



PFLAG of Cape Cod, Brewster

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

October - December 2005

NEWSLETTER

Brewster, MA

Tips For A Happy GLBT Holiday (From PFLAG)

- Don't assume you know how somebody will react to news of your sexual orientation or gender identity; you may be surprised.
- Realize that your family's reaction to you may not be because you are GLBT. The hectic holiday pace may cause family members to act differently than they would under less stressful conditions.
- Recognize that your parents need time to acknowledge and accept that they have a GLBT child. It took you time to come to terms with who you are; now it is your family's turn.
- Let your family's judgments be theirs to work on as long as they are kind to you.
- If it is too difficult to be with your family, create your own holiday gathering with friends and loved ones.
- If you are transgender, be gentle with your family's pronoun "slips." Let them know you know how difficult it is.

Before the visit...

- Make a decision about being "out" to each family member before you visit.
- If you are partnered, discuss in advance how you will talk about your relationship, or show affection with one another.
- If you bring your partner home, don't wait until late into the holiday evening to raise the issue of sleeping arrangements. Make plans in advance.
- Have alternative plans if the situation becomes difficult at home.

During the visit...

- Focus on common interests.
- Reassure family members that you are still the same person they have always known.
- If you are partnered, be sensitive to his or her needs as well as your own.
- Be wary of the possible desire to shock your family.
- Realize that you don't need your family's approval.

PFLAG: Mission Incomplete

The work of PFLAG won't be complete until everyone in every town feels safe and comfortable enough to be who they are. The PFLAG mission will remain critically important until every person who has a GLBT loved one in their life feels wholly comfortable talking opening and honestly about them.

Our hope for everyone traveling this holiday season is this: talk honestly about your GLBT loved ones. If you are in an airport waiting for a flight and the person next to you asks about your family, talk honestly about all of your loved ones. Don't be afraid to ask if they know a GLBT person. Ask if they have heard of PFLAG or know what PFLAG does. Think of all the conversations that can take place over the holiday season to truly change hearts and minds about GLBT equality. Small conversations can have limitless positive consequences in changing a person's understanding of the issues.

As we speak truthfully with love, it really won't matter what the immediate response is. What matters most is that we speak with pride and joy about all of our family and friends -- straight, gay, lesbian or transgender. Changing hearts and minds is what PFLAG does best, through support, education and advocacy. Let our holiday season be about changing hearts and minds this year! [Message from PFLAG's Executive Director, Jody M. Huckaby]

GAYLA Ball February 4

The sixth annual GAYLA Ball will be held at the Sheraton Four Points Motel in Eastham, February 4, from 8 to midnight. This is a glamorous and joyful celebration bringing together the Cape's lesbian, gay, transgender, transsexual, and straight communities.

Sponsored by the Welcoming Committee of the First Parish UU Church Brewster, this event has become a Valentine delight. Light refreshments, dancing, and cash bar. Tickets are \$60 per person, more if you can, less if you can't. Early reservations are recommended because the event is expected to sell out. For information or tickets, call Joanne Hush at 508-896-2406.

How to Make a PR Disaster

[Excerpted from Bruce Fleming, military.com]

The military has to do better at interacting with the civilian world than it usually does. Typically, the military says that things are a certain way just because it says they are, and then circles the wagons against the larger society questioning that decision.

My home institution, the US Naval Academy, recently provided a good example of how not to do it. A group called Equality Ride announced it was coming to the base to discuss the Don't Ask Don't Tell policy with midshipmen, officers, and faculty. Anyone can walk on with a picture ID, and we all talk to tourists.

The Academy should have seized the initiative and worked with Equality Ride to produce discussion. Instead, the Academy's administration went into panic mode. The *Washington Post* quoted Chief of Staff Helen Dunn: "Be advised that accessing the Academy grounds for the purpose of protesting or engaging midshipmen, faculty and staff, may subject you to arrest and prosecution." Moreover, according to the *Annapolis Capital*, "Academy officials at first prohibited reporters from talking with midshipmen or academy faculty." So much for sharing information with the world the military is here to protect.

