Observing Tucson And
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OBSERVER

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Tucson Observer Archives

G/L Couples Gain Under Violence Against Women Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - The Justice Department has decided that federal prosecutors should enforce criminal provisions in the Violence Against Women Act in cases involving gay and lesbian relationships, a newly disclosed memorandum shows, reported advocate.com.

In a seven-page legal analysis, David J. Barron, the acting assistant attorney general of the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel, concluded that federal prosecutors may use the law in cases of interstate stalking and domestic violence regardless of whether the victim or the defendant is a man or a woman, reported nytimes.com.

"The text, relevant case law and legislative history all support the conclusion" that the law's criminal provisions "apply when the offender and the victim are the same sex," Mr. Barron wrote.

The memorandum was addressed to the acting deputy attorney general, Gary Grindler, who had apparently asked the Office of Legal Counsel to consider the question. The document was posted on the Justice Department's Web site on Wednesday.

Tracy Schmaler, a Justice Department spokeswoman, said that the office's conclusion had been sent as guidance to federal prosecutors around the country.

Ms. Schmaler said she could not answer questions about the context of the request because it was a matter of internal deliberations.

But Brian Moulton, the chief legislative counsel of the Human Rights Campaign, a gay and lesbian advocacy group, said his group asked the Obama transition team after the 2008 election to have the office "clarify" for prosecutors that the Violence Against Women Act covers violence that might arise in same-sex relationships.

"It's a step towards equality and recognizing that our relationships exist and are subject to the same sorts of issues that face other committed couples," Mr. Moulton said. "Unfortunately, sometimes that is domestic violence and other issues that need to be dealt with through the criminal justice system."

Congress first passed the Violence Against Women Act in 1994. Among other things, its provisions made it a federal crime to cross state lines with the intent of committing domestic violence, stalking, or violating a protection order. Lawmakers have since expanded the act several times.

The federal government's treatment of gay and lesbian relationships has been a matter of sharp dispute against the backdrop of efforts to legalize same-sex marriage.

A 1996 law, the Defense of Marriage Act, requires the federal government to define legal terms like "marriage" and "spouse" as categories that can exist only with a union between one man and one woman.

But Mr. Barron argued in the memorandum that although the Violence Against Women Act defines possible victims as including the "spouse" of the abuser, the act also includes terms not covered by the Defense of Marriage Act, like "dating partner" and "intimate partner."

Moreover, he noted, the text of the act uses gender-neutral language, like saying "another person" instead of "a woman." He cited such language as proof that Congress intended the protections to cover same-sex couples as well as heterosexual ones.

"It is true that the statute is entitled the Violence Against Women Act, but other provisions of the Act make clear it applies to conduct perpetrated against male, as well as female, victims," Mr. Barron wrote.

Several social conservative commentators who have opposed same-sex marriage rights did not respond to requests for comment.

But John P. Elwood, who worked in the Office of Legal Counsel during the Bush administration, said that he thought Mr. Barron's analysis was correct as a matter of statutory interpretation.

Rush Weds, Elton Sings

NEW YORK (Observer Update) - Rush Limbaugh gets married for the fourth time, reports 365Gay.com.

Elton John sings at the wedding.

Before you freak out here is something to remember: Elton allegedly was paid $1 million bucks.

HHS To Retain Gay Blood Ban

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - A Department of Health and Human Services committee has voted to retain a policy barring gay men from donating blood, reported advocate.com.

The Advisory Committee on Blood Safety and Availability's 9-6 ruling, first reported by Chris Geidner of Metro Weekly, comes after two days of deliberations on whether to retain the ban, which has come under increasing fire by gay rights activists and allied congressional leaders.

A group of legislators, led by Massachusetts senator John Kerry and Illinois representative Mike Quigley, issued a joint statement in support for amending the ban.

"There is no prescribed consideration of safer sex practices," the lawmakers argued. "Individuals who routinely practice unsafe heterosexual sex face no deferral period at all, while monogamous and married homosexual partners who practice safe sex are banned for life," Kerry and his colleagues wrote to officials.

Addressing the committee, Kerry said he was joined by the nation's largest blood-banking organizations in opposition to the current policy. The American Red Cross, the American Association of Blood Banks, and America's Blood Centers have all blasted the policy as "scientifically and medically unwarranted."

"This is a discussion with real social significance for gay men," Kerry said before the committee. "They are clearly the target of this policy, which was initiated in the early '80s, when little was known about HIV/AIDS, except that gay men seemed to be contracting it almost exclusively. Today, this lingering policy carries with it a social stigma for this population that is still engaged in battles for civil rights on a whole array of fronts."

In a unanimous vote the panel also called the policy "suboptimal," however, and recommended that distinctions be made between low- and high-risk potential gay donors in a report to the assistant secretary of HHS.

In 1983 the Food and Drug Administration, a subagency of HHS that regulates the nation's blood supply collection, barred any man who'd had sexual contact with another man since 1977 from donating blood. FDA policy allows heterosexual men and women who have had sexual contact with an HIV-positive partner to give blood after a one-year deferral period.

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force executive director Rea Carey called the committee's decision "outrageous, irresponsible, and archaic."

"We expect more out of this advisory committee and this administration than to uphold an unnecessarily discriminatory policy from another era," Carey said in a statement. "The most critical issue is to ensure that the blood supply is safe and abundant, and this means maximizing the potential donor pool and making sure all donors are screened appropriately and assessed based on actual behavioral risk independent of their sexual orientation."

A spokeswoman with the American Red Cross said the organization was "disappointed" by the ruling.

"While the Red Cross is obligated by law to follow the guidelines set forth by the FDA, we also strongly support the use of rational, scientifically based deferral periods that are applied fairly and consistently among donors who engage in similar risk activities," Red Cross director of biomedical communications Stephanie Millian said in a statement to The Advocate.

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UPDATE

H2O - On 6/19

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Come kick off Pride Week 2010 in Tucson on June 19 and get WET at H2O located at the Radisson Suites at 6555 E. Speedway. Entertainers include singer/songwriter Eric Himan along with Tucson's own Namoli Brennet!

Food & beverages will be provided, cash bar with drink discounts all day. Swim and enjoy episodes of Absolutely Fabulous with Patsy & Edina on the big screen. Room rates start at only $69 for a 2 bedroom suite!

Tickets are $15.00 in advance or $20.00 at the Door and will be available at tucsonpride.org. For more information, contact David at Tucson Pride, 520-622-3200.

Bisbee Pride June 18-20

BISBEE (Observer Update) - Bisbee will once again fill the streets in with live music and dancing to celebrate the sixth annual Bisbee Pride on June 18-20.

