

*PFLAG, True Colors & the Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective
Scholarship Presentations & Reception*

**June 18, 2008, 7:00 p.m. (prior to our regular 7:30 meeting)
All are welcome to stay for our monthly meeting.**

Refreshments will be served.



The Voice of PFLAG Hartford

Caring

Volume 17, No. 3

May/June 2008

IN THE PFLAG HARTFORD FAMILY:

OUR PFLAG HARTFORD CHAPTER is a proud sponsor of the *True Colors Conference*, which was held at the UConn Storrs campus on March 14 and 15. Thank-you to all who made the trip to Storrs to help staff our PFLAG booth – Larry & Emily P., Karen P., Jean & Bob C.. A special THANK-YOU to Larry and Emily who set up and took down our booth on Friday and Saturday! We distributed pamphlets, Brill Scholarship applications and PFLAG information, and we got out the word that PFLAG Hartford is there to support parents and LGBTI youth – a very successful venture!

PFLAG is a welcoming place for parents and friends of lesbians & gays, but we are much more than that. Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people are also encouraged to attend our meetings. GLBTI people come with or without their family members, and parents and friends come with or without their GLBTI loved ones. PFLAG is for YOU!

PFLAG HARTFORD MONTHLY SUPPORT GROUP MEETS: Third Wednesday of each month, 7:30 p.m., Immanuel Congregational Church House, 10 Woodland Street (Just North of Farmington Ave.), Hartford. For more information, please call Marie & Bob at (860) 633-7184 or Becky & John at (860) 633-5111.

REFRESHMENT REMINDER:

May 21 – Gary G.

**June 18 – Scholarship Presentations
& Reception**

July 16 – Karen P.

August 20 – Connie & Mike

MEMBERSHIP DUES:

Student/Limited Income: \$10

Household Membership: \$40

Individual Membership: \$25

*Please make your check payable to **PFLAG Hartford** and Send it to:
PFLAG Treasurer, 12 Colchester Commons, Colchester, CT 06415*

**UPCOMING PFLAG
HARTFORD
BOARD MEETING
7:00 p.m., Tuesday, June 24
Hosted by Rose & Larry**

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and their families and friends through:

SUPPORT: To cope with an adverse society

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.

UPCOMING /ONGOING EVENTS

- **RAINBOW ROOM** (a program of the **Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective**) – a welcoming place for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and questioning “LGBTQ” teens and young adults (up to 21 years old). Sundays, 3-6 p.m., 1841 Broad Street (the Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective building). For more information please visit our website at www.hglhc.org or contact us at sensae@aol.com or call 860/278-4163.
- **TRANS SOFFA SUPPORT GROUP IN CONNECTICUT:** This is a group specifically for Significant Others, Family, Friends and Allies of Transgendered, Transsexual and Gender Variant people (SOFFAs). Trans people who are SOFFAs are welcome. Meetings will be held on the second Sunday of each month and are facilitated by Kristal Barnes and Kasha Ho. Contact Kristal - u2kristal@yahoo.com (860) 878-5256 or Kasha - kho@afsc.org or call (860) 523-1534 for more information.
- **HGLHC TRANSGENDER SUPPORT GROUP:** This professionally facilitated group offers an affirming non-judgmental environment for Transgender folk to explore issues and concerns that matter to them, and to give and take support. Each participant decides what to do with emotions and personal life-choices or body image, sexuality, relationships, HIV issues and anything else of concern. As with all other HGLHC Support groups, all participants must register in advance to determine whether this group is right for you. Location: Hartford. Contact HGLHC at (860) 278-4163 X21 or e-mail _____
- **OUT FILM CONNECTICUT** presents The Connecticut Gay and Lesbian Film Festival at Cinestudio, Trinity College, May 30 to June 7. Information. at www.outfilmct.org. PFLAG Hartford is a "Friend of the Festival."
- **HARTFORD PRIDE CELEBRATION**, Saturday, June 7, 11 am-5 pm at Elizabeth Park (between the Pond House & Rose Garden). PFLAG will have a booth and volunteers are needed. To help, sign up at the May meeting.
- **PFLAG VICE-PRESIDENT, JOHN CURRIE**, will deliver a sermon at the Unitarian Society of Hartford on Sunday, June 8. His sermon title is "A Conversation at Starbucks" and it will provide a contemporary look at the Good Samaritan and Prodigal Son stories, particularly in the light of the weekend celebration of Hartford Pride. It is anticipated that the sermon will be delivered at both the 9 a.m. chapel service and at the 11 a.m. service in the main sanctuary. The Rev. Barbara Jamestone will offer her response to John's sermon. You are welcome to attend.
- **FUNDRAISER** to benefit St. Philips House, True Colors and the Hartford Boys & Girls Club. June 15, July 13 & August 10. Nelson Roman, "Mr. Polo 2008," will present **“RENT-A Musical Review”** at Hartford Polo Club, Maple Ave., Hartford, 9 pm. Tickets-\$10. For information, call 860/816-3404 or e-mail Eros1687@aol.com.

