



P F L A G

PFLAG Cincinnati Quarterly Newsletter

Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

Letter from the President

The old saying goes "It takes a village to raise a child." Well PFLAG is our child and it has taken so many people to help raise it. There are so many people who have worked behind the scenes to ensure that our children are safe and that parents have the answers they need.

I received an email from one of the board members who thought we needed to do something to thank the people who help to make PFLAG a success. We decided that the first thing we could do was write an article to say thank you! First and foremost we want to say thank you to Marian Wedge for starting our local chapter. Lois Kay for working our hotline each night, Lynne Lefevbre for speaking to colleges, law makers, police departments and anyone else who will listen on LGBT issue. Rick Kay for helping us out each year with taxes! Tim and Carol Egbert for making sure we get snacks each month! Tom Jenkins for maintaining our website and newsletter mailings. Marie Jenkins for being at every meeting and giving insight and information to new parents. Dan Ley for spearheading our scholarship program. Tim Gross for writing our

newsletter all the way from Colorado. Jane Biddinger for her brilliantly crafted, sensitive and sometimes humorous articles. Each quarter she manages to thoroughly capture the essence of our organization. Thank you to Worley Rodehaver for printing, managing and paying for the GLBT News! Michael Chanak for promoting PFLAG events. Kathy Laufman for being a strong ally for PFLAG. Harold Delph for being a consistent pillar for PFLAG Families.

Marti Kwiatkowski for being a strong board member and for guidance over the years. Linda Arnest for being a strong advocate in the LGBT community and for keeping Paul's memory alive. Maria Sulcer for being the head of the Paul Delph AIDS Walk Team this past year. Thanks to David Whitaker for working the library each month. Emily Roth for helping out whenever and wherever she can!

I would like to personally thank the board of directors for all their help and guidance the past 2 years. Lynne Lefevbre, Mark Smith, Brent Rose, Monica Plett, Suzanne Whitaker, Karen Weber, Dorothy Byers, and Tom Jenkins. Thank you for

all the hard work you put into PFLAG to ensure that our message and our mission are heard.

We have had some very informative and insightful speakers over the past years. Thank you to each one of them for the information they gave to us to help us in our quest to equality.

Cheryl Hutchins, Ed Green, Victory Lloyd, Cheryl Eagleson, Antonia Harter. Joan Wyzenbeek and Pat Ritz, Tracey Duest, Steven Nichols, Daniel Drent, Tami Huber, Debi Johnson, Barry Floore, Adam Reilly, Dan and Nancy Tephper, Janice Flanagan. Marc Adams, Mike and Jan Neubecker, Lisa Meeks, Priscilla Wood, Diane Torrence, Brad Schmelling. Leland Spencer, Mark Byers, Dorothy Byers are just a taste of what PFLAG has to offer.

So in closing remember that it takes a village to raise a child. PFLAG says Thank you to all our 'villagers'. When you think you don't need PFLAG, PFLAG needs YOU!!

Michael Cotrell

President

and

The 2010 Board of Directors.

PFLAG Cincinnati

Volume 25 Issue 1

Winter 2010

- ☺ **Night of a Thousand Laughs**
- ☺ **A Box of Yesterdays**
- ☺ **CINCINNATI CHAPTER - PFLAG, The Beginning**
- ☺ **Welcome Baby Jesse**

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Mission



Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (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 secure civil rights.

Meetings

Our monthly chapter meetings are on the **second Tuesday of each month** from 7:00 – 9:30 P.M. at Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church (link for directions http://www.mtauburnpresby.org/more_about_us.html) located at 103 William Howard Taft Rd, 45219. The monthly **chapter meeting is open to everyone**, including parents, friends and family of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender persons, as well as to gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender persons or anyone inter-

ested in learning more about the topic. Meetings are completely confidential. What is said there stays there. Confidentiality is important to most of us for one reason or another, and at all time we respect the rights of others.

The chapter also has a monthly board meeting that is held on the Thursday before the monthly chapter meeting, starting at 6:30 P.M. at various loca-

tions. Paid up members of the chapter are welcome to attend the monthly board meeting.

Please send an email to info@pflagcinci.org or call the PFLAG Help Line at 513-721-7900 if you need more information about the monthly chapter meeting OR information about attending the chapter board meeting.

Newsletter

This newsletter is published quarterly (usually sometime in the first month of the quarter). The chapter would benefit greatly from your involvement in the creation of this newsletter.

