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Commemorating The 30th Anniversary of First-Ever Meeting Between White House And Gay And Lesbian Leaders



COMMEMORATING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST-EVER MEETING BETWEEN WHITE HOUSE AND GAY AND LESBIAN LEADERS

WASHINGTON, D.C. - During a press conference to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the first-ever meeting between the White House and Gay and Lesbian leaders (Mar. 26, 1977), those who attended that historic gathering talked about that milestone and the progress since made – or lack thereof.

“Thirty years ago, I received a phone call from Jean O’Leary and Bruce Voeller, the co-executive directors of the National Gay [and Lesbian] Task Force, and what they said was, ‘It is time. It is time that a government we helped choose and a government we help pay no longer discriminate against us. We want to talk – and we want to talk in the White House,’ and I agreed that certainly the Constitution demanded that everyone be represented under those laws, and that would include Gays and Lesbians,” recounted Midge Costanza, then-assistant to President Jimmy Carter.

The White House meeting in 1977 was initiated by Task Force leadership. Costanza met with Task Force co-executive directors Jean O’Leary and Bruce Voeller (now both deceased) and other leaders for a briefing on critical policy issues affecting the community – many of which remain relevant, including Gays in the military, immigration, religious discrimination against Gay and Lesbian people, and prison abuse. While the meeting was a critical milestone for Gay and Lesbian people in terms of access to the country’s most powerful leadership, the criticism of the Carter White House that followed was intense. “Anita Bryant back then wanted my resignation, as did many of the right-wing groups. More mail was generated from that meeting than from any other issue during Jimmy Carter’s

administration,” said Costanza. But the sense that something vitally important was unfolding was profound.

“There was a point made during the meeting that Franklin Kameny had marched outside the White House 12 years earlier. Here we were in 1977, and Frank was inside the gates now. Midge welcomed him, saying, ‘Frank, I’m really glad to meet you finally. I’m just sorry that it has taken so long to come into a house that belongs to you as much as it belongs to anyone in this country.’ Elaine Noble said that some of us had been marching outside the White House gates so long, we wondered if there was an inside,” recalled Pokey Anderson.

Said Bishop Troy Perry of Metropolitan Community Church: “What I remember most about the White House meeting is that we were actually inside the White House while Anita Bryant and right-wing politicians were fighting to take away our rights. We were actually meeting with the staff of the president of the United States. I remember thinking, ‘Thank God we’re inside while that group is outside.’”

“Now we’re outside, and they own the White House,” countered Elaine Noble, who, like other speakers today, acknowledged the progress made – but also the grim reality of the current administration and the fact that much remains to be done.

“Thirty years ago on this day, the doors of the White House were opened to us. Today, in spite of exponentially positive changes in public support for our equal rights, those doors are slammed tight, as they have been for nearly 20 out of the last 30 years. Thirty years ago no federal laws protected Gay people. Today, sadly, the same is true,” said Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Report: More Than One-Third Of Lesbians Have Children

LOS ANGELES - A new study on Gay parenting shows that more than one in three Lesbians have given birth and one in six Gay men have fathered or adopted a child, 365Gay.com reported. The report, prepared jointly by the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law and the Urban Institute shows that an estimated 65,500 adopted children are living with a Lesbian or Gay parent.

In California alone more than 16,000 adopted children are living with Lesbian and Gay parents. The study, Adoption and Foster Care by Lesbian and Gay Parents in the United States, says that Gay and Lesbian parents are raising four percent of all adopted children in the United States. Yet the figure could be much higher the authors say. More than half of Gay men and 41 percent of Lesbians want to have a child. That would mean, according to the report, an estimated two million GLB people who are interested in adopting.

“Our study documents that a significant number of GLB individuals and couples are raising adopted and fostered children and two million GLB people would consider adopting a child,” said Gary J. Gates, Senior Research Fellow at the Williams Institute, “GLB people appear to be an under-utilized resource for child wel-

fare agencies desperately in need of families willing to foster and perhaps adopt children who have had a rough start in life.”

The study relied on data from the U.S. Census 2000, the National Survey of Family Growth from 2002, and the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System of 2004. Currently half a million children live in foster care in the United States and more than 100,000 foster children await adoption. States must recruit parents who are interested and able to foster and adopt children. Three states currently restrict GLB individuals or couples from adopting. Several states have or are considering policies that would restrict GLB people from fostering.

“Same-sex couples raising adopted children are older, more educated, and have more economic resources than other adoptive parents,” the report says. It also notes that adopted children with same-sex parents are younger and more likely to be foreign born. The authors also have a warning for states the currently ban Gay adoption and others, like Arkansas, that are considering a ban. “Costs to individual states could range from \$100,000 to \$27 million. A national ban on GLB foster care could cost from \$87 to \$130 million.”

L/G Families Prepare For White House Egg Roll

WASHINGTON, D.C. - More than one hundred Gay and Lesbian families have signed up to take part in this year’s annual White House Easter Egg Roll - twice the number that had signed on this time last year, reported 365Gay.com. The annual event on the White House lawn is open to the public.

Thousands of tickets - an estimated 16,000 last year - are given away on a first-come-first-come basis beginning at 7:30 a.m. Saturday (Apr. 7). National Park Service officials said that children of all ages may attend as long as there is at least one child 7 years old or younger, and no more than two adults per group.

Last year Family Pride, a national organization that advocates for Gay families encouraged Gay and Lesbian parents to bring their kids to the Roll. About 50 families signed up on the Family Pride website and more than 100 showed up for tickets. Wearing rainbow-colored leis as a unifying symbol they joined the thousands of other families whose children searched for eggs hidden on the grounds, despite a driving rain. Publicity surrounding last year’s Roll angered social conservatives pushing for a federal constitutional amendment to ban Gay marriage, calling it a publicity stunt and a protest.

But Family Pride maintained it was not a protest - there were no signs

and no chants - just the rainbow leis. First lady Laura Bush’s office issued a statement to quell the conservative protest saying all families are welcome to attend. Mrs. Bush and the President posed for pictures - but only with the families of White House staff. By the time the Gay and other families got in the President and First Lady had left in what was seen as a move to avoid having their pictures taken with Gay families.

This year a Family Pride contingent will begin standing in line Friday night at 7:00 p.m. in order to secure early tickets to participate in the Roll. “We believe that by participating fully and openly in time honored traditions like the Egg Roll we can help the American public come to know our families,” the group said in a statement. “Last year’s Egg Roll was an amazing time and, for one weekend, this country was introduced to our families on a grand scale. And in addition to educating people about our lives, we had a great time rolling eggs, meeting amazing children’s characters and participating in a wonderful family celebration.” The egg roll has been a Washington tradition since the mid-19th century. Children use spoons to push colored eggs through the grass in a race. Past events have included petting zoos and White House staff members in bunny costumes.

UPDATE

SAAF Marks Tenth Anniversary April 12

TUCSON - The Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation (SAAF) will be holding a 10 year anniversary event at its 375 S. Euclid location, Apr. 12, 5 to 7:00 p.m.

A program highlighting local dignitaries sharing their perspectives on SAAF and AIDS will occur, a AIDS timeline will be displayed, spanning the 25 year history of the virus and tours of SAAF will be available. Music will be provided by boogie-woogie and jazz pianist Arthur Migliazzi. Hors d'oeuvres will be served.

In 1997, SAAF resulted from the merger of three different AIDS service organizations: the Tucson AIDS Project (TAP), the Shanti Foundation and the People with AIDS Coalition of Tucson (PACT). The purposes of the merger were to best serve people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS and better utilize scarce resources. The success of this merger was the result of the years of experience each agency brought to the newly formed organization and the significant reduction in administrative costs. This 10th Anniversary event acknowledges that SAAF continues the practice of its predecessors by providing direct services and programs in safe, supportive environments that enhance the quality of life for those living with and affected by HIV/AIDS; by assisting people in avoiding HIV infection; and by empowering people to lead healthy, productive lives.

"The harsh reality is that HIV/AIDS is still with us and that there is no end in sight but SAAF remains committed to its mission: to create and sustain a healthier community through a compassionate, comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS. This anniversary is not only an acknowledgment of the past, it is also a commitment to today and every day until the need is no longer," states Rick Wilson, Director of Development at SAAF.

For more information, call SAAF at (520) 628-7223 or go online to saaf.org.

Eytan Fox At UA April 12

TUCSON - Gay Israeli director Eytan Fox will be coming to the University of Arizona's Gallagher Theater on Thursday, Apr. 12, 6:00 p.m.

Eytan, director of the award winning films "Walk On Water" and

"Yossi and Jagger," will be screening one of his films and discussing his work, as well as the issues surrounding everyday LGBT life in Israel. Admission is free.

For more information, E-mail: bensky.cook@gmail.com.

AHRF So. AZ Caucus Meeting April 19

TUCSON - The Arizona Human Rights Fund (AHRF) southern Arizona Caucus is a regional group that functions as an AHRF subsidiary. All community members are invited to discuss the Legislature, the 2007 Tucson City Council elections and upcoming AHRF events Thursday, April 19, 6:00 p.m., at the Wingspan Community Center, 425 E 7th St.

In order to participate in the endorsements for the 2007 Tucson City Council elections, you must attend four of the six meetings from Feb. to July.

For more information, contact Barbara McCullough-Jones at publicaffairs@ahrf.org or call (602) 650-0900.

Cornerstone Easter Services April 6 & 8

TUCSON - Cornerstone Fellowship will be hold their annual services for Easter, Apr. 6 and 8.

Starting on Friday, Apr. 6, 7:00 p.m., Cornerstone will hold their Good Friday services. On Sunday, Apr. 8, Cornerstone will celebrate Easter, beginning with a sunrise service at 6:30 a.m. and the Easter church services, 10:30 a.m. in the sanctuary. These services are open to everyone to celebrate.

Cornerstone Fellowship is committed to sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with all persons, regardless of race, culture, social standing, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Cornerstone Fellowship is located at 2902 N. Geronimo, in Tucson, Arizona, online at cornerstonefellowshiptucson.com. For more information, call (520) 622-4626.



Jell-O Wrestling May 6

TUCSON - The 20th Anniversary of the Reno Gannon Memorial Jell-O Wrestling and Live Auction Extravaganza will be held on Sunday, May 6, 2:00 p.m., at Woody's, 3710 N. Oracle, to raise funds for the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation (SAAF).

Funds raised through Jell-O Wrestling assist SAAF with their mission to help people living with HIV/AIDS and make available vital HIV prevention and education programs for at-risk groups within our community and throughout the community in general.

Tickets are \$20, which includes the afternoon party, a gift from one of our Champion Sponsors, and a meal ticket for a burger, veggie burger or hot dog, chips, a beverage and sweet, or \$10 for entrance only. Please visit the Jell-O website at jello-wrestling.org to get more information or to request your application to wrestle, or contact Mae at (520) 628-7223 or by E-mail at events@saaf.org.

AHRF So. AZ Garden Party April 23

TUCSON - The Arizona Human Rights Fund will be holding their annual, Southern Arizona Garden Party, Monday, Apr. 23, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. at the Tucson Botanical Gardens, 2150 N. Alvernon.

This event is the local membership drive for the statewide LGBT rights organization. In addition, people will have a chance to mingle in one of the best gardens of the Old Pueblo and find out the latest in the political movement.

For more information or to register, go online to ahrf.org or call (602) 650-0900.

Coming Out Under Fire, April 21-22

TUCSON - Desert Voices (desertvoices.org), Tucson's LGBTs Mixed Chorus (under the direction of Chris Tackett) presents its last show of the 2006-2007 season, "Coming Out Under Fire," Apr. 21-22. This is their eighteenth season of bringing Tucson and Southern Arizona the finest in choral singing and theatrical presentations. This year the chorus is looking at the World War II years of 1939-1945 in a season they're calling "Changing History."

This final show of the season takes a more poignant look at the trials that gay and lesbian people faced around the world, on the front lines and on the home front here in Tucson during the darkest days of World War II through the Allied victory in 1945. Join the chorus as it sees how people managed to keep a gay outlook even in the darkest of times. They'll be singing even more fabulous vocal big band music (It's Been a Long, Long Time, Any Bonds Today?, Sentimental Journey) as well as some of the most beautiful choral music created in response to the hardships of the era (Randall Thompson's Alleluia, and a new setting of the prayer for the dead, El moley rachamim).

The show is presented at the Proscenium Theater on the Pima Community College West campus, 2202 W. Anklam Road, on Saturday, Apr. 21 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, Apr. 22 at 2:00 p.m. Tickets are available through any chorus member, through the Box Office, (520) 791-9662 and at Antigone Books on Fourth Avenue. Advance sales are \$18 (\$12 for senior citizens and students); \$20 at the door.

Calling for friendly and reliable people to join SAAF's Client Services Team as volunteer Peer Counselors.



If you are interested in offering peer support to clients, educating on HIV/AIDS and more, contact Volunteer Resources at 628-7223 or volcoord@saaf.org



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COMMENTARY . . .

Same Sex, Different Rules

By Harvey Fierstein

For years, the right wing has wrongly accused the Gay movement of seeking special rights. At no time has our struggle for equal rights been more transparent than in the fight to legalize marriage for Gays and Lesbians.

Those who push civil unions as a solution to the dilemma sicken me. To offer civil unions to some citizens and marriage to others is simply un-American. The only way to advocate for civil unions is to concurrently abolish marriage for all. Our rule of law has been interpreted as "separate but equal is not equal." How much more simply do you need the law explained?

Not only are civil unions unconstitutional, they are unworkable. Allow me relate the following example: My friend Charlie and his partner have been civilly unionized and, thanks to that law, his partner is covered under Charlie's union health insurance. However, at tax time Charlie received notification from the feds that he was responsible for an extra \$10,000 of income for that coverage. As a married couple, the coverage would not be taxable income. That, my friends, is not even separate-but-equal. That is institutionalized second-class citizenship.

Before you misinterpret my arguments, let me clearly say that I am not asking for your or society's approval of my love life. I do not need or seek your opinion of homosexuality at all. What I need - no, demand - is the full protection under the law that my status as a taxpaying citizen earns. In

the words of Nina Simone, "You don't have to live next to me. Just give me my equality."

