Observing Tucson And
The Greater Arizona Community

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Calif. Equality: Wait Til 2012 To Attack G/L Marriage Ban

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (Observer Update) - California Gay rights activists are at odds over when to ask voters to repeal the state's same-sex marriage ban, with one of the largest groups saying it needs until 2012 to put together a winning campaign and two others saying they plan go to the polls next year, 365Gay.com reported.

For months, organizers have been weighing the best strategy for gaining back marriage rights for Gay and Lesbian couples following their devastating loss last fall, when voters passed Proposition 8 banning same-sex nuptials just months after the California Supreme Court ruled to allow them. Outrage at the defeat caused Gay rights activists to spill into the streets, their anger galvanizing supporters in California and elsewhere to push forward.

Yet at the same time, a rift developed among California activists, with critics claiming the failed "No on 8? campaign had focused too intensely on liberal enclaves along the coast and did not effectively reach more conservative areas of the state, or minorities. Equality California, which led the "No on 8? charge, said that holding off until 2012 gives organizers more time to raise money and win over residents in those conservative areas. The group also said turnout in a presidential election year will be higher than in next year's gubernatorial race and will include more young people who tend to favor Gay marriage.

"Emotionally, we all want to win marriage back as quickly as possible," said Marc Solomon, Equality California's marriage director. "We really think that we have a shot in the next three years. But we have one shot, we don't have two shots. We're not waiting at all. We're going hard. But we think the campaign is a three-year campaign."

Meanwhile, Los Angeles-based Courage Campaign announced in an e-mail to supporters that it would push to get a measure on the 2010 ballot. And John Henning, head of Love Honor Cherish, said his group also would continue to focus on next year. "If you tell people that they're going to have to wait, a lot of people are going to lose interest," Henning said. "They're going to make other commitments, they're going to get the message that this isn't important enough to act now."

The anger over losing marriage rights - as well as the momentum from legalization in New Hampshire, Connecticut, Vermont and Iowa - have been strong arguments to launch the earliest campaign possible. Even Equality California was eyeing 2010 immediately after Proposition 8 passed with 52 percent of the vote. But Solomon said recent interviews with donors, sympathetic clergy, political consultants and organizations that work with Gay families advised waiting for 2012. He said it was unrealistic to quickly raise the needed cash - likely $40 million to $50 million - in a bad economy, especially when big donors are being asked to give to social service organizations whose budgets have been slashed.

G/L Marriage Fight: 'Kiss-Ins' Smack Mormon Image

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH (Observer Update) - Mormon church's vigorous, well-heeled support for Proposition 8, which banned Gay marriage in California last year, has turned the Utah-based faith into a lightning rod for Gay rights activism, including a nationwide "kiss-in" Saturday (Aug. 15), reported the Associated Press on 365Gay.com.

The event comes after Gay couples here and in San Antonio and El Paso, Texas, were arrested, cited for trespassing or harassed by police for publicly kissing. In Utah, the July 9 trespassing incident occurred after a couple were observed by security guards on a downtown park-like plaza owned by the 13 million-member Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The court case was dismissed, but the kiss sparked a community backlash and criticism of the church.

"I don't think that kiss would have turned out to be the kiss heard round the world if it were not for Proposition 8," said Ash Johnsdottir, organizer of the Salt Lake City Kiss-In. Atali Staffler, a Brigham Young University graduate student from Geneva, Switzerland, said she joined the 200 or so people who filled a downtown amphitheater for the event because she has watched her Gay father and many Gay friends struggle to find their place. The 31-year-old, who was raised Mormon but is not active in the church, said the church shouldn't be involved in Prop. 8. "I encourage them to promote the values they believe in and to defend their religious principles in advertisements, but civil rights have nothing to do with religious principles," she said.

Twenty-two people, many of them strangers to one another, gathered under the scorching sun on Washington's National Mall to participate in the national smooch. They were Gay and straight, couples and singles of all ages, with placards that read "Equal Opportunity Kisser" and "A Kiss is a Not a Crime." "This is America. A kiss on the cheek is OK," said Ian Thomas, 26, of Leesburg, Va., who organized the Washington Kiss-In. "It's got to be OK. If not, we're in serious trouble."

About 50 people, mostly Gay and Lesbian couples, gathered at Piedmont Park in downtown Atlanta and kissed for about five minutes. "You think that America is evolving into a Gay-friendly nation," said Randal Smith, 42, "but what happened in Texas and Utah show us it's still a long way off."

National organizers say Saturday's broadly held Gay rights demonstrations were not aimed specifically at the Mormon church. But observers say the church's heavy-handed intervention into California politics will linger and has left the faith's image tarnished. "What I hear from my community and from straight progressive individuals is that they now see the church as a force for evil and as an enemy of fairness and equality," said Kate Kendell, executive director of the San Francisco-based National Center for Lesbian Rights. Kendell grew up Mormon in Utah. "To have the church's very deep and noble history telescoped down into this very nasty little image is as painful for me as for any faithful Mormon."

Troy Williams, who is Gay and grew up Mormon, said ending the tension between Gays and the church requires mutual acceptance and understanding. "For both sides to peaceably coexist, we're all going to have to engage in some very deep soul searching," said Williams, a Salt Lake City-area activist and host of a liberal radio talk show. Church insiders say Prop. 8 has bred dissent among members and left families divided. Some members have quit or stopped attending services, while others have appealed to leadership to stay out of the same-sex marriage fight. But church spokeswoman Kim Farah said that Mormon support for traditional marriage has nothing to do with public relations. "It's too easy for those whose agenda is to change societal standards to claim there are great difficulties inside the Church because of its decision to support traditional marriage," Kim Farah said. "In reality the Church has received enormous support for its defense of marriage."

Mormonism teaches that homosexual sex is considered a sin, but Gays are welcome in church and can maintain church callings and membership if they remain celibate. The church has actively fought marriage equality legislation across the U.S. since the early 1990s and joined other faiths in asking Congress for a marriage amendment to the Constitution in 2006. Last year at the urging of church leaders, Mormons donated tens of millions of dollars to the "Yes on 8? campaign and were among the most vigorous volunteers. The institutional church gave nearly $190,000 to the campaign - contributions now being investigated by California's Fair Political Practices Commission.

TURNABOUT FOR TIHAN SUNDAY, SEPT. 6

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UPDATE

T-Squares Anniversary Dance August 29

TUCSON - T-Squares, Tucson's GLBT square dance club, is celebrating their 25th anniversary with a dance on Saturday, August 29 at the Therapeutic Recreation Center at Reid Park, 1000 S. Randolph Way.

The T-Squares club is a member of the International Association of Gay Squares Dance Clubs (IAGSDC) and the local Square & Round Dance Association of Southern Arizona (SARDASA). T-Squares' diverse membership is open to all regardless of age, race, gender, religion, ethnic background, or sexual orientation.

The T-Squares club dances every Tuesday evening at the Cornerstone Fellowship Social Hall at 2902 N. Geronimo Ave from 6:30 to 9:00 pm with a crash course slated for September 15th for anyone interested in taking square dance lessons with a uniquely Gay flair. For more information about T-Squares, email them at T-Squares@azgaydance.org, or visit azgaydance.org and click on "Tucson, AZ".

Turnabout, September 6

TUCSON (Observer Update) - "Turnabout for TIHAN" is an annual show put on by Tucson's GLBT clubs and their bar staff.

Each club and bar's staff request donations from their friends and customers in order to do a "turn-about" from male to female (or vice versa) and put on a fabulous show to benefit the work of TIHAN, the Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network (tihan.org)

So get ready for the glitz and glamour, the pumps and passion for this year's "Turnabout for TIHAN" benefit show, one of the biggest drag shows of the year, and takes place on Sunday, September 6 at the Doubletree Hotel at Reid Park (445 South Alvernon Way, Tucson, Arizona). The doors open at 5:00 p.m., and the show starts at 6:00 p.m. Tickets are only $10.00 in advance or $15.00 at the door. The evening also features a raffle with some great prizes.

Join us for Turnabout, featuring emcees Bunny Fufu and Janee Starr, along with your favorite bar staff in drag from your favorite participating bars: Woody's, IBT's, Coyote Moon and Colors.

Tickets are on sale now through the TIHAN office (credit card orders can be taken - (520) 299-6647), or at participating bars. For more information about the event, or to volunteer, contact Scott Blades at scott@tihan.org.

GLSEN Tucson Meetings In New Location

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Since Wingspan had to relocate to new premises, the Tucson chapter of GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, Straight Educators Network) has moved their meeting location.

Until further notice, GLSEN-Tucson will be meeting in the Martha Cooper Branch Library, 1377 N. Catalina Ave, in Meeting Room B.

Even though the meeting location may have changed, the date and time have not. On the first Thursday of each month, these meetings will take at 4:30 p.m. For more information, go online to chapters.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/tucson/home.html.

Welcome To OZ Keeps Bowling Right Into Winter

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Welcome to OZ, Tucson's newest LGBT/LGBT-friendly mixed bowling league had a wonderful inaugural summer season with 39 bowlers (thirteen teams), and are looking to carry the momentum forward and expand for the upcoming winter season.

