Observing Tucson And The Greater Arizona Community

OBSERVER

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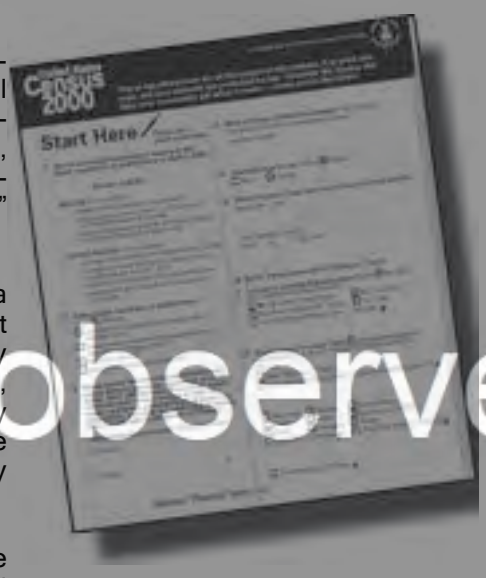
2010 Census Won't Recognize Same-Sex Marriage Responses



WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - The U.S. Census Bureau will actively edit the responses of same-sex couples on the 2010 Census, classifying all legally married same-sex couples as "unmarried partners," advocate.com reported.

"We are just showing the data published in a way that is consistent with the way every other agency publishes their data," Martin O'Connell, chief of the Census Bureau's Fertility and Family Statistics Branch, told the San Jose Mercury News Sunday (July 13)

The Census Bureau will be operating under the 1996 federal Defense of Marriage Act, which "instructs all federal agencies only to recognize opposite-sex marriages for the purposes of enacting any agency programs." According to O'Connell, the Bureau has not encountered any federal agency that tracks data on legally married same-sex couples.

Reached for comment by The Advocate, Gary Gates, senior research fellow at UCLA's Williams Institute, believes that this situation "demonstrates an unintended consequence of the Defense of Marriage Act." The Census Bureau, which enjoys a "well-deserved reputation as the gold standard of data collection," now finds itself "forced to change legal and accurate responses to inaccurate responses," Gates said.

The changes that will be made to Census responses will make it difficult to count married couples in states where same-sex marriages are legal, and impossible for married LGBT couples with children to be recognized as families on the Census. According to Census Bureau definitions, a "family" consists of two or more people related by birth, adoption, or marriage. "[A married LGBT person will] get counted as a single parent," Gates said.

"It's shameful," Shannon Minter, legal director for the National Center for Lesbian Rights, said of the Census policy. Minter told the Mercury News, "It really is something out of Orwell."

DADT May Go To Supreme Court

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - Federal appeals courts recently have come down on both sides of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy on homosexuals serving in the military, raising the possibility that the Supreme Court might take up the issue, reported the Army Times. In Boston on June 10, the 1st Circuit Court of Appeals essentially ruled in support of the policy. It upheld a 2006 decision by a lower court that dismissed a lawsuit filed by 12 former service members who said they had been improperly discharged because the policy violated their right to due process and equal protection under the law by banning them from the military simply for being Gay.

"Although the wisdom behind the statute at issue here may be questioned by some, in light of the special deference we grant congressional decision-making in this area, we conclude that the challenges must be dismissed," Judge Jeffrey Howard said, writing for the majority. The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, which filed the challenge on behalf of the 12 plaintiffs, clearly disagreed. "We are disappointed in the court's apparent failure to apply the requisite heightened level of judicial scrutiny to the facts of this case," said Aubrey Sarvis, SLDN's executive director. The decision also seemed to run counter to a late May ruling by the 9th Circuit, based in San Francisco. Although not a clear-cut win for opponents of don't ask, don't tell, that court did reinstate a lawsuit, rejected by a lower court, that a former Air Force major filed after she was told she would be discharged for homosexual activity.

The court essentially found that the military cannot discharge service members just because they are Gay without proving that they would harm good order and discipline and unit cohesion. But the 1st Circuit, despite siding with the government, agreed with the 9th Circuit that the don't ask, don't tell policy should receive "tougher judicial scrutiny ... because the policy disadvantages a defined group of people based on their involvement in constitutionally protected conduct," Arthur Leonard, a New York Law School professor, wrote in a June 10 commentary. The 1st Circuit ruling could take the issue to the highest court in the land, according to a leading military law specialist. "I suppose an effort will be made to take it to the Supreme Court," said Eugene Fidell, a Washington, D.C.-based attorney and president of the National Institute of Military Justice.

Whether that will happen remains to be seen. The plaintiffs and their legal team from the SLDN are "weighing all options in light of the court's decision," according to an SLDN statement. The Air Force, in essentially losing the 9th Circuit case, also could appeal to the Supreme Court, legal experts said. The don't ask, don't tell policy, enacted by Congress in November 1993 and implemented by the Pentagon in February 1994, prohibits commanders from asking service members about their sexuality. It allows homosexuals to serve as long as they keep their sexuality a secret and do not engage in homosexual acts. Separation is mandatory for those who state publicly that they are homosexual and affirm that they have engaged in homosexual behavior.

Supporters of the policy say homosexuality is incompatible with military service and that allowing Gays to openly serve would degrade unit cohesion and "good order and discipline." Many Gay activists say it's a flawed policy that requires Gays to deny their sexual orientation and provides no protection if they want to speak in confidence about their orientation to another military member. Critics also say the policy unnecessarily robs the military of service members in critical skills, with about 300 linguists among the nearly 12,000 troops discharged under the law since it was enacted. The Pentagon, which began tracking such discharges in 1997, says that through 2007, it had separated 9,888 service members under the policy. That's an increase of 627 over the 2006 total, Pentagon spokeswoman Cynthia Smith said.

McCain: Gay And Lesbian Adoption Not 'Normal'

NEW YORK CITY (Observer Update) - In a revealing interview with the New York Times, Sunday, July 13, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, Arizona Sen. John McCain an adoptive parent himself – declared that he opposed the right of Gay and Lesbian couples to adopt children, even if it meant leaving children in orphanages:

Q: President Bush believes that Gay couples should not be permitted to adopt children. Do you agree with that?

McCain: I think that we've proven that both parents are important in the success of a family so, no I don't believe in Gay adoption.

Q: Even if the alternative is the kid staying in an orphanage, or not having parents.

McCain: I encourage adoption and I encourage the opportunities for people to adopt children I encourage the process being less complicated so they can adopt as quickly as possible. And Cindy and I are proud of being adoptive parents.

Q: But your concern would be that the couple should a traditional couple –

McCain: Yes.

Senator McCain's position is an extreme one, considering that only one state, Florida, forbids all forms of Gay adoption.

A March 2007 study estimated that 65,000 adopted children are living with a Gay or Lesbian parent, and determined that a national ban on LGBT foster care could cost anywhere from $87 million to $130 million.

Is S.C. 'So Gay'? State Says 'No Way' Dumps Campaign

CHARLESTON, South Carolina (Observer Update) - South Carolina's top tourism agency has canceled an overseas advertising campaign targeting Gay tourists.

The campaign, tied to Gay pride week celebrations in London, included ads that proclaimed "South Carolina is so Gay." A handful of other U.S. destinations joined the campaign, including Atlanta, Boston and New Orleans.

After learning the state had agreed to spend tax money on the campaign – and spurred by a post on The Palmetto Scoop blog – the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism said it would not pay the tour operator. Greenville Sen. David Thomas called for an audit, after learning of the matter.

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UPDATE

Dr. Anne Bradford Stericker At Dezert Partnerz, July 20

TUCSON (Observer Update) - The July meeting. Sunday, July 20, 2 - 4:00 p.m. at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th, of the Dezert Partnerz group will feature a presentation by Dr. Anne Bradford Stericker, a Tucson therapist who has provided support and counseling to the Transgender community for over twenty years.

Dr. Stericker is the principal mental health specialist dealing with Transgender issues in Tucson. She will be prepared to talk about some common challenges couples face, what helps couples survive the upheaval of a transition, and sexual challenges for couples with a transgender partner.

Dezert Partnerz is a SAGA support group for people who share their lives with Trans people. It meets every Sunday afternoon from 2 to 4 pm. Meetings are also be open to friends, allies, and parents of Trans people. For more information, go online to wingspan.org/content/SAGA.php or E-mail: sharon@sagatucson.org.

GLBT Commission Meeting August 19

TUCSON (Observer Update) - The next meeting of the City of Tucson Commission on GLBT Issues will hold their next meeting Tuesday, August 19, 5:30 p.m. at the EOO Conference Room, First Floor, 100 N. Stone.

Tucson's GLBT Commission's purpose and mission is to foster conditions that promote the welfare of GLBT people of metropolitan Tucson, Arizona through education, advocacy and collaborative and advisory relationships with government, community organizations, businesses and individuals. The City of Tucson Commission on GLBT Issues was originally formed in November 1998 as a mayoral task force, and became an independent city commission in July 1999.

For more information, go online to tucsonglbtcommission.org/.

Turnabout For TIHAN Benefit Show , Aug. 24

TUCSON (Observer Update) - "Turnabout for TIHAN" is an annual show put on by Tucson's LGBT clubs and their bar staff. The staff request donations from their friends and customers in order to do a "turn-about" from male to female (or vice versa) and put on a fabulous show to benefit the work of TIHAN, the Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network (tihan.org)

The theme for this year's "Turnabout for TIHAN" benefit show is "Stonewall," and you can imagine the glitz, the glamour, and fabulous splendor of it all! It's one of the biggest drag shows of the year, and takes place on Sunday, August 24 at the Doubletree Hotel at 445 South Alvernon Way. The doors open at 4:30 p.m., and the show starts at 6:00 p.m. Tickets are only $15.00. Admission includes the show and finger food hors d'oeuvres at 4:30 p.m. The evening also features a raffle with some great prizes. Participating bars include: Colors, Howl at the Moon, IBT's, Woody's, and Yard Dog Saloon.

For more information on how you can participate in the fun, contact Scott Blades at (520) 299-6647. Tickets are on sale now through the TIHAN office (credit card orders can be taken), or at participating bars.

Community Conversation: Home Matters: Immigatin And LGBT Life, Aug. 2

TUCSON (Observer Update) - On Saturday, August 2, Wingspan will be holding their next in their Community Conversation series, Home Matters: Immigration and LGBT Life.

This conversation will take place from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th Street.

For more information, (520) 624-1779.

