



Greater Boston PFLAG

# NEWS & VIEWS

December 2008 — February 2009  
85 River Street, Suite 5A, Waltham MA 02453

Greater Boston PFLAG is committed to creating environments of understanding and respect for 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. We provide opportunities for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and act to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

## President's Message

By Stan Griffith

Contact info: 781-861-7689 or  
[stangriffith@rcn.com](mailto:stangriffith@rcn.com)

Since the early sixties, my wife, Ann, and I have been involved in many social justice issues including the Civil Rights movement. As we watched the truly gracious and eloquent concession speech by John McCain, one of America's true heroes, and the victory speech by the first African-American elected to the Presidency of the United States, we were moved like so many others to tears of joy that our great country is stepping beyond its long dreadful history of racial fears and prejudice to judge a man's fitness for this nation's highest office, paraphrasing the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., not by the color of his skin, but by the content of his character. In President-elect Barack Obama's words, "Change has come to America."

President-elect Obama praised the electorate for rejecting the rhetoric of fear and divisiveness and "putting their hands on the arc of history and bend [ing] it once more toward the hope of a better day." This was a reference, to Dr. King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech in which he declared: "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

However, for PFLAG, the election results from November 4 were mixed. We have a new President who openly campaigned in support of important gay rights, but three more states

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(California, Florida, and Arizona) enshrined discrimination against gays and lesbians in their constitutions by banning same-sex marriage, and one state (Arkansas) passed a truly short-sighted ballot question that prohibits unmarried couples from being adoptive or foster parents. Discrimination is indeed ugly and cruel.

Some analysts mistakenly attribute the California defeat to the high voter turnout in minority communities spurred by the Obama candidacy. We gain nothing by affirming the politics of division, and better, closer analysis leads to a different diagnosis. In the run-up to November 4, polls by both sides showed that the California gay marriage ban (Proposition 8) was going down to defeat. In the three weeks before Nov. 4, opinion shifted approximately eight percentage points, largely due to a massive infusion of cash from fundamentalist religious organizations, a highly effective advertising campaign, and a last minute, church based get-out-the-vote effort by Prop. 8 proponents. The politics of fear triumphed over the politics of hope.

We truly have work to do. PFLAG must continue our vital public education activities to eradicate

*(Continued on page 2)*



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*President's Message (Continued from page 1)*

unfounded prejudice and recruit straight allies. We must be eternally vigilant and ready to mobilize when new initiatives are launched in our state or in Connecticut, where the first same-sex couples availed themselves of equal marriage rights. We need to stay engaged as public citizens in communicating with our elected officials and to our communities that nothing short of full equality is acceptable in America.

We must help our new President and those elected to Congress on a platform of equality to keep their election campaign promises. President-elect Obama has been a supporter of the GLBT community from the beginning of his political career in the Illinois legislature. Every two years, the Human Rights Campaign, the largest national GLBT organization, publishes a scorecard for members of the U.S. Senate based on their sponsorship and voting on issues of importance to our community. President-elect Obama scored 89 of 100% on the 2006 scorecard. Senator Obama co-sponsored hate crimes legislation that would extend protection against crimes perpetrated because of sexual orientation and gender identity. He supported a fully inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act, and believes that workplace discrimination

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Greater Boston PFLAG News & Views welcomes coming out stories, articles, letters, and comments from our readers.

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**ADVERTISING INFORMATION**

All ads must be camera-ready (that is, in a format ready to print) or JPEG compatible electronic file. Mail your ad and payment to Greater Boston PFLAG, PO Box 541619, Waltham, MA 02454-1619, or e-mail your ad as an attachment to [Pflagsafeschools@aol.com](mailto:Pflagsafeschools@aol.com).