Featured events will include the famous Leather and Lace Ball, a gay and lesbian film festival, and the popular pub crawl that visits local bars throughout historic Old Bisbee.

Built in the late 1800's on the side of the beautiful Mule Mountains, Bisbee is truly an eclectic town with colorful homes, shops and hotels dramatically perched along Tombstone Canyon, making it a popular destination. Art galleries, gourmet restaurants and antique shops line the streets in beautifully renovated historic buildings. Getting to Bisbee is easy; fly into Tucson International Airport and drive an hour and half to join the party. Other popular events include the Artisan Street Fair, Ghost Tours, Pool Party and the Hangover Banshee Sunday Brunch.

Visit www.bisbeepride.com for more information. For additional information contact Kathy Sowden @ 520-432-2900 or

Paula Aboud House Party June 19

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Come meet Tucson's LGBT State Senator, Paula Aboud, Saturday, June 19.

From 5 to 6:30 p.m., at 5153 E. Circulo Las Cabanas, Paula will be discussing the issues of concern, a review of this last Legislative Session and answering your questions.

For more information, call Elaine Clark (520) 514-7129.

Man2Man Seminars June 26 - 27

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Attend a Free Weekend retreat, June 26-27, 8:30 to 5 p.m. at SAAF, 365 S. Euclid, for Gay, Bisexual, and Questioning Men.

You are invited to attend a two-day seminar providing education on sexuality and intimacy between men. All men who have sex with men or are attracted to men, and are 18 or older are invited.

Seminar Goals and Topics: Learning about healthy sexuality; Sexuality across the life span; Understanding effects of fear, violence and abuse; Sexual identity formation; Developing assertiveness and empowerment; Male intimacy and relationships; Breaking isolation and developing networks; Bisexuality and sexual diversity; Being sexual in the age of HIV/AIDS and, sexual functioning.

Continental Breakfast and Lunch Provided both days! All participants will receive a $75 gift card and other incentives!

For more information visit azman2man.org, or contact Cesar at 520-628-7223, cegurrola@saaf.org.

Tijuana Holds First Pride Fest June 19-20

TIJUANA (Observer Update) - Strolling past the deserted storefronts of Tijuana's Avenida Revolucion, Sean Zullo remembers different times, when bars were full and the area bustled with U.S. visitors. Now the Southern California native is on a quest to revive the city's decaying tourist strip by catering to members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities on both sides of the border, signonsandiego.com reported.

"I believe the timing is good," said Zullo, 43, a Long Beach entrepreneur who moved to Tijuana eight months ago. "There is no tourism. The market is completely untapped, unorganized; there's no one filling that niche."

Driven by this vision, Zullo is organizing Tijuana's first Gay Pride Festival, to be held June 19 and 20 at the northern end of Avenida Revolucion, center of a small, informal gay district. It will feature music, food, cultural events and presentations by social-service organizations from Baja California and California. And, Zullo hopes, it will bring as many as 10,000 people to the area, not only uniting the city's fractured gay community but changing attitudes among the population at large.

Zullo, the founder and executive director of Choices Baja, said he has been promoting the event as an economic opportunity, not as "an activist statement." But when he first approached city tourism authorities, "they basically laughed at me and said, 'You want us to start promoting gay and lesbian tourism?'?"

His proposal comes as Tijuana's iconic tourist strip has been struggling for survival after years of declining U.S. tourism. Few sectors of the Baja California tourism industry have suffered as much since 2001, the result of more stringent U.S. border security measures, the economic downturn and drug-related violence. Ceturmex, a local merchants group, estimates that 80 percent of the storefronts are empty.

For more information about the festival, go to choicesbaja.com.

Sean Zullo

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

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Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation

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Informing the Community
The Observer

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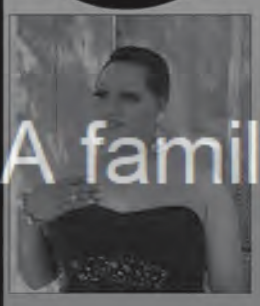

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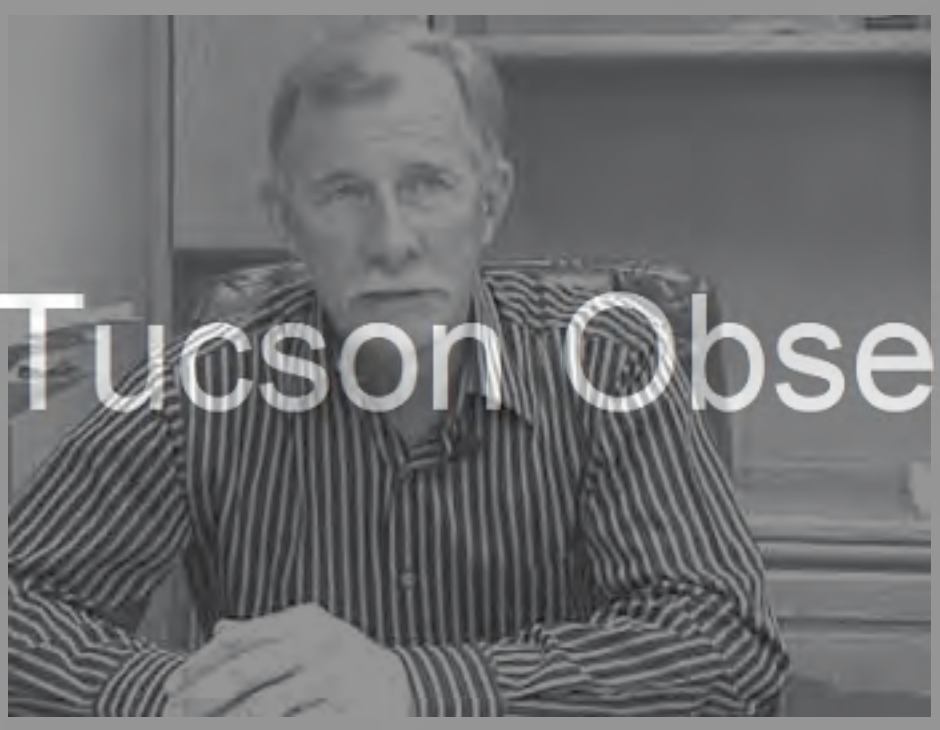
Yuma Mayor Makes Limp-Wisted Apology



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YUMA (Observer Update) - Al Krieger, the mayor of Yuma, Ariz., told the Yuma Sun that he is apologizing for a Memorial Day speech, where he criticized the proposed repeal of "don't ask, don't tell" by saying, "I cannot believe that a bunch of lacy-drawered, limp-wristed people…could do what those men have done in the past."

