



# GREATER CINCINNATI

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FALL 2006

## Notes from the Top

Let's talk about the PFLAG Banquet. It's not until March 3, 2007. What's the fuss?

And why do we have a banquet anyway? The banquet is a celebration, for us and for our community friends. The banquet showcases PFLAG and its good work of support, education and advocacy. The banquet offers all a good time. But most important, the banquet is our scholarship fundraiser. That's why we call it the **PFLAG Scholarship Banquet**. Funds are raised through banquet ticket sales, sales of program ads, the auction and raffle, and cash donations. The banquet and related fund-raising activities are **critical** to our scholarship program.

The banquet is five months away, but planning has begun. The banquet just HAS to be awesome. It will happen through the clever work of many people. That's where **YOU** come in! Some of our magical, mystical banquet elves have "retired." So think about ways that **YOU** – yes **YOU** – might be a banquet elf.



- Picture yourself! in publications, creating the program and invitations.
- Picture yourself! in communications, mailing letters, writing press releases.
- Picture yourself! in entertainment, helping with artists, A-V, and other program aspects.
- Picture yourself! in ticket sales.
- Picture yourself! soliciting ads, auction or raffle items, or even cash donations.
- Picture yourself! setting up the room on banquet day.

- Picture yourself! dreaming up the theme for awesome15<sup>th</sup> annual banquet

This newsletter is going out to over 900 households. Surely there are many elves among you with capable minds and big hearts. Just call me at 513-559-0271 or send email to [dfbyers@cinci.rr.com](mailto:dfbyers@cinci.rr.com). Let's make the 15<sup>th</sup> the best ever!

See you the next 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month.  
Dorothy Byers, President

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Elections were held at the October 2006 meeting. Your new officers are

- Dorothy Byers, President
- Mark Smith, Vice President
- Dan Parsley, Treasurer
- Monica Plett, Secretary.

At-large members of the Board are Tim Gross, Marti Kwiatkowski, and Tom Jenkins.

Many thanks to the Nominating Committee; the committee consisted of Lynne Lefebvre, Harold Delph and Rick Kay; for developing the slate, and to the candidates for agreeing to run for office.

Also at the October meeting, new bylaws drafted by Marie Jenkins, reviewed by the Board and edited by attorney Freeman Durham were discussed. Ballots to approve the proposed bylaws are due October 31.

Included on the ballot will be a vote to change the official name of our chapter from Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (the old version of the acronym) to Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.



Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons and their families and friends, through **support**, to cope with an adverse society, through **education**, to enlighten an ill-informed public, and through **advocacy**, to end discrimination and to secure civil rights. PFLAG provides an opportunity for confidential dialog about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human dignity. Meetings are open to all and are completely confidential.

**About the PFLAG Cincinnati Chapter:**

Our **regular** meetings are always held on the **second Tuesday of each month** at Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church, 103 William Howard Taft Rd., from 7:00 – 9:30 P.M. Meetings are open to parents, friends and family of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender persons, as well as to gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender persons.

**From the membership committee**

Please remember to check the mailing label on this issue of the newsletter. We have included the date of expiration on your mailing label to send a gentle reminder of when your PFLAG dues expire. The date will also include a letter indicating the type of membership dues you have paid. If a date does not appear on the label that either means that you are not yet a member or that our records do not show when you last paid your dues.

Your dues are our only source of revenue. Our only other fundraiser is the annual banquet and the proceeds from that event are earmarked for scholarships. We depend upon your generous support through your dues.

If it is time to renew your membership, please use the form included in this newsletter to do so.

Thank you for your help!

**Nuts & BOLTS**

- This is your newsletter! If you have story ideas or would like to contribute, please contact Tim Gross.
- The PFLAG Library has many great books, videos, and other resources about homosexuality, coming out, GLBT issues for children and families. Be sure to check them out at our next meeting.
- The Cincinnati Chapter of PFLAG is happy to provide a speaker for your group or organization, business, school or church. Please contact the PFLAG Help Line at 513-721-7900 to obtain details about requesting a speaker for your group.
- If you have any announcements you would like to include in the newsletter, email them to Tim Gross at pflagtim@yahoo.com. Submission deadline the first week of January, April, July, and October.

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**SUBSCRIBE TO THE WEEKLY!**

Wanna know what's going on in Greater Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky's GLBT and supportive communities each and every week? Subscribe to "The Weekly." It's a free service presented by "Greater Cincinnati GLBT News" and the Gay & Lesbian Community Center of Cincinnati. You will receive an email calendar of events every Friday night. The Weekly includes listings for community organization meetings, social and support group gatherings, theatre and arts events, sports leagues, nightlife happenings and much more. To subscribe to this great FREE service, please visit [www.greatercincinnati.glbtnews.com](http://www.greatercincinnati.glbtnews.com) and click on "The Weekly" button on the home page.

