



You Have a Home in PFLAG!

GREENSBORO, N.C.

Vol. 16 No. 9

September, 2009

Welcome to PFLAG Greensboro. We offer a safe, confidential space in which to explore our feelings and understandings about the GLBT experience, especially "coming out" and what this means to families and other loved ones. Listen and share, as much or as little as you feel comfortable with, knowing that others can understand. Welcome especially to our returning members whose love is so healing.

Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered 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. PFLAG provides an opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

PFLAG Greensboro

**September meeting
Tuesday, September 15
7:30 p.m.
Friendship Friends
Meeting House
1103 New Garden Road
Greensboro, NC**

Upcoming Events

PFLAG Greensboro:

Meeting: Tuesday, September 15, 2009, 7:30 PM

Dara Nix-Stevenson will be our guest at our Sept 15 "Back to School" chapter meeting. She is co-chair of GSAFE and is a teacher.

GSAFE (Gay Straight Advocates For Education) works to provide a safe school environment for LGBT people.

**Meeting: Tuesday, October 20, 2009, 7:30 PM
Program to be announced**

Saturday November 7, 9:30 AM to 5 PM

**PFLAG Safe Schools Training – "Cultivating Respect"
Wesley Long Hospital Education Center**

**Jamie Curtis, Senior Field and Policy Coordinator for PFLAG National, will do the training
Registration - \$15; Includes lunch**

Special Events

**NC PRIDE, Saturday, September 26, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Rally at 12 noon, Parade at 1 p.m., followed by
entertainment until 5 p.m. PFLAG Greensboro will have
a booth.**

Monday, OCTOBER 11, 2009

**National Coming Out Day
National march in Washington, D.C.**

February 2010 – Date TBD

**GSAFE and PFLAG joint sponsorship of a Teacher
Workshop.**



Parents, Families, and Friends of
Lesbians and Gays
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Wedding bells chime in Vermont

Bill Slimback and Bob Sullivan, who have been together for 17 years, were among the first couples to be wed in Vermont after midnight when the state's equal-marriage law took effect. "It feels wonderful. It's a day I've been long waiting for, and a day I truly, honestly thought would never come," said Slimback, a 38-year-old unemployed Teamster. [Google/The Associated Press](#)

Minister shares story of gender transition

The Rev. David Weekley, a minister at a United Methodist Church congregation in Oregon, on Sunday shared with his flock the closely held secret that he had gender-reassignment surgery in the 1970s, almost 10 years before he started the process of becoming a minister. Bishop Robert T. Hoshibata, leader of the Oregon-Idaho Methodist conference, said in a statement that "this decision does not, in any way, change [Weekley's] faith or his commitment to the ministry to which he was ordained, nor does it change his status as an elder in good standing."

News from Equality NC

Last week the North Carolina Court of Appeals handed down a decision that is a huge step forward for children of same-sex couples.

In a unanimous opinion written by Judge Wanda Bryant, the panel upheld Senator Julia Boseman's second-parent adoption of her son and rejected her former partner's contention that the adoption was invalid because they were a same-sex couple.

The Court of Appeals rightly interpreted the statute and focused on the best interests of the child, which in this case was for him to continue to have two loving, responsible parents. We hope this decision will encourage judges across the state to set aside prejudice and give children of same-sex parents the same rights and protections that children of married, opposite-sex couples take for granted.

Not surprisingly, the right wing is up in arms, and they're out to overturn this important decision through legislation.

The News & Observer has already reported that Senator James Forrester--the primary sponsor of the marriage discrimination constitutional amendment--thinks it's time for the legislature to define what kinds of families are allowed to adopt.

And Representative Paul Stam has already called the decision the "lowest common denominator adoption policy."

Apparently focusing on the best interests of a child isn't good policy in their minds.

* * *

2009 Legislative Achievements

As the North Carolina General Assembly adjourns its 2009 session today, it's time to look back at our achievements this year--and to look forward.

