



# PFLAG of Cape Cod, Brewster

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

**April - June 2007**

**NEWSLETTER**

**Brewster, MA**

## June 14 Vote Is Critical!

The anti-gay constitutional amendment, if approved, will amend the Massachusetts Constitution to define marriage as a union between a man and a woman. This amendment would take away the right of same-sex couples to marry after January 1, 2009. Not only would it counter the long-standing tradition of expanding rights with amendments to the Constitution, but it would put fundamental rights to the popular vote.

The Massachusetts and US Constitutions established republics with guaranteed constitutional protections that ensure minority rights are not subjected to majority rule. This petition amendment attempts to undermine that principle by putting gay and lesbian rights on the ballot.

On January 2, 2007, the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention voted to advance this amendment. It needs only 25% of the legislature in the June 14th Constitutional Convention to place it on the ballot in 2008.

Please take a moment to contact your state senator and representative to tell them you oppose taking away fundamental rights through the ballot initiative process. The constitutional rights of a law-abiding minority should not be left up to a popular vote of the majority. This is the basic guarantee of our constitutional democracy.

If we cannot get enough votes to defeat this proposed amendment on June 14, prepare for more than two years of craziness; as a friend just said, "Every nut in the country will be here to campaign for the amendment."

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## (Rethinking) Gender

... is the title of an important article in the May 21 issue of *Newsweek*. The article is a positive and sensitive exploration of the many facets of transgender issues, and it's in a mainstream publication!

Author Debra Rosenberg describes medical and psychological theories about the possible causes of Gender Identity Disorder, and describes a variety of case histories.

Of special interest is this quote from the International Olympic Committee: "We found there is no scientifically sound lab-based technique that can differentiate between man and woman." Text of the article is available on our website, [pflagcapecod.org](http://pflagcapecod.org), and a copy is in our library.

## \$4500 in Scholarships to be Awarded June 18

Join us on June 18 to recognize the two young men who will be awarded this year's PFLAG Cape Cod scholarships. The winners and their families will be with us at our regular meeting in the Fellowship Room of First Parish UU Church, Brewster, at 7pm. We look forward to meeting them and hearing about their plans at this informal meeting with refreshments.

Originally planned for this year's scholarship was a single \$3000 scholarship, but the offer was extended to allow an additional \$1500 to support a second very worthy applicant. The scholarships are given by PFLAG/Brewster in cooperation with PFLAG/Falmouth.

Falmouth PFLAG raises scholarship money with 'begging letters' to businesses and individuals, and our Brewster chapter has two fundraising concerts—PAVIA and the Providence Gay Men's Chorus. This year we were pleasantly surprised by an additional, large contribution from the estate of our late treasurer, Martha Berndt, and from memorial contributions for John Schultz.

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## "PAVIA Cabaret" Aids Scholarship

The third annual PAVIA Cabaret Concert in April was a success, attended by over 60 people. Joanne Hush and crew transformed the Fellowship Room at First Parish into an intimate setting with small tables, soft lighting, tasteful decorations, and delicious refreshments.

In addition to admission fees, we raised money with a raffle. Prizes were a weekend at Lands End Inn in Provincetown, gift certificate and PAVIA CD's from The Cranberry Goose Gift Shop, copies of Betsy Cochran's book *Flotsam and Jetsam*, gift certificates from Ay! Caramba and the Chocolate Sparrow, and a photograph by Rona Robinson. Thanks also to PAVIA for her performance and being a faithful friend of PFLAG.

One disappointing note is that our announcement of a matching grant from Walmart did not materialize. Apparently the Falmouth store manager said 'yes,' but his higher-ups said 'no—they do not support controversial organizations.' We apologize for inadvertently giving misleading information

# NEWS FROM ALL AROUND

**CALIFORNIA:** New regulations will allow gay and lesbian prisoners to have overnight visits with their partners.

**CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND:** The mayor and her partner are both transsexual, and no one cares.