IN MEMORIAM

"Vangie" Ilene Clevenger

Evangeline "Vangie" Ilene Clevenger died July 4 at the home of her sister in White Lake, WI, ending a very courageous 7 year battle with cancer. She was born March 7,1948 in Columbus, GA and lived in Tucson, AZ for 35 years. She was a banker by trade, ending her career as Senior Vice President, Computer Operations Division Head at Arizona Bank. Vangie's passion was singing and karaoke, and believed that to be her purpose in life. Along with performances in person, she made several CDs to share and bring joy to others. She is survived by her sister, Jan of White Lake, WI, brother, Arlen of Maumelle, AR, several nephews and nieces, aunt, uncle, several cousins; and many very special friends in Tucson. Vangie wished no formal service, but rather a celebratory gathering of those who knew and loved her, in the spirit of a birthday party, with singing. A celebration of life will be hosted on July 19, 2008, 3:00 pm at Howl at the Moon at 915 W. Prince Tucson AZ 85705. Details contact Ron 403-7978 or Triny 331-9097.

Suzanne Westenhoefer At The Rialto August 22

TUCSON - Trailblazing comedian Suzanne Westenhoefer will be performing on August 22, 8:00 p.m. at the Rialto Theatre, 318 E. Congress.

Suzanne vaulted onto the national comedy scene in the early 1990's as the first openly Gay comedian and she has been thrilling both mainstream and Gay and Lesbian audiences ever since. Her acclaimed career includes appearances on popular late night television shows as well as performances across the U.S. in popular theatres, clubs, and fundraisers.

Fearless. Bold. Sparkly. Hilarious. That's Suzanne Westenhoefer in a nutshell. She's made a career out of telling the truth. And, the truth is, life is funny (and no one is off limits). From her sister's obsession with "Passion of the Christ" to her girlfriend's Herculean thighs, Suzanne tells stories that leave audiences in stitches. Suzanne works mostly unscripted, so when she hits the stage it's an unpredictable, original night of comedy magic.

For tickets or more information, either call (520) 740-1000 or go online to rialtotheatre.com.

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Senior Pride / EON Poetry Reading And Open Mic. July 26

TUCSON (Observer Update) - On Saturday, July 26, 2:30 - 4:00 p.m., Senior Pride and Eon will meet in the library at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th St., surrounded by books and words and have some intergenerational poetry fun.

This is not a slam, no judges, no competition. It's a chance to share your favorite poems/poets with the Wingspan community and everyone is invited. We'll have two featured readers and then time for open mic. If you want to read (or recite) contact Penelope to get on the list. All ages encouraged to participate.

For more information, contact Penelope Starr, (520) 624-1779.

RainbowFamilies Bowling July 20

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Come join Rainbow Families for two hours of bowling at Lucky Strike Bowl, 4015 E Speedway (just east of Alvernon), July 20, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

The cost is $6.49 per bowler and includes two hours of unlimited bowling and shoe rental and everyone is welcome.

For more information, contact Peter Lake (520) 245-6659.

The Observer Blog Going Strong

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Ever wondered what's going on after you've read the print edition of Tucson's weekly LGBT newspaper?

Go online to tucsonobserver.blogspot.com and read up and comment on the posts dealing with latest comings and goings of concern to Tucson and Southern Arizona's LGBT community.

The Observer blog also provide links to the candidates who support the community, links to register to vote or listen to Equality Arizona radio or Out In The West online.

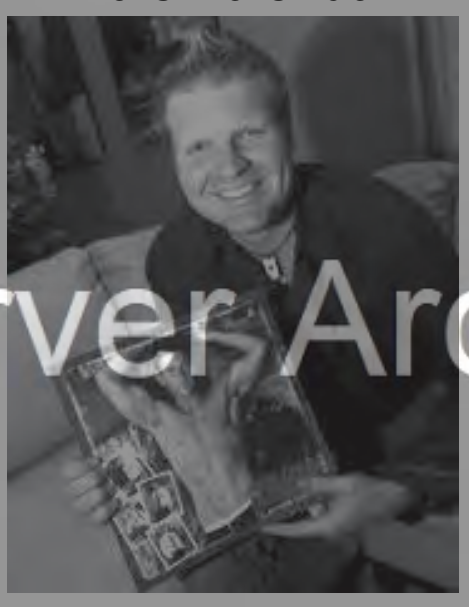
'Art Of Being Straight' Finds 20-Something Credibility

HOLLYWOOD, California - A low-key comedy high on charm and credible twentysomething observation, Jesse Rosen's debut feature, "The Art of Being Straight," stars the writer-director as a possibly-coming-out newbie in Los Angeles whose puzzling over his sexual identification isn't helped by his jokily insensitive straight buds.

Appealingly played, nicely executed pic has a shot at arthouse distribution in addition to select DVD/cable sales and further fest travel. Twenty-three-year-old John (Rosen) has just moved to L.A. from New York, ostensibly "taking a break" from his longtime girlfriend.

He moves in with college bro Andy (Jared Grey), whose pals incessantly do that kind of "That is so Gay" banter that's essentially harmless – unless you're the only Gay guy in the room. (Acknowledging there actually is a distinction, one eventually queries "Is it 'Gay' like it's lame or 'Gay' like it's homosexual?").

Mormon Excommunicated For Sexy Male Calendar



LAS VEGAS (Observer Update) - The creator of a calendar that featured shirtless Mormon missionaries was excommunicated after a disciplinary meeting with local church leaders in Las Vegas.

Chad Hardy said he bears no ill will toward the council of elders from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. "I felt like I spoke my truth," the 31-year-old entertainment entrepreneur said. "Bottom-line, they still felt the calendar is inappropriate and not the image that the church wants to have."

"Men on a Mission," which has sold nearly 10,000 copies at $14.99 each, included pictures of 12 returned missionaries wearing black slacks, but not their trademark white shirts, in modest poses. The men also were photographed in traditional missionary garb and share their religious beliefs in biographical sketches.

California Hotelier Boycotted Over Marriage Initiative

SAN DIEGO (Observer Update)- Grand Hyatt San Diego owner Doug Manchester donated $125,000 to a Nov. 4 ballot measure that would revoke same-sex marriage in California, reported advocate.com. Gay rights and union advocates have begun boycotting the Manchester Grand Hyatt in San Diego after its owner, Doug Manchester, donated $125,000 to a ballot measure that would end same-sex marriage in California, the San Diego Union-Tribune reported.

The hotelier's contribution to the proposed constitutional amendment on the Nov. 4 ballot struck a nerve among supporters of marriage equality. Fred Karger, an organizer of the boycott, told the Union-Tribune, "This is someone who is giving an exorbitant amount of money to write discrimination into the Constitution for the very first time." Activists were joined by Unite Here Local 30, which represents 4,500 San Diego-area hotel and restaurant workers.

The Manchester Grand Hyatt is not unionized, the Union-Tribune reported. In response to the union's boycott, SignOnSanDiego reported, local "ex-Gay" figure James Hartline started one of his own: He has asked Christians not to tip waiters at San Diego's unionized establishments. Manchester told the Union-Tribune he decided to support Proposition 8 after being told that schools teaching that marriage is between a man and a woman could be sued for discrimination. Despite referring to his Catholic belief that marriage is between a man and a woman, he told the Union-Tribune that his hotels and restaurants would welcome Gay and Lesbian clientele.

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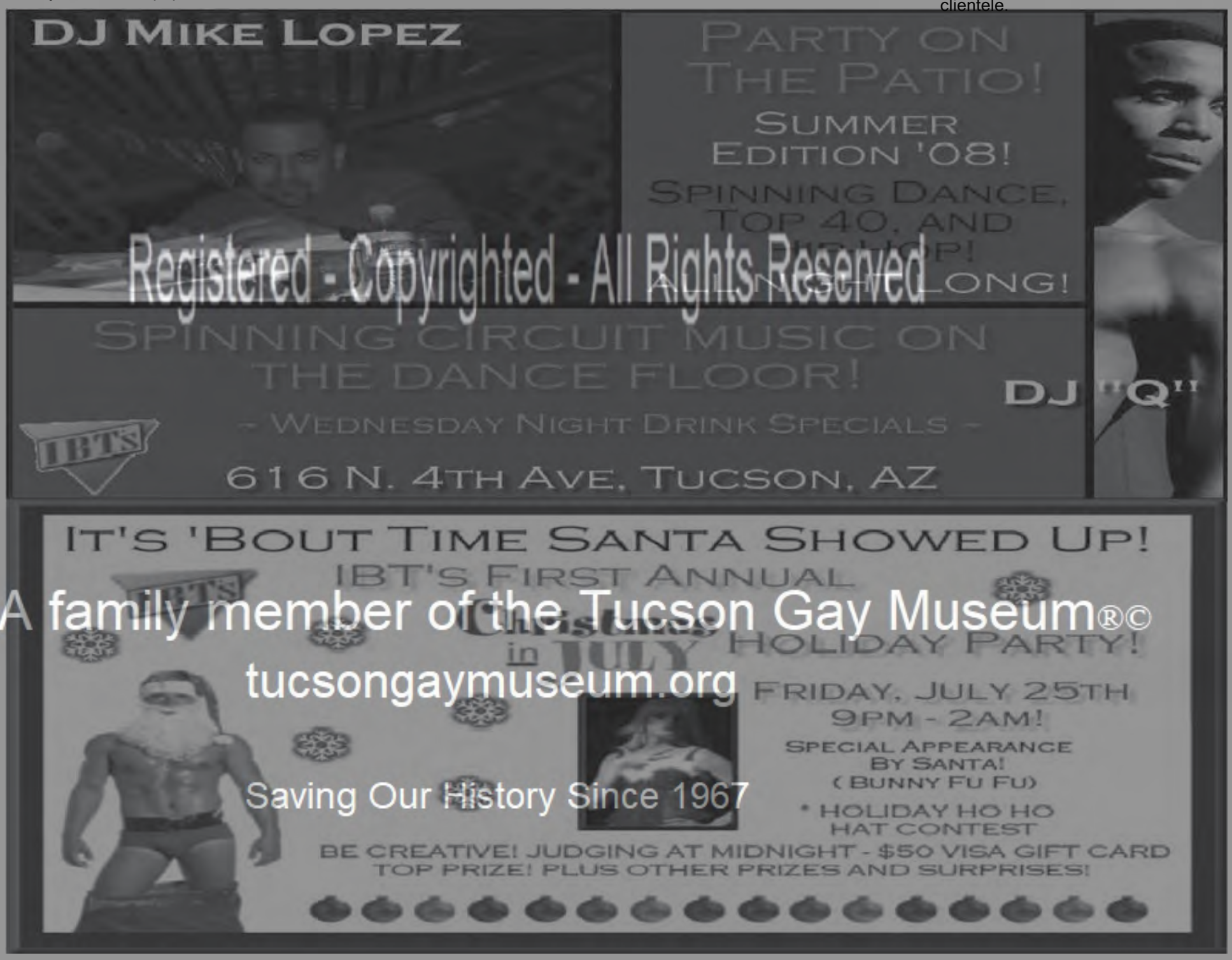

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COMMENTARY. . . .

by Deb Price

Lesbian Tries To Blaze Trail Against Arizona Marriage Ballot Issue

PHOENIX - A famous Chinese proverb teaches that a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step.

