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155UE #068 June 26, 2008

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July 12: Melissa Mason Crystle Chambers & Esme Russel

July 26: Velvet LeNore Deja Devonier & Tia Milan





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GIRLA PALOOZA
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Out on the Coast Magazine Issue #068

# HOROSCOPE by Jacqueline

We begin this month with Mars going into Virgo on the 1st, which means all of us will be focused on work. Be careful not to take things too seriously or get caught up in all the details, especially because on the 2<sup>nd</sup> the new Moon will be in Cancer and all will be thinking more about their needs than others. When Venus goes into Leo on the 12th it will bring us out of ourselves and into romance. Keep your passions going because, when the full Moon in Capricorn comes on the 18th, you'll bring you back to focusing on your work.

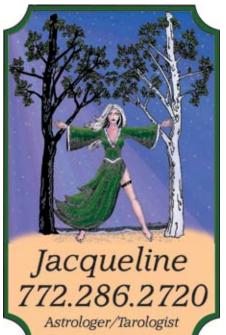
Aries March 23 - April 22 This is the calm before the storm. Work will become simple this month with Mars in Virgo. Treat yourself to a relaxing vacation and has some fun but, prepare yourself for August and September are transitional months for you and will prove to be more challenging.

**Taurus** *April* 23 – *May* 22 Relax a little, take a breather, you've crested the hill and now it's the down hill slide. However, patience is a virtue. Don't push the details; they'll fall into place in their own time. Focus on your goals and stay the course, just be prepared

to nudge things a bit to keep them flowing in the right direction and let nature run its course inhibited.

Gemini May 23 – June 22 Hi ho Hi ho it's off to work you go. This month may prove to be frustrating for you because your multitasking won't work. You need to take one thing at a time and finish it. A situation from last year is being brought into your life again. Wait, don't act upon it yet. There is still more information to be revealed.

Cancer June 23 – July 22 Happy





solar return! We start off the month with a new Moon as well as Venus in your sign which will radiate your natural beauty to all. Quit worrying about your security and safety this month. Sit back and enjoy the attention. You deserve it. Your finances and security are safe. You can go back to making improvements on them next month.

**Leo** July 23 – August 22 What you wanted to put into action last month but couldn't, this month allows you to. So, move forward and don't sweat the minute details, after Venus goes into your sign on the 12<sup>th</sup>, you'll be able to enlist others to help you fill in the gaps.

**Virgo** August 23 – September 22 With Mars entering your sign on the 1<sup>st</sup>, it's time to take action. Those projects from the fall can be finished now and then some. Use this time to set into motion what you truly want in your life. It will pay off. However, your love life may be a little dramatic. Use this time to find out the truth of how you both

truly feel.

Libra September 23 – October 22 Those little details you've left behind are catching up with you. Take the time to finish them. I know it feels like you're taking on too much, but keep pressing forward with one foot in front of the other and a little help from your friends will get you through it. You'll find great satisfaction in your accomplishments after this month.

Scorpio October 23 – November 22 You're sensitivity is at an all time high. Use this month to take stock of your life. Get rid of what doesn't serve you and find out what truly makes you happy. Use this time to set new routines to move forward towards your goals in life. Remember, nothing is impossible when you put your mind to it.

Sagittarius November 23 – December 22 Details, details, details, that's what this month is all about. You'll feel like others are putting you under a microscope. Relax, they aren't. They're just

looking for your advice. Use your natural comedy and humor to get you out of the tough situations. A mini vacation is in order, take it and shed those worries.

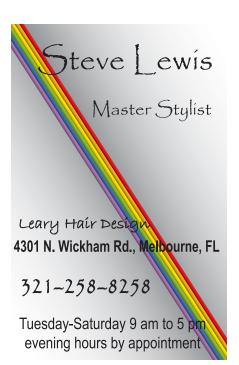
Capricorn December 23 – January 22 Work will consume you this month. Charge forward with the plans you made last month. The change is upon you and now is the time to act. With Mars in Virgo, you have the strength and with Jupiter in Capricorn, you have the protection. Don't throw a pity party, just look to the future. There is where you'll find your bliss.