**WHEN YOU NO LONGER NEED PFLAG  
PFLAG NEEDS YOU**



**This year the theme for National Coming Out Day 2006 is “Talk about it.”** While most PFLAGers already know the value of having meaningful conversations about our GLBT family and friends, we sometimes need a reminder of just how powerful having these talks with people who we’ve never connected with in the past can be. Commemorate National Coming Out Day by doing just that: Talk about it. Talk about your families and friends with someone new. Let your words and actions drive home the compelling point that equality matters for you. The most basic conversations emphasize the common values that we all share, and helping people recognize these commonalities will change hearts and minds.

Not sure of what to say? Just have the everyday conversations that you’ve always had with people. Talk about your family and don’t be vague about who they are. When you’re talking about your social life, mention partners. Invite your friends and colleagues to events like birthdays and parties.

No matter how you do it, make a commitment to **advocate**, come out, and talk about it. Moving equality forward depends on you!

Taken from Issue 4: October 2006 , Come Out and Talk About It!, PFLAG FYI, monthly online publication

### **The Return of the Youth Summit**

This year marks the return of the GLBTQ Youth Summit at the University of Cincinnati on December 16, 2006. The day will consist of an opening convocation, three workshop sessions with seven workshops being offered during each session, a keynote speaker and a dance with entertainment. Lunch, dinner, and refreshments during the dance will be provided. Montgomery Maxton, a young gay poet and activist with local roots who has just published his first book will be the key note speaker. Sample workshop topics will include coming out, starting a gay-straight alliance, healthy relationships, how to get involved in the community and many more.

The summit is for high schooler’s and college-aged GLBTQ youth and their friends and allies. GLSEN and Your Front are partnering in order to organize the event. Multiple fundraising events for the summit will be taking place throughout the fall.

To help out with the summit in any way from helping plan to helping raise funds for the event to helping execute the event go to the summit webpage that should be up and running soon, [www.cincyouthsummit.org](http://www.cincyouthsummit.org).

This article appeared in the GLSEN Cincinnati fall 2006 newsletter and edited was by Tim Gross.

### **PFLAG in Action**

- On August 18, some PFLAGers attended the Know Theatre production “Last Sunday in June.” It was a funny, yet soul-searching drama about (gay) relationships.
- On August 19 and 20, PFLAG participated in the Black Family Reunion at Sawyer Point by sharing a booth with GLSEN. Dorothy Byers “manned” the booth both days, and had a chance to speak with many passersby about PFLAG and its mission.
- On September 9, several PFLAGers attended the phenomenal Coronation XVI of the ISQCCBE. Congratulations to the new Empress Brooklyn Steele-Tate and Emperor Bobby Kettenacker!
- PFLAG had a booth at King’s Island on Pride Night September 29
- AVOC walk Delph Team.

### **Alliances**

Common Ground, the alliance from Northern Kentucky University, came in force to our September meeting. Lynne Lefebvre attended their Coming Out Day October 10.

Dorothy Byers has met with leaders of the alliances from UC, Cincinnati State, and Xavier University. The purpose is to let the alliances know that PFLAG is available for support, programs, and other activities, and to invite volunteers for PFLAG activities."



## Recent Programs

In July our regional director Mike Neubecker and his wife Jan gave a wonderful presentation at the monthly meeting. They simply told their story, but how moving stories can be. Jan had gay relatives in her family, gays who experienced violence and even death because of their orientation. Thus she was not happy when their son came out. She literally feared for his life. Nor was she inclined to inform Mike right away, as he would have a typical homophobic reaction. Mike eventually found out, and in his eagerness to change their son, he determined to send him to therapy. Mike changed his mind when he learned that the therapy would be covered by insurance on the basis of mental illness. He could see that his son was perfectly comfortable with himself and that Mike was the nervous one. Slowly the tide turned and Mike now finds himself not only proud of his gay son, but Chair of PFLAG National's Regional Directors Council!

In August Michael Cotrell (Brooklyn Steele-Tate) of the ISQC-CBE (Imperial Sovereign Queen City Court of the Buckeye Empire) gave a presentation on "the Court" and its goals and activities. Through their numerous drag shows they raise money for five charities each year. PFLAG has been fortunate to be one of those charities for the past two years. The Court's support for PFLAG benefits the scholarship program. Our scholarship winners are direct beneficiaries of the Court's efforts. At the time, Brooklyn Steele-Tate was a candidate for Empress XVI. PFLAG'ers who attended the Coronation on September 9 know that she was indeed crowned as Empress that night. Congratulations to Brooklyn! and to Bobby Kettenacker who is now Emperor XVI.

## Future Programs

Don't miss our exciting programs coming up. On November 14 Dan and Nancy Tepfer from the Dayton PFLAG Chapter will explain the case for marriage equality, including why people of faith should be supportive. Using poignant personal stories, they provide insights about gay and lesbian people, a history of marriage, characteristics of marriage, and arguments for same-gender marriage.

