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OBSERVER

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High Stakes G/L Marriage Trial To Begin In California

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SAN FRANCISCO, CA (Observer Update) - The national debate over same-sex marriage will take center stage in a California courtroom at a closely watched federal trial that could ultimately become the landmark case that determines whether gay Americans have a right to marry.

The case will decide a challenge to California's gay marriage ban that was approved by voters in 2008, and the ruling will likely be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. How the high court rules in the case could set the precedent for whether gay marriage becomes legal nationwide. "This could be our Brown vs. Board of Education," said former Clinton White House adviser Richard Socarides, referring to the 1954 Supreme Court decision that outlawed racial segregation in schools and other public facilities. "Certainly the plaintiffs will tell you they are hoping for a broad ruling that says that any law that treats someone differently because of sexual orientation violates the U.S. Constitution."

The case marks the first federal trial to examine if the U.S. Constitution permits bans on gay marriages, and the challenge is being bankrolled by a group of liberal Hollywood activists led by director Rob Reiner. They retained two of the nation's most influential lawyers to argue the case – former U.S. Solicitor General Theodore Olson and trial lawyer David Boies. The lawyers are best known as the rivals who represented George W. Bush and Al Gore in the "hanging chad" dispute over the 2000 presidential election in Florida, and have tapped the talent of their respective law firms in preparation for the trial and plan to take turns questioning witnesses.

Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Democratic Attorney General Jerry Brown are defendants in the lawsuit by virtue of their prominent positions in California government, but both men opposed the ban and have refused to defend the suit in court. Schwarzenegger has taken no position on the case, while Brown filed a brief saying he agreed with the Olson-Boies team that gays have the same federal constitutional right to marry as heterosexuals. The sponsors of the gay marriage ban, a coalition of religious and conservative groups, joined the case as defendants. Their legal team is being led by Charles Cooper, a veteran trial lawyer who worked for the Reagan-era Justice Department. Cooper is being assisted by a team of lawyers from his own firm, along with a Christian legal group based in Arizona.

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Presiding over the case is U.S. District Court Chief Judge Vaughn Walker, a Republican named to the bench in 1989 by the first President Bush. Walker, who has a reputation as an independent thinker, was randomly assigned the lawsuit, put it on a fast-track to trial and has said he thinks it raises serious civil rights claims. During a pretrial hearing in August, the judge pointedly scolded Schwarzenegger for remaining neutral "on an issue of this magnitude and importance."

Walker says the case is so important that the court has taken the rare step of allowing videotaping of the proceedings so the public can watch. The trial will air on YouTube every day.

To prevail, Olson and Boies will try to prove that denying gays the right to wed serves no legitimate public purpose and that Proposition 8 was motivated by legally irrelevant religious or moral beliefs or even anti-gay bias. The ballot initiative, which passed with 52 percent of the vote, supplanted a California Supreme Court ruling that had legalized same-sex marriages. Boies and Olson say the ban is a blatant violation of Constitutional rights to equal

Continued on Page Three

Lesbian Mother Seeks Public Help To Find Missing Child

Janet Jenkins (r) with daughter . Isabella

NEW YORK (Observer Update) - Lambda Legal tells us that Janet Jenkins is appealing to the public for help in locating her daughter, Isabella Miller-Jenkins, advocate.com reported.

From Lambda Legal: In November, the Rutland Family Court in Vermont ordered that Lisa Miller transfer custody of the child to Janet Jenkins on January 1, 2010. The transfer of custody did not occur, and Isabella's and Lisa's whereabouts are unknown. Lisa's attorneys say that they have not been in touch with her for some months, and Isabella's guardian ad litem and attorney have been unable to contact her.

Isabella was born in 2002, after Janet and Lisa, then a couple, decided to have a child together. Lisa was artificially inseminated to conceive the child. The current custody and visitation case began in 2003, when Lisa filed papers in Vermont asking the court to dissolve her and Janet's civil union and decide the custody of their child. The court granted temporary custody to Lisa and visitation to Janet. The court later determined that Janet is Isabella's legal parent.

Lisa filed a new case in Virginia, seeking to have herself declared the sole parent of Isabella. After years of litigation, the Virginia Court of Appeals held that Vermont had jurisdiction over the case, and that Virginia courts must abide by the Vermont court's decisions. The recent order transferring custody to Janet came after the Vermont court had repeatedly held Lisa in contempt for refusing to comply with court-ordered visitation. The court found that Isabella should have a relationship with both of her parents, and that Lisa was unwilling to allow Isabella to have a relationship with Janet.

Janet made the following statement: "I am so worried about Isabella. I do not know where she is or whether she is okay. Isabella is my daughter. Lisa and I decided together to have a child, and that we would use alternative reproductive technology to do so. We picked out a donor together. I was there with Lisa when she gave birth to Isabella. We gave her both our last names, since we were both her parents. After Isabella was born, Lisa and I cared for her together. We both fed her, played with her, changed her diapers, and loved her.

"Eventually, the courts ruled that I was Isabella's parent, but in my heart I've always known that. It was devastating to me, as I'm sure it was to Isabella, when Lisa withheld contact between me and my daughter. My goal has never been to separate Isabella from Lisa. I just want Isabella to know and love both of her parents. I just want to be with her, like any parent. Please help me find my child."

One of Janet's attorneys, Sarah Star of Middlebury, Vermont, said "We are very disappointed that the transfer of custody did not take place as ordered. For Isabella's sake, we hope that she will be found soon and reunited with Janet."

"Our main concern remains for the safety and well-being of Isabella. Our client, Janet Jenkins, has done everything she can as a loving parent to work within the system to protect her child. Lisa Miller has repeatedly defied court orders and her behavior has been outrageous and harmful.

Today our thoughts are with Janet who does not know where her daughter has been taken. This terrible situation cannot continue. Miller and Isabella must be found and the transfer of custody must take place as the court has ordered," said Greg Nevins, Senior Supervising Staff Attorney in Lambda Legal Legal's Southern Regional Office based in Atlanta, who also represents Janet.

"We are very concerned for Isabella's safety. We continue to hope that Lisa will do the right thing and comply with the court's order," said Rebecca Glenberg, legal director of the ACLU of Virginia and another of Janet's lawyers.

Jennifer Levi, senior attorney for Gay & Lesbian Advocates and Defenders and Janet's appellate attorney in Vermont said, "this case is a tragedy for all families. Janet has played by the legal rules for years while Lisa has ignored court order after court order. The legal system fails everyone if any parent can successfully evade the law. We remain hopeful that by continuing to cooperate with the courts and local law enforcement, Isabella will be found and reunited with her mother."

Anyone with information regarding Isabella's and Lisa's whereabouts should call the Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 1-800-843-5678 or the Bedford County Sheriff's Office at 540-586-4800.

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UPDATE

TLGBTCC Meeting Jan. 21

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Local, regional and homegrown products and services are being sought and marketed more than ever. Learn more about two Tucson organizations dedicated to promoting area business at the January 21st Chamber Breakfast at the Hotel Tucson City Center, 475 N, Granada

Speakers include Lisette DeMars from Local First Arizona as well as a representative from Tucson Originals.

