



ST. PAUL MINNEAPOLIS

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A MONTHLY PUBLICATION BY AND FOR PFLAG MEMBERS

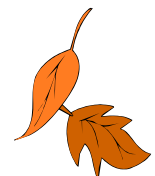
NEXT MEETING: October 20, 2002, at:
Mayflower United Church of Christ
Diamond Lake Road at 35 W in South Minneapolis
1:30 p.m. Set up, conversation, library opens
2:00 - 5:00 p.m. Program and Small Support Groups

Program begins promptly at 2:00 p.m.
You are encouraged to arrive any time before the regular meeting.
Your assistance in setting up chairs,
refreshments, and the literature table would be most welcome.

Calendar of Events



- Thursday, October 11** **The 8th Annual National Coming Out Day Luncheon (see page 3)**
- Sunday, October 20** **Regular Monthly PFLAG Meeting, 2-5 p.m.**
"Intersex 101" Sharon Preves, medical sociologist from Hamline University tells what happens when babies are born with unexpected sexual anatomy.
- Sunday, October 22** **PFLAG Board Meeting (see page 11)**
- Sunday, November 19** **PFLAG Annual Meeting (see page 3)**

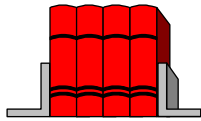


VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Some of our very hard-working volunteers need to rotate out of their current assignments

We need new people for:

- ◆ Librarian



- ◆ Welcome Table



- ◆ Support Group Facilitators



The "Outing" of a Mother

My son came out to me about 12 years ago. At the time, I had several visceral responses. The first was a sharp pain in my heart followed with tears. My immediate thoughts ranged from fear, sadness to guilt. Fear for his safety and the quality of his life. Would he find the love that I knew was important to him? Would that man be as committed as he would be? I experienced twinges of

sadness over my dreams for his life as a traditionally married man and father that could not happen. What part would I or could I play in a gay relationship? What to do now?

Feelings of guilt that made me think that I caused him to be gay. Who tells other people that are central to our lives? On and on went the questions. Now when I reflect, so many years later, I realize that I had much to learn. I was ignorant, prejudiced and fearful not only for my son, but for myself.

I did not know where to start. My son came to my rescue as we walked and talked. He informed me about his own coming out process. He gave or suggested books for me to read. He suggested that I might want to attend PFLAG meetings.

I describe the beginning, because at the time, if someone had questioned me about my thoughts on homosexuality, I would have been cavalier, open-minded and above prejudice. I was a fount of acceptance and awareness. Only when I was faced with this truth in my family did I begin the path to knowledge, acceptance and unconditional love.

The unconditional love I discovered was for myself. I already had that for my son. I had to forgive myself for my ignorance of the pain that my son had endured by himself. I had to forgive myself for my grandiosity about my own lack of prejudice. I had to forgive myself for not realizing that my son had as much opportunity for joy and love as my heterosexual daughter. In other words, over time I know at a deep level that labels placed on humans create prejudice and separation. We are all different on one level or another. We all deserve to be treated with respect, acceptance, tolerance and love.

Over the years, I have faced my own fears, ignorance and guilt. About three years ago I became a member of PFLAG. Yes, it took many years for me to fully come out of the closet. I had to absorb this new realization. Over time my own identity changed and I became more secure in my own acceptance and safety. I now speak of this when the opportunity presents itself. I find occasion when I am in the presence of someone who is feeling isolated. They are the mother, brother, sister, friend or lover of a gay person and lack the support that they need. Then I have the opportunity to help another person find safety and acceptance. This has helped me to grow emotionally and spiritually. The more I open myself to these experiences, the farther I am out of the closet.

Now the door is wide open and the sun pours in to brighten the darkest corners. I am a member of the board of PFLAG so that I may grow personally, help others and actively work to make the world a safer place for my son and other GLBT people. I march in the PRIDE parade and encourage friends and family to join me. I have been able to watch my son flourish in his own acceptance. He has very special relationships and I'm certain that he will have a special man to share his life with when the time is right. I welcome whoever is right and perfect for him. I thank him for allowing me to grow and becoming much more than I imagined. I honor his being in all aspects of his life.

