Observing Tucson And The Greater Arizona Community

OBSERVER

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18th Annual Reno Gannon Memorial Jell-O Wrestling Extravaganza May 1

TUCSON - The 18th Annual Reno Gannon Memorial Jell-O Wrestling Extravaganza will be held on Sunday, May 1, 4 to 7 p.m., at Woody's, 3710 N. Oracle Road.

Proceeds from this event will go to the programs and services offered by the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation (SAAF).

In addition to the action-packed and often hilarious wrestling matches, there will be a live auction with many beautiful and unique items to bid on as well as a raffle for two round-trip tickets anywhere in the continental United States on Southwest Airlines. Imagine, for just $1, you could win this incredible prize. So join us, as Jell-O celebrates its 18th birthday in a big way!

Event tickets are available now for $5 each! Due to the limited seating at this event, advance ticket purchase is recommended.

All tickets purchased the day-of the event will be $8. To purchase advance tickets, please call SAAF, (520) 628-7223 Lost or forgotten tickets will not be honored at the door. Ticket must be presented for entry.

For more information, contact Ethan Smith Cox, events coordinator, (520) 628-7223.

Frist Leads Gathering To Win Anti-G/L Support For GOP

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The National Stonewall Democrats on Monday, April 25, criticized Senate Republican leader Bill Frist of Tennessee for leading a political event Sunday in Louisville, Ky., where participants routinely ridiculed Gay families while calling for legalized discrimination against them, reported Advocate.com.

Frist joined, via video, a live simulcast broadcast by the Family Research Council titled "Justice Sunday: Stopping the Filibuster Against People of Faith." The event was designed to build support for Republican efforts to change Senate rules in order to approve the most radically far-right judicial nominations of the Bush administration.

"Senator Frist just led an event that focused more energy defending Tom DeLay from his ethical problems than it spent on issues of faith," said Eric Stern, NSD executive director. "Republicans are ready to change Senate rules to confirm the most radical of President Bush's judicial nominees, and they are willing to exchange personal faith for partisan pandering in an effort to do just that. It is telling that Senator Frist regularly appears at Family Research Council functions but refuses to meet with Gay families regarding his extreme Senate agenda."

Shortly after Frist addressed the simulcast, Catholic League president Bill Donohue took the stage and preceded to laughingly mock Gay families. Specifically, Donohue claimed that support of marriage equality "is a notion that belongs in an asylum." The comment drew wide laughter and applause from the audience at Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, where the simulcast originated.

During the simulcast, organizers devoted much of their time urging the confirmation of Janice Rogers Brown to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia circuit. Although her nomination was rejected by the Senate in 2003, President Bush renominated her earlier this year.

Rogers Brown holds a ideological judicial record that has consistently attacked the stability of Gay families. In 2003, Rogers Brown was the only justice on the California supreme court to rule against recognizing the right of Gay Californians to legally adopt their children. Brown argued that allowing a Gay parent to legally adopt the biological child of their partner "trivializes family bonds."

"What we detect instead is the work of a political organization using Christian language to exploit Americans' desire to preserve religious values by framing their political strategy in terms of religious liberty," said the Reverend Joe Phelps of Highland Baptist Church in Louisville.

During the simulcast Phelps led an opposition rally of churches from across the city. Their efforts were joined by representatives of the Jefferson County Democratic Party and through a letter signed by more than 400 religious leaders across the country.

Microsoft Retreating On GLBT Issues In Fear Of Red State Retribution

SEATTLE - [Editor's note, a bill before the Washington Legislature creating a statewide anti-discrimination ordinance, prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations failed by one vote in the Washington Senate. Reports state that the retreat of support for the 30-year-old effort by Microsoft was seen as the cause for its defeat this year. What follows is a column that sums up the whole story.]

Shall we call it Micro-too-soft?

Faced with a decision of conscience on whether to back a state bill to protect Gays and Lesbians from discrimination, the software giant decided to take the "neutral" position, reported columnist Robert L. Jamieson, Jr., with the Seattle Post Intelligencer

That's Microsoft code for what you and I might call "chickening out."

For a company that presents itself as cutting-edge and forward-thinking, such a move seems backward. And for a company recognized as a corporate leader for its treatment of Gay employees, such inaction seems hypocritical, too.

Given the chance to help deal a blow against ignorance and lead Washington state out of the dark ages, the visionaries in Redmond took one look at a tough issue and went soft.

Microsoft caved in to fire and brimstone from Eastside pastor Ken Hutcherson. The New York Times reported Friday, April 22, that Hutcherson, of Antioch Bible Church, threatened to boycott Microsoft if the company's stand did not square with the Lord. "I told them I was going to give them something to be afraid of Christians about," Hutcherson boasted.

The African American minister sounds too comfortable using the Bible to justify discrimination. Shame, shame on this soul brother. He quickly forgets the day when racial prejudice prohibited his forebears from sitting at cafe counters — and before that, when the Bible was used to justify slavery.

As the minister roils, Microsoft recoils, saying the whole blowup is a misunderstanding. Microsoft really loves Gay folk, truly it does, but company officials say they had "other" pressing legislative issues that shoved Gay rights to the back of its agenda.

Microsoft is doing macro spin.

State Rep. Ed Murray, who is Gay, spoke recently with Brad Smith, Microsoft's senior vice president and general counsel. Smith made it clear to Murray that Microsoft was feeling the heat.

The company, which had provided a letter of support for a pro-Gay bill last year, was suddenly concerned about a religious backlash.

So the explanation about Microsoft's other legislative priorities seems to fly right out the Windows of truth.

Parishioners of Hutcherson's church could indeed apply pressure on Microsoft. But while the congregation of 3,000 is robust as far as local churches go, it isn't big enough to cripple a global giant.

What Microsoft truly fears — and what company representatives won't say publicly — is the red Republican tide rolling across the country.

There are a lot of computers and software customers out in those Republican-leaning states. In the inner sanctum of Bill Gates' Redmond campus, I picture number crunchers trying to figure out whether all of that money is worth losing over a Gay rights bill in a state divided on the issue.

Judging by their response, they said heck no.

Theirs was a business decision. Faced with offending right-wing conservatives who could boycott en masse or Gays and Lesbians in Washington state who were far too meek as the bill came under fire in Olympia, Microsoft punted.

That's my take, despite what company execs are scrambling to say now.

Microsoft's pitiful stand certainly won't ruffle the FOM brigade.

Those are the Friends of Microsoft — people such as Ralph Reed, the former executive director of the Christian Coalition and an architect of the rise of religious conservatives in the GOP.

Five years ago, Reed was a senior consultant to the presidential campaign of then-Gov. George W. Bush. Reed was on the payroll of both the Bush campaign and Microsoft. His task as a hired gun was to round up Bush bigwigs who would lean on Bush to support Microsoft, which had taken a whipping in an antitrust suit triggered by the Justice Department.

Reed also helped to tar the one-time Bush rival, Sen. John McCain, by painting the Arizona lawmaker as a man too comfy with Gays.

Reed-minded people — and pastor Hutcherson falls into that rabid camp — were the folks Microsoft had in mind when controversial House Bill 1515 came up. The fate of the bill, which died

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UPDATE

LGBT Community Aleert On Hate Crimes

TUCSON - In the last few days the staff with Wingspan Anti-Violence Project (AVP), has received notification of a number of hate motivated crimes happening in Tucson.

The next few days are important white supremacists dates. In the past, to commemorate these dates, white supremacists and their followers commit acts of violence against others, including LGBT people. As we all know, these organizations have followers all over the country, including our own communities here in Tucson and Southern Arizona.

Wingspan and the AVP will like to encourage people who witness or who are victims or such attacks to please call the police and report the crime. If you don't want to report it to the police, please call the AVP 24-hour crisis line (520) 624-0348 or (800) 553-9387. The services are free and confidential. All of AVP's advocates are professionals that have been trained to assist all callers. AVP works in collaboration with other agencies and organizations to provide safe and adequate services to all of our clients. Remember, a trained and supportive advocate is just a phone call away!

Please remember that hate motivated crimes can range from verbal harassment, hate mail, property damage, vandalism, assault and even murder, and anyone of us can be a target. The victims are never at fault for the attacks committed against them.

Keep in mind the following safety tips:

Trust your gut! If you feel unsafe or threatened, trust your instincts and remove yourself from the situation as soon as you can.

Keep in mind your personal safety! Particularly when making the decision to allow someone you barely know into your home or car. Allowing a stranger into either of these places can make you vulnerable to robbery, assault, even murder.

Don't accept drinks from strangers or drinks that you didn't order! When you are out socializing with friends, keep in mind not to accept drinks from individuals that you just met. If someone offers to buy you a drink, walk to the bar with them and pick your drink directly from the bartender.

Nothing is free in life! Beware of strangers who want to give you "free" drinks. Drugs and other substances that can impair your judgment can be put into drinks, allowing strangers to take advantage of your inability to defend yourself. Also keep track of how much alcohol you consume throughout the evening. Knowing your limit can help you determine when it's time to stop.

When leaving the bar make sure that you tell someone! If you happen to meet a nice person while out at the bar, make sure that you introduce them to your friends or bar staff. Remember to ask their names (including last names), where do they work, where do they live, and their phone number. While introducing this person to others, make sure to mention as much information as you can about them to your friends. In particular, if you make the decision to leave the bar with them, tell someone about it!

~~2005 Wingspan~~ Awards Call For Nominations

TUCSON - It is time to help Wingspan recognize those who have made outstanding contributions to Southern Arizona's LGBT community.

Nominations for the Godat Award & Community Ally Award are due May 6. Winners will be honored at Wingspan's 8th Annual Benefit Dinner, on Saturday, September 24, at the Tucson Convention Center.

The Godat Award: Seven years ago, the Godat Award was inaugurated to recognize extraordinary long-term contributions by an individual to Southern Arizona's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community. Ken Godat, after whom this award was named, was the first recipient in 1998.

The Community Ally Award recognizes a straight ally who has made significant contributions to advance the freedom, equality, safety, and well being of LGBT people in Southern Arizona.

For the guidelines, nomination form & more information please visit: http://www.wingspan.org.

Dr. Carmichael Recognized Nationally

TUCSON - An online HIV/AIDS resource has named Dr. J. Kevin Carmichael, a Tucson HIV/AIDS specialist, as an "outstanding clinician," the Tucson Citizen reported.

TheBody.com is an award-winning Web site, having received honorable mention for the 2002 Medicine on the Net Web Excellence Award for Outstanding Content and the Best Health Web Site award in the 2000 Time Inc. Health FREDDIE Awards.

It is celebrating its 10th anniversary with HIV Leadership Awards in categories from nurses to prevention educators to clinicians. Nominees, up to 100 in each category, came from all over the country. There were 10 award winners in each category.

"The winners were chosen because of proven dedication, long-term commitment, a unique and effective approach to HIV/AIDS in their particular field, or a mixture of all these," a TheBody.comnews release said.

SASD Meeting May 3

TUCSON - The Southern Arizona Stonewall Democrats (SASD) want Tucsonans to join them for their May membership meeting where they will be joined by City Council candidate for Ward VI and Stonewall member, Nina Trasoff, Tuesday May 3, 7 p.m. at Democratic Headquarters, 4639 E. 1st St. (1 block S. of Speedway &Swan).

In addition to Trasoff, they will also be discussing future activities and goals for SASD, as well as committee and volunteer opportunities.

If you have questions, please contact Anthea Scouffas, (520) 326-4461 or by E-mail at thea2@lycos.com.

Position Open On GLBT Commission

TUCSON - A seat has opened up on the City of Tucson Commission on GLBT Issues, due to the resignation of a Commission member, who represented Ward 5.

Tucson Ward 5 Councilmember Steve Leal is seeking an individual to appoint to fill the Ward 5 vacancy on the Commission, which meets on the third Tuesday of each month. Members appointed shall be residents of the metropolitan Tucson area. All members shall be knowledgeable about issues and concerns of importance to the GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered) community.

Interested persons should submit a resume listing their community service and background to: Ward 5 Councilmember Steve Leal, 4300 S. Park, Tucson, Arizona, 85714. For more information, call (520) 791-4231.

♥ Want to do something positive with your leisure time?
♥ Interested in helping people while learning about HIV/AIDS ?

