

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Inc.

is a support, education and advocacy organization.

Founded in 1981 by 25 parents, PFLAG now services approximately 70,000 members and speaks for thousands of others. PFLAG affiliates are located in more than 450 communities in this country and overseas.

PFLAG is a tax-exempt, non-profit organization that is not affiliated with any political or religious institution.

Mission Statement

PFLAG of Greater Providence, an affiliate of National PFLAG, is dedicated:

to supporting parents on their journey to understanding and acceptance of their gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender children;

to helping the children -- of whatever age -- to understand and come out into loving relationships with their families;

to educating an ill-informed public about homosexuality, and

to the attainment of full civil rights for all.

Our Meetings are held on the **first Tuesday of each month** from 6:30—8:30 p.m.

At The Providence Center, 520 Hope Street
(off Doyle Avenue), Providence.

PFLAG is a welcoming place for parents and friends of lesbians and gays, but we are much more than that. Gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people are also encouraged to attend our meetings. Gays come with or without their family members, and parents and friends come with or without their gay loved ones. Confidentiality is assured. PFLAG IS FOR YOU.

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of Greater Providence

November / December 2001
Upcoming Meetings
Please Mark Your Calendar
Tuesdays, November 6 and December 4
Regular Meetings, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at The Providence Center

PFLAG AND THE HEALING CONNECTION

Haven't we all seen it in these awful weeks since the terrorist attacks? People are calling and e-mailing -- not only their nearest and dearest -- but people with whom they haven't been in touch for years. They seem to sense that the slights and disagreements that made them drift apart are trivial. The connection is now important. We're glad we survived, and no one knows if this is our last chance to make amends and heal the rifts.

We're all working hard to comprehend. The attacks struck at the very core of our sense of safety and order. Before September 11, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Americans often felt unsafe, or at least vulnerable, in large and small ways, even on a good day. They and their families know all too well the devastating effects of hate. They have witnessed it first-hand. Now that feeling has grown even more acute and has blanketed the nation. We struggle against fear and uncertainty as we work our way through physical, emotional and economic losses.

Connecting, understanding and healing is a great part of what PFLAG is about. Parents attend meetings to try to understand their children's orientation. Grown children come to ask how to mend relationships with their families. All come to be in a safe place where they can express their concerns freely, surrounded by people who have made the journey to acceptance themselves.

"Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me."

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
Page 2

**When you no longer need PFLAG...
PFLAG needs you!!**

**Please volunteer to help at one of our meetings
or with chapter duties!!**

News From All Over...

Corporate Good News

Home Depot, the largest home improvement retailer in the country, is adding sexual orientation to the list of characteristics covered by its nondiscrimination policy, reversing an earlier decision in which the company said the addition was not necessary. The company thus joins American Airlines, Apple, Avaya, Eastman Kodak, Lucent, Verizon and Xerox.

Gannett, the nation's largest newspaper publisher, will offer full medical benefits to same-gender (and heterosexual) partners who live together for a full year and sign an affidavit declaring there is financial dependence between them.

Boston -- The decision to tell his family he was gay didn't go well for one Bridgewater State College student. His father threatened to cut him off financially and left the junior feeling "like trash". "I was very scared," he said. "There was no way I could support myself." But a new Bridgewater scholarship helps gay and lesbian whose families refuse to support them financially. The school says it's the only one of its kind. The school's Safe Colleges Task Force, which advocates for gays, raises and allocates the funds.

Gay Ambassador -- Michael E. Guest, 43, was sworn in as U.S. Ambassador to Romania in

September, in a ceremony conducted by Secretary of State Colin Powell, who acknowledged Guest's partner of six years, Alex Nevarez.

Guest is only the second openly gay person to serve as an ambassador. The first was James Hormel, who was given an "executive appointment" by President Clinton after Congress had blocked it for two years.

Guest is a 20-year career Foreign Service Officer who has served in Hong Kong, Moscow and Prague.

NEWS FROM OUR CHAPTER:

Refreshments -- Thanks to Jan, Suzanne and Mary, who brought refreshments to recent meetings. If you would like to provide juice and cookies to any upcoming meeting, please call the chapter number.

Brochure in the works -- The Imperial Court, a state-wide organization that runs entertainments and raffles to raise funds for local gay-related causes, has promised us a substantial grant so that we can design, produce and distribute a brochure describing what PFLAG offers and how we help the parents. We plan to put this brochure into the hands of every physician and mental health provider in the state, so that they can refer patients and clients to us. Everyone with ideas and/or experience creating such a brochure is welcome to participate in this project. Call the chapter number or email pflag@ids.net.

