



You Have a Home in PFLAG!

GREENSBORO, N.C.

Vol. 17 No. 8

August 2010

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, and

Welcome 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
August meeting

SPECIAL EVENT

Tuesday,

August 17, 7 p.m.

Unitarian Universalist Church
of Greensboro
5603 Hilltop Road
James town, NC 27282

Special August Meeting!!

Tuesday August 17th, 2010, 7:00 PM

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Greensboro
5603 Hilltop Road, Greensboro, NC**

PFLAG Greensboro

Invites you to hear

Reverend Gil Caldwell,

PFLAG National Board member;

Associate of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr,

and advocate for civil rights for

African Americans and the LGBT Community,

discuss the intersection of the

black, church, and LGBT communities

in the pursuance of equal rights.

Please join in the discussion following:

**“Could the LGBT Human Rights struggle
create a new national unity,
without any effort to seek uniformity?”**

Reverend Caldwell

**will also present a photo from the memorial
for Unitarian Universalist Reverend James J. Reeb,**

a fellow associate of Reverend King

who was killed at Selma, AL,

to Reverend Alex Richardson of the

Unitarian Universalist Church of Greensboro.

**THIS WILL BE PFLAG GREENSBORO’S
AUGUST MEETING!**



Parents, Families, and Friends of
Lesbians and Gays
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Special Events

September 6th to 12th, 2010
[Southern Comfort Conference](#)
Crowne Plaza Ravinia
Atlanta, GA

Saturday September 25, 2010
[North Carolina PRIDE Festival](#)
Duke East Campus
Durham, NC
http://www.ncpride.org/pride/pride_2010.shtml

Saturday October 2nd, 2010
[Blue Ridge PRIDE](#)
Asheville, NC

Saturday October 2nd, 2010
[PRIDE Charlotte](#)
Charlotte, NC

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NOTE: All underlined titles are hyperlinks to the full story

Soulforce action at Presbyterian Church General Assembly

By Cris Elkins

Soulforce conducted a “pray in” at the 219th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in Minneapolis, July 3-10, with high hopes that, after 40 years of study, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people would finally be welcomed as full and equal members of the body of Christ. Those hopes were dashed when a tricky procedural maneuver sent the recommendation of the marriage committee back to the presbyteries for another 2 years of study. The marriage committee had voted 38-18 to change marriage to a covenant between “two people” rather than “a man and a woman”. An attempt to reconsider and bring the marriage committee recommendation to the floor for discussion and a vote was defeated. Justice delayed is justice denied.

We felt we had no choice but to protest this tricky procedural maneuver and act of spiritual violence. A little after 4 pm on Friday, July 9, about 20 members of Soulforce stood up and proceeded to the podium singing the choral response “Hear our Prayer, O Lord” and carrying signs that read; Prayer: Ordination, Marriage, Pensions. These were the 3 items concerning GLBT people on the GA agenda. As we stood in front of the GA chanting and holding our signs, the Moderator, Cindy Bolbach, called a temporary recess and came down and talked to each of us while the police were called. 11 of our members were arrested for misdemeanor trespass when we refused police orders to leave.

Covenant Network, More Light Presbyterians, That All May Freely Serve, and others within the PCUSA who are working for inclusion were opposed to our act of civil disobedience and did not participate. Soulforce applauds their work but believes that our more radical action was needed to help move the PCUSA toward a more just, loving, and welcoming church. Peace, unity, and purity are worthy goals of the denomination but not at the expense of justice, the integrity of the gospel’s ethic of love, or the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.

We are not some abstract issue to be studied but real human beings who suffer greatly because of anti-gay religious teachings and practices. The spiritual, emotional, and psychological abuse is real. The discrimination and hate are real, not abstract. Everyday prejudice, ignorance, and intolerance may not threaten physical violence and it may not hang over your head in everything you do. But it wounds, it hurts, and it can become a constant source of emotional and spiritual pain. Long term effects can be depression, anxiety, mental breakdowns, substance abuse, and other unhealthy, self-destructive behaviors—even suicide.

Heartfelt thanks to the GA for extending benefits to same-gender spouses and domestic partners of church staff. This is the fourth GA to approve removing ordination language requiring “fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman, or chastity in singleness.” A majority of the 173 presbyteries must now approve deleting the “fidelity-chastity” requirement by July 10, 2011 before gays in committed relationships can be ordained as ministers, deacons, or elders. Last year 4 of the 5 NC Presbyteries, including our own Salem Presbytery, switched from no to yes on the new ordination standard but the change was defeated when 94 presbyteries voted no.

NC Legislative Short Session Ends Well

The North Carolina General Assembly has adjourned for 2010, and I'm pleased to report success this year on our major legislative priorities. Stopping negative legislation is always a top priority for us, and no anti-LGBT legislation was successful this year. For the seventh year in a row, Equality North Carolina worked with legislative allies to block the marriage discrimination constitutional amendment. We're proud to remain the only Southern state that has not written anti-LGBT discrimination into our constitution.

It was a tough budget year as the state faced an \$800 million shortfall, but we and our partners in the North Carolina AIDS Action Network fought hard to win additional support for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program, to help get life-saving medication to more low-income North Carolinians living with HIV. Securing an additional \$14.1 million for ADAP--more than doubling the state's contribution to this program--is a huge victory. This will allow the state to begin serving the most vulnerable people on the waiting list, though additional funding is still needed to fully restore the program.

