Observing Tucson And The Greater Arizona Community

OBSERVER

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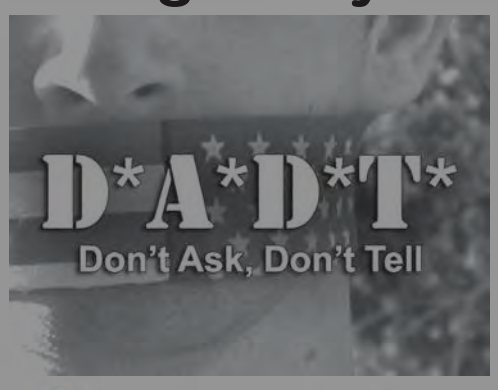
WEEKLY OBSERVER APRIL 6, 2011 ISSUE1392

DADT Could Be History By End Of Summer, Pentagon says



WASHINGTON - Gay members of the armed forces could serve openly and keep their jobs legally by the end of the summer, Pentagon officials told Congress, reported Stars and Stripes.

The Defense Department expects by midsummer to have completed enough "don't ask, don't tell" repeal training that it can ask the president, defense secretary and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to certify the results and begin the congressionally mandated 60-day countdown to full repeal.

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Just 200,000 troops, about 9 percent of the force, have gone through the training so far, according to Vice Adm. William Gortney, director of the Joint Staff. But the first progress reports coming in from service commanders over the past six weeks show "no issues or problems," said Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Clifford Stanley.

"All is going well," he told a House panel.

Stanley said Defense Secretary Robert Gates has met twice with the service chiefs and combatant commanders to monitor the progress. Gates earlier this year told DOD to "accelerate" the training process, and Gortney reported the department was moving "expeditiously, but in a careful and responsible manner."

Though the "don't ask, don't policy" remains in effect, a Navy panel in California voted unanimously to retain Petty Officer 2nd Class Derek Morado, an openly gay sailor who was brought under charges for violating the policy in 2009.

In October, Gates signed orders saying only the service secretaries can approve discharges under the policy; no one has been discharged since.

Obama Nominates Lesbian Attorney To Federal Bench

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ALISON NATHAN

WASHINGTON, DC (Observer Update) - President Obama nominated a lesbian attorney and former administration official for a position on the federal bench, reported advocate.com.

Alison Nathan, who currently serves as special counsel to the solicitor general in the Office of the Attorney General of the State of New York, was nominated to become a U.S. district judge for the Southern District of New York. "Alison Nathan is a distinguished individual who has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to justice throughout her career," President Obama said. "I am grateful for her decision to serve the American people from the district court bench."

According to the White House, Nathan previously served as a special assistant to President Obama and an associate White House counsel. Before joining government service, she taught law first as a visiting assistant professor at Fordham University Law School, and later as a Fritz Alexander fellow at New York University School of Law.

Nathan obtained her law degree in 2000 from Cornell Law School, where she was editor-in-chief of the Cornell Law Review. Nathan's position on the federal bench is subject to Senate confirmation. Other out federal judicial nominees pending before the Senate are J. Paul Oetken, nominated for a position on the Southern District of New York, and Edward DuMont, nominated for a seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

Lack Of Research On LGBT Health

WASHINGTON, DC (Observer Update) - More federally-funded research needs to be conducted on LGBT health issues, says a new report from the Institute of Medicine, published for the National Institutes of Health, reports advocate.com.

In response to the research, the National Institutes of Health announced that they will work with the Centers for Disease Control to "address and improve the methodology for collecting survey data on sexual orientation and gender identity."

LGBTs suffer from health disparities some of which stem - or are made worse - by long-term deficiencies in the health care and political systems. For example, bans on gay marriage mean that many LGBTs lack access to group health insurance; many medical providers still don't treat transgender and gay patients sensitively; many LGBT elderly don't have children and so may not have caregivers, or may rely more heavily on friends; and because of lack of research, many doctors don't realize that LGBTs have health issues that are different from the general population.

Also, research tends to tread LGBTs as part of a single, homogenous group, when the reality is that different parts of the community have very different health needs.

The report compiled the results of more than 100 studies on LGBT health. Major LGBT health issues include lack of health insurance, high rates of mental health and substance abuse issues, and increased risk of contracting STDs.

The report recommends that:

Researchers conduct more surveys and collect more data on sexual orientation and gender identity;

Researchers include LGBTs in health studies;

Medical institutions include sexual and gender orientation information in health records, if there are strong privacy controls;

Research should more adequately address health issues of LGBT teens and elderly, as well as differences between racial and ethnic populations and across socioeconomic classes and that NIH should train researchers to work with LGBT populations.

IOM's Committee on LGBT Health Issues and Research Gaps and Opportunities was formed in response to a request from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on researching LGBT health issues.

Barney Frank Holds Off On ENDA Introduction

WASHINGTON, DC (Observer Update) - Massachusetts Congressman Barney Frank has delayed introduction in the House of his Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), a bill that would ban workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity (transgender protections.), reported On Top Magazine.

At a news conference where the bill's introduction was expected to be announced, Frank instead told attendees that he's not ready to introduce the measure he has carried in the House for decades. Harry Gural, a spokesperson for the congressman, told gay weekly The Washington Blade that Frank was looking for greater support before going forward.

"It was announced but not formally introduced - the bill has not been 'dropped,'" Gural said. "Before it is formally introduced, we are still collecting cosponsors." Frank's office released a statement saying he would introduce the bill the next day.

A number of gay rights groups - including the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund (TLDEF), and the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) - followed suit, issuing statements congratulating Frank on the bill's introduction.

"Their plan may have been to introduce it today," said HRC's Fred Sainz, "but the congressman may have made a very good decision to wait until there are more co-sponsors that have signed on, and I think that if that's his judgment, then we would concur with his judgment."

Frank concedes that ENDA isn't likely to win approval in a Republican-controlled House.

"This is a chance to continue - not begin, but continue - a lobbying effort that I am convinced will be successful, frankly, next time the Democrats take back the House of Representatives," Frank said.

UPDATE

Tucson Take Back The Night April 12

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Take a stand against sexual violence and join us for TUCSON TAKE BACK THE NIGHT 2011! Thirty-three years ago, Take Back The Night started as a visible way for the community to come together against sexual violence. Today it's an international movement, and one that you can be a part of.