Send an email to the editor at newsletter@pflagcinci.org if you have an announcement that should be included, an idea for an article, or even better, would be interested in writing

an article. Also, feel free to send an email to the editor if you have any suggestions or comments regarding your chapter's quarterly newsletter's content or design.

2009/2010 Officers & Chairpersons/Board Members

Executive Board

President: Michael Cotrell
president@pflagcinci.org
Vice President: Lynne Lefebvre
vicepresident@pflagcinci.org
Secretary: Monica Plett
Treasurer: Brent Rose
treasurer@pflagcinci.org
Members at Large
Tom Jenkins, Karen Weber, Suzanne Whitaker, & Mark Smith

Committee Chairs

Advocacy Chair: Lynne Lefebvre
Hotline: Lois Kay
Email Liaison: Tom Jenkins
Library: David Whitaker
Membership: Tom Jenkins
Newsletter: Tim Gross
newsletter@pflagcinci.org
Programs: **OPEN**
Refreshments: Tim & Carol Egbert
Speaker's Bureau: **OPEN**
Scholarship: Dan Ley
Scholarship@pflagcinci.org
Webmaster: Tom Jenkins
webmaster@pflagcinci.org

WHEN YOU NO LONGER NEED PFLAG, PFLAG NEEDS YOU!!

PFLAG Cincinnati Presents *Night of a Thousand Laughs* A Benefit for the PFLAG Scholarship Fund

When: Saturday, May 15, 2010. 6:30 - 10:00 pm

Where: Below Zero Lounge, 1122 Walnut Street, Cincinnati 45202

How much: \$25 single, \$45 couple.

Join your PFLAG friends for a night of comedy, conversation and light snacks. A cash bar will be available. Our performers will be Loraine Braun and Mike Neubecker.



Loraine Braun is a comedian from Villa Hills, Kentucky. According to her bio, “after realizing that she had too many bad habits to be a nun, Loraine decided to be active in politics. At the age of 24, Loraine was the youngest woman elected to serve on City Council of her hometown in Northern Kentucky”. More recently she enrolled in comedy classes at the Funny Bone on the Levee in Newport and since graduating from that program has been performing comedy wherever she can: “Early and often . . . the same way she votes”. She has performed at many venues in the greater Cincinnati area and beyond. There’s more about her comedy career and interests at <http://www.myspace.com/cissybraun> .

Mike Neubecker is a PFLAG National Vice-President and Chair of the Regional Directors Council. In addition to his long and dedicated service to PFLAG, he enjoys performing his comedy routine.

Mike has been a stand-up comic since 1998. Lately he’s doing a lot of material about having an openly gay son to mainstream crowds with very lively receptions. He has performed at all the Detroit area clubs, across the USA from coast to coast. He brings his own style of comedy to mainstream audiences and making them laugh while showing support for his gay son. He also enjoys performing for the LGBT community which really needs some comic relief as the struggle for equal rights goes forward. He has opened for comedy greats, Rosie O’Donnell, Jennie McNulty, Chrissy Burns, Chili Challis, and Vickie Shaw. His MySpace page is <http://www.myspace.com/standupdad> .

To order tickets, email tickets@pflagcinci.org or call 513-202-1707.



A Box of Yesterdays

Jane Biddinger

Each January we think about cleaning the basement. Every decade or so, we actually put those thoughts into action. Last weekend was one of those times. Believe me, we were overdue.

It's amazing what two people can accumulate when the space is available. A cell phone that doesn't take photos, doesn't text, and would require a holster to carry on one's person. Christmas gifts purchased in early fall, tucked away in a special place, and forgotten. Stacks of travel books—some for places we've been, others for destinations we've yet to explore.

Alongside the travel books sat an unlabeled box. It was covered with the dust that clings to objects that have served their purpose but are too treasured to dispose of. The box was filled with books. To the untrained eye, these particular books might seem out of place next to the Foder's Italia, or Rick Steve's Ireland. But in truth, these books were valuable tools for my husband and me as we began the journey of a lifetime. A journey we never intended to take. A journey where a GPS was useless. A journey for which AAA has no map.

It seems an eternity has passed since I handed that box to a woman who came to our PFLAG meeting. Her son had come out to her, and she was struggling. She came alone. Her husband unwilling to make the trip with her. Unable to understand or offer support to his stepson. She kept the books for quite sometime. I had nearly forgotten them when out of the blue she returned them and told me of the divorce and the choice she made between a spouse and a child.

