Observing Tucson And The Greater Arizona Community

OBSERVER

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Tucson Observer Archives

Lawmakers Urge End To G/L Immigration Discrimination

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - A group of 60 senators and representatives, led by U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wisc., signed a letter urging President Barack Obama and members of Congress to end discrimination against LGBT immigrant families, reported 365Gaycom.

The letter states, "tens of thousands of binational families are either already living separately, face imminent separation, or have left the U.S. entirely in order to remain together. This is unacceptable, and we believe comprehensive immigration reform legislation must include a strong family reunification component inclusive of LGBT families."

The current immigration law does not allow LGBT Americans to sponsor their partners – mainly due to a lack of marriage recognition.

According to 2000 Census data compiled by the Williams Institute, a UCLA-based think tank that focuses on sexual orientation, more than 36,000 LGBT binational Americans would benefit by having the ability to sponsor their partners for residency. And almost half of those families – 47 percent – are raising children.

Until changes are made, the members of Congress contend the current situation is punishing families.

"No one should be forced to choose between the person they love and the country they call home." the letter states. "It is time that our immigration laws kept families together instead of tearing them apart."

Currently at least 20 countries, including Canada, the United Kingdom and Israel, allow citizens and legal residents to sponsor their same-sex partners for immigration purposes, according to the Williams Institute.

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75% Back Letting Gays And Lesbians Serve Openly

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - Three-quarters of Americans say that they support openly gay people serving in the U.S. military, according to a new Washington Post-ABC News poll, a finding that could lend momentum to the Obama administration's effort to dismantle the policy known as "don't ask, don't tell."

The Huffington Post reported civilian and military officials held their first meetings this week to begin a year-long review of "don't ask, don't tell," which forbids commanders to ask about service members' sexuality and requires the discharge of openly gay men and women. President Obama called for the policy's repeal last month in his State of the Union address, and the military's top civilian and military leadership has also expressed personal support for a repeal.

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates last week appointed Gen. Carter F. Ham, commander of U.S. Army forces in Europe, and Jeh C. Johnson, Defense Department general counsel, lead a team to study a possible repeal.

Ham flew from Germany to Washington this week to meet with Johnson, according to senior defense officials, but most meetings were postponed because of the snowstorm that paralyzed the capital. They and their team hope to deliver recommendations to Gates by mid-March on how to revise the current policy to de-emphasize "third-party outings" -- when another person reveals a service member's homosexuality – according to several military officials. The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak on the record.

Once the study is complete, the Pentagon team will determine how best to survey active-duty service members and their families on any change in the policy. Some officials favor asking the Rand Corp. to provide an updated version of the 1993 study it conducted.

The percentage of Americans who say they support gays openly serving is the same as a Post-ABC News poll found in July 2008; both are far above the 44 percent who said so in May 1993. In the new poll, majorities across party lines favor such a policy, with support among Democrats (82 percent) and independents (77 percent) higher than among Republicans (64 percent).

The poll also reveals several sharp demographic divides. Men (65 percent) and seniors (69 percent) are far less likely than are women (84 percent) and young adults (81 percent under age 30) to say that gays should be allowed to serve if they have disclosed their sexual orientation. Knowing a gay person makes a big difference: Among those who say they have a gay friend or family member, 81 percent support allowing gay people to serve openly, compared with 66 percent who say they do not know someone who is gay.

Lesbian Weds Male Stranger In Protest

BUFFALO (Observer Update) - Irish American lesbian Kitty Lambert (pictured above center) and her longtime partner Cheryl attempted to apply for a marriage license, reported the Irish Times. When her request was denied, Lambert turned to the crowd that had gathered, reported the Irish Times.

With news cameras rolling, Kitty asked for any male who would be willing to get married to her. A gay man named Ed, a total stranger to her, stepped forward and volunteered. They briefly exchanged information and presented the appropriate documents along with $40. City staff verified the information, and proceeded to give them a marriage license. Kitty's point in approaching the City Clerk for a marriage license is that there is no religious basis for marriage, and it serves only as a legally binding contract in our society.

Instead of being offered the ability to receive a license with her long-term partner, she was able to secure a license with a total stranger, strictly based on their gender.

So there you have it. You don't have to be gay to see how discriminatory and insupportable the denial of equality to gay people has become. This was not an act of civil disobedience here. The whole point, in fact, is that she was being obedient to the law. Most people have made on their minds on this issue and this action won't change it. But it will make the discrimination a good deal more insupportable.

A family member of the Tucson Gay Museum

SAGE Awarded $900 K Federal Grant

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius today announced an award totaling $900,000 over three years to Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE) to establish the nation's first national resource center to assist communities that provide services for older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals, reported 365Gay.com.

"The Resource Center will provide information, assistance and resources for both mainstream aging organizations and LGBT organizations and will provide assistance to LGBT individuals as they plan for future long-term care needs," said Secretary Sebelius. The Resource Center will provide training to aging service providers and LGBT agencies nationwide, and will offer critically important educational tools to LGBT older people, a statement said.

"The creation of a National Technical Assistance Resource Center for LGBT Elders is a monumental step forward for the LGBT community," said Michael Adams, Executive Director of SAGE. "We are confident that . . . we will make a difference in the lives of every LGBT older person in every community in this country."

SAGE is the nation's oldest and largest organization serving LGBT older adults. In creating the Resource Center, SAGE will forge a partnership with 10 organizations with expertise in a wide range of areas including mainstream aging, LGBT aging, culture change and competency and program evaluation. The Resource Center will engage, empower and support mainstream aging providers, LGBT providers and LGBT older adults to ensure that LGBT elders have the necessary and culturally appropriate supports and services to

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UPDATE

3rd Annual In The Life Celebration, Feb 19-21

PHOENIX (Observer Update) - Soul Purpose AZ is having its 3rd Annual In the Life Celebration in Phoenix, AZ on February 19-21. This is a Black History Month event to recognize and honor African American lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals for their contributions to the community as a whole. The theme of this year's celebration is In Unity Lies Strength.

