

Ranger Report

January through June, 2021

A Ranger Love Story **By Tony Appleman**

On Sunday, February 14, 2021 (Valentine's Day), Josh A. Gosnell (full member) and Tony S. Appleman (full member) were happily married by Sir Kel (club treasurer and ordained minister). It was conducted at Kel's residence while following full covid-prevention protocol. The real heart of this story is how both Josh and Tony came to be.

Both met each other on late Friday night in December, 2019, at Flexx in Cleveland. A mutual friend of theirs, Sean, invited both of them to come out and join him and another friend of his, Joe, for a night of fun. Tony made it there first, met up with Sean and Joe, got settled in, and then made his way to the hot tub to meet up with his friends. While in the hot tub, Josh finally arrived, spotted Sean, and entered the hot water. It was at this moment that Josh's and Tony's eyes met.

Tony recalls it was love at first sight. He made several glances at Josh while in the hot tub, but every time they both made eye contact, he had to keep looking away because he was too shy to keep staring. Josh recalls that it was love at first sight for him as well.

Both Josh and Tony left the hot tub and headed to the pool. It wasn't long before Tony jumped on Josh's back and secured himself like a backpack. Afterwards, they left the pool and headed to Flexx's hallways.

Tony asked Josh if there was a place where the two of them could spend the rest of the evening privately. Fortunately, Josh had rented a room for the evening.

While in the room, both expressed their attraction and feelings for one another. They then heard an announcement regarding free HIV/STD testing. Before going any further, they decided to get tested. After an hour of waiting, they sat together hand-in-hand waiting for their results. The results came back negative which gave both of them a fresh start.



Throughout the week they texted each other, expressing their interests in leather. On New Year's Eve, they headed to Cocktails Akron where they publicly made it known that they were a couple. While there, they examined the Rangers' trophy case and decided to grab membership applications. Soon afterwards, they became associate members of the Rangers. While being associates, they attended monthly meetings and

volunteered to participate in several events. One in particular was Puppy Daze at Circle JJ's Ranch. This was Tony's first experience at the campground. They loved the experience and spent several more weekends there.

During the "Around the World" weekend, Tony popped the big question. However, it wasn't any ordinary proposal. While Josh and Tony were dancing face-to-face in the dance hall, a friend of theirs pulled Tony's pants down and ran away. Josh then noticed two engagement rings attached to Tony's cock ring. That's when Tony asked Josh to marry him, and Josh instantly told him yes.

This is a tale one would normally find in a storybook, but true love like this really does exist.

Ranger Accolades By Mike Miller



On March 24, 2021, Mike Miller of the Rangers was given an award by the LGBTQ Center of Cleveland. The award was for all of the continuing volunteer work that Mike does for the community. Since the CDC was still suggesting social distancing, the award was given during a Zoom call, but then Mike was able to pick up the actual award a week later. The LGBTQ Center of Cleveland gives this award annually. Mike was given this award for his long-distance dedication to Pride organizations around the state. (Mike lives in Columbus.) Some of

the work that Mike has done includes holding the Pride in CLE banner and helping cheer on the drivers at the Pride ride and other various activities.



My Involvement in Our Community By Jeff Bixby

Many of you know of my involvement with LGBTQ+ organizations for many years. Though covid has curtailed many recent involvements, my work with GLSEN Northeast Ohio has remained active supporting local high school GSA's (gender and sexuality alliances) and the Kent State University LGBTQ+ Alumni Organization. I'd like to let you know of a couple of other efforts I have become involved with in the last few months.

Representing GLSEN Northeast Ohio, I have recently joined the Ohio LGBTQ+ Youth Advocacy Coalition organized by the Columbus Kaleidoscope Youth Center and Equality Ohio. The groups' efforts are three-fold:

1. To set up constituent meetings with both Democratic and Republican legislators to educate them about the LGBTQ community generally and also the harms of recent anti-LGBTQ bills.
2. To coordinate and plan public education to raise awareness about harms of State bills and the importance of LGBTQ youth in our communities. This includes planning town halls, creating videos for social media, and other strategies.
3. To document stories from LGBTQ youth and those who support them.

We meet on Zoom once every two weeks. What is great about this is that activists from all over the state are discussing these efforts. This is one positive thing to come out of the pandemic.

Another project I am involved with is the LGBTQ+ Community Needs Assessment for the Greater Akron area, which is being funded by the Akron Community Foundation and several private donations. The effort is being coordinated by Kent State Research Program Coordinator, Andy Snyder. The past three month's efforts have been in preparation for the Community Needs Assessment. My work has been in one of seven leadership domains: Physical Health & Wellness, Religion Spirituality, Education & Literacy (my group), Housing, Food, and Nutrition, Employment & Commerce, Safety & Law Enforcement, and Recreation & Leisure.

Plans are that the survey will be ready for distribution in June and will continue to collect survey responses through Dec. 31st. Incentives for people to participate are in the works.



Getting Circle JJ Ranch Ready By Aazura Bowers

The weekend of May 7th, Tink, Mik, Christopher, and I went to Circle JJ Ranch to help our associate member Dan Williams to get the camp ready for the summer. We hung lights, set up the grills, and helped to set up bingo. We quit when the rain started, but were still able to get quite a bit done. We were finally able to play bingo and actually won a game. We left on Saturday due to the cold weather, but overall, the trip was a lot of fun.

