

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

Lemme at 'em!

By Ed Kancler, Akron chapter president

The holiday season will be over by the time you read this, and we will have greeted 2009. This season, my wife Audrey and I took it right down to the wire, still wrapping gifts for grandchildren on December 23.

The choosing and wrapping of gifts, it seems, have become part of the season, regardless of your deepest personal beliefs. But there is much more to this time of year than neatly wrapped packages, and it is far more meaningful. In this season, we all celebrate life, reflect on the past year, and look forward to new beginnings and the hope we have for the future.

Most importantly, this season brings love and appreciation for those closest to us—our families and friends.

This new year has more uncertainties than I can remember. What will happen with the economy? How will our new President represent us? What security concerns will arise? What about our own well-being and that of our families and loved ones?



And, what about our cause? Will it get lost in the shuffle? Will other issues detract from the cause for equality?

Only if we let it.

We, PFLAG and its members, are part of the work to be done. If we do not participate in the cause, it will not have the success we desire. So, here are some suggestions for your involvement in 2009:

1. Whenever possible, as often as possible, engage straight allies. Keep our friends aware of the issues.
2. Attend events and participate in activi-

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CHAPTER MEETINGS

Akron PFLAG
 Jan. 15, 7:00 pm
 North Springfield
 Presbyterian Church
 671 N. Canton Rd.

Cleveland PFLAG
 Jan. 13, 7:30 pm
 Trinity Episcopal
 Cathedral
 2230 Euclid Ave., 44115

Alliance PFLAG
 Jan. 27, 7:00 pm
 Union Ave. Methodist
 Church
 S. Union Ave.

Wooster PFLAG
 Jan. 15, 7:00 pm
 Trinity United Church
 of Christ
 150 E. North St.



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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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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President-Sharon Groh-Wargo; Vice President-Jes Sellers; Secretary-Joy Colemand; Treasurer-Art Thomson; At Large-Alan & Margot Cohen, Craig Hoffman; Website-Marianne Buccini; Newsletter-Pat Brandt; Snacks-Gail Smith; Librarian-Gene Ashley

WHAT'S HAPPENING

SAT.
Jan 24

Connecting and Reconnecting

Mini-retreat for lesbian and gay couples, LGBT Community Center of Cleveland, 1:00-4:00 p.m. (See article on page 3).

MON.
Jan 26

No Name Calling Week

Sponsored by GLSEN. Hundreds of schools nationwide will engage in educational activities aimed at ending name-calling and bullying of all kinds. For info visit: www.nonamecallingweek.org.



SAT.
Jan 31

An Evening of Entertainment and Illusion 2009

Jim Bailey as the iconic Judy Garland with a full live orchestra, The Canton Palace Theater, Canton. Featuring memorable hits such as "The Trolley Song," "The Man that Got Away," and of course "Over the Rainbow." Reserved seat tickets at \$75, \$55 and \$35 are available at www.cantonpalacetheatre.org or by calling 330-454-8172.

SAT.
Feb 14

Hearts on Fire

North Coast Men's Chorus signature event, 6:30 p.m., Shaker Heights Country Club, 3300 Courtland Blvd., Shaker Hts. Visit www.ncmchorus.org for more information.



COMING SOON (SAVE THE DATE!):

- **March 19-29** — *International Film Festival*, Tower City, Cleveland, featuring the 10% Cinema Series. PFLAG will sponsor a film yet to be named.
- **March 28** — *16th Annual Human Rights Campaign Dinner*, 6:00 p.m., Intercontinental Hotel & Conference Center, 9801 Carnegie Ave., Cleveland 44106.
- **April 25** — *PFLAG State Meeting*, Trinity Cathedral, Cleveland.

Lemme (Continued from page 1)

ties that strengthen our cause:

- ❖ Attend PFLAG meetings.
- ❖ Talk with Akron Pride members
- ❖ Reach out to GSA and LGBTU groups.
- ❖ Attend the PFLAG State Meeting on April 25 in Cleveland, sponsored by our Cleveland chapter.
- ❖ Participate in Lobby Day in May in Columbus, Ohio, sponsored by Equality Ohio.
- ❖ March in the Cleveland or

Columbus (or both) Pride Parade in June.