Now as I thumb through them, I remember the days, some eighteen years ago, when these books were the mainstay of my reading material.

One on my nightstand. Another hidden beneath a stack of newspapers. A third tucked under the seat of the car.

I didn't handle the news of my son's sexual orientation well. Please feel free to consider that a gross understatement. After the initial hysteria eased, he suggested I do some reading. An appropriate suggestion as I've always been an avid reader. As a young girl I waited for the bookmobile each Friday after school, checked out the maximum six books that I finished and returned the following week. Over the years, the written word has served me well. Books have been a source of knowledge, escape, and comfort for me, but not in this case. Or so I thought.

I had my reasons for balking. Reasons, that in reality were excuses. I was clueless as to what to read. And even if I knew what to read, where would I find it? All those years ago, it never occurred to me that mainstream bookstore shelves would hold any hope. I had heard that gay and lesbian bookshops existed, but imagined these stores to be dank and dark, filled with weird sorts of people. I also questioned the veracity of the books that lined their shelves, assuming them to be propaganda pawned off as literature.

I had settled into my state of denial and I intended to stay there. It required little effort on my part. Aside from the anxiety, sleepless nights, and fear that someone would find out, I was handling things as well as could be expected. Of course, those things took their toll, but at the time it seemed my only option. Opening a book would affirm what I knew, but didn't want to know. Such as reading *On Death and Dying* as my father passed. I remember reading the title aloud and thinking It's true. He's really dying. So it would be to read about

homosexuality. Picking up a book and reading its words would make the situation real. It would crack my shield of denial. It would force me to face reality. While I was far from blissful, my ignorance didn't seem like such a bad thing.

Fortunately for me, my son showed great patience, a quality I'd like to think he learned from me, but there are those who would argue otherwise. Equally fortunate, he was stubborn—a quality he no doubt gets from his father. He took matters into his own hands and gifted me a copy of *Are You Still My Mother? Are You Still My Family?* He knew my weakness. A book is my personal Garden of Evil apple. Once I feel it in my hand, I cannot resist the temptation. I read that book as if it were due back to the bookmobile the next day.

The book revealed to me that ordinary women are mothers of ordinary sons and daughters who happen to be gay. And though my corner of the world may be turned upside down, the rest of the universe is intact and life goes on.

One good word leads to another, and as I secretly feared it would, the book lulled me out of my cave of denial and challenged me to read more. I was on a mission.

I ventured online to places like Amazon where I could browse their offerings from the privacy of my own home. At their website I hesitantly entered the word homosexuality. Much to my surprise, there were other books out there. The mailman would deliver them to my door. They'd be wrapped, so my secret would be safe. They'd ship them free if my order was over \$25.00. Two books were nearly as cheap as one, so I ordered in bulk.

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A Box of Yesterdays continued

Borders was one of my favorite hangouts, but not my gay book source. One day I pretended to wonder aimlessly through the store. In reality, I had an agenda. A gay agenda, no less. And guess what? They, too, had a section of books about homosexuality. If the number of titles was any indication, there must be gays all over the place. I looked around to see if anyone was watching, and when the coast was clear, I jotted down a title or two. If someone looked my way, I pretended to be shocked at the section, shake my head and move on. Jerry Falwell would have been proud.

As time passed, I grew bolder. When in Borders, I'd actually pick up a book and put it back. Quickly. Soon, I was scanning their pages until I eventually summoned the courage to walk up to the counter and buy one. I must confess I bought two mysteries to provide cover for my true purchase. I didn't make eye contact with the clerk. If asked, I'd say I was doing a research paper and dash to the door.

In retrospect this seems almost comical, but in those days, Will and Grace would have been unmarket-

able, Brokeback Mountain pornographic, and Ellen talking about her wedding plans unfathomable. The controversial Don't Ask, Don't Tell, bad as it is, was an impossible dream.

I became obsessed with the books. I read books that looked at homosexuality from a genetic standpoint. I read studies involving identical twins—one heterosexual, and one homosexual. The longtime theories of nature versus nurture battled on.

I read religious books. I read Leviticus. I read books that interpreted Leviticus. I read a book about what the Bible says about homosexuality. I scoured the Good Book to see what Jesus said about my gay son. Finding nothing was such a blessing.

As I read, I was drawn to the personal narratives. They are what touched me. They are what made sense of it all. When I joined PFLAG, I found the personal stories to be the true heart and soul of our organization. Our stories open our eyes to reality and our hearts to one another. Our stories assure us we're not alone. Our

stories unify us.