	<u>PER</u> <u>ISSUE</u>	<u>PER</u> <u>YEAR (4x)</u>
Business Card, 3-1/2" w x 2" h	\$15	\$50
Quarter page, 3-1/2" w x 4" h	\$25	\$100

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE:**

*February 13, 2008*

based on sexual orientation and gender identity should be illegal. He supports repeal of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy and would allow gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military. His campaign literature stated: "The key test for military service should be patriotism, a sense of duty, and a willingness to serve." He supports adoption by gays and lesbians, and during the campaign, stated his strong opposition to a federal constitutional ban on gay marriage. He voted against both the Federal Marriage Amendment and opposed the Defense of Marriage Act of 1996.

We have work to do to educate President-elect Obama on the issue of marriage equality. While he expressed his personal opposition to Prop. 8 in California, he supports the "separate but equal" civil union status for same-sex couples. He would leave it to state courts and legislatures to determine whether to permit same-sex couples to marry. Furthermore, Senator Obama stated during his campaign that he supported legislation: "Giving them [gays and lesbians] a set of basic rights [that would] allow them to experience their relationship

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*President's Message* (Continued from page 2)

and live their lives in a way that does not cause discrimination.... I think that it is the right balance to strike in this society." This would suggest that the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act would have to be repealed, and Federal law would need to recognize state-sanctioned marriages (gay and straight) and civil unions equally so that the myriad ways that Federal laws give preferred treatment to married persons would be extended to same-sex couples. While not perfect, this would bend the long arc of the moral universe much closer toward justice and confer over 1,100 federal benefits on same-sex couples in equal marriage and civil union states (including California where civil unions are still recognized).

We must now work with our elected officials to ensure that these promises, including the promises made to our community, become reality.

On behalf of Greater Boston PFLAG, we salute our 44<sup>th</sup> President, and look forward to his inauguration on January 20, 2009. As proud Americans, we will celebrate; and then the hard work for all of us begins again.

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## Home for the Holidays

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*By Pam Garramone, Executive Director*

The holidays offer a wonderful opportunity for families to reconnect, and share laughter and good food. For many parents, it will be the first time they hear the words, "I'm gay," or "I'm lesbian," or "I'm transgender" or "I'm bisexual." For LGBT people who live away from home, it makes sense that they would share their news during this time; for parents it may be a shock, a relief, or something in between.

A parent's reaction is often the one factor that is overlooked when assessing the well-being of LGBT youth. It can range from Rejecting to Ambivalence to Accepting to Celebratory. Their words and actions have an extraordinary impact on the risk-taking behaviors and health of their child.

Groundbreaking research conducted by Caitlin Ryan, PhD, Director of the Family Acceptance Project, and her team at the César E. Chávez

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**MEN'S GROUP FOCUSING ON  
SEXUALITY, INTIMACY, RELATIONSHIPS AND FANTASY**  
Ongoing - Thursdays from 5:30 until 6:45

Institute at San Francisco State shows that families have a dramatic impact on their LGBT children's health and mental health. Parents' rejecting behavior—such as excluding their child from family events or ridiculing their sexual orientation or gender identity—increases their child's risk for serious health and mental health concerns. Conversely, family acceptance helps protect against risk. LGBT youth are known to be at high risk of suicide, substance abuse, and HIV infection, and victimization in home, school, and community settings. They are also at high risk for homelessness, and for placement in foster care and juvenile probation as a result of family conflict and rejection.

However, Dr. Ryan's new data indicate that families can change rejecting behavior when they understand how their words and actions affect their LGBT children's health and well-being. The Family Acceptance Project is developing new evidence-based family interventions and a new model of family-related care for LGBT youth.

Greater Boston PFLAG is committed to working with Caitlyn Ryan's research and tools to help families decrease rejection and increase family support, to strengthen family relationships, and to help maintain LGBT youth in their homes.

Our one-to-one outreach for parents, helpline, support groups in Arlington, Cape Ann, Concord, Dorchester, Easton, Reading, and Fall River are available to help parents on their journey to acceptance and support. To youth in Gay Straight Alliances who are in the process of coming out, we offer the opportunity to speak with PFLAG parents,

*(Continued on page 4)*

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR MONTHLY PFLAG MEETINGS

If you cannot reach one of the numbers below, call the PFLAG office at (781) 891-5966.

