

## LGBT Bills Await Congress

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - Congress is back for the last three months of the Obama administration's first year in the White House, and suddenly, every bill is on fire-eight of 12 appropriations bills in the Senate, bills to steady a still wobbly economy facing an almost 10 percent unemployment rate, and bills to address climate change, renew estate tax provisions, and decide whether a government-or public-health insurance option should be part of health care insurance reform, the Keen News Service reported on 365Gay.com.

Most media spotlights are on health care. It is the Obama administration's self-selected show-down against the federal government's tendencies toward what the president calls "inertia" when it comes to helping people who can't afford health care. Passage of some meaningful health care bill will either make or break the Obama legacy for all time, according to many pundits. But while that's the sort of hyperbole necessary to get most people to read real news, the eventual bill could have real significance to the LGBT community. For instance, some of the current versions of health care reform bills include provisions to collect data concerning sexual orientation and to provide better for early treatment of HIV.

"We have provisions that have survived committee [votes], but they still need to get all meshed together in whatever bill comes out," says Allison Herwitz, legislative director for the Human Rights Campaign. HRC is widely recognized as the LGBT community's voice on Capitol Hill. Herwitz says HRC is "hopeful" that, when leaders of the Democratic majority in Congress sit down with White House staffers this month "and figure out what they want the final bill to look like," those LGBT provisions will survive. "They're very much a priority for us," said Herwitz.

So is a defense spending authorization bill. That's because the Matthew Shepard hate crimes legislation, adding sexual orientation and gender identity to the existing federal hate crimes law, has been attached to that funding bill in the Senate. Because the House passed a stand-alone hate crimes bill, a House-Senate conference committee must wrestle this month to come up with a final version of the defense funding bill to send back to both houses. Herwitz and others seem pretty confident that the Democratic leadership will fight to keep the hate crimes provisions in the defense bill.

Originally, the president had threatened to veto the defense bill because it included provisions such as funding for F-22 jets. But the objectionable provisions have reportedly been mitigated and "there is a strong will in

the leadership and the White House," said HRC policy vice president David Smith, to pass the hate crimes legislation.

That sort of "robust" support is imperative, says former White House staffer Richard Socarides, who said he thinks the hate crimes legislation will become law this year. "I think the mood in the country and Congress is pretty good for a robust Gay civil rights legislative agenda," said Socarides. "But you need to put the force of the president behind it. You need to put some vigorous advocacy behind it. A sort of agenda that gets a lukewarm push to it or doesn't have a lot of firepower behind it is going to go nowhere."

The strength of Obama's firepower behind LGBT-related legislative goals lingers as a bit of a rub between the LGBT community and the Obama administration. Candidate Obama promised much for the LGBT community; and President Obama reiterated many of those promises to quell a growing chorus of impatience in June. At a small Oval Office ceremony, calling for federal agencies to provide whatever benefits they could to the partners of Gay federal employees, President Obama gave a verbal nod to a bill seeking to ensure equal benefits for the partners of Gay federal employees - The Domestic Partners Benefits and Obligations Act (DPBOA). The bill's chief sponsor, Rep. Tammy Baldwin, said the bill "really got a boost by [the president's] strong endorsement." Baldwin could not be reached for this article, but HRC's Herwitz said the DPBOA bill might get a floor vote this fall in the House and a committee vote in the Senate. That puts it right behind hate crimes for likely action this fall.

Everything else tends to look more uncertain -with "maybe" hearings this fall or as-yet-unidentified sponsors to introduce them.

The Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) has been introduced in the House and the Senate and Rep. Barney Frank thinks the all-inclusive bill could get a committee hearing this month and a vote on the House floor this fall. The Senate is less promising. Senator Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) took over championship of the bill from the late Senator Ted Kennedy. He says hate crimes has to come first, then ENDA supporters need to "check in with" senators who haven't weighed in on the legislation in four years. "Then we'll work with senators and try to put together a plan," says Merkley. Merkley says he has not yet had a conversation with the White House about ENDA but signals from the staff have been "very supportive" and Merkley says he will ask President Obama to "support the

Continued on Page Six

## DADT On Tap For Mullen Hearing?



Admiral Mike Mullen

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - Joint Chiefs chairman Adm. Mike Mullen is scheduled to go before the Senate Armed Services Committee on September 15 to be reconfirmed, according to a spokesperson in Sen. Carl Levin's office, reported advocate.com.

The hearing does not have a set agenda, but advocates for repeal of "don't ask, don't tell" are anticipating some senators will ask Mullen about the policy in advance of the Senate hearings on the subject this fall.

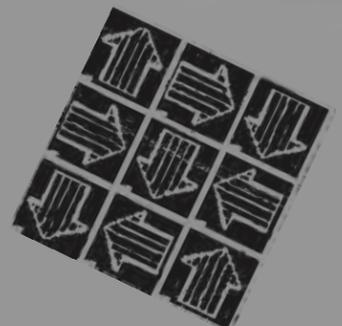
"Our hope is that the committee fleshes him out more extensively on 'don't ask, don't tell' so that when we get to the actual hearings, we can make more progress," said a person close to the situation who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

In particular, the source said matters that could be discussed include how a change in the military's Gay ban would be implemented, a timeline for accomplishing that change, what kind of communications the Pentagon is having with Congress on the subject, and what progress is being made on the proposal to relax implementation of the policy even before it is repealed.

Mullen recently talked about

the Gay ban in a podcast for the Pentagon Channel posted on August 14, in which he was asked how the agency is preparing for the possibility of making the policy change.

"Clearly, President Obama has made his strategic intent very clear - he wants to see this law changed," Mullen said. "I've had discussions with all the service chiefs on several occasions. I've actually also spoken with the combatant commanders, who certainly represent military leadership throughout the world at my most recent conference. I've had internal discussions on my own staff. Secretary Gates is reviewing some procedures in the current policy to see if that can be in any way changed before the law changes. So there's a lot of focus with respect to this right now, and certainly when the law changes - we get to that point - we'll carry out the law."



# UPDATE

## Voter Registration Alert!

TUCSON - Stonewall Democrats remind us that time is running out for voter registrations for the coming City Council elections in November. The final date is October 15. Forms are available at Antigone Books or Wingspan. For information for on-line and vote-by-mail call 740-4330. Your vote is important.

## Tucson Latin Gay Pride Festival

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Latino/as can celebrate their heritage through music, art, poetry, dance and film at the second annual Tucson Latin Gay Pride festival Sept. 30-Oct. 3. Coordinated by Wingspan, the festival will highlight the theme "Familia! (Family!)" with a Latin Dance Party, a local documentary, a community forum, a cultural showcase, a resource fair and a program for area youth. Wingspan - Tucson's LGBT community center - is presenting these social and educational events in collaboration with the University of Arizona's Chicano/Hispano Student Affairs program and Pride Alliance, the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation, and Ain't Nobody's Bizness (The Biz) nightclub.

The festival, which falls in the middle of National Hispanic Heritage Month and just before the beginning of Tucson Gay Pride celebrations, is designed to foster community and address concerns relevant to LGBT Latinos. "The events are meant to bring to the forefront issues specifically affecting LGBT Latino/as, such as disproportional HIV infection rates, domestic violence and immigration," says Oscar Jimenez, Wingspan Anti-Violence programs manager and Tucson Latin Gay Pride committee chairman. "It's also an opportunity for LGBT Latino/as to express themselves through culture sharing, art and music and for LGBT Latino/as to show that they have a voice in the LGBT rights movement."

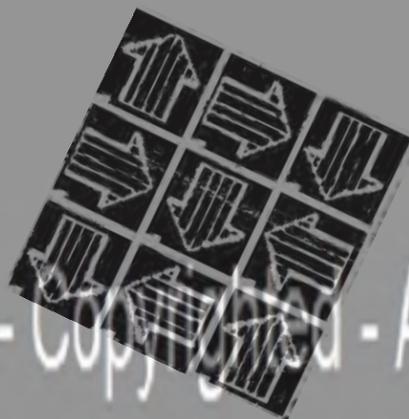
For more information, please contact Oscar Jimenez at (520) 954-2343 or [ojimenez@wingspan.org](mailto:ojimenez@wingspan.org).

