"Michael Johnston is...leading a battle to bring redemption to the homosexual and is encouraging others to stand against this change to Title V."

Dr. Jerry Prevo

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"...time will come when anyone who kills you will think that by doing this they are serving God. People will do these things because they have not known the Creator or me."

John 16:1-3

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"It will be a time to remember those who have died as well as a time to focus energy and empowerment on those still living."

World AIDS Day observance at the Anchorage Museum

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"I am hoping that gay men, lesbians and our friends will show up at the December 1st Assembly meeting in unprecedented numbers to testify. Our strength comes from telling the truth and from recognizing our collective power. What truth? The truth that discrimination based on sexual orientation is harmful, not only to us, but to all of society...."

Doug Frank

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"In Germany, they came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time, no one was left to speak up."

Pastor Martin Niemoeller
NorthView

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Distribution: NorthView is free upon request and is mailed at special non-profit, bulk mailing rates. Identity's mailing list is confidential and is not sold, given or loaned to anyone. Copies of NorthView are also distributed at select businesses in the Anchorage area. Financial contributions are gladly accepted to defray mailing costs.

Contributions: We welcome articles and letters from community individuals and organizations. Please submit, if at all possible, on 3.5 or 5.25 diskette (IBM compatible). All media will be returned. All contributions must be signed, but names will not be used upon request. NorthView reserves the right to edit as necessary and to refuse to print any article submitted.

Deadlines: All articles and advertising must be received by the 10th of the month for publication in that month.

Advertising: Rates are available upon request. Contact NorthView by mail or through the Helpline at 258-4777. All advertising must be camera ready. NorthView will not accept advertising that is sexist, discriminatory or sexually explicit.

Mail: Editor, Identity NorthView, P.O. Box 200070, Anchorage, AK 99520-0070.

Phone: Anchorage Gay & Lesbian Helpline 907-258-4777. Messages will be returned as soon as possible.
Editorial:
Cultural Rape

Anchorage seems a safe enough haven. After all, it was in Colorado that a majority of voters approved anti-gay and lesbian laws; the "ethnic cleansing" is taking place a half a world away in Serbia; a Nazi-like mentality calls for the ejection of non-Germans; rumors abound that Olaf Palme, the Prime Minister of Sweden, was assassinated by the CIA because he wasn't friendly to the USA; skin-heads invade the American consciousness and spew their hatred at Jews, Gays and Lesbians alike.

Have we grown so accustomed to terrorism that today we simply accommodate it? Is it now just another part of our daily lives? Remember in the early '70s when the first bombing occurred? Seared into our memory is a telegram we received that same day: "Dick and Shirley Winerman killed Swissair crash en route Tel Aviv. What a tormented world we live in." They were family friends, and the destruction of their plane was the first such terrorist act of sabotage of that magnitude. The world reacted in horror.

These days, we read of bombings, assassinations and other terrorist acts, react some and keep on with our lives (unless we are directly affected, there really isn't much to do, it seems). Have we grown so used to reading of these events, seeing them in full color (and sometimes live?) that we no longer react in outrage, but rather assimilate the information, deplore it, and not take the time and energy to register our protest in some way, no matter how small? Are we so insulated in our relatively safe haven that we don't need to put real, immediate energy into our outrage?

It is said, and there seems to be scientific basis in fact (as if we needed science to corroborate what our bodies already know), that depression, unhappiness and/or suppressed feelings can lead to as much long term physical and mental anguish and ill health as actual germ-borne diseases. While there may be scant comparison to the genocide of Bergen Belsen and Auschwitz and the slaughter of 6 million gays, lesbians, gypsies, political prisoners and Jews, attention must be paid to the systematic repression of, outlawing of, brutalization of and dehumanization of lesbians and gays, right here at "home."

Can we really react with equanimity when Colorado passes a law that judges an entire culture morally reprehensible and sick? Can we watch with only mild upset when Oregon very narrowly defeats a set of even more draconian laws? Have we in fact constructed lives for ourselves that appear comfortable and safe but that could be shattered by similar laws in Alaska? (Forget the laws for a moment: what about the gay murders? the violence, the abuses, the jobs, the discrimination against People Living with AIDS?) Do we honestly believe that our happiness is not linked inextricably to a society that brands us moral outlaws at the least and perverts deserving of opprobrium and violence at the worst? Those links have been branded on our hearts and minds over the years with oppressive rhetoric and physical harm. They are ours now, our legacy of internalized homophobia.

Recently, more people have involved themselves in consciousness raising/political action groups: Equal, Queer Nation, March on Washington, the Names Project Quilt, Identity, SEAQLA are some in Alaska. The "process" orientation of some of these groups is a good channel for our outrage. We have two distinct yet intertwined areas of focus: one, ourselves and the personal abuses we've suffered, and two, our outrage at a society (fellow citizens and lawmakers) who promulgate our repression. And let us give due and deserved praise to our non-gay/lesbian allies.

These protesters, these tiny bands of heros swell their ranks when you participate, whether openly and in public, whether privately with money, time or other resources, whether in your best thoughts. What is important is that our collective consciousness take the lessons of oppression and turn them back on our oppressors as stunning, positive and best-thinking light. That light, that consciousness, that different focus from the "you're wrong and I'm right" mentality will fuel the process and carry us strongly forward.

In this "light" we can look at the December 1st Assembly hearings (about the inclusion of Lesbian and Gay protections in the Municipal Charter along with race, creed, color, national origin and religion), as another step in our process. We can't be concerned with winning or losing, rather we must focus a strong voice, our voice; and we must be heard as we speak the oppression of all peoples, all cultures. We must speak our outrage (whether publicly or privately) at being made to believe we can't function as completely integrated members of society (can you imagine what life would be like if there were no issues at all around sexuality, if there were genuine interest in different sexuality, real sharing across the ethnic lines of demarcation, lack of judgements?).

We must consciously and actively alter the focus of parts of our daily lives, in some cases radically, so that we energetically and unequivocally refuse to accept the terrorism as just another awful event, so that we react instantly in some way, so that we burn into our individual and collective consciousness the urgent need to put a halt to the oppression, the cultural rape.
We must transform our and our oppressors’ fear, guilt and anger into a blinding light from which all may learn, grow and thrive.

F. Kenneth Freedman, Editor

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The UAA Campus Center Pub is connected to the sports center and the bookstore. The Pub is on the ground floor, on the east end of the building.
A TOAST TO LESBIANS: "TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH!"
by Karen Carlisle

This is the beginning of a regular column on primarily lesbian health issues, although gay men and bisexuals are certainly welcome to submit health articles to NORTHVIEW. My hope is that various writers, who may or may not be health care providers, will come forth with offerings. Although there are few health concerns of lesbians that are not also health concerns to most women, we bring to them a lesbian framework. What might that mean?

I think best by considering actual examples. Take the care of our reproductive systems (italicised because many lesbians wouldn't think of reproducing; the term is heterosexist, isn't it?) Many heterosexual women are so unfamiliar with their vulvas, that all sorts of symptoms go unnoticed for a long time. Lesbians, on the other hand, are likely to notice genital warts, herpes, unusual smells or appearances, and are more likely to express pain that might be caused during deep sexual contact that could be symptomatic of uterine or cervical illness. Having continued to try and practice heterosexuality until my thirties, I can attest to the fact that I now know much more about my own body than I did then.

How many of us know that a woman may be HIV-positive and be symptomatic with full-blown AIDS, but be under-diagnosed and under-treated with little or no financial support because the AIDS definition on the CDC register is based on the original constellation of symptoms displayed by gay white men? Women's symptoms are different, and often manifest as Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), uterine cancer, and other reproductive system illnesses. Michael at 4 A's says it may be woman-hating, but mainly the CDC (a government agency afterall) is dragging its heels about switching, or enraging the guidelines for diagnosis because many more people will then be diagnosed as AIDS-active, and then the government will have to do something!

Which brings me to another fact we in this community know to be true: health is political. Health is also physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. Starting with these ideas, the range of possible topics for this column might be far-reaching. Here are some possibilities: non-chemical pain relief, aging, breast cancer, sexual violence, lesbian battering, different forms of exercise, support systems during chronic or terminal illnesses, alternate roads to sobriety other than AA, development of a list of gay-friendly health care providers, anti-rape training, book reviews, etc.

And there is so much more! Send your ideas........volunteer to research...........write an article! Call Karen at 561-0409.
Karen Carlisle is a lesbian activist in the Anchorage community.

NEWS FROM "EQUAL"
Upcoming Events

7:00 p.m. November 9th, Wilda Marston Theater, MOA Main Public Library (on 36th). A representative from the Justice Department and other noteworthy persons will conduct a hearing on "hate crimes". Attend if you can.

7:00 p.m. November 18, U.A.A. Pub: The LGBSA is sponsoring a "Community and Family Gathering" (see ad). No charge for admission to this ice-breaking event; open to everyone. Bring your friends and neighbors.

December 1st: Anchorage Assembly Meeting: Come to testify or to support those who testify to the need to amend the anti-discrimination ordinance. Bumper stickers and buttons available: "Hate Is Not A Family Value"; "Straight...Not Narrow"

Recent Happenings

Channel 2 News covered the first Alaska Queer Nation demonstration last week. Twenty-two people showed up to the peaceful event in Town Square to display support for our 'family' friends in Colorado.
Growing Up Gay in America
by Jeffrey Nickel

"Behind the curtains I make love to America. In the closet I make love to America. My love is bigger than the Atlantic Ocean. America does not want my love. America throws sand in my eyes and tries to drown me in the Atlantic Ocean. But my love is bigger than any ocean. I am 13. I want to love America. America with its smell of gymnasiums and locker rooms. America with its smell of hamburgers and hot dogs. America laughs at me. I do not laugh."
-Harold Norse

I had a crush on this one boy in high school. I wanted so much to touch him and to tell him—just once—how I felt. But of course I couldn't. As we know all too well, at that age we could dream, but no more. I remember looking up his address and riding my bike over there, just to see what his house looked like. Though I wanted so much more, that was as close as I would ever come to him. All I ever wanted was just one boy. It wasn't too much to ask.

For gay children in America, it's a long way from realizing who you are, to being able to be who you are. With very few exceptions, gay young people have literally no one to talk to and nowhere to go. They try to wait until they're old enough to do what they want; pretend that the waiting doesn't hurt; believe that it's something they must endure; but the night is too long. Our children can't take growing up gay.

America's young people get the message early on that being gay is to be avoided at all costs. They're told that if they are to be loved and accepted by their families and friends, they must pretend to be something they're not. They hear that if they try very hard, they can change the way they feel. But they can't. It is possible that some people mean well when they say such things; that they just don't understand. But nevertheless, their message continues to destroy lives. In 1989, a report on youth suicide was released by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. In it was an article entitled, "Gay Male and Lesbian Youth Suicide." An interview conducted by its author elicited the following statement from a young man:

"I always knew I was gay. When I was eight or nine I would steal my mother's Playgirl magazines and look at the pictures of men. I also remember seeing heterosexual couples and knowing I wasn't like that. I would get very depressed about not being like the other kids. Many times I would take a kitchen knife and press it against my chest, wondering if I should push it all the way in."

No; no more. There are gay young people, and they will one day be gay adults. But only if they make it; only if adults dare to speak aloud in the dark; only if we become involved in the lives of those who desperately need to know who we are.

What does it mean to be gay at thirteen? Too much, and yet, not enough. Some of our friends begin dating. Those who aren't worry they might be "behind" the others. But at thirteen, we are "behind" everyone. We want to feel as they do, but we can't. Oh my God, we say to ourselves, what if I never grow out of it? We hardly conceive that we could love someone of our own sex that way. Our friends taunt us, ignorant of their cruelty: "Don't you think she's cute?" "No." We want desperately to say: What about Jimmy—he's cute! But that's unmentionable, even unthinkable.

We had a choice, as gay teens, if you could call it that. We could keep the truth to ourselves, and become totally isolated from everyone else. Or we could lie to the others, and become alienated from ourselves. Either way, we lost.

As children, we know only what we like. Left to ourselves, we wouldn't ask "why?", "when?", or "with whom?" We feel what we feel devoid of any "moral" judgment, until we can't escape the knowledge that others strongly disapprove. Ginny Apuzzo, in a speech she gave before a gay audience, spoke about this disapproval. She said: "When I proposed to her, when I was ten years old, I realized that however I felt about girls was never to be repeated again." As children, we approach ourselves in innocence, only to discover that we're guilty.

