



Notes from the Top

New Year's Greetings from your new president! When not completely cowed by this office, I try to live up to my New Year's resolution to get organized and be more productive. That's because there is so much to do!

Take for instance the 2006 Banquet. Mark your calendars now for an exciting time on March 4 at the Madison. The theme this year is "High Drama: Coming Out and other Family Tales" featuring singer Jamie Anderson and members of the Know Theatre Tribe. There's more: donate something for the raffle or silent auction. Or find organizations and businesses that will. Help make the banquet a fund-raising success for our scholarship program!

Here I come out of my shy shell. You may even consider a MONETARY donation to the scholarship fund! How's that for an unabashed ask (as they call it in the development world)? PFLAG has a stellar program, and we want to keep it strong for future deserving awardees.

The ISQCCBE continues to include PFLAG in their fund-raising efforts this year. We are very grateful for their support. A great way to show our gratitude is to attend their shows! Be sure to watch the calendar and announcements for ISQCCBE fund-raisers.

Here's an advocacy idea for everyone, an easy step for even the most timid of us. I got this tip from Abigail Garner, author of *Families Like Mine: Children of Gay Parents Tell it like it is*. She is the daughter of a gay father and advocate for LGBT families. She suggested that I buy her book at the local bookstore rather than through a mail order. She considers "...going into a book store to ask for a queer book as an everyday act of social change. They see that someone local is asking for a gay title, and it makes a difference in selections staff make when ordering books in the future." How simple is that?

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

A Journey Without End  
Jane Biddinger

Recently a friend told me that there is a gayness to my life. She was not referring to my sense of humor or good spirits. She was referring to the fact that I have a gay son. She noticed the impact on my life.

Fifteen years ago, our oldest child came out of his closet. My husband and I entered one of our own. Reluctantly and slowly we began our journey out. A journey we had never planned. A journey with no preset itinerary. A journey not yet completed.

Most of our travels have involved a change of scenery. Trading our Ohio valley for the beach, the mountains, or the attractions of a larger city. We were still the same persons, just in another locale. But this journey of ours has been unlike the

Inside this issue:

<b>NUT and BOLTS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>High Drama: Coming Out and Other Family</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Silent Auction &amp; Raffle Items</b>	<b>3</b>
Review of Brokeback Mountain	<b>4</b>
Cooking with Tim	<b>4</b>
<b>ISQCCBE REIGNS!!!!!!</b>	<b>5</b>
Book Review	<b>6</b>
50 Ways to Support Lesbian and Gay Equality	
<b>Banquet Invitation</b>	<b>6</b>

## 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.



### 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 Thursday before our monthly meeting, starting at 7:00 P.M. Please contact a Board Member for information about attending meetings.

### 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*

### NUT & BOLTS

- This is your newsletter, too. 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 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 @ [pflagtim@yahoo.com](mailto:pflagtim@yahoo.com), Submission deadline for 2006 are the first week of January, April, July, and October.

### 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 which will send you an email calendar of events every Friday night. The Weekly includes listings for community organization meetings, social ad support group gatherings, theatre and arts events, sports leagues, nightlife happenings and much more. To subscribe to this great FREE service,

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

## VOLUME 21, ISSUE 1

### High Drama: Coming Out and Other Family Tales 2006 Scholarship Banquet

As most of you are aware that our Annual Scholarship Banquet is fast approaching us. Mark your calendars for Saturday, March 4, 2005. This will be a night of great entertainment featuring Jamie Anderson.



*Touring nationally since the eighties, Jamie Anderson has played her warm and witty songs in hundreds of coffeehouses, concert halls, colleges and festivals all over the U.S. She's released seven albums including her newest, [A Promise of Light](#), produced by Kiya Heartwood (Wishing Chair). Her music has been featured on the Dr. Demento radio show, Car Talk, and stations all over the world. Jamie loves being a full time musician, so she doesn't really park cars, but her mama said she should have something to fall back on.*

