



AT HOLIDAY TIME, AND THROUGHOUT THE YEAR,
WE ARE THANKFUL FOR PFLAG AND FOR
EVERYONE WHO WORKS TO OBTAIN EQUAL
RIGHTS FOR OUR LGBT LOVED ONES.



The Voice of PFLAG Hartford

Caring

Volume 23, No. 6

November/December 2014

IN THE PFLAG HARTFORD FAMILY:

AT THE SEPTEMBER MEETING, the principal business was election of the Board for the coming year. Following are our 2014-2015 Board members: Lori D. & Donna S., Co-Presidents; Eric L., Vice President; Joan J., Treasurer; Lori D., Secretary. Additional Board members are: Connie G.; Mike R.; Jean C.; Mary Beth & Tom M.; Carole M. and Amanda K. Congratulations and thank-you all for serving.

A GREAT TIME WAS HAD BY ALL at the stepping down reception for Becky & John. A big shout out to the reception committee - Donna, Jean, Connie, Bev, Amanda, Eric, Lori, Rose, Tom and Mary Beth - for the time and gifts given that made the event so special.

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

It's that time of the year, and membership dues are now due and payable for fiscal year October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015. If you haven't already renewed your membership or enrolled as a new member, please do so as soon as possible. **PS:** You may now renew your membership by paying your dues at our monthly meetings. We now have a "square" that will take your credit card. See Lori if you want to pay your dues in this convenient way.

PFLAG is a welcoming place for parents and friends of lesbians & gays, but we are much more than that. Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people are also encouraged to attend our meetings. GLBT people come with or without their family members, and parents and friends come with or without their GLBT loved ones. PFLAG is for YOU!

PFLAG HARTFORD MONTHLY SUPPORT GROUP MEETS: Third Wednesday of each month, 7:30 p.m., Immanuel Congregational Church House, 10 Woodland Street (Just North of Farmington Ave.), Hartford. For more information, please call Donna at 860/505-7346 or Lori at 860/305-2743.

MEMBERSHIP DUES:

Student/Limited Income: \$15
Household Membership: \$40
Individual Membership: \$25



MONTHLY MEETING REMINDER

November 19 – 7:30 p.m.
December 17 – 7:30 p.m.
January 21 – 7:30 p.m.
February 18 – 7:30 p.m.

(Paid membership includes a one-year subscription to Caring & The National PFLAG newsletter.)

Please make your check payable to **PFLAG Hartford** and send it to:

PFLAG Hartford, P.O. Box 260733, Hartford, CT 06126-0733

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning persons and their families and friends through:

SUPPORT: To cope with an adverse society

EDUCATION: To enlighten an ill-informed public

ADVOCACY: To end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights.

PFLAG provides an opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

UPCOMING /ONGOING EVENTS

- **STONEWALL SPEAKERS** is an all volunteer speakers' bureau composed of LGBT people and allies dedicated to reducing violence and bias while promoting equality for all. We speak to thousands of Connecticut students and adults annually. Listeners will meet LGBT people and their allies in person; hear candid accounts of their lives; and receive honest, informed answers to any questions they have. Let your high school, college, business, religious group or community group know we are available. For more information please contact coordinator@stonewallspeakers.org.
- **XX CLUB "Twenty Club"** – The Transsexual Support Group of New England meets the 2nd & 4th Saturday of every month from 2-5 p.m. at The Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective, 1841 Broad Street, Hartford, CT www.twentyclub.net.
- **LIVING SOULFULLY** (Men Loving Men In Community) meets the 4th Wednesday of every month, 7:30-9:30 p.m. at The Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective, 1841 Broad Street, Hartford, CT. 860/278-4163.
- **Mpower CT** – Social gathering for gay and bisexual men ages 18-35 meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month from 7-9 p.m. at The Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective, 1841 Broad Street, Hartford, CT. 860/278-4163.
- **ONE BIG EVENT:** Saturday, November 22, 6 p.m. to midnight. An Invitation to the Gayest Night of the Year! Cocktails, dinner, live & silent auctions and dancing to the Shaded Soul Band. Won't you join us for a very special evening celebrating the work of the **Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective** and the community we serve? Don't miss this sell-out event. Tickets are \$150. Visit our website for details: www.onebigevent.org. For more information, please contact *OBE* Coordinator, Dan Millett at (860)278-4163 x 18 or email danm@hglhc.org.

TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Please join us for the Transgender Day of Remembrance vigil, which will be held in the Metropolitan Community Church sanctuary on **November 20, starting at 7 p.m.**, as we remember those we lost this past year from trans/violence and recommit to a movement that is changing (even saving) lives.

Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) is an annual observance on November 20 that honors the memory of those whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence. During the week of November 17-23, 2014 individuals and organizations around the country participate in **Transgender Awareness Week** to help raise the visibility of transgender and gender non-conforming people and address the issues these communities face.

What is the Transgender Day of Remembrance? The Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) was started by transgender advocate Gwendolyn Ann Smith as a vigil to honor the memory of Rita Hester, a transgender woman who was killed in 1998. The vigil commemorated all the transgender people lost to violence that year and began an important memorial that has become the annual Transgender Day of Remembrance.

"The Transgender Day of Remembrance seeks to highlight the losses we face due to anti-transgender bigotry and violence. I am no stranger to the need to fight for our rights, and the right to simply exist is first and foremost. With so many seeking to erase transgender people -- sometimes in the most brutal ways possible -- it is vitally important that those we lose are remembered, and that we continue to fight for justice."

Transgender Day of Remembrance founder **Gwendolyn Ann Smith**

THANK-YOU: At our Wednesday, October 15, monthly meeting we had a wonderful guest speaker. Martha Wick, from The Institute of Professional Practice, joined us to tell her story of working to find foster families for LGBT youth. She also familiarized us with, and updated us on, the "Jane Doe" case here in Connecticut. Martha is working with the state to find an appropriate home for this transgender young woman.



HRC BLOG

NYC ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE FINALLY ENDS DISCRIMINATORY BAN ON LGBT GROUPS

September 3, 2014 by HRC staff

The HRC Foundation today commended organizers of the New York City St. Patrick's Day parade for taking steps to lift the discriminatory ban on LGBT groups participating in the annual march.

The parade committee announced that next year it would allow OUT@NBCUniversal, an LGBT support group at the television network that broadcasts the event, to officially participate under its own banner. Cardinal Timothy Dolan, who has a long history of opposing equality for LGBT people, will lead the parade as grand marshal.

In coming years, other LGBT groups will be allowed to apply to march.

"We are pleased that the changes proposed by the parade committee will finally make it possible for LGBT Americans -- including Irish Catholic LGBT Americans -- to officially march under their own banners," said Sharon Groves, director of the HRC Foundation's Religion and Faith Program. "The discriminatory ban has been shameful, particularly in the very city where the LGBT rights movement got its start 45 years ago at the Stonewall Inn."

HRC [earlier this year hailed](#) the decisions of iconic brewers Guinness, Heineken, and Sam Adams for dropping their sponsorships of St. Patrick's Day parades that perpetuate discrimination against LGBT groups by banning their participation.

The LGBT civil rights organization also commends New York Mayor Bill de Blasio who had pledged to continue to boycott the parade until discrimination against LGBT groups ended.

"Hopefully, today's developments will lead to full inclusion of LGBT groups in the New York parade, and encourage parade organizers in other cities like Boston to follow suit and end their discrimination," Groves said.



A STUNNING ADVANCE—Decision Clears Way In 11 States For Gay Marriage - *David Savage, Los Angeles Times*

Just 12 years ago it was illegal for gays and lesbians to marry anywhere in the U.S. But Monday, the drive to legalize same sex marriage – which began some two decades ago as a seemingly far-fetched quest – neared final victory as the Supreme Court cleared the way for gays and lesbians to marry in 11 additional states. Now, 30 states, plus the District of Columbia, offer, or will soon offer, what supporters call "marriage equality."

