



Parents, Families & Friends  
of Lesbians And Gays

# PFLAG WEAVER

*Parents, Families & Friends of  
Lesbians And Gays/Dallas*

*March, 2003*

## *Our Mission*

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons, their families and friends, through *support*, to cope with an adverse society; *education*, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and *advocacy*, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights.



PFLAG provides the opportunity for confidential dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.



**NATIONAL WEB SITE**  
www.pflag.org



**DALLAS WEB SITE**  
www.pflagdallas.org



**PFLAG/Dallas**  
(Newsletter and all correspondence)  
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**Newsletter Deadline:**

March 13, 2003  
by mail, fax or e-mail

## *Next Meeting*

March 13, 2003  
Second Thursday, 7-9:30 p.m.  
Midway Hills Christian Church  
11001 Midway Road, Dallas

## *OK, who had mid-February? Collect your winnings!*



*FOUR PROMINENT GEORGIANS – John and Martha England with former President and Mrs. Jimmy Carter. John and Martha attended one of Carter's Sunday School classes recently.*

Dear PFLAG/Dallas,

Well, John and I have lived here [in Atlanta] now for over a year and we agreed Sunday to accept a job on the Atlanta PFLAG board as help-line coordinators.

We did not plan to get involved as we have had so many other doors open like having grandchildren right here to enjoy, new friends, a wonderful liberal church where we have made so many new friends ... but we have gone to PFLAG on and off for a year.

We like the people really well, but it is still not Dallas and it never will be.

The president has been president since the chapter was organized almost 20 years ago,

and she is stepping down. The board will be many new faces. Our new presidents (if the board and general body approve) will be a straight mom and a gay man. It was my idea to have co-presidents. A new couple agreed to take the vice-presidency (Ed.: Wonder if their name is England?) and will groom for president in future years. Sounds pretty exciting! So here we are ... right back in, but that's okay. This is a wonderful organization and so helpful to so many parents when there is absolutely nothing else for them.

*Martha England*

## Bill would bar harassment in schools

by Melissa Drosjack  
Houston Chronicle

AUSTIN – A Houston lawmaker has introduced a bill that would give public school students legal protection from harassment and discrimination because of their gender, race, ethnicity or sexual orientation.

Rep. Garnet Coleman, D-Houston, filed House Bill 862 late Tuesday to amend the state's education code. The law would apply to abuse of students by other students, teachers and employees of public schools.

Coleman said students need to feel comfortable in school to perform to the best of their ability and not be pushed away by the way they are treated.

Coleman said he is concerned with name-calling.

"We know that those terms are very hurtful," Coleman said. "We also know that when students hear those terms, it makes them less eager to attend school. What this is really about is making sure that students are protected when they go to school from not only personal remarks but also hurtful actions."

The proposed policy for the state's code of conduct would use alternative education programs or suspension to punish students who harass or discriminate against others, Coleman said.

No state law protects students from harassment or discrimination. A similar bill filed last session by Rep. Harryette Ehrhardt (Ed.: our sweet Harryette!), D-Dallas, died in committee.

Conservatives often oppose such legislation, claiming it creates a special class of protection for homosexuals.

Julian Padilla, a junior at a high school in Austin, said he has experienced discrimination at school. Openly gay since he was 12, Padilla said he has been called names and harassed.

Padilla tried to get help from school administrators and police when he was harassed, but no one could help him, he said.

"Schools are meant to be safe learning environments in which all students can get a good education and achieve happiness – passing this bill will help do that; that's all I ask," Padilla said.

Randall Ellis, executive director for the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas, cited a 2001 study that found students were negatively affected by harassment in schools.

The study, conducted by GLSEN, the Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network, a national organization to end anti-gay bias in schools, surveyed students who said the vast majority of negative comments they hear in school hallways concern sexual orientation.

Eight states have laws protecting students from harassment and discrimination, Ellis said.

"Texas lawmakers should follow the example of other states across the country and place education and safety first," Ellis said.

The Houston Independent School District updated its own harassment and discrimination component in its Code of Student Conduct this year in response to public concern, said a spokeswoman for the district.

The code prohibits bullying of others, slurs, name-calling, derogatory statements because of one's race, color, religion, national origin, disability, appearance or sexual orientation.

## Life in the fast Lane

Actor quick off the mat after sitcom bomb

by Bill Brioux  
Toronto Sun

Nathan Lane is sick of apologizing for his last sitcom.

