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NOTED PROVIDENCE PSYCHOTHERAPIST  
TO SPEAK AT MARCH 26 MEETING

I find that, in response to homophobia, the majority of G/L/B/T people have developed a remarkable sense of resiliency and responded in many creative ways. I will never call a gay person wrong for doing what he or she had to do to survive.

So says Thomas Fronczak, LICSW, a therapist with the Angell Street Wellness Collaborative, who works primarily with gay, lesbian, and bisexual people and their families. This experienced professional has volunteered his services to us, speaking at our March 26 meeting on "Getting Through Coming Out." Mr. Fronczak is well known, not only as a therapist for individuals, couples, and families, but also for his regular support groups for gay fathers and for G/L/B/Ts in the process of coming out, which he calls "an act of intimacy -- letting those close to you know who you really are."

He plans to shape his March 26 presentation around our questions and concerns, so please be sure to mark your calendar for this important meeting.

CHANGES in IMMIGRATION LAW  
WOULD BENEFIT SAME-SEX COUPLES

U. S. Representative Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) says he will introduce legislation in Congress this month to amend the immigration law to help binational same-sex couples. Current U.S. law -- which recognizes only heterosexual marriages -- disallows gay and lesbian citizens from sponsoring foreign national partners. "Here you have people who are longtime partners and who are kept separated by the immigration laws in a way that married couples [are not]," said Nadler, who represents a district that includes New York City's heavily gay Chelsea neighborhood. "It's just not right, and it's unfair, and we ought to change it." Nadler hopes the bill, called the Permanent Partners Immigration Act, will get a hearing this year.

-- Todd Savage, The Advocate

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News From Our Chapter

Our thanks to Ellen Salvas, Abe Gershman, Eileen Grey, and Roy and Jane Eastman, for providing refreshments for recent Chapter meetings.

Do you have any of our Chapter's library books around the house? Please bring them to a meeting so that others may use them, or call the Chapter at 751-7571 to arrange for pickup.

We have a new Editor! We are pleased to announce that our Newsletter Editor is now Montine Ross. Montine is carrying on the excellent work of Gwen Howard and Pat Falcon, who created the attractive design and then composed and published the Newsletter with thoughtful originality for well over a year. Thank you so much Gwen and Pat, and welcome, Montine

Please remember that this is YOUR Newsletter, open to your ideas for stories, poetry, clippings from other media, and letters. Write to pflag @ ids.net or call the Chapter at 751-7571.

FAMILY VOICES FOR EQUALITY  
PFLAG NATIONAL CONFERENCE

IN WASHINGTON, DC  
April 28 - 30, 2000

Don't come to this conference because Stockard Channing will appear, even though Ms. Channing plays the mother of a lesbian in an upcoming TV movie. Don't come to the conference to hear Jimmy Creech, the Methodist minister punished by his church for performing same-gender unions. Don't even come to hear Betty DeGeneres, Ellen's mother; or Representative Barney Frank, who is openly gay; or the dozens of other high-profile, ardent supporters of our cause.

Come because this is your once-every-three-years chance to feast your eyes on hundreds of parents who love and support their gay children as we love ours -- or as you, a gay person, love your parents who have made the journey to acceptance. There will be workshops on improving chapters, dealing with grandparents, religious issues, organizing in a hostile climate, youth and safe schools, bisexuality and transgender, and dozens more. There will be entertainment, fine food, and networking, networking, and more networking! You'll learn and be uplifted.

To register, or to find out about special conference hotel rates, call National PFLAG at 202-467-8180; or email [info@pflag.org](mailto:info@pflag.org); or go to the website: [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org). Or call our chapter at 401-751-7571.

The Eastern United States Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Conference for the year 2000 will be held April 7 through 9 at the University at Albany, featuring Paul Siegel speaking on the history of Gay Student groups and their legal struggles. For information and registration, call our Chapter number (401-751-7571) or 518-442-5640, or go to their website [www.albany.edu/~lgbi](http://www.albany.edu/~lgbi).

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News from Here and There . . .

Legal Advice for Gays -- A Helpful Book

As long as states deny same-gender couples marriage and its contractual legal protections, the partners will need alternatives. Frederick Hertz, a California lawyer specializing in gay family law, sets them out in "Legal Affairs: Essential Advice for Same-Sex Couples" (Owl paperback, \$17.95). It covers legal aspects of renting and home ownership, property agreements, methods for resolving disputes, tax and family matters including children.