For Meg Sneed, a 25-year-old Arizona Lesbian, journeys to change a thousand hearts begin with a single thought: There's power in sharing personal stories.

In 2006, she and other young activists in Soulforce, a Gay-rights group devoted to the peaceful confrontation practiced by Gandhi and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., traveled eight weeks by bus to evangelical colleges to share what it's like to be Gay.

The next year, Sneed, who was fighting cancer, was weak from chemotherapy but walked 60 miles to help raise money for breast cancer research.

Now, with her home state set to vote on banning same-sex couples from marrying, Sneed is back on the move: Starting August 8, she and other young Soulforce activists will walk 96 miles to the state capitol to share touching accounts of how the amendment would hurt real people.

She picked 96 miles for the six-day trek through egg-frying heat because that's the number of years Gay Arizonans haven't had equal rights.

"Walking 96 miles," Sneed says of her bold adventure, "is nothing compared to a Gay or Lesbian person being told they can't see their partner in their dying moments at a hospital because they don't have full marriage rights."

At the same time as the blazing walk, other Soulforce activists will spread out to share their stories with Arizona's young Mormons and senior citizens, two large voting blocs that most Gay-rights supporters would write off. But Soulforce never writes anyone off.

"It is important to reach out and have those conversations, because until you get the dialogue started, you can't start change," Sneed says.

Besides Arizona, marriage measures will be on the ballot in California and Florida. The broad Florida proposal would ban any sort of legal recognition for couples, except male-female marriage. To pass, it must get 60 percent of the vote.

California, where same-sex couples have been marrying since June 16, is the first state where voters will be asked whether marriage rights should be taken away from Gay couples.

Two years ago, Arizona became the first to defeat a ballot measure that included a Gay marriage ban. But that sweeping proposal, similar to the one up now in Florida, also would have banned domestic partner protections, even for heterosexuals.

This year, Arizonans will be voting solely on Gay marriage. That distinction hints at the challenges – and opportunities – for activists determined to change hearts before Election Day.

Will voters in California or Arizona become the first to turn down an anti-Gay amendment limited to marriage? California looks especially promising.

In Arizona, a Cronkite/Eight poll in February found voters supporting an amendment by 49-40 percent, with a whopping 11 percent undecided. Sneed sees those numbers as an invitation to keep talking and walking.

"If you just say, 'Their minds are not going to change,' then you are right, their minds are not going to change. But if you reach out to them, then there is a possibility."

Hearts are reached, the Arizona woman teaches, one step at a time.

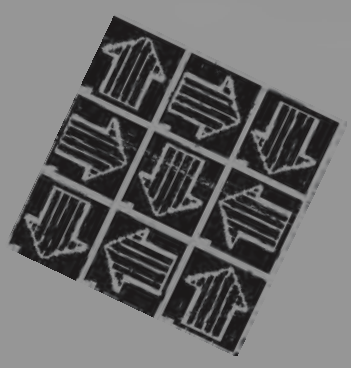
(Deb Price is a columnist for the Detroit News from which this is reprinted.)

Roche To Suspend HIV Research, Seeing No Advances

NEW YORK CITY (Observer Update) - Swiss pharmaceutical company Roche Holding AG will suspend its HIV research because none of its pending medicines represent significant improvement over existing drugs, a company spokeswoman said on Friday (July 11).

"Research scientists currently working in HIV will be reassigned to other activities," Linda Dyson, a spokeswoman in Roche's U.S. office in New Jersey, said in an e-mail. Dyson confirmed an e-mail sent. In that e-mail, the company said it "decided to refocus our resources within virology on diseases in which we can deliver substantial improvements over existing medications."

Dyson declined to specify how much Roche has been investing in HIV research. She also said she could not specify how many employees worked in the HIV research division. Roche employs 5,000 people in the U.S. and 3,000 in its New Jersey office.



BUZZ -- BUZZ -- BUZZ

Openly Gay former boy band icon Lance Bass could Tango his way into homosexual history becoming the first celebrity to dance his way up the Dancing with the Stars' ladder-with another man. Although the Dancing with the Stars season seven line-up has yet to be revealed, rumors are circulating that Bass, the former 'N Sync member who came out of the closet two summers ago, could join the cast. But Bass wouldn't be the first 'N Sync member to lace up his dancing shoes and Cha Cha his way into America's hearts. Bass' former boy band co-member Joey Fatone finished in second place on Dancing with the Stars' season four. The show pairs celebrities with dancing professionals and the word is out that Bass, if he joins the cast, would be paired with a male dance pro, reported The New York Daily News.

"Amazing Race" contestants Pat Hendrickson and Kate Lewis tied the knot Wednesday (July 9) in Ventura, Calif., the Ventura County Star reported. The women, who have been together for 11 years and blessed in an Episcopal ceremony for three, took a political stance on their latest but first legal marriage. "I'm OK with you not accepting who I am," Hendrickson told the Star. "But don't tell me that I have to be something else to have my rights in this country." Both Hendrickson and Lewis are members of the Episcopal clergy. Hendrickson is an ordained deacon and Lewis is a priest at Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Kailua, Hawaii.

The pair own a home in Thousand Oaks and returned to their longtime county for the ceremony at the Ventura clerk's office. The wedding party of 20 included Hendrickson's two grandsons, the Star reported, reported advocate.com. Although the women lasted only two episodes on the CBS reality show, they had plenty of opportunities for adventure, including riding a high-wire bicycle over a ravine. "Who would have ever thought we would do that?" Hendrickson asked the Star, remembering the show's transcontinental competitions. "And a year ago, who would ever have thought we would do this?"

Crowds in Arkansas came for the lure of cage fighting and $1 beer, but police say what they got instead was men ripping each others' clothes off and kissing _ a stunt suspected of being orchestrated by Sacha Baron Cohen of "Borat" fame. "We had a contract for cage fighting. We were deceived," said Dwight Duncan, president and CEO of Four States Fair Grounds in Texarkana, where the first of two Arkansas fights raised suspicions last month. Matt Labov, a Los Angeles-based publicist for Baron Cohen, said he had no comment Monday about the faked fights. One of Baron Cohen's movies, based on a Gay Austrian fashion TV commentator "Bruno," is due out next year. An elaborate array of mounted and handheld video cameras caught the crowd of 1,600's reaction as the two men "went right up to the line" of the city's morality laws, Holland said. The two men stripped down to their underwear, kissed and rubbed on each other, the sergeant said. The audience, as well as local fighters drawn to take part in the show, became enraged.

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GLAAD Gives High Marks To TV Networks ABC, FX

LOS ANGELES, California (Observer Update) - The marriage between the gay characters Kevin and Scotty in the season finale of ABC's "Brothers & Sisters" helped the network win the highest praise from an advocacy group that pushes for more visibility of such characters on television, reported the Associated Press on pageoneq.com.

It was the first wedding of two gay or lesbian characters in a prime-time scripted series, said the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). ABC has had other historic moments, including introducing a gay character to "Soap" in 1977, having a gay teen in "My So-Called Life" and Ellen DeGeneres coming out on "Ellen" as well as in real life. ABC ranked highest among the broadcast networks in hours where gay and lesbian characters were portrayed, with FX topping the 10 cable networks monitored, GLAAD said.

"We know that programming to lesbian and gay viewers is good business and these are two networks that realize the social and economic benefits of including images of our community in their programming," said Damon Romine, GLAAD's director of entertainment media.

FX was praised for "Nip/Tuck," which GLAAD said had one gay, lesbian or bisexual character in every episode. "Rescue Me" had a minor story line with a gay couple having a commitment ceremony and "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia" had a transgender character. Fox and NBC both had "failing" grades from GLAAD. While GLAAD was pleased by the inclusion of gay characters on "House" and the games "American Idol" and "So You Think You Can Dance," the group didn't like a "New Amsterdam" episode where two lesbian characters fell in love with a straight man.

GLAAD is pushing NBC to include more gay characters, particularly after the prominent lesbian doctor Kerry Weaver left "ER."

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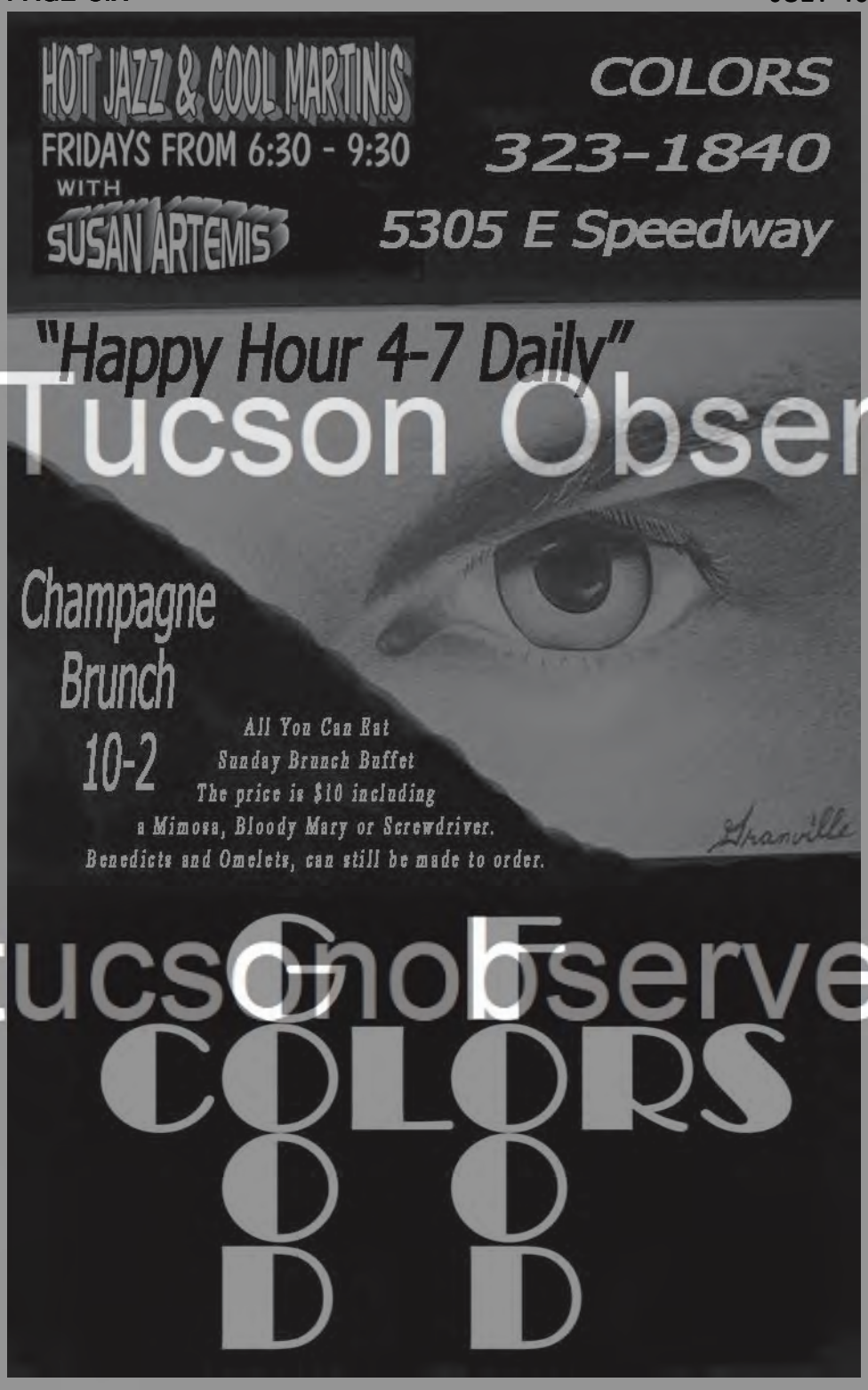

