



Parents, Families & Friends  
of Lesbians And Gays

# PFLAG WEAVER

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

November, 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.



#### 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:

November 13, 2003

by mail, fax or e-mail

### Next Meeting

November 13, 2003

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

Midway Hills Christian Church

11001 Midway Road, Dallas

## TCC, 'Patsy Cline' shine at Cho show

by Ladye Sparks

In honor of Margaret Cho's receiving the PFLAG "Voice of Freedom" award, the Turtle Creek Chorale and featured artist "Patsy Cline" really played all their Western strings.

Decked out in blue jeans, boots and vests ranging from satin to sequins to stripes to ... you get the picture, I think ... the boys, led by Dr. Tim Selig, did Dallas proud.

"Miss Patsy Cline," in a pink Cinderella strapless gown, performed "She's Got You" with style, grace and innumerable props which she hauled out of her dress: 45 records, a box of tissues one at a time, a handsaw, a golf club, and finally a crutch, among other goodies. It took five guys to clear the stage after she left it.



Before the evening's program, we enjoyed a cocktail party at the Apparel Mart showrooms of Dave and Joyce Gleason. Dave was kinda Western in boots, jeans and vest; Joyce had on suede boots, a pale buckskin handkerchief hem suede skirt, and a beige lace and voile shirt. She was *fancy* Western.

The PFLAG Dallas board was asked to dress Western, and co-president Pat and ye editor took that to heart. We were smashing!

The buffet dinner was delicious, and the birthday cakes in honor of PFLAG's 30th birthday were clever ... and tasty ... centerpieces.



The TCC arrayed themselves around almost half the five-story Great Hall at the International Apparel Mart, decorated with PFLAG banners from many of the 24 PFLAG Texas chapters. Their songs ranged from funny to bawdy to sentimental, and evoked their usual range of emotions from the listeners.

City Councilman Ed Oakley told us coming-out stories and presented Cho with a key to the city. It took both of them to tear it open, and Margaret was delighted to find the key was crystal. Then PFLAG National President David Tseng presented her the first-ever "Voice of Freedom" award, another crystal keepsake the size and shape of the famous crystal ball. Turns out she likes crystal, so we punched *all* her buttons!

Cho wore a pale aqua bias-cut slinky dress short enough to fully display her gold leather Western boots with at least 5" spike heels. She was seated below the dais, and climbed – no, clambered – up the side of the steps to get her pricy crystalline tchotchkes.

Then she launched into her "acceptance" speech ... not her accepting the shiny stuff, but everybody accepting GLBTs. Her parents ran a book store in San Francisco, and her babysitters were store employees, "mostly gay and more than one drag queen," said Cho. They helped to form her early acceptance of different orientations when they told her, "It's about love. Men can love men and women can love women, and it's all love."



In her stand-up act, Cho preaches tolerance of diversity. At the awards dinner, she became so incensed she said the "F" word, as a suggestion of what to do to bigots, as I recall. The assembled parents gave a tiny gasp and a loud ovation. It was a proud moment.

This was PFLAG's first "Voice of Freedom" award, but it was by no means the first award Cho has received from our community. She was given GLAAD's first-ever Golden Gate Award – honoring her as "an entertainment pioneer who has made a significant difference in promoting equal rights for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity."

Mathew St. Patrick ("Six Feet Under") and Cho were honorees at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force "Honoring Our Allies" fundraiser.

She also accepted the "Intrepid Award" from the National Organization for Women.



As Pat mentioned last month, Cho flew in between shows to accept her award from PFLAG. We're so glad she could be here, and so glad she does what she does for us.

### Annual Meeting/Election of Officers

November is our Annual Meeting and Election of Officers. Members were mailed slates of officers and instructions for nominating alternates. Be sure to come vote.

# 'Gay fatigue' claims another in its grip

by Steve Blow  
The Dallas Morning News

I think I have "gay fatigue."  
Don't worry, it's not catching. But I suspect that many of you have contracted it, too.

Let's talk.

Remember a few years ago when there was lots of talk about "compassion fatigue"? The news confronted us with so many problems, so the theory went, that our ability to feel compassion simply wore out.

If nothing else, it made a nice excuse for indifference.

But to some degree, it also made sense. And that's why I think I'm now suffering from gay fatigue. I'm just feeling kind of overwhelmed.

My moment of self-diagnosis came recently when I was looking through a list of upcoming movies on the Sundance Channel. That's a cable TV channel that shows independent films.

The movie descriptions read something like this:

"... the story of a brooding young lesbian coming to terms with her sexuality in the 1950s."

"... the story of a misunderstood gay teen confronting homosexuality, gangs and poor decorating in Brooklyn."

