



Parents, Families & Friends
of Lesbians And Gays

PFLAG WAVER

Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians And Gays/Dallas

July, 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

DALLAS – www.pflagdallas.org

PFLAG/Dallas

(Newsletter and all correspondence)
P.O. Box 111148 • Carrollton, TX 75011

972/777 PFLAG

(972/777-3524)

PFLAG/Dallas Co-presidents:

Donna Akin – 972/443-1422

pflagdonna@yahoo.com

Pat Smith – 214/538-2574

psmith@pflagdallas.org

Newsletter

Phone 972/418-1898

Fax 972/417-0880

newsletter@pflagdallas.org

Newsletter Deadline:

July 8, 2004

by mail, fax or e-mail

Next Meeting

July 8, 2004

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

Midway Hills Christian Church

11001 Midway Road, Dallas

Black Tie Dinner: 'An American Celebration'

The Dallas Fort Worth Black Tie Dinner has unveiled plans for this year's dinner Oct. 23 which include former presidential candidate and U.S. Senator Carol Moseley Braun as keynote speaker, HRC president Cheryl Jacques in her inaugural address to Dinner attendees, Representative Martin Frost, and gay icon Martha Wash.

Rounding out the program is the presentation of this year's Elizabeth Birch Equality Award, which will be given to Showtime Networks for their groundbreaking LGBT programming. For over 20 years Showtime has produced quality LGBT programming which has set the standard for others and has significantly impacted tolerance and equality across the country. Accepting the award will be openly gay Showtime president Robert Greenblatt, and members of "Queer as Folk" and "The L Word" casts.

"Other than Elizabeth [Birch, for whom the award was named], this is the first time we have given the award and Showtime perfectly fits the criterion of having made a significant national impact on lesbian and gay equality," said Pam Clayton, co-chair of the Dinner. "We don't know yet who they'll bring from 'Queer as Folk' or 'The L Word', but we're thrilled to have the celebrity element in the dinner. It always adds excitement."

Co-chair Scott Dinsmore added, "Our mission to educate, entertain and empower is right on target this year. As keynote speaker, Carol Mosley Braun will deliver an incredible, empowering and eloquent address. Her dedication to civil rights for all Americans, unfaltering support of lesbian and gay issues, and recent experience as a presidential candidate make her the perfect speaker for this year's 'American Celebration', which – talk about timing – is less than two weeks before the presidential election.

"We are also excited," Dinsmore continued, "to have Cheryl Jacques join us this year for the first time. It will be timely to hear her take on the upcoming election and marriage equality. She's from Boston and is forgoing the

Boston HRC Dinner – scheduled for the same night she'll be attending ours. I think that shows HRC's amazing commitment to support the Black Tie Dinner and we thank her."

Representative Martin Frost will be on hand to introduce Ms. Braun, while diva Martha Wash, long known for her support of the lesbian and gay community, will open the evening. A live orchestra and an appearance by the Turtle Creek Chorale, a community favorite, will add to the evening's entertainment. Plans for surprise guests and entertainment are still in the works and announcements will be forthcoming.

Returning as celebrity emcee is Dallas' Chris Jagger, 102.1 The Edge radio personality and host of the television show "Change of Heart." Jagger will be welcoming and entertaining guests during Pre-Dinner activities of the live auction.

A variety of events are planned for the Dinner, Oct. 23 at the Wyndham Anatole in Dallas, including:

- The presentation of the Raymond Kuchling Humanitarian Award, kept confidential until the night of the Dinner;
- A revamped silent auction and a live luxury auction during the dinner; and
- The drawing for two vehicles in the Dinner's annual raffle, courtesy of University Park Audi.

"Our theme, 'An American Celebration,' is especially significant right now. With the attacks our community has endured regarding marriage equality, and because of recent advances such as the *Lawrence vs. Texas* decision, it's important we celebrate America and our right to strive for equality. We have a long way to go, but we've already made huge strides and it's no time to back down. Despite the fact we are lesbian and gay, we are first and foremost Americans," added Dinsmore.

3,200 guests attended last year's Dinner that netted \$865,000 to local and national beneficiaries, increasing the 23-year cumulative fundraising total to nearly \$7 million.

See Black Tie, page two

PFLAG/Dallas appreciates your continued support.

AMA supports adoption for gay partners

by Jim Ritter, Health Reporter
Chicago Sun Times

Boston medical student Jana Montgomery was working in the emergency room when a five-year-old car accident victim was brought in.