Instead of a reasonable discussion of law, the debate over marriage has been reduced to a cacophony of selective Bible quotes, social doctrine, psychological misinformation and naked prejudice. Do you want to know what marriage law is really about? Ask anyone who has been divorced: Property rights are the root of these laws. It is ridiculous to assert that the state has any interest or business in "holy matrimony." Looking for something holy from government makes as much sense as shopping for art in a hardware store.

The good-thinking citizens of Massachusetts have shared the legal right of marriage with their Gay and Lesbian families for some years. Thus far, they've not been visited with predicted plagues or righteous retribution.

Rather, according to all reports, the state has found the amending of their laws a non-event. People are happy. The state flourishes. The Earth remains steady under their feet. But instead of accepting the facts of that excellent example, we are still tortured with superstitious lies that the acceptance of homosexual citizens will diminish the bonds of heterosexual ones. It's as silly as someone watching an airplane soaring overhead while proclaiming, "If God meant man to fly, he would have given him wings." The rightness of equal marriage laws is

no longer a matter of opinion. It is measurable visible fact.

Equal marriage rights are going to be the law of the land sooner or later. We can waste time, energy and billions of tax dollars fighting the inevitable, but America was founded on ideals of fairness and equality. Those principles will win the war.

Abstinence Czar Resigns

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Wade Horn, the Bush administration's point man for welfare reform, Head Start and abstinence education, resigned Monday (Apr. 2) as assistant



Wade Horn

secretary for children and families, reported 365Gay.com. In the Department of Health and Human Services, Horn oversaw a \$46 billion budget and 65 programs that serve vulnerable children and families. He is best known for his work on issues embraced by social conservatives, such as more money for faith-based groups and organizations that work to help couples improve their marriage.

Republicans gave some of those programs significant funding increases when they were in the majority. For example, Congress set aside for the next five years up to \$100 million a year to promote marriage and \$50 million a year to produce committed fathers. Similar expansions may be harder to come by with a Democratic majority. The Senate confirmed Horn in July 2001.

How long the wrong-thinking want to drag the battle out is up to them. But they have already lost. Right is on our side.

(Harvey Fierstein is a playwright, actor and four-time Tony Award winner and this op-ed is reprinted from the Apr. 1 edition of the Hartford (CT) Courant.)

He is a child psychologist who served as president of the National Fatherhood Initiative before his nomination by President Bush. Horn told his staff Monday that he would be accepting a position in the private sector. His resignation is effective Sunday (Apr. 8).

Robert Rector, a senior fellow at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, said Horn tackled the most important social issue in the United States while others ignored it - the decline of the institution of marriage. Others viewed Horn's work more skeptically. Horn oversaw a dramatic increase in funding for abstinence education, which now exceeds \$200 million a year. Some groups say it's important to promote abstinence to youth, but that message won't work for all. They would prefer that the administration fund comprehensive sex education programs, which would include abstinence as part of the curriculum. "Because (the abstinence funding) is so contrary to public health, our hope is the next assistant secretary there can have a firmer footing on what the evidence says," said William Smith, vice president for public policy for the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States.



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UPDATE

LGBT And Allied Arts Fest To Benefit Wingspan

TUCSON - Join in on Saturday, Apr. 21, 11:00 a.m. - 3 p.m. at the Wingspan (425 E. 7th St.) back parking lot for this inaugural Arts Fest.

creative moment and play with some fun art materials, as well as live music and free refreshments. As a benefit for Wingspan, 20% of all art sales will be donated to the LGBT community center.

Mingle with local artists and experience some of the incredible creative talent the community has to offer. The event will include a crafts corner for kids of all ages to have a

For more information, contact Anna Deligio at adriana.deligio@gmail.com.

Hands Across Campus April 17

TUCSON - Hands Across Campus will take place Tuesday, Apr. 17, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., on the U of A Mall in front of the Student Union Memorial Center.

hands as a part of a display of unity and solidarity. There will also be various performances by diverse groups, trainings, activities, and booths put on by Diversity Initiatives and other organizations.

Hands Across Campus symbolizes the U of A and Tucson communities coming together to fight racism, bias, and bigotry, holding

Please contact Dustin Cox for comments, questions, or concerns at uabeod@email.arizona.edu.

Foley Criminal Investigation Continues

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Observer Update) - Six months after resigning from Congress, former U.S. Rep. Mark Foley remains under criminal investigation for sexually explicit Internet communications with underage boys but has not been charged, authorities said Wednesday (Mar. 28), reported the Associated Press on the PlanetOut Network. "I can't really give any more detail other than to say we're still in the preliminary investigative stance and we are working with state authorities," said Debra Weierman, spokeswoman for the FBI's Washington field office.



Mark Foley

Florida authorities announced their own criminal investigation in Nov. 2006 but have remained tightlipped on the status since then. Foley resigned Sept. 29 after being confronted with the lurid messages to male teenage pages who had worked on Capitol Hill. He checked himself into an Arizona facility Oct. 1 for what his attorneys said was treatment of "alcoholism and other behavioral problems." At the time, his attorney said Foley was Gay, an alcoholic and had been molested by a priest as a teenage altar boy in Florida.

attempt to seduce the victim might be enough for a criminal case. Under state law in Florida, where the age of consent is 18, a crime may have been committed if Foley is simply found to have seduced or attempted to seduce a minor using lewd or explicit language. "It's definitely still an active investigation," Florida Department of Law Enforcement spokeswoman Kristen Perezluha said. Foley emerged publicly in West Palm Beach on Nov. 17 to attend a wake for his father, Edward, who died of cancer, but has rarely been seen in public since.

Attorney David Roth maintains Foley never had inappropriate sexual contact with the minors. He has declined further comment on any aspect of the case. Federal law generally requires a person to meet or attempt to meet a minor for sex for it to be a crime. However, under laws in some states where the Florida Republican communicated with minors, an



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upcoming events

Sat., April 7th - dj hard mac is back with dance mix starting at 9 pm

Sat., April 14th - Benefit show for Jasmine Bouvier starts at 9 pm

Sat., April 21st - Kimi San Dumi and guests. Show starts at 9 pm

Sat., April 28th - Boys R Us is here. Show starts at 10 pm.

Sat., May 5 - Cinco de Mayo! DJ Michelle will be playing your favorite cumbias, corridos, and Reggaeton

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April 2007

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						1 L WORD Finale Breast Cancer Awareness Fundraiser
2 Poker Night	3 Booze-Day Tuesday 25 cent drafts	4 18 & Over Hip Hop w/ DJ Shorty	5 Thunder Thursdays Drag Show DJ Hill	6 NELS Live Performance Latin	7 Hip Hop w/ DJ Shorty	8 L WORD Latin w/ DJ Dmenace
9 Poker Night	10 Wine Tasting Booze-Day Tuesday 25 cent drafts	11 18 & Over Hip Hop w/ DJ Shorty	12 BACK IN OUR DAY 80's w/ DJ Hill	13 DRAGSTAR Pink Ribbon Benefit w/DJ Hill	14 Hip Hop w/ DJ Shorty	15 Join The Biz @ the Komen Race for the Cure®
16 Poker Night	17 Booze-Day Tuesday 25 cent drafts	18 18 & Over Hip Hop w/ DJ Shorty	19 Thunder Thursdays Drag Show DJ Hill	20 FAC* 3-8p Latin w/ DJ Dennis the Menace	21 TOGA PARTY w/DJ Shorty	22 L WORD Latin w/ DJ Dmenace
23 Poker Night	24 Booze-Day Tuesday 25 cent drafts	25 18 & Over Hip Hop w/ DJ Shorty	26 Rep Ya Step w/Human Project DJ Hill	27 FAC* 3-8p Hip Hop w/ DJ Shorty	28 STOPLIGHT PARTY w/DJ Shorty	29 L WORD Latin w/ DJ Dmenace

LGBT Youth Storm State Capitals As Movement's Newest Ambassadors

SACRAMENTO, California - The half-dozen lobbyists who crowded into a lawmaker's office here didn't come bearing slick pitches, campaign cash or votes to swap, just tales of high school torment as fresh as their faces, reported the Associated Press (Mar. 31).

Maria Ramos, 18, discussed the academic toll daily doses of name-calling took on her Gay and Lesbian friends. Andrew Konke, 21, drew parallels between Gay rights and earlier civil rights struggles. Ignacio Pitalua, 19, talked about having a trash can dumped on him by other boys who suspected he was Gay. "It's a big obstacle to learning," Pitalua said, pressing Assemblyman Curren Price to co-sponsor a bill that sets specific requirements for schools to protect students from anti-Gay discrimination.

Young people, some barely in their teens, are becoming the Gay rights movement's newest ambassadors at statehouses from Olympia, Wash. to Montpelier, Vt. Their advocacy, unheard of as recently as a decade ago, reflects the slowly growing acceptance that is emboldening Gays and Lesbians to come out of the closet while they are coming of age. "The biggest change that has happened from 10 years or 20 years ago is there are more out people now, from openly Gay teachers to openly Gay classmates," said Candace Gingrich, youth outreach coordinator for the Human Rights Campaign, a national Gay rights advocacy group. "That awareness and getting that kind of support from your peers makes you stronger, as an individual and as a group, being willing to fight for things and to stand up against harassment."

Veteran activists credit the political participation of Gay youth, their straight friends and children of same-sex parents with a string of recent legislative victories, including last month's passage of an anti-bullying bill that provides specific protections Gay and Lesbian students in Iowa. The law's adoption came after the Iowa Pride Network issued a report saying more than 83 percent of the state's Gay, Lesbian and Transgender students said they had been verbally harassed because of their sexual orientation. "We get getting comments from legislators of 'There aren't Gay kids in Iowa, this is an east and west coast problem,'" said Ryan Roerman, the network's director. The group also arranged a news conference attended by Iowa's lieutenant governor and three students who provided firsthand accounts of discrimination. They included a girl who was kicked out of her Catholic high school after she came out as a Lesbian and another who said she wasn't allowed into the locker room to change with other girls.

Brad Anderson, spokesman for Iowa Gov. Chet Culver, said the organized lobbying effort, which also included a 1,000-person rally at Drake University, was "absolutely critical" in getting the legislation approved. "They added a loud voice, just physically being in the Capitol, and you saw them working all hours of the day lobbying to get this stuff passed," Anderson said.

Lluvia Mulvaney-Stanak, director of Outright Vermont, thinks young people have an advantage when it comes to persuading lawmakers, especially hostile ones, to hear them out. Painful stories of isolation may remind hardened politicians of their own children or awkward adolescence, she said. "Young people no matter who they are, command this

really tangible sense of empathy with adults. We've all been there," Mulvaney-Stanak said. "Maybe we were geeks or the athletes, but when it comes to victims of bullying and harassment, everyone has had a role in that cycle."

Yet the most effective spokespeople are not necessarily Gay youth, but the straight students who joined with them to form more than 2,500 high school Gay-straight alliance clubs across the country since the early 1990s.

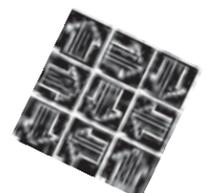
Carolyn Lamb, director of California's Gay-Straight Alliance Network, estimates that up to 40 percent of the 400 high school and college students bused to Sacramento for Queer Youth Advocacy Day were not Gay, Lesbian or Transgender. "Most of the adult-driven (Gay) civil rights work doesn't have such large numbers of straight allies who see it as a civil rights cause," she observed.

Children with Gay or Lesbian parents have been instrumental in building support for same-sex marriage, said Meredith Fenton, national program director with Children of Lesbian and Gays Everywhere. "For someone who isn't sure how they feel about Gay people, when they are hearing a message about supporting a LGBT family from someone who is really impacted by homophobia even though they are not Gay themselves, they can really hear and receive that message in a different way," Fenton said.

While previous generations waited well into adulthood before identifying themselves as Gay, the average age at which Gay children came out to friends and families in 2005 was 13 years and four months, according to Caitlin Ryan, a San Francisco State University researcher who studies the social and psychological development of Gay youth. "There were never historically any positive role models for LGBT young people," Ryan said. "Now, of course, we see more and more young people coming out because there are ways for them to be who they are, to socialize and live their lives as adolescents instead of coming out as an adult and then going back to live your adolescence."

Even in California, which has the nation's strongest legal protections for Gays of all ages, activists are concerned school administrators routinely ignore anti-harassment policies. They have gone back to the state Legislature this spring seeking laws that would require schools to inform students of their right to file complaints and expand the institutions currently covered to include community colleges and charter schools. Assemblyman Price, a freshman Democrat who represents an economically beleaguered Los Angeles district, listened attentively to the young constituents who came to his office urging him to vote for the pair of bills. He didn't make any promises, but said he would strongly consider lending his support. "You've been very courageous. Just try to keep fighting the good fight," Price told the group before it set off to deliver the same message to other legislators.

Outside the assemblyman's office, Pitalua smiled, satisfied his first outing as a lobbyist had gone well. "I think I planted the seed," he said. "He seemed really positive and like he cared about education."



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Sen. John McCain strolled briefly through an open-air market in Baghdad (Apr. 1) in an effort to prove that Americans are "not getting the full picture" of what's going on in Iraq. NBC's Nightly News provided further details about McCain's one-hour guided tour. He was accompanied by "100 American soldiers, with three Blackhawk helicopters, and two Apache gunships overhead." Still photographs provided by the military to NBC News seemed to show McCain wearing a bulletproof vest during his visit.

McCain recently claimed that there "are neighborhoods in Baghdad where you and I could walk through those neighborhoods, today." In a press conference after his Baghdad tour, McCain told a reporter that his visit to the market today was proof that you could indeed "walk freely" in some areas of Baghdad. In any case, it didn't take the insurgents long to send their reply. Less than 30 minutes after McCain wrapped up, a barrage of half a dozen mortars peppered the boundaries of the Green Zone, where the senators held their press conference.

"The crack of shots fired by unseen snipers echoed on Monday (Apr. 2) through Baghdad's wholesale Shorja market, the day after U.S. Senator John McCain held up his visit there as one sign of improving security in Baghdad."

After members of an American Congressional delegation led by Senator John McCain pointed to their brief visit to Baghdad's central market as evidence that the new security plan for the city was working, the merchants there were incredulous about the Americans' conclusions, reported the New York Times Tuesday (Apr. 3). "What are they talking about?" Ali Jassim Faiyad, the owner of an electrical appliances shop in the market, said. "The security procedures were abnormal!" The delegation arrived at the market, which is called Shorja, with more than 100 soldiers in armored Humvees – the equivalent of an entire company – and attack helicopters circled overhead, a senior American military official in Baghdad said.