Aquarius January 23 – February 22 Now is not the time to relax you still have some conflicts to resolve. With Mars in Virgo, you're finally seeing the details you've missed in order to resolve your problems. Venus is still in conflict with you, be diplomatic with family and friends. You'll find sugar attracts more than salt and vinegar.

Pisces February 23 – March 22 This is the time to show off your talents. With Mars in Virgo, your life is a balancing act now, but with Mercury and the Sun trining your sign, your intuition is strong. Use it to guide you and don't get caught up in the details. Stick to the simple basics and let the rest fall into place by itself.

For those who want to know: The Sun and Mercury are trining both the Pisces and Scorpios this Month. A trine is a 120 degree angle between 2 planets. It creates an easy flow of energy between the 2 that can enhance the energy of the stronger planet. Since this trine is between water planets, it increases our intuitive abilities and our emotions. It allows us to feel deeply. Make sure you use your intuition before speaking because you may end up finding the emotion was fleeting.

Monthly horoscopes by Jacqueline. For more information on Astrology or for a private reading call: 772.286.2720





with Miss T

Kelli Randell, Cold Keg and REBAR raised over \$5,000 for Project Response to send kids impacted by HIV/AIDS to summer camp. Pictures are on page 23. Harry, a Project Response board member, coordinated the events and should rightfully be proud of what everyone accomplished. People really got behind this, like Jeffrey Freeman, the popular Cold Keg bartender and artist, who put together rainbow AIDS ribbons and sold them at Space Coast Pride and at the benefits - raising over \$700! One glaring absence was any drag queen from On Sunday, July 6, Linda Breckstad and Brevard. There were 15 performers at **REBAR** and all the gueens at the Cold Keg event were from Port St. Lucie, where were the Brevard performers? You know, it's really time one of them stepped up and showed some



Susie Brenner from Omaha, Nebraska, will perform at East Coast MCC services in Port St. Lucie and Melbourne.

leadership in growing our community instead of relying on Kelli to do it all.

All that and some more was **Space Coast Pride 08!** See pictures on page 21. For a first year event there was an incredible turn out. Kevin Morris headed up a committee that really delivered - I'm guessing his being an Episcopal priest helped get a good word in for the fabulous weather! The Living Room of Brevard (that's the group behind the event) was hoping for around 500 people. Well, 644 tickets were sold at the door! Oh and note to whomever called the parks department and complained about the cover charge: if you couldn't afford \$5 to help cover the costs and to help The Living Room raise money for our community organizations and start a building fund you should have contacted them rather than trying to make trouble with the county. A good time was had by all the attendees - they drank over 1,000 cups of beer! The parks department was very happy with us - they couldn't believe that we picked up after ourselves (I quess they're used to events trashing the pavilion). Everyone who attended and especially the volunteers who made it happen should be proud! Next year it'll be bigger and better, plan on it for May 24, 2009!

The Living Room board met and, with public input, decided to take about half the profits and buy a six month CD as seed money for Pride 09, put \$1,500 in a building fund and gave the rest away to several community organizations. You know anyone can have a voice in their actions, just show up at a board meeting. See www.TLRbrevard.org for the schedule.

Treasure Coast folks have a new Sunday event to show up at (I know, I know that should be "at which to show up" but my mother isn't reading this). Confessions at REBAR with Shelita Cox features food, strippers and a show. It's another great **REBAR** special night! AND it happens early enough for you to stop in and still be home in time for a full night's sleep. So now there's something special Wednesdays through Sundays at REBAR. So no matter what you're looking for you'll find a good time in Port St. Lucie at REBAR.

A good time in Palm Bay is coming on July 27: Gay Bowling returns! This time it's at the Brunswick Lanes in Palm Bay. The Living Room is brining back the events people enjoyed so much last year! Gay Skate is coming up in August and another gambling cruise in September, so keep your eyes and ears open and check their web site to make sure you can take part.

