Observing Tucson And
The Greater Arizona Community

OBSERVER

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Victory Fund Gears Up For 2006 election

Colordo State Senator Jennifer Veiga

COLORADO SPRINGS - When state Sen. Jennifer Veiga made the agonizing decision to come out as Colorado's first openly Gay lawmaker, she turned to the Gay and Lesbian Leadership Institute for strategic advice, reported the Associated Press on 365Gay.com.

And when Beth -------- signed on to help an openly Gay candidate for mayor of Brockton, Mass., she attended the institute's campaign seminar and learned what to do if an opponent tries to make an issue of homosexuality.

Veiga credits the institute with helping her win re-election in 2002 after she went public; Beth says the group is helping her avoid mistakes in Jass Stewart's September primary campaign.

The 14-year-old Washington-based institute, attached to the Victory Fund, matches candidates with consultants, helps with fund-raising and runs up to five campaign seminars a year around the country - including one earlier this year in the conservative bastion of Colorado Springs.

Robin Brand, the institute's vice president for campaigns and elections, said the group mostly teaches fundamentals that any candidate — Gay or straight — would learn from any consultant: identifying potential voters, raising money, building contact lists.

But the institute also uses role-playing exercises and other training to help candidates avoid being sidetracked by questions about their sexuality.

"We tell them to answer openly and honestly, but to get back on message," Brand said. "It's a great exercise because that is one of the challenges that openly Gay candidates need to handle."

The institute is quiet about its work. Brand and other officials declined to provide details of the training, and reporters were allowed to watch the seminar here for just 15 minutes.

Veiga, a Democrat who represents Denver, said she contacted the institute when she became worried opponents would make an issue of her sexuality. The institute put her in touch with campaign consultant Joe Fold, who advised her to disclose her sexual orientation herself.

She did so in an interview with the Rocky Mountain News published in August 2002, nearly three months before the election. "We felt that it was important to come out on her terms," Fold said. "And even though she'd been out with her friends and family for a long time, there's a big difference between that and the public."

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Majority Of Americans Support Rights For G/L Couples

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Support among American voters for same-sex marriage has rebounded to its highest point since July 2003 and for the first time, a majority favors giving Gay and Lesbian couples many of the same rights as married couples, 365Gay.com reported.

While 53% of those polled by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press oppose Gay marriage, 35 percent said they favor Gay marriage. That is the highest number of people supporting same-sex marriage since the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court took up the marriage issue in 2003, ultimately ruling in November that year that Gay couples could wed.

Following the ruling support for Gay unions plummeted and in last year's election 11 states banned same-sex unions in their constitutions.

But, as the pollsters note, the bigger news is the growing support for civil unions and legal protections for Gay couples.

Fifty-three percent, the same number as oppose Gay marriage, would permit Gays and Lesbians to enter into legal arrangements that would give them many of the same rights as married couples.

"This is exactly what the right wing is afraid of," Evan Wolfson, executive director of Freedom to Marry and author of Why Marriage matters told 365Gay.com. "If we stick with the conversation and persist in engaging the non-Gay public on marriage equality the pubic will move to fairness."

The questions on same-sex couple rights were part of a broader series of surveys by Pew between July 7 and 17, prior to the nomination of John Roberts to the Supreme Court.

Gay marriage did not figure in the top five issues people believe the Supreme Court should deal with. Abortion topped the list, followed by terror suspect rights, religious displays, lawsuit award limits, and affirmative action.

A consistent majority of Americans (65%) are opposed to overturning the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision establishing a woman's right to abortion. But most Americans also favor restrictions on abortion. Nearly three-quarters (73%) favor requiring women under age 18 to get parental consent before being allowed to get an abortion.

Observer Endorsement: Nina Trasoff For Ward 6 Council Primary

Three seats on Tucson's City Council, for Ward's 3, 5 and 6 are up for consideration in 2005. Who will be running as their party's nominee for the general election has been set for all but one contest, the Ward 6 Democratic nomination, for which voters will go to the polls (early voting starting Thursday, August 11, the primary election to take place Tuesday, September 13) to decide who of two candidates will face incumbent Republican, Fred Ronstadt in the fall campaign.

Steve Farley, a local artist who was the founder of Citizens for Sensible Transportation, which had pushed a light-rail proposal that was defeated by voters in 2003 and Nina Trasoff, a former television news reporter and founder of the public relations firm, Trasoff and Associates are vying for the Democratic nomination in Ward 6.

Both candidates would serve the needs and the constituents of Ward 6 and Tucson very well, bringing new ideas and commitments to improving the city to the Council but with a primary election, there can be only one choice, and The Observer believes that it is Nina Trasoff.

Trasoff has given her time and service to better the lives of all Tucsonans. She has volunteered and worked for numerous community organizations, as well as serving on the board of directors for such community groups as the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation, the Brewster Center for Victims of Family Violence, Arizona Center for the Law and Public Interest, the Tucson Chapter of the American Cancer Society, the Tucson Rape Crisis Center, and Community Shares of Southern Arizona. In addition to all her community service, Trasoff is serving currently as a commissioner on the Tucson/Pima County Commission on Addiction Prevention and Treatment.

With her long track record for such organizations, Trasoff would bring a fresh perspective on issues of concern affecting all Tucsonans as well as a vision to better the Old Pueblo for future generations with her extensive background.

Passionate, experienced, involvement, articulate, intelligent and with a long-standing commitment to make Tucson a better place for all, including Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender residents, something for which Trasoff received the endorsement of the Southern Arizona Stonewall Democratic Club for her stands, makes Nina Trasoff the choice to make in the Ward 6 Council Democratic primary.

UPDATE

Community Forum On Voting Aug. 16

By Mark R. Kerr

TUCSON (ON) - With the 40th anniversary of the federal Voting Rights Acts marked, the importance of registering to vote and casting a ballot is more important than ever during these times, especially with the threat of the proposed, Protect Marriage Arizona amendment (PMAA) voters will most likely face on the ballot in 2006.

In Arizona, with the unfortunate passage of Proposition 200 in the November 2004 general election, voter registration regulations, as well as the rules to actually casting a ballot have changed, thanks to the proposition's supporters who alleged that purported voter fraud in the Grand Canyon State was rampant, despite evidence showing otherwise, and with the acquiescence of the U.S. Justice Department, who ruled the proposition didn't violate the Voting Rights Act, rules that Arizona must follow thanks to its dubious past track record on elections.

On Tuesday, August 16, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m., at Wingspan's new location, 425 E. 7th Street, a community forum will take place on voting, registering to vote - the new requirements, as well as discussing the new rules about casting a ballot, either an early (vote by mail) or at the polling place on election day, will take place and is sponsored by Wingspan and Arizona Together.

Going over the new regulations and guidelines will be Pima County Recorder F. Ann Rodriguez. A question and answer period will follow.

With the radical right trying to take away what few rights GLBT Arizonans have, this first forum on voting is one that should not be missed and every member of the community should be informed on this important aspect of ones lives. For more information, call Jess Knutson, (520) 624-1779 Ext. 21, jknutson@wingspan.org.

Arizona Together Update:

TUCSON (ON) - Recently, a challenge fund raiser went out to the GLBT and straight supportive Arizonans in which if Arizona Together raised $25,000 in pledges in 25 hours, that amount would be matched by a noted Tucson realtor and thanks to your efforts, the challenge was met!

This will be the first of many challenges to be faced in the upcoming months in this ongoing battle against the Center for Arizona Policy (CAP), the group spearheading the Protect Marriage Arizona amendment (PMAA)

If approved the PMAA would define marriage as consisting of "one man and one woman," and prohibits the recognition or creation of any legal status for any unmarried persons similar to marriage.

This measure would strip away many benefits, including health and dental coverage, currently offered to the domestic partners, same and opposite sex, of employees for the governmental entities which offers these as well as affected many state laws and private business policies. With the PMAA, Gays and Lesbians will lose access to petition their grievances in a court of law on such matters.

One thing is clear, once the state Constitution is amended, there is no going back and we must stop those individuals, such as CAP, who insist on mandating their discriminatory will upon the rest of the state.

No one is safe, regardless of their station in life. No one should feel comfortable, since this measure will affect every Gay and Lesbian so the time for involvement is now!

In Southern Arizona, call Jessica Knutson at Arizona Together, (520) 624-1779, Ext. 21, and for Phoenix and Northern Arizona, call (602) 908-4067, or go online to aztogether.org and sign up to volunteer and get the E-mail updates.

Two options to donate: if you don't wish to give online, then make checks payable to "aztogether.com" and mail them to AZTogether.com, 2303 N 44th St, #14-1548, Phoenix, AZ 85008. At their Web site, aztogether.org, people can also make secure online, credit-card donations as well.

Positions Open At Wingspan

TUCSON - Wingspan, Southern Arizona's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center, is hiring a full-time Health and Wellness Program Coordinator.

The Coordinator of Wingspan Health and Wellness Programs will be responsible for design and implementation of all health program activities, with a focus on early detection and screening programs for Cancer, Heart Disease, Stroke, and Pulmonary Disease for the LGBT community.

The compensation is $30,000 annual salary with health benefits. This position is grant-funded by the Arizona Department of Health Services. Funding is for one year, with the possibility of renewal.

To Apply: Submit letter of interest; résumé with dates of employment; and names, addresses, and phone numbers of three references to Wingspan, 425 E 7th St.; Tucson, AZ 85705. Fax: 520-624-0364. Email: wingspan@wingspan.org. Open until filled. No calls please. AA/EOE . . .

Wingspan's Anti-Violence Project (WAVP) is seeking a bilingual advocate and educator.

This position provides crisis intervention and advocacy services to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) victim/survivors of violence and allies, as well as providing outreach and education about violence within and against the LGBT with a focus on Spanish-speakers. The bilingual advocate and educator provides support for the WAVP Coordinator.

To apply, send a cover letter, resume and contact information of three references to Wingspan, 425 E. 7th Street, Tucson, AZ 85705, or fax (520) 624-0364 or E-mail wingspan@wingspan.org. For more details, duties and responsibilities for this position, go online to wingspan.org. No calls please. AA/EOE

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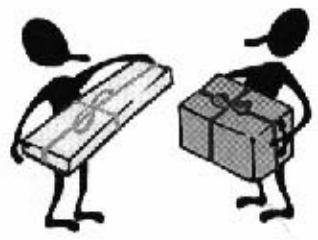

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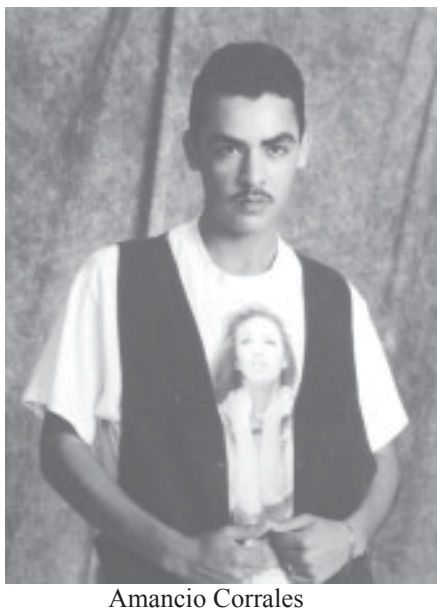
A Capital Vigil for Amancio Corrales Held Aug. 6



Amancio Corrales

Amancio Corrales as Dalia

PHOENIX - It's been three months since Amancio Corrales, 23, a Gay man and female impersonator, was murdered near Yuma.

Since then the unsolved case has become a rallying cause for rights advocates throughout Arizona. Many believe that Corrales was the victim of a hate crime, although investigators have declined to label it as such as this point, reported several media outlets.

On Saturday evening (August 6), nearly 100 people, Corrales family supporters and others gathered at the Arizona Capitol for a candlelight vigil to honor the victim's memory. Some carried signs saying, "Stop Hate Crimes!" and "Hate is NOT a Family Value."

"We don't know if this is a hate crime," said state Sen. Robert Cannell, D-Yuma, who attended the event along with Corrales' mother and sister. "But if it was a hate crime, it's tragic," Cannell added. "We hope that the perpetrator will be bought to justice."

Fabiola Corrales, 19, said she hopes her brother's violent death will help end discrimination against Gay people. His mother, Maribel, declined to comment on her son's death.

The vigil was intended, among other things, to help support the Corrales family, said Amy Kobeta, a spokeswoman for the Arizona Human Rights Fund & Foundation, one of several Gay rights advocacy groups represented there.

Also, it was aimed to push for adoption of federal legislation now before the U.S. House and Senate, Kobeta said. There are two pending bills that would give the FBI and other agencies more authority in dealing with hate crimes.

Specifically, they would expand the law to include violent crimes based on gender identity, thus allowing the FBI to track Transgender violence, according to the National Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Centers, a lobbying group based in Washington, D.C., and Garden Grove, Calif.

Two separate bills, now before the judiciary committee of each house of Congress, were introduced May 26 by Massachusetts lawmakers, a week after lobbyists blanketed Capitol Hill. In 1997, then-Gov. Fife Symington signed an Arizona hate-crimes bill that gave judges discretion to serve up harsher sentences for people found guilty of committing crimes motivated by hate.

As for Corrales, he worked as a cosmetologist but also performed as a female under the stage name Dalila, impersonating famous singers. His body was found May 6 in shallow water of the Colorado River near Yuma after what investigators believe was some bar hopping with friends. The cause of death has been listed as violent trauma. He was seen the night of his slaying at several bars in Yuma in drag. Police believe Corrales may have left one of the bars with people who believed him to be a woman.

Plea Deal Offered In New Mexico Gay Beatings

SANTA FE - Prosecutors have offered plea deals to at least five of the six defendants charged in connection with the beating of two Gay men outside a Santa Fe motel earlier this year, attorneys associated with the case said, reported the New Mexican newspaper.

Two of the young men — Gabriel Maturin, 20, and Joseph Cano, 19 — plan to accept prosecutors' offers, which typically include some reduction of charges in exchange for guilty pleas, lawyers said. However, David Trinidad, 17, will plead guilty to all the charges against him, lawyers said Friday (August 5). A lawyer for a fourth defendant, 20-year-old Paul Montoya, said her client has received a plea offer but she refused to comment further. Attorneys for the other defendants — Isaia Medina, 19, and Jonathan Valdez, 23 — could not be reached for comment.

