Observing Tucson And The Greater Arizona Community

OBSERVER

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Tucson Observer Archives

Thousands Participate In All Souls Procession

Jeffrey Scott Brown, the AIDS RIbbon Tucson caretaker, getting ready to join in the All Souls Procession last Sunday, November 8

TUCSON - Thousands of people - men, women and children, lined Tucson's downtown streets for the 20th annual All Souls Procession last Sunday, November 8. It is perhaps one of the most important, inclusive and authentic public ceremonies in North America today. The Procession had its beginnings in 1990 with a ritualistic performance piece created by local artist Susan Johnson, who was grieving the passing of her father. Inspired by Mexico's Dia de los Muertos holiday, Johnson felt she should honor her father in celebration and creativity. The performance was very well received and many artists were inspired to continue growing the Procession into its modern incarnation.

Many Mouths One Stomach (www.manymouths.org), a non-profit arts collective, based in Tucson, is the organizing body for the annual Procession and is responsible in seeing that this event goes off smoothly. Today the entire volunteer-driven group is charged with organizing over 20,000 participants on the streets of downtown Tucson. The nearly two-mile long human-powered procession ends in the finalizing pageantry of burning a huge urn filled with the hopes, offerings and wishes of the public for those who have passed. Along the route are myriads of installation art, altars, performers, and creatives of all kinds collaborating for nearly a year to prepare their offerings to this amazing event. The annual All Souls Procession, now an entire All Souls Weekend, is a celebration and mourning of the lives of our loved ones who have passed.

In keeping with that concept, AIDS Ribbon Tucson, Southern Arizona's interactive public memorial to the 25 million people lost to AIDS, was unfurled and blessed by faith leaders and clergy in the 2008 Procession earning it official memorial status. According to Jeffrey Scott Brown, the memorial's caretaker, the 120 foot long red ribbon banner is covered with names of some of the millions of people worldwide lost to the disease.

Traditionally, the procession started at the intersection of University Boulevard and Fourth Avenue. It wound down 4th Avenue towards downtown, passing historic landmarks along the way, finishing at the historic Warehouse Docks at Stone and Tool avenues, where a pyrotechnic spectacle and aerial fantasy dance which included the burning of a huge Urn. For more info regarding the All Souls Processions, go to http://www.allsoulsprocession.org/archives/108 For additional photos of Tucson's most unusual and exciting event go to page eight in this issue of the Observer.

tucsonobserverarchives.org

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LGBT National Election Day 2009 Results Roundup

AUGUSTA, ME (Observer Update) - Mainers narrowly rejected a Gay marriage law approved by lawmakers in the spring, reported On Top Magazine.

On the other side of the nation, in Washington State, Gay unions got a more favorable response. Early returns for Referendum 71 showed the measure leading by a narrow margin. If approved, the measure would extend a 2007 domestic partnership law for a second time, granting Gay and Lesbian couples all the remaining state-provided rights, benefits and responsibilities of marriage.

The conservative group Protect Marriage collected 138,000 signatures in the spring to put the law up for a vote. They've argued that the law is unlawful because it violates a 1998 Gay marriage ban approved by legislators and ruled constitutional by the state's Supreme Court. Handicapped by low enthusiasm to repeal the law - the group raised less than $60,000 - and low poll numbers, the group had a steep incline to overcome. After the loss, many believe social conservatives will turn to the courts to undo the legislation.

Voters in Kalamazoo, Michigan fended off an attempt to repeal a controversial Gay protections law approved by city leaders in June. Opponents called the anti-discrimination law an attack on religious groups, despite its exemption for churches. A large majority (61%, with 89% of precincts reporting) of voters disagreed.

New Jersey's gubernatorial race was as much a referendum on Gay marriage as a question on who will govern the Garden State. With Governor Jon Corzine's defeat to Republican Chris Christie, Gay marriage appears to be off the table. Corzine promised the Gay and Lesbian community that if reelected he would shepherd a Gay marriage bill through the Legislature, while Christie has vowed to oppose any such attempt.

Gay marriage foes in New York, however, were disappointed by the election of Democrat Bill Owens in the 23rd district. Owens is the first Democrat to win the seat since the Civil War. Owens is not a strong Gay rights supporter but his Republican opponent, Dede Scozzafava, is. A position that proved unacceptable to Gay marriage foes, who altered their allegiance to third-party candidate Doug Hoffman, a Gay marriage opponent, and pushed out Scozzafava. Her surprise withdrawal three days before the election drew cheers from Gay marriage foes who called it a victory. The celebration was short lived.

Annise Parker, the openly Lesbian candidate for Houston mayor, will face Gene Locke in a runoff next month. Parker and Locke, a former city attorney, were the two top vote-getters out of a field of seven in Tuesday's mayoral election. Parker is running to lead the nation's fourth largest city.

Openly Gay former news anchor Charles Pugh will lead Detroit City Council. As the top vote-getter in Tuesday's city council election, Pugh becomes council president. He is the first openly Gay person to hold elected office in Detroit.

Voters in two Cleveland suburbs also endorsed openly Gay candidates. Mark Tumeo won his bid to keep his Cleveland Heights City Council seat. And in Lakewood, openly Lesbian Nickie J. Antonio also held onto her city council seat, Cleveland daily The Plain Dealer reported. Antonio was the top vote-getter on Tuesday, which might influence council members when they decide on a new president in January. Both cities are among the most progressive in the area.

Also in Ohio, openly Lesbian Sandra Kurt won her freshman effort to become a member of the Akron City Council. She is the first openly Gay person to be elected to the council.

And in New York City, Gay representation on the city council doubled overnight with the election of four openly Gay candidates. Queens

Gay Friendly Dayton, Ohio Mayor Unseated

DAYTON, OH (Observer Update) - Some members of the political community in Dayton, Ohio, suggest that the electoral defeat suffered by incumbent mayor Rhine McLin can be attributed to her support for the city's Gay rights ordinance, advocate.com reported. As a result of her support for the ordinance, McLin, a Democrat in her second term, lost the backing of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, a group of predominantly African-American ministers, according to the Dayton Daily News.

"Mayor Rhine McLin lost the endorsement of a group of predominantly black ministers in large part because of her support for the city's Gay-rights ordinance," the Dayton Daily News reported. "She was chastised for taking a stand for human rights, in other words, by a group of ministers who spent much of their lives fighting for it."

The IMA endorsed newcomer Gary Leitzell instead. Leitzell defeated McLin in a close race. The president of the alliance, the Reverend Wilburt Shanklin, indicated that the Gay rights ordinance was a factor in their endorsement. "'We thought we had an agreement' that she wouldn't support a Gay rights ordinance," said Shanklin, according to the Dayton Daily News.

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UPDATE

Desert Voices Concert This Weekend

TUCSON (Observer Update) - There are still tickets available for the upcoming Desert Voices November 14 and 15 performances (season tickets as well), so it's not too late to get great entertainment by your favorite non-profit chorus at a gonga price - one ticket for $15/two for $25 - and you will be supporting a local business, important in difficult economic times. (Season tickets are one for $50/two for $100 - also a gonga deal!)

Check out the website at desertvoices.org to purchase your tickets on line through Brown Paper Tickets (a very secure internet site), call the Desert Voices Box Office at 791-9662 to purchase via mastercard or visa, or mail your check (made out to Desert Voices) to PO Box 270, Tucson 85702-0270. See how easy it is?!

Performances will be held at the Proscenium Theatre, West Pima Campus, 2202 W. Anklam Road - 7:30 pm on the 14th and 3:00 pm on the 15th. Join Desert Voices as the chorus pays tribute to memorable musicals from Broadway and Tinseltown in Upstaged! Divas and Mis(s)Leading Men. See you at the theatre!

TGLBTCC Breakfast Meeting November 19

TUCSON (Observer Update) - The November breakfast meeting of the Tucson Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Chamber of Commerce will take place Thursday, November 19, 7:30 - 9:00 a.m., at the Hotel Tucson City Center Conference Suite Resort (formerly Inn Suites),475 N. Granada Ave.

The program, is a Town Meeting: An Action Plan to Promote Economic Development in Our Community, Chair: City Councilman Rodney Glassman. The Tucson GLBT Chamber of Commerce Advocacy Committee is putting this forum together as part of its mission to provide leadership in the business community on local government issues.

RSVP by Monday, November 16, noon (any member who RSVP's after this day will be charged $20), 615-6436 or info@tucsonglbtchamber.org.

