Observing Tucson And The Greater Arizona Community

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Canada Edges Right; Martin Quits As Liberal Leader

Liberal Paul Martin

Conservative Stephen Harper

OTTAWA - Canadians ended more than a dozen years of Liberal rule on Monday, Jan. 23, electing a minority Conservative government, reported 365Gay.com. For most voters it was an issue of new blood rather than a ringing endorsement of conservatism. Paul Martin's Liberals had been beset with a series of scandals and was seen as tired. "Voters decided the Liberals needed a time out," said one television commentator.

At the same time voters weren't in favor of giving Stephen Harper's Conservatives a majority. The Tories won 124 seats and the Liberals 103. The results were much closer than polls were showing only a few days ago. The small left of center New Democratic Party was the big winner of the night - doubling their seats to 29 and putting the party in a position to be the power broker in the new Parliament.

NDP leader Jack Layton said he would make an issue by issue decision on whether or not to support the government. If the party supports the Tories legislation will pass. If the party sides with the Liberals they could defeat the government. "The people of Canada asked Mr. Harper to form a new government and the people of Canada have asked New Democrats to balance that government," Layton told supporters in Toronto. For Layton the election was a double victory. His wife, Toronto city councilor Olivia Chow, also was elected to Parliament.

The Conservative dependence on the NDP will likely mean no revisiting same-sex marriage legislation. Harper said on the first day of the campaign he would attempt to repeal the marriage equality law. With the New Democrats, the separatist Bloc Quebecois, and the Liberals all opposed to changing the law there is little chance same-sex marriage in Canada will end anytime soon.

While the Conservatives saw some of the party's most anti-supporters elected it also saw a wider number of moderate Tories win support. For Harper the big job will be in balancing the two factions. In a lengthy speech to supporters Harper outlined his agenda for the new Parliament. Absent was any mention of same-sex marriage.

Longtime Gay New Democrat candidate Svend Robinson lost his bid for a return to politics in British Columbia. Robinson, 53, resigned from politics in 2004 after admitting that he had shoplifted a diamond ring that he said was sparked by the stress of a hectic work schedule and a mild bipolar disorder for which he was taking medication and seeing a therapist. In Nova Scotia, Scott Brison the Gay man who quit the Conservatives in the last Parliament and joined the Liberals was re-elected. Openly Gay Bloc MP Real Menard also was re-elected

The election also marked the end of Paul Martin's political career. Martin told supporters following the election that he was stepping down as party leader. "My dedication to the Liberal family will never wane,'' Martin said in his Quebec riding of LaSalle-Emard. "But I will not take our party into another election.'' One of the highlights of his political career was pushing through marriage same-sex marriage equality last year.

Arizona Cities Seeking To Lure Tourists

PHOENIX - While conservatives work to add a Gay marriage ban to the state Constitution, many Arizona cities are rolling out the welcome mat to LGBT tourists, marketing the state as a cosmopolitan, tolerant place to vacation, the Arizona Republic reported.

Tempe is in the midst of a sophisticated campaign to lure Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender travelers. The Tempe Convention & Visitors Bureau launched a Web portal for GLBT visitors on its Web site, and the city plans to usher travel writers from Gay publications around town in the spring.

It's not the only Valley municipality eyeing a slice of the estimated $65 billion Gay travel market. Later this month, Phoenix leaders will discuss ways to strengthen the city's Gay tourism plan. A glossy, 89-page visitors and relocation guide, published by the Phoenix Gay chamber of commerce, is flying off the shelves. And officials in Tucson, Sedona, Bisbee and Jerome say they informally angle for those visitors.

Millions of dollars could be at stake since a crowd of 5,000 attended the Arizona Gay Rodeo Association's annual competition at Rawhide. Likely thanks to a boost from the public fascination with the movie Brokeback Mountain, this year's rodeo drew Access Hollywood, the BBC, French reporters and The Daily Show. Many contestants and spectators said they are more likely to travel to cities that strive to be Gay-friendly.

"I come from Fort Lauderdale, and I like places like that, where it's OK if I have a boyfriend, to hold his hand," said Alan Stark, 43. Making out in public, Stark added, would be in poor taste for anyone, Gay or straight. "I want to be treated like anyone else." By the end of his four-day trip, which included a mini shopping spree for a black felt hat, Wranglers and boots at Sheplers Western store, Stark said he would spend $2,000. "My money spends like anyone else's," said Albuquerque resident Andee Henderson,38, who attended the rodeo and often travels to the Valley to visit her godson. She usually times the trips so she can go to Diamondbacks or Mercury games. "You are tapping into a market that tends to have more money," she said, adding that she would probably spend $1,000.

But not everyone wants the hospitality industry courting the demographic. Cities shouldn't destroy the Grand Canyon State's family-friendly reputation to wrangle a few extra bucks, according to critics like Leo Godzich, president of the National Association of Marriage Enhancement.

Gay tourism, though, is gaining supporters. Phoenix is letting money slip through its fingers, said City Councilman Tom Simplot, who is Gay. "I wish the ballot initiative did not exist, but that doesn't mean we should back off tourism," said Simplot, who is hosting a Jan. 25 gathering on the issue. "If you look at it from a tax perspective . . . we are leaving dollars on the table."

Phoenix will never be San Francisco. But it has the warm weather advantage of seasoned Gay-friendly resort cities such as Palm Springs, Calif., and Key West, Fla., and offers sophisticated dining, shopping and outdoor pursuits. It doesn't hurt that the state already hosts major Gay events and that Phoenix is home to dozens of Gay bars.

Other major U.S. cities also are serious about Gay travelers, Simplot and Gay business owners say. Even Phoenix's rival, snowy Philadelphia, has launched an advertising campaign targeting Gay tourists. Because politics are a carefully avoided cloud in the sunny world of tourism, many hospitality experts are extremely reluctant to talk about the proposed proposition.

Enticing Gay tourists is complicated. It's not as simple as slapping a rainbow logo on the city's Web site. Cities that really want Gay business have to have buy-in from city leaders, law enforcement and the business community, experts say. Tempe began its campaign three years ago with careful research, said Stephanie Nowack, president and chief executive of the Tempe Convention & Visitors Bureau. It later joined industry groups, sent city employees to conferences, bought ads in Gay publications and set up a GLBT portal on tempecvb.com. Tempe also hopes to cash in on its cool factor. It's a college town, has citywide Wi-Fi and a high-profile Gay former mayor: Neil Giuliano, who now heads a national Gay advocacy group, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. The city is seeing results. A 2004 Gay-themed business conference helped sell out Tempe's Wyndham Buttes Resort.

Phoenix sends representatives to Gay conferences and hosts travel writers from Gay publications, said Doug MacKenzie, spokesman for the Phoenix Convention & Visitors Bureau. That effort has bloomed into glowing write-ups in the Gay press, he said. There have been stumbles, though, says Patrick Kelley, a Greater Phoenix Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce board member. A Tempe hotel was courting a Transgender group (those who cross gender lines) that needed conference space, he said, while officials from another Valley city, which also was looking for Gay tourists, had to ask the Gay chamber what "Transgender" meant.

UPDATE

Medical Forum Jan. 29

TUCSON - Do you think your doctor is open and knowledgeable of LGBT people's needs, open and not knowledgeable of LGBT people's needs, closed and judgmental and disinterested - believing that sexual orientation and gender identity are irrelevant to one's health?

Coming out to your Doctor could be an essential step in receiving the accurate health care that you need and deserve and on Jan. 26, 6 - 8 p.m. at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th St., join Wingspan's Serina Preciado, Bilingual Health Educator and Ed Ware, Anti-Violence Project Advocate / Educator, and Dr. Dexter, our ally and local physician for this important forum and explore, in a safe and supportive environment, about the pros and cons and process of coming out to your doctor.

For more information, call Serina Preciado, (520) 624-1779, ext. 25, E-mail: preciado@wingspan.org.

Priest Who Signed Gay Statement Resigns

MESA - A Catholic priest who signed a statement affirming Gay rights put together by clergy from several Christian denominations has informed parishioners at a Mesa church that he is resigning as pastor, 365Gay.com reported.

The Rev. Chris Carpenter, a leader in the Phoenix Diocese's ministry to Gay and Lesbian Catholics, already had a three-month sabbatical planned for this year. "But I feel the need for a more extended period of time off to try to resolve some health and other concerns," he told parishioners. He said he suffers from asthma related to the area's bad air but didn't elaborate about the other concerns. He said he plans to remain a priest.

Carpenter was one of nine priests who signed the Phoenix Declaration and is the sixth signer to leave his job. Phoenix Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted ordered priests to remove their names from the declaration in April 2004. Carpenter agreed to withdraw his a month later. A retired priest has been the only one to keep his name on the declaration. Carpenter said "no scandal or shame" forced his decision to resign. "There have been no allegations or accusations of wrongdoing of any kind," he said. "I am not in a romantic relationship nor I am leaving to pursue one."

Olmsted said there is sadness when a priest needs to step away from active ministry for a while. "It is my hope and prayer that at some point in the future, Father Chris will return to ministry as a priest," the bishop said. Carpenter was the pastor at Mesa's Christ the King Church since July 2000. He is also known as "Father Flick," for his regular film reviews in The Catholic Sun, the diocese newspaper.

Lucie Blue Tremblay Concert Feb. 5

TUCSON - Lucie Blue Tremblay, internationally-touring singer/songwriter, brings her music to Tucson on Sunday, Feb. 5, 6:30 P.M., at the Water of Life MCC, 3269 N. Mountain Ave.

This concert is a fundraiser for The Breast Exam Project (www.thebreastexamproject.org), an endeavor she began while helping her sister through chemotherapy.

Tickets for the event are $15 in advance and $20 at the door. They are available at Antigone Books, 411 N. 4th Ave. and Water of Life MCC, 3269 N. Mountain Ave. For more information, call Julie Nicolay of Outloud Productions at (520) 780-3605.

Forum On 'Brokeback Mountain' Jan. 30

TUCSON - "If you can't fix it, Jack, you gotta stand it."

Join Wingspan on Monday, January 30, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. for a facilitated community discussion on Brokeback Mountain, winner of four Golden Globes.

Brokeback Mountain is based on the E. Annie Proulx story about a forbidden and secretive relationship between two cowboys and their lives over the years.

One critic has written,"This slow and stoic movie, hailed as a Gay Western, feels neither Gay nor especially Western: it is a study of love under siege."

A Gay man who saw the movie said, "Every LGBT person has a Brokeback Mountain."

Newsweek observed, "No American film before has portrayed love between two men as something this pure and sacred. As such, it has the potential to change the national conversation and to challenge people's ideas about the value and validity of same-sex relationships."

What do you think?

Come share your thoughts and feelings about Brokeback Mountain on Monday, Jan. 30, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th St. For more information call (520) 624-1779, E-mail: cathy@wingspan.org.

Annual PFLAG Couple's Celebration Feb. 6

TUCSON - PFLAG Annual Couple's Celebration and support meeting, Monday, Feb. 6, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., offices of Residence Life in the El Portal Building on the University of Arizona campus on the northeast corner of 6th Street and Highland. Join PFLAG to honor and celebrate Tucson's LGBT couples as they share their lives with us.

PFLAG provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity. PFLAG meets monthly as a support group. In these groups every individual is at a different stage in the journey to understand the nature of sexual orientation.

For more information, call (520) 360-3795, E-mail: pflagtuc@pflagtucson.org, online at pflagtucson.org/index.htm.

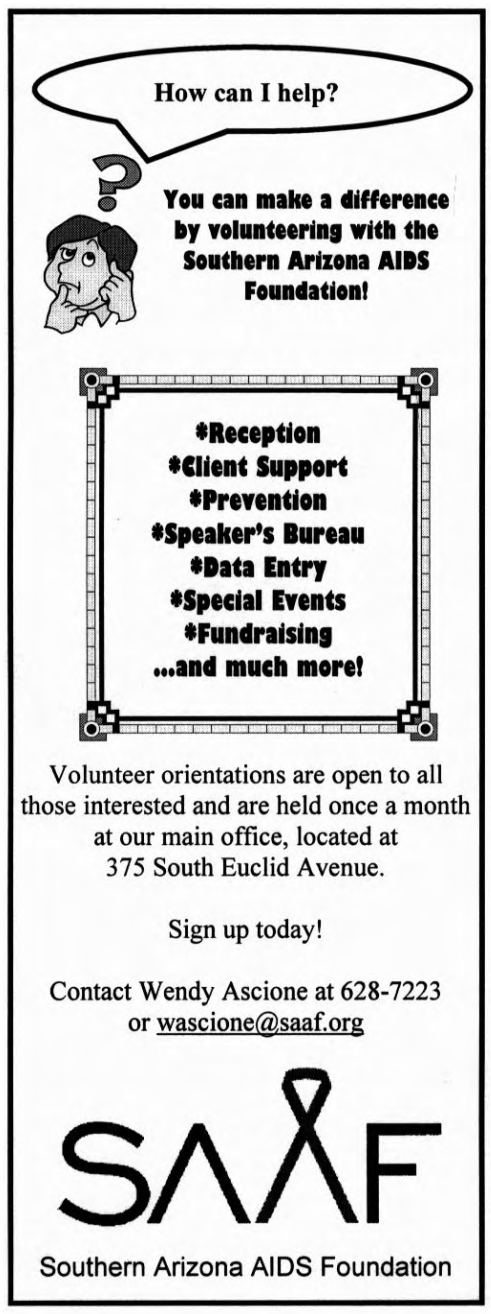
'A Passionate Affair' Fun Raiser Feb. 4

TUCSON - Desert Voices, Tucson's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Straight chorus, will present their annual Silent Auction fundraiser, "A Passionate Affair", just in time for Valentine's Day gift giving on Saturday, February 4, 6:30 p.m, at the Historic Y, 300 E. University. Guests will be treated to wine, champagne and beer from an open bar along with complimentary hors d'oeuvres and sweets from local catering companies Feast, Blue House, Bentley's and Delectables.

The chorus is raffling off an ipod nano on the night of the event as well. Tickets are available for $5 each, or 5 tickets for $20 and can be purchased by calling the Desert Voices office (520) 791-9662, or contacting any member of the chorus. The winning ticket will be drawn at the event, but winner need not be present to win.