Welcome to OZ is housed at Tucson Bowl, 7020 E. 21st Street (22nd & Kolb Rd) and will bowl on Thursday nights, practice at 6:45 p.m. and bowling at 7:00 p.m. The Winter league will begin on Thursday, September 10 and is a 34 week leaguer ending on Thursday, May 20, 2010 with a banquet held on Thursday, May 27, 2010.

A league meeting will be held on Thursday, September 10, 6:00 p.m. with our season beginning at 7:00 pm. Teams will consist of three bowlers each. Come as a team of three, a double or a single, we will assist in making teams. Let's continue the fun, so for more information contact us at: welcometoOZ09@gmail.com

Event At Antigone Books Friday, August 28

TUCSON (Observer Update) - On Friday, August 28, 7 p.m., state Rep. Kyrsten Sinema will discuss her new book, Unite and Conquer: How to Build Coalitions that Win–and Last (Berrett, Koehler, $16.95), at Antigone Books (antigonebooks.com), 411 N. Fourth Ave.

Sinema, a Democratic Representative in the Arizona State Legislature, was a leader in the successful fight against banning Gay marriage in 2006 and in the effort to divest state funds in Darfur–unexpected victories in a traditionally conservative state.

In her new book, Sinema shares how we can put together broad-based coalitions that advance the progressive agenda rather than simply sit back and feel good about the purity of our ideals. She argues that we must let go of our preconceived notions about who our opponents are and what specific outcomes we're aiming for; identity politics have bred insularity and intolerance and closed us off from creating winning alliances and strategies. Using examples from a host of campaigns from around the country, she offers specific advice on how to forge connections with seemingly unlikely allies.

The reading will be followed by a question and answer period. Refreshments will be served.

UA Presents Posts Third Consecutive Positive Year-End

TUCSON (Observer Update) - UApresents, the largest performing arts presenter in Southern Arizona, reported a positive year-end for the third consecutive season with a net gain (surplus) of $58,000. UApresents Executive Director Natalie Bohnet said eleven sold-out shows, in addition to the hard work of a dedicated staff and advisory board, contributed to another successful season.

"The 2009-2010 season has surpassed our expectations and already generated over $1M in ticket sales," Bohnet said. Ticket sales are 6% ahead when compared to the same time last season. "This season, UApresents' fundraising initiatives and community support are more critical than ever following a 75% reduction in our state funding," Bohnet added.

The 32-show season includes legends and innovators in classical, dance, jazz, blues, world music and programs for families. The new summer series continues on August 22 with country legend Randy Travis. The season opens Oct. 3rd with The Ultimate Doo-Wop Show featuring a stellar line-up of eight classic doo-wop groups including The Drifters. The season also features blues legend B.B. King, best-selling band Mannheim Steamroller in time for Christmas and blockbuster names in every genre including Olga Kern, Mark Morris Dance Group, The Chieftains, Michael Feinstein and Lily Tomlin. Most events are held at Centennial Hall. For more information go online to uapresents.org.

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Obama Extends Honors In Show Of Unity

Harvey Milk **Billie Jean King**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama honored LGBT rights icons Harvey Milk and Billie Jean King with the Medal of Freedom – the nation's highest civilian honor – along with 14 other recipients at a White House ceremony, advocate.com reported. "It didn't matter what their background was or where they came from," King said of her fellow recipients, "the one unifying thing is every single person wanted to make a difference for others – that's what I was thinking about."

From Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, and Sen. Edward Kennedy to cancer scientist Janet Rowley and Native American Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow, the honorees represented a broad international swath of humanity. Indeed, President Obama echoed King's thoughts as he opened the ceremony by pointing out that the men and women he was honoring were from all walks of life, making their mark everywhere from the court room to the tennis court to the court of public opinion. "What unites them is a belief," he said, "that our lives are what we make of them; that no barriers of race, gender, or physical infirmity can restrain the human spirit; and that the truest test of a person's life is what we do for one another."

Obama recounted that 11-year-old King purchased an $8 racket with money earned from chores and declared her goal to become the number one tennis player in the world. But today, Obama said, "We honor what she calls 'all the off-the-court stuff' – what she did to broaden the reach of the game, to change how women athletes and women everywhere view themselves, and to give everyone, regardless of gender or sexual orientation – including my two daughters – a chance to compete both on the court and in life. As Billie Jean once said, 'We should never, ever underestimate the human spirit.'"

The president presented Harvey Milk's nephew, Stuart Milk, with the Medal of Freedom. "For much of his early life, he had silenced himself. In the prime of his life, he was silenced by the act of another," Obama said. "But in the brief time in which he spoke – and ran, and led – his voice stirred the aspirations of millions of people. He would become, after several attempts, one of the first openly gay Americans elected to public office. And his message of hope – hope unashamed, hope unafraid – could not ever be silenced. It was Harvey who said it best: 'You gotta give 'em hope.'"

Following the ceremony, Stuart, who is also gay, said he had the chance to speak with the president prior to the event. "Both the president and the first lady acknowledged that there's a lot more work to do and they asked for my help, and I said, 'Absolutely,'" he recounted. Fresh off a trip to Turkey and Panama, Milk told the first couple what this award would represent worldwide. "It will mean a lot to the youth – not only in the U.S. but around the world – that people are starting to recognize us as equals," he said. But Milk hastened to add that the nation's laws are still lagging woefully behind the symbolic gestures being offered to the LGBT community. "We've got to change the laws so that they match the symbolism," he told the president and first lady. "Both of them absolutely said that they are committed to doing the work that's necessary."

Utah Paper Rejects Same-Sex Wedding Announcement

SALT LAKE CITY, UT (Observer Update) - A southern Utah newspaper has rejected a gay California couple's wedding announcement, saying its policy is to publish announcements only for marriages legal under Utah law, the Associated Press reported on 365Gay.com. The Spectrum in St. George initially accepted a paid wedding announcement for Tyler Barrick and Spencer Jones, but then changed course, Jones said. The San Francisco couple were legally married June 17, 2008. They wanted the announcement printed in Jones' hometown paper ahead of a family party.

Jones, 30, said he initially agreed to the paper's request that the announcement run without a photo, after a clerk told him the publisher feared the picture might make readers uncomfortable. Then Jones changed his mind and appealed to publisher Donnie Welch, asking him to reconsider. "After all, our marriage is just as real and legal and entitled to celebration as any of the others that are announced each week in the pages of The Spectrum," Jones wrote in an e-mail to Welch.

"This simply is not true," Welch replied in an Aug. 10 e-mail, a copy of which the couple provided to The Associated Press. "While that may be the case in some states it is not the case in the state of Utah. As our policy is to run marriage announcements recognized by Utah law, I have made the decision not to run the announcement." A telephone message seeking comment from Welch was not immediately returned. The Spectrum is owned by Gannett Co. A message left at Gannett's corporate offices in McLean, Va., was not immediately returned.

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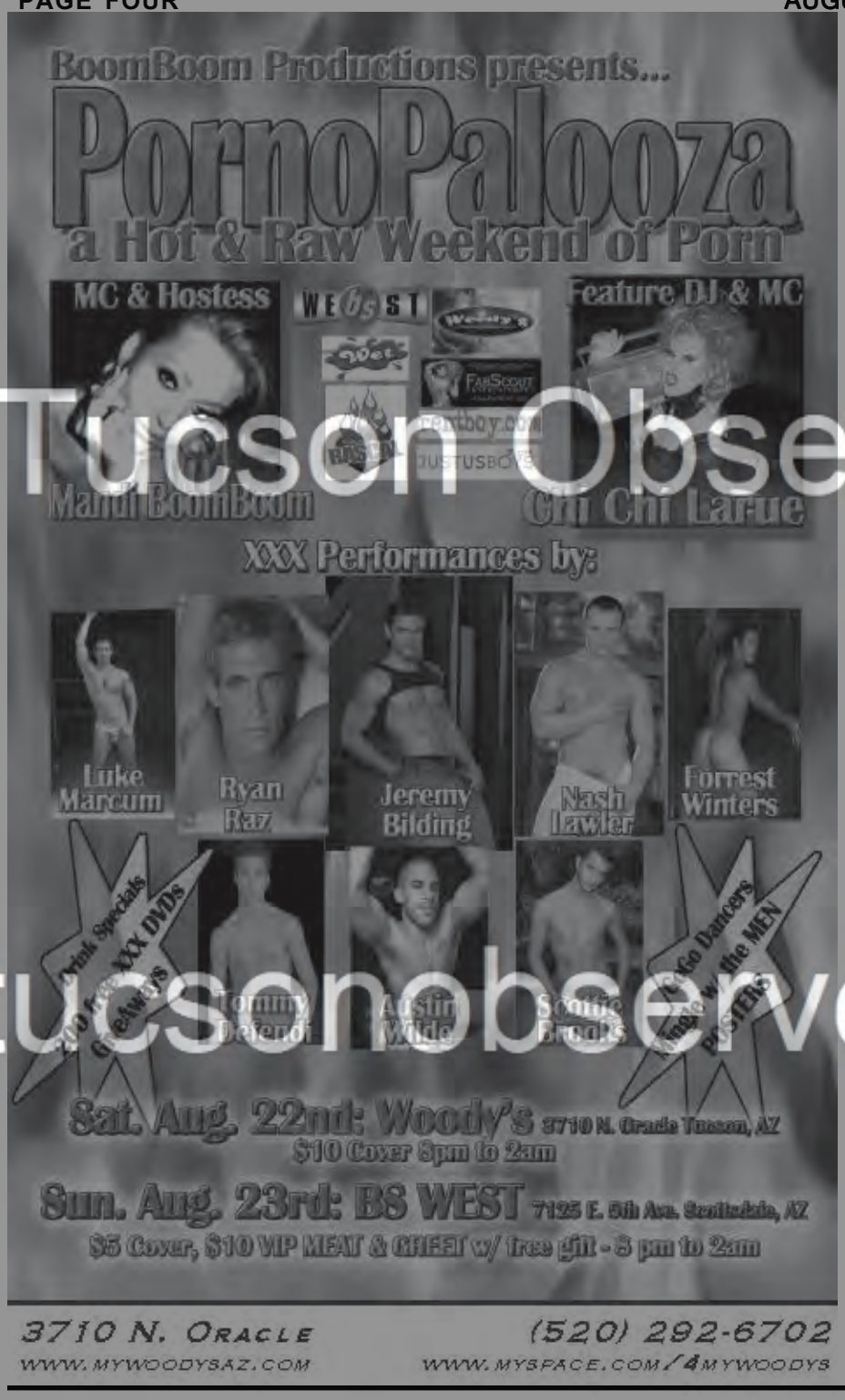

