Observing Tucson And The Greater Arizona Community

OBSERVER

WEEKLY OBSERVER | FEBRUARY 10, 2010 | ISSUE 133

Tucson Observer Archives

First Openly Gay Man Recommended For Federal Judge

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WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - Senator Chuck Schumer of New York is recommending that President Obama nominate an openly gay man to serve as a federal judge for the first time. Daniel Alter has been designated by the senator for the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, subject to Senate conformation.

Schumer noted the historic nature of the recommendation in a statement, according to DC Agenda. "His outstanding leadership skills, his commitment to justice, and his extensive experience make him an exceptional choice for a position on the federal bench," said Schumer. "I'm proud to nominate Daniel Alter. Period. But I am equally proud to nominate him because he is a history-maker who will be the first openly gay male judge in American history."

Schumer is the senior senator from New York. Presidents traditionally follow the judicial nomination recommendations of the senior senator from the state where this is a vacancy. According to DC Agenda, Alter is a graduate of Columbia College and Yale Law School. His experience includes six years as an assistant U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York and service as national director of the Anti-Defamation League.

In 1994, President Bill Clinton appointed Deborah Batts, an out lesbian, to serve as federal judge for the U.S. District Court of the Southern District of New York.

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Societal Shifts On LGBT Issues

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - A lot has changed since the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy was instituted 17 years ago. Some indicators of societal shifts:

* President Barack Obama's signing last year of hate crimes legislation marked the first time that gays and lesbians were given comprehensive legal status as a protected class. Many states have passed laws against hate crimes based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

* Massachusetts, Iowa, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Vermont and the District of Columbia have adopted laws permitting marriage of gay couples. Another nine states - New Jersey, California, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Colorado, Maine, Hawaii and Wisconsin - have granted various degrees of similar rights to gay domestic partners.

* The public's attitude toward gays and lesbians has undergone a significant shift. The gay-rights group Human Rights Campaign says polls show about three-quarters of Americans say it's OK for gays to serve openly in the military, compared with 44 percent in 1993.

* Internationally, the list of countries that allow openly gay people to serve in their armed forces has grown to 28, including Canada, Israel, Australia and most of Europe.

* The U.S. Census has for the first time begun tabulating information about gay couples who live together.

* Supporters of gay rights have formed a House caucus, which has 83 members. There are three openly gay members of Congress: Reps. Barney Frank of Massachusetts, Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin and Jared Polis of Colorado, all Democrats.

* Overall, there were about 50 openly lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered elected officials in the United States in 1993, according to the Victory Fund, which recruits and promotes gay candidates. Today, there are 460. The nation's fourth-largest city, Houston, Texas, installed openly gay Annise Parker as mayor last month.

* A 2003 ruling by the Supreme Court said that anti-sodomy statutes are unconstitutional, and that states can't criminalize intimate relations between same-sex partners.

A family member of the Tucson Sun Museum©

Defense Officials Say Lift Military Ban On Gays

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - It's time to repeal the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy and allow gay troops to serve openly for the first time in history, the nation's top defense officials declared Tuesday, with the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff proclaiming that service members should not be forced to "lie about who they are."

However, both Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Joint Chiefs Chairman Adm. Mike Mullen asked for a year to study the impact before Congress would lift the controversial policy. Reversing the Pentagon's 17-year-old policy toward gays "comes down to integrity," for the military as an institution as well as the service members themselves, Mullen told a Senate hearing. Unpersuaded, several Republican senators said they would oppose any congressional effort to repeal the policy.

Ten months before voters elect a new Congress, some Democratic leaders also were leery of trying to change the policy this year, when both sides concede Republicans are likely to pick up seats, especially after GOP Sen.-elect Scott Brown's surprise victory last month in Massachusetts. Repealing don't-ask-don't-tell is not a winning campaign strategy for a party under siege especially in the South and Midwest.

"What do I want members to do in their districts? I want them to focus on jobs and fiscal responsibility," said House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., classifying gays in the military in a category of "a lot of other issues" that will invariably come up.

"It's never a good year" for Democrats to bring up the controversial policy, said Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin of Illinois. "You can expect that it's going to be a rough ride."

However, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said he didn't see why it should wait another year.

The Pentagon announced an 11-month review of how the ban could be lifted, as President Barack Obama has said he will work to do. But there is no deadline for ending the policy that dates to President Bill Clinton's tenure and that gay rights advocates are pressing to overturn.

In the meantime, Gates announced plans to loosen enforcement rules for the policy, which says, in essence, that gays may serve so long as they keep their sexuality private.

Obama has called for repeal but has done little in his first year in office to advance that goal. If he succeeds, it would mark the biggest shake-up to military personnel policies since President Harry S. Truman's 1948 executive order integrating the services.

Homosexuality has never been openly tolerated in the American military, and the 1993 policy was intended to be a compromise that let gay men and women serve so long as they stayed silent about their sexuality. Clinton had wanted to repeal the ban entirely, but the military and many in Congress argued that doing so would dangerously disrupt order.

Repealing the ban would take an act of Congress, something that does not appear close to happening.

Since 'don't ask, don't tell" was established, much has changed. Five states and the District of Columbia have adopted laws permitting marriage of gay couples, while nine other states have granted similar rights to gay domestic partners.

The public's attitude toward gays and lesbians also has undergone a significant shift. A Pew poll last year indicated that 59 percent of Americans favor allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military, up from 52 percent in 1994.

Poll: Iowans Not Concerned With Gay Marriage

DES MOINES, IA (Observer Update) - A survey by the Des Moines Register found that Iowa residents would much rather ban texting while driving than gay marriage in the Midwestern state.

The Register found that regulation of distracted driving was a high priority for 72% of respondents while only 36% thought that regulating marriage should be an immediate focus of lawmakers. House Republican leader Kraig Paulsen told the Register that "they're clearly interested in government sticking to its core business, which is public safety." This comes at a time in Iowa when Republican legislators are beginning to regroup to push for a constitutional ban on gay marriage, which was approved by the state supreme court last year. Democratic lawmakers, who hold a majority in both houses, have promised not to discuss same-sex marriage during this year's session, but Republicans are rumored to be planning to use a procedure that would allow the amendment to come up for a vote.

Paulsen blamed poll results on the impression that banning gay marriage is time-consuming, adding, "There's no reason it should have to take more than 30 minutes."

UPDATE

TGLBTCC Meeting Feb. 18

TUCSON (Observer Update) - The February Breakfast Meeting of the Tucson Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Chamber of Commerce will take place Thursday, Feb. 18, 7:30 - 9:00 a.m., at the Hotel Tucson City Center Conference Suite Resort, (formerly Inn Suites), 475 N. Granada Ave.

The GLBT Market: How Do You Reach People? Almost every consumer business looks for a niche market that is loyal and includes those with expendable income. The GLBT market has great potential in these areas. There are many misconceptions about this demographic that drive businesses to make marketing decisions with little return. Join us on Thursday, February 18th as Cindy Jordan, of LP&G Inc. gives us the skinny on marketing to the GLBT Community. Speaker: Cindy Jordan, LP&G Inc.

$20 members, $25 guests and a $5 discount for members and guests who RSVP by Feb. 15. For more information, call (520) 615-6436 or info@TucsonGLBTChamber.org.