The auction tables will be loaded with marvelous one of a kind items including framed cartoons by David Fitzsimmons, artwork by John Casado and Marilyn Renshaw, tickets to local theatre productions coupled with restaurant gift certificates from Hacienda del Sol, Terra Cotta, Elle, and Blue Willow, cigar packages from Crescent Tobacco, Phoenix and Bisbee getaway trips, beautiful jewelry items, gay and lesbian DVD packages and as always, an assortment of freshly baked home-made pies.

Tickets are $20 and can be purchased in advance by calling the Desert Voices office at (520)791-9662 or at Antigone Books, 411 N 4th Ave in Tucson, or at the door if available. More information is available on the Desert Voices website at desertvoices.org. Make your plans now to get in the mood for love by taking part in "A Passionate Affair," presented by Desert Voices. Tickets are limited, so don't delay!



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Informing the Community
The Observer

Ominous Sign: The President's Growing Disregard For The Law

President Bush's latest tool for disrespecting the Constitution, Congress and the American people, used more than a hundred times so far, is the presidential signing statement. That statement is normally a few words that a president says when he signs a bill passed by Congress. In the past it was an occasion for the president to congratulate legislators who had been particularly active in passing the bill and to praise the new legislation generously, even if he himself had been unsympathetic to it.

There is no mention of the statement in the Constitution, nor does it have any role in how laws are passed and put into effect. Yet Mr. Bush has taken the presidential signing statement as another means of asserting his will over and above the country's laws, whatever they may say. In effect, he is trying to establish that whatever he says when he signs the bill overrides whatever the legislation itself may stipulate. Historians and presidential scholars, among others, find it alarming.

This is nothing new for Mr. Bush. He began disregarding the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 in 2002 when he authorized wiretapping of foreigners and Americans' telephone calls and e-mails by the National Security Agency without first obtaining a warrant from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court. The practice continues today. His new use of the presidential signing statement turned up egregiously when after signing the bill sponsored by Sen. John McCain to ban the torture of prisoners in American custody, Mr. Bush issued a statement Dec. 30 that in effect said he would enforce the new law only as he saw fit.

We repeat - there is nothing in the Constitution that says he can do that. To the degree that the American system functions, Congress passes laws that put into effect the will of the people.

Mr. Bush's subversion of the process is particularly ironic since the laws passed by Congress that he chooses not to carry out are the product of a legislature controlled by his own political party. Unfortunately, that is also a prime reason that Congress is not in open revolt over the president's disregard for its work.

Everyone loses when a president chooses to carry out only the laws that he wants to, as he wants to. Fundamental governance of the United States through the rule of law is sabotaged by this practice. We'll see what happens when Mr. Bush's ability to do so is challenged by a court - assuming there will still be independent courts after he succeeds in stocking them with acquiescent appointees.

Mr. Bush's presidential signing statements are a practice designed to paint the Constitution, Congress and the American people into a shrinking corner. If Congress can't pass a law and expect the president to respect it, where exactly is this nation left?

[This was an editorial from the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, of Jan. 20, from which this is reprinted.]

GLAAD Eye On The Media

MSNBC Airs Juvenile Homophobia on Imus in the Morning - On the Wednesday, Jan. 18 edition of "Imus in the Morning" on MSNBC, host Don Imus and guest Chris Matthews (host of MSNBC's "Hardball with Chris Matthews" and NBC News' "The Chris Matthews Show") used an exchange about "Brokeback Mountain" to engage in a sophomoric display of homophobia.

After Matthews quoted anti-Gay radio personality Michael Savage as having called the film "Bareback Mounting," Imus added that one of his show's staff members had titled the film "Fudgepack Mountain." A video clip and complete transcript of Imus and Matthews' exchange are available at www.glaad.org.

That Michael Savage - whose 2003 MSNBC show was cancelled after he referred to a caller as a "sodomite" and told him to "Get AIDS and die, you pig" would make such a comment about "Brokeback Mountain" is hardly surprising. But when Chris Matthews, an NBC News host and commentator, repeats it on MSNBC and Imus then tries to one-up him with a "fudgepacker" slur, it's the kind of juvenile display of homophobia that raises serious questions not only about Imus and Matthews' on-air behavior, but also about why MSNBC and NBC News would find such slurs acceptable for broadcast.

After GLAAD contacted MSNBC about the Jan. 18 broadcast, MSNBC Vice President for Communications Jeremy Gaines issued a statement saying: "'Imus' is produced by WFAN radio and is simulcast by MSNBC. The views expressed on the program are not those of MSNBC. Having said that, it was unfortunate that these remarks were telecast on MSNBC. We sincerely apologize to anyone who was offended by these remarks."

MSNBC's statement, however, avoids the larger questions: Why would MSNBC place its logo and the NBC Peacock logo on a show where these kinds of slurs are deemed acceptable? And even if MSNBC could credibly claim that Imus' views - as expressed on his daily, three-hour MSNBC show - aren't those of the network, it's ludicrous to suggest that Chris Matthews, one of the network's anchors and most visible commentators, should not be held accountable to the network's standards and practices, particularly for comments he makes on MSNBC.

Write now! Please write to Don Imus and Chris Matthews and let them know what you think about their exchange on Jan. 18. Also, please write to MSNBC. Ask whether anti-Gay slurs like "fudgepacker" are acceptable for broadcast under the standards and practices of NBC News - and, if not, why MSNBC would place its logo and the NBC Peacock on a show where these kinds of slurs are deemed acceptable?

Hardball - hardball@msnbc.com , MSNBC - viewerservices@msnbc.com, MSNBC TV, One MSNBC Plaza, Secaucus, N.J. 07094, Imus in the Morning - Imus@msnbc.com.

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UPDATE

Gay Bashing Case In Sante Fe Dismissed Against Two Defendants

SANTA FE - A District Court judge dismissed the charges Friday, Jan. 20, against the only two defendants who haven't accepted plea bargains for their roles in a gay-bashing incident almost a year ago, reported the Santa Fe New Mexican newspaper.

However, a prosecutor asked for a preliminary hearing next month to re-present the evidence against Jonathan Valdez, 23, and Paul Montoya, 20. This time, instead of a grand jury, District Judge Michael Vigil will decide if probable cause exists to charge the two men in connection with the February attack.

On Friday (Jan. 20), Vigil dismissed charges of aggravated battery, conspiracy, contributing to the delinquency of a minor and criminal damage to property against Montoya and Valdez because prosecutors did not notify them they were targets 10 days before the grand jury that indicted them met, as legally required. Vigil questioned why prosecutors mailed them the notice March 1 – instead of serving them personally – when the grand jury was set to meet March 10. He pointed out that the defendants couldn't have received the notice, at best, for another two to three days considering the problems with mail delivery in Santa Fe that have recently come to light. "I'm still getting my Christmas cards," Vigil said.

The judge said that if Montoya or Valdez was accused of being a principle participant in the beatings of James Maestas, 21, and Joshua Stockham, 23, case law says their indictment wouldn't necessarily have had to have been dismissed. That's because a principle participant's presence before the grand jury probably wouldn't have changed the outcome, he said. But because, by all accounts, Montoya and Valdez were accessories to the beatings, if they'd been given proper notice and testified to the grand jury, with their lawyers present, the jurors might not have returned an indictment against them, Vigil said.

Both Montoya and Valdez declined to comment after Vigil's ruling. Shari Weinstein, the prosecutor in charge of the case, also refused comment. Dan Marlowe, Valdez's attorney, said he was happy with the dismissal because prosecutors had skirted the law. "They didn't follow the rule," he said. Marlowe said he was looking forward to the preliminary hearing and doesn't believe the state's evidence will meet the low threshold of probable cause required at the hearing.

Sign-Making Party Feb. 2

TUCSON - On Thursday, Feb. 2, 6 - 8 p.m., please drop by Wingspan for a good old-fashioned sign making party.

Please bring your markers, crayons, construction paper, glue, poster board, snacks, and catchy phrases, such as "Fight For Love and Justice and the American Way," and "I (heart) Equality!", poster board and markers will be available.

The signs will be displayed at the 2006 Rally for Love and Justice on February 12 from 2 to 4pm at El Presidio Park. For more information call Sam at Wingspan, (520) 624-1779 or E-mail: sholdren@wingspan.org.

EDITOR:

In response to Jim Dondson retiring from the bar industry after 45 years. I speak on behalf of most of the Gay community in Tucson. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

It's unbelievable that your "philosophy" as you call it will continue to the new owners. How sad that is considering you still discriminate against some of the Gay community. Other bars in Tucson play an important role in serving our vast range of identities, such as SAAF and TIHAN. But when is the VENTURE-N ever going to step up to the plate to better serve the community than just be a Gay bar?

I think we all know the question. Thanks for the memories and you too shall be on our "86'd" list.

Proud to be diversified!

Robert Burgher via E-mail

Maryland Court: State Cannot Ban Same-Sex Marriage

BALTIMORE - A judge ruled Friday (Jan. 20) that Maryland's law against same-sex marriage "cannot withstand constitutional challenge," reported 365Gay.com. The suit was filed two years ago by the ACLU of Maryland on behalf of nine same-sex couples and a man whose partner recently passed away who would like to be able to marry one day.

The suit alleged that county clerks are violating the state constitution's guarantees of equality by not granting marriage licenses to same-sex couples. Judge M. Brooke Murdock agreed. "After much study and serious reflection, this court holds that Maryland's statutory prohibition against same-sex marriage cannot withstand constitutional challenge," she wrote in her decision.

"When tradition is the guise under which prejudice or animosity hides, it is not a legitimate state interest," the judgment said. "The Court is not unaware of the dramatic impact of its ruling, but it must not shy away from deciding significant legal issues when fairly presented to it for judicial determination. As others assessing the constitutionality of preventing same-sex marriage note, justifying the continued application of a classification through its past application is 'circular reasoning, not analysis,' and that it is not persuasive."

"This is such an exciting moment," said Lisa Polyak, who with her partner, Gita Deane, is one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit filed by the ACLU. "Our participation in this lawsuit has always been about family protections for our children. Tonight, we will rest a little easier knowing that those protections are within reach."

The ruling won praise from the state's largest LGBT rights group. "This is truly an historic moment for the State of Maryland," said Dan Furmansky, Executive Director of Equality Maryland. "Same-sex couples across the state just came a giant step closer to the day when they won't have to worry that life partners will be ignored in discussions about emergency medical care, or about the hurt and confusion their children feel when forced to explain why their parents can't marry."

A number of state legislators also approved of Judge Murdock's ruling. "To prevent Gay and Lesbian couples who want to be in a committed legal relationship from doing so is incompatible with our nation's basic premise that people should have the right to freedom and the pursuit of happiness," said Delegate Doyle Niemann (D-Prince George's County). "We should encourage committed relationships, not discourage them. We should let people live in peace and freedom, not force them into the dark corners of a closet. The fabric of our society does not get weaker if we pursue tolerance and understanding, it gets stronger."

Nevertheless, Murdock's decision is expected to be appealed to Maryland's highest court, the Court of Appeals. Republican Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. proposed some giving unmarried couples limited medical decision-making rights for their partners. Last year he vetoed a more expansive piece of legislation dealing with Gay and heterosexual unmarried couples, but promised he would support a narrower bill.

The new proposal is being soundly criticized by LGBT groups. "A bridal registry at Target would offer same-sex couples more benefits than this watered-down, election year ploy by Governor Ehrlich," said National Stonewall Democrats Executive Director Eric Stern.

Meanwhile, a proposal to amend the state constitution to prevent the so-called Defense of Marriage Act will be put to the General Assembly this session. Democrats, who have a majority in the House of Delegates changed the procedural rules of the House to make it more difficult to attach controversial constitutional amendments to existing legislation. "Maryland Democrats realize that the only institutions that anti-marriage amendments seek to protect are the political careers of the politicians who push them," said Stern.

New Military Publication Signals Shifting Attitude Toward Gays & Lesbians

WASHINGTON, D.C. - A new four-volume series on the cultural and psychological dimensions of American military life includes, for the first time, a chapter on the service of openly Gay troops. The chapter describes social and institutional changes needed to lift the U.S. armed forces' ban on openly Gay members, 365Gay.com reported.

Experts say the inclusion of the topic in a publication endorsed by major military scholars reflects a shifted landscape on the question of military service by Gays. Because a majority of junior enlisted service members now say that Gays and Lesbians should serve openly, according to an Annenberg poll, and because the vast majority of service members now say that they feel personally comfortable around Gays and Lesbians, integration is seen as a much less difficult option than would have been the case 12 years ago, when President Clinton tried to lift the Gay ban.

Described by scholars as a "path-breaking analysis" of the military experience and a "comprehensive review" of factors influencing military performance, the compilation addresses the emotional impact of combat, methods of coping with war, the role of spirituality in military life, issues affecting family life, cultural diversity within the armed forces, and more. Its authors include military officers, academic experts, health care professionals, and others who have taken part in primary research about the personal and institutional qualities of military life.

"The decision of the editors and publisher to include analysis on how to modify military culture to accommodate this policy change is an important milestone," said Nathaniel Frank, senior research fellow at the Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military. "It reflects an evolving understanding that the current exclusionary policy on Gay troops is harmful and outdated and that change is inevitable."

The chapter authors explain that compliance with new regulations–in this case nondiscrimination toward Gays–will be most stable and enduring if strong leaders enforce new expectations by creating high costs for noncompliance. The initial focus of change in this case, they explain, should be the behavior, rather than attitudes, of heterosexuals; but over time, it is reasonable to expect that personnel will conform to new policies because they believe their conduct reflects their identity as members of the institution.

