



News & Views

Greater Providence Chapter
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

Volume 14, Number 3

Fall 2013

Transgender Couple Educates PFLAG Members and Friends

By Scott Mirani

(In order to respect the confidentiality of our guest speakers, their identities have been deliberately omitted)

Our Chapter had the pleasure of listening to the personal story of a transgender couple during our monthly meeting held on August 7th. As a young married couple residing in Rhode Island, they provided the meeting attendees an opportunity to listen to some of the intricacies of hormonal therapy, sex reassignment surgery and the resulting physical and psychological transformation. They shared stories of how family members and friends responded to their personal disclosure and the overall lack of societal understanding on transgender issues. Legal difficulties in changing one's gender in official documents (e.g. birth certificate) and how this may impact various marriage benefits enjoyed by heterosexual couples were also discussed.

After one member of the couple had made the transition from female to male, he had to deal with how and who to come out to in his workplace. He shared his new found perspective as a male member of society and his observations on sexism and "male privilege" when engaged in conversation with other men.

Our guests also helped to clarify the various terms often misused when referring to transgender individuals. We were able to ask many questions related to proper pronoun use and better understand fundamental terms such as gender and sexual orientation.

Although the United States has recently made great strides in terms of gay, lesbian and bisexual equality, more work certainly needs to be done for transgender individuals, such as adding "transgender" as a protected category in non-discrimination law. The couple concluded their discussion by mentioning the various support and advocacy organizations available in New England, such as TGI Network of Rhode Island. (See more information about TGI Network in our Member Resources section on Page 3.)

PFLAG Providence greatly benefited from the evening's discussion; and we look forward to further education about and from this very important group.



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Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians & Gays

Our Mission

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and their families and friends through:

SUPPORT: To support parents on their journey to understand and accept their gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender children; and to help children, of whatever age, to understand and come out into loving relationships with their families;

EDUCATION: To enlighten an ill-informed public,

ADVOCACY: To end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights.

PFLAG provides an opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

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

PFLAG is a welcoming place for parents and friends of all members of the LGBTQ community, but we are much more than that. Those who identify as gay, lesbian bisexual, transgender, or queer are also encouraged to attend our meetings., with or without their family members. Parents and friends may come with or without their loved ones who are members of the LGBTQ community.

Confidentiality is assured.

PFLAG/Greater Providence Board of Directors for 2013

President, Barbara Metz

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news from our chapter

Upcoming Speakers

Ray Sullivan, former Campaign Director for Marriage Equality



Rhode Island, will be our guest speaker at our **October 2nd meeting.**

Our **December guest speaker** will discuss the topic of **bi-sexuality.** If you have a

specific topic you would like to have addressed by a speaker or know of anyone whom you would like to recommend as a speaker for our Chapter, please contact **Scott Mirani** at scmpmr33@gmail.com.

The plan is to publish the newsletter on a bi-monthly basis. We have also made some changes to the newsletter. We have replaced our former logo with the new logo used by PFLAG National and we have added some color to reflect the new logo. This, of course, will only be visible if you get the e-mail version of the newsletter.

In deference to the cover story about our August presentation, this issue has a greater focus on transgender topics. Although we will provide a greater balance of topics impacting family, friends and members of the entire LGBTQ community in future issues, occasionally we may focus an issue on news affecting a particular group of the LGBTQ community, when it seems appropriate.

“Tell us what you think about our newsletter! We need your ideas, stories, photos and information to help keep the PFLAG newsletter interesting and relevant.”

PFLAG Newsletter Gets New Editor

The one thing about change is that it is always constant. This summer we said goodbye to long-time chapter members of the PFLAG family, **John Grigsby and Jim Vegher.** As a couple who has been together for 38 years, they last spoke to our group in December 2011 about their lives and accomplishments over the years. Upon retirement, they moved from the West Coast to Rhode Island in 2002 and they are now headed back to Oregon to take on yet another opportunity.

