



Parents, Families & Friends  
of Lesbians and Gays

# PFLAG WAVE

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

April, 2004

### 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.



#### WEB SITES

NATIONAL – [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)



DALLAS – [www.pflagdallas.org](http://www.pflagdallas.org)



#### PFLAG/Dallas

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#### Newsletter Deadline:

April 8, 2004

by mail, fax or e-mail

### Next Meeting

April 8, 2004

Second Thursday, 7-9:30 p.m.

Midway Hills Christian Church

11001 Midway Road, Dallas

## ‘Separate but equal’ is not equal

by David Taffet

Recently, the mayor of San Francisco had the registrar issue hundreds of marriage licenses to gay and lesbian couples. As a result, thousands of heterosexual marriages were destroyed this week.

They weren't? Interesting. I thought I read in a local weekly that gay marriage would destroy heterosexual marriage. Maybe that wasn't the only lie in that article.

What is true is that while my friends Viv and Louise, who have been together for 32 years, cannot marry or receive any of the benefits of marriage, Britney Spears was entitled to all the special rights of marriage throughout her 55-odd hours of matrimony. Win "Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire" or some other so-called reality show, and that marriage will be valid as well. But George and Jack, two Cedar Springs merchants who have been together for almost 40 years, do not have a legal relationship.

Marriage today is not the same as biblical marriage or even marriage as it existed 100 years ago. Marriage is an evolving institution.

With no excuses or explanations, we are told in Genesis that when Sarah could not conceive, Abraham had a child with his slave Hagar. Surrogate parenting? Maybe. However, one generation later, when Jacob realized he married the wrong sister, he arranged to marry the one he wanted as well.

Back when King David wanted to marry Bathsheba, he had her husband killed. Today, he'd be in Huntsville. And King Solomon is reputed to have had 1,000 wives. Marriage today is not as it was in the Bible.

Until recently, women were still seen as property. A dowry was offered to a man for the burden of taking care of the helpless woman. Marriages were arranged. Love was irrelevant. Try arranging marriages and demanding a dowry today.

So the argument that marriage as an institution has not changed is false.

Does anyone on the side of gay civil mar-

riage want to force any religious institution to perform gay religious marriages or force any rabbi to perform a marriage ceremony that he or she did not consider holy? Absolutely not.

What everyone on the side of legalizing gay civil marriage wants is access to the approximately 1,000 special rights now given only to married heterosexuals. At the federal level alone, 1,047 benefits are conferred on those who marry from social security benefits to inheritance rights to insurance to taxes to the right not to testify against a spouse.

One myth is that partnership benefits such as allowing one partner to add the other to a health insurance policy costs everyone else money. Actually, if my partner were covered on my policy, it would save the cost of treatment at Parkland. Each uninsured patient that comes to Parkland costs every taxpayer money.

Another myth is that we can get any of these rights through a series of contracts. Benefits conferred with a \$25 marriage license costs the average gay or lesbian couple over \$700. Even then, those legal papers are regularly challenged.

When my father took his wife to the hospital, no one stopped to ask to see his marriage license. The hospital assumed they were married.

When Beth El Binah member Doug Frankel had a near fatal accident at home, his partner scrambled through the house to find his paperwork. At the hospital, while Doug's foot remained partially detached, they refused to administer any painkiller until he personally signed papers and showed proof of insurance despite the legal paperwork.

Interesting that my father and his wife were not actually legally married while David and Doug, who have been together for over 10 years, had their paperwork in place.

Most people would agree that gay and lesbian couples should indeed be given most of

*See Marriage on page two*

**PFLAG/Dallas appreciates your continued support.**

## *Marriage* from page one

these rights. It's that word "marriage" that bothers everyone. Why can't we just settle for "civil unions?" Interestingly, a few years ago, when Gov. Howard Dean signed the first civil union bill into law in Vermont, everyone labeled him a left-wing extremist and predicted that civil unions would be the end of civilization as we know it.

Instead, the civil union has done only one thing in Vermont: increased tourism. Only now that the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court has ruled that not allowing gays and lesbians to marry their partners is discriminatory is everyone screaming for civil unions.

What we need to do is distinguish between religious marriage and civil marriage. The government creates a set of special rights when they give a couple a marriage license. That license and those rights need to be given to any couple, gay or straight. The religious marriage is up to the individual religion, denomination or member of the clergy. Just as most rabbis do not perform interfaith wedding, rabbis who do not want to perform a gay or lesbian wedding simply shouldn't.

