Observing Tucson And The Greater Arizona Community

OBSERVER

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Canada High Court OKs G/L Citizens Right To Wed

OTTAWA - As expected, the Canadian Supreme Court told the federal government that the Canadian Parliament has the right to redefine marriage for the entire country, and that there was nothing unconstitutional about defining marriage as the union of two people, reported the PlanetOut Network.

Responding not to an appeal but to a set of reference questions from the government, the justices also said that religious officials cannot be forced to celebrate a same-sex marriage, or any other type of marriage, that may fly in the face of their faith.

Finally, the court declined to answer a fourth question that was added to the list by the incoming government of Paul Martin earlier this year. After taking the reins from Jean Chretien, Martin and his administration asked the court to tell them whether the heterosexual restriction on marriage complied with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The last-minute addition to the court's agenda obliged the justices to delay a hearing on the questions for about six months, long enough to hold parliamentary elections without the issue of same-sex marriage overshadowing the process.

In the end, the justices basically said that there was no advantage in answering the fourth question, and that there was every reason not to do so. First, Martin has made clear that he intends to present a bill to legalize same-sex marriage to Parliament, regardless of the court's answer. Second, five of Canada's top provincial courts have already ruled that marriage should be available both to Gay and straight couples, and the government has declined to appeal these rulings.

Therefore, same-sex marriage is the law of the land in these areas, which cover four out of five Canadian citizens. For the high court to issue a contrary and nonbinding opinion would be destructive. Likewise, since the answers to the questions are advisory only, there would be only a "hypothetical benefit" to a positive response, the court said.

In a press release headlined, "We are Canadian — Fully and Equally," same-sex marriage activists in Canada applauded the court for resisting being "drawn into the political games played by Prime Minister Paul Martin and Justice Minister Irwin Cotler. [Question four] was a question already answered and accepted by the government."

With Thursday's (December 9) announcement, Canada moves closer to imposing a national definition on marriage. The heavily populated province of Ontario started the ball rolling in June of 2003 by legalizing same-sex marriage from one day to the next. After the government of Jean Chretien declined to appeal, British Columbia followed within a few weeks. Then came Quebec, and eventually Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan and the Yukon territories. Alberta remains the only province that still opposes same-sex marriage, while the rest are likely to legalize marriage through the courts unless Parliament beats them to the punch.

The Martin government is expected to call for a vote on a bill to legalize same-sex marriage throughout the country as early as this month or next.

UCC Demands TV Licenses Be Revoked Over G/L Ads

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The United Church of Christ filed two interventions Thursday, December 9, calling on the Federal Communications Commission to deny license renewals to two Miami television stations that wouldn't air an ad showing the denomination supportive of same-sex relationships, reported 365Gay.com.

NBC and CBS rejected the ad saying they will not airing commercials that advocate one side of a political issue.

The 30-second spot, launched Wednesday, December 8, by the United Church of Christ, highlights the church's welcoming stance toward Gays and others who might feel alienated.

In the ad, a Gay couple, a Hispanic man, a black woman and a man in a wheelchair are pushed back from the doors of a church by two bouncers. The ad flashes the words: "Jesus didn't turn people away. Neither do we."

"Because this commercial touches on the exclusion of Gay couples and other minority groups by other individuals and organizations," reads an explanation from CBS, "and the fact the Executive Branch has recently proposed a Constitutional Amendment to define marriage as a union between a man and a woman, this spot is unacceptable for broadcast on the [CBS and UPN] networks."

Continued on Page Nine

GLBT Leaders Signal Split Over Strategy

WASHINGTON, D.C. - In a letter to Congress on Thursday, December 9, several prominent LGBT leaders distanced themselves from the nation's largest Gay rights group because it reportedly plans to shift its strategy to include political bargaining and easing up on the push for equal marriage rights, the PlanetOut Network reported.

The catalyst for the apparent public split was a New York Times article, published Thursday, that described how Human Rights Campaign (HRC) leaders plan to "moderate" their goals in response to the widespread victory last month of anti-Gay initiatives in 11 states to restrict marriage rights.

One of the HRC proposals, according to the Times, was to consider supporting President Bush's plan to partly privatize Social Security in exchange for a guarantee that Gay partners would receive benefits under the program.

In addition, the Times piece suggested that HRC leaders plan to adopt a more controlled strategy that places less emphasis on legalizing same-sex marriage and more on changing minds through personal relationships.

The reported shifts got a quick reaction from some LGBT leaders, who wrote to the people HRC spends most of its time lobbying: U.S. representatives and senators.

"Although the struggle for freedom can be difficult and painful for those without full equality, it would be an historic mistake to grow tired of the battle or surrender basic rights and equality in order to make the road easier," the group of more than 30 leaders wrote in the letter, titled "Where We Stand."

"We will not sacrifice our rights — or the rights of others, like senior citizens — on the altar of political expediency," they said, referring to the reported Social Security deal.

The signers include Democratic strategist and fund-raiser David Mixner, philanthropist David Bohnett and leaders of several national LGBT organizations, including the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), the National Black Justice Coalition, Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force(NGLTF), DignityUSA and Seniors in a Gay Environment (SAGE).

The HRC, however, has publicly disputed Thursday's article in the Times, calling it "inaccurate" and "incomplete" in its depiction of the agency's plans.

"There will be no retreat or compromise in the pursuit of full equality for LGBT Americans, including our right to marry, protect our families and be free from discrimination at work," the group said in a prepared statement.

The group also said it has not taken a position on the issue of privatizing Social Security.

Kate Kendell, executive director of the San Francisco-based NCLR, said she signed the letter in part to counter what she felt were false perceptions stemming from the Nov. 2 general election.

"In light of continued questions about whether 'the movement' is moving too quickly," she added, "I felt we needed to communicate directly with policymakers as they considered the lives of Gay people in legislation."

Kendell said her decision to sign was "completely separate" from the Times report, which she doubted was entirely accurate.

Author Betty Berzon, a psychotherapist and columnist for PlanetOut, said she signed the letter to Congress to prevent a narrowing of the LGBT community's focus.

"Of course Gay rights strategy should be reassessed now — that is healthy — but it doesn't have to be either-or: working for same-sex marriage or focusing on just helping the American family know us better," she told the PlanetOut Network. "They are essentially interrelated, and both continue to deserve our best efforts."

The public disagreement among leaders follows the sudden announcement last week that HRC's former leader, Cheryl Jacques, was departing after less than a year on the job.

Merry Christmas

There is a Christmas message in the block of letters below. Can you discover what it is?

A B C D E
F G H I J
K M N O P
Q R S T U
V W X Y Z

If you're unable to figure it out, the answer is printed on top of the Tucson map on Page Nine.

UPDATE

Desert Voices Holding Open Rehearsals

TUCSON - Be a Voice in Tucson's GLBT Community! Sing with Desert Voices!

Desert Voices will be holding open rehearsals on January 3, 10 and 17, 2005, at Water of Life MCC, 3269 N. Mountain Ave, just north of Ft. Lowell, beginning at 6:30 p.m. each Monday evening. Desert Voices is Tucson's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and straight/supportive (GLBTS) others chorus, singing songs of pride, hope and humor for the Tucson community over the past 16 years.

As a community chorus, Desert Voices welcomes everyone to come and sing. The only requirement is that members are able to 'match pitch', which means when a note is played on the piano, you have to be able to sing back the same note. A simple and painless voice check will be conducted between 6:30 and 7pm on the evenings mentioned. Please call the Desert Voices office at (520)791-9662, or email to info@desertvoices.org to sign up for a voice check during these open rehearsals.

The chorus typically presents two concerts each season, starting with a winter concert in December and wrapping up with a spring concert in April. In addition, the chorus will add the impact of their singing voices to a variety of community events throughout the year. Local non-profit organizations are invited to contact Desert Voices if they are interested in having them sing for an event they are planning.

Desert Voices members develop their shows as a group in a collaborative style, contributing their ideas and song suggestions to their multi-talented director and accompanist, Chris Tackett and Namoli Brennet. Their Spring show is titled "Our True Colors" and will be presented on April 16, 2005 at The Muse Community Arts center, 516 N. 5th Avenue in Tucson. The show will focus on the delightful diversity of the GLBTS community.

For more information about the chorus, check out their website at www.desertvoices.org. And don't forget to call their office at (520)791-9662, or email to info@desertvoices.org to sign up for a voice check during open rehearsals. Rehearsals for the April show start immediately on January 3, so the earlier you audition, the faster you'll get in the 'sing' of things! Be a voice! Come out and sing!

GLBT Health Access Project Items For Sale

TUCSON - The GLBT Health Access Project has put together a store featuring a wide range of products with the message that Homophobia and Transphobia in Healthcare are Unhealthy.

Head on over to www.cafepress.com/glbthap and you'll find t-shirts, buttons, mugs, bags, and a host of other fun items to surprise people with this holiday season. Whatever your budget, there's something for you!

What makes this extra special is that you'll be giving two gifts in one. Not only will the lucky recipient have a unique item to treasure, but you'll also be helping support the work of the GLBT Health Access Project, which works all year round toward ensuring equal access to quality healthcare for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity

Bear Beer Bust December 18

TUCSON - The Bears of the Old Pueblo will be holding their monthly "beer bust," Saturday, December 18, 3 to 6:00 p.m., at Woody's, 3710 N. Oracle Road.

Proceeds, or "tips" from the bust are used to support local charities. Sodas will also be available for those who prefer not to have alcohol.

For more information, call (520) 790-5775, or go online to botop.com.

OUT LOUD On KXCI Sundays

TUCSON - Tune in Sunday, December 19, 7:00 to 8:00 p.m., on KXCI, 91.3 FM for Out Loud.

Out Loud, hosted by Deb & Janet, is 60 minutes of programming by and about the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) community.

For more information, call (520) 623-1000 or go online to kxci.org.

Reveille Gay Men's Chorus Update

TUCSON - After their holiday concert. Reveille Gay Men's Chorus isn't packing up the song-books.

Reveille will be the first Gay chorus to sing in Mexico and will be the first Gay chorus to sing in Brazil in a tour planned for May 2005.

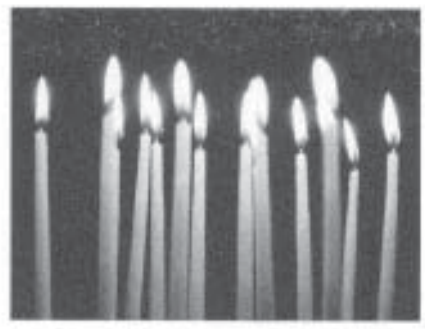
Reveille also will be the official opening performance of the world's biggest Gay parade in Sao Paulo. Reveille's goal is to raise funds for local institutions. In Mexico, Reveille presented two benefit concerts for ACCSIDA, a non-profit organization that provides help with people infected with HIV.

This year has been an amazing productive year for Reveille. The chorus is proud to announce the recording of 2 CDs: " Let All Men Sing" (released in April) and "Christmas Collection" to be official released at our holiday concert. Both CDs will be available for $12.00 each at our holy day concert and after that will be available on our Web Page: www.reveillegmc.com.

Reveille also performed at the International GALA Choruses Festival in Montreal, Canada, in July 2004. Reveille was the only group representing Tucson among a total of 134 choruses and 5.600 singers from seven countries, and their performance was received with standing ovations and numerous invitations for future engagements.

Reveille's spring concert, "Rhythms from the World," will be held at UA's Crowder Hall on April 2-3. The chorus also has been very active in presenting outreach programs within the Tucson community. Anyone interested in booking Reveille for an engagement or joining the chorus should call Linus Lerner, artistic director, (520) 903-1815 or visit us at www.reveillegmc.com

Best Wishes
for a Happy Holiday Season
for you
and yours.



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COMMENTARY. . . .

Where We Stand

Dozens of prominent advocates for Gay rights sent a letter to every member of Congress stating that they would reject any plan to bargain for equal rights, and specifically decried a report that the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest Gay political organization, was planning to "moderate" its positions and would possibly support President Bush's plan to create private Social Security accounts.