Social conservatives had seen the high court as their last hope to halt the rapid advance of Gay marriage. But, in a surprise move, the justices rejected without comment appeals from five states whose bans against same sex marriage had been struck down by lower courts.

The decision means gay marriage will soon be legal even in the South. Virginia, one of the states whose laws were invalidated when the high court refused to intervene, began issuing marriage licenses to same sex couples within hours.

By not issuing a formal ruling, the justices put off the question of whether the Constitution guarantees gays and lesbians a right to marry. Although the outcome does not set a legal precedent that binds the lower courts, it did send a strong message that same sex marriage could soon be legal across the country.

The court's decision made gay marriage immediately legal in Utah, Oklahoma, Virginia, Indiana and Wisconsin. Six additional states will be affected, because they are in the same federal appellate circuit court districts that have declared gay marriage bans unconstitutional: North Carolina, South Carolina, West Virginia, Colorado, Kansas and Wyoming. Separately, 19 states had legalized same sex marriage. Same sex marriages have been legal in Connecticut since 2008.

The high court's action capped a legal and political reversal of nearly unprecedented proportions on what once was one of the nation's most divisive social issues. James Esseks of the American Civil Liberties Union called the action "a watershed movement for the entire country."

Indeed the number of states where gay couples can marry will likely grow again soon, because the San Francisco-based U.S. 9th District Court of Appeals is expected to issue a ruling that would strike down gay marriage bans in five Western states under its jurisdiction: Nevada, Idaho, **Alaska**, Arizona and Montana. Once `

that happens, bans on same sex marriage will remain enforceable in just over a dozen states in the Midwest and South. What will happen there is the key question, which Monday's action left unresolved.

The justices will not allow the Constitution's guarantee of "equal protection of the laws" to mean one thing in one region of the country and something different in another – at least not for an extended period. One possibility is that judges in the appeals courts that have not yet ruled will take a clue from the high court and strike down the remaining bans. (see related news below)

JUDGE BATS DOWN ALASKA SAME-SEX MARRIAGE BAN

The Hartford Courant, 10/14

JUNEAU, Alaska – A federal judge Sunday ruled that Alaska's ban on same-sex marriage is unconstitutional.

Judge Timothy Burgess of the U.S. District Court for Alaska made the ruling after hearing oral arguments Friday challenging the state's 16-year-old ban. He also barred Alaska from refusing to acknowledge lawful same-sex marriages conducted in other states. ...



TRANSGENDER TROOPS IN OTHER NATIONS ARE PROOF THAT INCLUSIVE MILITARIES WORK

(This is a long article but well worth reading.)

Jennifer Bendlery, The Huffington Post, 10/21/14

WASHINGTON -- Cpl. Natalie Murray has been a member of the Canadian Armed Forces for 27 years. She is a radar technician, and she has been deployed as far away as Bosnia to put her specialized training to use. That was in 2002. About a year later, she transitioned from publicly identifying as a man to identifying as a woman. It didn't take long for word to spread in the military.

"I've arrived at a unit, and they're expecting a drag queen," said Murray. "A lot has to do with how media portrays us, or at LGBT events, when trans issues are being addressed, that's exactly who they bring out. A drag queen. ... Part of why I stand up and be who I am is to address that."

Murray was one of more than a dozen speakers at a first-of-its-kind event on Monday: an international conference of transgender military service members, hosted by the American Civil Liberties Union. Eighteen countries currently allow transgender people to serve openly -- the United States is not among them -- and transgender troops from five of those countries gathered in Washington, D.C., to share lessons learned and, perhaps, to influence U.S. policy.

Speakers at the event revealed the sharp contrast between the United States' military policy on transgender people and the military policies of some of its closest allies. The Supreme Court of Canada, for example, ruled in 1992 that it was unconstitutional to ban people from serving based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. In the United Kingdom, there's never been a ban. Instead, it's been a matter of keeping military personnel educated on LGBT issues over the years.

