



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 ▼ March/April/May 2004
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Help Stop NH Senate Bill 427

Ruth Smith, Board of NH Freedom to Marry

The New Hampshire Freedom to Marry Coalition (NHFTM) is excited about recent rulings from the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court stating clearly that same sex couples in the Bay State are entitled to equality and legal protection through marriage. We are energized by the response to our Engagement event held in January (see related article). However, we must continue on the defensive before we can move forward towards marriage equality here. Senate Bill 427 has been introduced in the legislature and if passed would restrict marriage in NH to "one man and one woman". This part of the bill is redundant, since NH law already states that. In addition SB 427 would also refuse to recognize any legal relationship between members of the same sex that might be granted by other states, such as VT's civil unions or MA's marriages. That means that if your gay child who lives in Massachusetts gets married and then later decides to move to NH to be closer to you, their marriage would be null and their rights would be taken away. **This bill must be stopped!**

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PFLAG NH Advisory Meeting

Thursday
 May 13, 2004
 7 to 9 PM

Desserts & Beverages
 Havenwood

Christian Avenue, Concord, NH
 All are welcome

We look forward to a wonderful Advisory Meeting. We hope many former members, friends and Advisory members will come to share this event.

Our special guests will be V. Gene Robinson, Episcopal Bishop of the Diocese of New Hampshire and Jeffrey C. Perkins, author.

V. Gene Robinson was ordained the Bishop of New Hampshire in Durham on Sunday, November 2, 2003 at the Whittemore Center. His ordination was a very special event for the Diocese bringing bishops, Episcopalians

and the press to celebrate from around the country. It was a historic event.

Gene is a 1969 graduate of the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee with a B.A. in American Studies/History. In 1973, he completed the M.Div. at the General Theological Seminary in NY. Upon moving to NH in 1975, Gene co-owned and directed an accredited girls' summer camp. From 1978 to 1985, Gene was Youth Ministries Coordinator for Province I. He is one of the founders of Concord Outright, a support group for gay/lesbian/questioning teens. He has been Canon to the Ordinary for the Episcopal Diocese of NH since 1988.

He lives with his partner, Mark Andrew, in Weare, NH. He enjoys entertaining and cooking, gardening, music and running. Gene is the father of two grown

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History is Being Made and Preserved

Thanks to the generosity of Roberta Barry, President of PFLAG NH and co-owner of Take 1 Video, of Keene, the historic event, "Engagement, the Next Step to Marriage" (see related article on p. 2) was captured on film. Roberta's gift of time and expertise is greatly appreciated because, not only will NHFTM have an important piece of history preserved for the future, but anyone who missed this inspiring event can have access to the encouraging words of Mary, Michele and the NHFTM Board. If any PFLAG chapter wants to purchase or borrow a copy of the video tape they should contact NHFTM at 603 223 0309.

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NHFTM has successfully led the fight to defeat two similar bills in the NH House in past years, however this senate bill will not be as easy to defeat. This Senate is not as friendly to GLBT issues as in previous sessions and we no longer have a governor who will stand with us for equality. Please go to the NHFTM web site (www.nhftm.org) to get more information about this bill. Then call or write your state senator and tell them to vote NO on SB 427.

To find out who your state senator is, go to the State of NH web site, or call your town hall. If you speak with your senator and get a commitment about how they will vote, let us know by sending an email to info@nhftm.org

Hearing on Senate Bill 427

by Carol S. Perkins

On Tuesday, February 17, 2004 over 400 people attended the hearing on Senate Bill 427. This bill hopes to redefine marriage in NH as a union of one man/one woman and would reject same-sex marriages or civil unions legitimized in other states.

The crowd filled Representatives Hall to voice their feelings about the recognition of same-sex marriage. Churches represented differing views. V. Gene Robinson, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of NH, many Unitarian Universalist ministers, and United Church of Christ ministers spoke against the bill and for equal rights. A Chancellor from the Catholic Archdiocese of Manchester, many bible based faiths and families spoke in favor of keeping the one man/one woman concept. There were many PFLAG members present at the hearing and the NHFTM group had a strong presence. Many gays, lesbians and parents told inspiring stories.

As I listened to the testimonies, my feeling went from one extreme to the other. Many people just don't understand how this issue is about civil rights being denied to our community.

It was a heart filled event.

Successful Engagement, On the Road to Marriage

By Ruth Smith, Board of NH Freedom to Marry

On January 29 New Hampshire Freedom to Marry (NHFTM) sponsored "Engagement, the Next Step to Marriage". Over 130 people, from all parts of New Hampshire came to hear Mary Bonauto, lead

attorney for Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) in the case that won the right for same sex couples to legally marry in Massachusetts. Mary spoke about the ruling given in November by the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts that stated it was unconstitutional to deny the rights of civil marriage to same sex couples. The court stated that anything other than equal marriage would be unacceptable. This is exciting news and Mary helped to shed light on that news and put it in context. Attendees were energized to help New Hampshire move in the same direction.

