

THE BANNER OF THE DESERT
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MEETING REMINDER:

Sunday, January 18th--2:30 p.m.

Gay Associated Youth Center

Moving forward after Prop 8. Terry Applegate, Prop 8 campaign leader, will lead a discussion about the future of activism in the Coachella Valley to reinstate same-sex marriage.

Light refreshments served. Please call (760) 202-4430 for driving instructions.

A Message From The Editor

-Mike Balasa

Is president elect Obama correct in inviting Rick Warren to be part of his inauguration? Will this, perhaps, be the beginning of the end of the culture war? Can there be a conversation between the two sides? Check out the blog from Tammy Lynn Michaels, Melissa Etheridge's wife, in the article below. Tammy seems to think that there is a possibility for dialogue with supposedly moderate Evangelicals like Rick Warren. I hope she is right. Neither side of the culture war is gaining anything from this fight except a growing and implacable animosity.

If there is going to be a dialogue and negotiations are possible, I believe there are some basic demands that are vital before reaching any accommodation. First the name calling and vilifying has to stop. They can't compare the glbt community to terrorists, Nazi's or criminals. They need to understand that we are people of all sorts with families, jobs and close ties to our communities. Secondly, they need to accept the personal testimonies of glbt persons and all the research of the accredited medical and psychological associations that being gay, lesbian, bisexual is an inborn immutable characteristic comparable to being heterosexual.

Is it possible that they would be willing to acknowledge the above? The Roman Catholic Church has always maintained that being gay or lesbian is an inborn seemingly immutable trait, but they go on to insist that it is a "disorder". Perhaps "disorder" is not a strong word of condemnation but it certainly is negative and hurtful. Most of the protestant fundamentalists, on the other hand, believe that being gay or lesbian is the fault of improper parenting or sexual abuse as a child, and that proper treatment will affect a cure. They have no problem demonizing the glbt community often with very vile words (as we witness at every Pride Parade).

I can't imagine any coming to terms with the anti-gay crowd if they insist on continuing their traditional assault on the glbt community. What am I willing to concede? I agree

that they can have the “marriage” word if everyone has the same Federal marriage rights. I can agree to let them consider any homosexual sex act a sin, comparable to divorce, that they seem to accommodate very well with their own members without resorting to name calling and vilifying. Other than that, I can’t really say what more we could do for them. We don’t call them names. We don’t want to pass laws limiting their civil rights. We don’t inspire anyone to violence against their members. We also, despite their accusations, don’t recruit their children. They may want the glbt community to disappear, but that isn’t going to happen. I guess the truth is we have nothing much to give to them. They have a lot to stop giving to us.

Editor’s note: *I took the following directly off the blog of Tammy Lynn Michaels, wife of Melissa Etheridge. I did no editing so you would get the personality of the author. This is an interesting appeal to understanding the “other side”, and I wanted to share it with you.*

Sunday, December 21, 2008

the big rick's yamaka

so honey met rick warren last night. well, she spoke to him on the phone beforehand, giving us insight into the man the media has made our latest "HE HATES YOU!" target. if i sit real still and think about it.. it's almost like reverse smear-the-queer. remember that recess game in second grade (natalie? derek? karyn?), when one kid had the ball, and all the other kids had to chase and kick the shit out of said person, hence "smearing" him? well, at times, it seems that the media presents us with target after target to smear, as if to say to us, "THIS IS THE GUY HOLDING YOU BACK!! GO GIT 'IM!!!" and it does seem that my lovely gay family is so bruised and battered and ready to fight back (myself included), that we attack and deem someone ANTI-GAY, and ready to SMEAR, simply when they don't want the word "marriage" brought into our gay ceremonies. now, if the person doesn't want gays AT ALL, then i'm gonna chase that one down. but, i'm starting to think that there are indeed some people... some well-meaning and loving people... who are not at all ANTI-GAY, that's not why they don't want the word marriage used... they are merely RELIGIOUS. and for religious (archaic) reasons, they want to stay safe and respectful to WHAT THEY'VE BEEN TAUGHT.

let me try to differentiate the two. let's say i am wearing a baseball cap. now what if i want to call it a yamaka? you know- it's basically the same thing, but one is missing the sun visor. i don't call my caps yamakas... cuz that is a religious name for a hat that is worn by religious people. now if i apply that thinking to this situation.... i would like to think of it as.... if they afford us the EXACT SAME RIGHTS, then who cares what it's called? my friend joel can wear his yamaka. i can wear my hat. joel can light his menorah, i'll light my candle. joel can eat his matzo ball soup, and i can break crackers into my soup. joel and hanna can have a piece of paper with the word MARRIAGE on it, and all 1200 rights... and i can have a piece of paper with who-cares on it, and all 1200 rights. the word marriage is a religious, holy, word that people who go to church on sundays are told belongs to them. like yamaka, menorah, or matzo.

rick is not a televangelist. rick is not falwell. rick spoke of some "stupid" things he's said (his word, not mine), some missquotes that were given, and lots of ammunition from the media. all excellent points. (we're all war-minded right now, you know. it's easy for the media to distract us by throwing us into our own verbal wars here at home.)) what to do, what to do.... the rest of the public is given an animation of rick warren... and then my wife meets the man behind the projections, the quotes, the "OTHER SIDE". and he is warm, caring, effusive, and LOVES gays. since he nearly swallowed honey when he hugged her, i tend to believe him. he wants our gay marriages to be just as respected and embraced as the straight marriages. he just wants to wear his yamaka, and me wear my hat. anyway. hath hell frozenth over? rick warren was humble and kind. honey and i are to go to his church sometime soon. and honey invited him to our house for an afternoon, to be with our family. (w.t.f.)
open minds hearts hands and
differences fade.
Tammy Lynn Michaels

Portland Is The Largest US City To Elect An Openly Gay Mayor

Those of us who live in Palm Springs don't find the news of Portland's newly elected gay mayor as unusual, as we have a gay mayor now who succeeded anther gay mayor. Portland, however, is a much larger and more diverse city than Palm Springs, so it is newsworthy. Sam Adams was elected mayor by capturing 58% of the vote. Sam's sexual orientation was never an issue in the race.

