



PFLAG NH
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

**North Country
Lakes Region
Plymouth
Seacoast
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Keene
Upper Valley**



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Gay Marriage in NY?

It's an extension of equal rights

By David Tseng

YES Legislation to allow gay marriage will be introduced in Albany soon, and already opponents are vowing to stop the bill at all costs. But we should not let the din of the same-sex marriage debate drown out what should be the key issue for legislators and the public alike: what makes a family, as defined by each of us in our personal lives.

Presently, tens of thousands of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender couples throughout New York State care for their life partners and raise families, all within the empowering and nurturing structure of life-long committed relationships. But the support and dignity these families provide to their loved ones is not sanctioned or protected by New York law.

For these New Yorkers, the hope of equality enshrined in the Constitution remains an unkept promise that deprives them of the right to visit their partner in the hospital, to fight for custody of their children in court or to designate heirs to their estates.

What everyone must recognize is that all families help improve and sustain the quality of neighborhoods and strengthen the fabric of society. In this vein, same-sex couples participating in PTA meetings in the Bronx, organizing a block party on Long Island or helping with a weekend charity breakfast in upstate Oswego echo exactly the same aspirations as their opposite-sex-couple counterparts, and they add immeasurably to each of their communities.

New York's failure to accord these families the rights bestowed upon others sets up a state of have and have-not families.

America has worked vigorously over the last half-century to eliminate state-sponsored discrimination based on race, religion, sex, color, age and other differences. New Yorkers have helped lead the way.

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Taking it Personally, Gays, Families Resist Legal Slap

The Capital Times, By Anita Weier, October 1, 2003, Madison, WI

About 200 Wisconsin residents came to the State Capitol on Tuesday to lobby for lesbian and gay civil rights. Specifically, they were opposing bills that would change the definition of marriage in state law from a contract between "husband and wife" to a contract between "one man and one woman."

Mary Fiore of Madison, a member of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, said she has two daughters and is distressed that the one who is lesbian has fewer rights than the other who is not. The questions being considered today are fundamental to basic civil rights for all and should not be based on religious beliefs," Fiore said. "We make great efforts in this country to separate those two things - except when it comes to gay marriage.

This is not about sex - it's about whether we have the right to choose whom we will love, whom we come home to at night."

Full text: <http://www.madison.com/captimes/news/stories/57914.php>

Freedom to Marry Day

This year, marking February 14 (Valentines Day) as Freedom to Marry Day, takes on special significance. Now is a good time to work with your community partners to start planning. Visit the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund website above for lots of great resources to make the most of this opportunity.

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For example, my organization, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, was founded in 1973 by a handful of New York City mothers and fathers. This year, as it marks its 30th anniversary, it has more than 250,000 members and supporters and more than 500 chapters and affiliates throughout the country. We help parents, family members and friends learn to understand and accept their gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender loved ones.

Thanks to the bill in Albany, New Yorkers now have the chance to underscore their commitment to families and honor one of the most profound American values: equality. Providing all citizens with a shared set of rights and responsibilities will make New York a stronger state - indeed, a stronger society.

When we champion equal rights for all - including the right to marry - we add to a proud American tradition of upholding freedom and the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, including our right to define our families however we see fit.

Tseng is executive director of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

This piece was originally published on October 14, 2003 in the NY Daily News.

PFLAG NH Board News

We have openings for new state board members. The board is composed of representatives from each of the seven chapters of PFLAG NH. We also invite representatives from partnership organizations to join us. For example, we would love to have someone from GLSEN, from "Welcoming" church congregations, from Freedom to Marry, or from the NH Gay Men's Chorus on the Board, as well. Building such coalitions helps in many ways. We have fun, learn new skills (like doing this e newsletter!), and meet yet more new and interesting people! So, contact me or Sheila Dion (admin@pflagnh.org) about how to get involved. Roberta Barry, PFLAG NH President - 603-352-6854 or email: bbarry29@mac.com.

