



PFLAG

Fort Collins / Northern Colorado

Next Meeting

Date: December 11, 7PM Program, 8PM Support
Program: Election Reflection

Our program leader will be Pastor Hal Chorpening of Plymouth Congregational Church. He will lead us in a discussion where we reflect on the election, its impact on the upcoming holidays, and next steps.

If you are planning to come out to your family during the holidays, please come to PFLAG's December support meeting for our *Tips for a Happy Holiday*. For more information, see [PFLAG FYI](#).

Local PFLAG News

Dec 9: PFLAG Annual Planning Retreat

The PFLAG Fort Collins/Northern Colorado chapter will hold its annual planning retreat on Dec 9, beginning at 8:45 AM. The event includes a light breakfast and will adjourn at noon.

We plan to review 2006 results and discuss goals for 2007, including projects that PFLAG will undertake and programs for the monthly meetings. We welcome your inputs. Please plan to attend the meeting at the conference room in Harmony Library, 5616 South Shields, Fort Collins.

RSVP: Julie Wilson, 667-5236, jw6804@aol.com

Dec 9: CGRA Night of Sharing

PFLAG Fort Collins/Northern Colorado is one of the charity partners, beneficiaries of the Colorado Gay Rodeo Association's fundraising this year. The festivities take place at Charlies, 900 East Colfax, Denver at 7:00 PM. For more information, see <http://www.cgra.net>.

RSVP: Roger Japp, tacmedic224@yahoo.com.

Local/Regional Events

Dec 10: Denver Gay Mens' Chorus

The Denver Gay Men's Chorus celebrates its 25th season on Sunday, Dec 10, at 8:00 PM with its traditional holiday concert at the First United Methodist Church sanctuary, 15th and Spruce Street, Boulder. Tickets are \$20. For more information, see <http://www.dgmc.org/tickets.htm>.

News of Regional Interest

Governor-elect Bill Ritter made it clear after the election that the voters have spoken on the issue of same-sex domestic partnerships. Ritter stated, "The great lesson of the election this year was that if elected representatives ignore the desire of their constituents and move in their own direction, then voters respond." Although Ritter supported Referendum I, he threw cold water on the notion that a domestic partnership measure could find its way into state law next year through the Democratic-controlled legislature. "I think the people have spoken on both those issues," Ritter said. One unexpected bright spot for gay- rights advocates emerged in Arizona, where a measure similar to Amendment 43 lost, 51 percent to 49 percent. [[Denver Post](#), Nov 9]

Nature vs. nurture—Prominent evangelical Ted Haggard's murky admissions of sin following allegations of an affair with a male prostitute have re-ignited a volatile argument over the roots of homosexuality, a debate where religion, politics and science collide. [[Denver Post](#), Nov 9]

RainbowVision Santa Fe is the first GLBT community offering a resort lifestyle in a retirement setting. For more information about the GLBT-friendly retirement alternative, visit their website at <http://www.rainbowvisionprop.com/>.

News of National Interest

In the Diocese of Camden, New Jersey, a Unitarian Universalist Church no longer leases space from a Catholic church. The lease was terminated abruptly because the UUC church invited gay author/activist Marc Adams to share his personal story and speak about HeartStrong, a non-profit educational organization providing outreach and support to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered students from religious educational institutions. [[more](#)]

In the November 2006 bishops' meeting, the U.S. bishops approved a document entitled "Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care" that is clearly problematic for those of us seeking greater acceptance of our GLBT loved ones by our faith communities. [[more](#)]

If you are Catholic parents who love and affirm you lesbian daughters and gay sons, you may be interested in the [Fortunate Families](#) organization and its newsletter.

Lest this newsletter seem biased against Catholics, the news has not been too great in other denominations either. The Presbyterians and Southern Baptists also made public statements about their positions on homosexuality. It's clear that we all have much work to do to help the religious leadership of this country understand the truth about sexual orientation and gender identity.

News of International Interest

Mexico City voted for the first time in the country's history to legally recognize gay civil unions, a measure that will provide gay couples with numerous social benefits as well as requiring them to fulfill responsibilities similar to those of married couples. [CNN.com, Nov 10]

Jerusalem's small but vocal homosexual community won a months-long battle with the city's right-wing-dominated city council, its ultra-Orthodox Jewish mayor and the police for a permit to hold its fifth-annual gay-pride march. The nation's Supreme Court ruled that under law, gays and lesbians had a right to freedom of expression and assembly. However, the gay-pride march was marred by threats of violence. [Denver Post, Nov 9]

South Africa will be the first African country where gay people can wed when a new law comes into force on Dec

1. The Civil Union Act gives gay people the same rights as heterosexual couples. [BBC News, Nov 30]

Advocacy

Please consider signing the online petition at <http://letusgive.com/>. Current FDA policy bans gay and bisexual men from donating blood. This policy has been in place since 1983 and needs to be rescinded.