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Carl Burns, PFLAG Vero Beach treasurer (left) and Dana Owens, PFLAG Vero Beach president (right) present plaques to Dan Tobias, Kelli Randell (Randy Kelly), Jerry Grenata and Jim Scullans commending them for their support of the GLBT community, specifically the founding and saving of the pride festival in the Treasure Coast. The plaques were presented at the turnabout benefit for Project Rewsponse, which is why you may not recognize Jerry and Jim.

Part of what makes East Coast MCC services special is the performers they bring in to lift the hearts of their parishioners. On Sunday, July 6, Linda Breckstad and Susie Brenner from Omaha, Nebraska, will perform. Linda and Susie will be featured in all three services on that day - 10 a.m. in Port St Lucie (at the St Lucie Shrine Club, 4600 Oleander) and at 5 and 6:30 p.m. in Melbourne (1603 S Wickham Rd). Stop in and experience an uplifting service.

My spirit is uplifted every time a new group forms. Down in Vero, People Care Center is starting a Support Group. The first gathering will be July 9th. from 6:30 to 7:30 pm and continue on every second Wednesday of the month in the Pelican Island Conference Room at the Indian River County Main Library, 1600 21st St in Vero Beach. Meeting are open to everyone: people living with HIV/AIDS, their families and friends. For additional info call 772-321-9394.

If you want to make some new friends check out this month at Cold Keg. It starts out with their Red, White and Groove party on July 5, then The Boys of Thunder will be there with Roxxxy on July 11 and on July 19 Spikey Dykey, Vita and M&M appear together again - their last show was hot! And each performer on their own attracts a crowd so when they're all together it makes it a night to remember and a show not to be missed.

If you missed the PFLAG Vero Beach pride dinner, you missed another wonderful evening. There were a number of great items in the silent auction, the dinner was excellent and the company outstanding. Kelli Randell, Danny and Dominique provided the entertainment before DJ Owens took over the dance floor. This yearly event raises funds for PFLAG

Vero Beach so they can continue their community activities. If you live on the Treasure



Coast you really should make the effort to come to one of their meetings (they meet on the second Monday and fourth Tuesday of every month at the UU church in Vero). You will be amazed at the warm welcome and their involvement in an amazing array of community service projects.

Finally, the Long Branch Saloon in Vero is attempting to offer a Sunday night event for our community. It's been a slow start with lots of drama. Hopefully things will smooth out and Vero folks will have a night of their own – Lord knows it's difficult enough to launch something in off season (especially since Vero is very snowbird/tourist oriented) without all the unnecessary emotions, name calling and finger pointing. We'll keep you posted, as the nights we've attended were nice – a bit slow – but we think the divas are now all gone and the locals will start coming to check the place out. Word is that there will be different types of performances on different Sundays. Stay tuned.

Gay Rights Tidbits: Have you heard the latest polling information? A new Quinnipiac Poll shows that Amendment 2, the deceptive "marriage protection" amendment, does not currently have enough votes to pass. But it's close - 58% currently support it.

Polling also shows that the more Floridians know about this dangerous initiative, the more they oppose it. That's why Fairness for All Families has created individualized VoteNoOn2. com Campaign Tool Kits, containing all the tools needed to talk to your friends, family, coworkers, classmates, and neighbors.

For just a \$20 contribution to the campaign, you'll receive a 76 piece tool kit with a T-shirt in your requested size, 5 bumper stickers, 5 buttons, 5 posters, 25 information postcards and 25 registration palm cards. The postcards are full of information on the harm Amendment 2 will cause and to whom. The registration palm cards give people a great way to join in the campaign.

Get more information at www.FairnessForAllFamilies.org – look on the right side of the continued on page 19







# REBAR

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### Spiritually Speaking

Little Johnny told this story in school one day: "My Auntie Karen, who is called 'Butch' by her comrades is in the army, and when she was in the Gulf War she parachuted down with only a gun, 20 bullets, a knife, and a six-pack of beer. On her way down, she drank the six pack. When she landed, she shot 20 Iraqis and killed ten of them with her knife." "Very interesting, Johnny, what is the moral to your story?" the teacher inquired. Little Johnny said: "Don't screw with my Auntie Karen when she's drunk."

