Observing Tucson And The Greater Arizona Community

OBSERVER

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Tucson Observer Archives

WEEKLY OBSERVER AUGUST 31, 2011 ISSUE 1413

World's First All Virtual Gay Museum

1977 Tucson Gay Coalition Meeting & Picnic Himmel Park N/E corner

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Tucson LGBT Museum (aka Tucson Gay Museum) It was the summer of 1977, Jimmy Carter was President, the unemployment rate in Tucson was 7.7%, the high school student murderers of Richard J. Heakin had been given simple probation and were right back in high school, members of the Tucson Gay Coalition gathered out at Himmel Park for a meeting and picnic, the Arizona drinking age was 19.

In 1977 Disco was hot but Parents were not, Anita Bryant was on her Anti-Gay Crusade across America, Howard Hughes who owned most of the Foothills had died 14 months before leaving behind a lengthy court battle, the Gay Commu- nity Services Center (G.C.S.) was on North 7th Avenue, gas was $1.48 cents a gallon, the 16 page Arizona Gay News kept Tucson & Phoenix informed, the Front Runner Disco bar on Stone Avenue & Jekyll's Disco bar on Miracle Mile were jumping … Some local Tucson young men by 1977 had already been quietly collecting Gay-Lesbian historical items from around Tucson and Phoenix for 10 years since 1967 as the Tucson Gay Museum. Those archived items including original photographs that are still being taken documenting Tucson and Phoenix now number in the thousands.

Visit the 1970's and other decades now at the All Virtual Tucson LGBT Museum (Tucson Gay Museum). www.TucsonGay Museum.org

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New Numbers And Geography For G/L Couples

REHOBOTH BEACH (Observer Update) - So much for San Francisco, reported nytimes.com. The list of top cities for same-sex couples as a portion of the population does not include that traditional gay mecca, according to new census data. In fact, the city, which ranked third in 1990 and 11th in 2000, plummeted to No. 28 in 2010. And West Hollywood, once No. 1, has dropped out of the top five.

The Census Bureau data, finalized this week and analyzed by Gary Gates, a demographer at the Williams Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles, gives the clearest picture to date of same-sex couples in America. In absolute numbers, they jumped by half in the past decade, to 901,997. Bisbee was reported as the gayest city in Arizona. Most surprising is how far same-sex couples have dispersed, moving from traditional enclaves and safe havens into farther-flung areas of the country.

Consider, for example, the upstarts on the list: Pleasant Ridge, Mich., a suburb of Detroit; New Hope, Pa.; and this beach town in southern Delaware. All three have been popular destinations for gay people locally but had never ranked in the top 10. The No. 1-ranked town is Provincetown, Mass., at the tip of Cape Cod. The reordering reflects a growing influence of baby boomers, who became adults in the 1960s and 1970s, when the social stigma was starting to ease, and are more willing than previous generations to stand up and be counted, Mr. Gates said.

Now that generation, arguably the first in history with such a large contingent that is out, is beginning to retire, and its life transition is showing up in the data, with older cities as the new popular choices. "As the baby boomer generation ages into retirement," Mr. Gates said, "we see its impact really strongly in the geography." The pattern was in evidence in Rehoboth Beach, a family resort town of 1,300, which was fourth on the list of same-sex couples per capita and did not figure in the top 10 rankings in 1990 or 2000."The change was pretty dramatic," said Rick McReynolds, 58, a resident. "It used to be all these boys," but now, he said, the gay population in town is older and has less of a singles scene.

But people who used to party here, like Bob Moore, a retired communications professor from Pennsylvania, have since returned with their partners to live. Mr. Moore, who came out in his 40s, after two children and a divorce, said he and his partner were looking for a place that was gay friendly, but not an exclusive enclave. "We liked the fact that it was gay without being the Castro" neighborhood of San Francisco, said Mr. Moore, 59, who was

Continued on Page Three

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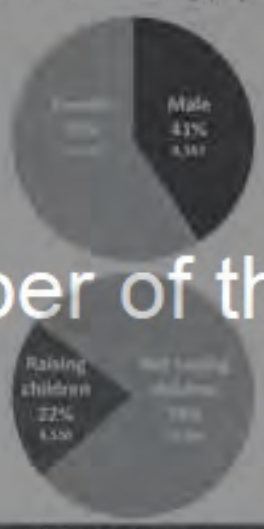
Same-sex couples	20,948
Same-sex couples per 1,000 households	8.8

Proportions of same-sex couples by sex and child-rearing (adjusted)



Percent of same-sex couples raising children by county (adjusted)

Data and methodology

About the authors

For more information

Top five counties and cities among those with more than 50 same-sex couples ranked by same-sex couples per 1,000 households

County			City		
Cocosino	473	10.14	Bisbee	55	20.91
Pima	8,734	8.61	Apache Junction	218	14.00
Maricopa	13,074	9.26	Phoenix	6,565	12.79
Pinal	1,069	8.51	Sedona	59	11.84
La Paz	89	7.89	Maricopa	164	11.41

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UPDATE

Turnabout for TIHAN Fiesta Sept. 4

TUCSON (Observer Update) - "Turnabout for TIHAN" is an annual show put on by Tucson's GLBT clubs and their bar staff. The staff request donations from their friends and customers in order to do a "turn-about" from male to female (or vice versa) and put on a fabulous show to benefit the work of TIHAN, the Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network (www.tihan.org).

Tickets are now on sale, so get yours now! We are pleased to announce that our emcees for the show will be Janee Starr and Tempest DuJour, along with a special guest appearance by Celia Putty, Miss Gay Arizona America 2011. These stars will join your favorite bar staff from Ain't Nobody's Bizness, Brodie's Tavern, Colors, IBT's, New Moon, and Woody's in a spectacular show, with this year's theme "FIESTA!"

Get ready for the glitz and glamour, the pumps and passion for this year's "Turnabout for TIHAN" benefit show! It's one of the biggest drag shows of the year, and takes place on Sunday, September 4th at the Doubletree Hotel at Reid Park (445 South Alvernon Way, Tucson, Arizona). The doors open at 5:00 pm, and the show starts at 6:00 pm.

Advance tickets are only $10.00 per person, or $100 for a table of 10. Tickets at the door will cost $15.00 each (if available). The evening also features a raffle with some great prizes. For tickets or more information, call TIHAN, 520-299-6647.

Welcome To OZ Fall League Starts Sept. 8

TUCSON (Observer Update) - The Welcome to Oz LGBT and straight supportive bowling league will start on Thursday, September 8, 6:30 p.m. (organizing meeting) at Tucson Bowl, 7021 E. 21st St.

Teams consist of three people and bowling will begin at 7 PM. Teams will bowl three games each week of the league. A good average is not important, having fun is.

So if you are interested and you don't have a team, come to the meeting and the Oz league officers will get you on a team!

Call To Artists: Tucson Latin @ Gay Pride 2011

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Wingspan will again present the 4th annual Tucson Latin@ Gay Pride schedule for September 15 through September 22.

Tucson Latin@ Gay Pride strives to create visibility of the LGBT Latin@ community, to raise awareness of the challenges faced by LGBT Latin@ people, and to celebrate the culture that occurs at these two intersections.

Always a highlight event, the Tucson Latin@ Gay Pride Art and Culture Fair facilitates the mission to create visibility by showcasing art produced by LGBT Latin@ artists and performers. The art and culture event is scheduled for Saturday, September 17, 2011 from 8:00 pm to 10:00 pm at the beautiful Dinnerware Artspace.

Artists who would like to show their artwork at this event are encouraged to send an electronic image/video of their art, a bio, and contact information to Oscar Jimenez at ojimenez@wingspan.org. Please send information by September 2. There is no fee to show work. This is a non-competitive event. Artists are encouraged to distribute contact information with potential collaborators at the Fair. A booklet with artist information will be distributed the night of the event.

Bisbee Friendliest City In Arizona for G/L Couples

BISBEE (Observer Update) - So what's the friendliest place in Arizona for gay couples?

An analysis of the annual count by researchers at The Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law found that, on a proportional basis, the tiny city in southeast Arizona had more gay couples living together than anywhere else in the state. The ratio was 20.9 for every 1,000 households, reports Capitol Media Services for the Sierra Vista Herald. That compares with a statewide average of 8.8.

