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The Greater Arizona Community

OBSERVER

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Tucson Observer Archives

LGBT Leaders Attend White House Health Summit

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WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - LGBT leaders were among 150 people invited to the White House for a health care forum in which the Obama administration launched an effort to reform the nation's health care system, reported advocate.com.

President Barack Obama kicked off the White House Forum on Health Reform Thursday by instilling a sense of urgency among about 150 participants – congressional members and organizational leaders – who had been invited to discuss ideas and concerns as the administration attempts to overhaul the nation's health care system. "Let's be clear: The same soaring costs that are straining our families' budgets are sinking our businesses and eating up our government's budget too," Obama said. "That is why we cannot delay this discussion any longer. And that is why today's forum is so important – because health care reform is no longer just a moral imperative, it is a fiscal imperative."

Several LGBT leaders were invited to observe panel discussions at the summit, including Joe Solmonese, president of the Human Rights Campaign; Rea Carey, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force; and Rebecca Haag, executive director of AIDS Action. Frank Oldham, executive director of the National Association of People With AIDS, spoke on a panel at one of the four breakout sessions Thursday afternoon but could not be reached for comment for this article.

LGBT people have a particular stake in health reform since many members of the community experience greater barriers to accessing care. "With the inability to get married for so many of us, unless we're fortunate enough to work for a place that has domestic-partnership coverage, we don't receive coverage or our children don't receive coverage," Rea Carey said. "So whatever comes out of this legislatively or administratively, we need to be looking at the definition of 'family,' particularly if people will continue to get access to insurance through their employers."

Carey also noted that gays are much more likely to experience disruptions in work because so many states lack employment protections. "Many LGBT people disproportionately move from job to job because they might be fired for being gay, which sets them up for carrying a preexisting condition in their next employment situation, and they really don't receive the full access to health care," Carey said. "This is particularly true for transgender members of our community."

Rebecca Haag was focused on the need to ensure that HIV-positive individuals and those at risk for infection are considered in any policy changes. "There's still 50% of the people living with HIV in this country who aren't in care and treatment," she said, "so we want to make sure those interests are covered through how Medicaid will include HIV as a disability and how private insurance will not discriminate against people if they have a preexisting condition." Private insurers often decline to cover people who have previously been diagnosed with a fatal or chronic illness.

One of the recurring topics throughout the discussions, according to Haag, was the need for compromise. "[Republican] Senator Hatch, in real sincerity, said that he and [Democratic] Senator Kennedy had been so successful in the past because they found the 80% everybody agreed on and sometimes they had to delay the other 20%," she said, recalling comments Senator Hatch made at one panel. "That same theme kept coming out – it's not going to be perfect." Haag said that getting at least some coverage for everyone with HIV/AIDS was the main priority. "What we want is all pharmaceuticals being open to every individual with HIV/AIDS," she explained, "but if we had to do with a list of 10 and everybody had access to those 10 – when some people don't have access to any lifesaving drugs now – would I accept that as a compromise? Absolutely."

President Obama pledged during the '08 election to develop a national HIV/AIDS policy, an issue that disproportionately affects both communities of color and LGBT individuals. Obama recently named Jeffrey Crowley, who is

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No On 8 Camp Didn't Use Obama Letter

SAN FRANCISCO, California (Observer Update) - More trouble for the No on 8 campaign. Amid accusations of a mismanaged, bungled campaign comes news the campaign had a letter from then President-elect Barack Obama speaking out against Prop. 8 – and chose not to use it, reported advocate.com.

The letter was publicized at the time, but nothing ever came of it. Campaign consultant Steve Smith acknowledged at a recent No on 8 town hall that the campaign had the letter in hand and decided against using it – even though the Yes on 8 campaign used words and images suggesting Obama was actually for Prop. 8 "That was a close call," Smith said. "Maybe we should have used it."

Steve Smith

Not surprisingly, bloggers and journalists attending the town hall erupted with questions and more accusations.

Obama's letter, dated June 29, 2008 was as follows:

Dear Friends,

Thank you for the opportunity to welcome everyone to the Alice B. Toklas LGBT Democratic Club's Pride Breakfast and to congratulate you on continuing a legacy of success, stretching back thirty-six years. As one of the oldest and most influential LGBT organizations in the country, you have continually rallied to support Democratic candidates and causes, and have fought tirelessly to secure equal rights and opportunities for LGBT Americans in California and throughout the country.

As the Democratic nominee for President, I am proud to join with and support the LGBT community in an effort to set our nation on a course that recognizes LGBT Americans with full equality under the law. That is why I support extending fully equal rights and benefits to same sex couples under both state and federal law. That is why I support repealing the Defense of Marriage Act and the "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy, and the passage of laws to protect LGBT Americans from hate crimes and employment discrimination. And that is why I oppose the divisive and discriminatory efforts to amend the California Constitution, and similar efforts to amend the U.S. Constitution or those of other states.

For too long, issues of LGBT rights have been exploited by those seeking to divide us. It's time to move beyond polarization and live up to our founding promise of equality by treating all our citizens with dignity and respect. This is no less than a core issue about who we are as Democrats and as Americans.

Finally, I want to congratulate all of you who have shown your love for each other by getting married these last few weeks. My thanks again to the Alice B. Toklas LGBT Democratic Club for allowing me to be a part of today's celebration. I look forward to working with you in the coming months and years, and I wish you all continued success.

Sincerely,
Barack Obama

Vermont Dems Pledge Marriage Bill Passage

MONTPELIER, Vermont (Observer Update) - The state leaders of the House and Senate have announced they will begin work on passing a marriage equality bill when the Legislature returns March 16, 365Gay.com reported.

At a joint news conference at the State House Senate President Pro Tempore Peter Shumlin (D) and Speaker of the House Shap Smith (D) said the Senate Judiciary Committee will hold a week of testimony and a public hearing on the bill beginning March 16. The bill was introduced last month, with 59 sponsors in the House - all Democrats. Shumlin and Smith said they expected the committee to approve the measure and that it would easily make it through both houses despite Republican opposition.

Vermont was the first state in the country to legalize civil unions in 2000. Since then LGBT groups have criticized the law for creating a "two tiered" system - marriage for opposite-sex couples and civil unions for Gays. An 11-member commission was set up last year by Shumlin and Smith to look into the civil unions law to see if it is providing equality for Gay and Lesbian couples. It submitted its report to the legislature last April, but made no recommendations on revising the law to allow for same-sex marriage.

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UPDATE

TLGBTCC Breakfast March 19

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Join the Tucson GLBT Chamber of Commerce for their March 19, 2009 Breakfast Meeting.

Speaker: Tom Shambo, Principle Business Analyst, PCC Small Business Development Center. Tom will speak about the confidential and no-cost services provided by the PCC Small Business Development Center. Tom has been a successful small-business owner for the past twenty-two years, developing ten businesses. He is a software developer and a professional speaker.

Where - Hotel Tucson City Center Conference Suite Resort (formerly Inn Suites), 475 N. Granada Ave. Time - 7:30 to 9:00 A.M. Cost - $15 Members, $20 Guests, $20 Walk-Ins. RSVP by Monday, March 16, by noon, (520) 615-6436 or E-mail atinfo@tucsonglbtchamber.org.

The Final Expenses, Are They Covered?

By Dan Kalm - The Observer's official State Farm Agent

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Are you worried about how your loved ones will pay the expenses incurred at the time of your death? While death is an inevitable part of life, financial questions associated with final medical bills, funeral expenses and estate settlements should not be.

According to a 2001 General Price List survey of the National Funeral Directors Association, the average cost for final expenses is $9,000. Preparing for those costs today could prevent family members from dealing with a financial burden in addition to coping with the loss of a loved one.

One way you can assure that your final expenses are covered without placing the responsibility on your family is to make certain you have a life insurance policy that will meet your needs. Your life insurance policy can be an important part of your financial planning. Taking the time now to review your coverages and benefits may give you the peace of mind you deserve. The death of a loved one can be enough of a physical and emotional burden for your family. By planning ahead, you can prevent it from being a financial hardship as well.

Visit with your insurance agent and discuss how a life insurance policy can cover your final expenses. It will only take a few moments of your time, but may go a long way toward easing the burdens of those you leave behind. For more information, go online to dankalm.com.

Out And Proud

TUCSON (Observer Update) - The December show was almost sold out - the February Cabaret was sold out! - The April show?

Don't take a chance on missing the extravaganza commemorating the past 20 years. Out and Proud will be performed Saturday night, April 18 at 7:30 pm and Sunday afternoon, April 19 at 3:00 pm. Special guest performer Namoli Brennet! Performance venue is the Proscenium Theatre, Pima West Campas. Ticket prices are still our 20th anniversary special - 2 for $20 (1 for $15).

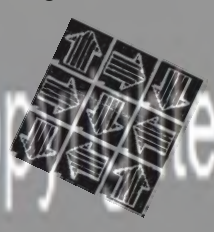
Call Desert Voices box office at (520) 791-9662 to reserve yours - we take mastercard and visa. Tickets are now available at Antigones on 4th Avenue and from any of our 50+ chorus members. Get all the details on their website desertvoices.org.

Tucson Pride Update

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Tucson Pride Inc. meets on the second Wednesday at Braun P.C. located at 6125 E Grant Rd at 6:00 p.m.

Tucson Pride produces the following events each year: Pride Week, Pride in the Desert, and Pride on Parade.

For more information please call (520) 622-3200 or visit their website at tucsonpride.org.



Senior Pride Spring Fling Potluck

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Come for a late lunch potluck for the spring solstice (also known as Vernal equinox), on Saturday, Mar. 21, 1:30 p.m. at UCC, 1350 N. Arcadia, the day that the sun passes directly over the equator, the day that is a perfect balance between day and night, light and dark.

Enjoy good food, good company and a musical surprise. Everyone is welcome.

For more information, contact Penelope Starr (520) 624-1779 Ext. 1, E-mail: pstarr@wingspan.org.

Car Washes Kick Off Biz's Several Breast Cancer Benefits

TUCSON - The Biz is raising as much money for the Susan G. Komen race for the cure as possible... and are seeking the communities help...on Saturday, , March 28 they will be doing car washes at the Biz for a $5 donation...all money raised from the car wash will be donated to the cause.

In addition, on Friday, March 27 they are having a fund-raising benefit at the club, with the help of Wingspan's breast health awareness team, all patrons will receive pink bracelets and again all money raised at the door will be donated.

Finally, on Sunday, April 19, the Biz crew (Biz For The Cure), will be walking in the race, as a team, to show their support to those who have or have had loved ones with breast cancer. They will end the walk at the Biz with a free Bar-B-Que to those who walked with their team and to those who have supported them. It will be a family BBQ and everyone is invited.

If you would like to join the 'Biz for a Cure' race team contact Hillary @the biz at 318-4838 for more information and race packet info. "Support the ones you love!"

Smoking Prevention Aims To Clear The Air For LGBT

PORTLAND, Oregon (Observer Update) - The cigarette pitch demands a second look. Two ripped, rakish men and one lean, pristine hound pause, inexplicably, in the cool shallows of a calm green sea.

"How Gay is this ad?" R.E. Szego, a Portland tobacco-prevention specialist, asks when she sees such an image. It's a sincere question, not a slam. Wooed for years by tobacco companies – who lavish free merchandise on their bars and clubs, sponsor their events and advertise heavily in their publications – Gays, Lesbians and Bisexuals remain hooked on cigarettes, even as the general population smokes less. But public health specialists are optimistic that a new ban on smoking in Oregon bars will cause a decline in the smoking rates of Gays and Lesbians, who tend to pick up the habit as teens coming to terms with stigma surrounding their sexual identity.

"If you were coming up Gay, it used to be the only place you got to meet was in a bar," says Michael Kaplan, executive director of Cascade AIDS Project and a former pack-a-day smoker. "If you wanted to fit in, you'd smoke."