LGBT Adoption Seminar Nov. 15

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Ethica with the support of The Alliance Fund is holding an informational meeting on November 15 to release our recently published "Navigating LGBT Adoptions: Pitfalls, Protections on the Road to Parenthood".

The event details will be held November 15, 2-4 pm at the Lighthouse YMCA at 2900 N. Columbus Blvd. There will be a panel discussion about adoption issues in the LGBT community with adoptive parents, adults, and prospective parents.

For questions contact Melissa at (520) 975-0385.

At Antigone Books

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Please join in for an event at Antigone Books, 411 N. 4th Ave., Friday, November 20, 7:00 p.m.

Join us for talks and slide presentations from Linda and Dick Buscher, authors of Historic Photos of Arizona (Turner, $39.95) and Roger Carpenter, editor of 2 volumes of Letters from Tucson (1925-1927 and 1933-1942). The Buschers' book is a photographic journey depicting the unique history, culture and natural beauty of Arizona captured in nearly 200 black and white images. The authors have been writing and teaching the history of Arizona for more than 35 years. Roger Carpenter's two volumes comprise a treasure trove of letters written by his mother in the first years of her life in Tucson, starting in 1925. In truly charming words and fascinating photos, they give an intimate portrait of Tucson from the point of view of an enthusiastic and very observant young biology teacher at the U of A. The wonderful 2nd volume, beginning during the depression and continuing into World War II, has just been released.

The reading will be followed by a question and answer period. Refreshments will be served. For more information, call (520) 792-3715.

Tucson City Election Update

TUCSON (Observer Update) - More than a third of registered voters in the City of Tucson, went to the polls to select people for three Council offices as well as decided the fate of two ballot measures on Tuesday, November 3.

Turnout for this off year, council election was higher than the last time the three Council seats that were up for consideration in Ward 3, Ward 5 and Ward 6 in 2005, when only a quarter of registered Tucson voters took part. Increased turnout, according to election officials and political pundits was in part due to Proposition 200, which would have mandated the hiring of more individuals for the City's police and fire departments but without a dedicated funding source to achieve this.

The campaign over this measure was the costliest, with proponents spending close to one-half million dollars while opponents to Proposition 200, spending about one-tenth the money. Proposition 200 was soundly defeated, with more 70% of the votes cast were opposed to it.

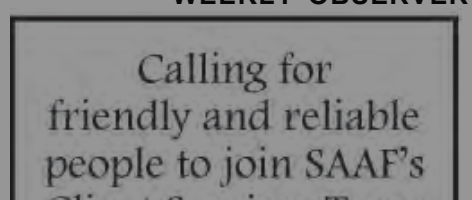
With this no vote, it permeated to other such measures, including Proposition 400, the Tucson Home Rule measure, narrowly defeated by less than 1,000 votes. This means that the City of Tucson budget deficit will be bigger, to the tune of $21 million.

Many school districts during this consolidated election had financial measures on their ballots of which, only a very few passed.

Ballot measures weren't the only consideration for Tucson voters. As previously written, three Council seats were up for consideration and of which, one of the two incumbents, Democrat Karin Uhlich of Ward 3, was narrowly returned to office, winning by less than 200 votes.

For the Ward 5 contest, Democrat Richard Fimbres was the victor and top vote getter of the night, defeating his Republican opponent by close to 7%. Fimbres led after the early ballots and never looked back, winning by close to 4,600 votes cast.

On the other hand in Ward 6, a Republican challenger, Steve Kozachik, defeated incumbent Democrat, Nina Trasoff, by more than 1,700 votes. Kozachik becomes the first challenger to defeat an incumbent since 1977.



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Informing the Community
The Observer

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Tucson Festival For Life, November 22

TUCSON (Observer Update) - The 21st Annual Jerôme Beillard Festival for Life hopes to bring in unprecedented community funding and support for local services and programs of the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation (SAAF).

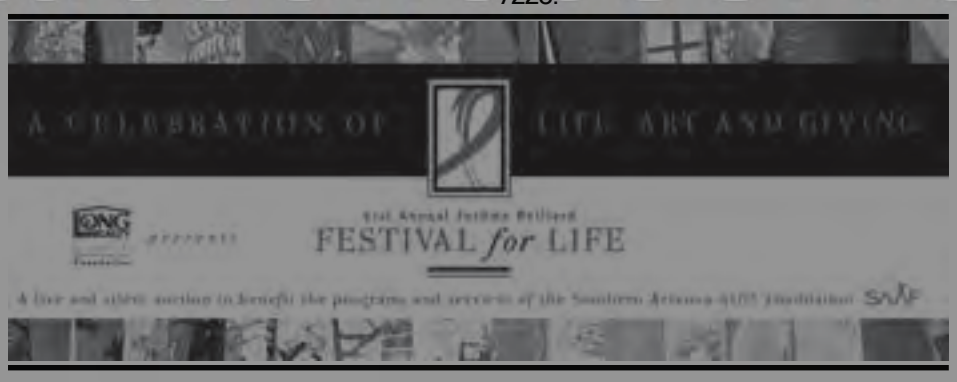
This year's event will take place at the University of Arizona, Student Union Grand Ballroom, 1303 E. University Blvd., Sunday, November 22, 4 - 7:30 p.m.

"Every year the attendance at this event is wonderful. This year we're hoping that it will be even greater. SAAF's local programs and services are depending on increased holiday giving during this challenging time. I can't say enough how much raising funds right now means to the stability and sustainability of the local services and outreach that the community needs and SAAF gives, so that we can address HIV and AIDS in a comprehensive and effective way.", says Wendell Hicks, the organization's Executive Director.

Tickets to the event are on sale now by calling (520) 628-7223 or you can purchase them online at festivalforlife.org.

"We've lowered ticket prices this year in hopes that even more people will enjoy the event. Last year ticket prices were $60 and $75 at the door. This year the tickets are $25 in advance and $35 at the door. More people at the event means the possibility of raising more funds to help support programs and services. Most of the funds raised at this event are from the live and silent auction.", says Hicks.

This year's event aims to increase attendance and giving by making the evening more affordable and attractive to all. Auction items vary from unbelievable donated fine art from local and well-known artists, travel packages, and jewelry, to items like lunch and dinner gift certificates, personal services, pet baskets, and local attraction passes so that people of any income level can enjoy bidding and purchasing items. For more details about this event, please visit festivalforlife.org or contact (520) 628-7223.



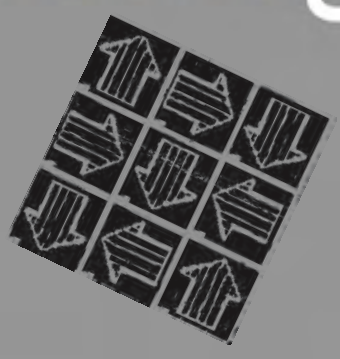
LGBT Magazine "Advocate" Trims Down To An Insert

NEW YORK, NY (Observer Update) - Gay media leader The Advocate will be trimmed down from a standalone magazine to an insert, insiders report. The Advocate quickly evolved from a newsletter titled The Los Angeles Advocate in 1967 to the nation's only publication dedicated to Gay news and politics by the mid-70s. It remains the only Gay glossy available on newsstands nationwide, reported On Top Magazine.

Its former owner, PlanetOut, shored up the magazine with related businesses, including industry-leading LGBT websites Gay.com and PlanetOut.com and other Gay-oriented publications such as Gay-glam monthly Out. But one decision, which followed a receding publishing market, continues to haunt the Gay media empire. In 2006, PlanetOut made the devastating decision to purchase Gay cruise line RSVP. Less than a year later, the company chalked up its loses and sold RSVP to Atlantis Events, Inc. for an undisclosed sum.

Yet, the company could not regain its footing. By 2009, after selling several more properties, PlanetOut agreed to be bundled into Here Media, Inc. and relinquish control of the company as it faced possible NASDAQ delisting. The move gave CEO Paul Colichman a Gay media empire for a song. Colichman controls all-Gay cabler here! and the Gay-friendly movie studio Regent Releasing, as well.

But turning around a Gay icon amid a recession that has hit publishers harder than most businesses has turned out to be easier said than done. Last week, Gay blog Queerty.com reported the magazine faced another round of staff cuts, which included managing editor John Jameson, a 15-year veteran. And The Advocate will be trimmed down from a standalone magazine to a 32-page insert bundled inside Out.