With this move we also lost our PFLAG Newsletter editor, as Jim graciously and expertly took on that role for PFLAG for many years.

Fortunately, we had a new volunteer waiting in the wings! **Sandra Richard**, one of our new Board members, will take on the task of **Editor for our newsletter.**

Tell us what you think about our newsletter! We need your ideas, stories, photos and information to help keep the PFLAG newsletter interesting and relevant. Please contact **Sandra Richard** at svrichard@cox.net regarding your comments, suggestions and submissions for the PFLAG Newsletter.

Refreshment Volunteers Needed!

What's a meeting without refreshments! Ours are voluntarily provided by our wonderful members. If you come to our meetings, please consider volunteering to supply the refreshments. All



you need to do is **contact Joan Bloom** at joanbloom@cox.net to sign up or sign up at a meeting. It's an easy process, as we don't ask for much and we provide you with simple instructions as to what to bring.

A Big “Thank You” to “Big Gay Al’s” Duckpin Bowling League!

Big Gay Al’s Duckpin Bowling League at Town Hall Lanes in Johnston sent our chapter a contribution of \$100 in August. Town Hall Lanes is owned by Rep. Frank Ferri and his spouse, Tony Caparco. This league has raised more than \$80,000 over the past 14 years to distribute to local organizations that work for gays and their allies. Our chapter is grateful to once again have been selected as a recipient of some of these funds.

Member Resources

The information listed below comes directly from each organization’s website.



Youth Pride, Inc.

YPI’s goals are to meet the unique and ongoing needs of youth and young adults impacted by sexual orientation and gender identity/expression through advocacy, support and empowerment to bring about social change. YPI offers a variety of programs and support for youth from ages 13-23. Contact them at:

Youth Pride, Inc.
743 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903
401.421.5626
info@youthprideri.org
http://www.youthprideri.org

TGI Network of Rhode Island

Incorporated in 2011, TGI Network of Rhode Island is the only statewide organization providing support and advocacy for the TGI community in Rhode Island and surrounding areas. General contact information for TGI Network:



TGI Network of Rhode Island
PO Box 40365
Providence, RI 02940
E-mail: info@tginetwork.org
Phone: (401) 441-5058 (voicemail)

TGI Network Provides the Following Peer Support Groups:

Borderlands is a peer-led support group open to TGI people and to those who are exploring whether a TGI identity is a good description of their experience. Please email borderlands@tginetwork.org for more information.

TransPartners provides loved ones of transgender people with a confidential, safe space to explore the impact of a partner’s TGI identity on their relationships and to connect with other partners of transgender people.

Contact partners@tginetwork.org for more information.

Trans Family New England is a free and confidential group meeting for parents (and other family members) of someone identifying as transgender, gender variant, or intersex.

Contact jewcy15@gmail.com for more information.

The Southern New England FTM (female-to-male) transgender peer support, information, and social group is open to people who identify somewhere on the trans-masculine spectrum and/or who were assigned female at birth but do not feel that is an accurate or complete description of their gender.

Contact sne_ftm@tginetwork.org for more information.

Straight Spouse Network

Serves straight spouses, post disclosure couples, families and the community. For more information go to their website:

<http://www.straightspouse.org>.

It’s amazing what the power of parents and love can do!

HRC 2013 Buyer’s Guide

A guide to companies, products and services that support lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender workplace inclusion. The full 2013 guide can be downloaded online at www.hrc.org/buyersguide.

Here is a sample of scores for some of the retailers in Rhode Island:

Best HRC Rating: 80 to 100

Businesses with one of HRC’s highest scores. Consumers should make every effort to support these companies:

Ambercrombie & Fitch	100
Barnes & Noble	100
Best Buy	100
Gap	100
Limited Brands	100
Bath & Body Works	
Victoria’s Secret	
Nordstrom	100
Office Depot	100
Sears	100
Kmart	
Lands’ End	
Staples	100
Shaw’s	100
Target	100
TJX/HomeGoods	100
Marshalls	
T.J. Maxx	
Walgreens	100
American Eagle	95
J.C. Penney	95
Crate & Barrel	90
Hallmark Cards	90
Macy’s	90
OfficeMax	90
REI	90
Williams-Sonoma	80
Pottery Barn	

Fair HRC Rating: 46 to 79

Companies that have taken steps toward a fair-minded workplace, but where there is still progress to be made.

