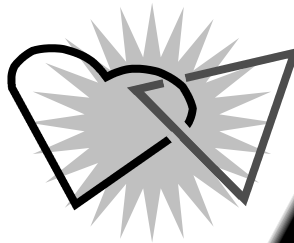
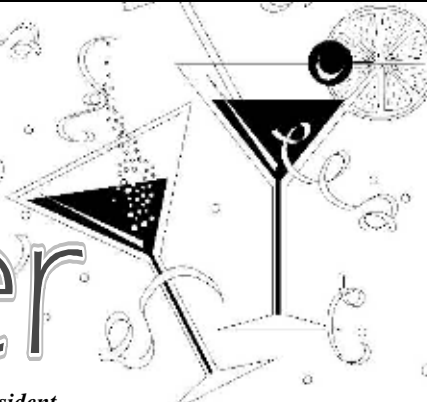


# PFLAG



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

## Reasons for Cheer



By Ed Kancler, Akron chapter president

What a month of November it was! The elections are now over, We have a new Administration coming in, and even though the economy still falters, there's reason to believe things will be better.

Locally, the Akron PFLAG annual meeting was a huge success. Over 100 people attended what is expected to be an annual event in memory of Bruce Kriete. Our guest speaker, Dr. Jack Rogers, discussed his book, *Jesus, the Bible and Homosexuality*. He

traced his own history of personal ambivalence imbued with a basic anti-gay bias until a gay man was elected an Elder in his church. This led him to intense biblical research and the eventual realization that all are equal and should be so regarded.

To make a long story short, Dr. Rogers mesmerized us for nearly an hour with truly uplifting observations of what anti-gay folk believe the Bible says compared to the true messages of equality that it contains. For those of you interested,

take a look at Leviticus 19:15-18 and Matthew 19:10-14.

There was a good deal of socializing both before and after the meeting, with all having a good time conversing with old and new acquaintances.

Special thanks to Pastor Janet Lowery for conceiving the idea, arranging for Dr. Rogers' appearance, and to the Gay Endowment Fund for its financial support, which also was obtained through Janet's efforts. And, appreciation to Rabbi David Horowitz for his poignant remembrance of Bruce. That really set a special tone for what the meeting was all about.

So, we are finishing a year in which our cause has had its share of ups and downs. But, remember,

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### MEETINGS

**Akron PFLAG**  
Dec. 18, 7:00 pm  
North Springfield  
Presbyterian Church  
671 N. Canton Rd.

**Cleveland PFLAG**  
Dec. 9, 7:30 pm  
Trinity Episcopal  
Cathedral  
2230 Euclid Ave., 44115

**Alliance PFLAG**  
Dec. 30, 7:00 pm  
Union Ave. Methodist  
Church  
S. Union Ave.

**Wooster PFLAG**  
Dec. 18, 7:00 pm Trinity  
United Church of Christ  
150 E. North St.



(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.

### AKRON CHAPTER

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**330-342-5825**

#### Executive Board

President-Ed Kancler; Vice President-Chris Goldthorpe; Secretary-Joe Gardner; Treasurer-Bob Menapace; At Large-David Horowitz, Bill & Marie Libby, Audrey Kancler

#### Committee Chairs

Program-Chris Goldthorpe; Publicity-Marie Libby; Hospitality-Rada Jenkins; Library-David Greene; Newsletter-Audrey Kancler

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- **Friday, Dec. 12**—LGBT Community Center of Cleveland winter party, 7:00-11:00 p.m., Tregoning & Company, 1300 W 78th St., Cleveland 44102. Festive attire, cash bar, appetizers, live music. Tickets \$35 advance/\$40 door, Tickets: [www.LGBTCleveland.org](http://www.LGBTCleveland.org) or (216) 651-5428 x.15.
-  **Saturday, Dec. 13 (8:00 p.m.) & Sunday, Dec. 14 (3:00 p.m.)**—North Coast Men's Chorus Holiday Concert "An Evening in December", Lakewood Civic Auditorium, 14100 Franklin Blvd., Lakewood 44107. Tickets: [http://www.ncmchorus.org/shows\\_performances.html](http://www.ncmchorus.org/shows_performances.html).
- **Saturday, Dec. 13 & Sunday, Dec. 14**—Bizarre Bazaar Indie craft fair & entertainment extravaganza, Tregoning & Company, 1300 W. 78th St., Cleveland 44102.
- **Sunday, Dec. 14**—"MILK" at Cedar Lee Theater, 7:00 p.m., 2163 Lee Road, Cleveland Heights, 44118. Discount tickets available. Call Andy Cohen (216) 321-8452. Join PFLAG afterward at Jimmy O'Neil's.
-  **Tuesday, Dec. 16**—"Gifts of Being Gay" discussion with Interfaith Spirit Group, 7:30 p.m., Franklin Circle Christian Church, 1688 Fulton, Cleveland 44113.