*Jamie's a confused folk singer who dabbles in several genres - witness the fun bluegrass romp of "Hurricane," the jazzy "Gone," and "Your Night Just Got More Interesting," an almost-pop number. For those who like their music political, there's "[Beautiful](#)," about body image, and "Felon," a less than kind look at North Carolina's weird laws. The title cut of *A Promise of Light* is a calming plea for peace; the disc even has a traditional folk tune, "Polly Vaughn," featuring a lovely fingerpicked guitar solo from Jamie. Even though her girlfriend says she should quit writing songs about food, "[A Little Chocolate](#)" is also on the disc:*

*Sweet and smooth, so very nice  
Like being in love but with a smaller price  
It doesn't have to be real pure  
Ain't nothin' wrong with me  
A Little Chocolate won't cure*

*Taken from [www.JamieAnderson.com](http://www.JamieAnderson.com)*

Besides Ms. Anderson we are going to have members from The Know Theater Tribe doing minuet's of coming out stories from their 2005 season of locally written stories of area people's coming out.



## Silent Auction & Raffle Items

Again this year we are going to continue with our silent auction and raffles. If for some reason you were missed with our mailing for the solicitation of items to donate for the event. Please contact Lynne Lefebvre @ 513-271-1787 or @ [klef241@fuse.net](mailto:klef241@fuse.net) to contribute. We will gladly accept donations of Merchandise or that platter that Aunt Sally gave you for Christmas that you do not care

for, or gift certificates. Use your imagination, be creative, if you are a crafty person create us one of your masterpieces.

Also consider making a cash donation in memory or in honor of someone.



## Review of Brokeback Mountain

by Ross Lefebvre, of San Francisco; son of Kent and Lynne

Ang Lee's new film is not the greatest romance put to film this year or any year. Romance in film seems fixated on the contrived spectacle of love, the near operatic absurdities of undying passions at the hands of fate. Romances concern themselves with narcissistic youths careening towards oblivion on doomed ocean liners or parted by wars or unsympathetic relations. Somehow there is always time for one last kiss, often a damp one, somewhere under a stormy sky or out to sea. Brokeback Mountain is not a romance.

It is a love story, but that is besides the point for what film isn't essentially a love story? It is really the story of Ennis Delmar (Heath Ledger) as he navigates a life he did not intend. Lee uses Ennis to explore the lives we live versus the lives we wish we could have lived and all the circumstances that divide the two. In the case of Ennis, who finds a brief time of happiness with another cowhand, Jack Twist, on an isolated mountain side, a culture not so different from our contemporary one splices his life and forces him in one socially dictated direction, that of

marriage and children and work. Even though he is no more than forty-three by the film's end, he shows the weariness of someone twice that age, of someone who has tried to carry two lives and failed at both. All of the characters seem torn over these variations of fate and circumstance, strained by the unexpected results of their choices and the consciousness of how things could have been. In the character of Jack's wife, we see a woman who believed she had married one man gradually withdraw behind her work, always at calculator, a desk, a phone, and behind strikingly blonder and blonder wigs, until the near end and she seems no more than a vacant space, a mannequin supporting this blinding platinum wig. The toll on both characters seems immense, though it is hardly an elegy, for the course of the film follows a personal awakening, a reconciliation of the divergent existences.

Ang Lee tells a story that is part character study, part social and cultural history, part homage to wide Wyoming skies, and finds a common experience that resonates outside of the place he has so meticulously crafted.

### Cooking with Tim Brazilian Coffee Cookies

2/3 cup shorting  
1 cup brown sugar  
1 cup white sugar  
2 eggs  
3 tsp vanilla  
2 tbsp milk  
4 cups Flour  
1 tsp salt  
1/2 tsp baking soda  
1/2 tsp baking powder  
4 tbsp instant coffee

Heat oven to 400.  
Mix shorting, sugars, eggs, vanilla and milk until fluffy. Mix the remaining dry ingredients together. Slowly stir into sugar mixture; mix thoroughly. Shape into 1" balls. If dough is too soft chill till firm. Place balls on an ungreased baking sheet 2" apart. Flatten with a greased fork or bottom of a glass dipped into sugar. Bake until lightly brown 8-10 minutes.