If so, the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation wants you to consider becoming a volunteer!

Volunteer orientations are open to all those interested and are held once a month at our main office, located at 375 South Euclid Avenue.

Sign up today!

Contact Wendy Ascione at 628-7223 or wascione@SAAf.org

SAAF

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Informing the Community
The Observer

Southern Arizona Stonewall Democrats
Meeting Tuesday, May 3 @ 7:00 pm
Pima Democratic Headquarters
4639 E. 1st Street, 1 blk West of Swan
Speaker, Nina Trasoff, Candidate, City Council, Ward 6
Join us! We need your voice and energy!

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Secret Service Records Raise New Questions About Gannon/Guckert

WASHINGTON, D.C. - In what is unlikely to stem the controversy surrounding disgraced White House correspondent James Guckert, the Secret Service has furnished logs of the writer's access to the White House after requests by two Democratic Members of Congress, Raw Story reported.

The documents, obtained by Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY) and Rep. John Conyers (D-MI) through a Freedom of Information Act request, reveal Guckert had remarkable access to the White House. Though he wrote under the name Jeff Gannon, the records show that he applied with his real name.

Gannon's ready access to President Bush and his work for a news agency that frequently plagiarized content from other reporters and tailored it to serve a conservative message may raise new questions about the White House's attempts to seed favorable news coverage. Democrats have sought to paint Guckert in the context of other efforts by the Administration to "plant" positive spin by paying for video news releases and columnists to espouse their views.

Guckert made more than 200 appearances at the White House during his two-year tenure with the fledging conservative websites GOPUSA and Talon News, attending 155 of 196 White House press briefings. He had little to no previous journalism experience, previously worked as a male escort, and was refused a congressional press pass.

Perhaps more notable than the frequency of his attendance, however, is several distinct anomalies about his visits.

Guckert made more than two dozen excursions to the White House when there were no scheduled briefings. On many of these days, the Press Office held press gaggles aboard Air Force One—which raises questions about what Guckert was doing at the White House. On other days, the president held photo opportunities.

On at least fourteen occasions, Secret Service records show either the entry or exit time missing. Generally, the existing entry or exit times correlate with press conferences; on most of these days, the records show that Guckert checked in but was never processed out.

In March, 2003, Guckert left the White House twice on days he had never checked in with the Secret Service. Over the next 22 months, Guckert failed to check out with the Service on fourteen days. On several of these visits, Guckert either entered or exited by a different entry/exit point than his usual one. On one of these days, no briefing was held; on another, he checked in twice but failed to check out.

"I'd be worried if I was the White House and I knew that a reporter with a day pass never left," one White House reporter told Raw Story. "I'd wonder, where is he hiding? It seems like a security risk."

Others who have covered the White House say not checking in or out with the Secret Service is unusual, especially in the wake of Sept. 11. The Secret Service declined to comment.

"We responded to the FOIA request and can provide no further information," Service spokesman Jonathan Cherry said.

Guckert declined to comment, directing all questions to the Service.

The records furnished by the Service are unlikely to finally answer who approved Gannon's "temporary" day passes into the presidential residence. The Service keeps a record of who approved passes only for the last sixty days; previous records are kept by the White House.

Since December 2004, all but one of Gannon's forty-eight temporary appointments were requested by Lois Cassano, a White House Press Office media assistant. One additional request was made by Peter Watkins, a press assistant who now works as deputy press secretary to First Lady Laura Bush.

Guckert sometimes stayed for an extended period of time before and after press conferences, particularly early in his tenure. This was especially common during his first few months, when he might be in the White House for as long as six hours.

A White House reporter dismissed this as insignificant, noting that sometimes reporters stay between events.

"You could probably find people who stayed there for nine hours," the reporter said.

Occasionally, the former Talon News reporter visited the White House twice on the same day. This was also most common in the early months.

The Secret Service furnished the records after a Freedom of Information Act request from Reps. John Conyers (D-MI) and Louise Slaughter (D-NY).

Guckert drew fire from liberals after asking a question of President Bush earlier this year in which he misquoted the Democratic Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV). Investigative bloggers at Daily Kos and AmericaBlog.org discovered that Guckert owned male escort sites, and was himself a male prostitute.

The now-blogger has also been accused of lifting copy from press releases and other reporters.

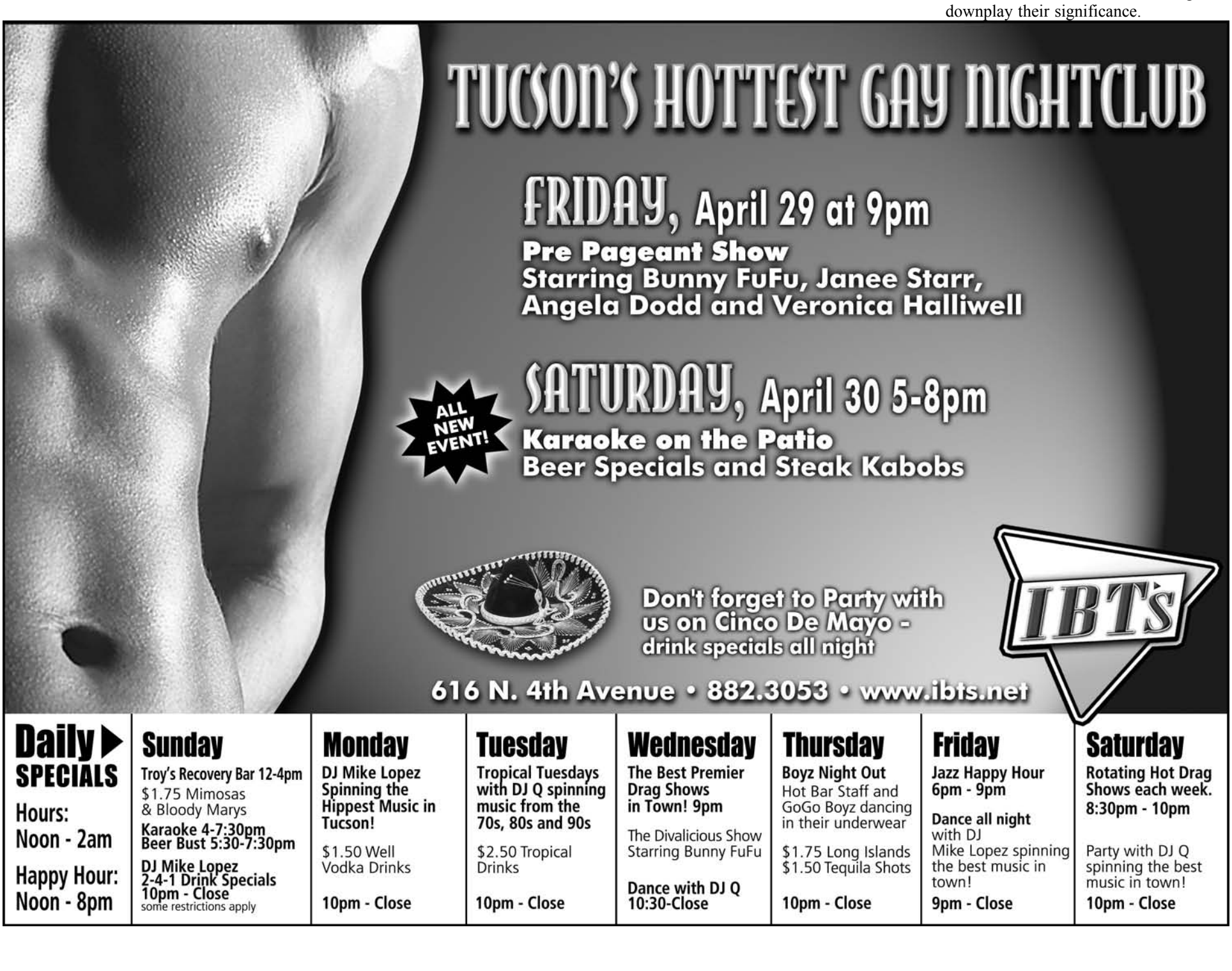
A Massachusetts editor and reporter have accused Guckert of plagiarism, which Raw Story reported in March. The watchdog Media Matters for America has also found that many of Guckert's stories lifted directly from White House press releases.

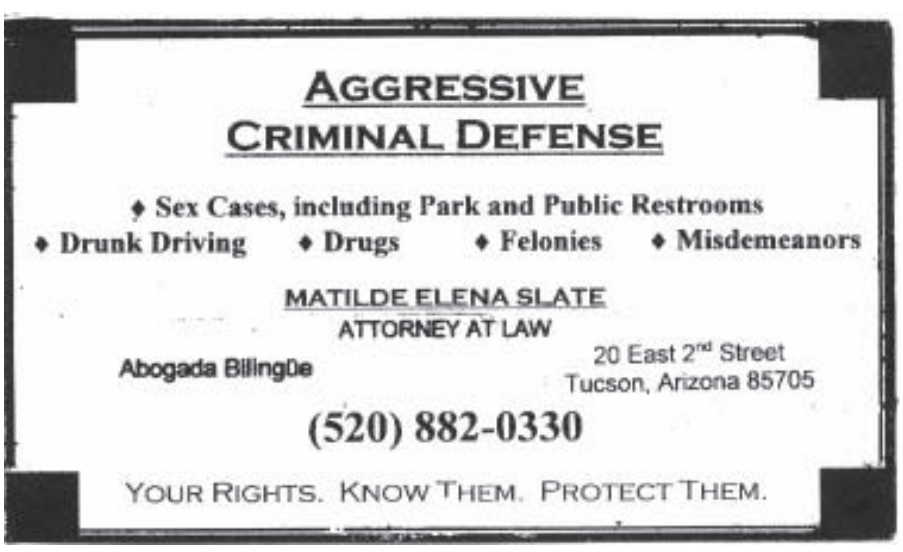
Talon News, which shut down after the fracas over Gannon erupted, was self-avowedly Republican. Bobby Eberle, the site's founder, told the Washington Post, "We make no bones about it: It's a partisan site."

In a February letter to President Bush, several Senate Democrats raised concern about Gannon in connection with what they believe is an attempt to "buy" coverage.

"The Gannon/Guckert affair is disturbing because of what we have recently learned about apparent efforts by some in your Administration to try to "buy" favorable news coverage," the Democrats wrote. "These other efforts include paying news personalities … large sums of money to promote your Administration's education and marriage initiatives, and using taxpayer dollars to produce video news releases promoting the new prescription drug benefit for Medicare beneficiaries and other policies the Administration regards as accomplishments."

The Administration has defended such efforts, and has sought to downplay their significance.





UPDATE

Foothill's Grad Honored For Homophobia Research

TUCSON - A 2001 Catalina Foothills High School graduate has won a $1,000 cash prize for her research on female homophobia, the Arizona Daily Star reported.

Michelle Johns will graduate from Whitman College in Walla Walla, Wash., next month. For her senior thesis, the 22-year-old psychology major examined homophobia among women and compared it with that among men.

"The most interesting thing I found was that feminine attitudes didn't have any root to homophobia, whereas masculine traits often do," she said. "Femininity doesn't operate the same way."

The research won the Nord Award, an endowment open to students and faculty members at Whitman. Johns plans to use the money to pay for her last semester's tuition.

The thesis was titled "That's Not Ladylike! Effects of Femininity and Exposure on Homophobia in Women."

Johns created a job-hiring exercise aimed at assessing female attitudes and actions toward lesbians. The exercise was designed to assess if an applicant's sexuality affects her perceived qualification for a job.

Johns hopes the research will shed new light on predictors of homophobia, a topic to which she was drawn as a psychology student.

"I think we need to get to the root to ever really deal with it," she said.

Johns will return to Tucson after graduation and plans to apply to graduate schools for fall 2006. She is the daughter of Tucsonans Jacqueline and Bradley Johns.

Anti-Violence Project Volunteer Training April 30

TUCSON - The Wingspan Anti_Violence Project (AVP) will hold a free, engaging, interactive and informative training for potential crisis line volunteer advocates, service providers, students, and interested community members. AVP relies on volunteers "just like you," to ensure the community has a 24-hour crisis line.

