



2010 Membership Handbook

(Rev. 26-Sep 2009)

MISSION: To develop a visual performance ensemble that is challenging and FUN for its members while producing the highest quality entertainment within our means.

1. History / Background:

- **1994** - A group of 10 marches with the Columbus Gay Men's Chorus in the Columbus Gay Pride Parade and perform to "Give It Up" at the Pride Rally at Bicentennial Park.
- **1999** - Matt Eisert joins 'The Flaggots' in the NY City Gay Pride Parade (3.5hrs, 770,000 participants), performing to Whitney Houston's "It's not right, but it's OK."
- **2002** - **DEBUT!** Matt Eisert & Joe Bowman met with several local guard instructors who showed interest in performing. 'The Flaggots' (NY/NJ/PA) gave permission to use their name, music and routine. **Flaggots Ohio** debuted with 15 performers in the **Columbus Pride Parade** performing to Mary J. Blige's 'No More Drama'. Later that year, FO performed as the Kick-off Entertainment to the **National PFLAG Conference** held in Columbus, with guest performers joining them from The Flaggots (NY/NJ/PA) and Chicago's Righteously Outrageous Twirling Corps (ROTC). FO Members make debut appearance in The Mary Ann Brandt Christmas Show.
- **2003** - **BEAUTIFUL...**10 performers debut 'Beautiful' on May 4 at **AIDS Walk 2003**. FO marches 24 performers through 'Ohio Pride Tour' including **Dayton (6/7)**, **Cincinnati (6/14)** and **Columbus (6/28)**. FO members appear in 2 Mary Ann Brandt Shows and join Chicago's ROTC to perform in Chicago's FIREBALL (Feb), Gay Pride Parade (Jun), San Diego's Pride Parade (Jul) & Halsted Street Fair (Aug). FO adds rifle to their program and wraps up the 2003 outdoor performance season at their premier at **King's Island PRIDE NIGHT (9/26)** with 11 guests from Chicago's ROTC.
- **2004** - **ALL THINGS...**FO begins weekly indoor rehearsals at Wall Street Nightclub, adopts military uniform base to parallel ROTC units and adds Safety Green T's. 'All Things' kept getting better with FO's new Web Site, increased media coverage, 2 performances with **Simone Denny** and 18 performers at each attended Pride event and 2 Mary Ann Brandt Show appearances (18 performances total, 5 songs).
- **2005** - **CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'...**FO plans trip to **San Diego, CA** for Pride late July, hosting Yard Sale, Variety Show, Gallery Hop appearance and more to raise money to send 15 out west. Adds 'True Color' to the program via small ensemble floor show. FO makes Columbus 'PROUD' by bringing home "**Most Outrageous and Creative Marching Float**" award from SD Parade. FO makes local news in *Via Colori Finale* and members appears in 2 Mary Ann Brandt Shows. (25 performances, 6 songs)
- **2006** - **NOBODY!...FO's 5th Anniversary!** Winter Training & Marketing Programs produce largest member base (27 flags / 13 rifles). FO performs ROTC Chicago's "Baby, I'm a Star" w/Nina West at Axis Hot Spot and Dancin' in the Streets. Flaggot Classic "All Things" gets new twist, using split flag/rifle blocking and 'old-school' tricks. Pink T-shirt, new FO Logo, member-made Pink/Black striped flags, and Voice-Over Introductions all add to the mix while appearing at Short North Gallery Hop, Columbus Pride and Festival, and lastly King's Island Pride Night. Members appear in 2 Mary Ann Brandt Shows, **Gay Games VII in Chicago**, Halloween 23 in New Orleans and Santa Parade in St. Petersburg, FL. (16 total performances, 9 songs)
- **2007** - **SUPER FREAK...**Several members break off in search of more diverse performance opportunities, to form *Spin Columbus*. FO's Founding members rebuild smaller, more unified ensemble with a less rigorous performance schedule than in years past. FO's core 15 Performers and 12 Supporters dazzle crowds at the June Gallery Hop, Bat-N-Rouge Softball Game as well as the Columbus Pride Parade and Festival, winning **Best 2007 Performance!** Performers appeared in 2 Mary Ann Brandt Shows and several cameos w/Nina West. 6 performers and 4 supporters travel to Palm Springs, CA to assist w/the debut of FO's newest sibling, **Flaggots Palm Springs**. Flaggots Ohio receives the honor of being inducted into the **Gay Ohio Historical Initiative (GOHI)** and receives media coverage in *Columbus Alive*, *SPIN! Magazine* as well as a feature story in *OUTlook Magazine*.
- **2008** - **MESMERIZED...**Flaggots Ohio ventured to **Indianapolis** with 11 performers for another FO-FIRST to help celebrate INDY Pride with ROTC Chicago. FO then returned to the streets of Columbus with a **NEW LOOK** and **GREAT** attitude! Sixteen (16) performers braved the battering winds and inclement weather to perform in the Pride Parade for those who remained along Columbus' parade route. FO didn't fare too well at the Festival, for a monsoon hit center stage just moments before performance time...so, no FO Show this year. Bat-N-Rouge and AIDS Walk offered 2 more performance opp's for local well deserved charities.
- **2009** - **ABSOLUTELY HOT!...**Coming out stronger than ever, 23 performers braved the *Winds on High* to dazzle record Columbus crowds (180,000+) with Debora Cox and FO's infamous Pink/Black striped flags. Big Fun was had by members new & old with performing guests from NY & Chicago. Ohio's Flaggots performed at Goodale Park, Columbus' own Bat-N-Rouge Softball Benefit and the ever important AIDS Walk in Franklin Park.

