



THE NEWSLETTER

August 2014

ISSUE 8

VOLUME 21



OUR PICNIC HAS RETURNED



Please join us for our General Meeting on **Monday, August 25** at 7:00 pm at Jewish Family Service, 8804 Balboa Avenue. Doors open at 6:45.

We have not had a potluck picnic since 2012 so wanted to re-start a fun tradition. We will not have a speaker this month so that we can munch and enjoy each others company. It's a great time to get to know one another. THE

ORDER OF OUR MEETING WILL NOT BE THE USUAL. We will have the potluck first followed by the support groups. If you are not able to make the potluck, but wish to attend the support groups, they should start around 8:00.

Please bring any type of dish you'd like to share, enough for 8-10 people (main dish, salad, appetizer, side dish, casserole, or dessert). PFLAG will provide the beverages.

Hope to see you there with your appetites!

IT'S JUST AROUND THE CORNER

Put on your sneakers and get geared up to walk with PFLAG on **Saturday, September 27** for the 25th Annual AIDS Walk San Diego. This event is San Diego's largest one-day HIV/AIDS fundraiser and the biggest non-governmental financial provider for HIV/AIDS in San Diego County. Dozens of agencies, serving thousands of clients, rely on funds raised at the annual Walk to help provide essential prevention and care programs to thousands of men, women, and children living with HIV/AIDS.

The 5K Walk starts at 8:15 am and begins at Normal Street and University Avenue (new starting location this year). The registration fee is \$35 (\$25 for 17 & under and 60+). If we have at least 10 walkers registered by September 22, we will qualify as Team PFLAG and be able to walk with the prestigious sneaker

sign with PFLAG on it. Any PFLAGer participant who has "walked the walk," knows what a big deal it is to be able to carry our PFLAG sneaker sign. As of early August, we have six walkers; please sign up soonest.

To register, go to www.AIDSwalksd.org and select Register at the top of the page, then Join an Existing Team. Either enter PFLAG San Diego or Search for a Team and find PFLAG San Diego. Click on the Join button and follow the instructions.

Even if you can't walk with us, please register so we can meet our 10 person and financial goals (\$1000).

If you don't have internet, call 619.692.2077 x 247 (Ian Johnson) to participate. For questions, please contact Sherry Cohen-Richards, scohenrichards@pflag.com or call 858-349-6269.

SOUTH BAY PRIDE IS COMING

Join the festivities at South Bay Pride Art & Music Festival on **Saturday, September 13** from noon-10:00 pm at Bayfront Park. There will be live entertainment, DJs and dancing, Art of Pride in the Park, great food, water sports, beverage gardens, children's entertainment, and much more!

Bayfront Park is adjacent to "J" Street Marina in Chula Vista.



As always, PFLAG will have a booth. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Patti Boman: pboman@pflag.com or leave a message on the info line (888-398-0006).

PFLAG ACADEMY ONLINE

Now, in the comfort of your own home, you can participate in PFLAG National's Webinars. The upcoming one is on Facilitation Skills. It's a good time for current facilitators to brush up on skills (or persons who wish to be facilitators), to ensure that support groups, one of the most honored PFLAG functions, aren't just running smoothly, but being led in ways that truly serve participants. There will be: a review of guidelines and best practices for support meetings; interaction with the PFLAG field team and chapter leaders from all over the country to discuss best practices and learn from their experiences in group facilitation; examination of five core skills of great PFLAG facilitators; access to resources from PFLAG National to help the support group go from good to great. There's lots of time for questions also. The first session is **Wednesday, August 20** at 4:00 pm (PDT) or **Tuesday, August 26** at 7:00 pm (PDT). To register, go to www.pflag.org and click on "Chapter Information and Resources."

All the webinars are open to any PFLAG member.



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(202) 647-8180, www.pflag.org

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or go online www.pflag.com
Membership forms available at www.pflag.com

MISSION STATEMENT

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends through Support, to cope with an adverse society; Education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and Advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights.

PFLAG provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

Current Events

August 18 | Monday
Mi Familia Support Group

August 21-September 21
Regrets Only
Diversionary Theatre
(see article)

August 25 | Monday
San Diego PFLAG General
Meeting and Support Groups

September 8 | Monday
PFLAG Support Group
North County Coastal

September 8 | Monday
PFLAG Support Group
East County

September 8 | Monday
Mi Familia Support Group

September 13 | Saturday
South Bay Pride (see
article)

September 15 | Monday
Mi Familia Support Group

September 22 | Monday
San Diego PFLAG General
Meeting and Support
Groups

September 27 | Saturday
AIDS Walk (see article)



Equality is the soul of liberty,
there is, in fact, no liberty without it.

