

Prime Times

A NEWSLETTER FOR MATURE GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN



PRIME TIMERS WORLD WIDE

FEBRUARY 2017

SINCE 1987



At each biennial convention, the board interviews candidate committees for the next convention (in October, it will be for the 2019 convention). What makes for a successful convention is competition. In past years, we've had as many as four chapters make presentations. Your chapter needs to jump on the bandwagon right now to get an early start.

It's not too late. Right now is the best time for interested chapters to contact us with their interest. You have between now and late October to prepare. The Worldwide Board will work with you hand-in-hand to guide you through the process. In addition, we have a printed manual called "How to Host a Convention" that covers many of the details. We can email this to you.

Each of our chapters resides in unique areas with so much to offer. Look around and find out which events will be offered in October of 2019. Consult your local Chamber of Commerce; they are always happy to work with you. Then form a sub-

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old? Wow!

CAN YOU BELIEVE that in that time we have been giving thousands of older gays a way to have a meaningful life in their advanced years? We have shown them that there is a lot of fun to be had at our advanced ages. We have become the salvation for many a bored, dispirited fellow who thought gay life was only for the young. Instead, we have even proved to them that they can still be sexually desirable.

CAN YOU BELIEVE that we have provided the opportunity for many men to find the love of their lives? I wish there were a way of knowing how many single men have found a lifetime partner through Prime Timers. We know there have been many. In the early days of the Austin chapter alone, a member complained to me that there were too many couples and not enough singles. I told them that nine of those couples were 18 singles

Woody was not only our founder; he was our leader; he was our teacher; he was our mentor and without him this wonderful organization would have never come about. We agreed to choose appropriate articles from the past and put those in the newsletter. He called his columns 'Founder Filosofy' and I think you'll agree, the philosophy in 'Filosofy' is profound.

FOUNDER FILOSOFY

BY WOODY BALDWIN, FOUNDER
 PRIME TIMERS WORLDWIDE

CAN YOU BELIEVE that Prime Timers is 30 years

when they joined. That number has no doubt tripled or quadrupled as the chapter is now celebrating its 18th anniversary. Surely this has happened in many chapters.

CAN YOU BELIEVE that we, in our own quiet way, have changed the belief of younger gays that there no gay life after 40 or 50 or whatever date they had perceived as the end of gay life? They have witnessed Prime Timers having some of the best years of their lives and it has given them a brighter outlook on the future.

CAN YOU BELIEVE that in 30 years we have brought older gays from the pits of gay society to a position of genuine respect as a contributing force in the gay community? We

have every right to be proud of our association. Become an active Prime Timer and enjoy these opportunities. Do good by telling all your lonely friends about us. We are gay! We are proud!

Woody



Mark your calendar for the Prime Timers Worldwide Convention held in Chicago, Illinois on October 29-November 2, 2017. Visit www.tinyurl.com/2017ptconvention for more information.

CANTON OHIO PRIME TIMERS CELEBRATE FOUR YEAR ANNIVERSARY

BY DAVID COLLEN, PRESIDENT, CANTON OHIO PRIME TIMERS

We celebrated our Four Year Anniversary on August 26, 2016. We now have forty-six members. We had a picnic at one of our member's homes to celebrate our anniversary with 38 members and guests. We "went international" at this picnic as one of our guests, Jan Willem-Smit, is from the Netherlands and is a member of Prime Timers Worldwide.

Four years of being in the Canton Prime Timers has been a great time with a great group of guys to have fun and fellowship with. Lots of good friends and magnificent fellowship. True friends. One of the most friendly groups of men I have ever met. These special people are just like family to me. It means we have a group of brothers that will always welcome us. The group is my friendship and support for us older men.

We always have plenty of help when it comes to events, everyone always asks, "What can I do to help?" At some of our events, the guys play euchre or bingo. Good memories, good times, good



Photo courtesy Jim F.

fellowship. Thank all of you for your help, your support, and fellowship. This is what Canton Ohio Prime Timers is all about. What a great group of men.

WICHITA PRIME TIMERS SERVE MEALS TO HOMELESS MEN

BY NORM GENTRY, WICHITA PRIME TIMERS



Photo courtesy Norm Gentry

have prepared and served the evening meal for 40-60 homeless men. The local homeless shelter reaches its capacity when the weather is bad. When that happens, local groups are recruited to supply dinner to those who could not fit into the regular shelter.