But, based on his apology, it doesn't sound like the critical national response to Krieger's Memorial Day speech did much to change his attitude toward gay people, reports advocate.com.

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In his latest phone interview with the Sun, he said, "As mayor I must respect the lifestyle choices of others, no matter how disagreeable they are with my personal beliefs or my personal moral standards…. I apologize for my comments at the Memorial Day service at Desert Lawn cemetery on Memorial Day."

Prior to the apology, Krieger defended his comments by comparing himself to some of the nation's forefathers. During an interview with the local NBC affiliate, KYMA, he said: "I'm reluctant to compare myself to George Washington or Abraham Lincoln, but I did get some feedback, and I don't think I said anything different than what they would have said."

Gay Nightclub Hopes To Revitalize Downdown Allbuquerque

ALBUQUERQUE (Observer Update) - A once empty building in downtown Albuquerque is set to reopen as the city's largest gay nightclub, reports the AP.

The Effex Nightclub at 4th Street and Central Avenues opened this week. Co-owner Kris McNeil told KOB-TV they hope the club helps revitalize downtown while giving the gay and lesbian community a place to feel comfortable.

McNeil added the gay community contributes financial support to downtown businesses including stores and grocery stores - something McNeil said that downtown needs to grow and flourish.

City Council President Ken Sanchez said new businesses and the latest gross receipts tax revenue, which showed a slight increase in March, is a good financial sign overall.

Orrin Hatch: I Never Said Gay People Are Faithless

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - President Obama will hold a White House gay pride reception on June 22. Invitations for the event were mailed last week. They say: "The President requests the pleasure of your company at a reception in celebration of LGBT Pride Month to be held at The White House."

Among those invited is openly gay Detroit City Council President Charles Pugh. "Who gets an invitation to the White House," Pugh said in a video posted on Facebook. "I'm just saying, that's pretty good."

"It's an honor, really, to represent the people of the City of Detroit who were not bigots, who accepted my candidacy for the qualifications I brought to the table and did not in any way judge or reject me because of who I am," he added, reports On Top Magazine.

Earlier Obama declared June gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender pride month. The president used the opportunity to cheer on lawmakers as they considered repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," the 1993 law that forbids gay troops from serving openly, and highlight some of the gay rights initiatives advanced by his administration.

Saying that "our Nation draws its strength from our diversity," Obama called upon Americans to "observe this month by fighting prejudice and discrimination in their own lives and everywhere it exits.

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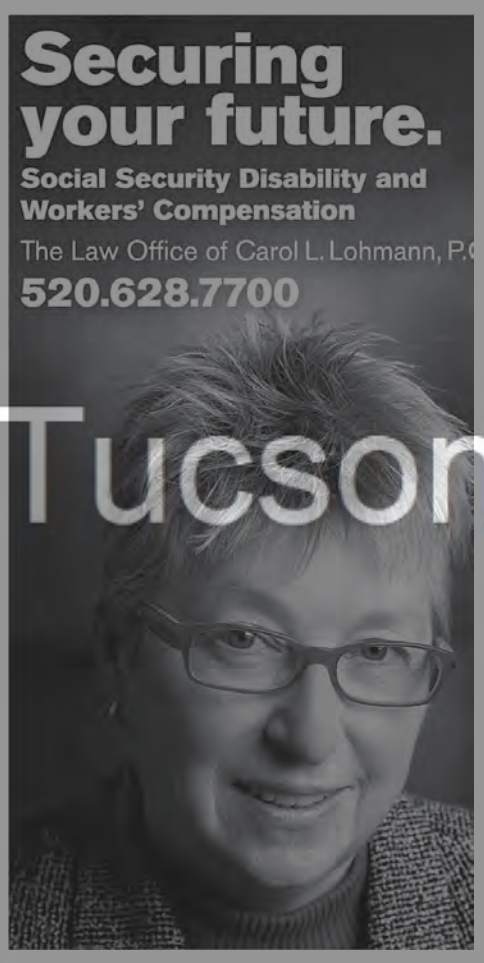

COMMENTARY. . . .

by John Corvino

The G/L Parenting Difference - And Why It Doesn't Matter To Marriage

Opponents of marriage equality often refer to the "untested experiment" of same-sex parenting, asserting that we just don't know how children in these families will fare over the long haul. They point to the fact that there has never been a significant long-term longitudinal study of such children's welfare–that is, one that follows the same group of children over time.

They can no longer make the latter claim. In the current issue of the journal Pediatrics, Drs. Nanette Gartrell and Henny Bos report on their 25-year study of the psychological adjustment of donor-conceived children in 78 lesbian-parented families. They followed the families from before the children's birth until they were 17 years old, interviewing the lesbian birth mothers at various points during this span, as well as interviewing the children at ages 10 and 17.

They then compared this data with a general normative sample of American youth (known as Achenbach samples), controlling for similar socioeconomic status. The study, which is ongoing, constitutes the largest, longest-running, prospective longitudinal study of same-sex parented families to date, with results published in the peer-reviewed official journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

What they found is that the 17-year-old children of the lesbian mothers scored significantly higher than their peers in social and academic competence, and significantly lower in social problems, rule-breaking, and aggressive behavior.

That's right: the lesbians' kids outperformed their peers. This does not surprise me.

One reason it doesn't surprise me is because I've known lesbian parents, and they rock.

But it also doesn't surprise me because of an important general fact about same-sex parents. Unlike heterosexual parents, same-sex parents typically don't wake up and say "Oops, we're pregnant." For them, becoming parents is never a matter of simply going through the motions. It's something into which they must put a great deal of planning and commitment–factors which translate into positive outcomes, for traditional and non-traditional families alike.

If I'm right about this, then the moral of the story is not that lesbian parents are better than straight parents. (Sorry, lesbians.) It's that thoughtful, committed parents are better, and that a lot of lesbian parents fit that description.

Many marriage-equality opponents claim to know this already.

"Sure, there are good lesbian parents out there," they say. "But on average, two-biological-parent families do better than any other family form."

They will doubtless argue that the current study doesn't show otherwise, because it doesn't control for biological relatedness in the Achenbach comparison group.

Let's suppose they're right about all that. What follows?

What follows is that gays and lesbians shouldn't kidnap children from their own biological mothers and fathers. Since that's not happening, the opponents' point is a red herring.

I don't mean to be glib, but from the premise "on average, two-biological-parent families do better than any other family form," to the conclusion "Therefore, we should not allow same-sex couples to marry," there are a lot of missing steps. Indeed, more like entire missing staircases. Marriage-equality opponents never acknowledge those missing staircases, much less address them.