$20 members, $25 guests, ($5 discount for members and guests who RSVP by Jan. 18), (520) 615-6436 or info@TucsonGLBTChamber.org.

TIHAN Volunteer Orientation Jan. 23

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Come join us, at 1011 N. Craycroft, #301 Saturday, January 23rd from 1pm-5pm to learn more about TIHAN, our volunteer opportunities, HIV/AIDS and what you can do to make a difference in our community.

The cost of the orientation is $17.00 to cover materials and snacks. Scholarships are available.

To register or for more information, contact TIHAN's Volunteer Resources Coordinator, Katelyn McDonald at (520) 299-6647 or katelyn@tihan.org.

Welcome To OZ Looking For Dorothy

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Welcome to Oz, the LGBT and straight supportive bowling league is looking for Dorothy or an individual who wants to take part bowling.

Welcome to Oz bowls at Tucson Bowl, 7020 E. 21st, (520) 747-1363, Thursday night's at 7:00 PM, with practice at 6:50 PM. The weekly fee is $11 and there is a one-time, sanctioning fee of $20.

Average is not important but having fun is, so follow the "Yellow Brick Road" to Oz, Thursday's at Tucson Bowl.

Tucson LGBT Film Fest Janury 30 - 31

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Be sure that you mark your calendars!

The 2nd annual Fabulous Faygeleh LGBT Film Festival, presented by the Tucson International Jewish Film Festival, is coming to the Crossroads Cinema Saturday and Sunday, January 30 and 31.

We have chosen six fabulous films with universal LGBT themes that will appeal to everyone. And, we are especially thrilled that all of the screenings will be introduced and moderated by former Tucson resident and lesbian filmmaker, Brooke Sebold (Red Without Blue).

So, check out the details at tucsonjewishfilmfestival.org and mark your calendars for popcorn and some great and very unusual film.

Desert Voices Concert Jan. 31

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Mark your calendars for January 31, 3:00 p.m. Desert Voices will bring its highly successful November 2009 performances of Upstaged! Divas and Mis(leading) Men to the Desert View Performing Arts Center, Saddlebrook.

Under the direction of Chris Tackett, Desert Voices, Arizona's Premier GLBTS Chorus, leads a gay romp through the best of Broadway and Hollywood with a few stops along the way. Join us as we share some of your favorite show tunes from classic shows and movies from the past through recent stage and screen hits. We'll also preview some selections from our February silent auction/cabaret show, Love Bites.

If you missed us in November, now's your chance to catch a great evening of wonderful, affordable, first rate entertainment. And if you joined us for Upstaged!... why not come to Saddlebrook and treat yourself to 'seconds.'

Tickets $20 per person (+ processing fee); $22 at the door (if available). Purchase tickets at the Mountain View Clubhouse - 520-825-2818 or on the Desert View website at dvpac.net ($3.25 online processing fee). Price includes all applicable taxes.

Dinah Party Announces Line-up

Pop Singer Ke$ha

PALM SPRINGS, CA (Observer Update) - The raunchy pop star Ke$ha is headlining one of the two parties that make up the Dinah Shore Weekend, the preeminent lesbian rager of the year.

The "Tik Tok" singer is the main event for Club Skirts the Dinah, which takes place in Palm Springs, Calif., from March 31 to April 4. Following Ke$ha are the Paradiso Girls, a Pussycat Dolls-esque group who've found some success with their debut single, "Patron Tequila." The musician Lolene, who has a dance hit with "Sexy People" will also perform at Club Skirts.

The other Dinah event – Girlbar Dinah Shore Week – has not yet announced its lineup. This year's parties mark the 20th anniversary of the Dinah Shore lesbian festivities in Palm Springs.

Gilead Says HIV Regimen Is Meeting Goals In Trial

FOSTER CITY, CA (Observer Update) - Gilead Sciences Inc. said its experimental four-drug HIV regimen is working as well as its current drug cocktail in a mid-stage clinical trial.

Gilead said the regimen of two experimental drugs called elvitegravir and GS 9350, as well as the combination drug Truvada, is meeting its main goal in the study. The combination was about as effective at reducing virus levels as Gilead's drug Atripla, which contains three medications. The trial is scheduled to last 48 weeks, and Gilead said the "Quad" regimen met its goal at 24 weeks of treatment. The drugs are being tested on 71 people with HIV who have not taken another anti-retroviral treatment.

Elvitegravir is an integrase inhibitor, meaning it blocks the enzyme integrase, which the is one of the types of enzymes the AIDS virus uses to reproduce and infect cells. GS 9350 is designed to boost blood levels of medicines like elvitegravir. Truvada made up of emtricitabine and tenofovir, and Atripla consists of those two drugs plus a third, efavirenz. Those drugs have already been approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

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High Stakes G/L Marriage Trial To Begin In California.

Continued from Page One

protection and due process.

Testimony in the trial will explore many of the most contentious political arguments surrounding the issue. Leaders of the campaign to outlaw gay marriages have been called as witnesses, along with competing academic experts who will be cross-examined on topics ranging from how having same-sex parents affects children and if gay unions undermine male-female marriages.

Cooper's team plans to argue that same-sex marriage still is a social experiment and that it is therefore prudent for states like California to take a wait-and-see approach. Their witnesses will testify that governments historically have sanctioned traditional marriage as a way to promote responsible child-rearing and that this remains a valid justification for limiting marriage to a man and a woman.

"What sets this case apart is the strategy up until now, in the last 10 or 15 years, has been by the national organizations that support same-sex marriage to attack this on a state-by-state basis," said Brian Raum, who is helping to defend Proposition 8. "The impact of those cases, obviously, was limited to their respective states. But the potential impact in this case goes beyond the state of California."

Kristin Perry, 45, is the title plaintiff in the case registered on legal dockets as Perry v. Schwarzenegger. She and her lesbian partner of 10 years, Sandra Stier, 47, got married in San Francisco in 2004 when Mayor Gavin Newsom ordered city officials to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples. Six months later, they were among the 4,000 couples who had their unions invalidated by the state Supreme Court.

Perry and Steier, who have four sons, agreed to become involved in the challenge because they believe that a judicial approach grounded in constitutional law provides the best chance of success. Still, many gay rights groups objected to the timing of the lawsuit, fearing it was too soon to mount a federal case. "All the other experiences around this have felt so politicized and in some ways outside of my control," Perry said. "But being in a courtroom where the rules of discussion are so different from a political discussion, I am feeling like as an American I have a right to ask someone if this is fair, someone whose job it is to do this every day and can make as educated a judgment about this as maybe anyone has made."

The plaintiffs will have plenty of star power with Olson and Boies. Olson helped Bush win the presidency in 2000 after the recount battle in Florida, and later served as the president's solicitor general - the lawyer who argues the government's cases before the Supreme Court. Boies represented Gore in 2000.

"The hope of the people behind this, in recruiting Olson and Boies, was to put a bipartisan face on this issue," said Jane Schacter, a constitutional law expert at Stanford. "I do think it's striking that one of the nation's senior conservative litigators is leading the charge, and it does cause some people maybe to take a second look, to see the issue through a different prism."

