

# GAY GRASSROOTS

Northwest Florida

Our Mission...

To bring together non-partisan activists to advocate for the full **UNDERSTANDING, RESPECT, EQUALITY, and INCLUSION** of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender persons living in Northwest Florida.



Volume 3, Issue 3

April 2011

## 3 major issues to be addressed at 6 important events in Pensacola this month

The early national lgbt civil rights movement, the state of homophobia in Pensacola, and the fight to retain Florida's recent adoption equality, will each be looked into in great detail at 6 different events that Gay Grassroots is collaborating on during the month of April. All of these events are FREE and open to the public:

**"On These Shoulders We Stand"** - nationally recognized film maker will take questions after screening her documentary that follows the struggles and advances made in Los Angeles during the early days of the lgbt civil rights movement. In conjunction with this screening, Gay Grassroots will award our 1st Annual LGBT Cultivation Award, and announce our own local lgbt history project. A wine and cheese reception will be included. This event is a collaboration with the Panhandle Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). *details, dates, and locations can be found on page 4*

**"Homophobia in Pensacola: Fact or Fiction:** - the finding from the 1st large scale scientific based research project on if and/or to what extent homophobia exists in the Pensacola area. The conclusions of this study conducted by the UWF Health Psychology Research Lab will be the 1st in a series of programs that Gay Grassroots will conduct the 2nd Monday of each month in collaboration with The Red Ribbon Charitable Foundation and The Elton John Foundation. *details, dates, and locations can be found on page 4*

**"A Parent's Love, is A Parent's Love"** - four events over 3 days will provide a better understanding of the harm that the children of Florida were subjected to under the 33 year ban on adoptions by gays and lesbians. Included in the events are screening of "In Anita's Wake" which documents how the once time beauty queen and Florida orange juice spokesperson misused her fame to create a climate of hysteria and fear that

kept thousands of children from finding long term safe and loving homes. Plaintiffs in the landmark court case that deemed this discrimination as unconstitutional will take part in town hall panel discussion. And workshop will prepare us to effectively talk about the need to uphold the Florida Supreme Courts ruling. Gay Grassroots is collaborating with the UWF Gay Straight Alliance (GSA), ACLU, and Holy Cross Metropolitan Community Church (HCMCC), to bring in the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Deformation (GLAAD) to conduct these events. *details, dates, and locations can be found on pages 4 & 5*

I hope that you will attend all of these important events, and bring others with you. In addition we have many fun events that you will find detailed on page 5.

In Pride,  
Doug Landreth

## We are back on the web! (or at least will be back very soon)



GGnwfl.com

After many trials and tribulations we have managed to get our web domain back and are working to quickly put in place a much improved website. Our revamped website will have back issues of our Rainbow Blades newsletters archived; our monthly calendar and current issue of Rainbow Blades will be easily accessed; you will be able to keep up to the minute on what is going on at our Equality House; how we are getting ready for PensacolaPRIDE 2011, including being able to access form needed to become a vendor, advertiser, donor, or entertainer; and the progress we are making on each of our advocacy goals. And with our new pay pal account you will be able to make your Gay Grassroots dues payments or fulfill your monthly Equality House support pledge.

### Inside this issue...

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Gay Grassroots of Northwest Florida is proud to demonstrate our commitment to our community by:  
 partnering in the lgbt community center      producing of our annual pride festival      publishing our monthly newsletter

**Equality House**  
Home to Pensacola's LGBT Community



To receive a full color version of this newsletter e-mailed to you each month please sent us an e-mail asking to be placed on our confidential e-mail list to [GayGrassrootsNWFL@gmail.com](mailto:GayGrassrootsNWFL@gmail.com).

# AS I SEE IT

*Doug Landreth*

Despite all the writing on the wall, and despite an overwhelming consensus among neutral parties, our elected officials all too often chose to either move slowly toward equality or worse yet do all they can to uphold social injustices based on their own prejudices. Case in point is "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"

"Don't ask, don't tell" led to the discharge of 261 service members in fiscal year 2010.

The discharge numbers, released Thursday, March 23, by the advocacy group Servicemembers United, comprise 250 separations reported by the Department of Defense and 11 from the Department of Homeland Security for the Coast Guard.

"Despite this law clearly being on its deathbed at the time, 261 more careers were terminated and 261 more lives were abruptly turned upside down because this policy," Servicemembers United executive director Alex Nicholson said in a statement.

Of the discharge numbers, Servicemembers Legal Defense Network executive director Aubrey Sarvis said, "While even one discharge under the discriminatory 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' law is too many, the 2010 numbers represent a marked decline from years before. But these numbers underscore the need to accelerate the timeline for training and repeal. The reality is that investigations continue and service members are still in danger of being discharged. We look forward to certification by Secretary Gates, Chairman Mullen, and the President as we move toward full repeal. Until we achieve full equality for all LGBT service members, the job is not done."

The Servicemembers United press release:

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Servicemembers United, the nation's largest organization of gay and lesbian troops and veterans, announced today that it has obtained documents showing that the total official number of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) discharges for Fiscal Year 2010 was 261. The annual fiscal year DADT discharge statistic combines the total number of discharges reported by the Department of Defense, which was 250, with the total number of discharges reported by the Department of Homeland Security for the Coast Guard, which was 11.

"While this latest official discharge number represents an all-time annual low, it is still

unusually high considering that the Secretary of Defense issued a directive half-way through the fiscal year to make it much harder for military units to discharge troops under 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell,'" said Alexander Nicholson, Executive Director of Servicemembers United. "Despite this law clearly being on its deathbed at the time, 261 more careers were terminated and 261 more lives were abruptly turned upside down because this policy."

While these annual figures released by the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security are used to calculate the official DADT discharge statistics, which now stand at grand total of 13,686, Servicemembers United previously uncovered and reported that the Department of Defense does not actually release information on all discharges under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." National Guard discharge numbers, which have yet to be released for fiscal year 2010, are often omitted from the official annual discharge numbers reported by the Department of Defense. This means that the total unofficial number of servicemembers discharged under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is now at least 14, 316.

For more information about Servicemembers United and "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," please visit [www.ServicemembersUnited.org](http://www.ServicemembersUnited.org). For the most comprehensive collection of polling data, discharge statistics, academic works, legislative and congressional material, and more, visit [www.DADTArchive.org](http://www.DADTArchive.org).

An even more disturbing issue for me is the reaction to the recent decision by the Florida State Supreme Court that overturned the ban on adoptions by gays and lesbians. Despite every respected child welfare agency finding that gays and lesbians are no more harmful to children than any parent can be, many state officials wasted no time voice their disapproval of the ruling and have vowed to find away to either circumvent or reverse this decision as quickly as possible.

Dean Cannon, the speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, wants to return the ban on adoption by same-sex couples. The 33-year-old ban was overturned by the courts last year, and former governor Charlie Crist ordered the Department of Children and Families to stop enforcing the ban. Former attorney general Bill McCollum decided not to appeal the ruling, and the window for appealing has since closed. Cannon discussed his views in an interview on Jan. 20 with the Florida Baptist Witness, where he said that the Republican-controlled legislature would be prepared to attempt to resurrect the adoption ban depending on how the issue plays out in more court districts or the administration of Gov. Rick

Scott. "Until we know how the governor and DCF secretary are going to apply it, it's not a foregone conclusion that the Legislature should step in," said Cannon. "If we think we should, we're certainly prepared and willing to do so."

In February, Gov. Scott appointed an administrator, David Wilkins, with fundamentalist Christian ties to lead DCF. Newly elected governor Rick Scott opposes adoption by same-sex couples, and when pressed on the issue in a recent visit to Pensacola said that due to the court ruling "yes gay persons are allowed to adopt, for now."

Wilkins has gone on the record as saying he believes that only legally married couples should be allowed to adopt. This would not only keep needy children from being placed in households with a single parent, but could certainly be used as a way to once again prevent gays and lesbians from adopting since we can not marry in the state of Florida and therefore would be considered unmarried by the state even if in a committed long term relationship.

Don't get me wrong, in the last few years the LGBT civil rights movement has seen a good deal of progress. And yes we need to take the time to celebrate these long overdue corrections, however with each step forward we see quick and orchestrated push back. If you have not yet been motivated, or have felt ill prepared to become engaged in the fight for your full equality, Gay Grassroots has collaborated in bring six events to Pensacola this month that are sure to have a lasting affect on you. Please plan now to attend the "On These Shoulders We Stand," "Homophobia in Pensacola: Fact or Fiction," and "A Parent's Love is A Parent's Love" events. Details can be found on pages 3 & 4.

That's the way I see it,  
Doug Landreth, Gay Grassroots President

# Equality House

Home to Pensacola's LGBT Community

## LGBT Teen Day



**SAT APR 2ND 10AM-8PM**  
Equality House will be reserved for teens ages 13 to 18 years today, (adult supervision will be provided) in order to provide a day of activities for this affinity group. Refreshments will be provided. This event

# LGBT TEENS

repeats the 1st Saturday of each month.

## 50+ Coffee Chat



**WED APR 6TH 6PM-8PM**  
Equality House will be reserved for persons 50 and above in order to provide a relaxing atmosphere for this affinity group, all ages welcome 10am til 6pm. This event repeats the 1st Wednesday of each

month.

## Game Night



**FRI APR 8TH 6PM**  
Come play one of our many games, or bring your favorite to challenge old and new friends. Please bring finger food to share.

## Parent & Child Day



**SAT APR 9TH 11AM-3PM**  
Equality House will be reserved for parents and their young children in order to provide an afternoon of activities for this affinity group, all ages welcome 3pm til 8pm. The

event repeats the 2nd Saturday of each month.

## National Pineapple Upside Down



**Cake Day WED APR 20TH 10AM-8PM**  
Come by for a FREE piece of homemade pineapple upside down cake!

## Children's Egg Hunt



**SAT APR 23RD 2PM**  
We will have 6 dozen prize filled eggs for the children to hunt. Cookies and punch will be provided.

## Potluck Dinner



**WED APR 27TH 7PM**  
Come enjoy a laid back meal with old and new friends. Baked chicken will be provided.

## Dining Out For Life



aware of it. See details on back page.

**THUR APR 28TH**  
Be sure to make plans to dine out and help raise money for local HIV/AIDS efforts. While this is not taking place at the Equality House we want to make you

## National Arbor Day



**FRI APR 29TH 10AM-8PM**  
Come get in the dirt with us, or simply donate plants, soil, or containers to make our home more inviting.

**VOLUNTEER TRAINING**

**Volunteer Ambassador Training**

**FRI APR 22ND 6PM**

**DINNER WILL BE PROVIDED**

If you are interested in volunteering at the Equality House you must attend one of these short trainings. You will learn how Gay Grassroots got started, how we opened the Equality House, how we produce PensacolaPRIDE, and what our goals for this year are. This will enable you to be a knowledgeable ambassador within the local lgbt community. Please RSVP if you plan to attend.

Please take a look around and see if you have any items that we would like to have donated to the Equality House.

