Observing Tucson And The Greater Arizona Community

OBSERVER

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Tucson Man Files Employment Discrimination Case Against Pima County; Trial To Start August 28

By Mark R. Kerr

TUCSON (ON) - Many Tucsonans know Mike Pollack as the President of the Tucson Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce.

People are aware of Pollack through Mighty Mouse Computer Consulting, provides technology support for computer and database needs.

Pollack is also known for his service and contributions to Tucson's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV/AIDS communties through his various endeavors.

Some may even remember Pollack through his work, for four years, with EON, a program of the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation, Pima County Health Department, and Wingspan which works to strengthen the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, and straight ally youth community by creating social opportunities, providing information and support on health issues, advocating for rights, and challenging society's perceptions of youth.

Tucsonan Mike Pollack

Mike Pollack will soon be a plaintiff in an employment discrimination case, scheduled for trial on Tuesday, August 28, in Pima County Superior Court.

Pollack, according to court documents. has filed suit against the Pima County Government for wrongful termination of the employment contract as an employee of the Pima County Health Department (PCHD), discrimination against Pollack in violation of the County's anti-discrimination policy and the law of the State of Arizona and for defamation of character.

Court documents state that the suit was filed in regard to an incident involving an individual who was utilizing EON's programs, suffering from a diagnosed mental illness and for whom their temporary housing situation was ending. The youth's mother did not want the individual to return to her house.

According to court papers, Pollack had gone to his supervisors and informed them of the situation and that it could pose a great risk to the mentally ill youth and that a potential option for the youth in question was to have him accepted into a program run by a local social service agency, for which the program places homeless youth with "host families."

Under this program, court documents go on to state, the youth must bring a "host family" with them into the program. Pollack investigated the requirements for participation in the host family program and determined that he was eligible to act as a host for the youth in question, and would not interfere in any way with his responsibilities working for the PCHD. He decided to discuss his supervisor of his decision to take part in the host program as a "private citizen."

Pollack held a subsequent meeting with his supervisors about his participation as a "host family" as a "private citizen" for which he alleges, in court papers, that no objections were raised if this was done during his "off-hours." Paperwork for Pollack to become a "host family" was then completed, according to the lawsuit.

After which, court papers state that Pollack's supervisors then changed their position. He then tried to appeal this under County government policies to no avail and was transferred to a lower position with PCHD and an investigation against him had been launched by Child Protective Services which found no evidence of impropriety or illegal activity.

In the lawsuit, Pollack alleges that his supervisors created a hostile work environment since efforts to terminate his employment contract could not happen, according to the Pima County Attorney's office, and he resigned his position with PCHD.

Pollack is seeking damages and a jury trial is scheduled to commence on Tuesday, August 28 in Pima County Superior Court.

Scottsdale Moves To Remedy Anti-LGBT Reputation

SCOTTSDALE - The city's mayor and police chief have met with victims of homophobic hate crimes and members of the LGBT community in an effort to stem criticism the city is not doing enough to combat violence against Gays.

Last month a Gay man had his jaw cracked when he was attacked leaving a Gay bar with a friend. Nicholas Gearing, 27, said at the time he felt police were not taking the assault seriously enough. Last year a gang of men who attacked a Gay couple outside a Scottsdale restaurant. One of the men needed more than a dozen stitches to close wounds on his head and face. Last month the Arizona Attorney General's Office began a human rights investigation after transgendered women complained they were barred from a Scottsdale nightclub.

The incidents, and several others, have left the city's LGBT community feeling isolated and unwelcome. With pressure mounting on officials, Mayor Mary Manross and Police Chief Alan Rodbell met with Gearing and representatives of the LGBT community. At a news conference both sides said the session had been productive. "Even one crime, especially a hate crime, is one too many for Scottsdale," Manross said. "Our city had the first diversity office in the state, maybe the nation, and we have domestic-partnership benefits for employees. I'm proud of what we've done." Rodbell said that hate crimes were now being investigated by the major case squad. Equality Arizona said the meeting was a good beginning, allowing for the first time the mayor, police chief and Gay leaders to meet face-to-face. "We are hearing a lot of truths and hearing a deep commitment from Scottsdale to move forward in partnership and make sure this is a safe place to live and work," Equality Arizona executive director Barbara McCullough-Jones said.

Both the mayor and McCullough-Jones acknowledge that the city has to clean up its image. Scottsdale is heavily dependant on tourism and the city's Visitors Bureau markets directly to Gays across the country. But hours after the meeting another Gay hate-crime victim came forward. The 22-year old man told a local televison he was attacked 10 days ago outside a Scottsdale bar. The man said he was beaten and nearly lost an eye. His attackers yelled homophobic epithets at him during the attack he said. The man also told the station that while he was at the hospital being treated he was belittled because of his sexuality by Scottsdale police officers.

Six Months Of Civil Unions In New Jersey 'Failure' Group Says

TRENTON, New Jersey (Observer Update) - New Jersey marks the six-month anniversary of the civil unions law this Sunday and the state's largest LGBT civil rights organization says it has been a failure, something the average person in the state seems to agree with according to a new poll, reported 365Gay.com.

Last October the state Supreme Court ruled that same-sex couples must have the rights as opposite-sex married couples but left it to the legislature to decide whether that should be done through marriage or civil unions.

Lawmakers chose civil unions, and Gay and Lesbian couples married in areas where same-sex marriage is legal, were regarded as in a civil union in New Jersey.

The law went into effect in February.

Since then, despite the law mandating equality for people in civil unions with those in opposite-sex marriages, there has been mounting evidence there remains a deep divide between the way the two groups are treated.

In June a commission to examine the effectiveness of the civil union law, created when the legislature passed the bill, was told the law is a failure.

Nearly one in eight couples who have had civil unions have been turned down for company health benefits for their partners according to Garden State Equality.

When completed the commission will deliver its report to the Legislature. It is generally expected the report will call for the legalization of same-sex marriage in New Jersey.

That likelihood is supported by a majority in the Garden State according to a Zogby Poll.

Sixty-three percent of those surveyed said they would not be upset if the legislature upgraded the term civil union to marriage. Only 31 percent were opposed.

In addition, 61 percent said they expected the state to enact marriage equality within just a couple of years. Only 29 percent of the voters polled said they thought lawmakers would reject the idea.

Moreover, 72 said a positive vote for marriage equality would not endanger lawmakers up for reelection. A slim 21 percent said it would.

"Regardless of whether any public official supports marriage equality or wants to maintain the state's failed civil unions law," said Steven Goldstein, chair of Garden State Equality, "no official in New Jersey can credibly say that marriage for Gay couples is a divisive issue in the state. Even voters who oppose marriage equality are ready to accept an upgrade of the state's civil unions law to real marriage equality."

UPDATE

PFLAG Garage Sale At Wingspan. Aug. 25

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) Tucson will be holding a garage sale in Wingspan's garage from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Saturday, August 25, to raise money for the coming year and to test the waters for an LGBT thrift shop in Tucson.

For those who wish to donate items for the sale, one may leave them at the Rochester home on the the evenings of August 20 - 22. Contact Christopher Rochester to arrange delivery by calling (520) 577-7967 and leaving a voice message or calling his cell number at (520) 440-9663. One may also leave items with Diane Steen at 6241 S. Candice Anne Drive the day before the sale (August 24). You may also bring items with you for donation on the day of the sale. Please do so as early as possible. PFLAG personnel will be on hand starting at 6:00 am. It would be helpful if you have your items priced and organized in boxes that can be easily transported. If you aren't sure about pricing, PFLAG can do it for you.

PFLAG will hold a follow-up sale at Rincon Congregational Church at 122 N. Craycroft Road (just north of Broadway) the following Saturday (September 1) in their parking lot for the items that are left over and any newly donated items. The sale will begin at 7:00 a.m. and end at 2:00 p.m. As for the previous sale, items may be dropped off at the Rochester's, at Diane's, or at the church prior to the sale.

Turnabout, Sept. 2, Volunteer for TIHAN

TUCSON (Observer Update) - If you'd like to see your favorite bartender from local LGBT clubs in "drag" and performing a number for charity, sponsor them and come see the show! Always one of the wildest nights of the year, it promises to be a fantabulous evening of glitz and glamour.

The show, annually held during Labor Day weekend, is at the Doubletree Hotel at 445 South Alvernon Way. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., and the show starts at 7:00pm. Tickets are only $15.00 and includes the show and finger food hors d'oeuvres at 5:30 p.m.

Tickets are on sale now through the TIHAN office or at participating bars: Ain't Nobody's Bizness, Colors, Howl at the Moon, IBT's, Woody's, and Yard Dog Saloon. "Turnabout for TIHAN" raised over $17,000 last year – all of it going directly to support HIV education and support programs right here in Tucson.

Are you looking for a fun, new, exciting way to volunteer? Come to "Tuesday Nights at TIHAN."

The Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network is open from 5:30 - 8:00 p.m. every Tuesday evening just for you. TIHAN has many projects that need your time, talent, and expertise.

If you want to help TIHAN become more organized, tidy up the office, engage in a few clerical functions, perform some minor repairs, hang pictures, help prepare for Volunteer Trainings, or become involved with data entry, this is the volunteer opportunity for you. Please call (520) 299-6647 to sign up.

Reveille Rehearsals August 30

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Reveille, Tucson's Gay Men's Chorus begins its Fall rehearsals Thursday, August 30 7 to 10:00 p.m. at The Historic Y, 300 E. University Blvd.

Reveille Tucson Gay Men's Chorus is a singing ensemble of Gay and Gay-supportive men who: Present excellent choral performances; Honor diversity and individual worth; Celebrate the unique qualities of Gay culture and nurture a caring chorus family

Reveille's goals are: To be widely known for artistic excellence in the performance of male chorus repertoire drawn from all genres; To present entertaining concerts and shows that are enjoyable, exciting, inspiring and thought provoking; To have a loyal, diverse, and growing audience throughout Southern Arizona and beyond; To promote human rights and reduce homophobia through our performances; To provide a safe, accepting, and supportive environment for members' personal and artistic growth and to function as a successful arts organization committed to long-term development and growth.

