



# PFLAG of Cape Cod, Brewster

Parents, Families, Friends of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, and Transgenderers

August 2004

NEWSLETTER

Brewster, MA

## 2004 Voter Registration Challenge

This year it is more important than ever that our friends and families exercise their right to vote. To this end, PFLAG offers a challenge: if each of our 250,000 members and supporters educate and register just four people, we can have ONE MILLION people signed up to vote this November! Please let's do our share.

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## Alabama DA Seeks Death Penalty

An Alabama prosecutor will seek the death penalty for three suspects accused in the grisly murder of Scottie Weaver, an 18-year-old gay man, whose mutilated and badly burned body was discovered on July 22, four days after being attacked in his home.

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## Court Invalidates CA Marriages

On August 12, the California Supreme Court ruled that San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom did not have the authority to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples, and declared the licenses issued to thousands of same-sex couples invalid.

The ruling does not address whether same-sex couples must be allowed to marry under the California Constitution. That issue is being litigated in a separate lawsuit brought by the National Center for Lesbian Rights, Lambda Legal and the ACLU. Legal briefs are being filed in that lawsuit in the next few weeks, and the case is expected to move quickly in state court.

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## GALE Fund Halloween Party and Fund Raiser

Come to a fundraiser/party with DJ, dancing, games, and prizes. Friday, October 29 at the Harbor Point restaurant off Rte. 6A in Cummaquid, 7:00 pm to midnight. Ticket price is \$45 per person in advance, \$50 at the door, or \$25 per person for those wishing to volunteer for party set-up/tear down (minimum age 21) or cookie baking, etc.

7:00 - 8:15 Fruit & Cheese

8:00 - 8:30 Hand-passed hors d'oeuvres

8:30 - 10:30 Heavy pasta station

10:30 - 12:00 Light dessert table

Coffee and tea station throughout

## PFLAG Condemns Republican Party Platform

[PFLAG Alert 8/26/04 and [lambdalegal.org](http://lambdalegal.org)]

**PFLAG denounces the approved Republican party platform, which bans marriage equality and opposes recognition of all civil unions.** By calling for a constitutional amendment to deny federal and state rights to millions of American families, the Republicans again prove they are not the "big tent" party of "compassionate conservatives."

"They're not just trying to prevent civil marriage equality," said Log Cabin Republicans Exec. Director Patrick Guerriero. "They want to marginalize part of the American family by barring not just marriage but also civil unions, domestic partnerships and indeed any benefits or protections for gay and lesbian families."

"The vicious, mean-spirited language adopted by the Platform Committee is a slap in the face to fair-minded Republicans all across our nation," said Guerriero.

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## Ashcroft Asks for Suit to be Dismissed

[[365gay.com](http://365gay.com) 8/27/04]

Attorney General John Ashcroft's Justice Dept. asked a Federal judge to dismiss a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the Defense of Marriage Act. The law, enacted by Congress in 1996 and signed by President Clinton, defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman and allows states to refuse to recognize gay marriages from other states. Friday's action is the federal government's first direct legal defense of DOMA.

The suit is one of two filed in Federal court in Florida by Ellis Rubin, who is representing two same-sex couples.

One suit was filed on behalf of a Tampa Bay lesbian couple who married in Canada but whose marriage is not recognized in the US. Rev. Phyllis E. Hunt and her spouse were married last month in Toronto. They have been together over 11 years.

The other suit also involves an MCC pastor, the Rev. Nancy Wilson, and her spouse, a family marriage counselor. They have been together for 27 years and were married July 2 in Massachusetts.

The issue of same-sex marriages has become a theme of the presidential race, with President Bush calling for a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage, which Democratic challenger John Kerry opposes.

## More Iranians Change Their Sex

Nazila Fathi, *New York Times* 8/2/04]

After decades of repression, the Islamic government is recognizing that some people want to change their sex and is allowing them to have operations and obtain new birth certificates.

Before the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iranians with the inclination, means, and connections could obtain the necessary medical treatment and new identity documents. The new religious government, however, classed transsexuals and transvestites with gays and lesbians, who were condemned by Islam and faced the punishment of lashing under Iran's penal code.

Iran's Muslim clerics, who dominate the judiciary, are now considerably better informed about transsexuality. Some clerics even recommend sex-change operations to those who are troubled about their gender. The issue was discussed at a June conference in Tehran that drew officials from other Persian Gulf countries. One cleric, Muhammad Mehdi Kariminia, is writing his thesis on transsexuality at the religious seminary of Qum.

To obtain legal permission for sex-change operations and new birth certificates, applicants must provide medical proof of gender-identity disorder. The process can take years and costs from 4 to 12 thousand dollars, but many have done it.