The Speaker Series

A testimonial that collaboration pays off is the The Speaker Series that is happening in the Monadnock Region. So far it has twice brought in a nice audience. We have two more to go - October 29th, Sabrina Sojourner will speak about homophobia, heterosexism and racism. On November 5th, Steve Yursick will speak about HIV/AIDS and how it can happen to anyone. This series is a collaboration between GLSEN, PFLAG Keene, AIDS SERVICES of the Monadnock Region, the Unitarian/Universalist Church, and the Monadnock Community Foundation.

Although the Monadnock Region is a little off the beaten path, it makes a lovely afternoon drive.

The location for the Speaker Series is the Unitarian Universalist Church at 69 Washington St., Keene, NH. Each program will begin at 7 PM with reception and refreshments following.

We have great restaurants - so I invite you to come for an early dinner, enjoy the program at 7:00, and you'll be on the road by 8:30.

**How do we go about
getting married
in Canada?**

www.nclrights.org

The Speaker's Bureau

It looks like our PR efforts are paying off. We have participated in several events this fall. To name a few: The NH Education Conference; The New England Library Association Fall Conference; The Plymouth University and Keene State College counselor preparation classes.

Margie and Gordon are making numerous contacts. It seems like they have been everywhere!

So, yes, our message of love and acceptance is moving into the mainstream.

Our membership drive will be beginning soon. We need money to fund all the materials we're starting to need. Watch for additional ways on how to contribute.



**- Marriage -
- Please Share Your Stories -
both of Happiness and Hardship**

Hello PFLAGers - The issue of marriage for same-sex couples is heating up and the political reality is that, ready or not, we will be dealing with it throughout the coming election year. At PFLAG we are working to bring our unique family perspective to the discussion and we will be counting on your help to make best use of this truly golden opportunity to educate. We will need to hold up stories that put a family face on both the joys of same-sex relationships and, just as importantly, the real-life hardships encountered due to the inaccessibility of legal, civil marriage. Your stories of happiness and struggle as parents and family members, and the stories of your friends and loved ones will give this issue that family face.

Do you know of couples who have gone to Canada to be married? What about to Vermont for a Civil Union - only to return home and be strangers before the law in their home state? If so, we want to hear about them and the joys and challenges they have encountered. Do you know of a partnership in which one of the members has experienced a medical emergency - or worse - and the lack of legal recognition has caused hardship? What about the specific impacts of no legal marriage on the children of these couples?

These will be the stories we can take to the press, opinion leaders and to the public to help our GLBT loved ones attain that most significant of human rights - the right to make life-partner decisions that are afforded the same civil rights and responsibilities as our heterosexual family members.

Please direct your stories to Dave Mallory at dmallory@pflag.org or by calling him at 202-467-8180 ext. 215.



Laconia/Lakes Region PFLAG NH

The Laconia/Lakes Region PFLAG NH Chapter is pleased to announce that Rev. Dr. Calvin Genzel will speak at the Sunday, November 9th meeting. The meeting time is 6:30 PM at the Unitarian-Universalist Society of Laconia.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Genzel is the Vice President of Clinical Services at Pastoral Counseling Services in Manchester, New Hampshire. A licensed psychologist and ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, Cal believes that embracing a healthy spirituality is an important component to healing the suffering caused by institutional and internalized homophobia. In this presentation he will share his coming out story and talk about common psychological stages in the coming out process. In addition, he will address ways to counter the toxic shame that inhibits the emotional development and spiritual growth of many GLBT persons.

For more information, please call Paula at 528-1714

**Frequently Asked Questions
From U.S. Couples**

**Who Are Considering
Getting Married In Canada**

Many same-sex couples in the United States are considering getting married in Canada. While this is now an option, it is important for couples to understand that getting married in Canada will not necessarily guarantee you and your partner the rights and privileges of different-sex married couples in the U.S. and may have significant tax and other legal implications. Although this is still a gray area with many remaining uncertainties, here are preliminary answers to some frequently asked questions:

- ▼ Can same-sex couples from the United States marry in Canada?
- ▼ Are there any other countries that permit same-sex couples to marry?
- ▼ Are there any states in the U.S. that permit same-sex couples to marry?
- ▼ How do we go about getting married in Canada?