The letter, titled "Where We Stand," was released by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) in response to an article in the December 9 New York Times. The article quoted officials from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) as saying that, in light of defeats for Gay rights in the Nov. 2 election (including the bans on same-sex marriage passed in 11 states), the organization decided to place less emphasis on same-sex marriage and more on "strengthening personal relationships." One HRC official was paraphrased as saying that the group would consider supporting Bush's efforts to partially privatize Social Security in exchange for the right of Gay partners to receive benefits under the federal retirement program. What follows is the letter, with the list of those who have signed on.

Dear Member of Congress (or Senator):

First, know that we appreciate and value the thoughtful and visionary leadership so many of you have provided. As a community, we are proud to have allies in both parties.

There has been much speculation over the last month about the meaning of the results of the last election and its impact on the future of American politics. Some have even suggested that same-sex marriage was a major factor in the outcome. Upon reflection, thoughtful analysts have come to dismiss that notion and realize that terrorism and the War in Iraq were uppermost on people's minds.

The powerful and revealing fact is that that over 60% of voters in November 2 exit polls said they supported either marriage or civil unions for Gay and Lesbian couples. What remarkable progress we have made over these last years.

The New York Times reported that some in the LGBT community are ready to pull back on our struggle for freedom to make everyone more comfortable politically, or willing to bargain away the rights of others to make a deal for themselves. Specifically, the notion was advanced that we could make gains at the expense of senior citizens by privatizing Social Security.

For our part, we want to be absolutely clear and on the record: We specifically reject any attempts to trade equal rights for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people, a group that includes many elders, for the rights of senior citizens under Social Security or, for that matter, the rights of any other group of Americans.

Finally, although the struggle for freedom can be difficult and painful for those without full equality, it would be an historic mistake to grow tired of the battle or surrender basic rights and equality in order to make the road easier. We have made it through some extremely harsh and challenging times, including losing thousands and thousands of our friends and family to HIV/AIDS. This is a community that has heroically walked its own path of tribulations and travail, determined to be free and proud American citizens.

We will not sacrifice our rights - or the rights of others like senior citizens on the altar of political expediency. Most of us, if confronted with that choice, would not even know where to begin. Which right would we give up? The right to adopt children? The right to serve our country proudly and with honor? The right to be at our partner s bedside in death? And how much would we be willing to hurt others like seniors as part of a cynical deal to help ourselves? We are not for sale to those who would undermine Social Security and we are not prepared to walk away from political leaders who have stood with us.

Nothing short of full equality and protection granted to all other American citizens is acceptable. We know that these are times that require wise and brave people who believe and love justice and freedom.

Given recent events, we wanted to restate our determination to do what s right for our community, for senior citizens, and for America. With the greatest respect,

Sincerely,

Diane Abbitt, Co-Chair, Equality California, David Barr, Roberta Bennett, Betty Berzon, Ph.D., Steve Black, Political Director, The Pennsylvania Gay And Lesbian Alliance (PAGALA), David Bohnett, Craig A. Bowman, Executive Director, National Youth Advocacy Coalition, Howard Bragman, Kent Burbank, Executive Director, Wingspan (Southern Arizona's LGBT Community Center), Richard D. Burns, Executive Director, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center - New York, Alan Van Capelle, Executive Director, Empire State Pride Agenda, Kevin Cathcart, Executive Director, Lambda Legal, Josh Cazares and Nancy Wohlforth, Board Co-Presidents, Pride At Work, AFL-CIO, George Chauncey, Ph.D., Professor of History, University of Chicago, Bruce Cohen, Darrel Cummings, Chief of Staff, Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center, James Dale, Teresa DeCrescenzo, Executive Director Gay and Lesbian Adolescent Social Services (GLASS), Ann DeGroot, Executive Director. Out Front Minnesota
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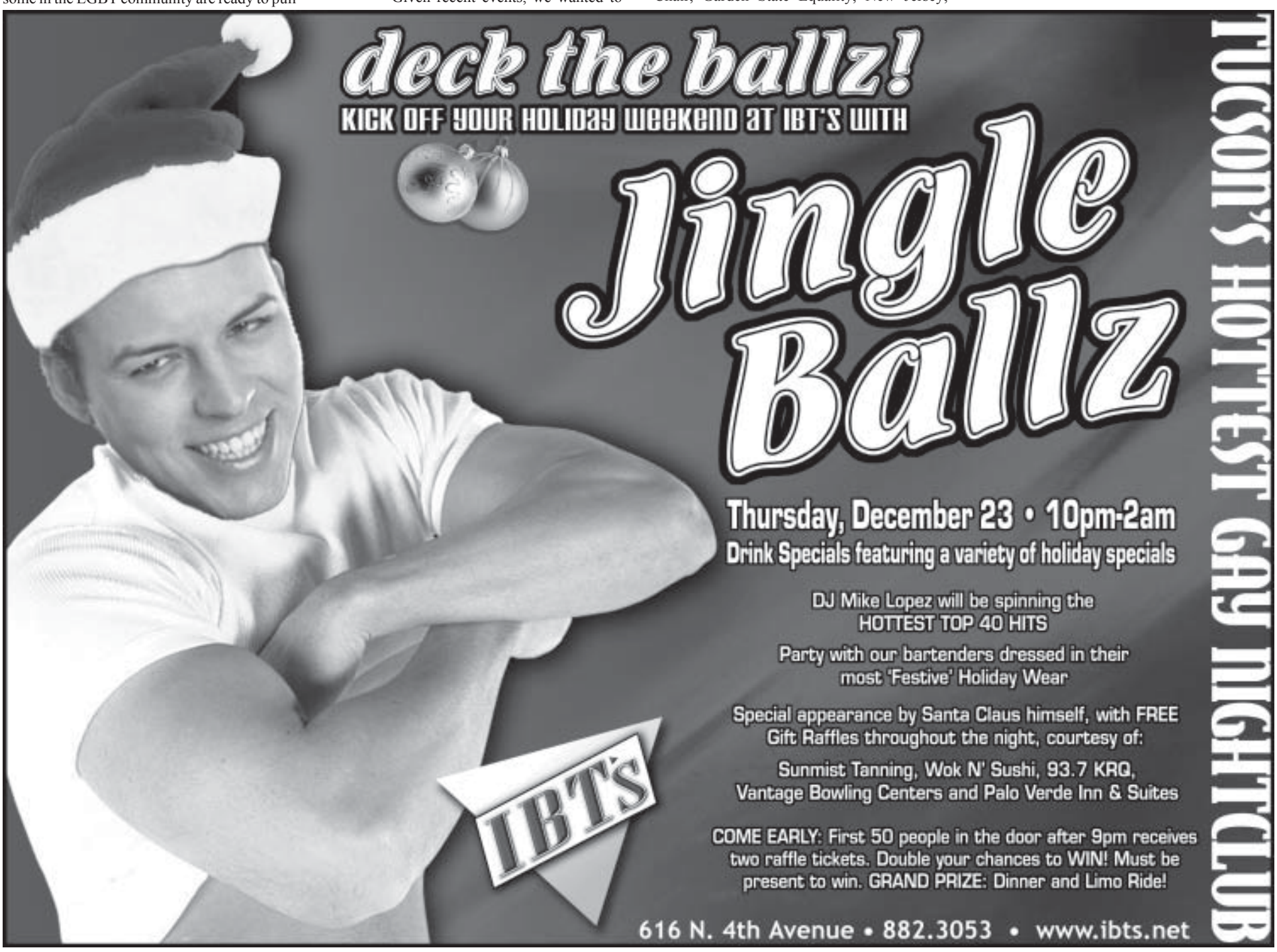
[If people want to sign on to the letter, go online to http://ga4.org/campaign/wherewestand, the Task Force's site set up and fill out the appropriate information to send to your Senators and Members of Congress fro

Play Safe!



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Army Ruling Deals Blow To Sodomy Law

WASHINGTON, D.C. - An unpublished ruling by the U.S. Army's top court may herald the beginning of the end for the military's sodomy law, the PlanetOut Network reported.

The military has long outlawed sodomy under Article 125 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, a prohibition on "unnatural carnal copulation with another person of the same or opposite sex, or with an animal." The rule, otherwise translated into a ban on oral and anal sex, even applies to private conduct off the military base, allowing the long arm of military law to stretch a little further than might be constitutional.

LGBT advocates challenged the military sodomy earlier this year in a case that went all the way to the highest military court, the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces. In that case, Air Force Technical Sgt. Eric Marcum challenged his court martial, which was based on a number of Article 125 violations with other men. Since some of Sgt. Marcum's activities were possibly coerced, the court was not able to absolve him in the specific incident under review, a consensual episode with a subordinate.

In its ruling however, the high court took no position on the key question of whether the U.S. Supreme Court (news - web sites)'s 2003 ruling in Lawrence v. Texas effectively gutted the military's sodomy ban along with that of the Lone Star State. In fact, the court suggested that Lawrence could govern a military case under different circumstances.

Now, that case may have arrived. Basing its ruling on Lawrence, the U.S. Army Court of Criminal Appeals overturned the guilty plea of an Army specialist who had oral sex with a female civilian in the barracks. According to the Washington Post, the decision is the first to uphold a right to sexual privacy that trumps Article 125.

The fact that the man involved was accused of a heterosexual violation is irrelevant to the legal principles at issue. Oral sex is oral sex, and if Article 125 no longer applies to straight sex, it no longer applies to Gay sex, either.

If the Pentagon appeals the ruling to the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, the high court will have another chance to consider the impact of Lawrence on the armed services.

The ruling coincides with a new lawsuit challenging the 1993 "don't ask, don't tell" ban on Gay speech in the military. The issues of sodomy and "don't ask, don't tell" are separate, but related, since the ban on Gay speech is supported by the more fundamental ban on Gay actions. Taking away that support could weaken "don't ask" and could affect the outcome of Monday's challenge to the policy, brought before a federal court in Boston by a group of 12 ousted Gay and Lesbian service members.

'Kinsey' Nominated For Best Picture, Drama In Golden Globes

LOS ANGELES - Sideways, a critically acclaimed tale of two men looking for love in California's wine country, led Golden Globes nominations on Monday, December 13 with seven, one more than its closest rival, The Aviator, a biography of young Howard Hughes conquering Hollywood, reported Advocate.com.

The nominations for the awards given out by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association on January 16 are often an indicator of what films are jockeying for position for the U.S. film industry's top awards, the Oscars, presented in February. Also receiving five nominations each were Closer, a story of tangled love affairs among two couples; Finding Neverland, a fictional film about Peter Pan author J.M. Barrie; and Clint Eastwood's female boxing movie, Million Dollar Baby. The award for Best Dramatic Film is considered the top Golden Globe, and joining The Aviator, Closer, Finding Neverland, and Million Dollar Baby in this category were Hotel Rwanda, which chronicles the plight of one man in the Rwandan genocide, and Kinsey, about the life of sex researcher Alfred Kinsey.

Sideways topped the nominees for Best Film Musical or Comedy. That group included the romance Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind; the musical Ray, about the life of soul singer Ray Charles; The Phantom of the Opera, based on the play of the same name; and the hit animated movie The Incredibles. Two French films were among the five nominated for Best Foreign Language film: The Chorus and A Very Long Engagement. Also nominated were Spain's The Sea Inside, international coproduction The Motorcycle Diaries, and China's House of Flying Daggers.

The Golden Globes awards help narrow the competition for 2004's top films because in the past many nominees have gone on to win Oscars. That fact is especially important in this year's race, which has been considered wide open. "Two months ago we were thinking this had not been such a good year for movies," said Lorenzo Soria, president of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, "but recently we have been seeing lots of interesting and relevant films."