The Wichita chapter donated supplies for the meal of baked ham and sweet potatoes. Various members prepared a variety of homemade salads. They prepared the meal and served it to those men in the shelter.

The group always enjoys working together, preparing the meal, and interacting with the homeless men in the shelter when they serve the meal.

WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?

Many Prime Timers chapters have annual or periodic events that are the highlight of the chapter's existence such as pig roasts, pool parties, anniversary dinners, and more. Please tell us about these events so that members visiting your area may partake in them. Send us your events via email to webmaster@primetimersww.com. They will also be posted on the PTWW website.

For the past 10 years, the Wichita Prime Timers

URGENT: HELP WANTED AND NEEDED, CONT'D...

continued from cover

committee and contact one of us with your intention. We welcome the opportunity to work together with you in producing such an exciting event.

There is money to be made in hosting a convention; it's a great way for chapters to build up their treasury. Since putting out a plea via email this past week, I've heard from two chapters. It's time to step-

up; throw your hats in the ring.

There is so much to share at conventions. At our upcoming Chicago convention in October, there are workshops that will help members with problems they may be experiencing; these are hands on learning opportunities. Jump right in and make 2019 a great convention year.

FROM YOUR VICE PRESIDENT

BY GARY PAYNE
VICE PRESIDENT



Well, we had a very interesting year in 2016. I guess the major story was the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election.

After watching all the horrible accusations from both parties, it got me thinking about our organization. I thought about the dynamics of the chapter boards

and the PTWW board. Each member on a board has different goals and different passions.

It would be nice if we had less drama and more harmony between members. Members of a board don't always agree on what is best or how a board should move forward. I don't expect all board members to get along all of the time and I know that will not happen.

I see people who love Prime Timers so much and are so passionate that they forget that others, who are just as passionate, are entitled to their own opinions regarding what's best for the organization.

I hope in 2017 that each board member will concentrate on what is best for us, forget the animosity, and concentrate on making Prime Timers the best social club for senior men in the world. Let us all work together and respect each other. We all have the same goal and that is what is best for Prime Timers in our area and worldwide.

THE TURTLE IN MY BACKYARD

BY MANUEL AVEZUELA
PRIME TIMERS INDEPENDENT CHAPTER



*The quantum world
of turtles,
The irrelevance of time,
The consciousness
of patience,
The turtle in my yard.*

*The secret world of turtles,
The universe in a shell,
The careful persistence
Of just being yourself.*

*The silent world of turtles,
The deep void of the sea,
The ancestral call of turtles,
Memories of a beach.*

PRIME TIMES DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR

To receive this newsletter by postal mail for one year, address a check for \$14 to "Original Prime Timers Worldwide", then mail it to: Tom Hammond, 15439 Valley View Road, Doylestown, Ohio 44230. You may subscribe for more than one year as well as larger quantities for your chapter membership. Thanks for supporting this worthwhile organization.

MEANINGFUL SERVICE

BY JACK NIMMO, CHAIRMAN OF INDEPENDENT CHAPTER

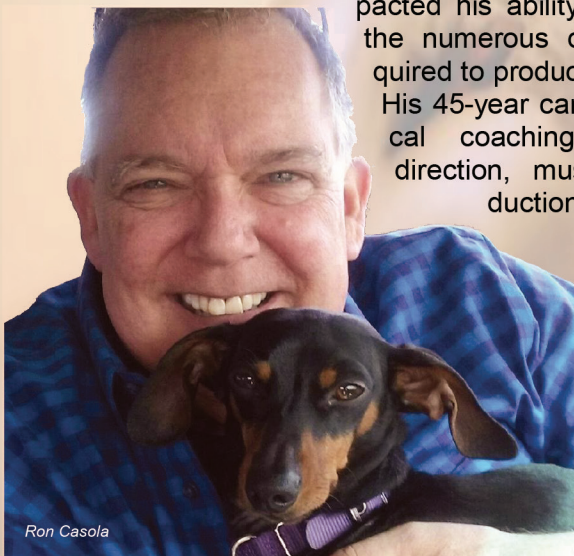


As our population ages, more and more of us are touched by an incurable robber of mind and memory called Alzheimer's. A mental blank might foretell the onset of this devastating erasure of the record of life's experiences that loved ones must cope with alongside the affected while they slowly drift away. Often an unspoken topic in years past, Alzheimer's

disease is now a frequent subject in conversations outside the medical circle. And it is found in family homes, elder care and memory facilities, and Prime Timers chapters everywhere.

