Observing Tucson And The Greater Arizona Community

OBSERVER

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Psychologists To Review Stance On Gays And Lesbians

NEW YORK CITY (Observer Update) - The American Psychological Association is embarking on the first review of its 10-year-old policy on counseling Gays and Lesbians, a step that Gay-rights activists hope will end with a denunciation of any attempt by therapists to change sexual orientation, reported the Associated Press on 365Gay.com.

Such efforts - often called reparative therapy or conversion therapy - are considered futile and harmful by many Gay-rights activists. Conservative groups defend the right to offer such treatment, and say people with their viewpoint have been excluded from the review panel.

A six-member task force set up by the APA has had its first meeting.

Already, scores of conservative religious leaders and counselors, representing such groups as the Southern Baptist Convention and Focus on the Family, have written a joint letter to the APA, expressing concern that the task force's proposals would not properly accommodate Gays and Lesbians whose religious beliefs condemn Gay sex.

"We believe that psychologists should assist clients to develop lives that they value, even if that means they decline to identify as homosexual," said the letter, which requested a meeting between APA leaders and some of the signatories.

APA spokeswoman Rhea Farberman said a decision on when and how to reply to the letter had not yet been made.

The current APA policy, adopted in 1997, opposes any counseling that treats homosexuality as a mental illness, but does not explicitly denounce reparative therapy. The APA has decided to review the policy at a time when Gay-rights groups are increasingly critical of such treatment and groups that support it.

Conservatives contend that the review's outcome is preordained because the task force is dominated by Gay-rights supporters.

"We're concerned," said Carrie Gordon Earll of Focus on the Family. "The APA does not have a good track record of listening to other views."

Joseph Nicolosi, a leading proponent of reparative therapy, predicted the task force would propose a ban of the practice - and he vowed to resist such a move. Nicolosi, who was rejected as a task force nominee, is president of the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality.

Clinton Anderson, director of the APA's Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Concerns Office, insisted the panel would base its findings on scientific research, not ideology. He defended the decision to reject certain conservative applicants to the task force.

"We cannot take into account what are fundamentally negative religious perceptions of homosexuality - they don't fit into our world view," Anderson said.

One of the counselors denied a seat on the task force was Warren Throckmorton, a psychology professor at Grove City College near Pittsburgh. Though Throckmorton doesn't advocate a specific form of reparative therapy, he argues that psychologists should respect Gay clients' religious beliefs in cases where the faith teaches that homosexual behavior is wrong.

"We work with clients to pursue their chosen values," he said. "If they are core, unwavering commitments to their religious belief, therapists should not try to persuade them differently under the guise of science."

However, one of the task force members, New York City psychiatrist Jack Drescher, said the conservatives don't acknowledge the harm that might be caused when a Gay patient - even voluntarily - undergoes therapy to suppress or change sexual orientation.

"They want a rubber stamp of approval for a form of therapy that's questionable in its efficacy and they don't want to deal with the issue of harmful side effects," said Drescher, who is editor of the Journal of Gay and Lesbian Psychotherapy.

As the APA planned the policy review, it received input from Gay-rights groups, including Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

PFLAG's executive director, Jody Huckaby, said reparative therapy had been particularly harmful for young Gays whose parents insisted on trying to change their sexual orientation. His group contends these efforts can cause depression and suicidal behavior.

Current APA policy stipulates that no therapy should occur without "informed consent" of a Gay or Lesbian client. Jason Cianciotto of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force said he hoped the APA would declare that no young person could ever be deemed to have given informed consent, and thus no reparative therapy would be approved for minors.

The largest ministry that does counsel Gays to change their sexual orientation is Exodus International. Its president, Alan Chambers - who says prayer and therapy enabled him to move away from homosexuality - is among those apprehensive of the APA review.

"I had hoped for more diversity on that panel," Chambers said. "I see a lot of people who represent the other side - who don't believe that people like me have a right to self-determination."

The task force may submit a preliminary report to the APA's directors in December. Anderson said a final report might be completed by next March.

Bush Surgeon General Nominee On Homosexuals: 'My Views Changed'

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - President Bush's nominee to become the next surgeon general said he would resign rather than allow politics to push aside science, reported the Associated Press on 365Gay.com. At his Senate confirmation hearing, Dr. James W. Holsinger sought to offered assurance that he would be a strong voice for public health, unswayed by political ideology, and to answer criticism of his past writings. He said a controversial 1991 paper about homosexuality and health no longer represents his views.

Holsinger's hearing came just two days after the last person to serve in the post told Congress that the Bush administration had manipulated the surgeon general's office for political purposes. Asked what he would do if pressured to promote ideology over sound science, Holsinger said he could never be persuaded to advocate a position contrary to his conscience. "I think I have a clear response to that. I would resign," Holsinger told the Senate health committee.

Committee Chairman Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., said he was worried that if confirmed, Holsinger would let his own ideological beliefs cloud his scientific judgment. He referred to the paper that Holsinger wrote on homosexuality for a study committee of the United Methodist Church. "Dr. Holsinger's paper is ideological and decidedly not an accurate analysis of the science then available on homosexuality," Kennedy said. "Dr. Holsinger's paper cherry picks and misuses data to support his thesis that homosexuality is unhealthy and unnatural."

Holsinger said the 1991 writing was not intended to be a scientific paper and relied on the information available to him at the time. "First of all, the paper does not represent where I am today. It does not represent who I am today," Holsinger said. Holsinger said he was personally troubled by allegations that he harbors bias against gays. "I've worked diligently to provide quality health care to everyone regardless of personal characteristics including sexual orientation," he said.

Before the Senate hearing, gay rights groups, the American Public Health Association and 35 members of the House

Dr. James W. Holsinger

lined up in opposition to Holsinger's nomination. The Kentucky doctor garnered the support of a prominent former surgeon general, Dr. C. Everett Koop, as well as the American College of Physicians.

Holsinger's paper is interpreted by gay groups and others as saying that homosexuals face a greater risk of disease and that homosexuality runs counter to anatomical truths. In the paper, which focuses extensively on human anatomy and the reproductive system, Holsinger said the "varied sexual practices of homosexual men have resulted in a diverse and expanded concept of sexually transmitted disease and associated trauma."

If confirmed, Holsinger would succeed Dr. Richard Carmona, whose term expired last July. Carmona accused the Bush administration of muzzling him on several hot-button health issues, such as abstinence-only education and embryonic stem cell research. He also said the administration quashed or delayed important health reports for political reasons. Kennedy has said Holsinger's record "appears to guarantee a polarizing and divisive nomination process."

Presidential LGBT Debate Expanded

LOS ANGELES (Observer Update) - LOGO television announced that it has expanded next month's debate by the Democratic presidential candidates to 90 minutes, and that Sen. Mike Gravel will take part.

Gravel was the only candidate not originally asked to the debate, to take place in Los Angeles on August 9 because he did not meet a campaign fundraising threshold set by LOGO and the Human Rights Campaign which is co-producing the debate.

Gravel expressed anger at not being invited. In a positing attributed to him on the political Huffington Post Gravel said, "To say that I'm shocked is an understatement. I can confidently say, of all presidential candidates, I've been the most outspoken advocate for Gay rights."

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UPDATE

Raingbow Families Community Forum On Adoption, July 22

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Join Rainbow Families us at Wingspan on National Parent's Day, Sunday, July 22, 2 - 4:00 p.m. at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th St., as they discuss adoption and the LGBT Community.

Many openly Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender people are parents. In the 2000 U.S. Census, 33 percent of female same-sex couple households and 22 percent of male same-sex couple households reported at least one child under the age of 18 living in the home.

In Arizona: Individuals are allowed to be foster parents and sexual orientation and gender identity are not asked. Single individuals or married heterosexual couples may adopt. Sexual orientation and gender identity are generally not asked, so individuals living with a partner of the same sex may still adopt, though only one member of the couple will be the legal parent. Arizona statute only allows adoption by the spouse of the legal parent; therefore a same-sex partner may not adopt the child of the legal parent.

There will be a panel presentation of LGBT who have adopted children, children who grew up with LGBT families, and agencies in Southern Arizona who want LGBT people as foster and foster-adopt parents.

For more information, contact Cathy (520) 624-1779 or email: cathy@wingspan.org.

LGBT Jewish Inclusion Project Dinner

TUCSON - The LGBT Jewish Inclusion Project dinner will take place Thursday, July 26, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m., at Sabra Restaurant, 4210 E. Speedway.

Share conversation while drinking turkish coffee and Israeli food.

For more information, contact Jenny (520) 577-9393.

SAGA Speakers Bureau Training July 21

TUCSON (Observer Update) - The Southern Arizona Gender Alliance (SAGA) is in need of trained speakers to represent transgender identities and concerns to a wide variety of audiences. SAGA has dozens of speaking engagements per year, and that number is increasing steadily. The next training session will take place Saturday, July 21, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th St., in the Anzaldua Room.

High professional standards are maintained for all of our presenters and thus training for anyone volunteering to speak on behalf of SAGA or to participate on Trans/LGBT panels through SAGA, Wingspan, and other venues is required. This training is also an excellent opportunity for allies to learn more about speaking on Transgender issues. You do not need prior speaking experience, only the desire to learn. If you have been through the SAGA training before, this is an opportunity to see the new and updated presentation materials and to learn to be a facilitator for next year's round of presentations. Prior to the training, please prepare a personal biography (your "story") to present. It should be no more than 15 minutes in length, but five and ten minutes is better. It would also be helpful to know your availability schedule to help us match presenters with future speaking engagements.

Please RSVP so they know how many packets to prepare. For more information or to sign up, call Michael (520) 624-1779, ext. 17, or email speakers@sagatucson.org.

LBT Cancer Support Group Meeting July 23

TUCSON - A weekly cancer support group for LBT women will hold their next meeting, Monday, July 23, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m., at the Arizona Cancer Center, at UMC North, 3838 N. Campbell

Some advantages to being in a Support Group? You can connect with others and remember that you are not alone. You can provide support in hard times. You can provide information and coping skills. You can offer tips that only cancer survivors, friends of cancer survivors, and family of cancer survivors understand. You are not alone.

If interested or for more information, please contact: Brenda Casey, LMSW (520) 694-0347.

EighthAnnual Sidewinders - TIHAN Baseball Benefit, July 29

TUCSON (Observer Update) - The Eighth Annual Tucson Sidewinders Baseball Game to benefit TIHAN is coming up on Sunday, July 29, 6:00 p.m., gates opening at 5:30 p.m.

Come out and enjoy "the boys of summer" as the 2006 Triple-A Baseball Champion Sidewinders play the Albuquerque Isotopes.

Admission includes a ticket to the game, hamburgers/hot dogs and all the fixings, sodas, and support of TIHAN (part of each ticket is a tax-deductible donation to TIHAN).

Enjoy press-box seating or open air seating at the ballpark.

Tickets are $30 in advance or $35 at the door, and are now on sale at the TIHAN office (520) 299-6647, and credit card orders can be taken by phone..

Presidential LGBT Debate Expanded

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Gravel has long supported same-sex marriage and ending "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" the ban on Gays serving openly in the military.

A number of LGBT bloggers also took HRC and LOGO to task for not inviting Gravel to debate.

Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, John Edwards, Chris Dodd, Dennis Kucinich and Bill Richardson have confirmed they will participate. Sen. Joe Biden declined the invitation due to scheduling problems.

The debate will take place in Los Angeles and will be broadcast on LOGO at 9:00 pm ET (6:00 pm PT) and through live streaming video at LOGOonline.com.

In a statement LOGO, said that the format of the program has been extended to 90 minutes to ensure in-depth conversations with each candidate. Discussions are continuing with a variety of journalists and a moderator for the forum will be announced in the near future the network said.

Already confirmed for the panel are Human Rights Campaign president Joe Solmonese and singer Melissa Etheridge.

In addition people will be able to pose their own questions through LOGOonline.com and HRC.org.

OBSERVER

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Informing the Community
The Observer

Dykes On Bikes Suit Tossed

'Dykes On Bikes' shown during the San Francisco Pride Parade 2007

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - A federal lawsuit challenging the issuing of a trademark to San Francisco's famed Dykes On Bikes has been thrown out, 365Gay.com reported.

Michael McDermott went to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in Washington, which hears cases about copyright and trademarks, alleging that granting the group a trademark for the exclusive use of the phrase Dykes On Bikes was "disparaging to men and is scandalous and immoral." His lawsuit claimed that men are subject to attacks and civil rights violations as a result of Dykes On Bikes' appearance at San Francisco's Gay Pride and Dyke marches, and said the very word dyke is synonymous with a "deep obsessive hatred of men and the male gender."