Michele Granda, also from GLAD, highlighted some of the

NH laws which relate to the rights and responsibilities of marriage. Same sex couples cannot participate in most of these rights and responsibilities without the opportunity to legally marry. These laws touch on issues like visitation of a partner in the hospital, getting joint auto insurance, being allowed to share a room in a nursing home, rights for making funeral arrangements for a deceased partner, and protection in the case of a split. Michele's research provides valuable information so that NH residents can articulate specifically what same sex couples are being denied by not having access to civil marriage.

Freedom to Marry board members also spoke about what it will take to bring about legal marriage for same sex couples in NH. Education, outreach, advocacy and funds are all needed. Part of the goal for the event was to engage more volunteers to help with those steps. Many enthusiastically signed up that night.

More are needed. Please visit the NHFTM website at www.nhftm.org

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(ADVISORY, Continued from page 1)

daughters and a new grandchild.

Gene was chosen the Person of the Year by the Advocate Magazine and will be honored on March 15, 2004 at the 15th Annual Leadership Awards sponsored by the National Gay lesbian Task Force in New York City.

Jeff Perkins is the co-author of "You Have the Power: Choosing Courage in a Culture of Fear." (May 2004, Tarcher/Penguin) with Frances Moore Lappé, author of the classic, "Diet for a Small Planet."

Lately it seems, that we are constantly being told about all there is of which we need to be afraid. We hear about orange alerts and flu outbreaks, job layoffs and staggering national debt. It seems as though our lives and those of our loved ones are continuously placed at risk. One normal response to fear is to shut down and retreat. We may linger in safe but mind-numbing careers, safe but unfulfilling relationships, just to avoid the terror of the unknown.

What if fear was not a negative force, but a positive one? What if fear could be a source of energy and strength, an invitation to plunge forward, and not a signal to retreat? This is the centerpiece of Jeff's message in "You Have the Power."

Sharing his personal journey, as well as those of others, author Jeff Perkins will discuss how we can help ourselves and those around us see our fear as a signal of our potential. He will show how working with our culture's fears can produce amazing results in the struggle for human rights.

Jeff is the founder of a Boston-based community network, Curious Minds (www.curiousminds.org) and leads workshops on working with fear.

Jeff is the son of Carol and John Perkins in Plymouth. He grew up on a dairy farm, was a great student and graduated from Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana with a degree in Politics and Peace and Global Studies. He received his masters degree in American Studies from the University of Massachusetts, Boston. He lives in Boston.

Talking Points

On the recent Opinion of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (SJC)

The SJC Opinion says that government may not deny marriage rights to same-sex couples.

- The Justices stated that civil unions do not offer the same protections and rights as marriage and, therefore, are unconstitutional and violate the equality and liberty guarantees of the Massachusetts Constitution. The fact that "prejudice exists is not a reason to insist on less than the Constitution requires."

Human rights should not be put to a vote

- It is undemocratic and wrong to put peoples' civil rights to a vote. Putting people's human rights on the ballot is the first step to writing discrimination into the Constitution.

- When one individual's civil rights are put to a vote, like some popularity contest, no individual's human rights can be safe and guaranteed.

- The only issue for legislators is whether or not they will go out of their way to write discrimination into the Constitution and take away rights from gay and lesbian families and their children.

Civil Unions

- The Court rejected the proposed civil union remedy and said: "The history of our nation has demonstrated that separate is seldom, if ever, equal."

- The Court said "no amount of tinkering with language will eradicate that stain" of exclusion from marriage rights. "The dissimilitude between the terms 'civil marriage' and 'civil union' is not innocuous; it is a considered choice of language that reflects a demonstrable assigning of same-sex, largely homosexual, couples to second-class status."

- The SJC emphasized that every religious faith remains free to make its own decisions about whom to marry and on what terms. The court's role is to uphold constitutional guarantees for all citizens.

**What if
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Lifeline Guide

Rainbow Resources of NH, Inc. is proud to announce publication of its new electronic Gay Lifeline guide for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender community of northern New England. The third in a series of community guides published by Rainbow Resources and the Gay Info Line of NH, this is the first directory to be published exclusively on the internet as an Adobe PDF document. Six hundred organizations, professionals and businesses are listed in this directory with electronic, phone and mail contact information included plus a fifty word description of each entry. Gay Lifeline PDF guides are available for free download to anyone or any organization. Hard copies of the directory are available for \$10 to cover printing and shipping costs.

Rainbow Resources of NH, Inc is a 501C3 non profit with the mission of providing free access to current information for and about the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community of New Hampshire. All donations are tax deductible. Any business, organization or group in NH, VT, ME, and northern MA can be listed in future editions of the Gay Lifeline at no charge. Paid advertising opportunities will also be available.

For further information go to the Rainbow Resources site on the internet at <http://www.rainbowresources-nh.org> or write us at 26 South Main Street, Box 181, Concord, NH 03301.

Plymouth University Gay-Straight Alliance

by Sara Brown, ALSO President

New Name: ALSO Gay-Straight Alliance
(formerly: Alternative Social Lifestyles Organization)

ALSO, the Gay/Straight Alliance of Plymouth University was founded in 1978. Once known as the Alternative Lifestyles Support Organization, ALSO was first introduced because students and teachers at Plymouth University felt that there was not enough support for the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and allied community. Students found it very difficult to find the support they needed because, at the time, it was very difficult for students to be "out."

