



A JOINT
PUBLICATION
OF THE AKRON
AND CLEVELAND
CHAPTERS



PFLAG

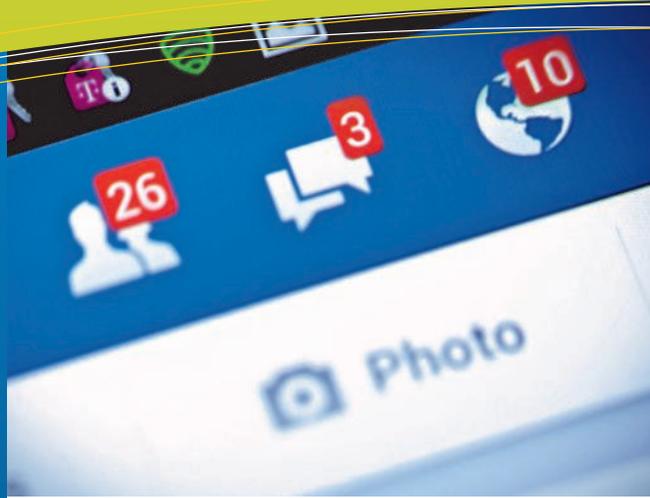
DECEMBER
2014

“Quotable”

IT'S VERY DEAR TO ME
—THE ISSUE OF—
GAY MARRIAGE.
OR, AS I LIKE TO CALL IT:
‘MARRIAGE.’

YOU KNOW, BECAUSE I
HAD LUNCH THIS
AFTERNOON, NOT GAY
LUNCH. I PARKED MY CAR;
I DIDN'T GAY PARK IT.

—LIZ FELDMAN



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It's Complicated

By Kim Mosyjowski, Akron PFLAG president

Single...In a Relationship...It's Complicated.

Those are the options Facebook offers us to describe our relationship status. I feel like “It's Complicated” really covers all relationship options. What relationship of any kind is not complicated?

During this season of holidays and celebrations those major and minor complications, quirks and disagreements frequently get magnified. Throw in the dark and dreary weather of winter in Northeast Ohio, unrealistic expectations of Norman Rockwell picture perfect holidays with families and friends when those family gatherings may resemble something out of *Beavis and Butthead* instead, gift buying on a tight budget, and the noise of truly awful Christmas music blaring from speakers everywhere, and we have the recipe for stress.

Now, toss in the fact that you or someone you

love is LGBTQ in a family whose LGBTQ IQ is challenged and in need of growth and a bit more love and understanding, and the stress levels have the potential to soar.

Who you gonna call?

I know I am not the only one who considers hibernation (a.k.a. avoidance) as a viable option here. Every year around this time the idea of being a hibernating bear appeals to me. Think about it: one would be expected, EXPECTED, to eat loads of food and get nice and plump, sleep through the dark cold winter, and wake up grumpy and snarly. I would be good at all of those things.

Alas (sigh!), I was not born as a bear and neither were you. So, while avoidance is sometimes the right solution (temporarily or perma-

(Continued on page 2)

Akron PFLAG at NEOMED

Akron PFLAG was invited once again to speak with the medical students at NEOMED in Rootstown. Benny, the president of NEOMED's Q-Club, invited us in to tell our stories and speak with the doctors-in-training about how they might become more inclusive in their practices.

Akron PFLAG members Joan and Kim Mosyjowski and Alex and Jennifer Gump shared their words of wisdom with the very attentive audience.

In addition to telling our stories, we answered questions about how they can become more considerate to LGBTQ patients. We urged the young doctors to look carefully at the forms patients are asked to fill out and pay close attention to gender and hetero-normative questions. We asked them to consider pronoun usage, to not make assumptions about gender-based appearances, to place some discrete symbol indicating their office was inclusive and

(Continued on page 2)



Our Mission

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons, their families and friends through SUPPORT to cope with an adverse society; EDUCATION to enlighten an ill-informed public; and ADVOCACY to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights.

PFLAG provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

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Snowbird? Let us know!

Stay up-to-date on all the latest PFLAG news and help us avoid return postage charges. If you winter away, contact the appropriate editor:

Akron: akancler@windstream.net

Cleveland: patriciat.brandt@gmail.com



Complicated *(Continued from page 1)*

nently) to some of our relationship challenges and complications, it is not the solution to all of them.