Don Cheadle in Rwanda and Liam Neeson in Kinsey earned nominations for Best Actor in a Drama. They will compete with Leonardo DiCaprio, who portrays eccentric billionaire Howard Hughes in The Aviator, Johnny Depp for Finding Neverland, and Spain's Javier Bardem in The Sea Inside. In a first, actor Jamie Foxx was nominated in three categories: Best Performance in a Film Musical for Ray, Best Supporting Actor for crime thriller Collateral, and Best Performance in a Miniseries or Made-for-TV Movie for Redemption. Among actors in a comedy or musical, Foxx will go head-to-head with Sideways star Paul Giamatti, comedian Jim Carrey in Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, Kevin Kline in the Cole Porter musical De-Lovely, and Kevin Spacey for the Bobby Darin biopic Beyond the Sea.

Nominees for Best Actress in a Drama were Nicole Kidman for Birth, Britain's Imelda Staunton in Mike Leigh's abortion piece Vera Drake, Hilary Swank in Million Dollar Baby, Uma Thurman in Kill Bill: Vol. 2, and Scarlett Johansson for A Love Song for Bobby Long. Nominees for Best Actress in a Movie Musical or Comedy were Annette Bening in Being Julia, Ashley Judd for De-Lovely, Emmy Rossum for The Phantom of the Opera, Kate Winslet in Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, and Renée Zellweger for Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason.

First G/L Divorces Filed In Massachusetts

BOSTON - Less than seven months after same-sex couples began tying the knot in Massachusetts, the state is seeing its first Gay divorces, the Associated Press reported on 365Gay.com.

Newlyweds seeking to renounce the vows they so recently took have been trickling into probate courts across the state, filling out obsolete forms that still read "husband" and "wife."

Exactly how many same-sex couples are seeking divorces is not clear - nor is it clear whether any Gay divorces have become final - because not all counties keep track of which divorce filings are from Gays.

The first Gay divorce case in Suffolk County, which includes Boston, was filed Wednesday, December 8, by a male couple who exchanged vows on May 22, five days after same-sex marriage was legalized.

One partner was a 33-year-old religious educator from Boston, the other a 39-year-old professor based in Washington. Since then, the couple said in their divorce filing, "our interests have grown in different directions." Each man signed a settlement attesting that the marriage had "irretrievably broken down."

The most difficult part of the settlement appeared to be custody of their three cats, who will live exclusively with the professor.

But "in recognition of the emotional hardship of such relinquishment," the settlement reads, the professor agreed to provide his ex "with periodic updates, photographs, and any health-related information pertaining" to the cats.

Massachusetts began sanctioning Gay marriages on May 17, six months after a landmark ruling by the state Supreme Court.

According to the state Registry of Vital Records, at least 4,266 Gay marriage certificates have since been issued, although there is a lag time in the records and hundreds more may have wed this year.

Hampshire County reporting a divorce filing within about two months of the first Gay weddings.

Middlesex County, which is the state's largest and includes Cambridge, Lowell and other outlying communities, received its first Gay divorce case on Dec. 2, involving a 38-year-old woman who works for a cleaning business, and a 27-year-old student. The older woman sought the divorce, citing "cruel and abusive treatment" during the three months of marriage.

Opponents of Gay marriage said the divorces, occurring so soon after the weddings, confirm that Gay couples are not equipped for marriage.

"We're not surprised," said Kris Mineau, president of the Massachusetts Family Institute, which is fighting for a constitutional amendment to ban Gay marriage. "Particularly among male homosexuals, the promiscuity is just phenomenal."

With the national divorce rate hovering near 50 percent, Gay rights advocates dismissed such arguments.

"That's a cheap shot," said Gay rights attorney Mary Bonauto, who represented seven Gay couples in the landmark Massachusetts lawsuit.

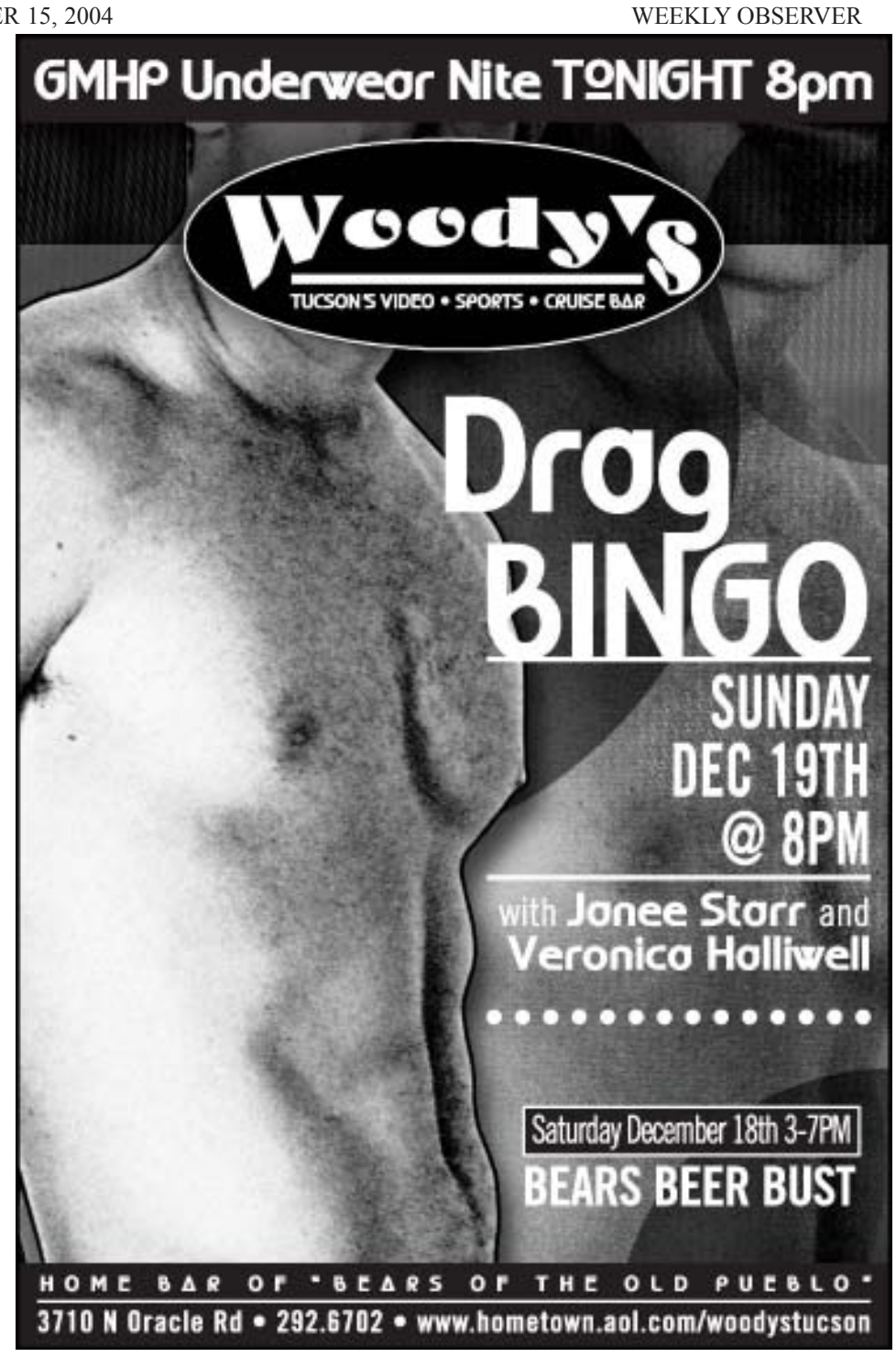
Texas Officer Suspended For Comment To Gay Couple

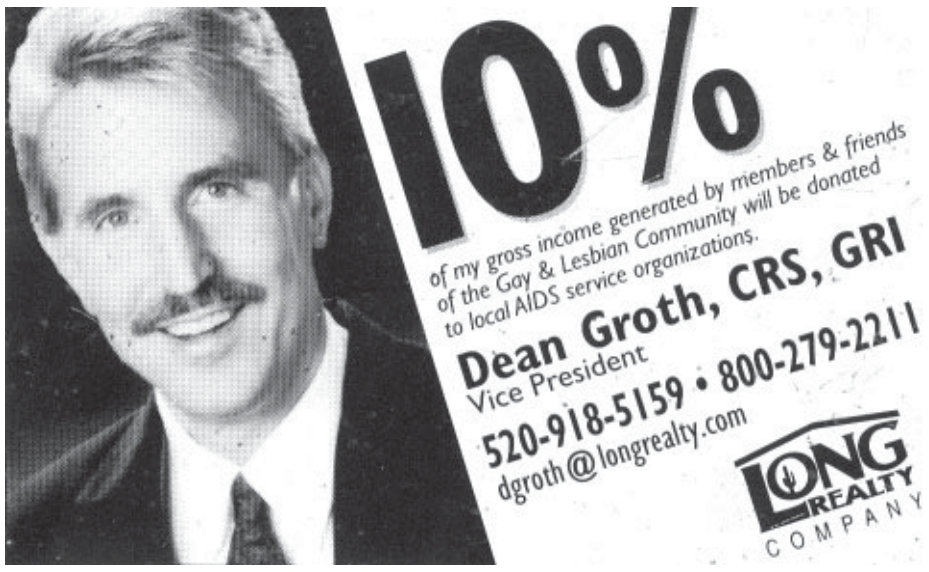
AUSTIN - A Texas Department of Public Safety trooper has been placed on job probation for telling two Gay men who were kissing at the state capitol that homosexuality was illegal in Texas, Advocate.com reported.

Trooper Michael Carlson was placed on probation for six months and given a written reprimand, DPS spokeswoman Tela Mange said Friday, December 10. Carlson, who has been a DPS trooper for three years, also has been ordered to have more training on Texas laws. Texas law does not prohibit Gays from kissing. Additionally, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the state's anti-sodomy law in June 2003. "I'm very pleased," said John Corvino, a former University of Texas at Austin graduate student who was one of the men involved. "As someone charged with enforcing the law, he ought to be better informed."

Corvino, who now teaches at Wayne State University in Detroit, said in a complaint filed with DPS shortly after the September 16 incident that the trooper approached him and his male companion while they sat on a park bench. The men responded that they were "just hanging out" when Carlson asked what they were doing, the complaint said. Corvino said he tried to tell Carlson that they were not breaking the law, but he said the trooper told them again that "homosexual conduct is against the law." "We won't have you doing this on capitol grounds," Carlson told the men, according to the complaint.

Randall Ellis, executive director of the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas, said he has followed the case since learning about it several months ago. The DPS "made sure they didn't ignore this issue," he said. "I'm very satisfied with the outcome."





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Gay Teen In Lawsuit Drops Out Of School

WEBB CITY - After filing a lawsuit for being forbidden to wear a Gay Pride T-shirt to his Missouri high school, Brad Mathewson has dropped out of school, according to a spokeswoman for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the PlanetOut Network reported.

Matthewson's mother, Marion, told the Associated Press (AP) that her son decided to leave Thursday because his grades had dropped from missing too many classes.

"I think he's a little discouraged," she told reporters.

She said Randy Richardson, the assistant high school principal, said Mathewson could come back after the Christmas break. "But I think Brad is going to go after his GED," she said.

Mathewson's troubles began on Oct. 20, when he was sent home to the principal's office for wearing a shirt with the name of the Gay-straight alliance at his old high school in Fayetteville, Ark. The shirt sported interlocking male and female signs with the slogan, "Make a Difference!"

According to the ACLU, Assistant Principal Jeff Thornsberry told him the shirt was offensive to other students.

However, Thornsberry could not explain why stickers supporting Missouri's anti-Gay marriage amendment, which were reportedly all over the school, were allowed.

Mathewson traded shirts with a classmate, but on Oct. 28 he was sent home for wearing a different shirt that had the slogan, "I'm Gay and I'm proud."

The ACLU sued on Mathewson's behalf, claiming school administrators violated his constitutional rights of freedom of expression.