### Vanilla

1/5 bottle of Vodka  
4 Vanilla beans (whole)  
Cut beans in 1/2 (lengthwise) and place in bottle of vodka. Let set 4-6 weeks. Boil vodka and beans 10 minutes. Strain through cheese cloth and use.

by Marti Kwiatkowski (Past President)



I know that many of you are aware that the ISQCCBE took PFLAG under its wing in 2005. For the past year -- under the reign of Empress XIV Roberta Bigg and Emperor Tom Wherry -- The Court has performed numerous shows to benefit their chosen charities. None of these talented, dedicated, and energetic performers get paid. Yet every weekend they perform in shows to raise money for AVOC, NKAVOK, Caracole House, YWCA Breast Cancer and PFLAG of Greater Cincinnati.

None of us at PFLAG had any idea how much money this group was going to raise. We felt so fortunate to meet these wonderful individuals at the court shows, that many of us who threw money into the hat, did it because we believed in the hard work and dedication of these fine performers. And when they announced last year that we would be one of the beneficiaries of their generosity, well, that was just frosting on the cake. We would have gone to their shows anyway!!

In December of 2005, PFLAG was presented with a check for \$11,223.87 -- bringing the total amount contributed to PFLAG for 2005 -- (are you ready) \$11,893.87 -- to say that we were speechless would be putting it mildly. This fine group raised in one year, enough to fund ten, \$1,000 scholarships and then some.

Thank you doesn't say enough. There is no doubt that the ISQCCBE and Empress Roberta and Emperor Tom as well as all the court members deserve accolades for all the hard work that went into putting together numerous shows and fund raisers.

To The entire Court I would like to say, there are millions of people out there-- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and heterosexual parents and teachers, employers, and coworkers, church members and neighbors--who are all looking for ways to express their love of justice and their abhorrence of bigotry. You -- have found such a way --as well as into my heart and into the hearts of so many others.

Thank you, not just for your hard work and astounding donation to PFLAG and all of your other charities, but also for being an example of what is possible in this world. Thank you for helping others in need, supporting our youth, and engaging us in your labor of love. You have all walked miles in your heels!!!

PFLAG hugs to each of you. Here's to 2006!!!



Left to Right :Imperial Crown Prince XIV - Greg Barker, Emperor XIV - Tom Wherry, Marti Kwiatkowski, Empress XIV - Roberta Bigg, Imperial Crown Princess XIV - Brooklyn Steele Tate

### Schedule of Events

- **February 3 11pm**  
Ladies of the 80's,  
ISQCCBE: PFLAG  
Show  
**OLD Street Saloon,  
Monroe**
- **February 14 7pm**  
PFLAG Meeting  
**Mt. Auburn Presbyte-  
rian Church**
- **February 18 8pm**  
"Winter Heat", Cincinnati  
Men's Chorus  
**Hamburger Mary's**
- **March 4**  
**14th Annual Scholar  
ship Banquet  
PFLAG  
Madison, Covington**
- **March 10 & 11 8:00pm**  
11th Annual Mew Spirituals  
Concert with Linda Tillery  
MUSE  
**House of Joy, Hamilton Ave  
College Hill**
- **March 14 7pm**  
PFLAG Meeting  
**Mt. Auburn Presbyte-  
rian Church**
- **March 25 8:07pm**  
**March 26 2:07pm**  
"Bustin' Out all Over"  
Cincinnati Men's Chorus  
**Aronoff Center for the  
Arts**
- **April 22 6:30pm**  
Reception and Silent  
Auction, MUSE  
**St John's Unitarian  
Church, Clifton**
- **April 11 7pm**  
PFLAG Meeting  
**Mt. Auburn Presbyte-  
rian Church.**

Book Review: 50 Ways to Support Lesbian and Gay Equality edited by Meredith Maran with Angela Watrous  
by Marti Kwiatkowski

If ever there was a book worth reading, "50 Ways to Support Lesbian and Gay Equality," is surely one of them. Described as, "the complete guide to supporting family, friends, neighbors -- or yourself," it is true to its word. This book was not only a delightful read, but an informative one as well, and full of good humor. I must admit that the dedication on the first page grabbed my attention: "To sweet Lilah Rubin, who deserves to grow up in a world where she can be anything she wants to be, and love whoever she wants to love." Who could resist that?