The soldiers redirected traffic from the area and restricted access to the Americans, witnesses said, and sharpshooters were posted on the roofs. The congressmen wore bulletproof vests throughout their hourlong visit. "They paralyzed the market when they came," Mr. Faiyad said during an interview in his shop. "This was only for the media." He added, "This will not change anything." During their visit, the Americans were buttonholed by merchants and customers who wanted to talk about how unsafe they felt and the urgent need for more security in the markets and throughout the city, witnesses said.

"They asked about our conditions, and we told them the situation was bad," said About Sharif Kadhory, 63, who peddles prayer rugs at a sidewalk stand. He said he sold a small prayer rug worth less than \$1 to a member of the Congressional delegation. Mr. McCain was asked about a comment he made on a radio program in which he said that he could walk freely through certain areas of Baghdad. "I just came from one," he replied sharply. "Things are better and there are encouraging signs." He added, "Never have I been able to go out into the city as I was today

In Their Own Words



The Modern GOP

(Apr. 1)." Told about Mr. McCain's assessment of the market, Abu Samer, a kitchenware and clothing wholesaler, scoffed: "He is just using this visit for publicity. He is just using it for himself. They'll just take a photo of him at our market and they will just show it in the United States. He will win in America and we will have nothing." . . .

Salon.com reported that Republican candidates attended a recent meeting of Club for Growth, and afterwards, National Review's Ramesh Ponnuru spoke to Cato Institute's President Ed Crane about what they said. This brief report from Ponnuru is simply extraordinary:

Crane asked if Romney believed the president should have the authority to arrest U.S. citizens with no review. Romney said he would want to hear the pros and cons from smart lawyers before he made up his mind. Mitt Romney can't say – at least not until he engages in a careful and solemn debate with a team of "smart lawyers" – whether, in the United States of America, the President has the power to imprison American citizens without any opportunity for review of any kind. But in today's Republican Party, Romney's openness to this definitely tyrannical power is the moderate position. Ponnuru goes on to note:

Crane said that he had asked Giuliani the same question a few weeks ago. The mayor said that he would want to use this authority infrequently. It sounds like Giuliani is positioning himself in this race as the "compassionate authoritarian" – "Yes, of course I have the power to imprison you without charges or review of any kind, but as President, I commit to you that I intend (no promises) to 'use this authority infrequently.'" ...

Rawstory.com reported that Mitt Romney's press secretary, Kevin Madden, tells Chris Matthews on MSNBC's 'Hardball' that the 2008 GOP White House hopeful supports President Bush's decision for preemptive war in Iraq. Madden then answers several of Matthews' Iraq questions evasively, focusing instead on Romney's tough stance on fighting "the global jihad." At one point, Madden says of Saddam Hussein, "All the intelligence pointed to the fact that he may have had weapons of mass destruction and ... we had to act," which triggers a contentious back-and-forth between Matthews and Madden. Madden later pans Democrats: "When you look at people who just use words like 'hope' and 'wish,' that's not what's going to eradicate Islamic fascism across the globe; that's not what's gonna help us challenge the terrorists."

PHOTO: Sgt. Matthew Roe



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Giant Tax Headaches For G/L Couples

NEW YORK CITY - Some states allow same-sex partners to file joint returns, but because the U.S. government doesn't, tax season for Gay and Lesbian couples means additional paperwork and lots more time-sapping computations, reported msn.com. The tax rules for same-sex marriages, civil unions and domestic partnerships are fraught with complications – and expense.

The 2000 U.S. census counted more than a million people in the U.S. who were part of same-sex couples (those who were willing to say so in census forms), according to data analyzed by GayDemographics.org. About 21% lived in states that today have laws for Gay couples on the books, and some of those states allow same-sex partners to file joint tax returns.

California's recently expanded domestic-partnership law gives the largest population of same-sex couples in the country access to a sort of matrimonial tax recognition, according to GayDemographics.org.

In 2004, Massachusetts became the only state with legal same-sex marriage. A same-sex couple files a joint tax return in that state, just as any heterosexual couple would. But complications arise when it's time to prepare an Internal Revenue Service tax return, says Shari Levitan, an attorney and partner in Holland & Knight's Boston office. The federal government doesn't recognize same-sex couples, so each taxpayer must file as single. To file jointly at the state level, that couple would have to prepare four tax returns, says Debra Neiman, a certified financial planner in Arlington, Mass., and a co-author of "Money Without Matrimony." The couple would prepare a joint state return and a "dummy" joint federal return for the Massachusetts Department of Revenue – because the state return is based on the joint federal return – and then two individual returns, prepared as single filers, to actually send to the IRS.

If a tax preparer was hired, the couple would pay for four tax returns. But sometimes costs go even higher, with tax preparation for same-sex couples running double the price of two single returns. Neiman deplors the extra cost, but there is so much extra time involved that there's no way to avoid it, she said. Why the extra time? Levitan and Neiman explain that completing these returns is not like pushing a button. You have to devote time to separating income from joint assets, such as bank accounts, businesses and securities sales. You must split up expenses, such as medical insurance, mortgages, property taxes and business expenses. And then there are the children. How do you go about equitably splitting a child? You need the wisdom of Solomon not to alienate and anger one of the partners. Often, the child is related by blood to a partner who is not producing income.

This creates problems with dependency exemptions, earned-in-

come credits, child-care credits, student-loan deductions and more. The Massachusetts Department of Revenue site details some special provisions that apply to same-sex couples.

In California, where the first same-sex tax returns will be filed in 2008, Lynn Freer, the president of Spidell Publishing in Anaheim, is pushing for legislation to get the California Franchise Tax Board to allow registered domestic partners (RDPs) to file the same joint tax returns that other married couples file. Under current law, when a registered couple file jointly in California, they have to make several adjustments to their joint return based on two federal single returns. Freer says some of the rules are still unclear. For instance:

Federal rental losses are limited to \$25,000 per joint tax return or per single tax return. Will California use the combined \$50,000 (\$25,000 times 2) loss on the RDP return? Or just the federal joint limit of \$25,000? What if one person has a capital loss of \$100,000 but the other has a capital gain of \$100,000? Will they be allowed to net the losses, or will they pay tax on the gain but not benefit from the loss? If one owns a home for two years and then the couple sell it, will California grant them each a \$250,000 exclusion from the gain? Or just the one owner that the IRS would allow?

And so it goes. In all other states that allow joint tax returns, same-sex couples follow the same rules as heterosexual couples within the state. The combination of elements from the two single returns will generally result in higher joint taxable income on the California Form 540 than the couple would have paid using a dummy federal joint return. For anyone, even a tax professional, to prepare the California version of the RDP joint return, he will need a specialized checklist of line items to change, combine or eliminate. No other state has made joint filing this complicated.

If you got married in Massachusetts and moved to California, will California recognize your marriage for tax purposes? No. California hasn't legalized same-sex marriage. However, if you have a registered domestic partnership in another state, California will honor that relationship and allow you to file jointly. Couples married in Massachusetts would have to register as domestic partners in California to have the same privilege. States with domestic partnerships and civil unions have reciprocity with each other. But if you move, it's worth checking the state laws to find out whether you may file a joint return.

Investments are another concern when moving. If you have

income from investments – such as real estate, partnerships or S corporations – in a state that doesn't recognize your marital status, you may find yourself filing a joint return in your state, separate returns for federal purposes and separate returns in the other state, too.

Are there tax advantages to filing jointly? Logically, if one member of the couple works and the other doesn't, it would drop their combined incomes into a lower tax bracket. Right? Well, when it comes to state tax rates, they hit the highest brackets pretty quickly. So, the decision to file jointly wouldn't be based on the savings from lower tax brackets. But when one partner works and brings home the proverbial bacon, and the other owns the home and has all the mortgage and property-tax deductions, suddenly, by filing jointly, you can itemize your deductions for state purposes.

For the IRS, if the income producer pays the mortgage and property taxes but isn't named on the mortgage, you've just lost the entire mortgage deduction. Why? The person who made the payments isn't entitled to the deductions, and the partner who is entitled to the deductions didn't make the payments. So no one gets to deduct the mortgage interest for IRS purposes.

Without extensive planning on how to pass along funds to each other, how to gift money or property to one another and what legal documents, promissory notes and liens to file, same-sex couples may find themselves facing tax comas at the end of the year.

As if divorce weren't already bad enough, just wait until you see same-sex couples in Massachusetts deal with dissolving civil unions or registered domestic partnerships, or getting divorced. Conventional couples may split the home and other assets without any tax consequences. Same-sex couples? Let's look at a pretend couple, Jack and Jim. Jim originally bought the home. Jack partnered with him. In the split, the court gave Jack half the house. This may work fine for the state. But, as Spidell Publishing's Freer notes, to the IRS this is either a gift (which may involve gift taxes being due) or compensation for services rendered (which would be taxable to Jack). Let's look at alimony. Jim is ordered to pay Jack \$2,000 a month in support. So the state lets Jim deduct \$24,000, but the IRS won't, as they weren't married for federal purposes. To the IRS this is a gift or further payment for services rendered. What about Jack? It's unclear whether he picks this up on his federal return as alimony income, other income, self-employment income or something else.

And Neiman, the certified financial planner, brings up QDROs – qualified domestic relations orders – that allow a couple to split up pensions without early-withdrawal penalties or

immediate tax assessments. When it comes to same-sex couples, they won't qualify for the special treatment provided by the tax code.

When judges deal with these dissolutions, attorney Levitan says, they have neither the experience nor the responsibility to ensure there is an equitable tax split. It's up to the lawyers to prepare their cases with the help of tax and financial professionals who understand all the implications.

Julie and Hillary Goodrich, one of the couples in Massachusetts whose landmark case is responsible for Gay marriage, separated amicably in July 2006, according to an article at GayWired.com. No divorce is on the horizon. Perhaps their advisers looked at the potential tax nightmare that a divorce would cause and decided to wait this one out.

Many experts agree that when it comes to taxes, getting married or registered poses too many challenges. Suzanne Durbin, a senior adviser at GV Financial Advisors in Atlanta, says same-sex couples who don't get married or registered enjoy distinct advantages. Her strategy works for couples who plan to stay together for the long term, when one is wealthy and the other is not. Durbin takes full advantage of the limits of gift-tax and estate-tax laws. For instance, usually when someone passes a share of a home or business property to a spouse or child, the appraiser discounts the value of the asset – that is, sets it lower than fair market value – because only part of the property is transferred. The IRS tends to insist on very conservative discounts when the transfer is between family members. But since a same-sex couple isn't married in the eyes of the IRS, the discounts on the valuations may be more aggressive. As far as the IRS is concerned, these are transfers to unrelated parties, so there's no need to look so closely. As a result, more property can be transferred to your spouse without triggering tax consequences.

Same-sex couples face so many tax complications that you could fill a book with them. In fact, it's so complex that producers of income-tax software don't write software to handle the computations. So tax professionals must make the adjustments by hand. We've barely tickled the surface of the inequities in the income-tax, estate and inheritance laws. Freer predicts that as tax and divorce cases involving same-sex couples hit the courts over the next few years, the legislation will evolve to define tax guidelines for couples that don't qualify for marriage in the eyes of Uncle Sam.



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POLITICS 2007

by Mark R. Kerr

H.R. 1820

Tax time in the United States is just around the corner, Apr. 17 to be exact. Two extra days though do not a deduction make for Gays and Lesbians in loving, committed relationships, especially those with families, in regard to health care coverage.

Under the federal Internal Revenue Code an employer's contribution of the premium for health insurance for an employee's spouse is excluded from the employee's taxable income. Any employer contribution for the domestic partner's (including civil union, Canada, Massachusetts or selection European marriages and otherwise) coverage is considered as wages by the Code and is counted as taxable income.

As a result, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) individuals that secure employer-provided health insurance coverage for themselves and their family members face a significant tax penalty; one that, depending on the facts applicable to the specific individual, can be in the thousands of dollars per year and result in an individual paying upwards of 50% more in federal taxes.

According to the Human Rights Campaign, an employee that earns \$32,000 per year which has family health coverage under his employer's group health plan for himself and his "domestic partner," and under the terms of the group health plan, the employer pays the monthly premium amount of \$907 for family coverage and since federal tax law does not exclude from an employee's income health insurance coverage provided to an employee for his or his domestic partner, the value of the coverage, resulting in \$6,864 of income, is imputed to the employee and their federal tax liability increases from \$3,155 to \$4,710 (comprised of \$525 of payroll tax and \$4,185 of income tax).

In this 110th Congress, legislation entitled (H.R. 1820), "The Tax Equity for Health Plan Beneficiaries Act" has been introduced to remove this inequity.

"This glaring inequity can add

thousands of dollars to an employee's taxable income every year, and result in higher federal income taxes, when the only difference is one household includes a married couple and another household includes a domestic partnership that's absolutely wrong," Representative Jim McDermott (D-WA) said in a statement.

H.R. 1820 would remedy this by simplifying the tax code and address - and encourage, McDermott hopes - a growing national trend by private and public employers to provide domestic partner benefits in order to promote fairness and equality in the workplace.

"This legislation to provide equitable tax treatment to all employees, regardless of their sexual orientation, is as fair and common sense as it gets," said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese in a statement. "Over half of Fortune 500 companies now offer domestic partner health benefits to their employees, and there is no logical reason why these benefits should be taxed any differently. This bill is a win-win proposal for both workers and businesses."

Both public and private employers across the country have made the business decision to provide health benefits to domestic partners of their employees and as of Jan. 1, 2007, a majority (265) of the Fortune 500 corporations offered health benefits to employees' domestic partners but current federal tax law has not kept up with corporate change in this area and both employers and employees who offer these benefits are being taxed inequitably.

H.R. 1820 has been referred to the House Ways and Means Committee and according to reports, a companion measure will be introduced shortly in the U.S. Senate.

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EDITOR:

A friend from Arizona sent me your March 28 paper and in one article I was surprised to see that Elton John on turning 60 is now all about speaking up against bigotry. In his Op-Ed piece reprinted from The Guardian, John says "People like William (Hernandez) are far braver than I am, because when bigots shout abuse, he shouts back. ... Whether the bigot is in our local pub or miles away, we should all stand up and speak out for basic human rights..."

