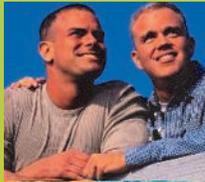




A JOINT
PUBLICATION
OF THE AKRON
AND CLEVELAND
CHAPTERS



PFLAG

JUNE
2015

We strive to deliver!

We realize the newsletter has never reached our mail recipients as quickly as we would like. New USPS bulk mailing routing now sends much of our Akron mailing through Cleveland (and some to Pittsburgh) offices. This may result in some delivery delays for Akron recipients, and possibly quicker delivery for some in Cleveland. We'll see.

The option for electronic delivery remains open—just send your name, zip and email address to:

akancler@windstream.net

(Akron)

patriciat.brandt@gmail.com

(Cleveland)

Arrivals



this issue

Chapter news	2
Cleveland PFLAG 30th Anniv.	3
Events	3-4
Local News	5
Opinion	6

Have we arrived?

By Frank Groh-Wargo, Cleveland PFLAG

When our daughter came out in 1999, the issue of marriage equality for gay individuals was not part of the nationwide consciousness, except among a few activist organizations. It was not so much backlash, as it was a national apathy regarding the rights of gay and lesbian individuals. Ohio, though, in 2004, passed one of the most restrictive statutory prohibitions against same-sex marriage, followed by a voter approved Constitutional Amendment.

Regardless, in 2009, our daughter married her spouse, in what I like to refer to as an "illegal Ohio wedding." Five years later, on their anniversary, they procured a marriage license, not in the state in which my daughter grew up and resided, but in Maryland. Accomplishing this was significant to them as she and her spouse were expecting a baby. They found it very prejudicial to live in a state that ignored their basic equal rights when it came to marriage equality, especially as expectant parents.

Therefore, it is only fitting that the current lawsuit before the U.S. Supreme Court came out of the 6th Federal District Court of Appeals in Cincinnati, Ohio. In that decision, the 6th Circuit opinion, written by Judge Jeffrey Sutton, upheld state laws prohibiting gay and lesbian couples from marrying in Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee. The U. S. Supreme Court consolidated the four cases (*Obergefell v. Hodges*) and will likely issue a single decision covering all four.

Two questions now exist before the U.S. Supreme Court. The first is whether states must allow same-sex couples to marry, and the second is whether states must recognize same-sex marriages performed elsewhere.

My understanding of the main argument against marriage equality is a federalism position endorsing state sovereignty. Opponents to same-sex marriage hope the Court will support the rationale that marriage is traditionally regulated at the state level.

Without delving into all of the substantive legal issues the Court faces (e.g., legal precedence, appropriate level of judicial scrutiny), the main argument is: Do state laws that prohibit marriage equality serve important governmental interests? The U.S. Supreme Court found in a prior decision (the *Windsor* case) that for purposes of federal law, marriage between a man and a woman served no legitimate governmental purpose and therefore, discriminated against gays and lesbians.

Presently, the four states are arguing that marriage is linked to procreation and that separating marriage from procreation dramatically changes a state's interest in the institution of marriage. As we have seen though, there are untold examples of marriages in which the object is not to have and raise children.

The second question is whether a state must recognize same-sex marriages from other states. This question is certainly relevant to Ohio gay couples who have traveled to other states to be married, much like my daughter. She and her spouse should have all of the rights and responsibilities afforded to heterosexual marriages.

A decision favorable to marriage equality can finally strike down the bigoted Ohio Constitutional Amendment and legislation, and provide

(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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Arrived *(Continued from page 1)*

gay and lesbian individuals the same rights enjoyed by heterosexuals, because this all comes down to a basic tenet of U.S. Constitutional history: equal rights and protection under the law.

I have titled this article, "Have We Arrived?" Even if the Supreme Court rules favorably on both ques-

tions, it is apparent that many Americans will not agree with the decision and will actively look for ways to subvert its ramifications. We will continue to need PFLAG and other supportive organizations and individuals to assist in implementation of equal rights for LGBT individuals. A favorable decision is important, but winning over objections is a journey that will continue.

Teen Pride Network

Pride Prom in **CANDY LAND**

All High School students are invited to a Candy Land themed Pride Prom on June 6. We have DJ Joey Marfy to keep the dance floor jumping once again. Our chef has an extravagant spread of food planned, and of course, we will have plenty of candy. This will be our largest event to date. Dress is formal prom attire. Tickets via Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TPNAkron>

And more...

