



**President's Message:**

Hello PFLAGers. July is a special time of the year. We are celebrating the Pride Festival. It is a time when we celebrate diversity, not only diversity within society, but also the diversity that exists within the LGBT community. No symbol represents the diversity that we celebrate better than the rainbow. Here is some history about the rainbow flag that I found on the [www.lambda.org](http://www.lambda.org) website:

The rainbow flag has become one of the most widely used and recognized symbols of the gay pride movement. The concept of the rainbow is hardly a new one. Rainbows have been used since ancient times in all kinds of cultures- Greek, African, Native American and Celtic, to name only a few. Even Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition has made use of the rainbow as a freedom symbol.

The Rainbow Flag as we know it today was developed by San Francisco artist Gilbert Baker in 1978. At the time, there was a need for a gay symbol which could be used year after year for the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade. Baker took inspiration from many sources, from the hippies movement to the black civil rights movement, and came up with a flag with eight stripes. Color has always played an important power in the gay right movement- Victorian England symbolized homosexuality with the

color green, lavender became popular in the 1960s, and pink from the pink triangle has caught on as well- and the colors of the gay flag were no different. Baker explained that his colors each stood for a different aspect of gay and lesbian life:

Hot pink for sexuality, Red for life, Orange for healing, Yellow for the sun, Green for nature, Blue for art, Indigo for harmony, Violet for spirit.

Baker himself and thirty other volunteers hand-stitched and hand-dyed to large prototype flags for the 1978 parade. It was an immediate hit. However, when Baker took his design to the San Francisco Flag Co. to have it mass-produced for the 1979 parade, he had to remove the hot pink stripe. Baker had hand-dyed the color, and unfortunately pink was not a commercially available color.

Later that year, when the city's first openly gay supervisor, Harvey Milk, was assassinated, the 1979 Pride Parade Committee found in Baker's flag the perfect symbol for the entire gay community to unite under in protest of this tragedy. The committee got rid of the indigo stripe to make the colors evenly divisible along the parade route: red, orange, and yellow on one side of the street; green, blue, and purple on the other. (This version also conforms to traditional color theory- the

[Continued from cover]

three primary colors and three secondary colors in art-rather than the spectrum of light colors of R O Y G B I V. ) Thus, today's six-color flag was born and displayed during the 1979 Pride Parade.

The flag quickly caught on like wildfire in cities across the country. It was even officially recognized by the International Congress of Flag Makers. In 1989 the flag was given international recognition when West Hollywood resident John Stout successfully sued his landlords after they tried to prohibit him from hanging the flag from his apartment balcony. At New York's Stonewall 25 Parade in 1994, a gigantic 30-foot wide, one mile long rainbow flag was carried through the parade route by over 10,000 volunteers.

Star Pfluger



## Loss in South Bend

The amendment to extended Equal Rights Protection to people regardless of sexual orientation or sexual identity was defeated after 4 hours of debate by a 5-4 vote on July 11th. The amendment was considered by the South Bend Common Council, after several months of very public debate.

Feelings were strong on both sides of the issue. Mayor Stephen Luecke, democrat, came out in favor of the amendment, and South Bend Equality led local efforts to pass the ordinance. On the other side of the issue, Council President, Rev. Timothy Rouse publicly announced his opposition as did Bishop John D'Arcy who oversees the South Bend/Fort Wayne Diocese. Bishop D'Arcy's statement of opposition was reprinted in church bulletins in the heavily Catholic city, home to Notre Dame University. The No Special Rights groups said repeatedly it was "lovingly opposed" to the legislation.

