Observing Tucson And
The Greater Arizona Community

OBSERVER

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Tucson Observer Archives

Uhlich, Aboud Urge Community To Vote In Presidential Primary

By Mark R. Kerr

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Voting has begun for Arizona's 2008 Presidential Preference election, Tuesday February 5.

This election for Tucson and Arizona's LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) community, it is a time they cannot afford to miss, as open Lesbian, Tucson Ward 3 Councilmember Karin Uhlich said, "Leadership in the White House to a great extent sets the tone for the country. The LGBT community can move the nation beyond fear, bigotry and intolerance by helping to select our next President."

A separate early ballot request must be made for each person eligible to vote (in this case with the Democratic or Republican parties by January 7). Voters have until Friday, January 25 to request a mail-in ballot for the Arizona 2008 presidential primary.

Place your voted early ballot in the postage paid envelope provided to you, seal and sign the envelope, then return it by doing one of the following: Mail to Pima County Recorder, P.O. Box 3145, Tucson AZ 85702-3145; Deliver in person to 115 North Church Avenue or drop it off at any Pima County polling place on election day. You must sign the ballot envelope in order for your ballot to be processed. Ballots must be returned by 7:00 PM on election day.

If one wishes to vote early but after the January 25 request deadline, people can also show up at any of the satellite polling places, Downtown: main Recorder's Office, 115 N. Church Ave., open weekdays 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or the East Side: Recorder's Office Annex, 6920 E. Broadway, Suite D, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays, until February 1.

For more information, call (520) 740-4330 or go online to recorder.pima.gov/earlyreq.aspx. To vote early, one can request their ballot online at recorder.pima.gov/earlyballot/default.aspx, by phone (520) 740-4330 or by mail to Pima County Recorder, P.O. Box 3145, Tucson AZ 85702-3145.

"We are only effective when we have a voice, and our best voice is heard when we participate in the decision-making opportunity that we have in this country," Arizona's openly Lesbian state Senator Paula Aboud, said about Arizona's presidential primary.

Councilwoman Paula Aboud

Councilwoman Karin Ulrich

Heath Ledger, 28, Is Found Dead
Co-Star In 'Brokeback Mountain'

Actor Heath Ledger found dead in New York City Tuesdy, January 22

NEW YORK CITY - Heath Ledger was found dead Tuesday (January 22) at a downtown Manhattan residence, and police said drugs may have been a factor, reported the Associated Press on 365Gay.com. He was 28. NYPD spokesman Paul Browne said Ledger had an appointment for a massage at the Manhattan apartment believed to be his home. The housekeeper, who went to let him know the masseuse had arrived, found him dead at 3:26 p.m.

The Australian-born actor was nominated for an Oscar for "Brokeback Mountain," where he met his wife, actress Michelle Williams, in 2005. Ledger and Williams had lived in Brooklyn and had a daughter, Matilda, until they split up last year.

Ledger was to appear as the Joker this year in "The Dark Night," a sequel to 2005's "Batman Begins." He's had starring roles in "A Knight's Tale" and "The Patriot," and played the suicidal son of Billy Bob Thornton in "Monster's Ball."

Ledger grew up in Perth, and began doing amateur theater at age 10. At 16, he moved to Sydney to pursue an acting career, quickly landing TV movie roles and guest spots on Australian television.

After several independent films and a starring role in the short-lived Fox TV series "Roar," Ledger moved to Los Angeles and costarred in "10 Things I Hate About You," a teen comedy reworking of "The Taming of the Shrew."

Offers for other teen flicks came his way, but Ledger turned them down, preferring to remain idle than sign on for projects he didn't like.

"It wasn't a hard decision for me," Ledger told the Associated Press in 2001. "It was hard for everyone else around me to understand. Agents were like, `You're crazy,' my parents were like, `Come on, you have to eat.'"

His latest role was in "I'm Not There," in which he played one of the many incarnations of Bob Dylan - as did Cate Blanchett, whose performance in that film earned an Oscar nomination Tuesday for best supporting actress.

Mr. Big Dog Triangulator: DADT's Legacy Isn't My Fault

By: Pam Spaulding

Don't Ask, Don't Tell was used to hurt Gays and Lesbians in uniform, and the president who signed on to it is now laying the blame for the toll it has taken on the careers of well-trained, loyal members of the military at the door of others.

(PageOneQ - January 19): "Former President Bill Clinton, while on the campaign trail for his wife, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY), said that anti-Gay forces made 10 USC 654, or the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy, do more than he says it was meant to do. . . ."

As Servicemembers Legal Defense Network outlines, Don't Ask has been used as a tool to gradually erode the rights of Gay servicemembers, with increasing precedent being set to probe into their personal lives for purposes of "rooting out" those suspected of being Gay.

Clinton, who signed Don't Ask into law in 1993, says he and then-Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Colin Powell meant for the policy only to govern Gay servicemembers while they were on duty or in uniform.

Servicemembers, says Clinton, "would be free to live their lives; as long as they didn't go marching in Gay rights parades or go to Gay bars in uniform... In uniform... and talk about it on duty, they would be all right."

I haven't looked this up, folks, but do you remember anything about Gay folks being able to go out and be out when off duty in civilian clothing when he was selling this policy? I'm certain the homophobes on the Hill would have had none of that. If Clinton wants to say his hands were tied and he was "forced" to accept DADT as compromise with a hostile Congress (the prior excusarama), that we've heard before, but it seems disingenuous to try to spin it today as he didn't think the witchhunts and discharges would be the end result of such a bone-headed policy.

As you might recall, it was Bill Clinton who told John Kerry to toss Gays under the bus and support the various state marriage amendments on the ballot in 2004 in order to rope in swing voters uneasy with the thought of Gays and Lesbians daring to ask for the same civil rights in their relationships as those enjoyed by opposite-sex couples.

The long legacy of triangulation and the Clintons is too familiar not to make this new statement sound like another bit of Bill revisionist history going on; he says the firewall protecting the private lives of Gay and Lesbian service members was Colin Powell, and that when he left office, it was a bum rush to investigate and bounce homos.

(Pam Spaulding is the editor and publisher of Pam's House Blend (pamshouseblend.com), honored as "Best LGBT Blog" in the 2005 and 2006 Weblog Awards. The Blend, which averages 110,000 visitors a month, was launched in July 2004 as a personal response to the anti-Gay state of the political landscape. This oped was reprinted from it.)

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UPDATE

Domestic Partner Bill Revived In New Mexico

SANTA FE, New Mexico (Observer Update) A domestic partner bill that died in the New Mexico legislature this spring has been revived at the prodding of Gov. Bill Richardson (D), 365Gay.com reported. The legislation would create a statewide domestic partnership registry for both same and opposite-sex couples.

Couples would register with local county clerks and receive certificates attesting their relationships. Partners would have to attest they are over the age of 18 and not otherwise in a relationship. They would be guaranteed access to each other in hospitals and be able to make medical decisions for partners who are unable to make those decisions themselves, and they would be granted other state benefits and rights accorded to partners in marriages.

The measure passed the House Consumer and Public Affairs Committee on a 4 - 3 vote along party lines with Democrats in the majority.

On Monday, January 21, the legislation cleared the House Judiciary Committee on a mostly party line 9-4 vote. All but one of the panel's Republicans opposed the bill.

Richardson ordered the legislature back in the spring for a special session. The legislation again passed the House but the Senate refused to take it up. In 2003, Richardson issued an executive order providing state employees, both Gay and straight, with the option of providing their partners health insurance through domestic partner coverage.

Public Can Still Weigh In On Arizona DP Benefits Proposal

By Mark R. Kerr

PHOENIX (Observer Update) - Arizona's Department of Administration has proposed to offer health benefits to the domestic partners, both same or opposite sex, and their children of state employees.

The public has the opportunity to comment before the matter is taken up by the Governor's Regulatory Review Council, made up of a six-member board appointed by the governor, who will have final say on the proposal.

More than 1,000 Arizonans on both sides of the issue filed comments about the proposal by Gov. Janet Napolitano's administration, according to Alan Ecker, spokesman for the Department of Administration.

It's is expected that the review could take place by March. People wanting to comment in writing can submit items (under A.R.S. 41-1052) to Governor's Regulatory Review Council, 100 N.15th Ave., Ste. 402, Phoenix, Arizona 85007. If one wishes to comment in person, they must attend the meeting and give their comments.

Chuzapalooza January 25 - 27

TUCSON (Observer Update) - January in Tucson will get hotter when LGBT and straight supportive bowlers will gather in the Old Pueblo for the inaugural Chuzapalooza bowling tournament, January 25-27 at Santa Cruz Lanes, 3665 S. 16th Avenue.

Chuzapalooza is part of the IGBO (International Gay Bowling Organization) schedule of tournaments held by LGBT bowling leagues and associations throughout the country and globe, held throughout the calendar year.

For more information E-mail chuzapalooza@aol.com or call (520) 495-0143.

Desert Voices Prepares To 'Come Out And Play' Auction, February 9

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Desert Voices Chorus members are busy gathering wonderful items for our auction scheduled for February 9 at the Historic Y, 300 East University and busy rehearsing for the cabaret, this year entitled "Come Out & Play."

Desert Voice's first parental guidance performance, it promises to be just naughty enough to tickle all funny bones. The doors to the Y will open at 6:00 p.m. for perusal of the auction tables. Tables will close at 7:30 with the entertainment to follow and there is ample seating for all. We are again offering stage-side tables seating 4/5. This is Desert Voices only fund raiser of the year, so come out and see what Desert Voices has for sale, then enjoy chorus members at their best.

Tickets will go on sale at Antigones and are also available as well through our box office (520) 791-9662 and from any chorus member.

Reveille Starting Rehearsals

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Reveille Men's Chorus already started its rehearsals for the spring production "Dim Sum and Then Some: A Foreign Affair," and if one is are interested in becoming a singing member or a volunteer, there is no better time to join.

Auditions are a very simple process. You can call (520) 304-1758 for more information or just show up at the rehearsal. Rehearsals are held every Thursdays at the Historic Y (300 E University Blvd) from 7:00 - 10:00 p.m.

According to Linus Lerner, Reveille's Artistic Director, the spring show will be the biggest production Reveille ever put together. It will evolve performances of various ethnic groups from the community, representing about 15 countries to promote human rights and diversity, major goals of Reveille's mission.

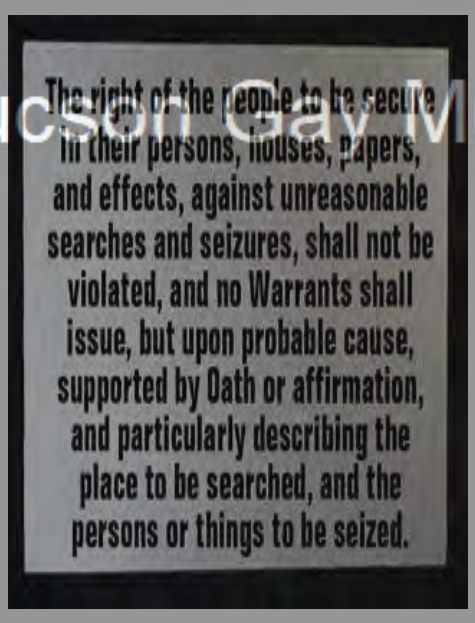
PFLAG Tucson Update

TUCSON (Observer Update) - PFLAG Tucson's (online at pflagtucson.org) annual couples celebration will be held on Wednesday, February 6, from 7:00-9:00 pm at the Ward VI City Council Offices at 3202 E. 1st Street, one block east of Country Club Road and one block South of Speedway Boulevard.

The stories of Tucson's LGBT couples is always an uplifting demonstration of the love and devotion that LGBT couples share. ...

It's that time of year again to apply for LGBT scholarships offered through PFLAG Tucson and Men's Social Network. The application deadline is March 31, for fall 2008. PFLAG Tucson will award six $1,000 scholarships in the names of Gene Moore, a dear past president of PFLAG. Men's Social Network will also award an additional two $1000 Jerry Curl Scholarships to gay male students through the PFLAG application process. LGBT graduating seniors headed to college, undergraduates, and graduate students may apply. Click here for application forms and details.

Please call PFLAG-Tucson's help line (360-3795) or send us an e-mail message (pflagtuc@pflagtucson.org) if you want or need immediate support.



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Pair Reflects On Months As Married Gay Couple

Tucson Observer Archives

DES MOINES, Iowa (Observer Update) - One image encapsulates the chaos of the summer morning five months ago when Gay marriage was legal - briefly - in Polk County, the Des Moines Register reported.