"Look, it wasn't a war crime," says the Tony Award-winning Broadway star of "The Producers," who flopped a few seasons ago with the forgettable "Encore, Encore."

Now he's back as Charlie Lawrence, a former "Touched By An Angel"-like TV star who has just been elected to his first term as a U.S. congressman. Adding to the fish-out-of-water fun is the fact that he's openly and unabashedly gay.

"I thought it was an interesting venue to place a gay character into," said Lane, who joined the rest of the cast at the CBS press conference Monday. "I loved the idea that he was a former actor somewhere along the lines of a Fred Grandy and Barney Frank."

While he chalks "Encore, Encore" up as "a tremendous learning experience," the failure of that sitcom still stings. Lane said he felt like a whipping boy for the critics that year after getting mugged in the press.

"I'm not saying it was ground-breaking television, but I've seen far worse," he says.

This time, Lane insisted on being very involved with all aspects of the series. He's listed as a writer and an executive producer.

Before he even met with series creator Jeffrey Richman (Wings, Frasier), he insisted that there be a script to read. "I just couldn't meet somebody and say, 'Gee, we hit it off over lunch. Here's my life and let's hope it works out.'"

Judging from the pilot, it has worked out beautifully. It is laugh-out-loud funny and likely will launch in mid-March, probably on Sunday nights.

CBS is already high on its other mid-season sitcom, "My Big Fat Greek Life." Lane joked that CBS CEO Les Moonves said he's changing the title of Lane's sitcom to "My Big Fat Greek Gay Congressman." "We'll premiere right after 'CSI: Athens'," he cracked.

Lane promised not to tip-toe around his character's sexual orientation on the show. He will, for instance, date other men. "I think 'Will & Grace' opened a door where an openly gay character could be just received into the living rooms of America and everybody will laugh," says Richman. "This guy is gay, he's a congressman, he's a former actor, he's a lot of stuff."

Co-star Laurie Metcalf, who plays Lawrence's flinty chief of staff, says that while both stars are very hands-on, working with Lane is a lot smoother than working with her old boss Roseanne. She says Lane and the writing really drew her to this series.

Ted McGinley ("Married... With Children") plays Graydon Cord, a rather rakish Republican congressman who strikes up an instant friendship with Lawrence. He also praised Lane as "the most amazing actor I've ever come across."

As for "The Producers," Lane held out hope that he might re-team with Matthew Broderick on a feature film version of the Mel Brooks musical hit, especially after the success of "Chicago."

"I'm sure Danny DeVito and Ben Stiller would love to be in those roles," he joked – sort of.

**Boy, did we throw a party!** In March, 2001, PFLAG/Dallas held a regional conference. Based at SMU's Hughes-Trigg Hall, it included "side trips" to the Cathedral of Hope and a marvelous drag show. We heard it was one of the best regional conferences ever. It was so good, in fact, that PFLAG National asked us to do it again next October for Regional Directors and (I think) National staff. We're up for it, but we could use some help. In a production such as this, there are stars, supporting players and crew. We need supporting players and crews. No experience necessary, just enthusiasm and a desire to show 'em all that Dallas is THE place for PFLAG to be! If you think it sounds like fun, contact Pat Smith or Donna Akin, contact info on the first page.

## *Gay camp near Pollock draws concern*

*by Andrew Griffin, Staff Reporter  
The Town Talk, Alexandria, LA*

POLLOCK, La. - A camp "where gay folk begin a journey of discovery" will be in operation from March through November near Pollock, and that has some area residents concerned.

Although Manitou Woods is not billed as a nudist camp, there is a picture on its Web site showing a group of nude men outdoors at the camp. A manitou is a spirit or supernatural force believed in by the Algonquian Indians.

The camp is described on its Web site as a "sanctuary for gentle gay folk."

Preston Mosley, chief deputy for the Grant Parish Sheriff's Office, said the camp site, located north of Pollock off U.S. Highway 165, had once been a boys' camp and later a bar. Mosley said the parish listed the owner of the camp property as Blanchard "Skip" Ward of Pineville.

"There's been a lot of talk about it, but there have been no complaints," Mosley said.

However, there have been some concerns among people who live and visit the area. Tina Saucier, who lives in Rapides Parish and spends a lot of time in Georgetown, said the Christian, family-oriented nature of Grant Parish does not mesh with the homosexual lifestyle of such a camp.

"In Louisiana we're family, we're community, and this is going to give our community a bad name," Saucier said. "This isn't Florida."

