



Observing Tucson And
The Greater Arizona Community

OBSERVER

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WEEKLY OBSERVER

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Tucsonans Win Statewide Singing Competition



Arizona's Gay Idol, Jason Brock



Runner-Up Veronica Martinez

Representing Tucson nightclub IBT's, Jason Brock was crowned 'Arizona's Gay Idol' in the final round of statewide competition held during Phoenix' Gay Pride "Rainbow Festival" on the weekend of October 6th. Brock won \$3,000 and five hours of recording time.

Veronica Martinez, representing Tucson nightclub Ain't Nobody's Bizness was runner-up. Her prize also was recording studio time.

The competition for the Idol title lasted several weeks. Both performers triumphed over seven other finalists each representing a Phoenix or Tucson nightclub. And both Idols performed at the DeMeester Outdoor Performance Center in Reid Park at the Tucson Festival "Pride In The Desert" last weekend.

Congratulations to Jason and Veronica and thanks for bringing the Karaoke title To Tucson.

Groups Slam 'Deal' On ENDA

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - Deep divisions remain with the LGBT community over how best to proceed with the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, and a Friday (October 12) meeting between Speaker Nancy Pelosi and representatives of several groups appears to have done little to heal the wounds, reported 365Gay.com.

Following the meeting the Human Rights Campaign said a commitment was made to send the stripped down version of bill - with the exclusion of protections for transsexuals or sexual identity - to a committee vote next week with a House floor vote to follow and that Pelosi had given assurances that as soon as there is enough support for amendments adding back in the protections for transsexuals that version would also be presented.

The bill was to have come before the Committee on Education and Labor but was pulled as opposition to the inclusion of transsexuals mounted.

In its original form the bill, known as ENDA, would have provided protections for workers across the country based on sexuality, gender, and perceived gender.

Its sponsor, Rep. Barney

Frank (D-Mass.) one of only two openly Gay members of Congress, removed the protections for transsexuals saying it was the only way to get any portion of the bill passed.

Frank said once the Gay and Lesbian portions of the bill were passed he would work to have transsexuals added. Only the Human Rights Campaign supported the tactic.

Nine other major LGBT groups announced their opposition and by the end of the week the number had grown to almost 300.

The agreement worked out Friday (October 12) between Pelosi and the HRC does little more than reaffirm Rep. Frank's earlier commitment to work for Trans rights once the rest of ENDA is passed.

And it drew the immediate ire of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

"We completely disagree with this proposed strategy - it simply makes no sense," said executive director Matt Foreman in a statement.

"If the goal is moving an ENDA that protects all of us, passing a flawed, Gay-only bill utterly under

Continued on Page Four

IGLHRC Accuses Bush Administration Of Funding African Violent Attacks On Gays And Lesbians

NEW YORK CITY - The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) said Thursday (October 11) that it has uncovered evidence that the Bush administration has funded groups in Uganda that actively promote violence and discrimination against Lesbians and Gay men, 365Gay.com reported. In a letter to U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator Mark Dybul, IGLHRC criticized the funding and asked for assurances that future will not be used to support homophobic organizations anywhere in the world.

The IGLHRC said it began an investigation into the groups following a series of events in Uganda this summer. At an August 16 press conference, Sexual Minorities of Uganda - a coalition of LGBT groups - launched Let us Live in Peace Campaign, calling for understanding and respect of sexual minorities. Homosexuality is illegal in Uganda and is punishable by between 14 years and life imprisonment. Last year, the Ugandan Parliament passed a constitutional amendment making same-sex marriages illegal. The Let us Live in Peace campaign was met with an increase in hate speech by religious groups. The primary instigator of the backlash, said the IGLHRC, was Pastor Martin Ssempe, leader of the Makerere University Community Church and spokesman for the Interfaith Family Culture Coalition Against Homosexuality in Uganda.

Ssempe organized an August 21 rally in Kampala at which more than one hundred demonstrators, including several government officials, demanded official action against LGBT people. Ssempe has called homosexuality, "a criminal act against the laws of nature," and has said that, "there should be no rights granted to homosexuals in this country." According to the U.S. Embassy in Uganda's website, Makerere University Community Church received a grant under a program designed to provide funds for AIDS prevention, treatment and care programs in Africa. Ssempe and his coalition, which includes Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, and Evangelicals, have threatened the safety of Ugandan LGBT rights activists by posting their names, photos and addresses on a website.

With support from conservative organizations such as Family Watch International in the United States, Ssempe has launched attacks not only on homosexuals but on Uganda's women's rights and HIV activists as well, the IGLHRC said. "The U.S. government's funding is meant to alleviate suffering and support effective AIDS initiatives in Africa, not to further blame and stigmatize already marginalized groups," said IGLHRC Executive Director Paula Eitelbrick. IGLHRC said it provided Ambassador Dybul with evidence of grants made by

the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to the Makerere University Community Church.

The IGLHRC also said it found that the Uganda Muslim Tabligh Women's Desk has also received a grant under the President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) to implement HIV programs in Masaka District. Recently, Muslim Tabligh youth announced a plan to form an 'Anti-Gay Squad' to fight homosexuality in Uganda. On 28 August 2007, Sheikh Multah Bukonya, a senior cleric in the Tabligh Organization, was quoted during prayers at Noor Mosque in Kampala as saying that his followers are "ready to act swiftly and form this squad that will wipe out all abnormal practices like homosexuality in our society." PEPFAR is a \$15 billion Bush administration fund to fight AIDS in Africa.

According to IGLHRC's 2007 report, "Off the Map: How HIV/AIDS Programming is Failing Same-Sex Practicing People in Africa," less than U.S. \$1 million targets HIV programs for men who have sex with men in Africa, despite strong evidence that HIV has a disproportionate impact on LGBT communities throughout the continent. According to IGLHRC, the complicated PEPFAR sub-granting process lacks transparency and makes it difficult to track the funding. "What we do know, is that few PEPFAR dollars are being used to fight HIV among Gay men in Africa," said Cary Alan Johnson, IGLHRC Senior Specialist for Africa. "Not only have African men who have sex with men been largely ignored with regard to HIV prevention services, but avowedly homophobic organizations are receiving funding for programs that will only further stigmatize homosexuality. This has to stop."

IGLHRC has called for increased transparency in the distribution of U.S. government HIV/AIDS funding internationally and a commitment by U.S. administrators that organizations espousing hate speech will not be funded.

Informing The Community



UPDATE

LGBT Travel And Tourism On Equality Radio

PHOENIX (Observer Update) - Saturday's at 10:00 a.m. (Arizona Time), Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgendered (LGBT) people, as well as their friends and families can tune into Equality Arizona Radio.

Equality Arizona Radio is designed to provide the listener with insights into the LGBT experience in Arizona. Their 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 living in Arizona.

This week's show features travel and tourism. Guests will include the Tempe Convention & Visitor's Bureau, a local travel agency who is a member of the International Gay Lesbian Travel Association and other guests from the LGBT travel community. We will discuss the health of the LGBT travel industry both as inbound and outbound travel. Be sure to listen in to hear "little tidbits and helpful hints" about LGBT travel.

Equality Arizona radio is broadcast on KPHX 1480 AM in the Phoenix area on can be heard online at aaphx.com or novamradio.com. Previous broadcasts are online at equalityarizona.org for those who may have missed previous airings.

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

Concerns Of Aging Forum Oct. 20

TUCSON - Senior Pride will be sponsoring a forum on the Concerns of Aging, Saturday, October 20, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th Street.

Topics to include estate planning, Medicare & health insurance, end of life planning -necessary conversations for documenting your wishes, and financial advising. The panel is comprised of Timothy A. Olcott, attorney, Lydia H. Baker, Pima Council on Aging, Dan Rhodes, Bring Funeral Home, and Suzanne Seay,

independent financial advisor/coach.

For more information contact Gary, glart13@aol.com, (520) 487-0176. For reservations contact Penelope, pstarr@wingspan.org, (520) 624-1779 x22. Seating is limited. Light refreshments will be served.

Lesbian Looks Closing Night Oct. 19

TUCSON (Observer Update) - The Lesbian Looks Film Series concludes its 15th season of free screenings on Friday, October 19, 7:30 p.m. at the U of A Modern Languages Auditorium with Itty Bitty Titty Committee (Jamie Babbitt, 2007)

The wildly entertaining story of a group of radical feminist punk activists called Clits in Action, or C(I)A. Shy Anna (Melonie Diaz), dumped by her girlfriend and rejected from college, still lives with her parents, and works at a plastic surgery clinic. Fate brings her in contact with Sadie (Nicole Vicius), who's demonstrating against the patriarchy by spraypainting Anna's office windows. With an undeniable attraction to this sexy, rebel girl, Anna soon joins the ranks of C(i)A and starts her rollercoaster ride from timid office girl to punk-feminist anarchist.

"A rockin' love song to the heady rush of sex, freedom and rebellion that happens when an everyday girl discovers her own strength and the righteous indignation needed to take action and change the world." - Cindy M. Emch, Frameline.

For more information, go online to: lgbcom.web.arizona.edu/Lesbianlooks/lobbydoor.html.

LGBT Jewish Inclusion Project Sponsors Jay Michaelson As Scholar In Residence, October 21-22

TUCSON - The LGBT Inclusion Project sponsors these three events with Jay Michaelson in October:

Sunday October 21, 8:00 p.m., a free lecture at Temple-Emanu-El, 225 N. Country Club, God in Your Body: Kabbalah, Mindful-

ness and Embodied Spiritual Practice Sponsored by Randy Greenberg and Generational Wealth Strategies

Monday October 22. Lunch and Learn book signing at the Jewish Community Center, 3800 E. River Road. God in Your Body: Kabbalah, Mindfulness and Embodied Spiritual Practice The Enlightenment of the Body in Jewish Tradition

Monday October 22, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Temple Emanu-El's Adult Education Academy Exploring Jewish Text through the Prism of Sexual and Gender Diversity. This is the final class in a series of four. To sign up for the course call Temple Emanu-El at (520) 327-4501. Cost of attending only this night's lecture will be \$10 at the door.

Beyond Leviticus: Readings of the Bible and Kabbalah For the last several years many in the Jewish community have been obsessed with two verses in Leviticus, assuming that it's all Judaism has to say about homosexuality. Not true! We will look at biblical narrative, Kabbalah, and Jewish poetry to gain a much more balanced view of Judaism and sexual diversity.

Sponsored by The Jewish Inclusion Project Funded by a Compelling Needs grant from the Jewish Federation of Southern Arizona. Call Jenny for more info, (520) 577-9393 or E-mail: lgbtinfo@jfsa.org.

