

No More No Less

NEWS FROM THE FAIRNESS CAMPAIGN October 2005

Save Our Basic Rights

“The bill to ban those gay-rights laws is gaining steam and it’s gonna move this session,” claims a leading anti-gay state legislator. WHAT?!? Unfortunately, that’s what we’re hearing. WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

Well, it’s certainly going to take a growing “we” to fight this attack on our basic civil rights. Let’s take a collective deep breath and see if there are a few small and simple tasks each of us can do to protect the Fairness law, as well as to stop a proposed ban on LGBT adoption and foster care.

Here is what Fairness supporters have been doing so far – the Fairness Campaign began a postcard and outreach strategy earlier this year. We first handed out “Let’s Talk” cards at every event we could in order to get a buzz going about the threatening legislation reportedly planned for the 2006 Kentucky State General Assembly in January.

Now we are adding on to that action a search for every supporter we can muster, asking each one to sign a postcard to send a strong pro-Fairness message to all Jefferson County state legislators. This postcard goes to each signer’s Kentucky state senator and representative. It clearly states that the signer supports Fairness and opposes any effort to get undermine local civil rights laws; does not support a Constitutional Amendment to ban any adoption or foster care by an LGBT person; and does not support making it easier to place issues like the Fairness law on the ballot for popular vote or referendum.

We also conducted a survey project at the Kentucky State Fair and talked to over 1,100 people at our booth, 500 of which said they would be willing to volunteer, all we have to do is call them to help. There is currently a small but very mighty team of volunteers who are directing all of this to happen. You’re welcome and invited to join the team, just call the office to learn how.

So, let that deep breath out. Look at the “To Do List” below and just bite off one little
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Katrina Friends and the Obstacles of Racism

by Christi Stevens

From New Orleans to Mississippi and beyond, there was devastation like I had never seen. Where was the help? What could we do?

After Kristi made countless phone calls, we were led to Mississippi and a woman living there named Gayle Tyree. Gayle is a black woman, one of very few living in Southaven, Mississippi, a white flight community in the Northeast corner of the state, heavily republican and home to many Council of Concerned Citizens supporters (a race-hate and anti-Semitic organization). Gayle had started a campaign to help the hundreds of folks who had arrived in Southaven, just southwest of Memphis, folks who had been flocking into the white churches there, seeking shelter, rest, food, and help.

Gayle needed computers and we needed to help. Kristi and I reached out and found enough computers to really make a difference. Darnell helped coordinate and folks brought donations of goods, diapers, clothes, bottles, baby food and formula to the Fairness Office. We rented a van, loaded the computers and supplies and left for Southaven.

When we arrived at the church shelter, the children lit up when they saw the computers. We met Gayle for the first time. I think she sensed our shock when we walked into that church. There was a weird vibe there. You could see the racial fear in the faces of the white volunteers

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PLAN TO ATTEND

★ **Take Back the Night/UofL** – Oct. 6, 5:30 p.m. at the Red Barn, plus feeder march beginning at 4 p.m. from Center for Women & Families, 927 S. 2nd St., call 581-7271 for more info.

★ **The Fire This Time** – Oct. 13, 6:30 p.m., Clifton Center, 2117 Payne St., spoken word artist Aletha Fields’ live CD/DVD recording to benefit Fairness Campaign, tickets \$15-\$150 (sliding scale) available from ear X-tacy.

★ **BeauxArts Ball** – Oct. 15, 7 p.m., Seelbach Hotel, to benefit Voices of Kentuckiana, tickets \$125, call 417-9180 for more info.

★ **Antonio Wickliffe Benefit Reception** – Oct. 16, 3-6 p.m., 1st Unitarian Church, 4th & York, to help longtime activist regain access to justice work following paralysis. Suggested donation: \$10-\$50.

★ **Hidden in Plain Sight** - Oct. 27, 7 p.m., Kentucky Alliance’s Reel Revolution films at Kentucky Theatre.

★ **Transgender Day of Remembrance** - Nov. 20, 3 p.m., Louisville Presbyterian Seminary.

