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OBSERVER

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Tucson Observer Archives

Census Counts Gay Marriages Even In States That Don't Allow Them

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - NEW YORK – With strong backing from the Census Bureau, gay-rights activists are urging maximum participation by their community in the first U.S. census that will tally same-sex couples who say they're married - even those without a marriage license, reported the AP on Huffington Post.

The move has drawn fire from conservatives, who complain that it's another step toward redefining marriage. For the first time, the bureau has deployed a team of professional field workers - about two-dozen strong - to reach out to gays and lesbians. On Monday, the bureau unveiled its first public-service videos encouraging gay Americans to mail in their census forms.

"What I tell folks in the bureau is that this is a powerful, important part of American society," said Tim Olson, a Census Bureau assistant division chief helping to oversee the campaign.

"We have to reach out and engage this part of the population. Anything less than that is a failure," he said.

Only the District of Columbia and five states - Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont and Iowa - have legalized gay marriages, starting with Massachusetts in 2004. But the Census Bureau says same-sex couples in any state who consider themselves spouses should feel free to check the "husband" or "wife" boxes on the census form, rather than "unmarried partner."

The bureau's willingness to count gay marriages - despite a federal law that denies legal recognition to any of them - has been hailed as a historic milestone by gay-rights leaders. "It's humongous," said Jaime Grant, director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Policy Institute.

"Our opponents are rightfully concerned, because it does lend an air of legitimacy to our marriages," Grant said. "It's another way of weaving us into the fabric instead of continuing to see as outsiders."

Olson also stressed the confidentiality of the census - insisting, for example, that gay members of the military should have no fear about identifying themselves as part of a same-sex union, even though the "don't ask, don't tell" policy forbids gay service members from being open about their sexual orientation.

The census forms do not inquire directly about sexual orientation, and some gay-rights activists have complained that this means single gays - as opposed to those with live-in spouses and partners - have no means of gaining collective representation through the census.

Olson said an act of Congress would be needed to add a sexual orientation question to the form, and some activists are already planning a campaign to achieve that. In a first step, a campaign called "Queering the Census," activists are distributing stickers for gays and lesbians to attach to this year's forms on which they can identify themselves as gay, lesbian, transgender or bisexual.

In the previous census, in 2000, the Census Bureau tallied 600,000 same-sex couples who were cohabiting across the country. In initial planning for the 2010 census, federal officials indicated that same-sex married couples would be tallied as unmarried partners who lived together, not as wedded spouses. But those plans were changed in part because of intensive lobbying by gay-rights groups.

"We pushed for that change because we want to be seen and heard and represented as part of our country," Christine Quinn, the openly gay speaker of the New York City Council, told a news conference.

"It sets the stage for our work over the next 10 years - to get sexual orientation added to the form so all of us can be represented, married or not," she said.

Also at the news conference were actor George Takei, a former member of the TV cast of "Star Trek," and his husband, Brad Altman, who married in California in 2008 when same-sex marriage briefly was legal there.

"We pay taxes, we vote, we serve in the military and yet we don't have equality," Takei said. "To get that equality, it's very important for us to be identified. This is what the census is going to do."

The couple were the stars of one of the public-service videos shown at the news conference - in which Takei wore his "Star Trek" uniform, and Altman wore a tinfoil space alien hat.

"It doesn't matter whether you have a legal marriage license or not," Takei said in the ad. "It only matters if you consider yourself married."

One of the new ads featured Glenn Magpantay, a Filipino-American attorney, along with the African-American son, Malcolm, whom he and his partner have adopted.

"I'm papa, my partner is daddy," Magpantay said in the ad. "We're really proud to be counted in this census."

Army's John McHugh Says Gay Discharges Remain

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - Secretary of the Army John McHugh has taken back his assertion that a de facto moratorium on discharging gay troops from the military was in effect. McHugh said he had been mistaken, reported On Top Magazine.

The military's gay ban on open service "remains the law of the land," McHugh said in a statement. The 1993 law, known as "don't ask, don't tell," prescribes discharge for gay men and lesbians who do not remain celibate or closeted. Speaking to reporters the day before, McHugh suggested there was a de facto moratorium on firing gay troops from the military when he said he would not dismiss soldiers who had told him they were gay.

"I was incorrect when I stated that [Defense] Secretary [Robert] Gates had placed a moratorium on discharges of homosexual servicemembers," he said. "There is no moratorium of the law and neither Secretary Gates nor I would support one."

He added that last week's softening of the guidelines under the existing law does not "in any way create a moratorium of the law."

McHugh, a former Republican lawmaker who was appointed by President Obama, said that moving against gay soldiers who had revealed their sexuality to him in the course of discussing upcoming policy changes would be "counter productive." But he reversed course the next day.

"I might better have counseled them that statements about their sexual orientation could not be treated as confidential and could result in their separation under the law," he said.

McHugh, however, added that he was "unable to identify these soldiers and I am not I a position to formally pursue the matter."

Gates has ordered a year-long review on how best to implement changes should Congress repeal the law. McHugh said a third party would likely be used to solicit the views of gay troops.

"The working group is likely to utilize a third party from outside of the department to solicit these views so soldiers can speak candidly and without fear of separation," he said. "I urge every soldier to share his or her views and suggestions on this important issue through this channel," he added.

Gay Protections Take Effect In Salt Lake City

SALT LAKE CITY (Observer Update) - In a first for Utah, an ordinance protecting gays from discrimination in housing and employment took effect in Salt Lake City on Friday (April 2)

Salt Lake City's Democratic mayor Ralph Becker attended a ceremony on Friday to celebrate the new law. Becker was joined by John Bennett, the gay nephew of Utah junior senator Bob Bennett.

"This is truly a good Friday," Bennett, said, according to the Associated Press. "Today I'm ecstatic."

Gay rights advocates are pushing for similar gay protections in 10 other Utah cities or counties.

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UPDATE

Desert Voices Presents 'Sound In Bloom' April 17-18

TUCSON (Observer Update) - A celebration of the beauty of choral art. The chorus, under the artistic direction of Chris Tackett, will be singing some of the finest choral music of the last five hundred years while revealing how singing in a chorus has touched their hearts, changed their lives, and made their community and world a better place.

Performances take place on Saturday, April 17 at 7:30 pm and Sunday, April 18 at 3:00 pm.

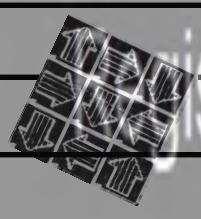
Tickets are $15.00 each or 2 for $25.00 and may be purchased from the Desert Voices Box Office (791-9662) and from Antigones Bookstore on 4th Avenue.

2010 PFLAG Scholarships

TUCSON (Observer Update) - This coming year PFLAG Tucson will again award at least three or four Gene Moore Memorial LGBT Scholarships. Although we have little money in our scholarship fund at the moment, we hope to raise more in the coming months.

Our scholarships thus may be $500 rather than $1000 this year so that we can benefit more students. TucsonLGBT.com is establishing a $250 School Books Scholarship this year specifically for a Tucson low-income gay male high school senior who plans to attend Pima College.

They will award this through the PFLAG Tucson application process. For more information and application forms, go online to pflagtucson.org/scholarships/index2010.htm. Awards will be made at our support meeting on Wednesday, May 5.



Ike And Ken's Colorful Life, April18

TUCSON (Observer Update) - You'll get a TWO for ONE Colorful Life presentation by a couple that has been together for 33 years and have had most colorful lives - both individually, and together!

