Observing Tucson And The Greater Arizona Community

OBSERVER

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WEEKLY OBSERVER FEBRUARY 9, 2011 ISSUE1384

Barney Frank Not Retiring

BOSTON (Observer Update) - Massachusetts Representative Barney Frank announced Thursday that he will run for re-election in 2012, The Boston Globe reported. In making his announcement, the 70-year-old Frank suggested gay rights were among the issues he wants to continue to pursue, reports On Top Magazine.

"I have become convinced that making my decision to run for re-election known is important for maximizing the impact I can have on the range of issues to which I am committed," Frank said in a statement. "These issues require a time commitment longer than the next two years."

Frank said his top priorities were to defend the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act from repeal by Republicans and to "reduce significantly America's swollen, unnecessary, worldwide military footprint."

"Failure to address excessive military spending will either add to the deficit or force cuts in education, police, fire, transportation, scientific research, food safety, and infrastructure investment."

"While these two issues are central to our ability to return to a full-employment economy while protecting our quality of life, there are other national and regional issues on which I will be working as well – protecting the fishing industry in Massachusetts from arbitrary, unjust and unfair actions; fighting for full legal equality for all citizens; providing for the housing needs of low-income people, not by pushing them unwisely and unsustainably into homeownership, but rather by building affordable rental housing; and helping local communities provide a level of service adequate to the needs of their residents."

Frank is the longest serving openly gay member of Congress. Three additional representatives – Jared Polis of Colorado, Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, and David Cicilline of Rhode Island – are also openly gay. He is also a vocal advocate for the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), a bill that would outlaw workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Obama Appoints LGBT Leader To Faith Council

WASHINGTON, DC (Observer Update) - The White House announced the appointment of Nancy Wilson, the head of the Metropolitan Community Church, the nation's largest denomination serving LGBT churches, to the President's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, reports advocate.com.

A leading LGBT pastor, Wilson currently serves as moderator for the Univerisity Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, where she is one of few women to lead an international Christian denomination. She previously served as senior pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church of Los Angeles, the founding MCC church.

Wilson is one of 12 appointees to the Council, which, according to a news release, "brings together religious and secular leaders as well as scholars and experts in fields related to the work of faith-based and neighborhood organizations in order to make recommendations to the government on how to improve partnerships."

President Obama said, "I am pleased to announce that these experienced and committed individuals have agreed to join this Administration, and I look forward to working with them in the months and years ahead." Other appointees to the Council include Archbishop Demetrios Trakatellis, the head of the Greek Orthodox Church of America, and Lynne Hybels, wife of megachurch pastor Bill Hybels, head of the Willow Creek Community Church near Chicago.

MCC Leader Nancy Wilson

The council, formed in 2009, is composed of 25 members appointed to one-year terms. The White House said additional members would be announced at a later date.

Argentina Celebrates More Than 1,300 Gay, Lesbian Marriages in 6 Months

BUENOS AIRES (Observer Update) - Six months after a gay marriage law took effect in Argentina, more than 1,300 gay and lesbian couples have married, Argentine daily Clarin reported.

The figures were released by the gay rights group Federacion Argentina de Lesbianas, Gays, Bisexuales y Trans (FALGBT), which lobbied for the law. The majority of marriages were between men who had lived together for more than 12 years.

Esteban Paulo, president of FALGBT, explained that "in many areas, for men it is easier to be visible." A male couple together 27 years were the first gay couple to marry in the nation. Architect Juan Carlos Navarro married his partner Miguel Angel Calefato in Santiago del Estero.

Argentina became the first Latin American country to legalize gay marriage after President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner signed the law on July 21.

Lawmakers approved the law over the strong objections of the Roman Catholic church; one cardinal called the movement to legalize such unions the devil's handiwork. Gay marriage is also legal in Mexico City, Mexico's capital.

AGRA Road Runner Regional Rodeo Feb. 18 - 20

PHOENIX (Observer Update) - Howdy partners and welcome to Arizona's official Gay Rodeo Association (AGRA) 2011 RoadRunner Regional Rodeo, Feb 18 - 20, at Rawhide the Wildhorse Pass at the Gila River Indian community.

It's going to be a great rodeo with fun, games and thrills for all. Ticket prices are $15 per day, Saturday and Sunday or you can purchase a 2 day pass for only $25.

AGRA and the Rodeo are proud sponsors of many charities, including PFLAG-Phoenix, TIHAN, Phoenix's Community Church of Hope and others.

Things were shaking in Phoenix as early as 1982, when a small group traveled to the Reno rodeo and Tish Tanner won the title of Miss Reno National Gay Rodeo. Arizona came to life in the fall of 1984 when John decided to open a second Charlie's in Phoenix. The bar opened in early November and since John and Kenny Cunitz lived and breathed rodeo, it was only a matter of weeks before the Arizona Gay Rodeo Association (AGRA) formed.

In December 1984 the new group targeted January of 1986 for their first rodeo. Arizona became the fifth state to host a gay rodeo and the event took place in the most unique arena facility on the south side of Phoenix: a Mexican Charro rodeo arena with an attached dance hall known as the Corona Ranch. AGRA is proud to be one of the 5 founding members of the International Gay Rodeo Association (IGRA) and privileged to hold the Arizona heat for the International Rodeo league. Since then. the story continues...

For more information, go online to agra-phx.com.

The Hypocrisy Of Newt

"Look, I'm quite happy to say I come out of a tradition, which is several thousand years old, that says marriage is between a man and a woman. And I'm prepared to defend that tradition. And I happen to believe it. And I think I have as much right to my belief as you have to yours." - Newt Gingrich, responding to a student question at George Washington University.

Gingrich would like to remind everybody that that marriage is between one man and one woman whom you abandon riddled with cancer on her hospital bed while you screw your mistress whom you later marry and cheat on with a third woman while screaming with Godly moral outrage about the infidelities of the president.

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UPDATE

Wiingspan Benefit At Congress Hotel Feb. 12

TUCSON (Observer Update) - On Saturday, February 12, 6:30 pm, at the Hotel Congress, 311 E. Congress, a fund raiser is being held for Wingspan.

This Wingspan fundraiser will model the latest in winter hair and fashion trends with live music, free food and Xoom juice samples.