"... the story of a transgendered Jewish poet's struggle to reconcile love, faith and verse."

I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. But I sure didn't want to watch.

I know I have a fairly acute case of gay fatigue because I have lost the will to watch "Will & Grace."

Jack, who once seemed so funny, now just seems annoying. One less penis joke per episode would probably help.

And this is one straight guy who wouldn't let those Queer Eye guys anywhere near him. I could use their help. I just couldn't stand all their yapping.

My gay fatigue is distressing because I have long had a heart for gay people. Life has given them a raw deal.

I didn't choose whether I would be attracted to men or women. Those circuits got wired without my say-so. (But I'm happy with the way things turned out, if I may say so.)

Gays and lesbians don't get to choose their wiring, either. Yet their wiring subjects them to ridicule, discrimination, beatings and Jerry Falwell. That's not right.

So thank goodness for all the progress that has been made in righting wrongs.

Yet, at the same time, I can't deny my fatigue. It's the cumulative effect of so much controversy. Everything I watch and every

thing I read seems to dwell on the subject these days. If it's not irate Episcopalians, it's Britney and Madonna kissing.

We're guilty, too. Yesterday there was a special "National Coming Out Day" advertising section in the newspaper.

How about a "National Please Shut Up Day," I wanted to say.

Look, I'm not happy about these feelings. I don't want to be Archie Bunker barking, "Put a sock in it!" But on the other hand, maybe it's helpful to acknowledge such feelings and talk about them.

I suspect such fatigue has always been with us because society is always changing. And change is hard.

The pollsters talk a lot these days about a "gay backlash." After years of society's growing acceptance of gays, now there's a reverse trend of sorts.

My guess is that it's not really a deep change of heart. Most folks still support equal rights for gays. It's just gay fatigue. We're tired, and we're cranky.

Let's face it. Society is in the midst of enormous change on this issue. It's no wonder nerves are frazzled. The deal we once made with gays was this: You stay invisible, let us pretend you don't exist, and everything will be OK.

It's not surprising that once gays did kick open the closet door, they were more than a little miffed – and clamoring for attention. "We're here, we're queer, get used to it," as the chant went.

Maybe ... it's time to simply reply, "You're gay, OK, we get it."

The irony is that most gay folks I know want nothing more than to live quiet, ordinary lives. Home. Church. Job. Family.

That's what all the fuss is about. And when that's won, peace and quiet is the prize we all will reap.

*E-mail sblow@dallasnews.com.*

## Letter: Column misguided

A note of thanks for Steve Blow's comments on the subject of "gay fatigue." I have lately found myself suffering from a wicked bad case of it, too.

Talk about tired! Imagine spending 20 years organizing fund-raisers, political support, lobbying efforts and writing check after check to support the very few fair-minded leaders who believe that I deserve the same rights in this country as Mr. Blow does and still coming up short every time.

Add that to answering the desperate phone calls of those pesky teenagers who have been thrown out of their homes and are on the verge of suicide because their parents found out they are gay. I am bushed just thinking about it!

*See "Gay" on page 3*



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## *'Gay fatigue' claims another in its grip* from page 2

Let's not forget attending hundreds of funerals of friends and loved ones with a disease that was ignored because it "only happened to gay men."

What about all the time it takes to amass the necessary legal paperwork for the simple right to be admitted to the hospital room of the person I have shared my life and home with for 10 years?

The good news is that every once in a while I read the words of a condescending and misguided fool who thinks he is being cute about the struggle for my equality. That re-energizes me, particularly when they come on the day of observance of the anniversary of the death of a young man named Matthew Shepard who was beaten and tied to a fence and left to die because he was gay.

Thanks for the lift, Steve! And great timing!

*Karen McCrocklin, chair,*

*Walt Whitman Community School board of directors, Dallas*

### **Letter: Another side to 'fatigue'**

Thanks to Steve Blow and *The Dallas Morning News* for "'Gay fatigue': Ready for a break?" (Oct. 12). Mr. Blow's description of this phenomenon was so accurate and honest that it was a pleasure to read even as my heart sank with "Uh-oh, another tired ally."

I concur with Mr. Blow that, in some parts of society, we're being overwhelmed by us – or, worse, by stereotypes of some of us. My queer eye has no sense of male couture, and I know people like Jack on "Will & Grace" and, trust me, they're not "on" all the time.

But if "gay fatigue" happens to our straight allies, think about what happens to us. Imagine how tiring it is to regularly live in fear because of who you are. Consider having to "come out" (or hide) every day you live. But, worst, think about being forced to conform to other people's religious beliefs and be denied your 14th Amendment civil rights because their heterosexist religion commands it.