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California: Now The Wait Begins

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SAN FRANCISCO, California (Observer Update) - The California Supreme Court heard oral arguments Thursday in a case challenging the constitutionality of Proposition 8. The measure that ended same-sex marriage in the state but a decision on is not expected for up to 90 days, 365Gay.com reported.

For three hours, the seven justices hammered away at arguments by attorneys on both sides, challenging just about every one of their arguments. Prop 8 was passed by voters in November by a slim 52 percent.

The American Civil Liberties Union, Lambda Legal and the National Center for Lesbian Rights immediately filed lawsuits challenging the constitutionality of the vote. They were joined by additional suits by the cities of San Francisco and Los Angeles and a legal opinion by California Attorney General Jerry Brown.

Arguing for the litigants was Shannon Minter, the NCLR attorney who earlier successfully argued the Gay marriage case before the high court. Minter told the court that Prop 8 should be ruled invalid because the initiative process was improperly used in an attempt to undo the constitution's core commitment to equality for everyone. He also argued that Proposition 8 improperly attempted to prevent the courts from exercising their essential constitutional role of protecting the equal protection rights of minorities. Minter said that under the California Constitution, such radical changes to the organizing principles of state government cannot be made by a simple majority vote through the initiative process, but instead must, at a minimum, go through the state legislature first.

The California Constitution establishes two ways that it can be altered. A substantial change to the principles or basic structure of the constitution, called a "revision," requires the involvement of the legislature and a more deliberative process. A less substantial change, called an "amendment," can be enacted by a simple majority vote of the people.

The California Supreme Court should strike down Proposition 8 because it is, in fact, a revision, Minter argued. The principle of equal protection, which prevents the majority from oppressing minority groups, is central to our constitution and our democratic system of government. Proposition 8 would limit that fundamental principle of equality for LGBT Californians and undermine the very purpose of equal protection for everybody he told the court.

Chief Justice Ron George asked what rights were lost other than being able to label their union as a marriage. "Relegating same-sex couples to domestic partnership does not provide them with everything but a word," Minter replied. "Proposition 8 changes the basic nature of our government."

Justice Joyce Kennard noted that as with Prop 8 California voters had successfully overturned a Supreme Court ruling that the death penalty represented cruel and unusual punishment. "Life is, at least in my view, a fundamental right," Kennard said. ACLU attorney Raymond Marshall, one of Minter's co-council, replied that unlike Prop 8 the death penalty applies to all Californians. "I think what you are overlooking is the very broad powers of the people to amend the constitution," Kennard shot back.

Attorney Christopher Krueger, representing California Attorney General Jerry Brown, told the court his office disagreed with Minter's argument that Prop 8 was an improper revision of the constitution. But said the measure should still be struck down. Krueger argued that Prop 8 was unconstitutional because it conflicted with an "inalienable right" to liberty that the state Supreme Court found last year included the right of same-sex couples to marry. Under questioning he acknowledge it was "somewhat of a novel theory," but nonetheless legitimate.

Representing the conservative groups behind Prop 8 was Kenneth Starr who led the inquiry into President Bill Clinton's affair with Monica L. Lewinsky. Starr argued that the will of the people must be respected by the court saying the groups challenging Prop 8 wanted the court to ignore "inalienable right" of the people to change the constitution. "The people do have the raw power to define the rights," Starr told the court. "We govern ourselves - and we may govern ourselves unwisely." He also argued that the measure also invalidated the 18,000 same-sex marriages between the time Gay marriage was declared legal and voters went to the polls in November.

Justice Carol Corrigan challenged the assertion, noting that the marriages occurred after the Supreme Court ruled that Gay marriage was legal. "If Californians can't rely on what this court says ... who should they ask?" she said. Justices Kennard and George also jumped on Starr's assertion questioning whether voters saw Proposition 8 as retroactive. Justice George suggested that if retroactivity was one of the intents of the backers of Prop 8 it should have been stated in the initiative.

For the court there are three issues to be determined: Is Proposition 8 invalid because it constitutes a revision of, rather than an amendment to, the California Constitution; Does Proposition 8 violate the separation of powers doctrine under the California Constitution; and If Proposition 8 is not unconstitutional, what is its effect, if any, on the marriages of same-sex couples performed before the adoption of Proposition 8.

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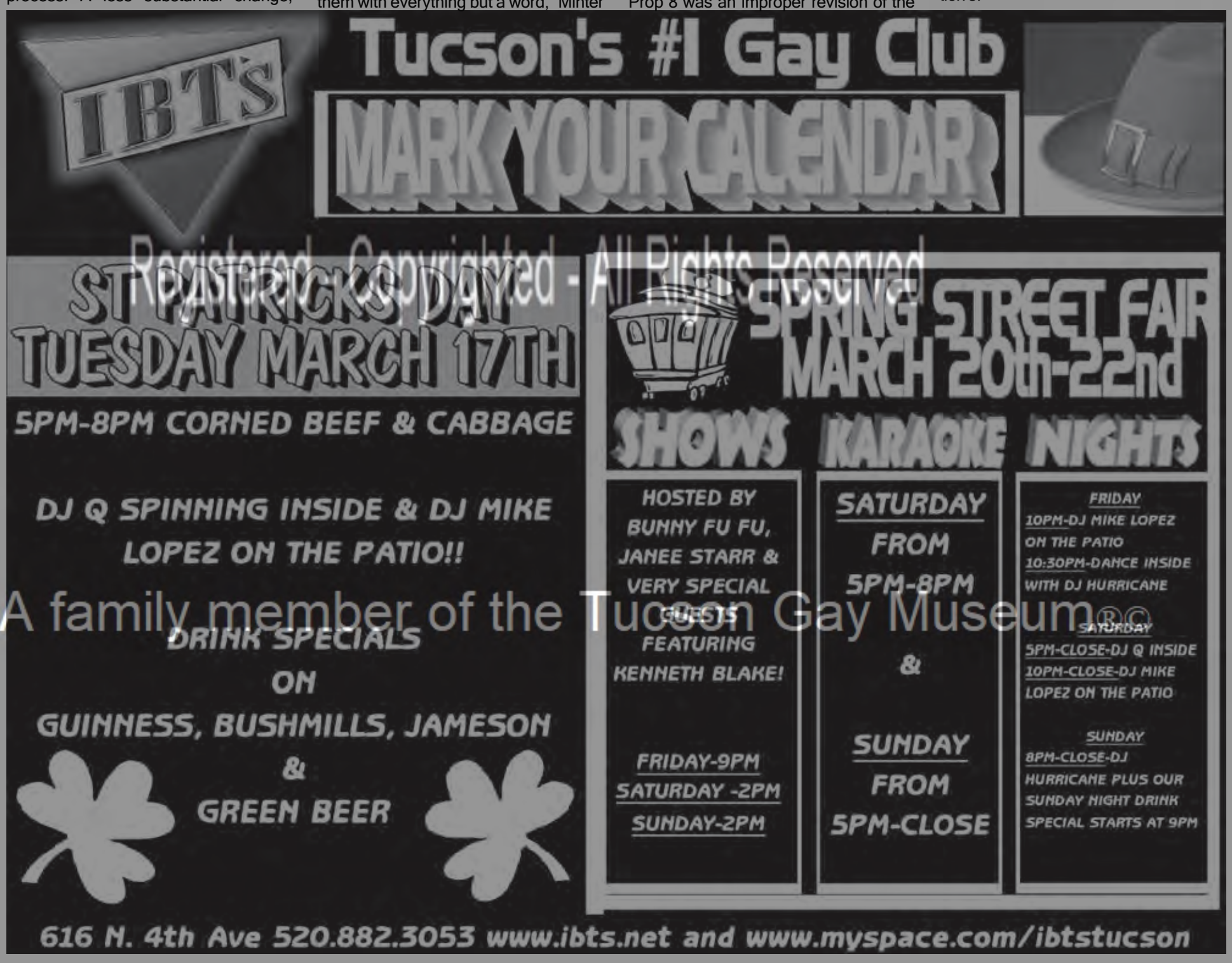

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Tucson Roller Derby: Vice Squad Busts (And Busts, And Busts) Waitresses

By King Daevid MacKenzie

TUCSON (Observer Update) - How does the Tucson Roller Derby spell "police brutality"? V-I-C-E S-Q-U-A-D.

The gals in blue busted, and busted, and busted some more, the Furious Truckstop Waitresses 185-33 at Bladeworld on perhaps the wildest Saturday night for badge-toting enforcers since Chicago '68. Two VICE jammers even racked up more individual point tallies than the entire FTW team scored all night; #22 Sami Automatic booked an amazing 76 points on her own, and #7 Polly Graf pinned 53 more points, with a third Squad jammer, #111 The Turkish Slammer, not far behind with 22 points on the night. At November's 2008 Wheelies Awards, Sami was named best jammer for both VICE and the all-star Saddletramps, as well as best jammer in the TRD league-wide and the Squad's MVP. The only Waitresses who generated double-digit individual scores were #ForkQ Gracie Spoon with 11 points and #1/2 pint Peaches Rodriguez with 10. Although Saddlebrats graduate LUC3FER (an Iron Curtain rookie this year) was loaned to the FTW for the night, it was hard to believe this was last season's #2 side in the league.

The VICE Squad also had a loaned skater on the track Saturday night, Copper Queen Venus Dynamite; the teams' depleted rosters were "due to injuries and incidents," according to tucsonrollerderby.com Sunday. Halftime music was provided by Tucson punk trio The Fisters. The unexpected death of Joe "Bones" July, the TRD's long-time EMT, cast a somewhat sombre mood over both skaters and audience throughout the evening. Bones, 49, had died of apparently natural causes Saturday morning, and was scheduled to work the bout that night. The TRD is expected to conduct some sort of commemorative event for Bones later in the season, but exactly what form that event would take was not determined at press time.

The next scheduled TRD bout at Bladeworld, 1065 Grant Road, will be held on March 28, when the Copper Queens and Iron Curtain meet in a MetalBrawl. Doors will open at 6:30, with the bout starting at 7:00; advance tickets cost $8.00, while door tickets will cost $10.00. Halftime music act will be Los Angeles band Psychostar, who will also play the afterparty at the Surly Wench Pub later that night.

Obama Meets Military Advisors Over DADT

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - The White House says President Barack Obama has begun consulting his top defense advisers on how to lift a ban on Gays serving openly in the military, reported 365Gay.com. But the administration won't say how soon that might happen or whether a group of experts will be commissioned to study the issue in-depth, as some Democrats have suggested.

The move enables Obama to say he's making good on his campaign promise to reverse the law, but doesn't lock him into doing so anytime soon. The carefully calculated statement, released this week by White House spokesman Tommy Vietor, leaves enough wiggle room to prevent the hot-button issue from consuming Obama's foreign policy agenda, which is dominated by ending the Iraq war and salvaging operations in Afghanistan.

"The president supports changing 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell," Vietor said in the e-mailed statement. "As part of a long-standing pledge," Obama has begun consulting closely with Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Adm. Michael Mullen "so that this change is done in a sensible way that strengthens our armed forces and our national security," Vietor said.

The statement was released in response to legislation reintroduced by Rep. Ellen Tauscher, D-Calif., that would repeal the ban. Tauscher's bill attracted 148 co-sponsors last year, but House leadership never pushed for a floor vote.

G/L Foes Want Say In DOMA Challenge

BOSTON, Massachusetts (Observer Update) - Opponents of same-sex marriage are preparing to ask a federal judge to allow them to submit briefs in a challenge to the federal Defense of Marriage Act, 365Gay.com reported. Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, the Boston-based LGBT rights group that brought the successful legal challenge leading to Massachusetts becoming the first state in the nation to legalize Gay marriage in 2004, filed suit in federal court challenging DOMA.

The Defense of Marriage Act, or DOMA, was enacted by Congress in 1996 when it appeared Hawaii would soon legalize same-sex marriage and opponents worried that other states would be forced to recognize such marriages. The new lawsuit challenges only the portion of the law that prevents the federal government from affording Social Security and other benefits to same-sex couples.