Event is free, but donations for Wingspan will be solicited. David Glenn Rudenborn is sponsoring this hairtastic and fashion fabulous event for your LGBT community center. For more information, call - 520-334-0901 or E-mail: davidofddesert@yahoo.com.

Queer Film Series Pageant, Feb,16

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Pagent will be playing Wednesday, February 16, 7 pm, at the Student Union Gallagher Theater, 1303 East University Drive. This showing is sponsored by the University of Arizona's Office of LGBTQ Affairs.

Following the trek of several individuals, Pageant, is a documentary about Miss Gay America. The insight of another sort of pageant life highlights the similarities and differences between the ceremonies that main-stream America knows, and the Drag culture that Miss Gay America glorifies. Screening is Free!

For more information, call 520-621-7585 or Email: asuapride@gmail.com.

Puertas Abiertas Presents Dia De San Valentin Fiesta!

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Puertas Abiertas is hosting a Valentine's Day party, Saturday February 12, at Wingspan, 430 East 7th, starting at 8 pm.

Celebrate love and friendship. Puertas Abiertas presenta la fiesta de el Dia de San Valentin. Celebre el amor y la amistad! Puertas Abiertas is Wingspan's social group for LGBT Latin@s!!! Allies and friends welcome!

For more information, contact Oscar Jimenez, 520-624-1779, Email: ojimenez@wingspan.org.

Regina Romero Asks For LGBT Help In Coming Campaign

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Tucson Ward 1 Councilmember Regina Romero, an advocate for the LGBT community and causes is facing a primary and general election campaign for her effort to maintain her seat on the City Council.

Romero is facing presently, two Democratic opponents as well as an independent candidate for the Ward 1 Council seat this year.

Her campaign is currently gathering petition signatures to qualify for the ballot. For more information or to volunteer, call 982-4178.

Lawmaker Introduces Bill Discouraging G/L Families In Utah

SALT LAKE CITY (Observer Update) - Conservative Utah State Representative LaVar Christensen (R-Draper) wants to pass a law allowing discrimination against gay and lesbian families.

House Bill 270, aka the "Family Policy" bill, calls for government-funded programs to be used to strengthen heterosexual families.

Tucson's Anti-Discimination Ordinance Marks 34th Anniversary

By Mark R. Kerr

TUCSON (Observer Update) - On February 7, 1977, the Tucson Mayor and Council enacted an anti-discrimination ordinance protecting the rights of gays and lesbians in employment, public accommodation and housing, will full criminal penalties as well as enforcement capabilities for the city government.

This made Tucson one of the first cities in the nation to have such an ordinance dealing with gays and lesbians on the books. In 1998, the ordinance was amended to include gender identity and the language was updated thanks to the work of the then, Mayor's Task Force on LGBT Issues, which became the City of Tucson Commission on LGBT Issues in 1999, one of the first cities in the West to give the LGBT community a part in their municipal government.

Under the ordinance, it is unlawful to discriminate within the city limits of Tucson, in employment, public accommodation and housing, on the basis of: Race, Color, National origin, Ancestry, Disability, Age, Sexual orientation, Gender identity, Religion, Sex, Familial status and

Marital status.

The City of Tucson Office of Equal Opportunity Programs takes complaints and investigates all allegations made. For more information, go online to tucsonaz.gov/oeop or call, 520-791-5140.

The bill also defines legal marriage as a union between a man and a woman "consistent with the Laws of Nature and Nature's God."

Brandie Balken, executive director of Equality Utah fears the law could be disastrous for gay and lesbian families.

In an interview with The Salt Lake Tribune, Balken said: "It could be used to create a filter for public agencies and a way to target laws, services and funding that currently help single Utahns or Utahns with families that differ from Representative Christensen's."

Rep. Christensen says the bill wouldn't stop single mothers from receiving assistance but it could make it more difficult for unmarried people to adopt. Current law prohibits same-sex marriage and civil unions in Utah.

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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The Observer

Coyote Moon Pub
sports pub & dance club
Saturday 2/12
Drag Sale 3:00 pm
BUY SELL TRADE
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Starting at 9pm
Dance music with
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Can Superbowl Ads Evolve?

NEW YORK (Observer Update) - Last year 106.5 million people gathered around the television to watch the New Orleans Saints beat the Indianapolis Colts 31-17 in the Super Bowl. While most are there for the game and some wings, catching the high-priced Super Bowl ads is inescapable, reports advocate.com.

No other event celebrates American capitalism so effectively: The top companies in the country, if not the world, fork over an average of $3 million (on top of production costs) to air a 30-second ad, hoping to capture the attention of one third of the U.S. population. While this is a chance for advertisers to show their best work, should it be at the expense of making gay people a punch line?

"Sometimes advertisers present images that cast LGBT people – and in the case of Super Bowl ads, usually gay men – in an unfair light," says Jarrett Barrios, president of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. "Usually those images are rooted in tired stereotypes that perpetuate misconceptions about our community and in some cases have even promoted violence against LGBT or LGBT-perceived people."

Take, for instance, two user-generated spots pitched by fans for Doritos' "Crash the Super Bowl" contest that made the rounds on the Internet last month. After varied public reaction (some people found the overtly gay characters and messages a bit too stereotypical; others said they were simply funny), Frito-Lay director of public relations Chris Kuechenmeister said the ads weren't in the running to air on television. While the spots used stereotypical gay characters or the old "sex-starved in the sauna" scenario, it seems as though they were meant to be a wink and a nod toward gay people, but it didn't quite work out.

Mike Wilke, an advertising consultant and founder of the Commercial Closet Association (which has since been absorbed by GLAAD), says male-driven advertising has shown evidence of a slight change in attitudes among ad directors in recent years.

"I think there isn't as much evolution across the board as there could be as far as a changing audience," he says. "But it does seem that there is an appreciation for the fact that homophobia exists."

While Ikea ads of two dads picking out a crib for their baby likely won't be airing during the big game, Wilke did recall a Pepsi spot that featured an attractive man strutting down the street, unabashedly catching the attention of every man and woman he passed.

On the contrary, Wilke also remembers an ad for Bridgestone tires that showed a driver trying to run down flamboyant fitness icon Richard Simmons (who is not openly gay).

