

Greater Cincinnati GLBT News

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Don Your Gayest Apparel for Community Holiday Party on Dec. 14

A host of local GLBT and supportive organizations are coming together again this year to present a special holiday party for the entire Greater Cincinnati community. Bring all your best "Queer Holiday Cheer" to the bash on Saturday December 14th beginning at 8pm at The Dock (603 West Pete Rose Way).

Enjoy food, live entertainment by members of the Imperial Sovereign Queen City Court of the Buckeye Empire, and a cash bar. Admission is free, but guests are asked to bring a donation to the Caracole Children's Toy Drive. The party is open to all ages, but those 19 and younger must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Sponsors are PFLAG (Parents Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), Northern Kentucky Fairness Alliance, The Gay and Lesbian Community Center, and GLSEN (Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network). For more information, call The Center at 591-0200.

Women's Center Back in Operation as New Gift/Book Shop Opens

Crazy Ladies, a 22-year-old institution in Northside, has taken a new direction and has a new name, "The Greater Cincinnati Women's Resource Center."

The brainchild of Maureen Wood and several Northside women, the new center will direct its attention to making space for women and others: safe space, meeting space and rental space. And the traditional bookstore is back with a Crazy Ladies sign still in place. But it is now a gift and consignment shop and while books are used, gifts such as art pieces, cards and bumper stickers are new. And, most are the work of local artisans.

The new gift shop takes about a third of the space of the old bookstore. The remainder of the first floor space includes a lending library with about 300 books, a small historical lesbian and feminist library available for reading and for research by women's study students. In the back room, the Ohio Lesbian Archives has now relocated from the third floor of the building.

Wood says the entire first floor space, except the area of the gift shop, is available for meetings, parties and receptions. She adds that space is available on the second floor for other offices. There is also a second floor meeting room. Wood says that plans call for one room to be furnished as an office which can be rented for one day or for a week at a time. There are also computers which will be used by the resource center and later, may be available for people who want to learn basic computer skills.

Julia Wetterer, retired for 30 years and a volunteer at the new center, explains that individuals who want to use the lending library need only fill out a card. Inside each book is the price a borrower can purchase it for. Wetterer says that some of those who borrow books may purchase them and others may bring in books to add to the library. More than 100 of the books came from the estate of a local woman.

Prices of books in the gift shop range from 50 cents to \$5 and most focus on women and women's issues, says Phoebe Beiser, a member of the center's steering committee. She says that most of the books and gifts are on consignment. Wood points out that income from the sale of books and gifts and for rental of space will go toward retiring debt and paying for operation of the building. The current steering committee is now paying off the mortgage on the building.

Wood, who also owns the Maitri Center, one of Northside's historic buildings (the former Hoffner Masonic Lodge) and the Off the Avenue artist space which is home to Stonewall Cincinnati, recently quit her day job to focus all her energies on Northside and other Cincinnati communities with energy to "come back".

The Greater Cincinnati Women's Resource Center will be open when volunteers are available. The gift shop is open Tuesday through Friday from 5 to 8pm; Saturday from noon to 4pm and Sunday from 1 to 4pm.

The first floor meeting space rents for \$15 an hour, the second floor room, \$10. Rates for parties depend on the use.
(Editor's Note: The following story is made available by the Northsider/METRO Neighbors Publication.)

Celebrate "Christmas With The Flame!"

For the past several years, that legendary downtown bar personality Rhonda Flaming has hosted an all-star benefit show in December to raise funds for residents of Caracole House, the Cincinnati area organization which provides housing for people living with HIV/AIDS. This year's show, titled "Christmas With The Flame," will be on Sunday December 15th and will be held in the upstairs dance bar (Flux) at The Plum Street Pipeline (corner of Plum and Court Streets downtown).

Rhonda tells us that the show will feature lots of holiday favorites performed by herself, Jessica Diamond, Taylor Mayde, Roxie, Dee Ranged, Ambrosia and many more. Hannah Downs will be the hostess.

At the show on the 15th, there will be a special holiday raffle which will feature gift certificates from many local businesses. All monies raised from the event will go directly to residents at Caracole in the form of gift certificates given to them to buy presents for themselves this holiday. "The Flame" says she is hoping to raise at least \$1,000 with the raffle this year which would be used to buy a \$50 gift certificates to each Caracole resident.

So mark your calendars now and plan to come out for a fun and festive evening on December 15th with "Cincinnati's Hot Stuff" Rhonda Flaming and her glamorous friends. The show starts at 9pm. For more information, call The Pipeline at 241-5678 or go online to www.pipelinebar.com.

Be A Lavender Santa This Year!

'Tis the season for giving and this year two GLBT groups in Northside need your help to bring toys and gifts to needy children. The Unity House World Peace Center and Club Kapri Korn are again sponsoring their "Lavender Santa" program. Last year the groups raised over \$500 worth of toys in just two weeks. To find out where you can bring your donations of food and toys, please contact Jackie at 542-5244. If you would like to make a money donation to the program by check or credit card, please contact the Unity House World Peace Center at 681-7765, or you can send your check to: Unity House W.P.C., attn. Lavender Santa, 4165 Turrill Street, Cincinnati OH 45223.

Local Athletes Compete at Gay Games in Australia

A total of 13 athletes from the Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky area traveled to Sydney, Australia last month to compete in one of the largest GLBT sporting events in history. Gay Games VI, held from November 2nd to 9th, brought together thousands of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender athletes from 82 countries for a week of sports competitions and cultural events. The athletes from our area competed in soccer, tennis, volleyball and track.