Seriously, who are you going to call when the stress of relationships with family or friends or with yourself builds? Please remember that you are not alone and help is a phone call away. Make that connection. We all long to be heard and understood and accepted. Sometimes that can happen within our families and sometimes it cannot.

Reach out and know that there are so many people who are ready to listen without judgment, who have walked a similar path, and who are ready to lend an ear and a hand. Take good care of yourself. Call our hotline. Get yourself to a PFLAG meeting. You can come and celebrate your joys or be as sad, grumpy, or snarly as you feel. PFLAG has your back.

It's complicated, but we can help. You are not alone.

NEOMED *(Continued from page 1)*

accepting, and much more.

The evening was spiced with excellent questions and conversations and also with a buffet of good Indian cuisine. We thank the Q-Club for inviting us in and for including important LGBTQ information in their medical training.

Clarification: The scholarships won by Julie Ann Boylen and Michael Smith, reported in last month's issue, were awarded by Akron PFLAG.

Akron PFLAG holiday party

December Chapter Meeting

Our chapter meeting on December 18 (see p. 6 for location/time) will be our annual holiday gathering. Attendees are asked to bring a small holiday treat to share.

Teen Pride Network

For dates and details of all our upcoming events, keep an eye on Teen Pride Network's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/TPNAkron> or send an email to tpnakron@gmail.org to receive our email blasts.

Game Night

The dreary cold weather of November 14 was kept at bay by the light and warmth of the crackling fire in the fireplace and the enjoyment of the evening. Teens and adults alike had a great time. We feasted on the delights from the overflowing taco bar, played games, talked with friends both old and new, and sat around the fire in comfortable rocking chairs. We even roasted marshmallows in the fire for s'mores. The evening passed all too quickly.

We are planning to hold game nights again in January and February. It is such a low-cost, no stress, great fun event for teens and adults alike during these cold weather months.

Ice Skating @ Lock 3

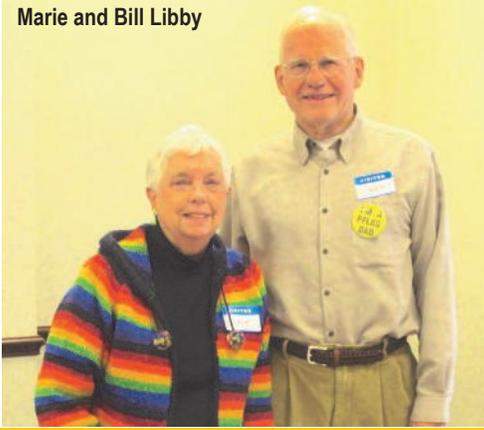
Join TPN at Lock 3 in downtown Akron on the evening of December 19 to celebrate the beginning of winter break. The beautiful Christmas decorations and lights, the German Village, and the sounds of Christmas music will put you in a festive mood. The whole package is a perfect way to get ready for the holidays and a much-celebrated break from school.

We will meet in the pavilion around 6:45pm and stay until 9:30. Bring your own skates or TPN will cover your skate rental. Plus, if you have never tried the scrumptious handmade pizzas at the concession stand, you can enjoy that too (our treat). The event is open to all 13- to 18-year-old LGBTQ teens and their allies. There is a parking garage on the south side of Lock 3 for easy access to the rink..

Mark Your Calendar for Pride Prom

Pride Prom will be held on June 6, 2015 at Unitarian Universalist Church of Akron. Tickets go on sale in May. Teens from all over Northeast Ohio!

Marie and Bill Libby



Akron PFLAG at Children's Services

On November 13, Marie and Bill Libby joined other Summit County organizations at the Children's Services headquarters in Akron. They have represented PFLAG at this event for the past four years. This appeared to be the largest participation yet, with over 30 professional social service providers distributing and discussing their programs to the Children's Services social service employees.

Similar to Akron PFLAG, Children's Services' mission statement commits to the safety, permanency and well-being of all children served, in partnership with families and the community of Summit County.

Marie and Bill were impressed with the fact that many in attendance knew about PFLAG and did not need an introduction to our purpose and goals. They shared with attendees how PFLAG could be of benefit to people in the care of Children's Services. They also discussed the hotline, monthly meetings and support for the LGBTQ community, including Teen Pride Network, local GSAs, and connections at Kent State University and The University of Akron.

