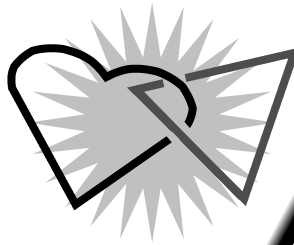


PFLAG



Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
A joint publication of the Akron and Cleveland chapters

One Step Back

By Sharon Groh-Wargo, Cleveland chapter president

Progress on LGBT rights does not move forward in a straight line—no pun intended. One day we cheer when a domestic partner registry passes, for example, only to get up the next day to find that a group has organized to strike it down. Many of us find similar “fits and starts” that play out among our friends and family in our personal journeys advocating for our LGBT loved ones.

Almost ten years ago now, our daughter came out to her dad and me. It was classical—she sat us down and said, “Mom, Dad, I’m gay.” We were shocked—had no idea—didn’t see it coming. But, in unison, we stood up, encircled her with our

arms and told her how much we loved and cherished her. There were a few tears and lots more conversation.

The next morning, Lauren told her 12-year-old brother the news. He was unfazed by the announcement, unimpressed with possible ramifications, and definite in his allegiance to his beloved sister. We had taken our first step forward.

Our family’s “coming out” proceeded over the next few months and years. Actually, it’s an ongoing process, isn’t it? We have been pleasantly surprised by our almost universally positive experiences. We started, as most parents do, with “safe” people. For us it was a few close friends. They said, “Oh, yeah...Glenn’s brother is gay. We never told you that?” No, they had not!

Then we told our my parents. Both well into their 70s, they were very surprised, but kept it simple. Lauren is our granddaughter and we love her. We went forward with our brothers and sisters, Lauren’s Aunt and uncles, who all pretty much



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CHAPTER MEETINGS

Akron PFLAG
Mar. 19, 7:00 pm
N. Springfield
Presbyterian Church
671 N. Canton Rd.

Cleveland PFLAG
Mar. 10, 7:30 pm
Trinity Episcopal
Cathedral
2230 Euclid Ave., 44115

Alliance PFLAG
Mar. 24, 7:00 pm
Union Ave. Methodist
Church
S. Union Ave.

Wooster PFLAG
Mar. 19, 7:00 pm
Trinity UCC
150 E. North St.

Youngstown PFLAG
Mar. 15, 3:00 pm
Stonewall Comm. Ctr.
1523 Poland Ave.

(Continued on page 3)



Our Mission

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender 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 opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

AKRON CHAPTER

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President-Ed Kancler; Vice President-Chris Goldthorpe; Secretary-Joe Gardner; Treasurer-Bob Menapace; At Large-David Horowitz, Bill & Marie Libby, Audrey Kancler

Committee Chairs

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

**MAR
8**

The L-Word Final Season Party, 8:00 p.m., Union Station Video Café, 2814 Detroit Ave., 44113. Hosted by HRC and Showtime. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. Suggested donation \$5. RSVP at www.hrc.org/lword.

**MAR
10**

Cleveland PFLAG chapter business meeting, 5:30 p.m., Trinity Commons, 2230 Euclid Ave., 44115. Agenda will include the state of the chapter and plans for the future. A light supper will be provided.

ACLU: Laws and Legislation affecting the LGBT Community, 7:00 p.m., University of Akron LGBT Union, Rm. 312.

The Church and Social Justice, 6:00 p.m., LGBT community Center of Greater Cleveland, 6600 Detroit Ave., 44102. A panel discussion of race, faith, sexual orientation and gender identity.

**MAR
19**

Akron chapter meeting, 7:00 p.m., North Springfield Presbyterian Church, 67 Canton Rd., Akron. Continuing our discussion of PFLAG National's "Straight for Equality" initiative.

**MAR
19-29**

International Film Festival, Tower City, Cleveland, featuring the 10% Cinema Series. (See article, pg. 4.)

**MAR
28**

16th Annual Human Rights Campaign Gala, 6:00 p.m., Intercontinental Hotel & Conference Center, Cleveland (See article, pg. 4.)

**APR
4-5**

Equality Ohio C.A.U.S.E. Conference, Bowling Green State University. Annual event for College and University Students 4 Equality. For info email cause@equalityohio.org.

**APR
17**

2009 Day of Silence, a student-led day of action to bring attention to bullying and harassment in schools. Visit www.dayofsilence.org.

**APR
25**

PFLAG State Meeting, Trinity Commons, 2230 Euclid Ave., 44115. (See article, pg. 4.)

**MAY
13**

Lobby Day, Columbus. Meet with state legislators to talk about equal rights. (See article, pg. 5.)