We allow many couples to marry who fall short of the purported parenting ideal–as we should. Notably, we allow stepfamilies to form, even though the very same premise that opponents cite against same-sex-parented families applies to them: "on average, two-biological-parent families do better than any other family form."

We allow poor people to marry, people without college degrees to marry, people in rural areas to marry, and so on, even though there is substantial research–far more decisive than that surrounding same-sex parenting–showing that, on average, children fare less well in these environments than in the contrasting ones.

My point is that the debate over marriage equality is not the same as the debate over parenting ideals–as much as our opponents try to make it so. We need to call them out on this diversion.

Meanwhile, we should welcome this new study as providing insight into lesbian families. Like any study, it has its limitations. It studies only lesbians, not gay men. The data are based on mothers' reports (although so are the Achenbach comparison data). The lesbian parents studied were not randomly selected–a procedure that would have been preferable, but also unrealistic in the 1980's when same-sex families were more often hidden. (On the other hand, it is a prospective study, so volunteers wouldn't have known ahead of time that their children would fare well.)

These limitations, and the study's broader implications, will inevitably be subject to critical debate. That is as it should be.

But let's not confuse that debate with the debate over our right to marry.

(John Corvino, Ph.D. is an author, speaker, and philosophy professor at Wayne State University in Detroit. His column "The Gay Moralist" appears 365gay.com from which this is reprinted.. He is currently working on a book (with Maggie Gallagher), Debating Same-Sex Marriage, for Oxford University Press. To learn more about John or see clips from his DVD, visit www.johncorvino.com.)

Obama To Hold White House LGBT Pride Reception

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Clear Channel Blocks Pride Billboards

ST PETERSBURG (Observer Update) - Billboard behemoth Clear Channel Outdoor rejected two advertisements that are part of a four-part campaign to promote St. Petersburg, Fla.'s gay pride celebration.

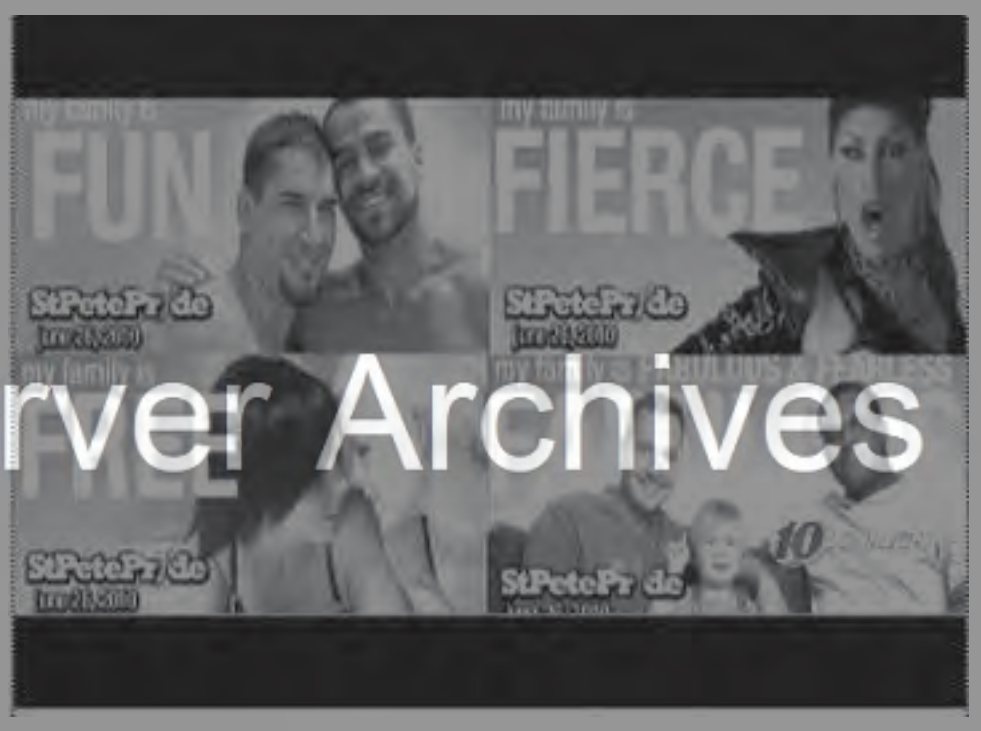
One of the ads featured two men without shirts, with the copy reading, "My Family is Fun." The other billboard shows a lesbian couple at the beach, with copy that reads, "My Family is Free."

According to WTSP News, St. Petersburg Pride Executive Director Chris Rudisill wrote an email to Clear Channel Outdoor executives following the decision.

"I'm almost certain that you have had billboards in the market which display men and women in both friendly and romantic ways," he wrote. "I can't seem to understand where these images would be any different, except for the fact that they portray two men and two women, respectively."

In eight years of St. Pete Pride, Clear Channel has reportedly censored or edited their advertisements, but this year, the organization offered up comparatively tamer ads. Clear Channel Outdoor told WTSP, "as a matter of policy, we don't discuss creative decisions on signage."

The Pride festival is sponsored by several large corporations, like Bank of America, Tropicana, and Macy's.



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Jodie Foster Responds To Battery Charges

LOS ANGELES (Observer Update) - After RadarOnline.com reported that Jodie Foster had been accused of battery by a 17-year-old boy, a rep for the actress tells People that the boy was "most definitely a professional paparazzo" who was harassing Foster and her family.

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According to the police report, the incident happened May 29 at the Los Angeles shopping center The Grove: "Vict while at The Grove saw susp and began taking pics of susp with his camera then walked to the valet area of The Grove. Susp followed vict, poked him on his chest, grabbed Vict by his left arm causing visible injury."

The 17-year-old's father told RadarOnline.com, "My son was at The Grove with his girlfriend and they were going to see a movie. He saw Jodie Foster and is a big fan so went over and took a picture of her.

"She came after him, poked him in the chest and said, 'Do you even have a mother you slime ball?'"

Foster's rep, however, says the police report is a complete "fabrication" of what happened. "He had a large camera bag and 100mm telephoto lens. He tailed Jodie and followed her all the way from the move theater to the valet.

"He crowded her and her two young children and took photos of them the whole time," says the rep, adding that the actress then asked him to stop.

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For additional information and sample letter please send an email to harveymilkstampdir@cox.net

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AIDS Drug Funds Threatened By Tea Party Scare?

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - Some Democrats and Republicans in Congress who have long supported funding for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program are reluctant to back the struggling program this year because they fear the additional spending will jeopardize their chances of being re-elected, Capitol Hill observers and AIDS activists said, reports the Washington Blade.