Building upon the success of last year's Celebration, the 2010 Conference will offer film screenings, workshops, displays and networking opportunities at the Wyndham Phoenix Resort in Downtown Phoenix. We expect over 300 members of the community to participate. The event kicks off with a reception at the beautiful Wyndham Phoenix Resort in Downtown Phoenix.

The event will offer all day workshops and a Fashion Show. During the show Soul Purpose AZ will recognize allies who make contributions to the Black and LGBT community and the event wraps up with a morning worship service and ending with a delicious brunch. All are invited to register for the event online at thesoulpurposeaz.com.

Senior Pride Breakfast Feb. 27

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Come join Senior Pride on Saturday, February 27, 9:30 a.m. for breakfast at the Royal Sun Restaurant, 1015 N. Stone Ave., just south of Speedway.

Senior Pride will meet in a separate dining room and order individually from the menu.

All are welcome, as usual! Come meet others in our community and share conversation and ideas for future senior events. Please call Lee or Merlin at (520) 207-5336 to RSVP.

Invisible Theatre Benefit Performance For PFLAG Scholarship Fund

TUCSON (Observer Update) - The Invisible Theater of Tucson has graciously offered to do a benefit performance of "Iron Kisses" for PFLAG. All funds raised will be used for scholarships. "Iron Kisses" is about a gay man's relationship with his sister and parents and how his parents cope with his being gay, a theme fundamental to PFLAG's mission. The man invites his parents to his wedding in San Francisco, which creates a quandary for them even though they are generally accepting of who he is.

The benefit performance will be Sunday, February 28, at 7:30 pm, and tickets will be $25. For this performance only, reservations must be made through PFLAG Tucson by contacting Donna Rochester at 577-7967, donna@jchristopherdesign.com. PFLAG must purchase all 80 seats at a base price and gets to keep any money above this. We are thus hoping for strong community support. PFLAG will provide free wine, cheese, and desserts following the play.

The Invisible Theater is located at 1400 N. First Avenue at Drachman, one block west of Euclid Avenue and three blocks north of Speedway Boulevard.

What Is SAGA?

TUCSON (Observer Update) - The Southern Arizona Gender Alliance (SAGA) envisions a society where transgender and transsexual people are ensured of their basic rights and can be open, honest, and safe at home, at work, and in the community.

To achieve this goal, SAGA offers support, social, and discussion groups that reflect the various aspects of gender and society. We also provide educational forums and trainings for businesses, service providers, and community members to learn more about the issues facing transgender, transsexual, intersex, and gender-variant people and their significant others, friends, families, and allies, and we provide information on how our allies can be supportive and inclusive.

For more information, go online to sagatucson.org.

Tucson's GLBT Commission

TUCSON (Observer Update) - The mission of the Tucson Commission on GLBT Issues is to foster conditions that promote the welfare of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people of metropolitan Tucson, Arizona through education, advocacy and collaborative and advisory relationships with government, community organizations, businesses and individuals.

The City of Tucson Commission on GLBT Issues was originally formed in November 1998 as a mayoral task force, and became an independent city commission in July 1999. It remains one of the only government-sanctioned independent commissions on issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity in the United States. Since its founding, the Commission has initiated a number of projects and successfully advocated for issues of concern to the community. Among the Commission's accomplishments include:

Establishment of the City of Tucson Domestic Partnership Registry

Addition of gender identity to City civil rights protections

Development of the Recommended Standards of Practice for the Provision of Quality Health

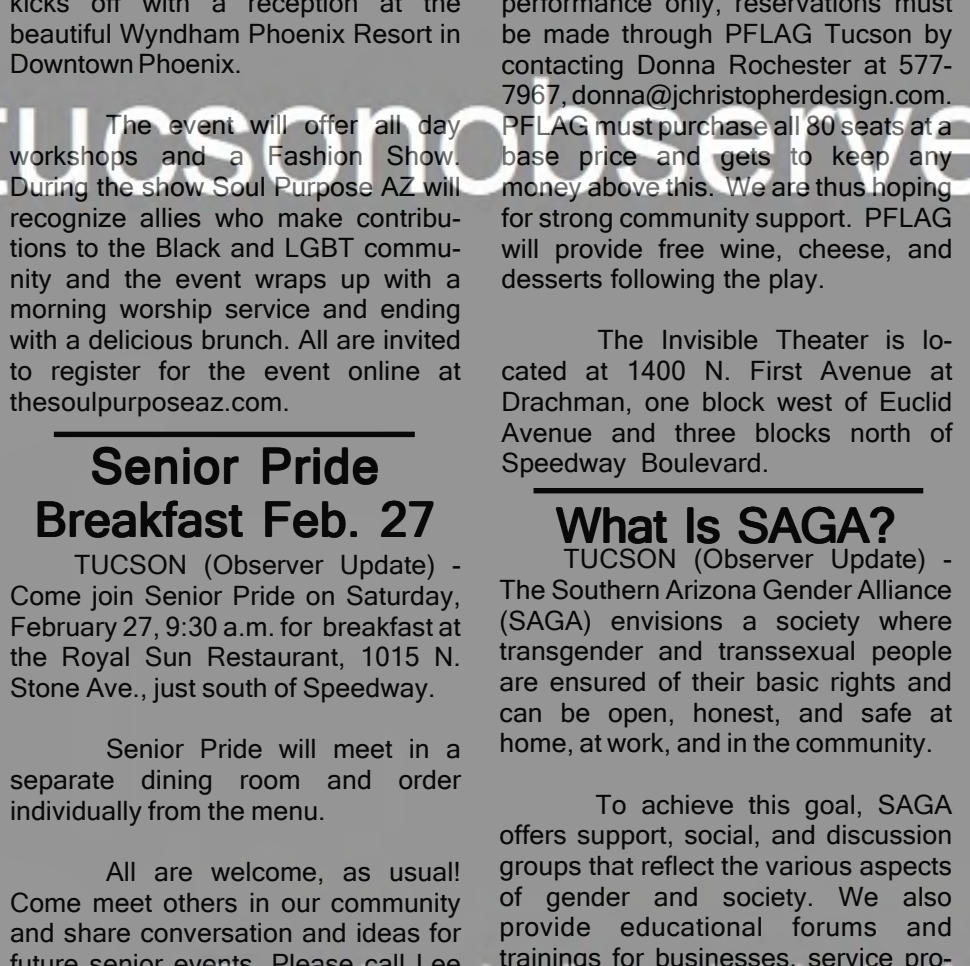
Care and Social Services for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Clients

Conducting a community survey on GLBT social Climate in Tucson

Meetings are held the third Tuesday of the month beginning at 5:30 PM at the Ward 1 City Council Office, 940 West Alameda. (The offices are located on the corner of Grande and West Alameda. West Alameda is south of St Mary's and north of Congress off Grande.) Meetings are open to the public, and there will be a call to the audience at each meeting. Meeting agendas are posted each month at both the City Hall and at the Wingspan Community Center a day or more before the monthly meeting of the commission. The Tucson Commission on Gay Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Issues complies with open meeting laws.