Other communities where the number of gay couples is above the statewide average include Apache Junction, Phoenix, Sedona and Maricopa. So why Bisbee?

"It's kind of a little bit of a liberal spot in a conservative oasis," explained Kathy Sowden. She and her partner, Deborah Grier, own and operate Finders Keepers, an antique and jewelry shop on Main Street in Old Bisbee. How liberal? "I'm always surprised to see a Republican bumper sticker here," she said.

The couple, who moved to Arizona six years ago from California, also said there's a kind of live-and-let-live attitude in the community. Sowden said part of that is strictly economics. "It's a lot of people trying to make a living in a small tourist town," she said. "A lot of times the mutual goal kind of erases any cultural differences, especially now with the economy the way it is."

Researcher Gary Gates said the census data is based on reports where the main person responding on the form identifies another same-sex adult in the household as either a husband or wife, or as an "unmarried partner," versus listing that other person as a roommate or unrelated adult. Because of that, he said, the study may reflect less what places are "attractive" to same-sex couples and more of where they feel comfortable.

"Same-sex couples are more likely to identify themselves on the census if they live in communities with lower levels of social stigma and higher levels of acceptance and support," he said. Conversely, that means gay couples are more likely to stay closeted – even on the census form – where they are less comfortable.

Still, Gates said, there's something to be said for how gays perceive a city.

"Some communities do develop specific reputations of being welcoming places for LGBT people, so it's likely that they attract some same-sex couples to move there," he said. Bisbee does, in fact, have a reputation.

In a 2007 article, Out.com listed Bisbee's annual Gay Pride event as among the top five in rural communities. "Once known as 'the Queen of Coppper Camps,' Bisbee's queens and kings camp it up during a drag race and bull run in Brewery Gulch, square dancing, a turn-of-the-century ball and other such high-spirited goings on," the site says.

Economics also can play a role. "It's very inexpensive to live here," Sowden said of Bisbee, saying the money goes further here than it did in San Diego. That description also would fit Apache Junction, Maricopa and even some parts of Phoenix. But Sowden also sees factors in Bisbee more akin to Sedona.

"It's kind of more of a retirement community, but the people who retire here tend to be the hippies of yesterday," she said.

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Informing the Community
The Observer

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New Numbers And Geography For G/L Couples

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sitting with his partner, Steve Ortleib, in Rigby's Bar and Grill on Tuesday night.

He said they had visited four top retirement destinations for same-sex couples – two in California and two in Florida – before settling on Rehoboth. In interviews in San Francisco on Tuesday, several gay people said the city attracted people who did not always want to become part of a couple. The census does not ask about sexual orientation.

"You settle down in small towns because there is not much to choose from," said Nick Meinzer, 41, a hairstylist who works on Castro Street. "In urban areas we wait longer to settle down. I've been single for two years. They're not counting those of us who are single." Of the top cities like Pleasant Ridge, Mr. Meinzer said: "I've never even heard of those places. You'd think if they were so great you'd have heard of them."

Dennis Ziebell, 61, the owner of Orphan Andy's, a Castro neighborhood diner he opened 35 years ago, said he did not believe the count was accurate. "Take another survey, that's all I can say," he said. "I've been in a relationship for 36 years and nobody from the census asked me about it. " Last year was the third time the Census Bureau counted same-sex couples. The count included people of the same sex in the same household who said they were spouses or unmarried partners (spouses were not included in 1990). Mr. Gates calculated how many same-sex couples there were for every 1,000 households within towns and cities across the country.

New York is too big to figure prominently in top city rankings for same-sex couples per capita (it was 67th in 2010, Mr. Gates said), but it does rank by county, alongside more the more traditional locations. Manhattan is No. 5, after San Francisco County, Hampshire County, Mass., Monroe County, Fla., and Multnomah County, Ore.

The city ranking is a barometer of the changing demographics among the population of same sex couples, which has grown more diffuse throughout the country over the past 20 years. In interviews here this week, several couples said that social attitudes had softened over time and that living farther afield was now easier to do. Mr. Gates compared the phenomenon to immigrants who no longer sought the safety of an enclave.

Steve Elkins, who runs a nonprofit community center called Camp Rehoboth, which acts as a liaison with the gay community, said cultural training classes for the summer police force would be met by stony stares in the early days. More recently, when he asked the police officers if they knew a gay person, two people in the class raised their hands to say they were gay. "It's a generational change in thoughts and attitudes," he said. Rehoboth, he likes to say, used to be an island of tolerance in a sea of homophobia, and now is an island of tolerance in a sea of outlet malls.

Further evidence, Mr. Elkins said, was the quick passage of a civil unions bill that is set to take effect in Delaware on Jan. 1. A decade is a long time in the gay community, and couples who were part of the pre-boomer generation said it had been all but impossible for them to come out. Michael Davis, 69, a retired intelligence officer who moved to Rehoboth in 2004, grew up in a small town in Wyoming in the 1950s, where homosexuality, in his words, did not exist.

"When I was growing up, gay was a mood you were in," he said, sitting at dinner with his partner, George Hooper, 64, a retired federal employee. For years he told people he was renting a room to Mr. Hooper. He could be fired for coming out in his job. These days he lives openly, socializing with other gay couples and enjoying retired life on the beach. "To go from complete homophobia to this," he said gesturing around him to the largely gay clientele at Rigby's.

Mr. Hooper smiled impishly and said, "He's come a long way, baby."

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Report: Joe Solmonese Leaving As HRC Head

NEW YORK (Observer Update) - Pam's House Blend is reporting that Joe Solmonese will be leaving as head of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) in December. An anonymous source says he'll announce his departure this Tuesday. If it's true, he'll be leaving several months before his contract expires in March 2012, according to Metro Weekly.

A good many gay intellectuals regard the HRC as the Halliburton of gay rights - a cog in the "non-profit industrial complex," monopolizing gay politics by dint of its fabulous piles of money and establishment connections, towleroad.com. Calling for Solmonese's resignation has been a common refrain. In late 2009, he was attacked for urging the LGBT community to be patient with President Obama - to give him the benefit of the doubt until his last day in 2017. Pam demanded Solmonese resign because of this alleged pandering to the political class and his slowness in getting the Defense of Marriage Act and Don't Ask, Don't Tell repealed. Andrew Sullivan said much the same thing in an angry interview. (Sullivan, a conservative, has called HRC "a patronage wing of the Democratic party.")

But now it looks like that patience has paid off - well, sorta. DOMA is very slowly withering (though its death is by no means assured and Obama's waffling is appalling). Don't Ask, Don't Tell has been finally, if fitfully, revoked. Gay marriage is increasingly becoming a fact. Critics were right to be steamed about the inching progress, but perhaps Solmonese was right, too, when he said, "Whatever you think of the Administration's first nine months, you don't pass laws by sitting out. You pass laws by sitting at the table."

Still, the HRC has been marked by an over-willingness to compromise. To take one example: In a conference after the 2004 elections, before Solmonese became head, one HRC official suggested "the group would consider supporting President Bush's efforts to privatize Social Security partly in exchange for the right of gay partners to receive benefits under the program."

