Observing Tucson And The Greater Arizona Community

OBSERVER

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Tucson Observer Archives

Military G/L Firings Continue Along With Efforts To Repeal Ban

tucsonobserverarchives

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - The Army fired 11 soldiers in January for violating the military's policy that Gay and Lesbian service members must keep their sexuality hidden, according to a Virginia congressman, the Associated Press reported on 365Gay.com.

Democratic Rep. Jim Moran said he has requested monthly updates from the Pentagon on the impact of the policy until it is repealed. In a statement released on Thursday, Moran said the discharged soldiers included an intelligence collector, a military police officer, four infantry personnel, a health care specialist, a motor-transport operator and a water-treatment specialist.

"How many more good soldiers are we willing to lose due to a bad policy that makes us less safe and secure?" asked Moran, a member of the House panel that oversees military spending.

The Pentagon's "don't ask, don't tell" policy was instituted after President Bill Clinton tried to lift the ban on Gay service members in 1993. It refers to the military practice of not asking recruits their sexual orientation. In turn, service members are banned from saying they are Gay or Bisexual, engaging in homosexual activity or trying to marry a member of the same sex.

The military discharged nearly 10,000 service members under the policy in a 10-year period, from 1997 to 2007. The number fired each year dropped sharply after the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, when forces were stretched thin. Whereas more than 1,200 were dismissed in 2000 and 2001 for violating the policy, about half as many - 627 - were fired in 2007.

The Pentagon has not released its 2008 figures.

The White House has said President Barack Obama has begun consulting with Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Michael Mullen on how to lift the ban. But the administration won't say how soon that might happen or whether a group of experts will be commissioned to study the issue in-depth, as some Democrats have suggested.

Likewise, Democratic leaders on Capitol Hill support repealing the ban but have not promised to press the issue immediately.

Obama In Hot Seat Over DP Benefits

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - Two strongly worded court orders place President Obama in an awkward position on the issue of whether the government must provide health insurance benefits to the same-sex partners of federal employees, The New York Times reported.

In separate instances of employee grievance resolutions, judges of the federal appeals court in California said that the same-sex partners of their employees were entitled to health benefits. This position challenges the federal Office of Personnel Management, which has directed insurers not to provide the benefits, citing the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act that defines the word "spouse" as a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or wife, reported 365Gay.com.

Obama must decide whether to support the personnel office, and risk disappointing the liberal base that helped elect him, or support the judges, and court conservative anger at a time when he needs them to help advance his daunting domestic agenda.

A White House spokesman declined to tell The New York Times how Obama would proceed if the judges tried to enforce the orders, although he did reiterate the president's support for legislative repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act.

As a senator, Obama sponsored legislation to provide health benefits to same-sex partners of federal employees. He and John Berry, his openly Gay appointee to head the personnel office, both have endorsed providing health benefits to same-sex partners of federal employees.

On the congressional front, Sen. Joseph Lieberman and Rep. Tammy Baldwin, who is a Lesbian, plan to introduce bills to provide benefits to same-sex partners of federal employees.

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The Real Scandal Of AIG

By Robert Reich

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The real scandal of AIG isn't just that American taxpayers have so far committed $170 billion to the giant insurer because it is thought to be too big to fail – the most money ever funneled to a single company by a government since the dawn of capitalism – nor even that AIG's notoriously failing executives, at the very unit responsible for the catastrophic credit-default swaps at the very center of the debacle – are planning to give themselves $100 million in bonuses.

It's that even at this late date, even in a new administration dedicated to doing it all differently, Americans still have so little say over what is happening with our money.

The administration is said to have been outraged when it heard of the bonus plan last week. Apparently Secretary of the Treasury Tim Geithner told AIG's chairman, Edward Liddy (who was installed at the insistence of the Treasury, in the first place) that the bonuses should not be paid. But most will be paid anyway, because, according to AIG, the firm is legally obligated to do so. The bonuses are part of employee contracts negotiated before the bailouts. And, in any event, Liddy explained, AIG needed to be able to retain talent.

AIG's arguments are absurd on their face. Had AIG gone into chapter 11 bankruptcy or been liquidated, as it would have without government aid, no bonuses would ever be paid; indeed, AIG's executives would have long ago been on the street. And any mention of the word "talent" in the same sentence as "AIG" or "credit default swaps" would be laughable if it laughing weren't already so expensive.

Apart from AIG's sophistry is a much larger point.

This sordid story of government helplessness in the face of massive taxpayer commitments illustrates better than anything to date why the government should take over any institution that's "too big to fail" and which has cost taxpayers dearly.

Such institutions are no longer within the capitalist system because they are no longer accountable to the market. So to whom should they be accountable?

When taxpayers have put up, and essentially own, a large portion of their assets, AIG and other behemoths should be accountable to taxpayers. When our very own Secretary of the Treasury cannot make stick his decision that AIG's bonuses should not be paid, only one conclusion can be drawn: AIG is accountable to no one. Our democracy is seriously broken.

(Robert Reich is the nation's 22nd Secretary of Labor and a professor at the University of California at Berkeley. This article was reprinted from the Huffington Post.)

UPDATE

Desert Voices Performs Final Concerts Of 2008-2009 Season

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Desert Voices brings a phenomenal concert season to a close on April 18, 7:30 p.m., and 19, 3:30 p.m., at the Proscenium Theatre, Pima Community College West Campus.

"Out and Proud" celebrates 20 years of community performance with a retrospective featuring musical selections that commemorate the heritage, history and so many of the inspiring moments that have become hallmarks of all Desert Voices' concerts. Special Guest Star, Namoli Brennet, makes a return engagement in what has become a season long celebration of 20 glorious years as Arizona's Premiere GLBTS Chorus.

Some of the selections for this season's final concerts will pay a musical tribute to GALA, the international association of LGBT Choruses. Founded in 1982, GALA fosters artistic and organizational development through a wide variety of programs and services for over 170 member choruses and almost 10,000 vocalists worldwide. Tickets are still available but selling quickly as this will be the last opportunity to participate in what has been a tremendous Concert Season. As an added special gift to their audiences, Desert Voices is offering an additional 20% discount on tickets for groups of 10 or more. Just make your reservations before April 18. For ticket information, please call, (520) 791-9662 or visit desertvoices.org.

Boys R Us Presents" 'That's A Good Boy' March 20

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Some times they're good, sometimes they're bad, but they're always hot. Get ready to see Boys R Us steam up the stage Friday, Mar 20, 9:00 p.m., at the Surly Wench Pub, 424 N. 4th.

Come see what the Tucson Citizen, the Caliente and the Tucson Weekly have all been raving about! See how GOOD BOYS come out on top! $8 general and $12 seating. Come early to get a seat and a drink.

For more information, contact Dante Celeiro (520) 304-2155.

Wingspan Volunteer Orientation Mar. 28

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Volunteering at Wingspan is a great way to meet some of the most interesting, smart, talented, fun people in Tucson! Volunteer Orientation is the first step and on Saturday, Mar. 28, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m., at Wingspan (Anzaldua Room), 425 E. 7th.

It will be a brief introduction to your community center and about the diverse volunteer opportunities available. Remember, Wingspan is very much a volunteer-run organization, we could not possibly exist without our outstanding volunteers!

For more information, contact Madeline Porta at Wingspan, (520) 624-1779.

March For Equality - Casa Grande March 28

CASA GRANDE (Observer Update) - This event is much like Pride, but it has a political twist. Instead of a parade, there is a march, starting at noon, Saturday, Mar. 28 to Casa Grande City Hall, 510 E. Florence Blvd.

There will be musical performers, influential speakers from organizations such as Equality Arizona, unified voice, and several others. There will also be stand-up comedy, drag performances, vendors selling food and rainbow decal, and a possible peformance by Desert Voices.

For more information, contact Christopher Hall, (520) 208 - 4681, christopher_hall@stu.centralaz.edu.

Learn About Adopting And/Or Providing Foster Care, April 4

TUCSON - Interested in adoption or providing foster care? Please join Proud Families, a program of Devereux Arizona, for an interactive presentation on adoption and foster care, Saturday, Apr. 4, noon, at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th St.

The need is greater than ever! Lunch will be provided. Proud Families is a Devereux Arizona program specializing in the recruitment and training of LGBT families for adoption and foster care.

For more information, contact Laura Binette, (520) 296-5551, ext. 132, devereux.org/site/PageServer?pagename=az_index.

Gay Bar Sex Complaint Resolved With Fine In Vegas

LAS VEGAS, Nv. (Observer Update)- Nevada gambling regulators are recommending a $50,000 fine and a 6-month suspension of a slot machine license to resolve a complaint alleging that several patrons in a Las Vegas Gay bar engaged in sex acts in public areas of the bar.

The settlement signed by Snick's Place owner Dominick Vitale and state Gaming Control Board members would resolve a 7-count complaint filed in December. Each count is punishable by a fine of up to $100,000. Also, the club's license for up to 15 slot machines could have been revoked.

The proposed settlement with Vitale and Snick's, which advertises itself as the oldest Gay bar in Las Vegas, dating to 1976, will be reviewed by the board's parent state Gaming Commission at a March 19 meeting in Las Vegas. Vitale's attorney, Bob Lueck, has said Vitale wasn't in the bar when the alleged activity occurred, and after getting reports of the activity he fired a bartender and took other steps to prevent future occurrences.

Car Washes Kick Off Biz's Several Breast Cancer Benefits

TUCSON - The Biz is raising as much money for the Susan G. Komen race for the cure as possible... and are seeking the communities help...on Saturday, , March 28 they will be doing car washes at the Biz for a $5 donation...all money raised from the car wash will be donated to the cause.

In addition, on Friday, March 27 they are having a fund-raising benefit at the club, with the help of Wingspan's breast health awareness team, all patrons will receive pink bracelets and again all money raised at the door will be donated.

Finally, on Sunday, April 19, the Biz crew (Biz For The Cure), will be walking in the race, as a team, to show their support to those who have or have had loved ones with breast cancer. They will end the walk at the Biz with a free Bar-B-Que to those who walked with their team and to those who have supported them. It will be a family BBQ and everyone is invited.

If you would like to join the 'Biz for a Cure' race team contact Hillary @the biz at 318-4838 for more information and race packet info. "Support the ones you love!"