"Things are still a mixed bag," he says of the ad. "What was a surprise to me was that the director of advertising at Bridgestone had spent years attracting gay media, including advertising for years in The Advocate. In this case, it seems like it wasn't a matter of intentional homophobia, but a matter of accident, and a mixed review within the gay community of whether it was an acceptable message." It may be a mixed bag because of where we are as a society. When it comes to gay rights, America has a patchwork of accomplishments: some states have legalized same-sex marriage, domestic partnerships, or civil unions, while others attempt to prevent any recognition of gay couples. The repeal of "don't ask, don't tell" is a major victory, but civilian LGBT workers in many states can still lose their jobs because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. And as some states – and the federal government – attempt to enact laws to keep gay youths safe in schools, the messages young people see in the media may be what influence them the most.

"Several television shows not only feature LGBT characters, but also feature images that reflect the rich diversity of our community, including representations of gay men who fall on what is traditionally considered the more 'masculine' end of the gender spectrum," says Barrios. "From the CW's 90210 to Calvin, the young African-American gay frat brother on ABC Family's Greek, the entertainment industry is presenting images that break the mold and help Americans understand that LGBT people are just like them. Advertisers are falling well below that curve and missing an opportunity to demonstrate their support for full equality and fully engage LGBT consumers."

But still, those influences are mainly missing when the Super Bowl comes around. If anything, says Stony Brook University sociology professor Michael Kimmel, advertisers right now are targeting the downtrodden, down-on-his-luck, white American male. In commercials like last year's Dodge Charger ad, an announcer lists the day-to-day sacrifices he makes (carrying his wife or girlfriend's lip balm, listening to her friends talk about why they don't like his friends, and taking out the recycling), all of which compromise his masculinity, therefore allowing him to choose the car he drives.

"What's interesting about this ad is the assumption that they're married," Kimmel says. "Is carrying her lip balm so humiliating? Is that the worst we can feel?"

As gay people have become more accepted in mainstream society thanks to new laws, changing attitudes, and a more perceptive group of media professionals, advertising is still catching up. As Barrios points out, some of the top television shows, including Glee, Modern Family, and True Blood, feature gay characters who add dimension to the shows, without compromising ratings or critical acclaim. Meanwhile, in between plays, a Super Bowl viewer will see a Snickers ad where the punch line is two men being completely grossed out because they accidentally kissed, or another Dodge commercial where a butch guy calls a male pixie a "silly little fairy." Tinker Bell retaliates by turning him into a sweater-clad metrosexual.

Wilke says, "I think the everyday straight male image is constantly evolving. We're in a place where advertising tries to reflect society, though it's much slower than TV and film than being anything close to reality – not that advertising tries to be real. In regards to showing greater diversity in types of character, we're starting to see more sensitive guys, even while still seeing the classic macho guy."

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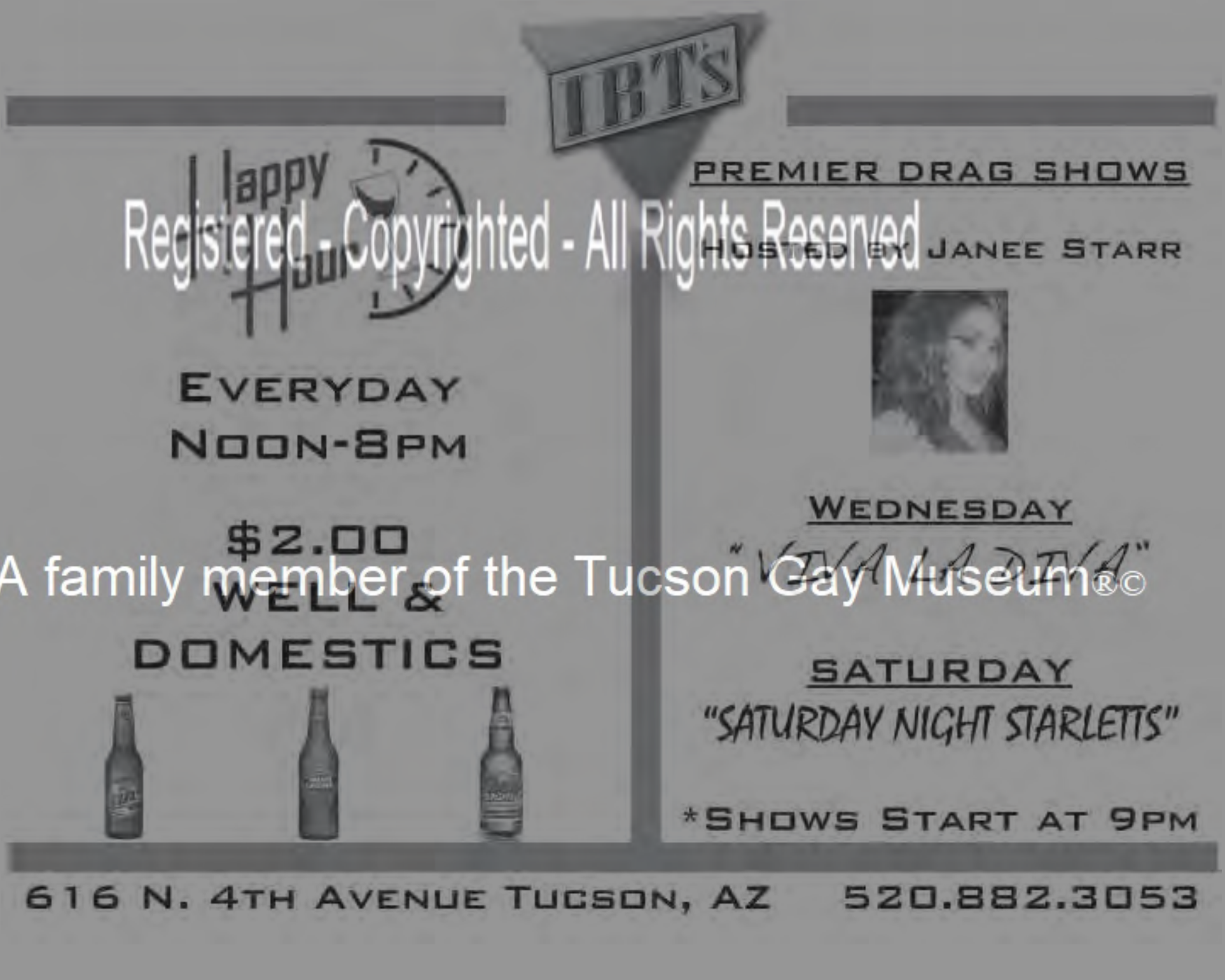


MARRIAGE-GAY-MARRIAGE

Maryland G/L Marriage Backers Searching For Four Senate Votes

ANNAPOLIS (Observer Update) - Gay marriage backers in Maryland are looking for four more votes in the Senate to approve a gay marriage bill, reported On Top Magazine. Twenty senators have publicly voiced their support for a bill that would make Maryland the sixth state to extend the right to marry to gay and lesbian couples.