Special Afternoon Of Music To Benefit TIHAN Nov. 11

November 11 Special Afternoon of Music to Benefit TIHAN

Join us for an afternoon of special music to support TIHAN! We are proud to announce that our annual Musical Potpourri concert this year will feature the Parisian blues of local favorite **Marianne Dissard** (a French songstress), the gospel sounds of the **Tucson Arizona Mass Choir**, and the rich diversity of **Desert Voices** and **Reveille**. This concert promises to be entertaining and fun, and a significant way to raise funds to support TIHAN's programs and services! This Sunday afternoon of music takes place on November 11 at 3pm. Tickets are \$20 (includes an hors d'oeuvres reception afterwards) and all proceeds benefit TIHAN (and all funds will be matched dollar-for-dollar by our friends at Thrivent Financial for Lutherans!). If you can't attend but want to give the gift of music to one of TIHAN's CarePartners living with HIV, purchase and donate a ticket. Tickets are on sale now by calling 299-6647, and you can order your tickets by credit card. Thanks to our host and event sponsor: Lutheran Church of the Foothills.

So. AZ Stonewall Democrats Meeting Oct. 29

TUCSON - On Monday, October 29, 6:30 p.m., the Southern Arizona Chapter of the Stonewall Democrats (SASD) will be holding their monthly meeting.

SASD is an organization for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Democrats and supporters. This group serves to inform and educate persons within the GLBT community regarding elected officials, candidates, and issues of interest to that community. SASDThey also provide information and education to elected officials, candidates, and others regarding LGBT issues.

For more information, either E-mail: sasdtucson@yahoo.com or call Maurice Grossman, (520) 323-2293.

Calling for friendly and reliable people to join SAAF's Client Services Team as volunteer Peer Counselors.



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Informing the Community
The Observer



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Dear Abby Says She's For Same-Sex Marriage



NEW YORK CITY - For years rumblings have surfaced on the Internet, conjecture about her casual references to "sexual orientation" and "respect," reported advocate.com. Now Dear Abby is ready to say it flatly: She supports same-sex marriage.

"I believe if two people want to commit to each other, God bless 'em," the syndicated advice columnist told the Associated Press. "That is the highest form of commitment, for heaven's sake." What Jeanne Phillips, a.k.a. Abigail Van Buren, finds offensive and misguided are homophobic jokes, phrases like "That's so Gay," and parents who reject or try to reform their children when they come out of the closet.

Her views are the reason she's being honored by Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, a national advocacy group that provides support for Gay people and their families. The original Abby, Phillips's 89-year-old mother, Pauline, helped put PFLAG on the map in 1984 when she first referred a distraught parent to the organization.

Avenue Q, Oct. 16-21

TUCSON (Observer Update) - AVENUE Q, the smash-hit musical about trying to make it in New York with big dreams and a tiny bank account, makes its Arizona debut in Tucson, with eight performances only at the Tucson Music Hall, from October 16-21.

AVENUE Q is the creation of a host of talented young theatre artists, 30-somethings all. Featuring a Tony Award-winning Score and Book, The New York Times hailed it as "a breakthrough musical of a very different stripe. Savvy, sassy and delicious!" and Entertainment Weekly claimed it was "one of the funniest shows you're ever likely to see!" You don't want to miss this Tony award-winning best musical!

AVENUE Q features a cast of people and puppets who tell their story in a smart, risqué and downright entertaining way.

It's the story of Princeton, a bright-eyed college grad who comes to New York City with big dreams and a tiny bank account. He soon discovers that the only neighborhood in his price range is Avenue Q; still, the neighbors seem nice. There's Brian the out-of-work comedian and his therapist fiancée Christmas Eve; Nicky the good-hearted slacker and his roommate Rod - a Republican investment banker who seems to have some sort of secret; an Internet addict called Trekkie Monster; and a very cute kindergarten teaching assistant named Kate Monster. Together, Princeton and his newfound friends struggle to find jobs, dates, and their ever-elusive purpose in life.

For more information on the national tour of AVENUE Q, visit avenueq.com. For more information on Broadway in Tucson, visit broadwayintucson.com. Discounts are also available for any group sale of ten or more tickets. Please call (520) 903-BWAY (2929) for more information or to arrange a group order.

Tucson's GLBT Chamber Of Commerce

TUCSON (ON) - The Tucson Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered (GLBT) Chamber of Commerce (TGLBTCC) is one of the Tucson metropolitan area's fastest growing chambers - and the only chamber dedicated to the GLBT business community and its allies.

The TGLBTCC, online at tucsonglbtchamber.org, is the second largest chamber of it's kind in Arizona with approximately 155 member companies represented by nearly 200 people. Membership within the chamber provides powerful networking possibilities, one of the most loyal and dedicated consumer niches, various marketing and advertising opportunities, and empowerment found through interaction within Tucson's GLBT and straight allied community.

TGLBTCC's missions is to provide a forum to the GLBT business community and its allies for the purpose of networking, creating increased visibility and strengthening relationships among business community members. For more information, call (520) 615-6436 or E-mail: info@tucsonglbtchamber.org.

Second Oregon Anti-LGBT Vote Measure Fails

PORTLAND, Oregon (Observer Update) - A group seeking to overturn amendments to Oregon's anti-discrimination law that provides protections for the state's LGBT community has failed to collect enough signatures to have the issue placed on the ballot, 365Gay.com reported. It is the second anti-Gay measure in a week to be rejected by the Secretary of State. On

Monday (October 8) a proposed referendum on Oregon's domestic partner law was turned down after it was determined there were not enough signatures.

The Oregon Equality Act amends the state's non-discrimination laws to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in housing, employment, public accommodation, education and public services statewide. It covers Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals and the Transgendered. The Secretary of State's Office said Friday that the groups attempting to repeal the act had collected only 53,875 valid signatures. To force a vote on the law the groups would have needed 55,179 valid signatures.

LGBT rights groups had been fighting for enactment of the change for more than 30 years. "This has been a historic week in Oregon. When these laws are implemented on January 1, 2008, Oregon will become a fairer place for all of our state's citizens to work, live and raise a family," said John Hummel, Executive Director of Basic Rights Oregon. "Most Oregonians believe that no one should be fired from their job, or evicted from their home, or turned away from a restaurant just because they are Gay or Lesbian," Hummel said.

The fight by conservatives to kill both laws, however, is not over. The groups said they intend to file initiatives to repeal the laws. The groups would have until next July to collect about 82,000 signatures. Hummel said anti-Gay activists are out of step with Oregonians. "Most Oregonians supported these laws when they were passed and signed by the Governor, they support the laws now, and they will support them a year from now," Hummel said. "Most Oregonians believe discrimination is wrong."

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Importance Of Straight Allies To LGBT Movement

SANTA CLARA, California - The setting was intimate, the hors d'oeuvres simple and the hostess barefoot, but the house party Gabby Seagrave and LaDonna Silva held for a dozen friends and co-workers was hardly a spontaneous affair, 365Gay.com reported. Over wine and cheese, guests signed a form signaling their support for same-sex marriage.

In the couple's family room, they took a quiz on marriage laws and watched a television commercial that could have been for diamond rings, but asked, "What if you couldn't marry the person you loved?" Such house parties and ad campaigns are just two ways in which Gay rights activists are courting sympathetic heterosexuals. They hope these "straight allies" can help persuade a majority of Americans to back their causes. Bridget Goin, one of the non-Gay party invitees to Silva and Seagrave's party, was moved enough by night's end to pledge \$20 a month to the Gay rights group that helped the domestic partners plan the gathering.

Goin also offered to host a similar reception at her house. "If I have the privilege, maybe I'm the one who has the power to do something about it," said Goin, who is in her second marriage. Though the campaign's messages are often aimed at heterosexuals who have a personal connection with someone who is Gay, the initiatives have a purely practical side. "There are a lot more straight people than LGBT people," said Jody Huckaby, executive director of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. Huckaby said a straight person has a better chance of convincing someone who may be on the fence on an issue like same-sex marriage than a Gay advocate to whom the target of the appeal cannot as easily relate. "It's important that those of us who work for equality realize the decision makers are the neighbors next door who will be voting in the next election, who will be talking in their faith communities about their stances on homosexuality," he said.

Among other efforts to recruit straight allies: PFLAG recently launched a new Web site, endorsed by the advice columnist who writes "Dear Abby," to enlist straight supporters in speaking out against anti-Gay jokes and slurs. Two Texas groups arranged for straight allies to lead overnight vigils in 30 U.S. cities to draw attention to the discrimination faced by Gay men, Lesbians and Transgender people. Hundreds of Gay-Straight Alliance clubs at high schools across the country have scheduled "Ally Weeks" to encourage teachers and students to help make their campuses more welcoming for Gay classmates and colleagues. A Gay rights media watchdog group recently rolled out a series of "Be an Ally & a Friend" public service announcements airing on "Access Hollywood" and featuring straight television actors such as Eric Mabius from "Ugly Betty."

Gay rights is not the first social movement to seek supporters among allies who were once considered adversaries, said David Meyers, a sociologist at the University of California, Irvine. White liberals found a place, though sometimes uneasily, championing civil rights for black Americans during the 1960s. Feminists lobbying for an Equal Rights Amendment eventually welcomed men to their ranks during the 1970s. There is a risk to the strategy - activists may be asked to put some goals on the back burner while working with outsiders, Meyers said. An example of that is playing out right now in Congress, where Democratic lawmakers are trying to enact a law that would protect Gays and Lesbians from job discrimination, but exclude Transgender people. "It's the way you win some stuff," Meyers said. "In every successful movement in the past, there was always important stuff they

didn't win."

Sparking conversations is the goal of house parties like the one hosted by Silva, a graduate student, and Seagrave, a police sergeant, as part of the "Let California Ring" campaign. Equality California, the state's largest Gay rights lobbying group, has come up with a list of talking points for supporters who are unsure how to broach the topic of Gay marriage. "It doesn't matter if it's through the courts, the ballot or the Legislature, it's the public understanding of the issue that is the key to being successful in any attempt to have equality," Executive Director Geoffrey Kors said.

Groups Slam 'Deal' On ENDA

Continued from Page One

mines that objective. The notion that the House of Representatives will be willing to revisit a different ENDA before the end of the calendar year - when it has been unwilling or unable to take up a single pro-Gay matter over the last 34 years - is more than implausible."

Mara Keisling, the executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, also attended the meeting with Pelosi but declined to sign on to the agreement reached with the HRC.

No matter which version of ENDA is passed by Congress it is likely to be met with opposition at the White House.

The Bush administration has been silent on the legislation, but on another LGBT rights bill - the Matthew Shepard Hate Crime Act - it has threatened a veto.

That measure has passed the House. The Senate version passed as an amendment to a military spending bill. The two versions are now in conference.

The feuding over ENDA comes at a difficult time for Democrats heading into the 2008 election where it is counting on the LGBT vote, and has divided community leaders more deeply than any issue in more than a decade.



