

20 YEARS AND STILL GROWING

SPRING 2005

From The Prez:

THANK YOU TO THE CINCINNATI GLBT COMMUNITY!!!!!!

For the first time in PFLAG Cincinnati scholarship history, our GLBT community has raised over **\$18,000** for the PFLAG Scholarship fund and activities. **WE ARE SO PROUD OF THIS COMMUNITY!!!!**

And it hasn't stopped there. Donations are still coming in from our supporters!!!!

Every time I stop at the post office box, more checks arrive. What a wonderful outpouring of love and support. It is a dream come true for all of us who have worked so hard to make this celebration one to remember.

"Party Like It's 1985," will be remembered as a very special occasion. The honorees for the evening were those past-presidents that gave their time and talent to help build our chapter to the thriving community we celebrate today.

- Marian Weage – Founding Member and First Chapter President
- Diane Townley –PFLAG Scholarship Fund

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!

Tom Jenkins, Membership Chair

Thoughts

- Judy Jacobs
- Judy Schmeling-Arnette
- Linda Arnest - "Starting The Journey" – Community Service Video

Each past-president was presented with a beautiful stained glass commemorative piece designed by Metronation for our 20th Anniversary.

Many special individuals came forward to help plan this special event. I owe a great deal of gratitude to the members of the Banquet Committee: Patrick Coyle, Lee Chenault, Marian Weage, Rick Kay, Jim Kelly, Lynne Lefevbre, Maria Sulcer, Tim Gross, Monica Plett, Steve Bebko, Tom Jenkins, Empress XIV Roberta Bigg, Emperor XIV Tom Wherry, and Co-Chairs Dolores Bebko and Marti Kwiatkowski. Without the help of these individuals this celebration would not have been possible. Please take the time to thank them.

Many thanks to all of our auction, raffle, and monetary donors. We are grateful for your support and encouragement. Thank you.

See you all next year!!

Inside this issue:

GENE SELLS DOES IT AGAIN	2
CONGRATULATIONS TO I.S.Q.C.C.B.E	3
PFLAG NATIONAL ANNOUNCES LONG-TERM GOALS	3
COOKING WITH TIM	3
A REFLECTION OF THE PAST: PFLAG CINCINNATI'S 2ND PRESIDENT	4
A SECRET NO MORE	5
JUDY JACOBS REMEMBERS HER TIME AS PRESIDENT OF PFLAG	6
PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF OUR NEW NATIONAL DIRECTOR	7
PFLAG NEW YORK CITY LAUNCHES THE "STAY CLOSE"	7
BANQUET DONATIONS	8
ISQCCB ADOPTS PFLAG	8



MISSION STATEMENT

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays promotes the health and wellbeing of gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans-gender persons and their families and friends, through support, to cope with the 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.

Why should you join PFLAG?

- 1. To help provide a safe, welcoming, affirming and nurturing environment for the parents of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex children, their families, and their friends.
2. To provide educational literature available at our monthly meetings free of charge.
3. To maintain our lending library of educational materials.
4. To mail our newsletter to over 900 individuals and organizations and businesses in the Greater Cincinnati area.
5. Strengthen networking and support with other GLBT organizations and events, such as, The Youth Summit, Cincinnati Youth Group and The GLBT Community Center.
6. Work for the full and equal human rights of all GLBT persons and their families.

If you are not a member of PFLAG, please consider doing so, only with your support are we able to continue our outreach into the Greater Cincinnati Community. I hope you will support our goals by becoming a member today. JOIN PFLAG TODAY

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.

Board meetings are held on the same night as regular meetings, starting at 6:00 P.M. Please contact a Board Member for information about attending meetings.

SUBSCRIBE TO "THE WEEKLY!"

Want to know what's going on in Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky's GLBT and supportive community each and every week? Sign up today for "The Weekly" It's a FREE email service presented by Greater Cincinnati GLBT News and the Gay & Lesbian Community Center of Cincinnati. We'll send ONE email to you a week which includes info on all the great things happening out there from community group meetings to social events to theatre and art openings to nightlife. Sign up today by visiting www.greatercincinnatiqlbtnews.com and clicking on the "Weekly" button on the lower left hand corner of the home page.

