Matanuska-Susitna School District Leads the Way, Bars Discrimination Against Its GLBT Students

by Howard Bess

On January 5 a victory was won for gay and lesbian teenagers who attend public schools in the Matanuska-Susitna School District, which is the second largest school district in Alaska, with a total of about 15,000 students. On a 4-3 vote the non-discrimination section of the school district policy book was amended to include sexual orientation. As the key paragraph was amended it reads:

District programs and activities shall be free from discrimination with respect to sex, race, color, religion, national origin, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, ethnicity, marital or parental status, and physical or mental disability. The school board shall ensure equal opportunities for all students in admission and access to academic courses, guidance and counseling programs, athletic programs, testing procedures, vocational education and other activities.

The policy is binding on school board members, administrators and all employees including teachers as well as all students.

Clearly, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) was the driving force behind the move to amend the district’s policy statement. PFLAG Matanuska Susitna chapter had been working behind the scenes for several weeks. Chapter president Joel Carter had worked with specific board members who were known to be supportive. Joel had furnished board members with copies of the November, 1999, American School Board Journal, which carried an extensive and comprehensive article on the responsibilities of school boards to protect gay and lesbian students. He had gathered materials from Lambda Defense Fund, which he shared with board members. He also directed them to PFLAG’s web site [http://www.pflag.org/]

This action is the first of its kind in Alaska. The CBS outlet in Anchorage had given the action lead coverage. Their coverage is statewide. The press was generous in their presence at the meeting. Debate was vigorous. President Joel Carter was an eloquent spokesperson for PFLAG. (He is a retired United Methodist minister and a long time friend of Jimmy Creech.) Those who opposed the action argued that the present non-discrimination statement was sufficient to protect all children.

PFLAG Mat-Su Valley knew they had four solid votes going into the meeting and had hoped that more would vote “yes.” But that was not to be. The crowd was large. It was clear that the crowd was overwhelmingly negative. The four positive board members could not be intimidated.

The victory is a textbook case of a group doing its homework, working with people behind the scenes, and maintaining the high ground of reason and compassion.

PFLAG leadership has expressed hope that the action in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley will be an encouragement for action in other school districts in Alaska.

Howard Bess has served of the Pacific Northwest Region of PFLAG since 1997 and holds a leadership position with PFLAG Palmer, AK. An ordained pastor for the American Baptist Church since 1958, he is also the author of Pastor, I Am Gay, a book about gay and lesbian people’s relationships with churches. as Regional Director

Jamieson Prepares Grant Proposal for Anchorage GLBT Community Center

In late January, Lisa Jamieson of Anchorage sent out e-mail about the idea of starting a gay/lesbian/bi/trans community center in Anchorage. She sent the e-mail to many people, and encouraged them to forward it. In the e-mail, she asked questions about what people are interested in, what they would do to make it happen, and what concerns they had.

Lisa tells us she got a number of responses, but not enough to make her think that she has a real handle on the community consensus. Lisa’s questions are these:

If we did make a GLBT community center happen, would you give hours? Financial support? Donate stuff like furniture, computers, etc.? Donate skills? Do you know anyone else who would? What good ideas can you contribute?

Feedback has been positive, with only one person responding that an Anchorage GLBT community center would be a bad idea. “I’m not trying to encourage negativity,” she says, “but I really hope that those who have concerns will speak up now.”

Lisa tells us she has found lots of great information on the Net, including many community center web sites—some in small conservative cities not unlike ours. “People do make such things happen,” she says. “We could, too, but it doesn’t make sense to pursue this unless there is real community support. By ‘support’ I mean not just enthusiasm, but commitment to give time and money.”

Lisa’s present plan is to keep developing the grant proposal for startup funding. If there appears to be enough support from the community, she will submit the grant application in May.

Contact Lisa at <lisaj@pobox.alaska.net> or drop her a note at PO Box 242134, Anchorage, AK, 99524, giving her your name, address, e-mail, phone number and comments.
the rainbow borealis

The 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: Steve Kendall; Members: Mikel Haase, Jean Craciun, Matthew Grabowy and Tim Brobst. There is one vacancy.

Distribution
The Rainbow Borealis is sent Bulk Mail to members of Identity, Inc. 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 The Rainbow Borealis are also distributed at select businesses in the Anchorage area. Upon request, you may receive The Rainbow Borealis in a First Class large envelope. $60 per year (includes membership in Identity and private mailing).

Submissions
We welcome articles and letters from individuals and organizations. Whenever possible submit electronic files (via e-mail) in PC or text format. All contributions must be signed but names will be withheld or pseudonyms used upon request. The Rainbow Borealis reserves the right to edit as necessary and to decline any article submitted. The Rainbow Borealis does not accept editorial copy or advertising that is sexist, racist, discriminatory or sexually explicit.

Copy Deadline
All articles must be received by the 15th of the month for inclusion in the Borealis dated the following month. Remember to give us information timely to the following month. (i.e. by March 15, we’ll need April information.)

The Rainbow Borealis
P.O. Box 200070, Anchorage, Alaska, 99520-0070.
borealis@postmark.net

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.

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Choice
by Fred Hillman

When the issue of civil rights for gay people comes up, opposition comes largely from people of the “religious right,” regardless of what political party they belong to. Locally we witnessed this in 1976 in the first attempt to introduce protections for gays into the Anchorage Municipal Code, and again, later, in the 1992 election. We witnessed it still again in the controversy over a Gay/Straight Alliance at Dimond High School, and once more last year in the struggle over the successful effort of church people (mainly Mormons, Roman Catholics, and Southern Baptists) to ban gay marriage via Proposition 2.