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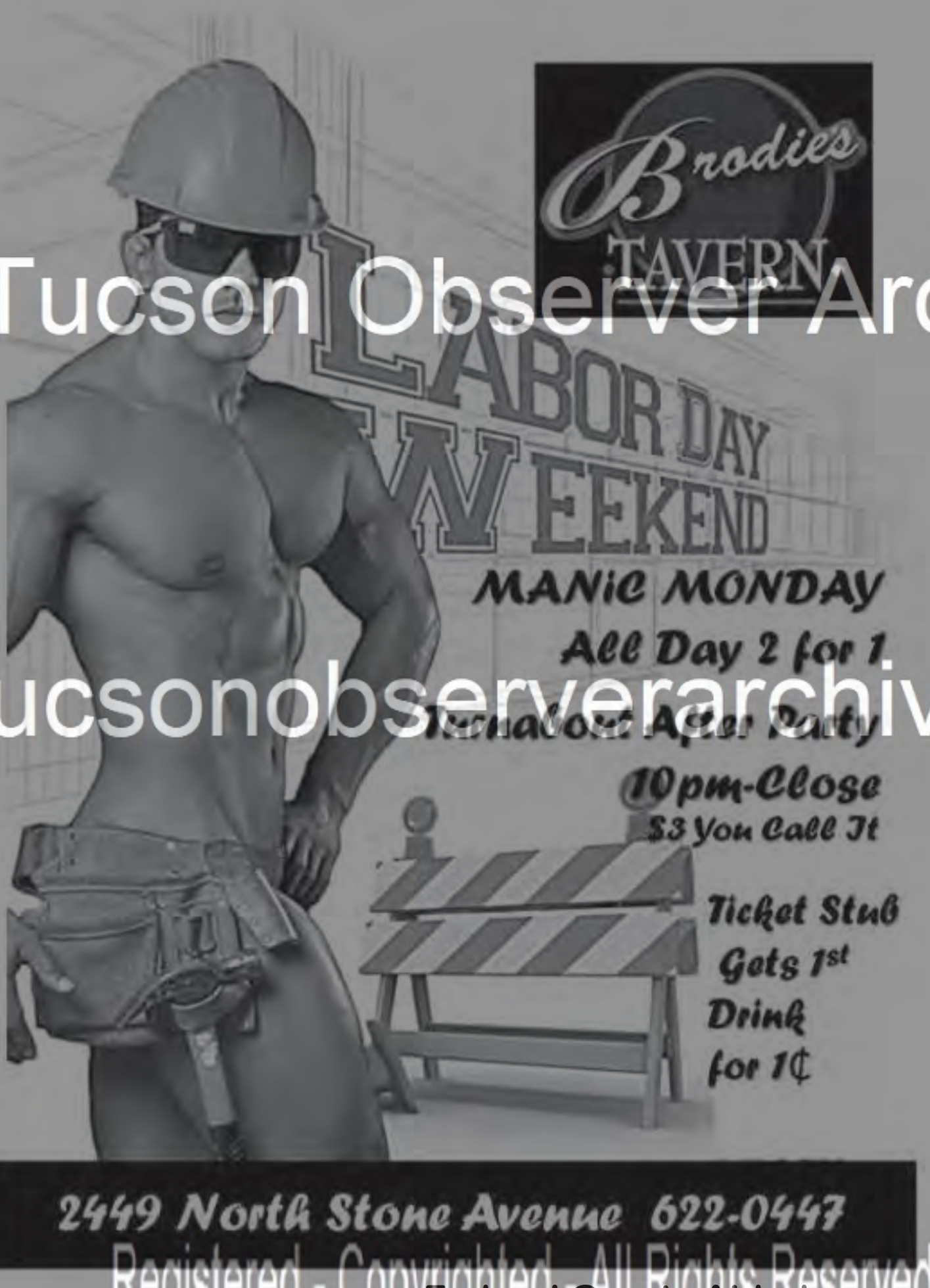

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Tucson Gay Pride Parade October 8

The Tucson Pride Board announces Grand Marshals for their annual Pride on Parade. This year's parade is scheduled for October 8, 2011 at 8:00 in the evening. The parade is being held in conjunction with Second Saturday's monthly downtown event. In honor of the 30th anniversary of the discovery of the AIDS virus, Tucson Pride has chosen Wendell Hicks (Executive Director Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation), Dr. Heather Moroso (Founder of Positively Beautiful), Scott Blades (Executive Director Tucson Interfaith HIV Awareness Network), and Jeffrey Scott Brown (AIDS Ribbon). The parade will start at 6th Street and Pennington going south to Congress then west on Congress and north on Stone Avenue where it will end. It is a night time parade so come see all the bright and colorful entrants. If interested in being a part of the parade please visit our website at www.tucsonpride.org.

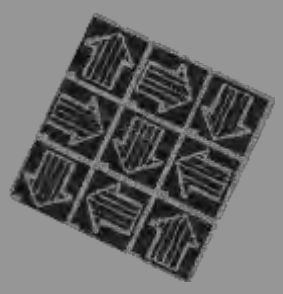
Federal Grants Aided Anti-Marriage Equality Group

DES MOINES (Observer Update) - Some $2.2 million in federal funds paid to the Iowa Family Policy Center for counseling services over a five-year period also aided anti-marriage equality efforts in the state, the AP reported on ontopmag.com.

According to an investigation by the Associated Press, the Department of Health and Human Services grants, received between 2006 and 2010, paid for education and counseling services – but also funded employee salaries and utility expenses as the group fought against gay marriage on multiple fronts.

According to one University of Iowa researcher who consulted on the grants, the center also refused to provide services to same-sex couples.

Bob Vander Plaats, president and CEO of Family Leader, which includes the Iowa Family Policy Center among its divisions, was a leading force in the state to oust three Iowa Supreme Court justices who struck down laws banning marriage rights for same-sex couples. Among its political activities in the run-up to the Iowa caucus, the group has hosted a presidential lecture series featuring many contenders for the 2012 GOP nomination.



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For Rent, Unless You're Gay - Or A Single Mom

VANCOUVER (Observer Update) - A surprising new study by the University of British Columbia has discovered that gay male couples and single parents face significant discrimination in Vancouver's rental housing market, compared to straight couples.

The research, published in the August issue of the journal Social Problems, is the largest investigation of housing discrimination against single parents. Overall, the study found that male couples are nearly 25% more likely to be rejected by landlords, while single parents are approximately 15% more likely to be rejected.

"Vancouver has a reputation for tolerance of diversity in North America and a vibrant gay community," says lead author Nathanael Lauster, a professor in UBC's department of sociology. "This means that housing discrimination levels may even be higher in other cities." Lauster says researchers analyzed nearly 1,700 online rental inquiries in metro Vancouver, one of Canada's largest and most culturally diverse cities, which also boasts strong housing laws to protect against discrimination. They discovered that discrimation varied significantly by neighborhood.

For example, communities with greater numbers of single-parent families exhibited increased levels of discrimination against single parents. The opposite was true, however, in neighborhoods with large gay populations – such as Vancouver's West End and West Side – which exhibited significantly lower levels of discrimination against male couples.

"This suggests that the bases for discrimination against same-sex couples and single parents may differ," says Lauster. "For gay couples, the discrimination is likely based in ignorance or moral objections that lessen with contact. For single parents, the discrimination may be based more on their real economic marginalization." Inquiries were identical except for minor variations by five family types: heterosexual couple, male couple, female couple, single mother with child, and single father with child. The study found no significant differences in landlord responses to female couples compared to straight couples. According to recent census figures, Vancouver has more than 4,700 same-sex couples, about 10% of all same-sex couples in Canada.

COMMENTARY. . . .

by John Culhane

Gay Marriage Victories Breeding Anti-Gay Desperation

Tucson Observer Archives

Will this never end? That thought – unusual for me – popped into my head more than once during the past week, as I've been reading about a series of events and comments related to marriage equality.

On one side are the continued struggles that same-sex couples face because of the continued legal and social failure to recognize our unions. On the other side, Maggie Gallagher has lately been doubling down on her opposition, seeming increasingly disconnected from rationality or moderation. Increasingly, her statements seem more concerned about some Platonic ideal of the form of marriage rather than its reality, and its capacity to solve problems.

Let me be more specific. On this site a few days ago, it was reported that the surviving member of a lesbian couple, and the couple's child, is suing the state of Indiana for the death of her (unrecognized) spouse resulting from the collapse of a stage at the Indiana State Fair. But Janeen Beth Urschel, the surviving partner, faces a huge hurdle in her wrongful death suit: like most states, Indiana restricts recovery under these statutes to certain enumerated classes of people: spouses and children, usually . And unmarried couples, straight or gay, are not among those entitled to sue. So the victim's seventeen-year-old daughter might be able to recover, but not Urschel.

Urschel's lawyer, Kenneth Allen, plans to challenge the wrongful death law. Similar challenges were successful in California and D.C., but not in New York (even though, there, the couple had gone to Vermont and obtained a civil union license). So the prospects for success are unclear. Of course, none of this legal maneuvering would be necessary if the state would recognize same-sex marriages. Urschel and her late partner, Tammy VanDam, had been together for 10 years, so perhaps they would have married had they been permitted to do so.

