



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 ▼ June / July / August 2004
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National PFLAG Representatives Tour

submitted by Roberta Barry

Do you know that our 7 PFLAG chapters in New Hampshire and our 150 or so members are part of a larger New England and United States organization? PFLAG is the largest Nationally based GLBT family organization that works for the rights of GLBT people.

I had the good fortune to meet a few of these folks during the week of May tenth. I joined Peg Gage and Jamie Curtis on a road trek around New England. You know Peg Gage as a member of PFLAG NH Seacoast Chapter, and PFLAG National Board Member, as well as our New England Regional Representative. Jamie Curtis is PFLAG National's Northeast Field and Policy Coordinator, from whom we had another visit recently at our Advisory Meeting.

In our many stops we visited and learned what our friends are doing to support each other as they deal with cultural heterosexism and homophobia.

Our first stop was Springfield, Vermont, where Mischelle Paton is starting a new PFLAG chapter. Twelve people, from teenagers to grandmothers joined to share

(TOUR, Continued on page 4)

Advisory Meeting

PFLAG NH Annual Advisory Meeting, report by Roberta Barry

The Spring Advisory Meeting was held at Havenwood, Concord on Thursday night May 13th. For the past two years this meeting has been held as an open public forum. It has been a time for inviting, as guests, some of the people who have expressed an interest in the mission of PFLAG.

This year the program for the evening included remarks from representatives of various groups, including New Hampshire Freedom to Marry (NHFTM), and NH Seacoast Outright. The meeting time also included the annual visit of National PFLAG representatives. We enjoyed the company of both Peg Gage, New England Regional Representative and National PFLAG Board Member, and Jamie Curtis, National PFLAG's Northeast Field and Policy Coordinator.

Although Bishop Gene Robinson was scheduled to speak, he was called away on an emergency.

We were privileged to have Jeffrey Perkins present to introduce his new book, *You have the Power - Choosing Courage in a Culture of Fear*. Jeffrey is the son of our VP, Carol Perkins. He spoke about his years growing up in his small hometown of Plymouth, NH. He

(ADVISORY, Continued on page 2)

Transsexuals are Protected

Transgendered News Network

June 3, 2004 - WASHINGTON - The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) applauded today's historic federal court ruling asserting that that transsexual employees are protected against workplace discrimination under existing law. In *Smith v. City of Salem, Ohio, et al*, the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals - which covers Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee - ruled that Title VII protects transsexuals and that the sex-stereotyping doctrine covers people who change their sex, marking the first such ruling by a federal appeals court.

"This is an historic day for our community, especially transsexual employees who are judged all too often not for the job they do, but because of someone else's prejudice," said HRC President Cheryl Jacques. "The plaintiff and attorney are to be commended for their efforts in bringing forth such a historic case."

The plaintiff, Jimmie Smith, was working as a firefighter in Salem, Ohio, when Smith be-

(PROTECTION, Continued on page 5)

(ADVISORY, Continued from page 1)

read sections of his book. One section that he read speaks of his thoughts surrounding the time around the moment when he came-out to his mother.

“Crying and upset that evening, I sat wishing it would all go away. But I knew there was no turning back, and the knowledge that a new era of my life had begun gave me strength even in my nervous fear. I had faced the most elemental fear - that I would not be loved for who I was - and I was still breathing. I did not know what it would mean, but I knew from that moment, life would be different.”

The audience of about 65 people received Jeffrey’s book with laughter, tears, and enthusiasm. PFLAG NH wishes Jeffrey Perkins much success with this opening book signing, and are grateful to him for sharing his story with us. Jeffrey’s book may be purchased through Amazon or



Jamie Curtis, Peg Gage, and Roberta Barry

Borders.

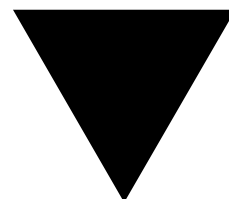
As we concluded our evening, we asked those present to step up to the plate and help PFLAG NH in the four areas of need we had identified. These are: (1) Board development; (2) Fund Raising and grant writing; (3) Strategic planning; and, (4) Educational materials development. This appeal brought offers of help from the leadership of other GLBT groups such as, Tawnee Walling of Seacoast Outright, and Mo Baxley of the Democracy Project.

For some time, the Board of PFLAG NH, the collective council of the seven NH chapters, has been hard at work providing speakers in public schools, and colleges. Now that service has grown into offering speakers to other human service facilities. We have sent speakers to places such as the Homeless Workers of NH and the New England Library Association.