Before I turned 21, there was almost nowhere for me to meet and talk with gay kids my own age. That made me very angry, because it sure seemed like gay adults just didn't care enough to make sure that people like me had a safe place to go. And several years later, things have changed little. Under-21 nights at gay bars are almost unheard of. These businesses that are making money hand over fist can't be bothered to reach out and help gay young people even one night a month. That's wrong. If we want to, we can convince them to have such nights. It's the least that they - and we - could do.

It's surprising that, as far as the gay rights movement has come in recent years, there has been almost no change in the experience of gay childhood. It must be admitted that we have, for the most part, cared only about helping adult gays and lesbians. We've been afraid to care about children, mostly because of what our opponents say we do to children. The fact that we don't do those things hasn't seemed to make much
difference. We're still afraid to reach out, for fear of being accused of something. We let our enemies intimidate us into doing virtually nothing for those who need us the most. That's appalling. Gay children desperately need to know what it's like to discover sexuality without fear. But as long as we're afraid of what bigots think, they never will.

Our children can't take growing up gay. For most of them, the world in which they live tells them that they couldn't possibly be happy being gay. So most are afraid even to hope. Gay children get the message early on that homosexuality is disgusting. They're not able to look at the larger picture. They can't realize that what's really disgusting is that they're made to hate themselves for loving. It's ironic that those who tell gay young people they won't be happy are making that come true.

Gay childhood remains a childhood of paranoia. The hatred is still scrawled on classroom desks. "Faggot" is still the worst thing you can be, yet children hardly know what it means. But how could they? Despite the fact that sex education courses are reaching more and more children at younger and younger ages, the vast majority of these courses don't even mention homosexuality. When they do, chances are it will be portrayed with prejudice. Many teachers yet believe -- and indeed tell their students -- that homosexuals lead miserable lives preying on young children in schoolyards. Given this message, it's not surprising that kids hardly know when to stop the cruelty. Their world teaches them that homophobia has no bounds. And it teaches gay kids that if they want to make it through childhood, they have to hide. Helpless. Hopeless. Worthless.

How paranoid is our childhood? When I was in fourth grade, something happened that I still find hard to believe. Yet, I was there. "Johnny" had a crush on "Joey." It was very obvious. He followed him around constantly. But it bothered no one, really, except the teacher. She felt that it was her duty to bring this "immoral" situation to a halt. To that end she set up a kind of trial, during which Johnny was utterly humiliated before his entire class. It was incredible. He was asked, before all of his friends and peers, why he liked Joey so much. He had to justify what he felt, in a world where there are no "excuses" for it. Merely because Johnny appeared to be gay, he was guilty. This is how scared we are, America. We're so terrified our children might be gay that we're willing to annihilate their self esteem in an effort to drive it out of them. And for what? Gay children will be what they are.

Adolescence is a hard time for anyone. But, boy, what it's like when you have a secret like that. Straight kids don't know what secrets are. Most of us couldn't tell anybody we were gay. We couldn't tell our best friends. We couldn't tell our parents. We couldn't even tell strangers. It's funny to hear people say gays are "security risks" (an excuse used to keep gays out of the military) because we can't keep secrets. What a piece of nonsense. Secrets were our childhood.

The first gay pride march I ever went to was in New York City, back in 1985. As the parade rounded Central Park, I noticed two boys - both about fourteen years old - sitting on a rock wall. I averted my eyes, expecting them to glare at me with pure hatred. But I turned my head, and saw both of their faces beaming at me with the most magnificent smiles I had ever seen. And then I saw that their hands were clasped together. As I think about it today, I almost start to cry. These fourteen-year-old boys were holding hands and smiling at me, because they knew that I loved as they did. Little children are begging us to not be ashamed of who we are. How can we hide from faces like that? Ordinarily, they aren't smiling, because America doesn't understand them. But it can understand. We have the power to make young boys and young girls smile instead of crying.

Recently, I visited my old high school. I noticed a small, quiet boy walking down the hallway. I'd walked down thousands of times before. I saw this boy turn around and stare at a beautiful boy passing by. I realized that he's me, just a few years ago. Later I passed by the gym. Even now, I'm afraid the boys will beat me up, if I look at them the wrong way in the locker room. Those were hard days for me, as they are for most gay people. We said to ourselves, when as boys we looked at boys, or as girls we gazed at girls, I can't; I can't. And it took years - years - to get the courage to finally say: I can; I can, and I will.

Many gay people prefer not to talk or even think about that time in their lives, because it's far more comfortable to forget it. But we shouldn't. We pretend that growing up gay in a homophobic society is something we can magically get over. But we can't. Once again, we have a choice. We can remember -- and talk about - what it was like, openly facing the pain and injustice. Or we can bury it, pretending that it doesn't affect us. The gay community ethos says: Just try to forget what it was like to be young and gay. I remember. Just try to forget the pain of feeling like a freak. I remember. Just try to forget how much you wanted to send him a valentine. I remember. The trauma of gay childhood will continue to do damage to us throughout the rest of our lives, unless we face it honestly. Doing so is critical not only to our own
health, but also to the well-being of tomorrow's gay children.

We should make it clear that all of the abuses gay youth suffer cannot be attributed to mere misunderstanding. The truth is that many people hate homosexuality so much that they're willing to sacrifice children - even their own children - in the name of "stopping" it. It's not very hard to understand why some people hate us. Just as we were lied to, they too were tricked into believing the most awful untruths about us. But one would think that once people realize what homophobia does to gay children - and it seems unbelievable that they couldn't realize it - they would be forced to reexamine what they think about homosexuality. For them to truly love children, they would have no choice. This should be especially true of parents. But far too many appear to be quite willing to write off their own children. Our young people sense that all too well, which causes many of them to believe they're not loved at all.

Left alone, children find nothing wrong with liking people of their own sex "that way." They're not prejudiced against themselves and others by nature; it must be taught to them. In South Carolina, there is actually a law that says homosexuality cannot be discussed from kindergarten through seventh grade; and even after that, it can only be mentioned in discussions about sexually transmitted diseases. The forces allied against providing such information are immense. So, each gay child becomes just one more casualty of a system that neither understands nor cares.

Throughout all history, gay people have been burned, hanged, and drowned. And still we are gay. We've been beaten up and told we deserve it, and still we are gay. As children we're so isolated from each other that we're nearly broken, and still we are gay. What do people mean when they say they "oppose" homosexuality? Do they oppose their own children? We're gay. The only choice involved here is whether such people will continue this senseless fostering of guilt. What could they ever hope to gain?

It's startling to realize that we are the people our parents warned us about. We are those very different, very mysterious peoples whom children are repeatedly told to stay away from. If only our parents had known who we were, maybe they might have warned us of different things. They might have told us how to protect ourselves from disease. They might have taught us that our sexuality is a gift to be both enjoyed and respected. And they might have comforted us, when others gave only rejection. But most parents didn't, because they have no idea what it means to be gay at thirteen.

They never will know, unless we tell them. From day to hopeless day, too many parents don't realize what homophobia is doing to their children. They don't know that once the damage has been wrought, it's very difficult to repair. There's no second chance at childhood; there we are formed. We have to make sure that parents are educated about homosexuality, because they can make the difference between a childhood of self esteem, and one of self denial.

And so can we. We pray for the day when being gay is the least of children's concerns. We hope for a childhood in which love and shame don't collide. They dream the dream of freedom, too. But for them the price of not having it is far greater. To the children we must say: We will hear you. We must find ways to get the message to young people that if you're gay, it's okay. Students must know that some of their teachers are gay. We have to get involved in youth causes and organizations, even if that means going places where the welcome won't be a warm one. And we need to speak to young people directly, so that they will be able to speak to us. To be sure, the more we do for children, the more hatred we will flush out. There will be the usual accusations that we're "recruiting" children, etc., etc. But we'd better have the guts to deal with that bigotry, because our children don't have the strength to. Whatever it takes to open those doors, do it.

Once more, two girls down the street fall in love. Boyfriends who live next door to each other find the wonder beyond friendship. I once heard a young man say: "I'm in love, mom, and I really think you're going to like him." How long will it be before we finally see two young boys kissing on national TV? (Perhaps this will come soon. On the soap opera One Life to Live there's now an openly gay teenager. Please watch and offer support for this courageous breakthrough.) This is the dream; for gay children to live in a society that truly cares about and respects them. Though the homophobes may be sworn to stop it, the time will come when millions of parents will buy books for their teenage kids to help them understand who they are. They will support them in every way. No one will protest the "immorality" of it. No one will be accused of discarding "traditional values." No one will give it even a passing thought; because everyone will recognize that it's obviously right.

"Can I fall in love with you Johnny, or would that be a sin?" One million gay adolescents are asking themselves that right now. If America could know what a normal, childhood crush feels like for a gay child, there would be no question, no controversy. But if Suzie has to stop dreaming of becoming president
because she likes Amy, she'll stop dreaming of a lot of other things, too. And we can't afford that. Our message is simple: The issue isn't whether you "favor" homosexuality. It's whether you favor healthy children.

Jeffrey Nickel lives in Boston with his partner Chael Needle. Jeffrey is the former president of Boston University Lesbian/Gay Alliance. Reprinted with permission from Christopher Street, Issue 188, September 21, 1992.

**Doran Vaughan, M. A.**

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Support Group for Long Term People Living with AIDS

If you've been living with AIDS or HIV (the suspected AIDS virus) for more than four years, there's a support group forming. Scott Olson, a long term survivor and AIDS activist, is interested in getting together with people "willing to get into their souls and not be afraid to cry, laugh and tap into that sense of community."

The group would meet every week or every other week depending on the interest, in different members' homes. There would be no charge for membership, and after the group has formed, it will be closed. Olson said he felt it would work better if people weren't drifting in and out at random.

Olson said he felt strongly that there be no alcohol or drugs (which might inhibit good clear interaction), before or during the group. Olson added, "anything said in the group is strictly confidential (as is the membership itself), and it targets the gay and bisexual men's community. It has no backing from any organization and has nothing to do with the 4As."

"I would like to see this group as a way to talk about issues that concern us emotionally and politically, and to help each other develop coping skills," Olson said. "If anybody out there would like to comment or join, please call 272-6210. Ask for Scott. I will not give out names of others interested in the group as it should be an individual commitment. The group will start in the beginning of 1993. I am open for discussion, so, let's see what happens and try to get this started. I know there's a need and times awastin'!"
Well-Rounded Growth Doesn't Mean "Fat"

by CJ

When I attended school at APU in Anchorage, Alaska, I was forced to take what they called "Core Courses." These were classes offered in four different areas of emphasis. One was called Social Environment, one was Natural Resources, another was Spiritual Environment and the last was called "Integration" (where we were to learn how to apply the other three courses to our lives in a balanced and uniform (well-rounded) manner.

In the gay community, whether it be Anchorage or some other city, there seems to be a wide variety of use in the field of "Natural" resources. We all use natural products such as food, drugs, alcohol, other minerals and so forth.

In the area of "Social" environment, we do pretty well also. We have clubs, bars & favorite restaurant hang-outs as well as our significant "cliques." We have our social diseases, our social biases, our social events and our social separations, our social attitudes and our disclosures.

In those two fields (Social Environment and Natural Resources), we pretty well have an "Integration." However, what of the area of "Spiritual" environment? Okay...there are women who are into "Goddess" worship, men and women into "nature spirituality," and people who are into chemically induced spiritual highs. This particular city supports a rather vast twelve-step availability from which many have balanced their needs for "spiritual" connection.

A well-rounded individual knows how to apply natural resources, social and spiritual environments and their own personal journeys to form a complete integration. These well-rounded individuals have probably experienced some "inner-child" work, some counseling of some sort, some realization of the earth and it's needs to function, and have even possibly had a "Christ" experience of some measure.

