

THE **NEWSLETTER**

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BEACON IN THE TRANS COMMUNITY



Please join us for our general meeting on **Monday**, **June 27** at 7:00 pm at Jewish Family Service (JFS), 8788 Balboa Avenue, San Diego.

Our guest speaker is one of our own, Courtney Ware. PFLAG was first introduced to Courtney when she was a volunteer for Stonewall Patrol. She became very interested in PFLAG and was on the board for many years before school beckoned her. She now has an M.A.

degree and is the Program Coordinator & Services Navigator – Youth for the Hillcrest Youth Center. Courtney's passion has been working with transgender youth. For the past four years, she has been a volunteer at Camp Aranu'tiq, a week long summer camp for trans and gender variant youth.

Please join us for support groups, then the cookie social, followed by Courtney's presentation.

THE NATION MOURNS



The article below was written by PFLAG National Executive Director, Jody Huckaby, on the day of the massacre at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando.

"As details continue to emerge from Orlando, our collective sadness, anger and grief is overwhelming. Our hearts are with those anxiously awaiting word of the safety of their loved ones, or who are already trying to cope with the unbearable loss of innocent lives. We thank the many first responders who saved, and continue to save lives.

PFLAG knows that the effects of this deliberate shooting spree that targeted an LGBTQ nightclub on Latin Night will ripple across the country, reviving anxiety and painful emotions for anyone who has experienced hateful actions themselves or against loved ones because of who they are. We concur with President Obama's message: This unprecedented massacre, this act of terror, this act of hate against people who are LGBTQ, was an attack on the fundamental belief in equality and dignity for all people.

At PFLAG, it tragically reminds us that our work is far from over. As ambassadors of love and hope, PFLAG members will continue to support our extended family of LGBTQ people, families, and allies through these dark, anxious moments and beyond. Let us join in unity to end violence and hatred."

NAMI CELEBRATES LGBTQ PRIDE MONTH

The National Alliance of Mental Health (NAMI) will present "Mental Health & Wellness in the LGBTQ Community" on **July 7** from 6:30-8:00 pm at the University Christian Church, 3900 Cleveland Avenue, San Diego. The guest speaker is Jan. E. Estrellado. She is currently a lecturer at SDSU and as a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Center for Stress and Anxiety Management. Previously, she was Assistant Director at the UCSD LGBT Resource Center. For more info or to RSVP, visit information@namisd.org or call 800-523-5933.

SPEAKING OF HILLCREST YOUTH CENTER



On Saturday, **July 23**, the Hillcrest Youth Center is sponsoring the Rainbow Prom for LGBTQ youth ages 14-18. The theme is Alice in Wonderland. They'll be a DJ, food, pho-

tos and fun. Special recognition will be given to the graduating class of 2016. The prom takes place from 6:00-9:00 pm at The LGBT Center. For more info, to help with the prom or donate finances, please contact Courtney Ware at hyc@ thecentersdorg or 619-497-2920.

SHE-FEST

Everyone is invited to the 2016 SHE-FEST on **Saturday**, **July 9** from 11:00 am-5:00 pm. The free event takes place at North Park Community Park, 4044 Idaho Street. They'll be workshops starting at 11:00, some of which are: health & wellness, self-defense, pet nutrition, and mental health. Live music starts at noon. Some of the other festivities include sports, dog fashion show, and photo booth. For more info: www.sdpride.org/shefest.

ALL'S WELL THAT DIDN'T START OUT WELL

Most of you are aware of the brouhaha at Petco Park on May 21 (OUT at the Park – Pride Night). The San Diego Gay Men's Chorus was to sing the National Anthem; however, there was a recording of a woman (apparently the performer from the night before) singing it. After the chorus stood on the field stunned, they were asked to leave the field. Heads rolled, but then calm prevailed. The situation was investigated and there was no malicious intent. Thanks to Bob Lehman, executive director of the Men's Chorus, for meeting with Padre President Mike Dee and getting everything squared away.