I'm so glad to be his mother. I delight in the richness he has brought me since the day that he was born. I'm grateful to be in full bloom.

Diane E. Grussing

Notice of Annual Meeting November 17, 2002 PFLAG St. Paul/Minneapolis Chapter

As provided in the Bylaws of the PFLAG St. Paul/Minneapolis Chapter, notice is hereby given of the Annual Meeting to be held at the beginning of the regular monthly general meeting, November 17, 2002. The meeting will be held as usual at Mayflower United Church of Christ, 35W and Diamond Lake Road, Minneapolis, at 2:00 PM.

The Nominating Committee will present a slate of persons to serve on the chapter's Board of Directors. As provided in Article 6, Section 7 of the Bylaws: "If active membership have names to place in nomination they may nominate a person with five (5) members' signatures on a petition. Nominations may be received until the time of the election at the Annual Meeting."

The 8th Annual National Coming Out Day Luncheon

Friday, October 11, 2002

Minneapolis Convention Center
Ballroom
1301 Second Avenue South

This year's schedule:

--11 a.m. to noon: Registration and exhibitors

--Noon to 1:30: Luncheon and speaking program in Ballroom A

--1:30 to 2:30: Dessert buffet and exhibitors

The cost of the luncheon is \$260 for a table of 10 guests or \$26 dollars per person. Tickets on the date of the event are \$30 per person. On-line registration will be available at www.outfront.org.

Who is speaking? As of this writing, the slate of NCOD speakers includes Pastor Anita Hill, a well-known lesbian in ministry and the subject of a locally produced documentary; Abigail Garner, the grown daughter of a gay dad and founder of FamiliesLikeMine.com; the third

supportive family members and friends who accept their sexual orientation. They expressed appreciation for the school-sponsored GLBT support group in their high school.

When asked how PFLAG can help families of color support their GLBT relatives and friends, Roxanne suggested that we make ourselves visible and be prepared to talk to people at various ethnic festivals and neighborhood block parties. Dennis Anderson, a former PFLAG board member and the executive director of Black GLBT Pride, said we could be effective at such events whether we staff a PFLAG booth or table or simply attend wearing PFLAG T-shirts.

And Kyle said we should tell parents of color, like all parents, to just love their kids.

Florence Dillon

Officer's death stuns Southwest residents

The Southwest community was stunned after the death of Minneapolis Police Officer Melissa Schmidt, killed Aug. 1 after a shootout at the Horn Towers housing complex, West 31st Street and Blaisdell Avenue South.

Community involvement

Schmidt's loss has deeply affected neighborhoods she previously served. She worked as a beat officer in the Stevens Square-Loring Heights neighborhood early in her career. She also worked a stint as a SAFE Officer for the Lyndale neighborhood where Horn Towers is located.

"She didn't wait for the calls. She went out in the community and talked to people," said David Delvoe, the safety coordinator for Stevens Square Community Organization, who worked closely with Schmidt.

Doug Kress, SSCO's executive director, said the neighborhood has two public housing complexes, and Schmidt covered them in her public-housing assignment.

"Because we had the relationship built with her as a person, she was able to carry that relationship into public housing -- which is often a difficult group to get involved in the neighborhood," Kress said. "We were starting to build those ties." Schmidt also continued to drop in on neighborhood events, Kress said, such as a late July showing at "Movies and Music in the Park." The two started chatting.

"I said, 'It would be great to have you come back to the neighborhood. One of our beat officers moved over to a different

position.'" Kress said. "She said, 'Well, I like what I'm doing now.'" City Councilmember Dan Niziolek (10th Ward) is a former community crime-prevention specialist with the Minneapolis police. Schmidt replaced him and his partner in Lyndale and CARAG when they stepped down.

"She was an incredible officer who really understood community policing," Niziolek said. He said his office was flooded with calls from the community after the shooting.

