Are you "in the pink"? If the renewal date is highlighted, your membership has either expired or will expire this month. Please renew by using the form provided on the reverse side of this cover.
Are you missing local news about the gay and lesbian community and the opportunity to network locally?

Your membership in Identity, Inc. helps support the many activities and programs that Identity provides the lesbian gay community in Anchorage and all of Alaska (see below). You will also receive twelve issues of The Rainbow Borealis, Anchorage’s lesbian gay newspaper. Simply return this page with you tax deductible $25.00 membership/donation (more if you can, less if you can’t) to the address indicated below.

The Rainbow Borealis has: a monthly calendar of events, a directory of lesbian gay friendly businesses (published quarterly), a listing of local lesbian clubs and social organizations, local news and opinion pieces, financial, law, travel, and other columns written by local writes, at least one cartoon, and much, much more!

Once you get your first issue, you’ll wonder how you ever got along without it.

Membership/Pledge Form

Identity, Inc., P.O. Box 200070, Anchorage, AK 99520-0070

Yes, I want to be a part of Identity, Inc. I understand that if membership will expire one year from this date. My membership entitles me to vote at annual meetings and to receive The Rainbow Borealis, Identity’s monthly newsletter and other periodic mailings. I have the option not to receive the newsletter and mailings if I check here.

Enclosed is my contribution of $25.00 (basic annual membership).

I’d like to contribute an additional $25.00 $50.00 $100.00 or $_____, just to help out.

I’d like to make a monthly pledge. Please send a monthly reminder to send my supporting commitment of $_____. Contributions are deductible to the full extent of the law.

Please PRINT clearly:

Name:

Mailing Address:

City: State: Zip:

Signature:

I got this copy of The Rainbow Borealis: ___ from a friend, ___ at a bookstore, ___ at a bar, ___ from a business.

I want to show my support for the lesbian gay community in other ways: (Please Circle.)

The Rainbow Borealis: typing, editing, writing articles/column, graphics, gofering
Fourth Friday Potlucks: setup, cleanup, monthly programs
Helpline: telephone volunteer, training, potlucks, resource manual, volunteer scheduling
National Coming Out Day Dinner/Dance: organize speak out, organize dance
Lesbigay Pride Celebration: organization, publicity, setup, cleanup, entertainment, vendors, permits
Fund-raising: grant writing, progressive dinners, bake sales, dinner/dances, yard sales, picnics, others
Obituary: The NorthView

After many years in production, Alaska resident, "The NorthView" expired early this year after a long decline. Suffering from bulky contents, a lack of Alaska local news, a diminished volunteer team, and an exhaustive search for a new font style, "The NorthView" struggled valiantly to overcome obstacles beyond its capabilities. A memorial service for "The NorthView" will be held by all those who hold a candle in the wind and chant the mantra "there is nothing like verbosity".

"NorthView" is survived by the sleeker, more Alaskan focused, "Rainbow Borealis", the brand spanking new newsletter of Identity, Inc. Striving for more local news and a broader volunteer base, look for "Rainbow Borealis" wherever Alaska's community tends to be. "Rainbow Borealis's "goal"? To include as many articles, stories, poems, photos, etc., that are submitted by our Alaskan gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans-gendered, and straight but allied community members interested in being inclusive, participatory and published (yes, reader that does mean YOUR participation).

In lieu of flowers, please send donations directly to: Identity, Inc. PO Box 200070, Anchorage, AK 99520-0070.

(Identity, Inc. wishes it be known that it will truly be forever grateful to all those volunteers who over the years enabled "The NorthView" to be produced and distributed).

'Identity' More Than Just a Newsletter by Ron Swartz

Did you know that Identity Incorporated provides many services to the sexual minority community besides a quality newsletter? As a not-for-profit organization, it has been able to give funding to individuals and groups who have projects that act to further the mission of Identity. It also helps with funding and staffing of annual events in Anchorage such as the Alaska Pride Conference and the National Coming Out Day celebration, where people in the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community can gather socially.

Identity sponsors a referral and information telephone service called HelpLine, at 258-4777 (toll-free in Alaska at 1-888-901-9876). This service is manned by trained volunteers each evening from 6-11pm, and is available via voice-mail during the rest of the day. Information on events, crisis and medical referrals, and everything from social clubs to dance clubs is available.

The organization also hosts a monthly Fourth Friday potluck dinner, held at the Unitarian fellowship hall on Turnagain Street starting at 6:30pm. Bring a dish and bring a friend. Stick around after the meal for a program which often features a guest speaker of local interest. It's a great way to introduce yourself to the group, as well as hearing (or giving) announcements concerning the queer community.

Identity is also part of the municipal Adopt-a-Road program, where we can be visible and helpful cleaning up litter along Patterson Road, between Tudor Road and Northern Lights Boulevard a few times a year.

And of course there's this newsletter, the new "Rainbow Borealis," compiled exclusively by dedicated volunteers and writers in the Alaska gay population. It serves as a forum for finding out what's happening, who the gay-owned and gay-friendly businesses and vendors are in town, and as an outlet for members who want to contribute volunteer time or information to the monthly effort. We hope it will become the medium through which the many queer organizations in Alaska can keep in touch and create a feeling of "Family" and solidarity! The "Rainbow Borealis" is your newsletter... help make it what you want it to be.

Fourth Friday Potluck

Join Identity, Inc. at its celebrated Fourth Friday Potluck & Social. Bring soup, salad, entrée, deviled eggs, hors d'oeuvres, fruit, bread, dessert, chips, dip, pizza, etc. Identity provides the drinks: tea, coffee, punch. Admission is free, but we cheerfully accept donations. Donations for the 4A’s food bank are cheerfully accepted by The Food Fairie; why not bring a couple of cans or boxes of food with you.