What about if the bigot is standing on stage with you, doing a duet? Lest we forget, the bigot is Marshall Mathers III, whom I don't recall hearing ever apologized for his hate message in 2001. You know the one that went thus: "You faggots keep egging me on Til I have you at knifepoint, then you beg me to stop My words are like daggers with a jagged edge That'll stab you in the head whether you're a fag of les Or homosex, hermaph or a trans-aves Pants or dress Hate fags? The

answer's yes"

And, as if generalized hate lyrics weren't enough, the punk gets personal with a local tragedy in my home town: "Hey, it's me, Versace Whoops, somebody shot me And I was checking the mail Get it, checking the male?"

So, did Sir Elton shout the bigot down? No, he gushed over the young rapper's genius and voiced his support at the Grammy Awards in February 2001, where the two sang a duet together. I don't know where John's head was at that night. My best defense of his rationale was that he hoped to score some rough trade off the chicken.

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Massachusetts To Recognize 26 Out-Of-State Nuptials

BOSTON (Observer Update) - Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick (D) has reversed an order imposed by his Republican predecessor that saw the marriages of 26 out-of-state same-sex couples set aside, 365Gay.com reported.

After same-sex marriage became legal in Massachusetts then-Gov. Mitt Romney invoked a 1913 law that said marriage licenses could not be issued to couples whose weddings would be illegal in the states where they lived. Four counties refused to abide by the old law, enacted at a time when interracial marriage was illegal in most of the country and not used for decades. Twenty-six Gay couples were married in those jurisdictions before Romney ordered the attorney general to prosecute the local clerks. Romney then ordered the marriages not to be registered in the state's vital records.

Last year the Massachusetts Supreme Court upheld the law in a case involving same-sex couples from neighboring states but questioned whether couples from Rhode Island and New York were excepted because those states do not have specific legislation banning Gay marriage. It sent the question back to a lower court. Before the court heard arguments New York's highest court ruled marriage was legal only for opposite-sex couples. The lower court later ruled that Gay and Lesbian couples from Rhode Island could marry in Massachusetts.

Gov. Patrick has ordered the Department of Public Health to bind and index the 26 marriages. Kyle Sullivan, a spokesperson for Patrick said the governor believed Romney's action to be without legal justification. But it does not mean same-sex couples from across the country can immediately go to Massachusetts and obtain marriage licenses. "The 1913 law remains in effect," Sullivan told

365Gay.com. It would take passage of a repeal of the old law by the legislature for out of state Gay marriages to be legal, with the exception of same-sex couples from Rhode Island.

Meanwhile, a proposed amendment that would end same-sex marriage in Massachusetts is headed for a vote in a joint session of the legislature later this year. To amend the state constitution a joint session of the House and Senate must approve a proposed amendment in two consecutive sessions of the Legislature then put the issue to voters. Only 50 votes in the joint session are needed for a proposed amendment to advance. The measure was advanced in a stormy joint session in January. Gov. Patrick opposes the amendment.

Gov. Deval Patrick and top lawmakers say they'll also push the repeal of a 1913 law that bans out-of-state Gay couples from marrying in Massachusetts - a move that could open the state to a wave of same-sex marriage applicants from across the country. Patrick decried the "smelly origins" of the 1913 law, which Gay marriage supporters say was aimed at preventing out-of-state interracial marriages. "It has questionable legislative history, and I think it's outdated," Patrick said. "If it passes the Legislature and comes to my desk, I will sign that bill."

House Speaker Sal DiMasi and Senate President Therese Murray both have said the law should be wiped off the books. The support of the three most powerful politicians in the State House gives the measure fresh momentum after previous efforts to repeal it died in the legislative process, but state Sen. Jarrett Barrios has a new proposal to do so. Opponents reacted saying it would essentially allow Massachusetts to force its liberal social views on the rest of the nation.



Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick

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'Act Up' Commemorative Protest Results In 30 Arrests



NEW YORK CITY - Nearly 30 people were arrested in an act of civil disobedience Thursday (Mar. 29) after 50 body bags were lined up on a New York City street to represent the number of people who die of AIDS complications every day, reported advocate.com. Venerable activist group ACT UP—AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power—commemorated its 20th anniversary by reenacting its first protest, which took place 20 years ago, also in New York City's financial district. Upward of 800 people showed up to march down Wall Street, calling out to health care providers and pharmaceutical companies.

Cathy Renna, a publicist who

represents the group, said that demonstrators received positive reactions from bystanders. "Gilbert Baker, who was the creator of the rainbow flag, made this giant banner that was so big, it took nine people to hold it," she said in a phone interview. "It said, 'Worst President Ever,' but had a picture of him and the flag, and it actually looked very patriotic. We got quite a few cheers from people on the street walking by." Renna described the marchers as diverse, reflecting the population of people who contract HIV now, including women, Latinos, and African-Americans. One of the groups involved with organizing the campaign was the Metro New York Physicians for a National Health Program, (PNHP).

Protest participants hold ACT UP banner on top of Wall Street bull statue in NYC's financial district. Oliver Fein, chairman of PNHP, said the partnering of these two groups is crucial to furthering the cause of health care and affordable housing for HIV patients and all Americans. Both ACT UP and PNHP are lobbying for a nationalized, single-payer health care plan for all Americans. "Single-payer says that every resident of the U.S. should be covered, no fancy eligibility criteria based on age, or ability, or employment," Fein said. "For instance, we have Medicare limited only to people over 65. So we would argue that if you live in the U.S., you should have a single-payer program. It would be similar to Medicare, but it would be extended to all Americans. Instead of being over 65, the only criteria is that you live here."



Gay Couple Turned Away From South Carolina Hotel

SUMTER, South Carolina - A Gay couple inquiring about a hotel room in South Carolina were turned away because of their sexual orientation, reported advocate.com. Jason Pickel and Darren Black Bear told local television station WLTX that they were searching for a home in the Sumter, S.C., area and needed a place to stay during their search. When calling the Affordable Suites of America, a long-term stay hotel, they asked about pricing and other details on the room.

"She asked who the room was going to be for, and I said for my partner and I," Pickel said in the news report. "She said, 'Oh, we don't rent to multiple people of the same sex.' I said, 'So you don't rent to Gay couples? She said, 'No, we don't rent to Gay people at all.'"

Posing as an interested customer, someone from the station contacted the hotel, inquiring about same-sex couples staying in the room. The receptionist told them their policy about accommodating Gay couples:

"Our policy is we don't rent to two people of the same sex if we only have one bed." The receptionist explained further that the corporate policy provides living space for only one person. The station member asked if they could just share the bed. "I suppose they could, but most men don't want to," she said. The station then contacted the hotel's owner, who said the policy was not intended to exclude Gays and that any couple would be allowed to stay at the hotel.

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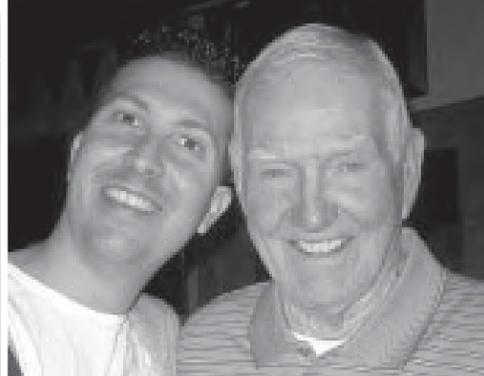
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COMMENTARY . . .

No Surprises

By Libby Post

It's no surprise that Archbishop Peter J. Akinola comes from Nigeria. Akinola is working to splinter the Anglican Communion, of which the Episcopal Church USA belongs, because some in the Communion are supportive of Gay rights, same-sex unions, the ordination of Gay and Lesbian priests and the election of Gay or Lesbian bishops.

It's no surprise that the Nigerian National Assembly is poised to pass legislation that would make it illegal to be Gay. Homosexual conduct among consenting adults is already a crime in Nigeria and comes with a 14 year prison term. It's no surprise that Akinola supports the legislation.

Slyly named the "Same Sex Marriage Act," the bill, if passed, does much more than just codifying marriage inequality. It doles out five year terms if someone is found to be a member of a Gay group, attends a Gay meeting or protest, donates money to a Gay organization or speaks out on behalf of Gay rights in any way.

Hosting or visiting a Gay web site? Five years. Telling your partner you love them in a letter or e-mail? Five years. Attending someone else's same-sex marriage or ceremony? Five years. Watching a Gay movie? Taking or having photos of a Gay couple? Publishing, selling or loaning a Gay book or video? Five years. Five years. Five years. Right now, I'm facing at least 50 years in a Nigerian jail. Good thing I don't even have a passport.

The Lesbians and Gay men of Nigeria are facing genocide if this bill passes. Not only does this bill give credence to violence that is already perpetrated against that country's LGBT community, but it will force people underground to have unsafe sex. The prevalence of AIDS will increase and the devastation the disease is already having on the African continent will only increase dramatically.

Supposedly, as a man of God, Akinola could speak out against the bill, against the abridgment of human rights that are sure to take place, against the violence. He

won't. This bill is right up his alley. He finds homosexuality to be abhorrent, a direct affront to Christian scripture, to be right in line with pedophilia and bestiality.

If you're not a member of the Anglican Church in Nigeria you're probably a Muslim. In 12 of Nigeria's 36 states—those with Muslim majorities—Islamic Sharia law has been imposed. Under that law, you can be stoned to death if you are found out to be Gay or Lesbian. This is just an incendiary situation in need of a match.

Akinola, however, isn't just having an impact in his country—his homophobia can be felt quite strongly here in the United States. He's the ringleader of the Episcopal Churches and Bishops—our own former Episcopal Bishop Daniel Herzog being one of them—who want to or have already split from the Anglican Communion because of the consecration of openly Gay Bishop Gene Robinson of the Diocese of New Hampshire, the ordination of Gays, Lesbians and straight women, the welcoming atmosphere in many of our Episcopal churches and the ability of clergy to perform same-sex unions. Akinola has become the pied-piper of wayward right-wing Episcopalians. He has formed the Convocation of Anglicans in North America—it should really be called the Church of Homophobia. Billing it as a mission of the Anglican Church of Nigeria, Akinola has lead over twenty churches to leave the Episcopal Church USA and to affiliate under his new organization.

In a Christmas Day 2006 article in The New York Times, reporters Lydia Polgreen and Laurie Goodstein wrote that by creating this offshoot for the discontented Americans, "he has made himself the kingpin of a remarkable alliance between theological conservatives in North America and the developing world that could tip the power to conservatives in the Anglican Communion, a 77-million member confederation of national churches that trace their roots to the Church of England and the Archbishop of Canterbury." By joining with Akinola, these churches are not only turning their backs on the Episcopal Church USA and quite possibly the Anglican Communion itself, but also on hundreds of years of the traditional Anglican approach of embracing diverse theological viewpoints.

Africa has had its fill of one man, one word, one rule despots. It's no surprise that Akinola is filling another pair of those shoes but with an eye to a new religious colonialism. God help us.

(Libby Post is a columnist for 365Gay.com, from which this is reprinted.)

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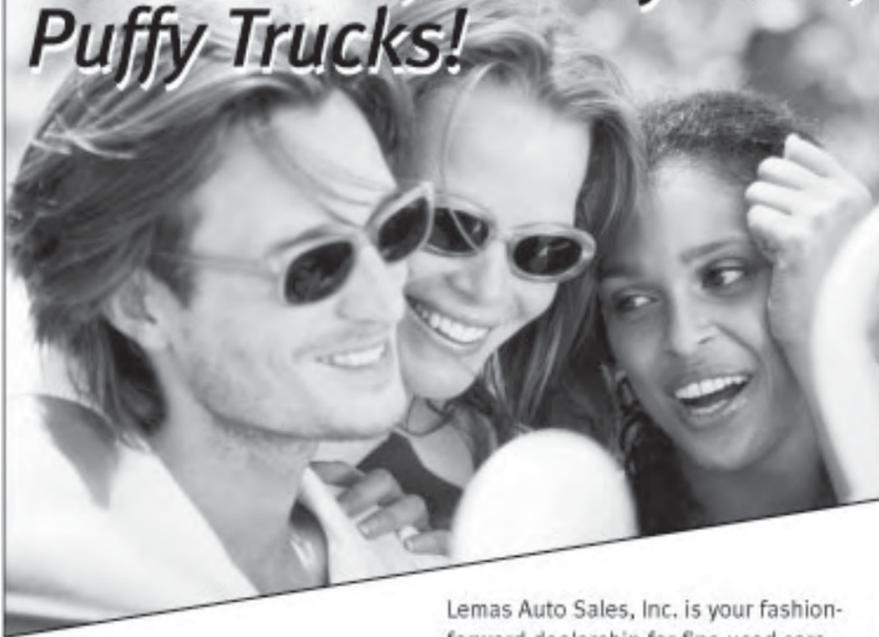



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NOTES FROM THE FOR-REAL SIDE Hidden Treasure

by Lee Thorn

Okay, so we're losing a war in Iraq that we shouldn't have started in the first place, and we're losing the battle against stultification at home. Forget all that. Let's play a game. I'll describe an interesting painting that's inextricably linked to an old Tucson business and you go out and find it. The first person who sends me its exact location will win a prize. I haven't decided what the prize will be. Something modest. But we've got to get our minds off the crushing negatives once in awhile.

The reason I say that this is an interesting painting is that, from the standpoint of serious art, it's very good, substantially original. It's also interesting in that it's a kind of sleeper: because it's done in a primitive style and because its composition is so brilliantly successful, one's first reaction might be to dismiss it as ordinary.

Its dimensions are approximately four feet high by six wide. I don't know the medium. I strongly suspect oil. It depicts a nook in an old city with a canal flowing under a footbridge. The architecture is vaguely Mediterranean with some Moorish touches.

It's essentially realistic but not obsessively so. The most realistic elements are the treatment of light, the treatment of perspective and some of the surfaces. The light tells us that it's either late morning or early afternoon. The perspective, very carefully constructed, creates a cozy little area that might have been designed to such in tourists. The textures include mossy walls, worn wood, a cloth awning, and, most striking and arresting, the decaying masonry of the footbridge which is the focal center of the piece.

The most unrealistic elements are the minimal amount of architectural decoration on the buildings, two boats that look like hollowed out gourds, and the absence of any life on the street at midday - no people, no birds, no dogs, no cats. Did the place just get hit with a neutron bomb?