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Observer Recommendations For Tucson General Election



Mayor - Bob Walkup

With the pending 2008 Presidential Primary campaign upon people which could result in voting beginning sometime late in December 2007, actual scheduled elections for other political offices may become an afterthought.

This should not be the case since decisions made by governmental entities, regardless of stature, will affect everyone so the importance of the individual serving in these posts is paramount.

On Tuesday, November 6, the City of Tucson will conduct their general election for Mayor and three Council seats for Ward 1, Ward 2 and Ward 4, as well as decide the fate of two ballot propositions.

As of press time, early voting for this election has commenced with Friday, October 26 being the last day to submit a request for a mail-in ballot if one wishes to cast their vote in this manner.

After reviewing statements, voting records, past actions of note and endorsements (including Equality Arizona the statewide LGBT rights organization), the Observer is making the following recommendations for the four contests and two ballot propositions in the upcoming Tucson General Election.

- Mayor - Bob Walkup.
- Ward 1 City Council - Regina Romero.
- Ward 2 City Council - Rodney Glassman.
- Ward 4 City Council - Shirley Scott.
- Proposition 100 - Mayor and Council Pay Raise - No.
- Proposition 200 - Water and Environmental Services - No.

Tucson's Mayor and Council election will take place Tuesday, November 6. For more information or to request an early ballot, either call (520) 791-4213 or go online to tucsonaz.gov/clerks/ballotrequest.php.

Ending the violence.

Wingspan launches the Anti-Violence Project – a community initiative to assist lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender victims of discrimination, domestic violence, sexual assault and hate crimes. Call the Anti-Violence Project 24-Hour Crisis Line at 624-0348, or toll-free 1-800-553-9387.



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

www.wingspan.org



Ward 1 City Council - Regina Romero



Ward 2 City Council - Rodney Glassman



Ward 4 - City Council Shirley Scott




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19th Annual AIDSWALK Held

TUCSON (Observer Update) - On Sunday, October 14, young, old, straight and LGBT people gathered at the University of Arizona Mall for the nineteenth time.

Some were there for friends they lost, others showed for family or loved ones who had passed while many present took part to help those living with or affected by HIV/AIDS to make a difference.

According to organizers of the 2007 AIDSWALK, more than 5,500 were taking part in the annual event to raise proceeds for the services, programs and educational outreach provided by the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation (SAAF).

A total of 1,746 cases of AIDS and 1,045 cases of HIV in Pima County since statistics were first recorded.

More than 40 million people who are infected worldwide, and there have been 35 million deaths related to HIV and AIDS.

In the United States, someone is infected approximately every 13 minutes, showing the need for service organizations such as SAAF.

Services and inspirational songs at the AIDSWALK were provided by the Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Action Network.

Twelve panels from the National AIDS Quilt were on display for the event including a quilt made for actor Rock Hudson.

Tucson's AIDS Memorial Quilt was featured with 13 panels, remembering those who lost their battle to this dreaded disease.

When the quilts were dis-

played at the AIDSWALK, they were opened and unfolded in a certain way, following guidelines to show respect for those who passed and for the makers of the respective panels.

Two courses, a ten kilometer walk and a five kilometer walk were offered for the participants in the AIDSWALK, marking its second year to be held at the University of Arizona campus.

In addition to the walk, various groups and vendors were present as well, including Toom Much Information, who provided entertainment for those taking part.

AIDSWALK organizers, in interviews, said to expect this year's event to equal or surpass the 2006 total of \$230,000 raised.

Walkers may have crossed the proverbial finish line on Sunday, October 14, people still send in money for the event, raising between \$6,000 to \$10,000 for the fund raiser.

If one wants to contribute to the event, make checks payable to "SAAF" and mail them to SAAF, 375 S. Euclid Avenue, Tucson Arizona, 85719-6644.

People can contribute online to the event by going to iwhome.com/saaf/donate.html.

AIDSWALK was first held in 1988 and since then thousands of community supporters, business leaders, friends and families have supported the local walk and run. It is SAAF's largest annual fundraising event generating more than \$2,359,500 over the years in the local fight against HIV/AIDS and providing countless community awareness and education opportunities.

After Vetoing G/L Marriage Bill, Schwarzenegger Signs Four Other LGBT Laws

SACRAMENTO, California (Observer Update) - Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has signed legislation that will require the Department of Education to monitor the way schools adhere to the state's anti-bias laws and specifically mandates the department to ensure the protection of LGBT students, 365Gay.com reported.

It was one of four new LGBT-positive bills signed by the governor after vetoing legislation that would have allowed Gay and Lesbian couples in the state to marry. "Despite his veto of the marriage legislation, the six bills that were signed will improve the lives of millions of LGBT Californians and their families," said Equality California Executive Director Geoff Kors.

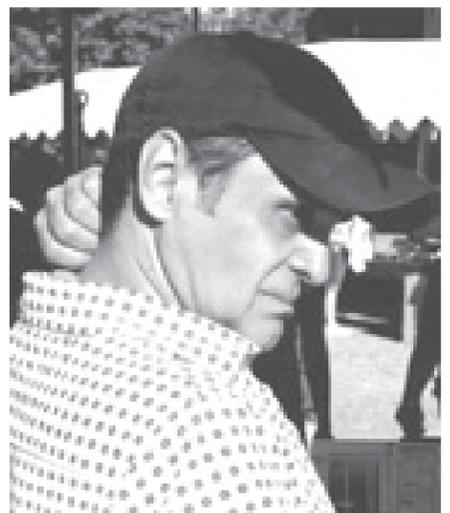
The Safe Place to Learn Act applies to publicly-funded institutions and activities, including alternative and charter schools, postsecondary institutions, instructional materials and financial aid programs. It was co-sponsored by Equality California and Asian Americans for Civil Rights and Equality. Schwarzenegger also signed the Student Civil Rights Act and the Safe Place to Learn Act which protects students from harassment and bullying in public schools by making sure teachers and school administrators fully understand their responsibilities to protect youth.

The measures are similar to legislation rejected last year by Schwarzenegger who at the time said it was vague and potentially confusing and was redundant because

California's education code already prohibits discrimination in schools. A recent survey of California students found that 91 percent had heard disparaging remarks about other students based on sexuality. Similar studies have found that bullied Gay students are more likely to suffer lower grades or drop out of school.

The governor also signed a bill that bans discrimination in government services based on sexual orientation and gender identity. And he signed legislation that provides safeguards to protect LGBT youth from abuse and mistreatment in California's Department of Juvenile Justice facilities.

While Equality California and other LGBT rights groups praised the governor for signing the schools measure they are planning demonstrations tonight across the state to show their anger at the marriage bill veto. "While we are very pleased the governor signed the majority of EQCA's bills this year, we are extremely disappointed that he vetoed one of the most important bills the Legislature sent him," said Kors.



Study Seeks Gay Gene

CHICAGO (Observer Update) - Julio and Mauricio Cabrera are Gay brothers who are convinced their sexual orientation is as deeply rooted as their Mexican ancestry, reported the Associated Press on 365Gay.com. They are among 1,000 pairs of Gay brothers taking part in the largest study to date seeking genes that may influence whether people are Gay. The Cabreras hope the findings will help silence critics who say homosexuality is an immoral choice.

If fresh evidence is found suggesting genes are involved, perhaps homosexuality will be viewed as no different than other genetic traits like height and hair color, said Julio, a student at DePaul University in Chicago. Adds his brother, "I think it would help a lot of folks understand us better." The federally funded study, led by Chicago area researchers, will rely on blood or saliva samples to help scientists search for genetic clues to the origins of homosexuality. Parents and straight brothers also are being recruited.

While initial results aren't expected until next year - and won't provide a final answer - skeptics are already attacking the methods and disputing the presumed results. Previous studies have shown that sexual orientation tends to cluster in families, though that doesn't prove genetics is involved. Extended families may share similar child-rearing practices, religion and other beliefs that could also influence sexual orientation.

Research involving identical twins, often used to study genetics since they share the same DNA, has had mixed results. One widely cited study in the 1990s found that if one member of a pair of identical twins was Gay, the other had a 52 percent chance of being Gay. In contrast, the result for pairs of non-twin brothers, was 9 percent. A 2000 study of Australian identical twins found a much lower chance. Dr. Alan Sanders of Evanston Northwestern Healthcare Research Institute, the lead researcher of the new study, said he suspects there isn't one so-called "Gay gene." It is more likely there are several genes that interact with nongenetic factors, including psychological and social influences, to determine sexual orientation, said Sanders, a psychiatrist. Still, he said, "If there's one gene that makes a sizable contribution, we have a pretty good chance" of finding it.

Many Gays fear that if Gay genes are identified, it could result in discrimination, prenatal testing and even abortions to eliminate homosexuals, said Joel Ginsberg of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association. However, he added, "If we confirm that sexual orientation is an immutable characteristic, we are much more likely to get the courts to rule against discrimination." There is

less research on Lesbians, Sanders said, although some studies suggest that male and female sexual orientation may have different genetic influences. His new research is an attempt to duplicate and expand on a study published in 1993 involving 40 pairs of Gay brothers. That hotly debated study, wrongly touted as locating "the Gay gene," found that Gay brothers shared genetic markers in a region on the X chromosome, which men inherit from their mothers. That implies that any genes influencing sexual orientation lie somewhere in that region.

Previous attempts to duplicate those results failed. But Sanders said that with so many participants, his study has a better chance of finding the same markers and perhaps others on different chromosomes. If these markers appear in Gay brothers but not their straight brothers or parents, that would suggest a link to sexual orientation. The study is designed to find genetic markers, not to explain any genetic role in behavior. And Sanders said even if he finds no evidence, that won't mean genetics play no role; it may simply mean that individual genes have a smaller effect.

Skeptics include Stanton Jones, a psychology professor and provost at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Ill. An evangelical Christian, Jones last month announced results of a study he co-authored that says it's possible for Gays to "convert" - changing their sexual orientation without harm. Jones said his results suggest biology plays only a minor role in sexual orientation, and that researchers seeking genetic clues generally have a pro-Gay agenda that will produce biased results.

Sanders disputed that criticism. "We do not have a predetermined point we are trying to prove," he said. "We are trying to pry some of nature's secrets loose with respect to a fundamental human trait."

Jones acknowledged that he's not a neutral observer. His study involved 98 Gays "seeking help" from Exodus International, a Christian group that believes homosexuals can become straight through prayer and counseling. Exodus International funded Jones' study. The group's president, Alan Chambers, said he is a former homosexual who went straight and believes homosexuality is morally wrong. Even if research ultimately shows that genetics play a bigger role, it "will never be something that forces people to behave in a certain way," Chambers said. "We all have the freedom to choose."