3. Keep up with the news:

- ❖ Proposition 8 in California
- ❖ Gay adoption in Florida.
- ❖ Rev. Rick Warren's public stance on our issues.

None of these things is difficult, but when they're all put together, they create a full year of doing important things for our push for equality. Like the player on the bench who says, "Lemme at 'em, Coach!" we can do great things in 2009.

Just let us at 'em!

A Couples' Retreat

Lesbian and gay couples are invited to a mini-retreat, sponsored by the LGBT Community Center of Cleveland, on Saturday, Jan. 24 from 1:00-4:00 p.m.

This retreat offers participants the rare opportunity to intentionally explore intimacy and connection with their partner in a supportive and validating environment.

Facilitated by an experienced, professional coach and licensed therapist, this experiential retreat for committed couples will provide participants with ways to develop the strength, pride, playfulness, love and wisdom inherent in their relationships.

Couples will engage in dialogue, awareness exercises, group processing/discussion, and gentle and appropriate contact between partners.

In a culture that remains largely unsupportive and invalidating, lesbian and gay relationships are often built and sustained without the support given to heterosexual couples. Many of us have even experienced hostility because of who we love.

This unique retreat is for healthy

and committed lesbian and gay couples who are not in crisis. Retreat fee is \$50/couple and pre-registration is required.

For more information, contact Renee Jennings at 216-905-3032 or rjenningsLisw@gmail.com.

The LGBT Community Center is located at 6600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland. Parking is available at the back and sides of the building.



Local Novel Puts a Twist on Gay Rights

Akron author J.G. Woodward has released an intriguing and hilarious new piece of historical fiction that is set in a United States with a unique twist.

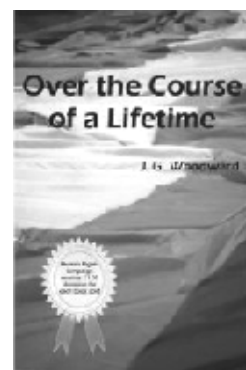
In Woodward's U.S.A., the only difference in the course of history over the last 100 years is that the majority of the population is gay and only ten percent of the population is straight.

Over the Course of a Lifetime challenges the reader to peer into an alternate reality through the eyes of Marcus, a straight man born in 1930. Against all odds, Marcus finds the woman of his dreams, and they spend their lives together, despite the deck being stacked against them as the most overlooked minority population in the country.

Set in Southern California, their love story is laced with historical facts and tremendous humor. The novel overall is uplifting, even as it challenges perceptions and poses questions of what is and what could be.

Woodward, a descendant of Edgar Allen Poe and President George Washington, is also the author of *Tumultuous Journey*, *Poems Along the Way*, and *Poems Beyond the Journey*. She has two additional collections of poetry due out in 2009. *Over the Course* is her debut novel.

Over the Course of a Lifetime is available in paperback and E-book format through retail booksellers. In-vincible Publishing will donate \$1 to the Human Rights Campaign for every purchase.



StandOUT



StandOUT After School is an after school program for LGBT youth in grades 6-12. It offers a safe place for LGBT youth to come and make friends, do homework, play games, watch TV, and just be who they are.

The program is offered by First Grace UCC, 350 S. Portage Path, Akron, on Thursdays from 3:00-5:30 p.m. It is staffed by fun, caring and accepting First Grace youth staff.

For more information, call 330-762-8469.

Youth bloggers wanted

Advocates for Youth is seeking 10-12 bloggers for a new online youth activism project. Each front page writer will have a weekly blog.

Applicants must have their own, regular Internet access and can be expected to be responsible for:

- ❖ 1 weekly blog on a topic of their choosing,
- ❖ 2 additional posts a month on a topic of their choice, within the constraints of the mission and vision of Advocates for Youth,
- ❖ Commenting on at least 5 other blog entries on the site per week and contributing to feedback for site development.

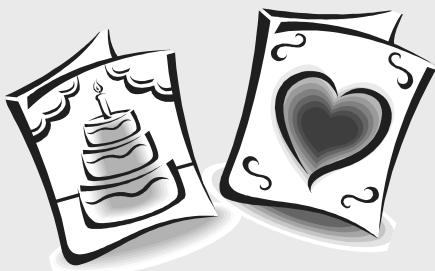
Young people of color, from outside the U.S., or who identify as transgender or genderqueer are encouraged to apply. The position includes a stipend of \$100 a month.