Date: Friday, October 22
Time: 6:30 p.m. doors open/socialize; 7:00 p.m. dinner; 7:30 p.m. announcements & program
Place: Anchorage Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 3201 Turnagain Street
Program: Reader’s Theater, excerpts from Torch Song Trilogy

Anchorage Gay & Lesbian Helpline

258-4777

A community service of Identity, Inc.
PO Box 200070, Anchorage AK 99520
As your co-chairs to the Board of Identity Inc., it is our pleasure to introduce you to your new monthly publication, the Rainbow Borealis. The Rainbow Borealis replaces the Northview, Identity's first monthly publication. As you will discover, the Rainbow Borealis will focus on local events, issues and ideas as expressed by our members. This is a significant change from the Northview in that its focus was weighted heavily upon articles written by syndicated columnists on national events or issues.

The board believed, as did many of our members that our primary focus for our new monthly newsletter should be on local issues and events, and to lessen the dominance of articles written by syndicated columnists on national issues. Many of our members commented that they already subscribed to other newsletters that carried the same articles that appeared in the Northview. As a result, our members told us that when the Northview showed up in the mail, it would often go unread or be viewed specifically for the calendar.

The Board also heard from some of its members whom expressed an interest in continuing to see articles written by syndicated columnists in their new newsletter. They told the Board that they do not subscribe to other newsletters and that the Northview was their only means to read about national events and issues. To these members we express our commitment to continue to provide you with these types of articles, but that these articles would be secondary to those articles written by our members about local events and issues.

When the Northview stopped being published earlier this year, the Board was uncertain if its members supported the continuation of a monthly newsletter. When the board solicited comments from its members, our members where unanimous in their support for continuing to publish a monthly newsletter. Our members told us that it was critical that the Board continue to publish a monthly newsletter because the newsletter was a communication device that keeps our community informed. Our members also pointed out that the Northview made money for Identity and that money helped fund other critically important Identity programs such as HelpLine and Pride on the Park Strip. We couldn't agree more with these points. In fact, the board believes that the Rainbow Borealis will be less expensive to publish than the Northview, and will therefore generate more money necessary to support Identity's programs. We also hope that you find your new newsletter to better represent what you've been asking to see- more local articles from our members. We hope you enjoy your new newsletter.

Sincerely,

Bill Wilks and Shirley Randal

Identity’s “Rainbow Borealis”
“Rainbow Borealis” is a monthly publication of Identity, Inc., a non-profit [501 (c) (3)], Alaska corporation concerned with issues of sexual identity. The “Rainbow Borealis” is published as a community service and the views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the directors, officers or members of Identity, Inc.

Identity Board of Directors
Chairs: Shirley Randal, Bill Wilks; Treasurer: Ron Swartz; Secretary: Tim Doebler; Members: Mikel Haase, Greg Kramer, Candy Bonham, [two vacancies].

Distribution
“Rainbow Borealis” is mailed (bulk mail) to members of Identity. Identity’s membership list is confidential and is not sold, given or loaned to anyone; however, special mailings under the auspices of Identity are occasionally sanctioned. Copies of “Rainbow Borealis” are also distributed at select businesses in the Anchorage area. Upon request, you may receive “Rainbow Borealis” in a First Class large envelope. Cost is $60 per year (includes membership in Identity and private mailing).

Reproduction
Please feel free to copy “Rainbow Borealis” and give it to anyone you feel will enjoy it or benefit from it. Articles that are copyrighted must be so noted on any copies.

Submissions
We welcome articles and letters from individuals and organizations. Ideal length is 250-400 words. Please submit on 3.5 (IBM compatible or MAC HD). All contributions must be signed, but upon request names will be withheld or pseudonyms used. Rainbow Borealis reserves the right to edit as necessary and to refuse any article submitted.

Deadlines
All articles must be received by the 15th of the month for inclusion in that month’s Rainbow Borealis.

Mail
Editor, Identity Rainbow Borealis, P.O. Box 200070, Anchorage, AK 99520-0070.

Phone
Anchorage Gay and Lesbian HelpLine 907-258-4777 daily from 6-11pm. Messages left during off hours will be returned as soon as possible.

Advertising
Contact Rainbow Borealis by mail or through the HelpLine at 258-4777. Advertising can be submitted camera ready or can be composed for negotiated fee. Rainbow Borealis does not accept personals, nor does it accept advertising that is sexist, racist, discriminatory or sexually explicit.

Advertising Rates
Classified ad (five lines) $15.00
Business Card 25.00
Quarter page 40.00
Half page 65.00
Full page 100.00
Back page 125.00
Insert (one page) 50.00
Insert (two plus pages) 25.00
(each page)

Discounts
Three months 10%
Six months 15%
Twelve months 20%
PFLAG Anchorage

by Jane Schiltler

As summer comes to a close, the Anchorage PFLAG chapter will be seeing the completion of a project we have been talking about and working on for several months. Soon there should be 50 interior bus signs placed in the Anchorage "People Mover" buses. These will include information for both PFLAG and our youth group, IMRU2. So if you haven't taken a bus ride lately, be sure and do so sometime during the next 6 months and look for the signs. This project was made possible by contributions to PFLAG by friends of Dan Carter and Al Incontro in honor of their 30th anniversary celebration; it meets our major goal for the year of increasing outreach and visibility in the community, its friends and allies. It makes working on this board a very rewarding experience.