For more information, go online to reveillechorus.org

Tucsonans Face Clear Choices For Council Seats

TUCSON (Observer Update) - For this primary election for individuals who will cast their ballots at their polling places on Tuesday, September 11 or earlier by mail, there are two contested elections, for the Democratic nomination for the City Council seats in Ward 2 which comprises Tucson's northeast side and Ward 1 that comprises the west side of the city.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) and HIV/AIDS Tucsonans have a clear choice for this important election.

In Ward 1, Regina Romero has an outstanding record of community activism. She is a southern Arizona native raised in a farmworker family in Somerton, Romero learned early the importance of engaging in the democratic process from her father, who was active in the United Farm Worker's movemen and has worked with the Board of Supervisors, school districts, Pima Community College and private agencies. From 2000 to 2005 Romero served as Pima County Program Coordinator for Neighborhood Reinvestment, working with over 20 neighborhoods and city and county staff to develop and implement projects totaling more than $3.5 million. Her efforts resulted in sidewalks, pedestrian walkways and safer streets to make Tucson a more livable community. Most recently, Romero worked on community development issues as an aide to Tucson City Council Member Karin Uhlich. Romero was an opponent of Proposition 107 and has reached out to the LGBT and HIV/AIDS communities to be an integral part of her bid and any members of the LGBT, HIV/AIDS and straight supportive allies are supporting Regina's effort to be the next Councilmember for Tucson's Ward 1.

When Rodney Glassman announced his Ward 2 Council candidacy, he said he plans to have everyone from all aspects of the community at his political table, equally, regardless of position, sex, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, HIV status. Everyone is equal and welcome, something the Observer considers a refreshing change. Glassman is living up to this promise by only taking donations of $20 each from individuals, no money from businesses and political action committees. He is running under the City's matching fund program for political campaigns. Rodney graduated from the University of Arizona in 1997 where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics. Rodney continued his studies, at the University of Arizona's prestigious Eller College of Business and Management where he received an MBA as well as a Master of Public Administration degree. In January 2003, Rodney joined U.S. Representative Raúl M. Grijalva's staff as Legislative Aide for Business and Agriculture, working on legislation pertaining to the business and agricultural community in the District. He served as a liaison for Congressman Grijalva to the agriculture and business communities by organizing monthly round-tables and analyzing legislation.

Glassman was opposed to Proposition 107, giving funding and more importantly time, by walking to spread the word about the proposal. As a Board member of the Boy Scouts, Glassman led the fight to change the policy and personally lead a local effort to reach out to the GLBT community and built relationships with leaders of the GLBTcommission. As a Councilmember, he will give his support and affirmation for funding for HIV/AIDS organizations.

To request an early ballot, either call (520) 791-4213 or go online to:tucsonaz.gov/clerks/ballot request.php. For more information, call (520) 791-4213.

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Informing the Community
The Observer

Pentagon Shuts Database Linked To Spying On LGBT Groups

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - The Pentagon said Tuesday (August 21) that it will shut down an anti-terror database that was found to be spying on Gay and anti-war groups, 365Gay.com reported.

A Pentagon spokesperson said that the database will be closed on September 17 but that much of the information it contained will be sent to the FBI where it will be placed on a database known as Guardian.

The Threat and Local Observation Notices surveillance program, known as TALON, was launched in 2003 track and monitor domestic terror threats.

But it came under intense scrutiny after news reports revealed officials were collecting data on demonstrators and protestors, including those within the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community.

The reports said that the Pentagon had spied on New York University law school's LGBT advocacy group OUTlaw and Gay groups at the State University of New York at Albany, William Patterson College in New Jersey, and University of California at Berkeley and at Santa Cruz.

In February, 2006, the DoD acknowledged in a letter to the Senate Armed Services Committee that it had 'inappropriately' collected information on protestors but did not name any of the organizations.

That same month the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network filed a lawsuit to obtain information related to the government's domestic spy program when the Pentagon turned down a Freedom of Information Act request. SLDN believed it had been targeted because of its support for Gays in the military and its efforts to have "Don't Ask, Don't Tell", the ban on Gays serving openly, repealed.

Last year, a Pentagon review found that as many as 260 reports in the database were improperly collected or kept there. James R. Clapper, Jr., undersecretary of defense for intelligence, recommended closing the database in April, saying that the Pentagon "must lay to rest the distrust and concern about the department's commitment to civil rights."

But whether any information collected on SLDN and other Gay and anti-war groups will be purged before the information is transferred is not known.

Pentagon spokesperson Army Col. Gary Keck denied that pressure from the groups had anything to do with the decision to move the material. Keck said the Pentagon database is being shut down because "the analytical value had declined."

Legislation is before Congress to repeal DADT.

Earlier this month President Bush's nominee to head the Joint Chiefs of Staff told a Senate Armed Services Committee confirmation hearing that whether or not to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell should be up to Congress.

Two lawsuits challenging DADT are underway. One, by the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network is underway in federal court in Boston and a second, by Log Cabin Republicans, is before a federal court

Richardson Orders N.M. Health Dept.To Implement Medical Pot Law

SANTA FE, New Mexico (ObserverUpdate) - Gov. Bill Richardson ordered the state Health Department on Friday (August 17) to resume planning of a medical marijuana program despite the agency's worries about possible federal prosecution, 365Gay.com reported. However, the governor stopped short of committing to implement a state-licensed production and distribution system for the drug if the potential for federal prosecution remains unchanged.

The department announced earlier that it would not implement the law's provisions for the agency to oversee the production and distribution of marijuana to eligible patients. That decision came after Attorney General Gary King warned that the department and its employees could face federal prosecution for implementing the law, which took effect in July. The distribution and use of marijuana are illegal under federal law, and King has said federal authorities have prosecuted citizens for growing medical marijuana.

Richardson directed the department to plan for full implementation of the program, such as preparing the regulations that will permanently govern how it operates. Under the law, the department is to issue the rules by October, including for licensing marijuana producers and developing a system to distribute the drug to qualified patients. Richardson spokesman Gilbert Gallegos said a decision would be made later whether to implement the production and distribution system if federal prosecution remained possible. Gallegos said the administration was pursuing possible legal options to allow the state to provide patients with access to medical marijuana, but declined to say what. T

he new state law allows the use of marijuana for pain or other symptoms of debilitating illnesses such as cancer, glaucoma, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, HIV-AIDS and certain spinal cord injuries. New Mexico is the 12th state to legalize marijuana for certain medical uses, but it's the only one calling for state-licensed production and distribution of the drug. Also Friday, Richardson, a Democratic presidential candidate, sent a letter to President Bush urging the federal government to allow states like New Mexico to implement medical marijuana programs without fear of federal prosecution. Such as exception would require Congress to approve legislation changing the law, Gallegos said. Last month, the U.S. House rejected a proposal - on a 165-262 vote - that would have blocked the Justice Department from taking action against state medical marijuana programs, including New Mexico's. Tom Riley, a spokesman for the White House drug policy office, said it's up to federal prosecutors and the Justice Department to decide what drug cases to prosecute. "The federal government doesn't spend time prosecuting low-level marijuana possession cases. It's drug traffickers who go to jail and it's drug traffickers who get prosecuted," said Riley. "There is a charade going on here with people who are interested in drug legalization using genuinely sick people as pawns to get sympathy to get their agenda through."

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Favorite Books Of The New Queerlenium

The GLBT Services Committee was established in 1997 to better serve southern Arizona's Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual and Transgender 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 they 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. I'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. 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.

Out of the Shadows by Sue Hines (Avon Books, 2000). Rowanna hasn't come to terms with her mother's death by a drunken driver. Since she won't talk about the accident, the fact that her Mom was Gay, or that she lives with her late Mom's lover, Ro has a lot of secrets that even her best friend Mark doesn't know. Enter Jodie, the new (and beautiful) girl at school; and you get a teen triangle of unrequited attractions. First-time novelist Hines shifts the point of view between Ro and Jodie, nailing the black and white extremes of adolescent emotion. It's a good book for teens confused about love and life, only flawed when Ro's guardian Deb becomes too saintly. (A regular adult would never have all the right things to say.) (Beth Petrucci)

Pages For You by Sylvia Brownrigg (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001). Flannery, a 17-year old college freshman, falls head over heels for Anne, a brilliant teaching assistant, in this novel chronicling the experience of first love. Brownrigg captures her heroine's delirious feelings and sensual discovery without being cloying or artificial. Flannery's inevitable awakening from her romantic dream is handled with a wholly satisfying clarity and balance. (Chris Dashiell)

The Powerbook by Jeannette Winterson (Alfred Knopf, 2000). In Winterson's seventh novel, Alix is an email writer who seduces the lover and reader through a storied world, one that moves through time, gender, and geographies. The Internet missives re-draw the tales of Lancelot & Guinevere, Paolo & Francesca, even Mallory & Everest. Tales of great obsessions and great ruinous, impossible romance are intercut with the modern romantic interludes of Alix and her married woman lover. The modern conflict is well-worn ground for a Winterson novel, but the language is delicious. (Beth Petrucci)

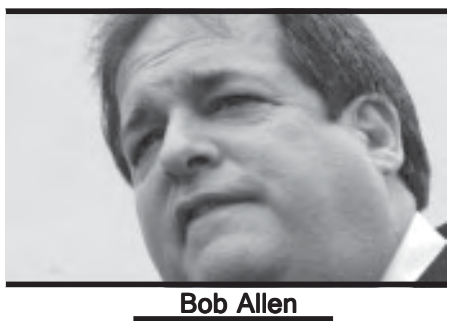
For more information, visit your local Pima County library or go online to tppl.org/community/glbt/index.cfm.

Allen Opens Mouth, Inserts Foot Again & Again

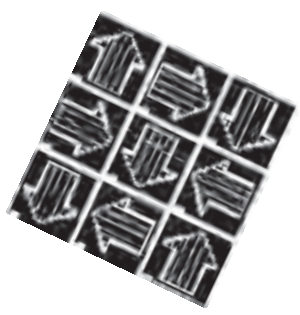
TITUSVILLE, Florida (Observer Update) - State representative Bob Allen, stripped of his committee assignmentsby a house speaker seeking his resignation over a Gay sex scandal, made more enemies with an apparent slur against Florida's Latino leadership, advocate.com. "I would think this leadership more than anyone would think that we don't want to copy totalitarian governments but copy American principles," Allen told the Miami Herald in an apparent reference to house speaker Marco Rubio being Cuban-American.