Morals...Morals teach us something and help us in living good lives. Some morals are as simple as "Don't put all your eggs in one basket." Some morals are more complex, such as considering killing one terrorist to save ten hostages. In a larger sense, morals speak of character and proper behavior, how people are expected to conduct themselves. But what is the true psychology of morality? Many would say the BIBLE is the final authoritative word on right-living. Many have taken the Bible literally, and in so doing have run into brick walls, because the Bible is not meant to be a literal handbook of conduct, but a spiritual guide which is enjoined with our own commonsense and logical reasoning. Moral Absolutism says homosexuals are to be put to death. According to the Torah in Leviticus 20:13 it states: "If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death: their blood will be on their own heads."

in America today we would line up all gay people and execute them one by one. This capital punishment for gays is practiced in Saudi Arabia and Iran today, societies run by religious control freaks granting no personal liberties to its citizens. A literal interpretation of this text today is foolishness. To understand that passage literally is like Hazel, a 93-year-old woman, particularly despondent over the death of her husband. Earl. She decided she would just kill herself and join him in death. Thinking that it would be best to get it over quickly, she took out Earl's old Army pistol and made the decision to shoot herself in the heart, since it was so badly broken in the first place. Not wanting to miss the vital organ and become a vegetable and burden someone, she called her doctor's office to inquire as to just exactly where the heart would be on a woman. The doctor told her. "Your heart would be just below your left breast." Later that night Hazel was admitted to the hospital with a gunshot wound to her left knee. Hazel had to look way down in the valley...It's all relative, isn't it?

The Biblical writers knew nothing of the distinction of sexual orientation and sexual behavior. Today, we understand as we understand the scientific explanation of hurricanes and how they are formed off the African coast and follow certain paths across the Atlantic. No more do we see hurricanes as a pre-conceived action of an angry God to punish humanity. In the same way, we understand that Bible does NOT decry sexual orientation, which within a

loving relationship receives sexuality as a gift of God, and is NOT perceived as a deviant immoral action.

The Levitical laws had to do with religious and ritual impurity and not necessarily moral standards per se. Many times morality is derived from some of the commandments, but holiness in itself, which is what the book of Leviticus concerns itself with. was not moral but ethnic and religious 'separation' or 'distinction' of the Jewish community and not of the world at large. (Lev. 20:24, 26) The Law prohibited sexual practices performed within the confines of pagan temples. This was called IDOLATRY—that which takes one away from the true worship of the One God. That was the issue, not the consensual loving sexual relations of two people of the same sex.

Morality, right action, and decent living, are principles Jesus taught. But Jesus' perspective was that our characters must be transformed before we can truly live out ethical principles. That is why he re-interpreted the Mosaic Law from not just 'doing' or 'not doing' to 'being'. In other words, if one's character is one of goodness, their actions will show it. Goodness will automatically manifest since the character or moral fiber of the person is good. Jesus is concerned with character, not simple standards of right and wrong. Jesus' psychology of morality was an inner awareness of holiness. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." He distinguishes between earthly and heavenly pursuits. He tells us that unless our righteousness surpasses that of mere religious obligation and blind obedience to a set of rules, we certainly will "not enter the kingdom of heaven."

Spiritual vision is our capacity to see clearly what God wants us to do and

to see the world from a Divine point of view. Proper morality is proper behavior: that which is esteemed good, decent, and ethical in the best interest of the community of God's People, and that which respects ourselves and all of human life...And that's what it's all about....AMEN!

 $\blacksquare$ 

The Reverend Gregory L. Denton is Pastor of New Hope First Community Church, "A church built on love where everyone is welcome," an independent growing congregation that believes in God's all-inclusive love. New Hope, celebrating its 12th year in the Palm Beaches, is located at 2929A South Seacrest Blvd. in Boynton Beach, FL. Sunday services are 10:30 am. Discussion Group/Bible Study Thursdays at 7:30 pm. On the web at: www.newhopefla.org

**Promoting** understanding. equal rights and diversity through of Vero Beach support groups, community activities and scholarships. Everyone is welcome! Meetings 7pm: 2<sup>rd</sup> Monday and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday every month UU Fellowship, 1590 27th Ave www.VeroBeachPFLAG.org PO Box 650533 Vero Beach, FL 32965-0533 772-778-9835

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**JULY 19:** 

VITA AND

M&M!