GENE SELL HAS DONE IT AGAIN!!!

Comedian Gene Sell (TOFU) has done it again for the Martha Weyand Scholarship Fund. On March 2nd at Carol's on Main those who attended were treated to comedy with a special gay slant. Gene's efforts have added another \$1,235.00 to the Martha Weyand Scholarship Fund for a total of over \$5,000 raised for this worthy cause. Thank you to all those who attended and supported this event. PFLAG is very proud to honor Martha Weyand who was a founding member of PFLAG and was very active and instrumental in starting our PFLAG chapter. She also continued to work in the gay community with AIDS education groups such as AVOC and Caracole House



CONGRATULATIONS TO I.S.Q.C.C.B.E:

Empress XIV Roberta Bigg and Emperor XIV Tom Wherry and all The Court for receiving "The Living Award" from Caracole House for their ongoing support and fund raising efforts that have raised over \$100,000 for Caracole House since 1990. An honor well deserved.

PFLAG NATIONAL ANNOUNCES LONG-TERM GOALS

The National office of PFLAG has announced the following long-term goals:

1. Build the capacity of the organization at every level so that it may have all the resources, in the form of information, people and funding, necessary to move forward in its work with the greatest possible effect.
2. Create a world in which our young people may grow and be educated with freedom from fear of violence, bullying and other forms of discrimination, regardless of their real or perceived gender identity or sexual orientation or that of their families.
3. Make its vision and message accessible to the broadest range of ethnic and cultural communities, ending the isolation of families with gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender family members within those communities.
4. Create a society in which all gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons may enjoy, in every aspect of their lives, full civil and legal equality and may participate fully in all the rights, privileges and obligations of full citizenship in this country.
5. Work toward full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons within their chosen communities of faith.

PFLAG Nation President Samuel Thoron said, "We welcome the participation and support of all who share in our vision and mission and who hope to realize our goals - whether straight or GLBT, whether relative or friend. We are redoubling our organizing efforts state by state all around the nation to significantly enhance and expand the effectiveness of exceptional grassroots network."

Cooking with Tim

Basil Tomato Spread

- 2 cloves of minced Garlic
- 1 tablespoon Olive Oil
- 1/2 cup sun dried tomatoes (not oil packed) snipped
- 1/3 cup dry white wine
- 1 8oz package cream cheese softened
- 1/3 cup snipped fresh basil
- 3 table spoons parmesan cheese

Cook garlic in oil until brown add tomatoes. Cook over low heat for 15 minutes, remove from heat, let stand 10 minutes, drain off excess liquid

While cooking combine remaining ingredients in a food processor and blend until smooth, Add tomato mixture and blend again until almost smooth, let set in refrigerator for 24 hours before serving.

Serve on toasted Baguette slices or crackers

CORRECTION TO THE WINTER EDITION OF COOKING WITH TIM

YOU NEED TO ADD ABOUT 1/3 CUP OF SUGAR (OR TO TASTE) WHEN YOU ARE MIXING THE SAUCE

**A REFLECTION OF THE PAST: PFLAG CINCINNATI'S 2ND PRESIDENT
DIANE TOWNLEY**

The recent PFLAG banquet, celebrating 20 years of service to Cincinnati brought with it an invitation for me to recall some of my experiences as president of PFLAG. I served as president for 3 years, following Marion Weage, in the early 1990's.

My involvement began when one of my five children said the infamous, "Hey Mom I've got to tell you something." I became teary eyed and choked up with the fear of his life becoming difficult in the workplace, health concerns, and social scene. Within a few years a second son came out. I knew enough to realize they did not choose to be gay; it was who they were and are. Like their siblings and peers, they have goals and dreams exactly like everyone else.