*Donald Cavanaugh, South Palm Beach, Fla.*

### **Letter: Blow's defense of gays rings hollow**

Steve Blow's Oct. 12 column reminded me of the person who tells a racial/religious joke and then tries to excuse it by saying, "But some of my best friends are ..."

His defense of gays and the "raw deal" dealt by life rang hollow. Would he have done a column about any other minority? Would he ever have written that he is tired of seeing black faces on TV and in movies? Or brown? Or female? Or that his employer was "guilty" of publishing an ad promoting pride in being Irish? Or Italian? Or tall?

I'm gay, and I find "Will & Grace" and "Queer Eye" as annoying as Mr. Blow does. But I'll make him a deal. When he's been exposed to the same number of annoying gay characters in TV and movies as the number of annoying straight characters I've been exposed to, we'll call it even.

*Kevin Keating, Dallas*

## *'Fatigue' a divisive diagnosis*

*by Steve Blow*

Boy, am I dumb.

In Sunday's column, I confessed to a case of "gay fatigue" – a weariness of the never-ending controversies over gay-related issues.

And what was the result of that column? More controversy! I think I'm now in a "gay coma."

The critics may contend I was in a coma when I wrote it.

At the risk of spreading gay fatigue even further, let's talk a little more. One hope for that first column was that it would help us continue to talk openly and honestly.

Thank goodness, many readers – gay and straight – understood just what I was trying to say and said, "Me, too." But many others found plenty to criticize.

The critics generally fell into two camps – those who hated the top half of the column and those who hated the bottom half.

The top-half crowd just didn't like the whole idea of gay fatigue. "You've given me 'Baptist fatigue,'" wrote one droll correspondent.

Fair enough. I suffer that myself on a pretty regular basis.

Maybe the comment I liked best was this one: "If you think you have gay fatigue, try being gay!"

Indeed, my weariness must be nothing compared to those who wrestle with all these controversies – and face the daily threat of being beaten up by some redneck or fired by a homophobe boss.

Walking in those shoes would undoubtedly give you a whole different perspective.

But I guess I wrote that column primarily for the 96 or 97 percent of us who face these issues from a heterosexual perspective. And fatigue is what so many of us are feeling.

I think the issue is worth discussing because that fatigue can quickly morph into something much uglier – from "I'm sick of gay controversy" to "I'm sick of gays."

A whole different set of critics didn't like the bottom half of the column. That's where I made clear that, despite my fatigue, I strongly believe in equal rights for gays and do not believe they "choose" to be homosexual.

I heard a lot of warnings about the "gay agenda." And a Garland resident wrote, "Make no mistake, homosexuality is an abnormal lifestyle. It is just wanton sexual appetites running out of control."

OK, and to be honest, a few didn't like either half. "Congrats, Steve! It has been a while since I have read an article where the writer was so articulate in talking from both sides of his mouth," said an anonymous note. "Not only are you a bigot, but a jerk as well."

I'm relieved to have also had many, many "amens." And yes, even from gays and lesbians themselves.

A Dallas resident wrote, "I'm a gay man and I am getting worn out from all the gay talk of the past few months. Having that same button pushed constantly ... is exhausting."

I loved this response from another gay man: "Having everything on TV and in our culture scream, 'gay, Gay, GAY,' gets pretty tiresome. Also, I'm afraid that it hurts the cause of gay civil rights to continue to put, as my former pastor used to say, beans up people's noses about the issue."

Beans up the nose? Well, that's a new one on me. But I sure understood the point.

Several readers made the excellent point that my fatigue really has more to do with modern media – the bombardment of nonstop news and the copycat nature of entertainment.

As one man wrote: "Also I suffer from trash fatigue, sex fatigue, violence fatigue, special effects fatigue, political fatigue, Laci Peterson fatigue, Kobe Bryant fatigue, 'expert' fatigue, and probably several other fatigues I cannot think of right now. (Can I get some type of disability for this?)"

Of all the responses, I'm most disturbed by those who say my column fueled prejudice against gays. "Giving the green light to gay bashing," as one man wrote.

*See "Gay" on page 4*

# Page Four

Hey, Puddin's,

Happy Thanksgiving!

What are you thankful for?

I am thankful I am lesbian. I am thankful I have support in PFLAG. Our PFLAG parents, families and friends provide the support that some gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders need. Some people would argue that GLBT people should not be part of PFLAG, that we should not be leaders, or even be in meetings. These people argue that PFLAG is for struggling parents who don't want to have any GLBT people around. They need a place where they can vent their sadness, frustration and anger. They need to do this venting to other parents who've been there.

I understand. I didn't know that we were welcome at PFLAG, until I was invited by Dan and Pat Stone who told me it was imperative that GLBT people be at meetings. Some parents really need to talk to us. We've helped many parents who are struggling. True, we're not straight parents, but we belong at PFLAG, side by side with straight people.