## An Evening Of Art And Cuisine

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Last November, Courtney Kelly a local artist donated an art piece to the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation's Festival for Life event not knowing what to expect but hoping that her piece would help raise money for SAAF. Her style was different, colorful, and hugely popular with guests. Courtney's piece was such a big hit that her piece of colorful greyhounds started an auction bidding war and raised more than \$2,000 that evening.

Now almost a year later, Courtney Kelly is still supporting SAAF through her art. With each art sale she gives back a % of her proceeds to help support SAAF's programs and services. "Her art has been a big hit. Her style is fun, colorful, and often includes pets - who can't relate to that?" says Wendell Hicks, Executive Director of SAAF, "her art just makes you smile!". Courtney has offered to put together an evening of art and cuisine thanks to support from Vila Thai Cuisine on East University Blvd. The event is taking \$5.00 donations at the door. Complimentary appetizers will be provided by Vila Thai and the evening includes \$5 wine tasting.

An Evening of Art and Cuisine, Sunday, September 20, beginning at 3:30 p.m., at Vila Thai Cuisine, 972 E. University Blvd. An RSVP is not required. For more information visit [facebook.com/event.php?eid=108716594363](http://facebook.com/event.php?eid=108716594363) or call



## Four Tucson GLBT Bars Raise \$10,000 At 13th Annual "Turnabout For TIHAN" Benefit Show

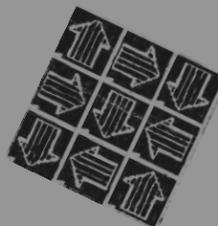
TUCSON (Observer Update) - Hundreds of Tucsonans came out as four of Tucson's LGBT bars produced a spectacular show to benefit AIDS education and support services in Tucson during the 13th annual "Turnabout for TIHAN" fundraiser at the Doubletree Hotel.

Under the leadership of the participating bars Woody's, IBT's, Coyote Moon, and Colors, their bar staff undertook a "turn-about" from male to female (and female to male) and performed to raise money for the Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network (TIHAN). At press time, the total raised has now reached the \$10,000 mark, with all funds being used for TIHAN's services for people living with HIV as well as AIDS awareness and education programs.

The efforts of the event's producers, performers, employees from Tucson's LGBT clubs, and their special guests paid off well, not just in terms of financial support for TIHAN's programs, but also in terms of a spectacular evening of entertainment for the crowd. The show opened with a powerful reminder of the purpose of the evening: a procession through the crowd by a group of community activists carrying the 120-foot long AIDS Ribbon Tucson, inscribed with the names of those in our hearts. That was followed by words of welcome and thanks from Scott Blades, TIHAN's Executive Director, who paid tribute to the long history of drag performers as activists for social change, and talked about TIHAN's work. Then the evening's emcees, local celebrities Bunny Fufu and Janee Starr, took over and entertained the crowd and introduced excellent performances from the staff of the four participating bars.

"Colors, Coyote Moon, IBT's and Woody's have been so generous in their support of TIHAN's work, and the community is appreciative and TIHAN is very appreciative," said Scott Blades, TIHAN's Executive Director. "We are especially grateful to Mike and Alan and other TIHAN donors, to the participating bars and their staff, to emcees Bunny Fufu and Janee Starr, to David Zinke, our stage manager and lead volunteer, to the Observer for their support and to all our volunteers who helped with this event and those who help with AIDS education, administrative support, and our services for people living with HIV/AIDS all year round."

Turnabout is the second-largest fundraising event for TIHAN, which provides HIV/AIDS education and awareness to thousands of people each year, and provided support services last year to 267 people living with HIV/AIDS.



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Informing the Community The Observer



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# Lambda Legal Condemns Strip- ping Of Domestic Partner Benefits By Arizona Lawmakers

PHOENIX (Observer Update) - Lambda Legal is profoundly concerned and disturbed by a move by Arizona lawmakers to strip health benefits from the domestic partners of state employees.

State legislators for months had taken aim at the equal benefits plan approved last year by former Governor Janet Napolitano, now Department of Homeland Security Secretary. Republican Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed a budget bill with the provision revoking the health insurance coverage for domestic partners.

The elimination of vital benefits for a small, politically vulnerable group of public workers emerged from a protracted and bruising battle over the state budget. The new law strips gay and lesbian state employees of the ability to obtain health benefits for an unmarried life partner. Because health coverage for an employee's committed life partner can be a critical lifeline for family stability and financial security, this budget denies 'equal pay for equal work' and inflicts severe hardship upon a targeted group of Arizona families.

"This is a cruel and cynical ploy by the far right to target and hurt the families of gay and lesbian state employees under the guise of cost-cutting," said Tara Borelli, staff attorney for Lambda Legal. "With families already facing pressure from job losses and a contracting economy, this couldn't happen at a worse time. The cutting of benefits pulls the rug out from underneath hardworking state employees and saves the state next to

# UPDATE

nothing."

Lambda Legal is already advising a number of affected state employees about their options and encourages others who may be affected to contact Borelli at (213) 382-7600, ext. 231, or via email at [tborelli@lambdalegal.org](mailto:tborelli@lambdalegal.org).

## I Walk Because

TUCSON (Observer Update) - I walk because, the funds raised at this year's AIDSWALK are more important than ever. SAAF recently received significant federal funding cuts to basic services. The areas hardest hit were medications assistance and dental services. While SAAF and its partners have worked hard to ensure a minimum amount of impact on services, the result has still been significant for some clients. This year, know that when you raise money for SAAF through AIDSWALK, you can help to close that funding gap. To register online and start a fund raising page visit [www.aidswalktucson.com](http://www.aidswalktucson.com).

The Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation provides care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS including case management, housing, transportation, a food pantry and a mobile meals program, medical and dental assistance and support groups. Equally important, SAAF provides outreach to groups at high risk of HIV/AIDS through seven different targeted prevention programs as well as general community education to help reduce the risk of HIV.

For more information about AIDSWALK visit [aidswalktucson.com](http://aidswalktucson.com) or call (520) 791-WALK (9255).

## T-Squares Hold Classes In Sept.

TUCSON (Observer Update) - T-Squares, Tucson's GLBT square dance club, is holding two free classes for new or returning dancers.

For anyone interested in trying out square dance with a uniquely Gay style, T-Squares live caller will be teaching beginners' lessons on the Tuesdays of September 15 and 22 from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m., and a dance partner will not be necessary. No special clothing is required either. In fact, they dress quite informally, often in shorts or whatever is comfortable.

T-Squares is one of Tucson's longest running clubs and has been known in our community for 25 years as a venue for fun, music, dance, and a place to socialize with new and old friends and acquaintances. Their dance site, the Cornerstone Fellowship Social Hall, is also easy to find at 2902 N. Geronimo Ave off of Laguna St.

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. For more information about T-Squares, email them at [T-Squares@azgaydance.org](mailto:T-Squares@azgaydance.org), or visit [azgaydance.org](http://azgaydance.org) and click on "Tucson, AZ".

## Runner Featured In Article; Tests Reveal Intersex



JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (Observer Update) - Track star Caster Semenya graces the cover of You magazine sporting a new, more feminine look. Amid testing following accusations that the 800-meter world champion may not be biologically female, Semenya emphasizes how much she likes her stylish outfits, glamorous jewelry, and stiletto heels, reported [advocate.com](http://advocate.com).

"I'd like to dress up more often and wear dresses but I never get the chance," she says, according to The Guardian, a U.K. newspaper. "I'd also like to learn to do my own makeup."

