



PFLAG of Cape Cod

Parents, Families, Friends of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgenders

Jan. - Mar. 2012

NEWSLETTER

Brewster, MA

Court Strikes Down California Ban on Equal Marriage

[Excerpted from Adam Nagourney, Los Angeles]

On February 6, A federal appeals court panel threw out the voter-approved ban on same-sex marriage passed in 2008 and known as Proposition 8.

In a two-to-one decision, the panel of judges found that Prop 8 violates the equal protection rights of two same-sex couples who brought the suit.

The two judges stated explicitly that they were not deciding if there is a constitutional right for same-sex couples to marry, instead ruling that the disparate treatment of married couples and domestic partners since the passage of Proposition 8 violated the Constitution's Equal Protection Clause.

"Although the Constitution permits communities to enact most laws they believe to be desirable, it requires that there be at least a legitimate reason for the passage of a law that treats different classes of people differently," Judge Stephen R. Reinhardt wrote in the decision. "There was no such reason that Proposition 8 could have been enacted."

"All that Proposition 8 accomplished was to take away from same-sex couples the right to be granted marriage licenses and thus legally to use the designation *marriage*," the judge wrote, adding, "Proposition 8 serves no purpose, and has no effect, other than to lessen the status and human dignity of gay men and lesbians in California."

In his dissenting opinion, Judge N. Randy Smith wrote that the court was overreaching in nullifying a voter initiative.

Boston Gay Men's Chorus Will Perform April 28 in Hyannis



PFLAG of Cape Cod is thrilled to be working with Barnstable High School's Gay/Straight Alliance in presenting the Boston Gay Men's Chorus Spring Benefit Concert, "Thrive at CIGSYA!" The concert will take place Saturday, April 28, 7:00 pm, at the Barnstable High School Knight Auditorium.

The Chorus' innovative High School Outreach Program takes it into area schools in support of Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) programs and students. These outreach events allow the Chorus to confront fear, anger, and homophobia, replacing it with pride, respect, and tolerance. We are fortunate that CIGSYA was selected for one of the outreach benefit concerts this year.

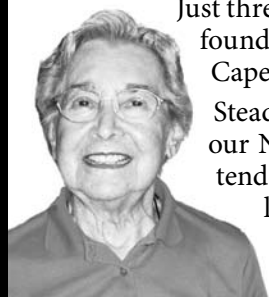
Help support this fundraiser with ticket purchases and spread the word. We would also be grateful for contributions to our intermission bake sale. [Email jim@pflagcapecod.org if you can help with this.]

Tickets cost \$25 for general admission, \$10 for students, and \$50 for premium tickets. The latter includes preferred seating and post-concert wine and cheese reception with Chorus members at CIGSYA House. To purchase tickets, visit www.cigsya.org or mail a check payable to CIGSYA, at CIGSYA, 56 Barnstable Road, Hyannis, MA 02601. Please note "BGMC Concert" and include the number and type of tickets, as well as your email address for confirmation that you are on the "will call" list. We look forward to seeing you there!

Doris Scherbak, one of the Founders of PFLAG of Cape Cod, died February 14.

Just three weeks ago, Doris traveled to New Jersey to celebrate her 87th birthday. Last Sunday, her caregiver found her in bed, awake but paralyzed. She had had a massive heart attack and stroke and died later at Cape Cod Hospital.

Steadfast in the cause of PFLAG, Doris shepherded our Chapter from its beginnings in 1989, through our National Charter application in 1995; she marched in Hyannis and Washington DC parades, attended National Conventions, held elective office and sat on the Board, was the first editor of our Newsletter, represented us at the Gale Fund, and was our historian and friend. We are blessed by her love and honored to count her among the leaders of Cape Cod's LGBT community. She taught us all how to be good allies. We miss her deeply, and will remember her with great affection.



NEWS FROM ALL AROUND

ANCHORAGE: Voters in Alaska's most-populous city will decide on April 3 to protect LGBT people from discrimination, while a conservative Christian group pulls out all stops to make sure that doesn't happen. Ballot Proposition 5 will ask voters if they want to add LGBT people to the city's equal rights code.

CHURCH: The Federated Church of Orleans recently voted to be "Open and Affirming."