And now some thoughts from a parent's perspective on "coming out". As has been noted by many others, this experience can be very traumatic for both parents and children. Although there was never any question about our love for our son, we experienced grief, confusion, fear, and doubt among other things. These emotions subsided over time, but it was several years before we began to tell a few friends and relatives that we had a gay son. There was no PFLAG group in Anchorage in 1976, so we felt very isolated. Eventually I discovered that two of my close friends also had gay sons. What a relief to finally have someone I could talk to!

When Ron became an activist in Eugene in the early 90's while attending the University of Oregon, he began having articles published in the newspaper concerning the now infamous Oregon Citizens Alliance and their anti-gay ballot measures. His picture also appeared in the Eugene newspaper. Since I am from Oregon and we lived in Salem for 2 years before coming to Alaska, we have several friends there. So now we were "out" whether we wanted to be or not, at least in Oregon.

Later we discovered PFLAG in Anchorage and have become more "out" as we have worked with this organization and become advocates. Now we are convinced that having a gay child is truly a blessing. It is our hope and prayer that all parents of gay children will not only accept but come to celebrate their children's sexual orientation.

The fight for equal protection of the law, mandated by the U.S. Constitution, continually serves as fodder for lawsuits in American courts. The invidious discrimination which gives rise to such suits affects many different groups, but with unanimity of cause. Hence, it is not unusual and is probably real wisdom for such groups to pool their resources and examine the situation together. An example of this is the action of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association at its Ninth Annual Conference in San Francisco when it sponsored a panel examining the relationship between struggles against discrimination by Asian Pacific Islanders and by lesbians and gay men. They say politics makes strange bedfellows; apparently discrimination brings similarly-situated friendly bedfellows together!

Other similar organizations, such as the Japanese American Citizens League and the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, are both lending support to the battle for full marriage rights for same-sex couples. Currently being circulated by Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, the following resolution has brought over 1,000 endorsements:

Because marriage is a basic human right and an individual personal choice
RESOLVED, the State should not interfere with same-gender couples who choose to marry and share fully and equally in the rights, responsibilities, and commitments of civil marriage.

Notable among the endorsers, in addition to the Japanese and Asian groups above, are: Coretta Scott King, Whoopi Goldberg, Helen Hunt, Norman Lear, Marlo Thomas, Phil Donahue, American Friends Service Committee, California Council of Churches, Central Conference of American Rabbis, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Unitarian Universalist Association, the American Civil Liberties Union, American Family Therapy Academy, American Psychoanalytic Association, National Association of Social Workers, National Organization for Women, People for the American Way, and many, many others! There's some notable bedfellows for you!
Kevin Sampson

by Dan Carter... gay Christian activist

Kevin Sampson, a long-time community activist, died on Thursday, July 1, 1999. Kevin, much in keeping with the way he lived his life, also chose the timing of his death. Many of you reading this article knew Kevin. He was one of the most treasured friends Al and I have ever known.

For those of you who did not know Kevin, you missed someone very special! Although he was very shy, he was able to overcome that shyness when it was necessary. Kevin was also very outspoken and no one – and I mean NO ONE – was able to avoid hearing his opinion. And sometimes his wrath. Particularly when he felt an individual or group was somehow not doing enough to support issues involving AIDS, Dying with Dignity, a woman's right to choose or equal rights for the LGTB communities, including the right to marry.

Although his body was ravaged by his 15+ year battle with AIDS, he had an uncanny ability to force himself to continue as long as he was in the midst of something which he felt was of great importance to the community.

He was involved in everything from organizing a protest against “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” when President Clinton visited Seattle, being an early Board member of the 4-A's, working on the No on 2! Campaign last November, running for the State Legislature as a Republican (he decided they deserved him more than the Dems!) in last year’s primary elections and his continuing battle (currently being waged in Alaskan courts) to force the state to recognize doctor-assisted-suicide for terminally ill patients. Along with his own personal activism, Kevin also was an “activist creator!” If I had not met Kevin, I may still be a frightened, closeted Republican working behind the political scenes with little or no self-respect.

A week after his death Kevin was awarded the 1999 American Civil Liberties Union-Alaska's award for his work for equal rights and his courage in fighting for the right-to-die for terminally ill Alaskans.

In a poem Kevin wrote prior to his death, he stated his greatest accomplishment in life was taking care of his partner, Dyer Downing, who died several years ago in Seattle. Thank you, Kevin, for your commitment not only to Dyer but to others you never knew. Thank you for your determination which allowed you to continue the fight long after most of us would have given up.

Most of all, thank you for being part of our family.

Check out the
IDENTITY WEBSITE
www.alaska.net/~identity
for up-to-the-minute details on events and activities...
Carpe Diem

by Bren Jorge’s Son

One year ago, I spent a month in Anchorage. I was told by a man that anyone who “came out” in Anchorage gets a free toaster. So, I thought about it and figured I had nothing to loose.

About one month ago I wrote a “coming out” letter to my family. As soon as I put the letters in the mailbox I asked myself, what had I done? You see, I have a large family, and they are very accepting. However, you never know what an action like this will trigger.

Now that a month has passed, I can honestly say that the hardest part of this “coming out” was actually writing the letter. I shed more tears than expected, saying and writing things I never thought I would have the nerve to go through with.

So, what was my family’s response? I first received flowers from parents and grandparents, which was followed by phone calls filled with humor, relief, tears, etc. Slowly, the rest of the family is responding as positively as can be expected. In fact, I have never felt more relieved about anything. It is like having a weight lifted from my shoulders. It took me 24 years to feel good about myself as who I am. Now it is my family’s turn to feel good about themselves.