A mother's intuition for years had made me aware. I need not deny the news. Before the official news I had read what was available in the mainstream media at the time. Since being told I needed to do more research. Now that I knew I felt like a shark on a feeding frenzy for information. The public library and telephone book were my first sources. I

came across information that PFLAG had a meeting at 4th and Elm which I felt very comfortable with as I had worked in the building. At my first meeting and contrary to my fears everyone was caring and supportive. I attended every local seminar or event offered. In 1993, I went to the March on Washington. This was my introduction to the AIDS Quilt which soon after came to the University of Cincinnati and Miami University. Somewhere between the international PFLAG conventions in North Carolina and Indiana I was elected the local president of the PFLAG chapter. The conventions gave me a broader scope on the issues and allowed me to network with others from the region. There were regional meetings held in Cleveland and Columbus. The kaleidoscope of experiences we enjoyed at these meetings allowed for growth and energy to the organization. I need to mention others who also contributed successfully to PFLAG's mission during these years. Marion Weage continued in her leadership role, as well as Lois Kay, Stephen Jones, Stephen's parents Liz and Harry Jones, Ed Blevins, Judy and Gene Schmeling, Dick and Judy Jacobs,

Kitty Green, and Van and Louella Blair. The aforementioned were active in regional and local events and contributed to PFLAG's service and successes. I am sure I have left out names of others who shared their talents in making the organization so strong, so thanks to them as well.

In my involvement, my thoughts kept returning to how we could offer support for achievements and open new doors. I was not sure exactly how but believed education may be an area to explore. I found an article about a female M.D. from New Orleans who founded a scholarship program for the local chapter in her area. After many phone calls and correspondence I felt ready to inaugurate a PFLAG scholarship fund in Cincinnati. Financial help would be needed from the entire gay and gay supportive community for this endeavor to come to fruition and grow. As always the support needed was there. Many individuals and organizations were supportive to get the scholarship off of the ground, grow and continue to what it is today.

Continued on Page 6

- **May 6 & 7** **8:00pm**
MUSE
Growing into Our Roots
New Thought Unity Center
-
- **May 10** **7:00pm**
PFLAG Monthly Meeting
Mt Auburn Presbyterian Church
- **May 15** **6:00pm**
Meet the Parents the
Finial Chapter
The Dock
- **June 11 & 12**
2005 Cincinnati Pride
Parade & Festival
- June 14** **7:00pm**
PFLAG Monthly Meeting
Mt Auburn Presbyterian Church
- June 17 & 18** **8:07pm**
Men's Choirs
Soul Sounds
Aronoff Center
- July 12** **7:00pm**
PFLAG Monthly Meeting
Mt Auburn Presbyterian Church
- **July 24** **6pm**
Tribute to the Empress
Shooters

A Secret No More

By: Jane Biddinger

Susan held her secret for 20 years. In retrospect, the secret held her. And though I don't know her well, she shared it with me.

After Susan's revelation I began to think about my own secrets. I categorized them—definitely a sign that I've watched too many of those organizational programs on HGTV. I assured myself that my task would be simpler. Basements require lots of energy and trips up and down steps. Secrets I could sort from my recliner.

First there are those small secrets. Things that are really no one else's business. My personal version of "don't ask, don't tell." My weight for instance. Though I'm generally an upstanding citizen, I have lied to the DMV. If I ever go missing and an APB is issued for me based on the hair color and weight listed on my driver's license, I could be sipping Margaritas in the Bahamas by nightfall.

There are some secrets that I must keep. Those entrusted to me by family and friends are not mine to share. And I do have a few of my own that I have grappled with and have concluded that airing them would serve no good purpose.

And then there are those secrets that fester and eat away at a person. They cry out to be shared but bring with them the fear of rejection. They threaten to separate us from the rest of humanity, but once revealed, offer hope to another and serve to unite us as soul mates on life's journey. Susan's secret was one of these.

I met Susan at a book group that meets at a small local restaurant. This serves as her lunch hour and she ducks in and out as her schedule permits.