Marc Adams, author of *The Preacher's Son* and *(lost)Found* and several other books, will speak about his experience growing up the gay son of a fundamentalist Baptist minister and his subsequent journey, including as a student at Jerry Falwell's Liberty University! He is founder and executive director of HeartStrong, Inc., an educational non-profit for GLBT students persecuted at religious educational institutions.

## Cooking with Tim

### Pumpkin Chocolate Chip Cookies & Pumpkin Pie Squares

#### Pumpkin Chocolate Chip Cookies

- 1 cup shortening
  - 2 cups white sugar
  - 2 eggs
  - 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
  - 1 (15 ounce) can pumpkin puree
  - 4 cups all-purpose flour
  - 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
  - 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
  - 1 teaspoon salt
  - 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
  - 1 pinch ground nutmeg
  - 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
  - 1 cup chopped walnuts
1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Grease cookie sheets.
  2. In a large bowl, cream together the shortening and white sugar until smooth. Beat in the eggs one at a

time. Stir in the vanilla and pumpkin until well blended. Combine the flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg; stir into the pumpkin mixture. Mix in the chocolate chips. Stir in the walnuts if desired. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto the prepared cookie sheets.

3. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes in the preheated oven, until edges begin to brown. Allow to cool for a few minutes on the baking sheets before removing to wire racks to cool completely.

#### Pumpkin Pie Squares

##### Crust

- 1 cup Flour
  - 1/2 Cup brown sugar
  - 1/2 cup oatmeal
  - 1/2 cup butter
1. Mix until crumbly, press in ungreased 9x13 pan and bake at 350 for 15 minutes.

##### Filling

- 2 cups can pumpkin
  - 13 oz evaporated milk
  - 2 eggs
  - 1 tea cinnamon
  - 3/4 cup sugar
  - 1/2 tea ginger
  - 1/2 tea cloves
  - 1/2 tea salt
1. Combine in a bowl, pour over crust and bake 20 minutes
  - 1/2 cup chopped pecans
  - 1/2 cup brown sugar
  - 2 table butter
  1. Mix and sprinkle over filling and bake an additional 15-20 minutes, cool, cut and serve with cool whip

## Faith and the PFLAG Mom

### Jan Biddinger



Faith was simple when I was a child. I had a set of rules, my roadmap to salvation, all spelled out for me in black and white. Honoring parents kept order in our home and not stealing meant my lunch money was safe in my desk at school. Murder was inconceivable and adultery was a mystery. My biggest challenge was coveting. Temptation came to me in the form of a red scooter belonging to Bobby across the street.

Faith was still uncomplicated when I was a teen. The same rules were in effect with a few additions. If something felt too good, it must be bad. Kissing a boy for longer than the time needed to recite *Mary Had a Little Lamb* was an occasion of sin. Reading *Peyton Place* led directly to hell's doorstep.

Faith was a factor in my choice of a husband. I married my high school sweetheart whose religious upbringing matched my own, and we began our life together. As we started our family, my faith was confirmed three times over. There was no room for doubt in a heart brimming with awe and wonder as I cradled my newborn son, as I counted his brother's fingers and toes, as I rejoiced at the birth of a daughter.

Faith was a legacy I passed on to those three children. I reinforced the lessons I'd learned, for they had served me well. Following the rules had worked for me and I was certain it would do so for them.

Faith became a quagmire the day my son told me he was gay. I feared for his soul. I feared for his safety. I also felt betrayed and angry. I had been a faithful follower and had led a reasonably good life. I had long since forsaken any desire for that little red scooter. Why was this happening to my son?

Wracked with guilt, I examined my mothering techniques looking for evidence of what I had done or hadn't done to influence his sexuality. Had I been domineering? Was I lacking in faith? From the time I'd suspected his conception, some twenty-two years prior, I had prayed for him. I prayed that he would be healthy. I prayed that he would be safe. I prayed that he would sleep through the night. I prayed that he'd return safely from prom. But I never once prayed that he'd be straight. The thought never entered my mind.

As our son left his closet, his father and I took his place. We knew no one else in our dilemma, and we felt isolated and alone. We were in the midst of an internal struggle with the societal issues of homosexuality—a battle we felt we were losing.

Normally I could rely on our faith to sustain me during such times of turmoil, but I now felt like an outsider, possibly even an imposter. The services I normally found so calming became a source of anxiety. I knew our son. He was no abomination. I had never heard any fire and brimstone preaching about homosexuality in our church. In truth, I heard nothing about it at all. But what if it was forthcoming? Would I walk? Where would I go? I wanted things to be like I once thought they had been. I tried bargaining with God. God held firm.