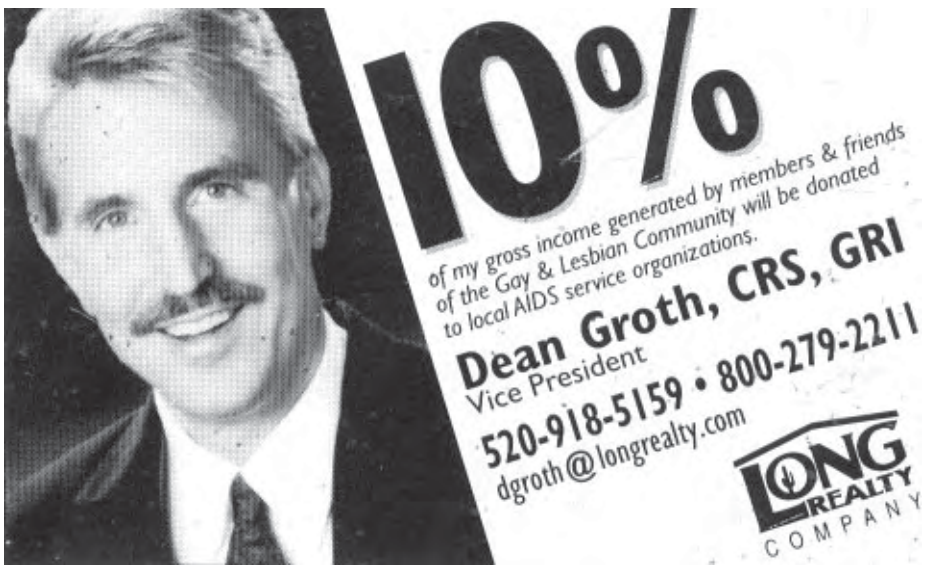

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Exhibit dates:
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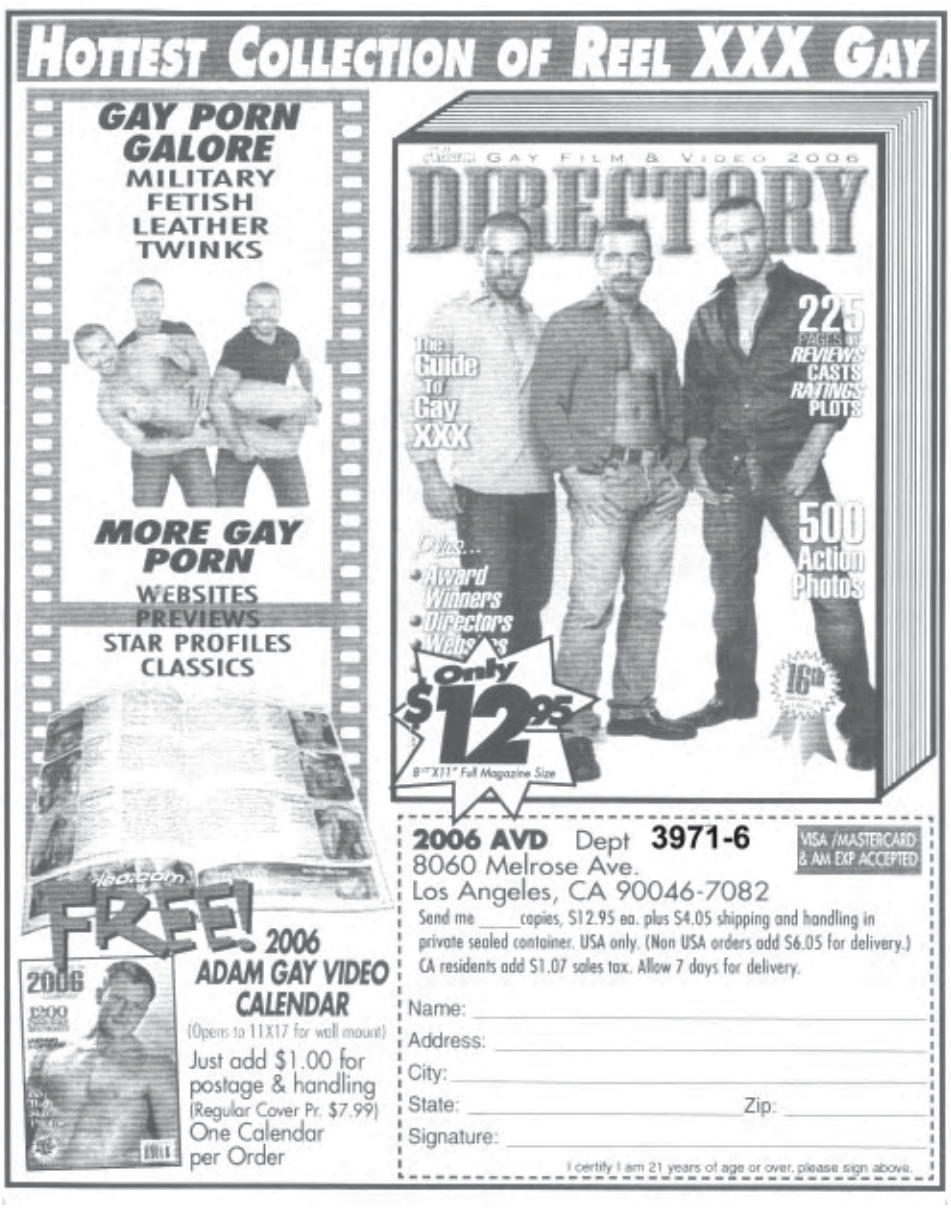
Saturday, February 25th, 1 - 7 pm



Black Clergy, LGBT Leaders Hold Summit

ATLANT - LGBT leaders and black clerics meet on LGBT equality, a cause that remains controversial in the black church, the PlanetOut Network reported.

LGBT activists have often compared the struggle for Gay rights to the civil rights struggle that crystallized under the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., a notion that many black religious leaders reject. But organizers of this weekend's meeting of African-American clergy and Gay leaders hope it will lead to an increasing number of black churches embracing LGBT people and their struggles for equality.

Led by the National Black Justice Coalition, the two-day event at the First Iconium Baptist Church in Atlanta features speeches from the Rev. Al Sharpton and Bishop Yvette Flunder of San Francisco's City of Refuge United Church of Christ. The conference's 150 attendees included 40 African-American clergy members from around the country who will engage in "high-level discussion about developing specific strategies that will challenge homophobic attitudes in our nation's black religious institutions," according to Dr. Sylvia Rhue, the National Black Justice Coalition's director of religious affairs and constituency development. The gathering will include films and discussion on acceptance and frank talk about marriage equality and how homophobia in churches can lead to risky behavior among closeted black men.

NBJC said the meeting is a landmark union of Gays and African-American clergy, some of whom fit both categories. "This is the first time an LGBT organization has called for a national discussion on challenging homophobia in churches," Rhue told the PlanetOut Network. She said the conference, if successful, will lead to a black church social justice community action network that will "support ongoing state, local and national actions to energize a pro-LGBT, black, faith-based movement."

It's no coincidence that the conference fell on the week celebrating King's birth. But until recently there has been very little effort to merge the struggles of black equality and Gay equality.

Rhue, who worked with King in the 1960s, points to pervasive rhetoric in predominately black churches that promotes homophobia. "Many leaders say, 'You can see my blackness, but you people chose to be Gay,' " she said. "But I say, 'You can't see my heart or my bone marrow.' Being Gay or Lesbian is that intrinsic."

Rev. Al Sharpton

King's widow, Coretta Scott King, has vocally supported Gay rights and has repeatedly equated homophobia with racism, anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination. A large percentage of black clergy members in the United States balk at such a comparison. Though anti-Gay attitudes are pervasive among U.S. religious conservatives of all races, African-American pastors have been particularly hostile to homosexuality. Coalitions of black preachers from around the country – even leaders in Gay-friendly San Francisco – have condemned same-sex marriage, for example, saying it would further erode the institution of marriage and the values in the African-American community.

The National Black Justice Coalition is not the only organization trying to change those entrenched attitudes. Jeff Lutes, the new executive director of Soulforce, applauded the conference leaders and expressed hope that it would further his organization's efforts to end discrimination of all groups.

"I think Dr. King would be proud of this conference," Lutes told the PlanetOut Network. "It is crucial for education on the link between assault on civil rights against the black community and the similar assaults on the LGBT community. Our movements are different, but share common goals. We want to mobilize all kinds of people to take justice to the streets and call on others to stop injustice led by the religious right."

Sharpton Accuses Bush Of Fueling Homophobia Among Blacks

ATLANTA - The Rev. Al Sharpton told a conference of African American Gay leaders Friday that the Bush administration is fostering homophobia in the Black community for his own political gain, reported 365Gay.com.

The New York Democrat said that Bush focused on same-sex marriage and traditional fears of Gays among Blacks to get re-elected in 2004when he should have been addressing education, health care and jobs. Speaking in Atlanta at a national conference called by the National Black Justice Coalition, Sharpton said that Gay African Americans must engage in dialogue with Black church leaders.

About 150 people from across the country are attending the three day conference aimed at combating homophobia within the Black community. Sharpton began his speech by saying he grew up in a family that had a Gay member. He did not identify that member, but he said that he saw firsthand the bigotry that Gay people confront. Rev. Sharpton recently announced an initiative to vigorously challenge homophobia in the Black Church. The conference also was told that it is imperative that religious leaders realize and recognize the contributions of the LGBT community and the impact marriage discrimination will have on African American children and families.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, black same-sex couples earn roughly $2,000 to $9,000 less in median annual household income than black

Continued on Page Nine

POLITICS 2005

by Mark R. Kerr

Eighty-Two

The forty-seventh Arizona Legislature, second regular session, has been called into action, running for two weeks (as of press time), resulting in more than 1,100 proposals being introduced for consideration, with the Republican leadership of both chambers (Arizona House and Senate), confidently proclaiming that this session will end Friday, Mar. 31 (the 82nd day), with their legislative "loose ends" all tied up and the ninety will be back home and snug in their Legislative "beds" by April Fool's Day.

Whom are they fooling, since they can't come to a consensus with Governor Janet Napolitano on the pending federal court case ruling on teaching English in public schools, resulting in potential, multimillion dollar daily fines for the taxpayer's to foot the bill if not resolved, let alone agreeing on a budget for state government and that the sessions have gone more than 130 days on average recently? So on with the fun and games from the gang of ninety at 1700 W. Washington, also known as "dysfunction junction!"

Being that it is an election year and all ninety seats in both chambers are up for consideration, a total of 1,117 bills, memorials, concurrent resolutions, joint resolutions and concurrent memorials have been submitted by state legislators, as of press time, with the potential of more being introduced before the legislative deadlines (Monday, Jan. 30 for the Arizona Senate and Monday, Feb. 6 for the Arizona House).

From the ridiculous to the nonsensical, proposals dealing with subjects ranging from a "shoot to kill" law similar to one on the books in Florida to voyeurism to ending public funding of Viagra prescriptions for people on the state's indigent health care rolls to reigning in those judicial activists, also known as Arizona's judges, are being read and assigned to legislative committees for consideration while sensible measures still wait to see the "legislative light of day."

HB 2672 - sentencing; misdemeanor offenses involving hate. This measure would expand Arizona's hate crimes law to cover misdemeanor offenses. Adopted in 1997, Arizona's hate crimes law covers only felonies not misdemeanor offenses.

In 2000, an off-duty Tucson firefighter was convicted of assaulting an openly Gay, Hispanic man outside a restaurant. Prosecutors tried to invoke the state law but the judge ruled that it was a misdemeanor assault case, for which the firefighter received a "slap on the wrist." HB 2672 has twenty-five sponsors and cosponsors but hasn't been first read as of press time.

HB 2422 - family leave insurance. This proposal would create some state-funded insurance benefit's program for people on family or medical leave. In the legislation, LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) Arizonans would be eligible for family leave benefits to care for a newborn or adopted or foster child of the individual or the spouse or the domestic partner, or care for a family member - including a domestic partner - who has a serious health condition.

House Democratic Leader, state Rep. Phil Lopes of Tucson, as well as state Rep. Tom Prezelski, D-Tucson and state Rep. Steve Gallardo, D-Phoenix are the sponsors and cosponsors. HB 2422 has been first read and assigned to two committees, the House Human Services Committee and the House Appropriations (B) Committee respectively. This is a legislative maneuver to quash bills the Speaker opposes.

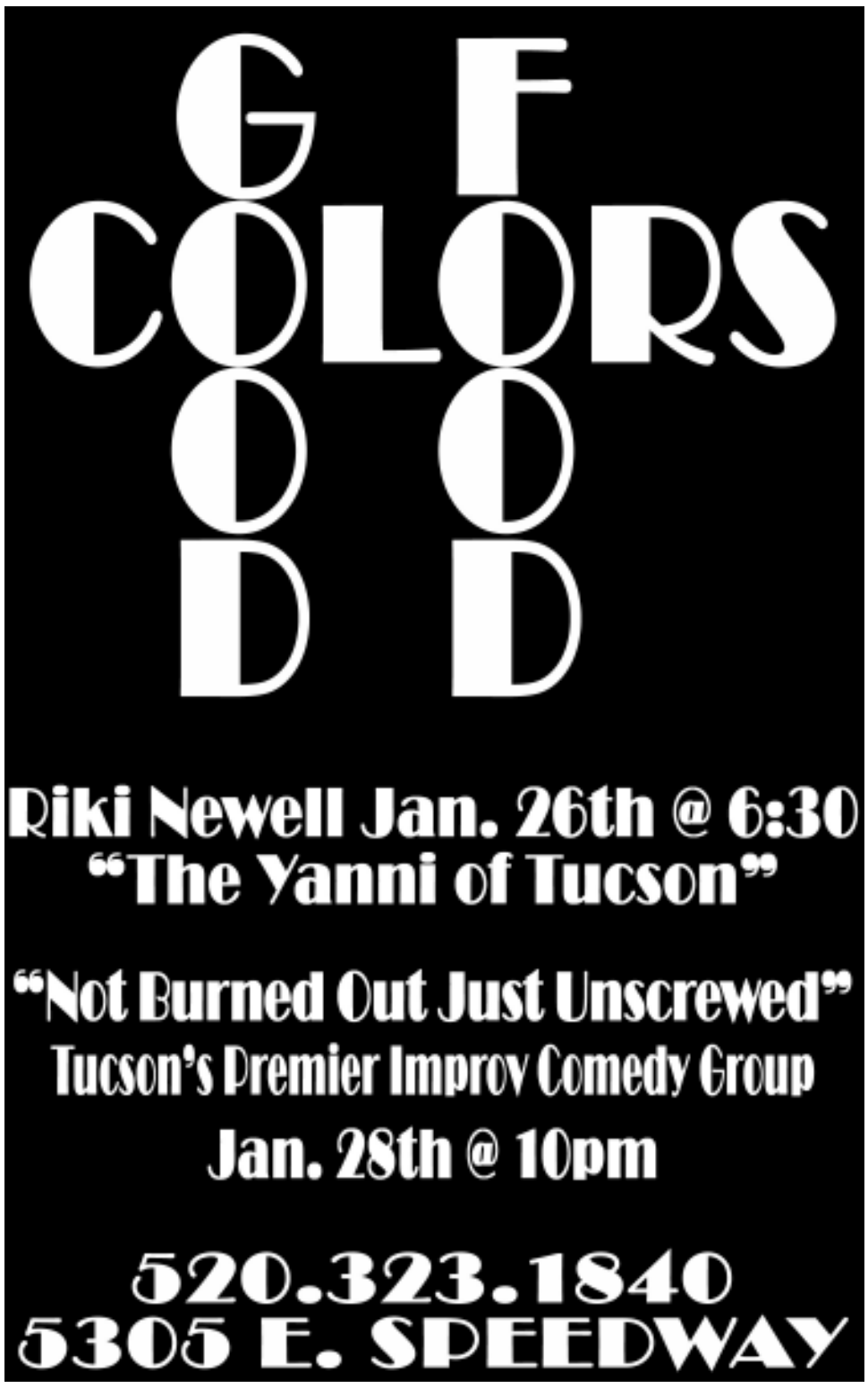
HM (House Memorial) 2003 - Gays in military; policy rescission, and HCM (House Concurrent Memorial) 2005 - policy rescission Gays in the military. Both bills are a call from the Arizona House of Representatives urging the President and members of the United States Congress to end the discriminatory "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy in the nation's armed forces. HM 2003 has nine sponsors and cosponsors and HCM 2005 has ten, and as of press time, neither has been first read and assigned to a legislative committee.