Last month we read *The Red Tent*, a biblical novel about Dinah the daughter of Jacob. As I gave the waitress my order, Susan settled into the chair next to mine. She told me that this book touched her deeply and she felt a connection to one of the main characters, Rachel, Jacob's second wife. Susan belongs to a ministry called Project Rachel, a support group for women who have had abortions. She told me the events that led her to the group. The abusive and mentally unstable husband; the affair with a trusted advisor; the pregnancy; the fear of being deemed an unfit mother and losing custody of her four-year-old son; her decision to have an abortion; her abuse of alcohol; her struggle to recover; her victory over it all. Susan has found peace but lost twenty years of her life in its pursuit. She wants to spare other women the heartache she has experienced and help them through the process. Susan is on a mission. She tells her story to church groups. She tells her story to women's groups. She tells her story to acquaintances like me. Susan lends a shoulder to women in her support group. Keeping the secret doesn't help anyone.

I am no stranger to secrets. There is one that I've struggled with for years now. Sometimes I think the battle is won but other times I'm still at war. This secret originally belonged to my son. He wrestled with it, conquered it, and then passed it to me. A reverse inheritance if you will. The secret of his sexuality came as a jolt though not a surprise. My husband and I had wondered, but always managed to push those questions to the back of our minds and assure ourselves that they were without merit.

At first the burden of this secret seemed impossible to carry alone, but I lacked the courage to ask another to share the load. I could not imagine telling another soul what I found so difficult to admit to myself.

Our son gave me the phone number for PFLAG and I carried it around in my wallet for months. Finally I called and got information about the meetings. My husband and I attended though on the drive there we discussed a myriad of things we should be doing instead. Matters of little or no importance. Just a reason to turn back. To replant our heads in the sand.

We took our place in the circle and listened to the stories. One after another after another. Stories so similar to ours. Stories we had lived. Soon it was our turn. Our son is gay, we said. And the world continued to turn. And the sky did not fall.

That meeting was the turning point for us. The stories were what touched us. Others had the courage to tell so maybe someday we could too. We came back month after month. Sitting in the circle. Telling our story to a friendly audience. A dress rehearsal for future revelations.

The time and place to release the secret is a personal choice. I met a woman who did some dry runs before she told her family. She felt safer telling a stranger so she began with the person in front of her at the grocery checkout line. I thought about the drive-thru—I'd like a single with cheese, small fries, and by the way, my son is gay.

We opted to begin with our families. Some encounters went better than others. We found a cousin with the same secret. We moved on to friends, and in the process debunked a myth or two. Our revelation encouraged several to rethink stereotypical assumptions and confront some bigoted notions. We came back to the PFLAG circle each month. To report our progress. To receive encouragement and support.

Continued on page 6

P.O. Box 19634
Cincinnati, Ohio 45219-0634
www.pflagcinci.org



A Secret No More; Continued

With practice and repetition telling has become easier, the knots in my stomach smaller, and the butterflies fewer in number. At that first meeting no one could have convinced me that in time my husband and I would speak at three Archdiocesan programs and participate in the PFLAG video.

There are still those moments, however, when it would be easier to keep quiet. When a comment was made at work about Disney insuring queers, I knew I had to address it. Afterwards, the plant foreman told me about his brother. Another worker had a sister. My boss had a friend with a son.

I am amazed at how often my speaking up gives a voice to another. A chance to feel connected and to share experiences. To be free of the secret. And I'm sure there are also those who aren't quite ready, but take heart in knowing they're not alone. And if not for themselves, for someone close.

Susan, it turned out was no exception. After she finished her story and requested prayers for her upcoming retreat, I told her about my son. My old secret. The good work of support groups. She told me she has a couple of friends who are struggling. Could I give her the date of the next meeting? Directions?

I don't know whether Susan's friends have made their way to PFLAG yet. I'll see her next week and ask. But there is one thing I do know for certain. If Susan and I had both kept our secrets, those two souls would not know that hope and fellowship are alive and well and waiting for them in Mt. Auburn.

A REFLECTION OF THE PAST: PFLAG CINCINNATI'S 2ND PRESIDENT; CONTINUED

During my tenure as president the meetings were moved to Mt. Auburn Presbyterian church. We were welcomed by Rev. Hal Porter and his affirming congregation. Although any endeavor requires time and effort, the friendships developed at monthly meetings and other PFLAG activities will be cherished forever. In our own way each of us somehow has managed to contribute through support, education, and advocacy.