The Cabrera brothers grew up in Mexico in a culture where "being Gay was an embarrassment," especially for their father, said Mauricio, 41, a car dealership employee from Olathe, Kan. They had cousins who were Gay, but Mauricio said he still felt he had to hide his sexual orientation and he struggled with his "double life." Julio said having

an older brother who was Gay made it easier for him to accept his sexuality.

Jim Larkin, 54, a Gay journalist in Flint, Mich., said the genetics study is a move in the right direction. Given the difficulties of being Gay in a predominantly straight society, homosexuality "is not a choice someone would make in life," said Larkin, who is

not a study participant. He had two brothers who were Gay. One died from AIDS; the other committed suicide. Larkin said he didn't come out until he was 26. "I fought and I prayed and I went to Mass and I said the rosary," Larkin said. "I moved away from everybody I knew ... thinking maybe this will cause the feelings to subside. It doesn't."

BUZZ BRIEFS

QUEBEC CITY (Observer Update) - Gay former Parti Quebecois leader Andre Boisclair announced his departure from politics today. Boisclair will give up his seat as MNA for Pointe-aux-Trembles on Nov. 15 - two years to the date that he assumed his duties as PQ leader. Boisclair, 41, informed Pauline Marois of his decision on Sunday afternoon saying it was time to take on new challenges such as the development of Quebec's economic sustainability. The openly Gay Boisclair raised questions about his judgment and maturity when he appeared in a parody of "Brokeback Mountain" featuring actors wearing the masks of Prime Minister Stephen Harper and U.S. President George Bush. . . .

LONDON - Sir Paul McCartney said in an interview published in the Guardian that Beatles bandmate John Lennon wasn't Gay. "There was an element of Satyricon, although that overstates the case a bit," said McCartney. "But there were certainly some elements that you wouldn't talk about in the newspapers. Privately, I could tell a tale or two [laughs]. The funny thing is when later the rumor came out that John was Gay, I said: 'I don't think so.' I mean, I don't know what he did when he went to New York, but certainly not in any of my experiences. We used to sleep together, top and tail it, you know. I always used to say: 'Come on, I would have spotted something here.' But what I spotted was completely the opposite. It was just chicks, chicks, chicks."

CARACAS, Venezuela - A Venezuelan legislative committee voted to protect Gay rights in a expansion of President Hugo Chavez's plan to rewrite the country's constitution. Under the proposed changes, discrimination based on sexual orientation would be formally outlawed in the constitution, according to a statement on the National Assembly's Web site. The Chavez-controlled National Assembly is likely trying to tap increased support for the president's socialist "Bolivarian revolution" among younger Venezuelans, said Riordan Roett, head of Latin American Studies at Johns Hopkins'

School of Advanced International Studies in Washington. . . .

SAN FRANCISCO (Observer Update) - PlanetOut Inc., a media company and entertainment targeting the Gay and Lesbian market, said Thursday it will to sell its RSVP Vacations unit to Atlantis Events. Atlantis Events Inc. specializes in gay and lesbian cruises and vacations, as does RSVP Vacations. Atlantis will retain the RSVP brand, the company said. Financial terms were undisclosed. The deal is set to close on or about Oct. 24. PlanetOut said the move helps simplify its business model and make advertising revenue its core driver. . . .

OCEAN COUNTY, New Jersey (Observer Update) - Freeheld, the documentary film about Lieutenant Laurel Hester's simultaneous struggle against terminal lung cancer and Ocean County's freeholders, has made the 80th Annual Academy Awards shortlist for Best Documentary Short Subject. Of the 8 on the shortlist, between three and 5 will be nominated for an Oscar this January. The film had previously won a Special Jury prize at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival. Laurel served Ocean County as a police detective, but when she found out that she had lung cancer, the government she served for 25 years turned its back on her. The film depicts the last year of Laurel's life and her fight for justice and the right to pass on her pension to her partner, Stacie Andree, who would have otherwise lost their home.



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EDITORIAL

TAKING PRIDE !!!

Thousands of people, from Tucson and points north, south, east and west, converged on the DeMeester Outdoor Performance Center Saturday, October 13 for a festival to mark Pride in the Desert.

Prior to the festival, the annual Pride Parade took part, starting from the corner of Country Club and Manchester (one block south of Broadway) and proceeded to the Center as a precursor to the Festival.

Observer owner and publisher, Bob Ellis, was honored as the Grand Marshall for the Parade.

Ellis, along with his longtime partner, artist Gary Clark, were founding members of Tucson Pride (known then as the Tucson Lesbian Gay Alliance).

Both Ellis and Clark, as well as other members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community staged this first event, the Pride Picnic, in Tucson, in Himmel Park in June 1977, to mark Pride and to commemorate the Stonewall Riots in New York in 1969 and the birth of the modern LGBT rights movement.

In years following the first Picnic, the LGBT family grew as others came out and proud, new causes were faced, discussed and protested about, community groups arose and HIV/AIDS began its deadly trek.

With all that, the message and meaning of the event never changed, "we are people and citizens of this country and all entitled to the same rights as others."

As time passed, other LGBT family members got involved with the event and its was moved to October, during the week coinciding with National Coming Out Day, an internationally-observed civil awareness day for coming out and discussion about LGBT issues, observed on October 11.

Organizers of the Tucson event also said that the weather in the Fall would let more people come out to the event. Others protested about the loss of significance since the Picnic marked the birth of the LGBT rights movement.

Years have passed since this transition and the October event has grown, now with entertainment, more vendors with items vying for the LGBT dollar, food choices, community groups and businesses.

As the event, known now as Pride in the Desert, has evolved, the situation and circumstances have changed, with increased fees for permits and to rent the space and items needed to put on a festival such as this.

Some say it has become more expensive while others state the purpose and the intent have been blurred. Perhaps or maybe not but remember this is America and everyone is entitled to their opinion.

Though the LGBT community of Tucson and Southern Arizona should not just take one day for Pride but instead take more time since so much has been accomplished.

This year is the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the City of Tucson Human Relations

Ordinance, protecting the rights of LGBT citizens in employment, housing and public accommodations.

In 1988, then Tucson Mayor, Tom Volgy, issued the first Pride Proclamation. This proclamation started out as proclaiming "anti-discrimination week" and evolved over the years to "LGBT Pride."

During the same year, Wing-span, Tucson and Southern Arizona's LGBT Community Center was formed.

Ward V City Councilmember Steve Leal defeated the incumbent, homophobic Republican Roy Laos, thanks to the efforts of the Lambda Democratic Caucus, in 1989.

In the 1980's Tucson's LGBT community stepped up to help those living with and those affected by HIV/AIDS with fund raisers and the formation of three AIDS Service Organizations, Tucson AIDS Project, Shanti Foundation and the People With AIDS Coalition - Tucson (PACT For Life). The three organizations subsequently merged to form the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation.

During the HIV/AIDS crisis, the City of Tucson in 1991, became one of the first cities in Arizona to give funding to local AIDS Service Organizations.

At the 1992 Democratic Convention, Arizona had the highest percentage of openly LGBT delegates.

Tucson, in 1995, became the first city in the state to have a hate crimes ordinance, with full criminal penalties on the books.

Then Member of Congress from Arizona, Republican Representative Jim Kolbe announced in 1996 that he was Gay.

Lesbian and Gay relationships were first recognized, when the City of Tucson Mayor and Council and the Pima County Board of Supervisors both voted in 1997 to extend medical and dental benefits to the same-sex domestic partners of their employees.

Tucson's LGBT community in 1999 became an integral part of City Government when the Mayor and Council voted to establish the City of Tucson Commission on GLBT Issues.

In 2003, Tucson's Mayor and Council voted unanimously to create the first domestic partners registry in the state of Arizona.

Karin Uhlich became the first open Lesbian elected to office in 2005 when she defeated the Republican incumbent in the City of Tucson, Ward 3 Council rate.

In 2006, Paula Aboud became the first open Gay or Lesbian from Southern Arizona, to serve in the Arizona Legislature when she was appointed to the Arizona State Senate for District 28. Aboud was subsequently elected to a full term in November.

Also in 2006, Proposition 107, the proposed, state constitutional amendment that would have barred governmental and legal recognition of same-sex marriages, civil unions and domestic partners was defeated at the ballot box, making Arizona the first state (in 28) to do so.

These are just some of the accomplishments Tucson's LGBT community can note, mark and be proud of, so one day does not Pride make.

Insurance & Financial Services Representative



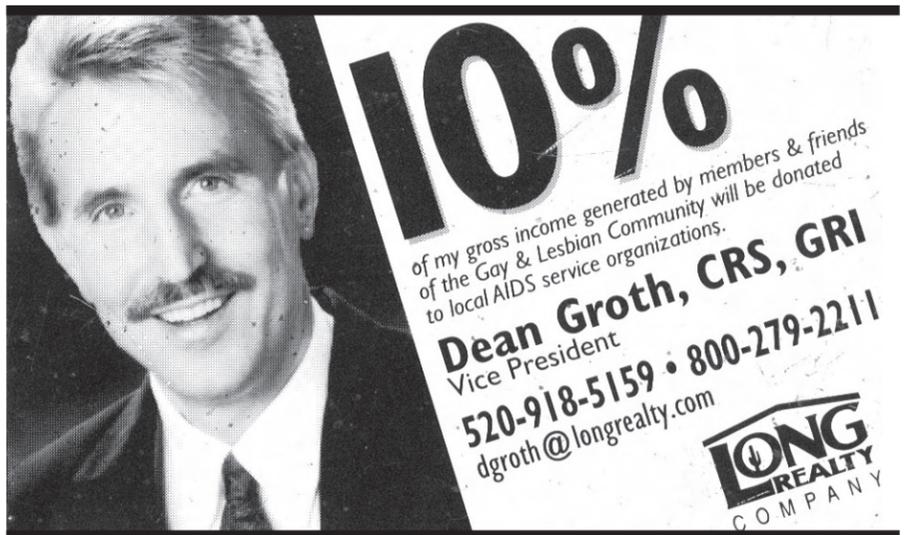
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EDITOR:

Tucson's Gay pride gathering, once a place for the LGBT community and its supporters to gather together has become something else altogether. When started in the late seventies it was held on the north side of Himmel Park and was open to all people wanting to stand with our community. In the first years it was more of a picnic where people could embrace our community and enjoy an afternoon of out and open fun and camaraderie.

This year's event was a gathering of people with fifteen dollars to blow just to get in the door. I watched as person after person turned away and walked back to their cars grumbling about the cost to enter. I cannot imagine why or how our community celebration has become this expensive private party.

Organizers seem to have lost sight of the purpose of the gathering and instead of seeing this as an opportunity to gather in solidarity it has become a way to make big bucks. So now there are many Tucsonans who are out, proud and feeling rather snubbed by the very community who once embraced them. It seems that Pride in the Desert has dried up and been replaced by bilk the queers in October.