#### ■ Thru December 20

"Lord of Burgeoning Lumber" at Convergence Continuum Theater, 2438 Scranton Road, Cleveland 44113.

*A pair of cowboys on a campy camping trip are discovered, mid-romp in a magical forest, by an extremely nearsighted park ranger who proceeds to try to "cure" the odd couple.*

"Boom" at Cleveland Public Theater, 6415 Detroit Ave., Cleveland 44102.

*Hilarious story of a gay marine biologist who posts an ad on Craigslist for casual sex that is answered by a female journalism student on assignment.*

"Santaland Diaries" at Cleveland Public Theater, 6415 Detroit Ave., Cleveland 44102.

*Narrative told from the perspective of a 33-year-old slacker who takes a job as Crumpet, a Macy's Christmas elf.*



#### Cheer (Continued from page 1)

there have been many recent years there were all downs and no ups. Now, in 2008, Proposition 8 caused pain, but the California Supreme Court is reviewing the matter. In Florida, a judge ruled unconstitutional the state's prohibition against gay adoption. The city of Cleveland is consider-

ing domestic partner legislation as part of a plan to attract the gay Olympics!

Maybe, just maybe, there is hope for the economy and reason to optimistic about the cause for equality.

So, we do have a basis to say, "Have a Great New Year!"

# Great strides with great strife

Jody Huckabee, executive director of PFLAG, released this statement after the passage of California's Proposition 8, which rolls back marriage equality in the nation's most populous state.

"While our families have encountered a heartbreaking obstacle on the road to full equality in California, the broad coalition of Americans who support fundamental rights for everyone will continue to work towards a day when the dignity of every American is respected. Families are defined by a love, and a commitment, that is beyond the barriers of a ballot. **No struggle for equality is won easily, and great strides do not come without great strife.** They also, however, require the great strength necessary to push forward in the wake of disappointment and persevere in the face of pain.

"On [election day] millions of Californians stood with our families and valiantly tried to beat back a mean-spirited, un-American attack on LGBT people. While we fell short of the majority we needed to prevail, each time the public has addressed this issue, those who stand with us grow in number. **A decade ago, it would have been unthinkable that so many**



people would have endorsed marriage equality at the ballot box. If we continue the critical work we began this year, it will be unthinkable, a decade from now, that anyone would not.

"All of us at PFLAG remain committed to securing the rights our families and loved ones deserve. With a new Administration and new Congress in Washington, there are many reasons to believe that we will soon prevail. As Dr. King so eloquently reminded us, 'The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.' On [election day] millions of Californians tilted that arc a little bit closer to liberty, and we must now commit ourselves to finding the strength we need to finish the work they have begun."

## Focus on the Family eliminates jobs

Anti-gay group Focus on the Family, which spent more than \$500,000 to support California's Prop 8, is cutting over 200 jobs, about 20 percent of its workforce.

The Colorado Independent reported noted that the cuts mark the third year of layoffs for the group.

Critics are holding up the lay-

offs, which come just two months after the organization's last round of dismissals, as a sad commentary on the true priorities of the ministry.

"They should do more with their half-million dollars than spending it to collect signatures to take the rights away from a class of people," said California activist Fred Karger.

## True Colors Online Charity Auction

*Created by Cyndi Lauper to benefit the True Colors Fund and partners PFLAG National, and CenterLink*

**Thru December 16**

*Find an amazingly unique holiday gift!*

Lots include:

- ❖ Lunch & voice lesson with pop singer Cyndi Lauper
- ❖ 2 "View" VIP tickets and meet-n-greet with Whoopi Goldberg
- ❖ 4 VIP tickets to "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart"
- ❖ \$1,000 Tommy Hilfiger gift card
- ❖ Autographed Miley Cyrus sweatshirt
- ❖ Shopping day at Nicole Miller's Soho boutique and lunch

Visit [www.charitybuzz.com](http://www.charitybuzz.com) for complete list of lots and bidding information.

## Get Electronic Updates from PFLAG Natl.

Do you currently receive the monthly electronic PFLAG National newsletter? If not, you're missing out on a lot!

These updates include news and info about important issues related to our cause, as well as notes from PFLAG Exec. Dir. Jody Huckabee.

To sign on, visit our website at: [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org) and click on the Sign Up for E-News link.



