



PFLAG NH
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

**North Country
 Lakes Region
 Plymouth
 Seacoast
 Concord
 Keene
 Upper Valley**



Newsletter ▼ PFLAG NH ▼ P.O. Box 485 ▼ Winnisquam NH 03289 ▼ September / October 2003
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Collaboration Works

by Roberta Barry

Talk to each other! That's my answer to the organizations who share similar missions, yet are crying that there's not enough money or volunteer power to achieve their goals.

It all started with a cup of coffee at the bagel shop with Susan MacNeil of Aids Services of the Monadnock Region. She had a great idea about a collaborative effort in sponsoring a speaker series. She knew of my involvement with PFLAG and GLSEN and she also knew that we, like many human service groups, had little money. She had experience in the process of obtaining grants. I had other contacts in groups who shared our vision for GLBT people and the need to move our world here in this corner of New Hampshire beyond tolerance toward acceptance. Thus, the speaker series was conceived.

Starting the series on October 8th is Craig Dean, who is Executive Director of the Equal Marriage Rights Fund, who will speak about living with pride, equality, dignity and respect.

On October 15th, Trio Bettencourt, the program coordinator for Boston's Dept. of Public Health Teen AIDS Program at Northeastern University, will speak. He is a

(COLLABORATE, Continued on page 2)

Recommended Fall Reading

*Love in Good Time,
 A Memoir
 BY Claire Robson*

"Claire Robson has written a warm family saga and an equally moving coming out story. She has shown us how the exceptional can be woven into the ordinary with patience and love. The writing in this book is deft and beautiful. This is a story for everyone."

— Edmund White,
 author of *A Boy's Own Story*

The world of the Robson family is a complicated mixture of suffocation and strength, and Claire's parents' lives are as small and safe as they can make them. A mother who wants her daughter to fulfill her own dreams and a daughter who wants to be everything her mother is not—both may love each other, but neither understands the other.

(READING, Continued on page 2)

AIDS Quilt

Timberlane Regional HS
 Hosts the AIDS Quilt

On November 13, Timberlane Regional High School will host 12 panels in their gym. Students will view the panels from 8 AM to 2 PM. Afterwards, the display will be open to the public from 4 PM until 8 PM.

The AIDS Memorial Quilt is a poignant memorial, a powerful tool for prevention education and the largest ongoing community arts project in the world. Each of the more than 44,000 colorful panels in the Quilt memorializes the life of a person lost to AIDS.

As the epidemic claims more lives, the Quilt continues to grow and to reach more communities with its messages of remembrance, awareness and hope.

More information about The AIDS Memorial Quilt is available at: www.AIDSQUILT.org.



Congratulations Bishop Gene Robinson

Congratulations to Bishop Gene Robinson upon his confirmation as Bishop for the diocese of New Hampshire of the Episcopal Church.

Many thanks to Peg Gage, PFLAG National Board member, for her unflagging support of Bishop Robinson.

Congratulations to Bishop Robinson Supporters

Having worked and prayed for this day for years, we thank you on behalf of the PFLAG NH family for your steadfast devotion to Gene.

(COLLABORATE, Continued from page 1)

gay, HIV positive, 25 year old, who will speak about accepting our children and embracing their needs.

The speaker on October 29th will be Sabrina Sojourner, African American Congresswoman and first open lesbian to be elected to the U. S. Congress from the District of Columbia. She will be focusing on diversity and multiculturalism. We'll be sharing her with Keene State College where she will participate in their symposium on racism on October 30th.

Our last speaker on November 5th is Steve Yurcik, a white, male, HIV positive heterosexual NYC Police Officer, and father of two. He will speak about how AIDS can happen to anyone. Please join us as we move beyond boundaries to examine what it truly means to be human.

This grant from the Monadnock Community Foundation has allowed five organizations to work together in a formal way to bring this thought provoking series to our community. Our goal is to raise visibility and community consciousness around the issues our groups collectively share.

The five groups are: Aids Services for the Monadnock Region, PFLAG - Keene, GLSEN - Southwest NH, Keene Unitarian Universalist Church, and Keene State College. The location for all of the speakers is the Unitarian Universalist Church at 69 Washington St., Keene, NH and each program will begin at 7 PM. A reception with refreshments will follow. We are offering continuing education or staff development credits for professionals.

