



## **THE BANNER OF THE DESERT**

THE NEWSLETTER OF PFLAG PALM SPRINGS/DESERT COMMUNITIES CHAPTER

Our Twenty-Third Year, September, 2019, Volume 24, No. 9

### **PFLAG MEETING**

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup> 2:30 P.M.**

**CATHEDRAL CITY LIBRARY, COMMUNITY ROOM**

Meeting Facilitator: **Dan Smith**

Discussion topic: What does support look like to me? How do I like to receive support from others? How can I know how others like to be supported? Let's explore what support is to each of us.

Light refreshments provided by Keith Knauss

Please volunteer to bring light refreshments to a future meeting. Email: [info@PSpflag.org](mailto:info@PSpflag.org)

### **PFLAG and TCC Support Group For Transgender And Gender Expansive Families**

Facilitator: Susan Thronson

The second Wednesday of each Month

Next meeting: September 11th,, 6:00-8:00 P.M.

Transgender Health and Wellness Center

35-325 Date Palm, Suite 143, Cathedral City

## **A Message From The Editor**

-Mike Balasa

This past month Carol and I were visiting relatives in South Bend, Indiana. Our home town is in the news lately; because, the mayor of South Bend, Pete Buttlegieg, is running for President. While there, relatives took us to Mayor Pete's favorite lunch spot - unfortunately the Mayor was out of town and didn't show up.

What makes the Mayor unique in the crowded Democratic field is that he is openly gay and married. He does not hide his husband. While on the campaign trail he proudly introduces him to the audience. Chasten, his husband's name, often speaks at events and they often hug and kiss in public just as any other married couple. I believe this is an important event in the fight for marriage equality. American audiences often see LGBTQI couples on television, but this is real life with serious people. That it is front and center in the news and in public rallies is an important step in making it a common, accepted fact of life.

Mayor Pete was elected Mayor in 2012 with 74% of the vote and reelected in 2015 with 80% of the vote. His terms of office are successful and South Bend progressed substantially under his leadership. He came out as gay in 2015. At that time, there was a bill in the Indiana Senate that would allow business owners to discriminate against LGBTQI persons - one of the many so called "religious freedom" bills introduced in conservative states. The Mayor explained his opposition to the bill, and cited the fact that he was gay and would be personally impacted by its passage. A short time later the Mayor appeared with the South Bend Symphony, the Mayor is an accomplished pianist, to play Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue". Our relative who was there said that when Mayor Pete came on stage he was given a tumultuous standing ovation.

Obviously the good citizens of South Bend appreciated his forthright honesty and courage. In 2017, the Mayor announced that he was engaged to a junior high teacher, Chasten Glezman. They were married at St. James Episcopal Cathedral in June of 2018.

### **Models of Pride Youth & Adult Conference, October 19th, Los Angeles City College**

Models of Pride is the world's largest conference for LGBTQI youth and allies. Participants attend an all-day event featuring an opening session, a choice of over 130 workshops, lunch, a resource fair, job fair, dinner, an entertainment hour and outdoor dance party. It is all FREE!.

PFLAG member, York Knowlton, wrote, ..."I can tell you from firsthand experience that it (the conference) is an incredible experience. Youth, parents, professionals and GSA's come from all over Southern California."

Youth track workshops include Activism/Social Justice, Ally Community and Issues, Art and Culture, Coming Out/Families, Education/Careers, Gender (i.e. Queer, Trans, Intersex, etc.), Health, People of Color Community and Issues, Self-empowerment, Sexuality (Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Pan, Fluid, etc.) and Spirituality/Faith.

Models of Pride includes parent and professional tracks (English and Spanish), that has three workshop sessions where one can choose dozens of workshops in a wide range of content area. Lunch and dinner is included for adults. Here are some of the workshop topics available for adults:

- Making Inclusion Reality: Implementing California's Comprehensive Sex Education and LGBTQ History and Laws
- "OUT for safe schools" What Does It Mean To Be An Active Adult Ally
  - Parenting the Trans Teen: What Happens After Transition Starts
    - Resist and Persist: Advocacy In Systems of Care
    - Stuck in the Middle? Faith, Family and your LGBTQ Child
    - Teaching Tolerance and Respect in the Classroom
- The Parenting Point of View: From Coming Out to Becoming An Ally
  - What You Don't Know About Your Child's Identity

Registration is required to participate. Online registration is available at [ModelsofPride.org](http://ModelsofPride.org). Registration closes on Wednesday October 16th at 10:00 PM, however, on-site registration is possible the day of the event from 7:30am until 1:30pm.

Parking at the Los Angeles City College Parking Lot 1 and Parking Structure 2 is free. The parking areas are at 4133 Marathon St, Los Angeles and the conference area is across Vermont Avenue.

### **LGBTQI Diversity Increases On Children's Programming**

As representations of LGBTQI persons becomes increasingly common on adult TV fare, children's programming is also stepping up the appearance of LGBTQI characters. Probably the first positive message for LGBTQI children came from Mr. Rogers who, starting in 1968, daily reminded his young audience that they were perfect "just the way you are". It wasn't specific but religious justified bigots knew what he meant and so did many children who knew they were different. The PBS series "Sesame Street", over its 50 year run, has featured many diverse characters and, of course, the close relationship of Bert and Ernie.

Today there are a number of LGBTQI characters as role models for children. Earlier this year the long running PBS series "Arthur" featured a same-sex wedding. Arthur the aardvark's teacher married another man to open the 2019 series. Alabama Public Television that carries the series refused to air the episode.