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Letterman's Mistake

by Emma Ruby-Sachs

I've heard my fair share of gay jokes. In fact, many of the most high profile come from members of the straight community: celebrities and supporters who use LGB issues to get a laugh, but also to get the issue out there and in the public eye. Sometimes I groan, often I laugh, rarely do I get offended.

But my generation may be the first to have that luxury. We are building on decades of struggle and awareness-raising around gay issues.

The trans community, however, is still in the beginning stages of gaining visibility, fighting for acceptance and defending against violence and discrimination. I'm not talking about discussing gender identity with your conservative southern parents. I mean, not being physically assaulted in large, liberal urban centers.

So, when David Letterman makes a joke about how disgusting it is to sleep with someone who is trans, it stings a little more than your average gay joke. Not because I think Letterman hates trans people. I have no idea how he feels about the issue, nor do I have any evidence that he's taken time to think about it at all.

But because the average viewer of The Late Show has little or no understanding of trans issues. The appointment of Amanda Simpson as the Senior Technical Adviser to the Commerce Department - a brave move by the Obama administration and one we need to take time to appreciate - may be the first time any of these viewers have seen a trans person as anything other than the butt of a joke or a victim of violence in the newspaper.

This is revolutionary and we need to support this new kind of visibility for trans people.

The good news is that Letterman's writers can fix their mistake. Apologize publicly and without humor for the disservice you have done Ms. Simpson, the trans community and the American public. We are not being sticks in the mud, we are not ruining your fun, we're just letting you know that, given the context of the trans struggle, your joke was in pretty poor taste.

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SUNDAY KARAOKE

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Pro-Gay Provisions May Be Stripped From Health Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - News on Capitol Hill suggested there was little hope for keeping pro-LGBT provisions in the health care reform legislation Congress hopes to pass. But Rep. Barney Frank says he's still "somewhat optimistic."

According to The Hill, a newspaper that serves Capitol Hill readers, leaders of the House and Senate decided to stick with the Senate version of the health care reform bill -the one without any pro-gay provisions–rather than go through a conference committee negotiation to merge the two versions. The paper said the decision was made on Tuesday night in a meeting that included only President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid.

The pro-LGBT provisions include:

ending the current tax inequity for gay employees who cover their partners or spouses on their work health insurance coverage;

prohibiting discrimination in health care based on "personal characteristics";

and launching studies to end health disparities for people based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.

If Congress decides not to merge the bills, the House would be able to amend the Senate bill and send it back to the Senate for a final vote, but the likelihood of pro-LGBT amendments being accepted onto a bill that has already been ravaged with controversy -over how and whether abortions could be covered and the exclusion of a government-run option for insurance– seems small.

But Rep. Frank says there's still plenty of room for negotiation with the Senate over the legislation to keep some of the pro-LGBT provisions passed as part of the House bill.

"There will still be negotiation between the House and the Senate over what's in the bill," said Frank, adding that, because the House will apparently have to make some concessions on major issues, it may have some leverage to keep the pro-LGBT provisions.

Meanwhile, Republicans are reportedly still trying to kill the bill, whatever form it takes, by persuading conservative Democrats to vote against it. Frank says it will be important for LGBT people and their supporters to lobby these conservative Democrats to continue supporting the legislation.

The vote margins in both the House and the Senate were very narrow on initial passage, leaving the effort to pass a bill without a conference fight a still uncertain future. In addition, legal challenges are brewing over enticements that were added to the Senate bill in order to win enough votes for passage there.

Rep. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisc.), an openly gay representative and strong advocate for both health care and LGBT civil rights, did not respond to a request for comment on the status of the overall bill and the pro-gay amendments she helped champion.

The Human Rights Campaign, in response to a request for comment, issued this statement suggesting it is not yet giving up:

"The decision to forgo a traditional conference does not change the fact that the negotiations between House and Senate leadership to complete health care reform will undoubtedly be complex and difficult on a range of issues. We will continue to strongly push the congressional leadership to ensure that critical protections for LGBT people included in the House-passed bill are

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GoProud Defends Conservative Event

Christo[pher Barron

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - The chairman of the conservative gay group GOProud is defending his organization's presence at an annual conference of its political brethren, advocate.com reported.

Christopher Barron wrote in an op-ed for Metroweekly that GOProud's objective is to make gay people more visible to conservatives, who are less likely to personally know gay and lesbian individuals and therefore less likely to support gay rights. He also blasted liberals for their lack of support for GOProud's presence at the Conservative Political Action Committee conference.

"In a case of truly strange bedfellows, the gay left has joined the most radical elements of the social conservative movement in attacking GOProud's participation," he wrote. "You can understand the fear of extremists on the far right: They know the impact GOProud's sponsorship will have on undercutting their anti-gay message. These people rely on manipulating fear of what is unknown or different. But why is the gay left so angry about it? The answer is simple. They are far more interested in politics [than] they are in achieving equality of opportunity for gays and lesbians and their families."

While GOProud announced its cosponsorship of CPAC with great fanfare, right-wing groups have blasted its presence at next month's convention. Some, like Matt Barber of Liberty Counsel, have threatened to lead a boycott of the inclusion of GOProud. Despite the outcry, CPAC organizers have said they will keep GOProud on its slate along with other cosponsors like the Alliance Defense Fund and the National Organization for Marriage.

However, as Barron also pointed out, the Log Cabin Republicans, another gay GOP organization, had acted as a cosponsor of the event in the past.

Big Win For Partners Of Foreign Service Medals

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - Life just got a bit easier for the same-sex partners of foreign service officers such as ambassadors and consuls – the State Department issued new rules making it easier for them to obtain visas as well as access to overseas employment opportunities and embassy medical units, reported advocate.com.

The DC Agenda obtained an undated memorandum that lists these changes, which are part of President Obama's June order that granted certain partner benefits to gay and lesbian federal workers.

The new rules also open up resources for helping domestic partners of foreign service officers move abroad and assistance in emergency evacuation should it become necessary.

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The Moral And Constitutional Case For A Right To A Gay Marriage

COMMENTARY. . . .

by Robert A. Levy

Following bitter defeats in California, Maine, and New York, the gay and lesbian community has a New Year's victory to celebrate. New Hampshire joins four other states - Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts and Vermont - in legalizing gay marriage. And the nation's capital is also onboard. Washington Mayor Adrian Fenty put it this way: "Marriage inequality is a civil rights, political, social, moral and religious issue."

He covered all the bases, except one: It's a constitutional issue as well.

Thomas Jefferson set the stage in the Declaration of Independence: "[T]o secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men." The primary purpose of government is to safeguard individual rights and prevent some persons from harming others. Heterosexuals should not be treated preferentially when the state carries out that role. And no one is harmed by the union of two consenting gay people.

For most of Western history, marriage was a matter of private contract between the betrothed parties and perhaps their families. Following that tradition, marriage today should be a private arrangement, requiring minimal or no state intervention. Some religious or secular institutions would recognize gay marriages; others would not; still others would call them domestic partnerships or assign another label. Join whichever group you wish. The rights and responsibilities of partners would be governed by personally tailored contracts - consensual bargains like those that control most other interactions in a free society.