SPIKEY DYKEY,

www.coldkegnightclub.com www.myspace.com/coldkegnightclub





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page for the link to get your VoteNoOn2.com Campaign Tool Kit.

Get to know your candidates. Live on the Space Coast? Visit: http://www.electtonysasso.org

Both Space and Treasure Coast voters should check out the politician that showed up at Space Coast Pride at http://www.blythe2008.com Steve Blythe is running for the seat Dave Weldon is vacating and he had the balls to show up and speak at Space Coast Pride demonstrating a knowledge of our issues as well as the problems our country is facing. Check him out.

On the presidential race, Sen. Barack Obama's campaign reached out to gay supporters of Sen. Hillary Clinton in a conference call June 6, acknowledging the devoted following Clinton enjoys among many gay voters, while asserting Obama's commitment to gay rights.

#### In The News

For current headlines see our website: www.ootcmag.com

MIAMI-May 20, Miami-Dade became the 4th Florida county, 22nd municipality to offer domestic partner benefits.

"This is a huge victory for our city and these protections will help thousands of families to better care for one another," said Stratton Pollitzer, Deputy Director for Equality Florida. "Even as we celebrate today's decision, we must go to work to protect these hard-won benefits by defeating Amendment #2 on the November 4th ballot."

Other states have used these so-called "marriage protection" amendments to strip Domestic Partner benefits from all unmarried couples, gay and straight.

This past month, Michigan's Supreme Court used their so-called "marriage protection" amendment to strike down domestic partner protections across the state, and evidence has emerged that proponents of Amendment #2 are getting ready to do the same here in Florida.

One of Amendment #2's major backers, David Caton, was recently discovered gathering data on Tampa's Domestic Partnership policy. He had to admit to reporters that he was doing this to prepare for his group's attack on Tampa's Domestic Partnership plan that currently provides health benefits to Tampa's police officers, firefighters and other municipal employees.

"Amendment #2 supporters can no longer deny that their goal is to repeal vital domestic partner protections like those passed today in Miami-Dade." said Pollitzer.

The new Miami-Dade ordinance provides health insurance and sick leave benefits to county employees and creates a Domestic Partner Registry, which will provide registered couples basic benefits like the right to visit their partner in the hospital. Monroe, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties also provide Domestic Partner benefits.

Equality Florida is Florida's only statewide

human rights organization dedicated to the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. Through education and advocacy, the organization is committed to building a state of equal rights for all Floridians, inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

WEST PALM BEACH—The Palm Beach County Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) has issued two rulings finding that the School District of Palm Beach County discriminated against employees with domestic partners by charging excessive health insurance premiums.

"District administrators have been under the mistaken belief for years that they did not have to comply with the county's equal employment ordinance," said Rand Hoch, President of the Palm Beach County Human Rights Council. "Hopefully these two rulings will now put an end to their discriminatory practices."

In 2005 the school district first offered employees the opportunity to purchase health insurance for their domestic partners. However, instead of charging the same premiums being paid by married employees, the district charged employees with domestic partners a minimum of \$4,200 per year more for the same coverage.

The school district maintained that it was not bound by the county ordinance and that no discrimination had occurred,

The OEO determined in that the school district was in violation of the Palm Beach Equal Employment Ordinance, which makes it illegal for an employer to discriminate in the provision of employment benefits, regardless of an employee's marital status.

"Now that the OEO has ruled that the school district is subject to the County's Equal Employment Ordinance, perhaps the district finally will amend its nondiscrimation policies to conform to the law." said Hoch.



AUGUSTA, Maine-An initiative campaign to repeal Maine's gay rights law and put in place roadblocks to gay marriages and adoptions has been abandoned.

"We're pulling the plug," said Michael Heath, executive director of the Christian Civic League of Maine. Heath said the evangelical group failed to attract voter, volunteer and financial support it needed to continue its campaign.