At both the local level, and through the PFLAG NH Board, we continually take on the challenges of educating people about the concerns and needs of our GLBT families. With the increasing visibility of GLBT people in our culture, PFLAG NH has received an increase in requests for information from the general public. In an effort to stay ahead of this, the work of the Board of PFLAG NH has been focused on education and advocacy missions. In trying to meet the extra calls and requests, and in developing our plans, the Board of PFLAG NH is finding it essential to develop coalitions with other groups.



Author Jeffrey Perkins at the Advisory Meeting



“Alert”

Every week, many of us receive a sizeable email communication from PFLAG National, called an “Alert.” Anyone can sign-up for it. Below is a part of May 28, 2004 Alert. It is the Message from our Interim Executive Director

With the excitement of May 17 still fresh and marriage equality in Massachusetts now a reality, we are able to focus attentions to other ongoing work. PFLAG continues to be a leader in the struggle to make schools safe for all youth and expose the ways that homophobia and anti-GLBT hostility harms all students. A huge new initiative for us in this area is our PFLAG National Scholarship. The press release below went out yesterday and is generating quite a lot of interest. Our thanks go to the Palmer B. Carson Trust, (a bequest that made the program possible), to The Dow Chemical Company and to two additional donors for funding the scholarships. And our thanks also go to the scholarship committee headed up by Nancy McDonald and to Dr. Roy Gilbert-Higginson, our Deputy Director of Field & Policy, for their hard work to implement the project.

There is still time to help us with our national safe schools assessment - we are looking for PFLAGers as well as youth, education professionals, youth serving professionals and interested allies to complete the survey available on line at http://www.pflag.org/safe_schools.htm. Results will be announced at the

Jamie Curtis, Peg Gage, and



the Perkins Family

Happy Father's Day to all PFLAG Dads!

Your love and support make a world of difference



PFLAG Dad, Gordon Sherman

PFLAG national conference in October in Salt Lake City, Utah.

We are calling for all PFLAGers and their allies who are now or once were members (or plan to be!) of the PTA to be in touch with us. Their motto is "Every Child. One Voice." but we have had difficulty getting the National PTA to take meaningful steps to educate themselves and their membership about how anti-GLBT hostility profoundly affects all students and their physical and emotional well-being. We have some plans coming together to work on this and will need your help. Please send your name, contact information and where you live to our safe schools coordinator, Ryan Spaeth at rspaeth@pflag.org and stay tuned for details.

Thank you to those of you who are sending in your reports from your in-district congressional visits. If you have visits planned or would like to make plans, please let us know ahead of time if possible so we can help link you up with some of our coalition partners who would like to join you!

Finally, watch for your PFLAG Weekly Alert to arrive on Thursdays rather than on Fridays starting next week, and as always, feel free to pass it along to others and encourage people to sign up to receive it themselves!

To sign-up, go to the following link:
<http://visitor.roving.com/optin.jsp?edit=t&m=1011215259143&ea>

(TOUR, Continued from page 1)

their stories and hopes for a more inclusive accepting climate in the Southeastern part of Vermont.

Our next stop was an early morning breakfast at Friendly's with the Western Massachusetts leaders. Judy Nardacci, Tom Lynch, and Jane Harris told us about efforts in their areas to educate and support the families of GLBT people. Tom, who is leading in the Great Barrington area, is trying to involve more dads, brothers, and other male leadership. He was successful in sponsoring a forum regarding gay marriage. Jane spoke of her continuing work on behalf of straight spouses. She has moved her chapter location to the North Hampton / Hadley area. Judy is working on developing coalitions in the Western Massachusetts area.

On Wednesday we met with Betty Batchelor, long time leader in the NH Seacoast area. She spoke to us about the history of the distribution of GLBT books, and its positive impact on schools and libraries in NH.

Wednesday evening we met with the Greater Boston Consortium of PFLAG groups. These 12 leaders have been embroiled in the gay marriage issue for months. An evening spent with them revealed how important our support is for the Freedom to Marry initiatives. Dr. Ralph Freidin shared with us from, "The Family Stories Project of Greater Boston PFLAG". This is a collection of stories from families of GLBT people, that was bound into a booklet and distributed to Massachusetts legislators in preparation for the March 11, 2004 Constitutional Convention. He is

exploring with Jamie Curtis how to make this a national project.