Saucier said she and others she has talked to are shocked to know this camp is in close proximity of several camps that host religious activities, including a Church of God camp and a Pentecostal camp.

Saucier said she does not have anything against gays, but she does not like the fact that the camp's Web site says "pagan" and earth-centered spirituality are embraced at the camp.

The Web site has several pages of information about the camp, but much of it is vague, and for good reason, according to Ward.

Ward, 82, runs the camp, which is open from March to November. He said he is part of the peaceful, non-Christian Radical Faeries movement, which has sanctuaries throughout the United States. They are associated with the "back-to-nature" movement and the hippie-run Rainbow Gatherings.

"Mine is one of many such retreats," Ward said. "It's not exclusive to just gays, but we also have families who come out there, many with kids."

Ward said he doesn't understand why Saucier and others are just now complaining about the Web site and Manitou Woods.

"It's been online for about four or five years," he said, adding that he likes the fact that his camp is remote. "I keep it hidden."

The Web site says, "Nestled deep within the woods of a Louisiana pine forest is found a privately owned sanctuary being developed for those in need of exploring the spiritual dimensions of being gay. What purpose is served in the scheme of the cosmos by our gayness? Participants are urged to seek and discover the divinity residing within oneself.

"We invite you to open yourself again to the joys of discovery in nature's domain, and find new views of the magic of sexuality, and to share your gay visions."

Ward said homophobia is common in central Louisiana, despite the fact that there are many gay people living in the area. He added that he has received hate mail from people regarding

his camp and his lifestyle.

"Homosexuality is such a taboo," he said.

Ward shared an e-mail ... from a local disc jockey who said, "Gay visions make me and most 'normal' people nauseous."

The disc jockey continued and said, "I can promise you ... my listening audience, friends, co-workers and most city and government officials and myself will see to it that (Manitou Woods) will not open ... this camp will not happen."

As for Saucier, she is upset that local churches aren't coming out against Manitou Woods.

"Most people in Pollock don't even know about it," Saucier said. "It's got us all a little spooked."

### **Letters to Town Talk**

#### **'Religious zealots'**

It seems that 15 percent of the earth's population is not wanted by certain religious zealots in Grant Parish. Who really cares what these so called Christians want? I certainly don't. These people are not acting very Christ-like. Are they afraid that they will not be able to explain an encounter with a gay person at a convenience store to their children?

And what exactly are they teaching those children – to stay away from those type of people, they're bad? No, teaching intolerance of others is bad.

This type of thinking leads to hate crimes and is nothing more than unadulterated bigotry. People do not choose to be gay; they are born that way. It has been proven by many years of scientific research. These complaining people are not scientists, just bigots.

I guess they think Jehovah was just sitting around and thought of making 15 percent of the population homosexual just to anger the Baptists. Hardly. Anyone who doubts me is in for a big surprise.

God said judge not lest ye be judged. These jackasses have opened the gate. These people always seem to try to make everybody else's life as miserable as their own.

The people at the retreat in Grant Parish will not bother them. In fact they probably feel sorry for these complainers because they don't realize that they exude hate towards their fellow man. Who knows, some of these so-called bad gay people might even be Christians. The Lord works in mysterious ways.

If this pseudoreligious doctrine of hate against others different from themselves is being taught in their churches, I suggest church members take steps to remove the so-called preachers. They are twisting the word of God for their own hate-filled agendas. And they may pay a price.

*- Reagan Boone, Pineville*

#### **Concern about camp**

The Grant Parish community is rightly concerned about the homosexual encampment in the Pollock area. I do not condemn homosexuals; I do, in accord with the Bible, condemn the sin of homosexuality. I will pray for the salvation of the homosexual, which would solve this problem.

I will not take the time to list the civilizations that have been destroyed when the practice and toleration of sodomy has been embraced by the populace. Of equal or perhaps even greater concern to me and my congregation is the blatant advocacy for the expansion of this iniquitous place for purely economic reasons advocated by Fran Demers of the Grant Parish Chamber of Commerce. I would encourage the membership of this organization to restrain Demers if she does not speak for their individual points of view. If she does represent the view of the members of this group, I would like them to know that I also may make informed decisions regarding the use of my disposable income.

*- The Rev. Jim Garlington, Pollock*

## Page Four

### From the President

Hey Puddin's –

Happy St. Patrick's Day!

Ah, spring has sprung, and of course with that comes spring cleaning ... and closets ... and cleaning out the closet ... and coming out of the closet.