Republican State Senator Allan Kittleman announced he would vote in favor of the bill and drop his plan to introduce a competing measure that would limit government recognition of gay and lesbian couples to civil unions. The Senate's GOP caucus has voted to take an official position against the measure. Such a position requires the backing of a majority of members. Kittleman stepped down of his own accord as Senate minority leader last month in part over his dissenting opinion on marriage equality.

The measure appears to be headed for an easy victory in the House. Six Democratic senators remain undecided, according to a Washington Post survey. They are Senators John C. Astle, Joan Carter Conway, Ulysses Currie, Edward J. Kasemeyer, Katherine A. Klausmeier and James C. Rosapepe.

Iowa House Approves Amendment To Ban G/L Marriage

DES MOINES (Observer Update) - The Iowa House has approved a bill that seeks to repeal gay marriage in the state, the AP reported. The Iowa Marriage Amendment (IMA) seeks to put a question on the 2013 ballot that would define marriage in the Iowa Constitution as a heterosexual union - and thereby reverse the 2009 Iowa Supreme Court ruling that brought gay marriage to the Midwest.

Hundreds of people crowded a public hearing on the issue after a key House panel approved the measure with a 13-8 vote. Lawmakers in the House approved the measure with a 62 to 37 vote, which means that at least 2 Democrats joined Republicans in voting in favor of putting the resolution on the ballot.

Danny Carroll, of the socially conservative group The Family Leader, urged lawmakers to give Iowa voters the right to vote on the issue. Gay rights groups decried the vote as an "attack."

"Today's vote is a shameful attack on same-sex couples and their children," said legal group Lambda Legal. "History won't look kindly on the politicians who voted today to attack committed Iowa couples and their kids across the state who merely want their government to continue to treat them equally."

The Iowa Supreme Court legalized gay marriage in a 2009 decision. A similar version of the resolution faces a much steeper incline in the Democrat-controlled Senate, where Majority Leader Michael Gronstal has vowed to block the measure from reaching the floor.

Rhode Island House Panel To Consider Gay Marriage Bill

PROVIDENCE (Observer Update) - The Rhode Island House Judiciary Committee will begin considering a gay marriage bill, the AP reported.

The measure enjoys the support of Governor Lincoln Chafee, an independent, and Democratic House Speaker Gordon Fox, who is openly gay. Fox is a co-sponsor of the bill. Lawmakers in the state have debated gay marriage every year since 1997, reports On Top Magazine.

Chafee's predecessor, Don Carcieri, a Republican, angered gay rights supporters in 2009 when he became the keynote speaker at the Massachusetts Family Institute's annual fundraiser, where he told the group that marriage is "not a civil right." During his tenure, Carcieri and his wife joined the Rhode Island chapter of the National Organization for Marriage (NOM), the nation's most vociferous opponent of gay marriage. Last year, he vetoed a bill that would have given gay couples the same rights to plan the funerals of their late partners as married couples.

Chafee, who says marriage equality will deliver a much needed economic boost to the state, has become the target of NOM in a new anti-gay marriage ad.

Colorado To Debate Gay Unions Bill

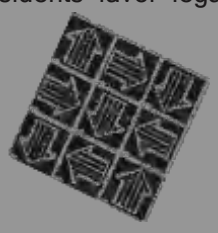
DENVER (Observer Update) - Colorado State Senator Pat Steadman is sponsoring a bill that would give gay couples many of the same benefits and responsibilities of marriage.

Steadman, an openly gay Democrat, told the Colorado Independent that he's proposing the law because a constitutional amendment bans gay marriage in the state. "Promoting a lesser status for gay people is not ideal," he said, but added that in the short term "people could really benefit from civil unions."

Over the last couple of years, Connecticut, New Hampshire and Vermont have scrapped their civil unions laws in favor of full marriage, leaving only New Jersey, which passed on the upgrade last year, to offer the union.

Lawmakers in Wyoming and Maryland have also promised to introduce similar legislation.

Steadman said he's likely to introduce his bill over the summer. Representative Mark Ferrandino will sponsor the measure in the House. A majority (52%) of Colorado residents favor legalizing gay marriage.



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COMMENTARY. . . .

Is An Executive Order Version Of ENDA Possible?

By Michael Hamar (The Bilerico Project)

RICHMOND (Observer Update) - Here in Virginia, LGBT citizens can be fired at will from their jobs simply for being a sexual minority - it happened to me personally in the private sector in a law firm setting. And, as my client Michael Ware Moore can attest, it happens in the the realm of state employees as well despite the lies spun by The Family Foundation and its whore like minions in the Republican Party of Virginia.

Even today, a bill passed by the Virginia Senate that would protect state employees faces likely death in the House of Delegates. At the federal level, with the shift of control of U.S. House of Representatives to the GOP, hoped for relief from the federal level is unlikely. As a result, some advocates are now lobbying for an Executive Order that would limit federal contracts to companies that have LGBT non-discrimination policies in place.

If such an Executive Order were to be secured, it would be subject to revocation by a future president and would leave the vast majority of employees in gay hostile states with zero protection. Being a pragmatist, I'd accept an Executive Order as a partial stop-gap ENDA, but in the long term, we must demand passage of state and federal employment non-discrimination laws.

