

**THE BANNER OF THE DESERT**  
**THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF PFLAG**  
**PALM SPRINGS/DESERT COMMUNITIES CHAPTER**  
**OUR THIRTIETH YEAR    JANUARY, 2020    Volume 30, No. 1**

**Next meeting: January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010**  
**2:30 p.m., Cathedral City Library**  
**33520 Date Palm Drive, Cathedral City, CA**

Our speaker will be Bruce Maughan who is active in Affirmation, the national organization for gay and lesbian Mormons. Bruce will help us be better witnesses to the Mormon community. Light refreshments served.  
For driving instructions call our information line at (760) 202-4430.

**A Message From The Editor -**  
*Mike Balasa*

Many supporters of GLBT civil rights are disappointed in the newly elected president and legislative branches. Only the Employment Non-Discrimination Act is under consideration in Congress and President Obama has promised to sign it. In the meantime his administration continues to administer the present laws that disallow partner benefits to federal employees, the military still dismisses service members for being GLBT and the Defense of Marriage Act still stands. I have heard several people who supported President Obama say that they would no longer contribute or work for his reelection. The President may not lose the GLBT community's vote, but the support will not be enthusiastic.

With the success of getting, what is obviously, a supportive administration, we are experiencing the same frustration and disappointment that the "right wing anti gay fundamentalists" have faced for years when they elected the politicians they believed backed their issues. The Bush administration actually gave very little to their base. The old anti-gay policies were safe. There were policies practiced against gays and meaningful sex-education; but, there was no major setback for GLBT civil rights from the Federal Government.

The fact is that neither political party wants to make serious changes in the "culture" area. It is far easier to say the right words to the base, and then work on financial and defense matters only. Why spend political capital and rile up the enemies for a minority that has no where else to place their support. We need to realize that the change we seek will first have to occur at the state and local levels. Let's dedicate our efforts to working here, in our community, to pass initiatives to further civil rights for the GLBT community and any other minority that needs our support. Send your money to candidates that care and

will actively work for our issues. Let's have a better New Year.

## **What Will Happen In 2010**

(The Editor will once again make his annual predictions)

While several alert readers have pointed out that my predictions are seriously deficient in accuracy, I would like to point out that they are generally optimistic, feel good, type predictions. There is some value in facing the future with confidence and high expectations. Anyone can get lucky and be right, but not everyone can be persistently cheerful. So - here are the results of vast research, seeking expert testimony and careful perusal of tea leaves.

Don't ask. Don't tell: The public is ready to let gays and lesbians serve openly in the military according to polls. Of course, once the right wing anti-gay fundamentalists start a hate campaign on this issue, support will drop. The Obama administration will want to "toss a bone" to the base before 2012, and this is the safe culture issue they will yield on. It won't be this year, but look for a change in 2011.

Defense of Marriage: Don't look for any action on this issue during Obama's first term. If more states than the current five pass a same-sex marriage bill, there will be a "civil union" type bill offering federal benefits sometime after 2012.

Overthrow of Proposition 8: Good news here. The Federal 9th District Courts will hear the case now in the appeal's court, and rule that Proposition 8 must meet the more stringent rules for a major constitutional amendment. This will happen in 2010. The Supreme Court will choose not to hear the case, and same-sex marriage will again be legal in California.

Remember you saw these predictions here first.

## **Our 30th Birthday**

Happy birthday to us, Happy birthday to us, Happy birthday to our PFLAG chapter.  
Happy birthday to us - and many more.

Thanks to all our officers, board members and members who have been loyal supporters. We do have a role to play in support, advocacy and education, and we can now claim to have some durability. We have very little overhead expenses, we pay no rent, everyone is a volunteer but we do need financial support to make it all happen.

If you haven't sent in your yearly dues, please do so now. We need your help.

## **The Immigration Reform Bill May Ignore Gays and Lesbians**

The Uniting American Families Act, a bill now in committee in the Federal House of Representatives, is an immigration reform bill. This bill was first written with a provision to allow an alien partner in a same-sex partnership with a legal resident to immigrate and

join the partner. This is a serious matter for many same-sex couples who have established a relationship in another country and want to be together in the United States.

A problem occurred when the bill sponsorship was taken from Representative Guterrez, Democrat of Illinois, who is supportive of GLBT issues and given to Representative Solomon Ortiz who is not supportive. Ortiz is quoted as saying, "Some Hispanic lawmakers may be uneasy with the same-sex provision for cultural reasons, and they may need more time to weigh it. They feel uncomfortable, I think that's what it is, to be honest with you."

The truth of the matter is that it is primarily Representative Ortiz who is uncomfortable. In the Hispanic Caucus eleven out of twenty-one members are co-sponsors of repealing DOMA. Ortiz has received a score of only 50% from HRC for his support of GLBT issues.

### **Proposition 8 Foes Lose A Court Battle**

A strategy for the team trying to overturn Proposition 8 in the federal court was to examine the internal planning documents of the Pro 8 side to determine if anti-gay bias was exploited in the campaign. Proving that anti-gay bias was a main motivator would give the Anti 8 side a basis for arguing that Proposition 8 should be overturned without dealing with the marriage issue. Judges in the Appeals court ruled on December 21st, that the Pro 8 side did not have to turn over the memos and directives. The ruling argued that requiring a campaign to disclose internal messages might discourage participation in future campaigns and inhibit strategists from speaking candidly. A request to appeal that ruling to an 11 judge panel was refused.

The trial is scheduled to begin in San Francisco before Chief U.S. District Judge, Vaughn Walker, on January 11th.