The group collected only a third of the 15,000 voters' signatures it had set as a goal for primary election day June 10, said Heath. He added said that potential volunteers "don't want to be aligned with bigotry and homophobia and hatred," tags their opponents had applied to the initiative backers.

EqualityMaine, which had placed volunteers at the polls June 10 to discourage voters to sign the initiative ballots, welcomed Thursday's decision.

"This was a really broad attack on gays and lesbians and their families," said Betsy Smith, executive director of EqualityMaine. "Mainers are generally fair-minded and I think they sent a strong message on primary day."

The proposed law had several components, including repealing Maine's law protecting gays and lesbians from discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodation, credit and education. It would have barred the use of state funds by the attorney general's office for its civil rights teams and civil rights programs in public schools.

SALEM, OREGON-The AP reported that groups are admitting defeat in their efforts to collect signatures for initiatives to repeal two Oregon gay rights laws in this November's election.

The campaigns were aimed at derailing a domestic partnership law and another new law banning discrimination based on sexual orientation. Both were enacted by the 2007 Legislature.

Opponents say they are dropping their efforts to qualify the repeal initiatives for this fall's ballot because neither has received a state-approved ballot title and the deadline for turning in signatures is July 3rd.

Former state Sen. Marylin Shannon, a Republican who was co-sponsor of the measure to repeal the domestic partnership law, said opponents aren't going to give up and will work to place a repeal measure on the 2010 ballot.

Oregon's leading gay rights group, Basic Rights Oregon, says the latest failure by opponents to force a statewide vote on the issue shows that a growing number of Oregonians support giving same-sex couple rights and protections similar to marriage.

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO-According to an AP story, Puerto Rico's house of representatives has denied a measure to toughen a ban on same-sex marriage.

Resolution 99 failed to make it to the house floor for voting, effectively killing the proposal for this legislative term.

The measure would have amended the U.S. territory's constitution to establish that marriage is between a man and woman and that no other types of unions could be recognized. Thus, it would have made it harder to allow civil unions or grant marital rights to unmarried couples.

Critics said the amendment was unnecessary because local laws already ban same-sex marriage. Others argued it was discriminatory.

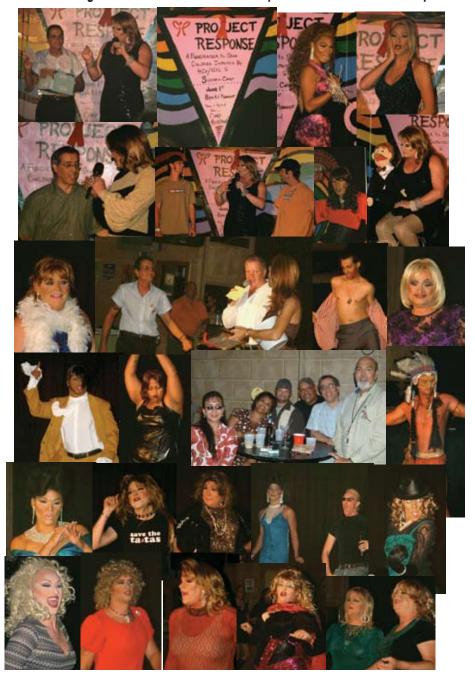
WASHINGTON, DC—The Advocate reported that the Social Security Administration must recognize the children of same-sex couples according to a Department of Justice determination on June 19.

The federal Defense of Marriage Act prevents the federal government from recognizing or providing benefits to same-sex couples, but it does not explicitly address the benefits of children of such couples.

"Although DOMA limits the definition of 'marriage' and 'spouse' for purposes of federal law, the Social Security Act does not condition eligibility for [benefits] on the existence of a marriage or on the federal rights of a spouse in the circumstances of this case; rather, eligibility turns upon the State's recognition of a parent-child relationship. and specifically, the right to inherit as a child under state law," stated the legal opinion

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## Project Response Benefits at Cold Keg & REBAR to send HIV/AIDS impacted kids to summer camp



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prepared by Steven Engel, deputy assistant attorney general for the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel.

