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WEEKLY OBSERVER JUNE 1, 2011 ISSUE1400

U.S. Adults Estimate That 25% Of Americans Are Gay Or Lesbian

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - U.S. adults, on average, estimate that 25% of Americans are gay or lesbian. More specifically, over half of Americans (52%) estimate that at least one in five Americans are gay or lesbian, including 35% who estimate that more than one in four are. Thirty percent put the figure at less than 15%, according to a gallup.com.

The findings, from a Gallup poll conducted May 5-8, 2011, mark the second time Gallup has asked Americans to estimate the gay population. In 2002, Gallup used two separate questions to ask Americans to estimate the percentage of gay men and lesbians. At that time, Americans estimated that 21% of men were gay and that 22% of women were lesbian. Twice as many did not offer an opinion as do now.

There is little reliable evidence about what percentage of the U.S. population is in reality gay or lesbian, due to few representative surveys asking about sexual orientation, complexities surrounding the groups and definitions involved, and the probability that some gay and lesbian individuals may not choose to identify themselves as such. Demographer Gary Gates last month released a review of population-based surveys on the topic, estimating that 3.5% of adults in the United States identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, with bisexuals making up a slight majority of that figure. Gates also disputes the well-circulated statistic that "10% of the males are more or less exclusively homosexual."

Americans' current collective estimate – which is substantially higher than Gates suggests – is likely driven more by perceptions and exposure than by scientific measurement or reality. Gallup previously found that a majority of Americans personally know someone who is gay or lesbian, though Gallup did not ask Americans how many gay or lesbian individuals they know, or whether they know more individuals now than they did before. Additionally, Americans tend to have difficulty estimating percentages of population groups whose numbers are more widely known. Gallup a decade ago found Americans estimating much larger U.S. black and Hispanic populations than what the U.S. Census Bureau reported for those groups.

Lower-Income Americans, Less Educated, Young People, and Women Give Highest Estimates

Americans with lower incomes and less education give the highest estimates, on average, of the U.S. gay and lesbian population, and far higher estimates than those with higher incomes and more education. Americans aged 18 to 29 give a higher average estimate than older Americans, and women give a far higher average estimate than men.

Democrats, liberals, and those who say they are socially liberal are also more likely to give higher estimates than those at the other end of the spectrum. However, the differences by political or ideological leanings are in most cases not as wide as those seen by demographic group.

Implications

Americans perceive that there is a large U.S. gay population – one far larger than is likely reality. Perhaps more informative than the exact figure Americans give is the trend that more Americans now than in 2002 feel they have enough information to offer an estimate. This suggests Americans have had even more exposure to gays and lesbians, be it in their personal lives or through entertainment or other means. It is also noteworthy that demographics appear in most cases to be more predictive of views in this matter than are political or ideological leanings. This suggests Americans' estimates are based more on who they are – and perhaps whom they know – than on their worldview. Gallup also previously found those who personally know someone gay or lesbian to be more accepting on related issues. Combined with Americans' record support for legal gay relations and same-sex marriage, it is clear that America's gay population – no matter the size – is becoming a larger part of America's mainstream consciousness.

Survey Methods

Results for this Gallup poll are based on telephone interviews conducted May 5-8, 2011, with a random sample of 1,018 adults, aged 18 and older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. For results based on the total sample of national adults, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of sampling error is ±4 percentage points.

Choi Beaten, Arrested In Russia

MOSCOW (Observer Update) - Advocate.com reports that Army veteran and gay activist Dan Choi, Chicago activist Any Thayer were among at least 18 people who were mobbed at a gay pride parade in Moscow by police and a group of Neo-Nazis on Saturday (May 28)

Video of the attack was posted on AmericaBlog, in which Choi and Thayer are walking quietly, when a mob of uniformed and undercover police attack them. According to British gay rights activist Peter Tatchell, the arrests took place between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. Moscow time.

Choi and seven others were carted off to Presnensky Police Station in Moscow after the attack.

He and the other foreign protesters were released without a charge or fine, but the Russians will have to remain overnight. Tatchell said that neither of the lead organizers, Nikolai Alekseev nor Nikolai Baev were arrested, and it is unclear if Alekseev actually participated in the protest since he was badly injured from a fall.

"Anna Komarova, who is under arrest, reports being pressured by the police to give information about the organization of Moscow Gay Pride," said Tatchell, who was at the event. "The police are threatening to detain her for 48 hours unless she gives them the information they want."

Louis Georges-Tin, a French academic and founder of the International Day Against Homophobia was reportedly sent into isolation after singing Bizet's Toreador, as was Choi after yelling "Discriminatzya!" He added that foreign protesters were being treated better than Russian protesters by police, evident by the fact that they were allowed to retain their cell phones while locked up behind bars. The Russian demonstrators were Tim Magomedor, Alexy Kiselev, Elizaveta Nikitina, Alexander Shiriaev, and Andzey Zayziev, all in their mid-20s.

Aide: President Palin Would Be Dangerous

SCOTTSDALE (Observer Update) - A former Sarah Palin aide said his old boss would be "an absolute disaster as president."

As the former Alaska governor possibly sets her sights on the highest office in the country, aide Frank Bailey toldExtra that she "loves to play the victim," nor can she handle criticism. He also described the relationship between Palin and her husband Todd as dysfunctional, and said her husband was not trustworthy, reports advocate.com.

Bailey is promoting his new tell-all book, Blind Allegiance to Sarah Palin: A Memoir of Our Tumultuous Years. It details his years working with Palin, with 50,000 emails he has written or received to back up his claims.

Gay Slurs Shows Sports Still Has A Way To Go

CHICAGO (Observer Update) - Enough with the excuses, wrote the AP on 365Gay.com.

Let's no longer cut any slack to an athlete who blurts out hateful, hurtful words about gays, even if they are really just upset with the refs or egged on by some moronic fan. Let's no longer tolerate those who think it's OK to throw around homophobic banter in a testosterone-fueled locker room, that no harm is intended when male athletes jokingly call out someone's sexual preference.

CONNTINUED ON PAGE SIX

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UPDATE

Reveille Men's Chorus Open Rehearsal

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Do you enjoy singing in the shower? When you belt-out karaoke, do people actually stay in the room? Then Reveille wants YOU!

Auditions are a very simple process of checking each individual's voice placement within the chorus, as a Bass, Baritone, Tenor II or Tenor I. They are open throughout the year and can be taken at any regular rehearsal.

Contact: Shawn Cullen, Director. Phone: 520-304-1758. Email: director@reveillechorus.org.