As for the question of whether Obama has the spine to issue such an order, I won't be holding my breath; as readers of my personal blog know, I sometimes refer to him as our faux "fierce advocate" when it comes to advocating for pro-LGBT legislative initiatives. Here are highlights from the Washington Blade on the Executive Order effort:

LGBT rights supporters are pressing President Obama to issue a directive requiring the federal government to contract only with companies that have non-discrimination policies based on sexual orientation and gender identity protecting their employees.

Richard Socarides, president of Equality Matters, said an executive order for LGBT workplace protections "ought to be something the president seriously considers doing." "It's definitely an administrative device the president can use to help advance the cause of full equality, especially if the Congress is unwilling to take action," Socarides said.

Even though some companies don't contract with the federal government, Socarides said the directive would set an example for all U.S. businesses to comply with the new rules. An executive order on LGBT workplace discrimination could be a workable alternative now that Republicans have taken control of the House and cut into the Democratic majority in the Senate after the 2010 midterm elections, making passage of ENDA in Congress significantly more challenging, if not impossible.

Whether Obama would be willing to issue such an executive order remains to be seen. The president has called for passage of ENDA, but hasn't voiced an opinion about an administrative action instituting workplace protections for LGBT people.

Nan Hunter, a lesbian law professor at Georgetown University [and Bilerico contributor], said a directive protecting LGBT people would be a "terrific idea" because history has shown executive orders for non-discrimination often precede changes in law. "I think the pertinent piece in terms of the civil rights history is that the federal contractor requirements were put in place prior to the enactment of the statutes," Hunter said.

In 1964, President Johnson issued an executive order prohibiting most federal contractors from discriminating on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin – prior to the enactment of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

Hunter acknowledged that Obama may face political challenges in issuing such an order – much like the difficulties Congress had in passing ENDA – if the directive includes protections for transgender people.

According to the Williams Institute, the federal government contracts with 91,367 companies. The percent of the U.S. workforce that these companies employ is unknown. However, the executive order that Johnson issued in 1964, which covered most federal contractors, protected only an estimated 22 percent of the civilian workforce.

Lesbian Students Enter To Cheers At Minn.

CHAMBLIN - (Observer Update) Two lesbian high school students who fought for the right to walk together as part of a royalty court made their entrances to the cheers of hundreds of classmates, reports 365Gay.com.

Sarah Lindstrom and Desiree Shelton wore matching black suits with pink ties and held hands as they entered the Snow Days Pep Fest at Champlin Park High School in Minneapolis' northwest suburbs. The reaction came as a relief to the couple and school administrators. The district has been stung by criticism of its policies toward homosexuality and the alleged bullying of a gay student who killed himself.

"It felt amazing," said Shelton, adding that she was too nervous to notice dozens rise to give her a standing ovation as she walked in with Lindstrom. "I think we were too focused on getting to the stage." If there were any boos, they were drowned about by supporters. "I feel so much better," Lindstrom said while surrounded by friends after the rally.

Sarah's mother, Shannon Lindstrom, camera in hand, joined the other mothers of children in the royalty court after the rally. "They had a lot of courage," she said Shelton and her daughter. "Look how far we've come." Students voted onto the royalty court traditionally enter the assembly in boy-girl pairs. After Lindstrom and Shelton, both 18, were elected, school officials announced a change in procedure: court members would walk in individually or accompanied by a parent or favorite teacher.

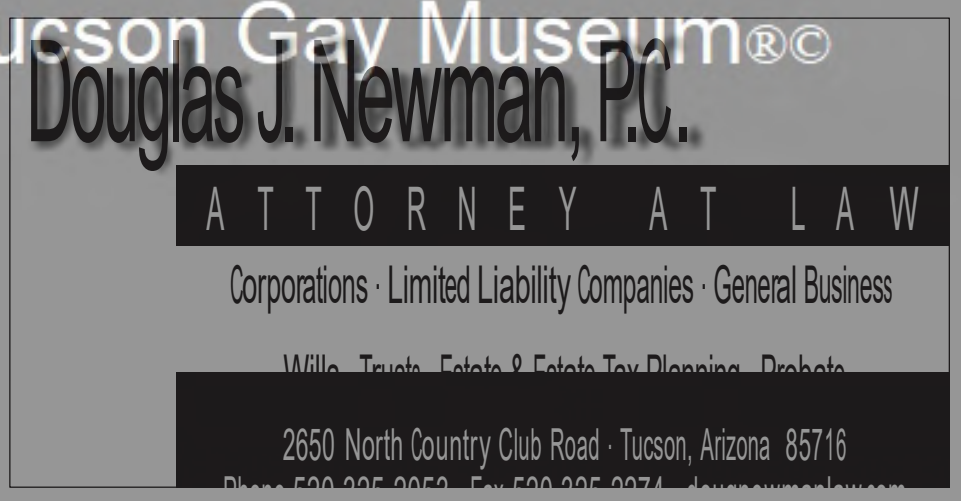
School officials said they merely wanted to prevent the two from being teased. But on Friday, two human rights groups sued on their behalf. In federally mediated talks, school officials relented. The two sides agreed that members of the royalty court would be escorted by anyone meaningful to them, regardless of gender or age. "This is a new chapter for the district," said Sam Wolfe, a lawyer with the Southern Poverty Law Center, which filed the lawsuit along with the National Center for Lesbian Rights and local assistance from the Minneapolis law firm of Faegre and Benson.

Judge Rules Not To Dismiss Charges In Warm Sands Case

PALM SPRINGS (Observer Update) - An Indio judge refused to dismiss charges against 14 men arrested in a sting targeting public sex in the Warm Sands neighborhood of Palm Springs, the Desert Sun reported.

Attorneys for the men claimed Palm Springs police unfairly targeted gay men and used discriminatory language during the June 2009 operation. Judge David B. Downing said that, prior to the hearings, he had been inclined to dismiss the charges, but the testimony of two Palm Springs police officials – outgoing Chief David Dominguez and Sgt. Bryan Anderson – changed his mind.

Palm Springs police showed no discriminatory intent, Downing said. The defense had sought to have charges dropped for 14 men on the basis of discriminatory enforcement by the Palm Springs Police Department.



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Clay Aiken Was Never in The Closet

ATLANTA (Observer Update) - Pop singer Clay Aiken says, "There was this misconception that I was not out," in an interview with The Georgia Voice, reports advocate.com.