Reform rabbis who have wanted to perform a religious marriage between two Jewish gay men or a lesbian couple have done so for more than 15 years. And how has this affected Reform Judaism? In the Dallas area, rather than the three temples that existed 20 years ago, we have at least eight now and membership in all has grown.

Rather than attacking gays and lesbians for destroying the family, maybe we should allow gays and lesbians to form legal families. Where gay civil marriage has been allowed, we've been quite good at it. In Denmark, where a form of gay marriage has been legal for over a dozen years, a study showed that while the heterosexual divorce rate stands at over 50 percent, the divorce rate for gays and lesbians was just 17 percent.

If heterosexual marriage is being destroyed, as charged, please don't blame me. But I will be presumptuous enough to offer some of my own unwelcome suggestions that should never be adopted. If you must amend the constitution, rather than prevent a group from getting married, outlaw divorce. Amend it to insist parents both pay child support rather than put the burden of supporting your abandoned children on me.

Why don't we just settle for equivalent civil unions? Because separate but equal is never equal and new laws will be passed that apply only to marriages and not civil unions. Shame on any GLBT on the side of discrimination.

*David Taffet is past president of Congregation Beth El Binah, the first gay synagogue in the country. He is an editor of The Dallas Voice and hosts Lambda Weekly Sundays on 89.3 KNON and Conversations daily on Radioleft.com.*

## *Marriage inspectors need time*

by *Linwood Barclay*  
Toronto Star

Now that thousands of gay and lesbian couples have gotten hitched in the United States in the last few weeks, it's just a matter of time before we see what damage these unholy unions will do to existing, traditional marriages. President George W. Bush says concrete evidence of gay marriages undermining regular marriages is probably already out there; it's just a question of finding it.

"We must act quickly and decisively, because if we don't, by the time the evidence is found, it'll be too late to do anything about it." President Bush is working hard to build a coalition of U.S. states to ratify a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages, rather than waiting for evidence to materialize.

Until recently, it was assumed that same-sex marriages would have a negative impact on traditional marriages, but now that they are actually happening, there's an unprecedented opportunity to see what those negative impacts will be. So it's puzzling Bush isn't willing to wait for Americans to view the evidence.

Give the matrimonial inspectors more time, many are arguing. These would be the independent inspectors, from the United Nations, who have been touring the continental U.S. and Hawaii, evaluating the state of marriages consisting of one man and one woman.

The inspectors have been searching for any marriages that have been threatened by the flurry of same-sex weddings. Among the things they're on the alert for:

Men shouting out the name "Carson!" during moments of intimacy.

An increase in the number of husbands who are able to say, honestly, that they've noticed when their wives have experimented with a new eye shadow.

Husbands and wives going door to door, gathering signatures on a petition to bring back Rosie O'Donnell's talk show and give her Boy George musical "Taboo" another chance.

Women being hounded by their husbands to help them rearrange the furniture in the living room.

While the inspectors have failed to turn up any of these things so far, they've made a few disturbing discoveries. These include a drop in the frequency of sexual encounters between men and women who've been married for several decades; men becoming less attentive to their wives while at the same time showing an increased interest in watching male-dominated activities, like football, basketball and right-wing talk shows; and guys who can't remember anniversaries or birthdays.

*See Bush on page four*

# Akin, Brock ads you have

# Small minds can be outgrown

by David Hunter  
Knoxville News-Sentinel

In the mid-19th century, Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds." A writer named Lance Morrow in an online column for *Time* Magazine in July 2000 put it another way: "Orthodoxy tends to make people lazy, stale and stupid."

A few years back, writing on this very editorial page, I accused the Knox County school board members of bumper-sticker men-tality when they put in place a zero-tolerance policy so rigid that nobody in the system had any wiggle room to look at the circum-stances in individual cases. The policy eventually led to court.

Emerson, Morrow and I were all writing on different subjects, but the principle involved was the same. Making a nonflexible rule, or taking a position and staying with it no matter how disastrous the results, is not a wise thing to do. In fact, it has been said that unsuccessfully applying the same solution to the same problem time after time, while expecting a different result, is one definition of insanity.

I understand that hobgoblin of foolish consistency very well. In the late 1970s, a female reserve officer at the Knox County Sheriff's Office decided that working jail visitation was not her cup of tea and demanded the right to ride patrol along with male reserve officers. She was told to find a male partner who would ride with her. She couldn't find that partner, and I was among those who refused her.