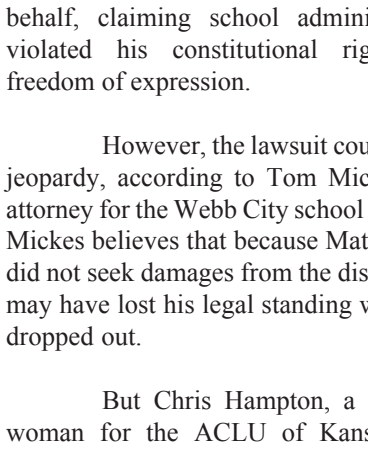
However, the lawsuit could be in jeopardy, according to Tom Mickes, an attorney for the Webb City school district. Mickes believes that because Mathewson did not seek damages from the district, he may have lost his legal standing when he dropped out.

But Chris Hampton, a spokeswoman for the ACLU of Kansas and Western Missouri, told the AP the lawsuit was still on track. On Nov. 30, seven other high school students were sent home for refusing to change homemade T-shirts supporting Mathewson.

The shirts sported such slogans such as, "If this shirt offends you, look the other way" and "We support Gay rights."

"Brad's not the only student who has been censored," Hampton said.

The ACLU believes it will win, citing the 1969 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Tinker v. Des Moines that schools cannot abrogate students' right to freedom of expression.



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POLITICS 2004

by Mark R. Kerr

"The Bill Of Rights"

Wednesday, December 15 marks the 213th anniversary of the approval by the states of the first Ten Amendments, also known as the Bill of Rights to the U.S. Constitution.

Ten statements on issues, ranging from freedom to the press, judicial procedures, self-incrimination in such procedures, civil rights, the separation of church and state and the right to worship has been around since the beginning of the country, a republic but Dubya and the intolerant, fundamentalist, Republican minions would just love to make some changes - can we say homophobic theocracy?!

As well aware, Dubya has reiterated his support for the proposed Federal Marriage Amendment for the U.S. Constitution, barring recognition of same-sex marriages, civil unions and domestic partnerships, enshrining discrimination in a noble document that grants rights, as well as denying citizens of this country their First, Seventh and Ninth Amendment rights.

"Congress shall make no law," the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution starts, "respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; ..." Separation of church and state but Dubya doesn't believe that, especially with the actions taken in a court case before the U.S. Supreme Court and the five justices who put him in the White House.

Saying that religion "has played a defining role" in the nation's history, Dubya urged the U.S. Supreme Court to permit Ten Commandments displays in courthouses - also known as a government building.

On December 8, the Justice Department filed a brief, before the U.S. Supreme Court, supporting two Kentucky counties accused of violating the constitutional ban on government establishment of religion by posting framed copies of the Ten Commandments.

"Official acknowledgment and recognition of the Ten Commandments influence on American legal history comport with the Establishment Clause," the administration argued in a brief filed with the court in Washington D.C.

Wasn't this nation, a country built by immigrants, including those who worship at other altars, such as Judaism, Muslims, Hindus, naming three of many religions, as well as those who don't too?!

As Dubya blathered during the recent campaign, the religious fundamentalists are "his base," and according to the Guardian newspaper, he met, for the fifth time, with Alabama State Representative, Gerald Allen, a Republican, on December 13, to discuss Allen's bill filed in the state legislature to prohibit state funds to purchase any other books or other materials that promote homosexuality, and to remove books, magazines, articles, etc., with any positive homosexual references from Alabama's libraries and schools, ban the production of plays, such as "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," "A Chorus Line," and the "Color Purple." Allen wants to bun and bury books, just like they did in Germany during the Forty-Third, er Third Reich.

Matt Salmon, the former Arizona Congressman, current spokes-schill for ArmorWorks, the firm who makes Humvees (armor extra) for the Defense Department, and soon-to-be Chair of the Arizona Republican Party, as reported by the Arizona Republic, sent out a fund raising letter for United Families International, a Gilbert, Arizona group that wants to define marriage as a union between a man and a woman.

Salmon's letter, the article says, that he quotes political theorist Edmund Burke: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." So Gay and Lesbian, hard working, tax paying citizens are evil?! According to the incoming Chair of the Arizona Republican Party, yes.

Openly Gay state Senator Ken Cheuvront, D-Phoenix, said that he read "into that the existence of Gays are evil," adding that "Gay relationships are so bad we need to call God's army. It's highly offensive."

Salmon's quote is also the new doctrine of the Republican Party, especially with their spokes-schill, the Rev. Jerry Falwell, the self-proclaimed "missionary to the media," who has been on more than a dozen times on the boob-tube, blathering his homophobic bigotry to the Rovian pleasure of all.

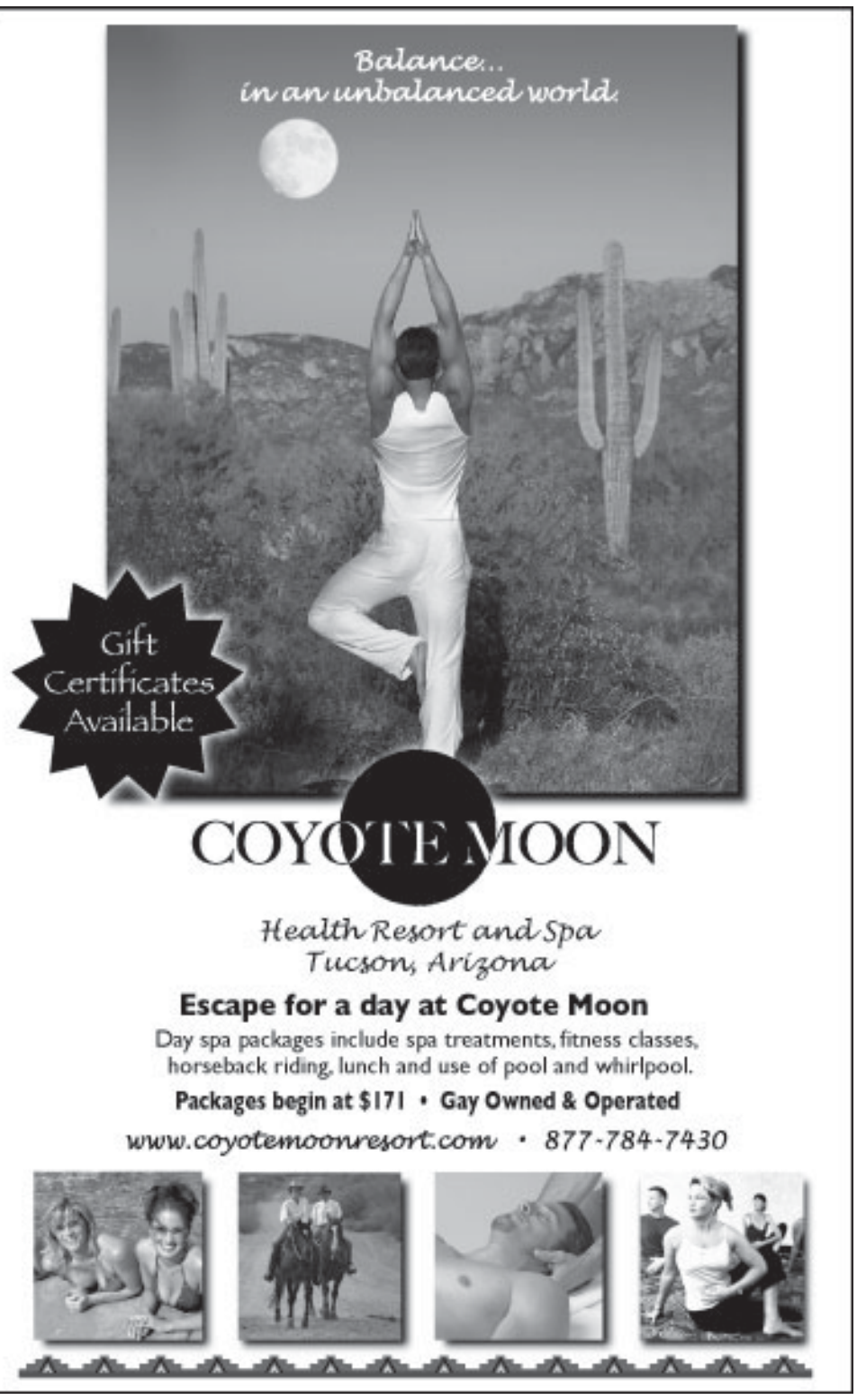
In 1981 during the confirmation hearings for Sandra Day O'Connor, nominated by then President Reagan for the U.S. Supreme Court, Falwell, head of the then "Moral Majority," said "good Christians should be worried about O'Connor."

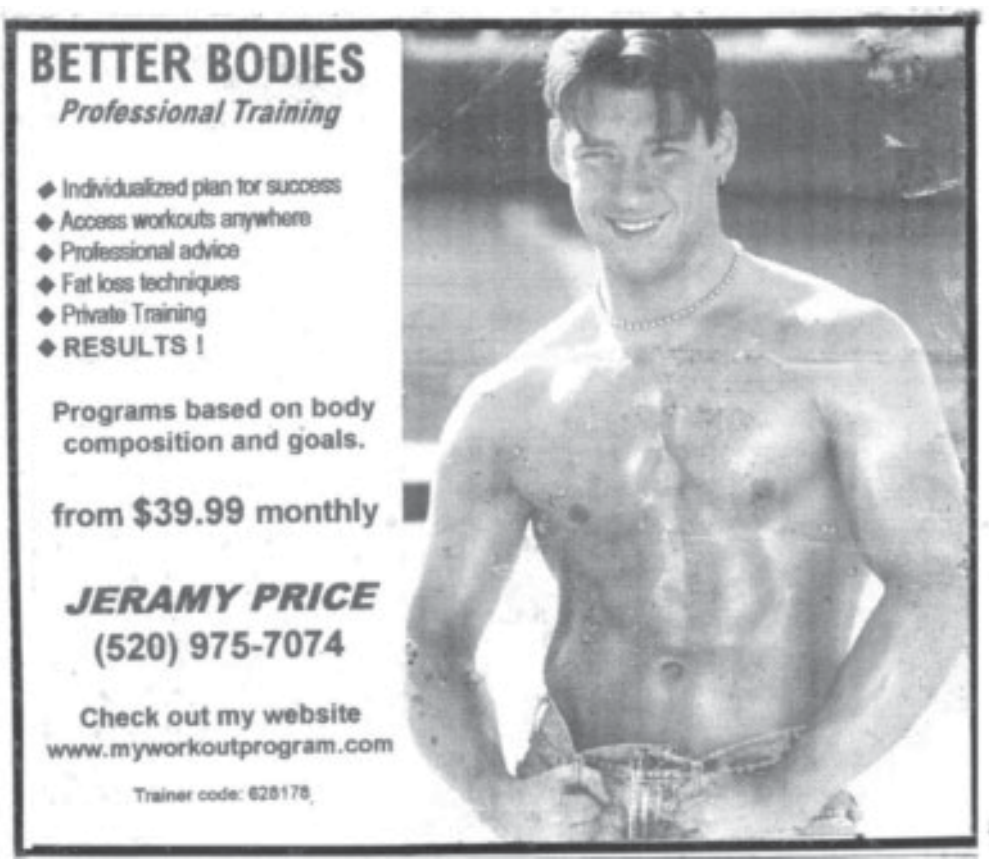
When asked for comment, then Republican Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona, said "Every good Christian ought to kick Falwell right in the ass."