A crowd of 30, mostly reporters and photographers, encircles two young men under a maple tree. Sean Fritz, bearded and dripping sweat, throws his arms around the tall, redheaded Tim McQuillan. With a kiss, their marriage is sealed - and so is their position as the unlikely poster children of Gay marriage in Iowa. Another poignant image occurs 138 days later: Hundreds march from the Iowa Statehouse to the Iowa Supreme Court on a January morning, praying as a light snow falls. They lobby legislators for a ban on Gay marriage. Sean and Tim's marriage epitomizes the marchers' worst fear.

After months of quiet married life in Ames, Sean, 24, and Tim, 21, have returned to the middle of a media maelstrom as Iowa's most visible symbol of Gay marriage. "It's awkward to see people pretending we're not people, that we're a demographic or just people to vilify," Sean said. "I mean, it's me. It's my marriage. And this stuff, it can hurt."

And yet it's so much more than one marriage between two people. These two self-proclaimed nerds - one a computer scientist looking for work, the other a linguistics major at Iowa State University - will continue to be poster children until the Iowa Supreme Court rules on the Gay marriage case later this year or in 2009. Their marriage, and all it represents, will continue to be glorified and vilified.

But for Sean and Tim, the controversy and symbolism surrounding their marriage is the simple part. Though they say they never sought the attention and that they married simply because they wanted to show their commitment to each other, they are fine with becoming spokesmen for the cause of Gay marriage. They're fine with photographs from their wedding being featured in the New York Times and with fielding calls from national television shows.

The complicated part takes place when the two step out of the spotlight, return to married life, and learn, as so many couples do, that there's more to marriage than they had expected. "It's a difficult concept to get your head around at first," Tim said. "It's much more monumental than we give it credit for. It's hard to describe in words. I hadn't expected anything like that to ever happen to me. ... I hadn't even considered it. I didn't even have time to think about it. Then this happened, and it's like worlds colliding. It's so on the opposite side of everything I had built my life up to."

A memory: Sean Fritz is 12. Hyperactive and headstrong, he lives in Bettendorf with his pharmacist mother, stay-at-home father and younger brother. They are a Catholic household, and Sean is an altar boy. One day in school, Sean realizes he's checking out a boy. Sean asks himself: "Am I Gay?" His answer: "Yes." He tells no one. Two years later: Sean is in ninth grade at Bettendorf High School. A classmate writes "HOMO" on Sean's backpack. His mother takes Sean to buy a new backpack. They are driving home from the store. His mother asks, almost offhand: "Are you Gay?" Sean ignores the question. "And then she asked me again," Sean said. "And I said, 'Yeah.' She said, 'That's cool.' I said, 'Don't tell dad.' And she said, 'Fine.' "

Mother and son go to Sean's bedroom, sit on his bed, cry together. His mother is shocked, but she doesn't want her vulnerable son to hear that. So she tells him she loves him. "At that moment he was no different than he was the moment before," Mary Ellen Fritz said. "He was my son. And no matter the difficulties I had or the challenges he had ahead, I accepted him for who he is."

Sean gets his first boyfriend at age 16, comes out to his father at 17, goes to Indian Hills Community College at 18, takes an IT job at 19, goes to ISU at 23. His relationships never last longer than a month. He doesn't fit in with the "Will and Grace" version of Gay culture. He has a scruffy beard, loves computer programming, and doesn't dress that well. Then one summer day before Sean's senior year of college, another student "friends" him on Facebook.com. Sean and Tim talk on the phone. Their conversation turns intellectual - talking about artificial intelligence, Tim's genetics class, their favorite science fiction. They set up a date.

A memory: Tim McQuillan is 12. It's New Year's Day 1999, cold and gray. Tim has just returned from Des Moines where his dad, a bowling alley manager, lives. The phone rings in his mother's home in Perry. She answers, and her voice sounds serious. She gathers the kids. Their father, she tells them, has died of a heart attack. They cry. The death of his father changes everything. The hyper youngster who once bounced around the house pretending he was a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle disappears. He turns inward. He buries his nose in old science fiction books written by authors like Jules Verne; he falls in love with the Internet.

Another memory a few years later: He's friends with a girl. He fears she wants to date. Instead, she becomes the first person he tells that he is Gay. "She was just like, 'Really? I would have never guessed,' " Tim said. "I've gotten that every time: 'I never would have guessed.' ... I don't use lip balm and hairstyling products. I'm not what people think when they think about Gay guys." When Tim is 15, his family moves to California, near Gay-friendly Palm Springs. Yet Tim hasn't told his family he's Gay, and he still doesn't fit in with the predominant Gay culture. He graduates from high school and is working an IT job when his older sister persuades him to enroll at ISU.

One summer day in Ames, he finds an interesting guy on Facebook.com. And they set up a date. It's a Friday evening, July 2006. Tim and Sean meet at Stomping Grounds Cafe in Ames. The past six days since their first date have been a whirlwind. They've stayed awake nights, watching the science fiction series "Stargate," making each other laugh, chatting about everything and about nothing. Each has the tingly feeling, the euphoria of all being perfect in a young relationship. On this night, a jazz band grooves at the cafe. At sundown, Tim and Sean leave for a stroll.

The evening is warm and humid. They walk toward a park, circle back to Welch Avenue.

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UPDATE

Wingspan/Eon Homeless Youth Project

TUCSON (Observer Update) - One of the hardest issues that LGBTQ young people in our community face is homelessness, particularly around instances of rejection by their families.

At Eon Youth Lounge, through their Homeless Youth Project they often work with young people who are facing homelessness and need a place to live. Eon and Wingspan are putting out a general call for people willing to qualify with a local youth agency and act as a "host family" for homeless LGBTQ youth.

If you are interested in having a young person stay with you, either temporarily or on a longer-term basis, please contact Ari Zwartjes at the Lounge, (520) 620-6245 or 909-6234 (cell), or by email at ari@wingspan.org so that we can talk further. Thank you!

Job Opening: Director Of Care Partner Support

TIHAN is recruiting a Director of CarePartner Support to oversee support services for people living with HIV/AIDS. Responsibilities include coordination of CarePartner support services, supervision of volunteer CareTeams, Poz Cafe monthly lunch program, and other volunteer-based support services for CarePartners living with HIV/AIDS. Additional responsibilities include recognition and retention practices that will support TIHAN volunteers and programs, and maintaining relationships with healthcare providers and social service agencies. Full-time position (32-40 hours) requires Bachelor's degree, 3 years experience in client support services and volunteer coordination, sensitivity to HIV-related issues, interfaith and multi-cultural issues, and confidentiality. Requires some evening and weekend availability. Salary DOE; benefit package includes health/dental insurance. Bilingual persons and persons living with HIV encouraged to apply. AA/EOE. Complete job description with minimum qualifications is available under Job Openings at www.tihan.org. Submit resume and list of three professional references to scott@tihan.org or TIHAN, 1011 North Craycroft Road #301, Tucson, Arizona 85711.

SAGA Planning Meeting January 26

TUCSON (Observer Update) - The Southern Arizona Gender Alliance (SAGA) will conduct its annual strategic planning meeting on Saturday, January 26, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th Street.

SAGA has a long tradition of meeting early in the year to lay out our strategy for the coming year. This year, SAGA will take a close look at both the results of our
recent Transgender community needs assessment as well as the Wingspan Strategic Planning Initiatives, and make plans for how to address these findings as they relate to transgender people and allies in Southern Arizona.

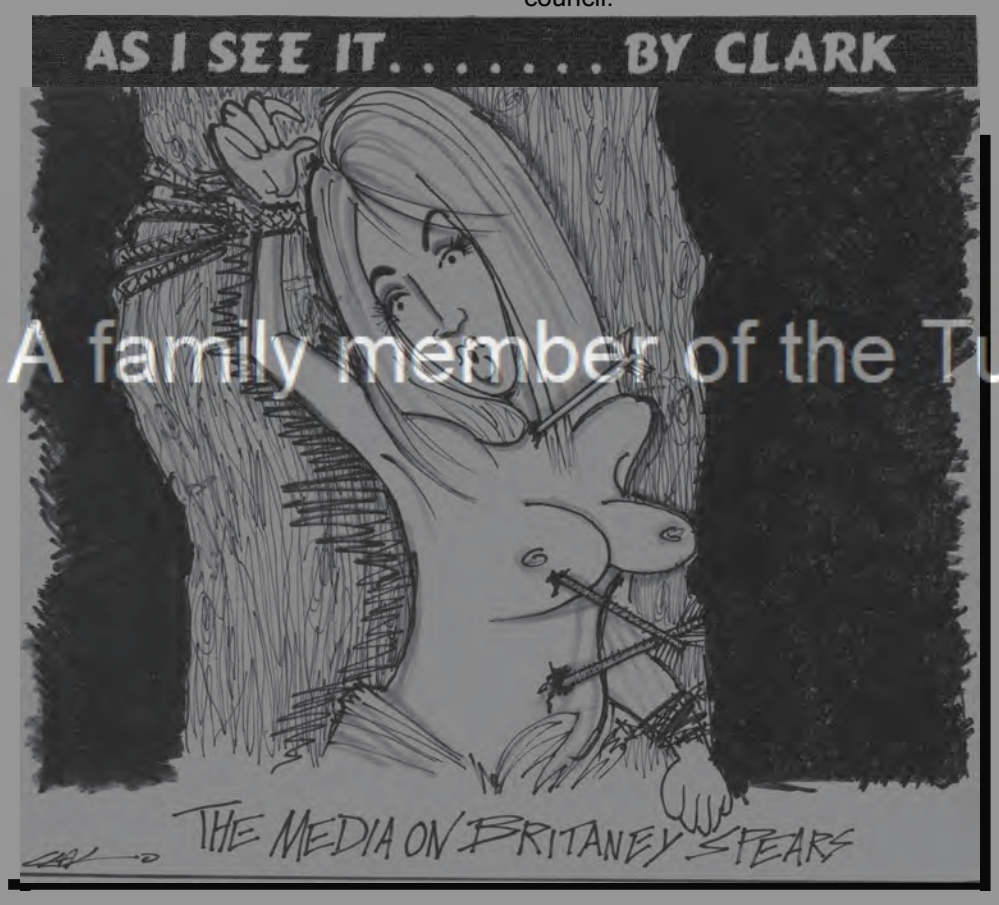
The planning meeting is open to anyone who is interested in how the program serves the local community. You do not need to be an active SAGA participant. Allies welcome! Bring your suggestions, ideas, and volunteer spirit! For more information, contact Michael Woodward (520) 624-1779, mwoodward@wingspan.org.

Cambridge City Council Elects Nation's First Black Lesbian Mayor

CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts - The city council voted unanimously to elect the nation's first openly lesbian black mayor, according to a story in The Cambridge Chronicle. Denise Simmons, a member of the council since 2001, will succeed Ken Reeves, who is also black and Gay, advocate.com reported.

Simmons's election marks "another broken glass ceiling," said Chuck Wolfe, president and CEO of the Victory Fund, a group that supports and endorses LGBT political candidates. "We are enormously proud of Mayor Simmons," Wolfe said in a press release. "Like Mayor Ken Reeves before her, she is among our community's trailblazers."

The unanimous vote followed a week of deadlock among council members. Simmons, who also served as a member of the city's school committee from 1992 to 2001, garnered support from only two of her colleagues during the first vote. Cambridge mayors are chosen by their peers on the city council.