The Family Research Council, a conservative Washington, DC-based group, suggested that the Department of Justice would not vigorously defend the law in court. President Barrack Obama has said he believes the law should be repealed. Democratic leaders in Congress also agree the law is discriminatory.

Kris Mineau, president of the Massachusetts Family Institute which failed twice to get a proposed amendment on the ballot to constitutionally ban Gay marriage in Massachusetts, said in a statement that the GLAD lawsuit is the latest effort to export Gay marriage to other parts of the country.

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G/L Unions Won't Be In Census

LONG BEACH, California (Observer Update) - No matter the legal fate of Proposition 8, the 2010 Census will not count same-sex marriages or ask respondents about their sexual orientation, reported the Long Beach Press Telegram.

The federal Defense of Marriage Act signed in 1996 by President Bill Clinton does not recognize Gay unions sanctioned by states. Census takers will ask same-sex couples who live together to define themselves as "unmarried partners," as they did in 2000 before some states - currently only Connecticut and Massachusetts - allowed Gay marriage.

"This is all about the numbers. This not about lifestyle or anything else," says U.S. Census spokeswoman Cynthia Endo. The omission of Gay marriage and sexuality questions on the census bothers some Gays and Lesbians, who argue that a proper accounting would give them the same visibility as minorities, who gain political power when their numbers increase.

"I am a sociologist and census data, very important to our existence, and I don't like it when they leave things out, it causes an undercount," says Sharon Raphael, 67, who teaches gerontology at Cal State Dominguez Hills. "Certain numbers of us are not out, and when they hide us under these general descriptions ... it just makes us more invisible." Raphael's partner, Mina Meyer, 69, says she will probably check the "married" box when the census form arrives at their East Long Beach home. "Somebody needs to read that, somebody in those offices needs to know there are people out here who are married," Meyer says, adding that she and Raphael married in California when it was legal last year.

Though the census will not count Gay marriages, domestic partnerships, civil union or the numbers of Gays and Lesbians, the questionnaire should provide some insight, albeit indirectly, into those areas. The census form, Endo says, allows respondents to identify the number of adults in a given household and their relationship. Along with husband and wife, one of those choices is "unmarried partner." If two people of the same sex identify as husband and husband or wife and wife, the census will retain that answer, but when results are released those people will be counted as unmarried partners.

"The census is all about self-identification," Endo says. "We don't ask that question on the census at all, but certain information can be gleaned from that if two people are living ... in the house."

Same-sex couples with children will not be categorized as "families" on the census. Children will be counted as belonging to single parents, those "unmarried partners."

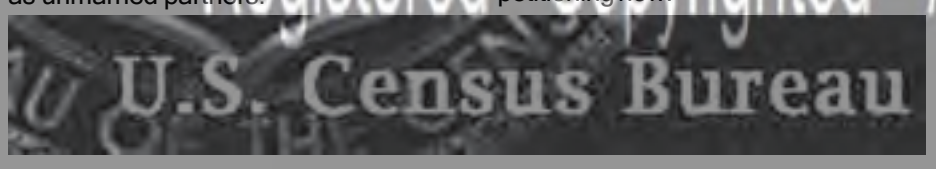
"That's totally unfair," Raphael says. "We should be treated the same. First of all, it's just not good science to leave us out for some dumb political reason."

Gary Gates, a demographer at the UCLA School of Law, says federal law limits census questions to topics for which there is funding, such as income's influence on poverty funding.

There is not a federal funding category for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered, or LGBT, communities. "The truth is there is no federal legislation that would be relevant on having information on LGBT people," he says. He calls that situation a "classic Catch-22" because it is hard to properly assess needs of a group that has not been counted. "We have no population-based survey that asks sexual orientation annually in this country," Gates says, adding that health care is one obvious place where an accurate LGBT count would help.

He encourages cities like Long Beach to use community surveys to get information on the Gay community the federal government does not gather.

Conservative groups tend to support the census the way it is. In a statement, ProtectMarriage.com, a group that backed Proposition 8, says, "The way that the federal government looks at it is the way that the law says it should be in California." It is too late to add questions before 2010. Congress, by law, must approve the questions for the census no later than two years in advance of the count. "It takes an act of Congress to change the questions on the census forms," Endo says. "If somebody would want something changed they would have to start petitioning now."



Call For Nationwide Rallies On Marriage Decision Day

SAN FRANCISCO, California (Observer Update) - Though Californians and people across the country await the state supreme court's decision on same-sex marriage, several activists are asking people not to simply wait around but to come together and make their voices heard.

If all goes according to plan, people will gather in protest or celebration on the Day of Decision, when California's supreme court rules whether to uphold or strike down a marriage ban that voters narrowly approved in November. The demonstration, spearheaded by Robin Tyler and Andy Thayer, will likely mirror the same events that followed the 2003 U.S. Supreme Court ruling for Lawrence v. Texas, which decriminalized Gay sex between consenting adults. The demonstrations in 2003 were in 50 cities across the country.

"By organizing now, we are also sending a message to the court that people are watching what they do, and that if it's a bad decision, our community will not go softly into the night," said Thayer, cofounder of Chicago's Gay Liberation Network. "We will react with a justified anger at one of the worst, and most cowardly court decisions of our era. If we win, these actions will be celebrations and an attempt to push the momentum of a California victory to other states and regions."

The court is required to rule within 90 days to reject or uphold Proposition 8, the measure rescinding the same court's ruling from last May that allowed 18,000 Gay and Lesbian couples to marry in California. There will be 24 hours' notice before the ruling is released.

To stay up-to-date on the events or to organize one in your city, visit DayofDecision.org.

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POLITICS 2009

by Mark R. Kerr

Arizona Dithers While Dollars Are Doled Out

When President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 into law on February 17, it marked the beginning of a 45-day window (deadline April 3) for each state to claim the funds allocated to it by the act.

The ARRA, in order to receive funds, requires governors to certify that they will first of all "request and use" funds from the ARRA and second of all use them to create jobs and promote economic growth. If a governor does not accept funds allocated to his or her state before that window expires, the state's legislature then has the option of certifying those two conditions itself.

As of press time, seventeen states, have had requests (certifications) filed, by their respective governors to receive stimulus funding.

District of Columbia's set up the pages, called state recovery sites, as mandated by ARRA.

According to the site, 70,000 jobs will be created in Arizona thanks to the ARRA.

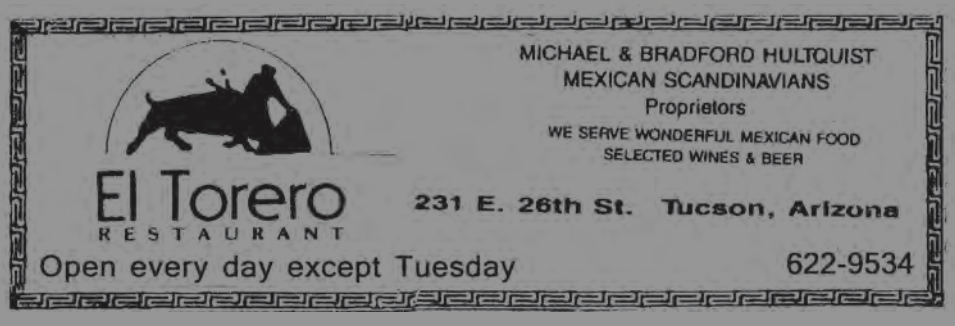
Arizona is set to receive $100,561,048 for state construction projects, $521,958,401 for rebuilding the state's infrastructure and $3,900,000 for community health centers, creating 90 jobs.

Just as long as Arizona's lawmakers must complete several certifications before receiving funding. Twenty nine states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, have filed their certifications, according to recovery.gov.

Arizona has not filed any initial certification under 1607 of ARRA, or transportation certification under 1201 and 1511 of ARRA.

Governor Brewer, the day (March 4), after Governor Brewer blathered on while people protested the cuts in the state budget, presenting nothing more than a political outline that contained few details on how to revive our economy, defend education, and protect vital services while not mentioning when she will submit the certification so Arizona can begin receiving funds as other states who've filed, have, as of press time.

So with that, House Democrats-



RECOVERY.GOV

ately asking Governor Brewer to use the funds made available to the state. "Arizona is in a fiscal crisis and the dollars from the federal stimulus package will offset our deficit and significantly lessen the burden of this budget shortfall," said Rep. David Lujan, House Democratic Leader. "The governor must act now."

"Brewer has proposed deep budget cuts to minimize the harm to education, not to create new jobs and protect education," said Rep. Kyrsten Sinema, House Assistant Democratic Leader.

"By not applying for the funds, Governor Brewer is requiring the state to take the entire chunk of the budget deficit and move Arizona forward toward a brighter future," said Rep. Chad Campbell, House Democratic Whip.

Democrats in the state House and Senate have introduced legislation to qualify the state for the federal stimulus funds. The bills would make statutory changes to draw down Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) funds, child care, unemployment insurance and Water Infrastructure and Finance Authority drinking water fund.

"Super Bowl weekend, and the Republicans' cuts, are lowering the potential the state could receive under ARRA. But the accidental Governor is more concerned about potential "strings being attached" when it comes to the more than $100,000,000 being offered in extending unemployment benefits, saying she may take part but not all of the funds allocated under ARRA.

Texas Governor Rick "Good Hair" Perry, Louisiana Governor Bobby "Pre existing Condition" Jindal, have started filing the paperwork despite their public protestations over unemployment benefits, and Mississippi's Legislature told Republican Governor Haley Barbour, they will take all the money as well, so what is the holdup Jan Brewer?!

Jobs cannot be created without a job, can someone have "fatter" At this point, political viagra won't help the state and it's dithering, unless action is taken!

LGBT Leaders Attend White House Health Summit

Continued from Page One

gay, to lead the Office of National AIDS Policy. The panel discussions also served as a way for LGBT leaders to get a sense of where the interests of lawmakers and gay activists are aligned. "What was most useful to me was to see what the members were thinking," Solmonese said of listening to the concerns of congressional leaders during the breakout sessions. The domestic-partner tax equity bill, for instance, is LGBT-specific legislation that could also improve access to health care by making it more affordable. The measure would eliminate taxes on domestic-partner health benefits, which presently cannot be deducted from payroll on a pretax basis in the same way they can be for heterosexual spouses.

Solmonese had met with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid two weeks ago to discuss the legislation and the bipartisan support for bringing down taxes on domestic-partner benefits, which would simultaneously help employees and eliminate the extra payroll tax for the employer. "[Reid] is here today," Solmonese said, "so I will be able to go back to him and say, 'Listen, when we're talking about taking down barriers to health care, here's a great example of where LGBT people face greater barriers.'"

Health care reform has been a vexing national issue for years, with costs growing ever higher even as government officials have shied away from addressing the problem. But President Obama was clear that he has no intention of backing down, despite the fact that some analysts have begun to suggest the Administration should be solely focused on the economy.

"There's been some talk about the notion that maybe we're taking on too much; that we're in the midst of an economic crisis and that the system is overloaded, and so we should put this off for another day," he told the forum's attendees. "Well, let's just be clear. When times were good, we didn't get it done. When we had mild recessions, we didn't get it done. When we were in peacetime, we did not get it done. When we were at war, we did not get it done. There is always a reason not to do it. And it strikes me that now is exactly the time for us to deal with this problem."

President Obama seemed committed to compromise and transparency in the process – two things that could set this process apart from Clinton's failed effort at health reform in the mid '90s.

Participants at the forum included representatives of interest groups ranging from doctors, nurses, and universal health care advocates to small businesses and the pharmaceutical industry. "In this effort, every voice must be heard. Every idea must be considered," Obama said. "There will be no sacred cows in this discussion." The president emphasized that lawmakers cannot "let the perfect be the enemy of the essential" and, though he noted a "heartfelt" and "moral imperative" among many to provide coverage to more Americans, he pressed the point that costs would have to be contained. "I hope everybody understands that – for those of you who are passionate about universal coverage and making sure that the moral dimension of health care is dealt with," he said, "don't think that we can solve this problem without tackling costs. And that may make some in the progressive community uncomfortable, but it's got to be dealt with."

