

Greater Cincinnati GLBT News

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Community Saddened by the Death of Geoff Grady, ISQCCBE Emperor for 2002

The Cincinnati community was saddened in May by the passing of Geoff Grady. Grady, who was serving as the current monarch, Emperor XI, of the ISQCCBE (Imperial Sovereign Queen City Court of the Buckeye Empire), died on Saturday May 18th. He was 45. The funeral was held on May 22nd at Saints Boniface and James Church in Ludlow, KY. He was buried the following day in Saint Mary's Cemetery in Ft. Mitchell.

Since being crowned Emperor XI last September, Grady had worked as a committed fundraiser for The Court's designated local charities. Imperial Crown Princess X Ginger Snap said of him, "He would always say if we only raise \$1 than that is \$1 that will make a difference in someone else's life." In a letter to the Court membership, Empress Gypsy Russel, his partner in Reign XI, said, "Geoff touched many people in his life and he will continue to live in all our thoughts." He is survived by his mother, Betty, whom he adored. Memorials can be sent to the Ludlow Fire Department, 234 Oak Street, Ludlow, KY 41016.

Regional Festival of GALA Choruses Coming in July

The Cincinnati Men's Chorus and MUSE, Cincinnati's Women's Choir, are pleased to announce that the first ever Eastern Regional Festival of GALA Choruses, an international GLBT Choral organization, will be held here in Cincinnati from July 3rd to 7th.

Participation by at least 32 choruses and over 1,500 delegates from throughout the Eastern United States is expected. GALA's motto "Our Voices Win Freedom" clarifies the decision to bring this event to Cincinnati, a city clearly in need of improvement in the area of civil rights. The Aronoff Center, Westin and Hyatt hotels have all adopted personnel policies prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in order to entice GALA to bring the festival to Cincinnati, so progress that will impact the GLBT community here for years to come has already resulted from this event.

Performances will be held at the Aronoff Center's Proctor and Gamble Hall, with the Cincinnati Men's Chorus and MUSE performing at the opening concert which will be open to the public. In addition, free public outdoor concerts are scheduled for Fountain Square and Findlay Market to bring media attention to the need for repeal of Article XII and improved civil rights in our city.

In conjunction with the GALA Eastern Regional Festival, a riverboat cruise is to be held on the evening of Saturday July 6th starting at 11pm. Tickets are now on sale to delegates and local supporters of the Men's Chorus and MUSE. This event will be a fundraiser for both local choruses. For only \$35 per person, you can climb aboard the BB Riverboat's River Queen for a leisurely trip down the beautiful Ohio River with dinner and dancing.

For more information on the GALA Choruses Festival and cruise tickets, please contact the Men's Chorus at 513-542-2626 or online at www.cmc.bigstep.com.

Ohio Supreme Court Rules "Gay Flirting" Law Unconstitutional

In a landmark decision, hailed by GLBT activists and civil libertarians, justices of Ohio's highest court have declared that the state's so called "gay flirting" law is unconstitutional.

On May 17th, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled that the statute was a violation of the civil rights of Ohioans. In their unanimous decision, the justices struck down the law, which had made a sexual advance toward a member of the same gender (if that advance was found offensive) a first degree misdemeanor, carrying penalties of a \$1,000 fine and up to six months in jail. The law applied only to advances to members of the same gender and not opposite gender.

"We don't throw men in jail for making passes at women, and there can be no double standard for gay people doing the same thing," was the successful argument presented to the court by Lambda Legal Defense attorney Heather C. Sawyer.

The high court is also looking at another case this session relevant to GLBT people. On April 10th, the justices heard arguments in a case involving the denial of a legal name change for a lesbian couple, Jennifer Bicknell and Belinda Lou Piddy of Hamilton. The two had been refused their request to have their last names changed to match that of their children. In his decision, Butler County Magistrate Charles Pater cited "divine edict," a term which has no legal definition.

In oral arguments in the case before the high court, their lawyer Scott Knox told the justices that the lower court judges had failed to apply the legal standards of reasonable and proper cause in name changes, citing that no evidence of fraud was present. A ruling in the name change case is expected by early fall.