I grew up believing that "well-rounded" meant having the four basic food groups at your beck and call. It wasn't until later in life that I realized "well-rounded" meant to have experienced all parts of life in some way or another. What is unfortunate to me is to watch people who fail to see beauty in themselves. I used to fail to see beauty in myself until I could come to grips with my homosexuality in the eyes of God. All of society had told me that I could not be a Christian and a homosexual. I figured God knew I was gay, and long before I did. If God didn't want me gay, why wouldn't God do something about it? I figured since God didn't strike me down, then my own personal journey with God was to bring me closer to some answers that most people would rather ignore. Ignorance of the straight society drove me to a deeper need to know God's opinion of my homosexuality. With that journey in mind, I found a way to integrate Spirituality with the rest of my world in a balance that is more than comfortable to live with.

I could choose to ignore God and be miserable or I could choose God and find freedom from other's judgements. Taking on the third avenue, "Spiritual" environment, makes a big difference in the life of this homosexual, Christian, and well-rounded (in more ways than one) individual.

The art of knowing and understanding your own spiritual journey is a vital one to your well-rounded wholeness as an individual in this society.

Go ahead and look around for a spiritual place to be: what have you got to lose? If you would like a list of non-Christian as well as Christian groups that accept homosexuals -- as we are -- I would be glad to provide it.

CJ lives in Anchorage and is mulling over the idea of using a last name in the by-line.
Public Hearings and Perspective
by Jaime Rodriguez

Take a deep breath, everybody. The Municipal Assembly of Anchorage has tentatively scheduled a public hearing concerning a gay rights ordinance for our city. This is bound to bring back memories for the old-timers who remember the last time the city voted on a gay rights ordinance. It also stirs emotion for those who have been following events in Oregon and Colorado. I am hearing people ask many urgent questions. How do we prevent a repeat of the last time, when the mayor vetoed the measure, and the assembly couldn't override? How do we keep what has happened in Colorado from happening here? (Colorado passed a measure prohibiting enacting any law that grants protected status to gays, lesbians and bisexuals.) How can we present an organized effort and achieve our rights? We need to remember a few things, and learn from the folks in Oregon who won a brutal battle with the religious right.

Our goal is not the public hearing. We know the mayor will veto any gay rights measure the assembly passes. We know that there probably isn't enough support to override the veto. We know that the religious right is mobilized to fight us (see letter from Prevo in this newsletter, Ed.). This public hearing is a great opportunity, but let's be realistic. We need to do something if we hope for our desired outcome. We need to present our arguments in a way that allows people to support us. Here is an example: a conservative member of the Equal Rights Commission who has not supported gay rights volunteered that he was surprised that no one brought up the protection of religious freedom. Most of the arguments used against us are matters of religion. The focus of our argument must be that discrimination is wrong. This is not about homosexuality. It is about discrimination. Our stories will be most effective if we give a personal experience of discrimination, and remind the audience that discrimination is wrong, and we want our religious freedom. Unfortunately, all too often we give people the excuse they need to not support us by saying too much that is not meaningful to a straight person. We get sidetracked into defending homosexuality. That is not the issue. When we defend homosexuality, we open the door that allows people to disagree. When we stick to the fact that discrimination is wrong, even the Roman Catholic Church can support us.

Another important fact to remember: if all the gays and lesbians in Anchorage demanded our rights, we still wouldn't get our rights. It will only occur with the support and willingness of straight people. We must build coalitions and make allies. This can only occur if we are visible. That means coming out of the closet! Most of us have straight people who love us. We need to ask them to speak on our behalf. We need to be a visible presence at School Board meetings and at forums against racism and sexism. Our commitment must go beyond the December public hearing. Regardless of the outcome, we can't go away. If we win in December, there is still concern about gay and lesbian youth. If we lose the December round, let's elect our own candidates.

It is likely that the Assembly will postpone the public hearing till later in December, or even January, if they have budget difficulties. What are the chances of that? The University of Alaska Board of Regents will be holding a public hearing on December 3rd, 1992 concerning adding the term sexual orientation to the University's anti-discrimination policies. EQUAL/The Alaska Gay & Lesbian Task Force continues to grow. Inside sources at the Pentagon have leaked that February 20, 1993 is the scheduled day when Clinton will issue an executive order rescinding the military ban on gays. April 25, 1993 is The March on Washington. Let's keep our perspective. Our goal is our rights, and this is part of a very large movement. Our success or failure is determined by our commitment and our persistence, not any single public hearing.

We have a couple of other hurdles. By now, many people have heard of EQUAL. As the public hearing approaches, I'm beginning to hear some grumbling. "We're not getting anything done. We're bogged down in process." I disagree. EQUAL has done what no one has been able to do for over a decade. People and groups who ordinarily can't stand each other have been interacting and cooperating in unity. This is occurring through a structure and decision-making process that is not patriarchal. Much is getting done, but not in a familiar way. A different set of priorities is being used than ever before. This will be very uncomfortable for some people. EQUAL is developing into a permanent political voice for the queer community of Anchorage. Truthfully, nothing is ever done by committees. EQUAL is a growing group of incredibly effective individuals. If you would like to find out more, come to the information social sponsored by the Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Student Association on Wednesday, Nov. 18, 1992 at 7:30 pm in the Campus Center Pub.

One last point. All of this will take money. Large amounts of money. The Oregon gay community raised over $1,000,000 to protect their rights. We need to get out of the nickel-and-dime mentality, and
December First: We Get Heard
by Herman Coen

What does December First mean to the gay and lesbian civil rights movement in Anchorage? To each of us, it may mean different things, but most important, to all of us, it means that we get to be heard. December First is merely an arbitrary date given as a best guess by the Assembly as the date they intend to hear testimony on AO92-115 and AO92-116, the proposed amendments to titles 7 & 5 of the Anchorage Municipal Code.

To me, December first is the next step in a dream. I have not told many people this, but unlike most people, I know that I have a purpose in life, and I know what it is. I was raised in a small town in West Virginia, spent four years in the Army, watched a very close friend die without his family present for support, and spent four days in intensive care recovering from being bashed by four fraternity boys who were given six months probation for the incident because it was just "a prank." I was feeling sorry for myself because my family didn't fully accept my sexuality, and I decided to commit suicide. I overdosed on prescription medicine, and would have died had my roommate not returned from class early and found me. I was taken to the hospital and had my stomach pumped, and was in the hospital for several days.

During that period, I realized that I could do so much to keep other people from getting to the point that I had gotten to. If there are positive role models for gay and lesbian youth, maybe there won't be so great of a need for acceptance that rejection will cause depression and suicidal thoughts. If gays and lesbians are recognized by society, and protected from discrimination, then perhaps gays and lesbians in prominent positions will be more likely to admit their sexuality, and our youth will have role models.

That is why December First is so important to me, because it is the next step. It will take all of us to get gay rights passed on each level, Local, State, and National, and it takes time, and it takes patience. It took seventeen years of introducing it each year before Massachusetts passed a gay rights law, and having talked to the people who wrote the law, the fight was worth it. It may not take us as long, or it may take longer, but this is the next step. Perhaps we will not get this passed this year, but rest assured, as long as we have dedicated people who are willing to work hard, we will eventually win, and it too, will have been worth it.

Herman Coen, Jr. is a gay rights activist living in Anchorage.
HOMOSEXUALS AND THE MILITARY

Editor's Note: The following quotes have been taken from local newspaper articles on the subject of gays in service. We believe that all non-straight people everywhere owe a debt of gratitude to the brave men and women who step out to fight for equal rights and the end of discrimination of any kind. Those in the closet might breathe a silent prayer for them and for their continued success. Those not in the closet could stand and cheer, and join their fight against this bitter injustice.

"For the past few years, U.S. leaders have found it harder and harder to defend banning gays from the military. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, who last year refused to fire a Pentagon aide who'd been 'outed' could offer only the lamest of excuses for continuing to bar gays from serving in the armed forces. Forcing heterosexual men and women to work alongside gay men and lesbians, he said, would be bad for morale.

If that excuse sounds familiar, it's because it has been used before. President Harry Truman didn't buy that justification for discrimination in 1948 when, over widespread protests, he integrated the armed forces. Now President-elect Bill Clinton says he won't listen to fear, prejudice and ignorance when it comes to keeping gays out of the military.

'Should people who have served their country with distinction -- many of them with battlefield ribbons -- and who have never had any kind of question about their conduct be booted out of the military?' he asked, in response to a reporter's question this Veterans Day." (Anchorage Daily News, 11-13-92)

"Clinton said he would sign an executive order removing current restrictions that bar gay men and women from enlisting or remaining in the military. Neither he nor his senior advisers would say when the order will be issued.

'The question here is simply status,' Clinton said. 'I don't think status alone in the absence of some destructive behavior should disqualify people. My position is we need everybody in America that has a contribution to make.'" (Anchorage Daily News: 11-12-92)

"On the intellectual level, people in the military say they understand the argument that homosexuals have the right to serve their country. On the gut level, many have doubts and anxieties.

Homosexuals have always been in the military. But it's been a quiet reality, an orientation that could be hidden or overlooked -- unlike a person's color or sex. If trouble cropped up, a soldier or sailor could be moved on or out.

But when the military dismissed Keith Meinhold after a national television interview in which he disclosed he was gay, the 30-year-old petty officer fought back." (Anchorage Daily News: 11-13-92)

'Meinholt said he hoped the case would help gays and lesbians throughout the military. 'I certainly would not have thrown away a 12-year career unless I thought I could make a difference for a lot of people. I would be proud and honored to were the uniform again.'

Meinholt's attorneys said, 'The real implication is that by 8 a.m. Thursday...Keith Meinholt will be the first admitted homosexual in the armed forces.'" (Anchorage Daily News: 11-11-92)

"Homosexuals will no longer face discrimination that barred them from careers in the Canadian armed forces. Tuesday the Federal Court of Canada ruled that restrictions on gays in the military are contrary to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. 'The Canadian Forces will comply fully,' Gen. John de Chastelain said in a statement from Ottawa." (Anchorage Daily News: 10-28-92).
Wear a Red Ribbon on World AIDS Day:

The Ribbon Project
from the Alaskan AIDS Assistance Association (4As)

Wear a Red Ribbon to show your commitment to fight against AIDS. The red ribbon demonstrates compassion for people living with AIDS and their caretakers, and support for education and research leading to effective treatment, vaccines and a cure.

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For more information call 276-1400.
Letters to the Editor:

Good Connection
Thanks for your good work on the newsletter.
I also look forward to working together more in the future. Your newsletter is a great way to connect us all together.
Here's my personal donation to Identity.
Rebecca Rogers
[Rebecca Rogers is the Executive Director of the Alaskan AIDS Assistance Association. Ed.]

Gay Republican, another opinion
I am a gay Republican from Boston visiting Anchorage this week. I read the article by Herman Coen and couldn't believe what I had seen. Having been an Economics major in college and currently a Banker back home I couldn't agree with Mr. Coen less. I understand that a capitalist economy is a constant cyclical one and the US just had the longest peacetime boom period in history. However, think back to when Mr. Bush denied there was a recession while we were in one for a year. And that the mandates of Graham-Rudman have heartily been ignored. He told us that the Economy was going to flourish after the Gulf War. But he forgot that we had no money to change it. The FDIC is running renegade over the banking industry spending tax dollars to close banks that probably would have made it if allowed to. I know, I worked for one that failed needlessly a year ago. And while he and his troupe are preaching "Family Values", he forgets that it now takes two incomes to reach the American Dream.

Normally, I agree with Republican economic policy. However, this time the government is going to have to spend a little more and increase the deficit to get us going again.

As an American, it scares me to see our economy the worst since 1929. As a gay man, I am terrified of the words that come from the mouth of the President I voted for in 1988 and his entourage. We don't need another period of McCarthyism in this country. That's why I am throwing my support behind Clinton/Gore as is the Log Cabin groups of Boston and San Francisco.
John L. Wild

Gay Republican But Not For Bush

Did you ever notice how one little thing can be blown all out of proportion? Lately this has become very obvious to me. Ken Freedman asked me to write an article for the Northview about being a gay republican, which I gladly agreed to write. Since that letter was printed in the October issue, I have gotten flack from people about the content of the article and the fact that no opposing view was presented. I am writing to clarify a few points.

Yes, I am a gay republican, but no, you did not read anywhere in that article that I intended to vote for George Bush. I would have, given an either/or choice between Bush and Clinton, but luckily, the American public was not so limited in the choices presented to them. I didn't vote for George Bush, but neither did I vote for Bill Clinton. Bill Clinton has presided over the worst decline in the Arkansas environment in any twelve year period on record. He will tax the heart and soul out of the American working class, and that includes you and me.