New Federal Laws Add Hassle For Trans-Fliers

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - New flight requirements will mandate that all passengers declare their full name, age, and gender to book travel, leaving some Transgender advocates worried about the implications to come, advocate.com reported.

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is working on a Secure Flight database to reduce the number of times a passenger is misidentified as a possible terrorist. The first phase of the initiative, implemented this year, required that airlines collect the names of all passengers, shown verbatim as they are featured on government-issued identification. The next phase, which begins on August 15, will require passengers to declare their gender at the time of booking their flights.

TSA spokesman Dwayne Baird told Advocate.com that Transgender travelers who are purchasing tickets should declare "the gender that they were at the time that they booked their flight." However, Baird said he was unsure whether those who don't identify with a specific gender or are in transition would be held to the same rules.

Kristina Wertz, the Transgender Law Center's legal director, said the new regulations will likely exacerbate airport hassles that some Transgender people already face while traveling. "A lot of Transgender people don't have documents" that match up with how they currently identify, she said. "There are always troubles that arise when dealing with documents. People are sometimes forced to disclose their Transgender status in a situation where they may not want to."

Wertz said she hopes that the TSA is open to receiving training on Transgender issues to prevent uncomfortable situations at the airport. The phase starts with some airlines this weekend, and by the end of March 2010 all companies will be required to obtain gender information from those booking travel.

COMMENTARY...
by David Mixner

President Bill Clinton: What Was He Thinking?

President Bill Clinton still doesn't get 'it'. He never has gotten 'it'. The 'it' in question is the struggle for LGBT civil rights and full equality. He has always missed the essence of our fight for freedom. Otherwise he never, ever would have said what he said to Lane Hudson in Pittsburgh last week. As I watched his defense of DADT at the public forum, I almost had to ask the nurse for more blood pressure medicine I was so shocked at his response.

The President, in an almost heated exchange, proclaimed loudly it was the LGBT community's fault that we got DADT because we didn't get enough letters to Congress. In a mind-boggling 'you guys' defense, he continued to refuse to accept responsibility for his lack of strength, courage and leadership back in 1993 that led to the passage of DADT. Instead, he allowed Senator Sam Nunn to lead him around by the nose including into the private quarters of the USS Roosevelt to show how endangered straights would be by Gays in such close quarters. The resulting photo of that sorry excursion made the front page of every newspaper in the country.

If he had met from day one with General Colin Powell and the Joint Chiefs and said "I am Commander-In-Chief and this is the policy and if you can't enforce it, give me your resignations," we wouldn't be where we are today. Powell, who now advocates a full rethinking of DADT, admits not one of them would have resigned and given up their careers over this issue. The entire debate could have been diminished if President Clinton had just done what many of us asked and signed an Executive Order with a stroke of a pen on Inauguration Day like President Carter did with amnesty for draft evaders who went to Canada.

Despite his weakness and equivocation during the entire sad and tragic six months, what he really didn't get is that freedom is not gained by those who can get the most postcards and letters to Congress. It is not "American Idol" where everyone calls in and votes yes or no for equality. The President's job was to protect an unpopular minority from the tyranny of a majority mob and he failed to do it. He gave in to the mob and then blamed us. His failure to grasp that this is a civil rights movement and not a lobby in Washington is indicative of his lack of understanding of this struggle.

President Clinton blaming us for "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is simply wrong, insensitive and outrageous. He should step up to the plate, accept responsibility for this huge mistake and then he can lead with dignity the battle to repeal it.

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Obama Disses Marriage Law As Justice Defends It

Jebb Harris / The Orange County Regi

Arthur Smelt and Christopher Hammer (OC Register)

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - President Barack Obama insisted he still wants to scrap what he calls a discriminatory federal marriage law, even as his administration angered Gay rights activists by defending it in court, reported the Associated Press on 365Gay.com.

The president said his administration's stance in a California court case is not about defending traditional marriage, but is instead about defending traditional legal practice. Justice Department lawyers filed new papers seeking to throw out a lawsuit brought by a Gay couple challenging the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act, or DOMA. Gay rights groups say that by doing so, the administration is failing to follow through on campaign promises made by Obama last year to work to repeal the law. Department lawyers are defending the law "as it traditionally does when acts of Congress are challenged," Obama said in a statement. The Clinton-era law denies federal recognition of Gay marriage and gives states the right to refuse to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states.

Obama said he plans to work with Congress to repeal the law, and said his administration "will continue to examine and implement measures that will help extend rights and benefits" to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender couples under existing law. The government says in its court filing that it will defend the statute in this case because a reasonable argument can be made that the law is constitutional - a standard practice of government lawyers.

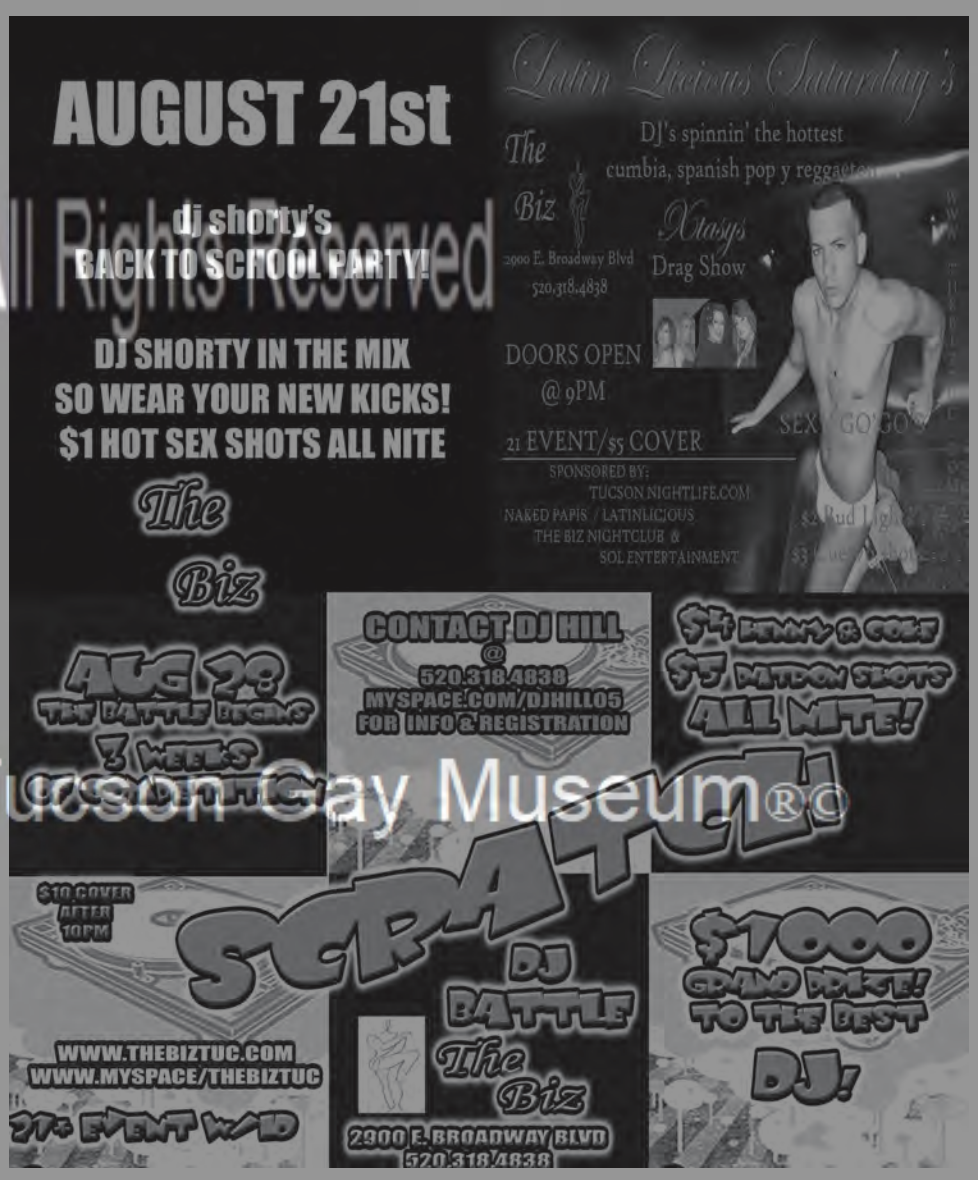
The mixed message got a mixed review from Joe Solmonese, president of the Human Rights Campaign, a Gay rights group. "It is not enough to disavow this discriminatory law, and then wait for Congress or the courts to act," Solmonese said in a statement. "While they contend that it is the DOJ's duty to defend an act of Congress, we contend that it is the administration's duty to defend every citizen from discrimination."