As our core committee works with others in the community on the details of this series, more collaborative connections are evolving. What better way of celebrating the Coming Out Month of October than for all of us to sponsor these speakers and to invite the whole community to join in dialogue about what it means to accept and embrace differences and how that differs from tolerance.

A simple contact via e-mail, a phone call, or invitation to share a cup of coffee can lead to powerful sharing and growth opportunities.

(READING, Continued from page 1)

Claire Robson escapes her village and her family through a scholarship to university, where she easily becomes a hippie, marries the son of a family far wealthier than her own, and plunges headlong into domesticity. But before long she leaves her husband and rides her motorcycle straight into the lesbian community to become first a squatter, then a school principal.

This memoir reads like a novel, and is by turns laugh-out-loud funny and heartbreakingly poignant. It is a coming out story that tackles the trade-offs some gay people make after they leave the closet and choose acceptance instead of activism, work instead of sex, success instead of happiness, and silence instead of truth. While this may not seem to be everyone's story, the author's courage, honesty, warmth, and humor make it an unquestionably universal one. "A deft, loving, and insightful recounting of the formative decades of an extraordinary ordinary life. Far from indulging in the current fashion in women's memoir for dissecting one's victimhood, Robson's sly good humor and iconoclasm shine a clear and unapologetic light on the quixotic and often lengthy process of becoming an independent, entirely functional, self-accepting queer adult. From her misbegotten marriage to her arrest as a housing squatter, from schoolyard taunts to lesbian bed death, from the healing power of women's basketball to grieving a dead parent, Robson is unflinching, funny, touching, and intimate in her disclosures. Reading her memoir of coming into her own as a lesbian, a woman, and a human being is like the best sort of long, ambling stories friends tell friends over innumerable pots of tea." —Hanne Blank, author of *Unruly Appetites*

Claire Robson is a British-born writer who has lived in the United States for the past fourteen years. She writes both fiction and poetry and has been published in numerous journals and literary reviews. Claire teaches writing in Boston and New Hampshire.

Nugget

Readers of the Billings
Montana PFLAG newsletter
are treated to a
"favorite shared quote"
that came from
the previous monthly meeting.

One edition
of the newsletter offered up
this one:

**"My Mom use to blame
herself for my being gay.**

**Now she wants to take all
the credit!"**

PFLAG Scholarship Program Is Fully Funded

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) announced that it has received a bequest from a private donor that will fully fund the first round of its first-ever PFLAG National GLBT Scholarship Program. The program was established to recognize the courage and leadership of GLBT youth and their peer allies in secondary schools. The unique program has five specific awards, including the Esera Tuaolo Scholarship Student/Athlete Scholarship, which honors the former National Football League player for his courageous stand as a gay athlete/role model for the nation's youth.

Initial funds for the scholarship program come from a bequest made by Palmer B. Carson. "Palmer wanted to leave a legacy of acceptance that would provide a more positive educational experience for our children," said John Drakulich, executor of Carson's estate. With Drakulich's advice and encouragement, Carson left virtually his entire estate to PFLAG. "[Palmer] felt PFLAG was an excellent choice due to its broad scope and mission statement," Drakulich said.

The first cycle of scholarship awards will be announced this fall, coinciding with the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of PFLAG.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for PFLAG members to work in partnership with their local school districts to offer this nationally funded scholarship to GLBT students and their allies for furthering their education," said Nancy McDonald, who chairs the scholarship committee. "It will also bring awareness to high school principals and academic counselors the tremendous support at a national level for GLBT students and their allies." McDonald brings strong credentials and a long history of public service to the PFLAG scholarship program. She is a past national president of PFLAG, served as vice president of the National Association of Partners in Education and is current chair of the Oklahoma Memorial Trust Foundation.

"These college scholarships will let GLBT youth and their allies know that they can fulfill their dreams and still be honest and open about who they are as individuals," said David Tseng, PFLAG executive director. "We can't think of a better way to celebrate PFLAG's 30th Anniversary than by encouraging the next generation of activists."

Has your PFLAG Chapter Sponsored Scholarships?

If So, Your Assistance is Needed!

The national office's Scholarship Committee, headed up by former national president Nancy McDonald, is preparing to undertake the work of implementing the PFLAG National GLBT Scholarship Program. To assist them in this, they would like to know what kinds of procedures our chapters offering scholarships have found work best for them. If your chapter currently offers scholarships, or has in the past offered them it would be most helpful if you could direct your various program administration materials to Betty Limon here at the PFLAG office.