The argument against gay civil rights invariably comes to focus on three premises: personal morality, choice, and the moral basis for law.

The moral code that is cited invariably is based on a literal reading of isolated passages from the Christian bible, divorced from both context and scholarly interpretation.

The issue of choice concerns the origin of homosexuality in an individual—whether it is inborn, is learned in early childhood, is caught like measles by contact with an infectious individual, or is a conscious choice. The religious right maintains that it is both a contagion and a choice, and various religion-based movements such as Exodus and Kerusso, attempt to change homosexuals by religious conversion. Psychoanalysts, misinterpreting Freud's writings, held for the better part of a century that homosexuality is a disorder of disturbed childhood development at an unconscious level.

Regarding the basis for law, the religious right maintains that the United States is a religious nation, more precisely a Christian nation, and that our laws are based on the Christian Bible, and should be.

Thus, the anti-gay argument, based on those three premises, runs like this: a) Homosexuality is wrong because the Christian Bible says so. It is evil, it damn a person to hell, and it should be punished, even to the extent of imprisonment and execution. b) Homosexuality is a choice. Therefore, a gay person is choosing to be evil and therefore is justly subject to punishment, for society needs to be protected from this wickedness. c) Since the U.S. is a Christian nation, the state has responsibility to deprive gay people of their civil rights and to punish their misdeeds.

All three premises are wrong. The bible passages reflect the tribal mores of ancient times and they must be read in that context. These passages cannot dictate behavior in our urban, cosmopolitan society two millennia later.

Overwhelming evidence has shown two things: that homosexual desire, if not biological and innate, at least is certainly established at a very early age prior to adolescence for the vast majority of gay men; and second, that while occasionally a gay man may honestly claim to have become heterosexual by either religious conversion or psychoanalysis, none of these so-called therapies can be shown to accomplish their goal in large numbers over the long term.

The United States is not, and never has been, a Christian nation. Both our history and our written constitution, reinforced by repeated interpretation over the years by various Supreme Court rulings, have made clear that one of the fundamental rights of an individual is freedom of conscience—freedom to choose a religion or not to choose one, insulated by our Constitution from the power of the state. The state, in an attempt to control personal behavior, should make no law that is based on a biblical text.

The operative word in the reasoning of the religious right is choice. My thesis is that choice is beside the point. Whether a man or woman chooses to be gay, learns to be gay or is born gay is entirely beside the point. The point is this: we are a secular nation in which laws should not be based on religious doctrine. If a person chooses to be gay (and I doubt that many do), that is his or her privilege. If a person chooses to be religious and follow some sectarian dogma, that too is a right.

The secular state has no business attempting to control the intimate details of any individual’s personal life because some people think that a particular mindset or behavior is against their religion. Neither should the state deprive a gay person of the rights and protections that it grants everyone else.

Whether homosexuality is biological or not, whether gay people choose to be gay or not—these distinctions are irrelevant, if not insignificant. The relevant and burning questions for us in this 223rd year of our nationhood are whether this nation can remember its founding, whether it will honor its constitution, and whether its citizens—including you and me—can both maintain their personal civil rights as well as guarantee them for everyone in this country.

Fred Hillman is a retired physician in Anchorage and a member of GLSEN & PFLAG.
Memetics and The Memes of Homophobia

by Taijmadge Bailey

Many people, including myself, have hypothesized as to why there might be one or more gay genes. The search has generally been based only on a good understanding of genetics and the modern interpretation of Darwin's Theory of Evolution. Typical hypotheses attempted to link genes for homosexuality with human altruism or some other trait. It is time for a new idea.

The new science of Memetics easily explains many human behaviors. Memetics explains the prevalence of homophobia first, and then accounts for why there are so many lesbians and gays. Genetics alone would predict that genes for same-sex pairing would not be widely propagated. Therefore, gay and lesbian genes should be of extraordinary rarity. However, in reality these genes are anything but rare. The new idea of memes can help us understand why.

Memes are nothing more than thoughts and ideas that can be transmitted from one person to another. In fact virtually everything that we consider cultural is based on memes. Memetics simply applies rules similar to "natural selection" to memes. Some memes die out while others are endlessly replicated around the world. Frequently cited examples include chain letters, email hoaxes, and so-called "urban-legends." There is a particular type of meme that evokes to get itself copied more than other memes - exclusively for the reproductive benefit of the meme.

Aaron Lynch has written a book, Thought Contagion, about these "selfish meme." His hypothesis regarding the rise of homophobia and homosexuality is elegant in its simplicity. Imagine an ordinary recessive gene or set of genes that would occasionally give rise to a homosexual person. That person might not reproduce, but would be seen by those who did. One or more of the persons who saw the homosexual person might create the idea that homosexuality was bad. They would have created an anti-gay meme. That meme or thought contagion would join a number of other memes replicated more often because of a mechanism Lynch calls "Quantity of Parenthood." This group includes memes against masturbation, birth control, and recreational sex. Memes to "be fruitful and multiply" and for "missionary style" copulation also belong in this group.

According to Lynch, even circumcision can be viewed as a "Quantity of Parenthood" meme because it makes masturbation more difficult and vaginal sex relatively more appealing. All these "quantity of parenthood" memes have one thing in common. People who carry the memes are more likely to reproduce. Children are then programmed with the parent's memes and inoculated against foreign memes with a meme that says, "don't talk about sex." If the offspring do not talk about sex, then they will not be exposed to competing memes.

