

PFLAG Palm Springs / Desert Communities

THE BANNER OF THE DESERT

The Newsletter of PFLAG Palm Springs/Desert Communities Chapter
Our twenty-second year. November 2017, Volume 22, No. 11

PFLAG Meeting
Sunday, November 19th, 2:30 pm
Cathedral City Library, Community Room
Info: 760-202-4430 – info@PSpflag.org

Dan Smith will facilitate the meeting and the discussion topic is:
How will I take care of myself at the holidays, when untoward
comments about the LGBTQI community are made
by family members or friends, that are not kind or are hurtful?

Light refreshments provided by: Ron and Linda Lang
(Volunteer to provide refreshments for future meetings: email info@PSpflag.org)

A Message From The Editor - Mike Balasa

At a news conference, Trump, made a reference to Pence suggesting that Pence would be willing to “hang all gays”. The VP has a long record of actively supporting anti-LGBTQI legislation. As governor of Indiana, he wanted to pass a “religious freedom” bill that would have allowed businesses to discriminate against any person who they perceived to be gay, lesbian or transgender. Only impassioned pleas from major corporations doing business in Indiana and civil rights groups stopped this bill from passing. There is no doubt that, for Pence, persecuting the LGBTQI community is a top priority and he would push vigorously to reverse the Supreme Court ruling on same-sex marriage. Pence would defend this behavior by citing his devotion to his fundamentalist religion.

Over the years, we have seen many influential preachers and politicians who obsessed about the “sin” of homosexuality. Many of them were ultimately found to be closeted gays when their male lovers told their stories to the press or they were caught having illegal sex in public places. Psychologists have a term for this behavior: it is called “reaction formation”. When a person is repressing strong urges, they form a strong reaction against the very thing that attracts them. If you ever quit smoking, you would know the feeling. To get past the smoking urge, it was best to become strongly anti-smoking and want it banned everywhere and feel antipathy towards people who smoke.

There is a classic study of college students who were shown gay pornographic images. Researchers found that the subjects demonstrating the most arousal, were the ones who expressed the most antagonism towards gays.

VP Pence seems to fit the stereotype of the repressed gay man. There really is no rational reason to feel strongly about the LGBTQI community and ignore other behaviors more frequently condemned in the Bible. The problem is that Pence might end up as President. This worries me, and we might have a serious problem in the next few years.

*Please visit our website. Thanks to a matching grant from two PFLAG members, your donation received by November 30, 2017 will double in value! Please click donate now. Help us achieve our mission knowing that every dollar you give will work twice as hard. Phone: (760) 202-4430

A DRAMATIC EXAMPLE OF "REACTION FORMATION"

Kevin Wilshaw wanted to be like his father who was a rabid "right wing" supporter. Even at age 11, he was advocating tenets of white supremacy, a movement that would consume his life. At 18 years of age, he applied for membership in the racist National Front. He wrote in his application that war against Jews, who were "enemies of my race" needed to be waged on a global scale to be effective. He was accepted into the National Front and during the 1980's he became a prominent organizer and rose to a leadership position. Later he joined the far-right British National Party where he used his organizing talents to hold speaking events and demonstrations. Earlier this year he was arrested for on-line hate messages against racial minorities.

Kevin explained, "I didn't have many friends at school, I wanted to be a member of a group of people that had an aim, and I thought getting involved in that kind of thing would be comradeship. Even though you end up being a group of people that through their own extreme views are cut off from society, you do have a sense of comradeship in that you're a member of a group that's being attacked by other people."

Kevin has a long police record of crimes against racial minorities in Britain. He was arrested in the 1990's for vandalizing a mosque. He was known to associate with members of the violent Racial Volunteer Force, a group involved in bombings and other crimes. The notorious David Copeland, who used nail bombs to kill people in Brixton and Soho was associated with Kevin.

Now after nearly 40 years of membership in far-right hate groups, Kevin has decided to confess not only who he is but also a truth about his heritage. Kevin told an interviewer on Channel 4, the British Public Service Station, that not only was he gay, but also, his mother was Jewish.

He told the interviewer, "On one or two occasions in the recent past I've actually been the recipient of the very hatred of the people I want to belong to . . . if you are gay it is acceptable in society but with these groups of people it's not acceptable, and I found on one or two occasions when I was suspected of being gay, I was subjected to abuse." He readily admits that his whole life was a contradiction, and he should have been so aware of the harm his actions caused. "It's a terribly selfish thing to say but it's true, I saw people being abused, shouted at, spat at in the street - it's not until it's directed at you that you suddenly realize that what you're doing is wrong."