**Arlington** -- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 7:15pm, First Parish Church, Sunshine Nursery School, 630 Mass Ave., Arlington (781) 891-5966 [pflagarlmass@yahoo.com](mailto:pflagarlmass@yahoo.com).

**Brewster/Cape Cod** -- 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, 7:00pm, 1st Parish Brewster, Main St. (508) 398-6471

**Cape Ann** -- 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday, 7:00-9:00pm, First Universalist Church of Essex, 57 Main St., Essex, MA 01929, [www.uuessex.org](http://www.uuessex.org) for directions. Contact: Maria at [m\\_menendez@verizon.net](mailto:m_menendez@verizon.net).

**Concord** -- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, 7:00pm, Trinity Episcopal Church Library, 81 Elm (enter from River St.) Contact: Beth (978) 692-7677, [bobandbeth@comcast.net](mailto:bobandbeth@comcast.net).

**Dorchester** -- 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday, 6:30pm, Codman Square Health Center, 637 Washington St., Conference Room A. Contact: Lucretia [lucretiakeygodfrey@msn.com](mailto:lucretiakeygodfrey@msn.com) or (781) 891-5966.

**Easton Area** -- 4<sup>th</sup> Monday, 7:30pm (if holiday, then 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday); Unity Church, 9 Main St. (508) 238-0567, [pflageaston@comcast.net](mailto:pflageaston@comcast.net). Co-Chairpersons: Cecile Arnold and Mary Cuddy Sutherland.

**Fall River** -- 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month. 7:00-9:00pm at Durfee High School, 360 Elsbree St. Room 101. Use the main entrance. Contacts: Mary Zema, Marianne Quinn (401) 391-1874, [zemawoman@verizon.net](mailto:zemawoman@verizon.net).

**Falmouth/Cape Cod** -- Contact: Anne (508) 548-1038, [annenfred@verizon.net](mailto:annenfred@verizon.net)

**Martha's Vineyard** -- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, 3:00pm, Unitarian Universalist Church, 238 Main, Vineyard Haven, (508) 627-4948, [rabrown1950@aol.com](mailto:rabrown1950@aol.com).

**Reading** -- 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday, 7:30pm, Loring House, 211 Summer Ave., Reading, MA Email Linda at: [whtsthpt@gmail.com](mailto:whtsthpt@gmail.com). (On the campus of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Reading, at the intersection of Woburn St. and Summer Ave. Park in the parking lot between the church and Loring House.)

**Springfield** -- 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday, 7:00pm, Feeding Hills Congregational Church, 21 N. Westfield St., Feeding Hills, MA 01030-1672; (413) 786-5061, [agrace1966@comcast.net](mailto:agrace1966@comcast.net).

**Worcester** -- 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday, 7:00pm, The Bridge, 4 Mann Street, [pflagworchester@iname.com](mailto:pflagworchester@iname.com).

### **Non-PFLAG Group meetings:**

**Always Our Children** -- 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, 7:00pm, Community Room of Sacred Heart Convent (behind Sacred Heart Church), 395 Chestnut Street, Springfield, MA 01104, Contact: Ann (413) 736-6803

**Straight Spouses Group** -- For Boston group, contact [ssn.boston@comcast.net](mailto:ssn.boston@comcast.net) or call Ivan (508) 966-0275 or email Tara at [tgl563@gmail.com](mailto:tgl563@gmail.com). Other areas, use [www.StraightSpouse.org](http://www.StraightSpouse.org).

**Transgender Group, Waltham/Tiffany Club of New England** -- Call (781) 899-3230 or (781) 891-9325 for info.



**The Samaritans** provide a free and confidential 24-hour befriending helpline. This unique service, staffed entirely by volunteers, provides unconditional and non-judgmental support to anyone who feels alone, depressed, or in crisis.