While promoting his Tried and True tour, Aiken, who officially admitted he was gay in People magazine in 2008, was asked about the obligation of gay performers to come out. "I was in Spamalot and everyone knew, but I don't necessarily want to sit at a table with strangers and tell them," he said. "When you come out, you do it with people you are comfortable with."

The singer says that while his coming-out may have surprised a few people, it had no adverse effect on his career. "I definitely do see the liberation and understand the rationalization of people wanting me to be out," he says. "On the other hand, I wouldn't say that coming out has made me happier because that implies I was not happy before and I was." The Voice writes that Aiken is now comfortable discussing being gay and mentions that he even went to D.C. to speak at a Capitol Hill briefing on antigay bullying at the end of last year.

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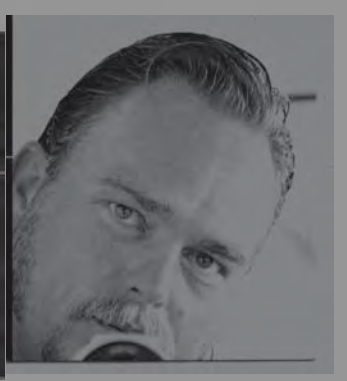

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Ex-Romance Won't Block Culture Club Reunion

Tucson Observer Archives

LONDON (Observer Update) - Boy George said that his former romance with Culture Club bandmate Jon Moss will not stand in the way of the group's highly anticipated reunion in 2012.

According to Digital Spy, "The singer, who secretly dated drummer Jon Moss during the band's peak, said the pair now have a 'healthier' relationship, after Moss married a woman and went on to have children." The Karma Chameleon singer told The Sun, "Oh no. We're really good mates. Jon has got kids now – beautiful kids and we're definitely over each other."

tucsonobserverarchives.org

Culture Club plans to reunite for a U.K. tour to celebrate the band's 30th anniversary next year, with a comeback album produced by Mark Ronson.

Chely Wright's Non-Profit Announces First LGBT Center

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KANSAS CITY (Observer Update) - Country music star Chely Wright's LIKE ME non-profit has announced plans to open its first LGBT center in Kansas City, reports On Top Magazine.

The singer-songwriter announced she was a lesbian last year and then went on to fund the LIKE ME Organization. "LIKE ME will open the first LGBT education and community center in Kansas City in 2011," the group announced on its website. "The first center will be opened in the Midwest because there, in Chelys' home state, the needs for understanding and education are among the greatest in the nation. Everyone will be welcomed at the LIKE ME Lighthouse and may visit the center for information, guidance and resources."

The group will also offer up to five $1,250 scholarships. Wright, who serves as the group's spokesperson, said the non-profit will focus on preventing LGBT bullying and teen suicide. Since coming out, Wright has become one of the most vocal and visible celebrities advocating for greater rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. In a recent appearance on the Nate Berkus Show, Wright talked to gay teens about coming out.

Hawaii House To Consider Civil Unions

HONOLULU (Observer Update) - Hawaii's house judiciary committee will consider a civil unions bill during at a public hearing, the Associated Press reports.

The legislation is near-identical to a bill passed last year by the Hawaii legislature, only to be vetoed by outgoing Republican governor Linda Lingle. Gov. Neil Abercrombie has said he supports civil unions, advocate.com reports.

The state senate passed a bill last month that would allow couples to enter into civil unions. In 1998, Hawaii voters approved a constitutional amendment allowing the legislature to limit marriage to heterosexual couples.

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BUZZ - BUZZ - BUZZ - BUZZ BUZZ FLASHES-

After news came out that a Pennsylvania Chick-Fil-A was sponsoring the Art of Marriage Conference, a marriage seminar run by one of the state's leading anti-gay organizations, the president of the company posted a video online defending the company. Change.org reports that the chances that the company or its charitable brand has donated to or worked with Focus on the Family, the National Organization for Marriage, the Pennsylvania Family Institute, Exodus International are "darn near 100 percent." Personally, I think I'll buy my chicken nuggets elsewhere.

Barbara Bush supports marriage equality, no, not the Bush family matriarch. One of the Bush twins released a video through the Human Rights Campaign's New Yorkers for Marriage Equality yesterday and said "everyone should have the right to marry the person that they love." First the McCain ladies (well, Meghan at least), and now one of the infamous Bush twins. Please keep coming forward, Republicans.

A French man is suing GlaxoSmithKline, the Parkinson's drug Requip manufacturer, because the drug made him a "compulsive gay sex addict." Didier Jambart, the 51-year-old married father of two who took the drug from 2003 to 2005, also "began exposing himself on the Internet and cross-dressing" because of the drug. In 2006, the drug's warning label began saying some of its users "developed gambling problems or other intense urges or behaviors that were compulsive or unusual for them, such as increased sexual urges or behaviors." Jambart is suing for $610,000.

Jonathan Knight comes out. The former New Kids on the Block member recently confirmed that he is, in fact, gay and has always been open about it. Pop singer Tiffany recently "outed" Knight on Bravo's Watch What Happens Live, though Knight said that he has never hid his sexuality. Logo should consider creating a reality series about gay boybanders and pop stars.

Student Becomes Celeb After Defending His Two Moms

IOWA CITY (Observe Update) - University of Iowa student Zach Wals has become a cyberspace celebrity after the three minute Youtube video of his speech defending gay marriage went viral. He delivered the speech to the Iowa House of Representatives explaining how being raised by a lesbian couple had no effect on the content of his character.

Wals told the Representatives he grew up like any other kid, attending church and going to Boy Scouts. He hoped his government would provide fair and equal treatment to all Iowans.

As the House approached a vote to ban gay marriage that day, Wals' strong speech moved a few representatives.

"I literally watched the faces of some of my Republican friends in the chamber, and I could tell they were torn about how they were going to vote," Rep. Dave Jacoby, D-Coralville told the Daily Iowan.

Police Arrest Suspect Ugandan Gay Activist Killing

KAMPALA (Observer Update) - A Ugandan police spokesman says authorities have arrested a key suspect in the killing of a prominent gay rights activist who was bludgeoned to death last week, 365Gay.comr eported.