Last evening, I attended a powerful portrayal of the devastating effects of Alzheimer's in a play written by fellow Prime Timer, Bernard Taylor. In *The Last Waltz*, Bernard's characters play-out the challenges of a husband and wife's day to day coping with the disease's impact that usually goes unseen by those not directly impacted by Alzheimer's. It aptly shows that memory loss can be a friend to those who are suffering the disease as they often do not recognize or remember the changes occurring in their brain. Caregivers and loved ones are not so blessed.

The Last Waltz is dedicated to another San Antonio Prime Timer, Ron Casola, who is currently battling early-onset Alzheimer's and openly serves as an advocate for Alzheimer's research and care. Ron recently gave up his directorship of The Live Oak Singers (LGBT and Friends Chorus) as Alzheimer's has impacted his ability to retain the numerous details required to produce a show. His 45-year career in vocal coaching, chorus direction, musical production, and personal

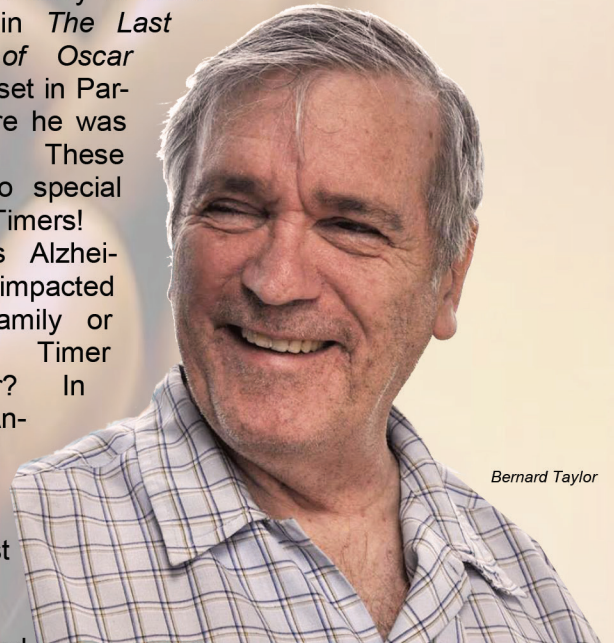


performances has ended, but a new challenge of Alzheimer's education has begun. Bernard also advocates for Alzheimer's research by donating 25% of his royalties for *The Last Waltz* to Alzheimer's research in the name of Ron Casola. Bernard is an accomplished composer, playwright, and producer with awards for services to music and the performing arts by the Victoria College of Music & Art and others. He is establishing a theater in San Antonio to showcase plays with gay themes or characters. His plays have been produced over 100 times worldwide. Bernard's next play tells the story of Oscar Wilde in *The Last Days of Oscar Wilde*, set in Paris where he was exiled. These are two special Prime Timers!

Has Alzheimer's impacted your family or Prime Timer chapter? In San Antonio Prime Timers, at least two members and

their partners are dealing with the end-state stages of this disease. Others have passed from our ranks. Our Care and Concern Committee recognizes that the greater victim of Alzheimer's is often the partner who performs caregiver functions. In many cases, Alzheimer's changes the personality of the patient, requiring loved ones to remember the partner that was. On a personal note, my family has been blessed. Our 94-year-old mother, Mary Sue, has not lost her bubbly personality as Alzheimer's has robbed her of short-term memory and blessed her with no recognition that she is so ill. Most families or partners are not so fortunate.

We salute Prime Timers, Bernard Taylor, Ron Casola, and all others who are making those around them more aware of Alzheimer's and its effects on us. Furthering research and education on this devastating disease is a noble effort. Remember the ancillary victims, learn more about Alzheimer's, and perhaps support fund raising efforts near you to find a cure and provide care!



Bernard Taylor

Ron Casola

MEMORIES OF OCTOBER TRIP TO FRANCE

BY ROBERT ROSENTHAL, PALM BEACHES PRIME TIMERS



Who says you can never go back and have the same experience? The Prime Timers Worldwide trip to France was just that. I had been to Normandy over 40 years ago and to Paris

at least a half dozen times since then. There is a mystique about the country and the people.