Preliminary results of hormone testing indicate that the 18-year-old South African has three times the expected level of testosterone compared to other women. Semenya clocked the world's fastest time this year in the 800-meter finals at the International Association of Athletics Federations World Championships in Berlin. Since then, Semenya has been asked to undergo gender testing in which it was determined that Semenya is a hermaphrodite, and may be stripped of her medals.

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# Equality Through The Arts Presents The Kinsey Sicks, September 25

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PHOENIX (Observer Update) - The Equality Through the Arts fall lineup includes America's favorite Dragapella Beautyshop Quartet the Kinsey Sicks Friday, September 25, 7:30 p.m. at the Chandler Center for the Performing Arts, 250 North Arizona Avenue, Chandler.

For over 15 years America's Favorite Dragapella Beautyshop Quartet has served up a feast of music and comedy to audiences in over 40 states! Their award-winning a cappella singing, sharp satire and over-the-top drag have earned the Kinsey Sicks a diverse and devoted following. kinseysicks.com.

Seating is limited and tickets are available for each show or purchase the series for a reduced rate. Individual Concert Tickets: \$35, \$50, \$75 - VIP \$125 (includes reception) Series Concert Tickets: \$50, \$75, \$125 - VIP \$200 (includes reception). Proceeds benefit Equality Arizona the only statewide LGBT civil rights organization working to secure, protect and defend the rights and welfare of LGBT people in Arizona. For more information, visit

## Texas Church's Billboards Affirm G/L Love

DALLAS - FORT WORTH, TX (Observer Update) - Four billboards along Interstate 30 between Fort Worth and Grand Prairie will likely send some drivers into fits, pageoneq.com reported by link. The billboards are inviting Christians to be more Christian by not excluding Gays and Lesbians from their churches, while asserting that it is OK in the eyes of God to be homosexual – a practice thought by many conservative Christians to be an abomination.

The "Would Jesus Discriminate" campaign is sponsored by five DFW Metropolitan Community Churches, whose congregations are predominantly Gay and Lesbian. The purpose of the campaign is to "engage people in a friendly discussion about Jesus' message of inclusion," according to the whywouldwe.org Web site. With statements such as "Jesus affirmed a Gay couple" and "Ruth loved Naomi as Adam loved Eve," the billboards assert homosexuality has been around for thousands of years. The billboards also offer a scripture reference that is meant to validate the message.

Each billboard also asks the reader, "Would Jesus discriminate?"

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# First Annual Wingspan Golf Classic November 20



TUCSON (Observer Update) - Looking for a way to promote your company, support a worthwhile cause, and have fun all at the same time? Register now to be a part of the First Annual Wingspan Golf Classic, a competition that tees off at the Ritz-Carlton Dove Mountain Golf Club at Dove Mountain, on Friday, November 20. The proceeds of the event will be donated entirely to Wingspan, Southern Arizona's GLBT community Center which provides a variety of programs critical to youth and the prevention of violence.

The Wingspan Classic tournament is open to all members, friends, family, and allies of the GLBT community. Tournament entry fee is \$150/golfer for the 12:30 p.m. shotgun start. All golfers will have the opportunity to buy mulligans and other fun advantages throughout the event. Green fees include driving range use, cart, a deluxe goody bag, and post-play BBQ dinner. Players will have the opportunity to win a variety of prizes on-course, to include a Lexus from Lexus of Tucson at the AutoMall, and \$500 off a cruise with Olivia. Fabulous raffle prizes will also be available, including a cruise for two with Olivia to the West Carribean and an exotic, all-inclusive tropical vacation package for two courtesy of Dr. Tax, Inc.

For more details and to register to play or be a sponsor, see Wingspan Classic ([wingspanclassic.org](http://wingspanclassic.org)).

## Across The Gay Globe G/L Weddings Revive Small Town

CAMPILLO DE RANAS, Spain (Observer Update) - The legalization of same-sex marriage and the commitment of an openly Gay mayor have fueled a wedding industry that has helped revive the small Spanish town, reported [advocate.com](http://advocate.com).

Campillo de Ranas, a once-struggling rural town in the hills north of Madrid, has returned to prosperity and become the "unofficial Gay wedding capital" of Spain, thanks to the commitment of fair-minded locals and an openly Gay mayor. Located in Guadalajara province, the nearly abandoned Campillo de Ranas benefited when Mayor Francisco Maroto welcomed same-sex couples whom more conservative mayors refused to marry despite Spain's marriage equality law, according to The New York Times. Spain, an overwhelmingly Catholic country, legalized same-sex marriage in 2005.

Since then, Mayor Maroto has married more than 140 couples, almost half of them Gay or Lesbian, from many countries. The hospitality industry has flourished, allowing the shuttered elementary school to reopen, among other improvements. The story of transformation and renewal is the subject of a documentary called Campillo, Si, Quiero (Campillo, Yes, I Do), produced and directed by Andres Rubio, who is currently screening his film on the festival circuit.

"Shot over the span of a year, the film tells the story of how this hardscrabble hamlet, which was virtually abandoned 20 years ago, has been revived through a willingness to serve anyone who is willing to marry there," reports The New York Times. "Saying "yes" to Gay couples turns out to have lured straight ones as well and has spawned a wedding and tourism industry that coexists quite peacefully with the town's rural character."

## Uruguay Clears Way For G/L Adoptions

MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay (Observer Update) Uruguay is clearing the way for Gay and Lesbian couples to adopt children, reported [365Gay.com](http://365Gay.com). The Senate's final approval makes Uruguay the first country in Latin America to allow Gay and Lesbian couples the opportunity to adopt.

The executive branch now will decide when the law takes effect. The change is supported by socialist President Tabare Vazquez's Broad Front coalition, while the Roman Catholic Church has voiced strong disapproval. Under Vazquez, Uruguay already legalized gay civil unions and ended a ban on homosexuals in the military.

The law gives judges less say over adoptions and shifts decision making to the national Institute of the Children and Adolescents.

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# POLITICS 2009

by Mark R. Kerr

## In The Nation's Capital

H.R. 3017, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), will be taken up by the House Education & Labor Committee (HELC) on Wednesday, September 23, which will only hear testimony from witnesses, either in favor of the proposed federal legislation or against.

Under the proposed bill, H.R. 3017, ENDA would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, perceived or otherwise, in employment. A subsequent hearing to markup H.R. 3017, to vote to approve the measure and moving it along in the process to become a federal statute, has not been scheduled. ...

As previously reported, federal legislation to repeal the 13-year-old federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) has been introduced in this session of Congress. U.S. Representative Jerrold Nadler, D-NY, is the primary sponsor of the measure and is the chairman of the House's subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights & Civil Liberties, which oversees DOMA.

Nadler's bill includes a provision to allow same-sex couples in one state to marry elsewhere, return home and still receive federal benefits. ...

Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT), the federal law which prevents Gay and Lesbian Americans who wish to serve in the country's armed services openly was in the news again when a new report showed that non-white Gay and Lesbian members of the armed services were more likely to be discharged under DADT.

According to a report from the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, about 45% of the 640 men and women discharged under "don't ask, don't tell" in fiscal year 2008 were nonwhite.

Legislation has been introduced to repeal DADT in this current session of Congress, H.R. 1283, the Military Readiness Enhancement Act of 2009 and the lead on this bill is U.S. Representative Patrick Murphy, D-PA.

H.R. 1283 currently sits before the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Military Personnel. Hearings on the issue of DADT will take place in the Senate Armed Services Committee sometime during the Fall, as previously reported. ...

Led by its co-chair U.S. Representative Raul Grijalva D-AZ, twelve members of the Progressive Caucus are pushing to include LGBT in a bill to deal with comprehensive immigration reform.

A letter was sent to Sen. Charles Schumer, D-NY, who is currently drafting the immigration bill, urging him to include policies that address: "Family reunification by alleviating the backlogs for family-based immigration, reducing lengthy waiting periods for legal immigrants to be reunited with their loved ones, and eliminating discrimination in immigra-

tion law against same-sex partners and their families."

