Gay Pride Month

Building Community Through Diversity

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The NorthView continues to seek volunteers to write articles, columns, reviews, and stories, and to help with layout, editing, and distribution.

We hope to serve the community by focusing more on community news, increasing circulation and ad revenue, and continue helping to serve as a community-wide resource.

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Cover: “The faces of our many volunteers” at the Community Center meeting, PrideFest Committee meeting, Gill Foundation meeting, and Identity’s 4th Friday Potluck.

Cover Photos: Victoria Shaver
THE FIRST WORD
by Pete Gregson, Editor

This month is Gay Pride Month! For the first time in many years there will be a Gay Pride parade as part of our celebrations of our pride. In addition, there will be five days of activities and events starting on June 20 including a kick off party, a Rocky Horror Picture Show screening, an appearance by nationally-known comedienne Roxanna Ward, a community potluck, a Tea Dance, a slave auction, the Mr/Mrs/Ms Gay Anchorage Pageant, the parade and a six-hour PrideFest festival on the Parkstrip.

Many people in the larger community do not understand why showing our pride is so important to us. They don’t understand why we feel such a need to march in the streets or to have a festival or to hold special events. Even some GLBT among us don’t understand why we place such emphasis on public displays of pride. For me, it is quite simple really. We put our pride on display because we can.

Identifying as GLBT is tough. It is tough to come out. It is tough to continually have to come out every day. It is tough to be denied the basic rights other Americans take for granted. It is tough being called horrible names and made to feel as if being gay is unnatural and sinful. It is tough having to always be hyper-vigilant about sexuality. It is tough having to live most of the time in a world that refuses to recognize any other reality than the straight reality.

That is why gay pride is an important time for me. There is great strength in numbers, and I feel safe celebrating in the streets with many other gay people. For me, it also an important way to educate the larger community that we exist.

For an entire month (and especially during PrideFest itself), we are able to publicly show Anchorage that we are here and we are queer. Frankly, I’m not as interested in folks getting used to it as I am in being able to celebrate the existence of a large GLBT community in Anchorage. I want to proclaim my pride mostly because so many in our community want me to be silent, closeted, and mainstream.

Already our visibility is on the rise in Anchorage because of Gay Pride. The Anchorage Daily News has run a front-page story on our parade asking why area politicians are not marching with us. They followed up this story with an editorial calling for acceptance of GLBT persons in Anchorage, calling GLBT rights the last struggle for equal rights. The ADN even ran a political cartoon of the Statue of Liberty holding hands with a gay marcher to underscore their views. Our hometown newspaper has publicly come out on our side. And they did so because we choose to celebrate Gay Pride in Anchorage.

There are many people working to make this year’s PrideFest truly remarkable. But there needs to be more volunteers and more people to help spread the word. We need more groups and individuals to march in the parade and more vendors for the Festival Marketplace. We need every single GLBT person and every single one of our allies to fill the streets of Anchorage on June 23. We need to show our strength, to show Anchorage the importance of diversity. We need to have a huge parade. We need you and all those you can bring with you to be there.

Already this event is bringing our community together. Identity and the Imperial Court have joined together as major sponsors of PrideFest. Volunteers on the planning committee represent PFLAG, TLFMC, MCC, YGMA, OPAL, the Family, and other groups. Funding has been provided by The Anchorage Press, Mad Mymas, Mendel and Associates, Gay.com, PlanetOut, ID Lube, Bud Light, Coca-Cola, Carrs/Safeway, Humpys, the NANA Corp, and Snow City. Many others will be vendors or will advertise in our program. We are finding our strength in community and in joining together.

So, show your pride. Check out the web site at www.anchoragepride.com to find out how you can be involved.

Most of all be downtown on June 23 by 11AM. Plan to stay all day to attend the festival following the parade. Be part of our strength. Add your unique voice. Add your pride. We are gay. We are Alaskans. We are one. We are proud.
COLOR BLIND
By Becca (Bearcat) Hart, age 12

I found out two years ago, when I was eleven, that my dad is gay. I felt empty like there was a hole in me when I found out. How could this man I had known all my life be gay? Could my mother just be teasing my father? I denied it for the longest time, until he told me himself. I felt frustrated when he told me himself that he is gay. How could he do this to my family and me? I finally “adjusted” as a therapist would put it.

