

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
 A joint publication of the Akron and Cleveland chapters



The cause goes on...

By Ed Kancler, Akron chapter president

By the time you read this, Halloween will be past, the first snowflakes of the season will have fallen and, oh yeah, the election will be over. As Jack Cafferty of CNN said, the election “started over 19 months ago, but it seems much longer than that.” When my wife Audrey and I were in Canada, it was the middle of its national elections. That country’s laws limit campaigning to 45-60 days before the vote. Obviously, Canadians are not as with it as we are.

By the way, the deleted

paragraph in last month’s newsletter was due to my realization that I had gone over the line on political opinion about candidates—a no-no for tax-exempt organizations.

So, not knowing the election results as I write this, including the California same-sex marriage issue, the question of how PFLAG stands in regard to where we go from here is easily answered. We continue to offer support, we continue to educate, and we continue to advocate the cause for equality. That’s because it doesn’t matter who won

the election or which issues passed or failed. The cause for equal rights goes on, regardless. And our obligation is to be professional, understanding, passionate and relentless about it.

Remember, if we step back from support, education and advocacy, we lose ground. If we don’t seek straight allies, we will not progress.

At this time, what with economic uncertainty and pocketbooks hurting, let’s not lose sight of what PFLAG is all about. The cause has come a long way, but there is still a long way to go. I truly believe time is on our side, if we use that time to support our friends and continue to educate and advocate. Let’s resolve to keep doing our best—so that the best is yet to come.

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MEETINGS

Akron PFLAG
 Nov. 20, 7:00 pm
North Springfield
Presbyterian Church
 671 N. Canton Rd.

Cleveland PFLAG
 Nov. 11, 7:30 pm
Trinity Episcopal
Cathedral
 2230 Euclid Ave., 44115

Alliance PFLAG
 Nov. 25, 7:00 pm
Union Ave. Methodist
Church
 S. Union Ave.

Wooster PFLAG
 Nov. 22, 7:00 pm
Trinity United Church
of Christ
 150 E. North St.



Dr. Jack Rogers

Author of *Jesus, the Bible and Homosexuality*

Dr. Rogers will be the guest speaker at the next Akron PFLAG chapter meeting on November 20. See page 2 for details.



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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Dr. Jack Rogers to visit PFLAG

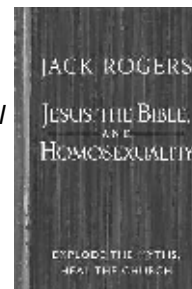


Theologian and author Dr. Jack Rogers will speak at the next Akron chapter meeting on Thursday, Nov. 20 at 7:00 p.m. at North Springfield Presbyterian Church, 671 Canton Rd., Akron.

Dr. Rogers is a former national Moderator of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and a Professor of Theology Emeritus at San Francisco Theological Seminary. He also taught at Fuller Theological Seminary.

Once opposed to LGBT rights in the church, he is now a spokesperson for the full inclusion of LGBT persons in society and religious

leadership. His book, *Jesus, the Bible and Homosexuality: Explode the Myths, Heal the Church*, explains his change of heart.



This lecture is in tribute to the memory of LGBT community advocate Bruce G. Kriete. Admission is free. For more information: Rev. Janet Lowery at pastor-janetnspc@cs.com or 330-784-3001.

Funding is provided by Akron PFLAG, Eastminster Presbytery, and (pending) the Gay Community Endowment Fund of the Akron Community Foundation.

Cleveland area events

■ **THUR., NOV. 20** — Showing of the movie *Trembling Before God—The Hidden Lives of Gay and Lesbian Orthodox and Hasidic Jews* at Metro-Health Medical Center, 2500 Metro-Health Dr., Cleveland (44109), Scott Auditorium, 5:30 p.m.

The movie is free and open to the public. Following the showing will be a panel discussion by local Jewish leaders.

This event is co-sponsored by the MetroHealth Pride Clinic, the Metro-Health Gay Straight Alliance, and PFLAG Cleveland. For more info:

Sharon Groh-Wargo at 216-778-5902 or sgrohargo@metrohealth.org.

