

Greater Cincinnati GLBT News

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Thousands Expected for Pride Night at Paramount's Kings Island

On Friday August 30th, the Midwest's premiere family theme park will open its doors for the sixth year to a special private party just for the GLBT community. Pride Night 2002 at Paramount's Kings Island promises to be one of the Midwest's largest gatherings of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and supportive people this year. The entire park will be closed to the general public for the evening with all your favorite rollercoasters and signature rides, including the new Tomb Raider ride, open throughout the night. Parking lots will open at 5pm, and the gates open at 6pm. The park will be open until midnight, a full hour later than in 2001.

This year's Pride Night will feature ex-panded special entertainment from well-known performers from across the region. Guests will dance to the music of DJs Blak Cheri, Chris Mercier and DJ Spyce. The new Queen City Rainbow Band, fresh from their debut at Cincinnati's Pride Parade in June, will make an appearance as well as the Cincinnati Men's Chorus ensemble known as "Vocal Point." Headlining the night's entertainment will be performances by the "Divas of Paramount's Kings Island." This new female illusionist group has been formed just for the occasion and will feature many top entertainers from Cincinnati, Dayton and other neighboring cities. They are sure to entertain with well-known numbers; choreographed to get you on your feet.

The event is presented again this year by the Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Cincinnati. All proceeds from Pride Night go to support the organization, now in its eighth year of operation. The Center relies heavily on monies raised each year at the Paramount's Kings Island event in order to keep its doors open and programs running. Some of these free services to the community include Cincinnati Youth Group, the GLBT Switchboard, the new Men's Interactive Group, and the Queen City GLBT Coalition. Their Northside office space features an extensive lending library and web browsing stations where you can access the internet free of charge.

A large committee of volunteers at The Center has been meeting since early January to put together Pride Night 2002. "I am confident that this year's event will be one of the largest we have had yet. We have had a very dedicated committee that I am very proud of," said Troy Henson, Pride Night Committee Chair and Vice-President of the Community Center. "The committee did their homework and has worked to bring more value to the purchase of thrills at Paramount's Kings Island." For the first time ticket stub holders will get a whole weekend of events. A Pride Night ticket stub will be good for special discounts and free admission from August 29th to September 1st at events being held at many Cincinnati area bars and restaurants.

If you have not been to a Pride Night at Paramount's Kings Island before, those who have report a good time to be had. Comments from those who attended last year's event included how short the lines were for all the rollercoasters allowing for multiple rides on all your favorites, how good the live entertainment was, and how friendly the staff of Kings Island was. One woman who came all the way from Michigan said, "It was just great being here with all these queer people."

Tickets for Pride Night 2002 will be \$41 at the gate. Tickets are available in advance at a discounted rate of only \$36. You can purchase them in Cincinnati at The Community Center, The Dock, The Pink Pyramid, Hamburger Mary's, Metronation and the Pyramid Leather Crypt. Other ticket outlets include the Dayton Community Center, Stonewall Columbus, the Cleveland Community Center, and Q Gifts in Dayton. Tickets are also available online at www.kqweekend.com. The Center encourages you to purchase your tickets in advance to avoid potential waiting at the front gate. For all the latest information on Pride Night 2002 at Paramount's Kings Island, call The Center at 513-591-0200 or check out the "Kings and Queens Weekend" website online at www.kqweekend.com. While you are there you can join the official mailing list. It will keep you up to date with any changes to the event.

Kings Island Event Centerpiece of Weekend Full of Activities

The Gay and Lesbian Community Center's Pride Night at Paramount's Kings Island will be just a part of a big GLBT Labor Day Week-end of events here in Cincinnati. Dubbed the "Kings and Queens Weekend" by organizers, the festivities will run from Thursday August 29th to Sunday September 1st, with each night having a different royal theme.

Thursday August 29th is the "Jack's Party" with a special show by the Spicy Divas at The Pipeline, karaoke at Bullfishes, live jazz music at Jacob's, and the hot guys of the "Down-n-Dirty" strip revue performing at The Dock.