On the day of the protest itself, the panic had subsided to some degree. The protesters were allowed in, as individuals, though they were told by Dunn that they were not to "discuss gay rights with midshipmen" (*Annapolis Capital*). Dunn's e-mail to midshipmen: said, "we ask that you...stay clear of the protesters" and "politely refer questions from media or demonstrators to the Public Affairs Office."

My students [, however,] were ready to talk with the Equality Ride people who arrived at our gates. They had ideas, they had views, they were articulate. Most of all, they were very interested. This was a policy that affected them. They're going to have to deal with this issue one way or another as officers. Instead of letting them discuss with the protesters, which might have done some good in both directions, the Academy froze up, brought out the big guns, blamed those pesky civilians again, and in general produced a mess we didn't need. [Bruce Fleming is a professor of English at the US Naval Academy and the author of *Annapolis Autumn: Life, Death, and Literature at the U.S. Naval Academy*.]

Equality Ride to Religious Colleges

[soulforce.com]

Scheduled to take place in the spring of 2006, the Equality Ride will take 25-30 young adults on a bus tour to confront seven religious and/or military colleges that ban the enrollment of GLBT students. The ride is sponsored by Soulforce, and the registration deadline is January 1, 2006. [The goal of Soulforce is freedom for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people from religious and political oppression through the practice of relentless nonviolent resistance.]

Brokeback Mountain Makes News

[glaad.org]

The journey of *Brokeback Mountain* continues. The film broke two box-office records its opening weekend; it grossed nearly double the amount of King Kong on a per-screen basis, and the *New York Times* found real gay cowboys in Wyoming that view the film as more fact than fiction.

Brokeback Mountain, the 2005 film directed by Academy Award-winner Ang Lee, is based on a short story by Annie Proulx, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Shipping News*. *Brokeback Mountain* was originally published in *The New Yorker* in 1997 and appeared in Proulx's collection of short stories *Close Range: Wyoming Stories*. The screenplay was written by Diana Ossana and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Larry McMurtry.

This is the story of two young cowboys, Ennis del Mar (Heath Ledger) and Jack Twist (Jake Gyllenhaal), who come together while working as sheep herder and camp tender in the mountains of Wyoming in the early 1960s. The two share a secret emotional and physical relationship that continues over two decades while they each marry women and have children.

Brokeback Mountain is an American love story about two people who simply cannot have what they want because of societal prejudice. In the end, this is a grand romantic tragedy, joining the ranks of great literature as much as great cinema.

PFLAG March Meeting Features PAVIA

The March 20 meeting of PFLAG will feature a cabaret-style performance by PAVIA, a Wellfleet chanteuse who will sing favorite old American and European songs. Accompanying herself on accordion, PAVIA evokes an old-world feeling with her vocal interpretation and arrangements of torch songs, love songs, cabaret songs, and street songs. She has presented her program in theatres, museums, libraries, and art centers in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York.

Refreshments will be served, and donations support our scholarship fund. Bring friends and join the fun! This meeting is open to the public and will honor all those who support PFLAG. 7pm at the First Parish UU Church, Routes 6A and 124 in Brewster.

Save the Date . . . May 21

Providence Gay Men's Chorus

4 pm, St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Harwich
Proceeds support PFLAG Scholarship Fund & the Chorus
Cranberry Goose Gift Shop for details 508-430-2818

NEWS FROM ALL AROUND

California became the first state ever to pass a bill to extend the freedom to marry to same-sex couples. Unfortunately, Gov. Schwarzenegger vetoed the bill.

