

New Mexico Community Voice

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New Mexico News



MY TRIP TO WASHINGTON DC : BRINGING THE MESSAGE HOME

From Our House to the White House

by Barbara J. Sheppard

My purpose for traveling to Washington D.C. was two-fold:

To bring an urgent message that our communities and schools are in crisis surrounding the ongoing bullying and discrimination that persists within our education systems. I brought with me over two hundred signed letters supporting Safe schools and Non-discrimination legislation. I had the opportunity to meet with Senator Bingaman and two of his staff, a member of Senator Udall's staff, and Congressman Ben Ray Lujan and a member of his staff.

Both the Safe Schools Improvement Act (SSIA) and The Student Non-Discrimination Act (SNDA) are bills which, if passed, can help put an end to the hateful, violent, and emotionally-damaging experiences that, sadly, many students are going through within our schools across the country.

I also went to Washington to attend the PFLAG National Convention, "Bringing The Message Home: From Our House to the White House." PFLAG (Parents, Family, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) envision a society that embraces everyone, including those of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Only with respect, dignity and equality for all will we reach our full potential as human beings, individually and collectively. I participated in workshops to learn what other chapters are doing within their communities to educate, support, and advocate for inclusion of all and full acceptance of our unique differences.

I came away with a deep and profound appreciation for PFLAG groups/chapters across the Nation who have worked tirelessly for nearly 40 years to advocate and support the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) community. As a lesbian in a partnership of over 18 years, I have benefited directly and indirectly from their efforts and feel compelled to give back so that our youth can learn and grow in a peaceful and safe environment.

I was inspired by the heart wrenching and heart warming stories that were shared of the many challenges and, in some cases, celebrations that have happened over four decades.

PFLAG truly is a grassroots organization that has and will continue to make a difference on a local, state and federal level.

We can be grateful for the support of both of our Senators and our Representative. However, unfortunately, there is very little movement toward the passage of any legislation in Washington. While it is very troublesome and disturbing to witness the glacial progress of this important legislation, I came away from my meetings a bit more optimistic than when I arrived. The growing grassroots/populist movement across the country may indeed be required for true change to occur. Being willing to share our own personal experiences—as well as the stories of those who continue to suffer and be deeply negatively impacted by hateful and bullying behavior—definitely makes a difference.

Shortly after my meeting on November 3rd with Congressman Lujan, I learned that he decided to sign on as a co-sponsor of the Safe Schools Improvement Act. *Cont'd on page 2*

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MY TRIP TO WASHINGTON DC *Cont'd from page 1*

Progress is evident in many ways for the LGBT community but there is much work to be done and it begins here in Taos. The Taos community can be proud of the work we have done, especially in the last couple of years, in raising awareness of these important issues. I must share that PFLAG Taos and its many supporters and organizations within the schools and community at large were formally recognized at the PFLAG National Convention. This affirmation and support deepens my commitment to furthering our efforts.

The letter campaign started in early October will be ongoing and since my return we have received an additional 100 signatures. PFLAG Taos will continue to work within the schools to assist our teachers, administrators, students and families to change the negative climate so that all of our children can learn in a peaceful and respectful environment.

My hope is that everyone will consider how in some small or not so small way he or she can contribute to creating a peaceful and accepting community. I believe the path and journey toward full inclusion of everyone starts with one conversation at a time, where we listen and share from our hearts. Silence is no longer an option for any of us—whether we identify as LGBT or are members of the straight community. Our intention must be to **Move Equality Forward**.

For more information about PFLAG Taos, visit our website: www.pflagtaos.org



Dear friends,

Today, I am excited to announce **Equality New Mexico's 2012 Agenda for Equality**.

Legislators will soon return to Santa Fe for the start of the legislative session and Equality New Mexico will be there to lead on the following issues.

Defending our families

The possibility of a Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) amendment becoming a part of our state constitution is more real now than ever before, and Equality New Mexico will take the lead in defeating this and all legislation that would discriminate against the LGBT community and harm our families.

Supporting our children

Bullying is a real problem in New Mexico schools. It threatens the health and well being of our children, and makes it impossible for them to learn. This is a public problem, and it requires a public response. As such, Equality New Mexico will take the lead on legislation that includes parents, students and community leaders in developing and implementing real solutions to this problem.

Improving our health

Whether it's on account of discrimination or income, the fact remains that LGBT people and families are less likely to have health insurance than the rest of the population. This directly threatens the health and security of our families and communities. To begin addressing this problem, Equality New Mexico will support legislation that would increase access to health insurance and healthcare for the LGBT community, especially those living with HIV/AIDS. *Cont'd on page 3*

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Jacob Candelaria

Equality New Mexico's 2012 Agenda *Cont'd from page 2*

We have a clear direction going into session and we are going all out to defend our families, support our children and improve our health.

Be sure to join our mailing list at www.eqnm.org to receive updates on our legislative work, and to learn more about how you can become involved in the legislative process.

As always, thank you.

More to come,

Jacob

Jacob R. Candelaria
Equality New Mexico
President/CEO

RISING SUN MINISTRIES RECAPS 2011 ACHIEVEMENTS

by Vangie Chavez



We at *Rising Sun Ministries* are both amazed and proud of the work that is being done as we continue to build the bridge between LGBTQ and Christian Faith Communities. We want to share some of our successes for 2011.

This has been a year of wonderful opportunities in the way of presentations, workshops, panel discussions, church outreach, and LGBTQ ministry. Some of these opportunities included presentations for the UNM Queer Straight Alliance, All Families Matter Faith Forum, Consolidated Association of Prides International (CAPI) Annual Conference, and participation at the Marriage Matters Downtown Rally. Additionally, we facilitated a workshop for the UNM Queer Summit and presented RSM's Bible and Homosexuality Seminar as a public event. We reached out to Faith Communities with presentations at St. Paul's United Church of Christ congregational forum and at Immanuel Presbyterian Church as we spoke to their church leadership.

Of great significance this year was the invitation for RSM to participate in the New Mexico Conference of Churches Statewide Gathering. This gathering brought forth people from across the state, within various denominations, clergy and laity alike. This was the first time in the history of the Conference that the topic of LGBTQ and church was brought forth for open discussion. Vangie Chavez and Ken Cuthbertson co-facilitated the workshop entitled "Why Welcome is Important." RSM also hosted an exhibitor table staffed by BOD members and volunteers, which provided for some great conversations! Our presence made a huge impact in bringing forth awareness around the issue of LGBTQ and church.

We provided social & educational opportunities for LGBTQ through our monthly LGBTQ Christians Networking Events. We hosted booths at both ABQ Pride and Santa Fe Pride having touched thousands.

We also made great strides in reaching out to Pastors and lay leaders. RSM hosted three (3) Open & Affirming Pastors' Luncheons, with sixty-one (61) total attendees. Through these luncheons we touched thirty-seven (37) Pastors and lay leaders from nine (9) different denominations. We succeeded in establishing good relationships with them, having had influence in two (2) of the churches taking the formal vote to become O&A congregations – St. Paul's United Church of Christ, and Monte Vista Christian Church. *Cont'd on page 4*



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RISING SUN MINISTRIES RECAPS *Cont'd from page 3*

Finally, in November, Vangie was honored as a 'Servant Leader' at the annual 'Called Back to the Well Servant Leader Breakfast'. The Servant Leader recognition honors those in the faith community who demonstrate and exemplify servant leadership. Vangie is the first openly gay person to be recognized for this honor.

RSM established four major goals for 2011; (1) expanding our relationships with LGBTQ (2) expanding our relationships with the Faith communities, (3) providing educational and ministerial services to LGBTQ, and (4) enhancing quantity and quality of O&A congregations in New Mexico.

