



Montana Newsletter

April 2012

Pete Shea, editor

Please share this freely with chapter members. If you have anything to share, please submit information to me.

I. Chapter Information and News for March/April

Please share the activities and plans of your chapter. Send news of what you did last month and what you plan for the future.

Please send updates or corrections for contact and monthly meeting information. If you would like to list a phone number, please send that also.

1. PFLAG Billings

info@pflagbillings.org

billingspflag@gmail.com

Meets second Wednesday of every month

PFLAG Billings serves to offer support to parents, families and friends of lesbians and gays as well as all members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities. We welcome all who wish to participate in dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity. The organization has been active in the Billings community for many years and is now working to raise awareness of its vision to offer support and work toward a community that embraces all.

Check out "Pflag Billings" on Facebook and like them!

2. PFLAG Butte

cummingsl@bresnan.net

Meets last Wednesday of every month

Fifty or more people carried signs and a new PFLAG Butte banner and walked with PFLAG Butte in the St. Patrick's Day parade. Chicks with Sticks were right with the group and provided great marching spirit. ACLU joined PFLAG with their "Fair Is Fair" campaign. Crowd reaction seemed overwhelmingly positive. A great demonstration of advocacy and education!

Check out the Butte chapter's website at: <http://buttepflag.com/index.html>

Members of the Butte chapter are planning a bowling party on Sunday, April 15, along with members of the high school GSA and BASS (Butte Aids Support Services).

3. PFLAG Great Falls/Golden Triangle
pbueling@bresnan.net
Meets third Tuesday of every month

The March chapter meeting was a presentation provided by the local College of Nursing on "Healthy Relationships, A Seminar on LGBT Relationships"--an open forum to discuss and learn the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships, an opportunity to learn about the wellness resources that are available in the Great Falls area for the LGBT community.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LGBTWellnessSeminarGF>

Email: LGBTWellness@yahoo.com Phone: 406-771-4443

The April meeting will be a discussion of gay marriage.

4. PFLAG Hamilton-Bitterroot
hamiltonbitterrootpflag@yahoo.com or www.pflaghamiltonbitterroot.org
Meets third Thursday of every month

Chapter leaders are busy planning and preparing for the regional PFLAG conference "Big Sky / Big Dreams" next September 21-23. Hamilton members are also meeting with their local school board, seeking to revise policies to protect LGBT persons by enumerating "sexual orientation" and "gender identity and expression" in pertinent policies. Check out www.pflaghamiltonbitterroot.org.

5. PFLAG Kalispell/Flathead Valley
fvpflag@gmail.com 406-219-7180
Meets fourth Tuesday of every month

Another alternative prom, the second in as many years, is planned for April 14, 2012, in conjunction with the GSA at nearby Whitefish High School and possibly a new GSA at Flathead High School in Kalispell.

6. PFLAG Missoula
pflagmissoula@gmail.com
Meets ?

7. PFLAG Bozeman/Gallatin Valley
pflagbozeman@hotmail.com or mgrabbe1008@msn.com 406-579-9102
Meets third Wednesday of every month

PFLAG Bozeman/Gallatin Valley is dedicating a series of meetings to explanations of what all the letters in the "gay alphabet" represent--the L G B T Q I A. Approximately a dozen people shared an informative presentation by Kendra, followed by a support discussion that makes one feel privileged to be a part of PFLAG.

8. PFLAG Polson
406-890-6289
Meets last Wednesday of every month

**II. Contacts up the "PFLAG-pole" (not to be confused with the publication by the same name):
Feel free to contact these individuals with questions or for assistance:**

State: Pete Shea, State Coordinator. sheapete@yahoo.com 406-450-6727

Region: Kathy Reim, Regional Director and a chapter leader in WA State. She is available to brainstorm specific strategies for building a chapter. kreim@earthlink.net 360 856 4676

National: Cesar Hernandez, National Field and Policy Manager for the western U. S.
chernandez@pflag.org

Another good resource is the Pacific Northwest Website where you will find program ideas and information to build a stronger board of directors. <http://www.pnwflag.org/>

III. Montana Pride Celebration, Bozeman, June 15-17.

PFLAG Montana has been invited to have a greater part in this summer's Pride celebration. I am inviting all PFLAG members in Montana to be part of this event. Some ways for PFLAG to be involved:

1. Volunteer to supervise the PFLAG booth or table, which will have longer hours this year, from Friday at 1:00 p.m. until Saturday night. The booth provides information about PFLAG to anyone interested.