Court papers filed by McDermott referred to the Dyke March as "the Annual Illegal San Francisco Dyke Hate Riot." In a 3-0 ruling the court said that as a man McDermott had no legal right to be offended. The ruling said in order for the case to have proceeded McDermott would have to have shown he had "a reasonable basis for a belief that he would be damaged." As a man, he could not be damaged by the word dyke. The decision ends a nearly three year battle by the group to trademark its name.

In 2004 and again in 2005 the Trademark Office rejected the group's application on the ground that the word 'dyke' is disparaging to Lesbians. The group appealed to the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board. In December of 2005, with the help of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, and after the group submitted more than two dozen expert declarations from scholars, linguists, psychologists, and activists demonstrating how the word "dyke" has evolved to become a positive term and that Lesbians view 'Dykes On Bikes' as empowering, the appeal board ruled in favor of Dykes On Bikes. It is the first time the term "dyke" has been trademarked as a stand alone part of a trademark.

Dykes On Bikes has been a fixture in San Francisco's LGBT community for more than 30 years. The non-profit group regularly leads off the city's Gay pride celebrations and regularly helps LGBT organizations with fundraising.

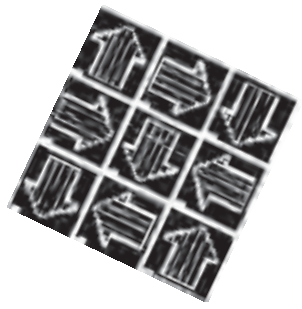
Whole Foods To Open New Store In Chicago Gay Center

CHICAGO - Whole Foods Market is scheduled to open a new store in a Chicago Gay community center, according to the Chicago Tribune, reported advocate.com. When it opens on July 25 in the Center on Halsted, Whole Foods will become the first major retailer to join a Gay community center in the United States.

Store manager Tom Marciniak expects the 40,000-square-foot store built in the East Lakeview neighborhood to become one of the most profitable stores in the area, given its proximity to Wrigley Field and the community's demographics. "We're going to really promote the center," Marciniak told the Tribune. "We'll be one of their greatest marketing vehicles." Whole Foods' decision makes it one of many mainstream companies catering to Gay and Lesbian shoppers.

The U.S. LGBT population has an estimated buying power of $650 billion, according to Chance Mitchell, cofounder and chief executive of the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce. A recent study by market research firm Packaged Facts predicts that the figure will grow to more than $835 billion by 2011. "The Gay household is now highly, highly visible," Bob Witeck, chief executive of Witeck-Combs Communications Inc., told the Tribune. Witeck's firm specializes in Gay consumers. "Now companies can say, '[We] now know who they are and [we] want them to be part of [our] mix as customers, shareholders and employees,'" he said.

Whole Foods has vied for a location in the neighborhood for the past five years. Company representatives approached the center as it was planning a smaller project that would include a bookstore or gift shop as the only retail tenant. In return, the store will also help its new landlord, providing potential clients a discreet side entrance that leads to the center's lobby. "There's a lot of people that are still struggling with coming-out issues," Modesto Tico Valle, executive director of the center, told the Tribune. "We're definitely setting the benchmark when you're talking about a comprehensive center." Valle said this new business venture has inspired centers in other cities to search out potential retail tenants. "There are many people coming here to learn from us," he said.



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Favorite Books Of The New Queerlenium: E - F

TUCSON (Observer Update) - It's an exciting time for GLBT-themed publishing. More and more books reflecting the strength, experience and vision of GLBT people appear on the shelves of book stores and libraries. We on the Pima County Public Library's GLBT Services Committee are proud to offer our favorite recent books that are by and about GLBT people. We hope this offering inspires you to read one or more of these marvelous books.

Eight Seconds by Jean Ferris (Harcourt, Inc, 2000). While attending summer rodeo school, Colorado teenager John Ritchie becomes friends with a fellow bullrider. Kit is mature, handsome, and a heck of a good bullrider, which all helps to throw John's world in a spin when he learns that his friend is Gay. Ferris' novel effectively depicts the confusion of a teen's attraction and "guilt by association" fears. Gay teens can identify with both John, the young man just starting to come out, and Kit, a more self-possessed man who, nevertheless, can be hurt. The novel is about friendship, not first love, and it explores the challenge of acceptance without any quick and tidy cuts to a Hollywood ending. (Beth Petrucci)

Fanny: A Fiction by Edmund White (Ecco, 2003). Edmund White, considered by many to be America's foremost Gay writer of fiction, forays into new territory with this work of historical fiction. Fanny is a faux memoir about two women, real people who knew each other in life and who influenced early America, but who are now long-forgotten. Fanny Wright (1795-1852) was a feminist who worked to abolish marriage, an anti-slavery activist, and advocate for the working class, founded a utopian community in Nashoba, Tennessee. Mrs. Frances Trollope (1780-1863), mother of the novelist Anthony Trollope, followed Wright to America, and later wrote the scathingly funny critique, Domestic Manners of the Americans. In the novel, an elderly Trollope writes a biography of Fanny Wright, describing the time period after Write invites Trollope to America to live in the utopian community she founded in Nashoba, Tennessee. Trollope arrives but finds Wright more concerned with causes than with people. Their friendship goes awry and devolves into a rivalry, then a catfight. Trollope is left to fend for herself and her children. But the misadventure is not all bad - at Nashoba, Trollope gets to have a very satisfying affair with a freed slave named Cudjo. In the novel and in life Trollope gets the last laugh as her writing career takes off while Wright is mocked as an extremist. Fanny succeeds in making the characters and times come alive, but for those of you who want to cut straight to the funny part, you may prefer to check out Trollope's Domestic Manners of the Americans from the University of Arizona library instead. (Terry Nordbrock)

Fingersmith by Sarah Waters (Riverhead Books, 2002). Sarah Waters, the award-winning author of Tipping the Velvet (1999), and Affinity (2000), has released her third novel set in Victorian England. Waters has been described as a "university-educated Lesbian Charles Dickens." This time the narrative follows 17-year-old Susan Trinder, an orphan taken in by Grace Sucksby, who is den mother to a family of "fingersmiths" or pickpockets. To repay Mrs. Sucksby, she agrees to help a con man, named "Gentleman" in his scheme to marry the naive heiress Maude Lilly. As Susan falls in love with Maude, things get even more complicated. Misdirections and reversals abound in this story of love, ambition and deception where the characters can be both predators and victims. Fingersmith is a page-turning suspense novel with an engrossing plot and great period detail. (Beth Petrucci)

Fixer Chao by Han Ong (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001). Playwright Han Ong has become one of the youngest people to receive a MacArthur genius grant. Character dialogue is the drive behind his debut novel. When the embittered writer Shem meets Filipino street hustler William Narciso Paulinha, a con is born. William goes from dive bar denizen to circulating amongst Manhattan's over-privileged upper class as the Chinese feng shui expert, Master Chao. This comic novel is an observant, picaresque journey through the shallow Hamptons time-share crowd; a group of "haves" that get skewered upon their own vanities. Fixer Chao tackles race, class, and artifice while being savagely funny. (Beth Petrucci)

The GLBT Services Committee was established in 1997 to better serve southern Arizona's GLBT library users. It seeks to fulfill this mission by creating exciting programs such as GLBT author visits, and through participation at various outreach events such as OUToberFEST and Tucson's annual Pride Parade. On a daily basis we review, order and make GLBT materials available for all PCPL users, regardless of age, location or sexual orientation. The Pima County Public Library's GLBT Services Committee is dedicated to upholding the library's Mission Statement as well as the Library Users Bill of Rights for all of our customers. PCPL is one of the few public libraries in the country to have an established GLBT Services Committee. For more information, visit your local Pima County library or go online to: tppl.org/community/glbt/index.cfm.

AS I SEE IT..... BY CLARK

COMMENTARY. . . .

by Cyd Zeigler Jr.

Bill O'Reilly's Wrong On Gays And The Padres

Using intellectually corrupt arguments to keep Gay people from engaging in a free-market economy: That's the subject of today's talking points memo.

On July 8, a group of Gay people bought about a thousand group tickets to the San Diego Padres' home game against the Atlanta Braves. On the same night, the Padres were giving away a free floppy cap to kids age 14 and under. Three nights later, Fox News Channel host Bill O'Reilly launched into a 10-minute attack on the Padres and their Gay fans.

"It is almost unbelievable, but the San Diego Padres scheduled a promotion for Gays on the same day the team gave away hats to kids," O'Reilly said. "So thousands of Gay adults showed up and commingled with Gay families."

There is so much wrong with this statement, I could have written a chapter of our book on it. Come to think of it, I did. O'Reilly asserts that the Padres scheduled this event, as though the Padres decided they wanted to have a bunch of Gay people at their ballpark so they found some and sold them tickets. If O'Reilly had read "The Outsports Revolution," he'd know that this isn't how it works. People in the community, whether they're Gay men, pregnant women, Muslims, Jews, union workers or members of a local softball league, decide they want to support their local team. Those people then pick a date, call the team's group-ticket sales office, and request tickets. The Gay group gets the same treatment and perks as any other group. No more, no less.

The Padres had scheduled the 14-and-under giveaway that night. O'Reilly wanted the Padres to tell the Gay group that they couldn't do it that night because they already had a promotion for kids scheduled. Mind you, he had no problem with the 100 other groups that had bought a total of 11,000 tickets that night; he just had a problem with the Gay group.

In fact, 13 of the 81 home games for the Padres, or one out of every six, has a kids giveaway. Another 31 games have promotions or themes also targeting families, like "Teacher Appreciation Night" and "Family Fireworks." So, according to O'Reilly, every other group in the known universe can pick any one of the 81 games they want to attend, but the Gay people have to avoid over half of the games for fear of kids or families being offended.

This is all a surprising position by O'Reilly, who is a free-market guy. Except, apparently, when it comes to selling tickets to Gay people.

Another part of the above statement that was absolutely ludicrous was this idea that "thousands of Gay adults showed up." It was only 1,000. In the history of "Gay days" at ballparks, only once or twice has a group sold over 1,000 tickets. In this case, there were 42,000 people at the game. So, one in 42 people in the stadium was Gay. That's 2.4% of the people in the stadium. Even conservative estimates put the number of Gay people in the general population over 2.4%. Petco Park that night was straighter than the San Diego community that surrounds it; those kids were safer from the Gay agenda that night than if they had just been walking the streets of San Diego.

Or watching The O'Reilly Factor. O'Reilly said, "Unfortunately there were a few over-the-top displays in the stands, a reminder that irresponsible behavior can come from any group." He called it "exhibitionistic." Accompanying his words were several shots of video footage of men kissing men and women kissing women. If these were so outrageous, over-the-top and harmful to our children, then why on earth is he, on the most-watched cable news program in the country, broadcasting these destructive images into the homes of families in San Diego and the rest of America? Good God, what if one of the thousands of children watching the O'Reilly factor sees those images and suddenly asks his parents why two men are kissing before the parents are "ready" to tell him? He might suddenly have 2 million Gay people watching him, because they'd all turn Gay at the site of two people kissing! That conclusion, of course, is as baseless as O'Reilly's.

O'Reilly also says, "This is social engineering by the Padres."