As I was writing the letter, I learned of a book named “Coming Out: an Act of Love.” If you are contemplating this issue, this may be used as a reference. I must also say that the support from the Anchorage community has also played a large part in this process. I feel much stronger knowing that I can count on many people throughout Anchorage for support when needed.

I have friends of many colors, experiences, abilities, strengths and shortcomings... as well as sexual preferences different than my own. So why do I feel like such a hypocrite since my son confirmed that he is gay? I am ashamed... not of him... of myself for feeling this undefinable loss... find myself worrying about what others may think, how going public in any way would affect some friendships or my business and what it will be like to observe simple displays of affection between him and his partner... is he safe... is he sure?? This is absurd since my husband and I so frequently discussed that my son my be gay. I felt confident of myself discussing the possibility... I felt like a better mother speculating than I do knowing... it hurt to write that... I am crying... I am angry at my confusion and selfishness. I wanted to hear happiness about a loved one in his voice... I have that now... I want that for him... I want to be a part of that... I want to be comfortable and I am so shocked that I may not be, at such an important time for him...... I do dumb things like write... is he sure????? I know I love him and am proud of the responsible adult he is... perhaps a 250 word public confession is a step....

Bren Jorge
Toward the Future....
4 A’s Ad
Coming Out in My 60's
by Shirley Randal

All of my life until I reached the age of 50 I believed wholeheartedly that I was heterosexual. I was raised to be a wife and mother and spent most of my adult years doing just that. I wasn't happy, but so what, maybe I wasn't supposed to be.

Homosexuality has always been in the background of my life. During World War II, my brother who was an actor on the British stage had many gay friends who he introduced me to at an early age.

As I grew away from my last marriage, I became more involved in the life of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship here in Anchorage. It was there in my 50's that I began to attend Identity potlucks and other gay community functions. I met and became friends with many gay and lesbian people who were open and caring people. I felt welcomed and accepted.

At one Identity potluck, we had a program on sexual orientation and I was asked to speak from the point of view of heterosexuality. I remember saying that I wasn't sure who or what I was but that I was certainly open to change and might identify myself as lesbian in the future.

Then at one October National Coming Out Day celebration at the Fellowship, I came out. There was only a small group of people there that day, but I felt at home and was glad that I had actually said out loud — "I am a lesbian."

Living as a gay person can be hazardous to one's health and I don't go around shouting from the rooftops that I am a lesbian, but if anyone asks me, I tell them that I am. It is a credit to most of my heterosexual friends that when I came out in the Fellowship, I was accepted with love.

Having come out has made me feel free. I feel that I am the real Shirley, not some mirror image of what my early culture thought I should be. I am happier than I have ever been in my entire life because I am no longer living a lie. Coming out of the closet was one of the smartest things that I ever did. And the beauty of my coming out is that my daughters respect and love me anyway!

Conservative Christianity’s Worst Nightmare
by Dan Carter

On Saturday, August 28, 1999, Marsha Stevens, a renowned and controversial lesbian gospel singer held her first Alaska concert at Lamb of God Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) in Anchorage.

Marsha began her singing/song writing career by writing “For Those Tears I Died” (also known as “Come to the Water”) when she was 16 years old. During the 30 years since that song was written, Marsha was a member of the group, Children of the Day, With her husband and younger sister; she performed in many of the early “Jesus Movement” concerts; and had two children and was fairly conservative Christian mom. Then IT happened...

After realizing she was lesbian, she and her husband divorced, she lost her children in a legal battle and gave up her singing career (at the encouragement of many of her “former” friends). She and her lover, Suzanne, created their own family and for several years stayed away from the “church scene.”

Once she realized that God had created her to be the person she WAS, and that being a lesbian was not a secret to God, she once again began to sing in churches, this time in Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC). She was also reunited with her children. She was the guest speaker (and singer) at Identity’s Fourth Friday potluck, then performed at her Saturday concert and again during the regular Sunday afternoon service at Lamb of God MCC. More than 120 persons attended these three events. For more information about Marsha, check out her website: www.allfaith.com/balm.
A Woman’s Story

Portrait in Blue

Esthetics are important to me - the way things look. Who am I? My name is Barbara Soule. Most people call me Barbara. At this moment, I'm five feet seven, weigh one hundred fifty eight compact no fat jiggling pounds, with short brown wavey hair, thirty-eight years old and I've just came out - a baby dyke. When participating in a feminist consciousness raising group on the topic of Lesbianism, I “outed” myself while still legally married to my husband of nineteen years.

For the last five years I've been involved in alternative spirituality - first transcendental meditation and now women’s spirituality. In one of my meditation workshops, it was suggested that I make myself an inner mental “workroom.” I created an office, with one blank wall. Since esthetics are important to me, along this wall, I created a large fireplace. The coziness, golden rosy glow and heat of a good fire is very calming even to my soul. Sitting in front of the fire with a cup of hot apple cider in my hand, the tanginess of the cider on my tongue, the mellow spiciness of cinnamon and ginger gently tickling my senses, the smell of fragrant wood smoke in the air, the heat radiating from the blazing fire, watching the red, yellow and orange hot coals, and the flames with their blue and green flickers is Nirvana to me.