New Mexico Domestic Partnership Moves Forward

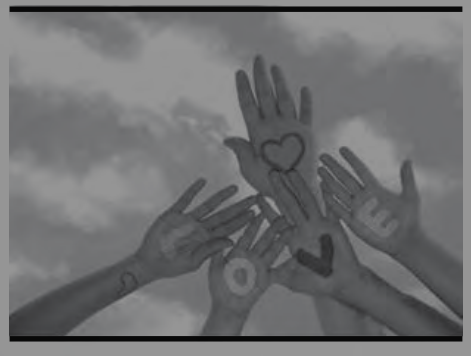
SANTA FE (Observer Update) - New Mexico's domestic partnership bill, supported by Gov. Bill Richardson, advanced again, seen as a good sign by gay rights activists.

The state senate's public affairs committee voted to move the bill forward to finance. The bill passed through the state's senate judiciary committee easily and the senate majority floor leader Michael Sanchez moved it straight to the finance committee, according to a report in New Mexico Independent. The bill must now clear one more committee hurdle - finance –before being introduced to the full senate.

"David Masci of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life said the bill may be one of the most comprehensive of its kind in the nation, as it enumerates every right conferred on domestic partners," the Advocate reported.

If the senate passes the bill, it will move on to the house. In 2009 a similar bill was defeated in the senate by eight votes.

Wingspan's Valentine



TUCSON (Observer Update) - This Valentine's Day, Wingspan (wingspan.org) is inviting everyone to send love back to someone who has made a difference in your life by supporting, loving and accepting you for being who you are. We wanted to do something special and fun that everyone could be a part of.

We created a greeting card for you to write a note to: The friend who stood by you in your coming out process. The teacher who encouraged you to be yourself. The child who accepted you as his or her family. A family member who has unconditionally loved you for being yourself. We hope you will take this opportunity to acknowledge anyone who has touched you and encouraged you to love and be yourself.

Or you may wish to recognize someone you helped embrace their sexual orientation or gender identity. By making a $25.00 donation to Wingspan and sending this card, you are celebrating love and supporting Wingspan's work in Southern Arizona. Additional cards are available at Wingspan. You may also email wingspan@wingspan.org or call 520-624-1779 to have cards mailed to you. We suggest a $25.00 donation.

Happy Valentine's Day.

Arizona Gay Rodeo Association 25th Anniversary And TIHAN

CHANDLER (Observer Update) - This year TIHAN (Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network) will be one of the five organizations benefitting from the Arizona Gay Rodeo Association's Roadrunner Regional Rodeo in Chandler, AZ.

TIHAN will be staffing volunteer shifts at this event on Saturday, February 13th and Sunday, February 14th.

If you are interested in representing TIHAN at this event please contact Katelyn McDonald at (520) 299-6647 or katelyn@tihan.org.

Woman Says Sex-Change Tax Battle Also Helps Ohers

BOSTON (Observer Update) - A woman who battled the IRS over a tax deduction for the costs of her sex-change operation says she feels like she won a victory for all transgender people, reported the AP on 365Gay.com.

Rhiannon O'Donnabhain, who was born a man, sued the Internal Revenue Service in 2007 after the agency rejected a $5,000 deduction for about $25,000 in medical expenses associated with the sex-change surgery, finding it was a cosmetic procedure and not medically necessary. The U.S. Tax Court ruled that O'Donnabhain should be allowed to deduct the costs of her treatment for gender-identity disorder, including sex-reassignment surgery and hormone treatments.

"The tax court has spoken for my community and has supported my community by saying that this is a proper medical deduction, much the same as an appendectomy or open heart surgery," O'Donnabhain said in an interview. "It was a proper medical deduction, and it certainly is not cosmetic surgery as the IRS contended," she said.

IRS spokeswoman Michelle Eldridge declined to comment on the ruling.

The legal group Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, which represented O'Donnabhain, said the decision could potentially affect thousands of people a year in the U.S. who undergo similar operations.

Lambda Legal, a national civil rights group for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people, called the ruling "a case of the federal government catching up with medical standards."

"I think it's an important decision that could help educate and bring along transgender rights in other areas because it ratifies what the medical community has said clearly for years, which is for people with gender identity disorder, this type of surgery is frequently a medical necessity for their lives and for their health and for their well-being," said Hayley Gorenberg, deputy legal director at Lambda Legal.

The Tax Court voted 11-5 to grant the deduction.

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Informing the Community
The Observer

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McCain Flip Flop Endangers National Security

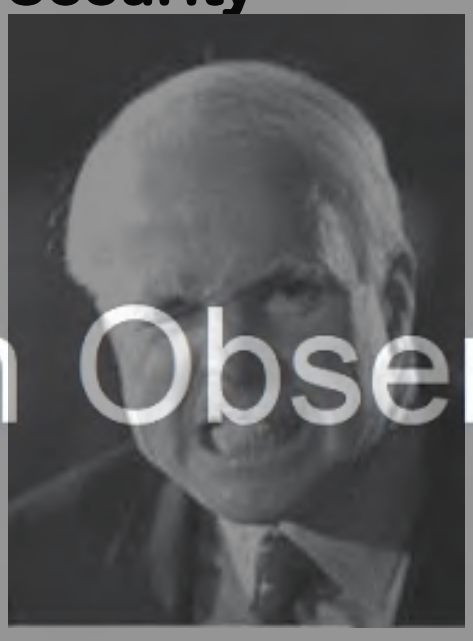
PHOENIX (Observer Update) - U.S. Sen. John McCain's flip-flopping on the issue of "don't ask, don't tell" would sacrifice national security on the altar of homophobia and his newfound adherence to far-right wing ideology.

In 2006, the Arizona Senator (who spends more time in New Hampshire) told MSNBC viewers that he would agree to overturn the outdated military policy the moment the top military commanders told him it was time. Top commanders said as much yesterday, but instead of saluting, McCain became outraged that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs would even express an opinion on the matter.

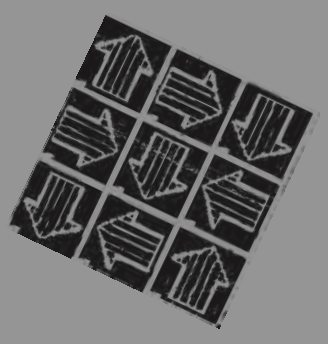
McCain's cynical flip-flop would allow the petty fears of a few to continue to jeopardize the readiness of our armed forces. Top pilots, platoon sergeants, special forces operators and logisticians would be drummed out of the military, simply because a few extremists harbor outdated hostilities toward gay servicemembers.

Retired Brigadier General John Adams wrote in an op-ed to the Arizona Daily Star in August, "All credible studies - as far back as a 1993 RAND report - conclude that openly gay people in the U.S. military have no negative impact on unit cohesion, morale and good order."

Reached for comment, Adams said, "My 30 years in the Army taught me that performance and loyalty to our Constitution is what counts. Gender, race, religion and sexuality are irrelevant when it comes to defending our Constitution – and John McCain knows it. His sudden change of heart is disturbing."