Frances Wright

THANKS!

General Fund Donation
Marie Thibeaux

Providing Refreshments
for Our Meeting

Kim Martinez
PFLAG San Diego



Show your support! Renew!

SUPPORT GROUPS

SD COUNTY GENERAL MEETING & SUPPORT GROUP

Meets every fourth Monday at 7:00 pm, at Jewish Family Service, 8804 Balboa Avenue, San Diego in Kearny Mesa.

For further information, contact the Info Line: 888-398-0006 or www.pflag.com

NORTH COUNTY COASTAL

Meets the first Monday, at 7:00 pm, North County LGBTQ Resource Center, 510 North Coast Highway, Suite C, Oceanside. **For September only, the meeting is the second Monday of the month (September 8) at 7:00 pm.**

Contact ncpflag@gmail.com or
Larry Gerling, (760) 224-2178.

NORTH COUNTY INLAND

Support Groups have been temporarily discontinued

EAST COUNTY

Meets every second Monday, at 7:00 pm, Summit Unitarian Universalist Church, 8778 Cottonwood Avenue, Santee.

Contact Contact Bob Dryden: 619-334-8214 or
bdryden@pflag.com

MI FAMILIA (Spanish)

Meetings are the first three Mondays of the month from 6:30pm - 8:00 pm at The Center. **There will be no meeting on September 1 (Labor Day).**

Contact Patti Boman, (619) 227-6092

TRANSGENDER SUPPORT

For more information on the Transgender Support Group

Contact Kathe Dunn, ftm_mom@yahoo.com.

NEXT IN LINE



Juan Carlos Ortega was one of the recipients of the Rob Benzon Memorial Scholarship.

He was in the Honors College at San Diego City College and will be attending the University of San Francisco in the fall.

One of Juan Carlos's professors, who taught him in several honors classes (and is also known for her challenging course work) said he consistently distinguished himself as an incredibly motivated, collaborative student who had a gift for his in-depth analysis and questions.

Even though Juan Carlos worked to support himself through school, he took the time to become a tutor in the Writing Center, sought out and received an internship with the American Federation of Teachers to set up a Workers Rights Center on campus, and was involved in the Associated Student Government.

"When I was twelve I helped my little cousin, Betty, set up a 'Dora la Exploradora' kitchen play-set. After we finished assembling it, Betty asked if I could join her for some very labor intensive make-believe cooking, and I gladly agreed. Halfway through our Iron Chef play-date, Betty asked me to help her set up a dinner table worthy only of the highest nobility, a title that belonged to her small poodle, KiKi. Mid set-up, my grandfather decided to check in on us and walked in on our culinary *chef d'ouvre*. Until that day, I had never seen my *abuelo* so furious. He walked up to me, pulled me by the ear and told me to stop acting like a 'maricón,' a term that would continue

to haunt me until the day I decided to confront it. Coming from a traditional Mexican-Catholic family has translated into a strictly conservative and 'machista' set of values that made it hard to be open about my identity. Growing up in this setting forced me to not only repress the truth about my sexuality, but also tried to assimilate me into the hetero-normative status quo. My hardest challenge has been the opposition between two fundamental aspects of my identity, one being my Mexican heritage and the other is the queer culture I was born into. However, activism was how I decided to confront this issue. Also, through activism I realized that all cultures could exist so long as bigotry was overwrought and replaced by ideas of solidarity and compassion.



It was not until my sophomore year when I realized that rather than being miserable and following the social constructs of a patriarchal paradigm, one should protest and educate. The issue of inequality became even more relevant to all members of my community in 2008. This was the year we entered the conversation of same-sex marriage as the infamous Proposition 8 gained momentum. It was in my World History class in high school where I first became aware of this issue. Every morning we were required to bring in a news brief to discuss in class, and on this particular morning one student brought up marriage equality and the Mormon funded proposition. To my surprise, my tenth grade classmates, regardless of their backgrounds, all agreed that it was unjust to deny someone the

access to marriage because of their sexual identity. Their unanimous decision gave me the confidence to accept myself for who I am and also convinced me that through collective action, one can undo the 'machista' school of thought that was deeply ingrained in the minds of people like my *abuelo*. I became an active member of a 'NO H8' campaign, which sought to educate people on the issue and dispel misconceptions created by the right wing media. While the battle was initially lost, what this campaign managed to successfully do was start the conversation of marriage equality as a basic human right. The 'No H8' campaign opened my eyes to the plethora of social issues within and outside the LGBTQIA community.