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

If you are interested in offering peer support to clients, educating on HIV/AIDS and more, contact Volunteer Resources at 628-7223 or volcoord@saaf.org

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Informing the Community
The Observer

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Is Uncle Sam Over-Charging G/L Couples?

CHICAGO, Il. (Observer Update) - Early last year, Chicagoan Victoria Stagg Elliott was relieved to put her spouse, Karen Shoffner, on her employer's health coverage. But there was a catch, reported 365Gay.com (Tuesday, Mar. 17).

Stagg Elliott found out she would be taxed on the portion of Shoffner's coverage paid for by the employer. She estimated that the coverage represents about $100 worth of monthly income, meaning she has to declare about $1,200 more in income each year than a straight married colleague with an equivalent insurance package.

"It's still cheaper than COBRA or an individual policy for my wife, but the bottom line is that it's unequal pay for the same amount of work," Stagg Elliott said.

For Gay and Lesbian couples, aggregate costs of living together without government-recognized marriages often becomes all too apparent at tax time.

There are well over 1,000 benefits afforded to Americans on the basis of marital status. Many of these benefits determine your bill at tax time. In the eyes of the federal government, Gay and Lesbians are entitled to none.

Mary Ritchie, a Massachusetts State Police trooper, was among more than a dozen plaintiffs suing the federal government on the grounds that the Defense of Marriage Act denies them Federal Benefits that other couples receive. Ritchie told the Associated Press that, while they've been a couple, she and her spouse paid over $15,000 more in taxes than they would have had to had they been able to file jointly.

Mt. Prospect, Ill.-based tax practitioner Michael Simon said that Gay couples absolutely have to hire a competent tax professional to work around the difficulties inherent in the tax code. A good tax planner, he added, should be able to save couples money in ways that offset these annual penalties.

When Simon prepares returns for same-sex couples wherein the partners have extremely disparate incomes, for example, he suggests the partner with the higher income file as a head of household and claim the other partner as a dependent. According to the IRS, a person can do that if someone in their household makes less than the standard deduction, among several other qualifications they must meet.

"We usually check the box as 'friend' or 'other,'" Simon said. He added that the best advice for anyone, Gay or straight, at tax time is to use a professional preparer. "A good tax professional will save you more than the fee they charge." According to Simon, the inequities Gays and Lesbians face at tax time, while significant, pale next to other financial challenges they face, such as those associated with buying property together or working around inheritance taxes.

"The people that I've worked with are not that disadvantaged by these (income tax) inequalities," Simon said. "The IRS has definitely narrowed the advantages of filing as (an opposite-sex) married couple."

Chicago attorney Roger McCaffrey-Boss, who advises Gay couples on tax and financial matters, agreed. He said Gay and Lesbian couples are more significantly affected by taxable events that, in most relationships, happen just a few times.

"If 'John' owns a house and wants to add his partner's name to the title, the government is going to look at that as a gift," McCaffrey said. "The same goes if he wants to add his name to a bank account."

Indeed, the largest cost for Gay and Lesbian couples might just be finding the time needed to explore their best tax options.

Couples wherein one partner is helping raise the other's children are especially at a disadvantage. Someone cannot qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit, for example, based on their raising a non-biological, non-adopted child. Similarly, they cannot increase their standard deduction if they are filing as a head of household on that basis.

Even in situations where both partners can technically claim the children, there will have to be negotiation. "Some couples ask, 'who will take the kids? I'll take them this year, you can take them the next year,'" McCaffrey said.

Couples in states that have or recognize gay marriages, civil unions or domestic partnerships unfortunately have additional paperwork to grapple with. They can file a joint return for their state, but they'll also have to prepare an ersatz joint federal return that calculates their income and deductions filing as a couple. In the end, though, they still have to file two single-payer returns for the feds.

McCaffrey said it was absolutely necessary for both partners in a relationship to communicate about sharing their assets and consider the long-term implications.

"The biggest mistake I see is couples who have a 'yours vs. mine' mentality," he said. "Partner A makes more money, so he has everything in his name. Partner B quits his job and stays home. They break up and Partner B has nothing."

"You have to speak up, negotiate and say 'I'm entitled,'" he added.

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10:30PM-DANCE INSIDE WITH DJ HURRICANE
SATURDAY
5PM-CLOSE-DJ Q INSIDE
10PM-CLOSE-DJ MIKE LOPEZ ON THE PATIO
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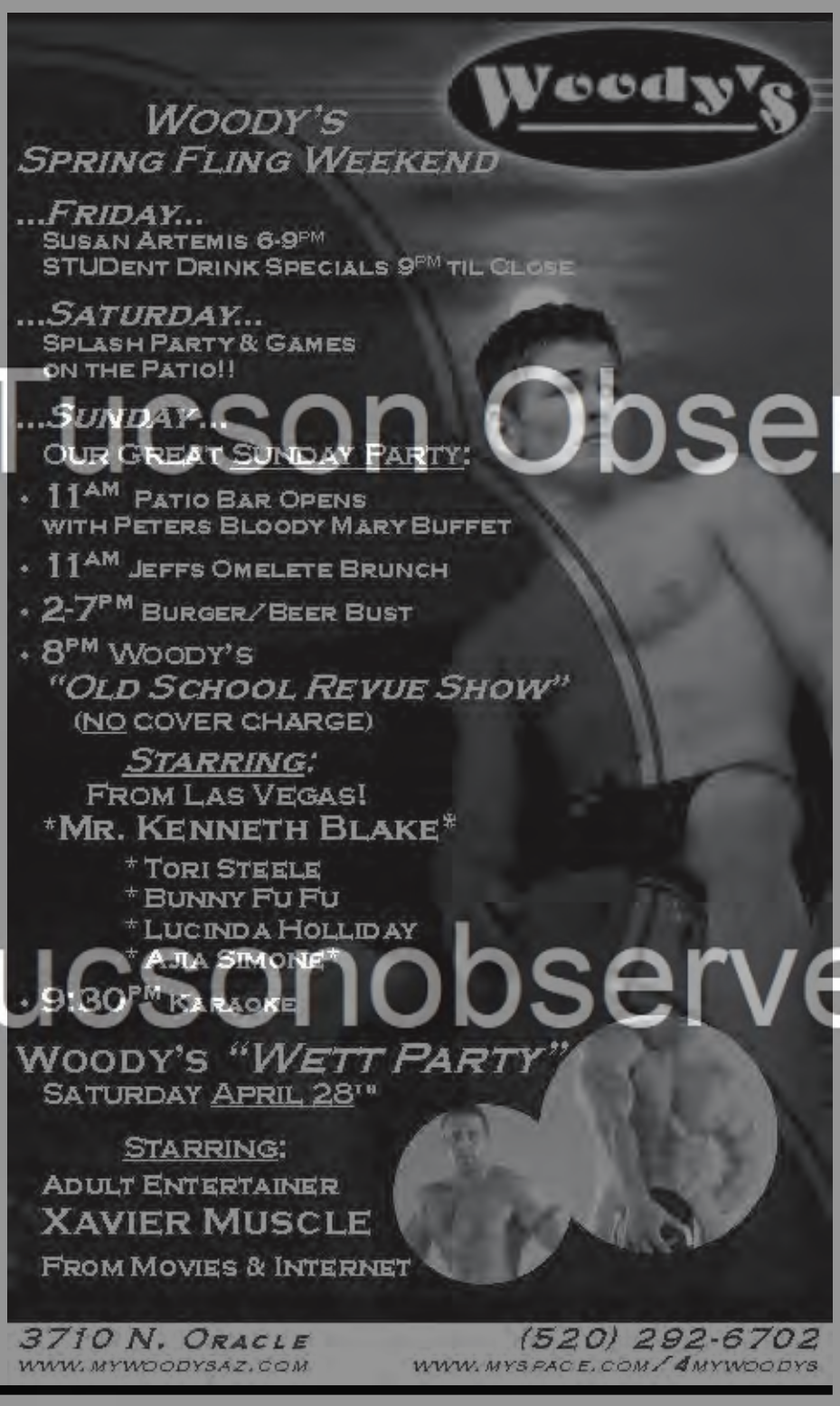


Dramatic Spike In LGBT Hate Crimes In California

SAN FRANCISCO, California (Observer Update) - A three-fold spike in homophobic hate crimes in Santa Clara County over the past year is being blamed on the fallout over Proposition 8, the voter measure than banned same-sex marriage in California, reported 365Gay.com.

More than half the hate crimes reported in the county south of San Francisco were directed at the LGBT community. Last year, 56 percent of hate crimes were designated as homophobic. The year before, it was 15 percent. "My belief from having done this work for many years is that surges in types of hate incidents are linked to the headlines and controversies of the day," Deputy District Attorney Jay Boyarsky told The Mercury News. Boyarsky monitors hate crimes for the District Attorney's office. "Marriage equality and Proposition 8 have been in the news, and we have seen an increase in Gay-bashing," he told the paper.

Statistics from other California counties have not been released. The figures will be included in the state Attorney General's annual hate crimes report to be released in July. LGBT rights activists said they were not surprised by the report. "When there's a lot more information about Gays and Lesbians on TV or in the news, it brings out the worst in people who have an inherent bias against groups they don't belong to," Leslie Bulbuk, president of BAYMEC, told The Mercury News. "It seems like visibility makes people come out of the woodwork."

Prop. 8 leaders don't dispute the findings but claim the report does not reflect cases in which supporters of the measure were harassed. "I certainly hope Proposition 8 did not result in more crime," Frank Schubert of Protect Marriage told the paper. "But if it did, it did so on both sides."

Earlier this month the California Supreme Court heard arguments challenging the way Prop 8 was placed on the ballot. The lawsuits charge that Proposition 8 is invalid because the initiative process was improperly used in an attempt to undo the constitution's core commitment to equality for everyone, by eliminating a fundamental right from just one group - Lesbian and Gay Californians.

They also say that Proposition 8 improperly attempts to prevent the courts from exercising their essential constitutional role of protecting the equal protection rights of minorities. The suits say that under the California Constitution, such radical changes to the organizing principles of state government cannot be made by simple majority vote through the initiative process, but instead must, at a minimum, go through the state legislature first.