Topics that will be covered include: Domestic violence 101; LGBT 101; Hate Crimes 101; Suicide prevention; Active listening skills; Crisis intervention skills; Community Resources; and much, much more. The AVP welcome folks who have no prior experience, as well as crisis line veterans. To continue Wingspan's commitment to diversity, the AVP strongly urge people of color, survivors of violence, Gay and Bi men, people with disabilities, bilingual folks, rural community members, transmen and transwomen, LGBT parents, people living with HIV/AIDS, youth, older adults and straight allies to volunteer.

AVP's next training sessions will be on Saturday, April 30, 9 a.m - 5 p.m. For more information please contact Carlos, (520) 624-1779 ext. 24, ctrres@wingspan.org. If you or anyone that you know is experiencing violence, please call the 24-hour crisis line, (520) 624-0348 or (800) 553-9387.

Navajo Nation Outlaws Same-Sex Marriage

WINDOW ROCK - The Navajo Nation has outlawed same-sex marriages on its reservation, reported the Associated Press.

The Tribal Council voted unanimously in favor of legislation that restricts a recognized union to that between a man and a woman, and prohibits plural marriages as well as marriages between close relatives.

"Men and women have been created in a sacred manner. We need to honor this," said Del. Harriet Becenti.

Critics have said the measure's sponsor, Del. Larry Anderson, was attempting to rewrite cultural history to parallel the clash across the United States between conservative Christians and Gay rights activists.

But Del. Lorenzo Curley said Navajo leaders wanted to send a message to young people to respect and live by the tribe's traditional beliefs.

"We are here to defend the foundation of our society. That's what is at stake here," he said.

The Navajo Nation, which has more than 180,000 residents, spans parts of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. Same-sex marriages are not allowed in any of those states.

Last year, the Cherokee National Tribal Council in Oklahoma voted to define marriage as between a man and a woman after a Lesbian couple successfully filed for a tribal marriage application.

Phelps Klan Greeted With Gay Kiss

ALBUQUERQUE - Stunned that protesters were flashing hateful anti-gay messages to traffic along a busy street on the weekend, Chris Lucas had to pull over to join a counter-protest, the Associated Press reported on the PlanetOut Network.

Then, just as spontaneously, Lucas found a way to stun the protesters. The 31-year-old massage therapist and a man he just met locked in a passionate kiss just feet from the protesters.

''I know the protesters were shouting things at me, but I couldn't hear what they were saying,'' said Lucas, who is Gay. ''I had my eyes closed. It was actually kind of liberating to do this.''

The kiss was one of several creative responses to a demonstration by 20 members of the Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kansas. The group travels the country to rally against homosexuality.

Police said the demonstrations were peaceful and no arrests were made.

HATE IS NOT A FAMILY VALUE

Despite Reports, Pentagon Keeps Sodomy Rule

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Pentagon insisted Thursday, April 21, it would continue to criminalize consensual sodomy, countering reports by the New York Times and other outlets that Pentagon attorneys had drafted a memo proposing to decriminalize the act, reported the PlanetOut Network.

"The fact is, it (consensual or forcible sodomy) will continue to be a crime in the United States military," Defense Department spokesman Lawrence Di Rita told reporters.

Di Rita said the Pentagon had asked Congress to update sodomy from simply defining it as a criminal act, to a violation that breaks "good order and discipline." Many news reports on Thursday, however, claimed the Pentagon was considering decriminalizing consensual sodomy.

"Basically what the Pentagon is doing is backtracking on a memo they very clearly made that was obtained by the New York Times," said Steve Ralls, spokesman for Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN).

"The law is blatantly unconstitutional," Ralls charged. "The Supreme Court was very clear in Lawrence [v. Texas] and said that every American has a right to privacy. Nowhere did I see an exception for the military. The military is trying to carve up an exception that does not exist."

"It is unimaginable to think that what two consenting adults do in their own private time will have any bearing on our national security," Ralls concluded.

Jeffrey McGowan, a former Army major who wrote a book about his life as a Gay man in the military, titled "Major Conflict," called the Pentagon's action "a smokescreen."

"The question is: Are we going to pursue the law fairly?" McGowan asked. "That means there should be statistics. So now we should be tracking oral sex by straight soldiers, because after all, the rule of law is blind. And I'm saying that tongue rooted firmly in cheek because it's ridiculous to expect it of any command. Do we really want to prosecute someone who said his wife or girlfriend gave him oral sex the night before?"

"I defy any commander to enforce that rule without a revolt on his hands," McGowan told the PlanetOut Network.

Prohibited sodomy by heterosexual or homosexual soldiers is defined as oral or anal sex with either other soldiers or civilians. It can be punished by up to five years in prison.

Di Rita said Gay and Lesbian soldiers could still be forced out under "don't ask, don't tell." "It's not going to change," Di Rita said of the 12-year-old policy. "There's nobody here contemplating changing it."

The chairman of the military's Joint Chiefs of Staff defended "don't ask, don't tell" amid some lawmakers' efforts to repeal it.

Elton John, Partner Prepare To Wed

LONDON - Sir Elton John has confirmed he will be having a civil partnership ceremony with his partner David Furnish, 365Gay.com.

The pop star told the Daily Mirror newspaper that the couple will take full advantage of the new legislation when it comes into force in December, admitting that he hopes to be one of the first same-sex couples in the country to hold a ceremony.

"We definitely want to do it about the middle of December, probably in Windsor," he said, adding that "meeting David has been the greatest thing to happen to me."

"Yes, we spend a lot of time apart and it's hard, but we make it work," he maintained, slamming claims earlier this year that their relationship was on the rocks. "We phone each other five or six times a day, and we still send each other a card from wherever we are."

Earlier this year, the couple was reportedly at the point of breaking up, with Internet sites suggesting they were already living apart.

But Furnish was quick to attack the claims, announcing the couple was as happy as ever.

The new Civil Partnership laws will give Lesbian and Gay couples the same rights and responsibilities as married heterosexual couples for the first time. Although the laws come into effect on Dec. 5, the first ceremonies will not take place for approximately two weeks.

Already, register offices in Brighton and Hove have announced they will be opening their doors especially early in order to hold the first ceremonies in the country.

Elton says the ceremony will be relatively low-key, and that the celebrations may have to be delayed. "There will be no honeymoon — I'm on tour," he said.

Sunnyside School District Expands Non-Discrimination Policy

TUCSON - Sunnyside Unified School District continued its trend in expanding rights and benefits to employees and its students.

At the April 12 Governing Board meeting of the Sunnyside Unified School District, the board voted unanimously to approve addition of "gender identity or expression" to all of its non-discrimination policies, non-discrimination; staff & hiring; student participation; and multicultural education.

Sunnyside is the only district in the state of Arizona to offer domestic partner benefits to all employees, to include "domestic partners" in its definition of "family" in policies, and to include both "sexual orientation" and "gender identity or expression" in its various non-discrimination policies.

TV Ad Calls For Fairness Toward LGBT Athletes

NEW YORK - A new television ad encouraging "a level playing field" for LGBT and straight athletes debuted Wednesday, April 20, before the USA cable network broadcast of "Ring of Fire," a true story about a boxing champion who struggled with his sexual orientation, the PlanetOut Network reported.

Created by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the ad includes images and names of openly Gay professional athletes such as Billy Bean, Rosie Jones and Esera Tuaolo, and a voice-over that salutes all athletes "including Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender athletes who have played to the highest level." HRC said the ad promotes the goal of letting everyone, regardless of orientation, have an equal shot at competing openly and honestly.

"For LGBT athletes, the opportunity to play often involves extra hurdles of discrimination, and it is time that we level that playing field," said HRC President Joe Solmonese.

The ad comes on the heels of a poll in which 86 percent of respondents said openly Gay athletes should not be excluded from team sports, while 68 percent thought being out would hurt an athlete's career.

"Our hope is that this ad will reach America's LGBT youth, who may feel alone and unwelcome so that they will know that they are welcome and deserving on all playing fields, just like anyone else," said Solmonese. "From professional competition to playground baseball games, everyone competes at a higher level and goes further when all athletes are allowed an equal chance to play."

The ad is airing in Atlanta, Birmingham, Ala., Denver, Milwaukee, Nashville, Salt Lake City, Topeka and Washington, D.C. For now, HRC plans to air it only in conjunction with USA Network's "Ring of Fire," an 86-minute documentary that explores homosexuality in sports by chronicling the life of six-time world boxing champion Emile Griffith.

Griffith's career and life were defined by a single, tragic event in 1962, when he met Benny "The Kid" Paret, a Cuban exile, for what became their final fight to win the welterweight title.

Griffith, rumored to be Gay in boxing circles, rose to fame previously when he won the title from Paret. At the afternoon weigh-in before their fateful final match, Paret stood beside his challenger and whispered "maricon," the Spanish word for "faggot," in Griffith's ear.

Later in the ring, Griffith unleashed a torrent of blows that left Paret dead. Broadcast live on TV, the bout had a lasting impact on the sport and created a political debate over boxing for decades. Griffith, even today, will not explicitly define his sexuality, though in the documentary he implies that he is Gay.

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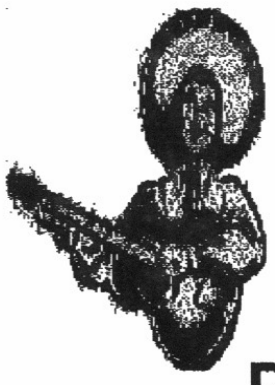

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Hispanic Radio Raising The Ire Of GLBT Groups

SAN FRANCISCO - When the call came on his cellphone, Roberto Hernandez was driving to work in San Francisco. The caller, who identified himself as Juan, said in Spanish that he had met Hernandez at a Gay bar and wanted to see him again, reported the San Francisco Chronicle.

"Refresh my memory, there are so many Juans," said a puzzled Hernandez. The man described himself as slim with "a very nice butt." Eventually, the caller offered to give Hernandez his phone number - then announced that the conversation was being broadcast live nationwide on the Raul Brindis and Pepito Show, a Spanish-language morning radio program.

"Why did these people have to treat me this way?" Hernandez said of his public outing, which led the Federal Communications Commission to fine the station owner $28,000 this year. "Why the hell do they think I deserved something so brutal and humiliating?"

Such on-air mockery of Gay men, Lesbians and Transgender people is common on Spanish-language radio and television, media watchers say, and it has raised the ire of Gay rights groups.

"If I were to put on a scale the sensitivity of Spanish-language radio to Gay and Lesbian issues, I would have to put it at less than 1 on scale of 1 to 10," said Ivan Roman, executive director of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. "It's ridiculous. It's seen as perfectly normal to ridicule Gays and Lesbians, to see them as less than human."

In a regular segment on Los Guapos de la Maqana, a morning radio program that airs on KBUE-FM in Los Angeles, a Transgender female character discusses celebrity gossip while a song about a Gay man who died of AIDS is played in the background, according the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, which has posted recordings of the show on its Web site.

In New York, Gay and Lesbian activists have repeatedly protested the popular radio show El Vacilon de la Maqana which airs on WSKQ-FM. They have criticized hosts for such antics as making a prank call to the mother of a man they pretended had been arrested for public Gay sex and airing a parody of a salsa song about a man who was raped by another man.

Calls to WSKQ were not returned. But Andrew Mars, corporate vice president at Liberman Broadcasting Corp., which owns KBUE, said, "We absolutely have no problem with our morning show. We don't attack any gender or non-gender. I would categorically deny it."

The Bay Area has almost 10 television stations and dozens of Spanish-language radio stations, including KSOL, the local station that aired the conversation with Hernandez.

At the time of the 2002 incident, Hernandez, 44, was selling advertisements for the company that produced the Raul Brindis and Pepito Show, which is how he suspects the hosts got his cellphone number. He was so demoralized by the prank, and the company's refusal to punish anyone after he complained, that his performance went downhill and he eventually quit, he said.

He filed a complaint with the FCC that led to the fine and the agency's determination that the station had unlawfully failed to obtain Hernandez's consent before broadcasting the conversation. And he is suing Univision, which bought the company from the Hispanic Broadcasting Corp. after the incident, for sexual harassment and invasion of privacy.

He contends in the suit that his work environment became so intolerable after he spoke up that he had no choice but to leave. His case went before an arbitrator on Thursday; a decision is expected in the coming months.