5th Annual "Ride for the Cure" Motorcycle Run to be June 22nd

The ISQCCBE (The Court) will host one of its largest fundraisers of the year on Saturday June 22nd at Old Street Saloon in Monroe, Ohio. The 5th annual "Ride for the Cure" Motorcycle Run will begin with registration at 11am and the bike run beginning at 1pm.

The run covers about 100 miles and will take between 3 to 4 hours to complete. Gays, lesbians and some straight folks will participate in this fundraiser for The Court's designated local charities.

"In the first year of the run we had 9 riders, last year we had over 30," says Emperor VIII Dale Pleiman, "This year we hope for even more." Following the run there will be lots of refreshments and food at Old Street Saloon.

Later that night, Old Street will present an all-star show featuring drag queens, drag kings and a live vocalist. For more information on the "Ride for the Cure," go to Old Street Saloon's website at www.oldstreetbar.com.

The Court will also be hosting several great pageants. Don't miss the "Miss Magical Makeover" pageant on June 21st at Shooters, the "Miss Porkopolis" pageant at Shooters on June 28th, and the "Miss Big Bone Lick" pageant on July 29th at

River Bears Preparing for Run III

Cincinnati River Bears are busy preparing everything for their third annual "Bear Run." This year's convention of bear types and their friends is expected to attract folks from across the Midwest. It will be an entire weekend of events on September 20th, 21st and 22nd. "Furgasm III: Bears on the Loose" will feature bar nights, contests and recreational outings for attendees. For more information about Cincinnati River Bears and their regular potlucks and activities, call 513-541-0003.

Proud Artist Contest Winner to be Announced on June 15th

During Pride Week, the Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Cincinnati is hosting a Proud Artist Contest and Exhibition. Many local gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and supportive artists, in a variety of media, are displaying their works at The Center's Northside office space at 4119 Hamilton Avenue. Hours are Monday through Friday from 6pm to 9pm. All guests who stop in to view the artwork are invited to vote for the best piece displayed. Every vote will give the voter a chance to win two tickets to this year's Pride Night at Paramount's Kings Island on August 30th. On Saturday afternoon June 15th, The Center will host a special reception for the artists from 2pm to 4pm. During this event the winners of the contest will be announced. Prizes will be awarded for the first and second place. The Center is pleased to welcome Cincinnati Art Museum as an official sponsor of the event. For more information, please go to the Center's website at www.glbtcincincinnati.com or call 513-591-0200.

Club Kapri Korn Summer Kick-off Weekend

On June 21st to 23rd, Club Kapri Korn of Cincinnati will host its annual "Kick-Off to Summer" Celebration. The organization, which welcomes people of all races, genders and sexual orientations to its functions, has expanded its annual June picnic to become a three-day gathering to be held at the Cincinnati Marriott North in Sharonville. According to Club Kapri Korn leader Darlene Hicks, "The group, in one incarnation or another, has gathered for this picnic for the past 20 years. It had become so popular that we decided last year to make it a two day event. This year it will expand to three." On Friday June 21st, there will be registration and reception followed by a pajama party at the hotel. On Saturday, the picnic will take place at the Oak Ridge Lodge in Mt. Airy Forest. The participants will enjoy a dinner and dance on Saturday night and then take a trip out to the Belterra Casino on Sunday afternoon. Transportation for the weekend outings will be provided to and from the hotel for all registered guests. Between 100 and 125 people are expected to attend. Registration is \$115. For more information or to make your reservations, contact Darlene Hicks at 513-281-3846.

Columbus Pride Parade on June 29th

Year after year, the Pride Parade in Columbus keeps getting bigger. It has become a must-see, must-do monster event. More than 32,000 people were there last year making it the largest GLBT Pride march in Ohio history. Mark your calendar for Saturday June 29th to come to Columbus and be a part of it all. The parade kicks off at noon near Goodale Park in the gay-friendly Short North area of Columbus. It will proceed down High Street, past the State Capitol, and end with a giant festival in Bicentennial Park. The festival features booths, games, food, and lots of live entertainment from 2pm to 6pm. There will be a family area for people with children and a beer garden at the festival. For more information on the Columbus Pride Parade, go to their website at stonewall-columbus.com.