★ **Dining Out for Life** - Nov. 30, donations to House of Ruth support Glade House, www.diningoutforlife.com

★ **Louisville Youth Group** – support and social group for LGBTQ youth 14 – 21, weekly meetings. Call 454-3300.

★ **Sienna** – Transgender support and social monthly meeting, 3rd Saturday, 7 p.m., 1st Unitarian Church, 4th and York Streets. Call 346-5298 for information.

★ **PFLAG** – Louisville - Monthly meeting, 3rd Sunday, 3 p.m., 1st Lutheran Church, 417 E. Broadway. Call 329-0229 for information.

National Coming Out Day

Coming Out to God

To celebrate **National Coming Out Day**, the Fairness Campaign presents Bible scholar and author, Pamela Ogilvie with "Coming Out to God: Homosexuality and the Bible. In her hour and a half presentation, Ogilvie will lead activists on a journey of clarity through the often ill-used "clobber" scriptures that have been used by the religious to condemn and shame the LGBT community for centuries. Join us for this dynamic and humorous presentation on Monday, Oct. 10 from 6-7.30 p.m. at the Fairness office.

On October 11, we will join Ogilvie for a book signing at Carmichael's Bookstore on Frankfort Ave. from 7-8 p.m. She will be featuring her book, *Taking Back Sodom*, a work of fiction capturing the story of some young adults as they travel back in time to the streets of Sodom to discover the truth of what happened there. The net proceeds from the sale of this wonderfully funny and insightful book will benefit the Fairness Campaign.

Standing for Equality

by Rev. Todd Eklof

As the minister at Clifton Unitarian Church, I've responded to the bigoted laws banning same sex marriage by informing my congregation that I can no longer, in good conscience, perform wedding ceremonies for anyone until I can perform them equally for all couples, gay or straight. My congregation has been extremely supportive, and our church board has since adopted a policy banning all marriages from our building until the discriminatory laws are overturned.

At the time, unfortunately, I worked as a video producer for Kentucky Farm Bureau. After the media covered my religious choice, I was called in by my bosses at KFB and told I'm not allowed to air my opinions in public. I was, in my opinion, reprimanded, demoted and asked to resign (as well as subjected to weeks of intense stress and humiliation). Within two months, I was officially fired for a variety of reasons I consider trumped up.

The good news is I've since been able to network with many supportive, goodhearted folks interested in ending this sort of intolerance. Though I identify myself as straight and consider myself an unlikely gay rights activist, I'm appalled by all forms of bigotry and hatred and feel fortunate my stance and circumstances are opening doors for me to keep making this opinion public—whether I'm suppose to or not!

Darnell Johnson is New Fairness Organizer

The Fairness Campaign's Coordinating Committee is thrilled to report that Darnell Johnson joined the Campaign's staff as an organizer in late August. Darnell is familiar to many Fairness supporters as he served as the co-coordinator of our board for four years and has been involved at Fairness for over ten years. He noted, "I'm thrilled to be back home with Fairness. I love this work. I welcome this opportunity to organize and help transform our community. With your support, Kentucky's LGBTQ people move ever closer to securing a statewide Fairness law."

Darnell's high energy, passion and grassroots approach to social justice organizing will serve our organization and community well. He is a true bridge builder. "I understand how race, class, gender and homophobia intersect and how they are used to divide," he said. "I want to be a positive, powerful public servant actively working to articulate a collective strategy, vision and action for systemic change in our community."



Katrina...Obstacles of Racism

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and I was nervous about the obstacles we might face. She took us to a table and with so much love and patience, explained the situation. We heard for the first time what she had been doing there in this white church that was filled with dark faces, made homeless by nature and by a negligent government, stuck in this place, still waiting for help and some direction, recovering and trying to figure out what to do next.

Gayle explained that there was virtually no black population there. These white parishioners had fled from Memphis to Southaven to get away from the blacks. People of color were strange to them and they were nervous and fearful. It was like walking into the past. A stark reminder that racism is alive and well. Gayle knew these people would need more than just shelter, which was all this church was willing to give.

