



HELEN & BOB BRILL SCHOLARSHIPS
AWARDED ON JUNE 18, 2015
 (Read about these amazing young people on page 3.)
 &



ON 6/27/15 - WE ALL WON EQUAL MARRIAGE RIGHTS!



The Voice of PFLAG Hartford

Caring

Volume 24, No. 4

July/August 2015

IN THE PFLAG HARTFORD FAMILY:

Congratulations to Rose and Larry Pysh on their 40th wedding anniversary. Rose & Larry are two of our most supportive members. They are “snow birds,” sharing their retirement time with a PFLAG chapter in Florida in the winter and with us for the remainder of the year. Congratulations also on the marriage of their daughter, Emily, to her partner, Paige, on October 4.

On June 18, 2015 Brill Scholarships were awarded to: Zane Carey; Frayah Cunningham, Cassie Martin and Tian-Shi Zhan Xu. Also presented that evening were scholarships from the Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective. The HGLHC Scholars are: Tomas Bergamo and Kylar Maldonado. Congratulations to all of our very deserving winners. Please read about these amazing young people on page 4.

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

- July 15 – 7:30 p.m.
- August 19 – 7:30 p.m.
- September 16 – 7:30 p.m. (Annual Meeting)
- October 21 - 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.
- **WE ARE THE CHANGE – 2015 PFLAG NATIONAL CONVENTION - October 16-18, Nashville, TN** PFLAG's work started with one mother from New York City who raised a sign...and changed the world. As a catalyst for change, she inspired others to step up and advocate for change in their own communities, home states, and at the federal level. Now, for 43 years, more families, friends, and allies have united their voices with those of their lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer loved ones, standing up together in support of civil rights and equality and against discrimination and hatred. **Register now for the 2015 PFLAG National Convention, where that legacy of change will continue. Information: pflag.org/2015convention.**



Friday, June 26, 2015

LOVE ACROSS AMERICA!

The Supreme Court of the United States has just issued its ruling in the landmark *Obergefell v. Hodges* case, affirming what every PFLAGer knows to be true: that love is love, family is family, and marriage is marriage. Thanks to this decision, people who are LGBTQ, regardless of where they live in the US, now have the freedom to marry. This is a long-anticipated victory, one we have worked very hard to achieve, and we are excited to celebrate this momentous occasion.

...

But while today's victory is important--a milestone to be celebrated--we also see it as an opportunity to push forward and further elevate PFLAG's core mission of support, education, and advocacy.

The reality in 2015 is that, while we continue to see families who are on their journey to acceptance and eventual celebration of their loved ones, sadly, many in the LGBTQ community come to be a part of the PFLAG family because their hearts need a home. Increasingly, the families of people who are transgender and gender expansive are joining our family as well. Our education efforts are only expanding, and we find there is an even more urgent need for our family and ally voices in rural towns, conservative locations, and in communities where reconciling faith with issues of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression is still an issue.

So while we celebrate today's victory, let's remain strongly committed to our support and education work, while also continuing our advocacy work for policies that will protect people who are LGBTQ from discrimination in their workplaces, homes, schools, and communities.

And beyond our fervent work to improve policy, let's remember that there are still those whose hearts and minds don't yet accept or understand, those who raise their voices against us and our loved ones, often driven by what they don't know or understand. We've heard those voices, time and again--the voices of those who still believe that people who are LGBTQ don't deserve protection, that they deserve ridicule, that they are "less than."

PFLAG voices are louder. They are stronger; they are kinder, and they are passionate on behalf of all who are seeking full equality in our country. United, our voices can move mountains...more importantly, they can move the hardest of hearts and the most mulish of minds.

As PFLAGers, let's keep working tirelessly not only to achieve full legal protection for people who are LGBTQ, but to move those who are not yet in a place of acceptance to a place beyond acceptance: to celebration of the great diversity of our communities.

Let's celebrate...and then let's push forward with our mission!