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## Transgender Health

The National Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health, in an effort to address health disparities among the transgender population, has compiled "An Overview of U.S. Trans Health Priorities," based on an analysis of available research on U.S. transgender populations, not all of which has been published in journals.

The goal is to educate our own communities about issues impacting our trans brothers and sisters and to save lives of probably one of the most medically underserved populations.

This document found the top priorities to be: 1) violence and murder prevention; 2) HIV/AIDS and other STD prevention and treatment; 3) substance abuse prevention and treatment; 4) depression, suicidal ideation and suicide prevention; 5) lack of health insurance and underinsurance; 6) lack of health insurance coverage for trans health services; 7) Gender Identity Disorder (GID) as the principal diagnostic means determining access to trans health services; 8) lack of FDA approval for transgender hormonal therapy; 9) widespread injection silicone use, especially among MTF's of color; 10) the continuing misclassification of sex reassignment surgery as "experimental" by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMMS); 11) lack of training in U.S. medical schools for trans health service delivery and working with transgender patients. [[www.lgbthealth.net/TransHealthPriorities.pdf](http://www.lgbthealth.net/TransHealthPriorities.pdf)]

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## Trans Hate Crime Inclusion

Connecticut joined seven other states that protect transgender people in hate crime laws when Republican Gov. John Rowland signed the legislation in May.

Connecticut's hate crime law already enhances the penalties for crimes committed against people or their property due to ethnicity, religion, real or perceived race, and sexual orientation. Sexual orientation was added to the law in 1987.

The new provision to Connecticut's hate crimes law goes into effect Oct. 1. Other states that include transgender people in their hate crimes statutes include California, Hawaii, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and Vermont.

## Bending the Mold: An Action Kit for Transgender Youth

[Lambda Legal Transgender Issues Publications 06/03/2004]

Thanks to the hard work of many courageous transgender people and their allies, things are changing when it comes to transgender youth. Many young people are coming out as transgender, genderqueer or intersex, showing their families and communities that a person's gender is not as simple as checking one of two boxes. At the same time, violence against transgender or gender-nonconforming people is on the rise and concern for personal safety is at an all-time high. In the face of these challenges, transgender youth have rights.

### Taking action

1. Form a gay-straight alliance (GSA). As long as your school accepts public funds and lets other nonacademic clubs meet, you have the right to form a GSA
2. Develop a public education campaign. Train teachers about trans issues. Start a letter-writing campaign for gender-neutral bathrooms. Hang posters around school.
3. Talk to friends about transgender issues. Change society one mind at a time. The more people who understand gender difference, the better our schools and world will be.

### Preventing Violence

You have the right to be open and honest about your gender identity at school without being teased, harassed or subjected to violence. Unfortunately, statistics show that this right is too often violated. Some schools blame the victim for bringing on negative attention by acting differently. But all students are not the same. You have the right to fight for the free expression of gender differences at your school and not be discriminated against for it.

### Making Bathrooms & Locker Rooms Accessible

If you've faced the challenge and outrage of others who assume you're in the wrong restroom, you may think twice about putting yourself in the same position again. Some transgender people avoid public restrooms altogether, which can lead to health risks if physical needs are constantly ignored. Also, negotiating the locker room can be difficult when you have to change clothes at school. Many colleges and universities have already taken the lead in offering multi-stall gender-neutral bathroom and shower areas.

### Express Yourself, Dress Yourself

While schools can set policy about appropriate dress, you should be able to dress according to your gender identity. Too often students are subjected to dress codes that conflict with their gender identity. This kind of rigid enforcement has resulted in successful lawsuits against schools, school administrators, and sometimes the school district. You should be able to dress comfortably (which may be a combination of "male" and "female" clothing), without reprisal from school officials. Contact Lambda Legal if you have problems or questions.

The "Action Kit for Transgender Youth" is available at [www.lambdalegal.org/cgi-bin/iowa/documents/record?record=1504](http://www.lambdalegal.org/cgi-bin/iowa/documents/record?record=1504)

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## Freedom to Marry Coalition March

Join in, bring your friends, come to the Harwich Cranberry Festival Sept. 19, 12:30 am, to walk or ride with a contingent from the Freedom to Marry Coalition. Their motto for the march is "No Discrimination in the Constitution."

The parade will begin and end at the Junior HS. For more information about where to meet, call Nancy at 508-398-5272.

## Ancient Homosexual Marriage

After a 12-year search of Catholic and Orthodox church archives, Yale history professor John Boswell has discovered that a type of Christian homosexual "marriage" existed as late as the 18th century.

Boswell's book, *The Marriage of Likeness: Same Sex Unions in Pre-Modern Europe*, lists in detail some same sex union ceremonies found in ancient church liturgical documents. One Greek 13th century "Order for Solemnisation of Same Sex Union," invokes St Serge and St Bacchus, calls on God to "vouchsafe unto these thy servants [N and N] grace to love one another and to abide unhated and not a cause of scandal all the days of their lives, with the help of the Holy Mother of God and all thy saints." The ceremony concludes, "And they shall kiss the Holy Gospel and each other, and it shall be concluded."