For answers to these and other important questions, and for lots more information, please visit:

www.nclrights.org

FALL READING

Dramatic Changes:

Talking About Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity with High School Students Through Drama

by Paula Ressler, 2002. ISBN: 0325004145. "Teachers need no drama background or extensive knowledge about sexual orientation and gender identity to use this book. Each chapter provides an introduction to the type of drama presented-from simple role plays through complex and extended pieces-along with educational objectives, rationales, resources, and materials needed." NH: Heinemann Publishing. \$21.00

Straight Parents, Gay Children: Keeping Families Together

Bob Bernstein, PFLAG National Vice President of PFLAG for seven years, a driving force in founding the national office in Washington, D.C., and original publisher and editor of the our national newsletter, "The PFLAGpole", has updated "Straight Parents, Gay Children: Keeping Families Together", his award-winning book, largely by and about PFLAG families.

This book has been labeled by various reviewers as "penetrating," "moving," "compelling" and "stirring" and with a new Foreword by Betty DeGeneres, the latest version of "Straight Parents, Gay Children: Keeping Families Together" features two all-new chapters, and updated material throughout the book. Like the original edition, it includes an Introduction by novelist and journalist Robert MacNeil of MacNeil-Lehrer Productions.

One of the book's new chapters, captioned "Family Values," discusses gay and lesbian parenting. Another, "The Unreliability of Stereotypes," considers three fields--policing, professional sports and politics--in which common stereotypes, in the words of the book, are "unmasked as, well, fairy tales."

Shortly after its original publication, a St. Louis donor contributed sufficient funds to PFLAG to insure that each of its hundreds of affiliates would own at least two copies.

For additional information about this book, please check out our PFLAG National Website or contact: Blanca Olivieri, Senior Publicist, Avalon Publishing, email: blanca@avalonpub.com.

PFLAG Chapters Focus On A Face In The Crowd

Throughout fall and winter 2003, PFLAG's 30th anniversary year, PFLAG has a unique opportunity to hold "Face In The Crowd" reading and discussion chapter meetings. The book, *A Face in the Crowd: Expressions of Gay Life in America*, sponsored by the Matthew Shepard Foundation and edited by John Peterson and Martin Bedogne, was created out of a desire to break down barriers rooted in prejudice and hate, and presents real-life stories and positive images that illustrate that gay life in America does not fit a single stereotype.

In the book's introduction, Judy Shepard conveys, "A Face in the Crowd is a reflection of Matthew's dreams. He knew that judging people before knowing them was the loss of an opportunity." The foreword, written by Betty DeGeneres, details her own personal journey and acceptance of when her now famous daughter, Ellen, first revealed that she was a lesbian more than 20 years ago.

"This book serves as an opportunity to initiate open dialogue about sexual orientation and to encourage respect and dignity for all - a common goal the Matthew Shepard Foundation shares with PFLAG," says Judy. "I am so proud to support the efforts and important work that you do. PFLAG members know all too well that education and compassion are critical tools against prejudice and intolerance."

The first 50 PFLAG chapters to sign up to hold a "Face in the Crowd" reading and discussion group meeting will receive a complimentary copy of the book. Discussion group guidelines will be provided along with a personal letter from Judy Shepard.

PFLAG members will be able to obtain copies of the book at a 25% discount off the cover price when ordered directly from the publisher, Prospect Publishing. Order forms are available on line at: www.prospectpublishing.com/pflag.htm.

Along with the book, you will receive the benefit CD with the beautiful song, "What Matters," written & performed by Randi Driscoll. The CD also contains a personal heartfelt message from Judy Shepard.

To participate or to find out more information, please contact: John Peterson - John@prospectpublishing.com ph: 323 656 7442