Walter Dellinger, a former solicitor general during the Clinton administration, praised the filing for striking "a delicate but appropriate balance between the government's obligation to respect federal laws enacted by Congress and this administration's policy and moral concerns about this particular law." The government's previous filing in the case angered Gay rights activists who supported Obama's candidacy in part because of his pledge to move forward on repealing the law and the "don't ask, don't tell" policy that prevents Gays from serving openly in the military.

The Justice Department is obligated "to defend federal statutes when they are challenged in court. The Justice Department cannot pick and choose which federal laws it will defend based on any one administration's policy preferences," said department spokeswoman Tracy Schmaler. "DOMA reflects a cautiously limited response to society's still-evolving understanding of the institution of marriage," according to the filing by Assistant Attorney General Tony West.

The administration also disavowed past arguments made by conservatives that DOMA protects children by defining marriage as between a man and a woman. "The United States does not believe that DOMA is rationally related to any legitimate government interests in procreation and child-rearing and is therefore not relying upon any such interests to defend DOMA's constitutionality," lawyers argued in the filing.

The court filing was in response to a lawsuit by Arthur Smelt and Christopher Hammer, who are challenging the federal law, which prevents couples in states that recognize same-sex unions from securing Social Security spousal benefits, filing joint taxes and benefiting from other federal rights connected to marriage. Justice lawyers have argued that the act is constitutional and contend that awarding federal marriage benefits to Gays would infringe on the rights of taxpayers in the 30 states that specifically prohibit same-sex marriages. Earlier this year, Massachusetts became the first state to challenge the law in court.



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POLITICS 2009

by Mark R. Kerr

Legal Briefs

Arthur Smelt and Christopher Hammer are a Gay couple who live in California and have been together for more than 10 years, filed a federal lawsuit in 2004, when, in an effort to have their relationship recognized by the government, went to the County Clerk's office in Orange County, to get a marriage license and were denied.

Their lawsuit made it to the U.S. Supreme Court in 2006 and wasn't heard, the high Court declining to review the appeal.

They married during the window of opportunity in California in 2008, when the state Supreme Court said Gays and Lesbians could marry, then shutting it later by turning down the court challenge to California's Proposition 8, narrowly approved by voters in the election that year.

Smelt and Hammer's case against the state of California and the federal government proceeded, with an initial ruling by U.S. District Judge David Carter, stating that their lawsuit against California was nullified because their marriage is still valid in the state but the federal portion of their lawsuit will get its "day in court."

With that backdrop, on August 17, the U.S. Justice Department, filed their legal papers in this case, raising the hackles of LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) rights organizations, as well as LGBT journalists and online bloggers and writers, criticizing the Justice Department for their legal actions in this case.

So were the Justice Department's actions worth criticizing as well as Smelt and Hammer for filing the lawsuit in the first case?

In the case of the U.S. Justice Department, they represent the United States in all legal matters, including cases before the Supreme Court and whether the Attorney General of the United States agrees with the federal legal statute in question that is being challenged in court or not, they are mandated to defend all actions taken by Congress and the President in the judicial branch of government.

This directive also applies to all fifty, state's Attorneys General, County Attorney's and City and Town Attorney's as well, existing across these United States. Was there a protest against Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard at the Equality Arizona dinner, held this year, when his office had to defend Arizona's then law banning the recognition of same sex marriage in the case of Standhardt V. Superior Court in 2004?

When it comes to the lawsuit by Arthur Smelt and Christopher Hammer, LGBT rights groups, journalists and bloggers haven't been so supportive either, for example in 2006, the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund and Equality California (the state LGBT rights organization), asking the Ninth U.S. District Court of Appeals to dismiss their case.

If the LGBT community didn't have people such as Arthur Smelt and Christopher Hammer, making an effort for equal rights for LGBT citizens in the only venue where the LGBT community has had any modicum of success, the legal branch of government, over time, what success that has been achieved wouldn't have taken place.

On the federal level there was Romer V. Evans, the 1996 U.S. Supreme Court's decision overturning Colorado's Amendment 2 that prohibit local measures protecting the rights of LGBT citizens and Lawrence V. Texas, the 2003 U.S. Supreme Court decision overturning state sodomy laws and Taylor V. Rice, the 2008 legal challenge overturning the U.S. State Department's ban on hiring individuals who are HIV+.

In the state courts there have been many legal advances for LGBT citizens, including:

Baker V. Vermont, the 1999 case prohibiting same-sex marriage was against the state's Constitution, resulting in the Court mandated that the state legislature institute laws recognizing same-sex marriage, or implement a policy affording similar rights. To comply, the legislature created a system of civil unions, whereby same-sex couples could receive many of the same civil benefits afforded heterosexual couples.

Fricke V. Lynch was decided in 1980 by a court in Rhode Island, in which the Judge in the case ruled that the school must allow students to bring dates of the same-sex, and that the school must provide enough security and oversight so that LGBT students are not harassed.

Benitez V. North Coast Women's Care Medical Group was decided by a California court in August 2008, in which a Lesbian Californian resident who sought infertility treatment from her doctors, conservative Christians, denied giving Benitez the treatment and argued that their individual religious beliefs could not support LGBT people serving as parents, despite the fact that California has a statewide anti-discrimination policy that encompasses sexual orientation but the court unanimously ruled in Benitez's favor, sending a message that individual religious beliefs cannot supercede statewide anti-discrimination policies.

Goodridge V. Department of Public Health, the 2003 case in which Massachusetts became the first state in the country to recognize same-sex marriage.

Without such individuals such as these, LGBT and HIV rights would not have been advanced, discussed, tolerated and hopefully accepted and without the legal branch of government doing what it is mandated to do, by law and the elected officials upholding the U.S. and state Constitution's, our society just wouldn't exist.

Homeland Secretary Janet Napolitano Refuses To Deny Lesbian Rumors

NEW YORK, NY (Observer Update) - Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano was quizzed by Deborah Solomon in the NYT Magazine. One line of questioning dealt with rumors that she's a Lesbian. Napolitano danced around the answers, but never said "no".

Is there anything you'd like to say to Gov. Ed Rendell of Pennsylvania, who said you would be perfect for your current job because you have "no life." It takes one to know one, towleroad.com reported.

Men don't know what to make of women who choose to be single. Rumors of Lesbianism have dogged women in politics like you, Condoleezza Rice and Ann Richards. Right. I think the more people get to know a person, the less that becomes an issue. It's interesting. In Arizona when I first ran for public office, that's when the rumors were going around, and of course I'm sure they go around now. In 2002, during your gubernatorial campaign, you publicly denied rumors that you were a Lesbian. I just happen not to be married. Are you seeing anybody now? Yes, my staff.

Janet Napolitano

Donor Names Of Washington Anti-Gay Referendum To Remain Public

OLYMPIA, WA (Observer Update) - The Washington Public Disclosure Commission has rejected a group's request to keep secret the names of donors to Referendum 71, the measure that seeks to repeal the latest expansion of a Gay-inclusive domestic partnership law in Washington State, The News Tribune reported.

In a letter to Protect Marriage Washington, officials said the donor names are public record. "These reports and this disclosure to the public are required by statute," Doug Ellis, assistant director of the PDC, said in the letter. Protect Marriage Washington had asked the commission to conceal donor names because the group has received threats.

Protect Marriage Washington is the group behind the effort to repeal the domestic partnership law dubbed the "everything but marriage" law by the media and approved by lawmakers in the spring. Referendum 71 supporters submitted more than 137,000 signatures on July 25 to force a vote on the issue. The office of the Secretary of State is painstakingly counting every single signature – instead of a sample - because the petition's signature count cuts it close to the required 120,577. Counting is expected to continue through next week.

Tennessee Schools Lift LGBT Web Filter

NASHVILLE, TN (Observer Update) - Two Tennessee school boards have been mandated to unblock online access to websites containing information about LGBT issues, advocate.com reported. Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools and Knox County Schools have agreed to a settlement, after a case was filed on May 19 in the U.S. district court. The suit was filed by the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of three students in Nashville, one student in Knoxville, and Knoxville's high school librarian, who also serves as the adviser to the school's Gay-straight alliance.

According to the ACLU, about 80% of Tennessee public schools use filtering software provided by Education Networks of America. One of the students involved realized that the software's default setting blocked sites categorized as LGBT, including the sites of many well-known LGBT advocacy organizations.