**wish list**

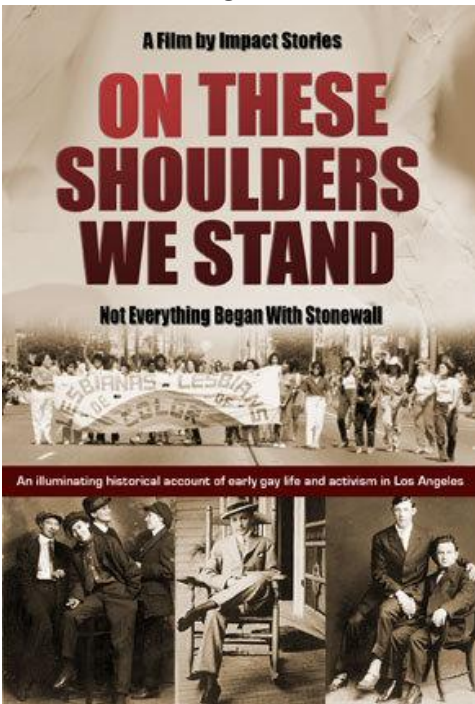
- Storage Shed
- Patio Furniture
- Push Lawn Mower
- Book Shelves
- Coffee Table
- End Tables
- LGBT Books, Magazines, & DVDs

What events and activities would you like to see take place at the Equality House? We would love to hear your suggestions!

# LOCAL JUICE

## Early LGBT civil rights movement, homophobia in Pensacola, and adoption equality events presented in Pensacola this month, all are FREE, open to the public, and not to be missed

**"On These Shoulders We Stand" Screening  
Q&A with Film Maker  
Award Presentation  
Launch of Pensacola History Project  
Wine & Cheese Reception  
Sun April 10th @ 2pm  
The Bowden Building, 120 Church Street**



Nationally recognized Film Maker brings documentary **"On These Shoulders We Stand"** the early lgbt civil rights movement in Los Angeles. Afterwards she will take questions, and Gay Grassroots will present our 1st Annual LGBT Cultivator Award, as well as announce a local lgbt history project. A Wine & Cheese Reception will follow. All aspects of this event are FREE and open to the public.

Not everything began with Stonewall. *On These Shoulders We Stand* is an illuminating historical account of early gay life and activism in Los Angeles told by the people who lived it. **Synopsis:** Eleven elders of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender community in Los Angeles chronicle gay life from the 1950s into the early 1980s. The film brings to light Los Angeles' hidden gay history by interweaving first person accounts with narration and unprecedented access to seldom-seen archival materials. **Project Summary:** The film shows postwar Los Angeles to be a city of startling contrasts. In this tale of two cities, there is one, a city with a substantial, vibrant gay community, and

the other, a city obsessed with rendering that community invisible, kept in the closet or locked in its jails. *On These Shoulders We Stand* chronicles the lives of eleven elders, from their early years to their coming out, to their groundbreaking activism for the rights of all LGBT people. Contrary to popular belief that the struggle for gay rights was confined to New York City and San Francisco, the film profiles several Los Angeles activists who helped change the course of both California and LGBT history. Viewers will learn how Los Angeles' gay community has had a national impact on issues as diverse as the first amendment, the entertainment industry and the civil rights movement. *On These Shoulders We Stand* brings the marginalized and under reported history of Los Angeles' LGBT community to a new generation of American audiences. This event is co-sponsored by Gay Grassroots and The Panhandle Chapter of the ACLU.

**"Homophobia in Pensacola: Fact or Fiction?" Presentation  
Mon April 11th @ 7pm  
The Equality House, refreshments provided**

The University of West Florida's Health Psychology Research Lab, will hosted the talk "Homophobia in Pensacola: Fact or Fiction?" on Monday April 11th (*this is the 1st in a series of events to take place the 2nd Monday of each month*) at the Equality House in downtown Pensacola. The talk will be presented by Susan Walsh, an associate professor of Psychology at UWF, and will reported on recent research pertaining to homophobia in Pensacola. "This is a fabulous opportunity for the community to take a scientific look in the mirror at ourselves," ACLU Regional Director Susan Watson said. Walsh, with the help of UWF research assistants, created a survey with questions designed to gauge people's opinions and attitudes towards homosexuals and AIDS. The questions ranged from whether you personally know any homosexuals or someone with AIDS to if you believe homosexuals deserve equal civil rights. "You can't measure homophobia without putting some things on paper that sound kind of homophobic," Walsh says as a disclaimer for those who may be shaken by some of the research questions. Participants were selected randomly in parking lots of major retail centers, such as Wal-Mart, resulting in 463 completed surveys. The majority of participants were white females considering themselves Baptist. Past research shows that homophobia is prevalent in men with less formal education, conservative religious beliefs,

conservative political beliefs and without prior personal contact with homosexuals. Did this hold true for Pensacola? "Knowing a gay person, your score in homophobia is on average half that of someone that doesn't know someone gay or lesbian," Walsh said. "What really did floor me was when half the people said that they didn't know anyone that was gay," she added. "That surprises me." Overall nearly 48 percent agreed homosexuality is a sin and 29 percent didn't know if AIDS could be spread by kissing. How do these factors influence the beliefs of our local citizens?

**4 FREE events in Pensacola to bring attention to the challenges that lie ahead to make sure that Florida children are secure in their opportunity to find safe a secure homes with gay parents**

Until an appellate ruling in September 2010, Florida explicitly banned gay and lesbian people from adopting children, even as the state foster care system was overwhelmed with neglected kids in need of safe, forever homes and legal protections. And even though the ban was ruled unconstitutional and having no rational basis by a lower court in 2008, the state continued to defend it at enormous cost to the state and to these families. In 2010 this ban was ruled unconstitutional. But now what? Why must we now fight to make sure the ruling that secured safe and loving homes for Florida's children is upheld, how must we prepare for future challenges that are based in hatred and bigotry; how can you help safeguard these safe and loving homes for the children of Florida? (*continued on page 5*)



# LOCAL JUICE

## 1st Screening of "In Anita's Wake":

**Thur April 14th @ 7pm**

**UWF, refreshments provided**

In 1977, Anita Bryant began a crusade against the gay community in Miami. Her Baptist church group called Save Our Children used irrational and malicious fear-mongering to fuel a repeal of a human rights ordinance that offered job and housing protections to gay citizens of Dade County. Anita's hysteria bloomed into a national anti-gay movement that prompted the Florida Legislature to pass a law banning all gay people from adopting children. 33 years after Anita, and still in the wake of her hysterical bigotry, over 3,000 children languished in an overburdened Florida foster care system. Those children were deprived of forever families and legal protections because a conservative Legislature and an army of "new Anitas" still embraced and profited from irrational, state-sanctioned, anti-gay bigotry. Over three decades later, that law - the only one of its kind in the nation - still stood. This updated version of the 2010 documentary looks back at the hysteria surrounding the 1977 homophobic crusade of Anita Bryant, and the resulting anti-gay adoption statute passed by the Florida Legislature. Featured in the film are parents and children who fought to save their families from a Florida government intent on tearing them apart.

## Town Hall Panel Discussion:

**Fri April 15th @ 1pm**

**refreshments provided**

Featuring Melanie and Vanessa Alenier, a family impacted by the ban, who became plaintiffs in the case and are featured in "In Anita's Wake." Hear their personal stories and have an opportunity to ask your questions.

## GLAAD Education & Speaker Training:

**Sat April 16th @ 12noon**

**UWF, refreshments provided**

**MUST BE 18 YEARS OF AGE & REGISTER**

Learn to talk about the adoption ban and how can help us sustain the victory for all of Florida's children by ensuring the ban is not reinstated.

## 2nd Screening of "In Anita's Wake":

**Sat April 16th @ 5pm**

**The Equality House, refreshments provided**

Gay Grassroots is proud to partner with these organizations to bring these 4 events to Pensacola: Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), Family Equality Council, Equality Florida, Securing Our Children's Rights (SOCR), National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), Florida To-

gether, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) ACLU of Florida Panhandle Chapter, Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) of the University of West Florida, the Equality House, and Holy Cross Metropolitan Community Church (MCC).

## **Ft. Lauderdale's lgbt museum goes national**

To better reflect the size and scope of the organization, Fort Lauderdale's Stonewall Museum and Archives has changed their name to the Stonewall National Museum & Archive. The Stonewall National Museum is the first of its kind in the United States and was the first to organize and circulate traveling exhibitions focused on gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender history. Also they were the first to have a permanent exhibition space dedicated to the history of the GLBT community in the United States from 1850 to the present. Founded in 1973 as one of the first gay libraries in the country, Stonewall has developed, through the years into one of the most significant and reliable sources of information on the LGBT communities in the country. While Stonewall's vast lending library will continue to be a part of its service to local community, what makes Stonewall unique today is its collection of historic artifacts and their credibility as a reliable chronicler and educator of the LGBT culture.

## **Navy seeks to discharge Pensacola native**

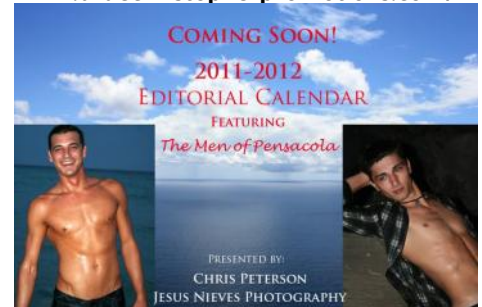
To hear Navy Petty Officer Stephen C. Jones tell it, what happened in his bedroom one night last month was purely innocuous: Another male sailor came by to watch "The Vampire Diaries," and they both dozed off in the same bed. "That is the honest, entire story," Jones said. Navy officials, however, have a different view of his bedroom behavior at the Naval Nuclear Power Training Command, near Charleston, S.C. Even though there is no evidence the 21-year-old sailor took part in any hanky-panky or that his friend was not permitted to visit, Jones has been charged with dereliction of duty. The Navy is seeking to discharge him, a move that he is contesting. "The subterfuge is, they believe this kid is a homosexual, but they have no proof of it," said Gary Myers, Jones's civilian attorney. "So what they've done here is to trump this thing up as a crime. This is not a crime." The gay ban still in effect. In December, President Obama signed legislation that will eventually allow gays to serve openly in the ranks for the first time. But the law will not take effect until 60 days after Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates and other officials formally certify to Congress that the military is ready to fully integrate gays. In the meantime, the Pentagon has effectively frozen many pending investigations into whether individual service members are gay. A [Defense](#)

[Department](#) spokeswoman said Pentagon officials have not approved the discharge of anyone for violating "don't ask, don't tell" since at least October. Some gay rights advocates have questioned whether commanders opposed to the new law might try to subvert it by pressing other disciplinary charges against people they suspect of being gay. "It's been the case for years that commanders had at their disposal the means to chapter someone out of the military for something other than homosexual conduct," said Alexander Nicholson, executive director of Servicemembers United, a group that pushed for an end to the "don't ask, don't tell" law. "If you want to get rid of somebody, you can always find something to punish them for."

## **The Men of Pensacola Calendar has increased their donation to Gay Grassroots to 15% of proceeds!**

**They are now taking advance orders online at: [http://](http://www.druechristopherpromotions.com/)**

**[www.druechristopherpromotions.com/](http://www.druechristopherpromotions.com/)**



On the website you can preview the men and read each of their bios. Gay Grassroots wishes to thank Chris Peterson and Jesus Nieves Photography for this generous donation. Gay Grassroots encourages everyone to buy theirs soon, and get some to give as gifts.