Today, I continue to see the value of activism as a means of joining education and social justice together. The universities I have been accepted to all have a strong emphasis on social justice in their curriculum. However, my dreams of teaching to transgress and community skill-building go beyond the institutions themselves, as I plan to have a career that fulfills my passion of social justice economics and education. Through the PFLAG scholarship, it will be financially feasible to pursue a higher education while giving back to the communities I am a part of. I plan to focus in on issues that today, affect underrepresented members of society like the LGBTQIA community. Ultimately, it has been education and solidarity that have saved me from constricting grasp of a hetero-normative and patriarchal paradigm, allowing me to transcend by accepting all aspects of my identity. Ultimately, I want to be a part of the change!"

"We need marriage equality in every state in this nation. Otherwise, no state really has marriage equality, and we will not rest until it is a reality." --New York Governor Andrew Cuomo

NEXT!



It's my turn! **Sherry Cohen-Richards** (me, Newsletter Editor) is next up on the Board Member bios.

"My son, Jared, officially came out when he was 16, going into his junior year of high school (2000). Although I was not surprised, this was still an adjustment for me so I only told a few close friends. Even then, I sometimes burst out crying before I even got the words out of my mouth (and for those who know me, it would seem impossible that I would have difficulty with that). Jared only told a small circle of friends at school.

I was very grateful that the Hillcrest Youth Center had just opened that summer and Jared had been going, although I didn't know it at the time. Once he came out that August, he became a new person since the stress of not telling anyone came off his shoulders. I was very worried

because for the years prior, he didn't do much socializing. That was an incredible relief to me, since he was always a social butterfly, so to speak.

Of course, my love for him never wavered (and why would it?), but I still wasn't comfortable about telling my family. I finally had the courage in January of 2001 to contact The Center for recommendations on LGBT friendly counselors. I didn't need it for the acceptance part; I felt I needed it to find out where to go from there. My husband, daughter, Jared, and I attended. The marriage and family therapist was a huge help and she was the person who told us about PFLAG. I went to my first meeting the same month.

At first, I sat quietly in the support groups (again, highly unusual for me). My husband also attended a few times. All I kept thinking was that those around me had taken giant steps in acceptance and understanding, and there was me, taking very small baby steps. Those small baby steps began

to grow and I was able to tell friends and family, although I still sometimes cried before the big announcement.

Jared came out to the world going into his senior year and so did I. You basically didn't mess with Mama Cohen-Richards in defending her cub. Although I continued going to meetings, I wasn't very active in PFLAG. That changed in late 2003 when I was asked to take over the "editorship" of the newsletter. Within the first few months, I had joined the board, becoming Vice-President in 2005. Over the years, my activism and love of the LGBT community has grown. I find myself continually saying, "There is nothing like the comradery of the LGBT community." And the rest, as they say, is history.

I have enjoyed my various roles on the board (one being historian, since I'm the only one left on the Board that's been around for over 10 years!), and I hope to continue for many years to come. "

RELIEF IN UGANDA

After only reporting terrible news for LGBT persons in Uganda, it's nice to have a bit of good news; we can only hope it is not short-lived.

Last December, there was a vote taken for the Anti-Homosexuality Act, which made the punishments worse than they were before, for being gay. Before, it was "illegal" to be gay, but the new law imposed much harsher punishments, including life imprisonment and even the death penalty for some homosexual acts. Thankfully, there were arguments on a challenge to this controversial Anti-Homosexuality Act brought by a

group of human rights activists, legal scholars, opposition politicians, and LGBT people. The Constitutional Court of Uganda struck down the law. The law was challenged because petitioners asserted that it had been passed by the parliament without following proper procedure. House Speaker Rebecca Kadaga ignored a quorum call by Prime Minister Amama Mbabazi when she moved the bill for a vote on Dec. 20. Without a quorum, the petitioners argue, the bill was not lawfully passed. The judge agreed with petitioners there was no quorum when the Anti-Homosexuality Act was passed and said it was an 'illegality'.

"The illegal act of the Speaker tainted the process and rendered it a nullity," the judge said.

"This is a major victory for gay campaigners and their straight allies in Uganda," human rights activist Peter Tatchell said. "They fought this law and won, against all odds. Congratulations to the Ugandan gay and straight civil society coalition that brought this legal challenge."

If the international pressure keeps up, perhaps the parliament will not attempt to pass the law again.