Aeropostale	75
Home Depot	75
PetSmart	75
Toys ‘R’ Us	75
Whole Foods	75
L.L. Bean	65
Burlington Coat Factory	60
CVS	60
Rite Aid	60
Wal-Mart/Sam’s Club	60
Stop & Shop	55

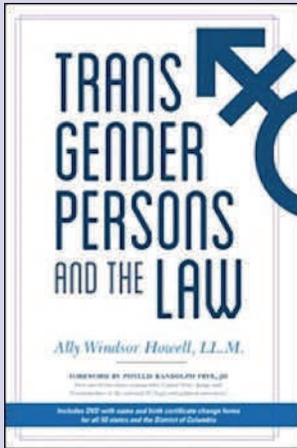
Poor HRC Rating: 0 to 45

Businesses that have more work to do in furthering equality. If possible, consumers should make the choice to support a more fair-minded company.

True Value/Party Central	40
BJ’s	35
Famous Footwear	35
Ann Taylor	30
Bed Bath & Beyond	30
Christmas Tree Shops	
Lowe’s	30
The Men’s Wearhouse	30
Trader Joe’s	30
Ace Hardware	15
Anthropologie	15
Children’s Place	15
Collective Brands	15
Payless ShoeSource	
Stride Rite	
Dick’s Sporting Goods	15
Foot Locker	15
Jo-Ann Stores	15
Kohl’s	15
Michaels	15
Pier 1	15
Chico’s	0

American Bar Association Publishes Legal Guide for Transgender People

The American Bar Association released a groundbreaking legal primer for transgender adults before, during, and after their transitions with regard to numerous legal spheres that in many states remain murky. The 313-page "Transgender Persons and the Law," written by lawyer and trans woman Ally Windsor Howell, is a comprehensive guide for both cisgender legal practitioners and transgender



individuals to better serve a population Howell describes as "immigrants into the world of men and women." "Transgender Persons and the Law" is likely to become the definitive treatise for legal issues that have specific application to transgender persons throughout the United States," says Robert J. O'Toole, Esq., co-chair of the New York State Bar Association's Transgender Subcommittee. "I commend this book to any lawyer who might be representing transgender clients, or anyone who is interested in learning more about the special legal challenges faced by transgender people."

The ABA book is not inexpensive, as it is \$129.95, which is in line with most professional publications.

news from all over

Federal Government

In recent months, the Federal government has issued several decisions impacting the lives of gay and lesbian couples who were legally married in the U.S. or abroad. These decisions follow on the footsteps of the Supreme Court ruling in *United States v. Windsor*. On August 29th, The U.S. Department of Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service ruled that same-sex couples, legally married in jurisdictions that recognize their marriages, will be treated as married for federal tax purposes. The ruling applies regardless of whether the couple lives in a jurisdiction that recognizes same-sex marriage or a jurisdiction that does not recognize same-sex marriage.

"Today's ruling provides certainty and clear, coherent tax filing guidance for all legally married same-sex couples na-



Any same-sex marriage legally entered into in one of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, a U.S. territory, or a foreign country will be covered by the ruling. However, the ruling does not apply to registered domestic partnerships, civil unions, or similar formal relationships recognized under state law.

Then on September 4th, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder announced that President Obama has directed the Executive Branch to take steps allowing for same-sex spouses of military veterans to collect federal benefits.

The new policy means that the administration will no longer enforce statutory language governing the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense that restricts the awarding of spousal benefits to opposite-sex marriages only. The language, contained within Title 38 of the U.S. Code, has, until now,

"Today's announcement makes clear that enforcement of the provision in Title 38 defining marriage as between a man and a woman will now cease."

tionwide. It provides access to benefits, responsibilities and protections under federal tax law that all Americans deserve," said Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew. "This ruling also assures legally married same-sex couples that they can move freely throughout the country knowing that their federal filing status will not change."