The "King's Party" will be Friday August 30th. Before heading out to Paramount's King's Island for the evening check out the Pre-Pride Night Buffet at Simon Says. Once you've had your fill of the rides and entertainment at Pride Night, head down to The Dock for the official "After Pride Night Party" featuring live entertainment by the Queen City Girls. Other special events will be going on at Jacob's, Hamburger Mary's, The Pipeline and Bullfishes on Friday night as well.

On Saturday August 31st, The Dock will be welcoming nationally-known circuit DJ Joe Bermudez for the "Queen's Party." Also that night check out the special Improv Comedy at Jacob's and the Royal Flush Show happening at Hamburger Mary's.

The fabulous Riverfest Fireworks top off the weekend on Sunday September 1st. There's no better place to see them than from The Dock's patio where Stanley will be hosting an "Aces High Cookout." Hamburger Mary's will host a KQ Brunch Sunday morning and Spurs serves up steaks and Long Island Iced Teas in the late afternoon.

Carol's on Main will be serving special lunch and dinner specials on Friday, Saturday and Sunday just for Pride Night patrons.

All weekend long, be sure to bring your Pride Night ticket stub with you to all these events. It will get you in free or at a big discount! Plus drink specials will also be offered at some venues for Pride Night ticket holders. For more information on these "Kings and Queens Weekend" events and some still to be announced, call The Center at 591-0200 or go online to www.kqweekend.com.

GLSEN Uses Education to Fight Attacks by Conservative Group

Recently the Cincinnati chapter of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) has been the target of a slew of false accusations made by a local conservative group, Citizens For Community Values (CCV). Through a letter campaign to Ohio Public School Superintendents, CCV has warned readers that groups such as GLSEN "promote homosexual behavior... behaviors which threaten students mental, physical, and emotional well being."

Clearly, CCV and their supporters have not done their homework because if they had, they would know that the only thing GLSEN, the leading national organization fighting to end anti-gay bias in K-12 schools, promotes is education. CCV would also know that 70% of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students report verbal, sexual or physical harassment in their schools

and that these youth are four times more likely to skip school because they feel unsafe.

Mindy Sandfort of GLSEN says "We are asking CCV to wake up and realize who their efforts are silencing. I can assure you that GLSEN's voice, they are not. It is the youth that will be affected by their measures, youth who already often have nowhere to go, no one to turn to and no chance to make their voices heard."

GLSEN's annual "Back to School" Campaign this year will include ongoing enthusiasm in the planning of new events and initiation of fresh ideas. Sandfort says "We will provide city schools and our community as well as groups like Citizens for Community Values the information they need to recognize our own set of community values."

Through personal letters to the community, educational mailings to school principals, and a youth speak-out event, GLSEN is determined to gain more support for their work in the schools and more importantly make evident the undeniable need for it that exists right here in our city.

"GLSEN values the affirmation of the inherent dignity of every student in the class-room regardless of their sexual orientation. GLSEN values the education that will bring an end to anti-gay prejudice and hate motivated violence in our K-12 schools. GLSEN's values lie in the safety of Cincinnati children. Who could possibly argue against that?" asks Sandfort. To get involved in GLSEN's campaign, please call Kathy at 221-1670 or visit the website at www.glsencincinnati.org.

The Court to Crown New Monarchs on September 7th

The ISQCCBE (Imperial Sovereign Queen City Court of the Buckeye Empire) invites you to celebrate with them the conclusion of the reign of Regent Emperor XI Will Fugett and Empress XI Gypsy Russell. Coronation XII will be held on Saturday September 7th at the Millennium Hotel in downtown Cincinnati. Doors open at 5:30pm with the Coronation beginning at 6:30pm.

The event, themed "The Carnival—A Night at a Venetian Masquerade Ball," will, of course, feature the crowning of The Court's new Empress XII and Emperor XII. It will be the culmination of over a month's worth of shows and appearances by the candidates for new monarch. This campaign kicked off on Saturday August 3rd with the announcement of Ginger Snap as candidate for Empress XII and Sam Clemons as candidate for Emperor XII.