PFLAG, AGAIN, WAS THE BELL OF THE BALL

As is the case every year, when PFLAG marches in the Parade, people cannot thank us enough. Although it is mostly teens and young adults who come up and thank us, hug us, and tell us they wish their parents were like us, we have a fair number of adults who do the same. So many times, PFLAG is the voice for so many and it certainly gives us warm fuzzies.

Wayne Walker did an excellent job as our first time parade coordinator. He took it upon himself to gather members to help make new signs to carry in the parade, signs for the cars in the parade, recruit volunteers to help with the staging area, and compose a letter to rally the troops to participate. Kudos, Wayne.

We were grateful to Lonnie Brunini and Louie Chavez for renting the convertible (as well as driving it!) and to Alexa Blazquez for also driving in the parade. Other busy bee workers on

the parade were: Mallory Hoac, Mariel Hoac.

A huge thank you to the queen of doing almost everything single-handedly, Bobbi Harwood. Bobbi buys the merchandise for the PFLAG booth for the festival, is responsible for the booth set up/take down, organizes the booth with brochures and merchandise, is the treasurer in chief for the weekend, and lines up the volunteers to work the booth (all this while smiling, of course). Bobbi takes on this task every year and has been doing so since 2002! This year, due to unforeseen circumstances, on Saturday, she worked the last shift at the booth by herself for four hours. Stamina! People must have thought she had Botox treatments since wore a non-stop smile the entire time!

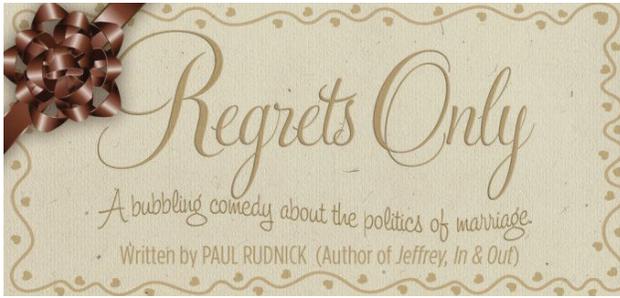
Thanks to all the booth volunteers. Sue and Tom Johnson helped Bobbi set up the booth on Friday. A big thank you to our members and friends who

volunteered to staff the booth at the Pride Festival: Scott Bernard, Linda Bessemer, Lonnie Brunini, Louie Chavez, Gail Folkman, Becky Lawton, Mike Minnick, Mary Thomas, Wayne Walker and Courtney Ware. All did a wonderful job of enticing festival goers with our large selection of buttons, stickers, bracelets, etc. and then providing them with information about PFLAG and letting them know we're here for them.

PFLAG and the rest of the LGBT community were thrilled to have actress, television star and renowned transgender advocate Laverne Cox as the Grand Marshal.

Below right is Fernando López, Jr. from PRIDE interviewing Ryland Whittington, who, before the age of six knew she was meant to be male. Laverne Cox looks on, as do Ryland's parents.





REGRETS ONLY

The Diversionary Theatre presents *Regrets Only*, a bubbling comedy about the politics of marriage, **August 21-September 21**. The Diversionary Theatre is located at 4545 Park Blvd., San Diego. For times and tickets information, go to www.diversionary.org. Remember, if you use the code PFLAG, you will receive \$5 off each ticket.

PROMO ADS ARE GOOD FOR LGBT COMMUNITY

Many businesses are “getting with the program.” The poster (right), which was rather large, of Nate Berkus and his husband, Jeremiah Brent, is displayed in the window of Banana Republic. The next time you pass by Banana Republic, by all means, stop in and tell the manager how appreciative you are of the poster. You can always email them to tell them the

same: www.bananarepublic.com and send a message through Customer Service.

A TV commercial for State Farm shows two dads with their children riding down an escalator. It was heartwarming. It would be a nice gesture to email State Farm also with some kudos.



Photo Credit: Banana Republic | Fashionista.com



Luan D. Andrews, M.A.

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INSTANT JUSTICE IN VIRGINIA

The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals declined a request to stay its ruling that the ban on same-sex marriage in Virginia is unconstitutional (stay=putting a stop to). A county clerk in Virginia has asked the appellate court to issue the stay while the ruling is appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. But the three-judge panel turned down the motion. The meaning? If the County Circuit Court Clerk doesn't appeal to the Supreme Court to intervene, which is most likely, then gay and lesbian couples in Virginia would be able to begin marrying as soon as possible, and seek to get any out-of-state marriages validated in Virginia.

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Or advertise in the annual directory:
gsdba.org/pages/AdvertiseinPrintDirectory



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