Speaking as somebody who knows, being "in the closet" is no fun. Imagine falling madly in love, your stomach does flips every-time you see your special someone. But you can't tell anybody. You have to be quiet. Just because.

Before I came out, I never discussed my personal life with my family and most of my friends. It was as though that part of me didn't exist. I'd found a woman who I wanted to share my life with, and I couldn't talk about it. Just because.

I didn't want to lose my family, or friends. Been there, done that. Lost people who I thought were friends.

They weren't.

I didn't fit into their idea of who I should be.



Recently I heard a troubling story from a lesbian college student who just came out to her parents. They want her to be "normal." They want her to stop this nonsense. "What will people think?" Her parents vowed to change her. They threatened her. She doesn't fit into who they think she should be. Why can't she be like "everybody else"?

She is normal and like everyone else. And lesbian. She had to tell her parents who she is. She doesn't want to hide ... "just because."

Coming out of the closet means having to deal with reality. It's daunting because the family has to deal with the loss of hopes and dreams that they believe now won't come true. But they can still come true.

The reality is, it just looks different from what they had expected. Some families disown children for not fitting into their idea of who they want their child to be.

The reality is, their child is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered. And when the child comes out of that closet, the parents, family or friend goes into the closet.

The closet is not fun. It's lonely and constrictive.

Coming out is freeing.

It's all a process. Parents who come to PFLAG are making an effort to understand reality. They don't want to hide in a closet. They are accepting reality. PFLAG is here to help parents and families and friends deal with coming out of that closet. You don't have to stay in it "just because."



It takes a lot of guts to accept reality.

It takes a lot of guts to come to PFLAG.

It takes a lot of guts to say, "I don't care what some people think ... *nobody* is gonna take my child away from me!"

Cleaning out that closet is worth it.

*Pat Smith*

*Save November 8 for this year's*

*Black Tie Dinner.*

*Exciting details to follow.*

*2003 will be a great year!*

## Do you live in Collin County?

A group plans to form an affiliate of Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance (DGLA) in Collin County and will have their first meeting within the next two months. If you are interested, please contact Dawnetta Miller at coract11@earthlink.net or (214) 676-5449, or Roger Wedell, president of DGLA, at (214) 521-6622. All are welcome (GLBT and heterosexual).

Please join our e-mail list, so we can update you on what is going on in Collin County: Plano, McKinney, Allen, Frisco, Lavon, Celina, Anna, Parker, Murphy, Wylie, Fairview, Princeton, New Hope, Lucas, Melissa and Prosper.



## Bloomy will march in Queens

*by Debbie McGoldrick*

*Irish Voice*

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg has confirmed he will take part in the Queens "all-inclusive" St. Patrick's parade set for Sunday, March 2 at 12:30 p.m.

The parade, which in contrast to the annual New York City march is open to all groups wishing to participate, including gay ones, will also pay tribute this year to Irish American peace activist Fr. Daniel Berrigan. The march will once again take place on Skillman Avenue, winding up in the heart of Woodside.

A number of other political leaders and dignitaries from Ireland have been invited to participate in the march, which in addition to supporters also attracts a number of onlookers protesting the inclusion of various homosexual groups.

Last year the parade was shrouded in controversy when a group from Drogheda, Co. Louth, including the city's mayor, Jimmy Mulroy, withdrew their participation due to pressure from New York Republican Party and Louth representatives who claimed that the march was a thinly veiled effort to advance a radical pro-homosexual agenda.

Still, there were several hundred revelers who lined the parade route, and in addition to Bloomberg a host of local politicians took part, including Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Bloomberg used his participation in the Queens march last year to justify his appearance in the New York City parade. There is no word yet on whether Bloomberg will march up Fifth Avenue this year.



## If you've ever wondered...

why there aren't more gay camps in this part of the country ... or, indeed, any gay camps in this part of the country ... be sure to read Page 3. The letters are only two of many about the camp. It has been vandalized; the ministers have gotten up in arms about it; and there doesn't seem to be any reason for the outcry except our old enemy, ignorance.

But progress continues to be made. See Page 2 for a story about a Houston legislator who wants to make a difference, and for an upcoming giggle we can all enjoy.

*Ladye*

Our March program welcomes Marc Adams, co-founder of HeartStrong, a non-sectarian organization reaching out to students from religious schools. See [www.HeartStrong.org](http://www.HeartStrong.org).