Sometimes people who are confused and hurt lash out at anyone who reminds them of their situation. Some parents are very angry at their GLBT children, so they are mad at all GLBT people. People who have a problem with GLBT people at PFLAG are missing the point. PFLAG is about inclusion, not exclusion.

Some parents will never be comfortable with their child. These parents will never be comfortable around gay people, not really. Especially not around a gay person who is comfortable in who they are. PFLAG parents are available to talk with at our meetings. They understand the feelings that come up when a child comes out. They totally understand the situation. They understand that tolerance and acceptance are a process. No one has to go this journey alone. The journey starts with an open mind.

I speak for all GLBT people – we are thankful for all of the courageous parents, families and friends involved with PFLAG. I have met some wonderful people from all over the country. People who understand and love their GLBT family member or friend. Our national board works very hard to educate an ill-informed public. PFLAG is a grassroots organization. The national staff and board are the blades of grass, and we as individual chapters are the roots. Our biological and extended families make up the soil. We all need each other to grow and flourish. And the result is a beautiful field of green.



Our strong presence at the Pride Parade was appreciated by all who applauded as PFLAG went by. PFLAG Dallas, Fort Worth, Denton and Abilene were represented. A national field director, Marti Bier, joined us! Rumor has it that our float even made it on the news!

National PFLAG's 30th Birthday Party was a big success! The national board was taken to the 6th Floor Museum, the State Fair and the Cathedral of Hope. Saturday night the pioneers of all of the 24 chapters in Texas were honored. Judy Shepard was given an award as well. Saturday was just a few days after the fifth anniversary of her son's tragic hate crime murder.

Sunday night, comedienne Margaret Cho was given PFLAG's "Voice of Freedom Award." She called everyone there "Accidental Activists." She also received a crystal key to the city.

Kathy Massey of PFLAG Denton, her son Chris Wallace, Dave Gleason of PFLAG Dallas and PFLAG Texas, and many volunteers helped make the weekend happen. Some people don't get credit they deserve as volunteers. I've seen it many times.

But it's not about keys to a city, national awards, recognition

from the podium or a name in a program. It's about inclusion and tolerance.



If anyone is interested, PFLAG gets group discounts for upcoming Dallas Summer Musicals. If you are interested in going to a show, let us know!



Dallas Voice reporter Arnold Wayne Jones is looking for coming-out stories involving PFLAG parents and their GLBT children for the "Out this Week" section of the Voice. If you are interested, contact him at [jones@dallasvoice.com](mailto:jones@dallasvoice.com). You will be required to send him a picture to use in the Voice.

**Pat Smith**

*Co-president*

*Editor's Note: Pat was concerned that she came on "too strong" in her column. I disagree. Let me add that parents who are worn raw by their own GLBT children need the opportunity to meet not only with parents but with other GLBTs on whom they can concentrate with no emotional component. As they see that GLBTs can be personable, capable, compassionate individuals, they can begin to see that their own children are the same as they have always been, and as deserving of love as ever.*

*Ladye Sparks*

▼▼▼  
**Circus officials deny claims of unhappy customers, poorly treated animals**

*or, Let's lump PFLAG in with the KKK*

*by Terri Jo Ryan*

*Waco Tribune-Herald staff writer*

Sterling & Reid Brothers Circus, billing itself as "the most spectacular show on earth," arrived recently for a two-day, four-performance gig at Heritage Square.

Although the circus promoters say they have a good show, they have received numerous citations and complaints from federal agencies and consumer watchdog organizations.

*Irrelevant verbiage omitted*

Although some Waco residents would prefer that Heritage Square not be leased to organizations like the Ku Klux Klan, PFLAG or anti-abortion activists, said Larry Holze, director of municipal information, "we have to be equal opportunity renters; we can't discriminate."

*Irrelevant verbiage omitted*

**Please** call or e-mail Holze and express your displeasure at our being included in this less-than-savory list: (254) 750-5636 or e-mail [larryh@ci.waco.tx.us](mailto:larryh@ci.waco.tx.us).



**'Gay fatigue' claims another...** *from page 3*

My hope was to do exactly the opposite – to help me and others defuse our gay fatigue by seeing it for what it is, a natural byproduct of change and of controversy.

There were three small, important words in that first column: "Change is hard."

Maybe I should have left it at that.

*Editor's Note: This was a very long story, but I felt that the Steve Blow columns and responses deserved this much room. PFLAG member Pat Stone wrote a great letter hitting on the points mentioned as well.*

*Don't forget to come and vote at the November meeting. The date is Nov. 13; the time is 7 p.m.*