Applications are being accepted on an ongoing basis. For info, email: joe@advocatesforyouth.org.

Gay greetings

PFLAGer Sandi Timberlake has designed a series of gay-oriented greeting cards. Cards are available for single LGBT family and friends as well as couples.

Check out Sandi's website at www.alittletotheleft.com for selection of cards, note cards and postcards, too.



Study says family behavior key to healthy gay youth

A recent study by researchers at San Francisco State University has found that how parents behave when their gay child comes out to them can have a profound impact on that child's mental health.

According to an article on the study by Associated Press writer Lisa Leff, young gay people whose parents or guardians responded negatively when they revealed their sexual orientation were more likely to attempt suicide, experience severe depression, and use drugs than those whose families accepted the news.

The study found that teens who faced a negative reaction were eight times as likely to have attempted suicide, nearly six times as likely to suffer from depression, and three times as likely to abuse drugs, the article said.

Lead researcher and social worker Caitlin Ryan was quoted in the article saying, "Now that we

have measured all these behaviors, we can see that some of them put youth at extremely high risk and others are wellness-promoting."

Forbidding a gay child to associate with gay peers was equivalent to physically or verbally abusing him in terms of negative feedback.

One of the most startling findings of the study, the AP reported, was that being forbidden to associate with gay peers was as damaging as being physically beaten or verbally abused by the parents in terms of negative feedback.

Contrarily, even small steps toward understanding on the part of parents resulted in dramatic improvements in a gay youth's mental health outlook.

The two-part study was based on a survey of 53 families with gay children, and a survey of 224 white and Latino gay people ages 21-25 and their medical histories, the AP reported. The study, according to Ryan, is the first to establish a link between health problems in gay youth and their home environments.

Louisiana to appeal court order

The state of Louisiana says it will appeal a federal court order to list the names of two adoptive fathers on their son's birth certificate, under the grounds that it forces the state to give more legal recognition to the same-sex couple than required by the U.S. Constitution.

The couple adopted the Louisiana-born boy in New York state, where same-sex couples can be listed as parents. They now live in San Diego.

—From the Cleveland Plain Dealer

A.G. will not defend Prop 8

California Attorney General Jerry Brown has reversed his initial statement that he would defend the state's newly enacted constitutional ban on gay marriage.

Brown, who personally opposed Prop 8, said he would defend the measure in court after it passed on November 4. In mid-December, he told the state Supreme Court that his obligation to defend state laws was overruled by his duty to uphold fundamental rights in the state Constitution.

Brown cited the "inalienable rights" clause of Article I of the state Constitution as grounds for his deci-

sion. Brown listed the right to liberty and privacy rights that support equal access to marriage as part of the clause and said those should not be subject to repeal by majority vote, according to an article in The San Francisco Chronicle.

This rare reversal marks the first time in 44 years that the state's top lawyer has refused to defend a successful ballot measure, according to The Chronicle.

The Prop 8 campaign committee, called Protect Marriage, will now defend the measure without Brown's aid.

LGBT community centers need reliable support, staff training

Despite the key roles that LGBT community centers can play in towns, cities and the LGBT movement, many are small institutions with high staff turnover and limited fundraising capacity, according to a 2008 survey of centers nationwide.



CenterLink, the community of LGBT centers, conducted an online and telephone survey of 71 active LGBT community centers. Among the findings:

Most of the centers surveyed were relatively young institutions, over half being founded after 1990.

Nearly all respondents (92 percent) represented independent centers.

Most community centers received the bulk of their funding (41

percent) from government sources. Individual donors made up the next largest source of revenue (22 percent).

The majority of centers surveyed had fewer than 5 staff members, most of whom are not paid.

Almost one-third of the centers' activities focused on educational services (29 percent) and outreach programs (22 percent), followed by physical/mental health services (20 percent). Almost all of the centers offered services specifically for LGBT youth.

CenterLink recommended that centers focus on more training in fundraising, staff recruitment and retention, and successful nonprofit operation to achieve continued growth.

