



April 2009

The PFLAG Link

MIDLAND, BAY CITY & SAGINAW CHAPTER
P.O. BOX 834, BAY CITY, MI 48707
989-941-1458

www.pflag-mbs.org

This Month's Meeting:

Sunday, April 26, 2 p.m.
Unitarian/Universalist Fellowship,
6220 Jefferson at Wackerly, Midland

Special Feature: "Semper Fi: One Marine's Journey"

Meetings: 2:00-3:00 Support Groups; 3-3:30 Break; 3:30-4:30 Film Presentation

Next Month's Meeting:

Sunday, May 24 at 2 p.m.

Michigan Pride

Saturday, June 13, 11:00am-7:00pm
Adado Park, Lansing

www.michiganpride.org

Pride Awards Banquet

Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are now available for the Saginaw Valley LGBT Pride Awards Banquet, which will be held on Wednesday, June 17. Nominations for award recipients will be accepted until May 8th. For more, visit www.PerceptionsSV.org/pride

(not related to Michigan Pride.)

Need help? PFLAG is here.

PFLAG TriCities supports families with GLBT children at all ages and all stages of life. We can help with

- ▶ Bullying or harassment problems
- ▶ Family Support
- ▶ Issues Awareness and Education

Each monthly meeting has room to address all three. Join us Sunday at 2 p.m. For help anytime, call 941-1458. Calls and meetings are always confidential.

"LINK up" early! Send your email address to the [Editor](mailto:Editor@lineweaver1080@charter.net) at lineweaver1080@charter.net and get the *LINK* up to two days earlier than the postal version. Our email list is confidential and is never shared.

Gay in Uniform: Honor, Courage, Commitment

Jeff Key was an ordinary kid born to hardworking religious conservative parents in Walker County, Alabama. "Ordinary" here means devoted to church, raised to fight racism, steeped in pride and loyalty to country, and, ultimately, being gay. With a degree in theatre, Jeff waited until the advanced age of 34, when his devotion to the ideal

of service - stated in his insistence "It's never too late to do the right thing" - moved him to join the U.S. Marine Corps. "**Semper Fi: One Marine's Journey**" is compelling; Jeff's courage and honesty so outweigh in importance his sexual orientation that viewers will leave feeling they know him. Deployed from the Reserves to

Iraq in 2003, he returned to the U.S. two months later for treatment of a non-combat injury - only to discover for the first time that the core of his mission, the weapons of mass destruction, did not exist. The film is an emotionally meaningful demonstration of what is most important in life - and what's not.



A Passion for Equality: 200 gather at CMU to protest speaker

Crowd Cries Out for Equality; "Conservatives" Cower

A chill breeze did nothing to quench a desire to speak out for justice, as some 200 protesters, both students and non-students, gathered on a shallow rise at the center of CMU's campus on Tuesday, April 7, holding rainbow banners and homemade signs. The crowd stood for almost an hour in the cold, shouting slogans and chants declaring their support for GLBT equality - a passionate response to the appearance of Gary Glenn, founder of the Michigan branch of the American Family Association. Glenn was invited by the

"Campus Conservatives," a Registered Student Organization at CMU, formerly known as Student Republicans, who had invited the public to attend. Glenn's speech was originally planned as the main feature of the group's meeting, scheduled for the large dining area in the basement floor of the Bovee University Center. However, by 7:45 p.m., protest organizer Ben Dotson announced to the crowd that he had been told the Conservatives had decided to close their meeting, limiting the event to invitation only. According to [CM](#)

[Life](#), "Journalism professor Timothy Boudreau, adviser to the Campus Conservatives, said he wished Glenn's speech would have been open to the public. 'I find it ironic and profoundly disappointing that on a night when they preached the value of free expression, they closed the door on opposing points of view.'" Even though Boudreau was apparently referring to the protesters, their stated intentions did not include obstruction of Glenn's appearance.

Michigan Equality announced that **Garnet Lewis** joined their Board of Directors on April 7, 2009, shortly after her confirmation to Northern Michigan University's Board of Trustees as the first openly gay person appointed to a governance board for a Michigan university. Ms Lewis was Michigan's first openly gay candidate for the Michigan House in 2008. Garnet and her partner, **Vicky Cobb**, have been supporters of Michigan Equality for years and became sustaining members in 2009.

The following corrects the event time, updated since the March Link.

Transgender Empowerment Conference Saturday, April 25th 11:00 am - 4:00 pm. For transgender individuals and their allies, families, and significant others. Presenters from local and statewide agencies will cover transgender safety, legal issues, health trends, and activism. Hosted by **Transgender Detroit** and co-sponsored by **Affirmations, Triangle, TransGender Michigan, and PFLAG Detroit**. Held at Affirmations, 290 W. 9 Mile Road, Ferndale. Phone 248-398-7105.

Seen "Milk?"