Sharing our stories with PFLAG members gives us strength, hope, and courage. Sharing our stories with those outside the PFLAG circle challenges the myths about our gay children, promotes understanding, and changes attitudes.

Story by story we break down the door of ignorance that keeps our children closeted. Story by story we shed the light of truth into the darkness of intolerance. Story by story, we expose the injustice and inequality our society allows to exist.

It is my firm belief that if not for telling our stories, Will and Grace would never have made their way into our homes, Brokeback Mountain would not have been an Oscar nominated film, and Ellen would not be an Emmy winning talk show host.

For now, I box up my books, put them back on the shelf, praying for the day no one need ask Are You Still My Mother? Are You Still My Family?

CINCINNATI CHAPTER - PFLAG, the Beginning Marian Weage, Founder, PFLAG Cincinnati

I moved back from Michigan to Cincinnati (my home town) in June, 1984. I had belonged to PFLAG in Lansing and discovered that there was no chapter here. So 3 gay men - Todd Camm, Ron Mohring, Ray (don't remember his last name and don't know where he is now) and I worked for a year all chipping in money, finding a place to meet, making and distributing flyers, etc. to get things started. The Cincinnati Post did a piece on me in July, 1985, and put

a box on the page announcing that our first meeting would be in the back room of the old Crazy Ladies Book Store on the 2nd Tuesday in August, 1985 We had 12 at the first meeting - all ladies. We eventually met at several different churches until Family Services offered us a room in their offices in downtown Cincinnati. When we outgrew that space, we came to Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church, and have been here ever since. I served as president for the first 6

years because we couldn't get anyone else to do it. Then Diane Townley consented to become our second president, and she is the one who started the wonderful scholarship program. The organization has grown and touched the lives of many through the years. We have not yet reached our ultimate goal, that of becoming obsolete. Hopefully that day will come in the not-too-distant future!

Welcome Baby Jesse And Congratulations Maria and Lisa

Long time PFLAGers Maria Sulcer and Lisa Beauchamp are celebrating the new year with the announcement of the birth of the son Jesse Beauchamp Sulcer.

WELCOME JESSE!!!



PFLAG Cincinnati Chapter Meetings

7—9:30 pm
Mt Auburn Presbyterian
Church, 103 W. H. Taft, 45219

April 13
May 11
June 8

July 13
August 10
September 14

October 12
November 9
December 14

Community Events

March 27 & 28 Cincinnati Men's Chorus Concert

April 16 Scholarship Applications due
(See Page 11)

April 24 Ohio PFLAG State Meeting.
Columbus

April 24 GLSEN Prom
(See Page 11)

MAY 15 Night of a Thousand Laughs
(see page 3)

May 15 and 16 MUSE Concert

June 5 & 6 Cincinnati Men's Chorus Concert

June 8 Scholarship Awards Night

July 3 & 4 Cincinnati Pride Festival

September 10 Pride Night at Kings Island

Every Saturday on WVQC 95.7

www.wvqc.org

Alternating Currents - 3-5pm

Weekly Gay and Lesbian public affairs radio program featuring news, interviews, music, and information on what is happening in the local community.

Police Academy Panel

Lynne Lefebvre

Barry Webb, Training Co-ordinator for the Police Academy program once again graciously invited PFLAG to participate in a panel presentation on January 19, 2010 at the Scarlett Oaks Campus to his class of cadets. Being a police officer today is a complex undertaking. To be prepared properly they will study a mountain of subjects. We want them to know the law, know our rights, know how to treat medical emergencies, be brave, be polite, be fair, not shoot the wrong person and maybe even have a sense of humor. We also need them to be comfortable with all kinds of people. This is the purpose of our participation. We all

know knowledge is power and that brings confidence to doing a job well. So we talk about the experience of not being straight in today's world. On this particular panel were two gay men, a transgender woman and myself - the mother of a gay son. We each take turns telling our stories by trying to emphasize the bits that we think are most important. After which we take questions. This is always the most fascinating part for us all. What did they hear? How did they receive it? What misconceptions have we helped to destroy? Who in the class may be considering coming out themselves? Did we help that person? I'm struck by the fact that many

more women are openly lesbian on the Cincinnati Police Force but the men feel less secure in being open. As we continue to participate in these panels, I hope eventually, for a comfort level that will allow everyone to be safely who they are - at work, at school, at church or in the home. Each conversation we have, each story we share goes towards expanding understanding and lessening the hurt and pain sometimes inflicted on our loved ones. Keep telling your stories friends. We're not there yet but we sure are on the way to making our differences irrelevant.