We also plan to attend the Cleveland Pride Parade on June 27 (see this page, top right), and the LGBTQ picnic and Trans Teen Camp hosted by OutSupport Medina on Aug. 1 (see page 5). And we're planning an outdoor games / picnic Sept. 19. Details coming.

Cleveland news

June education option

A Trans Ally program will be the June education option. See page 6 for meeting date and location.

Indians baseball game

Our annual PFLAG day at the ballpark is the Mon., July 27 game v. the Kansas City Royals at 7:10pm. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased at a support group meeting or reserved by contacting us through email or social media.

CORRECTION: Craig Hoffman, who's opinion piece appeared in last month's newsletter, is a member of PFLAG Cleveland, not Akron as published. We apologize for any confusion.

Pride Parades

Cleveland—June 27

Sat., June 27 at Voinovich Park
Cleveland PFLAG Annual Brunch held at Old Stone Church from 10:30 am to noon.

Columbus—June 20

Sat., June 20 at Goodale Park
Parade steps off at 11am. Meet at South Front St. and Broad starting at 9am.

Camp sunrise

For kids impacted by HIV/AIDS



Camp Sunrise, founded in 1994 and part of the AIDS Resource Center Ohio, is Ohio's only summer camp program developed specifically for children impacted by HIV/AIDS. Each summer, Camp Sunrise welcomes as many as 100 children to experience the joys of friendship, the love and support of a caring community, and an encouraging environment free of the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS.

This free summer camp for children ages 6-17 will be held August 9-15. Applications are now available at www.sunrisekids.org.

PFLAG National Conference

"We Are the Change"

October 16-18, Nashville, TN

Register now:

<https://community.pflag.org/2015registration>

Happy 30th Anniversary

PFLAG Cleveland plans 30th anniversary party

Picture yourself 30 years ago in 1985. It was a time characterized by awareness and change. During that time, Jane Daroff, LISW, and Dr. Jes Sellers established the PFLAG Cleveland chapter. The monthly support group meetings they led, plus the education and advocacy, helped LGBTQ people throughout Greater Cleveland.

Sticking with anything for 30 years is quite an accomplishment. Staying with something, making it successful, and growing is even bigger.

Join PFLAG Cleveland as we celebrate our success, honor our founders, and look to the future. The ticketed event takes place inside CWRU's Tinkham Veale University Center.

**Saturday, July 25
4pm to 7pm
Michelson and Morley**

11038 Bellflower Road
University Circle
Case Western Reserve University's (CWRU) campus

Tickets for this summer celebration cost \$30 per person and include:

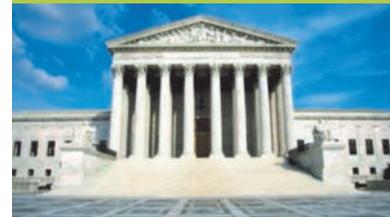
- Formal announcement of a newly established PFLAG Cleveland scholarship
 - A 50/50 raffle and gift basket drawings
 - Mixing, mingling and networking
- Online registration begins in early June. The link to register will be shared electronically. Additionally, formal invitations are being mailed later in June to all PFLAG Cleveland members and guests for whom the organization has addresses.
- For those who are unable to attend and/or want to honor Jane and Jes and help support our scholarship, the invitations will provide information on how to donate.
- Heavy hors d'oeuvres and one free drink ticket
 - Entertainment and live music on Michelson and Morley's outdoor patio
 - Recognition of PFLAG Cleveland founders, Jane Daroff and Dr. Jes Sellers, and special acknowledgements by national, state and city dignitaries

Freedom to Marry to address Court decision

Freedom to Marry will host a 1-hour presentation on marriage equality on Mon., June 8 at 6pm with Shinn Lanter, LLP, 12511 Madison Ave., Lakewood.

Attorneys will discuss the pending Supreme Court decision, the current state of Ohio law, the legal documents LGBT people need to protect their families, and the next steps that can be taken once same-sex marriage is legal in Ohio.