2. 2010 Membership Dues / Equipment / Uniforms:

Dues:

- **PERFORMING MEMBER** – Membership Fee = **\$25** + Performance Fee = **\$25***
- **AFFILIATE PERFORMER** – Membership Fee = *No Charge* / Performance Fee = **\$15.**
- **EVENT SUPPORT** – Membership Fee = *No Charge* / FO Support T-shirt = **\$15.**

All paid fees are non-refundable and are required prior to participating in ANY rehearsal activity. Performance Fees **must be received / paid in full by May 25.** *Performance Fees will be waived for any Performer who delivers an ANUAL SPONSOR of \$250 or more!

The following **forms of payment** will be accepted: **cash, personal check** made payable to “*Flaggots Ohio, LLC*”, or **credit card** online using PayPal. ALL contributions to Flaggots Ohio, LLC will receive a paid receipt for said amount upon request. Please direct all fees with signed Membership Forms to the Director. ALL returned checks (NSF) will result in a *\$20 service charge* along with denied access to Forum, Rehearsal and Performance Rights until member financial obligations are met. Members experiencing financial hardships are asked to speak with the Director to discuss payment or service plan options.

Signed Membership Applications are **required** to access Flaggots Ohio Forum Member Boards, Member Lists and Calendar Events, Tools and Documentation in the FO Forum, the use of Flaggots Ohio rehearsal and performance facilities and equipment, skilled instruction, and performance opportunities.

Equipment:

- **FLAGS** - Flaggots Ohio will provide an outdoor rehearsal flag for all ensemble rehearsals. These flags are the property of Flaggots Ohio, LLC, and are to remain at FO HQ or with FO Staff after each rehearsal. It is each member’s responsibility to obtain and return their rehearsal flag (*rolled neatly*) to/from the flag-bag or storage location at every rehearsal.
- **RIFLES** – (*Optional*) FO’s Rifle Line Members are **required** to purchase their own practice and/or performance rifle (~\$35.00/ea). Please put your name on the underside *where trigger would be.* **Fingerless gloves are optional!** ‘Show’ rifles are to be *all white w/black strap* at each performance event. Please visit to the Members Forum Library for information on ordering equipment, gloves and related optional carrying cases.

Uniforms:

- **PERFORMER** – Performing Members will receive 1 (*one*) Flaggots Ohio 2010 Performance T-Shirt with paid Membership Dues. Additional or replacement T-shirts will be available for ~ \$15/ea.
- **SUPPORT** – Support Members are asked to wear a *Safety Green* Flaggots Ohio (*sleeveless*) T-shirt during each FO Performance Event. This is done in an effort to help identify the Support Team quickly if needed. FO Support and Performance T-shirts are available for \$15/ea.
- **AFFILIATES** - Members of affiliate units (*Flaggots NY / ROTC Chicago / etc.*) will receive 1 (*one*) Flaggots Ohio Performance T-Shirt with paid Affiliate Performer Dues.

Each Performing, Affiliate, and Support Team Member will also be responsible for the purchase of (*minimum of 1 of the following*):

- Green based Camouflage Pants (*for winter*) and/or
- Green based Camouflage Shorts/Skirts/Kilts (*for summer*)
- Black Footwear (*Boots preferred*)
- Black Fingerless Gloves (*if performing w/rifle*)

(*Please refer to the FO Forums Library - Uniform and Equipment Catalog for more information!)