The Libbys eventually ran out of some of our PFLAG literature they were distributing! The experience, in their words, was both gratifying and uplifting.

New face of HIV is Gay & Young

According to a 2012 UNAIDS report, youth between the ages of 16 to 25 account for 40 percent of all new adult HIV infections. Each day more than 2,400 young people become infected with HIV.

In U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that in 2010, young gay and bisexual men (aged 13-24 years) accounted for 72 percent of new HIV infections among all people in the same age range and 30 percent of new infections among all gay and bisexual men.

LGBT Community Center schedule of groups

The LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland is located at 6600 Detroit Avenue Cleveland, OH 44102. Info: 216-651-5428 or lgbtcleveland.org.

Senior Drop-In Program (50+)

Mondays and Wednesdays

10:30-11:30 am: Coffee Talk

11:30- 12 pm: Arthritis Association Exercises

12-1 pm: Lunch and desert (\$3)

Bi-monthly group discussions and field trips throughout the community. Contact Carey Gibbons for more information at 216-651-5428 x17 or Cgibbons@LGBTcleveland.org.

Lesbian Women: Our Journey Discussion Group

1st and 3rd Thursdays

6-7:30 pm: A great way to get connected with other like-minded women in the LGBT community. Facilitated by May Dugan Center.

Pre-registration required. Contact Cindy Yu at Cyu@lgbtcleveland.org or 216.651.5428 x19.

50+ Women's Social Group

2nd and 4th Thursdays

5:30-7:30 pm: Meet and Connect with 50+ women in the LGBT Community. Contact Cindy Yu at Cyu@lgbtcleveland.org or 216.651.5428 x19.

GBTQ Men: Discussion Group (18+)

Thursdays

7:30-9:00pm: Safe, welcoming space to explore topics relevant to GBTQ men, and to share personal experiences. Contact Cindy Yu at Cyu@lgbtcleveland.org or 216.651.5428 x19.

Transgender: TransFamily

2nd Saturday of the Month

2pm-5pm: Support group for trans-identified individuals and allies. Contact Karen and Bob at 216-691-4357 for more information.



38 Cities earn perfect Equality Index score

A more demanding criteria that included transgender-inclusive healthcare coverage caused Cleveland and Akron to fall off HRC's Municipal Equality Index perfect score list; however, 38 other cities including Cincinnati and Columbus earned a perfect 100-point score.

Akron scored 68 and Cleveland scored 79.

The Index examines the laws, policies and services of municipalities and rates them on the basis of their inclusivity of LGBT people. See the entire Index list at

HRC.org.



Tease the season

Burlesque Holiday Show

Tease the season for being jolly and Santa likes us to be naughty. Come join us Monday, Dec. 22 at the Beachland Ballroom and Tavern, 15711 Waterloo Rd., Cleveland, for a night of fun, friends and family. Theme show will include burlesque, belly dance, drag and vaudeville. Ugly Christmas sweater contest and "Awkward Family" photo booth.

Proceeds benefit The Providence House. Tickets \$15 at the door.

GGP good for NE Ohio economy

Thousands came and spent millions this August at the 2014 Gay Games presented by the Cleveland Foundation. The global event's total economic impact was \$52.1 million, according to a study by two economic professors at Kent State University.

"The Gay Games provided an important economic impact for the local Northeast Ohio economy, including higher revenues generated for local businesses and new local jobs," says Shawn Rohlin, who co-authored the study with Nadia Greenhalgh-Stanley.

Participants were asked about their spending in a post-event survey. Among the results:

- 75 percent of the 20,000-plus who participated or attended the Games lived outside the Cleveland-Akron metro area.
- Locals and non-locals spent \$38.8 million in the main sectors of the economy, including hotels, restaurants, bars and gas stations.
- An additional \$20.6 million was generated

Equality Ohio party

2nd Annual Holiday Party

Join friends at Equality Ohio at Pura Vida, 170 E. Euclid Ave., Cleveland on Thursday, Dec. 18 from 5:30-7:30pm. Celebrate the holiday season and honor the 2014 Ally Award winner Connie Schultz..

Complimentary valet. Casual attire. Minimum suggested contribution \$100. visit <http://www.equalityohio.org/calendar/> for details and ticket reservations.

