



November 2008

The PFLAG Link

MIDLAND, BAY CITY & SAGINAW CHAPTER
P.O. BOX 834, BAY CITY, MI 48707
989-941-1458

www.pflag-mbs.org

This Month's Meeting:

Sunday, Nov. 23, 2 p.m.
Unitarian/Universalist Fellowship,
6220 Jefferson at Wackerly, Midland
Speaker: Chuck Batcke

Next Month's Meeting:

Sunday, Dec. 28 2 p.m.
(Thanksgiving is Nov. 27.)
Speaker: To Be Announced

Continue Your Membership

PFLAG depends on its members, and our chapter's dues must be sent to National in December. If you won't make the meeting, send your check, payable to **PFLAG TriCities**, to the post office box shown at the top of this issue. Your \$40 dues provide a full year of access and support from dedicated people in your own area.

"LINK up" early! Send your email address to the Editor and get the *LINK* up to two days earlier than the postal version. Our email list is confidential and is never shared.

PFLAG and its affiliate chapters are committed to diversity and to encouraging changes in our laws and society which promote equality. Our meetings are open to all regardless of political, social or religious beliefs. While we meet at the **Midland Unitarian/Universalist Church**, we have no affiliation with any church or political party. **All are welcome.**

Need help? PFLAG is here.

PFLAG TriCities supports families with GLBT children at all ages and all stages of life. We can help with

- ▶ Bullying or other harassment problems
- ▶ Family Support
- ▶ Issues Awareness and Education

Each monthly meeting is designed to address all three. Join us Sunday at 2 p.m. For help anytime, call 941-1458. Calls and meetings are always confidential.

Love Not Lost

When **Chuck and Sandra Batcke's** youngest son **Scott** was living in Chicago, his parents began to pick up clues that he might be gay. Uncertain how to respond, Chuck turned to his Catholic church. When Scott came out during a visit home, the guidance they had received helped them focus not



on their own feelings of dismay, but on their love for their son. Unfortunately, Scott, enjoying a successful podiatry practice in Chicago, died unexpectedly just five years later. But his family's story remains as an example of acceptance and support. As Chuck stated in the August-September 2008 issue of the newsletter for the Gay, Lesbian and Ally Employee Group (GLAD) at Dow Chemical Company, "PFLAG turned out to be a wonderful organization for us. Not only did we meet a lot of parents, but also some of their children and also some gays and lesbians who either could not tell their parents, or had

told them and were disowned. So many of them feared being "outed" at work and losing their jobs or at least the opportunity for advancement." Join us as Chuck shares his family's experiences at our monthly meeting on Sunday, Nov. 23 at 2 p.m.



Protest Pushes the Limit in Lansing

A self-described anarchist group staged a carefully-planned "action" at a Lansing area church. On Nov. 9, services at Mt. Hope Church in Eaton County were interrupted, first by protesters outside the church, and then by others dressed as worshippers inside, who threw leaflets, shouted slogans and attempted to hang a banner from the balcony. Most of the group, calling itself

"Bash Back," fled before police arrived. On Saturday, the church's website indicated legal action was being considered. On its Myspace pages, "Bash Back" claims to have been formed to mount protests at the Republican and Democratic political conventions. Stating that "until now, trans and queer organizing has been all but invisible within the Anarchist community," the group requires

members to reject "Capitalism, Imperialism and all forms of state power," and views gay marriage and gays in the military as "hetero-normative assimilation." Entries on myspace.com describing the group indicate that it is active in Lansing, Chicago, Philadelphia, Milwaukee, Washington D.C. and other cities.

Not Just California's Problem

The passing of Proposition 8 in California has brought an angry and vociferous response from many GLBTs and allies, and not just in California. Responses included a large number of peaceful demonstrations, coordinated to occur on the same day and

often at the same time across the country. In Michigan, demonstrations were planned in Detroit, Ann Arbor, Kalamazoo, East Lansing, Grand Rapids and Marquette. In Mount Pleasant, a group of some thirty protesters, including GLBT and allies,

gathered before the town's new City Hall building, and paraded up and down the main street shouting "Marriage is a civil right!" and other chants in favor of marriage equality. Events in Michigan were [coordinated by Michigan Equality.](#)

Perceptions of Saginaw Valley: **7th Annual Holiday Party**, including a Silent Auction for charity, will be held on December 13 at Sullivan's Black Forest Brew Haus, 281 Heinlein Strasse, Frankenmuth (behind Bronner's.)