Among the highlights of this Gay Games was the spectacular gold medal winning effort by the Americas Soccer Club team. Local players Harry Blanton, Darren Turner and Joe Smitherman played on the team which defeated New York City in the semi-final round and went on to beat the team from London in a heart-pounding, down to the wire, gold medal match. During the tournament, Smitherman played almost every minute in the eight games and Turner made a hat trick (three goals) in one game. The team was the only one at Gay Games to rank undefeated for the entire event. They won all their games and tied a game with Boston. In the final match up against London, played in grueling 97 degree heat, the two teams were tied 2-2 at the end of regulation play. They went on to play two ten minute overtimes until America's Club pulled ahead to win 3-1 in penalty kicks.

In other Gay Games action, Team Cincinnati, headed by Captain Ronnie Tuttle, won the silver medal in Division B Volleyball. They narrowly defeated the team from Hong Kong in a very exciting match before a crowd of over 5,000 spectators at Sydney's Olympic Park complex.

In tennis play, Dennis Menke of Cincinnati made it all the way to the "Sweet 16" in this world class competition.

Jason Knaley of Cincinnati ran the 5000 meter race and finished with a personal best time of just over 26 minutes. He had trained for two months for the race and even quit smoking in order to compete. In the true spirit of the Games, Jason was cheered on by the crowd and many of the other runners as he crossed the finish line.

Reflecting on his experiences in Sydney, Joe Smitherman says, "Some people think the Gay Games are 'less competitive' than other events because of the name or because the participants are gay. They need to realize that some of us that participate in the Gay Games can and do participate at the highest levels of competition in our respective sports." So all you GLBT athletics out there, start training now. The next Gay Games will be in Montreal in 2006!

Over 200 Attend Second GLBT Youth Summit

On Saturday November 16th, about 200 GLBT youth, young adults, and their supporters from the Greater Cincinnati area gathered for a day long conference that featured workshops, keynote speaker, a youth speak out and a pizza party and dance. The second GLBT Youth Summit was held at the campus of Northern Kentucky University in Highland Heights, KY and was sponsored by the Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network (GLSEN), Stonewall Cincinnati, PFLAG, Cincinnati Youth Group, and the alliance groups at Xavier, NKU and the University of Cincinnati.

One of the highlights of the summit was a workshop given by several local GLBT youth leaders about how they developed a gay/straight alliance in their school. Other workshops offered included sessions on coming out, bisexuality, legal issues, and GLBT spirituality. Nationally recognized poet and activist Alix Olson was the keynote speaker. Following her remarks, the youth were given an opportunity to participate in an informal "speak out."

According to Kathy Laufman, co-chair of GLSEN Cincinnati, all of the sponsoring organizations were very pleased with the turnout for this Youth Summit. Attendance was up about 25 percent from the first youth conference held last March at the University of Cincinnati.

Planning is already underway for the next GLBT Youth Summit. Because of the success of the first two summits, GLSEN and other area organizations have committed to making this an annual event. For more, visit www.cincyouthsummit.org.

Big Gay and Lesbian New Year's Party Coming to Downtown

Planet Freedom will present its giant annual Gay and Lesbian New Year's Eve bash on December 31st. This year's event will be centered in downtown Cincinnati and will offer a central party with drinks and dancing plus a free shuttle bus running throughout the night between most of the downtown GLBT nightspots.

For over ten years the group has been gathering friends together to ring in the new year in a safe and private atmosphere. This year's party will be at the LeBoxx Cafe (8th and Vine Streets) in downtown Cincinnati. Your hosts for the evening will be Michele, Kelly, Betsy, Kathy, Bill and Daniel. The festivities kick off at 9pm. DJ Chrissy G will be spinning your favorite dance music until 2am.

Tickets to the party are now available. They are \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door. With your ticket you will receive a special "New Year's Eve Wristband" which will get you not only admission to the party at LeBoxx Cafe but also special drink prices and no cover charge at Hamburger Mary's, Carol's on Main, The Pipeline, Spurs, and Shooters. There will be FREE transportation, on the half hour, to and from LeBoxx, Carol's on Main, Hamburger Mary's, Shooters, The Pipeline, Spurs and The Netherland Hilton Hotel.

Special overnight packages are available for guests of Planet Freedom at the Netherland Hilton Hotel on Fifth Street. Room rates start at \$79 by calling 421-9100 in advance. In order to get the special discount price you must mention Planet Freedom when you make your reservations.

The Planet Freedom New Year's Eve Party has been a very popular event with a large portion of the local lesbian community for many years. In the past, the party has been held at Millennium Hotel and the Kings Island Inn. For 2002, the group decided to bring it back downtown as a way of supporting the various local downtown GLBT businesses. Event coordinator Michelle says that she would really like to have a very diverse crowd this year with lots of both women and men as well as their supportive friends.

For more information on the Planet Freedom Party or to purchase your tickets in advance, please visit the website at www.planetfreedom.org or call 721-3713.

Christmas Party Puts the T in GLBT

Crossport, Cincinnati's social and support group for cross-dressers and transsexuals, will have its annual Christmas Party on Thursday night December 12th at 7:30pm. Everyone in the GLBT community is invited to join in the festivities at Washington Platform Restaurant (at Elm and Court Streets). There will be a dinner buffet, dancing, and an awards ceremony recognizing volunteers whose efforts have gone into making the group have a successful year. Tickets for the party are \$25 per person at the door. For more information, call Crossport at 919-4850 or visit them on the web at www.transgender.org. (click on Crossport in the list of transgender groups).