Allen was forced to backpedal as yet more of his fellow Republicans called for his head. "The fact that he's comparing the consequences of the allegations of his sexual misconduct to the plight of dissidents trapped in Castro's gulag is at best absurd and at worst insulting. He needs to go," Rep. Carlos Lopez-Cantera told the Herald, adding that Allen's comments made him "physically irked." The party leadership wants Allen to resign before his arraignment on a misdemeanor charge of solicitation to commit prostitution. Even Gov. Charlie Crist weighed in, telling the Orlando Sentinel that "I have to respect the wishes of the speaker.... It's a house issue."

Allen, a Republican representing Merritt Island, was arrested July 11 outside a Titusville park public restroom after allegedly offering a male undercover officer $20 and oral sex. The lawmaker, who last year cosponsored legislation to tighten penalties for public sex and indecent exposure, insists he is innocent and said last month that his actions were prompted by fear because the undercover cop and passersby were all black. Rubio's office issued a statement explaining his actions. "The house will continue to respect Representative Allen's right to defend himself against the charges which arose when he was arrested," the statement said. "However, we must acknowledge that in addition to being a private citizen, he is a public official. As such, we are judged by a higher standard than procedural innocence.... It is my personal belief that because of the allegations against him, Representative Allen can no longer effectively serve the people of his district in the Florida house." Allen told the Sentinel that he was "the most misunderstood guy on earth. Never was I trying to ever say Marco is the new Fidel. That's the most insulting thing you can tell anyone in Miami. I would have used North Korea if I thought more."



Bob Allen



How Do We Really Live Our Lives?

NEW YORK CITY - A massive survey of 25,000 Gay men and Lesbians is revealing new insights about the demographic and consumer tends of the LGBT community, 365Gay.com reported.

Approximately 1.3 million Gay and Lesbian U.S. households include children under 18; Gay and Lesbian consumers are more likely to have used a Visa card than other Americans, and they are more likely to buy from companies that treat their LGBT employees well and advertise in Gay media, found the survey conducted by Community Marketing, Inc.

Other findings: The median annual household income for Gay men is $83,000, nearly 80 percent above the U.S. median, and 28 percent of Gay men and 51 percent of Lesbians own cats.

Tom Roth, president of Community Marketing, Inc., said the 2007 Gay Consumer Index and 2007 Lesbian Consumer Index, based on data collected from more than 12,000 men and 10,000 women, could be used by marketers interested in targeting Gay consumers.

"Our community has risen to the forefront among corporate marketing executives in recent years, but most campaigns have relied on a "shotgun" approach to reaching various segments. This is mainly because in-depth cross sections of Gay and Lesbian consumer data have not been available," Roth said.

"These indices are a comprehensive and truly representative statistical picture of Gay and Lesbian consumers," he said, offering "an unprecedented profile of the demographic and psychographic details of their motivations, issues and preferences."

The top three publications among Gay men are LGBT-specific titles such as The Advocate, Out and local LGBT publications, the survey found; The New York Times, Men's Health and GQ were the three most commonly cited mainstream publications.

For Lesbians, the three most widely read publications were The Advocate, Curve and local LGBT papers, with People, AARP The Magazine and O The Oprah Magazine the mainstream favorites.

The most widely watched TV networks for both Gay men and Lesbians were NBC, ABC, and CBS. Gay men cited the next three as Fox, Bravo and Logo, while Lesbians liked Showtime, Fox and Logo.

Sixty-one percent of Gay men and 83 percent of Lesbians have a pet (specifically, 38 percent of Gay men and 59 percent of Lesbians have dogs, while 28 percent of Gay men and 51 percent of Lesbians have cats).

Marketers who in the past have actively targeted the LGBT community most likely have only been engaging Gay men, which makes up only half of the market, said Jerry McHugh, CMI senior research director and survey architect.

"Marketers and advertisers haven't had the tools to understand that there is no single LGBT community in terms of consumer statistics. It is a diverse melting pot of people who cannot be reached with one type of campaign or communications channel," McHugh said.

Eighty-eight percent of Gay men and 91 percent of Lesbians said their purchasing decisions are favorably influenced by corporate sponsorship of events and participation in Gay-related charities.

Women and men cited the same top two career fields – medical and education. Next were accounting or finance for Gay men and the legal or government sectors for Lesbians.

In terms of family life, 65 percent of Lesbians and 46 percent of Gay men and are partnered or live with a significant other; the number of couples with children under the age of 18 is 20 percent for Lesbians and 5 percent of Gay men.

Gay men's median household income is $83,000 per year (singles, $62,000; couples living together, $130,000), nearly 80 percent above the U.S. median of $46,326, according to the U.S. Census. Forty percent of Gay men reported annual household incomes in excess of $100,000. For Lesbians, the median household income is $80,000 per year (singles, $52,000; couples living together, $96,000), and 36 percent of Lesbians reported annual household incomes in excess of $100,000.

The survey was co-produced by Rivendell Media and sponsored by Absolut. Participants were solicited through more than 75 Web and print publications; with a sample size of more than 10,000 for each Index, the margin of error is plus or minus 1 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval.

Midwestern College Named Most Gay Friendly School In America

NEW YORK CITY - According to a survey by The Princeton Review of 120,000 students at 366 top colleges across the country Macalester College in St Paul, Minnesota is the most gay-positive school in the country, 365Gay.com reported. The liberal arts college was founded in 1874 and has as a stated goal a "special emphasis on internationalism, multiculturalism, and service to society."

Macalester's LGBT group, Queer Union, encourages students "of all sexual orientations" to participate in social, educational, and political events including a National Coming Out Week celebration, discussion groups, trips to Twin Cities cultural events.

The Princeton Review's ranking lists the top 20 colleges in over 50 other categories. They appear in the 2008 edition of its college guidebook "Best 366 Colleges." "In our opinion, each school in this book is a 'best' when it comes to academics," said Robert Franek, the guide's author. "But as anyone visiting colleges can attest, their campus cultures and offerings differ greatly.

The Review asked students 80 questions about their school's academics, administration, campus life, student body, and themselves. The most interesting profs are at Wellesley College, in Massachusetts, according to the Review. The best campus food is at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, while the best dorms are at Smith College in Northampton Mass.. The students happiest with their financial aid attend

Continued on Page Six

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Gay Fraternity Celebrates 20th Year

WASHINGTON, D.C. - In a world that values beer busts, hazing, and crass behavior, college fraternities don't come off as the most Gay-friendly of organizations, reported advocate.com. Delta Lambda Phi, a national fraternity for "Gay, Bisexual and progressive men", is working hard to change that image, and it celebrated its 20th anniversary this year. A frat for Gays? It's true, explains Randy Hubach, the organization's national vice president of outreach. "Delta Lambda Phi, like most fraternities, serves as a second family and brotherhood, networking organization, and professional development organization for our members," he says.

Delta Lambda Phi was the brainchild of Vernon Strickland III, who with three wealthy benefactors in 1987 created the Alpha chapter, the fraternity's first, in Washington, D.C. "The creation of a Gay fraternity seemed a natural extension of the movement towards increased visibility," says Strickland, now a prominent attorney in the D.C. area. He says the LGBT movement informed the fraternity's mission from the beginning. "In 1986, the national political scene was dominated by Jerry Falwell and his fundamentalist Moral Majority organization," Strickland says. "The Reagan White House wanted Gays to be invisible. Gay rights or marriage was not even discussed, and although AIDS was a known pandemic by that time, Reagan would not speak the term 'AIDS' publicly (until 1985). The national Gay movement was focused on the repeal of sodomy laws, and (Georgia's Bowers vs.) Hardwick case was being taken to the Supreme Court; but the court upheld the sodomy law by one vote."

Then a Georgetown University law student, Strickland acted as the informal legal counsel for a fellow student who had been denied a membership bid from a fraternity based on the presumption that he was Gay. After hearing similar stories from other parts of the country, Strickland became aware of the pervasiveness of behind-the-scenes fraternity procedures that kept "Gay" men – supposed or actual – from receiving bids. Under Strickland's direction, Delta Lambda Phi founded itself on three basic principles – to provide dignified and purposeful social, service, and recreational activities for progressive men, irrespective of sexual orientation; to lead in determining the rights and privileges of individuals in society; and to promote a strong and positive image as well as respect of the diversity of all individuals, irrespective of sexual orientation.

Twenty years later the fraternity is still growing, with 26 active chapters and seven colonies across the nation, including such red-state campuses as Southern Methodist, Purdue and North Carolina State. Most but not all are affiliated with college campuses. The Lambdas pride themselves on maintaining a strong social consciousness, engaging in issues such as HIV/AIDS, domestic violence, the homeless, and LGBTQ homeless youth. And they still have time to party. Like any fraternity, the Lambdas battle the Greek stereotype. People" think we are like 'Animal House' and 'Revenge of the Nerds' – as either hordes of beer-guzzling, insensitive morons or one of the last remaining institutional bastions for elites. Neither is accurate in the slightest," says Adam Williams, 22, a brother at New York University. They also struggle with their image as the "Gay frat." "As a fraternity for Gay men, though not exclusively, we have to combat two unique misconceptions – that we're secretly a sex club, (and) the enshrinement of Gay stereotypes," Williams says. And responses from other fraternities have often been less than welcoming. "Oftentimes the fraternity structures on many campuses are controlled by existing fraternities, in an entity called an Interfraternity Council, that are unwilling to share power and access with new start-ups," says Dave West, a Lambda alumnus. "On my own campus, when Delta Lambda Phi was formed we sought admission to the Interfraternity Council." Yet even though some IFC frats had Gay members, the Lambdas were denied membership.