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## 'Gay' Marriage Good for Budget

[AJ Burton, *Gay Financial Network* 6/23/04]

A new study by the Congressional Budget Office concludes that allowing same-sex couples to marry would have a positive impact on the federal budget, with a net savings of nearly \$1 billion per year.

Using Census 2000 data, the CBO found that allowing same-sex couples to marry would boost federal income tax revenues by \$400 million per year through the end of this decade.

Social security payments would rise over time, as would spending on spousal health insurance benefits for federal workers. Other expenditure items would be much lower, however, since spending on Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income would fall.

Last month a study at the UCLA School of Law found that the state of California would save as much as \$25 million by allowing same-sex couples to marry. The bulk of the savings, would come from a decrease in demand for social services.

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## Judge Backs Equal Marriage

[*New York Times* 8/4/04]

Gay couples can marry under Washington law. A judge ruled that there was no evidence that same-sex marriages threatened children in nontraditional families.

Ruling in favor of a challenge to the law restricting marriage to one man and one woman, the judge wrote that barring same-sex marriages served no "state interest" and violated the constitutional right of gay couples to due process.

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## Keeping a Straight Face

"Gov. McGreevey's wife stands by her man," read the headlines after the New Jersey governor outed himself as a gay American. At the press conference, his wife offered a small, non-committal smile as her husband of nearly four years made his announcement. McGreevey also said that he had had an affair with a man, and that he would step down as governor.

Amity Buxton, author of *The Other Side of the Closet*, says the situation is more common than anyone thinks. Buxton is the executive director of the Straight Spouse Network ([www.straightspouse.net](http://www.straightspouse.net)), which has helped about 7,000 people. However, Buxton estimates that up to 2 million people "have been, are, or will be in this situation." The organization was an offshoot of PFLAG, until Buxton took it over.

A local Straight Spouse support group, also an offshoot of PFLAG, has met in Brewster for several years. They now meet on an 'as needed' basis; for information call 896-9060.

## Missouri May Be Harbinger

[*New York Times* 8/4/04]

Missouri voters' overwhelming decision to bar gay marriage with a constitutional amendment has sent a resounding message around the country.

Missouri is the first in a wave of states that have chosen to hold elections on the question since Massachusetts' highest court ruled that gay marriage was not prohibited under that state's Constitution. State law in Missouri and in more than 30 other states already bars same-sex marriages, but organizers said they feared situations like the one in Massachusetts and decided that amendments to their state constitutions were the only sure way to ward off a similar fate.

With at least nine other states expected to vote on similar amendments this fall, including four swing states in the presidential race, leaders on each side of the issue viewed Missouri's 70 percent approval of the amendment as a glimpse of what might lie ahead.

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## "Activist" Judges

[[lambdlegal.org](http://lambdlegal.org)]

"Some activist judges and local officials have made an aggressive attempt to redefine marriage."

President George W. Bush, calling for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution in a speech at the White House, referred to "activist courts" or "activist judges" three times in two minutes (followed by a press conference where the White House press secretary used the terms 21 times).

They are lying.

Judges aren't "activists" just because they don't pursue the right wing's antigay agenda. The whole idea of "activist judges" is a scare tactic created by right-wing extremists who don't want our Constitution to protect gay Americans -- and who don't want judges to do their job and make sure everyone has equal rights.

Here's the truth: There are some pretty conservative judges behind the recent gay rights court victories that President Bush and his extreme right-wing supporters are railing against.

The Massachusetts high court ruling allowing same-sex couples to marry? Six of the seven judges on that court were appointed by Republicans.

The landmark U.S. Supreme Court case last year that struck down an antigay law in Texas and affirmed fundamental rights for gay Americans? Four of the six justices who voted to strike down the law were appointed by Republican presidents. The one who wrote the majority opinion was appointed by President Ronald Reagan.

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## Connecticut Gays Sue for Marriage

[[glad.org](http://glad.org) 8/25/04]

Seven gay and lesbian couples from across Connecticut who were recently denied marriage licenses in Madison, CT, filed suit in New Haven Superior Court challenging the State's discriminatory denial of marriage rights to same-sex couples.

The plaintiff couples, who have been in committed relationships for between 10 and 28 years, many of them raising children, contend that only marriage will provide them with the protections and benefits they need to live securely as a family.

The plaintiffs are represented by GLAD, attorneys from Hartford and New Haven, and the Connecticut Civil Liberties Union.