■ **MON., DEC 8** — "Philanthropia" at Landerhaven, 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

This is a fundraiser for PFLAG Cleveland and other non-profit organizations in Northeast Ohio. Attendees enjoy a lovely lunch and program.

Landerhaven generously underwrites the event so that the entire donation of attendees goes to PFLAG. For more info visit our chapter website: www.pflagcleveland.org.



SAVE the DATE!

Saturday, April 25

PFLAG Cleveland will host the 2009 Ohio PFLAG statewide meeting at Trinity Commons in Cleveland.

Fundraiser a “plum” event

Tickets are on sale now for the 7th annual Sugar Plum Tour, Sunday, Dec. 7 from 2:00-6:00 p.m.

Tour goers will experience Akron’s golden age, circa 1928. Visit five period Tudor, Georgian, and Arts Y Crafts homes in Fairlawn Heights, each uniquely decorated for the holidays.

All proceeds will benefit the Gay Community Endowment Fund.



Patron tickets (\$100) include a private post-tour party at a fabulous sixth home in Montrose.

Grand Patrons (\$150) will also get the opportunity to take pictures with Santa, as well as a limited edition Zeber-Martell holiday ornament.

General Admission tickets (\$25) for the 5-home tour may be purchased online by credit card or at Angel Falls Coffee Co. with cash (only).

North Coast Men’s Chorus Holiday Concert

An Evening in December

Saturday, Dec. 13, 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 14, 3:00 p.m.

Lakewood Civic
Auditorium
14100 Franklin Blvd.
Lakewood, Ohio,
44107



Tickets:

http://www.ncmchorus.org/shows_performances.html

Diverse Universe 12011 Detroit Rd.
Lakewood, OH 44107

Big Fun 1814 Coventry Rd.,
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

God wanted me this way

Daniel Helminiak wrote *The Transcended Christian* to explain why he believes that denying one’s sexual orientation is the equivalent of denying God.

What do you do when you’ve outgrown your religion? When your life experience goes beyond your clergy’s frame of reference? How do you grow in your personal faith when you feel completely out of step with your church?

Noted author Daniel Helminiak (*What the Bible Really Says about Homosexuality; Sex and the Sacred*) addresses these questions for gay and straight believers alike who feel out of touch with their faith communities in his book, *The Transcended Christian*.

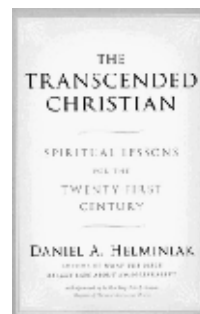
Ask anyone why they are gay or straight, and the answer likely would be, “It’s just the way I am.” Ask a Christian, and the answer might change to, “It’s just the way God made me.”

Helminiak reasons that Divine Providence decrees everything

about us, including our sexual orientation, and that to deny any part of it is to deny God’s will.

In *Transcended*, Helminiak explains that a gay person who denies their homosexuality is also denying God’s plan. But the lesson goes beyond LGBT issues. Individual intelligence, beauty, athleticism, or ability are all designed by God, he says. In the same way, situations such as infertility, unemployment, unexpected illness, death of a loved one are also ordained by the Divine.

In fact, Helminiak declares, everything we are or do in life is part of a bigger plan and we are foolish to think we can turn away from it. Instead, he recommends that believers embrace “authentic religion,” trusting that God knew what He was doing when he made each of us, and accepting every aspect of ourselves.



The author suggests that a positive, “make the most

of it” attitude can lead to creative solutions and surprisingly unexpected outcomes, especially when we join up with like-minded people.

Helminiak’s ties his viewpoint to classic biblical stories that reveal a compassionate Christ and a hypocritical church. The aim of *Transcended* becomes to help the reader transcend the doubt in his or her own life and regain a personal spirituality and faith.

Helminiak was ordained a Catholic priest in Rome and holds Ph.D.s in theology and psychology. He is an associate professor of psychology at the University of West Georgia. He is a fellow of the American Association of Pastoral counselors and a licensed professional counselor in the state of Georgia.