For more information, call 216-228-4791 or visit www.shinnlanter.com



Reflections from City Club's transgender identity forum

Cleveland PFLAGer Jeanette Nemcek recently attended the Cleveland City Club's Special Forum: Towards Full Equality: Transgender Identity in Northeast Ohio. The sold-out program featured a panel discussion with Susan Becker, Professor of Law Emerita, Cleveland-Marshall College of Law; Henry Ng, Clinical Director of Metro-Health PRIDE Clinic; Stacey Parsons, Transgender Activist; Board Vice President of Margie's Hope, and Facilitator of Trans-Family Support Group; and Darius Stubbs, Teaching Artist, Cleveland Public Theater. Pulitzer Prize winning columnist, Connie Schultz, moderated the event.

Jeanette's reflections:

I think of myself as a trans ally, just by being open and accepting. That is a good starting point. Since my future son-in-law is trans, I find myself in this position of how far do I go in conversation with others? I know it is up to Mason to decide who he wants to tell. I am not revealing that he is a transgender male when I talk about him. He is just Mason to me.

It was interesting to listen to Darius talk about coming out as a trans-male instead of "just" male. What is good and necessary for him is not what is good for another. We each have our coming out stories to share with others being in this community—coming out as an ally, a parent, a friend. I would proudly introduce Mason as a trans

male if he wanted me to, but I don't see where it is necessary.

I've had conversations with others about this and one in particular stands out. A friend works in an office with a F-M male. She never knew that he was trans until he felt the need to share this with his office mates. While it made no difference in her relationship with him, she now defines him as a trans male in her mind so it did alter her thinking. It changes the conversation with straight people because an explanation generally follows. This is fine if I want to educate at that moment, but to me it gets in the way of just knowing male or female, putting on a filter.

NCMC Concert

Welcome to the 60's

Waetjen Auditorium @
Cleveland State University
2001 Euclid Ave., Cleveland

Sat., June 20 @ 8PM
Sun., June 21 @ 3PM

Tickets: 216-556-0590 or
www.ncmchorus.org



Exact Change" at Playhouse Square

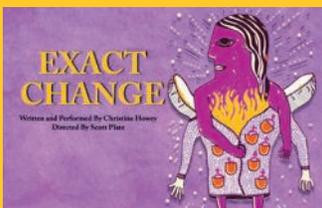
Exact Change is the powerful and personal story of noted Cleveland actor, journalist and critic Christine Howey (formerly Dick Howey).

Tickets: \$29.50 at
playhousesquare.org

Show times:

June 11, 12, 25, 26 @ 8pm
June 13, 27 @ 5pm, 8:30pm

Kavita Sherman, PFLAG Cleveland board member, has organized a social outing to the June 12 performance. E-mail kavita.sherman@gmail.com by June 1.



Michelle Kit and a friend at the Tolerance Fair

Game Change Conf.

2nd annual conference Aug. 13

Plans are underway for this conference scheduled for Aug. 13th at the University of Akron. This is a collaborative product of CANAPI, Akron PFLAG, Akron Foundation's Gay Community Endowment Fund (GCEF), GLSEN of Northeast Ohio, Jewish Family Services, and the University of Akron.

Registration details coming on CANAPI's website: www.canapi.org/

Medina OutSupport

NOTE: The Transparent dinner scheduled for June 7 has been cancelled.

Annual picnic and trans teen camp

OutSupport's second annual picnic will be Sat., August 1 at Camp Paradise, 4283 Paradise Rd., Seville. All LGBTQ friends are welcome.

Camp starts at 8am. Preregistration is required and cost is \$10. A session for transparents will be held at Unity of Medina at the same time.

Picnic is free potluck that begins at 2pm. Grills, refrigerators, drinking water and free entertainment on site.

For details and registration forms, visit <http://outsupport.org/event/lgbt-outsupport-annual-picnic-transcamp/> or call Sandy Varndell at 330-241-1281.

CANAPI concert

Tatsuya Nagashima concert June 7

World-renowned classical pianist Tatsuya Nagashima joins Pub Bricco and PNC Bank for an annual benefit that graciously supports CANAPI programs, June 7 from 6-8pm at Pub Bricco, 1841 Merriman Rd, Akron.

Tickets can be purchased for \$35 through Pub Bricco at 330-869-0035 or in person. A post-concert reception with cocktails and appetizers is included in the ticket price.

G.I.F.T. events

Annual Bowling Tournament

For 30 years, the annual Cleveland G.I.F.T. Bowling Tournament is one of the premier LGBT events in the Greater Cleveland area.