From the sensible to the nonsensical, there is HCM 2002 - opposing federal hate crimes legislation. Sponsored by and cosponsored by seven, radical right-wing, homophobic Republican legislators, and puts the Arizona House on record in opposition to the proposed federal hate crimes bill and asks " . . . the Congress of the United States take immediate action to defeat current hate crimes legislation."

HCM 2002 doesn't have any legal impact but its passage would perpetuate a new scare tactic of the extremist movement: any advancement of LGBT equality would result in "an unparalleled impediment to free speech." Remember the LGBT community is the new terrorist group, causing the downfall of the country!

Surprisingly, no memorial, joint, concurrent or otherwise has been introduced on the federal Marriage Protection Amendment, supporting this measure which would add an amendment to the U.S. Constitution barring same-sex marriage, civil unions and domestic partnerships but with the deadline still a week away, don't be surprised this won't be introduced.

So to take action on the above-mentioned proposals, call your state Senator and Representative, toll-free, (800) 352-8404. If you want to send E-mail or perhaps, don't know who your representatives are, go online to eqfed.org/ahrf/home.html, the Arizona Human Rights Fund Advocacy Center, for which you can send messages on these measures in support and to oppose HCM 2002, as well as finding out who represents you by just entering your zip-code and press enter. One stop political activism!



Fresh FROM THE FARM

NOTES FROM THE FOR-REAL SIDE

Abramoff

by Lee Thorn

The network news anchors are having trouble reading the phrase "Abramoff scandal" with a straight face. The so-called scandal consists of lobbyists buying congressmen, a practice as unremarkable as night following day. The only new thing about this scandal is that the media aren't even pretending to take it seriously. TV reporters are smiling and smirking about "congressmen tripping over each other" in their mad rush to get to the microphones and announce their proposals for ethical reforms.

In past scandals of this sort, even very recent ones, the reporters felt obliged to suppress their mirth. This time they're gleefully pointing out the loopholes in reform proposals as soon as those proposals are put forth. The reporters aren't even waiting for the analysts and pundits to ridicule reform plans. One of them said that the new schemes had loopholes big enough to fly a corporate jet through. Another said that there's no effective mechanism for enforcing current congressional ethics rules and the reform efforts don't even attempt to create one.

Popular news media have concluded that they can no longer pretend to take the concept of Congress reforming itself in ways that would actually prevent it from enriching itself seriously. Good riddance to that embarrassing pretense. But the truth has been well established for ages. I think it was Will Rogers who said that we had the "best Congress that money could buy." Some other famous wit whose name escapes me said, "An honest politician is one who, once he's been bought, stays bought."

Throughout our history reformers have dreamed of ways to keep congressmen from being bought. They've never come up with any that the Congress has been willing to enact. But what would happen if they did? What if, all of a sudden, you could substantially eliminate corruption from the Congress? It might lead to a very interesting form of government, possibly a much better form of government, but it would not be the American government that we've known for the last 200 years.

And before we all start crying in our beverage of choice, we might consider that this essentially corrupt branch has been a part of what most people would consider a spectacularly successful government. America, as nations go, has had a pretty good run. If it fell apart tomorrow, knock wood, its history would still contain a lot to admire, as well as a lot not to.

Wishing for clean government might be like wishing for absolute justice. We know that most of us would be in trouble if the latter were ever to obtain. We can only guess about the former. I just wish that more of the groups I admire – groups working for human rights, women's rights, gay rights, racial and economic justice – would stop thinking that the inherent righteousness of their causes entitles them to be oblivious to congressional reality. To put it bluntly, if the bad guys succeed in their evil schemes by bribing congressmen, why don't the good guys to the same? Is it because the bad guys have more money?

Perhaps they do. But if the good guys got off their high horse they might be able to buy some congressmen with an argument like the following: "Okay, maybe we can't match the bad guys dollar for dollar, but you ought to support our position because (1) it's the right thing to do, (2) we'll turn out the vote for you in your next election campaign, and (3) here's a very respectably bribe to boot, perhaps not as big as you could get from the bad guys but very respectable nonetheless."

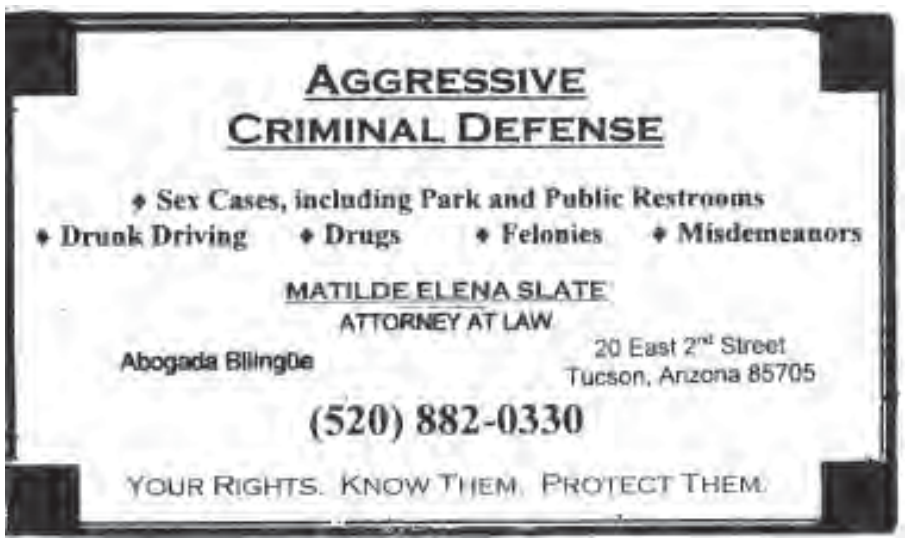
Meanwhile, back on the hill, the Democrats are trying to use the Abramoff scandal as the frosting on their "culture of corruption" cake. It's hard to believe that they're really going to rely on anything that silly for their midterm election theme, but at this point it looks like they might be fixin' to ride that pony right off the cliff. If anyone really wanted to get serious about delousing Congress, a big "if" indeed, he'd propose a term limitation – namely one term. It would be much tougher to buy citizen legislators who had real lives to get back to, and a Congress of one-termers would pump an enormous dose of democracy into our democracy. But again, that ain't the system that got us here.

[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.]

Sharpton Accuses Bush

Continued from Page Six

married opposite-sex couples. Last November many Blacks across the country supported President Bush's re-election over concerns Democrats were too favorable to LGBT issues. Black church leaders also were instrumental in the advancement of amendments in several states to ban same-sex marriage. The growing disharmony between Black clergy and Gays reached a climax in October when Gay African American leader Keith Boykin was prevented from speaking at the Millions More March on the National Mall, despite an invitation from march organizer Louis Farrakhan.



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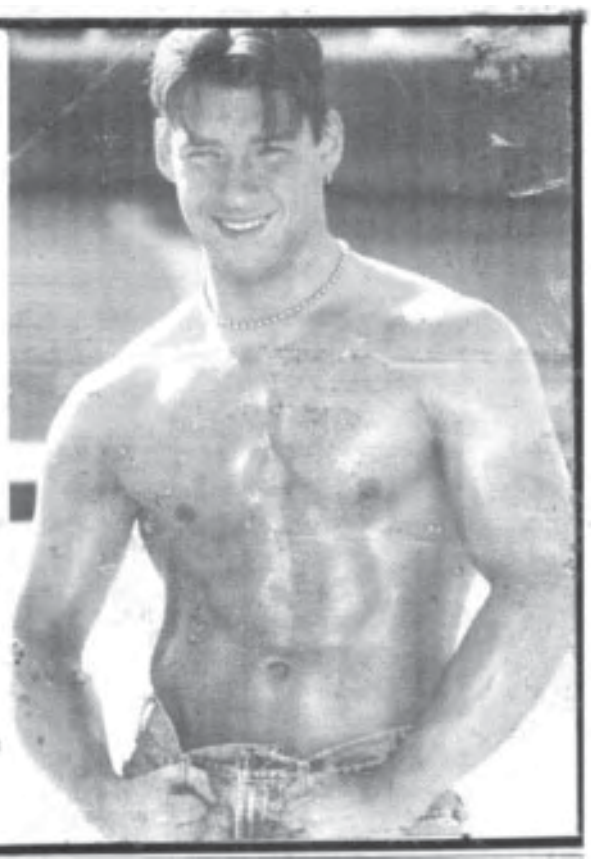

The Real Reason 'Welcome To The Neighborhood' Was Axed

AUSTIN - A year ago, Stephen Wright and his partner, John Wright, embarked on a sociology experiment that only a reality show producer could concoct: theirs was one of seven families competing to persuade the residents of a cul-de-sac here to award them a red-brick McMansion purchased on their behalf by the ABC television network, reported the New York Times.

Stephen Wright, John Wright and Son Eli

The unscripted series, "Welcome to the Neighborhood," was heavily promoted and scheduled to appear in a summer time slot usually occupied by "Desperate Housewives." Stephen Wright, 51, who was already living in a nice house a few miles away with his partner and adopted son, said he participated primarily for one reason: to show tens of millions of prime-time viewers that a real Gay family might, over the course of six episodes, charm a neighborhood whose residents overwhelmingly identified themselves as white, Christian and Republican.

As it turned out, the Wrights did win - beating families cast, at least partly, for being African-American, Hispanic, Korean, tattooed or even Wiccan - but outside of a few hundred neighbors (who attended private screenings last summer) and a handful of journalists, almost no one has been able to see them do so.

Ten days before the first episode was to be shown, ABC executives canceled "Welcome to the Neighborhood," saying that they were concerned that viewers who might have been appalled at some early statements made in the show - including homophobic barbs - might not hang in for the sixth episode, when several of those same neighbors pronounced themselves newly open-minded about Gays and other groups.

ABC acted amid protests by the National Fair Housing Alliance, which had expressed concern about a competition in which race, religion and sexual orientation were discussed as factors in the awarding of a house. But two producers of the show, speaking publicly about the cancellation for the first time, say the network was confident it had the legal standing to give away a house as a game-show prize. One, Bill Kennedy, a co-executive producer who helped develop the series with his son, Eric, suggested an alternative explanation. He said that the protests might have been most significant as a diversion that allowed the Walt Disney Company, ABC's owner, to pre-empt a show that could have interfered with a much bigger enterprise: the courting of evangelical Christian audiences for "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe." Disney hoped that the film, widely viewed as a parable of the Resurrection, would be the first in a profitable movie franchise.

In the months and weeks before "Welcome to the Neighborhood" was to have its premiere, as Disney sought to build church support for "Narnia," four religious groups lifted longtime boycotts of the company that had been largely prompted by Disney's tolerance of periodic gatherings by Gay tourists at its theme parks. Representatives for two of those groups now say that broadcasting "Neighborhood" could have complicated their support for "Narnia." One, the Southern Baptist Convention, with more than 16 million members, lifted the last of the boycotts against Disney on June 22, a week before ABC announced it was pulling the series.

When asked to respond to Mr. Kennedy's contention about "Narnia," Kevin Brockman, an ABC spokesman, said, "That's so ludicrous, it doesn't even merit a response." But Mr. Kennedy said he found ABC's stated reasons for canceling the series unconvincing. Although he acknowledged that he had "no smoking gun" to prove the link between "Narnia" and the fate of "Welcome to the Neighborhood," "I don't believe in coincidences," he said.

"Narnia," a joint venture with Walden Media, has gone on to earn almost $600 million since its release last month, on an investment of more than $150 million. "Neighborhood," by contrast, cost an estimated $10 million.

Now, nearly a year after production on "Neighborhood" concluded - and four months after the Wrights moved into the house - the couple, their new neighbors, Mr. Kennedy and another of the show's producers say they remain bewildered by the abrupt turn in the show's fortunes, including the statement by the network, which owns the rights to the series, that it has no plans either to broadcast it or allow it to be sold to another outlet.

The producers say that it is worth noting that a show that exists mainly to dispel people's tendencies to prejudge strangers was itself a victim of prejudgments. They also note that in a universe of failed reality-show relationships, this experiment has actually succeeded, yet only out of public view.

Since September, when the Wrights moved into their four-bedroom home in the Circle C Ranch development in southwest Austin, they have had standing Friday-night dinners with one neighborhood family (the Stewarts) and Sunday-night dinners with another (the Bellamys), whose twin teenage daughters are now their son's regular baby sitters.

Meanwhile, the neighbor who was the Wrights' earliest on-camera antagonist - Jim Stewart, 53, who is heard in an early episode saying, "I would not tolerate a homosexual couple moving into this neighborhood" - has confided to the producers that the series changed him far more than even they were aware.

Continued next page

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No one involved in the show, Mr. Stewart said, knew he had a 25-year-old Gay son. Only after participating in the series, Mr. Stewart said, was he able to broach his son's sexuality with him for the first time.

"I'd say to ABC, 'Start showing this right now,' " Mr. Stewart said in an interview at his oak kitchen table. "It has a message that needs to be heard by everyone." (Mr. Stewart first discussed his son publicly with The Austin American-Statesman.)

While other ABC shows have Gay characters - including the new comedy "Crumbs" - "Neighborhood" features a real Gay couple and their prospective neighbors in a continuing dialogue about homosexuality, including interpretations of the Bible.