Openly Gay U.S. Representative, Jared Polis, D- CO who signed on to the letter, said there's "very widespread agreement" among the 80-plus caucus members that LGBT families should be included in overall immigration reform. ...

According to reports, the Obama Administration will nominate out Lesbian Chai R. Feldblum to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which is responsible for investigating employment discrimination claims. The commission is a five-member panel, and three of the spots are currently filled and her nomination is subject to confirmation by the U.S. Senate.

Feldblum is a professor of law at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., as well as the director of the Law Center's Federal Legislation and Administrative Clinic, and codirector of Workplace Flexibility 2010.

## LGBT Bills Await Congress

Continued from Page One

bill in a public manner." But HRC's Herwitz is hopeful a Senate hearing could take place sometime this fall.

Four other bills are languishing far behind, with no one in the Senate lined up yet to introduce them and prospects in the House fairly uncertain:

Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) repeal has not yet been introduced in either chamber, though Herwitz says she hopes a bill will be introduced in the House this month;

"Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy (DADT) repeal has been introduced in the House and may be introduced in the Senate this fall, says Herwitz. But Rep. Frank and HRC say they don't imagine DADT will get a floor vote in the House before next year. Rep. Alcee Hastings announced in August that he was withdrawing an amendment he had prepared seeking to prohibit the Defense Department from spending any federal funds to enforce its "don't ask, don't tell" policy against Gays;

Reuniting Families immigration legislation has been introduced in the House only and is pending some effort to address immigration issues overall, an effort that is waiting in line behind all the other urgent matters of Congress;

Family Leave inclusion legislation, an effort to ensure that LGBT families are covered under the federal Family Leave law has also been introduced in the House only. No one has come forward in the Senate to introduce the bill.



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## Two-Thirds Of GLBT Americans Think Nation Headed In The Right Direction

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - American LGBT adults say they are more optimistic for the future than their heterosexual counterparts.

A new national survey conducted online in mid-August by Witeck-Combs Communications and Harris Interactive shows two-thirds (67%) of LGBT adults say that things in the country are going in the right direction, compared to 45 percent of heterosexual adults.

This is an increase from June 2009 when 56 percent of LGBT adults said that things were moving in the right direction.

When it comes to their outlook on the economy and their own personal financial situation, LGBT adults also appear somewhat more confident than their heterosexual counterparts. A majority (57%) of LGBT adults said they expect the economy to improve in the coming year, compared to 45 percent of heterosexual adults. In the next 6 months just looking at Gay and Lesbian adults, 31 percent expect their household's financial condition to be better, compared with 24 percent of heterosexual adults. The survey also found that more than two-thirds (69%) of LGBT adults would rate the overall job President Barack Obama is doing in handling the economy as excellent or pretty good, while only 38 percent of heterosexual adults agree.

The new nationwide survey of 2,709 U.S. adults, (ages 18 and over), of whom 378 self identified as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (which includes an over-sample of Lesbian and Gay adults), was conducted online between August 10 and 18, 2009, by Harris Interactive, a global market research and consulting firm, in conjunction with Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc., a strategic public relations and marketing communications firm with special expertise in the LGBT market.

While Americans are closely monitoring all aspects of the economy, LGBT adults continue to express more

confidence in what the future may hold. Four out of five (82%) LGBT adults said they trust in President Barack Obama to do what is right for the American economy, compared with 60% of heterosexual adults. Nearly seven out of ten (69%) LGBT adults said they are confident that the White House and the Administration will produce policies to help fix the economic crisis, while a slender majority (51%) of heterosexual adults agree. Also, a majority (64%) of LGBT adults said they think the stimulus plan passed earlier this year has been successful, compared with 39% heterosexual adults. More than half (53%) of LGBT adults, contrasted with 30% of heterosexuals adults, rate the overall job President Barack Obama is doing in handling employment/unemployment as excellent or pretty good.

In contrast - when critical of the President's leadership, one-third (35%) of heterosexuals adults said they blame President Barack Obama for the country's economic problems, yet only 13% of LGBT adults agree. Also, one-fourth (27%) of heterosexual adults said they have no trust at all in President Barack Obama to do what is right for the American economy; only 7% of LGBT adults agree.

"It's not surprising to see the higher marks that LGBT citizens give to the President and his Administration; last year's exit polls, for example, suggest that at least three out of four Gay and Lesbian votes were cast for President Obama," said Wesley Combs, President of Witeck-Combs Communications. "Keep in mind, this survey also addressed overarching national issues, and not policy matters affecting LGBT voters specifically such as Gays serving openly in the military, or employment nondiscrimination. As we see our way through this difficult economic climate, we know that LGBT households are feeling the same stress and sacrifices as other Americans. Nonetheless, the optimism and confidence shown by LGBT households is very telling, and policymakers and business leaders should take strong note."

## National Equality March 'Idols' Wanted

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - Organizers of the National Equality March are holding an American Idol-style contest to select two citizen advocates for the speakers platform at the event in Washington, D.C., on October 10 and 11, [advocate.com](http://advocate.com) reported.

"We will have nationally recognized speakers, LGBT leaders and grassroots organizers on the podium," Kip Williams, co-executive director of the march, said in a press release. "But we know there are passionate, unincorporated individuals who have ideas to share with the crowd. We are letting the public choose the opportunity for a once-in-a-lifetime platform for two lucky individuals to speak up for equality."

A panel of judges will select the top five video entries submitted by September 17, then let the public decide who will receive the opportunity

to speak on the podium through voting on Facebook and YouTube. Contestants, who are encouraged to share their "gift for speech and a passionate heart," should explain why the National Equality March is personally important.

Winners will be flown to the march courtesy of donated tickets. Organizers are in the process of finding housing for winners. Find more submission at [equalityacrossamerica.org/blog/?page\\_id=1080](http://equalityacrossamerica.org/blog/?page_id=1080).



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**COMMENTARY...**  
by Lisa Neff

**NOM's Anti-Gay Crusade**

There's a man in charge of an organization that has led a fight in multiple states and is setting up a national headquarters in Washington, D.C., that a reporter for the Washington Post characterizes as a man who speaks to the "movable middle, reasonable people looking for reasonable arguments to assure them that their feelings have a rational basis." This man recently profiled in that newspaper is effective in his advocacy work because he is "pleasantly, ruthlessly sane." This man, according to the reporter, is likeable, a thoughtful talker. His "children are precocious and sweet; his wife is gracious and funny."

This man, Brian Brown, will be home late from work because, according to that newspaper profile, he's "going off to quietly crusade for the hearts and minds of people who, like Brown, pride themselves on being rational, mainstream and sane." And do you know what Brian Brown is "quietly" crusading for?

He's crusading – and not so quietly – to keep same-sex marriage illegal in most states and overturn same-sex marriages in states where it is now recognized.

Brian Brown is the executive director of the National Organization for Marriage, and he's troubled that some people think he's a bigot for trying to block our access to equal treatment under the law.

"He tries to help people see that opposing Gay marriage does not make them bigots, that the argument should have nothing to do with hate or fear, and everything to do with history and tradition," the Post story on Aug. 28 read.

I don't like to publicly complain about the press. For me, that's akin to airing the family's dirty laundry – of which my family has none, by the way.

But I'm offended with the Post story as both a journalist and as a Lesbian who someday wants to marry her partner – a 16-year engagement ought to be evidence of our commitment.

I'm troubled by the one-sided, gratuitous, assuming, fawning nature of the story – offered as a news report, not a column.

And troubling is the omission in the story of any serious exploration of Brown's "rationale" argument against the legalization of same-sex marriage. Essentially his simplistic argument is that he says historically and traditionally marriage has been between a man and a woman and it is rational to never change. If the reporter had simply Googled "same-sex marriage history," she would have realized that Brown means for white people, marriage historically has been between a man and a woman. She would have found numerous references to same-gender marriage in Africa and among Native North Americans.

