



Parents, Families & Friends  
of Lesbians And Gays

# PFLAG WAVER

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

December, 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

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

**972/777 PFLAG**

(972/777-3524)

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#### Newsletter

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#### Newsletter Deadline:

December 11, 2003

by mail, fax or e-mail

### Next Meeting

December 11, 2003

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

Midway Hills Christian Church

11001 Midway Road, Dallas

## This could be your last PFLAG Waver

by Ladye Sparks

Editor

PFLAG Waver

Or not; it's your choice.

This is the situation: PFLAG/Dallas is spending nearly \$4,000 annually on producing and mailing the newsletter.

This would go quite a way toward billboards or bus signs, among our goals for 2004.

We offer three ways for you to receive your newsletter:

1. Become a PFLAG/Dallas member and get it in the mail as part of your membership. Nothing changes. **Your 2004 dues are payable now.** There's a membership application on the Web site; mail it and your check to the address indicated. Individual – \$20; Family – \$30; Bronze Patron – \$100; Silver Patron – \$200; Gold Patron – \$300; Benefactor / Life Member – \$500.

2. Access the newsletter at our Web site. If you like this option, send me an e-mail at [newsletter@pflagdallas.org](mailto:newsletter@pflagdallas.org), including the name your newsletter is mailed to and your zip code. I will take you off the mailing list, and put your name on an e-mail list so we can contact you and tell you when the newsletter is posted each month. From the Web site, you can print the

PFLAG Waver and share it with your friends or put it in the library for easy reading.

The advantages are that we would not be limited to four pages: five, six or seven would be possible without extra expense, and we could use more pictures and more color.

Disadvantages? I can't think of any.

3. If you lack Internet access and don't want to become a PFLAG/Dallas member, send \$5 to PFLAG Waver, c/o Ladye Sparks, P. O. Box 111148, Carrollton, TX 75011-1148. Nothing will change.

Or, if you've grown past the newsletter and don't care to receive it any longer, do nothing. Unless I hear from you one way or the other, I'll drop you from the list for the February issue.

So it's all up to you. Nothing can change, or everything can change. One thing is sure: changes must be made in how we disseminate the newsletter.

Your comments have been helpful and, in most cases, much appreciated. Even if I didn't agree with them, I appreciated your making them. Nothing's better than feedback!

And if you have something to say about this latest development, let me know.

Thank you.

You'll notice an astounding lack of information on "gay marriage" in this issue. My favorite source for all homosexually related media was filled with article after article, either "fer" or "agin" it. We can all make those cases. Let's wait and see.

The early part of the month, the articles were on one side or the other of the "openly gay bishop" question. Again, let's see what falls out from that.

## Christmas is a-coming – get out your pots!

'Cause we're having a pot-luck dinner at Rick and Donna Akin's house on Dec. 10, 7 to 10 p.m. The hosts will provide the meat, you show off your best side dish, bread or dessert. Call 972/443-1422 to let Donna know what you're bringing so we don't end up with 30 desserts and no Green Bean Casserole: think what a tragedy *that* would be!

To get to the Akins', follow Bellline Road west from Carrollton to Denton Tap Road; turn right. Less than a mile along, you'll see Bethel Road; turn left. About the same distance down you'll see two pillars; turn left between them onto Penfold and take the next right. The party's at 276 Benson Lane in Coppell; call 972/443-1422 if you get lost.

# United Way: No Boy Scouts

by Michael King  
Austin Chronicle

The United Way Capital Area and the Capitol Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America are scheduled to make a joint announcement of the pending dissolution of the BSA's "partnership" relationship with the United Way, following the local United Way's adoption last March of an "inclusiveness policy" that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

After months of consideration, Capitol Area Boy Scouts has decided to abandon its "partnership" status – which enabled it to receive direct grants from the United Way's Community Investment Fund – effective June 30, 2004. (Individual contributors will still be able to designate their United Way donations for the Boy Scouts.) The national Boy Scouts of America has legally defended its right as a private organization to prohibit the membership of openly gay scouts or scout leaders – or what it calls "avowed homosexuals." The U.S. Supreme Court upheld this right in 2000.

Since that decision, the relationship between the Boy Scouts and United Way affiliates in a number of cities has been strained or severed, but BSA policy has not changed. This year in Philadelphia, the national organization required a local BSA council to reverse a nondiscrimination policy it had briefly adopted.