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Go Ahead 'n Ask

by King Daevid MacKenzie

Happy Station Returns From Radio Heaven

There's a certain romance to the idea of watching a classic silent movie, say Nosferatu, by using an old 8mm print projected against a silver screen, or listening to Enrico Caruso's records on a '20s-era Victrola. I was going to include watching The Buggles' video clip of Video Killed the Radio Star on MTV, but we all know MTV hasn't run videos for most of this century, so on that count you're stuck with an old VHS or Betamax videotape in your mom's collection. Starting Wednesday evening (aren't you glad you read this on the Observer blog instead of just waiting for the print edition?), you can experience a similarly antiquated entertainment through a similarly antiquated medium, when Happy Station returns to the shortwave radio dial after a 14-year retirement.

Shortwave, or "world band" as some radio marketers have dubbed it in the last couple of decades, used to be a primary source of global information and entertainment as recently as the 1990s, when the world first learned of the attempted coup that killed off the Soviet Union via a news program on Radio Moscow. In the earliest days of commercial broadcasting, several major pioneering stations (KDKA Pittsburgh, WCFL Chicago and CFRB Toronto among them) broadcast to the world on shortwave as well as their own locales on AM. Arguably the most popular program on shortwave in those days was something called Happy Station, the Sunday offering of Philips' Netherlands-based station PCJJ starting in 1928. Interrupted only by the Nazi occupation of Holland, Happy Station ran from then to 1995, ending its 47-year run as the last entertainment program on the schedule of Radio Netherlands. The content of the show was always a mixture of friendly conversation and pop music. The original host, Eddy Startz, retired in January 1970 and was replaced by Tom Meijer, who in turn left the show in 1991. The last four years of the original run were handled by Radio Netherlands staffers Pete Myers and Jonathan Groubert.

And reach the world, they certainly did. Even Bing Crosby, whose records were frequently played on the show, was a regular listener and sent a taped oral greeting to Startz during the 1960s, which was itself also heard on the program. A Yahoogroups email list continues to connect listeners today, 14 years after the original version's run ended. Wednesday at 6:00 P.M. Arizona Time (0100 Thursday GMT), a brand new biweekly edition of Happy Station returns to the shortwaves, and the weeknight scheduling is not the only difference from the original edition. The new station the program is on isn't Dutch, but American WRMI, Radio Miami International from Florida (on 9955 kHz in the 31 Metre band); although Radio Netherlands has given the okeh to use the program name, they're not otherwise connected with the new edition. The new host is Canadian-born Keith Perron, whose resume includes previous jobs with Radio Canada International, Radio Havana Cuba and China Radio International. (Tom Meijer will make occasional contributions as well.) And, rather than Hilversum, Holland, the production base of the show is now Taipei, Taiwan.

Although the program will also be streamed on WRMI's Internet feed (wrmi.net) and podcast, those who crank up their shortwave sets to listen will have a unique opportunity to upgrade their own facilities. A special message will be aired, broadcast only on the WRMI shortwave signal, before the main program, and those folks who send Perron a reception report via snailmail detailing that message will receive a special QSL Card certifying their listenership. And Sangean, one of the world's leading radio manufacturers, has provided two brand new shortwave radios that will be awarded to two of those filing reception reports of that special message during a lucky draw. Pieces of the original Radio Netherlands Happy Station run featuring Tom Meijer will be podcast by me in a couple of days through http://kingdaevid.podbean.com and are available in the files section of the Yahoogroup email list http://groups.yahoo.com/group/thehappystation if you join it. So, if you still have an operating Zenith Trans-Oceanic portable (I wish I still had mine, on which I heard the original Happy Station over in the 1970s), or some other such unit, here's an even better reason to forego Guy Atchley or Heather Rowe's supper-hour blues.

Clinton: We'll Do Better By Gays And Lesbians

STRASBOURG, France (Observer Update) - The Obama administration will focus more on humanitarian efforts concerning Gays and Lesbians around the world, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said when addressing old U.S. foreign policies at a European Parliament session, reported advocate.com.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

Clinton answered a question from a Gay rights activist identifying himself as Max from Moldova, about uninclusive foreign policies. "A lot of Gay men around the world die because of the HIV AIDS policies that the Bush administration had that did not allow to spend money on prevention for men who have sex with men," he said, wearing an I Love Hillary t-shirt. "How do you see the foreign policy of the United States changing in the coming years in the field of human rights and in particular sexual rights and Gay and Lesbian rights?"

Max from Moldova

Clinton said that the administration's foreign policy will focus more on Gays than the previous president. "It is terribly unfortunate, as you just recited, that right now in unfortunately many places in the world violence against Gays and Lesbians, certainly discrimination and prejudice are not just occurring but condoned and protected," Clinton said according to video of the exchange posted on Friday. "We would hope that over the next few years we could have some influence in trying to change those attitudes, specifically with respect to HIV/AIDS."

Clinton cited the U.S.'s biggest international push against AIDS, the President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, which funds organizations and individuals in fighting HIV in international areas with high risk such as Asia and Africa. President Barack Obama, shortly after his inauguration, lifted the Mexico City Policy, also known as the Global Gag Rule, which barred U.S. funding to go to organizations that performed abortions, and contraception. "I can only hope that we all live long enough...that we will see the end to this kind of discriminatory treatment, and a recognition that human rights are an unalienable right, no matter who a person loves, and that is what we should be trying to achieve," she said.

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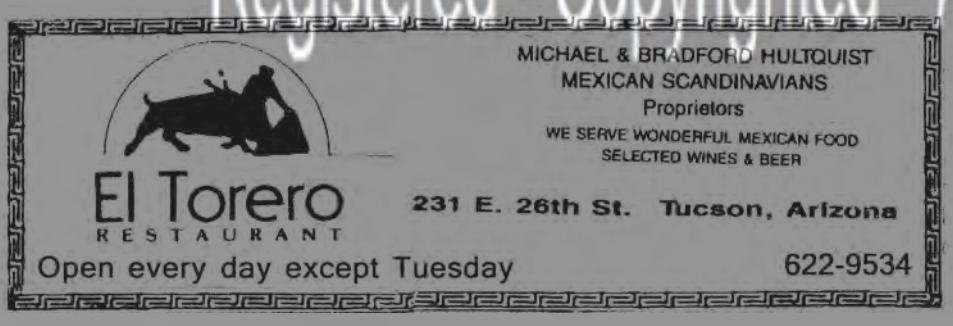

HOROSCOPES

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Venus retrogrades and upends our best laid plans. Will our love be returned unopened or just fall into a spam folder? Hold onto your heart this week and save your juice to be squeezed later.

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

Your need to reach out and touch someone ... anyone ... knows no bounds this week. Proud Rams will try to press the flesh in new circles but may find that their best moves are missing the mark. You are just trying to hard to please. Give it a rest and surround yourself with those who know you well and love you despite everything. Hmm how large is that group anyway...?

TAURUS (APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

The rumblings of lost loves past begin to grumble into thunder level noise. How many hearts have you broken, either knowingly or unknowingly queer Bull? This is the week to make amends to those who feel aggrieved. Well, at least appear to be contrite. Resolve not to kiss and tell, unless you want a few of your particulars plastered on walls. Do tell!!

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

Pink Twins may enjoy some solitude this week when friends become a little too nosy and a little too pointed. It may become annoying but you can chalk it up to their desire to see that you are happy - no matter what! Exert patience. After all, they only want to help. Of course the smarter move is to find some calming alone time and just chill out. Just don't become frosty.

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)

Your shining corporate star needs a rest this week. Gay Crabs might misstep around the hallowed corridors of power. But that shouldn't mean that you blend into the background and accept anything bosses dole out. Find roundabout ways to push your agenda and rely more on detail and smarts rather than lofty emotion. They will cheer for you next week.

LEO (JULY 24 - AUGUST 23)

Does your reach exceed your grasp? Proud Lions are known for sometimes going overboard in their quest to be recognized and admired. This week it is advisable for you to give your leash some slack and find ways to calmly wend your way through any new adventure. Too much push and pull will tip over the boat. There is nothing wrong with letting others steer ... briefly.

VIRGO (AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 23)

Your razzle may not dazzle around lovers this week. Your timing may be off or both of you could just be too tired to go through the dance. So why waste your best moves now? Take some time out and recharge your batteries, queer Virgin. Tomorrow is another day and you will find that your personal charisma is back at peak form. Then stand back world!

LIBRA (SEPTEMBER 24 - OCTOBER 23)

You are putting a great deal of effort into certain partnerships. Perhaps more than they deserve right now. Proud Libra seek harmony and balance, often at any cost. But I suggest that you calm down and take things slowly this week. You will have plenty of time to bowl them over and get them to see things your way as the weeks progress. Timing is everything.

SCORPIO (OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)

Try as you might, you may be unable to get co-workers in line this week. It may feel frustrating to you but if you are able to see things from their perspective, you may notice how overbearing you can be. Why try to boss the course now? It is better to allow others to find their own way and make their own mistakes. Yes, you can eventually say "I told you so."

SAGITTARIUS (NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 22)

Gay Archers are in creative overload as all their pet projects begin to nip at their heels. Too much fun can begin to feel like work if you can't find a good way to prioritize. When in doubt, allow yourself to get caught up in the moment and have a flight of fancy. But don't soar too high or your eventual descent back to earth (and the practical things in life) will be a doozy.

CAPRICORN (DECEMBER 23 - JANUARY 20)

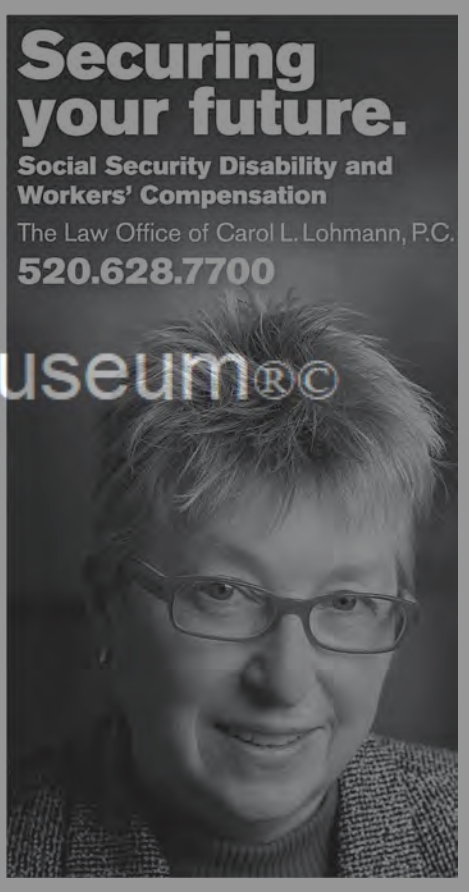
Pink Caps might be content to loll around the house this week but fight the urge. Your time will be better spent planting the seeds of future home-based or home-improvement projects. Also avoid any important discussions with relatives since you may become over emotional. Of course that may not be a bad thing if it gets you what you want.....

AQUARIUS (JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 19)

You have a way with words and this week, Aqueerians are apt to say much more than they need to or want to. You speak from the heart and can become more emotional. This out of character behavior may confuse people and make them cautious in any negotiations with you. So before you melt into a pool of your own making, think first and speak later. Much much later.

PISCES (FEBRUARY 20 - MARCH 20)

Hold tight to your wallet this week. Guppies may be tempted to spend with reckless abandon and waste money. You may get caught up in an emotional tear and think that you can buy what you want. Wait. Things are still evolving and you must not jump to conclusions. There are some things money just can't buy. Give me a few minutes and I will tell you what they are....



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Around The Nation

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - The passage in November of anti-Gay measures in four states and the release of the films "Milk" and "Prayers for Bobby" have resulted in a increase in interest in Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, 365Gay.com reported. The national organization said that it has received at least 75 inquiries about starting new chapters in communities across the country since Election Day.