And, while the reporter glosses over some NOM "missteps," such as the offending "Gathering Storm" commercial intended to rally voters against Gay marriage in California, where is the reference to the ethics questions involving NOM in Iowa and Maine?

Referring to NOM's anti-Gay marriage work in Iowa, W. Charles Smithson, director and counsel for the Iowa Ethics and Campaign Disclosure Board, recently wrote to Brown: "I want to remind you that an 'insignificant amount' of NOM's income is permitted to come from business corporations. Thus, as you solicit for your organization please keep this in mind in the



event that you are going to continue to be active in Iowa elections."

Smithson also referred to NOM's claim that it need not disclose donors to its campaign against Gay marriage in Iowa.

"If people are going to donate to your organization for express advocacy activities in Iowa and those donations exceed \$750 in the aggregate in a calendar year, your organization will be required to form a PAC and disclose those contributors. The independent expenditure process in Iowa is not a vehicle to shield political contributors."

In Maine, the Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices recently notified Brown that it will decide Oct. 1 whether to "conduct any investigation" regarding alleged fundraising violations by NOM and the Stand for Marriage Maine PAC.

Did NOM raise money – as much as \$250,000 – for the campaign to repeal Maine's same-sex marriage law and then donate the money to Stand for Marriage without filing campaign finance reports?

We know NOM can raise that kind of money. The organization helped bankroll the costly Proposition 8 campaign in California.

Did NOM, with its campaign against Gay marriage in New England, seek to hide donations? A complaint filed by Fred Karger of Californians Against Hate notes that a March solicitation for donations to NOM states, "And unlike in California, every dollar you give to NOM's Northeast Action Plan today is private, with no risk of harassment from Gay marriage protestors (sic)."

That NOM donation request announced its need to fund a new "hard-hitting radio ad" to air in Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine and New Jersey that was developed by the public affairs group that managed the Prop 8 campaign.

The ad is titled "Consequences," is aimed at the "potential marriage activists who listen to talk radio" and emphasizes that "legalizing Gay marriage has consequences for kids."

"As the ad says – if our politicians adopt same-sex marriage, our rights won't matter much – not parents, not people of faith, not any of us who will experience the consequences of redefining marriage. If we don't step up now, we'll all have to accept Gay marriage – 'whether we like it or not.'"

Ahh, Brian Brown and NOM, "going off to quietly crusade for the hearts and minds of people who, like Brown, pride themselves on being rational, mainstream and sane."

(Neff is a columnist for 365Gay.com, from which this is reprinted)

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# Around The Nation's Capital

**Dems To Introduce DOMA Repeal in House:** A group of Democrats in Congress, including New York representative Jerry Nadler, are reportedly preparing to introduce a repeal to the law that restricts the federal government from recognizing Gay and Lesbian marriages or partnerships legally recognized in certain states, [advocate.com](http://advocate.com) reported.

The group is gearing up to notify fellow congressmembers that the bill will introduced, while asking for their support, according to Politico.com.

While House speaker Nancy Pelosi has said she supports repealing the 13-year-old law, the House has a full slate of economic issues to deal with over the next session. President Barack Obama also campaigned on the message that he would approve of repealing DOMA. However, the Department of Justice, under Obama, has issued two briefs pertaining to the law over the summer, defending it in federal court cases.

**Hildebrand "Losing Patience" With Obama:** A former top adviser to the Obama campaign expressed his frustration with the pace of Gay rights change in an interview, reported [advocate.com](http://advocate.com).

Steve Hildebrand, the Gay man who served as deputy campaign manager for President Barack

Obama, expressed his frustration with the pace of the Gay rights agenda and other progressive items on Tuesday, telling Politico's Ben Smith in an interview that he was "losing patience" with the White House, [advocate.com](http://advocate.com) reported.

"I am one of the millions of frustrated Americans who want to see Washington do more than it's doing right now," said Hildebrand, who was instrumental to Obama's critical primary victories in Iowa and South Carolina.

Hildebrand said that Obama "needs to be more bold in his leadership," according to Politico.com.

The remarks, perhaps the most high-profile expression of displeasure to date from Hildebrand, followed his address on August 22 to the San Diego Democratic Club, in which he reportedly delivered a "slashing attack" against Obama and the Democratic congress. "The problem is Obama isn't listening enough," Hildebrand said at the time.

**WaPo Ombudsman: NOM Profile "Fell Short":** A recent profile of NOM (National Organization for Marriage) executive director Brian Brown in The Washington Post was unbalanced, says the newspaper's ombudsman, though he claims that the reporter holds no homophobic agenda, reported [advocate.com](http://advocate.com).

In an assessment published, Alexander acknowledged that the article by Monica Hesse, titled "Opposing Gay Unions With Sanity and a Smile," which appeared on the front page of the Style section, elicited a reader outcry unlike any he had yet experienced on the job. However, he denied that shoddy reporting or a homophobic agenda were to blame, especially given that Hesse, who is partnered with a man, used to be in a relationship with a woman.

"Rather, this is a case where three things – a storytelling concept, a writing technique, and a bad headline – combined to ignite reader reaction as vitriolic as any I've experienced in my seven months as ombudsman," wrote Alexander. Alexander suggested that the profile failed in execution, using unattributed characterizations of its subject and a biased-sounding headline, and neglecting to include perspectives from opponents. The result was the opposite of what the writer intended, he said.

"Hesse was stunned," wrote Alexander. "She had expected to hear from anti-Gay marriage conservatives who might view the story as 'snide.' Instead, she heard from liberals who support Gay marriage, accusing her of writing a puff piece about someone they believe fosters prejudice and intolerance. The story was shallow and one-sided, they complained."

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# Report: Mixed Court Views On Gays And Lesbians In Military

WASHINGTON, D.C (Observer Update) - Conflicting Supreme Court rulings on Gay rights make it difficult to predict whether any new laws protecting Gays who want to serve openly in the military would be upheld, a congressional report concludes, reported the Associated Press on 365Gay.com. The legal analysis by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) comes as Democratic lawmakers push legislation to repeal the 1993 "don't ask, don't tell" law that blocks Gays' military service if they disclose their sexual orientation.

"Unsettled legal questions remain as to whether a discharge based solely on a statement that a service member is Gay transgresses constitutional limits," concluded the CRS report, dated Sept. 2. The report cites two conflicting Supreme Court cases, and noted that lower courts have struggled to reconcile them. In 1986, the Supreme Court ruled in *Bowers v. Hardwick* that consensual homosexual sodomy is a not a fundamental right. Seventeen years later, the court overruled itself in *Lawrence v. Texas*, declaring in 2003 that a Texas law prohibiting sexual acts between Gays and Lesbians was unconstitutional.

The Lawrence ruling gave Gay-rights supporters the legal grounds to challenge the Pentagon on "don't ask, don't tell" by arguing that the policy limits the privacy rights

of Gay members of the military. However, the CRS report concluded, there's still a question whether the ruling provided a standard for judicial review that would give challengers the right to press in court. The Supreme Court has repeatedly turned down requests to hear challenges to "don't ask, don't tell," most recently in June.

President Barack Obama signaled during last year's election campaign that he supported repealing the law. But to the chagrin of his Gay-rights supporters, he has made no move to do so since taking office in January. The White House has said it will not stop the military from dismissing Gays and Lesbians who acknowledge their sexuality.

Last year, 634 members of the military were discharged for being Gay, or .045 percent of the active-duty U.S. force, according to an Aug. 14 CRS report. The largest number of Gays who were ousted under the "don't ask, don't tell" policy came in 2001, when 1,227 were discharged, or .089 of the force.

The House is considering legislation to repeal "don't ask, don't tell" and allow people who have been discharged under the policy to rejoin the military. The law is being pushed chiefly by Rep. Patrick Murphy, D-Pa., a former captain in the Army's 82nd Airborne Division who served in Bosnia and Iraq.