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The lesson is clear: With a relative snap of the fingers, marriage can solve a host of legal issues that otherwise are complex and indeterminate. Yet it can't stop discrimination from occurring, as seen by recent high-profile cases involving alleged discrimination by Vermont innkeepers against a same-sex couple, and the story I reported last week about a bridal shop that, risibly, declared illegal the sale of a dress to a lesbian. Today, these stories inspire more sympathy for the couple than for the discriminators. And that drives the increasingly shrill rhetoric from equality opponents like Gallagher and her organization, the National Organization for Marriage. As we well know, people generally don't like being viewed unsympathetically. So I was only mildly surprised to read her recent column, where, after recounting the woes that equality opponents have endured for daring to oppose our "agenda," she launched into an intellectually vacuous comparison between abortion and marriage. It's worth quoting at some length:

"At the heart of each movement is the belief that by re-jiggering words, elites change reality itself. A human life can be redefined as a cluster of cells. Marriage can be remade to mean whatever the government decides. Reality itself can be re-mastered to accommodate sexual desires. "But in truth, government cannot create life, and did not create marriage, and government has no business redefining either." Her argument depends critically on having the reader overlook a glaring fact: Gallagher assumes that her definitions of "life" and "marriage" are somehow essential, and incontestable. If you buy that, then her conclusions follow. But in the real world, we have to make complex decisions about legal and social structures. The position that a human life begins at conception is intellectually respectable, but it's not indisputable. It assumes that the potential for something that we'd all agree is human life is such a life from the moment the zygote is created.

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As for marriage, she's much further off the mark. Government surely created the legal institution of marriage, and it's the definition of that institution – not some natural law construct of Gallagher's or of Robert George's – that is up to us to define. And the idea that marriage has never been redefined is so thoroughly contradicted by the evidence as to be embarrassing to read. As the marriage equality movement accelerates toward its inevitable victory, expect much more of this – and expect it to get worse. Reason finds no shelter in a climate of fear.

(John Culhane is a law professor and a blogger. This is reprinted from 365Gay.com)

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Much Ado About Nothing

Jack Melichar

Well boys and girls, it's that time again - the beginning of a new theatre season. This looks like it will be another good year for the Arizona Theatre Company.

The season's premier work is SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE ADVENTURE OF THE SUICIDE CLUB.

In the heart of London, behind the impassive facade of a windowless house, some of Europe's most powerful men gather to play a game. The game is murder, and this is the Suicide Club. But the club now has a new member - Sherlock Holmes - brilliant, perceptive, the greatest detective in the English-speaking world. Does Holmes wish to die? Will he have to kill? Can his old friend Dr. Watson save him? Or doesn't Holmes want to be saved?

The play, a beguiling World Premier thriller commissioned by ATC from one of their favorite authors - Jeffrey Hatcher - brings the famous detective alive in a tale full of mystery, twists and chills. I will have more on this play later.

Sherlock Holmes will be followed in October by Tony Award Winner for the best play of 2009 - GOD OF CARNAGE. November will bring us DADDY LONG LEGS followed in turn by Alfred Hitchcock's THE 39 STEPS, THE GREAT GATSBY, RED, and finally CAFÉ BOHEMIA.

Next week, I will examine the Republican "wanna be President" field and try to guess which one is a proper candidate for the Mensa Society. Personally, I would select Michelle Bachmann - NOT. I think she has given "dumb" a whole new meaning.

Actually, I will look at aging because 70 will be staring me in the face. Anyway kids, have a great week and stay tuned for my tale of woe. However, I will give you a hint:

My memory shrinks,
My hearing stinks,
No sense of smell,
I look like hell!

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1,400 Gay, Lesbian Couples Marry In New York City

NEW YORK (Observer Update) - Roughly 1,400 gay and lesbian couple have married in New York City since the state began issuing marriage licenses to gay couples on July 24, the New York Post reported.

The Post's numbers are a guesstimate of sorts, since officials removed the gender requirement from the application. City Clerk Michael McSweeney told the paper that it was reasonable to assume that the difference between the number of licenses issued last year (4,200) and this year (5,587) have gone to gay couples, reports advocate.com.

"We've had to work hard to handle the increase, but even as same-sex marriage starts to feel routine here, everyone seems profoundly happy to be here," McSweeney told the paper.

"Last week, we averaged 335 license applications a day, busier than ever," he added, referring to the city's busiest month of August.

In remarks to the paper, several couples expressed surprise that only 1 in 4 licenses were issued to gay couples. "It's great, but I'm surprised the number isn't higher," Miller Hall, 44, said as he and boyfriend of 11 years Vince Gatton prepared to apply for a marriage license.

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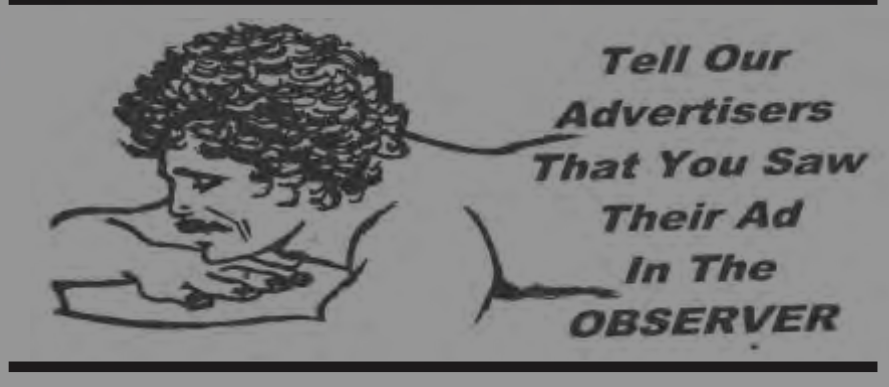

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Travel Expert: 'How To Avoid The "Gay Gouge!"'

NEW YORK (Observer Update) - Question: My partner and I want to travel to Europe next summer, but are tired of being the only gay couple in a travel group. Are there any gay travel groups that offer travel packages without the "gay gouge?"

Answer: I'm with you about the gay travel surcharge, which I have never heard called the "gay gouge" before but I will begin using that term from now on, thanks, reported Orbitz on 365Gay.com.

Not all gay group travel need be expensive. One company I have traveled with and worked with for years is the excellent Key West-based Alyson Adventures. Although they aren't really a "budget" gay tour company, the very nature of their adventure trips emphasize activities like hiking, biking, and camping, which automatically bring costs down.

These outdoor adventures also take you deeper into a country and more intimately involved with it, versus merely sticking around the noisy cities and the bars. And you don't need to be a jock, either – their trips typically are mellow and include visits to wineries, tours of museums, exploring historical sites, etc. They are fun and educational and not just a cheap backpacking experiences, to be sure.

Alyson has groups for lesbians, gay men, or a combo of both, and they tend to be small, so you get to know your fellow queer travelers and guides, and have a chance to meet locals as well.

Many of their weeklong trips to Europe fall in the $2,000 to $3,000 range, and that includes lodging, equipment like bikes, most meals, and transportation while on the trip (but not flights to the country itself). For instance, their weeklong Valley of the Kings bike tour of the chateaus of the Loire Valley in France is priced at $1,990 next September.

Alyson offers rafting, hiking, biking, and scuba trips to places in Europe like Austria, France, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, and more. Not every trip goes every year, but get enough of your friends together and they can probably find something to fit your needs. Have fun!