Life in the closet became claustrophobic. My husband and I were fighting demons on multiple fronts and could no longer go it alone. We decided to focus on our secular problems and we turned to PFLAG. Much to our surprise the group met in a church—a Presbyterian church. A building with an altar and a gay support group coexisting under one roof without a protestor or picketer in sight. We met gay persons, parents and friends—not a heathen or deviant in the lot. Finally, we had a place to feel free. Though PFLAG has no religious affiliation, we found there a sense of spirit that breathed new life into our weary souls. Within the walls at Mt. Auburn we experienced the love, acceptance and understanding that we longed for in our church.

Occasionally at monthly meetings, we would compare our church experiences. Many there were distressed. Some members, feeling rejected and abandoned, had left their churches. Some had found welcoming congregations. Some were too hurt to try. Some, like us, held on by a thread.

On the home front, as we began to tell family and friends of our son's sexual orientation, we were treated to a variety of religious opinions. A friend who belongs to a fundamentalist church assured me that our son could change. Another told me that God loves the sinner but not the sin. My sisters suddenly began quoting Leviticus and Catholic Church law. One said that God intends for those with my son's affliction to be celibate. In the public

### Schedule of Events

- **November 14 7pm**  
PFLAG Meeting  
**Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church,**  
Program: Tefpers on gay marriage
- **November 17, 18, 19**  
2006 Fall Concert and Health Fair  
**St John's UUC**
- **December 12 7pm**  
PFLAG Meeting  
**Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church,**  
Program: Marc Adams
- **December 16 All Day**  
Youth Summit  
**University of Cincinnati**
- **December 16, 17**  
CMC Presents Christmas with the Crooners  
**NKU**
- **January 9 7pm**  
PFLAG Meeting  
**Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church**
- **February 13 7pm**  
PFLAG Meeting  
**Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church**
- **March 6 6pm**  
PFLAG Scholarship Banquet  
**Madison in Covington**

continued



arena, I witnessed politicians using their religion to entice voters and church groups using their influence to sway politicians. Under the guise of protecting families and values, the sides united to deny rights to gay citizens. Leaders of the religious right blamed natural disasters, once called acts of God, on gay persons.

I was in the throes of a crisis of faith. I began to question the faith I held dear for so many years. I am neither a Bible scholar nor a theologian. I am a mother. What I have come to believe comes not from books, but from my life experiences and observations. Often we humans put limits on God's love based on our own fears and prejudices. We assume his wrath on those whose belief system doesn't coincide with our own. These are neither sound religious principles, nor are they sound societal principles. There are certain behaviors that are universally beneficial to the world and its people. I have reformulated my faith around them. I have come full circle and have reverted to a simple faith. But not the faith of rules and regulations that I knew as a child. For me, religion is the struggle of good versus evil, love versus hate, brotherhood versus alienation. It's as simple as that. It's as complicated as that.

I've applied my newfound faith philosophy to the subject of homosexuality. The key fact I learned both from my son and from PFLAG is that sexual orientation is not a choice. Who among us decides? From there everything falls into place. Since there is no choice, there can be no evil. There can be no sin. I now have an answer for my fundamentalist friend who claims my son can change if he will only pray hard enough. Prayer doesn't work and isn't necessary in this instance.

Given that orientation is not a choice, if my son needs to change from the way God made him, it must mean that God made a mistake. Not fundamentally sound theology in my humble opinion.

If my son cannot and should not change, there are but two options. He can be true to himself and his sexuality or he can pretend to be straight. I see no virtue in living a lie.

The need to love and be loved is an innate yearning in all of us. Love is critical to our health and well-being. There is a craving for intimacy that extends beyond the desire for procreation. This intimacy creates a relationship that brings commitment and stability to our lives. Society accepts this in young heterosexuals not yet ready to begin a family, and in those heterosexuals past childbearing years, but somehow cannot accept it for our gay sons and daughters. It is hard to imagine a creator who would instill this need and deny its fulfillment to so many of his people. Why would he bless my straight son, my husband and me, and condemn my gay son?

It is my belief that our maker sees love, pronounces it good, and rejoices in it always. I look to my son and his partner. I see two people who are devoted to one another, who take care of one another, and who respect one another. I see only love. There is no evil.

My turmoil is over. I no longer fear for my son's soul. I no longer fear for my own soul for supporting him. I no longer question my place in the church. I am at peace. For me, it's a simple matter of faith.

### *The Preacher's Son* by Marc Adams

Window Books, West Hollywood CA, 1996

Review by: Dorothy Byers

Marc Adams is coming to speak at our December PFLAG meeting, Tuesday December 12. Don't miss the chance to hear him talk about growing up as a preacher's son. If you have read his book (now available in the PFLAG library) you will know how harrowing it can be for a gay child growing up in a Christian fundamentalist home, a home so fundamental that Jerry Falwell's Liberty University truly felt like liberty!

