



The PFLAG Link

MIDLAND, BAY CITY & SAGINAW CHAPTER
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January 2010

Meeting This Month
Sunday, Jan. 24 2-4:30 PM
Unitarian/Universalist Fellowship
6220 Jefferson at Wackerly, Midland

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Hitting the Books? Here's Help: The Perceptions Scholarship

Deadline is February 1

Each year, a new class of high-school and college graduates bring the hope that lasting change is around the corner. That's why Perceptions Saginaw Valley funds a scholarship program for GLBT youth and allies. **Students who plan to attend college next fall have until February 1 to apply.** The Perceptions Saginaw Valley Scholarship is awarded annually to a Michigan resident who has demonstrated a passion for promoting mutual respect and acceptance across borders of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. We will award at least \$1,000 in scholarships this Spring. Members of Perceptions or **PFLAG Tri-Cities** and their immediate families automatically earn 10 bonus points (out of 100 total) on their score. Apply directly through the Saginaw Community Foundation at saginawfoundation.org.

Chocolate Warning!

The annual PFLAG-Perceptions Chocolate Party is coming up on March 13. Location will be in the same beautiful house as last year: 1000 Hoyt Ave in Saginaw. Come and indulge in a fantastic spread of pure delight!

PFLAG Tri-Cities has a Board which determines its goals and priorities. A planning meeting is scheduled for the last week of this month. If you have ideas for PFLAG activities or events, call us at **989-941-1458**. Or use the online form by clicking "Contact PFLAG TriCities" at www.pflag-mbs.org.

Finding the Way: the Charter for Compassion

Karen Armstrong's wish could change everything - if we let it

The great paradox of living gay or as an ally, is knowing that however deep the roots of prejudice and misunderstanding go, hatred of GLBT people is an invention of our modern culture. One voice bringing clarity to our understanding of how that

hatred is NOT part of history is that of author and historian **Karen Armstrong**, who has written more than twenty books about faith, fundamentalism, and modern human thought. Now Karen has leveraged a large prize, the TED Prize, into

an effort that might change things: [The Charter for Compassion](#). Armstrong's project emphasizes that compassion is one common element found in all religious traditions..

Uganda Almost Ready to Imprison or Execute Homosexuals

New York Times reports indicate three American evangelists bear some responsibility

The New York Times reports that a member of the Ugandan Parliament, **David Bahati**, had introduced a law that would impose life in prison for homosexuality and force the death penalty for "aggravated homosexuality." And failure to report an offense within 24 hours would result in a prison sentence of up to three years. "Encouragement" of homosexuality would bring a prison term of up to seven years. The Ugandan Government's Minister of Ethics and Integrity, **Nsaba Buturo**, at first strongly supported the bill, but later told [Reuters](#) "...We now think a life sentence could be better because it gives offenders room to be rehabilitated. Killing them might not be useful." A top government official later stated Buturo's initial statement had been made as an individual. Meanwhile, governments across the world expressed horror at the proposed law. However, [Reuters' online article](#) cited "condemnation from Western governments as well as international Christian and community leaders." But Buturo denied that the revision was due to outcry: "It's really out of our consultation with various groups, including religious leaders. It has nothing

to do with external forces." But Uganda still considers homosexuality "moral perversion that must not be allowed to spread." The concept of a "spreading threat" was encouraged by American evangelical leaders who spoke in [Uganda in 2009](#). [The New York Times](#) named **Scott Lively**, **Caleb Lee Brundidge** and **Don Schmierer**; Lively runs Defend the Family, a California-based ministry whose parent organization, Abiding Truth Ministries, is named by the [Southern Poverty Law Center](#) as a hate group. Brundidge is a "Sexual Reorientation Coach" with the [International Healing Foundation](#), which offers therapy to correct "unwanted Same Sex Attraction." Don Schmierer is on the Board of Exodus International, and asked [that his name be added to its recent letter](#) to the **President of Uganda**, which urged against the proposed law - largely because it would interfere with "gay-to-straight" corrective ministries. However, a broader connection has been found to a secretive religious association called "The Family," which is right in our nation's capitol, Washington D.C. (and to which several Senators and Representatives, including

Michigan's own **Bart Stupak**, have reported connections. In July, [Stupak denied](#) having any connection.) **Rachel Maddow** has covered this question several times on her show on MSNBC. On January 5, [Maddow said](#), "If you see a guy holding a gun to someone's head, and you hand the guy with the gun some bullets, your culpability can be described as a lot of things, but nuanced isn't one of them... It was at an event associated with one of The Family's national prayer breakfasts in Uganda where the kill-the-gays bill was reportedly first proposed." A member of The Family, **Bob Hunter**, told Maddow that of the "some 10,000" people associated with these prayer breakfasts, "I'm sure there are some of them that are doing some bad things. We immediately said this was bad and started privately working against it." Meanwhile, back in [Uganda, even seemingly careful reasoning](#) falls short, believing that Uganda's current intolerance is justified. When cultural prejudices are codified in law, people who are prone to violence are empowered. Laws to outlaw homosexuality have the result, however unintended, of giving silent permission for open gay-bashing. In Uganda, that means living underground.