COLOMBIA: The case of two gay priests who were believed to have been killed in a robbery last year is now being investigated as a double suicide. According to testimony heard in a Colombian court, Roman Catholic priests Rafael Reatiga, 35, and Richard Piffano, 37, paid a criminal gang to kill them after one discovered he had become infected with HIV. The suicide plot was uncovered when investigators traced numbers called by the priests in their last days to the alleged killers.

CORPORATE: J.C. Penney Co Inc said it fully backs its partnership with chat show host Ellen DeGeneres after a conservative group, One Million Moms, a division of the American Family Association, urged the retailer to reconsider hiring DeGeneres as a spokeswoman because she is a lesbian.

LIBYA: "Gays threaten the continuation of the human race," Libya's UN delegate has reportedly told the organisation's Human Rights Council.

MALTA: Following a second attack against two lesbians, Malta's prime minister stepped in to announce the creation of new hate crime laws that would encompass homophobia.

MINNESOTA: A local school board voted to replace a policy that was described by LGBT groups as a *de facto* gag order prohibiting the discussion of sexual orientation in schools. In a 5-1 vote, the board decided to swap the Sexual Orientation Curriculum Policy with one that reflects "respectful exchanges of views."

OKLAHOMA: Voters just elected their first openly gay state senator, current state representative Al McAffrey.

SPORTS: Australia's *Herald Sun* reports that Matt Cecchin decided to come out after his teenage son finished high school. Cecchin kept his sexual orientation to himself the past six years because he didn't want to tip his teenage son's "world upside down." "I would do whatever I could to protect my son; he's been so good to me about it. It hasn't made the world of difference to him." Cecchin says he came out to close friends and family after reading a book about

rugby player Ian Roberts's [Paul Freeman's 1997 biography, *Ian Roberts - Finding Out*]. "Like a lot of people, I thought to be gay you had to be feminine, you had to go to nightclubs and you had to be in the scene, and I was never into that. It wasn't until I read Ian's book that I started to tick a few boxes."

SPORTS: Houston Aeros forward Justin Fontaine was suspended by his team's NHL affiliate, the Minnesota Wild, after using the word "faggots" on Twitter during the Grammys.

U OF DENVER: As part of a transgender awareness program, a group of residential advisors (RAs) temporarily transformed a lobby bathroom in a student residence hall into a "gender neutral" facility.

VIRGINIA: The House approved legislation to allow faith-based adoption agencies to deny placements based on religious beliefs, including opposition to homosexuality. Lawmakers approved the measure 71-28 without debate. Equality Virginia Executive Director James Parrish said lawmakers were more concerned about protecting agencies' financial interests than children in the system. "What we're even more concerned about, there's nothing protecting LGBT children in the system from being placed in unfriendly homes."

Making Connections: A Day of Education and Inspiration for LGBTs & Friends

March 17 at St. David's Episcopal Church, 205 Old Main Street, South Yarmouth, 8:30am-2:30pm

Sponsored by the Cape Coalition of Welcoming Congregations

The conference will address congregational support of issues of aging, bullying prevention, and spiritual life of LGBTs

Featured speakers and topics:

"Widening our Welcome" with Rabbi Lev Baesh & Fr. Walter Cuenin

Panel on Aging

Harwich Junior Theatre Drama on Bullying Prevention

Interfaith Worship - Small groups

Vicki Cullen of Neighborhood Falmouth

Refreshments and a luncheon will be served. Cost is \$25. For information and registration contact Healthsigns Center 508-375-0700, or email starfish@massmed.org

PFLAG of Cape Cod at Regional Chapter Leader Conference

I recently represented our PFLAG chapter at a regional chapter leader training conference in Wellesley Hills. It was great to meet PFLAG leaders from throughout Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire and Vermont!

We learned a great deal from the keynote speaker, Michael LaSala, Director of the Masters of Social Work Program at Rutgers University.

Dr. LaSala led us through the REACH model of peer counseling. "REACH" stands for Reflection, Empathy, Assessment, Coping, and Hope. Often, we have a parent come to one of our support group meetings in distress. Since we are not trained therapists, it's sometimes difficult to know how to best help. The REACH model will be a wonderful tool for us to use in supporting others.