What's Happening

- PFLAG Cleveland is celebrating 25 years of service to their community! Check out their website at www.pflagcleveland.org and congratulate them!
- **We Need Speakers!!**
If you or someone you know has a positive message that would benefit our Cincinnati PFLAG family email Michael at president@pflagcinci.org. We want to hear your story!
- Scholarship applications are available online at www.pflagcinci.org. If you are a parent of a high school senior, or you are a college student who could use some financial assistance, please check out the PFLAG Scholarship program. All applications must be postmarked by April 16, 2010.
- **Upcoming Fundraiser**
Look for future details about our fundraiser to be held on May 15, 2010. It is going to be a riot as we welcome local comedian Loraine Braun and PFLAG National Vice President Mike Neubecker! Keep a watch out for the final details!
- Maria Sulcer reports "The Paul Delph team came in 7th place over all during the 20th Annual StopAIDS Walk in 2009. We raised \$2207.00 Thanks to everyone who walked." There were 80 individuals/teams who participated.
- Our next newsletter will be out in June 2010

PFLAG at Xavier University

Michael Cotrell

"On February 21 6 of us from PFLAG went to speak at a diversity class at Xavier University. This is a class that is a requirement for graduation and PFLAG is asked to speak to each new class. David Whitaker, Suzanne Whitaker, Steve and Delores Bebko, Mark Smith and I spoke to 15 students about the ups and downs of being gay or having a gay child. There were lots of insightful questions ranging from how did the siblings take the news to religion questions. They wanted to know if family members turned away and how they could talk to a family member about coming out. We spoke to the class for the full allotted time of 1.5 hours. It is moments like this that make me proud to be a part of PFLAG.

Cooking with John

Coffee Steaks

Marinade

- 3 tablespoons strong brewed coffee
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 teaspoon whole black peppercorns
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

1 pound steak (we prefer Strip Steaks)

Instructions

1. Whisk coffee, vinegar, oil, sugar, garlic, peppercorns and salt in a glass dish large enough for meat to lie flat.
2. Add steak and turn to coat. Cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hour or up to 8 hours.

FOR THE COFFEE RUB

- 1/2 cup coarsely ground coffee beans
- 1/4 cup kosher sea salt
- 1/4 cup coarsely ground black pepper, (do not use regular table pepper)
- 1/4 cup packed dark brown sugar

FOR THE STEAKS

- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- Marinade Steaks

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. To make the dry rub, place the coffee, salt, pepper, and brown sugar in a small

bowl and toss gently with a fork to combine.

3. To make the steaks, heat the canola oil in a large, heavy, ovenproof skillet (preferably cast-iron) over high heat until almost smoking. Pat the steaks dry with paper towels and generously and evenly coat all sides with the coffee rub, pressing it in a bit. Any leftover rub can be stored in the freezer for another time. Sear well to form a good crust, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Don't panic if the steaks look a little charred, that's what you're going for and will ensure lots of flavor.
4. Transfer the skillet to the hot oven and cook 5 to 7 minutes for medium-rare, or until desired doneness. Remove to a platter and let the meat rest for 5 to 10 minutes before serving.

Dorothy Goes to Abu Dhabi

Tom Jenkins & Lynne Lefebvre

Last June, when Dorothy Byers was looking forward to retirement as head of the UC Engineering Library, she attended a professional meeting on Engineering Education. A recruiter for Khalifa University of Science, Technology and Research, or KUSTAR for short, told her they were looking for a head librarian. So the day after Christmas she and husband Harold left for Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Harold staying for a ten day visit. For the next two years, Dorothy will be heading the library at KUSTAR's campuses in Abu Dhabi as well as Sharjah, but living in Abu Dhabi. Since her first PFLAG meeting ten years ago, Dorothy has served in many leadership roles as noted below. We miss her endless energy, quiet effectiveness and generosity to our organization. She has been a stalwart and much valued member of the PFLAG family and we look forward to welcoming her back when this exciting adventure comes to an end. Her article tells a little about her new life. As usual, Dorothy tackles the unknown and fascinating with

gusto.

Oct 2000 first meeting

2001—2002 Chair of Scholarship Committee under Linda Arnest

2002—2005 Vice President under Marti Kwiatkowski

2003—2005 Speaker's Bureau while VP

2005—2007 President

2007—2009 Treasurer

2009—Board at large member only, until December when she left for Abu Dhabi!

