

# HUGS EAST

July/August 2001

Volume 3, Issue 4

## Come Out, Come Out Wherever You Are

Yes, it's that time of year again, when gay pride is celebrated across the land. And, yes, this is yet another article imploring homosexuals to "come out." I, as much as you, look forward to the day when an article like this is no longer necessary. To ensure this reality, we cannot wait to celebrate our pride once a year in parades and marches. While these events are still necessary and important, we must observe our gay pride everyday by coming out and honestly sharing our lives wherever and whenever the opportunity presents itself; the ensuing gains, though sometimes incremental, are at the heart of creating a world free of homophobia.

Even the simplest, most banal everyday interactions are opportunities to clarify our lives for those who assume that we are straight or closeted. These assumptions are not always benign. Often they cover or perpetuate prejudice and ignorance, allowing these thoughts to breed and fester. Disclosing our homosexuality forces heterosexuals to face and question their beliefs and fears, perhaps even change their beliefs.

There are always risks involved in coming out, in protecting our rights and dignity. We've all heard the horror stories, the physical abuse and violence done to out homosexuals, the threats to jobs, homes and basic human rights. But there are many moments daily when we don't have to risk personal harm in coming out to family, friends, co-workers, and the people we encounter everyday. Certainly, it can be scary, but no more so than continuing to live silently and invisibly in a homophobic world. Studies suggest that a heterosexual who knows an open homosexual, is less likely to be homophobic. Our job, everyday, is to make sure that people "know." It doesn't always require a speech, explanation or confrontation; doesn't require our chanting, "We're here and queer," but a simple declaration, "I'm gay."

A friend of mine has never officially come out to his mother. Never said "Mom, I'm gay." Now, of course, his mother's no fool, she knows he's gay, but it's never been spoken or discussed in the twenty years since his first gay relationship. Even his father, no fool himself, wrote a letter shortly before his death in which he called his son's

Hugs - Hope \* Understanding \* Giving \* Support  
To the Gay & Lesbian Community of Lake, Geauga, and Ash-  
tabula Counties.

sexuality, "unnatural." And that's the word that lingers in the air, never having been replaced with the positive, pro-active affirmation, "I'm gay."

Recently, my friend's mother asked him what I was doing. He told her that I was writing for Genre magazine. "Is that French?" she asked. "No, Mom," he said, flinching, "it means a type, a category." And though his answer was technically accurate, it tip-toed around the truth like an elephant. The answer could have been, should have been, "No, Mom it's not French, it's gay." In doing so he would have reclaimed the power that he has, with his silence, abdicated for his entire adult life. It was an important, fleeting moment in which he had the opportunity to have a real conversation with his mother. But he let it pass, deferring to his mother's perceived level of comfort and propriety.

He has always deferred to his mother's needs and comfort out of a sense of duty and, perhaps, the fear that she might not love him if the truth were spelled out. Even though his partners and friends have always been welcomed at family gatherings, there has always been this odd, insidious reticence where he is not really allowed to share his life. You forget, when you are an out homosexual in the rest of your life, how much you have to censor yourself when placed in a closeted environment, where even the most mundane topics require the tact and spin of a seasoned politician; where simple questions beget the vague answers that become the end of conversations rather than the beginning. You might as well just talk about the weather. Implicit in this avoidance is shame, the idea that being gay is unseemly, inappropriate subject matter for polite conversation and the perpetuation of the idea that homosexuality is a stigma. When we use the word "gay" as we would use any other descriptive term like straight, married, single, Jewish, thin, fat, white, black; we reclaim the power of the word from those who imbue it with negative connotations.