2. Chaperone Friday night and Saturday night activities for youth from 7 - 12 each evening. In response to numerous requests from people younger than 21, Pride plans to provide entertainment opportunities for young people. Chaperones are needed, a minimum of three at all times. Please consider volunteering for an hour or more. **This event will be billed as "hosted by PFLAG."** It seems appropriate that PFLAG parents and friends would want to assist with the activities of their youth.

3. March in the Saturday parade. Two years ago in Kalispell only 5 represented PFLAG in the parade. Last year, thanks to an enthusiastic showing by the new PFLAG Bozeman/Gallatin Valley chapter, the group was much bigger. Hopefully this year will show representatives from every chapter in the state. **Wouldn't it be great if every chapter displayed a chapter banner in the parade? Or matching t-shirts? Some other great idea?**

4. Attend an interest session Saturday afternoon presented by Cesar Hernandez and Kathy Reim. Immediately after that session, a state-wide PFLAG meeting will be scheduled to discuss issues involving all Montana chapters.

5. Assist with personal contact with businesses in Bozeman to secure their support for Pride. We will sell sponsorship as well as rainbow or other gay-related materials that businesses can display to show that they are gay-friendly. ("Gay-friendly" means that they want you to patronize their business while in Bozeman.)

III. Chapter Banners. The Butte chapter has purchased a 3' x 10' banner which they will design to advertise their chapter. They plan to use it for the first time in the St. Patty's Day parade in Butte on March 17. They purchased it for \$100 from Adam Mari in Anaconda. His number is 406-490-4091. Although president John is pleased with the final product, next time he would get a pole sleeve on the top rather than grommets, but either way will work. It would be a great idea for every chapter to acquire a similar banner. It would be wonderful to see banners from every Montana chapter in the Pride parade in Bozeman in June.

IV. Events

1. New Hampshire legislature successfully voted down a bill that would have repealed same-sex marriage in that state.

2. Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles, at the request of a group of 20 legislators, revoked the specialty license plates offered by the Indiana Youth Group as a reward incentive to donors. IYG is a group that supports LGBT youth in Indiana. Citing violations of state law as the excuse, the BMV revoked IYG's privileges but not those of other groups engaging in the same practice. IYG appreciates letters of support and donations to compensate for the loss of their license plate privilege.

Check out: www.indianayouthgroup.org/iyg-license-plate

3. Starbucks has generated controversy in WA state by publicly supporting same-sex marriage in that state. Opponents of the recently enacted same-sex marriage law there are advocating a boycott of Starbucks. PFLAG members could visit your local Starbucks and support them with your \$\$, but also let them know verbally how you feel.

V. Monthly conference call. Just a reminder that the monthly Montana-Idaho PFLAG conference call takes place on the second Thursday of each month. All chapters are invited to have at least one member participate. The purpose of the calls is to improve communication among chapters, provide information, and encourage each other in our common cause.

The conference number to call is 888-645-9266, and the access code is 82723962(#). The April call will take place April 18, beginning at 7:30 MST.

VI. Reminder: be sure your chapter treasure files the appropriate reports with IRS.

VII. Montana State PFLAG Council

Our present state PFLAG organization consists of treasurer Kathy Sather, Havre; vice-president John Culliton, Great Falls; and Pete Shea, state coordinator. John has requested more than a year ago to be relieved on this responsibility. Kathy has served for about 7 years and would also like to pass her responsibility on. **If anyone is interested in serving in these offices, please let me know.** Duties are minimal, but we do need officers to continue to be a viable group.

We plan to meet next summer at the Pride celebration in Bozeman to discuss improvements to our state council. Ideally, we should have a representative from each chapter on the council. Please consider how you might contribute to the improvement of PFLAG in Montana.

IX. Other?

If you would like to contribute anything to this newsletter that could be of interest or benefit to members in other chapters, please feel free to share your wealth. Other comments or instructive criticism are welcome.

X. Pacific Northwest Regional PFLAG Conference, Hamilton

See the following pages for updated information.