And although other campuses have been friendlier, there has been the expectation that Delta Lambda Phi wouldn't last. "The other fraternities were aware of our presence but did not perceive us to be on a national scale," Hubach says. Despite these setbacks, Delta Lambda Phi has continued to grow. There are more than 2,500 active brothers nationwide, and the national office has received nearly 200 e-mails this year from men interested in establishing a chapter at their universities. Later this year the fraternity will launch its first national public relations campaign, Stand Together. The campaign hopes to encourage brothers – whether current, alumni, or pledging – to "stand together to help themselves and to help their communities."

Midwestern College Named Most Gay Friendly School In America

Continued from Page Five

Princeton University, in New Jersey. The college at which students gave their career center the highest marks is the University of Texas at Austin. The Review also found that the most liberal students are at Warren Wilson College in Asheville, North Carolina, while the most conservative are at Thomas Aquinas College in Santa Paula, California. The most politically active students are at George Washington University, in Washington DC. The school with the most diverse student body is Temple University in Philadelphia,

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

ARIZONA IDOL CONTEST AT THE BIZ

The War As We Saw It

By Buddhika Jayamaha,
Wesley D. Smith,
Jeremy Roebuck,
Omar Mora, Edward Sandmeier,
Yance T. Gray and
Jeremy A. Murphy

Viewed from Iraq at the tail end of a 15-month deployment, the political debate in Washington is indeed surreal. Counterinsurgency is, by definition, a competition between insurgents and counterinsurgents for the control and support of a population. To believe that Americans, with an occupying force that long ago outlived its reluctant welcome, can win over a recalcitrant local population and win this counterinsurgency is far-fetched. As responsible infantrymen and noncommissioned officers with the 82nd Airborne Division soon heading back home, we are skeptical of recent press coverage portraying the conflict as increasingly manageable and feel it has neglected the mounting civil, political and social unrest we see every day. (Obviously, these are our personal views and should not be seen as official within our chain of command.)

The claim that we are increasingly in control of the battlefields in Iraq is an assessment arrived at through a flawed, American-centered framework. Yes, we are militarily superior, but our successes are offset by failures elsewhere. What soldiers call the "battle space" remains the same, with changes only at the margins. It is crowded with actors who do not fit neatly into boxes: Sunni extremists, Al Qaeda terrorists, Shiite militiamen, criminals and armed tribes. This situation is made more complex by the questionable loyalties and Janus-faced role of the Iraqi police and Iraqi Army, which have been trained and armed at United States taxpayers' expense.

A few nights ago, for example, we witnessed the death of one American soldier and the critical wounding of two others when a lethal armor-piercing explosive was detonated between an Iraqi Army checkpoint and a police one. Local Iraqis readily testified to American investigators that Iraqi police and Army officers escorted the triggermen and helped plant the bomb. These civilians highlighted their own predicament: had they informed the Americans of the bomb before the incident, the Iraqi Army, the police or the local Shiite militia would have killed their families.

As many grunts will tell you, this is a near-routine event. Reports that a majority of Iraqi Army commanders are now reliable partners can be considered only misleading rhetoric. The truth is that battalion commanders, even if well meaning, have little to no influence over the thousands of obstinate men under them, in an incoherent chain of command, who are really loyal only to their militias.

Similarly, Sunnis, who have been underrepresented in the new Iraqi armed forces, now find themselves forming militias, sometimes with our tacit support. Sunnis recognize that the best guarantee they may have against Shiite militias and the Shiite-dominated government is to form their own armed bands. We arm them to aid in our fight against Al Qaeda.

However, while creating proxies is essential in winning a counterinsurgency, it requires that the proxies are loyal to the center that we claim to support. Armed Sunni tribes have indeed become effective surrogates, but the enduring question is where their loyalties would lie in our absence. The Iraqi government finds itself working at cross purposes with us on this issue because it is justifiably fearful that Sunni militias will turn on it should the Americans leave.

In short, we operate in a bewildering context of determined enemies and questionable allies, one where the balance of forces on the ground remains entirely unclear. (In the course of writing this article, this fact became all too clear: one of us, Staff Sergeant Murphy, an Army Ranger and reconnaissance team leader, was shot in the head during a "time-sensitive target acquisition mission" on Aug. 12; he is expected to survive and is being flown to a military hospital in the United States.) While we have the will and the resources to fight in this context, we are effectively hamstrung because realities on the ground require measures we will always refuse - namely, the widespread use of lethal and brutal force.

Given the situation, it is important not to assess security from an American-centered perspective. The ability of, say, American observers to safely walk down the streets of formerly violent towns is not a resounding indicator of security. What matters is the experience of the local citizenry and the future of our counterinsurgency. When we take this view, we see that a vast majority of Iraqis feel increasingly insecure and view us as an occupation force that has failed to produce normalcy after four years and is increasingly unlikely to do so as we continue to arm each warring side.

Coupling our military strategy to an insistence that the Iraqis meet political benchmarks for reconciliation is also unhelpful. The morass in the government has fueled impatience and confusion while providing no semblance of security to average Iraqis. Leaders are far from arriving at a lasting political settlement. This should not be surprising, since a lasting political solution will not be possible while the military situation remains in constant flux.

The Iraqi government is run by the main coalition partners of the Shiite-dominated United Iraqi Alliance, with Kurds as minority members. The Shiite clerical establishment formed the alliance to make sure its people did not succumb to the same mistake as in 1920: rebelling against the occupying Western force (then the British) and losing what they believed was their inherent right to rule Iraq as the majority. The qualified and reluctant welcome we received from the Shiites since the invasion has to be seen in that historical context. They saw in us something useful for the moment.

Now that moment is passing, as the Shiites have achieved what they believe is rightfully theirs. Their next task is to figure out how best to consolidate the gains, because reconciliation without consolidation risks losing it all. Washington's insistence that the Iraqis correct the three gravest mistakes we made - de-Baathification, the dismantling of the Iraqi Army and the creation of a loose federalist system of government - places us at cross purposes with the government we have

Continued on Page Nine

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The War As We Saw It

Continued from Page Eight

committed to support.

Political reconciliation in Iraq will occur, but not at our insistence or in ways that meet our benchmarks. It will happen on Iraqi terms when the reality on the battlefield is congruent with that in the political sphere. There will be no magnanimous solutions that please every party the way we expect, and there will be winners and losers. The choice we have left is to decide which side we will take. Trying to please every party in the conflict - as we do now - will only ensure we are hated by all in the long run.

At the same time, the most important front in the counterinsurgency, improving basic social and economic conditions, is the one on which we have failed most miserably. Two million Iraqis are in refugee camps in bordering countries. Close to two million more are internally displaced and now fill many urban slums. Cities lack regular electricity, telephone services and sanitation. "Lucky" Iraqis live in gated communities barricaded with concrete blast walls that provide them with a sense of communal claustrophobia rather than any sense of security we would consider normal.

In a lawless environment where men with guns rule the streets, engaging in the banalities of life has become a death-defying act. Four years into our occupation, we have failed on every promise, while we have substituted Baath Party tyranny with a tyranny of Islamist, militia and criminal violence. When the primary preoccupation of average Iraqis is when and how they are likely to be killed, we can hardly feel smug as we hand out care packages. As an Iraqi man told us a few days ago with deep resignation, "We need security, not free food."

In the end, we need to recognize that our presence may have released Iraqis from the grip of a tyrant, but that it has also robbed them of their self-respect. They will soon realize that the best way to regain dignity is to call us what we are - an army of occupation - and force our withdrawal.

Until that happens, it would be prudent for us to increasingly let Iraqis take center stage in all matters, to come up with a nuanced policy in which we assist them from the margins but let them resolve their differences as they see fit. This suggestion is not meant to be defeatist, but rather to highlight our pursuit of incompatible policies to absurd ends without recognizing the incongruities.

We need not talk about our morale. As committed soldiers, we will see this mission through.

(Buddhika Jayamaha is an Army specialist. Wesley D. Smith is a sergeant. Jeremy Roebuck is a sergeant. Omar Mora is a sergeant. Edward Sandmeier is a sergeant. Yance T. Gray is a staff sergeant. Jeremy A. Murphy is a staff sergeant. This oped is reprinted from the August 19 edition of the New York Times.)

Court Restores Rights Of Adopted Kids

By Deb Price

Should the legal ties between parents and their adopted child unravel if the family leaves the state where the adoption decree was handed down?

Of course, not. The very idea is outrageous.

But that's what Oklahoma lawmakers were striving for in 2004 with their chillingly titled "Adoption Invalidation Law," which targeted adopted children with Gay parents.

That wrongheaded statute declared that Oklahoma would refuse to recognize "an adoption by more than one individual of the same sex from any other state or foreign jurisdiction." In other words, if a Gay couple and the child they adopted in, say, California or Maryland moved to Oklahoma or simply drove through Oklahoma on vacation, they would not be treated as a legally recognized family by any Oklahoma official – whether a police officer, public school teacher or judge.

Sounds un-American, doesn't it? It's also unconstitutional. That's what a federal Court of Appeals panel told Oklahoma on Aug. 3 in striking down the law.

A panel of three judges – all of them Republican appointees – of the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals agreed with a lower court ruling that Oklahoma's anti-family law violated the U.S. Constitution's Full Faith and Credit Clause, which requires states to honor one another's judicial judgments, including adoptions.

The appeals court also ordered Oklahoma to issue a revised birth certificate for an Oklahoma-born girl so she is listed as the daughter of the women who legally adopted her in California.

The Oklahoma Department of Health decided not to fight the ruling, so families headed by Gay couples no longer need to fear traveling through or moving to Oklahoma with their adopted children.

"We are winning on the front of, 'Hey don't mess with our kids,'" notes legal director Jon Davidson of Lambda Legal, which represented the Gay parents who sued.

"People are less sympathetic to those attacks that clearly harm children," Davidson continues. "How can it be good for children to be told the parents who adopted them are no longer their parents?"