I mentioned that the style was "primitive." In the parlance of art criticism that simply means it doesn't derive from a recognized school of painting. It does not mean that the work is unsophisticated in concept or execution. And one of the great accomplishments of this painting is its sophistication of composition.

When we consider the range of colors, the range of texture and the range of shapes involved, the final feeling of unity almost to the point of compression is impressive.

The colors include the primaries and secondaries except for purple. There are many shades of tan from beige to nearly pink. There are also several shades of green. If one just made a list of the colors, you'd say that the piece must have a riotous quality. The opposite is true. The very diverse colors are orchestrated into a chromatic serenity.

The same is true of the range of shapes, from architectural to natural. The blend's the thing.

The range of textures is similarly wide - softly undulating water, rotting masonry, mossy walls, polished walkways, a run of glassy smooth waterway, trees, bushes, tautly drawn cloth, weathered wood. They all come together in this very tight composition of remarkable quietude.

I'm not at all sure what the artist's intent was. The aim is clearly to decorate a commercial establishment, not to excite a jaded art critic. But here's an artistic accomplishment that doesn't rely on the artist's intent.

The artist may just have wanted to make "a nice pretty picture." What he's done in addition to that is brought together an amazing disparity of elements in a composition that doesn't look "busy" or "stuffed" or, to paraphrase a description of music composed by the late comedian Jackie Gleason, like maple syrup being slowly poured over pizza.

Perhaps another reason it took me awhile to appreciate this painting is that most art in commercial spaces goes out of its way to be banal. Decorators choose it because custom dictates that some kinds of spaces require a piece of art. "Okay, we've got to have some art there. We know real art can upset people, so let's see if we can find something that nobody will notice." And they do.

The funny thing about the piece I'm writing about is that, although it's a brilliantly complicated and brilliantly successful composition, it has no doubt also succeeded in terms of the requirements of commercial decoration. I bet that in its whole existence of about five years it has never made a single person angry or even a little uncomfortable.

(Thorn welcomes comments, suggestions for future columns, and tips on local skulduggery that ought to be exposed. Write to Box 85571, Tucson, AZ 85754. E-mail: Doid3@aol.com.)

View From The Rock

"But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" (1 Corinthians 15:57) Last Sunday (Mar.25) was Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week, marking the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. When Jesus arrived at Jerusalem, people waved palm branches to welcome him as he rode into the city on a donkey and as he approached, they laid the branches in his path, symbolizing triumph and victory. During Holy Week we celebrate the sacrifice that Jesus made and the victory that he gave us. We have faith in Jesus, and we know that we too are included, promising that "everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has

overcome the world, even our faith." (1 John 5:4)

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Accepting Gay Identity, And Gaining Strength

MADISON, Connecticut - One month before Zach O'Connor, a seventh grader at Brown Middle School here, came out about being Gay, he was in such turmoil that he stood up in homeroom and, in a voice everyone could hear, asked a girl out on a date. It was Valentine's Day 2003, and Zach was 13, reported the New York Times in their Apr. 1 edition.

"I was doing this to survive," he says. "This is what other guys were doing, getting girlfriends. I should get one, too." He feared his parents knew the truth about him. He knew that his father had typed in a Google search starting with "g," and several other recent "g" searches had popped up, including "Gay." "They asked me, 'Do you know what being Gay is?'" he recalls. "They tried to explain there's nothing wrong with it. I put my hands over my ears. I yelled: 'I don't want to hear it! I'm not, I'm not Gay!'"

Cindy and Dan O'Connor were very worried about Zach. Though bright, he was doing poorly at school. At home, he would pick fights, slam doors, explode for no reason. They wondered how their two children could be so different; Matt, a year and a half younger, was easygoing and happy. Zach was miserable. The O'Connors had hunches. Mr. O'Connor is a director of business development for American Express, Ms. O'Connor a senior vice president of a bank, and they have had Gay colleagues, Gay bosses, classmates who came out after college. From the time Zach was little, they knew he was not a run-of-the-mill boy. His friends were girls or timid boys. "Zach had no interest in throwing a football," Mr. O'Connor says. But their real worry was his anger, his unhappiness, his low self-esteem. "He'd say: 'I'm not smart. I'm not like other kids,'" says Ms. O'Connor. The middle-school psychologist started seeing him daily.

The misery Zach caused was minor compared with the misery he felt. He says he knew he was different by kindergarten, but he had no name for it, so he would stay to himself. He tried sports, but, he says, "It didn't work out well." He couldn't remember the rules. In fifth grade, when boys at recess were talking about girls they had crushes on, Zach did not have someone to name. By sixth grade, he knew what "Gay" meant, but didn't associate it with himself. That year, he says: "I had a crush on one particular eighth-grade boy, a very straight jock. I knew whatever I was feeling I shouldn't talk about it." He considered himself a broken version of a human being. "I did think about suicide," he says.

Then, for reasons he can't wholly explain beyond pure desperation, a month after his Valentine "date" - "We never actually went out, just walked around school together" - in the midst of math class, he told a female friend. By day's end it was all over school. The psychologist called him in. "I burst into tears," he recalls. "I said, 'Yes, it's true.' Every piece of depression came pouring out. It was such a mess." That night, when his mother got home from work, she stuck her head in his room to say hi. "I said, 'Ma, I need to talk to you about something, I'm Gay.' She said, 'O.K., anything else?' 'No, but I just told you I'm Gay.' 'O.K., that's fine, we still love you.' I said, 'That's it?' I was preparing for this really dramatic moment."

Ms. O'Connor recalls, "He said, 'Mom, aren't you going to freak out?' I said: 'It's up to you to decide who to love. I have your father, and you have to figure out what's best for you.' He said, 'Don't tell Dad.'" "Of course I told him," Ms. O'Connor says. "With all our faults," Mr. O'Connor says, "we're in this together."

Having a son come out so young was a lot of work for the parents. They found him a therapist who is Gay 20 miles away in New Haven. The therapist helped them find a Gay youth group, OutSpoken, a 50-minute drive away in Norwalk. Dan Woog, a writer and longtime soccer coach at Staples High in Westport, helped found OutSpoken in 1993. He says for the first 10 years, the typical member was 17 to 22 years old. "They'd come in saying: 'I'm Gay. My life is over,'" Mr. Woog says. "One literally hyperventilated walking through the door." But in recent years, he says, the kids are 14 to 17 and more

confident. "They say: 'Hi, I'm Gay. How do I meet people?'" For the first 10 years, Mr. Woog never saw a parent; meetings were from 4 to 6 p.m. Sunday, so members could get out of the house without arousing suspicion. Now, he says, parents often bring the child to the first meeting. He believes teenagers are coming out sooner because the Internet makes them feel less isolated and they're seeing positive role models in the media. Indeed, Zach says he spent his first therapy session talking about the Gay characters on the TV show "Will and Grace" as a way to test the therapist's attitudes before talking about himself.

Still, seventh grade was not easy. "We heard kids across the street yelling 'homo' as he waited for the school bus," Mr. O'Connor says. Zach says classmates tossed pencils at him and constantly mocked him. "One kid followed me class to class calling me 'faggot,'" he says. "After a month I turned and punched him in the face. He got quiet and walked away. I said, 'You got beat up by a faggot.'" The O'Connors say middle-school officials were terrific, and by eighth grade the tide turned. Zach was let out 15 minutes early and walked across the football field to Daniel Hand High School to attend the Gay-straight club. Knowing who he was, he could envision a future and felt a sense of purpose. His grades went up. He had friends. For an assignment about heroes, a girl in his class wrote about him, and Zach used her paper to come out to his Aunt Kathy.

He still wasn't athletic, but to the family's surprise, coming out let out a beautiful voice. He won the middle school's top vocal award. His father took him to a Gay-Lesbian conference at Central Connecticut State in New Britain, and Zach was thrilled to see so many Gay people in one place. His therapist took him to a Gay Bingo Night at St. Paul's Church on the Green in Norwalk that raises money for AIDS care. Zach became a regular and within a few months was named Miss Congeniality. "They crowned me with a tiara and sash, and I walked around the room waving," he recalls. "I was still this shy 14-year-old in braces. I hadn't reached my socialness yet, and everyone was cheering. 'I was the future. Most of the men were middle-aged or older, and to see this 14-year-old out, they loved it. They were so happy.'"

Now, as a 17-year-old 11th grader, Zach has passed through phases that many Gay men of previous generations didn't get to until their 20s, 30s, even 40s. "Eighth grade was kind of his militant time," Mr. O'Connor says. "Everything was a rainbow," says Ms. O'Connor. These days, Zach is so busy, he rarely has time for the Gay-straight club. He's in several singing and drama groups and is taking an SAT prep course. "I've been out so long, I don't really need the club as a resource," he says. "I'm not going to say I'm popular, but I'm friendly with nearly everybody. Sophomore year, my social life skyrocketed."

In music groups he made male friends for the first time. "They weren't afraid of me," he says. "They like me." His brother, Matt, says sometimes kids come up to him and ask what it's like to have a Gay brother. "I say it's normal to me, I don't think of it anymore." As for his parents, they're happy that Zach's happy. "Coming out was the best thing for him," Ms. O'Connor says. "We ask him, 'Why didn't you come out in fifth grade?'"



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HOROSCOPES

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Let's welcome April this week and prepare as three "outer" planets retrograde and send us into various tizzies. Take heart; the fates find ways to lead us to where we need to be ... once the dust settles. Keep your feet on the ground and your head above the fray, if you can.

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

Gay Rams lose their heart in a faraway place now. You take a chance on someone you don't know well or fall head over heels for an exotic stranger. Either can change the course of your life in unintended ways. If you keep your wits about you, it might wind up to be just another breezy (or is it blowsy) affair that tousles your locks but keeps your head attached.

TAURUS (APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

April showers keep queer Bulls closer to home than usual. Make up an excuse to hang around the house, kick up your feet and just relax. But don't become so sedate that you spend hours in front of the tube vegetating. Partners and pals yearn for a bit of your company (among other things). Plan a few soirees and festivities that plant you in the epicenter of the party plot.

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

Pink Twins usually know just what to say to get what they want. Don't be surprised if you find yourself searching for the right words to fully express the range of your zesty desires through April. Relationships need some sprucing up. Instead of hearing yourself talk, plan a romantic getaway that says it all. Partners need more than a stale wind to fill their sails.

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)

Time is money so don't waste excess energy on wasteful pastimes. If your budget is tight, try to think of profitable alternatives. If you are a bit more flush than usual, think of new ways to bake your dough and let it rise. Gay Crabs are

constant worriers. Put aside your fears and forge ahead. Focus and prepare to act in May to become well endowed.

LEO (JULY 24 - AUGUST 23)

Life may be a series of false starts now. You are raring to go, go, go but plans may have to be put on hold. Poor Proud Lions want to be recognized for the artistic geniuses they are (or think they are) but the jaded world is asleep. So what? Dance your dance, play your music, be your own supporter and the world will eventually catch up to you. And then what?

VIRGO (AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 23)

Queer Virgins pine for peace and quiet but have trouble finding it through April. No sooner do they settle in for a comfortable evening at home than the immediate neighborhood comes knocking. Why ask why? Enjoy the convivial company. There will be someone in particular who will pique your interest, among other things. Be sure to practice safe piquing.

LIBRA (SEPTEMBER 24 - OCTOBER 23)

Proud Libras with something to say should say it proud and queer. You are encouraged to keep certain things in the background. You will be told that the frank and honest way will not get you what you want. "They" will tell you that it is easier to attract more flies with honey than with vinegar. But do you really want to attract all those flies?

SCORPIO (OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)

Buff your corporate star and don't succumb to the temptation to take the easy route to success. The fates will not allow slackers to glide by on oily charm. Proud Scorps who delegate the garbage tasks to underlings face a revolution but those who have put in the sweat equity reap the accolades and financial gains. Are you a diva or a doer?

SAGITTARIUS (NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 22)

Prioritize your projects. Some are time wasters. Yet, life presents you with such a great array of possibilities that it is hard for you to choose. Gay Archers improve their chances for success by getting out and expanding their current circle of contacts. Dive into a few new social pools and see who swims by. Lets hope its not another worm on a hook.

CAPRICORN (DECEMBER 23 - JANUARY 20)

Rather than sit home alone and count your money, why not share your goodies with a certain goodie or two? Someone Out there may capture your heart. Pink Caps could wind up falling in love with love and be swept off their feet. Assorted wilde passions could eventually cost much more than you think. But what a way to go!

AQUARIUS (JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 19)

Ornery Aqueerians create conflicts between pals and partners this April if they are not careful. Demands from both sides encourage you to sit on the fence. Speak honestly, passionately and from the heart might help overcome any hurt feelings. You want what you want and be adored for who you are but reality may bite. Will you bite back or chew it for a while?

PISCES (FEBRUARY 20 - MARCH 20)

Guppies would rather sit and daydream or meditate or even medicate. Actually they would really prefer to do anything else beside putting their nose to the grindstone at work now. Don't be lazy. Get the job done and don't fall into temptation. Hard work and perseverance are rewarded. At least that is what I am led to believe.