PFLAG got me active in the Article 12 (issue 3) campaign

Had successful banquets while Pres - Jamie Anderson singer in 2006 (High Drama) with Mayor Mallory visiting

That's Amore in 2007 with record attendance.

News from Abu Dhabi

Dorothy Byers

Greetings from the Middle East! It's a different world here. First of all, it's like summer every day. So imagine what it will be like come summer, when temps soar up past 105 with humidity like Cincinnati. Don't come visit me then!

This city is amazing, with beautiful waterfront on the Arabian Gulf and skyscrapers everywhere. They are building like crazy – a Guggenheim, a Cleveland Clinic, a Louvre, a performing arts center, an NYU, a Sorbonne... all by famous architects. Check out <http://www.saadiyat.ae/en/> for a view of what's coming. Not to mention Masdar City, a futuristic carbon-neutral city in the making. Contrast this with the deserted shore and palm-frond huts from the 1960's! Read *Rags to Riches* to learn more about this remarkable story.

Emirati make up only 20-30% of the population, and are very tolerant of the many expats that come here to work and help build their society. I have the acquaintance of peo-

ple from India, Pakistan, Sudan, British Guinea (So. America), South Africa, Brazil, Syria, Armenia, Thailand, Japan, Australia, England, Scotland, Canada, US, Russia, Italy, Iraq, Oman, Morocco, France, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Yugoslavia, to name a few! People are friendly and accepting, and their hospitality is generous. I accepted one invitation to visit an Emirati home, and now I am expected to visit often. The food is ample, and saying you have had enough is difficult to do gracefully.

On the other hand, Emirati maintain total control of the country, with only a few free zones where expats and foreign companies can "buy property," i.e. lease for 99 years. And you can't become an Emirati, even by being born here. Harold visited last week, and we took a guided tour to Al Ain, an old oasis town. The driver was born to Pakistani parents in Fujairah, another Emirate. But he works on a resident visa as I do. Being born here does not make him an Emirati. Should he ever quit work or retire, he

must leave the country where he was born and has lived all his life! Once I sever my ties here, I too will have to leave.

The UAE is an interesting experiment in adopting western ideas but without the more democratic infrastructure that we are used to. You don't realize until you live in a place like this that our way of doing things is not the only way! Decision processes are very hierarchical, and as yet I have no budget, so must get every last book and pencil approved for purchase. This creates a great bottleneck at the top. Hopefully this will change as the institution matures, but right now it creates frustration for westerners. I had been warned by others working here. I felt I could roll with the pace, which I am. But when you know how much easier and faster things could be, impatience mounts.

Continued next page

News from Abu Dhabi, continued

Certain things the Emirati are NOT tolerant of. Drinking is one. First offense drinking and driving and you are in jail with huge fines. Second offense you are exported. Actually, you don't even have to be driving. So forget the "designated driver" plan. The boys and girls are pretty much segregated until marriage. A young woman I know is 25 and living at home. She could not drive with me to visit a friend as we would be outside the city proper after dark. I asked if she minded the restriction and she said yes, but accepts that her mother plays the "worrier" role, a role this young woman can assume when she has her own family. The university is integrated, the first in Abu Dhabi – in the classes as well as in the institution. But girls tend to sit together and guys together. Once in a while they collaborate as assigned. But when we took them to the International Book Fair last week we had to reserve two

buses, one for boys and one for girls. There are special lines for women, special seats on the buses for women, separate praying rooms at the malls for men and women.

The papers tell of women who are punished for being raped, as if it is their fault. So special lines and privileges aside, they don't get a break in the rape department. As for the gay world, I haven't found it yet. Not sure how to do so, but if you just Google "gays in Abu Dhabi" you can see there is activity. It is probably very clandestine as homosexual activity is not accepted. There's one site called realjock.com but it is blocked by the telecommunications monopoly, so I can't see it. I can't download the Skype software either. Oddly enough, it is common to see men kissing on the cheeks or greeting each other nose to nose, and even holding hands. Apparently these are not PDA as we would define it. They ARE tolerant of music. I play

in the UAE Philharmonic Orchestra. They are working to build a solid cultural scene. A colleague in Saudi Arabia said his string-playing librarians were not allowed to play background music at the grand opening of his library. No music. Period. In all of Saudi Arabia. So I count myself lucky to be in the second most liberal of the Arab countries, with Lebanon being most liberal. Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan are at the opposite end of the spectrum.

