



PFLAG

Fort Collins / Northern Colorado

Next Meeting—Different Location

Date: September 10, 7PM Program, 8PM Support
Program: Suicide Awareness and Prevention
Location: Harmony Library, 4616 South Shields Street, Fort Collins

From Healthy Place, a web site that addresses gay teen suicide:

- ◆ Suicide is currently the third leading cause of death among teenagers in the United States.
- ◆ Evidence indicates that for every suicide, there are 50 to 100 attempts at suicide.
- ◆ A growing body of research literature has provided the estimate that gays, lesbians, and bisexual youth attempt suicide at a rate 2-3 times higher than their heterosexual peers.
- ◆ Some studies indicate that the rate of attempted suicide for transgender youth is higher than 50%.

Two representatives from the Suicide Resource Center will present this month's program. The program will include both a Powerpoint presentation and Q&A. For more information, see their [web site](#) and read their [August newsletter](#) that addresses adolescent grief.

PFLAG Met with Elected Officials

At the annual PFLAG picnic in August, we were pleased to host six local politicians:

- ◆ State Representative Randy Fischer
- ◆ State Representative John Kefalas
- ◆ Fort Collins City Council representatives—Diggs Brown, Ben Manvel, Lisa Poppaw, and David Roy

Our discussion ranged from state and national issues, such as same-sex parent adoption and ENDA, to local issues such as safe schools and making ENDA real in Fort Collins.

PFLAG in Country Fair Parade

As reported in last month's newsletter, our PFLAG chapter had a very positive experience when marching in the Larimer County Fair Parade. It turns out that the experience was even more positive than we realized. *We received a 2nd place prize and \$20!*

PFLAG Coalition Meets in Ft Collins

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

Editor: Julie Wilson

9:00. The afternoon workshop topic is "Leadership Development and Board Viability", led by Kim Jones from National PFLAG.

Events of Regional Interest

Sep 8: Boulder PrideFest Block Party
 On September 8, 2007, Boulder Pride will host its annual Block Party on the Pearl Street Mall in downtown Boulder, Colorado. Between 11 AM and 6 PM, thousands of people will gather at this action-packed, fun-filled, awareness-raising celebration. In fact, the Block Party has grown so much that this year they are planning to expand the celebration to two blocks of the Pearl Street Mall!

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](#), 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: "ANYONE and EVERYONE", a film by Boulder writer and film maker Susan Polis Schutz PFLAG Boulder County, together with several other organizations, is sponsoring the premier of a new film. The screening will take place at the Boulder Public Library Auditorium (Canyon Blvd entrance, just north of 9th St). The evening begins with a reception at 6:00 PM, film screening at 7:00, followed by Q&A. Admission is free.

Boulder writer and entrepreneur Susan Polis Schutz turns her talents to film making in this debut work about gay children coming out to their parents, and how families come to terms with acceptance in their faith. The several stories come to life through a series of remarkably honest and revealing interviews with parents and children who span a broad spectrum of ethnic and religious backgrounds – all devout in their spiritual practices, all committed to their children and keeping their families together.

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 Spendelow, PsyD.

News of Regional Interest

Focus on the Family, the Christian media ministry and gay-rights opponent, surprised many in its home base of Colorado Springs by lending its name to a local bike race raising money for AIDS relief. The Pikes Peak Classic, a 100-mile race, raises money for the Southern Colorado AIDS Project. [[Denver Post](#), Aug 9]

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](#) 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.

See [PFLAG's ad](#) about the convention in The Advocate!

News of National/Global Interest

Senator Larry Craig was arrested for soliciting sex from an undercover police officer in an airport bathroom. Bowing to pressure from fellow Republicans, he has announced his resignation from the Senate. Senator Craig represented Idaho for 27 years. *The Senator received a zero rating from the Human Rights Campaign for his voting record on gay rights issues.* [Contrasting perspectives: [MSNBC](#), Aug 30; [Bilerico Project](#), Aug 29]

Black Gay Pride was held in Atlanta from Aug 31-Sep 3. The event has become very popular, leading Atlanta to gain status as the black gay mecca. [[ILTA](#)—official sponsor, [Southern Voice](#), Aug 31]

In Latin America, the first significant step in promoting region-wide sexual and gender rights was taken when the human rights committee of the Southern Common Market issued a declaration to recognize and promote an end to discrimination against sexual and gender minorities by member countries. [[Bahamas Issues](#), Aug 30]