GLBT Coalition Planning Retreat

The Cincinnati GLBT Coalition is planning a retreat for representatives from all local GLBT and supportive organizations on Saturday January 18th from 9am to 3pm at the Clifton United Methodist Church (3416 Clifton Avenue).

Tom Jones, moderator of The Coalition meetings, says, "We would very much like to have interested individuals and organizational representatives come together to assess where we are as a GLBT community, where we would like to be, and how to get there."

According to Jones, the idea for this retreat grew out of discussions at a recent Coalition meeting where participants were looking for ways to identify the issues facing the GLBT community and how best for the member organizations to address them. The Coalition hopes this event will attract not only representatives from the groups typically thought of as GLBT, but also such other diverse groups as health agencies, bars and restaurants, supportive businesses, media, church representatives, sports groups, etc. Jones says, "It is our hope that by bringing together an 'across the board' look at our community, we can identify and address issues that impact us all in one way or another." Those planning to attend are asked to call The Community Center at 591-0200 or RSVP by email to tomjones2000@aol.com.

On World AIDS Day, Unveiling of "Celebration of Life" Tree Honors Those With HIV

Caracole, AIDS Volunteers of Cincinnati and One Human Family are creating a new holiday tradition in the Cincinnati area. On Sunday December 1st (World AIDS Day) the three organizations unveiled their "Celebration of Life" tree at Hamburger Mary's.

Throughout the month of December, ornaments from the three organizations can be purchased for \$5 each, and can be personalized to honor those living with HIV/AIDS, or to memorialize those we have lost to AIDS. The ornaments will adorn the "Celebration of Life" tree until New Year's Day, at which time the buyers may take them home.

All proceeds from the sale of the ornaments will go directly to benefit the prevention, education and client services provided by the AIDS Volunteers of Cincinnati, and to support Caracole which provides housing and other services for those living with HIV/AIDS. Monies will also benefit the new One Human Family organization as it begins to get up and running.

The "Celebration of Life" tree unveiling was just one of several events held in our area on December 1st to commemorate World AIDS Day. There was a program at the First Lutheran Church on Race Street and a prayer service at Christ Church Cathedral. In addition, a documentary produced by AIDS Volunteers of N. Kentucky which addresses the personal issues of AIDS from the perspectives of those affected was aired for the first time on Kentucky Cable Insight.

New Support Group for Straight Spouses

Women and men whose spouses have come out of the closet as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender now have a new source of support in our area. The Cincinnati Straight Spouse Network (SSN) will have its first two regular meetings on Thursdays December 19th and January 16th at 5:30pm at PF Changs Restaurant in Rookwood Commons in Norwood.

SSN is a supportive group, whose goal is to build bridges between the gay and straight communities, and to assist straight spouses in the healing process. Betty, a leader of the new group says, "We are working to make society more gay friendly so that gay people don't feel pressured by society to marry straight people." For more information of SSN, call 235-3109.

Community Center Adds New Women's Program

In November, The Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Cincinnati began another new weekly program. They are now presenting a new group for lesbian and bisexual women called WIG (Women's Interactive Gathering) on Wednesdays at 6pm. Rather than just the usual support and discussion group, WIG incorporates activities such as games and role playing into more dynamic conversations. The group is a safe space for women to gather and is completely confidential. For more information on WIG and the many other programs The Center offers, call 591-0200 or visit the group's website at www.glbtcencincinnati.com.

Rainbow Band to Play at Northside Tree Lighting

The Northside Community Council will have its official Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony on Sunday December 8th. The event takes place at Hoffner Park, site of last year's Gay Pride Music Festival and will begin at 6pm. Among the groups scheduled to perform at this festive event is The Queen City Rainbow Band, Cincinnati's own GLBT marching and concert group. For information on other upcoming Rainbow Band gigs, visit www.qcrb.org.

Men's Chorus Sings With Cincinnati Pops

The Cincinnati Men's Chorus will be performing with Eric Kunzel and the Cincinnati Pops in three spirited concerts on December 13th, 14th and 15th at Music Hall. "Happy Holidays from the Pops" will include seasonal favorites with featured guest tenor Kevin Anderson and narration by Nick Clooney. The Men's Chorus is just one of several ensembles to be featured in the program, including CCM's Musical Theatre Department from the University of Cincinnati, the Winton Woods High School Varsity Ensemble, and the Cincinnati Children's Choir. So don your mittens and scarves and plan to join the Pops and the Cincinnati Men's Chorus for a delightful evening that's sure to warm your heart. The concerts are Friday and Saturday at 8pm and Sunday at 2pm and 7pm. For ticket information, call 381-3300 or visit www.cincinnati-symphony.org.

In My Opinion

Flex Your Consumer Muscle During the Holidays

by Bruce Beisner, GLBT News editor

In the past thirty years of the gay liberation movement, for all the hard work many activists have done and all the giant pride marches and rallies we've had, our community must admit that we have not achieved all our goals. There are no federal laws protecting our civil rights and we still can't legally marry one another anywhere in the country (accept in Vermont, sort of). But before you get too down in the dumps about all this, remember this one important fact. We have most definitely achieved one goal. The GLBT community is at last a sought after marketing demographic!