MEET OUR AMAZING 2015 BRILL SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS:

Zane Carey Zane graduated from Stratford High School in Stratford, CT. He plans to attend the University of Connecticut to pursue a career in math education and perhaps other subjects as well. The head of the Mathematics Department at Stratford High School wrote, “Zane has a strong sense of dedication to the student body and has been responsive to and advocated for the needs of his peers through his work with both the Diversity Club and the GSA.” Zane was President of his GSA in his Junior and Senior years and received the Gold Presidential Award of Service. Additionally, Zane received the Vassar Book Award. He is an Honor Roll Student and a member of the National Honor Society. Zane’s GSA Advisor wrote, “Zane is, in the best sense of the term, a disruptor. His membership in the Stratford High community has changed us for the better.”

Frayah Cunningham Frayah is a graduate of the Marine Science Magnet High School in Groton. She is planning to attend Eastern Connecticut State University in the fall with a major in Psychology and a minor in forensics. Frayah will be working toward a career in Forensic Psychology and wants to focus on the mental health of and violence against teens of the LGBTQ community. There was no Gay/Straight Alliance (GSA) at her high school so she started one, and it has grown to include nearly 25% of the student body. She is proud to say that her GSA held fund raisers, participated in national LGBTQ events and provided support to all of the teens at her school. Frayah wrote in her Brill Scholarship essay that her experience with organizing a GSA has allowed her to learn, grow and inspire others to do the same. In addition to her work with the GSA, Frayah was the Editor in Chief of her school’s yearbook, is a staunch supporter of animal welfare and volunteers at the Mystic Aquarium as a Guest Service Specialist.

Cassie Martin Cassie graduated from Old Saybrook High School and will attend Smith College this fall. Cassie will pursue a career in music education and wants to provide instrumental music instruction to children in underprivileged communities. Cassie has been an active member of Spectrum (her school’s GSA) her entire high-school career and attended the True Colors Conference multiple times. She also headed a movement to integrate a more LGBTI inclusive, non-binary curriculum in her school’s health department. With the approval of her teacher, Cassie made a presentation in her Science and Contemporary Issues class entitled “Spreading Awareness, Eliminating the Binary.” The response was amazing. Not only did it inform them of the spectrum of gender identities and sexualities that exist, it also caused them to reexamine their own identities. Cassie brought her presentation to her principal in an effort to change the school’s health curriculum to make it more LGBTQ+ inclusive. Cassie says, “I’m obsessed with playing the trombone. I have an irrational fear of beavers. I’m an expert in the art of sneaking food into movie theaters. I’m also homosexual, but that doesn’t matter, because it’s merely one aspect of my multifaceted identity.”

Tian-Shi Zhan Xu (“Fudi”) Fudi is a graduate of Avon High School. He will be attending The University of Connecticut in Storrs. Fudi looks forward to a career in Business/Marketing. Aside from his volunteer activities for the American Cancer Society; Gifts of Love; being Master of Ceremonies for the Chinese New Year’s Gala Show, Fudi participates in many extracurricular activities as a staff member on the Yearbook staff ; Amnesty International; Improv Theater; Literary Magazine; Animal Welfare; Student Government; Tutoring in the City (Connectkids); H.O.P.E. (Helping Other People Everywhere). He was also an active member in the Connecticut Youth Forum, and as President of his GSA. In his Brill Scholarship essay, Fudi wrote, “In my future, I will not hesitate to continue my fight for social justice. ... I see more and more of the younger generation abusing language and acting ignorant. These peers ... are not educated to recognize how hurtful their words are. I wish to change that. As someone who can be easily targeted by the social groups I am a part of, I speak up. As someone with empathy beyond my social groups, I act against. As a human who recognizes the mechanisms of oppression, I refuse to let oppression harvest.”

WE WISH ALL OF OUR BRILL SCHOLARS SUCCESS IN THEIR FUTURE ENDEAVORS.

FINTAN O'TOOLE: IRELAND HAS LEFT 'TOLERANCE' FAR BEHIND

The Irish Times, 5/29/15

The overwhelming victory for the Yes side in the marriage equality referendum is not as good as it looks. It's much better. It looks extraordinary – little Ireland becoming the first country in the world to support same sex marriage by direct popular vote. But actually it's about the ordinary. Ireland has redefined what it means to be an ordinary human being. We've made it clear to the world that there is a new normal — that “ordinary” is a big, capacious word that embraces and rejoices in the natural diversity of humanity. LGBT people are now a fully acknowledged part of the wonderful ordinariness of Irish life. It looks like a victory for tolerance. But it's actually an end to mere toleration. Tolerance is what “we” extend, in our gracious goodness, to “them”. It's about saying “You do your own thing over there and we won't bother you so long as you don't bother us”.