This imaginary fireplace is flanked by two cream colored lightly veined marble columns. The columns hold up a matching mantle. On the ends of mantle are two

At the same time I have this inner life, in the real world, I'm involved in the first feminist conscious raising groups where I live. A number of women, of which I am one, committed themselves to facilitating women's raising of conscious and formed the Higher Ground Collective. The group does advanced consciousness raising among ourselves before leading other groups. One of the women, Lee and myself did a lot of collective work together, sometimes we even jogged together.

One weekend, Lee and I, sign up for the same Body Awareness workshop. When I register at the workshop the woman at the desk gives me two large blank sheets of paper. I'm instructed to write down two fantasies. That night, I climb into my sleeping bag wondering what in the world I'm going to write down. To stop my brain from being on fast-forward, I go into my interior space. I'm gazing at the portrait over the mantle. Every muscle is relaxed and I'm fading into oblivian when the woman in the blue dress changes form. Suddenly, it's Lee and is wearing the figure hugging bodiced gown. She leans towards me, winks, picks up the voluminous skirt and tosses it over her head, flashing her naked private parts. Flipping the skirt down Lee laughs at me. Astounded I laugh out loud, and still chuckling, fall asleep.

Continued on page 17

Rona Mason Ad
Gay Father, Gay Son: An Update

by Dan Cook

It has been a little over a year since the story “Gay Father, Gay Son Reunion” came out in the Northview. (June, 1998, article by Tom Rachal.) Cherresse, AKA Dan Cook, updates us about his and son Patrick’s ongoing relationship:

As comfortable as my life had been, there was always one thing missing — my son Patrick. Over the last 30 years I’d found the right roads to travel and the correct shoes to wear: tennis, boots and, yes, sometimes high heels. The only thing missing was the spit shine. All those shoes have been re-soled and the shine now comes from within as I explore this wondrous world with my son, Patrick.

In June, 1998 Patrick had just seen part of my crazy world. He’d seen Dad in drag at the Wave, he’d experienced the Ekutuna Picnic and he’d got to know Dad as a party animal who seemed to know just about everyone. Together we closed the bars each night. Then Patrick visited again over Labor Day Weekend, for Coronation ’98. I cannot express the pride I had when we were introduced that evening. My 6’3” son escorting his dad as Empress 18 — even the word “pride” falls short.

Next on our agenda would be a trip to Eugene, Oregon for New Year, 1999. This was Patrick’s reunion with my mother, my two brothers and their wives. The last time they had seen Patrick, he was only two years old.

The family albums brought out many stories. Knowing Patrick’s thirst for knowledge of this side of his family, my family held nothing back. Aunts and uncles told one story after another, filling in all the blank spots, while Grandma held his hand. We took the family albums to Kinko’s for duplication. Now Patrick has 100 years’ worth of photos and knowledge of a family tree that goes back many generations. Patrick’s return has given my family a renewed sense of what family is. They love this kid of mine and their love has finally come back to me, too. Believe me when I say I feel blessed.

Patrick and I were joined by friends Paul and Bob of Portland for a New Year’s bash at Eugene’s local gay bars. There Patrick got to meet friends I’ve known for close to 30 years. They filled in even more blank pages — ones that his uncles and aunts and grandmother couldn’t.

Two months later I found myself facing heart surgery. My world seemed to be coming to an end. I couldn’t and wouldn’t believe all I was going to have was one year with my son.

A quadruple bypass operation scared me almost to death. When it was over, the doctor pronounced my heart as good as a 25 year-old’s, so it looks as though I’ll have many more years with my Patrick.

Father’s Day now has a whole new meaning. I flew down to Atlanta this last June. Patrick put together a wonderful week. I love baseball and the team I always root for is Atlanta’s Braves. Patrick got us great seats and I came home without a voice that night.

We went to many bars, too. We both love the night life, we both love shopping and clothes, people and eating out. Our heads pivot at the same time, window shopping and looking at great-looking guys. Maybe it’s just a Libra thing?

Next, Patrick and I will be off to Las Vegas for New Year’s. Lady Luck has been great so far, so wish us the best as we explore this wondrous road together.

CLASSIFIEDS
Need to sell/rent/find something through your newsletter? Send your ad and a check to “Identity Inc.” for $15 (you’ll get 5 lines) to: Ron Swartz at Identity (P.O.Box 200070 Anchorage 99220) by the 15th of the month.

Ah Rose Marie
B&B
Ad
You resolved several months ago to become “financially fit” at the start of a new year. So...how's it going? No matter how hectic your schedule, “life” unfolds slowly. But making sure that your personal financial plan is keeping pace with your life changes is better than “tooling along” in the belief that not much is happening.

It doesn’t matter how young or old you are, how much money you earn or what your goals may be—a new house, new car, college funding or retirement income; financial planning is a tool available to anyone who would like to make the most of his/her hard-earned money. It's not how much you earn, it’s how much you keep of what you earn.

Yet, without some clearly defined goals, planning for the future can be intimidating and challenging. A financial plan is a “blueprint” to help organize and manage your current situation and assist you in working toward your personal goals—whatever they may be.

As a financial advisor with Waddell & Reed, I am available to meet with you to help establish a new plan or update an existing one. As self reliant individuals, it is extremely important to “take charge” of your financial future today!!

THREE IMPORTANT STEPS

The financial planning process involves three important elements:

1. ANALYSIS The process of preparing your personal financial plan begins with me listening to you. I will help determine your financial needs and priorities. This information allows me to identify strategies that appropriately fit into your financial plan.

2. STRATEGIES Once the analysis is complete, I will review your information and prepare your personal financial plan. I will help you determine which solutions may be appropriate for your current situation and future goals. Perhaps you are wondering which IRA is best for you? I can help.