As time went on, the Plymouth University campus and surrounding community became more accepting of ALSO and its members. However, interest for the group faded and grew with each entering class that Plymouth State had.

Today the group has experienced new growth and has become much more involved in the school and its community.

We are always looking for new members.
Please Contact us. <http://www.plymouthalso.com>



From a Religious Perspective

Rabbi David M. Horowitz, Rabbi Emeritus, Temple Israel, Akron, Ohio

The Hebrew word for marriage, kiddushin, conveys the notion of a significant and spiritual relationship between two individuals. There is no doubt that the love shared by same sex partners embodies that definition. The ceremony itself is a public vehicle to express that loving relationship. It allows any couple, same sex or opposite sex, the means by which they bring God into their union. From a religious perspective, they are married. Any attempt to limit marriage to "a man and a women" ignores the sacred bond that exists among all loving couples. Any civil attempt to restrict marriage is an infringement on religious freedom as well as an act of blatant discrimination.

Reverend Craig Anderson, Minister, United Church of Christ, Morris County, New Jersey

Perhaps like me, you have been deeply moved this week by the stories being told on the steps of City Hall in San Francisco as thousands of gay couples stand in line to be married. The stories they tell are filled with gratitude, commitment and love. How sad it has come to this, that minority groups in our society after so much progress in the last 50 years are singled out for unfair, unjust treatment, being denied rights which ought to extend to all. But still, I hear in the stories a new movement of divine spirit, calling us to affirm loving relationships, unions of love and life-long fidelity.

PFLAG NH Annual Meeting

A Walk Through GLBT History

by Roberta Barry, President PFLAG NH

This year's annual meeting was a time to review our history, celebrate our victories, and energize for all that lies ahead.

In spite of intimidating winter weather, PFLAG NH held their annual meeting on February 7th at the Auditorium at Havenwood in Concord.

We are now truly blessed with Gordon and Cynthia Sherman's residence at the Havenwood Retirement Community, for they are able to secure their excellent public auditorium for PFLAG events. Our connection with the Havenwood/Heritage Heights community has also grown since responding to Rev. Robert Wood's offer to share his history of the "gay movement" with us. Bob has lived at Havenwood for the past 18 years and the first of those years with his spouse, Hugh Coulter.

During the meeting, Bob shared his time line as a gay rights activist, beginning long before the Stonewall uprising and before PFLAG began. He and Hugh were married in October of 1962. Bob's stories of his life and work were very compelling. I'll offer more about Bob Wood's story in the next newsletter.

We thank him for his presentation and for reminding us that we must honor the efforts and

the memories of all who have been activists in this important work. Furthermore, I would add, that we must learn from our history, so that we can move forward in our fight for equality for our GLBT loved ones.

Another part of our program was to hear our Vice President, Margie Lindsley. She added to Bob's historical time line, drawing from her own recent studies in a course she completed on Gay History at New England College.

To close the program portion of the meeting, we invited the founding PFLAG board members who were in attendance to share their memories of why and what they did to begin cultural awareness of the needs of their families.

In doing so, we also honored and offered condolences to Lynn Kaufman, whose husband, Hans passed away in January of this year.

Also honored was Paula Spink who is semi retiring after serving six years on the board. We are grateful that she has signed up to continue helping, by being on the Newsletter committee.

The last part of the program was viewing a 10 minute video from the Alliance for Justice Democracy Project. It details the right-wing agenda of confirming conservative ideologies to lifetime appointments to the federal judicial bench. The video highlights the extremism of the nominees across a broad spectrum of issues. Such extremism is troubling to supporters of GLBT equality. This video is free to PFLAG chapters. If you would like a copy, contact the Alliance for Justice Democracy Project at 1-202-822-6070 or at www.allianceforjustice.org.

My challenge to those in attendance was to not only be aware of the political conservative agenda, but to act by becoming more involved in PFLAG's mission of education and advocacy.

By presenting the time line historical perspective, it was painfully obvious that we must choose to offer more than the support piece of our threefold mission. We must educate more and advocate more, or we will find ourselves back to the beginning of the time line. That was a time when gay people, out of fear of their lives, were compelled to live a life of secrecy.

We followed the program with a brief PFLAG NH Board meeting for election of officers. I shall again accept the challenge of leading PFLAG NH as your President for 2004. Margie Lindsley and Carol Perkins will co-lead as Vice Presidents. Gayle Spelman will be secretary, and Cheryl Elliot will continue as treasurer. Jeremy Winnck will fill the key role of Web Master and Recording Secretary. If you wish to have a copy of the full report, please contact Sheila Dion at admin@pflagnh.org.

San Francisco Marriage Stories

PFLAG National will be sending out a special edition newsletter that will focus on stories of PFLAGers and their family members who have been married in San Francisco. They have some wonderful stories compiled already. If you have a story to add, please send your good news to David Pendleton at editor@pflagnh.org.