I am impressed time and again by the inner strength that our gay loved ones develop as the result of adversity in their families and schools. Marc Adam's autobiography is a perfect example of the struggle as they journey through sensing their differences as gay persons, concealing identity and coping, following the rules, realizing the rules aren't one size fits all, and running with that realization to the full acceptance of self defined by the self and not by fundamental Biblical interpreters, charlatans, and other homophobes.

There are many heart breaks along this journey. Not every gay child makes it through the struggle. Of those who do, the path is uncertain, risky, dangerous, heart wrenching, morally challenging, and necessarily introspective. I am appalled at the impossible roadblocks created by parents and other well-intended persons in a child's life. Defining right and wrong in an arena where right and wrong don't apply set the child up for a difficult struggle. Tying the provision of love and acceptance to rigid right and wrong creates a worse struggle, a struggle that could be avoided by a different world view.

Come hear Marc Adams. I won't give away his story here, but you will learn what NOT to do in supporting our gay members of the human family. You will enrich your understanding of the inner struggle, and you will realize the continuing need for PFLAG's missions of support, education and advocacy.

**A Mother's Coming Out Story**  
Lynne Lefebvre



I was about to close my eyes for the night when Vanessa, our daughter, came into the bedroom. She'd just returned from a trip to visit her brother at school in South Carolina. Hesitatingly, she announced that our 21 year son was gay. I was dumbstruck. Not that this question hadn't crossed my mind before but there's a big difference between idle musings and cold hard language that leapt across our bedroom carpet. She said very clearly that I was not to say a word to Ross "until he was ready to tell us". He'd made her promise not to tell but she was not able to keep silent. Sharing this news she wanted to help her brother and didn't know how. Vanessa loves Ross completely and was struggling to find a way to help him.

From the time this kid was two years old I knew he was special. This sounds so stupid and corny but he was! We lived in France from the time he was two until he was eight. Some of the differences I put down to culture but he never quite behaved like all the other kids. Everyone adored "le petit Americain" with his mini baseball cap and jean jacket. Reading was his passion as it is today. Returning to America he entered fourth grade and abruptly ran into "sports". God did he loathe Little League. He played, never hit a ball (unless you count the time his thumb was smashed) . I wanted to cry but the little fella soldiered on. Later he would tackle soccer and unbelievably, football. In basketball in stunned himself by actually scoring a basket. In shock his feet remained riveted to the wood floor. He just stared at the basket as the game flowed on around him. His real joy was hiking - a pastime he learned while climbing the ranks in Boy Scouts - oh yeah, this chap has his Eagles wings.

Telling Kent, Ross's Dad, the news was the most difficult thing I've ever done. We've always shared all our joys and woes - I wasn't about to travel this road alone. Kent is the contemplative sort so he took his time, after shared tears, to digest this change in our lives. Coming from a strict Lutheran upbringing he really had some difficult moments. For the next six months we talked, read and wondered about those other members of our

families who'd never married. What did we call them? Ah yes, confirmed bachelors! A light was beginning to dawn.

Now all I wanted was for Ross to speak. Until he did, we couldn't embrace our new reality. My heart felt squashed during those months. Time hung like that bus, late at night that never comes. Finally, the day came when he was due to drive home from school. We waited. And waited. He kept calling to say he was running late, then later. Would he ever come? He was so scared of our reaction to the news he was about to impart that he couldn't get into his car. Finally, his roommate could stand it no longer. "Ross, they know! Go!" "What do you mean they know?" "Vanessa told them ... months ago." "Good God!" He was furious and relieved. Calling her - "do they know?". Vanessa responded "What do you want to hear?" That night we sat on the couch as he spilled out his thoughts and fears. We drank a lot of beer. Sobbing, he laid his head on my lap and I stroked his hair. God, I so badly wanted to give him peace. How? I'd always "fixed" everything up till now.

Kent arrived home and Ross went to meet him in the driveway, they hugged thoroughly. Ross was so scared. My dear sweet husband, a man of good deeds and words told him "Ross, if you will forgive me for anything I have done or said to make you believe I didn't love you, then I will forgive you for ever doubting that I loved totally and without qualification." It was over. We could begin to mend together.

That was five years ago. Five rich years of learning, growing and fighting back. That day I didn't realize we would have the strength to help others. I was too concerned with what it meant for Ross and truthfully, what the world would do to him and us. I didn't know that PFLAG would become my family, or that we would knock on doors for gay rights, lobby the legislature, speak at City Hall or sing in the occasional drag show - God, have we grown! Our lives are rich and full plus a hell of a lot of fun. My mission now - speak up for those who can't. Have hugs ready for all. And be grateful every day for this man I proudly, loudly call my son.

**2006 AIDS WALK, Barbara Levine**

AIDS Volunteers of Cincinnati (AVOC) happily announces that the proceeds from it's annual fundraising pledge walk, 2006 Walk to STOP AIDS, held Saturday, September 17, 2006 at the Schott Amphitheatre at Sawyer Point met our goal!