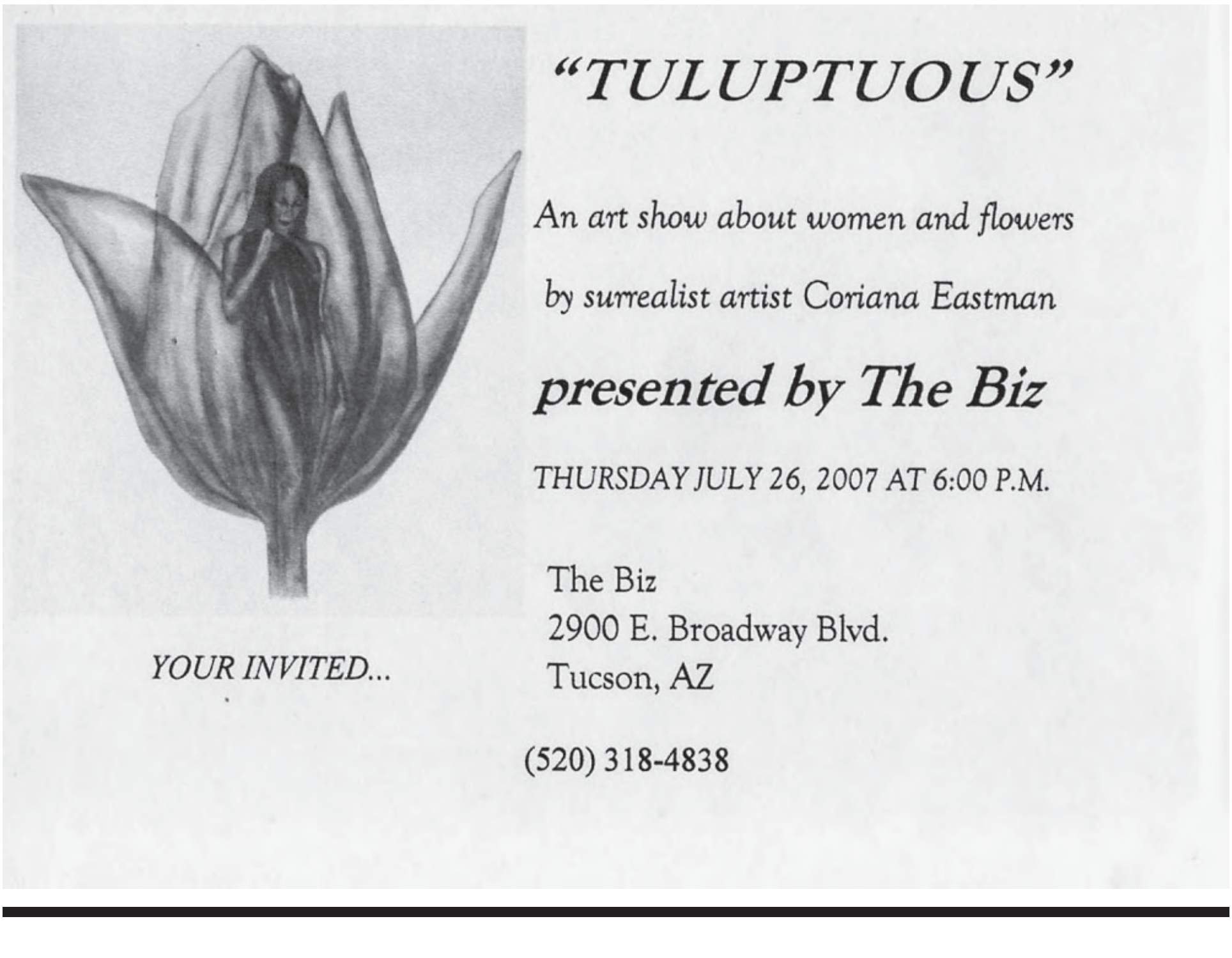
Again, it has nothing to do with the will of the Padres; this was a group of Gay people who had absolutely no idea that July 8 was one of the 13 promotional events targeting kids. And even if it did, O'Reilly's thinking in 1947 would likely have led him to attack the Brooklyn Dodgers for "social engineering" when they brought Jackie Robinson up from the minor leagues.

At the end of the night, all the under-14-year-olds wanted was to go to Petco Park, get a free hat, watch their favorite team win (they lost to the Atlanta Braves, 5-4), and hopefully catch a home run or foul ball. That's it. They couldn't care less about Gay people at the ballpark. One of the fans O'Reilly's team interviewed was wearing an Atlanta Braves jersey. The kids that night surely had more problems with that than anyone holding hands or kissing!

It's the adults and people like O'Reilly who blow it way out of proportion. Just as the Padres want to sell tickets to Gay people, O'Reilly knew he could get viewers to tune in by painting a Major League franchise as promoting homosexuality to their children. He got what he wanted. The next night, he acknowledged that the segment had been "highly rated" by his most loyal fans. But instead of taking the intellectual high road – painting the event for what it was – he expounded on an intellectually and morally corrupt argument based on lies and misinformation. His loyal viewers, and I include myself in that category, deserve better.

And that's the memo.

(Cyd Ziegler Jr. is a writer for outsports.com, from which this is reprinted from.)



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Settlement In Case Of Lesbian Denied Access To Homeless Shelter

CHICAGO (Observer Update) - The New Life Shelter has agreed to insure its facilities will not discriminate against the homeless based on their sexuality in an agreement ending a civil rights complaint by a woman who was denied a bed because she is a Lesbian, reported 365Gay.com.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois filed a complaint in May with the City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations and the State of Illinois Department of Human Rights on behalf of Michelle Wang. The 27- year-old woman says she denied space at New Life Shelter after she told a staffer at that shelter she is a Lesbian. Only intervention by a thoughtful, concerned Chicago city employee prevented Wang from spending another night on the streets. The events leading to the complaint took place on November 1, 2006.

Wang moved to Chicago earlier in the calendar year with her girlfriend who had taken a new job in the city. Within a few months, the relationship was strained and ultimately ended. At the time of the breakup, Wang had been working at a new job for a few weeks, and continues to be employed by the same retail chain to the present. Though she worked full time, Wang found herself in a new city, with no friends, no savings and no way to secure housing. A co-worker permitted her to stay in his home for several weeks. After that, Wang stayed with others from time-to-time, and began spending nights on the streets of Chicago. In late October, concerned co-workers urged Wang to find more permanent housing. On October 31st, with temperatures near freezing, a co-worker drove her to the City of Chicago Department of Human Services.

An employee at the DHS spoke with a number of shelters looking for space and found none. She asked Wang to return the following day. Wang stayed in an unheated building that night, and returned to the DHS offices the first thing in the morning. Again, the DHS employee called another shelter before confirming that the New Life Shelter, operated with City funding, had beds available. The New Life staff person asked to speak with Wang, and inquired about the reason she was homeless. Wang replied that she and her girlfriend had split up and that she had been asked to leave the apartment. The staff person became agitated, suggesting that she did not understand why Wang left the apartment if her name was on the lease. Wang finally responded that the other woman was her Lesbian partner, and they had a romantic breakup.

The New Life staffer put Wang on hold, and returned to say that there were no beds available for here. The City DHS employee asked a colleague to phone the shelter and check on the availability of beds and that employee found that New Life indeed had space available. In the settlement announced the Rev. Bud Ogle, founder and President of New Life Shelter, agreed to initiate "comprehensive training for all GNP employees." The Lawyers Committee for Better Housing, in cooperation with two other fair housing advocacy groups, will provide training for all current GNP employees. In addition, GNP will train all new employees and provide refresher training for all employees annually for at least the next three years.

"I'm happy this got resolved so well," said Wang in a statement announcing the settlement. "I wanted to make sure no one else had to fear for their safety after being turned away like I did. I think the training they are starting will make a huge difference for LGBT people looking for shelter," she said. "I met other homeless Lesbians who felt they had to make a choice between coming out as Lesbian or having a shelter bed. Homeless Lesbians and Gay men are going to be better protected in the future because of what Good News Partners is doing with this training."

Ogle said that "In our 31 years of work to end homelessness God often teaches us that good things can come out of bad situations. Michelle Wang has helped us realize this again." Under the agreement, employees at GNP will undergo training that in large part could be titled "LGBT 101," the ACLU said. Among other topics, the course includes: basic information about sexual orientation and gender identity, the proper use of terms and pronouns; means for communicating to LGBT residents that they are welcome and will be treated with respect; and guidelines for protecting the privacy and dignity of LGBT persons.

Olive Oil Found To Inhibit Spread Of HIV

GRANADA, Spain - Olive oil has become an essential ingredient in the fight against HIV, according to a press release from Spain's University of Granada, advocate.com reported.

Research performed by the Bionat team, headed by Prof. Andrés García-Granados, has found that maslinic acid—a product found naturally in dry olive-pomace oil—inhibits serin-protease, an enzyme used by the virus to release itself and spread through the whole body. The study determined that the use of olive-pomace oil can produce an 80% decrease in the spread of HIV.

In the press release García-Granados and the Bionat team expressed their hope to develop an efficient way to produce and market new maslinic acid by-products to augment the fight against HIV.

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COMMENTARY. . . .

LGBT Protections Under Threat From Supreme Court

By Deb Price

In 1992, vacationing on the big island of Hawaii, I walked toward a river of blood red lava shooting over a cliff and into the sea. I recall looking for a sign, rope or "Hawaii Five-O's" Steve McGarrett to warn me to stop.

But a giant caution sign wasn't necessary. The instant I knew not to step a hair's breadth farther was when I felt the soles of my tennis shoes starting to soften.

A similarly red hot warning – "Tread closer at your own peril" – poured out from the U.S. Supreme Court this term to Gay Americans.

The Roberts court – whose votes in non-Gay cases strongly signaled that Chief Justice John Roberts and Samuel Alito can be expected to join Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas in opposing almost any imaginable Gay-rights plea – is moving frighteningly close to having the five votes it would need to weaken the groundbreaking rulings of 1996 and 2003 acknowledging that Gay Americans are protected by the Constitution.

Gone is tenuous supporter Sandra Day O'Connor, who before retiring sided with Gay Americans in Romer v. Evans in 1996 and Lawrence v. Texas in 2003 – both 6-3 decisions.

Five Gay-rights allies remain: Anthony Kennedy, who penned the pair of legal aces; John Paul Stevens, now 87; David Souter; Stephen Breyer; and Ruth Bader Ginsburg. And no one can be certain just how far any of the five – especially Kennedy, who has become the court's conservative swing vote – would go to protect Gays in cases less outrageously extreme: In Romer, Colorado had tried to fence its Gay citizens out of the normal political process. In Lawrence, a Gay Texas couple was arrested for having sex at the home of one of the men.

"This term confirmed a lot of our fears," says Jon Davidson, legal director at Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund.

What alarmed Gay rights litigators? A string of 5-4 decisions against the powerless or minorities: Rulings blocking workers from suing over sex discrimination if it's not discovered immediately; ignoring public school students' free-speech rights, and hampering efforts to create racially diverse schools.

"The U.S. Supreme Court was for a long time a protector of minority groups, and it has become less so over time," notes James Esseks, a Gay litigator at the American Civil Liberties Union. "I'm worried that a future Supreme Court would narrowly interpret or even cut back Romer and Lawrence."

Sensing the court's rising temperature, most Gay-rights litigators are wisely avoiding the federal judiciary system. But cases already in lower federal courts could severely burn the Gay rights movement. They involve an Air Force flight nurse featured on recruitment posters, then booted out for being Gay; Lesbian couples asking Uncle Sam to recognize their Canadian marriages; a Texas woman who lost a job offer because she is transgender; and Gay-friendly schools attempting to feel welcoming.

The protections won in Romer and Lawrence are fragile, unlikely to be built upon soon. A smoking volcano looms above them. This Supreme Court could erupt.

(Deb Price is a columnist from the Detroit News, from which this is reprinted from the July 16 edition.)

Pope In Drag Yanked From Italilan Art Exhibit

MILAN, Italy - Organizers of an exhibition on the relationship between homosexuality and art said they were removing a controversial sculpture depicting Pope Benedict in drag, reported 365Gay.com. The exhibit drew protests from the Catholic Anti-Defamation League, which threatened to seek charges against the organizers for defaming a head of state. The group expressed outrage at "the vulgar offence against Christ's vicar and the feelings of Roman Catholics," the group said in a statement.

The sculpture, titled "Miss Kitty," shows the Pope in a blond bob wig wearing nothing but a stole, a pair of panties and thigh-high stockings. Organizers postponed the opening by three days to remove the sculpture and another controversial piece featuring a photo that appeared in the Italian media of Premier Roman Prodi's spokesman talking to a transvestite, whose face is superimposed in the work with an image of Jesus Christ. They also have withdrawn the catalogues and were reprinting new ones without photos of the two exhibits.

"It was made clear to us that it would be better to remove the pieces," curator Eugenio Viola told The Associated Press. Viola said the exhibit was intended to be provocative. "The value of art from the period of the avant-garde onward has been to free oneself from the dogmatic and ecclesiastic censors," he said. The "Miss Kitty" piece by Paolo Schmidlin has been bought by Milan's top culture official, Vittorio Sgarbi, who also helped back the exhibit, his office confirmed. The price was not immediately known.

POLITICS 2007

by Mark R. Kerr

Q-Politics 2008: Senator Sam Brownback

To the surprise of no one, in the most recent, Associated Press/ Ipsos Poll, 25% of Republican (GOP) respondents said they are either undecided or would prefer someone other than the current field.

Arizona Senator John McCain's campaign has imploded due to those "homosexual" sweaters and his Florida campaign co-chair, state Representative Bob "Hooker and John" Allen, arrested for proposition-ing an under-cover, male cop in a restroom in a park that Allen helped to get funded,

Former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani has shown his true, fading colors and his campaign committee has had two scandals recently, South Carolina Treasurer Thomas Ravenel indicting for cocaine trafficking and Louisiana Senator David "Diaper Dude" Vitter and his five-time (as of press time) associa-tion with the D.C, Madam;

"Law and Order's" Fred Th-ompson, has been shown as just a lazy, one-term senator, Nixon-mole during Watergate and a pro-choice lobbyist (Gasp), and not the reincarna-tion of the Gipper; and,

Mitt Romney, the former Governor of Massachusetts, is just a strapping-the-family-dog-to-the-top-of-the-family-car, make-up wearing ($300 and rising according to recent, campaign financial reports filed), flip-flopping opportunist.