Admission to the Coronation will be \$40.00 per person. Tickets are available by calling Will Fugett at 753-4050 or by mailing a check for \$40.00 a ticket to: I.S.Q.C.C.B.E., P.O. Box 141152, Cincinnati, OH 45250.

ISQCCBE is the local chapter of the International Imperial Court system, a network of almost 70 courts across North America. For over thirty years this Court system has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for charities and performed much community service. During the current Reign, our local Court chapter has raised funds for Caracole Inc., AIDS Volunteers of Northern Kentucky, and the YWCA Breast Cancer Awareness Program. For more information on goings on with The Court, visit the website at www.isqccbe.org.

Bowling League Begins Play

The TriState Alternative Bowling Alliance will begin play for its 2002 Winter League on Thursday August 22nd. The league for GLBT and supportive bowlers will run every Thursday from August until April 3rd from 7pm to 10pm. Play will be each week at the SuperBowl Bellewood. Cost is \$12 plus the sanction fee. For more information, please call Wes Adkins at 791-5145 or email to wadkins@cinci.rr.com or call SuperBowl Bellewood at 781-1211.

Crossport to Offer "Ladies Night Out"

Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky's social and support organization for crossdressers and transsexuals is expanding its lineup of monthly programs. Crossport currently sponsors two regular support groups, one for crossdressers on the first Wednesday of each month and one for transsexuals on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. Both groups meet at Church of Our Saviour in Mt. Auburn and begin at 7:30pm. On the third Thursday of each month, Crossport has its regular social event at the Washington Platform Restaurant. This monthly event has grown large enough that the group is now planning to offer another regular monthly outing. The "Girls Night Out" will take place on the third Saturday of each month and will be another opportunity for Crossport members to go out together to a local nightspot. The new program is expected to begin in September. For details, call 919-4850.

Stonewall to Host Fundraisers

Stonewall Cincinnati will present a special evening with the Know Theater Tribe on Wednesday August 14th. That night's performance of the play "Anton in Show Business" will be a fundraiser for Stonewall. Showtime is 8pm at Gabriel's Corner and admission is on a sliding scale. You are encouraged to pay what you can. For tickets call the Know Theater Tribe box office at 300-KNOW. Stonewall will also be having a fundraiser on Friday August 23rd at Bullfishes in Northside. For details, call 651-2500.

AIDS Volunteers Install New Leaders

On July 29th, AIDS Volunteers of Cincinnati installed a new board. New members are Jonathan Alexander, Michael Beauchat, Peter LaFoon, Jerold Freed, Dr. Lorraine Stephens, and Kevin Canafax. Elizabeth Turnbull was elected Board president. New Vice Presidents are Ransom Hudson and Carol Wright. Todd Ward is the new Treasurer and Richard Gargana is Secretary. This meeting also marked the 20th anniversary of the organization.

Meeting to Plan 2003 Pride Parade

The first preliminary planning meeting for next year's Pride Parade will be held on Sunday August 11th at noon at the Cincinnati Women's Resource Center (formerly Crazy Ladies) in Northside. This is your chance to get involved and build on the big successes of the parades from the past two years. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend. For more information, call 681-4627 or go to the Pride Parade website at www.cincypride.com.

Thursday Night Gatherings for Gay Men

Thursday nights will be the night for a brand new program especially for gay men at the Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Cincinnati. Beginning August 1st, The Center will present GIG (Gay Interactive Gathering). Each week from 7pm to 9pm, gay men are invited to stop by The Center for an evening of games, discussion and other activities which are designed to make it easier to get to know others and make new friends. This new program will be replacing The Center's long running Men's Support Group. On Monday nights The Center is now presenting a Lesbian and Gay Movie Night. To find out what film they are showing this week or for more information on The Center, call 591-0200 or go online to their website at www.glbtcincinnati.com.