Making a case for safe schools

By David M. Horowitz, Akron PFLAG

On September 27, Toby and I attended a "Train the Trainer" session conducted by PFLAG National's Safe Schools Director, Suzanne Greenfield. We were among about eighteen people from around the state who gathered in Dayton for the all-day session.

We learned the realities of what bullying does to the LGBT youth community:

- ❖ Youth who are LGBT are **five times more likely** to skip school because they feel unsafe on route to, or at, school than their straight counterparts.
- ❖ **18 percent** of LGBT students skip school at least once a month due to safety concerns.
- ❖ **97 percent** of all high school



students hear anti-gay slurs daily. The phrase "that's so gay" is used to describe things that are negative.

- ❖ **40 percent** of LGBT students have never seen anyone intervene in an instance of anti-gay harassment.

Members of PFLAG are in a unique position to change the playing field. Our agenda is nothing more than the wellbeing of our children and family members. It is time for us to step up to the plate and speak to our school administrators about training our teachers and counselors in how to create safe schools for all.

Ohio now has an anti-bullying law that has taken effect. We can affect change in our schools best by being represented by those who have children or grandchildren in the school system.

We can work with GLSEN (the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Educators Network) to help establish student run and faculty sponsored gay-straight alliances in our schools (very few have them exist in the Northeast Ohio area).

PFLAG National is eager to help us and come into our area to do the training, but we must make the request to our school officials and school boards. Remember, we are not asking for "sex education" (though I am not sure that is such a bad idea), only that our schools protect our children.

Every single lawsuit brought against a school board for not protecting a child's safety has been successful. It is in the schools' best interest to help keep all of our children safe in their learning environments.

We need people who will step forward and begin to speak to school officials.

We need to do it now.

9 out of 10 LGBT students face harassment in school

A new national survey of over 6,200 students, age 13-21, reveals that the majority still face some form of harassment at school because of their sexual orientation.

In addition, over 60 percent reported they felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation, and one-third reported skipping school because of it.

The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network's National School Climate Survey is the only national survey to document the experience of LGBT students in America's secondary schools.

The survey found that three-quarters of LGBT teens hear slurs such as "faggot" or "dyke" frequently at school, and nine in ten report

hearing anti-gay language frequently.

"It's hard to believe that anyone who reads this report could continue to turn the other way as our nation's LGBT students are bullied and harassed," GLSEN Executive Director Kevin Jennings said.

The study found in that schools with an active Gay Straight Alliance, students reported hearing fewer slurs, were less likely to miss school due to safety concerns, and were more likely to report harassing behavior to school staff.

GLSEN, in cooperation with the Ad Council, is launching a series of LGBT public service announcements this winter.

MILK

Academy Award winner Sean Penn stars as gay rights icon Harvey Milk in a non-documentary feature film coming to theaters this month.

Harvey Milk was an ambitious, awkward, and unforgettable activist and politician. In 1977 he became the first openly gay man to be elected to a major public office in America when he was voted to the city supervisor board in San Francisco.

Milk's most significant political battle successfully stopped a ban on gay teachers in the state's public schools. He was also instrumental in blocking the reappointment of another supervisor, Dan White, who later broke into City Hall and shot and killed both Milk and Mayor George Moscone. White's reduced conviction of manslaughter (from first degree murder) led to the White Night riots in San Francisco.

Milk is the first feature film to explore the history-making life and career of Harvey Milk. Directed by Gus Van Sant (*Good Will Hunting*, *My Own Private Idaho*), the film is quickly gaining Oscar attention for

what critics are calling Sean Penn's superb portrayal of Milk.

As Producer Dan Jinks (*American Beauty*) explained to Entertainment Weekly, "[Sean] is playing a guy who's not at all like him, way beyond the sexuality of the character. Harvey was this guy who wants everybody to love him, and he loves everybody else. Sean just completely became that."

The film opens November 26 in select cities, with expansion nationally on December 5. Group screenings are available in certain locations. Call 866-617-7175 for info.