"Obviously, it's very hard to be Gay in Latin countries," said Hernandez, who grew up in Mexico but has lived in San Francisco since 1991.

A Univision representative declined to comment because of the pending litigation. However, FCC documents show that Univision officials argued they weren't obliged to notify Hernandez that the conversation would be broadcast because he was an employee.

Univision's lawyers also said the company shouldn't be held responsible because it wasn't the corporate parent at the time and described the prank as an "isolated event" that didn't meet its programming standards.

The incident prompted Univision to send its radio stations a list of words DJs aren't to say on air, said Monica Taher of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. A Univision representative wouldn't confirm that a list was sent.

Will And Grace Back For Eighth Season

HOLLYWOOD - After a lengthy renewal negotiation, NBC and the producers and cast of Will & Grace have clasped hands on a deal for an eighth and probably final season of the Emmy-winning comedy series, reported the Hollywood Reporter and Reuters on Advocate.com.

Contrary to earlier speculation about the actors facing pay cuts, sources said the show's four key cast members—Eric McCormack, Debra Messing, Sean Hayes, and Megan Mullally—secured significant salary bumps in the one-year deals that were hammered out late Friday, April 22. Each of the actors will pocket between $13 million and $15 million for the 2005-2006 season, or about $600,000 per episode, compared with fees estimated at $400,000 per episode this season.

NBC has ordered at least 24 new episodes of the NBC Universal-produced series, plus a highlights clip show, probably in anticipation of a series finale in spring 2006. And for the first time since the series debuted in 1998, Mullally and Hayes will be brought up to full paycheck parity with Messing and McCormack, sources said.

NBC's renewal negotiations on the show were complicated by the litigation pending between NBC and series creator-executive producers David Kohan and Max Mutchnick. (James Burrows, another profit participant and executive producer on Will & Grace, is not involved with the suit.) Mutchnick and Kohan sued NBC in late 2003, claiming they were short-changed on potential profits in an earlier license fee renewal negotiation on the show because the studio (then NBC Studios, now NBC Universal TV Studio) was motivated to keep the show at its sibling broadcast network rather than shop it around to the highest bidder.

Play Safe!

POLITICS 2005
by Mark R. Kerr

'Support Your Community First'

An interesting question was posed by an individual who submitted a letter to Tucson's morning daily fish-wrap about whether the publication, the party of the elephants, a local homosexual Member of Congress who is an elephant, his supporters, businesses, and the general public will be supportive of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) community when the inevitable proposal, enshrining discrimination in the Arizona Constitution appears on the November 2006 general election ballot. Can we just guess?

Tucson's morning daily fish-wrap, in its "political column," Monday, April 25, compared the "don't ask, don't tell" policy to "consensual sodomy," when the Pentagon announced they are keep their "sodomy law" on the military law books.

Old Pueblo's a.m. paper and its "bouncing cactus," continue to stand by their praise and lack of research, of the local homosexual Member of Congress who is an elephant, despite his entire voting record that shows his questionable support on issues of concern.

In regard to the local homosexual Member of Congress' supporters - whom are we kidding here! Just ask formerly openly Gay state Representative Ed Poelstra, R-Tucson, who ran a great campaign for reelection in 2002, despite not getting any support from that Member of Congress, his supporters and for that matter, the party he ran as!

Standards and facts have flown "out the window" with the "Red" publication - with the classic example being Ann Coulter - no friend to those either favoring the "homosexual agenda" or helping those with, affected by and people who want to "abolish AIDS."

Businesses, like Microsoft are withdrawing their support the GLBT community, with the case in point being the computer giant withdrawing their support of a bill in the Washington State Legislature banning discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations based on sexual orientation, HIV status and gender identity which failed by one vote!

Microsoft's CEO, Steve Ballmer, who made donations to Dubya, told their lobbyists in the state capital, Olympia, to withdraw support for the bill, because thanks to religious groups in Redmond, Washington, the hometown of Microsoft, he agreed with them. Microsoft also has on a retainer, none other than Ralph Reed, the former head of the homophobic Christian Coalition for $20,000 a month.

When it comes to the general public, can the GLBT and HIV/AIDS communities count on people who care more about "American Idol," than their fellow Americans?

During the 1980's, the GLBT and HIV/AIDS communities had to support themselves first, because it wasn't coming from any other source. Flashing forward to the present, with stories reported previous in this publication, as well as recent events, show another effort to go back to that era of intolerance is ongoing:

HIV/AIDS funding for all programs is being drastically slashed by the federal government, as well as what can be discussed or taught to our nation's youth, one of the groups with the highest rates of infection with the HIV virus, according to the CDC;

The Republican-controlled Congress, as well as Dubya, tries to roll back what political gains both communities have made over the year's, as well as attempting to enshrine discrimination in the U.S. Constitution with the proposed Federal Marriage Amendment;

Businesses like Microsoft, to name one of many, are turning their backs as well to curry favor with the fundamentalist theocrats; and,

The general public, who is being fed a line by the homophobic, corporate controlled mainstream media who run video news items and press releases from Dubya and his minions occupying 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue and care more about some desperate housewives instead of these desperate times.

As in the 80's, support your community should be the rally cry for the present. If you can make a donation to service organizations, political groups, or use GLBT-owned and operated businesses then do so, because in the present, as in the Reagan era, the GLBT and HIV/AIDS communities are the groups to attack and it is time to fight back for what is rightfully ours!

Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation, SAAF, 375 S. Euclid Ave., Tucson, AZ 85719, saaf.org.

Wingspan, 300 E. Sixth St., Tucson, AZ 85705, wingspan.org.

Arizona Coalition for Fairness, 300 E. Sixth St., Tucson, AZ 85705, make checks payable to Wingspan but mark "Arizona Coalition for Fairness" on memo line.

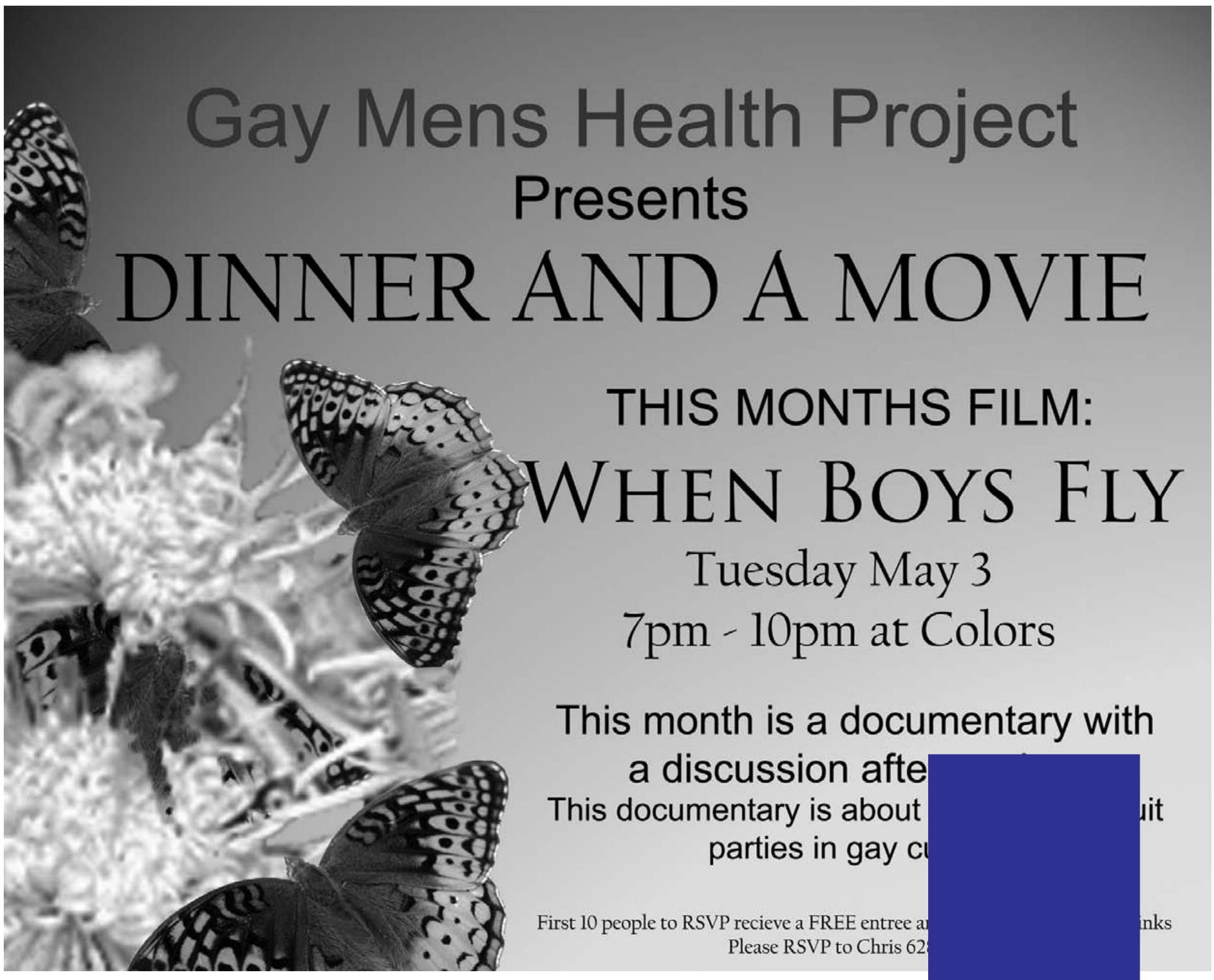
Southern Arizona Stonewall Democrats, stonewall@pimademocrats.org, (520) 326-3716, or 326-4461.

Tucson Pride, tucsonpride.com, 845 S. Craycroft Rd., Tucson AZ 85711, (520) 622-3200.

Tucson GLBT Chamber of Commerce, tucsonglbtchamber.org, (520) 615-6436.

Arizona Human Rights Fund and Foundation, POB 25044, Phoenix, AZ 85002-5004, ahrf.org. Make checks payable to AHRF but mark "marriage equality project" on memo line.

Arizona Stonewall Democrats, (602) 454-8688, info@azstonewalldems.org, azstonewalldems.com. Mail: Arizona Stonewall Democrats, P.O. Box 39524, Phoenix, AZ 85069.



COMMENTARY. . . . by Joe Solmonese

Remembering A Childhood Lesson

As kids we all learned the old lesson that you can't change the rules in the middle of a game, no matter how difficult the game becomes. Some senators seem to be forgetting that principle as they consider changing the more than 200-year tradition surrounding judicial nominations.

The Senate has confirmed more than 200 of President Bush's nominees since he took office. According to the Alliance for Justice, almost a quarter of all federal judges have been appointed by President Bush. And Democrats have filibustered only a handful of the most extreme appointments. But some senators want to ensure that doesn't happen again.

Majority Leader Frist is leading the charge to eliminate filibustering on judicial nominations, an effort being called the "nuclear option" to acknowledge its severity and consequences for our government.

A procedure that delays votes through unlimited debate, the filibuster has been employed by Republicans and Democrats alike for more than two centuries to prevent ideological extremism. It allows the minority party to check the powers of the majority.

If the nuclear option is invoked, it would end the minority's ability to block extreme judicial nominees, like the fewer than 10 out of 200 nominees who are currently being blocked because of their dismal records on civil liberties.

Given that the U.S. Supreme Court will likely have several vacancies in the next four years, this situation is particularly dire. Tinkering with the rules raises the prospect of a radical change to the makeup of our nation's highest court, and thus a radical change in the state of law protecting Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Trangender (GLBT) Americans.

Particularly at risk are the basic rights that ensure fairness and equality for all Americans, rights that have historically been provided by the courts. After all, the judicial branch was established by the Framers of the Constitution so that it could protect against the "tyranny of the majority." Judges were also given lifetime appointments to ensure that they were insulated from electoral pressures when considering the rights of unpopular minorities. The opposition wants to keep lifetime appointments while taking away the power to dissent over a nominee.

Consider the effect this could have on the GLBT community. Lawrence v. Texas, the Supreme Court case that struck down the last remaining sodomy laws — laws that were used to brand GLBT people as criminals — was won by a close margin. Had there been no dissent on the nomination of Judge Robert Bork to the Supreme Court, he would have sat on the bench rather than Justice Kennedy. Justice Kennedy voted to overturn sodomy laws; in fact, he wrote the majority opinion. Judge Bork is an outspoken opponent of GLBT rights and has since testified before Congress in support of an amendment to the Constitution denying same-sex couples the right to marry.