Womonfest Offers a Great Day of Music and More

On Saturday June the 15th, hundreds of women are expected to gather for this year's Womonfest. It will be a day of great live music, arts and crafts and food. Gates open at 11am. For those who want to camp out, tents are permitted both Friday night before the event and Saturday night. The admission is \$15.00 at the door and \$12.00 in advance.

Among the many performers scheduled to appear at this year's Womonfest are: Lucy Blue Trembley, Katie Reider, Jamie Fota, Chris Collier, Legacy, Tracey Walker, Lia & Keryn, Peggy Erin, Just the Band, and Rita Beach. Volunteers are urgently needed to help with the event. For info about Womonfest, call Lauren at 859-781-6614.

Dayton Pride Picnic and Dinner

Dayton Pride will host its annual Pride Dinner and Expo on Saturday June 15th at the Dayton Convention Center. An expo of many local GLBT supportive businesses and organizations will begin at 5pm. The banquet dinner starts at 7pm. Entertainment following the dinner will include lesbian comedian Suzanne Westen-hoeffler, Miss Bonni Blake and many others.

Dayton will wrap up its Pride festivities with a "Family" Outdoor Picnic on Sunday June 16th. Come out to Carillon Park from noon to 5pm for live entertainment, vendors, local artists and the "Wacky Olympics." For more information go to Dayton's website at www.gaydayton.org or call Jeff at 937-275-3059.

In My Opinion

Still Proud After All These Years

by Bruce Beisner

I came out when I was 16. Wow, that's been almost 20 years ago. And a lot of Pride Parades ago. You know, no matter how many times I've marched it is always a rewarding and new experience.

When I was younger and more angry, it was all about defiance and gaining self respect. I was telling those bashers from high school that they were right, I was a "fag" but that was not only a good thing, it was a powerful thing. Later it was because I was marching with this organization or that as a volunteer, board member or president. In recent years, pride parades have been a great opportunity for me and my husband to walk hand in hand down the street, singing happily with our friends and members of our church.

You know, you never forget your very first pride parade. Mine was back in 1987, and it actually wasn't a pride parade but something much bigger. In October of that year I traveled to Washington DC to the second National March on Washington. It was overwhelming to say the least. Almost half a million people were there. Queers as far as the eye could see, in all directions. A beautiful site to behold!

Over the years, I must say that I've been to more than my share of great parades here in Cincinnati. It seems to me back in the late 80's, they used to be a little more loud and political, but maybe that was just me yelling. Do you remember the year the leaders of the UC Alliance marched down 5th Street singing the Eurythmics song "I Need A Man" at the top of their lungs? Or the year Eartha Quake, that wonderful 500 pound drag queen with the great voice, rode in the parade on a bright pink push cart. And of course we all remember the first time we experienced the "dykes of bikes!" After the passage of Issue 3, I, like a lot of Cincinnatians, felt that we didn't have all that much to be proud of, at least in this city. The 1995 parade here in town was really

kind of sad, just a couple of hundred folks marching down empty downtown streets on a Sunday afternoon.

In 1996, I had the great pleasure of going home for pride. My hometown of Charleston, WV was having its first pride parade ever. Not sure what to expect I made the pilgrimage. What a delight to see many of my old friends from high school. I know being at the parade was scary for some of them, but it was also all the more thrilling because it was a risk.

Then two years ago, thanks to the vision and hard work of Chris Good and his committee, I along with most of Cincinnati's GLBT community discovered our pride again. A bright, happy and strong version of ourselves, joined by hundreds of our straight friends, took over Clifton and Northside in the second coming of all pride parades. And each year since it just keeps getting better.