Representatives of both Central Texas organizations are careful to describe the decision as an amicable separation, based on mutual agreement and respect. The Capitol Area Council of the BSA is currently receiving \$157,000 in a direct United Way partnership grant through June 2004 (plus additional funding through designated individual donations), but has decided not to reapply for partnership status in the current funding cycle for the next fiscal year. Recently, the United Way board agreed to provide one year of "transitional" funding to the BSA while it seeks to establish alternative sources of funds.

Clarke Heidrick of United Way Capital Area said, "This decision was reached with the best interest of the entire community in mind. ... Those who wish to continue to support Boy Scouts with their United Way gift may do so by designating their pledge to Scouting." Bruce Walcutt of the Capitol Area Council of the BSA said, "Out of respect for our friends at United Way, its inclusiveness policy, and the people we serve, our board believes that it is in the best interest of our community to move forward and replace the United Way funding from other sources."

Heidrick said the United Way's inclusiveness policy is the result of nearly two years of internal organizational dialogue as well as research and interviews in the community. A task force was

appointed to study the issue in early 2002, and its proposed change in eligibility criteria to reflect the new inclusiveness policy was adopted by the United Way board last spring. "We are one community, and we raise money from the entire community," Heidrick said. "We want to serve the entire community."

Walcutt said that while he does not expect the national debate over the Boy Scouts policy to end, the local BSA "doesn't want to spend ... energy on negativity. ... All we have control over is how our two organizations respond to this situation, and I think that sets Austin apart and reflects our strong sense of community."

## Controversy: Read, write and scout

by Jason McLure  
Newsweek

Former eagle scout Clint Lawton stopped pursuing a business major when he learned that Brigham Young University offered a new major: Scouting. "I thought, 'Oh, you can get paid to do Boy Scouts?'"

Gay-rights groups don't share his enthusiasm. They say the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which runs the university, is already the moving force behind the Boy Scouts of America's policy not to permit "avowed homosexuals." Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and a former Utah Boy Scout, says the new major was more evidence of the church's "insidious" efforts to take over the Boy Scouts.

The Boy Scouts are the official boys' youth group of the LDS, and more than one in nine Scouts are Mormons. Critics say the church exerts disproportionate influence through membership on the national advisory council and vigorous fund-raising. (In New York, LDS leaders recently launched a fund-raising campaign with pamphlets carrying an endorsement from the church's current prophet.)

Boy Scout spokesman Greg Shields says that while Mormons are an important part of Scouting, "we've worked very hard at becoming a diverse organization." Nevertheless, the no-gay policy is a major factor in declining Scout enlistments. In Philadelphia, the nation's third largest council is about to be evicted from its city-owned headquarters over its discrimination policy.

Scouting major Lawton is nonplused. He says that while he believes "someone can be gay and it's totally cool, it's against what Scouting believes." And now he's after his biggest merit badge yet – a Scouting degree.

## Your ad belongs here!

Business card: 1 time, \$20; 6 times, \$100; 12 times, \$150.



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# *Time is on the side of those who support same-sex marriages*

by Jerry Large  
Seattle Times staff columnist

People of the same gender are going to be allowed to marry. This country has been crawling in that direction for a few years now, but this year the pace has picked up, and we have moved within sight of the mountaintop.

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled Nov. 18 that the state's constitution guarantees gay couples the right to marry. Courts in a few other states have made similar rulings, but this one goes a bit further in the strength of its language: Preventing such marriages is unconstitutional.

Of course, this interpretation of the Massachusetts constitution doesn't mean the people who wrote that constitution intended gay people to be included. They didn't specifically rule out same-gender marriages because it would not have occurred to them that the matter would ever come up.

It would not have occurred to me until recent years, any more than I would have conceived of portable computers while I was working out trigonometry problems with a slide rule.

Even for gay couples, the idea of marriage remained little more than a wish until the achievement of a larger degree of acceptance, or at least tolerance, in other areas of life. There's no time to advocate for marriage when your relationship has to remain clandestine, lest it cost you your job or possibly your life.

We are just now moving past that basic level of acceptance, and even that is not completely won.

But the tide is turning.

In June, a Canadian appeals court ruled that, under the Canadian constitution, same-gender couples have the right to marry. That has an impact on the debate here. It gives encouragement to people working toward that goal here, and Canada hasn't imploded yet, so we can see that at least same-gender marriage isn't lethal.