Well at least some of us have memories of a time when the Tucson LGBT community was a proud, open and welcoming group of people.

B.F. O'Connor, Tucson

LGBT COMMUNITY AND FRIENDS:

Where were you Pride morning? The greatest Pride Parade ever in Tucson and no cheering crowds along the way (except near the park). A lot of work went into creating the parade. A great group of organizations and marchers made it the longest and best ever. If San Diego can turn out thousands, why not Tucson? It's an important part of our celebration!

Signed - A Marcher

EDITOR:

I began my career in HIV/AIDS health services as a volunteer 1989, so for me, this is a homecoming of sorts.

I am grateful to be able to be part of a wonderful organization with a primary focus on people infected and affected by this epidemic, where my passion began and continues.

The reputation of the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation is what drew me to accept this challenge. That reputation has obviously been built upon the efforts of a dedicated board, staff, and the incredible generosity of a nurturing and supportive community.

To be in the company of such people is indeed an exciting prospect where we can continue to strive to truly make a difference in so many lives.

Wendell Hicks
Executive Director - Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation

(From January 2000 until September 2007, Wendell had served as Executive Director for Special Health Resources for Texas, a multi-million dollar; 90+ employee AIDS organization.

Hicks had also worked at Wellspring Recovery Center in the roles of Program Manager, HIV Early Prevention Clinical Coordinator, and HIV Services Case Manager.

Previous to being at Wellspring, Wendell was a Substance Abuse Counselor at Sabine Valley Center.

Among Hicks' accomplishments were:

His election to the first chairmanship of the State of Texas Assembly Group East which oversaw planning and distribution of Ryan White, state services and HOPWA funds.

Creating and implementing a Texas state-wide program that provided chemical dependency treatment and medical care to clients in need. Helped to create and implement the first "Promotora" project, a dental program for people living with HIV/AIDS at Texas A & M and Baylor Dental School.)

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POLITICS 2007

by Mark R. Kerr

ENDA And Hate Crimes Redux

Proposed legislation to expand the federal hate crimes statutes to include sexual orientation, gender and gender identity are making its way through Congress, and a measure to enact a law protecting the employment rights of workers is beginning its trek through Capitol Hill and making waves.

Current federal law only covers hate crimes committed on another person because of their race, color, religion, or national origin but the proposal (Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act in the U.S. House and the Matthew Shepard Act in the Senate) would expand the list of protected categories to include gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability.

In addition, the proposal would also:

Remove the current prerequisite that the victim is engaging in a federally-protected activity, like voting or going to school;

Give federal authorities greater ability to engage in hate crimes investigations that local authorities choose not to pursue;

Provide federal funding to help State and local agencies pay for investigating and prosecute hate crimes and require the FBI to track statistics on hate crimes against Transgender people.

As previously reported the Senate approved its measure, as an amendment to the 2008 Defense Authorization Bill on September 27. On May 3, the House approved the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act by a vote of 237-180. A Conference Committee will be named to negotiate a compromise measure for both chambers to consider.

Each chamber determines the number of conferees for which the number of conferees need not be equal from each side.

In order to conclude its business, a majority of both House and

Senate delegations to the conference must indicate their approval by signing the conference report.

This proposal, passed by a conference committee, will go directly to the floor of both chambers for a vote, and is not open to further amendment.

So votes in the House and Senate on expanding the federal hate crimes law will be forthcoming and your Senators and Representatives in the red, purple and blue states need to hear from you and vote in favor of the proposed measure.

To let your elected officials know about your support of expanding the current federal statutes on hate crimes, go online to: kintera.org/c.n112leN1JyE/b.2536927/k.5DFF/2007_Hate_Crimes_Legislation_Contact_Your_Senator/siteapps/advocacy/ActionItem.aspx or hrcactioncenter.org/campaign/stophate_video.

Meanwhile, U.S. Representative George Miller, D-CA, the chair of the House Committee on Education and Labor has scheduled H.R. 3685 to be marked up by his committee on Thursday, October 18.

H.R. 3685, as previously reported, would prohibit discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation. Openly Gay U.S. Representative, Barney Frank, D-MA, is the primary sponsor of H.R. 3685, introduced on September 27.

Frank cited a lack of support for the original draft of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) (H.R. 2015) which would prohibit discrimination in employment based on gender identity and sexual orientation, perceived or otherwise.

Controversy arose over this parliamentary procedure from Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender rights groups and activists, resulting in the delay for the hearings of H.R. 3685 and its companion measure, H.R. 3686, that would prohibit discrimination in employment based on gender identity.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi released a statement on this issue, saying that the original ENDA will get fast-tracked if the votes are there.

To let your feelings be known on this issue, supporting the original language of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, contact your local Representative and Senator by going online to: nosubstitutes.org/, ipetitions.com/petition/transgender_inclusive_ENDA/, eqfed.org/domain-open-alerts-all.tcl, and eqfed.org/campaign/nobadendaAZ.

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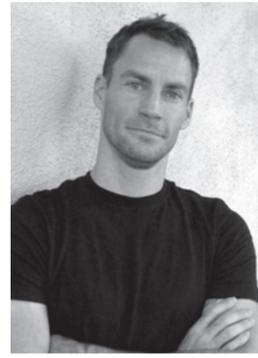
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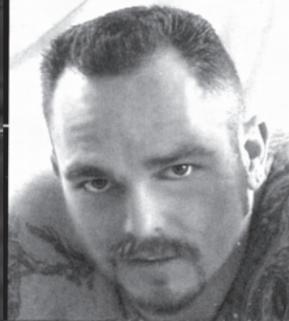
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by U.S. Representative Tammy Baldwin

I have always been a strong supporter of guaranteeing full civil rights for all in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community. My work on this issue will continue until these protections become law.

I strongly support H.R. 2015, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2007. For many years, I have worked closely and tirelessly with people in the LGBT community and our allies to build support for this important legislation. I have personally spoken with well over one hundred Congressional colleagues, explaining the importance of this particular bill, listening to their concerns, and answering their questions. As a result of all of our work, and that of Congressional supporters, 171 Members of Congress have co-sponsored the legislation, authored by Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA), which protects not only Gays, Lesbians and Bisexuals, but also provides equally strong prohibitions against discrimination based on gender identity.

Last weekend, Speaker Pelosi, in remarks before the Human Rights Campaign National Dinner, said: "I strongly believe that Transgender individuals deserve the

COMMENTARY . . .

'Keeping Our Eyes On The Prize'

same rights and the same protections as any other Americans and will work to see that ENDA also protects their rights." I share her sentiments.

Soon, I expect the House Committee on Education and Labor to consider this issue. It is my hope that the Committee will take up H.R. 2015 and pass it. I further hope for, and continue to work towards, passage of legislation by the full House, banning employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

All of the Democratic leaders involved in this discussion are committed to employment non-discrimination protections for Transgender Americans. We share a common goal, but disagree over process and strategy. Yet these procedural and strategic decisions are important because they affect the ultimate question of how and when we can most quickly pass protections that include Transgender people. This is how a democracy works.

I am under no illusions about the challenges of achieving our goal. But, the quest for advancement of civil rights in our nation has never been easy. It is precisely because of the discrimination these groups experience that this legislation is needed.

As is the case with all legislation, there is no guarantee of success. Everyone pressing for this legislation knows that. We know that opponents of workplace protections may offer any number of amendments designed to derail the bill, including, perhaps, an effort to remove protections based upon gender identity. I

believe we must boldly face these challenges.

Perhaps some of these hostile efforts will be successful. That should not deter our work. We must bring the strongest possible bill to the floor of the House for a vote. If our adversaries wish to erode protections in the bill, we must be prepared to face that challenge and make our case.

However, I believe it is a mistake to concede defeat on any issue, before our opponents even raise it.

In recent weeks there have been many efforts which have had the effect of distracting allies from the work at hand.

The House leadership afforded supporters of the fully inclusive bill two weeks to demonstrate that sufficient support exists to withstand worst-case scenario assaults on the bill. My work whipping Members on passage of a fully inclusive bill continues. I hope that the effort will culminate in sufficient evidence that the votes exist to withstand attacks and pass a fully inclusive bill.

Toward that end, I encourage all advocates to focus their efforts on building Congressional support for H.R. 2015. There will be ample time to consider distracting issues later. For now, let us keep our eyes on the prize.

(U.S. Representative Tammy Baldwin is a Democrat from Wisconsin and the first open Lesbian elected to the U.S. House of Representatives).

T-Room Larry Appeals Ruling About His Original Plea; Inducted Into Idaho Hall Of Fame

BOISE, Idaho (Observer Update) - Sen. Larry Craig has filed an appeal to the Minnesota Court of Appeals on Monday (October 15) in his ongoing attempt to withdraw his guilty plea in connection with an arrest in an airport bathroom sex sting.

His appeal was filed at the court in St. Paul less than two weeks after Hennepin County Judge Charles Porter refused to overturn the guilty plea, saying it "was accurate, voluntary and intelligent, and ... supported by the evidence."

Craig, a Republican, pleaded guilty to disorderly conduct in August after he was accused of soliciting sex in a bathroom at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport in June. In interviews following, he claimed the incident was caused by his "wide stance" that he uses. His phrase, as well as "toe tapping," has now become a part of pop culture.

In an interview with a local Boise television station, Craig repeated he will not resign his post in the Senate and said he had the right to pursue his legal options. "It is my right to do what I'm doing," said Craig. "I've already provided for Idaho certainly that Idaho needed - I'm not running for re-election. I'm no longer in the way. I am pursuing my constitutional rights."

Several days prior to that interview, Craig voted against expanding the federal hate crimes law to cover sexual orientation, gender and gender identity.

On Saturday, October 13, he was inducted into the Idaho Hall of Fame.