The California Constitution itself sets out two ways to alter the document that sets the most basic rules about how state government works, the groups said in a written brief to the court.

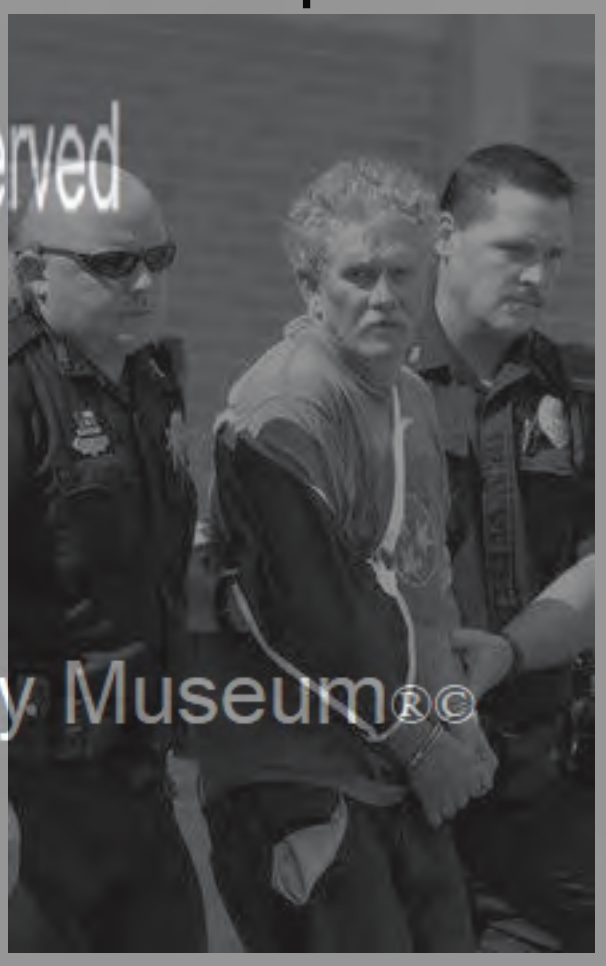
Through the initiative process, voters can make relatively small changes to the constitution. But any measure that would change the underlying principles of the constitution must first be approved by the legislature before being submitted to the voters. That didn't happen with Proposition 8, and that's why it's invalid, the petitioners said.

The court has 90 days to issue a ruling.

A public opinion poll released found that prospective voters remain deeply divided over the issue of same-sex unions. Forty-eight percent said they would vote to repeal the proposition. Forty-seven percent would vote to maintain the ban. Five percent are undecided.

Tenn. Gay-Friendly Church Shooter Hoped Attack Would Spur More

KNOXVILLE, Tennessee (Observer Update) - An unemployed truck driver seething over liberalism told police he opened fire in a church last year because it harbored Gays and multiracial families and he hoped others would follow his example, 365Gay.com reported.



Jim Advid Adkisson Under Arrest

Prosecutors opened their case file on Jim David Adkisson, 58, who pleaded guilty a month ago to killing two people and wounding six others at the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church in Knoxville. The file includes interviews with investigators and a suicide note Adkisson left in his car. Now serving a life sentence, Adkisson told police during an hour-long interrogation three hours after the July 27 shooting that he was unemployed, depressed and ready to take his anger out on what he called "an ultra-liberal" church that "never met a pervert they just didn't embrace."

"They just glory (in) these weirdos and sickos and homos," he said in an interview recorded by investigators. He also railed against the Unitarian Church: "That ain't a church, that's a damned cult," Adkisson said.

Adkisson concluded, "I'd like to encourage other like-minded people to do what I've done. If life ain't worth living anymore don't just kill yourself. Do something for your country before you go. Go kill liberals."

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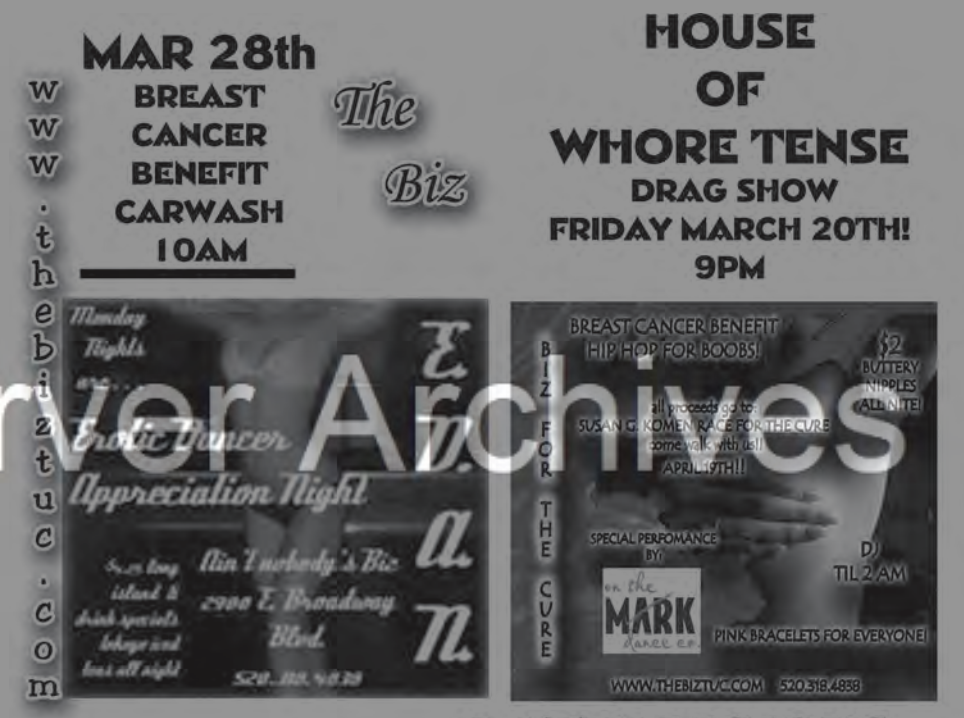
Family Guy Gay Orgy Incites Parents' Ire

Tucson Observer Archives

LOS ANGELES, Ca. (Observer Update) - Fox's controversial Family Guy has angered parents again, this time with storylines concerning bestiality, Gay orgies, and babies swallowing semen, reported advocate.com.

It was the March 8 episode that drove the Parents Television Council to file an indecency complaint with the Federal Communications Commission against Family Guy, an off-the-wall animated comedy – that often raises the hackles of conservatives – about a dysfunctional family with a talking, bi-curious baby and an alcoholic dog. "Fox treated viewers to everything from an eleven-way Gay orgy to baby Stewie eating a bowl of cereal with horse sperm instead of milk," said PTC president Tim Winter in a statement printed in The Hollywood Reporter . "If that isn't enough, the show's leading character is also shown fanaticizing (sic) about his wife and moaning while a horse licks his bare behind. Clearly, the explicit content was not isolated to one instance in one segment of the show; it permeated the entire program."

The children's watchdog group and its 1.3 million members have often complained about Family Guy, as well as shows like Friends, Today, Gilmore Girls and the Live 8 concert. Previously, Family Guy creator Seth MacFarlane told The Advocate the following about complaints from the PTC: "Oh, yeah. That's like getting hate mail from Hitler. They're literally terrible human beings. I've read their newsletter, I've visited their website, and they're just rotten to the core. For an organization that prides itself on Christian values – I mean, I'm an atheist, so what do I know? – they spend their entire day hating people. They can all suck my dick as far as I'm concerned."



BUZZ BRIEFS

Actor Ashton Kutcher took to Twitter this afternoon (Mar. 11) to tweet his disgust at people who use "Gay" and "fag" as insults. In typical Twitter style, where capitalization and punctuation are optional, Kutcher wrote: "can we just get clear, calling some one 'Gay' or 'fag' is as derogatory as calling someone a 'nigger'. U look like an idiot when you do it." The statement came in an exchange between Kutcher and another user on the popular social networking site, which allows users to communicate in 140-character bursts to those who choose to follow their Twitter feeds. Kutcher asked, "Are we giving people what we want to give or are we giving them what they need?" One of the followers of Kutcher's Twitter feed responded, "what are you a fucking philosopher...learn how to punch and learn how to stop being so Gay kelso," a reference to an earlier message from Kutcher about hurting his hand hitting a punching bag. ...

The unspeakable has begun. FOX has started filming the pilot for its American remake of Absolutely Fabulous, a favorite show of nearly every Gay man living today. For years now there has been talk of an American re-imagining, but for some (good) reason, the project never came to fruition. The two leads were announced last month, mostly to public dismay. The role of Edina (Eddy) Monsoon will be played by Kathryn Hahn, known for her role in Revolutionary Road and as a co-star on the series Crossing Jordan. And the role of Eurydice Colette Clytemnestra Dido Bathsheba Rabelais Patricia Cocteau (Patsy) Stone, everyone's favorite chain-smoking boozehound, will be played by Kristen Johnston, famous from her role on the series Third Rock From the Sun and a few guest spots on Sex and the City. Candid photos of the pilot's filming show the two actresses in crazy designer outfits, which means at least the writers got something right. ...

"The Sarah Silverman Program" will be back for a third season on Comedy Central, following the resolution of four-day day standoff over planned budget cuts. The cable channel has ordered a 10-episode season of its signature live-action series, which will now be co-financed with Gay-oriented sister cable network Logo. "We're happy," Silverman said. "All we ever wanted was just to make our show. Nothing fancy – just our show." It's a happy ending to a drama that threatened to make "Sarah Silverman" the first major primetime casualty of the economic crisis after the cable network was forced to slash the budget of the series by more that 20% and its executive producers refused to continue at those terms. In a surprising twist, Corrao came up with the idea early on Monday to share "Sarah Silverman" with another Logo, which caters to Gay, Lesbian and transgender viewers. She called former Comedy Central executive Marc Leonard, now a senior exec at Logo. After discussing the idea for several hours, Logo's brass called up their Comedy Central counterparts to tell them they wanted to be part of the show.

Advocate.com reported that author James Purdy, whose obscure but highly regaarded works include Cabot Wright Begins and the Gy-themed Eustace Chishollm and sthe Works, died Friday morning (March 13) at a hospital om Mew Jerseu. Though his exct age is unknown, he was in his mid 80s.