Vincent Sekatte said that the suspect made a confession before a magistrate. Sekatte said police will charge the man with murder soon. Police insist David Kato's killing had nothing to do with his sexual orientation. Police investigator Ronald Gata said the suspect is an ex-convict whom Kato employed three days before his death.

Gay rights campaigners though have said they believe that Kato's death was linked to his activism. Kato's killing comes after a year of stepped up threats against gays in Uganda, where a bill has proposed the death penalty for some homosexual acts.

Poet's Corner

THE CANDIDATE

by Ron Rose - Tucson

Smooth sailin', no more for Palin
A medical problem has she,
Her tongue got caught up in her eye tooth
Now she can hardly see The
shores of nearby Moscow The
sun on the Kremlin's walls. All
we can remember
Is Sara's jumbo "Balls"

Tucson Observer Archives

The Way I Saw It. . . by Gary Clark

NOTE: Before his untimely death, Gary Clark had worked on this newspaper for nearly 40 years as graphic artist and Entertainment Editor. Part of his heritage was producing a weekly humorous drawing of life 'as he saw it'. It is amazing that most of these drawings are as funny and entertaining today as they were in past years. We have decided to open the 'vaults' on these faultless viewpoints. Enjoy!

tucsonobserverarchives.org

What Protests Mean For LGBT Egyptians

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NEW YORK (Observer Update) - Michelangelo Signorile talks with activist and scholar Rasha Moumneh about the protests in Egypt and what they mean for LGBT rights throughout the country.

Moumneh, a researcher with Human Rights Watch who focuses on LGBT and women's rights, says that while there have been crackdowns in Egypt – most notably in 2001, when 52 men were arrested on board a floating gay nightclub called the Queen Boat – Egypt's laws against homosexuality are vague.

"Egypt does not have an antisodomy law," she says. "What they do have is a sort of generalized debauchery law. The problem with that law is that the interpretation is less to individual judges – it's an extremely elastic law. So you have all sorts of quote-unquote moral crimes being prosecuted under that law."

She says in Egypt, she doesn't think there's a concerted effort to target gay people – what happens to LGBT people in Egypt is indicative of what's happening all over the region. "These crackdowns usually happen ... when the government wants to flex its moral muscle. When they want to show they're still in control, that they're still the savior of Egyptian society."

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She says it's very difficult to tell how these protests will affect LGBT rights in the country moving forward. She said there is a growing attitude among young people to "open up more space toward personal freedoms."

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Smithsonian Board Seeks Changes After Video Flap

WASHINGTON, DC (Observer Update) - Smithsonian Secretary Wayne Clough came under fire after deciding a couple months ago to remove a gay artist's video that depicted ants crawling on a crucifix in an exhibit at the National Portrait Gallery. The scene angered some in Congress and a Catholic group that called it sacrilegious, reports 365Gay.com.

The board said it must be prepared to handle museum disputes and guard freedom of curators in the face of political pressure from Congress or other groups. "We're in the business of often doing exhibits that are about flash points in American history, flash points in American culture, and we have to accept that with that responsibility comes some controversy," said Patricia Stonesifer, chairwoman of the Smithsonian Board of Regents and former CEO of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. "We don't want curators or directors or others to think that 'above all, avoid controversy.'"

The video in question, "A Fire in My Belly," by the late David Wojnarowicz, explored the subject of AIDS. The artist later died of the disease at age 37 in 1992. The Catholic League called the video sacrilegious. It was among more than 100 pieces in the first major exhibit to explore gay themes in art history. Other contributing artists are Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, Thomas Eakins and Annie Leibovitz.

A panel convened to review the handling of the exhibit, "Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture," included Harvard University professor David Gergen, National Gallery of Art Director Earl A. Powell and Smithsonian regent John McCarter of Chicago's Field Museum.

The panel's key finding was that unless there is an error, changes should not be made to future exhibits once they are opened without curators, museum directors and leaders from the Smithsonian's governing board consulting. It also recommended that the Smithsonian seek public input during the planning of potentially objectionable exhibits and engage Congress as well.

"There are a number of things that with 20/20 hindsight probably could have been done differently," McCarter said. He added that he did not believe including the Wojnarowicz video was a mistake, though with more time to explain the context of the crucifix image to critics, "we might have worked through this."

"Representation of the crucifix and the ants had an interpretation to it, I

CONTINUED ON PAGE TWELVE

DAILY BAR CALENDAR

SUNDAY

THE BIZ - Closed Sunday , Monday, Tuesday

BRODIES - Open 10am - 2am. Happy Hour 4-7.

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. Beer specials and Trailer Trash Martini's All Day. Check our Ad for Special Events or Parties

MONDAY

THE BIZ - Closed Mondays

BRODIES - Open 10am-2am. Happy Hour 4-7.

COYOTE MOON PUB - Open 8pm.- 1am

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. Service Industry Night - Employee prices all day..

TUESDAY

THE BIZ - Closed Tuesdays

BRODIES - Open 10am - 2am.

COYOTE MOON PUB - Open 4pm - 1am. Happy Hour 4-8. $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. 2-4-1 Night

WEDNESDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Happy Hour 5-9pm (2 for 1). College Night 18 & Over. Drink & Shot specials every half hour.

BRODIES - Open 10am - 2am.

COYOTE MOON PUB -Open 4pm - 1am. 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.. 11pm - -close "Reverse Happy Hour".

WOODY'S - Open 11am-2am;. Happy Hour Prices all day.

THURSDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Happy Hour 5-9pm. 2 for 1 All Night Long.. Karaoke 9pm. Come out and play.

BRODIES - Open 10am - 2am.

COYOTE MOON PUB - Open 4pm.- 1am. Happy Hour 4 - 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; Free pool and Happy Hour prices all day.

FRIDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Happy Hour 5-9 pm (2 for1) Latino Night. $2 Tequila, $1.50 Tecate. $5 Buckets of Beer.

. BRODIES - Open 10am - 2am. Karaoke 9pm.

COYOTE MOON PUB - Open 4pm. 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 vocals and piano stylings of Susan Artemis 6-9pm. Tori Steele Show 10pm

SATURDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm - 2am. $10 and drink for pennies. All night long.