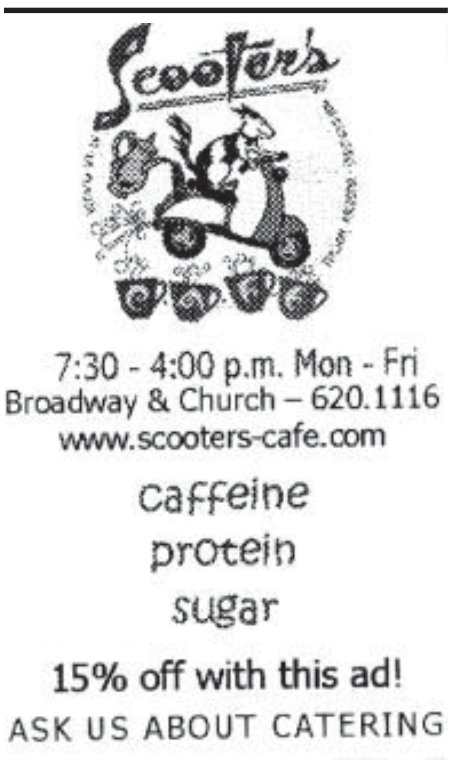
According to Senator John McCain, Goldwater, the 1964 GOP Presidential nominee went to some extent to distance himself from the far right wing of the party. McCain went on to state in the East Valley Tribune article on Goldwater to say, "Barry Goldwater, in his later years, disliked the religious right, because he felt they were intolerant ..."

So do you think Goldwater would be a Republican in 2004, since the fundamentalists have taken over and turned the party of Lincoln into the party of fundamentalist theocracy?

Happy Anniversary!







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NOTES FROM THE FOR-REAL SIDE

by Lee Thorn

Hayseeds Rule

In a previous column I argued that, based on the outcome of the recent presidential election, the experts really have no idea why people vote as they do. With all the time-honored theories down the toilet, there's ample room for new ones.

Try this on for size: There is a candidate persona, call it the "hayseed persona" that is more important to the outcome of presidential elections than all the political issues combined in cases where this persona opposes any other persona. To put it simply, if a hayseed runs against a non-hayseed, the hayseed wins no matter what the so-called issues are.

The elements of the hayseed persona are a rural background, economic hardship and anthropomorphic religiosity. The hayseed persona is an image that the candidate projects; it need not agree with the candidates actual biography.

In the most recent election, Bush worked hard to establish his hayseed credentials and he succeeded. As he said himself after his first loss of a congressional election many years ago in Texas, "I vowed never to get outcountried again" (545, "The Family" Kitty Kelly).

Bush had real rural roots to point to in Midland. He had a religiosity so anthropomorphic that he and God could go bowling together. His only problem in terms of establishing a hayseed persona was that he'd never been anything close to poor.

He overcame the no-poverty problem by being "caught" using exaggerated vulgarity in both the print and electronic media, by speak English like he'd never been in one of them thar schoolhouses, and steadfastly refusing to correctly pronounce the word "nuclear". If he couldn't actually be poor, he could at lest sound like a popular stereotype of how poor folks talk.

Kerry's persona was patrician, no matter how many geese he killed.

Gore's persona was that of a policy wonk. Peace, prosperity, jobs, etc. be damned.

Clinton played the hayseed against Dole. He had real rural roots, real poverty and convincing if not buddy-buddy religiosity. If you started to suspect his hayseed credentials because of the fluidity of his speech and his thought, he'd throw half a dozen stories about his mamma at you until you'd swear you smelled her down-home cooking.

On actual biography, Dole could have tried the hayseed route, but he was too well known for being funny, witty and cynical to ever have pulled it off.

The first Bush was a patrician against the hayseed Clinton.

In the race of the first Bush against Dukakis, patrician v. policy wonk, no hayseed factor.

Reagan played the hayseed despite his Hollywood background. He had the actual bio for the part and could dispel his Hollywood past with an "aw shucks" style of speech. If you read his private letters, you'll note that the "aw shucks" largely disappears.

Mondale as policy wonk lost to Reagan. Jimmy Carter, as good a hayseed as Reagan made the persona inapplicable. Remember that Carter made a point of calling himself a "peanut farmer" instead of a agribusiness man and his mamma stories were at the ready.

Ford could possibly have built a passable hayseed persona if he'd known he was going to run against Carter, but he'd spent lots of effort trying to build a sophisticated world leader persona for the presidential role he'd been thrust into. It was too late to shift gears.

Nixon v. McGovern, policy wonk v. policy wonk, no hayseed. Nixon v. Humphrey was at the time viewed as party hack v. party hack.

Johnson v. Goldwater. Authentic hayseed v. ideological zealot. No contest.

Kennedy v. Nixon. Socialite v. party hack. No hayseed.

Eisenhower v. Stevenson. Hayseed who actually grew up on a small far v. intellectual.

Truman, who actually plowed with a mule, v. slick New York lawyer Tom Dewey.

FDR, patrician, lucky enough to run against Hoover, Landon and Wilkie. No hayseeds.

If my theory is correct, and it's batting one thousand since 1932, McCain, Powell would have no chance against a believable Democratic hayseed next time around. Edwards would lose to a GOP hayseed. Although Edwards has the actual bio for the part, the persona of slick trial lawyer has been affixed to him as firmly as found presidents have been affixed to Mt. Rushmore.

[Thorn welcomes comments, suggestions for future columns, and tips on local skulduggery that ought to be exposed. Write to Box 85571, Tucson, AZ 85754.

LETTERS

EDITOR:

We would like to thank the following for once again, stepping up to help out in a time of need for TIHAN. Christmas boxes were placed at the following locations: Colors, ITB's, Woody's, Venture N and Yard Dog. Thanks to the owners, employees and patrons of those establishments, we were able to make Christmas a little happier for those in need.

We can still accept donations from any one who would like to donate to help in the cause by donating to TIHAN and calling 290-6647.

Thank you, Tucson!
Peter Sittig
Dave Locke

Play Safe!

Hearing Ordered For Evangelists In Gay Brawl

PHILADELPHIA - A preliminary hearing will begin Tuesday, December 14, for 11 evangelists arrested after a confrontation at a Gay festival, 365Gay.com reported.

Repent America director Michael Marcavage and 10 followers were charged with criminal conspiracy, rioting and ethnic intimidation after they attempted to break up the October 10 Outfest Gay pride block party in Center City.

A motion to block the prosecution was rejected by U.S. District Judge Petrese B. Tucker.

Repent America is represented by the Mississippi-based American Family Association which is involved in a number of cases across the country opposing Gay rights.

AFA attorney Brian Fahling called the arrests "harassment" of Christians and said that the charges violated the protesters' freedom of speech.

Judge Tucker in a single sentence ruling rejected the argument.

The confrontation began when the 11 protestors marched to the front of a stage at Outfest and began to yell out Biblical passages to drown out the events on stage.

Police attempted to get the protestors to move to an area on the edge of the site. Instead they went deeper into the Gay crowd. Using a bullhorn they condemned homosexuality. They then got into an argument with a group of Pink Angels, who screamed back.

It was at that point police intervened arresting the 11.

"They were not prohibited from preaching," said Karen Brancheau, a lawyer for the District Attorney's Office. "A reasonable request was made to prevent a situation from becoming dangerous to their own safety as well as the safety of the participants."

G/L Activists Denounce March

ATLANTA - Gay rights activists are denouncing an anti-Gay-marriage march that starts near the tomb of the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. as an effort to hijack the slain civil rights leader's legacy, reported Advocate.com.

The march, which took place December 11, was organized by the predominantly black 25,000-member New Birth Missionary Baptist Church of suburban Atlanta, whose pastor, Bishop Eddie Long, opposes Gay marriage and counsels Gay members to abandon their orientation.

The church's Web site said one of the march's goals is to promote a constitutional amendment to "fully protect marriage between one man and one woman." A quote from King appears on the site where details of the march are posted, and marchers are instructed to gather at the King Center, the memorial where he is buried. "To march from the King Center against the rights of Gays is a slap in the face to the legacy of Dr. King," said Keith Boykin, president of the National Black Justice Coalition, a Gay activist group. "Dr. King said injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere, but Bishop Long seems to think that injustice against Gays and Lesbians is perfectly fine."

In a statement Long said the march "was not derived out of an idea to protest same-sex marriage, but to present a unified vision of righteousness and justice." He said the march also seeks to promote education reform, affordable health care, and programs that create wealth for minorities. Rosalind McGinnis, managing director of the King Center, said the organization is not endorsing the march. King's widow, Coretta Scott King, has called same-sex marriage a civil rights issue and denounced proposed amendments to ban it. Last month state constitutional amendments banning Gay marriage were approved in 11 states, including Georgia.

UCC Demands

Continued from Page One

Similarly, a rejection by NBC declared the spot "too controversial."

The church targeted WFOR-TV, a CBS affiliate, and WTVJ-TV, an NBC affiliate, because their licenses are up for renewal in January and because both are owned by the networks.

UCC contends that the stations should lose their licenses because they have failed to provide viewers access to a full array of social, political and moral ideas.

The interventions were prepared by Gloria Tristani the Church's managing director in its office of communications director and a former FCC Commissioner.

Tristani was an FCC commissioner from 1997 to 2001. She said she believes the church has a strong case.

The United Church of Christ has nearly 6,000 congregations with more than 1.3 million members.

The UCC has a long reputation for welcoming Gays and Lesbians. Although its individual churches are mostly autonomous, many offer blessing services for same-sex couples. In 1972 it became the first mainstream denomination to ordain an openly Gay man.

Despite the refusal by the networks to air the commercial a number of privately owned local stations say they would consider running it.

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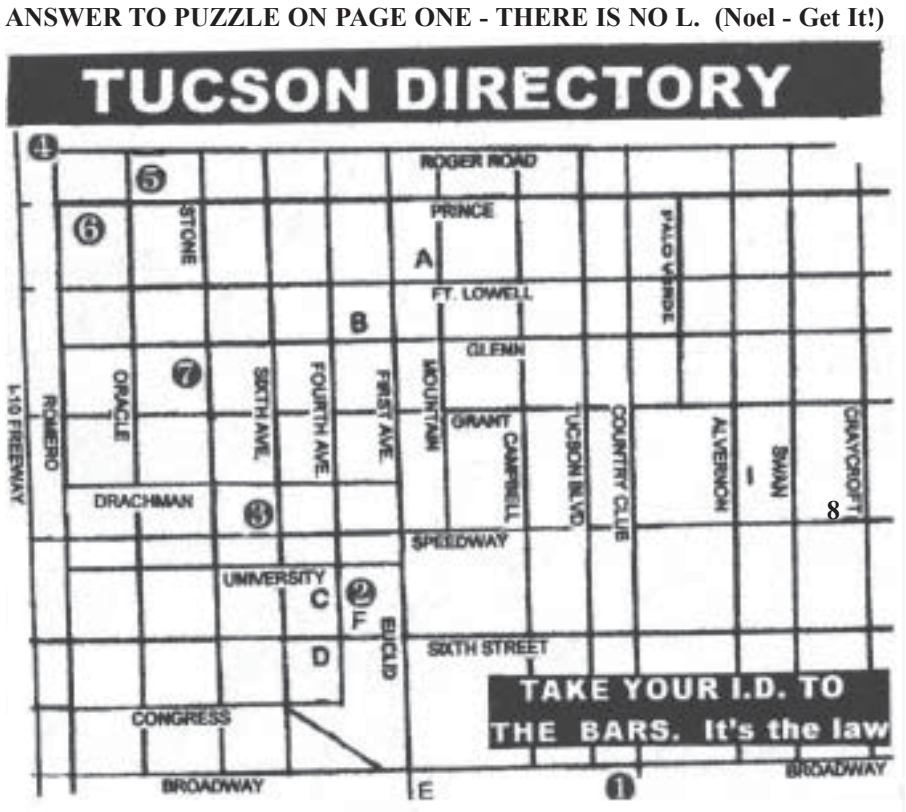

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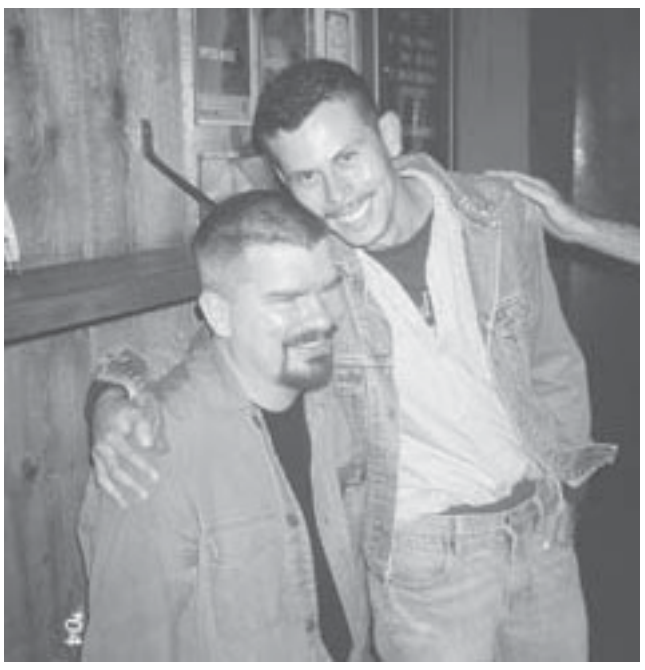

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HOROSCOPES

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What is it that makes our every move a momentous one this week? Yikes, kids; Mars and Venus square foggy Neptune and lead us into temptation. Before you place a bet on a dream and a scheme, be sure that you are prepared for any outcome. And I mean ANY outcome!

