Observing Tucson And The Greater Arizona Community

OBSERVER

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Tucson Observer Archives

Senator Inhofe Says Military Won't Fight For Gay Comrades

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK) told American Family Association Radio yesterday revealed his abysmally low opinion of the men and women serving our our Armed Forces, Jim Burroway of Boxturtlebulletin .com reported.

Oklahoma Senator James Inhofe

In an interview with Bryan Fischer, Inhofe said that the men and women aren't serving "for the flag or the country, [they're] doing it for the guy in the next foxhole." And he declared those men and women too bigoted to protect "the guy in the next foxhole" if they knew he was gay. Inhofe and Fischer were discussing Elena Kagan's nomination to the Supreme Court, and they both agreed that her nomination should be "resisted with every weapon at our disposal," citing her opposition to "Don't Ask, Don't Tell":

Fischer: Well, and Sen. Inhofe, I commend you for coming out so quickly because I do believe that this is a nomination that needs to be resisted with every weapon at our disposal, and I appreciate you centering on her attitude toward military recruitment on college campuses… [edit]

Inhofe: For those of us -— and I'm one of them —- who have gone through the military, gone through basic training, and you stop and think —- it just doesn't make any sense. First of all, it'd be very expensive. Secondly, it's just not working. You have women, men, then you have a third group to deal with, and they're not equipped to do that.

And you know – you hear the stories all the time. A military guy – I happen to be Army, and Army and Marines always feel that when we're out there, we're not doing it for the flag or the country; we're doing it for the guy in the next foxhole. And that would dramatically change that.

A December 2006 Zogby poll found that 73% were very comfortable in the presence of gays and lesbians, and only 27% believed that DADT's repeal would have a negative impact on unit morale. Those serving in today's armed forces work with much greater integrity and professionalism than Inhofe did, if indeed that was his attitude when he was in.

Carl Levin To Defy Petagon Request

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - Michigan Senator Carl Levin said he'll include "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" repeal in this year's Defense Authorization bill, and defy a Pentagon request to wait.

The Senate Armed Services Committee chairman said he's prepared to include repeal language of the policy that bans gay troops from serving openly in the defense budget if he can get the votes for it. Both sides of Congress are expected to act on next year's budget this month.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen wrote to the House Armed Services Committee and urged its chairman, Missouri Representative Ike Skelton, to hold off on repeal until their study is complete.

The men said they "strongly oppose" legislating repeal before the Pentagon has completed its review of the policy due in December.

President Barrack Obama promised he would back repeal of the policy this year during his first State of the Union address in January. The president has since reversed course, saying he supports holding off on repeal until after the study is complete.

Repeal supporters have accused the president of punting repeal until 2013.

"If repeal doesn't happen this calendar year, it is unlikely to pass until after the next presidential election," Dr. Aaron Belkin, director of the Palm Center, a group that supports repeal, said.

But Levin added that the legislation would take effect after the Pentagon has completed its review. "What we ought to do is repeal it but make the effective date after the report," Levin told Roll Call.

The strategy is supported by the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), the largest group lobbying for repeal. Howard Dean, the former chairman of the Democratic National Committee, called on the president to take action this year.

In an open letter released Saturday, Dean says he is in agreement with gay rights advocates who are concerned that the Department of Defense could "indefinitely delay the possibility of moving forward with the repeal of DADT until the Pentagon completes a review of the policy."

"Americans clearly understand that if someone is brave enough to take a bullet for the USA, then they should have the same equal rights guaranteed to every American under the law - whether they are serving in the military, or when they come home," he added.

Michigan Senator Carl Levin

"Treasures For TIHAN" Benefit Auction, Saturday, May 22

TUCSON - The 13th Annual "TREASURES FOR TIHAN," the year's largest fundraising event to benefit the work of the Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network (TIHAN), is Saturday, May 22, at 4:00pm at the Doubletree Hotel at Reid Park, located at 445 South Alvernon Way.

This spectacular event will feature great hors d'oeuvres, no-host cocktails, a live and silent auction, and festive entertainment! A huge collection of items to be auctioned feature original art, trips and travel, sports memorabilia, home and garden, health and beauty, celebrity items, and gift certificates for fine dining and services.

We will also be remembering and honoring Maurice Grossman as our Treasured Friend of TIHAN, and will be auctioning off 13 one-of-a-kind Treasure Chest Boxes created in memory of Maurice by local artists and friends.

Event tickets are available in advance for $40 or two for $70 (or will be available on the day of the event for $50 each) and can be purchased online at www.tihan.org or by calling 299-6647. Also, raffle tickets are now on sale for a chance to win $1,000 cash - 5 chances to win for only $20, or get 15 chances for $50!

"Treasures for TIHAN" supports the Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network, a non-profit organization that provides HIV education and support services for people affected by AIDS - including CareTeam support, lunch and breakfast programs, social and emotional support, information/referral and advocacy services, and other support services.

For more information about Treasures for TIHAN, contact Scott Blades, TIHAN Executive Director, at 299-6647 (office) or 603-7601 (cell phone) or visit www.tihan.org.

[The Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network (TIHAN) is a coalition of individuals and 39 congregations from diverse faiths committed to an informed, compassionate response to HIV/AIDS: preventing the spread of HIV infection, providing compassionate care for those infected and affected, and catalyzing the religious community to provide an informed and compassionate response to the AIDS crisis.]

Pope Calls Abortion & Gay Marriage "Insidious Threat"

FATIMA (Observer Update) - Pope Benedict XVI has called abortion and same-sex marriage two of the most "insidious and dangerous" threats facing the world today, reported 365Gay.com.

Benedict made the comments Thursday to Catholic educators, social workers and others after celebrating Mass before an estimated 400,000 people in Fatima, one of the most important shrines in Christianity. He was interrupted by applause several times.

Benedict's visit to Fatima was the spiritual centerpiece of his four-day visit to Portugal. It was cast by Vatican officials as evidence that Benedict had turned a page in weathering the clerical sex abuse scandal that has dogged him for months.