Yes, the "love that dare not speak its name" is now out of the closet and into the American marketplace. An increasing number of major corporations and even small local businesses have discovered that our money is as green as everyone else's. And that GLBT employees are valuable workers. While many of our families and churches continues to shun us, more and more of Corporate America seems to be coming around.

I bring this up this month because it is the holidays. Whatever your faith, you will more than likely be buying someone somewhere a gift in the next few weeks. So right now is a good time to think about the power your money has and how important the decisions you make about how to spend it really are.

Several months ago, our GLBT financial contributor Vicki Marsh wrote a column about socially responsible investing. She talked about the challenges we face when incorporating our moral and ethical beliefs into our money management. Unlike investing, with its concerns about profitability and long-range planning, how we *spend* our money can be a much simpler prospect.

When going shopping for your holiday gifts, it is important to think about who you are giving your money to. Often a simple decision between this store and the one right across the street can make a difference. For example, do you want to spend your hard-earned gay dollars at Target, a national chain who respects and values their lesbian and gay employees by having nondiscrimination policies and providing domestic partner benefits? Or do you want to shop at Wal Mart, which has none of these policies and who regularly makes large contributions to conservative politicians who work to marginalize our community? When you fill up your car with gas tomorrow, will you visit Exxon who recently removed GLBT protections from its corporate policies or will you go to Shell or Chevron, both of whom have much better records on GLBT issues?

Knowing which store supports GLBT people and which does not is easier to find out than you may think. While it's true that companies like Walgreens and Nike don't often loudly advertise their GLBT inclusive policies, there are some very accessible ways that you can find out this type of information. One good source is the Human Rights Campaign. Each year HRC compiles a complete list of national companies and how they rate in terms of their support for GLBT people and their issues. Each is rated from 0 to 100. You can see the complete list on their website at www.hrc.org. For a more local perspective, check out the Queen City Careers Association's "Listings" book. It features all kinds of advertisers from the Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky area and is available online at www.qccinc.com.

Another gift giving idea that I have found very satisfying is contributing to a charity. Instead of getting socks or shirts for Christmas, my husband regularly asks that my family make a contribution to a charity in his name. For my nephew's first birthday, his uncles made a large donation to AIDS Volunteers of Cincinnati in his name. These types of gifts are always important to non-profit groups but can have even more meaning during the holidays.

Out of the Past

Remembering A Gay Pioneer

by Bruce Beisner

Nightlife has always been a very important part of gay and lesbian life. Bars, nightclubs and discos have been the essential sites where so many of us can say we first "came out," made our first lesbian and gay friends, and even met our first and/or lifelong loves. Until the mid to late 1970's, other than bars, there were very few places in Cincinnati that GLBT people could be open with one another.

Recently I was reading a brief history of gay life in Cincinnati written by Shane Que Hee in 1986. In it, he talks about some of the many local watering holes that became gay gathering places over the past century.

During the 1920's, a popular gay hangout was the Green Door which was located on the second floor of the building on sixth street that is now home to The Maisonette. According to Shane, tokens could be purchased to buy drinks or boys at the Green Door. In 1936, a bar called the Greenwich Tavern opened.

Such clubs as The Keyhole at the Gibson Hotel (which is now the site of the Westin on Fountain Square), the Horseshoe Bar (at 4th and Walnut Streets) and Club Melody (at 1004 West McMillan) were frequented by gays during the 1940's.

While many gay men were cruising Eden Park and Mt. Storm Park during the 1950's, across the river in Covington, Jacobo's (or the Downstairs Club as it was called) drew a good gay crowd. The Downstairs Club lasted well into the late 1960's when it was frequented by both anti-war and gay rights activists.

The ABC Club, a 1950's bar on the west side of downtown, could be decidedly gay on some occasions. Almost all establishments in Cincinnati in the 1950s were segregated and the ABC Club was predominately a black bar. But they often had drag shows and other performances by gay entertainers. Keith's on Vine, which later became a straight club, was frequented by many gay men for a time during the 1950's because the manager was gay.

In 1971, the bar that would go on to become the Queen City's first large gay dance club opened. The Badlands originally was an ice cream and alcohol bar. For the first year or so, all ages were served and many teenagers could be found in the place. Located along Plum Street between Fourth and Fifth Streets, Badlands became the focal point for many in the disco and gay liberation days of the 1970s. Its giant metal dancefloor and cruisy action in the side alley are still legendary.

In 1975, several smaller bars (The Hanger, The Manger and The Barn) merged to become The Alleycat. Located in the alley that is now the "Backstage" area near the Aronoff Center, this club later became known as Xanadu, then in the 1980's The Metro. Also during the late 1970's PJ's opened on Calhoun Street in Clifton. In 1979 it became Mon Petit and then Just Friends in 1982.

Many of today's GLBT nightspots first opened in the mid 1980's. The Dock and Spurs opened in 1985. Shooters (originally called WG Magic) opened around the same time. Currently the oldest bar in operation in the city is The Golden Lions, located on Ludlow Avenue in Clifton.

Pride Parade Update

by Ken Colegrove

Thanks to the success of 2002, it has been decided that once again the Pride Celebration will be a two-day event, to be held on the weekend of June 7th and 8th. The celebration will consist of a festival beginning on Saturday in Hoffner Park featuring activities and musical entertainment, as well as informational and vendor booths. The 4th Annual Gay Pride Parade will be Sunday (June 8th) followed by the continuation of the festival. In order to maximize the impact of the event, it was decided that the Pride Committee will attempt to work even more closely with other GLBT organizations to coordinate a cohesive Pride Calendar for the local community.