A former National Front Activist, Matthew Collins, who knew Kevin said he was keeping watch on him. Collins is now working with an anti-racist group, Hope Not Hate. Collins said, "One of the things we noticed is there was someone who was struggling, he was becoming more and more extreme. We almost expected the phone call and a cry for help, and that's what he's done."

Kevin claims to feel guilty for his past. "I really do feel guilty. Not only that, this is also a barrier to me having a relationship with my own family, and I want to get rid of it, it's too much of a weight."

When asked about his future, Kevin indicated that he needed to atone for the damage he has done. “I want to do some damage as well, not to ordinary people but the people who are propagating this kind of rubbish - want to hurt them, show what it’s like for those who are living a lie and be on the receiving end of this type of propaganda. I want to hurt them.”

WEDDING CAKES FOR SAME-SEX MARRIAGES-SUPREME COURT TO HEAR CASE

The Supreme Court announced that the hearing on the case involving Colorado Baker, Jack Phillips, will be held on December 5th. Phillips refused to bake a wedding cake for two men, David Mullins and Charlie Craig, residents of Denver. The case went to the Colorado Supreme Court that eventually ruled that Phillips violated the couple’s civil rights. The court finding stated there was nothing about the creation of the cake that would indicate that the baker was for or against same-sex marriage. The court went on to say that Phillips could express his views against same-sex marriage in any other setting, but if he was willing to make wedding cakes for other marriages he could not discriminate against gays. Subsequent appeals upheld the decision that there was no excuse for discrimination.

A conservative Christian group, Alliance Defending Freedom, will represent Phillips and has made the case that Phillips was denied his right to freedom of speech. The Supreme Court has ruled in several cases during the past few years that free speech must not be denied religious groups.

The Trump administration’s Department of Justice has sided with the Alliance Defending Freedom. Acting Solicitor General, Jeffery Wall, submitted a brief to the Court stating: “Forcing Phillips to create expression for and participate in a ceremony that violates his sincerely held religious beliefs invades his First Amendment rights.”

PALM SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL

The first annual International Animation Festival is scheduled for November 9th through 11th. The best animated short films that won recognition in other festivals are selected for showing in Palm Springs. An emphasis of the Festival will be films that have LGBTQI themes.

The Festival Director, Brian Neil Hoff, wrote the following, “This inaugural season we have received over 2700 unique film entries from 103 countries. Each year our team of jurors work to select 250+ titles from shorts to features that showcase the breadth of the art form. We hold our judging to nine cinematic virtues: storytelling, humor, heart, ideas, originality, visual interest, craftsmanship, diversity, and gut level viewing pleasure. Animation is a powerful form of art with the ability to educate, inform and inspire a new world of storytelling. Our goal and passion is to celebrate amazing animated films, the talented artists and their teams from around the world.”

Brian Neil Hoff, the Festival Director, is a well-known producer and writer. His children’s book, “Secret Agent 00K9” has received critical acclaim. Brian has also directed films and has acting credits. Brian is a long time LGBTQI civil rights activist and lives in Palm Springs.

TRUMP’S TRANSGENDER MILITARY BAN OVERTURNED BY FEDERAL COURT

A Federal judge ruled that the government’s arguments supporting the ban on transgender persons serving in the military “wither under scrutiny”. Any subsequent case filed by an aggrieved transgender person forced out of the military would without doubt be successful. The court made clear that there is no justification for the ban other than prejudice and faulty information.

Shannon Minter, Legal Director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, wrote: “This is a complete victory for our plaintiffs and all transgender service members, who are now once again able to serve on equal terms and without the threat of being discharged. We are grateful to the court for recognizing the gravity of these issues and putting a stop to this dangerous policy, which has wreaked havoc in the lives of transgender service members and their families.” The law suit was filed by NCLR and the GLBTQ Legal Advocates and Defenders.

PFLAG MEMBERS HONORED FOR VOLUNTEER WORK

Congratulations to PFLAG members Peter East, Doug Oostdyk and Bob Warburton. They were honored for their many hours of volunteer work with the local Democratic Party. The awards were given October 29th at the annual Riverside County Democratic Party Gary Bosworth Awards Luncheon held at the Morongo Hotel and Casino in Cabazon.

Bob Warburton is a contributing editor for this newsletter. Peter East has assisted PFLAG in creating several of the banners and posters we have used at events.