Write me at dfbyers@cinci.rr.com if you want to view my blog. I am using a Google software that requires you to establish a Google account to get in. I have pictures on the web at <http://picasaweb.google.com/dfbyers>. The most recent albums are open, but I have to invite people to see old albums.

I hope everyone is fine – I miss your warm and welcoming embraces! Keep up the good work!

PFLAG Scholarship Applications Available!

With tuition costs on the rise, college students' need for financial support is needed now more than ever. It is with great pleasure that we announce the 2010 PFLAG Scholarship Award program!

The scholarship is available to high school seniors and current college students who demonstrate positive involvement in the GLBT community. Applicants must also be a resident of or attending college in the Greater Cincinnati area.

The goals of the scholarship program are to: (1) recognize outstanding gay, lesbian, bisexual,

transgendered, intersex and straight supportive students in the local community, (2) encourage continuing education for individuals involved with the GLBT community, and (3) foster a positive image of these people in society.

This is the 18th year that PFLAG is offering financial support for high school and college students through the Scholarship Award program. Since the program's beginning, one hundred-nine deserving students have received over \$115,000 in scholarship awards.

Additional information about the

scholarship program and applications are available on the website (www.pflagcinci.org). Local schools also received application materials via mail. All applications must be postmarked by Friday, April 16, 2010. Call 513-284-6485 or e-mail scholarship@pflagcinci.org with questions.

Please help us spread the word and support fundraising events for the Scholarship Award program. We would like to honor as many deserving students as we can; your support is greatly appreciated!

GLSEN Prom 10

Celebrating 10 years of Cincinnati's Gay Prom and 15 years of working for safe schools
Saturday, April 24th, 2010 7-Midnight
Contemporary Arts Center
44 East Sixth Street
Cincinnati OH 45202
Youth tickets are \$10 in advance and \$15 night of
Adult tickets are \$50 in advance and \$60 night of
www.glsenprom.com
All are welcome.

PFLAG Policy Matters - March 9, 2010

[Rep. Stark Reintroduces the Every Child Deserves a Family Act](#). Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA.), sponsor of the Every Child Deserves a Family Act, is planning to reintroduce the bill — which would prohibit discrimination against LGBT people seeking to adopt children — after making some positive changes in the bill with the assistance of PFLAG National. Additionally, on March 11, Rep. Stark plans to lead a congressional briefing panel on Capitol Hill featuring discussion from experts on LGBT adoption. The dialogue is intended to educate lawmakers on the bill's importance.

[ACLU Battles MS High School Administrators](#). Last week, the American Civil Liberties Union and Mississippi Safe Schools Coalition teamed up to demand that Constance McMillen, a Mississippi High School Student, be allowed to attend prom. However, school district officials seem to be making that dream a little difficult. [Itawamba County School District officials](#) told McMillan she may not arrive at prom with her girlfriend, that she may not wear a tuxedo, and that should other students become “uncomfortable” with her and her girlfriend’s presence, she will be asked to leave. “Prom is supposed to be about all students being able to express themselves, have fun, and make memories that will last the rest of their lives,” said Kristy Bennett, Legal Director of the ACLU of Mississippi. “Constance has a constitutional right to take the person she’s dating to the prom, just like any other student at any other public school.”

[Catholic Preschool Discriminates Against Same-Sex Couple](#). A Catholic preschool in Boulder, Colorado will not be getting an “A” for Acceptance after telling a lesbian couple their child is not allowed to return to the school next year. Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic School decided that the student would not be allowed to enroll as a result of the sexual orientation of the child’s parents, according to an [NBC 9 News](#) report. In a statement to 9 News, the Denver Archdiocese wrote that parents at the school are expected to follow teachings of the Catholic Church, including the teaching that “Homosexual couples living together as a couple are in disaccord with Catholic teaching.”

[Lieberman Introduces Senate Bill to Repeal DADT](#). Last Wednesday, Independent Senator Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut introduced the Senate’s first “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” repeal bill along with 11 Democratic co-sponsors including chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee Sen. Carl Levin of Michigan. Unfortunately, no Republicans have signed on to co-sponsor the bill. Lieberman told *The Advocate*, “To me, it’s very important that we repeal this law, both because it’s fair and consistent with basic American values of equal opportunity, but also because it’s a very positive step for the military to take in terms of military effectiveness and readiness.”

