



PFLAG NH
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

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



Newsletter ▼ PFLAG NH ▼ P.O. Box 485 ▼ Winnisquam NH 03289 ▼ January 2004
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Engagement The Next Step

On Thursday, January 29, 2004 at 6:30 PM, NH Freedom to Marry Education Fund Presents: Engagement: The Next Step to Marriage. This is an interactive forum with Special Guest Mary Bonauto, the Lead Attorney in the Massachusetts Marriage Case. The presentation will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Church, Concord, NH.

1. Mark the date in your calendar
2. Forward this notification to all your friends
3. Join us, in order to answer these questions:
 - What does the Massachusetts marriage decision mean for NH?
 - What does current NH law say about marriage?
 - How can you participate in making marriage for same-sex couples a reality in New Hampshire?
4. Make Marriage a Reality in New Hampshire.

It is the Next Step!

JOIN US in 2004

PFLAG NH and local chapters seem to be gaining in visibility. Perhaps it's the result of our distribution of the Human Rights Watch research called, "Hatred in the Hallways." Perhaps it's our Speaker Bureau activity. Maybe it's just more public awareness of "gay" America.

Whatever the cause, we applaud the increased visibility and the opportunities it presents. Of course, our success has led to greater need. There is a present need for more people to join PFLAG and a need for more money, to keep the momentum flowing.

Join us in getting our message of love and support out there for our GLBT loved ones.

Locate the chapter nearest to you and join us for one of the support group meetings or just call one of the contact people for more information.

Roberta Barry

National Marriage News

- N.J. Senate Advances Same-Sex Benefits, By Robert Moran Inquirer Trenton Bureau

To the cheers of gay and lesbian couples gathered in the Statehouse, the Senate yesterday passed a landmark bill that would offer financial and legal benefits for same-sex partners.

The bill now goes to Gov. McGreevey, who said he would sign it into law. The Assembly narrowly passed it last month. Yesterday's vote was 23-9, with eight senators recorded as not voting.

"The time has finally come when we can guarantee individuals who have entered into an enduring, committed relationship the basic civil rights they deserve," McGreevey said.

"It's an incredibly historic day," said Steven Goldstein, New Jersey representative for Lambda Legal, which is fighting in court for a right to gay marriage.

(MARRIAGE, *Continued on page 2*)

Resource: "Our Families, Our Children" Calendar

New 2004 "Our Families, Our Children" Calendar! Available Now!

Are your elementary or preschool classroom walls a little homogenous? Jazz 'em up now. The "Our Families, Our Children" 2004 Calendar includes tender photos of diverse Lesbian and Gay families appropriate for children of all ages. You'll want to laminate and post (or frame) these photos in your classroom, program, or home to welcome and support all kinds of families for years to come. To order a calendar, send a \$10.00 check, payable to Ian Hyde (Task Force Treasurer): Child Care Task Force, 225 N. 70th Street, Seattle, WA 98103. Call 206 789 0067 for more information.

(MARRIAGE, Continued from page 1)

Find the full text at: <http://www.philly.com/mlid/philly/news/local/7667885.htm>

- U.S. Senator Feingold: Don't Ban Gay Unions in Constitution; Capital Times, December 31, 2003

Says he would lead the fight

By David Callender

U.S. Senator Russ Feingold (Wisconsin) says he will "lead the charge" in Congress against any move to amend the U.S. Constitution to ban gay marriage.

"It is unbelievable to me that we would use our Constitution to deal with an issue like that," the Wisconsin Democrat said Tuesday during a meeting with The Capital Times editorial board.

Feingold, who serves as the ranking Democrat on the Constitution subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said the committee held hearings on the subject this past summer.

"I think we did very well in pointing out how inappropriate it is for the federal government to have a constitutional amendment to take the decision away from the states," he said. "I think it's really an abuse of the Constitution."

Find the full text at: <http://www.madison.com/captimes/news/stories/64277.php>

- William Weld and two Ex-Attorneys-General Urge the Passage of the Gay Marriage Law

Boston Globe, January 5, 2004

By Raphael Lewis, Globe Staff

Saying the "rule of law and the legitimacy of the courts" are at stake, former governor William Weld, two former state attorneys general, and two top lawyers will deliver a letter to all 200 legislators today, urging them to enact into law the Supreme Judicial Court's ruling allowing gays to marry.

The letter, signed by Scott Harshbarger, attorney

general from 1991 to 1999, and James M. Shannon, his predecessor, says that efforts by opponents of same-sex marriage to create an alternate civil union system have "no legal justification."

"We see the SJC's ruling as unequivocal: The existing ban on marriage for gay people is unconstitutional," reads the letter, authored primarily by Harvard constitutional scholar Laurence Tribe. ". . . We

urge each of you as members of a coordinate branch of government sworn to uphold the constitution, and the rule of law, to use the remainder of the time period in the court's stay to take any and all steps possible to facilitate the orderly issuance of marriage licenses to qualified same-sex couples."

The letter will arrive on lawmakers' desks as they return to session today after the winter holidays and prepare to take up the issue of the legal status of gay relationships.

- City Reviews Gay Weddings
Rochester Democrat & Chronicle, January 3, 2004 - At issue is legality of a license to marry

By Rick Armon, Staff Writer

Prodded by a gay city councilman, Rochester officials are exploring whether they can legally

give marriage licenses to same-sex couples - a practice now barred in New York state.

"There's nothing different about a gay person being married and a straight person being married," said Councilman Tim Mains. "It's a civil right and civil benefits come from marriage."

He asked city officials last week to research the issue. He and other gay activists say that denying marriage licenses to same-sex couples is discriminatory, especially because many legal benefits of marriage aren't available through civil unions or domestic partnerships.