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by Jimmy Petrol

Cheap Gas

Of the developed nations, the US has the cheapest gas. This is due primarily to the low tax on gasoline, which is about fifty cents per gallon.

Other developed countries tax gasoline heavily, to encourage conservation and for other "good government" reasons.

In relatively undeveloped countries that are also oil producers, the prices are heavily subsidized and kept at a very low point to encourage development and manufacturing. This subsidy comes from oil revenues when sold on the world market.

Here's a sampling of the current gas prices worldwide: (figures as reported by the New York Times this week).

Venezuela $0.25 per gallon, Iran 0.41, Saudi Arabia 0.60, Iraq 1.74, Mexico 2.54, China 2.84, Russia 3.79, United States 4.00, Japan 4.72, India 4.79, Canada 5.09, Spain 7.30, Sweden 8.60, United Kingdom 8.71, France 8.78, Italy 8.85, Germany 8.98, Netherlands 10.05.

For most of the countries that have prices above the US level, the additional cost is generally entirely due to taxes, which range from $0.49 per gallon in the US, $3.37/gal. in Spain to $5.34/gal. in Germany.

For all the countries that have gas selling cheaper than the US, there is no direct tax on the fuel as sold at the pump.

It is hard not to see the parallel between the countries currently in the cross-hairs of the American government and military and countries which are oil producers and have cheap fuel. Of the five cheapest gasoline producers, the United States is at serious odds with four and is at war or going to war with two.

Venezuela has a great deal on gas....odd coincidence that the US and Venezuela are at political odds.

The same goes for Iran; that country would be a great bargain, coming as it does with such cheap and plentiful fuel. Again, just a silly coincidence that the US and Iran are about to go to war.

It is plain that the United States tends to have serious, unresolvable issues with nations that produce gas cheaply. These countries will be annexed militarily in the next few years, as Americans clamor for more gas to fuel grossly inefficient vehicles.

There is a bit of irony in the current and impending war annexations; the fuel that is available in Iraq and Iran for next to nothing is not going to come to Americans. This fuel is headed for Eastern Europe via a brand new pipeline (as reported by The Economist last year) and also to India. India is a rapidly developing nation which depends on oil importation. It is also right next door to our new "territories". The current price at the Indian pump is $4.79, with no taxes added there. Clearly, the Indians will pay more than Americans for the Iraqi oil; the American oil companies who recently "won" contracts to "administer" the Iraqi oil will be sending it to the lucky Indians.

All of this is documented in business journals worldwide. The British weekly, The Economist, is accurate, even as it takes pains to paint the governments of Venezuela, Iran and Mexico as villainous and warranting custodial invasion.

The upshot to all this is simple; the oil wars are on, but the greedy American driver, hopeful and resplendent in his Hummer, Expedition and Suburban is not going to benefit at the pump. American Oil is busy doing business as usual, while the American government is providing the muscle.

Adding insult to injury, the oil will support rapid growth in India and former Eastern Block countries; people and places that are not generally considered to be American sympathizers. While we are browbeat into supporting the troops, the troops are drafted into support of profits for big oil. The United States military no longer serves the needs of the American people; the troops unwittingly support American Oil Company profits. Whether more profit for big American Oil supports freedom is one of those questions posed only to cloud the issue.

The fatuous intellectual practice of over-complicating these issues has been effective in the American political arena; most Americans choose to believe that the Oil Wars are about freedom, not profit. The task of the over-educated talking-heads of media, to obscure the obvious, has been successful.

Meanwhile, all the rest of the developed world uses gasoline more cautiously, taxes it judiciously and looks to the energy future as any country with truly custodial government must.

Around The Nation

A Buffalo, New York Lesbian couple is suing Blue Cross & Blue Shield accusing the insurer of contravening state policy in denying spousal benefits. Jeanne Kornowicz and Joy Higgins were married in Ontario in 2006, reported 365Gay.com. Kornowicz, a school psychologist for the Cheektowaga Central School district, applied to the school board to provide health coverage for Higgins, following a ruling in a similar case in Rochester where the court ruled that ruled New York State must recognize valid out-of-state marriages of Lesbian and Gay couples. The school district approved but its insurer, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Western New York, denied the coverage.

Wisconsin authorities say they'll investigate whether a man accused of kidnapping two young men and sexually assaulting them might be linked to other cases. Investigators arrested 46-year-old Edward Lanphear of the Town of Saratoga. He's accused of holding two men in his house, stripping them, beating them and sexually assaulting them several times. Lanphear's attorney disputes the allegations.

Miami-Dade Police have issued a murder warrant for a Mexican national described as a drifter in the killing of a 68-year old Gay man in January. The body of Alexio Bello, 68, was found by his housekeeper. An autopsy showed he had been stabbed to death. The apartment had been ransacked and a pair of bloody shoes were found near the body. The housekeeper identified the shoes as belonging to Jorge Espinoza Navarette, a young homeless man who Bello had taken in. DNA evidence and a bloody finger print found at the scene also pointed to Navarette.

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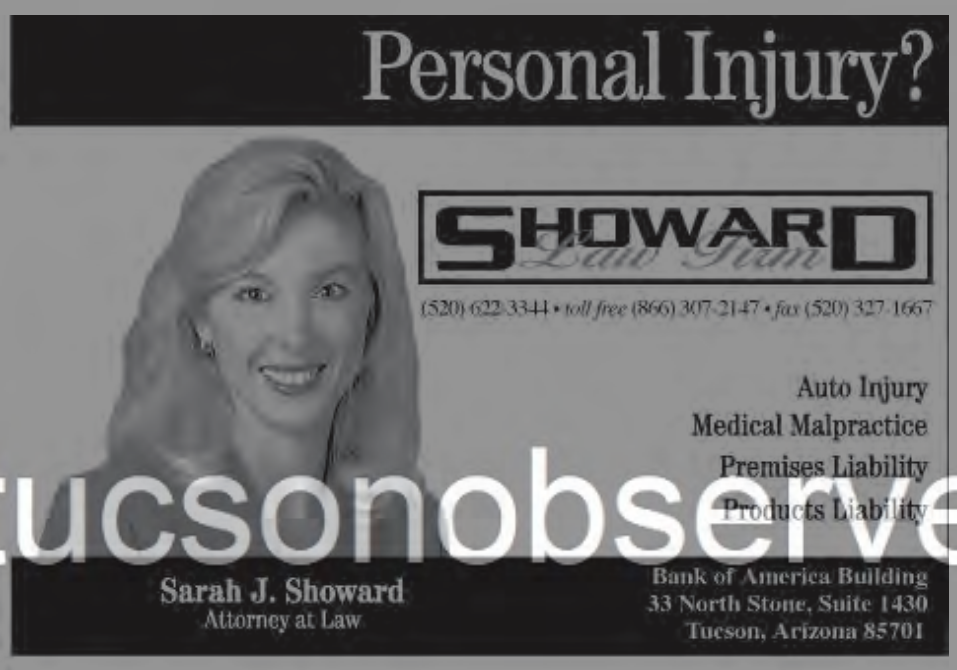

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POLITICS 2008

by Mark R. Kerr

'Leadership Log Cabinites Can't Believe In'

For those in the Arizona Congressional District 8 television market, current Arizona Senate President and Republican candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives, Tim Bee has started running ads for his campaign touting character, commitment and leadership.

In an interview published in the July 10 edition of the Arizona Daily Star Bee would not tell how he would vote on the measure on the upcoming November general election ballot that would enact a state constitutional amendment defining marriage as "a union between one man and one woman."

Bee was the state Senator who was the prime sponsor of the original bill (Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 1038) introduced during this session of the Arizona Legislature, who allowed it to proceed through the process, decrying when the measure was changed in the Arizona House, and then approved the amending of another bill (SCR 1042), dumping Vietnam Veterans (for whom one of his big endorsers Senator John McCain fought in) to engage in some political Gay and Lesbian bashing, being the sixteenth vote to put the measure on the ballot in this election year!

During this "interview" Bee blather's about the nasty tactics of the Center for Arizona Policy who were the "proponents" of this proposed state constitutional amendment this time since they couldn't get their measure, known as Proposition 107 approved in 2006 because the Arizona voters saw the political sham it was!

So then what was the point of this Tim?

To gain political traction, votes and contributions for your ill-fated bid for the U.S. House, latching on to a "wedge" issue for your gain. To quote one of your big endorsers yet again, Arizona Senator John "No Gay Adoptions" McSame, "that's not leadership we can believe in!"

For the record, in the same interview, current Member of Congress for Arizona Congressional District 8, Democrat Gabrielle Giffords expressed her opposition to any proposed such federal or state constitutional amendment on the subject.