The opinion was delivered after a child of a lesbian couple who had a civil union in Vermont attempted to receive Social Security benefits. The child's nonbiological parent began collecting her Social Security benefits in 2005, the year the child was born, and under Social Security law the minor children of adults who receive disability benefits can also claim benefits.

PITTSBURG—The Pittsburgh City Council has passed legislation establishing a partner registry for people living together in committed relationships.

The legislation, written by openly gay Councilmember Bruce Kraus, is similar to one in Philadelphia. It will be open to both unmarried opposite-sex and same-sex couples. Registering could serve as proof of a relationship for couples applying for domestic partner benefits at private companies which offer them.

If one partner is a city employee, the registry would allow health benefits for that person's partner under Pittsburgh's health plan. The registry also would be open to siblings or others in mutually dependent relationships such as a father and child.

WASHINGTON, DC—A report in The Washington Blade stated that DOJ Pride, the association for gay employees at the Justice Department, held its first Pride event in five years at the department's Great Hall.

Bush administration officials had barred the celebration from taking place in the Great Hall since 2003. The event was able to

take place this year because U.S. Attorney General Michael Mukasey in January revised the equal-employment-opportunity policy barring discrimination in the department.

During his speech, Mukasey congratulated two Justice Department employees receiving awards from DOJ Pride for their contributions to gay community: Gregory Friel, a special litigation counsel for civil rights, and Robert Moossy, the director of a human trafficking prosecution unit. Leonard Hirsch also received an award for his role as president of Federal GLOBE, an organization for gay federal government employees.

FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY—Gov. Steve Beshear has granted employment protections for gays and lesbians in state government, one of three executive orders he made reversing policies of his predecessor.

On gay rights, former Gov. Ernie Fletcher, a Republican, had stripped from his administration's equal employment opportunities policy a phrase to bar job discrimination in state government on the basis of "sexual orientation or gender identity."

Beshear, a Democrat, said in a statement yesterday that the policy meant that "a gay person could be fired simply for being gay. A person should be hired or dismissed on the basis of whether they can do the job. Experience, qualifications, talent and performance are what matter." The order says that the protection includes matters relating to "hiring, promotion, termination, tenure, recruitment and compensation."

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Christina Gilgor, executive director of the Kentucky Fairness Alliance, said the group was "thrilled that Governor Beshear has kept his campaign promise to reinstate sexual orientation and gender identity in the state government's employment nondiscrimination policy."

MADISON, WISCONSIN—The Wisconsin Supreme Court has ordered a conservative pastor to pay \$87,000 in legal fees to a gay rights group he accused of defaming him.

Grant Storms of the Reformer Ministries in Marrero, La., claimed in the lawsuit that Action Wisconsin defamed him by saying remarks he made at a 2003 anti-gay conference in Milwaukee advocated the murder of gays.

Storms was one of several speakers at the "International Conference on Homo-Fascism," a gathering of people who railed against gays. Action Wisconsin obtained an audio recording of the conference and publicized remarks that the group said incited violence and hatred.

After Action Wisconsin widely distributed the tape Storms sued the group claiming it had defamed him by suggesting he was advocating murdering gays.

In 2006 Milwaukee County Circuit Judge Patricia McMahon said the group's interpretation of the remarks was reasonable and the lawsuit lacked merit from the day it was filed. McMahon awarded Action Wisconsin \$87,000 in legal fees.

The appeals court reversed the ruling and Action Wisconsin took the case to the state Supreme Court.

In a 4-3 ruling the high court overturned

the appellate ruling, allowing the original decision to stand. In the majority decision the court said that Storms should have known the lawsuit was frivolous.

WOODSTOCK, NY—Ruth Simpson, a leader in the gay liberation movement who wrote a well-regarded critique of social and political attitudes toward lesbians in the 1970s, died May 8, in Woodstock, N.Y., after a series of illnesses. She was 82.

Simpson became prominent in 1970, when she led the New York chapter of Daughters of Bilitis, the oldest U.S. lesbian rights organization. As president, she began to steer it in a more activist direction, which included establishing one of the first lesbian community centers in the United States.

