

GLAD Chat

February 2013

20TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER SET FOR FEBRUARY 9TH SOCIAL



This month we mark a memorable anniversary for the Gay and Lesbian Association of Decatur. It was twenty years ago this month, on Feb. 13, 1993, that people met for a pot-luck at St. Thomas Church. It was the beginning of *GLAD*.

To commemorate this milestone our February 9th social will be an Anniversary Dinner catered by the GLAD Board of Directors. The dinner will feature

chicken, pork, rice, multiple vegetable dishes, tossed salad, rolls, and cake.

There will be no need to bring a dish to share. The suggested donation will be \$10 per person.

Those attending are asked to RSVP by Feb. 8th. The email to RSVP to is gladinfo@mchsi.com

The evening will begin with the usually socializing from 6:30 to 7, and dinner

will be served at 7 p.m. As usual, we will meet at the Peerless Corporate Training Center, 1304 N. 20th Street. GLAD is so very grateful to our friends at Peerless for allowing us to use this wonderful space. We certainly appreciate it.

We hope to see you there!

LIVELY CONVERSATION AT JANUARY SOCIAL

The January GLAD social brought a confluence of good food, good people and good conversation, as the social program of the evening featured round robin discussions on various LGBT topics.

We had 21 attendees and we divided ourselves into four groups and then rotated around the room discussing everything from activism to LGBT parenting to same-sex marriage. The conversations were lively, and participants seemed to really enjoy this

month's program.

Douglas also lined up two "ally coming out" stories for us in January. Husband and wife, John Wylder and Charla Stone, shared with us their history of being allies during their school years, and their assertion that being an ally was never a conscious choice; it was just the right thing to do.

John summed it up well when he said "'Gay' to me wasn't about sex. It was about being marginalized."

Comfort food reigned supreme for the evening. One of most popular dishes was Lee's tamale pie. A plate of holiday candy also proved to be a sweet treat for many.



February 9:
GLAD Social, 6:30 p.m. Peerless

RSVP – gladinfo@mchsi.com

February 10:

Just Flicks, 6 p.m. First Presbyterian

February 13:

"Edie & Thea," 7 p.m. Normal Theatre

March 2:

Gasland documentary, UUFD, uufd.org

March 9:

March GLAD Social

For more information or questions on any events please join us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/groups/GLAD1/

GLAD Chat is the monthly publication of the Gay and Lesbian Association of Decatur. To receive a free email copy of *GLAD Chat*, send your request to GLAD.newsletter@mchsi.com

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GLAD: IN THE BEGINNING

In the beginning, as the expression goes, the genesis of the Gay and Lesbian Association of Decatur (GLAD) was a 1980s television series called 'Dynasty.'

Several gay friends in Decatur would get together to watch the show, and the gatherings would include a potluck. Dynasty ended in 1989, but the tradition of the potluck continued and grew – eventually to the point that a space larger than a private home was needed. And while a desire for LGBT fellowship was a big part of GLAD's beginnings in 1993, there was more to the story than that.

Organizers sent out invitations to attend the first social: "Please accept this invitation....to become part of an exciting and new organization. The purpose of this group, one may ask? It has grown to include ideas of support, education, and even political action for those who wish to participate."

The first gathering was held on Feb. 13, 1993. Organizers provided sloppy joe's and chips. Those attending were asked to bring a dish to share and their ideas of what they would like to see from this new organization.

We have no record of how many folks attended the first social, but all indications were it was a rousing success. By the following month, the organization had the beginnings of a regular newsletter and four suggestions for the group's name. The winner, of course, was GLAD.

GREG GRAVEMIER REFLECTS ON GLAD HISTORY

(Editor's Note: Greg was GLAD's Chairperson from June 1993 to 2000)

When I reflect back on the eight years Leland and I were involved in GLAD, the Gay and Lesbian Association of Decatur, the thing that strikes me most about the organization, is that it meant a lot of different things to a diverse group of individuals.