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Membership Application

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Confidentiality is respected. Your donation is tax deductible (Tax ID 33-0512868)
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or go online www.pflag.com (forms available)



Phone......Date

Current Events

June 27 | Monday

San Diego Metro General Meeting and Support Group

July 7 | Thursday

NAMI presentation (see article)

July 7-31

Making Porn/A Gay Marriage Diversionary Theatre

July 9 | Saturday

She-Fest (see article)

July 15-17

Friday-Sunday Pride Weekend (see article)

July 21 | Thursday

PFLAG Support Group North County Inland

July 23 | Saturday

Rainbow Prom (see article)

July 25

San Diego Metro General Meeting and Support Group



Equality is the soul of liberty, there is, in fact, no liberty without it.

Frances Wright

VISION STATEMENT

PFLAG envisions a world where diversity is celebrated and all people are respected, valued, and affirmed inclusive of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

MISSION STATEMENT

By meeting people where they are and collaborating with others, PFLAG realizes its vision through: Support for families, allies and people who are LGBTQ; Education for ourselves and others about the unique issues and challenges facing people who are LGBTQ; Advocacy in our communities to change attitudes and create policies and laws that achieve full equality for people who are LGBTQ.

Luan D. Andrews, M.A.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPIST MFC 19321

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SUPPORT GROUPS

North County Coastal will not be meeting in July. All members are encouraged to attend a San Diego County "picnic" on July 25. Details will be in the July newsletter.

SD METRO GENERAL MEETING & SUPPORT GROUP

Meets every 4th Monday at 7:00 pm, at Jewish Family Service, 8788 Balboa Ave, San Diego in Kearny Mesa.

For further information, contact the Info Line:

888-398-0006 or www.pflag.com

NORTH COUNTY COASTAL

Except for July and September (no meetings), meets the 1st Monday, at 7:00 pm, North County LGBTQ Resource Center, 510 North Coast Hwy, Ste C, Oceanside.

Contact northcountycoastal@pflag.com or Annette Ottone, 760-518-3345

NORTH COUNTY INLAND

Meets the 3rd Thursday at 7:00 pm, Windermere Homes & Estates, 16783 Bernardo Center Drive, Rancho Bernardo.

Contact Kathie Moehlig: 858-382-9156 or northcountyinland@pflag.com

EAST COUNTY

The Support Group is not presently meeting.

Contact Terrie Vorono: 619-997-6139

or tvorono@pflag.com

ASIAN-PACIFIC ISLANDER

The Support Group is not presently meeting.

Contact email: sandiegoapipflag@gmail.com

SOUTH BAY

The Support Group is not presently meeting. For a private meeting for support and concerns, call for an appointment.

Contact: Patti Boman, 619-227-6092

or pboman@pflag.com

MI FAMILIA (Spanish)

The Support Group is not presently meeting.

Contact Patti Boman, 619-227-6092

TRANSGENDER SUPPORT

For more information on the Transgender Support Group

Contact Kathe Dunn, ftm_mom@yahoo.com

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL LAUNCHING LEADERS AWARDS



Anyone who attended our second annual Launching Leaders Awards luncheon can attest to the rewarding event. We presented nine scholarships. Teaming up with San Diego Human Dignity

Foundation was a very wise move. They did a fabulous job of gathering sponsors, securing a venue, and advertising. They/we raised approximately \$9100 for PFLAG San Diego County to provide more scholarships in the future.

The keynote speaker was Fernando Lopez, Jr., Director of Operations for San Diego LGBT Pride. As always, he was entertaining and direct.

Presenting our 2016 recipients:

The Mary Wagner Memorial Scholarship: Brandon Ishikata; John Bessemer Memorial Scholarship: Jacob Garrett; Rob Benzon Memorial Scholarships: Antonio Mendivil and Riley Gibson; Stephen G. Bowersox Memorial Scholarship: Humberto Castorena; John McCusker Memorial Scholarship: Teddy Bruni; Richard Geyser Memorial Ethics Scholarship: Ash Matheson; PFLAG Merit Scholarships: Jairo Leon and McKenna Roudebush.

Thank you to emcee **lan Morton** for running the show and keeping it moving with his good sense of humor and to scholarship chair, **Hillary Flocke**. A special, special thank you to San Diego Human Dignity Foundation Executive Director **John L. Brown**, who set us on the path to success with his leadership vision. All acknowledgements are listed on page eight.