During the interview, Tim Bee said that former Arizona Gay Republican Congressman, Jim Kolbe, who had announced his intentions to not publicly campaign for Bee will still be advising him on policy issues.

To the Log Cabinites a question, "Shouldn't it be people and their rights over politics and economic gain?"

It should not be the case so to stop this and to ensure LGBT citizens of Congressional District 8 a voice in Washington D.C., send a contribution to Gabrielle Giffords reelection campaign, make check payable to "Giffords for Congress," also listing on a separate piece of paper your occupation and employer (for the Federal Election Commission records) and mail to Giffords for Congress, P.O. Box 12886, Tucson, AZ 85732-2886. To give online go to giffordsforcongress.com. For campaign information or to volunteer, call (520) 512-0012 or go to the campaign headquarters, 4444 E. Grant Road.

Robinson Defies Orders, Attends Anglican Conference

LONDON (Observer Update) - Gene Robinson, the first openly Gay U.S. Episcopal bishop, was barred from a once-a-decade Anglican meeting so he wouldn't become a focus of the global event. Anglicans on all sides of the issue agree: The strategy has backfired.

New Hampshire bishop Gene Robinson has been embraced by sympathetic Anglicans in England and Scotland who view his exclusion as an affront to their Christian beliefs.

Robinson made several appearances on the outskirts of the Lambeth Conference to be what he called a ''constant and friendly'' reminder of Gays in the church.

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The Roast & Toast Of Lucinda Holliday

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Lucinda Holliday

Hostesses Bunny FuFu and Barbara Seville

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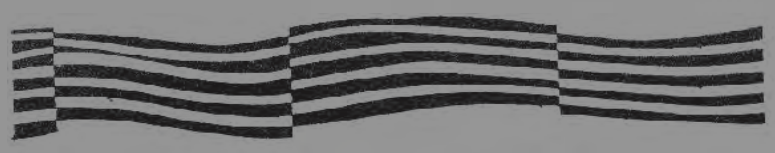
TUCSON - Last Sunday, July 13, there was a Roast & Toast of of Tucson's Queen of Comedy, Lucinda Holliday. The event was benefit for the Susan G. Koman Breast Cancer Foundation.

The benefit was held at Colors before a sold-out house of Holliday fans and friends. The entertainment was perfectly handled by hostesses Bunny FuFu and Barbara Seville. A series of patrons took the microphone to tell stories about Miss Holliday. Some were quaint and cool, but there was a lot of very, very humorous stories that had the audience in stitches.

In the end it was clear that the talented Lucinda Holliday was a very valuable asset to the Tucson Gay and Lesbian Community not only entertaining for these many years but also of her philanthropic passion for the community.

Observer congratulates Larry Moore aka Lucinda Holliday for his/her relentless love for our Gay and Lesbian community.



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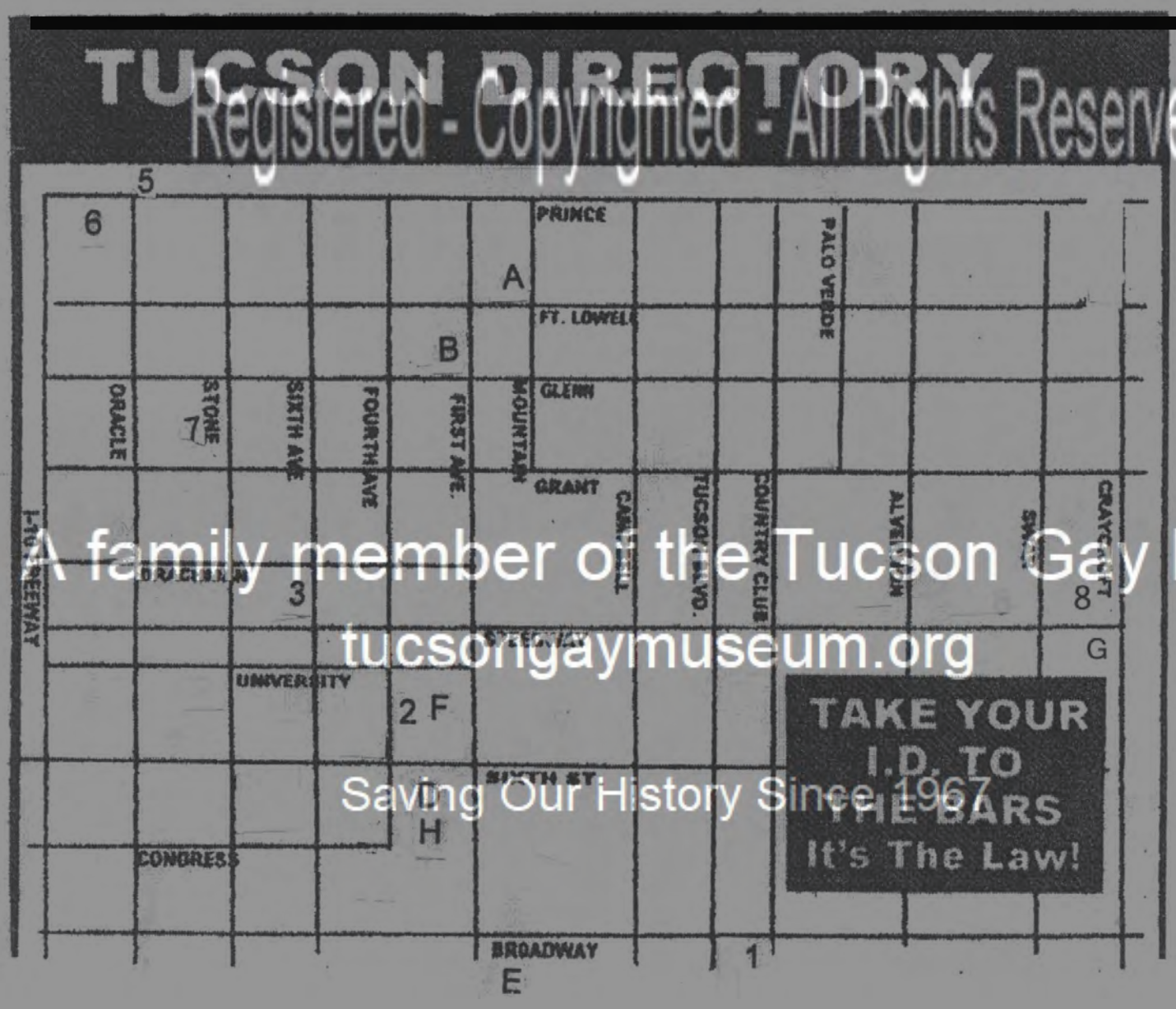

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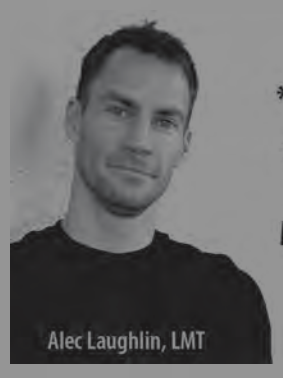

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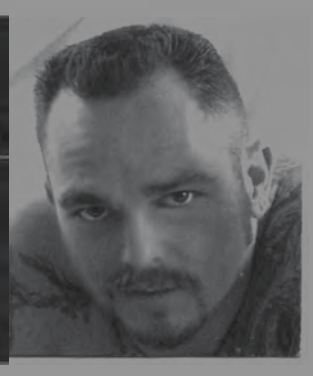

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Mars squares Pluto this week setting off a rash of rash actions. This may be a good thing if we are interested in changing the landscape and creating potholes. Err errant bulldozer anyone...?

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

Attend to the small details when Mars squares Pluto, proud Ram. Not only will you avoid mistakes of global proportions, you may be able to capitalize on hidden opportunities that often get lost in the back of the file drawer. Of course, it will be easy to forget that the devil is in these same details. Carefully consider your options lest you get pitchforked. Yikes!

TAURUS (APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

Fun leads to unmanageable games as Mars squares Pluto. But queer Bulls may be ready for an out-of-this world, uncontrollable liaison or three. Tap into your creativity and see what (and who) spurts. The secret to your success is to know when enough is enough, when to turn off the bubble machine and when to concentrate on the end product. But you know that!

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

Pink Twins avidly plan and execute home projects now. But are partners in agreement? There is a tendency to rush into various works without the proper sign-off or notice. You find that acceptance or even just acknowledgment makes the process easier. Also, defer highly emotional conversations with relatives until you can view things dispassionately. Maybe in August?

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)

If job related stresses come to a head this week, try taking some time off and avoiding any confrontation. Gay Crabs feel that they have reached the breaking point at work. While this may be true, you will also find that Mars square Pluto makes matters worse. But all is not lost; No decisions need to be made now. Get lost. Even better, get lost with you-know-who.

LEO (JULY 24 - AUGUST 23)

You dream of artistic greatness and this may be the week that you achieve it... with a price tag. Proud Lions revel in the attention that Mars square Pluto provides. All your efforts impress and delight as you continuously feed the press machine to keep the spotlight shining. I say that if your ego needs a stroke, find a well endowed admirer and ask for a handout.

VIRGO (AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 23)

Queer Virgos manage to grab all the attention in any large group. Your personal stock gains in value and takes you to new places to meet new, influential people. Good! But keep half an eye on your domestic agenda. It is too easy to lose sight of the basics while the stars (and you) glitter. Balance is not only everything, it is the only thing this week.

LIBRA (SEPTEMBER 24 - OCTOBER 23)

Proud Libras start off this week by sounding wise and spiritual. But it will soon become apparent that your words can take on a volatile and earth moving tone. This is not necessarily a bad thing. You hold some strong opinions that are not always heard above the general static. Sometimes you have to call it as you see it. Are you wearing your glasses...?

SCORPIO (OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)

A friend in need should probably be avoided this week, unless you don't mind picking up their bills. Queer Scorps feel tied down by certain needy greedy folks who can drain not only the surrounding energies but also the resources. How much are you prepared to give, give, give? Tough love is in order now. Does that also mean leather and chains? It is up to both of you!

SAGITTARIUS (NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 22)

Ill conceived and emotional reactions in your career can alter your "public face' and how you are perceived in general. The temptation to ratchet the rhetoric may be too much to resist. It is much safer for Gay Archers to hide into the background in any major professional project or, even better, make themselves scarce. Mars squares Pluto suggests a quick vacation. I agree.

CAPRICORN (DECEMBER 23 - JANUARY 20)

While a getaway seems to offer a deserved relaxing break, the opposite may be true when Mars squares Pluto. Pink Caps with a need to recede and a yearning to make their vibes more mellow are abruptly pulled back into the action. As you boil on the front burners, think of how successful you will be eventually. There is no rest for the weary but there is money and status.