If that doesn't grab you nothing will. This read is filled with short, advice-filled information which include diverse strategies for advancing equality while providing additional insight into LGBT communities. Each essay is written with insight and grounded in love. It is a roadmap of the GLBT landscape with suggestions at the end of each segment on how each one of us can make a difference. This is a guide for action. It's timely, informative, poignant essays will deepen your understanding while suggesting simple things you can do to achieve equality.

The opening segment titled, "Start from the Heart," begins: "Opening closed minds is no simple task. That's why we recommend focusing your activism less on changing people's minds and more on changing their hearts. Those who have never met an "out queer person--not realizing that we're their family members, coworkers and neighbors--fear who we are and how we love. Sometimes intolerance is so entrenched that even knowing or loving a few openly queer people isn't enough to undo it. It'll take time, and the visibility of respected queer people, to change hearts and minds about who we are, and to convince the world that we deserve equal rights."

While we can--and should--argue for equality until we're rainbow-colored in the face, debating with someone whose mind is made up against equality can be an uphill battle. By laying our hearts on the line and coming out as LGBT people and straight allies in every possible situation, especially in mixed company, we offer others an opportunity to open their own minds. We offer them a chance to put a face, and a heart, to the name--instead of calling us name." Angela Watrous

Now if that doesn't convince you to buy this book and give it to all your friends nothing will. There is also included, an essay by National PFLAG Presi-

dent Samuel Thoron. Every one of these essays ends with helpful hints and suggestions for advocacy. It made me realize that even if you are still "in the closet" about your child's sexual orientation, there are suggestions in this book that will help you understand and educate yourself about the GLBT life in America. So I suggest you read it and after reading, "pick a task and get busy."

A must read!!!!!!



THE GREATER CINCINNATI CHAPTER OF PFLAG  
PRESENTS

# High Drama

COMING OUT AND OTHER FAMILY TALES

## 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Scholarship Banquet

FEATURING:

SINGER JAMIE ANDERSON  
AND  
MEMBERS OF THE KNOW THEATRE TRIBE

AT THE MADISON  
SEVENTH AND MADISON, COVINGTON, KY  
SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 2006

CASH BAR 6:00 P.M. • SIT DOWN DINNER 7:00 P.M.

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THE PFLAG CINCINNATI SCHOLARSHIP FUND  
AND PFLAG ACTIVITIES

A Journey Without End; continued

others. We have remained planted in Cincinnati. The landscape is the same. But we are not. The change has been internal. Most trips involve looking at different things. Our trip has resulted in our looking at things differently. This is what my friend has noticed in me. And over time the change has inched its way into most facets of my life.

There are the two biggies—religion and politics. Neither to be talked about in public. I struggle with both.

I have been Catholic all of my life. When our son came out I questioned my place in the pew. Week after week I attended mass. Week after week I feared hearing the abomination homily. The homily that would force me to leave. Finally I talked with a priest I knew. He told me to love my son unconditionally. He told me that God does. We sat near a picture of the pope. I waited for the lightning to strike. It never did. I felt hopeful.

Before we registered in our current parish, we visited with the pastor and told him about our son. We expressed our concerns and he assured us that we would never hear the dreaded Leviticus passages in this church. He told us that our son is always welcome. Our parish hosted a discussion of the Catholic bishops document *Always Our Children*—a letter written to parents of lesbians and gays. We were invited to tell our story. No holds barred.

While my experience with my local church has been encouraging, I am appalled by the reports from the Vatican. The church is reeling in the wake of the child abuse scandal. A helpless observer of a drive by, I witness the higher men of the cloth fire unwarranted incriminations at our gay priests and seminarians trying to bag a scapegoat. I am disheartened, embarrassed, and angered as my church refuses to distinguish between homosexuality and pedophilia. I return to my pew each week. I pray. I await the final straw.

My political views have been colored by my journey. As I enter the voting booth I look to our founding fathers and that Declaration of Independence. Those words that declare all of us equal. Those words that say we all have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. No exclusions. No exceptions. I look for candidates who believe those words. For candidates who don't exclude segments of our population based on gender, color or sexual orientation. I question those who rally to keep under God in the Pledge of Allegiance but ignore the final words of the oath—liberty and justice

for all.