Although I am no longer actively involved in PFLAG, I am thankful for the opportunity, growth and friendships formed. My activism now lies in encouraging others to support diversity. The growth of the organization is encouraging. Thank you to all of those currently serving to make PFLAG an even stronger organization.

Judy Jacobs Remembers Her Time As President of PFLAG

Thinking back several years, before we knew about Rich, I remember seeing a picture in the newspaper of some people attending a support group for parents with children who are gay. I remember I didn't want to read the article, I was in big time denial and I guess I was afraid to read it. You know, if you don't acknowledge something, it can't be true!

Dick and I went to a P-FLAG meeting the night after Rich came out to us. I believe this was March of '93. I cried the entire evening; Dick shed a few tears too! In Sept. of '94 I became president of P-FLAG and I believe this speaks volumes. I learned so much from everyone. We were not the only parents going through this and the support we received helped

me to get thru the next several months. I threw myself into volunteering and before I knew it was asked to think about becoming president This was the fall of '93 and I knew our daughters wedding was coming up in May of 94 so I said maybe the next time. After much convincing, I agreed to do it. I remember Judy Schmeling kept telling me if I needed any help, the board would give it to me and indeed they did. I was president for two years and I must say one of the highlights of my life. The experience of being president and all the wonderful people I met, I would never trade for anything. I have so many wonderful memories of those two years, the picnics, banquets, board meetings, and the conven-

tion in Indianapolis with Mel White as special speaker. In late spring of '96 I got to present the scholarship winners at a program being held at UC with Mel White as guest speaker.

We took on the helpline the same time I became president and back then we sometimes had several calls a day. There were callers that I would connect with, sharing my experience and they with me. This was very gratifying to me, to know that just maybe, I made a difference for someone.

Being president of P-FLAG was truly an honor for me and I feel such pride knowing my two years helped to get P-FLAG to where it is today

VOLUME 20, ISSUE 2**Personal Experience Guides Leader of Group for Families of Gay People**

By Peter Panepento of the Chronicle of Philanthropy

Eunice, La., is far from being a Mecca of gay culture. Like many small communities, the town of 11,500 is a place where the prevailing view is that being gay or lesbian simply is not something that should be talked about.

At first blush, Jody Huckaby's family would appear to fall in line with the traditional view of gay and lesbian life in Eunice. Strongly Catholic and devoutly Republican, Mr. Huckaby's parents raised eight children in a household where old-school religion ruled. Jody enrolled in divinity school and one of his sisters is now a nun.

But four Christmases in the 1980s spun the Huckaby family's views on gay and lesbian issues in an entirely new direction.

The first to come out was Jason, the oldest son, who announced to the family during a Christmas gathering 19 years ago that he was gay. Jody, the seventh of the eight children, made his announcement one year later. Two other brothers followed during the family's next two Christmas gatherings.

"It wasn't easy when Jason, my older brother, came out," Jody Huckaby recalls. "He really struggled with it. But over the course of four years, as the four of us came out, for each successive person who came out it became easier."

Mr. Huckaby, 40, hopes his story will help inspire other families with sons and daughters -- or brothers and sisters -- who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. As the new executive director of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Mr.

Huckaby also hopes to lean on his experiences to help stimulate discussions in the broader population about gay and lesbian issues.

But as the rights of gays and lesbians have become an increasingly high-profile issue in the national political debate, the organization has also been raising its profile as an advocacy group on issues such as gay marriage, on-the-job discrimination, and the extension of Social Security benefits to domestic partners.

Mr. Huckaby says he plans to use his own story to help the organization spread its message to a larger audience. That story, says Samuel Thoron, president of the charity's board, will give the organization credibility as it works to reach more people and expand the number of chapters.

Continued next page

PFLAG NEW YORK CITY LAUNCHES THE "STAY CLOSE" CAMPAIGN

The Stay Close Campaign, a new educational advertising campaign sponsored jointly by PFLAG New York City and Metro DC PFLAG and designed to help families and friends better understand and accept the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people and their lives, began hitting the media at the beginning of February.

Stay Close is intended to remind folks that the GLBT person in their life is the same person they were before they disclosed their sexuality, the same person they loved unconditionally. To find out more about this exciting new campaign check out the website at: www.stayclose.org.