Stand up and speak out against sexual violence by joining our community for an evening of awareness raising, education, media, and performances by local artists, dancers and musicians. Together, we have the power to end sexual violence!

Join us at the Main public Library at 5:00pm before the event for a solidarity march to Armory Park! Then come together with our community at Armory park from 6-8:30pm for an evening of awareness-raising & to support survivors of sexual and relationship violence through performances, artwork, music, speakers, information and much more! For more information, contact Stephanie Arendt, 520-327-1171.

City Council Candidates Need Our Help

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Shirley Scott, Paul Cunningham and Regina Romero are running to stay on the Tucson City Council for their respective Ward's, Ward 1 (Romero), Ward 2 (Cunningham) and Ward 4 (Scott).

All three have been supportive of the Tucson LGBT community and issues of concern as well and are asking for help from our community to help circulate petitions to get the signatures needed to qualify for the September ballot.

To contact Regina Romero's campaign to volunteer, call (520) 406-9778. For Paul Cunningham's campaign, call (520) 339-1983. For Shirley Scott's campaign, call (520) 270-9662.

Equality Arizona Names Two New Board Members

Phoenix (Observer Update) - With the appointment of two new members, the Equality Arizona board has grown to nine directors.

Rebecca Wininger and Katherine Mabrey have been named to the board for two-year terms, according to Tom Mann, Equality Arizona chair in an interview with Echo Magazine. Wininger is an information technology consultant. Mabrey is an international banking executive.

Mann said there's a possibility that more board members will be named. "The board will continue to grow slowly and deliberately as we have rebuilt stability in the organization," he said. Rather than having two co-chairs as in the past, the organization is working under a chair/vice-chair model, with a vice-chair to be named by the end of the year, Mann said. He said the board no longer operates with an executive committee.

Other members of the board are Deborah Green, Deanne Jordan, Bill MacDonald, Jonathan Thatcher, Bobby Barnes and Joseph Gesullo.

Domestic Abuse And Anti-Gay Bullying Workshop

TUCSON (Observer Update) - More than two million men and women are assaulted by an intimate partner each year, according to the National Institute for Justice. A survey conducted by the National Mental Health Association revealed that 78 percent of teens aged 12 to 17 reported that kids who are gay or who are thought to be gay are teased or bullied in their schools and communities.

The workshop, sponsored by Emerge! Center Against Domestic Abuse, Wingspan, and St. Francis in the Foothills UMC, will be held 9am - 3:30pm on Saturday, April 16, 2011 at St. Francis. Lunch will be provided.

The workshop will include Domestic Violence 101 presented by Emerge! This presentation provides a overview of the dynamics of domestic abuse, the effects of abuse on children, how to help, safety planning, and Emerge! Services. Wingspan's presentation will include LGBT 101 and intimate partner violence within this community. Wingspan will also address issues of bullying.

Tickets are available in advance through the St. Francis office (299-9063, Laura Aldag) or online (stfrancisumc.com under donate, programs) $15.00 until noon April 13, thereafter $20.00. Scholarships are available. Proceeds benefit Emerge! and Wingspan domestic violence programs.

For more information, contact Elizabeth Fimbres, 520-299-9839.

Perfect Game Bowled In Desert Coyotes League; Near Miss In OZ

TUCSON (Observer Update) - On lanes 35 and 36, during the Wednesday night Desert Coyotes bowling league at Golden Pin Leanes, "Big Girl," finally became sanctioned.

Dan Diffie, also known as "Big Girl," put together twelve strikes in a row to bowl his first, sanctioned 300 game in bowling. He said he had thrown three previous, but not in sanctioned league contests.

The next night, at the Welcome to Oz bowling league, Chris King strung the first nine in a row. Unfortunately Chris got a nine count, and finished with a 278.

MARRIAGE-GAY-MARRIAGE

Republicans Kill Colo. Civil Unions Bill

DENVER (Observer Update) - Republicans on Colorado's House Judiciary Committee voted against a civil unions bill 6-5 after seven hours of passionate testimony from both sides, reported 365gay.com.

The Colorado Civil Unions Act would have provided gay couples the protections and responsibilities of marriage, including the ability to make end-of-life medical decisions for a partner. "I believe this law will provide the justice that so many families of Colorado deserve," bill sponsor Rep. Mark Ferrandino told the Denver Daily News.

Republicans, however, argued that civil unions should only be passed via ballot initiative.

Democrats on the House Judiciary Committee and pro-gay activists told the Denver Daily News that it is "only a matter of time until the entire U.S. legalizes civil unions or marriages for gay couples."

WA. Legislature OKs Out-Of-State G/L Unions

OLYMPIA (Observer Update) - The state Legislature has approved a measure that would make Washington the fourth in the country to recognize out-of-state domestic partnerships.

On a 28-19 vote, the Washington Senate cleared the last hurdle for the bill, which now heads to Gov. Chris Gregoire for a signature. Under the measure, gay marriages performed elsewhere would be recognized as domestic partnerships in Washington, as would domestic partnerships performed in other states.

Currently, five states, the District of Columbia and Canada allow same-sex marriages. With Gregoire's signature, Washington would become the fourth state to approve a similar bill, following Rhode Island, New York and Maryland.

The measure enjoyed wide support among Democrats. It passed the House 58-39, mostly on party-line votes. In the Senate, four Republicans voted for the measure.

G/L Immigration Situation Still Confusing

NEW YORK (Observer Update) - So….yes, deportations of gay men and women married to a same-sex spouse are currently being held while immigration officials figure out the ramifications of the Obama Administration's new DOMA policy. But perhaps only for a couple weeks, not indefinitely, reports 365Gay.com.

From the New York Times: Mr. Bentley said the agency's field offices had suspended cases for a short period, perhaps a week or two, while lawyers clarified a "narrow legal issue" concerning the marriage act. He said the agency would probably resume action on same-sex marriage cases in coming days and would continue to deny immigration status to foreigners based on those marriages.

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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U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS) Recommended Actions to Improve the Health and Well-Being of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Communities

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WASHINGTON, DC (Observer Update) - Below is a summary of the efforts taken by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to improve the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, as well as recommendations for future action.