3. ACTIONS This plan becomes a road map for your financial future. I will help you select and implement the strategies recommended for your plan. Once it is implemented, you can use your plan as a yardstick to monitor your progress.

Taking action is perhaps the most important step of all. A plan without action is only a plan. The most common reason people succeed in reaching their financial goals is that they take action—immediate action—by putting appropriate investment and insurance solutions into practice.

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Kathleen Madden is a Financial Advisor for Waddell & Reed. The Anchorage office in the Dimond Center is one of over 200 nationwide. Waddell & Reed can be accessed on the Internet at http://www.waddell.com.

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A United Way Agency
Out of My Mind

What is coming out (as a G/L/B/T/I/Q\(^1\)) person if not the very stuff of self-affirmation? When we come out, we send a deep and powerful message to ourselves, a message that says “I am,” “I have a right to be.” That “right to be” is not because of our ideas or our accomplishments, but because we exist. We have only to be in order to deserve the awareness and compassion of others. Whether we say “I am” or “I am a computer programmer,” or “I wish to grow old with my partner and retire in Fairbanks,” we deserve to be thought well of, to be loved, to be touched, to be comforted, to be respected, to be counted.

It is important to acknowledge that not everyone can come out safely. There are many circumstances in which coming out would cause harm (from annoying to serious, if not death). The gist of my comments, however, is that to be whole, to be integrus, to be in balance with our own nature and that of the world around us, we must change our circumstances if necessary (be it job, neighborhood, friends, religion, etc.) in order to be true to ourselves, foster our own best growth, provide optimum possibilities. Those changes aren’t always easy. In the long run, however, I believe they are vital for our spiritual, mental, emotional, and sometimes physical growth. The companion question, of course, is why tell everyone what I do in bed? Those of you who know me or know my writing know I believe being Gay, Lesbian, Bi-oriented, Transgender, Intersexual, or Questioning (and, yes, perhaps, even Hetero-oriented) isn’t a matter of sex alone. Remember my favorite Harry Hay idea which states that what we (as G/L/B/T/I/Q people)

have in common with Hetero-oriented people is what we do in bed; it’s everything else that’s different: everyone enjoys consensual sexual contact in some way or another—and, yes, there are exceptions. Some of what differentiates us (G/L/B/T/I/Q people) is how we dream, how we see our partner, how we perceive the daily comings and goings of people, how we fantasize, how we choose the person in front of whom we cry most deeply, how we choose our spiritual connections, how we come out—the list goes on. We are also culture-rich in our history in politics as well as architecture; in business and computer systems; in finance and construction, in battle as well as in love: our contributions stand proudly aside those of our Hetero-oriented counterparts throughout history, and except for the fact that we’ve been expunged and “straightened” in most history books, our orientation has influenced generations of people around the world in ideas, inventions, public policy, medicine, literature, art, spirituality—the list is endless.

Is coming out, then, an event? Is it a moment you say to someone “I’m a Lesbian” and there’s an end to it? Most who have been through it know that that is not all there is to it. We know that it is a process—an ongoing set of statements, discussions, questions, and answers, that repeat and double back and require yet more clarification, and then rest for a while, and then start all over again. Coming out is a process of teaching others about Our Culture, just as you have to teach people who may not know about your African-American or Alaska Native or American Indian or Asian or Hispanic Culture.

Nor does coming out always happen suddenly within ourselves. Our own interior process takes time and our acculturation develops over a period of years, a process of finding ourselves in the history books by reading between the lines, by taking Queer Studies courses, by searching the Internet for our roots. In doing so we pass through stages of development—just as do preteens and adolescents who march through their ineluctable process. Those of us not fortunate enough to have come out as pre-teens in a healthy, supportive environment, often double up or double back on development, often going through teen years in the closet (and, therefore, not able to experience a “normal” childhood) and then go through another childhood-type process as we come out.

A very brief overview of those stages follows. Keep in mind they don’t happen in order, they double back on themselves, and they leap over each other. Some people reach a certain stage and stop, just as do people in other parts of their psychological development. This is a model, a general map. The ideas come from Richard Troiden and from Vivienne Cass, people known for their research into issues of identity and development for Queer people.

Sensitization is a time (pre-puberty) that most Lesbians and Gay males do not see sex as personally relevant. If they think about sex at all, they assume they are Hetero-oriented. During this time, however, Lesbians and Gay

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\(^1\) Gay, Lesbian, Bi-oriented, Transgender, Intersexual, Questioning. In this article I’ll use “Lesbian and Gay” and “Queer” to stand for the G/L/B/T/I/Q list.
males acquire social experiences that serve later as support for emerging perceptions of themselves as possibly Homo-oriented. Some, indeed many, of the experiences are characterized by generalized feelings of marginality, and being different from same-sex peers.

Identity confusion is marked by inner turmoil and uncertainty surrounding just who we are. We can no longer take our Hetero-oriented identities as fact, but we have yet to develop perceptions of ourselves as Homo-oriented. The stigma surrounding Homo-orientation also contributes to identity confusion because it discourages adolescent (and sometimes adult) Lesbians and Gay males from discussing their emerging sexual desires, or activities, or both with either age mates or families.

Identity assumption is the stage at which one identifies as Gay or Lesbian and tells others who so identify. There is self tolerance in this stage, if not complete acceptance; there is regular social intercourse with others; there is sexual activity and some exploration of the Culture. In the Culture there can be meaningful contacts with others, more experienced Lesbians and Gays. Developmentally, this is instrumental in helping neophytes see that there is a Community, some social organization, and a sense of belonging. The few role models that can be found are fonts where the newly self-identified Homo-oriented person can learn more about their Culture.