Ike was born in Wyoming, beginning his life on a Montana homestead. He grew up in Seattle. He spent three years in Turkey, one year in France, four years in Holland, and seven years in Iran as a teacher. He met Ken when he moved to his company's corporate offices in Chicago in 1977.

Ken was born in Brooklyn and grew up in Chicago. He worked in Human Relations and Administrative Areas. This unlikely couple with divergent backgrounds, bought their first home after they had known each other 6 weeks (and they said it wouldn't last). In 1984 Ike had an opportunity to go to Egypt, Ken joined him, and they were there for five years. Ken, who had never been overseas before, adopted quickly and learned much more about "Ike's world".

In 1993, they settled in San Diego. They became involved with a group called "COUPLES", a social organization for gay and lesbian couples, and shortly became the Chaircouple. Three years later, they became National Chaircouple for affiliated groups throughout the country.

Ike and Ken moved to Tucson in February 2004, and look forward to sharing some of their adventures and treasures with you.

This event is free and open to all, Sunday, April 18, 2:30 p.m., Ward 6 Council office, 3202 E First Street. For more information, contact Penelope Starr, 520-730-4112.

EON Youth Event April 8

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Think you know everything there is to know about LGBTQ terms, labels and history?

Test your knowledge during this LGBTQ 101 refresher in the Lounge, hosted by Eon staff, April 8, 5 PM, 430 E. 7th St.

This event open to youth ages 13-23. For more information, contact Stephanie Arendt 520-624-

An Evening With David Sedaris, April 15

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Following the release of his New York Times #1 Bestselling book, "When You Are Engulfed in Flames," author David Sedaris is coming to Tucson for an evening of engaging recollections and readings, Sunday, April 25 at the TCC Music Hall.

With previous bestsellers "Naked, Me Talk Pretty One Day," and "Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim," and as a regular National Public Radio contributor, David Sedaris' sardonic humor and incisive social critique have made him one of NPR's most popular and humorous commentators. In 2001, he was named Humorist of the Year by Time magazine and received the Thurber Prize for American Humor.

Spend an evening with David Sedaris as he reads from his bestselling book. Tickets are $34.50 to $52.00 at TCC and ticketmaster ticket outlets, ticketmaster.com, and 800-745-3000.

Anti-Violence Programs Volunteer Advocate Training

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Want to lend a hand and volunteer for Wingspan's Anti-Violence Programs? The Wingspan Anti-Violence Programs provides 24hr advocacy, crisis intervention, and referral sevices to LGBT survivors and their allies who are affected by violence and discrimination.

Come join us at our volunteer advocate training to gain advocacy skills and learn how to assist individuals and communities affected by violence. This training will take place at Wingspan on Saturday and Sunday, April 24th and 25th 2010. Lunch and refreshments will be provided both days.

Saturday, April 24th, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm and Sunday, April 25th, 9:00 am - 2:00 pm at Wingspan 430 E. 7th Street. Volunteers need to attend both days of training to get certified. For more information, contact Kristi Smith 520-624-1779x1.

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The Observer

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MARRIAGE

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California Law - Doctors Must Cure Gays

SACRAMENTO (Observer Update) - A California assembly member has written an article for The Los Angeles Times about an outdated law on the book in the state requiring health experts to find a cure for homosexuality, reported advocate.com.

Bonnie Lowenthal writes: "This 60-year-old relic was not some gay-baiting prelude to the McCarthy era. It came, rather, in response to public outcry over sex crimes in California, specifically the molestation-murder of a 6-year-old Los Angeles girl. The murderer was not a gay man. There was no connection between the crime and homosexuality at all.

"Even so, before the dust had settled, well-meaning California legislators passed a law that not only required health officials to seek "the causes and cures of homosexuality" but likened people who are gay to child molesters. Amazingly, it's still on the books."

Lowenthal is the author of Assembly Bill 2199, which seeks to overturn the dated law and faces its first hearing before the Public Safety Committee.

ACLU Investigating McMillen 'Fake Prom'

NEW YORK (Observer Update) - Various news sources are reporting that Constance McMillen was invited to a "fake" prom on Friday night while the majority of her peers partied at a secret location, advocate.com reported.

McMillen hasn't been able to confirm the rumors, which derived from a Mississippi blog that has since crashed. Blogs including Towleroad and PerezHilton have since picked up the story. The prom that McMillen and her date attended on Friday, held at a country club in Fulton, Miss., was sparsely attended, according to Chris Hampton of the American Civil Liberties Union.

"We don't know whether it was a fake prom or not; McMillen and her date got there and most of the people chaperoning the prom appeared to be school staff and there were only seven other students from her school there," Hampton says. "We've heard rumors [that another prom was being held at another location] but we're trying to find out."

In March, after the Itawamba County School District refused to allow McMillen to bring a female date to the prom, the district canceled the event altogether. McMillen and her lawyers from the ACLU challenged that decision in court, and a judge ruled the district could not refuse McMillen and her date. The judge declined to force the school district to hold the prom because a parent-sponsored, private prom was being organized – and the understanding was that McMillen and her date were invited to that event. But Hampton says McMillen was never invited and organizers made it very difficult for her to find information on the time and location.

That prom was later mysteriously canceled, with the Friday night event at the country club replacing it. Now it's unclear whether that event was a red herring. McMillen is expected to speak to media at the end of her school day.

Gay Family At Center Of Florida Ban On Gay Adoption Attends 2010 White House Easter Egg Roll

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - A North Miami family at the center of a historic court case about Florida's ban on gay adoptions attended the White House Easter Egg Roll, reported the Huffington Post.

Frank Martin Gill, his partner, and their three children were invited by the White House to participate in the tradition. For more than five years, Gill and his partner have raised two half brothers who were taken from their abusive birth parents. A Florida judge approved the couple's 2008 adoption of the brothers, ruling that Florida's ban on gay adoptions was unconstitutional. But the state appealed that decision and the family is awaiting a ruling from Florida's Third Court of Appeals.

Gill told Miami's WTVJ that the invitation to the White House was "extremely gratifying" and that he saw it as evidence that the Obama administration does not discriminate. "Inviting us knowing that we are plaintiffs in this lawsuit, I think, yeah, it's a pretty strong statement." Florida's 1977 law against gay adoptions is only law in the country that is an outright bans gay and lesbian parents from adopting, according to The Advocate.

In 2009, the White House sent tickets to the event to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered families. More than 100 gay families were expected to attend last year.

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It's More Than You Think.....

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Sorry, Ricky Martin. Flying Under The Gaydar Is Less Frequent Than Ever

NEW YORK (Observer Update) - Latin pop star Ricky Martin's formal announcement last week that he is a "fortunate homosexual man" came as a surprise to few, and, in fact, provided a celebratory "I knew it!" moment for the sizable swath of humanity that revels in sexuality speculation, reported the Chicago Tribune.

There have, it seems, always been celebrities – or friends or co-workers, or aunts or uncles – that we know, in our heart of hearts, are gay or lesbian. They just refuse to admit it, fueling our curiosity with a stubbornness grounded in fear of being discriminated against or damaging an established career.

But research shows that people who remain in what's known as "the glass closet" are fooling only a small slice of the populace, and that human beings have a staggeringly good ability to judge sexual orientation.

"We've found that 'gaydar' has quite a bit, if not perfect, accuracy," said J. Michael Bailey, a Northwestern University psychology professor who has researched people's ability to guess other people's sexuality. "We've done studies where we've brought people into the lab, videotaped them describing the weather in Chicago, and then brought in other people to watch the video and judge them. And they're almost always right."