Mathematics can demonstrate that even a small steady influence can accumulate over a surprisingly small number of generations. After a few dozen generations, a majority of parents would be transmitting the anti-gay meme as part of the cultural programming of their offspring. At this point, other types of meme transmission come into play. So far, we only looked at the transmission from parents to children, however memes also spread to non-relatives. Proselytizing now rapidly increases the rate at which anti-gay memes spread through the population. Consequently, any children who were genetically predisposed to homosexuality would have an incentive to hide it - many by marrying and having children! Thus, the gene or genes that would have been a dead-end are instead transmitted to another generation. Thus, there will be even higher percentage of homosexual genes in the next generation. As each of these cycles feed on one another, the percentage of genes for homosexuality in the gene pool continued to rise. In turn, the meme against homosexuality evolved to more aggressively force the genetic homosexual into heterosexual reproduction. Thus, ironically, now that there are enough gays and lesbians to fight back against the memes of homophobia, we will not be passing our genes along as often. We can therefore expect genetics to take over and rapidly reduce the number of new homosexuals being born.

To read more on the topic of Memetics by picking up Aaron Lynch's book or getting The Meme Machine by Susan Blackmore. Both these authors are innovative thinkers and unafraid of new ideas. I highly recommend both books.
MCC Invites Everyone to Participate in Special February 13 Celebration of Relationships

by Dan Carter

Anchorage's Lamb of God Metropolitan Community Church would like to invite everyone to celebrate their relationships in a special service on Sunday, February 13 at 2:00pm. Whether you want to celebrate your relationship with a spouse, partner, lover or a group of friends, Lamb of God MCC is a church for all families.

Lamb of God MCC (LOGMCC) meets at Immanuel Presbyterian Church on Sundays at 2:00pm. The church is conveniently located in east Anchorage at 2311 Pembroke Street, just east of the intersection of 24th Avenue and Boniface Parkway.

Lamb of God MCC is a predominately gay/lesbian Christian church where all are welcome to worship a loving and compassionate God. LOG MCC is a member of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, a denomination founded in 1968 and now meeting in almost 400 churches in 19 countries around the world.

For more information about UFMCC, visit our website at www.ufmcc.com or email Lamb of God CC in Anchorage at LOGMCC@OL.COM

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Editorial: Will Success Spoil GLBT Volunteerism?

In the last issue of Rainbow Borealis, Identity Board Co-chairman Bill Wilks offered food for thought regarding the burnout of volunteers within the gay/lesbian/bi/lesbian community in Alaska. An organization like Identity cannot function without its volunteer workers. Even the organization's general membership numbers have been declining in recent years. Why is that?

One hypothesis is that people in the GLBT community may feel more welcome in the "straight" community than ever before, and see no need to set time aside to share a potluck dinner with other queers, or give some time to answer a referral telephone helpline. Dan Savage, in an article written recently for Out magazine, pondered the effects of an openly gay student's election as president of the student government at the University of Washington. The young man in Seattle beat out two straight students in the race, taking 65% of the vote.

According to Savage, "the downside to the emerging gay-friendly mainstream, with its increased possibilities to live with integrity at work, in school, and in politics, is that it may be siphoning talent from the pool that has typically fed gay and lesbian businesses and organizations." Where could homosexual and bisexual Alaskans go to be safely and openly with others of their own kind ten years ago? A Garden Buddies meeting. An Identity potluck dinner. A SEAGLA-type gathering. Savage continues, "To fill their ranks, gay and lesbian political organizations, businesses, and cultural groups could once count on a steady flow of talented, ambitious queers whose options outside the gay and lesbian universe were limited."

But what about our community in 2000? Young GLBT people involved in The Family, or IMRUJ2, or not involved in anything at all, may now feel content and at ease with their sexuality with little fear of recrimination for being who they are. As Savage asks, "As more and more gay men and lesbians grow to feel they can go anywhere and do anything, the question arises: Why should they identify with or take a job for less money and less prestige in a movement that seeks to fight limits and discrimination when they have never experienced limits and discrimination?"

Sure, we're still fighting for parity of legal rights regarding our chosen partners compared to "married" adults. But as more and more companies and institutions are developing domestic partner language in their employee contracts, gays stop identifying exclusively with the gay rights movements and begin to identify with the "straight" society that's making room for them at the table. Why bother supporting the Fourth Friday potluck, or Identity in general, or the Klondyke Kontakt?

It isn't a foregone conclusion that GLBT organizations will be diminished by extension of equal rights. Dan Savage quotes White House staff secretary Sean Maloney, who is openly gay, "Mainstream success won't weaken the gay and lesbian organizations so long as gay men and lesbians don't forget where they come from and on whose shoulders they stand. With more queers working in the mainstream, there will be more successful people to tap for boards, money, connections, and expertise."

Maybe so, but those dividends are being slow to pay off here in the Last Frontier.

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yes, yes, yes and yes

To The Four Who Voted “Yes” in Matanuska-Susitna

We note that the Wasilla High School fight song rejoices, "We've got the pride and the spirit inside..."

A spirited “thank you!” to the four who voted “yes” in Mat-Su, for doing the right thing and making it possible for this to be the song for all your students.
letters to the rainbow borealis

January 9, 2000

Dear Editor:

In the December 1999 issue of Rainbow Borealis, Bill Wilks wrote an excellent editorial entitled "Why Do Volunteers Burn Out?" While I agree with his comments regarding the value and worth of volunteers, and while I agree the demise of NorthView had a tremendous negative impact upon Identity's financial situation, I do not agree volunteer burnout was the only cause for the departure of NorthView volunteers. Burnout certainly did not cause me to leave a publication that I helped to expand and to nourish for nearly four years. Let me explain.

During an Identity Board Retreat in late January 1999, it was agreed that several major changes would take place in the NorthView. The Board appointed an ad hoc committee to institute those changes. For reasons known only to the Board, it was agreed to "keep the plan under wraps."

