



# The Flagpole

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

October 2005

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

## Come Out and Celebrate GLBT History Month!



In January 1994, Rodney Wilson, a high school social studies teacher in Missouri organized people around the country to celebrate GLBT history and focus on the contributions of GLBT people in all aspects of society.

October was selected because it built on existing traditions such as National Coming Out Day and the anniversaries of the first two GLBT marches on Washington in 1979 and 1987. Today, the month is commemorated across the nation, particularly in schools and workplaces.

On Oct. 11, 1987, half a million people participated in the second

March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. This was also the first display of the NAMES Project AIDS Quilt. The momentum continued four months after the event when more than 100 GLBT activists from around the country gathered in Manassas, VA. Recognizing that the GLBT community often reacted defensively to anti-gay actions, they came up with the idea of a national day to celebrate coming out and chose the anniversary of that second march on Washington to mark it. And so, National Coming Out Day was born.

Here are five ways to celebrate!

1. Read the essay on p. 2 for a great reminder of the importance of coming out – no matter who you are.
2. Attend one of the great upcoming events that are listed on page 6.
3. Help a GLBT student by letting them know about sources for funding their education (see p. 5).
4. Inform yourself. Much is happening at a fast and furious pace. Keep informed with the news on p. 3.
5. Come out! Talk about your families. Putting a face on who “we” are is one of the keys to change.



## Stay Close Campaign Goes International!



We're thrilled to report that there has been an official Stay Close sighting – in Greece!

Cornelius Baker, the former Executive Director of Whitman-Walker spotted Stay Close images in Athens, Greece this summer. Two Stay Close ads featuring Ben Affleck and Cyndi Lauper appeared in a news article in a Greek gay magazine.

He was kind enough to set us the Athens gay publication in which the Stay Close ads and article appeared (left).

Don't forget that you can help spread the word about Stay Close! (And what better time than GLBT History Month?) Visit [www.stayclose.org](http://www.stayclose.org) for more information about the campaign, who's involved, and how you can assist in placement for the ads.

## What Would a PFLAGer Do?

*PFLAG Mom and Former Metro DC President Kathy Tuerk Answers the Question*

“What would Jesus do?” was written on the pen he gave to us instead of his business card, but I didn’t notice it until he was gone. He came to fix the refrigerator. He brought us some crab soup. After his work was done, he did what the locals around here in the northern neck of Virginia seem to like to do—he sat around and wanted to chat. He had cancer of his mouth so his face was deformed, but that was ten years ago. He is fine now. He showed us his deceased wife’s picture when she was young and then right before she died. She was beautiful at 30 and still beautiful at 73. She died a year ago. He is still grieving. He is a musician, plays guitar, the straight man. He brought to my mind the wonderful black musicians that we had heard at the “blessing of the fleet” ceremony in Fletton, VA. Until the black word was spoken, he was just another friendly local. Now his face changed. Now the hate transformed his deformed face into that of a monster. “I’m sick of having blacks jammed down my throat,” was his opening comment. “They are all over the TV and in the movies. It’s all Hollywood’s fault, all the horrible music like rap.” He plays only country music. “No more Christian values,” and on and on. We just listened, trying to think of something to say or to get him to go, but he was on a roll. At first I thought he was about to start on the Jews with the Hollywood thing. But no - he moved to the HOMO-sexuals instead.

What would Jesus do indeed? What would I do? Listen politely. If he had launched into the Jewish thing, I would have immediately spoken up as I always do. “Excuse me, but I don’t want you to feel embarrassed. You probably don’t realize that we are Jewish.” So I said it. “Excuse me—you probably don’t know about our family.” (The pictures on the refrigerator had apparently gone unnoticed.)

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**“People say what’s on their minds down here. He spoke his mind and you spoke yours. I think you could have made a difference”**

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“We have a gay son and he has two black children.”

Now the deformed face looked shocked. I showed him all the pictures in my grandma brag book, giving him some time to gather his wits. I told him the story. I told him how I used to feel like him (never, really), but now we know that we were wrong. He listened, but then again he didn’t have much choice. He didn’t believe that gay people were born, not made. “It’s a choice,” he said emphatically. “Why in the world would your son adopt black children? I didn’t know they let gay people adopt. I know one thing. If my son was gay, I’d never speak to him again.”