Melissa MacNish, a licensed mental health clinician who specializes in working with transgender and gender variant youth and young adults, was the other speaker.

PFLAG chapters, including ours, are greeting more and more transgender people and/or family members at our meetings, and we don't always know how to best support them. Melissa helped us increase our understanding of gender identity and the family process of acceptance of a transgender child.

Amy Mesirov

Save the Date!

Thursday, May 3 is the date for the GALE Fund's Spring Fling at the Sea View in Dennisport. Join us for food, festivities, and a live auction with new and unique items.

What Is the Day of Silence?

To demonstrate the silence that surrounds gay and lesbian issues in schools, LGBT students and their allies will not talk to friends, counselors, or teachers on April 20.

What's Happening with Marriage Equality?

MAINE: Advocates in Maine are working on a campaign to reverse the referendum that overturned the marriage equality law in 2009. The issue will be on the ballot in November.

WASHINGTON STATE: Governor Christine Gregoire recently signed the marriage equality bill into law, making Washington the seventh state in the country (plus D.C.!) to open marriage to committed same-sex couples. The law goes into effect on June 7; however, if marriage opponents gather enough signatures before then, the law will be suspended pending a referendum on the November ballot.

NEW JERSEY: Both the Senate and Assembly passed a bill to legalize same-sex marriage, but Governor Christie (R) has vowed to veto any bill that reaches his desk. Mr. Christie has 45 days to veto the bill. If he does, activists and Democrats will have nearly two years to muster the two-thirds majority needed to override it. The Governor wants a referendum this November, an idea the Democratic-controlled legislature strongly rejects. Referendum opponents, including many African-American leaders, have denounced the idea of a public vote as incompatible with civil rights.

MARYLAND: Governor Martin O'Malley said that a House of Delegates committee could advance the marriage equality bill this week, but "a couple" of votes are still needed on the floor. He said that winning Republican support was important to the bill's prospects in the chamber. The Bill has already passed in the Senate.

MINNESOTA: We face a bad marriage amendment in Minnesota, which is on the ballot in November 2012 and would bar marriage for same-sex couples.

NORTH CAROLINA: In May, 2012, we're facing an even worse amendment to the state's constitution that would ban marriage or other forms of relationship protection for same-sex couples.

Same-Sex marriage is now legal in Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Vermont, Washington, and Washington D.C.

Umoja Project Unites Black Faith Leaders Around LGBT Equality

[Excerpted from HuffingtonPost.com]

Last week in Los Angeles, a forum for African-American audiences was held at the Liberty Hill Foundation to discuss the topic of LGBT inclusion in the family and faith community. Many participants expressed that they are offended by the assumption that the black community is less tolerant than any other. These men, mostly straight-identified, also expressed their honest questions and concerns about welcoming African-American LGBT individuals and their families into their churches, mosques, and community. This is hard work, and much dialogue in safe spaces needs to take place, but it is happening. These men took the chance to attend this forum and were exposed to scripturally sound materials that address many of the roadblocks to recognizing LGBT people as needing to be included fully as members of our families and congregations -- just as they are.

Materials used during the forum were from the **Umoja Project** [*umoja* is Swahili for *unity*], sponsored by the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, Calif. The Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund and Horizons Foundation funded this effort. They include Bible study and film resources to begin the conversation on LGBT inclusion and marriage equality in the black church and community.

GAYLA Ball Is Great Success!

The 12th annual GAYLA Ball was a sold-out event at the Cape Codder Resort in Hyannis. As usual, it was a joyous celebration of the Cape Cod's LGBT Community and their allies.

This year's honoree was PFLAG's President, Amy Mesirow, in recognition of her many contributions to the LGBT community on the Cape. As well as revitalizing Brewster PFLAG, Amy organized the Falmouth PFLAG group and began Rainbow Crafters; she orchestrated last year's "Coming Out" Workshops, CIGSYA fundraisers, and much more.

Proceeds from the Ball's ticket sales and donations totaled \$6000: \$2000 for The LGBT Aging Project, \$2000 for First Parish Brewster, and \$2000 for CIGSYA.