By mid-February, several major aspects of the plan had been "leaked" to a printing company employee with whom I had worked closely for a long period of time, and he asked me how I felt about the upcoming changes. I knew nothing about them, of course, as I was not a Board member and, therefore, did not attend the Board Retreat. After he described what was going to happen, I asked if he might be mistaken. When he revealed his source of information to be a person whom I knew to be reliable, I knew what he had been told was true.

Later that afternoon I spoke with Identity's Publications Director in order to verify what I had heard and was told "it was agreed to keep it under wraps" and she was not responsible if another ad hoc committee person released the information. In other words, it didn't matter that I was volunteering an average of 40 hours per month for NorthView, the decision has been made and my opinions were not wanted. Since my volunteer efforts were wanted but my opinions were not, it was with a sad heart that I initiated the resignation process to be effective March 31, 1999.

I truly felt that another person would step forward and take the leadership role just as I had done when my predecessor, F. Ken Freedman, became seriously ill and was unable to continue. As time quickly passed it became painfully evident there was a "leadership vacuum" at NorthView and it was going to consume that which I had worked so hard to expand and nourish. It wasn't easy to sit back and watch it all disappear.

In his editorial Bill Wilks says, "I personally want to avoid any future volunteer burnout because everyone involved becomes the road kill." How true.

I would hasten to add, however, that the Identity Board of Directors must assume the leadership role for which they have volunteered.

Tom Rachal
Former NorthView Coordinator

January 15, 2000

Dear Rainbow Borealis,

When Anne and I decided to come to Alaska we said we don't know where or what we will do but we will make it work and enjoy our adventure. I am Angela (29 yrs) and Anne is my partner (36 yrs). We are so excited for our journey. I will give you some background: Anne and I have worked in the restaurant and service industry for many years. I have a degree in marketing and advertising and Anne's degree is in education (English) and she is a licensed massage therapist. After some time of working hard and saving, we have decided the time is now! We currently own our own housekeeping business and we love it. We are able to make our own hours and it affords us the luxury of doing what we want. All of those years in the restaurant business we had no quality of life and now we do. Our goal is to leave Colorado on April 11, do some sightseeing in California and Seattle and make our way to Alaska on May 5.

We are interested in lodging and jobs. I have been warned online that neither is accommodating. I saw the high in Anchorage the other day was 8 degrees above? Whew! We have had such a mild winter here in Colorado that we will need to get our blood thickened up for Alaska. Anne and I would be so happy if you would spread our name in your newsletter and yes, you may use our e-mail—thank you for asking. We used to be so careful who we gave it to now we are happy to have people spread our name and our news of our journey.

(Continued on page 10)
letters, continued

(Continued from page 9)

Anne and I are willing to do any job (within reason of course) to enable us to live there. We are reliable and are not afraid to work hard. We have been so blessed to remain healthy. We are very interested in anything our friends-to-be in the community might suggest.

Sunny skies here,

A&A

Angela Waggoner
11735 Decatur St G-206
Westminster CO 34
Roody76@aol.com

January 4, 2000

Dear Editor,

The new millennium. How very exciting and full of possibilities. As a community, we must weigh our choices and decisions very carefully. We have weathered such ridiculous policies as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." Even the President has stated it simply does not work, which was obvious from the get go. We in a way settled for a meatless bone instead of pushing for a decent steak.

Now we are in the same position with the recent ruling in Vermont. It is great in a way, and certainly makes some strides after the disappointment of Hawaii.

However, the question now is whether we are willing to settle for "domestic partnership." I am 34 years old and have never once in my life heard a heterosexual refer to their loved one as their "domestic partner." Obtaining benefits for your partner is a good thing, but what are we sacrificing in the process? It still boils down to this: gay and lesbians are different, so it's OK to treat us differently. Well, it's not OK. In the bus boycotts of the sixties, I did not see African Americans saying "Well, at least they are kind of nice to us so if we have to sit in the back of the bus, I suppose we should put up with it."

France, Denmark, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Quebec and Ontario all have laws in place to protect the best interests of same sex unions. Are we willing to settle for anything less than total equality here in "the land of the free?" When women fought for the right to vote, did they grasp at a straw and accept a deal wherein they could vote on only certain issues? Of course not. I personally am not willing to accept that I will get "some" benefits but not the same my neighbor gets. If I am treated like a second-class citizen, then tax me like one.

Have the religious right cut me a check for my rebate.

Please write your Senators and State Representatives and tell them that you want your Constitutional rights just like everyone else. That would include the choice to be legally married if you wish.

Randy Sindelar Corturillo
11312 Clifton Boulevard
Cleveland, Ohio 44102
216.631.4403
sincort.aol.com

January 23, 2000

Dear Rainbow Borealis & Identity Board,

I found this in my file - it was sent for the Nov/Dec issue but never made it so I'm re-sending it:

On behalf of The FAMILY I would like to thank the PRIDE committee for making sure members of The FAMILY (and IMRU2) were able to attend the NCOD dance. Thank you to Greg and all who made NCOD possible, as well as past, present, and new members of the board.

I would also like to thank Kristara for her tireless fundraising efforts during her reign this past year. On behalf of the court she attended several FAMILY meetings and is donating $500.00 to The FAMILY at UAA. Thanks Kristara!

In PRIDE,

Victoria Shaver
Happy Anniversary, 258-4777
(How are we doing, Jim?)

Ten years ago on February 1, 1990, Jim Boudreau with the good help of Raymond Jorgenson, Tom Rachal and Beth Vann, undertook to set up Identity's HelpLine. Such a project had been tried previously in Anchorage. Hugely work-intensive, it closed down. But Jim felt that a HelpLine was a necessity for Alaskans and he soldiered on.