Please remember that the GLBT Commission, under the open meeting laws cannot discuss or take other action on a matter raised at a meeting, unless that matter is on the posted agenda for discussion or action. However, you may raise a matter to the Commission, and may request follow up attention from the Commission, including placement on a future agenda or follow up action from a subcommittee of the commission.

For more information, call (520) 791-4213.



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Informing the Community
The Observer

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UPDATE

'Something Wicked This Way' Comes To Tucson

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Broadway in Tucson and UApresents are proud to announce a new partnership to bring Broadway's biggest musical to Southern Arizona. The two organizations will co-present WICKED from January 5 – 23, 2011 at Centennial Hall on the campus of The University of Arizona.

"The Nederlander Organization has been proud to host WICKED in its theaters in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles as well as to present it in many of its other markets around the country," said Jack Meyer, Vice President of Programming for Nederlander. "Tucson audiences have been asking for this show for years and we are thrilled to partner with UApresents on this premiere engagement."

UA President Robert Shelton remarked, "I'm delighted that UApresents and Broadway in Tucson are collaborating to bring this wonderful production to Tucson and to the University of Arizona campus. I saw WICKED on Broadway and I can't wait to see it on the great stage at Centennial Hall."

WICKED is the untold story of the witches of Oz. Long before Dorothy drops in, two other girls meet in the land of Oz. One - born with emerald green skin - is smart, fiery and misunderstood. The other is beautiful, ambitious and very popular. WICKED tells the story of their remarkable odyssey, how these two unlikely friends grow to become the Wicked Witch of the West and Glinda the Good. WICKED has "cast quite a spell" (Washington Post) throughout North America, breaking box office records in every city that it has played, including Toronto, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington, DC, Philadelphia and Boston to name a few.

Called "a cultural phenomenon" Variety and just named "the defining musical of the decade" by The New York Times, WICKED continues to thrill audiences around the world. There are currently eight productions of WICKED worldwide, including two North American tours, a Broadway production, productions in San Francisco, London and in Australia, a Japanese-language and a German-language production. A Dutch-language production of WICKED will open in 2011.

Tickets for WICKED will be exclusively available to current season ticket holder of either Broadway in Tucson or UApresents beginning later this month. Become a season ticket holder today to Broadway in Tucson or UApresents and be eligible to renew later this month and secure your WICKED tickets before the general public. Sales for groups of 20+ will begin later this spring. Individual tickets will go on sale in the fall. For more information on WICKED, please visit broadwayintucson.com/shows_wicked.html or uapresents.org/purchase/wicked.php. You may also call (520) 903-2929, ext. 0 or email questions to info@broadwayintucson.com. Please visit the official website for WICKED at wickedthemusical.com/.

Ten More Good Years: A Free Film Screening & Discussion, Feb. 23

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Ten More Good Years is a documentary that explores the unique challenges of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender older adults and will be shown Feb 23, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m., TMC Senior Services, Seniors Classroom, 1400 N Wilmot Rd.

Ten More Good Years introduces remarkable LGBT Elders who share inspiring stories of their lives and Queer History. It is through these stories that the governmental and social injustices quietly reveal themselves, shedding light on what it is now, and what it will be to grow old and Gay in America. Outdated tax laws, Medicaid and Medicare regulations, Social Security and inheritance laws, a lack of Cultural Competency within Social Services, and the need for non-discriminatory housing are all issues currently facing the Elder LGBT population. Ten More Good Years corroborates these injustices through coast to coast interviews with gerontologists, social service workers, Lawyers from NCLR, Senior Strategists from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, along with a host of other credible figures.

Ten More Good Years also investigates the process and outcome of the 2005 White House Conference on Aging (WHCoA), an event scheduled every ten years to guide national policies on aging. Co-sponsored by Wingspan Senior Pride and the Pima Council on Aging. Refreshments provided. For more information, call the Pima Council on Aging (520) 546-2006.

What Is The Tucson Community Speaker's Bureau?

TUCSON (Observer Update) - The Tucson Community Speakers Bureau is an informal, grassroots group of individuals and organizations working together to provide culturally competent information and training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and related concerns (SOGI). We provide speakers and panelists for classes, groups, and organizations. Our members are individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer (LGBTQ), intersex, and related identities, or as partners, family, friends, and other allies. Each has a unique story to tell about their journey. Some are professional speakers and experts on the SOGI topics; others are simply volunteers living everyday lives who want to help change the way society views and responds to these minority populations.

Our FREE 60-120 minute presentations "LGBTQQIA 101? and "Gender Identity 101? are available upon request to government agencies, businesses, congregations, classrooms, and other groups in the Tucson metro/Pima County area. Please allow a minimum of 30 days notice prior to your event to ensure we have enough time to fulfill your request-especially for weekday events.

We can also develop presentations on specific topics such as healthcare, behavioral health, violence and oppression, spirituality, law enforcement, policy and advocacy, and more. Depending on the topic and depth of the training, we reserve the right to request a fee for services/expenses. (Donations always appreciated.) We may also refer you to one of our collaborating partners to address your specific request. To request a speaker, go online to lgbtqa.com/speakers/.

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COMMENTARY. . . .

by John Corvino

How To Define A Gay Marriage

Since my recent column discussing the "definitional argument" against marriage equality, I've learned something unsurprising:

There is no single, standard "definitional argument." There are, rather, various definitional arguments, and part of the problem is pinning down which one our opponents intend.