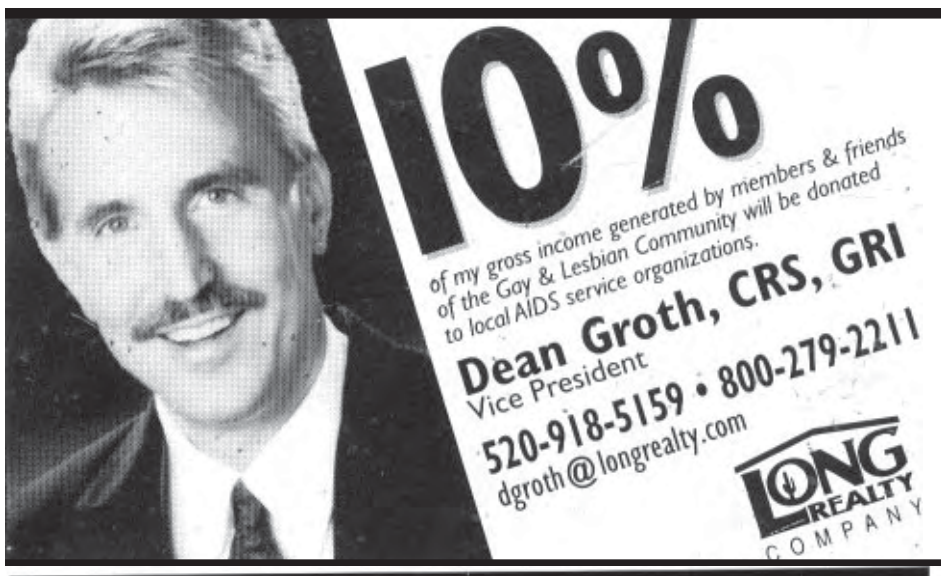
The 10th Circuit's sensible ruling comes as states – where nearly all family law originates – are getting more used to Gay families. About 250,000 U.S. children are being raised by Gay parents. Those families' rights vary greatly from state to state.

Courts in most states allow Gay couples to jointly adopt or allow a Gay adult to become the legal second parent of a partner's child. And the Oklahoma ruling puts lawmakers nationwide on notice not to tamper with the legal rights of adopted children, regardless of the parents' sexual orientation.

The ruling was the result of a lawsuit filed by three sets of parents. Greg Hampel and Ed Swaya of Seattle had feared taking their daughter back to Oklahoma to visit her birth mother. Heather Finstuen and Anne Magro feared that nonbiological mom Finstuen couldn't sign medical releases and other forms. Lucy and Jennifer Doel, who live in Oklahoma, had felt the impact of the misguided law: When their little girl had to be rushed to a hospital, the ambulance crew said only "the mother" could go along.

Adopted kids deserve to feel every bit as secure as their playmates. Now their parents can breathe easier, knowing the Constitution is on their side.

(Deb Price is a columnist for the Detroit News, from which this is reprinted from their August 20 edition.)



The Reader Speaks RAVE or RANT

By Christian Dunlap

What makes the word of one man heard? How do we as a nation understand where our fellow man or woman stands? Is it so hard to find a strong voice to speak up on the issues that matter most to us as a nation? I don''t know, but what I do know is that I have voice, and it is screaming to be heard.

Just like the rest of the nation, I watch the news and catch a glimpse of the horror: the war in Iraq, immigration issues that threaten our very way of life, families trying to piece together there lives after a disaster. I weep at the thought that we can do very little for those in the world that truly need our help.

With all this to think about and to act upon, it is the 2008 Primary elections that has caught my attention. As most of you know, and some of you don''t, they are trying to push the primary elections up. It is all too apparent that we are more focused on getting our current President out of the White House rather than focusing on the important matters.

According to CBSNEWS.com, South Carolina Republican Party Chairman Katon Dawson is expected to announce that he's moving his state's primary ahead of Florida's to Jan. 19. This has caused a spark in the primary states to compete in a political ""footrace"" to be the first state to start elections. Analysts say that the elections could start as early as December. That is a ten month general election. Is it just me or is that just a tad bit ridiculous?

Which brings me to my point: Are we as a nation so concerned on getting one man out of office that we have forgotten about all the thousands of men and woman around the world that need our attention just a little bit more. Now I don''t know about you, but I would gladly wait until the February start for the primary elections if we could just shed a tiny light on the issues at hand.

I will be honest, I am not the biggest supporter of George W Bush, really I don''t even like the guy, but he has done great things since the foul up of Katrina, to help all those at home during the I-35W bridge disaster and watching our borders to keep this great nation working. I want him out of the White House pretty bad, but come on, do we have to change the way we have been voting in this country for over 200 years because we are vain enough to want him out? Are we trying to prove a point?

This political agenda has spun out of control. It seems we have lost focus on the most important issues. I for one would like to see more attention on the same-sex marriage bill that is somehow floating around in Congress. Better health care for the elderly and for those in need of decent health care. Those seem to be the issues that we are dealing with every day. Shouldn''t Congress be dealing with them as well? Not as an ""amendment"" to a bill that our congressmen and woman are trying to ""slide"" past the president by hiding it in another bill, but as a genuine issue up front.

As I see it: We as a nation have a choice to make. We can focus on bumping up the elections to mask the issues that are taking place and require our most devout attention, or we can face them head on and let our time proven methods of electing our Nations Leader, run their natural course. I don''t know about you, dear readers, but I for one would like to see our troops home, families back in their homes, and a strong workforce that is fair and balanced. That''s how I see it.

Equality Arizona Radio, August 25

PHOENIX (Observer Update) - Equality Arizona Radio is designed to provide the listener with insights into the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) experience in Arizona.

Equality Arizona Radio's topics, guests and special guest hosts all focus on fulfilling Equality Arizona's mission to secure, protect and defend the rights and welfare of LGBT individuals and can be heard on Saturdays, 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. on KPHX 1480 AM or online at aaphx.com or novamradio.com.

Upcoming shows: August 25: Back to School: Campus Organizing. Students, staff and faculty work together to create a positive learning and work environment on Arizona's college campuses. Find out what the issues are and how people are teaming up for equality.

For more information, call Equality Arizona (602) 650-0900 or go online to equalityarizona.org.

Oklahoma Won't Appeal Federal G/L Adoption Ruling

OKLAHOMA CITY, Oklahoma (Observer Update) - The State of Oklahoma will not take its fight against same-sex couples who jointly adopt children out of state to the U.S. Supreme Court a spokesperson for the state Health Department said Friday, August 17, 365Gay.com reported.

"This is a monumental decision, not just for the couples involved in the case, but for Lesbian and Gay parents and their children nationwide," said Jon Davidson, Legal Director of Lambda Legal.

"It means that when same-sex couples have an adoption decree recognizing both of them as parents, the adoption, and their status as their child's parents, must be honored no matter where they go."

Earlier this month the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a lower court ruling that struck down an Oklahoma law described as being so extreme it had the potential to make children adopted by same-sex couples in other states legal orphans when the families are in Oklahoma.

''We hold that final adoption orders by a state court of competent jurisdiction are judgments that must be given full faith and credit under the Constitution by every other state in the nation,'' the 10th Circuit said in its ruling.

Although single Gays may become the parent of adoptive children same-sex couples in Oklahoma were barred from adopting and the law allowed the state to invalidate adoptions where couples have been awarded joint parenting rights in states where co-adoption is legal.

The Adoption Invalidation Law, hastily passed at the end of the 2004 Oklahoma legislative session, had said that Oklahoma "shall not recognize an adoption by more than one individual of the same sex from any other state or foreign jurisdiction."

Lambda Legal, representing same-sex couples took the state to court. Lambda represented two same-sex couples and their families who adopted children while living in other states and later moved to Oklahoma or want to visit the state with their family

Lambda Legal argued that the law was unconstitutional based on the United States Constitution's guarantees of equal protection, due process and right to travel, as well as the mandates of the Full Faith and Credit Clause.

A year ago U. S. District Judge Robin Cauthron declared the Oklahoma law unconstitutional and the state appealed to the 10th Circuit.

Health Department attorney Tom Cross said Friday that the department will not consider appealing to the U.S. Supreme Court because it does not believe that theU.S. Supreme Court would take up the case.

"We will be issuing birth certificates for all adoptions, whether same-sex or not, for children born in Oklahoma," Cross said.

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POLITICS 2007

by Mark R. Kerr

Q-Politics 2008: Senator John Edwards

Former Senator John Edwards is making his second run for the Democratic nomination for President. Edwards ran for the presidential nomination in 2004, and was the Democratic vice-presidential nominee.

Edwards represented North Carolina in the U.S. Senate from 1998-2004, quickly emerging as a champion for the issues that make a difference.

After the 2004 campaign, Edwards served as Director of the Center on Poverty, Work, and Opportunity at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Former Senator Edwards believes that all couples in committed, long-term relationships should have the same 1,138 rights, benefits, and responsibilities, whether they are straight couples or same-sex couples.

In 2004, Edwards voted against the Federal Marriage Amendment, the proposed amendment to the federal constitution that would have barred governmental and legal recognition of same-sex marriages, civil unions and domestic partnerships.

Edwards has expressed support for adoption by Gay and Lesbian couples and individuals.

While in the Senate, Edwards cosponsored the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) that would prohibit discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation.

During this campaign, Edwards has expressed support for the current version of ENDA that would prohibit discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation or gender identity, perceived or otherwise.

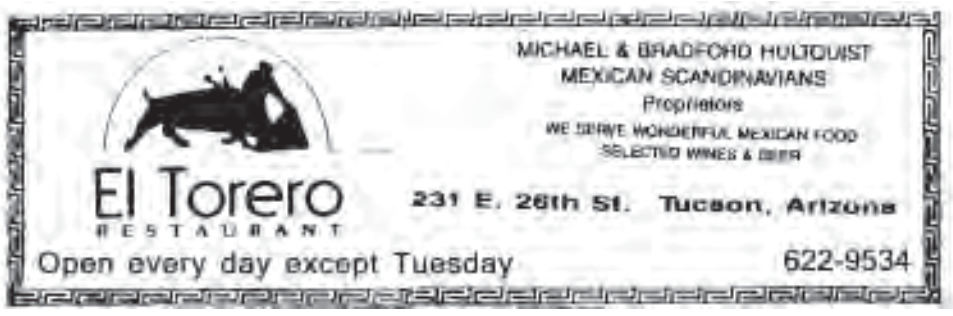
HIV/AIDS research and treatment would be a high priority in an Edwards administration. He cosponsored measures to fully fund Ryan White (ADAP) Programs.