Volunteeer Appreciation Picnic June 9

TUCSON (Observer Update) - The picnic, which was rained out last month, has been rescheduled for 6:00 - 8:00 pm on Thursday, June 9, at the Historic Y, 738 N. Fifth Ave.

The event this year is a joint affair by the staffs of Wingspan, TIHAN (Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network) and SAAF to say thank you to all who have given their time and talent to make our organizations work.

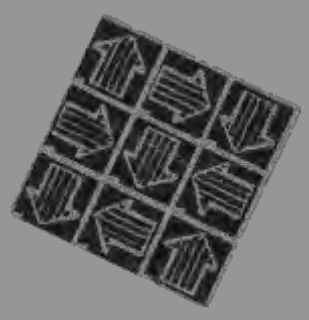
All volunteers and their guests are welcome. RSVP by June 6 to wingspan@wingspan.org.

Equality Arizona Endorses Stanton For Phoenix Mayor

PHOENIX (Observer Update) - Former Phoenix City Councilmember Greg Stanton has received Equality Arizona's endorsement for mayor of Phoenix in the election on August 30, 2011.

According to the Equality Arizona press release, "Greg is a strong advocate for equality, and as mayor, he will work to ensure the City of Phoenix remains a welcoming and safe place for all communities, including the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community."

Besides supporting organizations like 1n10 and the Southwest Center for HIV/AIDS, Greg helped champion equality initiatives while serving on the Phoenix City Council. He voted in favor of Phoenix's domestic partner registry and supported efforts to grant health benefits to the partners of Phoenix city employees and their children. He was awarded the Building Bridges Ally Award from Equality Arizona in 2009.



It Gets Better Project Video-Making In Tucson

TUCSON (Observer Update) - The It Gets Better Project works to provide hope and the knowledge that a positive future is possible for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transexual teenagers by collecting videos of personal stories.

On June 18, from 9 am to 1 pm, at the Murphy-Wilmot Branch Library, 530 N. Wilmot, the library will have a video camera, laptops, and staff member available to help those who would like to make a video then upload it to the site.

"Many LGBT youth can't picture what their lives might be like as openly gay adults. They can't imagine a future for themselves. So let's show them what our lives are like, let's show them what the future may hold in store for them." - It Gets Better Project

Check out the book that was created by the project: It Gets Better: Coming Out, Overcoming Bullying, and Creating a Life Worth Living edited by Dan Savage and Terry Miller.

Bloom Fund To Support Wingspan's Non Grant Funded Programs

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Wingspan has created the Bloom Fund to support Wingspan programs and outreach projects that engage underrepresented communities within the larger LGBT population. These projects include Puertas Abiertas, Southern Arizona Gender Alliance (SAGA), Rainbow Families, Senior Pride and RainbowCONNECT. All of these groups are only partly funded through grant streams and need your support.

Your gift will assure the continuation of events and project such as Transgender Awareness Week, Tucson Latin@Gay Pride, the Senior Forum newsletter and LGBT-family advocacy and parenting workshops, as well as travel costs that permit us to reach LGBT communities in geographically isolated areas in Southern Arizona.

Our goal is to find 50 "seed" donors who can commit to giving Wingspan $25 a month for one year. Bloom/seed donors will receive a special quarterly letter highlighting how your generosity is giving a voice to our community members who face compounded language, cultural, economic and geographic barriers.

Please consider becoming a seed donor to ensure that Wingspan's garden flourishes for the entire community! For more information on the Bloom Fund, email wingspan@wingspan.org.

Georgia Politician Comes Out To Stop Rumors

ATLANTA (Observer Update) - A Georgia state representative held a press conference Friday, during which he came out while combating rumors that he had traded state funds and lobbyist gifts for sexual favors from men, reports advocate.com.

Rep. Rashad Taylor, a Democrat from southwest Atlanta, said he did not want to come out under such a scandalous pretense, but said he felt "lucky for all the support from those who are closest to me," according to WSBTV News.

Taylor was the target of rumors being spread by Jermaine Callahan, who contacted several lawmakers to tell them that their colleague was accepting sexual favors in exchange for state funds. Taylor told reporters that Callahan was actually the former partner of the man that Taylor is now dating. Callahan eventually admitted that he had no evidence, and all of his allegations were heresy.

"The gentleman who wrote the email was the former partner of the person I'm now seeing," Taylor said at the press conference held at Georgia Equality. "He hoped he would humiliate and embarrass me by sending this email." He added, "I find it absolutely reprehensible and disgusting that another member of this community would use these types of tactics of fear and intimidation and would embrace this backward and frankly hurtful attitude that to be gay is to have a horrible secret."

Eddie Long Settles With Sex Coercion Accusers

ATLANTA (Observer Update) - Eddie Long, the homophobic senior pastor of Georgia's New Birth Missionary Baptist Church, has settled a lawsuit from four men who accused him of sexual misconduct – one allegation involved Long coercing a 17-year-old into sexual relations.

The pastor was accused of encouraging young men to sleep with him in exchange for money, trips, and jobs – the case was dismissed with "prejudice," meaning the men cannot sue Long again. Some in Long's church are continuing to stand by him, reports The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

"It doesn't make me think he's guilty or anything," church member Kamelya Hinson told the newspaper. "I decided when this came out that I loved my pastor unconditionally. Even if he came out and grabbed the mic and said 'I'm guilty,' it wouldn't change the way I feel about him."

Others told the Journal-Constitution that the settlement does suggest the pastor is guilty of sexual impropriety.

Long leads gay "conversion" therapies and has pushed for a national constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage.

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HRC Endorses Obama For Second Term

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The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) has endorsed President Barack Obama for re-election.

WASHINGTON, DC (Observer Update) - The nation's largest gay rights group offered its endorsement in a statement posted on its website.

"President Obama has improved the lives of LGBT Americans more than any president in history. In 2008 we were promised change and profound change is what we got. More remains to be done and ensuring that President Obama is able to continue the forward momentum toward equality for another term is an absolute priority of the Human Rights Campaign," said HRC President Joe Solmonese.

In its endorsement, the group singled out four major achievements of Obama's first term, including signing into law repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and a gay-inclusive hate crimes law, concluding that portions of the Defense of Marriage (DOMA) are unconstitutional, and requiring hospitals nationwide to adopt gay friendly visitation policies.

"From signature achievements like passage of the law to end 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' to administrative changes throughout government, President Obama has done more to improve the lives of LGBT people than any president in history," the group said.

HRC's admittedly early endorsement rankled gay Republicans. "Today, the Human Rights Campaign chose to endorse Barack Obama's re-election even though the field running for president in 2012 isn't even set yet," said Jimmy LaSalvia, the executive director of gay GOP group GOProud.