Ohio Supreme Court Grants Lesbian Couple's Legal Name Change

After a three year court battle, a lesbian couple from Butler County can now legally share the same last name. On July 31st, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled 6 to 1 to allow Belinda Lou Piddy and Jennifer Lane Bicknell of Hamilton to change both their last names to Rylen, a name the couple chose which is a combination of their two last names.

The couple's original request was denied back in 1999 by Butler County Probate Judge Charles Pater. In his decision, Pater said "To grant their petitions would be contrary to the public good, contrary to encoded public policy, and contrary to natural law." Last year a state appeal court upheld the judge's decision.

In oral arguments in the case last spring 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.

Writing for the majority, Justice Alice Robie Resnick stated that the requested name change by the two women does not damage the sanctity of marriage or imply that the State of Ohio recognizes same-sex marriages, a charge argued to the High Court by representatives of the American Family Association, a conservative Christian group.

Justice Evelyn Stratton, the lone dissenter, wrote that she believes the ruling runs contrary to state law.

In another case about GLBT issues, the Supreme Court struck down the state's "gay flirting" law back in May.

PFLAG Cincinnati to Get New President

Marti Kwiatkowski will become PFLAG Cincinnati's president effective in October. She has served as the group's secretary for the past three years and is looking forward to implementing new ideas to move our local chapter forward.

Kwiatkowski takes over for Linda Arnest who has been PFLAG's president for the last three years and has worked tirelessly to increase the group's outreach and expand their scholarship program and other programs which support GLBT young people.

Caracole Goes "Back to Broadway"

Caracole Inc., a Cincinnati area organization which provides safe, secure and affordable housing and support services for people living with HIV/AIDS, will present its 5th annual "Back to Broadway" fundraiser on September 14th.

The event will be a revue of numbers from various musicals such as "Guys and Dolls," "My Fair Lady," "A Chorus Line" and "Miss Saigon," performed by a company of talented volunteers. This year's revue will feature Broadway performer Ron Bohmer. "Back to Broadway" begins at 8pm and will be at the Rapid Run Middle School on the West Side. Tickets are \$35 general admission and \$50 for patrons. To get your tickets, call 761-1480. For more information, visit their website at www.caracole.org.

GLBT Youth Summit Returns in November

Planning is already under-way for this year's Greater Cincinnati GLBT Youth Summit. The event will take place on Saturday November 16th at Northern Kentucky University. It will offer a day of workshops and discussions on topics that are important to GLBT, questioning and supportive young people. Workshop topics that are being considered include discussions on religion, bisexuality, activism and working to organize support groups in local schools. This second Youth Summit follows the unprecedented success of last spring's first gathering, held at the University of Cincinnati, which attracted well over 150 participants. This year's event already has the sponsorship of GLSEN, PFLAG and the GLBT alliances at Northern Kentucky University, Xavier University and the University of Cincinnati.

In My Opinion

Denial and Ignorance Bring HIV Increase

by James Jackson

There's been a lot of good news about AIDS in recent years. New treatments are helping Americans with HIV to live fuller and healthier lives. Unfortunately, the good news has had a bad effect: a premature and false air of victory.

Ignorance and denial are on the rise, and so are new cases of HIV in Cincinnati and the U.S. Many Americans are being lulled into a false sense of security.

New research found that most young gay and bisexual men with HIV didn't know they were infected. According to an *Enquirer* lead story in July, researchers discovered that 77% of the gaymen between age 15 and 29 who were infected did not realize it. Lack of awareness was greatest among minority men, with 90% of African-Americans, 70% of Hispanics and 60% of whites who are infected being unaware.

The study, conducted in six top U.S. cities by the Centers for Disease Control, revealed that most of the infected men considered themselves to be at low risk of infection—despite having engaged in frequent unprotected sex.