The boy's mother was out of town. Her lesbian partner, who in effect was the boy's second parent, wanted to be with him. But since she wasn't his legal parent, the hospital wouldn't allow it.

Montgomery said, "It certainly was not in the best interest of the child."

Montgomery, a delegate to the American Medical Association, cited the case during floor debate on gay adoption. Delegates voted 316 to 130 to support allowing partners in same-sex couples to adopt children.

Courts in 20 states, including Illinois, are willing to allow the second parent in same-sex couples to adopt, according to a 2002 study by the Human Rights Campaign, a gay rights group.

Ten states have "poor records" on gay adoptions, and three states prohibit such adoptions, the group said. It could not determine court policies in the remaining states.

Studies have found that children of same-sex couples do as well as children of heterosexual couples, said Dr. Richard Pan, a California pediatrician.

"Science supports that same-sex couples should be able to adopt children," Pan said.

Other advocates said second parent adoption rights would ensure a child would be eligible for health benefits from both parents, and both parents could participate in the child's health care, education, etc. Moreover, if the couple were to separate, the second parent would have custody and visitation rights. And both parents could be responsible for child support.

Delegates who voted against second parent adoption rights said the issue is a legal matter outside the purview of the AMA.

The AMA is following the lead of the American Academy of Pediatrics, which endorsed second parent adoption rights in 2002.

"Children deserve to know that their relationships with both of their parents are stable and legally recognized," the academy said. "This applies to all children, whether their parents are of the same or opposite sex."

In other action, the AMA declared a morning-after contraceptive pill should be made available over-the-counter, movies that show people smoking should be rated R and elementary schools should provide at least 30 minutes of recess a day to combat obesity.

Black Tie from page one

"We raise the amount of money we do because of astonishing community support - like University Park Audi which is giving us two 2004 Audis to raffle off this year," said Clayton. "We are grateful for their continued support both within and outside of their dealership. To have stepped up this year with two cars and a lovely sponsor event to become our presenting sponsor is a gift we can all be proud of."

Tickets for this year's Dinner are now on sale at all sponsorship levels. For sponsorship information, contact Susan Spalter at 972-733-9200, ext. 4.

General tickets are \$300 per person, sold in tables of 10, with the chance for a table chosen by lottery draw August 21, 2004 at 11 a.m. in the Wedgwood Room at the Wyndham Anatole. Individual tickets, if any, will be made available after that date. Since a sell-out is anticipated, guests are urged to plan early. Contact Randy Ray at 972-733-9200, ext. 7, for more information regarding tickets. To sit at a PFLAG table, call Donna at 972-443-1422 to buy a ticket.

Raffle tickets for the choice of a 2004 Audi TT Roadster or 2004 Audi A-4 3.0 Cabriolet are \$100, and may be purchased from any board member or beneficiary organization, or by contacting Reid Ainsworth at 972-733-9200, ext. 5. Only 2,000 raffle tickets will be sold. PFLAG has a limited number still available; call Donna at 972-443-1422

For information about the dinner and updates as they become available, visit the Black Tie Dinner Web site at www.blacktie.org.



Think!

Is an atheist allowed to legally get married?

Because if yes, it proves that civil marriage has nothing to do with religion!

lifted from PFLAG/LA's June-July newsletter

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Gay plan commissioner slain in his loft in south Dallas

by David Webb, Senior Editor
Dallas Voice

Lawrence Wheat, a member of the Dallas Plan Commission, died late June 5 after he was savagely beaten at his residence, authorities said.

Police responding to an emergency call found Wheat at about 11 p.m. lying unconscious in his loft on South Harwood Street. Residents of the small gated complex called 911 20 minutes earlier and reported screams coming from Wheat's loft.

Wheat was taken to Baylor University Medical Center, where a doctor pronounced him dead at about 11:30 p.m.

Witnesses saw a man running from the complex adjacent to an industrial area south of downtown.

Detectives are reviewing a similar homicide three months ago to determine if the same killer could be involved.

Wheat also may have suffered strangulation, according to the Dallas County medical examiner's office.

Investigators are unsure of the motive for Wheat's killing, and said they had not determined whether any property was missing from Wheat's apartment, according to Sgt. Gary Kirkpatrick, a homicide supervisor.

There was no sign of forced entry, authorities said.

Dallas Mayor Pro Tem John Loza called Wheat a good friend of several years. Wheat worked on Loza's political campaigns before the City Council member appointed him to the Dallas Community Development Commission and later to the Plan Commission, of which he was chairman of the Zoning Ordinance Advisory Committee.