# OUR AMERICA



## Anti-gay Calif. senator comes out a year after being arrest drunk after leaving gay bar

Roy Ashburn, an antigay state senator, who made a name for himself over 14 years for opposing gay progress, came out on a California radio talk show last month. "I am gay... those are the words that have been so difficult for me for so long," the 55-year-old divorced father-of-four told KERN radio. Last year, Mr. Ashburn opposed a bill to establish a day of recognition to honour murdered gay rights activist Harvey Milk. He has also voted in the statehouse against efforts to expand anti-discrimination laws and recognise out-of-state gay marriages. Mr. Ashburn said his votes reflected the way his constituents wanted him to vote, not his own "internal conflict". Mr. Ashburn said he felt the need to address rumours that he had visited a gay nightclub before his arrest on suspicion of drinking and driving in Sacramento on March 3. He has been on leave since his arrest last week on suspicion of driving under the influence. Mr. Ashburn, who represents California's 18th district, said he does not plan to run for any public office after his term ends later this year

## Denver police fired for gay beating

Two Denver policemen have been fired for beating a gay man in 2009 and lying about the action captured on a surveillance camera. According to Reuters, in April 2009, Devin Sparks and Randy Murr detained Michael DeHerrera and his partner, Shawn Johnson, after Johnson was ejected from a downtown bar. The officers said that force was required to subdue the men, but a surveillance camera showed DeHerrera talking on a cell phone as Sparks tossed him to the ground and hit him with a metal rod. Although the police chief Gerry Whitman had recommended the officers be terminated, the then-safety manager Ron Perea suspended them for three days in a move that outraged the LGBT and Hispanic communities. Nearly two years later, the new safety manager Charles Garcia said their actions brought "immeasurable harm" to the department. Sparks was dismissed for "inappropriate use of force" and lying in his police report and Murr was let go for falsifying his report, reports Reuters..

## Requirement for surgery before change of gender on birth certificate brings law suit against New York

Three transgender people are suing the city of New York over a requirement that they must have gender reassignment surgery in order to have their birth certificates changed. The law-

suit, brought on their behalf by the Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund (TLDEF), says the requirement subjects transgender people to harassment and discrimination in violation of city human rights laws. The plaintiffs are two trans women and one trans man. Joann Prinzivalli, Patricia Harrington and Sam Berkley say they have been denied correct birth certificates because they have not undergone specific surgical procedures required by the city. Mr Berkley has had surgery and hormone treatment but says city officials are still denying him a birth certificate which lists his gender as male. "I've known since I was five years old that I'm male," he said. "I've undergone medical treatment as part of my transition and the medical documentation I submitted from my doctor should be sufficient to get my birth certificate corrected. Until it's corrected, I fear that I'll be subjected to harassment and discrimination whenever I need to present my birth certificate." Ms Harrington said she knew she was female at a young age but was not able to live as a woman until the age of 40. She said: "It's been a long journey, and it's important to me that the city correct my birth certificate so that I can present ID that reflects who I am today." Ms Prinzivalli said: "I am a woman. My birth certificate was incorrect when it was filled out, and it is still incorrect today." The lawsuit has been filed against the City of New York and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. It is understood to be the first of its kind. TLDEF says the vast majority of trans people have not undergone the surgeries required to change their birth certificates. Many trans people are unable to afford the complex and extensive procedures and some see the surgeries as unnecessary or potentially damaging to their health. "A birth certificate is a fundamental form of identification," said TLDEF staff attorney Noah Lewis. "By refusing to give transgender people accurate birth certificates that reflect who they are, the city subjects transgender people to harassment and discrimination in areas like employment where ID is essential to proving eligibility to work."

## Gay "second class citizenship" gets actor out of jury duty

A New York gay actor and model dodged jury duty this month by saying he could not be impartial because he is treated as a second-class citizen. Jonathan D Lovitz, was waiting to be called in with other jurors when they were asked whether they could be impartial. He wrote on his Facebook page: "I raised my hand and said, 'Since I can't get married or adopt a child in the state of New York, I can't possibly be an impartial judge of a citizen when I am considered a second class one in the eyes of this justice system.'" He was then excused

by the judge. Speaking to News Nation, he said: "It was such a spur of the moment thing. I was shaking, trembling. It just came out of me so spontaneously. "I never intended to be an activist. . . I'm just a young gay man who saw some inequality in the state, in the country." Mr Lovitz added: "We have certain civic responsibilities, like paying our taxes and serving on juries. and I think everyone is obligated to participate. "But when it's your turn to say how you really feel, you need to say how you really feel." Legal experts say it is up to a judge to dismiss a member of the jury if he or she is considered unable to be impartial

## Tennessee seeks to prevent mention of homosexuality in schools

Republicans in Tennessee are proposing a bill that would prevent students from learning about homosexuality in public elementary and middle schools. The bill states: "No public elementary or middle school shall provide any instruction or material that discusses sexual orientation other than heterosexuality." State Sen. Stacey Campfield and Rep. Bill Dunn are sponsoring the bill, and say it should be up to parents whether or not their children learn about homosexuality, rather than teachers in classrooms "where other children may be present". The Tennessee Equality Project, who recently received \$10,000 from the Human Rights Campaign, is lobbying against the proposal. TEP chair, Ben Byers, told [WVLT-TV](#): "It raises all kinds of issues about anti-gay bias, free-speech and government overreach." Mr Byers also said it prevents teachers discussing gay issues with students who may be gay or have gay family.

# WORLD VIEW

## Uganda eases talk of killing gays, but will keep severe punishments

Reports from Uganda indicate that the administration wants to shelve the bill that would punish gay people with death in certain instances, but David Bahati, the bill's main sponsor in parliament, appears unwilling to back down. Information minister Masiko Kabakumba appeared Thursday, March 24, on NTV to announce that the administration of President Yoweri Museveni had determined the Anti-Homosexuality Bill to be redundant because other laws already criminalize gay people in the country. The new proposal, which sparked international outcry when it was introduced in 2009, would magnify the penalties to include execution for "aggravated homosexuality," such as having sex when HIV-positive. Kabakumba said that another law, the Sexual Offenses Bill, would cover any outstanding concerns, but Bahati, the lawmaker with connections to antigay American evangelicals, insisted that a "specific and clear" law is still needed to fight the "promotion" of homosexuality. In addition, Warren Throckmorton reports that Bahati has been assured by legal and parliamentary affairs committee chair Stephen Tashobya that debate on the Anti-Homosexuality Bill will proceed. Bahati said that "95%" of Ugandans do not support homosexuality, a claim that Kabakumba did not challenge. "Of course we are concerned," she said. "We don't condone homosexuality in our country."

## Canada to launch program to assist lgbt refugees

Canadian immigration minister Jason Kenney announced a pilot project in which the government will work with the LGBT community to help persecuted refugees. The *Toronto Star* reports on the effort between Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Rainbow Refugee Committee to sponsor refugees. "The department will provide \$100,000 in assistance to cover three months of income support for the refugees upon their arrival here, while the Rainbow committee will offer orientation services, accommodation, food and other basic needs," reports the *Star*. The agreement requires the Rainbow committee to reach out to other private groups for help with sponsorship applications and arrangements. Sponsors will provide financial support for asylum seekers' first year of settlement in Canada. The announcement comes in advance of a likely spring election and after the controversy over the Tory minister's decision last year to abbreviate the references to gay rights history in a citizenship guide.

## Dutch military given okay to wear uniforms at pride events

Dutch Gay and lesbian soldiers, sailors, air force crew and other defence personnel who want to take part in this year's Amsterdam Gay Pride event have been given permission to wear their uniforms on the parade through the city's canals. The ministry of defence says it's backing 'out in the open' military participation during the week-long event. The homosexual representatives of the armed forces will have their own special boat in the famous Canal Parade, traditionally held on the afternoon of the first Saturday in August.

## China arrest women for writing gay erotica

Police in China have arrested 32 women for allegedly writing erotica for a gay website. The women, include one 17-year-old, were arrested in Zhengzhou, the capital of Henan Province, *ShanghaiDaily.com* reports. They were reportedly arrested for spreading obscene material. Police said the website contained 80,000 erotic stories and had 600,000 registered members. The site's owner reportedly said that his workers were young women in their twenties in cities like Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chongqing. Last September, reports said that 80 gay men had been detained by police at a cruising spot in woods near Beijing. They were apparently released after being photographed, although one report claimed they had been finger-printed and blood-tested. China only decriminalized homosexuality in 1997 and it was seen as a mental illness until 2001.

## South African lesbians bravely stand up against "corrective rape"

Lesbian activists in the South African capital of Cape Town held a demonstration outside parliament yesterday to call for more action on the problem of 'corrective rape'. The 25 campaigners from lesbian group Luleki Sizwe want Justice Minister Jeff Radebe to recognise the issue as a hate crime. 'Corrective rape', as it is known, is the rape of lesbians to try and 'turn' them straight. Campaigners say it is becoming more common. The most high-profile case was in 2008, when lesbian footballer Eudy Simelane was raped, beaten and murdered. Two men were jailed for her killing. As well as demonstrating outside parliament, Luleki Sizwe has organised a 170,000-signature petition from around the world asking the government to look at the issue. Luleki Sizwe founder Ndumie Funda told the Canadian Press: "We have shown that we can mobilize tens of thousands of people in South Africa and around the world, and the ministry now knows that they can no longer ignore our long fight against corrective rape. The question now is what

they will actually do about it. The ball is in their court." The groups wants research to be commissioned into corrective rape and a national plan to tackle sexual violence, as well as hate crimes. A 2009 report suggested that there was a rise in 'corrective rapes' and assaults on lesbians in South Africa. Figures suggest there are an estimated 500,000 rapes in South Africa every year and for every 25 men accused of rape in the country, 24 walk free.

## Thailand military creates new term for transgender service members

Thailand's defense ministry has coined new terms to describe transgender men normally exempt from army conscription to avoid causing them offence, a report said Sunday, March 20th. The ministry is amending the law that states transgender people are exempt from signing up to the military -- unless there is a shortage of recruits -- because of a "psychological abnormality", the Bangkok Post newspaper said. When Thailand's annual conscription begins in April, "Type 2" will instead refer to men who have undergone breast implants and "Type 3" will describe those who have had a full sex change, the Bangkok Post newspaper said. "Type 1" will refer to men "whose appearances are typical of men". "Normally only Type 1 are required to draw a conscription ballot," Thaksin Chiamthong, director of the academic resources division of the Army Reserve Command, told the paper. "But if the number of Type 1 is insufficient, Type 2 will be conscripted as well, despite their female-like breasts." Thaksin's office was unavailable for comment on Sunday. The army reportedly proposed replacing the current classification in the Conscription Act of 1954 with "gender identity disorder", but faced ire from rights groups opposed to any term that suggested abnormality. The Thai armed forces need to conscript 97,280 men aged 21 this year -- up by 9,828 from 2010, the paper said.

## German transgender prisoners may dress in alignment with their identify

Transgender prisoners are able to wear whichever clothes they want after a court ruled that personal rights superseded security concerns when it comes to clothes. An incarcerated transgender man first brought the suit to court because a state prison would not let him wear women's clothing as he had done before entering prison. The prison said the ban was due to "security concerns" because the prisoner choice of clothes might make him a target for attacks. But Germany's individual rights and anti-discrimination laws protect a prisoner's right to choose his or her clothing, the court said, and trump hypothetical security concerns. Unlike many other countries, prisoners in Germany do not wear uniforms.

# TIMELY TOPIC

*Donna Stough*

## Most Americans favor marriage equality

A majority of Americans now support gay marriage, according to a new Washington Post-ABC News poll. The results underscore the nation's increasingly tolerant views about homosexuals, and parallel a string of recent legal and legislative victories for gay rights advocates.

Five years ago, at 36 percent, support for gay marriage barely topped a third of all Americans. Now, 53 percent say gay marriage should be legal, marking the first time in Post-ABC polling that a majority has said so. "This is very consistent with a lot of other polling data we've seen and the general momentum we've seen over the past year and a half," said Evan Wolfson, president of Freedom to Marry, a leading pro-gay-marriage group. "As people have come to understand this is about loving, committed families dealing, like everyone, with tough times, they understand how unfair it is to treat them differently."