William Arnold, executive director of the National ADAP Working Group, said intense pressure on members of Congress to curtail spending by the so-called Tea Party movement has made it difficult to line up support for an emergency supplemental appropriation measure.

Arnold and officials with other national AIDS and LGBT organizations say the program is facing a crisis never seen before, where a growing number of low income people with HIV or AIDS may be denied life-saving anti-retroviral drugs in at least 11 states this year because state ADAP affiliates have run out of money.

Due to a shortage of funds, the 11 states have been forced to put in place waiting lists for patients who otherwise would have received AIDS medication prescribed by their doctors.

"It's ridiculous that people have to be wait-listed for medicine that they need to stay alive," said Laurie Young, a policy analyst for the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force.

ADAP was created in 1987 under the Ryan White Care Act to help pay for AIDS-related drugs for low-income people with HIV/AIDS, including those who don't have health insurance coverage.

Advocacy groups familiar with the program say an emergency appropriation of at least $126 million is needed this year to provide AIDS drugs for all that need them. But they say the Obama administration and Democratic leaders in Congress have yet to make a commitment to back such an appropriations measure.

Nearly 80 members of the House, including gay Reps. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) and Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisc.), signed a petition recently sent to the White House urging the president to back the emergency funding measure. All but one of the House members signing the petition were Democrats.

Baldwin said Tuesday that she and her colleagues who signed the petition have yet to receive a response from the White House.

In an e-mail to the Blade, White House spokesperson Shin Inouye said the president "strongly supports the Ryan White Program and the AIDS Drug Assistance Program's vital role in providing life-saving medications for people living with HIV and AIDS."

Inouye noted that the current year's funding for ADAP represents a $20 million increase over the fiscal year 2009 funding. He said President Obama has proposed an increase in ADAP funding for next year that will allow the program to "serve an additional 3,389 individuals."

But Inouye didn't say whether the administration would support the $126 million emergency supplemental appropriation for ADAP for this year, as AIDS groups have requested.

In response to a request for the White House's position on the emergency funding proposal, Inouye said, "We are working to ensure that ADAP has the funds it needs so that waiting lists are not needed for this safety net program."

Drew Hammill, a spokesperson for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, said Pelosi and other House Democratic leaders were reviewing the request.

"As she has every single year since the program was created, the speaker will push for increased funding for ADAP in the regular [fiscal year] 2011 Labor-[Health & Human Services]-Education appropriations bill," he said.

Representatives of AIDS groups, including Arnold, said a funding increase in the fiscal year 2011 appropriations bill cited by Pelosi's office would be helpful and could alleviate the ADAP crisis if the funding were large enough.

But they said that immediate relief is needed this year, noting that the

continued on page seven

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AIDS Drug Funds continued from page six

2011 measure would not take effect until July 1, 2011.

Baldwin told the Blade that she was certain that congressional Democrats would take steps to support the $126 million emergency appropriation. But she said Republicans in the House have followed a policy of opposing nearly all spending bills proposed by Democrats.

"I sense among the Democratic caucus, among the Democratic leadership, an absolute awareness of this" funding problem and a commitment to acting, she said. "And yet when we can't rely on any bipartisanship to respond to this crisis, we can't rely on a single Republican vote to help respond to the absolute needs of people we represent, it is extremely challenging."

But Michael Weinstein, president of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, questioned Baldwin's response, saying Democrats have yet to introduce a measure calling for the $126 million funding for ADAP.

"Why don't they introduce a bill and call the Republicans' bluff if they want to blame this on the Republicans?" Weinstein said.

He noted that Sens. Richard Burr (R-N.C.) and Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) introduced a bill last month that would take the $126 million needed for ADAP this year from the federal stimulus program, where there are millions of dollars in unobligated funds.

Sens. Michael Enzi (R-Wyo.) and George LeMieux (R-Fla.) also signed onto the bill, but no Democrats so far have agreed to become co-sponsors. Weinstein said Democratic sources in the Senate told him the bill would be "dead on arrival" when sent to a committee to consider it.

"This is partisan politics, with the well-being of people with AIDS the ones to suffer the consequences," Weinstein said.

Weinstein also challenged Pelosi to immediately introduce an emergency funding measure to cover the needed funds for ADAP this year, saying her district in San Francisco has a large number of low-income people with HIV that rely on ADAP.

He acknowledged, though, that no other Republican senator, including Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, have signed on to the Burr-Coburn bill. A similar bill has yet to be introduced in the House.

Baldwin said she would likely vote for such a bill if it were introduced in the House and became the only vehicle to allocate the ADAP funds. However, she noted that she would prefer not to take funds from the stimulus program.

In his e-mail to the Blade, Inouye said the White House opposes taking funds from the stimulus program "because those resources are needed by communities across the country to keep the economic recovery going and to stimulate job growth."

Arnold said his group supports the Burr-Coburn bill on grounds that it could provide immediate help for ADAP and the funds are already incorporated in the federal budget, preventing the need for "more spending" to appropriate the funds.

He also noted that the Tea Party movement appears to have frightened both Republicans and Democrats from embracing new spending, even if they know it's needed to help save lives.

Some Capitol Hill insiders have said the reluctance by lawmakers to back spending measures appears to have stopped a supplemental appropriations bill normally approved each year to pay for federal disaster relief efforts. AIDS activists were hoping a supportive committee member would seek to add the ADAP emergency appropriation to this bill.

That bill, which was before the House Appropriations Committee, was expected to come up for a committee vote last month, just before Memorial Day. But Arnold and other sources familiar with the measure said Committee Chair David Obey (D-Wis.) reportedly put the bill on "hold" because he couldn't line up the votes among his fellow Democrats to pass it.

Moderate and conservative Blue Dog Democrats were among those reluctant to back the bill, said people familiar with the measure.

"The Blue Dog Democrats have been very opposed to spending money, period, because they're worried about getting re-elected and they're from swing districts where tea partiers might be challenging them," Arnold said.

Obey reportedly has said he postponed committee consideration of the bill because too much business was taking place on the House floor and committee members didn't have time to consider the bill, according a source familiar with the committee. The source said Obey indicated he would soon decide how and when to take up the bill.

Arnold said his and other AIDS groups have argued that turning down the ADAP spending measure would be "penny wise and pound foolish" because it saves the government large sums of money in the long run.

If people with AIDS are denied medication, they could end up in the hospital, and state and federal agencies could be forced into picking up the bill from patients without insurance coverage.