More importantly, to those who have decided to vote for Clinton based on his statements supporting gay and lesbian rights, Bill Clinton has not only ignored the plight of gays and lesbians in Arkansas, he blames his lack of action on the Arkansas legislature. Bill Clinton has said that the Legislature would not pass or support a gay rights bill or amendment, but when the President says that Congress has blocked his attempts to pass economic reform, Clinton accuses him of making feeble excuses. Also, I didn't vote for Ross Perot, because I didn't feel that he is cognizant of the problems that this country faces, and because he is one of the "major candidates." The "major candidates" have conspired to keep other candidates who are also on the ballot from participating in the debates, because the "major candidates" do not wish to address all of the issues. My vote was for Lenom Fulani, as a statement to choose a "minor candidate" and for an inclusive electoral process.

Herman Coen

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Ignorance

Most of the people who know me consider me to be fairly tolerant and open-minded about most things. However, the letter to the editor in Northview's "special edition" which was not signed really made me see red. Why? The writer used the feminine gender as though to slander the author of a previous letter. Now, I ask you, why in the world would someone do a thing like that?

The only reason I can come up with is ignorance. Is this the sort of thing a thinking, caring, aware person would do? Suppose the situation were reversed, and a female writer had been answered by a female in the masculine gender. Would the guys out there rise up in indignation, or would they simply let it go?

Regardless of the answer to that rhetorical question, I cannot sit quietly and let such a piece of "yellow" journalism go unanswered. I believe the author was consciously trying to slander Mr. Coen, and must be a woman-hater at heart. Why else would he choose such words to belittle and demean? If you are out there reading this letter, take my advice and wise up. If the women of this community ever discover your identity, you will probably regret the day you wrote such a piece of trash.

Bitterly Yours, Marian Dewey

Jesus Sacrificed His Life

Mr. Prevo,

I see your nice big church, and all your lovely members, and I think you must be doing a lot of good for the community. I grew up in the church. I was reared knowing the Lord is with me. My father is a Reverend. He baptized me. I know first hand, the good feelings created when I've done some unselfish, loving and kind act.

I remember once in church, the choir I was in needed to do something special. We brought someone special to play piano, and put in a lot of rehearsal time. Since moving to Alaska, one lyric snippet keeps going through my mind: "...I don't know why Jesus sacrificed his life / but I'm glad, so glad he did..."

This is a very beautiful state. The mountains amaze me. What's really lovely are the people. The people here have a certain honest niceness that seems to make the days a little more cheery. What I don't understand is the blinding seething hatred you possess for me? My Bible teaches me to love every one, and to leave passing judgement to the Lord.

David Wimberly

Get out of the closet, Ann Landers!

I read your reprint of the Anchorage Daily News Ann Landers column from October 12, 1992, "Gay man says 'queens hurt image' with come amount of surprise and hurt.

I wholly agree with Dear Calgary that the flaunting of life-styles "aberrant" to the majority public is inflammatory and damaging "to the cause" and possibly offensive to segments of "the community" - just as "your" parading in boots, leather jock strap and a biker cap before TV cameras would be to me - and that such antics should be reserved for more appropriate occasions. What OFFENDS me is the tone of the letter (and your tacit endorsement?) that such "lunatic fringe" should be closeted to the bedroom. This mind-set is no more acceptable than the homophbic banterings of heterosexual society condemning the Gay and L3Lesbian community at large.

As a transcendent person I don't ask to be accepted "in polite society", but I DO ASK tolerance, understanding, and sensitivity FROM WITHIN the community! Common, screw your head on straight! [sic]. The "zipper mind" that would portray alternate sexualities in such monochromatic tones is seriously to be feared.

Either we're ALL free or NONE of us are free... and don't try to shove me back into some closet!

We're here... and we're NOT GOING AWAY!

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ANCHORAGE BAPTIST TEMPLE
Dr. Jerry Prevo, Pastor

[The following is a copy of a letter received by all churches in Anchorage EXCEPT the Metropolitan Community Church, Ed.]

During the past year homosexual activists pressured the Anchorage Equal Rights Commission to act on the issue of special civil rights protection based on homosexual behavior. Even following the Commission's recommendation against special protection, the Anchorage Assembly has proposed such a change to Municipal Title V and has scheduled public hearings for December 1, 1992.

The goal is clear when you consider what has been accomplished in Canada. Recently, the Canadian Radio and Television Commission approved regulations that prohibit any negative editorial concerning homosexuality. The Toronto Board of Education has drafted sex education curriculum which promotes homosexuality and provides pro-homosexual groups as resources for students. Legislation proposed by the pro-homosexual "New Democratic Party" would lower the age of consent to fourteen.

The same tactics are being used in Alaska and the rest of the United States. We must, once again, take a stand on this issue.

I encourage you to educate your congregation concerning the Biblical view of homosexuality. This issue is coming to the forefront and will have significant impact on our community this year and for the foreseeable future. The local media has already come out in favor of homosexuality. Our congregations need to be educated to the truth and encouraged to become involved by contacting their assembly representatives and attending the public hearings on December 1.

I also want to recommend Kerusso Ministries and its director, Michael Johnston, as an excellent resource for you on the issue of homosexuality. As a former homosexual, Michael has a unique and powerful perspective that will be valuable to you and your congregation. He is leading a battle to bring redemption to the homosexual and is encouraging others to stand against this change to Title V. Michael is also available to speak and help you encourage your folks to come out and take a stand. He is available at 333-4673 if you would like more information.

Sincerely,
Dr. Jerry Prevo
6401 East Northern Lights, Anchorage, Alaska 99504 (907) 333-6536, FAX (907)333-9851

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
P.O. Box 142095 Anchorage, AK 99514-2095 Phone: 338-6749
James W. Morgan, Jr., Pastor

[This letter was received from the Metropolitan Community Church as a response to the letter from Dr. Prevo. Ed.]

Dear Pastor and Congregation

The issue of equal rights for all citizens has again become part of the political debate in our community. The Anchorage Assembly is scheduled to hear public comments to revise Municipal Title V in December. The last time this issue surfaced it created a hate-filled atmosphere in Anchorage. I hope you will join with me in being a voice of reason and reconciliation rather than following the cry for divisiveness among our people.

The issue, as I see it, is very simple: should men and women who are doing their work properly, or who pay their rent, lose their job or apartment simply because of their sexual orientation? The change suggested for Title V would guarantee actions taken are based solely on merit. Some people refer to this as "special rights" but, to me, the right to have a job and a shelter are the most basic of human rights. If employees are not working properly or if tenants do not pay their rent, action could and should be taken against them...regardless of their sexual orientation.

I am the pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church of the Living God (MCC) and have lived in Anchorage since 1970. MCC is a Christian church with a special outreach to gays and lesbians. Our church meets on Sunday afternoons at 2:00 p.m. at St. Mary's Episcopal Church (Lake Otis and Tudor). I invite you to attend one of our services and meet some of your Christian brothers and sisters. Additionally, as time permits, I am willing to speak to your congregation to answer their questions.

In Christ's Love,
James W. Morgan, Jr.

As Jesus said,
"If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you." John 15:18

"I have told you this, so that you will not give up your faith. You will be expelled from synagogues, and time will come when anyone who kills you will think that by doing this they are serving God. People will do these things because they have not known the Creator or me." John 16:1-3
How To Answer Prevo or, On Leadership
by Jeffrey Nickel

[This article (reprinted with permission from Christopher Street magazine, Issue 165) represents some excellent thinking on the subject of hatred and bigotry addressed by many articles in this newsletter. On the eve of World AIDS Day, the Assembly hearings on the subject of inclusion of "sexual orientation" in the Municipal Code, and the hate mongering spurred forth from the Anchorage Baptist Temple, it is appropriate to ponder the heartfelt, and often heart rending sentiment contained herein. Ed.]

"What are practical politics so called are unrealities to him although in the end his prove to be the most practical politics."[1]
M. K. Gandhi

Gay people have a strange ambivalence toward leadership. Although we recognize that it is necessary, we are often so suspicious of it that our leaders never get the chance to grow and develop.

A big part of the problem is the difference between leading the gay community itself, and leading the world at large to an appreciation of what it means to be gay. It's clear that truly effective leaders must speak not only to gay people, but to "the mainstream." That may seem obvious, but the fact is that it rarely happens. That's not surprising, really. It's an almost unbelievably onerous task.

The rhetoric of the gay leadership establishment is almost always the rhetoric of "political correctness." It is assumed that all gay leaders share precisely the same liberal-left political agenda: pro-choice, anti-death penalty, in favor of decreased defense spending, etc. This agenda isn't wrong, and, as far as I'm concerned, it's not undesirable. But what is undesirable is that gay people who don't completely share these views often feel unwelcome in the gay community. They get the message that they simply have no place in it. And conversely, every heterosexual person with right-of-center political views hears that we are inextricably tied to liberalism, and automatically tunes out our message. Both of these are terrible wastes. We can't afford to alienate that many people.

One particularly egregious example of this liberal litmus test was an endorsement questionnaire recently sponsored by a gay political organization in Boston. Candidates were asked not only how they felt about gay-related issues, but also about what positions they held on everything from the environment to increased taxes for social programs. One got the idea from reading the questionnaire that even if candidates answered all the gay-related questions "correctly" -- but were less liberal on other issues -- they would not be endorsed.

This is not to say that coalitions aren't important; they are. But all too often, gay issues are accompanied by so many others that they just get lost. Other issues are important, of course. But to the gay community and the gay rights movement, gay issues should come first, all the time. Gay rights is big enough and important enough to stand on its own. More than anything else, what we need are leaders who believe this deeply.

Not least of the problems plaguing gay leadership is, to quote George Bush, "the vision thing." Far too often, we view leadership as a simple process of figuring out what the community wants and making it happen. That may be representation, but it's not leadership. In any case, those who would wait for any community -- especially the gay community to reach consensus without the direction that real leadership provides will wait for a very long time.

So often, leadership potential is wasted because people worry interminably about finding solutions that will please everyone. Inevitably, such "answers" please no one at all. Our leaders must be answerable to us; of course. But they must also have the courage to have vision. Martin Luther King, Jr., knew this better than probably anyone alive when he wrote: "Ultimately a genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus."[2]

Leadership is not simply a question of asking people what they want. Real leaders make people think about issues in ways they never thought about them before. They attempt to forge a consensus about what's best for the entire community. They engage in the broad dialogue about where we want to go, and how we get there.

We spend a great deal of time and energy making sure that no single individual has too much power in the gay movement. The result is often that our leaders are afraid to take initiative. Democracy is a good thing, but it cannot mean leaderlessness. For us particularly, leaderlessness means hopelessness.

It's easy to attack our leaders when their weaknesses become all too apparent. But we must realize that the

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1 Non-Violent Resistance, by M.K. Ghandi, Schocken, 1951, p. 216

more we attack them, the weaker they become. As with most oppressed peoples our "enemy" is somewhat undefined. So we're often tempted to lash out at our own people. What could be more self-defeating? We should reserve our most severe criticism for those who actively work against our common interests. Once again Martin Luther King knew the answer: "Our enemies will adequately deflate our accomplishment; we need not serve them as eager volunteers."  

Though it may appear obvious, we often forget just how much work has yet to be done to make our society understand and accept who we are. As we do this work, it is inevitable that certain reactionary elements will attack. But we can't let that deter us from doing what we must do.

When *The Well of Loneliness* was first published in 1928, a group of lesbians in Salt Lake City privately condemned it for publicizing their existence. They believed there was no problem, because they had managed to carve out a very small yet (they believed) safe niche for themselves. They thought they'd be left alone as long as they didn't make trouble, as long as they kept their mouths shut. Similarly, we should remember that many of the early educational efforts of the gay community were thwarted by middle-class gay men who also thought that making more people aware of homosexuality could only make things worse. I fear many of us still feel that way.