# Judge Shields Signatures In G/L Rights Referendum

OLYMPIA, WA (Observer Update) - A federal judge has ordered the state of Washington to keep shielding the identities of people who signed petitions to force a vote on expanded benefits for Gay couples, reported the Associated Press on 365Gay.com. U.S. District Judge Benjamin Settle in Tacoma granted the preliminary injunction involving petitions for Referendum 71 while a related case moves forward on the constitutionality of the state public records act.

The referendum, sponsored by a group called Protect Marriage Washington, asks voters to approve or reject the "everything but marriage" domestic partnership law that state lawmakers passed earlier this year. In his ruling, Settle said he was "not persuaded that waiver of one's fundamental right to anonymous political speech is a prerequisite for participation in Washington's referendum process."

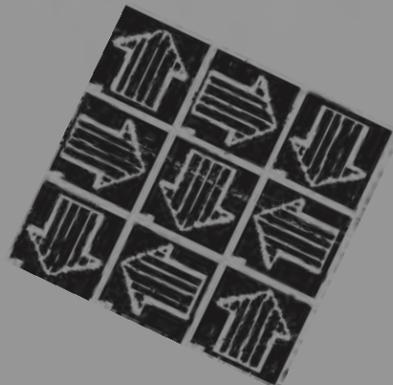
Brian Zylstra, spokesman for Secretary of State Sam Reed, said that the judge's decision "is a step away from open government."

"When people sign a referendum or initiative petition, they are trying to change state law," he said. "We believe that changing state law should be open to public view."

A spokesman for the state attorney general's office, which is representing Reed in the case, said they are weighing whether to appeal

the preliminary injunction. At a hearing before Settle, attorneys for Protect Marriage had argued that referendum signers' names and addresses should be exempt from the public records disclosure law because release of the information would put them at risk of harassment, amounting to an unconstitutional infringement of free speech rights.

Two Gay rights groups, WhoSigned.Org and KnowThyNeighbor.org, previously said they would post the names online, which sparked the legal action to keep them private. Protect Marriage was unsuccessful in an effort to keep the names of its political donors secret when the state Public Disclosure Commission ruled last month that donors weren't exempt from campaign finance laws requiring disclosure. Protect Marriage Attorney Stephen Pidgeon said he was still deciding whether to appeal that decision. But in the meantime, he said that he is happy that the names of those who signed the referendum petitions will not be released.



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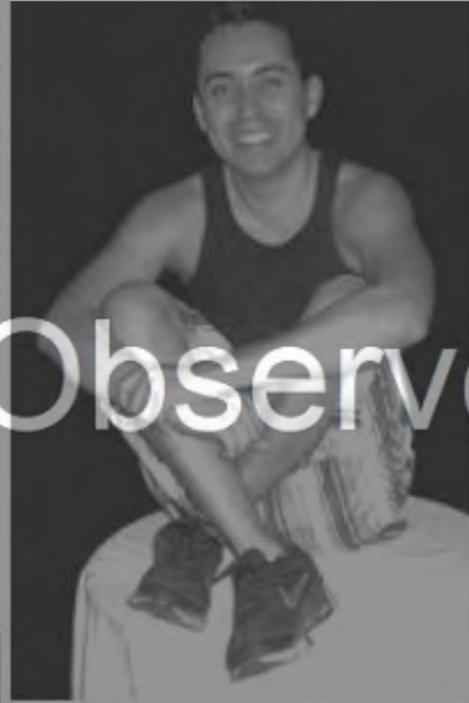
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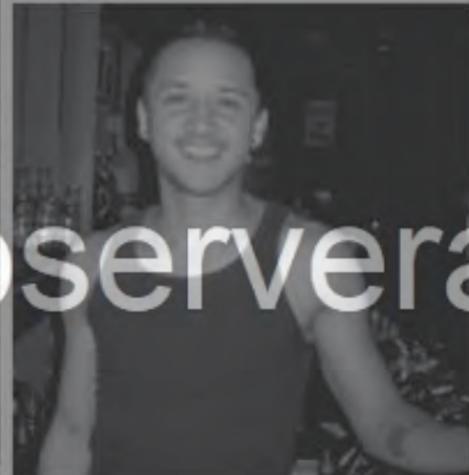
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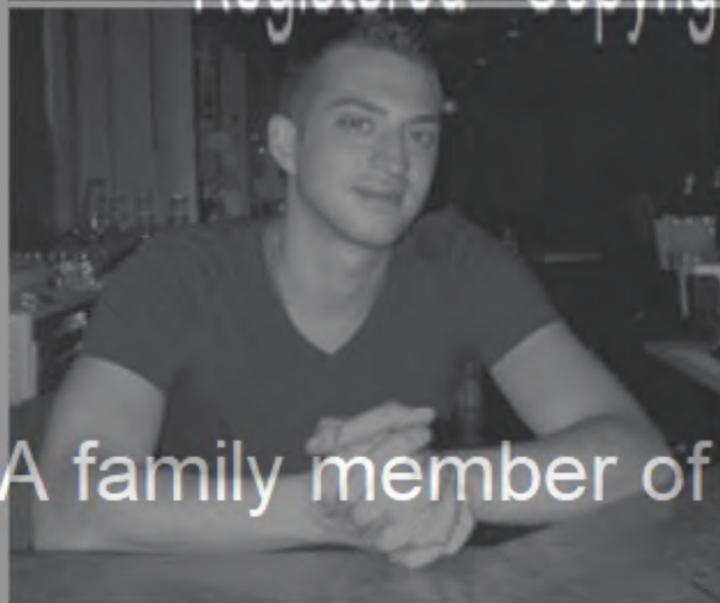
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**CLASSIFIED ADS GET RESULTS TRY IT!**

**Non-Bar Calendar**

Wednesday, September 16  
Men's Social Network\_Open to men of all ages. Newcomers welcomed. 7 p.m. Hand and Foot, a canasta\_like game, is hosted weekly by MSN members in their homes. Please call Marv at 745\_0304.

Thursday, September 17  
Men's Social Network\_Open to men of all ages. Newcomers welcomed. 1 p.m. MSN invites you to bowl at a great price. This event is done jointly with Tucson Prime Timers. For further information, please call Merle at 888\_7264. 7 p.m. MSN invites you to Triangle Tribe, a Men's Circle. According to a recent study, few people have as many close friends as they would like. Are you as connected with other men as you want to be? Do you get the support you need for the issues in your life? Do you wish you had more meaningful friendships? This long running, guided discussion group meets weekly. For further information, please call Lee & Merlin at 207\_5336.

Friday, September 18  
Men's Social Network\_Open to men of all ages. Newcomers welcomed. 5:30 p.m. MSN invites you to join a truly mixed discussion group. Oasis is open to all\_gay, lesbian, transgender, bi, queer, questioning, and straight allies. Displaced by the closing of Wingspan's facility, the group currently meets on the patio of Revolutionary Grounds, the former Rainbow Planet Coffee Shop. This guided discussion group includes all ages and genders. Meetings are often followed by dinner. The MSN contact for this group is Davis at 325\_4754 (message phone) or wilcoxgay@gmail.com.

Saturday, September 19  
Men's Social Network\_Open to men of all ages. Newcomers welcomed. 7 p.m. Shuffle over for a floating pinochle game every Saturday of the month save the first Saturday, the night of the monthly MSN pot luck. For further information, please call Steve at 664\_2076.

Sunday, September 20  
Men's Social Network\_Open to men of all ages. Newcomers welcomed. 6:30 p.m. MSN invites you to join us for Sunday dinner out. Every Sunday, MSN members meet at a different restaurant to eat and enjoy each other's company. This week we dine at Hometown Buffet, 5701 N Oracle Rd. For further information, please call Thom at 908\_6160 or Davis at 325\_4754. 7 p.m. MSN invites you to a concert under the stars at the band shell at Reid Park.

For further information, please call Vaughn at 834\_9980.