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G/L Marriage Loses In Maine: The Campaign Scorecard

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AUGUSTA, ME (Observer Update) - On Nov. 3, 299,483 citizens of the state of Maine were persuaded to tell women who love women and men who love men that they cannot marry. Those Downeasters who voted "Yes" on Question 1 – to repeal a same-sex marriage law – bashed Gays, but with a referendum rather than a fist, reported scholarsandrogues.com.

Those 267,574 people who voted "no" – which would approve the same-sex marriage law – were not dissuaded by an anti-Gay coalition of conservatives and churches wielding more than $3 million, including more than $2 million from out-of-state donors, according to a report by the National Institute On Money In State Politics.

Much of the sparring over the referendum was funded on both sides by groups outside the state of Maine. Given that Gay marriage has been a wedge issue for years, that's hardly surprising. But in Maine? Those who backed the Gay marriage law ponied up 12 to 1 over donors to the anti-Gay donors and had more money – $5 million. But they lost. The institute's report, written by Tyler Evilsizer, says: The measure pitted conservative groups and churches against Gay-rights groups, a few wealthy donors, and more than 10,000 smaller donors from Maine and around the country. Question 1 attracted over $9 million, or 72 cents of every dollar raised around Maine's seven ballot measures.

That's right. Maine had six other referendum questions – to decrease the auto excise tax (defeated); to repeal school consolidation laws (defeated); to require voter approval of tax increases (defeated); a medical marijuana act (approved); a $71,250,000 bond issue for infrastructure improvements (approved); and a constitutional amendment granting local officials more time to certify petition signatures (defeated). But press attention, money, and political capital focused on a wedge issue to divide people of good conscience and faith and divert their attention from far more pressing matters. Maine needs more attention to the condition of its roads, bridges and airports than it does in the bedrooms of loving, consenting adults who wish to make a lifelong commitment.

The blunt end of the money hammer used in Maine against Gays was primarily wielded by a group called Stand For Marriage Maine. Like all political communicators and niche interest groups these days, it has a website. But its site is notably deficient. It does not have links such as "About Us" or "Who We Are." Such links usually provide a list of financial supporters, coalition partners, and the names and contact data for organization officers and staff. Stand For Marriage Maine does not provide such information on its website. Wading through the organization's press releases and media stories is needed to learn that Marc Mutty is chairman of Stand for Marriage Maine, that Scott K. Fish is communications director (releases provide a phone number) and that Bob Emrich is a member of the group's executive committee.

That lack of clear, easy-to-find disclosure makes it difficult for those interested in the issue to find out more about the bona fides of donors and supporters who worked to repeal Maine's Gay-marriage law.

Why not explain "Who We Are"? Only conjecture is possible. It is, perhaps, easier to operate in ideological shadows. According to Mr. Evilsizer's report, here are the principal sources of money that drove the effort to repeal Gays' right to marry in Maine. A few groups are well known outside Maine.

StandForMarriageMaine.com | $2,650,052, Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland | $553,608, Focus On The Family Maine Marriage Committee | $114,500, Family Research Council Action | $25,000, Maine Marriage PAC | $11,539, Maine Grassroots Coalition | $9,410, Marriage Matters in Maine | $2,678, Maine4Marriage | $230, Proponents' total $3,367,018.

The best-funded organization opposing Gay marriage was Stand For Marriage Maine at $2.65 million. Where'd the money come from?

Fred Karger, founder of Californians Against Hate, asked Maine ethics officials to investigate the organization. He said it was laundering money. His August letter contained allegations religious organizations are hiding contributions to the Stand for Marriage Maine campaign. The letter reports how the National Organization for Marriage, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, the national office of the Knights of Columbus and Focus on the Family had contributors give the money to their organizations, and in turn gave the money to the Stand for Marriage Maine to hide the donors' identity.

Maine's ethics board ruled in early October that an investigation into the "finance reporting by the National Organization for Marriage, a major contributor to Stand for Marriage Maine," was warranted. NOM of course,

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Conservative Group Links G/L-Rights Movement To Islamic Terrorism

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - A prominent social-conservative activist group is using comments made by readers on a Gay-rights Web site as "evidence" that the LGBT movement is mulling using "organized terrorism" against Christians, reported rawstory.com.

The Liberty Counsel released a statement linking Nidal Malik Hasan, the alleged shooter in last week's Fort Hood massacre, to the Gay-rights movement. "In the wake of the horrific act of Islamic domestic terrorism at Fort Hood Texas, it has been learned that militant homosexual activists recently made similar online postings to those of Nidal Malik Hasan, threatening additional acts of terrorism against Christians," stated an email from Matt Barber, Liberty Counsel's director of cultural affairs, as well as an associate dean at Liberty University Law School.

Liberty University is an evangelical school founded in 1971 by televangelist Jerry Falwell. Barber's email came from a Liberty University account. Barber's email continued: In response to Maine's natural marriage victory last Tuesday, Gay activists have directly threatened to retaliate with terrorism and the killing of Christians on the popular homosexual activist JoeMyGod weblog. Liberty Counsel notified the FBI which is investigating the matter. As of this morning, the offending blog entry had been removed.

Matt Barber commented: "All potential threats of terrorism and murder are very serious business. As we learned just last week, there are ideologically driven terrorists who walk among us. After passage of Proposition 8 in California we saw that many homosexual activists are capable of threats, vandalism and even violence. Those who either threaten or attempt to incite terrorism must be immediately brought to justice. Churches and Christian leaders around the country need to be on high alert. These threats of homosexual activist terrorism must be taken very seriously."

Barber's statement did not address the question of whether Christians and heterosexuals are also "capable of threats, vandalism and even violence," or whether he believes that to be the domain of Islamists and homosexuals. The statement listed off a long series of reader comments on the JoeMyGod blog by people evidently upset at the loss of a Gay-marriage initiative in Maine in last week's elections.

Fort Worth Gay Bar Raid Suspensions 'A Slap On The Hand'

FORT WORTH, TX (Observer Update) - LGBT rights activists in Fort Worth are dissatisfied with police suspensions over a raid on a Gay bar - calling it "a slap on the hand" - and have renewed their call for an independent investigation, The Dallas Morning News reported.

Police Chief Jeff Halstead returned to the scene of the June raid to release his findings. Standing outside the Rainbow Lounge, he said the investigation found that three officers violated departmental policies, but dismissed all charges that police used excessive force. Each of the officers received a one- to three-day suspension. "We did not provide service to the GLBT community with respect," said Halstead. "It was clear from some of the 32 witnesses interviewed that some of our officers entered into the Rainbow Lounge in a manner that was perceived as aggressive, rude and unprofessional."

The June 28 inspection resulted in the arrests of six people for public intoxication and sent one man, Chad Gibson, to the hospital with a severe head injury. The raid sparked a loud outcry from the city's Gay and Lesbian community, which has called the raid police harassment. Agents from the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) assisted the department in carrying out the raid. After conducting its own investigation, TABC officials fired three agents involved in the raid, reported On Top Magazine.

In July, the police department released a report that suggested officers and agents turned violent because they faced sexually aggressive patrons - a claim eyewitnesses deny. Men and women "were reaching their hands out to touch officers, and moving their bodies in a sexually suggestive manner" as officers and agents inspected the club, the police report

G/L Marriage Loses In Maine:

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fired back with a lawsuit on Oct. 23 against Maine's inquiry. But a federal judge ruled on Oct. 29 that the "state can compel the National Organization for Marriage to disclose the identities of donors who contributed to its effort to repeal Maine's Gay-marriage law." In that story, the Portland Press Herald said NOM – based in Washington, D.C. – had funneled $1.6 million to Stand For Marriage Maine. A resolution of the lawsuit was "months away," the story said – well after the Nov. 3 referendum. Mr. Evilsizer's report contains a breakdown of donors to Stand For Marriage Maine showing NOM's $1,622,152 donation.

But his report notes that financial supporters of Gay marriage in Maine "from Away" were also plentiful. Those who supported the Gay-marriage law raised $5,678,579. The Human Rights Campaign, which bills itself as "the largest national Lesbian, Gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights organization," donated $267,589 to the principal umbrella organization, No On 1 Protect Maine Equality. The National Gay & Lesbian Task Force gave $139,056. Esmond Harmsworth, a founding partner of the Zachary Shuster Harmsworth Literary Agency in Boston and New York, gave $100,000. Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders of Boston gave $91,258.