Rangers' "Coming Out Again!" Party By Sir Kel

After a long respite because of covid, the Rangers held their first fund raiser in quite some time on June 6th. (The last event being "Puppy Daze" at Circle JJ Ranch in July, 2020.) That's why it was appropriately named "Coming Out Again!"

Sunday, June 6th, was time to "come out again" and have some fun. The event ended up being a HUGE success. The Leather Stallion in Cleveland was literally packed to the gills with people. Everyone was so anxious to get out, especially after Ohio's governor removed all restrictions on June 2nd.

The Rangers gave out over 65 gift cards and gift certificates valued at over \$350.00. The gift cards were actually part of the Rangers' 31st/32nd anniversary parties, both of which were cancelled due to covid.



Ranger treasurer, Sir Kel, was the emcee for the evening and kept things moving at a fast pace. Not only were there over 65 gift cards given away, but thanks to people buying plenty of raffle tickets, a few people went home with great gift baskets and the winner of the 50/50 raffle became \$76.00 richer.

Instead of the Rangers mingling among the crowd selling raffle and 50/50 tickets, for the continued safety of everyone, tickets were only sold at the door. Unlike previous events where we would visit with people and sell tickets, including "boots to balls," the Rangers felt it was much safer to have those interested in purchasing tickets to visit the front door.

There were special guest appearances by Denise Russell and Valerie Valentino, which made the evening even more enjoyable. The ladies gave stellar performances. . . as always.

Gwen from Equality Ohio spoke on stage to explain exactly how their group focuses on LGBTQ rights, especially trans rights. For example, she spoke about her group working with the Ohio legislature to help show the importance of State bills, such as HB 208 & SB 119. These bills deal with the Ohio Fairness Act, which would add sexual orientation and gender identity/expression to the laws that make discrimination illegal in Ohio.



Thanks to the great turnout, the Rangers were able to make a substantial donation to Equality Ohio so that they can continue their important work.

All-Club Leather Weekend By Aazura Bowers

As we entered the campground of Circle JJ Ranch on the weekend of June 28th, we knew it was going to be a great weekend. The campground was packed, and it wasn't even four o'clock yet on a Friday afternoon. As we got settled, even more were checking in. There were many leather clubs and quite a few Rangers.



On Friday we had a small picnic with a few close friends. At that time, we presented alumni member Ivan and associate member James with a beautiful cake celebrating their 3rd anniversary. They were incredibly happy to see the cake. After the celebration, the Rangers headed to the hot tub and the pool.

On Saturday, Christopher and Mik hosted the Ranger-sponsored cocktail party. Ivan and I cooked the hot dogs while Tink, Rob Roy, and James set up the lunch buffet. Trident, Iron Eagles, Unicorns, and Three Rivers Leathermen donated food to buffet as well. The buffet turned out to be a wonderful social function during which time all of the leather clubs were able to mingle and enjoy leather camaraderie.

After lunch, everyone hit the pool. The DJ was playing oldies, and there was a sing-along and dance party at the pool with about 50 people joining in.

For dinner, we headed to the food truck which was acquired by Circle JJ Ranch. While eating, the Rangers decided to play "Cards Against Disney." (Do you know why Geppetto has a difficult time sitting down? From the splinters in Pinocchio's nose.) By the way, Mik won the game.



At 10:00 PM, Christopher and Scott lined up the leather clubs for the Parade of Colors. The parade consisted of Trident Columbus, Iron Eagles, Three Rivers Leathermen (Pittsburgh), Unicorns, Rangers, and Empire MC (New York City). Yes, that's right. One of the oldest leather clubs from NY attended the leather weekend. Titleholders were also involved in the parade: Scott, Tink, & Christopher.



Afterwards, the Rangers presented the Unicorns a cake to celebrate their 50th anniversary. The Unicorns is the oldest leather club in Ohio. The members were very touched to be acknowledged with a cake.

All in all, this was the most successful All-Club Leather Weekend so far. Brother/sisterhood was paramount and leather camaraderie was at its peak.

UPCOMING RANGER EVENTS

Friday, July 23 through Sunday, July 25 PUPPY DAZE at Circle JJ Ranch
Fundraiser- Akron Humane Society
Activities: Saturday- Puppy pound fund raiser
Saturday night- “Puppy Daze Puppy 2021” contest
Applications for contest- aazurak@yahoo.com or
juliaunderwood07@gmail.com

Saturday, August 7 BEAR DAY at Circle JJ Ranch
Activities: Saturday afternoon and evening- Mr. Ohio Bear 2021 contest
Applications for contest- dreamdaddee@aol.com

Saturday, August 28 AKRON PRIDE FESTIVAL at Lock 3
Activities: The Rangers will have a booth giving information about the Rangers and the
leather community with pamphlets and giveaways.

Saturday, November 20 LEATHERFEST at Cocktails Akron
Fundraiser- TBD
Activities- Mr. Leather Akron 2022 contest
Applications for contest- dreamdaddee@aol.com

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