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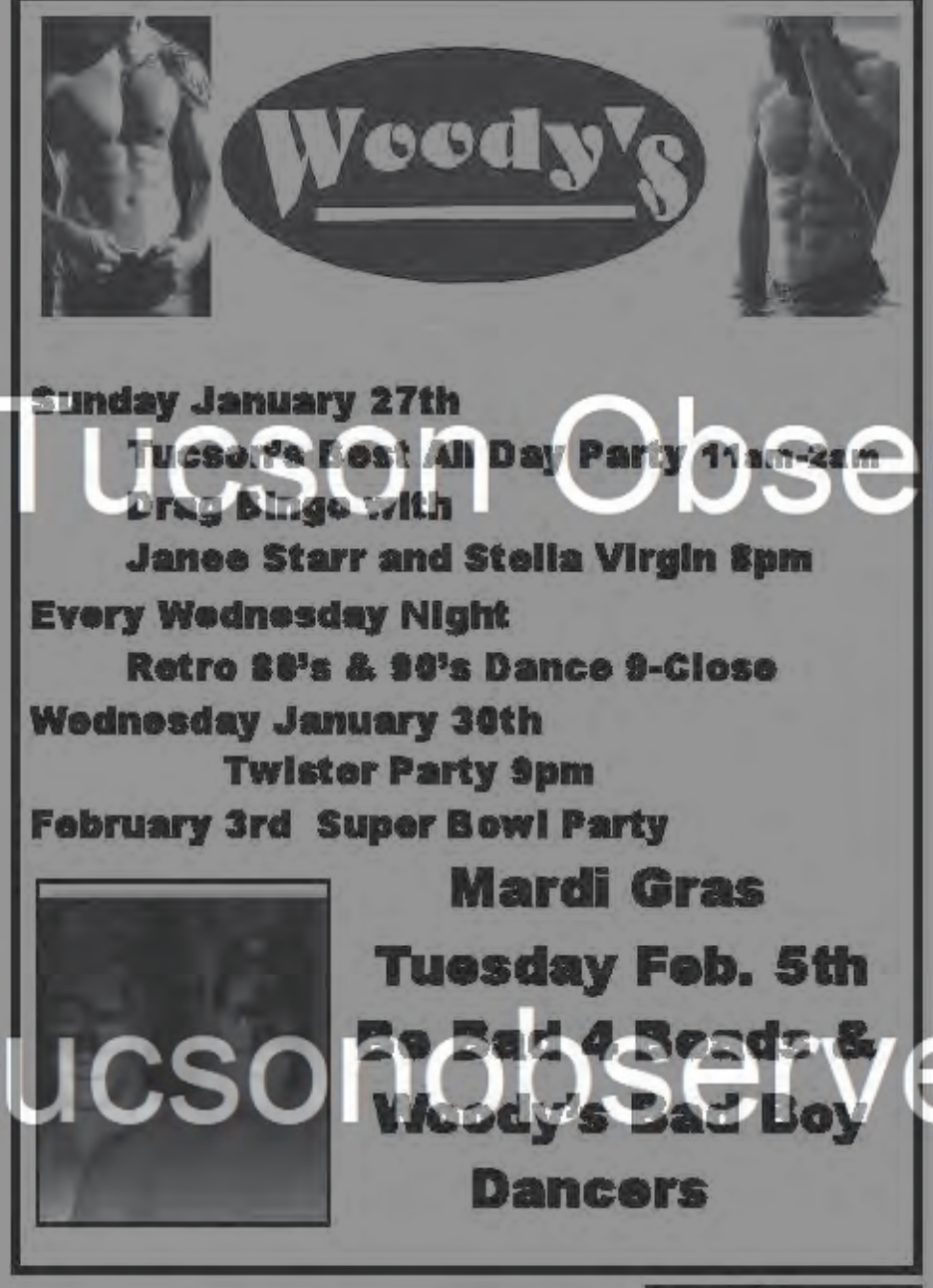

He Had A Dream

Bayard Rustin at the 1963 March On Washington

By Jennifer Vanasco, 365Gay.com

WASHINGTON , D.C. - He organized the 1963 March on Washington. He helped arrange the Montgomery, Ala. Bus boycott, reported 365Gay.com. He debated Malcolm X, learned non-violence directly from Gandhi's followers, went to jail for his civil rights protests, and is considered one of the architects of the black civil rights movement.

He was Bayard Rustin. He was Gay. And he is all but forgotten during our country's annual January commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Rustin was 17 years older than King, and had been working for the cause since leaving college. Born into a Quaker family in 1912 in a town where the Klu Klux Klan paraded proudly down the street on holidays and where blacks weren't able to take a seat in white restaurants or theaters, Rustin was soon convinced that non-violence was the answer to winning black civil rights. He traveled the country with the Fellowship of Reconcilliation, calling on "angelic troublemakers" to use their bodies to protest unfair conditions.

Rustin was athletic, polite and handsome. He was also completely unashamed of being Gay. He met his first partner, Davis Platt, at a conference at Bryn Mawr College.

In the documentary "Brother Outsider," showing on Logo, Platt recalls what Rustin was like: "Such intelligence, such a love of life, such a sense of humor, really a lot of wisdom. And he had absolutely no shame about being Gay."

That comfort with his Gayness ended in 1953 in Padadena, Calif., when he was caught by the police in the backseat of a car with two other men. His conviction for "sexual perversion" was to haunt him the rest of his life. It convinced him to tone down his sexuality in public, and was used by foes of the civil rights movement - notably Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-SC) - to try to convince the public that King was working with moral deviants.

Rustin was a long-time advisor to King - the documentary says that it was Rustin who really taught King the practical application of non-violence. Though all was not rosy, usually because of King's fears that Rustin would subvert the civil rights movement with his homosexuality. Though they were later reconciled, Rustin's strongest falling out with King, according to the documentary, came when Sen. Adam Clayton Powell threatened that he would accuse King and Rustin of having a sexual affair. King blinked, and friends recall Rustin as feeling personally betrayed.

While King inspired, Rustin's genius lay in the actual organizing of people and events. Rustin set up phone banks and transportation for the 1963 March on Washington, making the impossible possible. He insured that African-Americans around the country knew about the march, that every group that wanted a bus to Washington got one, and that no buses got lost.

King and Rustin were hoping for a crowd of 100,000 - instead, over 200,000 people from around the country packed the Washington Mall to hear King give his soaring "I Have a Dream" speech.

For the rest of his life, Rustin would continue his activism, working to end nuclear war, advocating on behalf of Soviet Jews and Israel, visiting refugee camps, and working with the Gay and Lesbian civil rights movement.

In 1977, Rustin met Walter Naegle in Times Square - they would be parters until Rustin's death of a ruptured appendix in 1987. Perhaps it was this relationship - and the changing times - that spurred him once again to be open about being Gay.

Toward the end of his life, in 1986, Rustin said, "Indeed, if you want to know whether today people believe in democracy, if you want to know whether they are true democrats, if you want to know whether they are human rights activists, the question to ask is, 'What about Gay people?' Because that is now the litmus paper by which this democracy is to be judged."

Bayard Rustin. An activist for civil rights for all until the end.

Bayard Rustin with Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1956 (AP)

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Pair Reflects On Months As Married Gay Couple

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Suddenly, Sean grabs Tim's hand. "I was uncomfortable at first," Tim later says. "He let go. He didn't want to make me do something I didn't want to do. He let go, and then I felt stupid. Because there weren't that many people. I was thinking, 'Someone in those cars might recognize me!' I was completely paranoid. ... "What's the use of being paranoid, if I really feel that I love him? And at that point, I did."

They talk of spending life together. They move in. At Christmas, Tim tells his mother he's Gay. She cries, not from the news but because he had feared telling her. And then, one evening in August, Sean hears that Gay marriage has become legal in Polk County. He calls Tim's mother for permission to ask her son to marry him. Sean buys two gold wedding bands. He picks up Tim from work. "Will you marry me?" Sean asks in the parking lot, a white rose in hand.

The next day, before the judge's ruling is suspended pending an appeal to the Iowa Supreme Court, they become the only same-sex couple to marry in Iowa. It all happens so fast, there's no time to think. Nearly five months later, Sean and Tim sit at a cafe and reflect on their marriage. The months after the wedding were chaotic: A Labor Day honeymoon in Des Moines. A hectic week of fielding reporters' phone calls. Catching up on missed schoolwork. Falling back into smoking cigarettes because of stress. Reading angry comments about their marriage posted below news stories and in blogs, having those insults bring down their relationship, then finally learning to ignore it.

It wasn't until recently, after finals, after the holidays, after giving up smoking again, that they have been able to take a breath to reflect. They say this: They never realized how much they wanted marriage until after they were married. "I now realize how important marriage is," Sean said. "I've (known I am) Gay since I was a teenager. Gay marriage was always something that's going to happen in the future, but I couldn't go get one, so it wasn't on the table. All the sudden it was on the table. And I got one. I was like, whoa, I really wanted this the whole time, and I was ready for it, and I just told myself I wasn't because it wasn't feasible."

They believe stereotypical Gay culture is filled with superficial relationships. Look at pop culture's Gay role models, they say. In "Will and Grace," neither Jack nor Will have meaningful relationships. "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" focuses on fashion and wine but has little substance. Could this superficiality stem, in part, from not allowing Gays to marry? And, therefore, is every Gay relationship destined to be thought of as temporary? "When we got married, I realized that made me an adult," Sean said. "Abruptly. ... And now I realize that probably has a strong influence upon what we call Gay culture, the fact that it's comprised of people who don't consider themselves adults."

"You treat children like children," Tim interjects, "they're going to behave like children. If you treat them as adults and you expect things of them - it's totally an argument of what you expect out of someone. If they've never been expected to get married, they aren't going to. It's pretty harsh social conditioning."

But there's another thing. Because they're Gay, they always have felt different from the mainstream. But they never felt part of stereotypical Gay culture. They aren't artistic, they aren't bohemian, they don't identify with "Rent." They've never had Gay role models. So part of what they want from their newfound status is to show a positive example for young Gay men who feel lost, like they once were.

"Hopefully, someone reads this who is in the situation I was in," Tim said. "Someone who isn't sure about themselves. They don't think they'll be accepted by everyone. I'm not casting myself as an ideal role model. But I think there's some good out of letting people know our story."

Vermont G/L Marriage Foes Seek Support Out Of State

MONTPELLIER, Vermont (Observer Update) - A conservative group that boycotted legislative hearings on a proposed Gay marriage bill in Vermont has reached out to organizations across the country to boost its opposition to Gay unions, 365Gay.com reported.

Vermont Renewal, an organization that for most of its history has fought all LGBT legislation in the state, has created its own commission to hold public hearings throughout the state called "Marriage Matters". At its first "hearing" the group drew about 100 people to hear speakers from Utah and Washington, D.C. Monte Stewart of the Marriage Law Foundation in Utah called same-sex marriage "genderless marriage" and said it lead to a breakdown of traditional families and endanger children. "Marriage can be the union between man and woman or it can be the union of any two people," Stewart said. "Vermont cannot have both."

A second speaker, Patrick Fagan of the conservative Family Research Council in Washington D.C., and a former researcher for the Heritage Foundation also said that opening marriage to same-sex couples would harm children. Fagan produced a series of statistics from mostly conservative groups that he said show children who do not grow up in households with opposite-sex parents are more likely to have problems in school, socially and in the workplace. Fagan discounted studies that have shown the opposite. In 2006 the nation's largest pediatricians group said that children would benefit from the legalization of same-sex marriage.

The kickoff of the anti-Gay-marriage "hearings" came as the legislature's committee nears the end of its public hearings on marriage.

HAPPY 17TH ANNIVERSARY TO DAVID, JIM AND ALL THE GANG AT VENTURE-N

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Favorite Books Of The New Queerlenium

The GLBT Services Committee was established in 1997 to better serve southern Arizona's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender library users.On a daily basis they review, order and make GLBT materials available for all PCPL users, regardless of age, location or sexual orientation.

The Pima County Public Library's (PCPL) GLBT Services Committee is dedicated to upholding the library's Mission Statement as well as the Library Users Bill of Rights for all of our customers. PCPL is one of the few public libraries in the country to have an established GLBT Services Committee. I's an exciting time for GLBT-themed publishing.

More and more books reflecting the strength, experience and vision of GLBT people appear on the shelves of book stores and libraries. The Pima County Public Library's GLBT Services Committee are proud to offer our favorite recent books that are by and about GLBT people. We hope this offering inspires you to read one or more of these marvelous books

The Perks of Being a Wallflower Stephen Chbosky (Pocket) A Gay character is part of the mix in this darkly funny, explicit novel. It's about a precocious but naive and cautious 15-year-old who tries to come to terms with a dreadful part of his past and discover who he is by breaking away from the "old him."

Kissing the Witch, Emma Donoghue (Joanna Cotler/ HarperCollins) Traditional fairy tales told from a lesbian perspective.

Eight Seconds, Jean Ferris, (Harcourt). At rodeo summer camp, John Ritchie admires the skills of his new friend Kit. When John discovers that Kit is Gay, his old perceptions are challenged in ways that change both young men forever. (Gina Macaluso)

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

Watch What You Hang From A Trailer Hitch

RICHMOND, Virginia - It's one thing to dangle fuzzy dice from a rear view mirror, but decorating a trailer hitch with a large pair of rubber testicles might be a bit much in Virginia, reported 365Gay.com. State Del. Lionel Spruill introduced a bill to ban displaying replicas of human genitalia on vehicles, calling it a safety issue because it could distract other drivers.

Under his measure, displaying the ornamentation on a motor vehicle would be a misdemeanor punishable by a maximum fine of $250. He said the idea came from a constituent whose young daughter spotted an example of the trail hitch adornment and asked her father to explain it. "'I didn't know what to tell her,'" Spruill said the constituent told him before Spruill vowed to stop such displays. "I said, 'Sir, I'm going to be a laughingstock, but I'm going to do it,'" he said.

The Virginia General Assembly has some experience with offbeat bills. Three years ago, it drew widespread attention with an unsuccessful effort to outlaw baggy pants worn so low they expose underwear. Spruill, 61, said the indignity of the "droopy drawers" debate wouldn't deter him. He said he won't hesitate to bring a set of $24.95 trailer testicles with him for a legislative show-and-tell. "I'm going to do it," Spruill told a handful of reporters after the House session adjourned. "I'm going to bring them out here and show them to you till they tell me to stop."