We all had what seemed to be legitimate fears. Our wives wouldn't like it, we might get hurt watching out for a woman partner, and we wanted a man beside us if we got into a real confrontation. Oh, the department already had a token female officer. Her name was Suzzane Fawver, and I was there the night she was shot in a grubby little park in North Knox County. I already knew courage had no color, and I learned that night that courage has no gender.



Since then, I've also learned that courage has no sexual orientation. It was the hardest of all the lessons. Nobody had ever taught me, at least not directly, that people of color and women were something less than I was. It was simply understood that being a white male was to be at the top of the food chain. I was taught that homosexuals were something less than human – by the scorn in the eyes and voices of my friends, family members and even some teachers and clergy when the subject was discussed.

In my youth, "gay" was not among the many names used to

address those who were sexually attracted to members of their own gender. The names we did use made it clear that homosexuals were loathsome, vile creatures to be driven from our midst when we discovered them. Furthermore, it was pretty well understood that even God wasn't too fond of them. Love that sinner but hate that sin. To me, it always seemed clear that, if I truly did the first, the latter would not be a problem.

My irrational fear of and disgust with gay individuals was the last conscious burden of bigotry that I had to put down. The sense of relief was enormous. Spiritually, it allowed me to actually be truthful when I spoke of what Jesus, the young rabbi from Nazareth, called the greatest of the commandments – the ones upon which He said all the rest hung – to love God with all my heart and my neighbor as myself.

Read the parable of the Good Samaritan. Neighbors aren't limited to those who live close by. Our neighbors are those who need our help and compassion. I reached the age of 30 having personally known only two gay people, or so I thought. Today I am acquainted with a lot of gay men and women, including several police officers. I used to think their numbers were small, but they may be 10 percent of the population.

They were there all along, but for reasons of self-preservation they lived lives of secrecy and fear. Many people today would like to see all gays go back in the closet because, when we put names and faces to the gay community – especially if the faces belong to loved ones – what once appeared clear-cut suddenly becomes complicated.

But, evidence and facts aside, I suspect that the foolish consistency Emerson called the hobgoblin of little minds will always be with us under one name or another.

*David Hunter, who writes this column for the News Sentinel, is a freelance writer and former Knox County sheriff's deputy. You may write him at P.O. Box 1124, Powell, TN 37849. His e-mail address is [ursus333@comcast.net](mailto:ursus333@comcast.net).*

## About: Youth First Texas

Youth First Texas is the only organization in Dallas area which exists solely to provide social services, leadership opportunities and recreational activities to Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning youth 14 through 22 years. Services include:

**Support groups:** Women; Guys; High School; Young Adult; Latino Outreach; Gender Identity; Drop-in Center; Free Counseling; Crisis Referrals

**Educational programs:** Mentor program matches youth with adults role models; Life Coach program teaches youth-specific tasks (such as budgeting or applying to college); Training to other youth organizations; Leadership Development Program; Recreational Program; Community Service.

Youth who might benefit from involvement in Youth First can call us at 214/879-0400 or visit our Web site: [www.youthfirsttexas.org](http://www.youthfirsttexas.org). If you know teachers, school counselors and others who work with youth, please let them know about us as well.

As a tiny non-profit made up of volunteers, we can always use help. Particular needs at this time include people with the skills and commitment to be mentors, and persons with experience with fundraising and marketing. If you or someone you know might be able to help support us financially, contact us by phone or on line.

Villa Antiques ad  
you have

## Page Four

Hey, Puddin's...

Happy Easter! Spring is here; you can smell it. Honeysuckle and yellow jasmine perfume the air. After a long winter, the air is fresh. You can open the windows and let the air in. Plants are growing, flowers are starting to bloom, there are new beginnings everywhere.

And how about the air? At first it is barely noticeable as it gently floats past you. It is a soft breeze on your skin. It gently ruffles your hair. You can feel it. Like a soft cool breeze that whiffs by on a hot sultry day when the air is heavy and thick with humidity. Suddenly out of nowhere a gentle breeze floats by, so very lightly. Barely perceptible, yet it's cool and refreshing.

That's the feeling of the gay marriage movement throughout the country. A soft gentle demonstration of love and commitment. The pictures of the newly married couples are heartwarming. The first couple to be married were lesbians who have been together for 50 years! Imagine their new beginnings! The gentle cool breeze they felt after a lifetime of stagnant, heavy air. The whole gay marriage movement is a breath of fresh air. For the couples it is a new beginning – one can't help but feel joy for them.