When GLAD was started in February of 1993, there were no gay bars in Decatur. In fact, the Book of Gay Lists listed Decatur as one of the largest 10 cities in the country without a gay bar. And back in 1993 gay bars were one of the few ways people had to meet other gay people. This was before PCs and the Internet were so prevalent.

So for some people, GLAD was a way to hook up with other people. More than one relationship started at a GLAD meeting. For others, GLAD was simply a place they could go and meet and talk with other gay people. Then there was the more "out and proud" members who enjoyed talking gay politics and wanted to do their part to further the gay cause. Others were "out and proud" but not interested in politics, but enjoyed meeting old friends and making new friends.

And GLAD even meant a lot to some Decatur area gay people who never

once attended a GLAD event of any kind. For them, the GLAD newsletter was, for one reason or another, their only lifeline to the gay community.

Now I will admit Leland (my partner of over 36 years) and I did not attend the first GLAD meeting in February of 1993. But we did attend the March meeting and I don't think we missed a monthly meeting until we moved to Northern Virginia in the fall of 2001. During that period of time GLAD was an important part of our family with many memorable people and moments we will never forget.

For me, things started happening and changing very fast. Several of us participated in the 1993 March of Washington. And like many others, we returned home buoyed by the spirit of the march. A short time later, several men were arrested in a local park for having sex. In a weekend story across the top of the Decatur Herald and Review, with a banner headline, the Macon County District of Attorney Larry Fitcher was quoted, in explaining the arrests, something had to be done "about the fags in the park"

Just returning from the march, that comment sent cold chills through me. Monday I was at the state's attorney's office asking to speak with Mr. Fitcher. I asked if he knew his comment about

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We would like to send our deepest sympathies out to Mark Doyle on the passing of his mother in December. She was a special lady who was often Mark's muse for the holiday decorating of their Water Street home.

A big kudos goes to the GLAD Board for social planning. For perhaps the first time ever, the board has planned out the entire year's worth of social programs. And, thanks to Daniel, the dates and the programs are all up on the website. Now prospective attendees can go to gladdecatur.com and get all the particulars all year long.

The 1999 Meryl Streep film Music of the Heart will be this month's Just Flicks feature. It will be on 2/10 at 6 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church. Refreshments are served and there is always a lively discussion afterwards.

The Prairie Pride Coalition will be sponsoring a free screening of the marriage equality documentary Edie & Thea: A Very Long Engagement, on Wed. Feb. 13th at 7 p.m. at the Normal Theatre in Uptown Normal.

While the Marriage Equality bill did not make it through the lame duck session, it is not dead. In fact, it has been re-introduced, and as GLAD Chat goes to press, it looks like the bill will go before the full senate on Feb. 14th. We will, of course, keep you posted through the listserv and Facebook page.

(Greg Gravemier... continued from page 2)

"fags in the park" was inappropriate and

might even unintentionally lead to violent acts by others. I explained that when you dehumanize a segment of the population you are giving the "not too sophisticated" segment of the population tacit permission to bash gay people.

Mr. Fitcher and I eventually became friends. I later learned he was spotted at the Decatur library studying the issue of homosexuality. And I must say, he did an about face after he educated himself in the issue.

(Part Two of Greg's Reflections will be printed next month.)

GLAD LEADERSHIP THROUGH THE YEARS

One of GLAD's founders and earliest movers-and-shakers was Mark Doyle. He was instrumental in planning the first meeting in 1993. He also chaired the first gathering, but he made it clear he did not want to be GLAD's chairperson.

Not too long after the first social, Jerry Spicer agreed to be GLAD's first chairperson. Employed by a local hospital, Jerry led the group until June 1993 when he accepted a job in Texas and moved away.

At that point, Greg Gravemier became the chair. He led the group until he and his partner Leland moved to Virginia in 2000. In 2001, the bylaws were amended and a female co-chair was added. In GLAD's 20 year history, 15 people have served in co-chair positions.