**JERUSALEM:** Gay pride organizers in Jerusalem were given conditional approval to hold a parade on June 21, but an ultra-Orthodox sect that rioted last year warns that if a parade is permitted this year it will again take to the streets.

**LATVIA:** A coalition of anti-gay groups has been trying to stop a June Pride parade in the capital city of Riga. Protesters include neo-Nazis, ultra-nationalists, and conservative religious leaders.

**MARYLAND:** A United Methodist minister who has changed gender since being chosen to lead a congregation in Baltimore will be reappointed there, church officials announced at a regional convocation. Since then, a group of United Methodist pastors in the Baltimore area has asked a church court to review the reappointment.

**MOSCOW, RUSSIA:** For the second year in a row, Moscow refused to issue permission for a GLBT Pride event. To protest this decision, activists gathered outside City Hall to present a letter signed by dozens of European MPs supporting the right to peaceful assembly. Moscow police simultaneously harassed and arrested peaceful demonstrators while Orthodox Christian and Neo-Nazi groups threw eggs, punched, and beat up demonstrators.

**NEW JERSEY:** When Nancy Wadington attended Holmdel High School, she endured nearly three years of verbal and physical harassment from other students because she is a lesbian. Wadington and her mother sought help from the school administration, which failed to take effective measures to protect her. Lambda Legal filed a lawsuit against the school district to enforce the law protecting students from discrimination and abuse. The school filed a separate lawsuit against the students who harassed Wadington, attempting to shift the blame to the students it failed to discipline. Fortunately, a judge saw through this tactic and dismissed the second lawsuit, clearing the path to Wadington's day in court. Stay tuned.

**NEW HAMPSHIRE:** Gov. John Lynch signed a bill establishing Civil Unions. Couples who enter civil unions will have the same rights, responsibilities, and obligations as married couples. Same-sex unions from other states will be recognized if they are legal in the state where they were performed.

**NEW YORK CITY:** After the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) tried to deny sex reassignment surgery to Mariah L., a transgender woman, a judge called its logic "irrational and unreasonable" and ordered the

agency to provide the service. Mariah has been in the care of ACS since she was 10 years old. When she was 18, she was diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder, and multiple experts determined that sex reassignment surgery was necessary for her. ACS argued that the surgery was "controversial, risky, and experimental." Lambda Legal submitted a friend-of-the-court brief arguing against this logic, and the New York Appellate Court agreed saying ACS's decision was "based on archaic law and out-of-date medical diagnosis and technologies."

**NORTH CAROLINA:** The House of Representatives voted 73 to 46 in favor of the School Violence Prevention Act, which would require public schools to adopt policies prohibiting bullying or harassing behavior, including bullying and harassment motivated by sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. The measure now moves to the North Carolina Senate. This House vote marks the first time in state history that a major pro-GLBT equality bill has passed either the House or the Senate.

**OHIO:** Gov. Ted Strickland signed an executive order that prohibits discrimination against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender state employees. The order is effective now.

**PAKISTAN:** Thirty-one year-old Shumail Raj who has been a transgender man for 16 years and 26-year old Shahzina Tariq were married according to Muslim law in September 2006. In May 2007, Shahzina's father testified in court that Shumail was not a man. The judge ordered a medical examination, which showed that Shumail had undergone gender reassignment surgery to remove his uterus and breasts. On May 22, the Lahore High Court found the couple guilty of perjury and fined each of them 10,000 rupees and sentenced them to 3 years in prison. The court's reasoning was that Shumail was a woman who lied about being a man, and the couple lied about the legality of their marriage since two women in Pakistan cannot marry. Shumail and Shahzina are now serving their sentence in two separate women's prisons in two different cities.

**USA:** A new national poll conducted by Gallup shows overwhelming support by the American people for passage of federal anti-hate crimes. The poll, conducted on May 10-13, shows that 68 percent of all Americans believe that federal hate crime laws should be expanded to include "sexual orientation, gender and gender identity." Even more impressive is that this support cuts across partisan, ideological, and religious lines with a majority of each of those demographic groups supporting the legislation.