Freedom to Marry—Iowa

In a powerful, closely reasoned 63-page decision, an Iowa trial court struck down the exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage. The court found that the denial of marriage harms couples and their kids, while helping no one and serving no legitimate government interest. The ruling is a victory for families and fairness in America's heartland. [[Polk County Iowa decision](#), Aug 30]

Unfortunately, the Polk County Recorder's office stopped accepting marriage license applications from same-sex couples around 11:30 a.m. the next day. The move came shortly after Polk County Judge Robert Hanson agreed to suspend his Thursday ruling pending an appeal by the Polk County Attorney's Office to the Iowa Supreme Court. [[Des Moines Register](#), Aug 31]

Freedom to Marry—New Jersey

New Jersey marked the six-month anniversary of the civil unions law in August and the state's largest LGBT civil rights organization says it has been a failure, something the average person in the state seems to agree with according to a new poll. Since the law went into effect in February, there has been mounting evidence that a deep divide remains between how the two groups are treated. For example, nearly one in eight couples joined by civil unions have been turned down for company health benefits for their partners. [[365Gay.com](#), Aug 16]

ENDA for State Employees—Kansas

Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius joined a growing number of leaders across the country in issuing an executive order making it illegal to discriminate against state employees because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, regardless of their job performance. The governor's action, taken at the start of the Labor Day weekend, protects more than 37,000 state employees from being denied jobs, fired or discriminated against because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT). The order takes effect immediately. [[Kansas Equality Coalition](#), Aug 31]

Election Year News

Stumbling to make separate sound like anything other than unequal, the Democratic front-runners swore allegiance to civil unions for LGBT Americans in the HRC/Logo-sponsored candidate forum. What was new and important and worth celebrating was the willingness of six leading Democratic candidates for President of the United States to address rather than dodge questions of concern to the LGBT community. However, the narrowness of the questions did not adequately represent the broadness of the concerns of LGBT Americans for the health, welfare and future of their country. [[Huffington Post](#), Aug 13; [video clips](#)]

Hate Crimes

In Palm Beach, the verdict is in. The teen who severely beat a pre-operative transsexual on Palm Beach after he discovered she was a man from the waist down was sentenced to probation. [[Pam's House Blend](#), Aug 31]

The U.S. House of Representatives voted to pass the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2007 in May. Unfortunately, the Senate has not yet passed its companion bill, known as the Matthew Shepard Act. A coalition of conservative African American pastors has aggressively lobbied against this legislation on the premise that it would make it unlawful for them to preach that homosexuality is a sin. [[LA Times](#), Aug 23]

Religion and Homosexuality

LGBT Survey on Religion and Spirituality

The Colorado School of Professional Psychology is conducting research into how LGBT people feel about their spirituality and how spirituality and religion have impacted LGBT individuals personally. CSPP is asking for members of the LGBT community to voluntarily participate in this research by taking an online survey. To participate in the survey, go to their website at: <http://www.glbtreligiousresearch.com/>

For LGBT Catholics / Welcoming Churches

The [Fortunate Families August newsletter](#) contains pastoral care guidelines proposed by DignityUSA. In addition to the guidelines, the newsletter also contains new insights on marriage from the Pew Research Center and several other interesting articles.

Gay Unions in Black Churches

Never in a "million years" did Robert Renix think he would find a Baptist church that would accept someone like him: a black Baptist gay man. Never mind one that would allow what happened one Saturday in July, when a tuxedo-clad Renix stood in front of the pulpit at Covenant Baptist Church in Anacostia, exchanging vows with his partner, Antonio Long.

It didn't turn out to be that simple though. About 140 members jammed into the fellowship hall a few weeks later for a tense meeting about the recent decision of Covenant co-pastors Dennis and Christine Wiley to conduct same-sex union ceremonies. Some expressed their opposition through Bible verses, saying they were worried that Covenant was getting a reputation as a "gay church." Others wept as they defended the Wileys, said people who were there. The split reflects a tug of war that is developing between a few black churches willing to welcome gays and black denominations that consider homosexuality a sin. [[Washington Post](#), Aug 19]

ELCA Churchwide Assembly Takes Action

In action that stopped short of changing churchwide policy, representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran

Church in America asked its synods and bishops to "refrain from or demonstrate restraint in disciplining" people and congregations that call otherwise-qualified candidates in mutual, chaste and faithful committed same-gender relationships. It also called for restraint in disciplining rostered leaders in committed same-gender relationships.