ARIES (MAR. 21 - APR. 20)
Proud Rams may be lured into a hot steamy romance with someone who they know very well on a purely platonic level. Survey your list of friends. Obviously familiarity will not breed contempt.... for now. But just wait as both Venus and Mars square Neptune! Today's glittering royalty morphs into tomorrow's slimy toad. Are you ready for your fair share of warts?

TAURUS (APR. 21 - MAY 21)
Life is one continuous balancing act as responsibilities conspire to pull you in two different directions at once. What is a queer Bull to do when two competing sides vie for your affections, attentions and time? Things rise to a boil when Venus and Mars square Neptune. Partners pull as do professional obligations. Choose or lose? Sigh. Choose and lose. Draw a line in the sand.

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)
Feel like a rat on an ever accelerating treadmill? Pink Twins content themselves with daydreams of relaxing vacations as they warm their desk chairs. But don't pack your bags just yet, compadre. Venus and Mars square Neptune and make any low key escape a wilde and wooly escapade. There is no relaxing now - only grand adventure and mischief. When do we leave?!

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)
It is possible to whip up a light frothy romance into a heavy, creamy affair. But how many calories are you willing to devour when Mars and Venus square Neptune? Hot pink Crabs may get their claws steamed and eaten by a nogoodnick who is there for a light snack and nothing more. Your better judgment is on hiatus, lover. Hmm. So what else is new?

LEO (JULY 24 - AUG. 23)
Will you allow your family to dictate the rules of your engagement? Probably not. You should plot your own course and just inform others after the fact. But proud Lions may let their attention stray and their guard down when Mars and Venus square Neptune this week. Just when you least expect it, your closest relationships shift and change. Earthquake anyone?

VIRGO (AUG. 24 - SEPT. 23)
Work will wear you down to a nubby stub, if you allow it. Queer Virgins often strive to please others but consider pleasing only yourself when Venus and Mars square Neptune. Will it be possible to get others to try to please you? Set limits and make your demands. Imagine, if you will, a world where your favor is sought and every desire met . Okay, dream on.

LIBRA (SEPT. 24 - OCT. 23)
There is fun and mischief to be had. Enjoy life to the fullest and fill your cup until it overflows with romance and creativity. Mars and Venus then square Neptune. The overflow quickly ramps up to a cascade. Oops. Suddenly not only are things bouncing through your life at an ever increasing pace, the monetary cost of corralling these puppies increases. Is it worth it?

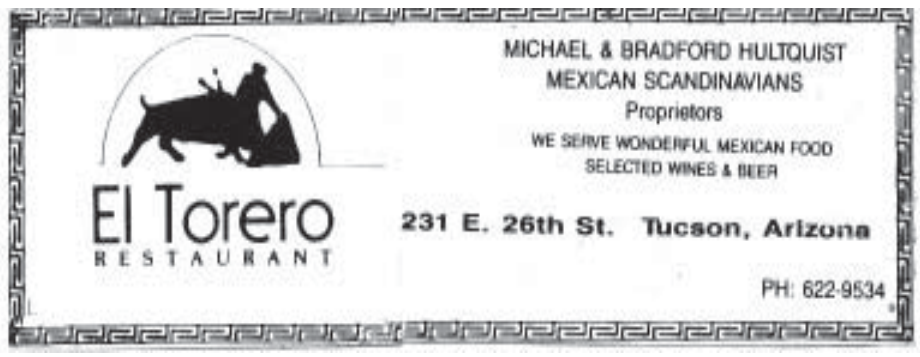
SCORPIO (OCT. 24 - NOV. 22)
Get ready for your close-up when Mars and Venus square Neptune. You are brash, bold and beautiful and you know it. Proud Scorps attract admirers like flies so pour on the sugar and enjoy the thrill. There are some relatives who disapprove of you and your dreams. Will your surge in popularity win over these critical family members? Do you really care? You shouldn't.

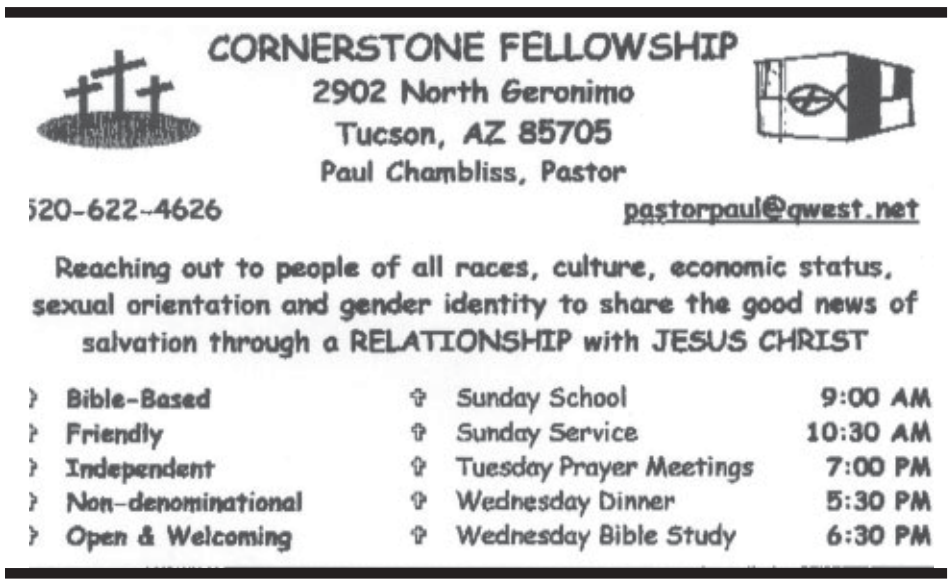
SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 23 - DEC. 22)
Mars and Venus square Neptune and give a strong voice to your intuition. This is the time to delve deep into your core, extract the essence of your life's path and cast your archetype. Okay, that sounds "new age-ie". What I mean to say is: find out who you really are, don't tell a soul and let actions (and results) speak louder and prouder than your words. Nuf said, Gay Archer.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 23 - JAN. 20)
Friends are there for you this week. They are also there for your vast monetary resources. It is not that they mean to sponge but frankly, as Venus and Mars square Neptune, you set yourself up to be the benefactor to every clown with a parade. Strike up the band, make merry and keep an eye on the bottom line. Before you know it your pocket and your dance card will have holes.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 21 - FEB. 19)
If you give more than your usual, unusual first impression with the powerful few, blame the Venus and Mars square with Neptune. They are drawing up a revised profile of you that can impact your professional path to success. Chances are that Aqueerians don't really care what others think of them but that would be a mistake. Of course you care ... as long as it pays off.

PISCES (FEB. 20 - MAR. 20)
Life becomes a trip to the moon on gossamer wings. At least it will seem that way during the Venus, Mars and Neptune square. Guppies ache to travel far afield and taste life to the fullest. Life will bring mystery, adventure and engrossing fun. So what are you waiting for? Go for it! Just be sure that you do not quaff your thirst for living in some boring dry county.





Ending the violence.

Wingspan launches the Anti-Violence Project – a community initiative to assist lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender victims of discrimination, domestic violence, sexual assault and hate crimes.

Call the Anti-Violence Project 24-Hour Crisis Line at 624-0348, or toll-free 1-800-553-9387.

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Dear Dr. X,

This is difficult for me to write and much more difficult for me to face. I am 24 years old and was diagnosed with HIV roughly two years ago. A good friend of mine thinks that I probably contracted the virus during the period in my life when I was heavily into using crack. I've heard that many people who are positive contracted the HIV virus while "under the influence". I would like to know what you think. Is it true?

I still smoke on occasion. I admit that I still like to mix drugs and sex but I'm told I shouldn't. What should I do?
Thanks,
Still Pip-pen

Dear Still Pip-pen,

Thank you for your honesty. Over time, mixing drug use and sexual activity has become more commonplace among Gay men. Many men, however, will not admit to using drugs with sex, or relate their use to contracting the HIV virus. The connection between drug use and the increased risk/exposure of contracting HIV (or any another STD) has been the subject of studies and controversy for years. The truth is, the likelihood of a person contracting HIV/STDs greatly increases when a person is under the influence of mind-altering substances. Period. Truth.

You mentioned that you still indulge in smoking crack cocaine once in a while. When you smoke how does your behavior change? While under the influence, what do you do differently that you wouldn't normally do while sober? It is very important that you and your partners be aware of the "under the influence behaviors" that may repeatedly put yourself, and them, at risk for contracting STD's and HIV. Research bears out that individuals who are high take more risks that those who are sober (no surprise, huh?).

Going back to your question, concerning did you or did you not contract HIV while under the influence of crack: I don't know, but it is defiantly possible. There are many people who do not know when or where they contracted HIV or by whom, then there are those who know more of the exact details surrounding their contracting HIV or another STD. As for whether you should still be using drugs: only you can answer that for yourself. Know this though—every time you use, you harm your immune system a little more. And if you are taking HIV meds, be sure to be honest with your doctor about it and be exceedingly careful of drug interactions. You can go to the website of one of our sister programs, Pulse, and look up some common interactions with HIV meds. (www.pulsetucson.org) If you are interested in quitting drugs altogether, there are programs that work specifically with HIV+ individuals who have issues around addictions. HIP/AZ is one such program, operating out of Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation (SAAF). If your use is a growing concern for you, you may contact them for help. You do not need to be a SAAF client to get help from them.

Good Luck!

Dear Dr. X,

A friend of mine goes to the sidewalk sale and goes off with guys to turn tricks. He still has a dick, but always steps out a girl and is pretty convincing. I try to tell her that hooking is crazy but she doesn't listen to me. She is too focused on making the money. She's my friend and I don't know what else to say. I know that my friend checks out the Observer and reads your column. Could you say something to convince her to not hook anymore. I don't want her to get hurt, or worse (you know what I mean?).

Thank you, Peace!