The commitment stage brings a sense of self-acceptance, a fusing of sexuality and emotionality, increased happiness, coming out to non-Homo-oriented people, and committed relationships. There is an emerging perception that Homo-orientation is an “essential” identity, a “state of being” and “way of life” rather than merely a form of behavior or sexual acting out.

In identity pride we develop an awareness of the enormous incongruity that exists between our feelings about ourselves as Queer and an awareness of society’s rejection of this orientation. We may feel anger at people who devalue our institutions (e.g., marriage, gender-role structures, etc.). We come out to more and more people; we immerse ourselves in the Gay or Lesbian scene consuming its literature, art, and other forms of culture.

Reconciliation with non-Gays informs another possible stage. The intense anger at Hetero-oriented people—the “them and us” attitude that may have previously existed—softens at this stage to reflect a recognition that some Hetero-oriented people are supportive and can be trusted. However, those who are not supportive are further devalued. There remains some anger at the ways that Lesbians and Gays are treated in the society, but this is less intense. The person retains a deep sense of pride but now comes to perceive less of a dichotomy between the Hetero-oriented and Homo-oriented worlds. A Homo-oriented identity becomes an integral and integrated aspect of the individual’s complete personality structure.

A word on internalized homophobia from Warren Blumenfeld and Diane Raymond: the decision to conceal one’s Homo-orientation from significant others may be detrimental to psychological well-being. Is it possible, they ask, to achieve an integrated personal identity or have authentic relationships while concealing fundamental aspects of the self? In choosing to hide an essential part of the self, individuals are left with a gnawing feeling that they are really valued for what others expect them to be rather than for who they really are.

Would you conceal your Jewish, Scottish, or Hispanic identity? Would you denigrate your heritage as a descendant of an Alaska Native shaman or a Parsi Indian or American Indian family whose history and culture spans generations of history. Would you deny your African-American roots that trace their origins to the farthest reaches of civilization in Africa? Not if you were about healing, growing, processing, becoming.

Coming out isn’t always about being in-your-face with the issues. It can be expressed in myriad and gentle ways, but, above all, it is an appropriate sharing of our beliefs, hopes, and dreams; the process of coming out is as vital to our mental, spiritual, physical, and emotional health as a good diet, exercise, laughter, sleep, and intimacy. When we are neglected as infants, we wither; when we neglect vital parts of ourselves, vital parts of ourselves wither. When we are nurtured as infants, we grow; and when we nurture those Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersexual, Queer, and Curious (vital) parts of ourselves, we grow and heal.

Coming out sends a powerful and clear message to the forces both in- and outside ourselves—forces that would keep us in an emotional and political ghetto—that we will grow, process, develop, laugh, cry, and come to know ourselves as whole and healthy people with a rich Culture whose roots can, indeed, be traced to the dawn of time.

F. Ken Freedman is a counselor with a private practice in Anchorage; is a former co-editor of the publication formerly known as the NorthView; and is a Gay activist. © 1999 F. Kenneth Freedman.

HELP!

Your sexual minority newsletter needs you to volunteer a couple hours to help create a fresh, comprehensive monthly. Local writers and lay-out volunteers especially welcome. Contact a Board member, or the HelpLine at 258-4777.
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1(888) THE GLNH (843-4564) Toll-Free
Free peer-counseling, information and referrals
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Check out the IDENTITY WEBSITE
www.alaska.net/~identity
for up-to-the-minute details on events and activities...
Community Events Calendar

*please send calendar activities, club notes, and directory updates to identity@alaska.net

October
Saturday, 2-
A Gala Evening, Identity's annual fundraiser and observance of National Coming Out Day. Dinner, dancing, and special guest: comedian Bob Smith!

Monday, 18-
(A) AGB Potluck, call Steve 272-5608

Friday, 22-
(A) Identity Potluck, 6:30 AUU Fellowship

On-Going Calendar Items

SUNDAYS
(A) Metropolitan Community Church Services, 2pm Sunday at Immanuel Presbyterian Church, 2311 Pembroke
(F) PFLAG, third Sunday, 4:30-5:30pm, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Hall, 4448 Pike's Landing Road
(A) Northern Exposure bowling league, Park Lanes, 561-8744 for more information
(A) GLSEN, first Sunday, 1pm, AUU

MONDAYS
(A) Gay Bar, Anchorage, noon, Second Monday, 845 K St., 279-5001
(A) Gay, Joyous & Free, 7pm, AA Meeting, AUU, 3201 Turnagain Street
(A) Over 50's Social Group, 2nd and 4th from 7-9pm. Inquire 337-6779
(A) Lesbian Social Group, reviews films & books. 1st, 3rd & 5th. Inquire 337-6779.

TUESDAYS
(A) Righteous Babes Radio Show, 7pm, KRUA-FM 88.1
(A) SLAA (Sex & Love Addicts Anonymous) 8pm, 566-1133
(A) PFLAG, 3rd Tuesday, 7-9pm, AUU
(A) The Family, 2:30pm, first Tuesday, UAA Campus Center room 105
(F) GLSEN, 5pm, FEA on S.Cushman, every 3rd Tuesday

WEDNESDAYS
(A) Free HIV test at 4 A's, 2-4pm, 1057 W.Fireweed Ln. Ste.102 Lori 263-2050
(A) IMRU2 5:30-7:30pm, 1st & 3rd at Q Café, 566-4678 (566-IMRU)
(J) Social at Summit Lounge, after work.
(J) "Women's Prerogative," KTOO-FM, Wednesday s, 9pm-10pm.
(F) Dames on the Dial, KSUA-FM 91.5, 10pm – midnight.