However, the filter did not block access to websites that urge LGBT people to change their sexual orientation or gender identity through "reparative therapy" or "ex-Gay" ministries.

Pride March Money To Be Revealed

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - The Tides Foundation, which is handling donations for October's March on Washington, said that it is hoping to remain transparent in its operations leading to the march.

Loch Powell, a spokesperson for the effort, told reporter Michael Petrelis that organizers will release fiscal numbers to prevent financial pitfalls.

Powell said the foundation has received approximately 60,000 pledges. Its target is 150,000 tax-deductible donations.

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Mayor Vetoes Gay Rights Ordinance

ANCHORAGE, AK (Observer Update) - A long, grinding, contentious political and social struggle hit a major bump Monday when Mayor Dan Sullivan vetoed the Assembly's latest attempt to ban discrimination against Gay people in Anchorage.

In a written statement, Sullivan said weeks of loud public hearings in which hundreds of people on both sides argued, sang hymns and told painfully emotional personal stories did not convince him discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation exists here. Supporters of the effort said they aren't giving up, but it was not immediately clear what direction the movement will take now. A demonstration at City Hall late Monday afternoon drew dozens of people waving rainbow flags and chanting, "Override now." Several later took the protest next door to the sidewalk outside the mayor's pub, McGinley's.

"The first step is to take it back to the Assembly," said Jackie Buckley, a spokeswoman for the pro-ordinance coalition Equality Works.

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School District Settles Gay Harassment Suit

MINNEAPOLIS, MN (Observer Update) - A school district in Minnesota agreed to pay a $25,000 settlement to a high school junior who was subjected to harassment by two teachers around his perceived sexual orientation, the Minneapolis Star-Tribune reports.

Teacher Diane Cleveland commented that the boy's "fence swings both ways"; when he wrote a paper on Ben Franlin, Cleveland said he had a "thing for older men." Another teacher, Walter Fison, said the boy "enjoys wearing women's clothes."

The settlement comes after an investigation by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights; the school district denies it violated the Minnesota Human Rights Act. Both teachers hae received "outstanding performance" awards from the district in recent years, 365Gay.com reported.

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Point Foundation Honors Cherry Jones

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LOS ANGELES, CA (Observer Update) - The Point Foundation announced that the Courage Award for 2009 will be given to award-winning actress and out Lesbian Cherry Jones, reported advocate.com. "In addition to being one of the most respected actresses in her profession, Cherry Jones has lived her life unapologetically as an out Lesbian and gives hope to young people everywhere, including our Point Scholars," CEO and executive director of the Point Foundation, Jorge Valencia, said in a statement.

"I was honored and humbled when I learned that I would receive the Point Courage Award," Jones said. "The Point Foundation is a wonderful organization, granting scholarships to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender students across America, and I am proud to be associated with such a worthy cause." The Point Courage Award is given each year to an individual who has "advocated for the future of the LGBT community." The Point Foundation is the largest scholarship granting organization for LGBT students. They offer mentoring and leadership training in addition to financial assistance for LGBT students who have been ostracized because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Jones, who plays President Allison Taylor on the hit series 24, is an Emmy nominee for Best Supporting Actress for that show and a two-time Tony Award winner for The Heiress and Doubt.

The Point Foundation also announced that its Inspiration Award will be given to Motorola for the company's "commitment to the LGBT community, as well as their unfailing support of Point Foundation's leadership conferences and events." The awards will be presented at the foundation's annual Los Angeles benefit, Point Honors, which will be held September 26 at the Hollywood Renaissance Hotel in Los Angeles.

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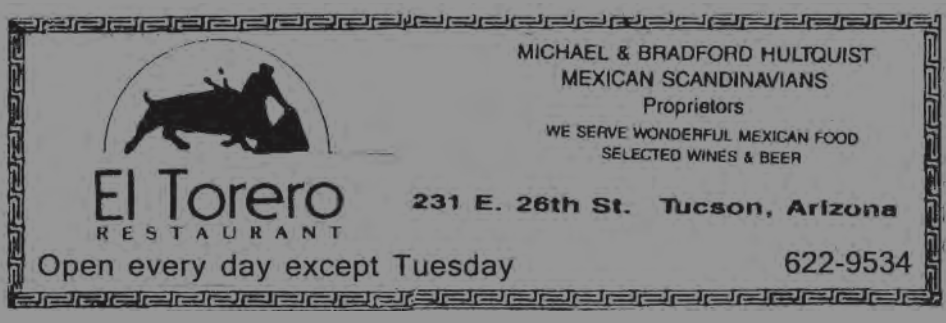
CBS News On Logo Shuts Down

NEW YORK CITY, NY (Observer Update) - CBS News on Logo aired its final broadcast on Thursday (August 13), bringing an end to what has been billed as the nation's "premier LGBT news program." In an online interview with Instinct, popular Logo news reporter Itay Hod called the demise of the partnership between MTV Networks and CBS a "sad day."

"I think it's terrible that there's not going to be a newscast," Hod told Instinct. "But I'm not the one paying for it. I'm sure whoever made the decision had their reasons. They are not reasons I agree with, but it was a certain amount of money that they realized they couldn't spend. Logo will continue to do a lot of news on 365Gay.com, so they're not completely letting go of news. They're continuing to do it; they just won't have a show on television." As to the reason for the cancellation, Hod denied that ratings or disenchantment with the program had anything to do with the fact that it was going off the air. He cited the current economic climate as playing a primary factor in the show's end, advocate.com reported.

"Logo canceled the news. It wasn't about ratings and they loved the show," Hod said. "CBS was basically a client of Logo. In the beginning, when Logo decided they wanted to do news, instead of hiring an entire newsroom and figuring everything out from scratch, they went to CBS, which was at that time part of the same Viacom family. It was a very smart thing to do. Basically, CBS then went on and hired me and Jason [Bellini] and Chagmion [Antoine] to do the news for Logo. Logo contracted and paid CBS to do the news every year. This year [Logo] decided they couldn't renew it because of the economy and recession."



Judge: 'Gay' Not A Dirty Word

Howard K. Stern and Anna Nicole Smith

NEW YORK CITY, NY (Observer Update) - The boyfriend of deceased actress and model Anna Nicole Smith is barred from including an author's claims that he had Gay sex in his defamation lawsuit against her because being viewed as Gay is not "contemptible and disgraceful," a federal judge ruled, reports Reuters. Howard K. Stern (pictured, with Smith), the former boyfriend and attorney for the star, is suing journalist Rita Cosby and the Hachette Book Group over the best-selling book Blonde Ambition: The Untold Story Behind Anna Nicole Smith's Death. The 39-year-old Smith died of a prescription drug overdose in 2007, advocate.com reported.

Stern charged that the book contained 19 libelous statements, including the author's claims that he had oral sex at a party in Los Angeles with Larry Birkhead, the father of Smith's child, and that Smith later called Stern Gay. U.S. district judge Denny Chin ruled that the case could proceed on 11 of the statements, not including the claims about homosexuality. The judge said that statements implying homosexuality were not defamatory, although he acknowledged that Gay people still face prejudice, reports Reuters.

"I respectfully disagree that the existence of this continued prejudice leads to the conclusion that there is a widespread view of Gays and Lesbians as contemptible and disgraceful," Chin said. The judge also ruled that Hachette could not be sued because the publishing company had no reason to doubt the truth of Cosby's book. He said that Cosby, a television reporter, would need to address claims that she was aware that some of her sources were untruthful.

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Milk Street Car Hit With Anti-Gay Graffiti

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (Observer Update) - A San Francisco streetcar dedicated to Harvey Milk was pulled from service because it was defaced with anti-Gay graffiti sometime in late June, reports the Bay Area Reporter. San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency officials learned only recently about the graffiti, which defaced placards of Milk inside the car with the words "fag" (pictured) and "faggot." The slain Gay rights leader was honored with a Presidential Medal of Freedom at a White House ceremony, advocate.com reported.

Trolley car #1051 was removed from the F-line and brought to a storage yard for inspection. It was returned to service the following day. The car, which was restored to its 1970s appearance and dedicated in October, had a cameo in the Academy Award-winning film Milk. Jamison Wieser, a Gay director of a local group that helps to restore historic trolley cars, first uploaded photos of the graffiti to his Flickr account on June 29. Three of the eight placards inside the car were damaged and one was missing. Replacement costs are estimated at $800.

Wieser guessed that the graffiti appeared sometime in the days leading up to or immediately after pride week. Some officials expressed concern that it took more than six weeks to bring the problem to light, and called on riders and drivers to report problems promptly.

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Four Oklahoma Women Continue Fight Against G/L Marriage Ban

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK (Observer Update) - Four Oklahoma women have filed a new complaint challenging federal and state laws banning Gay marriage, reports the Journal Record.

One of the couples, Susan Barton and Gay Phillips, were married in California in Nov., British Columbia in May 2005 and a civil union in Vermont in August 2001. The second couple, Sharon Baldwin and Mary Bishop, have been in a committed relationship for 12 years. "We have, on the surface, the same relationship as hundreds of thousands of couples everywhere," Baldwin told the Journal. "We have a home, we have a car, we have jobs, we have pets. We have a life together. We have extended family members. We are a couple. We are a married couple in any definition that you want to use, except legal ones. We think it's time the laws in this country caught up with society."