Gore Vidal, Dorothy Paarker and Tennessee Willliams were among his biggest fans, but outside literary circles, Purdy was relatively unknown. According to the Associated Press, for the past several years he lived in a one-room walk-up apartment in Brooklyn, outside what he considered "the anesthetic, hypocritical, preppy, and stagnant New York literary establishment."

Purdy's early works were given a critical lashing, voonsidered "fifth-rate, avant-garde soap opera. "The criticism caused hiim to leve official literary establishment -- the American Academy of Arts & Letters.

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POLITICS 2009

by Mark R. Kerr

Two Weeks

According to reports in and on the corporate hack media outlets, Arizona's share of the stimulus funding, known as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), is in the mail headed to the Grand Canyon State.

Arizona's Department of Transportation Board approved a laundry list of projects, 41, to improve Arizona's roads and bridges, eight of these were located in Southern Arizona, reported the Tucson Citizen.

Paul Senseman, the accidental Governor, Republican Jan Brewer's, spokes-flunky said in an interview that the state could see the effects by this Summer.

In an interview with the ASU Web Devil newspaper, Arizona's School Superintendent, Republican Tom Horne, said that his department expects to get more than a billion dollars alone from (ARRA), despite the fact the figures from the stimulus package show Arizona getting more than just $800,000,000 for everything, according to recovery.gov.

Recently, the accidental Republican Governor has blathered on about not taking part of the stimulus funding for unemployment benefits, just like Republican Governors "Kenneth the Page" Jindal of Louisiana, Texas Governor "Good Hair" Perry, Utah's Governor Jon Hunstman, or Mississippi's Republican mushmouth Governor, Haley Barbour.

A small problem with that "Pachyderm Political Play," according to recovery.gov, they've filed their ARRA initial certification or other such documentation to receive funding and in Mississippi's case, the Legislature overruled Governor Mushmouth.

As of press time and as previously reported, under Section 1607 of ARRA, in order for a state to receive funds from the ARRA, governors have till Friday, April 3, to certify in a letter that they will first of all "request and use" funds from the ARRA and second of all, use them to create jobs and promote economic growth.

For other ARRA funding, such as for transportation projects, under Section's 1201 and 1511 of ARRA must be filed and the state is one of thirteen who hasn't filed the initial certification or any other such documentation to receive one dime of ARRA!

In previous comments, Brewer said she'd consult with Legislative Leaders, the Republicans on whether to accept the money and if so, how to use it. This coming from an elected official who wants to hold a special election, at taxpayer expense, to raise the state sales tax rate because Arizona's Republican-led Legislature won't face the reality of the times and the needs of the state.

Arizona's Republican-controlled Legislature could do the right thing and actually lead and certifying those two conditions itself, as ARRA states:

"ACCEPTANCE BY STATE LEGISLATURE - If funds provided to any State in any division of this Act are not accepted for use by the Governor, then acceptance by the State legislature, by means of the adoption of a concurrent resolution, shall be sufficient to provide funding to such State."

Whom are we kidding since that won't happen because the Republican-controlled Legislature is more concerned about: what is discussed between a woman and her medical provider; pigs and dogs fighting in a ring; telling others, such as the City of Tucson, how to run their affairs; making more cuts in the state budget and not in the financial needs of the state, something ARRA would help, by creating jobs, increasing the sales tax revenue, decreasing foreclosures and improving the financial circumstances that government in this state relies on.

So it is back to Brewer and the letter. At a press conference, House Minority Leader David Lujan, a Phoenix Democrat, said applying for the funding is "a very simple process," adding "it comes down to what we value as a state," he said.

Lujan's remark is telling since it raises the question of the Arizona Republican's values and whether they have any to lead this state, especially during these times.

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COMMENTARY. . . .

by James Withers

Is Separate Always Unequal?

One of the things that irks in the marriage debate is how some Gay marriage advocates smooth out the edges in black history. In their desire for the grand prize of marriage as opposed to civil unions, people rightfully point to the fight against "separate but equal" (effectively killed by Brown v. Board of Education). All fair really but what is lost in the conversation when we don't even acknowledge that the debate about "separate but equal" was messier than most realize? And would we change our tactics if we knew the father of the civil rights movement, W.E.B. DuBois, opined that voluntary segregation was no sin?

In David Levering Lewis' biography, W.E.B. DuBois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, there is the story behind DuBois' infamous editorial called "Segregation." Written when DuBois was fighting with the NAACP board (for his whole long life DuBois seemed to be in intellectual warfare with everyone), the essay sent shock waves in the NAACP community and beyond because DuBois seemed to be taking up an argument that was once put forth by his nemesis, Booker T. Washington.

"It must be remembered that in the last quarter of a century, the advance of the colored people has been mainly in the lines where they themselves working by and for themselves, have accomplished the greatest advance."

Here was the leader of the race, when the phrase actually had meaning, extolling the virtue of segregation.

Why the early morning history lesson? Those who demand marriage rights always say that the benefits of the institution can be conferred with the name and civil unions are at best a poor substitute. But if the rights of marriage are transferred to civil unions, then what's the problem? By pushing for marriage and marriage only, aren't we boxing ourselves into a corner and making the fight for equality more complicated than it needs to be? And let's be honest: vigorous demands for civil unions that match marriage in everything but name will earn a large number of straight doubters and put our enemies on the defensive.

Maybe the debate is over. It's marriage or nothing, But if we can get marriage minus the word, what's the problem?

(James Withers is a contributing editor to the 365Gay Blog, from which this is reprinted from.)

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

Go Ahead 'n Ask

by King Daevid MacKenzie

A Tanssexual Angle On Summer Lovers

Like any good writer, I use three different reference books on English words while composing these columns - my grandfather's 1917 copy of Crabb's English Synonymes (sic); my dad's old copy of Roget's Thesaurus and somewhere in between is the Encarta World English Dictionary.

Said Dictionary defines "epiphany" as "a sudden intuitive leap of understanding, especially through an ordinary but striking occurrence." Last week, I experienced an epiphany concerning a movie that I didn't think could hold one for me after 27 years. The film is Summer Lovers, directed and written by Randal Kleiser.

Of Kleiser's directorial talents, I've never been particularly impressed; I loathed his biggest box office hit, Grease, and any quality The Blue Lagoon contained was solely due to Nestor Almendros' cinematography and the less said about Big Top Pee-Wee, the better.

Summer Lovers, on the other hand, fascinated me from its release in 1982. The story (originally written under the working title Trio) deals with American collegians Michael and Cathy, played by Peter Gallagher and Daryl Hannah, who spend a summer on the Greek island of Santorini, ostensibly Michael's ancestral home. Just after arriving, Michael becomes obsessed with a French archaeologist who works on a dig site on Santorini and lives near the Americans' summer residence. Michael pursues an affair with the French woman, Lina (played by the late French actress Valérie Quennessen), which gradually develops into a new bond between the three lead characters.

The film has developed its own little cult over the years, and even has its own Yahoogroup email list, which a member posted last week that a French language video edition she owns radically changes the dynamics of the story from those presented in the original English dialogue. In this edition, the nationalities of the three are switched - the couple become French tourists Michel et Catharine, and the French archaeologist becomes the American Trina - and, most significantly, at the end of the film Trina is identified as a post-op transsexual.

There appear to be several hints towards this end in the English version, such as Lina/Trina having the shortest hair of any female in the movie, a very independent attitude towards life in general, and in one scene a transgendered friend of Lina/Trina's makes a film that Michael and Cathy watch the production of. Lina/Trina even discusses with Cathy how her parents threw her out of their home at age 15, a too frequent reaction that many real-life parents have to learning that their offspring are not heterosexual. In one scene, Lina/Trina asks Michael if he's ever slept with another man, an idea he doesn't immediately reject. In another shot, completely unrelated to any other scene in the picture, Lina/Trina even brings up the Greek god Dionysus being disguised as a woman to deceive his adversaries.

By this same token, the transsexual angle could be something that the French (or Quebecois?) distributors of Summer Lovers decided to graft onto the film without Kleiser's knowledge. In the first draft of Kleiser's Trio screenplay, Lina confesses that her father was sexually abusive towards her, which leads Lina to avoid sexual commitments in her adult life. This piece of information is not mentioned in the American release version of Summer Lovers; whether it figures into this alternate French version, I know not.

But at least this epiphany should allow for looking at Summer Lovers with new eyes, so to speak. M-G-M, which distributes the film in the U.S. nowadays, plugged it into as many cable slots as it could just a few years ago, so I assume Encore or The Movie Channel have a few plays still contracted. The 2003 DVD is probably still to be found for $5 at better Targets or Best Buys everywhere. It's worth another look.

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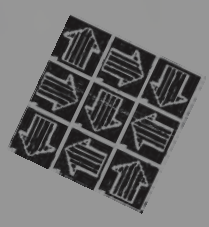
HIV In D.C, Reaches Crisis Rates

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - The HIV transmission rate in the nation's capital is as high as that of Uganda and parts of Kenya, where the virus is at epidemic levels, advocate.com reported. About 3,000 people in every 100,000 Washington, D.C., residents are HIV-positive, according to a report released by Mayor Adrian Fenty. The D.C. department of health's HIV/AIDS administration director Shannon Hader told The Washington Post that these levels are the highest in the nation, and higher than parts of West Africa, "where the disease is considered to be a crisis."

The count shows a 22% increase since 2006, bringing the total number of Washington, D.C., residents with the virus to 15,120 people. The groups most affected by this are African-Americans, white Gay males, and Latinos. Men who have sex with men of all races made up 51% of those with HIV. Nationally, the rate is about 60%. The majority of Gay and Bisexual men with HIV were between the ages of 20 and 49. Transmission is most fueled by both heterosexual and homosexual sex as well as drug use.

Of those with HIV in heterosexual relationships, about half believed that their partner was in a sexual relationship with another person, and about the same number of people were not aware of their partner's HIV status. Fenty, with Hader and department of health director Pierre Vigilance, unveiled plans to combat the skyrocketing rate of HIV transmission in the city.



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Mar slides into Pisces this week as we float on the mellowness and cruise on the vibes. Let your intuition be your spiritual guide. It is time to plot your course and swim to success.

