



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

## Gay Role Models

In gay Americans' long struggle for visibility and equality, the fieriest flash points always have been wherever openly gay people have attempted to cross over into the hallowed territory reserved for role models.

The cultural tug-of-war over the proper place of openly gay Americans centers not on whether we should be allowed to, say, sell shoes but on such role model jobs as soldier, teacher, cleric, law-maker, police officer, parent and Boy Scout leader.

While this culture war is not yet won, most of the nation already welcomes openly gay role models, as a close look at a major new Newsweek poll reveals. Increasingly large majorities of Americans want the most respected professions to include openly gay people, Newsweek's snapshot of national attitudes confirms. Instead of "Gay Today," the Newsweek cover story highlighting this poll and featuring a gay cop, a gay minister, a gay soldier, a gay teacher and a gay doctor on the cover ought to have been entitled, "Gay Role Models OK with America."

By 57 percent to 35 percent, Americans want openly gay soldiers, for example, Newsweek found in its poll conducted March 9-10. Likewise, most Americans (86 percent) say gay men and lesbians "should be hired" as pro athletes, as doctors and dentists (75 percent, up from 70 percent in 1998), as members of the clergy (52 percent), as high school teachers (63 percent, up from 54 percent in 1992), as elementary school teachers (60 percent, up from 51 percent in 1992) and as "major

political officeholders" (71 percent).

Those levels of support are translating into major gains throughout the gay civil rights movement.

For example, this year's record number of openly gay candidates are both benefiting from and helping accelerate the trend toward welcoming gay people as role models. Gay candidates dispel the stereotypes that hold back gay progress. And sometimes they are the first gay people whom voters come to know and respect.

Brian Bond, executive director of the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund, which assists openly gay candidates, notes, "There are historic opportunities for us in this election – not just in electing gay candidates to new positions but in their chances to tell our stories to American voters."

The uplifting Newsweek survey also provides the latest confirmation of the incredible power of coming out of the closet: Americans who are aware of knowing gay people are much more likely to see us as appropriate role models.

For example, 70 percent of Americans who know someone gay support the idea of gay elementary school teachers. Yet only 40 percent of people who don't know anyone are supportive. Similarly, 60 percent who know someone gay support gay clergy, compared with only 37 percent support

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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

## November, 2001

- 11/01 Craft Assembly. — Bethany  
 11/08 Movie "Aimee & Jaguar". — Terry  
 11/15 Board Game "Catch Phrase". — Mark  
 11/22 No meeting due Thanksgiving.  
 11/29 Terry's Shenanigans. — Terry

## December, 2001

- 12/06 Gift Wrapping Party.  
 Help wrap gifts for the AIDS Taskforce of Lake County. Bring wrapping paper, tape and scissors. Help feed Santa's helpers by bringing in chips, cookies, soda, etc... Also bring in Christmas music.  
 12/13 Planning Meeting. — Brenda  
 12/20 Useless Gift Exchange & Holiday Stories.  
 — Virginia  
 Bring in a gift that you received and didn't want. We will exchange these gifts with each other. (Please wrap the gift.) Also needed is Christmas music, chips, cookies, soda, etc...  
 12/27 Past & Present Resolutions. — Rhonda

## HUGS Social Activities for Nov. & Dec.

- 11/17 5:00 PM Dinner at Red Robin's  
 36565 Euclid Ave., Willoughby, OH  
 12/08 Movie Matinee. The movie & time will be determined at the Thursday, December 6<sup>th</sup> HUGS meeting.

## Other Activities for Nov. & Dec.

- 12/15 "Naughty and Nice". North Coast Men's  
 12/16 Chorus concert, 8 PM on Saturday,  
 Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> and 3 PM on Sunday, Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>,  
 Waetjen Auditorium, Cleveland State  
 Univ., 2001 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, OH.  
 (800) 766-6048

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

## Discount Theatre Tickets Available

Bethany is able to get discounted tickets (\$10 off) to the following performances at the Ohio Theatre on Playhouse Square in downtown Cleveland.

A Christmas Carol	11/28/01 — 12/06/01
Love, Langston	01/24/02 — 01/30/02
A Moon for the Misbegotten	03/14/02 — 03/20/02
Romeo & Juliet	05/02/02 — 05/08/02

If interested please contact Bethany or Rhonda as soon as possible because the number of tickets is limited.

## Christmas Craft Fair

The Christmas Craft Fair will be held Saturday, November 10<sup>th</sup> at The Boulevard Presbyterian Church, 24600 Lakeshore Blvd, Euclid, OH. Between the hours of 8 AM and 4 PM.