My friend has promised to send his mother Genre, and, certainly, she'll notice that it's not French. But it won't, most likely, inspire a conversation or be a shared moment because in his own avoidance of using the word gay, he has never given his mother permission to use it, to ask honest questions and really get to know him. Until he does, in all of

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### Contacting Hugs East

HUGS EAST  
P.O. Box 253  
Mentor, OH 44061-0253  
(440) 974-8909  
[HTTP://HUGSEAST.TRIPOD.COM](http://HUGSEAST.TRIPOD.COM)

**E-mail your questions or comments to:**

[HUGSEAST@HOTMAIL.COM](mailto:HUGSEAST@HOTMAIL.COM)

# Calendar of Events

## July, 2001

- 07/05 Gays In The Military. — Rhonda
- 07/12 Movie "Common Ground". — Blanche
- 07/19 Closet In or Out? — Rhonda
- 07/26 Business Meeting. — Rhonda  
Board members please arrive at 6:30 PM

## August, 2001

- 08/02 What Would You Do? — Mark
- 08/09 Terry's Shenanigans. — Terry
- 08/16 Love. — Rhonda
- 08/23 Planning Meeting & Open Rap. — Brenda
- 08/30 Movie "Queer As Folk". — Blanche

## Hugs Social Activities for July & August

- 07/14 6:00 PM Dinner at Otani's (Japanese).  
Otani's is located in Golden Gate Plaza in Mayfield Heights. Exit from I-271 onto Mayfield Road (WEST). At the second light turn left into Golden Gate Plaza and continue through the shopping center towards TGI Fridays. Otani's is 3 doors down from Fridays on the left hand side.
- For those interested, reservations will be made 1 week prior under the name of "Russell". Anyone who decides to come after the reservations are made can call Otani's at (440) 442 7098 and add to the reservation.
- 07/29 1:00 PM— 5:00 PM HUGS Family Picnic.  
Headlands Beach State Park., 600 Headlands Road, Mentor, OH. **Bring a dish to pass and something to drink.**
- 08/11 1:00 PM Geneva on the Lake Outing.  
Meet at Eddie's Grill., 5377 Lake Road East, Geneva on the Lake, OH. **A rain date of 08/18 has been set.**
- 08/25 9:00 AM Golf Outing at Johnnycake Ridge Golf Course. 7134 Mentor Ave., Willoughby, OH.  
Contact Blanche if you are interested in golfing so she can set up a tee time. You can contact

Blanche via email at hugseast@hotmail.com, the information line, or during a Thursday evening meeting.

08/25 12:00 PM Lunch at the Olive Garden.  
7850 Mentor Ave., Mentor, OH.  
(corner of Mentor Ave. and Plaza Blvd.)

For more details regarding any social event or meeting topic please call the information line at (440) 974-8909.

The Thursday evening meeting begins at 7:00 PM and is located at: 8521 East Ave., Mentor, OH 44060

## Thanks From Forbes House

Dear Hugs,

I wanted to take this chance to say how very grateful we are that you came to our rescue in the spring. Thank you very much for your continued support. If it weren't for you I would be out there myself and I just don't have the time. Thank you very much again.

**Linda Lou**

## Flea Market Update

Because of the bad weather we were only able to keep our table open for 2 hours. Even though the table was only open for 2 hours we were able to raise \$48.00. Thanks to everyone who donated items and manned the table. **Great Job!**

## Columbus Pride 2001

Marilyn and I went to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Stonewall's Pride Holiday on June 23. We arrived in downtown Columbus around 11 am to find a parking lot very close to BiCentennial Park where the festival was being held. Imagine our surprise when we not only found a lot about a block away, it was also cheap, \$2.00 for all day.

After parking the car for the day we walked up to the main corner of town, Broad and High St. where the Statehouse is. We sat on a park bench and watched the people as they started to assemble to see the parade and others who continued to walk up to Goodale Park, the beginning of the parade.

As we watched, we saw gays and lesbians in pairs and in groups walk by. After about 30 minutes of sitting on the bench, we noticed a group of people gathering on the corner across from us. They were right wing protesters, with signs and bullhorns, and then began preaching to us about

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*(Continued from page 1 [Come Out])*

those, tiny, fleeting moments to come, the answers to his mother's questions will never be an honest, loving account of his life.