Chanukah party

Shabbat service

Celebrate the season at a 30-minute Shabbat service with the Chevrei Tikva Chavurah of Fairmount Temple, 23737 Fairmount Blvd., Beachwood, on Friday, Dec. 19 at 8pm. Bring your own menorah and a white elephant gift to exchange. Latkes and holiday fare after the service. Info: 216-447-9539.



in local incomes, roughly the equivalent of 726 full-time jobs.

- 64 percent of local participants said they would have traveled outside Northeast Ohio to participate in the Gay Games, taking their local spending of \$8.4 million and "dropping" it into another region.

"We are thrilled the Gay Games were such a success for Northeast Ohio's economy as well as its global reputation. First-time visitors talked about how welcoming and impressive Cleveland was, and some were planning a return trip before they even left town," said David Gilbert, president & CEO of Destination Cleveland and the Greater Cleveland Sports Commission.

Thomas Nobbe, the Cleveland-based director of GG9, said the welcoming environment directly contributed to visitors' willingness to spend here.

"They received such a fantastic welcome here from the get-go. They felt good about Cleveland-Akron. I have to believe that encouraged them," he said.

All Sixth Circuit states appeal to Supreme Court

From HRC Blog

Plaintiffs in Michigan and Kentucky have joined Ohio and Tennessee in making formal request to the U.S. Supreme Court to review their cases on same-sex marriage.

The cases are on appeal after a three-judge panel of the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals overturned lower court rulings striking down the states' bans on marriage equality. The Sixth Circuit ruling marked the first time a federal appeals court ruled in favor of state marriage bans. The ruling stated that same-sex couples who want to marry should attain their goal through the balloting process and the state legislature, not the court system.

Ohio voters initiated a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage in 2004.



Cleveland transgender youth's story to be film

Director Joshua Butler (*The Following*, *Vampire Diaries*, *State of Affairs*) announced a film collaboration with Scenarios USA and youth writer Skyler Edge, a rising junior at Facing History New Tech High School in Cleveland to turn Edge's award-winning story into a short film. *House, Not Home*, was chosen by a selection committee comprised of filmmakers, community leaders, educators and youth from across the country. Committee members included producer/director Ross Katz (*The Laramie Project*, *Lost in Translation*) and director Seith Mann (*Nurse Jackie*, *Homeland*, *The Walking Dead*).

House, Not Home is a firsthand account of Terran, a transgender teenager navigating the journey out of the closet. The story follows Terran as he deals with bullying and violence from peers, rejection from his mother, and finds courage and his voice.

Edge described the story being born from his fears of coming out to his classmates. "I'm transgender, and there's so little representation. The main character's struggles are a mirror of how I expected my life to go after I came out. I thought that writing my story around a gender non-binary character might help at least give representation. I've been through all of it, but know a lot of others who are still hiding. I wanted to help them know that they are not alone."

Of Edge's story, Butler said, "It is an honor and a pleasure to work with a talented young person like Skyler. Skyler has rejected society's limiting labels and reminds us that there are people



whose gender identities are richer and more complex than simply male or female. Skyler is promoting inclusivity and understanding for all people in the story of *House, Not Home*. The film will speak not only to specific transgender issues that are rarely discussed, but also to universal issues of how we all identify ourselves as human beings."

Edge's film won the Scenarios REAL DEAL about Power and Place contest, in which over 650 students participated nationally.

The film is expected to premier on Showtime in April 2015 and will be used in classrooms nationwide and as part of Scenarios curriculum. Founded in 1999, Scenarios USA is a national non-profit organization that uses writing and film to foster youth leadership, advocacy and self-expression in students across the country, with a focus on marginalized communities.

Visit www.scenariosusa.org.

Mom publishes new birth announcement for trans son

The mother of a transgender teen in Australia published a birth announcement in her local newspaper to announce that the previous one, placed 19 years ago, was in error.

"In 1995 we announced the arrival of our sprogget Elizabeth Anne as a daughter," read the announcement in *The Courier-Mail* of Brisbane. "Oops, our bad. We would like to present our wonderful son—Kai Bogert. Loving you is the easiest thing in the world. Tidy your room."

Yolanda Bogert said placing the ad a few days after her son came out was a "no-brainer." She wanted to show him and the rest of the world that she supports him unequivocally.





