



# PFLAG

## Fort Collins / Northern Colorado

### Next Meeting

#### **PICNIC—different time, different location**

**Date:** August 13, 6 PM picnic, 7 PM discussion

**Location:** Rolland Moore Park, Shelter #2

PFLAG will hold its annual picnic in Rolland Moore Park, Shelter #2, west of Shields between Drake and Prospect in Fort Collins. Attendees are invited to bring salad, side dish, or dessert. PFLAG will provide the main course, beverage, and table service.

This year, we have invited our state and national legislators, as well as the Fort Collins and Loveland city council members to our picnic. We plan to discuss important social and political issues affecting GLBT individuals and families in a casual, picnic setting.

Please plan to attend and share your concerns with the elected representatives who attend our picnic.

### **PFLAG Marched in County Parade**

PFLAG marched in the Larimer County Parade on August 1. Thanks to a variety of groups—Lambda Center, Safe Schools Coalition, former Rainbow Chorus members, PFLAG members, and friends and family—we had a nice-sized group of 15 people with a great mix of ages. Our group was well received, with frequent applause, smiles, and thumbs up greetings. We were very impressed with the size of the crowd. The streets were packed. The County Fair Parade definitely qualifies as a good way to build awareness of PFLAG!

### **News of Local Interest**

Elyse Miller reports that she has just opened an eco-friendly and sex-positive boutique in downtown Fort Collins called Passion for the Planet. Their mission is to promote healthy relationships between people, animals and the environment. The boutique is located at 107 East Laurel Street. You can learn more about the boutique at their web site: [www.passionfortheplanet.net](http://www.passionfortheplanet.net).

### **News of Regional Interest**

**Aug 25:** Greeley PFLAG will meet at 7:00 p.m. in the Hope Room at 1st Congregational Church UCC, 16th Street at 22nd Ave, Greeley. For more information, contact Rick at [pflag-greeley@comcast.net](mailto:pflag-greeley@comcast.net).

**Sep 8:** CENTUS Counseling, Consulting & Education and St. John's Cathedral of Denver are offering an all-

day workshop entitled "Strength for the Journey: A Relationship Building Workshop for GLBT Couples" from 8:30 am -5:00 pm. Topics include: Building Trust and Intimacy, Legal and Financial Considerations, and Couples Spiritual Development (Interfaith). The cost of \$75 per couple includes lunch. The seminar will be held at [CENTUS Counseling, Consulting & Education](http://CENTUS Counseling, Consulting & Education), 1325 S. Colorado Blvd., Denver. Call 303-577-7711 for reservations. For more information, please contact David Johns at 303-639-5240 ext. 12.

**Sep 15:** PFLAG Fort Collins/Northern Colorado will host the next PFLAG Coalition meeting on September 15. We will meet at the Foothills Unitarian Church, beginning at 9:00. The afternoon workshop topic is "Leadership Development and Board Viability", led by Kim Jones from National PFLAG.

**Oct 3:** CENTUS Counseling, Consulting & Education is presenting a free class entitled "Come Out, Come Out, Whoever You Are! Coming Out 101 For Self, Friends & Family." The class will be held on Wed, Oct 3 from 7:00-8:30PM at CENTUS, 1325 S. Colorado Blvd., Conference Room B-018, Denver. The class will be presented by David Johns, M. Coun., NCC, and Judi Spindelov, PsyD.

### **National PFLAG News**

#### **PFLAG National Convention—Oct 11-14**

Where will you be Oct 11-14, 2007? PFLAG invites you to the national PFLAG National Convention at the Hilton McLean Tyson's Corner in McLean, Virginia, just outside of Washington, D.C. Don't wait to reserve your place for this special event -- go to the [PFLAG website](http://PFLAG website) today to get more information on the events and register!

This conference is shaping up to be a truly exciting event. The conference includes exciting keynote speakers and more than 50 workshops and training sessions. Dear Abby will receive PFLAG's first-ever Straight for Equality award.