BRODIES - Open 10am - 2am. Happy Hour 4-7.

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 OR two chicken tenders & fries. 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. .

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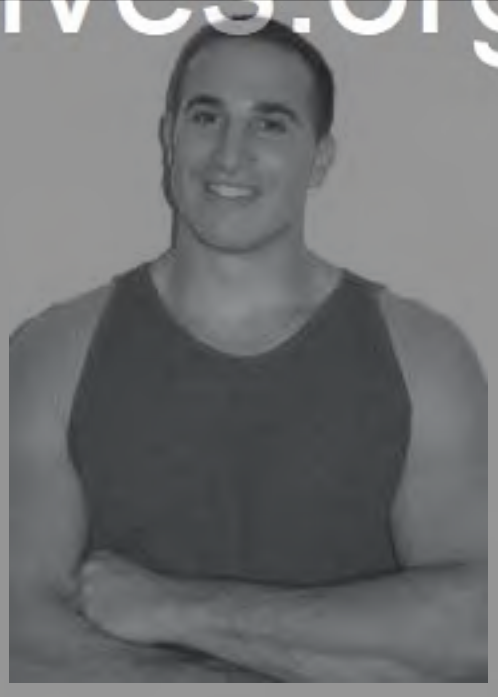

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COMMENTARY. . . .

BY JOHN CORVINO

Help A Hero

You may not know his name. You should. Frank Kameny has sometimes been called the "Rosa Parks" of the gay movement. Like most analogies, this one is imperfect. Parks' civil disobedience was backed by an organized movement; Kameny had to forge a movement. Parks is in the history books; Kameny–like LGBT history more generally–is still largely overlooked.

And while Parks retreated to a quieter life not long after her iconic bus ride, Kameny's vocal leadership has spanned a half-century. When Dr. Franklin Kameny was fired from his government job in 1957 for being gay, there was no national gay civil rights movement. It took pioneers like him to make it happen. Before pride parades, before Harvey Milk, before Stonewall, there was Frank.

I've known Frank for many years, mostly via e-mail. He's been to my home for dinner (incidentally, he likes peach schnapps). Regrettably, I've never been to his, though it was designated a D.C. historic landmark in 2009 in recognition of its–and Frank's–tremendous role in civil rights history. The house and its indomitable owner need help. More on that in a moment.

First, a few highlights of his amazing life. A Harvard-trained Ph.D. and World War II veteran, Frank was fired in 1957 from his job as an Army Map Service astronomer for being a homosexual. Unsure of his future employability and outraged by the injustice, he fought back, petitioning his case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1961. (They declined to hear it.)

That year he co-founded the Mattachine Society of Washington–a "homophile organization," based on the original society in San Francisco. Soon thereafter, in 1963, he began a decades-long campaign to revoke D.C.'s sodomy law. He personally drafted the repeal bill that was passed 30 years later. Frank would likely correct me here: it was "30 years, one month, four days, and 11 hours." He has that sort of relentless eye for detail.

In 1965, he picketed in front of the White House for gay rights. Signs from that demonstration, stored in his attic for decades, are now in the Smithsonian's collection. In 1968, he coined the slogan "Gay is Good," an achievement of which he is particularly proud–probably because it captures his moral vision so simply and powerfully.

In 1971, he became the first openly gay person to run for Congress (he lost). He was instrumental in the battle that led to the declassification of homosexuality as a mental disorder by the American Psychiatric Association in 1973. He has continued to fight over the years against employment discrimination, sodomy laws, the military ban–injustice in all forms. And he has served as a moral elder for generations of movement leaders.

The astronomer-turned-activist is now 85 and as spirited as ever. Thankfully, he has lived to see some of the fruits of his labor. In 2009, when President Obama signed a memorandum extending certain benefits to same-sex partners of federal employees, he handed his pen to Kameny.

That same year, the Federal Office of Personnel Management issued an apology to Kameny on behalf of the U.S. government. Without missing a beat, Kameny promptly sent a letter stating that he was expecting five decades of back pay. (He received no reply.) Frank continues to send off pointed letters in pursuit of justice. He is fond of reminding me and other "young" activists, whenever he hears us complaining amongst ourselves, "Don't tell us. Tell them. Contact the people who can do something about it."

And that's what I'm doing right now. To put it simply, Frank needs financial help. His modest Social Security check–his only income–is inadequate to cover his needs. An organization called Helping Our Brothers and Sisters (HOBS) has intervened on his behalf. From their website http://www.helpingourbrothersandsisters.com/donate.html:

"HOBS has worked with Dr. Kameny for more than a year, insuring that his basic life needs are met.

"To honor our greatest living gay rights activist, HOBS provides Frank with taxi vouchers. We work to ensure that his utilities are paid (phone, electric, water). We have worked with many other fine organizations in coordinating his needs.

"We are in constant communication with DC Government Officials, attempting to make sure city services are available to Dr. Kameny. We also gathered the donations in 2010 to pay Frank's real estate taxes, of $2,000+."

All donations to HOBS this month go to Frank. Meanwhile, a Facebook page has launched in conjunction with this effort, entitled "Buy Frank a Drink." The idea is not literally to buy him drinks, but to spare $10 (or whatever you can afford) for him.

Frank has worked tirelessly for decades to make our lives better. It is simply not right that he should spend his twilight years in financial need. I'm asking you to visit the HOBS website now and buy Frank a (figurative) drink–or 10, or whatever you can–to thank him for his monumental efforts. And I'm asking our national organizations to get behind this campaign, for a man who made their work possible.

He surely deserves that, and much more.

(John Corvino, Ph.D. is a writer, speaker, and philosophy professor at Wayne State University in Detroit. His column "The Gay Moralist" appears at 365gay.com, from which this is reprinted.)

Smithsonian Board

CONTINUED FROM PAGE TEN

believe in his mind that was not sacrilegious," McCarter said, noting that the artist was working at the time in Mexico where Christian iconography is often represented in art. "Alternatively, it might have been very deeply religious."

Arts groups have objected to the Smithsonian's reaction, including the Association of Art Museum Directors, the Andy Warhol Foundation and more recently the Smithsonian's own Hirshhorn Museum board, which wrote last week that bowing to pressure harms the Smithsonian's integrity.

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