We successfully accomplished the vast majority of them. We have increased our visibility both at the church level and in LGBTQ community, having directly touched 326 people through our activities and presentations, and at least 1000 more through Pride events.

We are making a difference!

We remain grateful to God for this calling and we are believing in God for a bigger and better year in 2012. We continue to look to God for guidance and direction. And we hold on to this, "that [God] who began a good work in you [us] will carry it on to completion" (Phil. 1:6)

We look forward to our work in 2012.

Visit us online at www.rsministries.com or follow us on facebook. Rising Sun Ministries is a 501(c)3 tax-deductible organization. Your support is very much appreciated.

NM CENTERS ESTABLISHES SAGE NEW MEXICO

New Mexico GLBTQ Centers (NM Centers) has created a senior services program and applied to become an affiliate of SAGE USA.



SAGE (Service and Advocacy for GLBTQ Elders) is the country's largest and oldest organization dedicated to improving the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) older adults. SAGE has pioneered programs and services for the aging LGBT community, provided technical assistance and training to expand opportunities for LGBT older people across the country, and provided a national voice on LGBT aging issues. In 2005, SAGE became the first official LGBT delegate at the White House Conference on Aging. In 2010, SAGE was awarded a three-year \$900,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Administration on Aging to seed the creation of the nation's only **National Resource Center on LGBT Aging**. (To learn more, go to <http://www.lgbtagingcenter.org/>)

"Our relationship with SAGE will provide us with resources, technical assistance and training to create a robust senior's program," states David Stocum, Executive Director of NM Centers. An advisory committee of seniors, advocates and service providers help develop the proposal to SAGE USA and will help guide SAGE New Mexico.

Cont'd on page 5

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SAGE NEW MEXICO *Cont'd from page 4*

Mission Statement

SAGE New Mexico actively promotes a community culture of acceptance and inclusion related to LGBT aging. In partnership with constituents and allies, SAGE New Mexico works to achieve opportunities for LGBT seniors to reduce their isolation, connect with their communities, and access needed services. SAGE New Mexico advocates for LGBT Seniors rights, a greater understanding of aging in all communities, and positive images of LGBT life in later years.

SAGE New Mexico will formally begin operations upon final approve of the affiliation, expected early in 2012.

CENTERS ORGANIZATION TO PRESENT AT CREATING CHANGE

New Mexico GLBTQ Centers will host a Caucus, Saturday, January 28, 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM at the 24th National Conference on LGBT Equality: Creating Change. The conference is in Baltimore, Maryland at the Hilton Baltimore, January 25–29, 2012.

Advancing LGBTQ Issues and Services in Small Communities

This caucus will explore ways of creating community, building a movement and providing services in small, rural states and communities. States and communities with smaller populations face unique issues when working to provide services to the LGBTQ population or advancing LGBTQ issues in the political arena. Bring your questions, ideas, examples of materials and resources to share as we create a lively dialogue and discussion. The objective of this caucus is for participants to learn from their peers ways to make their work in small states, rural communities and small towns or cities more effective. An additional objective is to identify gaps in resources and begin creating an action plan to fill those gaps. Smaller communities often feel separated from the larger LGBTQ movement, this caucus attempts to put needed focus on small community issues.

NEW MEXICO GLBTQ CENTERS DIRECTOR NAMED TO NATIONAL BOARD



David Stocum

New Mexico GLBTQ (NM Centers) Centers Executive Director, David Stocum, was elected to the Board of Directors of CenterLink, the Community of LGBT Centers on December 14, 2011. CenterLink is the national organization for GLBTQ community centers.

Terry Stone, Executive Director of CenterLink wrote, "Congratulations on your election to the CenterLink Board of Directors. I am thrilled that you will be working with us."

Serving over 200 LGBT community centers across the country in 46 states and the District of Columbia, as well as centers in Canada, Israel, Mexico, China and Peru, CenterLink assists newly forming community centers and helps strengthen existing LGBT centers, through networking opportunities for center leaders, peer-based technical assistance and training and a variety of capacity building services.

NM Centers is the only organization in New Mexico whose sole purpose is to establish and operate gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer community centers and related programs. NM Centers currently operates the Las Cruces GLBTQ Center and plans to open a center in Gallup during 2012.

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Greetings ~

I hope you are well and staying warm.

We had three wonderful town halls in different regions of our state in November. It was a pleasure having Kate Kendell join us for our Espanola and Albuquerque gatherings. In the near future, we will send out a more formalized report regarding these meetings and the insight that we were able to capture.

I am always looking for stories to be shared, so please let me know if you are interested in sharing your story or may know of people who are willing to share their experiences.

As the new year begins, I encourage you all to think about sharing this campaign with people you know and inform them about why this public education effort is important to you. One of the most powerful ways to move people to learn more about LGBT issues, support our public education efforts more deeply, and become more vocal and visible about LGBT issues in New Mexico is personal stories and intimate conversations.

I was delighted to speak to a sixth grade class at Mount Mahogany about my story and how I become involved with our campaign. It was incredible to hear their stories and willingness to figure out how to share their experiences with friends and parents.

I had a wonderful conversation with colleagues at Family Equality Council about working more closely with them on a local level. I am delighted to share that we will be participating in an International Family Equality Day in May 2012. After the first of the year, I will begin working closely with our coalition partners about our events in New Mexico in relation to this day.

I am continuing to build our relationships with members in the Southern and Northern New Mexico Regions. I am finalizing a lunch and learn meeting in Las Cruces on January 19th and will be speaking at the Espanola PFLAG meeting in January as well.

I would enjoy hearing how you are continue to work to share this campaign and move LGBT issues forward within your organizations, work, and amongst personal relationships.

We are in a historical moment throughout the nation regarding creating public awareness about LGBT families and individuals. In New Mexico, we are making tremendous strides in enhancing the awareness and visibility of LGBT families and individuals throughout our state.

As always, please feel free to contact me and I look forward to sharing and hearing about the work you are involved in for LGBT families in New Mexico.

In solidarity,
Jordon



Jordan Johnson

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THE NEW MEXICO WOMEN'S CHORUS ANNOUNCES PROGRAM



The New Mexico Women's Chorus will perform "Hidden Gems: Songs You're Sorry You Never Heard," an eclectic batch of "B-side" songs from the likes of Melissa Etheridge, Therese Edell, The Monkees, and Suede, among others, on January 14th, 7:00 PM at The Center for Spiritual Living, 505 Camino De Los Marquez in Santa Fe, and on January 21st, 7:00 PM, at Keller Hall at UNM in Albuquerque. Pick up your tickets at Café Olé, 2411 Cerrillos Road, at Red Wing Shoes, 3401 Central Avenue, or from a Chorus member. Tickets may also be purchased on the Chorus website, <http://www.nmwomenschorus.org>, with Paypal.

NEWMEXICOGAYMEN'SCHORUS



Sing
rehearsals begin Jan 9

Volunteer
anytime



Join Us!

Want to Sing? Rehearsals for the Spring 2012 season begin on Monday, January 9 and occur every Monday night from 6:30 to 9:00 PM at Immanuel Presbyterian Church of Albuquerque, located at Central & Carlisle, 114 Carlisle Blvd SE. For more information about auditioning and rehearsals: www.nmgmc.org/home.htm


Don't Sing? Want to Volunteer? Our 'Fifth Section' is a vital part of our Chorus. Those who do not perform onstage can perform a variety of tasks offstage including ticket sales and collection, advertising, set-up, tear-down, ushering, intermission activities, etc.

Whatever level of interest you have for joining the chorus, please go to https://nmgmc.musetta.org/public_forms/join and complete our form for signing up.



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IT GETS BETTER. MAKE IT BETTER.