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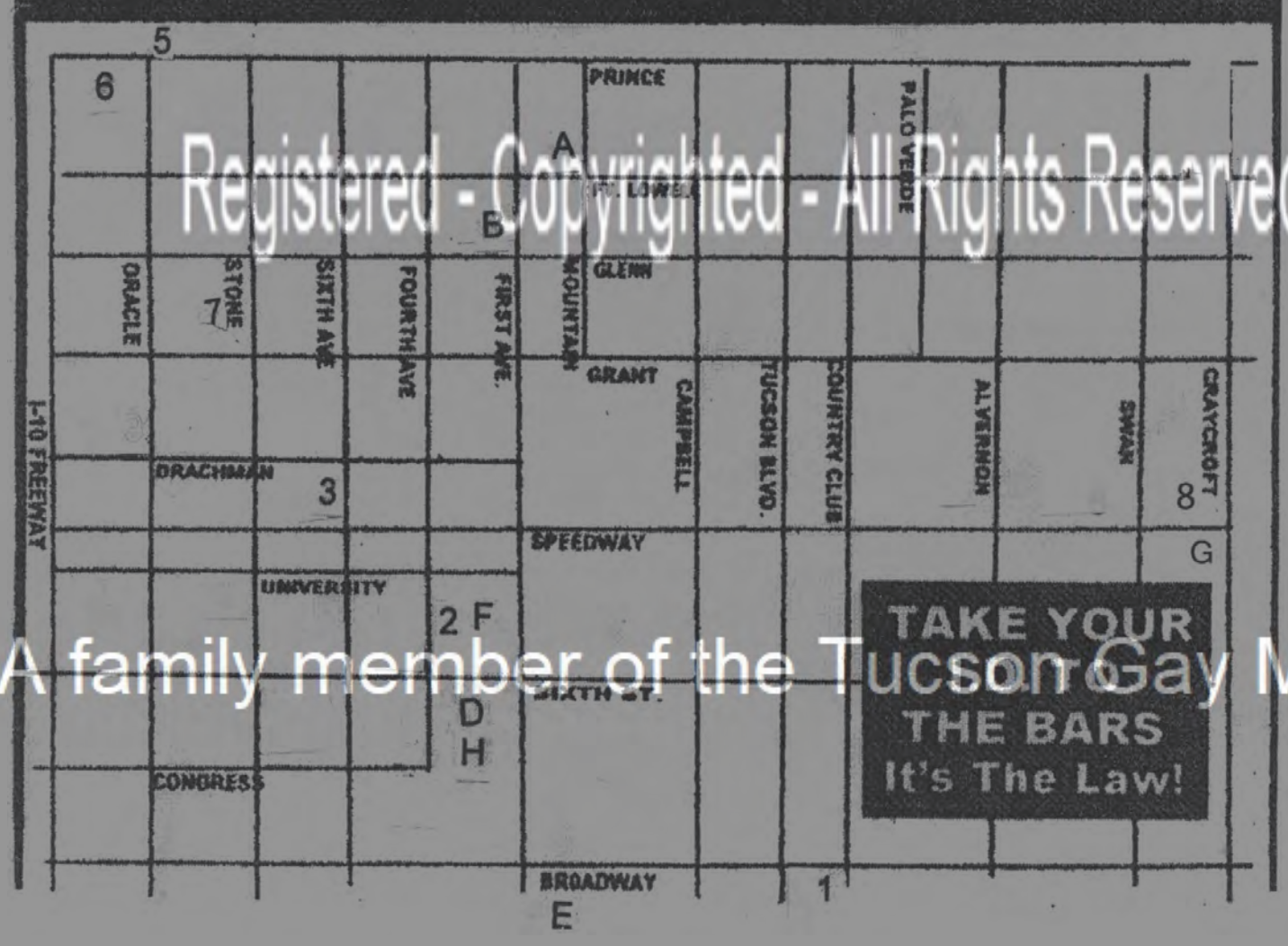

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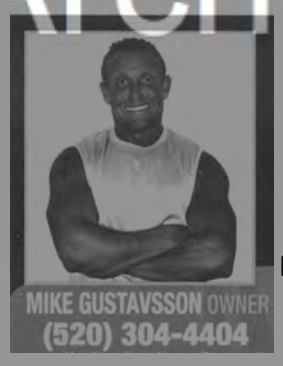

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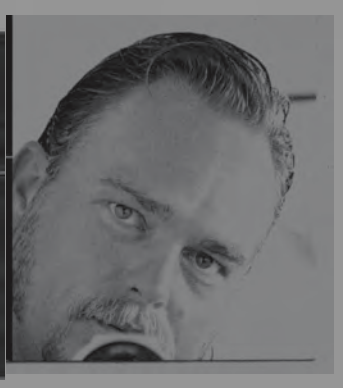

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SOUTHERN ARIZONA AIDS FOUNDATION (SAAF), 375 S. EUCLID. Office Hours 8am to 5pm, Monday through Friday. Direct services and emotional support for persons with and affected by HIV. Anonymous HIV testing and support groups available. Prevention education programs. 628-SAAF (7223). World wide web: http://www.saaf.org. VOLUNTEERS WELCOME.

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P.F.L.A.G. - Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays - is a support group available to anyone who has a son, daughter or friend who is Gay. Call 360-3795 or write P.O. Box 36264, Tucson, AZ 85740-6264. All replies confidential.

YOUNG AND GAY?
GLBT Youth 23 and under, meet Tucson for sharing, support and information. You are not alone. For more info call Wingspan, 624-1779.

Start getting more out of life with TUCSON PRIME TIMERS. We're the local chapter of Prime Timers Worldwide, the preeminent social organization for mature gay and bi men as well as younger (21+) men who enjoy their company. Each month we sponsor a wide range of dining events, cultural enrichment activities, parties, meetings, bowling, day trips, picnics, tours and much more. Visitors are always welcome. For info call our message phone 520-743-9514 Visit our website: www.tucsonprimetimers.org

TUCSON INFORMATION AND REFERRAL
For Information on human service organizations, health and mental health services, financial and government assistance, emergency services such as food and shelter, education, etc. Call Information and Referral 325-2111 - 7am-7pm M-F - 9am-5pm weekend and holidays.

WINGSPAN - Tucson's Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Community Center, 425 E. 7th St., offers support groups / info line / social events / library / meeting space. Volunteer Opportunities. Board meetings every 2nd Thursday (open to all), 6:00 p.m. Information 624-1779.

GREATER PHOENIX GAY & LESBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (GPGLCC) P.O. BOX 2097, Phoenix, AZ 85001-2097. E-mail: webmaster@gpglcc.org or call (602)225-8444.

