



OCTOBER 11, 2011  
NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY

(While this day is set aside for those now comfortable with their homosexuality to “come out,” it is also an opportunity for PFLAG parents to “come out” to their friends and family.)



*The Voice of PFLAG Hartford*  
*Caring*

Volume 20, No. 5

September/October 2011

IN THE PFLAG HARTFORD FAMILY:

**SINCERE CONDOLENCES** to Frank Ault, and his family, on the passing of his wife, Johnnie, on June 16th.

**NOTE:** We will hold a brief **ANNUAL MEETING** of our membership at the beginning of our September 21st regular monthly meeting. The principal business is election of the Board for the coming year.

**MEMBERSHIP REMINDER**

It's that time of the year, and membership dues are now due and payable for fiscal year October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012. For your convenience, a membership envelope was enclosed with our mailed copies. A separate letter will be sent to those members who receive *Caring* via e-mail. The schedule of dues is listed below. Thank-you in advance for your prompt membership renewal or enrollment.

*Did you know that PFLAG is the most successful grass roots organization since the civil rights movement of the 1960s? **But**, there is still more to do so...*

***PLEASE STEP UP AND BE COUNTED - OUR STRENGTH LIES IN OUR NUMBERS!***

**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:**

- September 21 - Debbie S.
- October 19 - Charlotte & Glen
- November 16 – Bev & Bob H.
- December 21 – Dusty & Mom

**MEMBERSHIP DUES:**

- Student/Limited Income: \$10
- Household Membership: \$40
- Individual Membership: \$25

**UPCOMING PFLAG  
HARTFORD  
BOARD MEETING  
7:00 p.m., Tuesday, October 11  
Hosted by Connie & Mike**

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

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**

- **RAINBOWROOM:** (a program of the **Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective**) - - A welcoming place for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and questioning "LGBTQ" teens (13-21 years old). RainbowRoom meets the third Sunday of every month, 3-6 p.m., 1841 Broad Street (Health Collective building), Hartford. For more information please visit our website at <http://www.hglhc.org/> or contact [lizy@hglhc.org](mailto:lizy@hglhc.org) or call 860/278-4163.
- **HGLHC TRANSGENDER SUPPORT GROUP:** Group is currently not meeting. Updated information will be posted as changes are made. More Info at: <http://www.hglhc.org/> or [lizy@hglhc.org](mailto:lizy@hglhc.org) or call 860/278-4163.
- **STONEWALL SPEAKERS** is an all volunteer speakers' bureau composed of LGBT people and allies dedicated to reducing violence and bias while promoting equality for all. We speak to thousands of Connecticut students and adults annually. Listeners will meet LGBT people and their allies in person; hear candid accounts of their lives; and receive honest, informed answers to any questions they have. Let your high school, college, business, religious group or community group know we are available. For more information please contact [coordinator@stonewallspeakers.org](mailto:coordinator@stonewallspeakers.org).
- **CONNECTICUT PRIDE RALLY & FESTIVAL** will be held at noon on Saturday, September 17, 2011, in Hartford's Bushnell Park. PFLAG Hartford will once again host a booth at the festival with free handouts, and our famous \$1.00 rainbow beads to raise funds for our yearly Brill Scholarships.
- **PFLAG NATIONAL CONVENTION**, November 3-6, 2011 in Washington, D.C. (more information below)

**THANK-YOU** to our July 20<sup>th</sup> meeting speakers, Katy Weber Tierney and Tracy Weber Tierney. Together since 2000, Katy and Tracy have very busy and interesting lives, which include motherhood and softball. They are both medical professionals. Tracy is an RN and is the Director of Operations at a community health center. Katy is a nurse practitioner, specializing in Endocrinology at the Joslin Center at the Hospital of Central Connecticut. She has a large practice, with particular expertise in hormone therapy for transgender clients.

Tracy and Katy were the first lesbian couple in Connecticut to celebrate a legal civil union. They are now a legally-married couple. Each of them has given birth to a son, brothers Jacob and Milo. Thank-you to both of you for being so out and proud!



## **2011 PFLAG NATIONAL CONVENTION**

### **Bringing the Message Home**

### **Washington, D.C., November 3-6, 2011**



Join PFLAGers from across the country to learn new skills, build relationships, and celebrate your work as we look ahead to the future. Whether you are a seasoned leader or just getting started, there is no better way to gain valuable new perspectives than to join us in November.

