

# The Flagpole

The Newsletter of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays  
of the Metropolitan Washington DC Area

On the web at [www.pflagdc.org](http://www.pflagdc.org) or [www.stayclose.org](http://www.stayclose.org)

February 2006

## The Date is Set! March 11 is the 9th Annual Honors & Silent Auction!

The Metro DC PFLAG Board of Directors, Rhonda Buckner Executive Director, and Gala Co-Chairs Erin Uritus and Randy Carswell recently announced the date and specifics of the 9th Annual Metro DC PFLAG Honors Gala and Silent Auction. The event is a celebrate the dedication of individuals, corporations, and celebrities working for equality for all people.

The Gala fundraising event will be held on March 11 at the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill and will feature a Silent Auction, VIP Reception, Dinner and

Awards Presentation.

Carole Simpson, ABC News, will serve as the Mistress of Ceremony. Potomac Fever, an A Cappella ensemble from the Washington DC Gay Men's Chorus will perform. The Invocation for the evening will be presented by Rev. Rob Hardies.

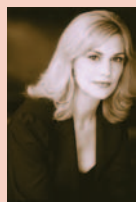
The Honors Gala is the area's pre-eminent GLBT family event and raises about 50% of the Metro DC PFLAG annual budget and allows us to continue with vital programs.

Sponsorships are available at varying

price points. For sponsorship opportunity information, contact Rhonda Buckner at 202-638-3852.

Tables of 10 are available to individuals or companies and organizations at \$1500. Individual tickets for the Gala Dinner are available at \$150 each, and tickets to the Honoree Reception combined with the dinner are available at \$250 each. Tickets and tables may be purchased online at [boxofficetickets.com/pflag](http://boxofficetickets.com/pflag) or by contacting Bill Delgrosso at 202-408-0042 or [delgross\\_bill@bah.com](mailto:delgross_bill@bah.com). ▼

## Breaking News: 2006 Gala Honorees Announced!



Honoree  
Thea Gill

The three Honorees for the 9th Annual Metro DC PFLAG Honors Gala and Silent Auction have been announced!

Rhonda Buckner, Metro DC PFLAG Executive Director, said, "Our honorees this year represent a wealth of diversity and commitment to the mission of PFLAG. Each one is making a distinct difference in society, and each is having global impact."

■ **Spotlight Award Winner:**  
**Thea Gill**, who played

Lindsay Peterson on Showtime's highly rated series, *Queer as Folk* is an accomplished actor, singer, and champion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender rights. She is the recipient of the National Leadership Award from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Her dedication goes beyond the character she plays on television.

"I realized that as the show went from season to season, I was taking on a more social role - I started to see that I was affecting people's personal lives," Gill says. "Being an actor is one thing, but being someone

who is making a mark on someone else's life is another. *Queer as Folk* has given me a wonderful purpose in life and it's a great feeling."

■ **The Faith In Action Award: Reverends John Mack and Barbara Gerlach**

of the First Congregational United Church of Christ. Twenty years ago, they led their congregation to be an open and welcoming and continued their commitment to equality in many ways, both with individual congregants and the community

John Mack has served as pastor of First Church since 1984. He is a graduate of Princeton University

and Union Theological Seminary and is a Vietnam veteran, who served as an infantry commander in the Marine Corps.

Barbara Gerlach joined the First Church staff in 1985. Besides her time at First Church, Barbara is an artist and a writer. She is a graduate of Hood College and Union Theological Seminary. She is active in Colombian human rights work and teaches English to recent immigrants from Latin America.

John Mack and Barbara Gerlach are married and have two children.

*Continued on p. 3*

## Unprecedented Support from Gala Corporate Sponsors!

The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Metro DC PFLAG Honors Gala and Silent Auction would not be possible without the support of our sponsors. And, this year, the sponsors are showing more commitment than ever before!

**Booz Allen Hamilton** headquartered in McLean, VA and longtime supporter of PFLAG, is Lead Gala Sponsor. In addition, the firm has a team of dedicated volunteers working in every capacity to ensure the Gala's success. Gala's Co-Chairs, **Erin Uritus** and **Randy Carswell** are both Booz Allen employees, and are leading the efforts of hundreds of volunteers—both from Booz Allen, and across all industries in the Metro area.

As Diamond Gala Sponsor, **XM Satellite Radio**, Washington, DC will broadcast the entire 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Gala live on satellite radio as well as provide music at the event.

**Art Litho Printing Solutions** in Baltimore, MD is graciously providing all printing and paper expense for the entire Gala. **G-V-I Productions** in Washington, DC is providing original video concepts and production. **Dane Rosendahl** is serving as the official designer for the Gala.

**Morris-Day** and **Verizon** are Ruby Silent Auction Sponsors, and **AOL** is the Platinum Gala Sponsor. **Koons of Manassas** is the Gold Gala Sponsor, and **Tom Drury** is the Silver Gala Sponsor. Other sponsors to date include **Addecco**, **National Education Association Health Information Network**, **Sun Trust Bank**, **Chip Benjamin Real Estate**, and **Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill**. ▼

## Silent Auction Goes Hi-Tech!

*Bid on Auction Items 24 Hours a Day—Even if You Can't Attend the Event*

What's a Gala without a Silent Auction? Fortunately, we don't have to ask the question! The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Honors Gala and Silent Auction has gone hi-tech! For the first time in the Gala's history, the Silent Auction will begin online.