"Perhaps J.D. Hayworth, darling of the radical right, has forced McCain to swerve hard toward extremism," said Jeff Rogers, Chair of the Pima County Democratic Party. "McCain says he 'fears no man,'" Rogers said. "Apparently, that's not true. He's scared to death of J.D. and gay Americans."



Barney Frank Pounces On Backers Of Military Gay Ban

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - Openly gay Massachusetts Representative Barney Frank has come out swinging at supporters of the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy that bans open gay service, reported On Top Magazine.

Frank appeared on the Michelangelo Signorile radio talk show to discuss the issue. The policy has come under close scrutiny since President Obama called for an end to the law during his first State of the Union address. On Tuesday, the Pentagon's top brass - Admiral Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Defense Secretary Robert Gates - told a key Senate panel considering the issue that the military should end the policy. The testimony - in particular Mullen's support - has stirred new debates on the issue.

Frank took offense at Gates' announcement that the military would conduct a year-long study on how best to implement repeal should Congress repeal the law. "These include potential revisions to policies on benefits, base housing, fraternization and misconduct, separations and discharges, and many others," Gates said in his testimony. "I was actually troubled by some of Gates' approach," Frank said in the radio interview. "I have no idea what he plans to study when he talked about housing."

Frank and other lawmakers, including Senator Carl Levin, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, are backing a plan that calls for including repeal legislation in the military's annual reauthorization in the fall. "As quickly as we can do this, it will be toward the end of the year. So Gates has plenty of time to study whatever the hell he wants to study," Frank added.

Opponents of the policy have sounded similar concerns.

"You're a gay service member today taking a shower, and when the law will change, you'll be a gay service member taking a shower tomorrow," Aaron Tax, legal director of the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, a gay group that lobbies for repeal, told National Public Radio. "We're not incorporating a new element here. Gay people have been serving the military since the beginning of time."

Frank also took aim at Arizona Senator John McCain, who appears to be taking the helm for Republicans opposed to repeal. McCain, a ranking member of the Senate committee, declared himself "deeply disappointed" in Gates' testimony. "At this moment of immense hardship for our armed services, we should not be seeking to overturn the 'don't ask,don't tell' policy," McCain said. "And that John McCain ... I think the last vestiges that John McCain is an independent guy ready to resist the right wing should be buried," Frank said referring to McCain's 2008 presidential campaign that touted his maverick credentials.

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COMMENTARY. . . .

by John Corvino

Why Conservatives Should Want Gay Parents To Marry

Brian Brown throws around the term "irrational" quite a bit. Brown is the Executive Director of the National Organization for Marriage (NOM), an anti-gay-marriage organization (Maggie Gallagher is its president). I first came across his name last summer when the Washington Post profiled him, describing him as "pleasantly, ruthlessly sane" and "rational."

From the profile, it appears that "irrational" is Brown's favorite term of abuse.

For example, he claims it's irrational when polls indicate that most young people support equal marriage rights for gays and lesbians. Or when people argue that marriage equality is ultimately inevitable. Or when they describe his position as bigotry:

"I think it's irrational that up until 10 years ago, all of these societies agreed with my position [and yet now they're changing]" he tells the Post. However, the term "irrational" was given new meaning in Brown's most recent fundraising letter, in which he uses a new Department of Health and Human Services study, the "Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-4)," to argue against same-sex marriage.

Brown cites the HHS study as stating that: "Children living with two married biological parents had the lowest rate of overall Harm Standard maltreatment, at 6.8 per 1,000 children. This rate differs significantly from the rates for all other family structure and living arrangement circumstances."

Brown goes on to argue, "All parents working hard to raise good kids…deserve our respect and help. But there is no call to wipe out the ideal itself, rooted in Nature and Nature's God, and replace it with a man-made fantasy that same-sex unions are just the same as the one kind of union that best protects children."

Got that? Children do best with a married biological mother and father. Therefore, we ought to oppose same-sex marriage. I felt like I was missing some steps–maybe I was being "irrational"–so I went and read the study Brown cites. And I learned a few interesting things.

First, the 455-page study says not a word about gay and lesbian parents. Zero. Zilch. Nada. Which makes it essentially useless for anyone wanting to do a three-way comparison between children of married straight parents, married gay parents, and unmarried gay parents.

The study does indeed find that, on average, children living with married biological parents are at substantially lower risk of maltreatment than children in other family structures studied: namely, those with "other married parents" (not both biological but both having a legal relationship to the child), unmarried parents (biological or other), single parents with an unmarried partner, unpartnered single parents, and no parents.

What follows from this finding is quite simple. My fellow gays and lesbians should stop snatching children away from married biological parents who are raising them. As the Gay Moralist, I hereby call for an immediate cessation of this horrible practice. It's bad for the kids. Stop it. Thank you.

Back on Planet Earth, where gay and lesbian people are generally not kidnapping children from their married biological parents, the relevant conclusion is rather different. To the extent that the study teaches us about gay and lesbian families at all, it is to suggest that children in them would do far better IF THEIR PARENTS COULD GET MARRIED. Are you listening, Mr. Rational? The study actually shows the OPPOSITE of what you're using it for.

But wait–there's more. Everything I've said thus far (and indeed, everything in the HHS report) assumes an "all else being equal" clause. But of course, all else is often not equal. Which is why the report looks at factors beyond family structure, and notes that, for example: Children of the unemployed are at a 2-3 times higher risk for maltreatment. Children in large households (four or more children) had more than twice the incidence of maltreatment than those in two-child families. Children in families of low socio-economic status were 5 times more likely to be victims of maltreatment than other children.

Somehow, however, I don't expect Brown to oppose marriage for the poor, or for his fellow conservative Catholics (who tend to have large families). Or maybe to ask wealthy lesbians (Ellen and Portia?) to revive that imaginary kidnapping trend. The general problem here is familiar: making the best the enemy of the good. Brown's argument presupposes that the only people who should be allowed to marry are those whose marriages would create ideal scenarios for children.

By that logic, NOM's own president wouldn't have been allowed her current marriage, since that marriage created a stepfamily. Logician, heal thyself. Meanwhile, there are several million American children being raised by gay parents. What (if anything) can the HHS study tell us about them? According to the study, children living with "other married parents" (at least one non-biological) are at LESS THAN HALF the risk of maltreatment compared to children living with a single parent and an unmarried partner. So if we really care about these children's welfare, we should let their parents marry. It's only rational.

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

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A family member of the Tucson Gay Museum

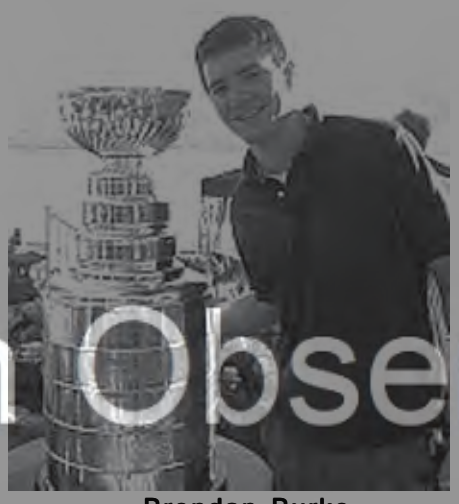
Hockey's Brendan Burke Dies

RICHMOND, IN (Observer Update) - Brendan Burke, the 21-year-old son of Toronto Maple Leafs manager Brian Burke, died in a two-car accident in Indiana Friday afternoon, the Huffington Post reports. Burke came to national attention last year when an ESPN.com story profiled his coming out and his father's and family's acceptance of his sexual orientation.