In a 2008 study, Bailey found that gay and straight people who viewed the videos correctly identified straight people 87 percent of the time and correctly identified homosexual people 75 percent of the time. The research, involving about 50 subjects and 50 raters, also found that gay and lesbian people don't have much of an advantage over straight people when it comes to guessing whether a person is gay or straight.

Many who judged Martin's sexuality certainly based their opinions on his behavior as a performer, as well as other mannerisms they would see in interviews. Bailey agreed that most of those perceptions are based on stereotypes of gay men.

"Stereotypes are often at least partly based in truth," Bailey said. "It reflects what we call 'gender nonconformity' in gay and lesbian people. On average, gay men tend to be a bit feminine and lesbians a bit masculine. That's on average and not every case, of course. There are gay and lesbian interest patterns.

"Certainly acting, dancing and singing are interests that are more common among gay men than straight men. Obviously, not all actors and dancers who are male are gay, but there's a higher-than-average number of them that are." In recent years, a number of celebrities long suspected of being gay have left the glass closet: Neil Patrick Harris and Lance Bass, as well as "American Idol" singer Clay Aiken. Harris and Bass cited intense Internet speculation about their sexuality as one of the reasons they decided to come out.

These revelations can only up the confidence Americans have in their gaydar, raising the stakes for others out there who have long been the subject of sexual-preference speculation. But there's also a far greater acceptance of homosexuality, both in Hollywood and in American culture in general. Which allows someone like Martin to leave the closet behind and state publicly: "I am very blessed to be who I am."

'Gay' Not Grounds For Defamation

TRENTON (Observer Update) - Stating that someone is gay, regardless of whether the person is, cannot be considered slanderous in New Jersey, a U.S. district court judge ruled, reported advocate.com.

Judge Joel Pisano ruled that two radio shock jocks, Craig Carton and Ray Rossi, on WKXW 101.5 FM in Trenton, would not have to paying damages to freelance photographer Peter Murphy. In 2006, Carton and Rossi posed for a photo by Murphy, which was included in New Jersey Monthly magazine. The photo was a shot of them naked with only a placard featuring the station's name held up to cover their midsections, according to the New Jersey Law Journal.

As a promotional push, the station asked listeners to alter the photo, but did so without crediting Murphy as the original photographer. When listeners submitted their own versions of the photos with Michael Jackson or former New Jersey governor Richard Codey, Murphy's lawyers sent a cease-and-desist letter in June 2007.

After the letter arrived, Carton and Rossi went on the air complaining about how Murphy made them pose for the shoot, implying that he was gay. They also said that Murphy was "a man not to be trusted" and that he "will sue you."

Murphy then sued on the basis of defamation and copyright infringement.

Judge Pisano ruled that because the 2006 case that said civil unions would be treated equally to marriages, "it appears unlikely that the New Jersey Supreme Court would legitimize discrimination against gays and lesbians by concluding that referring to someone as homosexual 'tends to so harm the reputation of that person as to lower him in the estimation of the community as to deter third persons from associating or dealing with him.'"

The gay references were "nothing more than rhetorical hyperbole, name calling or verbal abuse."

The judge also rejected the copyright claims, holding that the fair use doctrine applied to the use of the original photograph and the altered versions. He said that the photo appeared in the magazine, not with copyright notice, but with a photo credit added to the design of the page.

Iowa Celebrates First Anniversary Of Gay Marriage Ruling

DES MOINES (Observer Update) Gay rights advocates in Iowa are counting down the minutes. Some will gather in Ames at the Unitarian Universalist church for a potluck dinner, reported On Top Magazine. Others will celebrate at a wine tasting hosted at the Cedar Rapids Gay and Lesbian Resource Center.

Everyone is excited. Excited that despite numerous attacks from opponents, the state Supreme Court's ruling legalizing gay marriage is holding strong a year on. The court's April 3 ruling was a sweeping win for gay rights advocates. The seven justice court unanimously agreed with the six gay and lesbian couples who had challenged the state for a marriage license.

The order was unequivocal in its demand: gay couples are equal under the law to heterosexual couples.

"[W]ith respect to the government's purpose of 'providing an institutional basis for defining the fundamental relational rights and responsibilities of persons,' same-sex couple are similarly situated to opposite-sex couples," the court said, adding that, "The Legislature has excluded a historically disfavored class of persons from a supremely important civil institution without a constitutionally sufficient justification."

At the time, only Massachusetts and Connecticut granted gay couples the right to marry. Since then, two more states – New Hampshire and Vermont – and the District of Columbia have legislatively legalized the institution. Maine was the first state to do so, but the law was repealed by voters before it took effect.

The Iowa decision – with its decisive mandate for marriage equality – renewed fizzling momentum on the issue after Californians voted to ban gay marriage in November of 2008.

On the day the court issued its ruling, one gay couple had already wed. Sean Fritz and Tim McQuillan, a pair of Iowa State University undergraduates, married on August 31, 2007. The men were the only couple to successfully secure documents and find a judge to marry them before an Iowa District Court ruling that found the state's gay marriage ban unconstitutional was appealed to the Iowa Supreme Court.

A year and a half later, jubilation followed as dozens of gay and lesbian couples too slow to take advantage of the one day window joined Fritz and McQuillan, who welcomed them to the married life.

Opponents have not taken the ruling lying down. At rallies and demonstrations, on billboards and websites and at the Statehouse they are pressing lawmakers to put the issue up for a popular vote. Democrats, who control the Legislature, so far have managed to block Republican-led efforts to begin the multi-year process to amend the Iowa Constitution. The issue is certain to dominate this year's gubernatorial election.

But advocates won't have their parade rained on. "Fairness won out, and Iowa continues to inspire America to follow its heartland to marriage equality," Evan Wolfson, executive director of Freedom to Marry, said in a statement. "The milestone marks yet another moment in the marriage movement when critics said we couldn't – but we did."

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What are you going to do to end the silence?
DAY of SILENCE® 04.16.2010

The History Of The Day Of Silence

NEW YORK (Observer Update) - Founded in 1996, the Day of Silence (marked on April 16) has become the largest single student-led action towards creating safer schools for all, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. From the first-ever Day of Silence at the University of Virginia in 1996, to the organizing efforts in over 8,000 middle schools, high schools, colleges and universities across the country in 2008, its textured history reflects its diversity in both numbers and reach.

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Here's a brief history.

1996 - The Day of Silence is born. Students organized the first Day of Silence, its original name, at the University of Virginia. With over 150 students participating, those involved felt it was a great success. The Day of Silence received extensive local press coverage and a positive response from the UVA community members, motivating Maria Pulzetti to take the Day of Silence nationally.

1997 - From one, to one hundred, National Day of Silence takes off With a web page and much dedication, Pulzetti and then 19-year-old Jessie Gilliam, developed the project to be used in schools across the country. It was renamed the National Day of Silence, and that year nearly 100 colleges and universities participated. Some schools in Australia heard about the project and modeled a similar day for Australian schools.

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1998 - The Day keeps growing, the Project begins Pulzetti and Gilliam realized they could not expand the National Day of Silence alone, so they organized a team of regional coordinators who could assist schools better by working with and understanding local networks. Expanding from a one-day vow of silence to include additional actions and educational events, the Day of Silence was officially inaugurated. That year, for the first time in a recognized number, students in high schools joined the organizing efforts, helping double the number of participating schools to over 200.

1999-2001 - More people, more time, a message of unity sets in Through the sponsorship of Advocates for Youth, Gilliam worked part-time over the summer of 1999 to maintain and expand the Day of Silence. A first in the project's history, a team of volunteers met for a weekend in Boston to discuss strategy and develop future plans towards assisting schools. The Day of Silence continued to support high schools, colleges and universities around the country with volunteers led by then 18-year-old Chloe Palenchar, as the National Project Coordinator. Over 300 high schools participated that year.