We are pleased to announce that Jeff Young and Bill Abney have volunteered to co-organize the 2003 Parade. Debra Randall will co-organize the festival with Ken Colegrove. Cynthia Jeffries continues in the role of liaison to the Coalition, as well as assisting with media relations. Once again, Dr. John Maddux and Michael Chanak will coordinate the rally prior to Sunday's parade. Kerry Wickstrom will continue to maintain the website. Ken Colegrove will continue for the third consecutive year as treasurer, and overall Pride chair. Other volunteers of the group include John Nelson, Mary Jennings, Jenelle Rose, Jason Dul, and John Sparaco. If you have not yet subscribed to our online newsletter, you may do so by emailing cincypride-subscribe@yahoo.com. You will be kept informed of all the latest Pride news.

A special thanks goes out to Kerry Wickstrom, the Committee's resident artist and webmaster! She has completely redesigned our website with great new graphics, and an easy to navigate menu. Be sure to check it out at www.cincypride.com. New content is being added almost daily, and soon you will be able to apply for festival booths and parade floats online from the website. One of the new features of the website will be a complete Pride Calendar to help promote events of other local GLBT organizations. If your organization has already set a date for its June Pride event, please send us information about it for posting on our site.

Cincinnati Pride Committee's last monthly meeting was held at Crazy Ladies on Sunday November 10th. Here are some of highlights from the meeting. The theme for the 2003 Cincinnati Pride Parade will be "The Gayest Show On Earth!" All parade participants will be encouraged to embrace this circus theme, and there will be awards for the best parade floats based on this theme. And for the first time this year, the Committee is planning to allow trailer style floats in the parade. More details of this will be available soon when the applications become available. Also, this year the Cincinnati Pride Committee will be actively soliciting sponsorships from local, regional, and national businesses and corporations. Sponsorship packets are now being mailed. If you would like to receive a packet for your business, be sure to contact us.

Our Faith Too!

Celebrating the Spirituality of GLBT People

"Coming Out As a Sacrament" at Mt. Auburn Presbyterian

The members of Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church invite you to join them on Sunday December 15th for a special worship service at 11am. Chris Glaser, a nationally known lecturer, activist and the author of [Coming Out As A Sacrament](#), will be the guest preacher. In addition, Chris will be the featured speaker at Mt. Auburn's Adult Forum class at 10am that morning.

Mr. Glaser received his M.Div. from Yale University Divinity School in 1977. While at Yale, Chris founded what became the Gay/Lesbian/Straight Coalition at the Yale Divinity School. In 1976, he founded the Gay and Lesbian Peer Counseling Service at the University of Pennsylvania and served for ten years as the director of the Lazarus Project, a ministry of reconciliation between the Presbyterian Church USA and the lesbian and gay community of Los Angeles.

He is the author of [Coming Out to God; The Word is Out: Daily Reflections on the Bible for Lesbians and Gay Men](#); and [Prayers for Lesbians and Gay Men, Their Families and Friends](#). His writings on sexuality and spirituality have appeared in publications such as Newsweek, The Los Angeles Times, The Advocate, Frontiers, The Christian Century and a range of church periodicals, including Church and Society and Presbyterians Today. He is also the editor of Open Hands, a US/Canadian ecumenical quarterly magazine for congregations in seven denominations that are welcoming of GLBT people.

Traveling widely as a speaker and retreat leader, he has spoken at hundreds of college and seminary campuses, churches, and retreat centers to a wide variety of religious and secular groups.

Following the 11am morning service, Mr. Glaser will lead a special meeting of Mt. Auburn's GLBT Spirituality Group at 12:45pm. He will speak at that gathering about "Cultivating the Inner Voice of Love."

Chris Glaser's visit to Cincinnati comes at a crucial time for Mt. Auburn Church. Both its minister and lay leadership are currently under investigation by the local Presbytery over their policies offering full inclusion in church life to GLBT people. If found in non-compliance to denominational doctrine forbidding the ordination of gays, the church's minister, Rev. Steve Van Kuiken, could be defrocked and the congregation dissolved.

For directions to Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church and more information on Chris Glaser's visit, call 513-281-5945 or visit www.mtauburnpresby.org.

Local Groups Celebrate The Holidays

The New Spirit Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) will have its annual Christmas Cantata worship service on Sunday December 22nd. Rev. Bonnie Daniel says the service will include performances by the gospel group "God's Earth With Love" and a visit from Santa Claus who will have lots of presents for all the children. Following the service everyone is invited to stay for a big holiday feast of turkey, ham, fried chicken and all the fixins. The event is entirely free and begins at 7pm at Grace Episcopal Church, 5501 Hamilton Avenue in College Hill. For New Year's Eve, MCC will offer a "Nightwatch" worship service for those who wish to bring some spirituality into the evening. Join them at 10:30pm on December 31st.

Celebrate the Winter Solstice with EarthSpirit on Friday night December 20th. This local organization for Unitarian Universalist Pagans, will hold their annual Solstice Bonfire and "Council of All Species" in the back parking lot of St. John's Unitarian Church (320 Resor Avenue in Clifton) beginning at 7:30pm. You are encouraged to come dressed as your favorite animal and enjoy a night of dancing, drumming and also hot chocolate and cider. For details, call 961-1938 or visit www.stjohnsuu.org/earthspirit.