"Prayers for Bobby" available on iTunes

Lifetime's critically acclaimed film, "Prayers for Bobby," starring Golden Globe winner Sigourney Weaver, is now available for download on iTunes.

The film tells the emotional, true story of San Francisco PFLAG mom Mary Griffith, and her amazing journey following the suicide of her gay son.

Lifetime has no plans to release a DVD of the film, instead relying on the digital format for post-television distribution. To download, visit www.apple.com/itunes.

Liberation United Church of Christ in Lakewood is considering showing the film in May. For info call 216-521-5556 or email info@liberationucc.org.

One Step *(Continued from page 1)*

voiced acceptance and over the years a willingness to accompany us on our educational and advocacy journey. And that's the way it's been—taking our second steps forward.

Until now.

In November, Lauren and her wonderful partner, Mae, announced to Frank and me and to Mae's parents that they are getting married in June. We were thrilled! We love Mae—a perfect match for our treasured child. We immediately started planning: where it would be, how the ceremony would be structured, the food to be served and the music to be played.

But after Lauren sent out "Save the date" cards to family and friends, we heard NOTHING from most of the relatives on my side of the family. Where was there support? An email...a card...a word of congratulations over the Christmas holidays when we were all together? Near silence. I felt like it was the elephant in the room. Although the ceremony will have no legal standing, perhaps it's the word "wedding" or the concept of "marriage" as applied to Lauren and Mae that is uncomfortable. In any event, sadly, I feel we have taken our step back.

So what to do? I have seen truly remarkable progress in many families at our PFLAG support group meetings over the years. I am trying to take comfort in that and practice patience. I didn't ask to be a "poster family," but it is in fact what PFLAG families must do sometimes.

I hope all of my relatives come in June. They will experience the excitement and love and hopes of a young couple. They will take a step forward, and Frank and I will be right by their side.

Tell your story; make some new friends

By Ed Kancler, Akron chapter president

This year is moving too quickly. Here it is with January over and February slipping by. On February 8, Audrey and I attended the Gay Community Endowment Fund's annual dinner. This was a very well attended event by an enthusiastic group. You may remember that last year the Fund awarded us a \$2,000 grant which enabled us to have Dr. Jack Rogers as our first guest speaker at our annual meeting in November in memory of Bruce Kriete.

This fun event featured Chris Hixson as emcee and a number of the Fund's board members reporting on the many events the Fund sponsored in 2008, as well as plans for this year. But the topper was our own David Horowitz as guest speaker. No one in my recent memory has given a more stirring, humorous and optimistic address. His subject? Toby and David's PFLAG story. He also reported on the PFLAG National "Straight for Equality" celebra-

tion in New York City. When David finished, he received a standing ovation!

We all have a PFLAG story to tell. While we tell each other, we should be ready, willing and able to also tell our friends. There is no better way to talk about gay rights. Our stories are true, and when your friends know it's about you and your family, it brings credibility to the cause—persuading and convincing your friends that this is all part of humanity, for all of us.

When your friends know your story, it brings credibility to our cause.

Off the soapbox and on to other things. First, get ready for Cleveland PFLAG to host the annual State PFLAG meeting on April 25 (see article on pg. 4). It's on a Sunday and is always a good opportunity to see hold friends and meet some new ones. Please plan to attend. It's nearby and will really be worth your while.

Now to the mundane: We really need your email address. When you sign in at meetings, please provide your email address with your contact information. This will give us the opportunity to forward important PFLAG news to you as it happens and will open up new areas for your with regard to PFLAG news and events.

I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.



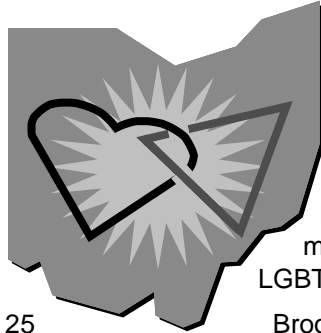
State PFLAG meeting

PFLAG chapters from around the state will gather together this spring right here in Cleveland to share their experiences and develop joint ideas for advocacy and education.

The state PFLAG meeting will be held April 25 at Trinity Commons, 2230 Euclid Ave., 44115, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Presenters include Patrick Shephard, associate director of the Cleveland Film Society, and Tami Brown, vice president of marketing for Positively Cleveland, the region's visitors bureau.

Keynote speaker will be Mary Lou Wallner, co-founder of TEACH ministries (To Educate About the Consequences of Homophobia). Wallner, who lost her lesbian daughter to suicide in 1997, has made a



very difficult spiritual journey to comprehend the issues of her personal relationship with her daughter, and also to recognize the hatred being preached by many mainline churches against LGBT people.