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UPDATE

HIV Testing Update

TUCSON (Observer Update) - HIV Counseling and Testing is provided in collaboration with the Pima County Health Department.

Testing is available at SAAF, local bars, and at community events throughout the year. All tests are confidential. SAAF uses a Rapid HIV Test, with results available in approximately 15 minutes.

For more information on testing or to make an appointment, please call (520) 628-7223.

Bowling For Tommy May 21

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Bowling for Tommy is a memorial event honoring the work and legacy of Tommy Gin, a SAAF Board Member and an active community member.

Register now for a fun evening of cosmic bowling in Tommy's memory on Friday, May 21, 2010 from 6-8pm at Camino Seco Bowl.

Join this event as an Individual Bowler or as a Corporate Sponsor Bowling Team. The cost is $30 per person for all ages. The evening includes: bowling shoes, unlimited cosmic bowling, 1 large pizza and a pitcher of soda per lane (6 people per lane).

Register Now at saaf.wufoo.com/forms/bowling-for-tommy/

Memorial Day All-Star Music Jam May 31

TUCSON (Obs erver Update) - On Memorial Day, LGBT Tucson favorite and award-winning musician Namoli Brennet will be headlining an evening jam to benefit the fundraising efforts of her friend, trumpet player Michelle Maliniak. This concert will take place Monday, May 31, 7:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Church, 4831 E. 22nd.

Michelle will be riding in the 9th annual AIDS/LifeCycle, a 7 day, 545-mile cycling event benefiting the West's two largest HIV/AIDS service organizations, The San Francisco AIDS Foundation and the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center.

To be admitted to the event, just go to Michelle's fundraising website at tofighthiv.org/goto/zombiegirl and donate. Then, print out your confirmation page and bring it with you to the door. If you can't get to the internet ahead of time and want to see Namoli live and in person, you can also make a tax-deductible donation at the door.

For more information, call Donna Trujillo, (520) 975-5687.

Open Seat On Tucson GLBT Commission

TUCSON (Observer Update) - The City of Tucson has an opening on its Commission on GLBT Issues, with the resignation of the Ward 5 appointee, Matt Harding.

Harding resigned to due a new job opportunity, for which Ward 5 Councilmember, Richard Fimbres, thanks him for his service and commitment to the Commission.

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.

If interested, E-mail your resume a letter of intent to the Ward 5 mark.kerr@tucsonaz.gov, subject line, GLBT Commission. For more information, go online to tucsonglbtcommission.org or call the Tucson City Clerk's Office, (520) 791-4213.

Actors Union Blasts 'Newsweek' For Gay Hollywood Slam

NEW YORK (Observer Update) - The pile up against Newsweek continues as the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) jumps into the fray, reported On Top Magazine.

The nation's largest union for working actors took a swipe at Newsweek for running a story by openly gay contributor Ramin Setoodeh critical of gay actors who take on straight roles.

"Unfortunately, harmful attitudes like those of Setoodeh are used to pressure actors to stay in the closet," Jason Stuart, chair of the SAG National LGBT Actors Committee, a group that supports openly gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender actors, said in a statement.

In the feature, titled Straight Jacket, which appeared on the weekly's website on April 26, Setoodeh cuts into Sean Hayes' portrayal of straight man Chuck in the Broadway revival of Promises, Promises: "He comes off as wooden and insincere, like he's trying to hide something, which of course he is." Hayes, who recently came out gay on the cover of gay glossy The Advocate, has been nominated for a Best Actor in a Musical Tony Award for his Broadway debut.

Setoodeh also takes aim at Jonathan Groff's performance on Fox's musical comedy hit Glee, saying he's "so distracting, I'm starting to wonder if Groff's character on the show is supposed to be secretly gay."

"Intentional or not, Ramin Setoodeh's wrongheaded argument sends a damaging and false message that we are limited in the roles we are able to play," Stuart added.

Openly gay Mad Men co-star Bryan Batt said the piece "saddened" him, adding that "gay actors have been playing straight since Euripides."

Earlier in the week, the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Defamation (GLAAD) joined openly gay Glee creator Ryan Murphy in urging Newsweek to apologize. Murphy asked fans to dump Newsweek until an apology is at hand, and demanded the weekly apologize to Hayes and other "brave out actors who were cruelly singled out in his damaging, needlessly cruel, and mind-blowingly bigoted piece."

Calling for friendly and reliable people to join SAAF's Client Services Team as volunteer Peer Counselors.

If you are interested in offering peer support to clients, educating on HIV/AIDS and more, contact Volunteer Resources at 628-7223 or volcoord@saaf.org

SAAF Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation

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Informing the Community
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Barney Frank Says No Plans To Exclude Transgenders From ENDA

Tucson Observer Archives

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) Massachusetts Representative Barney Frank says he won't give in to pressure to exclude transgender people from a federal gay protections bill that has stalled out in committee, reported On Top Magazine.

Passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), a bill that would ban workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity (transgender protections), has been elusive. The measure remains bottled up in the House Education & Labor Committee, despite strong support from committee members.

The main sticking point appears to be the inclusion of transgender protections. Frank, the bill's sponsor in the House, has vowed to keep transgender rights in his bill.

"No," Frank spokesman Harry Gural told On Top Magazine in an email, "he's not considering any changes."

Yet three years ago, that's exactly what the openly gay Newton Democrat did in order to ensure passage of the measure through the House. The move divided the gay community. The Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the nation's largest gay advocate, backed the move, while other gay groups refused. The measure fizzled in the Senate.

This year's version adds back transgender people, a move that has drawn some serious heat. Republicans appear united against inclusion and even several moderate Democrats are speaking out as well.

"If you include transgender rights, I think that just pushes the envelope too far," Representative John Campbell, a California Republican who voted for the measure in 2007, told the Boston Globe.

The chief whip of the moderate Democratic political block – known as the Blue Dogs – Representative Heath Shuler of North Carolina, agreed, saying that asking House members to vote on a trans-inclusive bill during an election year would be "a mistake."

