

PFLAG of Cape Cod, Brewster

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

October - December 2007

NEWSLETTER

Brewster, MA

Weakened ENDA Passes House

By a vote of 235-184, the US House passed HR 3685, a version of ENDA (Employment Non-Discrimination Act) which does NOT include protections based on gender identity. The vote came after a period of strong GLBT community mobilization in support of an inclusive bill. The job now is to work hard to ensure an eventual version of ENDA that protects ALL members of our community.

PFLAG Benefit Concert Was Success

On a Friday evening in November our PFLAG chapter presented "My Life In Song" at the Orleans United Methodist Church. The concert was written and performed by Jon Arterton, with special guests James Mack and John Thomas, pianist.

We netted almost \$1000 for our scholarship fund. PFLAG extends its thanks to Jon, James, and John for generously giving their time and talents for the performance. Thanks also to the Orleans Methodist Church, the Hot Chocolate Sparrow and Cranberry Goose Gift Shop for selling tickets, and to all the wonderful and friendly folks who came out on a cold night to support us.

Iraqi Gays Are Having a Bad Time

[Excerpted from Advocate.com 12/19/07]

Religious extremism sparked by the war in Iraq has left once-comfortable gays in this Middle Eastern country feeling demonized and afraid, *The New York Times* (Cara Buckley, Dec. 18) profiled Mohammed, a 37-year-old openly gay man and his friends.

Outsiders have always been viewed with suspicion in Iraq, but gays were ignored if not accepted before American troops invaded in 2003. After the war began, about 400 people were killed for being gay, according to an Iraqi gay rights group, and gays and lesbians were forced to see lovers at night and in secret, according to *The Times*.

A United Nations report released in January described the growing persecution, torture, and killing of Iraqi gays and lesbians. In 2005, Iraq's highest-ranking Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, issued a decree calling for gays and lesbians to be killed in the "worst, most severe way." The decree was lifted a year later, but Mohammed and his friends said they still don't feel safe.

The growing influence of Iran, where homosexuality is sometimes punishable by death, has also alarmed Iraqi gays and lesbians.

"Gayla" Ball Dinner Dance "We Are Family"

The eighth annual Gayla Ball will be held at the Sheraton Four Points Hotel in Eastham February 9 (snow date Feb 10), from 7 to midnight. Dinner buffet 7:30 – 8:30, dancing until midnight. Cash bar, cabaret entertainment, and music by DJ Mary Sweeney. This is a glamorous and joyful celebration bringing together the Cape's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and non-gay communities.

Sponsored by the Welcoming Committee of the First Parish UU Church Brewster, this event has become a Valentine delight. Proceeds this year will benefit GLAD (Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders) and First Parish Brewster. Tickets are \$65 per person (more if you can, less if you can't).

This is a reservations-only event, and reservations are limited, so don't wait. All seats are reserved. For information about preferred seating arrangements for dinner, pre-dinner cocktail parties at homes of church members, or for ticket reservations, call Joanne Hush at 508-896-2406.

"Dress Fabulous or Funky, we don't care
It's most important that you be there!"

NEWS FROM ALL AROUND

BUDAPEST: Hungary's left-of-center coalition government passed legislation giving same-sex couples many of the rights of marriage. The Registered Partnership Act will go into effect in January, 2009. It will allow gay and lesbian couples to register their relationships and will recognize partners as next-of-kin. The law will provide guarantees for joint tax filing, decision making in health care, and assure inheritance, social security, and pension rights. It will not, however, allow same-sex couples to adopt or undergo fertility treatment, nor will it allow couples to share a common surname.

CALIFORNIA: GLAD and Equality Federation have filed an amicus brief with the California Supreme Court. The brief argues that California's domestic partnership statute (the equivalent of civil unions in other states) constitutes a discriminatory, separate, and unequal status for lesbian and gay citizens, and that a ruling ending the exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage in California will advance progress toward equality elsewhere in the country.

FLORIDA: Should the Florida constitution ban same-sex couples from marrying? That's the question that will be put before the state's voters next year, thanks to the efforts of the anti-gay Florida4Marriage.org. After three years, the coalition succeeded in gathering the 611,009 signatures needed to add the question to the November 2008 ballot—assuming all of them are verified. The amendment will need support of at least 60 percent of voters to become enshrined in the state's constitution. If the measure ends up on the 2008 ballot and passes, Florida would become the 28th state to ban marriage between people of the same sex with a constitutional amendment.