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

If a bright light is suddenly switched on in your closet, thank your lucky stars for Mars in Pisces. Proud Rams are generally very honest and forthright folks. Now, any lingering secrets that are holding you back are released and stamped out. You may turn to spirituality or the occult in a quest for further enlightenment. Why not try your hand at palmistry with a certain palm?

TAURUS (APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

Queer Bulls find that the the week brings friends out of the woodwork. You are surrounded by good Gay cheer! Enjoy this convivial time by expanding your social circle; Join social groups, make it a point to meet new folks or get more involved in social activities. There is something and someone to be learned in every encounter. How friendly can you be...?

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

This week, make it a point to become more active in navigating your own career path. You are able to impress those in power and showcase your considerable skills. Pink Twins should use this calculating energy to make their best moves and maneuver to the top of the corporate heap. Will you have to step on the backs of others to get there? Heck, that's half the fun!

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)

Gay Crabs are tempted to travel this week. The urge to see the world or at least reach people on a more global level will have to be satisfied one way or another. If money or time is tight, try cruising the web for inspiration or exploring different neighborhood haunts for exotic nightlife. Okay, how about renting a foreign movie and ordering in anchovy pizza?

LEO (JULY 24 - AUGUST 23)

If the sexual steambath gets too hot to handle, blame the flame on the new matches who heat up your sex life. Proud Lions become especially alluring (what a nice change of pace!) and can bag any quarry they set their sights on. But choose wisely compadre; You can become passionate, possessive and jealous. You just can't love and leave 'em anymore.

VIRGO (AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 23)

Partnerships become the be all and end all for all queer Virgins. Now you begin to realize how important it is to have a special someone with whom to share your hopes, dreams and toothbrush. If you are in a relationship, use this zesty spark to electrify partners. Single Virgos know just where to look to find domestic bliss. So what are you waiting for?

LIBRA (SEPTEMBER 24 - OCTOBER 23)

It is not too late to put your best foot forward on the day to day job. Proud Libras feel in the pink and can manage to see the sunny side of even the greyest cubicle. Tackle any routine or detailed project now and get it out of the way. Soon, this energy will divert your attention to diet and health related exercise. Bench press or squat thrust with a friend.

SCORPIO (OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)

Queer Scorps manage to have a great time this week. Anything that you do that is creative or just plain fun is .... just plain fun. The secret to your success is to go with the inspirational flow and allow your Gay muse to take you on artistic rambles where you interact with wilde folks. Relax bubbele; this marvelous energy doesn't come around often. Sound familiar?

SAGITTARIUS (NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 22)

Gay Archers are inspired to clean under the familial rug this week. Do what needs to be done to clear the air and open the windows. For those who have dumped out their closets long ago, use this time to make needed changes around the house, whether it's renovation, redecoration or removal. How about dumping that wagon wheel coffee table?

CAPRICORN (DECEMBER 23 - JANUARY 20)

Your words speak volumes this week. Pink Caps are mesmerized by concepts and theories and can use this fleeting strategic, incisive cosmic energy to hone their communication skills and get the manifesto Out. Don't waste time obsessing on trivialities; it is the time to set things in motion for the rest of the year. If not you, then who? If not now, then when? Hurry!

AQUARIUS (JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 19)

The fates focus on on all acquisitive Aqueerians with a taste for the fine life. (And that is just about all of them.) Suddenly you think that you can afford anything your heart desires. Don't make that mistake. This week you are supposed to reevaluate your value system with an eye towards austerity. Count your pennies and ascertain the worth. Then save it!

PISCES (FEBRUARY 20 - MARCH 20)

Guppies get a burst of sociable energy this week and should use it before they lose it. You are pushed into center stage where you happily oblige an adoring crowd with a jaunty dance or two. New projects can be launched and fresh ideas planted in fertile soil. You can charm new acquaintances with your wit and finesse. Oh my! Have you got them fooled!

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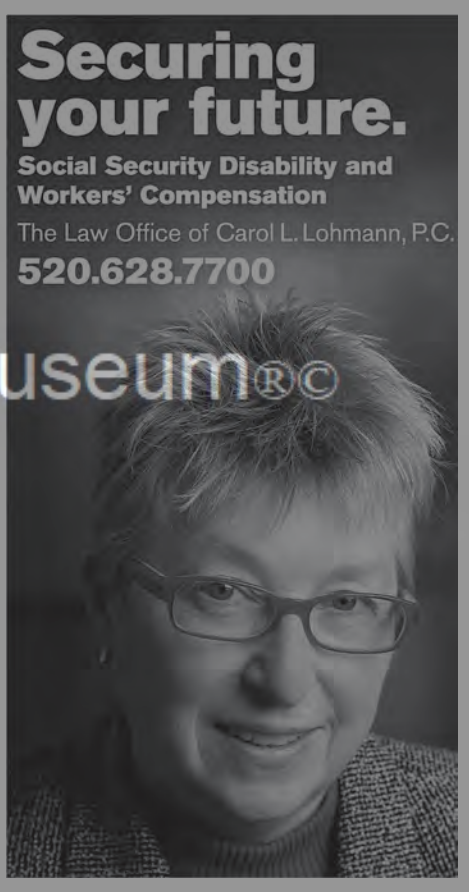

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Around The Nation

OLYMPIA, Wa. (Observer Update) - Same-sex domestic partners would have all of the rights and benefits that Washington offers married couples under a measure passed by the state Senate, the Associated Press reported on 365Gay.com. Supporters of the bill said it offers same-sex couples fairness that has been denied them under the state's 1998 Defense of Marriage Act, which restricts marriage to unions between a man and woman.

"You have denied us that right," said bill sponsor Sen. Ed Murray, D-Seattle, one of six openly Gay lawmakers in the Legislature. "Do not deny us the right to care for our families and build our lives." The bill passed on a mostly party-line 30-18 vote and now heads to the House. The Senate rejected two Republican amendments, including one that would have sent the measure to voters. The bill expands on previous domestic partnership laws by adding reference to partnerships alongside all remaining areas of state law where currently only married couples are mentioned, statutes ranging from labor and employment to pensions and other public employee benefits.

The underlying domestic partnership law, which Murray spearheaded two years ago, provided hospital visitation rights, the ability to authorize autopsies and organ donations, and inheritance rights when there is no will. Last year, lawmakers expanded that law to give domestic partners standing under laws covering probate and trusts, community property and guardianship. A total 5,112 domestic partnership registrations had been filed since the law took effect in July 2007.

Opponents said the bill alters the traditional definition of marriage. "Same-sex couples have the right to form meaningful relationships. But I don't think they have the right to redefine marriage for all of us," said Sen. Janea Holmquist, R-Moses Lake. Gov. Chris Gregoire has said she supports the new expansion measure. Gregoire signed the last two domestic partnership bills into law, as well as a Gay civil rights law in 2006.

DES MOINES, Ia. (Observer Update) - Legislation that would make marriage gender neutral in Iowa appeared dead after it was stripped from the list of measures to be take up by lawmakers this session, 365Gay.com reported.

While it remains possible the bill could reemerge near the end of the session, most political observers believe it has little chance of being taken up. The bill was sponsored by Sen. Matt McCoy. It would have replaced the words that define a couple as husband and wife under Iowa's marriage law with spouse.

With the bill failing to be marked up, same-sex couples are now pinning their hopes on the state Supreme Court. The court late last year heard arguments in a challenge to the state ban on same-sex marriage.

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Observer Update) - Legislation that would bar unmarried couples in Kentucky from adopting or fostering children was declared officially dead after the state Senate's GOP leadership declined to schedule a vote, 365Gay.com reported.

The measure passed a key committee and was sent for a vote on the floor of the Senate. But with the current session set to end shortly, the bill was not placed on the agenda. Even if the bill won Senate approval, it would have to be sent to the House and passed there before the end of the session, expected this week.

The sponsor of the legislation, Sen. Gary Tapp (R) said he hopes to bring back the measure in the next session. But even then its future is uncertain. The measure said that anyone "cohabitating with a sexual partner outside of marriage" cannot be considered as a foster or adoptive parent. Although the bill would affect all unmarried couples living together it was seen as specifically targeting same-sex couples.

WILKES-BARRE, Pennsylvania (Observer Update) - In less than four hours a jury of eight men and four women found 27 year old Harlow Cuadra guilty of first degree murder in the slaying of Cobra video owner Bryan Kocis in 2007, reported 365Gay.com. In addition to the murder conviction, the jury also found him guilty of 11 other counts including theft, robbery, arson and abuse of corpse. Cuadra was sentenced to life in prison.

Cuadra's former lover and business partner, 35-year-old Joseph Kerekes, already is serving life after pleading guilty last December to second degree murder after making a deal with prosecutors. The prosecution maintained that Kocis was murdered by Cuadra and Kerekes in a business rivalry over the lucrative Gay porn industry. In closing arguments, defense attorney Joseph D'Andrea told the jury that Cuadra was guilty of nothing more than being at Kocis' home during the murder and that it was Kerekes who committed the killing.