Trinidad, who is charged with aggravated battery, battery, conspiracy and criminal damage to property, was offered a deal by prosecutors, said Stephen Aarons, his lawyer. "But it seemed to be in his best interest to go this way" and plead guilty to all charges, Aarons said. There is no agreement concerning Trinidad's sentencing, and it will be up to state District Judge Michael Vigil to decide if the 17-year-old will face adult or juvenile sanctions, Aarons said.

While Aarons said Trinidad "was not a major participant in the beating," prosecutor Heidi Pircher disagreed.

"But for David Trinidad, this incident wouldn't have happened," she said. "David Trinidad was the one who told the group where the homosexual men were staying," she said.

James Maestas, 21, and Joshua Stockham, 23, were attacked February 27 in the parking lot of a Cerrillos Road motel in what Santa Fe police described as a hate crime. Early that morning, the two beating victims had been eating with a group of friends at a restaurant, police said. Maestas, Stockham and their friends left the restaurant after the group of young men became aggressive toward them, according to the police account. However, Trinidad, a waiter who had served Maestas and his friends at the restaurant, knew where they were going and directed his friends to the motel, police said.

Maestas spent several days in the hospital recovering from injuries sustained during the attack. Stockham suffered minor injuries.

Attorney Tom Clark, who represents Maturin, said his client will accept a plea offered by prosecutors, though he refused to provide details.

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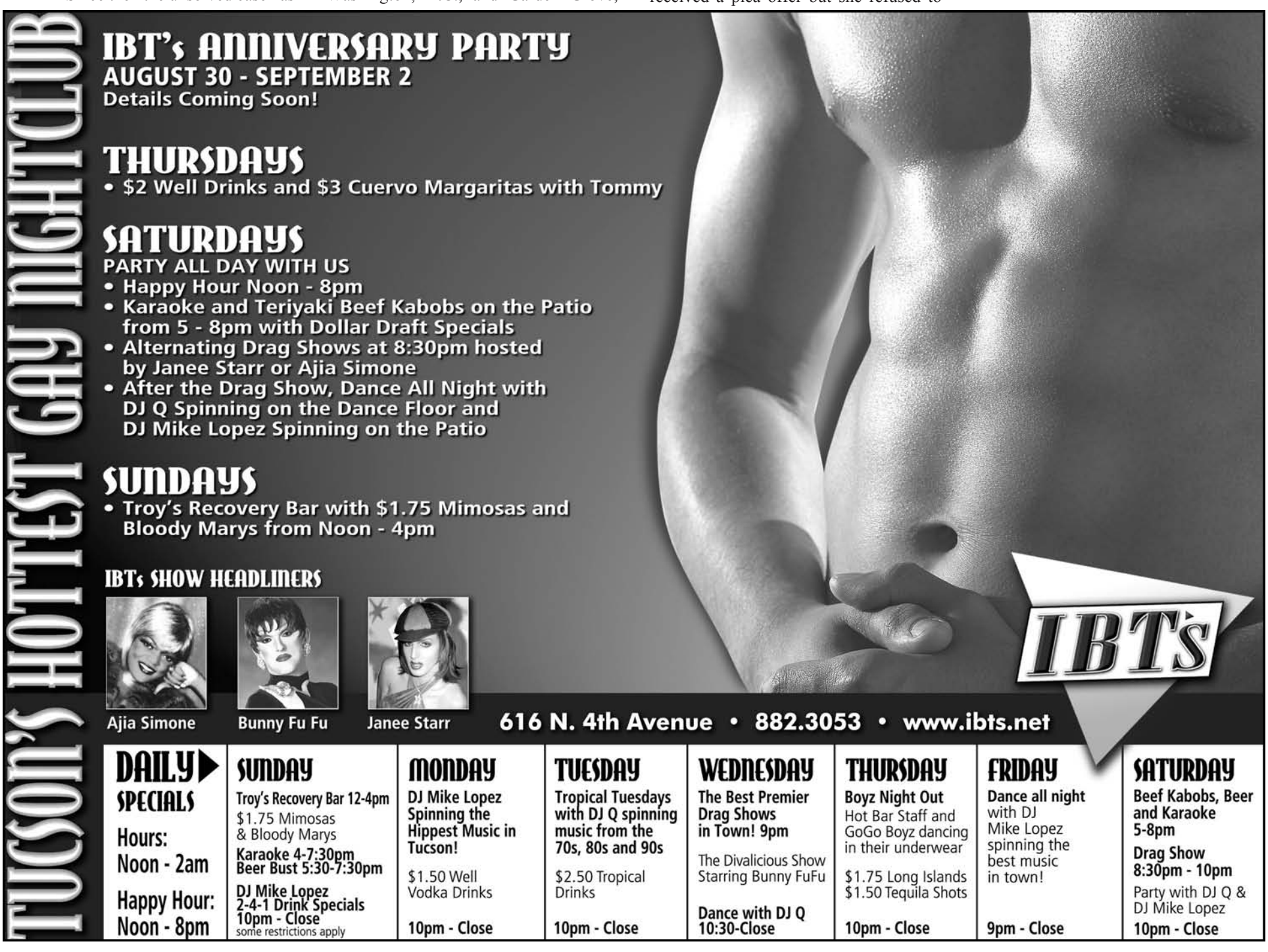

Desert Voices Sings Out For The Community

TUCSON - Desert Voices (DV), Tucson's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and straight supportive (GLBT&S chorus), sings out against hatred, prejudice, lack of compassion and understanding, ignorance and intolerance. Through their songs, stories and concerts, DV encourages connecting with other people and celebrating GLBT Life.

If you like to sing, and want to raise your voice against hatred and discrimination, and in support and celebration of the GLBT community, DV is the chorus for you. Singers of all genders, ages, and sexual orientations are invited to attend the Desert Voices Open House Rehearsals on August 15, 22 and 29, at Water of Life MCC, 3269 N. Mountain Ave., beginning at 6:30 p.m. New members are invited to come and meet director, Chris Tackett and chorus members and participate in a brief voice check to determine their part in the chorus. Membership dues are paid annually or per show, and some scholarships are available.

DV's 17th season is titled "Reaching Out," and will present two complete shows this season, in December and April, as well as a Silent Auction Fundraiser and Cabaret show in February titled "A Passionate Affair." Chorus members work with director Tackett to choose music and develop their shows, weaving together familiar songs, personal experiences, laughter and outrageous parodies to create a unique theatrical event.

In addition, each year, the chorus sings at community events for a variety of different causes, such as the Annual AIDS Vigil, SAGA Day of Remembrance, OUToberFEST and the Bisbee Pride Festival. If you are interested in singing or just in learning more about the chorus and their mission, please come to the open rehearsals, or call their office at (520)791-9662 for more information. You can also email the chorus at info@desertvoices.org or go online to desertvoices.org. So come and discover why everyone is talking about this chorus and the work they are doing in the Tucson GLBT community.

FBI Seizes Gay Chat Mayor's Computer

SPOKANE - A personal computer and related records were seized in an FBI search of embattled Mayor James E. West's home as part of a federal investigation into public corruption allegations, The Spokesman-Review reports.

West, who is fighting allegations that he used his office to offer City Hall jobs to young men he met in a Gay online chat room, was present with an attorney when FBI agents searched his West Spokane home July 26, the newspaper reported.

West and his attorneys could not be immediately reached for comment Friday afternoon (August 5), reported 365Gay.com.

The warrant is based on probable cause suggesting West violated federal public corruption laws, using interstate wire communications, the newspaper reported.

The FBI obtained the federal warrant to search West's home after convincing a federal judge there was probable cause to believe a federal crime has been committed.

The warrant says there is sufficient evidence to believe that West "knowingly and willingly engaged in a scheme to entice others to engage in sexual activity with him through offers and grants of city of Spokane jobs, internships or appointments," the newspaper reported

Beginning May 5, the newspaper began publishing a series of articles alleging that West had trolled a Gay chat room for sex partners, offering jobs and other perks.

The newspaper also reported that West was implicated in sexual abuse of boys when he was a sheriff's deputy and Boy Scout leader in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

West has acknowledged using poor judgment, but denied doing anything illegal, reported the Associated Press.

The U.S. Department of Justice acknowledged May 10 that it had opened a preliminary inquiry into a possible public corruption case against West. The search warrant affidavit included clippings of the newspaper's stories.

The Washington State Supreme Court is scheduled to hear arguments later this month in a recall effort against West.

An independent panel appointed by the city attorney fell apart, but the City Council has said it will conduct its own investigation into whether the mayor violated city policies.

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Salt Lake Lawmakers Seek Domestic Partner Benefits

SALT LAKE CITY - Mayor Rocky Anderson and City Councilwoman Jill Remington Love are separately exploring ways to offer insurance and other benefits to employees' domestic partners and other significant others — such as siblings and parents — with whom they live, reported the Associated Press on 365Gay.com."I've always been in favor of equal benefits for employees, regardless of sexual orientation," Anderson said Thursday (August 4)

He said he would sign an executive order launching the benefits if city attorneys determine the it does not require City Council approval.

Mayor Rocky Anderson

was

"I've wondered why the mayor hasn't been working on it," she said. Love was quoted in a copyright story in The Salt Lake City.

She doesn't want the debate to be just about Gay rights. She says it's about fairness "to our employees."

"Good employers across the country are expanding their benefits," Love said.

Because of the council's conservative bent and the near-constant tension between the mayor and council, Valerie Larabee, executive director of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Community Center of Utah, suspects it may be difficult to get a domestic-partner plan approved by the council.

Anderson mentioned the idea during his 2003 re-election campaign. But he said he was initially advised that extending benefits might be impossible.

Love said she made inquiries about expanding benefits after she was elected in 2001, but was told it would be too costly. This summer, she directed council staff to research the concept and found almost half of Fortune 500 companies offer benefits to Gay partners, along with 11 states, 295 colleges and universities (including the University of Utah) and 129 city and county governments. "It was time to ask the question again," she said.

Councilman Carlton Christensen, who helped defeat an ordinance that banned discrimination against employees based on sexual orientation, said the benefits proposal "would have to have a broader inclusion than just Gay couples. I would hope the fiscal impact would be minimal."

A similar proposal was defeated last month by Salt Lake County Council.

Nebraska Ordered To Pay G/L Couples Lawyers

LINCOLN - The federal judge who struck down Nebraska's constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage now has ordered the state the pay the legal fees of the Gay couples who took the ban to court, 365Gay.com reported.

U.S. District Judge Joseph Bataillon's order requires Nebraska to pay the nearly $157,000 incurred by Lambda Legal and the ACLU's Lesbian and Gay Project.

He then stayed the ruling until all appeals in the case are completed. If the state continues to lose in court it could be on the hook for more than three times the amount. But, Bataillon's award would be reversed if the state wins on appeal.

In May Bataillon ruled that the amendment interferes not only with the rights of Gay couples but also with foster parents, adopted children and people in a host of other living arrangements.

The constitutional amendment, passed in 2000 with 70 percent of the vote, bans any and all forms of legal recognition for same-sex relationships, including domestic partnerships and other basic protections.

In his ruling Bataillon said the ban "imposes significant burdens on both the expressive and intimate associational rights" of Gays and Lesbians and "creates a significant barrier to the plaintiffs' right to petition or to participate in the political process."

He also noted that the plaintiffs in the case had not requested any recognition of their relationships through marriage or any other legal status, but merely sought an equal opportunity to persuade legislators of the need for protections.

Bataillon went on to say, "The court finds Section 29 is a denial of access to one of our most fundamental sources of protection, the government. Such broad exclusion from 'an almost limitless number of transactions and endeavors that constitute ordinary civil life in a free society' is 'itself a denial of equal protections in the literal sense.'"

The state attorney general's office has appealed the ruling to the U.S. 8th Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis. The court has not set a date to hear oral arguments.

Military Ousts More Gays For On-Line Ads

SAN FRANCISCO - As a frontline artilleryman during two tours of duty in Iraq, Army Specialist Jeff Howe faced many dangers that could have ended his military career, if not his life. Instead he got tripped up by his online personal ad, which identified him as Gay, the PlanetOut Network reported.

Howe set up the ad last year on Connexion.org as a social outlet during a break between his deployments. Though he did not use the ad or discuss it while on active duty, it led to his discharge on Wednesday (August 3) under the U.S. military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy against openly Gay and Lesbian service members.

Howe's case is not unusual, as online "outings" have increased this year over last year, according to a Washington D.C.-based group that serves Gay and Lesbian military personnel and works to end the Gay ban.

By the end of July, the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN) had assisted 10 people with similar circumstances, and the cases represent 25 percent of the "outing" incidents monitored by SLDN this year. The category refers to cases in which a service member's sexual orientation is revealed by another individual to a supervisor without the member's consent.

The individuals affected — nine men and one woman — include a Farsi linguist, a doctor, an intelligence analyst and a communications operator. At least three served in the Iraq war. Five of the cases involved profiles on Gay.com, which is owned by PlanetOut Inc.

Howe's case started this spring in Iraq with a Web log, or blog, the Army asked him to create so that his unit could easily update friends and family back home. One of the photos he posted to the blog depicted a vehicle that was blown up by a rocket. A commander who was senior to Howe's direct supervisor objected to the photo and quietly started a background investigation on Howe, which led to the discovery of his Connexion.org profile from 2004.

Howe, 32, enlisted in the Army after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, taking a leave of absence from his job in corporate marketing. He was already open with family and friends about his sexuality, but his desire to help his country exceeded his concern about the military's Gay ban.

"Going back in the closet was a trade-off I could make briefly," Howe said in an interview with the PlanetOut Network.

"With my understanding of 'don't ask, don't tell,' I thought I was fine," the Chicago resident said. "I didn't realize my personal ad was a violation of the policy. You don't receive any training about it during your military orientation."

In addition to Howe, four service members have been discharged this year because of online ads. The five others have either been retained or are fighting to be retained, according to SLDN.

The military's actions have angered many advocates for online privacy and LGBT rights.

"It's bigoted, wasteful and expensive for us all when the U.S. military continues to violate its own policy regarding the privacy of off-duty Gay personnel by investigating and discharging them for seeking companionship with other Gay people online," said Will Doherty, executive director of the Online Policy Group.

After hearing about Howe's story, Tim Gill, founder of Connexion.org, posted an alert in the help section of his site for military members. Gay.com also has a message to members that has been posted since last year, when the online outing trend first came to light.

"It's just wrong that the military is engaged in a witch hunt for LGBT service members," Gill said. "Connexion is committed to help its members serving in the military protect their identities from discovery."