**VERMONT:** Gov. Jim Douglas signed into law a bill extending existing anti-discrimination laws to prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity in employment, public accommodations, housing, insurance, and credit services.

## **Exxon Mobil Failing GLBT Employees**

[Excerpted from HRC.org]

Exxon Mobil shareholders voted with record support for a resolution to add “sexual orientation” to the company’s written equal employment opportunity policy. The percentage of shares voted in favor of the proposal has grown each of the last eight years, with 37.8 percent of shares voting in favor of the policy this year, an increase from 34.6 percent in 2005. The tally represents about 1.78 billion total shares voted in favor of the proposal.

Exxon Mobil is alone as the only Fortune 50 company that refuses to write sexual orientation protections into its primary non-discrimination policy. A total of 435—nearly 90 percent—of Fortune 500 companies include sexual orientation in their non-discrimination policies, and 124—or 25 percent—include gender identity. Exxon Mobil’s competitors, BP Corp., Chevron Corp., Dow Chemical and DuPont all have non-discrimination statements inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity. Moreover, Exxon Mobil does not provide domestic partner health insurance to all of its employees.

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## **ABC Airs Isaiah Washington Gay Public Service Announcement**

[365Gay.com, 5/24/07]

A public service announcement aimed at combating homophobia was taped by Isaiah Washington, a star of the TV show, “Grey’s Anatomy.”

The public service announcement (PSA) is the result of a January meeting with GLAAD and GLSEN following a public outcry over Washington’s use of the word “faggot” during a heated exchange with fellow actor T.R. Knight and used again at the Golden Globe Awards. [The furor led to Knight outing himself.]

Washington issued a public apology and went into a residential treatment facility to deal with anger management and homophobia.

The PSA will debut in two back-to-back episodes of “Grey’s Anatomy” on ABC; here is the text:

“Words have power. The power to express love, happiness and joy. They also have the power to heal. When you use words that demean a person because of their sexual orientation, race, or gender, you send a message of hate. A very powerful message. But we all have the power to demand better from one another and from ourselves. We have the power to heal and change the world by the words we use.”

## **British Gays Integrate Military Successfully**

[Reprinted from *New York Times*, 5/27/07]

LONDON -- The officer, a squadron leader in the Royal Air Force, felt he had no choice. So he stood up in front of his squad of 30 to 40 people.

"I said, 'Right, I've got something to tell you,' " he said. " 'I believe that for us to be able to work closely together and have faith in each other, we have to be honest and open and frank. And it has to be a two-way process, and it starts with me baring my soul. You may have heard some rumors, and yes, I have a long-term partner who is a he, not a she.' "

Far from causing problems, he said, he found that coming out to his troops actually increased the unit's strength and cohesion. He had felt uneasy keeping the secret "that their boss was a poof," as he put it, from people he worked with so closely.

Since the British military began allowing gays to serve in the armed forces in 2000, none of its fears—about harassment, discord, blackmail, bullying, or an erosion of unit cohesion or military effectiveness—has come to pass, according to the Ministry of Defense, current and former members of the services, and academics specializing in the military.

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## **Catholic Support for GLBT's**

Catholic parents who love and affirm their lesbian daughters and gay sons are “Fortunate Families.” They have a website offering support and resources and a place to share their stories with others.

Grounded in Catholic tradition, Fortunate Families ministers primarily to Catholic parents, but welcomes families of all faiths. “When parents explore and value their personal stories, they are empowered to share that story with their family circle, their faith community and the larger society.”

[www.fortunatefamilies.com](http://www.fortunatefamilies.com)

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## **"What is Gender?"**

A group of young people from the CIGSYA program have been asking themselves and others about gender, and they started a bi-monthly conversational group to explore the issue.

Meetings are the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays from 8 to 9pm and are open to all ages. CIGSYA House, 56 Barnstable Road Hyannis. For more information, call 508-778-7744 or email [cigsyahouse@aol.com](mailto:cigsyahouse@aol.com)

## Short History of PFLAG

Following the 1969 Stonewall riots in New York, a group of activists called the Christopher Street Liberation Day Committee organized the first Pride Parade. The next year, thousands of people marched to commemorate the events at Stonewall, and the idea of Gay Pride Parades was born.