“But don’t you love your son?” my husband asked.

“Yes.”

“I’ll just bet you wouldn’t be able to stop loving him.”

With that the chat ended and the goodbyes began. “Thanks for the help. Thanks for the soup. We’ll see you again sometime. Maybe you’ll get to meet my grandchildren.” He and my husband shared a friendly handshake.

He left and we felt sick. Our new little creek house on the water felt soiled, tarnished. We felt abused, a little afraid of what he might do. Will he tell everyone so all of our neighbors will be unfriendly? Will they burn our house down? Will he tell our plumber who he knows well and he won’t come and winterize our house? Or maybe he learned something. Maybe he will be different, just a little different. Now he has to put a face on his bigotry. But most of all we learned how it feels to be the other, the despised other.

The next morning we left him a message telling him how much we enjoyed the crab soup. Then we called our realtor for reassurance and told him the story. He was enthusiastically supportive. “People say what’s on their minds down here. He spoke his mind and you spoke yours. I think you could have made a difference.”

What would Jesus do? He would speak up, and we did. After all, Jesus was Jewish.

### Meet Board Member Kathy Braeman

*In the September edition of The Flagpole, you heard from Allen Keiswetter, president of the Metro DC PFLAG Board. This is the first in a series of profiles of other members, written in their own words.*

I first appreciated PFLAG in 1988 when my daughter told me she was a lesbian and went to a support group at Cedar Lane. I began to support PFLAG financially when Rhonda Buckner came to my church, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, VA, to speak and made the mission of the organization come alive. After attending the past two Galas, PFLAG President Allen Keiswetter invited me to join the Board this summer. I agreed as the mission is even more important in today's climate.

My daughter is a public interest lawyer in San Francisco where she had the opportunity to marry her long-time partner on February 13, 2004. City officials replaced the traditional terms of "bride" and "groom" in the text of marriage license applications with the terms first and second applicant. At the first officially-sanctioned same-sex marriages in the United States, instead of being declared "husband and wife," couples promise to be "spouses for life." Although I missed the marriage ceremony at San Francisco's City Hall, I joyfully announced this rite in the Washington Post wedding pages and held a reception for friends and family in March 2004 at UUCA. Unfortunately, on March 11, 2004, the California Supreme Court ordered San Francisco

officials to immediately suspend issuing licenses. Media and politicians reported, "Love and controversy are in the air in San Francisco." Yet I wonder why is it so controversial to promote stability in the relationships of people who love each other. Lesbian and gay couples deserve to have full equality – including the choice to marry. I believe same-sex marriages should be recognized as a matter of constitutional right. As one editor said: "The fat lady has sung and she is singing the wedding march."

So much more public education needs to be done on this important topic that I gave several speeches at my toastmasters group. Recently, I was pleased to attend an impressive panel discussion on this topic held in Arlington by the American Association of University Women.

My role as a Board member for PFLAG is to provide leadership and more movement towards a broader initiative to create "Safe Schools." I'm still in the learning curve phase as to what needs to be done to create more awareness of the damage from bullying in schools and how such outreach efforts can best be financed. I believe that parents want to "stay close" to their children both within the family and outside in the public arena. We are looking for other PFLAG members and friends who care about these issues and want to be involved.

My e-mail is  
braemank@dcaccess.net ▼

### Sad News

Bob Strohm, a PFLAG member and volunteer, died on September 6. Married to Patty, and father of John and Charles, Bob loved life and adored his family. His PFLAG contributions included helping at the Pride booth, marching in the Pride Parade, and staffing our Youth Pride table. Bob and Patty were also two of the first supporters of the Stay Close campaign. Bob was also active in the Always Our Children Catholic Support Group. He had serious health problems for much of his life and lived many decades longer than expected. He once wrote, "I'm the most fortunate person ever invented, and I'm going to be so bold to tell you that if you ever feel a bit down, just think of your blessings. And start with family."