Brooke Smith, PFLAG Field and Policy coordinator, will address the financial issues facing chapters in today's economy. The day will also include time for chapters to share and collaborate on ways to make PFLAG a more effective agent for equality in Ohio.

Breakfast and lunch are included with registration. Dinner (off-site) and evening activities are optional.

For more information, contact the Cleveland PFLAG chapter at mail@pflagcleveland.org or call Marianne Buccini at 440-759-8524.

Join the

Celebration

The Human Rights Campaign is celebrating equality at its 16th annual dinner and auction, "Celebrate the Fine Art of Equality," on Saturday, March 28 at the Cleveland Inter-Continental Hotel, 9801 Carnegie Ave., Cleveland.

VIP reception begins at 5:00 p.m. Grand reception is at 6:00 p.m. with dinner and entertainment at 7:30 p.m. Black tie is optional.

Featured performers include North Coast Men's Chorus, Verb Ballet, Jack of Trades, Sinners Highway, and DJ Greg G.

Guest speaker is Beth Grant, star of the comedy series "Sordid Lives." She also appeared in "Little Miss Sunshine" and "No Country for Old Men."



HRC's guest speaker is Harry Knox, HRC Director of Religion and Faith Program.

Awards this year include the Equality Award being given to Cleveland's Trinity Cathedral and the Very Rev. Tracey Lind, and the HRC Cleveland Steering Committee Leadership Award being given to Barbara Snyder and Lynn Singer of Case Western Reserve University.

Presenting sponsors for this event include: Time Warner Cable; KeyBank; Benesch, Friedlander, Coplan & Aronoff Attorneys; Ulmer & Berne Attorneys; and the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Tickets are available by calling 1-800-494-8497 or at www.boxoffice.tickets.com/hrc. Look in the Table Captain drop-down box for PFLAG.

Ticket prices are as follows: VIP \$225, General (dinner and auction) \$175, Federal Club \$75, Student \$85.

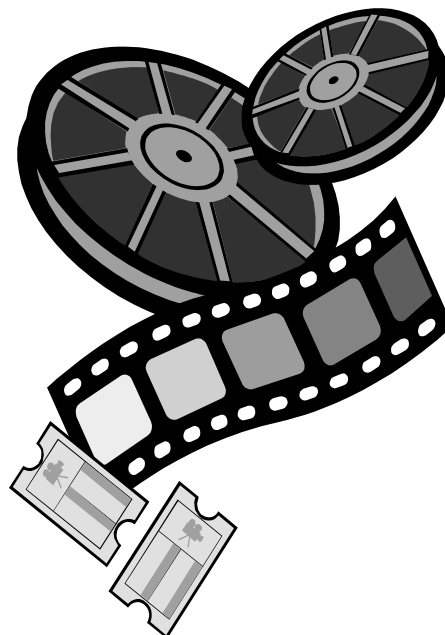
International Film Festival

The Cleveland Film Society is proud to present the 33rd International Film Festival at Tower City Cinemas March 19-28.

Cleveland PFLAG will sponsor a 10% Shorts Program on Friday, March 20 at 7:00 p.m., with a reception to follow—details will be available at the theater.

Other 10% Short Programs will be shown on Wednesday, March 25 at 9:40 p.m. and Saturday, March 28 at midnight.

Tickets go on sale March 6 at www.clevelandfilm.org or call 216-623-3456. A \$2 discount on tickets is available when you use the code: PFLAG.





Register for Lobby Day

Equality Ohio's Lobby Day 2009 is scheduled for Wednesday, May 13, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at the Hyatt on Capitol Square, 75 East State St., Columbus.

This year we are really excited about the event because the Ohio House of Representatives is controlled by legislators who are our allies.

Last year over 300 Ohioans visited their elected officials in Columbus to talk about equality for ALL Ohioans, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. This year's Lobby Day is a chance for you and your family to have an even bigger impact.

When you register for Lobby Day, you will be scheduled to meet with particular state officials or mem-

bers of their staff. You'll get advance facts, training tips and other information to help you feel comfortable. Local Action teams are being formed to help support participants from their area.

And Equality Ohio staff are also on hand at Lobby Day to help you learn how to talk to our representatives in ways that will get attention. With issues like EHEA still awaiting action, we need your voice to be heard!

Lobby Day is not about reciting statistics to our legislators—it's about relating your personal stories and how discriminatory laws in our state affect your family and loved ones.

Registration is going on now through May 4 at <http://eqfed.org/equalityohio/events/lobby09/details.tcl>. For more info call 614-224-0400 or email contactus@equalityohio.org.

Register your Next of Kin

Renew your license in Ohio and you will receive a form to register who you want considered your "next of kin" with the Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

This first-of-its-kind registry allows you to list the people who should be notified in an emergency, and includes the designation of "partner." Law enforcement officers will be able to access the information during traffic accidents or other emergencies.