Several celebrities have signed up for the campaign including: talk show host Cristina Saralegui and her brother Ignacio; Broadway star Barbara Cook and her son Adam; pop star Cyndi Lauper and her son Elen, New York Congressman Gregory Meeks and his brother John; Ben Affleck and his cousin Jason, and the family of Congressman Gephardt.

Personal Experience Guides Leader of Group for Families of Gay People , Continued

"One of the really important aspects of our decision to hire Jody is, over the years, he has empowered those around him not so much to evangelize, but to understand and speak their voices," says Mr. Thoron, who joined the group shortly after his daughter came out in 1990. "It's vitally important now that we speak our truth and tell our stories."

As of this printing we would like to thank the following donors for their support:

Pride 2004 Committee	Toyota	Mary Anne Duchin	Mona Mansour— In memory of Richard Pearson
I. S. Q. C. C. B. E	David Tseng	Catherine & Paul Callahan	
River Bears	Judy Schmeling-Arnette	David Holscher	Doreen Quinn— In memory of Jeff Aufderbeck & Coleen Tracey
Martha Weyand Scholarship Fund	Earl Apel	Sandra & Joseph Gross— In honor of Timothy Jon Gross	Clay & Sue Wiseman
Paul Delph Scholarship Fund	Mary Arundell— For gay and lesbian youth everywhere	Kathy Fryer Helmbock— In honor of John E. Fryer, M.D.	Bette Wismann
Stephen Peterson	Charles Boswell— In honor of the Cincinnati Men's Chorus	Knowledgeworks	Sheilah Wagner
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			Bobbi Sterne

ISQCCBE ADOPTS PFLAG

BY: TIM GROSS

The Imperial Sovereign Queen City Court of the Buckeye Empire, Inc., All of Ohio, actually was born out of gay bowling leagues, which were prevalent throughout the Midwest during the early and mid-1980s. Cincinnati's yearly bowling tournament, CIN-TIT, was (and still is) one of many gay bowling leagues located across the continent. One of the bowlers from Toronto, a distinguished gentleman named Bob Toane, was a regular visitor to Cincinnati with and without this group way back then! Some of the guys and gals from Cincinnati, including Miss Buffy, Lydia, and Tom Wherry, attended a bowling tournament in Toronto in early 1988. At this tournament, certainly with lots of partying going on, our Cincinnati folks stumbled upon and met a beautiful blonde who was the Empress of Toronto - Empress I Lauren Michaels.

While some details here are a bit sketchy, we know that at this time period Miss Buffy worked at the Pipeline, and we also know that during Lauren's reign, she came to Cincinnati and performed a one-woman show at the Pipeline - our best recollection stems to early summer of 1988. It was at this show that Lauren named Buffy as Imperial Crown Princess, Cincinnati to Toronto. Rather gracious on Lauren's part, as we feel reasonably sure that Buffy insisted on performing in Lauren's one-woman show! Sadly, however, no one from Cincinnati attended the step-down Coronation in

Toronto of Empress I Lauren Michaels and Emperor I Sergio in November of 1988, but we are grateful for them for giving Buffy.

Every year the COURT adopts charities as their main beneficiaries, this year PFLAG has the honor to be selected as one. When asked, Empress XIV Roberta Bigg, why PFLAG was chosen this is what was said "The main reason that we chose PFLAG Cincinnati for a charity is that we thought it was important to help the gay youth in the city. Education is one of our best resources, and what better way then to help gay and lesbian youth with scholarships."

Since 1990 the COURT has raised almost \$500,000 in donations for local charities. To learn more about the COURT visit their website <http://www.isqccbe.org/> and join us on May 15, 2005 at 6 pm at The Dock on Pete Rose Way for food and at 7 pm for the "Meet the Parents: The Final Chapter Show"

Info about the ISQCCBE was attained from their Website. <http://www.isqccbe.org/>



VOLUME 20, ISSUE 2

2004/2005 Officers & Chairpersons/Board Members

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General Membership Application

Type of Membership

Check below

- New
- Renewal
- Change of Address

Membership

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

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