On Saturday December 21st, Dignity Cincinnati will have their regular mass at 7:30pm followed by a holiday social outing. The group for GLBT Roman Catholics meets at the Community Friends Quaker Meeting House in Avondale.

Integrity of Greater Cincinnati celebrated the holidays on Thursday December 6th with their St. Nick's party. You are invited to join them for the community dinners each Wednesday in December at 5:30pm at Church of Our Saviour. An Advent service follows each dinner. On January 9th, Integrity will have their annual "Celebration of St. Aelred" (Patron Saint of Integrity). The program starts at 7pm at COS.

Family Matters

Thoughts from the PFLAG National Convention

by Marti Kwiatkowski, PFLAG Cincinnati President

As the new kid on the block and walking into the convention center hotel to participate in “PFLAG: Family Voices For Equality”, I felt overwhelmed. It wasn’t long, however, until I began to feel at home and was looking forward to this new experience.

The eagerly awaited three-day conference was a special one. A place that provided a forum for all to connect, exchange, explore and learn from one another. The conference format featured over 50 presentations, panel discussions, plenary sessions and workshops by more than 100 experts, interesting and varied, specializing in many issues confronting the GLBT community. A special emphasis on safe schools, hate crimes and how to strengthen chapters gave me a lot of food for thought and how to incorporate new ideas and information into our chapter.

I must admit that after three days, I was both exhilarated and exhausted. So much information in so little time!! Despite my tiredness, one thing stood out for me. As I shared Cincinnati Chapter information and activities with other chapter presidents, I realized what a wonderful chapter we have. Our outreach, programs, support, education and advocacy are something to be proud of. My heart swelled to see how impressed other chapter presidents were to hear about our new video, how we received our grant support and about our successful scholarship program.

We have a great deal to be proud of PFLAG Cincinnati and I must confess I bragged about our chapter whenever I could. All of us need to give ourselves a pat on the back for our success. It encourages all of us to be hopeful of Cincinnati’s future as a GLBT friendly place to live.

Please come to see us on the second Tuesday of every month at Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church (located at 103 William Howard Taft Road) at 7:30pm and help us as we work to promote the health and well-being of GLBT persons, their families and friends through support, education and advocacy. All meetings include small group discussion. Also, mark your calendars for our annual banquet to be held on March 1st. This PFLAG chapter feels like family. I hope you will join us.

Financial Advisor

Retirement Strategies for Every Stage of Life

by Vicki L. Marsh, American Express Financial Advisors

The actions you can take to rebuild your portfolio in a down market depend largely on how close you are to retiring. While young investors have more time, those closer to and in retirement need a more immediate plan to regain their savings. Here are some retirement planning strategies for every stage of life:

Young Investors

Young investors in their 30s and 40s have time on their side. They have more time to save and more time to recover any losses they may incur. But reaching their retirement goal depends on how quickly they get started and on how much they save in the years to come. For young investors:

Develop a long-term financial plan. Having more time to save and being less affected by daily market turbulence are benefits of being a young investor. To best take advantage of your early years, meet with a financial advisor soon to develop a long-term financial plan.

Take advantage of savings vehicles. Building your nest egg is top priority. If your company has a 401(k) program, contribute as much as you can. The 2001 tax law allows employees to put as much as \$11,000 in their 401(k), 403(b) and 457 plans, up from \$10,500 in 2001. In addition, consider opening an individual retirement account. Contribution limits to both traditional and Roth IRAs have increased from \$2,000 to \$3,000 per year in 2002.

Reassess your needs. If you’ve already charted your financial goals, you may need to reassess them as a result of market losses. Retirement tools, such as the one available at www.americanexpress.com, can help you recalculate figures to determine whether any adjustments are necessary.

Pre-Retired Investors

For individuals in their 50s and nearing retirement, it is important to strike a balance between investing aggressively to make up for possible recent losses and for longer life expectancies and more years in retirement and preserve your accumulated wealth conservatively. However, because of ongoing market losses, this balancing act has become more and more challenging. For pre-retired investors:

Don’t ignore inflation. Remember how much more \$20 used to buy? By the time you retire, it will be worth even less. Inflation is the rate at which your money depreciates. To outpace inflation, be sure your portfolio contains the appropriate allocation of higher-yielding investments such as stocks, and mutual funds.

If accounts are down, catch up. The “catch-up” provisions in the 2001 tax law can help pre-retirees save more money for retirement. Employees 50 and older can save an additional \$1,000 in their 401(k), 403(b) or 457 plans in 2002, on top of the new \$11,000 contribution limit for all workers. That catch-up amount increases by \$1,000 per year until 2006, when these employees can stash \$20,000 in their workplace plan. Older workers can and should also make much more generous IRA investments. The maximum 2002 contribution to all types of IRAs went from \$2,000 to \$3,000 (An additional catch-up contribution of \$500 is allowed for those age 50 and older).

Hold assets in many segments of the market. Investors approaching retirement should have an investment mix that will give them the ability to keep the purchasing power of their assets ahead of inflation while providing protection from future market setbacks. Review your portfolio and make sure it is properly balanced.