In a recent interview, Richard Land, an official with the Southern Baptist Convention involved in the negotiations with Disney last year to end the group's boycott of the company, said he did not recall any mention of "Neighborhood." He added, however, that had the show been broadcast - particularly with an ending that showed Christians literally embracing their Gay neighbors - it could have scuttled the Southern Baptists' support for "Narnia."

"I would have considered it a retrograde step," Mr. Land said of the network's plans to broadcast the reality series. "Aside from any moral considerations, it would have been a pretty stupid marketing move."

Paul McCusker, a vice president of Focus on the Family, which had supported the Southern Baptist boycott and reaches millions of evangelical listeners through the daily radio broadcasts of Dr. James Dobson, expressed similar views. "It would have been a huge misstep for Disney to aggressively do things that would disenfranchise the very people they wanted to go see 'Narnia,' " he said.

Asked whether Disney's plans for "Narnia" had affected "Neighborhood," Mr. Brockman of ABC referred a reporter to comments made on July 26 by Stephen McPherson, the president of ABC Entertainment, to a gathering of television critics. At that time it was not widely known that a Gay couple had won the competition. Instead, Mr. McPherson, a champion of the show until its sudden cancellation, was asked if he had been influenced by criticism by civil rights groups.

"If I stopped airing things just because advocacy groups had issues with it, we would run a test pattern," Mr. McPherson said. Rather, he said, he had begun to worry that some of the neighbors' most intolerant statements early on could confuse the audience's understanding of "the message you were trying to get across."

Hank Cohen, a former president of MGM Television Entertainment, a partner with ABC in "Neighborhood," said no one at the network had given him a direct answer as to what had transpired behind the scenes, and "the lack of any single coherent reason cited by them opens them up to all kinds of conjecture."

The full series, a copy of which was given to The New York Times by an advocate, is often raw, as contestants and judges speak openly about their preconceptions, only to observe in amazement as some of their ideas - though by no means all - melt away. Much of the give-and-take occurs in the series's version of the tribal council on "Survivor," as the three couples charged with giving away the house (bought by ABC for more than $300,000) meet to eliminate one family each episode.

Still, the neighbors' attitudes toward homosexuality constitute the dominant theme. That the tide may be shifting is telegraphed in an all-male scene in a hot tub, of all places, when one neighbor, John Bellamy, observes that Mr. Stewart appears to be softening his views toward Gays. "I love you for that," Mr. Bellamy says, before cautioning, "Not in a weird kind of hot-tub love, with no chicks in the hot tub."

For Stephen Wright, who was recruited for the series through his church, which has a predominantly Gay membership, the outcome has been bittersweet.

On the one hand, he has yet to achieve his goal of telling his family's story before a big audience. "We opened our souls and the life of our family, and we did it because we thought we could make a difference," he said. But Mr. Wright said he took solace that through their participation in the series, he and his partner had had a positive impact on at least one relationship, that of Mr. Stewart and his son. "We said at the outset that if we changed one person's heart or mind, it would be worth it," he said. "We have empirical evidence we did that." "And," he added, "we won a house."

G/L Partner Benefits Tied To Having Sex

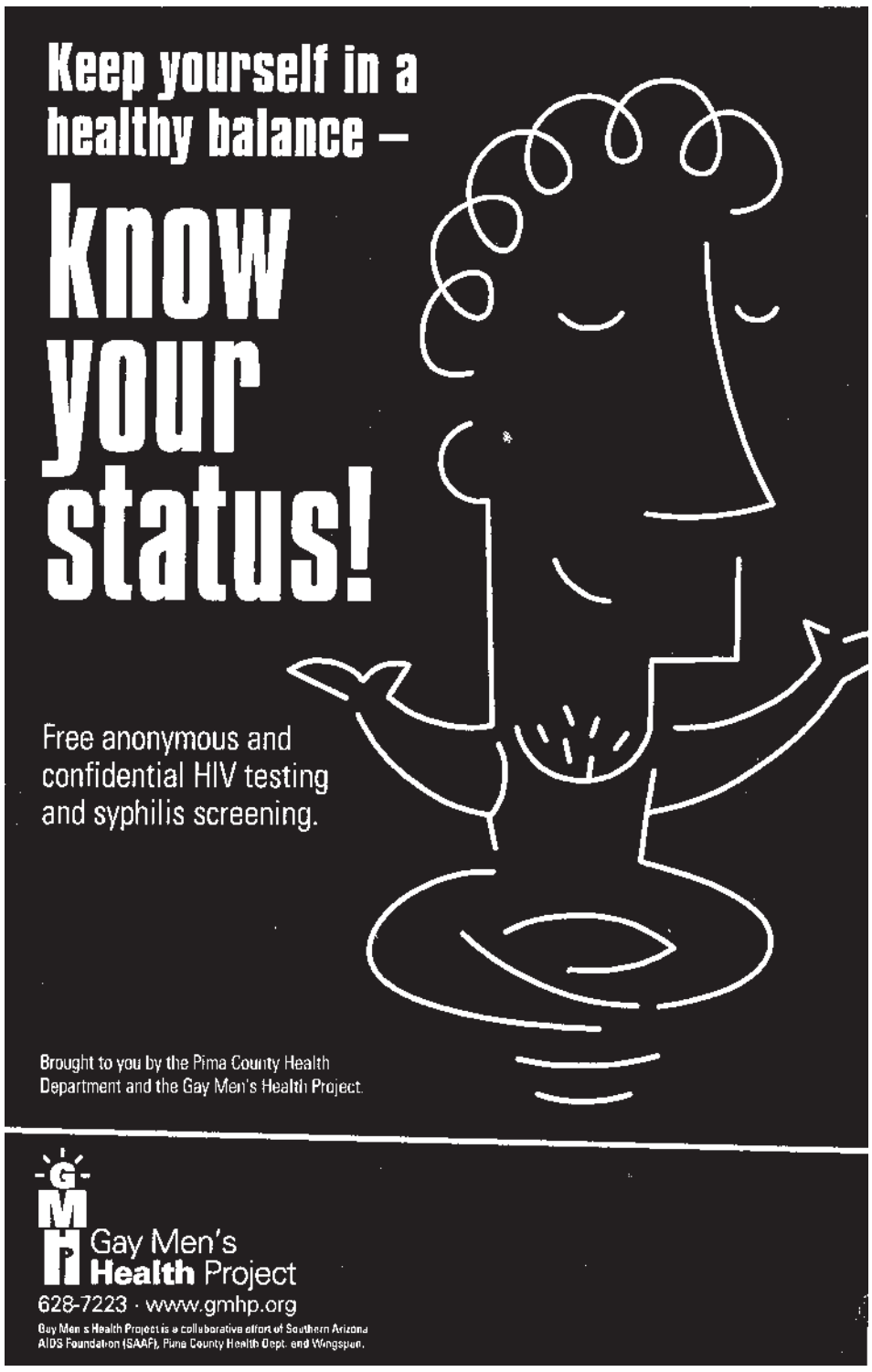
GAINESVILLE - Some employees of the University of Florida are balking at a provision in the school's health care plan for the domestic partners of its workers, 365Gay.com reported. Last month the university became the state's only public university to approve a benefits plan for its partnered unmarried workers. The plan is scheduled to go into effect in February.

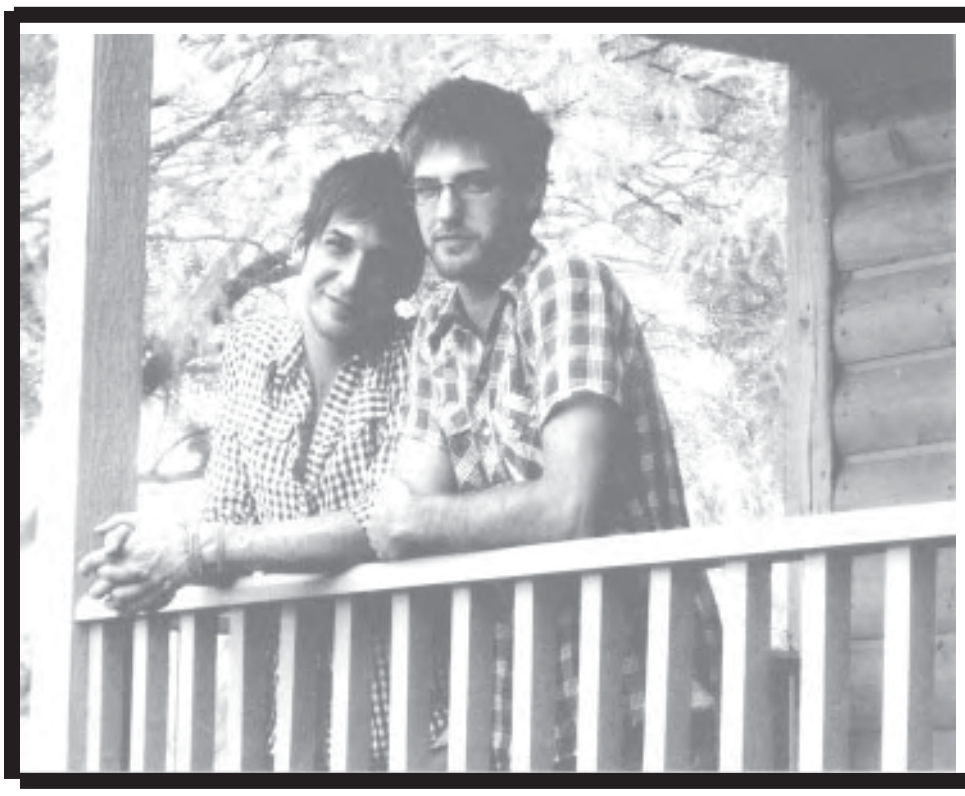
Married employees have long been able to insure their spouses. But now as details of the program are being rolled out a number of Gay and Lesbian employees are discovering a provision asks unmarried couples to sign an affidavit swearing they are in a sexual relationship. Although most Gay and Lesbian workers say they don't mind the question, a number of employees say it is discriminatory because the issue of sex is not put to married couples applying for inclusion in the benefits program.

Responding to questions about the provision UF's vice president of human resources, Kyle Cavanaugh, said that the question is being asked to ensure that only domestic partners and not roommates or siblings attempt to register. Cavanaugh said that the affidavit only asks enrollees to affirm they "have been in a non-platonic relationship for the preceding 12 months."

Some UF senators said the question is pointless. One, Marylou Behnke, who represents the College of Medicine called it "offensive,." suggesting the university would have go into couples bedrooms to ensure they were not lying. "Are you going to police it?" Behnke asked Cavanaugh. After fielding several other questions from senators Cavanaugh said that the university may consider modifying the wording. In addition to the question affirming a couples are in a sexual relationship, they must show they cohabitate and have share financial obligations.

Following the university's announcement that it would begin offering the health insurance plan a Republican lawmaker announced legislation to block state universities and community colleges from using taxpayer's money for same-sex domestic partner benefits. Rep. Larry Cretul said his bill would not prevent the schools from using private funds to pay for the benefits.





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'Brokeback' Receipts Hit New High

NEW YORK - Spurred by four Golden Globe wins on Monday, "Brokeback Mountain" topped the U.S. box office charts for the next two days and became the top film in the United Kingdom and Paris, according to the film's distributor, reported the PlanetOut Network.

Focus Features announced Thursday (Jan. 18) that its film, about two cowboys who fall in love and continue their affair over two decades, had a U.S. gross of $742,412 on Tuesday (Jan. 16), and $748,028 on Wednesday (Jan. 17). The totals exceeded those earned by any other domestic film on those days. The total domestic gross for "Brokeback Mountain" as of Wednesday was $33.6 million.

"The unusual midweek surge to- and hold on - the top slot is particularly impressive in that the film is playing in only 683 theaters, which is but a fraction of the runs of the others film in the national box office Top 10," said Jack Foley, president of theatrical distribution for Focus Features. "The growth potential is still evolving and more and more exhibitors are requesting the film," he said, "so we're going to expand to 1,194 theaters."

On Thursday (Jan. 18) , the film received nine BAFTA nominations. The awards are on par with the Oscars for the United Kingdom, where "Brokeback Mountain" is the top-grossing film in its second week of release. The film also debuted in France, and is currently the top film in Paris, according to Focus Features. "Brokeback Mountain" received four Golden Globe Awards on Monday (Jan. 16), including best picture and best director, and its Oscar buzz continues to grow. Academy Award nominations will be announced Jan. 31.

'Will & Grace' To End In May

LOS ANGELES - NBC announced on Sunday, Jan. 22, that "Will & Grace" will go off the air in May. There had been talk for months that this was to be the series last season, but until now NBC had not made an official announcement, 365Gay.com reported.

"It is a bittersweet moment for all of us at NBC to confirm that this will be the final season of the comedy 'Will & Grace,'" said NBC Entertainment President Kevin Reilly in a Sunday night statement that also announced the cancellation of "The West Wing." Reilly said that "Will & Grace" will have a two-hour finale Thursday, May 18. The first hour will be a retrospective. The second hour will be the final episode. Sources at the network say the final episode will include a baby and a wedding but they would not be more specific about the plot.

"Will & Grace", the first successful sitcom built around an openly gay character, has been a mainstay of NBC for the show's eight-year run. It has won14 Emmy Awards, eight GLAAD Media Awards, two TV Guide Awards and one Directors Guild Award.

The "Will & Grace" cast are already working on their futures. Eric McCormack is doing a comedy called "Lovespring" for Lifetime. Megan Mullally will get her own talk show in the fall. Sean Hayes has been trying his hand at producing and Debra Messing is eyeing a film career.

NBC Drops 'Book Of Daniel'

LOS ANGELES - NBC has dropped "The Book Of Daniel" from its schedule effective immediately. The episode that was to have aired on Friday has been replaced with a rerun of "Law & Order," reported 365Gay.com.

"The Book of Daniel" featured two of primetime's few openly Gay characters and was scripted by Gay writer Jack Kenny. "I just wanted to say 'thank you' to all of you who supported the show. There were many wonderful, talented people who contributed to its success – and I do mean success," said Kenny on his blog. "I remain proud of our product, proud of my association with Sony, NBC Universal, and NBC, who all took a chance on a project that spoke to them, and proud to have made an impact on so many of your lives."

