



## The PFLAG Link

MIDLAND—BAY CITY—SAGINAW CHAPTER  
P.O. BOX 834, BAY CITY, MI 48707  
• 989.941.1458 •

<http://www.pflag-mbs.org>

January 2008

### This Month: One Plus One Makes... Thirty

*Bay City Central students talk to PFLAG about causes they care about*  
“Today’s teenagers, homosexual or not, need a group in which they belong. They need friends and a support system to help them surpass their struggles.” A quote from a letter written to the Bay City Times on December 23 responding to opposition to a Gay-Straight Alliance forming at Bay City Central High School. Social activism has come alive, thanks to **Kaitlyn Skrzypczak** and **Glenn Madigan**, both 16, who attracted no fewer than thirty other students to join them in their efforts to promote recycling and clean up public areas of Bay City. The two decided to start their Green Club after viewing *An Inconvenient Truth* in their advanced placement history class. Both are members of the school’s Gay-Straight Alliance as well. They and their advisor, history teacher **Craig Windt**, will appear at this month’s PFLAG meeting to share their point of view and talk about their experiences at the center of controversy regarding the school’s Gay-Straight Alliance. In a letter to the Times, the two declared, “The students involved with GSA throughout the nation have done nothing wrong. The members of Central's chapter have followed every rule and procedure to attain the right of having this organization. All that we are attempting to do is create awareness for our peers on the discrimination and hate crimes that have been targeted towards the gay community.”

#### This Month’s Meeting:

Sunday, Jan. 27, 2 p.m.  
Unitarian/Universalist Fellowship,  
6220 Jefferson at Wackerly, Midland  
Speakers: Bay City High School Students  
**Kaitlyn Skrzypczak & Glenn Madigan**

#### Refreshments:

January: **Denise Malosh**  
February: **Jim & Linda Doane**  
March: **Ed Hutchison**  
April: **Ruth Baker**  
May: Open  
June: **Pat Buerkel**

#### Calendar:

Next Meeting: Sunday, February 24  
Creating Change: National Gay & Lesbian  
TaskForce’s annual conference, Detroit,  
Feb. 6-10  
ACLU Metro-Detroit Branch Civil  
Liberties Conference: January 26 Arab  
American National Museum, 13624  
Michigan Ave., Dearborn, from 12 noon  
to 5:30 p.m.

To make comments regarding  
*The PFLAG Link*,  
contact **Brian Baker** at (989) 772-5393 or  
[lineweaver1080@charter.net](mailto:lineweaver1080@charter.net)

### Gather, Talk and Make it Happen

*Create Change by gathering in Detroit February 6-10*

The **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force** announces a powerhouse lineup of keynote speakers at its National Conference on LGBT Equality: **Creating Change**, Feb. 6–10 in Detroit, Mich. Two thousand lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights advocates will converge on the Motor City just one day after Super Tuesday, to strategize and organize for the critical year ahead. Also, this year the **Family Equality Council**, <http://www.familyequality.org>, is sponsoring the first-ever family-focused full-day training institute, "Families to the Fore," aimed at making family issues a top priority for LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ activists alike. On opening night, Feb. 7, **Julian Bond**, NAACP chairman and civil rights leader, will address the conference. The next day, Task Force Executive Director **Matt Foreman** will give the annual “State of the Movement” address. On Feb. 9, Episcopal Bishop **V. Gene Robinson** will share his unique perspective on faith, equality and social change, and the mother-daughter musical team of **Bernice Johnson Reagon** and **Toshi Reagon** will perform at the closing plenary on Feb. 10. The plenaries will be emceed by comic and social commentator **Kate Clinton**. To learn more about Creating Change and register today, visit [www.creatingchange.org](http://www.creatingchange.org).

### ACLU Metro-Detroit Branch to Kick Off Civil Liberties Conference January 26

*Concern over civil liberties prompts diverse gathering*

With new revelations about wiretapping, Internet spying, torture cover-ups, and library censorship emerging almost daily, the Metro Detroit Branch of the **ACLU of Michigan** will hold a community wide conference and mobilization to defend civil liberties Saturday, January 26 in Dearborn.