PFLAG, which already boasts nearly 500 chapters and affiliates across the country, said it is working with local allies who have expressed interest in bringing the organization to their communities. California, Florida and Arizona passed constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage in November. Arkansas voters approved a law barring Gays from adopting or fostering children.

"If there is a silver lining to the set-back our families experienced on Election Day , it is that our allies in communities across the country have started to mobilize at the local level and work for change," said Jody M. Huckaby , PFLAG's national executive director. "New PFLAG chapters are forming in critically important districts and existing PFLAG chapters in many communities are reporting an increase in their membership. Today, our families, allies and loved ones are organizing and pressing for change as they never have before." Huckaby said that PFLAG national headquarters has received inquiries about starting new chapters in states such as Mississippi, Alabama, Ohio , Florida, California, Utah, Texas and Idaho, among others.

In Texas, a half-dozen people have expressed an interest in organizing a local PFLAG presence and at least four inquiries have come from California, where many community leaders are working to rally allies in the wake of Proposition 8's passage. The national office has also heard from organizers in Tennessee, Missouri, South Dakota, New York and New Jersey. In Indiana, local allies have organized a new PFLAG chapter in Terre Haute. ...

CINCINNATI, Ohio (Observer Update) - A federal appeals court was asked to reinstate a lawsuit accusing a Baptist childcare agency of proselytizing youngsters in its care and firing Gay employees, reported 365Gay.com.

The lawsuit was brought by Americans United for Separation of Church and State and the American Civil Liberties Union. It asserts that Kentucky Baptist Homes has no right to accept public funding while imposing religious dogma on the children in its programs, and that the Homes' religion-based anti-Gay employment policy violates civil rights laws. The lawsuit was filed on behalf of Alicia Pedreira, a former employee at the Louisville home who worked with troubled young people. Despite her excellent performance reviews, Pedreira was terminated in 1998 after officials at the facility learned she is a Lesbian. A federal district court dismissed the case last year, ruling that the plaintiffs do not have legal standing to bring it. Americans United and the ACLU asked the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to reinstate the case.

LOS ANGELES, California (Observer Update) - Gay twins who worked as servers at a Los Feliz restaurant were sexually harassed by the homosexual men who owned the eatery, a jury determined in awarding each plaintiff $1,000.

The Los Angeles Superior Court jury deliberated for a little more than a half day before finding that the 32-year-old twins were forced to work in a hostile work environment. However, the panel rejected Jed and Wyatt Lorenzen's other claims, including retaliation and intentional infliction of emotional distress.

The brothers sued Vermont Restaurant owners Manuel Mesta and Michael Gelzhiser in Los Angeles Superior Court in November 2007, claiming they were subjected to adverse treatment while working at the establishment.

NEW YORK CITY, New York (Observer Update) - New York district attorney Robert Morgenthau told Gay activists Monday (Mar. 9) he would investigate the 2008 prostitution arrests of at least 30 Gay and Bisexual men targeted at Manhattan porn shops. He also said he may dismiss the cases against five of the men who are contesting the charges, reported advocate.com.

"The first thing Morgenthau said was, 'We are going to investigate all these cases,'" said Joey Nelson, coordinator for the Queer Justice League and a member of the Coalition to Stop the Arrests. "That was the first thing out of his mouth."

Gay activists in New York were up in arms about the series of arrests throughout the city. They allege that police have been targeting Gay men at sex shops and posing as prostitutes around Manhattan. The Coalition to Stop False Arrests, an activist group born out of the surprising rise in arrests, formed last month to address the issue.

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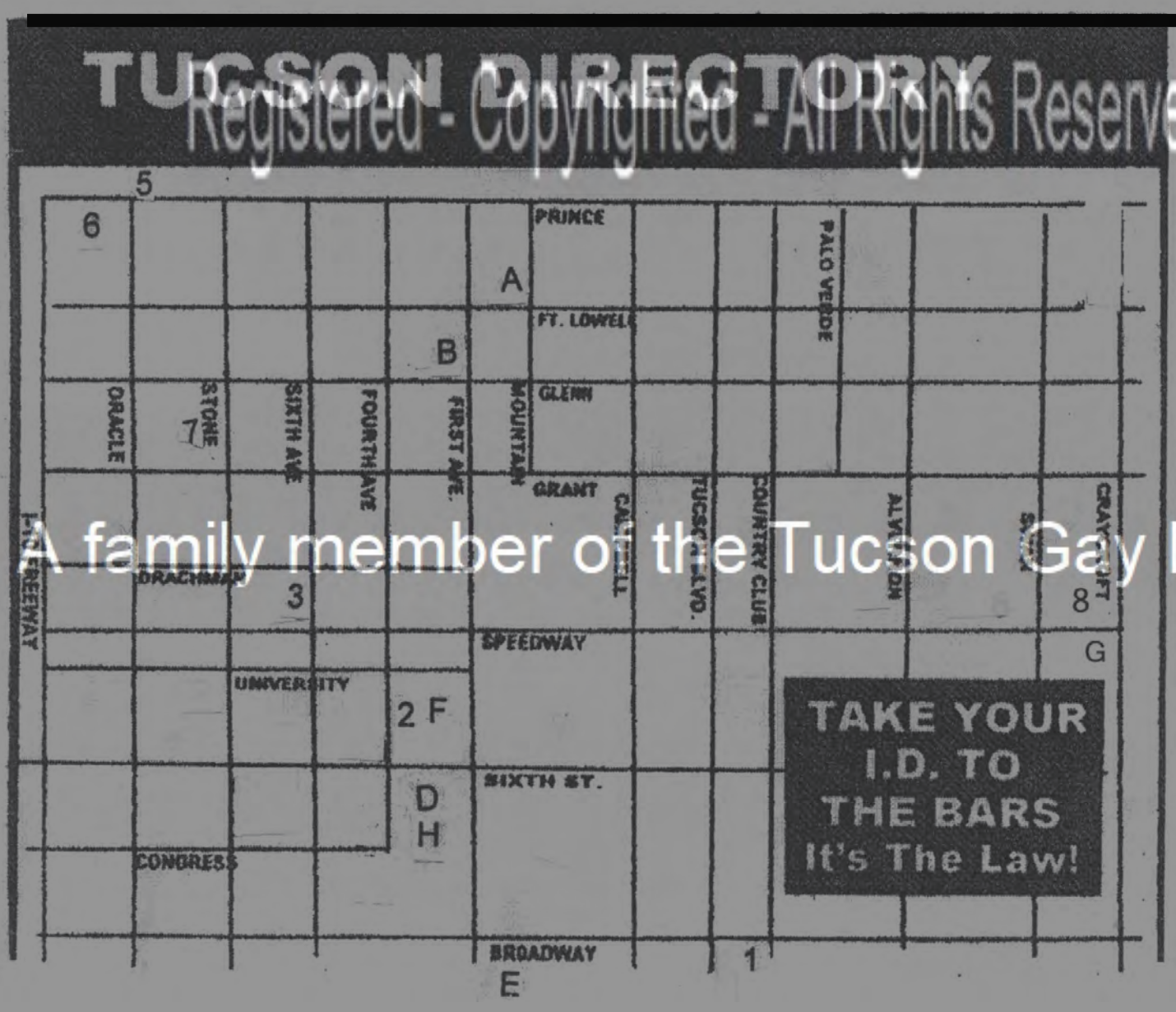

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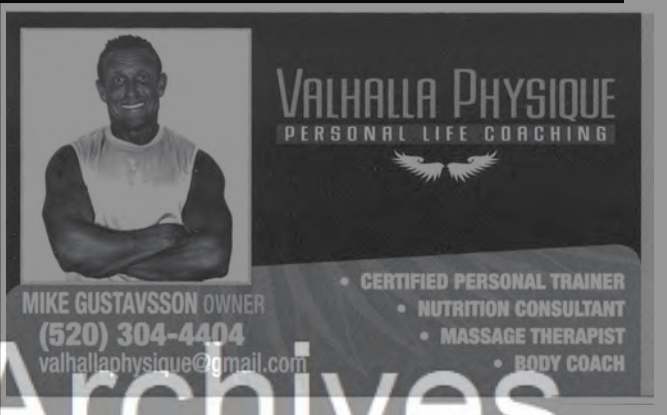

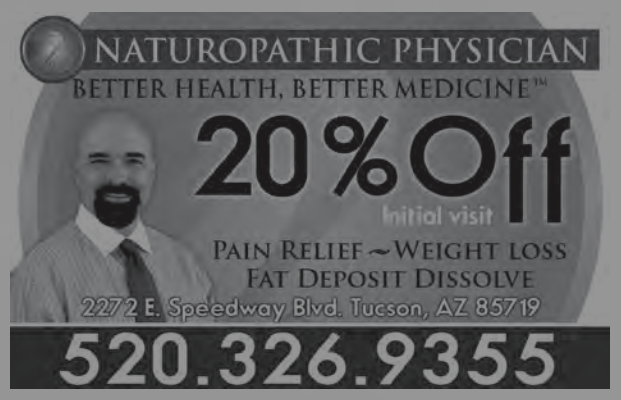

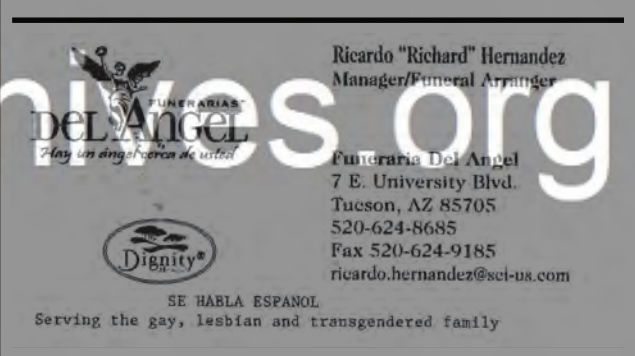

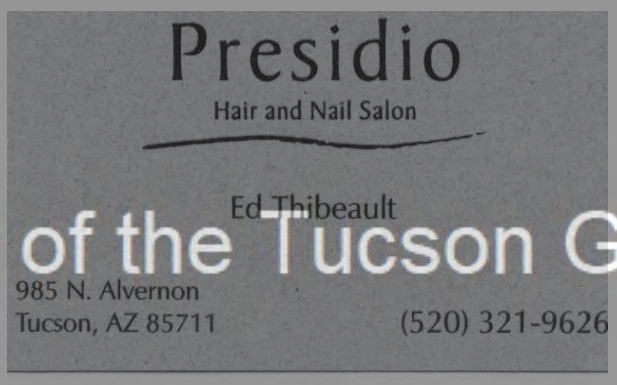

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Fueled By Petrol

by Jimmy Petrol

Girl On A Boat (The Conclusion)

"Come on," she said, "it'll be dark soon. I want to be out in the wind and get the sails up before dark; it's a lot easier in the light. Come on." She waggled her hand at him. From where he stood, he could see a little down her shirt, firm breasts framed by her confident face and strong arms. Wisps of hair had escaped her tom-boy bun and dance wildly in her face; the wind was playing with everything now, showing off its strength. The young fellow felt it against his back. It was strong enough now to rock him a little with its gusts. Awfully nasty weather, he thought.

"Forget it." He paused for effect, expert in the manipulation of the fragile sex, " I'm not getting on until you two put on life vests. Period." He had finally been able to see something wrong, somewhere he could assert his dominance. Dominance led to sex, he had found; his heart trilled at his words; his tone, he knew, was just right. They would be his. There was a finality in his body language; he stood quite still, arms folded in front of him. He had spoken to her breasts, though, which he knew was a mistake. What the hell, he kept looking.

The prettier, more feminine girl he had come with seemed to be stunned for a moment, but only a moment. She clambered past her captain and onto the dock, throwing off the lines that held the boat to the dock. The boobs he had been talking to hid themselves in their shirt and went with their owner to the back of the boat. The little outboard spurted into life, the last line went over the side and the boat backed out into the dark water lane.

The boy thought that the pretty one he had come with was going to stay with him; she was still on the dock as the little engine revved up and the boat began to pull away. He felt a surge of gratification; he only *needed* one of them. The hell with the bossy bitch and her stupid boat. Her friend could tell her what she had missed later. He turned to walk back to the car. He was twenty feet down the dock before he realized he was alone.

