



Buffalo / Niagara

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PFLAG@bfn.org
www.PFLAG-buffalo-niagara.org

We meet because we have learned that someone very close to us is Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, or Transgendered.

We try to help one another deal with this information in a positive manner.

Although we do not agree at all times, we try to be understanding.

We offer help to those who seek it, but do not force ourselves on others.

We strive to maintain anonymity while sharing on a level that is comfortable for all of us.

We encourage all to attend meetings for their own benefit as well as that of the group.

It is our hope that when each of us reaches a point of understanding and acceptance, we realize that this is when others need us the most.

Buffalo Monthly Meeting

Sunday, February 21, 2010
2:30–5:00 PM

The February meeting will start with a talk by Todd Plank of the Empire State Pride Agenda. He will primarily talk about the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA) but will also briefly address the issues of same-sex marriage and the Dignity for All Students Act. After the presentation, there will be time for sharing. As always, newcomers will be offered the alternative of meeting privately with a PFLAG parent.

Heritage Room, Westminster Presbyterian Church
724 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, New York 14209

Use the driveway to left of the church to reach the church parking lot. Walk behind the church to other side of the building (through the nursery school) and enter through the kitchen entrance.

New Parents Meetings

These meetings are scheduled as needed. Please call the helpline.

Held at a location convenient to those involved.

This self-help one-on-one meeting deals with the concerns of parents and family members who have recently learned that a loved one is Lesbian or Gay.

Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Buffalo/Niagara, is a non-profit, all volunteer, community-based organization not affiliated with any ethnic, religious, economic, or political group. Membership is open to all. PFLAG membership lists are kept confidential and mailings are sent in plain envelopes.

Queer Journeys Programs

Queer Journeys is a cable access program sponsored by PFLAG Buffalo/Niagara and coordinated by Camille Cox and Babs Conant. The programs are based on documentaries on GLBT issues. This program only airs in Buffalo, on Mondays at 6:30 pm and Tuesdays at 1:00 am on Adelphia Channel 20.

The schedule for the next two months is:

Feb 1: Lesbian Physicians
 Feb 8: Maybe We're Talking About a Different God / The Preacher's Son
 Feb 15: Mom, Dad, ... I'm Gay
 Feb 22: Making History in Massachusetts
 Mar 1: Safe School Program for Youth in Massachusetts
 Mar 8: A Little Respect
 Mar 15: Choosing Children, Pt 1
 Mar 22: Choosing Children, Pt 2
 Mar 29: Our Brother, Dan

A short description of the storylines and a full schedule can be found on our website at:
www.PFLAG-buffalo-niagara.org/video_project.shtml

Let It Snow???

Buffalo winter weather sometimes requires cancelations of meetings or events. PFLAG Buffalo/Niagara is registered with WIVB and WGRZ for posting cancelations of our meetings. So, if the weather outside is frightful, check those stations to see if our meeting is canceled.

Lifetime Members

Frank Carnevale & James Pilc
 Mary Hewitt
 Clarice Lechner-Hyman

Sponsoring Members

Anonymous (1)
 John & Diane Covert
 Sheila Dickinson
 Russel Hurlburt & John Percy
 Paula Welch Jack
 Bob Patterson
 James & Mary Ellen Walsh

Supporting Members

Anonymous (2)
 Jane & Tony Benfante
 Babs Conant & Camille Cox
 Shawn Cribari
 Loretta & Richard Gucwa
 Brian Hilton
 Donald Kreger & Ron Ehmke
 Ronda Marvel
 Jeffrey McConnell & Fred Dansereau
 Mark Meyer
 Roger Seifert & Dennis Stuart
 Linda Stefaniak
 P. J. Tomczyk

Can You Help With Newsletter Content

It is time consuming to find interesting things to share with our members. We want to have an interesting and content filled newsletter but sometimes that's hard to do within the time we have available. This month we have a few items submitted by members. The material on coping with the holidays is repeated from last year.

You can help in this process. When you're reading the news and you see something that would be interesting to our members, just send an email with the information to pflag@bfn.org and if you're reading on-line most sites have a button that easily allows you to share the article with us.

Supreme Court's second move alarms gay advocates

Lisa Keen, Bay Area Reporter

In its second surprise move in a week, the United States Supreme Court on Friday, January 15, announced it would review another narrow dispute involving anti-gay activists' alleged fear of harassment over their public opposition to legal recognition for same-sex relationships.

The court's actions - because they are unusual involvements in two cases regarding same-sex relationships - have gay legal activists worried.

"With the first decision, it might have looked like it was mostly driven by justices who are just adamantly opposed to cameras in the courtroom," said Jennifer Pizer, head of Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund's National Marriage Project. "But with the second decision, it goes from being worrisome to alarming. Both decisions are based on quite absurd arguments" that the anti-gay activists are being "terribly persecuted by an angry mob, and that's just ridiculous."

Pizer was referring to a ruling issued January 13 that bars televised coverage of the Proposition 8 trial now under way in San Francisco. U.S. District Court Judge Vaughn Walker, who is presiding over the Perry v. Schwarzenegger case, had issued a decision allowing the trial to be shown in several federal courthouses around the country and have the proceedings uploaded to YouTube. But the high court blocked those plans at the start of the trial last Monday and then on Wednesday issued its order prohibiting the broadcasts.

