

TIME TO SHOW YOUR PRIDE!

Hold the Date -- Saturday, June 17 is Gay Pride Day in Rhode Island. If you've ever attended, you know what a colorful, exciting, uplifting day it is. Last year a contingent of more than thirty members and their families and allies represented Greater Providence PFLAG, and this year we hope to have even more, proudly wearing our chapter T-shirts, on the State House lawn for the late-morning rally.

You can meet PFLAGers from other chapters, hear greetings and encouragement from local officials and leaders of gay and lesbian support groups and agencies, and then join the parade -- the only parade that goes through downtown Providence. Just as last year, we'll be joined by a flotilla of boats and end up at India Point Park, where the music, entertainment and festivities will last until late afternoon.

We plan to have a convertible car riding along with our contingent, to carry those who wouldn't be comfortable walking the whole parade route, and we've reserved a space at the park for a table where we can offer our literature and "Straight But Not Narrow" buttons, spread the PFLAG word, and show the pride we feel in supporting real family values.

So do plan to be there. Park your car that morning at India Point and take a free shuttle bus to the State House for the rally. Invite all your friends and family, of whatever sexual orientation and whether or not they have gay family members, to put on their walking shoes and join us. See you June 17!

California Newspaper
Turns Down PFLAG Announcement

The San Luis Obispo (CA) Gazette has refused to publish any more announcements of PFLAG meetings, citing their policy of not "promoting the gay lifestyle or abortion - not writing any articles on the subjects that may be construed as supportive." Many reporters and editors have quit en masse in protest, and many advertisers have left. Readers have asked that their names be removed from the mailing list. The staff members who have quit have spent a great deal of time talking to talk show hosts and other reporters.

The Gazette has been inundated with calls and letters, "80% of them supportive," according to Todd Hansen, Chief Operating Officer. Later he made it clear that not only was PFLAG banned, but also any letters protesting the ban or any editorials or articles that showed support for gay rights or pro-choice views on abortion. The City of San Luis Obispo, a trendy liberal bastion surrounded by conservative Republicans in the countryside, is more fired up than anyone there can remember.

Ron Bast, a long-time local writer who quit his job as editor over the policy, said "It's a story that I think is important. Everybody has a take on gays and abortion. But I think we all have a sense of what's fair. It's just patently obvious that in this case, what the owner is doing is not fair."

Mr. Bast asked Mr. Hansen how the paper would cover the annual AIDS Bike-a-thon from San Francisco to Los Angeles, which brings 10,000 people through town, presumably most of them in support of gays. He said the paper would not cover

it. The owner of the newspaper, David Weyrich, explained the policy in a front page editorial: "We strongly believe in the family, as God defines it, and we are strong supporters of the sanctity of life."

In San Luis Obispo, which has a sizable gay and lesbian population, the news of the ban was met with sadness and disappointment. A local cafe owner who is gay offered free meals to any of the staff members who quit. The Chamber of Commerce voted to remove their advertisements from the paper and the performing arts center pulled its items from the paper's calendar.

- condensed by Mary Horan from a NY Times 3/19/00 story

News From Our Chapter

In March, Barbara, Myra, and Carol-Anne went to a free speakers' training to prepare us to introduce high school and college students, teachers and administrators to the true nature of homosexuality, and what can be done to spot and STOP harassment of g/l/b/t students and/or teachers. Barbara's description of her first assignment as a speaker appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

Mary suggests that, besides writing or emailing newspeople and legislators to encourage a gay-friendly action, we should write to thank them when they have supported civil rights for gays. At our June meeting you can pick up her Xerox'd pages of good ideas. One member has already thanked her own insurance company for withdrawing sponsorship of the hateful "Dr. Laura" program.

Abe and Ellen, wanting to know more about the insidious fringe Catholic group "Courage", that seeks to "cure" homosexuality through prayer and abstinence, went to one of their meetings and brought back a tape and some notes we hope to share with the membership at an upcoming meeting.

Jane arranged for Roy and Myra to be interviewed in April on the radio broadcast "Good News For a Change". It was a good outreach and exposure for PFLAG, and we heard a tape of it at the May 2 meeting.

Graduate students recently asked for parents of lesbians and gays to contribute to the research for their theses. Neva, Myra, Eileen, and Mary and their children responded by filling out questionnaires on the coming-out process. Their anonymity will be scrupulously protected.

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