The recommendations were developed in response to the Presidential Memorandum on Hospital Visitation, which, in addition to addressing the rights of patients to designate visitors regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, directed the Secretary to explore additional steps HHS could take to improve the lives of LGBT people.

For too long, LGBT people have been denied the compassionate services they deserve. That is now changing. HHS continues to make significant progress toward protecting the rights of every American to access quality care, recognizing that diverse populations have distinctive needs. Safeguarding the health and well-being of all Americans requires a commitment to treating all people with respect while being sensitive to their differences.

Summary of Actions

Equal Employment Opportunity Policy - In March 2011, Secretary Sebelius updated HHS's equal employment opportunity policy, which already prohibited discrimination based on sexual orientation, to explicitly protect against unfair treatment of employees and applicants for employment based on gender identity and genetic information.

Non-discrimination Policy - On April 1, 2011, the Secretary issued a new policy explicitly requiring HHS employees to serve all individuals who are eligible for the Department's programs without regard to any non-merit factor, including race, national origin, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability (physical or mental), age, status as a parent, or genetic information.

Hospital Visitation - The President's Memorandum on Hospital Visitation directed HHS to initiate rulemaking to ensure that hospitals receiving Medicare or Medicaid payments respect the rights of patients to designate visitors, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other non-clinical factor. On November 17, 2010, HHS issued the final rule affirming those rights.

Advance Directives - The Presidential Memorandum also called for new guidelines to facilitate hospitals' compliance with existing regulations allowing patients to designate who they want to make medical decisions on their behalf through advance directives. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is on track to issue these guidelines in the coming months.

Internal LGBT Coordinating Committee - To ensure effective coordination of LGBT-related policies and the consideration of LGBT concerns throughout HHS's activities, Secretary Sebelius established an internal committee of senior representatives from each operating and staff division of the Department and named Assistant Secretary for Aging Kathy Greenlee, Assistant Secretary for Health Howard Koh, and Acting Assistant Secretary for Children and Families David Hansell to co-chair this committee. The committee will produce an annual report on the Department's key accomplishments and upcoming initiatives.

Institute of Medicine Study on LGBT Health - The National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded a study by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to identify research gaps and opportunities related to LGBT health and outline a research agenda. The results of this study, announced on March 31, 2011, will assist HHS in enhancing its research efforts.

Healthy People 2020 - Every ten years, HHS develops national, science-based objectives for promoting health and preventing disease for the following decade. In 2010, for the first time, a formal workgroup was formed to examine the scientific literature and propose objectives regarding LGBT health. This initiative is part of HHS's overall effort to strengthen LGBT data.

National HIV/AIDS Strategy - On July 13, 2010, Secretary Sebelius

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HHS SECRETARY KATHLEEN SEBELIUS

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House Republicans Attack DADT Repeal

WASHINGTON, DC (Observer Update) - House Republicans showed their disapproval with repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" at a committee hearing, during which Pentagon leaders said the military would be prepared for implementation by summer's end, CNN reported.

Clifford Stanley, the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, told members of a House Armed Services subcommittee that "Implementing repeal embodies that view of total force readiness – more simply put – it is about respect. … no matter their race, color, creed, religion or sexual orientation."

"My focus is total force readiness, caring for our people and creating a culture of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency," Stanley said.

After a bitter debate last year, Congress approved and President Barack Obama singed into law a bill that repeals the Clinton-era law that bans gay and bisexual troops from serving openly. But implementation won't begin until 60 days after Pentagon leaders and the president certify that the military is ready for the change.

Republicans on the panel criticized the move, embracing the view that repealing the policy at a time when the nation was at war was a mistake.

Missouri Rep. Vicky Hartzler called the change "radical."

"I'm very concerned that in a time of war … that we are making such a radical major shift in our policy," she said.

After the Obama administration announced it would no longer defend in court the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), a law that bans federal agencies from recognizing the marriages of gay and lesbian couples, because the administration believes parts of the law are unconstitutional, Hartzler sponsored a bill that would force it to do so.

Rep. Mike Coffman of Colorado said open gay service would undermine the military mission. "I think this is a political decision obviously made by the executive branch and the military will follow it under whatever circumstances and ramifications it has to the combat effectiveness to our forces," Coffman said.

Freshman Rep. Austin Scott of Georgia predicted an exodus of troops from the military.

Prop. 8 Stay "Deadly" For Elderly Gay And Lesbian Couples

SAN FRANCISCO (Observer Update) - For many older same-sex couples living in California, a dream wedding may never become a reality, reported 365Gay.com. The 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals refused to lift the stay of Proposition 8, the ballot measure banning same-sex marriage in the state. The stay will remain in effect until the California Supreme Court rules on a procedural matter, which will not happen until this fall.

Courage Campaign chairman Rick Jacobs says continuing to delay marriage equality is unjustly harming thousands of families, including elderly men and women who cannot legally marry their ailing partners. "This decision has a direct, powerful and in some cases deadly impact on gay and lesbian couples," Jacobs said. "This is a delaying process that's not about justice.

Jacobs says putting faces on the cause will hopefully speed up the process. The Courage Campaign launched the Testimony video project to tell the stories of LGBT people and allies throughout the United States. The purpose is to document the shift in public opinion regarding gays and lesbians.

Ed Watson and Derence Kernek are featured on the site. Partners for more than 40 years, they're racing against the clock, anxiously anticipating the day when their relationship will be legally recognized.Watson and Kernek moved from Oregon to Palm Springs five years ago. They registered as domestic partners and made plans to marry. Watson, 78, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2009, just a few months after Proposition 8 passed. His mental condition continues to decline rapidly.

"We want to have that service as soon as we can," Kernek, 80, said. "We hope the Supreme Court won't dilly-dally on it because Ed wants to be able to remember the service. It's disheartening but we love each other and carry on the best we can."

More than 7,500 people signed the Courage Campaign's amicus curiae letter filed on behalf of Ed, Derence and others, urging the 9th Circuit to lift the stay. The panel denied the request without giving an explanation. Jacobs says it's not enough for gays and lesbians to speak out, straight allies need to pressure the courts to give same-sex couples legal recognition.