(Matthew Link, a writer for Orbitz, is the founding editor of two travel magazines, The Out Traveler and Sherman's Travel, and he was also guidebook pioneer Arthur Frommer's right hand man at Budget Travel magazine. This was reprinted from 365gay.com)

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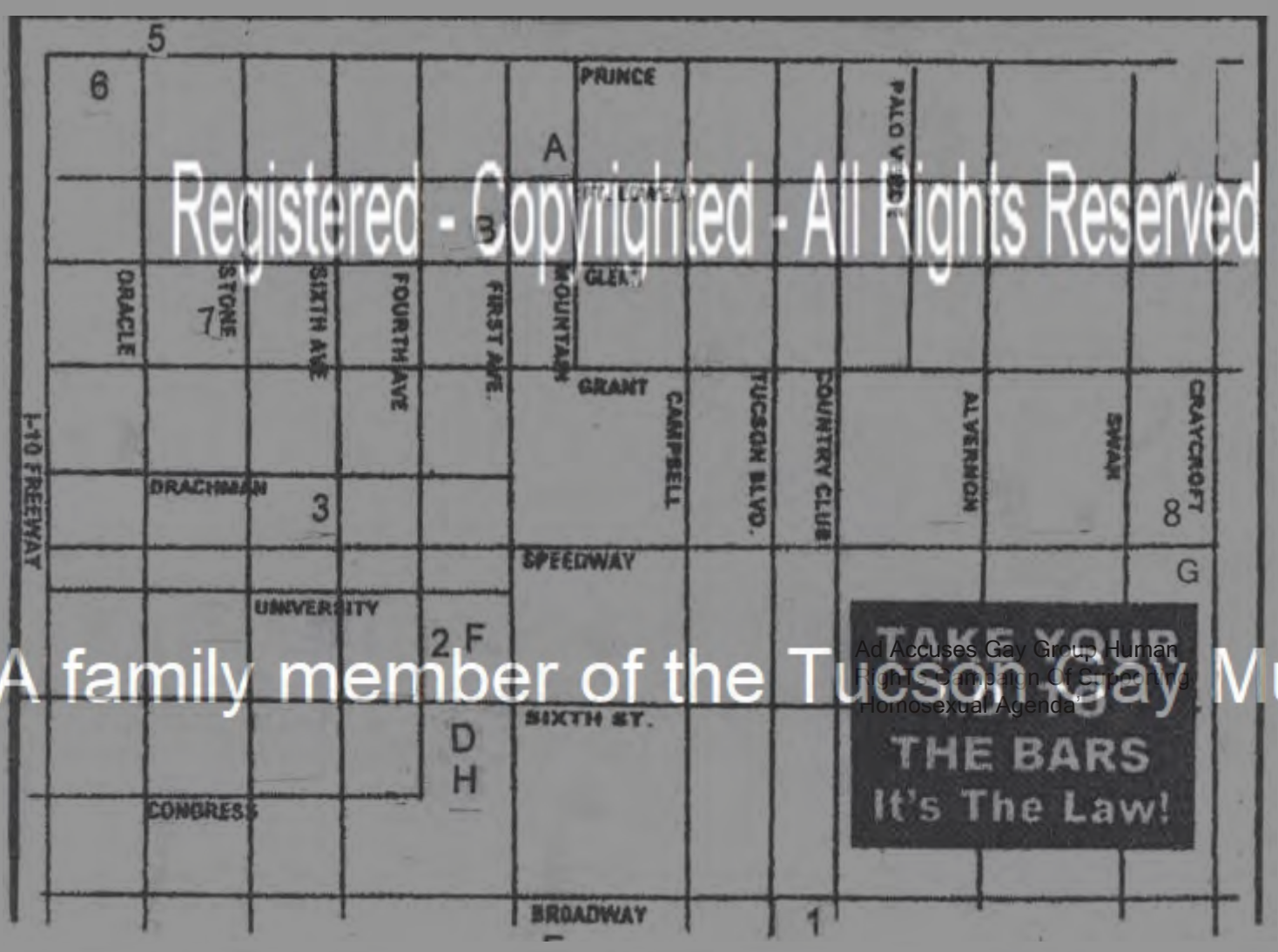

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Ad Accuses Gay Group Human Rights Campaign Of Promoting Homosexual Agenda'

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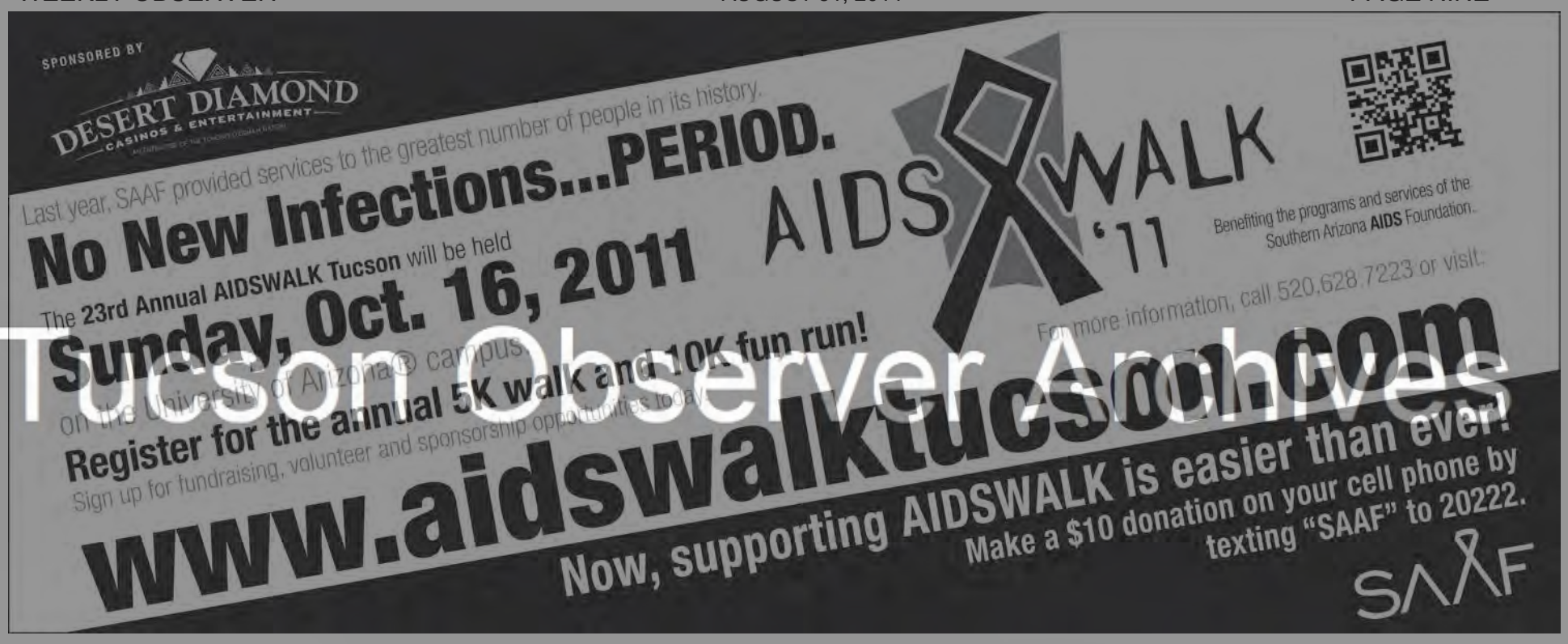

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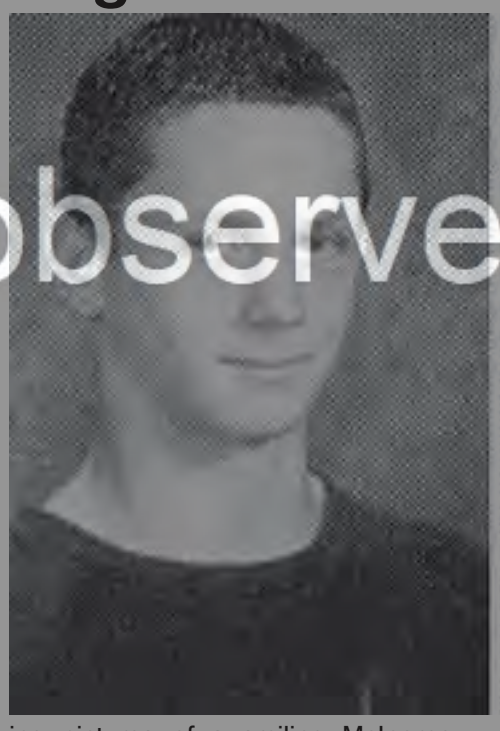
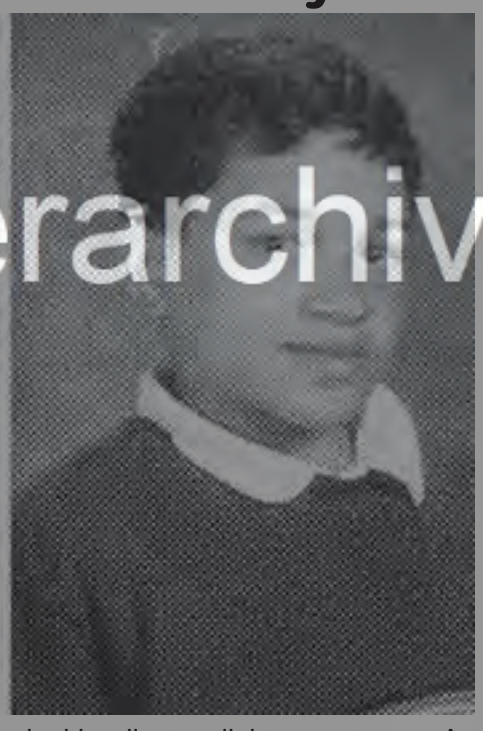
Fate Of King's Shooter Now In Jury's Hands