2001 - GLSEN developed a proposal to become the official organizational sponsor of the Day of Silence and provide new funding, staff and volunteers. GLSEN developed a first-ever Leadership Team of high school students to support local high school organizers around the country and a partnership with the United States Student Association, to ensure colleges and universities receive equal support.

2002 - Making noise, making history In what has become the largest single student-led action towards creating safer schools, the April 10th Day of Silence was organized by students in more than 1,900 schools across the country, with estimated participation of more than 100,000 students. Representative Eliot Engel introduces the first ever resolution on the Day of Silence in Congress, which received support of 29 co-signers; additionally, Governor Gray Davis of California issued an official proclamation making April 10, 2002 the National Day of Silence. Local Day of Silence® organizing efforts appear in over fifty media stories across the country, including USA Today, MSNBC, CNN, Voice of America and a live broadcast on NPR. Breaking the Silence rallies are organized with tremendous success in Albany, NY, Kalamazoo, MI, Missoula, MT, Ft. Lauderdale & Sarasota, FL, Eugene, OR, Boulder, CO and Washington DC, among other places.

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2008 - The 2008 Day of Silence on April 25 was held in memory of Lawrence King, a 15-year-old eighth-grade student in Oxnard, California, was shot and killed by a 14-year-old classmate because of his sexual orientation and gender expression. Hundreds of thousands of students at more than 8,000 schools participated. Their efforts were supported by hundreds of community-based "Breaking the Silence" events at the end of the day. Together, concerned students created a powerful call to action in order to prevent future tragedies.

A Family Member of the Tucson Gay Museum ®©

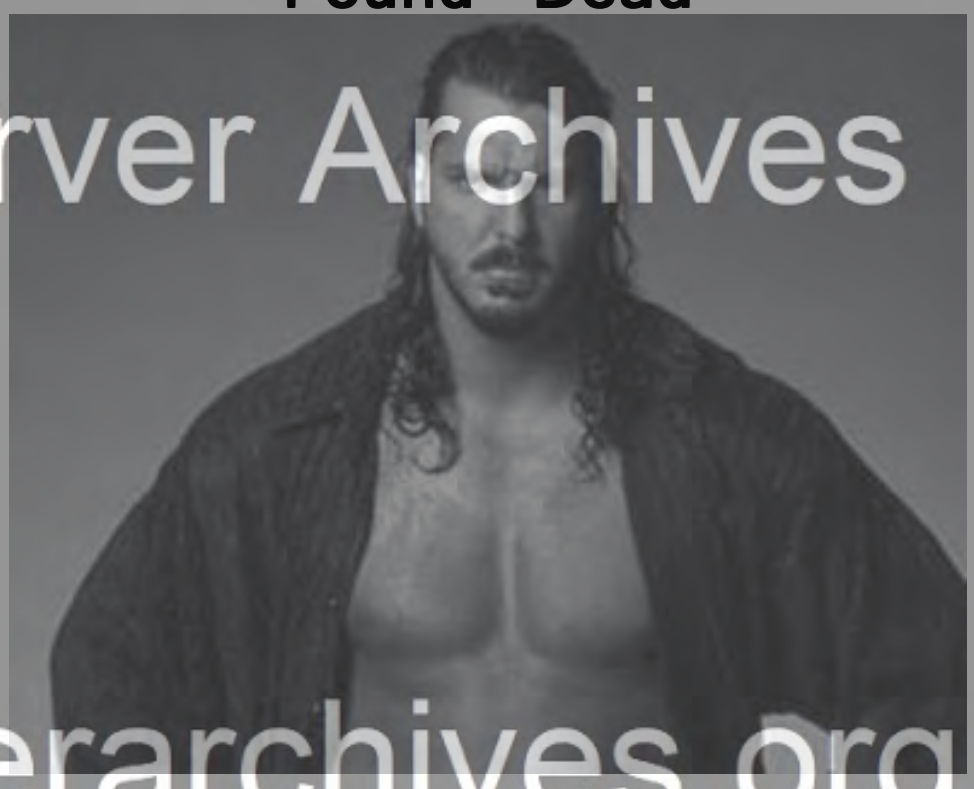
There are simple steps that all schools can take to make schools safer for all students, to end the endemic name-calling and harassment that LGBT students and their allies face every day. We need to act now so that Lawrence King and the countless others who endure anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying and harassment will not be forgotten, and so that we can create an enduring legacy of safer schools for all in their names.

Students handed out "Speaking Cards" which said:

"Please understand my reasons for not speaking today. I am participating in the Day of Silence, a national youth movement bringing attention to the silence faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their allies in schools. My deliberate silence echoes that silence, which is caused by name-callinmg, bullying and harassment. I believe that ending the silence is the first step toward fighting these injustices. Think about the voices you are not hearing today. What are you going to do to end the silence?"

What are you going to do to end the silence? For more information, go to dayofsilence.org.

Out Wrestler Chris Kanyon Found Dead



NEW YORK (Observer Update) - Chris Klucsaritis, who wrestled for World Championship Wrestling and late in his career attempted to market himself as the first openly gay professional wrestler, was found dead in his New York apartment. He was 40, advocate.com reported.

According to WrestlingObserver.com, Kanyon died of an apparent overdose of pills. Kanyon has reportedly been treated for depression and bipolar disorder in recent years.

Kanyon wrestled professionally from 1992 until 2004 and later tried to get back into the business by marketing himself as the first openly gay professional wrestler. He told reporters he'd been fired by WWE by CEO Vince McMahon because he was gay but later changed his story, saying he wasn't gay and that he'd made the whole thing up.

He subsequently changed his story again, telling reporters he was gay.

At the time of his death, Kanyon was a part of a lawsuit against WCW for allegedly misclassifying wrestlers as independent contractors. Since being released by WWE in 2004, Kanyon has made sporadic appearances at independent shows.

Douglas J. Newman, P.C.
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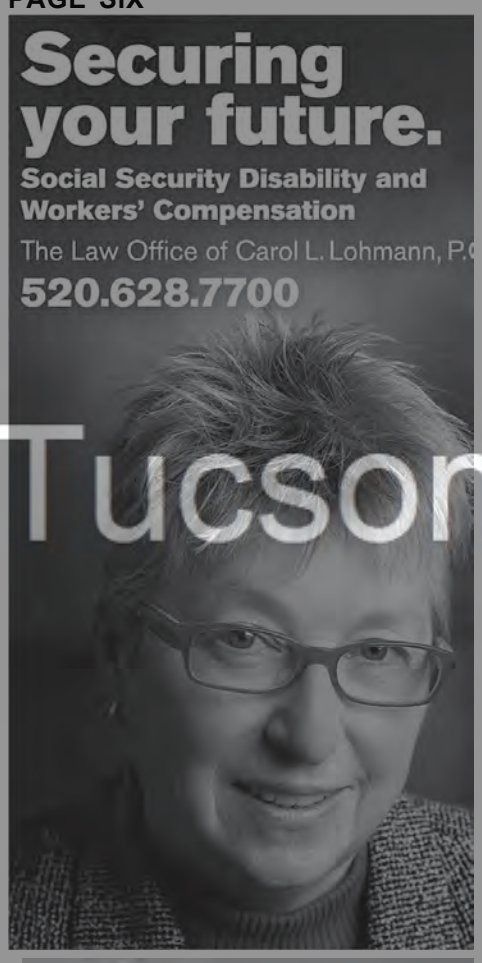


COMMENTARY. . . .

by David Mixner

What Happened To Silence - Death?