### **Dutch Caribbean To Allow Same-Sex Marriage**

Queen Beatrix Wilhelmina Armgard of the Netherlands is introducing gay marriage to Dutch possessions in the Caribbean. The islands of Sint Eustatius, Saba, Sint Maarten, Aruba, Curacao and Bonaire would be affected. Those planning to visit the Caribbean should prefer the Dutch islands over Jamaica. Jamaica enforces anti-gay laws such as a 10 year prison term for men caught having sex together.

### **Anne Marie Schubert Candidate For Sacramento County Superior Court Judgeship**

Anna Marie Schubert, the sister of political consultant, Frank Shubert, announced her candidacy for the judge position in December. Frank Schubert was one of the major leaders in the Pro Proposition 8 campaign. Frank's sister, who has served as a Sacramento County deputy district attorney for over 20 years, has a record of prosecuting crimes against women and children. Her candidacy was lauded by Equality California leader, Geoff Kors, who said, "It would be terrific to have a member of the Schubert

family on the bench who understands the public danger and harm that Frank Schubert has inflicted on so many.

The reason Geoff Kors is happy about her candidacy is that Anna Marie Schubert has a domestic partner, Julie Greenberg, and together they have raised two children. Frank Schubert when asked if he considered Julie Greenberg and their two children as part of the family replied, “Of course I consider them and their children to be part of my family, and I love them very much”.

## **Supreme Court To Decide If California Law School Can Bar Group That Discriminates Against Gays and Lesbians**

The Supreme Court said it would hear a case concerning the Hastings College of the Law where a Christian group was denied recognition because their by-laws excluded gays and lesbians. A similar case involving a university in Illinois resulted in a religious group winning recognition even though their discrimination was contrary to school policy.

## **Son Of Satan? Could Be**

Jerry Falwell, Jr. has emerged in the public spotlight, carrying on his father’s work. Jerry, Jr. has joined a call to ban the Republican gay group, GOProud, from co-sponsoring the 2010, Conservative Political Action Conference scheduled in February. The letter sent to the CPAC chair said that allowing the gay group in is a “dumbing down of the pro-family stand in the public policy arena”

## **New Hampshire Starts the New Year With Same-Sex Marriage**

New Hampshire became the fifth state to allow same-sex marriage when the newly passed law took effect on January 1st. All New Hampshire couples who were previously registered as domestic partners under the two year old Civil Union bill were automatically converted to married status. Many, however, are planning on celebrating the new civil right with appropriate ceremonies.

One couple, Beth McGuinn and Ruth Smith, had a Civil Union ceremony in 2008, but plan to repeat the ceremony on October 2nd of this year, the date of their Civil Union ceremony. McGuinn told reporters, “This is big. It may not give us anything more, but we have fought almost two decades for this. The word marriage means a lot. It’s universally recognized. It’s not about rights. It’s about being accepted. It’s about being part of the community and part of society.

## **Mexico City Moves To Legalize Same-Sex Marriage**

The Mexico City government, on December 21st, gave their GLBT community a holiday gift by passing a far-reaching bill to allow same-sex couples to marry and adopt children. Despite pressure from the Roman Catholic Church, the bill passed by a 39 to 20 vote. Mayor Marcelo Ebrard, has promised to sign the bill into law.

The state of Coahuila which shares a border with Texas also allows same-sex weddings. In Mexico, legal same-sex marriages are recognized throughout the country and receive all federal benefits.

## **Safe House Is In Full Operation**

Safe House, a facility located in Thousand Palms, provides emergency shelter for youth in crisis. A troubled youth can go to any bus driver or Starbucks in Coachella Valley, and they will be taken to Safe House. At Safe House, teen age persons are given short term shelter, special longer term living facilities, counseling and referrals to either resolve their problems or find them more stable living conditions. Family counseling is also part of the program to attempt reconciliation with parents and keep the child in the family home. Since the demise of Gay Associated Youth, Safe House is now the designated area where youth who feel unsafe in their homes can find help. Angela Kinley, who was with Gay Associated Youth, is now working at Safe House. Angela has a grant to establish “curbside counseling”, a program that provides counseling and referrals for youth in their home areas at coffee shops and other places where youth feel comfortable meeting.

Safe House had an open house, and we found that it was clean, airy with pleasant bedrooms, kitchen area and recreational facilities. There were several young people in residence and they spoke highly of the care and attention they were receiving. There seemed to be a good number of adults supervising the facility, 24 hours a day.

Safe house has volunteer opportunities and they need donations. Call Safe House at 760-343-3211 or on the web: [www.operationsafehouse.org](http://www.operationsafehouse.org)

## **Coachella Valley Marriage Equality Coalition (CVMEC) Seeks Collaboration With Churches**

Paul Zak, CVMEC member, and part of the Faith Outreach Team is looking for straight parents in various churches, temples and congregations who have gay or lesbian children. CVMEC wants to work with these parents in helping them to serve as resources for other members of their congregation who are struggling with their children’s sexual identity. CVMEC believes that by helping parents become more comfortable with their GLBT children, they will be open to supporting GLBT civil rights and, especially, same-sex marriage.

If you fit this category or know of others who might be interested, contact the information line at 760-202-4430.

---

## **PFLAG MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Your membership supports our local Palm Springs/Desert Communities PFLAG chapter and includes membership in National PFLAG.

**PFLAG MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone No.** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-Mail** \_\_\_\_\_

**Check One: Yearly Dues**

**Family Membership \$50** \_\_\_\_\_ **Individual \$40** \_\_\_\_\_

**Make check payable to PFLAG and mail to :**

**PFLAG  
611 S. Palm Canyon Drive 7-262  
Palm Springs, CA 92264**

---

**PFLAG INFORMATION LINE: (760) 202-4430**

**EMAIL: [INFO@PSPFLAG.ORG](mailto:INFO@PSPFLAG.ORG)**

**WEBSITE: WWW.PSPFLAG.ORG**