The website of No On 1 Protect Maine Equality also has a "Who We Are" page that lists its coalition partners. Its "Contact Us" page list its physical address, mailing address, phone number and e-mail address. Its campaign manager is clearly identified as Jesse Connolly. The Gay marriage caravan now moves on, it seems, to New York state. Gov. David Patterson wants a same-sex marriage bill, passed twice in the state Assembly, on the floor of the Senate for debate. And the money, both for and against, will likely move on as well.

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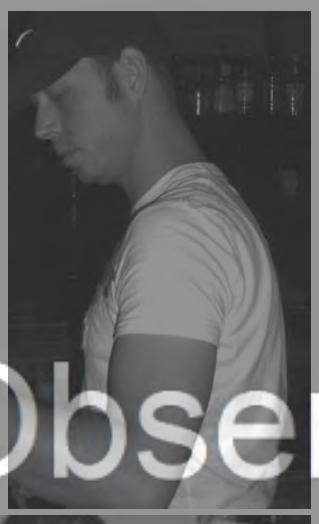

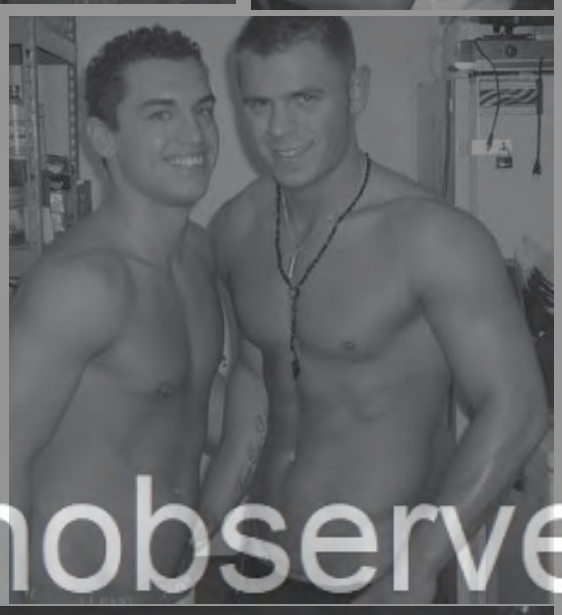

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POLITICS 2009

by Mark R. Kerr

H.R. 1283 Update

A new study has been released about this nation's policy of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) which again, raises questions about this 16-year-old policy of preventing open Gays and Lesbians from serving in the armed forces and harming military "preparedness."

This new report was conducted by the RAND Corporation, longtime advisors to the Pentagon - not known for "liberal viewpoints" and the University of Florida and surveyed military personnel who had served in Iraq and Afghanistan and found that having a gay or lesbian colleagues in their unit had no significant impact on their unit's cohesion or readiness.

"Service members said the most important factors for unit cohesion and readiness were the quality of their officers, training and equipment," said Laura Miller, study co-author and a sociologist at RAND, in a press release. "Serving with another service member who was gay or lesbian was not a significant factor that affected unit cohesion or readiness to fight."

DADT prevents the open service of Gay and Lesbian military personnel is based on the premise that open integration would harm cohesion and readiness, the findings suggest that the U.S. military should revisit the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, said Miller and study co-author Bonnie Moradi, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Florida, in a press release.

Their study found that just 40 percent of the military members surveyed expressed support for the policy, while 28 percent opposed it and 33 percent were neutral–less support than seen in previous surveys. About 20 percent of those polled said they were aware of a gay or lesbian member in their unit, and about half of those said their presence was well known. In addition, three-quarters of those surveyed said they felt comfortable or very comfortable in the presence of gays or lesbians, according to the study.

"Attitudes of Iraq and Afghanistan War Veterans Toward Gay and Lesbian Service Members," the title of this new study, will appear in the print edition of Armed Forces and Society.

Presently in Congress, there is only one piece of legislation to overturn DADT, H.R. 1283, which has 183 co-sponsors and still sits awaiting a hearing before the House Subcommittee on Military Personnel, for which the chair is U.S. Rep. Susan Davis, D-CA, an original co-sponsor of the bill. To contact Rep. Davis, go to her Congressional website at house.gov/susandavis/, and let her know its time for hearings on H.R. 1283.

Meanwhile in the U.S. Senate, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, D-NY, will be holding hearings on DADT before the Senate Armed Services Committee but no bill has been introduced, as of press time. Contact Senator Gillibrand at her website, gillibrand.senate.gov.

Osteen: Gays Aren't 'God's Best'

NEW YORK, NY (Observer Update) - View cohost Whoopi Goldberg asked megachuch pastor Joel Osteen whether Gay people are welcome at his Lakewood Church in Houston. Osteen said he welcomes people of different religions and sexual orientations, but that "homosexuality is not God's best."

Osteen added that he loves everyone, that some of his closest friends are Gay, and that they tend to be "some of the nicest people in the world." Joy Behar, who also has her own show on CNN Headline News, asked Osteen whether he thinks homosexuality is a choice. "It's not something you pick to be, because it's very difficult to be Gay in this society," she said.

"I know it isn't, but I try to love them and treat them with respect," Osteen said.

Pastor Joel Osteen

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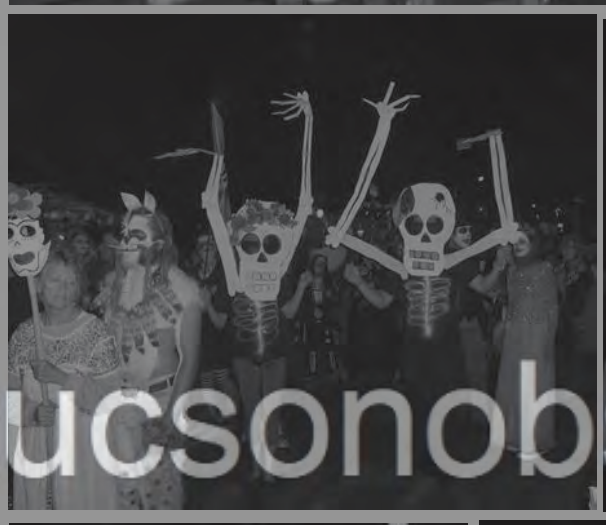

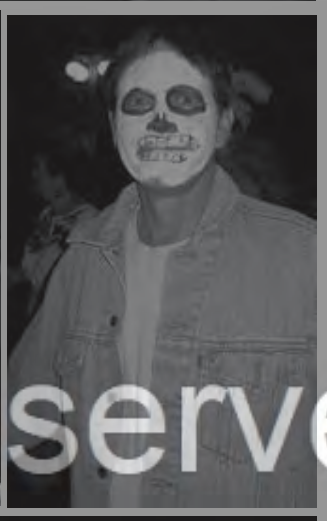

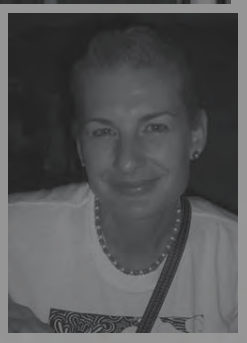

Schools Emerge As New Tactic In G/L Marriage Votes

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (Observer Update) - In one ad after another, voters in California and Maine were besieged with images of what would supposedly happen if same-sex marriage were legal: Students on a field trip to a Lesbian wedding, elementary kids gobbling up books featuring Gay couples, kindergartners learning about homosexuality from their teachers, reported AP on pageoneq.com.

The strategy worked. Overruling the courts and lawmakers, voters defeated Gay marriage ballot measures in California last year and in Maine this week after conservatives convinced residents that same-sex unions would become common classroom fodder without any say from parents. The punch-to-the gut claim has emerged as the latest tool in the ever-evolving playbook of same-sex marriage opponents, and the Achilles' heel of the Gay-marriage movement. Voters seem to be swayed by the notion that Gay marriage will be a corrupting force among children, even though critics blasted the message as a blatantly misleading case of fear-mongering.

"It was very effective. It's drawing on the fears of the unknown," said Sandy Maisel, director of the Goldfarb Center for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement at Maine's Colby College. "There's no evidence that it's going to happen, but there's very clear evidence that it's an effective campaign tactic." Gay marriage opponents discovered the effectiveness of the schools message in last year's successful effort to pass Proposition 8 to outlaw Gay marriage in California.

After signing up to lead the campaign, political consultants Frank Schubert and Jeff Flint knew they had a problem: Polls were showing that residents tended to not have much of a problem with Gay relationships. With the help of focus groups, surveys and ammunition unwittingly supplied by their opponents, Schubert and Flint soon found a new way to frame the issue, by focusing on education. It was a departure from past elections when the issue was defined in simpler terms – that marriage is a sacred institution between a man and a woman. The various strategies have helped conservatives win 31 consecutive ballot initiatives on Gay marriage.