I marvel at the gay teenagers I see and read about these days; their courage, insight and strength are miraculous and inspiring. I cannot imagine living their lives, coming out so early, so certainly, not content to keep their sexuality a secret or to invest their passions solely in immaculate attractions. They have become my heroes, my role models as I watch them peel back the layers of homophobia, creating a word where, one day, a child's sexual orientation will be as accepted as the color of their eyes or hair; where we will no longer need special schools for gay students, no need to take organizations like the Boys Scouts of America to the Supreme Court, no more Matthew Shepards left to die alone on dusty country roads.

Not since Harvey Milk's murder has there been such a national outpouring of outrage and empathy for the violent death of a homosexual, even though there have been many such crimes in the twenty-three years since Milk. Matthew Shephard was not, like Milk, an elected official or public figure, just a quiet, young college boy trying to live his young, quiet life. The circumstances of his death were the catalyst for our reaction; that lonely, rural, unpaved road became the physical embodiment of the psychic road all of us have traveled as homosexuals. We gathered and marched as much in honor of Shepard's memory as we did in honor of our own; remembering our pain, our alienation; remembering that we are lucky to have survived, in some cases, lucky to be alive. But our thoughts, prayers, anger and indignation are not enough to pave that road for our future. We must dedicate ourselves to coming out everyday, and embracing those moments essential to creating a word free of homophobia. I want to live my life knowing that I'm making a tiny bit of difference. This is our job, our responsibility and the least that we can do.

Rudin, Kate "Come Out, Come Out Wherever You Are."  
Genre Jun. 2001: p. 13-14.

## HIV / AIDS

As activists, researchers, health care providers and people living with HIV/AIDS mark the 20th anniversary of the AIDS epidemic, a new study suggests that rates of infection among young gay and bisexual men in the United States are approaching mid-1980s levels. The study, released May 31 by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, found that every year an additional 4.4 percent of gay and bisexual men aged 23 to 29 test positive for HIV. Among black men, the rate was closer to 15 percent, raising alarm bells among activists about an HIV emergency among young gay black men.

In March, researchers reported that an AIDS vaccine succeeded in keeping monkeys healthy for months after they were infected with an HIV-like virus. It is not yet clear whether the vaccine would work on people, but scientists

intend to conduct human trials early next year. The report was one of few pieces of good news about the AIDS battle in recent months. In the first weeks of 2001, alarming new statistics were released that seem to indicate that HIV infections are again on the rise among "men who have sex with men." (Some such men don't identify as "gay.") Toronto, New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Miami, Chicago, and Seattle are among the cities where such increases have been reported. Most public health experts say the cause is likely complacency brought on by more effective treatments for the disease. New studies show that fewer and fewer gay men are following safe sex practices, and some do not realize that AIDS remains incurable.

Approximately 1 million Americans are infected with HIV, and alarmingly, at least half of new cases of HIV in the United States occur among people under 25. Although new drugs have greatly lengthened the life spans of people with AIDS, an increasing percentage of HIV-positive people are poor and lacking insurance. So AIDS remains an important part of the national agenda.

Overseas, of course, the news is much worse. Eighty percent of those who will die of AIDS this year live in Africa, where in some countries infection rates exceed 25 percent of the population. A new report from the United Nations indicates that new cases of HIV in Russia will more than double this year. The same report points out that there are more than one-and-a-half times as many cases of HIV infection today (36 million) than medical experts predicted a decade ago, despite progress in treatment and prevention.