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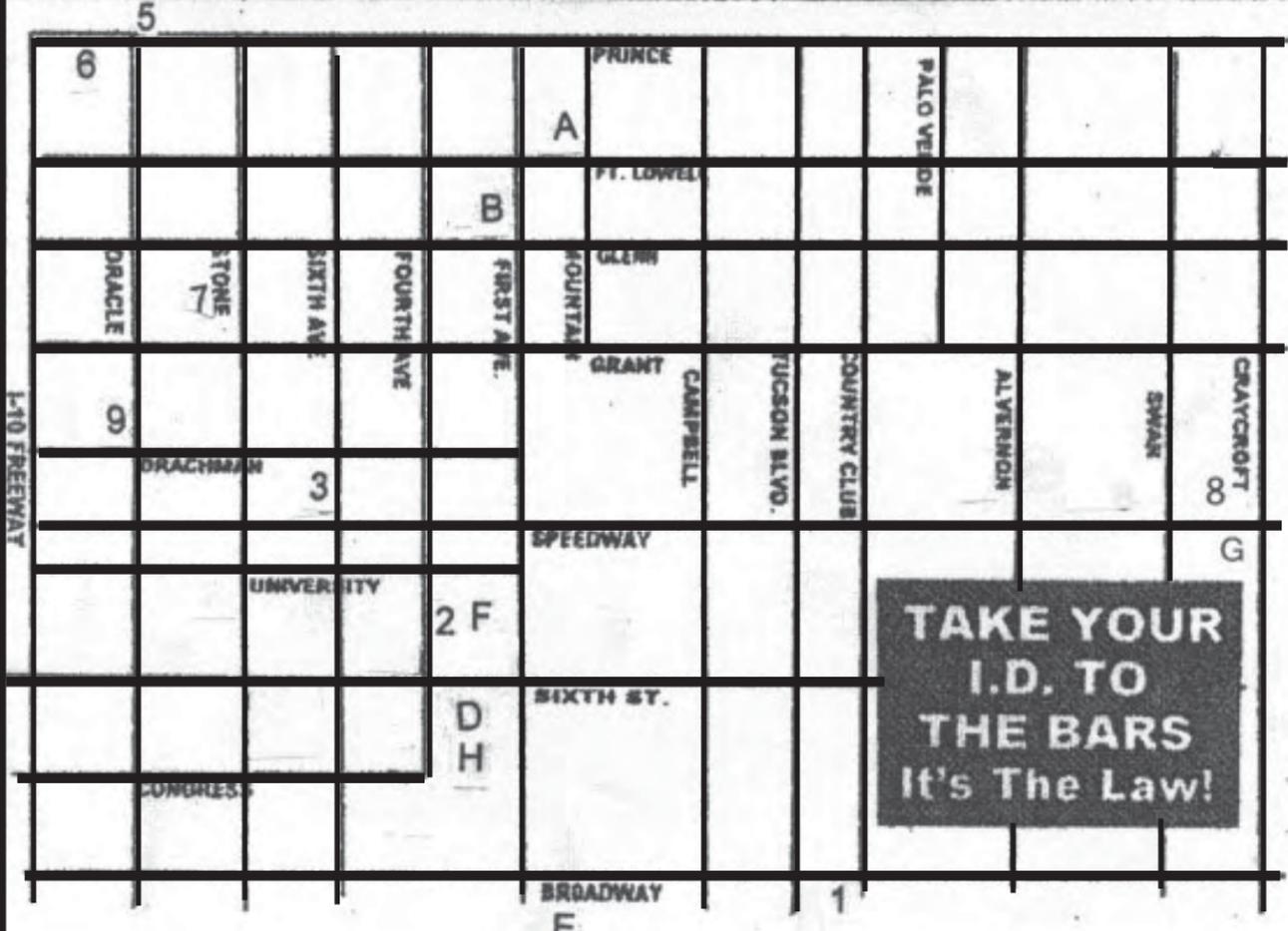
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 3. VENTURE-N
1239 N. 6th Ave. 882-8224
 5. WOODY'S
3710 N. Oracle Road, 292-6702
 6. HOWL AT THE MOON
915 W. Prince Rd. 293-7339
 7. YARD DOG SALOON
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 - G. TIHAN -Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network
1101 N. Craycroft, Ste 301. 299-6647
 - H. EON YOUTH CENTER 620-6245

Wednesday, April 4
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00pm. Canasta hosted by Bruce 743-3890. MSN Canasta is played every Wednesday at 7pm, but check back here for the specific host.

Thursday, April 5
Rainbow Train Cultural Competency Training. Learn how to better serve the older Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community. Wingspan Rainbow Trainers will present information about specific concerns of LGBT elders and ways you can improve your service to the community. Excellent for anyone offering service to the aging community: caregivers, social workers, nurses, doctors, etc. 2:00pm-4:00pm. Ward Six Offices, 3202 East 1st Street, Tucson. Event Sponsor: Wingspan Senior Pride. For More Information Contact Judy Kinney, 624-1779 ext23, jkinney@wingspan.org

#1Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00pm. No host Coffee Night at Rainbow Planet on fabulous 4th Avenue.

#2Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00pm. Triangle Tribe-A Men's Circle. According to a recent study, very few people have as many close friends as they would like. Are you as connected with other men as you want to be? Do you get the support you need for issues in your life? Do you wish you had more meaningful friendships and relationships with other men? Join like-minded men at Wingspan to share feelings, thoughts and ideas in a safe, respectful space. For the same experience with both straight and gay men, join us at the regular Circle of Men meetings. Call Tom at 591-2828 for dates and times.

Friday, April 6
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00pm. Join Merlin and Lee for an evening of Charades. Come out and totally enjoy putting your acting/miming and pantomime skills to the test. For directions and reservations [(a limited space event, please plan ahead and phone early)], place a telephone call to Lee and Merlin, your gracious yet competitive emcees and moderators, at 207-5336.

Tucson Prime Timers, Cocktails - 5:30 - 7:00, Colors, 5305 E. Speedway

Saturday, April 7
#1 Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 8:30a.m. Join Robert for a morning of Volleyball. This is played for fun, and you'll get to know some nice guys as you play. Two great ways to work on your game! For details and directions, please call Robert at 400-1376.

#2 Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. We invite you to join us for our monthly Pot Luck Dinner and to get to know the members of MSN. It's a nice, safe setting, meet new men, and greet friends. Reservations are not necessary. Bring your favorite dish to share. If you don't cook, bring restaurant, deli, or grocery pre-cooked food. Call Steve at 745-0304 for location and directions.

Sunday, April 8
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 6:30p.m. Thom and/or Ken host Dinner Out at one of Tucson's Ultra-Fabulous Buffets. For reservations and direc-

tions, contact Thom 623-2941 - e-mail thomsepals@hotmail.com, or Ken at 294-6606. Please contact Thom or Ken by Sunday at Noon to facilitate reservations. Price is usually under \$10. Check the MSN Yahoo on-line calendar for the scheduled location. The venue is rotated to include all parts of town, and may occasionally be held at a full-service menu restaurant.

Tucson Prime Timers, Brunch - Noon, Colors, 5305 E. Speedway

Monday, April 9
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Join Karol for Trivial Pursuit! Call for info at 744-9017.

Tucson Prime Timers, Lunch - 12:30 P.M., The Wildcat House, 1800 N. Stone Ave.

Tuesday, April 10
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. An evening of Bridge with Perry. Please call 321-4387.

Wednesday, April 11
Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00pm. Canasta hosted by Marvin at 745-0304. MSN Canasta is played every Wednesday at 7pm, but check back here for the specific host.

Thursday, April 12
#1Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. o host Coffee Night at Rainbow Planet on fabulous 4th Avenue.

#2Men's Social Network Open to men of

all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Triangle Tribe-A Men's Circle. According to a recent study, very few people have as many close friends as they would like. Are you as connected with other men as you want to be? Do you get the support you need for issues in your life? Do you wish you had more meaningful friendships and relationships with other men? Join like-minded men at Wingspan to share feelings, thoughts and ideas in a safe, respectful space. For the same experience with both straight and gay men, join us at the regular Circle of Men meetings. Call Tom at 591-2828 for dates and times.

Friday, April 13
#1Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Lloyd hosts a word for word fun evening of Scrabble. If you don't know how to play, we'll be glad to teach you. For reservations and directions, please call Lloyd at 792-8537. If you're loquacious, erudite, or a wordsmith; this man's game just may be a triple word score for you!

#2MSN Reminder: Mail your reservation check to Lloyd NOW for this month's visit to Tanque Verde Guest Ranch Brunch on Sunday, April 29th. Lloyd must receive your check by April 18th to reserve your 'place at the table'!

Tucson Prime Timers, Cocktails - 5:30 PM, Colors, 5305 E. Speedway

Saturday, April 14
#1 Men's Social Network Open to men of all ages, newcomers welcomed: 7:00p.m. Classic Movie Night with Ross. A new MSN event which we hope will become a regular monthly MSN event.

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Jail Shower Reveals Suspect's Gender

HAMILTON COUNTY, Tennessee - A statutory rape case against a 42-year-old charged as a man took on a different look after a jail shower revealed the defendant is actually a woman, reported the Associated Press on advocate.com. The female victim and several prisoners at the jail were among those surprised to discover that the person booked in the case as Alexander David Cross is a woman also known as Elaine Ann Cross.

Cross had been in jail awaiting a court appearance Wednesday (Mar. 28), where she pleaded guilty to an aggravated statutory rape charge as part of a deal with prosecutors. The charge stems from a sexual relationship with a 15-year-old girl. In exchange for the plea, Cross will not serve jail time if she stays out of trouble for six years. Officials said her

gender was revealed when jail authorities directed Cross to take a shower. "After about 10 days in jail, they figure out Alex Cross is a female," Asst. Dist. Atty. Boyd Patterson said in court. Patterson didn't immediately return a call Thursday seeking more information about the case.

The charges indicate Cross and the teenager had some sort of sexual contact at least three times during June and July 2006. Patterson said the teen was "enamored" of Cross and had considered marriage when she thought Cross was a man. As part of the plea agreement, Cross must register as a convicted sex offender, have no contact with the teen, and change her gender designation on her driver's license to female. Cross couldn't immediately be located for comment.

New Faster HEP A & B Vaccine Program Approved

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Monday (Apr. 2) approved an accelerated dosage for GlaxoSmithKline's Twinrix, the only hepatitis A and hepatitis B combination vaccine available in the United States, reported the Associated Press on 365Gay.com. The CDC recommends that all men who have sex with men be protected against hepatitis A and hepatitis B, two serious liver diseases that have a higher rate of incidence among MSM than in the general public. The Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA) has also called for universal vaccination against hepatitis A and hepatitis B for all MSM.

Despite widespread availability of safe and effective vaccines against both hepatitis A and B, research indicates that nearly half of the MSM population in the United States may not be fully protected against hepatitis A and hepatitis B. The usual vaccination schedule takes 3 shots over the course of a year. This new schedule gives LGBT travelers the option of taking the bulk of the vaccinations in one month, and then a booster shot at the end of the first year. For LGBT travelers going overseas, it means they can get vaccinated now and still have the same protections as the more delayed dosing schedule.

"Hepatitis A and hepatitis B are serious liver diseases which can be prevented through vaccination," stated travel medicine specialist Bradley A. Connor, M.D., Past President, International Society of Travel Medicine and a principal study investigator. "Twinrix's new accelerated dosing schedule offers an option that could benefit individuals such as those preparing to travel internationally to high-risk areas. It may also benefit emergency first care responders, especially those deploying to

disaster areas overseas, as well as others at risk for hepatitis, such as people with sexually transmitted diseases and those who are HIV-positive."

To raise awareness among Gay and Bisexual men that hepatitis A and hepatitis B are preventable by vaccination, the GSK-sponsored "Hep Team" outreach program will be partnering this summer with city health departments and LGBT community-based organizations in New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta, and San Francisco for a comprehensive education and vaccination campaign. In 2006, Hep Team programs reached tens of thousands of at-risk MSM and vaccinated over 2,000 patients at Gay Pride Festivals and other community events in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Atlanta.

Freedom Of Assembly Belongs To Everyone, Including LGBT

BRUSSELS, Belgium - The European arm of the International Lesbian and Gay Association, ILGA-Europe, has welcomed a Council of Europe resolution that condemns bans in some countries of "Gay Prides," UK Gay News reported.

Approved Mar. 28 by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the resolution reminds local and regional authorities throughout Europe that it is their duty to ensure that the freedom of assembly and expression is enjoyed by LGBT people without any discrimination

what she called an important resolution. "The Congress is one of the main European forums for the representatives of local and regional authorities in Europe. This resolution provides further reinforcement that freedom of assembly and expression is one of the fundamental human rights strictly guarded by the Council of Europe and LGBT people must enjoy these rights in absolutely the same way as any other citizens."



Patricia Prendiville, executive director of ILGA-Europe, welcomed

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School Officials Seek To Fire Journalism Teacher Suspended In Conflict Over Editorial

WOODBURN, Indiana (Observer Update) - A high school journalism teacher will fight administrators' efforts to fire her over a conflict that began when the student newspaper published an editorial advocating tolerance for homosexuals, reported indychannel.com. Teacher Amy Sorrell received a letter Thursday (Mar. 29) saying that the East Allen County School Board would consider firing her for insubordination and other misconduct when it meets May 1.

The letter accused Sorrell of failing to follow directives from Woodlan Junior-Senior High School Principal Ed Yoder regarding the school newspaper, altering the newspaper class curriculum and engaging in a campaign to falsely portray the district and Yoder as intolerant. "The journalism program at Woodlan Junior-Senior High School would be better served by replacing you with a teacher willing to work collaboratively with, not in conflict with, the building administrator in carrying out the prior review curriculum requirement for school-sponsored publications," the letter said.

Sorrell, who was placed on paid suspension, will seek a public hearing before the school board to discuss how she has been treated by district officials, said Jack Groch, an Indiana State Teachers Association

representative. "I think the charges are trumped up," Groch said. Sorrell said she has difficulty accepting the charge that she improperly had students study court cases regarding the First Amendment rather than produce a newspaper this month. "I just have a really hard time accepting that First Amendment cases are against the curriculum," she said.

Officials in the school district east of Fort Wayne are confident in their decision, Assistant Superintendent Andy Melin said. "If the administrative team did not fully believe that this was the appropriate action, it would not be taken," he said. After the editorial ran in the Woodlan Tomahawk's Jan. 19 issue, school district officials told Sorrell and the newspaper's staff that the principal would need to approve all content before future issues were printed.

Some students quit the newspaper staff after Sorrell was suspended and Yoder told the class that it must resume publishing the school paper and print a district policy naming the principal as the publisher. Sophomore Megan Chase, who wrote the editorial, said she expected many students and others to attend the school board meeting in support of Sorrell. "It's not fair. She never did anything wrong," Chase said. "I didn't think they would actually do it."

Catholic Theologian Condemned For Pro-Gay Writings

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has taken the unusual step of declaring pamphlets by a Marquette University theologian incompatible with church teaching, reported advocate.com. Daniel Maguire last year distributed pamphlets to all the U.S. bishops titled, "The Moderate Roman Catholic Position on Contraception and Abortion" and "A Catholic Defense of Same-Sex Marriage."

The bishops' doctrine committee said in a statement that Maguire gave his views wide distribution "as if they were a valid alternative to the teaching of the Catholic Church," so the prelates felt it was important to publicly denounce his arguments. Maguire, a graduate of Pontifical Gregorian University in

Rome, teaches religious ethics at Marquette, a Jesuit school. He has been challenging the church's views on sexuality for years.