3. Rehearsals / Attendance:

- **Etiquette:** **The success of the ensemble and quality of our performance relies on your commitment to this organization!** Please strive for maximum results during designated rehearsal times. Periodic breaks will be given to all members for rest, drink, food, smoke, etc. and we ask that all Performing Members:

- **Arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of all rehearsals.** Please assist with setup and be in position with equipment ready to begin at the specified rehearsal time.
- **Respect your host!** All members are to clean up after themselves and the entire Flaggots Ohio Organization after every FO function, **regardless of the location!** This includes gathering trash, cigarette butts, beverage containers and litter. If a member or guest is caught misusing or mistreating FO Equipment or any Rehearsal or Performance Venue, they will be dismissed from Flaggots Ohio immediately and without notice!
- **‘Mums’ the word!** Your Creative Design Team will do their best to maximizing the best use of rehearsal time and available resources, and we ask the same of YOU. Please keep conversations to a minimum during rehearsals, saving conversation/socializing for breaks or before/after rehearsal.

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- **'eh, Sonny?'** Please remember that some performing members are hearing impaired and may not hear you if you mumble.
 - **Absences:** If a performing member misses a rehearsal, it is the responsibility of that member to learn what was missed **prior to** the next scheduled rehearsal. The CDT will only run brief reviews at the beginning of regularly scheduled FO Rehearsals. If we don't hear from you, **empty spots will be closed.** (*accountability!*)
 - **Winter Flag and Rifle Clinics:** (*Jan- Apr*) will be held at **Wall Street Night Club** (144 N. Wall Street) on **Thursday** evenings from **7pm-9pm** on the 3rd floor. Flaggots Ohio's Creative Design Team (*CDT*) will be reviewing color guard and body techniques and basic equipment skills that are required to perform with Flaggots Ohio. All participants are encouraged to practice at home between rehearsals to reinforce these basic *FUNDamentals!*
 - **Spring / Summer Rehearsals:** Membership Applications and Profile information will be used to determine best time for Weekend Rehearsals during Spring and Summer. Full Ensemble Rehearsals are typically 2-4hrs, and will be scheduled 4 weeks prior to ALL Performance Events and **are mandatory!**
- 4. Skill Level for Flaggots Ohio:**
- **Basic Skill Set** - In an effort to maintain the level of quality that audiences have come to expect from Flaggots Ohio, every performing member **MUST** meet the basic skill sets in order to perform! Winter Flag and Rifle Clinics will end late April and we will do our best to help you throughout the winter, but come June, if you still can't cut it and stick out, **YOU WILL NOT BE PERFORM!**
 - **Performance blocking** is established by technical skills, performance readiness, attendance, attitude and participation. Book and placement are assigned to create visual effects and may be adjusted at anytime! Staging restrictions, financial backing, performance readiness and/or other factors may dictate hard-pressed decisions resulting in what may seem 'unfair' to some performers. Sorry...it is what it is.
- 5. Membership Requirements:**
- **Good Standing:** Every Performing Member of Flaggots Ohio must adhere to the following in order to establish and maintain *Performance Rights*:
 - Current year **dues paid in full**
 - These **required forms** submitted with member signature:
 - **Membership Application**
 - **Release of Right, Liability and Compensation**
 - **Emergency Contact Information (online profile)**
 - **Medical Health Questionnaire (optional)**
 - **Attendance** (*or independent effort to learn / catch up*)
 - **Support Team Participation:** (*1 or more of the following*)
 - *Audio/Video*
 - *Equipment*
 - *Fundraising*
 - *Marketing*
 - *Event Support*
 - *Creative Design Team (appointed)*
 - **Conduct:** Performing, Affiliate and Support Members of Flaggots Ohio are to represent the Flaggots Ohio Organization to its BEST capacity while wearing the FO Uniform or Logo before, during and after all Flaggots Ohio Performance Events and/or during Performance Events while other organizations are performing. Inappropriate conduct includes:
 - *Spinning, tossing or related visual distractions in the view of a designated audience during the performance of affiliate organizations.*
 - *Loud or ludicrous behavior that may be distracting to paying patrons during performance events involving Flaggots Ohio.*
 - *Distasteful or disrespectful comments towards anyone!*
 - **Event Participation:** ALL Performing Members of Flaggots Ohio **MUST** be registered online **6 weeks** prior to scheduled Performance Events, in the Members Forum Calendar at www.FlaggotsOhio.org. This will allow the CDT ample time to stage, document, and teach the related choreography.
 - **Event Transportation / Admission:** Transportation to/from all Flaggots Ohio events and rehearsals lies under the responsibility of each individual member. Carpooling and mass transit may be available for Remote Events. When Flaggots Ohio performs at an Event requiring an admission fee, all Performing, Affiliate and (1) Support Member per 4 Performing Members of Flaggots Ohio will receive entrance to that event if they are in Good Standing AND actively participating with that event.
 - **Remote Events:** On occasion, Flaggots Ohio will receive an out of town performance request. In such cases, Event Information and Fee Schedules will be provided as far in advance as possible for consideration.