Opponents of same-sex marriage took issue with the poll, which asks respondents: "Do you think it should be legal or illegal for gay and lesbian couples to get married?" Brian Brown, president of the National Organization for Marriage, argued that the term "illegal" could be inferred to mean that violators could be imprisoned, which most Americans would consider harsh. Brown, whose group is a prominent anti-gay-marriage group, noted that all 31 states that have put same-sex marriage on the ballot voted to ban it. "The only poll that counts is a free and fair vote on the part of the people," he said. "We've seen these biased polls time and time again — right before votes in which same-sex marriage is rejected. It's absurd. The people of this country have not changed their opinion about marriage."

Post-ABC News polls have used the same "legal or illegal" wording in every poll about same-sex marriage since 2003. Other surveys by the Pew Research Center, the Associated Press and CNN show similar trends. In the new Post-ABC poll, the shift has been driven by several political and demographic groups whose support for such unions jumped sharply. Men, who previously were less supportive of same-sex marriage than women, now back it at the same rate. Support among college-educated whites, political independents and people who do not consider themselves religious also rose substantially.

Republicans, conservatives and white evangelical Christians remain the groups most opposed to legalizing gay marriage.

The survey also shows a shift in how intensely people feel on this issue. In the past, the number of Americans who felt strongly that gay marriage should be banned far outnumbered those who were passionate in their belief that it should be legal. That has balanced out, with 35 percent strongly against legal gay marriage and 36 percent strongly in favor. Passionate opposition to gay marriage last year in part led voters in Iowa to oust three state Supreme Court justices who had joined in the unanimous decision to legalize same-sex unions in the state. Minnesota, Indiana, Pennsylvania and North Carolina are considering steps that would ban same-sex marriage in their states. But those victories for opponents of same-sex marriage have lately been overshadowed by several defeats.

Last March, the District joined five states in allowing same-sex couples to marry. Later in California, a federal judge struck down that state's voter-approved ban on same-sex unions. The issue is now before an appeals court and is likely to end up at the Supreme Court. In the summer, a federal judge in Massachusetts struck down the federal government's

ban on recognition of same-sex marriages under the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act. This issue, too, will probably end up before the nation's high court. In a major victory for supporters of gay marriage, the Obama administration announced earlier this month that it would no longer defend the statute in court.

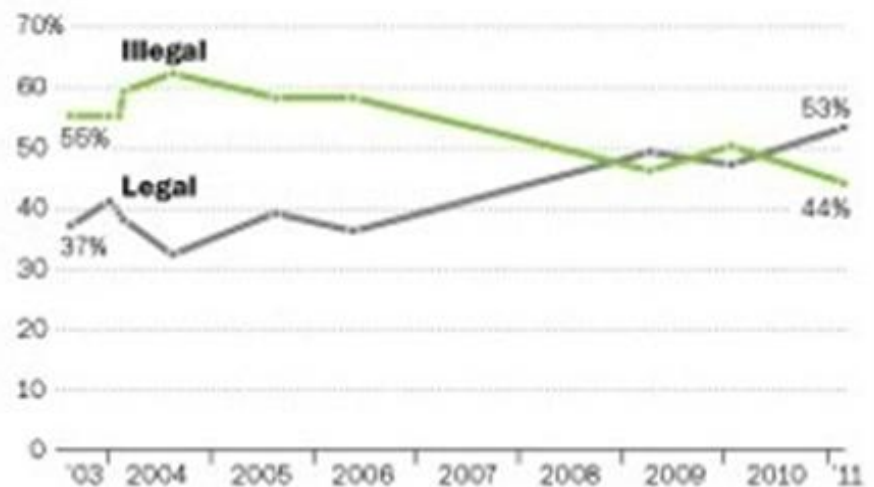
Congressional Republicans have vowed to defend the law themselves and criticized Obama for elevating such a divisive social issue at a time the focus ought to be on the economy and jobs. This week, Democrats introduced bills to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act and noted how the tables have turned. "What do I say to the idea that this is a wedge issue? I say 'Hallelujah,'" Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), who is gay, told reporters, according to the liberal Web site Talking Points Memo. "The fact that we've now evolved to the point where the Republicans are complaining about the fact that we introduced this bill because it causes them political problems is a great sign of progress. It used to be the other way around."

*due to family illness Donna regrets that she was unable to submit her column this month, instead we are spotlighting a timely poll*

### The Washington Post - ABC News poll

## Slim majority support for gay marriage

Q: Do you think it should be illegal or legal for gay and lesbian couples to get married?



SOURCE: This Washington Post-ABC News poll was conducted by telephone March 10 to 13 among a random national sample of 1,005 adults, including users of both conventional and cellular phones. The results from the full survey have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa. Because of rounding, not all percentages total 100.

Complete data from the poll can be found at [www.washingtonpost.com/polls](http://www.washingtonpost.com/polls)

# MOVING FORWARD

You could win \$100

# PRIDE Pensacola ART CONTEST

PensacolaPRIDE 2011 will join pride festivals around the world in adopting the global theme "Pride Around the World" for use as the local theme for PensacolaPRIDE 2011, to be held Monday October 10th through Sunday October 16th, with our signature Festival in the Park to be held on Saturday October 15th in historic Seville Square. Everyone is invited to enter our art contest to select the image that will be used on the cover of the Pensacola-PRIDE program (and all other publicity materials), as well as being reproduced on all 2011 PensacolaPRIDE merchandise. The winner of this contest will receive \$100 cash, and be acknowledged in our Rainbow Blades newsletter and the PensacolaPRIDE program. Artwork must be e-mailed to [GayGrassrootsNWFL@gmail.com](mailto:GayGrassrootsNWFL@gmail.com) by 12 noon, Wednesday April 27th. Artwork must include the wording, "Pride Around the World", no other text should be included. Winning artwork becomes the property of GayGrassroots and may be altered for reproduction purposes, the artist will have the 1st option of making any need changes. For more information please e-mail your questions to [GayGrassrootsNWFL@gmail.com](mailto:GayGrassrootsNWFL@gmail.com).

**Open Meeting**  
**THUR APR 21ST @ 7PM**



Everyone is invited to join us as we continue our growth and organizing. We will discuss our progress on creating Gay Straight Alliances (GSA) in all greater Pensacola High Schools;

our initial approach to insuring that all local lgbt youth who become homeless or find themselves in unsafe home have access to safe and affirming housing; and discuss plans for the May 17th International Day Against Homophobia. Refreshments will be provided.

**Open Planning Roundtable**  
**THUR APR 28TH @ 7PM**



Everyone is invited to join us as we continue our planning for a bigger and better Pensacola-PRIDE 2011. Before the meeting everyone is asked to think of entertainment they would like to see perform during Saturday's Festival in the Park, events they think would be well attended during the week, possible advertisers, and ideas to start raising money now. Refreshments will be provided.

**Local Attorney to conduct series of FREE workshops on lgbt legal topics**



**1st workshop: General LGBT Law Overview**

**SAT MAY 14TH @ 4:30PM**

Attorney Joshua Jones will be offering a 5 part series on legal issues of particular importance to the lgbt community. These free workshops will be held the 2nd Saturday of each month at the Equality House from 4:30pm til 6:00pm. Persons wishing to attend are asked to RSVP for each workshop by e-mailing [GayGrassrootsNWFL@gmail.com](mailto:GayGrassrootsNWFL@gmail.com). The tentative sched-

ule is: May 14th-general overview; June 11th-real estate; July 9th-adoption; August 13th-same gender divorce; September 10th-estate planning.

**International Day Against Homophobia**  
**TUE MAY 17**

**Same-sex Couple**  
A Story of Love

**May 17**  
International Day  
Against Homophobia

Participate!  
This day belongs to YOU!

[homophobiaday.org](http://homophobiaday.org)

We have only this year become aware of this observance, and we want to plan an event that is meaningful and gets press coverage. Why May 17th? May 17th is symbolic due to its significance in improving the status of gays and lesbians. In removing homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses on a May 17, the World Health Organization (WHO) put an end to over a century of homophobia in the medical field. We will make plans for this event at our Thursday April 21st Gay Grassroots open meeting.



**WE NEED A FLAT BED TRAILER AND PICK-UP TRUCK THAT WE CAN USE FOR THE MOBILE PRIDE PARADE SAT APRIL 30TH & SUN MAY 1ST. PLEASE CONTACT US ASAP IF YOU HAVE ONE THAT WE CAN BORROW.**

# APRIL 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
MAR 27	MAR 28	MAR 29	MAR 30	MAR 31	1	2
 <p><b>Pensacola Homophobic?</b></p> <p>Homophobia in Pensacola: Fact or Fiction?</p> <p>Results from the area's only large scale research conducted by UWF. This will be the first in our 2nd Monday Series.</p> <p>Mon April 10th @ 7pm The Equality House</p> <p><b>DETAILS IN LOCAL JUICE ON PAGE 4</b></p>			 <p><b>ACLU</b> AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF FLORIDA</p> <p>6PM DOWNTOWN LIBRARY OPEN MEETING</p> <p>info Dale 850 429-9128 www.ACLUfl.org</p>		 <p><b>LGBT TEENS</b></p> <p>10AM-8PM Equality House will be reserved for teens ages 13 to 18 years today, (adult supervision will be provided) in order to provide a day of activities for this affinity group.</p>	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
 <p><b>Kaleidoscope AA</b></p> <p>6PM OPEN MEETING</p> <p>info Louis 850 291-6859 louiscooper@cox.net</p>	 <p><b>Rainbow Readers Book Club</b></p> <p>5:30PM OPEN DISCUSSION</p> <p>info Brian 850 375-2524 bdjeike@mac.com</p>		 <p><b>50 Plus coffee chat</b></p> <p>6PM-8PM Equality House will be reserved for persons 50 and above in order to provide a relaxing atmosphere for this affinity group, all ages welcome 10am til 6pm.</p>	 <p><b>Family Dinner</b></p> <p>6:30PM Come catch up with old friends or make new friends at this affordable buffet dinner @ Panda China on E Gregory St.</p>	 <p><b>GAME NIGHT</b></p> <p>6PM come play one of our many games, or bring your favorite <b>FEEL FREE TO BRING FINGER FOODS TO SHARE</b></p>	 <p><b>PARENT &amp; CHILD ICE CREAM DAY</b></p> <p>11AM-3PM Equality House will be reserved for parents and their young children in order to provide an afternoon of activities for this affinity group, all ages welcome 3pm til 8pm.</p>
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
 <p><b>ON THESE SHOULDERS WE STAND</b> Not Everything Began With Stonewall</p> <p>2PM SCREENING AND Q&amp;A WITH FILM MAKER</p>	<p>Plus we will award our 1st Annual LGBT Cultivator Award</p> <p>and we will announce a local LGBT history project</p> <p>wine &amp; cheese reception will follow</p> <p>details on this FREE event can be found on page 3</p> <p><b>BOWDEN BUILDING</b> 120 CHURCH STREET PENSACOLA</p>		 <p><b>PFLAG</b> Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays</p> <p>6PM OPEN SUPPORT GROUP</p> <p>info Marge 850 932-0397 www.PFLAG.org</p>	 <p><b>In Anita's Wake</b> The Irrational War on Florida's Gay Families</p> <p>1st Screening of "In Anita's Wake" 7PM @ UWF</p>	<p>Florida's law banning gay people from adopting has been overturned in the courts! Now what?</p> <p>details on these 4 FREE events are on pages 3&amp;4</p> <p><b>GLADD</b> Education and Speaker Training 12noon @ UWF</p> <p>2nd Screening of "In Anita's Wake" 5PM</p> <p>Town Hall Panel Discussion 1PM @ UWF</p>	