Social conservatives throughout the country are fighting local and state level legislative efforts to outlaw transgender discrimination. In some states – including Massachusetts, Florida, New Hampshire and North Dakota – opponents have labeled such measures "bathroom bills," warning that the laws invite sex offenders to lurk in public restrooms, endangering public safety.

"This is an invitation, it seems to me, for people with predatory tendencies to come out and hide behind the fact that they are having a transgender experience," state Rep. Peyton Hinkle, a Republican, said on the New Hampshire House floor during debate on a similar bill that was ultimately approved by the Legislature.

Leading transgender rights activists appear to be in a catch 22; they do not want to be held responsible for holding back the entire gay community, but also recognize that they may not get another shot at federal transgender rights for a long time, maybe decades.

Still, they say, their support hinges on proposed language around bathroom usage.

Denise Leclair, executive director of the International Foundation for Gender Education, a transgender advocacy group, warned that the inclusion of bathroom rules could trickle down to the state level, setting a precedent that could last generations. It's a "serious concern," Leclair said in a telephone interview.

"On the surface, it seems like a reasonable compromise," she said. "It's not a given that the language is actually necessary. It might get more votes for ENDA, but in a practical sense it's not strictly necessary."

"I think if it gets in there, that we'll see that future state laws will include very similar language, because state laws typically model federal legislation."

Complicating the issue for transgender people is the fact that many see themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual – groups that would be included under the bill's sexual orientation clause.

Half-a-year after the bill was scheduled to be voted out of committee, gay rights groups are becoming increasingly vocal over the delay. Last month, a group of seven gay activists disrupted a House committee hearing demanding action on ENDA.

"We've waited too long already," Robin McGehee of the group GetEQUAL told gay weekly Metro Weekly after she was briefly detained. "We have been promised since last year and, since the '90s, that we were going to have employment protections put in place. And yet, we still don't have it on the House floor."

Frank, however, says progress is being made and urged greater lobbying for the bill.

"Congressman Frank encourages people to continue calling their own representatives," Gural said. "He says that the phone calls have been very effective but the work isn't over yet."

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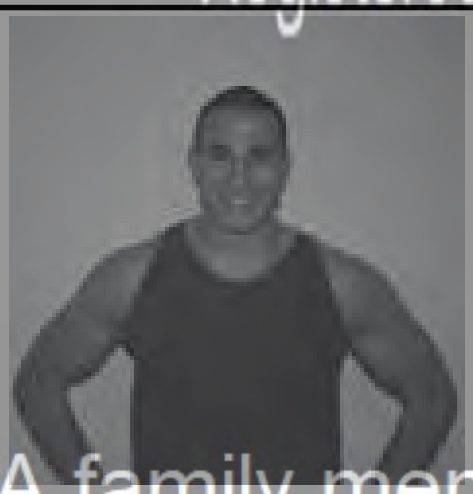

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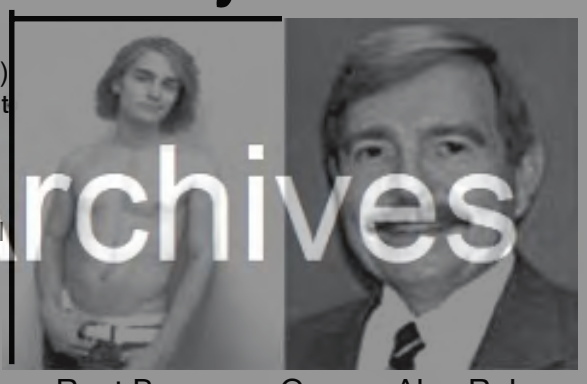
COMMENTARY. . . .

by Frank Rich

A Heaven-Sent Rent Boy



Rent Boy George Alan Rekers

Of all wars, only culture wars offer the hope of sheer, unadulterated hilarity. Sex and hypocrisy were staples of farce long before America became a nation, and they never go out of style. Just listen to the roaring audience at the new hit Broadway revival of the perennial "La Cage aux Folles," where a family-values politician gets his comeuppance in drag. Or check out the real-life closet case of George Rekers, who has been fodder for late-night television comics all month.

Rekers is in a class by himself even in the era of Larry Craig and Ted Haggard. A Baptist minister and clinical psychologist with a bent for "curing" homosexuality, the married, 61-year-old Rekers was caught by Miami New Times last month in the company of a 20-year-old male escort at Miami International Airport. The couple was returning from a 10-day trip to London and Madrid. New Times, which published its exposé in early May, got an explanation from Rekers: "I had surgery, and I can't lift luggage. That's why I hired him."

Alas, a photo showed Rekers, rather than his companion, handling the baggage cart. The paper also reported that Rekers had recruited the young man from Rentboy.com, a Web site whose graphic sexual content requires visitors to vouch for their age. Rentboy.com – really, who could make this stuff up?

Much like the former Senator Craig, Rekers claims it was all an innocent mix-up. His only mistake, he told the magazine Christianity Today, was to hire a "travel assistant" without proper vetting. Their travels were not in vain. The good minister expressed gratitude that his rent boy "did let me share the gospel of Jesus Christ with him with many Scriptures in three extended conversations."

This is a family newspaper, so you must supply your own jokes here. But once we stop laughing, we must remember that culture wars are called wars for a reason. For all the farcical shenanigans they can generate, they do inflict real casualties – both at the micro level, on the lives of ordinary people, and at the national level, where, as we're seeing right now, a Supreme Court nominee's entire record can be reduced to a poisonous and distorted debate over her stand on the single culture-war issue of "don't ask, don't tell."

Rekers is no bit player in these wars. Though he's not a household name, he should be. He's the Zelig of homophobia, having played a significant role in many of the ugliest assaults on gay people and their civil rights over the last three decades. His public career dates back to his authorship of a theoretically scholarly 1982 tome titled "Growing Up Straight: What Families Should Know About Homosexuality." (I say theoretically because many of the footnotes cite his own previous writings.) And what did Rekers think that families should know? By Chapter 2, he is citing the cautionary tale of how one teacher's "secret homosexual lifestyle most likely led to his murder."