"There's no harm in allowing gays and lesbians to get married," Jacobs said. "The only harm is to couples like Ed and Derence. As a movement for justice we have to press harder now than we ever have before. Last August, District Court Judge Vaughn Walker ruled Proposition 8 unconstitutional but it could take a federal appeals court at least a year to review that decision.

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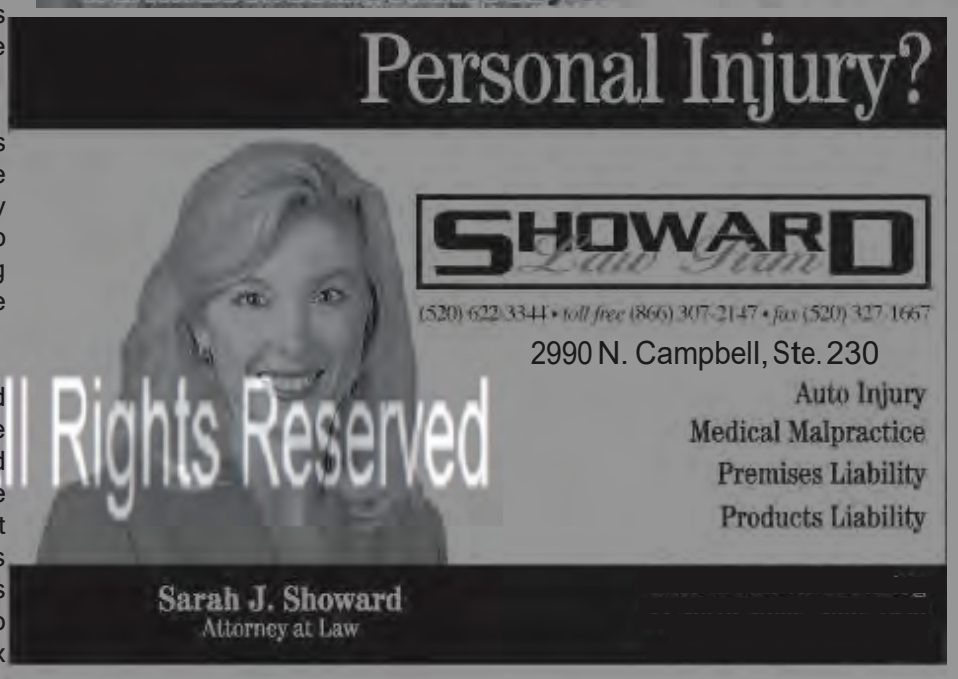

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Health and Human Services

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joined the President and Jeffrey Crowley, director of the Office of National AIDS Strategy, in announcing the National HIV/AIDS Strategy, a rigorous effort to increase access to care and lower the number of new HIV cases in the United States by 25 percent within the next five years. The strategy seeks to reduce HIV-related health disparities with a specific focus on high-risk populations, including LGBT populations.

The Affordable Care Act - The health care law is helping to improve access to care for all Americans, including individuals in the LGBT community. Studies have shown that health disparities related to sexual orientation and gender identity are due in part to lower rates of health insurance coverage and a lack of cultural competency in the health care system. As HHS implements the Affordable Care Act, it will pay close attention to the unique health needs of LGBT populations and continue to include LGBT health experts on Affordable Care Act and other advisory boards, as appropriate.

Tobacco Control - The 2009 Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act authorizes the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to regulate the content, marketing, and sale of tobacco products. These efforts, combined with tobacco cessation initiatives across HHS, have the potential to save millions of lives, particularly among high-risk populations, including LGBT populations. On November 10, 2010, HHS released a Department-wide strategic action plan to reduce tobacco use. To address higher smoking rates among LGBT individuals, this plan emphasizes the need for more research, and calls for the increased development of evidence-based, population-specific treatments and interventions. HHS will continue to work toward meeting these needs.

Aging Services - In 2010, HHS funded the nation's first national technical assistance resource center to support public and private organizations serving the unique needs of LGBT older adults. HHS also published a toolkit for providing respectful and inclusive services for diverse communities, including LGBT populations.

Anti-Bullying Efforts - Last year, HHS collaborated with five other departments - Education, Agriculture, Defense, Interior, and Justice - to establish a federal task force on bullying. HHS also announced an unprecedented, cross-departmental National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention with a wide range of public and private partners to coordinate suicide prevention efforts, particularly among at-risk groups, such as LGBT youth. On March 10, Secretary Sebelius participated in the White House Conference on Bullying Prevention to further highlight the importance of making schools and communities safe for all students. HHS also launched a new website - www.StopBullying.gov - which contains a specific section for LGBT youth. Additionally, the Secretary recorded a video, It Gets Better, at www.ItGetsBetter.org, encouraging young people to reach out for help to overcome bullying by their peers.

Improvements in Foster and Adoptive Care - To help address barriers to permanency and well-being for LGBT foster youth, who are disproportionately represented in the foster care population, HHS recently awarded a \ 3.3 million grant to theLos Angeles Gay & Lesbian Community Services Center. This is one of the largest federal grants ever awarded to an organization primarily serving LGBT individuals. HHS's Administration for Children and Families also applied an existing cooperative agreement toward the development of respite care and support group models for LGBT parents to strengthen and support foster and adoptive placements. This grant will help reduce the barriers encountered by prospective and current foster and adoptive parents who are LGBT.

Runaway and Homeless Youth Services - In contrast to previous years, HHS now requires that all organizations serving runaway and homeless youth be equipped to serve LGBT youth, who represent a disproportionate segment of this population. HHS also allows homeless and runaway youth providers to apply for funds to primarily serve LGBT youth. Moreover, HHS has begun the process of improving data collection among homeless and runaway LGBT youth through the Runaway Homeless Youth Information Management System.

Future Recommended Actions

HHS is moving forward with the following actions. HHS will continue to work in close coordination with LGBT community advocates in improving services and responding to the needs of these populations.

Later this year, HealthCare.gov, HHS's innovative new on-line tool called for by the Affordable Care Act, will provide additional information of specific relevance to LGBT populations. In particular, the website will allow LGBT consumers to identify health insurance policies available to them that include coverage of domestic partners.

HHS will conduct outreach to organizations that serve LGBT communities to make them aware of available funding opportunities and, in Funding Opportunity Announcements, highlight programs that may particularly benefit LGBT populations.