In last month's issue of GLBT News, Mark Byers talked about pride being a risk, a commitment and a celebration. I agree with him. I also believe that you don't have to go to a parade to be proud. Actually, parades are just the celebration part, good places to get your batteries recharged. The real work of pride is the risk and commitment in our everyday lives. It's holding your partner's hand whenever and wherever you both want. People say you can't do it because no one is doing it around here. Well, it has to start somewhere.

One of my mother's favorite songs is from "South Pacific." It's called "Carefully Taught" and it's all about how people don't naturally hate people who are different than themselves. They have to be "carefully taught" to hate. By being out, being ourselves, and maybe even marching in a pride parade or two, we are carefully teaching the world not to hate.

Family Matters

by Linda Arnest, Cincinnati PFLAG President

It's June, that time of year when we take special pride in the GLBT community and ourselves. For PFLAG Cincinnati, it is the climax of the year, the month when we revel in the success of the March banquet and announce the recipients of our annual scholarship awards.

Thanks to the generosity of the GLBT community and its supporters, PFLAG Cincinnati awarded ten \$1,000 scholarships to an incredible pool of applicants this year. The PFLAG Board and the Scholarship Committee take great personal pride in the GLBT students who will benefit from the proceeds of this year's banquet. There are future doctors, activists, attorneys and entrepreneurs among this year's recipients. Each is actively involved in GLBT advocacy and education in their own distinctive way. Each one is an accomplished, unique and wonderful individual. PFLAG is proud to recognize them, to assist in making their dreams a reality and to contribute to the exciting future that surely awaits each one.

I hope you attended the June 11th PFLAG meeting where scholarship recipients were recognized and honored. At the meeting, we congratulated and celebrated the accomplishments of ten fine representatives of the Greater Cincinnati GLBT community.

PFLAG meets on the second Tuesday of each month at Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church, 103 William Howard Taft Road, at 7:30pm. All meetings include small support group discussion. This PFLAG chapter feels like family. I hope you will join us.

Financial Advisor

Take Advantage of Retirement Plan Rollovers

by Vicki L. Marsh, American Express Financial Advisors

Private-sector workers with 401(k)s or IRAs aren't the only ones taking advantage of expanded retirement plan portability enacted by the new tax law. If you're a state or local government employee with a 457 plan (governmental deferred compensation plan), you also now have more options for your retirement nest egg when you change jobs.

Such flexibility may help you consolidate your retirement assets and simplify your financial life while maintaining the tax-deferred status of your investments.

Before January 2002, 457 plans were fairly restrictive when it came to rollovers. Government employees had two options when they left their jobs: either transfer the money to another 457 plan at a new government job or leave it with their former employer. Now many of the barriers between government, private and individual retirement plans have been removed. So when you leave your government job, you can roll over distributions tax-free to a traditional IRA or to a 401(k), 403(b) or 457 plan that accepts such rollovers.

The same flexibility also applies to owners of 401(k)s, 403(b)s and traditional IRAs, who now may roll over eligible distributions tax-free to any of the other types of plans or to a governmental 457 plan, if the plan accepts such rollovers. Other portability provisions of the new law include: 1. After-tax employee contributions to a qualified plan can be rolled over to another qualified plan or traditional IRA. 2. Taxable IRA distributions can be rolled over to a qualified plan, 403(b) annuity or governmental 457 plan, if the plan permits. and 3. A deceased spouse's qualified plan assets can be rolled over to any qualified plan, 403(b) annuity or governmental 457 plan for the surviving spouse.

If job changes have left your retirement savings in different employer plans and IRAs, you know that managing scattered accounts can be challenging. One way to cut the confusion is to meld your retirement plans into one, easy-to-manage IRA. Such a move may offer several advantages, including:

Continued tax deferral—A direct rollover to a traditional IRA will not interrupt your retirement savings' tax deferral. Delaying taxes over the long term may make a big difference in how much your investment may grow.

Easier tracking and managing—Having one IRA will reduce the number of account statements you receive and your time spent in tracking and managing the assets. Maintaining proper asset allocation among stocks, bonds and other investments will be easier and quicker. You'll find planning for required minimum distributions is much simpler with just one account.