Also in June, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a Texas case that same-gender couples have the same right to privacy that man-woman couples enjoy.

In Massachusetts the court said, "The marriage ban works a deep and scarring hardship on a very real segment of the community for no rational reason."

That is true. It is also true that most Americans, 59 percent in a recent national poll by the Pew Research Center, disapprove of marriages between people of the same gender.

People have a lot of arguments against recognizing same-gender marriages. Discomfort with the idea of gay sex is a large part of the resistance. But at the root of most arguments is the idea that marriage is a religious institution, and most people don't believe God intended people of the same gender to marry.

The court can say there is no rational reason to ban same-gender marriages, but the opposition is largely based on something beyond logic. Beliefs aren't subject to rational argument, which is why so much of the effort to win marriage rights is focused on civil rights.

Advocates for allowing same-gender marriage point out the troubles that arise when couples break up and government is not there to mediate the distribution of possessions, or worse, when the couple have children and the law recognizes only one person's parental rights.

There is a long list of roles that government plays in people's lives based on a marriage contract.

Sometimes people can see the benefit in recognizing those

rights regardless of the gender of the couple. Vermont, for instance, allows same-gender civil unions.

Last month, I attended a gathering on Capitol Hill of people who are working toward legalizing same-gender marriages in Washington. A minister who spoke that evening suggested a separation of church and state when it comes to marriages.

That may be the answer eventually. I can't say how the issue is going to be resolved, but it will be resolved in favor of recognizing the rights of same-gender partners.

The Pew Research Center poll found opposition to same-gender marriage was 4-to-1 among people in their 60s and 70s. People ages 20 to 30 were evenly split.

Time is on the side of people who want change.

For now, the Massachusetts legislature is likely to react in the same way other legislatures have, by trying to go around the ruling. If the law says it's OK, change the law.

Other state courts allowing same-gender unions left enough room for legislators to change laws, but the Massachusetts court was clear that any law banning same-gender marriages or giving them a separate and unequal status would be unconstitutional.

So, in Massachusetts getting around the ruling will be a lengthy process, since it will require changing the constitution.

In the meantime, there will be a lot of new marriages, and the issue will be kept alive in the current presidential race. The more people talk about it, and read about it, the more real the idea will become.

Older people won't change their ideas, but people whose views are being formed at a time when the issue is part of the environment will increasingly view same-gender marriage as a perfectly reasonable idea, which it is.

. Jerry Large: 206/464-3346 or [jlarge@seattletimes.com](mailto:jlarge@seattletimes.com).

## **You're not alone**

A support group for those who have been or are married to homosexual or bisexual people. For more information call our confidential voice mail at 214/521-5342, ext. 1734 or visit us on the web at [www.straightspouse.com](http://www.straightspouse.com).

## **Gay softball team trounces Sports Radio team**

edited By Mike Clark-Madison  
Austin Chronicle

The Austin Bat Boys, a gay softball team, celebrate their recent win over a team from Sports Radio 1300 (KVET-AM). After 1300-AM morning jocks Bucky Godbolt and Erin Hogan made on-air comments ridiculing a national gay softball league, the Bat Boys challenged them to a game.

The Bat Boys jumped out to a quick 6-0 lead on their first at-bat, en route to a 14-4 whipping of the radio boys. The event raised \$1,800 in charity money for the Interfaith Care Alliance and Project Transitions, \$200 of which came from KVET, \$500 from sponsor Rainbow Cattle Company, and \$1,100 from fans.

## ***A big ol' Taixas thankew***

to the outgoing board members for their service;  
and to all who volunteered time and effort this  
year to help us attain our objectives. We couldn't  
have done it without you, nor would we want to!

## Page Four

### Hey, Puddin's!

Merry Christmas! Happy Chanukah! Happy Kwanzaa!

Speaking of gifts, I want to tell you about the wonderful gift I received from PFLAG/Dallas this year: the gift of being co-president. I have really learned a lot, about myself and other people. Leading is not as easy as it looks. It is both very enjoyable and very painful. I have felt tremendous support on one hand, and incredible loneliness on the other.

Kinda like being GLBT. It's wonderful and fulfilling being ourselves, yet people hate us for who we are. Some people are totally understanding and welcoming, others don't understand and hassle us. That's reality. In our August meeting's Diversity class we learned that part of learning one's identity consists of a sense of pride, then acceptance in who we are. We have truly arrived when we come to a place of acceptance regardless of whether or not someone else approves of us.

