

# PFLAG SPIRIT

January-February 2012

Volume XVIII, Number 1

Newsletter of Parents, Families, & Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Fort Worth Chapter, P.O. Box 8279, Fort Worth, TX 76124. Published monthly except January.

**MISSION:** Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays 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 secure equal civil rights. PFLAG provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

## February meeting

Chuck Dunning, LPC, will talk about an upcoming event. We will follow his presentation with a group discussion of current issues.

### Samaritan House Supper Club

Our dedicated group of volunteers cooks and brings food on the fourth Monday of the month which is served from 5:30-7:00. Supper Club is a great opportunity to volunteer for a project that really makes a difference. The residents look forward to our meals, and we enjoy both preparing and sharing the meals with them. Please contact Brenda Cowley at [brendastar46@msn.com](mailto:brendastar46@msn.com) if you'd like to join us.

### Dates to Remember

|       |                                 |           |
|-------|---------------------------------|-----------|
| 2/2   | PFLAG Monthly Meeting           | 7:00 p.m. |
| 2/13  | PFLAG Denton Monthly Meeting    | 7:00 p.m. |
| 12/27 | Supper Club for Samaritan House | 5:30 p.m. |

### PFLAG INFORMATION

**Meetings:** First Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m.  
 First Jefferson Unitarian Universalist Church  
 1959 Sandy Lane, Fort Worth, TX 76112-5412

**Hotline:** 817-428-2329

**Website:** <http://pflagfortworth.org>

**National Website:** <http://www.pflag.org>

**Newsletter:** Sharon Salih, Editor

Change of address & news to share: 817-496-1587  
 Deadline: 15th of the month

**Membership:** Lisa Earley VP/Membership Coordinator

## 2011 Straight for Equality Award

PFLAG stands for Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. As members and families of the LGBT community, we all know that we need straight friends and allies to achieve true equality and respect for all of us. Following the lead of National PFLAG four years ago, we started our annual "Straight for Equality Award" to recognize a straight member of our community who strongly supports our dreams and goals.

This year's winner is Gary Randall, who has been tirelessly working behind the scenes almost from the beginning of the Fort Worth chapter. He not only has marched in the Dallas and Fort Worth Gay Pride Parades, but he is usually found at the front carrying our banner. He even constructed the frame for the banner. He volunteers at two Samaritan House Supper Clubs, ours and his church's. He sings with the Sam House Choir and volunteers many hours at the Aids Outreach Center. He is the webmaster for our chapter website and two years ago he produced the video tribute to our dear friend Jim Hainline. Finally, he has strongly supported his life partner, Sharon Salih, in everything she does for Fort Worth PFLAG.

Previous honorees have been: In 2009, Joel Bailey of Fort Worth and First Jefferson Unitarian Universalist Church was chosen because he is a tireless and passionate advocate who never fails to promote LGBT issues in his community and in church. In 2010 Rita Cotterly was chosen to honor her many contributions to the LGBT community, including being a founding member of the Fort Worth Chapter of PFLAG and her outstanding work as a sexuality educator and counselor.

## Thank you Samaritan House volunteers

I want to thank you all for the wonderful year we had, and I know we will make this year just as good or better. I don't need to tell you all how Samaritan House feels about our group— you can see it in their smiles, their hugs and verbal appreciation. Thank you so much for all of the sacrifices you have made in order to bring the joy and love to our special friends.

Brenda Cowley, PFLAG Samaritan House Coordinator

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## Food drive for AIDS Outreach Center Sandy Lanier Nutrition Center

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A very big thank you to all of you who contributed to our successful food drive. Thanks goes to everyone who contributed either food or cash. In addition to the bags and boxes of food, we received \$150 in donations. This money was used to purchase eleven cases each of two kinds of soup for the Nutrition Center as those were the items the Center needed most.

Your generosity made a better Christmas for the clients who depend on the Nutrition Center. It was hard year for AIDS services organizations due to the funding cuts, and PFLAG's donation was a much needed contribution.

Some of you contributed clean used plastic bags, which are also very useful. If you would like to recycle your plastic bags in this way, bring them to the meeting, and they will be delivered to the Nutrition Center.

