



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

Our Chapter's 26<sup>th</sup> Year, June 2021, Volume 26, No. 6

**VIRTUAL PFLAG MEETING**  
**SUNDAY, JUNE 20<sup>TH</sup> 2:30 P.M.**

In lieu of our regular monthly meeting at the Cathedral City Library, will be a virtual meeting, via Zoom. This will be a place to discuss your thoughts and concerns and an opportunity to connect with other PFLAGers.

Just email us at [info@PSpflag.org](mailto:info@PSpflag.org) prior to 2:00 the 20<sup>TH</sup> and you will be added to the list. This will be an invitation-only meeting, so be sure to RSVP now! Note: you need to RSVP the June meeting even if you had sent in a request for the May meeting. You can expect an email invitation to arrive Sunday and can join with audio/video or by phone. Facilitated by Sly Zelnys.

Remember, your PFLAG-PS family is here and available to you by phone at 760-202-4430 or via email at [info@PSpflag.org](mailto:info@PSpflag.org) if you want to connect.

Visit our Facebook page and share your thoughts, feelings and insights on your individual experience and insights on current events.

**SUPPORT FOR TRANSGENDER AND GENDER EXPANSIVE FAMILIES**

Meetings are the first Wednesday of each month. Next Zoom meetings: June 2<sup>nd</sup> and July 7<sup>th</sup> from 6 pm - 7:30 pm. Facilitated by Susan Thronson. Please email [info@trans.health](mailto:info@trans.health) or call the Transgender Health and Wellness Center at (760) 202-4308 for more information.

**A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR**

-Mike Balasa

For many years I have struggled to understand why so many people are antagonistic towards LGBTQI people. I have walked down a street in a major city alongside a transgender person, and witnessed insults and slurs yelled from passing motorists. We all know of the demonstrators who appear at Pride Parades with their horrible signs justified by the "clobber" passages in the Bible. How many young people have we encountered who experienced rejection and violence from their families and classmates?

Despite the statements from all the major medical and psychological associations, that defend LGBTQI people as normal and healthy, the animosity is firmly entrenched in many fundamentalist and political groups. Despite our best efforts in PFLAG to change hearts and minds, some people will not listen or understand the evidence. They will not believe the testimonies of LGBTQI people, their families and allies that there is no threat to children or society from sexual minorities.

Early on in my association with PFLAG in the Seattle area, I was told by long time activists to focus on the “movable middle”: people who listen to reason and change their minds. The unmovable 1/3 will never change, and will never listen to anyone except those who support their hate and ignorance.

There is no doubt in my mind, that the hateful 1/3 are responding to innate tendencies. Unmovable traits that are intrinsic parts of their character. All the babies and young children I have ever encountered were naturally afraid of strangers or anything new. Even new foods were scary. For me it is helpful to understand the “unmovable” folks as victims of immature emotional development. We treat children with patience and assure them that the new person or the new snack, will not hurt them and that they might even come to appreciate the new experience. They might continue to throw temper tantrums, but we will be patient and continue with the assurance that all is well.

### **TENNESSEE VYING FOR TITLE OF MOST INTOLERANT STATE**

Five new anti-trans bills were signed by Tennessee governor, Bill Lee, at the end of the legislative session - the most anti-LGBTQI bills passed and enacted than any other state. Only Texas introduced more similar hate bills. Currently there are anti-trans bills in the legislatures of Texas, Wisconsin and Louisiana. Polls show the majority of voters and businesses remain opposed to such bills but, conservative Republican legislators, urged on by Fundamentalist Christian groups, continue to introduce these bills.

The five bills enacted in Tennessee are harsh attacks on transgender persons. The first bill, HB 1233, forbids transgender students from using restroom facilities of their choice. The bill also stipulates that parents of children, who suffer psychological damage because they were forced to share a restroom facility or locker room with a transgender person, can sue the district for damages.

The second bill, HB 1182, requires any business that allows transgender people to use the restroom of their choice, must post a sign advising the public that the restroom might be occupied by a transgender person. No other state has enacted this type of law.

The other three bills include a ban on transgender students participating in sports unless they are competing as the sex listed on their birth certificate, a bill to prohibit teaching about LGBTQI issues, and a bill prohibiting doctors from providing gender-confirming hormone treatment to prepubescent minors. In the next legislative session, a bill is pending introduction that would ban gender-affirming healthcare for teenagers.