BIG SKY/BIG DREAMS

PFLAG PACIFIC NORTHWEST 2012 Regional Conference



SEPTEMBER 21, 22, 23

**Bitterroot River Inn
Hamilton, Montana**

**HOSTED BY PFLAG HAMILTON-BITTERROOT, MONTANA
PFLAGHamiltonBitterroot.org**

Plans are now underway to bring chapter leaders, members and interested community people together for support, education, advocacy and...fun.

**Please encourage your chapters to help find resources to send people to this event.
Ask for sponsorships, combine air miles, have a fundraiser, ask for donations**

**Special Guests: Jean Hodges, Chair of Regional Directors, National PFLAG
"Faces and Facets of Transgender Experience"
Dr. Robert Minor, The Fairness Project**

Additional Activities:

- **Hikes led by local people in one of the most beautiful parts of the world in the largest wilderness area of the lower 48.**
- **Entertainment in a lovely conference center- to make you laugh and think... with people who share your dreams of equality for all.**

Tentative Conference Schedule:

Friday, September 21

5:30 PM Informal no-host social and dinner

7:00 – 8:30 PM Dr. Robert Minor: Dealing with Religion

When You've Tried Everything and Nothing Seems To Work

Religious arguments based on the Bible, tradition, religious authorities, or other icons often interfere with the liberation of transgender and bisexual people, and lesbians and gay men. They are cited to justify discrimination and abuse. Yet arguing about religion is often futile, producing more heat than light, more anger and frustration. Few walk away from such discussions feeling good about them. This workshop's goal is to put religious arguments into perspective, not to argue about "what the Bible says," but to explore strategies to defuse and redirect such arguments into the issues that lie beneath the religious arguments where the healing can begin.

Saturday, September 22

8:00 – 9:00 AM Breakfast and Socializing

9:00 -10:30 AM Opening Keynote by Dr. Robert Minor

**How to Be an Activist Without Being a Victim: Personal Strategies for
Activists Burnout, Blowout, and Balkanization: Why We End Up
Frustrated and Divided. What We Can Do About it?**

10:45 – 12:15 PM Concurrent Workshops: Session I

1A. Promoting Respect: Safe Schools for Everyone:

**Kathy Reim facilitating: presentation by Terry Rhines, Montana Safe Schools and
Mike Travis, GLSEN WA State**

What are the best strategies to use when engaging schools in welcoming, safe and inclusive practices for LGBT students? Students can't learn if they don't feel safe and school climate is essential to a school's ability to meet the needs of students. In this training, learn specific skills in intervention and strategies that work in the moment in a variety of settings. This is not a "why" workshop but a "how" one.

1B. Having Faith in Straight Allies: Using Straight for Equality in Faith Communities to Engage New Allies:

Jean-Marie Navetta: PFLAG National Director of Equality & Diversity Partnerships

Since 2007, PFLAGers have been using Straight for Equality as a way of inviting, educating, and engaging new straight allies in the fight for equality. Its unique approach of conversations over confrontations has been a powerful tool for change in many communities. And this year, with the newest Straight for Equality resource, PFLAG members in faith communities will have a new way to start conversations for equality. Learn about the keys to engaging straight allies, understand how this can be effective even in more conservative faith communities, and understand how this new guide can be a way to move equality forward with this very important audience.

12:15- 1:15 PM Conference Luncheon

1:15 – 2:45 PM Concurrent Workshops: Session II

2 A. Welcoming our Transgender Friends and Families:

Jean Hodges, Chair of Regional Directors, National PFLAG Boulder, Colorado
“Faces and Facets of Transgender Experience”

<http://pflagboulder.org/2011/05/17/3-minute-trailer-for-faces-facets/>

This workshop will include some parents and family members with transgender children and include a discussion on how to make them supported and welcome at PFLAG.

2 B. Putting Your Aces in their Places:

Pride Foundation’s Montana Regional Development Organizer, Caitlin Cople and Amy White, Pride Foundation, Director of Operations and Leadership

This session will provide participants with an understanding of why creating and sticking to a plan is essential for the success of a PFLAG chapter, Leadership Action Team or any volunteer group’s effort. The discussion will include how such a plan can increase community involvement, help you raise funds, and communicate your message through networking and events.