In the hope of advancing the debate–or at least of showing that the moving target is indeed moving–I'd like to distinguish, and briefly respond to, four versions. I'll give them names for convenience:

1. The "Logical Impossibility" Version:

This, in some ways, is the purest definitional argument against same-sex marriage. It is also the silliest. Here's Alliance Defense Fund attorney Jeffery Ventrella:

"[T]o advocate same-sex 'marriage' is logically equivalent to seeking to draw a 'square circle': One may passionately and sincerely persist in pining about square circles, but the fact of the matter is, one will never be able to actually draw one."

And again,

"The public square has no room for square circles, because like the Tooth Fairy, they do not really exist."

Of course we don't have room for things that don't exist….precisely because they don't exist. Which is why we don't bother arguing against square circles or passing constitutional amendments banning them. It would be pointless.

By contrast, people fight same-sex marriage because it DOES exist: in five states and various foreign countries. If same-sex marriage really were like a square circle, Ventrella could simply ignore it. That he doesn't is telling.

2. The "Obscuring Differences" Version:

This version, which is related to the first, states that same-sex relationships and opposite-sex relationships are so different that using the word "marriage" to apply to both would obscure a fundamental distinction in nature. As Maggie Gallagher puts it, "Politicians can pass a bill saying a chicken is a duck and that doesn't make it true. Truth matters."

Note that the objection is not that using terms this way would have bad consequences–confusing the butcher, for example–but that it would fail to divide up the world correctly. Even if nobody noticed or cared, such usage would blur a real boundary in nature.

The problem (as I argued previously) is that marriage is a human institution, the boundaries of which are drawn and redrawn for human purposes.

3. The "Bad Consequences" Version:

But what if such redrawing had bad consequences? This, I think, is the real concern driving the definitional arguments. Gallagher, for example, thinks that defining "marriage" to include gays and lesbians would ultimately erode the institution.

David Blankenhorn has similar concerns. Indeed, his own version of the argument makes the consequentialist undercurrent apparent: instead of square circles or duck-chickens, Blankenhorn asks us to imagine what would happen if the word "ballet" were used to refer to all forms of dance.

Of course redefining "ballet" that way would be bad. But that's because doing so would frustrate human aims. If you go to the theater to see ballet and end up getting Riverdance instead, you'll likely be upset or disappointed.

Would extending marriage to gays and lesbians frustrate human aims in a similar way? Marriage-equality opponents like Blankenhorn and Gallagher certainly think so. Specifically, they think it would sever marriage from its core function of binding children to their mothers and fathers.

But now it seems that the definitional point is no longer doing any argumentative work. The real objection here is that same-sex marriage harms society. If that's the objection, let's focus on it directly.

4. The Constitutional-Law Version:

There is, however, a fourth version of the definitional argument, one specifically related to the constitutional debate.

Legal advocates for marriage equality–such as Ted Olson and David Boies, who are challenging California's Prop. 8–often argue that gays and lesbians deserve the freedom to marry because of the Fourteenth Amendment's equal-protection and due-process guarantees. But if same-sex marriage involves CHANGING the definition of marriage, opponents contend, the Fourteenth-Amendment argument falters.

According to this version of the definitional argument, gays and lesbians are not being denied equal access to an existing institution, they are asking for an existing institution to be re-defined. There may well be good reasons for redefining it. But that is a matter for legislatures to decide, not courts.

This version is more subtle than the others, and addressing it fully requires more space than I have here. But my quick response would be that marriage caselaw over the last four decades suggests that male-female isn't a defining element in the way this argument requires.

Consider for example Griswold v. Connecticut (1965), which affirmed the right of married couples to purchase contraceptives, and Turner v. Safley (1987), which affirmed the right of prisoners to marry. Marriage is defined by its core purposes, and those purposes do not necessarily require (actual or potential) procreation.

The fact is that same-sex couples fall in love and commit their lives to each other for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, until death do they part.

And if it looks like a duck and walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, then legally speaking it ought to be treated like a duck.

(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.)

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Vigils Honor The Memory Of A Murdered 15-Year-Old

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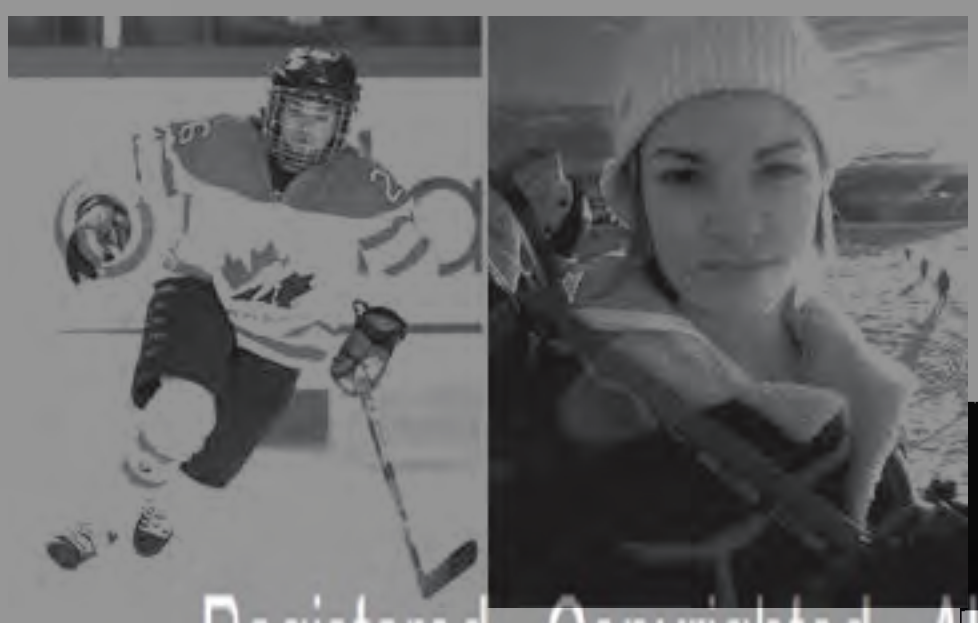
A family member of the Tucson Gay Museum

OXNARD (Observer Update) - Friday, February 12, marked the second anniversary of the death of Lawrence King, the 15-year-old gay boy who was killed at his school, E.O Green Junior High School in Oxnard, Calif. Classmate Brandon McInerney has been charged with King's murder and will go on trial in May, reported advocate.com.