The Mary Wagner Memorial Scholarship is our longest running scholarship – 17 years! Friends of Mary Wagner, Art and Marilyn Carpenter and Sharon Murphy, have made this annual scholarship possible. The recipient is **Brandon Ishikata**, who obtained his California Multiple Subjects Teaching Credential from San Diego



State University in the spring. He will continue at Loyola University in July to pursue his Master of Education in Higher Education. While at SDSU, a partial list of his accomplishments include: a leader in the SafeZones Ally Program, Residential Advisor, an SDSU Ambassador, served on Aztec P.R.I.D.E. (Philanthropic Role in Development and Education), and was selected for the N.A.S.P.A. program (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators). There wouldn't be enough room to list all that Brandon has accomplished as an undergraduate and graduate student.



Brandon's essay:

"When one thinks of a homecoming king, many people automatically associate it with a silly high school popularity contest. People

assume that the title is only given to someone based off looks and their large social network. However, in 2015 at San Diego State University (SDSU), as an openly gay student, I defied the odds and was crowned the university homecoming king. At SDSU, it is a prestigious service position. In my one-year term, I developed, conceived, and executed a campus wide project called, 'A Kaleidoscope of Abilities.' My service project focused on disability awareness and arts appreciation.

Throughout the project, the students, faculty and staff participated in a morning experimental piece where they had a chance to 'walk' in the shoes of someone with a disability. At night, our program concluded with a talent showcase, which included a deaf alumnus dancing Bachata [a Latin dance], a professor performing an original spoken word piece, and an all-female a capella group & the American Sign Language Club signing and singing to 'Demons' by Imagine Dragons. The 'Kaleidoscope of Abilities' has truly made a positive difference by providing the disability community a voice for their rights, unifying the campus and opening a new perspective about diversity. The project was a major success that over 300 participants attended. In fact, the project was so successful that the SDSU Disability Services department now sponsors it as an annual campus event.

To continue my vision of making an inclusive world, I aspire to fulfill my childhood dream of being an elementary school teacher. In elementary school, I was a previous victim of bullying and understand the agony many LGBT youth face. As a future teacher, I hope to educate school professionals through LGBT ally training. I want to teach my colleagues how to best support their students and how they can create a safe learning environment. With raising drop-out rates, it is vital that we educate our professionals on supporting our youth's emotional needs. On a school wide level, I want to develop inclusivity initiatives such as a peer counselor program. In my personal teaching philosophy, I feel that students should leave my classroom learning not only the curriculum, but also strong character and citizenship skills. As a teacher, I want students to know that my classroom is a 'safe zone' and I aim to be a role model for LGBT youth. I want them to know that Mr. Ishikata loves his students and wants to them to be the best version of themselves.

When I was coming out of the closet, I remember my heart racing before I announced to my parents that I was gay. I feared their rejection. I expected a horrific blowout, but was instead given love and support. During this emotional

PRIDE UNITES THE WORLD

This year's Pride Weekend is the 42nd. Pretty impressive. The events in order of appearance:

July 15 (Friday): "Common Ground" is the theme of this year's Trans Pride which takes place at 6th and Quince in Balboa Park. The event starts at 1:30 with a BBQ. Bring food, art, music, and games to share, along with family and friends. Free event. Trans Pride invites you to join their Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/SDTransPride/?fref=ts) to sign up for the potluck and volunteer.

July 15 (Friday): Spirit of Stonewall Awards will be presented to individuals or groups who contribute significantly to the LGBT community through their leadership, activism, and fundraising efforts. The festivities take place at Marston Point (6th and Laurel) at 6:00 pm. Free event.

July 15 (Friday): Congregation Dor Hadash invites you to attend PRIDE Shabbat at a BYO picnic, which starts at 6:00 pm. The picnic is followed by a pride-filled Shabbat service. The event is at Playa Pacifica in Mission Bay. For more info: administrator1@dorhadash.org.

July 16 (Saturday): At 9:30 am, Front Runners and Walkers will have their Pride 5K Run/Walk beginning at University Avenue at Centre Street. To register, go to: www.frwsd.org.