Burke, who was a student assistant on the University of Miami (Ohio) hockey team, was reportedly driving east on a snow-covered U.S. 35 in a Jeep Grand Cherokee when his vehicle slid sideways into an oncoming 1997 Ford Truck, the Richmond (Ind.) Palladium-Item reports. Burke's passenger, 18-year-old Mark Reedy, also died in the accident.

Damien Cox of the Toronto Star tweeted the following: "Oh my goodness, what awful news. Brian Burke's son, Brendan, was killed in a car accident in Indiana today. Huge prayers to the family. Brendan Burke courageous young man. Came out in ESPN.com story earlier this year. Hoped to have a career in hockey. So sad. Brendan Burke was just 21 years old. His 18-year-old friend, a passenger in the car, was also killed in treacherous, snowy conditions."

In the ESPN.com story, Burke expressed gratitude for his family's and team's acceptance of his sexual orientation: "Imagine if I was in the opposite situation, with a family that wouldn't accept me, working for a sports team where I knew I couldn't come out because I'd be fired or ostracized," he said. "People in that situation deserve to know that they can feel safe, that sports isn't all homophobic and that there are plenty of people in sports who accept people for who they are."



Brendan Burke

According to the Toronto Star, the Burkes decided to go public about Brendan's sexual orientation after a reporter, who had been a friend of the family, said he was going to write about it. Brendan had told his father in 2007 that he was gay, and while his father said he was surprised, he said at the time, "'It won't change anything Brendan. It doesn't change our view. We love you and we're proud of you. It doesn't change anything in my mind and it never will.'" The Star reports that Burke's coming out was widely credited with nudging hockey toward overcoming its sometimes homophobic culture.

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman released a statement in response to the news. "The National Hockey League grieves for the family and friends of Brendan Burke, a young man of courage and character," he said. "Words simply cannot express our sorrow over his loss. We send our deepest respect, most heartfelt condolences to Brendan's father, Brian; his mother, Kerry; everyone in Brendan's family and all who were inspired by his love of hockey."

Half LGBT, HIV+ Surveyed Report Health Discrimination

NEW YORK (Observer Update) - Lambda Legal released the first nationwide survey that examines health care discrimination experienced by LGBT people and people living with HIV.

"The results of this survey should shock the conscience of this nation and make clear that the system is broken when it comes to health care for many lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and those living with HIV," said Beverly Tillery, Director of Community Education and Advocacy and one of the authors of the report. "No one should be turned away or face discrimination when they are sick or seeking medical care."

In spring 2009, Lambda Legal and over 100 partner organizations distributed a survey to LGBT people and people living with HIV across the country. When Health Care Isn't Caring: Lambda Legal's Survey on Discrimination Against LGBT People and People Living with HIV, is based on responses from approximately 5,000 people and provides a powerful snapshot of the experiences of a diverse cross section of members of the LGBT and HIV communities all over the country.

The survey included questions about the following types of discrimination in care: being refused needed care; health care professionals refusing to touch patients or using excessive precautions; health care professionals using harsh or abusive language; being blamed for one's health status; or health care professionals being physically rough or abusive.

According to the results, almost 56 percent of lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) respondents had at least one of these experiences; 70 percent of transgender and gender-nonconforming respondents had one or more of these experiences; and nearly 63 percent of respondents living with HIV experienced one or more of these types of discrimination in health care.

We found that not only did sexual orientation or serostatus affect the respondents' access to quality health care, but transgender or gender-nonconforming respondents faced discrimination two to three times more frequently than lesbian, gay, or bisexual respondents.

In nearly every category, a higher proportion of respondents who are people of color and/or low-income reported experiencing discriminatory and substandard care.

Close to 33 percent of low-income transgender and gender-nonconforming respondents reported being refused care because of their gender identity and almost a quarter of low-income respondents living with HIV reported being denied care.

In addition to instances of discrimination, respondents also reported a high degree of anticipation and belief that they would face discriminatory care.

Overall, 9 percent of LGB respondents are concerned about being refused medical services when they need them and 20 percent of respondents living with HIV and over half of transgender and gender-nonconforming respondents share this same concern. Nearly half of LGB respondents and respondents living with HIV and almost 90 percent of transgender respondents believe there are not enough medical personnel who are properly

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Barney Frank Pounces On Backers Of Military Gay Ban

Continued from Page Three

In a separate statement released by the representative's office, Frank disagreed with repeal opponents who say the timing is wrong. "The argument that we should not repeal 'don't ask, don't tell' because we are in the midst of two wars is badly flawed. Ironically, the religious fundamentalist terrorists we are fighting generally agree with the defenders of this discriminatory policy in their opposition to the principle that gay men and lesbians should be treated fairly."

And Frank thanked Mullen for his support. "As a gay man, I want to pay particular tribute to the decency, integrity, and courage of Admiral Mullen, who so clearly stated his opposition to a policy that has been deeply unfair to many men and women with whom he himself has served. I regret that Republican Members of the Committee saw fit to use this example of Admiral Mullen's courage as a basis for unfair criticism."

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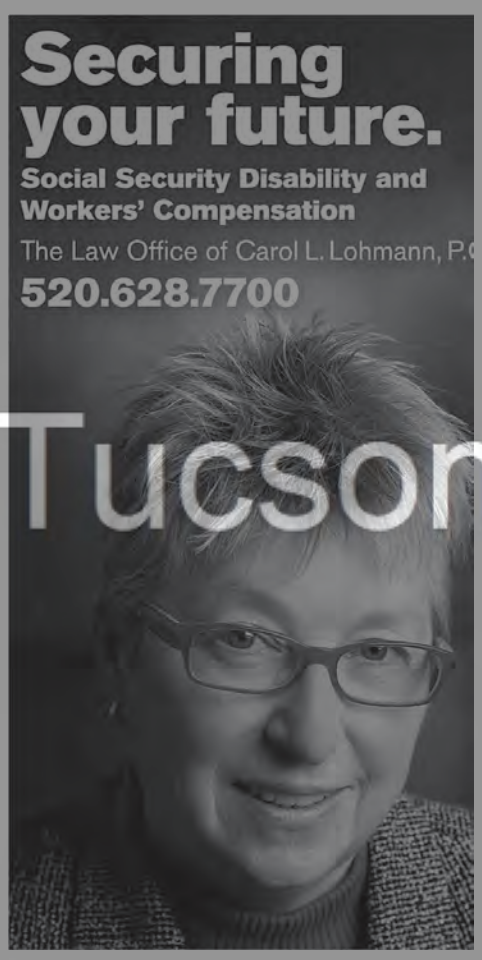