Mayor Adams grew up in a working class household that he said was at times dependent on food stamps and subsidized housing. Adams said that his political activism is not only involved in gay civil rights but also in the needs of the working poor. "My passion for public service includes promoting social justice equality for all, but it obviously also includes finding good jobs for people, which is also part of my family background of not being able to always have economic security. Being gay is part of me, so is being Irish-American, so is being from a small Oregon town." Adams served on the Portland city council since 2004.

Golden Rainbow Senior Center To Move

Senior Center director, Harvey Stern, announced that the Golden Rainbow Senior Center will soon be moving. By mid-month said Director Stern, the Center will move to it's new facilities located across the street from the Regal Cinemas in Palm Springs. The address is 700 East Taquitz Canyon Drive. The new Center is larger and more versatile to offer multiple programs. There is better parking and easier access to shopping and public transportation.

Gay Penguins Win Right to Hatch Eggs

Two male penguins in a China zoo who got in trouble for egg snatching were given a reprieve when animal right groups came to their defense. Authorities realized that the two males were inseparable and wanted to be parents. Taking eggs from two straight parents, who were inexperienced, the male couple proved to be "the best parents in the whole zoo," said a keeper.

Study Links Family's Anti-Gay Attitudes To Emotional Health Of Children

In a widely disseminated Associated Press article written by Lisa Leff and carried on the front page of the Desert Sun, researchers found that families with negative responses to their children's homosexuality affected their children's health. Children in the anti-gay families were more likely to attempt suicide, experience severe depression and use drugs. PFLAG board member and former civics teacher Don Koch, told the "Banner" editor in an exclusive interview, that the finding may have some interesting implications for future court cases. "It is likely that some where down the line a case of child abuse could be brought against parents who have rejected their child's sexual orientation", Don said. Don went on to say that the Brown vs Board of Education verdict that mandated integrated education, was the first case to use psychological research to support a verdict. Since that time, cases have often been determined by scientifically validated research.

In the Associated Press interview with Sten Vermund, a Vanderbilt University Pediatrician, Dr. Vermund said that doctors should encourage parents to respond to their child's sexual orientation in a supportive way. "So many families of children who are gay, bisexual or transgendered, particular families of gay male youth, think that if they are tough on the kid and tell him how unsatisfactory his gay lifestyle is to the family, he will have it knocked out of him. The Southern Baptist doesn't have to become a Unitarian. Someone can still be uncomfortable with their child's sexual orientation, but if they are somewhat more accepting and do the best they can, they will do the youth a lot of good. That to me is an important message," said Dr. Vermund.

If parents continue to denigrate their glbt children, force them into "reparative therapy" advocated by Focus on the Family and isolate them from friends and gay support groups, there is now sufficient evidence that the such children will be harmed. Research also indicates that young people are coming out an earlier age. On the average, children now know they are gay or lesbian by age 14 and come out to their parent before turning 16. Families now have more years parenting a child who has come out than in the past.

We Now Have The Means To Send You "The Banner" On Line

Thanks to our computer whiz, Stuart Lynn, we can now offer to send you the "The Banner" by e-mail rather than by Post Office mail. If you would like to receive "The Banner" by e-mail, send us an e-mail message at PSPFLAG@hotmail.com When "The Banner" is available, we will send you an e-mail message with an appropriate link.

Campbell Soup Defies the American Family Association

The anti-gay American Family Association has routinely attacked any corporation that places ads in gay publications. Campbell Soup placed an ad in "The Advocate" showing two women serving Swanson chicken broth to a young boy. The text identified the two women as a couple. Another ad in the January issue only featured a man dressed as a chef, with no indication of sexual orientation. That was enough for the AFA to demand on their web site that Campbell remain neutral in the culture war. A Campbell representative said that the company will stand behind the ad and has plans to continue placing ads in "The Advocate", "Our position on this is pretty straightforward, inclusion

and diversity play an important role in our business, and that fact is reflected in our marketing plan. For more than a century people from all walks of life have enjoyed Campbell products, and we will continue to try to communicate in ways that are meaningful and relevant to them.”

AFA has long called for boycotts of companies who they think are too friendly to the gay community. They have boycotted Disney and Ford, and threatened McDonalds and WalMart.

The Palm/Springs PFLAG has never advocated boycotting any corporation, because often the persons hurt are the employees who have no say in company policy. We do support businesses that support their glbt employees with partner benefits and non-discrimination policies. A good source of information about major companies gay civil rights policies go to HRC.org/buyersguide2009/ At that site, HRC scores businesses with “Excellent”, “Making Progress” and “Not Good”. Most major corporations are glbt friendly and it seems odd to find one favoring divisiveness.