In 1972, Jeanne Manford marched with her son in New York's Gay Pride Parade. Enraged that her son had been beaten at a gay rights protest while police stood by and watched two months earlier, she carried a sign that said, "Parents of Gays: Unite in Support of Our Children."

The response was overwhelming, and in 1973 the first meeting of what became PFLAG was held at the Metropolitan Duane Methodist Church in New York City.

PFLAG has grown to include more than 500 chapters nationwide, with over 200,000 members, supporters, and affiliates, representing the largest chapter network in the struggle for GLBT rights.

## Greeting Cards for GLB's

Finally, we have a place to purchase GLB greeting cards for all occasions. The webstore Open Closet offers a family-friendly selection of cards for many occasions whether it's "Congratulations" on an adoption by two gay parents or a "Happy Birthday" card from a child's two Mommies or Daddies. From Grandma in Iowa, to gay families in West Hollywood, the selection offers everyone the opportunity to share their best wishes with loved ones. [Ed. Note: Unfortunately I didn't see any trans cards on the site, but a few phone calls would probably rectify that.] [www.opencloset.org](http://www.opencloset.org) or 877-646-9256

## Local PFLAG News

[Pem Schultz]

PFLAG/Brewster participated in the March Freshman Class Diversity Day in Chatham. A former Chatham student, a current Harwich Tech student, and a transgender adult joined me in the program. The response was very positive, and the school seems to have become more open to accepting differences.

In April, we presented a booth at Harwich HS Diversity Health Fair, along with several other GLBT Cape groups. Word has it that Harwich HS may start a GSA group. Harwich Tech already has a large GSA, led by our own Anna Green, just back from Hawaii.

A new "No Place for Hate" youth group, started in Harwich by fourteen-year-old Claire Bangert, has asked for PFLAG's assistance, which we will give.

## GLBT Group Meetings

**PFLAG/Brewster** every third Monday, 7pm, 1<sup>st</sup> Parish CIGSYA 56 Barnstable Rd, Hyannis, 7pm Wed & Thur Family-Parent Meetings, 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday, CIGSYA House

**Lesbian Connections:** 1<sup>st</sup> Friday Potluck, 6:30pm; First Parish, Winslow House; 508-430-2653

**Straight Spouse Group:** for information call 896-2620

**Transgender Support:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday 7-9pm, 1<sup>st</sup> Parish Barn top floor, on Harwich Rd, 508-362-4435

## Dates to Remember

**Jun 18, Jul 16, Aug 20: Brewster PFLAG, 7 pm**

**Jun 13, Jul 11, Aug 8: Transgender Suppt.** 362-4435

**Aug 25: Gay Pride Festival, Club 477, Willow St Hyannis**

**Oct 10-14: National PFLAG Conference, McLean, Virginia**

[Note: Early registration rates are extended through June.]

## PFLAG/Cape Cod, Brewster

PO Box 1167 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; everyone is welcome. For information call 508-398-6471.

**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:** Coordinator, Randy Lewis-Kendell; Treasurer, Joanne Hush; Corresponding Sec'y, Pem Schultz; Publicity, Joanne Hush & Pem Schultz; Newsletter, Joann Figueras & Doris Scherbak; Library, Randy Lewis-Kendell.

**NEWSLETTER:** Email [joann@pflagcapecod.org](mailto:joann@pflagcapecod.org).

**WEBPAGE:** [www.pflagcapecod.org](http://www.pflagcapecod.org)

## Membership Application PFLAG/Brewster

\_\_\_\$35 Family \_\_\_\$25 Individual \_\_\_\$15 Limited income

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Additional donation for local chapter

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Checks are payable to PFLAG/Brewster. Mail to Joanne Hush, 200 Breakwater Rd, Brewster, MA 02631