I just love weddings! The positive energy of weddings – not the planning – the actual wedding! There is anticipation in the air, and the promise of hope as two people commit to each other as they embark on a new life together. It doesn't make sense to cut lesbians and gays off from this wonderful energy.

The air in the closet of intolerance is stagnant, thick and oppressive. You can't breathe in that closet. It's time the closet door was opened for good. Get out and take in a big deep breath of fresh air. Doesn't it feel good? Gay marriage is good energy. It's refreshing to see happy couples. It's nice to hear good news for a change. Everyone's been so caught up in negative energy, how about celebrating these new beginnings?

Over 3,700 couples were married in San Francisco alone. And other parts of the country followed suit, including New York. Unfortunately these acts of commitment were construed by paranoid people to be acts of civil disobedience and halted. Imagine that ... two people getting married being civil disobedience. It doesn't make sense.

The winds of new beginnings are in the air. Unfortunately, those gay marriages may not be legally binding in the aftermath of all the civil disobedience claims. But one thing is for sure, proud PFLAG parents from all over the country are sharing photos of the marriages of their lesbian and gay children. Their stories are like any other wedding stories. Parents have been brought to tears as they talk of how excited and happy they are for their children. It's good energy. It's fresh air. Okay, everyone ... breathe!



Speaking of Spring ... our Fabulous Family Flamingo Spring Fling is Saturday, May 15, at Don Carter's West Bowling Center, 10920 Composite Drive, Dallas 75220. Registration begins at noon; bowling is from 1 to 5 p.m. Our Mistress of Ceremonies, the one and only Edna Jean, will hand out fabulous prizes for some lucky bowlers. We will also have a silent auction with exciting items to bid on.

Recruit a team of your best bowlers. Each team must consist of four bowlers. The price is \$20 per bowler if you register before May 11, and \$25 per bowler after that. You can download a registration form off our Web site.

You don't have to be a pro bowler to have fun! We'll even spot you a few strikes! All proceeds from this fundraiser for PFLAG/Dallas go to our "billboards against intolerance" fund, so come join the fun!

Many thanks to the Texas Gay Rodeo for contributing \$319!

*Pat Smith, Co-president, PFLAG/Dallas*

## Gephardt 'ashamed' of Bush

*by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff*

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Richard Gephardt has delivered a rousing denunciation of the Bush administration's support for a constitutional ban on gay marriage.

Gephardt (D-Missouri) was speaking at an awards ceremony organized by PFLAG in Washington. He and his wife Jane joined the organization shortly after he began his short-lived presidential campaign last year.

"We are members of PFLAG and we are proud members of PFLAG and we're very proud of our daughter Chrissy Gephardt and her partner, Amy, who's here tonight and we love both of them a lot," Gephardt said.

"We were supportive as any parent should be. We love Chrissy unconditionally and we supported her in every way that we knew how and could."

He then attacked the Bush marriage policy: "I must tell you I am ashamed when top leaders in this country and citizens of this country and even the president of the United States suggest ... that there should be an amendment to the constitution to take away rights from people rather than giving rights to people."

The congressman is part of a public service announcement campaign featuring nationally recognized figures posing with gay and lesbian family members in hopes of encouraging other families of gays and lesbians to stay close.

Chrissy Gephardt recently was hired by National Stonewall Democrats to lead the organization's new Grassroots Campaign Corps, aimed at organizing GLBT students across the country. She also is involved in the Victory Fund which helps raise campaign money for gay politicians.

## *Bush* from page two

There is a suspicion, however, that these particular activities may pre-date the spike in same-sex marriages.

President Bush is adamant marriage inspectors have had plenty of time to conduct their searches. The fact that they haven't found evidence is proof that traditional marriages are being hurt in unseen, and ultimately more sinister, ways.

In a related development, the White House has said there might be some support for same-sex couples referring to their union as a marriage, so long as they spell it differently.

A number of alternative spellings has been offered by the Bush administration, including "marridge," "mayrij," "marriadje," "marritch," and one from the president himself: "marriage." When it was pointed out to the president that that was the actual spelling, he was said to have no comment.

But the administration remained firm in its opposition to letting any partner in a same-sex marriage refer to the other as the "old ball and chain." "That's an expression reserved for a union consisting of a man and a woman," the White House maintained.

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