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Tucson, AZ 85716
(520) 327-6088
http://www.humane-so-arizona.org

POLITICS 2008

by Mark R. Kerr

'Weak Two'

One of the bills that has been introduced in the current session of the Arizona Legislature is HB 2010, entitled "legislature; bill limitation," and was drafted by state Representatives Chad Campbell, Tom Chabin, Mark DeSimone, Steve Farley and Rich Crandall.

HB 2010 would limit the number of bills that, a legislator (either in the House or Senate) could introduce for consideration in a session, to a total of ten. So what are the chances for this measure?

As of press time, a grand total of 858 bills (an average of more than nine per legislator), memorials and resolutions had been introduced so far during this current session with time remaining, (Monday, February 4 for the Arizona Senate and Monday, February 11 for the Arizona House), for more measures to be drafted and submitted, which will happen. In addition more than 1,400 bills (more than 14 on average) had been introduced for each of the past three sessions.

HB 2010 was assigned to both the House Judiciary Committee and the House Government Committee respectively, so the chances for this measure seeing "the legislative light of day," are slim to none.

Meanwhile, Arizona's state Legislature is in the second week of their current session and the state budget and the shortfall is the current topic with the Governor submitted her proposal to deal with the fiscal problem and keep Arizona moving forward while the Republican leadership in both Legislative chambers is promoting tax breaks for the rich.

Many of the introduced (and soon to be) bills, resolutions and memorials, the good, the bad and the sublime will get legislative consideration while many measures will just gather "legislative dust."

Of the bills introduced so far during this session:

SB 1113, entitled "HIV related testing" would amend state statues (A.R.S 36-663) to allow a health care provider the option of oral consent for an HIV test.

Current law requires that written consent must be obtained before an HIV test is given. SB 1113 has not been assigned to a committee, as of press time, yet.

HB 2646, entitled "AIDS drug assistance program; appropriation," would appropriate the sum of $1,500,000 to increase eligibility in the department's AIDS drug assistance program by increasing the maximum household income at which individuals are eligible to participate in the program.

As of press time, HB 2646 has not been assigned to a committee for consideration.

Previously reported in this column and publication, HB (House Bill) 2002 - "employment discrimination; prohibition," would prohibit discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the entire state.

HB 2002 has been first read and assigned to the House Judiciary Committee and then the House Rules Committee, if approved by the Judiciary Committee.

Legislation to expand Arizona's hate crimes law to cover misdemeanor offenses will also be introduced during this session.

So to take action, call your state Representative or state Senator, toll-free, (800) 352-8404 and let them know of your support for the respective measure.

To E-mail or call your state Senator, go online to azleg.gov/MemberRoster.asp?Body=S or your state Representatives, go online to azleg.gov/memberRoster.asp?Body=H.

If you don't know who your state legislators are, go online to eqfed.org/ahrf/leg-lookup/search.html.

Prof. On Hunger Strike For G/L Rights

AUSTIN, Texas - A University of Texas (UT) lecturer has entered the third day of a hunger strike aimed at forcing the university to provide health benefits to the domestic partners of Gay and Lesbian workers at the school, reported 365Gay.com. UT bans discrimination against Gays in its written human rights policy but says it cannot provide domestic partner benefits because of an amendment to the Texas constitution banning Gay marriage.

"The fact that the university is conducting itself in this manner makes me feel like I'm a persona non grata here, a person whose rights are less important than others," Uri Horesh told the American-Statesman. Horesh who teaches Arabic in the Department of Middle Eastern Studies is only consuming water and vitamins said he is continuing to lecture while continuing to refuse food. "I'm not going to start eating until this matter is resolved or I'm taken to the hospital, whatever happens first," Horesh, 37, told the paper. He has been fighting for partner benefits since November when he filed a complaint with the university's Division of Diversity and Community Engagement.

Horesh says that the university has ignored the complaint and a subsequent appeal. UT spokesperson Linda Millstone said the the schools hands are tied because it is publicly funded. Millstone told the American-Statesman that "I and other administrators are not unsympathetic to his concerns ... The issue of providing benefits in today's society is critically important in the recruitment and retention of employees, faculty, (and) staff."

Texas voters overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage in 2005. It not only bars same-sex couples from marrying but also prevents the state from recognizing civil unions.

DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE

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Scenes From The 2008 Road Runner Regional Rodeo Last Weekend

PHOTOS BY BILL MORROW

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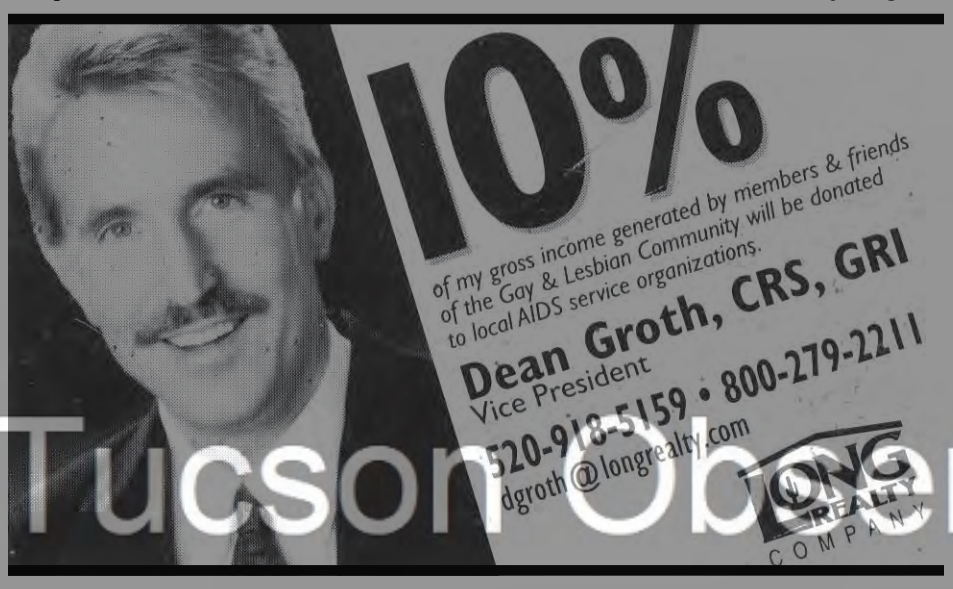

HOROSCOPES

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Make your personal mark on the world as the Sun enters Aqueerius. It's not enough to think about the "what ifs" of life. Start to think about the "why nots?". And full speed ahead!

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

This week, try to make a difference in someone's life and, in turn, you make yourself feel good. Proud Rams are in harmony with the greater group effort and will change the direction of the dynamic with the ease and grace of a true diplomat. But don't work from purely selfish motives. Take a worthy charitable effort one giant leap forward. Simon says no baby steps.

TAURUS (APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

With pioneering Sun in Aquarius so strongly placed in your chart, retiring queer Bulls can take decisive action in professional matters. Your mission, should you decide to accept it, is to grab the reins and ride the corporate chariot to unparalleled success. Don't accept excuses or promises; you've been far too understanding for too long. It's play or pay time, buddy.

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

Travel is highlighted so get Out and make things shake, rattle and roll; you are charged with the task of harnessing and then spreading valuable information. (Does a personal blog count?) Pink Twins can be very compelling so become a spokesperson for any personal pet cause. I expect you will do it with flair. Call it as you see it. Wear glasses to maintain focus.

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)

Lusty Gay Crabs are sensual and insatiable with Sun in Aquarius. There is something fiery in the air that guides you to the heat, but you may bite off more than you can chew (if that's possible). Maintain your balance and avoid arguments by treating lovers as one would treat fine china; Handle them gingerly, show them off and don't use them for target practice.

LEO (JULY 24 - AUGUST 23)

Sun in Aquarius accentuates the importance of relationships and what you can do to create and sustain one. This process requires the subtle touch but proud Lions might decide to push the envelope.Try not to. Allow partners more latitude and breathing space than usual. You can't expect absolute devotion simply because you roar for it.

VIRGO (AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 23)

Queer Virgins virtually dive head first into their pile of paperwork on the job thanks to Sun in Aquarius. If you find mundane tasks multiplying and dividing, use the week to prioritize. Then tackle the most overwhelming and difficult projects with tour de force. Energy for even the most boring and detailed project is high. Slice through the clutter while you sizzle and cook.

LIBRA (SEPTEMBER 24 - OCTOBER 23)

Sun in Aquarius knows how to give a proud Libra a good Gay time! Try to maintain your perspective though. The week brings far too much of a good thing and can send you off on detours. Avoid blithely wandering into the distance on silly, wasteful tangents. But enjoy the useful creative verve; we all need a little whimsy now and then. And more now than then.

SCORPIO (OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)

Proud Scorps scale and move mountains with Sun in Aquarius. Try to keep it in the domestic sphere. Do what needs to be done on any home-related issues whether redecorating projects around the house or any ongoing, nagging family matters. Don't take no for an answer so repeat yes, yes, yes like a mantra. There can be no compromise on your life's direction.

SAGITTARIUS (NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 22)

Your communications have never been so strong and compelling thanks to Sun in Aquarius. Gay Archers are great humanitarians and yearn to "do good" at any cost. Sugarcoating your desires are not in the cards. Personal opinions have all the subtly of a sledgehammer, but what the heck; you are here to make things happen any way you can. Force 'em to listen if you have to.

CAPRICORN (DECEMBER 23 - JANUARY 20)

Review your investment strategy. Sun in Aquarius mandates that finances must be firmly set before you can proceed on more loftier goals. This is good - pink Caps should not be at the mercy of others for their financial security. Get off your assets and learn the nuts and bolts of investing. You can then expect a surge of self-confidence to get things fiscally launched.

AQUARIUS (JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 19)

Aqueerians are the source of all power this week. Plug into the surge and maneuver into the middle of important social circles. You charm people to your way of thinking (and where charm leaves off, arm twisting comes in.) Keep in mind that in the long term, nobody likes to get handled and pushed into a corner. If things take longer to gel, just smile and say pretty please.

PISCES (FEBRUARY 20 - MARCH 20)

A strobe is flashed in your closet of insecurities and self delusions and guess what: It's not as horrible as you originally thought. Sun in Aquarius sweeps out all the psychological debris that holds you back from success. Don't let gremlins rule you, Guppie. This is the time to give them a kick in the patoot once and for all. Be strong and sweep out the garbage. Then breathe free.

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COMMENTARY. . . .

Get Your Motor Running

By Lisa Neff

Some 20 years ago I went to a memorial for Beat Generation legend Jack Kerouac in Lowell, Mass. It was a trippy night. I remember Ray Manzarek of The Doors fame playing the organ. I remember Allen Ginsberg sitting in the front row of the audience, clasping a purse on his lap and nodding, nodding, nodding to the music. I remember someone passing a bottle of wine; someone else passing a joint. And I remember the event ended way too early for my having driven so many miles from New Hampshire. So I struck out to find more good times.

I visited the cemetery where Kerouac was buried – it didn't inspire like I suspected it might. Then I stumbled across – or rather into – a biker bar. Not a leather and Levi club, but a real and true biker bar, with a three-piece head-banging rock 'n' roll band on a platform in the front window, a bar stocked only with long-necked Budweisers, lots of burly guys in blue jeans and T-shirts and lots of tough women in tighter blue jeans and T-shirts. I remember thinking, this would be the place for me – if these burly guys were burly girls.

Then, a couple of years later, I attended my first Pride parade and saw about a dozen women on motorcycles leading the pack. The in-my-mind soundtrack to that first parade still starts with "Get your motor runnin'..." This parade took place well before Harley-Davidson got clued in to the notion that women might like to drive motorcycles, not just ride on the backseat. I for one yearned for either a shiny new Harley Sportster or a custom Captain America-inspired police bike.

I looked forward to each Pride parade after that first, mostly to see the Dykes on Bikes and to hear that "potato-potato" sound of those V-twin Harley engines. It wasn't that the Dykes on Bikes had outlaw attitude like the Hell's Angels. It wasn't that they seemed subversive or radical. To me they were just dykes, on bikes, having a "get your motor runnin'..." good time.

So I admit to initially laughing when a man named Michael McDermott filed a serious lawsuit challenging the "Dykes on Bikes" name. The San Francisco Women's Motorcycle Contingent had filed an application with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office seeking exclusive rights to Dykes on Bikes to protect and reserve the name for the nonprofit clubs.

The patent office at first rejected the application on the grounds that the name disparaged Lesbians. The office, faced with more than two dozen expert declarations that the word "dyke" has positive connotations, reconsidered and still denied the request. But another review three years ago produced an approval of the application.