Clearly, GLBT Americans have much to lose from a change in the filibuster rules and we should be active in opposing the nuclear option. While hard work will continue in state legislatures and the halls of Congress, there's no doubt that the judiciary provides our community with huge gains and protections.

This move to take away the filibuster is a blatant power grab and an unprincipled attempt to change longstanding rules. It has been denounced by fair-minded Democrats and Republicans alike, including Sens. Lincoln Chafee, Hillary Clinton, Harry Reid, John McCain and Olympia Snowe.

Now it's time for us to denounce it. Write or call your senators and tell them that you oppose the nuclear option. Let them know that our society's highest aspirations — equality and justice, for instance — depend on a system of rules that are consistently applied. And remind them of that childhood lesson.

[Joe Solomonese is the President of the Washington D.C. based Human Rights Campaign.]

Lesbian's Killer Pleads Guilty, Another Jailed

WASHINGTON, D.C. - William Martin Parrott Jr., the man charged in the stabbing death of a Lesbian official last month in Washington, D.C., pled guilty to second-degree murder on Thursday, April 21, the PlanetOut Network reported.

Wanda Alston, 45, a well-known activist and director of Mayor Anthony Williams' Gay affairs office, was killed in her home on March 16. Alston's domestic partner, Stacy Long, found the body.

Parrott admitted to authorities he was under the influence of crack cocaine, and that the motive for killing Alston was to rob her so he could buy more of the drug.

"I'm ashamed and I'm sorry … because she had never done anything to me," Parrott, 38, told Judge Judith E. Retchin in court.

At first, Alston's killing fueled speculation that her sexual orientation may have played a role in the crime. But the investigation soon pointed to Parrott, who lived two doors down from Alston with his wife and children.

Eyewitnesses reported seeing Parrott driving Alston's car. When police caught up with him two days later, they said he still had Alston's car keys and two of her credit cards in his possession.

Alston herself was once a crack addict, but she had given up the drug 15 years ago, according to the Washington Post. She went on to be an organizer for the National Organization for Women, and an outspoken Lesbian activist. Mayor Williams named her to head the Gay affairs office in 2001.

Williams issued a statement saying that he was "gratified that the police and prosecutors were able to bring this case to a close so quickly."

Sentencing is scheduled for July 29. Parrott could receive a maximum of 40 years in prison.

"I hope the defendant gets the help he needs, but I also hope he gets the maximum sentence of 40 years," Gay activist Phil Pannell told the Washington Blade.

Meanwhile, a man who admitted to the May 2003 killing of a Lesbian teenager in Newark, N.J., was sentenced to 20 years in prison on Thursday, April 21.

Like Alston, Sakia Gunn, 15, was stabbed to death.

Richard McCullough, 30, pleaded guilty last month to aggravated manslaughter, aggravated assault and bias intimidation. The bias charge was dropped as part of a plea bargain.

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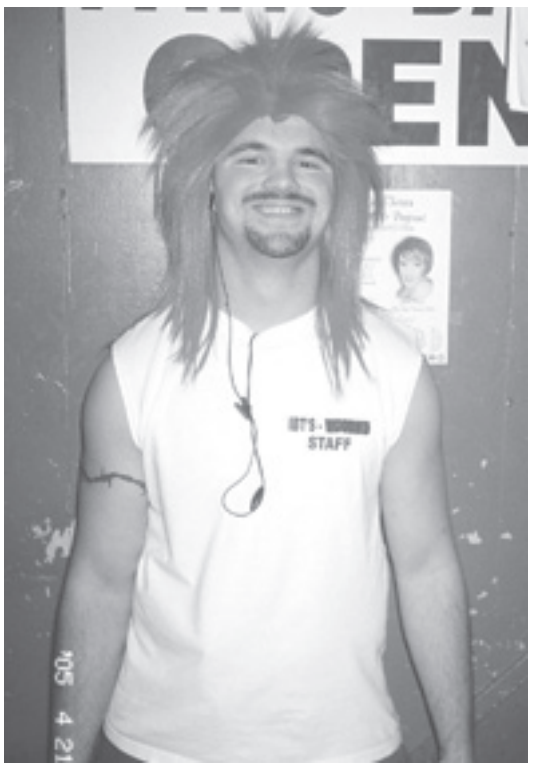

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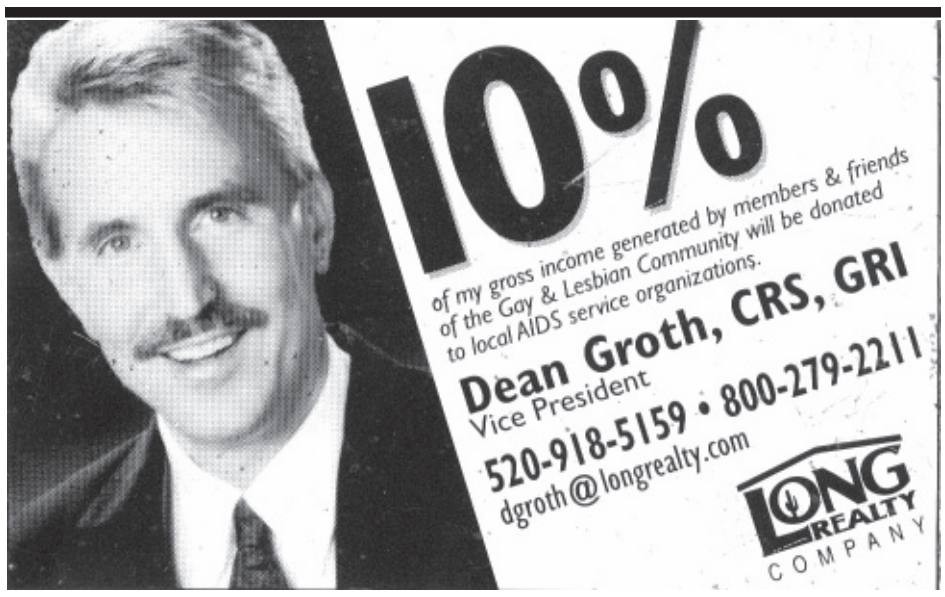

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Go boldly forward this week when Sun stampedes into bullish Taurus. Now is the time to get your head, heart and body in gear and plow through any and all obstacles. See you on the other side!

ARIES (MAR. 21 - APR. 20)
It's been a ton of fun but now prepare to hand over the mantle of popularity for a while and use the next weeks to quietly capitalize on what you have accomplished thus far. Proud Rambos should not mistake the glory for the gain: not you and not now. Enjoy the accolades but also demand the compensation. Make it pay off big time and spread the wealth as you grab it.

TAURUS (APR. 21 - MAY 21)
Sun in your sign sends you carefully coded messages that can no longer be ignored. Don't second guess yourself, queer Bull. You gain self confidence and lose that old baggage that you've been schlepping around. (No names please...) Things fall into place. You know exactly what the expectations are and how to maximize your efforts. You have what it takes so take take take.

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)
There is nothing that you can't accomplish while the Sun shines in Taurus. A light is turned on in every dark corner. Every mystery is unraveled (much to your personal delight) and all your secret admirers make their plans known. You have your pick and one will not be enough. Pink Twins are in there element for the next few weeks. Is it animal, vegetable or mineral?

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)
Seek new friendships while Sun sits in Taurus. Even shy pink Crabs manage to come Out of their shells and greet the world now. Good. You have been feeling confined. Spend some time exploring new terrain, new social circles and new organizations. There is something about the roar of the crowd that gets your juices going. Don't drip, unless requested to.

LEO (JULY 24 - AUG. 23)
Feeling a bit under-appreciated in your career? You will be pleased to know that as Sun ambles into Taurus your professional stock rises. 'Bout time! Proud Lions can capture the corporate limelight and get a bit of press for their efforts. Once they hear the news, senior staff finds a very nice way to reward you. But be sure to take it in cash rather than trade.

VIRGO (AUG. 24 - SEPT. 23)
There is nothing tying you down (unless you like it that way). Gay Virgos are itching to travel and explore vast new terrains. Don't put it off. There is someone or something waiting for you on the other side of the world. If money and time are tight find ways of expanding your sphere of influence with cheaper alternatives. Cybersurf if you can't surf in person.

LIBRA (SEPT. 24 - OCT. 23)
Do we smell someone cooking? Gay Libras are hot hot hot while Sun shines in Taurus. You are keen to share the love and may not know when enough is enough. So this is a problem? Probably not but before you singe your best assets, be discerning and slow moving. The choices that you make today will live with you for the rest of the year. Or it will just seem that way.

SCORPIO (OCT. 24 - NOV. 22)
Relationships hit a high note as the Sun shines in Taurus. What is it about that certain someone that encourages you to overlook some glaring faults? While this too shall pass, don't think about tomorrow and just enjoy it for what it is worth now. For those proud Scorps who are on the prowl for a catch, this is a great time to hunt and peck, with the emphasis on the latter.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 23 - DEC. 22)
There is great fun to be had while the Sun lolls in Taurus. Gay Archers should not let the grass grow under their feet and should get Out and enjoy while the good times roll. Before you know it you will find yourself in the center of the action. Think of what you can do. Think of what can be done to you. Next month you will still be coming off that high. Splat.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 23 - JAN. 20)
Plan to spend more time on homebase. You may be inspired to move, improve or totally renovate to make your abode especially comfortable. At the same time Sun in Taurus brings family and other friendly folks to your door in droves. Pink Caps become home entertainers extraordinaire. The more the merrier and I see a very merry bunch. A bunch of what?

AQUARIUS (JAN. 21 - FEB. 19)
If there is something thrilling to be said, you can be sure that Aqueerians will say it while the Sun grazes in Taurus. Your eloquence is in top form. You are bursting with good ideas and the desire to implement them. So why sit around waiting for others to take the cue? Resolve to get your name Out there among the movers and shakers. March forth even though it is April.

PISCES (FEB. 20 - MAR. 20)
They say that all that glitters is not gold but what do they know? Gold and the delightful items it can buy are pretty enticing when the Sun enters acquisitive Taurus. You are ready to do anything and everything to get as much loot as you can. Spoil yourself and a few select others now, Guppie. You will need to cash in a few favors next month when your loot is all looted.

Conn. Governor Signs Civil Union Law

HARTFORD - Connecticut on Wednesday, April 20, became the second state to offer civil unions to Gay couples — and the first to do so without being forced by the courts, the PlanetOut Network reported.

About an hour after the state Senate sent her the legislation, Republican Gov. M. Jodi Rell signed into law a bill that will afford same-sex couples in Connecticut many of the rights and privileges of married couples.

"The vote we cast today will reverberate around the country, and it will send a wave of hope to many people, to thousands of people across the country," said Sen. Andrew McDonald, who is Gay.

The state House passed the measure last week but amended it to define marriage under Connecticut law as between one man and one woman. The Senate approved the amended bill Wednesday, April 20, 26-8.

Vermont is the only other state to allow civil unions (California offers similar domestic partnerships). Massachusetts allows Gay couples to marry. But those changes came about after same-sex couples won court battles.

Last summer, seven same-sex couples sued in Connecticut after being denied marriage licenses; the case has not been resolved.