PFLAG Scholarships

Pass the word to high school seniors!

National PFLAG offers over [20 scholarships](#) ranging from \$1000 to \$2500 to graduating seniors who are GLBT or strong allies. In 2006 they awarded some \$38,500 to 28 applicants out of 280 applicants. For applications and details, go to www.pflag.org. The deadline is Feb 14 and winners are notified by April 15.

Safe Schools

Boulder Valley Safe Schools has completed its high school edition of *Everyone Counts, A Resource Guide on GLBT Issues for Educators*. This book of over 300 pages joins the revised Elementary and 2004 Middle School editions. Contact JeanInBoulder@comcast.net if you would like to obtain a copy of one or more of these valuable resources for your school.

Support PFLAG Fort Collins / Northern Colorado—Become a Member

A membership in PFLAG extends a helping hand to families who have gay members, provides educational materials for families and the public, and offers a family voice that stands for equality and justice for all human beings. You can join at any time of the year. The current membership year extends from January 1, 2006, to December 31, 2006.

Name(s) of Member(s): _____	_____ Local Only	\$10
_____	_____ Regular Member	\$30
Address: _____	_____ Supporting Member—Silver	\$45
City: _____	_____ Supporting Member—Gold	\$75
State: _____ Zip Code: _____	_____ Supporting Member—Platinum	\$100
Home Phone: _____	_____ Donation _____	
Other Phone: _____	_____ Email list only (no membership)	
Email: _____		

Make checks payable to **PFLAG Fort Collins** and mail to 305 West Magnolia, PMB 117, Fort Collins, CO 80521. Membership fees and contributions are tax deductible. All information will remain confidential. PFLAG is a 501(C)3 non-profit organization.

MEETINGS:

2nd Monday each month, 6:45 pm
 Plymouth Congregational Church
 916 W. Prospect Rd.
 Fort Collins, Colorado

CONTACTS:

Local chapter: 970.407.0300
 Julie 970.667.5236
 Bev 970.484.0031
 Don 970.278.0261

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Web site: www.pflagftc.org
 Email: info@pflagftc.org
 Mail: 305 W Magnolia, PMB 117
 Fort Collins, CO 80521

In addition to parents, families, friends, and GLBT people, we welcome anyone involved in the coming-out process.

We welcome anyone who supports the PFLAG mission of **SUPPORT, EDUCATION and ADVOCACY** for GLBT people.

Speech by Jean Hodges

Jean Hodges, PFLAG's Mountain West regional director, gave the following speech at a Youth Rally in Denver on December 2. 150+ participants braved the snow and cold to gather at the State Capitol for the Unity and Equality through Visibility rally organized by the now burgeoning Colorado youth movement. Visit their website at www.coloradoyouthequality.org. The 150+ turnout was impressive, considering that the organizers had only three weeks to prepare, almost no pre-event coverage, and quite disagreeable weather with which to contend.

FOX 31 coverage of the rally can be found at the end of the [post-election coverage video](#). Look for the video titled "Election Day Concerns Aired for City Council".

Youth For Visibility, Unity and Equality Speech Dec. 2, 2006 Colorado State Capitol, West Steps

My name is Jean Hodges and I am a PFLAG mom.

This is a rally for youth and I am not young. I am a grandmother who is here to pay tribute to you who hold the future in your hands. I am a mother who mourned after Nov. 7th that her son and his partner of 10 years have not yet won access to the legal benefits of domestic partnership that his father and I have—just because we are heterosexual.

At the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., there is a sign that reads: "Thou shall not be a victim. Thou shall not be a perpetrator. But most important—thou shall not be a bystander." I am here to join those of us who passionately proclaim in this historic fight for equality for our gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender loved ones: WE WILL NOT BE BYSTANDERS.

I come to bring you hope. Let's look at the reality of the Nov. 7th election returns for Referendum I. We have reason to hope that the political process will one day succeed.

We won 47% of the vote with 12 out of 64 counties approving Ref. I—4 counties at least 2 to 1 in favor of domestic partnerships for same-gender couples. Three more counties won 49% of the vote and there was one county where 9 more voters voting Yes for Ref I would have carried it. 47% of the electorate said Yes to Referendum !! We now know that we have only 4% more to win approval of a citizen initiative in 2008! That is quantum progress since the passage of Amendment 2 in 1992, which legalized discrimination against GLBT's in housing, employment and accommodations.

We have reason to hope because we have come together as a caring community with a passion for social justice!

On Nov. 9 in Boulder we had a community-wide event we called "Moving Forward Together Win or Lose" where gays and straight allies joined together to acknowledge the pain of our loss and begin the process of healing so we could begin once again to move forward. Jean Dubofsky, the lead lawyer who won the case in the U.S. Supreme Court to rescind Amendment 2 in 1996, said to the crowd of nearly 300: "We have come so far since 1992 to be together like we are tonight. In 1992 there was no community united for GLBT equality."