THURSDAYS
(A) SLAA (Sex & Love Addicts Anonymous), 5:30pm, Unitarian Church, 566-1133.
(A) Friends and Family Support Group, 6:30pm, call 4As, 263-2050.
(A) Gay, Joyous & Free, 7pm, AA Meeting, AUU, 3201 Turnagain.

FRIDAYS
(A) Lunch, 4As, noon-1pm, 1057 W. Fireweed Ln, Ste. 102, Lori 263-2050. Everyone invited – HIV, volunteers and friends.
(A) Midnight Suns Gay AA Meeting, 7:30pm-9pm, 3020 Minnesota (Z-Plaza) & Benson.
(A) Identity Fourth Potluck Friday, 6:30pm, AUU.
(F) Free anonymous HIV testing, 3:30-5:30pm, IAA offices, 710 3rd Avenue.
(F) Outlooks, KSUA-FM 91.5, 5:30pm – 7pm.
(F) Socializing and Dancing at Club G, mixed crowd, 9pm – 3:30am, 150 Farmer's Loop.
(F) Arctic Bears meet first Friday, call 479-8680 for information.
(J) Juneau Pride Chorus, 5:30-7:30pm, Resurrection Lutheran Church, Marsha at 789-6167 for info.

SATURDAYS
(A) SLAA (Sex & Love Addicts Anonymous), 12 noon, Unitarian Church, 566-1133.
(A) G/L Two-Step, first Saturday, 7:30-11pm, Pioneer School. Donations accepted.
(J) PFLAG First Saturday of each month, 10:30am to 12:30pm in the Mendenhall Library conference room.
(A) Womens Coffeehouse, 2nd Saturday, 751-7234 for information.
(F) Socializing and Dancing at Club G, mixed crowd, 9pm – 3:30am, 150 Farmer's Loop.

LEGEND
(A) = ANCHORAGE, (F) = FAIRBANKS, (J) = JUNEAU

INTERESTED IN ADVERTISING? Get your camera-ready copy to Jack or Chris at Stonewall'd (528 E. 5th Ave.)... or by mail to Identity c/o “Rainbow Borealis”!
Waking up smiling and remembering my outrageous vision, I impulsively write down the description of the portrait in blue metamorphosing into Lee flapping the skirt over her head. Folding up the paper with the fantasy on it, I toss it in the bowl. Turning around I bump right into Lee. Startled, I gasp, "Oh my god!" "Sorry, I didn't mean to startle you. I've been looking for you. Want to go for a run, Lee asks mildly?" "S-s-sorry, I've got other plans," I sputter embarrassed.

Later that night at dinner, I avoid Lee, making sure I'm always talking to someone engrossingly so Lee doesn't catch my eye and I have to face her. All too soon the announcement is made that the fantasy share is about to begin. I stay as far away from Lee as possible in the circle. Only candles and kerosene lamps are lit. You don't have to read your own fantasy. We take turns drawing a paper out of the bowl. Each woman can read the selection or pass it on to someone who can read it without embarrassment. My tension mounts with each selection. About half way through I start biting my nails. Finally, there is only one piece of paper left. Guess who's? It's Lynn, the facilitator's turn. She reads my fantasy extremely well. There is whooping, hollering and applause as she ends. Lee looks utterly stunned. I'm literally so tense I'm shaking. Women start getting up to leave. I head for the door, but can't help looking back. Lee is in the center of the room and has the paper with the fantasy written on it in her hand engrossed in it.

I head to the bath house to get ready for bed. You know wash up, brush my teeth. The women in the bathhouse are talking very loudly, commenting on the last fantasy. One woman comes out of the shower, stands naked next to me toweling off and exclaims, "I bet you few woman are getting to sleep without some sex tonight! "Really, you think so, I muse. After brushing my teeth, I turn to walk out of the bathhouse and step right up to Lee coming in the door. She grabs hold of my arm pulls me out the door while saying, "I want to talk to you, woman. I know you wrote that last fantasy. I recognized your handwriting! Never in a million years would I have imagined a fantasy about me was going to be read out loud in public. I'm attracted to you, too. I want you to sleep with me tonight."

So that night Lee zipped our sleeping bags together, laying on the floor in front of the fireplace on the floor with other women laying in sleeping bags around us. The same women who saw us zip our bags together, woman who had an idea of what we were about to do. Women's voices murmuring around us. the tinkle of their laughter ring like the sacristy bells.

Lee and I are laying together not touching yet. I can feel the heat of her body radiating towards me. I sense her hesitation about making love with me the first time in front of other woman. There is this pulling desire in me to kiss her, touch her and I don't really care that we are not alone. It's daring and adds to my excitement.

Everything feels so right - the dimness of the darkened room, only the firelight from the fire. Lee is laying on her side looking into my eyes. Slowly the distance between us melted away.

This night and ever after making love with a woman is part of my religion. I worship at Her altar, worship at the altar of Her. A melding, a blending, a communion transpires in the process of coming together to share love making. Conventional religion talks about two beings becoming one, but that ever happened to me. There was always something missing, some element not present. The first time I touched a woman, the blending, the oneness was present. It's as if, the two of us together in this space is always sacred. In my mind, in my inner sanctum, the portrait of the woman in the blue gown is changed for good. The woman in the picture has a name, Lee, my first woman lover.
"Quality of Life is our Goal"

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