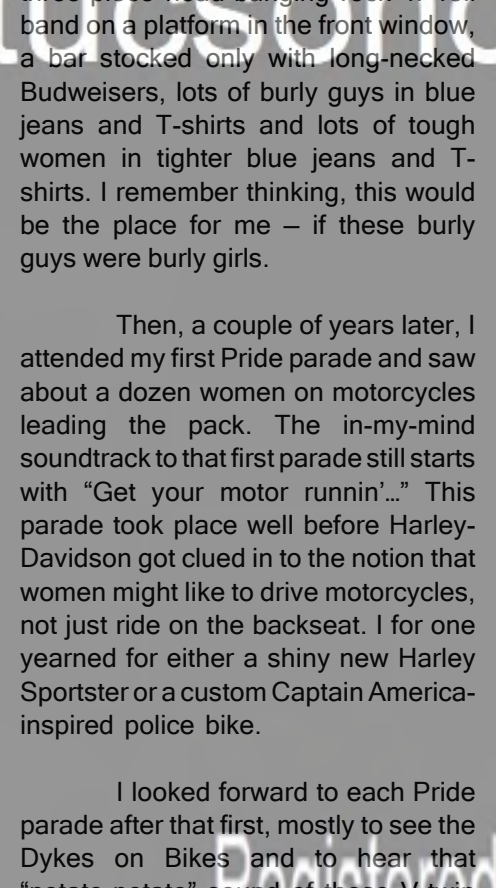
McDermott, a self-described men's rights advocate, decided to take his personal objections to the name to federal court, arguing that Dykes on Bikes was scandalous, immoral and hateful toward men. He literally made a Supreme Court case out of the issue. Last week the High Court denied his petition seeking review of an appeals court ruling in the motorcycle group's favor.

The courts have held now that "Dykes on Bikes" does not disparage men, that the name "would have no implications for a man" and that the man who filed the opposition had failed to show that "his belief is shared by others." Case closed.

The San Francisco Chronicle and USA Today reported that when McDermott was asked to comment on the Court action, he replied that Dykes on Bikes constitutes an "anti-male hate riot" and the Supreme Court "has largely signed on to the so-called homosexual agenda."

Now, I have to admit I'm laughing again that McDermott could think a 30-year-old moniker seeking to turn a sometimes epithet into a statement of pride disparages him. Sorry Michael. "Take the world in a love embrace..."

(Lisa Neff is a reporter with The Islander, a weekly newspaper on Anna Maria Island, Fl. This oped is reprinted from 365Gay.com.)



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NON-BAR CALENDAR

Wednesday, January 23
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00pm Hand and Foot hosted by Merlin and Lee at 207-5336. MSN Hand and Foot is played every Wednesday at 7pm, but check back here for the specific host.

Thursday, January 24
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Triangle Tribe-A Men's Circle. According to a recent study, very few people have as many close friends as they would like. Are you as connected with other men as you want to be? Do you get the support you need for issues in your life? Do you wish you had more meaningful friendships and relationships with other men? Join like- minded men at Wingspan to share feelings, thoughts and ideas in a safe, respectful space. For the same experience with both straight and gay men, join us at the regular Circle of Men meetings. Call Tom at 591-2828 for dates and times.

Friday, January 25
LGBT and straight bowlers will gather in the Old Pueblo for the inaugural Chuzapalooza bowling tournament today through Sunday at Santa Cruz Lanes, 3665 South 16th Avenue in South Tucson. For more infoormation call (520)495-0143.

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

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

Saturday, January 26
#1Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 1:00p.m. Meet Lee and Merlin at Crave Espresso Bar on Broadway for the MSN 'coffee night during the day' revival! Enjoy basic or elaborate coffee beverages, pastries baked fresh every morning, and talk things over! Crave is in the same strip mall as Dandy Dime where the 31 flavors used to be. Check the Crave website for prices and complete menu: www.craveespressobar.com Need direction in Life? Call Merlin or Lee for details and directions at 207-5336.

#2Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Shuffle over for Floating Pinochle every Saturday of the month except for first Saturday MSN Monthly Pot Luck. Contact Marvin at 745-0304.

Sunday, January 27
Men'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.

Tucson Prime Timers Brunch – 11:30 am – 2 pm, Colors, 5305 E. Speedway

Monday, January 28
Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed. Check MSN online calendar for this Monday's events.
www.groups.yahoo.com/group/menssocialnetwork/

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

Tuesday, January 29
Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed. Check MSN online calendar for this Monday's events.
www.groups.yahoo.com/group/menssocialnetwork/

Wednesday, January 30
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00pm Hand and Foot with Peter at 881-8276. MSN Hand and Foot is played every Wednesday at 7pm, but check back here for the specific host.

Thursday, January 31
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Triangle Tribe-A Men's Circle. According to a recent study, very few people have as many close friends as they would like. Are you as connected with other men as you want to be? Do you get the support you need for issues in your life? Do you wish you had more meaningful friendships and relationships with other men? Join like-minded men at Wingspan to share feelings, thoughts and ideas in a safe, respectful space. For the same experience with both straight and gay men, join us at the regular Circle of Men meetings. Call Tom at 591-2828 for dates and times.

Friday, Feb 1
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Join Merlin and Lee for an evening of Charades. Come out and totally enjoy putting your acting/miming and pantomime skills to the test! For directions and reservations [(a limited space event, please plan ahead and phone early)], place a telephone call to Lee and Merlin, your gracious yet competitive emcees and moderators, at 207-5336.

Saturday, Feb 2
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 6:00p.m. MSN Potluck and Annual AUCTION! This year's auction kicks off Jerry Curl month, honoring our founder and continuing our fundraising for the Memorial Scholarship. Join us for a rambunctious evening of food and bidding starring our favorite auctioneer, Mr. John Barnes.

Sunday, Feb 3
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 6:00p.m. Dinner Out at one of Tucson's Ultra-Fabulous Buffets. For reservations and directions, contact Thom 623-2941 e-mail thomsepals@hotmail.com , or Ken at 294-6606. Please contact Thom or Ken by Sunday at Noon to facilitate reservations. Price is usually under $10. Check the Yahoo MSN on-line calendar for the scheduled place. The venue is rotated to include all parts of town, and may occasionally be held at a full-service menu restaurant.

Monday, Feb 4
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00 p.m. Lee and Merlin host a word for word fun evening of Scrabble. If you don't know how to play, we'll be glad to teach you. For reservations and directions, please call 207-5336. If you're loquacious, erudite, or a wordsmith; this man's game just may be a triple word score for you!

Tuesday, Feb 5
#1Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Gay Reading Group meets at Wingspan. For info, contact Doug at 529-0014

Wednesday, Feb 6
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00pm Hand and Foot with Bruce. 743-3890

Thursday, Feb 7
#1 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

Continued on next page

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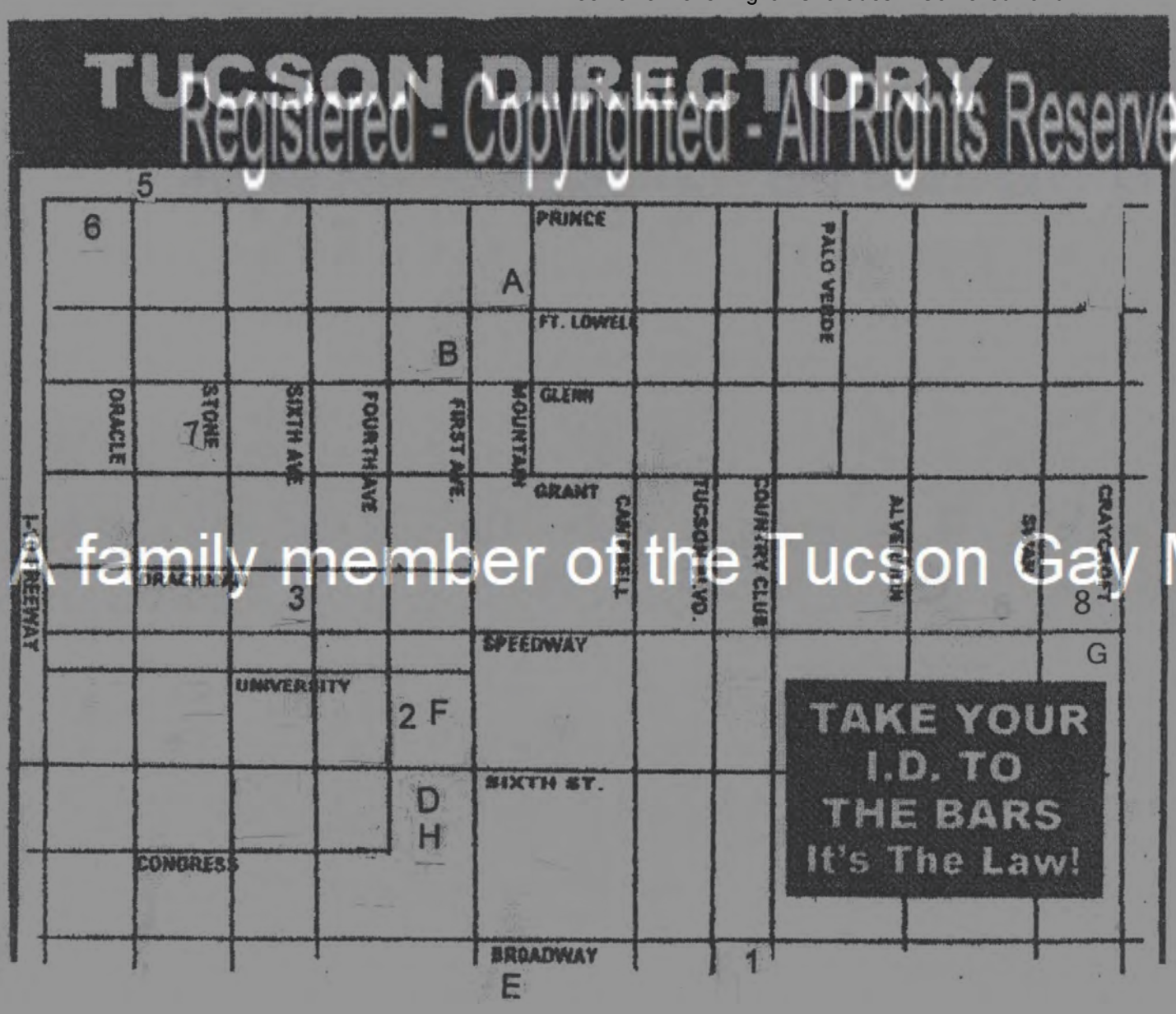

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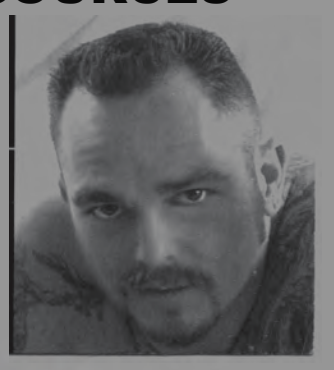

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space. For the same experience with both straight and gay men, join us at the regular Circle of Men meetings. Call Tom at 591-2828 for dates and times.

#2 Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Play Bridge with Ike and company! Call for info: 207-6264

Saturday, Feb 9
Desert Voices Chorus members hve been gathering wonderful items for their auction at the Historic Y. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. for perusal of auction tables. Tables will close at 7:30 with entertainment to follow. This is the Desert Voices only fundraiser of the year. Tilckets will go on sale at Antigone's and are also available through their box office (520)791-9662. Prices for this event are $30 (no discounts) which includes entrance to the auction, complimentary hors d-hoeuvres and spirits (beer, wine and champagne), and fun-filled entertainment from the chorus members.

#1 Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 10:00a.m. Sabino Canyon Hike. MSN members are invited to join Desert Adventures up the Canyon along the Esperero Trail to Cardiac Gap. Wonderful views, 8 miles, elevation to 1600'. Call for info: Peter 881-8276.

#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 MSN Monthly Pot Luck. Contact Marvin at 745-0304.

Sunday, Feb 10
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 6:00p.m. Dinner Out at one of Tucson's Ultra-Fabulous Buffets. For reservations and directions, contact Thom 623-2941, e-mail thomsepals@hotmail.com , or Ken at 294-6606. Please contact Thom or Ken by Sunday at Noon to facilitate reservations. Price is usually under $10. Check the Yahoo MSN on-line calendar for the scheduled place. The venue is rotated to include all parts of town, and may occasionally be held at a full-service menu restaurant.

Monday, Feb 11
Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Trivial Pursuit. Please call Lee and Merlin at 207-5336 for information and to reserve your place at this limited seating event.

Wednesday, Feb 13
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Hand and Foot with Marvin at 745-0304.

Thursday, Feb 14
#1Men'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

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COMMENTARY. . . .