"None of the above's" cam-paign is scoring points with GOP voters, getting the biggest share than all, eight, announced candidates, including Sam Brownback. Who?

Sam Brownback is the senior Senator from Kansas, who:

Doesn't believe in evolution;

Expressed his support for Joint Chief's Chair, General Peter Pace's remarks that homosexuality is "immoral";

Called Gays and Lesbians "fruits" in an interview with Rolling Stone magazine; and,

Held up a nomination of Janet Neff, as reported in this publication, for a federal judge position, by Dubya because she attended a Lesbian commitment ceremony.

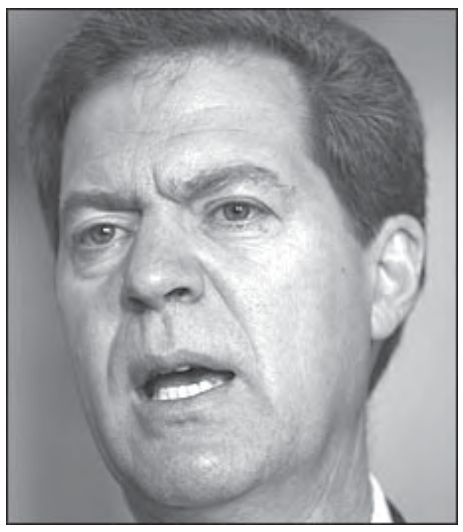
Senator Brownback's voting record on LGBT and HIV/AIDS issues isn't any better.

In the 109th Congress (2005-06), Brownback received a zero rating from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), not supporting measures:

Creating a federal funding stream for states to teach comprehen-sive sex education;

Providing Medicaid coverage to low-income, HIV-positive Ameri-cans as "categorically needy;"

Amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide same-sex partners of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents the same immi-gration benefits legal spouses of U.S. residents enjoy; and,



Senator Sam Brownback

Expanding federal jurisdiction to reach serious, violent hate crimes perpetrated because of the "actual or perceived race, color, religion, na-tional origin, sexual orientation, gen-der identity or disability" of the victim.

Brownback has co-sponsored proposed amendments to the U.S. Constitution, forbidding the govern-mental and legal recognition of same-sex marriage, civil unions and domes-tic partnerships.

According to HRC, Senator Brownback has received a zero rating in the last three Congressional sessions (107th through 109th).

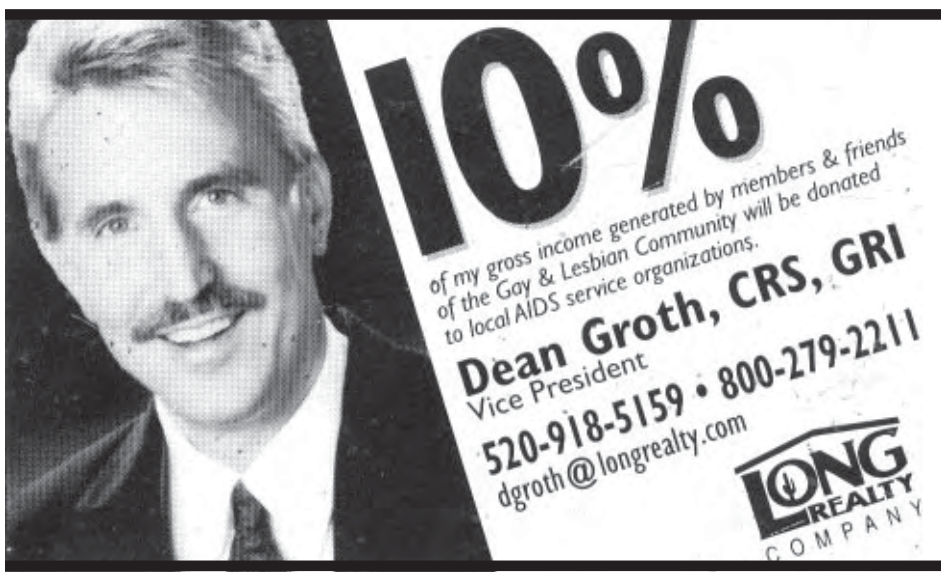
Brownback's presidential campaign website is at brownback.com. For more informa-tion on other issues go issues2000.org/Senate/Sam_Brownback.htm, ontheissues.org/Sam_Brownback.htm and vote-smart.org/bio.php?can_id=21952.

Attacker On Croatia Pride Parade Charged With Hate

ZAGREB, Croatia (Observer Update) - A 25-year-old man was arrested and charged with hate crime for alledegly attempting to throw Molotov cocktails at the Gay Parade in Zagreb last weekend, police said, 365Gay.com reported. The man, identified only as Josip. S., is accused of preparing Molotov cocktails at home, bottles containing gasoline, and planning to throw them at the participants of the Gay Parade, entitled here "Gay Pride", at the Zagreb's main square.

Police troops, among 500 that provided security for about 300 participants of the parade, spotted the man and he fled the scene. Two of his aides, who were armed with eggs and tomatoes, were arrested on the spot, while the man was tracked down later. He will remain in detention under suspicion of attempting to endanger lives and property by an act out of hatred toward the participants of the Gay parade, police said in a state-ment. He has not been formally indicted yet.

Several people were lightly injured across the town during the parade, the seventh in a row in Zagreb, as homosexuality remains a taboo subject for some in this predominantly Roman Catholic coun-try. The man is the first person to face charge of a hate crime since it was installed in the Penal Code last year.



Here, There And Everywhere

Gaynor: I Want To Lead Gays To Christ

Gloria Gaynor

LONDON - Speaking to a BBC radio news reporter, I Will Survive singer Gloria Gaynor said she wants to help gays find Christ. “I want to lead them to him, I want to lead them to truth,” she said. The song, first released in 1979, is still played in many gay dance clubs and at many gay events, including Prides across the world.

“I feel good about it because I feel it is a platform for my purpose, which is to bring the love of Christ to all of my fans,” Gaynor said. “Because they trust me, I think,” she added.

When asked if she saw her work see it as an evangelistic thing and whether she saw homosexuality as sinful, the singer replied “I want to lead them to Christ, simply, and whatever he has for them.” Gaynor refused to say whether or not she thought homosexuality was a sin.

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Moore May Tackle Gay Rights

Michael Moore

LOS ANGELES - Film maker Michael Moore has revealed that he might take on homophobia and the anti-Gay movement in his next documentary, camwest.com reported. “I think it’s a very ripe subject for someone like me to make a movie about,” he admitted, in an interview with The Advocate. “Simply because we are not there yet and it remains one of the last open wounds on our soul that we are not willing to fix yet.”

Moore, whose latest film Sicko attacks the U.S. health care system, expressed anger at fundamentalist Christians in the U.S. who condemn same-sex marriage. “There is nowhere in the four Gospels where Jesus uses the word homosexual.’ The right wing has appropriated this guy ... and they have used him to attack Gays and Lesbians, when he never said a single word against people who are homosexual. Anyone who professes to be a Christian and does that is certainly not following the teachings of Jesus Christ.”

Moore, who told the magazine he is a spiritual person, said he supports same-sex marriage. “I certainly believe that I have no right to tell another couple whether they can or cannot be married,” he said. Moore said he is optimistic that Gays and Lesbians in the U.S. will have more equality soon “because everyone has someone who is Gay or Lesbian in their family or their extended family.” The director of Fahrenheit 911 and Bowling for Columbine said he is proud to speak out in favor of Gay rights. “If you believe in equality, if you believe in standing up for the rights of all, especially for people most affected by bigotry and discrimination, then you have no choice but to be present and accounted for when it comes to standing up for Gays and Lesbians in our society.”

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L.A. Catholic Church Sex-Abuse Settlement To Be Formalized

LOS ANGELES (Observer Update) - Negotiations have produced a landmark $660 million settlement between the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Los Angeles and more than 500 alleged victims of clergy abuse are heading toward a conclusion, reported the Associated Press on advocate.com. The deal marks the end of more than five years of negotiations and is by far the largest payout by any diocese since the clergy abuse scandal emerged in Boston in 2002.

Mahony, leader of the nation's largest archdiocese, apologized to the hundreds of clergy sex abuse victims who will receive a share of the settlement. ''There really is no way to go back and give them that innocence that was taken from them. The one thing I wish I could give the victims...I cannot,'' he said. ''Once again, I apologize to anyone who has been offended, who has been abused. It should not have happened and should not ever happen again.'' Mahony said he has met with dozens of victims of clergy abuse in the past 14 months and those meetings helped him understand the importance of a quick resolution to what he called a ''terrible sin and crime.'' The cardinal said the settlement will not have an impact on the archdiocese's core ministry, but said the church will have to sell buildings, use some of its invested funds, and borrow money. He said the archdiocese will not sell any parish properties or parish schools. ''We gather today because this long journey has now come to an end and a new chapter of that journey is beginning,'' Mahony told reporters.

The settlement also calls for the release of priests' confidential personnel files after review by a judge. ''I think for those of us who have been involved in this for more than five years, it's a huge relief,'' said Michael Hennigan, archdiocese attorney. ''But it's a disappointment too that we didn't get it done much earlier than this.''

Parishioners reacted with a mix of disappointment and relief. Vivian Viscarra, 50, who attends Mass at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels three times a month, said the victims deserve the payout even though it could hurt the church's ability to deliver important services. The amount would average a little more than $1.3 million per plaintiff, although individual payouts will vary according to the severity and duration of the abuse. ''I am disappointed,'' Viscarra said. ''And it's making me reevaluate my views of whether people in the ministry should be married. People do have needs.''

The deal settles all 508 cases that remained against the archdiocese, which also paid $60 million in December to settle 45 cases that weren't covered by sexual abuse insurance. The archdiocese will pay $250 million, insurance carriers will pay a combined $227 million, and several religious orders will chip in $60 million. The remaining $123 million will come from litigation with religious orders that chose not to participate in the deal, with the archdiocese guaranteeing resolution of those 80 to 100 cases within five years, Hennigan said. The archdiocese is released from liability in those claims, said Tod Tamberg, church spokesman. The settlements push the total amount paid out by the U.S. church since 1950 to more than $2 billion, with about a quarter of that coming from the Los Angeles archdiocese. A judge must sign off on the agreement. Previously, the Los Angeles archdiocese, its insurers, and various Roman Catholic orders had paid more than $114 million to settle 86 claims. Several religious orders in California have also reached multimillion-dollar settlements in recent months, including the Carmelites, the Franciscans, and the Jesuits.