Our group came together caring, loving, and laughing together in Normandy. We toured the beaches and understood what occurred there so many years ago. The horrors of war was made tangible for us. We toured abbeys and cathedrals with excellent guides who made us see how life was hundreds of years ago. We think a house that was built 35 years ago is old, but to Europe 200 years is just about right.

Our trip aboard the river boat included all food — all food prepared in the French style. Everyone commented how wonderful the food was. Also included was the wine, beer, and spirits and it was enjoyed by all. Certainly we all slept well.

Versailles and its hall of mirrors still intimidates all who visit. While this palace entertained heads of countries from all over the world, a historic appointment was being made at Place de la Concorde where the guillotine was built. Interesting in that it was thought to be merciful and painless.

Paris always renews herself and is therefore young each visit. I had forgotten food could taste so good. Every mouthful was a delight.

Our group had such a wonderful time that we started research on a cruise on the Danube for 2018. We are looking forward to the Prime Timers Worldwide January cruise and the Land and Cruise New Orleans in April. Many of the people on this trip have signed up and will be with us once again.



Photo courtesy Robert Rosenthal



Photo courtesy Robert Rosenthal



Photo courtesy Robert Rosenthal

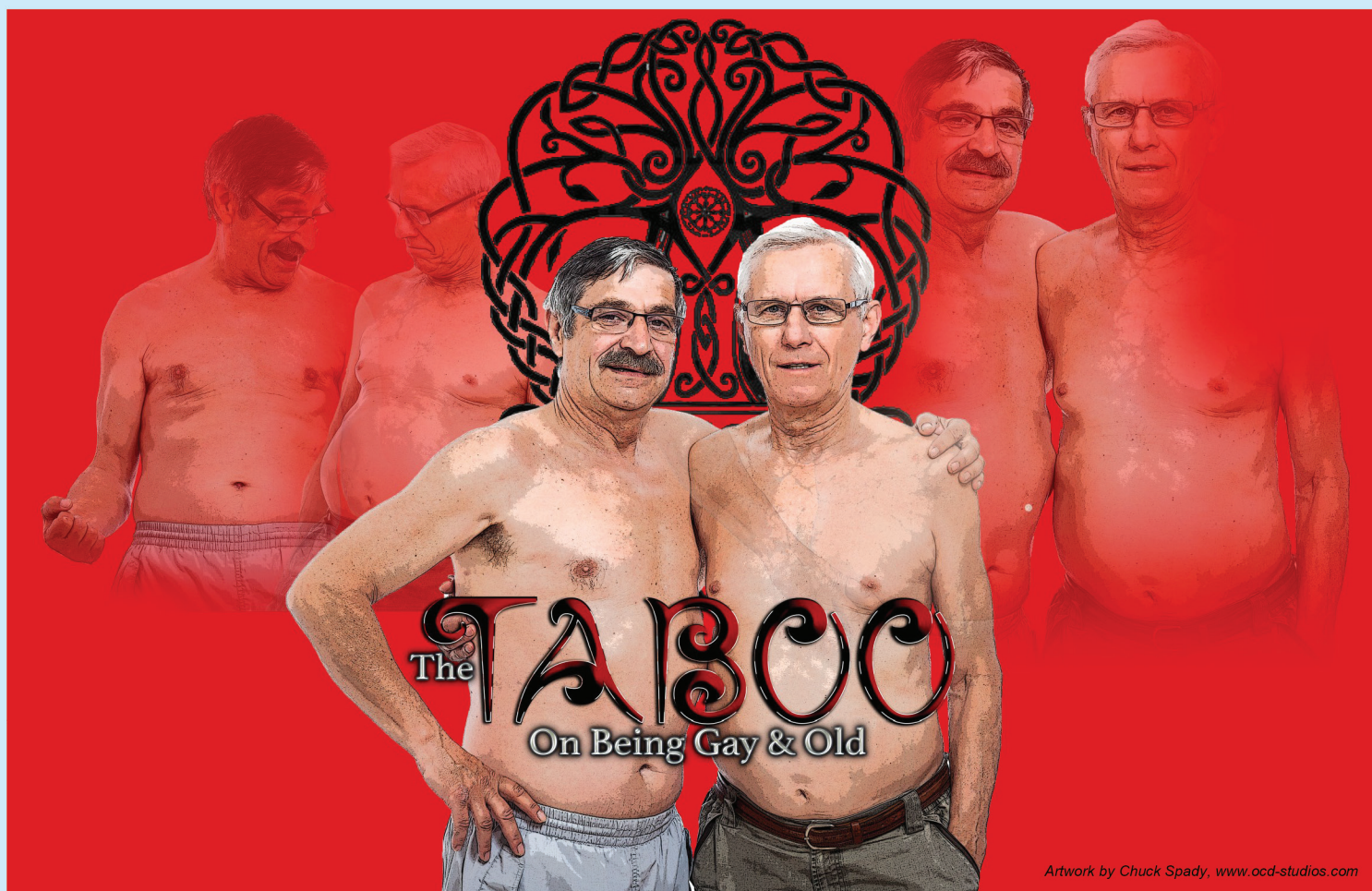
CHICAGO SELECTED FOR 2017 CONVENTION

BY MARVIN LEVIN, CHICAGO PRIME TIMERS

The Chicago Prime Timers chapter would like to thank Worldwide for selecting us to host the Worldwide Convention on October 29 - November 2, 2017.

For more information, please visit our website at www.tinyurl.com/2017ptconvention or email us at info@chicagoprime timers.org





BY PETER FIELD, REGISTERED PSYCHOTHERAPIST

The gay world, with its emphasis on youthful good looks and hip fashion trends, can be a cold and unwelcoming place for those who are no longer young.

For many, aging is a frightening concept, something to be denied, fought against, and held at bay for as long as possible. Botox, collagen injections, and cosmetic surgery, our obsession with youth seems to know no bounds.

In so many ways, being old and gay is one big taboo subject, a topic to be shunned and avoided at all costs. But age, like the future, cannot be avoided; like it or not, it is something that will come all too soon.

Research is really only beginning to uncover what it means to be older and LGBT. Because many older LGBT people felt unable to be open about their sexual orientation, gender identity, and preferences earlier in life, some may experience even greater difficulty adjusting as they continue to age.