"This pre-emptive endorsement ends HRC's charade of bipartisanship."

"LGBT people who are interested in putting policy before partisanship now know that HRC is little more than a puppet of the Democratic National Committee and an organization that has one goal – to elect more Democrats."

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Writers Honored At Lammys

NEW YORK (Observer Update) - Legendary playwright Edward Albee and acclaimed crime fiction writer Val McDermid were among the honorees at the Lambda Literary Awards.

Comedian Lea DeLaria (pictured) was master of ceremonies for the event, held at the School of Visual Arts Theater, which saw awards presented in 24 categories by the Lambda Literary Foundation.

Albee, a three-time Pulitzer Prize-winner and author of such classic plays as Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? received the Pioneer Award, presented by another respected gay playwright, Terrence McNally. According to a foundation news release, McNally noted that since Albee has largely avoided gay subject matter, "people wonder if he's gay. Well, I'm here to tell you he is ... I picked him up at a party in 1960." In accepting the award, Albee said, "I'm not a gay writer. I'm a writer who happens to be gay."

Another Pioneer Award went to Scottish crime writer McDermid, who said she believed there were no lesbians in the small town where she grew up, so she thought they were "mythical, like mermaids." She thanked earlier pioneers, including presenter Katherine V. Forrest, saying, "I understand the importance of doors being opened. Other people opened doors for me." McDermid also received the award for Best Lesbian Mystery of the year, with Fever of the Bone.

Alex Sánchez and Susan Stinson received the Outstanding Mid-Career Novelists' Prizes, and the University of Wisconsin Press received a special Publisher's Service Award. Other Lammy honorees included Tristan Taormino, Kate Bornstein, Eileen Myles, Scott Herring, and Adam Haslett. Among the presenters were former New Jersey governor Jim McGreevey, actress Stefanie Powers, author Emma Donoghue, activist Mel White, Mr. Gay USA Eddie Rabon, and Miss New York Claire Buffie.

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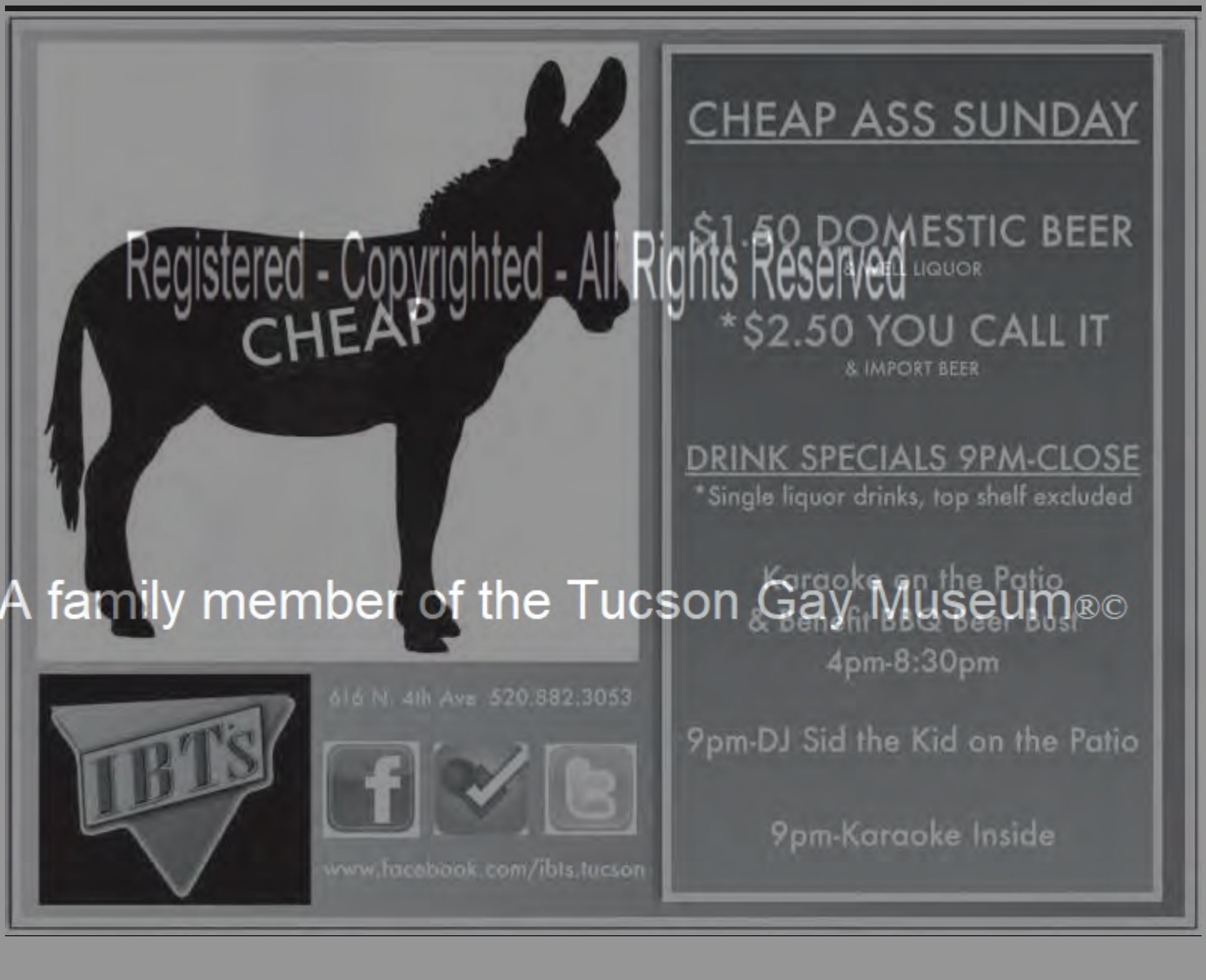

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U.S. House Passes 3 Anti-Gay Amendments

WASHINGTON, DC (Observer Update) - The U.S. House on Thursday, May 26, passed the House Armed Services Committee authorization bill that includes three amendments aimed at delaying implementation of the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell and shoring up the impact of the Defense of Marriage Act, the Keen News Service reported on 365Gay.com.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Senate on Wednesday, May 25, rejected two budget proposals for Fiscal Year 2012 appropriations –one that LGBT activists liked and one they didn't like.

The House vote Thursday was 322 to 96 on the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which authorizes spending by the Defense Department for Fiscal Year 2012.

The three amendments included

1. One that seeks to require additional certifications before repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT) can take place and

2. Two amendments which reiterate that the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) bars the use of military facilities or personnel for same-sex marriage ceremonies.