Staff. HIV/AIDS. Online. PlanetOut. Available: <http://www.planetout.com/news> 25 May 2001

## Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network (GLSEN) News

GLSEN's education department recently introduced "The GLSEN Workbook", as a new way to approach ending antigay bias in K-12 schools. The workbook is a tool that guides community members from abstractions to concrete descriptions, which, in turn, lend themselves to practical solutions. The workbook can help folks move a school to the status and practice of safe, affirming and inclusive, in a way tailored to that school's particular needs. The book includes an A-Z assessment tool to gauge a school community on a host of criteria. A scoring guide then helps place a school in categories – Hostile, Resistant, Open or Inclusive – which can easily pinpoint problem areas for advocates. Additionally, the workbook offers tactics to turn words into attainable goals. Director of Education, Scott Hirschfeld, says "the point is not to grade the school, but create positive, concrete and long-lasting change." He adds, "by narrowing problems, choosing issues, and developing a strategic plan, community members can proactively work to make a difference in their

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community.” (Excerpt from “Respect”, Summer 2001, Issue 6)

Last year GLSEN’s education department developed “The Lunchbox” program. “The Lunchbox” is a comprehensive training and staff development program for ending anti-gay bias in schools. Incorporating theories on adult prejudice reduction, the first of its kind kit offers 25 training exercises, a binder of resources, a training video and a booklet with strategies for effective anti-bias training.

GLSEN’s National Meeting, entitled, “Teaching Respect for All 2001”, will be held September 21-23 in Washington DC. For more information on GLSEN publications and activities you can go to [glsen.org](http://glsen.org) or write to GLSEN, 121 West 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 804, New York, New York 10001.

**Submitted by Brenda**

## Recipe's for your Summer Picnic

### Katharine Hepburn’s Brownies

1. Melt together 1 stick butter and 2 squares unsweetened chocolate and take the saucepan off the heat.
2. Stir in 1-cup sugar, and 2 eggs and ½ teaspoon of vanilla, and beat the mixture well.
3. Stir in ¼ cup all-purpose flour and ¼ teaspoon salt. (In the original recipe, 1 cup of chopped walnuts is added here as well.
4. Bake the brownies in a buttered and floured 8-inch-square pan at 325°F for about 40 minutes.

You can cut these brownies into squares, once they have cooled, and eat them out of the pan, but it is so much nicer to pile them on a fancy plate, from which people are going to eat them with their hands anyway. If you want to smarten up your act you can put a square of brownie on a plate with a little blob of *crème fraiche*\* and a scattering of shaved chocolate. (\* Don’t ask me what “crème fraiche” is. Though I think a scoop of Ice Cream would be good in its place.)

### Chic Appetizers

Butter chicken wings (1 ½ lbs or so).  
 Bake at 350 for 45 minutes.  
 Then brush sauce onto the wings and bake for 45 minutes more, brushing and turning several times.

### Sauce

Combine: ½ cup peach juice (like from canned peaches)  
 2 T sugar  
 ½ cup soy sauce  
 1 t ginger  
 2 T lemon juice  
 10 drops Tabasco  
 Several slices of onion  
 Bring to a boil and then simmer 20 minutes or so.

Recipe from Sammy Lou’s mom Irma’s Neighbor Rene.

Have a great summer and don’t forget your Sunscreen.

**Submitted by Brenda**

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our sins.

Some of the signs quoted verses with Bible references. Like: Friends don’t let friends be Homosexual. Lev. 19:17. This is a very liberal translation. The verse actually says, "Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt." (NIV)

After awhile we got so tired of hearing these narrow minded people, we proceeded up High St. so we couldn’t here them only to have another group of about 4 right wingers set up about half a block away from us.

The parade was great, from start to finish it lasted 43 minutes. We were sorry we didn’t bring a camera to record what we saw. Among the drag queens, bare-chested women, lots of floats, and many grand marshalls were hundreds of average looking people just like us. As we watched from the sidewalk, a man came up to us and said, "Are you ladies from Lake County?" At first I was surprised then remembered we were both wearing our shirts from Pride that said HUGS EAST on the back. Of course, we said "yes, we are!". He told us he used to be a teacher in Painesville but moved to Columbus and knew the name Hugs East from reading the Chronicle. We told him we, too, were from Painesville.