Rutgers University professor, Dr. Michael C. LaSala, believes that aging may be particularly difficult for gay men because historically gay culture has focused on youth and beauty, and as sexual attrac-

tiveness diminishes, so can self-esteem.

To free ourselves and develop a robust and lasting sense of self-worth as we age, it may mean going against the current of many present-day gay attitudes.

Aging can be especially difficult if we are overly dependent on one aspect or dimension of our self, but when we remember that there is much more to us and that we have far more value than mere physical beauty, then growing older can be better accepted and handled with dignity.

In 2010, the UK organization Stonewall conducted a survey of LGBT people over the age of fifty-five. The data, intended to assist in planning for long-term housing and medical support for the aging LGBT population, revealed that older gay and lesbian people are more likely to be single and to be living alone than their straight counterparts.

LGBT people are less likely to have children and they tend to see their conventional families less often. This is sometimes due to the family's rejection. People who came out later in life, or not at all, also have less time to build up lasting relationships within the LGBT community.

In many other ways, aging LGBT people share the same concerns as others involved in the aging process. We may have concerns about finances, health, and death. Some of the health needs and concerns of LGBT people are unique and require further study, but many are not.

As we age, it is important that we learn to assert our rights in terms of the kind of care we receive.

Unfortunately, homophobia continues to be an issue for older adults. Not every doctor, social worker, senior community, or gerontological physician is knowledgeable or prepared for LGBT seniors. Don't be afraid to ask questions or to assert your rights in order to help educate these healthcare professionals. If necessary, shop around to find the right doctor and the right community for you. They are out there and they can be found.

If all of this makes you feel blue about your golden years, don't be! Remember that you have control over many things and this includes a huge part of your own happiness. With a little planning and determination, your later years can be absolutely amazing.

Many older LGBT people manage to find wonderful, long-lasting relationships, even in later years. The same rules that apply to youthful relationships apply to relationships in later life. As long as each partner is loving and supportive, the relationship can be healthy, regardless of age.

