

PFLAG Cape Cod, Brewster

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

Sept. - Dec. 2011

NEWSLETTER

Brewster, MA

9/20/11 DADT is Dead!

It ended with a simple Tweet from the White House at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday morning that said, "The repeal of the discriminatory law known as *Don't Ask, Don't Tell* finally and formally takes effect." DADT was dead.

While DADT is a victory, the LGBT community has a lot of work to do. The Employment Non-Discrimination Act will help all members of the LGBT community by providing protection from discrimination in employment based upon sexual orientation or gender identity.

Then there is the Defense of Marriage Act defining marriage as a legal union between one man and one woman. DOMA guarantees that same-sex relationships cannot be recognized by the federal government and prevents their taking advantage of over 1100 rights granted to married couples.

Bullied Teen Kills Self

A 14-year-old who had been bullied for years committed suicide outside his home near Buffalo, NY.

Although Jamey Rodemeyer recorded an "It Gets Better" video and his parents say they worked with his school to stop the bullying, he was still being harassed. "I always say how bullied I am, but no one listens," he wrote Sept. 9. "What do I have to do so people will listen to me?"

Buffalo News said that comments on a social media account for Jamey included one that said, "I wouldn't care if you died. No one would. So just do it. It would make everyone WAY more happier!" and another that said, "JAMIE IS STUPID, GAY, FAT ANND UGLY. HE MUST DIE!"

Transgender News

In a move to help stop workplace discrimination against transgender people, the Social Security Administration stopped issuing "gender no-match" letters to employers, alerting them when the gender marker on an employee's W-2 does not match his or her Social Security record.

In 2010, 711,488 letters were sent to employers, according to the National Center for Transgender Equality, which filed for a Freedom of Information Act request to obtain the numbers. Mara Keisling, NCTE's executive director, said that alerting transphobic employers of their workers' transgender status may put their jobs in jeopardy. Keisling said another protection needed for transgender people would be for the S.S.A. to drop its requirement for proof of gender-reassignment surgery before changing gender markers in the files.

Other news: "Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey" highlights disparities in income, health care, and emotional well-being between transgender blacks and other transgender people. African-American transgender people suffer the most discrimination of all LGBT groups.

More: The Transgender American Veterans Association reports there could be up to 300,000 transgender military veterans in the U.S. According to their 2008 survey, the vast majority of transgender vets are trans women (of those using VA hospitals, 13% identified on the FTM spectrum, while 82% identified somewhere on the MTF spectrum). Trans men were three times more likely than trans women to have been asked by an officer about their sexual orientation.

PFLAG Purchases Film "That's a Family!"

This entertaining documentary breaks new ground in helping elementary school children understand the different shapes of today's families. "That's a Family" presents interviews with several children who speak candidly about what it's like to grow up in a family with parents of different races or religions, divorced parents, a single parent, gay or lesbian parents, adoptive parents, or grandparents as guardians.

The DVD package includes a discussion and teaching guide with lesson plans, suggestions for facilitating classroom discussion at different grade levels, and additional resources.

PFLAG believes this film can help promote understanding of "differences" among young children and curtail bullying of students who may be gender non-conforming or have LGBT parents. We hope to introduce "That's a Family" in elementary schools and congregations in the coming months. Anyone interested in more information, or in viewing the film and teaching guide should contact amy@pflagCapeCod.org.

PFLAG Renewal Time

Our PFLAG Chapter follows PFLAG National's fiscal year, so now is the time we need to renew our local memberships for 2011-2012.

Please renew soon. If you receive Newsletters by email and don't have a renewal slip, you can renew online at pflagCapeCod.org. You can fill in a renewal blank, print, and mail with your check, or you can renew online and pay with Paypal.

FISCAL YEAR ENDS SEPT. 31 — DUES ARE DUE NOW

NEWS FROM ALL AROUND

AUSTRALIA: Australian passports will have three gender options – male, female and indeterminate – under new guidelines to remove discrimination against transgender and intersex people. Intersex people will be able to list their gender on passports as “X.” Transgender people will be able to pick whether they are male or female if their choice is supported by a doctor’s statement. Transgender people cannot pick “X.” Previously, gender was a choice of only male or female, and people were not allowed to change their gender on passports without having had a sex-change operation. The United States dropped the surgery prerequisite for transgender people’s passports last year.