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CHATSWORTH (Observer Update) - After the defense concluded its arguments in the Brandon McInerney murder trial today, attorney Scott Wippert continued to paint McInerney as a victim of the effeminate Lawrence King, while in a final rebuttal, Ventura County senior deputy district attorney Maeve Fox pleaded with the jury to not let sympathy toward McInerney or bias toward gay people sway them from a first-degree murder conviction.

The proceedings in a Chatsworth, Calif., courtroom ended yesterday before Wippert could wrap up his concluding statements in the trial of McInerney, who shot 15-year-old King twice in the head in February 2008 at Oxnard, Calif.'s E.O. Green Middle School. For much of Friday morning, Wippert repeated his points from the previous day, saying King's alleged flirtation and effeminate manner helped pushed McInerney "to his limit," therefore justifying a manslaughter conviction, not first- or second-degree murder.

He again took umbrage at Fox's characterization of his defense as one of "gay panic." Though he disputed he was trying to whip up stereotypes of gay men as sexual predators – which Fox accused him of doing yesterday – he soon described King's occasional wearing of makeup and high-heeled boots as highly "disruptive" to E.O. Green students and claimed King routinely "harassed" male students, and "victimized" and "humiliated" McInerney.

"The [E.O. Green] boys didn't feel safe in the school," Wippert said, because of the 5-foot 4-inch, 125-pound King.

Wippert brought up an unsubstantiated rumor regarding King giving a valentine to McInerney and routinely brought up an incident where King possibly said, "What's up, baby?" to McInerney. Fox, in her closing arguments yesterday, said "What's up, baby" was said to McInerney just minutes after McInerney told King he was going to shoot him, and that was a normal response to a threat King didn't realize was serious. Wippert, more assured then yesterday, repeatedly told the jury that the "What's up, baby?" was the "straw that popped the balloon" in McInerney's head and cemented his decision to shoot King.

Before he concluded by showing pictures of a smiling McInerney three years ago and saying, "Remember, he was only 14" (when he shot King), Wippert worked to discredit King's onetime best friend, Avery L., saying she had a tenuous relationship with the truth. Avery previously testified that McInerney associated with white supremacists and that it was King who was bullied at E.O. Green, not McInerney. Wippert then zeroed in on former E.O. Green vice principal Joy Epstein, a lesbian who Wippert claims enabled King's wearing of high heels and makeup. Earlier in the case, some E.O. Green teachers testified for the defense that they complained about King's attire to Epstein but that she did little in response.

"Epstein could have prevented this," Wippert said.

Because the prosecution has the burden of proof, it was allowed the last word, with Fox given an opportunity for rebuttal. Fox pounced on Wippert's attacks on Epstein.

"What is it about Epstein?" Fox asked rhetorically. "The liar, the pariah, the person who could have averted this tragedy – she's a lesbian."

Fox reiterated that Wippert was working to garner sympathy for McInerney by repeatedly bringing up his abusive childhood and mentioning McInerney's age at the time of the shooting 39 times in his closing argument. She also said there was no doubt Wippert was trying to stir up jurors' latent homophobia in an effort to gain his client a lighter sentence. A witness who previously reenacted the way King walked was described by Fox as mockery, and she added that the defense counsel was complicit in the ridicule.

"It's an attempt to reach somewhere deep down," she said. "To a dark place."

Fox countered Wippert's actions by showing a picture of King just a few days before the shooting, smiling and holding up a green dress given to him by his teacher. He had makeup on that was barely visible and was wearing a school uniform, not a dress.

"This is the guy that you are being asked to believe was a sexual predator who tortured the defendant into a state of despair," she said. "This [person] is so threatening to the average male psyche of 14 or 44 or 84?"

King wasn't even a human to McInerney, Fox said, reminding jurors that McInerney told a psychiatrist just that. She closed her case by saying that a manslaughter conviction would require jurors believing an average person would have acted as McInerney did.

The final words of the two-month-long trial hinged on that fact.

"Why did nobody lay a finger on Larry King except the defendant?" Fox asked. "Because [McInerney's] not your average reasonable person. He's extreme and he did the most extreme thing humanly possible, and you should convict him of first-degree murder and find all the special charges to be true."

The jurors were then given explicit instructions on how they should arrive at their ruling. If there is not a unanimous decision or murder or manslaughter, the jury will be declared hung and the case will likely be retried.

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Poet's Corner

3011 "DRAVILIAN POETRY"

by Ron Rose - Tucson

2011 folks spoke in strange tongues
In the Good Old U.S.A.
They called these strange tongues "Anglish".
In the Good Old U.S.A.
They lived in tiny boxes
In the Good Old U.S.A.
They called these boxes "Hosis"
In the Good Old U.S.A.
They prayed on every corner
In the Good Old U.S.A.
They called their churches "Stirbicks"
In the Good Old U.S.A.
They played a game called "Bisbol"
In the Good Old U.S.A.
Also the "Stick Market"
In the Good Old U.S.A.
"T-Shirts" wore their God's name "(Nike)"
In the Good Old U.S.A.
Atoms formed an "A-BUM"
In the Good Old U.S.A.
"BUM" went BOOM and killed them
Bye, Bye, U.S.A.

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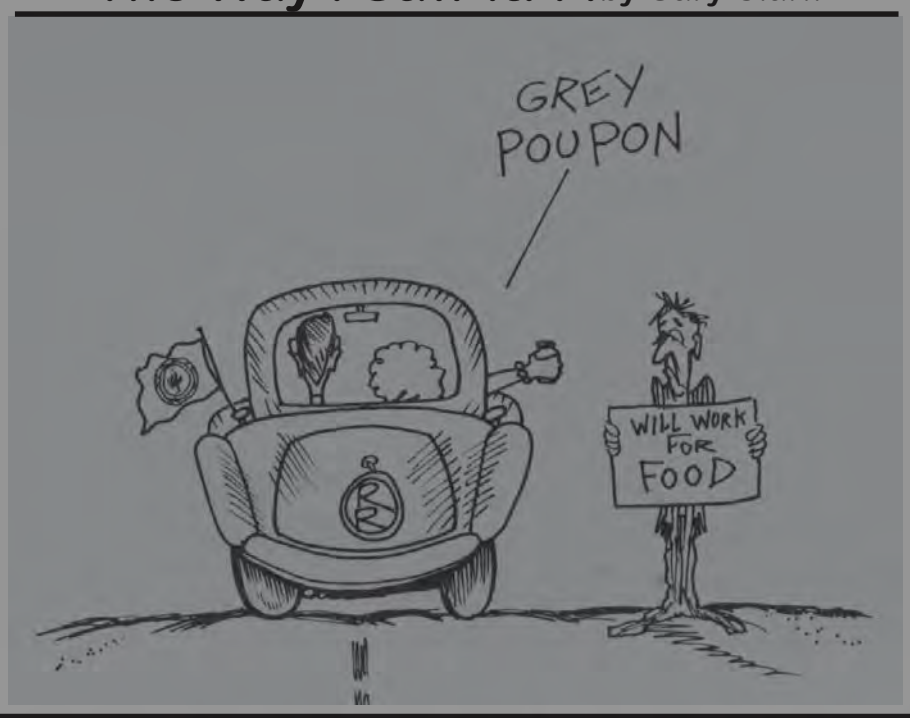
The Way I Saw It. . . .by Gary Clark



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

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Gay Man Barred From Being Alone With His Step Children

HOUSTON (Observer Update) - A Houston judge has ordered a gay man not to leave his children alone with his husband, the Houston Chronicle reported.