Find the full text at:

http://www.rochesterdandc.com/news/0103132QR1E_news.shtml

**The existing
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Person of the Year Runner-up PFLAG Parents

Many people in the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community were outraged when U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) in April compared gay and lesbian couples to people who practice bigamy, polygamy, incest and adultery.

People wrote letters, protested his local offices, and called for him to resign his Senate leadership post. Two couples from Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays of Philadelphia really got the senator's ear. Armed with family photographs, PFLAG Philadelphia president Fran Kirschner, her husband Allen, and Dick and Melina Waldo of southern New Jersey drove to Washington, D.C., to tell Santorum why his comments were hurtful to their families.

The couples were told they would only have 10 minutes with Santorum, but the meeting ran for more than half an hour before the senator finally stormed out, tripping over a chair.

While the Kirschners and Waldos probably did not change Santorum's mind, their voices were clearly heard.

And the local PFLAG chapter's advocacy does not stop there. PFLAG activists have been involved in most major gay-rights initiatives in the city, meeting with key players such as Republican Mayoral candidate Sam Katz and Philadelphia School District chief executive officer Paul Vallas. These efforts have made the group one of the most active community organizations in the city.

For its members' dedication to their loved ones and the community at large, PFLAG Philadelphia is a runner-up for PGN's Person of the Year. As Santorum learned last spring, arguing with parents who love their children is no easy task.

And PFLAG parents do not advocate solely for their own children. Many of the moms and dads involved have adult children who no longer live in the city, yet they are still dedicated to the community on behalf of all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. This sort of dedication is a valuable resource that is not easily found. And as the gay-rights movement continues to gain clout, allies such as the members of PFLAG will be increasingly vital to its success.

Learning to Deal, Love and Then Laugh

Washington Post, By Roxanne Roberts, December 15, 2003, Washington, DC,

It was Mother's Day in December on Thursday night, when 91-year-old Elsie Frank was honored for being a proud mom. Frank, the parent of openly gay congressman Barney Frank, was honored as an activist and role model by Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays at its 30th anniversary gala at the Grand Hyatt. "It's really sad that you have to be courageous to say who you are," said the vibrant Frank. "But it's so important to stand up and fight for what you believe in."

PFLAG is all about equality, acceptance and motherly (and fatherly) love. "How you identify your family is up to you and nobody else," said PFLAG Executive Director David Tseng. Frank was honored along with chanteuse Barbara Cook, Sen. Barbara Boxer and Maryland student Stephanie Haaser, the straight River Hill High School junior who made national headlines last month when she kissed a female classmate to protest homophobia.

The party for 300 was a high-spirited pep rally with parents and children and partners, full of laughs and coming-out stories. "Even though my mother is a gay icon, she still had to deal with it," joked Cook's gay son, Adam LeGrant.

All most parents need, said proud son Barney Frank, is a chance. "Most people have been better than we thought," he said. "The reality is that they really aren't homophobic. They just thought they were supposed to be."

For full text:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A64940-2003Dec14.html>



Safe Shelters for Transgender People

"I don't think most Americans have any idea how much discrimination transgender people face," said Matt Foreman, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Executive Director. "If they did, more people would be doing something about it. Transgender people who lose their jobs because of discrimination, then lose their homes because they can no longer pay the rent or mortgage, are still likely to get a 'your kind is not welcome here' from an emergency shelter. I am hopeful that this guide will be a tool for shelters to make changes so that all people have a safe and warm place to stay."

"Transitioning Our Shelters: A Guide to Making Homeless Shelters Safe for Transgender People" is a joint publication of the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Earlier this year, the National Coalition for the Homeless adopted a nondiscrimination resolution covering transgender people. The guide combines the transgender expertise of the Task Force with NCH's expertise on shelters to produce a usable guide that is suitable for homeless shelters across the country. "Our goal was to ground our policy recommendations in the reality of shelter life. That is why the recommendations are based on successes at real shelters across the country," said Lisa Mottet, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Legislative Lawyer for the Transgender Civil Rights Project and lead author of the Guide.

"Transitioning Our Shelters: A Guide to Making Homeless Shelters Safe for Transgender People" is available for free download from the Task Force publications library. (<http://www.TheTaskForce.org/library>).

Rev. V. Gene Robinson Seeks to Heal NH Rift

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, January 4, 2004
By Maeve Reston, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

CONCORD, N.H. - In the two months since the Rev. V. Gene Robinson was consecrated as New Hampshire's new Episcopal bishop and became the nation's first openly gay bishop, he has had to make some small and sometimes unsettling changes.

With great reluctance, he has finally decided to give up his front-room office in Concord. He worried that church members would think he was less accessible. But his security advisers convinced him that he couldn't work in front of a large glass bay window. If he had stayed there, he said, they told him he might as well paint a target on his back.

It was a line that might have prompted great anxiety, but Robinson delivered it to laughter yesterday in remarks to more than 200 clergy and lay people gathered for the first time to discuss the future of the New Hampshire Episcopal diocese after his consecration.

In speeches full of humor (often at his own expense), Robinson tried to make it clear that he hopes the worst is now over and that he is ready to move forward with the diocese in what he sees as their mission to reach out to those - who like himself - are viewed by some as being on the margins of society.



MTV Broadcast Opportunity

MTV is gearing up to launch an exciting, new, news-focused broadcast initiative, Choose or Lose. Choose or Lose is the title of MTV's year-long coverage of the presidential race and PFLAG has an opportunity to assist producers in support of one of the significant issues of GLBT rights and same-sex marriage. We are looking to identify people within the community who are willing to share their story. Down the road, the network might like to follow a young couple (17-27) who would like to marry, but are finding that laws, to date, prohibit it.

Interested in learning more? Have a candidate about whom you would like to apprise us?
Please contact: Alice Leeds, PFLAG Communications, 917-523-5029