Unfortunately all the craft fairs that we looked at do not allow food sales because they will be selling food themselves.

We **desperately need volunteers** to work the table the day of the fair. If you can donate your time please let Rhonda know.

## Give a Child a Christmas

By the time you receive this newsletter HUGS East should have received from the Lake County AIDS Taskforce a list of items needed by the children.

If you would like to make a child's Christmas memorable, stop by or call HUGS East and choose a child or children to buy gifts for.

Please drop off your gift(s) (wrapped or unwrapped) to HUGS East by Thursday, December 6, 2001. If you wrap your gift(s), please attach a note to the outside of the package indicating what child it is for and what is inside the package.

Thank you in advance for your generous gifts.

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among those who say they don't know anyone gay.

America's growing embrace of gay people as role models goes hand in hand with an ever-increasing awareness of how thoroughly gay people are already integrated into the fabric of our society. Sixty-seven percent of Americans say they know someone gay, up from 53 percent in 1994. Thirty-two percent say they have a gay co-worker, up from 20 in 1992. Twenty-three percent say they have a gay relative, more than double the 9 percent saying that in 1992. And 56 percent have a gay friend or acquaintance, compared with 22 percent in 1985.

Gay visibility is slowly erasing the myth that only heterosexuals make that most precious role model – a good parent. Thirty-nine percent of Americans endorse "adoption rights for gay spouses," up from 32 percent in 1992, Newsweek found.

Inspiring role models come in all shapes, sizes and colors. And some of them are gay.

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Deb Price, "Approval of Gay Role Models is on the Rise." gfn.com. 27 Mar. 2001: Online. Available: <http://www.gfn.com/archives/story.phtml?sid=5465>

## Young Men With Gay Moms

Bonnie Tinker, mother of 17-year-old Alex, and Sara Graham, Josh's mom, have been together for 23 years. Their family is a statement about defying conventions and reaching across boundaries. Josh, now 33, began his life as a child who represented the blending of two worlds. His mother, Sara, is white, and his father, John, was black. When Josh was 5 years old, his father died. A few years later, the widowed Sara fell in love with a

woman, Bonnie Tinker.

For Josh, Sara and Bonnie's relationship was at first perplexing. "It was just total confusion for me," he says.

In 1977, Bonnie and her daughter Connie moved in with Sara and Josh, who was only 10. Adjusting to the new family was a painful challenge. The idea of homosexual parenting was not widely accepted, and Josh says he felt embarrassed by his lesbian mom and her partner.

Because he feared being ridiculed, he brought home only his closest friends and told others Bonnie was his aunt. "I didn't want to have to deal with explaining who she was," he says. In fact, Josh says having a lesbian mother was harder for him than growing up a biracial child.

In 1983, when Josh was in high school, Bonnie became pregnant through artificial insemination, and Alex was born.

Alex's childhood was different from Josh's because, from the time he was born, his parents were "out" as lesbians. But things were difficult nonetheless. When he was 5, Alex's was barred from seeing his best friend when the little girl's parents decided they didn't want their daughter exposed to his lesbian parents.

### Agony of Adolescence

The toughest years for Alex were middle school, when adolescent teasing can be particularly cruel. Alex says he faced a lot of mudslinging of all sorts: "Fairy. Sissy boy. You're mom's a lezzie. She's a fag. She's a dyke. You must be gay, too. Your family's weird."

The ridicule made Alex long for conventional parents. "I spent a lot of time wishing that I could just have a normal family," he says.

Though both Alex and Josh are straight, they say that as a teens they felt anxiety about their sexual-

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ity. "I felt like I had to prove my masculinity and that I was straight," Josh says. Alex too says he feels pressure to let people know that he is heterosexual.

Alex says his most significant male role model was his older brother Josh.

"I never felt like there was anything lacking. I mean, by the time I was old enough to need any kind of male influence, Josh was a young man," he says. Alex also occasionally sees his biological father, who is a friend of the family.

Josh, too, says that having lesbian parents did not deny him the benefit of male role models. He spent a lot of time with his uncle. "He was there whenever I needed to talk," Josh says.

### **Coming to Terms**

While Josh and Alex have both gone through some of the painful struggles children of gays often face, they both seem to have come to terms with it.

Josh says that as he matured into adulthood, he saw how deep the prejudice against homosexuals can be. Ironically, witnessing that prejudice taught him a lot. "Other people's ignorance has given me a sense of enlightenment," he says.

Josh now does volunteer work for an organization started by Bonnie called Love Makes a Family, which offers support to families with sexual minorities.