King led a short and troubled life, as his biological father abandoned his family and his biological mother failed to take care of him because of her drug addiction. King came out when he was 10 and was bullied by classmates. After King transferred to E.O. Green in the seventh grade, he began wearing women's clothing, high heels, and makeup. According to Newsweek, a couple of days before King's death, King asked McInerney to be his valentine, which McInerney declined as his friends made fun of him. An irritated McInerney told one of King's friends, "Say goodbye to your friend Larry because you're never going to see him again."

Many organizations are hosting vigils and remembrance ceremonies across the country. For more information visit RememberingLawrence.org.

This Just In: Meet Your 2010 Lesbian Olympians



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VANCOUVER (Observer Update) - The 2010 Winter Olympics have begun and after sifting through 2,500 women (and dozens of rumors), AfterEllen.com has confirmed four openly Lesbian athletes who will be competing in Vancouver.

Ireen Wüst, Netherlands – Speed Skating. Ireen Wüst is a speed skater from Goirle, Netherlands. She won the gold medal in the 3000m at the 2006 Olympics in Turin at the age of 19 (making her the youngest Dutch world champion ever). In Vancouver she will be competing in the the 1000m (Feb 18), the 1500m (Feb 21) and the 3000m (Feb 14). Wüst came out in November 2009, telling TVM Helden magazine that she has a girlfriend and is very happy.

Vibeke Skofterud, Norway – Cross-country Skiing . Vibeke Skofterud is a cross-country skier from Norway. Her best showing in previous Olympics came in Salt Lake City in 2002 with an eighth place win in the 30km. In 2008, Skofterud came out in the Norwegian magazine See and Hear, telling them that she'd known she was gay for a while: "I have gone many rounds with myself, and it has taken a lot of time to figure out. I was not always honest with my own feelings." She went on to say that she would live in a "dump site" as long as she could live with her girlfriend.

Sarah Vaillancourt, Canada – Hockey. Sarah Vaillancourt is a forward on the Canadian women's hockey team. She has been out and proud since her freshman year at Harvard, where she told local newspapers that if her coaches and teammates weren't comfortable with her sexuality, there was no point in her sticking around. Turns out they were comfortable with sexuality and with her ability put the puck in the net. (Sometimes it helps.) Team Canada is the top contender for the gold in Vancouver this winter.

Erika Holst, Sweden – Hockey. Erika Holst has been playing hockey with the Swedish women's national team since 2002, where they took home a bronze medal in Salt Lake City. In 2006, her team captured silver in Turin. Holst came out in 2006 along with her teammate Ylva Lindberg (who won't be competing in the 2010 Games). Holst is a high school hockey coach when she's not medaling at the Olympics.

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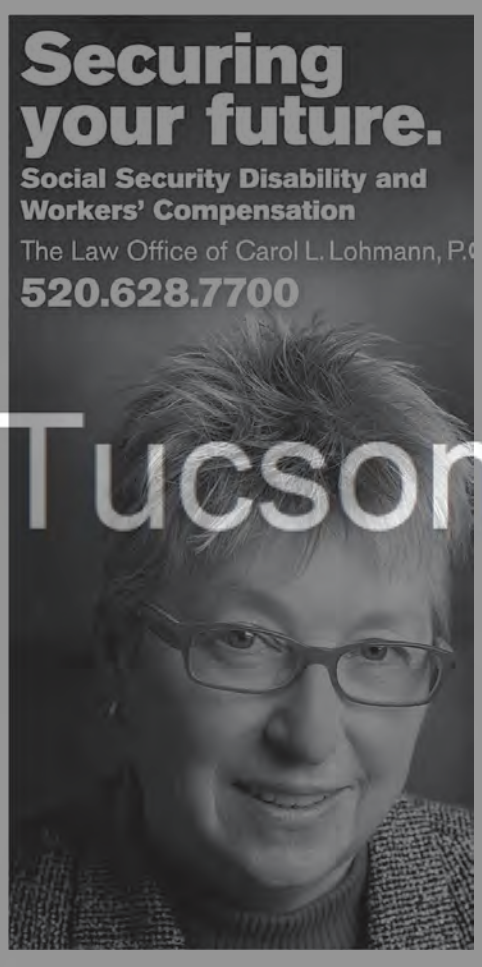

Gay Stock Car Announcer Gains National Exposure, Breaks Stereotypes

BOSTON (Observer Update) - Troy Germain has literally spent most of his life around the track, reported edgeboston.com. The Lancaster, N.H., native began to go to stock car races with his parents when he was five. A small track in nearby Groveton hired him and a local radio disk jockey in 1991 to announce their weekly races; but Germain took over after managers fired the DJ. The American Canadian Tour hired him to announce their races in 2001-the same year he came out to his now ex-wife.

"As I've come out and become more comfortable with who I am, I've become less afraid and more comfortable being myself around the officials," Germain told EDGE in a recent interview. Nearly two decades later, Germain's life continues to revolve around cars and the sport he loves. He currently works at a car dealership in St. Johnsbury, Vt., but he spends almost every weekend from April through October at tracks across New England, New York and Ontario and Québec in Canada. "In most cases, I feel like I'm just walking up to and chatting with a friend of mine to see what's new, to see the latest developments in their lives, in their careers," Germain said.

Germain has also begun to announce races on the national level. He announced the ACT's inaugural race at the New Hampshire International Speedway last September in front of 40,000 people. Germain also announced a nationally broadcast NASCAR race at the Texas Motor Speedway in 2007. "I'm looking to expand what I do into more national exposure," he said. Germain came out to the ACT in 2003. He conceded it remains tough to be the only openly gay man on the circuit-he said there are others about whom he knows, but they remain closeted. Germain said an e-mail Darla Hartt, vice president and general manager of the ACT, gave him the strength to come out to his colleagues. It read be yourself; be who you are and don't be afraid; just be.