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## Opinion: Leonard Pitts

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### The boos for Rick Santorum speak of coming change

By Leonard Pitts Jr., The Miami Herald

We gather here today to parse the meaning of "boo."

Not "boo," as in the greeting of ghosts and goblins, but rather "boo," as in the chorus that drowned the bigot Rick Santorum last week after he defended his opposition to gay marriage before an audience of college students in Concord, N.H.

Santorum took the same header into non sequitur and illogic that gay marriage opponents often take -- i.e., if we legalize this, then we must also legalize polygamy.

It is a line of "thinking" that conveniently ignores a glaring fact. Namely, that there is not and never has been a large culture of people who felt biologically driven toward polygamous behavior, much less who seek social sanction for it. Santorum raises a classic straw man argument, tries to win the debate by stoking fear of what has not and will not happen.

And as you watched him washed from the podium by that song of opprobrium (i.e., "boo"), there was to it a certain sense of last stand, last ditch, last bitter dregs of resistance before the coming of a change that now feels inevitable as the dawn.

The former senator and would-be president tried to minimize the question by noting the youth of his questioners -- "I'm surprised I got a gay marriage question at a college crowd," he quipped. "Really, that's a shock to me." -- but in so doing, he manages to simultaneously make and miss the point.

There is an absolute historical pattern to the bigotry of social conservatives. They rally using terms of moral Armageddon against the freedoms sought by some despised or condescended to Other, whether that be a woman wanting to work outside the home, a Jew seeking to join the country club, an African American trying to get home on a city bus. Then the freedoms are won, and people -- even socially conservative ones -- realize the world kept spinning after all. Armageddon did not come. Only change.

The point is that change is usually spearheaded by the young. They are the ones who are quickest and most likely to reject lame arguments built of straw and fear. So while Santorum tries to laugh off the youth of those pressing him about gay marriage, he might be well advised to ponder the deeper implications thereof.

A 2010 survey by the Pew Research Center found support for marriage equality on the rise among all age groups, but noted that the support is highest among the young. Among those born after 1980, 53% approve (as opposed to 39% who do not).

Santorum seems to believe the children will grow out of their foolishness. Actually, the truth is probably closer to what the songwriter said: "I believe the children are our future." Consider that prominent conservative blogger Meghan McCain, who is not yet 30, dubbed Santorum's views "dated" and "gross."

The trend lines are clear. As children, even children of the right, now find it hard to fathom there was ever a time women could not work outside the home or Jews were banned from the country club, so will there come a day when they will marvel that once upon a time, gay people could not be married.

The future is coming, and not all the frothing and spewing of people like the bigot Santorum can deter it. Or, to put that another way: Boo.

<http://www.freep.com/article/20120113/OPINION05/201130328>

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## Bishops say rules on gay parents limit freedom of religion

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By Laurie Goodstein, December 28, 2011

Roman Catholic bishops in Illinois have shuttered most of the Catholic Charities affiliates in the state rather than comply with a new requirement that says they must consider same-sex couples as potential foster-care and adoptive parents if they want to receive state money. The charities have served for more than 40 years as a major link in the state's social service network for poor and neglected children.

The bishops have followed colleagues in Washington,

*(Continued on page 3)*

First Jefferson  
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Affirming the inherent worth and  
dignity of all human beings.



*What are you trying to protect heterosexual marriages from? There isn't a limited amount of love in Iowa. It isn't a non-renewable resource. If Amy and Barbara or Mike and Steve love each other, it doesn't mean that John and Mary can't.*

--- Ed Fallon

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## Iowa student Zach Wahls: Why I'm defending my two moms

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Dec 6, 2011 4:45 AM EST

Whoa.

The last week has been a wild ride. I was sitting at my desk in my apartment in Iowa City working on deadline for my new book, *My Two Moms*, when the volume of emails pouring into my inbox became unusually large for 2:30 p.m., or for any other time of day. A video I was in had gone viral—again. Hundreds of people were zapping me notes about it.