Today HelpLine staff reminisce about the startup days, years, actually, that the (borrowed and donated) line-switching computer equipment lived in Ken Freedman's house. Rachel Vann wrote the line-switching software especially for the HelpLine. The program needed maintenance and a major challenge to that fact was that the computer from this project resided at Ken Freedman's house, since at that time Identity didn't even have an armoire at the Unitarian Church to call "home."

The software was limited in that it could not be configured remotely: if you were scheduled on the HelpLine from 6 to 11 pm, the calls were switched to your line as programmed. If you weren't home, oh my goodness, the HelpLine went to your house anyway!

Hard work. Long hours. Limited technology. Zero office space. Some might say that these were not the best indicators for long-term success, but Jim and Ray and Tom and Beth and the other volunteers believed in the importance of the work.

We talked with HelpLine Coordinator Candy Bonham, who has been HelpLine's Coordinator for the past several years. She recalls how Identity Board member Bill Wilks was instrumental in getting HelpLine selected to be one of the Beta test projects for what we now know and use as Anchorage Telephone Utility's call forwarding service. That technology, along with voicemail and cell phones, provided the important latitude that the HelpLine volunteers needed. No more inability to arrange last-minute coverage, and no more HelpLine computers in living rooms.

Currently, with Candy coordinates the activities of 28 volunteers. Amy O'Mara does the scheduling and Tom Rachal follows up on voice mail messages left when the HelpLine isn't "live." Tom also keeps edits the ever-expanding resource manual that is used by the volunteers, who field calls ranging from "Where are the gay bars in Anchorage?" to crisis management to, "I'm gay, I'm lonely out here in the bush with nobody safe to talk to, can we just chat?" Not to mention the occasional all-important first step call, when a person who has decided to acknowledge his or her homosexuality calls, wondering and asking, "Now, what?" Clinical Psychologist Ken Freedman provides training for the volunteers and is a resource when professional input is needed.

More volunteers are needed. Candy's goal is to always have at least enough trained volunteers on the schedule to allow for only one evening per month as a volunteer's on-line commitment. The present count of 28 volunteers doesn't quite cover that, and when people are ill and unable to cover their

(Continued on page 17)
The FAMILY

All members of the GIBLTQ* community are welcome to attend. You do not have to be a UAA student - many of us are not!

The FAMILY meets on Fridays at 7 pm at the UAA Campus Center, Room 106.

Call Karl 278-6000 or Victoria 275-8763 for more information or check out our socials, events, projects and Local Links Page at http://owlit.uaa.alaska.edu/~abfam/

GIBLTQ = Gay, Intersexual, Bi, Lesbian, Trans, Questioning

The FAMILY is proud to announce that Magdalen Hsu-Li will be speaking and performing at the University of Alaska at Anchorage during the week of March 17 as part of the UAA’s Women’s History Month.

One of the first Bi Chinese-American singer-songwriters to emerge in the United States as a star in the acoustic/pop/alternative genre, Magdalen has broken new ground as the forerunner of a new wave of Asian musical artists. Magdalen writes universal, personal, and political songs that stretch the boundaries of our consciousness, while appealing to a wide spectrum of people.

Her lecture series includes 2 programs which encourage diversity: “Redefinition of Identity - Asian Women in the Arts (queer and feminist focus), Redefinition if Identity - Asian-Americans in the Arts, and an interactive workshop called True Diversity - Exploring Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Programming. Audiences can expect the unexpected, from the tender piano ballads to raging political piano punk. Magdalen is a new voice for an increasingly diverse and multicultural generation coming into their own as individuals in the 21st Century.

What the critics are saying about Magdalen Hsu-Li:

"Musically, Hsu-Li withholds nothing. Confrontational as all hell, she shows her piano no mercy, taking intolerance and every 'ism in the book prisoner with a rare and relentless fury, an approach that earns her infinite comparisons to Tori Amos and Ani DiFranco."

Susan Moll, Sacramento, CA

"I’ve been waiting for a long time for an Asian-American singer-songwriter whose music would tackle issues and experiences that I can relate to as an Asian woman in America. Hsu-Li is a natural performer. When she attacks the piano she is all woman and all knowing...the raw emotion...the personal and confessional lyrics...her impassioned performance...all wrapped up in one ferociously talented package."

Ria Roncales Goodwin, The Asian Reporter, Portland, OR

"Magdalen represents an emerging rebellious Asian generation. She seduces you with her voice and captures you with her words. It's great to see Asian women fighting like this. Blow 'em away Hsu-Lil!"

Doualy Xaykaothao, WBAL Radio, NY, NY
PFLAG Anchorage News

by Tom Rachal

The following information was gleaned from the PFLAG Anchorage Annual Report compiled by Jane Schlittler, President.

Accomplishments for Fiscal Year 1999

a) Continued sponsorship of the youth group, IMRU2.
b) Held our Annual March Potluck with the IMRU2 facilitators being our honored guests.
c) Received substantial donations in honor of the re-commitment of Dan Carter and Al Incontro, and the commitment of Yolanda Meza and Kate Lehn.
d) Used the unexpected donations mentioned above to design and purchase 50 People Mover interior signs featuring PFLAG and IMRU2 logos and information about both groups.
e) Continued outreach activities including brochures in various locations around the city, an informational slide for use on the Community Calendar (Channel 44), monthly meeting notices in the Anchorage Daily News, Pride on the Parkstrip and World AIDS Day.
f) Received two requests for information from out-lying areas, Thorne Bay and Homer. In both cases the requests came from school personnel. Packets of booklets, brochures, and ordering information were sent to both.