### More From Beano

Last month we reported on Beano Solomon's free speech victory in Utah. Thanks to Carol Gneade from the ACLU, we have a photo of Beano with her GAYSROK license plate.



### Get Into the 2006 Gala!

Booz Allen Hamilton has committed to again being our lead sponsor and have increased their donation to \$25,000. The Hyatt Regency Capital Hill has again agreed to be a sponsor for \$2,500. Get your company contacts ready to help! For more information, contact the Metro DC PFLAG office at (202) 638-3852.

*Continued on p. 7*

# Upcoming Events



## God & Gays: Traditional Faiths with Contemporary Views

Wednesday, October 26, 2005 • 7:30 pm

Hope United Church of Christ, 6130 Old Telegraph Rd., Alexandria, VA

Join the Alexandria Gay and Lesbian Community Association for a panel discussion with leaders from several religious traditions. Many GLBT persons and their families have had negative experiences with organized religion, but many traditions have open and affirming places of worship in Alexandria. Learn about these and hear contemporary perspectives on GLBT persons and faith. Co-sponsored by Hope United Church of Christ and PFLAG-DC.

Don't forget events from the September *Flagpole!*

## 20th Anniversary Celebration of Open and Affirming in the United Church of Christ

October 22, 1:00-6:00 p.m.

First Congregational UCC ([www.fccuccdc.org](http://www.fccuccdc.org)) • 945 G St. NW, Washington, DC

## An Afternoon with Author Alex Sanchez

Saturday, November 12, 3:00 p.m.

Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library • 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA

## Families of Value: A book reading with Bob Bernstein


Sunday, November 13, 1:00 p.m.

Politics & Prose • 5015 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC ▼

**Please Join Us!**

*PFLAG National Board of Directors, Regional Directors and National Staff invite you to:*

**THE 2005 PFLAG NATIONAL ANNUAL MEETING**



**Dessert Reception &  
Reparative Therapy Panel Discussion**

**Sunday, October 23, 2005**  
3:30 pm – 6:00 pm  
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church  
9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda, Maryland 20814-4099  
*Go to [www.cedarlane.org](http://www.cedarlane.org) for directions. There is plenty of free parking.*

Featuring on the panel are renowned "reparative therapy" expert and psychiatrist, Dr. Jack Drescher, and David Fishback, former Chair of the Board of Education/Montgomery County Public Schools Advisory Committee on Family Life and Human Sexuality. Also, we will have featured guests who will be able to share with us their journey as "ex-gay" program survivors.

**If you are planning to attend, please RSVP to Cassi Holder at the PFLAG National office at 202-467-8180 extension 234. We hope to see you there!**

*You Have a Home in PFLAG*  
Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays  
1726 M Street, NW, Suite 400 • Washington, DC 20036 • Phone: 202-467-8180 • [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

# Development News

## Thank You, Metro DC PFLAG Donors and Members!

### Flagwaver (\$500)

Michael Gasch

### Benefactor (up to \$250)

Phil and Sandy Loiterstein

Donna L. Brown

### Patron (\$50)

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### Household (\$40)

David Barkley and Jeff Wingate

Dawn A. Lednum  
and Mimi Holt

Douglas R. and Laurie H. James

Jane and Roger Thayer

Lilli Vincenz and Nancy Davis

### Individual (\$30)

Elizabeth Buie

Wallace Haggard

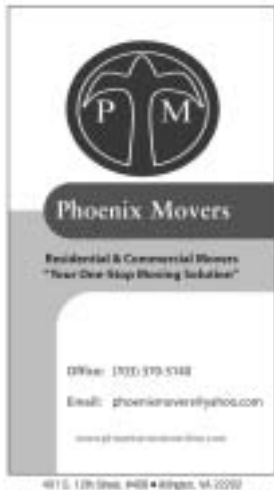
Madeline R. La Porta

Karl Esser

Carol W. Bernstein

### Other Giving Levels

Jorge Lindo



### Support PFLAG's Sponsors!

Support the people who support Metro DC PFLAG. For more information on ways to show your PFLAG pride through ads in *The Flagpole*, call (202) 638-3852.

### Give Through the Combined Federal Campaign!

Give to Metro DC PFLAG through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), or the United Way.