Just Pizza and a Movie Night:

BOYS DON'T CRY

January 24 4:30-6:30 PM at the UU Fellowship. Co-sponsored by the UU FoM, Social Justice Committee and PFLAG Tri-Cities.

Boys Don't Cry is based on the true story of Brandon Teena (born Teena Brandon) who was raped and murdered along with two others when it was discovered that Brandon was born female. It is a powerful story of a young transgendered man's struggles, as well as the damage that hate and bigotry can do. This movie is a drama and is 119 minutes long. Childcare at \$2/child will also be provided.

Just a Movie is sponsored monthly by the Social Justice committee and alternates dramas and documentaries on justice related topics.

Arcus Foundation Sponsors Art Dialogue on LGBT and Faith

The members of the LGBT & Faith Project, funded by the Arcus

Foundation, will host a special reception and dialogue program on Sunday, February 21 at the Detroit Institute for Art. Event participants will use art to explore issues of faith and inclusion, as well share dialogue on LGBT inclusion in congregations and faith traditions. "We are really excited about this event," explains **Craig Anderson**, coordinator of the program. "This will be a chance for people of faith to come together in a beautiful setting to learn from one another and share perspectives – but also have fun! Sexual orientation has been such a divisive issue in so many religious congregations, this will be a first step in bridging that gap. This will not be a debate or religious service, but rather a dialogue and exploration." The event will take place from 1:30 – 4:00pm and will be free of charge. Participants will need to reserve space. For more information, please contact Craig [Anderson at canderson@miroundtable.org](mailto:Anderson@miroundtable.org)

Still Needed But Still Unheeded?

Alleged anti-gay remark shows the need, and state school funding crisis may show the way

Saying "Get your gay tail off my bus," a Lansing School District bus driver triggered an investigation by the district, a period of "administrative leave" and more calls for anti-bullying legislation in Michigan. Audible in a cell-phone video previously available on Lansing's CBS

affiliate WLNS, and reported in the [Michigan Messenger](#), [pridesource.com](#) and [Between the Lines](#), Todd Heywood writes that previously-introduced legislation would have required training for all Michigan school district employees to prevent bullying. On December 21,

writing in the Michigan Messenger, Heywood reported that lawmakers were trying to boost the state's chances of winning the federal "Race to the Top" funding. Legislators were considering including an anti-bullying law as a way to improve chances of gaining that federal money.

PFLAG Statewide Meeting

Join us April 17 in Jackson for "Chapter Check-Up"

This year's Annual Statewide meeting will take place in Jackson, Michigan and will feature our new Regional Director, **Dan**

Tepfer of Ohio, who will provide perspective on PFLAG National; **Dr. Julie Nemecek** of Michigan Equality; **Mike Neubecker**,

and **N-Power Michigan**, a firm that helps non-profits with technology. More coming soon!.

Notes on a Possible Debacle

In Perry v Schwarzenegger, The Supreme Court will hear the case for gay marriage

Lawyers **Theodore Olson** and **David Boies** are doing that one thing conventional wisdom always panics about: betting the store on a single throw of the legal dice. They are fighting in a California court to overturn Prop 8, knowing the loser will appeal and the case will finish in the laps of the US Supreme Court. At a time when Maine, New York and New Jersey have rejected it, with a court with a Justice who says openly, "Many Americans do not want persons who openly engage in homosexual conduct as partners in their business, as scoutmasters for their children, as teachers in their children's schools, or as boarders in their home. They view this as protecting themselves and their families from a lifestyle that they believe to be immoral and

destructive." (**Antonin Scalia**) Why would two former opponents (Olsen beat Boies before the Court before: remember Gore v Bush?) join to fight against such apparently slim odds? According to **Margaret Talbot**, writing in the January 18, 2010 issue of [The New Yorker Magazine](#), attitudes are shifting: "In 1993, few Americans had heard of same-sex marriage. Now some forty percent of Americans support marriage for gay couples, and more than fifty percent support civil unions..." **Patrick Egan**, a political scientist at New York University, and **Nathaniel Persily**, a law professor at Columbia University, who together have studied public opinion on gay rights, believe that in five years a majority of Americans will favor

same-sex marriage - the result of generational replacement and what **Persily** calls "attitude adjustment." At the same time, **Gay & Lesbian Advocates and Defenders**, of Boston, is trying a more cautious, incremental approach: challenging limits on federal benefits for same-sex couples which were written into the Defense of Marriage Act. **Talbot** warns that the danger of succeeding too soon with the Supreme Court - too soon meaning before enough public opinion has changed to accept a positive decision - is the kind of long-term backlash that resulted from the Roe decision on abortion. Unfortunately, most observers and supporters of same-sex marriage don't predict that that will be the problem.