But this isn't news to many HIV workers. Society has turned its attention elsewhere, to 9/11 and the ailing economy. Federal funds for HIV prevention and education are being cut in cities nationwide. Education efforts face huge challenges reaching schools and minorities. And many young people are coming of age thinking HIV is a manageable disease—or not thinking of HIV at all.

HIV has no cure. Medications work temporarily and have serious side effects. There is no end to society's fear. And thousands of local adults and children face this disaster daily. All of us need to recommit ourselves to fighting this preventable disease. You can make a difference by doing three simple things:

1. Every day, do what you can to educate others. Even a simple red ribbon goes a long way.
2. Contribute right now to local AIDS charities. They need your support more than ever before. If you can't contribute dollars, volunteer your time instead. Better yet, do both. (See the list of organizations on the website at www.greatercincinnati.glbtnews.com)
3. Open your heart to those who are affected and infected. Remember that those living with HIV, and their partners, often become isolated by the rigors of the disease and the discomfort they perceive among friends confronted with its day-to-day realities. Go out of your way to help, and make them feel loved and important.

Our region is fortunate to be served by some vigorous agencies who work tirelessly to prevent the spread of HIV. They not only save lives, but also help the individuals and families affected by the epidemic. But they can't do it alone.

James Jackson is president of the board of Caracole Inc. and Director of New Media for The Cincinnati Enquirer.

Our Faith Too!

Celebrating the Spirituality of GLBT People

National Conference of Catholic Ministries to Gays and Lesbians Coming in September to Blue Ash

In September, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati will host the 9th annual conference of the National Association of Catholic Diocesan Lesbian and Gay Ministries (NACDLM). The three day event, to be held in Blue Ash at the Clarion Hotel and Suites, will feature work-shops aimed at providing educational resources and models for ministry to lesbian and gay Catholics.

Founded in 1994, the NACDLM serves as a resource and network and encourages pastoral care with lesbian and gay persons. The group urges those in ministry to reflect on sacred scripture, Church teachings and pastoral practice, to study the social and physical sciences, and to listen and ponder the lived experiences that lesbian and gay people and their families can share.

The conference will be held on September 20th to 22nd with an introduction for newcomers in the morning on Friday followed by an afternoon program and an evening plenary session. Saturday's program will offer a morning program with speakers Jeanne Hunt, a local parish director of religious education, and Rev. Carl Moeddel of St. Rita's School for the Deaf. Both will talk on the subjects of wholeness of self, families, the faith community and reconciliation.

Workshops on Saturday will cover a variety of topics. Some include "Creating A Welcoming Parish," "Scripture: God's Message of Love for All," and "Ministry to Straight Spouses of Homosexuals."

One workshop will focus on the Cincinnati area group called CRYSM or Catholics Respecting Youth in Sexual Minorities. Sean Reynolds, director of the Office of Youth Ministry for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, and several high school members of the group will talk about their personal experiences with the group. Another workshop will be about starting a support group for parents who have lesbian or gay children.

The NACDLGM conference is intended for pastors, parish staff, youth ministry leaders, educators, and anyone involved in ministry with lesbian and gay Catholics. For more information, call 510-465-9344 or go online to www.nacdlgm.org. It is important to note that while this conference is intended to offer resources for Catholic clergy to reach out to lesbian and gay persons in loving ways, it does **NOT** in any way mark a change in the official teachings of the Catholic church about homosexuality which many consider to be contradictory.

Eclectic Group Gathers at Buddhist Dharma Center

One of the basic foundations of Buddhism is that all beings have Buddha Nature within. There is no room for separation or prejudice. As Bonnie from the Buddhist Dharma Center in Northside puts it, "Our religion teaches that when one is harmed, all are harmed." This belief has led the Center to welcome people of all sexual orientations and gender identities to be a part of their meditations and other regular activities.

The Dharma Center is an urban, non-residential center where people who practice various forms of Buddhist meditation and meditative inquiry gather together. Their membership consists of individuals who come from many different backgrounds but all share an interest in some aspect of Buddhism.