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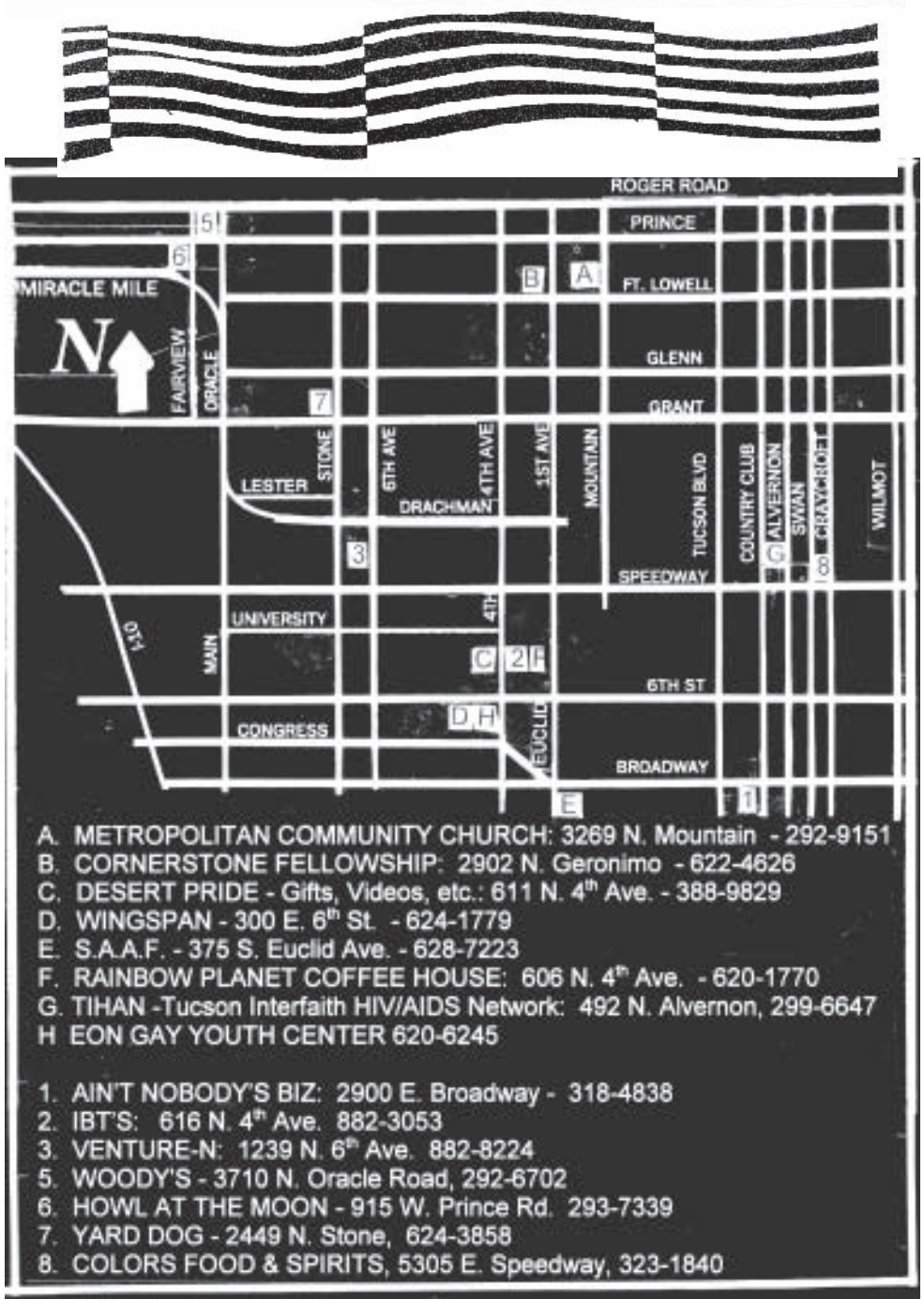

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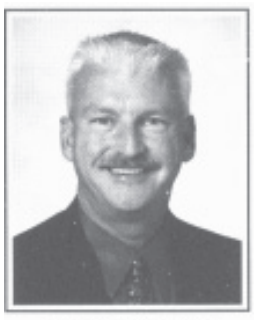
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NOTES FROM THE FOR-REAL SIDE

by Lee Thorn

La Frontera

The Arizona Daily Star of April 10 ran an article about child-on-child sexual offenses at facilities run by La Frontera, one of Tucson's biggest providers of behavior health services.

The article mentions seven alleged offenses which were investigated by police between 1997 and the present. It says that the allegations have contributed to the agency's rethinking its practice of grouping emotionally troubled students in the same classroom and quotes La Frontera's CEO as saying, "We're wondering if that's the best way to do it — are they helping each other or are they learning things from one another and making it worse?"

After reading the details of the seven cases reported by the Star, one wonders why the CEO is focused on questions about the classroom. Nobody alleged that sexual assaults were occurring in classrooms. The locations of the misbehaviors were bathrooms and school buses.

La Frontera has been around for decades and the same CEO who's having a problem figuring out where his sexual assaults are happening is quoted by the Star as saying that his outfit is "the only place" that some of this community's emotionally disturbed children "can go."

If you're not crazy about monopolies, having only one organization to go to for essential services in a community the size of Tucson might be troubling, even if it CEO wasn't clueless. La Frontera is getting a lot of your tax money from contracts with public agencies like Child Protective Services. It would be nice to know if the organization is effectively a local monopoly and even nicer to know how good it is at what it purports to do.

In 2001 the Arizona Department of Health Services found, according to the Star, that La Frontera staff members were allowing "children privacy while in the bathroom." Hey! Wait a minute! Isn't that where most of the sexual assaults happened?

But the Star goes on to say that the same Department "has not found any egregious violations of policies to ensure the health, safety and welfare of clients...since 1996."

Apparently the Department doesn't believe that being sexually assaulted when you're a little kid trying to go to the bathroom endangers your mental health.

While the police and the Department of Health Services have made themselves fairly irrelevant to the problem, lawsuits claiming sexual assault get filed against La Frontera and, in at least one case, a quiet settlement was reached.

Who is minding the store? Answer: nobody. Who should be minding the store? Answer: somebody!

La Frontera is this big old, possibly monopolistic, agency sucking in all this public money and permitting, according to the Department of Health Services, regular opportunities for children to be sexually assaulted by other children. Where's the outrage? Is it no big deal because these are just "throwaway" children?

And if we have seven incidents of alleged assaults that were investigated by the police, what would the internal records of La Frontera indicate about the frequency and the seriousness of the problem? Why isn't anybody asking for those records?

Without singling any public official out for abuse, might I gently suggest that it should be somebody's job to make sure that the citizens of Pima County are getting their tax money's worth when that tax money is spent at La Frontera? Some government agency, or panel, or committee — with or without a blue ribbon — should be empowered to investigate La Frontera via interviews, examinations of documents, physical inspection of buildings and any other means it deems useful with the purpose of resolving one simple question: Why can't this great big organization figure out how to keep little kids from sexually assaulting other little kids?

What about using bathroom monitors? According to the Star, "four staff to six children" was the ratio in the classrooms involved in recent lawsuits against La Frontera. Suppose one of the six children had to go to the bathroom. If one of the staff took that child to the bathroom, it would make the classroom ratio three staff to five children.

While in the bathroom, the staff person could make sure that the child in his charge had no contact with other children, that he went into the toilet stall alone, washed his hands alone, and came back to the classroom without touching other children.

Now here's the part that we've all been waiting for. Let's all scream it out together. "This ain't rocket science!"

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

In Their Own Words

Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kansas announced that it will picket the National Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the GLBT Civil Rights Movement on Sunday, May 1 at Independence Hall in Philadelphia. In a press release dated April 16, the group challenged openly Gay Congressman Barney Frank to a debate with Pastor Rev. Fred Phelps.

The Westboro release reads in part, "God hates America, now a vile homofascist regime irreversibly cursed of God and doomed."

"I couldn't debate Mr. Phelps because I only speak English, and therefore would find it very difficult to communicate with him," Rep. Frank responded.

Dear Dr. X,

I have a girl question for you. My girlfriend and I sometimes use toys during sex. The problem is, the toys can only go in about four or five inches before it hurts her. She says that it has always been this way for her. We are wondering if there is something wrong or abnormal, and what we can do to make sex better for her.

Thanks, J.D.

Dear J.D.,

I don't get many questions about girl stuff, so I'm very glad you asked, and allowed the response to be printed. I know there are many readers of this column that have questions about more than just Gay guy stuff. Not being overly familiar with this topic, I asked for some assistance with this question from some friends who have their own vaginas, as well as a doctor in the field.

The first thing you should know is that the average length of the vagina (measured from the vaginal opening to the area beneath the cervix) is between three to five inches. This is very convenient, as the average penis length is only about five inches. Although vaginal muscles can be stretched to accommodate larger diameter items, there is no way to increase the depth. Sadly, like the length of a penis, you cannot safely alter what you are born with. You must work with what you have.

As to there being something wrong or abnormal, the only way to find that out is to get an exam from a doctor. While there is the possibility of an injury or infection that would cause such pain, I doubt that is the case, since you say in your letter that this has always been her situation. If you have reason to believe that something may indeed be wrong, such as pain without penetration or symptoms that may indicate an infection, have a gynecological exam done. Other wise, know that this is just her natural size.

One thing you did not address in your email though, is your gender. This seems important to me to determine a possible cause of your girlfriends discomfort and pain. Here's why: if you are a male, and you are able to penetrate her vagina deeper with your penis than with the toys, there may be another issue than her size or an infection. If this is the case, your girlfriend may, for whatever reason, be too tense or uncomfortable with the idea of the insertion of these objects into her vagina. (Of course, this could be the issue no matter what your sex, but it is more difficult to tell without a penis to measure it by-no pun intended.) Either way, talk with her about this and see what she thinks and how she feels.

Lastly, I want to address what you wrote about making sex better for her. From the sound of your email, it seems like you are putting a lot of importance on deep penetrative sex. I would strongly encourage you to think about this differently. Intensely pleasurable sex can be had without deep penetration. In sex surveys, both men and women report a better sexual experience from penetration by objects that are bigger around than by objects that are longer. The tension and stretching of the muscles seems to be more important to pleasure than the depth.

To go one step further, you can give your partner a great sexual experience without any penetration at all. I believe this is the very reason God created oral sex. And though I have met many people who don't like performing on someone else, I don't think I have ever met someone who did not like having it done to them. It's always a crowd pleaser. Also, don't forget about using body parts other than genitals to enhance sexual experience. There are many areas for sensual touch besides her vagina. As a hint, try the back of her neck, the small of her back, and her toes. If you really want to make sex better for her, ask her what she likes. Her answers may surprise you.

[Have a question? Need a straight answer? 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.]

Microsoft Retreating On GLBT Issues

Continued from Page One

a painful death by a single vote last week in the state Senate, ultimately rested with lawmakers.

But Microsoft could have publicly asserted in Olympia the pro-Gay agenda it so enthusiastically celebrates in its workplace. Doing so could have opened up public attitudes about the need for protection of Gays and Lesbians in our state.

If corporate America leads the way, elected officials — especially those on the fence — might be more inclined to follow a humane line of thinking.

Bill Gates and Microsoft deserve the kudos they get for fighting disease in the Third World and for putting computers in poor urban schools.

The company's timidity on the Gay rights bill was a missed opportunity for a company that doesn't miss many.

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

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NON-BAR CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27
Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. Join Richard & 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 T. Jay and Richard at 881-7919.

THURSDAY, APRIL 28
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. This is a No-host event, so please ask Barista to point you in our direction.

SATURDAY, APRIL 30
Annual Miss Gay Tucson America 2006 Pageant at the Holiday Inn Palo Verde, 4550 S. Palo Verde Rd. For ticket information check their ad in this issue or call (520)904-9090

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.

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SATURDAY, MAY 7
Tucson Prime Timers, Food & Drinks- 5:00 p.m., Woody's, 3710 N. Oracle Rd.

MONDAY, MAY 9
Tucson Prime Timers, Lunch – 12:30 p.m., The Wildcat House, 1800 N. Stone Ave.

SATURDAY, MAY 14
#1-Tucson Prime Timers, Breakfast – 9:00 a.m., The Good Egg, 4775 E. Grant Rd.
#2 -Tucson Prime Timers, Food & Drinks - 5:00 p.m., Woody's, 3710 N. Oracle Rd.

MONDAY, MAY 16
Tucson Prime Timers, Lunch – 12:30 p.m., The Wildcat House, 1800 N. Stone Ave.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 18
Tucson Prime Timers, Luncheon – 1:00 p.m., La Parilla Suiza, 2720 N. Oracle Rd.

SATURDAY, MAY 21
#1 - Tucson Prime Timers, Lunch/ Business Meeting - Noon, Home Town Buffet, 5101 N. Oracle Rd.
#2 - Tucson Prime Timers, Food & Drinks- 5:00 p.m. Woody's, 3710 N. Oracle Rd.