One U.S. not-for-profit association that offers support to the mature gay person is SAGE, the country's largest and oldest organization dedicated to improving the lives of older LGBT people. SAGE offers numerous services to gay people nationwide, and their website gives much useful information. The address

is www.sageusa.org.

In the UK, Age Concern is a not-for-profit organization that does much to support and improve the lives of older LGBT people. Simply type "ageconcern.lgbt" into the address bar and click on the link.

In the coming years, the LGBT community will continue to increase in visibility and in power. As society changes and becomes more open and accepting, it is likely that life for aging LGBT people will change for the better as well. But this will not happen until gay people themselves end the taboo on becoming old.

As long as we maintain a dismissive attitude to older gay people, we will continue to fear the aging process and we will continue to make those uncomfortable beds upon which we ourselves will one day have to lie.

If our lives are to have any meaning beyond the pleasure principle, any real relevance and authenticity, then we need to end our denial and come to terms with the aging process, of what it is to be gay and older.

It really is time to break the taboo about being gay and old.

"Aging is not lost youth but a new stage of opportunity and strength." – Betty Friedan

Reprinted with permission. Peter Field is a UK registered psychotherapist and Director of Rainbow Champions, assertive life-skills and confident communication training for LGBT persons. His book "How to Be Gay and Happy" is now available on Amazon. Peter's hypnotherapy Birmingham and London clinics provide hypnotherapy services for a wide range of issues. And, Dr. Field now knows about the good work of Prime Timers Worldwide.



INNER PEACE

CONTRIBUTED BY

BENNY RAPHAEL, PRIME TIMERS TEL AVIV

If you can always be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains, if you can resist complaining and boring people with your troubles, if you can eat the same food every day and be grateful for it, if you can under-

stand when your loved ones are too busy to give you any time, if you can take criticism and blame without resentment, if you can conquer tension without medical help, if you can relax without alcohol, if you can sleep without the aid of drugs, then you are probably the family dog!



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HERE AND THERE

BY CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
ZACH MULLANEY AND RAY DARR, OKC PT

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL: This is an affiliate group of the worldwide organization. About fifteen or so meet twice a week at the LGBT Community Center there in Tel Aviv on Mondays and Thursdays. The hours are usually from 10–1 in the afternoon. There is always coffee and refreshment snacks of some kind. The city is very gay-friendly, works closely with the gay community, and operates the Center. The city sponsors many activities for seniors and many of the gays are active with that organization. Usually the group will get together for a movie each month. Benny, their spokesperson, will be visiting friends in Fort Lauderdale during the holidays. Hope he has an enjoyable visit to our country.

RHODE ISLAND/PROVIDENCE: It is good to read that several from their group drove over to visit with the Hartford, Connecticut chapter. When distances are close, it is easy to do. Also, many of the Rhode Island guys enjoy live theatre and are scheduling several in the upcoming months. Their newsletter has many good photos of their troops.

HAMILTON, ONTARIO: Congratulations to the chapter. They are celebrating their fifth anniversary on January 9th. The chapter will be holding a “fun time” on January 14th at 2:00 p.m. at One Duke on the corner of Duke and James Street South. They also have a Bears group that meets on the first Sunday of the month at The Speakeasy.

WICHITA, KANSAS: Martin stated a very important remembrance for us all. January 27th is International Holocaust Day. That date in 1945 was when Auschwitz and Birkenau were liberated. We need to take a moment to remember the multitude of gays that were killed simply for being gay during WWII. To see the large pink marble triangles as a monument in remembrance along the canals in Amsterdam is quite sobering, realizing what our forerunners in Europe went through. Thank you for your words, Martin.

DALLAS/FORT WORTH, TEXAS: A tradition has been started. On the “First Tuesday” of the month, a group of them meet at the Golden Corral out on Forest Lane at 11:30 a.m. We all know the amount of food the Corral puts out and the cost is only eight bucks. Then stick around and join the guys in a side room for a game time, such as Texas 42, Mexican Train, or Uno. If you’re in the area, find the correct Golden Corral, and join ‘em. You’ll have a good time.

CENTRAL FLORIDA: 82 members. This club has done many things for the Central Florida community and are deserving of the local recognition they have

received. They have had a food drive for people affected with HIV/AIDS, a drive to bring in items of toiletries for Hope and Help, towel sets for seniors through Meals on Wheels, and toy collections for the Salvation Army that have benefitted over 3,600 kids. Hey, guys, well done. We’re pleased you’re “one of us”.

PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA: With a membership above 800, attendance at some events need to be reserved ahead, to not just appear. I can imagine. They often take jaunts in tour buses such as the gambling jaunt to Laughlin, Nevada. But all of their Monday Mixers are open to everyone. And, this is a chapter that has something for everyone. We have members that have relocated to the desert and joined PTOD and love the variety of activities. We’re always glad to read the chapter’s newsletter and see all the photos.

DES MOINES, IOWA: The chapter’s Winter Holiday Potluck will be out of town at the Walnut Woods State Park. All will start arriving around 2:00 p.m. for the social hour. The eatin’ will begin about 4:00 p.m. There will be a roaring fire in the fireplace. BYO, but hard liquor is not permitted. This is the chapter’s New Year Potluck, and sounds like fun one. Good beards!

FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA: 500+ members. This large chapter also has many activities happening throughout the month. They are to be commended in the many physical events they have planned: tennis, bowling, and bocce ball to name a few. They also have card games, roundtable discussion groups, a collection group meeting at a local library, and a history group. Hey, both brains and brawn get exercised. Plus, every Tuesday is mixer night at The Tropics.

DENVER, COLORADO: 175 members. This chapter is celebrating their 30th anniversary this year. They ran an interesting article of members’ names that have passed from the earliest up to the most recent. Several are remembered by us from their coming down to our Labor Day Getaway. If in Denver, plan on having coffee with the guys on Mondays at 8:00 a.m. at Panera’s on S. Colorado Blvd. and Tuesdays 10:00 a.m. at the LGBT Center.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA: Mid-January to mid-February is what they call Mid-Summa Festival. This is the summertime down south of the equator and this festival is their state’s (Victoria’s) premier gay and lesbian arts and culture festival. The Vintage Men have a booth and several have volunteered to staff it. Volunteering for something like this can be fun. It is a good opportunity to meet a lot of interesting people.

OPEN AND AFFIRMING PROGRESS FOR LGBT WORSHIPERS

BY GEORGE AKERLY

There's a church near my home that in the spring of 2014 unfurled a rainbow flag on the building. There's also a sign posted nearby that says "God is still speaking".

As I drove by one day, I spotted on the front lawn two quite noticeable rainbow flags. Not long after, I spied an article in the local newspaper, announcing that the First Congregational Church of Bloomfield had become "Open and Affirming".

I took this as a clear sign that the church was now welcoming the LGBT community in for worship. As a gay man, I was thrilled to learn of their stance.

Yet, I still had little knowledge of just what ONA meant in the overall scheme of things. My next instinct was to contact the

pastor of the church to learn more about this new, welcoming spirit and to see if it made sense to author an article about the new ONA outlook to share much good news to the LGBT community as a whole. In my curiosity, I called and asked to speak with Pastor Deborah Blood.

When we first spoke, I let her know my interest, advised her that I'm a gay man who is intrigued and thrilled with the news of their decision to reach out to the LGBT community. She suggested that we get together with her Board of Trustees so that I'd be able to get a better understanding of this new stance the church had taken.

While waiting to arrange a new meeting, I took to the internet so as to learn more about the Open and Affirming practice in churches. I was delighted to learn that there are hundreds of church congregations around the United States that are Open and Affirming. I was most pleased to learn that many churches in the State of Connecticut were, indeed, ONA. In fact, the church that I had attended (on and off) as a child was on that list (First Congregational Church in Middletown, CT). Clearly, we have come a long way in seeking acceptance in this society.

The Open and Affirming Statement of the First Congregational Church in Bloomfield: "We engage

and support all people through worship, fellowship, learning, and service. In this spirit, we declare that this church is Open and Affirming. We welcome persons of every age, gender, gender identity and gender expression, sexual orientation, race, national origin, faith background, marital status and family structure, mental and physical ability, economic and social status and educational background. We invite all into the sanctuary of our fellowship and the full life and ministry of our church".

In speaking with Pastor Blood, I learned that 95 percent of the congregation had voted in favor of the ONA designation. In fact, she noted that the congregants had begun the process several years earlier.