"Hey!" He shouted it loudly; he had come in the pretty one's car. She couldn't leave him out here. "Hey! Get back here!" Across the water he heard only the quiet roar of the outboard; merciful circumstance saved him from the loud, sad laughter of the captain and her mate as they rounded the point and hit the chop of the open river.

The old fellow was still there. The boy turned about, looking for some sign that he was not really deserted; a fool. Eventually, he headed back up the catwalk to the gate and went through it, wondering if anyone would pick him up; he would thumb it back into town and go to a club. Bitches.

Much Ado About Nothing

by Jack Melichar

Arizona Theatre Company presents the world premier of SOMEBODY/NOBODY. Just a brief synopsis: Sheena is a somebody who wants to be a nobody. Loli is a nobody desperate to be a somebody. In this comedy about Hollywood, renowned playwright Jane Martin takes dead aim at our culture of celebrity. So you think you want to be famous? So did teen idol and "shark-movie" star Sheena Keener, the darling of the press, the obsession of the paparazzi, and the goddess of the E! Channel. But now she can't stand to be looked at anymore and her Godzilla of an agent is on the warpath. When Sheena ends up on the doorstep of naïve newcomer Loli, a recent arrival from Flatt, Kansas, it's a wild ride on the road to fame. Somebody/Nobody is a look at modern life and our unending quest for fifteen minutes of fame.

The play opens at the Temple of Music and Art on March 13 and runs through March 28. For ticket information, call the Arizona Theatre box office at (520) 622-2823 or go online to arizonatheatre,org. Check the next issue of the Observer for a complete revue. ...

Now on a sad note, playwright and screenwriter Horton Foote, who movingly portrayed the broken dreams of common people in THE TRIP TO BOUNTIFUL, TENDER MERCIES and his Oscar-winning screen adaptation of TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD died March 4 in Connecticut. Foote left the cotton fields in Wharton Texas as a teenager, dreaming of becoming an actor, but realizing his gifts as a storyteller, he embarked on a writing career that spanned more than half a century, and earned him two Academy Awards - TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD and TENDER MERCIES. He also won a Pulitzer Prize in 1995 for THE YOUNG MAN FROM ATLANTA. His talent will be missed.

Two Fla. Students Challenge School Ruling On GSA

JACKSONVILLE, Florida (Observer Update) - An attorney for two Gay students at a north Florida high school told a federal judge they should be allowed to form a campus club promoting tolerance toward Gays, despite a school prohibition, reported 365Gay.com. But a lawyer for the Nassau County School Board said the group's name, Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA), is against school policy.

Yulee High School students Hannah Page and Jacob Brock, represented by the American Civil Liberties Union, are suing the school board to overturn its decision banning them from forming the club at school. Yulee is about 25 miles north of Jacksonville, near the Georgia state line. U.S. District Judge Henry Adams Jr. said he would issue a ruling on a motion for a preliminary injunction "as soon as I can," but gave Nassau County three days to submit additional written arguments. The students want an injunction to allow them to meet until the case goes to trial.

ACLU Attorney Robert F. Rosenwald Jr. argued that Page and Brock had been the target of anti-Gay epithets and threats of violence at school and wanted to start the Gay-Straight Alliance to open a discourse among students. Attorney Frank Sheppard, who represents the school board, said the district's main complaint is the name of the group, saying it does not approve of groups dealing with sexual orientation and noted the school has an abstinence-based sex education curriculum.

"If they change the name and comply with Nassau County School Board policies they can meet," he said. The judge questioned Sheppard over the school's objection to the name. "A Gay-Straight Alliance, that covers everybody doesn't it?" Adams asked. After the hearing, Page said the group doesn't want to change its name because it represents what the club is about. "This school is ashamed of using the word 'Gay' In this environment," she said. School officials had no problem with the idea of tolerance and rejecting bullying, Sheppard said, but they believe the club will be disruptive.

The ACLU recently won a similar case in Okeechobee. A judge there ruled schools must provide for the well-being of Gay students and cannot discriminate against a Gay-Straight Alliance. Rosenwald said the Okeechobee County School Board paid $326,000 in attorneys fees in the case.

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An Interview With Ilene Chaiken - 'L Word' Creator Dishes On The Show After Its Final Episode

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update_ = "The L Word," a television show about the lives and loves of a group of Lesbians in Los Angeles, ended its six-season run on Showtime last night. Ilene Chaiken, the creator, writer and executive producer of the show, chatted with the Blade this morning about how the show got started, the finale and what die-hard fans may be able to look forward to in the future, reported the Washington Blade.

Washington Blade: Where did you get the idea for the show? Ilene Chaiken: It came from my wanting to tell some of my stories for a change, stories that came from my looking around at my life and my friends and people I knew. Our stories were unrepresented in popular culture and I think they're good stories that deserve to be told.

Washington Blade: How did you get Showtime to approve it at the beginning? IC: They didn't approve it at the beginning. I had been working for Showtime on other projects, and had written a movie for Showtime that had some Gay themes. It was about the work of Robert Mapplethorpe, the photographer… Showtime didn't shy away from our stories and our issues in the way that other mainstream broadcasters did. I brought it to the executives at the vice president level … back in 2000 and they said that this just isn't going to happen here. A prime time, nighttime drama about the lives of Lesbians – no, I just don't think we can sell that to the guy in the corner office. So I went away, and I wasn't surprised but was testing the waters. I decided to leave it be, and a year later Showtime picked up an English television show called "Queer as Folk." They bought the format and remade it as an American show, and it was a success for them. So I went back and said, "You've got the boys, what about the girls?" They said, "Yes, you're right, we should do your show."

Blade: How much, if any, backlash was there at the beginning? IC: There wasn't political backlash and the right wing backlash we were used to seeing didn't happen. My theory was that this was premium cable and not on their radar, so they didn't notice. The backlash I got at the beginning was from Lesbians, who said that it didn't represent their lives, and that the Lesbians on "The L Word" were too pretty, too glamorous, too affluent, and that it wasn't telling the story of their lives. My response was that this was a TV show, firstly, and … most television is glamorized … My secondary response was that we're just getting started telling the stories about people I know, and that the representation is not far off from reality. It's slightly elevated, but here in L.A. I know a group of women who are quite like the characters portrayed on the show. If the show is a success, if you enjoy it over the course of time, we'll get to represent a lot more women, and indeed that's the case. We've broadened the scope of representation over the six years on the air.

Blade: What were some of the issues and topics you wanted to address? Did you meet them all? IC: There were not issues and topics that I wanted to address. I just wanted to tell good stories and tell the stories of our lives, make them entertaining and tell them with depth and detail. If there were issues we talked about on the show, they were the issues of our lives and the issues that touched our lives.

Blade: Season six seemed to be modeled on "Sunset Boulevard" and season five on "All About Eve." What was the reason for this? IC: I've read that [it was modeled on "Sunset Boulevard"] and it never occurred to me. "Sunset Boulevard" is probably in my blood, and as an avid student of cinema history, I'm sure that it was in me. But there are other stories I've told on "The L Word," like "All About Eve," which we did boldly and unashamedly. Love me or hate me, that's what we took on. But I never said let's do "Sunset Boulevard," and it never occurred to me that Jenny is found in a swimming pool. It just happened, and I guess my point is that this story grew organically out of the character's stories that we had been telling these six years. It wasn't just another riff on an old, great Hollywood convention.

Blade: Why did you leave so many unresolved plotlines – Jenny's death, the situation with Max's baby, Helena and Dylan's relationship? IC: Those are not unresolved plotlines. I was not interested in wrapping up the show neatly and tidily. I wanted to end with a sense that life goes on. It would have been much more false to have resolved everything, to conveniently have Max have his baby before the series ended. This is just a day in the life, and life goes on. Who knows if we'll revisit [these characters] in fiction or reinvent them on TV or in a movie, hopefully we will. I simply thought that the appropriate thing to do was to tell a story that had some satisfying conclusions and said many of the things we wanted to say, but not [where the stories were ended].

Blade: Do you have any regrets with various plotlines over the seasons? IC: I don't believe in that. Sure there are things that we could have done better. Some stories were successful and some less successful, but you don't get any do-overs. I just stand by the stories we told, and the most important thing I can say is that we did our very best. We were always trying to do our best and tell good stories to be true to the characters and entertain the audience.

Blade: A spin-off series is in the works. Can you talk about that? IC: Alice is the character from "The L Word" who takes us into the spin-off and her participation qualifies it as a spin-off. It's called "The Farm," and the status is that we made a pilot for Showtime and delivered it to them. They are going through the process that networks go through in deciding what to air. We're waiting to hear if they'll put it up. Alice is the only series regular from "The L Word," and I hope that if the series goes forward that some of the other "L Word" stars will make guest appearances.

POET'S CORNER

LIMBAUGH-ER CHEESE
by Ron Rose - Tucson

It's stinky, it's smelly, it's Limbaugh-er cheese
It's fit for a king, no, it's fit for a sleaze
Oxycontin they say, is his drug of choice
Is that why I cringe at the sound of his voice?
Demeanor, seems meaner, with each passing day
His motive, so simple, get more airwave play
Rush, please don't fuss, we can't miss your smell
Conservative values are values from Hell.

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COMMENTARY. . . .

by Deb Price

Stop Selective Recognition Of Marriages

A decade after falling in love, Massachusetts State Trooper Mary Ritchie and Kathy Bush became parents. When Ryan was born, Bush postponed her career to be a stay-at-home mom. Not long afterward, Ryan was joined by brother William.

Once the sports-loving boys reached school age, Bush threw herself into the parent/teacher organization and into book fairs to raise money for their school. Ritchie, a crime scene investigator, continued to be the family's breadwinner. In 2004, the moms were among the first same-sex couples to marry in Massachusetts, which treats all married couples equally under state law.

But, as a new, first-of-its-kind lawsuit spotlights, the federal government picks and chooses which Massachusetts marriages to honor. The Massachusetts lawsuit – filed by eight same-sex couples and three widowers – asks the federal courts to declare unconstitutional the part of a 1996 federal law that says only heterosexual spouses are recognized by Uncle Sam for any of the 1,138 federal benefits linked to marital status.

That huge list includes receiving larger Social Security benefits based on a higher-earning spouse's income, filing taxes jointly, not having employer-provided spousal health care taxed as income, and health and pension benefits for spouses of federal workers.

The challenge to the misnamed Defense of Marriage Act doesn't seek to require other states to recognize same-sex marriages, only to stop the federal government from discriminating against ones legally recognized in such states as Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York. The other faces behind the lawsuit include a 78-year-old who lost his spouse after 60 years together, federal workers, cancer survivors, and the widower of former Congressman Gerry Studds.

At a March 3 press conference in Boston, the couples and widowers detailed financial hardships they've suffered because of the federal government's refusal to acknowledge the reality that they are legally wed. Ritchie and Bush, for example, can't file federal income taxes jointly, meaning they've "overpaid" – as they aptly put it – $14,518 in just four years of marriage.

"This money could really help with monthly household expenses, paying down our mortgage and putting away money for our sons' college education," Ritchie said. She also pointed out that, if she were killed in the line of duty, her spouse would be denied the federal $290,000 death benefit as well as the federal $850-a-month educational benefit that ordinarily goes to the families of slain law enforcement officers.

Perhaps the most poignant story was told by Herbert Burtis, who lost the man he fell in love with in 1948 to Parkinson's disease. "After more than a half-century together ... there was a hole in my life that would never be filled," said Burtis, who recounted creating a "one-bed nursing home" to care for his deteriorating husband. "It was at this time that I discovered that after having paid Social Security taxes all of our lives, I would not receive either his death benefit or his Social Security benefit, which was considerably higher than mine," Burtis said, adding the $700-a-month difference in his Social Security check could pay medical bills not covered by Medicare.

The federal government has no business picking and choosing among state-recognized marriages. If Congress won't reverse itself, the courts should step in.