ACT AWARENESS.
CONTROL.
TRAINING.


**DOWNTOWN SELF-DEFENSE CLASSES
FOR THE LGBT COMMUNITY**

Mon & Wed at 6:00 PM & 7:00 PM
Fri at 11:30 AM
Sun at 2:00 PM & 3:00 PM

420 Central Ave SW
(upstairs above Effex Night Club next to Schlotzsky's)



Information & Pricing:
(505) 873-8084 or abqpride.com



a community program by
Albuquerque Pride

National News

from latimesblog.latimes.com & from the huffingtonpost.com

GIRL SCOUTS OF COLORADO WELCOMES BOY -- IF HE THINKS HE'S A GIRL

Denver, CO - What does it take for an anatomical boy to be enough of a girl to join the Girl Scouts?

The question came up recently when 7-year-old Bobby Montoya -- a long-haired, Bratz-loving, biological boy -- asked his mother to sign him up for a Girl Scout troop near his Colorado home.

The troop leader said no. So Bobby's mom, Felisha Archuleta, went to the media -- telling a local television station that her son has loved "girl stuff" since he was 2, and that the troop leader's decision to reject him had left him devastated.

"I said, 'What's the big deal?' and she says, 'It doesn't matter how he looks, he has boy parts; he can't be a Girl Scout,'" Archuleta told Colorado's Channel 9 News. *Cont'd on page 9*

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GIRL SCOUTS OF COLORADO *Cont'd from page 8*

But in fact, Girl Scouts of Colorado does allow people with boy parts to join its troops, as long as the child is truly transgendered -- meaning the child identifies as a girl, and the family identifies the child as a girl.

"We feel it is important to include all girls, so when a family says, 'This is my daughter and she wants to be a Girl Scout,' we are not going to question that," Rachelle Trujillo, vice president of communications for Girl Scouts of Colorado told *The Times*.

"The troop leader in this case was confused because the mom was confused," Trujillo said. "She did not say, 'This is my daughter.' She said, 'This is my son and he wants to be in Girl Scouts,' and we don't accept boys in Girl Scouts."

Trujillo said the Girl Scouts of Colorado has only started encountering transgendered children asking to join Girl Scouts in the last three or four years. Since then, she said, her office hears about one or two such cases a year.

"It's still a very small population," she said. Girl Scouts of Colorado has more than 30,000 girls.

As of Friday morning, Trujillo said the troop leader was still waiting to hear back from Archuleta about whether she wants to sign Bobby up.



Bobby Montoya

"If she does want Bobby to join, they need to make a decision, that as a family, that we are going to entirely have her live her life as a girl," Trujillo said. "If they do so, we are happy to have her as a member."

Troop To Disband

A Colorado-based Girl Scouts troop's decision to admit a 7-year-old transgender child this fall has prompted three leaders to resign and dissolve their troops. As *The Christian Post* is reporting, all three of the troop leaders were affiliated with the Northlake Christian School in Covington, Louisiana.

Susan Bryant-Snure, one of the leaders who resigned, told *The Baptist Press* that the Girl Scouts' action is "extremely confusing" and an "almost dangerous situation" for children. "This goes against what we [Northlake Christian School] believe," said Bryant-Snure, who has three daughters among the 25 girls who had been active scouts there...

Bryant-Snure and her fellow leaders are now expected to align themselves with the American Heritage Girls, a Christian organization that was founded in 1995 in response to the Girl Scouts' decision to let scouts use a word other than "God" in their pledge, according to *She Wired*.

from myfoxtampabay.com

SCHOOL BOARD BLOCKS GRANT OVER GAY DISCRIMINATION

by Kristin Wright

Pinellas County, FL - The Pinellas County School Board decided Tuesday to cut ties with an educational program affiliated with the Boy Scouts.

The school board made the decision to reject funding for "Learning for Life," citing discrimination against gay youth by the organization. *Cont'd on page 10*

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SCHOOL BOARD BLOCKS GRANT *Cont'd from page 9*

"This board has a chance to send a strong message to the Boy Scouts," said Board Member Linda Lerner during the meeting.

Lerner has asked the board to split from the program for the past 10 years.

"I was pleasantly surprised, and I believe that it is so good for our district for our educators, students, and citizens, gay and straight," said Lerner.

"Learning for Life" is a character education program in schools. It teaches students values like respect, responsibility, honesty and fairness.

A \$54,000 grant would have supported the program at a handful of Pinellas Schools, including Skyview Elementary, Mildred Helm Elementary, Palm Harbor, Safety Harbor and Tyrone Middle Schools.

The plan now is to expand the district's "Commitment to Character" program to replace "Learning for Life." Other groups nationally have cut ties, too.

Mildred Helm Principal Sandy Cowley said character building early on is critical.

"I think character is part of establishing who you are in life, what your morals are, how you treat other people," Cowley said.

The Boy Scouts have said that homosexuality is inconsistent with its values. The Supreme Court ruled it is the private organization's right.

Pinellas School Board Chairwoman Carol Cook voted to keep the program intact.

"I think it's more valuable to have left the character education in the classroom and attack the concerns with the national organization in a much different way," she said.

Lerner's son is gay, but she said her opposition to the program is not personal.

"It was the driving force of becoming educated and being an advocate for human rights for all," she said.

Cook said the "Learning for Life" program was a success during its 10-year run in the district.

Researchers at the University of Missouri found that 35-40 percent of the LGBT community smoke compared to just 21 percent of the general population. Responding to the data, the Missouri Foundation for Health is investing in smoking cessation and education programs that specifically target the LGBT community. The Center for American Progress released an issue brief in May pointing out how tobacco companies disproportionately advertise menthol cigarettes in LGBT venues and to other minority communities.



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from *thinkprogress.org*

11TH CIRCUIT: TRANSGENDER DISCRIMINATION IS SEX-BASED DISCRIMINATION

by Zack Ford



Vandy Beth Glenn

A Georgia transgender woman has won her appeal that she was illegally fired for planning to make her gender transition. Vandy Beth Glenn had been a legislative editor in the Georgia General Assembly, but her supervisor, now-retired legislative counsel Sewell Brumby, testified that he found the thought of her transition “unsettling,” “unnatural,” and something that others would view as “immoral.” An 11th Circuit panel ruled that her termination constituted sex discrimination and the decision could have a far-reaching impact on protecting the rights of transgender people:

In each of these foundational cases, the Court concluded that discriminatory state action could not stand on the basis of gender stereotypes. The Court’s more recent cases reiterate that the Equal Protection Clause does not tolerate gender stereotypes. Accordingly, governmental acts based upon gender stereotypes—which presume that men and women’s appearance and behavior will be determined by their sex—must be subjected to heightened scrutiny because they embody “the very stereotype the law condemns.”

“We conclude that a government agent violates the Equal Protection Clause’s prohibition of sex-based discrimination when he or she fires a transgender or transsexual employee because of his or her gender non-conformity.”

The state could still appeal this decision to the full 11th Circuit or the U.S. Supreme Court.

It is worth noting that all three judges on the panel concurred, including Judge William H. Pryor. Pryor’s nomination to the bench was opposed by LGBT groups, who noted that he had filed an amicus brief supporting sodomy laws in *Lawrence v. Texas*. He also cast the deciding vote to oppose hearing a challenge to Florida’s law that banned gay people from adopting.

from *trib.com*

MARRIAGE EQUALITY WOULD BE GOOD FOR WYOMING

by Rev. Rodger McDaniel

Cheyenne, WY - The economic and political windfall to Wyoming may be greater than you might think if the Legislature joins other states permitting same-sex marriage. First, we could reclaim the pride of being the “Equality State.”