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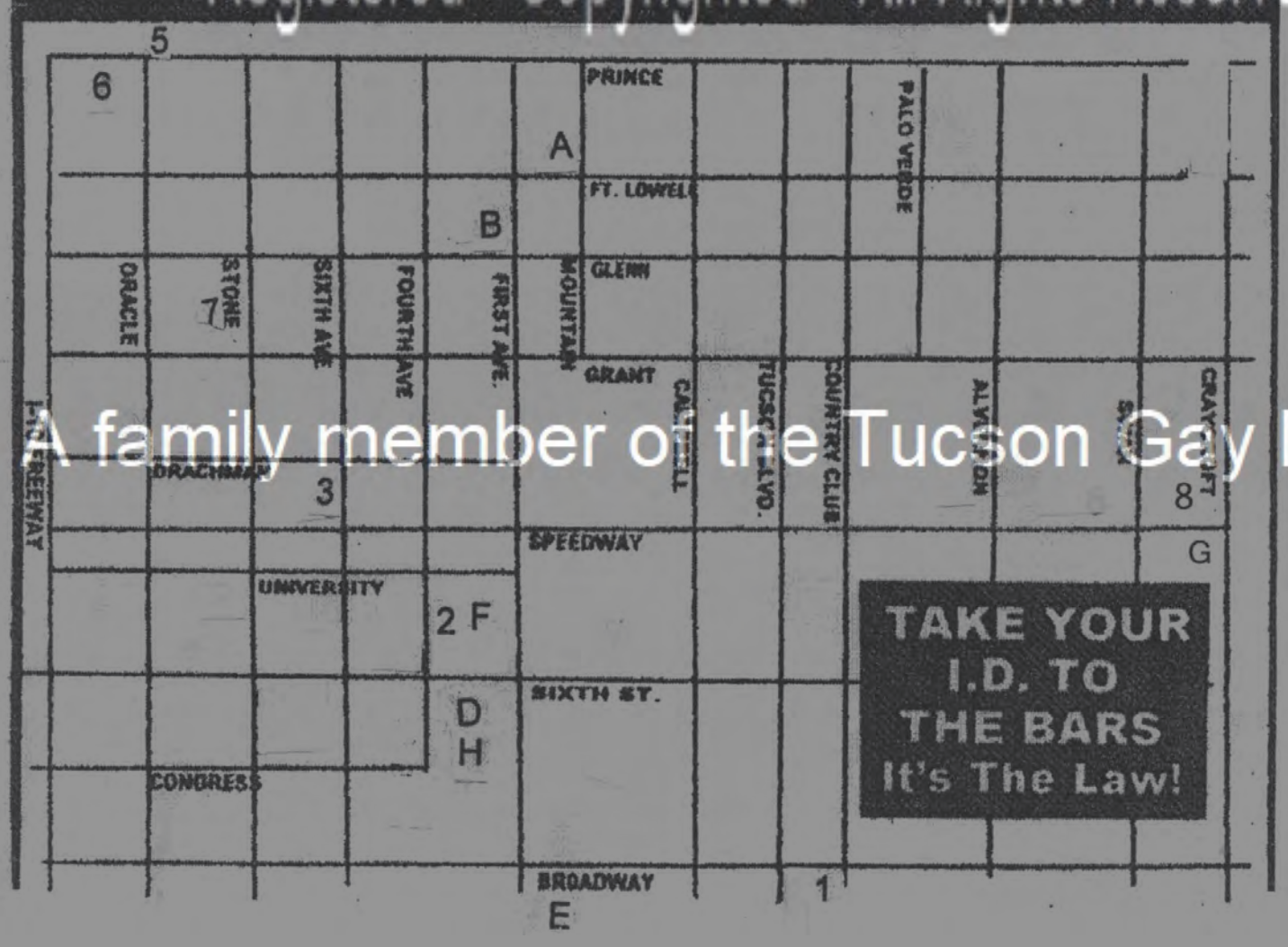

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Theatre Review

by Jack Melichar

The Arizona Company presents SOMEBODY/NOBODY, a world premier comedy by Jane Martin.

I felt that act 1 dragged somewhat and that Jessica Martin, who played Loli, from Flatt Kansas(and was in Hollywood to find fame and fortune) over acted, and it was apparent, to me at least, that she was not in character. She was Jessica Martin. And would somebody please tell actresses that there is a difference between projecting and shouting?

At the close of act 1, I believed I would have the first play put on by ATC that I could have fun writing about - that it was awful and should be avoided. However, by act 2. The play came together and was, in fact, very funny.

I must say that I recommend it wholeheartedly - particularly if you enjoy laughing.

As I said, Loli went to Hollywood to find fame and fortune. It was there she met Sheena Keena, a teen-idol. Sheena came to realize that there was a world beyond tinsel-town and was beginning to yearn fo something more. Did either get that which they desired? Go to the play and find out. My lips are sealed.

SOMEBODY/NOBODY will be playing at the Temple of Music and Arts on Scott Ave. until March 28. Call (520) 622-2823 for ticket information. It's a play you will enjoy. Coming next, KING HENRY V.

"A celebrity is one who is known to many persons he is glad he doesn't know." H.L. Mencken.

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COMMENTARY...

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A Pragmatic Argument For Approaching Gay Marriage

by Emma Ruby-Sachs

There is a lot of time and money spent on defining the word marriage. Does it mean family? Procreation? Stability? Commitment? But in a legal sense, marriage is a basket of rights. Some of these rights are pretty mundane (like once you're married you have the right to require your spouse to refrain from marrying anyone else without first getting a divorce), but others are significant (benefits, tax deductions, property rights etc.).

In the debate about Gay marriage, a lot of attention is paid to civil unions vs. marriage and, while I agree with Jenna that creating inequalities in law - even if the two terms fundamentally stand for the same thing - creates untenable violations of the rights of LGBT people, I am a pragmatist at heart.

In Canada, the fight for same-sex marriage was not won with a grand challenge and call for equality (although that was going on in the background with much help from civil society organizations). The first big Gay marriage win was a case about a woman whose partner, after years of living together, kicked her out of the matrimonial home, changed the locks and unilaterally took her name off their joint business. She went to the courts for the same divorce rights as her straight friends. And won. In that decision, no one mentioned "Gay marriage."

Meanwhile, groups around the country, especially unions like the Canadian Auto Workers, were fighting for same-sex benefits at private employers. Soon, the courts were forced to determine that under the equality provisions, the word spouse (both common law and married) had to include same-sex couples.

That led to a debate about civil unions and, only after the government had supported a separate but equal regime, was there a decision requiring the same legal term for both straight and same-sex relationships.

What this history tells us is that these little battles that have been playing out in states across the country are important. And the battles we fight everyday to have employers recognize our relationships without a government mandate are also essential.

But no government, not even Obama, will leap into equality without being forced to do so. And while I believe in activism by the courts, maybe we all have to settle for a piecemeal struggle for the rights in the marriage basket. That is what the new DOMA challenge is about.

I am infuriated by calls for separate but equal and am frustrated by the inaction of the current administration. But that part of me that understands politics and history recognizes that rights may have to be won one by one before real equality can be achieved.

(Emma Ruby-Sachs is a contributing editor to the 365Gay Blog, from which this is reprinted.)

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Radio France Head Sorry For Erotic Photo

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PARISm France (Observer Update) - The 60-year-old, Gay head of Radio France has apologized for appearing in an erotic pose, shirtless and wearing a wrestler's mask, for a charity calendar raising money for AIDS activism, advocate.com reported.

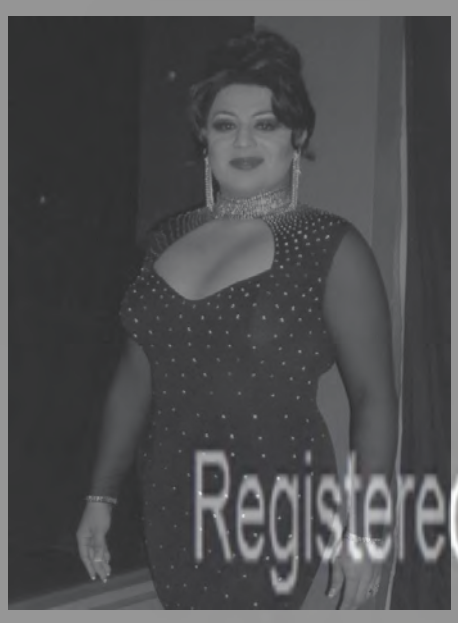
Jean-Paul Cluzel showed his heavily tattooed body in a provocative photo to benefit Gay and AIDS activist group ACT UP. The photo is to appear in a 2009 calendar. But now Cluzel is apologizing for appearing in the calendar – a number of high-ranking officials have reportedly taken issue with the photo, including French president Nicolas Sarkozy. "I made an error of judgment and apologize to any colleagues at Radio France that were offended by it," Cluzel told newspaper Le Figaro in an interview.

"Friends of mine suggested I pose for a calendar about the diverse range of people with tattoos, the profits of which would go to the fight against AIDS. I didn't want to appear in my capacity as head of Radio France, so I posed in a colored cloth mask." He says ACT UP is responsible for revealing his name and job title to the press.

Miss Gay Tucson America Pageant Held March 8

TUCSON - The Miss Gay Tucson Pageant America is now in the record books. The event was held to a excited audience at the Coyote Moon Pub Sunday, March 11. Seven contestants participated The event was hosted by Lucinda Holliday and the contestants provided the entertainment for the evening during their solo talent and evening gown presentation.

Contestant were Madame Alegra, Bianca Solei, Lady Ashley, Vivika DeAngelo, Veronica Chase, Diva and Jazmine White. At the end of the contest the judges awarded the title “Miss Gay Tucson America 2009" to Vivika DeAngelo. Veronica Chase won first Runner-up, Congratulations to the winners as well as the rest of the contestants.



POET'S CORNER

OBAMA'S PAJAMAS
by Ron Rose - Tucson

Obama's Pajamas, Smithsonian Bound
Barach never wore them, how does that sound?
The President's problems, 24 hours a day,
Gets 400 Grand, why that's hardly pay!
To face all our troubles, find answers for all
Takes 24 hours, 24 hours, on call.
Barach, buy a nightshirt, and wear with a tie,
And then you'll be ready, to go “Beddy-Bye”,

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COMMENTARY. . . .

Separation Anxiety: G/L Couples Should Be Allowed To Stay Together In The United States

(The following is an editorial that appeared in the March 16 edition of the Washington Post newspaper, from which it is reprinted from.)

The Uniting American Families Act would allow Gay and Lesbian Americans and permanent residents to sponsor their foreign-born partners for legal residency in the United States. The bill, introduced last month in the Senate by Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and in the House by Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), would add "permanent partner" and "permanent partnership" after the words "spouse" and "marriage" in relevant sections of the Immigration and Nationality Act. If passed, it would right a gross unfairness.

Under the proposal, a "permanent partnership" is defined as a "committed, intimate relationship" with another adult "in which both parties intend a lifelong commitment." The couple must be financially interdependent and not married to or in a permanent partnership with anyone else. And the partners can't be related. The benefit comes with the same immigration restrictions and enforcement standards that apply to heterosexual couples. Fraudulent permanent partnerships face the same penalties as fake marriages: up to five years in prison and up to a $250,000 fine.