William Flowers and Jim Evans married last year in Connecticut, one of six states where such unions are legal. Flowers sought custody of his three children from a previous marriage to a woman that ended in 2004.

A jury decided that the woman should keep the kids and his visitations would continue. Neither party alleged the children had been or would be in danger of being abused. Harris County Associate Judge Charley E. Prine, Jr. ruled after the trial that Flowers was not permitted to leave his children alone with any male to whom the children are not related by "blood or adoption," effectively cutting out Flowers' husband Jim Evans.

Judge Prine declined to comment on his ruling, but lawyers told the paper that it appeared as if Prine felt it necessary to protect the children from gay men. "Attorneys who practice family law in Texas point out that in cases of abuse, it is common for courts to prevent children from being alone with specific people," the paper wrote. "But those same lawyers say that they've never heard of a case in which a step-parent or long-term partner is permanently enjoined from being along with his or her step-children when abuse is not even alleged, let alone proven. No lawyer consulted for this story has ever heard of an order which prohibits children from being left alone with an entire gender." Flowers has said he will appeal the decision.

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Contact the Tucson's LGBT Museum about sharing/donating your LGBT history-related memories, memorabilia, photos, 8mm films, home videos. Estate LGBT historical items are welcomed from executors, executrixes, individuals, family members, trustees.

Tucson LGBT Museum (Tucson Gay Museum)

Chris Barron Suggests Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender People Not Part Of Gay Community

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NEW YORK (Observer Update) - Chris Barron, chairman of gay GOP group GOProud, has suggested lesbian, bisexual and transgender people are not part of the gay community.

During an appearance on Fox News' early morning talk show Red Eye, Barron mocked a viewer's question that included the inclusive term LGBT, which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. "Will a gay Republican ever be truly accepted in the LGBT community? Will Bill?" a viewer messaged the show on Twitter, a reference to host Bill Schulz. Barron complained, "Why do I get the gay question?" then added: "Yeah, I think a Republican will be accepted in the gay community. I don't know about the LGBTQI whatever community. I don't think Bill's ever going to be accepted."

He later added: "They're adding letters to [it] I don't even understand anymore." Earlier this month, GOProud stirred controversy in announcing that celebrity conservative and author Ann Coulter had joined its advisory council and been given the title "gay icon." Coulter is best known for calling former Senator John Edwards a "faggot" during his 2008 bid for the White House.

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Daily Bar Calendar

SUNDAY

THE BIZ - Closed Sunday , Monday, Tuesday
BRODIES - Open 10am - 2am. Happy Hour 10am-8pm
IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm $2 Well or Domestic Beer. Karaoke on the Patio 4-8:30pm. Burger BBQ 5-8pm + $1 pint draft. 9pm-close Karaoke inside with Troy & $1.50 Well or Domestic Beer, $2.50 Call or Premium Beer. DJ Hurricane on the Patio.
NEW MOON - Open 4pm. Happy Hour 4-8 = $2 well, dom longnecks, dom pints, or New Moon shots. Kitchen open 5-9pm. Check our calendar for special events.
WOODY'S - Open 11am-2am. Beer specials and Trailer Trash Martini's All Day. Check our Ad for Special Events or Parties

MONDAY

THE BIZ - Closed
BRODIES - Open 10am-2am. Happy Hour 10am-8
IBT's -Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm $2 Well or Domestic Beer. 8pm-close $5 Scratch Long Island Varieties. 9pm-close DJ Hurricane with "All Request Music".
NEW MOON - Closed Mondays
WOODY'S - Open 11am-2am. Service Industry Night - Employee prices all day..

TUESDAY

THE BIZ - Closed Tuesdays
BRODIES - Open 10am - 2am. Happy Hour 10am - 8pm.
IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, $2 Well or Domestic Beer.
8pm-close "2'sDay" - $2 Well or Domestic Beer. DJ 9pm-close.
NEW MOON - Open 4pm. $2 well, dom. Long necks, pints New Moon Shots. Kitchen open 5-9. Women's Texas Hold 'em poker 6pm. Karaoke 8pm.
WOODY'S - Open 11am- 2am. 2-4-1 Night

WEDNESDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Happy Hour 5-9pm (2 for 1). College Night 18 & Over. Drink & Shot specials every half hour.
BRODIES - Open 10am - 2am. Happy Hour 10am - 8pm.
IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, $2 Well or Domestics..11pm - -close "Reverse Happy Hour".
NEW MOON - Open 4pm. $2 well, dom. Long necks, pints New Moon Shots. Kitchen open 5-9. $2 off appetizer menu items* with drink purchase (priced $4 or higher).
WOODY'S - Open 11am-2am;. Happy Hour Prices all day.

THURSDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Happy Hour 5-9pm. 2 for 1 All Night Long.. Karaoke 9pm. Come out and play.
BRODIES - Open 10am - 2am. Happy Hour 10am - 8pm.
IBT's -Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, $2 Well or Do mestics. 10pm-close "Boyz Nite Out" w/Bartenders in their underwear. DJ Hurricane spinning Top 40 & DJ Mike Lopez on the patio. $1.75 Long Island, $1.50 Tequila Shots, $3 Skyy Cape Cods and $4 Skyy Cosmos.
NEW MOON - Open 4pm. $2 well, dom. Long necks, pints New Moon Shots. Kitchen open 5-9. Free Nachos 5-7. New Babies Drag Show 8pm. Check ouit the new talent!
WOODY'S - Open 11am-2am; Free pool and Happy Hour prices all day.

FRIDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Happy Hour 5-9 pm (2 for1) Latino Night. $2 Tequila, $1.50 Tecate. $5 Buckets of Beer.
.BRODIES - Open 10am - 2am. Happy Hour 10am-8pm. Karaoke 9pm.
IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, $2 Well or Domestics. 9pm -close DJ Hurricane inside. 10pm-close DJ Mike Lopez with "I'm a Sexy Bitch Night" on the patio.
NEW MOON - Open 4pm. $2 well, dom. Long necks, pints New Moon Shots. Kitchen open 5-9. Women's Texas Hold 'em poker 6pm. Karaoke 8pm. First and Third Fridays are country, with dance lessons at 7pm and country DJ 8:30.
WOODY'S - Open 11am-2am; Happy Hour 11am-8pm (excl spec events). Full Menu Kitchen open 11am-11pm Back Pocket Patio Bar open 5pm-close. Enjoy the Live vocals and piano styling of Susan Artemis 6-9pm. Tori Steele Show 10pm

SATURDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm - 2am. $10 and drink for pennies. All night long.
BRODIES - Open 10am - 2am. Happy Hour 10am-8pm.
IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, $2 Well or Domestics. 5-8pm Karaoke on the patio $1Draft Pints. 9pm "Saturday Starrlett's" w/ Bunny FuFu & Janee Starr. After the show, DJ Spinning inside & 10pm-close, DJ Mike Lopez with the "Party on the Patio".
NEW MOON - Open 4pm. $2 well, dom. Long necks, pints New Moon Shots. Kitchen open 5-9. Cheeseburger & Fries $5.
WOODY'S - Open 11am-2am; Happy Hour 10am-8pm (excl spec events); Full Menu Kitchen open11am-11pm. .