**Samariteens** is a peer support line staffed by teens talking to teen callers during after-school and weekend hours. For more information on volunteering, call us at 617-536-2460 or visit us online at [www.samaritansofboston.org](http://www.samaritansofboston.org). If you need to talk to someone on our help lines for any reason, you can reach us at **617-247-0220** or **877-870-HOPE (4673)** or for teens at **800-252-TEEN (8336)**.

### ***Home for the Holidays*** (Continued from page 3)

and we invite them to an evening of discussion and viewing of the documentary, *Anyone and Everyone*. Our lending library of books, literature, and videos is readily available.

In light of the risk statistics in Massachusetts and across the country, it's more important than ever for us to reach out to parents, and provide training and resources.

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## Greater Boston PFLAG Receives 2008 Climate For Freedom Award

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The Concord-Carlisle Human Rights Council has named the Concord Chapter of Greater Boston PFLAG as its winner of the 2008 Climate For Freedom Award. The award was given at the annual Human Rights Day Breakfast on Monday, December 1st at the Trinitarian Congregational Church in Concord.

Pam Garramone, the Executive Director of Greater Boston PFLAG, accepted the award along with members of the Concord PFLAG chapter.

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# THE CASE FOR ACCEPTANCE

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By Robin Reardon  
([www.robinreardon.com](http://www.robinreardon.com))

The only thing wrong with being gay is how other people treat you when they find out. See how I prove it.

In my author's blog ([www.robinreardon.blogspot.com](http://www.robinreardon.blogspot.com)), I'm writing a ten-chapter open letter to humanity called "The Case for Acceptance." It's written in the voice of a gay man, which I am not, so it's fictional, strictly speaking. But in this truth we call life, it's real.

I use reason, physical and social sciences, psychology, various other provable disciplines, and religious scripture to remove any rational objection to homosexuality. Note that I said "rational." I'll also take a stab at explaining why so many people refuse to let go of their gut-level, knee-jerk negative response to gays, and how their very humanity could help everyone.

Tolerance is better than hatred. But who wants to be tolerated? I tolerate tolerance, because I'm doing everything I can to see that it ends in acceptance.

Read my open letter. Tell me what you think.

Here are excerpts from the first two chapters to give you a sense of what it's about.

## **CHAPTER ONE: From Me To You** [excerpt]

What's a faggot-bag, you ask? Everyone has one. We all grew up hearing insult after insult about how dreadful it is to be gay. I have one. And all the time I was growing up, I would hear those nasty things and shrug; they didn't apply to me, after all, or so I believed. They went into my faggot-bag.

When I could no longer pretend I wasn't gay, I knew I had to open that filthy, disgusting thing and dig around in there, see what each one was, really, because I sure as hell didn't want to think all those pieces of crap applied to me. And I knew how nasty they were, because I'd put them in there myself. So I sidled up to it, glancing around to make sure no one saw me taking ownership of that yucky thing. Avoiding as much of the crap rubbed into the bag as possible, I opened it, looked around me once more, reached into the slime, grabbed something and pulled it out. Gritting my teeth, I shook the thing until enough muck came off it so

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## **I wish membership in Greater Boston PFLAG**

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We do not sell, lease, or loan our membership lists to individuals or organizations.

Please mail to GBPFLAG, P.O. Box 541619, Waltham, MA 02454-1619.

**THE CASE FOR ACCEPTANCE** (Continued from page 5)

that I could recognize it. And do you know what it was? Pedophile. It was a card that said Pedophile.

Well, this certainly didn't apply to me! I'm gay, I said to myself; I want a man, not a boy. So I threw the thing aside thinking maybe this process wouldn't be quite as painful as I'd feared. That one wasn't so bad; it was easy to get rid of. Feeling encouraged, I forgot to look around and see if anyone was watching as I dug in for the next bit of crap. This homophobic bigot saw me, saw the faggot-bag, saw that I'd discarded Pedophile, walked over and picked it up and threw it in my face, sneering, "Here, faggot. This is you."