On November 3rd, our nation's capital will provide the ideal backdrop for a lobby day that will energize and inspire you. Then, starting November 4th, the National Convention will offer hands-on workshops, networking opportunities, and dynamic speakers presenting on cutting-edge topics to provide the framework your chapter needs to help move equality forward.

**Register between September 1, 2011 and November 3, 2011 for the following rates**

\$400 for PFLAG members

\$450 for general public

\$350 for children age 10-18 - No Charge for children under 9

The Westin Alexandria is a spectacular location for the 2011 PFLAG National Convention. Be there for all the action by staying on site at the official Convention hotel for only \$179 per night plus tax. Valet parking is available for hotel guests for the rate of \$24 per night. Daytime valet parking is available at the rate of \$10 for attendees who join us during the day and are not staying at the hotel. This special convention rate extends three days before and after the convention, and is good for single, double, triple or quad rooms, so plan your trip today.

*This thoughtful piece was written by Casey and Mary Ellen Lopata, leaders of Fortunate Families, parents of a gay child, and faith-filled Catholics. It was posted on the pflagall site.*

### **THERE IS SIN, AND THEN THERE IS GAY SIN...**

"In early July, Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles opposed a modest piece of legislation that requires schools in that state to include lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgender people, and other previously excluded groups, in their social studies curricula. The archbishop argued that he was merely supporting parents' rights to make decisions regarding their children's education. But Catholics who pay attention to our bishops' energetic campaign to thwart any legislation that legitimizes (or in this instance, even recognizes) same-gender attraction are familiar with this ruse. Our hierarchy has a habit of invoking noble sounding principles but applying them only when they can be used against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.

Cardinal Donald Wuerl of Washington did something similar last year when he announced that the legalization of same-sex marriage in the District of Columbia had forced him to stop offering health insurance to the spouses of new employees of Catholic Charities. The marriage equality law, he explained, would force him to extend benefits to gay and lesbian couples, and since this violated the church's teaching on marriage, he could not do it.

**There is Sin, and then There is Gay Sin** - To take this argument seriously, one has to overlook the fact that Catholic Charities already offered benefits to the spouses of employees who had not been married in the Catholic Church, or who had been remarried without benefit of an annulment. These are also clear violations of the Church's teaching on marriage. But Wuerl's harsh and unloving stance is typical of a hierarchy that behaves as though there is sin, and then there is gay sin—and gay sin is much worse. Catholics faithful to the scriptural admonition to love mercy, do justice, and walk humbly with their God, have become increasingly alienated by bishops who seem obsessed with pushing a narrow anti-gay agenda to the exclusion even of simple charity. Our bishops were in the small minority of religious leaders who failed to speak out when a wave of anti-gay bullying, some of which led to suicides, swept the country last year. At a time when seemingly every organization in the United States was finding a way to tell young lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people that "It Gets Better," our hierarchy, to our shame, was silent.

In their zeal to deny any form of legitimacy to same-sex relationships, the bishops have neglected more urgent pastoral duties. Catholic schools and parishes are closing by the dozen in dioceses across the country, yet somehow the hierarchy and its allies in the Knights of Columbus have found millions of dollars to spend in one state after another opposing marriage equality, or its weaker cousin, the civil union.

**Leaders Without Followers** - The rhetoric our bishops employ in these campaigns is hardly pastoral. Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York referred to same-sex marriage as "an Orwellian nightmare" and an "ominous threat." He compared his state's government to North Korea's during New York's recent debate on marriage equality. Then, upon losing the debate, this prince of the Church, with a palace on Fifth Avenue, proclaimed himself a victim of intolerance.

We are well acquainted with the history of anti-Catholic bigotry in this country, and keenly aware of what our forebears in the faith suffered at the hands of hateful fellow citizens. But we find it reprehensible when that legacy is invoked by those who themselves advocate discrimination and repression. If you are the Catholic parent of a LGBT daughter or son, you know firsthand that it is your child's sexual identity, and not a belief in the Immaculate Conception, that puts them at risk for beatings and taunting. Archbishop Dolan and his colleagues should stop pretending that they face anything like the intolerance that our children do.