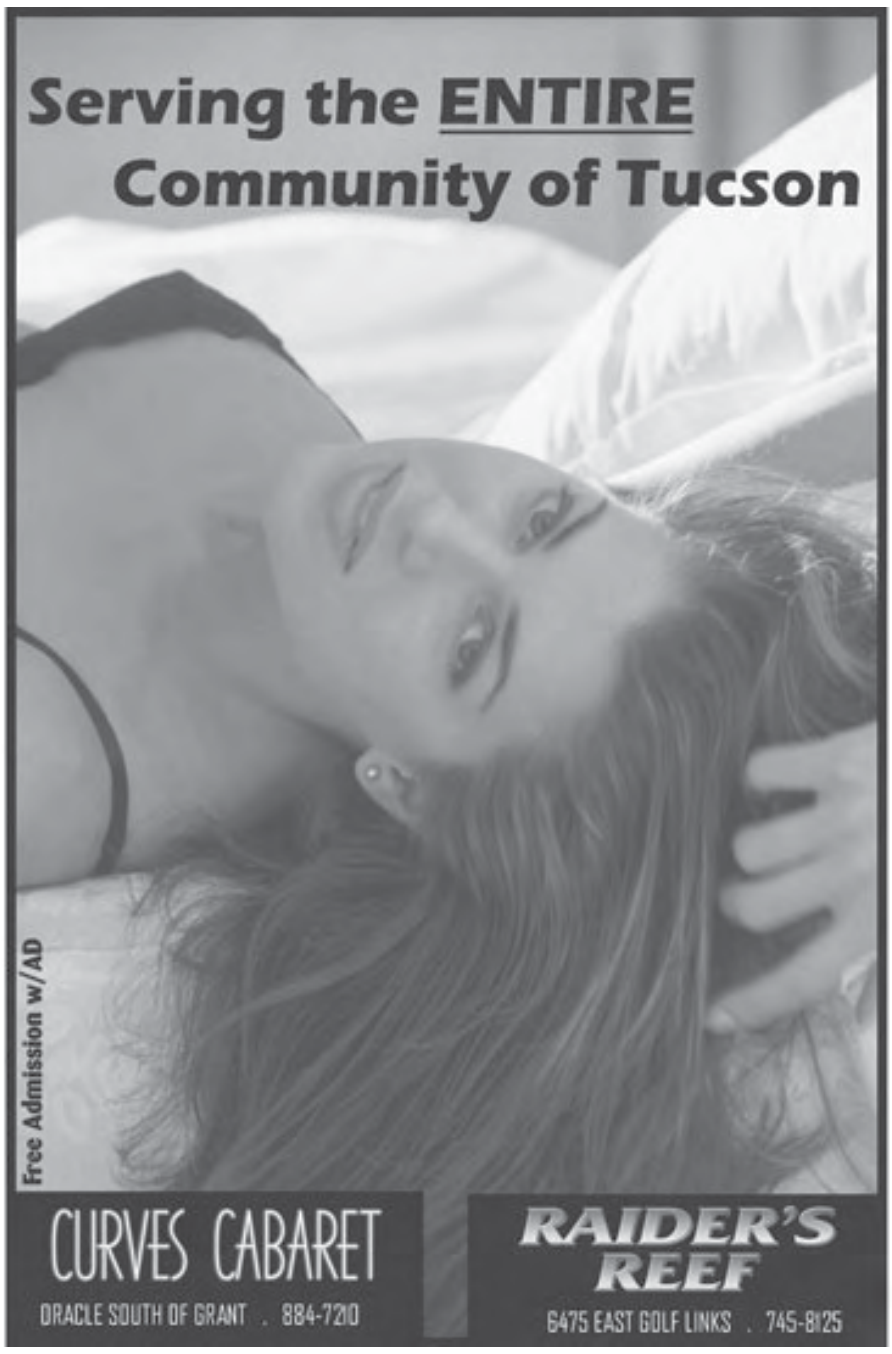
He has expressed support for the Early Treatment for HIV/AIDS Act, legislation that would provide Medicaid coverage to low-income, HIV positive Americans.

Edwards opposes "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," the federal law that prohibits openly Gay and Lesbian individuals from serving in the country's armed services.

While in the Senate, Edwards co-sponsored the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement (LLEEA) Act, which would have expanded the federal hate crimes law to cover sexual orientation and has expressed support for the current version of LLEEA, that would also cover sexual orientation and gender identity.

John Edwards website is at johnedwards.com. His positions on various issues can be found online at issues2000.org/John_Edwards.htm, and ontheissues.org/John_Edwards.htm.





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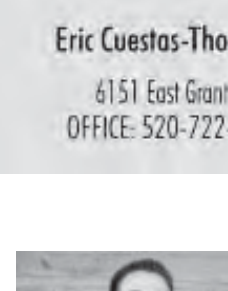

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Reuters Drops Article About 'Gay' Merv Griffin

Merv Griffin

NEW YORK CITY (Observer Update) - It started innocently enough with a story about late entertainer/talk show host Merv Griffin, who died, at The Hollywood Reporter's web site. Its opening line: "Merv Griffin was Gay."

Then things got really interesting. The Reporter pulled the story – by regular Ray Richmond, who once worked for Merv – for awhile, then reposted it under the heading, "Griffin never revealed man behind the curtain." What next? Reuters picked it up in its normal entertainment feed and then, after protests (presumably), it pulled the story, with this explanation: "This was a story from The Hollywood Reporter that ran as part of a Reuters news feed. We have dropped the story from our entertainment news feed as it did not meet our standards for news. GBU Editor." By this time, of course, Yahoo had carried the story, via Reuters, with the frank headline, "Merv Griffin died a closeted homosexual." And a Reuters blog still carried the first two paragraphs, along with reader's comments, such as: "I was just reading the article about Merv Griffin being a closeted Gay. Wow! What a way to punch a dead man in the stomach!"

Many obituaries this week had noted, in passing, that Griffin had been sued by men a few years back, one for palimony and the other for sexual harassment, but left it at that. The story currently posted at The Hollywood Reporter follows. It is currently the #1 most popular story on the site:

Merv Griffin was Gay.

Why should that be so uncomfortable to read? Why is it so difficult to write? Why are we still so jittery even about raising the issue in purportedly liberal-minded Hollywood in 2007? We can refer to it casually in conversation, but the mainstream media somehow remains trapped in the Dark Ages when it comes to labeling a person as Gay.

Maybe that helps explain why Griffin, who died of prostate cancer Sunday at 82, stayed in the closet throughout his life. Perhaps he figured it was preferable to remain the object of gossip rather than live openly as "one of them." But how tremendously sad it is that a man of Merv's renown, of his gregarious nature and social dexterity, would feel compelled to endure such a stealthy double life even as the Gay community's clout, and its levels of acceptance and equality, rose steadily from the ashes of ignorance.

I'm not at all insinuating that Griffin had a responsibility to come out. That was up to him.

But what a powerful message Griffin might have sent had he squired his male companions around town rather than Eva Gabor, his longtime good friend and platonic public pal. Imagine the amount of good Merv could have done as a well-respected, hugely successful, beloved and uncloseted Gay man in embodying a positive image.

As it was, I loved the guy, finding him charismatic and charming. And I had more than a passing acquaintance with him, having worked on "The Merv Griffin Show" as a talent coordinator/segment producer in 1985-86 as the show was winding down. Around the office, Merv's being Gay was understood but rarely discussed. We knew nothing of his relationships because he guarded his privacy fiercely, and we didn't pry.

Merv's secret Gay life was widely known throughout showbiz culture, if not the wider America. It gained traction in 1991 when he was targeted in a pair of lawsuits: by "Dance Fever" host Denny Terrio, alleging sexual harassment; and by assistant Brent Plott, seeking $200 million in palimony. Both ultimately were dismissed.

Over the past 16 years of his life, however, Griffin deflected the sexuality questions with a quip, determining that his private life remained nobody's business. He certainly didn't owe us an explanation, but maybe he owed it to himself to remove the suffocating veil he'd been forced to hide behind throughout his adult life. Then again, Merv carved his niche in the entertainment world at a time when being Gay wasn't OK, when disclosure was unthinkable and the allegation alone could deep-six one's career.

If you're Griffin, why would you think a judgmental culture would be any more tolerant as you grew into middle and old age? Even in the capital of entertainment – in a business where homosexuality isn't exactly a rare phenomenon – it's still spoken of in hushed tones or, more often, not at all. And Merv's brush with tabloid scandal no doubt only drove him further into the closet.

While it would seem everything has changed today, little actually has. You can count on the fingers of one hand, or at most two, the number of high-powered stars and public figures who have come out. Those who don't can't really be faulted, as rarely do honesty and full disclosure prove a boon to one's showbiz livelihood.

Nonetheless, the elephant that was his sexual orientation never really stopped following Griffin from room to room. He could duck it for a while, but it would always find him. It's disheartening that Merv had to die to shake it for good.

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San Francisco Has Dykes On Bikes Seattle Has Dykes With Weiners

Word came back from Seattle Pride Events that they have a Lesbian contingent parading with their dachunds and are known as "Dykes with Weiners". This is to counter the famous "Dykes on Bikes" from San Francisco and the Australian Lesbian group known as "Rondas on Hondas". What's next!

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Brazil's Drama Over Soccer Gay Baiting

Richarlyson

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil - The leader of a prominent soccer team insinuates on national television that a player on a rival team is Gay, reported the Associated Press on advocate.com. The player sues for slander and goes on TV to deny it. A judge causes an uproar by saying Gays don't belong in Brazilian soccer.

With a narrative like a Latin American soap opera, the flap over the sexual orientation of Sao Paulo midfielder Richarlyson has shaken the hallowed and macho institution of Brazilian soccer. The commotion started in June when Palmeiras club director Jose Cyrillo Junior was asked on TV whether it was true that a soccer player from his team was negotiating for an exclusive TV interview to announce he was Gay. Cyrillo denied the report, but added "Richarlyson 'almost' played for Palmeiras," suggesting the 24-year-old player was Gay.