The Cincinnati weather cooperated and it could not have been a better-organized event. Thanks to the generosity of our event sponsors: The Wiz and The Buzz, our presenting sponsors, who broadcasted live from the event. Sara Lee, Starbucks, Trader Joe's and Coca-Cola provided a pre-walk continental breakfast during registration. Trauth Dairy and Vitamin Water provided refreshments along the scenic route 5-mile Riverfront walk, and Kahn's, Coca-Cola, and Husman's provided the post-walk lunch! Prizes will be awarded to the First, Second and Third place Walkers and Teams raising the most money for AVOC, and the random drawing prizes were plentiful.

WALK TO STOP AIDS  
June Delph



\$1940 — That’s the number, so far, raised by the Paul Delph Team for this years AIDS Walk. The 9 teams members who join Harold and myself were our daughter Linda, and granddaughter Caitlin, our nephew Geoff Pittman, Tim Gross and Roxanne (Tim’s Golden Retriever), Dorothy Byers, and David Maschinot —covered the five-mile route in just over 2 hours. We had a marvelous morning for the walk, slightly chilly to start and warming up to a very comfortable end.

As we lunched on the steps of Schott Amphitheater at Sawyer Point, Dorothy mentioned she had noticed a woman who had walked the entire route behind us, and she walked it alone. Of course, Dorothy moved to sit with her as she ate by herself. I thought as I watched the two of them talk that there were so many stories, so many heartaches, and so many unknown battles all around us. We are fortunate to have groups like AVOC, PFLAG, and GLSEN here in our city. These people many times provide the only support we have in learning how to accept our children as gay human beings. Many are also learning, as our family did, how to love and support those who are living with HIV/AIDS. I’m so glad we are able to draw on the experience of these wonderful people who are willing to give themselves to help through the rough times.

We had a surprise this year when one of our donors told us that her donation would be matched by her employer (Johnson & Johnson) \$2 for each \$1 donated. This means that her \$25 check becomes \$75 for AVOC! We

were thrilled. Maybe all of us should find out if our employers do the same.

Most of you know that late September means that the female members of my family are packing for our week at the beach in South Carolina. Linda and I, my sister Wilma and her daughter Vicki, my sister Mavis (Tootsie) and our cousin Betty left at noon on September 22, we spent the night in Spartanburg, SC and the arrived in Garden City around 2pm on the 23rd. Harold’s sister Mae has been adopted by the “Allen Women” and she and her husband Carl were already there. She joined us for the week. All of us look forward to this trip every year (for the past 20 years!). Harold came down when the ladies all left and we left for home on October 15th. It was golf and more for Harold while we were there, and I took a new book to read and magazines that I’ve not had time to read at home. It is always a relaxing time and we look forward to it every spring and fall. Again we are blessed to be able to travel and have the strength to enjoy our activities.

Harold and I thank you each of you that supported the AIDS WALK with us. We are indeed blessed to have so many warm and caring people in our lives. We hope to see you again many time before the next AIDS WALK.

(edited by Tim Gross)

The Imperial Sovereign Queen City Court of the Buckeye Empire (the court)

THE IMPERIAL SOVEREIGN QUEEN CITY COURT OF THE BUCKEYE EMPIRE (THE COURT) IS A NOT FOR PROFIT ORGANIZATION THAT RAISES MONEY FOR 5 CHARITIES IN THE GREATER CINCINNATI AND NORTHERN KENTUCKY AREA. THIS YEAR OUR CHARITIES ARE: PFLAG OF GREATER CINCINNATI, AIDS VOLUNTEERS OF NORTHERN KENTUCKY, AIDS VOLUNTEERS OF CINCINNATI, GARAGOLE HOUSE AND THE TWGA BREAST CANCER AWARENESS GROUP.

HOW DO WE RAISE MONEY? WELL WE BASICALLY PERFORM FOR PEOPLE! WE ARE MAINLY A GROUP OF DRAG PERFORMERS WITH SOME LIVE SINGERS AND BOYS WHO ALSO LIKE TO PERFORM AND WE DO THIS IN BARS AND TAKE TIPS. OUR SHOWS RAISE ANYWHERE FROM \$100.00 - \$10,000.00 AND WE DO IT ONE DOLLAR AT A TIME! IN THE PAST WE HAVE DONE EVENTS FOR BIRTHDAYS, FOR PRIDE ALIVE, TOYS FOR TOTS, GLSEN AND OTHER STATES AND THEIR CHARITIES. OUR PERFORMERS ARE THE ONES WHO RAISE THE MONEY AND DESERVE THE CREDIT! THEY ARE SOMETIMES OUT FOUR - FIVE TIMES A WEEK.



Submitted jointly by Linda Arnest, Harold & June Delph

My brother, Paul, was twenty-two years old when he came out to me. It was only after he moved from Cincinnati to Los Angeles and had lived there for two years that he was able to accept himself as gay.