This year's tournament will be held June 12-14 at Freeway Lanes of Parma, 12859 Brookpark Rd, Cleveland. Weekend includes singles, doubles and team bowling events. Cocktail hour and other social gatherings at the Marriott Hotel, lunch buffet, cruise (see next) and a closing party.

Corporate sponsors include Miller Lite, Storm Bowling Supplies, Marriott, Republic Services, BKF Computer Services, and Twist Social Club. Various fundraising activities and sponsor support prize money, raffle gifts and prizes, as well as donations to local LGBT organizations.

Annual Cruise

The G.I.F.T. Cruise has evolved into one of the single most attended LGBT events in Cleveland. It takes place on Saturday of the tournament aboard the Goodtime III. Boarding at 7pm rain or shine for a party on the Cuyahoga River and Lake Erie until 10pm.

Tickets are \$25 in advance, \$30 at the dock. Advance tickets available starting Memorial Day weekend at the following locations: Angel Falls Coffee (Akron West Market St.), Body Language, Cocktails (Cleveland and Akron locations) Dean Rufus' house of Fun, Latitude 41N, Leather Stallion Saloon, LGBT Center, The Hawk, Twist, and Vibe.



Akron PFLAG at Pride!Kent

(l-r): Audrey Kancler; Jennifer Hamilton; Kim Homsher; Kim, Joan, and Joe Mosyjowski; Ed Kancler

Seven members of Akron PFLAG attended the spring parents and families meeting of Pride!Kent on KSU's campus on April 23.

Pride!Kent, one of the country's oldest LGBT campus support groups, meets weekly on Thursdays at 8pm in the Student Center.

A nice mixture of families and

students were on hand for the meeting. Each of Akron PFLAG's attendees told their own story and offered insights on what PFLAG has meant to them individually.

What followed was an open and heartfelt discussion, moderated by President Branson Stephens. It was a lengthy period of questions, observations,

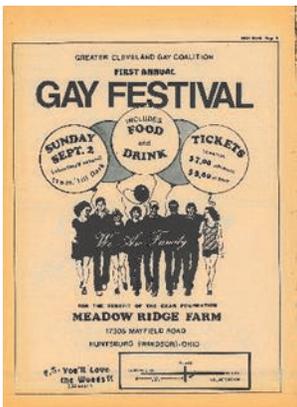
suggestions, and thoughts. Some questions were directed to the PFLAG members, and at other times students and families interacted with one another. The caring and support were wonderful to see. At the end of the meeting, PFLAG members weren't sure who had benefitted more...Pride!Kent and the families or those attending from PFLAG.

Kent State prof protest spurs action

Kent State Associate Professor of Sociology Molly Merriman waged a one-woman protest over the university's LGBT Studies program, which she co-founded.

According to a report in Cleveland.com, Merryman penned a letter of resignation to the administration, citing lack of support for the program. Less than a week later, the school announced the creation of a new Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality to be developed by Merryman.

"I certainly didn't expect that," Merryman said in the Cleveland.com article. She's looking forward to once again make KSU a leader in this kind of teaching.



LGBT Center celebrates 40 years

The LGBT Center of Greater Cleveland celebrated 40 years on May 8. Founded as the Gay Educational and Awareness Resource (GEAR), the Center has operated under various names and in several locations, but has consistently worked to increase visibility, empowerment and support of the LGBTQ community.

It has developed programs like Women's Coffeehouse and Pride in Sobriety, as well as benefit parties including the TaDa! Series and Bourbon Street Ball. In the midst of the AIDS crisis, the Center also created the Living Room, ACT UP, The Names Project, Metro Youth Outreach and Be Sex Smart. Congratulations to the LGBT Center!

GCEF meeting uplifting

Despite the unusual appearance of the sun, and weather warm enough for gardening, close to 150 people attended the annual meeting of the Akron Community Foundation's Gay Community Endowment Fund on April 26.

People socialized, networked, and shared plans for this year's Sugar Plum Tour, GCEF's much enjoyed fundraiser held every December.

During the meeting, Steve Williams, who chairs Sugar Plum, was given the organization's first ever award recognizing an individual or organization making an outstanding contribution to the GCEF.