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If FO chooses to accept the invitation, Members may be asked to pay for their own transportation to/from that event along with lodging and misc. travel costs. **Participation in every event is not mandatory!**

- **Affiliate Members:** are considered current members of Affiliate Color Guard Organizations (i.e. *Flaggots NY / ROTC Chicago / etc.*) A financial contribution may be required of Affiliate Members when joining Flaggots Ohio for special performances where additional costs are accrued (*bus rental, amusement park admission, etc.*). Affiliate costs will be determined on a per event basis.
- **SUPPORT CREW NEEDED!** We HIGHLY encourage potential members, friends, partners and family to help before/during/after ALL performances and rehearsals whenever possible. There are many 'behind the scenes' tasks that could use their efforts. Talk to our Membership Chair to see what talents are needed!

6. Membership Communication:

- **WWW.FLAGGOTSOHIO.ORG** will be our **primary source of communication**. FO's *Performance Event Schedule* will appear on the FO Home Page and the *Members Forum* will contain information needed for training, rehearsals, performances and more!
 - Each Member will be given a User Name (*First Last*) and Password (*default = "temp"*). Please log in and complete/verify your personal information in your **My Profile (User CP)** (under 'Edit Profile'). This information is critical for smooth operation and will be used by the Leadership Team ONLY!
 - All Performing Members are **required to register for every Performance Event**. This is done online in the Forum Calendar (*click on the Date of the Event*).
 - All Event Logistics, Blocking Charts, Schedules and last-minute details will be stored in the Members Forum. Please check the Members Forum regularly and read all updates carefully! If you are not sure how to access the Member Forum, contact the Membership Chair for assistance. When in doubt as to what's going on with Flaggots Ohio, remember... "*it's on the web!*"
- **Email** is secondary method of FO communication. Official notifications will be preceded with "**FO:**" in the email subject line. Please DO NOT '*reply all*' for personal, political or other non-colorguard related topics. If you need help with a routine, have a special personal event coming up or want to find out how the local color guards are doing, don't send an email...check out the Members Forum instead!
- **Cell Phones!** Call a FOriend! The **FO Membership Roster** is available to the General Membership and can be found online in the Members Forum under **Members List**. Please use this tool to promote practicing with *Fellow Flaggots* outside of weekly structured rehearsals. Also, take a few minutes and program these phone numbers into your cell phone contacts so you'll have them at your fingertips!

(Information collected in the *Membership Forms Workbook* is for the Use of Flaggots Ohio, LLC Staff, its' Membership and Support Personnel ONLY and will not be sold or distributed without your consent.

7. Funding Flaggots Ohio:

- **Member Support:** Flaggots Ohio IS a Volunteer Organization with limited financial support and resources. We ask FO's Members to support the organization financially wherever possible, offer sponsorship for a fellow performing member who cannot afford dues and/or donate your time and/or a service that could benefit the organization both on the street and off!
- **Performance Fee Schedule:** In an effort to manage the incoming flow of performance requests, Flaggots Ohio has implemented a Performance Fee Schedule for Performance Requests over and above Columbus Pride and AIDS Walk. All such inquiries should click on the "**BOOK US**" link on the FO.org Home Page. There, the Event Coordinators will have the opportunity to view our *Performance Fee Schedule*, time lines and related staging requirements along with what Flaggots Ohio will provide for them in return.
- **FO Show Promo:** We encourage every performer to participate with FO Marketing and Fundraising Events whenever possible. Word of mouth travels pretty fast in our community and YOU are our best 'Horn Tooter'! Please ask the Director to see how you can help keep FO's wheels *spinning!*
- **Financial Process:** With any organization, budgets are necessary. Please contact the Director prior to purchasing items for the organization that may require reimbursement. This consideration will save all of the parties involved a potentially uncomfortable situation. Once a purchase is approved, the original receipt must be submitted to receive financial reimbursement.

8. Flaggots Ohio - The Organization:

- Flaggots Ohio emerged from the LOVE of COLOR GUARD! We carry the torch that has been passed to us and encourage you to do the same.
- FO's Team Leaders want a safe and enjoyable experience for ALL who participate. We need to know what works and what doesn't, so please provide input and get involved!
- Last but not least...**HAVE FUN and MAKE IT WORK!** =>

THANK YOU for your interest in **FLAGGOTS OHIO!**