How'd we do it? We mobilized our supporters to send emails, make phone calls, and even come to Raleigh and meet with their legislators on our successful Day of Action. We built strong coalitions with non-LGBT organizations. We reached out to the media to engage fellow North Carolinians on our issues. And we continued to have a strong professional lobbying presence in the Legislative Building throughout the session.

We'll be working hard to build support for anti-discrimination legislation at next year's "Long Session." The legislature may have gone home, but our work is far from over.

—Ian Palmquist, Executive Director
Equality North Carolina

Federal judge overturns Prop. 8

SAN FRANCISCO (Aug. 4) —A federal judge in California has struck down the state's voter-approved ban on same-sex marriage, ruling Wednesday that the state's controversial Proposition 8 violates the U.S. Constitution. Chief U.S. District Judge Vaughn Walker found in his ruling that the ban violated the Constitution's equal protection clause under the 14th Amendment. Governor Schwarzeneger and Attorney General Brown refused to defend Prop 8 in court.

The closely watched case came some two years after Californians voted to pass Proposition 8, which defined marriage as a union between a man and a woman.

Supporters of Prop 8 immediately appealed to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. The case will probably go to the US Supreme Court.

[New Jersey Supreme Court rejects marriage case](#)

Same-sex couples suing for the right to marry in New Jersey must begin a new legal fight in the state's lower courts before its highest court will weigh in. The state Supreme Court's decision not to hear the case was a defeat for marriage-equality advocates, who claim the state's civil-union measure does not fulfill the high court's now-4-year-old mandate to equalize the rights and benefits afforded to heterosexual and same-sex couples in New Jersey. The Star-Ledger (Newark, N.J.) (7/27)

[Lesbian student, school district settle suit over prom](#)

A Mississippi school district that canceled a high-school senior prom rather than allow Constance McMillen to bring her girlfriend to the event has agreed to pay McMillen \$35,000, plus legal fees, to settle a discrimination lawsuit. The Itawamba County School District did not acknowledge wrongdoing under the settlement but said it would adhere to a nondiscrimination policy. USA TODAY/OnDeadline blog (7/20)

Charges dropped against gay veteran protester

WASHINGTON (July 14) — Prosecutors have dropped all charges against an openly gay Iraq War veteran who twice chained himself to a White House fence to protest the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Lt. Dan Choi and James Pietrangelo, a gay army captain honorably discharged for disclosing his sexual orientation, were in court Wednesday on charges of failure to obey police orders during the March and April protests. All charges were dropped against them.

[Marriage equality is now the law in Argentina](#)

Argentina this week became the first Latin American country to enact nationwide marriage-equality legislation, approving a bill that also allows gay couples to adopt children. Strong support from President Cristina Fernández helped push the effort over the top. Argentina joins nine other nations that extend full marriage rights to same-sex couples. The first marriage of a same-sex couple is scheduled for Aug. 13 in Buenos Aires. Google/The Associated Press (7/22)

News Briefs

[United Nations accredits major gay-lesbian organization](#)

LA Times, July 19, 2010

(Reuters) -- The United Nations on Monday accredited a major gay and lesbian organization that Egypt, Russia and others had tried to keep out as a group permitted to lobby at the world body.

The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, a U.S.-based advocacy group, had applied for "consultative status" at the U.N. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) three years ago.

Last month, a U.N. committee that accredits nongovernmental groups rejected the application after "no" votes from countries including Egypt, Russia and China. Western diplomats vowed at the time to override the committee vote.

The United States, Britain and other Western delegations urged the full 54-nation ECOSOC to vote on the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission's application, which it did on Monday.

It was approved 23-13, with 13 abstentions.

Among those who voted "no" were Egypt, China and Russia, along with Niger, Morocco, Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. Those voting in favor included the United States, Britain, Canada, Germany, Brazil and Japan.

"I welcome this important step forward for human rights," US President Obama said in a statement. "Today, with the more full inclusion of the International Lesbian and Gay Human Rights Commission, the United Nations is closer to the ideals on which it was founded, and to values of inclusion and equality to which the United States is deeply committed."

[Father of a transgender tween speaks out](#)

by [Melissa Jeltsen](#), August 2, 2010

What's it like to raise a transgender child? In this Thrive exclusive, a father reflects on his experience. Click [here](#) to read more about his daughter and a [new medical treatment at Children's](#) that offers hope to transgender teens.



My 12 year old transgender daughter is my mentor. It's tough to put into words what a profound impact this small person has had in changing my core values, but since the young age of five, she has unknowingly

encouraged me to open my eyes and heart to new ideas. It hasn't been easy. I've watched her experience severe emotional pain and physical frustration, but thanks to support and guidance, I've watched as she's become a confident, happy and healthy child. And as she changed, I changed too.

For a lot of men, change is hard. Over the last 25 years, my body has aged. I can no longer run a six minute mile, touch the rim of a basketball hoop or bench press 200 pounds. But my emotional change has been more shocking. Most men rarely experience something that radically adjusts their core values. When it happens, you quickly learn it can force you to revisit your youth and question the foundation you've built for your family.

Much of how I used to define myself as a man was passed on from my father. He offered me guidance through values, typical to his upbringing and generation, like "be a man, weather the storm." Throughout adolescence and young adulthood, I was confident these core beliefs made me the type of man who could help my family strive and prosper. I would later learn that there was a great deal of room for improvement.

What happened next would rock my world, test my marriage, and challenge who I thought I was as a person. My baby, my beautiful son would begin to teach me that he was really my daughter.

[Read more at Thrive, Children's Hospital Boston's Blog](#)