"Gay.com provides lifelines to LGBT people who want to connect with their friends, family and loved ones in a safe and welcoming environment," said Spencer Moore, director of corporate communications for PlanetOut Inc. "For Lesbians and Gays in the U.S. armed forces — who serve courageously in Iraq, Afghanistan and around the world but are not allowed under 'don't ask, don't tell' to be honest about who they are — our communications channels and the community they provide are even more vital. Our company was outraged to learn that some service members who have recently been discharged for being Gay or Lesbian had their use of Gay.com cited as evidence against them."

Sharra Greer, SLDN's director of law and policy, said the military interprets "don't ask, don't tell" more broadly than many people realize, and it can include seemingly innocuous statements or actions outside a professional context.

"Any statement of your sexual orientation at any time, to anyone, is a violation," she said. "But many service members don't understand that."

The agency has posted tips to help military personnel protect their identities online, such as avoiding screen names containing the words "army," "navy," "soldier" or other military-specific terminology.

"We cannot emphasize enough what a serious risk a military screen name is for a service member; it creates a red flag just waiting to be brought to a command's attention," said Steve Ralls, SLDN spokesman.

SLDN is awaiting a ruling on its lawsuit to end "don't ask, don't tell," which was argued in federal court last month.

Howe's discharge was honorable, based on his record, and he has returned to Chicago to pursue a law degree. His advice to Gays and Lesbians hoping to enlist in the military: "Be careful."

"[Potential Gay recruits] should contact SLDN or another LGBT support group to talk it over before enlisting," he said. "I would recommend that people get fully educated about 'don't ask, don't tell' so that they are going in with their eyes open."

POLITICS 2005

by Mark R. Kerr

Questions To Consider About The Protect Marriage Arizona Amendment

Should Gays and Lesbians, fortunate enough to be in a loving, committed relationship be entitled to what rights, benefits and privileges listed under the Arizona State Constitution?

Can governmental entities recognize Gay and Lesbian families in the manner they choose to do so, under their respective ordinances, state statute or constitution and do such couples have the right to choose these options if they are created and offered?

Those same Gays and Lesbians in relationships, who filed legal paperwork, under the guidelines set down by the state constitution or statute to have their relationship recognized, as well as drafting a will or medical powers of attorney, have these documents stand up in a court of law in Arizona?

Is every citizen in Arizona entitled to due process under the law, regardless of their sexual orientation, as stated in the constitution, Arizona laws and local ordinances?

Do governmental entities have the right to extend medical and dental benefits to the families of their Gay and Lesbian employees, as they do to their other workers under the provisions set down under Arizona's constitution and the respective laws and ordinances on the legal books?

Private businesses that extend benefits, to the families of their Gay and Lesbian employees, be able to continue doing so in Arizona, as well as doing business with the state, county or a local government?

Shall every citizen in Arizona, be entitled to the protections, rights, benefits and privileges listed in the state constitution or statute, as well as the ordinances drafted and adopted by local governmental entities, regardless of their sexual orientation?

As society changes and develops, can local, county and state draft ordinances, regulations and laws dealing with the ever-changing aspects as set down by the state constitution or statute and the city's respective charter?

Will businesses (such as insurance companies) that recognize Gay and Lesbian couples or families with the benefits and privileges as they offer other "married" families, continue to do so if the constitution says otherwise or cease operating in Arizona?

Shall every citizen in the state be afforded the right to work, own property, start a business, pay taxes, worships or not, vote, and participate in all aspects of the community, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, perceived or otherwise?

If the Protect Marriage Arizona amendment (PMAA) gets on the ballot and is approved by voters in November 2006, these won't be questions but the facts all Gay and Lesbian Arizonans will face, regardless of if they are in a relationship or not, their financial status or other reason. In Arizona, Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals and Transgendered (GLBT) have few rights under the law currently, so if this attempt by the radical right to enshrine discrimination succeeds, we all will have no rights and economics, comfort, age or otherwise won't help one GLBT Arizonan since everyone will lose if the PMAA is approved.

Why get involved with this upcoming battle? As they did in Philadelphia in 1965, in Stonewall in 1969, in Tucson in 1976-77, as the entire national and global GLBT community did, starting in the 1980's with the AIDS Epidemic, in Hawaii in 1992 as well as Massachusetts and Vermont at the end of the twentieth century, as well as the other states have in the past several years, it is about the rights, not about the use of a word.

In Their Own Words

Dr. James Dobson, and his minions, disguised as Focus on the Family (FOF), of which the Arizona chapter is the Center for Arizona Policy, currently pushing the homophobic Protect Marriage Arizona amendment are still at it. Sponge Bob Square Pants be damned!

FOF recently released "Helping Boys Become Men, and Girls Become Women ," and John Cole at the blog, balloon-juice.com responds to FOF's flaming bigotry. Enjoy!

Is My Child Becoming Homosexual? Before puberty, children aren't normally heterosexual or homosexual. They're definitely gender conscious. But young children are not sexual beings yet — unless something sexual in nature has interrupted their developmental phases.

Still, it's not uncommon for children to experience gender confusion during the elementary school years. Dr. Joseph Nicolosi reports, "In one study of 60 effeminate boys ages 4 to 11, 98 percent of them engaged in cross-dressing, and 83 percent said they wished they had been born a girl."

"By the time the adolescent hormones kick in during early adolescence, a full-blown gender identity crisis threatens to overwhelm the teenager," warns psychologist Dr. James Dobson. To compound the problem, many of these teens experience "great waves of guilt accompanied by secret fears of divine retribution."

Evidences of gender confusion or doubt in boys ages 5 to 11 may include: 1. A strong feeling that they are "different" from other boys. 2. A tendency to cry easily, be less athletic, and dislike the roughhousing that other boys enjoy. 3. A persistent preference to play female roles in make-believe play.

This is my personal favorite: 5. A susceptibility to be bullied by other boys, who may tease them unmercifully and call them "queer," "fag" and "Gay."

Your son might be Gay if other little boys tease him. The guide also has some warning signs for later on in adolescense:

Evidence of gender confusion in boys age 12-20 may include: 1. A preference for show tunes, foot rubs, and slow nights watching Queer Eye for the Straight Guy. 2. Ownership of quiche cookbooks. 3. An appreciation of art. 4. Good table and phone manners. 5. Ownership of a "Gay" automobile.

Okay, I may have made those up. At any rate, Sadly, No! has the details, and notes that you better pay attention to these signs and act quick "before he buys his first Cher album." Filed under: General Stupidity.

Wingspan Moves To Larger, Grander Quarters

Wingspan Begins New Chapter In Grand New Digs

By Jerry Diaz

TUCSON - Saturday, August 6 was the beginning of a new chapter in the history of Wingspan, when the center opened its doors to the public at its new location, 425 E. 7th St.

A large segment of the community was on hand to tour the new home of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender center serving Tucson, Pima County and Southern Arizona.

Wingspan's new location, on 7th Street just East of 4th Avenue, was the former site for a communications company. The rebuilding and remodeling helped give the site the space to meet the needs that have grown over the years.

Wingspan has been through three site changes since its inception, most of it due to the growing community through its services and programs.

The new location houses several meeting rooms, an extensive library, and administrative offices that will give the different program heads spaces to work in. There is now ample parking in the back, something the previous space had lacked. The official grand opening showed the space off to the entire community, and those on hand were treated to the first look at the space.

In addition, the band T.M.I., formed from community members and Wingspan volunteers who utilize the site, provided entertainment. There were also refreshments and a slide show that gave observers a view of the hard work that went into modeling and building the new space.

Several of Wingspan's program coordinators gave presentations about their programs to the community present.

The staff all had the pride of showing off a newborn child. That pride was shown possibly the most by Wingspan's Executive Director, Kent Burbank. In the years he has been the head of the center, Burbank has seen the bulk of the growth, and now the location that everyone has dreamed of. With his commitment, along with the many employees and volunteers, they as well as the community, now have a space to show all of the hard work and effort involved in running a constantly growing project like Wingspan.

For more information, call (520) 624-1779, or go online to wingspan.org, or better yet, stop by and see what hard work and dedication has brought to the community.

See photos on page eight

Victory Fund Gears Up **Continued from page one**

Veiga told the newspaper she did not want to make an issue of her homosexuality but feared that some detractors, whom she did not identify, planned a mailing to voters attacking her as a Lesbian. Citing two unidentified Republican Party activists, the newspaper said "a few ultraconservative members of the GOP" planned a smear campaign against Veiga based on her sexual orientation.

"I would never make an issue of my sexual orientation unless I knew the attacks were coming," Veiga told the News. "I think you have to ask yourself, `Why is this an issue now, since I've been in office six years?' The only answer I can come up with is I'm moving up in leadership in the House and I'm trying to elect Democrats across the state. And that's threatening."

GOP leaders told the paper they had no knowledge of a smear campaign, and it never materialized. Veiga won the election by 14 percentage points.

Her Republican opponent, Karen Kataline, said Veiga unfairly labeled her as anti-Gay and wrongly accused her of unleashing a smear campaign.

"In the end it worked beautifully for her," she said. Veiga portrayed herself as a victim to "raise money out-of-state and fire up her base," said Kataline, now president of Jewish Republicans for Colorado.

Veiga called Kataline's assertions ridiculous.

The institute does not keep records of how many of its seminar graduates have won election, but at least one from each of its sessions gets into office, said Dave DeCicco, vice president of communications.

The institute claims it has had a hand in increasing the number of openly Gay politicians in office nationwide from 49 in 1991 to about 300 last year.

Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., who in 1987 became the first member of Congress to voluntarily make his sexuality public, said the rising number of Gays in public office is gradually dissolving negative labels.

"It is helping," he said. "A major reason for homophobia among people is that they have inaccurate stereotypes. But as people get to know (Gays), we'll make progress."

Some Gay Deportations To Iran Halted

LONDON - Two European countries have blocked the deportation of Gay asylum seekers from Iran, following the hanging of two Gay teenagers last month, the PlanetOut Network reported.

The Netherlands and Sweden have halted the return of Gay asylum seekers to the country, which has been criticized internationally for the killings.

Mahmoud Asgari, 16, and Ayaz Marhoni, 18, were publicly executed for having sex with each other.

After an international outcry began to swell, the government also announced the boys were accused of raping a 13-year-old boy, although human rights activists have questioned these claims.

According to some protesters, Iran is now hunting other boys named by the two executed, in a bid to "stamp out" homosexuality in the country.

The Dutch government said it would investigate the situation in Iran while the block was in force.

It had been facing increasing pressure from influential Lesbian and Gay activists in recent days, as it emerged some asylum seekers were due to be returned to Iran, despite their fears that they would also be killed.

Sweden has also instigated a halt because of its opposition to the death penalty for minors.

The U.K. government has yet to respond to calls to protect Lesbian and Gay asylum seekers from deportation to homophobic states. Civil rights groups want assurances that Lesbian and Gay people from Iran will not be deported.

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Time: 7 pm – 10 pm

A collaboration of the Pima County Health Department and Gay Men's Health Project

UPDATE

FBI Asked To Probe Anti-GLBT Arson Attacks

NEW YORK - A New York-based organization that tracks violence against members of the LGBT community has called for a federal investigation into 4 arson attacks in the South, reported 365Gay.com reported.

In a letter to FBI Director Robert S. Mueller, the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs says the bureau should investigate all of the arsons collectively.

In the course of a month fires were set at a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender-friendly church in Middlebrook, Virginia, Gay bars in Fayetteville, Arkansas and Brownsville, Texas, and the torching of the home of two Gay men outside Orlando, Florida.

Luckily there were no injuries in any of the attacks.

In its letter to Mueller the NCAVP said that the agency needs to investigate if there are any connections between the arsons and a possible heightened and/or coordinated activity by hate groups.

"We know that the FBI is looking into any connections between organized hate groups and the recent church burning in Virginia," said Clarence Patton, who heads NCAVP and is the Acting Executive Director of the New York City Gay & Lesbian Anti-Violence Project.

"And while there is no evidence that we're aware of at this time indicating that all the cases of arson in the Southeast and Texas are connected, or that the same individual or group is responsible for them, it is increasingly clear that there is a problem that warrants some coordinated response," Patton said.

"At the very least, there are a number of questions that we in the nation's LGBT community have including 'are the local law enforcement agencies working on these cases in communication with each other; have there been other instances of arson targeting Gay, Gay-friendly and Gay-associated sites that haven't yet been identified as such; and finally, what should the role of the nation's premiere law enforcement agency be in addressing what is so obviously a crisis for a community already under cultural, political and physical siege?'"

Patton said that LGBT hate incidents, reported to NCAVP member groups across the country, have risen dramatically in the last two years - 8% in 2003 and another 4% in 2004, and show no signs of decreasing.

"This has been an absolutely terrifying summer for LGBT people," Patton continued. "Those that hate LGBT people feel increasingly emboldened to act violently and destructively on that hatred from New York to Arkansas, from Texas to Florida and in just about every corner of the country; it is past time for those charged with protecting all Americans to pay attention to these horrors," said Patton.

In Florida, police are continuing to search for the person who torched the home of a Gay couple after spray painting "Die Fag" on the front steps. Days earlier a Gay club in Brownsville, Texas was been gutted by fire. The week before, arson destroyed the only Gay club in Fayetteville, Arkansas. On July 9, fire damaged a Gay-positive church in Middlebrook, Virginia. Police said the arsonist had scrawled a message on the exterior of St. John's Reformed United Church of Christ saying that UCC members were sinners.

Australia's Gay Blood Ban Challenged

HOBART - The Australian Red Cross ban on Gay's donating blood is being challenged by man in northern Tasmania. Michael Cain on Tuesday (August 2) filed complaints with the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Commission and the Australian Human Rights Commission, 365Gay.com reported.

Cain said that when he attempted to donate blood last October he was told that the Red Cross does not accept donations from men who have had male-to-male sex in the previous 12 months.

Cain, 22, also charges in his complaint that a Red Cross nurse used the derogatory term "you people" – referring to Gay men.

His complaint charges that the Red Cross ban is both discriminatory and unnecessary.

"I know that I have safe sex ... It almost felt like I was being accused of being a dirty person," Cain told reporters.

The ban was imposed in Australia and most other countries at the height of the AIDS crisis 20 years ago. Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group spokesperson Rodney Croome called the Red Cross donor screening process "outdated."

"Now we know that AIDS is not simply a Gay disease, it's a disease anyone can catch," Croome said.