PFLAG Genesee County presents "Milk," the Academy Award winning film starring Sean Penn, Friday, April 24th - 7:00 pm. Refreshments and discussion following. 50/50 Drawing. Free will offering collected to cover expenses. UU Church of Flint, 2474 S. Ballenger Hwy, Flint.

Detroit LGBTQ Wedding Expo RainbowWeddingNetwork.com has announced that it will produce a **Same Love, Same Rights® Wedding Expo** this spring for the first time in Michigan. The Expo is designed to connect same-sex couples with gay-friendly businesses that wish to offer their ceremony, honeymoon, travel and family-related services to this viable niche market. The event will be hosted by Infinity & Ovation Yacht Charters, and will take place aboard the company's two elite yachts anchored in St. Clair Shores. Free for the public to attend, the Same Love, Same Rights® Wedding Expo will take place on Saturday May 2, 2009 from 1:00-4:00pm. For more information visit SameLoveSameRights.com.

Statewide PFLAG Meeting Focuses on Safe Schools training

A personal report and commentary from Suzanne Greenfield

On Saturday, April 4th, the **Genesee County Chapter of PFLAG** hosted the Michigan PFLAG State Conference, devoted to "Cultivating Respect: Safe Schools" training. Representatives from seven chapters, with over 26 members in attendance, spent the day learning how to communicate to school personnel and, most importantly, how to get our foot in the door to bring programs and education that will make schools safer and more inclusive of all students. It was a long and productive day, broken up by great food

and plenty of laughs. As part of the training, we were briefed about pending state legislation. The legislation, called Matt's Law, was named after **Matt Epling**, who took his own life following a brutal bullying incident. Matt's parents, as well as a lobbyist for the Triangle Foundation, attended. PFLAG chapters have supported Matt's Law in the past, but it has just been reintroduced, stripped of all enumerated language, including sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Chapters and other partners in the coalition

supporting anti-bullying legislation are examining the change and will need to decide if they will once again support the bill. (If you would like more information about the importance of enumerated language, please email sgreenfield@pflag.org.) Thank you to everyone in Michigan who attended and are helping PFLAG create a network throughout the country of concerned and caring parents and community members that will go directly to their schools to make them safer and better for all students.

Iraqi Gays Murdered by Family; Others Sentenced to Death

Rex Wockner reported April 16 in [Between the Lines](#) that seven gay men were murdered in Baghdad's Sadr City district in late March and early April, activists and media reported. Three men were shot by fellow Shiite tribe members on April 2 and four were killed by tribe members around March 26. Some of the bodies were found with notes attached that said "pervert." The killings came after influential clerics in the district preached against homosexuality. The [New York Times](#) reported April 8 that

over the past two months as many as 25 gays have been killed in the area. Police believe relatives of the deceased have committed most of the murders to alleviate family shame. Meanwhile, the London-based group **Iraqi LGBT** says five of its members in Baghdad have been sentenced to death by the government for running or belonging to a banned organization, and that the executions will be carried out promptly. **Scott Long**, director of Human Rights Watch's LGBT Rights Division, said:

"We are trying urgently to determine who they (the condemned men) are and what has happened. ... This is a situation that's both desperate and extremely dangerous, given that lives may be at stake. Together with other groups, members of Congress and concerned activists, we're doing everything we can to investigate and determine who's jailed and what their fates may be. The Iraqi government and the U.S. government must both investigate these charges immediately."

McCain Campaign Manager Supports Gay Marriage... WHAT!?

Speaking to **Log Cabin Republicans** on Friday, April 17, **Steve Schmidt, John McCain's** campaign manager in the November election, said conservatives should drop their opposition to same-sex marriage. "There is a sound conservative argument to be made for same-sex marriage," Schmidt was quoted as saying on Sunday April 19 on [CNN's website](#). Schmidt told CNN that the GOP must become more open if it wants to reverse a shrinking coalition, especially among younger, more accepting voters. "People are turned off in large measure by what they see as intolerance coming out of the party," he said. "I don't honestly

expect our party will reverse in the very near term its opposition to same sex marriage. Nor do I yet see support for it from a strong majority of the general public," Schmidt told the Log Cabin Republicans. "And, I do believe that such a highly charged political question such as this should be settled by the freely expressed will of the people, and not by the courts." Schmidt also said, "One of the things that has definitely impacted my views on these issues...is having a gay sibling," Schmidt told CNN. "As Americans get to know gay couples and or have gay family members, or work associates ... they come to understand that

these relationships are deep and worth being respected and being protected. I'm confident American public opinion will continue to move on the question toward majority support, and sooner or later the Republican Party will catch up to it," he told the gathering. "And I believe the nation's acceptance of same sex unions as lawful marriage would provide a far more secure guarantee that the change made to this profoundly important social institution will be permanent than would judicial fiat." CNN's Evan Glass and Ed Hornick contributed to this report.