



**THE BANNER OF THE DESERT
THE NEWSLETTER OF PFLAG PALM SPRINGS/DESERT COMMUNITIES CHAPTER**

Our Twenty-Third Year, January 2019, Volume 24, No. 1

PFLAG MEETING

SUNDAY, JANUARY 20, 2:30 P.M.

CATHEDRAL CITY LIBRARY, COMMUNITY ROOM

Meeting Facilitator: Dan Smith

Our tradition at PSPFLAG is to tell our stories to the group from our own unique vantage point so we will all have a broader perspective from which to view our LGBTQI community.

Please join us as David Windsor, a writer and TV producer from LA, joins us to share his experience growing up and living with two gay dads and a straight mother and stepfather. We may have some question for him or some personal observations after he presents.

Following our meeting, at 5:30 P.M. there will be a reception with David and one of his gay dads, Alan Hockberg, a Rancho Mirage resident. There will be a lite buffet. Please join us for more conversation and banter. Location of the reception available at the Cathedral City Library meeting or by calling the Information Line.

Meeting refreshments provided by Keith Knauss

Please volunteer to bring light refreshments to a future meeting. Email: info@PSpflag.org

COMMUNITY EVENTS & NOTICES

FIRST THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH:

JANUARY 3, 7 pm

**PFLAG/Transgender Community Coalition Support Group for Families,
Members of Transgender and Gender Non-Binary People**

Meeting Facilitator: Susan Thronson

Transgender Health and Wellness Center

35325 Date Palm, Suite 107, Cathedral City

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 3 – 6 pm

INFO-A-GO-GO

The LGBTQ Community Center is having their yearly "INFO-A-GO-GO".

At this event every LGBTQ organization and club will be spotlighted. This is where you can learn what is available in Coachella Valley for LGTBQ persons. Palm Springs PFLAG will be there. The event is held at the Hyatt, 285 N. Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, Wednesday, January 23rd, 3:00 to 6:00 P.M.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

– Mike Balasa

My editorial for January traditionally consists of predictions for the coming new year. I am not very good at predictions; however, and my guesses usually are wrong. Nevertheless, I enjoy trying to imagine what the new year will bring the LGBTQI community. This coming year might be bleak, considering the proclivity of the current President and the conservative bent of the Supreme Court.

President Trump is under fire from the on-going investigation of his ties to Russia and the accusations of election irregularities. The Mueller investigation is rumored to be near completion, and a new Congress under control of Democrats will soon be installed. There will be Congressional Investigations of Trump's involvement with Russia and his questionable business dealings. The likelihood of an impeachment is real. Trump knows that his only chance to get past the investigations is to build the loyalty of his base. Trump's supporters are primarily religious conservatives who support Trump despite his irreligious background; because, he has promised to roll back gains for LGBTQI civil rights. Trump has rewarded their loyalty by naming Supreme Court justices who voice support for conservative Christian causes.

The big question is: will the Supreme Court overturn *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the ruling that legalized same-sex marriage in all states? Advocates of same-sex marriage are hoping Chief Justice Roberts will follow tradition and not change established decisions. Roberts, however, wrote a scathing dissent in the *Obergefell* case arguing that States should still have the right to limit benefits and rights for same-sex couples. Since then, the Supreme Court has let a Texas ruling stand that the State could deny employee benefits to same-sex couples.

It looks bleak at this time, but my prediction is, despite the probability of a conservative majority on the Supreme Court, the *Obergefell* decision is safe. Roberts will moderate his stance to maintain the Court's appearance of consistency and independence. Let's hope for the best.

LGBTQ HISTORY NOW AVAILABLE FROM PFLAG

At the Holiday PFLAG potluck, those of you who attended had the opportunity to meet two new residents of Palm Springs: Jean-Marie Navetta and her wife, Jude Medeiros. They have joined our local chapter of PFLAG. Jean-Marie is the Director of Learning and Inclusion for National PFLAG. She shared with us information about recorded LGBTQI history lessons that are available on-line from PFLAG National.

The web site where the lessons are located has the following introduction, "LGBTQ history and culture tells the story of a vibrant, diverse and determined community that has overcome massive barriers and deeply influenced mainstream culture. PFLAG is an important part of that story, but there countless other people and organizations who shaped who we are today."

The first set of lessons include the following information: Why LGBTQ history and culture are significant; learn about symbols, events, people, places and references us by LGBTQ people; how LGBTQ history has influenced the larger culture and history; and, learn how to integrate LGBTQ history into chapter support, education and advocacy. Go to: pflag.org/lgbthistoryrecording.