# APRIL 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>17</p>  <p>6PM OPEN MEETING info Louis 850 291-6859 louiscooper@cox.net</p>	<p>18</p>  <p><b>Dine Out, Fight AIDS</b></p> <p>Dine out THUR APRIL 28 and help fight AIDS. All funds raised will be used locally to help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and provide humanitarian support and services to those affected by HIV in Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton counties. Visit the Dining Out for Life website, <a href="http://www.diningoutforlife.com">www.diningoutforlife.com</a>, to learn more about the event, and to see what local restaurants are participating.</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>  <p>it's national pineapple upside down cake day, come in for a free piece!</p>	<p>21</p>  <p><b>OPEN MEETING</b> <i>everyone invited join in our progress</i></p> <p>6PM we will discuss our plans for gsa clubs and lgbt homelessness <b>REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED</b></p>	<p>22</p>  <p><b>VOLUNTEER TRAINING</b></p> <p>6PM see page 4 for details <b>REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED</b></p>	<p>23</p>  <p>2PM we will have 6 dozen prize filled eggs for the children to hunt <b>COOKIES AND PUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED</b></p>
<p>24</p>  <p>4PM OPEN MEETING info 850 346-6004 nwflnow@gmail.com</p>  <p>6 PM</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>27</p>  <p>7PM come enjoy a laid back meal with old and new friends <b>BAKED CHICKEN WILL BE PROVIDED</b></p>	<p>28</p>  <p><b>PLANNING ROUNDTABLE</b> <i>everyone invited to help with this festival</i></p> <p>6PM we need you to insure our festival continues to get bigger and better <b>REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED</b></p>	<p>29</p>  <p><b>NATIONAL ARBOR DAY</b> donate plants, soil, or containers to make our home more inviting</p>	<p>30</p>   <p><b>COME GO WITH US TO MOBILE PRIDE, WE WILL HAVE A BOOTH</b></p>	
<p>MAY 1</p>  <p>6PM OPEN MEETING info Louis 850 291-6859 louiscooper@cox.net</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>  <p>6PM-8PM <i>Equality House will be reserved for persons 50 and above in order to provide a relaxing atmosphere for this affinity group, all ages welcome 10am til 6pm.</i></p>	<p>5</p>  <p>6:30PM <i>Come catch up with old friends or make new friends at this affordable buffet dinner @ Panda China on E Gregory St.</i></p>	<p>6</p> 	<p>7</p>  <p>10AM-8PM <i>Equality House will be reserved for teens ages 13 to 18 years today, (adult supervision will be provided) in order to provide a day of activities for this affinity group.</i></p>

# GOOD NEWS

## **1st ever gay candidate announces campaign for U.S. President**

He may not be taken seriously by many voters in 2012, but long-shot GOP presidential hopeful Fred Karger caught the attention of the Republican National Committee's top brass Tuesday, March 22. The California-based gay-rights activist, a former top political operative for three Republican presidents, visited Washington this week to become the first to file for the GOP presidential nomination. He plans to turn in his paperwork in person to the Federal Election Commission on Wednesday morning. And although the announcement will be a blip, if anything, on the national political radar, Karger said he received a warm reception during a meeting with RNC Chief of Staff Jeff Larson. "He welcomed me and said they would provide any of their facilities — obviously they have to be neutral," Karger said, adding that his Washington-based communications director was invited to attend presidential-related RNC meetings in the future as well. RNC Chairman Reince Priebus and his vice chairman joined the meeting soon after it began. "In comes Reince to shake my hand," Karger said. "We had a great meeting. I gave him one of my T-shirts. "They rolled out the red carpet," he continued. "I've been getting a lot of resistance from the establishment, particularly in Iowa. ... So to have the chairman, vice chairman and chief of staff welcome me with open arms was very gratifying." Karger, 61, who publicly acknowledged being gay just two years ago, served as a senior campaign consultant with Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush and Gerald Ford.

## **Irish candidate seeks to be world's 1st gay head of state**

Gay senator David Norris has formally announced his bid to become the next president of Ireland. If successful, he will become the first openly gay head of state. Mr Norris, an independent senator is currently the front runner to win the position, which is primarily ceremonial. During his announcement, he said that he would become a "deeply serious" president if successful but added "that doesn't mean there's going to be no fun." When asked by reporters if Ireland is ready for an openly gay president, Mr Norris said: "I don't see myself as a gay president, I see myself as a president who happens to be gay." He added: "I think the Irish people are a little bit bored with my sexuality". A poll in January for Paddy Power put Mr Norris ahead in the race for president. He was favored by 27 per cent of the 1,001 people surveyed by Red C for Paddy Power. This year's election, to find the successor to Mary McAleese will be the first presidential

election to be contested in 14 years. Mrs McAleese was elected unopposed in 2004. If he is successful, Mr Norris will be the first openly gay head of state. Johanna Sigurdardottir, Iceland's prime minister became the world's first openly gay head of government in 2009.

## **Gay leadership grows within NAACP**

More gay leaders and people of diverse racial backgrounds are being selected to lead the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People as the venerable civil rights organization seeks to increase its membership and broaden its anti-discrimination agenda. The Associated Press reports on the new faces, the result of an "aggressive effort over the past four or five years" started under former chairman Julian Bond and accelerated under president Benjamin Todd Jealous, who has pushed for the organization to support gay rights. Paid membership has increased to 525,000 from a low of just below 300,000 within the past decade, and people under 25 are now the fastest-growing membership group. "NAACP branches have been recruiting gays, immigrants and young people who grew up in a world far removed from the landmark 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education ruling that outlawed school segregation," reports the AP. "Now, leadership positions that were once held only by blacks are being filled by members of other racial or ethnic groups."

Some worry that the push for inclusion could distract from the NAACP's focus on African-American issues, but others argue that the broadened agenda returns the organization to the spirit of its 1909 founding by black and white activists.

## **Apple discounts antigay iPhone app**

Apple appears to have pulled the antigay Exodus International iPhone app from the App Store, although the company has not yet released a statement on the move. Change.org, home of a petition against the app started by Truth Wins Out, reported on the apparent change late Tuesday, March 22, "Apple has been under fire for more than a week now for carrying a 'gay cure' app on its platform from Exodus International. But if you try to access the controversial app this evening, this is the message you'll get: 'The item you've requested is not currently available in the U.S. store.'" According to Change.org, the president of Exodus International, Alan Chambers, tweeted that their 'gay cure' app was removed from the App Store. The petition against the app garnered more than 145,000 supporters, and counting. Visitors are encouraged to continue to sign the petition because Apple has not released an official statement.

## **Crystal Cathedral founder voices dis-**

## **pleasure with pastors requirement that choir members be straight**

On March 16, *USA Today* reported that Crystal Cathedral, now headed by founder Robert Schuller's daughter, riled up the choir and congregation by asking the them to sign a statement opposing all sex outside male-female marriages. Now, *The Orange County Register* finds Schuller didn't know what senior pastor Sheila Schuller Coleman was doing and didn't approve. Indeed, he says, when he ran the show people didn't even have to be Christian to sing for the church. He told the paper, "I strongly disapprove of an anti-gay covenant my own church administrators asked choir members to sign, stating that it goes against the principles of tolerance, acceptance and positive thinking on which he built his 50-year-old ministry. I have a reputation worldwide of being tolerant of all people and their views. I'm too well-educated to criticize a certain religion or group of people for what they believe in. It's called freedom. Schuller also, however, says he's not contesting the "Biblical view" the covenant claim. He just says that forcing people to sign covenants doesn't fit with his positive principles. We don't test anyone who comes to our ministry. We don't require them to be Christian. We would not demand that they be born-again Christians.

## **Baking queens can relax, Easy-Bake oven survives ban on incandescent bulbs**

The popular toy, the Easy-Bake Oven got a new lease on life this past week when manufacturer, Hasbro announced it would redesign the device using a small heating element to replace the 100-watt light bulb which powered the small oven since its unveiling in 1963. The reborn Easy-Bake will be sold as the new Easy-Bake Ultimate Oven. The future of the Easy-Bake Oven had been in doubt since the U.S. Government announced that incandescent light bulbs will no longer be sold in the United States beginning in 2012. With the new, more efficient heating system, the new oven will now bake an extended menu that includes cookies, red velvet cupcakes, checker cakes, pizza, pretzels, cinnamon twists and brownie sticks. This brand new oven will also have a more modern, stylish look and modern functions. The oven was inducted into the National Toy Hall of Fame in 2006.



# ALL OUT ASSAULT

## Huckabee urges “fight gay marriage, even if it costs you your job”

Speaking at an event in Iowa, likely Republican presidential aspirant Mike Huckabee urged the crowd to be “spiritual warriors” in the fight to protect the sanctity of marriage, even if it costs you your job. Huckabee spoke at the Des Moines Sheraton, in a battle cry of sorts to energize his evangelical base.

## N.Y. Archbishop equates marriage equality to incest

Archbishop of New York Timothy Dolan appeared on *60 Minutes Overtime*, where he said that same-sex couples are no more entitled to marry each other than he is entitled to marry his mother. The former Milwaukee archbishop explained the Catholic Church’s opposition to marriage equality to Morley Safer with a baseball analogy. “I have a strong desire to play shortstop for the Yankees,” he said. “I don’t have a right to, because I don’t have what it takes. And that would be what the church would say about marriage. We would say marriage by nature, marriage by definition is between a man and woman for life, giving children. Don’t tamper with the definition.” Pressed by Safer to explain how exactly marriage equality would harm heterosexual marriages, Dolan responded, “Because where then would the tampering stop?” “I mean, I love my mom,” said Dolan. “I don’t have the right to marry her, OK? There are certain rights and attractions in life that are very beautiful and noble but don’t entitle you to marriage.” As leader of the powerful archdiocese of New York, Dolan is a key voice of opposition to the effort to pass a marriage equality bill in the state this year. He also discussed priestly celibacy with Safer and explained why the church believes women cannot be priests.

## Sheriff thinks “fag jew boy” use okay if not meant to be public

The Schuyler County, Ill., sheriff says he regrets posting a comment on Facebook referring to someone, he claims jokingly, as a “little fag Jew boy.” Don Scheiferdecker says he has no animus toward Jews or gays but was only making a silly comment that he didn’t realize could be seen by the public. “He posted it to the Facebook page of a dispatcher, who had used the slang word for a homosexual under the picture of another dispatcher,” reports Illinois’s *Journal Courier*, noting the sheriff is new to Facebook. “I wouldn’t say or do anything like that to hurt anyone,” he told the

newspaper. “I couldn’t care less about anyone’s religion and sexual preference.”