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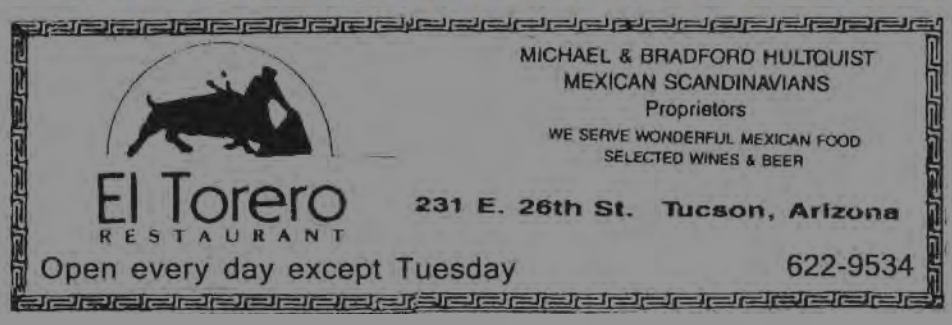

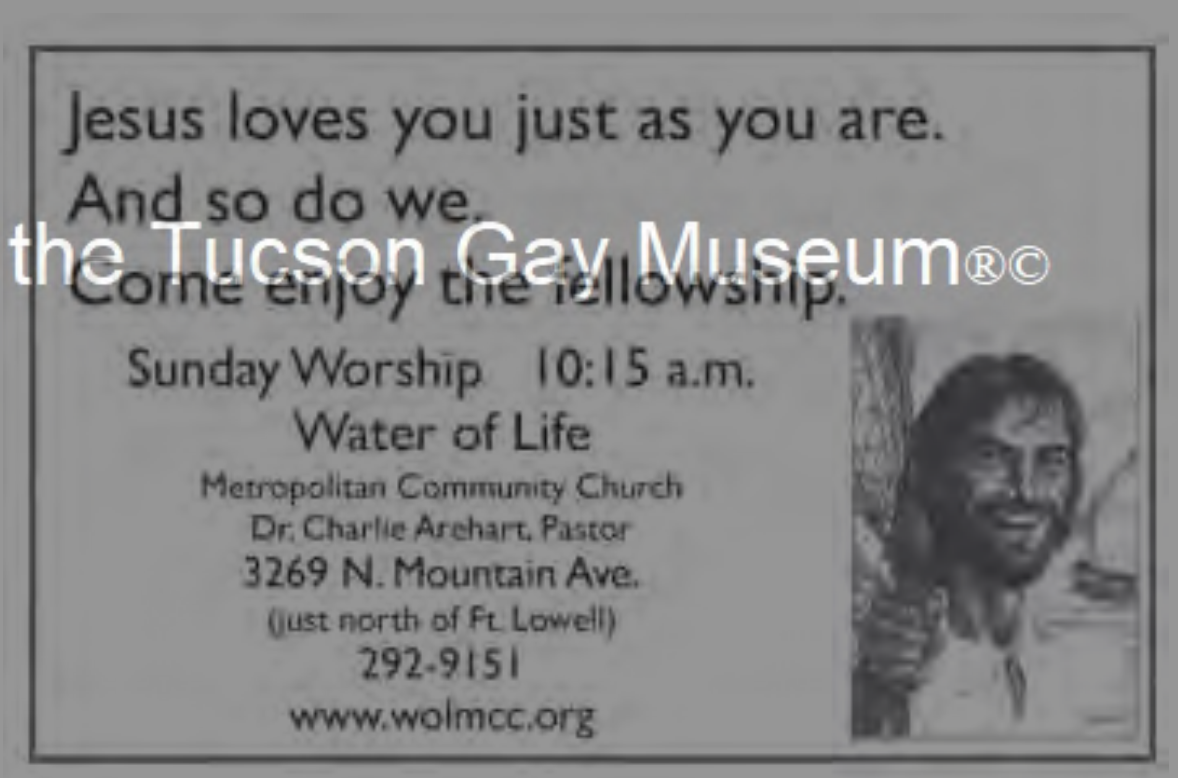

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The Top Non-Stereotypical Gay Characters On Television

LOS ANGELES (Observer Update) - There have always been stereotypical gay and bisexual depictions on our screen – but sometimes TV shows have broken the mold, giving us characters who are people first and gay or bi second. Here are our favorites, current and past, tv.com reported.

CHARACTERS ON AIR NOW

Renly Baratheon (HBO's Game of Thrones) The book series hinted that Renly was gay, but in the show he is seen being shaven by shirtless Loras – who later goes down on him. Though this relationship is still young in its development, it's the medieval times we're talking about. At least we know that any gay character in a medieval production couldn't go around on shopping sprees, being fabulous. That would just be weird.

Max (ABC's Happy Endings) Max, played by Adam Pally, is a sloppy individual who is considered a "bro." He's chunky and unambitious – worlds away from the stereotype of a finicky, neat, overly organized gay man.

Owen Cavanaugh (CBS' The Good Wife) Alicia's younger brother Owen (Dallas Roberts) is a math professor, not an interior decorator or fashion designer. While some gay characters don't wind up dating much in their shows, Owen is rumored to be getting a boyfriend in the upcoming fall season.

Kalinda Sharma (CBS' The Good Wife) While Kalinda (Archie Panjabi) does fit the bisexual stereotype of promiscuity and turns out to be a bit of a home wrecker, she's also a lot more than that. An intelligent and successful woman, Kalinda's bisexuality isn't what defines her. In a conversation with another character, she notes that she doesn't distinguish between sex with a man and sex with a woman because she doesn't do relationships that involve love or intimacy.

Cameron Tucker (ABC's Modern Family) Cam Tucker (Eric Stonestreet) is a hefty, ex-offensive lineman for a university football team and avid sports fan. Yes, he's on the fey side, but he and his partner have an adopted daughter and a stable home life – they're not picking up strangers in a park.

John Cooper (TNT's Southland) John (Michael Cudlitz) is a hard-nosed police officer who hangs with the best of 'em on the mean streets of gang-infested South Los Angeles. If someone told you a gay cop was on the way to the rescue, you'd probably assume it was your bachelor party.

Dr. Arizona Robbins (ABC's Grey's Anatomy) Jessica Capshaw plays a veteran lesbian who winds up in a relationship with inexperienced Callie. Arizona is a quirky, often ironic pediatric surgeon.

Oscar (NBC's The Office) Oscar Nunez plays Oscar Martinez on NBC's The Office – he's a character who had to come out of the closet for anyone to really know he was gay. An accountant who wears a generic suit and tie, Oscar doesn't outwardly exhibit any gay traits at all. He even made reference to dating a woman at one point, and when asked who he'd do, responded "Pam."

CHARACTERS THAT ARE NO LONGER ON THE AIR

Kevin Walter (ABC's Brothers & Sisters) Kevin (Matthew Rhys) is a lawyer and married. At the start of the show, he was already out to his family and coworkers, allowing him to really blend in with all of the other heterosexuals around him. He was treated like an equal (and his relationship is accepted in his family) and isn't flamboyant.

Omar (HBO's The Wire) Omar is a thug. A gangster. He steals drugs. He carries a gun. He wears a trench coat. Homophobia is a misnomer, not because people are afraid of gays, but because they don't accept them. Omar is a gay character others are literally afraid of. How many gay people do you know that you find terrifying?

Brian & "Straight" Steve (Comedy Central's Sarah Silverman Program) Brian (played by Brian Posehn) seems to identify as a bear: he is husky and hairy (though he's also generally not well kept). However, he is also nerdy and a metal-head, characteristics which make his gayness anything but obvious. His partner Steve (Steven Agee) is a video game addict. From the outside, they look like two straight dudes who hang out.

Caleb Brewer (WB's Melrose Place) Played by Victor Webster, Caleb Brewer is stereotypically Aaron Spelling promiscuous, but he doesn't mess around with HGTV and frou-frou drinks; rather, he is a hunk who enjoys sports, Scotch and cigars.

Willow (WB's Buffy the Vampire Slayer) Willow (Alyson Hannigan) is a nerd of sorts, despite her supernatural abilities. She originally has a huge crush on a male character Xander, then Oz, but eventually falls for female Tara. Willow started out as a shy and awkward teenager who developed into a strong, confident leader and replacement for Buffy.

Jack McPhee (WB's Dawson Creek) Played by Kerr Smith, Jack was not one to fit into any overtly gay stereotype. He spent a lot of time reflecting upon who he was and coming to terms with being different. He is a jock – and it was nice to see a gay character portrayed like that.

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