Sweden may take the top honors, however. In 1972, it became the first country in the world to let people change their legal gender after sex reassignment surgery. Acceptance of transgender people in the military took hold in the mid-1990s, said Maj. Alexandra Larsson, a transgender intelligence officer for the Swedish Air Force. "The key for me was when a four-star general, the chief of defense, said in a press conference ... that he wouldn't accept any

discrimination against LGBT people," said Larsson, speaking at the conference. "That summer, I walked alongside the chief of defense and the minister of defense in the Stockholm Pride Parade. ... I'm sure their presence made 50 more people come out. That aspect of symbolic leadership is so, so important." "I have the best job in the world," added Larsson. "I really, really do. I'm so grateful to be in that position."

Don't expect U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel to march in a Pride parade anytime soon. Gay and lesbian people have been allowed to serve openly in the U.S. military since 2011, but transgender people are banned. And that's not about to change. "I can confirm that for you -- that no review of the policy has been ordered," Lt. Cmdr. Nate Christensen, a Department of Defense spokesman, told The Huffington Post. "DOD regulations don't allow transgender individuals to serve in the U.S. military, based upon medical standards for military service." Specifically, Defense Department instruction 6130.03 bars people with "psychosexual conditions ... including but not limited to transsexualism, exhibitionism, transvestism, voyeurism, and other paraphilias" from serving in the military.

Hagel himself addressed the issue in May, saying he's not inclined to review the policy but is open to *learning more about transgender issues*. "I would want to hear more from individuals who are close to this issue, know this issue, who I would value their judgment and their direction on," he said.

Despite the ban, an estimated 15,500 transgender personnel are already serving in the U.S. military in secret, according to the think tank Palm Center. Conference attendees said Monday that only hurts a force's operational effectiveness. "Without a doubt, the more mature our inclusive policies become, the more effective our operational delivery becomes," said Sarah Maskell, a squadron leader in the United Kingdom's Royal Air Force and an official policy advocate for diversity within the military. "People are preparing to take on the challenge of military operations without the stress of personal changes."

Nearly everyone speaking at the conference said it wouldn't be that difficult to openly integrate transgender people into the U.S. military system. "Organizationally, it's just not a heavy lift," said Lucy Jordan, a transgender sergeant in the Royal New Zealand Air Force. "It's about investing in the most important thing in your organization. It's people, people, people."

It comes down to educating military brass on transgender issues, the speakers said. And treating people with dignity. And shower curtains. "That's one of the things people always say. 'Oh, transgender people, oh my! How do you deal with bathrooms?'" said Lt. Cmdr. Nicole Lassaline of the Canadian Armed Forces. "We're kind of saying, 'This person has the right to use that washroom. If you have a problem, you go use the other washroom.' It's worked fairly well and opened their eyes. They've said, 'Oh, maybe I don't have a problem.'" Lassaline, who leads a focus group for transgender personnel, said there have also been cases of female soldiers not wanting to undress in communal dressing rooms because they have scars from breast cancer surgery or other operations. The goal, she said, should be to preserve people's dignity. "It's the privacy of the person that should be respected," said Lassaline. "And really, how much does it cost to put a curtain in a shower cubicle? Really."

To be sure, it hasn't always been a smooth process for transgender military personnel even in the countries that don't ban their service. Murray said she feels she's been prevented from advancing in rank because she is transgender, and people in her initial unit made it clear that they didn't want her around. But the situation has improved over the years, she said, and she chooses to put herself out there to help her transgender colleagues. ...

Conference participants said their advice for transgender Americans who want to serve in the military is to keep speaking out and educating people on transgender issues, particularly those in the military and in Congress. "My trans community [guides] 90 percent of the direction of my policy," said Maskell. "It's not a revolutionary step. ... It's not fighting against the machine. It's working with the machine because generally the machine just needs educating."