BRITAIN: British prime minister David Cameron supports a ban on same-sex kisses on television outside late-night “adult” viewing hours.

CALIFORNIA: U.S. District Judge James Ware directed that videos of the Prop 8 trial be released to the public after Sept. 30. The stay allows the anti-marriage side to make an appeal. Ware said he found “no compelling reason” to deny public access to the video record of California’s historic gay marriage trial.

CALIFORNIA: Two cases brought by Lambda Legal illustrate that discrimination continues to frustrate and humiliate gay men and women seeking equal treatment in fertility services. Guadalupe Benitez was denied infertility treatment by a clinic in California because she is a lesbian; the California Supreme Court ruled that the doctors’ actions were illegal under the state’s antidiscrimination law.

FLORIDA: Two Florida lawmakers are pushing for domestic partnerships in their state, but opponents say even that level of recognition for same-sex relationships is illegal because of a ban voters added to the constitution.

GEORGIA: After viewing a video clip from a rehearsal of “Rocky Horror Show,” the mayor of Carrollton

called the show too risqué, overruled the center’s board, and canceled it. The director and cast plan to find private sponsors and produce the 1973 comedy musical on a different stage.

HARVARD: Lisa Forest was appointed first campus Director of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, Transgender and Queer (BLGTQ) Student Life.

MEDIA: Ricky Martin spoke with Jay Leno about the contradiction between his public persona as a straight sex symbol and his private gay life in the years before he came out. “I was the sex symbol and I needed to dance and I needed to make girls crazy and I couldn’t say that I was gay.” He said is very happy to be living an openly gay life today

NEW HAMPSHIRE: The House Judiciary voted to endorse a bill repealing the state’s gay marriage law and replace those marriages with civil unions. Marriage equality has been the law since January, 2010. The new bill would reverse this, allowing both straight and gay couples to form civil unions – unlike the first bill, which banned those as well. However, the bill also states that any individual, business, association, or school could choose not to recognize civil unions.

NEW YORK: The attorney general asked a state court to throw out a lawsuit challenging the gay marriage law signed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo in June. New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedoms and several other opponents of the law sued on July 25, claiming in part that the law should be nullified because the state Senate violated its own rules and the state’s open meetings law before the critical vote that led to its narrow passage.

NORTH CAROLINA: Despite polls showing that constituents don’t support writing the state ban on gay marriage and other gay unions into the state constitution, the legislature today approved the amendment. Residents will vote on the measure in May. Gov. Bev Purdue has no veto power in this case.

NORTH CAROLINA: Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II, president of the North Carolina chapter of the NAACP, released a statement asking state politicians to stand tall against the bill (see above). “A vote on the same sex marriage amendment has nothing to do with your personal opinion on same sex marriage but everything to do with whether or not you believe discrimination should be codified and legalized constitutionally,” Barber said.

NEW JERSEY: A judge will not dismiss charges against a former Rutgers University student accused of using a webcam to spy on his roommate’s intimate encounter with another man. The judge ruled that prosecutors provided adequate evidence for 19-year-old Dharun Ravi to be accused of invading his roommate’s privacy, biased intimidation, and trying to cover up the alleged crimes. The judge also ruled that the name of the other man in Clementi’s encounter should be released to Ravi’s defense lawyers.

TENNESSEE: Nashville paramedic Kevin Kennedy was suspended after posting anti-gay comments on a Nashville Facebook page. He wrote that homosexuality is a perversion and that two gay EMS workers should “crawl back into the closet,” according to *The Tennessean*. Kennedy has been with the Nashville Fire Department for 20 years and must attend anger management and diversity training classes at his own expense before he can be reinstated.

MILITARY: Nearly 70 years after expelling Melvin Dwork for being gay, the Navy changed his discharge from “undesirable” to “honorable” – marking what is believed to be the first case since the repeal of DADT the Pentagon has taken such a step on behalf of a World War II veteran. The Navy notified the 89-year-old former corpsman that he will be eligible for the benefits he had long been denied, including medical care and a military burial.