Many of Metro DC PFLAG's donors choose the convenience of workplace giving through the CFC or the United Way. Your donation is deducted from your paycheck in equal installments throughout the year. CFC and United Way giving is a vital part of Metro DC PFLAG's budget each year.

### Mark CFC/United Way #8154 to help.

With you help, we can continue our work of keeping families together.

### Coming next month...

*Safe Schools Update* ▼ *Getting Ready for the 2006 Gala* ▼ *Meet Members of the New Metro DC PFLAG Board* ▼ *PFLAG and National News* ▼ *Coverage of PFLAG's Annual Meeting* ▼ *Local Event Listings and much more!*

**Don't forget!** You can help spread the news about PFLAG by subscribing to the online edition of *The Flagpole*. Send an e-mail to [info@pflagdc.org](mailto:info@pflagdc.org) with "Subscribe Flagpole" in the subject line to get started.



## Metro DC PFLAG Support Groups

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.

**ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA:** October 11 at 8:00 p.m. at the Beverly Hills Community United Methodist Church, 3512 Old Dominion Blvd., near the corner of West Glebe Road. (Meeting is on the second Tues. of each month.)

**MANASSAS, VIRGINIA:** October 24 at 7:00 p.m. at the Bull Run Unitarian Universalist Church, 9350 Main Street. (Meeting is on the fourth Mon. of each month.)

**RESTON, VIRGINIA:** October 4 at 7:30 p.m. at the Washington Plaza Baptist Church, Lake Anne Village Center. (Meeting is on the first Tues. of each month.)

**BETHESDA, MARYLAND:** October 16 at 2:00 p.m. at the Cedar Lane Unitarian Church, 9601 Cedar Lane. (Meeting is on the third Sun. of each month.)

**TRANS-PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES:** October 16 at 2:00 p.m., concurrent with the Bethesda support group. (Meetings are on the third Sun. of each month.)

Be sure to check out the new group listing on page 7!

**REMEMBER:  
YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**



## Headlines from Around the Globe

Sources: 365gay.com, PlanetOut News, and the Associated Press

### Equality VA Launches PAC

Equality Virginia, the state's largest gay and lesbian advocacy group, has created a nonpartisan political action committee to add monetary support to its grass roots efforts. The PAC will focus on delegate races this year, directing money – somewhere in the range of \$10,000 – toward up to 20 candidates identified as supporting gay-friendly legislation.

### Mass. Lawmakers Reject Anti-Gay Amendment

A joint session of the House and Senate on Wednesday rejected a proposed amendment that would ban same-sex marriage while allowing civil unions, but another anti-gay amendment looms on the horizon.

The vote was the second of a two-part process to get the proposal onto the ballot in 2006. Lawmakers voted 157-39 against the measure.

Last March when it passed the first phase, it did so by only a handful of votes. Many Democrats opposed the measure and many Republicans who object to gay marriage voted against it because it would permit civil unions. But as more same-sex couples married in Massachusetts support for the measure dwindled. About 6,500 gay and lesbian couples have married in the state.

### Teamsters Recognize Same-Sex Marriage

Two Teamsters Locals representing workers at JFK Airport will treat marriages of same-sex couples the same as all other marriages in terms

of retirement benefits and coverage. The decision followed a threatened lawsuit by retired Teamster Dolores Damone, who lives in Suffolk County and married her same-sex partner earlier this year in Toronto.

### Has Arnold 'Sold Us Out'?

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has been accused of selling out gays and lesbians following his announcement that he will veto legislation allowing same-sex couples to marry. Equality California's Geoffrey Korrs said the decision was about his quest to be reelected. "Clearly he's pandering to an extreme right wing...He has to make a decision on what he wants his legacy to be; we hope that he will not go down in history as 'The Discriminator.'"

### Hate Crimes Amendment Passed

The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act by a 223-199 bipartisan vote. The measure was passed as an amendment to H.R. 3132, the "Children's Safety Act."

The bill would add actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and disability to federal hate crime laws. It also gives grants to the states to help prosecute these crimes and allow federal assistance in cases where needed to fully prosecute hate crimes.