The Senate is unlikely to include similar language in its version of the NDAA, so the real showdown on the measures won't occur until a Senate-House conference committee meets later this year to hammer out one version of the measure.

By that time, one of the amendments may have become moot. The Defense Department has said it expects the Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff should be able to certify the military's readiness to enact repeal of DADT by mid-summer. Assuming the president does so at the same time, the repeal would be enacted 60 days after that –or sometime in October. The Senate-House conference committee will likely not be ready to meet until sometime after that.

The two DOMA-related amendments have already had their impact - prompting a Navy official to withdraw recommendations that military facilities and personnel be allowed to participate in same-sex ceremonies in states where same-sex marriages are legal.

Even if the amendments survive conference committee, DOMA is under serious challenge in the federal courts.

The White House issued a statement, saying that, while it generally supports the FY 2012 NDAA passed by the House Armed Services Committee, it objected to the three anti-gay amendments inserted during committee debate.

"The Administration strongly objects to any legislative attempts to directly or indirectly undermine, prevent, or delay the implementation of the repeal, as such efforts create uncertainty for servicemembers and their families," said the White House statement.

The White House "strongly objects" to a number of other provisions in the NDAA budget that the House kept in its final version of the bill even though President Obama has threatened to veto the measure should with those provisions.

The White House did not threaten to veto the bill over the Don't Ask, Don't Tell amendments.

Aubrey Sarvis, head of the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), said he was "heartened to see the White House standing firm against attempts to use the defense spending bill as a vehicle for delaying or derailing repeal and expanding DOMA."

The bigger question looming over budget matters this week is what sort of budget will ever gain passage in Congress for FY 2012.

The budget LGBT and HIV activists generally supported was President Obama's initial budget proposal for FY 12, a budget which included modest increases in programs against HIV and bullying. That proposal went down 97 to 0 in the Senate Wednesday, mostly because Democrats have shifted their support over to a revised proposal from Obama that promises a more aggressive effort at reducing the current deficit. The nuts and bolts of that proposal has yet to be released.

The budget LGBT activists didn't like was one authored chiefly by Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wisc.) that included dramatic reductions in domestic spending. That proposal passed the House last month and has been hotly debated ever since. Among the proposal's more controversial cuts were in Medicare, which provides health insurance coverage for Americans 65 and older and for people with disabilities, including AIDS. It would also have left unfunded, President Obama's Affordable Care Act, which provides care for many people with HIV. A motion to consider Ryan's plan failed by a vote of 40 to 57.

Among the senators voted against proceeding to Ryan's bill were Republicans Scott Brown of Massachusetts, Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, and Rand Paul of Kentucky. All other Republicans voted to consider the bill, all Democrats against.

Cancer Support Group For LGBT People

TUCSON (Observer Update) - This group's next meeting is Monday, June 6, 4 - 6 p,m, at the

Arizona Cancer Center at UMC-North, Rm # 1127, 3838 N Campbell Ave, Tucson

This is a weekly cancer support group for lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. Some advantages to being in a support group: You can connect with others and remember that you are not alone; You can provide support in hard times; You can provide information and coping skills

You can offer tips that only cancer survivors, friends of cancer survivors, and family of cancer survivors understand and that you are not alone. Spread the Word!

Contact: Brenda Casey, LMSW. Email: bcasey@umcaz.edu. Phone: 520-694-0347.

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Gay Marriage Debate Continues Across The U.S.

PROVIDENCE, R.I.(Observer Update) - A flurry of activity in efforts to legally recognize gay relationships or ban same-sex marriage is reminding advocates that even though polls indicate growing acceptance, the debate is far from settled, reported the AP on the Huffington Post.

Rhode Island is pondering a proposal to allow civil unions, a compromise that arose after it became clear there weren't enough votes to aim for marriage. Minnesota lawmakers voted to put a constitutional marriage ban on the ballot, and the mayor of New York spoke out strongly in favor of same-sex marriage as talks continue in his state.

In Rhode Island, gay marriage advocates say they're unsatisfied with the proposal to offer civil unions, which provide many of the same legal benefits of marriage without calling it that. "There's a special status when you say `my wife,' and civil unions don't give that," said Annie Cronin-Silva, of West Warwick, who married a woman in neighboring Massachusetts in 2008. "But things are changing. It's coming. It's just so hard to wait."

Gay marriage is allowed in Iowa, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut and the District of Columbia. Several other states offer civil unions or domestic partnerships instead. Illinois, Delaware and Hawaii enacted civil unions this year. The debate continues to rage in several other states.

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg warned lawmakers in his state that they will be remembered as civil rights obstructionists if they block attempts to pass gay marriage. Opponents have committed $1.5 million to defeat the efforts, matching the amount raised by supporters.

Minnesota lawmakers voted a week ago to put a constitutional prohibition against gay marriage on the 2012 ballot. Voters in 29 states have already added similar amendments, and gay marriage supporters hope to make Minnesota the first state to reject such an amendment.

"It's a changed debate in Minnesota and in the nation," said Monica Meyer, executive director of OutFront Minnesota. "I'm hoping we can ride that sea change. But we know we have a very big challenge in front of us."

Even though Massachusetts considers Cronin-Silva and her wife, Melanie Silva, legally married, Rhode Island doesn't. They've had legal agreements drawn up granting rights that are automatic through marriage, such as making medical decisions in an emergency.

Civil unions could spare gay couples an expensive trip to a lawyer, Cronin-Silva said. But she said it's no substitute for marriage.

Groups on both sides of the debate have long pointed to polls that appear to advance their agenda. But in the past nine months, several major surveys are showing a trend of increasing support for gay marriage.

A Gallup poll released this month found that a majority of Americans believe same-sex marriage should be legal. In 1996, Gallup found that only 27 percent of Americans supported gay marriage. It's just the latest of several major surveys showing that a slim majority of Americans now support gay marriage.

"I thought for a while it might be one fluky poll," said Gregory Lewis, a professor of public management and policy at Georgia State University who tracks public attitudes on gay marriage. "But now it's just one after another. It does seem like this year's polls are noticeably different even from last year."

An ABC-Washington Post survey in March found that 53 percent of Americans support gay marriage. An Associated Press poll in August found that 52 percent of Americans think the federal government should extend legal recognition to married gay couples, up from 46 percent the year before.

Opponents note that public opinion polls in Maine and California showed majority support for gay marriage in those states, too – right before voters rejected gay marriage measures. Even in left-leaning Rhode Island, efforts to pass marriage rights stalled this year after legislators balked.