Who was J. D. Smith?

[Excerpted from Associated Press]

A man called J.D. Smith came into being when a gay student group in upstate New York needed a speaker to talk about DADT.

On Tuesday when DADT went away, so did J.D. Smith. J.D. Smith is Air Force First Lt. Joshua David Seefried, and he is telling.

"It's all about leading now," Seefried told The Associated Press as he prepared to come out to his superiors, put a picture of his Air Force pilot boyfriend on his office desk, and update his personal Facebook profile to reflect his sexual orientation. "Those are things I feel like I should do because I guess that is what a leader would do. **If we all stay in the closet and don't act brave, then the next generation won't have any progress.**"

Seefried co-founded **OutServe**, the underground network for gay military personnel.

OutServe has grown to 4,300 members in more than 40 chapters from Alaska to Iraq since its beginning in February 2010. Seefried and a tech-savvy civilian friend, Ty Walrod, saw its mission as two-fold: to ease the isolation of gay service members and to educate the public about the price of requiring them to serve in silence.

They set up a private Facebook group for gay personnel, starting with a handful of Seefried's friends. New members were allowed to nominate others – and the group grew.

The organization also became the voice of gays in the military after Defense Secretary Robert Gates appointed a working group to study the ramifications of a potential repeal.

OutServe sent an open letter to Gates stating that the working group's research would be flawed as long as it lacked a conduit to gays with boots on the ground.

"Many of us have served, and will continue to serve, openly in our units across all branches of the military," the letter said. "These are the very units that should be studied the most,

for they most clearly demonstrate the capacity for soldiers to serve . . . regardless of sexual orientation."

Eventually channels to the Pentagon were opened. The working group's report in November specifically acknowledged the gay network for supplying information that only its members could provide.

While the policy remained in effect, however, Seefried lived a double-life. At first, only Walrod, and later, Jonathan Hopkins, an Army captain who was discharged under the policy last year, participated in talks and meetings with military officials at the Pentagon. As J.D. Smith, Seefried exchanged emails with civilians involved in the working group study.

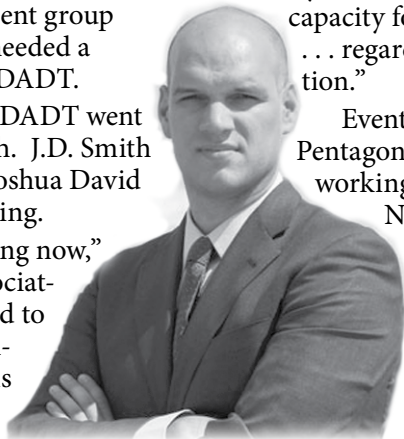
His two lives converged unexpectedly on the day Obama signed the repeal bill. To get into the ceremony, he underwent security clearance as Josh Seefried, "but they knew I was J.D. Smith."

The alias J.D. Smith was an amalgam of Seefried's real initials and his mother's maiden name that he hastily created when a gay student group at State University New York at Oswego invited him to speak about DADT in advance of Army Secretary John McHugh's scheduled commencement speech.

Thanks in part to **OutServe's** expanding membership, J.D. Smith quickly found himself in demand. Each interview provided an opportunity and risk. He declined the use of voice alteration equipment, but made TV appearances in shadow.

"I always had the policy of not changing my voice. It would add too much creepiness to it," he said. "I got extremely lucky last year that no one ever found out in my office. If my commander had found out and approached me about it, I don't know what would have happened."

Farewell and thanks to J.D. Smith; welcome to Joshua David Seefried.



Scholarship Winners

We had a wonderful time at our June PFLAG meeting as we welcomed this year's two scholarship winners and their families. It was heartening to witness the love and support these young women receive from their families.

Lily Olin (left) and Sammie Scovill each won a \$2000 scholarship to be distributed after completion of their first semester in college. Lily is attending Bennington, and Sammie is at Smith College.