The council member said that he doubted anything about Wheat's lifestyle contributed to his murder.

"Larry was a very cautious person, and certainly I don't think he ever put himself in harm's way," Loza said. "I don't have any reason to believe he was doing anything that would have been risky or could have led to something like this."

The victim had a large circle of friends, Loza said.

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Oak Lawn neighborhood activist Frank Stich said that he admired Wheat's work on the Plan Commission.

"I hate the fact that we have lost him in the city – not just because of all the hard work he did, but just because of the quality of person he was," Stich said. "We've lost a very hardworking, dedicated, good person."

Wheat, a native of Big Spring, was graduated from Texas Christian University with a bachelor's degree in music. His major was classical piano performance. He obtained a master's degree in architecture from the University of Texas. He moved to Dallas from Austin in the late 1980s.

Wheat's interest in urban renewal led him to the south-of-downtown neighborhood where he lived – and died.

Police are comparing Wheat's case to another killing three months ago in Oak Cliff to see if the same killer might be involved.

Interior designer James Stephen Watts was beaten to death March 13 in his Kessler Park home, Kirkpatrick said. Like Wheat, the Oak Cliff man died from blunt force trauma to the head. There were no signs of strangulation, he added.

"We're looking at the cases and comparing physical evidence," Kirkpatrick said. "We can't say that there are any definite links, but we still are checking to make sure we don't overlook anything."

Stich said he hopes investigators will vigorously pursue the case. Living in Oak Lawn since the 1970s, Stich said he has observed numerous unsolved killings of gay men.

"I have seen countless murders more or less ignored through disinterest," Stich said. "These sort of things can just sort of disappear."

Kirkpatrick said that police are interviewing Wheat's neighbors, friends and family members in an effort to determine his whereabouts in the hours before his death.

The person seen running from the complex was described as a white or Hispanic man in his mid-20s. He was less than 6 feet tall, weighed about 175 lbs. and had brown hair, police said they were told by a witness.

Loza said he plans to monitor the investigation.

"I certainly will be keeping on top of it, and I certainly hope they can find that person and bring them to justice," Loza said. "They're going to do everything they can."

E-mail webb@dallasvoice.com

12 reasons same-sex marriage will ruin society

from GatorGSA

www.12reasons.com

1. Homosexuality is not natural, much like eyeglasses, polyester, and birth control are not natural.
2. Heterosexual marriages are valid because they produce children. Infertile couples and old people cannot get legally married because the world needs more children.
3. Obviously gay parents will raise gay children because straight parents only raise straight children.
4. Straight marriage will be less meaningful, since Britney Spears's 55-hour just-for-fun marriage was meaningful.
5. Heterosexual marriage has been around for a long time, and it hasn't changed at all: women are property, Blacks can't marry whites, and divorce is illegal.
6. Gay marriage should be decided by the people, not the courts, because the majority-elected legislatures, not courts, have historically protected the rights of minorities.
7. Gay marriage is not supported by religion. In a theocracy like ours, the values of one religion are always imposed on the entire country. That's why we only have one religion in America.
8. Gay marriage will encourage people to be gay, in the same way that hanging around tall people makes you tall.
9. Legalizing gay marriage will open the door to all kinds of crazy behavior. People may even wish to marry their pets because a dog has legal standing and can sign a marriage license.
10. Children can never succeed without both male and female role models at home. That's why single parents are forbidden to raise children.
11. Gay marriage will change the foundation of society. Heterosexual marriage has been around for a long time, and we could never adapt to new social norms because we haven't adapted to cars or longer lifespans.
12. Civil unions, providing most of the same benefits as marriage with a different name, are better, because a "separate but equal" institution is always constitutional. Separate schools for African-Americans worked just as well as separate marriages will for gays and lesbians.

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Are your 2004 dues paid?

Membership dues of 62 members remain unpaid. Please catch up! We need you and your many contributions.

Page Four

From the President

Hey, Puddin's!

Happy Fourth of July, and Happy National Ice Cream Month!

In this month that celebrates freedom, imagine how it would be not to be free to be yourself, to have to pretend to be someone you're not. I know of several people who thought they were straight, only to find they were really lesbian or gay. They never had the freedom to be who they were, because they never questioned someone else's definition of who they were.

These people had been in long-term straight marriages. Asked why they didn't know sooner that they were lesbian or gay, many reply, "I didn't really know; I just knew something was missing."