This filters into my everyday activities as well. Take breakfast for example. I don't spend a lot of time fretting about the political correctness of naming a colorful, possibly even flamboyant, cereal Fruit Loops. But I am concerned about the children sitting at breakfast tables who are unable to eat. Unable to face another day of harassment. Unable to endure another day of bullying. Unable to hide their sexual orientation any longer. Each morning as I give thanks for my bran flakes, I add a plea for these children. For their parents. For wise teachers to protect them. For an end to the ignorance that fuels intolerance and violence. I add a thank you for PFLAG, the place of my awakening. And for GLSEN, the hope of the next generation.

This causes me to look at all children in a new light. When I see a class of youngsters on a field trip to the library or post office, I pause and think. Early in my journey I wondered if any of them were gay. Now I wonder which ones are gay. I know they're there. Kicking a stone. Toting a book bag. Carrying a secret.

My thoughts carry over to babies. When my proud grandma friends first began presenting photos of their newest family member, as I oohed and aahed at the wrinkled little faces I thought about the possibility. As the numbers of pictures have grown, I reflect on the probability.

When our grandson was born, I held him close. I checked for ten fingers and ten toes as I caressed each and every one. As I held this infant so small, so helpless, so perfect, I looked into his eyes and pondered for a second or two. What about this child? What will his life hold? Then came a granddaughter. A bundle of pink to love. To cherish. To nurture. What about her? If the answer is yes, will the world be a better, safer place for them? We had drifted from PFLAG. It was time to return. There is work yet to do.

There is a rift between my sisters and me. A nine-year-old rift that began when our son brought someone to Thanksgiving dinner. It resulted in a pre-Christmas proclamation by my siblings that we do not don gay apparel at family gatherings. Not in their homes. Not with their children.



## VOLUME 21, ISSUE 1

A Journey Without End; continued

I carry a sense of wariness with me into group gatherings, both social and work. I listen and lay in wait. For conversations can take turns. And often they do. I can almost feel them twisting. Becoming personal. Becoming painful. A snide remark. A comment about gay marriage. A joke about gay cowboys. Early in my journey I turned a deaf ear. Sometimes I chuckled uncomfortably. Sometimes I turned away. Oh, I seethed and fumed on the inside. I thought about what I should say. I beat myself up afterwards, regretting my silence. Now I am compelled to respond. To defend. To challenge. Generally my conscience overrules my spine.

I belong to a book group. At one time I dreaded the thought of a book with a gay character and any discussion it might bring. I wasn't ready to be out there. Eventually a side conversation let me to slide open the closet door. Now I'm looked at as the gay authority. Even with the acceptance I've received, I still want the gay character to be the good guy. Normal. Well-balanced. Someone my cohorts would welcome into their homes. Just as they do me. Just as I hope they would my son.

My entertainment choices are influenced too. I mourned with Ellen as she broke up with Anne. I cheer her success as a talk show host and hope her ratings continue to soar. I am pleased that a local station carries

the show. I love the fact that *Lion King* featuring Elton John's music is such a success. And that is a beloved family show. Though I personally do not care for the Tellytubbies I am happy they survived the assault by the religious right.

Then there's talk radio. Need I say more?

I could go on and on about things I do that may seem insignificant to some but are important to me. All result from this journey. The Christmas cards I choose because of their message of inclusiveness. Fighting the urge to move the picture of my son and his partner when the big burly plumber comes. My response when asked if my son is married.

My journey is logged, not by miles or odometer readings but by PFLAG meetings and coming out experiences. At PFLAG the hope is that the organization will one day be obsolete. Inequalities obliterated. That is when my journey will end. When Jack and Ennis can find love on Brokeback Mountain, get a license at City Hall, exchange vows in the local chapel, and ride off into the sunset to live happily ever after.



## 14th Annual PFLAG Cincinnati Scholarship

To recognize outstanding gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, intersex and straight supportive students in the local community

To encourage continuing education for individuals involved with the GLBT community

To foster a positive image of these young people in society

Applications can be obtained from PFLAG's Website @ [www.pflagcinci.org](http://www.pflagcinci.org)

Deadline for submission is April 16, 2006

For further information, call (513) 919-8474





2005/2006 Officers & Chairpersons/Board

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime     | \$1000   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other        | \$ _____ |

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