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7th ANNUAL BRILL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS/RECEPTION will be held on Wednesday, June 18, at 7:00 p.m. (one half hour before our regular meeting). Named for the PFLAG Hartford founders, the Brill Scholarships are a joint venture of True Colors and PFLAG Hartford. This evening will be shared with the Hartford Gay and Lesbian Health Collective scholarship winners. It is always inspiring to hear what these amazing GLBTI and Ally Activists have done within their communities and schools toward moving equality forward. Be sure to mark your calendars and join us!

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THANK YOU to Tracey Wilson, our March meeting speaker. Tracey grew up in Granby, CT. She attended Trinity College [BA, MA and varsity tennis] and Brown University for her PhD in history. Tracey has taught in the West Hartford public schools since 1977. She loves teaching---and is parenting 2 sons and 2 step-daughters, all teenagers. Thank-you, Tracey, for sharing your personal story with us.

THANK YOU to Joe Richman, our April meeting speaker. A student at Manchester Community College and an intern at the UConn Rainbow Center, Joe is creating and expanding a program there that focuses on parent/student relations as they apply to academics. Thanks, Joe, for letting us know about you and this important work.

WHAT IS CARING? The noted author and lecturer, Leo Buscaglia, was asked to judge a contest with the purpose of finding the most caring child. The winner was a four-year-old boy whose next door neighbor was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife. Seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there. When his mother later asked what he had said to the neighbor, the little boy said, "Nothing. I just helped him cry."

Come to our PFLAG support meetings and be four years old. We need one another!

CT BLACK LEGISLATOR "COMES OUT" AND MAKES HISTORY

This week Connecticut State Representative Jason Bartlett made history when he publicly “came out”, becoming the **first openly gay African American legislator in the country**.

Love Makes a Family would like to congratulate and thank Rep. Bartlett for his courage in “coming out” and his support and leadership on the marriage equality issue. *Love Makes a Family’s Political Action Committee* endorsed Jason and sent staff to work on his campaign when he first ran in 2006.

Following are excerpts from a February 19, 2008 interview by the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC)

NATIONAL BLACK JUSTICE COALITION EXCLUSIVE: THE COMING OUT OF JASON BARTLETT

...

NBJC: At what age did you begin to become aware of your sexuality?

JB: I think that we all evolve into awareness over time. And, I would like to think that I am still learning and will continue to learn about my sexuality well into my ripe old age.

...

NBJC: When did you finally accept yourself?

JB: I was taught by my mom to love myself. I grew up with the knowledge that I was different because of my race. I remember the kids in my school putting pencils in my afro and from time to time I got into a few skirmishes at recess with kids that used racial epithets. I was always strong and confident in the face of being different.

NBJC: How did you come out to your family?

JB: I remember coming home one day and asking both my parents to sit down and talk with me. I told them I was gay. Then I changed it to bisexual. Then I changed it back to gay. It was a difficult talk because I didn't want to disappoint them. They were both very supportive. When I told my dad it was going to be in the paper the other day, he said, "I love you. I've never cared what side of the fence you played on." I really appreciated that!

NBJC: What do you currently identify as gay, bisexual or other?

JB: I am gay.

...

NBJC: Why publicly come out as gay now?

JB: When people ask, why now? My response is, why not now? I am 41 years old, I have raised two children as a single parent, I've owned my own mortgage business for the last 13 years and I have been a community activist my entire life in the Greater Danbury community. "Coming out" is just having a conversation and revealing a part of myself that I had kept private.

NBJC: Who currently knows?

JB: My family and friends have known for some time. Recently, I have come out to my political friends and associates pretty much informally. At cocktail parties and social events I would just slip in the fact that I am gay. Everyone has been supportive.

...

NBJC: What would you say you have learned that would be helpful to same-gender loving people who are considering a run for office?

JB: I would advise people to embrace themselves, if not publicly certainly privately. You have to be comfortable with yourself in order to be scrutinized by the public and the media. You also have to know the values and beliefs you share with a majority of voters in your district. It is the common values and beliefs that you share that will get you elected.

NBJC: You have two sons. Are we correct in our assumption that you are out to them? How old are they?