The polls show at least two factors contributing to changing attitudes. For one, younger Americans of all political persuasions say they're more tolerant of homosexuality than older generations.

Meghan McCain, the daughter of former Republican presidential candidate and gay marriage opponent John McCain, is one example of a prominent Republican who says the party's opposition to gay marriage is causing it to turn off younger voters.

Madeline Koch, a 24-year-old heterosexual Republican, told Minnesota lawmakers to oppose the gay marriage amendment because it would put inequality in the state Constitution.

Second, while older Americans identifying themselves as Republicans remain firmly opposed to gay marriage, Democrats and independents appear to be changing their minds, Lewis said. The Gallup poll found that 69 percent of self-described Democrats support gay marriage, compared with 56 percent the year before.

"The generational changes don't explain everything," Lewis said. "There's a fair amount of Americans who are just changing their minds."

Gay marriage opponents concede that surveys show increased support for gay marriage. But they say polls are different from ballot questions.

"A poll is just a poll," said Chris Plante, executive director of the National Organization for Marriage-Rhode Island. "The reality is, when people go to the voting booth they protect marriage. Legislatures including our own in Rhode Island recognize that people don't want it."

Plante points to similar predictions made about the demise of the anti-abortion movement after Roe v. Wade. Nearly 40 years later, anti-abortion groups have successfully pushed for more restrictions on abortion throughout the nation.

"They think the old folks will just die out and they'll win this with the young people," he said. "Maybe for a season. But I believe we will see young people say, `Wait a second. This was an awful social experiment.' You have to take the long view."

From the other side of the debate, New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg also endorsed viewing it in context. A measure to legalize gay marriage in the state is being negotiated among Gov. Andrew Cuomo and legislative leaders, but Cuomo has said he won't put it to a vote until enough legislators are on board.

The billionaire mayor has lobbied Republican senators, for whom he is a major campaign funder, but no senator has committed to switching camps.

"As other states recognize the rights of same-sex couples to marry, we cannot stand by and watch," Bloomberg said Thursday in a Manhattan address. "To do so would be to betray our civic values and history – and it would harm our competitive edge in the global economy."

Federal G/L Adoption Bill Picks Up First GOP Co-Sponsor

BUFFALO, (Observer Update) - Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.) has signed on as the first Republican supporter of a bill outlawing discrimination against same-sex couples from becoming adoptive or foster parents, reports the Huffington Post.

"It's way past time to allow the thousands of children in foster care the opportunity to live in safe and nurturing families who are eager to adopt them," said Ros-Lehtinen in a statement. "There are strict guidelines to ensure that the placement of these children will be regulated and that the parents will provide the protective guidance and structure that the children need."

"My home state of Florida had discriminatory laws in place that were preventing caring parents from adoption," she continued. "This Federal bill is a step in the right direction so that the proper match between responsible parent and needy child can take place regardless of the parent's sexual orientation."

Ros-Lehtinen has traditionally been more supportive of LGBT issues than many others in her party. According to the Human Rights Campaign's Congressional Scorecard, she had one of the best records in the Republican Party voting for LGBT priorities in the last session.

Rep. Pete Stark (D-Calif.) introduced the Every Child Deserves A Family Act on May 3, and dozens of lawmakers have signed on as cosponsors, including House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.). Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) plans to introduce companion legislation in the Senate in the coming weeks.

The Every Child Deserves a Family Act would "ban discrimination in adoption or foster care placement based on the sexual orientation, marital status or gender identity of the potential parent, or the sexual orientation or gender identity of the child," according to a statement from Stark's office.

"Sound family policy is not a partisan issue," said Family Equality Council Executive Director Jennifer Chrisler. "There are more than 424,000 kids in foster care in the United States, with 115,000 eligible for adoption. Congress must work together to find ways to provide these children loving and stable homes. The only way to do that is to tear down legal and political barriers that are eliminating qualified parents who also happen to be gay or lesbian."

In April, Virginia's State Board of Social Services rejected adding protections against discrimination in adoption proceedings on the basis of sexual orientation, gender, age, religion, political beliefs, disability and family status. Currently, the state prohibits discrimination on national origin, race and color.

ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN (R-FLA)

Last month, Arkansas' high court struck down the state's law barring same-sex couples from adopting. In an opinion published without dissent, the court argued that the law violated individuals' right to privacy.

Even with Ros-Lehtinen's cospsonsorship, prospects for Stark's bill seem slim, although her name could open the door for more Republicans to support the measure.

According to the Family Equality Council, one million LGBT parents in the United States raise two million children.

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Gay Slurs Shows Sports Still Has A Way To Go

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

It's not acceptable anywhere, at any time, under any circumstances. Got it?

It's time to deliver a stronger edict to every basketball, baseball, football and hockey player: If you insist on using the "f" word, no matter the provocation, you'll be assured of watching at least a game or two from the comfort of your hopefully soundproof living room. That way, at least, you can scream whatever you want and the rest of us don't have to hear it.

The NBA has taken strong steps to stamp out anti-gay attitudes, but it dropped the ball twice on Monday. Joakim Noah of the Chicago Bulls was fined $50,000 for spitting out that most hateful of gay slurs while going at it with a heckler during a playoff game in Miami.

Not enough, and the league looked even worse when it said Kobe Bryant was fined twice as much last month for a similar offense because he used it during a dispute with a referee.

Huh? That word is offensive, no matter the company. The league would have been better served taking a page ... from itself. Remember when the NBA could've stood for National Brawling Association? That sort of ugliness doesn't happen anymore, because now players know they'll be suspended for leaving the bench.

There should be suspensions for words as well as punches, and not just in the NBA. "It isn't OK to say it was unintentional," said Jarrett Barrios, president of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). "Players cannot use this language, just like they can't and don't use language about race and religion to show their frustration with a player, fan or referee. It's not OK. It's never OK."

You use it, you sit – without pay. That goes for you, Kobe. Sure, you apologized, paid a $100,000 fine and even taped a public-service announcement after using that awful word to show your frustration over a referee's call. Next time, you're out for a while.

Just imagine the impact if the NBA had ordered Noah to take Tuesday night off with the top-seeded Bulls trying to even their Eastern Conference final against the Heat. The emotional center acknowledged saying "something" in Game 3, but it didn't take a lip reader to figure out what he was jabbering just as the camera focused in on him. "I got caught up," Noah said. "I don't mean no disrespect to anybody."

Not good enough. That doesn't account for all those kids sitting in the immediate vicinity or watching on television, who want to grow up to be just like Bryant or Noah and have likely concluded that sort of language is perfectly acceptable when you're going mano-y-mano. "The apology is appreciated," Barrios said. "But the damage is done."