Under the ruling, same sex couples will be treated as married for all federal tax purposes, including income and gift and estate taxes. The ruling applies to all federal tax provisions where marriage is a factor, including filing status, claiming personal and dependency exemptions, taking the standard deduction, employee benefits, contributing to an IRA, and claiming the earned income tax credit or child tax credit.

prevented the Executive Branch from providing spousal benefits to veterans—and in some instances active-duty service members and reservists—who are in same-sex marriages recognized under state law.

"Today's announcement makes clear that enforcement of the provision in Title 38 defining marriage as between a man and a woman will now cease," said Holder

Then again on September 18th, the U.S. Department of Labor announced that employers should recognize the legally performed marriages of same-sex couples when considering retirement plans or any provision that is governed by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). Continuing the "place of celebration" precedent for marriages, this guidance means that same-sex couples who are legally married in a

state that recognizes their unions can claim retirement benefits in any state. The term "marriage" will be read to include a same-sex marriage that is legally recognized as a marriage under any state law. Again, like benefits for federal employees, the benefits will not be extended to civil unions or domestic partnerships.

U.S. Departments of Justice and Education Reach Settlement in Transgender Student's Discrimination Case

On July 24th the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights and the U.S. Department of Justice announced a resolution agreement settling a complaint filed on behalf of a transgender student who was denied access to the appropriate restroom and locker room facilities. The student was also prevented from rooming with his male peers during an overnight trip. As part of the agreement, the school district has agreed to provide the student with access to the boys' restroom and locker room and treat him as a boy in all respects. The agreement also ensures that the district takes active steps to create a safe and inclusive environment for transgender and gender non-conforming youth by changing their policies to explicitly protect those groups of students and conduct district-wide training of personnel and students.

The federal government has now clearly stated that federal law protects transgender and gender non-conforming youth from discrimination in schools. School districts can no longer claim that treating a student differently because of their gender identity is not sex discrimination.

If you have further questions or your child's school is consistently denying your requests to treat the child consistent with their gender identity, please contact the National Center for Lesbian Rights for additional information and resources about your options. <http://www.nclrights.org/>

Marriage Equality in New Mexico?

by Myra Shays

The State of New Mexico has no law or constitutional provision for or against marriage equality. So, on their own, county clerks have been issuing marriage licenses to gay and lesbian couples. By mid-September, three counties had begun the practice, including the largest county, Bernalillo.

The state's top politicians stayed neutral on the issue, its three Catholic bishops said it was a matter for lawmakers, the attorney-general has declined to intervene, and an evangelical mega-church in the state's largest city was mum. "I've gotten some fairly nasty religious-related telephone messages," said one clerk, "but generally speaking I'm surprised by the relatively muted response from those who clearly disagree."

Experts and gay rights advocates say the lack of an uproar is a sign of how quickly public opinion has turned on the issue. One sociology professor said, "If this had happened five years ago, there would have been a public outcry. If it had happened two years ago, there would have been public concern...The dam broke quickly."

Several lawsuits had previously been filed seeking to force county clerks to issue the licenses. One clerk, predicting that the legal process was doomed to drag on, said, "Enough is enough. It's time to move forward." At the request of the clerks, the state Supreme Court has scheduled a meeting for October to decide if same-gender marriage is legal under the state's constitution.

A Rainbow Over (Some) Catholic Colleges

by Myra Shays

At prominent Roman Catholic universities across the country, such as Georgetown, DePaul, and the Catholic University of America, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students are finding increased acceptance and a more relaxed atmosphere. Georgetown's dean of students says he is confident that providing LGBT students support, freedom of expression, and a place to celebrate who they are does not conflict with the university's Jesuit heritage. He cites *cura personalis*, the Jesuit tenet that loosely translates into "care of the whole person," saying that Georgetown has an obligation to concern itself with the well-being of all students.