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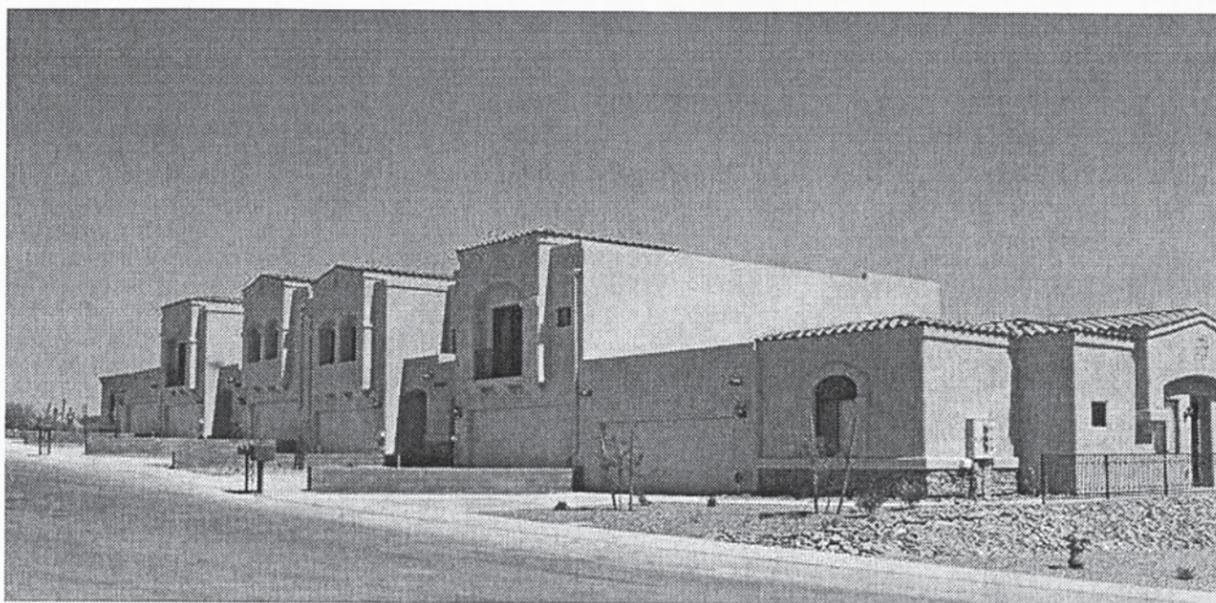
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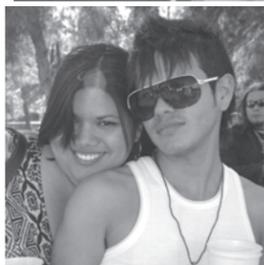
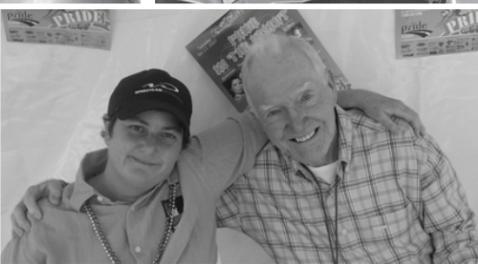
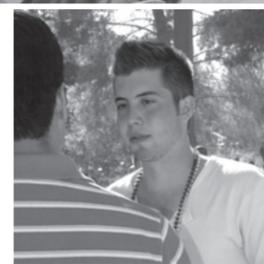
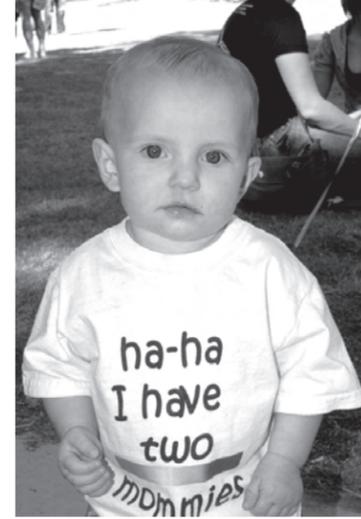
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Unsettling Re-Emergence Of 'Gay Cancer'

SAN FRANCISCO (Observer Update) - Doctors have reported a cluster among Gay men of unusual cases of Kaposi's sarcoma, the cancer-like skin disease whose disfiguring purple lesions were a terrifying signature of a bygone era of the AIDS epidemic, sfgate.com reported.

All 15 patients under treatment for the condition are long-term survivors of HIV whose infections are firmly under control with antiviral drugs. So far, none of them appears to be in any danger. The new cases of Kaposi's sarcoma have not been aggressive, invasive or lethal - the way the disease behaved in patients with uncontrolled HIV during the 1980s.

Still, the lesions are unsightly, difficult to treat and raise uncomfortable questions about what weaknesses might lurk in the immune systems of thousands of aging survivors of the epidemic. The re-emergence of this classic AIDS illness in these outwardly healthy patients is an unsettling echo from the past and a warning that this 26-year-old plague still has the capacity to surprise.

"This could either be the canary in the coal mine, or it could just be a collection of rare events that will continue to occur when people are given what appears to be effective treatment," said Dr. Jeffrey Martin, a San Francisco General Hospital epidemiologist and Kaposi's sarcoma expert.

Kaposi's sarcoma was one of the first visible manifestations of the HIV epidemic. At the time, it was popularly known as "Gay cancer." About 80 percent of early AIDS patients suffered from it, and when it migrated to the lungs, lymph nodes and throat, many died.

With the widespread use of combinations of antiviral drugs beginning in 1995, however, the lesions disappeared, and AIDS-related Kaposi's sarcoma has seldom been seen in the United States except among impoverished patients whose HIV is untreated. Today, the disease is still rampant in Africa, where only one in four people who need AIDS drugs to survive has access to them. "KS is the most common malignancy among adults in sub-Saharan Africa," said Martin, who travels to the region frequently.

So it was highly unusual, and a little spooky, when the KS cases among long-term HIV survivors in San Francisco began to stack up in the past three years. "I'm of an age to remember when, if a purple lesion showed up on your face, it meant you were going to die," said Matt, a 42-year-old San Francisco man who has controlled his HIV infection since 1995. Matt, who asked that his last name not be used, said he was startled three years ago when a pea-sized purple spot appeared on his waist. Before long, he had a dozen lesions, including two on his face. "It was extremely scary," he said. "I got something out of the blue and totally unexpected."

The nodules on his skin were not painful or itchy, but they were embarrassing. Mostly, they generated fear. Matt acknowledged that Kaposi's sarcoma bears a stigma as a visible mark of AIDS that is still difficult to overcome. Treatments have caused most of the lesions to fade. Some were removed like warts by freezing with liquid nitrogen; others responded to direct injections of chemotherapy drugs.

Always conscious about his appearance, Matt said he dreaded the prospect of Kaposi's sarcoma when he was first diagnosed with HIV, and was relieved in those early years that he never came down with it. He was stunned to see the lesions appear so much later. "It was jarring," he said. "I never thought I would have to face this."

Although Matt's anxiety eased as time went by, and his KS remained stable, he could not help reliving some of the darker days of the AIDS epidemic. "I've had the experience of people saying, 'What's that on your face?'" he said. "It is like something out of the movie, 'Philadelphia.' I'd thought those days were over."

Most of the new Kaposi's sarcoma patients are in their 40s and 50s and have been living with HIV for nearly two decades. Their lives were spared by the introduction of antiviral drug combinations in the mid-1990s. Their HIV is suppressed below the level of detection in standard tests, and they have plenty of infection-fighting white blood cells.

"The normal treatment for KS among HIV patients is to treat the virus and boost the immune system. But in these patients, their immune system is already boosted," said Dr. Toby Maurer, chief of dermatology at San Francisco General Hospital.

Maurer and colleagues revealed a cluster of nine cases of Kaposi's sarcoma in a brief letter published in the New England Journal of Medicine. The patients described in the report were diagnosed from November 2004 through January 2006. The total number of cases has since grown to 15, with several more suspected but not confirmed, Maurer said. Since she published her letter in the prestigious medical journal, more reports have come her way. "Every day, I am getting stories from around the world," she said. These new cases are more of a nuisance than a threat to life. They resemble the Kaposi's sarcoma cases first described in medical textbooks in the 19th century. The patches of purple skin - caused by a proliferation of blood vessel growth - are painless and have not spread to internal organs. It's a kind of Kaposi's sarcoma that is relatively common in countries surrounding the Mediterranean, with one exception: Classic KS is a disease of old men, but the average age of Maurer's patients is 51.

Columbia University researchers proved in 1994 that Kaposi's sarcoma is caused by a herpes virus, dubbed HHV-8. Both the rampant AIDS-related Kaposi's sarcoma, and the more benign Mediterranean variety, are caused by the same virus. In the case of uncontrolled HIV infection, the Kaposi's sarcoma virus takes off because the patient's immune system is destroyed. In the case of the Mediterranean men, their immune system is simply old.

"This is an infection of 70-year-old guys, and I'm seeing it at 50. What does it mean?" Maurer asked. "The big question," she added, is that if the HHV-8 virus can't be controlled, does that mean other things won't be controlled in these patients, as their immune system ages? That's why we are following this very closely."

Dr. Marcus Conant was a dermatologist catering to a Gay clientele in the early 1980s when the

first cases of deadly Kaposi's sarcoma began to appear. Since then, he built one of the largest private AIDS practices in the nation. After the arrival of effective AIDS drugs, KS cases plummeted, but he has seen about a dozen of these mild cases among patients who have their HIV under control. None has developed the fulminant Kaposi's sarcoma that killed so many during the 1980s and early 1990s. "I believe some other virus, or infection, is stimulating HHV-8 to replicate," he said.

An eyewitness to the epidemic since its earliest days, Conant is not alarmed by the new Kaposi's sarcoma cases. "This is nothing like what we saw 25 years ago," he said. Kaposi's sarcoma

What is Kaposi's sarcoma? It is a cancer-like skin disease that is triggered by a virus, which causes blood vessels to grow out of control. Patients develop purple spots on their skin.

Is it dangerous? It can be. Until AIDS drugs became effective in the mid-1990s, Kaposi's sarcoma was a major killer of people infected with HIV. It is still the leading malignancy in sub-Saharan Africa, where most people with AIDS have no access to drugs. But historically, KS was a skin

tumor found mostly in old men in the Mediterranean region. They didn't die of it.

Why did the AIDS drugs help? The drugs lower the level of HIV in the bloodstream and boost the number of infection-fighting white blood cells that naturally control HHV-8, the virus that causes Kaposi's sarcoma.

What's different about these new KS cases? They are occurring in Gay men who have been controlling their HIV with antiviral drugs for years. It also appears to be a milder form of Kaposi's sarcoma, like the kind that affected the old men.

Why is this happening? Doctors are trying to figure that out. It could be that some other virus is triggering an outbreak of latent HHV-8 infection, much as stress can trigger a cold sore. It could be that as treated AIDS patients age, their immune systems weaken faster.

How worrisome is this? There are only 15 confirmed cases in San Francisco, and none of these patients appear to be in danger. It is nevertheless unsettling for something unpredictable to occur among vulnerable AIDS patients, and it dredges up memories of the terrible toll Kaposi's sarcoma once took.

Suspended Vatican Official Insists He Was Only Pretending To Be Gay When Secretly Filmed

VATICAN CITY - A Vatican official suspended after being caught on hidden camera making advances to a young man says he is not Gay and was only pretending to be Gay as part of his work, reported the Associated Press on 365Gay.com. In an interview published Sunday (October 14), Monsignor Tommaso Stenico told La Repubblica daily he frequented online Gay chat rooms and met with Gay men as part of his work as a psychoanalyst. He said that he pretended to be Gay in order to gather information about "those who damage the image of the Church with homosexual activity."