# Equality Ohio 2008 ELECTION wrap-up

By Lynne Bowman, Equality Ohio Executive Director

After months of canvassing, phone banking, donating and door knocking, the results are in and we know that for Ohio, it paid off. Senator Obama is our president-elect, and we can be proud that Ohio contributed to his success. With his leadership we look forward to seeing federal legislation enacted that will recognize, protect, and embrace the contributions of LGBT Americans.

In addition to the presidential victory, we can also celebrate significant change within our state. With 32 endorsements across the state, Equality Ohio is proud to announce an 88 percent win-rate for our candidates. Here are some of the highlights:

Treasurer **Richard Cordray** will become Attorney General Richard Cordray. Rich's record of support for inclusion and equality speaks for itself and we are excited to have a friend like him in the A.G.'s office.

**Judge Mary Wiseman** maintained her seat on the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas,

proving again that voters in Ohio make their decision based on who the best candidate is, rather than on the person's sexual orientation.

In Chillicothe, democratic challenger **Ray Pryor** unseated 3-term incumbent John Schlichter. During this race Schlichter's campaign and the Ohio Republican Party sent 5 anti-gay mailers and ran 2 anti-gay radio ads against Ray.

In January, the **Ohio House of Representatives** will have a Democratic majority. Equality Ohio endorsed in 23 Ohio House races and 22 of our candidates won. Four of these seats contributed to the change in House leadership. This gives us the real opportunity to see the Equal Housing and Employment Act finally move. We look forward to working with the next General Assembly to pass Ohio's first ever pro-equality legislation.

Just as exciting as all of that is the way our community came together to help make those successes happen. Across the state, lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-

gender people and our allies played a critical role in changing the political landscape of Ohio. Over the course of the election season we all:

- ❖ Donated hundreds of thousands of dollars;
- ❖ Knocked on almost 200,000 as pro-equality campaign volunteers;
- ❖ Phone-banked and canvassed nearly every night for two months;
- ❖ And on Election Day in 87 of our 88 counties, over 5,000 volunteers worked to get out the vote for pro-equality candidates.

Of course, our hearts go out to our brothers and sisters in California, Florida, Arizona, and Arkansas as they deal with the emotional and legal impact of their losses. As Ohioans, we know from our 2004 experience how they must be feeling today and we grieve with them. These states stand as a vivid reminder to us all that there is a continued need for pro-equality organizations and the work we do across the state everyday.

We were blessed to come out of our 2004 loss as a connected, determined and strategic statewide community committed to creating lasting, substantive change in Ohio for LGBT people and our families. We're not there yet, but we're one step closer. The road ahead of us will not necessarily be easy; nothing will be handed to us. We must remain focused and committed to creating change. We will have amazing opportunities in the years ahead.

On behalf of the boards and staff of Equality Ohio, thank you for all that you did and will continue to do to see equality in this state.

—Bill Libby, Hudson



## Letter to the Editor

At the same time the historic election Nov. 4, as our country voted for the first time a black president, Barack Obama, several states again had constitutional amendments banning marriage for same-sex couples.

California electors approved Proposition 8, which was considered the most expensive social justice campaign in U.S. history at \$74 million. Florida and Arizona approved similar ballot issues, while Arkansas voters banned unmarried

couples, straight or gay, from being adoptive or foster parents.

Thirty states now ban gay marriages and some 17,000 gay couples in California are left in doubt about their legal status.

It is no surprise that these election results tell PFLAGers and their many friends there are still miles to go in education, advocacy and counseling for equal justice for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and queer persons.

# Florida adoption ban ruled unconstitutional

**M**iami-Dade circuit judge has ruled that there is "no rational basis" for prohibiting gays from adopting children. The ruling will allow a gay foster parent to adopt the two young boys who have been in his care for the past four years.

The Associated Press reported that the state attorney's office said they would appeal the ruling by Judge Cindy Lederman. Florida's 80-year-old ban on gay adoptions is one of the strictest in the country. The appeal will ultimately decide the fate of the state ban.

**"[The] ruling is a long-overdue recognition of the equal ability of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people to raise happy, healthy families,"** said Jennifer Chrisler, executive director of the pro-gay Family Equality Council, in a statement issued after the ruling.

A study by the FEC noted that more than 65,000 adopted children in the United States are being raised by gay and lesbian parents.

According to The Advocate, Lederman ruled that Frank Martin Gill, 47, should be entitled to adopt the 4- and 8-year-old boys he and his partner of eight years have raised since 2004. The boys had been living with abusive, crack-addicted parents and were removed from their home by the Department of Children and Family Services. The children, half-brothers, were not able to return to their parents.

The Miami Herald reported that Lederman said in court that the children were undeniably thriving in Gill's care.