Regrettably, government has interceded, enacting more than 1,000 federal laws dealing mostly with taxes or transfer payments, and an untold number of state laws dealing with such questions as child custody, inheritance and property rights. Whenever government imposes obligations or dispenses benefits, it may not "deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." That provision is explicit in the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, applicable to the states, and implicit in the Fifth Amendment, applicable to the federal government.

Of course, government discriminates among its citizens all the time. By the 1920s, 38 states prohibited whites from marrying blacks and certain Asians. Until 1954, all states were allowed to operate segregated schools. Thankfully, the Supreme Court invalidated both interracial marital restrictions and school segregation. The court applied the plain text of the Equal Protection Clause despite contrary practices by the states for many years even after the 14th Amendment was ratified in 1868.

To pass constitutional muster, racial discrimination had to survive "strict scrutiny" by the courts. Government had to demonstrate a compelling need for its regulations, show they would be effective and narrowly craft the rules so they didn't sweep more broadly than necessary. That same regime should apply when government discriminates based on gender preference.

No compelling reason has been proffered for sanctioning heterosexual but not homosexual marriages. Nor is a ban on gay marriage a close fit for attaining the goals cited by proponents of such bans. If the goal, for example, is to strengthen the institution of marriage, a more effective step might be to bar no-fault divorce and premarital cohabitation. If the goal is to ensure procreation, then infertile and aged couples should be precluded from marriage.

Instead, most states have implemented an irrational and unjust system that provides significant benefits to just-married heterosexuals while denying benefits to a male or female couple who have enjoyed a loving, committed, faithful and mutually reinforcing relationship over several decades. That's not the way it has to be. Government benefits triggered by marriage could just as easily be triggered by other objective criteria, leaving the definition of marriage in the hands of private institutions.

For instance, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee recently voted to extend employee benefits to same-sex partners of federal employees. The qualifying criterion, which could also apply to heterosexual couples, is an affidavit identifying the domestic partner and certifying that the partnership is intended to be exclusive and permanent, within a common residence, with shared responsibilities.

Similarly, some states dispense benefits to qualifying gay couples joined in predefined civil unions. Even private-sector employers are increasingly offering same-sex "marital" benefits. According to the federal Office of Personnel Management, nearly 60% of Fortune 500 companies confer employment benefits on domestic partners.

Yet our politicians, unwilling to privatize marriage, seem congenitally unable to extricate themselves from our most intimate relationships. One would hope, in the coming months and years, that more enlightened federal and state legislators will have the courage and decency to resist morally abhorrent and constitutionally suspect restrictions based on sexual orientation. Gay couples are entitled to the same legal rights and the same respect and dignity accorded to all Americans.

(Robert A. Levy is chairman of the Cato Institute. This is reprinted from the New York Daily News.)

Around The Gay Globe

Portugal's parliament voted to pass a bill that would make the historically socially conservative country the sixth in Europe to permit same-sex marriage. Conservative president Anibal Cavaco Silva is not expected to veto the bill, which won the support of all liberal parties. He is expected to ratify the bill in time for gay marriage ceremonies to begin in April, a month before a scheduled visit from Pope Benedict XVI. The bill passed by a vote of 125 to 99.

The state government in Australia's New South Wales (NSW), which includes Sydney, decided Thursday that it won't allow same-sex couples to adopt, saying there isn't enough community support to justify changing the law, TheSydney Morning Herald reports. The NSW decision comes despite a parliamentary inquiry that said allowing adoption by gay couples would "ensure the best interest" of Australia's children.

Kellie McDonald of the Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby called the decision "extremely disappointing." "If the NSW government's primary concern was the interest of the children, it would rectify the discrimination of the NSW Adoption Act," she said. "I'm not sure what more can be done." Both the Australian Capital Territory and Western Australia allow adoption by same-sex couples.

The American Jewish World Service, an international development and human rights organization, announced Friday that it has established the Urgent LGBT Uganda Fund to support gay and lesbian grassroots groups in the African nation.

Responding to the proposed Anti-Homosexuality Bill, which could imposed the death penalty or life imprisonment on gays, the AJWS set up the fund and created a website for individuals to donate to it.

"AJWS's work is propelled by a very basic value: the essential dignity of every human being," AJWS president Ruth Messinger said in a release. "Through the creation of the 'Urgent LGBT Uganda Fund,' in conjunction with our broader advocacy efforts, AJWS is taking the lead in the Jewish community and in the broader faith-based community to ensure that all people – regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity – can realize their full, true selves."

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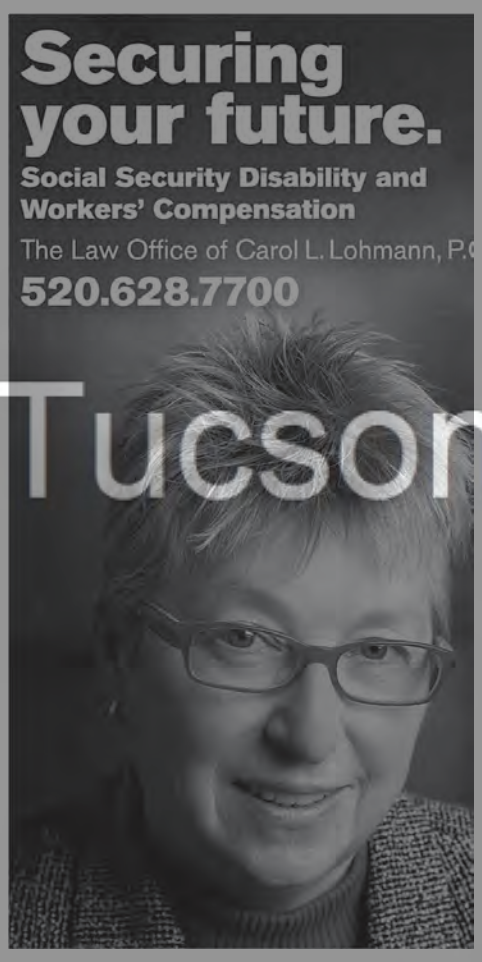


UN Lauds U.S. And S. Korea For Lifting HIV Travel Ban

UNITED NATIONS (Observer Update) - The United Nations praised the United States and South Korea on Monday for lifting travel bans on people with HIV and urged 57 other countries with travel restrictions to end them quickly.

President Barack Obama announced in October that the U.S. would overturn a 22-year-old travel ban against people with HIV, and the new rule eliminating the ban came into force on Monday. South Korea eliminated travel restrictions for people with the HIV virus, which causes AIDS, on Jan. 1.

Michel Sidibe, executive director of UNAIDS, which coordinates the U.N.'s AIDS response, called the policy changes "a victory for human rights on two sides of the globe."

Ending the restrictions means travelers who are HIV positive can now enter both countries.

In the United States, the ban has kept out thousands of students, tourists and refugees and has complicated the adoption of children with HIV. No major international AIDS conference has been held in the U.S. since 1993, because HIV-positive activists and researchers could not enter the country.

In 1987, at a time of widespread fear and ignorance about HIV, the Department of Health and Human Services added HIV to the list of communicable diseases that disqualified a person from entering the U.S. The department tried in 1991 to reverse its decision but was opposed by Congress, which went the other way two years later and made HIV infection the only medical condition explicitly listed under immigration law as grounds for inadmissibility to the U.S.