The Center offers sitting and walking meditations, which are shared by all Buddhist traditions. These take place on Sunday mornings from 10:30am to noon and Tuesday evenings from 7 to 8:15pm. Other activities include "Dharma Talk" on Tuesday nights, Chanting (in English) on Sunday mornings, and a brunch outing on the first Sunday of each month.

On the third Sunday of each month, everyone is welcome to join them for a "brown bag" lunch and discussion group which meets after the morning meditations. The activities go on later into the afternoon with more sitting and walking meditations until 3pm for those who choose to stay.

The Dharma Center is located at 13 Moline Street (directly behind the Cumminsville Post Office on Hamilton Avenue) in Northside. For directions visit their website at www.cincinnatiidharma.org. Before attending a regular meditation session, some brief prior instruction or training in Buddhist meditation is recommended. Meditation cushions and chairs are provided. There is no charge but donations are accepted. For further information, please contact Bonnie at 513-541-1650 or email at openway@fuse.net.

Financial Advisor

What Same Sex Couples With Children Need to Know

by Vicki L. Marsh, American Express Financial Advisors

If you're raising children in a gay or lesbian relationship, you're far from alone. According to the 1998 Current Population Reports issued by the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 10% of the approximately 1.6 million same-sex couples in America have children age 15 or younger living with them. Because the Census Bureau figures don't include older children, that percentage is probably even higher.

That means some 167,000 gay or lesbian couples are facing the same child-related financial challenges as their heterosexual counterparts. From buying a first car to financing college, the issues are universal. But add the other financial complexities that gay parents face, and you can see the need for meticulous financial planning. Consider these issues as you plan to secure your family's future:

Safeguard your relationship with your children. Although many gay and lesbian couples parent equally, there is often only one legal parent. Not only does the legal parent have the right to make decisions about the children's health, education and well-being, that person is also obligated to provide financial support. If you are fortunate enough to live in one of the 16 states that allow same-sex partners to jointly adopt—or where one partner can adopt the biological child of the other—both of you can protect your parental rights and responsibilities if your relationship ends. However, if second-parent adoption is unavailable where you live, consider preparing a written co-parenting or custody agreement with your partner. Because these agreements usually don't hold up in court as legal documents, you and your partner may have to put your differences aside and keep your children's financial best interests in mind in the event of a breakup.

Make and execute a will. A will is a legal declaration of how property should be distributed and how your estate should be administered after your death. But a will also allows for decision-making beyond property distribution.

Another important function of a will is to appoint a guardian for your minor children, which is especially important if you and your or even distant blood relatives are generally considered your heirs, depending on the rules in your state. That means your partner may be left without any decision-making rights for the minor children you've been raising together. Consult with your

attorney about drafting a will. In addition to making a will, you may also want to create a videotape of yourself explaining your wishes at the time the document is executed. This will add an extra measure of protection for your children by showing your mental competence and confirming your true wishes.

Provide for your partner and your children with a life estate. If you and your partner live in a home that either of you own independently, you might want to consider establishing a life estate. To do so, you must clearly state in your will that you want to give a life estate to your partner and the remaining interest to specifically named individuals, such as your children. That way you can avoid uprooting your partner in the event of your untimely death and still allow your home to pass to your children when your partner dies.

Protect your family with life insurance. Today's life insurance products offer more options and flexibility than in the past. One such option that may protect your children once you and your legal co-parent partner are both gone is "second-to-die" life insurance. This type of policy is based on both your lives, and the death benefit goes to your beneficiary at the death of the second insured. You may find that the "second-to-die" rates are somewhat lower than 2 separate policies. What's more, any cash value built up in the policy may potentially be used for unexpected emergencies.

Look for advice you can trust. A knowledgeable financial advisor can help you see your big financial picture, and help you understand the individual pieces. Look for someone you both trust implicitly and who understands the issues gay and lesbian couples face. Once that relationship is established, you'll have peace of mind knowing that you've taken a critical step toward securing your family's future.