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LESBIAN AND GAY AL-ANON- Affected by someone's drinking? Meeting every Tuesday 8:45 to 9:45 p.m. at Lambda Center, 2940 E. Thomas, Phoenix. Ellie 581-8850 or Ronn 968-2384.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE GROUP - Outreach to Gay and Lesbian people in Arizona. Meets monthly. Write to P.O. Box 893, Phoenix, AZ 85001 or call Eddy Walters, (602)371-1102

T-Squares, Tucson's Gay & Lesbian square dance club, dances Tuesdays 6:30_9 pm at the Cornerstone Fellowship Social Hall, 2902 N. Geronimo Ave (Northwest of 1st Ave & Glenn St). No experience needed, no partner required! For more information contact Barb at 886-0716, or visit www.azgaydance.org.

LIGHTNING LIGHTING will provide lighting for AIDS and related benefits at no charge. For more info call Adrienne at 889-7298.

COME EXPLORE YOUR SPIRITUALITY! St. Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church offers a variety of Gay and Lesbian groups and services for the spiritually minded. Come meet the Family! For more information call Debbie 579-9827 or David 323-7943.

LESBIAN/GAY WRITERS: Workshop at 7:00 p.m. third Wednesday of every month. Read and critique current projects. Network and support. For info call 325-4737.

DESERT VOICES, Tucson's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Straight Chorus, has been singing songs of pride, hope and laughter for 20 seasons. Check out our website at www.desertvoices.org, or call (520)791-9662 for information about upcoming concerts or how to join.

Join the LESBIAN & GAY PUBLIC AWARENESS PROJECT. In Tucson write Awareness Project, 3661 N. Campbell Ave. #365, Tucson, AZ 85719.

AA Meeting with HIV/AIDS focus, Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m., Wingspan Annex, 425 E. 7th Street. All alcoholics welcome.

MEN'S SOCIAL NETWORK: Social organization for men of all ages. Building an extended Gay family in Tucson. Monthly social potluck gatherings the first Saturday of each month and almost weekly social activities. Call 207-5336 for information and a newsletter.

CARE TEAMS ARE AVAILABLE to offer support to people living with HIV/AIDS. The Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network (TIHAN) offers trained, compassionate and committed volunteers to provide services including friendly visits, light housekeeping, assistance with meals, shopping, errands, transportation and companionship for medical appointments, and respite care for primary care givers. No judgement or proselytizing - we are here to be of service. For information call Scott at 299-6647.

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT SPORTS TEAMS and updates on Gay Games, contract TEAM ARIZONA at their website: teamarizona.org

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE GLBT, Tucson's Gay and Lesbian business networking group holds regular meetings the third Thursday of every month. Call 615-6436 for more info. www.tucsonglbtchamber.org

TUCSON PRIDE, INC. meets on the second Wednesday at Braun P.C. located at 6125 E. Grant Road at 6pm. Tucson Pride produces the following events each year: Pride Week; Pride In The Desert and Pride On Parade. For more information please call 622-3200 or visit their website at www.tucsonpride.org

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ANONYMOUS HIV COUNSELING AND TESTING is available through the Pima County Health Department at sites throughout Tucson, Very Gay Friendly. For more information or to make an appointment call 791-7676.

SMART (Self Management And Recovery Training) a free non-12-step self_help alternative for people working to overcome addictive and other emotional problems meets in Tucson Monday thru Thursdays at different locations. For more information about SMART, contact Jennifer at 838_3975.

THEATER / DINNER / MOVIES / ETC! Nonsmoking Lesbian Network meets every month. If you'd like to meet women 50+ (flexible) and socialize in a smoke-free environment, please call or email: 888-8010 'til 9pm, or joycesmth1@aol.com. The group dines OUT! and attends shows, movies, comedy events, etc. Now in our 23rd year, 7th in Tucson.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LGBT SUPPORT GROUP FOR VICTIM/ SURVIVORS OF Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Hate Crimes, Bias Acts, Harassment. Call Megan at Wingspan, 624-1779, ext. 116. Services are free.

MEN'S HIKING CLUB - A peer-run MEN's outdoor club for hiking, biking, camping, boating etc, is now up and running in the Tucson area. To join, go toSAGE-Tucson-subscribe @yahoogroups.com. See you on the trails.

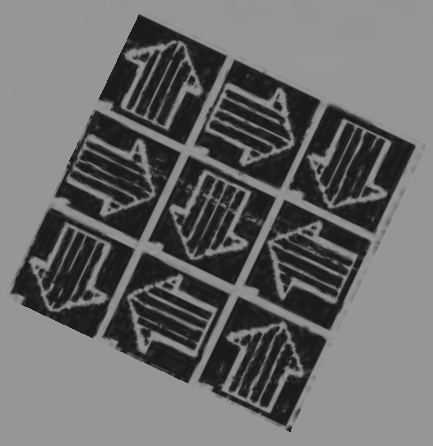
MEN'S KINK DISCUSSION GROUP (Open to all who identify as male and are 18 or older) meets 2nd Tuesday of the month, 7:00 p.m. at Desert Dominion, 3843 E. 37th Street, Tucson, AZ. (Map available at www.desertdominion,org) For those who are kinky or just curious. No fee, contributions are appreciated, but not required.
Mondays, 6:30pm at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th Street. This is an open meeting of Narcotics Anonymous - all are welcome. For more info call Bernie W.: 406-0740

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

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

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP
Sponsored by TMC Hospice and Valor Hospice Care. 1st & 3rd Thursdays 4:30-6:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4831 E. 22nd Street, Tucson. Located one quarter mile east of Swan on 22nd St. For more information please contact Steve Ross- Valor Hospice 615-3996; Karla Brockie - TMC Hospice 269-9573 or karla.brockie@tmcaz.com

LGBT Buddhist Meditation Group. Join us for two 20 minute silent sitting meditations, and reading from Buddhist Spiritual text and discussion. Bring a friend and a pillow or cushion. Takes place every Sunday from 10-11:30AM at 3 Jewels, 314 E. 6th St. Donations accepted. for more info. 323-2293.



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Poet's Corner

THE GRAND PLAN

by Ron Rose - Tucson

McCain and Kyle say wait awhile
Have you got twenty years?
Two decades more are needed
To quell the border fears
They plan, and plan, and plan and plan
To solve the border mess,
Next step, legislation
In twenty years, I guess.
In my next life, dear senators
I would love to see
You legislators, legislate
And fill my heart with glee.

Tucson Observer Archives

Poll: Majority Of LGBT's Oppose Arizona Immigration Law

tucsonobserverarchives.org

ROCHESTER (Observer Update) - A new survey shows that 63% of LGBT Americans, a clear majority of those polled, oppose the strict new immigration law set to take effect in Arizona next month, reports advocate.com.

In contrast, the poll found that about 60% of straight adults support the law.

According to the joint survey by Harris Interactive and Witeck-Combs Communications, which polled 2,698 U.S. adults online between May 10 and May 17, the results hold economic implications for Arizona, especially in the area of tourism.