(Deb Price is a columnist for the Detroit News, from which this is reprinted from.)

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NOTICES - COMMUNITY - NOTICES

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

TUCSON KNIGHT OWLS (T.K.O)
We are a non profit social club that is open to every one. T.K.O. contributes to the fellowship and support of the community, and openly invites new members and/or guests. Monthly meetings occur on the first Saturday of every month at 11:00a.m., Please come and join us! Our next meeting will be held at the Yard Dog.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE CLINIC provided daily by the Pima County Health Department. Gay friendly. Confidential. Treatment and Medication too! Any questions? Call 624-8272

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

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

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

Start getting more out of life with TUCSON PRIME TIMERS. We're the local chapter of Prime Timers Worldwide, the preeminent social organization for mature gay and bi men as well as younger (21+) men who enjoy their company. Each month we sponsor a wide range of dining events, cultural enrichment activities, parties, meetings, bowling, day trips, picnics, tours and much more. Visitors are always welcome. For info call our message phone 520 742-1271. Visit our website: www.tucsonprimetimers.org

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

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

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

SOURCES UNLIMITED, a Lesbian & Gay referral service. Business and individual listings are free of charge. All information available to anyone just simply by asking. 322-5655. Leave message. TucsonSources@aol.com

INNER WISDOM - Try hypnotherapy for pain relief, past life exploration and addiction release. Also available: Spiritual Counseling and Dream Interpretation. 579-9020

BEARS OF THE OLD PUEBLO – a social club for bears and bigger, more robust men (and of course, those who prefer their company). For more info, Call the Bears Hotline (520)790-5775 or write P.O. Box 43910, Tucson, AZ 85733-3910 of visit our website at www.botop.com All are welcome to our general meetings/ potlucks on the 2nd Friday of every month, at 3202 E. 1st St. (the "Ward 6" Office Bldg.) Just south of Speedway & East of Country Club. PotLuck Dinner begins at 6:30 and the monthly meeting follows at 7:15 p.m.

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

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

T-SQUARES Lesbian and Gay Square Dance Club, dances Tuesdays. from 6:30-9 p.m. at Cornerstone Fellowship Social Hall, 2902 N. Geronimo (Northwest of 1st Ave. and Glenn). No experience, no partner required! For more info contact David at 325-6739, or visit www.azgaydance.org

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TUCSON PRIDE, INC. (Formerly Tucson Lesbian and Gay Alliance - TLGA) meets on the second Wednesday at 845 S. Craycroft Road at 6pm. Tucson Pride events: Pride Week, Gay West and OUToberFEST. For more information call 622-3200 or visit the TPI website at www.tucsonpride.com

LEARN TO BE A LISTENING FRIEND Unique Hospital Volunteer Program teaches listening skills to Volunteers who provide a safe/compassionate environment to at-risk patients. Training every 6 weeks. 694-7063.

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

SMART (Self Management And Recovery Training) a free non-12-step self-help alternative for people working to overcome addictive and other emotional problems meets in Tucson Monday thru Thursdays at different locations. For more information about SMART, contact Jennifer at 838-3975.

THIS WAY OUT, 1/2 hour national GLBT show. 4:30 p.m. on Sundays only on 91.3 FM, Community Radio KXCI.

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

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

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT GROUP FOR ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLES. Not a dating club. Discreet. Meetings every Monday evening. Call for more info. APEX (Arizona Power Exchange) 602-415-1123. 24-hr multi-choice message including information, calendar and location.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

REVEILLE MEN'S CHORUS rehearses Thursday evenings 7-10pm at the Historic Y, corner of University Blvd. And 5th Ave. Join us!! For info call 304-1758

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

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

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

MEN'S KINK DISCUSSION GROUP (Open to all who identify as male and are 18 or older) meets 2nd Tuesday of the month, 7:00 p.m. at Desert Dominion, 3843 E. 37th Street, Tucson, AZ. (Map available at www.desertdominion,org) For those who are kinky or just curious. No fee, contributions are appreciated, but not required.

THE BROTHERS OF THE COMPASSIONATE WAY. Pagan spiritual group for gay, bisexual, transgendered men. Box 41623, Tucson,

NA MEETING WITH GLBT FOCUS meets Mondays, 6:30pm at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th Street. This is an open meeting of Narcotics Anonymous - all are welcome. For more info call Bernie W.:

TUCSON M2M - http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TucsonM2M

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*Open Sundays 2-7 p.m. or until last member leaves. Bottle Beer starts at $1.00

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DAILY BAR CALENDAR

SUNDAY

THE BIZ - 'L' Word showing 7pm & 9:30pm (Progressive drink specials) - First: $3 Well; Second: $1.50 pints. Last Special is 2-4-1. Following L Word, Out Loud Open Mic. If you have talent join our open night mic - Starts10:45 pm.

COLORS - Open 10am - 10pm Champagne Brunch 10am - 2pm with choice of complimentary mimosa, Bloody Mary or Screwdriver included. Happy Hour 4-7pm $3.50 Skyy Cocktails, $2.75 Domestics and well. Appetizers ½ price 4-6. Brunch served until 2pm. Full menu served until 10;m. Nightly dinner specials.

COYOTE MOON PUB - Open 11am. Beer Bust Sunday - $1 draft beers (12 oz), domestic only; $2.25 domestic long necks. Texas Hold-Em Poker at 3 & 6. No cash involved - Play for Points & Prizes. SIN Nite - drink discounts for Service Industry employees with ID or payroll receipt.

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.

VENTURE-N - Open 10am-2am. Patio Bar open 3pm. Beer Bust $2.25/pitcher, 3-7pm. Burger BBQ, 5-7pm, $3 proceeds to Petwatch (Helping HIVAIDS clients with their Veterinary bills).

WOODY'S - Open 11am-2am. Peter's Build Your Own Bloody Mary Bar 11am-2pm. Happy Hour 11am-8pm (excluding special events). Full Menu Kitchen open 11am-8pm. Back Pocket Patio Bar 2pm-2am. Beer Bust 2pm-7pm. Karaoke with Michael D 9pm-Close. Drag Bingo every other Sunday 8-9pm.

YARD DOG - Open 10am - 2am. Mimosas & Bloody Mary Bar (Build your own)

MONDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Happy Hour 3-8. EDAN...Exotic dancer appreciation night. DJ spins Hip Hop & R&B and all request dance. $5.25 drink specials.

COLORS - Open 4-10pm. Happy Hour 4-7. $3.50 Skyy Cocktails, $2.75 well & domestics. Appetizers ½ price 4-6m. Full menu served until 10pm.

COYOTE MOON PUB - Open 3pm. Happy Hour 3 - 8 p.m. $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. $3.50 sm. Pitcher/$5.50 lg. Bucket o" Beer - $10 Domestic, $12 Imports (4 beers to a bucket, for 2 or more people, Some brands excluded). Texas Hold-Em Poker at 6 & 8:30 p.m. No cash involved - Play for points & Prizes

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".

VENTURE-N - Open 9am-2am. SKYY Matinis $3 ea., 4-8pm.

WOODY'S - Open 11am-2am. Happy Hour 11am--8pm (excl spec events) Full Menu Kitchen open 11am-10pm Back Pocket Patio Bar 8pm-close. Karaoke with Michael D. 9pm-close.

YARD DOG - Open 11am. Beer Bust 3-7pm.

TUESDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Happy Hour 3-8. PHAT Tuesday's 50 cent Pabst cans 9pm-close Come play our Wii gaming system. Beer Pong Tournament w/ cash prizes starts 9pm.

COLORS - Open 4-10pm. Happy Hour 4-7 $3.50 Skyy cocktails, $2.75 Domestics and well and ½ price appetizers 4-6. Full menu served until 10pm.

COYOTE MOON PUB - Open 3pm. Happy Hour 3-8. $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. Pitcher Special $3.50 sm. Pitcher/$5.00 lg. Pitcher (excluding Blue Moon & Dos XX Amber).Girlz Nite Out. Girlz pay only .75 for well liquors or domestic drafts 8-10pm.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, Tropical Tuesdays $2.50 Tropical drinks and DJ Craig Carter playing Retro Music 70's, 80's and 90's 9pm-close.

VENTURE-N - Open 9am-2am. Dart Tournament, 7pm $3 entry fee/Pot Match.

WOODY'S - Open noon- 2am. Happy Hour 11am-8pm (excl spec events). Full Menu Kitchen open 11am-10pm. Back Pocket Patio Bar open 8pm-close, Caribbean Party Night with Woody's own Specialty Mojitos, Caprioskas and Martinis with Tucson's Hottest Bartenders.

YARD DOG - Open Noon-2am. Beer Bust 3-7

WEDNESDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Happy Hour til 8pm. Wild Wednesdays College Night. 18 to party - 21 to drink. $7 Cover 18+ No Cover 21+. DJ Spins Hip Hop, R&B Top 40 remix dance.

COLORS - Open 4-10pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm, $3.50 Skyy cocktails, $2.75 Domestics and ½ price appetizers 4-6. Full menu served until 10pm. Nightly dinner specials.

COYOTE MOON PUB -Open 3pm. Happy Hour All Day $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints, $3.50 sm. Pitcher/$5.50 lg. Pitchers. Texas Hold-'Em Poker at 6 & 8:30 pm Play for points & Prizes. No cash involved.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, $2 Well or Domestics. "Diva-Licious" show w/Bunny FuFu. 11pm - -close "Reverse Happy Hour". DJ Q Inside & DJ Mike Lopez playing 80s music on the Patio.

VENTURE-N - Open 9am-2am. Beer Bust, 8pm-11pm $2.50/Pitcher.

WOODY'S - Open 11am-2am;. Happy Hour 11am-8pm excl. special events). Ful Kitchen open 11am-10pm. Back Pocket Bar open 8pm-close. Service Industry Employee Special All Day Long - $1 off all drinks except schnapps and draft. Different Themed Underwear Party 9pm-close with $1.00 off for those who participate (excl. Schnapps and Draft). Retro 80s & 90s Dance with DJ Clint 9 til close..

YARD DOG - Open 11am-2am. Beer Bust 3-7pm.

THURSDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Happy Hour 3-8. Y-NOT Karaoke starts @9:00pm to close. 2-4-1 starts 10;pm.

COLORS - Open 4pm-10pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm,$3.50 Skyy cocktails, $2.75 Domestics and Well and ½ price appetizers. Full menu served until 10. Nightly dinner specials.. .

COYOTE MOON PUB - Open 3pm. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints, $3.50 sm. Pitcher/$5.50 lg.. Pitcher. Boyz Nite Out - boys pay only .75 for well liquors or domestic drafts 8-10pm. Bicardi Thursdays - $3.00 Bicardi Rum - all flavors. Karaoke with Kristen and K2 Tunes 8pm.

IBT's -Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, Boyz Nite Out with your Bartenders & GoGo Boys dancing in their undies and DJ Mike Lopez spinning Top 40 & All request $1.75 Long Islands and $1.50 Tequila shots 10pm-2am.

VENTURE-N - Open 9am-2am..

WOODY'S - Open 11am-2am; Happy Hour 11am-8pm (excl Spec Events); Full Menu Kitchen open 11am-10pm. Back Pocket Patio Bar open 8pm-close. Cheap Party Day **FREE POOL**, $1.00 PBR Longnecks, $2.00 Tecate Longnecks. Techno and Top 40 Dance with DJ Jeff 9pm - close..

YARD DOG - Open Noon-2am. Beer Bust 3-7

FRIDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Happy Hour UNTIL 8. Hip Hop & R&B. Drink Specials all night called out by DJs. Special Performances.

COLORS - Open 4pm-midnight. Happy Hour 4-7pm, $3.50 Skyy cocktails, $2.75 Domestics and Well and ½ price appetizers. Finlandia martinis $5.50 open to close! Full menu served until 10. "Hot Jazz, Cool Martinis" with Susan Artemis & Craig Faltin 6:30 to 9:30. "Guys & Dolls" drag show hosted by Lucinda Holliday at 10pm. Nightly dinner specials. Drink specials during the drag show.