JB: I have two sons that are now 21 and 19 years old. Both are attending community college in Connecticut. The boys came to live with me when they were 9 and 11 respectively. Both of their biological parents who were my aunt and uncle had passed away. So I took them into my home and raised them as my own. We have open communication and they are aware of my sexual orientation.

NBJC: So what do you do for fun?

JB: I enjoy most sports as a fan or participant, dining with friends, good conversation, traveling, reading and of course being politically active.

FAITH LEADERS RESPOND TO INCREASE IN GIFTS TO UCC DESPITE CONTROVERSIAL MARRIAGE STANCE

Members of the Task Force-convened National Religious Leadership Roundtable responded to the recent announcement by the United Church of Christ that gifts to its denomination have increased by more than \$1.2 million in 2007 since its controversial resolution in support of same-sex marriage.

"When churches accept risk and still step out into courage, they discover new joys in their life together. The United Church of Christ has taken public prophetic stands that are controversial and the denomination thrives. In 2005, when the General Synod passed a resolution supporting marriage equality, some people predicted the precipitous decline of the church. In 2007, however, church members affirmed their commitment to the shared ministries of the UCC tangibly: by increasing their financial support of the UCC."

— Roundtable member the Rev. Ruth Garwood, executive director of the UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns

GUILFORD FILMMAKER FIGHTS FOR 'DIGNITY, RESPECT' *By: Robert C. Pollack, Staff writer, Shoreline Times*
02/20/2008 GUILFORD - Filmmaker Fran Rzeznik is the holder of two Emmys for editing at NBC sports and the co-producer and co-director of "One Nation Under God," a widely praised feature length documentary that challenged the reparative therapy movement and the assertions that homosexuality is a curable disease. Now the Guilford resident has created a new film called "Marriage Makes a Word of Difference," which portrays the personal struggles and political challenges of six same-sex Connecticut couples and their families who are fighting for the freedom to marry. The film, a project of the Love Makes a Family Foundation, premiered in New Haven, New Britain, and Norwalk beginning Feb. 8 in small venues, but Rzeznik said it will soon be released on access television and will be shown in a variety of college campuses starting with Connecticut State University.

Rzeznik, 48, born and raised in the Bronx, discovered she was gay while still in high school. "It was a struggle," she said quietly last week. "But we have come a long way since." She and her partner have been living together in a committed relationship for 20 years. "We were in California where domestic partnerships are recognized as civil unions as they are here in Connecticut," she said. "We were moving to New York but found there was no such legal protection for gay couples there so we moved here instead. We found Guilford and love it; we have been here for two years and hope to never leave."

She explained that the 44 minute documentary - really a collection of short stories - shows why marriage is increasingly important to gay couples of both sexes. "Even when you have legal protection such as you have here with civil unions," she said, "it gets confusing because there is no such federal protection - none at all. "Let's face it, marriage is understood by everyone as a committed relationship that affords dignity and respect."

Rzeznik said she is dyslexic, which means she often transposes letters when she reads. "That makes reading difficult, so I turned to a more visual medium. My father was a very good photographer so I started thinking in terms of pictures." She remembers seeing a film version of "Romeo and Juliet" in high school where "everything became so clear as to plot line and character development." After graduating from SUNY with a degree in psychology and broadcast journalism, she went on to earn a masters degree in filmmaking at NYU. She wound up working for NBC where she won her two Emmys for editing on NFL Live and the '92 Barcelona Olympics and has written, directed and produced a wide variety of commercial projects including social commentary documentaries, reality television series, and feature films. She has worked in both the New York and Los Angeles markets. She left her editing job at NBC because "I didn't want to push buttons anymore; I wanted to create my own work - write, direct, produce."

She is proud of her work in creating "One Nation Under God" which won raves from newspapers and magazines across the country including the New York Times and Variety. "It showed how ridiculous the theory was that being gay is a disease that can be cured. And ironically enough, the two men in charge of the movement that tried to sell that idea wound up falling in love." She paused, clearly relishing the moment. But if you talk to her, it is not her pride in that film, as gratifying as it was for her, or her awards or career that leave an impression. It is her compassion and deep belief that "Marriage Makes a Word of Difference" can make a real difference to those who see it because it shows that everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation, shares the same day-to-day traits and needs and wants and weaknesses and strengths. "We are all people," she said quietly.

Anne Stanback, Executive Director of "Loves Makes a Family," said last week: "Fran is a remarkably gifted filmmaker who is deeply committed to marriage equality for same-sex couples. She has created a film that will

profoundly impact anyone who sees it. The film will contribute significantly to the public discussion on marriage equality in Connecticut. "Through compelling interviews and archival and 'slice of life' footage, 'Marriage Makes a Word of Difference' celebrates our common humanity, and shows why marriage equality is a fundamental civil right," she concluded.