In a Mar. response to the bishops, Maguire called church leaders "arrogant," saying they ignored the central message of his pamphlets and letter last year. He said he told the bishops that were overly fixated on contraception, abortion and same-sex marriage and neglected justice issues including poverty, racism and environmental degradation. Marquette University said in a statement that it agrees with the bishops that Maguire's pamphlets are not in accord with Catholic teaching. But Maguire has a right to express his views and, "as a tenured professor, he also has rights related to his academic discipline," the university said.

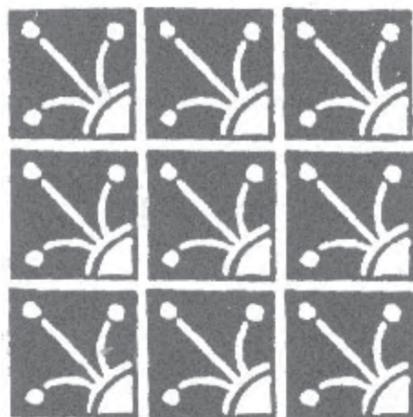
Texas Triangle Publisher Kay Longcope Dies

AUSTIN, Texas - Kay Longcope, longtime civil rights reporter and the founding publisher of the Texas Triangle, a Gay newspaper in Austin, died Thursday (Mar. 29) of pancreatic cancer, reported Gay.com. She was 69.

Kay Longcope launched the newspaper in 1992 when she moved to Austin and noticed there was minimal local coverage of the Gay community, the Austin American-Statesman reported. Longcope published her first newspaper as an elementary student using a mimeograph machine. She later worked on her high school newspaper and then wrote for the University of Texas' daily publication when she was a student there. Ten years out of college, she worked for the United Council of Churches in New York and then moved on to the Boston Globe in the 1970s, where she covered civil rights and later Gay and Lesbian issues for 22 years.

Longcope started the newspaper with Barbara Wohlgemuth, her

longtime partner of 17 years and the Texas Triangle's business manager. "I just don't know how to convey to you what an amazing person she was," Wohlgemuth told the American-Statesman. She said the newspaper inspired Gay Austin citizens to identify with their community and instill a sense of pride. "People just loved it because it was just different from any other Gay paper," Wohlgemuth said. "It was a paper they could show their parents or leave on their coffee table."



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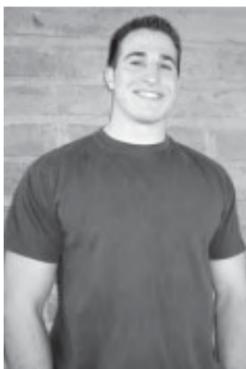
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Bishops Issue Threat To Italian Lawmakers Over Civil Partner Bill

ROME (Observer Update) - Italy's Catholic bishops have issued a threat to Italian lawmaker that they could face church repercussions if they pass a proposed bill giving same-sex couples the rights of marriage, 365Gay.com reported. But the open letter to parliamentarians did not specify what specifically would happen if the bill passes. The letter said that Catholic politicians had "the moral duty to clearly and publicly voice their disagreement and vote against any proposed law that would recognize homosexual couples."

The warning comes two weeks after Pope Benedict said there could be no surrender or compromise on civil partnerships. "[It is] non-negotiable," the Pope said. The letter from the conference of Italian bishops was welcomed by the opposition right-of-center coalition which has vowed to defeat the bill, but condemned by some members of Prime Minister Romano Prodi's left-of-center coalition. "This continuous, daily interference by the Church in parliament's activity is intolerable," said Sen. Luisa Boccia, a member of the leftist coalition. "What's next, excommunication?"

The civil partnership bill has been introduced in Parliament, but Prodi's government which narrowly survived a non-confidence vote and is divided on how to proceed with the bill, has not set a date for a vote. The legislation is modeled after Britain's civil partnerships. It would allow same-sex couples to sign a civil registry and then share pensions, health insurance, enter into contracts, and permit them to be considered the same as married couples for public housing. Prodi has been a supporter of moderate rights for same-sex couples since 2005 when he met with Gay activists, but he opposes Gay marriage.



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COLORS - Open 11m - 11pm Champagne Brunch 11am - 2pm with choice of complimentary mimosa, Bloody Mary or Screwdriver. Dickie Steed on piano during brunch. Brunch served until 2pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm \$3.50 Skyy Cocktails, \$2.75 Domestic and well. Reduced price appetizers. Dinner served until 10pm.

HOLLYWOOD - Open 5:00pm. Happy Hour 5-7pm \$1.75 well, domestic bottles and draft.

HOWL AT THE MOON - Open at 10am. \$2.50 Smirnoff Vodkas all day. Free Texas Hold-'Em Poker Tournaments at 4:00, and 7:00 pm. Play for points and prizes - no cash involved.

IBT's - Troy's Recovery Bar noon-4pm. 4-7:30 Karaoke on the patio. Benefit B-B-Q for the Pride Parade 5:30-7:30 and dance with DJ Mike Lopez 9pm to close.

VENTURE-N - Open 10am. Patio open 3pm. \$2.00 Bloody Marys or Screws til 3pm Patio Beer Bust 3-7. Burger BBQ 5-7. Selection of burger meats to choose from. \$3 proceeds go to Pet Watch (helping HIV/AIDS clients with their veterinary bills).

WOODY'S - Open 11am. Happy Hour 11am-8pm (excl spec events); Brunch 11:30am-2:30pm; Back Pocket Patio Bar 2pm til 2am. Beer Bust 2-7pm; Bar-B-Que 5-9pm; Karaoke with Michael D. 9p.m.; DJ Jeff in the Back Pocket 9pm; Drag Bingo every other Sunday 8-9pm Watch for special events.

YARD DOG - Open 10am - 2am. Patio Bar opens at 7pm

MONDAY

THE BIZ - Open 3pm-10pm; Drink what you want with ½ priced Happy Hour. Poke-Her Monday! Free card lessons 5pm. Free Texas Hold-'em Tourney at 6pm; Prizes for 1st, 2nd, 3rd Places. Happy Hour pricing & Free Food

COLORS - Closed on Mondays.

HOLLYWOOD - Open 5pm. Happy Hour 5pm to 7pm. \$1.75 well, domestic bottles, draft. Movie Night 8-11pm.

HOWL AT THE MOON - Open at 3 pm. Happy Hour all day & night with \$2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. Kitchen closed. \$3 taco & tostada bar 4-8 pm. GLBT Movie Nite with shows at 6 & 8 pm. Free pool all day.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, DJ Craig Carter 10pm-2am \$1.50 well vodka drinks, All drink specials not available during special events.

VENTURE-N - Open 9am. Patio 6pm. Free pool til 4pm. \$2.75 Skyy Martinis 4-8pm.

WOODY'S - Open Noon til 2am. Happy Hour Noon-8pm (excl spec events) Karaoke with Michael D. 9pm

YARD DOG - Open daily 8am. 50¢ off any Top Shelf Rum until 8pm. Beer Bust 4-8pm. Patio Bar opens 7pm

TUESDAY

THE BIZ - Open 3pm-10pm; Drink What You Want with ½ priced Happy Hour. Monthly Wine Tasting on 2nd Tuesday of every month at 5:30pm. Please RSVP by the first Monday of the Month. Wine bottles will be for sale after the tasting at a special discounted price.

COLORS - Open 4-11pm. Happy Hour 4-7 \$3.50 Skyy cocktails, \$2.75 Domestic and well and reduced price appetizers. Dinner served until 10pm.

HOLLYWOOD - Open 5pm. Happy Hour 5pm to 7pm. \$1.75 well, domestic bottles, draft. Karaoke 8pm-12am.

HOWL AT THE MOON - Open at 3 pm. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, \$2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. Kitchen open 4-9pm. Free Texas Hold-'Em Poker for women only at 6:30 p.m. Play for points and prizes - no cash involved. Tequila Nite with \$2.50 well tequila & margaritas, 75¢ off call tequilas.

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. Patio 7pm. Free Pool til 4pm. Spaghetti Nite (2nd Tuesday every month \$2.00).

WOODY'S - Open Noon til 2am. Happy Hour Noon-8pm (excl spec events) 80s Nite with Alex 8-close

YARD DOG - Open daily 8am. 50¢ off any Top Shelf Tequila until 8pm Dart Tourney at 9am. Beer Bust 4-8pm. Patio Bar Opens 7pm.

WEDNESDAY

THE BIZ - Open 3pm-2am; Drink what You Want with ½ priced Happy Hour 3-8pm; 18 to Party, 21 to Drink! 18 & Over Night w/DJ Shorty at 9:30pm! Rotating Shot Specials all night.

COLORS - Open 4-11pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm, \$3.50 Skyy cocktails, \$2.75 Domestic and well and reduced price appetizers. Dinner served until 10pm.

HOLLYWOOD - Open 5pm. Happy Hour 5pm to 7pm. \$1.75 well, domestic bottles, draft. Movie Night. First show 6pm, Second show 8pm with movie theatre popcorn and hot dogs.

HOWL AT THE MOON - Open at 3 pm. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, \$2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints, Kitchen open 4 - 9 pm. Free Pool all day and night. Free Texas Hold-'Em Poker Tournament at 6:30 pm for Women Only and open tournaments at 7 and 10. Play for points & prizes - no cash involved. Great way to learn the game or sharpen your skills.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, "Diva-Licious" show 9pm w/ Bunny Fu Fu & Friends. After show dance with DJ Q til 2am,

VENTURE-N - Open 9am. Patio 7pm. Free Pool til 4pm. \$2.75 Cuervo Margaritas 4-8pm

WEDNESDAY CALENDAR CONTINUED

WOODY'S - Open Noon til 2am; Happy Hour Noon-8pm (excl Spec Events); Chili Dog Buffet 5-9pm; Underwear/Fetish/Leather Party with Alex and Blake 9-close - \$1 off all drinks for those who participate (50¢ off draught/schnapps) Back Pocket Patio Bar open 9pm-close.

YARD DOG - Open daily 8am. 50¢ off any Top Shelf Vodka until 8pm Beer Bust 4-8pm. Patio Bar Opens 7pm. Dart Tourney 8pm.

THURSDAY

THE BIZ - Open 3pm-2am; Drink What You Want with ½ priced Happy Hour 3-8pm; 'Thirsty Thursday' with Tori Steele & Friends! Drag show starts at 9:30pm with Tori Steele, Janee Starr, Diana Flair and weekly special guests. \$2 Pitchers and Rotating Shot Specials. Followed by a new Surprise guest DJ!

COLORS - Open 11:30am-11pm. Lunch served until 4pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm, \$3.50 Skyy cocktails, \$2.75 Domestic and Well and reduced price appetizers. Dinner served until 10pm.

HOLLYWOOD - Open 5pm. Happy Hour 5pm to 7pm. \$1.75 well, domestic bottles, draft. Karaoke Night presented by Rebecca of Y-Not from 8pm until 1am.

HOWL AT THE MOON - Open at 3 pm. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, \$2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. Kitchen open 4 - 9 pm. Karaoke with Rosemary at 8:30pm. \$2.50 Mexican Beers all night, \$1.00 Jello shots.

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. Patio open 7pm. Free Pool til 4pm. Pool Tourney 7pm. \$3 entry. Special prices for players. Steak Nite (3rd Thursday during summer). Bring your own or get it here \$6.00.

WOODY'S - Open Noon-2am; Happy Hour Noon-8pm (excl Spec Events); Free Pool all day. Nacho Chip Buffet 5-9pm; \$1 PBRs Longnecks and \$2 Tecate Longnecks; Back Pocket Bar open 8-close.

YARD DOG - Open daily 8am. 50¢ off any Top Shelf Bourbon til 8pm. Beer Bust 4-8pm. Patio Bar opens 7pm.

FRIDAY

THE BIZ - Open 3pm-2am; Drink What You Want with ½ priced Happy Hour 3-8pm; Rotating weeks Latin or Hip Hop Music with DJ Shorty at 9:30pm. Rotating Shot Specials all night!

COLORS - Open 11:30am-1am. Lunch served until 4pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm, \$3.50 Skyy cocktails, \$2.75 Domestic and Well and reduced price appetizers. Dinner served until 10pm. "Hot Jazz, Cool Martinis" with Susan Artemis and Craig Faltn 6:30-9:30pm. "Guys & Dolls" comedy drag show hosted by Lucinda Holliday at 10pm.

HOLLYWOOD - Open 5pm. Happy Hour 5pm to 7pm. \$1.75 well, domestic bottles, draft. Happy Hour #2 10pm until midnight.

HOWL AT THE MOON - Open at 3 pm. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, \$2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. Kitchen open 4 - 9 pm. \$4.50 Fried Chicken dinner with fries and slaw. Free Two-Step lessons with Amanda every other Friday. Call 293-7339 for schedule. DJ Pat plays the best of contemporary and classic country 8:30 to close. Kitchen open 9 pm - midnight serving late night munchies menu.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, 9pm Hot Dance with DJ Mike Lopez outside on the patio and DJ Raynman spinning club music inside. 9pm-2am.

VENTURE-N - Open 9am. Patio open 7pm. Free Pool til 4pm.

WOODY'S - Open Noon-2am; Happy Hour Noon-8pm (excl spec events); Martini Happy Hour 5-8pm-\$1 off all call Martinis; Back Pocket Patio Bar open 8-close. DJ Jeff in the Back Pocket 9-close; Watch for special events.

YARD DOG - Open daily 8am. 50¢ off any Top Shelf Gin until 8pm. Beer Bust 4-8pm. Patio Bar Opens

SATURDAY

THE BIZ - \$1 Draught Beers until 10pm & \$4 Finlandia Vodka Red Bull drinks until 11pm; Dance Party with DJ Shorty at 9:30 mixing it up and playing what you want to hear!

COLORS - Open 11:30am-11pm, Lunch served until 4pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm, \$3.50 Skyy cocktails, \$2.75 Domestic and Well, reduced price appetizers. Dinner served until 10pm. Nightly dinner specials. Tucson's hot new duo "Pacific Breeze" performs 7-10pm.