Gay/lesbian outreach

Third Precinct Commander Lt. Sharon Lubinski said the death has left the department devastated. She noted that Schmidt was adept not only at representing the community as a whole, but also the gay and lesbian community, of which she was openly a part.

"She was willing to be in uniform doing outreach to the gay community, most recently in June of this summer," Lubinski said. "I think that is significant."

Schmidt is the first Minneapolis police officer to die in the line of duty since Officer Jerry Haaf was killed in 1992. Schmidt apparently is the first gay or lesbian police officer in the history of the Minneapolis Police Department to die in the line of duty.

"Losing such a strong officer who showed leadership and could help to build those bridges, that is going to be a loss," Niziolek said. (With thanks to the Southwest News and reporters *Kevin Featherly* and *Scott Russell*)



NORTH DAKOTA DADS Persistence pays off Todd Berg and Chad Long

When the two of us met in September 1996, we knew it was meant to be: we both had four letters in our first names and last names, both our first names ended with d and our last names with g. We were wearing the same belts. And we both wanted to be parents. God stepped in, creating a committed relationship, and five years later we were ready for parenthood (or at least as ready as one can be). But was North Dakota ready for us to be out...and be parents together?

After two years and many, many hours of researching agencies across the country and struggling to find a North Dakota agency that would do our home study (state law dictates that a state-based agency must conduct the home study regardless from where someone is adopting), we found a local agency willing to do the home study and support the Chicago-based agency we chose to use for our adoption. The local agency's recent change in policy as to who could apply made it possible for us to do just that. The change did not specifically include applicants who were gay or lesbian, but left an open statement that "anyone" could apply.

Our paperwork was sent to the two agencies in late January 2001. The home study process quickly began, with our local agency willing to facilitate an out-of-state adoption.

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NORTH DAKOTA DADS

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We all assumed this would be our means of adopting, because the North Dakota Department of Human Services had some personnel who would make adoption of anyone in state custody impossible for a same-sex couple, and our social worker thought the wait for a North Dakota birth family to choose a same-sex couple could be lengthy. So we proceeded with the home study that would be sent to the agency in Chicago.

Of course, the standard questionnaires, physicals, parenting surveys, and behavior inventories had to be done. At the conclusion of our home study visit on March 15, 2001, our social worker shared some incredible news with us. She wanted to show our portfolio to a North Dakota birth mother who was interested in choosing a same-sex family to adopt her two-week-old son, who was in temporary foster care (born March 1). The same-sex couple she had chosen originally from a state on the East Coast had backed out at the last minute, and she was quite determined that her son be placed with a gay family! A North Dakota birth mother interested in us? A North Dakota adoption rather than an out-of-state adoption? Could we become parents this quickly? Was it really possible?

The local agency's policy dictates that a birth family be presented at least three portfolios for placement of their child in an adoptive home. On April 6, 2001, we received a phone call from our local agency

that the birth other had made a decision. She wanted us to adopt her son! This wouldn't be an out-of-state adoption as both we and our local agency had expected. We were about to adopt a North Dakota infant!

We soon learned that our son would be coming home on April 20, so we had plenty to do to get ready. After buying all the baby necessities and getting the nursery prepared, we were told by our local agency just a couple of days before his expected arrival that they would no longer be supporting the adoption and that they would have to back out. Apparently, the foster parents had learned of the birth mother's wishes to place her child in a two-dad family and threatened the local agency with media attention. That, linked with pressures from someone in a position of authority with the North Dakota Department of Human Services, caused the agency to reconsider placing this child in our home. They deemed our home no longer in the best interests of the child. Our hopes were quickly dashed and our spirits crushed. But we made a decision that evening: we were going to fight for our son.

Several phone calls later we located a different agency (locally) that was willing to take over, although a few changes were necessary. The new agency had to do an update of our just-completed original home study, and the adoption had to take place as an identified adoption (the North Dakota Department of Human Services has no authority in identified adoptions), meaning full

disclosure (names, addresses, etc.) for the birth mother and ourselves. The child needed to be removed from the foster family as soon as possible, without any information as to where he was going or what avenues the birth mother had chosen, and be placed with us pending termination of parental rights.