Parents of a six-year-old transgender daughter told reporters how serious this legislation is to the wellbeing of their child, “It’s been pretty stressful for my husband and myself. My daughter’s pretty young right now. We don’t go into any of this with her. She is not aware of any of the hatefulness and discrimination out there. For us, it’s been a lot of sleepless nights. We’re just trying to shelter her as much as we can and let her have as normal a childhood as she can. She’ll have to her whole life to deal with this.” She went on to add that she and her husband would not have moved to Tennessee from Pennsylvania if they knew how transphobic the state would be. They are considering a move in the future.

### **RESEARCH INDICATES SAME-SEX COUPLES HAVE SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGES**

Researchers, John Gottman and Robert Levinson, summarized research from literature and their own studies to find that same-sex couples have amazing relationships. The two clinical psychologists have

conducted research and practiced marriage counseling at the Gottman Institute. They serve both heterosexual and same-sex couples. Over the years, many psychologists have studied the dynamics of same-sex relationships and consistent evidence indicates that, in many ways, same-sex couples are even more stable than heterosexual couples. Summarizing the evidence, Gottman and Levinson published the following findings.

Same-sex couples are satisfied with their partners and enjoy equality of roles. Men married to men had the highest satisfaction rating, women married to women were second highest and men married to women had the most dissatisfaction with their relationship. The reason seems part of society's power imbalance between men and women. Gender expectation and gender roles create turmoil. Same-sex couples share chores and child care more equally. Opposite sex couples create a situation where the women assumes most of the home duties, increasing home work by over three hours a week. Same-sex couples share equally in the effort and time of caring for children as opposed to heterosexual couples where the women does most of the care work.

Same-sex couples are successful at providing emotional support for their partners. Opposite-sex couples often become emotionally distant - not understanding their partner's emotional needs. Research indicates that the failure to provide emotional support is the main cause for divorce.

Disagreements and arguments are difficult for all couples, but same-sex couples do it with more affection and humor. Also after the disagreement they calm down quickly and return to pleasant feelings. Research also indicates that same-sex couples tend to influence decisions with their partner with more kindness and respect. It seems that same-sex couples expect their partner to treat them with respect.

In summary, Gottman and Levinson write that problem solving and conflict resolution is not a major factor in relationship success as much as how we communicate: the tone of discussion, empathy and non-defensive attitude mean the most. Same-sex partners know how to be good mates.

#### **A MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR LESBIAN RIGHTS**

Last night, after two days of deliberation, in a case that gripped the country, sparked nationwide protests and unrest, and prompted the beginning of a long-overdue reckoning on racial justice, a jury found Derek Chauvin guilty on all three charges related to the murder of George Floyd

This conviction was the first time that an on-duty White police officer was convicted of killing a Black civilian in Minneapolis. And while I sincerely hope that this verdict provides some bit of solace to every family that has lost a loved one to police violence, particularly the family George Floyd, let's be clear - this is not justice. This is accountability - and only the first step toward what we are fighting for.

We are fighting for a world where the system and institutions that govern it aren't reinforcing racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of oppression. We are fighting for a world that celebrates each of us as unique - and does so by providing access to what we each need to be successful. We are fighting for our liberation.

This verdict does not signal that we have become a post-racial society, or that something has been fixed or corrected. Our criminal justice system is fundamentally broken. The cycles of the school-to-prison pipeline, overpoliced neighborhoods, poverty, and lack of access all work together to make it nearly

impossible for people in our communities to thrive. This continues to disproportionately impact the most vulnerable among us.

What this verdict does tell us, is what we've always known - that your activism matters. The world-wide protests, that calls to action, and the education campaigns over the last year played a role in the arrest, this verdict, and the accountability it provided. And this work was done and continues to be done by the activists, the dreamers, and those with creative vision that can imagine a future that hasn't existed yet. Your work changed the trajectory of our future, and we are closer today that we were yesterday.

The injustices that brings people to the streets need the structural change that is provided by the courts. And yesterday, we saw this in action.

But this is not justice. Justice would be George Floyd at home sitting with his daughter Gianna right now. Justice provides protection and safety for all of us. We don't have it yet. But we will. Let this day remind you of what we can do. Let's get to work.