The registry can be a help to LGBT people whose relationships are not legally recognized by the state of Ohio.

If you don't want to wait for your license renewal You can register (and update) your next of kin online at www.ohioBMV.com or by visiting your local BMV office.

Special Recognition

Our Cleveland chapter benefits from the contributions of its many dedicated members and allies. We'd like to take this opportunity to recognize those persons who have provided significant monetary support for our activities and programs:

Gold (\$500-\$999)

Marianne and James Buccini
Robert Dubbs and Tim Leiden
Michael Kemmer and Anne LaFrance-Kemmer
Jes Sellers and Art Thompson

Silver (\$250-\$499)

Robin Richmond and Judith Wolfe
David Lasalvia

Bronze (\$100-\$249)

Ed and Phyllis Branham
Jane and Bob Daroff
Helen Korach
Ted Lucas
David Shank
Gail and Steve Smith
Elizabeth O'Donnell and Sam El-Dalati

THANK YOU

Tell 3 Coming Out isn't Enough

Join the Impact has partnered with other national LGBT groups to develop a web-based public education campaign, www.tell-three.org, to encourage LGBT people and their supporters to have three conversations with friends and family to help build support for LGBT equality.

"The passage of Prop 8 in California has motivated LGBT people and their supporters like never before," said Amy Balliett of Join the Impact. "And the single most important thing we can do to guarantee we don't find ourselves on the losing side of another political campaign is to have conversations with our friends and family about what it means to be LGBT."

Other organizations, including the ACLU, The National Lesbian and Gay Task Force, Freedom to Marry, and PFLAG will be rolling out their own versions of the campaign on their websites. LGBT and straight ally visitors to the site will find information on who and how to start these important conversations and how to address homophobic comments.

News from around the Nation

Here's a brief look at LGBT news from around the country:

In **NEW MEXICO**, legislation to create a statewide domestic partner registry for same- and opposite-sex couples is heading for a vote in the state senate. The bill would allow guaranteed access to each other in hospitals and the ability to make medical decisions for partners, as well as grant other state benefits and rights accorded to married couples.

MINNESOTA's largest school district has agreed to discontinue a policy prohibiting teachers and students from discussing homosexuality as anything but an abnormality. The new policy for the Anoka-Hennepin School District calls for LGBT topics to be addressed "in a respectful manner that is age-appropriate, factual, and pertinent to the relevant curriculum."

A television station in Grand Rapids, **MICHIGAN**, is being praised by LGBT advocates for refusing to air a paid, one-hour special produce by the anti-gay American Family Association after the group did not agree to a proposed time slot. The show, "Speechless: Silencing Christians," focuses on the "radical homosexual agenda."

In **ILLINOIS**, openly gay state Rep. Greg Harris (D-Chicago) has filed legislation to allow same-sex marriage in the state. The bill, officially called the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act, would

confer the rights of civil marriage on eligible same-sex and heterosexual couples. Similar legislation died in committee two years ago, but Harris

unions, the theology and practice of Christian marriage, and the effects of current laws on same-gender partners and their children.



The pastor of Pilgrim Congregational UCC in Cleveland, **OHIO**, will no longer sign state marriage licenses until gay unions are legalized in the state. The 460-member congregation voted overwhelmingly for the civil rights protest move. It means that heterosexual couples exchanging wedding vows at the church will also need an additional civil ceremony by a justice of the peace to make their union legal.

A study released by **GLSEN**, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, has found that LGBT parents

said that even if the measure fails this year, he hopes it will open further debate.

In Augusta, **MAINE**, more than 1,000 people attended a rally decrying legislation to legalize same-sex marriage while dozens of supporters of gay marriage held a candlelight vigil outside the civic center. The rally was sponsored by the Family Research Council. The state currently bans gay marriage, but lawmakers in the state plan to call for legislation to repeal the ban.

The **PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)** has appointed a special committee to study the issue of civil unions and Christian marriage. Last year, the church's General Assembly voted to create the committee, which is charged to report on the history of the laws governing marriage and civil

are more likely to be involved in their children's K-12 education than the general parent population. The report, prepared in partnership with the Family Equality Council and COLAGE, noted that LGBT parents are more likely to attend parent-teacher conferences and to volunteer at school. Current estimates indicate that more than seven million LGBT parents have school-age children in the United States.

In **WASHINGTON, DC**, Secretary of State Hilary Clinton has reiterated her pledge to review inequities in her department's treatment of gay employees. Clinton said she considers it an issue of workplace fairness, employee retention, and embassy safety. The review will also include a study of what can be legally changed in the department without congressional approval.

You always have a home at PFLAG!