Amid rumors of state legislation banning same-sex adoptions (nothing has come of the rumors yet) and a revisiting of policy by our initial agency, a court order was signed on May 2 providing temporary custody to us, pending relinquishment of parental rights. A wonderful visit with the birth mother and birth grandmother followed on May 3, the day we met our son and brought him home. The relinquishment hearing took place on June 7, where we met additional members of the birth family, followed by our six-month placement period in which the new agency continued home visits.

Our persistence and determination paid off! The finalization hearing on December 14, 2001, less than one full year after sending in our paperwork, made Jensen a legal member of our two-dad family. We still enjoy letters, share photos, and have occasional visits with Jensen's birth family. With one of us able to work from home two to three days each week (Todd) and the other with summers off (Chad), we are able to experience the joys that come with a child firsthand — morning baths, walks with the wagon, swinging in the park, trips to the zoo, and reading stories aloud, to name a few. Just as in the two of us meeting, God once again stepped in, changing our

committed relationship of two into a family of three.

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NORTH DAKOTA DADS

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Chad Long, Todd Berg, and Jensen Long Berg live in Bismarck. Chad is an elementary teacher and recently finished his master's degree in education. Todd advocates for and oversees staff who work with people with developmental disabilities. Chad and Todd help keep Rainbow Families apprised of legal and legislative happenings in North Dakota and serve as our Bismarck area contact family. They are believed to be the first men to adopt in North Dakota as a couple.

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www.rainbowfamilies.org, 612-827-7731.)

MAKING A MARK IN MEMPHIS BLUES

by Catherine Tuerk

We decided to stop in Memphis on the way to our niece's wedding in Clarksdale, Mississippi. We knew two things about Memphis: the blues on Beale Street and the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. We also knew that there was a museum built around the motel where the assassination took place. Perhaps if we had gone to Memphis at one time, we would have just focused on the blues and the food. But since we have long been civil rights people and more recently gay activists, we surely would have visited the museum. But a recent family

event made the visit a must; in fact, first on our list. What was that event? We have a brand new grandson and he is a beautiful African-American child.

Even if he wanted to (which I hope he won't), he will not be able to hide the color of his skin. The fact that he has two dads may or may not be so apparent in every situation. But we know that it will be an issue that will challenge him, and we are aware that many new experiences lie ahead for all of us as we help integrate Noah into the world.

The museum evoked the kinds of anger that all of us share. Old newsreels spewed hate rhetoric about Blacks, the same rhetoric that we have gotten so used to hearing about gays. Civil rights struggles were described as "the Black agenda." Funny we've heard the same thing about "the gay agenda." And there were the selected biblical quotes used to justify bigotry and hate.

Because of their experiences with oppression, many African American leaders work hard to help the Black community overcome negative stereotypes of gay people. In fact, one room of the exhibit paid homage to various other peoples who have been oppressed. It was a collection of wonderfully creative quilts representing, among others, Native Americans and Jewish Holocaust victims and survivors. One quilt represented oppressed people in Africa. Beautiful quilts — but none of them representing the oppression of gay people, not even a panel about the AIDS quilt.

The explanation of the quilt from Africa included wonderful quotes from James Baldwin. Baldwin wrote about Noah's covenant with God calling for courts of justice

and other fundamental principles. The rainbow became the symbol of this covenant. It was also adopted as a symbol of the American Black civil rights movement.

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MAKING A MARK IN MEMPHIS BLUES

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I started imagining that at least the explanation could say that James Baldwin was gay and that the rainbow flag is a symbol shared with the gay civil rights revolution.

In the museum shop I bought a book for Noah, a book for African-American children reflecting pride and soul. And then it came to me — this complete rainbow mom/grandmom was now on a mission. I asked if I could speak to the curator of the museum. “She’s not here, but come back tomorrow,” I was told. Good, I thought. Now I’ll have time to develop my strategy. “Wonderful museum,” I’d start off the conversation positively. “Beautiful quilts but not a gay one,” I’d say. Then I would show her a picture of Noah; the picture of Noah and his two dads, Joshua and John. Then I’d talk about James Baldwin, then the book. Then I would ask her to sign the book. Perfect.