Do we fear change? We shouldn't. Change is one of the best friends the gay community has. It's not enough for some of us to become comfortable as gay people. We must never forget what it means to be gay at sixteen, when no change was far more dangerous than any change you could think of. Some of our leaders caution us that we shouldn't ask for too much too soon. This school of thought holds that if we make our demands one at a time, we'll be able to avoid "scaring" the opposition into thinking that what we're asking for are radical and dangerous changes. That approach is short-sighted. To be sure what we're talking about achieving does mean uprooting some American traditions. But our enemies would have Americans believe that we want to turn society upside-down. Of course, this is absurd. We love many things about this country just the way they are, just the way they love them, too. But traditions that make a farce of equality, traditions that undermine at every turn our ability to lead open, happy lives -- those are the traditions we must eradicate. And bit by bit, it's happening.

It's crucial to be completely open about the fact that we seek nothing short of total equality. If that means we should demand the right to marry, then we must. If it means exposing the hypocrisy of anti-gay gay people, then we are obliged to do so. If it means risking small gains to win larger ones, nothing could be more appropriate.

First and foremost, we need a leadership that is willing to take chances. In our community, contrary to popular myth, dictators aren't the problem -- debilitators are. These are people who, despite their rhetoric, are desperately afraid of change. They're terrified about what might happen if the boat's really rocked. And they're frightened about the prospect of individuals actually taking charge. That prospect doesn't frighten me at all. The prospect of no change terrifies me.

Humanist psychologist Abraham Maslow tells the story of the little boy who was seen standing uncertainly at a street corner with a bundle under his arm. A concerned bypasser asked him where he was going and he replied that he was running away from home. Why was he waiting at the corner? He wasn't allowed to cross the street.

Who cares what our opponents think of our goals and methods? They will criticize and attempt to hamstring us regardless of what we do. So why not do what's right because it's right, and let the chips fall where they may? The Canadian historian Gary Kinsman brings up a big problem:

The new gay minority approach directs us away from challenging the dominant forms of social life. By accepting the boundaries of an adult-defined community we are accepting a strategy of regulation which would let us have a commercial ghetto but would keep us firmly out of areas that involve young people, schooling, and family policies.

We do no children any good whatsoever if we live and work in our "safe" sections of town. The more of us who stay in ghettos to keep them "safe," the fewer there will be in areas where families live -- families with children who need to be able to interact with us. The safer it is in the south end, the more unsafe suburbia will be for gay people.

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There are many stereotypes designed to keep us from freedom. Not least of these is the lie that says we molest and "convert children. On the rare occasions when we do insist upon being involved in kids' lives, the reactions are often predictably hysterical. But we can't let that bother us. The things that most need to be done are precisely those which produce the most backlash. This is usually how we know we've hit on something critical. Rather than making us run for cover, such reactions should galvanize us in the rightness of our cause. "We do these things,"as John F. Kennedy said, "not because they are easy, but because they are hard."

Martin Luther King, Jr., also said: "What is needed is strategy for change, a tactical program that will bring the Negro into the mainstream of American life as quickly as possible."

If there is any single definition of what direction should be taken by leadership in the gay community must be, that's it. Yet, for whatever reasons, it's still largely missing.

That's not to say that we're not going anywhere. Maybe I'm absurdly optimistic, but I believe that we cannot possibly lose. The real question is when? Our enemies would have to do the most awful things to have even a faint hope of stopping us. They would have to eliminate every last one of us, and even then, we would come again. We should ask them: "Are you that cruel? Are you willing to go that far? "We've had to answer their questions all of our lives. Let's challenge them with a few of our own. Someone once said to former President Harry Truman: "Give 'em hell, Harry." Truman responded: "I give 'em the truth. They just think it's hell." By living openly gay lives, we give America the truth about homosexuality. For some Americans, that is hell, because it means they will have to confront the reality that they've been unfairly prejudiced against us for centuries.

Earl Warren, former Chief Justice of the United States, made his reputation defending the rights of blacks, labor organizers and alleged communists. He drew a hard line between church and state, voting to forbid organized prayer in public schools. He was an ardent defender of the rights of the accused. None of these was a popular cause. For these and many other reasons, Earl Warren was vilified, sometimes quite viciously, by much of America. His enemies did everything they could to make his life miserable, but they did not succeed. Warren was once asked by a reporter: "Some people say you're ruining this country. Does that bother you?" He responded: "Does that bother me? Does that bother me? No, that doesn't bother me. I know what the facts are."

We know what the facts are, too. And we know that those who accuse us of ruining this country are in fact ruining it themselves. As long as America fails to live up to the promise of equality for all of its citizens, it is ruined. Those who profess to love America, but hate us, cannot love what America is. But we do.

We rally most effectively not behind the retaliatory "We'll get even with you," but behind the assertion, "We'll show you." If we are right, people will have to agree with us. Let's give them the chance. In his younger years, Mohandas Gandhi became involved in settling a legal dispute in South Africa. Somehow he was able to make everyone feel that they had won the dispute. He said: "I had learned to find the better side of human nature, and enter men's hearts." Perhaps the most important role of the leader is that of educator. We must literally change people's minds on a subject that couldn't be more polarizing. That mission demands great moral courage and conviction, but it is possible. We can make people realize, as Bertrand Russell once said, that we are "human beings, not just a tiresome circumstance." We want people to discover the startlingly ordinary nature of gay and lesbian life. They can. There are as many ways people can accommodate us as there are Americans. Gandhi writes: "The way I have suggested is the way of reform, conversion, love. The way of reform appears at some stage or other to be difficult but is in reality the easiest." We ask a lot of America; we will need strong leaders to get the right answers. We need people who will stand up and say: "Whatever we do, we cannot oblige this national ignorance." But that degree of leadership doesn't come easily; it must be nurtured and encouraged. We must respect our leaders, or be left without any. As Martin Luther King, Jr., said: "We will have to demand high standards and give consistent, loyal support to those who merit it. We will have to be a reliable constituency for those who prove themselves to be committed political warriors in our behalf."

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What is the nature of leadership? When the Air Force tried to deny David Eckert his retirement benefits, on the sole basis of his homosexuality, he sued them and won. He said: "If what I do and how I conduct myself in this case can bring us any closer... if I go down in horrendous flames but it brings us one step closer, for that I want to be remembered... Heaven help us... But if that is what it takes, then I'm ready to do that. Our leaders must be that committed."

"Our rebel message is so revolutionary," Walter L. Williams writes, "because it is so banal. That message is simply acceptance."\(^{12}\) We have begun to spread that message. But we haven't yet made gay rights the national crisis that it must become. The average American can't think of one single leader to associate with our cause. It's not merely that people can't think of one particular name that stands out from all the others; it's that the average American can't think of any name at all. Of course, there are national gay leaders, but for the most part, they are known only to gay people. This, too, must change. We need to have sufficient faith in our leaders to help them rise to positions of national prominence. The black civil rights movement realized that was a necessity. The gay civil rights movement will be no different.

Edward Carpenter's words ring as true for us today as they did when he wrote them to gay Britons a century ago: "These are they who dream the impossible dream -- and it comes true; who hear the silent prayers, who accept the trampling millions... who dream the dream which all men always declare futile; who dream the hour which is not yet on earth -- and lo! it strikes."\(^{13}\)

Jeffrey Nickel is a native of Delmar, New York, a small suburb just south of Albany. He is a freelance writer currently living in Washington, D.C., with his dachshund companion, Max.

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\(^{13}\) *Towards Democracy*, by Edward Carpenter, Gay Men's Press, 1985, p. 106. (Originally published in 1883.)

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**World AIDS Day Celebration**

"We Are Here for the Cure"

The Alaskan AIDS Assistance Association (4As), the Interfaith Council of Churches and the Municipality of Anchorage Section of Community Health Education are sponsoring a special Celebration of Hope on the eve of World AIDS Day, Monday night, November 30, 1992, 7-9:30pm at the Anchorage Museum of History and Art (121 W. 7th Ave, at 'A' St). The observance will begin with a Service of Hope followed by a Reception and a Time of Fellowship.

Our Hope is for a new beginning and new awareness that people living with HIV will live until a cure is found. This Celebration of Hope will focus on the power of the human spirit to prevail against this terrible disease. It will be a time to remember those who have died as well as a time to focus energy and empowerment on those still living. It will be a time to renew our pledge to fight for the end of AIDS in Alaska through honest dialogue and commitment.

The Alaskan "AIDS Family" and network of providers, friends and people affected by HIV is growing... which is both good and bad for Alaska.

It's good because Alaskans are finally beginning to acknowledge that many people in Alaska have HIV -- people who need our help, resources, friendship and support.

It is very sad that our family is growing, as HIV continues to spread, not just in Anchorage, but also in small communities throughout Alaska, the Nation and the World.

Our small Alaskan AIDS family is part of a much bigger worldwide family. Together we must work for a cure to this horrible disease while working together, not against each other, to stop its spread.

Please join us for this uniquely Alaskan Celebration on a world stage. Imagine first a world without art, then think again. Imagine our community helping people living with HIV not because of how they got sick but rather because they are sick, and We Care.

Interested "community members" are encouraged to bring either canned food or toys for children ages five to ten years old for families affected by HIV, to the November 30 Service and Reception. The 4As has a wish list for children's toys. Please contact the 4As for more information on how you can help children affected by HIV this Christmas. For more information, call 276-1400 or 343-6872.
Alaska Community Share: Working for Your Social Change

Change. We've all heard a lot said about change this political year. From economic change to a change in leadership to social change. For a group of Alaskans, change has been more than a fashionable buzzword. It has been a commitment to our community spanning more than seven years. The name of that commitment is Alaska Community Share.

Alaska Community Share is an umbrella support and fund raising organization comprised of 14 Alaska-based non-profit corporations committed to enhancing the quality of life in our communities. One of those 14 non-profits is Identity, Inc.

"It's important for Identity to be a part of a local charitable organization," comments Ken Freedman, editor of Identity's NorthView newsletter. "As partners, Identity and Alaska Community Share can promote social change and build bridges for a prejudice-free environment. Identity receives extra publicity through Community Share. And through that publicity I'm hopeful the people of Alaska will be supportive of our philosophy."

"We're pleased to have Identity be part of the Community Share family for the past couple of years," says Alaska Community Share executive director Tracy Reid. "Identity, like our 13 other non-profit members, is working hard to make this state a better place to live. Cooperatively, we can all help each other's efforts and get the community at large involved.

One of Community Share's main efforts is to provide financial support to member organizations through state-wide fundraising. Usually that fundraising takes the form of payroll deduction plans at small and large businesses across Alaska. "We like to use the slogan 'give us your social change!'," says Reid.

"We are often described as a mini United Way," explains Reid. "But there are some significant differences. We are based in Alaska and all of our money stays in Alaska working for Alaskan groups. And importantly, we provide representation for alternative groups that have not had a voice in larger national organizations."

Alaska Community Share member agencies complement Alaska's more traditional and regional non-profit organizations by providing services that emphasize advocacy, education, and training in addition to direct assistance to Alaskans in need. Most of Alaska Community Share members work from the grassroots social change vision. They focus on getting to the root of the problems.

From Ketchikan to Kotzebue, Community Share members are supporting emergency food and shelter, early childhood development, equal rights, opportunities for disabled persons, counseling for victims of domestic violence, safer work places, healthier communities, clean air and water, alcohol and drug abuse prevention and other innovative programs designed to make Alaska a better place for all.

Cheers Reid, "We all want Alaska to be a better place to live. Alaska Community Share members now have a voice in payroll deduction programs throughout the state."

Please remember Alaska Community Share in your payroll deduction program or give generously to support Identity and other related programs. For more information please contact Tracy Reid, Alaska Community Share, PO Box 103800, Anchorage, AK 99510. Phone(907) 258-4576.
Alaska Goes to Lavender Law
by Allison Mendel

I came home educated and inspired. Several hundred lawyers, law students, and legal professionals met in Chicago October 23-25 for Lavender Law III, the third biennial meeting of the NLGLA -- the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association. National conferences in any field are useful for the chance to exchange ideas and the opportunity to meet people from around the country who do what you do. This was an experience of a different order. I wasn't prepared for the amazing, resourceful, and brilliant community of lawyers from all parts of the country who are dedicated to the improvement of gay life through law, both in their practices at home and through the collective efforts of the organization. The wealth of combined experience and information was almost overwhelming. The NLGLA, as a result of the dedicated efforts of some of its members over the last two years, now holds a seat on the august American Bar Association House of Delegates. This gives the organization a voice not only in our community but in the mainstream establishment of lawyers.