South Africa's highest court ruled in May that gays and lesbians have a right to marry, and it gave the national parliament one year to change the words "husband" and "wife" to "spouse" in its marital laws. Under the ruling, South Africa will become the first African nation and the fifth in the world to extend full marital rights to same-sex couples. Elsewhere in Africa, attitudes toward homosexuality are severe. Gay and lesbian sex is illegal on most of the continent, and some countries' punishments can include the death penalty. [*Boston Globe* 12/20/05]

Ireland: On December 19, two lesbians became the first gay couple in the United Kingdom to win legal recognition. Northern Ireland, which in 1982 was the last region in the United Kingdom to legalize homosexuality, is now the first to grant gay couples the same legal protections as married heterosexuals. Scotland, England, and Wales have followed. The measure is already in force in many other European countries

The Vatican: In the first major ruling of Pope Benedict's reign, the Catholic Church imposed restrictions on homosexuals becoming priests. Practicing homosexuals are barred from entering the priesthood along with men with "deep-seated" homosexual tendencies and those who support gay culture. Men who have overcome "transitory" gay tendencies can be ordained if their homosexual tendencies are clearly overcome at least three years before admission to the diaconate, a position one step short of the priesthood. The document does not affect men who are already priests, and it calls on the faithful to show respect for homosexuals.

Sheryl Swoopes: In an exclusive interview with *ESPN The Magazine*, three-time Olympic gold medalist and WNBA MVP, Sheryl Swoopes came out as a lesbian. Swoopes, 34, is a forward for the Houston Comets and has been honored many times for her career in basketball. Despite an often homophobic climate in sports, some athletes have come out as gay, including former NFL defensive tackle Esera Tuaolo and MLB outfielder Billy Bean. Former WNBA player Michele Van Gorp came out as a lesbian. All three came out when they retired from sports. Swoopes, however, is still moving forward with her career in basketball and is the most visible athlete to date, to come out. Her decision to come out was ultimately about being happy and living a life that is honest and open, Swoopes said. In the article, she also discusses the personal struggle she experienced keeping her female partner and their long-term relationship hidden from the public while reconciling her sexual orientation as a lesbian with her three-year marriage to a man. "I'm just at a point in my life where I'm tired of having to pretend to be somebody I'm not," Swoopes said. [glad.org]

Maine voters, by a 56-44 margin, rejected a referendum November 8 that would have repealed a law signed by Gov. John Baldacci earlier this year that protects gays, lesbians, and transgenders from discrimination.

Connecticut instituted civil unions to provide state-level rights and responsibilities to long-term, committed same-sex couples.

Maryland and **Colorado** became the ninth and 10th states to include gender identity and expression, and the 30th and 31st states to include sexual orientation in their hate crimes laws.

Washington, DC: The "Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act" is awaiting Senate action. It cleared the House earlier in December. Immigration policies already prohibit gay, lesbian and bisexual citizens from sponsoring their foreign national partners for immigration benefits. Currently, a foreign national in a relationship with an American citizen is forced to live out of status and is committing a civil violation, not a criminal offense. The Immigration Control Act would criminalize anyone in the U.S. without documentation.

California: A federal judge ruled that a student may sue her school district and members of the administration for disclosing the student's sexual orientation to family members. Charlene Nguon, 17, a lesbian Asian-Pacific Islander enrolled in a Garden Grove School, was 'outed' as a lesbian to her mother by the principal.

Beijing: Police shut down one of the country's first gay festivals in a raid that took place on the event's opening night. The weekend-long event was to include films, plays and art associated with the issue of sexuality, as well as seminars and discussions. [planetout.com12/19]

Cape Cod: Over the past seven years, the GALE Fund has distributed approximately \$120,000 to local organizations that support LGBT issues on Cape Cod. The 2005 grantees are AIDS Support Group of Cape Cod, Cape & Islands Gay & Straight Youth Alliance (CISGYA), Cape Cod Gay Men's Chorus, First Parish Brewster Transgender Support Group, Outer Cape Chorale, Provincetown International Film Festival, Provincetown Theater Foundation, Yarmouth Council on Aging, and Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Falmouth.