Monday, September 21  
Men's Social Network\_Open to men of all ages. Newcomers welcomed. 10 a.m. MSN invites you to bowl at a great price. This event is done jointly with Tucson Prime Timers. For further information, please call Merle at 888\_7264.

Tuesday, September 22  
Men's Social Network currently has no Tuesday events scheduled. Why not join us and start something?

Wednesday, September 23  
Men's Social Network\_Open to men of all ages. Newcomers welcomed. 7 p.m. Hand and Foot, a canasta\_like game, is hosted weekly by MSN members in their homes. Please call Lee & Merlin at 207\_5336.

Thursday, September 24  
Men's Social Network\_Open to men of all ages. Newcomers welcomed. 1 p.m. MSN invites you to bowl at a great price. This event is done jointly with Tucson Prime Timers. For further information, please call Merle at 888\_7264. 7 p.m. MSN invites you to Triangle Tribe, a Men's Circle. According to a recent study, few people have as many close friends as they would like. Are you as connected with other men as you want to be? Do you get the support you need for the issues in your life? Do you wish you had more meaningful friendships? This long running, guided discussion group meets weekly. For further information, please call Lee & Merlin at 207\_5336.

Friday, September 25  
Men's Social Network\_Open to men of all ages. Newcomers welcomed. 9 a.m. MSN invites you on a day trip to the Desert Museum. Seating is limited, so be sure to call ahead! If the initial car is full, other cars may join. For further information, please call Thom at 908\_6160. 5:30 p.m. MSN invites you to join a truly mixed discussion group. Oasis is open to all\_gay, lesbian, transgender, bi, queer, questioning, and straight allies. Displaced by the closing of Wingspan's facility, the group currently meets on the patio of Revolutionary Grounds, the former Rainbow Planet Coffee Shop. This guided discussion group includes all ages and genders. Meetings are often followed by dinner. The MSN contact for this group is Davis at 325\_4754 (message phone) or wilcoxgay@gmail.com.

**Poet's Corner**

**STIRRING THE POT**

by Ron Rose - Tucson

Those GOP are stirring the pot  
Spoonng out lies, patriotic they're not  
Did we forget dead troops in Iraq?  
George Bush and Cheney, on the wrong track  
Banks nearly busted, Wall Street collapsed  
Out of sight deficit, were we just saps?  
United we're not, Republicans gloat  
They're happy as hell, punching holes in our boat,  
Striking fear that our Congress, under Demo control  
Will burden the rich, and that's not their goal.  
Guns for the people, Conservatives shout  
Our government's useless, the rednecks all pout  
Don't tax us, you Demos we love all our perks  
But those with a brain, know Democracy works  
So stir while you can, we respect all your rights  
Cause we know when we vote, we'll just put out your lights.

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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. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Tucson, AZ 85701. For more info, please contact Brenda Casey, LMSW 520-694-0247 or [bcassey@umcaz.edu](mailto: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](http://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 (GPGGCC)** P.O. BOX 2097, Phoenix, AZ 85001-2097. E-mail: [webmaster@gpggcc.org](mailto:webmaster@gpggcc.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](mailto: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 or visit our website at [www.botop.com](http://www.botop.com) All are welcome to our general meetings/potlucks on the 2nd Friday of every month, at 3202 E. 1<sup>st</sup> 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](http://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](http://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. 7<sup>th</sup> 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 TEAMARIZONA at their website: [teamarizona.org](http://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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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 1<sup>st</sup> Mondays at 7pm; Dezert Girlz (MTF Support) meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays at 7pm; Dezert Boyz (FTM Support) meets 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://www.lctucson.org) or write: Lutherans Concerned/Tucson, P.O. Box 40702, Tucson, AZ 85717-0702.

**REVELLE MEN'S CHORUS** rehearses Monday evenings 7-10pm at the Historic Y, corner of University Blvd. And 5<sup>th</sup> 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. 6<sup>th</sup> 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@yahoo.com](mailto:SAGE-Tucson-subscribe@yahoo.com). See you on the trails.

**MEN'S KINK DISCUSSION GROUP** (Open to all who identify as male and are 18 or older) meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month, 7:00 p.m. at Desert Dominion, 3843 E. 37<sup>th</sup> Street, Tucson, AZ. (Map available at [www.desertdominion.org](http://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. 7<sup>th</sup> 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>

**COPPER RAINBOW BISTRO** at David's Oasis Camping Resort, Bisbee, AZ 520-979-6650  
[www.azgaycamping.com](http://www.azgaycamping.com)

Membership Beer and Wine Bar. Annual Member \$15.00  
Bar Hours:  
\*Open Fridays, 5-10 p.m. or until last member leaves. Happy Hour 5-7 all drinks \$100 off.  
\*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

**DAILY BAR CALENDAR**

**BAR CALENDAR Of Upcoming Events**

**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 Domestic and well. Appetizers 1/2 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 HIV/AIDS clients with their Veterinary bills).

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

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

**MONDAY**

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Happy Hour 5-8. \$4.25 Long Island, Tokyo and Long Beach Teas, all nite with sexy Spencer.

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 Martinis \$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 5-8. PHAT Tuesday's 50 cent Pabst cans 9pm-close, \$1.50 pints all nite and DJ Lover Boy spinnin' 80's.

COLORS - Open 4-10pm. Happy Hour 4-7 \$3.75 Skyy cocktails, \$3.00 Domestic and well and 1/2 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's Day" - \$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. \$8 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 Domestic and 1/2 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 Domestic. "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.

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 Domestic and Well and 1/2 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 Domestic. 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 Gods 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 Terty 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 Domestic and Well and 1/2 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 Domestic. 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 . Hourly rotating drink specials.

COLORS - Open 4pm-10pm, Happy Hour 4-7pm, \$3.75 Skyy cocktails, \$3.00 Domestic and Well, 1/2 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 Domestic. 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 open 11am-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.

Saturday, September 19  
WOODY'S - "Super Soaked" Pool Party to celebrate the end of summer. 9 p.m. - close. Wet shorts contest in the pool area 11 p.m. No Cover.

Friday, September 25  
THE BIZ - DJ Battle finals. One incredible DJ will win \$1,000. Come support to see who is the best!

WOODY'S - Fall wine tasting is coming tonight. Make your reservation with your favorite bartender.

Saturday, September 26  
THE BIZ - Bringing back the funk!! Remember Colette's - remember the good ole days! Then join the crowd this special evening. Benefitting Wingspan. Please RSVP to Colette @ 520-909-4190 or visit colettes.org for more info.

COYOTE MOON- Tea Dance from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. Then it's girls gone mad! DJ Domenica & The Deviltry Girls and show girlz! Cover \$5 or \$10 for two. Free by 9:00 p.m. Bring a book donation and get \$1 off cover. \$3 Hot Sex Booby shots and raffles and prizes!

WOODY'S - The Wett Party starring Dayton O'Conner. Live performances 10:30 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. DVD give-aways and hot dancers.

YARD DOG SALOON - Yard Dog is headquarters for the Tucson Knight Owls (TKO) "Fun Bus Run" a 12-hour adventure which includes a Bus Ride with food on board, commemorative T-Shirt and Mardi Gras Beads. The trip is \$40 per person and you will board the bus at 9:45 a.m. at the Yard Dog and arrive at the Bunkhouse at Noon and stay until 1:45 when you will go to Cruisin' On Central until 3:45 p.m. then on to Roscoes until 5:45 p.m. and then to Cash In Country until 7:45. The bus will leave Phoenix at 8 p.m. and arrive back in Tucson at 10 p.m. See the bartender at Yard Dog for a trip package and learn how to sign up for the Cab Asharing Program to get you safely home!

Saturday, October 2  
THE BIZ - 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Latin Pride Party @ the Biz 9pm. DJ Hill spinnin' all your Latin favorites. In part with Wingspan, SAAF, UofA Chicano/Hispano Student Affairs Program & Pride Alliance.