Vatican teaching holds that Gays and Lesbians should be treated with compassion and dignity but that homosexual acts are "intrinsically disordered." The Vatican said it was suspending Stenico after he was secretly filmed making advances to a young man and asserting that Gay sex was not sinful during a television program on Gay priests broadcast Oct. 1 on La7, a private Italian television network. While Stenico's face was blurred in the footage, church officials recognized his Vatican office in the background and suspended him pending a church investigation.

There have long been allegations that there are Gays in the Roman Catholic priesthood, but the Stenico case is unusual because he is a relatively high-ranking Vatican official. He heads an office in the Vatican's Congregation for Clergy - the main office overseeing all the world's priests. The case comes at a particularly sensitive time, just two years after the Vatican issued tough new guidelines effectively barring Gays from the priesthood - seen in large part as a response to complaints about a "Gay subculture" in U.S. seminaries. The guidelines say the church cannot admit men to the priesthood who practice homosexuality, or have "deeply rooted homosexual tendencies or support so-called Gay culture." However, the document said that if the Gay tendencies were just a "transitory problem," the men can be ordained deacons if they



Monsignor Tommaso Stenico

successfully overcome those tendencies for three years.

In the Repubblica interview, Stenico said he had never been Gay and was heterosexual, but remained faithful to his vow of celibacy. He said he expected to be fully exonerated after a review. "It's all false; it was a trap. I was a victim of my own attempts to contribute to cleaning up the church with my psychoanalyst work," La Repubblica quoted Stenico as saying. Stenico said he had met with the young man and pretended to talk about homosexuality "to better understand this mysterious and faraway world which, by the fault of a few people - among them some priests - is doing so much harm to the church," La Repubblica quoted him as saying. Italy's Sky TG24 said Stenico had written a letter to his superiors with a similar defense.

In 2006, the Vatican denied Italian newspaper reports that an official in the office of the Secretary of State had been involved in a fight with police after he was stopped in a neighborhood frequented by transvestites and male prostitutes. In 2002, a former official in the papal household, Archbishop Juliusz Paetz, resigned as archbishop of the Polish city of Poznan over accusations that he had made sexual advances toward young clerics. He denied the accusations.

HOROSCOPES

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Mercury retrogrades from Scorpio back into Libra. Not only does our communication go haywire, we may go off on a tangent based on faulty information. Is the check in the mail? Yeah sure.

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

If your path of true lust is strewn with potholes and rocks, blame it on retro Mercury and give your randy patoot a rest. Gay Rams are tempted to pitch and woo but can't seem to get their romantic missives to the desired ears. Why not concentrate instead on getting your domestic environment in order? It is never too late for a little house cleaning. Very little I suppose....

TAURUS (APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

Queer Bulls are caught between partner's demands and the job. Blame the strain on retro Mercury which exacerbates any attempt at communication in these two areas. Before you become a piece of styrofoam bobbing between home and work, think of some escape routes. Maybe it's time to take that long needed vacation? Or maybe just make yourself scarce.

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

If you are feeling a little under the weather, it may be that retro Mercury is gleefully kicking the stuffing out of you. Because of the energy low, pink Twins can't seem to get things at work under control either. Folks are either not listening to you or are misinterpreting what you say. Don't despair. You'll be feeling your oats and happily cracking your whip in a month. Ouch!

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)

Gay Crabs may think they are the life of the party, but the rest of the party begs to differ. Retro Mercury cramps your personal style and your message doesn't seem to translate correctly. Why not fade into the background and quietly enjoy the festivities from the sidelines? There will be plenty of opportunity in November to make up for lost face time.

LEO (JULY 24 - AUGUST 23)

Expect minor confusion around the house as retro Mercury upends domestic plans. Proud Lions may be tempted to pour their frustrations out on family but avoid, avoid, avoid. Don't enter into any sensitive discussions now; wait a couple of weeks before you draw your line in the sand in any situation. In the meantime, think happy thoughts.

VIRGO (AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 23)

Queer Virgins may experience some communication gaffs when retro Mercury fogs up your thoughts and speech. There is nothing worse than being misinterpreted or ignored but you should be more forgiving at this time. Channel your frustrations into long neglected home projects. Sometimes there is nothing quite as reassuring as moving some furniture around.

LIBRA (SEPTEMBER 24 - OCTOBER 23)

A ditty to remember; A fool and their money are soon parted. Even though it seems like everyone and their idiot brother are making millions on stocks and hedge funds, when Mercury retrogrades, Gay Libras are advised to keep their money in the bank and off the street. Another ditty: If it seems to good to be true, it usually is. There are so many ditties to remember!

SCORPIO (OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)

Proud Scorps need to check their public face in the mirror when retro Mercury has them bumping into things and people. You're not going to make the best first impression now so try to avoid important meetings with folks you barely know. Don't sweat it too much though; you are usually so genuine and friendly that no one can stay mad at you for long. Just long enough.

SAGITTARIUS (NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 22)

Ignore those little voices in your head. Retro Mercury causes static on your psychic hotline. Even your good deeds seem to go unnoticed or unappreciated. That doesn't mean that you should stop your charitable efforts, Gay Archer. It means that sometimes we don't always get the credit we deserve. Don't worry; You'll feast on your just desserts in a few weeks.

CAPRICORN (DECEMBER 23 - JANUARY 20)

There are times when you just can't figure out your friends. This week will be one of those times as retro Mercury causes misunderstandings among compadres. Try not to jump to conclusions. Pink Caps are advised to channel their considerable social skills to different areas of endeavor. How about stumping for a favorite rainbow cause? I vote for that.

AQUARIUS (JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 19)

Your professional path may hit some unexpected barriers when retro Mercury confounds communication. If you're entering into a new job, check out all paperwork and all acceptance points. If you're cruising along in your current career, avoid any major political stand. Skillful Aqueerians can outswim any shark if they keep their ears and eyes open and their mouth shut.

PISCES (FEBRUARY 20 - MARCH 20)

Guppies are ready to take their opinions to the world. The question is, is the world ready for your pearls of wisdom? With retro Mercury screeching through the cosmos, your pearls may be tossed before various undeserving swine. I suggest that you hold back on pontificating some of your best laid plans for now. Then, sing it Out loud and queer!

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Gays And Lesbians Banned But Military Recruits Increased Numbers of Convicted Criminals

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - The Army last year again increased the number of its recruits who have prior criminal records by granting them special exceptions, 365Gay.com reported.

The Pentagon's top personnel official defended the policy, saying it's so stringent that many in Congress would have difficulty getting into the military today, too, because of things they did in their youth.

The military routinely grants waivers to recruits with past criminal behavior, medical problems or low aptitude scores that would otherwise disqualify them from service.

In the fiscal year ended Sept. 30, 18 percent of recruits needed waivers for problems with the law - up from 15 percent the previous year, Maj. Gen. Thomas Bostick, commander of the U.S. Army Recruiting Command, told a Pentagon news conference. He said 87 percent of those were for misdemeanors such as joy riding or violating curfew.

Appearing with him, defense personnel head David S.C. Chu said the waiver policy, taken as a whole, is a tough one and takes into consideration the whole person and his or her future abilities, not just mistakes the person may have made in the past.

One question they are asked, he said, is whether they have ever used marijuana, even once. "If you answer 'yes' about one

use ... it requires a waiver," said Chu.

"That's a pretty tough standard," he said. "Not to be cheeky about this, but (if) we apply that standard to our legislative overseers, a significant fraction would need waivers to join the United States military."

Chu was announcing that the services met their targets for recruiting in fiscal year 2007 - the Army recruited more than 80,400; Marines more than 35,500; Navy more than 37,000 and Air Force nearly 28,000.

The Army has been struggling to increase the size of its force amid the unpopular war in Iraq.

Various lawmakers and others worry that the Defense Department is lowering standards to draw in the needed recruits.

Legislation that would repeal 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' the ban on Gays serving openly in the military is before Congress.



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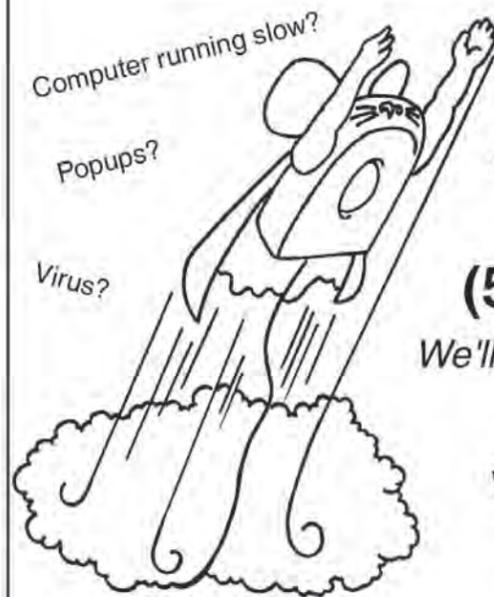
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DAILY BAR CALENDAR

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 10am - 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 Domestic and well. Reduced price appetizers. Dinner served until 10pm.

HOWL AT THE MOON - 10am. Starting 9/9. NFL package here. Wear an NFL team t-shirt or jersey and get 50¢ off your drink. Smirnoff Vodkas \$2.50 all day. Free Texas Hold-'Em Poker Tournaments at 3 and 6 pm. Play for points and prizes - no cash involved. \$1 chili dogs during game.

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 - Happy Hour all day & night with \$2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. \$3.50 sm. Pitcher/\$5.50 lg. Watch MNF here! \$1.00 hot dogs during game. Free Texas Hold-Em Poker tourney at 6 & 8:30, Play for points and prizes. No cash involved.

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

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 Domestic and well and reduced price appetizers. Dinner served until 10pm.

HOWL AT THE MOON - Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, \$2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. \$3.50 sm. Pitcher/\$5.50 lg. Pitcher. \$2.50 well margaritas and tequila. 75¢ off call tequilas. Free Texas Hold-Em Poker for women only at 6:00 p.m. Play for points and prizes - no cash involved. Fabu Tuesdays with your hostess Chantelle Douglas as your hostess for a mid-week brek. Show starts at 9:30 p.m.

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 Domestic and well and reduced price appetizers. Dinner served until 10pm.

HOWL AT THE MOON - Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, \$2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints, \$3.50 sm. Pitcher/\$5.50 lg. Pitchers. \$5.00 Jager Bombs and Long Island Ice Tea. Free Texas Hold-'Em Poker Tournaments at 6 & 8:30 pm Play for points & Prizes. No cash involved.

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,

OCTOBER 17, 2007

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 - Open 3pm-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 - Open 4pm-10pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm, \$3.50 Skyy cocktails, \$2.75 Domestic and Well and reduced price appetizers. Dinner served until 10pm. .

HOWL AT THE MOON - Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, \$2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints, \$3.50 sm. Pitcher/\$5.50 lg.. Pitcher. Mexican Beers \$2.50 all day, all night. Karaoke starts at 8:30 p.m.