**CHAPTER TWO: Unnatural** [excerpt]

What makes sex natural or unnatural? Let me turn to my homophobic challenger, the guy who told me that I was unnatural. In the spirit of seeking understanding, I might say to him, "Why? Seriously; why? What am I doing that's unnatural?"

I'll let you imagine his response, which is possibly going to be graphic and offensive.

So I take a different tack. "So, if you think what I do is unnatural, and if you say it in that insulting tone of voice, you must think it's bad. That must mean that you think what you do is natural, and therefore good. So help me out, here. What do *you* do?"

He's probably not used to having someone respond in good faith, so he sputters and maybe even tries not to answer. Let's say I get him to hang around long enough to work with me on this, since he thinks it's so important.

He might say, "You know very well what I do."

"Well, actually, I don't think so. I don't think I've ever done it. Wouldn't you like to prove your point? Tell me. Really. What do you do?"

[Imagine a brief description here.]

The first thing that goes through my mind is, "Eeeewww." And then, "Why?" But I say, "Okay, and what makes that more natural than what I do? I'm working with natural body parts, too."

"Yeah, but you can't get pregnant."

"Ah, so reproduction is the objective of natural sex. How many kids do you and your wife have?"

"Three."

"Planning on more?"

"No way; three's plenty."

"So I guess you aren't ever having sex again."

"What are you talking about?"

"Well..." I say, "you seem to have a pretty low opinion of unnatural sex. And you've just told me that what makes sex natural is reproduction. That means birth control is unnatural, and I'm sure you wouldn't want to do that. It would put you in the same boat as me." And while he's still sputtering I add, "By the way, you do know that if you put it in her mouth she won't get pregnant, right?"

*Robin Reardon* ([www.robinreardon.com](http://www.robinreardon.com)) is the author of two published novels (so far) about gay teen boys. What makes her work stand out are the immediacy of the primary voices and the role played by religion and spirituality. Her second novel, *THINKING STRAIGHT*, deals head-on with the problems faced by a gay boy who is not willing to compromise either his religion or himself, even when he's placed into an "ex-gay" religious camp.

To read the rest of Robin Reardon's examination of homophobia, go to our website [www.gbpflag.com](http://www.gbpflag.com) or to [www.robinreardon.blogspot.com](http://www.robinreardon.blogspot.com).



# STATE STREET

## Summer Internship Opportunities

### State Street Corporation (Boston)

State Street Corporation is the world's leading provider of financial services to institutional investors. Our broad and integrated range of services spans the entire investment spectrum, including research, investment management, trading services, and investment servicing. Diversity and inclusion have long been strategic imperatives at State Street, and we seek to be a place where all employees are engaged and valued. Our efforts in this endeavor continue to receive wide-acclaim, and recently we earned a top rating of 100 percent for the third consecutive year in the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's 2009 Corporate Equality Index and Best Places to Work Survey.

At State Street, we recognize the need to groom our future talent from the earliest stages. Through internships, we are able to both expose students to working in a corporate, financial services environment and fulfill our internal need for additional workforce resources. To this end, we are actively recruiting candidates for varied summer internship opportunities in our Boston and Quincy locations. Typically, our internship candidates are undergraduate students pursuing academic concentrations in such areas as business, economics, and/or technology.

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Easton PFLAG members, Jeanne Hardy and Mary Cuddy Sutherland, strike a pose at the Prop 8 rally at City Hall in Boston on Saturday, November 15. Their message to President-Elect Obama reads: "Please Give EQUAL Rights Under the Law to Our GLBT Children" and is signed "This Hopeful Family." Members from Easton and other Greater Boston PFLAG chapters rallied in support of marriage equality. Mary says, "I am thrilled with the momentum that Prop 8 is taking across the country with the hope that in my lifetime I will see that our children will have equal rights in the whole USA."

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