Nearly all states have an official motto which serves as shorthand for what really matters to its people. My favorite is *Serit ut alteri*, North Dakota’s motto, meaning “one sows for the benefit of another age.” Many are expressed in Latin. Wyoming’s motto is plain English, “Equal Rights.”

Wyoming became “the Equality State” as the first to grant women the right to vote. The powerful white males who made that call didn’t do so because of any deep commitment to the rights of women. The Legislature didn’t even ratify the 19th Amendment until 26 other states had done so and the final outcome was inevitable. But they were practical men who understood women were needed in order to attain the requisite number of voters to qualify for statehood. It was not liberal reformers but practical and conservative Wyoming politicians who earned that motto. That was 1869. It’s time for conservative, practical legislators to earn it again. *Cont’d on page 12*

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GOOD FOR WYOMING *Cont'd from page 11*



Rev. Rodger McDaniel

There were practical benefits to giving women the right to vote. So there are in providing marriage equality. There are more than 1,100 economic benefits available under law to heterosexual couples denied to same-sex couples. The economics of discrimination weigh heavily in favor of recognizing the validity of all marriages. Benefits denied range from spousal and child support to certain inheritance and property ownership rights. Most states, including ours, don't even protect the right to be employed for same-sex partners.

The economic benefits of permitting same-sex unions would ripple throughout the state's entire economy in surprising ways and amounts. A study conducted by the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law concluded Vermont's recognition of same-sex marriage will inject \$30.6 million over three years into that state's economy, generating increases in state and local government tax and fee revenues by \$3.3 million while adding about 700 new jobs. Vermont has roughly the same population as Wyoming, depends as heavily on tourism and expects more than 8,000 same-sex couples to travel there as a result of the new law.

Imagine the international allure of Wyoming's tourist destinations were legislators to open this new vista of freedom. Given our location near the center of the nation and reputation for environmental beauty, it's not hard to believe Wyoming would experience an even greater fiscal windfall than Vermont.

Numerous studies, including one by the Brookings Institute, document the economic impact of state laws that eliminate discrimination against gays and lesbians who, as a group, tend to be creative entrepreneurs with larger than average amounts of disposable and investable income.

Marriage equality happens to have the added advantage of being the right thing to do. It would seem conservative, libertarian, "live and let live folks" wouldn't be inclined to allow government to determine who we can marry. But politics is a strange business where labels, like mottos, are beguiling. Same-sex marriage is often thought to be a "liberal" agenda. However, the belief that government should allow people to live free lives with minimal government intervention is, like Wyoming, quite conservative and the reasons for doing so persuasively practical.

There's a curious thing about freedom. Governments create unexpected and positive economic, cultural and political rewards as they unleash the human potential of those who have been marginalized whether in Libya or in Wyoming. Equality is a concept of liberty and freedom given definition only by historical context. Wyoming earned the right to be called "the Equality State" 142 years ago. Wyoming would do well to shed a reputation for intolerance acquired from the Matthew Shepard murder and last year's thorny debates in the Legislature by once again taking a practical and conservative stand for equality.

Rev. Rodger McDaniel is pastor of Highlands Presbyterian Church of Cheyenne and the former head of the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division of the Wyoming Department of Health

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The Navy tradition of being the first couple to share a homecoming kiss went to a same-sex couple for the first time. Petty Officer 2nd Class Marissa Gaeta won the lottery aboard the Oak Hill to fulfill the tradition and was greeted by her girlfriend, Petty Officer 3rd Class Citalic Snell when she crossed the bow.



from npr.com

YOUNG, GAY AND HOMELESS: FIGHTING FOR RESOURCES

by Margot Adler

New York, NY - A number of studies of homeless youth in big cities put forth a startling statistic: Depending on the study, somewhere between 30 and 40 percent of homeless youths identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

It's largely because gay youths are more often kicked out of their homes than straight youths. And even if they are not kicked out, they may feel so uncomfortable that they leave.

In New York City, nearly 4,000 young people are homeless every night — many of them gay.

Reaching Out To Homeless Youths

On the Christopher Street pier in Greenwich Village, where dozens of gay and transgender youths hang out, Carter Seabron and Elena Wood of Safe Horizon's Streetwork Project hand out snacks, condoms and information. The organization sends out several nightly teams to find homeless youths.

"Would you like a snack?" Seabron and Wood ask. Oreos, Rice Krispies treats and chewy bars are the favorites. They also give out information about Streetwork's drop-in centers, where young people can get showers, clothing and housing referrals.

Seabron, the outreach coordinator for the Streetwork Project, says that "for the most part, the majority of youth we see who identify as being homeless also identify as being LGBT." *Cont'd on page 14*

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YOUNG, GAY AND HOMELESS *Cont'd from page 13*

Wood says not all of them are thrown out of their homes, although many are.

"The parent might not say, 'You have to get out now,' like, 'I am kicking you out,' especially since that is illegal if they are under 18," she says. "It's a fine line between what is their choice and what is not."

Each homeless young person has a different story.



Tiffany Cocco (left to right), Jeremiah Beverly, Carl Siciliano and Avi Bowie hang out at the Ali Forney Center in Manhattan.

Jeremiah Beverly grew up in Wisconsin and Illinois.

"The day after my 18th birthday this year, my adopted parent kicked me out," he says. "At the time, I was really infatuated with this guy, and she was listening to my phone calls. She started telling my family, 'He is this, he is that, he is gay,' and talking about me as if I wasn't part of the family."

Beverly was lucky — he had friends whose parents were more accepting. He stayed with them until he finished high school. Now, in New York City, he is in emergency housing — only available for 90 days.

"I went from shelters and couch-surfing to my own bed," he says. "I haven't slept in my own bed for almost a year, so it is really nice."

'Living In A Societal Moment'

There are three organizations that cater to homeless gay kids in New York City.

Carl Siciliano is the founder and executive director of the Ali Forney Center, which he describes as the nation's largest organization dedicated to homeless LGBT youth. When he started the center almost 10 years ago, he says, "kids were dying in the streets; there was no shelter for gay youth; every couple of months, I would know someone who was murdered in the streets."

In the beginning, Siciliano's goal was just keeping kids safe. But as the years have gone on, he says, "it has become clear to me that we are living in a societal moment, where kids are coming out at younger and younger ages, and there are so many parents who can't be parents to their gay kids. They can't cope, they can't deal with it, their religion is in conflict with the reality of their kids' lives, and these kids are getting thrown away."

It makes sense if you think about it. Kids growing up today see gay people on television. They read about gay marriage in several states. If they think they are gay, they think they can come out of the closet at a younger age.

Tiffany Cocco grew up in East Harlem. She dropped out of school, did some drugs, was kicked out by her parents. She is now 23 and on a waiting list for housing. She's been homeless since she was in her teens. She says she has slept at friends' houses, couch-surfing, among other places. *Cont'd on page 15*

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LGBT youth gathered in Union Square in late October, 2011 to protest New York City's policies toward the homeless.

YOUNG, GAY AND HOMELESS *Cont'd from page 14*

"I lived on the streets," she says. "Literally, the A Train was my best ride: Waking up to the sunrise, gorgeous. I slept on stoops, park benches — then, finally, shelters."

Siciliano says the gay rights movement has not been good about dealing with the issue of homeless gay youth.

"The movement was articulated and thought out at a time when it was almost all adults coming out," he says. "We have framed our fight for equality in adult terms, and almost all the victories we have won only really benefit the adults in our community."

He also says the gay community hasn't really dealt with poverty and destitution.

A Fight For Resources

Siciliano attended a recent rally in Union Square for gay homeless youths. A crowd of several hundred people chanted, "They're our kids; they're our kids."

At the microphone, Siciliano says it's a different kind of struggle to protect gay kids than the battles the movement has fought in the past.