"Gay threat" spurs bid for state house

Ron Marlett of Oklahoma considered running for state representative for years. Then he heard Rep. Sally Kern call homosexuals "the biggest threat our nation has, even more so than terrorism or Islam."

That decided it.

"Sally Kern's comments and the threat of extremists from either the right or the

left infringing on our personal freedoms set me into action," Marlett explained on his campaign website.

He ran a campaign to oust Kern from her seat in House District 84.

Despite the controversial nature of her words, Kern has refused to apologize for her anti-gay rhetoric.

Kern called homosexuals the "biggest threat to our nation."

Get discounted tickets to *MILK* from Cleveland PFLAG

Cleveland PFLAG will be selling discounted tickets for the film *Milk*, starring Sean Penn. The movie will be shown exclusively at the Cedar Lee Theater in Cleveland Heights.

The exact date of the movie showing is not known but is expected to be in December. Look for details about the event on our website www.pflagcleveland.org.

McDonald's gives in to anti-gay group

Fast food giant McDonald's has agreed to end its support for the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce under boycott pressure from the American Family Association.

The company had donated \$20,000 to the chamber of commerce and at first resisted the AFA's demands to rescind support.

However, in a memo emailed to franchise holders, the company said it has dropped ties with the chamber. "It is our policy to not be involved in political and social issues. McDonald's remains neutral on same-sex marriage or any 'homosexual agenda' as defined by the American Family Association."

The AFA has a long history of boycotting large companies for (in its view) supporting gay rights, including Proctor & Gamble, Kraft, Wal-Mart, Disney, and Ford Motor Company.

Aetna creates link to gay-friendly providers

Aetna has become the first health benefits company in the U.S. to link its online provider directory—DocFind®—to the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association's growing online database of more than 1,200 health care providers. The database includes primary care providers, specialists, therapists, and dentists who welcome LGBT patients.

In addition, Aetna awarded GLMA a \$50,000 grant as the diamond sponsor of GLMA's 26th Annual Conference held last month in Seattle. The conference provides presentations and workshops on HIV/AIDS; lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual health; substance abuse; aging; families and relationships; and legal issues.

Openness between patients and their health care providers can be an issue for the LGBT community and can impact their quality of care.

"We hope to see other insurance companies follow Aetna's lead by linking to our database," said Joel Ginsberg, GLMA's executive director. "This is a valuable tool that allows LGBT individuals to find LGBT-friendly health care providers whom they can trust."

"All patients must feel comfortable speaking candidly with their health care providers so that the care delivered is appropriate and effective, and patients can take greater control of their health and well-being," said Troyen Brennan, M.D., Aetna's chief medical officer.

Openness between patients and

their health care providers can be an issue for LGBT patients and can impact their quality of care.

A study released in July by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene showed that men who disclose having sex with men to their physicians were twice as likely to have been tested for HIV (63 percent vs. 36 percent). The study also revealed in a survey of 452 New York City men who have sex with other men that 39 percent had not disclosed their sexual orientation to their doctors.

Any provider who is willing to affirm their commitment to providing a welcoming environment for LGBT patients and clients is invited to join



the GLMA Provider Directory. GLMA also has resources available for providers on how to meet the unique health care needs of LGBT individuals.

Aetna is one of the nation's leading health care benefits companies, serving 37 million people. It has earned the top rating of 100 percent in the Corporate Equality Index, an annual survey administered by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, for the past seven years.

Columbus urges lawmakers to pass EHEA legislation

Columbus city council passed a motion urging the Ohio legislature to pass the Equal Housing and Employment Act.

The bill, which would prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in employment, housing or public accommodation, has languished in the statehouse since its introduction in March.

It has the bipartisan support of 10 senators and 18 state representatives, and Gov. Ted Strickland's promise to sign it into law if passed.

An Equality Ohio survey found that two-thirds of Ohioans favor the bill's concept. Twenty-one states have similar laws on their books, and more than 90 percent of Fortune 500 companies have implemented like policies.

You always have a home at PFLAG!