#### **PFLAG Honored the Film "Tru Loved"**

Jody Huckaby, PFLAG's executive director, awarded its Focus on Equality award to the film "Tru Loved". The leaders of PFLAG selected "Tru Loved" to receive this honor for its role as a leader in portraying positive images of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people, as well as their families, friends and other straight allies. [\[more\]](#)

## Dear Abby Featured PFLAG

Dear Abby recommended PFLAG again in her [July 13th column](#). In spite of the mother's life-long reluctance to accept her gay son and his partner, the two of them made a home for her and brought new meaning to the mother's later years. We at PFLAG continue to work toward equality and offer support and education to any parents, family, and the community members who need to learn more about gender issues.

## News of National/Global Interest

On Aug. 9, presidential candidates will gather in Los Angeles for a forum on issues affecting the lives of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people in the United States. Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese, Melissa Etheridge and journalist Jonathan Capehart will appear as panelists at the event. Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, John Edwards and Chris Dodd have confirmed they will participate. The forum, moderated by Margaret Carlson, will be televised live on the Logo network and the Logo website on Thursday, Aug. 9, starting at 7 p.m. MDT. For information on how to watch the event and on the candidates' positions on GLBT issues, go to the [HRC web site](#).

A 57-year-old suburban Boston man underwent a sex-change operation after a tormented existence as a father, a husband, a Coast Guardsman and a construction worker. Then she wrote off the \$25,000 in medical expenses on her taxes. Unfortunately, the IRS disallowed the deduction—ruling the procedure was cosmetic, not a medical necessity—in a potentially precedent-setting dispute now before the U.S. Tax Court. [[AP](#), July 16]

Since the U.S. military policy of “Don't Ask, Don't Tell” was adopted in 1993, 11,000 men and women in uniform have been discharged. In a recent discharge, Stephen Benjamin was actually “caught” due to the contents of his email. [[SNDN](#), July 1]

The American Medical Association (AMA) voted June 28 to amend its non-discrimination policies to include transgender persons. Their previous policy already included sexual orientation. The AMA has taken an increasingly high-profile stance in the past few years on issues of concern to LGBT patients and physicians. The new policies address a wide range of scenarios, including discrimination against patients, medical students and physicians. [[Q Notes](#)]

On June 14, the Massachusetts legislature defeated a proposed constitutional amendment to define marriage as between a man and a woman. Having passed the legislature last year, approval for a second consecutive year would have met the state's constitutional requirement and the amendment would have gone to a voter referendum in November 2008. Supporters of the amendment needed 50 favorable votes, but got only 45,

with 151 against. The June newsletter from Fortunate Families delves into the personal stories that helped legislators change their votes. [[Newsletter](#)]

## News of Global Interest

The European Commission quietly approved an agreement that gives the US Department of Homeland Security unprecedented access to the personal information for anyone on a transatlantic flight, including details of their sexual orientation. The DHS insists on the right to use the information for disease control, and there are fears that gay passengers may be singled out as possible HIV risks. [[Pink News](#), July 24]

Ireland's new government coalition has pledged to provide full equality to same-sex couples and would like to have legislation enacted as soon as possible to make this a reality. Under the proposed civil partnership law, gay and co-habiting couples will be entitled to the same tax breaks, social welfare benefits, pension schemes and inheritance rights as married couples have now. However, opposition parties poured cold water on these promises. [[Independent.ie](#), July 17]

Britain's new Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, answering questions on a range of LGBT rights issues, pledged his continued support for civil partnerships and for fighting LGBT violence, both in the U.K. and abroad. He stated, “The Britain I believe in is one of fairness and opportunity for all—for me that means no one should ever feel unable to fulfill their potential whatever their race, religion or sexuality.” [[Pink News](#), July 17]

## Advocacy

The American Family Association (AFA) warned its members in June 2007 that the hate crimes bill before congress (H.R. 1592 / S. 1105) would criminalize negative comments concerning homosexuality. The [Urban Legends web site](#) thoroughly debunks the claims in the AFA alert. National PFLAG provides a great deal of [useful information about hate crimes](#) and why such legislation is important.

This month's “[Not In Our Town](#)” newsletter shows all too clearly that our GLBT loved ones continue to be the victims of hate crimes. It provides a detailed report about a gay youth who was murdered in Greenville, SC.

Discrimination is not limited to the GLBT community. Currently in Jena, LA, six young black people have been charged with attempted murder in a very racially charged situation. To read more, see the [ColorOfChange](#) web site.