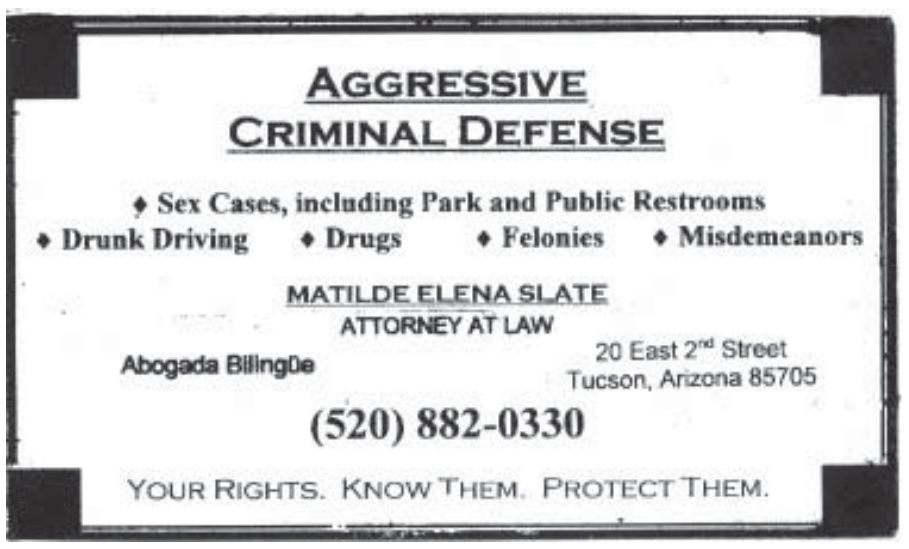
"It's really time for the Red Cross to change its policy and focus on whether donors have safe or unsafe sex rather than the gender of the person they have sex with."

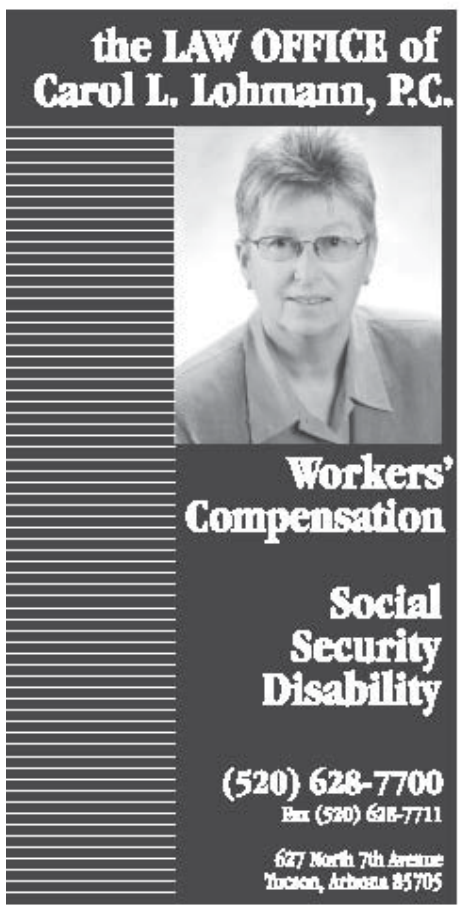
Gay and Bisexual men are allowed to donate blood in Switzerland and Spain. Last month Sweden's Prime Minister became the first world leader to publicly call for an end to the ban on Gays from donating blood.

Bans on Gay blood donors in the United States and Canada have also been called outdated.

The US Food and Drug Administration says that "there is scientific justification for screening out all potential donors who are men who have had sex, even once, with another man".

A number of universities, mainly in the Northeast, have banned the American Red Cross from holding blood donor clinics on campuses because of the ban.





NOTES FROM THE FOR-REAL SIDE
Discovering Tuchman

by Lee Thorn

I'm not just reading history to escape the desperate state of current events. I'm reading it because it can achieve the status of fine art, the genuine stuff that can fill your spiritual cistern.

One of the great things about literature is that it's always there awaiting you whenever you get around to being ready for it. Everybody else discovered Barbara Tuchman is the early 1960s when she won the Pulitzer Prize for THE GUNS OF AUGUST. I just stumbled across her a few months ago.

And I just stumbled across history as an art form a few years ago when, for whatever now forgotten reason, Shelby Foote's 3,000-page opus on the Civil War fell into my lap. While reading it I came to appreciate the fact that historians don't have to worry about the issue of plausibility like novelists do. Wildly implausible things happen in history all the time, things that just wouldn't fly as fiction. Not a problem for the history writer, icing on the cake in fact.

The first Barbara Tuchman book I read was her wonderfully eccentric THE FIRST SALUTE: A VIEW OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. Not knowing beans about the American Revolution, my initial reaction to her opening pages was, "The lady can write. This looks like fun."

I had no idea how much fun I was in for. She starts of writing about "St. Eustatius, a rocky meager spot less than seven square miles in area..." in the Carribbean. Then she goes on writing about it, and on some more.

Then she writes about a bunch of naval battles all over hell and gone, everywhere except for in the vicinity of the American Colonies. This is supposed to be the American Revolution. About halfway through the book I'm asking myself, "What about Washington crossing the Delaware? What about Valley Forge?" But no, it's all European naval battles far far away.

She does deal, at the end of her entertaining book, with the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, which was an event that occurred in what later became the United States.

As someone who can appreciate eccentricity for its own sake, each succeeding chapter of SALUTE that ignored the Continent of North America brought a new smile to my lips, but I couldn't imagine how the author had gotten away with it. This has got to be the strangest account of the Revolution ever written.

I'm sure that, given its extraordinary perspective, no publisher in the world would have touched it but for one important fact — its author had previously written a mega hit called THE GUNS OF AUGUST which won the Pulitzer and became a perennial solid seller.

The lesson is that if you write something that makes a ton of money you can find a publisher for something that's totally off the wall. I was curious, having read SALUTE first, how the book that made it possible compared.

The big thing that the two books have in common, by far the most important thing for this reader, is that they're both extremely well written. My definition of well written includes a command of the language, being able to play it like a master violinist would play a Stradivarius, the descriptive power to bring a scene or a long dead person to life, and the narrative force to bring suspense to events whose outcomes are already known to the reader.

Tuchman demonstrates all the above in both books, but in other ways the works are quite different. GUNS stays close to conventional views of how and why and where the events of World War One happened. It doesn't transform history by revising its factual content or reconceptualizing it. The book's accomplishment lies is using the stuff of history to create a work of art, just as Foote did with his CIVIL WAR.

I'm glad I finally found Tuchman the history writer. I now vaguely remember having encountered Tuchman the essayist many years ago and being unimpressed with her efforts in that very different genre. I'm looking forward to reading her other works of history/art and hoping to find something as wild, or even half as wild, as THE FIRST SALUTE.

[Thorn welcomes comments, suggestions for future columns, and tips on local skulduggery that ought to be expose. Write to Box 85571, Tucson, AZ 85754. E-mail: Doid3@aol.com.]

Ex-Cons Arrested In Gay Slaying

HATTIESBURG - Two ex cons face extradition from California to face murder charges in the slaying of a Gay Hattiesburg man, but local activists say police are refusing to consider the killing a hate crime, reported 365Gay.com.

Stuart Milam, 53, died as a result of blood loss after his throat was slashed. His body was discovered by a neighbor in Milam's home in an upscale south Hattiesburg neighborhood.

Police say that the Milam may have been dead for eight or nine days before his body was found. There were signs that the home had been robbed and Milam's car was missing.

Hattiesburg police issued a nationwide alert for the vehicle. It as discovered on the weekend in the parking lot of a Long Beach, California hospital.

Long Beach police arrested a man and woman inside the vehicle. Robert Wayne Bounds and Angela E. Rigdon surrendered without incident.

Both were on parole at the time of the killing.

Bounds, 32, has been in and out of state prisons since 1991 on charges that include auto burglary, probation violation and receiving stolen property.

Rigdon, 34, recently was released on probation for a charge of possession of a controlled substance.

The lead investigator in the case said there is evidence that Milam and Bounds knew each other.

"They were just known acquaintances," he said. "I don't know how they were linked. He had been seen frequently around (Milam)," said Detective Capt. Charles DeJarnett.

DeJarnett also said police have not determined a motive for the killing.

The murder has raised concerns in the city's small Gay community.

Milam was well known in the community. In the early 1990s he was a drag performer and went by the stage name "Momma T."

Several members of the LGBT community believe Milam may have been killed because he was Gay.

"The police need to be honest and address that this possibly is a hate crime and reassure the Gay community that it's being investigated as such," Robert Maynard, told the Hattiesburg American.

"This was a heinous crime; the man's throat was cut, and it is disturbing that the Gay community has not been warned that this could have been a hate crime," said Hattiesburg resident David Benedict.

But, even if the slaying were motivated by hate there is little police could do. Mississippi's 1994 hate crimes law does not include sexual orientation.

It could take more than a month to extradite Bounds and Rigdon back to Mississippi.

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A man who doesn't advertise is like one who winks in the dark: he knows he's doing it, but nobody else does.

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TO THE GAY AND LESBIAN COMMUNITY:

On April 30, 2005 Heather Boa (Oscar Jimenez) competed for and placed 1st alternate in the Miss Gay Tucson America 2006 Pageant. Being that Heather secured the 1st Alternate position, she still had an important role within our community.

The Miss Gay America Rules state that if a title-holder does not fulfill his / her duties in the respected role, they forfeit the title to the first alternate. This has happened in the case with Heather Boa. On July 30, 2006, the crowned winner of the Miss Gay Tucson America 2006 Pageant was Miss Leading. As Miss Gay Tucson, Miss Leading was required to compete at the state level vying for the title of Miss Gay Arizona America 2006.

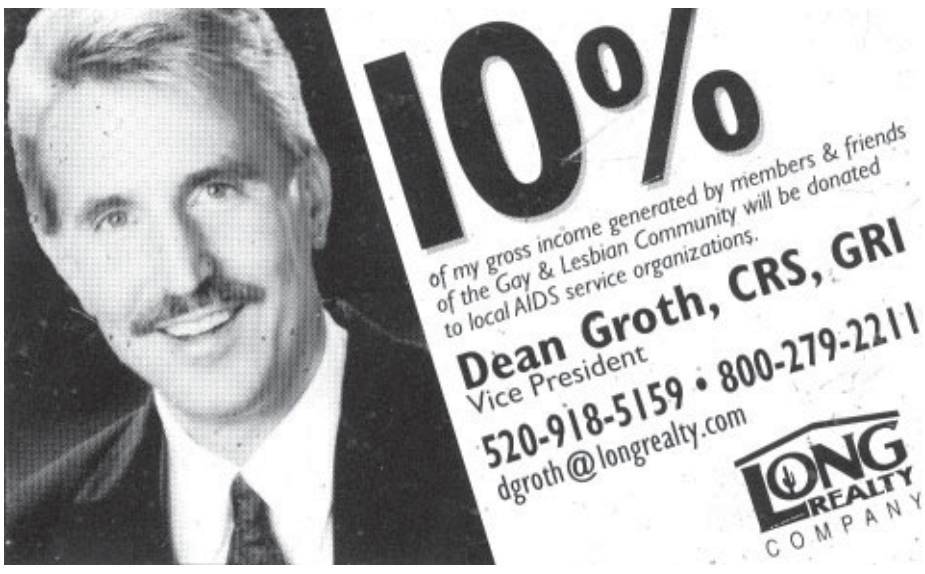
On that HOT July day, Miss Leading did not show and or compete for Miss Gay Arizona America 2006. Therefore, I, David Dawson of 3D Productions and the Miss Gay America Advisory board reviewed the situation and decided that in the best interest of the Miss Gay America Pageantry System, Miss Leading's title as Miss Gay Tucson America 2006 must be removed.

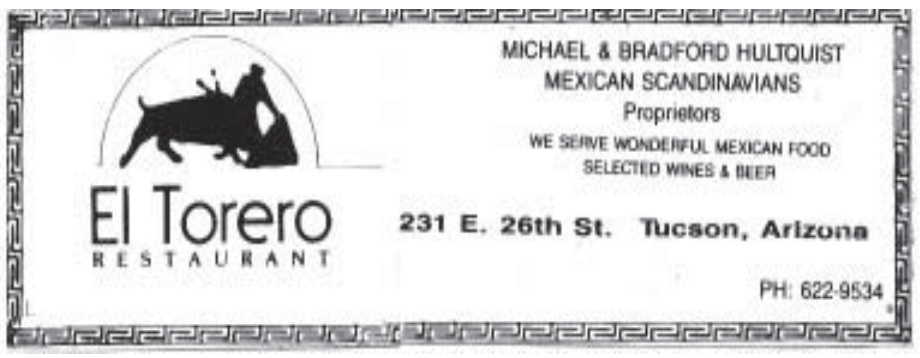
We then approached Heather Boa and explained that as 1st Alternate, he / she is entitled to assume the role and title of Miss Gay Tucson America 2006. Much to our relief, Heather gladly accepted!

To make things official, I have planned a special crowning show for Heather Boa at IBT'S on Wednesday August 10, 2005 at 9:00pm. I would like to invite everyone and anyone to join us on Wednesday night and help make this an extra special evening for Heather!

For more information, please feel free to contact me at BunnyFuFuAZ@aol.com Thank you to everyone in our community for your continued Love and support! We couldn't do it without you! XOXO

Mark aka Bunny Fu Fu-
Miss Gay Arizona America 2004-
BunnyFuFu.com





Conservatives, Rights Groups 'Concerned' Over Judge Roberts Gay Past

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Christian conservative groups that only days go were criticizing Democrats and demanding a speedy confirmation of judge John G. Roberts Jr. to the US Supreme Court now are calling for tough questioning in the Senate Judiciary Committee, 365Gay.com reported.

The speedy change in their approach follows this week's report that Roberts had offered free legal advice to an LGBT group that ultimately won a landmark 1996 Gay civil rights case at the Supreme Court.

In the hours before President Bush publicly announced Roberts' nomination the President called leading fundamentalist Christians assuring them of Roberts conservative background. Indeed he was once a member of a right wing legal group in Washington - an organization that Roberts says he does not remember ever belonging to.

Now, some conservative Christian leaders say they, and the President, may have been mislead by "by a liberal in conservative robes".

Mathew Staver, president of Liberty Counsel, a conservative legal group fighting LGBT rights in several states, said Roberts' involvement in the Gay case is "something to certainly be concerned about."

Staver wants Republicans to ask Roberts direct questions about his positions on Gay marriage, the Supreme Court ruling striking down sodomy laws, LGBT civil rights issues, and abortion.

"We need more information to find out the facts behind what Judge Roberts did when he was working on the case," Staver told the Baptist Press. "But if in fact the story is true, it is clearly concerning because, according to the story, Judge Roberts did not hesitate to get involved to work on this case pro bono.