"We bet the campaign on consequences, especially on education," Schubert recalled in March when he and Flint were named the "public affairs team of the year" by the American Association of Political Consultants for their work in California. "Education from the beginning, while it was one of three consequences, it was the one that was the most emotionally charged and the most powerful."

In California and Maine, Gay marriage supporters countered the claims with spots featuring prominent elected officials – California's chief of public instruction, Maine's attorney general – who insisted that same-sex marriage had nothing to do with schools. They also angrily denounced as deceptive the visuals the Sacramento team employed, including a Massachusetts couple who lost a lawsuit seeking parental consent before same-sex families are discussed in elementary classrooms.

But the response did not defuse the hot-button issue, advocates on both sides of the issue observe, in part because they failed to address what many parents knew to be true: Many public schools already have lessons that include references to Gay families in the younger grades and confronting anti-Gay discrimination for older students. Although the topics usually are broached in the context of appreciating diversity and tolerance, for some parents any discussion of Gay people is too close to talking about Gay sex.

"The trend that we are seeing is homosexuality is being promoted more and more in schools, and the increase in this is creating a hostile environment for kids with Christian or socially conservative viewpoints," said Candi Cushman, education analyst for the Christian group Focus on the Family.

Cathy Renna, a public relations consultant in Washington who is married to a woman and has a 4-year-old daughter, said that equating references to Gay parents with sex is "like saying that introducing someone's mother and father to a class means you are talking about heterosexual sex." But Renna agrees that same-sex marriage supporters need a different comeback to the kids-and-schools argument.

"This idea that Gay people are coming to eat your children is a long-standing tactic of the right wing," she said. "The response to those ads that not only has more truth, but more integrity, is that we live in a diverse world and our kids know that and it's irresponsible for us not to talk about the world we live in in age-appropriate ways. Dismissing them as lies actually does a disservice not only to the people in our community, but to the public that knows better."

In California, some Gay rights groups want to try to repeal Proposition 8 at the ballot box next year. There has been talk about including language in the new measure that would state that nothing in it is meant to mandate the teaching of same-sex marriage in schools. Some Gay rights advocates fear, though, that the wording could be used to undermine the way Gay subjects are treated in schools now, said Chaz Lowe, founder of Yes! on Equality.

Melissa Murray, an assistant professor at the UC Berkeley Boalt Hall School of Law who researched the messages used in the Proposition 8 campaign, said Gay marriage advocates underestimated how deeply Schubert and Flint's carefully crafted schools message resonated with the public.

One reason it resonated so deeply is it changed the debate from one of equal rights to the equally cherished notion of individual rights, something Gay activists should keep in mind as the marriage moves to other states, Murray said.

"Parents are always thinking about how do I keep unwanted influences out of my children's lives, and it's a lot harder to do that as a parent if that influence is the state," Murray said. "That's the fear they are tapping into. ... and they are just going to keep repackaging it, because it works."

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Fort Worth Gay Bar Raid Suspensions 'A Slap On The Hand'

FORT WORTH, TX (Observer Update) - LGBT rights activists in Fort Worth are dissatisfied with police suspensions over a raid on a Gay bar - calling it "a slap on the hand" - and have renewed their call for an independent investigation, The Dallas Morning News reported.

Police Chief Jeff Halstead returned to the scene of the June raid to release his findings. Standing outside the Rainbow Lounge, he said the investigation found that three officers violated departmental policies, but dismissed all charges that police used excessive force. Each of the officers received a one- to three-day suspension. "We did not provide service to the GLBT community with respect," said Halstead. "It was clear from some of the 32 witnesses interviewed that some of our officers entered into the Rainbow Lounge in a manner that was perceived as aggressive, rude and unprofessional."

The June 28 inspection resulted in the arrests of six people for public intoxication and sent one man, Chad Gibson, to the hospital with a severe head injury. The raid sparked a loud outcry from the city's Gay and Lesbian community, which has called the raid police harassment. Agents from the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) assisted the department in carrying out the raid. After conducting its own investigation, TABC officials fired three agents involved in the raid, reported On Top Magazine.

In July, the police department released a report that suggested officers and agents turned violent because they faced sexually aggressive patrons - a claim eye-witnesses deny. Men and women "were reaching their hands out to touch officers, and moving their bodies in a sexually suggestive manner" as officers and agents inspected the club, the police report

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Students Rally, Teacher Reinstated

PIASA, IL (Observer Update) - A teacher at Southwestern High School in Piasa, Ill., will be reinstated after having been suspended for a controversial reading assignment, reported advocate.com. Hundreds of Dan DeLong's students showed up at a six-and-a-half-hour school board meeting to urge members to keep the 10th-grade English teacher on staff. DeLong had been suspended after a parent of one unidentified student asserted that an assignment on homosexuality in the animal kingdom was inappropriate.

According to The Telegraph newspaper in Alton, Ill., 200 students and supporters lined the stairs, sidewalk, and office space at the school district's office holding handmade signs and banners in support of DeLong. After a five-hour closed-door executive session, the floor was opened to members of the public who wanted to weigh in. Two spoke in support of the teacher, and no one spoke in opposition. Junior Bonita Stevey also presented the board with a petition in support of DeLong.

"One of the points of the article is to give us thought-provoking information, so we can form our own opinion," she said, according to the article. "Mr. DeLong gives us facts – he doesn't sugarcoat things. He treats us like young adults, because in a few years, we will be, and no one will be there to edit what we see and hear. He is preparing us for the real world... His passion to help his students shines in everything he does." The article in question, Jonah Lehrer's "The Gay Animal Kingdom," concerns the research of Joan Roughgarden, a biologist who has documented homosexual societies among more than 450 animal species.

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Hearings Study To Focus On HIVers

ROCHESTER, NY (Observer Update) - Specialists in HIV and in hearing at the University of Rochester Medical Center are teaming up to measure the hearing of people with AIDS, reported HIV Plus Magazine. The five-year study is believed to be the first large study of its kind testing the hearing of people infected with the virus and comparing the results with those from people who are not. The new effort, supported by a $1.9 million grant from the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, is the result of collaboration between hearing experts and experts on HIV.

The study is led by Amneris Luque, MD, associate professor of Medicine and director of Strong Memorial Hospital's AIDS Clinic, which provides care for more than 900 patients. The project brings together experts in the nervous system and the immune system – both of which are involved in many types of hearing loss. The first of 360 participants who will take part in the study enrolled last week. Luque will work closely with hearing researcher Robert Frisina, Ph.D., professor of otolaryngology, biomedical engineering, and neurobiology and anatomy. Frisina's team, which is based at the medical center as well as the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, is widely regarded as one of the premier groups in the world looking at age-related hearing loss.

Luque says that since AIDS was recognized nearly three decades ago, hearing loss among some patients has been reported. However, these reports have been scattered and unconfirmed. "There has not been a systematic study looking at hearing function in people with HIV," says Luque. "If there is hearing impairment, it could be related to the disease itself, it might be related to infections that our patients with AIDS are prone to getting, or it might be related to the medications used to treat the disease." Luque notes that some scientists have found evidence that people with HIV disease may be aging prematurely. The team will look closely at whether a similar acceleration of aging may play a role in the hearing of people with HIV.

In addition, of course, many people without HIV also experience hearing loss. Causes of hearing loss can include noise exposure, medications used to treat conditions like cancer or other infections, or heredity. Sorting out those causes from other processes unique to people with HIV is challenging. "We're trying to tease out what is happening in people with HIV," says Luque. "Is there something inherent about the infection that may be involved in hearing loss?"

Participants in the study will undergo periodic, rigorous testing of their hearing. Scientists will study patients at various stages of HIV infection, including some infected people known as "long-term nonprogressors" or "elite controllers," people in whom the infection hasn't advanced even without medication. The team will compare the results in HIV patients to results in noninfected people who have had similar hearing tests conducted at the International Center for Hearing and Speech Research, where Frisina is associate director. That database includes extensive information about the hearing of more than 1,400 people who have had similar testing done.