## Religion and Homosexuality

A new documentary, “God and Gays: Bridging the Gap”, explores sexuality and spirituality through the eyes and experiences of people wanting a relationship with the very religion that rejects them. This documentary claims to break the silence and open dialogue on a major taboo

subject. "God and Gays" puts the face and heartbeat of humanity onto the emotionally charged issue and answers: what is the "gay agenda"? Is being gay a choice? What does the Bible say? Is it possible to be gay AND religious or must we choose? [[Review, HRC Interview](#)]

The Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations concluded its annual General Assembly in Portland, OR with passage of a statement calling for repeal of the U.S. Military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" ban on lesbian, gay and bisexual service members. The 6000 conference attendees overwhelmingly supported the resolution, which calls for passage of the Military Readiness Enhancement Act (H.R. 1246), a bill to repeal the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law. [[365Gay.com](#), July 30]

In a powerful new book entitled [Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality: Explode the Myths, Heal the Church](#), evangelical theologian and former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Jack Rogers argues unequivocally for equal rights in the church and in society for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. Throughout history, he observes, Christianity has moved towards ever-greater openness and inclusiveness. Today's church is led by many of those who were once cast out: people of color, women, and divorced and remarried people. He argues that when we interpret the Bible through the lens of Jesus' redemptive life and ministry, we see that the church is called to grant equal rights to all people. [[Amazon](#)]

In Atlanta, GA, congregation members at St. John's Lutheran Church voted to support their pastor, Bradley Schmeling in spite of the ELCA ruling that he could no longer be a rostered clergy member. By retaining Schmeling as its pastor, St. John's effectively becomes a rebel church, though the consequences of that move remain to be seen. [[Washington Blade](#), July 9] Members of St. John's Lutheran Church will host an educational event at the ELCA's churchwide assembly in August, in hopes of changing church policy. [[Goodsoil](#)]

## Safe Schools

The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), a member of the National Safe Schools Partnership, recognized Congresswoman Linda Sanchez from California for introducing a bipartisan federal bill that would protect all students from bullying and harassment. The Safe Schools Improvement Act

(H.R. 3132) instructs school districts to adopt safe schools policies with enumerated categories, including bullying and harassment based on race, gender, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, among others. The bill also requires states to include bullying and harassment data in statewide needs assessments reporting. [[GLSEN](#)]

## The Reading/Viewing Corner

- ◆ Thirty years ago, in 1977, *Word is Out: Stories of Some of Our Lives* startled audiences across the country when it appeared in movie theaters and on television. The first feature-length documentary about lesbian and gay identity made by gay filmmakers, the film had a huge impact when it was released and became an icon of the emerging gay rights movement of the 1970s. A 30th Anniversary DVD is now in production and will include updated interviews with the original cast and filmmakers as well as a tribute to Peter Adair, creator of the film. See [Wikipedia](#) for more information.
- ◆ Robert N. Minor, Ph.D., has written a new book, [When Religion Is An Addiction](#). Dr. Minor is a Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Kansas. His other books include [Gay & Healthy in a Sick Society](#) and [Scared Straight: Why It's So Hard to Accept Gay People and Why It's So Hard to Be Human](#). Dr. Minor also leads [The Fairness Project](#), which has a variety of pamphlets that are useful when preparing for religious-based discussions.
- ◆ View Cyndi Lauper in PFLAG's "Stay Close" campaign on [YouTube](#). Also check out PFLAG's "[Stay Close](#)" [web site](#).
- ◆ Robert Putnam, a distinguished social scientist recently published his research into the effects of diversity on community. His research shows that diversity "seems to bring out the turtle in all of us." [[Scandinavian Political Studies](#), June 2007]
- ◆ Over time, [60 Minutes](#) has provided several good segments on GLBT issues. [Excerpts from these episodes](#) are consolidated in a single web page.
- ◆ In a Vanity Fair interview, Brad Pitt asked Archbishop Desmond Tutu about gay rights and equality. The Archbishop Tutu's response was both eloquent and supportive. [[Straight, Not Narrow blog](#)]
- ◆ Fox News' The O'Reilly Factor Offers Unsubstantiated Claims in "Lesbian Gang Epidemic" Segment [[GLAAD](#), July 5]

### MEETINGS:

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

### CONTACTS:

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Email: [info@pflagfc.org](mailto:info@pflagfc.org)  
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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.