At Georgetown, the nation's oldest Catholic university "OUTober" is a month packed with celebrations of all things gay. There is a Gay Liberation Week, Gay Pride Month, a popular drag ball called "Genderfunk," and a Lavender graduation ceremony attended by the university president. There is an LGBT Resource Center with a full-time staff.

These events are not without their vocal critics, however. The archbishop of Washington recently received a lengthy petition signed by 2,000 Georgetown alumni condemning the school for promoting a culture of "moral relativism" and "radical autonomy." Providence College canceled a lecture in support of same-sex marriage by a gay philosophy professor, John Corvino, citing a church document that says that "Catholic institutions should not honor those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles." His appearance had been co-sponsored by nine departments and programs, and some of the organizers said the cancellation surprised them. The lecture has now been rescheduled for a future date next Spring.

Last year DePaul University and Catholic University of America both elected Catholic gay men as presidents of their student general assemblies. These gay activists and others seek to make institutional changes through a mix of theological debate and political maneuvering. They have called attention to the high rate of suicide among young gay Catholics. At Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, gay leaders persuaded administrators to change the code of conduct to include language condemning violence stemming from sexual orientation.

Chapter Meetings

PFLAG/Greater Providence meets the first Wednesday of each month from 6:45 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.:

The MET School
325 Public Street
Providence, Rhode Island

Upcoming Meetings

October 2, 2013
November 6, 2013
December 4, 2013
February 5, 2014

(NOTE: There is no meeting in January due to the New Year's Day holiday.)

Contact Us

PFLAG/Greater Providence
c/o 500 Angell Street, Apt. 212
Providence, RI 02906
(401) 751-7571

www.PFLAGprovidence.org
Email: PFLAGprovidence@gmail.com

Transgender Day of Remembrance

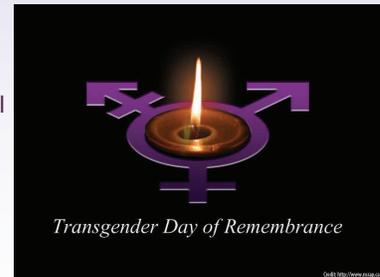
Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) is an annual observance on November 20 that honors the memory of those whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence. TDOR was started by transgender advocate Gwendolyn Ann Smith as a vigil to honor the memory of Rita Hester, a transgender woman who was killed in 1998. The vigil commemorated all the transgender people lost to violence that year and began an important memorial that has become the annual Transgender Day of Remembrance.

"The Transgender Day of Remembrance seeks to highlight the losses we face due to anti-transgender bigotry and violence. I am no stranger to the need to fight for our rights, and the right to simply exist is first and foremost. With so many seeking to erase transgender people -- sometimes in the most brutal ways possible -- it is vitally important that those we lose are remembered, and that we continue to fight for justice."

- Transgender Day of Remembrance founder Gwendolyn Ann Smith

How can I participate in the Transgender Day of Remembrance?

Participate in the Transgender Day of Remembrance by attending or organizing a vigil on November 20 to honor all those whose lives were lost to anti-transgender violence that year. URI will host a vigil during their Trans Awareness Week from Nov. 18-22. A vigil will also be held in Providence on Nov. 21st from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Temple Beth El. The vigil often involves reading a list of the names of those who died that year.



Article credit: <http://www.glaad.org/tdor>



**Greater
Providence
Chapter**

Membership Application

Yes! I want to be a supporting member of PFLAG.

Please provide the information requested below and make your check payable to: PFLAG/Greater Providence. You may bring this form with your payment to the next chapter meeting or mail to: PFLAG, c/o 500 Angell Street, Apt. 212, Providence, RI 02906.

- Household \$30 Individual \$25 Student/Limited Income \$15
 Newsletter Only \$10 Additional Contribution \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone No. _____ E-mail _____

I'll do my part to help save a tree. Please send me the newsletter via email only (.pdf format).



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