Robots Need Not Apply

By Wayne Besen

The most notable legacy of the New Hampshire primary will be the soiled reputations of leading pollsters and political consultants. For at least the past two decades we have worshiped at the altar of these glorified statisticians. Now the truth is out – these know-it-alls don't know much more than we do.

The beauty of politics is its unpredictability, but the imprecise nature of this sport is often too much for some people to handle. Thus, at some point in time, the political establishment sought to turn this fine art into an exact science. An industry was created where people tried to figure out a secret formula for success. Unfortunately, all it has done has made politicians sound formulaic – and in the process turned off large swaths of the electorate.

Once the political consultants get involved, we often get milquetoast pabulum from the contenders that appeals to the lowest common denominator. The heart of the problem is that politics, like music, hits many emotional notes that can't be neatly figured out on a spreadsheet. What matters are the intangibles that ignite the imagination, and thus can't be so easily quantified.

So, it is no coincidence that Mike Huckabee – a man that until recently could not afford to take polls and had few political hacks on the payroll – was able to defeat Mitt Romney, who spent $10 million in Iowa. Unencumbered by canned talking points, Huckabee speaks from the heart and connects with the voters.

It was a blessing in disguise for him (not in the literal sense that Huckabee suggests) that he could not afford Washington consultants. They would have used focus groups to test every one of his jokes and the vast majority of his barbs would never have seen the light of day. He would have lost his groove and sounded like Romney with a southern accent – and would have likely been out of the race already as a result. Going with his instincts, he solidified his outsider status. We can only hope that his recent success and infusion of contributions will afford him the best Washington insiders money can buy.

Likewise, the pollsters in New Hampshire told us that Barack Obama was going to defeat Hillary Clinton by double digits. On the brink of defeat, however, Clinton showed her vulnerable side and voters rallied to her side. What the experts never expected was that going "off message" was the only message that would save her. When she briefly scrapped her staid talking points for spontaneous crying points, voters finally bonded with her. Clinton should consider firing her high-priced gurus and replacing them with on-sale bags of onions at the Price Club.

I'm not saying that politicians should get rid of all pollsters and political consultants. They are good at helping candidates understand the public's priorities. But, I am suggesting that the candidates can't be encouraged to ignore their gut feelings on the campaign trail. The public is hungry for honest politicians who don't need to check with three "experts" before they complete a sentence.

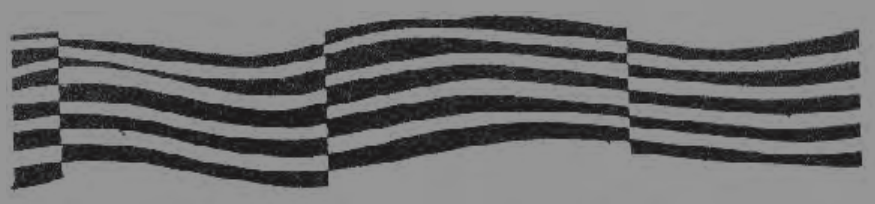
This lesson also pertains to the GLBT movement. There are some who rely too much on polling and focus groups to frame our message. They forget that focus groups only reinforce the status quo by letting us know where the public currently stands. The job of activists, however, is to move the conversation forward by telling people painful truths that they might not want to hear. When the GLBT community crafts messages on what people are already comfortable with, how does that advance the cause?

Somehow, the women's suffrage and civil right's movements managed to inspire and change the world without umpteen polls and focus groups. In fact, it seems the rhetoric was more inspiring back when every phrase wasn't poured over and parsed. Today's GLBT speeches often sound like a listless array of nothing sprinkled liberally with the word "equality." It appears the goal is not to screw up, rather than actually inspire.

▪

The three most underrated ingredients in politics are heart, originality and intuition. To stay in business, consultants must convince insecure candidates or movements not to trust themselves and rely on the "hard data" – which we have found in campaign 2008 is hardly reliable. If Iowa and New Hampshire taught us one thing it is that authenticity beats plasticity. While America may finally be ready to elect its first African American or woman President – the country seems in no mood to elect a robot. The candidate who comes across as least programmed is the one who will sit in the Oval Office.

(Wayne Besen is an author, activist, columnist and public speaker. He is the founder and executive director for Truth Wins Out, an organization that counters the ex-Gay movement and right wing disinformation campaigns. This column was reprinted from 365Gay.com)



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'No Country', 'Blood' Top Oscar Nods

HOLLYWOOD, California (Observer Update) - "No Country for Old Men" and "There Will Be Blood" led with eight Academy Awards nominations each Tuesday (January 22), among them best picture and acting honors for Daniel Day-Lewis and Javier Bardem - but whether any actors would show up was in doubt because of the writers strike, reported the Associated Press on 365Gay.com.

"No Country for Old Men," a crime saga about a drug deal gone bad, "There Will Be Blood," and a historical epic set in California's oil boom years will compete for best picture against the melancholy romance "Atonement," the pregnancy comedy "Juno" and the legal drama "Michael Clayton."

"Atonement" and "Michael Clayton" trailed with seven nominations each, including best actor for George Clooney in the title role of "Clayton." The lead players in "Atonement," Keira Knightley and James McAvoy, were shut out on nominations, however, with teenager Saoirse Ronin the only performer nominated for that film, for supporting actress.

Past Oscar winner Cate Blanchett had two nominations as best actress for the historical pageant "Elizabeth: The Golden Age," and the Bob Dylan tale "I'm Not There."

The acting categories generally played out as expected - with a few surprises, including best actress nominee Laura Linney for "The Savages" and best-actor nominee Tommy Lee Jones for "In the Valley of Elah." Neither performance had been high on the awards radar so far this Oscar season.

Best actress looks like a two-person duel between Julie Christie, an Oscar winner for "Darling," as a woman succumbing to Alzheimer's in "Away From Her" and Marion Cotillard as singer Edith Piaf in "La Vie En Rose." Both won Golden Globes, Christie for dramatic actress, Cotillard for musical or comedy actress. Yet they face strong competition from Blanchett, Linney and relative newcomer Ellen Page as a whip-smart pregnant teen in "Juno."

Day-Lewis, an Oscar winner for "My Left Foot," grabbed another best-actor nomination as a flamboyant oil baron in "There Will Be Blood," for which he could emerge as the favorite.

Along with Day-Lewis, Clooney and Jones, the other nominees were Johnny Depp, who won the Globe for musical or comedy actor as the vengeful barber in "Sweeney Todd," Viggo Mortensen as a Russian mob member in "Eastern Promises."

With a Golden Globe and universal acclaim for his performance as a relentless killer, Bardem looks like the closest thing to a front-runner this Oscar season, which is unusually wide open for best picture and other top categories.

Bardem is up against Casey Affleck, "The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford"; Philip Seymour Hoffman, "Charlie Wilson's War"; Hal Holbrook, "Into the Wild"; Tom Wilkinson, "Michael Clayton."

Joining Blanchett and Ronin in the supporting actress category were Ruby Dee for "American Gangster," Amy Ryan for "Gone Baby Gone" and Tilda Swinton for "Michael Clayton."

ABC Leads In GLAAD Award Nominations

NEW YORK CITY (Observer Update) - For the second straight year, ABC led nominees with nine nominations from the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), while CBS garnered three nods, NBC two and Fox two.

ABC's nominated shows include "Brothers & Sisters," "Ugly Betty" and "Desperate Housewives." Among cable networks, Logo received five nominations, CNN four, Bravo three and ABC Family two. Nominees for feature film in wide release include Julie Taymor's Beatles musical "Across the Universe," the fantasy "Stardust" and "The Jane Austen Book Club." Special prizes will go to singers Rufus Wainwright and Janet Jackson, MTV Networks president of entertainment Brian Graden, "My So-Called Life" actor Wilson Cruz, activist David Mixner and "The L Word" creator Ilene Chaiken.

The 19th annual GLAAD Media Awards - with 172 nominees in 40 categories - are split into four ceremonies, held in Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco and southern Florida in March, April and May. "This year's extraordinary nominees exemplify the important strides we have made as a community toward creating a truly inclusive society," GLAAD President Neil Giuliano said in a statement. The organization noted that Transgender issues were addressed in numerous news reports and documentaries as well as in the TV shows "All My Children," "Cold Case" and "Dirty Sexy Money."

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Sex Scandal Envelops Texas Sodomy Prosecutor

Chuck Rosenthal

HOUSTON, Texas (Observer Update) - The district attorney who defended the Texas law criminalizing homosexuality before the U.S. Supreme Court is desperately trying to keep his job following the discovery of e-mails containing sexually explicit videos, racist jokes and what is described as torrid love notes to his executive secretary.

Harris County District Attorney Chuck Rosenthal (R) is facing a state investigation into the emails which were discovered on his office computer. If he is found in violation of "official misconduct" he could be removed from office.

The office computer also contained evidence he had used it for political purposes. Rosenthal who is married and portrayed himself as a "family values" candidate ended his re-election campaign last week after the sexy emails to his secretary were discovered.

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Rapist Who Preyed On Men Gets 99 Years

HOUSTON, Texas (Observer Update) - A man convicted of sexually assaulting a 17-year-old boy at gunpoint was sentenced to 99 years in prison after he apologized for that attack and the rapes of four other young men, reported the Associated Press on advocate.com. In a written statement read in court, Keith Hill also said he decided to assault men rather than women because ''it would be less hard on them.'' Hill, 20, was convicted Tuesday of assaulting one of five young men he had confessed to raping during an eight-month spree in 2006 in Baytown, Texas.

Earlier, the defense had disputed his confession to police, but in the trial's punishment phase Hill said he deeply regrets the attacks and hopes his victims ''find it in their heart to forgive me.'' ''It would not happen if I did not have mental issues,'' Hill said. He added that he had prayed to both God and the devil for instruction. Hill blamed his aggressive behavior on an incident when he was 13, when a ''white guy in his 40s'' knocked on his door and said, ''We're going to have some fun.'' He said he screamed and ran away after the man touched his ''personal areas.''

The victim in the case that went to trial testified that he thought he was going to die in the attack, which began when Hill abducted him from his driveway as the victim searched for something in his car. The victim said he was blindfolded with duct tape, his hands were tied behind his back with zip ties, and he was forced in the back seat of an SUV. There the assailant forced him to perform oral sex and hit him on the back of the head with a gun eight or nine times. Another victim testified in the punishment phase that Hill had taken degrading photos of him and threatened to post them on the Internet if he talked.

Hill described feeling conflicted even as he committed the crimes, saying he struck two of his victims after assaulting them because he was ''upset at them for doing what I told them to do.'' His attorney, Laine Lindsey, had sought probation for his client, saying none of the victims claimed any ''lifelong trauma.'' Prosecutor Cameron Calligan countered, ''Nobody should have to go through what these young men did.'' The attacks spread fear in Baytown, an oil-refining town of 70,000 people about 30 miles east of Houston, and piqued the interest of those who study the criminal mind because the attacker preyed on men, something of a rarity in the world of crime. The U.S. Justice Department says one in 33 men in the United States has been a victim of a rape or attempted rape, compared with one in six women. Experts say men are far less likely to report a rape because they fear being perceived as weak.

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Washington Lawmakers Hope To Expand Domestic Partner Law

OLYMPIA, Washington (Observer Update) - Lawmakers are looking to expand the state's domestic partnership law by granting same-sex couples more than 170 of the benefits and responsibilities given to married couples, including property and guardianship rights.

Sen. Ed Murray, D-Seattle, who sponsored the original domestic partnership measure last year, is sponsoring the expansion bill in the Senate this year; Rep. Jamie Pedersen, D-Seattle, is sponsoring the measure in the House. A news conference to announce the bill was planned Tuesday at on the Capitol campus.

"It's a significant piece of legislation, but it still leaves hundreds of rights and benefits and responsibilities of marriage out," Murray said, noting that the bill only covers a fraction of the 485 rights and responsibilities married couples have.

The Drug Resistant Bacteria, And How To Protect Yourself

NEW YORK CITY (Observer Update) - Since it was widely reported that a drug-resistant staph has hit the Gay community, some of the mainstream press and no small number of anti-Gay media outlets have jumped on the most sensational parts of the story without thought to the pesky notions of actual fact, or reporting the full story.

In this light, GFN offers a brief overview of this important story to separate what we consider vital information from the salacious, and what simple things you can do to protect yourself from getting it in the first place. As reported, a new variety of staph bacteria, highly resistant to antibiotics, is spreading among Gay men in San Francisco, Boston, New York and Los Angeles.

The culprit is a form of MRSA, or methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus, a bug that was once confined to hospitalized patients but, since the late 1990s, has been circulating outside medical settings, afflicting anyone. The part of the story that made headlines, though, had to do with the high incidence in the Gay community as studied by researchers at San Francisco General Hospital, who dubbed the worst of the staph USA300.