PFLAG CHAPTER MEETINGS

Akron

3rd Thursdays - 7pm
North Springfield
Presbyterian Church
671 N. Canton Rd.

Cleveland

2nd Tuesdays - 6:45pm
Trinity Episcopal Church
2230 Euclid Ave., 44115

Elyria/Lorain

3rd Mondays - 7pm
First Congregational Ch.
4th and Lorain

Wooster

4th Thurs. - 7:30pm
Universalist Fellowship
3186 Burbank Rd.

Youngstown

2nd Tuesdays - 6:30pm
St. John's Episcopal Ch.
323 Wick Ave.

OTHER SUPPORT GROUPS

OutSupport Medina

4th Mondays - 7pm
Unity Church
787 Lafayette Rd./Williams
on the Lake (4th bldg.)
Sandi 330-241-1281
OutSupport.org

Thank you to Consolidated

We sincerely appreciate the generous contribution of the Lanci family and Consolidated Solutions for making this full-color newsletter possible.

National president has local connection

PFLAG National, the nation's largest organization of parents, families, and allies united with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people, announced at its national meeting the election of Jean Hodges of Boulder, Colorado, as its new board president.

Hodges has a long involvement with PFLAG. She co-founded the Boulder, Colorado chapter, served as its president, as a regional director, and then as the chairperson of the 13-member regional directors council. In that capacity, she also served as the vice president of the national board of directors.

Her roots, though, are in Northeast Ohio. She is a graduate of Euclid High School and Ohio Wesleyan University in Delaware, Ohio. She is also a longtime friend of Bill Libby, who graduated high

school and college with her and is certain she will continue to serve PFLAG very well.

After accepting the presidency, Hodges said, "I'm honored and excited to lead PFLAG during this time of rapid change. We must not be lulled into believing that full equality has arrived. The challenges ahead are exciting: working for legal protections in every state, helping to make faith communities accepting, eliminating employment discrimination for our LGBTQ loved ones, advocating for gender-neutral spaces in schools for trans and gender-variant children, just to name a few. The work of PFLAG is not done, not by a long shot!"



Jean Hodges

Thankful for PFLAG: A holiday message

By Stephanie K. Blackwood, Director of Development, PFLAG National

Editors' note: Although this is a Thanksgiving message, we feel it is appropriate throughout the holiday season.

Thanksgiving. It always reminds me of coming out.

It was Thanksgiving 1973...in rural Kansas. My brother, whom I seldom saw because he was in the Air Force, was home for the holiday and picked up clues in my excitement about my new friend Sarah. He was curious in a big-brother way. He asked a few questions, and encouraged me to tell Mom and Dad.

I told. They listened politely, asking no questions, saying little, and offering their standard comment: "Oh?"

Then, we drove to Grandpa and Grandma's for Thanksgiving dinner. We ate too much, we watched football, we napped, we drove home.

Nobody told me I was bad. Nobody judged or condemned.

Nobody asked questions. Nobody offered support.

For the next 20 years.

Even after I moved to New York in 1986 and started a public relations agency that focused on gay issues.

Still, nothing was said by my family.

In my third decade of being the out, out, OUT professional lesbian daughter, my mother--without explanation--grew bold. She began talking... with family, with neighbors, with my high school classmates, with her minister...and talking with pride about my work and our relationship.

Mom never told me what had changed for her. But I can tell you what changed for me.

Mom's public affirmation freed me. She also sparked change in my little hometown. Today, a gay couple owns the floral shop, a classmate has boldly acknowledged her gay son,

high school reunions are open and welcoming of what few LGBTQ classmates there are. And my hometown welcomes differences of all types...not saying much but also not judging.

We enjoyed a warm and close relationship in her later years. My mom wasn't a firebrand like PFLAG's founder Jeanne Manfred but, like Jeanne, she knew that she needed to speak up. There was no PFLAG chapter in my hometown but now that I am part of PFLAG, I know without a doubt that she was a PFLAG Mom; in her own way, she quietly took a stand for equality.

So today, as you gather with your families--and I gather with my chosen family of LGBTQ and ally loved ones--I want to thank each of you for taking a stand for equality. Your courage has made the difference for so many people who, like me, needed affirmation to feel whole.