AQUARIUS (JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 19)

Suddenly everyone wants a piece of you. Which section will you offer friends and which one will you offer lovers? Try to parse out your best qualities equally, Aqueerius, unless you want to cut some strings. Mars squares Pluto and can make either side dissatisfied and kvetchy. If diplomacy fails, try theatrics. If that fails, take your show on the road.

PISCES (FEBRUARY 20 - MARCH 20)

Relationships may conflict with your professional aspirations when Mars squares Pluto. Guppies allow themselves to be swayed by what they think partners want. But this would be a mistake since there is no way to know the wants of others at this time. If you are fishing for a catch, avoid dipping your pole into the work pool. It is too full of sharks.

Mass High Court Says No To Retro Marriage Benefits For Gays And Lesbians

BOSTON, Massachusetts (Observer Update) - The state's highest court ruled Thursday (July 10) that marriage benefits for Gay couples can't be applied retroactively to the time before same-sex marriage was legalized – a ruling affirming a bright line between marriage and other long-term relationships.

The Supreme Judicial Court issued the ruling as part of a malpractice case brought by Cynthia Kalish and Michelle Charron, who was diagnosed with breast cancer a year before the couple married in 2004. Charron sued her doctors for malpractice, saying they should have ordered a biopsy earlier.

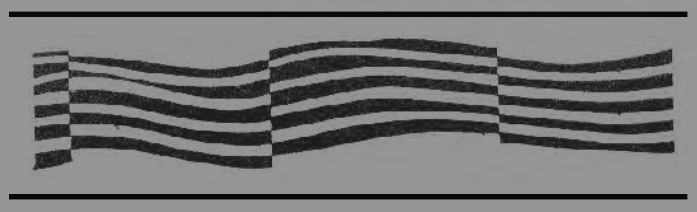
As part of the case, Kalish also sued for loss of marital companionship. Charron died in 2006. The lawyer for Charron's doctors contested the claim of loss of companionship, saying the couple was not legally married when Charron was diagnosed with breast cancer.

120,000 March In Vienna Rainbow Parade For LGBT Rights

VIENNA (AFP) - About 120,000 people in colorful and often scanty dress took part in Vienna's annual Rainbow Parade on Saturday (July 12) to call for equal rights for Gays and Lesbians, organizers said.

Thirty-degree heat and sunny weather ensured record attendance for the 13th edition of the march, which like almost all other events this year in Austria had a football theme, even two weeks after the end of Euro 2008.

"No more offsides!" organizers urged, calling for legalized gay marriage and an end to discrimination, although daring high heels, rather than soccer boots, were the choice of footwear on the Ring boulevard where the Fan Mile recently stood.



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Offshore Oil Drilling Won't Help According To Gov't Report

WASHINGTON, D.C. - President George W. Bush has issued a proclamation, ending the 18 year ban on offshore oil drilling that was started by his father, George H.W. Bush in 1990.

President Bush, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, Arizona Senator John McCain both had opposed lifting the ban when they ran for president in 2000.

So the question is posed on whether this lifting of the ban will actually help consumers presently feeling at the pump with the rise in the price of oil due to speculation. The U.S. Government's Energy Information Administration did a recent study on the issue that showed that it won't help. What follows is the executive summary of the report.

The OCS (Outer Continental Shelf) is estimated to contain substantial resources of crude oil and natural gas; however, some areas of the OCS are subject to drilling restrictions. With energy prices rising over the past several years, there has been increased interest in the development of more domestic oil and natural gas supply, including OCS resources. In the past, Federal efforts to encourage exploration and development activities in the deep waters of the OCS have been limited primarily to regulations that would reduce royalty payments by lease holders. More recently, the States of Alaska and Virginia have asked the Federal Government to consider leasing in areas off their coastlines that are off limits as a result of actions by the President or Congress. In response, the Minerals Management Service (MMS) of the U.S. Department of the Interior has included in its proposed 5-year leasing plan for 2007-2012 sales of one lease in the Mid-Atlantic area off the coastline of Virginia and two leases in the North Aleutian Basin area of Alaska. Development in both areas still would require lifting of the current ban on drilling.

For AEO (Annual Energy Outlook) 2007, an OCS access case was prepared to examine the potential impacts of the lifting of Federal restrictions on access to the OCS in the Pacific, the Atlantic, and the eastern Gulf of Mexico. Currently, except for a relatively small tract in the eastern Gulf, resources in those areas are legally off limits to exploration and development. Mean estimates from the MMS indicate that technically recoverable resources currently off limits in the lower 48 OCS total 18 billion barrels of crude oil and 77 trillion cubic feet of natural gas (Table 10).

Although existing moratoria on leasing in the OCS will expire in 2012, the AEO2007 reference case assumes that they will be reinstated, as they have in the past. Current restrictions are therefore assumed to prevail for the remainder of the projection period, with no exploration or development allowed in areas currently unavailable to leasing. The OCS access case assumes that the current moratoria will not be reinstated, and that exploration and development of resources in those areas will begin in 2012.

Assumptions about exploration, development, and production of economical fields (drilling schedules, costs, platform selection, reserves-to-production ratios, etc.) in the OCS access case are based on data for fields in the western Gulf of Mexico that are of similar water depth and size. Exploration and development on the OCS in the Pacific, the Atlantic, and the eastern Gulf are assumed to proceed at rates similar to those seen in the early development of the Gulf region. In addition, it is assumed that local infrastructure issues and other potential non-Federal impediments will be resolved after Federal access restrictions have been lifted. With these assumptions, technically recoverable undiscovered resources in the lower 48 OCS increase to 59 billion barrels of oil and 288 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, as compared with the reference case levels of 41 billion barrels and 210 trillion cubic feet.

The projections in the OCS access case indicate that access to the Pacific, Atlantic, and eastern Gulf regions would not have a significant impact on domestic crude oil and natural gas production or prices before 2030. Leasing would begin no sooner than 2012, and production would not be expected to start before 2017. Total domestic production of crude oil from 2012 through 2030 in the OCS access case is projected to be 1.6 percent higher than in the reference case, and 3 percent higher in 2030 alone, at 5.6 million barrels per day. For the lower 48 OCS, annual crude oil production in 2030 is projected to be 7 percent higher–2.4 million barrels per day in the OCS access case compared with 2.2 million barrels per day in the reference case (Figure 20). Because oil prices are determined on the international market, however, any impact on average wellhead prices is expected to be insignificant.

Similarly, lower 48 natural gas production is not projected to increase substantially by 2030 as a result of increased access to the OCS. Cumulatively, lower 48 natural gas production from 2012 through 2030 is projected to be 1.8 percent higher in the OCS access case than in the reference case. Production levels in the OCS access case are projected at 19.0 trillion cubic feet in 2030, a 3-percent increase over the reference case projection of 18.4 trillion cubic feet. However, natural gas production from the lower 48 offshore in 2030 is projected to be 18 percent (590 billion cubic feet) higher in the OCS access case (Figure 21). In 2030, the OCS access case projects a decrease of $0.13 in the average wellhead price of natural gas (2005 dollars per thousand cubic feet), a decrease of 250 billion cubic feet in imports of liquefied natural gas, and an increase of 360 billion cubic feet in natural gas consumption relative to the reference case projections. In addition, despite the increase in production from previously restricted areas after 2012, total natural gas production from the lower 48 OCS is projected generally to decline after 2020.

Although a significant volume of undiscovered, technically recoverable oil and natural gas resources is added in the OCS access case, conversion of those resources to production would require both time and money. In addition, the average field size in the Pacific and Atlantic regions tends to be smaller than the average in the Gulf of Mexico, implying that a significant portion of the additional resource would not be economically attractive to develop at the reference case prices.

Table 10. Technically recoverable undiscovered oil and natural gas resources in the lower 48 Outer Continental Shelf as of January 1, 2003

OCS areas	Crude oil (billion barrels)	Natural gas (trillion cubic feet)
Available for leasing and development		
Eastern Gulf of Mexico	2.27	10.14
Central Gulf of Mexico	22.67	113.61
Western Gulf of Mexico	15.98	86.62
Total available	**40.92**	**210.37**
Unavailable for leasing and development		
Washington-Oregon	0.40	2.28
Northern California	2.08	3.58
Central California	2.31	2.41
Southern California	5.58	9.75
Eastern Gulf of Mexico	3.68	12.46
Atlantic	3.82	36.99
Total unavailable	**18.17**	**77.17**
Total Lower 48 OCS	**59.09**	**287.54**

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NON-BAR CALENDAR

Wednesday, July 16th
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00pm Hand and Foot with Jack 887-3736

Thursday, July 17th
Men's Social Network. Mexican Dominoes. Open to men of all ages. 6:30pm. Call Jack at 887-3736 for directions.

Friday July 18th
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. MSN Pizza Night! Did you phone in your reservation on time? Then join Bruce for a great MSN Pizza Night! You need to call Bruce at 743-3839 by Thursday for reservations.

Saturday, July19th
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. Contact Steve at 664-2076 for directions and information.

Sunday, July20th
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Dinner Out at Country Folks. For reservations and directions, contact Thom 908-6160, e-mail thomsepals@hotmail.com.

Monday, July 21st
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: Men's Book Club 6:30p.m.Meet Stephen and the group monthly for dinner and discussion of an agreed upon work of gay fiction. Currently, the group meets the 3rd Monday. Contact Stephen at 241-7854 to add yourself to their e-mail list.

Wednesday, July 23rd
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Hand and Foot with Lee and Merlin at 207-5336.

Thursday July 24th
Men's Social Network. Open to men of all ages. Bridge Join your MSN friends for a night of fun and cards. Call Ike at 207-6264.

Saturday July 26th
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, July 27th
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 6:00p.m. Dinner Out at Le Rendev-Vous. For reservations and directions, contact Thom 908-6160, e-mail thomsepals@hotmail.com. Please contact Thom by Sunday at Noon to facilitate reservations. Price is usually under $10. Check the Yahoo MSN on-line calendar for the scheduled place.

Wednesday, July 30th
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00pm Hand & Foot with Peter at 881-8276.

Publisher Sued Over Anti-Gay Bible Passages

DETROIT, Michigan - Some editions of the Bible from the 1980s published by Zondervan Publishing and Thomas Nelson Publishing assert that homosexuality is a sin, causing one Gay man to sue the publishing houses for emotional damage, reported advocate.com.