These are interesting times for those who have fought for homosexuals to be treated equally in that ultimate man-cave: Big-time team sports in the United States.

Phoenix Suns president and chief executive officer Rick Welts felt comfortable enough to reveal that he's gay. Then again, we've had not only the outbursts from Bryant and Noah, but an ugly, homophobic rant by Atlanta Braves pitching coach Roger McDowell before a game in San Francisco, of all places. And don't forget New York Rangers forward Sean Avery, coming under fire from a prominent hockey agent after he took part in a video supporting same-sex marriage.

Barrios insists "the tide is turning." He points to the swift sanctions against Bryant and Noah, and Major League Baseball coming down even harder on McDowell, who got a two-week suspension and some much-needed sensitivity training (A caveat: He's not a player and his penalty was undoubtedly harsher because he allegedly threatened a fan, as well).

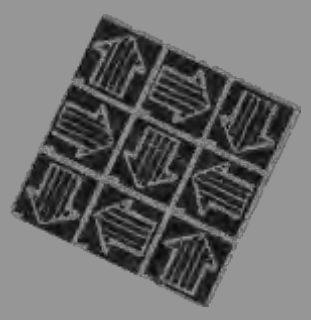
But the tide hasn't turned enough for someone to take that boldest of steps. There's no indication a prominent male athlete in one of the four major team sports is willing to come out while still in uniform. Surely, the words of Bryant and McDowell and Noah would give pause to anyone considering it.

"It would be a career-ender for someone in male professional sports to come out as gay," said Lori Brown, an associate professor of sociology at Meredith College in Raleigh, N.C. "Having a pro football player come out would be the most helpful because that is the ultimate masculine sport, and if anyone thinks there aren't gay football players, well, that is simply not true."

Welts knows the attention he received for saying he's gay would be dwarfed by an active player doing the same thing. It will likely take someone at the top of his game, along with impeccable character and the thickest of skin. A modern-day Jackie Robinson, in other words, and those guys don't come around too often.

"They don't have anybody who's gone before them to know how that will actually play out," Welts said. "So more than anything it's the fear of the unknown, of not knowing." In the meantime, the fight goes on to change the hearts and minds of this masculine-dominated world. Hefty fines and lengthy suspensions can make people behave in public, but there's no guarantee they'll modify their attitudes. That will be helped along by players such as Grant Hill and Steve Nash, who've expressed their support for gay rights. Hopefully, those two and many others – in all sports – will use their influence in the privacy of the locker room, where anti-gay chatter is still commonplace.

"While we may be waiting for an athlete to come out, we're not waiting for the world to change," Barrios said. "It's changing right before our eyes." It doesn't matter if you're straight or gay. We're not taking the homophobic slurs anymore. Got it?



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Old Navy Introduces Gay Pride Tees

Tucson Observer Archives

NEW YORK (Observer Update) - Clothing retailer Old Navy began selling 2 Gay Pride t-shirts, reported On Top Magazine.

"We are proud to support the new @OldNavy Gay Pride tees. Yay for all kinds of families!" the retailer tweeted to its more than 44,000 followers.

One shirt exclaims "Love Proudly" in rainbow colors, while a second offers a rainbow flag on a black background. Both include the tagline, "Pride 2011 Old Navy."

Ten percent of the proceeds from the t-shirts will go to gay rights activist Dan Savage's It Gets Better Project, which raises funds and awareness for The Trevor Project. Both groups attempt to reach out to troubled gay teens considering suicide. It Gets Better features videos produced by everyday folks, celebrities, professional athletes and even companies urging gay teens to not give in to bullies, because life gets better.

While it is the first foray into gay swag for Old Navy, which is owned by the parent company of the GAP, the company is not the first to produce a line of t-shirts aimed directly at gay consumers. Clothier American Apparel began selling its "Legalize Gay" t-shirt several years ago. And designers Kenneth Cole and Marc Jacobs have designed limited edition t-shirts to benefit HRC.

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Thank You!

This year, Jell-O Wrestling had its biggest year ever and raised more than **$56,000** for the programs and services of the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation (SAAF).

Thanks to everyone who came out and made this year's event such a success!

We'll look forward to seeing you next year for the 25th Anniversary of Jell-O Wrestling!

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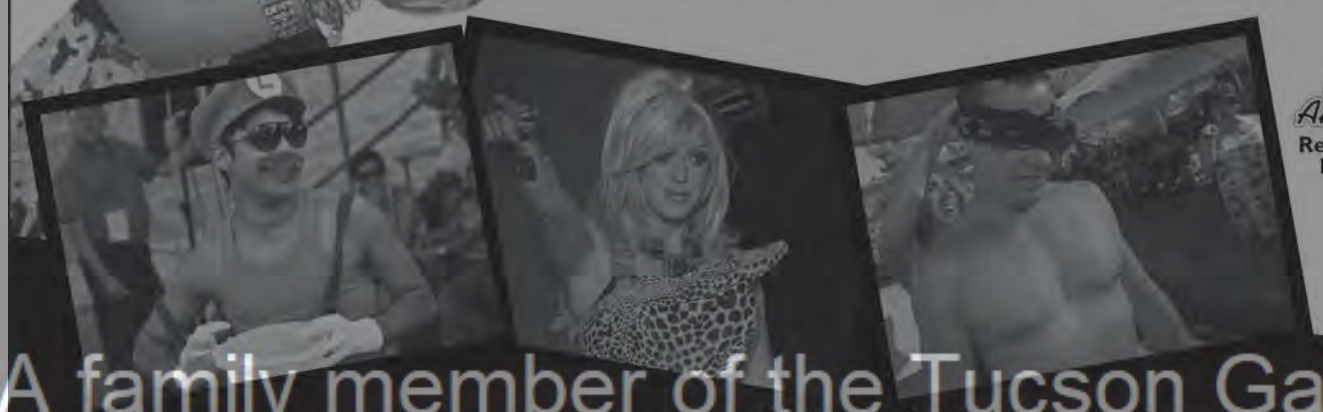