July 16 (Saturday): The Pride Parade begins at 11:00 am. It starts at University Avenue and Normal Street in Hillcrest. The route is 1.1 miles. If you have never marched in San Diego's parade, you are in for a real treat. Besides all the excitement of the event, the crowd goes crazy when PFLAG passes by. There are upwards of 100,000 spectators. And speaking of walking 1.1 miles, if you cannot walk that distance and want to ride in the parade, please contact Mike Minnick immediately. There are a limited number of cars/spots. Mike can be reached at 619-804-5512 or Minnick@san.rr.com. Free event.

After the parade (until 11:00 pm) is the Pride Festival (also **Sunday, July 17** from 11:00 am-8:00 pm), which includes multiple stages of entertainment, more than 80 musicians, bands, comedy and dance performers, 300 participating vendor booths, an art exhibit, cultural presentations, and

great food! There is also a Farmers Market, Beer Garden, and Youth Zone. Most important is our PFLAG booth, located on the main drag. The festival is located at Marston Point at 6th and Laurel in Balboa Park. All tickets are \$20 (+\$1.75 service charge if purchased online) and are good for both days of the Pride Festival. To purchase tickets: www.sdpride.org. Please note, there are no discounts for seniors or military. At the Festival, tickets are \$25.00.

Here comes the lecture part. For the Pride Parade on Saturday, read this BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME! These are suggestions that have stood the test of time: 1) get to the shuttle buses early; there are free shuttle buses from the old Balboa Naval Hospital located on Park Blvd. across from President's Way. If you are a procrastinator, now isn't the time as the buses back up and you'll be waiting in line so long that you'll miss part of the parade, 2) wear comfortable shoes, 3) put on lots of sun block, 4) wear a hat, 5) bring a camera/cell phone, 6) make PFLAG signs and bring them, 7) wear as much PFLAG/rainbow clothing and paraphernalia as you own.

RAIN IS NOT IN THE FORECAST!

Most likely we will not know the location of our contingent until a week before the parade. Ditto for knowing what number we are in the parade. We will be sending out an email as soon as we know and also posting the location on our website. If you do not have email, when you get off the bus, you can ask at the information booth located at University Avenue and Normal Street.

Here are a few suggestions for signs:

Closets are for Clothes, Focus on Your Own Family, Gay Rights ARE Civil Rights, Homophobia - Now That's a Choice, I'm for the Separation of Church and Hate, Homophobia - That's SO last millennium, I'm the Pink Sheep of the Family, Love Knows No Gender, Protect Marriage. Let's Expand It, What Part of Love Don't You Understand?, We the People - that means all of us.

Hope to see your decorated selves and signs at the Parade.

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL... (continued)

moment, my mom played the Jackson 5's 'I'll Be There.' As she and my family embraced me with their love, I distinctly remember the lyrics, 'I'll be there to protect you. With an unselfish love that respects you. Just call my name and I'll be there.' This song not only holds personal meaning, but it is my theme song of creating positive and lasting change. I aspire to be a change agent in the LGBT community who upholds the PFLAG vision of 'creating a world where diver-

sity is celebrated and all people are respected, valued, and affirmed inclusive of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.' I am ready to share my heart and create a harmonious rainbow of kindness. If anyone of the LGBT community needs me, just call my name because 'I'll be there.'

WAY TO GO! Written by Lorraine Wilson

In December of 2015, my then 12 year old daughter, Rylee, told me in strict confidence that she is gay. She did not want me to tell my husband (her father), or my sisters, or anyone else for that matter. So I got busy looking for resources... support groups, therapy, and anything else I could find. This led me to the LGBTQ center in Oceanside. I called and then stopped in one afternoon in January. I talked to the wonderful Linda and she was a full of information and so supportive. She suggested I go to a PFLAG meeting and said that she would also recommend some therapist for me. Around the same time my daughter's close friend told his mom that he is gay. I connected with his mother and we attended our first PFLAG meeting together in early February 0f 2016.

My first PFLAG meeting was a life changing experience for me. It was there that I met Annette Ottone (Regional Director of PFLAG North County). Annette knew exactly how I was feeling and was so helpful. My biggest problem that night was that I had known for almost 2 months that my daughter is gay and she still didn't want her father to know. This is not a secret that I felt comfortable keeping from my husband, yet I also wanted to respect my daughter's wishes and not "out" her to anyone, including her father. So I was stuck! And this was hurting me. I even lied to my husband about where I was that evening. Annette in all her wisdom talked to me about her own experience and about ways to tell my husband.