GCEF provides grant funds to many local organizations. Kim Mosyjowski, Akron PFLAG President, spoke on behalf of recipients in thanking the group for their generous support of LGBT endeavors. PFLAG was awarded \$6,000 this year for Teen Pride Network activities.

Judy Shepard, Mother of Matthew Shepard, was the keynote speaker. She spoke in a most eloquent, warm and open manner, discussing uplifting moments as well as the pain of the 16 years since her son was murdered. The award-winning documentary "Matt Shepard is a Friend of Mine" was shown, and Mrs. Shepard answered questions and talked individually to people.



Joe and Kim Mosyjowski at the GCEF annual meeting

The meeting was long but the tone was uplifting and positive, reflecting GCEF's accomplishments over the past year. People seemed almost reluctant to leave once it was over.



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 Washington

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.

Dear Editor,

This letter was published by the Plain Dealer on April 13. Reprinted with permission.

I was born a girl, and over 36 years later, I can honestly say that given the choice, I wouldn't have it any other way. So, I really don't understand being transgender.

I've never felt an extreme discomfort about being in the wrong body. I've never felt hopeless or suicidal because of a gender disconnect. I'll never have the experience of transi-

tioning to the other gender and finally feeling whole or right. Of course there are a lot of experiences I'll never have.

So, in such cases where I don't have personal experience, I make a rule of deferring to people who do and trusting what they say about it. I evoke this rule with the issue of transgender people and public restrooms. I don't understand, therefore I trust the transgender individual knows what is best for him or her. And I trust they can make the right restroom choice

for themselves without any input from me or their city government.

So, I'd like to call on my mayor, Frank Jackson, and my city council person, Dona Brady to take a look at this ordinance and talk to the people that feel it needs to be changed. We may not understand what it's like to be transgender, so let's listen to those who do, and grant them the dignity of being permitted to make their own choices.

Aubrey Fox, Cleveland

Some observations

By Ed Kancler, Akron PFLAG board member

As we await the U.S. Supreme Court decision on marriage equality, the vitriol against equality gets more astounding each day, each one more surreal than the last. What appalls me, and I am sure others as well, is the base hatred leveled against LGBT! That, to me, is no way to win an argument. Here's a list, as of this writing:

1. We are in the end of days and if marriage equality is granted by the Court, the world will end and the sinners will be punished.
2. A huge fireball will destroy the earth.
3. 900,000 abortions will result.
4. Billboards in Michigan claiming "Homosexuality is a behavior, not a civil right."
5. The President is not obligated to follow an order of the Supreme Court—retired surgeon and presidential candidate Dr. Ben Carson).
6. Some states are proposing that clergy and court officials are not required to conduct marriage ceremonies if contrary to their religious beliefs.

7. Other states are considering laws that state employees, including judges who support marriage equality will have pay withheld and/or be fired.

8. Marriage equality will "criminalize" Christianity—Mike Huckabee. (Same guy who once said, "Wouldn't it be great if the only rule we had to live by is the Golden Rule?")

9. Proposed elimination of state required marriage licenses and substitute clergy certifications of marriage. (Note: This proposed law could be a path to a "certification" of a gay marriage! Not thought through very well.)

10. Since marriage is a religious institution, the U.S. Supreme Court has no jurisdiction to hear the marriage equality case! (Oh, and, what about the Loving and Windsor cases?)

The list increases every day and actually echoes what happened after the 1964 Civil Rights Acts were adopted. Then, certain states adopted laws to seek every way in the world to avoid the civil rights of blacks, e.g., voting laws, education laws. (Caveat: That is,

until Alabama football coach Bear Bryant expressed a desire to recruit black players.]

I hope someone notices that LGBT people (regardless of personal disgust and other adjectives regarding the above examples) have stayed on the high road, consistently promoted the notion of equal fundamental rights, and have kept the ball rolling.

If the Supreme Court rules favorably, and I think it will, let's stay on that high road, because the shenanigans of our opposition will increase and there will be more lawsuits along the way.

Remember, the tide has turned. Over 60 percent now favor marriage equality. The latest polls want the Court to rule in favor of equality. Think of it! Think of 5-10 years ago!

What it means to me is what I have thought all along: Fair minded people, when apprised of the facts, act with fairness. Let's keep that in mind when we see and feel the hate, coupled with the outrageous and simple ignorance of those who oppose us.