### SoCal Baptists Quit Over Gays

The Pacific Southwest Region of American Baptist Churches USA – based in S. California – said in a

statement that it intends to secede because the national organization has refused to declare homosexuality incompatible with Christian Scripture. The region includes about 300 of the denomination's 5,800 churches.

### Anglican Gay Rift Widens

The deep divisions between conservatives and modernists in the worldwide Anglican church over the role of gays widened with a decision by Nigeria to sever ties with the Church of England, deleting all references to Canterbury, the "mother" church of the Anglican Communion, from its constitution.

### Pope Bans Gay Seminarians

Pope Benedict XVI is said to have approved a document saying that homosexual men should not be ordained as Roman Catholic priests. The document, prepared at the request of the late Pope John Paul II, reportedly calls on bishops to bar even chaste homosexuals from seminaries because their orientation is rooted in a personality disorder that may undermine their capacity to minister, according to *Catholic World News*.

The report comes as a sweeping inspection of 229 U.S. seminaries, including those in New York and the Diocese of Rockville Centre, is about to begin. That review, also triggered by the sex abuse scandals, will look for "evidence of homosexuality," and proper instruction on celibacy, among other things.

*Continued on p. 7*

## New Annandale Support Group Starting in October

On Sunday, October 16, from 4:30-6:00 pm, the eighth Metro DC PFLAG support group will hold its first meeting. The group will be hosted by The Little River UCC church at 8410 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA 22003 (across from NOVA Community College). Vivien Loymer will lead the group along with Diane Puckett.

Please join us if having a GLBT family member challenges you, or are GLBT yourself and have issues about coming out. You are also welcome – straight or gay – if you want to support others in their coming out journey. ▼

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## Headlines, continued from p. 6

### ...And Some More Bad News for GLBT Catholics

Giving legal recognition to unmarried couples in Italy would eclipse the nature and value of traditional families and cause grave harm, said Cardinal Camillo Ruini, president of the Italian Bishops' Conference.

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### Challenges to Gay Marriage Widespread in Europe

Spain's Constitutional Court was asked to declare the three month-old law allowing same-sex couples to wed illegal. The Popular Party, Spain's largest opposition party, mounted the challenge to the law.

Meanwhile, Latvia's Parliament has passed an amendment to the country's constitution to ban same-sex marriage. It still needs approval in three additional votes and then be approved by a constitutional panel before going into effect. ▼

## Resources



### Funding Opportunities for GLBT Students

By Scott J. Gilbert

Funding opportunities for GLBT students are out there – if you know where to look! This is the second of a two-part series of educational funding resources. (To see the first part of the list, check out the September edition of *The Flagpole*.)

#### GLSEN Scholarship Program

[www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)

These scholarships enable students who have played leadership roles in addressing GLBT issues in their middle and high school years with the support they need to continue their development as leaders through higher education. (*Note:* To access information, use the term “scholarships” on the GLSEN website search area.)

#### Pride Foundation

[www.pridefoundation.org](http://www.pridefoundation.org)

Through grants and scholarships, the Pride Foundation promotes philanthropy and provides leadership in the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community.

#### Queer Asian & Pacific Islander Wellness Center

[www.apowellness.org](http://www.apowellness.org)

Each year, the Queer Asian & Pacific Islander Pride Scholarship Fund awards scholarships to deserving applicants.

#### Third Wave Foundation

[www.thirdwavefoundation.org](http://www.thirdwavefoundation.org)

Third Wave Foundation Scholarship Program is available to all full-time or part-time young women and transgender activists.

#### The Transgender Scholarship and Education Legacy Fund for Transgender Identified Students

[www.tself.org](http://www.tself.org)

Transgender Scholarship and Education Legacy Fund awards scholarships to transgender identified students in the helping and caring professions.

#### National Women's Studies Association

[www.nwsa.org](http://www.nwsa.org)

NWSA offers several annual scholarships and awards through its many communities. ▼

#### *A note on this issue of The Flagpole...*

Information on GLBT History Month and National Coming Out Day was collected from HRC and NGLTF. The photos of notable people, places, and events come from a variety of sources on the web, including The GLBT Historical Society.