In the video, I'm testifying before the Iowa House Judiciary Committee in a public hearing about a constitutional amendment to reverse the Iowa Supreme Court ruling that legalized same-sex marriage in Iowa in 2009. (Yes, you're reading that right—Iowa legalized same-sex marriage before New York.) That hearing was on Jan. 31, 2011.

In the immediate aftermath of the hearing, the video leapt to a million hits and thrust my family and me into the limelight for the first time. People were trying to figure out who was this kid from Iowa (Iowa?!?) and how two lesbians (Tall Mom and Short Mom) in the middle of the American heartland had managed to raise a normal family.

This past week, the video got a second wind after the site Move On.org decided to post it.

The video has now managed to rack up more than 15 million hits in all.

Like I said, whoa.

I'm not one to complain about going viral on the Internet, but I do have to say that I'm still trying to recover from the first time that video blew up, nearly 10 months ago. I'm currently on deadline for my book, writing about what it was like growing up with two moms in eastern Iowa, describing the values my moms taught me, how those values were reinforced in Boy Scouts, and explaining why Scouting and LGBT rights are like peas in a pod.

It's incredible to me that people are still interested.

Upon the book's release in the spring of 2012, I'll be working with a number of nonprofit organizations to roll out an advocacy campaign with the hopes of finally erasing the stigma that some people still associate with two-mom or two-dad families and with the gay community in general. With your help, I think we'll be able to finally make this "issue" a nonissue, and I'll finally get to go back to studying engineering.

As crazy and awesome as this ride has been so far, I had decided to temporarily suspend my studies to focus on advocacy work because of a Facebook message I received back in February. At the guy's request, I'm withholding his name, but here it is, verbatim: "man, i just watched your video on youtube. being from the south, the deep south, I have been raised 'anti-gay.' Pardon the slur. but that completely changed my view on the subject. Just amazing. Im leaving for the army in two weeks and was pretty upset about don't ask don't tell being repealed but again you changed my view on that. I just thought it would be nice for you to know you truley opened someones eyes. Thank you."

On the one hand, it's cool to know that folks like Ellen DeGeneres, Ashton Kutcher, Rosie O'Donnell, and Melissa Etheridge know who I am, thanks to my video. But, sorry, stars, the previous message was way better. It's a testament to the

power of stories to change minds and a testament, too, to our willingness to reevaluate long-held convictions. And it's that willingness—that open-mindedness—that has driven progress in this country for centuries. It is at the core of what made America possible in the first place.

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2011/12/06/a-tale-of-two-moms-a-teenage-son-and-a-video-that-wouldn-t-die.html>

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## New study: Lesbian households produce a child abuse rate of 0%

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The U.S. National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study (NLLFS) just released its results on its 24-year long study on families with lesbian parents, finding that not one of the 78 adolescents in the study had reported being sexually or physically abused by their parents. This compares to 26% of American adolescents overall who report parent or caregiver physical abuse. 8.3% report sexual abuse.

Additionally, only 2.8% of the adolescents in the study identified themselves as gay. Apparently the majority of them didn't catch their parents' gayness.

While I hate the idea of showing "proof" that lesbian and gay couples are capable of raising healthy families, these kinds of studies are critical in breaking down the myths that are constantly being perpetuated by anti-LGBT culture. Check out NLLFS for more info on their awesome work.

<http://feministing.com/2010/11/11/new-study-lesbian-households-produce-a-child-abuse-rate-of-0/>

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*(Continued from page 2)*

D.C., and Massachusetts who had jettisoned their adoption services rather than comply with nondiscrimination laws.

For the nation's Catholic bishops, the Illinois requirement is a prime example of what they see as an escalating campaign by the government to trample on their religious freedom while expanding the rights of gay people. The idea that religious Americans are the victims of government-backed persecution is now a frequent theme not just for Catholic bishops, but also for Republican presidential candidates and conservative evangelicals.

"In the name of tolerance, we're not being tolerated," said Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki of the Diocese of Springfield, Ill., a civil and canon lawyer who helped drive the church's losing battle to retain its state contracts for foster care and adoption services.