Health officials say USA300 is resistant to the antibiotics erythromycin, clindamycin, tetracycline, Cipro-like antibiotics and drugs in the penicillin family. But it is treatable with some antibiotics, like vancomycin, an antibiotic reserved for the most serious staph infections. The concern from the medical community, though, is that these MSRA strains continue to evolve rendering more and more antibiotics ineffective.

Most MRSA infections are skin infections that may appear as pustules or boils which often are red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. These skin infections commonly occur at sites of visible skin trauma, such as cuts and abrasions, and areas of the body covered by hair (like the back of neck, groin, buttock, armpit, beard area of men). How much worse is USA300 than the other dozen distinct varieties of MSRA? Toxic proteins carried by USA300 have been implicated in infections that destroy fingers and toes or cause the rare but frighteningly fast skin- and muscle-tissue destruction attributed popularly to "flesh-eating bacteria" - a condition known as necrotizing fasciitis.

According to the San Francisco Chronicle, the study estimated that 1 in 588 residents living within the Castro neighborhood 94114 zip code area is infected with USA300, resistant to six types of commonly used antibiotics. This information prompted hysterical headlines that seemed to demonize the Gay community, and for the anti-Gay lobbyists, the very notion of sex between two men.

The truth, however, is that USA300 is a dominant form of staph infection in much of the United States. Not just Gay men. Health officials report it is commonly found in suburban housewives, executives, doctors, athletes and children, and in newborn nurseries. Yes, people with HIV infection seem especially prone to it, but it strikes people, regardless of their sexual orientation, who have no previous health problems.

MRSA infections used to be confined to hospitalized patients. But in the late 1990s, people began contracting them in community settings - in gyms, jails, schools and even at home. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention calculated last fall that drug-resistant staph was killing 19,000 Americans a year, even more than are dying of AIDS. Its most disturbing trait, say researchers, is how easily it gets around, described in at least 44 states and is now spreading in European countries.

Soap and water: the cornerstone of controlling MRSA infection - The MRSA bacteria can be transmitted through direct skin-to-skin contact as well as through contact with contaminated surfaces. The bug is quite hardy and can survive on surfaces for hours or even weeks, depending on the environment. It thrives in humid conditions, such as those found in gyms.

The good news is that it's pretty easy to avoid becoming infected with MRSA. Don't share towels at the gym and lay a fresh one down on any surfaces you sit or lay on so as not to pick up an earlier person's microbes. Follow your workout with a hot, soapy shower. Any soap will serve to dilute the bacteria; it doesn't have to be antibacterial. Wash your clothes frequently.

Transmission can also occur through sexual contact, and, as noted in the Bay Area Reporter, through the use of unclean sex toys. After any sexual activity, shower well right after; sex toys should be well cleaned to prevent the spread of other sexually transmitted diseases as well as MSRA. As previously mentioned, MRSA can hang out for long periods of time on clothes (including leather), so clean them well, and clean them frequently.

You can carry MRSA in your nose or on your skin for long periods of time without having any outward signs of infection. But you can also spread the bacteria from those sites to other parts of your body. Scratching may be enough to cause small breaks in the skin and allow an active infection to get going. So it's important to wash your hands on a regular basis to cut down on the possibility of spreading the bug around.

Credit Freeze Can Freeze Out Identity Thieves

WEST HOLLYWOOD, California (Observer Update) - Rob is, by his own description, a cautious gay man when it comes to his personal data, reported gfn.com. An avid news hound, the West Hollywood resident was well aware of the dangers of identity theft, even knew that theft of personal data was way up from last year, when it was mentioned to him for this story.

In fact, the incidence of identity theft tripled since 2006. More than 162 million records have been reported lost or stolen in 2007, triple the 49.7 million that went missing in 2006, according to USATODAY's analysis of data losses reported over the past two years.

Which is why Rob is so cautious about giving out his personal information, credit card number and social security number on almost any form except his tax returns. "Even my doctor asks for my social security number; I know it's not necessary, so I don't give it," Rob said.

"I don't shop on any merchant site unless I know them, and even then, I read reviews of any site before I do business with them," said the licensed cosmetologist.

Despite his cautious nature, Rob (who asked that his last name not be revealed for this article), Rob received a letter from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for Professional Licensure with the following ominous greeting:

"[We] regret to inform you that your social security number [was] inadvertently included on computer disks sent to individuals requesting information about the Department of Professional Licensure. It appears the disks included social security numbers and names..."

While the disks were subsequently recovered, or so claimed the letter, and they didn't believe his information was compromised, they suggested Rob place fraud alerts with the three big credit reporting agencies (more on that below).

Weeks after the incident, Rob says he's incredulous that this could happen so easily and randomly. "It makes you a little paranoid," said Rob, who now lives in Los Angeles, but had his cosmetology license issued in the state of Massachusetts, where he grew up, back in 1990. "It made me realize, any confidential material, no matter what you sign, may end up compromised one way or another."

While it's little consolation, Rob is hardly alone.

Last year, news stories written about data losses included 98 companies, 85 schools, 80 government agencies and 39 hospitals and clinics, according to tech security Website Attrition.org

The letter Rob received suggested he place fraud alerts with the credit reporting agencies, Equifax, Experian, and Transunion. So while the letter assured him that his personal information had been retrieved and said to be secure again, his concerns were hardly allayed.

"Just getting the letter and suggesting I contact the credit reports didn't instill any confidence that this kind of thing wouldn't happen again," said the cosmetologist. "I called all three reporting agencies, then I logged online, as they instructed, and put up three 90-day credit alerts. The awful part is, even as I filled out their forms, I felt unsure. After this incident, I didn't feel an overwhelming sense of confidence going to their Website, knowing all my information was going off into cyberspace."

A credit freeze bars anyone from having access to your credit report and credit score without your permission, which means identity thieves will have a tough time opening an account in your name. Even if they know your name, date of birth, and Social Security number, lenders generally won't issue new credit without first seeing a credit report.

To put a freeze on your file, you'll have to send a certified letter to each of the three major credit bureaus: Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion, or this can be done online. In most states, the service is free for identity-theft victims who provide a police report or a copy of a warning letter, similar to the one Rob received. Otherwise, you'll pay about $10 at each credit bureau, unless your state mandates a lower fee.

While the freezes are effective, they are a pain in the rear if you're shopping for a mortgage, auto loan, insurance, or a new credit card. That's because you'll have to temporarily lift the freeze using a pin code each time you apply for a new line of credit. Companies you already do business with, though, can still access your report; the freeze only affects new lines of credit.

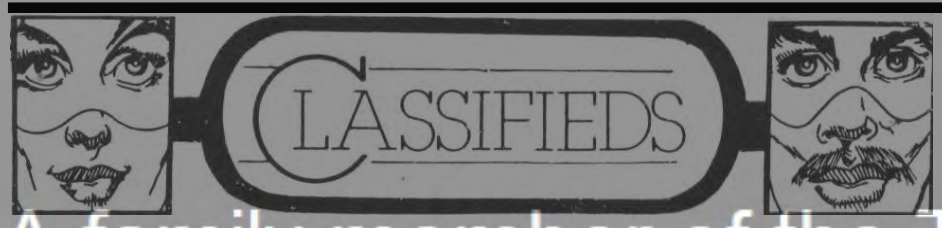
To check freeze fees in your state and get instructions on how to place a credit freeze, go to consumersunion.org/securityfreeze.htm.

Ending the violence.

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

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

WINGSPAN
Southern Arizona's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center
www.wingspan.org



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CLASSIFIED ADS WILL NOT BE TAKEN BY PHONE

SERVICES

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Let me keep your clothes fitting properly and in good repair. Experienced - Economical - Prompt. Merle Hudson, (520)888-7264 in Tucson.
1235

FOR RENT

1 BEDROOM STUDIO. Tile floors, AC, Cable & phone hook up, on bus line. 1 person, no pets. $495/mo includes all utilities. Gay Friendly. 293-9198 or 247-8268 1228

MASSAGE

QUALITY PROFESSIONAL TANTRIC MASSAGE! STRONG healing hands leave you more ALIVE! Take a REAL chance. Professionally trained and licensed - - A exceptional experience for 26 ears. Marc - 881-4582 from 8 AM - 8 PM. 1228

PROFESSIONAL THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE FOR MEN. In-Call Only. Private Studio near Sabino Canyon. www.massagemenu.com for more information. Steve - CMT 247-8139
1234

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DAILY BAR CALENDAR

SUNDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am; L Word Sundays. L Word shows at 7pm on two 51" flatscreens. Beer Bust 5pm-10pm. DJ HILL following til 2am.

COLORS - Open 10am - 10pm Champagne Brunch 10am - 2pm with choice of complimentary mimosa, Bloody Mary or Screwdriver included. Happy Hour 4-7pm $3.50 Skyy Cocktails, $2.75 Domestics and well. Appetizers ½ price 4-6. Brunch served until 2pm. Full menu served until 10;m. Nightly dinner specials.

HOWL AT THE MOON - Open 11am. Wear an NFL team t-shirt or jersey and get 50¢ off your drink. Smirnoff Vodkas $2.50. Texas Hold'Em Poker at 3 and 6 pm. Play for points and prizes - no cash involved. $1 hot dogs, $2 chili dogs during game. SIN Nite Drink Discounts for Service Industry employees with ID or payroll receipt. Latin Dance Music 8:30 to close.

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

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

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

YARD DOG - Open 10am - 2am. Mimosas & Bloody Mary Bar (Build your own)

MONDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Poker Pub...FREE. No Happy Hour on this day. Games at 6:30 and again at 9:00pm. 21 and up.

COLORS - Open 4-10pm. Happy Hour 4-7. $3.50 Skyy Cocktails, $2.75 well & domestics. Appetizers ½ price 4-6m. Full menu served until 10pm.

HOWL AT THE MOON - Open 3pm. Happy Hour all day $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. $3.50 sm. Pitcher/$5.50 lg. Texas Hold-Em Poker 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. Beer Bust 4-8pm.

TUESDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. No Happy Hour on this day. Spin Tuesdays with Karaoke. Spin the drink wheel every hour for incredible drink prices...nothing over $2!! Karaoke at 8pm. 21 and up.

COLORS - Open 4-10pm. Happy Hour 4-7 $3.50 Skyy cocktails, $2.75 Domestics and well and ½ price appetizers 4-6. Full menu served until 10pm.

HOWL AT THE MOON - Open 3pm. $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints.$3.50 sm. Pitcher/$5.50 lg. Pitcher. $2.50 well margaritas and tequila. 75¢ off call tequilas. Ladies Only Texas Hold-Em Poker at 6:00 p.m. Play for points and prizes - no cash involved. $2 U-call-it drink special 9pm to midnight (some restrictions apply).

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. .Beer Bust 4-8pm.

WEDNESDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. 1/2 Price Happy Hour til 8pm. Wild Wednesdays. DJHill Spins til 2am. This is an 18 and over event..

COLORS - Open 4-10pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm, $3.50 Skyy cocktails, $2.75 Domestics and ½ price appetizers 4-6. Full menu served until 10pm. Nightly dinner specials. Every Wednesday is "Cabaret Open Mic Night". Sign up at 6:30 - Show starts at 7. MC: Cabaret Diva Liz McMahon. Music Director: Marilyn Harris.

HOWL AT THE MOON -Open 3pm. 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. 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,

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

WOODY'S - Open Noon til 2am; Service Industry Day - $1 off all drinks except schnapps and draft. 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 Beer Bust 4-8pm.

THURSDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. 1/2 Price Happy Hour til 8pm. 20/20 Thursday's a night guaranteed to F*UCK,, with your vision!! $20 at the door we take care of the rest (premium top shelf not included). DJHill spins hip hop & R&B all night. 21'n up

COLORS - Open 4pm-10pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm,$3.50 Skyy cocktails, $2.75 Domestics and Well and ½ price appetizers. Full menu served until 10. Nightly dinner specials.. .

HOWL AT THE MOON - Open 3pm. 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. Starting 1/17/08 TNT Thursday Night Temptation for 18 & over. Eat-drink-dance Music with DJ Shorty v2.0

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. Beer Bust 4-8pm..

FRIDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. NOCHE de CALOR. 1/2 price Happy Hour til 8pm. Every Friday DJ Hill spins the best norteno, Cumbias, Salsa, Bachata Reggaeton, Rock en Espanol and anything else that makes you shake your hips!!

COLORS - Open 4pm-midnight. Happy Hour 4-7pm, $3.50 Skyy cocktails, $2.75 Domestics and Well and ½ price appetizers. Finlandia martinis $5.50 open to close! Full menu served until 10. "Hot Jazz, Cool Martinis" with Susan Artemis & Craig Faltin 6:30 to 9:30. "Guys & Dolls" drag show hosted by Lucinda Holliday at 10pm. Nightly dinner specials. Drink specials during the drag show.