## Australian telecaster call part of Sydney Mardi Gras “disgusting” while on air

An Australian TV presenter has apologized for remarks he made about Sydney’s Mardi Gras festival. Ron Wilson, a presenter for Channel Ten, was interviewing festival co-chair Peter Urmson on Monday, March 8. Wilson said on the show: “On the night there some of the spectacles you’re seeing I’m assuming would even make you cringe. It becomes an exploitation almost of a sexual image rather than trying to explore the diversity of lifestyle.” Urmson interjected, saying the parade was colorful. But Wilson replied: “With respect, there’s a difference between colorful and disgusting in some cases.... [some people] really do seem to cross the line.” Later in the exchange, Wilson said: “There’s acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle. Why not let time take care of the gay marriage issue rather than pushing it?” Urmson responded by saying: “Because if we don’t push for it, no one’s going to.” After complaints, Wilson issued an apology on the next day’s broadcast, saying: “As a journalist, my job is to present an issue from different perspectives. But there is no question I could have chosen my words better. If anyone took offence at anything I said during the interview I apologize. “I fully support the gay community and its campaign to promote the issue of gay marriage and I do congratulate the gay and lesbian community on the success of this year’s event. Please take that with sincerity.” Urmson told reporters he accepted the apology but Australian gay rights campaigner Gary Burns has said he will lodge a complaint against Wilson at the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Board. “The Mardi Gras may not be everyone’s cup of tea but surely diversity on a night like this is acceptable,” Burns said. In a statement, Channel Ten said: “Ten Morning News featured eight minutes of overwhelmingly positive coverage of Mardi Gras. Ron Wilson congratulated organizers on the success of the 2011 event. “One small section of the interview raised a question about behavior by some participants. The phrasing might not have been ideal, and Ten apologizes if any viewers took offence. “However, it is not unreasonable for alternative views to be put to organizers and the interview talent agreed that while he didn’t hold the view, some sections of society may.”

## Kansas law makers decide to keep laws making gay sex illegal on the books

Members of Kansas’ gay community aren’t happy as lawmakers in Topeka have decided to leave on the books laws banning homosexuality. The laws banning gay sex have been ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court,

but the law remains in place in Kansas. And an effort to repeal it was killed in mid March. in Topeka, leaving gay and lesbian Kansans outraged. “Good people make bad decisions, and I believe this was a very bad decision,” said Jackie Carter with Metropolitan Community Church. Carter is a leader of the gay and lesbian community in Wichita and the pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church. She says she’s saddened by a move this week in Topeka to leave a law on the books in Kansas that bans gay sex. She says it leaves thousands of gay Kansans under the impression they are unwelcome in the Sunflower State. “I read that message quite clearly: you really don’t matter so if you move to another state we really won’t care,” she said. The House Judiciary Committee was considering a bill to clean up Kansas’ criminal code when a pair of lawmakers, Jan Pauls from Hutchinson and Lance Kinzer from Olathe, removed an amendment from the bill that would have repealed the law banning homosexual acts. Laws banning homosexual acts have been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. But Lanzer says it doesn’t need to be repealed because it isn’t being enforced, saying “It’s a tempest in a teapot. I don’t think it would make any difference. The statute is unenforceable.” “I think their motivation is pretty clear,” said Thomas Witt, chair of Kansas Equality Commission. “They don’t like gay people and they’re going to make sure in the eyes of the law we’re still considered criminals.” Efforts to reach Representative Pauls were unsuccessful today. KSN was told she was in committee all day long and unable to return a phone call. A rally in her district of Hutchinson is planned for next week to protest leaving the law on the books

# LGBT HEALTH

## Obesity higher among lesbian women and women who have been sexually abused in childhood

By 2008 approximately 1 in 3 adults in the United States were obese with estimates of obesity accounting for 9 percent of all medical expenses. In a research paper exploring adult obesity, increased odds of obesity were found among lesbians (58 percent greater) and women reporting childhood sexual abuse by a family member (42 percent greater). In addition, women with a history of a mental health diagnosis (depression or anxiety) had a 41 percent greater odds of obesity than those without such a diagnosis. Reduced odds for obesity were found in those having a household income above \$75,000 per year (47 percent lower) or a bachelor's degree (56 percent lower). After adjusting for other factors, the influence of other categories of sexual abuse on the risk of obesity was not significant. One suggestion for future weight loss intervention studies would be the inclusion of a psychosocial component for those reporting childhood sexual abuse by a family member. The study findings were based on analysis of information

collected between 2003-2006 from 392 heterosexual and 475 lesbian women, aged 35 to 64, enrolled in the ESTHER (Epidemiologic Study of Health Risk in Women) Project at the University of Pittsburgh. Helen Smith, Ph.D., and colleagues used a standard definition of obesity as body mass index of 30 kg/m or higher. This research was supported by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. Dr. Smith was supported by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (HS17587).

## Quit Smoking Classes for the lgbt community to be offered at the Equality House



Smoking is disproportionately high in the lgbt community. Gay Grassroots is pleased that West Florida Area Health Education Center will be offering smoking cessation classes at the Equality House. The Quit Smoking Now Program is a FREE 6 week evidence-based program developed by Ex-smokers for those who want to become Ex-smokers. Assistance with Nicotine Replacement products such as

the patch, gum or lozenge, can be made available for participants of the class. The class meets for one hour per week for 6 weeks in a row. You will learn about the effects of tobacco on your health and how to correctly use the pharmacological treatments. You will learn about your barriers to quitting and how to cope with withdrawal symptoms. You will also find out about how to make lifestyle adjustments and manage feelings that trigger cravings, and how to manage stress through lifestyle changes. IF you would like to enroll in these FREE quit smoking classes please show your interest by visiting the web survey below so that we may see what day and time will best serve the most people.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LBNHQPC>

## Free Rapid HIV Testing continues at the Equality House

Everyone is welcome to come into the Equality House for a 20 minute HIV test. Testing is done by members of the lgbt community so you can feel comfortable talking about your sexuality and behaviors. Testing is available Wed-Sat from 10am-8pm. The Equality House also stock a large assortment of free water based lube and latex condoms.



## Walmart removes "gay" from censorship online

Walmart has issued an apology for censoring the word *gay* on its website in reviews of the just-released *It Gets Better* book by Dan Savage and Terry Miller. A Walmart representative apologized for the blunder Wednesday on *JoeMyGod*. He added, "It was a systemic oversight, in which 'gay' was on a list of filtered words. Certainly it makes absolute sense for you to include this word in your review. This is a no-brainer for us." Mark King, who wrote an entry for the *It Gets Better* anthology giving advice to young people about enduring difficult adolescent years, said he made several attempts to leave a comment on Walmart.com

about the book. His comments kept getting rejected until he removed the word *gay*. Following the apology, King said that while the world's largest retailer has a dubious reputation on some issues, "on this day, on this issue, Walmart did right by the LGBT community. Now, everybody go buy *It Gets Better*."

## IKEA gives gay ads another shot

Swedish furniture giant IKEA has unveiled an ad featuring a gay couple in Italy. The ad – which is not the first gay-friendly campaign the company has run – shows two men holding hands under the slogan: "We are open to all families." Below, text says: "With us you will feel at home. What we want to do is make life easier for everyone, every family, every couple, whoever they are." Italian newspaper *Il Giornale*, which is owned by prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, accused IKEA of "Swedish imperialism" and trying to be "provocative". Mr Berlusconi says that his government would

never allow gay couples to marry or adopt children. But the *Queer Italy* blog welcomed the ad, saying: "Nothing can be more indigestible for our bigots and homophobes who cannot bear to read the word family with the words same sex. "We like this advert and we welcome it – maybe some others will follow on from this campaign and look forward progressively and modernly, instead of backwards to the Middle Ages." In the past, IKEA has had to withdraw gay-friendly adverts. Its first gay ad, in 1994, showed a gay male couple shopping for dining tables. It was pulled after the retailer received a bomb threat. In 2008, Polish Catholics called for a boycott of IKEA because its catalogue featured gay couples. The store was accused of "promoting" homosexuality.



Thank you to the Cabaret for their recent donation of \$125 to Gay Grassroots. This gift was money that was raised at last month's gallery night art show.



### La. Student sent home for gay shirt

A Louisiana middle school student sent home by the principal for wearing a pro-equality T-shirt is receiving support from the American Civil Liberties Union. WWLTV reports on the developments at Desoto Parish Middle School, where principal Keith Simmons sent Dawn Henderson home after she refused to change a T-shirt that said, "Some kids are gay. That's OK." Marjorie Esman, executive director of the ACLU of Louisiana, said in a letter to the principal that sending Henderson home constituted a violation of the student's First Amendment Rights. School officials claimed the T-shirt was disruptive, but no incidents were reported, according to WWLTV. "Sending Dawn home for wearing a shirt with the word 'gay' on it not only trampled her right to freedom of expression, but also sent a destructive message to all students that there is something wrong with being gay or even saying the word 'gay,'" said Esman. "A school is the best place to encourage young people to share opinions."

### Brown Univ. students quickly counter anti-gay demonstrators

Students at Brown University in Providence, R.I., quickly put together an impromptu

counterdemonstration when antigay protesters turned up on campus Wednesday, March 23. About 15 volunteers with the American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property's Student Action group appeared on the campus around 11 a.m., carrying a banner reading "God's Marriage = 1 Man & 1 Woman," reported the student newspaper, *The Brown Daily Herald*. Fresh from conducting actions in Maryland when a marriage equality bill was pending in that state's legislature, the group is protesting around Rhode Island, where lawmakers are considering a similar bill. Brown students who saw the protesters alerted their fellow collegians through text messages and e-mail to attract a crowd of counterprotesters that numbered in the hundreds by noon. They carried makeshift signs, handed out rainbow pins, and chanted, "Hey ho, homophobia's got to go" and "What do we want? Equality!" They also attempted to argue with the antigay group, and at one point two female students kissed, drawing cheers from the pro-gay contingent. The action by students was "tremendous," Aida Manduley, head chair of Brown's Queer Alliance, told the *Herald*. Students recognize the antigay protesters' free speech rights, she added, but "will not stay silent" in the face of hate speech. While gay activists at Brown are developing an official response, she said, her immediate reaction was that "it was a really great thing to have happen

at Brown because of how we chose to respond."

Students and teachers at a high school in California's Inland Empire have submitted a number of complaints of antigay harassment to the Perris Union High School District, including allegations that a teacher called a lesbian student a "sinner."

### Calf. Teacher calls lesbian student a sinner

According to the allegations, a teacher at Paloma Valley High School in Menifee, Calif., wrote an S on a student's hand and called her a sinner. Teachers and students took a number of complaints to school administrators, the school district, and the American Civil Liberties Union. Among the other complains, a student group claims it was kept from planning an activity to honor gay and lesbian history month, and gay senior Andrew Braham says he was unfairly disciplined after a dispute with a classmate he claims was harassing him. A spokeswoman for the district says administrators take the complaints "very, very seriously" and the school has held antibullying assemblies and now has a Peer Leadership Uniting Students program, a group that encourages students to intervene and report harassment or bullying.



### Frank anticipates introduction of ENDA

On Wednesday, March 16, Representative Barney Frank (D) stated that he anticipates the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) will be introduced into the House within a matter of days. But will this important act be passed by the House? Frank remains skeptical while others remain hopeful. ENDA prohibits job bias based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the majority of private and public work environments. Frank stresses the significance of this legislation because it educates the public and members of Congress on these issues, specifically on the transgender protections within the bill. The problem with the passage of ENDA lies within the control of the Republicans of the U.S. House. According to sources, it will be difficult to pass any pro-LGBT legislation while Republicans are in control of the legislative agenda. While Democrats maintain control of the Senate, the bill may not be put up for a vote in the Republican controlled House. Frank is known for being the longest-serving, openly gay member of Congress. While Frank does not have an estimate of the number of co-sponsors for this specific

legislation, he remains skeptical ENDA will pass in both the Senate and House.