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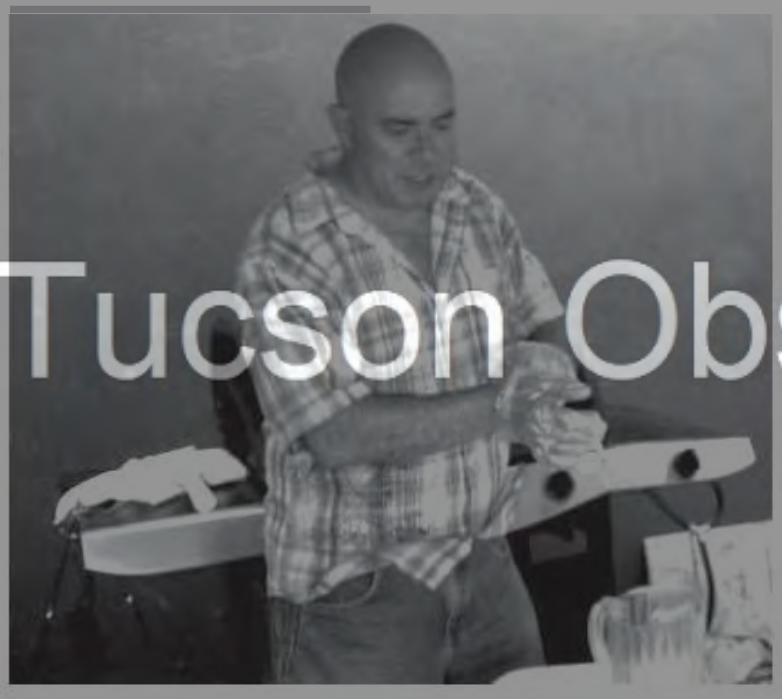
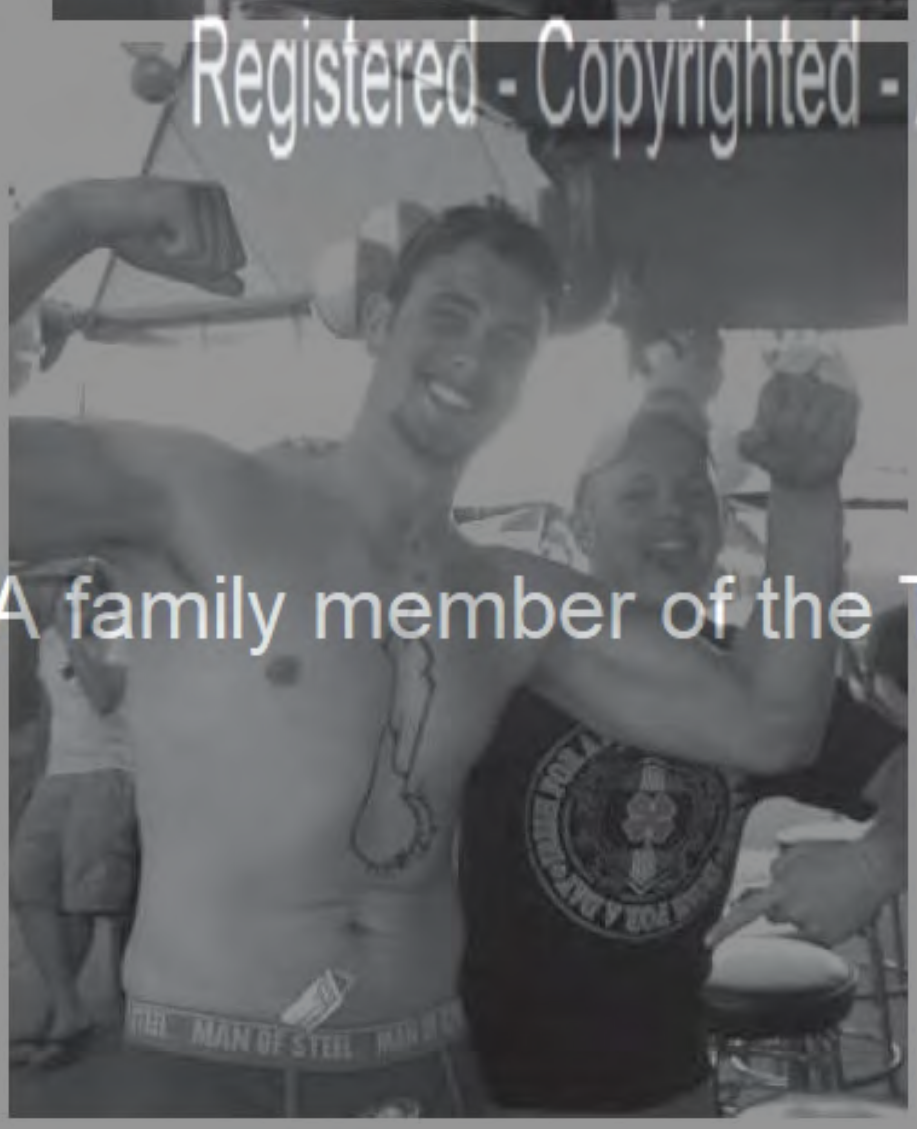
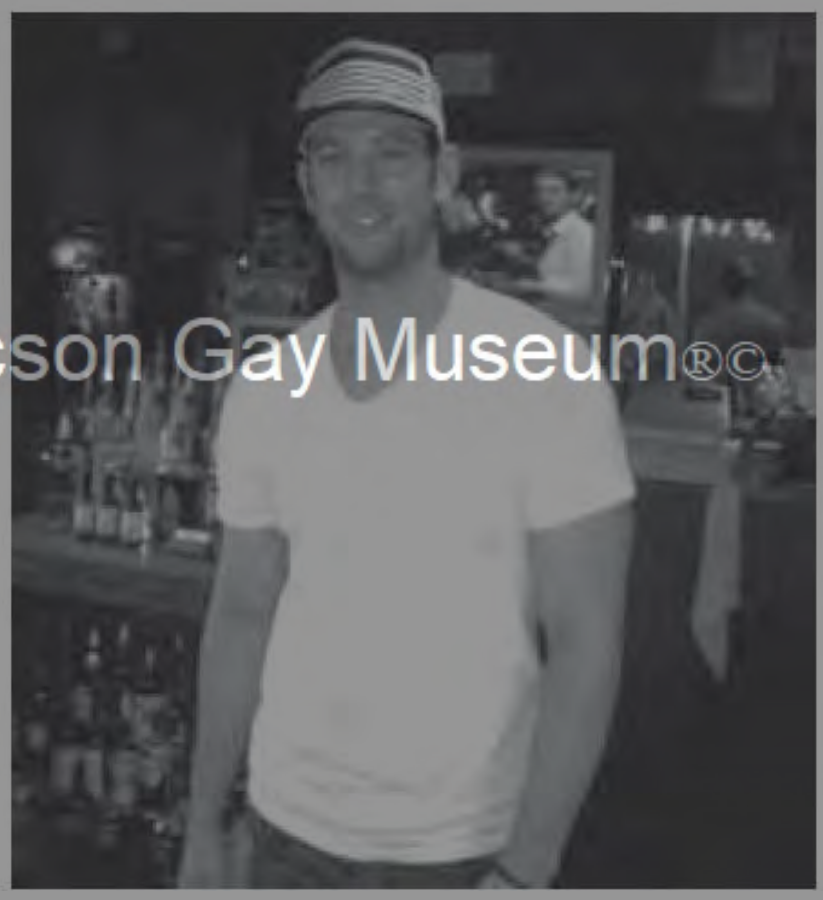
It was Memorial Day Weekend and this page gives you an idea of what was going on at Woodys Continued on Page Twelve