Retired Investors

As a retiree, the most common retirement concern is outliving your money. With today’s bear market, the money you were counting on to compound and sustain your standard of living may have been reduced. Many retired individuals are now faced with smaller returns and finding ways to stretch their cash flow. For retired investors:

Consider tax implications of withdrawals. To minimize your taxes, take most of your money from tax-free sources. Taking money from Roth IRAs, U.S. treasuries and sometimes life insurance may be tax-free. However, withdrawals from pensions and retirement plans are taxed at the ordinary income rate, which is typically 30%. Earnings on withdrawals from nonqualified assets, such as mutual funds and stocks, are taxed at a capital gains rate, which is usually 20%.

Invest for income vs. appreciation. For retirees, investing in something stable that will produce a steady income stream such as a corporate mutual fund, can be a good strategy. However, if the investment is designed for appreciation (such as stock), be mindful of the liquidation time in case you need to access that money relatively quickly.

No matter what stage of life you’re in, having adequate money for retirement requires careful planning and regular adjustments. A qualified financial advisor can offer advice on retirement strategies and help chart the path to meet your goals.

GLBT Health

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

by Bob Donovan, MD

If you were to mention Sexually Transmitted Diseases or STDs, to a gay man you might get the idea that HIV or AIDS is the only one he has to worry about. If you mentioned STDs to a lesbian, you might get the idea that she doesn't think she's at any particular risk. Unfortunately, both are incorrect, and a recent report emphasizes this: syphilis is increasing among gay men. Gay men and lesbians are susceptible to *every* STD that any heterosexual is. Perhaps some are of less risk, but still the risk is present. STDs can be transmitted by vaginal intercourse, anal intercourse, other anal contact, oral sex or even just skin-to-skin contact. An important piece to this is that having certain STDs makes your body more vulnerable to HIV penetration and infection.

How do you know if you or your partner has an STD? The answer to that will show you why STDs are such a problem. Often there may be **no** symptoms if you or a partner has an STD, more especially in men, but also in women. If you think that because your partner is clean looking and doesn't have a penile or vaginal discharge that they can't have an STD, you're quite wrong. The reason that STDs get around so much is that often, perhaps after some symptoms early on, they become quiet and don't produce significant problems, at least for a while. So, the only way to be sure is not to have sex. The second way is to use condoms, although that also doesn't avoid all STDs. Third is to have a monogamous partner who you know has been checked out for STDs, although that, too, is not 100%, as no test for an STD is perfect in detecting it.

There are a dozen typical STDs in the US. Here are some of the most common:

Gonorrhea or "the clap" is quite common. The most common symptom is a penile or vaginal discharge, but as I mentioned, there may be no symptoms at all. 2.2% of sexually active male military personnel have gonorrhea without symptoms. 20% of anal gonorrhea in homo-sexual men has no symptoms. Women may have a discharge, pain with urination, bleeding between periods. Men may have a thick yellow discharge or burning with urination. Either sex may have a sore throat from oral infection or an anal discharge and pain from anal infection. Gonorrhea can also cause more serious problems, like infection in the pelvic organs and in the joints. Antibiotics can easily cure gonorrhea.

Herpes is an infection caused by a virus. The first symptom is often tingling in the genital area, then a painful blister develops, followed by a very painful open ulcer. The first outbreak is usually most severe. Antibiotics are available for herpes, but they only help to relieve the symptoms of an outbreak—they do not cure the disease. Herpes is most easily transmitted during an outbreak, but it can even be transmitted between them when there are no visible signs. Condoms can help prevent spread, but if the infected area is outside the covering of the condom, it obviously won't help.

Pubic lice or "crabs" is an STD that can be spread by simple skin-to-skin contact and condom won't prevent it. These are insects that need the pubic hair to deposit their eggs or nits. The usual symptom is itching in the pubic area. Pubic lice are different from head lice, so they cannot be spread to other hairy areas. Other than being a nuisance, they don't usually cause other problems and can be treated by topical medications.

Syphilis sounds like a blast from the past that hardly exists any more, but even as recent as five years ago there was a small outbreak of it in Cincinnati and as I mentioned, it's on the rise in gay men throughout the US. The first sign of syphilis is a red, painless sore called a chancre. It can be on the penis, vagina, tongue or throat. There may be swollen glands nearby and it may be accompanied by fever, headache or joint pain. These symptoms will usually go away promptly without treatment, but the syphilis germ is hiding inside, and over the course of the years can wreak havoc in the body. A rash on the palms and the soles may develop months later, signaling new activity, but this will also often go away on its own. Then, even decades later, the bug will re-emerge and can cause brain damage and problems in the aorta, the major blood vessel coming from the heart. Antibiotics can cure syphilis, most easily if caught early.

On The Nightbeat

Arts, Entertainment and Nightlife

by Miss C.C. Bloom

A big congratulations to "Trojan" who was crowned the 2002 Mr. Old Off The Street on November 1st at the Old Street Saloon up in Monroe. This fun pageant was a fundraiser for The Court and featured seven contestants and celebrity judges Empress XII Ginger Snap, Miss Montana McDaniel and Imperial Crown Princess Cody Ann. Visit the bar's website at www.oldstreetbar.com to view some great pictures of the night. In December at Old Street catch the Booshie Rayburn Show on Fridays and Ashley West every Saturday night. On the 28th, Ashley welcomes guest Coco Vega.

Have you heard Annette Shepard? Her sultry voice and lush music is perfect to chill out to. Her new CD "Perils of Iva" is terrific. You can hear Annette live on Sunday nights down at Rosie's Tavern in Covington and she will also be appearing at Jacob's in Northside on December 19th. Speaking of Jacob's, if you haven't been down for the "Bear Hug Happy Hour" on Thursdays from 6 to 10pm, check it out. Louis and Thalmadge will show you some sweet lovin' bear style.