We stand together UNITED on this very cold day, aware that we have become more than individuals who care. We have become a Movement! A movement of gay and straight together, determined that we will not be defeated, that we will not be deterred, we will not settle for anything less than full equality for ALL! And we mean ALL!

We have reason to hope because we know that we walk the moral high ground.

This election process exposed that the opposition that self-righteously proclaims their high and mighty "family values" are really hypocrites. They believe in "Family Values Lite!" They care only for families that are like themselves. Their arguments ignored the children of gay and lesbian committed parents. When confronted with the fact that in this state only one parent in a same-gender family can legally adopt a child, they have no answer. They don't want to acknowledge that there are thousands of children with same-gender parents in this state who remain unprotected by law in case of the death of their one legal parent. They ignore the fact that a second mom or dad has no legal standing in time of crisis or cannot be included as part of a family health plan. Where is their compassion, their belief in Family as the backbone of society?

We agree with Focus on the Family that a child needs two loving parents! When will they let go of the ugly stereotype about "homosexuals" that prevents them from knowing that there are wonderful same-gender parents every bit as

dedicated to parenting as the best of heterosexual couples? There are no accidental pregnancies with same-gender couples. They want to be parents. Ah, we have careful and caring work to do to win that other 4%.

Now we know we have reason to hope; we know that the election process we just completed has accomplished a huge amount; so what do we need to do to win in 2008?

As Pat Steadman, the long-time lobbyist for GLBT rights in the legislature, has said, "We will begin by picking the low-hanging fruit." We have a newly elected Democratic majority in the Colorado house and senate. We must talk to them often. They are our allies. They want to do the right thing.

1. You as voters need to write or call your legislators to vote for laws that protect equal employment opportunities and benefits.
2. We need to fight against anti-GLBT violence by demanding the inclusion of sexual orientation, gender identity, age and disability in a Colorado hate crimes law that already protects Coloradans based on race, religion and national origin.
3. We must fight for family laws that give our children strong legal ties to both their parents.
4. We must insist on safe schools in every one of our communities across the state, where all youth can learn, free from bullying, harassment and discrimination.

Besides talking to your legislators and your school boards, you must talk to your friends, your neighbors, your families (they can be the hardest) and to people in line with you at the grocery store. You must gain the courage and the skill to stand up and speak out.

I don't mean to be argumentative, or to put-down anyone who disagrees. I mean we must practice speaking from our hearts, from our own experience, to say our personal truths. In PFLAG we tell our own stories of how we have changed our understanding of what it means to be gay or to love a gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered child. If you are an ally, you too have a story of what you used to believe and what changed your mind. If you are a religious person, you know how your faith instructs you to love unconditionally. Witness to your personal beliefs whenever possible.

There is good reason why I agreed to speak to you today. I believe in the strength, the energy and the idealism of youth!

My husband and I have two granddaughters who have been part of our discussion with our family about gay rights. In July I took them along as we gathered signatures to support domestic partnerships from passersby on the Pearl Street Mall in Boulder. The eleven-year-old, Jonna, said to me "Grandma, I wish I were old enough to vote. I'd sign your petition!" We walked up to a college-age young man and asked him if he were a registered voter. He replied, "No" because "it didn't matter," Jonna looked at him and said, "Well, if you don't vote, you can't complain!" At another time after showing the girls some ads to oppose Amendment 43 on the web, as we sat at our dinner table later, our seven-year old Katie, said to her two startled uncles: "I think you two deserve `the pursuit of happiness!'" It is the young who will win this battle!

We have two years until 2008. We need to begin today to win that extra 4%. We have time to reach out to those rural, conservative areas of our state to witness to our personal truths. We can speak up, gently but firmly, for equality by demythologizing old stereotypes about "homosexuals." ("You know, I know two moms who are active in the PTA and always volunteer to bring cookies and attend their kids' programs. I wish my mom had been as attentive.) Or just learn to ask questions: "Do you really believe that all gays hang out in bars and lead promiscuous sex lives?" You'll figure out the language. Practice with each other.

Frederick Douglas, the great African American orator of the nineteenth century, once said: "Power accedes nothing without demand. If there is no struggle there is no progress."

So I say to you: Be a voice for GLBT equality wherever you are able, to whomever you meet, in whatever circumstance presents itself... and we will win GLBT equality by 2008!

Jean Hodges is the Mountain West Region Director of PFLAG and the President of the Colorado Coalition of PFLAG Chapters. Mother and grandmother of 3, she helped found the Boulder County chapter of PFLAG and in 2004 received the Hunter Award from the Colorado HRC campaign for outstanding Colorado volunteer. A former high school teacher and theatre director, Jean founded the Safe Schools Coalition in Boulder County.