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5. **WOODY'S**
   3710 N. Oracle Rd, 292-6702
6. **COYOTE MOON PUB**
   915 W. Prince Rd. 293-7339
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   5305 E. Speedway 323-1840

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B. CORNERSTONE FELLOWSHIP
2902 N. Geronimo - 622-4626

D. WINGSPAN
430 E. 7th Street -624-1779

E. S.A.A.F. - 375 S. Euclid 628-7223

G. TIHAN - Tucson Interfaith HIV-AIDS Network - 1101 N. Craycroft Suite 301 - 299-6647

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South Park Tackles 'F' Word, GLAAD Mad

NEW YORK, NY (Observer Update) - Comedy Central's South Park has a penchant for turning serious subjects on their head, and on Wednesday it set its sardonic sights on the f word, reported advocate.com. In the "F Word" episode the four grade-school characters of South Park verbally harangue a group of motorcyclists for revving their machines too loudly – by calling them "fags." Later, Kenny, Kyle, Stan, and Cartman express their displeasure with the pseudo-Hell's Angels by spray-painting "Fags Get Out" on the side of a building.

When their principal takes them to task, the boys explain that they weren't describing the two-wheelers as Gay, just annoying. "Just because a person is Gay doesn't mean he's a fag," they tell her. The boys explain that they, and kids their age, don't connect Gay people with the term "fag."

A Gay group – Act Out – works to co-opt the f word. The character Big Gay Al says, "I believe we have an opportunity to take a big step forward for our kind. We must acknowledge that the words fag and faggot are never going to disappear; they're simply too much fun for everyone to say. But we must realize that we are no longer the most hated people on the planet and help the children change the meaning of the word." Apparently, the most hated people are now annoying, inconsiderate Harley riders.

The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation was not pleased with the South Park episode. The media advocacy group told viewers to contact Comedy Central and complain about the episode's content: "Like many other South Park episodes that use edgy humor to provide commentary on current issues, last night's episode was an attempt to examine the evolving definition of words. Yet despite what the South Park writers may believe, the definition of the F-word remains one that is harmful and derogatory to the LGBT community."

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Equality March Co-Directors Resign

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - Kip Williams and Robin McGehee, the codirectors of last month's National Equality March, have resigned from the parent organization, Equality Across America, over concerns about financial stability, viability, and direction of the organization, advocate.com reported.

EAA founder and lead march organizer Cleve Jones confirmed their departures with Bill Browning at The Bilerico Project. "We're still not sure this is a viable organization," Jones told Browning. "It's still not clear to me that EAA is going to happen yet. There needs to be a working group to take EAA forward. I'll be inviting [the march's] steering committee and executive committee members to participate."

In the interim, National Equality March executive committee members elected Tanner Efinger, a personal assistant to Jones, as the volunteer project director. Intense discussions about the future of the organization are ongoing, according to Browning. "Underlying tensions in the committees, however, have many frustrated activists at the breaking point as various factions vie for control of the organization's leadership," reported Browning, who disclosed that he is a member of the executive committee.

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G/L Advocates Trek To LDS Offices

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SALT LAKE CITY, UT (Observer Update) - Members of several Utah Gay and Lesbian advocacy groups asked LDS Church leaders to open a dialogue with its Gay members but stay out of politics – a day after Maine voters rejected a same-sex marriage referendum and one year after the monumental passage of California's Proposition 8, reported the Deseret News. "They're worried we'll force our lifestyle on them, when they're forcing theirs on us," LGBT activist Jacob Whipple said during a gathering.

Whipple said he hopes LDS Church leaders can understand the plight of its Gay and Lesbian members, even if they haven't experienced that inner turmoil firsthand. To illustrate their points, roughly a dozen people trekked from This Is the Place Heritage Park to the headquarters of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in downtown Salt Lake City, pulling handcarts filled with items to present to church leaders.

Those items included books of remembrance for Gay LDS Church members who have committed or attempted suicide, as well as their families and loved ones; letters from local religious leaders; and a letter from a therapist group that believes recent comments from one church leader could lead to more suicides. A representative from the LDS Church's public affairs department smiled and shook hands with the 50 or so people who accompanied the items.

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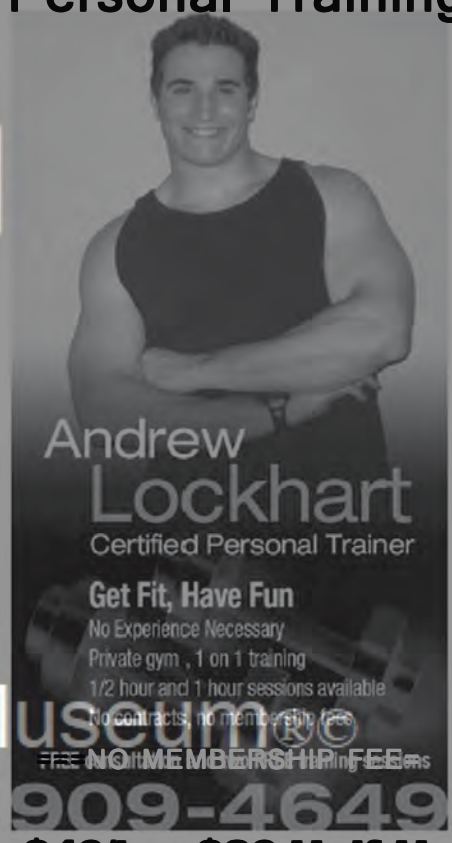

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Drama For Grey's Anatomy Lesbian Couple?

LOS ANGELES, CA (Observer Update) - Grey's Anatomy star Jessica Capshaw talked with TVGuide.com about what's in store this season for her character, Arizona Robbins, and her girlfriend, Callie, played by Sara Ramirez, advocate.com reported.

Capshaw responded to questions about whether Arizona and Callie plan to marry, whether the audience will see them get intimate, and the possibility that Arizona may waver toward a relationship with a man.

"There's definitely ample opportunity for that to happen," said Capshaw.

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COMMENTARY. . . .

by Bob Witeck

Ending Employment Discrimination In America: Lies, Damned Lies And Statistics

"When you say...you [Gay Americans] are not a group of people who need special protection. You do well economically. You are an elite. That is precisely the argument that has been made in behalf of the worst kind of discrimination against Jewish people." -United States Senator Paul Wellstone, July 29, 1996, responding to an extreme right spokesperson's anti-Gay testimony

The late Senator Wellstone delivered that biting argument fifteen years ago, during an historic Senate hearing weighing the passage of the Employment Non Discrimination Act (ENDA). ENDA ultimately met an achingly close Senate vote that year, failing by one vote.

Fast forward now to 2009. Here we go again.

Familiar political distortions and myths continue being spread, notably by adversaries painting the LGBT community as rich elites. They twist reality to explain that we are rewarded more with privilege than burdened by discrimination. They argue again that ENDA is another way to seek preferential and undeserved special treatment under federal law.

The Traditional Values Coalition and other opponents, once again, selectively cherry pick data to argue that "Gay incomes don't justify ENDA. " In an action alert made in October 2009, the TVC writes that it doesn't appear "that LGBT individuals are suffering any widespread or systematic discriminatory treatment as employees. Clearly, the stated purpose of ENDA is based on a falsehood about widespread discrimination against LGBT individuals."

Paul Wellstone knew a lie when he heard one. So do most Americans.

To start, this is not a debate about privilege. All Americans regardless of their economic circumstances deserve fairness and equal treatment on the job.

The plain fairness of ENDA is so clear that in a national survey this summer conducted for Out & Equal Workplace Advocates, 86% of straight Americans agree that employers should judge employees only on their ability to perform their job, not because of their sexual orientation. Seventy-seven percent of non-LGBT Americans agree also that transgender employees ought to be judged by their performance and not because of their gender identity. [See witeckcombs.com/news/releases/20091005_out%26equal.pdf]

That means equal justice for all, and not just for some. Justice in America is not rationed by wealth or economic status, real or fantasized. Now let us also put to rest the hurtful political distortions made about Gay affluence and privilege.

For over the past decade, in our analysis of credible market research and many demographic samples including the U.S. Census and the annual American Community Survey - there is not a whisper of evidence that Lesbians, Gay men, bisexuals or transgender people in general earn more or, on average, are wealthier than other Americans.

In a review of the more than 40,000 American adults who self-identify as LGB and/or T and also who have voluntarily opted in as members of a specialty online panel by Harris Interactive, roughly 38% report incomes of $35,000 or less - compared with 33% of all U.S. adults over the age of 18. Among wealthier Americans, we see a similar contrast with nearly 15% of LGBT adults reporting incomes over $100,000, contrasted with 18% of all U.S. adults according to government data.