Male Co-chairs

- 2/93-6/93 – Jerry Spicer
- 10/93 – 6/2000: Greg Gravemier
- 10/00 - 10/01: David Swinford
- 10/01- 10/03: Barry Parrish
- 10/03- 10/07: Jim Barr
- 10/07 – 10/10: John Poling
- 10/10 – 6/11: Marlon Chaney
- 6/11- 10/12: *Vacant*
- 10/12 – Present: Wes Drake

Female Co-chair added in 2001

- 10/01-10/02: Lisa Cotton
- 10/02-10/03: Cammi Lance-Ankoor
- 10/03 -10/05: Linda Ryherd-Schroeder
- 10/05-10/09 – Dottie Dare
- 10/09 – 3/11 MaryLynn Feltes
- 4/11 – 8/11 Emily Anderson
- 8/11 – Present: Rene Verry



Martha [*Lesbian*] Living

By Martha Miller

SURPRISE

Girlfriend can still surprise me. Every time I think I know her, she manages to do something that I never expected. Mostly our life is stable. This morning she was sitting in her recliner with a cat on her lap talking to me about the fires down on Eighth and Ninth Streets. The last one was in the home of a hoarder. It's kind of a Saturday morning routine: breakfast, reading (her the newspaper and me a book or magazine) and our pets (two cats, two dogs) taking turns in our laps. I like these little islands of peace in our lives. I draw energy from them. But there are still surprises. Like she made this doll for a fundraiser auction at the Lincoln Presidential Museum, where she volunteers. It was like Jack, the doll that belonged. Abe Lincoln repeatedly pardoned Jack, and Willie repeatedly put him to death anyway. We've been together over twenty years, and I didn't know she could make a doll. What a surprise.

It happened again last week. We were on North Grand going west and at the stop light on Monument when we got rear ended. This was the second time in a year (the first being last spring and quite serious—for the car, that is). We sat there for a minute and the car behind us backed up and pulled into the little strip mall, so after waiting for traffic to clear Girlfriend followed it. We were just in time to see the car pull out another exit. Girlfriend sped up and followed it out on to Monument going toward the cemetery. The driver must have thought it was a dead end street because the car did a U-turn back toward North Grand. So did Girlfriend. The car went through the light, and so did Girlfriend. I was in the passenger seat wondering who was driving the car we were chasing and if he had a gun. On North Grand the car sped up to about 60 mph, weaving in and out of traffic, so did Girlfriend. We passed a police car and I waved frantically and then Girlfriend told me to write down the license plate's number. It was a word. Who expects to get away with leaving the scene of an accident with a word for a license plate number? Someone who will leave no witnesses, that's who. The car was practically on two wheels as it sped through the light at Walnut going south and then turned onto one of the side streets. We were right behind it. I was looking at Girlfriend asking myself, who is this woman? Where was my calm collected girlfriend?

Finally the car pulled off the road at a church where there were several suspicious looking men standing around. Great, I thought, he's got his friends here. We are dog meat! But it turned out the cop had seen my frantic gestures and was behind us with flashing lights. Girlfriend got out of the car and told the officer what happened. They both went to the rear of our car and while some dirt had been displaced, there was no other damage. He went up to the car we had followed and spoke to the person inside that car. Then he said "Get out of the car." This short, chubby, middle-aged woman got out. She told him she didn't remember hitting us. He asked why she was going 60, weaving in and out of traffic. I don't know what she told him because he let us go. And we went. I suppose the scary looking people who had been standing around looking at us were church people, maybe on a smoking break or something.

I like action adventure movies and chase scenes. Moreover, this wasn't my first car chase. Years ago, doing research for a mystery I was working on, I went on a police ride-along, and they pulled someone over, who stopped and then took off. We followed at a high speed for several blocks. Then they lost him. I've been thinking about that a lot lately. Girlfriend threw the rules of the road out the window and didn't lose the car.

Martha Miller's latest book *Retirement Plan* is now out in audible (audio) in several formats. Check out Susie Bright's review. http://susiebright.blogs.com/the_bright_list/2012/11/if-jane-tennison-had-been-a-lesbian.html . Also Martha's "Books for Boomers" is up at <http://marthamiller.net/main/index.php/marthas-book-reviews>