**A Gay-Friendly Church?** - The one fortunate aspect of the bishop's campaign against LGBT people is that it has been singularly ineffective. Polling by the Public Religion Research Institute makes clear that almost three-quarters of Catholics support either marriage equality or civil unions, and that we back legal protections for LGBT people in the workplace (73 percent), in the military (63 percent), and in adoptions (60 percent) by significant margins. We are, in other words, an extremely gay-friendly church; and while it has taken a while for this fact to filter out beneath the bluster of our bishops and their lobbyists, political leaders have begun to take note. A Catholic governor and Catholic legislators made marriage equality a reality in New York. A Catholic governor and legislators passed civil unions into law in Illinois. Heavily Catholic Rhode Island passed a civil union bill over the protests of Bishop Thomas Tobin of Providence, and a Catholic governor has promised to permit same-sex couples to marry in Maryland, if the legislature will only put the bill on his desk. A few days after Archbishop Gomez announced his opposition to the legislation requiring California schools to give an accurate recounting of the nation's history, Gov. Jerry Brown, a Roman Catholic, signed it into law.

Those of us who support equality for LGBT people in civil society do so not in spite of our Catholic faith but because of it. We learned in childhood that Jesus moved freely among the outcast and the marginalized, that he

warned his followers to judge not lest they be judged, and that he taught that our neighbor was not the priest who passed the beaten traveller on the other side of the road to avoid ritual impurity, but the hated Samaritan who bound up his wounds, and paid for his care. We learned later that the Church’s teachings on social justice compelled us to act as advocates for fairness, justice, and individual dignity, that its teachings on politics instructed us to vote for the common good, and that in making moral decisions, we were to follow the promptings of our own well-formed consciences. There are times, it seems, when our hierarchy is so committed to cultivating political power, and deploying our Church’s resources in contemporary culture wars, that they expect us to forget all of this. We won’t.

**As Philadelphia Burns** - Last week, the Vatican announced that it had appointed Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver as the new archbishop of Philadelphia. The clergy abuse scandal that has badly damaged the hierarchy’s credibility is still spinning out of control in Philadelphia, and Pope Benedict XVI clearly thinks that Archbishop Chaput is the right man for a difficult job. We would only note that in his previous post, he supported a parish priest who expelled a girl from a Catholic school because her parents were lesbians. The archbishop argued that parents must be able to cooperate with Catholic schools in the education of their children, and that those who do not embrace Church doctrine cannot do so. This was not an argument he employed against Protestants, or non-Christians, or children whose parents had remarried after a divorce. It was employed exclusively against lesbian parents. Because in the theological universe that our bishops are constructing to support their personal biases, there is sin, and then there is gay sin, and gay sin is so much worse.

*Editor’s note: Casey and Mary Ellen Lopata wrote the above as individuals; the piece doesn’t necessarily represent the position of Fortunate Families.*



**FIRST OPENLY GAY MAN CONFIRMED BY SENATE FOR SEAT ON ARTICLE III COURT**

July 19th, 2011

*By Charlie Joughin*

In an 80-13 vote last night, the U.S. Senate confirmed Paul Oetken to serve as a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. Mr. Oetken is considered the first openly gay man to be confirmed by the Senate for a seat on an Article III court. HRC has advocated for Mr. Oetken’s confirmation since his nomination, including a letter of support from January of this year.

Judge Deborah Batts, who currently sits on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, is considered the first openly gay woman to be confirmed for a seat on an Article III court. She was appointed to the bench during the Clinton Administration. Prior to Mr. Oetken’s confirmation, Batts was considered the only LGBT individual serving openly on an Article III court. Now, the Southern District of New York will have the only two openly-gay Article III judges in the nation.

**Article III court:** a court created in accordance with Article III of the U.S. Constitution whose judges have positions for life and cannot have their salaries reduced

*NOTE: The purpose of the salary and position guarantees enjoyed by the judges of Article III courts is to ensure that their decisions are not influenced by fear of losing their positions or salaries.*

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**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.**

## **A PFLAG HARTFORD 2011 BRILL SCHOLARSHIP WINNER FEATURED IN THE HARTFORD COURANT**

Sixto M. Cancel, of Bridgeport, is the first recipient of the True Colors voucher program, which helps foster children headed to college. (Patrick Raycraft, Hartford Courant / July 31, 2011)

*8/9/11 by Susan Campbell*

In his college essay, Sixto M. Cancel of Bridgeport called himself "America's Angriest Colored Child." The 19-year-old called his "a strange kind of anger because it won't allow me to burn buildings, break car windows, intoxicate myself, shoot my enemy, or even cry" even while "my city is full of gangs, drugs, and angry teens living in poverty who act out their anger by shooting each other because they are too angry to function."