Craft Sale at Alternative Gift Market

Do you know about the Alternative Gift Market which takes place in Falmouth every November? Have you ever been there? You won't want to miss it this year because PFLAG will be represented for the first time! We'll be selling hand knit and crocheted hats, scarves, mittens, stuffed animals, dog sweaters, and more!

The Alternative Gift Market is a community fair where you can purchase non-traditional gifts. The fair is sponsored by the UU Fellowship of Falmouth, St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, Falmouth Jewish Congregation, Church of the Messiah, and First Congregational Church of Falmouth. Last year, the Market raised almost \$46,000 for local and global charities.

This year, the Alternative Gift Market will be held at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church on Main Street in Falmouth, Saturday, November 12, 10:00 – 3:00 and Sunday from 11-3.

We hope to see you there! For more information, email amy@pflagCapeCod.org.

PFLAG Meetings in Falmouth

Meetings are on the last Tuesday of each month at 6:30 at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Falmouth, 840 Sandwich Road, East Falmouth. This is not a separate chapter, but an additional meeting place of PFLAG Cape Cod.

“Gen Silent” Showing & Discussion

Saturday, October 22 10:am – 12 noon

Church of the Holy Spirit, 204 Monument Rd, Orleans

Discussion led by Barrie Atkin, Executive Producer

Gen Silent is a new LGBT documentary from award-winning director and filmmaker Stu Maddux. Six senior LGBT adults put a face on what experts in the film call an epidemic: older LGBT adults so afraid of discrimination and bullying in long-term/health care that many go back into the closet because of feelings of distrust and dangerous isolation. Many who fought for equality are dying prematurely because they don't ask for help and are estranged from their families.

Sponsored by The Cape Cod Coalition of Welcoming Congregations. For more information call Linda Bailey-Davies at 508-255-6832

2nd Annual Crock-Pot-a-Thon

Join the GALE Fund for its second Crock Pot-a-Thon, Sunday Nov. 6, 5:00 to 7:30 pm, Cotuit Center for the Arts, 4404 Route 28, Cotuit. Enjoy delicious foods, wine, and non-alcoholic beverages. View the gallery exhibit, tour the Campus, and hear an update on GALE Fund news. Bring a pot of your favorite slow cooker recipe or other food item to share. Free admission but donations welcome. RSVP preferred dish to amy@pflagCapeCod.org.

Our Chapter is on Facebook!

We want to be your friend! Please “friend” us by searching “Pflag Cape Cod” on Facebook.

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, Tuesday, Apr. 12 (or 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 Church

PFLAG/Falmouth, every last Tues 6:30. UU Fellowship

CIGSYA 56 Barnstable Rd, Hyannis, 4-7pm Wednesdays for ages 12-22. See Calendar at www.cigsya.org

Gay Men's Group information: email capecodtrade@aol.com

Lesbian Groups: www.meetup.com/CapeCodWomen

Gender Discussion, Age 18+ every Wed, 8pm CIGSYA House

Rainbow Crafters every 2nd Tues, 1:30-3, Falmouth Library

Transgender Support: every 2nd Wednesday, 7pm, First Parish Winslow House, off Rte 124 at 6A, 508-292-0393

Dates to Remember

Sep 19, Oct 17, Nov 21: Brewster PFLAG, 7 pm, 1st Parish Ch.

Sep 27, Oct 25, Nov 29: Falmouth PFLAG 6:30, UU Falmouth

Oct. 22: **Gen Silent** film and discussion (see article left)

Nov 6: Crock-Pot-a-Thon (see article left)

Nov 12 - 13: Alternative Gift Market (see article page 1)

PFLAG of Cape Cod, Brewster

PO Box 241 Harwich Port, MA 02646

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 508-398-6471 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: Coordinator-Randy Lewis-Kendell; Treasurer-Joanne Hush; Corresponding Sec'y-Pem Schultz; Publicity, Crafters, Falmouth Group-Amy Mesirow; Newsletter & Website-Joann Figueras; Fundraising-Paul Goddu; Rona Robinson.

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/Brewster. Mail to Joanne Hush,
11 Anthony Drive, Orleans, MA 02653

To receive Newsletter by email instead of print copy, email joann@pflagCapeCod.org