Cyrillo later apologized, but Richarlyson filed a criminal complaint for slander. Judge Manoel Maximiano Junqueira Filho stoked the dispute by dismissing Richarlyson's claim and issuing a ruling that suggested he leave the game if he were Gay. If he weren't, the judge said, Richarlyson was obliged to defend himself on the same TV program. "Not that a homosexual can't play soccer," Filho wrote. "He can, but he must form his own team and federation, setting up matches with those who want to play against him." Soccer, the judge said, is a "virile game" and "not homosexual," and that allowing Gays could lead to affirmative action for the sport requiring quotas of Gays. The ruling prompted the government body that oversees judicial ethics in Brazil to demand an explanation from the judge.

HOROSCOPES

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Seemingly innocuous things pack a jolt as Mars opposes Jupiter. Even our most sedate and serene actions seem to go too far too fast. But it all works out in the end... as usual.

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

Even the best laid vacation plans can get scrambled when Mars opposes Jupiter. Maybe proud Rambos should reign in their more global projects and stay closer to home to recharge and relax. I would also advise postponing any legal maneuvers until the end of the month. You jump in with both feet at a time when you should tiptoe out the back door.

TAURUS (APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

Queer Bulls turn the sexual heat up to boiling with the Mars / Jupiter opposition. This may not be a bad thing but know when to say when. Conquests can rage out of hand at this time (although some people happen to like it that way...). Perhaps it's best to take a nice cold shower and go to bed with a good book until you can shake this unstable fatal attraction.

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

Relationships are often the reason for being for all romantic pink Twins but now, with Mars opposing Jupiter, you find cocooning a bit confining. You find an excuse to add lighter fluid to any smoldering argument. Why not bite your lip and let things go by for now. Words once spoken and actions once taken can not be undone easily.

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)

Mars opposes Jupiter this week which can tempt even placid Gay Crabs into inadvisable actions on the job. Refrain from getting those lovely claws locked into any petty work related disputes; you will have a dickens of a time disentangling yourself. Try a more productive technique - count to ten and then go to lunch.... a looooonnnng lunch.

LEO (JULY 24 - AUGUST 23)

Yes proud Leo, it is possible to have too much of a good time this week. Creative musing could be in for a bruising. The party hearty mantra could lead to a dissipated "scrape me off the floor" feeling. Avoid overindulging especially in alcohol, gambling or other recreational pastimes. It's hard to bounce back when you feel like concrete.

VIRGO (AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 23)

Although you feel driven to solidify roots by redecorating your current hovel or moving, a tornado rushes into your best laid plans. Queer Virgins should delay major changes for a couple of weeks. And avoid discussions with difficult relatives - Sparks fly and ignite. Live life openly out but don't invite family to rain on your pride parade. Call it avoiding unnecessary aggravation.

LIBRA (SEPTEMBER 24 - OCTOBER 23)

Proud Libras are advised to keep their best opinions to themselves . Simply stated, nothing is simply stated now. Of course, if you hanker to start an out of control stampede, the Mars/Jupiter opposition provides the molotov. Since good fences make good neighbors, consider building a good solid wall now. And don't lend neighbors your sledgehammer...

SCORPIO (OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)

Although you hanker to retire early, the Mars/Jupiter opposition tempts you into inadvisable investments based on pure greed. Temper your needs for a week or so and quietly do your financial homework, seek conservative advisors and learn how to balance work and play. Gay Scorps need to lie in the sun and rejuventate their energies every so often. Why not now?

SAGITTARIUS (NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 22)

Mars opposes Jupiter which plays havoc with any new endeavor or around new and important people. Gay Archers may try too hard to please as they pratfall their entrance onto center stage or tip the cocktail tray on unsuspecting divas. Keep that sense of humor kiddo! The most important thing is to wear clean underwear in case your fabulous outfit loses its fit. Too late...

CAPRICORN (DECEMBER 23 - JANUARY 20)

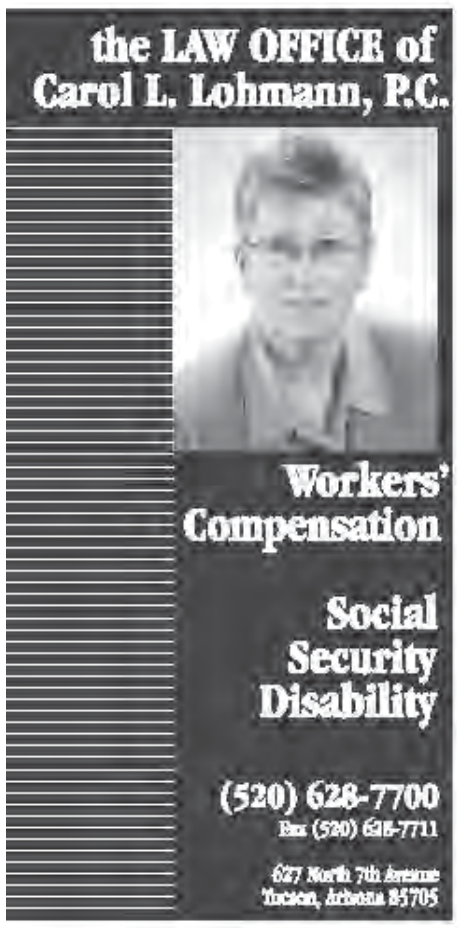
Mars and Jupiter have a few surprises in store for you this week. But don't worry about it pink Cap; it may be the best thing to happen to you in a long time. Don't over-react as your intuition runs amok and you perceive a wrong that is not wrong at all. Avoid uncovering any others' secrets, Sherlock. They may not be ready to hatch and the smell could be shocking.

AQUARIUS (JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 19)

Don't be surprised if you piss off a few friends during the Mars / Jupiter oppostition. Maybe Aqueerians should lock themselves away on a deserted island for a while. Whatever you do, try not to become too involved in grand social gestures and events. You are unable to effectively harness the social dynamic now and could come off as a petty dictator or even worse.

PISCES (FEBRUARY 20 - MARCH 20)

While you have never been a political player (you are far too honest to kiss up to senior staff) the current opposition could derail your best corporate ambitions. Guppies can play to win by playing it very safe in their career. Allow the corporate sharks their feasting moment in the sun and prepare to go shark fishing later this month.



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

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Non Bar Calendar

Wednesday, August 22nd
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, August 23rd
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, August 24th
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.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 PM, Colors, 5305 E. Speedway

Saturday, August 25th
#1Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 1:00pm August Pool Party.

#2Men'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 Marvin at 745-0304.

Sunday, August 26th
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, August 27th
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Hearts. Please call Karol at 744-9017 for information and to reserve your place at this limited seating event.

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

Tuesday, August 28th
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Enjoy an evening of Bridge twice a month on the second and fourth Tuesdays. Call Perry at 321-4387 for details.

Wednesday, August 29th
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Hand and Foot with Peter at 881-8276.

Thursday, August 30th
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, August 31st
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed. Today is the only day on this month's MSN calendar with no MSN events scheduled. This presents MSN members with unlimited possibilities and opportunities to create on their own that most perfect day that they have always dreamed of living. So MSN members: go for it, and bring photos and stories of your fabulous day to the next Pot Luck so we can all enjoy sharing in each other's happiness!

Tucson Prime Timers Cocktails – 5:30 PM, Colors, 5305 E. Speedway

6:30 to 9:00 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 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.

Thursday, September 6
7:00 p.m. Yoga and Meditation. Call Marc at the Man to Man Club for more information. 881-4582.

Sunday, September 9
3:45 p.m. Sign up for the monthly Men's Massage Group in its 18th year. Spend 2 hours on the 3rd Sunday of each month in nude b liss with other men. Call Marc at 881-4582 to sign up and for information..

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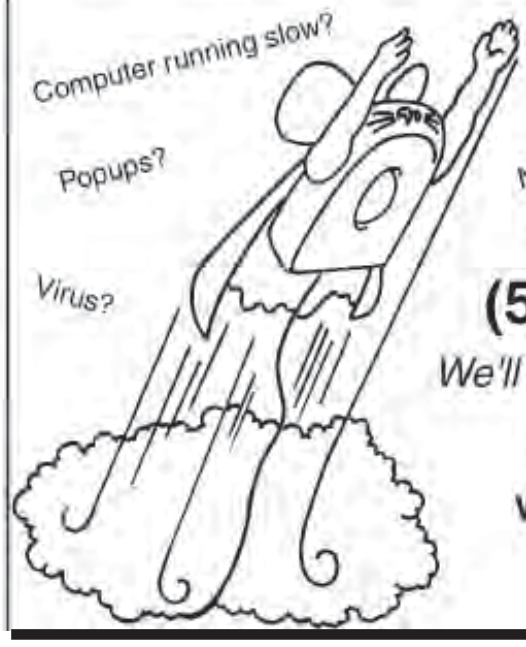

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DAILY BAR CALENDAR

SUNDAY

THE BIZ - Open 3pm-2am; $2 Pitchers til 10pm and Rotating Shot Specials all night;. Latino Explosion 9pm with DJ Hill. Beer Bust 5-10pm

COLORS - Open 10am - 10pm 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.

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 - Half-Price Happy Hour 3-8pm. Karaoke 8pm-12am with 2 for 1 drinks.

COLORS - Open 4-10pm. 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/DJHill at 9pm! Rotating Shot Specials all night. Patio Bar opens @ 10:30pm.

COLORS - Open 4-10pm. 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 now ts at 10pm with Tori Steele, China Colliins and guests. $2 Pitchers and Rotating Shot Specials. Followed by DJ Hill til 2am.

COLORS - Open4pm-10pm. 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 Hill at 9pm. Rotating Shot Specials all night! Patio Bar opens at 10:30pm

COLORS - Open 4pm-midnight. 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 - $2.00 U-Call-Its til 11pm. Saturday night dance party with DJ Hill9pm. Patio Bar opens at 10:30pm.

COLORS - Open 4pm-10pm, 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.