Germain's dates and even boyfriends have become fixtures at ACT races, banquets and other events. Hartt told EDGE from her Waterbury, Vt., office Germain's experience on the tour is far different from that of a closeted gay man with whom she once worked. She categorized her interactions with her former boss as an "egg shell kind of experience," because he was afraid of how his colleagues would react to his sexual orientation if they found out about it. "I'm really proud and happy for Troy to be comfortable with whom he is; a Red Sox fan, a gay man or a race car announcer," she said. Hartt added she has never heard of anyone on the tour reacting negatively to Germain. "In the kind of work we do... we're all very busy and focused on the task at hand," she said.

Dave Moody, the host of Sirius Speedway who is also one of the Motor Racing Network's senior broadcasters, echoed Hartt. Germain succeeded him when he left the ACT in 2001. And Moody said Germain continues to garner the respect of the drivers and others with whom he works on the track. "Troy is Troy," Moody said. "Our business is performance driven. The only thing that matters is if you can or can't do his job. Troy is really good at his job."

Stereotypes continue to influence the way the public views stock car racing and motor sports in general. Moody said people continue to feel it is "kind of a red neck sport that evolved from moonshine runners..." and "an intolerant hillbilly sport." He said Germain's presence alone dispels them. "The misconception is that it is kind of a Southern redneck, boot culture, conservative... culture, and it's really not," Moody said as he further discussed Germain's presence on the tour. "He's kind of like the rest of us."

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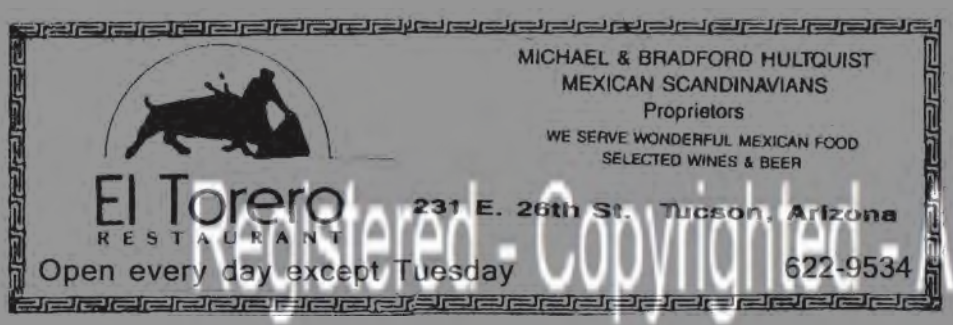

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Rhode Island Elects First Gay House Speaker

PROVIDENCE (Observer Update) - Gordon D. Fox was elected Rhode Island's first openly gay House Speaker on Thursday, the Providence Journal reported.

Fox was widely considered the front-runner in a three man race that included Representative Gregory Schadone, a Democrat from North Providence, and Robert Watson, a Republican from East Greenwich. Fox received the support of nearly three-quarters of the chamber's members, On Top Magazine reported.

In an interview with the paper last fall, Fox, who came out publicly in 2004, said he is "in a long-term relationship, but not officially married," and when he does marry, he would like to do it in his home state. Fox's ascension is likely to help make that a reality. Rhode Island is the only New England state that has not legalized gay marriage. Last year, Maine lawmakers approved a gay marriage bill, but opponents successfully repealed the law after a difficult fight that drew national attention to the state.

But lawmakers in the Ocean State have debated gay marriage for 13 years running. While Fox has kept mum about whether he would personally shepherd a gay marriage bill in the House, he's certainly in favor of gay marriage, having come out at a rally for proponents.

Rhode Island is following in the steps of the California Assembly, which selected 40-year-old John Perez - an openly gay man - as speaker last month.

Sage Awarded $900K Grant

Continued from Page One

successfully age in place. Assistant Secretary for Aging Kathy Greenlee explained: "AoA frequently turns to national organizations to support the Aging Network in their efforts to work with specific minority populations that are traditionally underserved. With the full support of the current Administration, we now recognize that LGBT older adults also represent a community with unique needs that must be addressed."

Among other tools, SAGE plans to develop a comprehensive, web-based clearinghouse targeting all three audiences. The clearinghouse will include diverse resources, social networking tools, an "Ask the Experts" service, web-based trainings and other features.

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GLAAD: Tweet John Mayer For Apology

John Mayer

LOS ANGELES (Observer Update) - The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, the media monitoring organization, issued a statement on its blog urging people to tweet John Mayer and ask him to apologize for using gay and racial slurs, advocate.com reported.

"We hope the intent behind his use of the F-word was not malicious," GLAAD's Entertainment Media Manager Jonathan Rosales wrote in the blog. "Mayer should be more cognizant of the impact his casual use of both slurs can have." In an interview with Playboy, Mayer used the gay epithet in addition to the n word for African Americans.

"Everyday, countless LGBT people including LGBT people of color are subjected to harassment, ridicule and even violence because of their sexual orientation or gender identity," Rosales continued. "We expect more from John Mayer and ask that he apologize." Mayer previously apologized for his use of the racial epithet on his Twitter account.