"... If in fact he did this, this would be contrary to everything I've read about him thus far. This was a state constitutional amendment passed by the people. For the court to strike that down, I felt, was judicial activism."

Focus on the Family also is raising alarm bells. FOC's James Dobson was one of the conservative leaders who received a Bush assurance that Roberts would be a "strict constitutionalist" and "rule on the law not make it".

FOC now is also calling for questions to be put to Roberts about his role in the Gay rights case.

"While this is certainly not welcome news to those of us who advocate for traditional values, it is by no means a given that John Roberts' personal views are reflected in his involvement in this case," FOC said in a statement.

The involvement of Roberts in the Gay rights case has also been a hot topic on conservative talk shows.

Fox's Sean Hannity now says he has "some" doubts about Roberts.

"It's the first sign I've seen where his conservative judicial philosophy ... may not be as solid as what I thought," Hannity said on his radio program.

But, some of Roberts' conservative supporters say the debate is just an effort to set Republicans against each other.

It "is a red herring meant to divide the right," Sean Rushton, executive director of the Committee for Justice told the Chicago Tribune. The CFJ helps coordinate strategy on judicial nominations for conservative groups.

As some conservatives raise concerns about Roberts' positions on what they perceive as "liberal issues" LGBT rights groups are still not ready to endorse him pointing out lawyers often take cases in which they do not believe.

Accused murderers have been represented by lawyers pro bono even when they know the accused committed the crime.

"All this shows is that Roberts is a good lawyer," National Gay and Lesbian Task Force executive director Matt Foreman told 365Gay.com earlier this week. "It has nothing to do with his ideology."

"It's very interesting and something that we'll be throwing into the mix and it's not something we were aware of until now," said Michael Adams, director of education at Lambda Legal said.

"It poses as many questions as answers," Adams told 365Gay.com

"Judge Roberts' involvement in the case is noteworthy, but his participation adds little to our understanding of how he would vote on the court," said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese.

The stakes are too high for guessing games over Judge Roberts' stance.

"The Supreme Court makes critical decisions and it is the nominee's job to guarantee that he will protect individual rights and freedoms on the nation's highest court," Solmonese said. Judge Roberts has consistently argued that as an attorney, he has zealously represented the interests of his client, no matter his personal views. Judge Roberts should make clear where he personally stands on important constitutional principles.

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Report: Social Security Privatization Would Disproportionately Harm Gays & Lesbians

WASHINGTON, D.C. - A report released Tuesday (August 9) shows that LGBT Americans would be disproportionately affected by the President's plan to privatize Social Security.

The report, prepared for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, found that LGBT Americans, on average, have lower incomes than their heterosexual counterparts, which translates into lower Social Security benefits when they retire.

In addition, same-sex couples are not eligible for Social Security's spousal and survivor benefits provisions, making the LGBT community disproportionately vulnerable to the benefit cuts and risks inherent to the president's plan.

"There is a widespread myth that Gay people are economically advantaged compared to heterosexuals. U.S. Census data and other national surveys indicate the opposite. In fact, Gay and bisexual men earn anywhere from 13 percent to 32 percent less than heterosexual men," said Sean Cahill, director of the Task Force's Policy Institute.

"If we earn less, we receive a lower Social Security payment in retirement. Any proposals that cut retirement benefits will disproportionately hurt Gay people."

The study, titled "Selling Us Short" also finds that LGBT people of color, in particular, face an income disadvantage that leads to lower Social Security benefits. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, black same-sex couples earn roughly $2,000 to $9,000 less in median annual household income than black married opposite-sex couples, and Hispanic same-sex couples earn roughly $1,000 to $4,000 less in median annual household income than Hispanic married opposite-sex couples.

Government policies, meanwhile, place all Gay people in an even more economically disadvantaged position, increasing the critical need to maintain the economic safety net Social Security is intended to provide.

"Gay people have to report domestic partner health insurance as income to the IRS, but married spouses don't have to report their health coverage as income," said Cahill in a conference call with reporters on Wednesday.

"Gay people can't inherit their partner's pension plan, while a heterosexual widow or widower can be a beneficiary. Not only do we earn less, we are less able to keep what we earn. These are among the many inequities that make same-sex couples particularly vulnerable to cutbacks in Social Security benefits."

Many Hu, the author of the report, noted that: "The federal Defense of Marriage Act continues to deny same-sex couples access to more than 1,000 federal benefits and protections of marriage that opposite-sex married couples currently receive, including Social Security spousal and survivor benefits. Even though LGBT Americans pay in to the Social Security system at the same rate as everyone else, our families and children receive fewer benefits, often in times of crisis. If Social Security is to be changed, it should be changed so that all families are treated fairly."

The report also said that LGBT people are more likely to age alone and less likely to have children than their heterosexual counterparts.

"This, coupled with a lower rate of earning makes them particularly reliant on Social Security," said Amber Hollibaugh, the NGLTF specialist on aging

By 2030, the estimated population of LGBT seniors will range from two to eight million. LGBT elders may be especially dependent on public services for the elderly, including Social Security, because they may be without the same family support systems as heterosexual seniors.

Bush's Social Security proposal is stalled in Congress. It faces widespread opposition from Democrats who object to Bush's plan to divert a portion of Social Security tax revenues to set up private investment accounts for workers under the age of 55.

While congressional Republicans have expressed doubts about getting Social Security legislation approved, Treasury Secretary John Snow said Monday (August 8), "I remain optimistic that we will get something done there. ... I think in the fall you will see us heavily engaged on the Social Security issue."

Court Tosses Cherokee G/L Marriage Case; Another Legal Petition Filed.

TULSA - A Cherokee Nation court has dismissed a lawsuit seeking to prevent the tribe from giving its legal blessing to a Lesbian couple's marriage, the Associated Press reported on the PlanetOut Network.

The Judicial Appeals Tribunal in its ruling Wednesday (August 3) said that tribe member and attorney Todd Hembree had no standing to sue and could not show that he suffered any harm by legal recognition of the same-sex marriage.

Dawn McKinley and Kathy Reynolds haven't decided whether they will try again to file their tribal marriage certificate. Since the tribe is sovereign, Cherokee Nation marriage certificates are recognized just like Oklahoma marriage licenses.

The couple, who are both members of the tribe, exchanged vows in Cherokee in May 2004 after the tribe gave them the certificate without protest. But Hembree sued and won an injunction that kept it from being filed.

After the couple wed, the Cherokee Nation Tribal Council unanimously approved language defining a union as between one man and one woman.

Previously, tribal laws governing marriages used Cherokee terms for "husband" and "wife" that Hembree claimed were gender-specific. The couple contended the terms were not gender specific, and that the Cherokee words used in the marriage ceremony are "cooker" for wife and "companion" for husband.

The court would still have to accept the certificate before it is filed.

"We're excited, we're happy,"

t

Hembree, who serves as counsel to the tribe's legislative body, said the court's decision ends the case for him: "That is a decision by the highest court in our land."

A new petition has been filed in a Cherokee Nation court challenging the marriage.

The tribe's highest court ruled that Todd Hembree, who filed the original suit, did not have standing in the case and could not adequately prove he would be harmed by the couple's marriage. On Friday (August 5) a group of tribal councillors filed a petition challenging the couple's marriage license on the same grounds. The petition is expected to be amended and refiled Tuesday (August 9).

One of the councillors who filed the lawsuit, Linda O'Leary, claimed that necessity brought about the petition. "We don't want gay marriages in the Cherokee Nation. It's that simple," she said. "We do have standing in this case because we're the ones who make the laws."

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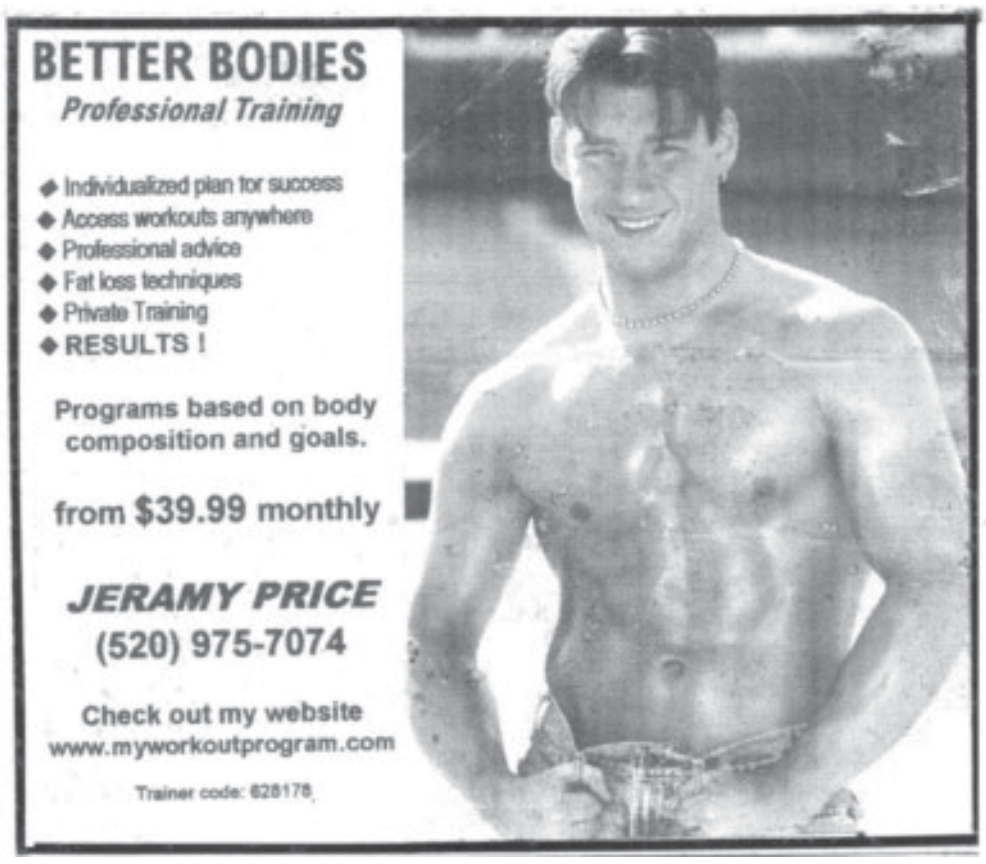

NON-BAR CALENDAR

Wednesday, August 10
Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Join Jack for an evening of Canasta. If you don't know how to play, they'll teach you-and it's a very relaxed atmosphere. For directions and reservations, please call Jack at 887-3736.

Thursday, August 11
Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Join the men of MSN for Coffee Night out at Rainbow Planet Coffee House. This is a chance to have a cup of coffee and chat with the men of MSN. This is a No-host event, so please ask Barista to point you in our direction.

Friday, August 12
#1 Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m.
Lloyd hosts a fun evening of Scrabble. If you don't know how to play, we'll be glad to teach you. For reservations and directions, please call Lloyd at 792-8537.
#2 Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Join David as he hosts Game Night. Here's your chance to play your favorite board /card games. For reservations and directions, please call David at 883-7668.

Saturday, August 13
Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Marv hosts Pinochle Night. If you don't know how to play, but would like to learn, this is the place. For more information, please call Marv at 745-0304.

Tuesday, August 16
#1 Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. The Circle of Men is a support group that helps you deal with yourself and your relationships with others. For directions and reservations, please call Tom at 591-2828.
#2 Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Join Karol for an evening of Dinner and a Movie; ?The Exorcist?. Is pea soup on the menu? For details and directions, please call Karol at 744-9017

Wednesday, August 17
Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Join Merlin and Lee for an evening of Canasta. If you don't know how to play, they'll teach you-and it's a very relaxed atmosphere. For directions and reservations, please call Lee and Merlin at 207-5336.

Thursday, August 18
Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Join the men of MSN for Coffee Night out at Rainbow Planet Coffee House. This is a chance to have a cup of coffee and chat with the men of MSN. This is a No-host event, so please ask Barista to point you in our direction.

Friday, August 19
Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Join Lloyd as he hosts Pizza Night. For just $5.00, come and enjoy a night of Pizza and good conversation. For reservations and directions, please call Lloyd at 792-8537. Please reserve your spot by noon on Thursday, August 18th.

Saturday, August 20
Tucson Knight Owls (TKO) is hosting a beer bust beginning at 2:00 p.m. The bust will be held at The Yard Dog Saloon. Proceeds will go to start setting up the annual holiday meal donation from TKO

#1 Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed) 7:30 am Join Jack & Mike and Ed & Marcus for a morning of Volleyball. This is played for fun, and you'll get to know some nice guys as you play. For details and directions, please call Mike/Jack at 881-5733 or Marcus/Ed at 407-5733.
#2 Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Steve hosts Pinochle Night. If you don't know how to play, but would like to learn, this is the place. For more information, please call Steve at 664-2076.

Monday, August 22
#1. Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Join us for the "putting out the Newsletter" Night. For reservations and directions, please call Arlan at 323-7414.
#2. Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:30 p.m. Join us for the MSN Premiere of "Straight Jacket? (after Newsletter Night). For reservations and directions, please call Arlan at 323-7414.

Tuesday, August 23
#1 Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. The Circle of Men is a support group that helps you deal with yourself and your relationships with others. For directions and reservations, please call Tom at 591-2828.
#2 Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Terry hosts Bridge Night. If you don't know how to play, they'll teach you-and it's a very relaxed atmosphere. For reservations and directions, please call Terry at 577-3545.

Wednesday, August 24
Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Join Richard & T. Jay for Canasta. If you don't know how to play, we'll be glad to teach you. For reservations and directions, please call T. Jay and Richard at 881-7919 .

Thursday, August 25
Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Join the men of MSN for Coffee Night out at Rainbow Planet Coffee House. This is a chance to have a cup of coffee and chat with the men of MSN. This is a No-host event, so please ask Barista to point you in our direction.

Friday, August 26
Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m.
Lloyd hosts a fun evening of Scrabble. If you don't know how to play, we'll be glad to teach you. For reservations and directions, please call Lloyd at 792-8537.

Saturday, August 27
Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Marv hosts Pinochle Night. If you don't know how to play, but would like to learn, this is the place. For more information, please call Marv at 745-0304.

Tuesday, August 30
Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. The Circle of Men is a support group that helps you deal with yourself and your relationships with others. For directions and reservations, please call Tom at 591-2828.

Wednesday, August 31
Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Join Merlin and Lee for an evening of Canasta. If you don't know how to play, they'll teach you-and it's a very relaxed atmosphere. For directions and reservations, please call Lee and Merlin at 207-5336.