Newsletter Changes

The PFLAG NH State Council has had to take a hard look at our budget to find ways to cut costs, without having a significant impact on services. One of our largest expenses is the printing and mailing of our 800 bi-monthly newsletters.

We view the newsletter as an important education and outreach tool. Since education is part of our mission, we certainly do not want to cut or significantly impact this service. It is also a way to stay in touch with you – our members.

The State Council has come up with a compromise that we hope will improve our education mission. We have decided to print and mail the newsletter quarterly, while adding an email news bulletin, to be sent to members every 4 – 6 weeks.

By using email technology, we will be able to keep you better informed about programs, events and important news, while cutting down on costs.

We realize that not everyone uses email, and we still want to be able to send newsletters to those who wish to maintain their subscription. Printed versions will also continue to be supplied to libraries and other community organizations to share with their patrons and clients.

When you are able to assist us in cutting costs by opting for the more frequent and up to date electronic version rather than the printed version, please email admin@pflagnh.org

The change takes effect this month, following the distribution of this issue.

READING OPPORTUNITIES For GLBT Teens

(1) BROCHURE: "I Thought I Knew You: Quick Answers for Friends of Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual Teens" Pamphlet available online. Written by a private individual and available free online. It has a few flaws (uses the term 'sexual preference' which many GLBT people feel implies that one's orientation is chosen and which many find offensive). It is basically a very good, simple starting place for a friend to whom someone comes out. Find it at Stopping the Silence: <<http://www24.brinkster.com/thalerfamily/glbqa.html>>

(2) MANUAL: "Take it Back: A Manual for Fighting Slurs on Campus" This amazing 50-page manual is available FREE online from the GSA network. "Slurs hurt, isolate, and fragment communities, leaving people feeling left out and targeted. Recognizing the power of language to affect individuals and environments is foundational to the work of creating safe space for all students at school. Through student organizing and activism, you can work to prevent slurs and respond effectively when they happen; you can focus on the source, meaning, and impact of slurs in order to take back hurtful language in your school. By speaking out against slurs on your campus, you can also take back the ability of language to empower and strengthen our communities.

By offering you Take It Back: A Manual for Fighting Slurs on Campus, Gay-Straight Alliance Network invites you to be a partner in taking on the use of slurs in schools." Go to:

www.gsanetwork.org/takeitback/TakeltBack.pdf

(3) BOOK: She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders by Jennifer Finney Boylan. Vickie Countryman, Director of Equity at Spokane Public Schools, says, "This is an excellent book for those [high school students and adults who want more info, or who would like to have a better understanding of transgender/transsexuals as well as a resource. It is beautifully written, honest and full of love. I could NOT put it down and read right through it in one day. I am adding it to our Equity Library - I strongly believe that it is a book that brings 'voice' to this population and is essential reading for people interested in equity/diversity."

From the inside cover: "The exuberant memoir of a man named James who became a woman named Jenny. In this extraordinary true story, the author explores the remarkable territory that lies

between men and women, examines changing friendships and rejoices in the redeeming power of family.

She's Not There explores the dramatic outward changes and unexpected results of life as a woman and captures the universal sense of feeling uncomfortable, out of sorts with the world, and misunderstood by her peers. Through her distinctive perspective, Jenny Finney Boylan provides us a new window on the often confounding process of accepting ourselves."

Media Opportunity For GLBT Teens

The very popular kids' network, Nickelodeon, has created Noggin, a commercial-free interactive network. Noggin is in the process of producing its fourth season of the award winning show "A Walk In Your Shoes". This groundbreaking series allows kids from different backgrounds to literally swap lives in order to better understand each other.

This season the series will be dedicating a half-hour show to exploring what it is like for a gay or lesbian teen to come out to friends and acquaintances. For this particular episode, the teen would also spend time with a straight boy or girl so that the two could explore the differences, and similarities, in their respective lives.

Interested teens between 14 and 17 need to provide a videotape, which would allow producers to see how comfortable they are on camera and a sense of their personality. They are looking for people who are articulate and energetic and have just begun the process of coming out to friends and acquaintances.

Here are questions for all who are interested: What is your name and age? What hobbies or school activities are you involved in? What misconceptions do you think people have about gay and lesbian teens? What would you want to teach someone who might have misconceptions about you? To whom have you come out? To whom would you like to come out? Why is coming out important to you? Why do you want to be involved in this documentary?