When Obama announced in October that the ban would be overturned, he commended Congress and former President George W. Bush for starting the process to eliminate the ban in 2008 and said his administration was "finishing the job."

"It's a step that will encourage people to get tested and get treatment, it's a step that will keep families together, and it's a step that will save lives," Obama said. "If we want to be the global leader in combating HIV/AIDS, we need to act like it."

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon congratulated Obama in October and applauded South Korea's President Lee Myung-bak on Monday "for his country's leadership in ending restrictions towards people living with HIV that have no public health benefit."

"I repeat my call to all other countries with such discriminatory restrictions to take steps to remove them at the earliest," Ban said in a statement.

Among the countries that still have restrictions on entry, residence and length of stay for HIV sufferers are China, Cuba, Egypt, North Korea, Israel, New Zealand, Poland, Singapore, Iraq and Russia.

Sidibe, the UNAIDS chief, called for "global freedom of movement for people living with HIV in 2010, the year when countries have committed to achieve universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support."

Discrimination against people with HIV "has no place in today's highly mobile world," he said in a statement.

Proposition 8 Judge Has Tough Questions In California Gay Marriage Trial

SAN FRANCISCO (Observer Update) - Two same-sex couples gave intimate accounts of their private and public lives Monday (Jan. 11) during the opening day of a highly anticipated federal trial to decide the constitutionality of state bans on gay marriage, at times tearfully testifying about moments of awkwardness, disappointment and shame they said resulted from their inability to legally wed, reprted the AP on Huffington Post.

"I've been in love with a woman for 10 years, and I don't have access to a word for it," said 45-year-old Kristin Perry of Berkeley, the lead plaintiff in a lawsuit seeking to overturn the voter initiative that outlawed gay marriage in California. "In a store, people want to know if we are sisters or cousins or friends, and I have to decide every day if I want to come out wherever we go, if we are going to risk that negative reaction."

Perry and her partner, Sandra Stier, 47, and a gay couple from Los Angeles, Paul Katami, 37, and Jeffrey Zarrillo, 36, were the first witnesses in a case that could become a landmark that determines if gay Americans have the right to marry. Their testimony, designed to demonstrate that the law passed as Proposition 8 promotes inequality and bias, was expected to provide the human element during proceedings that will rely heavily on evidence supplied by academic experts.

Katami, a manager for a fitness company, described the 2008 campaign to pass Proposition 8 as a series of uncomfortable encounters. He recalled being stuck in traffic and seeing another driver with a bumper sticker promoting the measure as a way to protect children. Katami told her he disagreed with the message, and she responded that marriage "is not for you people."

"I pay my taxes, I own a house," he said. "But in that moment, being gay means I am less than, I have been relegated to a corner, and I'm tired of living my life that way because I think of myself as a good person."

The trial is the first in a federal court on the question of whether the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of equal treatment makes it unlawful for states to withhold marriage from gays.

Regardless of the outcome, the case is likely to be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, where it could lead to laws that restrict marriage to a man and a woman being upheld or abolished nationwide.

The couples' chief attorneys are noted conservative litigator Theodore Olson and one of his former liberal adversaries, David Boies. Earlier in the day, Olson quoted the U.S. Supreme Court's own lofty description of matrimony to demonstrate what his clients were being denied.

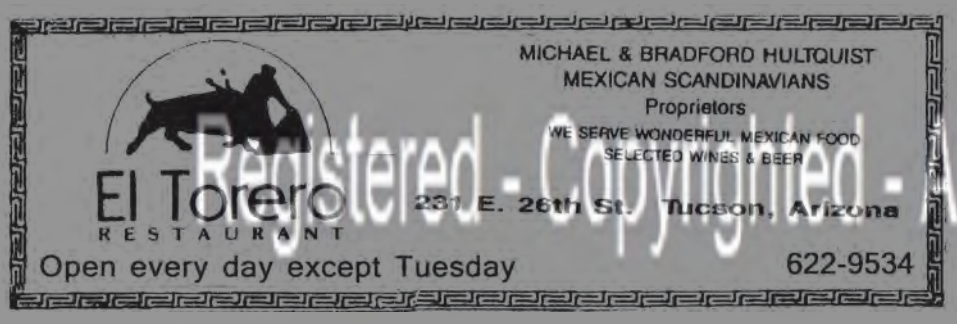
"In the words of the highest court in the land, marriage is the most important relationship in life and of fundamental importance to all individuals," said Olson, who represented George W. Bush during the Florida recount in 2000 and later served as his solicitor general.

Olson had barely launched into his opening statement when Chief U.S. District Judge Vaughn R. Walker, who is presiding over the trial without a jury, interrupted him to ask how Proposition 8 could be discriminatory since California already allows gays to enter into domestic partnerships that carry the same rights and benefits of marriage.

"If California would simply get out of the marriage business and classify everyone as a domestic partnership, would that solve the problem?" the judge asked.

Olson answered that such a move would resolve the constitu-

Continued On Next Page



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Proposition 8 Judge Has Tough Questions

Continued from Page Six

tional issues but likely wouldn't be politically feasible.

"I suspect the people of California would not want to abandon the relationship that the proponents of Proposition 8 spent a tremendous amount of resources describing as important to people, and so important it must be reserved for opposite-sex couples," he said.

Olson went on to argue that as long as marriage remains available only to opposite-sex couples, the state will be "relegating gay men and lesbians to badges of inferiority that forever stigmatize their relationships as inferior."

If societal attitudes toward gays and marriage are changing, Walker asked, "why shouldn't the courts just stand back" and let the political process decide the issue?

"Because this is why you have courts, and this is why we have a Constitution, and this is why we have a 14th Amendment," Olson said. "We have courts to declare that our citizens - loving, upstanding citizens - are being hurt every day, to declare those measures unconstitutional, and that's why we are here today."

Charles Cooper, who is representing Proposition 8 sponsors, launched into his opening statement by saying Proposition 8 was motivated not by "ill-will nor animosity toward gays and lesbians, but special regard for the institution of marriage."

Cooper also noted that President Barack Obama doesn't support legalizing gay marriage, a remark that prompted Walker to point out that Obama's own parents would not have been allowed to get married in some states before the Supreme Court overturned state bans on interracial marriage in 1967.

"That indicates there is quite a change in individuals' entitlement to enter the institution" of marriage, Walker said.

Cooper said laws that prevented people of different races from marrying can't be compared to bans on same-sex marriage because interracial couples can engage in "naturally procreative relationships" that governments have an interest in fostering to promote stable families.

"It is the purpose of marriage - the central purpose of marriage - to ensure, or at least encourage and to promote that when life is brought into being, it is by parents who are married and who take the responsibility of raising that child together," he said.

Walker pressed for examples of how allowing gay couples to marry "in any way diminishes a procreative function or denigrates a marriage for an opposite-sex couple."

Cooper answered that the effect of gay marriage on traditional marriage is unknown because the practice is still so new. Only five states have opened the institution to same-sex couples, and three of them were required to do so by judges, he said.