[DC Marriage Equality Law Takes Effect](#). At the culmination of a three-decade struggle for marriage equality, advocates celebrated the first day that marriage licenses were issued to same-sex couples in Washington, DC. Many community activists had long known that the DC Council would approve same-sex marriage, but the timing had to be right. Congress and the White House could have killed the bill, so advocates waited for a president and legislature sympathetic to gay rights and home rule. In the meantime, the LGBT community picked up important rights in the District, including a domestic partnership law, before the council passed the same-sex marriage bill in December.

General Chapter Information & Resources

Advocacy: Understanding and participating in advocacy for GLBT concerns at a local, state, national and international level is addressed by our Advocacy committee. If you have anything concerning awareness or participation in advocacy for GLBT concerns please contact our Advocacy chairperson at info@pflagcinci.org

Hotline/Email: Throughout this section and the entire newsletter you will see references to the hotline and various email addresses. If you ever get confused about whom to contact, you can just use the chapter Hotline or general email address. The chapter hotline can be reached by calling 513-721-7900 and ask for the PFLAG number. The general email address for the chapter is info@pflagcinci.org. Feel free to use these as your single point of contact for anything related to the chapter. Just keep in mind that depending on your request, the operator/email monitor may need to contact someone else in order to properly address your questions/comments.

Library: Your chapter has a mobile library that is open for business at every monthly meeting. The library is an excellent resource that contains many great books and videos that address topics such as homosexuality, homosexuality and religion, coming out and GLBT issues for children and families. You are welcome to borrow any of the books or videos.

Membership: PFLAG Cincinnati values your support and interest in the chapter. Your membership supports the activities of the chapter which include purchasing publications for distribution at meetings and events where we are represented, books for the library, dues to National PFLAG and the printing and mailing of this newsletter. The scholarship program is funded primarily through our fund raising events and donations. The membership year runs October 1 to September 30.

Programs: Periodically throughout the year at the monthly meetings, a guest speaker will be included in the agenda. In the past we have had religious leaders, doctors, lawyers, financial advisors and GLBT non profit health and support leaders as guest speakers. If you have an idea or would be interested in being a guest speaker send an email to info@pflagcinci.org.

Scholarships: Each year your chapter funds its own scholarship program. The scholarships are awarded annually to deserving members of the community. More information can be found at the chapter website, www.pflagcinci.org in the Scholarship Info section or by sending an email to info@pflagcinci.org. If you are interested in donating to the scholarship fund, send a check to P.O. Box 19634, Cincinnati Ohio 45219-0634 made out to PFLAG Cincinnati, noting in the memo that the check is for the scholarship fund; PFLAG Cincinnati is a non-profit organization with a 501(c)3 status. Your contribution may be tax deductible – seek advice from your tax preparer.

Speakers: If you ever need anyone to speak to a group, organization, business, school or church, your chapter has experienced members that have volunteered to speak on behalf of the chapter. Send an email to info@pflagcinci.org to make a request or to volunteer to be on the speakers bureau.

Website: The chapter has an excellent website (www.pflagcinci.org). There is up to date information about the chapter including things like monthly meetings, information about events and volunteer opportunities. If you have any feedback on the website send an email to webmaster@pflagcinci.org

General Membership Application Membership Application & Address Change Form



PFLAG Cincinnati memberships run from October 1 through September 30. Join or renew now and your membership will run through September 30, 2010.

Request Type

- New
- Renewal
- Change of Address

Membership Category

- Individual \$25
- Household \$35
- Supporting \$50
- Contributing \$100
- Sponsoring \$500
- Lifetime \$1000
- Other \$ _____

- Please contact me for Volunteer Opportunities
- I do not wish to receive email announcements
- Send all mailing blind (will have no references to the organization name on the envelope)
- Please mail paper copies of the newsletter

Make all checks payable to "PFLAG" and mail to P.O. Box 19634, Cincinnati OH 45219-0634. Thank you!

NAME _____ DATE _____

ADDRESS _____ PHONE (_____) _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

The chapter newsletter is published four times a year. Issues are posted on the web site with an announcement sent by email. Paper copies are mailed only by request. If you wish to receive a paper copy by mail, please check the appropriate box above.

Announcements of chapter activities as well as those of kindred organizations are sent via email. Posts also include news of interest to PFLAG members, mostly involving GLBT issues. The list averages 3 to 4 announcements per month. If you do not wish to receive email announcements, please check the appropriate box above.