Fifteen ministers from Cape Cod faith communities attended the Ball to demonstrate their interest in reaching out to the LGBT community. A highlight of the evening was a spontaneous, standing ovation for the Rev. Sally Norris who announced that her church, the Federated Church in Orleans, had recently voted unanimously to become an "Open and Affirming" Congregation.

Our Chapter is on Facebook!

We want to be your friend! Please "friend" us by searching "PFLAG Cape Cod" on Facebook.

Help Raise Money

For people who have a TDBank account: the Bank will make an annual contribution to the GALE Fund based on the average yearly balances in cooperating member accounts — checking, CD's, savings, etc.

Members' accounts are not affected in any way by this contribution. Ask to have your account balances included as part of the **GALE Fund Affinity Membership Program**. The code is A3170.

Join Rainbow Crafters

If you or someone you know is a knitting or crocheting maven, or wants to become one, please come to our next Rainbow Crafters meeting any 2nd Tues from 1:30 to 3:00 in the Falmouth Public Library, Bay Room.



We'll provide yarn, needles/hooks, patterns, etc. You provide the labor in return for good conversation, tasty snacks, and much appreciation!

We're making scarves, hats, gloves, mittens,

bags, purses, watches, beaded bracelets, stuffed animals, and more. Crafts are sold at craft fairs and PFLAG events. Proceeds fund educational events and student scholarships. For more information on our meetings or on purchasing crafts, please call Amy at 508-420-0696.

GLBT Group Meetings

PFLAG/Brewster, every 3rd Monday, 7pm, 1st Parish UU Church
PFLAG/Falmouth, every last Tues 6:30. UU Fellowship
PFLAG Crafters every 2nd Tues, 1:30-3, Falmouth Library
CIGSYA 56 Barnstable Rd, Hyannis, 4-7pm Wednesdays for ages 12-22. See Calendar at www.cigsya.org
Falmouth Gay Men's Group: www.FalmouthMensGroup.org
Lesbian Groups: www.meetup.com/CapeCodWomen
Gender Discussion, Age 18+ every Wed, 8pm CIGSYA House
Transgender Support: every 2nd Wednesday, 7pm, First Parish Winslow House, off Rte 124 at 6A, 508-292-0393

Dates to Remember

Feb 20, Mar 19, Apr 16: Brewster PFLAG, 7 pm, 1st Parish UU
Feb 28, Mar 27, Apr 24: Falmouth PFLAG 6:30, UU Falmouth
Mar 19, May 21: PFLAG of Cape Cod Board Meetings
Mar 17: Welcoming Congregation Conf., St Davids, Yarmouth
Apr 20: National Day of Silence
Apr 28: Boston Gay Men's Chorus (see article page 1)
May 3: GALE Fund Spring Fling, Sea View in Dennisport

PFLAG of Cape Cod

11 Anthony Drive, Orleans, MA 02653

MISSION: Promote the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons, their families and friends, through Support, to cope with an adverse society; Education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and Advocacy, to end discrimination and secure equal civil rights.

MEETINGS: 7 pm on the third Monday of each month at 1st Parish UU Church, Brewster (Rte 6A near Rte 124 intersection). Everyone is welcome. For information call 508-737-5832 or see our webpage.

MEMBERSHIP: Dues-paying members support the efforts of PFLAG both locally and nationally. Fifteen dollars goes to PFLAG National (includes subscription to Pflagpole), and the balance is used for our own Newsletter and the purchase of pamphlets, books, and videos. Our fiscal year begins Oct. 1.

OFFICERS & BOARD: President—Amy Mesirow, Treasurer—Joanne Hush, Scott Daniels, Joann Figueras, Paul Goddu, Joan Hubbard, Terry Norgeot, Rona Robinson, Jim Sharpe, Pem Schultz, Olivia White.

NEWSLETTER: Email info@pflagCapeCod.org

WEBSITE: www.pflagCapeCod.org

Membership Application PFLAG of Cape Cod

\$35 Family \$25 Individual \$15 Limited income
\$ _____ Additional donation for local chapter

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

I prefer to receive Newsletter by email ONLY. Yes No

Checks are payable to PFLAG of Cape Cod. Mail to Joanne Hush, 11 Anthony Drive, Orleans, MA 02653