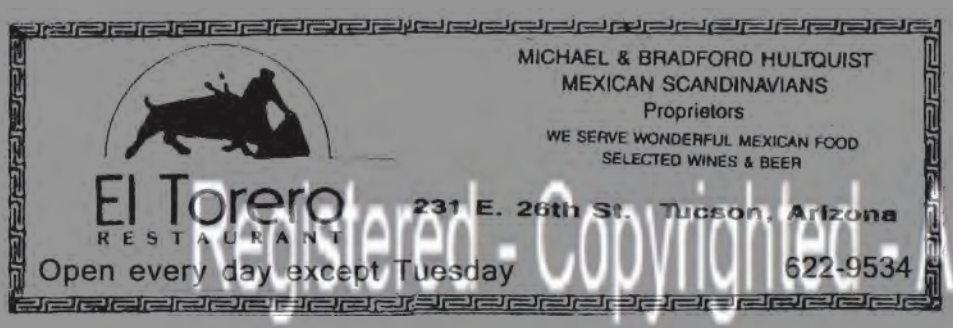

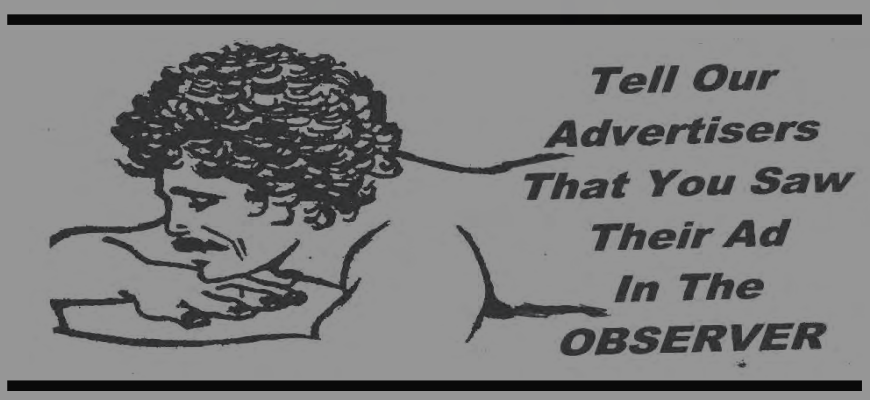

COMMENTARY. . . .

by Frank Rich

Smoke The Bigots Out Of The Closet

A funny thing happened after Adm. Mike Mullen called for gay men and lesbians to serve openly in the military: A curious silence befell much of the right. If this were a Sherlock Holmes story, it would be the case of the attack dogs that did not bark. John McCain, commandeering the spotlight as usual, did fulminate against the repeal of "don't ask, don't tell." But the press focus on McCain, the crazy man in Washington's attic, was misleading. His yapping was an exception, not the rule.

Many of his Republican colleagues said little or nothing. The right's noise machine was on mute. The Fox News report on Mullen's testimony was fair and balanced – and brief. The network dropped the subject entirely in the Hannity-O'Reilly hothouse of prime time that night. Only ratings-desperate CNN gave a fleeting platform to the old homophobic clichés. Michael O'Hanlon, an "expert" from the Brookings Institution, speculated that "18-year-old, old-fashioned, testosterone-laden" soldiers who are "tough guys" might object to those practicing "alternative forms of lifestyle," which he apparently views as weak and testosterone-deficient. His only prominent ally was the Family Research Council, which issued an inevitable "action alert" demanding a stop to "the sexualization of our military."

The occasional outliers notwithstanding, why did such a hush greet Mullen on Capitol Hill? The answer begins with the simple fact that a large majority of voters – between 61 percent and 75 percent depending on the poll – now share his point of view. Most Americans recognize that being gay is not a "lifestyle" but an immutable identity, and that outlawing discrimination against gay people who want to serve their country is, as the admiral said, "the right thing to do."

Mullen's heartfelt, plain-spoken testimony gave perfect expression to the nation's own slow but inexorable progress on the issue. He said he had "served with homosexuals since 1968" and that his views had evolved "cumulatively" and "personally" ever since. So it has gone for many other Americans in all walks of life. As more gay people have come out – a process that accelerated once the modern gay rights movement emerged from the Stonewall riots of 1969 – so more heterosexuals have learned that they have gay relatives, friends, neighbors, teachers and co-workers. It is hard to deny our own fundamental rights to those we know, admire and love.

But that's not the whole explanation for the scant pushback in Washington to Mullen and his partner in change, Defense Secretary Robert Gates. There is also a potent political subtext. To a degree unimaginable as recently as 2004 – when Karl Rove and George W. Bush ran a national campaign exploiting fear of gay people – there is now little political advantage to spewing homophobia. Indeed, anti-gay animus is far more likely to repel voters than attract them. This equation was visibly eating at Orrin Hatch, the Republican senator from Utah, as he vamped nervously with Andrea Mitchell of MSNBC last week, trying to duck any discernible stand on Mullen's testimony. On only one point was he crystal clear: "I just plain do not believe in prejudice of any kind."

Now that explicit anti-gay animus is an albatross, those who oppose gay civil rights are driven to invent ever loopier rationales for denying those rights, whether in the military or in marriage. Hatch, for instance, limply suggested to Mitchell that a repeal of "don't ask" would lead to gay demands for "special rights." Such arguments, both preposterous and disingenuous, are mere fig leaves to disguise the phobia that can no longer dare speak its name. If gay Americans are to be granted full equality, the flimsy rhetorical camouflage must be stripped away to expose the prejudice that lies beneath.

The arguments for preserving "don't ask" have long been blatantly groundless. McCain – who said in 2006 that he would favor repealing the law if military leaders ever did – didn't even bother to offer a logical explanation for his mortifying flip-flop last week. He instead huffed that the 1993 "don't ask" law should remain unchanged as long as any war is going on (which would be in perpetuity, given Afghanistan). Colin Powell strafed him just hours later, when he announced that changed "attitudes and circumstances" over the past 17 years have led him to agree with Mullen. McCain is even out of step with his own family's values. Both his wife, Cindy, and his daughter Meghan have posed for the current California ad campaign explicitly labeling opposition to same-sex marriage as hate.

McCain aside, the most common last-ditch argument for preserving "don't ask" heard last week, largely from Southern senators, is to protect "troop morale and cohesion." Every known study says this argument is a canard, as do the real-life examples of the many armies with openly gay troops, including those of Canada, Britain and Israel. But the argument does carry a telling historical pedigree. When Harry Truman ordered the racial integration of the American military in 1948, Congressional opponents (then mainly Southern Democrats) embraced an antediluvian Army prediction from 1940 stating that such a change would threaten national defense by producing "situations destructive to morale." History will sweep this bogus argument away now as it did then.

Those opposing same-sex marriage are just as eager to mask their bigotry. The big arena on that issue is now in California, where the legal showdown over Proposition 8 is becoming a Scopes trial of sorts, with the unlikely bipartisan legal team of David Boies and Ted Olson in the Clarence Darrow role. The opposing lawyer, Charles Cooper, insisted to the court that he bore neither "ill will nor animosity for gays and lesbians." Given the history of the anti-same-sex marriage camp, it's hard to make that case with a straight face (so to speak). In trying to do so, Cooper moved that graphic evidence of his side's ill will and animosity be disallowed – including that notorious, fear-mongering television ad, "The Gathering Storm."