Rekers soon went on to become a co-founder with James Dobson of the Family Research Council, a major, if not the major, activist organization of the religious right as well as a power broker in the Republican Party. When the Miami scandal broke, the council's current president, Tony Perkins, quickly tried to distance himself, claiming that he had to review "historical records" to verify who Rekers was and that his organization had "no contact" with him or "knowledge of his activities" for over a decade.

That historical record is hardly as obscure as Perkins maintained. Rachel Maddow of MSNBC found that only weeks before Rekers's excellent European adventure, his name appeared on the masthead of an official-looking letter sent to some 14,000 school superintendents nationwide informing them that homosexuality is a choice that can be stamped out by therapy. The letter was from the "American College of Pediatricians" – a misnomer for what is actually a political organization peddling homophobic junk-science. Rekers was also on the board of another notorious peddler of gay "cures" – the National Association for Research and Therapy on Homosexuality, or Narth – until he resigned last week. Such groups have done nothing to stop homosexuality but plenty to help promote punitive "treatment" and suicidal depression among untold numbers of gay youths.

No less destructive has been Rekers's role in maintaining the draconian Florida law prohibiting adoptions by gay couples and individuals, a relic of the Anita Bryant era. When the law was challenged in court two years ago, the state Attorney General Bill McCollum personally intervened to enlist Rekers as an expert witness to uphold it. Rekers charged $120,000 for his services – a taxpayers' expenditure now becoming an issue in the Florida gubernatorial race, where McCollum is a Republican candidate to succeed Charlie Crist. A Miami judge ruled Florida's law unconstitutional, and even now McCollum is appealing that decision.

Rekers was also an expert witness in a similar court case in Arkansas in 2004. That anti-gay-adoption law was also ruled unconstitutional. (His bill there was $200,000, but he settled for $60,000.) In 1998 Rekers was hired as an expert witness by the Boy Scouts to uphold its gay ban in a case before the District of Columbia Human Rights Commission. And then there's Rekers's cameo in the current Proposition 8 trial in California: one of his homophobic screeds can be found in the bibliography for the "expert report" by David Blankenhorn of the Institute for American Values, the star witness for the anti-same-sex-marriage forces.

Thanks to Rekers's clownish public exposure, we now know that his professional judgments are windows into his cracked psyche, not gay people's. But there is nothing funny about the destruction his writings and public activities have sown. His fringe views have not remained on the fringe. His excursions into public policy have had real and damaging consequences on a large swath of Americans.

The crusade he represents is, thankfully, on its last legs. American attitudes about homosexuality continue to change very fast. In the past month, as square a cultural venue as Archie comic books has announced the addition of a gay character, the country singer Chely Wright has come out as a lesbian, and Laura Bush has told Larry King that she endorses the "same" rights for all committed couples and believes same-sex marriage "will come." All of this news has been greeted by most Americans with shrugs, as it should be.

But the rear-guard remnants of the Rekers crowd are not going down without a fight, and their focus on Elena Kagan has been most revealing. There are many grounds to debate Kagan's nomination to the Supreme Court, wherever you are on the political spectrum. There are many questions about her views and record that remain unanswered. But from the get-go the preponderance of the debate on the right has been about her handling of military recruitment as dean at Harvard Law School. Here her history is unambiguous.

Despite her critics' cries, Kagan never banned military recruitment of law students and never denigrated the military in word or deed. She followed Harvard's existing (and unexceptional) antidiscrimination policy while a court battle played out over a Congressional act denying federal funds to universities barring military recruiters. She was so cautious – too cautious, I'd argue – that she did not join the majority of her own faculty in urging Harvard to sue the government over the funding law, limiting her action instead to the signing of an amicus brief.

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A family member of the Tucson Gay Museum

COMMENTARY

Continued from Page Four

She did declare that "don't ask, don't tell" was "a moral injustice of the first order." Given that a Washington Post-ABC News poll in February showed that 75 percent of Americans want that policy rescinded – as do the president, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the secretary of defense – this is hardly a view out of the American mainstream. Yet if you went to the Web site of the organization Rekers co-founded, the Family Research Council, and clicked on "Tony Perkins' Washington Update" last week, you'd have found a head shot of Kagan with the legend "Deep Ties With the Gay Agenda." What those "deep ties" are is never stated. Indeed, Kagan said only last year that "there is no federal constitutional right to same-sex marriage."

The Family Research Council's line has been embraced by the non-fringe right, including some Republicans in the Senate. In mid-April, a full month before Kagan's nomination was even announced, The Wall Street Journal preemptively hyped this plan of attack with a conspicuously placed news article headlined "Kagan Foes Cite Gay-Rights Stand." The only foes cited were religious right organizations.

The real game became clear when that same week a former Bush aide and Republican Senate staffer published unsubstantiated rumors about Kagan's private life in a blog at CBSNews.com. (It was taken down after White House denials.) Those rumors have chased all unmarried Supreme Court justices or would-be justices loathed by the right, whether Republicans like David Souter and Harriet Miers or the previous Obama choice, Sonia Sotomayor.

By late last week, double-entendre wisecracks about Kagan's softball prowess were all the rage on Fox News and MSNBC. These dying gasps of our culture wars, like Rekers's farcical pratfall, might be funnier if millions of gay Americans and their families were not still denied their full civil rights.

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

AROUND THE GAY GLOBE. . .

Hundreds March In Cuba

HAVANA (Observer Update) - Mariela Castro, the daughter of Cuban President Raul Castro, joined hundreds of gay activists in a march in Havana on Saturday in a celebration leading up to the International Day against Homophobia on May 17, the Associated Press reports.

May 17 marks the 20th anniversary of when the World Health Organization stopped listing homosexuality as a mental illness.

"We have made progress in Cuba, but we need to make more progress," Castro said, as marchers made their way down the wide avenues in Havana's Vedado neighborhood.