“Didn’t you ever suspect?” he asked. He knew from a young age that he was gay and thought his feelings were surely transparent, but I had never for a minute suspected.

“Do you think Mom and Dad know?” he’d ask me repeatedly over the years. We’d both think hard about it. Although Paul had come out to me and all of his Cincinnati friends, he didn’t come out to our parents.

“I don’t want to complicate their lives,” he would say. As the years went by, these conversations continued.

“They came to LA to visit once and Tony and I had them over to our place for dinner. It was an efficiency on Venice Beach. What else could they think? There was one room, one king sized bed and two guys. Duh!”

“Maybe Dad has figured it out,” I’d say, “but I doubt Mom has.” Mom could be preoccupied, but Dad was observant and frequently knew more than I thought he did in those days. I remember one time when Paul was a teenager and had borrowed Dad’s Volkswagen Beetle over the weekend. At dinner the next night, Dad confronted Paul, saying he found a ‘roach’ in the ashtray. I was impressed he knew what a roach was. He seemed ancient to me at the time, though he was only in his early forties.

I’d try to think of anything our parents had said over the years that might suggest they knew Paul was gay. I could think of nothing. I couldn’t blame them though; there had been few clues as Paul grew up.

When Paul was four he would occasionally put on my pink and white checked dress and ride his tricycle around the block. Mom and Dad later said he always wanted to do everything his big Sis did. In their minds, this was one more example. Another came a few years later.

When Paul was about seven, we were sitting at dinner one night when Paul looked at our parents and with great sincerity asked, “Can I be a girl?” I remember his sweet little face so clearly. He had a burr haircut at that time.

Dad calmly said, “No, Paul.”

After a pause, Paul asked again, “Please...I could wear a wig.”

My heart broke for him. I was too young to know anything about sexuality or gender identity, but old enough to understand how impossible Paul’s wish was. It was clear, he had thought about it and really wanted this. As an adult, Paul was never drawn to cross-dressing, gender reassignment or even performing in drag. I figured, as a child, his young mind thought if he were female his attraction to boys would be acceptable.

Paul never spoke of this again.

Occasionally, Paul would bring a boyfriend home when he visited from LA. Everyone accepted these young men as Paul’s friends. At family gatherings, he was constantly asked if he had a girlfriend or when he was going to get mar-

ried.

Paul was an American son, handsome and personable. He had a list of life-long friends longer than your arm. He was one of those students that his teachers remembered years after he graduated. He was a talented musician, song-writer and recording engineer evidenced by a successful eighteen-year career in Los Angeles. And his immediate and extended family loved him unconditionally.

So it was another heartbreaker when my parents and I received his letter in 1992 telling them for the very first time that he was gay and us that he was writing from the hospital and had just been diagnosed with AIDS.

The next four years were very special. We took trips together and created opportunities for Paul to perform for us. We spent as much time together as possible and loved him with all our hearts.

There was no cocktail in those days. As we knew would happen from the day Paul’s letter arrived, he died on a Tuesday afternoon, May 21, 1996. We cared for him in our parent’s home the last five months of his life.

But this sad story does not end there. As a family, we are serious about remembering the special man that Paul was. We celebrate his birthday every February 28th with his favorite ‘killer cake’ from Graeter’s. We gather on each anniversary of his passing at the Spring Grove mausoleum where his ashes sit on a glass shelf in a beautiful cloisonné urn. We have become PFLAG members (Parents, Families and Friends of Gays and Lesbians). My parents and I were co-presidents of the Cincinnati chapter for three years. We created the Paul Lee Delph Memorial Music Scholarship fund which has provided scholarships to a Norwood High School student and a PFLAG scholarship applicant each year for the past nine years. The Paul Delph Team walks the AIDS Volunteers of Cincinnati (AVOC) AIDS Walk and has raised a total of \$15,250.00 for AVOC over the past eight years.

Even my daughters have gotten involved. When they learned that Uncle Paul was gay both quickly became outspoken whenever they heard anti-gay jokes or slurs. They were nine and thirteen years old at the time. Since then, Caitlin has volunteered her time with GLSEN, the Youth Summit and was president of the Walnut Hills High School Gay/Straight Alliance. I’m so proud of both of them and proud that Paul’s life has inspired three generations of gay rights activists.

My parents now have a growing number of adopted gay sons and lesbian daughters. The many wonderful men and women who have become part of our family have enriched their lives and eased their loss. I am so very grateful for that.

This past May we commemorated the tenth anniversary of Paul’s passing by taking a family trip to Los Angeles. My mother arranged a small display of the AIDS Memorial Quilt including the panel she designed for Paul. When we realized that May 21<sup>st</sup> fell on a Sunday this year, Unity Fellowship Church seemed the obvious place to display the quilt, reunite with Paul’s many LA friends and remember him.