And perfect it was. Ms. Barbara Andrews was lovely. “The quilt exhibit is a done deal, done by others,” she said. “Changing it would be like painting on someone else’s canvas.” But then she added, “But we will have our volunteers add the gay info into their tour information scripts.”

“Wow!” I thought. Hundreds of school children, busloads of tourists with now hear that James Baldwin was a gay man and Black people share the rainbow symbol with their GLBT brothers and

sisters.

She asked if she could think a minute about writing a note to Noah in his new book. She thought; we waited. Then she reappeared, smiling broadly, and handed us the book with the following inscription: “To Noah: You are truly blessed to have found love twice. May your journey in life be strengthened by that love. Beautiful one — go forth knowing that impressions in the sand have already been made.”

A little chutzpah, a dash of red hot passion, and a heaping dose of grandma love were my ingredients for change. If a few more cooks concoct their own recipes, pretty soon Martin Luther King’s “I’ve Got a Dream” will really include us all.

Cathy Tuerk is a former president of Metro DC PFLAG.

Transgender college professor finds Minnesotans "friendly, respectful" but teaching contract not renewed

Stacy Clement joined the psychology department at the University of Minnesota-Duluth in June, 2001. She was one of a small, but growing number of openly transgendered professors teaching at American colleges and universities. During the following interview she reflects on her experiences in Minnesota and the University's decision not to renew her contract for a second year.

Linda G.--How has your life partner handled your transition? Your children?

Stacy--My wife of 15 years and I are getting a divorce, not because we do not love each other, but

because she is not a lesbian and I am. She needs a man in her life and I cannot be that for her. We are still quite close and may end up being together despite the change because we truly are "Best Friends." My son is now 17 and was told when he was 12. He worried about losing his Dad but we worked very hard to reassure him that that would not happen. While living in LA we went swimming, to the water park, to the Dodger's games and so on. He now knows that Dad is not lost. His most recent challenge was what to call me in public (a shared response of kids-of-TGs). Now he knows it doesn't matter to me, to him and we don't much care what others think. He calls me Dad just fine and we laugh when it turns people's heads. It's not a huge issue as he lives in Oregon with his Mom.

Linda G.--You're a PhD candidate. What's the topic of your dissertation?

Stacy--The topic, which was birthed more than five years ago, is "The Adult and Adolescent Children of Crossdressers" and is foundational research with the kids of Ts.....a group that has been sorely overlooked. The findings are not earth shattering but will allow for better, further research.

Linda G.--What brought you from Southern California to Duluth?

Stacy-- I was applying to colleges and universities in the northern tier of states and UMD came through.

Linda G.--How did you find the level of acceptance on the University of Minnesota-Duluth campus? Among students? Among faculty? Among the general community?

"When I got off the plane at the Duluth airport last June.....I said to myself, "Stacy, what are you doing?"

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Transgender college professor
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From the moment I approached the Hertz rental counter to right now, I have experienced nothing but amicable, friendly, respectful people in all of Minnesota, Duluth, the Iron Range, Wisconsin, Morris, Minneapolis.....nowhere have I had a problem. One of my colleagues suggested that it is the sound of people minding their own business. I am sure that there were people in this department, on this campus and in town who have opinions of me and my life style and presentation, but they have ALL kept those opinions to themselves.

Linda G.--There are quite a few transgendered college professors around the country. Do you know if there are any other "out" transgendered professors in Minnesota?

Stacy--I am not sure I would agree with "quite a few transgendered college professors" — there are some, but not nearly as many as there could be or should be. Heck, there are still many, many professors who are not out as gay or lesbian..... Of course, of the transgendered, transsexual academics, there are those who go into a classroom and pass without flaw. I am not that person and cannot pretend to be. I am OUT by nature because of my size and my voice and I am PROUD by choice — if you get lemons, make lemonade. No, I do not know of

any other Minnesota school, college or university instructors, professors or classroom people at any level who self-identify or present as TG. In fact I know of only one other employee of UMD system-wide that is trans. She is a physics department administrator here in Duluth. She and I are friends.