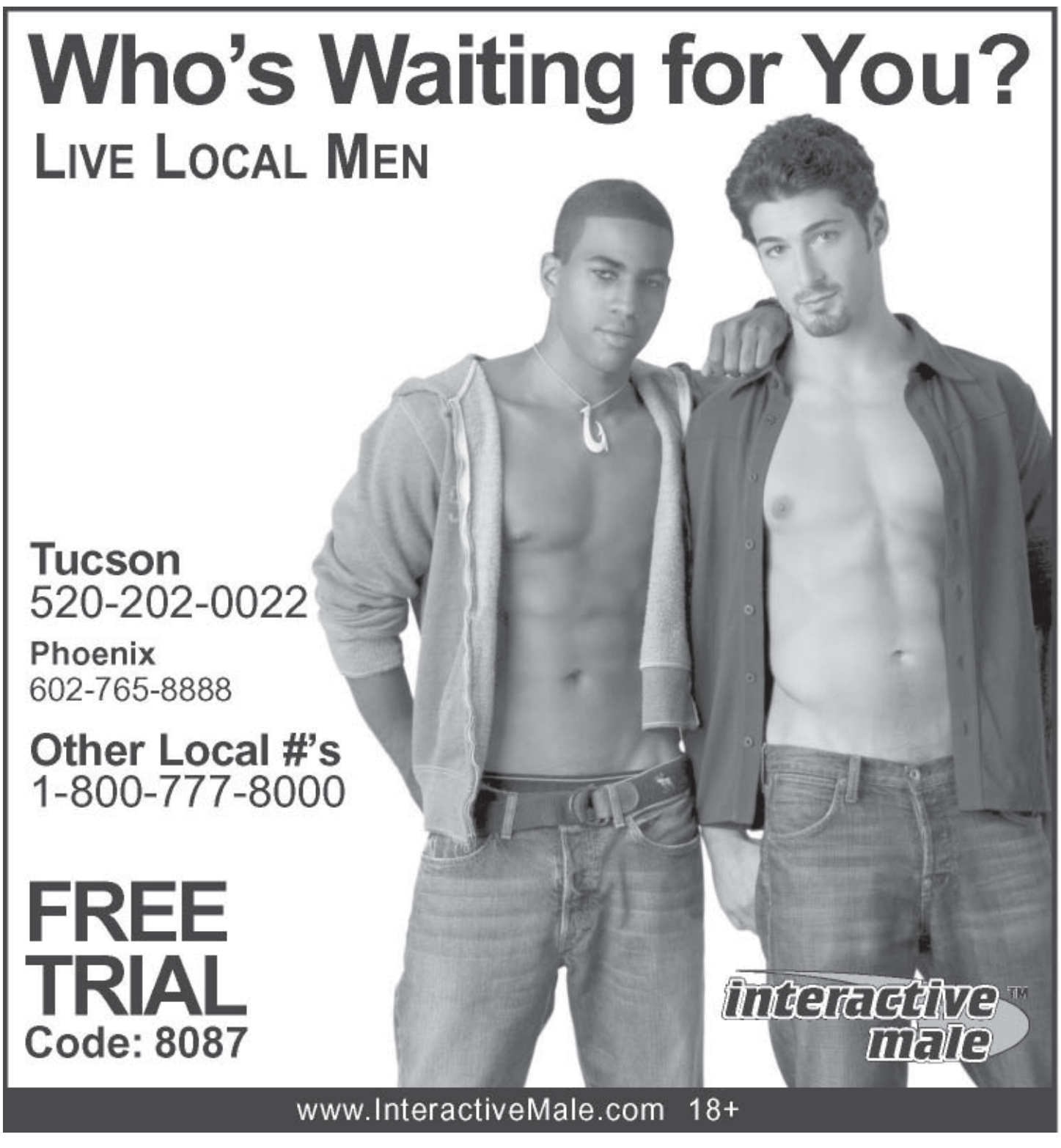
Peace to You!

Your friend certainly has a lot to be worried about. I am not going to moralize and talk about whether turning tricks is right or wrong—we each have our own ideas about what is right for our own lives, and I am certainly not one to judge.

What I will talk about though, is the danger involved with tricking. First: it is illegal. Bad for your criminal record, and booking photos seldom capture one's most glamorous moments. Second: though it may seem like no one else is looking, believe me—people are paying attention to these kind of things and do not quickly forget. Your friend should be sure that she is okay knowing that she will carry this label for probably as long as she lives here in town. Third, and most important: your friend puts herself in real physical danger every time she goes out to work. Sex work is dangerous in itself, simply because you don't ever really know the state of mind your clients might be in. Are they drunk? High? Violent? This kind of danger may be further heightened by the fact that your friend may be picking up tricks that are expecting her to be more of a her than she is.

I don't know how your friend advertises for tricks, but not everyone is as friendly as the group inside the bars (and they are not always all that friendly). If your friend insists on keeping this line

Continued on Page Fifteen



NON-BAR CALENDAR
Groups / Clubs / Organizations /

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15
#1 Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Join Terry for Canasta. If you don't know how to play, we'll be glad to teach you. For reservations and directions, please call Terry at 577-2396.
#2 Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. The Circle of Men is a support group that helps you deal with yourself and your relationships with others. For directions and reservations, please call Tom at 591-2828.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16
Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Peter hosts Bridge Night. If you don't know how to play, they'll teach you-and it's a very relaxed atmosphere. For reservations and directions, please call Peter at 615-8974.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17
Men''s Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): - Join us for an evening of Dominoes at 7:00 PM. It''s easy to learn; we''ll teach you. For details and directions, please call Karol at 744-9017

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18
#1 Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 8:30 a.m. Join Jack & Mike & Ed for a morning of Volleyball. This is played for fun, and you'll get to know some nice guys as you play. For details and directions, please call Jack/Mike at 881-5733 or Ed at 407-5733.
#2 Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Steve hosts Pinochle Night. If you don't know how to play, but would like to learn, this is the place. For more information, please call Steve at 664-2076

Tucson Prime Timers Lunch/Business Meeting - Noon, Home Town Buffet, 5101 N. Oracle Rd.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 20
#1. Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Join us for the "putting out the Newsletter" Night. For reservations and directions, please call Arlan at 323-7414.
#2. Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:30 p.m. Join us for the MSN Premiere of "Connie and Carla" (after Newsletter Night). For reservations and directions, please call Arlan at 323-7414.

Tucson Prime Timers Lunch – 12:30 p.m., The Wildcat House, 1800 N. Stone Ave.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 21
#1 Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. The Circle of Men is a support group that helps you deal with yourself and your relationships with others. For directions and reservations, please call Tom at 591-2828.
#2 Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Join the men of MSN for an evening out at Rainbow Planet Coffee House. This is a chance to have a cup of coffee and chat with the men of MSN. For more information, please contact Ray at 247-2716.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22
#1 Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Join Richard and T. Jay for Canasta. If you don't know how to play, we'll be glad to teach you. For reservations and directions, please call Richard and T. Jay at 881-7919.
#2 Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. The Circle of Men is a support group that helps you deal with yourself and your relationships with others. For directions and reservations, please call Tom at 591-2828.

BAR CALENDAR
Of Upcoming Events

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15
HOWL AT THE MOON - Learn to waltz or just comd and learn some fun and fancy new turns. Classes are free. Dancing partners not necessary. First class tonight from 7:30 to 8:30, 2nd class next Wednesday.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18
YARD DOG - Prime Rib Dinner at 7:00 p.m. for only $8.00. The bargain of the year!

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19
HOWL AT THE MOON - 7:00 to 10:30 p.m. the smooth sounds of Susie Rough - Jazz, Blues Vocalist. Sit back and relax and enjoy Susie's unique range and style.

WOODY'S - "Sissy Bingo" starts at 8:00 p.m. Hosted by Janee Starr and Veronica Halliwell. Prizes and greaat fun!

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22
HOWL AT THE MOON - Learn to waltz or just comd and learn some fun and fancy new turns. Classes are free. Dancing partners not necessary. Second class tonight 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23
IBT'S - Kick off your holiday weekend here at the 'Jingle Ballz' from 8:00 p.m. until 2:00 a.m. Mike Lopez will be playing the top 40s, the bartenders will be dressed in their most 'festive' holiday wear and then, of course, a special appearance by Santa himself with free gift raffles throughout the night. The first 50 people in the door after 9:00 p.m. receives two raffle tickets - double your chances to win! Must be present to win and the grand prize is dinner and limo ride!!

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31 - NEW YEAR'S EVE !!!!!!
WOODY'S - Happy New Year's Eve Party. Watch for upcoming ads and mark your calendar.

YARD DOG - Come and enjoy a New Year's Eve dinner and celebreation with the band "Ice 9".

DAILY BAR CALENDAR

SUNDAY
COLORS - Fabulous Brunch 11am - 2pm with complimentary mimosa. Dinner 5-10pm..

HOWL AT THE MOON – Open at 10:30 am. Chuckwagon Breakfast 10:30 am – 1:30 pm, includes Bloody Mary or Mimosa. $2 Smirnoff Sunday. DJ Jake playing country favorites 8:30 pm to close.

IBT's -Open Noon $1.75 Bloodys, Screws or Mimosas.. Sangria Party $2.50 from 4-1 Benefit B-B-Q and Beer Bust for community organizations 5:30-8pm. Karaoke with Michael D. on the patio 4:30-7:30. 8:30 shows or special events or Hi energy dancing w/DJ 'T.C. Wildman'. 9-close. All drink specials not available during special events.

VENTURE-N - Open 10am. Patio open 3pm. $1.75 Bloody Marys or Screws til 3pm Patio Beer Bust 3-7.Burger BBQ 5-7. Selection of burger meats to choose from. $2 proceeds go to Pet Watch (helping HIV/AIDS clients with their veterinary bills).

WOODY'S - Open 11am. Sunday Brunch 11:30 - 2:30. Eggs and meat du jour plus BMs, Mims or Screws $5. $1.50 Bloody Marys, screwdrivers, Mimosas; Happy Hour 11am-8pm $2 well or domestic beer Patio Bar open 5-close. Pick-up Beach Volleyball games 5-?. $2.50 sirloin burger w/salad 5-9pm. Karaoke with Michael D. 9pm

YARD DOG - Open Sundays 10am - 1am. Bloody Marys or Screwdrivers $1.75 from 10am - 3pm.

MONDAY
COLORS - Open 11am for lunch; 5pm for dinner. Happy Hour 4-7pm. Domestic beer and well cocktails $2.25

HOWL AT THE MOON – Open at 3 pm. Happy Hour 3 – 8 pm, $2 well, domestic longnecks & pints, $3 sm pitchers, $5 lg pitchers. Monday Munchies 3 – 8 pm with reduced prices on appetizers. Pool Tournament 6:30 pm - $3 entry fee, bar matches pot. Draught Beer Specials for players.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-7pm, All drink specials not available during special events.

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

WOODY'S - Open Noon. $2 well or domestic beer til 7pm.Karaoke w/Michael D. 9-1

YARD DOG - Open daily 6am. 50¢ off any Scotch until 7pm. Beer Bust 3-7pm.

TUESDAY
COLORS - Open 11am for lunch, 5pm dinner. Happy Hour 4-7pm. Domestic beers and well cocktails $2.25. Karaoke 10:30pm to close w/Johnny DJ.

HOWL AT THE MOON – Open at 3 pm. Happy Hour 3 – 8 pm, $2 well, domestic longnecks & pints, $3 sm pitchers, $5 lg pitchers. Tequila Tuesday: $2.00 well margaritas, 50¢ off call tequilas. Karaoke with Calabaza Cabeza Karaoke 8 – 11:30 pm

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-7pm, Bare Chest Nite- Bare it and get happy hour prices from 9 to close. Progressive/Retro '80s dance with DJ Q. 9 to close

VENTURE-N - Open 8am. Patio 6pm. Free Pool til 4pm. WOODY'S - Open Noon. $2 well or domestic til 7pm. Bartender Calls It drink specials..

YARD DOG - Open daily 6am.50¢ off any Tequila until 7pm Beer Bust 3-7pm.

WEDNESDAY
COLORS - Open 11am for lunch; 5pm dinner. Happy Hour 4-7pm Domestic Beers or Well cocktails $2.25.

HOWL AT THE MOON – Open at 3 pm. Happy Hour 3 – 8 pm, $2 well, domestic longnecks & pints, $3 sm pitchers, $5 lg pitchers. Free Pool all day. Draught Beer Specials all day. Beginning couples dance lessons with Amanda 7:30 – 8:30 pm. Country DJ Jake plays 8:30 - close

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hours Noon-7pm, 9pm "Diva-Licious" show w/Lucinda Holliday and guests. HiNRG Dancing with DJ-Q. All drink specials not available during special events.

VENTURE-N - Open 8am. Patio 6pm. Free Pool til 4pm. Draft Special 12-4pm. $2.75 Cuervo Margaritas 4-8pm

WOODY'S - Open Noon. $2 well or domestic beer til 7pm. Free Hot Dog Buffet 5-11pm. Underwear- fetish-leather nite w/Gary and Chris along with GMHP. $1 off any drink or bottled beer.(Excludes draft & schnapps) for all in leather or underwear.