To make it even clearer, anecdotal evidence and social science investigators have long shown us that transgender citizens in particular are among the most stigmatized among us, and face appalling rates of joblessness, homelessness and victimization.

In addition, thanks to the thorough investigations by the Williams Institute as well as other academicians, for example, we know that employment discrimination, lack of access to marriage, and a greater likelihood of being uninsured exacerbate poverty among LGB people too. A 2007 meta-analysis from the Williams Institute of 50 studies of workplace discrimination against LGBT people found consistent patterns of bias in the workplace. Their analysis found that up to 68 percent of LGBT people reported experiencing employment discrimination, and up to 17 percent said they had been fired or denied employment.

This summer, the Williams Institute released a path-breaking study on the incidence of poverty in America, particularly among same-sex coupled families. They showed us that, comparing families with similar characteristics, Gay and Lesbian couple families are more likely to be poor than are heterosexual married couple families. [See law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/pdf/LGBPovertyReport.pdf]

This recent study also suggests, in general, Lesbian couples have higher poverty rates than either different-sex couples or Gay male couples; African-Americans in same-sex couples have poverty rates that are significantly higher than black people in different-sex married couples; andsame-sex couples who live in rural areas have poverty rates that are twice as high as same-sex couples who live in large metropolitan areas.

While that snapshot of poverty within portions of the LGBT communities sharpens, let's also consider the discriminatory economic challenges that face many same sex couples, whether or not financially advantaged. This month, the New York Times' personal finance reporting team, Tara Siegel Bernard and Ron Lieber, addressed those questions for the first time - with the aid of a small army of experts in demographics, taxes, health insurance, adoption and family services including Dr. Gary Gates and Dr. Lee Badgett at the Williams Institute.

Their quest was to find out how much more, if anything, same-sex couples must pay to achieve the same protections, safeguards and family status that heterosexual couples and their children take as their birthright.

Their front page story, entitled, "The High Price of Being a Gay Couple," concluded that Gay couples must pay far more than their heterosexual friends and families to address the same needs, and that the Gay couple's lifetime costs of being Gay (worst case scenario) nearly reaches a half million dollars ($467,562). [See nytimes.com/2009/10/03/your-money/03money.html New York Times, October 2, 2009]

Yet, even in the best-case scenario for a Gay couple raising two children, and assuming one partner stays home for five years to take care of them, must pay an extra $41,196 on average more than a similar heterosexual couple also raising two kids.

These higher costs are found in the taxable status of health insurance benefits, as well as differences in estate taxes, pension and IRA accounts, combined with the more complicated and costly path to legal adoption in many jurisdictions, and finally, the longstanding exclusion from federal and state safety net programs from Social Security to disability benefits to veterans' pensions.

The New York Times rightly concluded: "Nearly all the extra costs that Gay couples face would be erased if the federal government legalized same-sex marriage."

This picture of discrimination and unfairness is very real. While LGBT people generally do not consider ourselves "victims" as a class, many of our households and families are consistently penalized by unfair and unequal public policies, by our status as sexual minorities, by gender and race as well, and that is the story we find here. The passage of federal legislation such as the Employment NonDiscrimination Act, and the repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act also would begin to lift these burdens that unfairly touch the lives of millions of LGBT Americans.

Despite these persistent hallmarks of discrimination, we also see that our community's contributions to the economy remain real and measurable, as consumers, taxpayers, workers, investors, managers, and entrepreneurs - as well as parents and as family members.

We matter not to American society because we all are thought to be "rich," which is untrue, but because we still have decision-making power, purchasing power and entrepreneurial power to create assets, income and protection for ourselves, our family, our employers and for our community. Business leaders know this, and many of America's top corporations value us, respect us and welcome us equally with all others.

(Bob Witeck is co-founder and CEO of Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc., a Washington-based public relations and marketing firm founded in 1993, specializing in LGBT market and public policy issues.)

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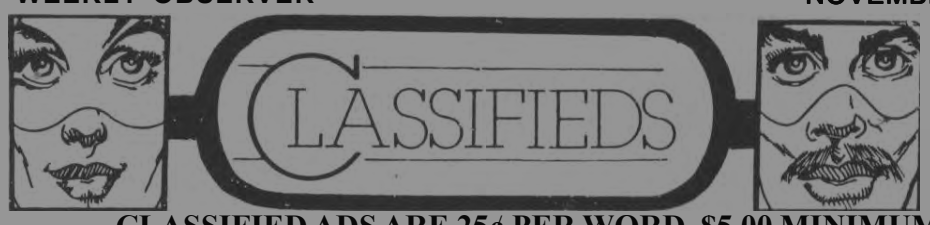

CLASSIFIED ADS ARE 25¢ PER WORD, $5.00 MINIMUM

PERSONALS

LOOKING FOR VINCENT MARTINEZ, **JR.** Last known address in Tucson. Sought by niece Tara Jeanne Martinez. Please contact: Tarajm1234@hotmail.com 1328

FOR RENT

COZY 1 BEDROOM CASITA. New heating & A/C. Midtown location near Randolph Golf. Nonsmoking environment. Indoor cat ok. $475/ month. 977-0212. 1319

1 BEDROOM STUDIO - Tile floors, cable and phone hook-up. On bus line. $450/mo. Includes all utilities. No pets. 293-9198. 1320

WANTED

BIRD WATCHERS. VERY HEALING, ENJOYABLE. If you like the outdoors and especially Chiricahua Mountains, Portal, Bisbee, Silver City, let's explore. Life is too short not to. Call Don, (520)971-5884. 1321

SERVICES

ALTERATIONS AND REPAIRS
Let me keep your clothes fitting properly and in good repair. Experienced - Economical - Prompt. Merle Hudson, (520)888-7264 in Tucson . 1315

MASSAGE

THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE FOR MEN Trained and certified by Body Electric School. Offering a complete full body massage to provide a relaxing and rejuvenating experience. Steve - CMT www.gaymanmassage.com 520-247-8139. 1317

RELAXING FULL BODY MASSAGE. Swedish, Deep Tissue also feather-touch sensual hands. Private. Open minded. Also back by popular demand group massage once a month. Benson area. Twenty-five minutes East of Kolb Road. Call Victor Victoria (520)971-5884 1321

QUALITY TERRIFIC MASSAGE & very Sensual TANTRIC SESSIONS! My sensitive touch gives you a dynamic experience! Creating a sacred space, for 28 years. Call Marc - 881-4582 (8 AM - 8 PM) Touching Tucson men since 1983. Professionally trained.. 1323

FOR SALE ---------- FOR SALE

A real classic car. Chrysler Town And Country Ltd. in showroom condition. It's a 1991 model but they don't make them like this baby anymore. Low mileage (110,000) and too many extras to list here. You name it - it's got it, including heated seats for those who hate sitting on cold leather in the middle of winter. Asking $8,000. Call 622-7176.

Non-Bar Calendar

Saturday & Sunday, November 14-15

Desert Voices Concert at the Prescenium Theatrre, West Pima Campus, 2202 W. Anklam Road, 7:30 p.m. on the 14th and 3:00 p.m. on the 15t. Join Desert Voices as the chorus pays tribute to memorable musicals from Broadway and Tinseltown in Upstaged! Divas and Mis(s)Leading men.

Thursday, November 19

The November breakfast meeting of the Tucson Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Chamber of Commerce will take place today at 9:00 a.m. at the Hotel Tucson City Center Conference Suite Resort (formerly Inn Suites), 475 N. Granada Ave. RSVP by Monday, November 16. 615-6436 or info@tucsonglbtchamber.org

Friday, November 20

First Annual Wingspan Golf Classic, a competition that tees off at the Ritz-Carlton Dove Mountain Golf Club today. The proceeds of the event will be donated entirely to Wingspan which provides a variety of programs critical to youth and the prevention of violence. Entry fee is $150/golfer for the 12:30 p.m. shotgun start. For more details and to register to play or be a sponsor see Wingspan Classic (wingspanclassic.org)

Poet's Corner

TEXTING

by Ron Rose, Tucson

Please, please, send me one more text
I have to know what's coming next.
I think my brain no longer works
First it sputters, then it jerks.
Your fingertips now hold the key
You see they mean the world to me.
So hurry, let your fingers fly
Go faster please, just try, just try
Technology is really great.
I guess my brain will have to wait.

Water of Life
Metropolitan Community Church
The Rev. William H. Knight, D.D., **Interim Pastor**

"It is the greatest of all mistakes to do nothing because you can only do a little." Sydney Smith, (1771-1845)

Sunday Worship: 10:15am Wednesday Worship 7:00 p.m.