"The people of California are entitled to await the results of the experiment and to assess them before they endorse a fundamental change in the definition of marriage," he said.

Two hours before the trial was scheduled to start, the Supreme Court blocked video of the proceedings from being posted on YouTube.com. It said justices need more time to review that issue and put the order in place at least until Wednesday, Jan. 13 (after Observer Press time).

Over the weekend, Proposition 8's sponsors sought to block YouTube broadcasts after Walker approved the plan last week, saying the case was appropriate for wide dissemination because it dealt with an issue of wide interest and importance.

Rick Jacobs, chairman of the Courage Campaign, a Los Angeles-based gay rights organization, said his group was disappointed with the decision to bar cameras and called on the high court to lift its ban.

"It's time that the debate about marriage equality is seen for what it is - a debate over the rights of our friends and families to live their lives freely," he said.

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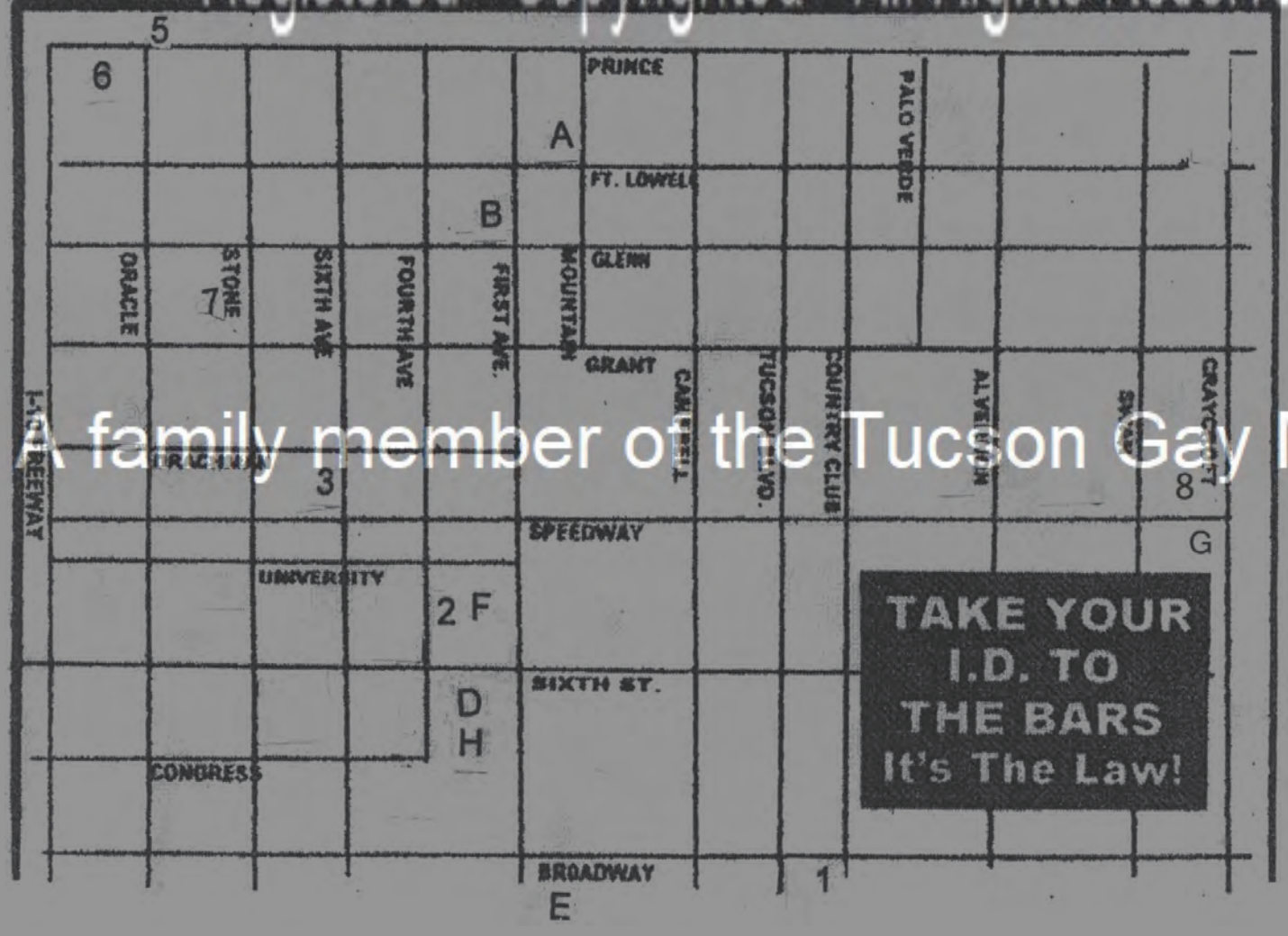

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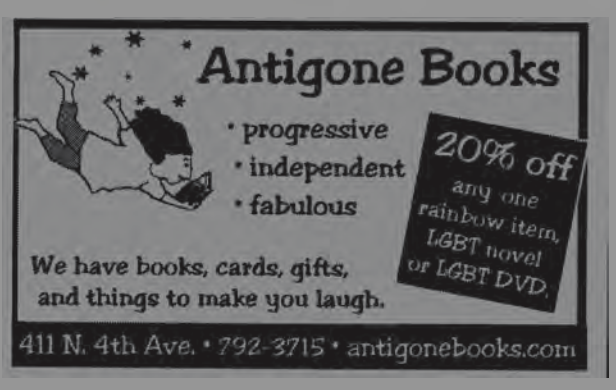

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COMMENTARY. . . .

by John Corvino

Fighting Gay Dehumanization

The column that follows is about anal sex. Some friends have urged me against writing it, not because readers find frank discussions of anal sex "icky," but because the offending comments' source–Peter LaBarbera–is unworthy of serious attention.

In one sense these friends are quite right. But for reasons I hope to make clear, LaBarbera's most recent ugliness needs answering. LaBarbera is the president of Americans for Truth About Homosexuality (AFTAH), one of the nastier anti-gay groups. In a recent letter at his website, he discusses how Matt Barber at Liberty Counsel (a right-wing legal group) is threatening to boycott the Conservative Political Action Conference unless CPAC drops the gay conservative group GOProud as a co-sponsor.

LaBarbera writes, "It boils down to this: there is nothing 'conservative' about – as Barber inimitably puts it – 'one man violently cramming his penis into another man's lower intestine and calling it love'." Don't say I didn't warn you.

LaBarbera's post led Liberty Counsel to deny that Barber had ever said such a nasty thing, prompting a sharp rebuttal from LaBarbera, followed by Barber's admission that he had indeed made the comment privately years ago (and had given LaBarbera permission to quote it). This back-and-forth was interspersed with some barbs between LaBarbera and Randy Thomas, president of the ex-gay group Exodus International, at Thomas's Exodus blog. (Thanks to Pam's House Blend for exposing the imbroglio.)

I'll focus here on LaBarbera, since he was the one who saw fit recently to post Barber's words and to defend them repeatedly, calling them "a brutally honest and necessarily accurate description of homosexual sodomy." He also challenged Thomas to "cite chapter and verse in the Bible" explaining why their use of these words is wrong.