If you think about it, GLBT people are some of the most polite people around. We worry about "what Grandma thinks" or "what will the family say?" We protect people from hurt. We try to protect people from pain. In reality we are protecting people not from us, but from themselves; from their illusions and delusions about GLBT issues.

Being a lesbian co-president of a straight organization has been very interesting. I've had to rely on strengths deep within. There were times I didn't know what to say or do. No one really understands this unless you've experienced a message that you are "less than" because of who you are; that somehow being yourself will hurt someone in some way. I felt so lost at times. Even when I had guidance and support I still wondered what in the world my role was; what did I have to give to this particular organization as a leader?



Well, I found out ... a lot! I've had people tell me how great I'm doing and how I add to the organization; others told me I don't belong. Some smiled when they saw me, others glared. I could only do my best in every situation. I had to find my place. And I did. My place is wherever I am!

Self-acceptance is knowing that not everyone is going to like us, or approve of us. We can't make everyone happy. We can't protect people from themselves. The best way to educate people on GLBT issues is to just be who we are as GLBTs, families and friends. Sometimes it's easy and other times it's stressful. A lot of ups and downs.

Pilots flying airplanes know all about "altitude" which is needed to keep the airplane flying up in the air. But there is also something called "attitude." It is needed during turbulence to keep the plane flying steady and true through the bumpy air. We need to keep a positive "attitude" during stressful times. We don't always know the outcome, but we can stay true to ourselves during the process. Even when we feel lost. Even when positive and negative criticism bumps us around. Sometimes it's easy and sometimes it's stressful. We can only do the best we can.

My gift this year is self-acceptance, no matter what the situation. GLBT people can be whoever we want to be. We can do whatever we want to do. Our sexual orientation has nothing to do with leadership abilities. Some people believe in us, and others despise us. It's more about them than us. Facing problems head on with a great "attitude" is a great way to learn, a great way to lead and, most important, a great way to live. Pretty cool, eh?

Have a wonderful holiday season!

*Pat Smith*

## How states handle gay marriage

*from the Associated Press*

Here's how states are handling the question of gay marriage:

- California: Has a law defining marriage as between one man and one woman; recently enacted legislation creating new rights for domestic partners, though there is an effort to repeal the law by putting the issue to a referendum.
- Connecticut: There are competing efforts on the legislative front to allow gay marriage or civil unions, and another to create a law defining marriage as between a man and a woman.
- New Jersey: A Superior Court judge this month dismissed a lawsuit brought by seven gay couples that sought to make same-sex unions legally recognized. Gay rights advocates have said they'll appeal.
- Massachusetts: Highest court became the first in the country Monday to rule that its state constitution guarantees gays and lesbians the right to marry, and also ruled a ban on same-sex marriage was unconstitutional.
- Vermont: Was the first state to allow civil unions between gays.
- Thirty-seven states have laws defining marriage as between one man and one woman.

— Source: Human Rights Campaign

## Phelps statue thwarted by Casper, Wyo.

365Gay.com Newscenter Staff

Casper, Wyoming has removed a Ten Commandments statue from the city park, denying homophobic preacher Fred Phelps an opportunity to erect a monument condemning gays.

A six-man crew from a local cemetery and the Casper Public Utilities Department dug the 2,000-pound statue out of its base and used a crane to lift it in the air. It was then hauled away to storage.

Last month, Phelps notified the city that he intended to place a monument condemning homosexuality in the park and if the city objected he was prepared to go to court.

The Topeka, Kansas minister cited a ruling by the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals in a case involving a Ten Commandments statue in which the court said that any city that displays a similar monument on public property must also allow monuments espousing the views of other religions or political groups on that same property.

The monument, Phelps told the Casper council, would bear a plaque with a picture of Matthew Shepard and the inscription "Matthew Shepard, Entered Hell October 12, 1998, in Defiance of God's Warning: 'Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with woman-kind; it is abomination.' Leviticus 18:22."

Casper was the hometown of Shepard, the gay college student who was brutally murdered five years ago near Laramie.

City council voted to remove the statue and place it in a new historical law plaza near the library. Because the plaza will be devoted only to monuments with legal significance, Phelps will not be able to have his statue placed there.

The Ten Commandments statue will be stored until its new home is ready.



**So I goofed ... Come to the December meeting and vote.  
Sorry I misled you. But you got free pizza, right?**