The judge admitted such exhibits anyway. Boies also triumphed in dismantling an expert witness called to provide the supposedly empirical, non-homophobic evidence of how same-sex marriage threatens "procreative marriage." In cross-examination, Boies forced the witness, David Blankenhorn of the so-called Institute for American Values, to concede he had no academic expertise in any field related to marriage or family. The only peer-reviewed paper he's written, for a degree in Comparative Labor History, was "a study of two cabinet-makers' unions in 19th-century Britain."

In another, milder cross-examination – on "Meet the Press" last weekend – John Boehner, the House G.O.P. leader, fended off a question about "don't ask" with a rhetorical question of his own: "In the middle of two wars and in the middle of this giant security threat, why would we want to get into this debate?" Besides Mullen's answer – that it is the right thing to do –

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COMMENTARY -

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there's another, less idealistic said he was undecided on "don't ask" and declared same-sex marriage a "settled" issue in his state, Massachusetts, where it is legal.

It's in this political context that we can see that there may have been some method to Obama's troublesome tardiness on gay issues after all. But as we learned about this White House and the Democratic Congress in the health care debacle, they are perfectly capable of dropping the ball at any moment. Let's hope they don't this time. Should they actually press forward on "don't ask" in an election year with Mullen and Gates on board – and with even McCain's buddy, Joe Lieberman, calling for action "as soon as possible" – they could further the goal and raise the political price for those who stand in the way. Recalcitrant Congressional Republicans will have to explain why their perennial knee-jerk deference to "whatever the commanders want" extends to Gen. David Petraeus and Gen. Stanley McChrystal on troop surges but not to Mullen, who outranks them, on civil rights.

The more bigotry pushed out of the closet for all voters to see, the more likely it is that Americans will be moved to grant overdue full citizenship to gay Americans. It won't happen overnight, any more than full civil rights for African-Americans immediately followed Truman's desegregation of the armed forces. But there can be no doubt that Mike Mullen's powerful act of conscience last week, just as we marked the 50th anniversary of the Greensboro, N.C., lunch counter sit-in, pushed history forward. The revealing silence that followed from so many of the usual suspects was pretty golden too.

(Frank Rich is an award winning columnist for the New York Times, from which this is reprinted from.)

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Half LGBT, HIV+ Surveyed Report Health Discrimination

Continued from Page Five

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trained to care for them.

These barriers to care may result in poorer health outcomes because of delays in diagnosis, treatment or preventive measures.

Within the report, Lambda Legal provides key recommendations for health care institutions, government, individuals, and organizations to combat these issues. We recommend comprehensive cultural competency, inclusive policies, research and training for medical personnel, stronger laws, as well as advocacy and community education. For the full report and the list of partners in Lambda Legal's national Health Care Fairness Campaign, please visit www.lambdalegal.org/health-care-report.

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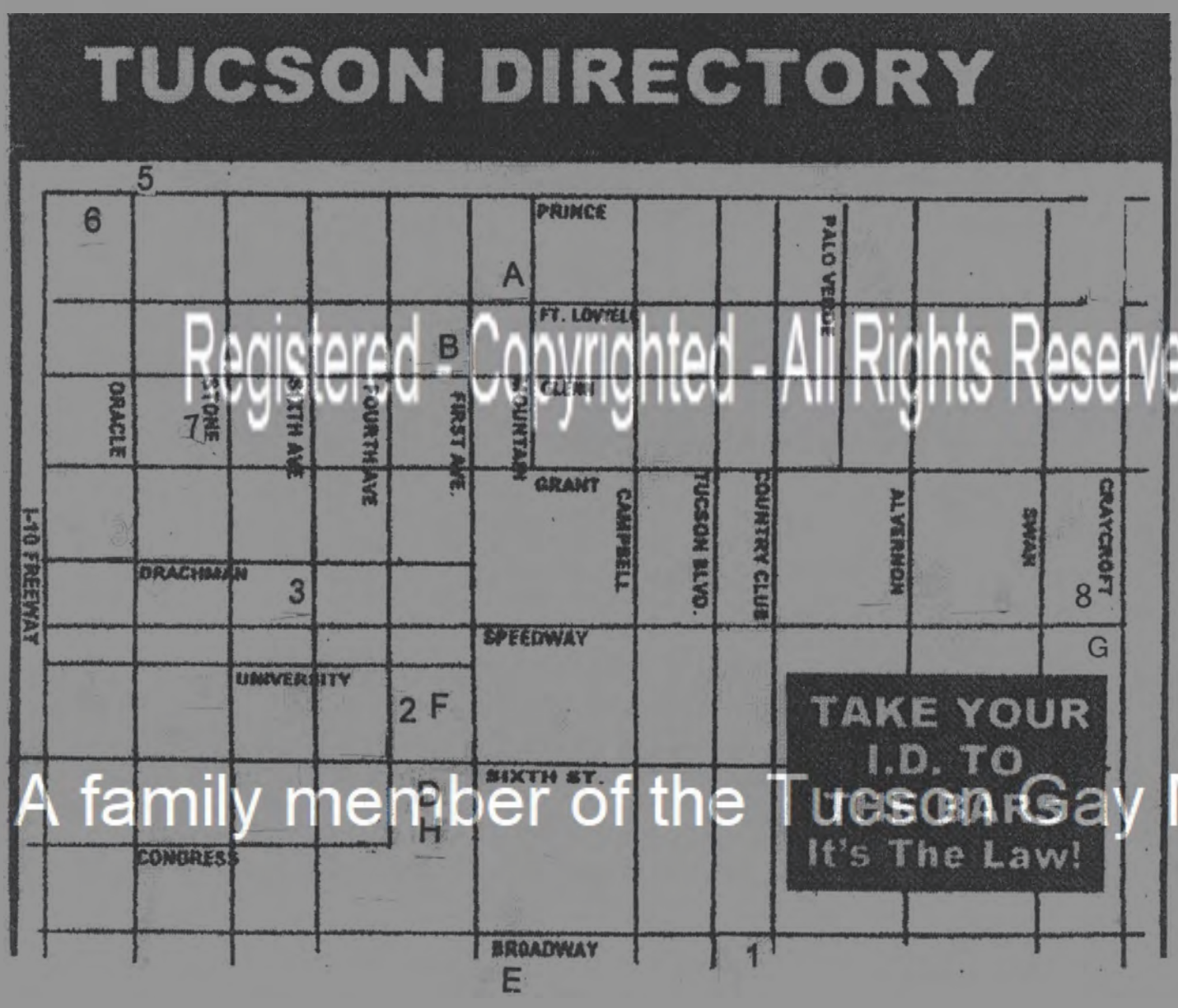

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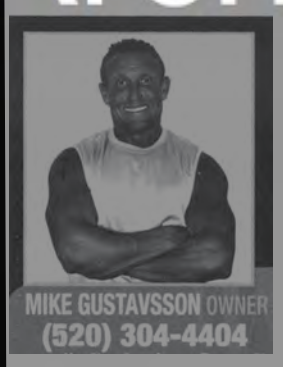