She also wrote From the Closet to the Courts, a book that examined discrimination against lesbians in various arenas, including religion, psychiatry, the legal system and the women's and gay rights movements. Originally published in 1976 by Viking Press and reissued last year by Take Root Media, it was unusual for its time, not only because few major publishers were interested in works about lesbianism but also because it blended personal history with analysis.

""It was a pioneering book. In some ways, it was a very brave book, personal and also political," said Lillian Faderman, a scholar of lesbian literature and history who teaches at California State University, Fresno. "I think women in the lesbian community found it very exciting and liberating."

Simpson is survived by her partner of 37 years, Ellen Povill.



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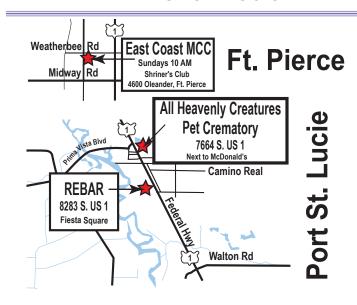
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Steve Hildebrand, Obama's deputy campaign manager, hosted the call that was joined by about 1,200 listeners. In his remarks, Hildebrand emphasized Obama's "rock solid commitment to gay equality." "We know there are a lot of people who have supported Sen. Clinton on the call," Hildebrand said, "we recognize the pain that goes with some of this, but we need your help, we want your help ... we'll take it when you're ready."

Hildebrand announced that Brian Bond, who currently serves as the gay outreach director for the Democratic National Committee, will move to Chicago to become director of constituencies for the Obama campaign. That role will involve outreach to a broad range of voters, not just gays.

Lesbian musician Melissa Etheridge will serve as a co-chair of Obama's 50-state voter registration campaign. Joan Garry, former executive director of GLAAD, and Kevin Jennings, founder of GLSEN, will serve as co-chairs of Obama's LGBT finance operations.

Elizabeth Birch, former executive director of the Human Rights Campaign, spoke about her strong support for Clinton. "I was asked by the Obama campaign to try to articulate what the Hillary Clinton people are feeling now," she said. "I was surprised by my own reaction." Birch said she burst into tears on June 3rd when Obama clinched the nomination. She asked for patience from Obama's supporters, saying that Clinton's gay backers would come around to Obama, not within hours, but within days.

HRC President Joe Solmonese, speaking by phone from the AIDS LifeCycle ride in California, also praised Clinton. He said gay Americans have no greater ally in the U.S. Senate than Clinton, then praised Obama for including gays in his vision of America. HRC has now endorsed Obama and Solmonese vowed the organization would work to mobilize its members "like never before" to defeat Sen. John McCain in November.

Longtime gay rights activist David Mixner, who initially endorsed John Edwards, also spoke. He said that Obama opposes the November ballot initiatives in California and Florida that would ban same-sex marriages in those states.

A few days later Hildebrand and Obama communications director Ben LaBolt hosted another gay outreach call to announce that Dave Noble will head up the team's LGBT Vote campaign making it the second homo-related call in less than a week.

Noble, previously director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Public Policy & Government Affairs, kept his remarks short, sweet and to the point, highlighting the urgency of the homo-mission: "I am thrilled to be joining Senator Obama's team as he's ramping up efforts headed into the general election. The fact that there are only under five months between now and election day means we have a lot to do.

"Thousands of LGBT people have already come on board to Senator Obama's team and have done so for the same reasons that I have, I'm sure: not just his stance on the issues that are so important to our community, but also the way he has conducted this campaign and the way he is going to change politics in this country that will benefit everyone, not just LGBT people. I have been proud to watch him speak about LGBT issues on the stump, not just in front of LBGT audiences, but to everyone as he's been campaigning...

"[We need] to make sure everyone understands what's at stake, the differences between the change that Senator Obama is going to bring to Washington and the same policies, same judges and same fights that John McCain is going to bring..."

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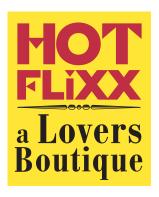


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