It's back-to-school time, but not every young adult is heading off to Target in search of just the right dorm ware. Cancel's been in a series of foster homes since he was 11 months old. He is preparing for college without family help — something he's never had, he says. "In a regular home, your parents provide the clothes, and on top of that pay your cell phone bills, your car insurance," said Cancel. "That's all me. I pay my own bills. If I want a pair of sneakers, I budget for them." He's been working since he was 16, most lately in telecommunications. He's also started a nonprofit called Stellar Works Transitional Services to help foster children prepare for adulthood. Yet the thought of building an apartment from scratch is intimidating.

Fortunately, Cancel has help. True Colors, an organization based in Hartford that provides support for minority gay, lesbian and transgender youth and their families, just started The Right Stuff, a program in which donors can "adopt" youths who may need help getting ready for school or moving into their own apartment. The program's beneficiaries are any youths – not simply True Colors clients -- who've been involved with the state Department of Children and Families, and who are moving out on their own, whether to college or to live independently. But don't let the program's name confuse you. "We are not just buying stuff," said Robin McHaelen, True Colors' executive director. "We want to get the right stuff, the stuff they want, in the colors they want." ... "Kids who've been in foster care for a long time or in a group home don't have much stuff," said McHaelen." ...

Cancel is the fifth of 10 children of a heroin addict. He's lived in more foster homes than he can count, he says. "The State planned to find me a 'better' home, someone to give me a happy life but instead scattered my siblings across the East Coast," he wrote in his essay. "The survivors, that is." The series of foster homes that "welcomed" Cancel included a woman who, he said, "seemed to think my name was 'Nigger.'" Refrigerators had locks, and Cancel wore bruises and too-small shoes. But he became an advocate and along the way, Cancel appeared on CNN, went to Washington to talk to politicians. His anger, he said, turned into passion. ...

Now, Cancel writes, "I am America's most passionate colored child. My experiences have built resiliency, perseverance, integrity and leadership. Overcoming my childhood without parents and a stable environment has made the person I am today."

On Wednesday, Cancel leaves for Virginia Commonwealth University, where he'll be a scholarship student studying political science and business. Like the survivor he is, Cancel chose the school because of its support system. Classes start Aug. 25. They are lucky to have him.

*(On June 15,2011, PFLAG Hartford awarded Sixto a Helen & Bob Brill college scholarship)*

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In a historic "Dear Colleague" letter from Secretary Arne Duncan, the U.S. Department of Education underscored the legal right of students to form Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) under federal law and heralded the positive benefits of GSAs on school campuses. This letter is the first from a federal agency affirming the rights of students to form GSAs, and we are delighted with such unequivocal, research-based, U.S. Department of Education support.

### **FIRST PROM HELD IN STAMFORD FOR GAY-STRAIGHT ALLIANCE STUDENTS**

*While prom season was in full swing, one dance stood out from the pack.* By Marion Herbert, *The StamfordPatch*

Who wants to be prom king when you can be crowned the "most outgoing person?" One student was on Friday night when Stamford students broke tradition and held the city's first Rainbow Ball, a prom for members of the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) at Stamford High, Westhill, AITE and neighboring cities. The first-of-its-kind dance was held at the Italian Center and had over 100 attendees.

"The prom was amazing," 16-year-old Stamford High student Julian Arias told Patch. "Everyone felt like they belonged and that's where they needed to be. They weren't struggling with their sexuality or discrimination, they were just kids having fun and not trying to fit in." Arias joined the alliance last year as a freshman but felt that the group, which was traditionally a social setting, had to be more active. His friends at Westhill evidently felt the same. In January, the Westhill GSA began brewing ideas about holding a prom for Stamford GSA members and neighboring students. While most proms are booked a year in advance with a few years' worth of fundraised money, the GSA members had under five months to organize theirs.

"We didn't want them to feel short changed," Kate Tobin, English teacher at Westhill and GSA Co-advisor, said. "We decided from the beginning that this prom had to be as good as any other prom, if not better." Soon after, donations began flowing in from members of the community and beyond supporting the group's endeavors. The prom was primarily sponsored by the Norwalk Triangle Community Center and the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), both nonprofit organizations supporting the gay community. "We're very grateful for the outpouring of support and those wishing us well," Tobin said.

The dance even earned the Stamford students an acknowledgment at GLSEN's national fundraiser held in New York City on May 23. The students were nominated by Fairfield County's regional GLSEN organization and invited to the black tie gala. There, amongst legislators, celebrities and philanthropists, the students were asked to stand and received nearly two minutes of applause from supporters. Tobin said meeting Eliza Byard, executive director of GLSEN, was a highlight for both her and the students.