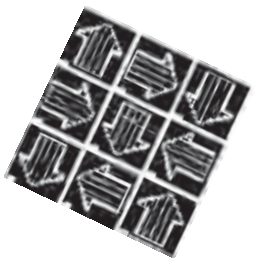
HOWL AT THE MOON – Summer hours - Open at 2 p.m. Happy Hour 2-8pm, $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. Kitchen open 2-9pm. $2.50 Capt. Morgan or Mailbu. Cheeseburger & Fries Special for $4.50 all day. Best burgers around. Learn to plau Texas Hold-Em Poker Lessons at noon with a friendly game to follow - 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, AUGUST 24
WOODY'S - Motown/R&B sounds of Simon Crown 6-9 p.m. in the Back Pocket Patio Bar during Happy Hour.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 25
HOWL AT THE MOON - Johnny D is in the DJ Booth and Jake is behind the bar.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 26
WOODY'S - Drag Bingo 8:00 p.m.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 30
IBT'S - Fire Party 10:00 p.m. to closing. Kick off the weekend early. Hot Drink Specials. Bartenders in their underwear and DJ Neil spinning the hottest dance and hip hop.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 31
IBT'S - Ice Party 10:00 p.m. to closing. Cool drink specials from their ice luges and "Frozen" shots. Dance inside to techno with DJ Neil and outside to Hip Hop with DJ Mike Lopez.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1
HOWL T THE MOON - Showtime featuring Samora de Huni

VENTURE-N - Labor Day Weekend starts with Bucky's world famous' BLTs and Reuben sandwiches served beginning at 11 a.m. Then prepare your loin cloth and get ready for the annual "Jungle Party" from 9:00 to closing. Contest at Midnight. Wear a loincloth - wear a sarong - be original. Make your own costume! Prizes for men in Best Loincloth and Most Original. Great prizes.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 2
VENTURE-N - Labor Day celebration party continues today when the bar opens at 10:00 a.m. Beer Bust from 3 to 7 and Burger Bust from 5 to 7.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3
IBT'S - Start Labor Day off with Monday Morning Madness. Doors open at 10:00 a.m. with free breakfast Buffet. 11:00 a.m. Viva La Diva Show hosted by Bunny FuFu. 1:00 p.m. Karaoke on the Patio. Dancing after the show and all night long. Free sandwich served after the show!

VENTURE-N - Labor Day Weekend winds up hsesre with the bar opening at 9:00 a.m. and the Patio Bar opening at 3:00 pm. Labor Day BBQ (eat in only) from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8
HOWL AT THE MOON - NCC Pageant Show hosted by Amanda Nicole.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9
THE BIZ - DJ Hill will be playing from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. $2.00 Cover and drink specialss - $2 Fuzzy Navels; $3 margaritas; $4 Long Islands. Bring in the ladies for a great afternoon treat ... It's gonna be Lucious. Tucson's only T-Dance for the ladies.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15
HOWL T THE MOON - Elias de Noche Show.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22
THE BIZ - Masquerade Ball begins at 9:00 p.m.. More details later!

HOWL AT THE MOON - September Birthday Bash.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29
HOWL AT THE MOON - Miss USA at Large Benefit Show

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6
HOWL AT THE MOON - Show featuring Jessica Devereaux.

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.

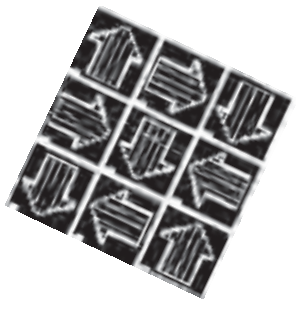
LGBT SUPPORT GROUP FOR VICTIM/SURVIVORS OF Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Hate Crimes, Bias Acts, Harassment. Call Lori at Wingspan, 624-1779, ext. 20. Services are free.

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.

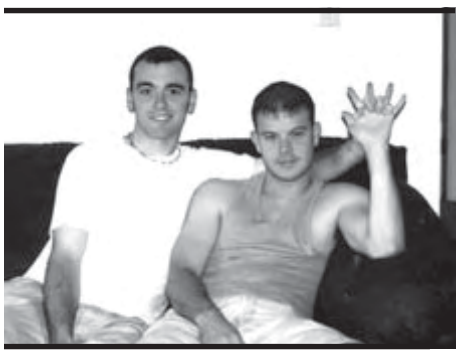
MEN'S KINK DISCUSSION GROUP (Open to all who identify as male and are 18 or older) meets 2nd Tuesday of the month, 7:00 p.m. at Desert Dominion, 3843 E. 37th Street, Tucson, AZ. (Map available at www.desertdominion,org) For those who are kinky or just curious. No fee, contributions are appreciated, but 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.



Settlement Reached In Grave Site Battle



Kevin-Douglas Olive (Right) reached a settlement Aug. 10 with the parents of his late partner, Russell Groff (Left),who sought to move the body to a family plot. The settlement ended a legal battle that lasted two years.

BALTIMORE, Maryland - A Gay Baltimore man has won a legal battle to keep his late partner's remains buried in the Tennessee grave the two men chose, reported the Washington Blade. Kevin-Douglas Olive reached a settlement Aug. 10 with the parents of his late partner, Russell Groff, who sought to move the body to a family plot. The settlement ended a legal battle that lasted two years.

"It's been pretty traumatic," Olive said. "I'm just ready to put it all behind me and see what comes next." The settlement, which ends all attempts by Lowell and Carolyn Groff to overturn their son's will, stipulates that a large gravestone intended to also accommodated Olive be replaced by separate headstones at each grave. Olive said he'd hoped to avoid replacing the gravestone, but was willing to make that concession to end the case. "If they will leave me alone and let this case go," he said, "I will get that headstone changed."

Lowell and Carolyn Groff, who had sought to move Russell's body to a family cemetery, argued in court that their 26-year-old son didn't know what he was doing when he completed his will and burial instructions shortly before his death on Nov. 23, 2004. Russell, who was HIV-positive, died from a staph infection that spread throughout his body. Olive, 35, said Russell was estranged from his parents at the time of his death and completed a will and burial instructions in anticipation of the legal battle.

In a brief interview, Carolyn Groff told the Blade that she and Lowell "continue to love" Russell, and that Olive "is using everything that he can, everyone that he can, to further the homosexual agenda." Carolyn, who lives in Seymour, Tenn., declined to discuss the settlement "because of future ramifications," but did not elaborate. In accordance with the settlement, Mark Scurti, a Gay Baltimore attorney who represented Olive, said his client also must give to Lowell and Carolyn about two dozen of Russell's personal items. "Things such as a karate black belt and a fishing tackle-box that his father had given him," Scurti said. "More sentimental items than materialistic." He said the settlement does not stop Olive from being buried alongside Russell, and makes clear that Russell will remain buried outside Knoxville, Tenn.

"That was a non-negotiable issue for us," Scurti said. "We made sure that the only thing that's going to change is the tombstone." Although the settlement yielded what Scurti called "a good result" for Olive, he noted the case held a lesson for Gay Marylanders. "Make sure that your affairs are in order early," he said. "Don't wait until your partner is ill or something catastrophic happens." Olive agreed. He said that he and Russell erred by waiting until Russell was in the hospital to formalize their legal protections. "There are so many Gay couples running around with no legal documents written up whatsoever," Olive said. "It's stupid. Just stupid. It was stupid on our part." He said Gay Marylanders – unable to acquire the legal protections that marriage or civil unions would afford – must guard themselves through other means. "Get your legal documents in order now, not next week," Olive said. "Call an attorney. And make sure it's an attorney who does it, not some form you've gotten online. Spend the money now, because if you don't spend the money now, you might spend a whole lot more later. A whole lot more."

Scurti said legal costs for the case, charged at about one-third his usual rate, were more than $5,000. He noted those costs would have doubled had the case gone to trial. Olive, who sold his car to help fund the case, received assistance and donations from people across the nation and as far away as Belgium. "For people I don't even know to say, 'Here's $20,'" he said, "it's been really touching." Olive said after the case's bills and loans have been paid, all remaining funds will be given to an undetermined Gay civil rights organization. He noted that Equality Maryland, which is seeking marriage equality in the state for same-sex couples, might be the recipient. Olive said he strongly supports that effort. "It's more than just inheritance," he said. "It will change things. It will change the disrespect that same-gender couples get all the time when we describe ourselves as same-gender couples."

Clock Ticking Ffor Rights Law Foes

SALEM, Oregon (Observer Update) - Groups gathering signatures to overturn two Oregon Gay-rights laws say they are disconnected, frustrated and uncertain whether they can muster enough voter names to qualify for the statewide ballot, reported the Oregonian.

They have less than seven weeks to collect the 55,179 valid signatures needed to refer each of two laws passed by the Legislature to the November 2008 ballot. Chief petitioner Janice Bentson estimates that only 5,000 to 10,000 signatures have arrived at her Salem home. Bentson is part of a Salem-based political action committee called Defense of Marriage and Family Again, which filed papers with the secretary of state to seek a voter referendum. One law creates legal domestic partnerships that give same-sex couples most of the state benefits of marriage. The other bans discrimination against Gays in work, housing and public places such as restaurants. The laws take effect Jan. 1. But if opponents collect enough signatures to refer them to voters, the laws would be suspended until the fall 2008 election.

The Salem petitioners include Marylin Shannon of Brooks, a former Republican state senator, and members of Slavic churches who lobbied against the laws during the Legislature. Other groups also are collecting signatures, but they are working independently, even at odds with one another, said Jack Brown of Grants Pass, chairman of the Constitution Party of Oregon.

"It is a movement without structure. It is like a jellyfish," Brown said. Brown initially filed referendum papers but withdrew them because it appeared he was acting on behalf of the Constitution Party, he said. The party does not have a position on the campaign, he said, though it opposed the bill banning discrimination against Gays.

After Brown pulled out, the Defense of Marriage group stepped in and has since ignored Brown and other southern Oregon signature-gatherers, he said. Brown has about 1,000 signatures, he said, and will deliver them to the Salem group. "I'd like them to know they are thumbing their noses at people who cared about the issue and could work for them and would work for them," he said. Basic Rights Oregon, the state's largest Gay rights group, has noticed that petitioners do not seem to be working together, said spokesman Bryan Boyd. Still, he said, Basic Rights assumes opponents will get the signatures they need and is preparing for battle. "We don't want to fight," he said, "but if we have to, we have to fight very hard."