Lawyers, even in large communities, are often so busy that we think we are the only ones dealing with the problems that come up in practice. Conferences like this are a great antidote to this delusion. Workshops covered almost the entire range of imaginable topics of particular interest to gays and lesbians, from the law as it affects people living with AIDS, to gays and lesbians as criminal defendants and in prisons, equal employment law, privacy and free speech, and a whole range of family law issues including domestic partnership, wills, child custody, gay marriage, adoption, insemination and surrogacy -- the list goes on. There was even a session -- which played to standing room only -- entitled "Hardwired Homos" about the nature versus nurture debate. We certainly are not of one mind about issues like that.

Topics of discussion weren't simply technical legal issues, either. We worried collectively about how best to serve lesbian and gay clients in the real world, particularly in light of the serious problems we have getting our legal needs met because of the real or perceived consequences of coming out. How can we bring a complaint, for example, about being discriminated against in a housing situation on the basis of sexual preference, when we believe that coming out would cost us our jobs? And how do we go about finding lawyers, accountants and other professionals who are not only sensitive to but also knowledgeable about the needs of lesbian and gay clients? Is it a disadvantage to a gay client to have an openly gay lawyer?

The social consciousness of the conference was equally refreshing. The organization is committed to gender and ethnic parity. There was a concerted effort to balance conference topics in terms of presenters and topics presented, and the governing board of NLGLA is equally divided by gender, with the greatest possible representation of minority populations. I heard complaints about lack of accessibility and a scarcity of topics of interest to minorities, but there seemed also to be a commitment to making improvements for the next conference. At the final plenary meeting, a lawyer from Oregon, Mark Johnson, read a brilliant speech asking the membership to pledge its opposition to Measure 9 in Oregon. Naturally, we agreed. What moved me was that the men there seemed perfectly willing to cry in public when the occasion demanded -- Mark's tale of the emotional costs and rewards of the fight in Oregon moved the whole meeting to tears.

As anyone who has ever been to a national conference knows, being from Alaska can be a very effective entree for meeting people and starting discussions. People were pointing me out across the room as "the woman from Alaska." Fortunately, I'm not shy. Being from Alaska was a part of the reason I was elected as one of two Northwest representatives on the national board of NLGLA at this conference. Representation on the Board gives us an opportunity to get involved and to profit from the enormous resources of this organization. Our Northwest region also decided to hold a regional conference in Seattle in off-year before the next biennial conference, which will be held in Portland in 1994. The regional conference in 1993 will give some of us a chance to attend and participate which we might not otherwise have. I am strongly encouraging interested lawyers and legal professionals to join the NLGLA and get involved.

Allison Mendel is a practicing attorney living in Anchorage.
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THE LIVING END
an irresponsible movie by gregg araki

EXCLUSIVE ANCHORAGE ENGAGEMENT
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**Night on Earth**
Tim Robbins
Separate Admission
**CAPTIVATING.**
-John Ashcroft, ROCKERS

**MONSTER IN A BOX**

**SPALDING GRAY'S**

**OUT IN FORCE**

**SCHOOL TIES**

**CROSSING THE BRIDGE**

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Granting the best film and best director awards at the 1992 Toronto Film Festival, "Night on Earth" has given me a glimpse of what Hollywood is currently content to view gay men and lesbians only as chatty neighbours or psychopathic killers. Maybe next month there will be a radical development: a chatty gay neighbour who is secretly a psychopathic killer.

Fortunately, a far more realistic interpretation of homosexuality is being taken outside the mainstream, particularly by independent American filmmakers. Tom Kalin's "Swoon," aims, according to the director, to put the "homo back into homicide." It is based on the true story of Nathan Leopold Jr. and Richard Loeb, two Jewish law students who kidnapped and murdered a young boy - no, not because they were psychopathic killers - in order to prove their intellectual superiority to others. Also part of the State of Independents strand at this year's Film Festival is Gregg Araki's "The Living End." It tells the tale of of a pair of young, HIV+ outcasts, carrying on a tempestuous love affair while setting out on an aimless - and, yes, murderous - odyssey across the USA. Not to be outdone, Europe plays its part with a documentary of the iconic artwork of Tom of Finland. "Daddy And The Muscle Academy" contains a full retrospective of his drawings, as well as interview material with the artist and with those who have found his forthright depiction of gay pride an inspiration.

"THE LIVING END" starts Fri., Dec. 11,"SMOON" and"DADDY & THE MUSCLE MACHINE" coming soon.
Reprinted from Edinburgh Int'l Film Festival
Pomo Afro Homos: Workshops

Developing scripts and performance skills as well as a discussion of Racism and Homophobia are a part of the visit of Pomo Afro Homos. The performance group is presenting "Fierce Love: Stories from Black Gay Life" as part of Out North Theatre's season.

The workshops encourage attendance by teens and adults and "people of Color, and others whose experiences have been marginalized by mainstream society."

Thursday, Nov. 19, 7:30-9pm at UAA Building K, Rm 109: Writing for Performance Art. An informal exploration of the development of scripts for performance art. Participants are welcome to bring writing samples to discuss. Tuition $10.

Friday, Nov. 20, 12 noon to 1pm, UAA Campus Center Student Lounge: Compare & Contrast: Racism & Homophobia. Featuring members of Pomo Afro Homos. Admission free.

Saturday, Nov. 21, 10am-12 noon, UAA Building K, Rm 109: Performance Art for Actors & Other Artists. This workshop will look at ways to incorporate a wide variety of artistic skills and techniques into a performance art work. Participants with ideas for performances are welcome to bring proposals, outlines, or script fragments. Tuition: $15.

For additional information, call Out North Theatre Company at 279-8099.

The Eye
(not to be confused with The Nose)

Overheard at the Haloween costume contest at your favorite Azure Luna Dance Palace: don't you know that person dressed as Cat Woman won because of all that flesh? or some words to that EYEffect. Claws, everyone, claws * And dast we mention the errata this rag published last month: EYE heard there were some egregious mistakes made about one James Arthur Boudreaux. Ah, well, he's in Sunny Downtown Seattle now, and the pen is mightier than the DELETE key * Would EYE believe that two extremely eligible bachelors have popped up on the scene? Seems there's a rift, if not a downright split, between Jaime R. and Glenn B. SorrEYE guys, but remember, one person's closing door is another's opening one! Awright everyone, get in line!! * Chalk up another politically correct judgement in the Anchorage court system: seems Out North Theatre wanted to advertise Pomo Afro Homos on the busses, you know like legitimate advertisers? Seems the people who decorate those transportation behemoths oh so tastefully declined the pornographic content if not the prurience of those nasty posters (they show those African-American men from the neck up!!). Nice to know the law saw the LEYEight and ordered DOT to put up those naughtEYE signs. Are we everywhere? or what? * And last but not least: EYE was told of a computer company executive in Colorado who (over the phone on a business call, no less) professed to being both non-gay AND embarrassed that Colorado voted in the gay/lesbian discrimination laws. We are indeed everywhere, not to mention our Straight But Not Narrow supporters.
The Truth Can Make Us Free
by Doug Frank

I have been thinking a lot recently about the damage silence can do...about what happens when people do not speak out against injustice. I wonder how a country could remain essentially silent while 6 million innocent people were exterminated during WWII? It is hard to remain distant knowing that over 190,000 were gay men - no different from myself. With only one generation separating us, the hatred, ignorance and fear that spawned this irrationality is still present. The pseudo-Christian anti-Semitic pamphlets distributed throughout Anchorage this fall, the anti-gay initiatives in Oregon and Colorado, the growth of the skin-head movement, these are only the tip of the iceberg.

Prejudice, fear and hatred are powerful visceral emotions. How does one respond to such gut-level fear and ignorance? The natural response is a spiral of more fear and anger, and yet I know the only productive response is to tell the truth. This is the core of wisdom celebrated in National Coming Out Day, and the basic principle behind the ACT UP phrase "Silence Equals Death."

For years, the larger Anchorage community has wrestled with its response to the question of protection against violence and discrimination for gay men and lesbians. Anchorage's charter specifically states that the city is to be free from the detriments of discrimination. I am hoping that gay men, lesbians and our friends will show up at the December 1st Assembly meeting in unprecedented numbers to testify. Our strength comes from telling the truth and from recognizing our collective power. What truth? The truth that discrimination based on sexual orientation is harmful, not only to us, but to all of society; that secrets and closets do not change the truth of who we are but only keep too many of us from reaching our full potential; that our real enemy is not the Fundamentalist, but fear -- a giant which also resides inside us as a community.

Several weeks ago while having lunch with a non-gay friend I explained why I wanted as many people to show up as possible on December 1st. I asked if he had seen the cover story in a recent Newsweek, "Gays Under Attack". The first two paragraphs were about my home town of Portland, Maine. After the second incident of homophobic violence in which a man was "severely beaten," the police arrested a group of men responsible for the attack. My friend immediately responded that there were already laws to protect people from this violence, but he was only partly right. Unfortunately, the gay man, afraid of further discrimination, refused to press charges. Without the specific legal protection afforded other people on the basis, for example, of race, creed, color, national origin, the violence continues, and as I described the fear and hesitancy to testify my friend saw the connection. Finally he agreed to show up December 1st. In spite of his religious convictions, he is a fair man. Maybe he will even stand up and speak the truth.

I am encouraging all my friends to come to the Assembly meeting whether they intend to testify or not. I know that it requires courage to stand in public and tell the truth. A person applauding for those who have spoken is still participating. It will take all of us to create a level of safety and security in our community. Luckily we are simply asking for our inalienable rights as guaranteed by the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. We have every right to assume that we should be able to coexist with the rest of society without being the object of ridicule and violence; to retain our jobs as a result of our competency, not lose them as a result of our sexual orientation; to live in our homes in peace and be free from harassment.

Unfortunately these basic rights have never been a 'given' in this country for gay men and lesbians. As we testify on December 1st we will be standing in a long line of people who have courageously stood up for their rights. I am hoping that our statements will be a record of our self-respect. It is finally time to insist that we be treated as equals. Our only legitimate defense is to tell the truth. Thanks in advance to each of you who plan to shed a little more light in telling the truth of your experiences. Our collage of stories makes up the rainbow of our diversity. No one has a corner on the truth, but when we are coming from a place of self-respect we certainly have our share. Someday our rights will be secure, but they will come as a result of years of hard work and a deep abiding commitment to the truth...and the truth from our neighbors.

Doug Frank is a gay rights activist who has been a driving force in the organization of EQUAL, the new political action group.
Part II: Gay Male Incest Survivors, Safer Sex and AIDS

"I believed that AIDS was going to get me no matter what. I didn't think there was anything I could do to stop it. Just like the abuse."

from an interview by Liz Galst for The Gay Community News

In order to understand the impact child sexual abuse has on HIV transmission and on health behavior, we have to look at three things: the general impact of child sexual abuse, the assumptions employed in gay-targeted AIDS education, and the specific impact of child sexual abuse on a survivor's ability to protect her/himself from HIV transmission.

The effects of incest and other child sexual abuse are so devastating and complex that they really can't be discussed fully in one article. So, for the sake of brevity; let's say that child sexual abuse results in tremendous psychic (and sometimes physical) pain, and, because in childhood there is no opportunity to express this pain in a way that helps a survivor heal, s/he learns to numb out by necessity. Of course, different people numb out in different ways. The survivors I interviewed became alcoholics and drug addicts, some ate compulsively, had sex compulsively, became insomniacs, workaholics, mastered the art of spacing out. Many of the men used several of these strategies, because sometimes one is not enough, and other times they needed new strategies to replace ones they had abandoned.

Survivors often isolate themselves because they've learned that being close to people is dangerous. Robert: "I can feel more connected to people who I've seen, whose names I know, but that I don't actually know. I just think of them as close and intimate friends." Amongst survivors there's a strong internalized sense of personal worthlessness. Ken weeps during our interview as he told me, "My self-esteem is practically non-existent. The thing that bothers me most is not being able to believe that I'm a worthwhile person when people tell me that I am."