"These polarized opinions also appear to influence consideration for Arizona as a future travel destination," said a news release.

"Among the LGBT respondents who have seen, heard or read about the new law, 43% say they would be less likely to travel to the state for leisure, and 36% said they would be less likely to travel there for convention gatherings.

"Thirty-two percent (32%) of LGBT adults also added that they would be less likely to travel to Arizona for other business purposes."

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Log Cabin Republicans' Tea Bag Toss

LOS ANGELES (Observer Update) - The Log Cabin Republicans of Los Angeles, largest group of GOP gays in America, are planning a Tea Bag Toss in conjunction with the Los Angeles Pride celebration, reports advocate.com. "Participants will purchase a tea bag and win a prize if they can successfully throw it through the open mouth of one of three politicians on the game board," the group said in a press release.

The bipartisan trio of open-mouthed politicians are Democratic gubernatorial nominee Jerry Brown, 2008 Republican vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin, and Speaker of the House (and San Francisco congresswoman) Nancy Pelosi.

Wyatt Buchanan of the San Francisco Chronicle (a onetime Seattle P-I intern) decided to check it out the event, slated for Christopher Street West, and called Scott Schmidt, president of Long Cabin-LA. "He said it was part of their effort to reach out (to) the LGBT community," wrote Buchanan, "and 'We figured this year we ought to take it up a notch and do something that is engaging and somewhat amusing and shows that we can even laugh at ourselves."

Schmidt told Buchanan that inclusion of Palin was a bid to be bipartisan, adding that she raised the sales tax while mayor of Wasilla, Alaska.

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Fines Proposed Against Mormon Church For Prop. 8 Campaign Finance Violations

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) hailed a proposal by the California Fair Political Practices Committee (FPPC) that would fine The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) for failing to report all of its late non-monetary contributions in its efforts to pass Proposition 8 in California in 2008.

While the recommended fine of just more than $5,500 for the unreported late contributions of $36,968 to the Yes on 8 campaign may seem inconsequential, it represents a pattern of blatant disregard for California election laws and provides ongoing evidence that the Mormon Church was a significant leader in the campaign to repeal marriage equality, even while it evaded standard reporting requirements and denied its involvement.

HRC President Joe Solmonese also commended the efforts of Fred Karger of Californians Against Hate, for filing the initial FPPC complaint that has shed light on the anti-equality activities of the Mormon Church. The issue, scheduled to be discussed at its June 10th meeting, follows the January 2009 admission by the Mormon Church to the FPPC that it failed to report in-kind contributions to the Yes on 8 campaign of $190,000. Previously the Mormon Church had failed to disclose its real involvement in the Proposition 8 campaign, as California law required it to do.

"Thanks to Fred Karger's dogged pursuit of the truth, we now know the Mormon Church not only violated the law in its election work to pass Prop 8, it most likely did so purposely" said Solmonese. "It's just not credible that a multi-billion dollar, sophisticated organization like the LDS Church didn't know or understand the election law requirements. California requires early disclosure so voters know who's behind these referendum fights and clearly, the Mormon Church worked overtime to keep their full involvement hidden from the people of California."

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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 cheese-burger & 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, JUNE 19

COYOTE MOON - Help get Vivika D'Angelo to Miss USofA at Large! 9:30 p.m. with guest stars Koyote Kingz, Regine Rochelle, Desirayee DiMarco, Veronica Chase, Bianca Solei and Miss Honey.

SUNDAYS AND MONDAYS HAVE BEEN CHAGED AT IBT'S. On Sundys from noon to 9 p.m. is happy hour with a BBQ Beer Bust for the Reveille Mens Chorus and 4p.m. karaoke on the patio, followed with dancing on the patio with DJ Hill and Karaoke on the inside. 9p.m. to closing it's $1.50 well and domestic beer and $2.,50 call and import beer.

On Mondays the bar opens at noon with happy hour until 8 p.m. 8 p.m. to closing it's $5 Smirnoff Martinis and Mojito specials. and at 9 p.m all request music with DJ Hurricane.

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Passport Rules Eased For Transgender People

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - The U.S. State Department has announced passport rules that removed a strict requirement that applicants must undergo gender-reassignment surgery before qualifying for a gender change on their passport, reports advocate.com.

According to the State Department, "Beginning June 10, when a passport applicant presents a certification from an attending medical physician that the applicant has undergone appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition, the passport will reflect the new gender." Applicants can also obtain "a limited-validity passport" if the physician's statement shows they are in the process of transitioning to a new gender. No additional medical records are required, and gender-reassignment surgery is no longer a prerequisite for passport issuance.

Activists hailed the move as lifesaving for trans individuals, who will no longer face the risk of being "outed" by a gender designation that is out of alignment with their gender identity.

"It's going to save lives," said Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality. "It's actually dangerous to get outed in some foreign countries as transgender. I've had friends who were harassed because their gender marker didn't match who they appeared to be." She added that the passport will also be helpful in states that have "antiquated" gender designation policies for drivers licenses.

A Consular Report of Birth Abroad can also be amended with the new gender for American citizens who were born in foreign countries.

Keisling said the change was long overdue and an issue trans advocates had been working on for 10 years, but she added that the policy change came faster during this administration than she had anticipated. "I thought we would see it by the end of the year," she said. "Most of the kudos has to go to the State Department and Secretary Clinton and the Obama administration. This is a huge win."

Though the policy represents a major advancement for transgender rights, Keisling noted that it could be a more "perfect policy" if the gender change required only a self-declaration by a trans person rather than requiring a physician to weigh in. The changes are based on the recommendations of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, the recognized authority in the field, according to the statement.

Pride Flag On VA Hospital Sparks Debate

ALBANY (Observer Update) - A gay pride flag hanging on a VA hospital in Albany, N.Y., has raised questions about whether nonofficial flags may be flown on federal buildings, reports advocate.com.

According to the Albany Times Union, the Stratton VA Medical Center is one of 40 groups in the state capital area that agreed to fly the flag in honor of Gay Pride Month and the 40th anniversary of the founding of the city's LGBT community center.

However, at least one patient has asked whether the hospital should fly flags other than ones that relate strictly to the government.

Pat Lasher, who served in the Navy from 1971 to 1975, including 10 months in Vietnam, says he "thought a law or code forbids display of banners other than the American and MIA-POW flags on federal buildings," the Times Union reported. "But there's no evidence of that, and a local attorney, a federal buildings property manager, and others said they knew of no such restriction."

Some nearby institutions, such as the state university and federal buildings, fly only flags that represent the government, according to the Times Union.

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