The Department will continue to work toward increasing the number of federally-funded health and demographic surveys that collect and report sexual orientation and gender identity data, consistent with the President's support for evidence-based policies. In collaboration with other agencies throughout HHS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is leading an effort to develop and test questions on sexual orientation and gender identity. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health is also reviewing existing LGBT data and will generate baselines and targets addressing LGBT health disparities through the Healthy People 2020 initiative. This process will include meetings with LGBT data experts and stakeholders to provide transparency and opportunities for input.

HHS will continue to evaluate ways its programs can ensure equal treatment of LGBT families. For example, HHS will advise states and tribes that federal law allows them to treat LGBT couples similarly to non-LGBT couples with respect to human services benefit programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and child care. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services will also notify states of their ability to provide same-sex domestic partners of long-term care Medicaid beneficiaries the same treatment as opposite-sex spouses in the contexts of estate recovery, imposition of liens, and transfer of assets. This includes not seizing or imposing a lien on the home of a deceased beneficiary if the same-sex domestic partner still resides in the home. It also includes allowing Medicaid beneficiaries needing long-term care to transfer the title of a home to a same-sex domestic partner, allowing the partner to remain in the home.

HHS will encourage new and existing health profession training programs, including behavioral health (e.g. mental health, substance abuse, and HIV) programs, to include LGBT cultural competency curricula. The lack of culturally competent providers is a significant barrier to quality health care for many LGBT people, particularly those who identify as transgender. HHS's Health Resources and Services Administration will also convene professional groups that represent LGBT health providers and students to identify challenges and opportunities for training LGBT providers and to isolate strategies geared toward increasing culturally competent care for LGBT patients. In consultation with LGBT communities, HHS will develop cultural competency goals and promote the use of cultural competency curricula inclusive of LGBT populations in future grants guidance. Moreover, to improve the capacity of practitioners in addressing behavioral health needs, HHS's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration will utilize existing federal and national training and technical assistance networks to support the adoption of behavioral health training materials.

HHS will provide guidance on the array of training and technical assistance available to state child welfare agencies to support LGBT youth, caregivers, and foster and adoptive parents.

HHS will continue to address discrimination, harassment, and violence against all individuals, including LGBT individuals, through domestic violence and other violence prevention programs. This includes recognizing LGBT populations as underserved communities in 2011 and 2012 Funding Opportunity Announcements under the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program and, where appropriate, identifying LGBT populations as target populations for population-specific grants. HHS will integrate an even stronger component focusing on LGBT youth in all anti-bullying initiatives and continue working with the White House, Departments of Education, Agriculture, Defense, Interior, and Justice to ensure that states, schools, and the general public are aware of the resources available.

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Gay Calif. Sailor Says He Can Stay In The Navy

SAN FRANCISCO (Observer Update) - A Navy petty officer who was investigated for violating the military's ban on openly gay servicemembers says a review board at his California base has voted against his discharge, reports advocate.com.

Derek Morado said the three-member board voted unanimously after a six-hour hearing at Lemoore Naval Air Station to allow him to serve out the remaining three years of his current enlistment. The 26-year-old Morado says he had been under investigation for violating the "don't ask, don't tell" policy since 2009, when someone reported seeing a picture of him kissing another man and that he described himself as gay on his MySpace page.

Congress voted to repeal "don't ask, don't tell" in December, but the policy remains in effect until military leaders certify the armed forces are ready to integrate openly gay troops.

Vermont Gov. To Talk To Rhode Islanders About Gay Marriage

MONTPELIER (Observer Update) - Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin will travel to Rhode Island this week at the invitation of gay marriage supporters to talk about Vermont's experience as the first state to offer civil unions and its later transition to allowing marriage for same-sex couples.

Vermont was the first U.S. state to offer legal recognition to same-sex couples when it passed its civil union law in 2000. In 2009, it became the first state in the country to offer those couples full marriage solely on the Legislature's say-so and without a court's involvement. Shumlin was president pro tem of the Senate on both occasions.

"We have a wonderful story to tell," Shumlin told The Associated Press in an interview. "We were the first state in the country to do the right thing, just because it was the right thing to do. … There were those who thought the sky would fall in, but we did the right thing and the sky never fell."

Gay Manager May Inherit Elizabeth Taylor's Millions

LOS ANGELES (Observer Update) - Elizabeth Taylor's estimated $360 million may land in the hands of manager and close friend Jason Winters, on whom Taylor "relied in her final years," according to the Daily Mail.

Winters, who is openly gay, met Miss Taylor the late 1990s through their work with AIDS victims. The two developed a strong friendship that included vacations at Winters' home in Hawaii. After Taylor's last marriage with Larry Fortensky failed, she collapsed into depression and Winters provided constant comfort. Gossip columns reported Taylor was 'madly in love' with Winters and there was speculation the two were to be engaged in 2010.

Since her death, the Daily Mail reports that if Winters did receive the inheritance, he would administer the funds through a trust to her AIDS charity. Taylor's four children believe Winters will inherit the sum once the will is read because of the numerous fights around their mother's worth that happened over the past year.

ACLU Fighting To Stop Filtering Of Gay Websites

WASHINGTON, DC (Observer Update) - As a first step in a national campaign, the American Civil Liberties Union recently sent letters to schools in Michigan and Missouri that asked them to stop blocking educational websites about LGBT issues from its students.

In the past, the ACLU successfully got Tennessee school districts in Knoxville and Nashville to stop using filtering software that blocked educational LGBT websites in 2009.

The ACLU is planning to send several dozen records requests in the next couple months as a part of this national campaign.