Linda G.-- What do you tell your students about yourself?

Stacy--I give my students about an hour the first day of the semester a lecture I call "All about ME!" It is designed to open the subject for discussion, and then move on. As I said, I cannot be in the closet, so I set the record straight from the get go. I have had a total of five students opt out of my class, and had more than 12 students in classes who have had me in class before. I tell them whatever they want to know. I have never been asked a question I would not answer. I figure if they are brave enough to ask, I am brave enough to answer. I get students in my office all the time who want to talk about all sorts of things. I am a safe-space for them. They talk about using condoms with their girlfriends, being angry with their parents, being depressed, and so on.....not just about how they did on the last test. That part I love too. In fact, when I am in my office, the door is open.....

Linda G.--How would you evaluate the general level of education on transgender issues on American college campuses?

Stacy--Not good, but getting better, thanks to members of the community willing to bring the subject on campus. The problem that remains is that this is only experiential information and

academia needs more rigorous research for better understanding. That's the tricky part. I have heard so many Ts say that my research is great and when I ask them to participate they tell me no.....Not in my backyard! mentality. I think many people get their ideas of alternative lifestyles from Jerry Springer and from Howard Stern. That's not a problem as I see it. "It's easier to change a mind than it is to open one" is my credo.

Linda G.--Do you feel education is more effective when it's not just theoretical, but when students relate to a real, live transgendered professor?

Stacy--Yes, I teach psychology that is aimed at being very, very applied. There are plenty of academics who are mired in or interested with THEORY. Not me. If the student can take the lecture out into their daily life, I have succeeded. Honestly, my classes are seldom about transgender—I taught Human Sexuality at UMD. Sure the students learned about me, but they didn't learn much beyond that unless they did it on their own. I have a McNair Scholar who is working with me on TG Coming Out personalities. I guess it is helpful in realizing that you CAN live authentically and succeed and that everyone, regardless of their own story, has a right to live fully and has lessons to teach and to learn.

Linda G.—Given the positive experience you had at UMD, were you surprised that your contract was not renewed?

Stacy—At the time, I was floored. Partially because I had been reassured I would stay on, partly because I was named Faculty

Person of the Year, was on three high profile committees and had been asked to be the Queer Students Advisor

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Transgender college professor
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and the chair of the GLBT Advisory Commission. However, the reality of it is that having an out lesbian transsexual on faculty at a university is difficult regardless of the student response. All it takes is for a handful or fewer students to complain while the others remain content to make my presence a thorn rather than a rose. The budget was certainly an issue —given unlimited funds there would have been no reason to justify my non-renewal, but with this cut and that cut, it's easiest to remove the wheel that squeaks — first to show everyone that you are diligently addressing budget issues. It was easier to let me go and blame the budget than it would have been to argue for me to stay. Heck, perhaps the chair had no intention of renewal ever. He just wanted to say he had hired a TS. I cannot say.

Linda G.—Where do you go from here?

Stacy—The one thing that this hiatus from work has allowed me to do is to reinventory my spiritual base. It was a little fragile after I got word I would not be renewed and that took me by surprise. I thought.....I believed fervently what I spoke about and there I was with a test of faith. I have had the opportunity to pray, meditate, read and generally get reacquainted with my spiritual side. There was a time four or five years ago when I

felt so spiritual that I was inclined to think that I might move toward a ministry. I am now more interested in teaching, but there is a spiritual component of what I say and what I live. Physically, I hope to stay in Minnesota, but will go wherever a job shows up. Professionally, perhaps I will return to a former life as an Administrative Assistant. At least it's clean work and I get to dress pretty. Both options are available. I allow the universe and Goddess to move where I am needed. I have had a couple of inquiries into my consulting and my current "girlfriend" who is an attorney and a professor at UMD is a whiz at creating work. She has a passion for catering, so perhaps we will move in that direction. The bottom line though is to exercise patience above and beyond all else. The universe and Mother-Father-God wants the best for each of us — abundance and plenty in our lives. I'll see it only when I can believe it.