Their hard work came to fruition Friday night at the inaugural GSA prom. Arias, decked out in a white and purple mask, said that his costume was slightly more "outrageous" than others. "I wasn't seeking attention, I was trying to prove that no matter what you wear you're still a human being and clothing is irrelevant to who you are as a person," he said. Moreover, he said, everyone had fun.

Arias has heard some students are unhappy with the fact that GSA members are receiving a separate prom. "We wouldn't be having it if we didn't feel harassed and uncomfortable at a straight prom," he said. Arias says he does plan to attend his junior prom next year.

*GLSEN Connecticut is proud to have been one of the Co-Sponsors of this wonderful event.*

**THANK-YOU** to our August monthly meeting speakers. Our speakers were Dale and Ann McKinzie. Dale and Ann are the parents of two sons, Bryce and Matthew. Their son Bryce came out to his close and extended family years ago, when he then identified as a lesbian. Since that time he has transitioned from female to male and, as a trans-man, has continued his activism in LGBT civil rights; especially transgender issues. His parents both share in his support and social activism and, with Bryce, they are very involved in all of the fundraising efforts of the Imperial Sovereign Court of All CT.

Dale and Ann, thank-you for sharing your family's journey toward unconditional love and support.

*"You were made for good purpose and are inherently valuable."*

*- Michael McManmon*

*(Written on the walls of the Good Purpose Art Gallery in Lee, MA)*

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICES DIRECTORY:** If you would like to advertise your business/service in *Caring* for one year (6 issues), send your business card and a check for \$40 (made payable to PFLAG Hartford) to: Jean Cormier, 156 Randal Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06110. Your Patronage of our advertisers, who help us pay the costs of sending the *Caring* newsletter to you, would be greatly appreciated by them and by us. Please mention that you saw their advertisement in *Caring*.

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## **Connecticut PFLAG Meetings**

**PFLAG HARTFORD:** Information on front page or at our website: [www.pflaghartford.org](http://www.pflaghartford.org)

Helpline: (860) 633-7184

Phone: (860) 633-5111

Transgender Issues: (860) 231-8582

### **PFLAG SOUTHWESTERN CT**

When: 7:30 pm, 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday (bi-monthly)

Jan./Mar./May/July/Sept./Nov.

Where: Triangle Community Center  
16 River Street (lower level) Norwalk

Help Line: (203) 226-0257 - Westport

(203) 322-5380 - Stamford

(203) 925-0445- Shelton

(203) 847-9183 - Norwalk

Email: [PFLAGSWCT@yahoo.com](mailto:PFLAGSWCT@yahoo.com)

### **PFLAG SECT (SOUTHEASTERN CT)**

When: Second Monday of every month,

Potluck at 6:00 pm; Meeting at 7:00 pm

Where: Noank Baptist Church,  
18 Cathedral Heights, Noank (Groton)

Helpline: (860) 447-0884

Email: [bjalthen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bjalthen@sbcglobal.net)

Web site: [www.pflagsect.org](http://www.pflagsect.org)

### **PFLAG GREATER NEW HAVEN**

166 Lovers Lane, Guilford, CT 06437

Meeting: 3rd Tuesday of the Month, 7:30 pm

Church of the Redeemer

185 Cold Spring Street, New Haven

(Corner of Whitney Avenue)

Phone/Help Line (203) 458-0493

Email: [greaternewhavenpflag@yahoo.com](mailto:greaternewhavenpflag@yahoo.com)

## **Central and Western Massachusetts**

### **PFLAG FRANKLIN-HAMPSHIRE CHAPTER**

#### **Northhampton**

When: Second Tuesday of every month

Where: Highland Valley Elder Services,  
Cutlery Building, 320 Riverside Drive

Helpline: 413/625-6636

Email: [jcmalinski48@gmail.com](mailto:jcmalinski48@gmail.com)

#### **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](mailto:PFLAGPV@valinet.com)

## **CARING IS THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF PFLAG HARTFORD**

Editor/Circulation Manager: Jean Cormier

*Caring* welcomes articles, letters and other submissions for publication.

**Deadline:** 15<sup>th</sup> of even numbered months. Send articles to: *Jean Cormier*

156 Randal Avenue,

West Hartford, CT 06110



**Autumn is here!**

### **STRAIGHT SPOUSE SUPPORT NETWORK:**

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

Contact Jane Harris at (413) 625-6636 or  
[jcmalinski48@gmail.com](mailto:jcmalinski48@gmail.com)

or at [www.straightspouse.org](http://www.straightspouse.org)

### **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](http://www.pflag.org).