WHAT WILL WE DO WITHOUT BASEBALL?

By Bob Warburton

I guess it starts with the womb. I believe that is the first time as human beings we individuals are struck with a bad situation after things are going pretty good. I am talking about birth after nine months of relative security of being with your mother, and then all of a sudden, things change. And no matter how good things become in the future, one never has it as good or as secure.

Hopefully life brings good times after that initial shock, and I believe most of us are happy to leave childhood behind even though we are again thrust into a world with more responsibility and less protection. I bet most of you have wished at some time you could return to the good old days of childhood when you had “no worries.” All I remember is worrying about everything and not being able to control anything in childhood. But I digress.

For most of one’s life there are periods of good things happening at the same time bad things exist. Maybe the job is going well, but the love life is not so good. Or family life is wonderful, but wouldn’t it be nice if the career would take off. For the last 10 years or so I have been living on the Obama rule. From mid-2008 on, no matter how terrible things were in my life, at least the country was getting better under Obama. There was hope.

Recently, I have not had the Obama rule to help me. In fact, the President has been the cause of much of my exasperation. I wake up wondering what has Trump ruined for the world today. I had to find a new at least one thing is going right scenario, and I found baseball. In 2017 the Los Angeles Dodgers had a fantastic year winning the most games of any major league team. There was that new guy Cody Bellinger who at 22 hit 39 home runs and had not even been in the opening line up. The season just ended last night with Manager Dave Robert’s Dodgers losing the 7th game of the World Series in LA to the Houston Astros.

Now here is my LGBTQIA tie in. In the 2003 Tony Award winning play by Richard Greenberg titled “Take Me Out,” a secondary character playing an accountant who has just become a fan says at the end of the season, “What will we do without baseball?” Now that may not be the main theme of the play which is a fictional account of racism and homophobia surrounding the coming out of

the first major league baseball player, but it is essential in my life now. What the heck am I going to do in the era of Trump without my daily baseball game?

Going back to the other ideas in the play “Take Me Out,” we were supposed to have some active player in Major League Baseball come out by now, which has not happened. There have been Out players in all other sports, but except for a minor leaguer, not in baseball. And as for racism, it showed up in the 2017 World Series. But I will leave the discussion of racism and homophobia to others. I have to find a new hobby.

SAVE THE DATE: PFLAG HOLIDAY PARTY

The annual Holiday Potluck will be on Sunday December 10th, beginning at 1:00 p.m. at the home of Board Members Sly Zelnys and Christine Hammond in Palm Springs. Bring a favorite share dish; PFLAG will provide a variety of beverages and all eating utensils. This is always a fun event! Feel free to bring guests—this event is not limited to PFLAG members—everyone is welcome. There is plenty of street parking available. If you would like suggestions for what dish you can bring, or need Sly and Christine’s address, call the PFLAG information line at 760-202-4430 or email to info@PSpflag.org.

TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

The TDoR is scheduled for Monday, November 20th from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM at the Palm Springs City Hall, 3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way. The vigil will begin at 5:00. Transgender Community Coalition is organizing the event and issued the following announcement: You are invited to join us as we dedicate the first Transgender Day of Remembrance Memorial Cenotaph Statue to our community. This sculpture was inspired by the death of Yazman Sanchez who was burned to death in a Florida alleyway. The scorched burned marks from her remains inspired a breathtaking life-size sculpture of a person lying in a somber sleeping position covered in butterflies. Butterflies are the spiritual symbol of transgender people. PFLAG will host an information table at the event.

Time To Join PFLAG? Time To Renew?

PFLAG Membership

If you would like to join PFLAG Palm Springs/Desert Communities, print and mail the form below or join [online](#)

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.

PFLAG PALM SPRINGS/DESERT COMMUNITIES MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____

Additional Names: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Suggested Membership Donation:

Family \$50: _____ Individual \$30: _____ Other Amount: _____

We appreciate any dollar amount.

Budgetary restraints will not keep anyone from being part of our PFLAG family.

Make check payable to PFLAG and mail to:
PFLAG 611 S. Palm Canyon Drive / 7-262
Palm Springs, CA 92264

Info: 760-202-4430 – info@pspflag.org

Chapter Officers: President: Mike Balasa, Vice-president: Carol Balasa
Secretary: Christine Hammond, Treasurer: Ron Wallen
Directors: Gina Orban, Dan Smith, Sly Zelnys