HOLLYWOOD - Open 5pm. Happy Hour 5pm to 7pm. \$1.75 well, domestic bottles, draft

HOWL AT THE MOON - Open 11:00am. Happy Hour 11am-8pm, \$2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. Kitchen open 11am-9pm. \$2.50 Capt. Morgan or Mailbu. Cheeseburger & Fries Special for \$4.50 all day. Best burgers around. Learn to plau Texas Hold-'Em Poker Lessons at noon with a friendly game to follow - no money involved. DJ playing dance mix or check our ad for special events. Kitchen open 9pm to midnight serving late night munchies menu.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, 5-8pm karaoke and Teryaki Kabobs on the patio. 8:30pm Show time w/ Ajia Simone or Janee Star. DJ Q spinning Club Music inside and Mike Lopez spinning on the patio 10pm to close.

VENTURE-N - Open 9am. Patio Bar open 3pm. Patio Beer Bust 3-7pm.

WOODY'S - Open 10am-2am; Happy Hour 10am-8pm (excl spec events); Steak/Fish Dinner in the Back Pocket 5-9pm. Back Pocket Patio Bar open 5-close. Live Jazz with Arthur Migliazza in the Back Pocket 6-9pm; DJ Jeff in the Back Pocket 9-close. Watch for special events.

YARD DOG - Open daily 8am. Beer Bust 4-8pm. \$1.25 glass, \$2.25 pitcher. Patio Bar Opens 7pm.

BAR CALENDAR Of Upcoming Events

THURSDAY, APRIL 5

THE BIZ - Thunder Thursday - Drag Show hosted by Boy Sean with DJ Hill

FRIDAY, APRIL 6

THE BIZ - Live Rock by Nels at 9:00 p.m.

WOODY'S - Miss Gay Western States America Pre-Pageant Revue Show 8:00p.m. showcasing 3 former Miss Gay Americas and the Reigning Miss Gay America, Luscious.

SATURDAY, APRIL 7

HOWL AT THE MOON - DJ Hard Mac is back with dance mix.

SUNDAY, APRIL 8

VENTURE-N - Opens at 10:00 a.m. Easter Egg Hunt - prizes and surprises. Bloody Marys & Screwdrivers \$2.25 until 3:00 p.m. Holiday Beerbust 3 to 7 p.m. and BurgerBust 5 - 7 p.m.

WOODY'S - Special Easter Brunch with Easter Egg Prizes - Eggs Benedict, Chorizo & Eggs, Salmon & Eggs, Fresh Fruit and Pastries. \$10.00 per person

YARD DOG SALOON - Easter Champagne Brunch at 11:00 a.m. Easter coloring and Bonnet Contest at 1:00 p.m. - Prizes

TUESDAY, APRIL 10

THE BIZ - Wine Tasting at 6:00 p.m. Sample their selection and if you like what you taste, buy a bottle to take home.

FRIDAY, APRIL 13

THE BIZ - Dragstar Cabaret' a Benefit for Breast Cancer starts at 9:00 p.m. Tickets \$5.00 presale and \$6 at the door. Presale tickets are available at The Coffee Vein 1545 N. Stone and at The Biz..

WOODY'S - April Birthday Party.

SATURDAY, APRIL 14

HOWL AT THE MOON - Benefit drag show for Jasmine Bouvier in her quest for the Miss Gay Arizona title. 9 pm

SUNDAY, APRIL 15

WOODY'S - Join the crowd for Stella Virgin's Last Drag Bingo. She has something special planned for the event!

FRIDAY, APRIL 20

WOODY'S - Bio Hazard / Earth Day Party.

SATURDAY, APRIL 21

HOWL AT THE MOON - Join Kimi San Dumi and guests for a big show at 9:00 p.m.

WOODY'S - Annual Pool Party today. Watch for details.

SUNDAY, APRIL 22

WOODY'S - April Drag Show. Check for special guests. 8:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY APRIL 25

WOODY'S - Suck and Blow Party with special Hosts.

SATURDAY, APRIL 28

HOWL AT THE MOON - Boys R Us show at 10:00 p.m. Tickets available soon.

SUNDAY, APRIL 29

WOODY'S - Drag Show. Come out and see who replaces Stella Virgin!

TUESDAY, MAY 1

Special show with Ayida Cox and her guests. Starts at 9:00 p.m.

SATURDAY, MAY 5

HOWL AT THE MOON - It's Cinco de Mayo! Special Latino Drag Show at 8:00 p.m. followed by DJ Michelle playing cumbias, corridos and reggaeton. Drink specials all night. \$3.00 Cover.

SUNDAY, MAY 6

20th Annual Reno Gannon Memorial Jell-O Wrestling Extravaganza and Benefit Auction at Woody's, 3710 N. Oracle. Pre-event Party 2:00 p.m. wrestling starts at 4:00 p.m. Tickets on sale now. For more information call SAAF, (520)628-7223.

SATURDAY, MAY 12

HOWL AT THE MOON - Tori Steele is your host for an evening with great female illusionists. 9:00 p.m. \$5.00 cover.

NOTICES - COMMUNITY - NOTICES

TUCSON KNIGHT OWLS (T.K.O.)
Openly invites new members to our monthly meetings which occur on the first Saturday of every month at 12:00 pm., followed by a beer bust from 2pm to 6pm., at our home bar the Yard Dog saloon. We will have a Bake sale at our next beer bust April 7th. T.K.O.'s annual spring/summer fling is now called owls fling. This year we will be going to Holly Lake July 27th - 30th. The run fee is \$60 for members and \$70 for non-members. Applications will be available at our next beer bust. You can also pick one up from any T.K.O. member.

HALLELUJAH RECOVERY DRUG & ALCOHOL 12-STEP. Every Thursday 5:30-6:30pm at Cornerstone Fellowship, 2902 N. Geronimo. 622-4626.

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.

GLBT-friendly AL-ANON group meets Saturdays at 11am at Unitarian Universalist Church, 4831 E. 22nd Street, Tucson.

YOUNG AND GAY?
GLBT Youth 23 and under, meet every Saturday in Tucson for sharing, support and information. Meetings are held at 425 E. 7th Street from 3 to 4:30 pm. You are not alone. For more info call Wingspan, 624-1779.

The **TUCSON Chapter of PRIME TIMERS WORLDWIDE** invites Gay or Bisexual men and their admirers to join and share Prime Timers fellowship. We welcome mature men (and admirers) who wish to become involved with planned and future Prime Timers (TPT) activities. Meetings luncheons and dinners are held monthly. For dates, times and information call 298-6727, leave name and phone number. Tucsonpt@primetimersww.org

TUCSON GAY 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 881-1794 - 8 am - 5 pm M-F.

AIDS HOTLINE - 326-AIDS. Hours M-F, 9:00 am to 10:00 pm. Information, counseling, HIV-related services, Tucson.

GAY OR BI-SEXUAL MEN in relationships with women. Need friends you can talk to? Weekly support group meets Wednesdays 6:30 - 8:00 pm. Licensed psychologist facilitator. Call 745-6977 in Tucson for more information. Strictly confidential.

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

GET NAKED with TNTucson MEN! We're a social and recreational club. Have you ever longed to camp, swim, hike or play with others who enjoy the same, dropping all the masks and pretensions? We're for you! TNTucsonMEN@nethere.com, P.O. Box 12176, Tucson 85792 or call 514-9894

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

CRONIES SOCIAL GROUP. A Social group for Gay men who enjoy the fellowship of their peers. Call Leo at 624-6768.

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 16 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 690-9565 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 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, contact TEAM ARIZONA at their website: teamarizona.org

ARE YOU GAY OR BISEXUAL AND UNDER 21 YEARS OF AGE? The Gay Young Men's Project is now looking for volunteers for the project. We need people who want to help create a positive social change for young Gay men as well as reduce the risk for HIV infection. For more information please call 628-7223.

THE MEN'S MASSAGE GROUP meets the 3rd Sunday of each month. It is a good way to meet other men of all ages, safely, and with the art of nurturing touch. There is a fee. You must sign up in advance to participate. Call Marc at 881-4582 for more information or sign up.

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

Pride Weekend. Inquiries about support groups and individual needs should be directed to Wingspan and other local agencies listed here. 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.

TUCSON INTERFAITH HIV/AIDS NETWORK (TIHAN), a coalition of faith communities committed to a compassionate response to HIV/AIDS, provides HIV education in congregational settings, volunteer CareTeams to support HIV+ persons, a referral network of HIV-sensitive clergy, and interfaith services of healing and hope. For more information call 299-6647.

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.

OUTLOUD! Tucson's premiere Local Lesbian and Gay Radio Show, broadcast every Sunday from 7-8 pm 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).

AAPSP - ARIZONA ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC SAFETY PROFESSIONALS: a confidential organization committed to providing support and networking for all Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual public safety professionals in Arizona. Membership open to Law Enforcement Officers, Firefighters, Probation, Parole and Corrections Officers and civilians working within these agencies. Website: AAPSP.org or e-mail: AAPSP@aol.com or call Dave (520)745-9059 (Tucson) or Kim (602)534-6219 (Phoenix)

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, 6:30 p.m. each month at Santa Cruz Lutheran Church, 6809 S. Cardinal Ave. For information visit www.lctucson.org write: LC, 7014 E. Golf Links Road, PMB 212, Tucson, AZ 85730.

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

"OUT ON THE TRAILS - EQUESTRIAN FUN!" Rider Club forming. Looking for women and men to ride together on the trails of Southern Arizona. Must have own horse, truck and trailer. For more info write: "Out On The Trails" P.O. Box 44045, Tucson, AZ 85733-4045

THE MAN TO MAN Social/erotic education club is the tantric men's group that offers passionate friendships, fun activities and real Tantric sex education. Marc 881-4582

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 Wingspan, 425 E. 7th 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 Lori at Wingspan, 624-1779, ext. 20. 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@yahoo.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 new **MAN TO MAN INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY** is meeting about honoring the spiritual side of ourselves. It is the men's social/erotic group that offers passionate friendships, fun activities, and real tantric sex education. Call Marc 881-4582 in advance Check it out. We meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 7-9pm. Potluck dinner. Donation.

BROTHERS OF THE COMPASSIONATE WAY. Pagan spiritual group for gay, bisexual, transgendered men. Box 41623, Tucson, AZ 85717.

DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE

Gay College Athletes Seek Greater Acceptance



John Amaechi (I) and Joey Fisher

ATLANTA, Georgia - A click of a box on Joey Fisher's Facebook page altered life for the University of Georgia hockey goalie - he had changed the "Interested In" box in his profile from "Women" to "Men," reported the Associated Press on 365Gay.com. The junior sociology major, who had been openly Gay to his friends and family since his teens, but never to his college teammates, might as well have shouted out his sexual orientation during practice.

"News like that travels fast," said Fisher, who was part of a panel discussion held in conjunction with the men's Final Four weekend in Atlanta to raise awareness of the challenges Gays face in college and professional sports. "We know the odds are very likely that at least a handful of these players are Gay, Lesbian, or Transgender," said Joe Solomonese, president of The Human Rights Campaign, one of the groups that sponsored the event. The panel included former NBA player John Amaechi, former baseball player Billy Beane, and former NFL players David Kopay and

Esera Tuaolo - four of the six male athletes from the four major North American sports who have publicly discussed their homosexuality. The men came out after retiring.

Fisher said he was surprised that his team supported him when he came out last summer. "After coming out, I felt I could be more open with my teammates," he said. "Life beforehand was definitely more challenging." But prejudice against homosexuality remains in sports, panel members said. "If a team and coaches make a stand like they have for other civil rights issues, that will be a help," said Bean, who played from 1987 to 1995 for the Detroit Tigers, Los Angeles Dodgers and San Diego Padres. Pat Griffin, director of It Takes a Team! - a project of Billie Jean King's Women in Sports Foundation - said college athletes seem to be more accepting of Gay teammates than in the past. "I think young athletes in colleges are way ahead of their coaches," Griffin said. "It's really important the coaches catch up because they set the tone for the team."

Fisher said his university's non-discrimination policy, which includes sexual orientation, made him more comfortable "when it came time to come out," and that his coaches and senior team members have provided leadership to the rest of the team on the issue of homosexuality. Such acceptance allows the five-foot-11, 160-pound goalie to be just another part of the team when the Ice Dogs hit the ice. "It's an escape from everyday life for a couple hours," Fisher said of hockey. "You can forget about all the rest of the world and focus on that one goal of keeping the puck out of the net."

Episcopal Bishops Reject Anti-Gay Ultimatum

SEATTLE, Washington - An ex-NFL player and anti-Gay preacher Ken Hutcherson flew to Latvia to give advice on fighting LGBT rights and falsely claiming to be a White House envoy, Gay.com U.K. reported. The White House has denied any connections with Hutcherson, who runs a church in Redmond, Wash., with a Seattle lawyer now asking the FBI to investigate whether the claim to official backing broke federal law.

Hutcherson was accompanied by Scott Lively, co-author of "The Pink Swastika: Homosexuality in the Nazi Party." The scary pair were flown over by the New Generation Church for an anti-Gay conference and were welcomed at the U.S. embassy in Latvia. They met with the Ministry of Domestic Affairs, the parliament and the Ministry of Social Integration. The fact that Hutcherson had the ears of Janis Smits, leader of the Latvian Parliamentary Human Rights Committee, was particularly galling for Mozaika, Latvia's LGBT rights group. Despite invitations, Smits failed to attend any of the events organized by Mozaika.

Hutcherson claimed that he visited Latvia with the knowledge and support of Jay Hein, director of the White House's Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives. "Jay says we have a partnership and we are going to work together again . . . I told him, 'There are things I want to do in Latvia, but I can do them a lot faster with your backing,'" Hutcherson told Deutsche Presse-Agentur. Hutcherson is no stranger to controversy and has no fear of picking fights with adversaries bigger than himself. In 2005, he took on Microsoft,



Ken Hutcherson

demanding the software maker withdraw its support for a bill making it illegal to fire employees due to sexual orientation.

"He said he was a representative of the office. The ministry of integration should be open to all, so I generally trust people and don't ask them if they have their credentials," added Integration Minister Oskars Kastens. Hutcherson was carrying a file bearing the U.S. coat of arms, he said. White House officials contacted by Deutsche Presse-Agentur denied that Hutcherson had any link with the office. Hutcherson "was not appointed 'special envoy' by OFBCI," said White House spokeswoman Alyssa McClenning. He has no official status or links with the body which would legitimately allow him to claim to represent the White House on a foreign visit, she added.



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