"Being able to be open and authentic is the key," added Donna Harding, a transgender major in the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps. "For trans people in the service, all we want to do is serve to the best of our abilities and to serve with dignity."

Just be Yourself. Let people see the Real, Imperfect, Flawed, Quirky, Weird, Beautiful and Magical person that you are.

CT TransAdvocacy Coalition

CALL FOR THE NINTH ANNUAL TRANSGENDER LIVES CONFERENCE WORKSHOP PROPOSALS

Our Ninth Annual Transgender Lives: The Intersection of Health and Law Conference will be held on April 25, 2015 at the UConn Health Center in Farmington, Ct. In preparation for this conference, we are announcing our CALL FOR WORKSHOP PROPOSALS for the conference. Workshop space is limited and all proposals will be reviewed for applicability and relevance to the conference theme and audience. We encourage you to submit your proposal as soon as possible. **Deadline for Proposals is December 19th!**

We also encourage you to forward this Request for Workshop proposals to any colleagues, friends, family or distribution lists you feel would be interested in doing a workshop at the 2015 Transgender Lives: The Intersection of Health and Law Conference.

As this conference has dramatically grown over the years, we recognize that many of you have very important topics and experience which fold into our theme of *The Intersection of Health and Law*. Workshop space is *limited* and all proposals will be reviewed for applicability and relevance to the Conference theme and audience. If you feel you have a workshop that would benefit the conference then we encourage you to submit your proposal at your earliest convenience.

If you have any questions, please email us.

Sincerely,

Your Conference Team, Ct TransAdvocacy Coalition

P.O. Box 111, Farmington, CT 06034

(860) 255-8812 conference@transadvocacy.org

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Wednesday - 7:15 A.M. Low Mass
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PFLAG SOUTHWESTERN CT

Hot Line: (203) 874-7365

PFLAG SECT (SOUTHEASTERN CT)

When: Second Monday of every month,

Potluck at 6:00 pm; Meeting at 7:00 pm

Where: Noank Baptist Church,

18 Cathedral Heights, Noank (Groton)

Helpline: (860) 447-0884

Email: bjalthen@sbcglobal.net

Web site: www.pflagsect.org

PFLAG GREATER NEW HAVEN

166 Lovers Lane, Guilford, CT 06437

Meeting: 3rd Tuesday of the Month, 7:30 pm

Church of the Redeemer

185 Cold Spring Street, New Haven

(Corner of Whitney Avenue)

Phone/Help Line (203) 458-0493

Email: greaternewhavenpflag@yahoo.com

Central and Western Massachusetts

PFLAG FRANKLIN-HAMPSHIRE CHAPTER

Northhampton

When: Second Tuesday of every month

Where: Highland Valley Elder Services,

Cutlery Building, 320 Riverside Drive

Helpline: 413/625-6636

Email: jcmalinski48@gmail.com

Williamstown Area:

When: Second Sunday of every month, 2 pm

Where: First Congregational Church, Williamstown

Contact: (413) 243-2382

Springfield Area:

Where: Agawam

Contact: (413) 732-3240 or (413) 783-7709

Greenfield, MA

Help Line: 413/625-6636

E-Mail: PFLAGPV@valinet.com

CARING IS THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF PFLAG HARTFORD

Editor/Circulation Manager: Jean Cormier

Caring welcomes articles, letters and other submissions for publication.

Deadline: 15th of even numbered months.

Send articles to: *Jean Cormier*

156 Randal Avenue,

West Hartford, CT 06110



Hanukkah begins at sundown on December 16th.

STRAIGHT SPOUSE SUPPORT NETWORK:

In Connecticut and Western Massachusetts

Monthly Support Group, Third Sunday,

West Hartford, CT.

Contact Jane Harris at (413) 625-6636 or

jcmalinski48@gmail.com

or at www.straightspouse.org

FOR OTHER PFLAG LOCATIONS

Contact a Hartford Chapter Board Member or call the National PFLAG office at (202)638-4200. You may also sign onto PFLAG's Home Page at

www.pflag.org.