"With adults, it's a fight for laws like marriage equality," he says. "It is not so much laws with the kids; it is economics. It's a fight for resources. That's what our community hasn't quite gotten yet; we have to fight for resources to protect our kids. How dare we say 'it gets better' to the kids if we are not willing to fight to make sure they have what they need."

There are only 250 beds for 3,800 homeless kids in New York City; waiting lists are huge. Facing a \$10 billion deficit, Gov. Andrew Cuomo made compromises with the New York state Legislature. Budget cuts would have taken 100 of those beds away. The city council restored monies cut from both the city and state budgets, so no beds have been cut. A spokesperson said Cuomo asked all local governments to take more responsibility for their budgets by eliminating waste and prioritizing vital programs.

But Siciliano is still angry that homeless kids are not a priority. Of the governor, whom Siciliano describes as heroic in regard to gay marriage, he says, "It's tearing my heart in two. Here you have a political leader who is doing so much to help the adults of our community and is taking actions that harm and imperil the most vulnerable youth of our community. What do we do? What is our response to that?"

Siciliano hopes the rally in late October, 2011 was the beginning of a real campaign for youth shelter. They're calling for 100 more beds for homeless youth each year until the need is met. But homeless kids don't have power, money or votes. It's hard to believe they will be at the top of many politicians' list in future city and state budgets.

New Mexico Community Voice

from thinkprogress.org & washingtonpost.com



Maggie Gallagher

A new survey by the Pew Forum on Religious and Public Life finds that religious lobbying groups on Capitol Hill have increased fivefold since 1970, and now spend hundreds of millions of dollars each year influencing lawmakers on issues from abortion to school vouchers. The survey identifies 212 groups that spent \$390 million last year, the largest of which are the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and social conservative groups...Maggie Gallagher, co-founder of the National Organization for Marriage, a new group aimed at fighting same-sex marriage, said that religious conservatives have been too meek about getting directly involved in the political part of lobbying and that might change...“The upside is that this is an area with a lot of room for growth.”

To learn more: http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/religious-advocacy-grows-on-capitol-hill/2011/11/21/gIQA3AZVjN_story.html



movement advancement project ▶

from thinkprogress.org

ANTI-GAY GROUPS SIGNIFICANTLY OUTSPEND LGBT ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

by Zack Ford

The Movement Advancement Project has released its annual National LGBT Movement Report, which analyzes the financial documents of 40 prominent LGBT organizations. According to this year's report, the number of individual donors to these groups constitutes at most 3 percent of the estimated LGBT population. Considering many of those donors are also heterosexual allies, the number is probably even lower.

As a result, organizations are relying more heavily on their largest contributors. The average LGBT organization receives 45 percent of its revenue from its 10 largest contributors, though this dependence is slightly lower for the largest groups. It's alarming regardless — as the report points out, the top 10 anti-gay foes spend *three times* as much as all 40 advocacy groups considered in this analysis combined.

Despite concerns about donors, LGBT organizations continue to remain efficient in their fundraising and financially healthy overall. Read the full report at <http://www.lgbtmap.org/2011-national-lgbt-movement-report> for more details about the organizations leading the LGBT movement. *Cont'd on page 17*

New Mexico Community Voice

ANTI-GAY GROUPS SIGNIFICANTLY OUTSPEND *Cont'd from page 16*

Figure 6: 2010 Expenses for Participating Organizations vs. Anti-LGBT Organizations

\$ Millions, Combined (c)(3) and (c)(4)/527 PAC expenses (excluding in-kind expenses)

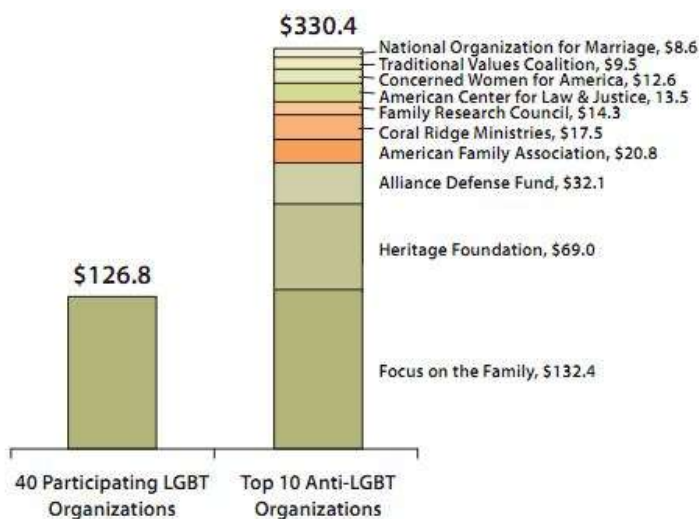
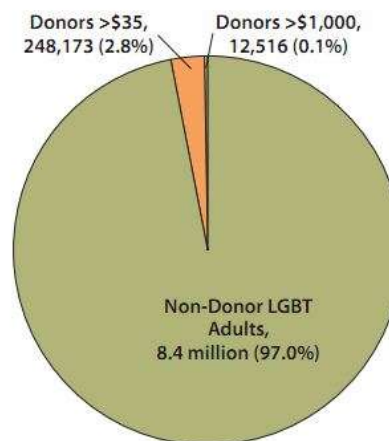


Figure 18: Combined 2010 Donors vs. LGBT Population

All Participants Combined, 100% = Est'd 8.7 million LGBT Adults in US



Source: The Williams Institute (LGBT population estimate).

from deseretnews.com

CONFERENCE EXPLORES UNIQUE CHALLENGES OF GAY MORMONS

by Joseph Walker



Salt Lake City, UT — The unique challenges encountered by those who identify themselves as both Mormons and gay were explored during the first general session of "Circling the Wagons," a three-day conference dedicated to the issues of homosexuality within LDS faith and culture.

The conference, which drew 300 people to the First Baptist Church, was sponsored by Mormon Stories, an organization with no affiliation to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Mormon Stories claims to "build bridges between all who identify as Mormon."

The conference featured a number of presentations that conference organizer Joseph Broom said were aimed at "creating a space where LGBTQ or SSA (same-sex attraction) individuals and their families and allies can gather to acknowledge, explore and honor shared experiences."

Broom conducted the first session of the gathering and read the following from its statement of purpose: *Cont'd on page 18*

New Mexico Community Voice

CHALLENGES OF GAY MORMONS *Cont'd from page 17*

"No issues strike more deeply than whom we love and how we understand and honor God. In convening this conference, we are inviting LGBTQ Mormons and their families and allies to step beyond historic divisions to establish a shared space where all who have ever self-identified as Mormon and have experienced same-sex attraction can speak truthfully and respectfully."

According to the LDS Church's Handbook of Instructions, "homosexual behavior violates the commandments of God, is contrary to the purposes of human sexuality, and deprives people of the blessings that can be found in family life and in the saving ordinances of the gospel. ... While opposing homosexual behavior, the Church reaches out with understanding and respect to individuals who are attracted to those of the same gender."

During a morning session, Dr. Lee Beckstead, a Salt Lake therapist whose research has focused on resolving sexual, social and religious conflicts, said Mormons with same-gender attraction often feel torn apart by individuals urging them to "get off the fence — to be gay or be Mormon," suggesting that one can't be both.

Beckstead said either choice is painful.

"You can't cut off a part of yourself and not do harm — even if you're doing it to please God, or parents, or family or friends," he said. While Beckstead said that he personally had a hard time being both gay and Mormon, the same may not be true for others.

"My resolution may not be your resolution," he said, urging conferencegoers to "keep exploring for yourself what your truth is, what is right for you. That is where you will find your happiness."