In the second set of instructions, History 201, the following lessons are covered: Expand upon the facts learned from the first course; tie current political issues, including the attempted ban on transgender persons in the military to history and recent legislative efforts, strategies, tools and lessons for advocacy work; and, key LGTBQ historic figures and the lessons we can learn from them for strategies and inspiration. Go to: pflag.org/history201recording.

WHEN PARENTS FAIL: TRYING TO CHANGE A CHILD'S SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Those of us involved in PFLAG for many years are familiar with LGBTQI persons who as adults are still suffering from the rejection of their parents. Most often parents finally realize, despite what they hear from the pulpit of their church, their child is not making a sinful choice, but is expressing their immutable, endowed orientation. However, some parents continue throughout their lives to reject their children or continue to refuse support and acceptance.

A new study was reported in the Journal of Homosexuality from the Department of Human Development and Family Science, University of Texas at Austin. Research by Caitlin Ryan, and others, explored the topic of what happens to young adults when their parents are non-accepting. The study found that change attempts were disastrous to the wellbeing of the child. Change attempts doubled the occurrence of attempted suicide, and suicide attempts tripled when the parents subjected their child to intervention from religious leaders or therapists. Depression and lowered self-esteem was twice as likely for young adults who experienced the change pressure and three times more likely if outside influences were involved. Even the economic status of young adults was negatively affected.

Lead author Caitlin Ryan wrote, "Although parents and religious leaders who try to change a child's LGBT identity may be motivated by attempts to 'protect' their children, these rejecting behaviors instead undermine an LGBT child's sense of self-worth, contribute to self-destructive behaviors that significantly increase risk and inhibit self-care which includes constricting their ability to make a living".

The Study entitled, "Parent-Initiated Sexual Orientation Change Efforts with LGBT Adolescents: Implications for Young Adult Mental Health and Adjustment", indicated that more than half of LGBT Caucasians and Latino, Latina young adults have faced such efforts, with more than half of those having to deal with it from parents as well as therapists and religious leaders.

Conversion therapy has been banned in California, 13 other states and the District of Columbia. Many more states are considering the ban. The current movie "Boy Erased" deals with this issue.

SURPRISE! WE ARE EVERYWHERE.

— *Bob Warburton*

I guess the real surprise was that I was surprised. About a year ago I wrote about going to a pop concert of a Gay icon from Spain in Indio to an almost sold out auditorium and being surprised at how few LGBTQIA people I saw. Miguel Bose even kissed his male band members a la Adam Lambert, but the folks who looked like me I could count on two hands.

Concert night rolled around again at the same casino in Indio December this 15th, and the four of us expected the usual well-dressed 2/3 female 1/3 male Latino crowd to welcome Mexican singer Paulina Rubio. As you may have figured out, the crowd was not the usual tonight. Out of the almost 2,000 people there, 1/2 appeared to be out Gay male. It was a little confusing. Not that Paulina is not known for having a large Gay following, she does; however, for example, we had recently seen the rock group from Mexicali "Reik," with all Gay members and no obvious Gay following. Why was this crowd so Gay?

Paulina who is now 47 began singing for money at age 11 with the group Timbiriche, which was a made for TV group with many hits and soon a world-wide following. In 1992 she went solo and for the next 15 years she produced success after success even coming out with a modestly successful album in English, "Border Girl." Recently she had not had the success selling records that she had before, but she still is constantly touring. Just last month she had played with three other female Mexican rock stars at a concert in Los Angeles at the Forum advertised for our community. Rubio played with Alejandra Guzman, Gloria Trevi, and Thalía who sang with Rubio in the original Timbiriche group as a child.

But both Guzman and Trevi had songs in their repertoires known as LGBTQIA anthems. Not so from Paulina Rubio. I decided I just did not know. I was even surprised when the two Gay male blond teens in front of us knew all the words to all the songs. They were too young to know 1990 songs. I just decided I don't know anything and listened happily to her singing to her first single hit, "Mio," which means mine. Maybe Gay males like her for her independence.

We also recommend the movie "Roma" by the Mexican director Alfonso Cuarón known for many films including "Y Tu Mama Tambien." Being brilliant myself I knew it was about poor people in Mexico, I thought the name must be from what the poor gypsies are called across Europe. I think too much. "Roma" is the name of the neighborhood in Mexico just south of the Gay part of town we stay in every year. I also made sure our friend Arturo went with us because he grew up very poor in the City, but not in Roma which was upper middle class. I was incorrect here again. The film was much different than I expected, but it was superb. It is more of an upstairs - downstairs look at life in 1971, with women making it by themselves. If at all interested, see this film. It is in theaters and on Netflix, and in Spanish sub-titled.