Out of the Past

GLBTs on the Tube

by Bruce Beisner

Today, GLBT people are coming into America's living rooms every day. From high profile programs such as "Queer As Folk" and "Will & Grace" to more subtle fare like the PBS series "In The Life" and MTV's dating show "Dismissed," it seems we are everywhere. But long before Ellen came out in primetime, the TV was a virtual ghosttown for gays.

Anyone over 30 can tell you about the days, not so long ago, when we searched in vain to see reflections of ourselves in the media. Often we resorted to projecting our orientations onto characters like Alice of "The Brady Bunch," Dr. Smith from "Lost in Space" and Jane Hathaway on "The Beverly Hillbillies." I know when I was growing up I was sure that Bert and Ernie on Sesame Street just HAD to be lovers.

The very first nationally broadcast program about homosexuals was on public television in 1961. The one hour documentary about gay men featured sociologist Margaret Mead and activists from the Mattachine Society. In 1968 Phil Donahue presented a landmark program about lesbians. Barbara Gittings and Lilli Vincenz flew to Ohio from New York to appear on the show, then broadcast on Dayton's WLWD. By the mid 1970s, series such as "The Nancy Walker Show," "The Corner Bar," and "Soap" were featuring gay characters in recurring roles.

Here in Cincinnati it wasn't until the early 1980s that GLBT folks got their own air time. It came on the cable access show GCN, or Gay Cable Network, which aired mostly in the wee hours of the morning. Produced by volunteers, the show presented a mixed bag of gay life in the Queen City. Activists, including myself, went on to talk about their organizations. Hurricane Summers performed drag numbers. And who can forget the outrageous Tommy and his fabulous calendar of events. GCN (which later became "Out Front") went off the air in the early 1990s but sometimes comes back for special programs, like their award winning coverage of the last March on Washington.

Getting accurate portrayals of GLBT people on the air (and keeping them there) has been an uphill battle all the way. Many shows with gay themes have met opposition from religious fundamentalists, who wage letter writing campaigns and threaten boycotts of sponsors. So the next time you see a lesbian couple or a family with two dads on television, remember to write or call the network or station and tell them thanks!

Pride in Action

The Third Eye Knows

by Cynthia Jeffries

There are many things that have happened in my life that when looked back on, just seem to be totally amazing, and very much of an ego booster, especially when children are involved. This happened to me just a few months before I began living full time as my female self. This is the story.

As I walked down the aisle of my Kroger store, in my questionable male mode. I say this because I was wearing clothes that were all female but androgynous was the order of the day. Only I knew they were woman's clothes. Anyway, I passed a little boy and his mom. He was about 4 or 5 years old. He was fidgeting about and his mother was trying to control his behavior. He was not being bad. It is very easy for me to strike up a conversation when I am out and about in the community. As I looked for groceries, I also stood there waiting for an opening to strike up a conversation. As the little boy turned around I saw in the middle of his forehead, a drawing of a third eye. By then he had noticed me. I said in a surprised manner, "You've got an eye, right in the middle of your forehead," and I pointed to the spot on my forehead corresponding to his. He giggled a little and said, "That's not a drawing that's a tattoo." He then said, "I got another one too," and before anything else was said he pulls up his shirt and exposes a tattoo of a spider on his belly. I gasped and said "Its a spider!" He giggled again, and as we began to walk down the aisle, he explained that it was the kind of tattoo that you could wash off. I said, "Those are my favorite kind." He said, "Mine too." By this time, he had gotten a good look at me and said, "Hey, you got long girl hair." I said "Well, thank you." Then he said while looking at my ears (they are pierced twice on both sides), "You got girl earrings." I immediately said with enthusiasm, "Well thank you" and without skipping a beat he noticed all of the rings on my fingers and said, "Look at all those rings, hey you're a girl!!"