3:00 – 4:30 PM Concurrent Workshops: Session III

3 A. Sharing Effectively Your Personal Story to Create Change:

Jean-Marie Navetta, PFLAG National Director of Equality & Diversity Partnerships

Author Rudyard Kipling once said that, “If history were taught in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten.” PFLAGers know this better than anyone. Effectively

shared personal stories are memorable, powerful, and motivational tools for transforming hearts and minds. This highly interactive training leads participants through an examination of the power of the personal story in their own lives, translates this examination into the case for why telling personal stories about equality is critical, provides skill-building tools that help participants develop their own stories to inspire change, and offers a chance to share stories and receive important feedback to refine personal tales. It will conclude with framing our elevator messages to take home.

3 B. Making LGBT Relationships Better:

Dr. Robert Minor

The messages we receive from our culture about relationships profoundly affect LGBT people and how they relate in their most intimate relationships. These messages have nothing to do with sexual orientation, though the dominant culture teaches us that somehow they have to do with being non-heterosexual. We identify six sets of messages which hurt LGBT relationships in order to improve and affirm what it means to be a whole LGBT person who is prepared to enter into healthy committed relationships with another.

Saturday Evening: No-host Dinner and Entertainment

Sunday, September 23

9:00 – 10:00 AM Breakfast & Facilitated State meetings

10:15- 11:45 AM Concurrent Workshops: Session IV

4 A. Understanding Leadership Styles and Resolving Conflict:

Kathy Reim, Pacific Northwest Regional Director

Diversity includes differences in how we approach the world and conflict sometimes results when that diversity is misunderstood. Using some tools and activities participants will have a chance to reflect on their own leadership styles, consider how successful groups welcome differences and conclude with an activity that analyzes our conflict resolution approach. Handouts will include - one entitled, "When Tough Things Happen to Good Leaders."

4 B. Establishing Winning Board and Leadership Practices:

Cesar Hernandez, PFLAG Western Field and Policy Manager

Strong leadership is the foundation for a strong chapter. This workshop will help participants learn the proper function of chapter boards and the specific roles and responsibilities of the board members and leaders. Through discussion and brainstorming we will examine the

barriers that exist for people to get involved and how to overcome them. This workshop will also share tips on how to have a smooth, successful leadership transition.

12:00 -12:45 PM Closing: Celebration Heading Home with Hope

Jean Hodges, Chair of Regional Directors: National PFLAG

Jean is wonderful to hear as she shares the stories of the things she has done and seen done by others to transform families and communities. She will send us home with energy and love.

Other details:

1. There will be resource tables: Bring and share chapter materials, letters to the editor samples, program ideas, etc. Let us know what would be helpful or what you want to share.
2. Limited amounts of materials like books and films may be available for purchase.
3. Important information:
 - Hotel is pet friendly with a off lease pet park adjacent to conference center
 - Up to 5 people can stay per room
 - Up to 150 people can attend: hoping for 100 minimum
 - \$50.00 for registration
 - Rooms are about \$89.00 each. We have to fill a quota to be able to use the conference rooms and keep the cost of registration down.
 - We need to have people register by the required deadline. Some of you know how critical this is for our success. We will send out the registration information and deadlines as soon as the rest of the arrangements are made. The target is June 1, 2012.

Important information for helping us market this:

Very little of this conference is PFLAG specific but it will reflect the PFLAG values of inclusiveness, safety and respect and address our mission of support, education and advocacy. While the intended audience is PFLAG leaders, members and supporters, we welcome other supportive groups including the Leadership Action Teams from the Pride Foundation and LGBT or Pride groups and other nonprofits interested in the capacity building of their organization.

Guest Presenters :

Dr. Robert Minor: The Fairness Project <http://www.fairnessproject.org/aboutus.html>

Jean Marie Navetta: National PFLAG *Straight For Equality*

Cesar Hernandez: PFLAG Western Field and Policy Manager

Kathy Reim: Pacific Northwest Regional Director

**Special Guest: Jean Hodges: Chair of Regional Directors: National PFLAG Boulder, CO
"Faces and Facets of Transgender Experience"**

<http://pflagboulder.org/2011/05/17/3-minute-trailer-for-faces-facets/>

Special entertainment plans are being made and will be shared with you soon.



2012 PFLAG Pacific Northwest Regional Conference Sept. 21-23, 2012 Hamilton, Montana