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Poet's Corner

8-BALL
by Ron Rose - Tucson

The plop of the black old 8-ball,
Called the pocket before the shot,
Vinny reached for the "fin" on the table,
Ready to snag the whole pot.
But with too much "draw" on the cue ball,
It slowly edged to the right.
Steely-eyed Vinny saw it
Spinning crazily in its flight.
As it spun toward the corner pocket,
If it dropped Vin would lose the match.
"Crap" hollered toothless Vinny,
I wasn't supposed to "scratch".
The moral of the story,
Is to keep your ass out of pool halls
And never be sure of a win
For a simple "scratch" of a cue ball,
Can cost a pool shark a fin.

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!

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Will A Minn. Vote Turn The Gay Marriage Tide?

INNEAPOLIS (Observer Update) - Activists are speculating that Minnesotans will vote for – not against- gay marriage when asked the question on the 2012 ballot, reported 365Gay.com. Why?

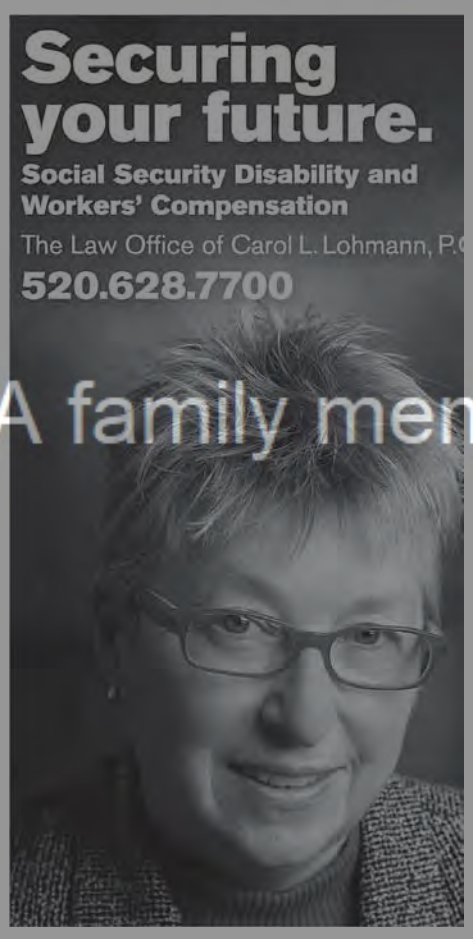
Because poll numbers are steadily changing to reflect an openness toward gays and lesbians in American society.

"For so long, we've had these ballot measures, and we keep losing them," says Sarah Warbelow, state legislative director at Human Rights Campaign told NPR. "But our hope is that Minnesota is going to turn the tide."

NPR points out that, like the recent Gallup and CNN polls, a Star Tribune Minnesota poll also found 55 percent of state residents oppose the marriage ban. (Though I must say – opposing a constitutional ban doesn't necessarily mean they are FOR gay marriage. After all, they may just think it's overkill, since Minnesota state law already forbids gay marriage. Also, for many, it's one thing to be against equality – it's another to actually write discrimination into a state constitution.)

Nevertheless, because marriage equality has lost every time it's been brought to the people, it would signal a cultural shift – and make a big difference to state legislatures everywhere – if Minnesotans stepped up and voted against the proposed ban.

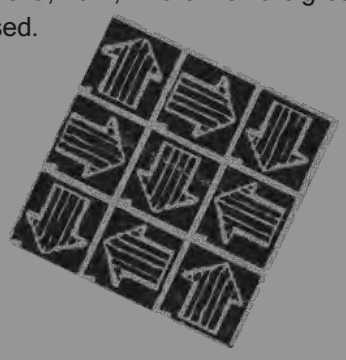
The National Organization for Marriage, of course, does not want that to happen. Brian Brown told NPR: "In Minnesota, they'll do what 31 other states have done – vote for traditional marriage. We've been working with the state groups, just as we did in Maine and California, and we will financially support the effort."



Lampanelli: In Your Face, Westboro

EW YORK (Observer Update) - Comedian Lisa Lampanelli didn't make good on her promise to counteract the hatred of the Westboro Baptist Church by donating $44,000 to the Gay Men's Health Crisis – she donated $50,000.

Lampanelli handed over a check to the GMHC at a ceremony in New York. The comedian made the donation in response to the WBC picketing a recent performance of hers in Topeka, Kan., where the hate group is based.



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Illinois Civil Unions To Take Effect

SPRINGFIELD (Observer Update) - Gay and lesbian couples will be eligible to apply for civil union licenses in Illinois beginning Wednesday, the Associated Press reports on ontopmag.com.

Civil union ceremonies may be held one day after an application is approved, according to the AP. Gov. Pat Quinn signed the civil unions bill in January. It's unclear how many couples may apply for civil union licenses, though dozens of couples are expected to wed the next day after the law is in effect, in downtown Chicago at Millennium Park.

Catholic Charities in Rockford announced it would suspend its state-funded adoption services – a program that handles about 350 adoption and foster care cases each year in northern Illinois – because church officials say it's unclear whether state law would require them to place children with parents who have a civil union, whether gay or heterosexual, according to the Chicago Tribune.

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DAILY BAR CALENDAR

SUNDAY

THE BIZ - Closed Sunday , Monday, Tuesday

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

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.

NEW MOON

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

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

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".

NEW MOON

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.

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.

NEW MOON -

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.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, $2 Well or Domestics.. 11pm - -close "Reverse Happy Hour".

NEW MOON

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.

IBT's -Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, $2 Well or Domestics. 10pm-close "Boyz Nite Out" w/Bartenders in their under-wear. 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.

NEW MOON -

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.

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.

NEW MOON -

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 styling 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.

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".

NEW MOON -

WOODY'S - Open 11am-2am; Happy Hour 10am-8pm (excl spec events); Full Menu Kitchen open11am-11pm. .

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It was Memorial Day Weekend and this page gives you an idea of what was going on at IBrs and Brodies

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