If you listen to gay rights discussions these days, you'd think that marriage equality and "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" are the only issues that matter. And they do matter – for our dignity and our fundamental civil rights. But there is a fire in our house that we are no longer talking about, that we pretend no longer exists: the unchecked spread of HIV.

Not only did HIV never leave the gay community, it's getting worse. New HIV infections among gay men have doubled in the last 15 years. Last week, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention reported that gay and bisexual men are more than 44 times as likely as straight men to test positive for HIV. But instead of increasing funding in response, states are slashing their prevention budgets.

Amid this crisis, the silence from our community is deafening. Where's the outrage? Where's the protest? Understandably, after decades of coping with AIDS, we've been eager to change the subject. But in our impatience to move on, we've overshot the mark. Our silence is fueling the spread of HIV.

Recently, I was at a large dinner party, and the conversation turned to AIDS. Most people seated at the table said that they didn't know anyone who was HIV positive. I knew for a fact that two had recently become infected. They sat quietly and chose not to reveal their status. My heart broke for them. They were closeted about HIV in a room full of out gay men.

In the early days of AIDS, silence equaled death. We had to come out of the closet to confront the disease. With illness and death all around us, we had a powerful motivation to stay safe. As a community, there was a shared sense of responsibility to help protect our friends.

Mercifully, younger gay men never had to experience that era. And with our community largely silent about the disease, it's all too easy to think of it as a thing of the past. Who can blame young men for thinking that they're not really at risk, that they don't need to be tested, or even that getting infected isn't all that bad given effective antiretroviral therapy? But many younger men may not realize that even when treatment works, the side effects can be terrible and long-term. New research is finding that more than half of people with long-term HIV have early senility or another cognitive problem, not to mention a host of premature geriatric illnesses such as bone loss, arthritis, and organ failure, as well as insulin and cholesterol problems. You wouldn't choose to get diabetes or emphysema. Why HIV?

The struggle to stay safe is hard for older gay men too. The fight against AIDS has been exhausting and long. I lost nearly 300 friends to the disease. Many of us feel isolated and alone, depressed, guilty and tired. For more than 25 years we have been expected to have safe sex, every time. That is not easy to sustain, even with the powerful memories of those we have lost.

Recent studies underscore just how hard it is for us to confront the reality of HIV. One major study found that nearly half of HIV-positive gay men don't know their status – a sign that many of us are afraid to be tested or in denial about our risk. Studies also find that half of HIV-negative gay men don't know the HIV status of their casual partners.

It's time to end our collective silence about HIV.

Gay rights organizations need to put it back on the agenda. Over the past year, just 2 percent of press releases from some of the top national organizations were about HIV, and two major gay organizations didn't issue a single release on the topic. I know that many gay organizations have HIV/AIDS programs, but what's gone is the advocacy. When AIDS organizations became well funded and well established in the 1990s, gay groups largely abdicated responsibility for the disease to them. But today, the major AIDS organizations rightly serve a very diverse group of people – gay and straight men, women, IV drug users. If the CDC's numbers tell us anything, it's that gay men are still far more affected by this disease than anyone. Our leaders have a responsibility to speak out more forcefully and more often.

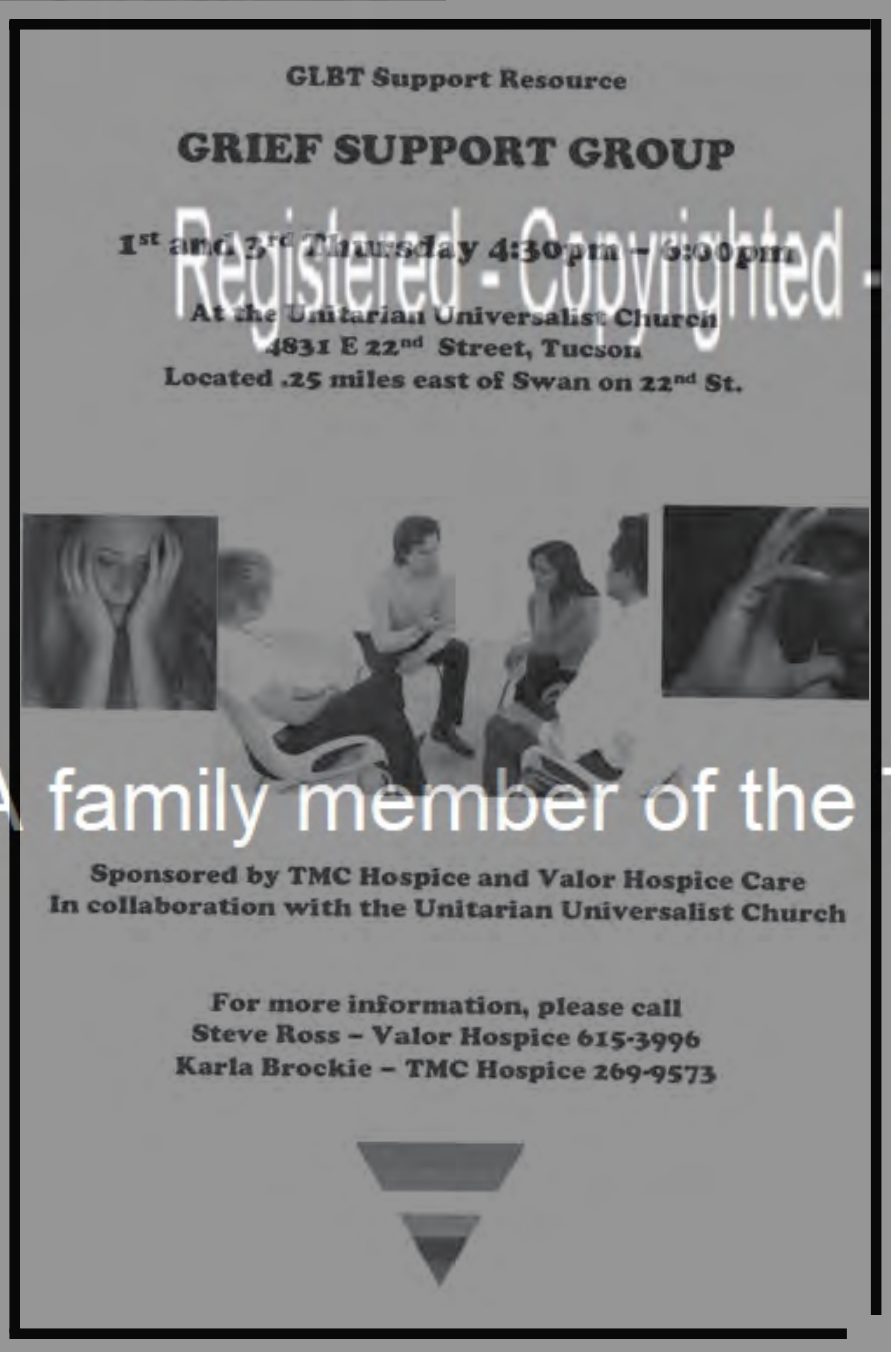
We need to demand more of Congress and the administration. HIV prevention works, but just 20 percent of gay men have access to effective prevention programs. Prevention funding is just a tiny sliver of the federal AIDS budget, and has been largely flat for 6 years. Last year, California, which has been a leader in fighting HIV, cut its prevention budget from $54 million to $18 million, and many other states cut their budgets as well. And HIV prevention campaigns often don't resonate with gay men. We need new approaches that are relevant to gay men today – young and old, black, Latino and white.