The allegations against the publishers, brought by Bradley LaShawn Fowler of Canton, Mich., could result in $70 million in damages if Fowler wins his case. Fowler is representing himself in federal court against both publishers after a U.S. district judge refused to appoint him an attorney in his case against Thomas Nelson. The judge explained, "The court has some very genuine concerns about the nature and efficacy of these claims."

According to the Chicago Tribune, the suit against Zondervan claims 1982 and 1987 editions of the publisher's Bible explicitly declare homosexuality to be wrong in 1 Corinthians 6:9: "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders." Fowler claims that the word "homosexual" was edited out of the 1989 and 1994 editions but that consumers were not informed, and that because his family pastor uses the older versions, he's been shunned by his family as a result.

Fowler levels similar claims against Thomas Nelson regarding its earlier versions of the New King James Bible, saying he has suffered extreme emotional and sometimes physical discomfort as a result of the antiGay passages in the Bible. He wrote that it was the intention of the publishers to cause "me or anyone who is a homosexual to endure verbal abuse, discrimination, episodes of hate, and physical violence...including murder."

Researchers Want Human Trials For New AIDS Vaccine

ATLANTA, Georgia (Observer Update) - GeoVax Labs Inc., a biotechnology company specializing in prevention and treatment of infectious diseases, said that it hopes to begin a large human trial of its AIDS vaccine this fall.

The Emory University spinoff is seeking approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to start a Phase 2 trial this fall of its human version of its preventive vaccine that has proven successful in previous studies, said Robert McNally, president and CEO of GeoVax Labs.

The trial, to be conducted by the National Institutes of Health and supported by the HIV Vaccine Trials Network, will involve 225 healthy volunteers from the United States and South America. The purpose, he said, is to "further evaluate the safety and immunogenicity of the GeoVax preventative vaccine."

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Sunday Worship: 10:15am Thursday Fellowship: 7:00pm
The Gathering Place: Fridays, 7:00 p.m
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(Just North of Ft. Lowell)
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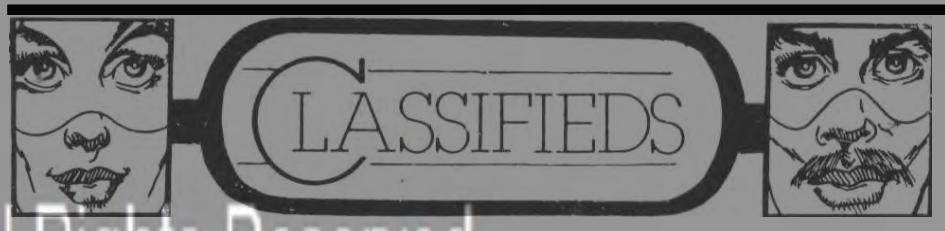
www.wolmcc.org



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EMPLOYMENT

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COLORISTS / HAIR DESIGNERS New salon @4400 Hair Salon on Broadway in Bank of Tucson building. Chair rental and new customers welcome. Call 981-0824 or tucsonjoel@aol.com 1253

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YOUTHFUL 60 GWM. New to area. Would like to meet other GM in Green Valley area. Call 717-919-2688 1955

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NOTICES - COMMUNITY - NOTICES

TUCSON KNIGHT OWLS (T.K.O)
We are a non profit social club that is open to every one. T.K.O. contributes to the fellowship and support of the community, and openly invites new members and/or guests. Monthly meetings occur on the first Saturday of every month at 11:00 pm., Please come and join us! Our next meeting will be held at the Venture-N.

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.

YOUNG AND GAY?
GLBT Youth 23 and under, meet Tucson for sharing, support and information. You are not alone. For more info call Wingspan, 624-1779.

Start getting more out of life with TUCSON PRIME TIMERS. We're the local chapter of Prime Timers Worldwide, the preeminent social organization for mature gay and bi men as well as younger (21+) men who enjoy their company. Each month we sponsor a wide range of dining events, cultural enrichment activities, parties, meetings, bowling, day trips, picnics, tours and much more. Visitors are always welcome. For info call our message phone 520 731-3485. Visit our website: www.tucsonprimetimers.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.

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

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

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 207-5336 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 (TIHAN) offers trained, compassionate and commited 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

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. 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.

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. on Sundays only 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.

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.

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 3 Jewels, 314 E. 6th St. Donations accepted. Contact Maurice Grossman for more info. 323-2293.

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

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

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

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

NA MEETING WITH GLBT FOCUS meets Mondays, 6:30pm at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th Street. This is an open meeting of Narcotics Anonymous - all are welcome. For more info call Bernie W.: 406-0740

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DAILY BAR CALENDAR

SUNDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am; Visit the outdoor patio enjoy aa cocktail or two. Sports on all day!!! MLB; WNBA; You call it!! Music with DJ/Hill starts at 9pm.

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. Beer Bust Sunday - $1 draft beers (12 oz), domestic only; $2 domestic long necks. Texas Hold-Em Poker at 3 & 6. No cash involved - Play for Points & Prizes. SIN Nite - drink discounts for Service Industry employees

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-2am. Peter's Build Your Own Bloody Mary Bar 11am-2pm. Happy Hour 11am-8pm (excluding special events). Full Menu Kitchen open 11am-8pm. Back Pocket Patio Bar 2pm-2am. Beer Bust 2pm-7pm. Karaoke with Michael D 9pm-Close. Drag Bingo every other Sunday 8-9pm. Check our Ad for Special Events or Parties

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

MONDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Visit the outdoor patio enjoy aa cocktail or two. Drink specials every hour.

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 3 - 8 p.m. $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. $3.50 sm. Pitcher/$5.50 lg. Bucket o" Beer - $10.00 Domestic, $12.00 Imports (5 beers to a bucket, for 2 or more people, Guinness excluded). Texas Hold-Em Poker at 6 & 8:30 p.m. No cash involved - Play for points & Prizes

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 11am-2am. Happy Hour 11am--8pm (excl spec events) Full Menu Kitchen open 11am-10pm Back Pocket Patio Bar 8pm-close. Karaoke with Michael D. 9pm-close.

YARD DOG - Open 11am. Beer Bust 3-7pm.

TUESDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Visit the outdoor patio enjoy aa cocktail or two. Drink specials every hour.

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. Happy Hour 3-8. $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. Pitcher Special $3.50 sm. Pitcher/$5.00 lg. Pitcher (excluding Blue Moon & Alaskan Amber). Ladies Only Texas Hold-Em Poker at 6:00 p.m.

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

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

WOODY'S - Open 11am- 2am. Happy Hour 11am-8pm (excl spec events). Full Menu Kitchen open 11am-10pm. Back Pocket Patio Bar open 8pm-close, Caribbean Party Night with Woody's own Specialty Mojitos, Caprioskas and Martinis with Tucson's Hottest Bartenders.

YARD DOG - Open 11am-2am. Beer Bust 3-7pm.

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.

HOWL AT THE MOON -Open 3pm. Happy Hour All Day $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints, $3.50 sm. Pitcher/$5.50 lg. Pitchers. Texas Hold-'Em Poker 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 11am-2am;. Happy Hour 11am-8pm excl. special events). Ful Kitchen open 11am-10pm. Back Pocket Bar open 8pm-close. Service Industry Employee Special All Day Long - $1 off all drinks except schnapps and draft. Different Themed Underwear Party 9pm-close with $1.00 off for those who participate (excl. Schnapps and Draft). Retro 80s & 90s Dance with DJ Clint 9 til close..

YARD DOG - Open 11am-2am. Beer Bust 3-7pm.

THURSDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Karaoke starts @9:30pm. With 2 for 1 starting after the first singer! (Poker Pub will resume in the Fall).

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. Bicardi Thursdays - $2.50 Bicardi Rum. July 3rd Karaoke's back 8-10:30pm

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 11am-2am; Happy Hour 11am-8pm (excl Spec Events); Full Menu Kitchen open 11am-10pm. Back Pocket Patio Bar open 8pm-close. Cheap Party Day **FREE POOL**, $1.00 PBR Longnecks, $2.00 Tecate Longnecks. Techno and Top 40 Dance with DJ Jeff 9pm - close..

YARD DOG - Open 11am-2am. Beer Bust 3-7pm..

FRIDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. With incredible Happy Hour pricing from 5-8pm. Noche de calor w/DJ Hill jugando la mejor en musicia latino! Todos los viernes por la noche, la musica comienza a las 9. Shot specials cada nora!!

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. $2.25 All Mexican Beers. Free Dance Lessons at 7:30 p.m. Country Dancing 8:30 p.m. to close with DJ Pat.

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 11am-2am; Happy Hour 11am-8pm (excl spec events). Full Menu Kitchen open 11am-11pm Back Pocket Patio Bar open 5pm-close. Enjoy the Live Blues/Motown/Soul sounds of Simon Crown 6-9 p.m.; Request your favorite Music Dance Night with DJ Clint 9pm-close. Monthly Birthday Party every 2nd Friday Night of the month. YARD DOG - Open 11am-2am. Beer Bust 3-7pm. Patio Bar Opens 8pm

SATURDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm - 2am. Patio opens @9pm. BEER PONG tournament on the patio every Saturday night!! DJ Hill 9pm. Don't forget to catch the WNBA games every Sat on our 51" flat screens!!

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. Plus check out the bartenders choice of shot specials. $5.00 cheeseburger & fries. $3.00 Cuervo and $4.75 Jager Bombs. Check our calendar for the Saturday Night Special Entertainment.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, 5-8pm karaoke & Teryaki Kabobs on the patio. 8:30pm Show time w/ Bunny FuFu or Janee Starr. DJ Q spinning Club Music inside & 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 11am-2am; Happy Hour 10am-8pm (excl spec events); Full Menu Kitchen open11am-11pm. Back Pocket Patio Bar open 5pm-close. Techno and Top 40 Dance with DJ Jeff 9pm til close. Check our ad for Twice-A-Month Special Events or Themed Parties.

YARD DOG - Open 8am-2am. Patio Bar Opens 8pm.

COMMENTARY

Extra Value Meal, Please

By Lisa Neff

So, I walk out of "WALL-E" vowing never again to suck down a biggie soda – not because I want to boycott pop, but because I'm repulsed at the notion that the last of the human race was living in floating loungers and sucking its meals and numerous night and day snacks through a straw. "Never again." So much for that vow.

It's two days later and I'm at the counter in McDonald's asking for super-sized everything. I'm also telling the cashier that I'm feasting under the Golden Arches because the American Family Association called for a boycott of the fast-food chain. The cashier shrugs. "Whatever."