For now, I allow things to unfold in front of me. I pay attention!

(City of Lakes Crossgender Community, A Transgender Organization, Minneapolis/St. Paul MN, Web Site: www.clccmn.com)

GLSEN Releases State of the States 2002

A report issued by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, or GLSEN, is the first examination and comparison of state policies that protect students -- or fail to do so -- from discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

"State of the States 2002:

GLSEN's Policy Analysis of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Safer Schools Issues" is issued by GLSEN's Office of Public Policy in Washington, DC, and available at www.glsen.org.

"State of the States" compares safe schools laws and statewide policies related to the issue, as well as facts related to sexuality and HIV/AIDS Education, and the frequency of student-organized gay-straight alliances (GSAs) in schools. Other sections include state public school information ranging from the number of districts, students and teachers, to the percentage of students of color.

"This report is America's first opportunity to view in one location up-to-date information on the most important policies impacting LGBT people in schools," said GLSEN Public Policy Director M.K. Cullen. "While it allows us to showcase those states where advances in protections against discrimination and harassment in schools are far reaching, it most glaringly defines the gross inadequacies still present in 42 states."

In addition to the District of Columbia, only eight states legally protect students on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity: California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin. Those 8 states and DC protect only 11.9 million students, 25 percent of the country's school children. The state of Rhode Island, while not having a legal mandate from the legislature, does have a statewide regulation from its Department of Education that protects LGBT students from harassment.

"This resource will serve as an information source as well as a tool for students, parents, educators and others working to

GenderPAC speaks out on 30 years of Title IX ‘Whispering Campaigns’

Despite Title IX, passed thirty years ago this summer, women and girls in sports still find themselves subject to a highly contradictory social message: be athletic, but be feminine, too.

Women must excel not only at their sport, but also at their conventional social role. Particularly in sports like basketball and tennis, where bodies are on up-close and sweaty display, female athletes who hone their muscles and competitiveness as well as their skills face being labeled mannish, lesbian, or both.

In fact, in the current issue of *Sports Illustrated*, an article on the WNBA highlights alleged attempts by officials to feminize its players and achieve what is described as the "hyper-hetero-sexualization" of the sport.

Despite the required tennis skirt and her propensity for tears at Wimbledon, Martina Navratilova's grunting, short hair, attacking style, and muscular, veined arms made her the target of a whisper campaign that said, "Of course she's good, but she looks and plays like a man." The whispers became self-satisfied snorts of "I told you

so" when Martina came out as a lesbian.

Wimbledon champions Venus and Serena Williams find unflattering comments lobbed at them about their height, obvious musculature, aggressiveness and unladylike noises. Last year Amelie Mauresmo, with her strapping build, forceful play, and open lesbianism, was dismissed by Martina Hingis as "half a man."

The fear of transgressing traditional feminine norms has so contorted women's body building that several years ago the sport split into body building and "women's fitness," where points are deducted for too much muscle, too little make-up, clenched-fists and not high enough heeled shoes.

And, in the you-just-can't-win category. Anna Kournikova, an intelligent, sensitive, and business-savvy young woman has been dismissed as a "dumb blond" pin-up in a way that Andre Agassi never experienced when he, too, had million dollar endorsement contracts that were out of balance with his low tour ranking and lack of tournament trophies.

For women to continue moving forward, not only in sports, but in other competitive fields as well, we must keep expanding the conventional, constricting view of

what's feminine. Let's stop forcing women to do an awkward balancing act between excellence and gender stereotypes. Let's give women and girls the freedom to excel without looking over their shoulders wondering if a whispering campaign is gaining on them.

Patricia Ireland, former president of the National Organization for Women, is a member of the Gender Public Advocacy Coalition's (GenderPAC) Board of Directors.