A wide selection of investments—An IRA at a financial services firm may give you a broader selection of investments than many government or private plans allow, and you can move your money among investments at any time.

Cost savings—Consolidating into just one IRA means you'll no longer have to pay annual fees on multiple accounts at different institutions.

Comprehensive planning and service—Another big benefit of rolling over your retirement assets to a full service financial firm is that you'll get ongoing planning and support from a knowledgeable financial advisor. Such a professional not only can help make your rollover go smoothly, he or she can suggest the best investments for you and help you stay on track for your goals in the years ahead.

Our Faith Too!

Celebrating the Spirituality of GLBT People

Seeking GLBT-Friendly Religious Institutions

The Rev. Jerry Hill, pastor of Clifton United Methodist Church, is on a mission this summer. He is looking for GLBT-friendly churches and religious organizations in the Greater Cincinnati area. His goal is to organize a networking and/or advocacy group of people of faith. He isn't sure what the final make-up of the group or coalition might be, but he is starting with pastors. He currently has a list of 15 churches he plans to contact to find out how much interest there is in forming a supportive group of churches and other institutions.

United Methodist churches that are openly supportive of GLBT people and issues are few and far between, he says. In fact, there are only three churches that are "Reconciling Congregations," not in Cincinnati, not in the tri-state, but in the entire state of Ohio. and, there are 1,300 churches in the West Ohio Annual Conference. It is one of two conferences in the state. He knows other churches in other denominations have the same problem, few supportive congregations nearby.

So, he feels it is important that an interfaith group is established to support one another in this area. He would like to organize a major event in the fall, but what it might be will be up to the forming group.

But support of one another would be a major goal. He refers to the situation at Mt. Auburn Presbyterian where charges have been filed in the denomination against two clerics who are supportive of GLBT people. He adds that his denomination has its own set of issues toward their General Conference in 1994.

The far right has targeted all major mainline denominations in an effort to remove progressive leadership and they have big bucks behind them so progressives must organize to keep Christianity from being taken over completely.

Hill has been thinking about forming a coalition for about a year, ever since his church set as a goal the building of bridges where they can. When talking about the church's problems with homosexuality, he says "It is really hard for me to understand what the fear is, what the concern is. My guess is that sex is something that has never been talked about much at church, it is something that is not talked about at all."

"We have certain assumptions but we don't think about how we carry out our sex lives as faithful people," he says, adding, "We need to open up that discussion about the variety of ways people can live responsible, and faithful lives."

He points out that there are two passages in the New Testament where Jesus refers to inhospitality as the sin of Sodom, yet fundamentalists refer to these passages when referring to Old Testament passages when referring to the same topic, and their interpretation is suspect even there, according to many theologians. Hill says the passages in the Old Testament about homosexuality are actually referring to men degrading other men by raping them.

If you are involved with a church or organization interested in being a part of a coalition of GLBT-friendly religious institutions, please contact Rev. Hill at 513-961-2998.

GLBT Groups Respond to Priest Sexual Abuse Scandal

Stonewall Cincinnati host-ed a forum on April 30th at Xavier University to discuss the national scandal involving sexual abuse by Catholic priests and possible cover-ups by church officials. The panel included Xavier history professor Father John La Rocca, Bellerme Chapel's associate pastor Father Al Bischoff, and Margaret Black, representing the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

In early May, the Board of Directors of Dignity USA, the nation's largest organization of GLBT Catholics, released a public statement saying "We express our profound sorrow to all who have been affected by the clergy sex abuse scandal in the Catholic Church. In particular, we reach out to those who suffered abuse by priests, those whose complaints were disregarded or dismissed by bishops, and all whose faith has been shaken by the ongoing revelations of the abuses of power in our church." The group called on Catholic leaders to respond honestly and fully to the crisis saying they believed that all allegations of sexual abuse by priests or other Church personnel should be referred to the proper legal authorities for investigation. Dignity is "saddened and angered by continued efforts by some in our church to deflect concerns about sexual abuse and the decades of cover-up by church officials by laying blame for these problems with gay priests. We recognize and affirm the dedication and commitment of the many fine gay priests who have served and who, with integrity, continue to serve Roman Catholics around the world. A priest's sexual orientation is irrelevant to his ability to fulfill his responsibilities as a minister of the Gospel."