RESOURCES:

“COMING OUT AS TRANSGENDER” – A groundbreaking new resource guide is now available from the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) and the Human Rights Campaign. It offers step-by-step guidance in talking with friends, co-workers and family about being transgender, and is available in both print and online versions. Talking with the people in your life about being transgender is a deeply personal journey and this resource will help point the way. To obtain the guide, or to receive more information, visit www.NCTEquality.org or www.HRC.org.

“THE SURVIVAL GUIDE TO DON’T ASK, DON’T TELL, DON’T HARASS” The ban on GLBT people serving in the military is the only law in our country that authorizes the firing of an American for being gay. If you think you know all about DADT, there are truths that you may be unaware of that may be crucially important to anyone you know in the military – gay or straight.

The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network is a national, non-profit legal services, watchdog and policy organization dedicated to ending discrimination against and harassment of military personnel affected by DADT and related forms of intolerance. Since 1994, it has responded to over 8,300 requests for assistance. This assistance is confidential. To obtain a copy of the guide, visit www.sldn.org or e-mail legal@sldn.org.



“BUYING FOR EQUALITY” When we spend our hard-earned dollars, whenever possible we should give our business to companies that are fair to their gay and transgender employees. That’s now easier than ever, because the Human Rights Campaign’s latest issue of “Buying for Equality” is out. The preface of the guide says that whenever you buy a book or a cup of coffee, fill your gas tank or plan a vacation, you’re voting with your dollars. Companies now realize what tremendous buying power the GLBT community has, and they are granting domestic partner benefits to their gay employees; including gays in diversity training and non-discrimination policies; and advertising in gay-oriented publications. The number of companies scoring 100 on the Corporate Equality Index rose last year from 138 to 175, a record number. To download the latest Buying for Equality Guide, visit www.hrc.org/buyers guide, or call 800/777-4273 for a mailed copy.

I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT THE GOOD WORKS OF PFLAG HARTFORD WITH A TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION OF:

\$ _____ My name: _____

Please cut out this coupon and mail it with your check (made payable to PFLAG Hartford) to our Treasurer, Joan Jansen, 12 Colchester Commons, Colchester, CT 06415.

PFLAG Hartford has been available as a resource for support to families and friends of GLBTI people in Greater Hartford, and beyond, for over 20 years. We are staffed solely by volunteers, and depend heavily on contributions to enable us to continue to educate and advocate for an end to discrimination and to make this a safer world for our GLBTI loved ones.

Your help is greatly appreciated.

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force honors Gov. David Paterson with New York Leadership Award

New York Gov. David Paterson, 'held hostage' to Albany budget process, sends extraordinary message to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender advocates. "We will push on until we bring full marriage equality to New York State." - New York Gov. David A. Paterson

NEW YORK, April 8 — New York Gov. David Paterson addressed a standing-room-only audience at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's New York Leadership Awards last night, in which he was honored for his longstanding work on behalf of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights.

"Held hostage" to the Albany budget process, Paterson sent an extraordinary message via video to the assembled crowd. Remembering that this year commemorates the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and remembering King's legacy of "his ability to go beyond the issues of his neighborhood," Paterson urged **"New York's civil rights leaders to recognize that the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities deserve equal rights as well."**

The governor said he was "proud to have run on a ticket that advocated for marriage equality and to win on that premise." Underscoring the remarkable triumph of the passage of the marriage equality bill in the New York State Assembly, Paterson reiterated that more people understand "that when people love each other they should be able to express it in every way that they deem necessary and possible and they should have all the rights that the rest of us have."

He vowed **"to push on until we bring full marriage equality to New York State"** and promised to fight for an end to bullying in schools, for transgender rights and for affordable health care for everyone. Paterson concluded with a call to "change the face of New York which will be a catalyst for change in national policy."



STANDING WITH R FAMILY: A MESSAGE FROM PFLAG'S PRESIDENT

To hear Bill O'Reilly tell it, you'd think spending some time with your loved ones - especially your GLBT loved ones - was downright *dangerous*. Fortunately, you and I know better, and together, we're building a critical movement to counter the misinformation of O'Reilly and those like him.