(ACLU Conference, cont.) The event will feature dialogues with public officials and civil-liberties advocates and will develop and strengthen strategies for protecting the rights of all Americans. Congressman **John Conyers**, chair of the House Judiciary Committee, will update efforts to preserve civil liberties at the federal level; **Gilda Jacobs**, Michigan State Senator, will report on issues at the state level; and State Representative **Steve Tobocman** will report on local concerns. Other speakers and panelists will include **Heaster Wheeler**, executive director of the Detroit NAACP; **William Goodman**, former national director of the Center for Constitutional Rights who has traveled to the U.S. prison in Guantanamo, Cuba, and others. The “Reclaiming Our Rights” conference will be held at the Arab American National Museum, 13624 Michigan Ave., Dearborn, from 12 noon to 5:30 p.m., followed by a social reception. A registration fee of \$15 (or sponsorship fee of \$25) includes lunch and the post-conference reception. Registration is available on the web at [www.aclumich.org](http://www.aclumich.org). For more information, contact **David Elsil**, ACLU Metro Detroit, 313.882.2032

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## MRSA spread by MSM? Fear vs Facts: PR FUBAR at UC-SW

*Where drug-resistant bacteria is concerned, acronyms are a cause for acrimony*

What started as a press release from the University of California at San Francisco warning of increased rates of a drug-resistant strain of staphylococcus (Methicillin-Resistance Staphylococcus Aureus) sparked a scare in the international press. After researchers announced that that sexually-active gay men were a high-risk group, the **Concerned Women for America** spokesman **Matt Barber** attempted to distort the situation into a threat that would, supposedly, easily reach into the general population. The University researchers soon attempted to clarify their earlier statements. According to **Jesse McKinley**, writing in the New York Times, on Friday, the University issued an apology, saying the release had “contained some information that could be interpreted as misleading.”

The strains of MRSA described in the recent *Annals of Internal Medicine* have mostly been identified in certain groups of men who have sex with men (MSM), but have also been found in some persons who are not MSM. It is important to note that the groups of MSM in which these isolates have been described are not representative of all MSM, so conclusions can not be drawn about the prevalence of these strains among all MSM. The groups studied in this report may share other characteristics or behaviors that facilitate spread of MRSA, such as frequent skin-to-skin contact.

The controversy prompted involvement from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which has done extensive and continuing study of invasive MRSA in 9 US states, and whose statements indicate that these strains are rare. According to the CDC, MRSA is typically transmitted through skin-to-skin contact, which occurs during a variety of activities, including sex. There is no evidence at this time to suggest that it is a sexually-transmitted infection in the classical sense.

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## Fixing Federal Mistakes

*Lieberman, etc. introduce Federal benefits for domestic partners, reform exclusions of HIV-positive foreigners*

Gay and lesbian relationships of federal employees would be treated similarly to marriage under legislation introduced on Dec. 19 by Senators **Joe Lieberman** (I-Conn.) and **Gordon Smith** (R-Oregon) and 19 cosponsors. The bill is called the Domestic Partner Benefits and Obligations Act of 2007. “Rights and benefits must be afforded to all employees equally,” said Smith. “This bill corrects the current inequity.” The legislation allows same-sex domestic partners to take advantage of health, retirement, and other benefits associated with federal employment. It also extends restrictions such as anti-nepotism and financial disclosure rules, which now apply only to legal spouses. A companion bill was introduced in the House under the lead sponsorship of Democrats **Tammy Baldwin** (D-Wisc.) and **Henry Waxman** (D-Calif.), and Republicans **Tom Davis** (R-Virg.) and **Chris Shays** (R-Conn.). It has 35 additional cosponsors. Similar legislation previously has been introduced in both chambers. Additionally, foreign people who are HIV-positive will be allowed to enter the USA under a reform act introduced into the U.S. Senate in December by **John Kerry** (D-Mass) and **Gordon Smith** (R-Oregon). This would include, for example, political commentator **Andrew Sullivan** and AIDS experts from other countries, as well as “refugees who are seeking asylum in our country,” according to **John Kerry**. Information for this article was gathered from Bob Roehr, writing in the January 10 issue of **Between The Lines**.