HOROSCOPES

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You simply cannot rest on your laurels when Mars squares Saturn. Our search for love, glory and all the goodies that go with success revs into overdrive. Fill your basket to the brim and let a certain someone catch the spillage. Don't slip on it though. Oops!

ARIES (MAR. 21 - APR. 20)
Just when you thought enough was enough, Mars squares Saturn and encourages you to go for much much more. Gay Rams get into all sorts of high priced mischief (no names please!) and have a jolly time spending and spreading it around. Seek creative stimulation for your Gay muse. Will you watch the bottom line as you pay the piper? Nasty thing!

TAURUS (APR. 21 - MAY 21)
Mars and Saturn propel you into a frenzied social swirl. Queer Bulls are endowed with extra dollops of charisma and are the ones to see and be seen with. Try to be discerning as the hoi poloi scramble to get a piece of you. It can all become much too much. But escaping from all this madness is futile since home is no refuge. So just try to be choosy ... for a change.

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)
Not only do you have a number of great ideas, some of them are especially intuitive and wise. Are we talking about gossipy pink Twins? Oh yes. Go with the cosmic flow as Mars and Saturn send you mystical directions and important answers. Share your knowledge now! By the end of the month the most valuable information you will divine is the address of the next hot bot.

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)
Friends ask a lot of you and while you are happy to oblige, be sure to set limits on your generosity. Mars squares Saturn and creates extreme situations that require extreme measures. Where does that leave caring pink Crabs? Hopefully fading into the background where they cannot see you. Bide your time. By next week the dust settles and you can play the big shot without risk.

LEO (JULY 24 - AUG. 23)
Miffed proud Lions are apt to take matters in their own paws at work when Mars squares Saturn. Recent events seem to tell you that you are under-appreciated and being taken for granted. Very true, but don't bite just yet. Swallow your bile and wait for a less stressful time to air your grievances. Catch more flies with honey than vinegar, sourpuss. Then you can squash 'em!

VIRGO (AUG. 24 - SEPT. 23)
They say that travel is broadening but when Saturn squares Mars, you may find that travel is more stressful, less engrossing and generally unpleasant. No one wants to help you, small incidents become international fiascos and even after landing on shore you may still feel at sea. Queer Virgins are advised to relax and recharge closer to home ... at least for this week.

LIBRA (SEPT. 24 - OCT. 23)
Haven't I seen you someplace before? Sure seems that way. Gay Libras are madly in lust and are raring to experiment with a few close bosom buddies. Normally a fine idea but when Mars squares Saturn there is a risk of increased possessiveness and jealousies. Why ruin a perfectly good friendship on a moments bliss? I guess that is a good enough reason....

SCORPIO (OCT. 24 - NOV. 22)
As hard as you work (and you are working very hard right now) there is something to be said for taking a breather, pulling back and seeking greater life balance. Proud Scorps refuse to see the connection between time spent with partners and overall stress reduction. Oh but just wait. Mars squares Saturn and drives the point home this week. Maybe you will get the point?

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 23 - DEC. 22)
This may be the perfect time to take a vacation. Mars and Saturn have been turning up the heat at work and Gay Archers are feeling like rats on an ever increasing treadmill. There is nothing to be gained from putting in that extra effort now. Before you fall off and become grist for the mill, jump off the rat track and make tracks for parts unknown. Let it all hang Out.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 23 - JAN. 20)
Fun may be much more trouble than it is worth when randy Mars squares Saturn. Pink Caps think they can party hearty and go overboard in their pursuit of assorted jollies. You may also gamble more than you can afford now. The payoff will either be enormous or catastrophic. Let's guess what happens. Your love knows no bounds this week. Unless that is your thing.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 21 - FEB. 19)
Count to at least ten in relationships this week. Mars and Saturn can create frictions and extra, unnecessary stress. Aqueerians want major and quick changes around the house but partners vehemently disagree. It is better to create a different friction between the two of you ... and start a raging fire. See what happens when you rub two sticks together.

PISCES (FEB. 20 - MAR. 20)
You think you are eloquent, inspiring and dramatic. Sadly you may come off as shrill when Mars squares Saturn. Store up your ferocious opinions for at least another week. You can use this time to refine them. Guppies speak from the heart but now you may get heartburn especially around the office. Push a few paperclips and contemplate your next move quietly.

Plea Deal Offered In New Mexico Gay Beatings

Continued from Page Three

Aarons, who also represents Cano, said Cano's deal will allow him to plead guilty to conspiracy, while charges of aggravated battery, criminal damage to property and contributing to the delinquency of a minor will be dropped.

Trinidad on Thursday (August 4) received a two-year commitment to the state Children, Youth and Families Department for a parole violation in January, when he was charged with reckless driving and concealing his identity. He was on parole for raping a 4-year-old boy.

District Attorney Henry Valdez refused to comment about any plea bargains offered by his office. In the past, Valdez has said he was prepared to invoke New Mexico's hate-crimes law to seek enhanced sentences for those found guilty in connection with the beating. The 2003 statute, which has not yet been used in New Mexico, allows an additional year of prison time to be imposed for a felony determined to be a hate crime.

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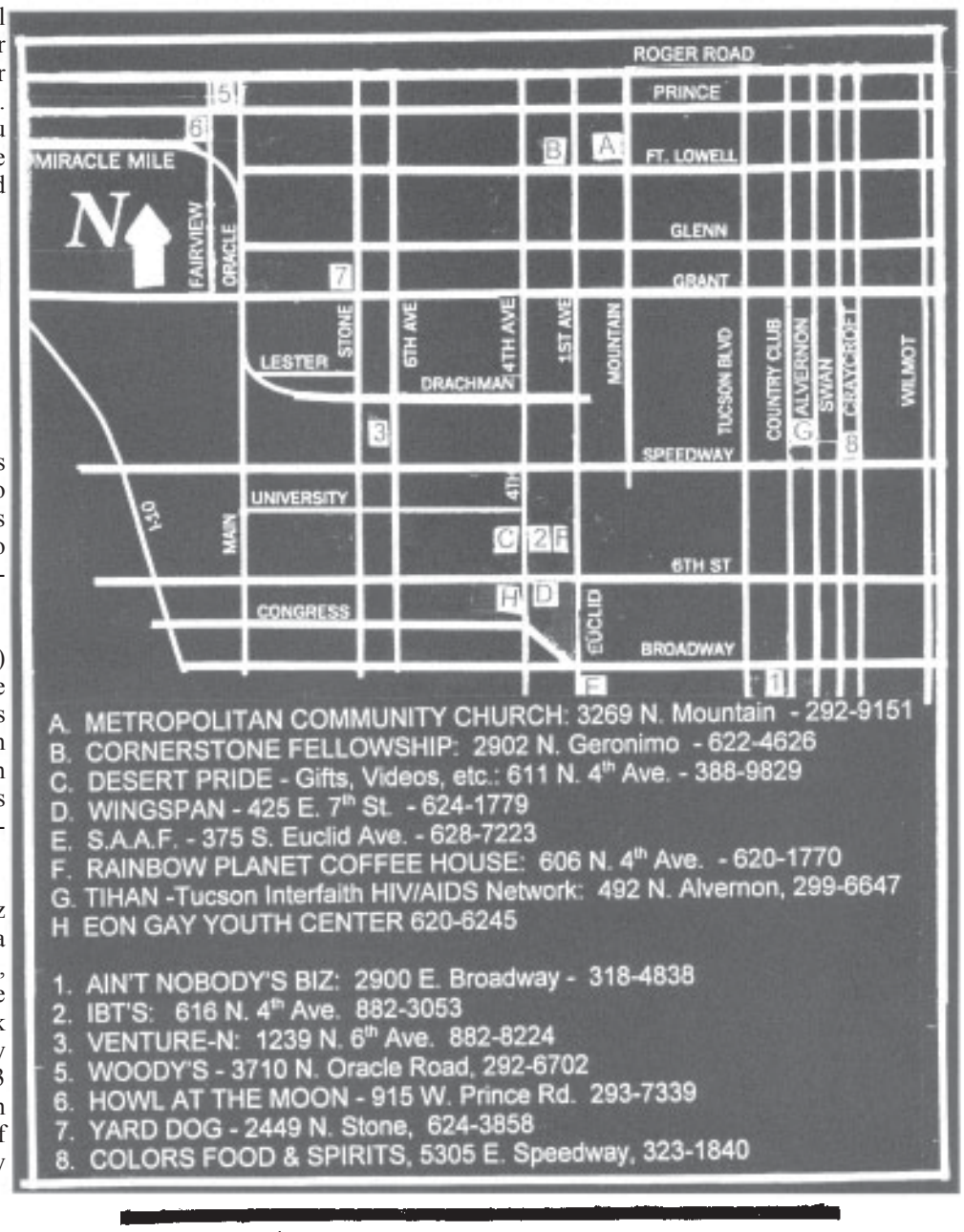

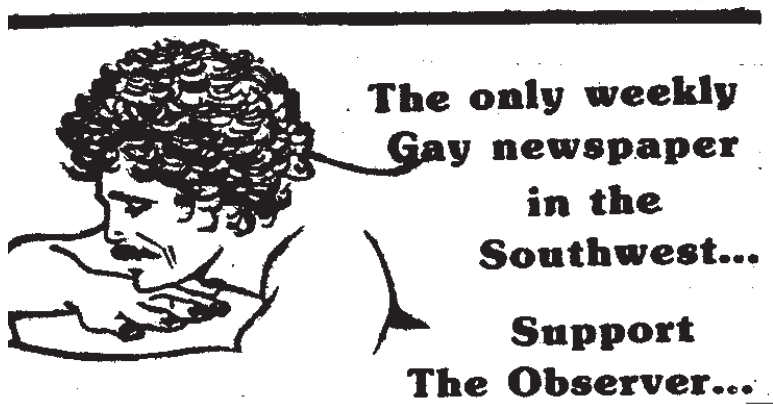

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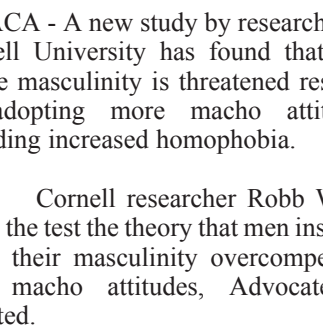
Study: Masculinity Linked To Homophobia

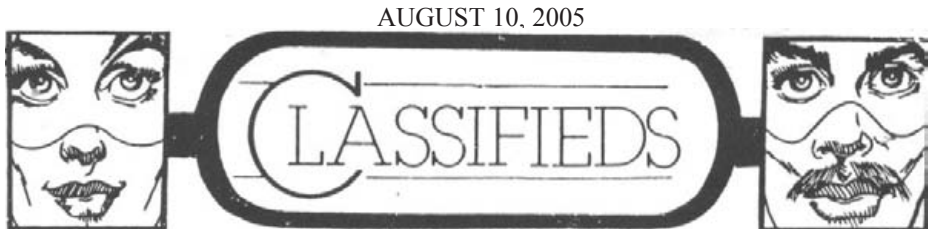
ITHACA - A new study by researchers at Cornell University has found that men whose masculinity is threatened respond by adopting more macho attitudes, including increased homophobia.

Cornell researcher Robb Willer put to the test the theory that men insecure about their masculinity overcompensate with macho attitudes, Advocate.com reported.

Willer gave more than a hundred Cornell undergraduate students a gender identity survey and then randomly told them their responses indicated they had a masculine or feminine identity. Then the subjects were interviewed about political opinions, car preferences, and feelings toward Gay people.

Willer says men who were told they were feminine gave much more homophobic responses. They were also more likely to support the war in Iraq and to be interested in buying an SUV. Women's responses were unchanged by the masculine-feminine rating. Willer will present his findings at the American Sociological Association's 100th annual meeting later this month, reported Sirius Out Q radio.





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TENSE? STRESSED OUT? Relax for an hour with a full body rub by Frank. Private studio, off-street parking. 548-7019 days, evenings. 1099

KNEADING TENSE SORE MUSCLES in relaxing central location. Nurturing, stress relief body rub. Affordable. 326-8226 1098

RELAX WITH A FULL BODY MASSAGE FOR MEN in a private studio on the West Side. Call Ralph, 883-74 96. 1097

END BACK PAIN. The back solution, massage and bodywork. 15 years experience. Tension Erasure - Stress Reduction - Relax for Health. Abe 294-4810 1097

TRANSFORMING TANTRIC THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE. Strong and masculine hands to sooth the wildness in you. An exceptional experience of quality for 24 years. Surrender now... Marc 881-4582 by appointment. 1103

ALTERATIONS AND REPAIRS
Let me keep your clothes fitting properly and in good repair. Experienced -- Economical -- Prompt. Merle Hudson, (520)888-7264 in Tucson. 1111

A man who doesn't advertise is like one who winks in the dark: he knows he's doing it, but nobody else does.

Ending the violence.

Wingspan launches the Anti-Violence Project – a community initiative to assist lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender victims of discrimination, domestic violence, sexual assault and hate crimes.

Call the Anti-Violence Project 24-Hour Crisis Line at 624-0348, or toll-free 1-800-553-9387.

WINGSPAN
Southern Arizona's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center

www.wingspan.org

DAILY BAR CALENDAR

sunday

COLORS - Open 11am - 11pm Champagne Brunch 11am - 2pm with choice of complimentary mimosa, Bloody Mary or Screwdriver. Happy Hour 4-7pm $2 skyy Cocktails, $3 Skyy Martinis, $2 Domestics and half price appetizers. Full menu served 2-10pm. Nightly dinner specials.

HOWL AT THE MOON –Open at 11:00 am. Chuckwagon Breakfast 11am - 1:30pm, - Scrambled eggs, hash brown, biscuit & sausage gravy and your choice of Bloody Mary, Screwdriver or Mimosa. Free Texas Hold'em Poker Tourney at 4 and 7pm. Sign-up begins one hour before playing time. No Cash - Play for Prizes and Points. Great chance to learn the hottest game around

IBT's -Open Noon. $1.75 Bloodys, or mimosas. til 4pm. 4-7:30 Karaoke with Michael D. on the patio 5:30-7:30 Beer Bust. 2-4-1 drink specials and DJ Mike Lopez 10pm to close. (Some restrictions apply).

VENTURE-N - Open 10am. Patio open 3pm. $2.00 Bloody Marys or Screws til 3pm Patio Beer Bust 3-7.Burger BBQ 5-7. Selection of burger meats to choose from. $3 proceeds go to Pet Watch (helping HIV/AIDS clients with their veterinary bills).