IDAHO: Moscow city officials passed a Gay Partner Benefits Law. Council members say they don't know if any of the municipality's employees are gay, but they want to do the right thing.

INDIANA: K.K. Logan was prevented from attending his Gary HS prom wearing a dress. He was literally blocked by Principal Diane Rouse who stretched her arms across the door of the off-campus banquet center where the prom was held. Logan's classmates rallied to his defense, as did members of the community who were outside taking pictures of their children. Lambda Legal has filed a lawsuit on behalf of Logan.

LONDON: The archbishop of Canterbury said on December 14 that he will not reverse his decision to exclude a gay U.S. bishop from joining other bishops at a global Anglican gathering next year.

MAINE: In a unanimous decision, Maine's Law Court issued a ruling in August stating clearly that unmarried couples are able to adopt under Maine law.

MOROCCO: A court in Ksar el-Kbir convicted six men of violating article 489 of Morocco's penal code, which criminalizes "lewd or unnatural acts with an individual of the same sex." However, according to lawyers for the defendants, the prosecution failed to present any evidence that the men actually had engaged in the prohibited conduct in the first place.

NEW HAMPSHIRE: Same-sex couples plan to celebrate New Hampshire's new civil unions law by holding a group ceremony the minute the law takes effect Jan. 1. Democratic state Rep. Gail Morrison and Jen Major said the event is to take place just after midnight on the Statehouse steps. Both women are former board members of the New Hampshire Freedom to Marry Coalition and said they are planning civil unions with their own partners that night.

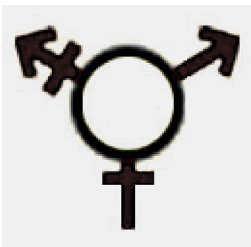
RHODE ISLAND: The Supreme Court ruled December 7 that the state's Family Court does NOT have jurisdiction to recognize a same-sex couple's Massachusetts marriage for the purpose of granting them a divorce.

ROME: The city council rejected a proposal to establish a domestic partner registry for either same-sex or opposite-sex couples.

TEXAS: Real estate agent Joel Burns became the first openly gay member of the Fort Worth City Council. He won in a run-off election December 18 after a race that was marked by homophobia.

URUGUAY: President Tabare Vazquez said recently that he will sign legislation making the country the first in Latin America to allow civil unions.

WASHINGTON DC: On the 14th anniversary of the signing of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," 28 retired, high-ranking military leaders have signed a letter calling for the policy's repeal. In the years since "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was enacted, over 12,000 men and women have been discharged from the military under the policy. This sign-on letter marks the single largest number of generals and admirals from the U.S. Armed Forces to come out against the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy at one time.



TNET Story: A Matter of Degrees — Trans Like Me—

[Excerpted from Jenn Burleton]

Transgender and gender non-conforming identity are at the core of homophobia. Our LGBQ (LGBQueer) family members are not marginalized because employers, co-workers, authority figures, or random homophobes have witnessed a same-sex physical act. In most cases, they only perceive that our child or loved one is GLBQ based upon their gender expression.

Does this mean that homophobia is a form of biased gaydar? Absolutely. So what is gaydar?

It's shorthand for identifying someone who is gender non-conforming in their dress, body language, speech pattern, career choice, or other aspect of personal expression. If someone does not appear on your gaydar screen, they are said to be straight-acting.

Straight-acting has nothing to do with sexual orientation. In reality, it means gender normative – and that makes everyone a potential victim of gender identity discrimination.

Recently the House of Representatives passed a revised version of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) to protect GLB workers. Protections for trans people were stripped during the negotiation process. This means anyone can still be denied or terminated from employment for being "too feminine" for a man or "too masculine" for a woman. One need not be transgender to be victimized by this, though trans people (especially children) have long been the canaries in the coal mine of homophobia.

The decision by Congress...sends a signal that it's still OK to tease, abuse, isolate and terminate our trans children, youth and loved ones, along with those who are simply perceived as being transgender.

In my advocacy work I reassure parents their child is going to be all right. I tell them we've progressed in the 42-years since I was an "out" transgender child. I also need to look these children in the eye and tell the truth – the truth that in 21st century America they may not be able to find work simply because of who they are.

For now I'm going to avoid telling that truth, because our children don't have the option of changing their gender identity. I must conceal it because, at present, some of our elected officials do not have the courage to include everyone in the American dream.