The latest case, Doe v. Reed, stems from the controversy over a new law that recognizes domestic partnerships in Washington state. The legislature passed, and the voters, through Referendum 71, ratified that new law last year. But a lingering side issue in the matter has been whether citizens who signed the petitions that forced the new law onto the ballot last November can block those petitions - normally, a part of the public record - from public view.

Those who want to keep the petitions secret say they are asking for this special dispensation because they fear

that people who disagree with them will harass them for having taken the position that they did. Protect Marriage Washington, the group that sought, unsuccessfully, to overturn the domestic partnership law, filed a lawsuit in federal court seeking to seal the petitions from public scrutiny. A federal judge issued a temporary order stopping release of the signatures, pending a final decision, and the appeals of that decision are now before the high court.

The U.S. Supreme Court's announcement that it would intervene in that dispute comes just two days after its decision in the Prop 8 broadcast issue. Proponents of that November 2008 initiative, which was successful in banning state-issued marriage licenses for same-sex couples, claim they are opposed to making the trial proceedings available for even a very limited amount of public exposure because they fear harassment from people who disagree with them.

In *Hollingsworth v. Perry*, the Supreme Court voted 5-4 on January 13 to overturn lower court decisions from the 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals. Those decisions would have allowed airing of the Proposition 8 trial on closed circuit television in several federal courthouses around the country and for delayed posting on YouTube.

In a 17-page opinion, to which no justice's name was attached as author, the majority indicated its decision was based - not on the merits of whether this trial should be made available for public viewing, but rather because "it appears the courts below did not follow the appropriate procedures set forth in federal law before changing their rules to allow such broadcasting."

Nevertheless, the majority recounts that Proposition 8 "advocates claim that they have been subject to harassment as a result of public disclosure of their support," including death threats and boycotts. And it stated that proponents of Prop 8 "have demonstrated that irreparable harm would likely result from the district court's actions" to make the proceedings viewable by the public. Specifically, the majority suggested that Walker allowed only five business days for public comment on his plan to make the proceedings public, whereas "administrative agencies ... usually" provide 30 days or more.

"There are qualitative differences between [pro-Prop 8 witnesses] making public appearances regarding an issue and having one's testimony broadcast throughout the country," stated the majority opinion. "... It is difficult to demonstrate or analyze whether a witness would have testified differently if his or her testimony had not been broadcast."

Dissenting from that decision were Justices John Paul Stevens, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer, and the court's newest justice, Sonia Sotomayor. Breyer, writing a 10-page dissent for the minority, called the majority's decision "unusual" and said there was no reason for the high court to intervene on this issue. The

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dissent also noted that the majority was doing "harm to the public interest" by interfering with the public's right to have access to the trial proceedings.

The high court's decision to review the Washington state battle, coupled with last week's decision barring the public viewing of the Prop 8 trial, is causing some anxiety among gay civil rights advocates. The Perry case vote was 5-4; it required at least four justices to take *Doe v. Reed*, and it can be safely assumed that those four have reason to question the decision of the lower courts.

Lambda's Pizer called the Supreme Court's involvement an "extra-procedural micro meddling" over courtroom cameras and its decision to hear the Referendum 71 petitions dispute makes it "hard not to

draw a bigger, bleaker conclusion" about the high court's motives. In both cases, she said, anti-gay activists are making "absurd claims" in order to secure "special protection" from the government. "Their claims would be comical," said Pizer, "if they weren't falling on such distressingly receptive high court ears."

PFLAG Documentary

There is a new documentary called *Holding Families Together* that is an excellent resource for parents and a useful tool for teenagers planning on coming out to their parents. The documentary produced by PFLAG San Diego has been posted on YouTube and can be found via a search or by going to the link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJ7Ai4c0fJY>

Bumper Sticker

Members will find a free PFLAG bumper sticker in with this month's newsletter. These bumper stickers were provided free to our chapter by PFLAG National.

A Day in Hand

Same-Sex Hand Holding Around the World

From PlanetOut



It happens every month. Participants from as far away as China take a moment to hold hands with a same-sex partner or loved one and send a photo of the act to LGBT rights activist David Watkins's campaign, A Day in Hand.

Watkins has put out the call again, for January 30, for as many participants as possible to take part in Same-Sex Hand Holding to increase the visibility of gay people and challenge stereotypes. Although many gay couples live in parts of the world where they cannot openly make this small

gesture, they are all encouraged to participate as subtly and safely as they can.

Watkins said he hopes the campaign "really forces you to question your own attitudes and your attitudes toward your loved ones. It's OK to say you're out and proud, but can you put that into practice? When people break that barrier, it gets easier. It increases self-esteem and relationships.

"Another way to support it is just to talk about it as much as possible. We know that not everyone around the world can do it. Opening up debate is the most positive thing," he said.

He urges LGBT people to remember, no matter how many rights they do or don't have, that just being visible "can be difficult. You can't legislate for this." By collecting the photographs from around the world, he hopes to inspire individuals who feel disenfranchised and create a "domino effect."

A Day in Hand has occurred on the last Saturday of each month since September. For more information and to see photos from participants around the globe, visit the A Day in Hand website www.aDayInHand.com.

PFLAG BUFFALO/NIAGARA 2009-2010

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