The Illinois experience indicates that the bishops face formidable opponents who also claim to have justice and the Constitution on their side. They include not only gay rights advocates, but also many religious believers and churches that support gay equality (some Catholic legislators among them). They frame the issue as a matter of civil rights, saying that Catholic Charities was using taxpayer money to discriminate against same-sex couples. ...

The controversy in Illinois began when the state legislature voted in November 2010 to legalize civil unions for same-sex couples, which the state's Catholic bishops lobbied against. *For the rest of the story:* [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/29/us-for-bishops-a-battle-over-whose-rights-prevail.html?pagewanted=1&\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/29/us-for-bishops-a-battle-over-whose-rights-prevail.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1)

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## Tennessee Republicans try to kick transgender people out of public restrooms

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The Tennessee General Assembly has taken another big step toward long-sought recognition as the most contemptible legislature in the land. This time, lawmakers have earned quick ridicule by introducing a bill aimed at keeping transgender people out of public restrooms. Thanks to Rep. Richard Floyd, R-Chattanooga, and Sen. Bo Watson, R-Chattanooga, for this thoughtful proposal. Under their bill, it's a criminal offense - complete with a \$50 fine - for transgender people to use restrooms designated for the sex other than the one listed on their birth certificates.

That puts transgender people in a quandary, since it's legally impossible for them to change their sex on their birth certificates in Tennessee. At Daily Kos, they're wondering what our legislators think they are accomplishing, a question we have asked ourselves a lot lately.

The purpose of the bill is entirely unclear unless they are just trying to erase people who are transgender and stigmatize them permanently as sexual predators who want to prey on unsuspecting victims in public accommodations. The bill seems to be trying to criminalize gender variance - not something that's unheard of. And it's obvious that there is no way to enforce this if it becomes law. They can't possibly employ bathroom police all across the state of Tennessee to make sure that someone going into a female bathroom possesses a birth certificate proving they have the requisite body parts for that bathroom and that they have had those same parts since birth.

Legislative leaders have claimed they will stick to important issues this session for a change and prove Republicans are serious adults capable of governing responsibly. So much for that.

<http://www.nashvillescene.com/pitw/archives/2012/01/12/tennessee-republicans-try-to-kick-transgender-people-out-of-public-restrooms>

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## The transgender revolution, from Albert Nobbs to "Work it"

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Jan 17, 2012

There is a scene in *Albert Nobbs*, the movie starring Glenn Close as a woman who passes as a man to survive in late-19th-century Dublin, in which Albert Nobbs and Hubert Page, another woman living as a man, played by Janet McTeer, take a stroll on the beach wearing dresses.

They've been living for so long as men that wearing women's clothing is as much drag to them as it would be if their male counterparts were donning lace frocks. They stagger awkwardly, inelegantly walking like bowlegged cowboys, before Nobbs suddenly breaks stride and begins running through the wind. After a moment of feeling freedom, Nobbs trips and falls. Soon, the gentle butler is back in his usual garb, a suit and tie covering a constrictive corset that hides his breasts.

To call the two characters transgender would be anachronistic. Indeed, in the original short story that the movie is based on, author George Moore had created a term for Albert: "perhapter." "It's very foolish of an old *perhapter* like me, neither man nor woman!" thinks Albert. "But I can't help it." *Transgender* in the modern sense is what Leslie Feinberg applied to

gender warriors of all kinds in the 1998 treatise, *Trans Liberation*, writing: "We are a movement of masculine females and feminine males, cross-dressers, transsexual men and women, intersexuals born on the anatomical sweep between female and male, gender-benders, many other sex and gender-variant people, and our significant others."

Albert and Hubert didn't set out to be gender warriors; they lived as men to survive. But the interpretation today of their story taking place more than a century ago brings visibility to film audiences—right in time for Academy Award consideration. Both Close and her co-star Janet McTeer have been nominated for numerous awards in the Best Actress and Best Supporting Actress categories (including for the Golden Globes and the Screen Actors Guild Awards).