"This is the forum where we try to heal children, find permanent families for them so they can get another



chance at what every child should know and feel from birth, and go on to lead productive lives," Lederman was quoted in The Herald.

In her ruling, as reported in The Herald, Lederman said children taken into state care have a "fundamental" right to be raised in a permanent adoptive home if they cannot be reunited with birth parents. Children whose foster parents are gay, she said, can be deprived of that right under the current law.

"The challenged statute, in precluding otherwise qualified homosexuals from adopting available children, does not promote the interests of children and, in effect, causes harm to the children it is meant to protect," Lederman wrote.

The judge added: **"There is no question the blanket exclusion of gay applicants defeats Florida's goal of providing [foster] children a permanent family through adoption."**

The attorney general's office had argued that gay men and lesbians are disproportionately more likely to

suffer from mental illness or a substance abuse problem than straight people, rendering them less fit to parent -- especially children in foster care who already are under tremendous stress, reported The Herald.

Lederman, however, concluded that 30-years of research overwhelmingly shows gay people can parent just as well as straight people and are no more likely to suffer issues that would lead them to cause harm to children in their care.

Gill, who appeared in court with his mother, told The Herald that he was "elated" by the ruling.

## LGBT leaders comment on Obama

Metro Weekly, a Washington, DC publication, has published its interviews



with a variety of people prominent in LGBT circles. The questions focus on how the election of Barack Obama will impact LGBT issues.

Participants included leaders from the Human Rights Campaign, The Task Force, National Stonewall Democrats, Log Cabin Republicans, Servicemembers Legal Defense Network.

Read their opinions for yourself at <http://metroweekly.com/feature/?ak=3882>.

# Cleveland considers domestic partner registry

*By Pat Brandt, Cleveland chapter*

CLEVELAND—The City of Cleveland looks to become one of the few cities in Ohio to have a domestic partner registry on the books, joining Toledo and Cleveland Heights. Openly gay Councilman Jose Santiago read the proposal before the council and a large audience, the bulk of which was “pro-registry,” judging by the many who wore rainbow stickers declaring “Equality for Cleveland.”

The reading of the referendum at the November 17 meeting by Santiago was met by applause by audience members, as were the comments of a few of its 13 cosponsors, among them Joe Cimperman, Matt Zone and former Council President Jay Westbrook. Mr. Westbrook concluded his comments by saying the registry was “the right thing to do.”

The domestic partner registry would allow unmarried couples over the age of 18 to register their partnership with the city. It would be open to residents and nonresidents of Cleveland, as well as opposite-sex and same-sex couples. Although it confers no rights or benefits to registered couples, it does allow them to access health benefits provided by

insurance and health care providers, as well as employers.

The domestic partner registry passage has been linked to Cleveland’s hopes to host the 2014 Gay Games. However, Councilman Cimperman suggested more was involved when he said, “We could have done this ten years ago, if the time was right.”

Committee hearings were held December 1 for the registry and a Transgender Rights bill that could be included in Cleveland’s nondiscrimination code. Many, including city residents, community leaders and clergy, testified on behalf of both measures. In particular, Cleveland Heights Mayor Ed Kelley testified that his city’s institution of a registry has become an asset, not only fostering diversity of the community population, but as an economic engine because it is a feature of a welcoming place for businesses.

The two proposals easily passed through committee hearings with only two committee members voicing opposition. It is expected that the ordinances will be passed by the full Council at its December 8 meeting.



## 5 Strategies to win gay marriage

*Excerpted from an article by John Corvino, 365gay.com*

Proposition 8 in California passed. So did similar bans in Florida and Arizona. With the pressure of the election behind us, what must we do to convince majorities that our love is just as worthy as theirs?

**1. Tell our stories.** A striking feature of the anti-amendment campaigns was the invisibility of those they were supposed to help: gay people. I’m grateful for straight people who support us. But straight people can’t directly illustrate the ways in which our families matter to us.

**2. Cut the vague talk about “rights” and “discrimination.”** We need to be more specific about why these rights matter and why this particular discrimination is wrong.

**3. Use words like “bigot” and “hateful” sparingly.** Yes, there are hateful people out there. But many more are our friends and coworkers who are simply misinformed or shortsighted.

**4. Don’t let opponents hide behind religion.** God, after all, can be invoked on both sides of the political spectrum.

**5. Patience, yes. Complacency, never.** Time is on our side. Voters under 30 heavily opposed Prop 8. Ironically, our opponents have catapulted us to the front page news and increased our determination to be heard. We need to keep fighting the good fight.

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When you no longer need PFLAG, that’s when PFLAG needs you!