Today's adjournment marks the sixth year in a row that Equality NC and our legislative allies have blocked a marriage discrimination constitutional amendment. Our state remains a beacon of hope as the only Southern state that has not written anti-LGBT discrimination into our state constitution.

Together, we have done extraordinary things this year. With the amazing support and hard work of people like you, we not only held back repeated attacks on our families, but made history by passing the first LGBT-inclusive law in North Carolina, the School Violence Prevention Act (SVPA). Our hard work on that bill helped ensure that not only our kids, but all vulnerable kids who are victimized by bullies, get the protection they deserve.

We also helped protect the health of our young people by winning passage of a bill to restore comprehensive sex education in our schools. We fended off proposals to reduce the number of people served by the AIDS Drug Assistance Program and cut HIV prevention funding, and we worked successfully to prevent the complete elimination of Medicaid HIV case management in the state budget.

* * *

Judge rules gay-straight alliance can't be forced to change name

A gay-straight alliance at a Florida high school must be allowed to keep its name, hold campus meetings and to continue with its mission to "advocate for tolerance, respect and equality" of LGBT people, according to an order from U.S. District Judge Henry Lee Adams. The decision makes final a temporary ruling issued in March in a lawsuit filed on behalf of two Yulee High School students by the American Civil Liberties Union against the Nassau County School Board for allegedly refusing to let the club call itself a gay-straight alliance.

Durham city council backs marriage equality

DURHAM - The City Council got a standing ovation Monday night when it unanimously passed, without discussion, a resolution supporting civil marriage for same-sex couples.

"It is simply a statement" and has no effect on the law, City Attorney Patrick Baker said before the vote.

Nevertheless, when the outcome was announced much of the full-house audience in the council chamber broke into applause and then stood.

The resolution states: "The City Council of the City of Durham endorses and supports the rights of same sex couples to share fully and equally in the rights, responsibilities and commitments of civil marriage."--News & Observer, Aug. 17

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October Advocacy: Let's March ... in Maine

9/3/2009 - This October, there's nowhere more important to be than on the ground defending marriage equality in Maine from a Prop 8-like ballot measure. If you have the ability to give time beyond North Carolina, we hope you'll consider a volunteer vacation in Maine.

As a small, statewide advocacy nonprofit, Equality NC's focus is on achieving equality and fairness for LGBT North Carolinians. We don't generally work on national issues and have limited capacity. We do, however, encourage our supporters to take part in broader portions of the movement.

There are many ways to participate in the national movement for equality, and Equality NC encourages all people to work in their assorted constructive ways to create positive change.

This October, the option we are suggesting to our activists is to take a [volunteer vacation](#) and help protect marriage equality in Maine.

Maine is one of the five states that have marriage equality for all citizens, including LGBT Mainers. However, anti-equality forces are trying to eliminate this in a referendum in November (using a model of Prop 8, which eliminated marriage equality in California).

People who take this volunteer vacation will get an intensive, hands-on campaign experience while working with a great team from around the country. Volunteers will be hosted and trained by local supporters and allies.

There are several reasons we feel supporting our sister statewide advocacy organization, Maine Equality, will benefit our own efforts here in North Carolina.

The direct experience and skills you gain at networking and issue advocacy will translate back to similar efforts here in North Carolina. Volunteers will learn to identify supporters, run get-out-the-vote activities, find other volunteers, and participate in all aspects of a statewide equality campaign.

Also, the effort will have immediate feedback. The campaign will either translate into success or failure at preserving civil marriage equality in Maine.

Success would be thrilling for participants, knowing their efforts directly helped preserve fairness for LGBT folks in Maine and marked another milestone along the path to full civil equality. Failure would be galvanizing, just as Prop 8 last year awoke the sleeping giant of equality activism, and we could then channel that energy into direct local efforts.

Even if you don't have the resources to participate in this national campaign, you can make a difference by spreading the word about the national movement or taking part in local action. Any action you take will make a difference and it makes you part of the broader movement towards civil equality, fairness, and justice for all.

"For a new season of hope that my Uncle Teddy envisioned, where we rise to our best ideals, and close the book on the old politics of race and gender, group against group and straight against gay, we pray to the Lord."