Safe Schools -- Every day in this country, tens of thousands of children skip school because they are afraid to go -- afraid that they will be insulted, tormented, beaten up, or worse. For gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender students, school can be a living hell. They are four times as likely to skip school because they feel unsafe. For gay teachers, coming out can be professionally hazardous -- which means that our children have few, if any, adult role models in school. That this is still the case in the year 2001 is a scandal.

Two years ago, National PFLAG launched "From Our House to the Schoolhouse," a campaign to train teachers and school administrators in how to keep gay students safe from homophobia. Many chapters have had great success with this program, but we, instead, have partnered with The Safe Schools Institute, which does the same work in RI. Now the Institute is doing a brief telephone survey of all the state's secondary schools (as directed by National PFLAG) to see what their progress has been in combating homophobia among students and staff. Whether or not you have a school-age child, if you would like to call some schools with a prepared script, let us know.

Special note about 2002

Our January meeting cannot be held on our usual First Tuesday of the month, because New Year's Day falls on that day. So we will meet on the Second Tuesday of January, 2002 -- January 8.

Page 3

THINGS WE DIDN'T KNOW BEFORE SEPTEMBER 11

Did you know there was a National Gay Pilots Association? Did you think there were enough gay pilots to form an association? David Charlebois, an active member of the NGPA, was at the controls of American Airlines Flight 77 when it took off from Washington DC for Los Angeles on September 11, and died with hundreds of others when hijackers crashed it into the Pentagon. Charlebois, in his early 40's, had been flying for American for about ten years. Reportedly, all flight crews and pilots who worked with him knew he was gay, and liked and respected him, as did his neighbors in Washington, where he lived. He leaves a life-companion of fourteen years' standing.

One of the brave United Airlines passengers who thwarted hijackers' attempts to fly their plan into the Capitol or Camp David, by overcoming them and diverting the plane to rural Pennsylvania, was gay public relations executive Mark Bingham. Bingham called his mother, Alice Hoglan, from the plane minutes before it crashed, saying that he and some other passengers were planning to overpower the hijackers. Ms. Hoglan says that he had a reputation for fighting for civic justice, and had fought off muggers. "It gives me comfort," she said, "to know my son may have helped to avert the killing of many innocent people." Bingham, 31, was a member of a local gay rugby team in San Francisco and had planned to organize a rugby team for next year's Gay Games in Sidney, Australia.

New York Fire Department Catholic chaplain Rev. Mychal Judge, who was killed by debris while giving last rites to a victim at the World Trade Center on September 11, had years before won the love and respect of the traditionally homophobic Fire Dept., although he was known to be non-practicing gay. A NY journalist says "He was a wonderful human being. He had said publicly that it was terrible for gays to be kept out of the St. Patrick's Day Parade, and for the church to be doing it. He showed up in his Franciscan monk's cassock at many demonstrations for gay and AIDS causes. And he was there at every major fire tragedy in the City, lending moral support to firefighters."

More News From All Over...

South Africa -- A court ruled that gay and lesbian couples can adopt children, and the judgment is expected to be upheld when it is reviewed by the Constitutional Court in a few months.

Czech Republic -- The Prime Minister's Cabinet has thrown its support behind a draft law granting gay couples equal rights in areas such as inheritance and health insurance. Couples would be allowed to register their partnerships at local government offices, and severing a union would require a court-approved divorce. The law would give same-gender couples all the rights of heterosexual couples except for adopting children, and is expected to be passed by the legislature, although a Roman Catholic group is organizing to oppose it. Sweden, Germany, Denmark, and The Netherlands already have such laws (or broader versions), but the Czech Republic would be the first post-communist country to approve such a measure.

Massachusetts -- The State Senate approved a bill in October that would provide domestic partnership benefits to state employees. This is the fourth time in as many years that the Senate has passed such a bill; the House of Representatives has always defeated it. This year supporters think they can muster the votes to pass the measure, which would also give local communities the green light for similar packages. A spokesperson for the MA Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus said "Benefits are compensation. Decisions about them should never be determined by prejudice. If they were, you'd have to advertise "Heterosexuals - \$15/hour; Gays and Lesbians - \$11/hour."