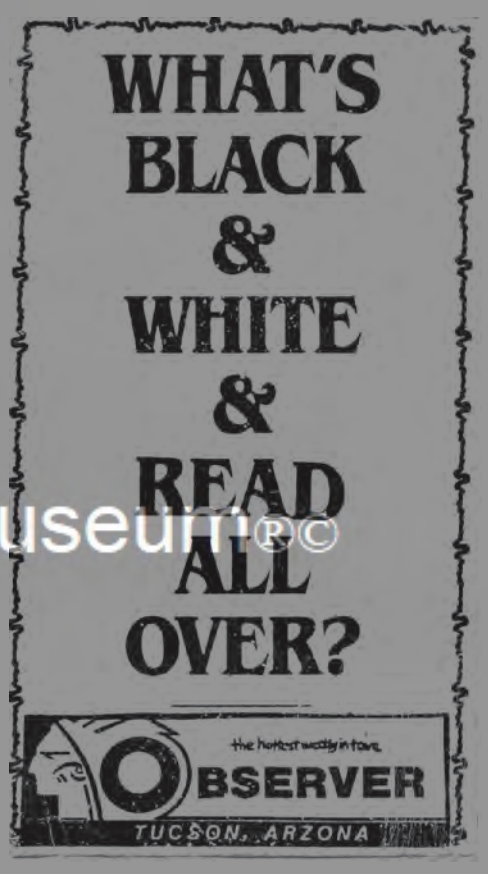
But real change won't come from the government or big organizations. It will come from each of us. Ask yourself: Have I been tested for HIV in the last year? Have I talked about HIV with my partners? Have I reached out to friends that I'm worried about, who may be at risk?

As tragic as this disease has been, AIDS galvanized a generation of gay men, and it showed that we are a force to be reckoned with. Today, a new generation is taking gay rights to a place that was inconceivable just a decade ago – fighting for our right to marry and to serve our country openly and with honor.

But taking care of ourselves and each other is just as important to our future. Every one of us needs to confront the resurgence of HIV. The first step is ending our silence.

(David Mixner is an author, blogger, political strategist, civil rights activist and public affairs adviser. Reach him via davidmixner.com. This column was reprinted from dcagenda.com)





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Much Ado About Nothing

by Jack Melichar

Preview Of Coming Attractions

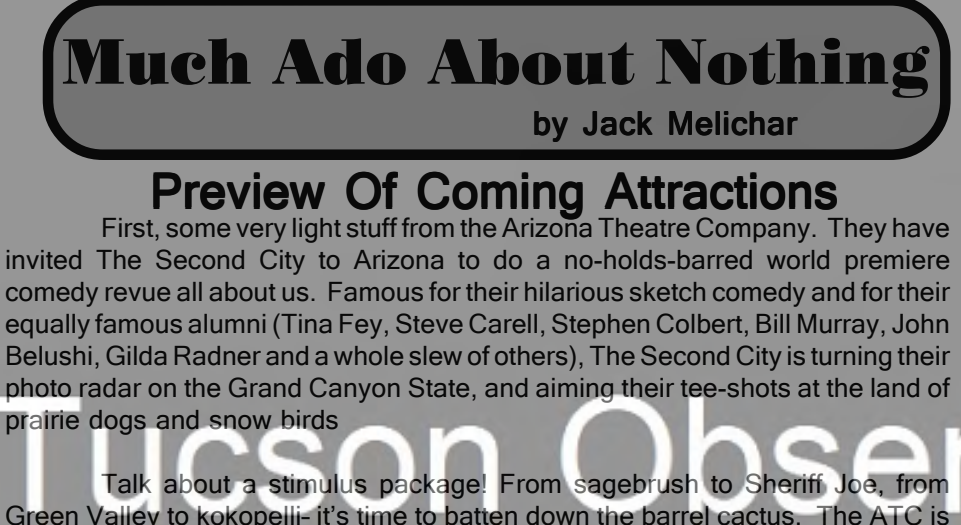
First, some very light stuff from the Arizona Theatre Company. They have invited The Second City to Arizona to do a no-holds-barred world premiere comedy revue all about us. Famous for their hilarious sketch comedy and for their equally famous alumni (Tina Fey, Steve Carell, Stephen Colbert, Bill Murray, John Belushi, Gilda Radner and a whole slew of others), The Second City is turning their photo radar on the Grand Canyon State, and aiming their tee-shots at the land of prairie dogs and snow birds

Talk about a stimulus package! From sagebrush to Sheriff Joe, from Green Valley to kokopelli- it's time to batten down the barrel cactus. The ATC is joining with this troupe of expert Chicago comedians to create a comedy about the special challenges of the high life in the low desert. It's a guaranteed evening of recession-proof fun and high-mileage laughter - and which of us couldn't use a lot more of that right now?

Opens April 9, 2010 at the Temple of Music and Art 330 S. Scott Avenue. For ticket information call (520) 622-2823, or go online to Arizona theatre company.com.

Be advised that the play contains mature language and content.

On April 10th, the Tucson Knight Owls will host a beer bust at Woody's. Mark your calendar for June 4, 5, 6 when TKO will hold their Spring Fling at Holly Lake. Threee days for only $120.00.



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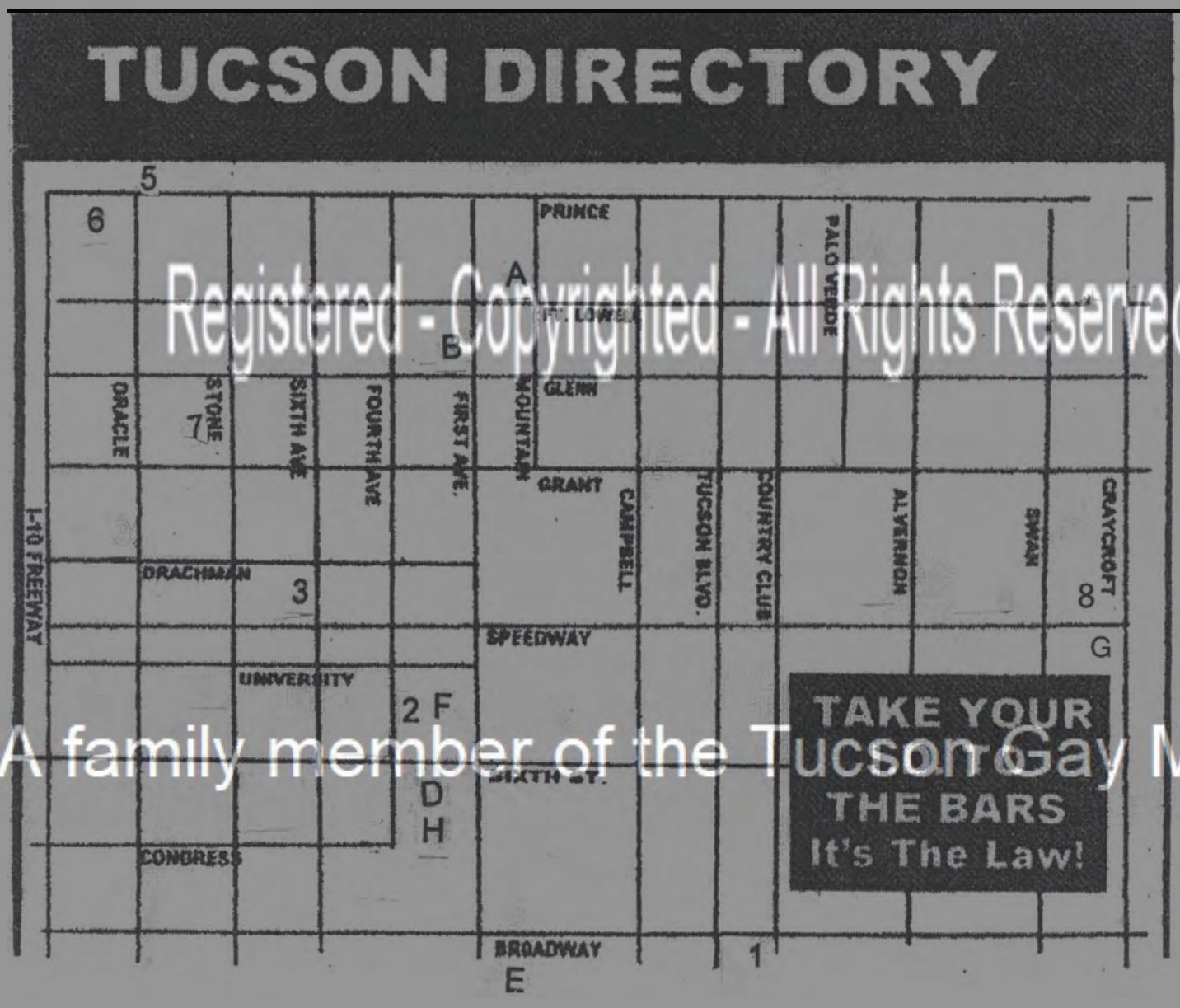