The show starred Aidan Quinn ("An Early Frost") as the Reverend Daniel Webster an unconventional Episcopalian minister who not only believes in Jesus - he actually sees him and discusses life with him. His TV children included Peter (Christian Campbell, "Trick"), a 23-year-old Gay son, daughter, Grace (Alison Pill, "Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen"), who just happens to be a drug dealer, a 16-year-old adopted son who regularly had sex with the bishop's daughter, and Webster's martini addicted wife. Webster's secretary was a Lesbian who was sleeping with his sister-in-law.

The series was immediately targeted by the Christian right. The American Family Association called on its members to pressure stations to drop the series and issued veiled boycott threats against advertisers. A number of stations throughout the Bible Belt refused to air the series, and several sponsors pulled out. But NBC insists it was ratings and not pressure from conservative Christians that sank the show. "The Book of Daniel" lost about a quarter of its viewers over its few weeks on the air. Nevertheless, the AFA declared victory. "This shows the average American that he doesn't have to simply sit back and take the trash being offered on TV, but he can get involved and fight back with his pocketbook," said AFA Chair Donald E. Wildmon in a statement Tuesday (Jan. 24).

Administration Officials Refuse To Release Spying Documents

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The administration is refusing to turn over documents related to allegations that it spied on LGBT civil rights groups, reported 365Gay.com.

The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, which represents Gays in the military, and other LGBT rights groups sought the documents under the Freedom of Information Act. They filed the request early this month and asked that the government respond within 20 days.

Last month media reports said that the Pentagon has been spying on "suspicious" meetings by civilian groups, including student groups opposed to the military's "don't ask, don't tell".

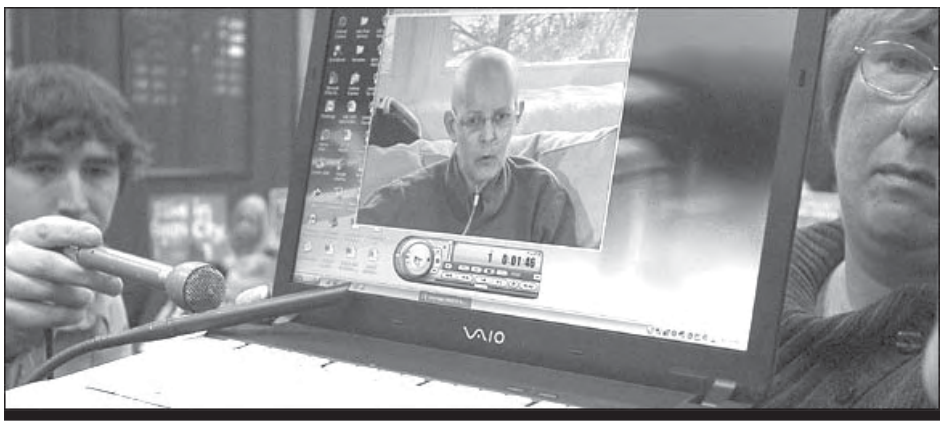
The reports said that the Pentagon had spied on New York University law school's LGBT advocacy group OUTlaw and Gay groups at the State University of New York at Albany and William Patterson College in New Jersey.

The FOIA request included a demand for "any and all documents" concerning meetings and communications within and between LGBT organizations, including SLDN. The filing

Continued on Page Thirteen

Desert Voices 'A Passionate Affair' Fun Raiser February 4th

Officials Reverse Position, Lesbian Cop To Get Dying Wish



Laurel Hester (PHOTO: New York Times)

TRENTON - Ocean County freeholders will grant Laurel Hester her dying wish, to have her death benefit given to her same-sex partner, 365Gay.com reported. Despite state law allowing local governments to grant health and other benefits to the same-sex partners of their employees Ocean County has steadfastly refused to do so.

For months Sgt. Hester, who has inoperable brain cancer, has pleaded with freeholders to pass an ordinance recognizing same-sex partners for the purpose of benefits. With only a few months to live, she made a final plea from her hospital room, Jan. 17. Appearing weak, and breathing with the help of a machine, she said on a video tape that she feared partner Stacie Andree would lose the home they shared after Hester dies.

With little doctors can do for, except make her as comfortable as possible, Hester has been a released from hospital and is now at home. Until she became too ill to work Hester was a lieutenant with the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office. She had worked there for 23 years - more than half her life - and is a member of the New Jersey Police and Firemen's Retirement System.

Although the state's five other pension systems allow its members to pass pension benefits to domestic partners the NJPFRS does not. Under the state's domestic partner law local governments can transfer pension benefits. The death benefit amounts to about $13,000.

Following Hester's emotional appeal freeholders refused to reopen the issue. But following news coverage including television reports which showed Hester's deteriorating condition, freeholders were besieged with critical phone calls and emails. Friday (Jan.20) state Sen. Andrew Ciesla (R-Ocean) said he intends to bring in legislation that would amend the police and fire pension fund to permit domestic partners to receive benefits. That was followed by a conference call between state GOP leaders from the county and freeholders. The conference call ended with freeholders agreeing to a special meeting next where a new vote will be taken and Hester will be allowed to transfer her benefits.

"This is one of the happiest days of my life," Hester said. "I feel like David conquering Goliath."

Steven Goldstein, chair of Garden State Equality - the group that fought for Hestor and prepared the video so she could make her final appeal to freeholders.

"Truth be told, we did lose hope for a reversal in the last couple of weeks. We had applied all the pressure in the world, embarrassing the freeholders as few public servants had ever been before in the state of New Jersey or in this country, and they would not budge. Finally they did. Hallelujah! There is a God."

Whether the vote will apply only to Hester or will be extended to all same-sex partners of county workers is not yet known. Freeholder James F. Lacey said that he still feels the benefits issue is one for the legislature. "I don't want to pay to clean up for the state," he said. But he agreed that Hester's situation cannot wait for state lawmakers to act.

Following Hester's desperate plea two other New Jersey municipalities have changed their laws. Camden County and Passaic passed ordinances offering health and pension benefits to the domestic partners of their employees. Five other communities in the state also provide domestic partner benefits.

Spying Documents

Continued from Page Twelve

included a request for "reports, video recordings, audio recording and photographs" obtained through Pentagon surveillance.

Joining SLDN were Gays & Lesbians Against Defamation; the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association; the Human Rights Campaign; the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission; the Los Angeles Lesbian & Gay Center; the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund; Lambdas, Chicago-Kent College of Law; the Mautner Project; the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Projects; the National Youth Advocacy Coalition; Outlaws, University of Michigan School of Law; Pride at Work, AFL-CIO; QLaw, University of Wisconsin School of Law; and OUTLAW, Stanford Law School.

In responding to the request FBI said the FOIA request did not "reasonably describe" the records sought.

The Freedom of Information officer for the Attorney General's office responded that their office "would not maintain" the records that were requested, but did not indicate if it had conducted a search to be certain.

The Department of Defense turned down the request saying that SLDN is not an organization primarily engaged in disseminating information to the public and that there is no imminent loss of substantial due process rights.

"I'm not surprised to learn that the government is attempting to stonewall our original FOIA request," SLDN spokesperson Steve Ralls said.

Ralls called the FBI response "outrageous" and said that the organization would continue to press for the documents.

"SLDN is undeterred in our efforts to find out what information the government obtained and for what purposes it may have used that information."

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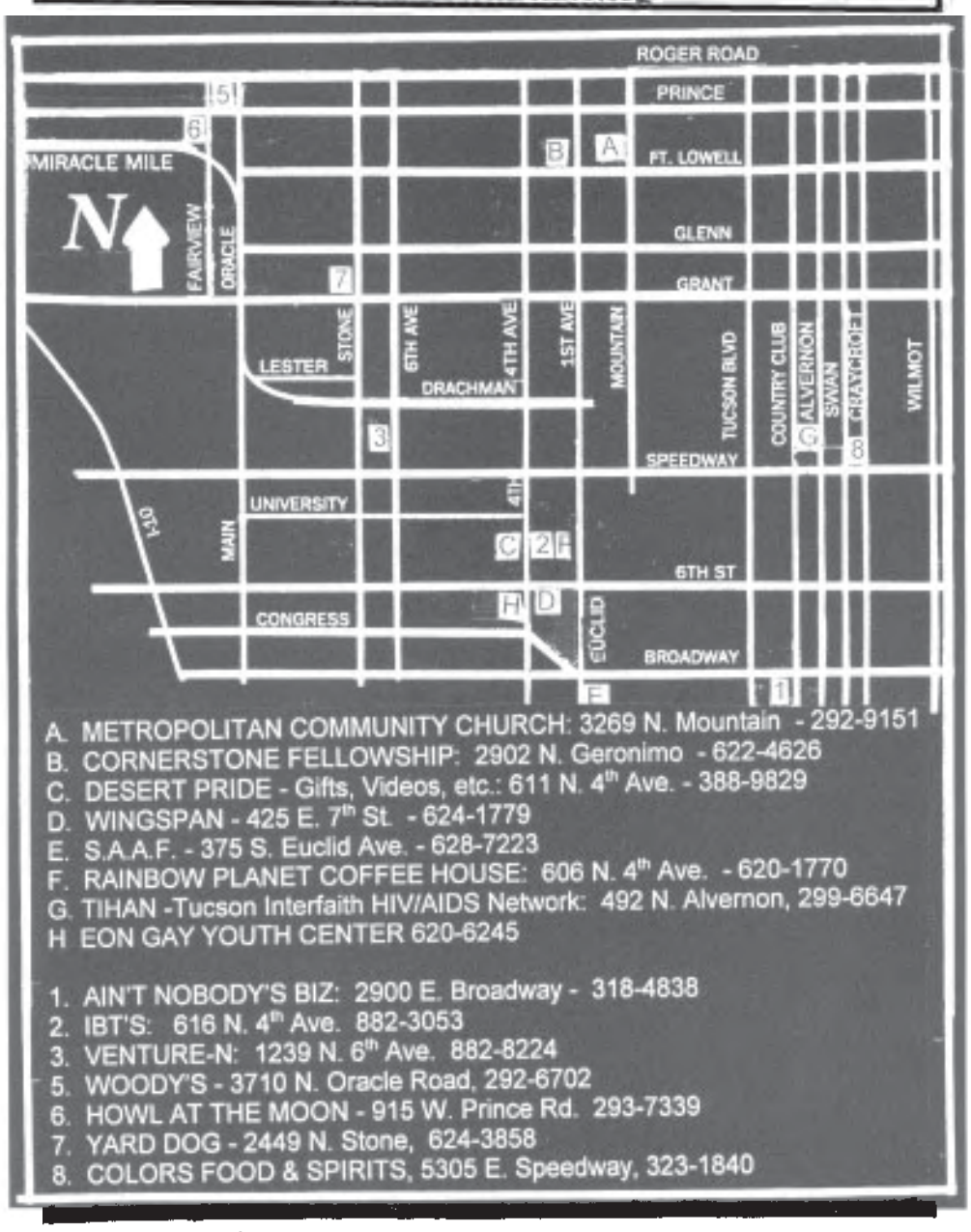
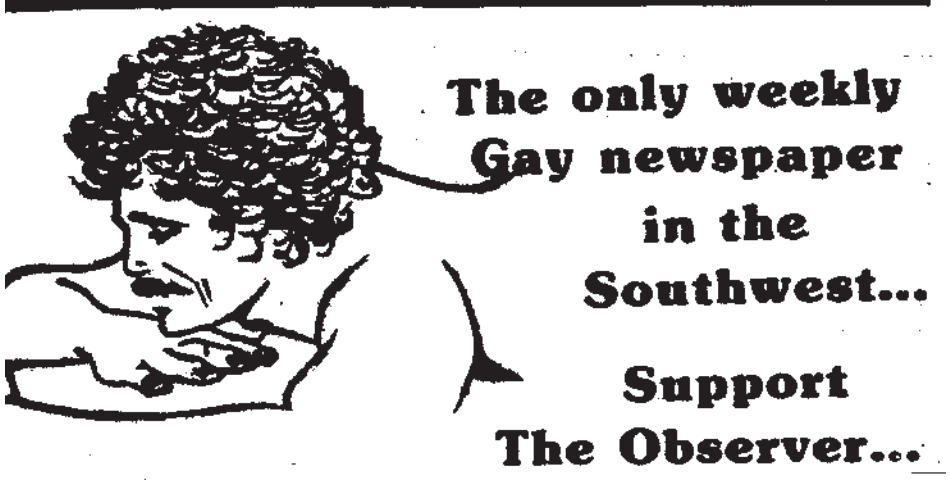




Non Bar Calendar

Thursday, January 26
Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed: 7:00 p.m. Join the men of MSN for Coffee Night 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.

Friday, January 27
#1 Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed:7:00 p.m. Lloyd hosts a fun evening of Scrabble. If you don't know how to play, we'll be glad to teach you. For reservations and directions, please call Lloyd at 792-8537.

#2 If you would like to donate your gently used items to the MSN Auction at our February 4th Auction/Pot Luck, please contact Jack at home at 887-3736 or 745-8844 at work. He will store and if needed, pick up the articles from MSN members.

Saturday, January 28
Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed:
7:00 p.m. Marv 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 Marv at 745-0304.

Tuesday, January 31
#1 Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed: 7:00 p.m. The Circle of Men is a support group that helps you deal with yourself and your relationships with others. For directions and reservations, please call Tom at 591-2828.

#2 If you would like to donate your gently used objects in support of MSN, please contact Jack at home at 887-3736 or 745-8844 at work. He will store and if needed, pick up the articles from MSN members.

Saturday, February 4
Men's Social Network (open to men of all ages; newcomers welcomed): 7:00 p.m. We invite you to join us for our Annual Auction Pot Luck dinner and to get to know the nice guys of MSN. The Auction is our major fundraiser for the year and has allowed our dues to remain at a more than reasonable level since our inception. While reservations are not necessary, please call Robert at 400-1376 for location and directions. If you would like to donate your gently used objects in support of MSN, please contact Jack at home at 887-3736 or 745-8844 at work. He will store and if needed, pick up the articles from MSN members.

I Did Nothing Wrong
Gay Survivor Tells Court

PROVIDENCE - Richard Hatch the openly Gay man who won $1 million on the first season of the reality show "Survivor," told a federal judge on Friday (Jan. 20) that he did not evade taxes on his winnings, reported 365Gay.com. Hatch faces 10 charges, including tax evasion, filing a false tax return, wire fraud, bank fraud and mail fraud. A resident of Newport, Hatch also allegedly used donations to his charity, Horizon Bound, to cover personal expenses.