GALE Fund Forum Jan. 30

4C's Science Bldg, Lecture Hall A, 3 – 5 PM. The forum will focus on the areas of youth needs, legal issues, transgender needs, human services, health care, and elder care. A brief grant-writing workshop will follow the forum. For more information, contact Lisa McNeill at The Cape Cod Foundation, 508 790-3040.

What is CIGSYA?

The **Cape & Islands Gay & Straight Youth Alliance** (CIGSYA) is a non-profit, community-based alliance welcoming lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and straight young people ages 22 and under. They are located in the middle of Hyannis, one block off of Main Street at 56 Barnstable Road.

CIGSYA'S mission is to improve the lives of LGBTQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex) young people and their peer allies on Cape Cod and the Islands by addressing key risk factors such as the self-hate, isolation, and fear, which are often prevalent in their lives. CIGSYA works toward eliminating all forms of discrimination based on differences through programs at the CIGSYA Center where young people come together in an environment of respect, free from judgment and harassment.

CIGSYA offers social and supportive activities such as family-style dinners, movie nights, dances, and supportive meetings. They also offer supportive programs for the adults who work with or are raising these young people.

Recently, CIGSYA started to host a monthly meeting of PFLAG, Parents, Friends of Lesbian and Gays); we want all parents regardless of their child's sexual orientation to come to these meetings and gain knowledge and support as they guide their young person into adulthood. The monthly networking meeting is held on the second Monday of each month at 6:30; meetings last 90 minutes or less.

CIGSYA also hosts bi-monthly networking meetings for educators on Cape Cod, The Islands and South-Eastern Massachusetts. All educators who want to help create a supportive environment are welcome to attend; this is an opportunity for people to come together and find out what is working in their schools and how to change the challenging areas.

CIGSYA is coming into its tenth year in 2006. They need our help to sustain and continue to develop our programs. Please send donations to CIGSYA, 56 Barnstable Road, Hyannis, MA, 02601 or support online at www.cigsya.org. For more information, contact Linda Dupuis, Director of Programs, 508-280-9931 or e-mail cigsyahouse@aol.com.

Elton John Ties the Knot

Elton John and his longtime partner David Furnish were among the first same-sex couples in England to be joined in a civil ceremony. [Boston Globe 12-21-05]

GLBT Group Meetings

PFLAG/Brewster every third Monday, 7pm, 1st Parish Church
CIGSYA, 56 Barnstable Rd., Hyannis, 7pm Wed & Thur
Family-Parent Meetings, 2nd Mondays, CIGSYA House
Lesbian Connections: 1st Friday Potluck, 7pm; 2nd Friday 7-9pm; 1st Parish Barn; drwest@rcn.com
Metropolitan Community Church: 1st & 3rd Sundays, 6pm, Chapel in the Pines, Eastham 508-398-6471 or 432-8361
Straight Spouse Group: 1st Tuesday, 7pm, 1st Parish, 896-2620
Transgender Support: 2nd Wednesday 7-9pm, 1st Parish, Barn top floor, across 6A on Harwich Rd., 362-4435

Dates to Remember

Mar 20, Apr 17, May 15: Brewster PFLAG, 7 pm
Mar 7 Apr 4, May 2: Straight Spouse Group, 896-2620
Mar 8, Apr 12, May 10: Transgender Support 362-4435
Apr 17 PAVIA Performance Fundraiser at regular meeting
May 21: Providence Gay Men's Chorus, Harwich
May 26 GALE Fund Spring Fling with Kate Clinton

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 First Parish Church, Brewster; everyone is welcome. For information call 508-398-6471 or 508-240-2737 or 508-432-8119.

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

WEBPAGE: 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 payable to PFLAG/Brewster. Mail to Joanne Hush, 200 Breakwater Rd, Brewster, MA 02631-1308