"Under current law, committed same-sex foreign partners of American citizens are unable to use the family immigration system, which accounts for a majority of the green cards and immigrant visas granted annually by the United States," Mr. Leahy said upon introducing the bill. "The promotion of family unity has long been part of federal immigration policy, and we should honor that principle by providing all Americans the opportunity to be with their loved ones." According to the most recent census, he added, about 35,000 binational, same-sex couples are living in the United States. The new legislation would ensure that the family connections valued under immigration law are extended to Gays and Lesbians.

The strain of the status quo on Gay and Lesbian binational couples should not be discounted. Because their relationships are not legally recognized by the United States, some couples have resorted to illegal marriages where the foreign nationals marry Americans to get green cards that allow them to stay in the country permanently. In other cases, Americans have exiled themselves to be with their partners. Sixteen countries, including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Israel, South Africa and the United Kingdom, allow residents to sponsor same-sex permanent partners for legal immigration. American Gays and Lesbians should not have to choose between their country and their partners.

Nigeria Gays Come Out Of Shadows

LAGOS, Nigeria (Observer Update) - Nigerian Gays who regularly face police persecution are coming out to fight a proposed law that would make it a criminal offense to attend a Gay event, gather or attend a Gay wedding anywhere in the world, reported 365Gay.com.

Homosexuality already is illegal in Nigeria, punishable by a prison term up to 14 years with hard labor. Under the proposed new law, a same-sex couple married anywhere and returning to Nigeria, or anyone who is married to a same-sex partner who travels to Nigeria - including foreign business people - would be jailed for up to three years.

The legislation also would imprison anyone who attends a Gay wedding with up to five years behind bars. In addition, police would have the right to raid public or private gatherings of any group of people suspected of being Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender. The National Assembly began holding public hearings on the bill and for the first time Nigerian Gays openly testified.

"This bill is not necessary, we see no reason why people should be criminalized," Rashidi Williams, 23, of the Queer Alliance of Nigeria told the committee. "I did not choose to be Gay. It is trial enough to live in this country, we should not create more laws to make us suffer," he said. Williams went on to tell the committee that "We believe that we are created by God and do not wish to be discriminatedgainst, we seek your help and appeal to you all to lay this Bill aside. We ask that the House of Representatives and our lawmakers work with us to understand the concept of sexuality and sexual orientation through our experiences and not create laws that punish us needlessly."

PLEASE HELP

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NOTICES - COMMUNITY - NOTICES

CANCER SUPPORT GROUP for Lesbians, Bisexuals, Trans, Queer, Women. Meets Mondays (6:00 - 7:30pm) at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th Street, Tucson, AZ 85701. For more info, pleases contact Brenda Casey, LMSW 520-694-0247 or bcassey@umcaz.edu

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 11:00a.m., Please come and join us! Our next meeting will be held at the Yard Dog.

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 520 742-1271. 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 20 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 committed volunteers to provide services including friendly visits, light housekeeping, assistance with meals, shopping, errands, transportation and companionship for medical appointments, and respite care for primary care givers. No judgement or proselytizing - we are here to be of service. For information call Scott at 299-6647.

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT SPORTS TEAMS and updates on Gay Games, contract TEAM ARIZONA at their website: teamarizona.org

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, 5:30 p.m. each month at Lutheran Church of the Foothills, 5102 N. Craycroft Rd. For information visit www.lctucson.org or write: Lutherans Concerned/Tucson, P.O. Box 40702, Tucson, AZ 85717-0702.

REVEILLE MEN'S CHORUS rehearses Thursday evenings 7-10pm at the Historic Y, corner of University Blvd. And 5th Ave. Join us!! For info call 304-1758

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 Megan at Wingspan, 624-1779, ext. 116. 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,

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.:

TUCSON M2M - http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TucsonM2M

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*Open Saturdays 5-10 p.m or until the last member leaves. Happy Hour 5-7 all drinks $1.00 off.
*Open Sundays 2-7 p.m. or until last member leaves. Bottle Beer starts at $1.00

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DAILY BAR CALENDAR

SUNDAY

THE BIZ - 'L' Word showing 7pm & 9:30pm (Progressive drink specials) - First: $3 Well; Second: $1.50 pints. Last Special is 2-4-1. Following L Word, Out Loud Open Mic. If you have talent join our open night mic - Starts10:45 pm.

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.

COYOTE MOON PUB - Open 11am. Beer Bust Sunday - $1 draft beers (12 oz), domestic only; $2.25 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 with ID or payroll receipt.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm $2 Well or Domestic Beer. Karaoke on the Patio 4-8:30pm. Burger BBQ 5-8pm + $1 pint draft. 9pm-close Karaoke inside with Troy & $1.50 Well or Domestic Beer, $2.50 Call or Premium Beer. DJ Hurricane on the Patio.

VENTURE-N - Open 10am-2am. Patio Bar open 3pm. Beer Bust $2.25/pitcher, 3-7pm. Burger BBQ, 5-7pm, $3 proceeds to Petwatch (Helping HIVAIDS 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.

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

MONDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Happy Hour 3-8. EDAN...Exotic dancer appreciation night. DJ spins Hip Hop & R&B and all request dance. $5.25 drink specials.

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.

COYOTE MOON PUB - 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 Domestic, $12 Imports (4 beers to a bucket, for 2 or more people, Some brands 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 $2 Well or Domestic Beer. 8pm-close $5 Scratch Long Island Varieties. 9pm-close DJ Hurricane with "All Request Music".

VENTURE-N - Open 9am-2am. SKYY Matinis $3 ea., 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. Happy Hour 3-8. PHAT Tuesday's 50 cent Pabst cans 9pm-close Come play our Wii gaming system. Beer Pong Tournament w/ cash prizes starts 9pm.

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.

COYOTE MOON PUB - 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 & Dos XX Amber).Girlz Nite Out. Girlz pay only .75 for well liquors or domestic drafts 8-10pm.

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-2am. Dart Tournament, 7pm $3 entry fee/Pot Match.

WOODY'S - Open noon- 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 Noon-2am. Beer Bust 3-7

WEDNESDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Happy Hour til 8pm. Wild Wednesdays College Night. 18 to party - 21 to drink. $7 Cover 18+ No Cover 21+. DJ Spins Hip Hop, R&B Top 40 remix dance.

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.

COYOTE MOON PUB -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, $2 Well or Domestics. "Diva-Licious" show w/Bunny FuFu. 11pm - -close "Reverse Happy Hour". DJ Q Inside & DJ Mike Lopez playing 80s music on the Patio.

VENTURE-N - Open 9am-2am. Beer Bust, 8pm-11pm $2.50/Pitcher.

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. Happy Hour 3-8. Y-NOT Karaoke starts @9:00pm to close. 2-4-1 starts 10;pm.

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.. .

COYOTE MOON PUB - Open 3pm. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints, $3.50 sm. Pitcher/$5.50 lg.. Pitcher. Boyz Nite Out - boys pay only .75 for well liquors or domestic drafts 8-10pm. Bicardi Thursdays - $3.00 Bicardi Rum - all flavors. Karaoke with Kristen and K2 Tunes 8pm.

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-2am..

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 Noon-2am. Beer Bust 3-7

FRIDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Happy Hour UNTIL 8. Hip Hop & R&B. Drink Specials all night called out by DJs. Special Performances.

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.

COYOTE MOON PUB - Open 3pm. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. $3.50 Sm. Pitcher/$5.50 lg. Pitcher. $2.75 All Mexican Beers and Dos XX Amber. Country Dancing 8:30 p.m. to close with DJ Pat.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, $2 Well or Domestics. 9pm -close DJ Hurricane inside. 10pm-close DJ Mike Lopez with "I'm a Sexy Bitch Night" on the patio.

VENTURE-N - Open 9am-2am Patio Bar Open 7pm-2m Cuervo Margaritas $3 ea., 4-8pm.

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. Starting Feb. 13th Escandalo Saturdays w/Carnival Latino. Latin Hip Hop, Top 40s & Reggaeton music will be spun. Guest DJs. $5 Cover. oGo dancers male and female. Shot specials allnight. .

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.

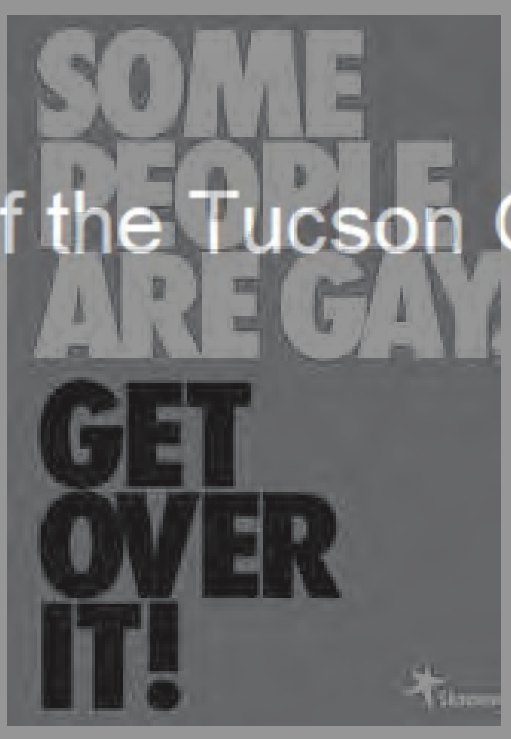
COYOTE MOON PUB - Open at 2pm. Happy Hour 2-8pm, $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. $3.50 sm. Pitcher/$5.50 lg. Plus check out the bartenders choice of shot specials. $5.00 cheeseburger & fries. $3.00 Cuervo and $4.75 Jager Bombs. Check our calendar for the Saturday Night Special Entertainment.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, $2 Well or Domestics. 5-8pm Karaoke on the patio $1Draft Pints. 9pm "Saturday Starrlett's" w/Bunny FuFu & Janee Starr. After the show, DJ Q spinning inside & 10pm-close, DJ Mike Lopez with the "Party on the Patio".

VENTURE-N - Open 9am-2am. Patio Bar open 7pm-2am. Beer Bust $2.25/Pitcher. 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.



BAR CALENDAR Of Upcoming Events

Thursday, March 19
WOODY'S - Tori Steele's "Cover Girl Revue" starring Mr. Kenneth Blake from Las Vegas.