Chapter and verse? Let me try. Exodus 20:16: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." (Hint: it's one of the Ten Commandments, and it boils down simply to "Don't lie.") Look, Peter–and I know you're reading this–NOBODY calls it love when a man "violently cram[s] his penis into another man's lower intestine." Nobody. We sane people call that rape.

Indeed, the "violent cramming" of a penis into any bodily orifice, male or female, is rape. Not love. The description is not merely uncharitable (about which we could both cite many verses), it's a blatant falsehood. Frankly, I'm not surprised you missed this simple, obvious point, because when it comes to homosexuality, you wouldn't know truth if it violently crammed itself into your–oh, never mind.

Now one might argue that we shouldn't bother with LaBarbera. Indeed, a Christian friend of mine told me just that, stating that LaBarbera's comments are "no more worth writing about than the graffiti on men's room walls." And I wish I could ignore them. I really, really do. If only the sentiments underlying them weren't so pervasive and harmful. I've been defending gays and lesbians against heterosexist distortions for two decades. And one of the things that has saddened and angered me most is our opponents' continued tendency to reduce our lives, our commitments, and our intimacy to bare mechanical descriptions–and false ones at that.

Why do they do this? Perhaps it's because of a fundamental lack of empathy (a trait that forms the core of The Golden Rule, another biblical principle). Or perhaps it's because they know that dehumanizing us in this way is an extremely effective tactic. As LaBarbera himself writes at the Exodus blog, his and Barber's "colorful and dismissive" language are precisely geared to "re-stigmatize shameful homosexual behavior." Stigmatize, it surely does.

By spreading their lies about "violent cramming" and such, LaBarbera, Barber and their ilk have visited needless suffering upon countless LGBT people, particularly LGBT youth. Among the unspoken casualties of such stigmatization is that it makes it harder for us to have frank conversations about the relative risks of various sexual practices, for fear of feeding such nastiness. The upshot is more silence, and shame, and–paradoxically–risk. All of which LaBarbera and Barber can answer to their Maker for, when and if Judgment Day should come. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

(John Corvino, Ph.D. is an author, speaker, and philosophy professor at Wayne State University in Detroit. His column "The Gay Moralist" appears on 365gay.com, from which this is reprinted from.)

Daly, Feminist Theology Professor, Lesbian Separatist Dies

BOSTON (Observer Update) - Feminist theologian and author Mary Daly, who retired from a professorship at Boston College rather than allow men to take her classes, has died, reported 365Gay.com. College spokesman Jack Dunn confirmed that Daly died at a Massachusetts nursing home. She was 81. He says she had been ill for some time.

According to the GLBTQ encyclopedia of the social sciences: "An outspoken lesbian-feminist and separatist, Daly provoked outrage by challenging established ideas and institutions that she considered destructive to women's power and creativity.

"From organized religion to the university world she calls "academentia," to men themselves, Daly dissected the "death-loving" culture of patriarchy and its effects on the minds and hearts of women. However, her brilliant body of work was far more than a litany of complaints. It was a joyously iconoclastic search for liberation, and an exploration of a hypothetical women-centered landscape where patriarchal domination has lost its power.

"Daly came out publicly as a lesbian in the early 1970s. Always a holistic thinker, she never regarded her lesbianism as merely a sexual identity. It became part of her redefinition of the universe in terms of the feminine."

Daly had a stormy 33-year tenure at the Jesuit university. She challenged the patriarchy of the Roman Catholic church in her writings. She said she barred men from her class because women did not freely exchange ideas with them present, though she did privately tutor men. In 1999, the university ordered her to accept a male student who threatened to sue. She took a leave of absence and filed a lawsuit. It was settled in 2001 with her retirement.

Says the GLBTQ encyclopedia: "In 1999, two male students attended Daly's class with the express purpose of challenging her "exclusionary" policy. One of the students was backed by a right wing think tank called the Center for Individual Rights (CIR), and neither student had the proper prerequisites for the class. Even though Daly continued to offer separate classes for men truly interested in her subject, Boston College officials demanded she open her classes.

Instead, Daly took a leave of absence. The college responded by attempting to force Daly to retire. A flurry of litigation followed, with CIR threatening to sue the college for discrimination, and Daly suing B. C. for breach of tenure. A settlement was reached in 2001, with Daly receiving an undisclosed amount of money."

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BUZZ FLASHES

Neil Patrick Harris, Gay Man Of The Decade

LOS ANGELES (Observer Update) - AfterElton.com has named Neil Patrick Harris its Gay Man of the Decade, and Jimmy Kimmel had him on his show, in part to celebrate the honor, reported advocate.com.

Harris ran down the list of other potential winners, including Adam Lambert ("Didn't we just meet him, like, eight months ago?" Kimmel asked), Ian McKellen ("Well-deserving," Harris added) and Torchwood's John Barrowman, whom Harris says he beat by just 20 points.

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Vanessa Williams, Brother Do Drag-Off

NEW YORK (Observer Update) - Sometimes nepotism is a good thing – case in point, Vanessa Williams's brother's turn as her drag queen doppelgänger Wilheldiva Hater on the January 20 episode of Ugly Betty.

"I'm genetically programmed for [this role]," Chris Williams told Entertainment Weekly. His scenes were shot on location at New York's famed burlesque club the Box.

Michael Urie stated the obvious during the shoot: "This side of bursting into flames, this show couldn't get any gayer."

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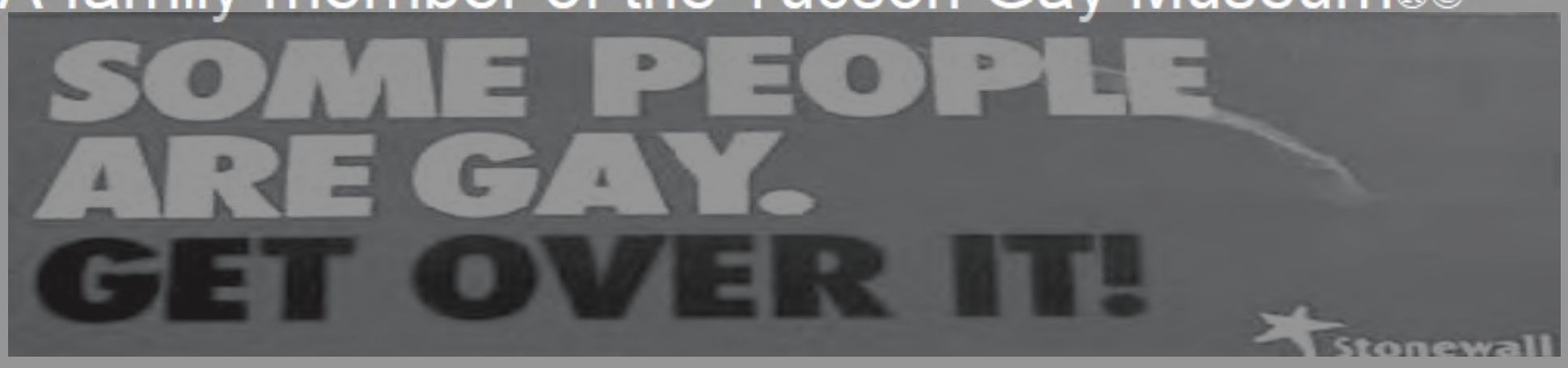


DAILY BAR CALENDAR

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.