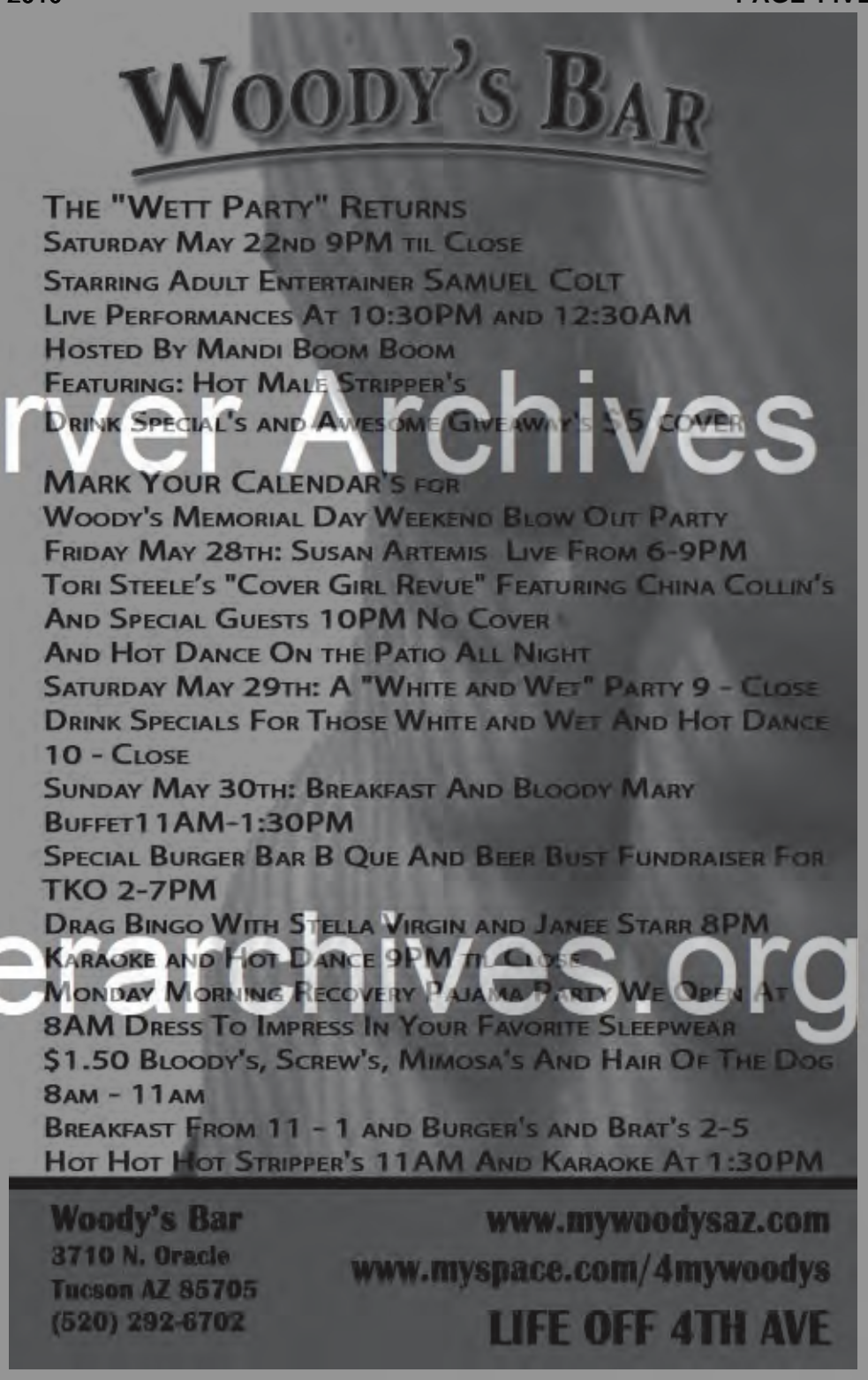
Fired from work and/or imprisoned after the Cuban revolution, gay people began seeing progress in Cuba in the 1980s, in large part because of the work of Mariela Castro's National Sexual Education Center.