Friday, March 20
THE BIZ - House of Whore Tense drag show 9:00 p.m.

Friday, Saturday & Sunday, March 20-21-22
IBT's - It's 4th Avenue Spring Street Fair with some great shows hosted by Bunny FuFu and Janee Starr and some very special guests and featuring Mr. Kenneth Blake here from Las Vegas. Showtimes are: Friday - 9:00 p.m., Saturday 2:00 p.m. and Sunday 2:00 p.m.

Sunday, March 22
WOODY'S - Following Woody's great all-day Sunday Party and food, starting at 8:00 p.m. is "Old School Revue Show". It will star, from Las Vegas, Mr. Kenneth Blake with Tori Steele, Bunny FuFu,, Lucinda Hollliday and Ajia Simone - a true all-star show and No Cover Charge! Don't miss this great show which will be followed by Karaoke beginning at 9:30 p.m.

Saturdy, March 28
THE BIZ - Breast Cancer Benefit Car Wash starts at 10:00 a.m. Also, Latin Licious "Glow Party". Enter to win tickets to see Britney Spears live in Phoenix. Drawing April 10th.

VENTURE-N - It's that time again for V-Ns Hides of March. Join in the fun. It's a big celebration here.

Saturday, April 28
WOODY'S - "Wett Party" starring adult entertainer Xavier Muscle from the movies and internet. More later.

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COMMENTARY. . . .

by Frank Rich

The Culture Warriors Get Laid Off

Someday we'll learn the whole story of why George W. Bush brushed off that intelligence briefing of Aug. 6, 2001, "Bin Laden Determined to Strike in U.S." But surely a big distraction was the major speech he was readying for delivery on Aug. 9, his first prime-time address to the nation. The subject – which Bush hyped as "one of the most profound of our time" – was stem cells. For a presidency in thrall to a thriving religious right (and a presidency incapable of multi-tasking), nothing, not even terrorism, could be more urgent.

When Barack Obama ended the Bush stem-cell policy last week, there were no such overheated theatrics. No oversold prime-time address. No hysteria from politicians, the news media or the public. The family-values dinosaurs that once stalked the earth – Falwell, Robertson, Dobson and Reed – are now either dead, retired or disgraced. Their less-famous successors pumped out their pro forma e-mail blasts, but to little avail. The Republican National Committee said nothing whatsoever about Obama's reversal of Bush stem-cell policy. That's quite a contrast to 2006, when the party's wild and crazy (and perhaps transitory) new chairman, Michael Steele, likened embryonic stem-cell research to Nazi medical experiments during his failed Senate campaign.

What has happened between 2001 and 2009 to so radically change the cultural climate? Here, at last, is one piece of good news in our global economic meltdown: Americans have less and less patience for the intrusive and divisive moral scolds who thrived in the bubbles of the Clinton and Bush years. Culture wars are a luxury the country – the G.O.P. included – can no longer afford.

Not only was Obama's stem-cell decree an anticlimactic blip in the news, but so was his earlier reversal of Bush restrictions on the use of federal money by organizations offering abortions overseas. When the administration tardily ends "don't ask, don't tell," you can bet that this action, too, will be greeted by more yawns than howls.

Once again, both the president and the country are following New Deal-era precedent. In the 1920s boom, the reigning moral crusade was Prohibition, and it packed so much political muscle that F.D.R. didn't oppose it. The Anti-Saloon League was the Moral Majority of its day, the vanguard of a powerful fundamentalist movement that pushed anti-evolution legislation as vehemently as it did its war on booze. (The Scopes "monkey trial" was in 1925.) But the political standing of this crowd crashed along with the stock market. Roosevelt shrewdly came down on the side of "the wets" in his presidential campaign, leaving Hoover to drown with "the dries."

Much as Obama repealed the Bush restrictions on abortion and stem-cell research shortly after pushing through his stimulus package, so F.D.R. jump-started the repeal of Prohibition by asking Congress to legalize beer and wine just days after his March 1933 inauguration and declaration of a bank holiday. As Michael A. Lerner writes in his fascinating 2007 book "Dry Manhattan," Roosevelt's stance reassured many Americans that they would have a president "who not only cared about their economic well-being" but who also understood their desire to be liberated from "the intrusion of the state into their private lives." Having lost plenty in the Depression, the public did not want to surrender any more freedoms to the noisy minority that had shut down the nation's saloons.

In our own hard times, the former moral "majority" has been downsized to more of a minority than ever. Polling shows that nearly 60 percent of Americans agree with ending Bush restrictions on stem-cell research (a Washington Post/ABC News survey in January); that 55 percent endorse either gay civil unions or same-sex marriage (Newsweek, December 2008); and that 75 percent believe openly gay Americans should serve in the military (Post/ABC, July 2008). Even the old indecency wars have subsided. When a federal court last year struck down the F.C.C. fine against CBS for Janet Jackson's "wardrobe malfunction" at the 2004 Super Bowl, few Americans either noticed or cared about the latest twist in what had once been a national cause célèbre.

It's not hard to see why Eric Cantor, the conservative House firebrand who is vehemently opposed to stem-cell research, was disinclined to linger on the subject when asked about it on CNN last Sunday. He instead accused the White House of acting on stem cells as a ploy to distract from the economy. "Let's take care of business first," he said. "People are out of jobs." (On this, he's joining us late, but better late than never.)

Even were the public still in the mood for fiery invective about family values, the G.O.P. has long since lost any authority to lead the charge. The current Democratic president and his family are exemplars of precisely the Eisenhower-era squareness – albeit refurbished by feminism – that the Republicans often preached but rarely practiced. Obama actually walks the walk. As the former Bush speechwriter David Frum recently wrote, the new president is an "apparently devoted husband and father" whose worst vice is "an occasional cigarette."

Frum was contrasting Obama to his own party's star attraction, Rush Limbaugh, whose "history of drug dependency" and "tangled marital history" make him "a walking stereotype of self-indulgence." Indeed, the two top candidates for leader of the post-Bush G.O.P, Rush and Newt, have six marriages between them. The party that once declared war on unmarried welfare moms, homosexual "recruiters" and Bill Clinton's private life has been rebranded by Mark Foley, Larry Craig, David Vitter and the irrepressible Palins. Even before the economy tanked, Americans had more faith in medical researchers using discarded embryos to battle Parkinson's and Alzheimer's than in Washington politicians making ad hoc medical decisions for Terri Schiavo.

What's been revealing about watching conservatives debate their fate since their Election Day Waterloo is how, the occasional Frum excepted, so many of them don't want to confront the obsolescence of culture wars as a political crutch. They'd rather, like Cantor, just change the subject – much as they avoid talking about Bush and avoid reckoning with the doomed demographics of the G.O.P.'s old white male base. To recognize all these failings would be to confront why a once-national party can now be tucked into the Bible Belt.

The religious right is even more in denial than the Republicans. When Obama nominated Kathleen Sebelius, the Roman Catholic Kansas governor who supports abortion rights, as his secretary of health and human services, Tony Perkins, the leader of the Family Research Council, became nearly as apoplectic as the other Tony Perkins playing Norman Bates. "If Republicans won't take a stand now, when will they?" the godly Perkins thundered online. But Congressional Republicans ignored him, sending out (at most) tepid press releases of complaint, much as they did in response to Obama's stem-cell order. The two antiabortion Kansas Republicans in the Senate, Sam Brownback and Pat Roberts, both endorsed Sebelius.

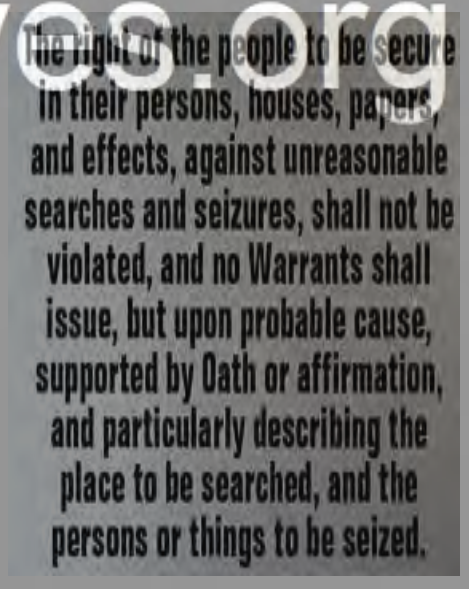
Perkins is now praying that economic failure will be a stimulus for his family-values business. "As the economy goes downward," he has theorized, "I think people are going to be driven to religion." Wrong again. The latest American Religious Identification Survey, published last week, found that most faiths have lost ground since 1990 and that the fastest-growing religious choice is "None," up from 8 percent to 15 percent (which makes it larger than all denominations except Roman Catholics and Baptists). Another highly regarded poll, the General Social Survey, had an even more startling finding in its preliminary 2008 data released this month: Twice as many Americans have a "great deal" of confidence in the scientific community as do in organized religion. How the almighty has fallen: organized religion is in a dead heat with banks and financial institutions on the confidence scale.

This, too, is a replay of the Great Depression. "One might have expected that in such a crisis great numbers of these people would have turned to the consolations of and inspirations of religion," wrote Frederick Lewis Allen in "Since Yesterday," his history of the 1930s published in 1940. But that did not happen: "The long slow retreat of the churches into less and less significance in the life of the country, and even in the lives of the majority of their members, continued almost unabated."

The new American faith, Allen wrote, was the "secular religion of social consciousness." It took the form of campaigns for economic and social justice – as exemplified by the New Deal and those movements that challenged it from both the left and the right. It's too early in our crisis and too early in the new administration to know whether this decade will so closely replicate the 1930s, but so far Obama has far more moral authority than any religious leader in America with the possible exception of his sometime ally, the Rev. Rick Warren.

History is cyclical, and it would be foolhardy to assume that the culture wars will never return. But after the humiliations of the Scopes trial and the repeal of Prohibition, it did take a good four decades for the religious right to begin its comeback in the 1970s. In our tough times, when any happy news can be counted as a miracle, a 40-year exodus for these ayatollahs can pass for an answer to America's prayers.

(Frank Rich is the Pulitzer Prize winning columnist for the New York Times, from which this article is reprinted from.)



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