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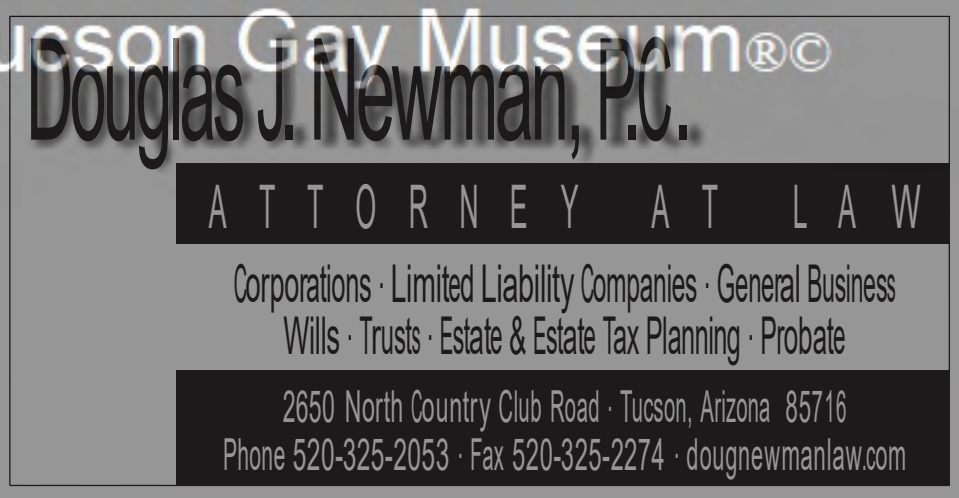


COMMENTARY. . . .

by John Culhane

Why Are We Focusing On Gay Marriage?

Marriage equality has become – for whatever reason – the most important item on our gay agenda. The legislative, judicial, and voter-related news on the marriage front keeps pouring in, and it's hard to keep up. But that same need to digest the massive amount of information pouring in, and to continue making the arguments for equality, sometimes starves another important issue of air, namely: Why should we continue to privilege marriage at all?

To be sure, there are some reasonable arguments for state recognition and support of marriage. Sociological studies suggest that being married makes people healthier and wealthier (although marital status is, on average, a better bargain for men than for women). That's good in itself, and also supports the broader society by creating an efficient "welfare unit" that draws less on public resources.

But maybe many of the same couples who now marry would realize similar benefit if the institution were done away with. And why aren't efficient units also possible through other sorts of committed relationships?

As Nancy Polikoff might say, a woman suffering from a terminal illness doesn't necessarily need a husband (or even a wife!), she needs a care-giver. That person might be a sister, another close relative, or a life-long friend. So why aren't those relationships privileged in appropriate cases? To the point, why can't adult siblings take time off to care for each other under the Family and Medical Leave Act, while spouses and the adult children of sick parent do have that right?

These are hard questions to answer, and the difficulty of justifying the privileged status of marriage has led some to call for its outright abolition.

I'm not one of those, in part because I would be loathe to deprive people of something that clearly affords them so much meaning and is so much a part of their identity (these observations, by the way, are also good arguments for marriage equality). It also seems that the security that comes with marriage enables couples to arrange their lives in the expectation that the law will take care of them if the marriage doesn't last. (It's fair to say, though, that on average women still get a lousy deal in divorce.)

But the marriage equality debate forces us to think through the vast entitlements that go along with marriage. Like data-rich robots, we marriage equality advocates roam the land intoning that there are "1,049 federal benefits to marriage,"and point out the unfairness of denying those same benefits (which of course come with responsibilities and obligations, as well).

And we're right to do so. But what about those who will continue to be fenced out, both from the benefits and from the dignity that we demand from marriage? By looking only at the narrow issue of our right to marry, we risk missing greater, more systemic injustices.

We need to continue to project of reducing the differences between marriage and other forms of human relations. That can be done in two complementary ways: By carefully scrutinizing the benefits that go along with marriage to see whether they can be justified, and also by extending the rights usually associated with marriage to other people. In short: subtraction and addition.

Most of the action in extending the rights and benefits usually associated with marriage is going on at the administrative level, where state and federal agencies charged with implementing laws have used their discretion to solve problems affecting real-world families.

The Obama Administration has been particularly good in this regard. While we wait – forever, it seems – for legislative action on ENDA and the repeal of DOMA, the Administration has been very bold and effective in recognizing LGBT families and, importantly, other families that don't have the Good Housekeeping seal of marriage.

So, for example, proposed new rules from HUD would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in federally funded or insured housing, but would also expand the definition of family beyond its already broad contours.

Proposed rules from HHS will allow patients in hospitals that receive federal funding (almost all of them) to designate who may visit them – a boon to same-sex couples, but also to anyone in a relationship other than marriage.

These and similar initiatives can further the project of reducing the gulf between marriage and other relationships that matter in people's actual lives. Those of us fighting for marriage equality need to keep in mind that marriage isn't the only goal worth seeking. Dignity is sought and expressed in many ways, and we can't fall into the trap of limiting its definition in a way that more suits our conservative opponents than fits our own proud tradition of inclusion.

John Culhane, is a Professor of Law at Widener University

Delaware Civil Unions Bill Clears State Senate Committee

DOVER (Observer Update) - The Delaware civil unions bill won its first legislative battle on after two hours of testimony. With the support of four out of the six Senate Administration and Election committee members, the bill now moves to the state Senate, reports 365Gay.com.