On Friday night's *The O'Reilly Factor*, Bill included a troubling debate about R Family Vacations, the GLBT-friendly vacation provider founded by Rosie O'Donnell and her partner, Kelli. *R Family*, which has been a long-time sponsor of PFLAG national, brings together families of all kinds to celebrate . . . well, being a family. But according to O'Reilly and one of his guests, conservative radio host Marc Rudov, these affirming family get-togethers are patently offensive, and nothing more than a "fairly intrusive" way to "mainstream the gay lifestyle." And Rudov even goes so far as to compare *R Family Vacations* with smoking . . . radiation . . . and brain tumors! "I kind of look at this in the same way," he told O'Reilly, going on to proclaim that "children do form their sexual identities from their same-sex parents." That's right. "Pro-family" O'Reilly and his ilk now seem to be *anti*-our families. But fortunately for us, we have PFLAG to get the facts right.

In fact, I recently returned from an *R Family* cruise with my wife and some other important members of the PFLAG family, including executive director Jody Huckaby and Straight for Equality endorser Cyndi Lauper. We were surrounded by hundreds of loving families who were onboard with their GLBT children and loved ones. It was an inspiring and emotional journey that I will never forget. Because of *R Family*, these families from across the country were able to come together, be appreciated and loved for who they are, and take part in a welcoming, inclusive vacation that - until Rosie and Kelli founded their company - was simply an impossible dream for so many people.

So when O'Reilly and his guests use shrill rhetoric - not far removed from Sally Kern's comparison of GLBT Americans to a "cancer" - we should all be alarmed. And we should all be grateful to have PFLAG fighting on our side. Because, as Margaret Hoover pointed out to O'Reilly on Friday, "We've got a whole lot of people and kids that are growing up that don't have parents that love them," and so we shouldn't be spending our time attacking those who do.

That's what PFLAG is all about: Bringing families together and celebrating who we are. And it's a common value we share with our good friends at *R Family Vacations*. So we're proud to stand with them . . . share their journey with them . . . and call out the O'Reillys and Rudovs of the world on their misinformation and false propaganda. Just as we did with Representative Kern, and as we have always done, PFLAG will continue to show

the *true* faces of every family . . . and we'll always stand with "R Family" and yours. Because you and I know that loving our children is the most *un*-intrusive thing anyone can do. And isn't loving our families what being *pro*-family is all about?

Sincerely, John R. Cepek, PFLAG National President

Connecticut PFLAG Meetings

PFLAG HARTFORD: Information on front page or at www.pflaghartford.org

PFLAG NORWALK/SOUTHWESTERN CT

When: First Wednesday of every month, 7:30 pm
Where: Triangle Cmnty. Center, 16 River St. Norwalk
Help Line: (203) 226-0257 or (203) 438-0530
Email: PFLAGSWCT@yahoo.com

PFLAG NORTHWESTERN CT:

Contact: Diane (860) 435-2738

PFLAG MADISON/SHORELINE

No Meetings
Email: davidwinthropknapp@yahoo.com
Help Line: (203) 453-1395

PFLAG GROTON (NOANK) /SOUTHEASTERN CT

When: Second Monday of every month
5:30-6:30 Potluck Dinner
6:30-8:00 Meeting
Where: Noank Baptist Church, 18 Cathedral Heights
(Childcare is available)
For Information call Mike (860) 447-0884

PFLAG GREATER NEW HAVEN

When: Third Tuesday of every month, 7:30 pm
Where: Church of the Redeemer
Corner: Whitney Ave./Cold Spring St., NH
Help Line: (203) 907-0518
Email: greaternewhavenpflag@yahoo.com

Central and Western Massachusetts

Williamstown Area:

When: Second Sunday of every month, 2 pm
Where: First Congregational Church, Williamstown
Contact: (413) 243-2382

Springfield Area:

Where: Agawam
Contact: (413) 732-3240 or (413) 783-7709

Greenfield, MA

Help Line: 413/625-6636
E-Mail: PFLAGPV@valinet.com

CARING IS THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF PFLAG HARTFORD

Caring welcomes articles, letters and other submissions for publication.

Deadline: 15th of even numbered months. Send articles to PFLAG EDITOR, 156 Randal Ave., West Hartford, CT 06110 or via e-mail editor@pflaghartford.org.



STRAIGHT SPOUSE SUPPORT NETWORK:

In Connecticut and Western Massachusetts
Monthly Support Group, Third Sunday,
West Hartford, CT.

Contact Jane at (413) 625-6636 or
janenrosie48@yahoo.com or at
www.straightspouse.org

In Southern Connecticut, Call Joan at (203)
438-0530)

FOR OTHER PFLAG LOCATIONS

Contact a Hartford Chapter Board Member or call the National PFLAG office at (202)638-4200. You may also sign onto PFLAG's Home Page at www.pflag.org.