

NOTES FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR

By Glenn Gullickson



COURAGE

With the Winter Olympics in the spotlight, the LGBT community watches Sochi, Russia, and wonders if athletes will make a courageous gesture in support of LGBT rights in a country where laws oppress the gay community.

It's another reminder that despite some shortcomings, Americans are part of a pretty great system that's sometimes taken for granted. It's a system that still needs improvement, but it offers methods to make changes.

But even at home it still takes courage to stand up for LGBT rights.

For example, take the four Arizona couples who recently filed a lawsuit challenging the state's ban on same-sex marriage. They haven't been LGBT activists, but seeing little progress on the issues locally they thought it was time to get Arizona in the game and

exercised rights available to any American.

In the days after the lawsuit was filed, they were featured prominently in the local media, and in an instant went from being private individuals to public personas putting themselves on the line for a cause they believe in. They had to be willing to endure the negative comments that all too frequently show up on blogs reacting to the news of the day. These four couples deserve the support of the Arizona LGBT community.

Despite the tremendous strides that have been made during the last couple of years, there are many examples of the courage it can take to be openly gay.

Youth still show courage by coming out at the risk of being thrown out of their homes by unsupportive parents.

Workers still show courage by coming out at the risk of being fired by discriminatory employers.

Couples still show courage by coming out at the risk of not being able to obtain housing or other services.

Progressive legislators in Arizona show courage by standing up to a conservative majority that would restrict LGBT rights.

Activists and allies show courage by leading the way in the frontlines of the fight for equality.

So while the Olympics will spotlight the struggles of the LGBT community in Russia, we continue to work for the day when it won't take so much courage just to be ourselves here at home. **-E**

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