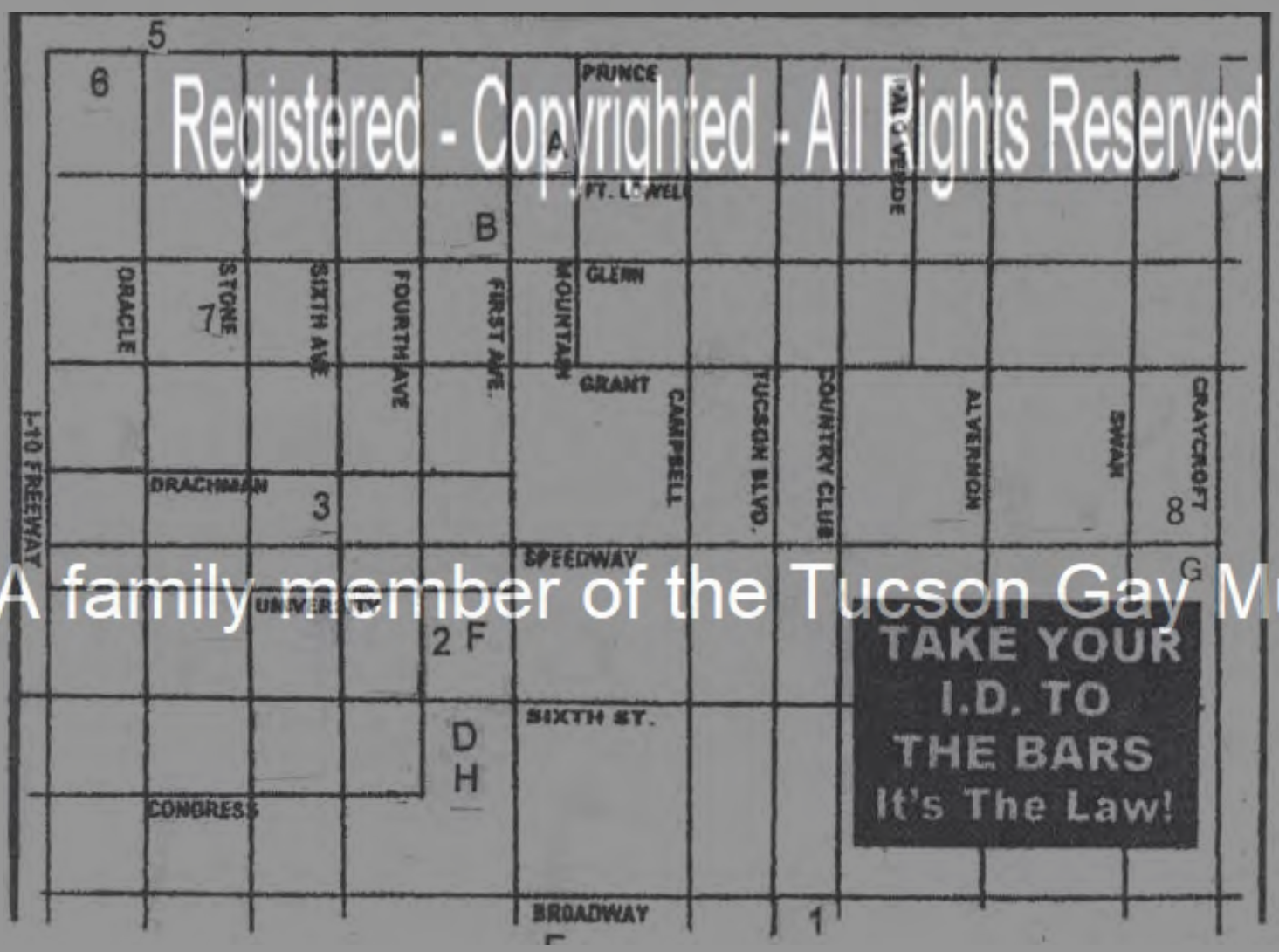
Mike Bouchard, a New Castle County policeman who is active in his church, told the panel he says goodbye to his partner each morning and lays his life on the line each day for the community, according to Delaware Online.

"I hold the highest regard for my position in law enforcement," he said. "But why, if I am willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for my community, am I not given the same rights as those whose partner is of the opposite sex?"

According to ONTOP, Nicole Theis, executive director of the conservative group Delaware Family Policy Council, opposes the bill and claims that it is dishonest.

"Marriage is about bringing male and female together, and that is good. Same-sex marriage redefines marriage, saying that men and women are optional for the family," Theis told lawmakers.

All four of the Democratic representatives voted yes – the two Republican Senators Dave Lawson and Joe Booth opted not to take a position.



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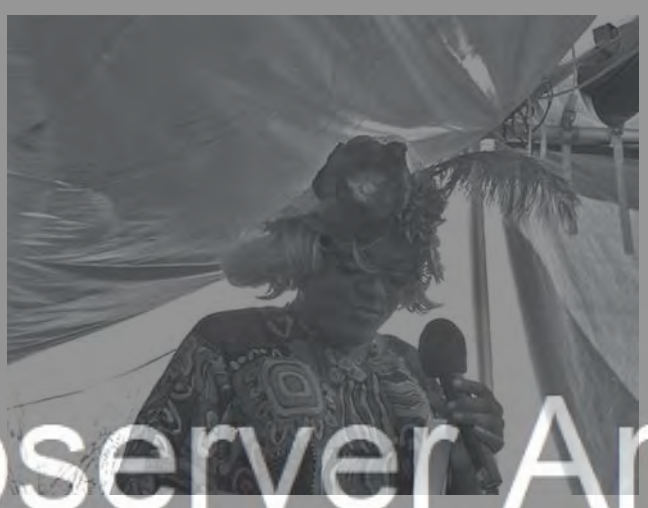
One Sunday At Ajia's Gospel Brunch At Woody's. If You Missed This One Watch For Upcoming Brunches