Delighted, I thanked him once again, and by this time we had reached the end of the aisle. His mother had made the turn to go down the next row. Her back was toward me when he said "Hey you're a girl!!" She bent down and with a whispery kind of voice, but loud enough for me to hear of course, said to him "No that's a man." Without her turning around I said, "Your son is more perceptive than YOU are mom" and I walked off to another aisle with a big smile on my face. Even though I thought I was looking like my guy self, it felt good that I had been seen as the woman I am by a little boy with a third eye.... He did make my day! Life IS Great!

Thought You Knew

Advice for the Confused and Clueless

from Ambrosia

Dear Ambrosia,

I've just started doing drag—a few benefit shows—and I want to do more. I think I'm prettier and dance better than the girls doing it now but I don't have a lot of outfits. Earlier today, I saw a fabulous outfit at The Deb Shop and was able to sneak it into a shopping bag I already had. At first I felt bad but I'm sure all those other girls do that. It was kind of a rush. I couldn't relax until I got home. I know that there's no way they get all of that stuff by just doing shows. I've counted the tips they make during their numbers and there's just no way. Is that how queens build up their pieces?

—New at this

Dear New At This,

Well, I hear two issues here, one with shop-lifting and the other with your quantity of outfits. First let me answer the shoplifting cue. I'm so glad you didn't take from another girl (that's even more wrong and dangerous than the police, trust me!). I think we all know that shoplifting is against the law and it's hardly worth going to jail for doing it. Through the years, there have been many queens that have shoplifted, scammed, thrown garbage cans through windows, robbed delivery trucks— you name it, they did it. The most notorious group of crooks was a "House" of queens that is pretty much out of the headlines now. From what I know, they are (for the most part) dead, missing, or drugged out. This "House" grew to be so notorious (from arrests and exposure) that they weren't welcome in any upscale clothier in the nearest four states. Their reputation preceded them to their audience and their scams backfired. People turned on them with disgust and they weren't welcome anywhere. The public judged them for their crimes and their wish to be working on stage (fueling it with stolen clothes) backfired. So, no, that's not allright. One of them was even so bold as to wear an outfit damaged by half of a blue ink tag! I didn't want to mention any names but shoot me another email or ask me in person and I'll gladly divulge....

As far as quantity of outfits, I'm sure if you have enough to do one show (all by yourself) you're in better shape than half of the girls in this city. I happen to have (at last count) nearly 80 different (and complete) outfits but you'll find that girls like me are a rarity. Most queens here have to borrow something for every show and almost everything for a pageant. I couldn't, with a clear conscience, tell you not to keep trying to work, when I see queens in everyone else's borrowed outfits, jeans, boy clothes, etc. I may not agree with the climate here but I think it is helpful for those just starting out (you girls that aren't just starting out and still borrowing, you know who you are, need to stop!). Darling, I wish you the best of luck and I hope that you are prettier and more talented than anyone else in this city. I like to be entertained too— you can't watch yourself!

Ambrosia,

My lover says she really wants to have kids. She talks about it all the time. I'd like to have children someday, but I'm concerned that she may not make the best mother. I love her and she is a great person, but she is a neat freak and a perfectionist. I just don't think she has the patience for children. She gets upset if our cat makes a mess. How can I tell her my concerns without hurting her feelings?

—Wife of the UnMom

Dear UnMom,

Sounds like your lover is a keeper and it sounds like to me that you're a slob. I think as gays and lesbians that there's one group we won't tolerate and that is SLOBS! We're more developed, gone beyond that (in all ways) and too smart to be messy. I personally think that's one reason we have straight people. The fact that she gets upset by the cat's mess shows that she's disciplined (possibly more than you). I believe that a child's role models should display and pass on discipline so that we don't have to "clean up" after them for their entire lives in everything that they do. Kids should be brought up in a tidy and disciplined environment (believe me they make for better sex later in life). I'd say keep your mouth shut and try to clean up YOUR act, sister!

Let Ambrosia hear from you. Write to her at ehutflie@cincyradio.com

(Coming next month Ambrosia tackles "Bi vs. Gay" and "Is it racist and wrong for whites to perform black music?")