Full Equality For Same-Sex Couples - Pledge By Irish PM

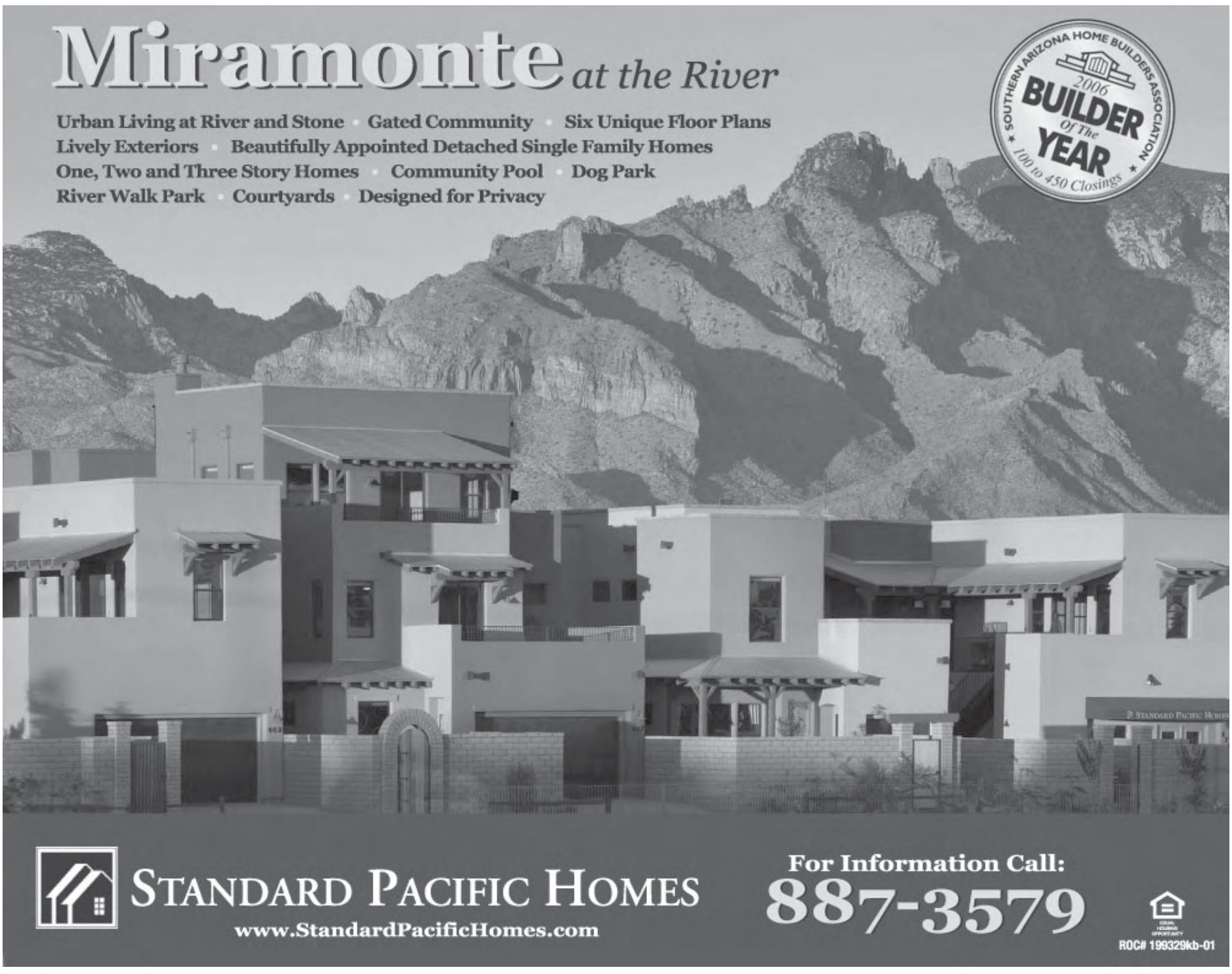
Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern

BELFAST - The Government will pass laws as soon as possible to allow Gay couples to marry, Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Bertie Ahern said Monday (July 16) reported eveningecho.ie. Ahern insisted that the current Coalition was committed to providing full equality to same-sex couples in society. The Taoiseach was speaking as he reopened the refurbished Outhouse community center in central Dublin, which has survived two arson attacks. "This Government is committed to providing a more supportive and secure legal environment for same-sex couples," he said. "Taking into account the Options Paper prepared by the Colley Group, and the pending Supreme Court case, we will legislate for Civil Partnerships at the earliest possible date in the lifetime of this Government," he added.

The Outhouse on Capel Street contains a café, library and office space for 70 groups working on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) issues. It receives more than 25,000 visitors annually. Outhouse manager Louise Tierney said the lack of recognition of Gay relationships was discriminatory and called for immediate action. "The lack of recognition of same-sex relationships is a barrier to real equality. It engenders discrimination and puts Gay people at distinct disadvantage when it comes to basic rights around inheritance. The 30th Dáil should prioritize legislative reform to allow for recognition of Gay partnerships. While we would like to see such reform within the coming year, it would be unacceptable if it did not take place within the lifetime of this Dáil."

Tierney added that elderly Gay people were reluctant to engage with elder care health services and community care because of the fear of discrimination. She also called for resources to set up a creche in Outhouse to allow Gay parents to go out to work.

HATE IS NOT A FAMILY VALUE



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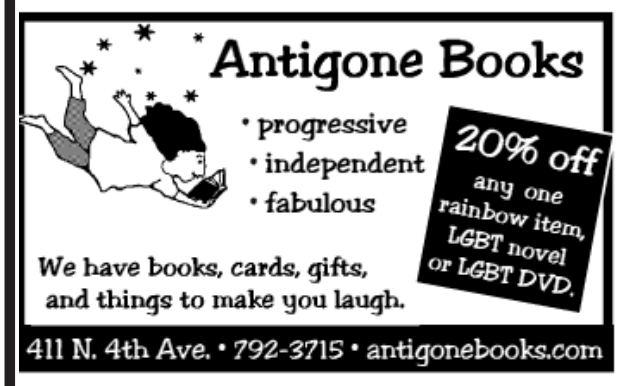

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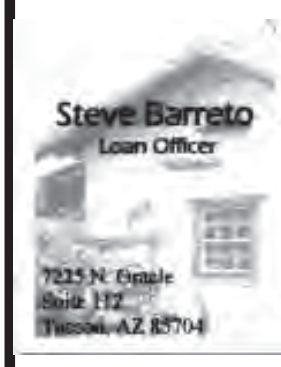

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NOTES FROM THE FOR-REAL SIDE

Pro Wrestling

by Lee Thorn

Pro wrestling isn't just phony; it's elaborately phony. They don't just pretend to stomp on a head; they throw themselves around the ring with intricate choreography, throw in some acrobatics, and then pretend to stomp on a head. Pro wrestling is so elaborately phony it reminds me of the pretend combat going on right now between Wal-Mart and Tucson, with the daily newspapers playing referee.

The city's zoning code says big-box stores can use no more than 10 percent of their space for food and beverage sales. Wal-Mart did a petition drive to repeal the 10 percent limitation. The ARIZONA DAILY STAR has been reporting the contest as if it's a real contest.

The city has already granted a waiver to the 10 percent rule based, according to the STAR, on the "wishes of the adjacent neighborhood..." A whiff of pro wrestling? Won't you always be able to find an adjacent neighborhood that supports the Wal-Mart position? Isn't it a basic law of economic oppression that the consumers who are getting a bargain don't mind their bargain's coming at the expense of other people's suffering?

Here are some other pro wrestling questions that don't seem to interest our referees: How did the city come up with its 10 percent figure in the first place? What percent of its store space would Wal-Mart like to devote to the sale of food and beverages? How do we know that 10 percent is not exactly the figure that Wal-Mart really wants?

You might say that Wal-Mart wouldn't have gone to the trouble of doing a petition to overturn the 10 percent rule if the rule wasn't going to severely hurt them. But if you said that it would simply show you don't understand pro wrestling. Wal-Mart may or may not care about the 10 percent rule. To determine that you'd probably need a news organization interested enough in the news to assign a reporter to go out and do some actual reporting on how Wal-Mart typically operates when it's free of the 10 percent constraint. Don't hold your breath.

And remember that Wal-Mart put on its petition gambit knowing beforehand that it is settled law that petitions can't change zoning ordinances. Why bother doing a petition drive when you know if can't possibly have any legal effect? Why bother running across the ring and bouncing yourself off the ropes before pretending to stomp someone's head? Wal-Mart isn't really wrestling against the 10 percent rule, a rule which may or may not have an actual effect on how they do business. Wal-Mart is doing public theatre to make the point that it's willing to fight even the mildest attempt by the city to regulate how it does business. The city passed and then waived a zoning ordinance of little or no consequences. Why bother?

My guess is that they'd like to be able to say that they've regulated Wal-Mart. Whether they'll be able to say it with a straight face will depend on how well they can control their facial muscles. And the STAR is simply being its ever gullible, ever lethargic self.

What the city is passing up in favor of its pro wrestling theatrics is a chance to really regulate Wal-Mart in ways that would protect our citizens and promote healthy business. A city government that had some real concern for the average citizen would set a minimum wage and benefits package for all giant retailers operating within its territory. Would such a bold move drive the big boxes out? That depends on how well or poorly it was done. If the city could overcome its chronic laziness long enough to do sufficient research to determine how much Wal-Mart could really afford to pay its workers and still make a viable profit, it could then create meaningful zoning regulations that would both benefit Tucsonans and make Tucson an attractive market for retailers. Think of the concept – actually basing regulations on a detailed knowledge of the activity you're regulating!

Meantime we've got pro wrestling and that wonderfully mysterious 10 percent whose pedigree has yet to be probed. From what unholy orifice was that fateful 10 percent plucked? And did the plucker remember to wash his hands afterwards?

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

Facebook.Com Bars Gay, Welcomes Hitler

SYDNEY, Australia - Hitler is more than welcome to join the popular social networking site Facebook.com, but don't even try to create an account if your name is Gay, reported the Sydney Morning Herald on advocate.com reported. The newspaper found that the Web site–with a worldwide membership of more than 30 million people–does not allow people with the common surname Gay to join. The site attempts to block people from using fake names, especially those containing profanity or bigoted slurs.

The investigation came after the New Zealand newspaper Dominion Post published a story about 30-year-old Rowena Gay, who was prevented from creating an account due to her last name. "I was pretty mystified," Gay said, according to the Brisbane Times. "I have got used to a few jokes over the years, but for a Web site to deem my name inappropriate–what is the world coming to?" To validate Gay's claims, the Sydney Morning Herald attempted to create an account using the name. "Please enter a legitimate name," the Web site prompted. And while Facebook.com would not accept Gay, it allowed the newspaper to join using the surname Hitler. Facebook spokesman Matt Hicks wrote in an e-mail to The Advocate that the site "is based on real people making real-world connections. To ensure that people do not register with fake names or identities, Facebook has blocked a list of common names people might use to abuse the site. We recognize that many of these names can also be legitimate, and we allow users to register with them if they write to our customer service department and verify their real name."

Duncan Gay, deputy opposition leader in the New South Wales upper house, is the most prominent Australian with the surname, according to the Sydney Morning Herald. After he was notified of the situation, Gay told the newspaper he was "bothered" by the issue. "That's a bit tough, it's pretty ordinary.... It bothers me to the extent that quite often when you give your name you get a twitter. People looking and smirking," Gay told the paper. "This is a continuation of that." He mentioned to the Sydney Morning Herald that he plans to protest the Web site's decision to block the common Anglo surname.

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Parents Choose To Accept Son Over Church, Friends

MUSKEGON, Michigan - When he was in eighth grade, Ari Beighley told his closest friends at school he was Gay. But he kept his silence at home for two more years, his homosexuality hidden in the midst of his conservative evangelical Christian family. "Then I just didn't want to hide anymore," he said, mlive.com reported.

In 2005, while his parents were getting ready for a Super Bowl party at their home in Spring Lake Township, Ari Beighley asked if his mother had a couple of minutes to talk. Two hours later, mother and son emerged from conversation, their lives irrevocably changed. "Even when we were talking that day, I remember thinking: Things are never going to be the same again in this family," said Ari's mother, Colette Beighley. "In a sense, everyone had his or her own 'coming out.' " By the end of the year, Ari Beighley's father, the Rev. David Beighley, 56, had his ministerial license "withdrawn" by the West Michigan District of the Wesleyan Church for, among other things, questioning the denomination's position that homosexuality is a sin, he said. David Beighley, who also has his doctorate in family psychology, said even before his son "came out," he had a "growing uneasiness within me regarding some of the church teachings." The family sought out a new church home at Christ Community Church in Spring Lake, which is a "welcoming" congregation to Gays and Lesbians. After his ministerial license was revoked, David Beighley said, "I felt a curious freedom."

The Rev. Mark Gorveatte, district superintendent of the Wesleyan Church, said "the only cause" for Beighley's license being revoked was his transfer of church membership. "You have to be an active member of a Wesleyan church to be a Wesleyan pastor," Gorveatte said. "The withdrawal (of Beighley's) credentials was never punitive for supporting his son." However, he said, "Wesleyans are clear" on our beliefs about homosexuality. "We encourage monogomous marriage between men and women. We believe that's how the Bible defines things," Gorveatte said.

Their church affiliation wasn't the only change that occurred. David and Colette Beighley – both licensed marriage and family therapists – also lost the majority of their clients at a counseling ministry they had in Spring Lake for nearly 20 years. "There's been a lot of fallout from my son's coming out," Colette Beighley, 50, said. But their "greatest heartbreak," she said, was the unexpected estrangement from some of their family and friends because Ari is Gay. "I thought when people learned Ari is Gay, they'd love him because it's Ari," Colette Beighley said. "They'd loved him for 16 years. They'd held him in their arms when he was first born. How could they reject him?"

Ari listened to his mother's words and watched her fight a losing battle to curb her tears. "There's this label that overshadows things," he said when she could no longer speak. "The label becomes bigger than the person." At first, the Beighleys told people one family, one relationship at a time that Ari had "come out." Finally, in their 2005 Christmas letter, the Beighleys wrote about their son's revelation. They ended their letter by thanking their son for "letting us know who you are – not just who we need you to be."