Poet and author Carol Lynn Pearson referenced "the Hero's Journey" from Joseph Campbell's "The Hero With a Thousand Faces" and said "in a way, we're all on a hero's journey."

She outlined what might be considered the gay Mormon person's "Hero's Journey," which, she noted, can also be shared by that person's parents, spouse or other allies. She spoke of a number of her friends and acquaintances who have taken different approaches to life as gay Mormons, and urged those in attendance to find the path that works best for them.

Music for the session was provided by a chorus under the direction of David Zabriskie. It included the premiere of "Pioneers," one of Pearson's poems set to music by Zabriskie.



Amy Koch

fromcitypages.com

GAY COMMUNITY APOLOGIZES TO AMY KOCH FOR RUINING HER MARRIAGE

by Kevin Hoffman

The gay and lesbian community of Minnesota has issued a letter of apology to recently resigned Senate Majority Leader Amy Koch for ruining the institution of marriage and causing her to stray from her husband and engage in an "inappropriate relationship."

"On behalf of all gays and lesbians living in Minnesota, I would like to wholeheartedly apologize for our community's successful efforts to threaten your traditional marriage," reads the letter from John Medeiros. "We apologize that our selfish requests to marry those we love has cheapened and degraded traditional marriage so much that we caused you to stray from your own holy union for something more cheap and tawdry." (To read the full apology, go to http://blogs.citypages.com/blotter/2011/12/gay_marriage_amy_koch_michael_brodkorb.php?page=2) *Cont'd of page 19*

New Mexico Community Voice

GAY COMMUNITY APOLOGIZES *Cont'd from page 18*

The letter comes on the heels of Koch's own apology, released yesterday, in which she expressed her deep regret for "engaging in a relationship with a Senate staffer." Although the letter did not specify the identity of the other participant in the "inappropriate relationship," it is widely rumored to be former communications chief Michael Brodkorb, who lost several positions with the GOP in the wake of the scandal.

Koch, Brodkorb, and their fellow Republicans campaigned this year to put a constitutional amendment on next year's ballot to define marriage as the union between a man and a woman, thus forbidding gay marriage. Sadly, the amendment comes too late to prevent Koch from straying from her own marriage.



Michael Brodkorb

from thisisbristol.co.uk

OLD REDCLIFFIANS' SKIPPER JED HOOPER HAPPY TO REVEAL THAT HE IS GAY



Jed Hooper

OLD Redcliffians captain Jed Hooper has become the first Combination player to publicly announce that he is gay.

The 22-year-old back row forward came out to family and friends earlier this year. And Hooper has now spoken exclusively to the Evening Post in the hope that his story can help other young rugby players come to terms with their sexuality.

In recent seasons, former Welsh international Gareth Thomas and top referee Nigel Owens have both broken one of the great taboos in arguably the most macho sport of all.

And Hooper, a fierce competitor who speaks as directly off the pitch as he does in his pre-match team talks, has now also chosen to come out of the closet after years of anxiety connected to grappling with his true identity.

The decision, he said, was still far from easy. "I met someone earlier this year who said he could not be with someone who was in the closet. That, basically, was the catalyst that I needed.

"Before that, I think I had already told about ten friends and their reaction was very positive so that gave me an inkling of what might happen. And I also thought if the crap really hits the fan then at least there are ten people on my side!"

Even with that knowledge, though, Hooper still agonised over what he knew he had to do. "I was never going to do it bit by bit, that would have been too drawn out, so I decided to text everyone and also put it on Facebook.

"I was horribly nervous. I wrote and rewrote the text four or five times, and I had my finger on the 'send' button for ages before I finally pushed it. *Cont'd on page 20*



New Mexico Community Voice

JED HOOPER *Cont'd from page 19*

"The text basically said something along the lines that 'I've been hiding it and fighting it for too long, and I can't hide any more. If you can accept me this way then great ... and if you can't then I don't need you and you can get lost!'

"I then cried my eyes out as I was thinking to myself 'what have you done? But very quickly I must have had 40 replies and all of them were positive."

Instantly, Hooper added, there were feelings of relief. "A massive weight came off my shoulders. If I couldn't accept myself the way I am, how could I expect my friends to?"

"No punches were pulled with questions from the rugby lads, that's for sure. I can't repeat some of the things I was asked, but I've always been someone who has been at the centre of any banter flying around, and the only thing that's changed is the type of banter."

Hooper is a proud Old Red having played his first game for the Brislington club at the age of six before joining the Gloucester Academy and also appearing for Hartpury, Cinderford and Newbury, returning home two seasons ago to score a hat-trick in a Twickenham final victory and help secure two successive league promotions.

He said: "Being captain is a huge privilege, so when I made my announcement one of the first people I spoke to at Reds was our then chairman, Ray Massey.

"I said that if the club doesn't want a gay man as its figurehead I would understand and step down. But he was brilliant and said 'you're our captain and this doesn't change anything'. That support was massive to me."

Reaction throughout the Bristol rugby community, in fact, has been overwhelmingly positive. "There has only been one comment on the pitch, at a pre-season tournament, and I had to step in to stop our lads from kicking things off."

Hooper first became aware that he might be gay when he was 14. "Even then I had a bit of a hard man image because of my rugby, and that made me think 'no I'm not gay', but at the age of 15, in my heart of hearts, I was sure. At school, I didn't want to be with a girl and I couldn't be with a boy."

On-going inner turmoil surrounding his double life led Hooper to drink himself into a stupor at different times, while he admits to a short period of self-harming with a knife "because I thought I might be able to cut this out of me."

There was also a six-month ban from rugby in 2009 after being sent off playing for Hartpury and for later threatening the referee, something Hooper still bitterly regrets. "I can't blame that on being gay, but back then I was so angry all the time," he said. "Now I feel like a different person and I wonder why I hid this for so long. It's brought me closer to a lot of people and it's certainly made me happier."

But Hooper stresses that on the rugby pitch nothing has changed. "I'm slightly less aggressive, but I'm still not the nicest customer you'll come across

"I'm a very aggressive competitor, someone who hates losing and has a win at all costs mentality, but I'm a much nicer bloke in the bar after.

"If anyone is reading this and they're in the same situation as me, all I want to say is don't bottle things up because, trust me, there is light at the end of the tunnel. The world's not against you. If my story can help one person then this has been worth it."

New Mexico

Community Voice

from inamerica.blogs.cnn.com

WEDDING BELLS TO RING FOR ARCHIE COMICS' GAY CHARACTER

by Stephanie Siek

One of Archie Comics' archetypal all-American teens is getting married – and it isn't to girl-next-door Betty Cooper or scheming sophisticate Veronica Lodge.

A year after introducing Riverdale's first gay character, Kevin Keller, Archie Comics is showing his marriage to an African-American physical therapist named Clay Walker. The issue with their wedding, "Life with Archie #16," debuts at comic book stores January 4 and newsstands January 10.



It's part of a series that imagines the gang five or six years after graduation, with two alternate timelines - one in which Archie married Betty, another in which he married Veronica. Kevin's wedding appears as part of a story showing Archie and Betty's married life.

Kevin Keller is shown to have followed in his Army father's footsteps - in images released to CNN, readers learn that he served in the military and was injured while serving in Iraq. He meets Dr. Clay Walker while in a hospital's rehabilitation unit.

Clay helps Kevin regain his ability to walk, and the two become friends. But it's not until a chance meeting in an airport that they start dating.

Archie Comics CEO Jonathan Goldwater said it's part of a concerted effort to make Archie's universe mirror the diversity and complexity that today's readers encounter in their lives. Archie's first comic book appearance was in 1941, and the core "gang" of Archie, Jughead, Betty and Veronica had, for the most part, changed only cosmetically.