I went home and asked my daughter that same evening to please tell her father. She was afraid of his reaction and refused to tell. I explained that the secret was not good for our family nor my marriage, but that didn't help to convince her. I finally suggested that I be the one to tell him and she agreed! The very same night as my first PFLAG meeting I told my husband that our daughter is gay. He was hurt that I hadn't told him sooner. Both my husband and Rylee are quiet people that don't talk much about feelings. It took them a while to talk and reconnect, but it happened in time, and now their relationship is good again.

A few days later Annette emailed me and said that she wished my daughter's middle school had a GSA (Gay Straight Alliance) club and that we should think about starting one. I wasn't able to attend the March PFLAG meeting. Annette told me to bring Rylee to the April meeting as there would be college aged speakers that Rylee would enjoy. At this meeting we talked to Molly, a middle school counselor and GSA advisor in Escondido. She also suggested starting our own GSA at Valley Middle School. Rylee was interested, but I had no idea where to start! I planned on emailing our principal and counselor, but I was dragging my feet. In late April Annette emailed me and said she knew of a teacher at Valley that might be interested in being an advisor for the GSA club. So I emailed Beth Thomason at Valley. I told

Beth a little about my situation and asked if she'd be willing to help us start a GSA and be the advisor. This email was sent around 7:30am, and at 9:00am during Valley's morning break I got a call from Beth. We both talked about our daughters being gay and the need for a GSA at Valley. We cried happy tears and then set up a meeting to get started.

In early May I met with Beth, Kurt Dearie (GSA advisor for Carlsbad High), Annette, and my daughter Rylee. Kurt has been advising GSA at the high school since it started 13 years ago so this was our chance to learn from him. He helped us to set goals and get the logistics going. Rylee and I went home to write a constitution and fill out club paperwork as quickly as possible. We wanted to turn everything in ASAP so that it would get to the Board of Education and be approved before school was out. I met with the ASB advisor to make sure all the paperwork was correct. Rylee had to find four friends to be founding members of the club with her. She had a mental list of who she would ask, friends that knew she is gay, but aren't gay themselves. One by one her friends said no. This was her first heartbreak in this process, but not the last. We regrouped and called her friend whom is gay for advice. He is at a different middle school and will return to Valley next year to help found the GSA. He's been involved in this process and suggested a few kids that Rylee didn't think of. When she asked they said yes! Meanwhile Beth and Rylee decided to have an informational meeting for the GSA Club. Rylee and I got up early and got a box of donuts. Our plan was to send Rylee to school with the donuts and when kids asked to have one she'd say come find out about the GSA club and have a donut there. Thirteen kids showed up the first day. We were surprised and elated. The following week we did the same thing, but this time fifty kids showed up! I cried happy tears when I heard this news. Then Rylee came home from school and I cried angry tears. She told me that a boy called her a dike, also it was rumored that kids went to the meeting just to find out who is gay in order to pray for their sickness, and that another group was waiting outside the meeting saying hateful things while waiting to find out who is gay. This was a big setback. Again the adults got together with the kids and talked. Rylee was encouraged and praised for being brave and that was enough for her to want to move forward.

At the same time I found out that the club's approval process was stalling. There was a thought that maybe a letter should be sent to parents of the students in ASB that would vote to approve the club. I called the principal to discuss Rylee being bullied as well as the stall for club approval. The principal was very receptive and helpful in both areas. He has been cautious yet fair when dealing with the club. What is important to know here is that if a school has clubs, which Valley does, then by California law the GSA club has

WAY TO GO! Continued from page 6

to be approved. The only alternative is to remove all clubs from campus. So the ASB, principal, and School Board's approval is to follow protocol. I asked him to make sure the club was approved and the paperwork passed on to the Board in time to make it on the next agenda. He did just that!

In late May we took Rylee and two friends to visit the GSA at Carlsbad High School This was an inspirational meeting where kids talked about the importance of support and understanding. Many students mentioned how much it would have helped them to have had a GSA in middle school. We are looking forward to getting the School Board's approval and officially starting our club.