3269 North Mountain Avenue
Tucson AZ 85719
(Just North of Ft. Lowell)
292-9151
www.wolmcc.org

Humane Society of Southern Arizona
3450 North Kelvin Boulevard
Tucson, AZ 85716
(520) 327-6088

http://www.humane-so-arizona.org

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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, Tucson's Gay & Lesbian square dance club, dances Tuesdays 6:30-9 pm at the Cornerstone Fellowship Social Hall, 2902 N Geronimo Ave (Northwest of 1st Ave & Glenn St). No experience needed, no partner required! For more information contact Barb at 886-0716, 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 Monday 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

COPPER RAINBOW BISTRO at David's Oasis Camping Resort, Bisbee, AZ 520-979-6650
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

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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. Dinner 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.

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.

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

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 - Open 4-10pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm $3.75 Skyy Cocktails, $3 Domestics & Well. ½ price appetizers 4-6pm. Dinner served until 10;m. Nightly dinner specials.

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).

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".

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.

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 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. Y-Not Karaoke with Anna at 8:00 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.

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.

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 4-10pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm, $3.75 Skyy cocktails, $3.00 Domestics and Well. 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.

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 with DJ Cliint 9 til closing.

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-10pm. 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.

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..

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" comedy 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.

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.

SATURDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm - 2am. LATINLICIOUS . Hourly rotating drink specials. 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. Dinner 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".

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.

BAR CALENDAR Of Upcoming Events

Saturday, November 14

COYOTE MOON - The Koyote Kingz will be performing beginning at 9:30 p.m.

Suspect: 'God Made Me Hate Gay People

NEW YORK (Observer Update) - One of three suspects in an anti Gay hate crime that occurred early Sunday (Nov. 1) on Long Island in New York told police, "God made me hate Gay people." Robert Bellamy Jr., 23, is the only suspect apprehended thus far in the beating of two men, one of whom was dressed in drag – possibly for Halloween, police said – in Lakeview in Nassau County. The other two suspects are still at large.

Bellamy, who was charged with robbery and assault as a hate crime, blamed his alleged actions on a directive from a higher power, according to Newsday. "Bellamy told police, 'God made me hate Gay people,' court records show," Newsday reported.

Police said the assailants shouted an anti Gay slur and then kicked and beat the two men, who were targeted because of their perceived sexual orientation. The attackers stole $7 from one of the victims. The victims suffered cuts and bruises.

Kalamazoo Keeps Anti-Discrimination Ordinance

KALAMAZOO, MI (Observer Update) - An anti Gay effort to rescind Kalamazoo, Mich.'s antidiscrimination ordinance failed by a wide margin after a campaign that attracted national attention.

According to reports, 65% of those turning out voted to uphold Ordinance 1856, which the city commission passed in June to protect against discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Supporters of the antidiscrimination ordinance had out-fund-raised their anti Gay opponents, who have criticized the measure as "special rights on sexual behavior and cross-dressing" and have focused their repeal effort largely on the specter of "cross-dressing men" using women's bathrooms.

Alabama Rep.: DP Benefits A Waste

MONTGOMERY, AL (Observer Update) - An Alabama state legislator wants to block the University of Alabama at Birmingham's plan to offer domestic-partner benefits, saying the university shouldn't "waste money by making a liberal or politically correct statement." State representative DuWayne Bridges is seeking support among his fellow Republicans for a yet-to-be drafted bill that would ban the use of tax dollars for such benefits, The Birmingham News reports.

Last month the university announced that it would provide health insurance coverage to employees' domestic partners, both same-sex and opposite-sex, beginning January 1, and allowed them to begin signing up for the plan. UAB needs to offer the benefits to remain competitive for top talent, especially for its medical school, and "create a positive, supportive and diverse work environment in which faculty and staff can excel," spokeswoman Dale Turnbough said, reported advocate.com. Another state university, the University of Alabama at Huntsville, offers domestic-partner benefits, but UAB's announcement drew attention because it is the first of the state's "big three" universities to extend domestic-partner coverage. Neither the University of Alabama, located in Tuscaloosa, nor Auburn University offers such benefits, although the former is considering doing so.

Bridges called domestic-partner benefits "a misuse of taxpayers' dollars" and said the plan violates the spirit of the state's constitutional ban on same-sex marriage, passed in 2006 with 81% of the vote. Tim James, a Republican gubernatorial hopeful, has expressed support for Bridges's proposal, contending domestic-partner benefits are a "tacit recognition of same-sex marriage and civil unions." He issued a statement saying, "I will vigorously oppose this measure and will enforce the spirit of Alabama law defining marriage as a sacred union between a woman and a man."

Democratic state representative Patricia Todd, Alabama's first openly Lesbian legislator, told the News that LGBT people "just want equality." She added, "Like it or not, Representative Bridges, the world is changing and people are accepting more diversity."

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ENDA Hearings Recap

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WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - A House of Representatives committee held hearings Monday (Nov. 9) on the Employment Nondiscrimination Act (ENDA), which would make it illegal to discriminate against LGBTs in employment and hiring, reported 365Gay.com.

"For more than three decades, Gay, Lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Americans have waged a courageous campaign for their workplace rights. I regret that they had to wait so long for us to respond," said Rep. George Miller, chair of the House Education and Labor Committee. Reports the Advocate:

The 3.5-hour hearing was mostly dominated by the testimony of pro-LGBT witnesses and questions from lawmakers who generally favor the bill. Those who opposed the legislation were few and even their arguments mostly lacked the incendiary rhetoric that sometimes accompanies LGBT issues.

"The questions that we heard, even from members who may not be thrilled with ENDA, were actually very technical issues," said Rea Carey, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. "They were not the arguments that we have heard over the past 20 years that have been degrading, insulting and inhumane. I think that bodes well for the passage of ENDA."

Representative Barney Frank of Massachusetts, lead sponsor the bill, kicked off the testimony with his usual flair. "I find it hard to argue for legislation that bans discrimination," he said. "It just seems to me so self evident that an American who would like to work and support himself or herself ought to be allowed to do that judged solely on his or her work ethic and talents ... Sometimes, we've been accused – those of us who are Gay and Lesbian – of having a radical agenda. As I look at radicalism through history, trying to get a job or trying to join the military have not been the hallmarks of radicalism."

Those who testified in favor of the bill also included Representative Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin; The Honorable Stuart Ishimaru, chairman of the U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission; Professor William Eskridge of Yale Law School; Rabbi David Sapperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism; Brad Sears, executive director of The Williams Institute; and Vandy Beth Glenn, a former Georgia state legislative aide who had been fired due to her gender identity.

The main opposition came from GOP Representative John Kline of Minnesota and Craig Parshall, senior vice president and general counsel for the National Religious Broadcasters Association. In his opening statement, Kline said the legislation "creates an entirely new protected class that is vaguely defined and often subjective. For instance, the legislation extends protections bas on - quote - 'perceived' sexual orientation." These "vaguely defined" terms would result in an "explosion of litigation," he added.

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Wisconsin Supreme Court Refuses To Hear G/L Partner Suit

MADISON, WI (Observer Update) - Wisconsin Supreme Court has rejected a legal challenge to the state's Gay partner law, the AP reported in On Top Magazine. Opponents of the law argue that Governor Jim Doyle's Gay-inclusive domestic partnership is unconstitutional because it violates the state's constitutional amendment banning marriage and civil unions for Gay and Lesbian couples.

Doyle, a Democrat, lobbied for the legislation that extends a limited number of protections for Gay couples when he tucked away the provision inside his biannual state budget approved by lawmakers. Most of the 43 rights granted to couples center around estate planning and hospital visitation issues. More than 900 couples have applied for the benefits since the law's August 3 start.

Opponents took heart in the fact that the court offered no explanation in its order and quickly announced they would refile their challenge in a lower court. The group Wisconsin Family Action (WFA), which supported passage of the anti-Gay marriage amendment as the Family Research Institute and is being represented by the Christian-based Alliance Defense Fund (ADF), said the court's decision "implies nothing about the merits of the constitutional challenge."

Wisconsin Attorney General John Byron "J.B." Van Hollen has refused to defend the law, calling it unconstitutional, forcing the state to hire attorney Lester Pines to defend the policy. The registry made Wisconsin the first state with a constitutional amendment banning Gay marriage to recognize the unions of Gay and Lesbian couples.

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