"Riverdale, Archie and the gang are set in high school, and we ran a risk, unless we reflect what's going on with kids today in the real world, of becoming irrelevant," said Goldwater, the son of Archie creator John L. Goldwater.

Archie is far from the first comic book to introduce a gay character - gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender characters have played leading roles in superhero and alternative genres for two decades. The Comics Code Authority, an industry body, explicitly banned any mention of homosexuality in comics until 1989, although writers sometimes hinted at a character's sexuality. LGBT readers often identified with superheroes' double lives and feelings of being somehow different.

But Riverdale is still a pop culture symbol for all things wholesome, moderate and Midwestern, and Kevin Keller's success seem to indicate that readers think he fits right in.

Goldwater said the creation of Riverdale High's first gay student resulted in only seven canceled subscriptions, and "hundreds and hundreds" of new ones. Archie Comics sold out of Kevin's four-issue miniseries. Kevin is also getting his own title, published every other month, in February. Creator Dan Parent said dating will be a major part of his storyline - as it is in every Archie character's narrative. *Cont'd on page 22*

New Mexico Community Voice

ARCHIE COMICS' GAY CHARACTER *Cont'd from page 21*

"And of course it won't be as smooth as you think it will be, because it's an Archie comic," Parent said. "The story really revolves more around Kevin preparing for the date, and the influence of the gang helping him in going on his date."

Part of the reason Kevin has proven so popular may be the fact that his sexuality is handled just like that of the heterosexual characters – as part of their storyline, not a gimmick.

"Sexuality is a trait that's a facet of a character, but is not the single defining characteristic when the writer is doing a good job," said Bob Bretall, co-host of the Comic Book Page Podcast. "I applaud Archie for creating a character where being gay isn't a pejorative and showing that it's possible for the Riverdale characters to interact with Kevin as they would interact with any other person."

Matt Kane, the associate director of entertainment media at the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, said he's pleased with the way Kevin's life has been handled so far. He said it's important for teens to see a future in which loving relationships – be they same-sex or opposite-sex – can be recognized and celebrated.

"Riverdale is this picturesque vision of American life, and when you see yourself reflected in that, you have a role in even the most idealized version of the reality you live in," Kane said. "That's the difference between feeling like a rejected outsider and feeling like you're a part of something."

from sdgln.com

JOHN GEDDES LAWRENCE JR., LEAD PLAINTIFF IN LANDMARK LGBT CIVIL RIGHTS CASE, DIES AT 68

by Ben Cartwright



Tyrone Garner (l) &
John Geddes Lawrence, Jr.

Silsbee, TX – John Geddes Lawrence Jr., the lead plaintiff in the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case *Lawrence v. Texas*, died Nov. 20, according to an obituary posted online by a funeral home in Texas. He was 68 years old.

The obituary, posted by the RS Farmer Funeral Home in Silsbee, Texas, stated that Lawrence lived in Texas his entire life, working as a medical technologist at hospitals in Houston and Kountze until his retirement in 2009. Ironically, the funeral home's notice made no mention of the famous Supreme Court case.

In the 2003 case, the Supreme Court held that the Texas statute that made it a crime for two persons of the same sex to engage in certain intimate conduct violates the Due Process Clause. *Lawrence* was considered a landmark victory for the LGBT community, as it overturned sodomy laws that still existed in Texas and 12 other states.

Lawrence and his partner, Tyrone Garner (who died in 2006), were arrested under Texas' "Homosexual Conduct Law" in 1998 after police were sent to their home in response to a weapons disturbance call. Houston police entered the apartment and saw the couple engaged in a private, consensual act. *Cont'd on page 23*



JOHN GEDDES LAWRENCE JR. *Cont'd from page 22*

The two were arrested and convicted of deviate sexual intercourse, in violation of the Texas law.

In a 2004 interview with *The Houston Chronicle*, Lawrence recalled being shoved to the couch, which shattered a set of porcelain birds that were a gift from his mother. He says he was humiliated, driven to the police station wearing only handcuffs and underwear. Lawrence, who was not completely out of the closet to all of his family and co-workers, also remembered the difficult call to his elderly father to explain what happened. "I was a little worried," Lawrence told the *Chronicle*. "I didn't know how I was going to handle this. So I called my dad, and my dad said, 'You will find a good lawyer.'"

The court ruled in the case on June 26, 2003, which overturned a 1986 ruling, *Bowers v. Hardwick*, which had upheld Georgia's sodomy law, which was later repealed by the state. Many considered the ruling to dramatically change the way that gay and lesbian people are treated under the law, setting precedent for civil rights advances that have occurred in the 8½ years since. Celebrations erupted across the nation following the ruling.

Locally, the *Gay & Lesbian Times* reported that a news conference was held at The San Diego LGBT Community Center following the ruling. "Today will go down as one of the milestones of the civil rights movement," Kevin Tilden, then-chair of The Center's board of directors, said at the event. "For more than 600,000 same-sex households counted in the last census, it means in 13 states those households will not have to worry about being sex offenders."

In writing about Lawrence's death, former SDGLN contributor Ari Ezra Waldman wrote on Towleroad.com that Lawrence's case has made a huge impact on the legal community:

His name will be part of every constitutional law class, every gay rights class, and every future case in which liberty and privacy are at stake. His case overturned every anti-sodomy law at the state level, overturned the odious *Bowers v. Hardwick* that misunderstood the quest for gay equality, and made our post-gay world possible. Mr. Lawrence allowed us to argue that we have the liberty to love whom we choose, the liberty to marry whom we choose, and the right to be left alone about it. Every successful piece of gay rights litigation cites *Lawrence v. Texas* and every success we have is thanks to our advocates' skillful interpretation and use of that case.

At the time of his death, Lawrence was being cared for by his partner, Jose Garcia. Lawrence is survived by a brother and a sister who reside in Texas, two nieces, two nephews, and numerous grand nieces and nephews. Services were held Nov. 22 and 23 in Texas. It is not known why news of Lawrence's death is just now being reported.

Today, Lambda Legal issued a statement:

"John Lawrence was a quiet, unassuming and heroic man, whose courage shaped the LGBT rights movement, and we look back on his accomplishment with profound respect and pride," said Kevin Cathcart, executive director of Lambda Legal. "The impact of *Lawrence v. Texas* is felt every time a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender person steps into a courtroom. We honor John for his courage and willingness to represent the community in a watershed moment that has forever changed our march to equality."



Regular Meetings around the State

Support

Community Voice is a monthly newsletter whose editor takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the information that appears herein.

If you wish to submit an article, want to be listed in the Regular Meetings around the State, have an upcoming event, or have a comment, please send your submission to: newslettereditor@nmcommunityvoice.info.

In order to appear in the following month's newsletter, all articles and listings must be submitted no later than the 15th of the previous month. All submissions must include a contact person and phone number and/or email address for verification purposes. Please include date, time, location and contact information for all upcoming events and activities.

ABQmen on Facebook: A gay men's social group in Albuquerque and Santa Fe, largely the guys who wouldn't normally go out to the bars. 60-90 guys come out each month for the events. We meet 3rd Thursday of the month 6-9PM, and 1st Sunday for brunch 11AM-1PM at various locations. Check out the ABQmen Facebook page to see what we're all about. Contact info is ABQmen@gmail.com.

Fierce Pride - Fierce Pride is a statewide organization run by and for LGBTQ folks to advocate for our health. New members are welcome. We design campaigns to reach people at Pride events and have fun doing it! Contact: Rebecca4health@gmail.com
Monthly meetings in Albuquerque.

LGBTQ Ai-Anon Meeting-Albuquerque: Every Saturday morning at 10:30am at the Desert Club, 4305 Mesa Grande SE (Betw. Zuni and Central, one block West of Washington) For info, call (505) 262-2177 or www.nmal-anon.org.