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E. S.A.A.F. - 375 S. Euclid 628-7223

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

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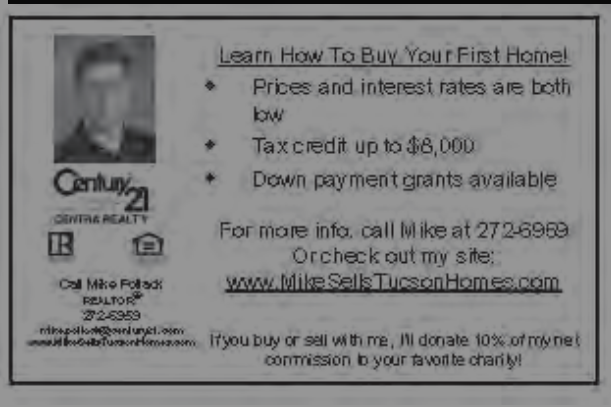

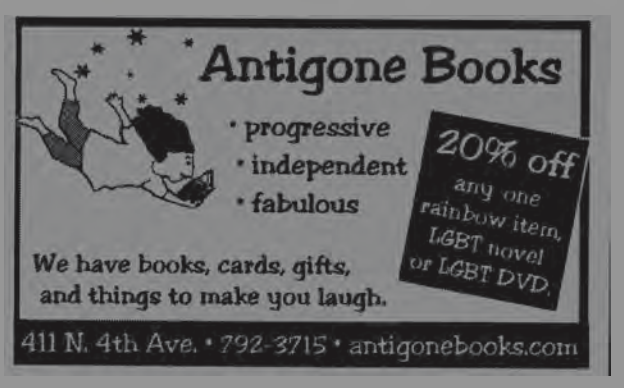

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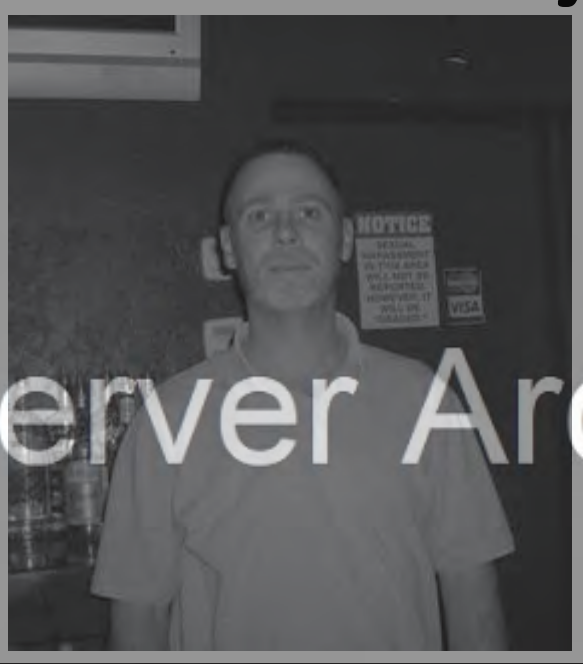
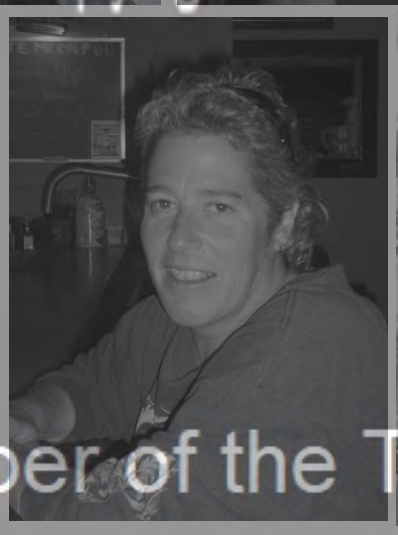
Easter Weekend In The Old Pueblo Was Pretty Scrambled





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Poet's Corner

HOUSE DIVIDED

by Ron Rose - Tucson

Just Say No	Yes We Can
War	Diplomacy
Guns Solve Problems	Guns Cause Problems
Protect Wall Street	Regulate Wall Street
Tax breaks (Rich)	Tax Breaks (Poor)
Protect Wall Street	Protect Main Street
Status Quo	Health Care For All
Pan Social Security	Fix Social Security
Greed	Compassion
Just Say No	Yes We Can

Military's Refusal To Discharge Lesbian A New Catch 22

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - Lt. Robin R. Chaurasiya wasn't exactly asked, but she told anyway: She is a lesbian, and in a civil union with another woman, latimes.com reported.

Her commander at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois, Lt. Gen. Robert R. Allardice, could have discharged her under the Pentagon's "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Instead, he determined in February that she should remain in the Air Force because she acknowledged her sexual orientation for the purpose of "avoiding and terminating military service."

Chaurasiya says that is not true. But the general's reasoning has the flavor of a Catch-22: If you admit to being homosexual you can be discharged from the military, but if you admit it for the purposes of being discharged you won't be.

Yet the action is being cited by some opponents of the controversial prohibition on open gay military service as a sign of willingness to reinterpret rules after President Obama called on Congress to overturn the controversial 1993 law.

At the very least, said Nathaniel Frank, an expert on "don't ask, don't tell," the Chaurasiya case appears to turn the rationale behind the gay ban on its head.

"If commanders are ignoring or rejecting credible evidence of homosexuality because of the alleged motive of the person who makes the statement, the bottom line is they are keeping gay people in the service," said Frank, a senior research fellow at UC Santa Barbara's Palm Center. "That gives the lie that known gay people undercut the military."

Officially, "don't ask, don't tell" remains in place and service members are still being discharged for homosexual conduct. But how to handle such discharges clearly has become a delicate matter inside the Pentagon.

In a round-table interview Wednesday, Army Secretary John M. McHugh said that during a review of the policy, several soldiers had acknowledged to him that they were gay. McHugh initially said he wouldn't seek to punish them for responding candidly to his questions, but on Thursday he sought to refine that answer.

Emphasizing that "don't ask" remains law, McHugh said in a statement that he should have counseled the soldiers that anything they said could not be kept confidential and could lead to their discharge. But McHugh said he couldn't pursue punishment of the soldiers because he was unable to identify them.