# A Coming Out Story – Paul Delph, cont

Paul loved Unity and attended Sunday services during the last two years of his life. The mission of Unity is “to proclaim the sacredness of all life...empowering those who have been oppressed and made to feel shame.” Many Unity parishioners are people, like Paul, living with AIDS. The Unity motto is “God is love and love is for everyone.” The church and its founder, Bishop Carl Bean, bolstered Paul’s spirit and enriched his life in his final days. Once again, Paul introduced us to a wonderful group of people and expanded our circle of cherished friends.

As a family, we feel blessed; blessed to have been introduced to the GLBT community, to have become PFLAG family members and to have had thirty-nine years with my dear brother Paul.

**Save the date! Saturday April 21, 2007 will be the Ohio PFLAG Conference focusing on media training by Jean-Marie Navetta, Assistant Director of Communications at PFLAG National and Elizabeth Brown, our contact at the national office.**

### November and December ISCCCBE Events

November. 5	Chili Cook Off – Simon Says, 5:00pm		
November. 10	Toyland Show – Shooters, 11:30pm	December 1	The Flame Still Burns Kickoff Show, Shooters
November. 12	Lube Wrestling – Shooters, 1:00 – 4:00pm	11:30pm	
November. 16	Cocktails w/the Court, On Broadway, 7:00 – 8:00pm	December 2	On Broadway 11:30 pm
November. 19	Harrison Jones Pre-Thanksgiving Show, Food 6:00pm	December 3	The Flame Still Burns Closing Show, The Dock 7:00pm
November. 22	Thanksgiving Show, 8:00 & 10:00pm	December 7	USO Show at On Broadway 8:00
November. 26	Christmas Boutique Rosie’s Tavern, 4:00pm	December 9	Bus Tour - 8pm
November. 28	Guest Bartending, 8:00 – 11:00pm	December 10	Birthday Show at Shooters Food 6pm show 7pm
		December 14	Simon Says 7:00 - 8:00pm

### 2006 AIDS WALK, cont

AVOC is happy to report that the event raised approximately \$100,000 in revenues for AVOC to continue its mission to provide education, testing and support services to the greater Cincinnati community. Kathy Nardiello, event chair, reports, "We're delighted that we've been able to reach our event goal! Our on-line registration and donation system continues to be a great tool for us with over \$41,000 of the event's revenues being collected on-line!" She states, "It is interesting to note that while we've had more people register this year and come down and walk than in the past 3 or more years, our results from the event have not really increased, but because of the longevity of this event, we're happy to be able to maintain these important revenues for AVOC. This was the 17th annual Walk and we are pleased that even though we see a lot of fundraising walks this month and still a lot of complacency and denial about AIDS, this event continues to be supported with enthusiasm by its participants. Let's hope that this year's participation sent a message out to our community that we still need to fight HIV/AIDS and that not one single case of HIV/AIDS has been cured and that not talking about it and advancements in treatments does not mean that the crisis is over."

Vickie Brooks, AVOC CEO adds, "I was thrilled to see the diversity of people walking this year. We had more people walking and I would say at least 40% were African American. Our walk certainly reflected the pattern of the AIDS epidemic here locally."

Many thanks not only to our generous sponsors, but also to you, our participants and teams, and to all the friends, family, co-workers and companies who supported them. Our heartfelt thanks goes out to you and also to our

staff and volunteers who served food and drinks, set-up, distributed brochures and posters, registered walkers, gave massages, provided entertainment, answered questions, served as marshals on the route, staffed refreshment stops, and performed the countless but vital tasks that make our event such fun, energy-filled and inspirational.

The Walk to STOP AIDS is an annual pledge walk sponsored by AVOC, a local not-for-profit, and the leading area comprehensive HIV/AIDS service organization and resource center for people affected by HIV and AIDS. This event is made possible through the generous donations of our corporate supporters: Radio One, 101.1 The Wiz, 1230 AM The Buzz, Federated Department Stores Foundation, WKRC-Local 12, Ethicon Endo-Surgery, Fifth Third Bank, Walgreen's, Q City News, Vitamin Water, Trauth Dairy, Galerie, Sara Lee Foods, Starbucks Coffee, Delta Community Credit Union, Comey & Shepherd Realtors, Jack Volking, Time Warner Cable, Cincinnati Frontrunners, Kahn's, Scott Knox: Attorney at Law, Coca-Cola, Kroger, Holland Communications, Husman's, and many more!

Proceeds of the Walk to STOP AIDS Cincinnati support AVOC's HIV Prevention Education Programs, free and anonymous HIV testing programs and client services to HIV/AIDS infected individuals, their families, friends, and loved ones in the Greater Cincinnati Area. For more information about AVOC and the event, please visit our website at <http://www.avoc.org>.

**Thank you very much for all of your efforts, support and participation in this event!**  
**AVOC • 220 Findlay Street • Cincinnati, OH • 45202 • 421-2437**



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