MPower-Albuquerque: Every night M-F at 7:30pm at 107 Jefferson NE. For info, call (505) 232-2990. For a monthly calendar, email abqmpower@yahoo.com.

Native GLBT Support Group: Every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month from 7-9pm at First Nations Community HealthSource Conference Room, 5608 Zuni Rd., Albuquerque. For info, call (505) 262-6554.

PFLAG-Albuquerque: 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7pm at First Congregational UCC. 2801 Lomas NE. www.pflagabq.org.

PFLAG-Farmington: 3rd Sunday at 1 pm at the Unitarian Church, 219 N. Orchard.

PFLAG-Taos: Usually the 1st Sunday of every month at 1335 Gusdorf Rd, Suite R, Taos at 5pm. For info, call (575) 779 7264. www.pflagtaos.org.

Santa Fe HRA and Pride: 1st Sunday of the month at 11am. For more info, call (505) 692-9061. www.santafehra.org

Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico-Albuquerque/Gallup/Las Cruces: For info, www.tgrcnm.org or contact Adrien Lawyer at (505) 440-3402.

Albuquerque:

Rainbow Friends Support Group – 3rd Monday, 7-9 PM. Open to all transgender, transsexual, or gender nonconforming people and their SOFFAs. At Young Women United, 120 Morningside NE, ABQ

Trans Youth Support Group – Every Sunday, 5-7pm. An 18 and Under TG Youth Group (with possible exceptions being made on a case by case basis). At Young Women United, 120 Morningside NE, ABQ. For info, contact Seth at seth@tgrcnm.org.

ABQ FTM Group – 3rd Friday, 6:30 pm. Details are posted on the yahoo group: ABQ FTM Yahoo Group.

Transgender New Mexico Support Group – Every Friday, 7:30pm. For info, contact Shannon at Shannon@transgendernm.org.

New Mexico Community Voice

Support, cont'd

Gallup:

GLBT Support Group of Gallup – For info, contact Jeremy at (505) 713-2828.

Las Cruces:

Southern New Mexico Trans Support Group – Every 4th Friday, 6:00PM. At the Las Cruces GLBTQ Center at 1210 N. Main St., Las Cruces.

UNM Queer-Straight Alliance-Albuquerque: Every Wednesday from 7-9pm in the Acoma Room of the UNM Student Union Building during the school year. For info, call (505) 277-6739 M-F from 12-4pm.

Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice: Please check calendar at www.abqpeaceandjustice.org

U21 (under 21 only group)–**Albuquerque:** Every Friday night at 7 PM at Metropolitan Community Church of Albuquerque, 1103 Texas NE (1 block north of Lomas Blvd & 4 blocks west of Wyoming Blvd.). If you know a GLBTQ person under 21, tell them to sign up for U/21 emails. Have them contact us at poetoishi@yahoo.com.

Las Cruces GLBTQ Center: The Center is located at 1210 Main St. and offers various programs. Schedule can change, so call to verify time and day: (575) 635-4902. The Center will be CLOSED December 24th -26th for the holidays! www.gaynewmexico.org

SCA Sexual Compulsives Anonymous – Every Monday, 7-8pm

Pride on Main Al-Anon – Every Tuesday, 5:30-6:30pm

AA-Lambda Group – Every Wednesday, 6-7pm

Las Cruces HIV Support Group – Every Tuesday, 6:30-8pm

HIV Testing (rapid test) w/NM Dept. of Health – 2nd Monday, 2-5pm

Rainbow Writers of the Southwest Writing Group, 2nd & 4th Saturdays, 1-2:30pm

"I Am Who I Am" - Women's Group - 1st and 3rd Wednesday, 6-7pm

Women's Group – 1st & 3rd Thursdays, 7-8:30pm

Men's Group – 1st & 3rd Wednesday, 7-8pm

GLBTQ Youth Support Group – 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 6:30-7:30pm

Bisexual Community Circle – 2nd & 4th Thursdays, 7-8:30pm

Rainbow Writers of the Southwest Writing Group – 2nd & 4th Saturdays, 1-2:30pm

Family Fun Night - 1st Friday, 7-9pm

Pride Cinema at The Center – 3rd Friday, 7-9pm

Family Fun Night – 1st Friday of each month, 7-9pm

Southern New Mexico Trans Support Group – 1st & 3rd Saturdays, 4-5:30pm

Grupo de apoyo-Familias apoyando al joven gay, lesbiana, bisexual, transgénero, o queer (GLBTQ)- **Canceled until further notice**

Grupo de apoyo para jovenes gay, lesbiana, bisexual, transgénero, y joven en duda. (GLBTQ) – *Grupo de apoyo* **Canceled until further notice**

Parents of GLBTQ Youth Support Group will be CANCELED indefinitely until we find a facilitator

Reading Q is canceled until further notice

New Mexico Community Voice

Social

4 Corners GLAD Happy Hour-Durango, CO: Every Friday at 5:30pm at Lost Dog Bar and Saloon, 12th and Main, Durango, CO. For info, call (970) 385-7202.

New Mexico Leather League (NMLL)-Albuquerque: General Meeting is every third Saturday of the month from 2-5 PM at I-Hop, Wyoming and Paseo Del Norte.

Prime Timers-Albuquerque: 2nd Sunday of each month at 2 pm at Sidewinders Bar, 8900 Central SE. The organization is open to all men, 21 years and older. For more info, go to <http://primetimersww.org/primetimersnm/>

U21 (under 21 only group)-Albuquerque: Every Friday night at 7 PM at Metropolitan Community Church of Albuquerque, 1103 Texas NE (1 block north of Lomas Blvd & 4 blocks west of Wyoming Blvd.). If you know a GLBTQ person under 21, tell them to sign up for U/21 emails. Have them contact us at poetoishi@yahoo.com.

NMLL General Meeting-Albuquerque: 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm. Every month on the third Saturday.

Wilde Bunch Square Dance Club-Albuquerque: NM's only LGBT square dance club. Free open house, 7-8 pm, the first Monday of every month. Albuquerque Square Dance Center, 4909-15 Hawkins NE. For info, call Jim at 232-2140 or visit www.wildebunch.org.

Religious

Metropolitan Community Church-Albuquerque: Every Sunday at 10:30am at 1103 Texas St. NE. For more info, call (505) 268-5252. www.mccabq.com

St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church-Albuquerque: Eucharist every Sunday at 7:30, 9 & 11:15am and 5pm. For more info, call (505) 345-8147. www.all-angels.com

**Deadline for
February Issue: Jan. 15th**

Community Voice is Your Voice. Use it well and often.

Upcoming Events

New Mexico Women's Chorus

The New Mexico Women's Chorus will perform "Hidden Gems: Songs You're Sorry You Never Heard" on January 14th, 7:00 PM at The Center for Spiritual Living, 505 Camino De Los Marquez in Santa Fe, and on January 21st, 7:00 PM, at Keller Hall at UNM in Albuquerque. Pick up your tickets at Café Olé, 2411 Cerrillos Road, at Red Wing Shoes, 3401 Central Avenue, or from a Chorus member. Tickets may also be purchased on the Chorus website, <http://www.nmwomenschorus.org>, with Paypal.

New Mexico FetLifers

New Mexico FetLifers welcomes community leader and education powerhouse Lady D of Atlanta to Albuquerque! She'll be presenting her workshop "Taboo: Exploring the Politically Incorrect" on Saturday, January 28th. Stay tuned to "New Mexico FetLifers" on fetlife.com for time and location.

New Mexico Leather League

Spring Pan. April 13-15, 2012. Spring Pan is going to be bigger and better than ever. Watch for details. And keep this date open!