Council member Ann Puzzello remarked that it does not make sense to oppose equality. "We cannot lovingly oppose this right. It's discrimination and certainly has nothing to do with love."<sup>1</sup>

South Bend Equality has not given up the fight for GLBT civil rights in it's community. "We're going to keep coming to Common Council," stated Catherine Pittman of SBE, "There's no other place to go. We're going to continue to bring our concerns here."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *South Bend Tribune* July 11, 2006

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*

See also :

<http://advanceindiana.blogspot.com/2006/07/catholic-church-lobbying-succeeds-in.html>

## Reintroduced Comic Book Character Is Now a Lesbian

DC Comics is reintroducing a former love interest of Batman, but this time as a lesbian. Kathy Kane, a socialite-turned-caped-crusader as Batwoman, first appeared in 1956. DC Comics already has a number of African-American, Hispanic and Oriental characters and has added a lesbian as part of a working plan to diversify its superhero base thus allowing it to better reflect its readership base and the world.

As can be the case, different groups are looking different ways at the change. Some consider this to be a part of the "decline of our society" while others consider that Batwoman may become a role-model. The character is out to her friends, but not her family, reflecting the experience of a growing number of GLBT readers.

While gay and lesbian characters are not new in comics, they are still rare enough to bring comment. Other comic characters who have 'left the closet' are Northstar from Marvel Comics who came out and adopted an AIDS infected baby, the Rawhide Kid who is also from Marvel and is a gay cowboy [a few years before *Brokeback Mountain* hit the screen] whose comic carried a Mature rating as the character flirted with other men, not hiding his orientation. Currently the *Young Avengers* has a gay couple, Wiccan and Hulkling, with their relationship being handled extremely well without making it sensational or overplayed.

DC Comic has had "The Authority" comic series featuring a gay super powered couple, "The Green Lantern" features a supporting teenaged character named Terry Berg who had a crush on his straight boss Kyle. The character was later badly beaten on the street for being gay.

Of course Showtime's series *Queer As Folk* features a 'fictional' superhero—one that only exists in the series—Rage: Gay Crusader created by gay characters Michael and Justin.

References:: *CNN.com*; *LARRY McSHANE Associated Press Writer*



## What PFLAG Means To Me...

*By Mark Stevens*

One of the most important things that we have in this life is our family. Whether the family you grew up with or the one that you have created for yourself, they are the people who teach you how to grow, how to live, how to love... or how not to.

I have been very lucky in my life to have both grown up in a loving family and to have created a pretty wonderful family for myself over the years. For a gay man sometimes the family that you create is the only one you really get to know. And sometimes you only get to know the family you grew up with because of the one you have created.

It will be one year next month since my mother passed on. I am grateful to PFLAG for helping me to let my mother see that the family I created was, and is, as caring and loving as she made the family I grew up with be for me and my two sisters.

Shortly before she went into the hospital for that last visit, my mother came to Fort Wayne from my hometown of Marion to visit. I had only truly discovered PFLAG myself less than a year before, but I was eager to introduce my mom to the group and to show her that she was not alone in the questions she had expressed to me over the years... that there were other loving and caring people out there posing the same questions. That isn't something that is readily available in a town like Marion. Most people see having a gay family member as a sign of 'something wrong'.

We happened to time her visit to Fort Wayne to coincide with a PFLAG meeting. She was a little nervous about going, but I think, eager as well. The meeting was nothing unusual, just the regular discussions on how life affects those who have a loved one who is gay, or how being gay was affecting those around us. After the meeting she spoke with several people all of whom helped to make her feel comfortable in this completely new situation for her.

She told me later that she felt how close everyone was and how relaxed she felt in the midst of this 'second family'. It was the very first time that she ever had the opportunity to see me in a loving and safe environment where I was completely at ease being myself outside of the home she had built for our family. I was so happy to know that she could sense all of that in such a short time.

When mom was in the hospital I had to deal with something that I had not ever foreseen myself dealing with. A member of my birth family showed the ugly side of homophobia. Admittedly she was under a lot of stress, but it will be difficult to ever forgive

some of the nastier things that my sister said to me, much of it in my mother's presence. I think that it helped mom somewhat to know that I still had my chosen family to fall back on and to comfort me when she would no longer be able to do so herself.

So when I think about what PFLAG means to me, I think about family and love and caring and comfort in times of sorrow and love and support through hardship and companionship and friends with whom to share the good times. I think of mom and all the wonderful things she taught me about what a family really is... and how PFLAG can be all of that for anyone who needs it. And I strive to be able to be an active and sharing member of this, my chosen family.