Goals for Fiscal Year 2000

a) Continue outreach and promoting visibility in the Anchorage community by:
b) Continuing sponsorship of IMRU2.
c) Renewing free ads in the Anchorage Daily News and Channel 44.
d) Exploring participation in the Multi-Cultural Conference at King Career Center, Community Forum, and Kids Day.
e) Preparing a library display for Loussac Library.
f) Participating in Pride on the Parkstrip and World AIDS Day.
g) Printing business cards for distribution, such as bulletin boards and school counselors.
h) Hosting our Annual March Potluck and August Picnic.
i) Pursuing outreach to rural areas as requests and opportunities arise.
j) Exploring additional contacts with other community groups as liaisons.

There are two additional goals that do not involve outreach and promoting visibility in the Anchorage community;
a) Revising our by-laws in order to streamline the organization
b) Seeking funding from members and non-members to fund various projects throughout the year.

If you would like to know more about PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) or if you would like to join with us in reaching these goals, please call (907) 566-1813. If you prefer, you may write to us at PFLAG Anchorage, P O Box 203231, Anchorage, AK 99520-3231. We are also on the Internet at <http://www.alaska.net/~idity/pflag>.

...and some excerpts from PFLAG's NewsNotes 2000

On PFLAG Calendar's - February 10 - IMRU2 Advisory Board meeting, 7:30 pm, 2521 Banbury Drive (333-0116); February 15 - Monthly Meeting, 7 pm, AUUF, 3201 Turnagain Street

A great big THANK YOU! to Sylvia Short and Kathleen Jones for their generous contributions in December. As mentioned previously, our dues and merchandise sales alone are not enough to finance chapter activities the board wants to pursue. We are planning to increase the number and variety of educational materials that we purchase from the national PFLAG office.

Our chapter makes these materials available free of charge to the public, individuals, and groups. Last year we received requests from three rural areas for information for parents and teens with GLBT concerns. There is a huge need in the rural areas of Alaska for accurate, reliable information. We welcome any all contributions to assist us in carrying out the PFLAG mission of support, education, and advocacy.
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OPEN Year Round
"Love" and Those Three Little Words: (Eros, Philia and Agape)

by Michael the Music Minor

Americans use the word “love” to mean many different feelings. We may love our parents, we may love our partners, and we may love our friends. However, the Greeks were quite efficient in splitting up the different feelings of love into three separate words: eros, philia, and agape.

Eros is what the Greeks called their sexual love. Eros would be the love two people could share together deeply and physically. Philia was defined as the love that two friends have for one another. Agape was the Greek universal love. This type of love is most rare. It is the love few people achieve, for it is the love of all mankind, friend and enemies together.

So, what kind of love do you desire? All are satisfying alone, but together they are the greatest emotions to experience. All three may be obtained in different ways. How would you like to obtain your love? Or have you done so already? When two people share all three, they may sexually desire each (eros), talk to each other as friends (philia), and on those bad hair, bad breath, argumentative days, they wouldn’t choose a different soul to desire in the entire world (agape).
I lay curled up in a fetal position on my living room couch and cried for the first two weeks.

It's been a while since I wrote my last Stargazer column. While Identity was deciding how and what it wanted to publish, my partner and I got "let go" from our jobs. I had thought that I was getting on rather well with our new supervisor, though my partner had figured her days were numbered.

My astrologer has often said that since in my birth chart, Venus is in the eleventh house of illusion and delusions that I am often have the wrong perspective about any of my relationships. Losing my job was a big surprise and a devastating shock. I've never been fired from a job before.

I lay curled up in a fetal position on my living room couch and cried for the first two weeks. My extreme reaction puzzled me. I'd known for a long period that most of my time centered on my job. My life was very out of balance. I'd caught myself saying out loud, "I hate my job!" On one hand, not having that job was an enormous relief. On the other hand, I was grieving in the extreme. Finally, I figured out that I had come, not to just respect my coworkers, but to love and cherish them as individuals. After seven years, we had become both a working team and "a family." So, I am making the effort to remain connected to people that I consider my friends, whose jobs are a big part of their lives. "The job" is a big part of my friends' conversation and it is hard not to get caught up in reminiscing about our shared work experiences, a topic which inevitably sends me into another round of grief and tears.

I have decided to recover. Since I am unemployed and because I've known my life is out of balance I've been concentrating on reestablishing stability. Job Partnership Training Agency (JPTA) has a job re-entry program for people over forty-five. I've taken all their workshops and a class in Windows 98 to upgrade my work skills. Since I am unemployed and can't afford to go to therapy, the next thing I did was to start back in a twelve-step recovery program, renewing my commitment to regular exercise and healthy eating.

Even when work "the job" was too all consuming in my life I still managed to spend some time each day in prayer and meditation, but I didn't have time to keep a relationship with my spiritual equals, teachers and mentors. When a person is on an "alternative" spiritual path, spending time with like souls is a wonderful luxury. It provides a forum of understanding, sharing and healing.

Two spiritual people have reentered my life. The first is Jeanmarie Crumb. Last year she completed a four-year program at the Barbara Brennan School of Healing in New Jersey. Jeanmarie has a body, mind and spirit energy balancing practice. Energy balancing is wonderfully soothing, stress-reducing and relaxing.

The second person is Nancy Swanson-Cohen. Nancy is a Reiki Master and reads astrology, runes and tarot. She concentrates on "healing the heart." Nancy spearheaded the local Psychic Faires that include astrology charting and interpretation, many different kinds of readings, several different types of bodywork and massage. Her first Faire was at the Q Cafe in November. The second Faire was at the Inlet Towers on January 9th. The third Faire will be this spring the first part of April. The exact date is not set. If any one is interested in a free tarot reading bring this article to Nancy's next Psychic Faire and I will read the cards for you personally.