She said that she and Baldwin are fourth-generation Oklahomans and want to stay in the state. "Our heritage is here," she said, advocate.com reported. "We don't want to have to move away from that just to have equal rights. It should be the same for people all over the country." The lawsuit alleges that denying Gay people marriage injures them as a class of people, resulting in loss of dignity and respect, and that the current laws violate due process and equal protection guarantees."

Freeing Those Found Guilty Of Being 'Gay' In Cameroon

YAOUNDE, Cameroon (Observer Update) - In 2003, Alice Nkom made a decision that has put her on a collision course with the police, prosecutors and judges of Cameroon.

Nkom, who has been a barrister at the Cameroonian Bar for 40 years, was chatting with some young men whom she considers her own children. She realized they were Gay. Not only that, having gone after school to France to study and only ever living there as out Gay men, they were oblivious to the extent of the persecution they faced for expressing their sexuality in Cameroon. Extortion and unfair prosecution of Lesbian, Gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people are common occurrences in the Francophone west African state.

They were handsome and full of life, talking passionately about their plans. She was struck by the injustice of their situation and felt she had a duty to do something, otherwise "coming back to Cameroon means having to choose to go to jail for who you are, to have one's dignity trampled upon all the time, to be a victim of the police". She founded the Association for the Defence of Homosexuals and has ever since been acting as defence lawyer for LGBT people in Cameroon.

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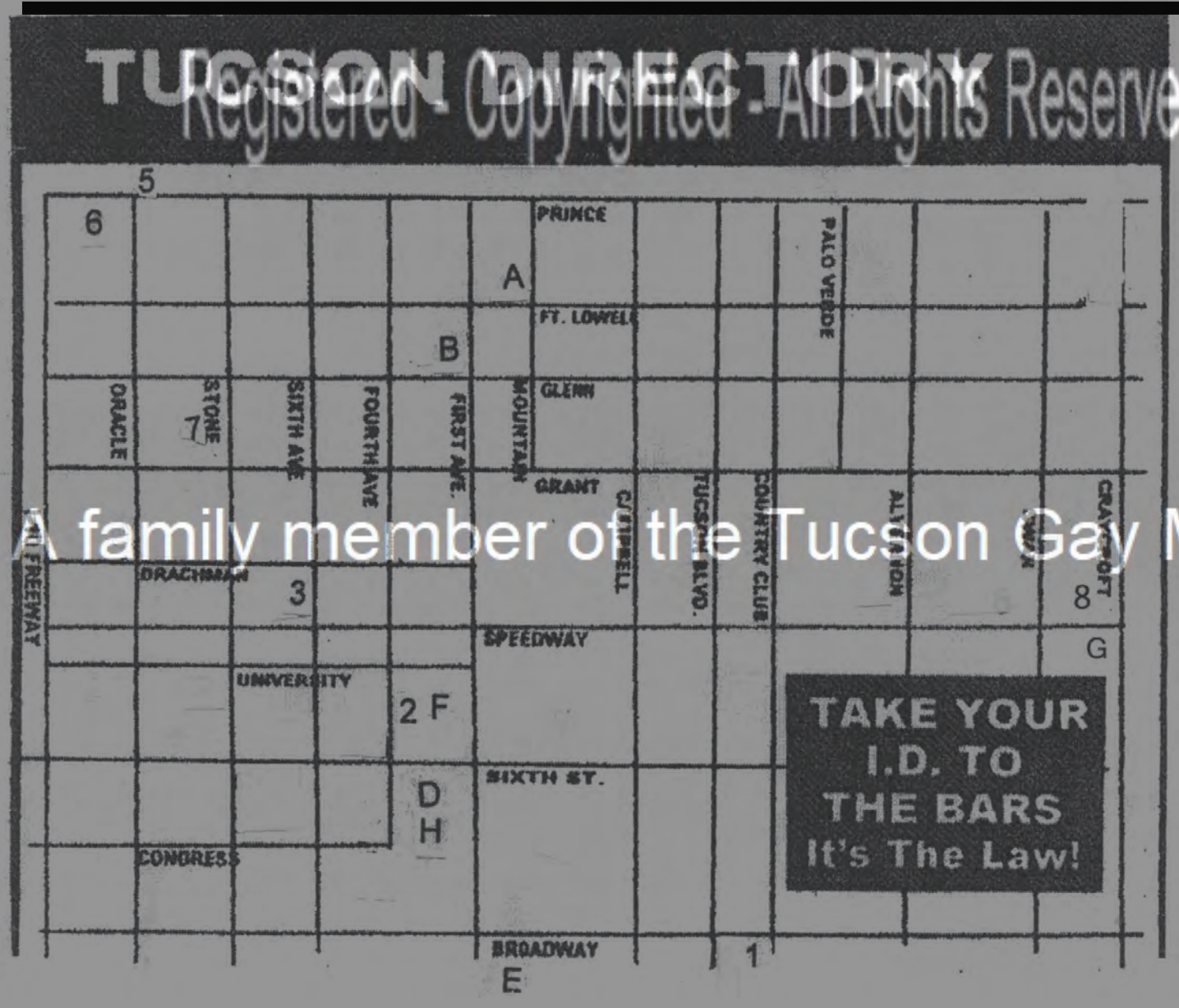

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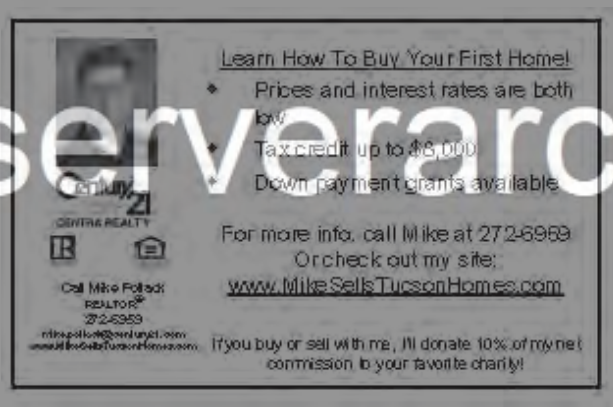

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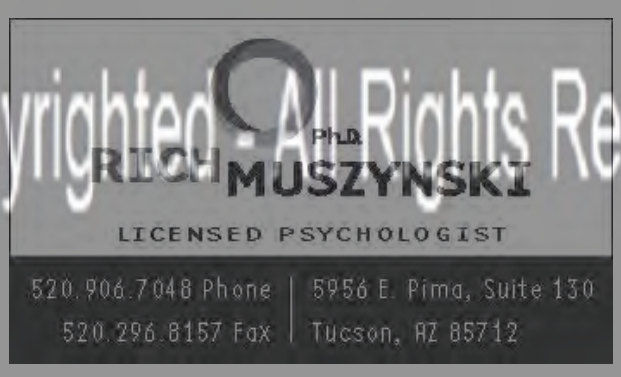

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Alleged Crist Lover Charged With Theft

Jason Wetherington Gov. Charlie Crist

FORT LAUDERDALE, FL (Observer Update) - A young Republican staffer who allegedly had an affair with Florida governor Charlie Crist was slapped with felony charges on August 5 for stealing nearly $20,000 worth of property from a pastor's daughter, reports the Broward-Palm Beach New Times.

Fort Lauderdale police charged Jason Wetherington (pictured, left), who appeared in the Outrage documentary, with grand larceny, dealing in stolen property and false verification of ownership stemming from his late July house-sitting gig in Las Olas for Jennifer Thompson Jones. She is the daughter of the Reverend Larry Thompson, leader of the influential First Baptist Church of Fort Lauderdale, where Wetherington is a member, reported advocate.com.

Wetherington is accused of stealing three of Thompson's rings, including her wedding and engagement rings, then pawning them at a shop in Deerfield Beach July 20. In a message circulated on Facebook, Thompson said that Wetherington "confessed" to stealing her wedding ring and selling it, as well as stealing $5,000 from her parents' safe, an accusation not included among the official charges. Reached in Georgia by Bob Norman of the New Times, Wetherington declined to comment.

Wetherington, 24, rose quickly in the GOP ranks as a teen, and served as regional field director for former Florida secretary of state Katherine Harris's failed 2006 bid for the U.S. senate. During that time, he came out to Thompson and told numerous people that he was engaged in a sexual affair with Crist, then the state attorney general. Crist denied the accusation.

Florida Cuts Threaten Stonewall Library

BROWARD COUNTY, FL (Observer Update) – Like most municipalities, Broward County in South Florida is experiencing hard times. Broward – home of Fort Lauderdale and the heavily Gay community of Wilton Manors – is proposing to balance its budget by slashing 30% of its cultural grants, a move that could impair Fort Lauderdale's Stonewall Library & Archives, advocate.com reported.

The cultural cuts could mean a decrease of over $1 million to Broward County's cultural institutions, a cutback likely to disproportionately affect places like the Stonewall Library that depend on every penny of government assistance. Jack Rutland, executive director of the library and archives, sent out a notice to Broward residents and media asking them to contact county commissioners and urge them to maintain the arts funding. "All we are asking is that the reduction to cultural organizations is in line with other agencies," Rutland wrote in the missive.

