



The PFLAG Link

MIDLAND, BAY CITY & SAGINAW CHAPTER
P.O. BOX 362, BAY CITY, MI 48707-0362
989-941-1458

www.pflag-mbs.org

December 2009

Meeting This Month
"Holiday Friendship and Support"
Sunday, Dec. 27 2-4:30 PM
Unitarian/Universalist Fellowship

Worth Noting! New PO Box for PFLAG- Tricities: PO Box 362, Bay City 48707-0362

Send Holiday Greetings to the First Family

PFLAG and other equality orgs will forward your family's greetings

PFLAG National has joined with other LGBT family rights groups to launch "From Our Family to Yours," a campaign to introduce the **First Family** to thousands of LGBT families. Our families will collect and send holiday cards to the **President Obama** and his family, sharing photos and seasons greetings. To participate, send a holiday card with photos, with this message to the address below:

"Season's Greetings, from our family to yours. May the next year bring peace and equality for all." Please send your cards and photos to:

Family Equality Council
Attn: First Family
P.O. Box 206
Boston, MA 02133

or send a digital version to tina.walker-morin@familyequality.org. The deadline is January 1, but send your cards as soon as possible so all images can be gathered into a holiday package to be delivered to the First Family. In addition to spreading holiday cheer, the campaign will increase visibility and awareness for the need for federal protections for the LGBT community. According to **Jody Huckaby**, executive director of PFLAG National, "We hope that by bringing some of our holiday stories to the White House, we'll help our elected leaders see the faces and stories of people who rely on their commitment to equal rights under the law for all people."

PFLAG TriCities is now on Facebook! Become a Fan and receive regular updates!

Sorry, San Francisco, You're Only Number Two

"Outrage" Film says Washington D.C. is the most gay city anywhere

Central to efforts for equality is the argument over "out" vs "careful." Some activists feel equality will never come unless every GLBT person is open about their internal truth. On the other side are those who feel the resulting social stigma would demand too high a personal cost. No more persuasive depiction of this problem exists than the **Kirby Dick** film "**Outrage**." It starts with Michael Rogers, whose

blogactive website uses careful documentation and reliable sources, publishes the names of well-known public leaders who are gay but deeply closeted. In addition to outing several national political figures, the film asserts that Washington D.C. could not function without gay staff working on both sides of the aisle. The idea that their hard work effectively limits the freedom and protections given GLBT citizens is hard to grasp.

Some closeted staffers feel it actually requires more strength and bravery to achieve success inside the closet than to be open and out. The film provides a comprehensive investigation into a veil of secrecy over an astonishing fact: our government, which refuses to accord full rights to LGBT people, depends on the legislative expertise of its cadre of smart, hardworking gays.

Homophobia Unites Strange Company

Signers of the "Manhattan Declaration" stand firm in the face of human need

Leaders from four major corners of the conservative religious world, including Catholic, Evangelical, Anglican and Orthodox, joined together November 20 to pledge never to obey laws supporting gay marriage or abortion, according to a Nov. 20 report in the Colorado Independent. Protective of their freedom to preach "against gays," the group indicated no sense of the irony of their statement, part of which decries "any... act that violates the principal of the profound, inherent and equal dignity of every member of the human family." Signatories included **The Most Rev. Peter J. Akinola** of the Anglican Church of Nigeria; **Charlotte K. Ardizzone** of INSP Network; **Chuck Colson**; **Michael Beresford** of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association; and leaders of the Catholic Archdioceses of Denver, Oakland, New York, Louisville, Portland, Maine,

Newark, Kansas City, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Phoenix, Colorado Springs, Philadelphia, Washington D.C., Pittsburgh, and **Adam Maida**, Archbishop Emeritus of Detroit. **Harry Knox**, director of The Human Rights Campaign's Religion and Faith Program, responded by saying, "This declaration simply perpetuates the fallacy that equality and religious liberty are incompatible and that every step toward fairness for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community is another burden on religious people. In reality, non-discrimination laws are working all over this country, where religious freedom is existing side-by-side with equal opportunity... It is deeply cynical for the authors of this document to paint themselves as victims because they cannot have a free hand to discriminate, including with taxpayer dollars." One is reminded of famed attorney

Gerry Spence's famous line, "Half truths are like half-bricks: they can be thrown twice as far." Promotion of the Manhattan Declaration was handled by **DeMoss Group**, "the largest PR firm specializing in faith-based organizations and causes." They provide those stark black billboards featuring messages from God, such as "Life is short - eternity isn't." Closer to home, the Mount Pleasant Christian Clergy Association was expected to vote on new bylaws on December 16. Membership requires pastors to sign the bylaws to signify their acceptance of the Association's bylaws. The new bylaws were expected to stand for marriage as between one man and one woman. Far from confirming faith in Christ as a motivation for inclusion, the change would effectively ban the Association's single openly-gay member.