A Letter to Time Magazine (excerpt)

Not only is there a "greater number of visible and comfortable gays" today, as you point out in your report -- there is also a greater number of visible, comfortable, and vocal parents of gays who are proud to express their unconditional love of all children, straight and gay alike. We stand proudly with our gay children; we help educate an ill-informed public; and we tirelessly advocate equal civil rights for all, regardless of sexual orientation. Iris Bluementahl, Past President PFLAG Long Island, NY.

A Letter to National Catholic Reporter  
(excerpt)

The characterization of PFLAG as "pagan" will be news to the vast majority of our members who are people of faith -- many active participants and leaders in churches and synagogues. Far from warning us against PFLAG, bishops and other religious leaders should be encouraging families with a gay or lesbian loved one to join us. We in PFLAG love and cherish the children that God has blessed us with, and seek to include them as persons God created them to be. We believe in living our lives in truth and openness, keeping families together.

Melina Waldo, PFLAG Regional Director, New Jersey

#### GTECH Extends Domestic Partner Benefits

In an effort to promote diversity in the workplace, GTECH Holdings Corp. has extended healthcare benefits to the domestic partners of its U.S. employees.

The benefits are now available to an employee's unmarried domestic partner of the same or opposite sex, as well as the dependent children of the domestic partner. According to a 1999 Society for Human Resources Management study, domestic partner health-care benefits are offered by only 9 percent of private employers nationwide.

from the Rhode Island Parents' Paper, February 2000 edition.

#### More About the Straight Spouse Network

The PFLAG Straight Spouse Network is a confidential network offering support, networking and information to all whose partners are coming out as non-heterosexual -- and thus helping the coming-out partners as well. It provides free non-phobic information, a lending library and monthly area support groups in Hartford, CT, and Northampton, MA. Feel free to call Jane Harris at 413-625-6033, or e-mail her at aharris@valinet.com.

Greater Providence PFLAG attendees will find books and booklets at all of our meetings that can help the straight spouses and their partners and children. Come and see.

A MESSAGE FROM . . .

KIRSTEN KINGDON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR of NATIONAL PFLAG

(or: Why We're All Here!)

When my son told me he is gay, I realized how little I knew about homosexuality. At times I felt alone. I turned to PFLAG and found the support, education and advocacy opportunities I needed. I connected with other parents and family members who listened, supported, and helped me learn more. Now I want to make sure that everyone who needs PFLAG's vital assistance can find it.

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SCHOOLS CAN BE MADE SAFER FOR  
GAY, LESBIAN, and QUESTIONING YOUTH  
HERE'S OUR CHANCE!

Here's our chance to learn how to be "Safe Schools" speakers in our own state. On Saturday, March 11, we can participate in a free Speakers' Training Workshop from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at PYCO in Fall River. It is sponsored by Massachusetts chapters and facilitated by Warren Blumenfeld, a riveting speaker, writer, and teacher.

"We can no longer let a minority of voices dictate the ignorance that leads to homophobia. We can no longer ignore harassment and violence in schools, no matter how difficult it is to discuss. Safety in schools must come before political ideology. We must say so often -- to parents, to school officials, to school boards and in the community. Our first priority must be our children. All of them." Those are the words of PFLAG National President Paul Beeman.

In Massachusetts and several other states, PFLAG representatives and their allies have been speaking to teachers, school administrators, school boards, and even high school and college student groups about the discrimination and harassment gay, lesbian, and questioning youngsters suffer in school. It ranges from kids using "gay" and "faggot" as insults -- even when taunting their straight classmates -- on up to actual physical assaults. The PFLAG

presentations have sensitized educators to problems they hardly knew existed, suggested ways of solving those problems, replaced prejudice with facts, and so have made the schools safer.

To get more information, or to register to join our contingent, call Pam (781-891-5966) or call Greater Providence Chapter (751-7571). It should be a great day. Breakfast and lunch will be provided.

From an Ann Landers column:

Dear Ann,

I am 26 years old and made up my mind a few months ago that I'd been in the closet long enough. I told my older brother that I'm gay. He said he didn't have any trouble accepting the problem as long as I kept quiet about it. He suggested that I not have my significant other, Ed, with me at family functions (weddings, graduations, Thanksgiving and Christmas), most of which take place at this brother's home. In other words: keep Ed out of sight.

I would like to make it clear that my relationship with Ed is not a passing fancy, but one we hope will last a lifetime. We have been a couple for almost three years and are devoted to each other. Of course, we conduct ourselves properly at all times. I hate being estranged from my family, but I've made up my mind that I am not going back in the closet.

Ann's reply: Tell your brother that Ed is your life partner and you expect him to be included in the same way that the significant others of the rest of the family are included. Let him know that if he cannot accept your relationship you will understand, but you do not plan to attend without Ed.

###END###