Under existing regulations, the military has the ability to retain service members who say they are gay for the purpose of avoiding service, according to Cynthia Smith, a Pentagon spokeswoman.

Such rules have been used to discourage or stop recruits from falsely claiming they are gay to back out of boot camp. But it has been rare for military commanders to issue a formal finding, according to advocates for gay and lesbian service members.

If more commanders begin to use the regulation, it will result in more gays and lesbians being allowed to serve openly.

An estimated 16,000 service members have been discharged under "don't ask, don't tell."

Last month, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates ordered new rules to make it tougher for third parties to accuse a member of the military of being gay.

J. Alexander Nicholson III, executive director of Servicemembers United, which represents gay veterans and service members, said there was "a clear message that the Department of Defense wants to curtail discharges more and more."

In his Feb. 25 decision ending any administrative discharge action against Chaurasiya, Allardice cited a section of the "don't ask, don't tell" law that allows military commanders to keep service members on active duty if they married a person of the same sex for the purpose of getting out of the military.

Like many cases, Chaurasiya's situation is complicated. She had left active duty in 2007 after serving one year, but was recalled to active duty in 2009.

After she was sent to Scott Air Force Base, a male former service member she had once dated forwarded to her commander a group e-mail in which Chaurasiya had written that she was a lesbian.

After an investigation, Chaurasiya submitted a memorandum to her commander declaring herself a lesbian.

"I want to be respected for it, and if I am going to be disrespected I don't want to be here," Chaurasiya said in an interview.

Chaurasiya said she did not enter into the union or declare herself a lesbian to get a discharge.

"My intention is not to get out," she said. "But if I am going to be kept in and treated unfairly either from my peers or by the military itself . . . then I want to be loud about it to bring about the change, or I do not want to be here."

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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!

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 Cosos.

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.

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 piano & vocal sounds of Susan Artemis 6-9 p.m.;

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!

COYOTE MOON PUB - Open at 2pm. Happy Hour 2-8pm, $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. $3.50 sm. Pitcher/$5.50 lg. Plus check out the bartenders choice of shot specials. $5.00 cheeseburger & fries. $3.00 Cuervo and $4.75 Jager Bombs. Check our calendar for the Saturday Night Special Entertainment.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, $2 Well or Domestics. 5-8pm Karaoke on the patio $1Draft Pints. 9pm "Saturday Starrlett's" w/Bunny FuFu & Janee Starr. After the show, DJ Q spinning inside & 10pm-close, DJ Mike Lopez with the "Party on the Patio".

WOODY'S - Open 11am-2am; Happy Hour 10am-8pm (excl spec events); Full Menu Kitchen open11am-11pm. Back Pocket Patio Bar open 5pm-close. Techno and Top 40 Dance with DJ Jeff 9pm til close. Check our ad for Twice-A-Month Special Events or Themed Parties.

Bar Calendar Specials

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7

COYOTE MOON - Y-Knot Karoke with Anna starts at 8:00 p.m. Special drink prices too!

WOODY'S - America's Amateur Strip Contest starts at 11 p.m. To be held alternating Wednesdays. Final Grand Finale in May!

SATURDAY, APRIL 10

WOODY'S - "Meow Mix" with "Dia V" - "Boys-R-Us" and the return of "Aunt JoAnna" direct from Puerto Vallarta at 9:00 p.m. in the cabaret doing her incredible live vocal impersonations of Cher, Cyndi Lauper, Celine Dion and dozens of your favorite stars.

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Water of Life
Metropolitan Community Church

The Reverend Dr. Charlie Arehart, Pastor

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

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

"The Church where Jesus Doesn't Discriminate"

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'Heartbroken' Male Otters Die Within An Hour Of Each Other

NELSON (Observer Update) - Two elderly male otters who were best friends and lived side by side for years died within an hour of each other earlier this week. Zookeepers told the press they believe the second otter died of a broken heart.

Daz, 19, and Chip, 16, lived and died at Naturelands Zoo in Nelson, New Zealand. Their handler said they had been inseparable for nearly 15 years. She said she believes they lived beyond the normal 14-year life span for otters because they had each other for company.

"They were a great pair of otters, they were interested in what was happening," Gail Sutton told the press. "The only consolation from this is that they both went together because if one had gone without the other, the remaining one would have been really lost."

Parker Signs Discrimination Order

HOUSTON (Observer Update) - Mayor Annise Parker issued an executive order banning discrimination against LGBT city employees. According to The Dallas Voice, the policy may be the most comprehensive in the nation, reported advocate.com.

The sweeping order, which was signed March 25 and took effect immediately, includes gender identity and gender expression protections. It enforces the policy among contractors, vendors, and city agencies.

The order makes it a violation "to fail or refuse to hire, recruit, appoint, promote or train any individual" based on sexual orientation or gender identity. It's also a violation "to discipline, demote, transfer, lay off, fail to recall or terminate" or to "or to limit, segregate or classify employees or applicants" for those reasons.

Her order replaces one signed by Bill White, the former mayor who is running for the Democratic nomination for Texas governor.

MD. Attorney General Impeachment Attempt Defeated

ANNAPOLIS (Observer Update) - The Maryland House Judiciary Committee struck down an attempt to impeach state attorney general Douglas Gansler over his legal opinion that recognizes same-sex marriages from other jurisdictions, reported advocate.com.

According to Southern Maryland Online, "Delegate Don Dwyer, R-Anne Arundel, brought charges against Gansler during the House's morning session, citing 'willful neglect of duty' in Gansler's February opinion recognizing same-sex marriages from out of state. Dwyer demanded a full vote on the House floor, but members voted against his proposal 101 to 39, upholding House Speaker Michael Busch's move to send the issue to committee."

"At the committee hearing, Dwyer moved to return the charges to the House floor for a full-body vote. The committee rejected the motion, with only six members siding with Dwyer." Few colleagues offered public support for Dwyer, who said he might try to bring the resolution to the house floor again. The legislator has long sponsored constitutional amendments to ban marriage equality, and this was the second time he had attempted to impeach a public official over same-sex marriage, according to Southern Maryland Online.

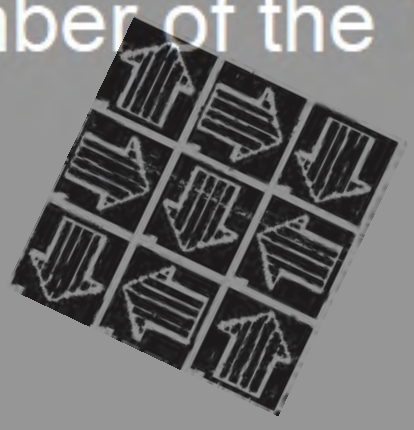
New Hampshire Lawmakers Defeat Marriage Bills

CONCORD (Observer Update) - New Hampshire legislators voted to kill two proposed bills that would have changed the states new same-sex marriage law.

The House voted 210-109 to defeat a bill calling for the repeal of same-sex marriage as between one man and one woman.

Marriage equality opponents needed 60 percent of the votes to forward the bills to the same state Senate. Rep.Alfred Baldsaro, a Republican, and sponsor of the repeal bill, told Boston.com that being gay violates natural law. He said it is a matter of choice. "A black person cannot change the color of their skin, but a homosexual can change their sexual preference any time.' he added.

His fellow representative has other plans. Rep. Ed Butler, a Democrat, told the Web site of his plans to tie the know. "We have fought to be married not because we want to tear down the institution of marriage, but because we respect and honor it," he said. "Thank you for what will be an incredibly powerful moment in our lives. Please don't take it away."



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