The Stonewall Library & Archives houses over 18,000 LGBT-related books and audio-visual materials, as well as 5,000 historical LGBT items, many focusing on the history of Gays in the South.

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COMMENTARY. . . .

Kushner On Gay Turf Of 'Angels'

MINNEAPOLIS, MN (Observer Update) When Tony Kushner agreed to premiere a new play at the Guthrie Theater, the artistic director at the Minneapolis theater wanted to know what it would be called. Kushner, who hadn't yet decided what to write about, responded with a mouthful of a title that had been knocking around in his head for more than a decade: "The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide to Capitalism and Socialism With a Key to the Scriptures."

"Joe Dowling needed a title, and I figured well, I can make this play about absolutely anything and somehow or another, that title will carry it," Kushner said sipping a late afternoon cappuccino during a break from a hectic rehearsal schedule for the new play. The new play is about "sexuality, and the housing market, and religion, and Marxism, and stuff like that," Kushner said. "It's a very complicated text, so I don't know how to explain it beyond that." A new work from the Pulitzer- and Tony-winning dramatist behind "Angels in America" is an event in American theater and a coup for the Guthrie. Long a leader in America's regional theater scene, the Guthrie moved to expensive, sprawling new digs along the Mississippi River in 2006, and its leaders were looking for the right moment to turn over its three stages and ample public spaces to celebrating the work of a single dramatist.

Dowling said Kushner was his first choice as "the pre-eminent dramatist of our time." Kushner signed on, he said, out of allegiance to the regional theater movement that helped spark his own career - "Angels" debuted in San Francisco before moving to Broadway. Thus was born the Guthrie's "Kushner Celebration." Besides the new play, it includes a two-month production of his musical "Caroline, or Change," the staging of a series of his short plays dubbed "Tiny Kushner," and panel discussions, speeches and seminars on his work. You can even buy T-shirts emblazoned with the words "Intelligent Homosexual" in the Guthrie gift shop.

It's quite a salute to a playwright whom Dowling called "not really a household name. Hopefully, we can help change that." Kushner hasn't debuted a finished new play since the Tony-nominated "Caroline, or Change" in 2002, though he's been plenty busy. He won an Emmy Award for adapting "Angels" into a six-hour miniseries for HBO in 2003, co-wrote the Steven Spielberg film "Munich" and has been working on another script for an upcoming Spielberg film about Abraham Lincoln. He worked on adaptations and translations of other playwrights' works, and always a vocal leftist, took up passionate criticism of the Bush administration.

But once Kushner signed on with the Guthrie, he actually had to sit down and write a new play. Kushner copped the wordy title from a book he found among his late grandmother's things after she died in the early 1990s: "The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism," written in 1928 by the playwright and socialist George Bernard Shaw. It served as a nice jumping-off point for a new play that's about people losing faith in the beliefs and personal relationships that once anchored their lives - themes Kushner said resonate more personally as he's gotten older. "This is a play about how you proceed when all the old theories have failed," said Kathleen Chalfant, one of the stars of "The Intelligent Homosexual" and an "Angels in America" veteran.

Set in Brooklyn's Carroll Gardens neighborhood over one long weekend in 2007, "The Intelligent Homosexual" is about three Italian-American siblings - two of them Gay - who gather to deal with their suicidal 75-year-old father, a longtime widower and retired union longshoreman who's watched his leftist belief system rendered irrelevant over the years. Chalfant plays the old man's sister, a former Carmelite nun who got swept up in revolutionary South American politics in the 1980s, and now lives and works among the poor in a New Jersey housing project. Two other Kushner vets, Stephen Spinella ("Angels in America") and Linda Emond ("Homebody/Kabul") play two of the three children.

"On one hand it's a very psychological family drama that's about how siblings relate, how they vie for the attention of parents," said the play's director, Michael Greif, another longtime Kushner associate. "And then on the other hand it's about people who have lost their way in the world, who've come unmoored from the things they relied upon in a radically changing world." It's also Kushner's first real "Gay play" since the landmark "Angels in America," a sweeping epic about AIDS, the closet, religion, politics and yes, angels, that debuted on Broadway in 1993. The Gay rights movement has seen setbacks but also big advances since "Angels" first debuted, some just in the last few weeks as several states in quick succession legalized Gay marriage either through the courts or the legislature.

Kushner, now 52, has also seen his life change a lot in that time. He started writing "Angels" around the time he came out of the closet, and today has been with his partner for more than a decade. They exchanged wedding vows in 2004, but as New York residents have not yet been able to legally marry. "We've seen unbelievable gains in an unbelievably short time, and against the terrible odds of AIDS, which was a catastrophe on so many levels that might easily have dismantled an embattled social movement," Kushner said. Kushner, whose outspoken liberalism has prompted him to call conservatism a "thought disorder," said he'd prefer that Gay marriage be implemented nationwide by a Supreme Court ruling rather than "having to fight this thing state by state for the next 10 years."

As for links between "The Intelligent Homosexual" and "Angels in America," Kushner said they share some themes but that the new play is more intimate and less filled with "liberational energy." It's shorter, too, running just a little more than three hours. "This is a much more middle-aged play," said Kushner. "I think because of things that are happening in my own life - an aging father, aging friends and my own aging body - it seemed like it was the right moment for this." So about that title. "There is something kind of ridiculous about it," he said. But in the term "Intelligent Homosexual" he sensed an interesting contradiction between the mind and the body. "Everybody has trouble thinking their way through sex and thinking about sex and the way the body expresses itself and gets and gives pleasure," Kushner said. "The relationship of intelligence to pleasure and life, which is not an easy relationship, is something I was interested in exploring."

Poet's Corner

TATTOO'S

by RON ROSE - TUCSON

The right to "bare" arms, no tattoos at all
No tattoos too big, no tattoos too small.
While neuveau artists ply their trade
The parlored pictures seldom fade.
Arms ablaze with color fast
Forever wearers bear a caste.
Anchors weigh old sailors arms
"Mom" engraved on boys from farms
Girls bear hearts with boyfriends names
Guys show their names of current "Janes".
The history of "Tats" is vast
Just remember, they forever last!

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COMMENTARY. . . .

by Barbara Atwood

Preserve Domestic Partner Benefits

A bill pending in the Arizona Senate (SB 1174) would eliminate the domestic-partnership benefits for state employees that became available in October. Withdrawing the benefits would be a mistake, and not just for those people who desperately need the benefits for health insurance. Withdrawing the benefits would signal to the world that Arizona is taking a step backward rather than forward.

Arizona extended domestic-partnership benefits to state employees by action of the Governor's Regulatory Review Council in 2008. The proposal was open for public comment in December 2007, and the comments that were received overwhelmingly supported the change in benefits eligibility. The positive response of the public is not surprising. Domestic-partnership benefits are widely available across the nation. Thousands of governmental and private employers now offer such benefits as part of their employee-benefits packages. Until last October, Arizona's universities were the only schools in the Pac-10 not to provide such benefits.

Thanks to the administrative rule change, we're no longer out of sync with the rest of our peer institutions. Clearly, the availability of domestic-partnership benefits can help us recruit and retain faculty and staff. Recognizing domestic partnerships is not about same-sex marriage. The definition of marriage as a union between one man and one woman is the law in Arizona, and the passage of Proposition 102 placed the definition in our state Constitution.

The domestic-partnership rules, in contrast, extend benefits to the registered partners of state employees, whether same-sex or opposite-sex, and make available essential access to health insurance. Indeed, supporters of Proposition 102 emphasized this distinction last fall when they argued that their target was same-sex marriage, not the benefits associated with civil unions or domestic partnerships.

Although fewer than a thousand new enrollees are expected as a result of Arizona's domestic-partnership program, for that small group the benefits are of critical importance. Through the program, domestic partners of employees finally have access to health insurance. They and their children can receive preventive care, early diagnosis of health problems and other medical treatment that isn't available to the uninsured. In these hard economic times, the domestic-partnership benefits are a lifeline.

The cost to the state is minimal relative to the overall budget. The state's expenses, moreover, are partially recouped through income tax paid by employees for the state's contributions for domestic partner coverage. In addition, the availability of medical insurance for domestic partners relieves some portion of expense that the state would otherwise bear for medical care for the uninsured.

The cost to the state may be minor, but the value to the individual is priceless. Gov. Jan Brewer could demonstrate real leadership by opposing SB 1174. Eliminating the domestic-partnership program could financially devastate those individuals who would lose their health insurance by such a move. Arizona took a much needed step forward last year. It's not the time to reverse course.

(Barbara Atwood is a law professor at the University of Arizona and this oped is reprinted from the Arizona Daily Star.)