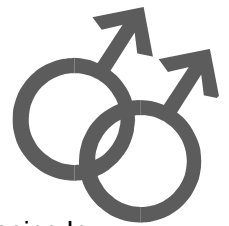
Kudos to Akron Pride Center

2008 was a very productive year regarding the Akron Pride Center's efforts to open the Aster Ave. building.

In June, the initial drainage project was finished. This was followed by treatment to get rid of mold, the installation of a sump pump, and waterproofing the basement. Improvements have been dramatic and use of the building may be only months away!

PFLAG congratulates all of the volunteers and supporting organizations who have made this possible.

Keeping in Touch



The Community AIDS Network is pleased to announce that Keeping In Touch is back and better than ever!

Keeping In Touch is a group for gay/bisexual men that works to establish stronger relationships within our community.

Meetings are held at the network center, 1950 McTaggart Dr., Ste. 105, Akron. Refreshments and fun will be readily available.

For more info, contact Danny at 330-375-2000 or email: dannyboomhower@gmail.com.

U.S. refuses to sign U.N. gay rights declaration

By Gay365.com newscenter staff

The United States Thursday became the lone major western nation to refuse to sign a United Nations statement affirming that human rights protections include sexual orientation and gender identity.

Rama Yade, French foreign affairs and human rights secretary, appeared before the United Nations General Assembly on Thursday to present the document calling for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to be amended to include the new protections.

The document has been signed by the member states of the European Union. It was drafted by France which currently holds the rotating EU Presidency. But it also has been signed by about 40 other states.

In all 66 of the U.N.'s 192 member countries signed the nonbinding declaration.

Other countries besides the US who refused to sign the declaration were Islamic countries, Russia and China.



The Vatican also has voiced its opposition. Archbishop Celestino Migliore, the Vatican's permanent observer at the UN, said in a statement earlier this month that the declaration would discriminate against states which support traditional marriage.

Appearing with Yade on Thursday at the General Assembly was Dutch foreign minister Maxime Verhagen and a panel of political figures, human rights experts and LGBT defenders from all continents.

Yade said it was necessary to call the international community's attention to violence against individuals because of their sexual orientation and gender identity. The text of the document calls specifically for all countries to de-criminalize homosexuality.

It also provides support to all human rights defenders who are working in the field, often in difficult conditions.

According to some of the declaration's backers, U.S. officials expressed concern in private talks that some parts of the declaration might be problematic in committing the federal government on matters that fall under state jurisdiction.

In numerous states, landlords and private employers are allowed to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation; on the federal level, gays are not allowed to serve openly in the military.

"It's an appalling stance—to not join with other countries that are standing up and calling for decriminalization of homosexuality," said Paula Ettelbrick, executive director of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission.

She expressed hope that the U.S. position might change after President-elect Barack Obama takes office in January.

Meanwhile, a report issued by Hu-

man Rights Watch called laws against homosexuality an oppressive legacy of colonialism.

The 66-page report is called "This Alien Legacy: The Origins of Sodomy Laws in British Colonialism." It details

that sodomy laws were imposed on over three dozen countries, from India to Uganda and from Nigeria to Papua New Guinea by the British Empire in the 1800s.

The British colonial rulers imposed the law against sodomy in India in 1860. This year, the High Court in Delhi ended hearings in a

years-long case seeking to decriminalize homosexual conduct there. A ruling in the landmark case is expected soon.

"Half the world's countries that criminalize homosexual conduct do so because they cling to Victorian morality and colonial laws," said Scott Long, director of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights program at Human Rights Watch. "Getting rid of these unjust remnants of the British Empire is long overdue."

The Human Rights Watch report shows that British colonial rulers brought in these laws because they saw the conquered cultures as morally lax on sexuality. The British also wanted to defend their own colonists against the "corrupting" effect of the colonies.

Today, international human rights standards have compelled former colonial powers to acknowledge that these laws are wrong. England and Wales decriminalized homosexual conduct in 1967. The European Court of Human Rights found in 1981 that a surviving sodomy law in Northern Ireland violated fundamental rights protections.

In all, 66 of the U.N.'s 192 member countries signed the nonbinding declaration.