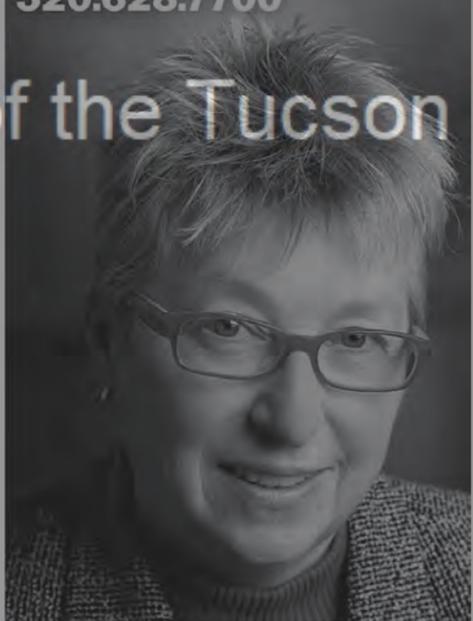
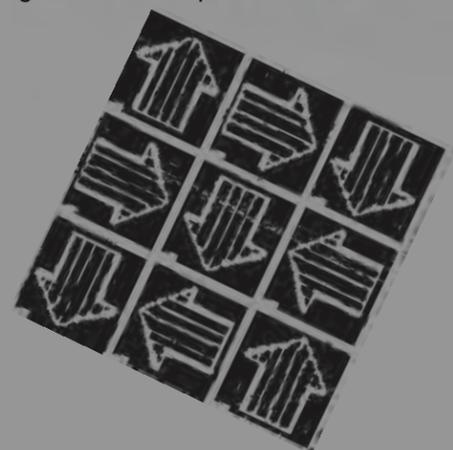
Thursday, October 9  
THE BIZ - Pre-Pride Party with Latin Carnaval! One massive Latin Party to kick off Gay Pride Weekend! Special guest Live from Sonora Dinamita Live!

Friday, October 10  
THE BIZ - Pride Party Biz opens @ 5:00 p.m. Pride Party all the way til 6:00 a.m.! Arrive early to avoid the lines. DJ Hill killing you on the dance floor until 6a.m. 18+ afterhours til 6 a.m.

Friday, October 16  
THE BIZ - Spin Babez wrap-up Party. Poles, toys and all the sexiness you could ask for! Free Goodie Bag to the first 150 guests and some lucky person will win a stripper pole! One incredibly hot & sexy night - DJ Hill til 2 a.m.

Saturday, October 17  
THE BIZ - Flame Halloween style. Come dressed and enjoy the fun, the friends, and the great time. DJ Tweet Tweet scratchin' the Mac! Costumes encouraged. 5:30 - 9:30 p.m.

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# HIV Screening Tests Proposed To Be Added To Medicare's List Of Covered Preventive Services

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has announced a new proposal that would cover Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection screening for Medicare beneficiaries who are at increased risk for the infection, including women who are pregnant and Medicare beneficiaries of any age who voluntarily request the service.

"The President has set clear priorities for an improved national response to ending the HIV epidemic," said HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. "Today's action by HHS' Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) sends a strong signal that this Administration takes prevention very seriously, especially when it comes to HIV and AIDS."

"While younger age groups account for most cases of HIV infection in the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that in 2006, approximately 19 percent of all U.S. residents with AIDS were age 50 years or older when the disease was diagnosed," she added. "Knowing about their HIV status can help patients live longer, fuller lives as well as avoid unintentional transmission of the virus to others."

CMS' efforts mark the first time that Medicare has proposed to expand its list of covered preventive services under a new authority established by Congress. The Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008 (MIPPA) gave CMS the ability to consider whether Medicare should cover "additional preventive services," if certain requirements are met. Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is diagnosed when an HIV-infected person's immune system becomes severely compromised or a person becomes ill with an HIV-related infection. Of the more than one million Americans estimated to have the HIV infection, the CDC has estimated that about a quarter of them do not realize they are infected. Without treatment, the HIV infection usually develops into AIDS within 8 to 10 years. While there is presently no cure for HIV, screening can help identify infected patients so that they can receive medical treatment that could help delay the onset of AIDS for years. "This proposal to cover HIV screening for our Medicare population has great potential in terms of saving lives and improving the quality of life for many seniors, as well as beneficiaries under age 65," said Acting CMS Administrator Charlene Frizzera.

The White House's top HIV/AIDS official saluted the move by HHS, calling it a critical step in helping HIV and AIDS patients to get the treatment they need. "The President is committed to re-focusing national attention on the domestic HIV epidemic and salutes this decision as an important step in our overall strategy," said Jeffrey S. Crowley, the Director of the White House Office of National AIDS Policy. "We are working with agencies across the government to achieve the President's goals of reducing HIV incidence, getting all people living with HIV/AIDS into care and improving health outcomes, and reducing HIV-related health disparities. The actions taken by the HHS today are an important part of our

efforts."

Under MIPPA, CMS can consider whether Medicare should cover preventive services that Congress has not already deemed as covered or non-covered by law, as long as they have been "strongly recommended" or "recommended" by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. For instance, the Task Force graded HIV screening as "strongly recommended." More information about the Task Force is available online at [ahrq.gov/clinic](http://ahrq.gov/clinic). CMS uses the national coverage determination process to make decisions on these types of preventive services. This process provides transparency about the evidence that CMS considers when making its decisions and allows opportunity for the public to comment on CMS' proposals.

"We are pleased to be able to propose an expansion to Medicare's portfolio of preventive services," said Barry M. Straube, M.D., CMS Chief Medical Officer and Director of the Agency's Office of Clinical Standards & Quality. "Before the MIPPA law, CMS had not been able to expand preventive services without Congressional action. Now we can take more active steps to evaluate the evidence about CMS Office of Public Affairs which services are reasonable and necessary to help keep Medicare beneficiaries healthy." CMS will accept public comments on the proposed decision through Oct. 9, 2009, and will issue a final coverage decision by Dec. 8, 2009. The proposed decision will be available online at [cms.hhs.gov/mcd/viewdraftdecisionmemo.asp?id=229](http://cms.hhs.gov/mcd/viewdraftdecisionmemo.asp?id=229). Instructions on how to submit comments are available at [cms.hhs.gov/InfoExchange/02\\_publiccomments.asp](http://cms.hhs.gov/InfoExchange/02_publiccomments.asp).

## Ellen Degeneres Will Take Over Paula Abdul's Idol Chair

LOS ANGELES, CA (Observer Update) - Well even we didn't see this coming! With Paula Abdul failing to take a lesser offer, American Idol's producers 19 Entertainment just signed the one and only Ellen DeGeneres to take over the star's judging chair, [queerty.com](http://queerty.com) reported. (And yes, that does mean Victoria Beckham won't be permanent.)

Don't worry, Ellen is keeping the daytime talk show, which also films in Los Angeles. Like Abdul, we imagine DeGeneres will prefer to lift contestants up with platitudes than shoot them down with criticism. She'll just be wearing pants (or jeans!) instead of a sparkly number a la Abdul. Also, inside sources tell [Queerty](http://queerty.com) Ellen plans to keep her head up without the use of her arms or Simon Cowell.

First Ryan Seacrest. Then Adam Lambert. Now Ellen. American Idol is getting Gayer than, well, So You Think You Can Dance.

**Pride on Parade Tucson Inc. Pride**  
 Celebrity Grand Marshal, Margaret Cho  
**FRIDAY OCTOBER 9**  
 6PM-9PM  
 4TH AVE., TUCSON

**COMMUNITY GRAND MARSHAL**  
**DESERT VOICES**

**SPECIAL GUEST**  
**GOD-DES & SHE**

**PRIDE In the Desert**  
**SATURDAY OCTOBER 10**  
 10AM-8PM  
 REID PARK, TUCSON  
**TICKETS ARE \$12 ADVANCE \$15 GATE**

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