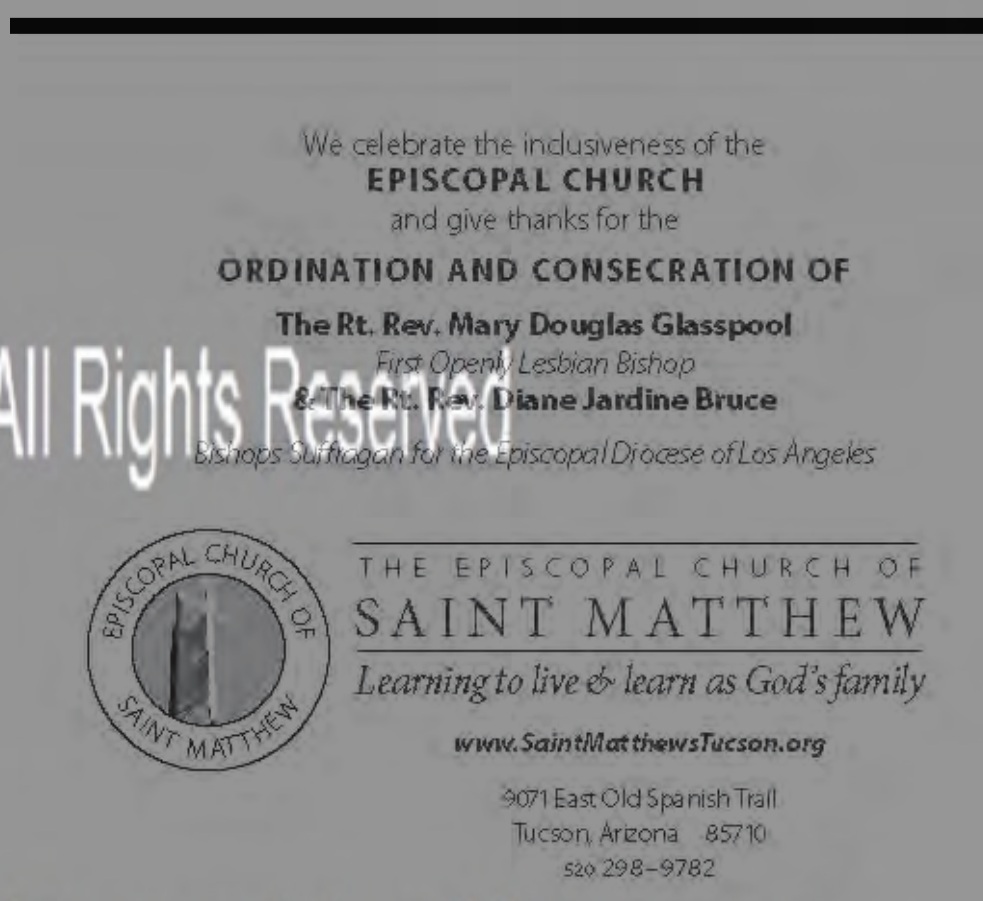
Gays Arrested, Beaten In Belarus Pride

MINSK (Observer Update) - Police in Belarus used force to break up a gay pride event that was banned by authorities, arresting several participants and beating some to the ground.

Riot police broke up the event in the capital city of Minsk. Organizers said that their goal was to attract public attention to the violation of sexual minorities' rights in Belarus.

Sergei Androsenko, a gay rights activist and one of the pride event's organizers, said the treatment of gays and lesbians in Belarus amounts "to the state sanctioning homophobia."





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Somber Scenes From The Candlelight Memorial Last Sunday

PHOTOS: Bill Morrow

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Wanda Sykes Show Cancelled

LOS ANGELES (Observer Update) - A tough break for Wanda Sykes and The Wanda Sykes Show. Word from the upfronts that FOX will not renew production, reports Rod 2.0 Beta.

Deadline Hollywood's Nellie Andreeva writes: "The late-night talk show started off strong but tumbled in the ratings as the season went on and fell below the performance of predecessor MadTV in the Saturday 11 PM hour."

When the hour-long show debuted in November, Sykes became one of the very few blacks or women to host a late-night show. Sykes also became one of a handful of black openly gay or lesbians with their own television show. The show had its moments but it probably suffered from a variety of factors–bad time slot, poor writing, confusing format–and unfortunately it didn't create a buzz.

One highlight: Wanda Sykes was so moved by the story of Constance McMillen, the Mississippi lesbian high school student, that she invited her on the show and to present at the GLAAD Media Awards.

Tucson Observer Archives

Lesbian Bishop Installed Amid Protest

LONG BEACH (Observer Update) - Two protesters created a disturbance as Episcopalians installed their second openly gay bishop in Los Angeles, reported On Top Magazine.

A crowd of over 3,000 lined into the Long Beach Arena to witness the ordination of the Rev. Mary D. Glasspool, of Baltimore, as suffragan (assistant) bishop of the Los Angeles diocese during a three-hour service, themed Rejoice!

Glasspool, 55, whose nomination was approved by the majority of the church's bishops and standing committees in March, has been in a committed relationship with Becki Sanders for over 22 years. "The world's transformed only if we turn to each and every one of our brothers and sisters and see the face of Christ superimposed on them," Los Angeles Bishop Jon Bruno, a co-consecrator, told the audience. "The ones we disagree with the most are the ones we're obligated to share our lives and teach the most.

Two protesters rose to protest Glasspool's installation. One man disrupted the service just as it was about to get underway. He was escorted out of the building as he shouted about the need to repent and held up a sign that read "Do not be deceived, homosexuals will not inherit the kingdom of God." Security guards also removed a young boy who rose holding a Bible and shouted a similar protest, National Public Radio reported.

Glasspool has acknowledged that her ascension would not be welcomed by everyone. "I am … aware that not everyone rejoices in this election and consent, and will work, pray and continue to extend my own hands and heart to bridge those gaps, and strengthen the bonds of affection among all people, in the name Jesus Christ," Glasspool said in March.

Among the bishops in attendance was New Hampshire Bishop V. Gene Robinson, who became the first openly gay bishop in the church in 2003. Robinson, 62, lives in Weare with his husband Mark Andrew.

Robinson's ordination created a deep divide between the 77 million-member Anglican Communion and its more liberal American branch, the Episcopal Church, and led to a self-imposed moratorium on the election of gay bishops.

The church reversed course last July when it voted in favor of lifting the ban at its general convention. Within six months, the Los Angeles diocese had nominated Glasspool.

Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, the spiritual leader of the Anglican Communion, called Glasspool's election "regrettable" and suggested the Episcopal Church's moves threaten the bonds between the two churches. However, the church is not backing down. A gay priest is one of four finalists vying to replace retiring Bishop Carolyn Tanner Irish of the Utah Diocese in a special election to be held May 22. The Rev. Michael L. Barlowe married his husband in San Francisco during the narrow May-to-November window in 2008 when gay marriage was legal in California. If elected, Barlowe would become the third openly gay bishop in the church.

Conservatives in the church opposed to openly gay clergy have formed a rival church, the Anglican Church in North America.

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Minnesota House Approves Death Rights For G/L Couples

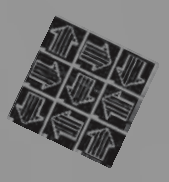
ST. PAUL (Observer Update) - The Minnesota House approved a measure that allows gay and lesbian couples to control the remains of a loved one. If approved, it would be the first time the state has recognized gay couples as domestic partners.

House members approved the measure on a 78-to-55 vote.

The measure, sponsored by Rep. Eric Murphy, a Saint Paul Democrat, allows a surviving domestic partner to decide what to do with the remains of a loved one. Currently, only married spouses can make such decisions under Minnesota law. The measure also allows a partner the right to sue to recover funeral and hospital costs in the event of a wrongful death.

"This legislation eliminates two of 515 Minnesota laws that discriminate against committed couples," Murphy told Minnesota Public Radio.

"I think it's important because we should never tolerate discrimination in Minnesota," she added. Gay marriage advocates in February hailed a first-ever hearing on legislation that would give gay and lesbian couples the right to marry.