[Jenn Burleton is a PFLAG TNET Board member and West Coast Sector Coordinator. She is Executive Director and Founder of TransActive Education & Advocacy based in Portland, Oregon.]

In Memoriam

We mourn the passing of our dear friend and supporter, Robert Lewis-Kendell, age 72, who died November 14. Through his long and painful struggle with cancer, he and his devoted partner, PFLAG Coordinator Randy Lewis-Kendell, continued to be faithful attendees at our monthly PFLAG meetings. They were fervent champions of our Scholarship Fund and helped enormously with yearly fundraisers, convincing both PAVIA and the Providence Men's Chorus to perform benefits.

Besides Randy, Rob left an ex-wife (whom he called his 'partner-emeritus'), with whom he and Randy remained good friends, and a large family of children and grandchildren, all of whom adored both men—as Papa and Grandpa. At the time of his death, Rob and Randy had been together 30 years and married for over three years. They stand before all as a strong argument for same-sex marriage.

Rob had a long and successful career with the Boy Scouts of America as a leader and camp executive. He and Randy have owned the Cranberry Goose Gift Shop in Harwich for the past 14 years, and many friends from that association attended the memorial service in Rob's memory. Their Harwich Port neighbors and the entire Cape and South Shore gay community will join with us in missing Rob.

We also mourn the untimely death of Claire Kenney, partner of our late treasurer Martha Berndt. Claire was a willing booster of Martha's activities with PFLAG, and she has been a generous supporter of our Scholarship Fund.

This Church Won't Marry ANYONE!

It doesn't matter if you're gay or straight, you can't get legally married at the Lyndale, Minnesota, United Church of Christ. The small, liberal church in south Minneapolis was the first of several Twin Cities congregations to stop performing civil marriage ceremonies as long as same-sex marriage is illegal. These churches, and others around the country that took the same step, will hold a religious ceremony to bless unions of both straight and gay couples – but straight couples must go to a judge or justice of the peace for the marriage license. "If you feel that gay and lesbian people are loved and created by God, then how can we continue to discriminate against our brothers and sisters?" asked Rev. Don Portwood, the reserved Nebraska native who's been lead pastor at the church for 27 years.

Cape Cod Tech GSA Invites GLBT Youth & Advisors

Cape Cod Tech's Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) will host a dinner Thursday, January 17, from 5 - 7 PM at First Parish Brewster. Their goal is to bring together different GSA/GLBT youth on Cape for a night of fun and meeting new people.

Soup and salad will be provided, and all pot-luck dishes are welcome! Please RSVP by email to neveragirl@yahoo.com.

Transgender Support News

In addition to the regular transgender/transsexual discussion and support group meetings (every 2nd Wednesday from 7-9pm, First Parish Winslow House), the group will host a potluck and family/allies night three times a year—in April, August and November. Families and allies of the TG community will meet from 6-7 for dinner and from 7-9 for lively discussions on "ally-issues." Same place. ALL welcome.

Jackie Corso 508-362-4435

"L Word" in the News

An anonymous fan of the lesbian-based TV show "L Word" donated \$1 million to the Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation in honor of a breast cancer story line that involved a popular character in the drama. The gift will be used to establish the Erin Daniels and Leisha Hailey Fund for Breast Cancer. The donor also pledged to match dollar for dollar every donation made to the fund.

In January, the Human Rights Campaign and cable-TV's Showtime will present the 5th season premiere of "The L Word." A Cape Cod screening will be in P'Town at the Crown and Anchor on January 5 and 6—over 21 only. Doors open at 7:00 PM and screening begins at 8:00. Suggested donation is \$10; reservations can be made at www.hrc.org/lword.

**NOTE: Our fiscal year ended
September 31;
Have you paid your dues?**

GLBT Group Meetings

PFLAG/Brewster, every third Monday, 7pm, 1st Parish
CIGSYA 56 Barnstable Rd, Hyannis, 7pm Wed & Thur
Family-Parent Meetings, 2nd Monday, CIGSYA House
Straight Spouse Group: for information call 896-2620
Transgender Support: 2nd Wednesday 7-9pm, 1st Parish
Winslow House top floor, on Harwich Rd, 362-4435

Dates to Remember

Jan 15, Feb 18, Mar 17: Brewster PFLAG, 7 pm

Jan 9, Feb 13, Mar 12: Transgender Suppt. 362-4435

Feb 9: GAYLA Ball, Eastham Sheraton 7:30–12pm (see p.1)

Apr 9: Transgender Support Family Night (see article)

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