By the way, my partner went to Career Academy, took a travel specialist course and has a job at the airport. I am still looking.
scheduled hours, someone has to cover, usually someone who will have to do double duty that month.

"And people need breaks," says Candy. More volunteers would allow for those needed breaks to be accommodated.

Jim, it’s been five years since you left us, it’s still pretty dark in February in Alaska, there’s still a lot of work to do in and for the GLBT&Q community, and we still haven’t conquered AIDS. But there is one good thing: The project you cared so much about continues. Countless people have been helped on 258-4777 — not to mention (888) 901-9876, toll-free statewide for Alaska. Thanks, Jim. We miss you.

Interested folk can call the Helpline number (258-4777). Say “thanks” to the person on duty, and tell them you want to volunteer.

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Gay Rhode Island State Legislator Introduces Pro-Marriage Bill

Openly gay state Rep. Michael S. Pisatro, D-Cranston, announced the introduction of a bill on February 3 in the RI state House of Representatives that would allow all Rhode Islanders equal access to civil marriage, according to the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund.

Pisatro noted that civil marriage confers hundreds of basic legal protections for committed couples many of which cannot be arranged by other means, even for those who can afford a lawyer. "All of our state's families should have equal access to the rights and responsibilities of civil marriage," stated Pisatro. "This bill is not about, nor will it ever require any religious denomination to perform or recognize same-sex marriage; it is only about the government owing equal access to a civil marriage license for gay and straight couples alike. Legally, religious and civil marriage are two separate institutions. People of faith are sincerely divided in their beliefs about gay unions. Our society is deeply committed to religious liberty and part of that commitment means the state should not dictate which marriage any religion recognizes, and no one religious viewpoint should dictate which marriages the state recognizes."

Pisatro pointed out that civil marriage ensures hospital visitation rights, the ability to file joint tax returns, inheritance rights, equal access to bereavement leave or sick leave to care for an ailing partner, the ability to make medical decisions without a special power of attorney and literally hundreds of other basic family-friendly legal safeguards. "This is a pro-family, pro-marriage bill that would allow more Rhode Island families to take on the commitment and responsibility that a civil marriage entails," noted Pisatro. "Gay men and lesbians should no longer be excluded from the simple protections for our families that others take for granted." Pisatro has secured 20 co-sponsors for the Equal Access to Marriage Act. He has introduced similar measures in the past, but this year he believes support has grown sufficiently to hold hearings on the bill. Outside of Vermont, Pisatro's proposal is the only pro-marriage measure currently pending before any state legislature. Contact: Rep. Michael Pisatro Phone: (401) 946-1905

Fourth March on Washington Slated for April 30

The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund has announced its support for the Millennium March on Washington for Equality, recognizing the event's potential to mobilize voters, energize state and local equal rights advocates and inspire future candidates by gay and lesbian civic leaders. The national march is set for Sunday, April 30, 2000, and may be among the largest civil rights events in the history of the United States.

"At its core, the Millennium March on Washington for Equality is about one fundamental value on which there is broad agreement " the need for equal rights under the law for all Americans," said Brian K. Bond, executive director of the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund. "The march presents worthwhile opportunities in this critical election year to advance the cause of equality by mobilizing voters, energizing state and local advocates and giving rise to the next generation of outstanding openly gay and lesbian candidates. This march is happening, its message and organizing opportunities are important, the whole nation will be watching it and we are hopeful that the community will come together to make it a success."

Of particular importance to the Victory Fund will be "GLBT Vote 2000," the march's voter registration drive aimed at maximizing the impact of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and fair-minded heterosexual voters. According to Bond, two facts make this year's elections especially crucial: one is that, while America has about 500,000 elected officials, less than 200 of them are openly gay leaving the community largely without a place at the table of public policy. The other is that discrimination based on sexual orientation remains legal throughout most of the United

(Continued on page 19)
OUTside

(Continued from page 18)

States. By energizing voters and prospective candidates, he said, the march can unleash the nation’s potential to change these facts.

“The 2000 elections are so important because our community remains largely without representation and without protection from discrimination,” said Bond. “The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund works to end discrimination through increased representation, and this march for equality can empower voters, advocates and candidates to do just that. The march can enhance our efforts to elect exemplary openly gay and lesbian candidates throughout the country this year.”

People interested in finding out more about the Millennium March on Washington for Equality or its GLBT Vote 2000 can write to the march’s office at 1000 16th Street, NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC, 20036; call (202) 467-8100; e-mail mmow2000@aol.com; or visit the march’s Web site at www.mmow.org.

The April 30 event is the fourth national march focused on including gay and lesbian Americans in the country’s commitment to equality under the law. The prior marches were held in 1979, 1987 and 1993, and inspired new waves of local, state and national equal rights advocacy.

Civil Rights Activists Urge Active Support of Vermont Ruling

Forwarded to us from a national Unitarian-Universalists’ e-mail list, January 17, this action request which was originally posted by Anthony R. Cicalose, Fort Lauderdale, Florida’s 22nd Congressional District Coordinator for the Human Rights Campaign.

Cicalose posted: “As you may know, the Supreme Court of Vermont recently ruled that committed homosexual relationships should have the same rights and privileges afforded to married straight couples. There are over 1,000 rights that come with marriage which are currently denied to gay couples – including hospital visitation/medical decisions, rights of survivorship, filing joint tax returns and many hundreds more.

“This is a very important first step towards equality in America. However, the Vermont Governor’s office has been bombarded with phone calls by anti-gay individuals who are opposing the recent decision – primarily fueled by the “Doctor” Laura radio program, which gave out the phone number.”