All of this happened so quickly and has been so positive for Rylee and our family. We've had so much help and support from friends, from Annette at PFLAG, Kurt from CHS, and Beth our fearless advisor. Just two months ago I wouldn't have dreamed that all of this could happen. Today they had their third informational meeting for the GSA and they were afraid that the negative things surrounding last week's meeting might scare some kids away, but 44 kids showed up. Forty freakin' four! Makes me cry happy tears. LGBTQ kids are here in middle school and they are ready to have a safe place to meet and a safe school to be part of.

A MOTHER SHARES HER STORY

by Bishop Peter Elder Hickman

Annette Ottone came to Saint Matthew Church this past May for Mother's Day (2016) at my invitation to speak to our parish community during our Sunday masses about what it means to be a mother of a LGBT child. I had originally met Annette nearly thirty years ago when she and her fiancée, Remo Ottone, came to Saint Matthew Church for the first time to ask if I would officiate at their wedding ceremony. Not only did I officiate at their wedding but I also became their pastor for nearly twenty years as they became members of my parish. They had three children, two daughters and a son, whom I baptized when they were born, and confirmed when they were teenagers. Not only were Annette and her family active members in the parish of Saint Matthew of Orange, California but they had also become close friends of my own family.

Several years ago, the Ottone's relocated to Carlsbad and were no longer able to participate in the life of a parish so far away. Nonetheless, our friendship continued and they never cut ties with Saint Matthew Church. So I was able to keep up with the growth and development of their three children. When I became aware that one of her daughters came out as being gay I was happy to know that Annette and Remo were able to embrace their daughter and continue to support her as she grew from adolescence into early adulthood. Like so many other parents this is something you do not expect when you are raising your children. Needless to say, Annette and Remo were the kind of loving parents who were able to respond in the most loving and supportive way to their daughter's sexuality. They had joined Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) in order to become more effective parents of a gay child as well as to help other parents who were also blessed with such special children.

I have become so inspired by Annette's work as a mother of an LGBT child, as well as her involvement in the greater community through PFLAG, that I very much wanted her to

share her experience with the members of our parish community. It has been a custom at Saint Matthew Church for the past several years for me to invite a mother to speak about the meaning of motherhood on Mother's Day. This year I had invited my friend, Annette, who readily accepted my invitation to be our featured Mother's Day guest "homilist" (speaker).

I was quite happy that she agreed to come to share her experience with the families of our faith community. This was the first time that I had a parent of an LGBT child come and publicly share about the meaning of the experience of the "coming out" of their child. I, myself, am a father of an LGBT child, but I had never mentioned that in any of my Sunday homilies, although many in the parish know of my son's sexual orientation. So having Annette Ottone come and speak about this topic was a first for our parish community.

Annette did not let us down. She was terrific! As I looked out across the faces of our congregation while she was speaking I could see many tears among those who were listening. There is nothing like the power of story and narrative to touch the depths of people's hearts. Annette's story did just that. She touched our hearts and she inspired an entire church congregation at a Sunday morning mass. Her faith in her God and in her daughter was evident; her hope for a more inclusive and kinder society was further realized; and her unconditional love was not only an inspiration but it also echoed the Gospel of compassionate love.

Annette, through her tireless work with PFLAG, is truly making a difference in our world. I know this because she has made a huge difference for the people a small congregation in Orange, California called Saint Matthew Ecumenical Catholic Church. We are truly seeing the dawn of a new day in human society as we become a more just, loving, and inclusive humanity. Human diversity should never be seen as a threat to fear but as a treasure to embrace.

PFLAG THANKS YOU FOR YOUR EXTRA HELP

With special thanks to everyone involved in making the 2016 Scholarship Awards Ceremony a huge success. PLEASE NOTE: THE SPONSORS FOR THE LAUNCHING LEADERS LUNCHEON will be highlighted in the July newsletter.

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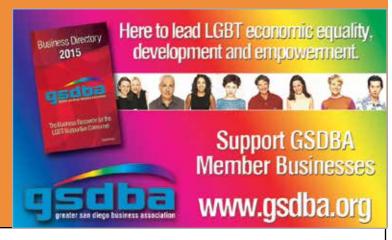
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