MONDAY, MAY 23
Tucson Prime Timers, Lunch – 12:30 p.m., The Wildcat House, 1800 N. Stone Ave.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25
Tucson Prime Timers, Lunch - 1 p.m., China A, River at Stone Ave.

SATURDAY, MAY 28
Tucson Prime Timers, Food & Drinks – 5 p.m., Woody's, 3710 N. Oracle Rd.

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

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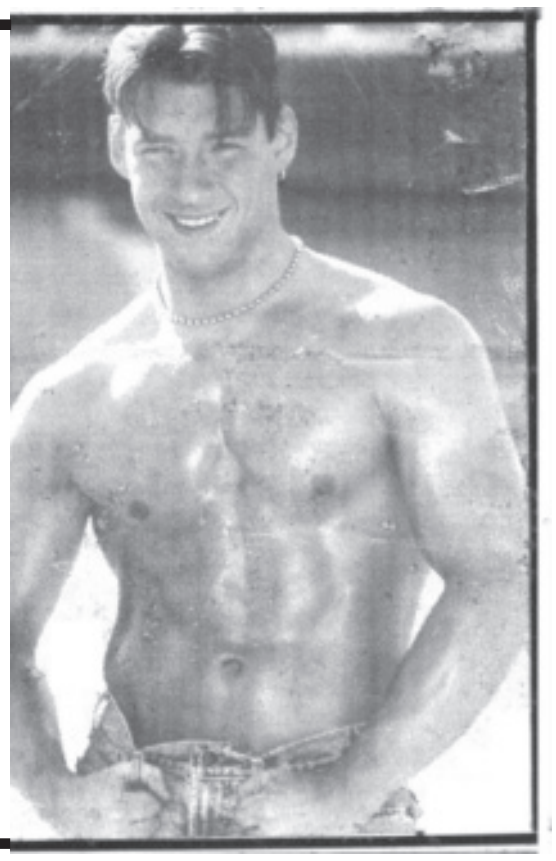

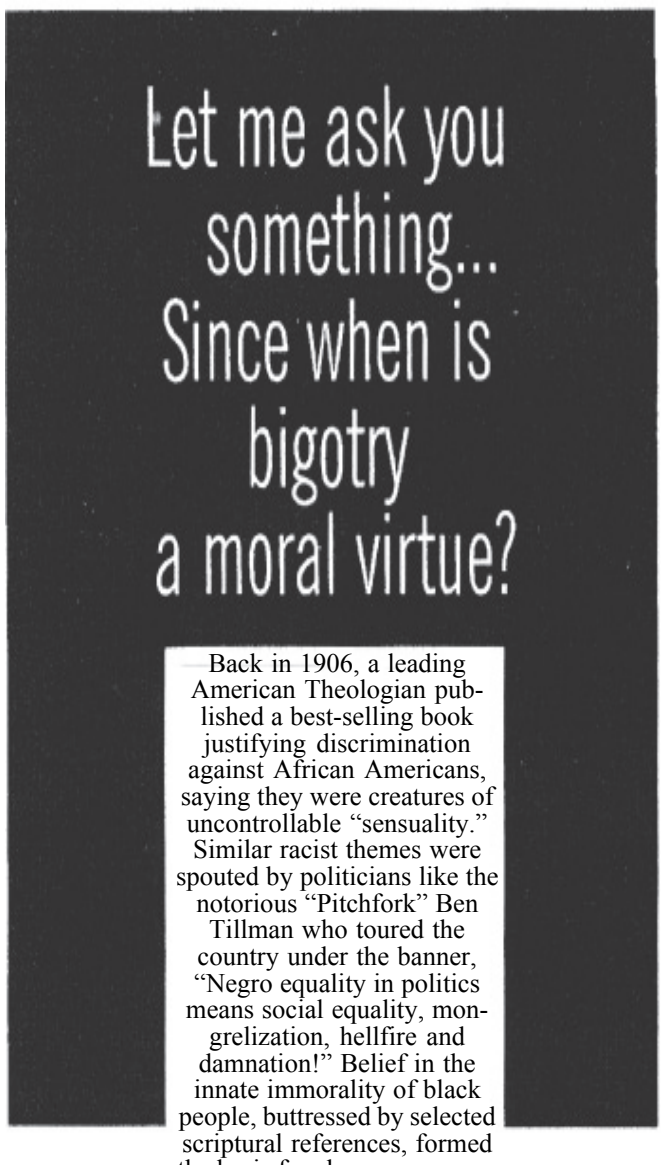

Back in 1906, a leading American Theologian published a best-selling book justifying discrimination against African Americans, saying they were creatures of uncontrollable "sensuality." Similar racist themes were spouted by politicians like the notorious "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman who toured the country under the banner, "Negro equality in politics means social equality, mongrelization, hellfire and damnation!" Belief in the innate immorality of black people, buttressed by selected scriptural references, formed the basis for slavery, segregation and lynchings. Now come the homophobes, spouting the same hate-filled rhetoric about a different minority group. "Homosexual-

Ira Glasser
Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union

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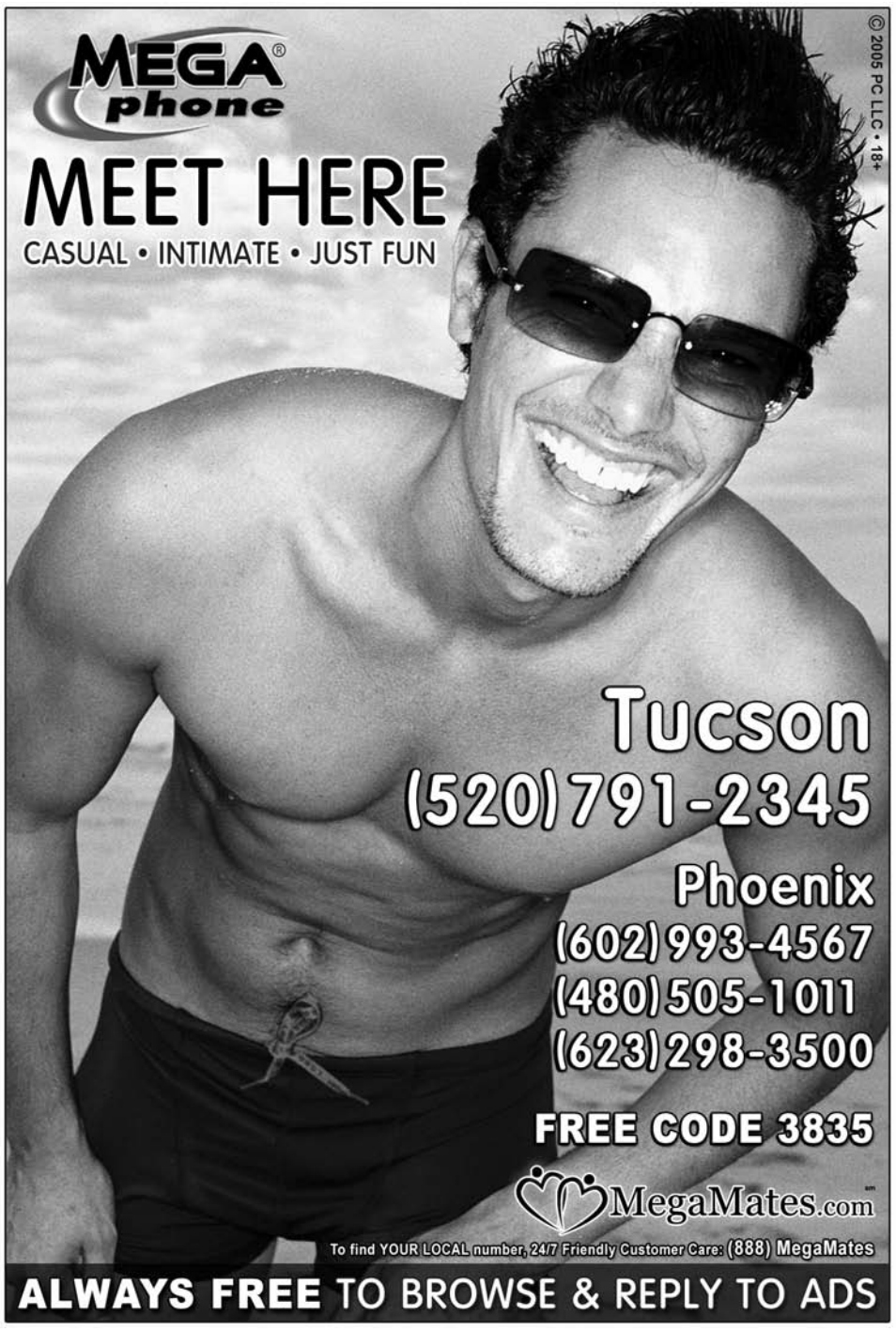

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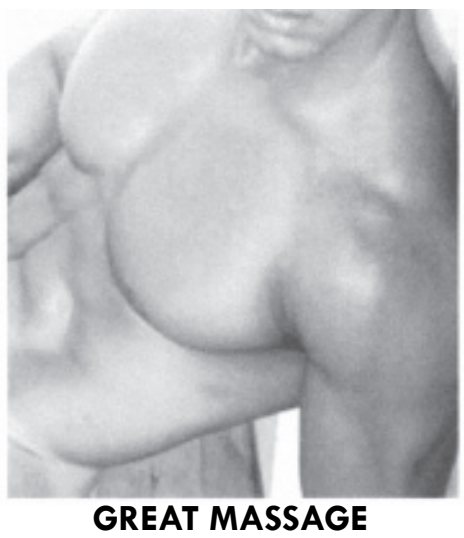

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IBT's -Open Noon. $1.75 Bloodys, Screws or mimosas. til 4pm 4-7:30 Karaoke with Michael D. on the patio 5:30-8 Benefit BBQ for community organizations 7:30-2Am Dance with David Z.All drink specials not available during special events

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. 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 - Closed on Mondays.

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 - best deal in town! Free Texas Hold-'Em Poker Tournaments at 6:00 pm and 9:00 pm. Sign-up begins one hour before playing time. No Cash - Play for Prizes and Points.

IBT's -Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-7pm, Audio Anomoly 9pm-2am with DJ Trinidad, 10pm-2am $1.50 well vodka drinks, 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 10am. Special Happy Hour 10am-2pm. Regular Happy Hour 2-8. Karaoke w/Michael D. 9-1

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

tuesday

COLORS - Open 4-11pm. Happy Hour 4-7 $2.25 well & domestic. Full menu served 4-10pm.1st Tuesday of month "Dinner & Movie" sponsored by GMHP. All other Tuesdays "Dinner & Concert" shown on our 52" projection System.

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 Debbie from 8 - midnight

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-7pm, Tropical Tuesdays $2.50 Tropical drinks and DJ Q playing Retro Music 70's, 80's and 90's 9pm-close, All drink specials not available during special events.

VENTURE-N - Open 8am. Patio 6pm. Free Pool til 4pm.

WOODY'S - Open 10am. Special Happy Hour 10am-2pm. Regular Happy Hour 2-8. Bartender Calls rink specials..

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

wednesday

COLORS - Open 4-11pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm, $2.25 well & domestic. Full menu served 4-10pm. Nightly dinner specials.

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. Country DJ Jake plays 8:30 - close

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-7pm, 9pm "Diva-Licious" show w/ Bunny Fu Fu. HiNrgy dance 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 10am. Special Happy Hour 10am-2pm. Regular Happy Hour 2-8. Free Hot Dog Buffet 5-11pm. Underwear- fetish- leather nite w/Gary and Chris 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 4-11pm. Happy Hour 4-7pm, $2.25 well & domestic. Full menu served 4-10pm. Nightly dinner specials. Karaoke from 9pm with Johnny DJ & Dan..

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 Debbie from 8 to midnight.

IBT's -Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-7pm, Tricked Out Thursday with your Bartenders in their undies and DJ Mike Lopez spinning Top 40 & All request $1.75 Long Islands and $1.50 Cocksucker shots 10pm-2am, 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 10am.Special Happy Hour 10am-2pm. Regular Happy Hour 2-8. 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 4pm-2am. Happy Hour 4-7pm, $2.25 well & domestic. Full menu served 4-11pm. 10pm "Guys & Dolls" Hosted by Lucinda Holliday in a 2 girl cabaret show with a different guest each week. Reservations suggested.