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Poet's Corner

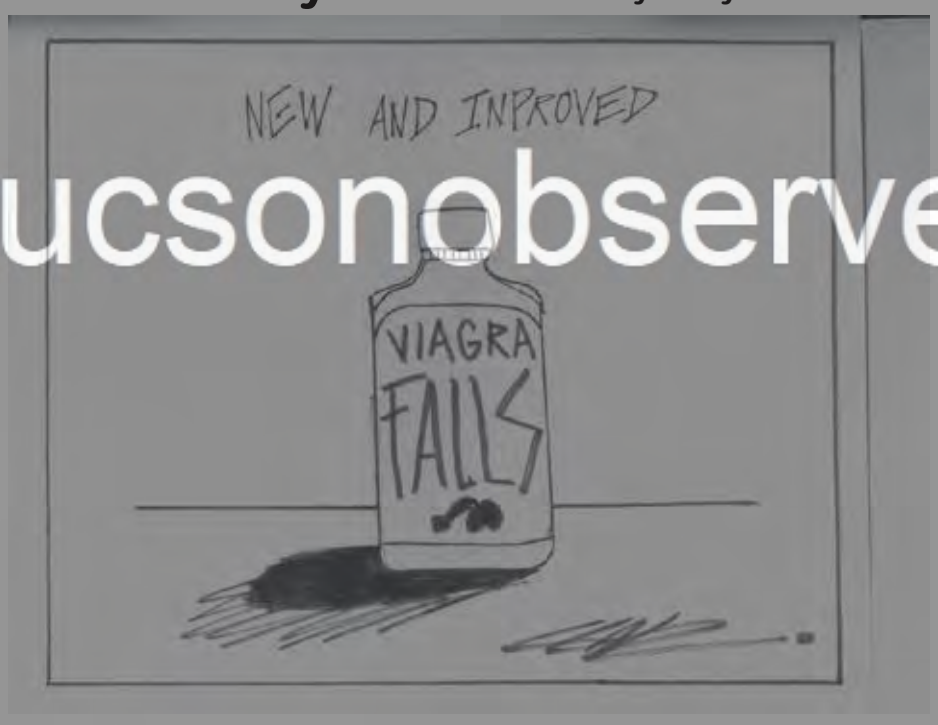
RADIO ACTIVE JIM

by Ron Rose - Tucson

Just above the Pacific Rim, Lies Radio Active Jim
Light Bulbs clenched between his lips,
That's all that's left of him.
The gadget that's attached to him Is really kind of slick,
Too bad there's no one left alive, To hear the counter click.
Nuclear clouds float gently by Wafting in the breeze,
If only brilliant scientists, Had listened to our pleas
Miscalculated tremors, awful aftershocks
Left us with crumpled buildings
And charred and melted clocks.
A planet left so lonely, take time, remember him
A symbol of destruction, Radio Active Jim.

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

A Decade of Dutch Marriage Equality

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AMSTERDAM (Observer Update) - April 1, 2011 marks a decade of marriage equality in The Netherlands, the first country in the world to legalize same-sex marriage, reports advocate.com. Ten years later, 20% of gay and lesbian Dutch couples are married, after 15,000 weddings.

"The fact that same-sex marriage has been legalized on three continents demonstrates progress in equality," said Boris O. Dittrich, acting director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Rights Program at Human Rights Watch. "However, while the right to same-sex marriage may be viewed as the last step in ending discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, legalization does not end discrimination, either by officials or other people."

Demographer Jan Latten of Statistics Netherlands told Radio Netherlands that the figures reflect the same behavior as heterosexual couples.

"Many of them marry out of love, of course," he said. "But, just as with straight couples, the desire to have children and the resulting legal responsibilities often weigh even more for gay and lesbian couples to marry. This could explain why gay couples marry less often than straight ones. Gay couples, especially gay men, are still facing considerable difficulties when they want to adopt children."

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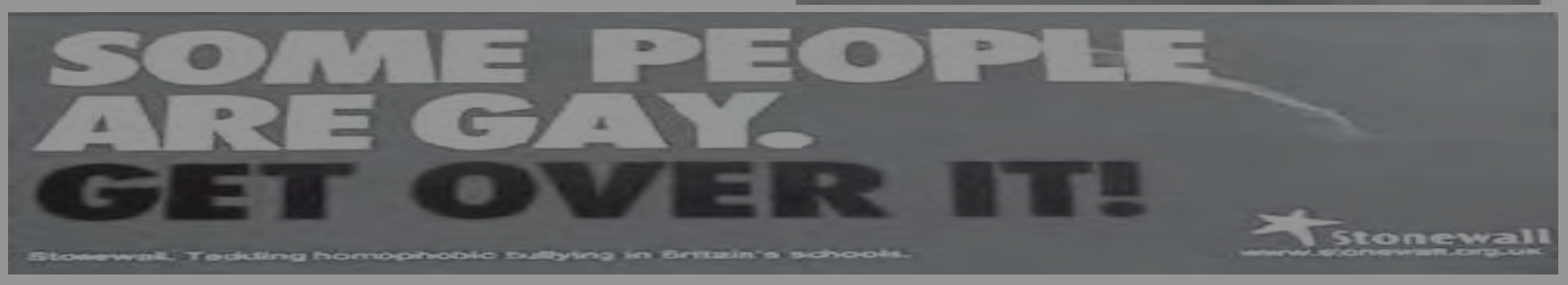

DAILY BAR CALENDAR

SUNDAY

THE BIZ - Closed Sunday , Monday, Tuesday

BRODIES - Open 10am - 2am. Happy Hour 10am - 8pm.

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 Hour10am - 8pm.

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.Happy Hour 10am-8pm

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. Happy Hour 10am-8pm

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. Happy Hour 10am - 8pm.

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. Happy Hour 10am-8pm. 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 10am - 8pm.

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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COMMENTARY. . . .

BY FRANCISCO O. BUCHTING

Why The IOM Report Is A Healthy Change For LGBTs

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) released its long-awaited report on what researchers know about the health of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans.

But more studies are needed, because we don't know enough about key segments of our overlapping communities and this puts LGBT health at risk. And to conduct more studies, researchers need funding.

This report marks a turning point in the struggle to address health inequalities of this enormously diverse minority group. Among the findings from the report: LGBT people experience significant disparities in access to care, tobacco, mental health, HIV, addictions, suicide; there are other health areas, such as cancer, where data indicate that there may be disparities, but more studies are needed; and unfortunately, there is very little data on, for example, LGBT communities of color and transgender people.

We know, for example, that LGBT people smoke at rates almost 50% to 200% higher than the rest of the population - the American Cancer Society indicating that over 30,000 LGBT people die each year of tobacco-related diseases. Yet LGBT health continues to be forced to compete with a wide range of other stakeholders for funding.

At a minimum, the IOM report will give us all an opportunity to change the local, state, and national dialogue around LGBT health. Previously, the health of LGBT people was barely addressed by either government or private funders of public health and research programs.

Why? Because, the funders said, there was a lack of evidence or data to justify the targeting or even the inclusion of LGBT people in competitive funding opportunities.

Obtaining funding to address LGBT health issues had therefore become a vicious cycle where "not enough evidence or data to justify targeted funding" has been used as a justification to deny targeted funds to actually collect data.

This IOM report will hopefully start to change that.

When it comes to health research and public health funding priorities, if one is not counted one does not exist. The IOM report will help remind private and government funders of health research that LGBT individuals have been counted, that we exist, and that we have significant health needs not being adequately addressed – and, in many cases, that are being ignored – in the face of mounting evidence.

The challenge is up to each of us to make the most of this opportunity to help ensure health equity for all LGBT people and communities.

(Dr. Francisco O. Buchting is a member of the National Cancer Institute's Tobacco Research Network on Disparities (TReND) and chair of the steering committee for The Network for LGBT Health Equity at The Fenway Institute. This is reprinted from 365Gay.com.)

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