LONG TIME PFLAG LEADER SAM THORON DIED

Sam Thoron died Nov 17, in his home in San Francisco. Sam was 79 years old. He is survived by his wife, Julia, three children, Benjamin, Joseph and Elizabeth along with seven grandchildren. After daughter, Elizabeth, came out to Sam and his wife, they became active in PFLAG. They were long time leaders of the San Francisco PFLAG. Sam served on the National PFLAG board for 20 years and was president of National PFLAG board from 2002 to 2006.

Sam and Julia were married in December of 1962 in San Francisco and were married 55 years when he died. Sam met Julia while attending Harvard and always referred to her as "my lovely bride". Prior to meeting Julia he served with the U.S. Army in an artillery unit stationed in Germany.

Sam and Julia vigorously campaigned against Proposition 8 in 2008 and signed the California Voter Information Guide arguments against the proposal to take away same-sex marriage rights. Sam and Julia wanted their lesbian daughter to have the same rights and opportunities as their two straight sons. Sam continued fighting for marriage equality as a board member of Freedom to Marry and Marriage Equality USA. In 2015 Sam and Julia were honored by the San Francisco LGBT Pride Celebration Committee as recipients of the Jose Julio Sarria History Maker Award, in recognition of their contribution to the LGBTQI community.

He will be remembered by those who knew him for his wisdom and insightful commentary. He was humble, pragmatic and gentle with his advice.

ANNOUNCING THE ANNUAL PFLAG NATIONAL CONVENTION

PFLAG National announced the annual convention will be held in Kansas City, October 25th through the 27th. PFLAG issued the following message to members: "During the last two years, it's not only been a hard battle securing equality for LGBTQ+ people, but also to end discrimination and violence against all marginalized people. In 2019, that work will continue, which means PFLAG members and supporters need every skill, every tool, every connection at their command.

PFLAG National is ready to provide these and more- We Are the Change: the PFLAG National Convention gives us the opportunity to share them widely. In Kansas City we will gather to learn, to strategize, and to be in the company of passionate, compatriot change makers from across the country. Our best rates - \$186 for members, \$270 for non-members, are in effect right now. Get registered and take advantage of this early bird offer. PFLAGers are the change in communities across the country. Now, like never before, we must build on our shared knowledge and needs or shared challenges and triumphs.

We Are the Change will provide major opportunities for networking, while offering workshops, panel discussions, and nationally renowned speakers to be motivated by and learn from. You'll also enjoy our PFLAG National Awards ceremony during which we will honor those who are making a difference and from whose efforts we can learn - and mirror - in the coming year. In between sessions, you'll have free time to enjoy all that Kansas City has to offer, whether you're a foodie, a BBQ aficionado, a craft beer lover, a history buff, an art lover, or all of the above.

So take advantage of our Early Bird Registration. An incredible bargain for two days of learning new skills, building relationships, and gathering crucial information and resources that will support your efforts to be the change in your own community. But don't wait too long Early bird registration will end on March 29th, 2019."

(more on next page)

DEAR FRIENDS — IT IS TIME TO JOIN OR RENEW PFLAG MEMBERSHIP

If you would like to join PFLAG Palm Springs/Desert Communities, print and mail the form below or join online at www.pspflag.org/joindonate.html

All our expenses go to furthering our mission. Our expenses are for materials that we supply to individuals, schools and supporting organizations; the information phone line, newsletter production, support to local schools' Gay Straight Alliances; and, many other occasional expenses such as the Pride Parade.

When you join and support the local PFLAG chapter with a membership of \$30 or more, we send your name and a portion of the fees (\$15) to PFLAG National, making you a member of both the National and our local chapter of PFLAG. You will receive all publications and notices.

Members sometimes don't realize that if you join National PFLAG directly you are not on the membership rolls of the PFLAG Palm Springs/Desert Communities. PFLAG National does not notify us that you joined, and they do not share any of the membership fee.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ ZIP _____

Phone No. _____ E-Mail _____

Suggested Donation: Family Membership \$50 _____ Individual \$30 _____

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

Chapter Officers

President: Mike Balasa, Vice-president: Carol Balasa, Secretary: Christine Hammond,
Treasurer: Peter East, Directors: Dan Smith, Sly Zelnys

ANOTHER WAY TO SUPPORT PFLAG

Every time you shop online using AmazonSmile, PFLAG Palm Springs-Desert Communities will receive a donation from the AmazonSmile Foundation.

at www.Smile.Amazon.com