HRC IPhone APP Helps You Buy Gay

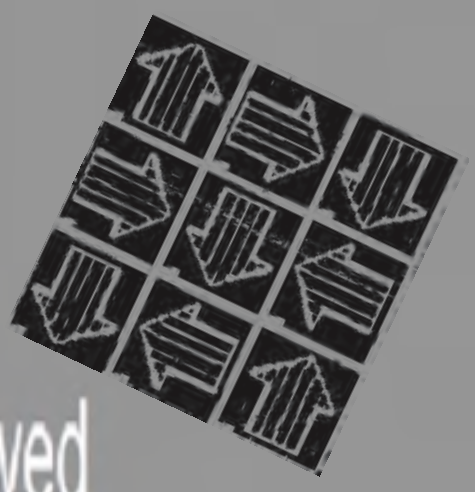
WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - HRC (Human Rights Campaign) has released a first of its kind, free iPhone application for its "Buying for Equality" guide, advocate.com reported.

The app allows shoppers to access the Buying for Equality guide as they enter a store to see how gay-friendly hundreds of brands are. The iPhone application is available for download at www.hrc.org/iPhone. Both Apple, and the iPhone's exclusive service provider, AT&T, score 100% on the 2010 Corporate Equality Index.

From HRC: The Buying for Equality iPhone application puts information directly in the hands of consumers in an easy to read format that divides businesses and their consumer products into red (brands to avoid), yellow (brands that have made some progress) and green (brands to support) categories to help consumers support businesses that support LGBT equality.

These color-coded rankings are based on a company's score on the HRC Corporate Equality Index, a nationally recognized benchmark that scores major American corporations based on their workplace policies and commitment to fairness for their LGBT employees. "As pro-equality consumers enter the stores in 2010, the new Buying for Equality iPhone application is a revolutionary tool that will help inform purchases and support those businesses who believe in our equality," said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese.

"With this application, critical information about workplace equality is now at the fingertips of thousands of LGBT and allied supporters who have hundreds of billions of dollars in buying power. This is another way that we are enabling our community to come together to support those that support us in this new year ahead."



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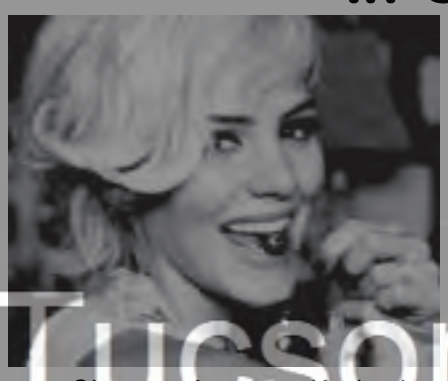
Kat McPhee Tells Idols To Stay In Closet



Singer, Actress Katharine McPhee

NEW YORK (Observer Update) - Singer-actress Katharine McPhee, best known as first runner-up on season 5 of American Idol, is now advising future gay contestants not to reveal their sexuality while still on the show – regardless of new judge Ellen DeGeneres's potentially liberating influence, reported advocate.com.

"I love Ellen and think she's going to be great on the show," McPhee tells NightTimez, a New England LGBT newspaper, "but that's a tricky thing I can only compare to someone who's really spiritual or religious: You don't need to wear your religion on your sleeve. The competition is not about your faith or your sexuality but about you as an artist.

"Look, I think everyone knew Adam Lambert was gay. I don't feel it was a big surprise, and I think Adam did the right thing by coming out with that Rolling Stone cover. He was just as flamboyant on the show as he is now, but anytime you say too much about your personal stuff, it can hinder you in the competition. If people saw the pictures of me being crazy in college with my gay friends and my girlfriends, they'd probably think differently of me on the show. So it's a fine line you have to follow on a reality show competition when all of America is voting."

Currently promoting her sophomore solo album, Unbroken, McPhee doesn't hesitate to come out as an admirer of the feminine form.

"It might be kind of cliché, and it's taken me some time to fully admit it, but Megan Fox is definitely my female crush just for physical appearances. Sometimes she's a little too vulgar for me with the things she says, but she's a gorgeous woman."

Hill Republicans Join Fight Against D.C. G/L Marriage

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - Republican congressional leaders have joined local activists in a court fight to allow voters to decide whether same-sex marriage should be legal in the District, underscoring the continued uncertainty surrounding the issue.

Same-sex marriage supporters and opponents faced off in D.C. Superior Court for a hearing Wednesday on whether the city should be required to allow a ballot initiative that would define marriage as being between a man and a woman.

Thirty-nine GOP legislators, including 37 members of the House and two senators, James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.) and Roger Wicker (R-Miss.), have filed an amicus brief supporting a public vote on the issue. The House members include Minority Leader John A. Boehner (Ohio) and Minority Whip Eric Cantor (Va.).

The filing asserts that the D.C. Board of Elections and Ethics exceeded its authority by ruling twice that a public vote would discriminate against gay men and lesbians.

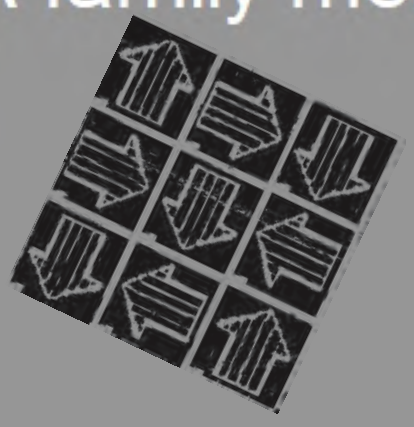
The court challenge comes as the Democrat-controlled Congress begins to consider whether to allow D.C. Council legislation legalizing same-sex marriage to become law. The measure has been signed by Mayor Adrian M. Fenty (D).

"As members of the District's ultimate legislative body, amici are concerned about the extent of the District's delegated legislative authority, the preservation of Congress's constitutional authority, and the interpretation of home rule," the brief states.

Same-sex marriage supporters and some D.C. Republicans expressed outrage over the federal lawmakers' decision to become involved in the court challenge. Sultan Shakir, a regional field director for the Human Rights Campaign, noted that many House Republicans have long argued against giving District residents full voting rights in Congress. "It is ironic that nearly all of the 39 representatives and senators that signed the brief have done everything in their power before to deny voting rights to D.C. residents," Shakir said. "I don't know if they have had a sudden change of heart on D.C. voting rights or, more likely, they are just playing politics and once again meddling in home rule."

A spokesman for Cantor did not return calls seeking comment.

The court brief was filed even though several D.C. GOP leaders, including local party Chairman Robert J. Kabel, had asked national Republicans to stay out of the controversy. "The Republican Party I am a member of is dedicated to allowing local rule and respecting the thoughts of individuals," said Kristopher J. Baumann, a local GOP activist who is also active in the Fraternal Order of Police. "I find it ironic they would come out squarely against the wishes of the local party."



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