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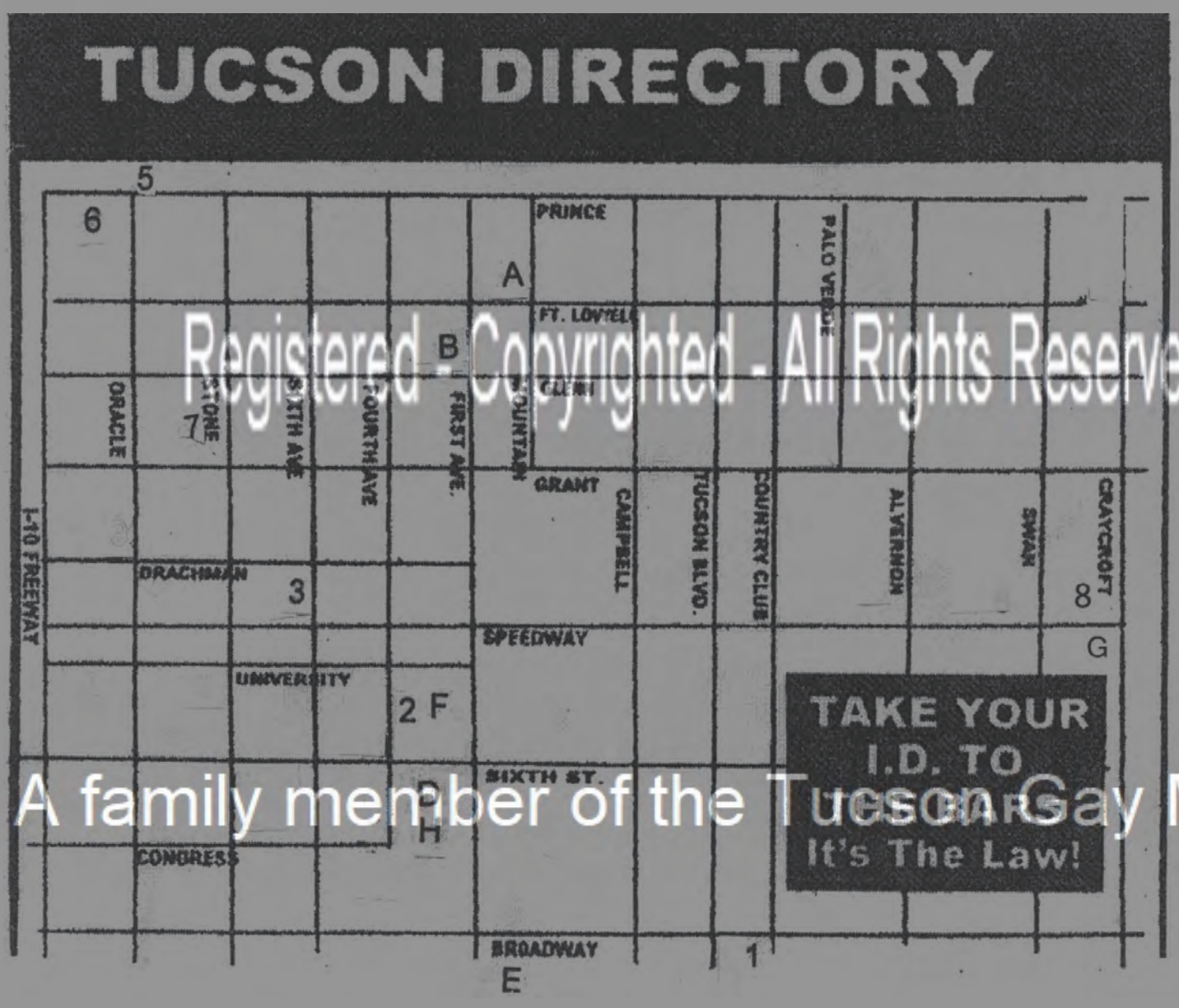

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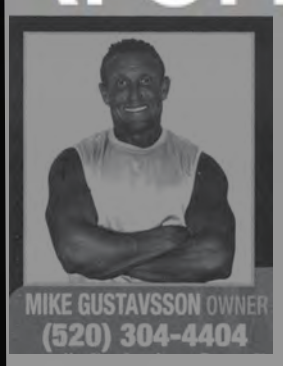

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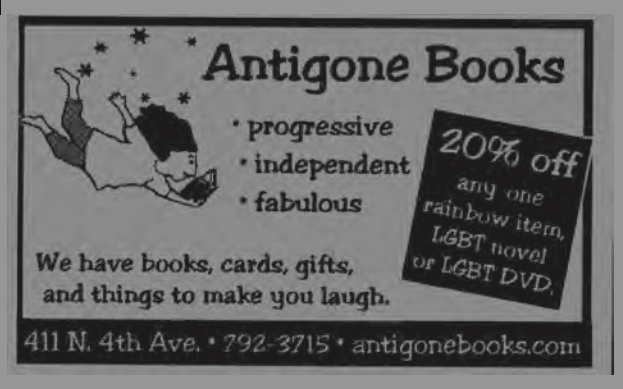

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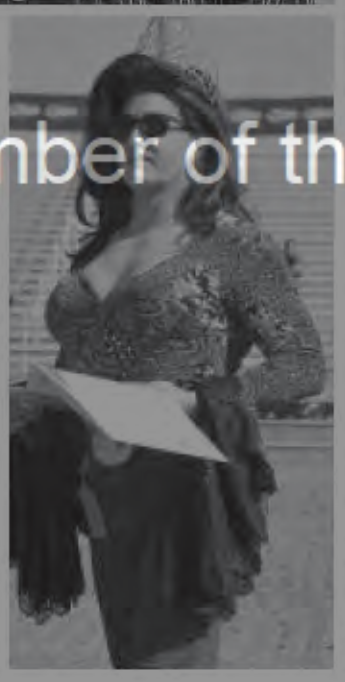
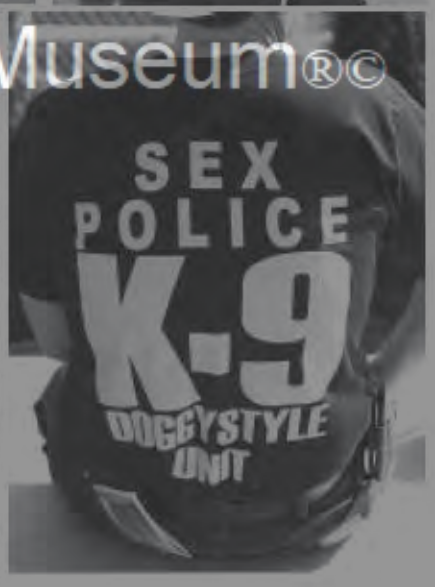
Arizona Gay Rodeo Association 25th Anniversary Rodeo Last Weekend





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Gay Mayor Runs For Congress

PROVIDENCE (Observer Update) - Providence, Rhode Island's openly gay Mayor David N. Cicilline announced Saturday he'll run for Congress, reported On Top Magazine. Cicilline, 48, threw his hat into the ring a day after Rhode Island Representative Patrick J. Kennedy said he would not seek re-election.