HOWL AT THE MOON - Open 3pm. 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 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)Enjoy the sounds of Simon Crown 6-9 p.m.; Martini Happy Hour 5-8pm-$1 off all call Martinis; Back Pocket Patio Bar open 8-close. Watch for special events.

YARD DOG - Open daily 8am. Beer Bust 4-8pm. Patio Bar Opens 8pm

SATURDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm - 2am. $2.00 U-Call-Its til 11pm. Saturday night dance party with DJ Hill9pm. Patio Bar opens at 10:30pm.

COLORS - Open 4pm-10pm, Happy Hour 4-7pm, $3.50 Skyy cocktails, $2.75 Domestics and Well, ½ price appetizers 4-6. Pianist/Vocalist Marilyn Harris 6:30-9:30. Full menu served until 10. Nightly dinner specials.

HOWL AT THE MOON - Open at 2pm. Happy Hour 2-8pm, $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/ Bunny FuFu 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. Patio Bar Opens 8pm.

BAR CALENDAR Of Upcoming Events

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23
WOODY'S - College Greek Night.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 26
COLORS - A new art show opens tonight. Abstracts and mixed media by Rich Sieferd

HOWL AT THE MOON - DJ Shorty is here playing Latin and Dance Mix. No Cover.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30
WOODY'S - Twister Party 9:00 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1
IBT'S - Parti Gras beginning of a big Mardi Gras. See Tuesday Feb. 5

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3
WOODY'S - Super Bowl Party.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5
THE BIZ - Fat Tuesday. Come celebrate and enjoy Karaoke at 9:00 p.m.

IBT'S - Fat Tuesday. Join the crowd for fabulous music, drink specials, beads and more!

WOODYS - Mardi Gras Party. Be bad 4 beads and Woody's Bad Boy Dancers.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9
THE BIZ Mardi Gras Ball. Come dressed in your best Mardi Gras attire. Show your boobs - get some beads! Drink Specials all night. DJ Hill til 2:00 a.m.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14
IBT'S - Valentine's Day Red Party. Bar staff in their underwear; Go-Go Boys, drink specials and DJ Hurricane spinning the hottest top 40 and R&B. Come, feel the love.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26
IBT'S - Janet Jackson CD Release Party. Listen to her new album and enter to win the CD.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 29
IBT'S - Leap Year Party. A party 4 years in the making.

FDA Approves HIV Drug Entravine

WASHINGTON, D.C (Observer Update) - Tablets of the drug etravirine were approved Friday (January 18) by the Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of HIV infection in adults who have failed treatment with other antiretrovirals, 365Gay.com reported. Sold under the trade name Intelence, etravirine is a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor, or NNRTI, that helps to block an enzyme that the human immunodeficiency virus needs to multiply, the FDA said. It was approved for use in combination with other anti-HIV medications.

Etravirine can reduce the amount of HIV in the blood and increase white blood cells that help fight off other infections, the FDA said. It also may reduce the risk of death or infections that can occur with a weakened immune system. The government gave etravirine a priority review, a status granted to medications aimed at treating serious or life-threatening conditions. Tibotec Pharmaceuticals Ltd., a unit of Johnson & Johnson, said last July that it had requested etravirine be placed on a fast track for review.

"This is another significant new product for many HIV-infected patients who are NNRTI-resistant and whose infections are not responding to currently available medications," said Dr. Debra B. Birnkrant, director of the FDA's Division of Antiviral Products.

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NOTICES - COMMUNITY - NOTICES

WRITE NOW is an LGBT writers' group that meets at Wingspan, twice monthly, on the 2nd and 4th Sunday afternoons, 2:30 to 4:00. For more info please call 323-2465 or email evynrubin@yahoo.com.

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

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

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

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

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

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

T-SQUARES Lesbian and Gay Square Dance Club, 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 19 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, contract TEAM ARIZONA at their website: teamarizona.org

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

THE MEN'S MASSAGE GROUP meets the 2nd 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 OUToberFEST. Inquiries about support groups and individual needs should be directed to Wingspan and other local agencies listed here. For more information call 622-3200 or visit the TPI website at www.tucsonpride.com

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

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

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

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.

THIS WAY OUT, 1/2 hour national GLBT show. 4:30 p.m. daily on 91.3 FM, Community Radio KXCI.

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

SOUTHERN ARIZONA GENDER ALLIANCE (SAGA). The Southwest's largest transgender and gender-diversity advocacy organization. Speakers and panelists available. General meetings monthly on the 1st Mondays at 7pm; Dezert Girlz (MTF Support) meets 2nd Mondays at 7pm; Dezert Boyz (FTM Support) meets 3rd Tuesdays at 7pm. Also serving partners, youth, intersex, service providers and allies. Call (520)624-1779 x26 for more info.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

REVEILLE 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 toSAGE-Tucson-subscribe @yahoogroups.com. See you on the trails.

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

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

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Study: Same Sex Couples As Committed, Happier Than Straight Couples

NEW YORK CITY (Observer Update) - Same-sex couples are just as committed in their romantic relationships as heterosexual couples and may be happier, say researchers who have studied the quality of adult relationships and healthy development, Medical News Today reported on 365Gay.com.

Their finding disputes the stereotype that couples in same-sex relationships are not as committed as their heterosexual counterparts and are therefore not as psychologically healthy.

These results are from two studies featured in the January issue of Developmental Psychology, published by the American Psychological Association. This issue includes a special section that examines sexual orientation across the lifespan.

Both studies compared same-sex couples with opposite-sex couples on a number of developmental and relationship factors. The first study examined whether committed same-sex couples differ from engaged and married opposite-sex couples in how well they interacted and how satisfied they were with their partners. Evidence has shown that positive interactions improve the quality of relationships in ways that foster healthy adult development.

Researchers from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign compared 30 committed Gay male and 30 committed Lesbian couples with 50 engaged heterosexual couples and 40 older married heterosexual couples, as well as with dating heterosexual couples. All the partners responded to a questionnaire that documented how positively they interacted with one another on a day to day basis. The couples were also observed during a laboratory task and were monitored for distress by skin conductance and heart rate.

Results showed that same-sex relationships were similar to those of opposite-sex couples in many ways. All had positive views of their relationships but those in the more committed relationships (Gay and straight) resolved conflict better than the heterosexual dating couples. And Lesbian couples worked together especially harmoniously during the laboratory tasks.

The notion that committed same-sex relationships are "atypical, psychologically immature, or malevolent contexts of development was not supported by our findings," said lead author Glenn I. Roisman, PhD. "Compared with married individuals, committed Gay males and Lesbians were not less satisfied with their relationships."

Furthermore, said Roisman, "Gay males and Lesbians in this study were generally not different from their committed heterosexual counterparts on how well they interacted with one another, although some evidence emerged the Lesbian couples were especially effective at resolving conflict."

In the second study, researchers from the University of Washington, San Diego State University and the University of Vermont wanted to examine how sexual orientation and legal status affected relationship quality. To do so, they followed 65 male and 138 female same-sex couples with civil unions, 23 male and 61 female same-sex couples not in civil unions and 55 heterosexual married couples over a three-year period. One member of each heterosexual couple was a sibling to a member of a civil union couple.

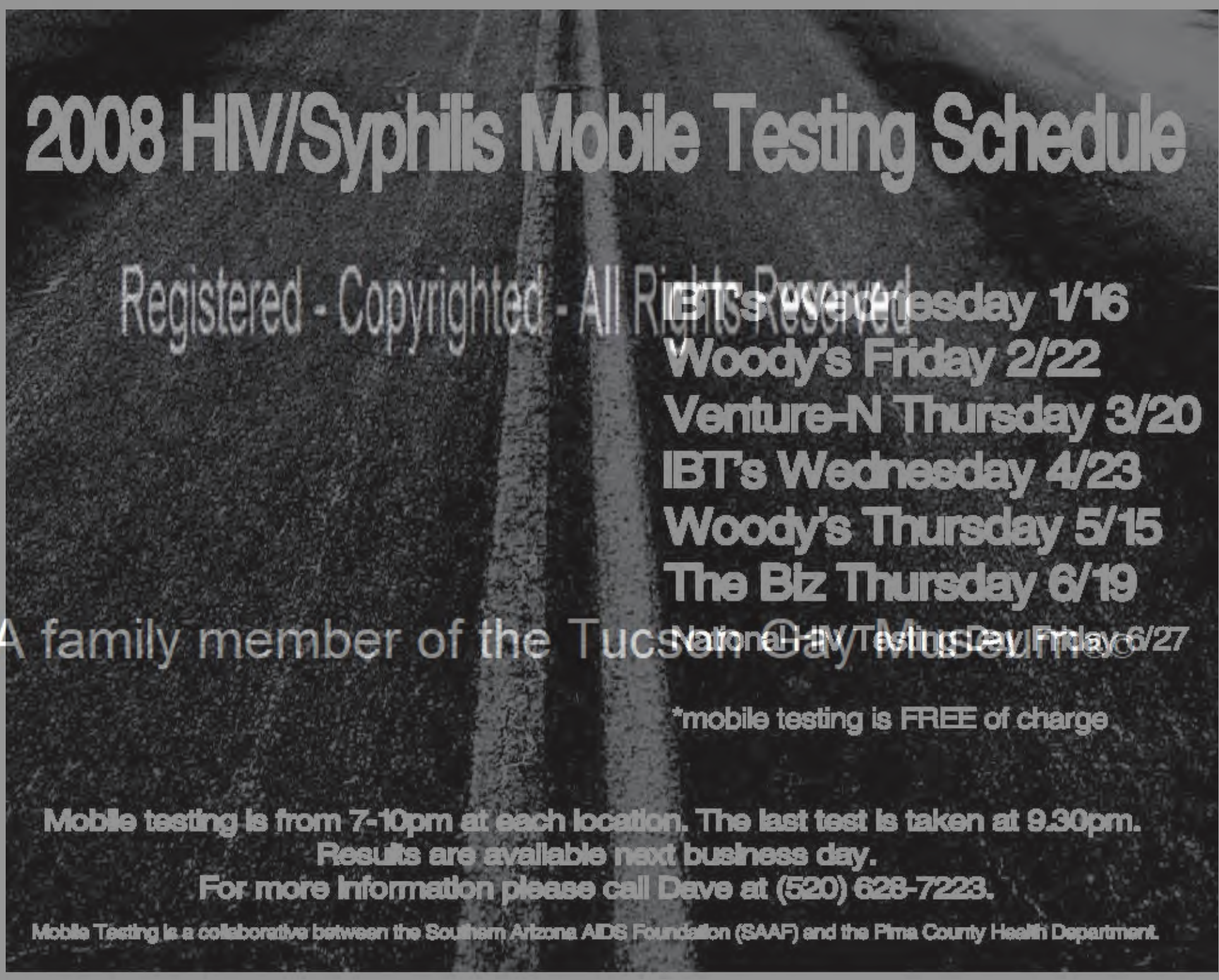
Both partners in all of the couples answered questions regarding their demographics, status of their relationship, number of children, sexual behavior, frequency of contact with their parents with and without their partners and perceived social support. Partners in same-sex relationships also answered questions regarding disclosure of their sexual orientation to their family, peers and work associates.

The researchers found that same-sex couples were similar to heterosexual couples on most relationships variables, and that the legalized status of a relationship did not seem to be the overriding factor affecting same-sex relationships.

Despite the legal status of their relationships, the civil union couples showed no differences on any of the relationship measures from the same-sex couples who were in committed relationships but not in civil unions. "This may be because those couples in Vermont who sought out the legal protection of a civil union might have legalized their relationship more for symbolic value than for commitment reasons, which did not affect their day-to-day interactions," said lead author Kimberly F. Balsam, PhD.

However, the same sex-couples who were not in civil unions were more likely to have ended their relationships compared to those couples in same-sex civil unions or heterosexual marriages. This suggests that the protections afforded by a legalized relationship may impact same-sex relationships, something the study's authors plan to follow up on in future research, said Balsam.

The findings also showed that same-sex couples, regardless of civil union status, were more satisfied with their relationships compared to married heterosexual couples. Same-sex couples reported more positive feelings toward their partners and less conflict than heterosexual married couples, said the authors. They theorized that there may be societal pressures and norms, as well as the presence of legal status as a couple, which may contribute to heterosexual couples staying together even when they are not happy. Alternatively, most long-term same-sex couples have to stay together by their own will and hard work since they don't have society's forces on their side, Balsam added.

This was the first study to follow same-sex couples in legalized unions over a period of time. This type of design allows the researchers to monitor changes in the relationships and compare them with changes experienced by both same-sex couples not in civil unions and heterosexual couples. All the couples were comparable with respect to race/ethnicity and age at the time of the study.

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