June's speakers were two dads who were doing what was expected of them. They never questioned their deep feelings for other men because they didn't give themselves the freedom to do so. Had they been free to be themselves, the hurt and anger that attended their coming out could've been avoided.

These men were pillars of their communities. One was a leader in his Baptist church. The families looked perfect from the outside. But something was missing. They weren't sure what it was, just a nagging feeling that their life wasn't complete. They had everything a man could want, a wife and children, prestige ... but no passion. Passion's overrated. Just Hollywood. Real life isn't like that, right?

But those nagging feelings for other men kept emerging: feelings that made them feel passionate and alive; feelings that surfaced in lucid moments, when they were honest with themselves, when they realized they were not really free. Finally those passionate feelings washed over them like a tsunami.

Never having acted on those feelings, these dads were confused and lost. Why was it so bad to have an attraction to a member of the same sex? Why did they have to live in an emotional prison for the rest of their lives?

Because they had responsibilities. They'd made marriage vows. They had children, an image to uphold at all costs.

One man felt so vile that he decided to kill himself. As he sat on a deserted beach, gun in hand, he thought about his daughters. They deserved a gay dad more than a dead dad. How was he serving them if he died? So he drove back home to make amends; to free himself and everyone else from that perfect-family prison.

People who realized that they were lesbian or gay later in life ended up divorcing their spouses. It's best for everyone, because everyone deserves to have passion, deserves to have a whole life. People always say that they feel complete when they come out. They feel free. In fact, the whole family is freed.

PFLAG helps struggling parents understand that their lesbian or gay child is normal. When parents support their child, they are able to grow into someone who can choose a partner and enter into authentic relationships. They can come out and reclaim their rightful place. Being authentic saves lives. It's true freedom.

Don't forget our Fabulous Family Flamingo Fling Sunday, Aug. 22, 1-5 p.m. Get your teams ready for an afternoon of fun at Don Carter's West Bowling Center.

I thank Pat Stone for nominating me for the Extra Mile Award, given all around the country to people who have gone that extra mile for their local LGBT community. It means a lot to me to have been nominated by one of my PFLAG mentors.

Pat Smith

Happy birthday, Voice!

Friday, June 18, I joined an eclectic crowd of well-wishers to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the *Dallas VOICE*.

The stunning venue was the Frontiers of Flight Museum, and the chefs were inspired to create delicious nibbles and noshes.

I saw old friends, met new ones, and enjoyed the view of buff young bodies in muscle shirts. And I had my first pink martini. Won't be my last, I promise you!

The drinks flowed freely, the food was plentiful, the speeches were interesting and brief: "the way we were" was pure nostalgia.

It's difficult to recall that the *VOICE* is only 20 years old. In those two decades, they have reported – and supported – constant changes in the lives of Dallas-area GLBTs. No doubt their next two decades will report even more changes as we all travel together toward equality.

Thanks, *VOICE*, for a great party and a great paper.

–Ladye Sparks

'Not on my watch!'

by Ladye Sparks, editor
PFLAG Update

Such a hooraw! With all the problems we have in our country, so many of our leaders, political and otherwise, are wasting their time and ours by railing against same-sex marriage. I can only believe they want to be remembered as standing firm against the ungodly gays. But remembered by whom?

They have to know that gay marriage is coming, that it's only a matter of time until it's the law of the land – a land that will still stand, with marriages that continue unchanged – but maybe that's what's the matter. Time.

In time, the do-nothings will be out of office. Younger, smarter, less prejudiced legislators will wonder aloud what the fuss was about. Prohibitive laws will be rescinded, and families will continue to grow and love each other.

In time, incumbents will start thinking about their constituents instead of their cronies, about the ones who voted them in – and can vote them out – instead of the ones who paid for their votes.

In time, the loud and angry voices will grow too old to shout, and may even realize that shouting is only sound, not substance.

In time, even Phelps and will pass and be forgotten with the rest.

Our time will come. Perhaps not in their time, but in our time, we will have the rights and privileges GLBTs deserve as American citizens. It's just a matter of time.

Guess who's coming to PFLAG?

Just one of our favorite columnists in the whole wide world! Or, at least, in the Dallas area!

Dallas Morning News writer Steve Blow will speak to us at the October meeting. Blow has been a long-time friend of PFLAG, and is an interesting speaker: insightful, humorous, respectful of his readers.

His last visit to PFLAG resulted in the largest-ever attendance. Plan to be with us Thursday, Oct. 14, to make him welcome once again. We promise you'll find it a worthwhile experience.