WOODY'S - Open 11am. Brunch $5, 11:30 - 2:30. Patio open 1pm-close. Yard games on the grass. Beer Bust 16oz $1 2-7p. $2.50 Sirloin Burger or Chicken w/sides 5-9pm. Karaoke with Michael D. 9pm-close. Drag Bingo every other Sunday 8-9

YARD DOG - Open Sundays 10am - 1am. Bloody Marys or Screwdrivers $1.75 from 10am - 3pm.

monday

COLORS - Closed on Mondays.

HOWL AT THE MOON –Open at 3 pm. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, $2 well, domestic longnecks & pints, $3 sm pitchers, $5 lg pitchers. Monday Munchies 3 - 8 pm with reduced prices on appetizers - best deal in town! Free Texas Hold-'Em Poker Tournaments at 6:00 pm and 9:00 pm. Sign-up begins one hour before playing time. No Cash - Play for Prizes and Points.

IBT's -Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, DJ Mike Lopez 10pm-2am $1.50 well vodka drinks, All drink specials not available during special events.

VENTURE-N - Open 9am. Patio 6pm. Free pool til 4pm. $2.75 Skyy & Beefeaters Martinis.

WOODY'S - Open 10am. w/Special Happy Hour til 2pm $1.50 well or domestic longnecks. Regular Happy Hour 2-8. Karaoke w/Michael D. 9-1

YARD DOG - Open daily 6am. 50¢ off any Scotch until 7pm. Beer Bust 3-7pm.

tuesday

COLORS - Open 4-11pm. Happy Hour 4-7 $2 Skyy cocktails, $3 Skyy Martinis, $2 Domestics and half-price appetizers. 1st Tuesday of month "Dinner & Movie" sponsored by GMHP. All other Tuesdays "Dinner and a Concert"shown on 52" projection system. Full menus served until l0pm.

HOWL AT THE MOON – Open at 3 pm. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, $2 well, domestic longnecks & pints, $3 sm pitchers, $5 lg pitchers. Tequila Tuesday: $2.00 well margaritas, 50¢ off call tequilas. Karaoke with Debbie from 8 - midnight

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, Tropical Tuesdays $2.50 Tropical drinks and DJ Q playing Retro Music 70's, 80's and 90's 9pm-close.

VENTURE-N - Open 9am. Patio 6pm. Free Pool til 4pm. Spaghetti Nite (2nd Tuesday every month $2.00).

WOODY'S - Open 10am w/Special Happy Hour til 2pm $1.50 well or domestic longneck. Regular Happy Hour 2-8. 80s Nite 9-close. $1 off to those wearing 80s concert T-shirt. (Excludes draught & schnapps).

YARD DOG - Open daily 6am.50¢ off any Tequila until 7pm Beer Bust 3-7pm.

wednesday

COLORS - Open 4-11pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm, $2 Skyy cocktails, $3 Skyy Martinis, $2 Domestics and half-price appetizers Full menu served 4-10pm. Nightly dinner specials.

HOWL AT THE MOON – Open at 3 pm. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, $2 well, domestic longnecks & pints, $3 sm pitchers, $5 lg pitchers. Free Pool all day. Draught Beer Specials all day.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, 9pm "Diva-Licious" show w/ Bunny Fu Fu. HiNrgy dance with DJ Q,

VENTURE-N - Open 8am. Patio 6pm. Free Pool til 4pm. $2.75 Cuervo Margaritas 4-8pm

WOODY'S - Open 10am w/Special Happy Hour til 2pm $1.50 well or domestic longnecks. Regular Happy Hour 2-8. Underwear- fetish-leather nite $1 off for those wearing underwear-fetish or leather. (Excludes draught & schnapps) for all in leather or underwear.

YARD DOG - Open daily 6am.50¢ off any Vodka until 7pm Beer Bust 3-7pm.

thursday

COLORS - Open 4-11pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm,$2 Skyy cocktails, $3 Skyy Martinis, $2 Domestics and half-price appetizers. Full menu served 4-10pm. Nightly dinner specials.

HOWL AT THE MOON –Open at 3 pm. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, $2 well, domestic longnecks & pints, $3 sm pitchers, $5 lg pitchers. $2.00 Mexican Beers all day. Karaoke with Debbie from 8 to midnight.

IBT's -Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, Boyz Nite Out with your Bartenders & GoGo Boys dancing in their undies and DJ Mike Lopez spinning Top 40 & All request $1.75 Long Islands and $1.50 Tequila shots 10pm-2am.

VENTURE-N - Open 9am. Patio open 6pm. Free Pool til 4pm. Pool Tourney 7pm. $3 entry. Special prices for players. Steak Nite (4th Thursday of each month). Bring your own or get it here $6.00.

WOODY'S - Open 10am w/Special Happy Hour til 2pm $1.50 well or domestic longnecks. Regular Happy Hour 2-8. Free Pool all day. NTN Game Nite w/prizes 9-close. $1 Pabst Blue Ribbon. Patio bar open 8pm-close

YARD DOG - Open daily 6am.50¢ off any Bourbon til 7pm. Beer Bust 3-7pm.

friday

COLORS - Open 4pm-2am. Happy Hour 4-7pm, $2 Skyy cocktails, $3 Skyy Martinis, $2 Domestics and half-price appetizers . Full menu served 4-11pm. Nightly Dinner Specials. 6:30-9:30pm. "Hot Jazz, Cool Martinis" with Susan Artemis 10pm "Guys & Dolls" hosted by Lucinda Holliday. Reservations suggested.

Open 11am for lunch. Dinner 5-10pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm domestic beers or well cocktails $2.25.

HOWL AT THE MOON – Open at 3 pm. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, $2 well, domestic longnecks & pints, $3 sm pitchers, $5 lg pitchers. Line Dance Lessons 7:30 to 8:30 pm. DJ Pat plays your favorite country dance songs 8:30 to midnight then a mix of dance & country 'til close. Kitchen open 10 pm - 2 am for late night munchies.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm,, Hot Dance with DJ Mike Lopez 9pm-2am.

VENTURE-N - Open 9am. Patio open 6pm. Free Pool til 4pm. DJ 9pm to close.

WOODY'S - Open 10am.w/Special Happy Hour til-2pm $1.50 well or domestic longnecks. Regular Happy Hour 2-8. Patio Bar open 8-close. Party w/DJ Jeff 9-close.

YARD DOG - Open daily 6am.50¢ off any Gin until 7pm. Beer Bust 3-7pm. Kennel open 9pm.

saturday

COLORS - Open 4pm-2am, Happy Hour 4-7pm, $2 Skyy cocktails, $3 Skyy Martinis, $2 Domestics and half-price appetizers Full menu served 4-11pm. Nightly dinner specials. Amber Norgarrd sings originals and cover tunes 6:30-9:30pm. Reservations suggested.

HOWL AT THE MOON –Open at 11:00 am. Chuckwagon Breakfast 11am-1:30pm, $4.50. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, $2 well, domestic longnecks & pints, $3 sm pitchers, $5 lg pitchers. $4.00 Cheeseburger & Fries all day. DJ playing your favorite country songs 8:30 - midnight, then "anything goes" requests until close. Kitchen open 10 pm - 2 am for late night munchies.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, 5-8pm karaoke and Teryaki Kabobs on the patio. 8:30pm Show time w/ Ajia Simone or Janee Star. DJ Q spinning Club Music inside and Mike Lopez spinning on the patio 10pm to close..

VENTURE-N - Open 9am. Patio Bar open 3pm. Patio Beer Bust 3-7pm. DJ 9 to close.

WOODY'S - Open 10am. Regular Happy Hour 2-8. $5 Steak or Fish w/all the trimmings 5-9. Patio Bar open 5-close. Live Jazz w/Arthur Migliazza on the patio 6-9. Party w/DJ Jeff 9-close.

YARD DOG - Open daily 6am. Beer Bust 3-7pm. 75¢ glass, $2.25 pitcher. 50¢ off any Rum 1pm to 7pm. Beer Bust 3-7pm. Kennel Open 9pm.

CASINOS. . . . . .

AVA AMPHITHEATER AT CASINO DEL SOL COMING ATTRACTIONS:(Box office 838-6700 -I-10 Exit Valencia West)

DESERT DIAMOND CASINO UPCOMING ATTRACTIONS: (Box office 393-2799 - I-19 & Pima Mine Road, Exit 80 - 7 minutes south of Tucson)

OCTOBER 16 - 17TH Annual AIDSWALK takes place at Rillito Downs Race Park,s River Road and First Avenue in Tucson. AIDSWALK 2005 will again feture both the traditionala 4K walk as well as a 10K non-competitive run. Tucson's support of AIDSWALK over the years has made an important and lasting statement about Southern Arizona's commitment to the fight against AIDS. AIDSWSALK at

Of reported demographic information from participants, 60% of all registered walkers are female, two thirds are under 35, and one-fourth are under 18.

BAR CALENDAR Of Upcoming Events

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10
IBT's - Heather Boa to be crowned Miss Gay Tucson 2006 tonight starting at 9:00 p.m. Starring in the show beside Heather will be Amanda Bury, Miss Gay Arizona 1006; Janee Starr, Miss Gay Tucson 2005 and Bunny FuFu, Miss Gasy Arizona 2004. Read the letter to the editor in this issue to see what the buzz is all about.

WOODY'S - Sarong Underwear Party 8:00 p.m. til close.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 12
WOODY'S - August Birthday? Celebrate at Woody's starting at 9 p.m. Champagne toast, balloons and cake!

SATURDAY, AUGUST 13
HOWL AT THE MOON - Tina Angotti In Concert. The award-winning singer/songwriter from Phoenix will be performing from 8:30 to 10:30 p.m. Don't Miss It!

SUNDAY, AUGUST 14
YARD DOG - 3:00 p.m. there's a Cricket Dart Tourney. Blind draw, $5.00 entry fee. Get your darts out

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17
Gay Men's Health Project (GMHP) Underwear Party. Play Twister in your shorts.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 18
WOODY'S - Wet Shorts Contest 10:00 p.m. $75 First Place.

SATURDAY AUGUST 20
HOWL AT THE MOON - Ella de Noche Latino Drag Show back by popular demand. The fun starts at 10:00 p.m.

VENTURE-N - Bucky's 'world famous' Reubens and BLTs will be served from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m.

WOODY'S - Tattoo Party

YARD DOG SALOON - Tucson Knight Owls (TKO) is hosting a beer bust beginning at 2 p.m. Proceeds will go to start setting up the annual holiday meal donation from TKO

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24
WOODY'S - Boys Gone Wild Party

THURSDAY, AUGUST 25
VENTURE-N - It's Steak Nite here from 6 to 8 p.m. Only $6.00 and it includes salad and baked potato.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 27
HOWL AT THE MOON - Moon Glow Painting Party - black lights, body paints - Oh Yeah!

YARD DOG SALOON - The Scottish are coming !!!!!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 3
VENTURE-N - Jungle Party!!!!! Get your loincloth together. Ask the bartender for instructions.

NOTICES - COMMUNITY - NOTICES

HALLELUJAH RECOVERY DRUG & ALCOHOL 12-STEP. Every Thursday 5:30-6:30pm at Cornerstone Fellowship, 2902 N. Geronimo. 622-4626.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE CLINIC provided daily by the Pima County Health Department. Gay friendly. Confidential. Treatment and Medication too! Any questions? Call 624-8272

SOUTHERN ARIZONA AIDS FOUNDATION (SAAF), 375 S. EUCLID. Office Hours 8am to 5pm, Monday through Friday. Direct services and emotional support for persons with and affected by HIV. Anonymous HIV testing and support groups available. Prevention education programs. 628-SAAF (7223). World wide web: http://www.saaf.org. VOLUNTEERS WELCOME.

LESBIAN SUPPORT GROUP. Involving discussion, support and activities. Designed to support each other. Meets 1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month from 6:30 to 8pm. Alternate Saturdays the group meets for social activities. For info call Dorian Easty. 882-7723 Facilitator.

P.F.L.A.G. - Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays - is a support group available to anyone who has a son, daughter or friend who is Gay. Call 575-8660 or write P.O. Box 36264, Tucson, AZ 85740-6264. All replies confidential.

TUCSON GLBT AL-ANON GROUP meets Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th Street. Call 624-1779 for more information.

YOUNG AND GAY?
GLBT Youth 23 and under, meet every Saturday in Tucson for sharing, support and information. Meetings are held at 425 E. 7th Street from 3 to 4:30 pm. You are not alone. For more info call Wingspan, 624-1779.

The TUCSON Chapter of PRIME TIMERS WORLDWIDE invites Gay or Bisexual men and their admirers to join and share Prime Timers fellowship. We welcome mature men (and admirers) who wish to become involved with planned and future Prime Timers (TPT) activities. Meetings luncheons and dinners are held monthly. For dates, times and information call743-0810, leave name and phone number. Tucsonpt@primetimersww,org

TUCSON GAY INFORMATION AND REFERRAL
For Information on human service organizations, health and mental health services, financial and government assistance, emergency services such as food and shelter, education, etc. Call Information and Referral 881-1794 - 8 am - 5 pm M-F.

AIDS HOTLINE - 326-AIDS. Hours M-F, 9:00 am to 10:00 pm. Information, counseling, HIV-related services, Tucson.

GAY OR BI-SEXUAL MEN in relationships with women. Need friends you can talk to? Weekly support group meets Wednesdays 6:30 - 8:00 pm. Licensed psychologist facilitator. Call 745-6977 in Tucson for more information. Strictly confidential.

WINGSPAN - Tucson's Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Community Center, 425 E. 7th St., offers support groups / info line / social events / library / meeting space. Volunteer Opportunities. Board meetings every 2nd Thursday (open to all), 6:00 p.m. Information 624-1779.

GREATER PHOENIX GAY & LESBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (GPGLCC) P.O. BOX 2097, Phoenix, AZ 85001-2097. E-mail: webmaster@gpglcc.org or call (602)225-8444.

SOURCES UNLIMITED, a Lesbian & Gay referral service. Business and individual listings are free of charge. All information available to anyone just simply by asking. 322-5655. Leave message. TucsonSources@aol.com

GET NAKED with TNTucson MEN! We're a social and recreational club. Have you ever longed to camp, swim, hike or play with others who enjoy the same, dropping all the masks and pretensions? We;re for you! TNTucsonMEN@nethere.com, P.O. Box 12176, Tucson 85792 or call 514-9894

INNER WISDOM - Try hypnotherapy for pain relief, past life exploration and addiction release. Also available: Spiritual Counseling and Dream Interpretation. 579-9020

BEARS OF THE OLD PUEBLO — a social club for bears and bigger, more robust men (and of course, those who prefer their company). For more info, Call the Bears Hotline (520)790-5775 or write P.O. Box 43910, Tucson, AZ 85733-3910 of visit our website at www.botop.com All are welcome to our general meetings/potlucks on the 2nd Friday of every month, at 3202 E. 1st St. (the "Ward 6" Office Bldg.) Just south of Speedway & East of Country Club. PotLuck Dinner begins at 6:30 and the monthly meeting follows at 7:15 p.m.