Starting February 13, all auction items will be available for preview and for bidding online at [metrodcpflag.cmarket.com](http://metrodcpflag.cmarket.com). Simply register your bid and keep tabs on the current pricing! Some items will be available exclusively online, while many others will actually be available for live bidding on the night of the Gala, March 11.

This year's product line is showing tremendous promise and includes fabulous trip packages and other one-of-a-kind merchandise.

We're also still accepting items to include in the auction. If you have something of value to donate, contact Jim Jenkins, Auction Chair, at **301-694-9008**.

Prepare to kick off the bidding on February 13—visit [metrodcpflag.cmarket.com](http://metrodcpflag.cmarket.com)! ▼

**Additional sponsorship opportunities are still available! Support Metro DC PFLAG! Contact Rhonda Buckner at (202) 638-3852 to learn more today!**

## Report from Metro DC Safe Schools Coordinator

*by Jillyenne Harris*

Metro DC PFLAG is constantly gaining momentum for its Safe Schools Program. In January, we met with Liz Sessoms, Executive Director of Counseling Services for DC Public Schools (DCPS) to discuss how we can work together. At the meeting, we talked about the attitudes of staff who meet individually with students and the need for training on how to be supportive of GLBTQ youth.

We were invited to conduct a training that will be held at their guidance and counseling staff meeting in February.

In January, another of our accomplishments was the training of the two "go-to staff" at H.D. Woodson High School. These staff members are now able to accurately and consistently report and deal with incidents of harassment and sexual harassment as they happen.

Finally, we held an information session about PFLAG for

the staff of the Department of Mental Health. They have 30 qualified mental health professionals who work in 30 DC schools. We distributed material and many expressed interest in working with our chapter.

Metro DC PFLAG staff has been following the Montgomery County Public School Board through the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC). Metro DC PFLAG's Emily Wurtz and David Fishback are attending the CAC meetings and diligently working towards an honest and functional health education curriculum for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). The [www.teachthefacts.org](http://www.teachthefacts.org) blog is a great resource and way to stay informed on issues affecting GLBT people in the larger framework of American society. Metro DC PFLAG also has representatives on the MCPS citizen's advisory committee, who help influence the school board to institute a sex ed curriculum that is both inclusive and accurate. ▼

## Metro DC PFLAG at Equality VA Lobby Day!



*Metro DC PFLAG President Allen Keiswetter speaks with VA Governor Tim Kaine.*

*Metro DC PFLAG President Allen Keiswetter, Equality Virginia Executive Director Dyana Mason, and Sessa Keiswetter*



*Metro DC PFLAG President Allen Keiswetter, daughter Sessa Keiswetter, and VA Governor Tim Kaine.*

*Thanks to all of our donors and supporters! We'll have a full list of people who have supported our work since December 2005 in next month's issue.*

### *Gala Honorees, continued from p. 1*

■ **The Corporate Leadership Award:** For **Kimpton Hotel and Restaurant Group, LLC**, diversity is important. To solidify a commitment to diversity initiatives, Kimpton created an initiative team comprised of home office and field representatives to focus on continuous improvement in Diversity Awareness. As a direct result of this powerful initiative, in 2004 Kimpton embarked on its first advertising campaign specifically targeting GLBT travelers. In addition, Kimpton was ranked as one of the best companies to work for by *The Advocate*, a magazine geared towards the GLBT market, and Kimpton scored a perfect score in the 2004 Corporate Equality Index—the only company in the hotel industry to earn this perfect score. ▼



## Support Group Schedule

Everyone is welcome! Trained facilitators lead our support groups and confidentiality is maintained. Our goal is to help families heal and stay together. For additional information about any Metro DC PFLAG support group, call (301) 439-FLAG (3524) or (202) 638-3852.

**Washington, DC:** Feb. 6, 7:00 p.m.  
Galludet University  
Hall Memorial Building  
(First Monday of the month)

**Reston, VA:** Feb. 7, 7:30 p.m.  
Washington Plaza Baptist Church  
1615 Washington Plaza  
Lake Anne Village Center  
(First Tuesday of the month)

**Alexandria, VA:** Feb. 14, 8:00 p.m.  
Beverly Hills Community United Methodist Church  
3512 Old Dominion Blvd. (near West Glebe Road)  
(Second Tuesday of the month)

**Annandale, VA:** Feb. 19, 4:30 p.m.  
Little River UCC  
8410 Little River Turnpike  
(Third Sunday of the month)

**Bethesda, MD:** Feb. 19, 2:00 p.m.  
Cedar Lane Unitarian Church  
9601 Cedar Lane  
(Third Sunday of the month)

**Trans-people and their families**  
(Concurrent with the monthly Bethesda support group)

**Manassas, VA:** Feb. 27, 7:00 p.m.  
Bull Run Unitarian Universalist Church  
9350 Main St.  
(Fourth Monday of the month)

**REMEMBER:  
YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**