COYOTE MOON PUB - Open 3pm. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. $3.50 Sm. Pitcher/$5.50 lg. Pitcher. $2.75 All Mexican Beers and Dos XX Amber. 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.

VENTURE-N - Open 9am-2am Patio Bar Open 7pm-2m Cuervo Margaritas $3 ea., 4-8pm.

WOODY'S - Open 11am-2am; Happy Hour 11am-8pm (excl spec events). Full Menu Kitchen open 11am-11pm Back Pocket Patio Bar open 5pm-close. Enjoy the Live Blues/Motown/Soul sounds of Simon Crown 6-9 p.m.; Request your favorite Music Dance Night with DJ Clint 9pm-close. Monthly Birthday Party every 2nd Friday Night of the month.

YARD DOG - Open 11am-2am. Beer Bust 3-7pm. Patio Bar Opens 8pm

SATURDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm - 2am. Starting Feb. 13th Escandalo Saturdays w/Carnival Latino. Latin Hip Hop, Top 40s & Reggaeton music will be spun. Guest DJs. $5 Cover. oGo dancers male and female. Shot specials allnight. .

COLORS - Open 4pm-10pm, Happy Hour 4-7pm, $3.50 Skyy cocktails, $2.75 Domestics and Well, ½ price appetizers 4-6. Pianist/Vocalist Marilyn Harris 6:30-9:30. Full menu served until 10. Nightly dinner specials.

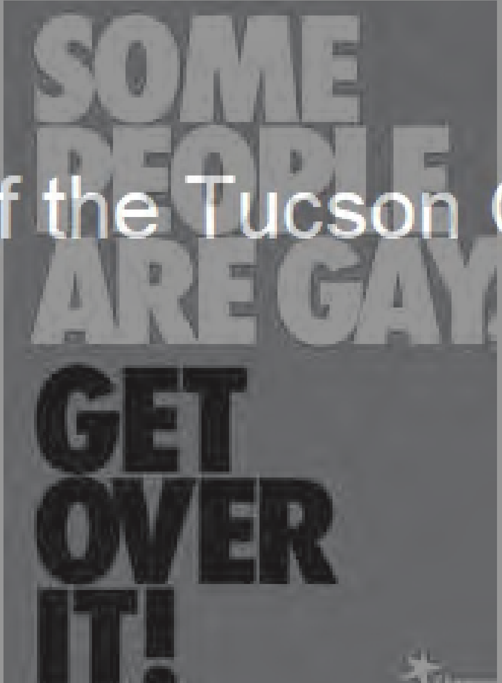
COYOTE MOON PUB - Open at 2pm. Happy Hour 2-8pm, $2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. $3.50 sm. Pitcher/$5.50 lg. Plus check out the bartenders choice of shot specials. $5.00 cheeseburger & fries. $3.00 Cuervo and $4.75 Jager Bombs. Check our calendar for the Saturday Night Special Entertainment.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, $2 Well or Domestics. 5-8pm Karaoke on the patio $1Draft Pints. 9pm "Saturday Starrlett's" w/Bunny FuFu & Janee Starr. After the show, DJ Q spinning inside & 10pm-close, DJ Mike Lopez with the "Party on the Patio".

VENTURE-N - Open 9am-2am. Patio Bar open 7pm-2am. Beer Bust $2.25/Pitcher. 3-7pm.

WOODY'S - Open 11am-2am; Happy Hour 10am-8pm (excl spec events); Full Menu Kitchen open11am-11pm. Back Pocket Patio Bar open 5pm-close. Techno and Top 40 Dance with DJ Jeff 9pm til close. Check our ad for Twice-A-Month Special Events or Themed Parties.

YARD DOG - Open 8am-2am. Patio Bar Opens 8pm.



BAR CALENDAR Of Upcoming Events

Friday, March 13
THE BIZ - 15th Year Anniversary Bash. Jaeger Promo - Go Go Dancers and give-aways!!!

WOODY'S - March Birthday? Celebrate at Woody's - Balloons, Cake and Champagne Toast.

YARD DOG - Karaoke with Troy St. John 9:00 p.m. every Friday.

Saturday, March 14
COYOTE MOON - Gaia Sounds begins at 9:00 p.m. No Cover. Come on down!

Sunday, March 15
WOODY''S - Drag Bingo is back with Stella Virgin and Janee Starr along with great Sunday Specials.

Tuesday, March 17
IBT'S - 5:00 t 8:00 p.m. Corned Beef and Cabbage. DJ Q spinning inside and DJ Mike Lopez on the patio. Drink specials on Guinness, Bushmills, Jameson and Green Beer!

WOODY'S - Woody's famous St. Patrick's Day Party. Corned Beef, Cabbage and Potato dinner with giveaways and drink specials!

Thursday, March 19
WOODY'S - Tori Steele's "Cover Girl Revue" starring Mr. Kenneth Blake from Las Vegas.

Friday, Saturday & Sunday, March 20-21-22
IBT's - It's 4th Avenue Spring Street Fair with some great shows hosted by Bunny FuFu and Janee Starr and some very special guests and featuring Mr. Kenneth Blake here from Las Vegas.
Showtimes are: Friday - 9:00 p.m., Saturday 2:00 p.m. and Sunday 2:00 p.m.

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rslettersletters

EDITOR:

Well, I see Mr. Phelps is at it again: trying to put a monument in the park condemning Matthew Shepard. And the ironic thing about the whole affair is that he is using Leviticus 18:22. Anyone who says that Scripture condemns us Gay people is automatically telling you three things about themselves. 1) They know nothing about language and the use thereof. 2) They know nothing about Gay life. And 3) - and this is the saddest part of all - they don't even know their own Bible. Let me explain. "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, it is abomination" certainly outrightly condemns us Gay people. There can be no argument with that. And I'm, sure that everyone would agree with me. There's only one problem with that statement. That's NOT what the Bible says. That's what Mr. Phelps says the Bible says. So what does the Bible say?

Leviticus 18: 22: "Thou shalt not lie with mankind AS WITH WOMANKIND, it is abomination." If you're like most people you probably didn't pay much attention to your seventh grade grammar teacher. That's why when I ask you to identify "AS WITH WOMANKIND" grammatically speaking you'll probably scratch your head and look at me with a rather blank stare. "AS WITH WOMANKIND" is a simile. Now to make sure we're all on the same page: a simile is 'a figure of speech comparing two DISSIMILAR[!!!] things using the words 'like' or 'as'.' Please note: TWO DISSIMILAR THINGS!!!

Let me give you a couple of examples of the simile/no simile paradigm I'm talking about. Suppose you have just turned 16 and gotten your driver's license. You come to me and: " Okay, pops. I want to drive the family car." As your father I am going to give you two options. 1) You will NOT drive the family car, I hate that. 2) You will NOT drive the family car, AS YOUR OLDER SISTER DRIVES THE FAMILY CAR, I hate that. Now which option would you as a teenager choose? The first one? Hardly! According to the first option you wouldn't drive the family. PERIOD! You would choose the second option. Why? Because by choosing the second option you could drive the car anyway you wanted to as long as you DIDN'T drive it like your older sister did.

Let me give you a second scenario and then I'll tie the whole thing together. Suppose I were a landlord and I watched you moving your stuff in as a new tenant. I see you carrying in two huge stereo speakers. As your landlord I'm going to give you two options. 1) You shall not play music: I hate that. Or 2) You shall not play music AS THE PEOPLE IN 3-B PLAY MUSIC, I hate that. Now you as the new tenant, which option would you choose? The first one? Not a chance! According to the first option you would never play your music. You would choose option no. 2, because with that option you could play your music anyway you wanted to just as long as you DIDN'T play it as the people in 3-B play it.

Now let's look at the two Gay statements. 1) Thou shalt not lie with mankind, it is abomination. Or 2) Thou shalt not lie with mankind AS WITH WOMANKIND, it is abomination. Now as a Gay person which option would you choose? The first one? Not even on a bet. Because with that option you could not have ANY kind of Gay sex. You would choose the second option. According to that option you can have any kind of Gay sex you wanted to just as long as you DIDN'T have sex as with a woman. In those days women were not equal to men as they are today. They were pieces of property and to be used as such by the men (father, brother, husband, etc.) who owned them. That's why when we treat our lovers as a second-class citizens (or 'as womankind', if you please) it becomes hateful in the Lord's eyes.

Now the question arise: is there a physical example of this in the Bible? YES, THERE IS! 1 Samuel 20: 41: "And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they [David and Jonathan] kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded [climaxed]." In other words they made love until David climaxed. Does it tell us how? No. We don't need to know how they made love. All we need to know is that they DID make love and by so doing committed a homosexual act. Not there are a lot of people who dismiss my interpretation and claim that all David and Jonathan did was to give each other a friendly kiss of good-bye. Those people are making a big mistake. Calling that act a homosexual act is not my interpretation. It is the interpretation of an EYEWITNESS! That's right! There was an eyewitness to the whole affair. And he called it a homosexual act!

1 Samuel 20: 30: "Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse, rebellious woman, do not I know that thou has chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness?" Translated: "YOU FAGGOT! WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW YOU'RE HAVING SEX WITH DAVID!?!" In other words King Saul is not only accusing Jonathan of being Gay, he's also accusing him of having sex with David. And this isn't being done in the quietness of some backroom somewhere. He is yelling it at his son at one of his banquets with all the people at court being there and listening to it. Now if Jonathan were as heterosexual as he's presumed to be, he would have been on his feet, pounding on the table demanding an apology from his father. Was he? No. In fact he didn't even bother denying it. How could he turn his back on the man he loved? Besides everyone at court knew what was going on.

So what did he say? 1 Samuel 20: 32: "And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? What hath he done?" In other words Jonathan didn't deny it at all. And under the law: silence implies consent. Now that we have cited the homosexual act, and proved it was a homosexual act by an eyewitness, we must ask ourselves 'What did God think of it?'. 1 Kings 15: 5: "Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite." Since what we're talking about had nothing to do with Uriah we can conclude that God APPROVED of David and Jonathan. There it is. Signed, sealed and delivered. We have the act, the eyewitness account and the acceptance by God. (Act, Attitude and Alliance!) So does Leviticus 18: 22 condemn all Gay behavior? With what you've just read - directly from the King James Version of the Bible - NO IT DOES NOT! But at this point we must be careful. Just because we are not condemned in the Bible does not mean we have been given a free pass to go a-whoring.

David and Jonathan weren't condemned because they were married. (1 Samuel 20: 42, et al) So you see the very verse Mr. Phelps says condemns us....doesn't. It qualifies us! What irony! The verse that Mr. Phelps says condemns Matthew Shepard to hell is the same verse a Gay martyr can use for entrance into heaven! And Matthew Shepard certainly qualifies as a Gay martyr. So who speaks for Matthew Shepard? I DO!

Rev. Dr. Thomas Krahn, ddl. hon. ret. "World's Leading Gay Theologian Who is Gay!"
Tucson, Arizona

UK Prime Minister Blasts Prop. 8

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown

LONDON, UK (Observer Update British Prime Minister Gordon Brown has blasted the California law banning same-sex marriage. Brown called Proposition 8, as it is known, "unacceptable" and said it was a setback for civil rights in the United States, reported 365Gay.com.

Brown made the comments during a speech to British Gay rights leaders during a reception at the Prime Minister's official Residence 10 Downing Street the British Broadcasting Corporation reports. "This attempt to undo good that has been done is unacceptable," Brown said. "This shows why we have always got to be vigilant, always got to fight homophobic behavior and any form of discrimination."

The Prime Minister praised UK Gay leaders for pushing to have civil partnerships legalized in 2005, giving same-sex couples all of the rights of marriage except the name. He praised the rights leaders for "changing opinion" about same-sex unions. "You have shown how the legislative process, by your pressure, can respond," he told the group. Brown's comments came only hours after the California high court heard arguments challenging the legality of the proposition. It could be up to 90 days before a ruling is made in the case.

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