Jack Kennedy Schlossberg prayer (grandson of Jack)
at Ted Kennedy's funeral)

Obama administration defends marriage ban, but backs its repeal

The Obama administration is attempting to walk a fine line in its approach to a federal lawsuit seeking to overturn the Defense of Marriage Act. The Justice Department "does not support DOMA as a matter of policy, believes that it is discriminatory, and supports its repeal," but must defend it in court as it does with all federal statutes being challenged, according to the brief. The filing was accompanied by a statement from President Barack Obama, who writes: "This brief makes clear, however, that my Administration believes that the Act is discriminatory and should be repealed by Congress."

The Obama administration scored a victory of sorts in federal court on August 25 when a judge threw out an Orange County gay couple's lawsuit claiming that the federal Defense of Marriage Act is unconstitutional.

Just last week a top Justice Department lawyer sought dismissal of the lawsuit on grounds that the couple, Arthur Smelt and Christopher Hammer of Mission Viejo, had failed to identify any personal harm suffered because of the 1996 law, which bars the federal government from treating same-sex marriages as legal or granting federal benefits to same-sex spouses.

The judge agreed, explaining in his seven-page decision that the absence of "an injury in fact" meant the court lacked jurisdiction to consider the broader constitutional questions.

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Lutherans to allow gay clergy

Leaders of the nation's biggest Lutheran denomination voted Friday to allow gays in committed relationships to serve as clergy in the church -- making it one of the largest Christian denominations in the country to significantly open the pulpit to gays.

Previously, only celibate gays were permitted to serve as clergy in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a denomination of 4.8 million members. But delegates to a church assembly voted 559-451 to allow gays in "life-long, monogamous" relationships to serve as clergy and professional lay leaders in the church.

The vote is the culmination of a years-long process in the ELCA, and was accompanied by plenty of emotion at the convention in Minneapolis. After standing in long lines to reach microphones during debates that extended all day, some delegates shook and others cried as they expressed their opposition or support of the measure.

But the passage of the resolution now raises questions about the future of the denomination, which has 4.6 million members but has seen its ranks steadily dwindle, and whether it will see an exodus of its more conservative followers or experience some sort of schism.

Conservative dissenters said they saw various options; including leaving for another Lutheran denomination or creating their own unified body. A contingent of 400 conservative congregations that make up a group that calls itself Lutheran Core is to meet in September. Leaders of the group said their plans were not to split from the Evangelical Lutheran Church but to try to protect its "true tenets" from within.

Among so-called "mainline" Protestant denominations, distinguishable theologically from their more conservative, evangelical Protestant counterparts, both the Episcopal Church and the United Church of Christ already allow gay clergy members.

The Episcopal Church has endured the most visible public flashpoints over homosexuality, grappling in particular in the last few years with the consecration of gay bishops. It affirmed last month, however, that "any ordained ministry" was open to gay men and lesbians.

Earlier this year the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) rejected a measure that would have opened the door for gay ordination, but the margin was narrower than in a similar vote in 2001. The United Methodist Church voted not to change its stance barring noncelibate homosexuals from ministry last year, after an emotional debate at its general conference.

But the Evangelical Lutheran Church's heavily Midwestern membership and the fact that it is generally seen as falling squarely in the middle of the theological milieu of mainline Protestantism imbued Friday's vote with added significance, religion scholars said.

I am a man in some ways different from other men. But most people are different from other people in some way. - And God still loves us."

--The Rev. David Weekley,
in a sermon explaining his gender transition

School district settles harassment suit; Teachers heckled student thought to be gay

MINNEAPOLIS , Minn. (Aug. 14) - The Anoka-Hennepin School District has settled a lawsuit filed by the family of a high school junior who said he was harassed by teachers who thought he was gay. The district agreed to pay \$25,000 to the family after an investigation by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights found two teachers made the boy the subject of classroom jokes and innuendos about sexual orientation.

The state investigation showed that one teacher told her class the boy's "fence swings both ways." It said another teacher told her class the boy enjoyed wearing women's clothes.