YARD DOG - Open daily 6am.50¢ off any Vodka until 7pm Beer Bust 3-7pm.

THURSDAY
COLORS - Open 11am for lunch, 5pm dinner. 4-7pm Happy Hour Domestic Beers or Well cocktails $2.25. Karaoke 10:30 - close with Johnny DJ.

HOWL AT THE MOON –Open at 3 pm. Happy Hour 3 – 8 pm, $2 well, domestic longnecks & pints, $3 sm pitchers, $5 lg pitchers. $2.00 Mexican Beers all day. Karaoke with David Z from 8 to midnight.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hours Noon-7pm, DJ 9-1 All drink specials not available during special events.

VENTURE-N - Open 8am. Patio open 6pm. Free Pool til 4pm. Pool Tourney 7pm. $3 entry. Special prices for players. Steak Nite (4th Thursday of each month). Bring your own or get it here $5.

WOODY'S - Open Noon. $2 well or domestic beer til 7pm. Free Pool 8 to close. Volleyball Court is Open. See bartender.

YARD DOG - Open daily 6am.50¢ off any Bourbon til 7pm. Beer Bust 3-7pm.

FRIDAY
COLORS - Open 11am for lunch. Dinner 5-10pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm domestic beers or well cocktails $2.25.

HOWL AT THE MOON – Open at 3 pm. Happy Hour 3 – 8 pm, $2 well, domestic longnecks & pints, $3 sm pitchers, $5 lg pitchers. Line Dance Lessons 7:30 to 8:30 pm.
.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hours Noon-7pm, Live Jazz on the patio with the Susan 6-9pm. Patio Bar 5-1pm. GoGo Boys and Dance Party with DJ 'T.C. Wildman' 9 to 1. All drink specials not available during

VENTURE-N - Open 8am. Patio open 6pm. Free Pool til 4pm. DJ 9pm to close.

WOODY'S - Open Noon. $2 well or domestic beer til 7pm. Martini Party - Well Martini's $2.00 4-8pm. Call Martinis $3 from 4-8pm. Complimentary Shrimp Cocktail 4-8pm. Patio Bar Open 7pm - midnight.

YARD DOG - Open daily 6am.50¢ off any Gin until 7pm. Beeer Bust 3-7pm. Kennel open 9pm.

SATURDAY
COLORS - Open 11am for lunch; 5-10pm full dinner.

HOWL AT THE MOON – Open at 10:30 am. Happy Hour 3 – 8 pm, $2 well, domestic longnecks & pints, $3 sm pitchers, $5 lg pitchers. $3.00 Cheese Burger & Fries all day. Country DJ with the best country dance music 8:30 to 2

IBT's - 10am-5pm $4 Martinis and Daquaris. Happy Hours Noon-7pm. Dance Party 9-1 w/DJ-Q. All drink specials not available during special events.

VENTURE-N - Open 10am. Patio Bar open 3pm. Patio Beer Bust 3-7pm. DJ 9-1.

WOODY'S - Open 11am $2 well or domestic beer. Til 7pm. Patio Bar opens 5pm. 5-9pm Steak or Mahi Mahi BBQ with all the trimmings $5.

YARD DOG - Open daily 6am. Beer Bust 3-7pm. 75¢ glass, $2.25 pitcher. 50¢ off any Rum 1pm to 7pm. Beer Bust 3-7pm. Kennel Open 9pm.

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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.

LESBIAN SUPPORT GROUP. Involving discussion, support and activities. Designed to support each other. Meets 1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month from 6:30 to 8pm. Alternate Saturdays the group meets for social activities. For info call Dorian Easty. 882-7723 Facilitator.

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 575-8660 or write P.O. Box 36264, Tucson, AZ 85740-6264. All replies confidential.

TUCSON GLBT AL-ANON GROUP meets Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. at Wingspan, 300 E. 6th Street. Call 624-1779 for more information.

YOUNG AND GAY?
GLBT Youth 23 and under, meet every Saturday in Tucson for sharing, support and information. Meetings are held at 300 E. 6th 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 call529-2269, 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 Mon. - Fri.

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, 300 E. 6th 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 Hotliine (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, 7pm at Sentinel Bldg. On the City of Tucson Resource Campus, 310 N. Commerce Park Loop on Bonita St. between St. Marys and Congress.

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 meets every Tuesday from 6:30-9:00 p.m. at Cornerstone Fellowship Social Hall, 2902 N. Geronimo (near 1st Ave. and Laguna). Open to All. Call Liz at 325-9466 or Ray at 749-5247.

CLASSIFIEDS

CLASSIFIED ADS ARE 25¢ PER WORD, $5.00 MINIMUM
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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 Chorus. Want to join? E-mail: www.desertvoices.org or call 791-9662 .

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, 739 N. 4th Ave. 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 2002, contract 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.

COMMUNITY BUSINESS ASSOCIATION (CBA), Tucson's Gay and Lesbian business networking group holds regular meetings the third Thursday of every month. Call 615-6436 for more info.

TUCSON PRIDE, INC. (Formerly Tucson Lesbian and Gay Alliance - TLGA) meets on the second Tuesday at 845 S. Craycroft Road at 6pm. Tucson Pride events: Pride Week, Gay West and OUToberFEST. 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.

GRACE GROUP - CATHOLIC GAY/LESBIAN SUPPORT GROUP meets every 2nd and 4th Monday at 7:30 p.m. in the Madonna Hall at Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church, 1436 N. Campbell across from University Hospital. For more info. Call Anabeli at 325-0892

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.

AZdykes is a new email list for Lesbians living in Arizona. For information mail tyan@theriver.com and request guidelines.

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 / ETC! Non-Smoking Lesbian Network meets every 3rd Saturday night of each month. If you'd like to meet women 35+ (flexible) and socialize in a smoke-free environment 888-8010 before 10:00 p.m. The group dines out and attends shows or movies. Now in their 16th year! (2nd in Tucson).

SOUTHERN ARIZONA GENDER ALLIANCE (SAGA). The Southwest's largest transgender and gender-variant 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)867-0083 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, 300 E. 6th Street. 743-4800.

TUCSON CATHOLIC GAY & LESBIAN FAMILY MINISTRY. Currently meeting the 4th Monday of every month at SS Peter & Paul Church, Madonna Hall 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Fr. Fiedler in attendance every meeting and willing to speak one on one. Reaching out to Parents and Families. For more info call Doc or Barbara 293-6624.

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.

ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS: Confidential individual or group support for Gay, Bisexual or Trans men who are victims/survivors of domestic violence. For more information call 624-0348 (24-hour line)

REVEILLE GAY MEN'S CHORUS rehearses Tuesdays 7-10pm at MCC Church, 3269 N. Mountain. Have any history/ experience singing? Join us!! Call 617-3100 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

LIKE TO READ?
The Guys Book Club (TGBC) invites new members to join them. The group meets once a month, on the 3rd Monday of every month at 6:30 p.m. at Magpie's Pizza on 4th Avenue to discuss the Gay-themed book read by members the previous month.

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

GLBT Buddhist meditation group meets Sundays from 9:30 - 11:00 a.m. at the Wingspan annex space, 739 N. 4th Ave. Please be willing to sit for two twenty minute sessions in silence. All are welcome.

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.

NEW TUCSON SOBRIETY SUPPORT GROUP. Secular Organizations for Sobriety - Sundays 8:00 - 9:30 p.m. at 739 N. 4th Avenue. Contacts Rick R. 520-792-2604 or Gary S. 520-323-1969. More information at www.secularhumanism.org/sos/ This group is an alternative to 12-step programs.

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.

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Dr. X

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13...

of work, I hope she is being careful about it. And, of course I hope that she is using condoms every time, and getting regular checkups for STD's and HIV. In short—if you won't stop, at least take care of yourself.

[Do you have burning questions with no answer in sight? Ask Dr. X! Send your questions to Dr. X at gmhp@saaf.org or mail them to SAAF/GMHP, 375 S. Euclid, Tucson, AZ 85719. You can also check out Dr. X online at www.gmhp.org.]

Gay Cop Comes Out And Finds Support On Force

WAYNE - A few months ago, during a debate over whether government workers should get benefits for same-sex partners, Passaic County Sheriff's Department Detective Cpl. Douglas Laverty revealed that he is Gay - something he had kept secret from even close friends, reported the Associated Press on 365Gay.com.

In the ultra macho culture of law enforcement, he feared the worst: harassment, discrimination or worse. Instead, what he found was acceptance and support. And he wants people to know he's grateful.

"People knew me as Doug; now they know me as 'Gay Doug,'" said Laverty, an 18-year veteran. "The guys were all great. I know how lucky I am; I am blessed that I work with good people."

In July, when New Jersey's domestic partnership law went into effect, Laverty began wondering whether the policy extending benefits to same-sex couples would extend to the county level. He has been in a committed Gay relationship for three years, and refers to his partner of three years, James Roche, as his spouse and husband.

Laverty asked for a meeting with Passaic County Sheriff Jerry Speziale, telling the sheriff's aide only that he wanted to discuss a personnel matter. The sheriff didn't flinch when Laverty said he was Gay, and immediately put him in contact with county freeholders to discuss the possibility of granting same-sex benefits. (That hasn't happened yet.)

Soon, a local newspaper got wind of his inquiries and profiled him in a front-page article. The night before it was to be published, Laverty couldn't sleep, fearing what he might have gotten himself into.

"It's a macho, very masculine-type job," he said. "For all these years, I had been totally afraid to reveal it to anybody. I know other Gay cops that are out that have been received in a very negative manner, having bras and panties hung in their lockers, people refusing to work with them."

When he got to work the next day, his desk was filled with cards and notes - all offering support.

"Basically everyone said that `Nothing had changed, you're still our friend, we still care about you,' " he said. "I had a few guys pull me aside and say, 'Doug, why didn't you ever say anything?' Honest to God, there was not one negative thing said or done."

It's a story that is slowly becoming more common in America as Gays are more visible and accepted, said Michael Adams, a spokesman for Lambda Legal, a Gay civil rights group.

"It reflects the progress being made in law enforcement and in New Jersey," he said. "New Jersey is becoming an increasingly supportive state for Gay people. And we're definitely seeing progress being made with Gays in law enforcement, which is encouraging."

There are several Gay police groups, including GOAL, the Gay Officers Action League, which has chapters across the country, including New York, Boston and San Francisco.

His coming-out this year was the end of a journey the 37-year-old Laverty began as a child; he began to suspect as far back as junior high school that he was Gay, but he says he didn't want to deal with it.

"I started realizing I was attracted to boys; it was very confusing," he said. "I was brought up in a very straight household."

Laverty did things he thought would help steer him in the opposite direction. He joined the military, got married and had two daughters. When the feelings persisted, he went to a psychiatrist, hoping for "a cure."

It was not to be; although he loved his wife and kids, his true sexual orientation was becoming clearer, and he would have flings with men behind his wife's back.

"I wasn't being the best husband or father, living all these lies," he said. "I was leading an ugly life."

Finally, after six years of marriage, he decided to tell his wife and daughters the truth, despite his fear he would lose them forever. His wife was upset at first, but has now accepted the situation to the point where Roche, a hair stylist, does her hair. She and her boyfriend are friendly with Laverty and Roche.

"It's so much easier that I can be who I am now instead of pretending to be just one of his buddies," said Roche, who recently bought a house with Laverty in Little Falls. "Now when the guys at his work have a Christmas party or have their wives over to dinner, I go with him."

Detective Kevin Niethe, Laverty's on-the-job partner, trusts him with his life.

"I feel confident in any situation that he would back me up," Niethe said. "He's a great guy and a good cop. If my life was on the line, I'm not thinking of who he's kissing behind closed doors."

Laverty says he and Niethe get along great, engaging in the usual squad car banter and teasing that partners do.

"He talks to me about his wife; I talk to him about my husband," he said with a smile.

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