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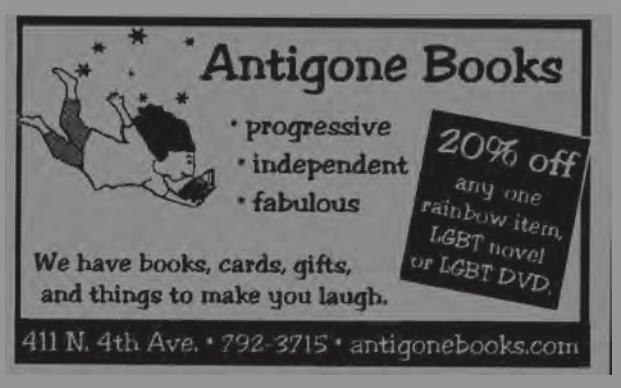

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CANCER SUPPORT GROUP for Lesbians, Bisexuals, Trans, Queer, Women. Meets Mondays (6:00 - 7:30pm) at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th Street, Tucson, AZ 85701. For more info, pleases contact Brenda Casey, LMSW 520-694-0247 or bcassey@umcaz.edu

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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

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SOUTHERN ARIZONA GENDER ALLIANCE (SAGA). The Southwest's largest transgender and gender-diversity advocacy organization. Speakers and panelists available. General meetings monthly on the 1st Mondays at 7pm; Dezert Girlz (MTF Support) meets 2nd Mondays at 7pm; Dezert Boyz (FTM Support) meets 3rd Tuesdays at 7pm. Also serving partners, youth, intersex, service providers and allies. Call (520)624-1779 x26 for more info.

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT GROUP FOR ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLES. Not a dating club. Discreet. Meetings every Monday evening. Call for more info. APEX (Arizona Power Exchange) 602-415_1123. 24-hr multi-choice message including information, calendar and location.

ARIZONA AIDS POLICY ALLIANCE (AZAPA) seeks to educate legislators and citizens about sound AIDS policy. For more information write AZAPA, 6523 N. 14th St., #112, Phoenix, AZ 85014 or call 602-279-4805.

DESERT DOMINION, whose focus is providing information and education for people interested in the BDSM lifestyle, meets monthly for group discussion and social events. Visit our web site http://www.desertdominion.org or call (520)792-6424

SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS. Starting this February, the Tucson Rape crisis Center will be providing free confidential group services for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender survivors of all manner of sexual assault. Interested persons please call Mirto Stone, MSW, at 327-1171 (if unavailable leave message with phone number.

GLSEN - Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network meets first Thursday of every month at 4:30pm at Wingspan, 425 E.7th Street. 743-4800.

SAA (Sex Addicts Anonymous) has 5 meetings a week in Tucson. People who wish to stop their compulsive sexual behavior, please call (520) 745-0775 for current information.

TUCSON GREATER SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION. Interested? Call Kelly Quinn, (520)906-0669 and or Mona Garcia 256-8728.

LUTHERANS CONCERNED - Tucson chapter for Gay/Lesbian Lutherans meets 3rd Sunday, 5:30 p.m. each month at Lutheran Church of the Foothills, 5102 N. Craycroft Rd. For information visit www.lctucson.org or write: Lutherans Concerned/Tucson, P.O. Box 40702, Tucson, AZ 85717-0702.

REVEILLE MEN'S CHORUS rehearses Monday evenings 7_10pm at the Historic Y, corner of University Blvd. And 5th Ave. Join us!! Call 304-1758 for more info.

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 toSAGE-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.
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.: 406-0740

TUCSON LATINO M2M - http://groups.yahoo.com.TucsonM2M A social group for Tucson and Sonora Latinos, and those who appreciate them.

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BUZZ FLASHES

Hathaway Quits Catholicism For Gay Brother

NEW YORK (Observer Update) - Oscar nominee Anne Hathaway tells GQ Magazine she and her parents have left the Catholic church because of the religion's views on gay issues. Hathaway, whose brother is gay, says she and her parents became Episcopalians shortly after he came out.

"The whole family converted to Episcopalianism after my elder brother came out," she said. "Why should I support an organization that has a limited view of my beloved brother?"

Hathaway, who has been a vocal champion of gay rights since starring in Brokeback Mountain, says she isn't quite at home with the Episcopalian Church either: "So I'm... nothing (no denomination). F**k it, I'm forming. I'm a work in progress."

Gay NY Teen's Harassment Suit Gets Federal Notice

Mohawk, NY (Observer Update) - The U.S. Department of Justice is seeking to intervene in a gay harassment lawsuit against a New York school district that it says raises important civil rights issues, 365Gay.com reported.

Settlement talks continue in the federal civil rights lawsuit brought by a junior high student last summer against the Mohawk Central School District. The suit claims officials failed to stop harassment by classmates of a male student who didn't conform to gender stereotypes. The boy, now 15, is not named in the lawsuit.

Superintendent Joyce Caputo says the district denies allegations in the lawsuit. But she stresses that it is working with the New York Civil Liberties Union and the Justice Department to settle the suit.

Ranks Still Divided On Gays In Military

SAVANNAH, GA (Observer Update) - The question of whether gays should serve openly in the military remains divisive among the rank and file, even as the Pentagon studies whether to end its ban, reported advocate.com.

The Pentagon's top uniformed officer, Adm. Mike Mullen, told the Senate he's personally opposed to the policy of "don't ask, don't tell." His comments raised expectations that the military may be relaxing its attitude about gays. The Army's Facebook page was swamped with comments, pro and con, after Mullen's testimony.

It's hard to gauge what active duty personnel think. Many are shy about publicly debating policy because they're prohibited from voicing opposition to Pentagon policies and presidential orders. But several veterans contacted by The Associated Press spoke freely and landed on both sides of the debate.

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Pioneering AIDS Hospital Faces Closure

NEW YORK (Observer Update) - St. Vincent's Hospital Manhattan, a Greenwich Village institution with inextricable links to the history of the AIDS epidemic in New York City, is in danger of closing, reported advocate.com.

According to The New York Times, the struggling hospital is $700 million in debt and needed a state loan to make payroll this week. A last-minute takeover deal from a local hospital consortium was scrapped this week after negative community reaction to the proposal, which would have eliminated emergency room services and left St. Vincent's almost exclusively an outpatient hospital.

Because of its location at an epicenter of the HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1980s, the Roman Catholic hospital became one of the first and most experienced to treat the disease. It is a setting of the Tony award-winning play Angels in America by Tony Kushner. The state has agreed to keep the hospital afloat for a month while the search for a long-term solution continues, reports the Times.

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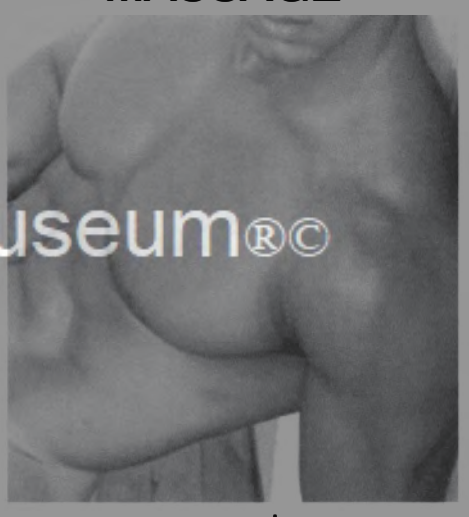

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DAILY BAR CALENDAR

SUNDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm - 2am It's Latin Sunday like the good ol' days. Catch DJ Dmenace spinning the best Cumbias. Get your Bucket of Beer ... 5 Bud Bottles for $5!