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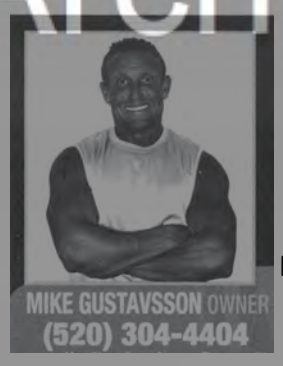

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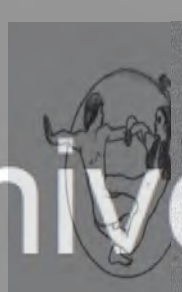

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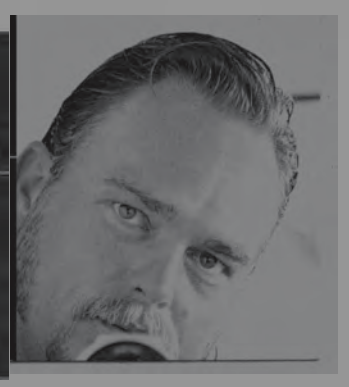

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PHOTOS - Amanda Irvin

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Poet's Corner

BURGER QUEEN

by Ron Rose - Tucson

I wear the crown of Burger Queen
Obese, as you can see
I draw stares, like mama bears
My fat belongs to me.
So make the burgers bigger
I'll down them by the score
I'll go to bed, with heavy heart
If I fit though the door.
My heart will slow, I surely know
Addiction conquered me.
So build a bigger burger
With just one calorie

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COMMENTARY. . .

Gay Soldier: "The Love Of My Life Is In The Next Room"

"Stories from the Frontlines: Letters to President Barack Obama" is a new media campaign launched to underscore the urgent need for congressional action and presidential leadership at this critical point in the fight to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT). Every weekday morning as we approach the markup of the Defense Authorization bill in the Senate and House Armed Services Committees, SLDN and a coalition of voices supporting repeal, will share an open letter to the President from a person impacted by this discriminatory law.

We are urging the President to include repeal in the Administration's defense budget recommendations, but also to voice his support as we work to muster the 15 critical votes needed on the Senate Armed Services Committee to include repeal. The Defense Authorization bill represents the best legislative vehicle to bring repeal to the president's desk. It also was the same vehicle used to pass DADT in 1993. By working together, we can help build momentum to get the votes! We ask that you forward and post these personal stories.

May 14, 2010
President Barack H. Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing to you from a kitchen in the state of Washington. The love of my life is in the other room. It has been eight months since I saw him last and I cherish every moment we spend together. Next week, my mid-tour leave will be over and I will return to Iraq and finish my second deployment. I don't know when I'll see my partner again.

When serving in a war zone, you learn quite a bit about yourself and what's important to you. I've had the chance to work on a close and personal level with the people of Iraq, and in doing so, I have realized more than ever that the freedoms we enjoy as Americans should not be taken for granted – we must protect them at all costs. These freedoms are essential to the very foundation of our society. Yet so many men and women who fight for these freedoms aren't allotted their own. Our freedom to love and be loved by whomever we choose. The freedom to live of a life of truth and dignity.

Recently I was informed that the military was investigating me for violating the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law. Another service member had apparently "outed" me. At first I felt free: I didn't have to lie anymore. But after that initial sense of relief, I'm left knowing just how little the Pentagon and the United States government think of me.

Mr. President, my unit is extremely undermanned. We're working around the clock in Baghdad. My commander informed me that the Army cannot afford to lose me. I was told that they would prepare my discharge paperwork, "stick it in a Manila envelope, and keep it in a desk – for now."

One moment they wanted to throw me out and the next they are hiding evidence to keep me in.

My comrades now know that I am gay, and they do not treat me any differently. Work runs as smoothly as ever, and frankly the only difference I see – besides my pending job loss – is that I am free of the burden of having to constantly watch my words and ensure my lies are believable.

Having this out in the open makes things a bit less stressful. But it's also clear the Army is only keeping me around until they are done with me. After I have served my two deployments – and am only a year shy of separating from the military honorably – I suspect they will kick me to the street.

It's bad enough that there is a law that denies tens of thousands of service members from serving with integrity, but it's even worse when such a law is carried out with such inconsistency, without any warning of when it might come down.

If my suspicions are true, my discharge will move forward after my deployment. I am good enough to serve in war, but not at peace? I will never be at peace until this law is repealed – and neither will my partner. In fact, he won't even be informed if I am killed in action. That might be the hardest part for us both.

Mr. President, when you took office I remember watching your inauguration knowing that history was being made. I remember feeling like this weight was being lifted off of my shoulders. I truly believed in you, and I still do.

But, Mr. President, please keep your promise to me.

Please do everything in your power to help Congress repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" this year. Our government called upon us to fight for our country. So many of us answered the call; we did not delay. We were sent world's away to defend your freedoms. Mr. President, won't you fight for mine?

With deep respect,
A soldier returning to Baghdad

(The writer is currently serving and unable to identify himself publicly.)

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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. Hair of dog special $1.50 well bloody mary, screwdriver,,Cape Cod, salty dog or margarita.

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. Girlz Nite .75 for your favorite well drink or domestic drafts 6-8pm. Ladies only Texas Hold 'Em Poker 6 p.m. Y-Not Karaoke with Anna at 8pm. - Drink specials during karaoke $1 Michelob Ultra or Bud Light.

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. Boyz Night - .75 for your favorite well drink or domestic draft beer for men 6-8pm. Karaoke with Anna at 8pm drink specials during karaoke $1 Michelob Ultra or Bud Light..

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. Latin Thursday: Latin music 8pm to close. $2,50 well margaritas. $3 Mexican beers, $3.50 Jose Cuervo.

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.

COYOTE MOON PUB - Open 3pm. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. $3.50 Sm. Pitcher/$5.50 lg. Pitcher. Shots shot specials 8-close.. Dance lessons with Lawrence 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!