## From The Editor

*By Mark Stevens*

Summer... the slow lazy days of relaxation and rest for the weary. In a pig's eye! For most of us summer is just another season filled with work and days filled with chores that must be done while the weather stays warm... or hot as the case may be.

There are many good things to look for during the summer months, though. We may not get quite as much rest as we wish, but we can go out and make some noise and have some fun with our friends. Personally I am looking forward to PRIDEfest this year. I will be manning the booth for PFLAG for the first time and I hope to garner enough stories and ideas to last through the winter months ahead for the newsletter!

We are also hoping that this summer will bring more of our neighbors into the fold to help us to defeat the Marriage Act and other forms of public homophobia. It would be nice to think that simply coming out to the big events to show our support for one another would be enough to wake up the sleepers out there, but I think we all know that it will take a bit more than just a rowdy celebration to do that.

If you have ideas about ways to focus our attention where it should be, or just questions about how we affect those around us as parents and friends of the gay community, please stop by and tell us. We need the support of the community of PFLAG to continue to fulfill our mission. So take a few moments out of your busy summer schedule to stop by and talk with us, or write to us or call. We will all be happier for your input!

# Ring the Closing Bell on Homophobia



## PFLAG at the New York Stock Exchange June 30, 2006

On the last day of the second quarter of 2006 on June 30<sup>th</sup>, a number of PFLAG leaders came to New York and made history as the first organization for families and allies of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people to ring the closing bell. Dubbing the event “Ring the closing bell on homophobia,” they came armed with information showing the economic power of GLBT people. Such current buying power is estimated at \$641 billion with expectations to reach \$1 trillion by 2012. And that figure does not include the buying power of all the fair-minded people who are our allies.

Many corporations have come to realize the value of offering policies that allow them to recruit and retain the best employees regardless of the orientation. Nearly half of the Fortune 500 has GLBT-friendly practices, which include domestic partner benefits, nondiscrimination policies and financial support for organizations working to promote equality.

They came to express that there is “... new research to back their arguments [which] reveals that more than three-fourths of Americans personally know someone who is GLBT, and those consumers are more likely than others to support companies that market to the gay and lesbian community.”

During The Closing Bell event, PFLAG introduced a way to “move equality forward with an exciting and unique initiative, **Straight for Equality**.

“**Straight for Equality** will create opportunities for straight fair-minded individuals to step up and speak out for GLBT equality. Your support of PFLAG will make this initiative a reality.

No one is requesting special rights, just the end of special wrongs.”

Reference: [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)



We meet the second  
Monday of each month  
7:00 pm at  
**Plymouth  
Congregational Church**  
501 W. Berry Street  
(corner of Fairfield and  
Berry)  
For more information  
call 260-497-8528 or e-mail:  
[PflagFtWayne@aol.com](mailto:PflagFtWayne@aol.com)

**PFLAG of Fort Wayne**  
PO Box 5086  
Fort Wayne, IN 46805-5086  
(260) 497-8528  
[PflagFtWayne@aol.com](mailto:PflagFtWayne@aol.com)  
<http://members.aol.com/pflagfw/>

### Upcoming Events:

**August 14** - Fort Wayne PFLAG Meeting, 7:00 pm, Plymouth Congregational Church.

**August 29** - Indiana Equal Region 3 Meeting and Social Dinner, 7:00 -9:00 pm at Hall's Gas House (on Superior St. in Fort Wayne).

**September 11** - Fort Wayne PFLAG Meeting, 7:00 pm, Plymouth Congregational Church.

**September 26** - Indiana Equal Region 3 Meeting and Social Dinner, 7:00 -9:00 pm at Hall's Gas House (on Superior St. in Fort Wayne).

**The PFLAG Mission:** Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons, their families and friends through **support** to cope with an adverse society, **education** to enlighten an ill-informed public and **advocacy** to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. PFLAG provides an opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.