Testifying on his own behalf Friday the Survivor, known for regularly shedding his clothes on the show, said that he struck a deal with producers during the taping of the show and that they had agreed to pay the taxes if he won the big prize. The show's producer, Mark Burnett, testified earlier this week, but neither the defense nor prosecutors asked him about any such deal.

Hatch also told the court on Fridayt about how the behavioral problems of his son, Christopher, have weighed on him. His lawyer, Michael Minns, has said Hatch was distracted by problems with his son and was a terrible book keeper, but he never meant to commit tax fraud. The indictment against Hatch claims that he had two accountants prepare tax returns that included his "Survivor" winnings but did not file them when he learned he would owe hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxes. In 2002, the indictment alleges, Hatch had one of the accountants prepare a second return that did not include his TV show winnings. He filed that one, which called for a $4,500 refund.

Survivor Richard Hatch

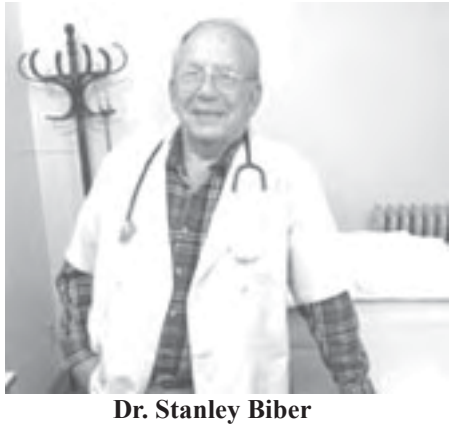
On "Survivor," Hatch stood out for being a cunning and ruthless competitor. He won the show's first season in August 2000. He has since appeared on other TV shows, most recently the "Battle of the Network Reality Stars" on Bravo. Since the TV show, Hatch has weathered a series of legal battles. He was arrested in April 2000 on a charge of abusing his then 9-year-old son. That charge was later dropped. In 2002, Hatch was found innocent of assaulting his ex-boyfriend. If convicted of the most recent charges Hatch could face up to 75 years in jail.

Pioneerng Sex Reassignment Surgeon Dies

TRINIDAD - Dr. Stanley Biber, a small-town physician who said he performed more than 4,500 sex-change operations, has died. He was 82, reported 365Gay.com. The cause of Biber's death was not announced, but he had been hospitalized for complications from pneumonia. Word of Biber's death came from Mary Winter, a friend and owner of the Cormi Funeral Home in Trinidad, a town of 9,300 near the Colorado-New Mexico border.

Biber, an Iowa native, moved to Trinidad in 1954 and became the town's only general surgeon. He told The Associated Press in a 2000 interview that he performed his first sex-change operation in 1969.

He said a social worker he had met asked for the surgery, and he agreed after talking to a New York doctor who had done some sex reassignment operations and after getting sketches from Johns Hopkins University. At one point he was performing 150 transsexual operations a year, Biber said. He stopped doing surgery in 2003 and closed his practice in 2004, at age 81.


Dr. Stanley Biber

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Wednesday March 15, 2006
Time: 7 pm – 10 pm

A collaboration of the Pima County Health Department and Gay Men's Health Project

HOROSCOPES

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Sun and Mercury enter and rubadub in Aqueerius now. Don't wait. Take a good idea to great. Make your mark based on a mere hunch. Prepare for sparks of genius. Or whatever.

ARIES (Mar. 21 - Apr. 20)
If you think that you are a mover and shaker you probably are. The platonic heat is on when Sun and Mercury move and conjunct. So don't sit back and wait for a delivery, bud. Get Out and join a new, unorthodox group or bring a few close pals together for a mutual admiration brunch. Gregarious Gay Rams are a whirlpool in the social swirl. What is that sucking sound?

TAURUS (Apr. 21 - May 21)
Queer Bulls can't help but be overly confident in their careers now. You make no bones about what you feel you deserve and where you see yourself going in that great professional arena. Why not shoot from the lip while Sun and Mercury heat your corporate star? Allow the powers that be to push you in the right direction and then position yourself for success. Err prone?

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
Long term goals and global ideas catch fire. Ouch! This is no time to stay home and contemplate your navel. Pink Twins need to rouse themselves, pack their bags and head to parts unknown to aggressively explore new terrain. You never know what (or who) you will find. Even legal battles can be fought and won now. Just show them your briefs and rest your case.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
You are a complex soul - Moody, sensual, emotional and intuitive. There is something about you that draws people in and distills their very essence. Pink Crabs can be boiled in their own sexy broth when Sun and Mercury conjunct in Aqueerius. The sensual possibilities are endless. But will you waste this energy on mere physical pleasure? Heck why not?!

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)
Proud Lions have quite a few great ideas on how to improve partnerships now. Are you putting your platform to a vote or will you overthrow the system, take control and institute your own laws? If you decide to push your opinions it may become an all or nothing situation. Sun and Mercury conjunct and can make you a petty dictator. Petty? Harrumph!

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)
Let's face it - you are a fairly hardworking individual. And you are in your element with Sun and Mercury in Aqueerius. Even terribly hard work seems easy. So get that elbow grease going queer Virgin and whittle down that massive stack of work. As long as you are putting out the effort, try little elbow grease on your physique. Work it, or let someone else do it.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)
Fun finds you. You get into all sorts of interesting situations and find creative ways to make each one memorable and valuable. Plucky Gay Libras are even pluckier when Sun and Mercury collide. Yet there is a downside. Your naive over confidence could lead you to take unreasonable risks especially with games of chance. Better bet with someone elses money.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
What is on your domestic agenda? Will you increase spending or rely on cuts to nurse you in your old age? Proud Scorps should not buy what the powers that be are selling. You see through their little games. Sun and Mercury conjunct and make you smarter, bolder and uncompromising with your long term security. Good. Feather your own pillow for a soft landing.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)
Gay Archers are usually chatty. Now as Sun and Mercury make their move, you burst with great ideas and big opinions. If you ever had a hankering to broadcast your message globally, do it now. Focus on what is most important, research your facts and check your sources. The point is to build credibility for a change. Then start a blog and break through the cyber fog.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)
Money becomes the be all and end all for pink Caps this week. (So what else is new.) Will you carefully plan for future riches or spend what little you have on some crackpot get rich quick scheme? Rein in your greedy tendencies and proceed with caution, cousin. Do your fiscal research and seek advice. Then take charge, and I don't mean credit card.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
Aqueerians are never the shy and retiring types and now, as Sun and Mercury conjunct in your own sign, it's time to chart your course for the next year. Don't get caught up in the details - Look at the big picture, plan grand schemes and plant the seeds now. You are focused on what is important and can hit the jackpot. All eyes are upon you. Is your fly open?

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20)
Your closet door bursts open and flies off the hinges when Sun and Mercury conjunct. All your carefully hidden secrets become front page news and even hidden enemies are unmasked and vanquished. Not a moment too soon! Guppies are given a rare opportunity to clean out the cobwebs and dust from the corners of their life. Don't sweep it under a rug.

Justice Dept. Obtains Internet Users' Search Records

SAN FRANCISCO - Federal investigators have obtained potentially billions of Internet search requests made by users of major websites run by Yahoo Inc., Microsoft Corp. and America Online Inc., raising concerns about how the massive data trove will be used, reported the Associated Press.

The information turned over to Justice Department lawyers reveals a week's worth of online queries from millions of Americans – the Internet Age equivalent of eavesdropping on their inner monologues. The subpoenaed data could, for example, include how many times people searched online for "apple pie recipes," "movie tickets 90012" or even "bomb instructions."

The Internet companies said Thursday that the information did not violate their users' privacy because the data did not include names or computer addresses. The disclosure nonetheless alarmed civil liberties advocates, who fear that the government could seek more detailed information later.

A Justice Department spokesman said the government was not interested in ferreting out names – only in search trends as part of its efforts to regulate online pornography. But the search-engine subpoenas come amid broader concerns over how much information the government collects and how the data are used.

Congress is debating an extension of the Patriot Act, which dramatically expanded the government's ability to obtain private data. And congressional hearings are expected soon on the legality of a National Security Agency program to track communications by U.S. citizens without prior court approval.

Privacy advocates said the opportunity to peruse search queries provided an unprecedented glimpse into people's private thoughts and habits. Virtually unknown a decade ago, search engines rapidly have become an integral part of daily life.

Search engines maintain "a massive database that reaches into the most intimate details of your life: what you search for, what you read, what worries you, what you enjoy," said Kurt Opsahl, a staff attorney at the Electronic Frontier Foundation. "It's critical to protect the privacy of this information so people feel free to use modern tools to find information without the fear of Big Brother looking over their shoulder."

The issue came to light this week only when Google Inc., the most-used Internet search engine, fought its subpoena. AOL, Microsoft and Yahoo also had been subpoenaed. Government lawyers filed a brief in U.S. District Court in San Jose seeking to force Google to comply.

Google's refusal was first reported by the San Jose Mercury News.

Search engines and e-mail providers are asked for information on specific people in hundreds of cases yearly, both by law enforcement and in civil lawsuits. They generally comply, and their privacy policies warn users that data can be turned over to authorities.

Under a section of the Patriot Act expanding the use of so-called national security letters, companies such as Google can be asked to turn over potentially useful data – even about people who aren't suspected of wrongdoing – while being barred from disclosing those requests.

But no previous case is known to have involved such a wide range of data.

"Their demand for information overreaches," said Nicole Wong, Google's associate general counsel. "We had lengthy discussions with them to try to resolve this but were not able to, and we intend to resist their motion vigorously."

The other search engines disclosed the information after narrowing the government's original request for two months' worth of searches to one week's worth. The week was not specified.

"We are rigorous defenders of our users' privacy," Yahoo spokeswoman Mary Osako said. "We did not provide any personal information in response to the Department of Justice's subpoena. In our opinion, this is not a privacy issue."

A Microsoft spokeswoman said the company complied with the request "in a way that ensured we also protected the privacy of our customers. We were able to share aggregated query data ... that did not include any personally identifiable information."

AOL spokesman Andrew Weinstein said the Time Warner Inc. subsidiary initially rebuffed the Justice Department's requests and eventually provided "an aggregated and anonymous list of search terms.... What we gave them was something that was extremely limited, didn't have any privacy implications and is fairly common data."

Beth Givens, director of the nonprofit Privacy Rights Clearinghouse in San Diego, said those companies should have fought. "Google and the other search engines," she said, "represent a very appealing honey pot for government investigators."

In some ways, Google's action echoes Verizon Communications Inc.'s fight against the record industry two years ago. The record labels used a provision of a digital copyright law to demand the names of subscribers to Verizon's Internet service who were suspected of swapping music files illegally. Verizon resisted, and a federal appeals court eventually agreed that the labels would have to sue individuals before forcing Verizon to turn over information on them. The Supreme Court declined to intervene in the case.

Justice Department spokesman Charles Miller said the government wanted an overview of what people look for online as part of its effort to restore an anti-pornography law that was struck down by the Supreme Court.

The Child Online Protection Act was adopted in 1998 after a similar law, the Communications Decency Act, was struck down on constitutional grounds. The Child Online Protection Act establishes fines and jail terms for businesses that publish sexually oriented material on the Web that is obscene or offensive, unless they weed out minors by demanding a credit card or other proof of age.

Continued on Page Twenty

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PERSONALS

HUNG & HANDSOME - Tall, decent, discreet, thick, cut, top, oral, n/s, private home. Want nice, single / couple to meet. No weirdos, please. Tubac area. Jim @ 520-604-7023 before 9 p.m. 1096

HOUSING/FOR RENT

DUPLEXES AVAILABLE AROUND 8/1& 9/1. $425/mo. Near N. 4t Ave. & 6th. 620-1311 or 622-2285. 1097

1 BEDROOM ADOBE HOUSE with Hardwood floors and fenced yard. Speedway & Alvernon area. Rent $400/mo + $100 Deposit. Call Bill for appointment 795-8881. 1095

ROOMMATES

RETIRED PERSON LOOKING for someone to go traveling with. Private spa. Call 883-2753 1095

HOME TO SHARE NEAR UofA. Good neighborhood. Looking for quiet non-smoker. $400 + 1/2 utilities. For info call Richard 795-1262 1098

FOR SALE

MOTORCYCLE FOR SALE. Beautiful Honda Shadow Aero (1100cc). Garaged, showroom condition. Two-tone black/tan, whitewalls. Lots of chrome. Many extras./ Low miles. $8,000. Must see. Call Bruce 743-3890. 1096

SERVICES

NEED A HELPING HAND? Reliable, trustworthy and most of all, affordable help with any task around the house, inside or out. Learn how to get some free help., I will return all calls. George, 869-5599. 1096

SENSUOUS FULL BODY SWEDISH MASSAGE FOR MEN. Best rates in Tucson! Speedway and Swan area. IN and OUT CALLS. 7days. 548-6314 1094

KNEADING TENSE SORE MUSCLES in relaxing central location. Nurturing, stress relief body rub. Affordable. 326-8226 1093

RELAX WITH A FULL BODY MASSAGE FOR MEN in a private studio on the West Side. Call Ralph, 883-74 96. 1097

END BACK PAIN. The back solution, massage and bodywork. 15 years experience. Tension Erasure - Stress Reduction - Relax for Health. Abe 294-4810 1097

TRANSFORMATIONAL TANTRIC THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE. Strong and muscular hands to sooth the boy in you. An exceptional experience of quality for 24 years. Surrender now... Marc 8811-4582 by appointment. 1098

ALTERATIONS AND REPAIRS
Let me keep your clothes fitting properly and in good repair. Experienced -- Economical -- Prompt. Merle Hudson, (520)888-7264 in Tucson. 1111

ENHANCE YOUR WELL-BEING

XXX $45 SPECIAL XXX
Swedish - Deep Tissue
CALL TODAY
(520)-390-0330

CARD ADS IN THE RESOURCE SECTION OF THE OBSERVER GET RESULTS

DAILY BAR CALENDAR

sunday

COLORS - Open 11am - 11pm Champagne Brunch 11am - 2pm with choice of complimentary mimosa, Bloody Mary or Screwdriver. Happy Hour 4-7pm $2 skyy Cocktails, $3 Skyy Martinis, $2 Domestics and half price appetizers. Full menu served 2-10pm. Nightly dinner specials.