She explained that she had bought new tires for one family who had lost everything, new tires for their car so that they could find work and housing. She was buying cell phones by the dozen, and giving them to anyone that needed one. Without a phone number or address, finding a job is virtually impossible. The cell phones she gave them put them back in touch with their families, now scattered all over the place. Gayle was slowly and methodically helping these folks rebuild their lives. She hoped the computers would provide them with the ability to apply for aid, look for missing family and find jobs and housing. These things would create a lifeline for the people there, and soon we would see and hear the hope coming back.

We were optimistic and set out to get the computers hooked up. We were having trouble getting them on the church's wireless network. We were also being watched closely by the church ministers. One of them pulled me aside and explained that he was afraid that people would use the internet for "unclean" things. These people were exhausted and wanted to find housing and work. They wanted out of that shelter as badly as the church wanted them out. I finally found someone who was helpful, and everything was soon up and running. People were waiting in line to get on-line.

When we returned the next day nothing was working. A very anxious man came forward and said he feared our computers had infected the church network. I sat down to try and get the computers working again and finally got one to connect. A man indicated that someone had probably shut down the network. He assured me he would find someone to fix it and all we could do was trust that he would. It was nearing time to go. I was angry. These people were so racist that they cut off a very important resource for the folks seeking shelter there. Every non-white person there was being watched, and the thought of them on the internet was too far out of their control and was not to be tolerated by these racist white Christians.

Amidst all this we made friends with the folks who were living at the shelter. We heard their stories. Almost everyone there at the shelter had lost everything. For some the water had receded, but there were many others who knew that their homes were under water and they did not expect to ever live in them again.

I heard time and again, that outside of the lives that were lost, the loss of their photographs is what hurt the most, the other stuff was just stuff and didn't matter, it was the place. These people are not victims but survivors and the spirit of New Orleans will always carry them home. It was hard to leave Southaven, Mississippi. Gayle and others had become our friends. We had connected on a very deep level. We had become a team, a crew navigating the obstacles of racism and we will never forget!

"...navigating the obstacles of racism..."

Read more at
www.fairness.org

Fairness Campaign & KFA Working for Equality

In June 1991, nearly 15 years ago, the Fairness Campaign/Fairness Education Fund was launched in Metro Louisville to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. In November 1992, the Fairness Campaign and advocates across Kentucky came together, recognizing the need to defend and protect the rights of LGBT people at the state legislature and throughout the Commonwealth, to establish the Kentucky Fairness Alliance (KFA).

Throughout our histories, the Fairness Campaign and the Kentucky Fairness Alliance have worked collectively to defend our civil rights and stop anti-gay initiatives. The Fairness Campaign's work is centered in Louisville and is focused on moving elected state and local officials in Jefferson County to support equality and combat discrimination.

KFA and its regional chapters have focused on similar objectives to secure support for LGBT people and families across Kentucky's other counties. When the state legislature is in session in Frankfort, KFA staff serves as lead lobbyist on behalf of Fairness groups throughout the state, with the Fairness Campaign playing an active role in generating support from citizens from Jefferson County.

As an affiliate of KFA, the Fairness Campaign, believing that what happens in the General Assembly in Frankfort is crucial to the lives of Louisvillians, has historically supported KFA by giving 10% of all membership contributions to KFA to further the statewide work for fairness.

As KFA has grown and objectives expanded, it has become important to KFA to explore new avenues of financial support for their work. Thus, beginning this year, KFA has elected to independently fundraise in Jefferson County. While this change may be a bit confusing for Fairness Campaign supporters and allies in Louisville, we believe people will recognize the importance of sustaining strong advocates both locally and across the state. You can be sure that when the Fairness Campaign communicates with you or appeals for your support, our materials will say "the Fairness Campaign."

The Fairness Campaign will persist, as always, to advocate for equality and justice for all in Metro Louisville and represent our community's interests by actively engaging with our elected representatives in the state legislature in Frankfort.

Fairness Campaign and KFA will, of course, continue to work together to build a better Kentucky for all. If you'd like to help, please call the Fairness Campaign office at 893-0788.