The fun continues down in Newport at the new Woolly's on Monmouth. This great new neighborhood spot had its grand opening in November. On Thanksgiving weekend they hosted a big show featuring our good friend Miss Candy Apples, all the way from New York City! If you haven't been by yet, be sure to check out Woolly's soon. I can guarantee you'll want to come back again and again.

The Pipeline will be heating up your holidays with hot male go go boys on Friday nights in December. Their "All Male Fridays" are a good time as well as the gay movie night on Sundays at 10pm. On December 15th, the infamous Rhonda Flaming will host her "Christmas With The Flame" show at The Pipe. The raffle and tips from the show go to benefit Caracole House. I'd like to also send my very best wishes to the wonderfully talented Dee Ranged, your current reigning Miss Pipeline. She will be traveling to compete in the Miss Ohio pageant this month. You go girl!

Good dance music makes the party as far as I'm concerned. And The Dock delivers. On Wednesdays check out their "Club DC" with DJ Pat playing hip hop and r&b hits. The weekends bring DJ Mark and afterhours 'til 4am. Last month at The Dock, LaToya Bacall was crowned the new Miss Northern Kentucky. On Sunday December 8th, look for Dee Range's "Diva's Live Part II" and on Sunday December 15th find out what's cooking at "Darlene's Diner."

Sunday mornings are a the time to sleep in and then treat yourself to a good meal. The brunch down at Hamburger Mary's is simply the best! All their menu items are made to your order. On November 24th, Dan Savage, that cute little sex advice columnist on www.gay.com was at Mary's for a book signing and a little QandA about TandA from the audience.

Have you made plans for New Year's Eve yet? I'm still gathering info for the big night, so be sure to check out the Nightlife section of the paper's website at www.greatercincinnatiagbt-news.com for all the latest details on the parties and bar events around town. Oh, and remember, designated driver's are a real turn on!

Thought You Knew!

*Advice for the Confused and Clueless
from Ambrosia*

Hey Ambrosia,

Recently my best friend and I took a road trip up to Indianapolis to see an old friend from college. He was competing in a big drag pageant up there. It was a lot of fun until we got to the crowning. I was so certain that he was going to win. His evening gown was superior. His talent flawless. And he looked beautiful all night. Well he didn't and I was really upset. My buddy told me that I shouldn't take a drag pageant that seriously. He said, "These things are always fixed anyway." Is that true? Is it all a fraud? And if so, why do so many queens participate in such a sham?

–Big Drag Fan

Hey Big Fan,

First of all, your drag queen friend is very lucky to have such a loyal and concerned friend. I hope she treats you as well as you seem to be treating her –I say this because I know how queens can be... As far as it all being a fraud? Well, I hate to tell you this but all of those beau-tiful young ladies in those pageant aren't exactly ladies! They're men! Now, are those contests fixed? Well to me fixed is such an ugly word. I prefer to think of as "liked by the judges" or possibly "what those judges are looking for." For example, several months ago, I participated in cast tryouts at the Dock. Even as a former Miss Dock, I lost my tryout. I didn't do anything unusual or avant garde (this is Cincinnati!). I know for a fact (I really do) that those cast try-outs were fair and were NOT fixed –the judges assured me. So, I think that at that time, I simply wasn't what the judges were looking for (beauty has a tendency to make people nervous!) Back to your letter, perhaps this is what happened to your drag friend or possibly you have a favored eye for your friend –you know, maybe you're not looking for or at the right things. As far as queens participating in a sham– once again, they are men dressed as women– don't know how much more of a sham it can get than that!

Dear Ambrosia,

I don't know what to do. I am really in a crisis! It's been many years since I came out of the closet and I thought I knew who I was. Over the last year or so it seems that the more I sleep with guys, the more I don't like it. Every time I meet a guy and we go home together, it seems like all they want to do is get it over with and get out (if you know what I mean). I don't know what the problem is. I am sexually attracted to guys but the actual sex act is something I'm finding I just don't like any more. Am I really a closeted hetero? Should I check out Hooters instead of heading down to Spurs?

–Confused in Clifton

Dear CC,

Everybody knows that you can change a straight man but never a gay man! Do gay men secretly go to parks to sleep with women? How many times does a gay man sleep with a woman and then just get too embarrassed to tell his friends? I think you're getting my point. I suppose we could kick ideas around about that. I know it has happened –but there always will be people who will lie just to get attention.

For the sex issue, you just aren't getting the right kind of sex. Maybe your sex is too mainstream. You might do some investigating into bondage, water sports, or role playing. You also might pay for sex several times with different kinds of people to pick up some new tricks –so to speak. Maybe sex in public places would light your fire. I think a trip to a bath-house might be what you need, lots of variety for one low cost, under one sin-filled roof!

Definitely, your choices in partners need to change. Sounds like you need some excitement. There's nothing wrong with that – unless you want it to be. Good luck and let me know how things are going.

Gentle readers– I apologize that my "Holly-wood Diet Tips" have been so long in coming. I've had several letters getting dusty on the shelves waiting for publication (just kidding about the dust– MY house is too tidy to get dusty!) With the Holiday Season approaching, my "Hollywood Diet" will get a workout - you know we've all got to "sparkle and shine" for the holidays. I hope each and every one of you have the Happiest of New Years!