HOWL AT THE MOON -Open at 11:00 am. Chuckwagon Breakfast 11am - 1:30pm, - Scrambled eggs, hash brown, biscuit & sausage gravy and your choice of Bloody Mary, Screwdriver or Mimosa. Free Texas Hold'em Poker Tourney at 4 and 7pm. Sign-up begins one hour before playing time. No Cash - Play for Prizes and Points. Great chance to learn the hottest game around

IBT's -Open Noon. $1.75 Bloodys, or mimosas. til 4pm. 4-7:30 Karaoke with Michael D. on the patio 5:30-7:30 Beer Bust. 2-4-1 drink specials and DJ Mike Lopez 10pm to close. (Some restrictions apply).

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. Brunch $5, 11:30 - 2:30. Patio open 1pm-close. Yard games on the grass. Beer Bust 16oz $1 2-7p. $2.50 Sirloin Burger or Chicken w/sides 5-9pm. Karaoke with Michael D. 9pm-close. Drag Bingo every other Sunday 8-9

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-8pm, DJ Mike Lopez 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. w/Special Happy Hour prices til 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 Skyy cocktails, $3 Skyy Martinis, $2 Domestics and half-price appetizers. 1stTuesday of month "Dinner & Movie" sponsored by GMHP. All other Tuesdays "Dinner and a Concert"shown on 52" projection system. Full menus served until l0pm.

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-8pm, Tropical Tuesdays $2.50 Tropical drinks and DJ Q playing Retro Music 70's, 80's and 90's 9pm-close.

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

WOODY'S - Open 10am w/Special Happy Hour til 2pm. Regular Happy Hour 2-8. 80s Nite 9-close. $1 off to those wearing 80s concert t-shirt. (Excludes draught & schnapps).

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 Skyy cocktails, $3 Skyy Martinis, $2 Domestics and half-price appetizers 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.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, 9pm "Diva-Licious" show w/ Bunny Fu Fu. HiNrgy dance with DJ Q,

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

WOODY'S - Open 10am w/Special Happy Hour til 2pm. Regular Happy Hour 2-8. Underwear-fetish-leather nite $1 off for those wearing underwear-fetish or leather. (Excludes draught & 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 Skyy cocktails, $3 Skyy Martinis, $2 Domestics and half-price appetizers. 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. $2.00 Mexican Beers all day. Karaoke with Debbie from 8 to midnight.

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

VENTURE-N - Open 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 w/Special Happy Hour til 2pm. Regular Happy Hour 2-8. Free Pool all day. NTN Game Nite w/prizes 9-close. $1 Pabst Blue Ribbon. Patio bar open 8pm-close

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 Skyy cocktails, $3 Skyy Martinis, $2 Domestics and half-price appetizers . Full menu served 4-11pm. Nightly Dinner Specials. 6:30-9:30pm. "Hot Jazz, Cool Martinis" with Susan Artemis 10pm "Guys & Dolls" hosted by Lucinda Holliday. Reservations suggested.

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

HOWL AT THE MOON - Open at 3 pm. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, $2 well, domestic longnecks & pints, $3 sm pitchers, $5 lg pitchers. Line Dance Lessons 7:30 to 8:30 pm. 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-8pm,, Hot Dance with DJ Mike Lopez 9pm-2am.

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

WOODY'S - Open 10am.w/Special Happy Hour til-2pm. Regular Happy Hour 2-8. Patio Bar open 8-close. Party w/DJ Jeff 9-close.

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

saturday

COLORS - Open 4pm-2am, Happy Hour 4-7pm, $2 Skyy cocktails, $3 Skyy Martinis, $2 Domestics and half-price appetizers Full menu served 4-11pm. Nightly dinner specials. Amber Norgarrd sings originals and cover tunes 6:30-9:30pm. Reservations suggested.

HOWL AT THE MOON -Open at 11:00 am. Chuckwagon Breakfast 11am-1:30pm, $4.50. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, $2 well, domestic longnecks & pints, $3 sm pitchers, $5 lg pitchers. $4.00 Cheeseburger & 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-8pm, 5-8pm karaoke and Teryaki Kabobs on the patio. 8:30pm Show time w/ Ajia Simone or Janee Star. DJ Q spinning Club Music inside and Mike Lopez spinning on the patio 10pm to close..

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

WOODY'S - Open 10am w/Special Happy Hour til 2pm. Regular Happy Hour 2-8. $5 Steak or Fish w/all the trimmings 5-9. Patio Bar open 5-close. Live Jazz w/Arthur Miguazza on the patio 6-9. Party w/DJ Jeff 9-close.

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.

CASINOS. . . . . .

AVA AMPHITHEATER AT CASINO DEL SOL COMING ATTRACTIONS:(Box office 838-6700 - I-10 Exit Valencia West)

DESERT DIAMOND CASINO UPCOMING ATTRACTIONS: (Box office 393-2799 - I-19 & Pima Mine Road, Exit 80 - 7 minutes south of Tucson)

BAR CALENDAR Of Upcoming Events

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28
WOODY'S - Celebrate Chinese New Year's - the Year of the Dog Party.

YARD DOG SALOON - According to the Chinese Calendar, their New Year is the 'Year of the Dog' - So what more of an excuse to you need to throw a party? Food and dog specials.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29
WOODY'S - Still celebrating the Chinese New Year 'Year of the Dog'. 11:30-2:30 Brunch, $5.00. 2-7pm Beer Bust. 3:00 p.m. Best of Show Pet Dog Competition. ($25 Petsmart Gift Certificate to the winner and $25 same day bar tab for the dog owner). 5-9pm Burger B-B-Q. 8pm Drag Bingo with Janee Starr and Stella Virgin. 9pm Karaoke with Michael D.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2
WOODY'S - UofA Tailgate Party 7:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5
WOODY'S - Superbowl Party

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9
VENTURE-N - Aquarian Party! 60s-70s Retro Party. Get out your tie-dye shirts and platform shoes. Give-aways and specials and more!

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11
WOODY'S The Red Party

YARD DOG - Dog of the Month Club

Ireland Moves Closer To Civil Partnerships For G/L Partners

DUBLIN - An all party committee of the Irish Parliament is recommending legislation to permit civil partnerships similar to those in the UK but rejects the possibility of same-sex marriage, 365Gay.com reported. The report will be presented to Prime Minister Bertie Ahern, ending a year of consultations with citizens groups across the country.

LGBT rights groups have been pressing the government to legalize Gay relationships, but the report will advise Ahern that a move to allow same-sex marriage could lead to a national referendum that would prevent Parliament from any recognition of Gay and Lesbian couples. Ahern, in India on a trade mission, said he is awaiting the report but said he agreed with what he has heard. The Prime Minister said that a referendum would be socially divisive and Irish voters would probably reject same-sex marriages. "There have been no opinion polls on it and I don't think they would (accept it)," he said of Gay marriage.

Ahern said that Gay couples deserve recognition under the law and that he specifically wants to address issues such as inheritance, pensions and insurance rights. The Gay rights groups have asked for partner rights but not specifically marriage, Ahern said. "I would rather do the things that I think I can usefully do," he told reporters, adding that one day a future government may decide to move forward on the issue of marriage. "Perhaps on other days, people can do other things."

But Gay rights group GLEN disputed Ahern's assertion that same-sex couples did not want his government to legalize Gay marriage. "We want full equality for same-sex couples and we believe that can be achieved within the current [Parliament]," GLEN's director of policy change Eoin Collins told the Irish Times.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

NOTICES - COMMUNITY - NOTICES

to broadcast your message globally, do it now. Focus on what is most

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 360-3795 or write P.O. Box 36264, Tucson, AZ 85740-6264. All replies confidential.

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

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

The TUCSON Chapter of PRIME TIMERS WORLDWIDE invites Gay or Bisexual men and their admirers to join and share Prime Timers fellowship. We welcome mature men (and admirers) who wish to become involved with planned and future Prime Timers (TPT) activities. Meetings luncheons and dinners are held monthly. For dates, times and information call743-0810, leave name and phone number. Tucsonpt@primetimersww,org

TUCSON GAY INFORMATION AND REFERRAL
For Information on human service organizations, health and mental health services, financial and government assistance, emergency services such as food and shelter, education, etc. Call Information and Referral 881-1794 - 8 am - 5 pm M-F.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

T-SQUARES Lesbian and Gay square dance club 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.

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

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

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

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

MEN'S SOCIAL NETWORK: Social organization for men of all ages. Building an extended Gay family in Tucson. Monthly social potluck gatherings the first Saturday of each month and almost weekly social activities. Call 690-9565 for information and a newsletter. Check the Non-Bar Calendar in the Observer.

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

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT SPORTS TEAMS and updates on Gay Games 2002, contract TEAM ARIZONA at their website: teamarizona.org

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LUTHERANS CONCERNED – Tucson chapter for Gay/Lesbian Lutherans meets 3rd Sunday, 6:30 p.m. each month at Santa Cruz Lutheran Church, 6809 S. Cardinal Ave. For information visit www.lctucson.org write: LC, 7014 E. Golf Links Road, PMB 212, Tucson, AZ 85730.

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 us. The group meets once a month, on the 3rd Monday, at 6:30 p.m. Reading selections include Gay-themed novels, bios and other nonfiction. For location or more info, email Bryan at Bryansct@aol.com

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

LGBT BUDDHIST MEDITATION GROUP. Join us for two 20 minute silent sitting meditations, and reading from Buddhist spiritual text and discussion. Bring a friend and a pillow or cushion. Takes place every Sunday from 10:00 - 11:30am at Wingspan, 425 E. 7th St.. Contact Maurice Grossman for more info. 323-2293.

LGBT SUPPORT GROUP FOR VICTIM/SURVIVORS OF Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Hate Crimes, Bias Acts, Harassment. Call Lori at Wingspan, 624-1779, ext. 20. Services are free.

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

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

SUN WORSHIPERS OF TUCSON (SWOT) is a local men's nudist organization for men of all ages. Events feature swimming, hot tubbing and socializing in a relaxed, private setting

MAN TO MAN INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY FORMING for anyone wanting quality friendships, better health and more passion in their lives. This group has far-reaching benefits for those who want to explore their own spirituality, sexuality and purpose in life. Contact Marc Haberman, Holistic Health Practitioner at 881-4582.

Play Safe!

Justice Dept. Obtains Internet Users' Search Records

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In 2004, the Supreme Court upheld an injunction against the law but sent the case back to a lower court in Pennsylvania. A majority of the high court wrote that the government could save the measure if it showed that the rules were more effective than Internet content filters at balancing the need to keep pornography from children against the free-speech rights of website operators.

Philip Stark, a UC Berkeley statistics professor working for the government, wrote in the San Jose court filing that the queries, along with a list of available websites, would help show what users were looking for and how often they found material that the government deemed harmful to minors.

The Justice Department also asked the Internet companies for the addresses to every website in their search-engine indexes, a request that was negotiated down to 1 million randomly chosen addresses. Government lawyers said they wanted that information to gauge the prevalence of websites that were harmful to minors and to measure the effectiveness of filtering software on those sites.

"We're not seeking any individual information regarding anybody who entered the query terms," Miller said.

He did not respond to other questions, including whether the department would rule out seeking such information in the future and how the existing data would be used.

Google said, though, that the words in a single text query could lead the government to a searcher's identity.

"One can envision scenarios where queries alone could reveal identifying information," the company wrote in a letter objecting to the demand.

Users often search for information about themselves.

More broadly, the company wrote, "Google's acceding to the request would suggest that it is willing to reveal information about those who use its services. This is not a perception that Google can accept."

Google has tried to cast itself as an enlightened company, going so far as to tell investors that it planned to do business under a simple rule: "Don't be evil."

But as Google has collected increasing amounts of information about its users, some observers have expressed concern that the company could break that rule by letting the data fall into the wrong hands or simply by complying with government demands.

"Google could help protect its users ... by limiting the information that is kept and how long it is stored," said the Electronic Frontier Foundation's

Newest Senate Member Gets Praise From LGBT Groups

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Robert Menendez was sworn in Wednesday (Jan. 18) becoming the newest member of the Senate. The New Jersey Democrat was appointed by Gov. Jon Corzine to serve out the remaining year in Corzine's Senate term.

Corzine resigned his Senate seat to run for governor. Menendez was a seven-term member of the House prior to his appointment to the Senate. As a Congressman he had a strong record of fairness on LGBT issues, according to the Human Rights Campaign's congressional scorecard. He received a congressional career rating of 91 percent on the HRC scorecard, "siding with equality and fairness 43 out of 47 scored votes, cosponsorships and pledges."

The most serious "negative" came in 1996 when he voted for the Defense of Marriage Act - a law signed by President Clinton that purports to allow states not to recognize same-sex couples married in another state, as well as block federal benefits for those unions. Since then he has become a strong opponent of amending the Constitution to ban marriage rights for same-sex couples.

"Following the September 11th terrorist attacks, Senator Menendez championed LGBT families by pressing the federal government to include them alongside legally-recognized families in its response," said Eric Stern, National Stonewall Democrats Executive Director. "We look forward to our members further working with Senator Menendez on important issues that will be brought before the United States Senate."

Stern also said that Menendez, along with Congressman John Lewis (D-GA), will be presented with NSD's Capitol Champion Award at the National Press Club in March.

Menendez pressed the federal government to provide equal treatment of same-sex families in its response to the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001. The attacks directly impacted Senator Menendez' congressional district, which sat across the Hudson River from the World Trade Center. Then-Representative Menendez successfully argued that the federal government should offer equal assistance to all surviving families through its Victims' Compensation Fund. Additionally, he worked with the International Association of Fire Fighters and leading Democrats following the September 11th attacks to force the Republican Leadership to allow a vote authorizing a federal death benefit paid to the same-sex partners of first responders who die in the line of duty. Under previous law, only opposite-sex partners were eligible under the benefit.

Menendez, with his huge $4.1 million campaign war chest and status as the third most powerful Democrat in the House, was long considered the front-runner for Corzine's seat. National Democrats pushed for a solid candidate to keep the seat in the party's hands in the 2006 election, a post no New Jersey Republican has won since 1972.

Concerned with your friends' drug use, like meth?
Worried about the risks of barebacking?

Gay Men's Health Project

To find the answers to your questions and to learn how to help your friends with real problems, come to the Gay Men's Health Project Community Leadership Series.

The first in the series is Sunday January 22nd.
For more information, or to RSVP and secure your place, call Gary at (520) 628-7223.

Compensation ranges from $60-$180* depending on participation level.
(* compensation comes in the form of gift cards.)

Gay Men's Health Project is a collaborative between the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation, Wingspan and the Pima County Health Department