The resounding Yes is a statement that Ireland has left tolerance far behind. It's saying that there's no “them” anymore. LGBT people are us — our sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, neighbours and friends. We were given the chance to say that. We were asked to replace tolerance with the equality of citizenship. And we took it in both arms and hugged it close.

It looks like a victory for articulacy. This was indeed a superb civic campaign. And it was marked by the riveting eloquence of so many people, of Una Mullally and Colm O'Gorman, of Mary McAleese and Noel Whelan, of Ursula Halligan and Colm Toibin, of Averil Power and Aodhan O'Riordan and of so many others who spoke their hearts and their minds on the airwaves and the doorsteps. The Yes side did not rise to provocations and insults, it rose above them. Many people sacrificed their privacy and exposed their most intimate selves to the possibility of public rejection. Their courage and dignity made the difference.

Even so, this is not a victory for articulate statement. Deep down, it's a victory for halting, fretful speech. How? Because what actually changed Ireland over the last two decades is hundreds of thousands of painful, stammered conversations that began with the dreaded words “I have something to tell you...” It's all those moments of coming out around kitchen tables, tentative words punctuated by sobs and sighs, by cold silences and fearful hesitations. Those awkward, unhappy, often unfinished conversations are where the truths articulated so eloquently in the campaign were first uttered. And it was through them that gay men and lesbians became Us, our children, our families.

It looks like a victory for Liberal Ireland over Conservative Ireland. But it's much more significant than that. It's the end of that whole, sterile, useless, unproductive division. There is no longer a Liberal Ireland and a Conservative Ireland. The cleavage between rural and urban, tradition and modernity that has shaped so many of the debates of the last four decades has been repaired. This is a truly national moment — as joyful in Bundoran as it is in Ballymun, in Castlerea as it is in Cobh. Instead of Liberal Ireland and Conservative Ireland we have a decent, democratic Ireland.

It looks like LGBT people finally coming out of the closet. But actually it's more than that: it's Ireland coming out to itself. We had a furtive, anxious hidden self of optimism and decency, a self long clouded by hypocrisy and abstraction and held in check by fear. On Friday, this Ireland stopped being afraid of itself. The No campaign was all about fear — the fear that change could have only one vehicle (the handcart) and one destination (hell). And this time, it didn't work. Paranoia and pessimism lost out big time to the confident, hopeful, self-belief that Irish people have hidden from themselves for too long.

It looks like a victory for global cosmopolitanism. But actually it's a victory for intimacy. It was intimacy that made Ireland such a horrible place for gay and lesbian people, for all those whose difference would be marked and spied on and gossiped about. But intimacy is a tide that is just as powerful when it turns the other way. Once LGBT people did begin to come out, they became known. Irish people like what they know. They like the idea of “home”. On Friday, the wonderful spectacle of people coming back to vote, embodied for all of us that sense of home as a place where the heart is — the strong, beating heart of human connection.

Finally, it looks like a defeat for religious conservatives. But nobody has been defeated. Nobody has been diminished. Irish people comprehensively rejected the notion that our republic is a zero sum game, that what is given to one must be taken from another. Everybody gains from equality — even those who didn't think they wanted it. Over time, those who are in a minority on this issue will come to appreciate the value of living in a pluralist democracy in which minorities are respected. By pushing forward on what only recently seemed a marginal issue, the LGBT community has given all of Irish democracy one of its greatest days. It has given our battered republic a new sense of engagement, a new confidence, an expanded sense of possibility. It has shown all of us that the unthinkable is perfectly attainable. We now have to figure out how to rise to that daunting and exhilarating challenge.

BOY SCOUTS PRESIDENT SAYS BAN ON GAY LEADERS NEEDS TO END

Marice Richter, May 21, 2015

Boy Scouts of America President Robert Gates said on Thursday the group's ban on adult gay leaders needs to end, taking a step toward dismantling a policy that has caused deep rifts in the 105-year-old organization.