First Transsistahs and Transbrothas Conference a Success

The first ever Transsistahs and Transbrothas Conference (TSTBC) was recently held at the Galt House September 14-18. This historic gathering of African-American transgender people spent four days discussing various seminar topics on issues of importance to African-American transgender people.

Topics that were discussed included spirituality, African American transgender images in the media, African-American transgender history makers and the reasons why they are not mentioned in overall GLBT history, transgender people in prison and medical issues. There were seminars on the cultural differences between the African-American and Caucasian communities and how they affect building working relationships between the two communities and job interview skills. There was strategizing done on ways to build the African-American transgender community infrastructure and thoughtful conversations that lasted well into the early hours. There was also a transmen only rap session in which they discussed their unique issues and a Saturday night drag show and party that raised money for GLBT Hurricane Katrina victims.

The speakers for the conference included Mandy Carter, the executive director of SONG-Southerners on New Ground, Dawn Wilson and Jordana LeSesne. Fairness leader Monica Roberts was the conference's programming chair; and SONG and the Fairness Campaign were co-sponsoring organizations for conference. Fairness Campaign volunteers helped staff the registration tables forging links with attendees who came here from across the country to participate. The TSTBC conference is already scheduled to return to Louisville in October 2006.

Save Our Basic Rights

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piece that you can do. Thanks for your help! Please call the Fairness office at 893-0788 if you would like more information.

1. Stop by the Fairness office, 2263 Frankfort Avenue, to fill out and sign a postcard to your state legislator.
2. Download a postcard from our web site: www.fairness.org. Email the card to volunteer@fairness.org with your information.
3. Go to www.loukymetro.org/map.asp, type in your address to learn the name of your Kentucky representative and senator.
4. Send an email to 10 of your friends asking them to also sign a postcard.
5. Come to the office for any time you have - 15 minutes to 3 hours - and help locate the appropriate representative for the signed post cards we have already collected.
6. Prepare the postcards for delivery to our Jefferson County state legislators.
7. Join a delivery team of five people and meet with your representative to ask her/him to support their constituents' calls for fairness and equality.
8. Come to the office and help call and recruit potential volunteers we have from all the outreach at the State Fair and elsewhere.
9. Work from home on your computer to identify the representatives for already signed post cards.
10. Make a donation to the Fairness Campaign to help us pay for photocopying, mailings, flip charts, staff time and more.
11. Go to the Fairness Campaign web site to read 90 more simple ways that you can help protect our basic rights.

Lawn Party Celebrates Community's Diversity

The best remedy for challenging times is to come together in celebration of the full diversity that makes us strong and gives us hope. Thank you to all that made the 8th annual Lawn Party at the home of Carla F. Wallace a wonderful success again this year. The event brought together for an evening of conversation & community, dinner & dancing, and a giving generosity that exceeded last year's record. Over 240 people attended and with people contributing gifts of all sizes, we raised over \$16,000. The funds support the work of the Fairness Campaign and the Kentucky Alliance Against Racism and Political Repression.

In addition, people gave to hurricane relief efforts committed to empowerment and justice for those in need. Mark your calendar now for the first Sunday in Sept. 2006.

Find out more @ www.fairness.org





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National Coming Out Day Oct. 11 – Talk About It

Come Out for Fairness

Please make a financial contribution to the work for equality & justice!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250
 Other: _____

Please make your check payable to
Fairness Campaign, P.O. Box 3431,
Louisville, KY 40201.

I prefer my gift remain anonymous.



Aletha Fields Live and Uncut THE FIRE THIS TIME

October 13, 2005
6:30 pm
Clifton Center - 2117 Payne St.

Tickets: \$15-\$150, sliding scale
Students w/ valid ID: \$5-\$15, sliding scale

Join us as spoken word artist Aletha Fields presents a live recording of her original works to benefit the Fairness Campaign.

"rich with the lyricism of brown people and brown places"
"fiery hot and socially conscious"

"inspiring"
"spiritual & uplifting"

Tickets available at
ear X-tacy

For more information,
please call 502.262.4272
or e-mail
allpossible1@aol.com

Net proceeds benefit
The Fairness Campaign