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 Domestic 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.

HOWL AT THE MOON - Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, \$2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. \$3.50 sm. Pitcher/\$5.50 lg. Pitcher. \$2.50 Smirnoff Ice. Triple Black, Green Apple and Raspberry Twisters. Free Country dance lessons at 7:30p.m. DJ Pat plays the best of contemporary and classic country 8:30 to close..

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 Hill 9pm. Patio Bar opens at 10:30pm.

COLORS - Open 4pm-10pm, Lunch served until 4pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm, \$3.50 Skyy cocktails, \$2.75 Domestic and Well, reduced price appetizers. Dinner served until 10pm. Nightly dinner specials.

HOWL AT THE MOON - Open at 11am. Happy Hour 11-8pm, \$2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. \$3.50 sm. Pitcher/\$5.50 lg. \$4.50 cheeseburger & fries. \$2.50 Captain Morgan or Malibu Rum all day, all night. Check our calendar for the Saturday Night Special Entertainment.

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.

WEEKLY OBSERVER

BAR CALENDAR Of Upcoming Events

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 17

WOODY'S - Wine Tasting Party begins at 5:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21 - HALLOWEEN

THE BIZ - Halloween Party and contest \$350 first prize with 2nd and 3rd cash prizes for most original costumes. Party til 2:00 a.m.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

THRU SUNDAY, OCT. 16-21. The Broadway Musical "Avenue Q" at Tucson Music Hall. Tickets 321-1000 or Ticketmaster also at TCC Ticket Office, 260 S. Church. Winner! Best Musical 2004 Tony Award. More info try avenueq.com

NON BAR CALENDAR

Wednesday, October 17th

Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00pm Hand and Foot hosted by Jack. 887-3736. MSN Hand and Foot is played every Wednesday at 7pm, but check back here for the specific host.

Thursday, October 18th

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. Deadline is Noon today to reserve your place for pizza night. Call Lloyd at 792-8537.

Friday, October 19th

Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Pizza Night! Call Lloyd for directions at 792-8537! Did you phone in your reservation earlier this month to help plan ordering and preparation? Excellent! Get ready for great company, plus delicious salad, yummy desert, and 4 choices of pizza for only \$5.

Saturday, October 20th

#1 Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 8:30a.m. Join Robert for a morning of Volleyball. This is played for fun, and you'll get to know some nice guys as you play. Two great ways to work on your game! For details and directions, please call Robert at 400-1376.

#2 Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Shuffle over for Floating Pinochle every Saturday of the month except for first Saturday Monthly Pot Luck. Phone host Steve at 644-2076 for location, driving directions, and info.

5:30 - 9:00 p.m. Photography Evening and Potluck Dinner Party. 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 gret 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.

Sunday, October 21st

#1 Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 12:30p.m. MSN Brunch at Tanque Verde Guest Ranch: Hosted by Lloyd-792-8537.

#2Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 6:30p.m. Thom and/or Ken host 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 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.

7-9 p.m. Introduction to Tantra. A wonderful introduction to the world of holistic sexuality. Call Marc at the Man to Man Club for more information. 881-4582.

Monday, October 22nd

Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00pm MSN Newsletter Night! Join Bruce and crew to help get the MSN newsletter in the mail, plus find out next month's

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.

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 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 325_2111 - 7am-7pm M-F - 9am-5pm weekend and holidays.

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; Dezer Girlz (MTF Support) meets 2nd Mondays at 7pm; Dezer 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).

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.

REVELLE 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@yahoo.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.



Around The Nation

OKEECHOBEE, Florida (Observer Update) - Despite an ongoing federal lawsuit challenging the Okeechobee County School Board's banning of a Gay-Straight Organization the board has moved to tighten its rules governing clubs, 365Gay.com reported.

At a meeting Tuesday (October 9) the board revised its rules on clubs to bar from the campus of Okeechobee High School any "sex-based" clubs. Schools Superintendent Patricia Cooper in a memo to board officials before the meeting said that the proposal came from its attorneys and would "assure that student clubs and organizations do not interfere with the School Board's abstinence only sex education policy." . . .

MIAMI, Florida (Observer Update) - A conservative umbrella group pushing to amend the Florida constitution to bar same-sex marriage says it expects to have enough names before the February deadline to put the issue to voters in 2008, reported 365Gay.com. Florida4Marriage said that it is only a few thousand signatures short of the 611,009 signatures needed and will likely have enough additional signatures to offset any names which cannot be verified and struck off by the secretary of state. The groups involved in Florida4Marriage said they plan a signature blitz over the holidays to put them over the top.

Florida LGBT rights groups say they will mount a major campaign against the proposed amendment if it is certified to go on the ballot. Over the summer they got additional support from straight allies. Florida Red & Blue boasts both Democrats and Republicans among its members. It amassed more than \$1 million to battle the proposed amendment in its first 60 days. The organization says that the proposed amendment could be devastating not only for Gay and Lesbian couples but also for unmarried opposite-sex couples who live together. . . .

NASHVILLE, Tennessee (Observer Update) - Socially conservative groups behind Tennessee's constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage are looking at launching a new push to bar Gays and Lesbians from adopting children, 365Gay.com reported. The move follows a legal opinion issued Thursday (October 11) by Attorney General Bob Cooper that there is nothing in the Tennessee constitution or in state law to prevent same-sex couples from becoming adoptive parents.

Cooper had been asked for the legal assessment by Wilson County Circuit Judge Clara Byrd. Although Byrd has not said why she asked for the opinion it has been generally assumed she is presiding over an adoption application by either a Gay person or a same-sex couple. Adoption cases are sealed to protect the rights of children. Cooper in his legal opinion said that under current state law anyone 18 years of age or older may adopt, assuming the adoption is found to be in the best interest of the child. "There is no prohibition in Tennessee statutes against adoption by a same sex couple," he said.

PROVIDENCE, Rhode Island (Observer Update) - Same-sex marriage is not on the table but Rhode Island's highest court Tuesday (October 9) began considering whether a Lesbian couple married in Massachusetts can divorce, 365Gay.com reported. Justices heard oral arguments from lawyers for each of the two women. But the court refused to hear arguments from either the state or from conservative religious groups.

The case involves Margaret R. Chambers and Cassandra B. Ormiston who were married in Massachusetts in 2004. The marriage was

never recognized in their home state of Rhode Island. Last year the women filed for divorce in Providence, citing "irreconcilable differences". Rhode Island has no specific law banning same-sex marriage. But the Chief Family Court Judge Jeremiah S. Jeremiah Jr. said he did not know if he could rule without taking up the issue of marriage and asked the Supreme Court justices to determine if he has the authority to hear the case. . . .

ANNAPOLIS, Maryland (Observer Update) - Top state Democrats say they are warming to the idea of civil unions for same-sex couples in Maryland but the idea is being met with opposition from both LGBT rights groups and Republicans, reported 365Gay.com reported.

The latest to sign on to civil unions is Democratic House Speaker Michael Busch. "I believe in civil unions," Busch told Baltimore radio station WYPR-FM. "I think people should have the same rights as far as probate is concerned, as far as health care is considered, as far as visitation and all those things." The remarks followed a statement by Gov. Martin O'Malley (D) that he would support civil unions.

NEW YORK CITY (Observer Update) Students at schools and colleges across the country observed National Coming Out Day in a variety of ways all aimed at raising LGBT visibility, 365Gay.com reported. National Coming Out Day is celebrated every October 11 to mark the anniversary of the 1987 March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Equality.

Over the past 20 years there have been remarkable advances in LGBT civil rights, but perhaps the most noticeable change has been the number of people publicly identifying as Gay. In the 1980s the average Gay came out in college. Today it is in high school, and Gay-straight alliances are springing up in high schools across the country. In 1997 there were 100 high school Gay and Lesbian groups. Now, there are more than 3,000 across the country in communities large and small.

Still young people in a number of states continue to have problems organizing LGBT student groups. As well, bullying and harassment of LGBT students continues to be a problem for many students across the country. A study released earlier this year by researchers at the Children's Hospital Boston Division of Adolescent Medicine found that Lesbian and Gay adolescents were three to four times more likely to report having been bullied than heterosexual teens.

A 2005 study commissioned by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network found that three-quarters of students surveyed across America said that over the previous year they heard derogatory remarks such as "faggot" or "dyke" frequently or often at school, and nearly nine out of ten reported hearing "that's so Gay" or "you're so Gay" - meaning stupid or worthless - frequently or often. Over a third of students said they experienced physical harassment at school on the basis of sexual orientation and more than a quarter on the basis of their gender expression. Nearly one-in-five students reported they had been physically assaulted because of their sexual orientation and over a tenth because of their gender expression. The study also showed that bullying has had a negative impact on learning. LGBT students were five times more likely to report having skipped school in the last month because of safety concerns than the general population of students.

A public service announcement by Grey's Anatomy star T.R. Knight began airing nationally urging people to accept their Gay friends and family members.

Across The Q Globe

Hundreds Of Thousands Fill Rio For Celebration

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil - More than 800,000 people participated in Sunday's (October 14) Gay pride parade in Rio de Janeiro along the famous Copacabana Beach, dpa.com reported on 365Gay.com.

Politicians such as Rio de Janeiro Governor Sergio Cabral and tens of thousands of tourists were among the revelers at the 12th annual parade. Despite the relatively cool temperatures many participants were scantily clad as they danced to samba music and waved the rainbow flag. The celebrations also took on a serious note, with a call to Brazil's congress for a bill against homophobia, same sex-marriage the right for sexual self-determination.

According to human rights groups in Brazil up to 2,582 homosexuals have been murdered in the past 10 years. "If we don't make progress in these matters our democracy will never consolidate," said Cabral. In June, more than 3.5 million crammed into the streets of Sao Paulo's business district for the world's largest Gay pride parade.



Taiwan's LGBT Grow In Visibility

TAIPEI, Taiwan - Thousands of Gays, Lesbians and transsexuals marched through the streets of Taipei Saturday (October 13) in the capital's biggest pride celebration to date, 365Gay.com reported. Five years ago only a handful of people turned out. This year some 10,000 people took part, more than four-times the number from a year ago.

Like pride parades in Europe and America it was led off by the rainbow flag with marchers decked out in often outrageous costumes. But uniquely Asian, the marchers also carried banners - red considered a symbol of sex, orange for power. And like parades elsewhere Taipei Gays tied a message to the partying - "we're here, we're queer, and want our rights". LGBT civil rights bills have been languishing for years in Parliament. In 2003 the cabinet approved a draft anti-discrimination bill and in 2005 a draft of a marriage equality bill was endorsed by cabinet. Neither piece of legislation has made it to a vote on the floor. Following Saturday's parade opposition presidential candidate Ma Ying-jeou addressed a Gay rights rally.