In solidarity,

Imani Rupert-Gordon  
Executive Director, NCLR

### **HAPPY FATHER'S DAY**

by Bob Warburton

I try not to try to write too often about the same subject, but I think twice in 11 years is not too often. In honor of Father's Day I will rhapsodize about my Father and how good and understanding he was about my sexuality. I often say how great my Mom was, and how much of a 30 year out advocate she was, but she took a while wandering in the wilderness before she saw the light. In a lot of ways, my Father was supportive from the start.

George was born in 1923 in small town Massachusetts to a poor, traveling, labor organizer father, and a loving mother. Both his Father and his Brother turned out to be Gay but neither my Grand Mother or Mom ever told him. He enlisted in the Navy after Pearl Harbor and for most of the war did not see action and always down played the two battles he was in; however, according to my brother even though most of the war he did spend on "tubs" as my father called them, the two so called "kamikaze" battles he was in were major and one of the ships he was on was damaged. Yet, he never spoke of the War.

Stateside he was a 1950s Dad, working all the time to bring home the bacon, and the family moved every few months/year searching for the next oil well. George was supportive of my Mom, and slowly changed from a 50s to a 60s type of man encouraging my Mother to complete her education and begin teaching. he whole family went through the trauma of being threatened with death by the White Citizen's Council with my Father backing my Mother as she was thrown out of the Shreveport, Louisiana PTA for being pro-integration. e was a great role model. What we are really interested in for this piece is how well he accepted me as a Gay son.

I came out to my Mom first as I thought she would take things better; however, she had no one to talk to and was lost until she finally told my brother and got some support from him. This was 1977 and we hadn't heard of the new parents group! When Mom felt better I was ready, "Let's tell Dad," I said, but Mom was

reticent. Yet, I was gone one weekend, Mom told Dad, and Dad said he had known before Mom had. He said, "Bob's had such a tough life (physically); we should support him any way we can."

The 70s became the 80s. This Eisenhower Republican joined the Union and voted Democratic. Dad mused at how well Bob and I got along with him and my Mom. One vacation we got him a room overlooking the Oakland Harbor. It had been decades since he had seen the sea. He died shortly thereafter. Through- out my life my Father was always there to support me. Happy Father's Day to everybody.

#### **NEW DEPUTY PRESS SECRETARY FOR THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION**

Karine Jean-Pierre is only the second Black woman and the first lesbian to serve as a presidential deputy press secretary. The first Black female deputy press secretary was Judy Smith serving in the Bush administration. Jean-Pierre made her first national TV appearance leading a press conference in the White House Briefing Room on May 26th. Jean Pierre has led a number of press briefing off camera since accepting the appointment to be the number two press secretary under press secretary, Jen Psaki.

Prior to assuming her present duties, Jean-Pierre was Kamala Harris's chief-of-staff during the 2020 campaign. She also served in the Obama administration, was a spokesperson for the liberal organization, MoveOn.Org. and has been an NBC News political analyst. Psaki wrote on Twitter that Jean-Pierre was her "partner in truth" and her first national televised briefing is "a big day in the press office and White House."

Jean-Pierre was born to working class, Haitian immigrants on the French Territory island of Martinique. She grew up in New York. She wrote, "As a Black gay immigrant who comes from a working-class family, I know that America hasn't always worked for everyone. And I know that America still doesn't work for everyone. The truth of the matter is we have a long way to go. But that's what I'm working toward: mobilizing people around this shared vision of what an America that works for everyone could look like - and then making it happen."

At the beginning of the press conference, Jean-Pierre told the reporters, "It's a real honor to be standing here today. I appreciate the historic nature, I really do, but I believe that being behind this podium, being in this room, being in this building, is not about one person. It's about what we do on behalf of the American people. Clearly the President believes that representation matters, and I appreciate him giving me this opportunity, and it's another reason why I think we're all so proud that this is the most diverse administration in history."

*(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](http://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 Palm Springs and mail to:  
**PFLAG Palm Springs, PO Box 4326, Palm Springs, CA 92263**

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PFLAG INFORMATION LINE: (760) 202-4430

EMAIL: [info@pspflag.org](mailto:info@pspflag.org)

**Chapter Officers**

Co-presidents: Christine Hammond, Dan Smith, Sly Zelnys, Treasurer: Peter East  
Emeritus members: Mike and Carol Balasa

**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.