Perceptions Potluck

Join us on Thursday, November 20th at 7:00 pm at St John's Episcopal Church, 123 N. Michigan Ave., Saginaw for our annual Thanksgiving Potluck and Food Drive. Bring a dish to pass, if possible. **Perceptions** will provide table service and beverages. All non-perishable food items that we collect will be donated to the pantry at Innerlink Runaway & Homeless Youth Shelter. A special version of "*Jeopardy*" is planned for entertainment. All are welcome

Bias Crimes Clarified

Recently the **Michigan House of Representatives** overwhelmingly voted in favor of House Bills 6340 and 6341. These bills expand the categories of groups for which a crime could be considered a bias-motivated crime and increase the penalties. The new law will include disability, gender, national origin or ancestry, race, color, or ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression of gender. This is a major step forward for Michigan's LGBT community and is a direct result of the work done by Michigan Equality, the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, the ACLU of Michigan and many other LGBT and ally organizations. The next step is to push the Michigan Senate to pass it before the end of its session.

Remembering a Pioneer

The movie "Milk," telling the story of gay activist and San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk, will open Nov 26. To carpool to Royal Oak on Sat. Nov. 29, send an email to Alan@perceptionssv.org.

Commentary on Proposal 8 by Keith Olbermann

Olbermann is the anchor for MSNBC's Countdown. The full text of his commentary can be viewed at msnbc.com.

Finally tonight as promised, a Special Comment on the passage, last week, of Proposition Eight in California, which rescinded the right of same-sex couples to marry, and tilted the balance on this issue, from coast to coast. ...I don't have a personal investment in this: I'm not gay...I have no personal stories of close friends or colleagues fighting the prejudice that still pervades their lives. And yet to me this vote is horrible. Horrible. Because this isn't about yelling, and this isn't about politics. This is about the human heart, and if that sounds corny, so be it. If you voted for this Proposition or support those who did or the sentiment they expressed, I have some questions, because, truly, I do not understand. Why does this matter to you? What is it to you? In a time of impermanence and fly-by-night relationships, these people over here want the same chance at permanence and happiness that is your option. They don't want to deny you yours. They don't want to take anything away from you. They want what you want—a chance to be a little less alone in the world. ...I keep hearing this term "re-defining" marriage. If this country hadn't re-defined marriage, black people still couldn't marry white people. Sixteen states had laws on the books which made that illegal in 1967. 1967. The parents of the President-Elect of

the United States couldn't have married in nearly one third of the states of the country their son grew up to lead. But it's worse than that. If this country had not "re-defined" marriage, some black people still couldn't marry black people. It is one of the most overlooked and cruelest parts of our sad story of slavery. Marriages were not legally recognized, if the people were slaves. Since slaves were property, they could not legally be husband and wife, or mother and child. ... Marriages among slaves were not legally recognized. You know, just like marriages today in California are not legally recognized, if the people are gay.

...What is this, to you? ...The world is barren enough. It is stacked against love, and against hope, and against those very few and precious emotions that enable us to go forward. Your marriage only stands a 50-50 chance of lasting, no matter how much you feel and how hard you work. And here are people overjoyed at the prospect of just that chance, and that work, just for the hope of having that feeling. With so much hate in the world, with so much meaningless division, and people pitted against people for no good reason, this is what your religion tells you to do? With your experience of life and this world and all its sadnesses, this is what your

conscience tells you to do? ...You want to sanctify marriage? You want to honor your God and the universal love you believe he represents? Then spread happiness—this tiny, symbolic, semantical grain of happiness—share it with all those who seek it. Quote me anything from your religious leader or book of choice telling you to stand against this. And then tell me how you can believe both that statement and another statement, another one which reads only "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." You are asked now, by your country, and perhaps by your creator, to stand on one side or another. You are asked now to stand, not on a question of politics, not on a question of religion, not on a question of gay or straight. You are asked now to stand, on a question of love. All you need do is stand, and let the tiny ember of love meet its own fate. You don't have to help it, you don't have to applaud it, you don't have to fight for it. Just don't put it out. Just don't extinguish it. Because while it may at first look like that love is between two people you don't know and you don't understand and maybe you don't even want to know. It is, in fact, the ember of your love, for your fellow person just because this is the only world we have. And the other guy counts, too.

Progress by Request: Moving Forward in Montreal

In early November, the Right Reverend Barry Clarke, 11th Anglican Bishop of Montreal, Canada, stated he would move forward "in an incremental yet prophetic way" with efforts to provide blessings for same-sex relationships. Quoted in a copyrighted story by Reuters reporter Randall Palmer on November 3, the Bishop said he would "be following through with the wishes of the diocese of Montreal" even

though a "large majority" of Canada's bishops remained committed to observing a moratorium against such ceremonies. "I don't want to stop the journey, because I think that would be unhealthy," Reuters quoted him as saying. Quoted in the November issue of the Montreal diocese's official newsletter *Anglican*, the Bishop said God is calling the church to proclaim the

good news of Jesus, "to those whose sexual orientation has resulted in their marginalization and has often made them victims in their communities, families, and churches." Emphasizing his commitment to "open dialogue," the Bishop also clarified that "no cleric and no congregation will be required to participate in future blessing of same-sex civil marriages."