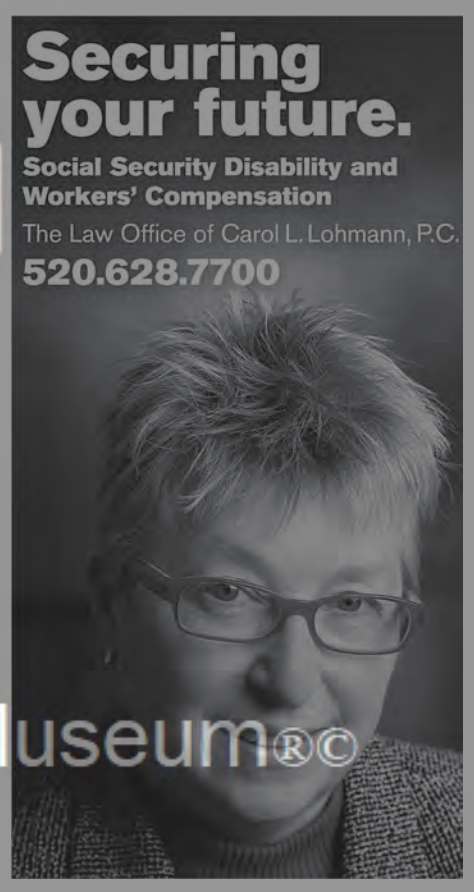
Court: Private Schools Can Expel LGBT Students

LOS ANGELES, California (Observer Update) - A California appeals court ruled that a Lutheran school did not violate the state antidiscrimination law by expelling two 16-year-old students for forming an intimate bond "characteristic of a Lesbian relationship."

Jane Doe and Mary Roe, as the now-college students are identified in the case, will appeal their case to the California supreme court, their attorney Kirk Hanson told the Los Angeles Times. In 2005 they were expelled from California Lutheran High School in Wildomar after another student told a teacher that Doe and Roe loved each other. The student advised the teacher to look at both students' MySpace pages, where one identified herself as Bisexual and the other said she was "not sure" about her sexual orientation.

When principal Gregory Bork questioned the girls, they admitted to hugging and kissing each other and telling other students they were Lesbians, but they told him they really only loved each other as friends. The school's policy is to refuse admission to Gay and Lesbian students, according to court documents. Bork suspended them that day and then expelled them a month later. Roe and Doe have not disclosed their sexual orientation within the realm of the case, advocate.com reported.

The court cited a 1998 case with the Boy Scouts of America, which was a social organization and not a business, and therefore it did not have to comply with laws that prohibit discrimination. "The school's religious message is inextricably intertwined with its secular functions," wrote Justice Betty A. Richli for the appeals court. "The whole purpose of sending one's child to a religious school is to ensure that he or she learns even secular subjects within a religious framework."



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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)829-0117 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.

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, 426 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, AZ 85717.

NA MEETING WITH GLBT FOCUS meets Mondays, 6:30pm at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th Street. This is an open meeting of Narcotics Anonymous - all are welcome. For more info call Bernie W.: (520) 406-0740.

TUCSON LATINO M2M - A social group for Tucson and Sonora Lastinos, and those who appreciate them.. 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 - Garage Sundays. $1 Well Drinks until Midnight. Bring your band and come rock with us.

COLORS - Open 10am - 10pm Champagne Brunch 10am - 2pm with choice of complimentary mimosa, Bloody Mary or Screwdriver included. Happy Hour 4-7pm $3.75 Skyy Cocktails, $3.00 Domestics and well. Appetizers ½ price 4-6. Brunch served until 2pm. Full menu served until 10pm. 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 1 & 4. No cash involved - Play for Points & Prizes.

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. Check our Ad for Special Events or Parties

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

MONDAY

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

COLORS - Colors is closed on Mondays.

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 and microbrews (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 $3.75 Skyy cocktails, $3.00 Domestics and well and ½ price appetizers 4-6. Full menu served until 10pm. Nightly dinner specials.

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. Ladies only Texas Hold 'Em Poker 6 p.m.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, $2 Well or Domestic Beer. 8pm-close "2'sDay" - $2 Well or Domestic Beer. DJ Q 9pm-close.
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 11am- 2am. Happy Hour 11am-8pm (excl spec events). Full Menu Kitchen open 11am-10pm. Back Pocket Patio Bar open 8pm-close, Caribbean Party Night with Woody's own Specialty Mojitos, Caprioskas and Martinis with Tucson's Hottest Bartenders.

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

WEDNESDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. 5-9 Wild Wednesdays $1 Hump Day Drinks DJ Hill. 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 4-11pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm, $3.75 Skyy cocktails, $3.00 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. Karaoke with Ynot Entertainment at 9pm.

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. 5-9 $3 glasses of wine. Y-NOT Karaoke starts @9:00pm to close. 2-4-1 starts 10;pm.

COLORS - Open 4pm-11pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm,$3.75 Skyy cocktails, $3.00 Domestics and Well and ½ price appetizers 4-6pm. 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.

IBT's -Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, $2 Well or Domestics. 10pm-close "Boyz Nite Out" w/ Bartenders in their underwear. DJ Hurricane spinning Top 40 & DJ Mike Lopez on the patio. $1.75 Long Island, $1.50 Tequila Shots, $3 Dkyy Cape Cods and $4 Skyy Cosmos.

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 11am-2am. Beer Bust 3-7pm..

FRIDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Flirt Friday with Happy Hour extended to 9 p.m. and munchies. DJ Hill & guest DJs. COLORS - Open 4pm-midnight. Happy Hour 4-7pm, $3.75 Skyy cocktails, $3.00 Domestics and Well and ½ price appetizers. 4-6 pm. Dinner served until 10pm. Finlandia martinis $5.50 open to close! . "Guys & Dolls" drag show hosted by Lucinda Holliday at 10pm. 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. $2.75 All Mexican Beers and Dos XX Amber. Dance lessons at 7pm $5 per person, 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. LATINLICIOUS . $3 Cuervo, $2 Bud Lights all night. DJ Kool-A

COLORS - Open 4pm-10pm, Happy Hour 4-7pm, $3.75 Skyy cocktails, $3.00 Domestics and Well, ½ price appetizers 4-6. 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.

New AIDS Approach Disrupts Patient's DNA

WASHINGTON, Feb 2 (Reuters) - California biotechnology company Sangamo BioSciences Inc. said it will start human testing of a new approach to treating the AIDS virus that involves deliberately damaging the patient's DNA.

The approach is based on research that has long shown that people with a certain mutation in a gene called CCR5 resist infection with the fatal and incurable virus. The gene controls a doorway called a receptor in immune system cells. The human immunodeficiency virus uses the CCR5 receptor to latch onto the cells it infects. Sangamo's drug SB-728-T disrupts CCR5. It is a zinc finger nuclease – a compound that can slice open molecules. This one is specifically designed to disrupt CCR5. The company plans to remove immune cells called CD4 T-cells from HIV patients, treat them with the drug and re-infuse them.

The hope is these damaged cells will thrive and multiply and give the patient an immune system resistant to HIV. "This is the first time that we have had the ability to make a patient's T-cells permanently resistant to infection by CCR5-specific strains of HIV and we are very excited to begin a clinical trial of this novel zinc finger nuclease-based therapy," said Dr. Carl June of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, who will help test patients. The company said its phase I study is meant to look for safety only, and 12 patients with advanced HIV infection will be recruited.

"The ability to protect immune cells from infection with HIV and the expansion of CCR5-modified T-cells has the potential to provide long-term control of both the virus itself and eventually the opportunistic infections characteristic of AIDS," June said. In November, German researchers reported that a bone marrow transplant to replace the immune system of an HIV patient with leukemia not only treated his cancer, but appeared to have suppressed the AIDS virus as well. The transplant was from a donor who had the CCR5 mutation.

BAR CALENDAR Of Upcoming Events

Friday, August 21
THE BIZ - DJ Shorty's "Back To School Party" with DJ Shorty in the mix so wear your new kicks! $1 Hot Sex Shots all nite!

WOODY'S - Tori Steele's "Cover Girl Revue" 10-:00 p..m.

Saturday, August 22
COYOTE Moon - Tea Dance this evening from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.

WOODY'S - "Porno Palooza"8:00 p.m. until closing, ChiChi LaRue DJing and 11 of her porn star friends dancing! M.C. and Hostess is Mandi Boom Boom. Therre'll be gift bags full of goodies - 200 FREE XXX-DVDs. . - $10Cover 8p.m. until 2 a..m. A hot and raw evening of porn!

Sunday, August 23
WOODY'S - "PornoPalooza" Recovery Party all day. Check it out!!!

Friday, August 28
THE BIZ - Battle for DJ begins tonight. Any interested DJs contact DJ Hill @ 318-4838

Saturday, September 5
VENTURE-N - It's that time again "Jungle Party 2009". Don't miss this big annual event

Wyoming Anti-G/L Bill Dies

Cheyenne, Wyoming (Observer Update) - Legislation to amend the Wyoming constitution to ban same-sex marriage has been defeated in the state legislature, 365Gay.com reported. The House voted 35-25 against it, despite massive lobbying by socially conservative groups. The vote ensures the measure will not appear on the ballot in 2010.

The proposed amendment would have defined marriage as a union between a man and a woman and would block the state recognizing same-sex marriages performed in other states or countries where they are legal.

The measure needed a two-thirds vote in each house of the legislature and to then be signed by the governor in order to make it onto the ballot. A similar proposed amendment passed the Senate two years ago but died in the House.

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VENTURE-N

Tucson's Only Men's Bar

JUNGLE PARTY 2009

SATURDAY NIGHT
SEPTEMBER 5TH

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