The body is not something we survivors do well with. In fact, we're hardly ever in them. Buck: "I've had so little feeling that I've burned myself with liquid solder and watched my skin burn and felt nothing." Survivors experience self-hate like you. Survivors experience self-hate like you wouldn't believe, unless, of course you are one. We often blame ourselves for what happened to us, and for everything else bad thing in the world. Survivors, having been abused by people in positions of authority, as adults often have trouble with people in position of authority. In addition, survivors experience the world as extremely dangerous and experience ourselves as both unprotected and unworthy of protection. Plus, there's a whole lot of self-punishment going on.

That's the short course. Incest 101. Except to say, that survivors can and do recover from this with tons of hard work.

AIDS education that's targeted at gay men in this country makes a lot of assumptions. It assumes, first and foremost that you want to stay alive. It assumes you want to stay healthy, that you feel entitled to health, and that you think you'll get more out of being well than you will out of being sick. (For many people - survivors or not - getting sick is a way of getting otherwise unavailable attention. "When I was growing up," John says, "I used to fantasize a lot about getting leukemia, dying was a way to get away from it all. I thought everyone would love me if I was sick. Well, AIDS is very much like leukemia. And I have the virus").

AIDS education assumes you feel some ownership over your body, some agency. It assumes you know how to make choices and that you believe you can successfully change your behavior. It assumes you are able to assert yourself. It assumes you believe your wishes will be respected. It assumes that sex is your primary risk factor. It assumes that the best educational strategy is one that depicts and discusses sexual behavior, but not the motivation for that behavior.

Basically, the "Just Do It" approach to AIDS education that has been directed towards gay men for the last eight or so years assumes empowerment, especially in the sexual sphere. And, for many, many gay men, these assumptions have held true. No other community in history has responded as well to a public health crisis. The percentages of men who are consistently practicing safer sex are high. (Sixty-seven percent of gay-identified men polled in a recent

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3 For more complete information on this topic, see The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse, by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis, and Victims No Longer: Men Recovering from Incest and Other Sexual Child Abuse, by Mike Lew.
survey by the AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts reported no unprotected anal sex in the six months prior to the survey.\(^4\) The community should commend itself.

But one of eight of the AIDS Action Committee survey respondents reported that they had consistently participated in unsafe sex in the time period covered by the survey. Empowered people make empowered health choices, disempowered people don't.

During our interview, John tells me this: "In the beginning of the AIDS crisis, I could have been more safe. I never put anyone at risk, except myself. I knew I shouldn't have been doing it, but I didn't want to live, I didn't want to participate in life any longer."

Ken, a member of Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, describes his sex addiction: I knew that what I was doing was unsafe, or had unsafe potential, but I wasn't going to let that bother me. What mattered at that time was having sex."

Buck says he was often so fucked up on coke, he couldn't negotiate safer sex. And about negotiating sex, Will says, "I have difficulty with it. Like when I don't want to have it, I feel very much that I have to do it anyway. It's difficult because it has put me in some dangerous positions. Also, I think my own idea of sex was pretty dysfunctional. It's difficult to understand 'normal' sex when your first sexual experiences were base on violence."

Listen to these men and it is clear the assumptions of AIDS educators aren't working.

But what is it about child sexual abuse that makes it so difficult for adult survivors to protect themselves? Well, on a very basic level, we survivors have had taken away from us our ability to assert our own boundaries, our own sense of personal space and limits. Mark Gianino, a therapist who works with a number of gay male survivors says: "Basically, abuse makes it much more difficult to feel a sense of ownership of one's own body and one's own choices. It's an act of violence that robs a person of their ability to be in control of their bodies."

And boundaries may well be the most important component of safe sex. Without a sense of boundaries to protect them, survivors must rely entirely on their partners to ensure their sex is safe. Unfortunately, not all partners are so reliable. John: "Many of the men I had sex with wouldn't be safe. The condom would break and they wouldn't say anything. Or I'd have sex with people who wouldn't use a condom but said they'd pull out, and then when they'd be about to cum they wouldn't and they'd pin me down and say, 'Oh, sorry.'"

One thing that must be understood about survivors is that we blame ourselves for our own abuse. Current psychological theory asserts that as children we found this easier than believing we lived in a random, terrifying and unsafe world. But often, our perpetrators and other family members reaffirmed our guilt. We were too seductive, too coy, too beautiful, too curious.

Because we blame ourselves, we punish ourselves. We punish the part of us that "caused" the abuse. "Growing up, I always had the feeling that if I didn't have my body, none of this would have happened to me," Daniel says to me across his kitchen table. "The incest was my body's fault." Independently, both he and John speak of having sex until it is painful, until it hurts them for days afterwards. This is their punishment. And though neither mentions it, I wonder if putting themselves at risk is their punishment too.

Mike Lew says: "To say 'no' or to say, 'I don't want this, I'm not going to do this' you have to have some self-esteem. You have to feel you have a right to say 'no,' and that you deserve to have your needs respected and met. That's not been the experience of a lot of people who've been sexually exploited."

Will notes, "There were times in my life when I really strongly felt I deserved no protection, whether it be from AIDS or violence or whatever. I can say that most of that came from incest. I was not protected. So it's difficult. You internalize that and say 'I'm not worthy of protection.'"

Then he tells me: "We have always wanted our parents or some adult to put their arms around us, put a shield around us and say, 'I'm not going to allow this to happen to you again. You're safe.' Unless we are willing to do that for ourselves mentally, it's going to be very difficult to put on a condom. Because a condom, in a way, is what we always wanted - something to cover us and protect us."

Indeed, because survivors often experience themselves as unprotectable and undeserving of protection, AIDS and incest become, in their minds, synonymous - the inexorable workings of the universe. "I believe that AIDS was going to get me no matter what," John says. "I didn't think there was anything I could do to stop it. Just like the abuse."

If you believe something is inevitable, why take precautions to stop it?

Let us talk for a moment about pain, and about self-medication.

Survivors who don't have opportunities to confront their abuse need to numb out. This need results in

\(^4\) A Survey of AIDS-Related Knowledge, Attitudes and
Behaviors Among Gay and Bisexual Men in Greater
Boston: A Report to Community Educators (Boston:
AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts, 1991)
incredibly high rates of sex addiction, alcoholism and drug abuse among survivors. While these coping mechanisms may provide survivors with some protection from their memories, they increase the probability of contracting HIV.

For instance, many of the men I interviewed said that when they had emotions they couldn't deal with, they went out to have sex. Several described themselves as sexually compulsive. "My self-worth being what it is, it's been very hard in those fuck-and-suck situations to be conscious of safe sex," Daniel offers.

Likewise, gay men who combine drinking or drug use with sex are significantly more likely to engage in unsafe sexual behavior. IV drug use by gay male survivors opens them up to another route of transmission, one not to be discounted. IV drug use figures as a possible route of infection for approximately 10 percent of all CDC-reported cases of AIDS among gay men. Moreover, continued drug use after infection often results in decreased immune functioning and significantly earlier onset of symptoms.

AIDS service organizations (ASOs) cannot go on treating IV drug use as if it is not a gay men's issue.

There is one part of the dynamic of unsafe sex that none of the men I've interviewed have talked about but which I understand from my own experiences as a survivor: in the sexual arena, we interact with our partners as if they are the parents we always wanted, the ones who will set limits for us and act in our own best interest. Of course, being survivors, chances are we'll go for people who are very much like our parents - neglectful, distant or actively abusive. In these situations, we conduct ourselves as if we are still the objectively powerless children we once were. We wait for our partners to set the limits, and then feel betrayed when they act in ways that are difficult for us.

But protecting yourself from HIV transmission requires that you act like an adult, that you take responsibility for what you will or will not do or have done to you sexually. Unfortunately, incest turns us into perpetual children even as, robbed of childhood, it makes us old before our time. The parts of us that were not allowed agency don't know how to exercise it. Parts of us resist all responsibility as a method of protesting our innocence in the abuse.

Daniel: "In '84 and '85, my lover and I didn't use condoms - not for oral sex, not for anal sex. I told myself that he was enough of a virgin that he couldn't be infected, and I, because I had such a hard time being fucked, was probably okay too. Some part of me knew I wasn't being safe, but taking responsibility for my sexuality would have somehow meant to me that I was responsible for this horrible abuse that had happened to me."

Innocence is something you cling to, even as it is torn away from you. Unless you've been allowed to experience your childhood fully, you can never give it up.

From what I've been able to dig up, nowhere in the country is there AIDS education targeted specifically to gay male survivors - either to self-identified survivors, or to the others, walking around relatively clueless about what has happened in their pasts and its impact on their lives now. I called AIDS service organizations in major cities across the country - Whitman Walker, San Francisco AIDS Foundation, Stop AIDS/LA - and not one had AIDS education designed with the needs of gay male survivors in mind. David Klotz, coordinator of primary prevention at the Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York, the nation's largest AIDS service organization, told me, "We don't have anything specifically targeted in that area. I don't know anyone who does. Usually we start to target something when there's been a study."

And, of course, there have been no studies. Child sexual abuse is not perceived as an issue gay men must confront.

This cycle of invisibility hinges in part on societal denial about the pervasiveness and devastation of child sexual abuse, and in part, on issues of gender.

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6 As of May 31, 1991, the CDC listed 11,611 cases of AIDS in which gay sex and IV drug use were listed as routes of transmission. The total number of DCD-reported cases of AIDS in gay men as of May 31, 1991 was 115,340.


[Next month: "To change the popular conception of sexual abuse as a "woman's" problem, male survivors must stand up and utter what many will be the most difficult words in the world; I was raped. So far, few have been willing to do so (if they even allow themselves to remember!) Ed."]
FRANK CALLED TO INVITE YOU TO A PARTY.
HE SAID THE CHIFFON WITH THE SPAGHETTI STRAPS WILL BE FINE... WILL YOU PLEASE EXPLAIN THAT.
Heart, Mind & Soul: What You Feel, You Can Heal
By Doran Vaughan

Editor’s note: This column takes a look at our mental health from various angles and offers different points of view, different approaches to healing. Please write with your questions and comments to: Identity North View, P.O. Box 200070, Anchorage, AK 99520-0070. Answers and advice will appear in the following issue of this newsletter.

Are you a victim of the recession and high unemployment? Do you feel burned out in your job? Are you having problems at home? Are you already wondering how you’re going to make it through one more long, cold Alaskan winter? Well, you’re not alone! We all endure a multitude of life stresses throughout each day. How we deal with those stresses emotionally and psychologically determines the status of our mental health.

Stress is not all negative and debilitating. Hans Selye, a Canadian researcher, reports that many of life’s stresses are positive and healthy. Exercise, play, laughter, and even sex incur physical and emotional stress. Stress is a natural part of our lives. Without stress we would probably cease to exist. Stress prompts escape from danger, motivates us to make important changes in our lives, and prevents us from being bored. The right kind of stress in the proper dosage can prove to be healthy.

How do you deal with life’s stresses? Does stress control you or do you control it? People commonly deny the existence of stress, or better yet, recognize it, but avoid dealing with it. Do you eat too much, smoke too much, or drink too much? Do you feel run down all the time, or worse, do you find that you’re depressed? If so, you’re probably not dealing with stress effectively.

Life is full of stresses, but stress doesn’t have to rule your life. Recognizing and acknowledging problems is the first step toward assuming self control and responsibility. Coping with stress requires that you focus on resolving one problem at a time. You must determine which problems have top priority, analyze potential solutions to those problems, and plan your strategy. Concentrating on a manageable number of stresses, and setting others of less intensity aside, is a primary method for coping with overwhelming stress.

Stress sometimes resolves itself. Consider the fact that you could be exaggerating the problem or that you worry too much. Stresses are often inter-related, meaning that the resolution of one stress may have a positive impact on resolving others. The better you know yourself, the more self-control you can exert.

Be realistic in setting goals for your recovery from life’s problems. Inaction only enhances stress to the point that you feel distressed. Distress causes a multitude of physical and emotional problems which, in turn, magnify the distressed feeling. Withdrawal from people, lack of motivation, inactivity, and depression are emotional symptoms. Migraine headaches, high blood pressure, gastric problems, and disturbed sleep are all physical signs that you’ve exceeded your limit.