Integrity, the national organization of GLBT Episcopalians, expressed its "complete solidarity" with the statements of Dignity, adding that there has been a "culture of dishonesty" which has perpetuated this abuse, a culture which has also oppressed GLBT persons in both the Episcopal and Catholic churches. "We denounce this attempt to trump criticism of the church and its complicity in abuse with homophobia."

Thought You Knew

Advice for the Confused and Clueless

from Ambrosia

A quick note before beginning: I would like to thank everyone who has submitted a letter to my column. The response has been over-whelming! Please be advised that we cannot print letters that are adult-themed in nature, however please know that I will respond to ev-ery letter submitted. I would like to also thank my die hard fans and supporters for coming to yet another one of my Mojo Mama appearances. We met at Burlington, Kentucky at a TA Center Truckstop. I was there as your Mojo Mama in the big white afro giving out money and selling 0.94 cent gas. Thanks again, without your support, I'd just be another over-painted face in the crowd...

Dear Ambrosia,

I don't really know how to bring this up, but I'll try. My partner and I have been together for many beautiful years. We love each other a lot and are proud to be lesbians. We're planning on driving up with some other friends to the big Pride March in Columbus. Well, my partner is convinced that she is going to march in the parade "topless" this year. She has her reasons and feels very strongly about it. I, on the other hand, would prefer that she didn't and feel quite strongly about that. What should we do?

—Shy in Cincinnati

Dear Boob Shy,

Don't let her rain on your parade ...you're doing a good thing by settling this before the event. Unfortunately, the way things are (legally) in Columbus, you'll have two options: 1) Go topless and end up in jail or 2) Don't go topless and go home with your lover that night. I personally am all for the women going topless but the "Zero Tolerance" policy up there makes it difficult to show your attributes in handcuffs. I would suggest - PASTIES! Now, you don't have to use typical stripper pasties - hearts, stars, smile faces, but try a pride flag, or pink triangle. Pasties and pasty glue can be bought at most adult shops. You'll be tickled to see the various sizes and colors. Why don't you go together to make the buy and then have a sensuous practice session at home before the big event. You'll be sure to be right in style at the big parade. I think pasties offer a much more dressed up look than that tacky electrical tape you'll see on some.

Dear Ambrosia,

As an aware homosexual who has done drag, I am very disappointed in you –as a person, you make me sick! I used to think what you do is okay but I can't believe that you wear and support the use of real fur. That is just tacky and outdated. I think as gay people we are supposed to be further along in our development and discard those horrible caveman atrocities like fur, eating meat, animal testing, etc. I just hope you're woman enough to print this and respond to this so we can all see what kind of pitiful response you have.

—Animal Lover

Dear Animal,

Well, first I must say that I admire your unusual and unique position on me. It must be difficult to be the only one in the city that feels that way about me. But down to business...The Fur Wars... Let me start by saying that furriers no longer sell endangered species. I also know of very few individuals, that could afford (or would want to) buy enough of one type of fur to create an endangered species. Love the animals all you like, but there's nothing like a fur. I've found in my varied experience with the other "performers" that their stance on fur hate is purely financial. They can't afford a fur. Come on ladies, fun fur (not faux fur) is fun for a costume, but sooner or later you've got to grow up and get clothes. Nothing looks more ridiculous than an aging "lady" in a young girl's costume. Yes, you all know who you are. Anyway, as further support of my view, my long-time friend and twin, super model Linda Evangelista, was a staunch animal rights activist until earlier this year. She was offered and accepted a big dollar contract to model and wear fur. Honestly, for the number of people that own and still buy furs - I think that you could find a cause that you could effect better and do more good. Hey, let me know if you find any good deals on lynx - I need a new coat for next season!

Ambrosia wants to hear from you! Write to her about your personal problems at ehutflie@cincyradio.com.

(Coming next month: Ambrosia Speaks Out on Silicone)