From the minute we arrived in downtown Columbus we felt very much at home. Everyone was nice and friendly, except the ‘Bible Thumpers’. By the way I forgot to mention, as the parade was finishing up, one of the protesters was arrested by the Columbus City Police. We don’t actually know why unless it was ‘trying to incite a riot’.

We had a great time and are thinking of going again next year, if it doesn’t conflict with Cleveland Pride. Want to go? We can give details or go as a group.

**Submitted by Blanche**

## Annual Financial Report

In keeping with the Board of Directors desire to keep members informed, the 2000 Annual Financial Report is printed below. As you can see, we need your financial support in order to continue serving the Gay & Lesbian Community of Lake, Geauga, and Ashtabula Counties.

### Expenses

Rent for Meeting Space	\$ 600.00
*Telephone, Info Line	\$ 662.93
*Telephone (AT&T)	\$ 167.12
*Western Reserve Phone Listing	\$ 12.36
Newsletter Expenses	\$ 33.00
Mailing of Newsletter	\$ 137.22
Post Office Box Rental	\$ 44.00
Liability Insurance	\$ 130.00
Advocate, Magazine Subscription	\$ 39.97
Curve, Magazine Subscription	\$ 17.95
Miscellaneous Expenses	<u>\$ 112.00</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,956.55</b>

\* HUGS East is listed in the Phone book in Lake, Geauga, & Ashtabula Counties

### Income

Meeting Donations (Thursday Night Rap Group)	\$ 486.00
2000 Membership Dues	\$ 370.00
Miscellaneous Donations	\$ 640.00
Fund Raisers	\$ 412.05
*Interest from Endowment Funds	<u>\$ 159.65</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,067.70</b>
<b>Net Gain (Loss)</b>	<b>\$ 111.15</b>

\* All of the Interest remains in the Endowment Funds

HUGS East currently has two Endowment Funds, the first is the **Building Fund** with a Balance of **\$3,676.74** and the **General Endowment Fund** with a balance of **\$ 2,034.78**. To date, neither of these funds has ever been withdrawn from and continue to grow each year.

The Board of Directors of HUGS East want to thank you for your support in 2000 and hope that you will continue to support the organization and its' goals in the future.

**\* Just a friendly reminder, it is not too late to pay your 2001 dues.\***

# Be a part of HUGS EAST

## BE A PART OF HUGS EAST

Due to the increased cost of the mailing of our newsletter we can no longer afford to continue our current mailing to non-paying members. This will be the last to those not currently with paid dues or who do not mail their dues prior to the next newsletter mailing in March.

Please send your dues to Hugs East P.O. Box 253, Mentor, Ohio 44060. If your not currently paid and would like to remain on the mailing list, please submit your dues by the next scheduled newsletter. Current newsletters will still be available on Thursday nights at the Mentor site for those who are not on the mailing list.

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### 2001 HUGS EAST MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY & STATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE #(optional) \_\_\_\_\_  
 EMAIL (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Membership</u>	
Individual:	\$8.00
Student:	\$5.00
Household:	\$10.00
Supporter:	\$25.00
Contributor:	\$50.00
Benefactor:	\$100.00

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Dues run from January thru December.

To update our membership list we ask that you complete the above information. Even if you were a current member, we would like to update our records to show current information. This will ensure your copy of the newsletter. Membership dues are suggested amounts. Please feel free to pay more if you can, less if you cannot. All members share the same privileges. Make check or money order payable to: HUGS EAST P.O. Box 253 Mentor, Ohio 44061-0253, or bring to the Mentor site any Thursday evening (7pm to 9pm).

\_\_\_\_\_ Do not send HUGS EAST newsletter to my home.

\*\*\$8.00-\$10.00 dues are not tax deductible; amounts paid over said dues are considered contributions and are tax deductible.