### Gay men face more discrimination at work than lesbians

Gay men earn less than straight men because of employer discrimination, according to a new study published in the *Journal of Labor Research*. According to the authors, Bruce Elmslie, a professor of economics at the University of New Hampshire, and Edinaldo Tebaldi, a former assistant professor of economics at UNH and now at Bryant University — gay men who live together earn 23 percent less than their married peers and 9 percent less than unmarried heterosexual men who reside with a woman. Not surprisingly, discrimination is most prevalent in male-dominated management and in blue-collar jobs such as construction. Interestingly enough, the study, which is based on labor and wage data from 91,000 heterosexual and homosexual couples collected by a 2010 U.S. Census survey, showed that lesbians actually encounter less discrimination than heterosexual women do. The authors suggest that although some employers may hold negative attitudes toward lesbians, gay women may actually benefit from the perception that they are more career-oriented and less likely to take time out to raise children than are heterosexual women. The study

found that only 18.1 percent of lesbians have children, versus 49.4 percent of straight women. So why do gay men face more bias? Anti-gay attitudes connected with AIDS may be one reason. Another may be that some employers and customers disapprove of their lifestyle. "Employers may disapprove of gay lifestyles and act on this bias in making hiring decisions," the authors said. Likewise, "if customers prefer to interact with heterosexual employees, the owner will act on the customer's taste for discrimination," they added.

# DIVERSE FAMILIES



## National campaign to spotlight gay dads

Neil Patrick Harris and Elton John aren't the only gay fathers in the world, though you would hardly know it by the lack of media coverage that families run by gay men receive. Not surprisingly, a lot of these gay fathers live in the LGBT mecca that is Southern California. And now a non-profit supporting these men has unleashed a campaign to raise awareness about just what it means to be a gay dad. The Pop Luck Club, which was founded in 1998, announced the launch of the "Raise A Child" campaign. One of the main goals of the campaign is to increase awareness and understanding in the community for gay fathers and their families. It also attempts to inspire gay fathers and those who aspire to be gay fathers, while promoting the variety of ways that one can start a family in 2011. Surrogacy, fostering and adoption are all highlighted as part of the campaign. Another main endeavor of the ads is to reduce the stigma that still surrounds gay parenting. The group hopes to achieve this goal through radio public service announcements and bus shelter ads that feature family portraits. For the month of January, the cam-

aign will have ads up across the Los Angeles region. "We make lunches for our kids, get them to music and karate lessons... just like every family," says Pop Luck Club Co-President Richard Valenza. "With this campaign, we are putting a real face on gay parenting." The Pop Luck Club has many faces to choose from. Over the last 12 years, the group has grown from a handful of members to more than 500 South Californian gay dads. They have pot-luck play dates. They hold support groups and host discussion forums. They hold family events and mentorship programs for new fathers. They promote the love that can exist in a gay-male run household, essentially, and the idea that families can be formed in all different kind of ways. "Growing up, many of us felt sadness that coming out as gay would end our dreams of parenting," says John Ireland, a Pop Luck Club board member. "I now know that becoming a father and providing a loving home for our child is the most important and rewarding thing I have ever done."

## Equality House reaches out to lgbt parents with small children

The 2nd Saturday of each month the Equality House will be reserved for parents and their young children in order to provide an afternoon of activities for this affinity group (all ages welcome 3pm til 8pm.) It is hoped that this time will present a new opportunity for lgbt

parents with small children to get together in a safe and friendly space to that they can get to know each other. Currently an ice cream party is being enjoyed, as the group grows they will decide and plan what activities they would like to take part in. If you have small children we hope that you will join this group. If you know of other lgbt parents with small children please pass this invitation along to them.

# TO SAY "I DO"

## Colorado senate approves civil unions with help from republicans

The Colorado Senate approved a civil-unions measure Thursday, March 24, after a speech by a Republican lawmaker that left some colleagues in tears. Jean White, R-Hayden, said the easy thing would have been to simply vote "yes" and not talk about the measure, which gives gay couples many of the rights and responsibilities of marriage. White, along with Republicans Nancy Spence of Centennial and Ellen Roberts of Durango, joined 20 Democrats in voting for Senate Bill 172. Twelve Republicans voted "no." White said she was inspired by Wednesday's debate, including remarks by Sen. Linda Newell, D-Littleton, who said her brother Bill "lived in the shadows." He didn't acknowledge he was gay until after he was 50 years old. Newell said her vote was for him. "It occurred to me," White said, "that if I did not come to the mic in support of this bill today, that I would be voting quietly for it but not having the courage to stand up for what is right, not having the courage for me to step out of the shadows and tell my story." She told the Senate she has a gay niece and a gay nephew "whom I have loved from the moment they were born." "My vote today is for love and respect and commitment," White

said. "My vote today is for my niece and my nephew." Rep. Mark Ferrandino, D-Denver, the House sponsor of SB 172, said White's speech left him in tears. Ferrandino and the Senate sponsor, Democrat Pat Steadman of Denver, are gay. Republicans Bill Cadman and Keith King of Colorado Springs, Scott Renfroe of Greeley and Kevin Lundberg of Berthoud praised Steadman when they spoke against the bill. "On this issue, despite my high regard for you, I can't agree," Cadman said. Renfroe pointed out that tasteless attacks about the issue came from both sides, in the form of e-mail, phone calls and such. "Some have been lacking tolerance while asking for tolerance in return," he said. "Some are borderline threatening." After the vote, Senate President Brandon Shaffer, D-Longmont, thanked senators for the respectful tone of the debate.

"Whether you agreed with the bill or not, it was actually the way it was supposed to be done," he said. "You did this chamber proud." The bill now heads to the Republican-controlled House, where it is expected to face a tougher time. Ferrandino said he has the votes to pass the measure should it come to the floor, but the question is whether it can survive a committee hearing. Senate Bill 172 allows unmarried adults, regardless of gender, to apply to a county clerk for a civil-union license. The legal benefits, protections and

responsibilities granted under the law to spouses would apply to parties in civil unions. That includes the ability to file a claim based on wrongful death, eligibility for family-leave benefits and the responsibility for decisions relating to medical care and treatment.

## 10 counties now allow same gender marriage

A leading rights group says 10 countries have legalized same-sex marriage in the past decade. But Human Rights Watch said in a survey released Monday that bias continues against people who want to marry people of the same gender in those 10 countries and many others. Boris O. Dittrich of the group's gay rights program says that the growing number of countries legalizing same-sex marriage demonstrates progress in sexual equality around the world. The first same-sex marriages took place in the Netherlands on April 1, 2001. The countries that followed were Belgium, Spain, Canada, South Africa, Norway, Sweden, Portugal, Iceland and Argentina.

# RESEARCH

## Research study looks for lesbian mothers in Pensacola area

The University of West Florida is looking for lesbian mothers, or co-mothers, of children conceived through donor insemination. If you are interested in participation in this study or wish to find out more information please contact Melissa Coates at (850) 530-0988 or mmh17@students.uwf.edu; or Dr. Erica Jordan at (850) 474-2689 or ejordan@uwf.edu.

## Most Catholics okay with same gender marriage

New research on Catholic attitudes toward gay and lesbian issues shows that a majority do not see same-gender sexual relations as sinful and support either marriage rights or civil unions for gay couples. According to a report released Tuesday, March 22, by the Public Religion Research Institute, 56% of Catholics say same-gender sexual relations are not sinful. Forty-three percent of Catholics support marriage rights for gays and lesbians, with another 31% supporting civil unions. And when specifically asked whether civil marriage should be legal for gay couples, 71% of Catholics said

they supported such rights. Only 27% of those who regularly attend church services report that their clergy speak about homosexuality. But Of those who reported that clergy do address the issue, 63% say the message is negative.

## Chinese scientist find “gay chemical” in brains of mice

Chinese scientists say that a chemical in mouse brains controls sexual orientation, according to a study in Nature. Says the BBC: “Male mice bred without serotonin lose their preference for females. The researchers say it is the first time that a neurotransmitter has been shown to play a role in sexual preference in mammals. Experts have warned about the dangers of drawing conclusions about human sexuality.” The BBC continued, “When just a male was introduced into the cage, the modified males were far more likely to mount the male and emit a ‘mating call’ normally given off when encountering females than unmodified males were. However, a preference for females could be ‘restored’ by injecting serotonin into the brain.” Scientists say that because humans have been using Serotonin for years without an effect on sexual orientation, the finding is unlikely to be replicated in people.



## WWE Partners with GLAAD on anti-bullying messages

World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) will be working with GLAAD to create and promote an anti-bullying initiative aimed at their core audience, and has invited us to conduct trainings for their staff of writers and editors. Our outreach to WWE was prompted by outrage from many LGBT viewers, about a series of homophobic taunts by wrestler John Cena on the USA program WWE Raw in late February. We reached out to WWE Incorporated, which responded swiftly and positively. GLAAD was first made aware of the incidents by several of its members following the February 21 broadcast of WWE Raw, which featured wrestler John Cena responding to taunts made by Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson with a rap song making fun of Johnson’s film roles. The song included lyrics like “You left us high and dry to play a fairy with a tooth?” and “He wore lipstick in Get Shorty, and rocked a skirt for The Game Plan.” But the real kicker came near the end when he said: “Just don’t go racing to Witch Mountain, Rock, cause your mountain is Brokeback.” The next incident

occurred on the show a week later (Feb. 28), when Cena was challenging another wrestler known as “The Miz” while in the ring with him, and had the crowd roaring when he joked about the Miz and his wrestling partner secretly being a couple. It began with Cena saying “Do you really want to look back years from now and realize you shared your legacy with another man?! ....Wait don’t answer that.” Cena continued: “Now The Miz and Alex Riley are co-champions and to celebrate it they’re going to move in together. They’re going to buy one of those tandem bikes and ride to bed bath and beyond to buy some duvets. And every evening they’re going to relax with a glass of warm piot noir and watch The Notebook, or reruns of last season’s Bachelor. ....You want to be a mentor and train him? Well, tonight I’m going to train you on how to be a man.” The incidents were particularly troubling because WWE recently began promoting itself as PG-rated entertainment marketed primarily towards adolescent males. Young boys are of course the demographic most likely to experience homophobic bullying or to be bullying themselves. And there was wrestling superstar John Cena performing what amounted to scripted homophobic bullying of other wrestlers on a nationally broadcast show for kids. GLAAD contacted WWE executives and explained the problem after

receiving our first reports. They then spoke to John Cena and the show’s writers. We have been assured that not only will such incidents not happen again, WWE intends to reach out to their adolescent audience, with messages aimed making it clear that bullying someone with homophobic taunts or for their perceived sexual orientation is wrong. WWE released the following apology statement to that effect: “WWE takes this issue very seriously, and has already spoken with our talent about these incidents. We are taking steps and working with GLAAD to ensure that our fans know that WWE is against bullying or discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. We strongly value our fans in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community, and apologize to them for these incidents.” We are very much looking forward to developing our relationship with WWE, and we thank them both for hearing our message loud and clear, and for planning to send an anti-bullying message of their own



### Ricky okay with Target, Lady Gaga not

Fresh from winning a GLAAD award following coming out, Ricky Martin has performed at a meeting of the managers of Target, the US retailer criticised for supporting homophobic political groups. Last month, Lady Gaga walked away from an exclusive deal with the retailer after the company allegedly continued its past practice of donating to right-wing anti-gay causes. The deal with Lady Gaga was itself only agreed after intense negotiations over the company's policy to donate considerable sums to organisations that support those who discriminate against or even advocate death and violence to gays. The company agreed to "make amends" for past behaviour by instituting a committee that would in theory prevent these sorts of donations occurring in the future and to donate to LGBT causes. "That discussion was one of the most intense conversations I've ever had in a business meeting," Lady Gaga said at the time. When she walked away from the deal, Lady Gaga's spokesperson said it was so that the star could remain "true to her audience". Now the Minneapolis Star Tribune reports that Ricky Martin joined Jennifer Hudson on stage at the day-long meeting of more than 10,000 managers of Target stores. Martin has had a deal to promote his music in-store since January of this year

### Maupin not man enough to use men's room down under?

Tales of the City author and gay rights activist Armistead Maupin said he was shocked after a bartender in Australia told his partner the gents room was 'reserved for real men'. Mr Maupin, best known for his 'Tales of the City' series of novels, which were converted into a television mini-series, has been travelling around Australia with Christopher Turner - who he married 2007. The pair were in the Bojangles restaurant in Alice Springs, a city at the geographic centre of the country with a large itinerant population, when Mr Turner was refused entry to the toilets. Mr Maupin, 66, told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation that his partner asked a bartender where the bathroom was, but was told there wasn't one. 'I knew they had one because I'd been there the day before and I said 'what's that over there?', and he gave me a very pointed look and said 'that's reserved for real men,' Mr Maupin said. 'Neither one of us could quite believe he'd said it. And he actually repeated it. He said 'see the sign on the door. It says 'gents'. It's for real men.' The owner of the restaurant could not be reached for comment.