The renewed debate on homosexual clergy in the ELCA stems from the case of Rev. Bradley Schmeling, an Atlanta pastor who was removed from the clergy roster in July after he told his bishop he was in a relationship with a man. The new measure prevents his bishop from seeking further disciplinary action, but does not re-institute Schmeling's status. [[Chicago Tribune](#), Aug 12]

Cancelled Funeral at Megachurch

A megachurch canceled a memorial service for a Navy veteran 24 hours before it was to start because the deceased was gay. The Rev Gary Simons said the church believes homosexuality is a sin, and it would have appeared to endorse that lifestyle if the service had been held there. [[Washington Post](#), Aug 11]

Safe Schools

The University of Vermont's new student center doesn't just have women's bathrooms and men's bathrooms. It also has gender-neutral bathrooms, a feature added to accommodate transgendered people, as well as those with disabilities. The four single bathrooms in the new student center—each with a toilet, sink, shower and lockable door—cost about \$2,500 a piece to build. Their wall signs identify each as "gender neutral restroom."

UVM isn't the only school trying to make its accommodations more accommodating. At least 17 colleges and universities have included gender-neutral bathrooms in their new construction or in retrofitting residence halls, said Stephanie Gordon, director of educational programs at the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. [[Newsday](#), Aug 25]

GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network) is proud to announce the third annual GLSEN Ally Week will take place October 14-20, 2007 at schools across the country. Ally Week is an opportunity for allies of the Safe Schools Movement to pledge their support for ending anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) bullying and harassment in schools. For more information about GLSEN's Ally Week, visit www.dayofsilence.org/ally.

The Public's Right to Know

When you sign a petition, you take a position that is a matter of public record.

In Oregon, the Legislature passed two gay-rights bills. A coalition of conservative Christians is circulating petitions to put the two measures before voters in the November 2008 election. That would enable Oregon voters to

Send news to share and feedback to jw6804@aol.com

decide whether to grant marriage-style rights to same-sex couples via domestic partnerships, and whether to ban discrimination against gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered people.

A new gay-rights group called Know Thy Neighbor has announced plans to publicize the name of everyone who signs referendum petitions to overturn the bills passed by the Legislature. [[Statesman Journal](#), Aug 22]

The Director of Know Thy Neighbor, Aaron Toleos, writes: "When you sign a petition to take basic rights and protections away from a class of citizens, you are engaging in direct democracy. You are choosing to bypass your elected representatives and take on the role of legislator yourself—a citizen legislator. It is a great privilege to live in a democracy and have such power! But if you are going to take advantage of the benefits of democracy, you must also assume the responsibilities. That means if you don't feel strongly enough about a petition to sign it publicly, then you shouldn't sign it! That tension you feel over knowing that your signature will be public is intended. It's what makes a petition have value. It's part of the normal system of checks and balances that underlies our form of government."

The Reading/Viewing Corner

- ◆ [My Turn: "The Love That Will Finally Speak Its Name"](#) shares the story of an 88-year-old lesbian who finally has the courage to come out of the closet [Newsweek, Sep 3]
- ◆ Commentary: "[Senator's Bathroom Bust is No Laughing Matter](#)" by Mark Acito [NPR, Aug 30]
- ◆ "[America's Craig-like Credibility Gap](#)" addresses the dichotomy between America's words and actions [Christian Science Monitor, Sep 4]
- ◆ "[Gay By Choice? The Science of Sexual Identity](#)" poses the question: If science proves sexual orientation is more fluid than we've been led to believe, can homosexuality still be a protected right? [Mother Jones, Aug 27]
- ◆ [Families Joined by Love](#), a comprehensive bookstore, resource center, and discussion community for LGBT families and the important people in their lives, announced the launch of its website on August 1.
- ◆ "[Study of gay brothers may find clues about sexuality](#)" by Robert Mitchum explores the Molecular Genetic Study of Sexual Orientation. The scientists hope that by gathering DNA samples from 1,000 sets of gay brothers, they will be able to find genetic linkages smaller studies failed to detect.

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, 2007, to December 31, 2007.

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.pflagfc.org
 Email: info@pflagfc.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.