A new animated series on Hulu, "The Bravest Knight", depicts a family with two dads. Wilson Cruz, a co-star of the series, said, "We're not explaining homosexuality, or same-gender sexuality. We're talking about the love of a family. It's these parents that love her and care about her." (The her refers to the main character, the couple's daughter, Nia, who is the brave knight in the title.) Cruz said that he felt lonely and alienated in his youth and seeing a happy family with same-sex parents would have been important to his happiness and self-acceptance.

This past June the series, "My Little Pony", featured a lesbian couple, Aunt Holiday and Auntie Lofty. The Hasbro toy company created the series for the Discovery Channel. A spokesperson for Hasbro said, "We have featured many types of families in the show over the past nine seasons and we hope this helps to provide kids and fans from all backgrounds an opportunity to identify with our characters and learn from their stories."

A Peabody award winning series, "Steven Universe", which began on the Cartoon Network in 2013, features a boy who fused into a new, separate androgynous teenager after kissing a girl. The series was also attacked by religious zealots but the protest drew little attention. Today, diverse characters are showing up in many series and this is a positive development we can celebrate.

### **Bakersfield High School GSA Harassed By The School's FFA**

Bakersfield, California's ABC affiliate, KERO-TV reported that a Gay Straight Alliance meeting was picketed by students who belonged to the school's Future Farmers of America club on August 28th. Initial reports indicate that the district's administrators suspended the picketing students for harassment, intimidation and sexual harassment. One of the demonstrating students is reported as saying that he and his group didn't want to start a fight.

This is another example of the growing division and incivility spreading across the country. It is obvious that the rhetoric and policies of the Trump administration are giving persons with bigoted tendencies the permission to act out their hates. Donald Trump spoke at the FFA National Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana in October of 2018. A parent of one of the students attending the GSA reported on Facebook, "The FFA students, described as 'straight kids' were holding hands and shouting, 'This is what's right'. They also had 'Make America Great Again', or MAGA flags." The parent wrote that the FFA demonstrators said they were defending conservative principles and were picketing because the GSA kids were liberals.

A spokesperson for the Kern County School District issued a statement saying that the District and "Frontier High School accept the fact that students have "varying viewpoints and opinions. One of the goals of the educational process is to teach students how to communicate respectfully."

### **Community Leadership Council Reception**

On Tuesday, Aug. 13, 2019, four of our longtime Palm Springs PFLAG members attended the Community Leadership Council Reception held at the Palm Springs Hilton Hotel. The gathering was a chance for community organizations to come together in a social setting to mix and mingle, gathering information about other groups as we learned more about the others' mission statements.

We met with other organizers, exchanged business cards and talked about ways to collaborate with one another in order to support and strengthen our community.

Our members attending the meeting were Susan Kross, Barbara Nappa, Diane Ross and Dan Smith. This is a part of the outreach that Palm Springs PFLAG is committed to doing to broaden our connection to the Coachella Valley and better support our community.

## MY PARTY RIGHT OR WRONG?

- Bob Warburton

When we were changing governments from the Obama to the Trump Administrations, I was writing some of the worst articles of my life trying to give a fair analysis of what the actual policies of the Trump White House would be regarding the LGBTQIA Community. I could not quite fathom that Donald Trump might say for example that he would be "very pro the LGBT Community," and then would take actions that would harm us. In a similar vein at the time people were unsure what Trump would do about a National Health Plan, as he told people he was in favor of a sort of Medicare for all, but then tried to destroy a struggling Obama Care and not replace it. My writing at the time said even though this administration contains the homophobic Vice President Mike Pence and the formerly proven racist Attorney General Jeff Sessions maybe Trump will protect us.

I really did not believe that reasoning then, but I was wishing it all would prove true. As we know, it did not. Surprisingly, Transgender troops were some of the first to feel the sting of discrimination directly from the President as he tweeted that that part of the population could not serve even though the military wanted them to. Since then the administration has advocated everything from curtailing LGBTQIA Rights by allowing religious people to discriminate against us to allowing schools to denigrate Trans students. It is now clear President Trump is no friend of our community no matter what he says.

With this wealth of information I did not expect the Gay branch of the Republican Party would back this administration, especially considering that they had refused to back incumbent President George W. Bush in 2004 as he had publicly called for a constitutional amendment banning "same sex marriages." The Log Cabin Republicans had not endorsed Bush even though in 2004 Bushes Vice President had an out Lesbian daughter and he got 27% of the LGBT vote that year; and yet in 2019 the Log Cabin Republican's Board supported a completely homophobic administration. What gives?

I am happy to report that there are those Log Cabin folk who still remember they are a Civil Rights organization and not just a mouthpiece for a political party. The "Washington Blade" reports that the recent resignation of the Log Cabin group's Executive Director Jerri Ann Henry is due to that endorsement of President Trump. Henry was the first female Executive Director for the group. The press also has reported much internal and external unhappiness due to the endorsement.

Thank you Ms. Henry for just saying "no" to Donald Trump. I wish more Republicans would do this, and I hope I would have the intestinal fortitude to do this if it were my party and my job.

(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 and mail to:  
PFLAG 611 S. Palm Canyon Drive 7-262, Palm Springs, CA 92264

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PFLAG INFORMATION LINE: (760) 202-4430

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

**Chapter Officers**

President: Mike Balasa, Vice-president: Carol Balasa,  
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 [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)