“I called the Governor’s office, and spoke to the secretary, who was very nice but said that I was one of only a handful of callers who support this huge step towards equal rights,” said Cicalose, urging people to contact the Vermont Governor’s office to register support in this vital issue. Contact: Governor Howard Dean’s office - (802) 828-3333, 8 AM – 4 PM. FAX (802) 828-3339; or email the Lieutenant Governor - Douglas A. Racine at ltgov@leg.state.vt.us

University of Alabama Establishes GLBT Scholarship

Alumni, faculty and students at the University of Alabama have recently established a scholarship fund for members of the campus Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender Alliance. The first scholarships will be awarded in spring 2000. For more information, please contact Dr. Rose Gladney at (205) 348-9764, e-mail: rgladney@tenhoor.as.ua.edu, David van der Griff at (818) 884-6404, e-mail: dvander736@aol.com or Rachel Barrow at (404) 284-3479, e-mail: rbarrow@emory.edu.

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Oh my, it's....

Chocolate Crème Cheese Pie!

1 1/2 cups flour
1 stick (4 ounces) margarine
1 stick (4 ounces) butter
3 tablespoons powdered sugar
3/4 cup macadamia nuts (coarsely chopped)
1/3 cup Brazil nuts (coarsely chopped)
1 1/2 cup powdered sugar
2 8-ounce packages cream cheese
1 13-ounce Cool Whip
2 packages instant chocolate pudding
3 cups cold milk

Cream butter, margarine and 3 tablespoons powdered sugar. Add nuts and flour. Press into 9" x 13" pan. Bake 8 to 10 minutes at 425 degrees. Cool.

Leave cream cheese out to soften. Beat 1 1/2 cup powdered sugar and cream cheese until smooth. Add 3/4 of the Cool Whip. Mix thoroughly. Spread onto cooled crust. Refrigerate one or more hours.

Whip chocolate pudding and cold milk until thick. Pour over cooled cream cheese filling. Spread remaining Cool Whip on top. Sprinkle with additional nuts if you wish to garnish.
STIGMA = FEAR
by Martha Giffin  Four A's

In the past three decades of HIV/AIDS, we've seen stigma associated with this disease worse than anything attached to cancer, diabetes or other health concerns. Even now, when education and knowledge of the transmission routes is widespread, fear and stigma can still dictate policy. The following is from January 3, 2000:

WASHINGTON (NYT Syndicate) - The Clinton administration has urged the Supreme Court not to hear an appeal in a discrimination case brought on behalf of hundreds of HIV-positive prisoners in the Alabama prison system, where all inmates with the virus that causes AIDS are barred from educational and recreational programs and even from religious services where they might mix with the general prison population.

If the court takes the administration's advice, it will leave intact a sweeping ruling that bars these inmates from more than 70 programs available to other prisoners, including work-release programs that can shorten their incarceration.

This is just a recent example of national policy being influenced by unreasonable attitudes. The transmission routes for HIV/AIDS are so very specific that it is hard to believe that any real concern exists over the “mixing” of HIV+ inmates with the general population. The reactionary separation of HIV+ inmates from uninfected inmates could set a dangerous trend for separation in other societal institutions. Inmates, like anyone else living in the world today, should be educated on the risk factors and behaviors that cause the spread of HIV/AIDS. The choices and consequences for engaging in the risky behaviors must then be on the individual. There are rarely true victims of AIDS, only bad choices.

The Alaskan AIDS Assistance Association works regularly with the Alaska Department of Corrections on education and support programs. While there is no official separation of HIV+ inmates in this state, the fear of disclosure and head in the sand approach to HIV is prevalent - "if I don't get tested, it won't be a problem." Unfortunately, with HIV/AIDS, what you don't know will kill you, and probably others.

Stop unnecessary fear! You can do your part by getting the facts and educating others. Stay safe!

Upcoming Events:
- AIDS 101 Training: call for days and times @ 263-2050
- Free HIV Testing: call for days and times @ 263-2050
- Every Friday “Friday Lunch” for clients, friends and volunteers Noon @ 4 A’s
community events calendar

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

2000
February
Thursday, 10
IMRU2 Advisory Board, 7:30 p.m. 2521 Banbury Drive (333-0116)

Tuesday 15
IMRU2 Monthly meeting, 7pm, AUUF, 3201 Turnagain St Friday, 25
(A) Identity Potluck, 6:30pm Anchorage Unitarian Universal Fellowship.
Friday, 17
(A) Christmas Celebration Lunch - Four A's 12:00 noon

Ongoing Events

SUNDAYS
(A) Metropolitan Community Church Services, 2pm Sunday at Immanuel Presbyterian Church, 2311 Pembroke
(F) PFLAG, third Sunday, 4-5:30pm, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Hall, 4448 Pike's Landing Road
(A) Northern Exposure bowling league, Park Lanes, 4:00pm 561-8744 for more information
(A) GLSEN, first Sunday, 1pm, AUUF

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

TUESDAYS
(A) Righteous Babes Radio Show, 7pm, KRUA-FM 88.1
(F) GLSEN, 5pm, FEA on S.Cushman, every 3rd Tuesday
(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
(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, AUUF, 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) THE FAMILY, 6pm, Campus Center Room 105.
(A) Identity Fourth Potluck Friday, 6:30pm, AUUF.
(F) Free anonymous HIV testing, 3:30-5:30pm, IAA
community events calendar, continued

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, Marsh 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

DANCIN’
The remaining dates for the 2000 two-step dances are

1st Saturday,
February 5

2nd Saturday,
March 11

1st Saturday,
April 1

First Saturday,
May 6

At the
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