If you face stresses one at a time, try to resolve problems one at a time, and make major life changes one at a time, you will find that you have a better handle on life in general. The solution to life’s problems are within you. If you find it difficult to access the solutions alone, you may need an outside catalyst. Family and friends may offer the support you need to explore and to resolve your problems. For more complex issues, professional therapists may offer you the objective guidance you require to identify and implement solutions.

Don’t ignore the negative stresses in your life. Deal with them. Develop your strength in coping with life’s surprises. Stress can be positive. In today’s world it is ever more important to become a survivor. A healthy body requires a healthy mind, and a healthy mind depends on healthy emotions. Confront life and you’ll feel better for it.

Doran Vaughan, M.A., is a private therapist in Anchorage with twenty years experience in the mental health field.
A Black Man with a Life That Matters
by David Wimberly

Life has played a cruel trick on me, and, I suspect, on other peoples in this country. I was born in the mid-60's. I went through adolescence in the late 70's and through the early 80's. I grew up in a small town and had a VERY sheltered life. College for me and my siblings was assumed. My parents were active in my development as a person. My folks own their home, have nice cars and good careers. I am a bright college educated young man, with a solid background, and the career people twice my age, of any ethnic or non-ethnic group, dream. Coming out of high school I was not a valedictorian, but I was still recognized on a national level for academic achievement. The cruel trick is that both non-ethnic and ethnic peoples alike, assume that I fill a quota. A famous person once spoke of a dream. He dreamed that one day his children would be judged by the content of their character not the color of their skin. To do someone harm, physical or otherwise, because of their ethnic background is criminal. To give someone preferential treatment based on their skin color is a shame. Being a member of an ethnic group will make me stand out. Being 6 foot 1 inch tall and 350 pounds means I can't be missed in a crowd. I am equally skilled, equally educated, and have an equal amount of experience. What difference does the amount of melanin produced by my body make?

Maybe, my life seems too easy. I left all the bad parts out. I would like to think that "all men are created equal." However, I think the other quote applies to the real world, "all men are created equal, but some are more equal than others." I know the world is not fair, nor is it just. The man with the dream was shot dead like a dog, his children are grown, and the world has not changed. All those businesses suddenly serving ethnic groups, realized they had a new untapped market for sales and a reliable source for good employees.

My parents reared me to be a black man with a life that matters. I may not take over, but the world will know I was here. I should recognize my limitations and go on. My folks had rougher lives than me growing up. I've experienced racism first hand. Once on family trip through Georgia, in 1981 or 1982, we needed to stay in a hotel. We were told the hotel was full. It had 6 cars in the parking lot. Hmm. That is not really a violent racist act, but that is the most vivid image in my mind. The look on my fathers face is something I will never forget. He was not angry. That tall, strong, powerful man was hurt. His home state, had not changed.

Cruel tricks are played on people all the time. This one seems to be perpetuated by society. The advocates for equal representation of ethnic groups have a strong arguments for this. I agree with them. Their need and my own need, for measurable, tangible proof that this is being done is something that needs a lot of work.

David Wimberly is the current President of the Anchorage Garden Buddies and makes his home in Anchorage.
Alaska Queer Nation
by Jaime Rodriguez

Many people have been asking me lately, "What is Queer Nation? Who is Queer Nation?" As I understand it, Queer Nation is mostly an idea whose time has come. The basic idea recognizes that the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender subcultures form a group commonly labeled queer. This group crosses all ethnic, national and economic borders. Working together in unity, our collective population in The U.S. alone is greater than many smaller countries. The collective worldwide population of queer people could populate a superpower. There is even an international movement to incorporate the Queer Nation like an ethnic tribe, register it's citizens, and apply for membership in the United Nations. Generally, in the United States, Queer Nation is a group of local activists dedicated to visibility through street theatre and demonstration. There is a loose affiliation of local groups organizing a national Queer Nation network. Queer Nation got its start in ACT-UP, the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power. Queer Nation developed to apply the direct action experience of ACT-UP to queer political issues other than AIDS.

Alaska Queer Nation is a loosely affiliated group of people who visibly claim their citizenship in a greater queer community. This self empowerment actively removes the negative use of the word "queer" as a derogatory insult, and restores the word to its original meaning, odd, different, unusual. Citizens in the Queer Nation stress the importance of the differences between our community and the mainstream. We are different, and that is good. Collectively, and as a movement, we are not just continuing the abuses of the past. We recognize that our struggle for rights is intimately linked to the struggles against racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination.

Alaska Queer Nation held its first ever demonstration on Wednesday, November 4th at 6pm in the Town Square. Twenty-two people gathered for a candlelight vigil to show support for the queer people of Colorado, protesting the passage of an anti-gay amendment to the Colorado state constitution. We also were celebrating the defeat of Proposition 9 in Oregon, and calling attention to the need for gay rights in Alaska. We anticipate Alaska Queer Nation will evolve into a cooperating branch of EQUAL, The Alaska Gay & Lesbian Task Force. If you are interested in Queer Nation, please get involved with EQUAL.
Pacific Rim Theatre presents
THE DOCTOR IN SPITE OF HIMSELF as a fund-raiser for the 4As

Pacific Rim Theatre will be accepting donations for the Alaska AIDS Assistance Association at the December 3rd Preview of their production of Molière's THE DOCTOR IN SPITE OF HIMSELF. Donations of canned goods and toys will be accepted at the door. Cash donations, of course, are always welcome. The canned goods will be used to replenish the Food Bank at 4As, and the toys will be given to children affected by AIDS. The preview performance is free to the public, but everyone is encouraged to donate the equivalent of the admission price of $12.00. THE DOCTOR IN SPITE OF HIMSELF is a sure cure for the winter doldrums: a fiesty, flamboyant war of the sexes served up by a scalpel sharp wit that eviscerates the medical profession in this hilarious French farce. Don't miss THE DOCTOR IN SPITE OF HIMSELF; an over the counter remedy for your Holiday blues. And help the 4As in the bargain. Regular performances will begin December 4th and run thru the 20th at Cyrano's off Center Playhouse. Tickets are available at Cyrano's Bookstore or by calling 376-2198. Pacific Rim Theatre is a non-profit organization.

WHERE ARE ALL THE BIG HUNKY MEN THAT BELONG TO THOSE MOTORCYCLES OUTSIDE?

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The Alaska Organizing Committee meets every other Wednesday, 7:00pm at 603 W. 20th Ave., Anchorage, AK 99503. Next meeting: Oct. 20th.
907-338-0762 * 907-258-5131

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We have the potential to see more positive change in the next 24 months than we've seen in the last 24 years.

We will lose that potential unless we act and act now!

Look for more announcements and get in contact with your local organizers now, so you can be part of our great future.
**Calendar**

**Nov 18, Wed:**
* Anchorage Garden Buddies, 7:30, 248-2339
* Blue Moon Boy-See-Alice Review, 10:30pm
* Equal Family Gathering Potluck, 7-9:30pm, 338-0762 or 258-5131 (see ‘ad’)

**Nov 19, Thu:**
* 4As Annual General Meeting, 7pm, Moose Club, call 276-1400 for details
* EQUAL Political Meeting, 7pm AUUF (see ‘ad’)

**Nov 20, Fri:**
* PLWA lunch, 12-1pm, 4As, 730 ‘I’ St. 276-1400.
* Pomo Afro Homos present "Fierce Love", 8pm, Williamson Auditorium at UAA

**Nov 21, Sat:**
* Pomo Afro Homos present "Fierce Love", 8pm, Williamson Auditorium at UAA

**Nov 22, Sun:**
* Metropolitan Community Church, 2:00pm (see ‘ad’)
* Bowling Team “Northern Exposure”, 5pm, Park Lanes
* Anchorage Women’s Community Chorus, 4-6pm, UAA Arts Bldg., Rm. 122.
* Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Student Assn. support group, 7-9pm, UAA, Bldg K-210 (except during Holiday breaks)

**Nov 25, Wed:**
* Blue Moon Boy-See-Alice Review, 10:30pm

**Nov 26, Thu:**
* Equal Political Meeting, 7-9:30pm, 338-0762 or 258-5131 (see ‘ad’)

**Nov 27, Fri:**
* PLWA lunch, 12-1pm, 4As, 730 ‘I’ St.
* Identity Potluck, 6:30pm, UUF, 3201 Turnagain St. (see article)

**Nov 28, Sat:**
* Identity Board Meeting, 10am, AUUF, members welcome
* Women’s Coffeehouse, 8:00pm, 837 ‘A’ St.

**Nov 29, Sun:**
* Metropolitan Community Church, 2:00 (see ‘ad’)

* Bowling Team “Northern Exposure”, 5pm, Park Lanes
* Anchorage Women’s Community Chorus, 4-6pm, UAA Arts Bldg., Rm. 122.
* Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Student Assn. support group, 7-9pm, UAA, Bldg K-210 (except during Holiday breaks)

**Dec 1, Tues:**
* Anchorage Assembly to discuss inclusion of Gays & Lesbians in the Municipal Code, 5:00pm??, call around to check on actual time and place, Loussac Library downstairs (36th & Denali)
* Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Student Assn. support group, 7-9pm, UAA, Bldg K-210 (except during Holiday breaks)

**Dec 2, Wed:**
* Blue Moon Boy-See-Alice Review, 10:30pm

**Dec 4, Fri:**
* PLWA lunch, 12-1pm, 4As, 730 ‘I’ St.
* 4As Benefit showing of “The Doctor In Spite of Himself”, 7:30, doors; 8pm performance, Cyrano’s; 276-1400 (see article)

**Dec 5, Sat:**
* Women’s 2-Step Dance, Pioneer School House, 7:30pm lessons; 8:30 dancing

**Dec 6, Sun:**
* Metropolitan Community Church, 2:00 (see ‘ad’)
* Bowling Team “Northern Exposure”, 5pm, Park Lanes
* Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Student Assn. support group, 7-9pm, UAA, Bldg K-210 (except during Holiday breaks)

**Dec 8, Mon:**
* Gay Bar: free legal advice, 279-5001 (see ‘ad’ - notice new address!)

**Dec 9, Wed:**
* Blue Moon Boy-See-Alice Review, 10:30pm

**Dec 10, Thurs:**
* NorthView deadline; 248-7722

**Dec 11, Fri:**
* PLWA lunch, 12-1pm, 4As, 730 ‘I’ St.
Outing, the Hard Way
by Carmen Cash

It had been rumored to me that a particular friend was gay. Of course, I didn't really believe it. After all, we were pretty close, went to the prom together, and I knew about all his escapades with other women. I had asked him on two different occasions if this rumor were true, and he told me No.

One day a family member called me and told me that my friend had been caught in bed with another man, and that if I didn't believe now that he was gay I could go down to the Village (the local gay bar at that time) and see for myself. I gave it some thought and decided to go that night. With my heart beating about 100 miles a minute and my palms sweaty, I drove to the bar. His car was parked right in front.

I went inside to a scene that was pretty unfamiliar -- I was intrigued yet mystified. I searched the eclectic crowd for my friend, half hoping to not find him. But there he was, hugging another man. And then he kissed the guy on the mouth.

I was suddenly in a rage, not because I was jealous or because I couldn't accept his homosexuality, but because he lied to me, not once but three times. I walked up to him, my face twisted with anger. People sensing that something was up, moved to the side as I stomped through. His back was to me. I tapped him on the shoulder. The look on his face when he saw who I was reminded me of a person on his deathbed with just one last wish. "Carmen, I....", he started to say. I slapped him hard on the face before he could finish.

I turned and ran back outside into the rain. I wanted to drown in it. I heard his voice calling me, "Carmen, Carmen! Stop!" I stopped to yank my heels off so I could run faster but he grabbed my arm. "Dammit," he said, "stop a minute! I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I lied to you. I'm sorry!" I almost yelled at him, "Why? Why did you lie to me? Not once! Three times! Why?" He was crestfallen. "I couldn't face the truth about myself and besides, I thought you'd stop being friends with me." Then he said softly, "Could we go somewhere and talk? Please?"

I remember when I was living in Europe seeing men holding each other's hands, and women, too. But I never thought much about it. Now he told me what it was like living a double life, and now I began to understand. And I assured him we would go on being friends, better friends, that we would talk and grow, and work it through. Together.

Carmen Cash is a budding writer, a member of EQUAL and Straight-But-Not-Narrow ally.
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