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 Specials

SATURDAY, MAY 22

COYOTE MOON - T-Dance. All your favorite dance music 4-8 pm - no cover, Guest DJ Sparky

WOODY'S - Wett Party returns 9pm to close starring adult entertainer Samuel Colt in live performances at 10:30pm and 12:30am. Hosted by Amanda Brandt featuring hot strippers, drink specials and awesome giveaways. $5.00 Cover.

WOODY'S -Friday,May 28 thru Monday, May 31 watch for big Memorial Day Weekend events.

SATURDAY, JUNE 5

COYOTE MOON - MCC - Water of Life Church benefit show 8pm

SATURDAY, JUNE 12

COYOTE MOON - Dragstar Troupe is here with another mind-blowing show. 10pm

FRIDAY, JUNE 19

COYOTE MOON - Vivika D'Angelo and Friends drag show. 10pm

TUESDAY, JUNE 22

COYOTE MOON - Extxended girlz night special hours 6-10pm for Pride Week.

WEDNESDAY JUNE 23

COYOTE MOON - Extended Bouz night special hours 6-10 pm for Pride Week.

SATURDAY, JUNE 26

COYOTE MOON - Tea Dance. All your favorite dance music. 4-8pm no cover

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Discrimination With A Degree Of Separation

DES MOINES (Observer Update) - A same-sex couple married in Des Moines last year has filed a lawsuit against two state health department officials, after the department refused to name both women on their daughter's birth certificate, the Des Moines Register reported.

Heather Lynn Martin Gartner, 38, and Melissa McCoy Gartner, 39, filed the Polk County lawsuit on behalf of their second child, who was born in September. The couple argues that the birth certificate - which lists only Heather Gartner, the biological mother - incorrectly labels their daughter Mackenzie as a child born out of wedlock.

The Iowa Department of Public Health in March rejected the couple's request on grounds that Melissa Gartner had not legally adopted Mackenzie and was not biologically related. Iowa Department of Public Health Director Tom Newton, who is named in the lawsuit, said in a statement Thursday that his office will fight the claim. Newton said current state law only allows the name of a "husband" to appear on birth certificates when the mother is married, unless a judge grants parental rights to someone else. Newton said naming a lesbian couple as parents without a legal adoption could jeopardize the rights of a biological father.

Iowa birth certificate laws "expressly recognize the biological reality that women and men each play a distinct but equally necessary role in human reproduction and have corresponding rights, duties and obligations to their child," according to a Department of Health letter sent to the Gartners' attorneys.

The lawsuit was filed little more than a year after the Iowa Supreme Court overturned a state law that defined marriage as a union between man and woman. The decision, Varnum vs. Brien, legalized same-sex marriage in Iowa and ignited a political debate.

Undocumented G/L Immigrants Speak Out

NEW YORK (Observer Update) - Sometimes we forget that what seem to be big, mainstream news stories affect us, too. Take immigration, reports 365Gay.com.

Sure, we're all aware of the need to unite gay foreign citizens with their U.S. citizen partners. We've all heard the stories of couples torn apart (or forced to move to Canada) because one is from Brazil, one is from the US and neither can get citizenship in the others' country.

But LGBT immigrants WITHOUT partners need help, too. And today in Midtown, thanks to the National Queer Asian Pacific Alliance, I met a few of them, people with heartbreaking stories whose lives are made harder because they're gay.

Take Dania, from Indonesia, who grew up in a Muslim family. In tears, Dania explained that "life was very scary for me." She knew of a gay man who had been killed for being gay and a lesbian who had been raped in order to turn her straight. She was afraid she would be stoned or killed if word got out.

When she came out to her best friend at age 15, the friend stopped speaking to her, because having a gay friend was too frightening. Then, Dania came to America, expecting life to be better. And it was - sort of. She's able to be openly gay here. But because she's undocumented (she was denied asylum by a judge, because she didn't have enough proof that she was gay and she wasn't personally tortured), she now has to stay in the closet about her immigration status. And she misses her family. And she can't go home, because if she does, she can't come back.

Then there's Pradip, a handsome, solemn young man in a bowtie (below). Pradip came here with his family when he was 3. He went to a respected American college. But only as a teenager did he learn about his undocumented status - and that makes it impossible for him to find (legal) work. Pradip sounds like an American, he looks like an American - in fact, he hasn't been back to Bangladesh since he was a toddler, so for all intents and purposes, he is an American. Except he's not. Because there's no longer an easy route to amnesty.

Dania and Pradip were joined by the Rev. Noel Bordador from the Phillipines, who formerly was undocumented - and now is a social worker and Episcopal priest, because he wanted "to give something back to this country." And Ken Takeuchi, a formerly undocumented worker from Japan, who now is co-chair of the Gay Asian & Pacific Islander Men of New York.

Ben de Guzman, co-director of NQAPIA, said that hearing stories like theirs was important, because the immigration debate is often narrowed to include only Latinos - or, in the gay community, to only include people with partners. But LGBTs who immigrate here have special horrors: it can be too dangerous for them to return to their country of origin if they are deported; and often, their family cuts them off when they learn they are gay, which means they are often left with no support system. And if they are harrassed at their barely-living-wage jobs because they are gay, what can they do?

The gay community may shun them because they are illegal; the immigrant community may shun them because they are gay.

"What we need," de Guzman says, "is comprehensive immigration reform that provides a clear path to citizenship for all immigrants, protects our families, communities and workplaces, and ensures our safety and human dignity."

For Pradip and Dania, that reform cannot come too soon.

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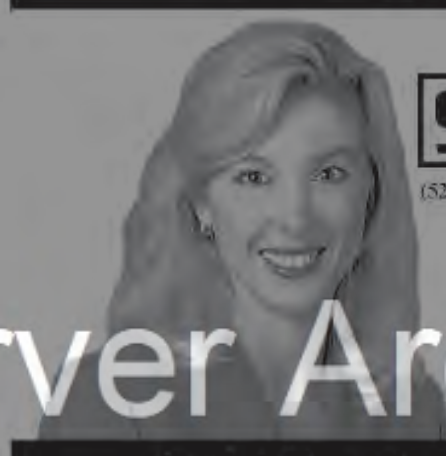
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