Colette Beighley jokes that she "kept the living room clean, expecting people to come to see us and want to talk ... but silence. For eight months, all we got was silence." It is a subject still so sensitive and painful that David Beighley, whose family lives in West Michigan, can barely broach it. "They are on their own journey. We want to honor that," he said, choosing his words carefully. For emotional support, the Beighleys turned to a group called Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays – PFLAG, for short – that has chapters in Holland and Grand Rapids. "We are not a family with a Gay son, no, we are a Gay family," David Beighley said. They are a Gay family with three other children and a daughter-in-law who are an integral part of the story: Nate Beighley and his wife, Sarah Beighley, both 32; Collin Beighley, 28; and Chloé Beighley, 15. Nate and Collin are from David Beighley's first marriage. "Sarah had the most classic response of anyone in the family to Ari. She said, "OK, so you're Gay. You're still a butthead.' "

Family love and allegiance can be expressed in so many ways. "I'm so proud of my kids," Colette Beighley said. "That's the coolest thing that came out of this – how much they love each other." The family ties are closer than ever. "I got what I expected," Ari Beighley said. "I found out who my friends, who my family are." His comments set off an impromptu family discussion. "The minute Ari came out, and we started telling people, it was like, 'Oh my gosh, my uncle is Gay,' " Sarah Beighley said. "Everyone has a Gay brother," Nate Beighley added. When Ari Beighley – who is 19 and majoring in liberal arts at St. John's College in Annapolis, Md. – "came out," his parents say they worried first for his physical and emotional well-being. "For me, growing up in West Michigan, my mind was already thinking consequences," David Beighley said. "I can't protect my son from those who despise him and call him an abomination, and because I cannot protect him, as a father, I have failed."

Originally from Muskegon, David Beighley practiced in the San Francisco area until about 20 years ago. "We moved here because (West Michigan) is a great place to raise a family, and that's true, unless one of them turns out to be Gay," said Colette Beighley who is originally from San Francisco. "We live in an area that demands assimilation." A National Merit scholar and one of the top students at Black River Public School, a charter school in Holland from which he graduated in 2006, Ari Beighley always stood out. He also stood apart from other students. Gradually, he started telling his parents and siblings about some of the discrimination – and bullying – he had endured. For weeks on end, he was terrorized in the school stairway by several students, who punched him in the stomach so severely he vomited blood. The violence lasted for an entire school year, but he never told anyone, especially his family. "It was so painful to hear he'd been suffering alone," Colette Beighley said. "It was heartbreaking to know he'd had no comfort."

That's not the case today. His family is on the journey with him, every step of the way. "We've become so much more comfortable as a family," said Nate Beighley. "I can't believe how honest we are. We aren't afraid to talk about anything. There's no need to put up any masks." For their part, David and Colette Beighley

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Life pushes back when Mars squares retro Neptune. We fools rush in where angels fear to tread. Will it all be worth the effort? Who knows? Maybe treadmarks will become a new fashion statement.

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

Social obligations wind up costing you much more than you expect this week.Yet, friends seem to know all the hot places and the best parties and the excitement draws you in like a moth to the flame. All this glamour doesn't come cheap, even if you do. Can your checkbook handle it Gay Ram? You may not get your money's worth but then again, what a way to go!.

TAURUS (APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

Queer Bulls are unleashed and roaming the halls of power. Revolution! Or is it? Timing is everything. Will you try something new that is truly beneficial or try something daring just for the heck of it? If you truly want to overthrow the system, think things through. Don't tear down what has taken so long to construct. Or at least get your bonus check first.

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

This can be a time of intuitive revelations or one big headache. What great thoughts will you conjure when Mars squares Neptune? Keep your eyes open and be alert for great opportunities to express yourself. Reach out and try to connect with the global community. But promise nothing right now. Pink Twins can be forgiven for flirting instead of falling.

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)

A particular friend catches your eye in an entirely new way and Gay Crabs can lose their heads with a spur of the moment fling this week. Stay grounded. Mars square Neptune is transitory and so is the passion. Don't risk a perfectly good friendship for a couple of jollies. Despite what you say, you are not really looking for anything permanent at this time.

LEO (JULY 24 - AUGUST 23)

If you are on the prowl, this week can bring you a few hot prospects that turn out to be too hot to handle. If you are in a relationship, watch for sparks that ignite. When in doubt, grease liberally and let nit picky issues slide. Proud Lions feel forced to choose between the joys of corporate advancement and the security and warmth of partnerships. Find time for both.

VIRGO (AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 23)

Flare ups on the job may cause you to delay all travel plans until you crawl out from under the pile. Understand that it's just Neptune and Mars making life busier for the moment. Try to take care of every nasty detail at work as best as you can and don't look back as you close the door and leave. All things shall pass. Bon voyage, queer Virgin.

LIBRA (SEPTEMBER 24 - OCTOBER 23)

Tap into your creativity and make yourself available for all sorts of fun things. There is a cosmic party going on and you have an open invitation to overdo. And overdo you will. Not only can you get into mischief, it will be short, sweet and shocking. Have your dessert with a cherry on top proud Libra, and don't topple it as the earth moves under you.

SCORPIO (OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)

Any relationship that requires you to restrict your sense of self will be reevaluated, revamped and possibly abandoned this week. Are certain relatives shoving you back in the closet? Do partners allow you to be yourself? Unleash the force, proud Scorp. Demand your place in the world, make necessary changes and take no prisoners. Okay, take only the sexy ones...

SAGITTARIUS (NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 22)

Gay Archers say the damnedest things when Neptune squares Mars. Thankfully the junk you blurt out may actually help you on the job so don't be too worried about stepping on your tongue. Even stupid opinions sound brilliant and visionary now. Don't blather on too long though however compadre; this phase will phase out but your words will be there forever and ever.

CAPRICORN (DECEMBER 23 - JANUARY 20)

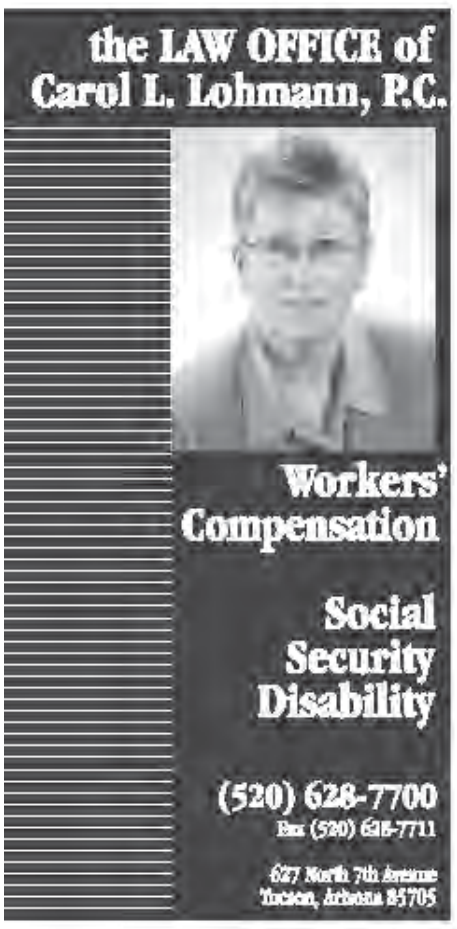
Promises of large rewards may not pan out after all, at least in the short term. Pink Caps who dream of wealth, accolades and glory may have to temper their aspirations and settle for something more mundane. But thankfully you have enough confidence to stay grounded and wait. Instead of attention grabbing, why not be the power behind the throne instead?

AQUARIUS (JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 19)

You make an ... err... interesting first impression when Mars squares Neptune. You think you are a charmer but others may beg to differ. Rather than extend your social circle and press new flesh, engage in more domestic and familiar pastimes this week. Those who know you well will forgive your assorted foibles. Believe me, they do this more times than you realize, Aqueerius.

PISCES (FEBRUARY 20 - MARCH 20)

Guppies sound almost visionary when Mars squares Neptune. But of course you know you are just rambling on and on about nothing in particular. The most important thing is to express yourself honestly and let others do the interpretation. Who knows? You could be catapulted into the litterati class. Respected, adored, even envied. Then again, maybe not.



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.

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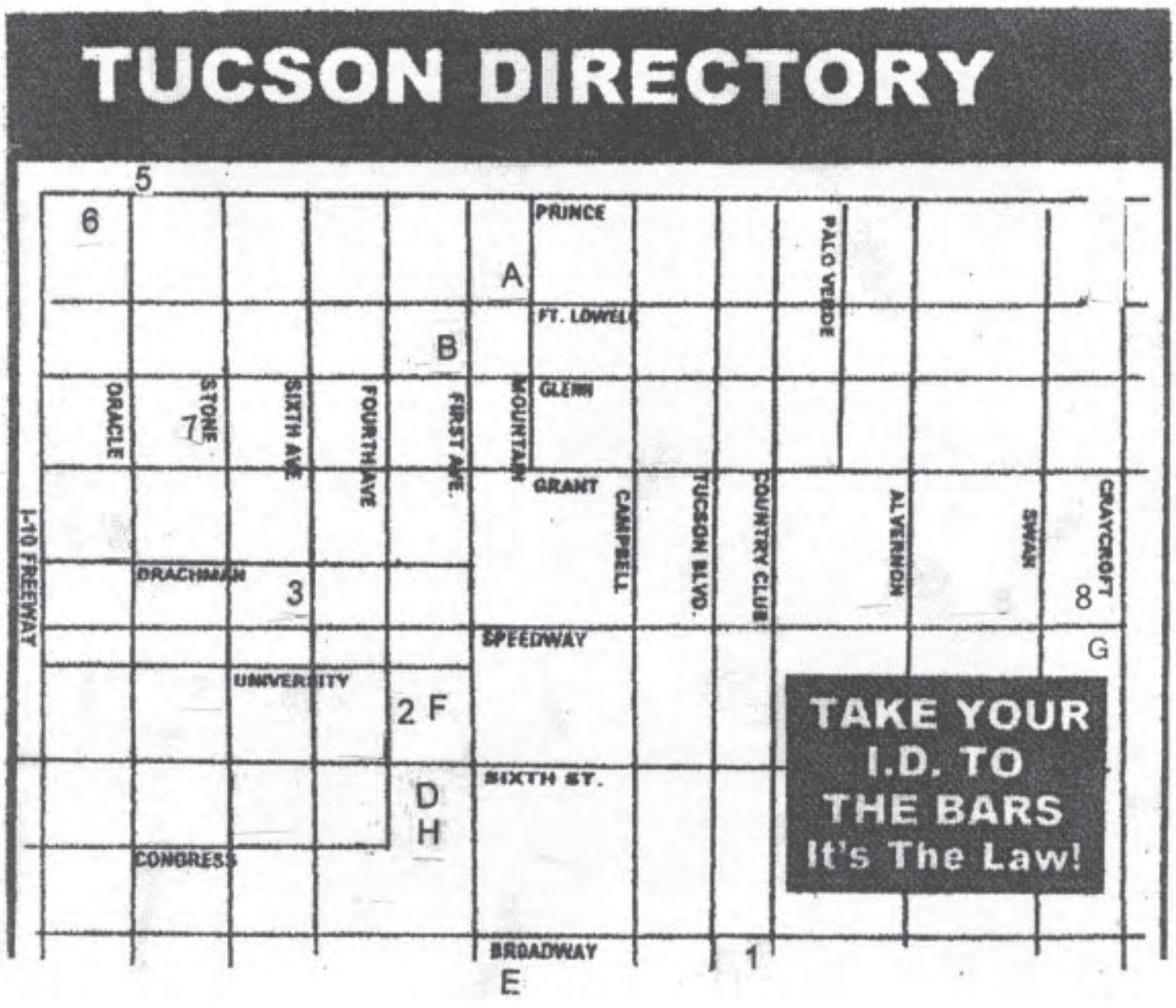

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Non Bar Calendar

Wednesday, July 18th
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00pm Hand & Foot with Jack 887-3736.

Thursday, July 19th
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Triangle Tribe-A Men's Circle. According to a recent study, very few people have as many close friends as they would like. Are you as connected with other men as you want to be? Do you get the support you need for issues in your life? Do you wish you had more meaningful friendships and relationships with other men? Join like-minded men at Wingspan to share feelings, thoughts and ideas in a safe, respectful space. For the same experience with both straight and gay men, join us at the regular Circle of Men meetings. Call Tom at 591-2828 for dates and times. (Also, if you plan to attend tommorrow's Pizza Night, please call Tom Ruch at 744-9036 to make your reservation by Noon today.)

Friday, July 20th
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. PIZZA NIGHT with Tom! Did you call yesterday to reserve? Great! Have a fun Evening!