The impetus for the affirmation of the LGBT members within the congregation resulted from congregants' personal experiences and knowledge.

Several church members have relatives – sons, daughters, brothers, sisters – who are members of the LGBT community. Undoubtedly, these members recognized the need for inclusion and a welcoming to the LGBT community. Clearly, there was a feeling of inclusivity and acceptance for this

congregation. As Pastor Blood also noted, "we already are" open and affirming, prior to the decision being made to present the proposal to the church. They've taken to heart the precepts of Open and Affirming.

Open and Affirming churches, continuing to grow throughout the country, are at the forefront when it comes to seeking equality for the LGBT community and in recognizing the validity of marriage equality. At the First Congregational Church in Bloomfield, Connecticut, all are afforded an Extravagant Welcome. In their public announcement, it is rampantly clear that all people are welcome, that the church indeed provides a safe sanctuary for all people.

Often, within the confines of a church service, the question is asked, "Is there more to be said?" Clearly, in this instance, there is a great deal more to be said.



WITH ANY ORGANIZATION

BY SCOTT KING, PRIME TIMERS CHARLESTON WV

With any organization, there are good times and not so good times. Member participation is the life blood for all of us! When you live in a small, rural state like West Virginia, there are challenges that our clubs in larger, more urban situations do not necessarily encounter. We have to deal with members who may drive 30 miles or more to get to a function. Weather becomes much more of a concern when you have to consider not everyone has a four-lane highway available. Then there are the challenges every PT chapter has: how to schedule activities that will draw in members, how to maintain our relevancy, how to meet the needs of our members.

The Charleston West Virginia PT'ers had been struggling for the last year or so. It seemed like whatever we did, we were getting just the same three or four dependables who always showed up. One of our members suggested having an event and inviting anyone who had ever been a member in the seven-year history of our club and this did sound like it had some potential.

Easier said than done. Who would have thought finding a room for 30-40 guys to have dinner would be such a headache? Hours were spent calling possible venues and caterers with no luck: too small or too ex-



Board of Directors members Andy Ragland, David Shumate, Scott King, and Russ Harvey

pensive. Then, we stumbled upon the obvious. One of the older restaurants in town had just been purchased by a new owner who was interested in working with us. What made it even more relevant was the basement of the restaurant had for decades been the home of the oldest gay bar in the state. Most of our members had very fond memories of evenings spent there and as we talked about the possibility the theme gradually emerged: "A Family Reunion at the Tap Room".

When we met with the owner, he was as excited

as we were about the prospects for our event. The last location of the bar had been upstairs in the building, in a room reverting back to its original purpose – a banquet room, now with an elevator. This was the answer to our prayers: space large enough to accommodate our group, easily accessible with the elevator, lots of parking, and a great theme that would be easy to market to our members.

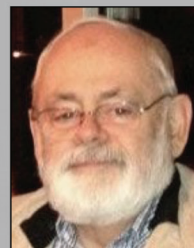
We scoured our membership rolls and found 42 current and former members still in our area. Those with emails got weekly teasers in their inboxes, advising them to hold the date for the biggest event in our history. That was followed by a letter to all 42, inviting them to join us for a free meal on November 11th and also enclosing a membership form, just in case. It took a round of phone calls to get the last responses but we had 30 positive RSVPs and the evening looked like it could be successful.

The room was full of charm when we walked in that evening. A Happy Hour allowed people to trickle in and enjoy a drink with an assortment of finger food before we settled in for the evening. Tables with specially printed menus welcomed our group, wine glasses with folded napkins, centerpieces on each table – it definitely wasn't just a regular dinner on our schedule.

When we left, it was with three renewed and three new memberships and the challenge to find ways to build on the interest and enthusiasm that our Family Reunion had created.

HELP IS ON THE WAY

BY GARY COPELAND



Need help in saving a chapter, or revitalizing one that is showing signs of decay and near death? Well, we may just have some ideas for you. Prime Timers Worldwide has just created a brochure that addresses that very problem. Just ask your chapter president or look on the PTWW website under the

Membership menu for the document named "Revitalizing and Reinventing an Existing PTWW Chapter". This is an adaption of a similar document created for the Society of Sigma XI (an international scientific research society) which has hundreds of chapters. We have adapted their experience to our own structure and we hope it will assist you in refreshing your chapter or restarting one.

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