Are we having a trans moment? Until recently, transgender issues were nearly invisible in the mainstream press—but now, everywhere you turn, transgender stories are being told. From Andrei Pelic and Lea T, two trans models currently walking the high-fashion runways, to the outrage over *Work it*, the hapless, now-canceled ABC comedy featuring two men who resort to drag to get a job, transgender awareness is growing exponentially by the moment—seeping into pop culture in films like *Albert Nobbs*...

Even the Girl Scouts have entered the fray. When a trans child was denied admittance into a Girl Scouts troop in Colorado, the child's parents appealed and the Girl Scout relented. But that decision wasn't pleasing to everyone: A Girl Scout, known only as Taylor from Ventura County Calif., called for a boycott over the organization's open-mindedness, resulting in countercalls from trans supporters vowing to buy even more cookies. And more important, last month, a federal-court ruling in favor of Vandiver Elizabeth Glenn, who was fired from her job after coming out as transgender, led *Time* magazine to declare transgender people's legal issues to be the next big civil-rights frontier.

Chaz Bono is the first bona fide transgender celebrity. When Bono was first cast to be on last fall's *Dancing With the Stars*, the outrage was palpable. But within a few weeks of Bono's appearance on the show, he'd quickly turned from pariah to underdog—the person Americans probably least expected to like, but rooted for the most.

For the rest of the story: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/01/17/the-transgender-revolution-from-albert-nobbs-to-work-it.html>

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## Westside Unitarian Universalist Church

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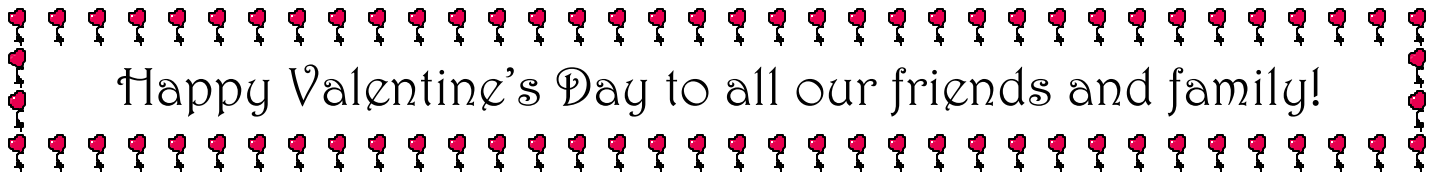
Support your local PFLAG chapter—renew your membership

It's that time of year again—time to renew your commitment to PFLAG Fort Worth.

Your local chapter's officers give their time and energy to PFLAG because they believe in PFLAG's mission and see the need to continue the presence of the organization in our community. If you share that belief, put it in action by supporting the chapter with your dues. Just fill out the form on below and mail it in with your check or bring it to the treasurer at the next meeting. You can chose either full membership, \$25 for individual or \$40 for family, or newsletter hard copy only, for \$10. Your support will be deeply appreciated. **It takes all of us to carry out the mission of PFLAG.**

If you are a non-member and receiving a hard copy, please consider contributing for delivery of the newsletter by sending in the membership form with a \$10 contribution for "newsletter only". Or you can send an email to ransalih@charter.net requesting that you be added to the email list and removed from the hard copy list.

Our dedication to PFLAG is a gift of love to the community, supporting individuals, families and friends, educating the public and advocating for equal rights for all. Join us in furthering that mission! **When you no longer need PFLAG, PFLAG still needs you to support your local chapter and national organization with your dues.**



Membership Application

|   |          |                         |                     |
|---|----------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual             | \$ 25    | Date                    | _____               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family                 | \$ 40    | Name                    | _____               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bronze Patron          | \$ 100   | Address                 | _____               |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter only        | \$ 10    | Make checks payable to: | PFLAG/Fort Worth    |
|   |          | Mail to:                | PO Box 8279         |
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**RENEWAL** \_\_\_\_\_ **NEW** \_\_\_\_\_

Membership automatically includes a subscription to the national *PFLAGpole* newsletter which shows PFLAG on the return address. Please check one: \_\_\_\_\_ I do \_\_\_\_\_ I do not want to receive the *PFLAGpole*.

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**FIRST CLASS**