### Vanity Fair sorry about Glee gay comment

Vanity Fair has apologized after a gay writer used the word 'fags' in an article about Glee. Brett Berk, a columnist for the magazine, wrote an article about a recent episode on the Vanity Fair website. He wrote: "Nice singing. But how can having girls in the audience make these cartwheeling, foam-party fags straight-sexy?" Berk, who describes himself as Vanity Fair's "fun and faggy editor", was roundly criticised for the comment, with gay rights groups, bloggers and commentators weighing in. On March 16th, he apologized but said he was a "tireless agitator" for gay rights. He said: "I would like to apologise sincerely to anyone I offended. . . As an openly gay writer writing in an overtly overblown style, my intent in using the word in this offhanded way was to continue my consistent efforts to confront and challenge stereotype, to unpack the way in which language works, and to deconstruct the clever gender politics at play in the scene I described. "Anyone with even a whiff of familiarity with my writing will know that I am, and have long been, a tireless agitator, here at VF.com and elsewhere, for gay rights, as well as a huge supporter of everything Glee has accomplished in advancing a meaningful dialogue about homosexuality in our popular culture – and in our youth culture in particular." Vanity Fair said: "With so many genuine homophobes stirring up trouble these days, the gay community doesn't need any [agitation] from an ally like Vanityfair.com, so we are eager to set the record straight about the use of the word 'f\*\*s' in Brett Berk's latest 'Gay Guide to Glee' column. "Brett, who has repeatedly referred to himself as VF.com's 'fun and f\*\*gy editor' (a title the editors have declined to endorse), writes from a humorous and explicitly gay perspective, and his invocation of this complicated word was meant to critique the notion that the gay characters of Glee should feel obliged to 'play straight' on stage. "That said, we recognize that the column caused genuine offence to many readers, and we apologize unreservedly to them." Last year, Newsweek writer Ramin Setoodeh, who is gay, found himself in a similar storm after arguing that gay actors cannot play straight roles.

### Insider says gay characters could be in future at Disney

Andreas Deja, award-winning veteran animator for Disney, has suggested the company would be open to featuring both openly gay characters and gay families in future projects. Mr Deja, who is gay and worked on The Lion King, Aladdin and Beauty and the Beast said to News.com.Au: "Is there ever going to be a family that has two dads or two mums? Time will tell. I think once they [Disney chiefs] find

the right kind of story with that kind of concept, they will do it. It has to be the right kind of story and you have to find that first." Despite Disney's conservative reputation, Disney World and Disneyland host annual Gay Day parades and last year the studio appointed Hollywood's first openly gay studio chief, Rich Ross. Polish-born Mr Deja also pointed out to the website that various Disney characters come from unconventional family set-ups, referring to Cinderella's step-family, the orphaned Bambi or Aladdin growing up on the streets. Though he added: "We are going to stay with family audiences and basically continue to do what Walt Disney tried to do." Pixar Studios, a subsidiary of Disney, last year featured LGBT members of their animation teams in a series of "It Gets Better" videos, which seek to offer hope to LGBT teenagers.

# *the beauty, talent, and heart of Elizabeth Taylor will be greatly missed*

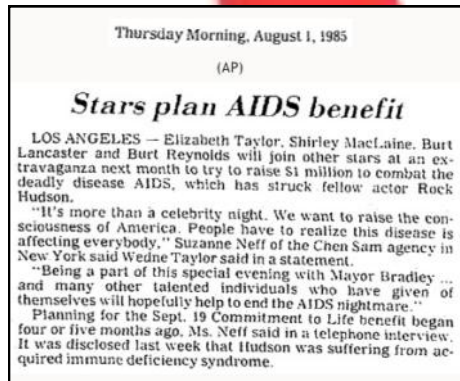


Dame Elizabeth Taylor passed away the morning of Wednesday March 23, 2011, due to congestive heart failure, after years of fragile health.

Despite a fabled life and film career, Elizabeth Taylor's lasting legacy was her courage and conviction to speak up about the AIDS epidemic, according to her biographer William J. Mann. Mann says that while researching his acclaimed 2009 biography of the late screen siren, titled *How to Be a Movie Star: Elizabeth Taylor in Hollywood*, he was surprised to learn how smart Taylor was. "People think of her as beautiful and glamorous and sexy and she was certainly," Mann says. "But she was also shrewd and a great businesswoman. She knew how to sell movies and diamonds and perfume. She knew what the public wanted to hear and see. She was very, very smart." Yet Mann says that despite making many wonderful movies and living a full, exciting life, it is Taylor's "basic decency and integrity that people will remember." "She was blessed with a supreme self-confidence about her place in the world that gave her the integrity to speak up about AIDS at a time when no one else was doing so," Mann says. "People were telling her, 'You can't touch that. It's a disease we don't want to talk about. It's gay, it's dirty, it's secretive.' She said plain and simple, 'My friends are dying!'"

The actress, known for iconic films *National Velvet*, *Little Women*, *Father of the Bride*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Giant*, *Cleopatra*, *Butterfield 8*, *BOOM!* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* was also one of the world's leading activists in the fight against AIDS well before it was popular or even considered safe to do so. Always a friend to gay people (she had long, lasting friendships with gay actors such as Montgomery Clift and Rock Hudson), when the AIDS epidemic besieged the community in the mid-1980s, Taylor took action.

Elizabeth Taylor began her work as a spokesperson and fundraiser in the struggle against AIDS in the early 1980s. A mysterious virus had appeared in the community, a fatal illness of unknown origin that sent shockwaves of fear across the nation. Great stigma accompanied this fear, and Miss Taylor's determined outspokenness was indeed controversial. Miss Taylor's work began with fundraising for an AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA) dinner, the first major AIDS benefit ever held. This support marked the debut of her public commitment to raising funds and awareness for AIDS.



*Original, and small, notice of the nation's 1st major HIV fundraiser organized by Elizabeth Taylor*

She testified in front of Congress as early as 1986, urging the U.S. Government and President Reagan to acknowledge the crisis and do something about it. Arguably, Taylor was one of the first and surely the boldest and most persistent champions in making the fight against AIDS a crucial, international, human cause that concerned all citizens.



*Elizabeth Taylor testifies before the U.S. Senate in 1986, urging for increased spending and awareness for the fights against AIDS.*

Miss Taylor became a potent force in mobilizing the entertainment, arts and fashion communities to step up their initiatives in connection with AIDS, traveling extensively to speak at conferences, concert venues and benefit events around the globe. She testified before

Congress to ensure Senate support for the Ryan White CARE Act, spoke before the National Press Club, and addressed the General Assembly at the United Nations on World AIDS Day.

A quote from the website "The Elizabeth Taylor Archives:" "I have to show up because it galvanizes people. [They] know . . . I'm not there to sell or gain anything. I'm there for the same reason they are: to get something done." The discovery of HIV/AIDS not only changed the world forever, but also the life and purpose of Dame Elizabeth Taylor. Elizabeth was the first person in the entertainment industry to stand up and take charge when few were willing to listen, and even fewer were willing to help. "Elizabeth did something when it required real courage," said Elton John. Since then she has remained at the forefront of the battle against this disease, a loyalty that has earned her the name the "Joan of Arc of AIDS."

And yes, Elizabeth Taylor was synonymous with Hollywood glamour and drama. She was married oodles of times, and her appearance in films and real life always brought sparkle and unpredictability. And it brought accolades, as the NY Times obit states: In a career of more than 70 years and more than 50 films, she won two Academy Awards as best actress, for her performances as a call girl in "Butterfield 8" (in 1960) and as the acid-tongued Martha in "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" (in 1966). Mike Nichols, who directed her in "Virginia Woolf," said he considered her "one of the greatest cinema actresses." Yep, Elizabeth Taylor never did anything quietly. And a global community of movie-lovers and those affected by AIDS will always be thankful to her for that.

In 1985, Miss Taylor joined with Dr. Mathilde Krim and a small group of physicians and scientists to form the American Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR). As amfAR's Founding National Chairman, she used her celebrity to take the issue of HIV/AIDS to the mainstream media. In October 1991, Miss Taylor established The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation (ETAF). With a focus on direct services for people living with AIDS, ETAF provides funding to AIDS service organizations throughout the world to assist those living with HIV and AIDS. Since its inception, the Foundation has raised funds for HIV/AIDS service organizations throughout the world, providing critically needed support services and prevention education.



**SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY:**

Opening an lgbt community center in Pensacola was historic, and provide new resources and opportunities never available before. You can ensure that the doors stay open and more and more programs, activities, and events are offered by making a monthly pledge of support.

I will support my lgbt community center each month in the amount of:

\$10     \$15     \$25

\$50     \$75     \$100

\$\_\_\_\_\_

(please include 1st installment, each month you will be sent a invoice)

I will support the advocacy mission of Gay Grassroots by my paid membership. I desire a membership for:

\$15 individual     \$25 couple

\$40 family (same household)

(please include full payment, and names for membership cards)

**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY**

Name(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:

The Equality House  
317 N. Spring Street  
Pensacola, FL 32501



To receive a full color version of this newsletter e-mailed to you each month please sent us an e-mail asking to be placed on our confidential e-mail list to **GayGrassrootsNWFL@gmail.com.**



# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED NOW! for this April 28th event



**Dine Out, Fight AIDS**



[www.AIDSsoasis.org](http://www.AIDSsoasis.org)  
Okaloosa AIDS Support & Informational Services, Inc.  
(a Florida 501(c)(3) not for profit)

Local HIV services are struggling under record budget cuts. Medication and services have been drastically reduced.

On Thursday, April 28, participating restaurants in Northwest Florida will join with more than 3,500 restaurants in 56 cities across North America that will donate a generous percentage of revenue from meals served that day to the fight against AIDS. Diners will also have the opportunity to enter a drawing for prizes from local businesses.

All funds raised will be used locally to help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and provide humanitarian support and services to those affected by HIV in Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton Counties.

To learn more about this event, including how to participate as a restaurant, sponsor, or volunteer please call Paul at (850) 314-0950 or e-mail him at [oasis9@cox.net](mailto: oasis9@cox.net).

To see what local restaurants are participating and for additional information, please visit [www/DiningOutForLife.com](http://www/DiningOutForLife.com).

## BECOME A PAID MEMBER

**Gay Grassroots and the Equality House have greatly increased what we have going on. To keep up this pace we MUST have more community support. Without your support, large or small, Pensacola will slip back to a area with a less vibrant lgbt community.**

## AND/OR MAKE A MONTHLY PLEDGE