Tucson Prime Timers Cocktails - 5:30 p.m. Colors, 5305 E. Speedway.

Join us for a wonderful potluck dinner party from 6:30-9:00 p.m. to see what the new Man to Man Club is all about. This very popular group of quality men is going to close the membership soon. It's a great way to meet healthy attractive men in a balanced environment, with increased awareness and presence. Call Marc at 881-4582 between 8 a.m. And 8 p.m. Space is limited. Only 10 men per event. This is a structured experience of what intimacy is all about.

Saturday, July 21st
The Southern Arizona Gender Alliance (SAGA) is in need of trained speakers to represent transgender identities and concerns toa wide variety of audiences. The next training session is today from 9:00 a.m .until 5:00 p.m. at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th Street in the Ansaldua Room. Please RSVP. Call Michael 624-1779 ext 17 or email speakers@sagatucson.org.

#1Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:30a.m. Join Robert for a morning of Volleyball. This is played for fun, and you'll get to know some nice guys as you play. Two great ways to work on your game! For details and directions, please call Robert at 400-1376.

#21Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Pinochle with Marvin 745-0304.

Sunday, July 22nd
Join Rainbow Families at Wingspan on National Parents Day from 2:00 to 4:00 at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th St. as they discuss adoption and the LGBT Community. There will be a panel of LGBTs who have adopted children, children who grew up with LGBT families and agencies in Southern Arizona who want LGBT people as foster and foster-adopt parents. For more info contact Cathy 624-1779 or email: cathy@wingspan.org

Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Dinner Out at one of Tucson's Ultra-Fabulous Buffets. For reservations and directions, contact Thom 623-2941, e-mail thomsepals@hotmail.com , or Ken at 294-6606. Please contact Thom or Ken by Sunday at Noon to facilitate reservations. Price is usually under $10. Check the Yahoo MSN on-line calendar for the scheduled place. The venue is rotated to include all parts of town, and may occasionally be held at a full-service menu restaurant.

Tucson Prime Timers Brunch Noon, Colors, 5305 E. Speedway.

Monday, July 23rd
A weekly cancer support group for LBT women will hold their next meeting today from 2:00-3:30 p.m. at the Arizona Cancer Center at UMC North, 3838 N. Campbell. If interested or for more info please contact Brenda Casey, LMSW (520)694-0347.

#1Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Newsletter Night & Movie! Help us bend, fold, spindle, mutilate, and mail the MSN Newsletter, plus enjoy snacks and a movie. Contact Arlan at 323-7414.

Tucson Prime Timers Lunch - 12:30 P.M., The Wildcat House, 1800 N. Stone Ave.

Tuesday, July 24th
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Enjoy an evening of Bridge with David at 579-9763.

Wednesday, July 25th
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Hand and Foot with Lee and Merlin. Phone: 207-5336.

Thursday, July 26th
The LGBT Jewish Inclusion Project dinner will take place tonight from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Sabra Restaurant, 4210 E. Speedway. Share conversation while drinking Turkish coffee and Israeli food. For more info call Jenny (520)577-9393.

Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Triangle Tribe-A Men's Circle. According to a recent study, very few people have as many close friends as they would like. Are you as connected with other men as you want to be? Do you get the support you need for issues in your life? Do you wish you had more meaningful friendships and relationships with other men? Join like-minded men at Wingspan to share feelings, thoughts and ideas in a safe, respectful space. For the same experience with both straight and gay men, join us at the regular Circle of Men meetings. Call Tom at 591-2828 for dates and times.

Friday, July 27th
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00 p.m. Merlin and Lee host a word for word fun evening of Scrabble. If you don't know how to play, they will be glad to teach you. For reservations and directions, please contact Merlin and Lee at 207-5336. If you're loquacious, erudite, or a wordsmith; this man's game just may be a triple word score for you!

Tucson Prime Timers Cocktails, 5:30 p.m. Colors, 5305 E. Speedway.

Saturday, July 28th
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Shuffle over for Floating Pinochle every Saturday of the month except for first Saturday MSN Monthly Pot Luck. Contact Steve at 664-2076.

6:30-9 p.m. join us for a wonderful potluck dinner party to see what the new Man to Man Club is all about. This very popular group of quality men is going to close the membership soon. It's a great way to meet healthy attractive men in a balanced environment, with increased awareness and presence. Call Marc at 881-4582 between 8a.m. - 8 p.m. Space is limited. Only 10 men per event. This is a structured experience of what intimacy is all about.

Sunday, July 29th
The Eighth Annual Tucson Sidewinder's

WATER OF LIFE
Metropolitan Community Church
Reverend Gale Rawson, Pastor
Our Mission . . .
Discover God's Love In All People
Sunday Service - 10:15 AM
Fellowship Thursdays - 7:00 PM
3269 North Mountain Avenue
Tucson AZ 85719
(Just North of Ft. Lowell)
292-9151
www.wolmcc.org

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TELL OUR ADVERTISERS
YOU SAW THEIR AD IN THE OBSERVER

DAILY BAR CALENDAR

SUNDAY

THE BIZ - Open 3pm-2am; $2 Pitchers til 10pm and Rotating Shot Specials all night; Latin Music with live DJ at 9:30pm. Get ready!!! L Word Season 4 begins Jan. 7th at 8pm!

COLORS - Open 11am - 11pm Champagne Brunch 11am - 2pm with choice of complimentary mimosa, Bloody Mary or Screwdriver. Dickie Steed on piano during brunch. Brunch served until 2pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm $3.50 Skyy Cocktails, $2.75 Domestics and well. Reduced price appetizers. Dinner served until10pm.

HOWL AT THE MOON – Summer Hours Open 2pm. Smirnoff Vodkas $2.50 all day. Kitchen open 2-9pm. Free Texas Hold-'Em Poker Tournaments at 3 and 6 pm. Play for points and prizes - no cash involved. SIN is in on Sundays - Service Industry Nite. Driink discounts for hospitality industry employees. Dance music 9-close.

IBT's -Troy's Recovery Bar noon-4pm. 4-7:30 Karaoke on the patio. Benefit B-B-Q for the Pride Parade 5:30-7:30 and dance with DJ Mike Lopez 9pm to close.

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.Happy Hour 11am-8pm (excl spec events); Brunch 11:30am-2:30pm; Back Pocket Patio Bar 2pm til 2am. Beer Bust 2-7pm; Bar-B-Que 5-9pm; Karaoke with Michael D. 9p.m.; DJ Jeff in the Back Pocket 9pm; Drag Bingo every other Sunday 8-9pm Watch for special events.

YARD DOG - Open 10am - 2am. Patio Bar opens at 7pm.

MONDAY

THE BIZ - Open 3pm-10pm; Drink what you want with ½ priced Happy Hour. Poke-Her Monday! Free card lessons 5pm. Free Texas Hold-'em Tourney at 6pm; Prizes for 1st, 2nd, 3rd Places. Happy Hour pricing & Free Food

COLORS - Closed on Mondays.

HOWL AT THE MOON – Open at 3 pm. Happy Hour all day & night with $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. Kitchen closed. $3 taco bar 4-8 pm. Free Texas Hold-Em Poker tourney at 6 & 8:30, Play for points and prizes. No cash involved. Free pool all day.

IBT's -Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, DJ Craig Carter 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 Martinis 4-8pm..

WOODY'S - Open Noon til 2am. Happy Hour Noon-8pm (excl spec events) Karaoke with Michael D. 9pm

YARD DOG - Open daily 8am. 50¢ off any Top Shelf Rum until 8pm. Beer Bust 4-8pm. Patio Bar opens 7pm

TUESDAY

THE BIZ - Open 3pm-10pm; Drink What You Want with ½ priced Happy Hour. Monthly Wine Tasting on 2nd Tuesday of every month at 5:30pm. Please RSVP by the first Monday of the Month. Wine bottles will be for sale after the tasting at a special discounted price.

COLORS - Open 4-11pm. Happy Hour 4-7 $3.50 Skyy cocktails, $2.75 Domestics and well and reduced price appetizers. Dinner served until 10pm.

HOWL AT THE MOON – Open at 3 pm. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. Kitchen closed. $3.00 taco bar 4-8pm. Free Texas Hold-Em Poker for women only at 6:00 p.m. Play for points and prizes - no cash involved. Tequila Nite with $2.50 well tequila & margaritas, 75¢ off call tequilas.

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

VENTURE-N - Open 9am. Patio 7pm. Free Pool til 4pm. Spaghetti Nite (2nd Tuesday every month $2.00).

WOODY'S - Open Noon til 2am. Happy Hour Noon-8pm (excl spec events). Havana Night with Woody's own Specialty Mojitos, Caprioskas and Martinis.

YARD DOG - Open daily 8am.50¢ off any Top Shelf Tequila until 8pm Dart Tourney at 9am. Beer Bust 4-8pm. Patio Bar Opens 7pm.

WEDNESDAY

THE BIZ - Open 3pm-2am; Drink what You Want with ½ priced Happy Hour 3-8pm; 18 to Party, 21 to Drink! 18 & Over Night w/DJ Shorty at 9:30pm! Rotating Shot Specials all night.

COLORS - Open 4-11pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm, $3.50 Skyy cocktails, $2.75 Domestics and well and reduced price appetizers. Dinner served until 10pm.

HOWL AT THE MOON – Open at 3 pm. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints, Kitchen open 4 - 9 pm. Free Pool all day and night. Free Texas Hold-'Em Poker Tournaments at 6 & 8:30 pm Play for points & Prizes. No cash involved. Great way to learn the game or sharpen your skills.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, "Diva-Licious" show 9pm w/ Bunny Fu Fu& Friends. After show dance with DJ Q til 2am,

VENTURE-N - Open 9am. Patio 7pm. Free Pool til 4pm. $2.75 Cuervo Margaritas 4-8pm

WOODY'S - Open Noon til 2am; Happy Hour Noon-8pm)excl Spec Events); Chili Dog Buffet 5-9pm; Underwear/Fetish/Leather Party 9-close - $1 off all drinks for those who participate (50¢ off draught/schnapps) Back Pocket Patio Bar open 9pm-close.

YARD DOG - Open daily 8am.50¢ off any Top Shelf Vodka until 8pm Beer Bust 4-8pm. Patio Bar Opens 7pm. Dart Tourney 8pm.

THURSDAY

THE BIZ - Open3pm-2am; Drink What You Want with ½ priced Happy Hour 3-8pm; 'Thirsty Thursday' with Tori Steele & Friends! Drag show starts at 9:30pm with Tori Steele, Janee Starr, Diana Flair and weekly special guests. $2 Pitchers and Rotating Shot Specials. Followed by a new Surprise guest DJ!

COLORS - Open4pm-11pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm,$3.50 Skyy cocktails, $2.75 Domestics and Well and reduced price appetizers. Dinner served until 10pm. .

HOWL AT THE MOON – Open at 3 pm. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. Kitchen open 4 - 9 pm. Karaoke with Rosemary at 8:30pm. $2.50 Mexican Beers all night, $1.00 Jello shots.

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 7pm. Free Pool til 4pm. Pool Tourney 7pm. $3 entry. Special prices for players. Steak Nite (3rd Thursday during summer). Bring your own or get it here $6.00.

WOODY'S - Open Noon-2am; Happy Hour Noon-8pm (excl Spec Events); Free Pool all day. Nacho Chip Buffet 5-9pm; $1 PBRs Longnecks and $2 Tecate Longnecks; Back Pocket Bar open 8-close.

YARD DOG - Open daily 8am.50¢ off any Top Shelf Bourbon til 8pm. Beer Bust 4-8pm. Patio Bar opens 7pm.

FRIDAY

THE BIZ - Open 3pm-2am; Drink What You Want with ½ priced Happy Hour 3-8pm; Rotating weeks Latin or Hip Hop Music with DJ Shorty at 9:30pm. Rotating Shot Specials all night!

COLORS - Open 4pm-1am. Happy Hour 4-7pm, $3.50 Skyy cocktails, $2.75 Domestics and Well and reduced prize appetizers. Dinner served until 10pm. "Hot Jazz, Cool Martinis" with Susan Artemis and Craig Faltin 6:30-9:30pm. "Guys & Dolls"comedy drag show hosted by Lucinda Holliday at 10pm.

HOLLYWOOD - Open 5pm. Happy Hour 5pm to 7pm. $1.75 well, domestic bottles, draft. Happy Hour #2 10pm until midnight.