I tell my mom I'm waging an anti-boycott in defense of McDonald's support of the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce and in opposition to the AFA's boycott. She doesn't say, "Whatever." She's concerned that although salads are an option at McD's, I've never ordered off that portion of the menu board. She's concerned because even my 105-pound frame can't afford a lengthy McDonald's diet – we both saw "Super Size Me." "McDonald's has been good to me," I tell her.

Specifically I'm remembering the summer of 1984, when the restaurant gave away scratch-and-win tickets for the Olympic games. If the United States won a medal, the holder of the ticket one a McDonald's treat – a Big Mac for a gold medal. Well, with the Soviet boycott that year, the United States cleaned up in the medals category and I was one well-fed college student. But I also appreciate McDonald's commitment to diversity and respect. "Our founder Ray Kroc once said, 'None of us is as good as all of us.' At McDonald's we believe that sentiment still holds true today, and is best reflected in action; specifically, with our strong and longtime commitment to our People through diversity and inclusion," McDonald's chief diversity officer Pat Harris wrote the AFA recently.

This hold-firm position, applied to GLBT equality, has put the restaurant in the sights of the AFA, which already has taken aim at Disney, Ford, Kraft Foods and Proctor and Gamble over pro-Gay policies. The AFA also has threatened a large-scale boycott of Wal-Mart, but then where would members buy their Crucifixion Eggs at Easter? The AFA's big beef with McDonald's is that the company donated to the Gay chamber of commerce. Surf over to the AFA Web site and you'll read that the group is concerned "about McDonald's, as a corporation, refusing to remain neutral in the culture wars," the AFA states. "McDonald's has chosen not to remain neutral but to give the full weight of their corporation to promoting the homosexual agenda, including homosexual marriage."

In short, the AFA is not loving it. But I'm loving it.

I'm loving this curious development that an iconic American company is standing firm against the oh-so un-American American Family Association, which at every right turn stands against justice and equality.

I'm loving that McDonald's USA spokesman Bill Whitman defended the restaurant's policy in the Washington Post proclaiming, "Hatred has no place in our culture. That includes McDonald's, and we stand by and support our people to live and work in a society free of discrimination and harassment."

I'm loving my lunch of Filet-O-Fish, fries and strawberry shake – and the restaurant's wi-fi connection allowing me to write and eat at the same time.

I'm loving planning tomorrow's lunch. Perhaps I'll trick a right-winger into joining me and we'll catch a showing of "WALL-E" afterward. The Pixar film also has irked some on the right for its "leftist propaganda," which must be a reference to the environmental message since the movie is a traditional love story between the robotic WALL-E and Eve. Ba da ba ba ba…. Don't you love it too?

(Lisa Neff is a reporter with The Islander, a weekly newspaper on Anna Maria Island, Fl. She has worked for more than 20 years in journalism. This oped is reprinted from 365Gay.com).

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COMMENTARY. . . .

The Pro-Family Scam

By Wayne Besen

The last few weeks have shown that so-called pro-family organizations are some of the most useless, money-sucking scams in the world. With real families suffering from economic hardship in America, a declining birthrate in Europe and Google doubling the price of daycare for employees, the only thing right wing family groups want to discuss is their bizarre and all-encompassing fagela fetish.

Recently, The Brooklyn Paper, had a huge headline, "SPLITSVILLE: Brooklyn divorces up 30 percent." The article cited a number of reasons including, "when the economy tanks, so do many marriages."

One would think this would alarm so-called pro-family organizations and they would be out in force repairing marriages - or at least looking for economic solutions to take the stress off couples. Unfortunately, as I walked around my Brooklyn neighborhood, I saw not one representative from the American Family Association.

Well, I take that back. I did encounter one of the group's representatives on CNN Headline News as we debated a Heinz mayonnaise ad in the United Kingdom that featured two men kissing. I'm sure the children of these broken marriages in Brooklyn will feel much better knowing Heinz pulled the ad and they can have Gay-free mayonnaise at both mommy and daddy's separate houses.

A new study by the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University showed that in 2006, for the first time in U.S. history, a majority of births to women under 30 - 50.4 percent - were out of wedlock. New York Times columnist Bob Herbert points out that, "By comparison, when John F. Kennedy was elected president in 1960, just 6 percent of all births were to unmarried women under 30.

One imagines that this report might have startled "pro-family" organizations and they would have put their millions of dollars towards stopping this trend. No such luck. Instead, they are investing huge piles of money and manpower to pass anti-Gay marriage amendments in Florida, Arizona and California. The upshot for "pro-family" groups is that if heterosexuals keep screwing up marriage, by the time Gay people finally win the right nationally, we won't want to use it.

"Evangelicals of the older generation have become obsessed in almost a technical psychological sense in opposing Gay rights," David Weddle, a professor of religion at Colorado College told the Colorado Springs Gazette. "The irony is that homosexuality is not a biblical theme."

Right wing organizations and their flocks want to be taken seriously, but their priorities and actions are reprehensible. For example, a middle school teacher was fired in Mount Vernon, Ohio last month after preaching in the classroom, refusing to remove his Bible and burning crosses onto the arms of pupils. You read that correctly - he seared crosses on the body parts of impressionable students, as if it were a gang ritual.

Surely, reasonable people can agree that such behavior is inappropriate in the classroom. But, oh no, some of the yahoos in Mount Vernon believe their religion places them above the Constitution - so they are holding demonstrations in the town square. I wonder if these zealots would have the same reaction if a teacher were burning a Stars of David or Muslim crescents on the forearms of students?

A recent New York Times magazine article, "Childless Europe," explored why certain countries in Europe are losing population. The hopelessly out of touch Pope Benedict chimed in with his typically sunny advice. "Europe is infected by a strange lack of desire for the future," the Pontiff said. "Children, our future, are perceived as a threat to the present."

Instead of selfishness, as the Pope implied, it was the traditional values of the Pope that contributed to the problem. In societies that either offered a safety net or where men shared the burdens of child rearing, women were having more babies. However, when educated women were stuck at home and forced to do all the work - such as in Italy - they chose to have less children. Will the Pope now call on men to help out more at home or for countries to ensure daycare for families?

Finally, the Wall Street Wonder, Google, plans to raise the amount it charged for in-house day care by 75 percent. Under the revised plan, parents with two children in Google day care could see their yearly bill increase to more than $57,000 from around $33,000. This crushing blow to the family drove a few employees to tears.

Was the American Family Association in Silicon Valley raising hell and standing up for families? No, they ignored grimacing parents, so they could punish Ronald and Grimace by launching a boycott against McDonalds for supposedly having a Gay agenda. Maybe the delusional scolds at the AFA thought they saw rainbow color fries, in much the same way they once accused the cartoon character Mighty Mouse of snorting cocaine.

Right wing organizations can be considered many things - but certainly not advocates for the family. They inhale money, exhale anti-Gay pollution and have done absolutely nothing for the traditional families they claim to represent. It seems the more such groups proliferate, the more the family deteriorates.

(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 oped is reprinted from 365Gay.com)

Dobson's Nomination To Radio Hall Of Fame Protested

NEW YORK CITY - Truth Wins Out, a Gay rights advocacy group, launched a campaign Thursday protesting the recent nomination of Focus on the Family founder and president James Dobson to the Radio Hall of Fame.

"It is outrageous and insulting that James Dobson would be nominated," Wayne Besen, executive director of Truth Wins Out, said in a press release. While the Hall of Fame criteria for nominees does not address content or character, the LGBT advocacy group is demanding that Dobson's name be removed from consideration because of homophobic and antiGay comments made in articles, books, and on the air.

"I'm not surprised," Besen said of Dobson's nomination. Besen is, however, outraged: "[Dobson] is a very accomplished broadcaster, but I think it's offset by the fact that he's a very accomplished liar." Truth Wins Out also maintains that Dobson has a history of distorting scientific research to defend his faith-based claims.

Several instances of misinformation occur in a guest article Dobson authored for Time magazine in December 2006. In "Two Mommies Is One Too Many," Dobson commented on the announcement that Mary Cheney, Vice President Dick Cheney's Lesbian daughter, was expecting a child with her partner, Heather Poe. "The majority of more than 30 years of social-science evidence indicates that children do best on every measure of well-being when raised by their married mother and father," Dobson wrote.

Dobson went on to cite the parenting book of child psychologist Kyle Pruett, Fatherneed, as supporting Dobson's claim. In a video clip posted on Truth Wins Out's website, Pruett decried Dobson's citation of his book. "I was disappointed, I was dismayed, and frankly, I was...mortified that my work would be in paragraphs of the conclusion that [Dobson] drew," Pruett said, adding, "There is no science that says those children [who are raised by Gay or Lesbian couples] are at risk."

Dobson also referred to the work of Carol Gilligan, a professor at New York University's School of Law, in the article. Dobson portrayed her as siding with his criticism of Mary Cheney and her partner. Following the publication of the article, in a direct letter to Dobson, Gilligan wrote, "Not only did you take my research out of context, you did so without my knowledge to support discriminatory goals that I do not agree with.... What you wrote was not truthful."

While Dobson insists in his 2004 book Marriage Under Fire that "I have never said anything hateful about homosexuals on our broadcasts, and I do not condone violence or disrespect for anyone," he predicted in a 2005 on-air broadcast that the legalization of same-sex marriage would lead to "group marriage," "marriage between daddies and little girls," and "marriage between a man and his donkey." Dobson concluded in the same broadcast that same-sex marriage "will bring the destruction of this nation and many others."

Dobson also lamented California's recent legalization of same-sex marriage on the Focus on the Family website: "Chalk up another disastrous loss for the defenders of morality and the family."

The National Radio Hall of Fame did not return calls for comment, reported advocate.com.

Study: Internet Fueling Rise Of Syphilis Cases Among Gays

CHICAGO, Illinois - Experts believe Internet hookups are helping to fuel a syphilis epidemic among men who have sex with men (MSM), reported advocate.com. MSMs are more likely to turn to the Internet to find sex partners than meet them at bars or clubs, according to a new report by the Chicago Department of Public Health, reports the Chicago Tribun

According to the health department survey, 34% of men diagnosed with syphilis last year at city health department STD clinics claim they met their sex partners on the Internet. While rates among heterosexuals have dropped to a historic low, rates among men who have sex with men have risen in recent years.

Syphilis is easily treated with penicillin in its early stages. Untreated, it can damage internal organs, including the brain, nerves, eyes, heart, blood vessels, liver, bones, and joints. The National Coalition of STD Directors published national guidelines on Internet-based interventions to help health departments use the Web in outreach and prevention programs.

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