## Note from PEM

TIME TO MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT! All friends and members of PFLAG are strongly encouraged and urged to VOTE THIS FALL. Talk about it with everyone you meet and encourage THEM TO GET OUT AND VOTE. These are very critical times for us all, and YES, if we all appear at the polls in huge crowds, IT WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

There will be a PFLAG BOARD MEETING before our OCTOBER 18th regular meeting, 5:30 p.m.--bring a sandwich--and a friend or a fellow member! We invite new attendees to a Board meeting to brainstorm ideas and events for next year. We also encourage new participants to serve on the board!!! INTERESTED-CURIOUS-COME

DUES for the coming budget year (Oct 2004-Sept 2005) are due this fall. Everyone's amount is very helpful to run our mission of EDUCATION, SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY. Our biggest yearly project is the Scholarship Fund awarded in May. Dues help with our newsletter, educational pamphlets, and our library. \$10 of each person's dues go to PFLAG NATIONAL to help the smooth running of this large and influential organization. THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR HELPING OUR OWN TREASURER, MARTHA BERNDT, WITH HER WELL DONE JOB!

Hope to see you at our coming meetings Sept. 20, Oct. 18, Nov. 15, and Dec. 20.

## PFLAG National News

### No ENDA Without Trans

[Part of an editorial by PFLAG's Acting Executive Director, Ron Schlittler, published in the *Washington Blade* 8/6]

"With all due respect to those who have worked so hard over the years on iterations of ENDA and the federal hate crimes bill, much has progressed in our collective understanding of both how and why the workplace discrimination and hate-motivated abuse faced by our GLB friends and family members are so closely intertwined with the discrimination and abuse confronting people who are transgender or gender non-conforming.

In our safe schools work, PFLAG-ers point out that so much of what we understand as anti-gay hostility is rooted in cultural expectations for gender expression. This poisonous mindset takes root long before children even have a notion of the true meaning of sexuality.

Yet the price inflicted by peers and adults alike for failure to conform to proscribed gender characteristics has long been endemic and is widely accepted as perfectly OK.

PFLAG proudly joins 11 LGBT groups in opposing workplace protection and hate crime bills that do not protect gender identity."

### PFLAG & PTA

PFLAG's first delegation to a National PTA convention was successful. The former national PTA president introduced our workshop and noted that she had been working for over four years to make the PTA more inclusive. Folks from the national level expressed their happiness that we were there and hoped that we would return next year. Many attendees visited our display, and most were supportive. PFLAG was invited to make presentations and attend State conventions in New Jersey, New York, West Virginia, Virginia, and California.

## GLBT Group Meetings

**PFLAG/Brewster** every third Monday, 7pm, 1<sup>st</sup> Parish Church  
**CISGYA**, 56 Barnstable Rd. Hyannis, 7pm Wed & Thur,  
**Freedom to Marry Coalition of CC:** ccftmc@yahoo.com  
**Lesbian Connections** :1<sup>st</sup> Fridays, 6:30-8pm, 1<sup>st</sup> Parish Barn  
**Metropolitan Community Church:** 1st & 3rd Sundays, 7pm,  
Chapel in the Pines, Eastham, 385-2873 or 430-2682  
**Straight Spouse Group** meets as needed, 896-9060  
**Transgender Support** 2nd Sundays 2-4pm, 1<sup>st</sup> Parish; 255-5354

## Dates to Remember

Sep 20, Oct 18, Nov 15: **Brewster PFLAG, 7 pm**  
Sep 23, Oct 21, Nov 18: **Straight Spouse, 896-9060**  
Sep 12, Oct 10, Nov 14: **Transgender 432-8119**  
Sep 19: **Cranberry Festival "Freedom to Marry March"**  
Oct 13: **Last day to register to VOTE**  
Oct 18: **PFLAG Board Meeting at 5:30 (before regular mtg.)**  
Oct 29: **GALE Fund Halloween Party (see article p. 1)**  
Nov 2 **ELECTION DAY**

## PFLAG/Cape Cod, Brewster

PO Box 1167 Orleans, MA 02653

**MISSION:** *Promote the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered 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 First Parish Church, Brewster; everyone is welcome. For information call 508-240-2737 or 508-432-8119.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Dues-paying members support the efforts of PFLAG both locally and nationally. Ten 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:** Co-Leaders, Pem Schultz & Rob Lewis; Treasurer, Martha Berndt; Corresponding Sec'y, Betsy Cochran; Publicity, (volunteer needed); Newsletter, Joann Figueras and Doris Scherbak; Program, (volunteer needed); and Library, Randy Kendall;. Additional Board member Joanne Hush.

**NEWSLETTER:** Published four times a year. Send articles to PO Box 1167 or e-mail joann@pflagcapecod.org.

**WEBPAGE:** www.pflagcapecod.org

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

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to PFLAG/Brewster. Mail to Martha Berndt, 2 Englewood Dr. H-5, Harwich, MA

# Be Sure to VOTE on November 2