The school district denied it violated the state's Human Rights Act. Anoka-Hennepin Superintendent Dennis Carlson says the two teachers remain employed in the district.

Maine rules in favor of young transgender

By Abigail Curtis, BDN Staff

AUGUSTA, Maine — July 01, 2009 - The Maine Human Rights Commission ruled Monday that the Orono School Department discriminated against a transgender child by denying her access to the girl's bathroom.

While the school department's lawyer warned that schools around the state may not be ready to manage the practical fallout from the decision, civil liberties advocates hailed the ruling as an advancement of human rights.

<http://www.bangordailynews.com/detail/109732.html>

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Nationwide kiss-in for marriage equality

SALT LAKE CITY (Aug. 15)– The Mormon church's vigorous, well-heeled support for Proposition 8, which banned gay marriage in California last year, has turned the Utah-based faith into a lightning rod for gay rights activism, including a nationwide "kiss-in" Saturday.

The event comes after gay couples here and in San Antonio and El Paso, Texas, were arrested, cited for trespassing or harassed by police for publicly kissing. In Utah, the July 9 trespassing incident occurred after a couple was observed by security guards on a downtown park-like plaza owned by the 13 million-member Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The court case was dismissed, but the kiss sparked a community backlash and criticism of the church.

"I don't think that kiss would have turned out to be the kiss heard round the world if it were not for Proposition 8," said Ash Johnsdottir, organizer of the Salt Lake City Kiss-In.

Atali Staffler, a Brigham Young University graduate student from Geneva, Switzerland, said she joined the 200 or so people who filled a downtown amphitheater for the event because she has watched her gay father and many gay friends struggle to find their place. The 31-year-old, who was raised Mormon but is not active in the church, said the church shouldn't be involved in Prop. 8.

"I encourage them to promote the values they believe in and to defend their religious principles in advertisements, but civil rights have nothing to do with religious principles," she said.

Twenty-two people, many of them strangers to one another, gathered under the scorching sun on Washington's National Mall to participate in the national smooch. They were gay and straight, couples and singles of all ages, with placards that read "Equal Opportunity Kisser" and "A Kiss is a Not a Crime."

"This is America. A kiss on the cheek is OK," said Ian Thomas, 26, of Leesburg, Va., who organized the Washington Kiss-In. "It's got to be OK. If not, we're in serious trouble."

About 50 people, mostly gay and lesbian couples, gathered at Piedmont Park in downtown Atlanta and kissed for about five minutes.

"You think that America is evolving into a gay-friendly nation," said Randal Smith, 42, "but what happened in Texas and Utah show us it's still a long way off."

Workplace bias protections by end of 2009

The Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which would ban workplace bias based on sexual orientation and gender discrimination, has a chance of becoming law by the end of 2009, according to Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., its lead sponsor in the Senate. The measure was introduced in the Senate on Wednesday with 38 co-sponsors, including Sens. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass.; Olympia Snowe, R-Maine; and Susan Collins, R-Maine. Out Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., is the chief sponsor of the House version, which was introduced in June. Advocate.com (8/5)

PLEASE PAY YOUR 2008-2009 MEMBERSHIP BY SEPT. 30TH!!

PFLAG Greensboro must pay our Chapter dues to PFLAG National in October, based on the number of members we have.

Please be sure your information is correct so you are included in our membership!!

Membership Information

We invite all GLBT, their families, and friends to join PFLAG Greensboro or to renew your membership. Anyone 18 years of age or older who supports our mission is welcome. As a member, you will receive our local newsletter and be kept informed of news and events of interest to you. Membership in PFLAG Greensboro automatically includes membership in PFLAG National, which entitles you to receive the PFLAG National newsletter and to vote in local and national issues within PFLAG. You do not have to be a member of PFLAG to participate in our meetings or other activities.

We do not sell or share our mailing list.

Annual Dues are:

- \$30: Individual membership
- \$20: Limited income (Student)
- \$50: Household
- \$100 or more: Angel

Is this a renewal?

- Yes** **No**

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