Alex says he, too, has slowly come to accept his lesbian parents. For one thing, now that he is a senior in high school, his classmates are more mature and the teasing has ceased. But he says he too has matured and has changed the way he views his mom and Sara.

"You know, eventually I just kind of dealt with it and said, you know, it's not like they're doing anything wrong. It's the world that needs to be

changed," he says. "I feel blessed to have had two parents who have been there 100 percent for me my whole life."

Josh agrees. "There's so much love in our family. The experience was hard but I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world. Just the experience of living in a different family teaches you a lot of values."

Alice Irene Pifer, "Young Men With Gay Moms." ABCNEWS.com. 03 Mar. 2001: Online. Available: [http://abcnews.go.com/sections/2020/2020/2020\\_010314\\_gaybesons.html](http://abcnews.go.com/sections/2020/2020/2020_010314_gaybesons.html)

## **Where Did the Gay Gene Go?**

It's a seemingly endless debate: Why are some people attracted to the opposite sex, while others are drawn to their own gender? Thanks to new research published today, that question just got even harder to answer.

A team of researchers at the University of Western Ontario in Canada has found no evidence of the so-called "gay gene," directly contradicting studies from 1993 and '95 that pinpointed a specific genetic marker on the X chromosome linked to homosexuality in men.

Whether genes play a part in sexual orientation has long been a hot button topic for people who support or oppose gay rights. If gays and lesbians are biologically predisposed to homosexuality — through their genes or some other way — that makes for a stronger case against discrimination.

That's why the gay community welcomed the 1993 study by biologist Dean Hamer of the National Cancer Institute. Hamer found that in 40 pairs of gay brothers, 33 had the same set of DNA sequences in a region of the chromosome called Xq28.

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## **Dueling Studies**

Attempting to replicate those findings, Ontario neurologist George Rice examined the DNA of 52 pairs of gay brothers, and found that their Xq28 sequences were no more similar than what might be expected from sheer chance.

Rice's results appear in today's edition of the journal *Science*.

"What we have here is a scientific controversy," says Michael Bailey, a Northwestern University psychologist who has studied homosexuality in twins. The latest research effort "is a good study and it certainly raises questions about whether Hamer was right, but I don't think it proves him wrong either."

That's because both studies were relatively small, and because specific genes are difficult to find. "A definitive study," says Bailey, "would entail substantially larger numbers of people."

## **Maybe the Gene Is Elsewhere**

Rice himself doesn't discount the idea of a genetic link to homosexuality. He just doesn't think Xq28 is the spot. "The search for genetic factors in homosexuality should continue," he says, adding that he's currently searching for other genes that could be linked to sexuality.

But Hamer stands by his earlier findings, especially since two subsequent studies (one of which has not yet been published), found the same thing. "All this proves is that not every case of homosexuality is because of Xq28," he asserts. "I expect we'll find that many genes are involved. One of them will be on Xq28."

Twin studies, like those done by Bailey, have fueled the search for such genes. In 1991, he studied the twin brothers of gay men and found that 52 percent of identical twins were also gay, while only 22 percent of fraternal twins were. Among

women, 48 percent of identical twins were also lesbian, while the rate dropped to 16 percent for fraternal twins.

As with all twin studies, a greater similarity among identical twins usually indicates a genetic link. But because the connection wasn't 100 percent, researchers know that genes aren't the whole picture. Environment — family, friends, society — could also be an important influence.

## **Does It Really Matter?**

Gene or no gene, gay rights groups maintain that what "causes" homosexuality isn't really important. "The vast majority of gay people will tell you that same-sex orientation is an innate part of who you are and is not changeable," says David Smith, a spokesperson for Human Rights Campaign. "But in the final analysis, it really shouldn't matter. Public policy should treat all people equally and fairly."

Conservative groups, on the other hand, say Rice's study proves that homosexuality is a learned, chosen behavior that doesn't deserve legal protection.

"Dean Hamer's study has been used by gay activists for years," says Yvette Cantu, policy analyst for the Family Research Council. "We're saying you can't grant someone special minority status for something that's just a sexual behavior, a choice."

For now, though, the scientific debate is far from over. Sex, says Hamer, "is one of the most interesting things we do. And biologically, it's the most important thing we do." That's why we'll always wonder why some people do it differently than others.

Claudine Chamberlain, "Where Did the Gay Gene Go?" ABCNEWS.com. 22 Apr. 2001: Online. Available: <http://www.abcnews.go.com/sections/living/DailyNews/gaygene990422.html>

# 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.