HOWL AT THE MOON – Open at 3 pm. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. Kitchen open 4 - 9 pm. Free Country dance lessons at 7:30p.m. Two Step or line Dance Call 293-7339 for schedule. DJ Pat plays the best of contemporary and classic country 8:30 to close. Kitchen open 9 pm - midnight serving late night munchies menu.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, 9pm Hot Dance with DJ Mike Lopez outside on the patio and DJ Raynman spinning club music inside.9pm-2am.

VENTURE-N - Open 9am. Patio open 7pm. Free Pool til 4pm.

WOODY'S - Open Noon-2am; Happy Hour Noon-8pm (excl spec events); Martini Happy Hour 5-8pm-$1 off all call Martinis; Back Pocket Patio Bar open 8-close. DJ Jeff in the Back Pocket 9-close; Watch for special events.

YARD DOG - Open daily 8am.50¢ off any Top Shelf Gin until 8pm. Beer Bust 4-8pm. Patio Bar Opens 7pm

SATURDAY

THE BIZ - $1 Draught Beers until 10pm & $4 Finlandia Vodka Red Bull drinks until 11pm; Dance Party with DJ Shorty at 9:30 mixing it up and playing what you want to hear!

COLORS - Open 4pm-11pm, Lunch served until 4pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm, $3.50 Skyy cocktails, $2.75 Domestics and Well, reduced price appetizers. Dinner served until10pm. Nightly dinner specials.

HOWL AT THE MOON – Summer hours - Open at 2 p.m. Happy Hour 2-8pm, $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. Kitchen open 2-9pm. $2.50 Capt. Morgan or Mailbu. Cheeseburger & Fries Special for $4.50 all day. Best burgers around. Learn to plau Texas Hold-Em Poker Lessons at noon with a friendly game to follow - no money involved. DJ playing dance mix or check our ad for special events. Kitchen open 9pm to midnight serving late night munchies menu.

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.

WOODY'S - Open 10am-2am; Happy Hour 10am-8pm (excl spec events); Steak/Fish Dinner in the Back Pocket 5-9pm. Back Pocket Patio Bar open 5-close. Live Jazz with Arthur Migliazza in the Back Pocket 6-9pm; DJ Jeff in the Back Pocket 9-close. Watch for special events.

YARD DOG - Open daily 8am. Beer Bust 4-8pm. $1.25 glass, $2.25 pitcher. Patio Bar Opens 7pm.

BAR CALENDAR Of Upcoming Events

FRIDAY, JULY 20
HOWL AT THE MOON - Two Step lessons with Amanda at 7:30 p.m. DJ Pat plays contemporary and classic country all night.

SATURDAY, JULY 21
HOWL AT THE MOON - Benefit show for the Water of Life Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), Show starts at 7:30 p.m. Come early for a good seat. An evening of comedy, 50-50 raffle and door prize. Shot specials - Jello shots $1.00.

WOODY'S - Live music with Lisa Oatey

TUESDAY, JULY 24
HOWL AT THE MOON - Join Miss Model and friends for a mid-week show. 9p.m. $2 Cover.

FRIDAY, JULY 27
THE BIZ - It's Fuego Friday!

HOWL AT THE MOON - Line Dance lessons with Libby at 7:30 p.m. DJ Pat plays contemporary and classic country all night.

SATURDAY, JULY 28
HOWL AT THE MOON - Too Much Information is back for a rockin' evening. 9:00 p.m. $5.00 Cover. Mustang Sally, Love Shack and other favorites.

WOODY'S - Live music with Lisa Oatey.

SUNDAY, JULY 29
WOODY'S - Drag Bingo

FRIDAY, AUGUST 3
HOW AT THE MOON - Two-Step lessons with Amanda at 7:30 p.m. DJ Pat plays contemporary and classic country all night.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 10
HOWL AT THE MOON - Line Dance Lessons with Libby at 7:30 p.m. DJ Pat plays contemporary and classic country all night.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 11
HOWL AT THE MOON - Lucinda Holliday's back with a great show. Better git you some o' that! 10:00 p.m.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 17
HOWL AT THE MOON - Two Step Lessons with Libby at 7:30 p.m. DJ Pat plays contemporary and classic country all night.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 18
HOWL AT THE MOON - August Birthday Bash - Drink Discounts if you were born in the month of August.

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

NOTICES - COMMUNITY - NOTICES

TUCSON KNIGHT OWLS (T.K.O) Openly invites new members to our monthly meetings which occur on the first Saturday of every month at 12:00 pm., followed by a beer bust from 2pm to 6pm., at our home bar the Yard Dog saloon. T.K.O.'s annual spring/summer fling is now called owls fling. This year we will be going to Holly Lake July 27th - 30th. The run fee is $60 for members and $70 for non-members. Applications will be avaible at our next beer bust. You can also pick one up from any T.K.O. member.

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.

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 360-3795 or write P.O. Box 36264, Tucson, AZ 85740-6264. All replies confidential.

GLBT-friendly AL-ANON group meets Saturdays at 11am at Unitarian Universalist Church, 4831 E. 22nd Street, Tucson.

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 call 298-6727, 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

IINNER 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, dances Tuesdays. from 6:30-9 p.m. at Cornerstone Fellowship Social Hall, 2902 N. Geronimo (Northwest of 1st Ave. and Glenn). No experience, no partner required! For more info contact David at 325-6739, or visit www.azgaydance.org

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, 425 E. 7th Street. 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, contact 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 Wednesday at 845 S. Craycroft Road at 6pm. Tucson Pride events: Pride Week, Gay West and

Pride Weekend. 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.

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.

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 / MOVIES / ETC! Nonsmoking Lesbian Network meets every month. If you'd like to meet women 50+ (flexible) and socialize in a smoke-free environment, please call or email: 888-8010 'til 9pm, or joycesmth1@aol.com. The group dines OUT! and attends shows, movies, comedy events, etc. Now in our 23rd year, 7th in Tucson.

SOUTHERN ARIZONA GENDER ALLIANCE (SAGA). The Southwest's largest transgender and gender-diversity 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)624-1779 x26 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.

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 Thursday evenings 7-10pm at the Historic Y, corner of University Blvd. And 5th Ave. Join us!! Call 304-1758 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

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, and reading from Buddhist Spiritual text and discussion. Bring a friend and a pillow or cushion. Takes place every Sunday from 10-11:30AM at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th St. Donations accepted. Contact Maurice Grossman for more info. 323-2293.

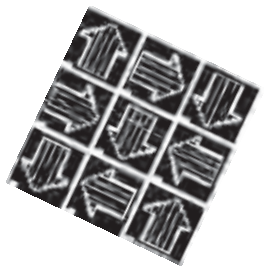
LGBT SUPPORT GROUP FOR VICTIM/SURVIVORS OF Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Hate Crimes, Bias Acts, Harassment. Call Lori at Wingspan, 624-1779, ext. 20. Services are free.

MEN'S HIKING CLUB - A peer-run MEN's outdoor club for hiking, biking, camping, boating etc, is now up and running in the Tucson area. To join, go to SAGE-Tucson-subscribe @yahoogroups.com. See you on the trails.

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.

The new MAN TO MAN INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY is meeting about honoring the spiritual side of ourselves. It is the men's social/erotic group that offers passionate friendships, fun activities, and real tantric sex education. Call Marc 881-4582 in advance Check it out. We meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 7-9pm. Potluck dinner. Donation.

BROTHERS OF THE COMPASSIONATE WAY. Pagan spiritual group for gay, bisexual, transgendered men. Box 41623, Tucson, AZ 85717.



IRS Sued Over Sex-Change Deduction

WASHINGTON, D.C. - After a tormented existence as a father, a husband, a Coast Guardsman, and a construction worker, a 57-year-old suburban Boston man underwent a sex-change operation. Then she wrote off the $25,000 in medical expenses on her taxes, reported advocate.com. But the IRS disallowed the deduction, ruling the procedure was cosmetic, not a medical necessity, in a potentially precedent-setting dispute now before the U.S. Tax Court.

Rhiannon O'Donnabhain is suing the IRS in a case Transgender rights advocates are hoping will force the tax agency to treat sex-change operations the same as appendectomies, heart bypasses, and other deductible medical procedures. The case is set to go to trial July 24. An estimated 1,600 to 2,000 people a year undergo sex-change surgery in the United States, according to the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association. O'Donnabhain said she could have paid back the approximately $5,000 she received in her tax refund but decided to challenge the IRS because she believes the ruling against her was rooted in politics and prejudice. ''This goes way beyond money,'' O'Donnabhain said in an interview with the Associated Press. ''If I were to give the money back, it would be saying it's OK for you to do this to me. It is not OK for them to do this to me or anyone like me.''

The U.S. Tax Court has never issued an opinion in a similar case, said Jennifer Levi, an attorney with Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, the Boston-based legal organization representing O'Donnabhain. But the IRS has ruled against allowing the deduction in at least one other case. In a 2005 case, the IRS ruled the costs of a woman's gender reassignment surgery and related treatments were not deductible as medical expenses. The IRS cited the section of the tax code that says cosmetic surgery or similar procedures are deductible only when they are needed to improve a congenital abnormality, an accident or trauma, or a disfiguring disease. In a 1983 case, however, the IRS allowed a father to deduct his transportation costs when he accompanied his college-age son to a clinic where he received a sex-change operation.

Levi argues that because gender-identity disorder is a recognized mental disorder that is generally treated with hormones and surgery, the costs are legitimate medical deductions. ''Every mental health textbook and medical dictionary recognizes the legitimacy of both the diagnosis and course of treatment,'' Levi said. IRS officials declined to comment, citing the upcoming trial. Robert Adelson, a Boston tax attorney, said the IRS ''might take the position that you were dealt a particular hand, you are the gender you are, and if you want to now change the gender, should the government now subsidize you to do so?''

Others say the IRS has made a mistake. ''The IRS ruling is pure bias, since scientists agree that gender transition services are medically necessary and not cosmetic,'' said Joel Ginsberg, executive director of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association. O'Donnabhain will not disclose her original name to protect her family's privacy. She said she struggled with uncomfortable feelings she could not identify while growing up in an Irish Catholic family. ''There was a definite feeling I wanted to be female, but there was no language for it,'' she said. ''It was confessions on Saturdays and Mass on Sundays. We didn't talk about those things.'' O'Donnabhain, now 63, served in the Coast Guard, got married, raised three children, and worked as a supervisor at various engineering and construction jobs, including Boston's colossal Big Dig highway project. ''I always thought the feelings would go away. If I date, the feelings will go away, if I marry, they'll go away, if I do male stuff, they'll go away. But of course, they never went away,'' she said. ''I finally reached a point where I just couldn't contain this anymore. I felt like my life was unraveling.''

In 1996, O'Donnabhain began seeing a psychotherapist who eventually diagnosed her with gender-identity disorder. Five years later, her therapist recommended sex-change surgery, finding it was a medically necessity. A psychologist who examined O'Donnabhain concurred. O'Donnabhain claimed the expenses on her 2001 tax return. The IRS denied the deduction in 2003. Kenneth Vacovec, a tax attorney from Newton, said O'Donnabhain could have a strong case because of the psychological component of gender identity disorder. ''If you were going to a psychiatrist and you had a bipolar condition, and you were taking medication and getting treatment and it made you function better in society, how is that different from having a sex-change operation that allows you to function better and be more comfortable in society?'' Vacovec said.

Allies Form Group In Florida G/L Marriage Battle

TALLAHASSEE, Florida (Observer Update) - A new organization made up mainly of people who are not Gay has amassed more than $1 million to battle a proposed amendment to the state constitution to ban same-sex marriage, 365Gay.com reported. Florida Red & Blue boasts both Democrats and Republicans among its members. The organization says that the proposed amendment could be devastating not only for Gay and Lesbian couples but also for unmarried opposite-sex couples who live together. The group says that many straight couples in non-married relationships depend on domestic partner registries.

Florida Red & Blue is led by Bob Farmer, a former treasurer for the Democratic National Committee and a key fundraiser for four Democratic presidential campaigns; and by Jon Kislak, the former financial director for Republican Attorney General Bill McCollum's campaign. In just 60 days they raised $1.01 million. ''This is not just a Gay marriage amendment,'' the Miami Herald quotes Stephen Gaskill, a spokesperson for the group as saying. ''It's easy to focus on that because that's what is controversial, but it goes way beyond that.''

The proposed amendment is being pushed by conservative Christian group Florida4Marriage. It attempted to have the measure placed on the 2006 ballot but fell short of the required number of signatures. Of the 611,009 signatures necessary to place the amendment on the November 2006 ballot, only 455,363 were gathered by the February 1, 2006, deadline. But under Florida law Florida4Marriage, can continue to add names to the petition in a bid to get it on the 2008 ballot. The group says it needs 18,000 more signatures by February to get the amendment on next year's ballot.

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