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 - Closed for employee training.

COLORS - Open 4pm-10pm. Happy Hour4-7pm $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 and Game Night all night long. Play Wii, beer pong and pool with the staff.

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 8pm

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.

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. Happy Hour 5-8pm. Wild Wednesday 18+ Party with DJ White Shadow spinning the hottest Hip Hop, R&B and top 40 remix dance of today. 21+ NO COVER. 18+ $8 Cover.

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 Dance with DJ Clint 9 til close..

THURSDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Happy Hour 5-8pm. Y-NOT Karaoke 9pm-2am with Meco pouring the best drinks in town. Come out and play.

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 Skyy 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. Happy Hour 5-8 pm. GoGo Fridays with 2-4-1 drinks for the ladies til midnight. Catch Shorty spinning the hottest Hip Hop, R&B and Top 40 remix dance of today.

. 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. Latin night with Latin Drag Show the 1st, 3rd and 4th Saturdays of the month. DJ Dmenace spinnin' the best Cumbias, Salsa & Merengue. $3 pitchers and $2 Tequila shotz all night long!

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.

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Bar Calendar

Upcoming Bar Events

Saturday, February 13
COYOTE MOON - The live band 'Too Much Information'

Sunday, February 14
IBT'S - Valentine's Day

Tuesday, February 16
IBT'S - Fat Tuesday (Mardi Gras)

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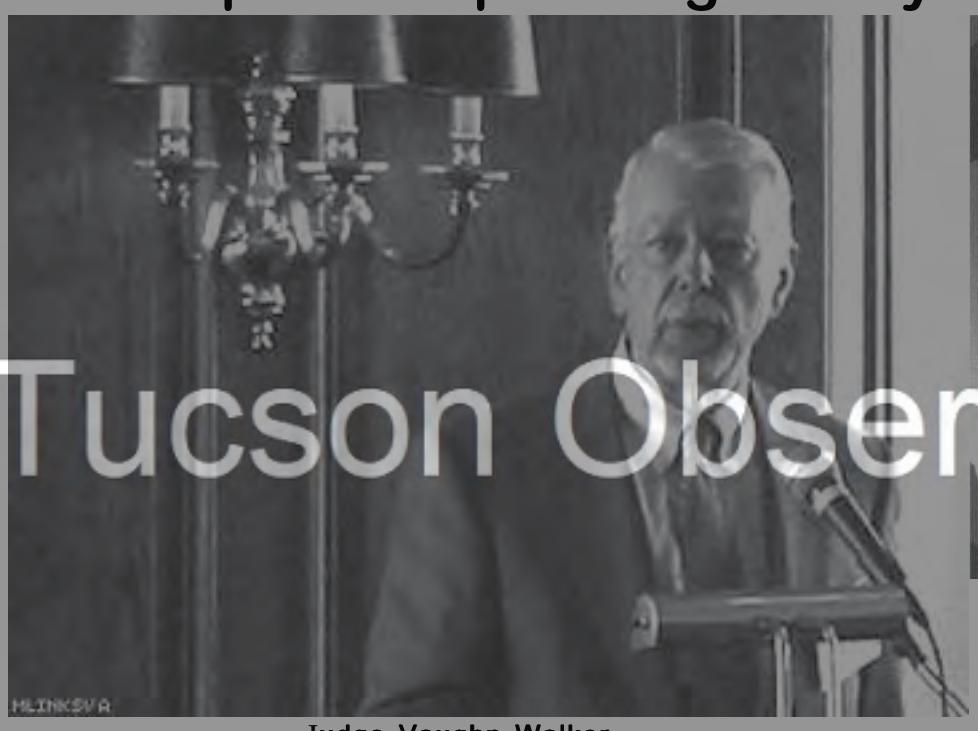
NOM Reports Prop. 8 Judge Is Gay



Judge Vaughn Walker

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (Observer Update) - National Organization for Marriage executive director Brian Brown has responded to the San Francisco Chronicle's column reporting that federal judge Vaughn Walker, who is presiding over the Prop. 8 case, is gay, attacking the judge not for his sexual orientation but for being biased, advocate.com.

A column in the Chronicle called Walker's sexual orientation the "biggest open secret in the landmark trial over same-sex marriage." Brown, in a blog post on NOM's website, says he has no idea if the article is true, but says Walker has taken a one-sided stance throughout the trial. Reads Brown's statement: "In a story this Sunday, the San Francisco Chronicle reported that Prop 8 Judge Vaughn Walker is gay and called his orientation 'the biggest open secret in the landmark trial over same-sex marriage.' We have no idea whether the report is true or not. But we do know one really big important fact about Judge Walker: He's been an amazingly biased and one-sided force throughout this trial, far more akin to an activist than a neutral referee. That's no secret at all. Protect Marriage, the defendants in this case, are effectively being held hostage by Judge Walker and cannot really comment. ...

"Judge Walker's bias has been so extreme, he's earned a rare judicial 'twofer.' Key elements of his 'fishing expedition' rulings were already reversed by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals (notably one of the most liberal in the nation) and the Supreme Court had to step in to block his illegal attempt to broadcast the trial. It is highly unusual for a higher court to have to intercede in a trial judge's handling of a trial while it is going on – yet Walker has had that 'distinction' twice in the same case – and we're not yet even at closing arguments. There's only one saving grace to Judge Walker's bias. It's so big, and so obvious, not only the American public but the Supreme Court itself is already aware we have bias in the trial judge presiding."

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N.J. Group Ends Giving To Political Parties

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TRENTON, NJ (Observer Update) - Garden State Equality, which suffered a heartbreaking marriage equality defeat in the New Jersey state legislature last month, announced that it would stop making financial contributions to political parties and urged its individual members to do the same.

According to a news release from Garden State Equality, the 85-member board of directors of the state's largest civil rights group voted unanimously for the new bylaws provision, which precludes the organization from giving financial contributions to political parties and their affiliated committees. Under the new policy, the group will contribute only to individual candidates and to pro-LGBT nonparty organizations. Garden State Equality urged its 65,000 members to follow the policy in their individual giving.

"No political party has a record good enough on LGBT civil rights that it can rightfully claim to be entitled to our money on a party-wide basis," said Steven Goldstein, chair of Garden State Equality, in the news release. "No longer will we let any political party take our money and volunteers with one hand, and slap us in the face with the other when we seek full equality."

The new bylaws provision says that Garden State Equality sends "two unmistakable signals to our political parties" with the resolution: "That none should take the support of the LGBT community and its allies for granted, and that none should write off the potential to earn the support of the LGBT community and its allies."

New Jersey, which offers some of the country's strongest gay rights protections including civil unions, appeared on track to pass marriage equality legislation until Gov. Jon Corzine lost his bid for reelection in November. The new governor, Chris Christie, has vowed to veto any marriage equality bill passed during his term. Garden State Equality plans to take the marriage equality battle back to court.