LESBIAN AND GAY AL-ANON - Affected by someone's drinking? Meeting every Tuesday 8:45 to 9:45 p.m. at Lambda Center, 2940 E. Thomas, Phoenix. Ellie 581-8850 or Ronn 968-2384.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE GROUP - Outreach to Gay and Lesbian people in Arizona. Meets monthly. Write to P.O. Box 893, Phoenix, AZ 85001 or call Eddy Walters, (602)371-1102

CRONIES SOCIAL GROUP. A Social group for Gay men who enjoy the fellowship of their peers. Call Leo at 624-6768.

T-SQUARES Lesbian and Gay square dance club meets every Tuesday from 6:30-9:00 p.m. at Cornerstone Fellowship Social Hall, 2902 N. Geronimo (near 1st Ave. and Laguna). Open to All. Call Liz at 325-9466 or Ray at 749-5247.

LIGHTNING LIGHTING will provide lighting for AIDS and related benefits at no charge. For more info call Adrienne at 889-7298.

COME EXPLORE YOUR SPIRITUALITY! St. Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church offers a variety of Gay and Lesbian groups and services for the spiritually minded. Come meet the Family! For more information call Debbie 579-9827 or David 323-7943.

LESBIAN/GAY WRITERS: Workshop at 7:00 p.m. third Wednesday of every month. Read and critique current projects. Network and support. For info call 325-4737.

DESERT VOICES, Tucson's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Straight Chorus, has been singing songs of pride, hope and laughter for 16 seasons. Check out our website at www.desertvoices.org, or call (520)791-9662 for information about upcoming concerts or how to join.

Join the LESBIAN & GAY PUBLIC AWARENESS PROJECT. In Tucson write Awareness Project, 3661 N. Campbell Ave. #365, Tucson, AZ 85719.

AA Meeting with HIV/AIDS focus, Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m., Wingspan Annex, 739 N. 4th Ave. All alcoholics welcome.

MEN'S SOCIAL NETWORK: Social organization for men of all ages. Building an extended Gay family in Tucson. Monthly social potluck gatherings the first Saturday of each month and almost weekly social activities. Call 690-9565 for information and a newsletter. Check the Non-Bar Calendar in the Observer.

CARE TEAMS ARE AVAILABLE to offer support to people living with HIV/AIDS. The Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network offers trained, compassionate and committed volunteers to provide services including friendly visits, light housekeeping, assistance with meals, shopping, errands, transportation and companionship for medical appointments, and respite care for primary care givers. No judgement or proselytizing - we are here to be of service. For information call Scott at 299-6647.

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT SPORTS TEAMS and updates on Gay Games 2002, contract TEAM ARIZONA at their website: teamarizona.org

ARE YOU GAY OR BISEXUAL AND UNDER 21 YEARS OF AGE? The Gay Young Men's Project is now looking for volunteers for the project. We need people who want to help create a positive social change for young Gay men as well as reduce the risk for HIV infection. For more information please call 628-7223.

THE MEN'S MASSAGE GROUP meets the 3rd Sunday of each month. It is a good way to meet other men of all ages, safely, and with the art of nurturing touch. There is a fee. You must sign up in advance to participate. Call Marc at 881-4582 for more information or sign up.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE GLBT, Tucson's Gay and Lesbian business networking group holds regular meetings the third Thursday of every month. Call 615-6436 for more info. www.tucsonglbtchamber.org

TUCSON PRIDE, INC. (Formerly Tucson Lesbian and Gay Alliance - TLGA) meets on the second Tuesday at 845 S. Craycroft Road at 6pm. Tucson Pride events: Pride Week, Gay West and OUToberFEST. Inquiries about support groups and individual needs should be directed to Wingspan and other local agencies listed here. For more information call 622-3200 or visit the TPI website at www.tucsonpride.com

LEARN TO BE A LISTENING FRIEND Unique Hospital Volunteer Program teaches listening skills to Volunteers who provide a safe/compassionate environment to at-risk patients. Training every 6 weeks. 694-7063.

TUCSON INTERFAITH HIV/AIDS NETWORK (TIHAN), a coalition of faith communities committed to a compassionate response to HIV/AIDS, provides HIV education in congregational settings, volunteer CareTeams to support HIV+ persons, a referral network of HIV-sensitive clergy, and interfaith services of healing and hope. For more information call 299-6647.

ANONYMOUS HIV COUNSELING AND TESTING is available through the Pima County Health Department at sites throughout Tucson, Very Gay Friendly. For more information or to make an appointment call 791-7676.

GRACE GROUP - CATHOLIC GAY/LESBIAN SUPPORT GROUP meets every 2nd and 4th Monday at 7:30 p.m. in the Madonna Hall at Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church, 1436 N. Campbell across from University Hospital. For more info. Call Anabeli at 325-0892

SMART (Self Management And Recovery Training) a free non-12-step self-help alternative for people working to overcome addictive and other emotional problems meets in Tucson Monday thru Thursdays at different locations. For more information about SMART, contact Jennifer at 838-3975.

AZdykes is a new email list for Lesbians living in Arizona. For information mail tyan@theriver.com and request guidelines.

OUTLOUD! Tucson's premiere Local Lesbian and Gay Radio Show, broadcast every Sunday from 7-8 pm on 91.3 FM, Community Radio KXCI.

THEATER / DINNER / ETC! Non-Smoking Lesbian Network meets every 3rd Saturday night of each month. If you'd like to meet women 35+ (flexible) and socialize in a smoke-free environment 888-8010 til 9:00 p.m. The group dines out and attends shows or movies. Now in their 16th year! (2nd in Tucson).

SOUTHERN ARIZONA GENDER ALLIANCE (SAGA). The Southwest's largest transgender and gender-variant advocacy organization. Speakers and panelists available. General meetings monthly on the 1st Mondays at 7pm; Dezert Girlz MTF Support) meets 2nd Mondays at 7pm; Dezert Boyz (FTM Support) meets 3rd Tuesdays at 7pm. Also serving partners, youth, intersex, service providers and allies. Call (520)867-0083 for more info.

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT GROUP FOR ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLES. Not a dating club. Discreet. Meetings every Monday evening. Call for more info. APEX (Arizona Power Exchange) 602-415-1123. 24-hr multi-choice message including information, calendar and location.

ARIZONA AIDS POLICY ALLIANCE (AZAPA) seeks to educate legislators and citizens about sound AIDS policy. For more information write AZAPA, 6523 N. 14th St., #112, Phoenix, AZ 85014 or call 602-279-4805.

DESERT DOMINION, whose focus is providing information and education for people interested in the BDSM lifestyle, meets monthly for group discussion and social events. Visit our web site http://www.desertdominion.org or call (520)792-6424

SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS. Starting this February, the Tucson Rape crisis Center will be providing free confidential group services for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender survivors of all manner of sexual assault. Interested persons please call Mirto Stone, MSW, at 327-1171 (if unavailable leave message with phone number.

AAPSP - ARIZONA ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC SAFETY PROFESSIONALS: a confidential organization committed to providing support and networking for all Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual public safety professionals in Arizona. Membership open to Law Enforcement Officers, Firefighters, Probation, Parole and Corrections Officers and civilians working within these agencies. Website: AAPSP.org or e-mail: AAPSP@aol.com or call Dave (520)745-9059 (Tucson) or Kim (602)534-6219 (Phoenix)

GLSEN - Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network meets first Thursday of every month at 4:30pm at Wingspan, 425 E.7th Street. 743-4800.

TUCSON CATHOLIC GAY & LESBIAN FAMILY MINISTRY. Currently meeting the 4th Monday of every month at SS Peter & Paul Church, Madonna Hall 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Fr. Fiedler in attendance every meeting and willing to speak one on one. Reaching out to Parents and Families. For more info call Doc or Barbara 293-6624.

SAA (Sex Addicts Anonymous) has 5 meetings a week in Tucson. People who wish to stop their compulsive sexual behavior, please call (520) 745-0775 for current information.

TUCSON GREATER SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION. Interested? Call Kelly Quinn, (520)906-0669 and or Mona Garcia 256-8728.

LUTHERANS CONCERNED — Tucson chapter for Gay/Lesbian Lutherans meets 3rd Sunday, 6:30 p.m. each month at Santa Cruz Lutheran Church, 6809 S. Cardinal Ave. For information visit www.lctucson.org write: LC, 7014 E. Golf Links Road, PMB 212, Tucson, AZ 85730.

REVEILLE GAY MEN'S CHORUS rehearses Tuesdays 7-10pm at MCC Church, 3269 N. Mountain. Have any history/ experience singing? Join us!! Call 617-3100 for more info.

"OUT ON THE TRAILS - EQUESTRIAN FUN!"
Rider Club forming. Looking for women and men to ride together on the trails of Southern Arizona. Must have own horse, truck and trailer. For more info write: "Out On The Trails" P.O. Box 44045, Tucson, AZ 85733-4045

LIKE TO READ?
The Guys' Book Club (TGBC) invites new members to join us. The group meets once a month, on the 3rd Monday, at 6:30 p.m. Reading selections include Gay-themed novels, bios and other nonfiction. For location or more info, email Bryan at Bryansct@aol.com

THE MAN TO MAN Social/erotic education club is the tantric men's group that offers passionate friendships, fun activities and real Tantric sex education. Marc 881-4582

LGBT BUDDHIST MEDITATION GROUP. Join us for two 20 minute silent sitting meditations, a reading from a Buddhist religious text and discussion. Bring a friend and a pillow or cushion. Meets every Sunday from 10:00 - 11:30am at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th St.. Contact Sean Seeba at 622-8759 for more information.

LGBT SUPPORT GROUP FOR VICTIM/SURVIVORS OF Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Hate Crimes, Bias Acts, Harassment. Call Lori at Wingspan, 624-1779, ext. 20. Services are free.

NEW TUCSON SOBRIETY SUPPORT GROUP. Secular Organizations for Sobriety - Sundays 8:00 - 9:30 p.m. at 739 N. 4th Avenue. Contacts Rick R. 520-792-2604 or Gary S. 520-323-1969. More information at www.secularhumanism.org/sos/ This group is an alternative to 12-step programs.

MEN'S KINK DISCUSSION GROUP (Open to all who identify as male and are 18 or older) meets 2nd Tuesday of the month, 7:00 p.m. at Desert Dominion, 3843 E. 37th Street, Tucson, AZ. (Map available at www.desertdominion,org) For those who are kinky or just curious. No fee, contributions are appreciated, but not required.

SUN WORSHIPERS OF TUCSON (SWOT) is a local men's nudist organization for men of all ages. Events feature swimming, hot tubbing and socializing in a relaxed, private setting. Check out our website at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/swot. Bi-weekly daytime meetings, Saturdays at 10am and Sundays at 2pm. Contact John at 327-3135 for more info and upcoming dates.

MAN TO MAN INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY FORMING for anyone wanting quality friendships, better health and more passion in their lives. This group has far-reaching benefits for those who want to explore their own spirituality, sexuality and purpose in life. Weekly social events include Keys to Healthy Relationships, and Be Your Own Best Lover. Also events include entertainment like dinner, movies, theater and art. Group discussions. Group fun with intimacy, spontaneity and play. A great way to meet other men who are on a more focused path. Contact Marc Haberman, Holistic Health Practitioner at 881-4582.

UPDATE

Oregon Civil Unions Bill Officially Dead

SALEM - The Oregon Legislature ended its second-longest session ever at 6:20 a.m. Friday (August 5), allowing a bill that would have provided civil unions for same-sex couples to die without coming to a vote, 365Gay.com reported.

The bill would have created a civil unions registry and grant same-sex couples many of the rights available to married couples including inheritance benefits, pensions, property rights when a partner dies, and the right to make medical decisions for a partner.

The legislation also would have included Gays and Lesbians in Oregon's nondiscrimination act.

The bill, which had the support of Gov. Ted Kulongoski, passed the Democratically controlled Senate last month.

But Republicans who dominate the House dug in their heels - first, gutting the legislation and then deciding not to allow it to go to a full vote on the floor.

The death of the bill came as little surprise. House Speaker Karen Minnis said two weeks ago she had no intention of allowing a vote.

In an interview, Minnis said Oregonians decided the issue last fall when they joined with voters in 10 other states in passing Gay marriage bans.

"This issue has been greatly discussed; it's been voted on," said Minnis, who over the years has gained a reputation as a social issues conservative.

The Gay marriage debate intensified in Oregon in early 2004, when Multnomah County began issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

Some 3,000 same-sex couples were married in the county, which includes the city of Portland. In April the state's highest court ruled that the marriages null and void but indicated that in light of the marriage amendment the legislature could provide civil unions.

Supporters of civil unions say they will try to reintroduce the measure in the next session of the legislature.

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Melissa Etheridge 'Recovered From Cancer'

Melissa Etheridge and Tammy Lynn Michaels

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MELISSA ETHERIDGE 'RECOVERED FROM CANCER'

LOS ANGELES - Melissa Etheridge is jumping back into recording and performing after spending much of the last year fighting breast cancer. The 44-year-old rocker has appearances booked for October, when her greatest hits collection "The Road Less Traveled" is due for release, 365Gay.com reported.

"I would say I'm 97 percent back now," Etheridge told AP Radio in an interview. "It is very hard. ... Chemotherapy is so hard on a person. And I would say I'm fully recovered, yeah."

Etheridge took to the stage with a shaved head but strong voice at the Grammy Awards in February for a Janis Joplin tribute and received a standing ovation.

In an interview that aired Wednesday (August 3) on syndicated TV show "Extra," Etheridge said she and actress Tammy Lynn Michaels, who held a commitment ceremony in September 2003, are considering having a baby.

Etheridge shares custody of a daughter and a son with former partner Julie Cypher, who had the children through artificial insemination using a sperm donation from rocker David Crosby.

"We won't be using my friend," the singer told "Extra." "David has been there and done that."

Etheridge won a 1992 Grammy for best female rock vocal performance for "Ain't It Heavy" and a 1994 Grammy in the same category for "Come to My Window."

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