



**Buyer Brokerage & More**

802.388.9999 • www.acrevt.com

A buyer agent works to protect your best interests by providing complete and professional guidance to you.



**bob green, LCMHC**  
 LICENSED CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR


individuals *and* couples

SOUTH BURLINGTON (802) 658-2390 (800) 830-5025  
 Magellan, VHAP, Medicaid and many other insurance programs accepted

**Joseph Kress, M.A.**

Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor  
 Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor

Individual and Couples Counseling 802.334.6301  
 Adults and Adolescents 95 Main St., Suite 203, Newport



**Financial Planning is important for anyone.**

**For gay and lesbian partners it can be crucial.**

For same sex partnerships, proper financial planning can help ensure that you and your loved ones are properly protected. As a Financial Advisor, my goal is to meet your needs in a relationship based on trust and professionalism, working closely with your attorney or CPA to develop a strategy based on your unique situation and objectives.

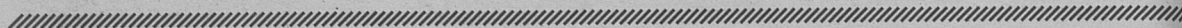
Call me for a free consultation.

**Mitch Rosengarten**  
 Financial Advisor  
 (802) 775-4371  
 90 Merchants Row, Rutland, VT 05701



IRS Circular 230 Disclosure: Citigroup, Inc., its affiliates, and its employees are not in the business of providing tax or legal advice. These materials and any tax-related statements are not intended or written to be used, and cannot be used or relied upon, by any such taxpayer for the purpose of avoiding tax penalties. Tax-related statements, if any, may have been written in connection with the "promotion or marketing" of the transaction(s) or matter(s) addressed by these materials, to the extent allowed by applicable law. Any such taxpayer should seek advice based on the taxpayer's particular circumstances from an independent tax advisor.

©2006 Citigroup Global Markets Inc. Member SIPC. Smith Barney is a division and service mark of Citigroup Global Markets Inc. and its affiliates and is used and registered throughout the world. CITIGROUP and the Umbrella Device are trademarks and service marks of Citigroup Inc. or its affiliates and are used and registered throughout the world.



# Transcending Boundaries and PFLAG: *Telling Stories*

BY LINDSAY COBB

**A**s wind-driven rain pelted the city of Worcester, Massachusetts, an estimated 400 members of New England's GLBT community and their allies formed an oasis of acceptance and solidarity at the Transcending Boundaries and Northeast PFLAG Conference, which commandeered the upper floor of the DCU Center on the weekend of October 27-29.

This was the fifth year of the Transcending Boundaries conference, which was founded, according to the conference literature, "to gather and form alliances within the bisexual/pansexual, trans/genderqueer, intersex, and allied communities." In other words, the various sexual and gender orientations not covered by "G" and "L."

This was the first conference of the Northeast Regional PFLAG, so the two organizations joined forces and produced a weekend, not only of challenging talks and thought-provoking workshops, but also of what may have seemed to the casual observer like strange bedfellows ... or at least conference attendees. Statuesque transwomen, ragtag hippies, goth genderqueers, and supportive soccer moms, all gathered within the glass and chrome of the convention center to share ideas, raise their collective consciousness, expand their webs of friendship, and especially, to tell their stories. A glorious hurly-burly of opinions, perspective, and fashion sense reigned throughout the weekend.

Indeed, telling stories seemed to be the unofficial focus of the conference, in order to expose hurts and injustices, heal oneself, and understand one another. Jennifer Finney Boylan, who gave the opening address on Saturday morning, and the author of *She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders*, put it most succinctly when she said, "It's impossible to hate someone whose story you know."

Other keynote speakers included Esther Morris Leidoff, an intersex activist; Matt Kailey, author of *Just Add*

*Hormones: An Insider's Guide to the Transsexual Experience*; Samuel Thoron, PFLAG national president; and Lani Ka'ahumanu, co-editor of the classic *Bi Any Other Name*.

**Telling stories seemed to be the unofficial focus of the conference, in order to expose hurts and injustices, heal oneself, and understand one another.**

Each of them had many stories to tell: Ka'ahumanu's talk was perhaps the most poetic, as she urged the attendees to "go to that naked place where fear and the thirst for justice live within our souls."

Telling stories and listening to other people's stories were activities that pervaded the workshops throughout the weekend. This reporter's initial reason for attending was to participate in a panel discussion involving bisexuals and transpeople who came out in the course of their marriages. The discussion elicited stories from both panelists and attendees that seemed to share common themes of initial pain and confusion, leading eventually to one form or another of acceptance and reconciliation.

Telling stories also served as a means to recount and combat societal oppression, from antigay religious rhetoric to high school bullying, racism, and harassment by police. Some workshops employed storytelling as witnessing and warning, while others employed hands-on group exercises to explore and transform the stories in depth. Such tactics for transformation and empowerment were another major theme of this conference.


And what would a conference be without vendors? On Saturday, the rows of tables lining the concourse lent a carnival atmosphere to the conference; as various organizations

provided pamphlets, publishers offered books, magazines, music, and movies and craft-people hawked jewelry, buttons, and artwork. All offered the opportunity to network and schmooze. The Halloween costume dance on Saturday night was another opportunity for people to connect, boogie, wear outrageous costumes, and generally decompress after an intense day of workshops.

The one suggestion this reporter put on his evaluation forms at the end of each workshop was, "Needs more time." With so many people presenting workshops throughout the weekend, only an hour could be spared for each one. Any longer than that, and the conference would have to be longer than a weekend - which isn't a bad thing, but perhaps not immediately attainable.

Still, any amount of time spent enveloped in the embrace of the queer community is a tonic and an inspiration. It's a liberating feeling to sit in a roomful of several hundred people and realize you have no need to hide. For that matter, it's a liberating feeling to kiss your same-sex sweetie in the middle of a crowd of people in broad daylight. Granted, we were in a crowd of like-minded others within the safety of a convention center. We weren't standing on a street corner in the middle of downtown Worcester, where such affectionate displays are more important to raising the consciousness of society at large, and which are also potentially more dangerous. Perhaps Samuel Thoron put it most starkly when he said, "My wife and I can kiss in public almost anywhere, at any time. Our daughter cannot, and that's wrong."

Here's to queers willing to kiss in public anywhere. Here's to parents working to support their children's right. And here's to conferences like Transcending Boundaries, that empower just such cultural transformation. ▼

 Lindsay Cobb serves on the advisory board of the Queer Community Project in Brattleboro.