You can use any format tape, such as DVC, High-8, VHS, etc. Also, it's best if you have someone video you at a fairly close range, from the mid-section up, so the face can be seen.

Once the tape has been completed, please contact Alice Leeds, PFLAG Communications, aleeds@pflag.org

Marriage, Many Definitions

Letters - The Times-News, August 18, 2003
Hendersonville, NC

Despite assertions that "marriage" should mean only the union of a man and a woman, the word has a much broader definition: that of joining two entities into a new relationship. Corporate mergers are sometimes described as a marriage; the phrase "to marry the flavors" appears in some recipes; Roman Catholic nuns are "married" to the church; poet John Milton spoke of "soft Lydian airs, married to immortal verse."

Marriage has meant many different things, evolving from the time when a woman was merely a possession to be passed from father to husband, to the present time, where in its ideal form - which all too often is not achieved - the partners are equal in power and diligent in loving and sustaining one another. Those of us who are past childbearing age or who are infertile would not take kindly to the dissolution of our marriages on the grounds that marriage is only for procreation.

I claim the same rights - without exception - for all four of my children, straight or gay: the right to choose a life partner; the right and the obligation to undertake the responsibilities attendant to that choice; and the right to enjoy any and all of the benefits available in the society their efforts help to build.

- Jean W. Allen, Secretary/Treasurer,
PFLAG Flat Rock/Hendersonville

Gay Leaders Mobilize for Marriage Battle

Washington Blade (GLBT), By Lou Chibbaro Jr.,

With a proposed constitutional amendment seeking to ban gay marriage looming in the background, leaders of at least 16 national and state gay civil rights groups are scheduled to meet in Washington on Sept. 8 to map strategies for opposing the amendment and advancing the cause of same-sex marriage.

The meeting, to be held at the offices of the Human Rights Campaign, follows a similar meeting held in New York City on July 21. Participants hailed that meeting as a first-of-its-kind "summit" of gay leaders waging a high-stakes marriage battle. "It's really less about a meeting and more about what we are doing to enlist non-gay people and to move public opinion," said gay rights attorney Evan Wolfson, executive director of the New York-based gay advocacy group Freedom to Marry.

Celebrate 30 Years With PFLAG Founders

Nila Marrone, President, PFLAG NYC

This is an invitation to meet Jeanne Manford, Amy Ashworth, Elaine Benov and Edie Ogolsky, the founding members PFLAG. You are invited to attend a PFLAG Dinner October 13, 2003 at which Jeanne, Amy, Elaine and Edie will be honored. You can also attend the monthly PFLAG NYC meeting on October 12, and have another opportunity to meet and speak with our founders. Our Dinner Committee Chair, Sally Sekler, will help guests find reasonably priced hotel accommodations.

Monday, October 13, 2003, Tavern on the Green
(67th Street and Central Park West, New Your City)

Cocktails: 6:00PM Dinner: 7:00PM.

Members: \$115 pp. RVSP By September 30:
Sally Sekler, 212.957.2067; ssekler@aol.com

THE GAY AGENDA

A Commentary

Ann Woolner is a columnist for Bloomberg News.

July 7 – Over dinner with a gay friend this week, I asked to see his copy of the Homosexual Agenda. I've been trying to find one ever since Justice Antonin Scalia complained two weeks ago that the U.S. Supreme Court had "signed on to the so-called homosexual agenda." My friend claimed he had never actually seen it himself. Yeah, right. He's spent his career working in public schools, perfectly placed to troll for recruits and poison young minds. How could Agenda distributors have missed him?

In any case, it turns out that the best sources for the Homosexual Agenda are not homosexuals but anti-homosexuals. Gay activists target America's children and seek their help in their quest of "tolerance" and "acceptance," says an article posted on the American Family Association's Agenda page. "Sodomites have infiltrated every level of government and society and are now demanding legitimization of their sinful lifestyle," says a Homosexual Agenda article posted on the fundamentalist Jeremiah Project's site.

Actually, the anti-homosexuals are onto something. The Homosexual Agenda contains no item proposing the destruction of marriage, insists Jon Davidson, of Lambda legal, a so-called gay-rights group. All it says is, "Please let us in." At last! A homosexual who admits the Agenda exists.