Gates said at a national meeting of the group in Atlanta he does not plan to revoke the charters of Boy Scout councils that allow gay leaders, according to a text of the speech, which could significantly weaken enforcement of the ban.

"We must deal with the world as it is, not as we might wish it to be. The status quo in our movement's membership standards cannot be sustained," said Gates, who as U.S. secretary of defense helped end the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy that barred openly gay individuals from serving in the military.

Former Defense Secretary Robert Gates addresses the Boy Scouts of America's annual meeting on Friday, May 23, 2014, in Nashville, Tenn., after being selected as the organization's new president. Gates is taking over one of the nation's largest youth organizations as it fights a membership decline and debates its policy toward gays.

He said he was not asking the Boy Scouts' national board to make any policy change at the current meeting.

"Dozens of states - from New York to Utah - are passing laws that protect employment rights on the basis of sexual orientation," he said. "Thus, between internal challenges and potential legal conflicts, the Boy Scouts of America finds itself in an unsustainable position."

Those pushing for change, applauded Gates' stand.

"We are 180 degrees from where we were a year ago," said Zach Wahls, executive director of Scouts for Equality. "This is a very, very positive development."

The Irving, Texas-based organization lifted its ban on gay youth in 2013 but continues to prohibit the participation of openly gay adults.

The selection last year of Gates as president of the Boy Scouts was seen as an opportunity to revisit the organization's policy on gay adults.

Gates said he personally would have supported going further toward lifting the Scouts' ban on gays but would not reopen debate during his two-year term.

The ban received its first major challenge in April when the first openly gay adult was hired as a summer camp leader by the Greater New York Council of Boy Scouts.

In Ohio, an assistant scoutmaster was expelled in March for being openly gay, according to local media reports.

"The one thing we cannot do is put our heads in the sand and pretend this challenge will go away or abate. Quite the opposite is happening," Gates also said.



We won!

And I just want to say THANK YOU:

We would not have made it to this incredible moment without the efforts of every single person who has joined in this fight over decades.

This momentous victory shows what love – and lots of hard work – can do.

And we'll use that momentum to keep fighting until all of us – all Americans – no matter who they are or where they live – have the same opportunities and freedom to live equally, safely, securely – and with liberty and justice for all.

Love won this week. Let's celebrate. And let's get back to work.

Thank you,

Mary L. Bonauto

Civil Rights Project Director

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PFLAG Hartford has been available as a resource for support to families and friends of GLBTI people in Greater Hartford, and beyond, for over 20 years. We are staffed solely by volunteers, and depend heavily on contributions to enable us to continue to educate and advocate for an end to discrimination and to make this a safer world for our GLBTI loved ones. *Your help is greatly appreciated.*

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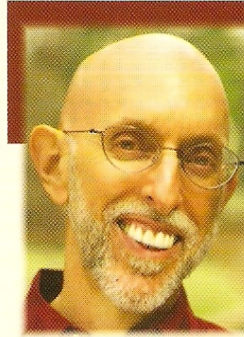


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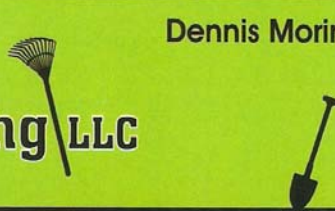


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Connecticut PFLAG Meetings

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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

Contact: David Knapp 203/453-1395

Email: davidwinthropknapp@yahoo.com

PFLAG/MANCHESTER YOUTH SERVICE BUREAU

When: First Tuesday of every month, 6:30-8:00pm.

Where: 63 Linden Street, Manchester

Contacts: Youth Group, Kellie Sheridan (860) 647-5263

Parent Group, Lori Davison pflaghartford@gmail.com

NORWALK

Support Group for PARENTS of trans/gender creative children of all ages, and of all our LGBTQ children!

When: 2nd Sunday of every month, 3:00-5:00 pm

Where: Triangle Community Center
618 West Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06850

Central and Western Massachusetts

Franklin - Northampton

When: Second Tuesday of every month from 6-8 pm

Where: Northampton at Northampton Crossing
325 King St. (conf. rm.

Pioneer Valley Family Medicine)

Contacts: 413-625-6636 or 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

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Help Line: 413/625-6636

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