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. DJ Pat plays your favorite country dance songs 8:30 to midnight then a mix of dance & country 'til close. Kitchen open 10 pm - 2 am for late night munchies.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-7pm, Live Jazz on the Patio with Susan 6pm-9pm, Hot Dance with David Z from 9pm-2am, All drink specials not available during special events.

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

WOODY'S - 10am.Special Happy Hour 10am-2pm. Regular Happy Hour 2-8. Martini Party - Well Martini's $2.00 3-4pm. Call Martinis $3 from 3-4pm. Complimentary Shrimp Cocktail 4-8pm. Patio Bar Open 7pm - midnight.

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

saturday

COLORS - Open 4pm-2am. Full menu served 4-11pm. Nightly dinner specials. Reservations suggested. Karaoke 10pm-close with Johnny DJ & Dan.

HOWL AT THE MOON –Open at 11:00 am. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, $2 well, domestic longnecks & pints, $3 sm pitchers, $5 lg pitchers. $3.00 Burger & Fries all day. DJ playing your favorite country songs 8:30 - midnight, then "anything goes" requests until close. Kitchen open 10 pm - 2 am for late night munchies.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-7pm, 8:30pm Show time w/ Ajia Simone or Janee Starr, Circuit Saturday's with DJ Q spinning Hot Club Music. 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 10am. Special Happy Hour 10am-2pm. Regular Happy Hour 2-8. Patio Bar opens 5pm. 5-9pm Steak or Mahi Mahi BBQ with all the trimmings $5, Live Jazz with Arthur Migliazza 6-9pm.

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.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Through MAY 5 - Live Theatre Workshop Theatre presents "The Emperor's New Clothes", an original adaptation by Caarolyn Marbry with original music by Jay Everett.

Playing Sundays only at 1:00 p.m. at 5317 E. Speedway, tickets are $7.00 for adults and $5 for 18 and under.

The treasury has run low in the vast empire of Emperor Beauegard (Cliff Madison), and he hasn;t a stitch to wer to the upcoming Grand Ball. Fortunately, his two Evil Advisors (Sean Marbry & Sara Robison) know a fantastic tailor that can make him a new set of imperial robes out of ... well, nothing. The Emperor's Valet (Bruce Bieski) and Cook (Kristi Lorera) try to stop the two wicked advisors from embarrassing their dimwitted boss because they know it is all a plot to help Duke Wayne (also Cliff Madison) steal the throne.

Find out how this clever musical adaptation of a classic comedy unfolds as these hilarious characters sing and dance around their dunderhearded emperor. The whole theater will be laughing out loud and singing along with this all star cast. For reservations call 327-4242.

BAR CALENDAR Of Upcoming Events

THURSDAY, APRIL 28
VENTURE-N - Treat yourself to Bucky's 'Reubens' from 11 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Then it's Steak Night from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m, $6 steak and sides. All this is followed by the enormously fun event, the "Locker Room Party" from 9:00 p.m. to close. Always steamy

FRIDAY, APRIL 29
COLORS FOOD & SPIRITS- A brand new show from Tucson's own queen of comedy, Lucinda Holliday tonight and every Friday. Lucinda's guest this week is Nikki Knowles.

HOWL AT THE MOON - 7:30 to 8:30 Line dance lessons with Richard. 9 to 10pm AWGA sampling and promotional give-aways. 8:30 to closing, DJ Pat plas country.

IBT'S - 9:00 p.m. a special Pre-Miss Gay Tucson Pageant Show starring Bunny FuFu, Janee Starr, Angela Dodd and Veronica Halliwell.

YARD DOG SALOON - NaZarov Vodka Tasting begins at 8:00 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 30
IBT'S - A new event here and every Saturday - Karaoke on the Patio from 5 to 8 p.m. with beer specials and Steak Kabobs

YARD DOG SALOON - Ray's famous Meatloaf Dinner starts at 7:00 p.m. Don't miss it!

SUNDAY, MAY 1
WOODY'S - 18TH Annual Reno Gannon Jell-O Wrestling Extravaganza and Auction to be held at here, 3710 N. Oracle Road. The bar opens at 1:00 p.m. You must have a ticket to enter. Advance tickets available now. Call SAAF, 628-7223. The bar will be open after Jell-O wrestling at 7:00 p.m. for regular business. 9:00 p.m. Karaoke with Michael D.

THURSDAY, MAY 5
VENTURE-N - First day of a three-day celebration for Cinco de Mayo. Today there will be a taco bar manned by the Venture's own Taco Belle Charles from six to eight p.m. At 7:00 p.m. there will be a piñata break too!!!

WOODY'S - Cinco de Mayo Party here with $2.50 Coronas or Cuervo Margaritas all day. Hot Latin Music Videos 8pm until closing.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Through APRIL 30 - "Macbeth" presented by Arizona Theatre Company''s tribute to Shakespeare. "Macbeth" is playing at various stimes at the Temple of Music and Art, 330 SA. Scott Ave. Tickets are $26-$44, are available at the Box Office. Call 622-2823.

Through MAY 1 - "The Rocky Horror Show" presented by the University of Arizona's Repertory Theatre. Performances are at UA's Laboratory Theatsre at the couthewest corner of Park Avenue and Speedway. Performances are at 7:30 p.m.. Tickets are $29 general, $27 senior and $21 for students. For dates call 621-1162.

Through MAY 1 - "The Glass Menagerie", Tennessee Willilams' play of a family's struggle during the Depression days. This Live Theatre Production plays at 5317 E. Speedway. Performances are at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays with Sunday matinees at 3:00 p.m. Tickets are $13 - $15. Call 327-4242 for reservations.

APRIL 30 - Fairy Tail Productions presents the annual Miss Gay Tucson America Pageant beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Palo Verde, 4550 S. Palo Verde Rd. Janee Starr the reigning Miss Gay Tucson America 2005 will headline an all-star group of performers including : Bunny FuFu (Miss Gay Tucson 2001/Miss Gay Arizona 2004); Lucinda Holliday (Miss Gay Tucson 1994/Miss Gay Arizona 1996); and Tori Steele (Miss Gay Tucson 2000/Miss Gay Arizona 2006). Tickets: General (in advance) $12; General (at the door) $15; VIP (in advance) $20 For more information call (520)904-9090)

APRIL 30 - Female stand-up comic Paula Poundstone on her 2005 "The Big Picture" tour at the Leo Rich Theater in the Tucson Convention Center, 8:00 p.m. Tickets $29.00. Paula continues to be one of the country's funniest stand-up comics working today. She is a veteran of "The Tonight Show", David Letterman and has starred in her own award-winning HBO special. For more information call 520-791-4101.

NOTICES - COMMUNITY - NOTICES

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

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

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

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 info.

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 call 529-2269, 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 msg. TucsonSources@aol.com

GAY COWBOY CLUB - Nationwide Personal Ads. Admirers welcome too. Send stamp for information: Mavericks, Box 9543, Santa Fe, NM 87504.

TNTucsonMEN, a nudist Gay men's club. We are a social and recreational group. By the way the TN means Totally Naked! Drop us an e-mail at TNTucsonMEN@nethere,com

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

BEARS OF THE OLD PUEBLO — a social club for bears and bigger, more robust men (and of course, those who prefer their company). For more info, Call the Bears 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.

LAMBDA CAR CLUB, a social organization of Gays and Lesbians who share interest, information and fellowship involving all cars and trucks. New Southern Arizona Region now in Tucson. Call the Hotline at 888-5541

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.

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.

DESERT VOICES, Tucson's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Straight Chorus, has been singing songs of pride, hope and laughter for 16 seasons. Check out our website at www.desertvoices.org, or call (520)791-9662 for information about upcoming concerts or how to join.

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

AA Meeting with HIV/AIDS focus, Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m., Wingspan Annex, 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 Jerry at 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 info 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. Web: 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 info.

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 118 or older). 7:00 p.m. at Desert Dominion, 3843 E. 37th Street, Tucson, AZ. (Map at www.desertdominion,org) For those who are kinky or just curious. No fee, contributions are appreciated, but not required
.
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, pretensions? TNTucsonMEN@nethere.com P.O. Box 12176, Tucson 85792 or call 514-9894

DESERT PRIDE - Your store for Gay Pride and more!
611 N. Fourth Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85705 (Across from IBT's, Next to Magpies. Come See Us!) **(520)388-9829**

Calif. Marriage Measure Moves To Legislature

SACRAMENTO - Legislation to allow same-sex marriage in California heads to committee this in its first airing of the legislative session, 365Gay.com reported.

The Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Protection Act will go before the Assembly Judiciary Committee on April 26.

A similar bill had cleared one of the two committees it needed to reach the floor in the last session, but its author, Assemblymember Mark Leno (D-San Francisco) pulled it when it appeared there was not enough support to ensure passage.

The new bill is identical to last year's effort but Leno now has the support of Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez and other key Democrats. Earlier this month the California Democratic Party passed a resolution supporting same-sex marriage.

"Support has grown steadily over the past year," Leno told the Associated Press.

"We're breaking new ground, but I'm very confident. We have a very good opportunity to move this off the floor of the Assembly, to the Senate and then to the governor's desk."

But, conservative Republicans are vowing a fight.

Their chief argument revolves around Proposition 22. The voter initiative approved five years ago is understood by conservatives to ban same-sex marriage in California.

Leno and other Democrats say that Prop 22 only prevents the state from recognizing Gay marriages performed elsewhere.

"My bill specifically states nothing in my bill will affect (Proposition 22)," Leno said.

So far, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has sent mixed messages about whether he would sign the legislation if it were passed.

In a January meeting with the editorial board of the San Francisco Chronicle Schwarzenegger suggested that this may not be the best time to push Gay marriage, saying that a legislative push to fully recognize marriage rights for Gays might backfire.

"Eventually in a few years from now, you can readdress it again and see what the people of California think,'' he told the paper. "You cannot force-feed those kind of things.''

Last year in a Tonight Show appearance Schwarzenegger said Gay marriage would be "fine with me" if it were enshrined in state law or ruled legal by the courts.

The issue is slowly heading toward the California Supreme Court. Last month a San San Francisco judge ruled that state laws preventing Gay marriage are illegal.

UK: Gay Iranian Denied Asylum Kills Self

LONDON - A Gay man who was fleeing persecution in Iran has committed suicide after fearing he would be forcibly removed from the United Kingdom, according to an inquest held on Tuesday, April 19, the PlanetOut Network reported.

Hussein Nasseri was found dead in his car in Eastbourne last June after shooting himself between the eyes with an air rifle. A coroner ruled Tuesday that nobody else was involved in the killing.

He had been refused asylum for the second time by the Home Office, despite his telling the asylum body that he would be killed if he returned to his home country.

Homosexuality is illegal in Iran and is punishable by death.

According to press reports, Nasseri had already been imprisoned in the city of Tehran because of his sexuality, but had managed to escape. He had hoped that Britain would help him find a safer home.

His friend Nader Ashkani, also from Iran, told the BBC that Nasseri had been upset at the Home Office ruling and feared deportation.

"I saw him two weeks before he died," he said. "He was very upset. He said he wanted to kill himself. He said he had bought a gun to kill himself."

This is the second high-profile case of a Gay asylum-seeker committing suicide.

Last year Israfil Shiri, who was also Iranian, set himself on fire last year in protest at being deported by the Home Office. He reportedly feared if he returned he would be subjected to public execution because of his sexuality.

Gay activist group Outrage, which has campaigned for more recognition for Gay people seeking asylum, said the two incidents are examples of why the Home Office needs to update its stance on Gay asylum-seekers.

"It is absolutely appalling that the Home Office has no specific guidelines to deal with LGBT issues in asylum," campaigner Brett Lock told Gay.com U.K. on Wednesday. "The notion that Gay people can simply return to their home countries and 'be discreet' — as is often requested — is nothing short of homophobic."

"No British citizen could be expected to live under the same conditions," he added.

Rainbow Build Meeting May 10

TUCSON - Please mark your calendars for the next Rainbow Build Coalition meeting at Wingspan, 300 East Sixth Street, May 10, 6 p.m.

Hear an update on the progress of the build, see pictures, be encouraged by the creative ideas in the coalition for fund-raisers, and more!

For more information, call (520) 624-1779.

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