This booklet is a powerful tool to show how families are supporting their GLBT loved ones in their civil rights efforts. I hope we can create a New Hampshire section! We're certainly going to need many PR tools in the months ahead, as we try to convince our legislature to grant marriage rights to gay couples.

Here is an interesting idea for getting our message out the public that we heard while in Boston.

- One simple, but powerful message is printed on a business sized card which can be handed to someone during any business transaction. It reads, "Your business has just been supported by someone who is gay or has a gay friend or relative." Information about a local chapter could be included. Such a simple, safe, yet quiet way to speak up about how much we care for GLBT people.

We hope to see these folks again, as we join together for the Boston Pride Parade on June twelfth.

Thursday, our tour visited the PFLAG NH Advisory Meeting. Please read the accompanying article describing this terrific event which included Jeff Perkins, a new author and son of our Vice President, Carol Perkins.

At all the meetings in the tour, Jamie Curtis told us about a School Climate Survey, and encouraged chapter leaders to respond to it. The survey form can

(TOUR, Continued on page 5)

2004 Membership Form for Renewal or New Members

Membership: Includes Chapter, State and National PFLAG Dues.

\$35 Family / Partnership \$25 Single \$10 Newsletter Only Additional Contribution \$_____

Name _____ Telephone (optional) _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Chapter Affiliation (please circle one):

Keene ▼ Concord ▼ Plymouth ▼ Stratham/Seacoast ▼ North Country ▼ Lakes Region ▼ Upper Valley

Please make check payable to: PFLAG NH ~ Mail to PFLAG NH, PO Box 485, Winnisquam, NH 03289

Please send me the PFLAG NH E-news. My email address is: _____

CONFIDENTIALITY: The PFLAG NH Mailing List is confidential and is never shared with any other organizations. Everything PFLAG NH sends comes in a plain envelope with only a return address. If you prefer not to receive the National PFLAG mailings, which do come with the PFLAG logo on the envelope, please check this box:

(PRESIDENT, Continued from page 4)

be downloaded from the National web site. The goal of this assessment tool is to have at least ten responses from each state.

Peg Gage reminded each group that providing updated information to National about membership is crucial, so that accurate data bases can be maintained.

The National office is experiencing some changes in staffing. Among the changes will be a new Executive Director, whom they hope to have on board in time for the National Conference in October.

Although I was not part of the tour for this visit, Jamie Curtis and Peg Gage met with John and Becky Glezen in South Glastonbury, CT on May 14th. David Knapp, the Representative for PFLAG Madison / Shoreline, as well as Barb and Bob Underwood of Coventry were also present.

They discussed visits to the Senatorial offices in DC and then matters specific to Connecticut. Peg told me that Jamie did a superb job of answering all their questions.

For me, this opportunity to meet others who are part of our mission of support, education, and advocacy, was a highlight of my year as President of the New Hampshire Board.

(PROTECTION, Continued from page 1)

gan to transition from male to female. After informing supervisors of the transition, Smith's supervisors met with city officials to devise a plan to terminate Smith's employment. Following the meeting, the city unfairly disciplined Smith and attempted to either force Smith out or terminate employment. The lower court threw out the plaintiff's claims under Title VII and another civil rights statute. The 6th Circuit ruled today that the trial court erred.

In a conversation with HRC, Randi Barnabee - who argued the case on Smith's behalf applauded the historic ruling.

"In the 6th Circuit, it is no longer permissible for an employer to discriminate against an employee on the basis of stereotypes about gender nonconformity -- even when the sole basis of nonconformity is the mere admission by a person of self-identification as a transsexual," said Barnabee. "They can no longer get away with sex discrimination against a gender-non-conforming person simply because that person can be labeled transgender or transsexual."

"This type of victory under Title VII is long overdue, because it is so clear that the sex stereotyping of transgender people is blatant sex discrimination," says Shannon Minter, a board member of the Transgender Law and Policy Institute. "This decision represents basic fairness."

Historically, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 has not been interpreted to cover transgender people. However, most of those cases were decided before 1989's Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins - the first Supreme Court case to conclude that Title VII prohibited sex stereotyping.

The Human Rights Campaign is the largest national lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender political organization with members throughout the country. It effectively lobbies Congress, provides campaign support and educates the public to ensure that GLBT Americans can be open, honest and safe at home, at work and in the community.



PFLAG National's NE Tour stops at Friendly's