In announcing his candidacy, the two-term mayor said that if elected he would focus on the middle class. "I'm running for Congress because Washington has lost sight of what is really happening to the hard-working middle class in the cities and towns in America," Cicilline said in a statement. "There's a dangerous disconnect between what Washington thinks will help the American people out of this miserable economic decline and what will really make a difference in their lives right now. I see the cost and the reality of that disconnect every single day."

Cicilline, a lawyer and a former state representative, was first elected mayor in 2002 and re-elected in 2006. He easily won both contests with an overwhelming majority of the vote. A second Democrat, Bill Lynch, the chairman of the State Democratic Party, also declared his candidacy for Kennedy's seat on Saturday, saying his top priority in Washington would be "jobs, jobs, jobs." In elected, Cicilline would become the fourth openly gay lawmaker in Congress. The current list includes representatives Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, Barney Frank of Massachusetts and, most recently, Jared Polis of Colorado.

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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 20

COYOTE MOON - The Dragstar Cabaret presents Haiti Relief starting at 9:30 p.m. with DJ Hill and the spinning babes. Koyote Kingz, Freddie Prince Charming and Revo Lution. Tickets are $5 - $8. Bring clothing donation for $2 off the door. Drink specials all night long!!!!

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Analysis: The American Cultural Shift On Gays In The Military

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - President Barack Obama may get his wish to allow gays to serve openly in the military – not because of his powers of persuasion but because arguments against it have lost traction over time., reported the AP on 365Gay.com

A cultural shift since Congress passed a legal ban nearly a generation ago has changed the debate. For many younger members of the military – those doing the bulk of the fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq – it's hardly a debate at all. Polls show they care little about sexual orientation in their ranks. Views in the wider society have evolved; gay marriage is now legal in five states and the District of Columbia. Opinion surveys say a majority of Americans think it's OK for gays to serve in uniform.

"Do I care if someone is gay? I have no qualms," said Army Sgt. Justin Graff, serving with the 5th Stryker Brigade in southern Afghanistan.

Jason Jonas, a former Army staff sergeant from Tempe, Ariz., said openly gay soldiers served in his intelligence unit at Fort Bragg, N.C., and their presence never affected unit morale. "I don't think it is anybody's right to say who can and who can't fight for their country," said Jonas, 28, who served in Afghanistan before being injured. "Nobody cares. 'Don't ask, don't tell' is kind of a joke."

It will not go unnoticed among military members that their most senior uniformed leader, Adm. Mike Mullen, told a Senate panel Tuesday that he personally believes it is time to allow gays to serve openly. It's just wrong, Mullen said, that gays must "lie about who they are" to defend their country.

Although Obama said he would work to change the law this year, Defense Secretary Robert Gates gave him some extra leeway by telling Congress the Pentagon would need at least a year to implement the changes. Gates' comment gave the impression that he thinks repeal is almost inevitable, although a leading Republican voice on defense matters, Sen. John McCain of Arizona, opposes the change.

"I fully support the president's decision," Gates said. "The question before us is not whether the military prepares to make this change, but how we best prepare for it," adding that the final decision rests with Congress. In the meantime, Gates said he is seeking latitude in how the law is enforced, and there are indications that the military already is honoring the ban mostly in the breach.

According to figures released, the Defense Department last year dismissed the fewest service members for violating the policy in more than a decade. The 2009 figure – 428 – was sharply lower than the 2008 total of 619. Overall, more than 10,900 troops have been discharged under the policy.

The list of countries that permit gays to serve openly in uniform has grown to 28, including Canada, Israel, Australia and most of Europe. Many of those nations have troops fighting alongside U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan, and Mullen said he has seen no indication that the different policy on gays by the allies in Afghanistan has hurt the war effort.

Yet in the U.S., there remains a powerful rhetorical weapon for opponents of lifting the ban – fear that it would weaken a military at war. It's a question that cuts to the heart of why sexual orientation has been such a sensitive topic in the military in the past – and remains so among those who see repeal of the 1993 ban on allowing gays to serve openly as putting still more stress on a military strained by years of conflict.

Mullen said he shares that concern, even as he became the first sitting chairman of the Joint Chiefs to publicly advocate allowing gays to serve openly. He told the Senate Armed Services Committee "there will be some disruption in the force" if the law is changed. "Our plate is very full" already, he said.

Obama entered the White House as an advocate of repealing the ban, but he let it rest for a year. In his State of the Union address, he vowed to work with Congress this year "to finally repeal the law that denies gay Americans the right to serve the country they love because of who they are."

When President Bill Clinton took office in 1993, he ignited a political firestorm by trying to use his executive powers to end the policy – not written into law at that point – of discriminating against gay service members in the military.

Congress stopped him by passing a law that does not explicitly prohibit gays or lesbians from serving but requires them to serve in silence. If they acknowledge their sexual orientation or engage in a homosexual act, they can be expelled. But if not asked, they need not disclose it.

The 1993 statute calls the military a "specialized society" in which life is "fundamentally different from civilian life." And so it is. But the cultural differences are not necessarily as stark as in 1993.

Walter Slocombe, a defense consultant who was a senior Pentagon policy officer during the Clinton administration, says most military members "won't care one way or another" if the ban is lifted. All branches of the military struggle to some extent with racial, religious and gender tensions, he noted, but "that's a result of having a military that reflects the diversity of the country."

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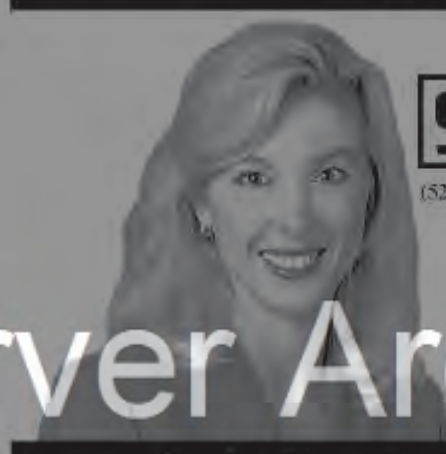
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