Danny Glover, Felix Justice to Appear at CMU

Minority Student Services at Central Michigan University has announced that actor Danny Glover will be the 2010 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Week Keynote Speaker. On Tuesday, January 19, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in CMU's Plachta Auditorium, Glover and his long-time friend Felix Justice will present "An Evening with Martin & Langston." The evening begins with Justice's critically acclaimed portrayal of Dr. King and Glover will bring to life the words and poetry of Langston Hughes. Event is free and open to the public. More at www.cmich.edu or at 989-774-3945.

Legally Married, Federal Employee Denied Partner Benefits

As reported December 18 in The Advocate. A bill to legalize protections for domestic partnerships, the "Domestic Partners Benefits and Obligations Act," has been approved by committees in both Houses of Congress, and it can't come too soon for a legally married lesbian couple in San Francisco. Karen Golinski, a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals staff attorney, has been denied benefits for her wife, after the Department of Justice determined that the Federal Office of Personnel Management's empowerment comes under the Defense of Marriage Act. Even with the Obama Administration's favorable position on equality, and even though the Office of Personnel Management is led by John Berry, himself gay. An OPM official remarked that the situation in an indication of the urgency of the need to repeal DOMA.

Shoot Your Own Foot to Stomp on Mine

Texas Tried Too Hard to Restrict Gay Rights with 2005 Amendment

In Texas, it may not only be illegal for the state government to recognize gay marriage. It may be illegal to recognize any form of marriage at all - including between "one man and one woman." Attorney Barbara Radnofsky, who will soon declare as a candidate for Texas Attorney General, claims that, in the 2005 amendment to the Texas Constitution, the wording "...may not create or recognize any legal status identical or

similar to marriage," bans all marriage. This may seem nonsensical considering the obvious intent of the amendment, but Radnofsky points out "In our justice system, when language is clear, the courts are not permitted to go behind the clear language to consider intent."

Conservatives, including the current AG, Greg Abbott, are reacting with vehemence.

Quoted by [McClatchy news service](#), Abbott's spokesman

Jerry Strickland said "The Texas Constitution and the marriage statute are entirely constitutional. We will continue to defend both in court." He also stated the chance for any lawsuit to succeed based on the broad wording to be "one in a trillion." It must take some amount of hubris - and hatred - to try so hard to hurt a few harmless gays that you risk humiliating your own state's Constitution.

Tell Me Again: Why Do We Need Bias-Crime Laws?

A statement from the OutCenter and a warning of violence against GLBT people

(Benton Harbor, MI, Dec. 15, 2009) - A Benton Harbor resident was attacked over the weekend in what is believed to be hate-motivated violence based on his sexual orientation. Another similar incident was reported to St Joseph police a few weeks earlier. Both attacks occurred at local gas stations. No arrests have been made. The OutCenter is deeply concerned about the recent acts of violence toward two members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

(LGBT) community. We urge local law enforcement authorities to continue their expedient work on these cases. We encourage all residents to be vigilant and aware of their surroundings. Avoid travelling alone; if you must travel alone remain in well-lit areas. "We must work together as a community to stop hate crimes," said Jennifer Hsu, executive director of the OutCenter. "The OutCenter is committed to putting an end to bigotry and prejudice against

LGBT persons and stands ready to work with allies in southwest Michigan to make this community safe for all people." Survivors of LGBT discrimination or hate violence are asked to contact 269-925-8330. Since 2003 the OutCenter, previously the YWCA Out & Affirmations Center, has been advocating for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. See www.outcenter.org.

PFLAG Tri-Cities Membership Form for 2009-2010

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
Phone (home) _____ Phone (cell) _____
E-mail _____

Check here if you want to receive correspondence from the National PFLAG :

PFLAG Tri-Cities Newsletter Subscription Options:

- I want to receive the PFLAG Tri-Cities newsletter
- I would like to receive the newsletter as an e-mail attachment
- I would like to receive the newsletter by U.S. Mail

2009-10 Memberships

- Family \$40.00
- Individual \$30.00
- Student/senior citizen (65 or older) \$15.00
(\$15 goes to national, PFLAG Tri-Cities membership is complimentary)
- I would like to donate to PFLAG Tri-Cities \$ _____

Please make check payable to **PFLAG Tri-Cities** and mail to:
Ruth Baker, Treasurer, 1030 South Drive, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858