GenderPAC is the national organization working to end discrimination and violence caused by gender stereotypes.

PFLAG St. Paul/Minneapolis

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Jack Stuart, Administrator,
612-825-1660
admin@pflagtc.org

PFLAG Membership Form —St. Paul/Minneapolis Chapter
(Includes membership in National PFLAG)

**Please Make Checks Payable and Mail to:
PFLAG ST. PAUL/MINNEAPOLIS
P.O. Box 19290, Minneapolis, MN 55419**

- Household Membership \$35.00
- Newsletter Only \$15.00
- Additional Contribution _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ (H)

City: _____

_____ (W)

Preferred e-mail: _____

Would you like occasional notices from PFLAG? _____

PFLAG BOARD MEETING

The next PFLAG Board Meeting will be held Tuesday, **October 22, 2002** at 7:00 p.m.

We meet at Mayflower Church, where our regular PFLAG meetings are held. Please feel welcome to attend.

JUST A REMINDER!

The newsletter deadline is ALWAYS the SECOND WEDNESDAY of the month.

All articles, as well as corrections, should be sent to:

Jack Stuart
PFLAG
P.O. Box 19290
Minneapolis, MN 55419-

PFLAG AROUND THE STATE & CLOSE AT HAND

Alexandria: 218-943-1431
Duluth: 218-728-4405
Fargo/Moorhead: 701-232-8361
Grand Forks: 701-775-4447
Granite Falls: 320-564-4991
Mankato Area: 507-526-3173
Marshall: 507-532-0231
Northfield: 507-663-0510
Red Wing: 651-388-9610
Redwood Falls: 507-644-6855
Rochester: 507-282-8874
St. Cloud: 320-252-5189
St. Paul/Minneapolis: 612-825-1660
SW Minnesota: 507-644-6855
Winona: 507-454-1507

In the Twin Cities, support is available at monthly meetings for spouses, former spouses, and significant others of gay men and lesbians. Contact Deb at 507-263-3644.

If you have a group in your area and would like to have it listed, please call Jack at 612-825-1660, so that it can be added to the newsletter and our brochure.

Want a meeting reminder?

To receive an e-mail reminder about our monthly meetings, send a blank message to: pflag-subscribe@topica.com

Your e-mail address will be kept confidential and you will receive a notice from this list just once a month.

Email List

Would you like to receive occasional e-mail notices about GLBT events and news (other than our regular meetings)?

If so, send an email to admin@pflagtc.org

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- BECAUSE, Bisexual Organizing Project, (612) 822-0127 ext. 503
- Chrysalis, A Center for Women, offering many support groups and individual therapy, (612) 871-2603
- City of Lakes Crossgender Community, active social support group for all transgendered folk, (651) 229-3613
- COLAGE, Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere, Twin Cities Chapter, (612) 822-0127 ext. 513
- District 202, center for GLBT youth and their friends, (612) 871-5559
- Family and Children's Service, (612) 339-9101; GLBT-KIDS: Abuse Intervention Network (1-877-452-8543)
- Gender Education Center, transgender information and assistance, (612) 424-5445
- Generations, working to provide services and facilities for GLBT elders in the Twin Cities (612) 724-2313 (uses Spirit of the Lakes church telephone line - leave a message)
- GLSEN, Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network, (612) 729-5850
- GLEAM, Gay & Lesbian Elders Active in Minnesota, (612) 822-4395
- Minnesota AIDSLine, information and counseling, (MN AIDS Project - MAP) (612) 373-2437, (800) 248-2437
- Minnesota Men of Color, (612) 871-1788
- OutFront Minnesota, statewide GLBT public advocacy and community services organization (612) 822-0127, 800-800-0350, ext. 500
- Out for Equity, GLBT programs in Saint Paul Public Schools, (651) 603-4946
- Out4Good, GLBT programs in Minneapolis Public Schools, (612) 588-4447
- Out in the Valley, GLBT group in Saint Croix Valley, (612) 822-0127, ext. 502