Enough of my dad, more about me and my experiences as a child of a gay parent. I have lost many friends over my dad being gay and not straight. I have also met so many awesome people I would never have met if my dad was not gay. My friend Tierra told me that she thought higher of my dad, when I told her my dad was gay. Her reason: “He is not scared of who he is. Instead he holds his head high with honor for being himself. He is your dad and my friend.” Then there is Sammie Joe, who thought I was ok to hang out with at church, but not at school. Tamara thought my dad was a jerk for “deciding” to be gay.

Tamara and I were getting into an argument one day, and she yelled loud enough for a group of seventh graders heading out of the lunchroom to hear. “At least my dad isn’t a faggot.” I then left the lunchroom crying hard. I ran to the bathroom. There I bumped into one of my friends, Cara, who had no clue my dad was gay. She just stood there with me until I could tell her what had happened. Cara asked if he was gay, and I told her he was. She then just comforted me, and then told me I should go talk to the seventh grade counselor. I walked out of the bathroom still crying and went to the counselor’s office. She just happened to be teaching a class. I would have to suffer through one class period. I sat through the next period acting just fine. I went to the counselor’s office right after the bell rang. I told her what happened (I started crying again), and then she called my mother and told her that I could go home early. Tamara just got told to stay away from me for a while. I got the lecture of how I brought it upon myself by telling her about my dad.

It is truly sad how our advanced society still doesn’t know how to teach my generation how to accept gay and lesbian individuals. I know that it was well worth learning how to accept homosexuals because in learning that skill I became closer to my father. My new acceptance has helped me in so many ways like I have learned to be “color blind.” Now as soon my generation can learn how to do this, we will all be “Color Blind.”

IDENTITY, INC.’S
FOURTH FRIDAY POTLUCK

All community members and allies are invited to Identity’s Fourth Friday Potluck, held on the fourth Friday of every month, at the Anchorage Unitarian Fellowship. We are a diverse bunch of friendly people, who welcome newcomers. It’s an opportunity to meet new people and eat things you otherwise might not. Please come!

SPECIAL EVENT
AS PART OF THE PRIDEFEST CELEBRATION
THE JUNE POTLUCK WILL BE:
June 22, 2001
6:00 p.m.
UAA Campus Center Pub

We do a periodicals swap at each meeting, bring your old Advocates, Outs, Curves, and other magazines (please- no porno). After you read them, bring them back for more recycling.
As usual, Food Faries can bring canned food and non perishable items to be donated to the 4A’s.

If you have questions, suggestions, or requests for a presenter or program for subsequent potlucks, please send it to Lisa at info@ak.net or call the Identity Helpline at 258-4777
THE LEARNING CURVE
By Victoria Shaver

Last fall, I traded in my economics' books and my backpack for a palm pilot and briefcase, my Birkenstocks for dress shoes, and my locker for a plain gray cubical - without a window. The first thing I put up in my 'o so spacious cubical was a one of my favorite quotes:

Our Deepest Fear

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. You are born to make manifest the glory of God that is within you. It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we're liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

- Attributed to Nelson Mandela
- Also attributed to Marianne Williamson in her book, A Return to Love.

NOTE: If you do not like the use of the word God in this quote - insert "The Universe" or "Higher Power" or your Deity of choice, or just take out the sentences that have God in them all together. That is what I do. You will still see how powerful this quote and how powerful this concept is.

I work in a conservative corporate environment. This quote is one of the most diverse and progressive things in our entire office! Well, besides the other quotes I have in my cubical. Point being, that I am confronted most everyday with the option of using pronouns or staying silent when a comment is made. Having served as a FAMILY leader while at UAA I have heard fellow FAMILY members say that I always have a come back and or always know what to do in such situations. The truth is, I do not. I actually practice and talk about situations I have had, and like most people, I have brilliant "come backs" about two hours after the fact. And I think it is important to talk about this. About the fact that I did not pop out of the womb being able to speak in front of a group or being able to confront homophobia. It is a skill. And like most skills, one needs to practice it or at least talk about it with others. I get ideas and suggestions from other people's experience.

I remember my first Gay volunteer job was being a HelpLine Volunteer. It allowed me to talk and connect with other people, and I learned about the resources in the community. From talking to people, and sharing stories, come backs, memories, and future projections of "Next time I am going to say this or that," I learned how to empower myself.

At the office and in other places in my life, I have bitten my tongue and then raged with anger at my own internalized homophobia. I have looked down or away and instantly hated the feeling that washed over me. Now, more often than not, I speak up. I have learned to respond simply and honestly. For example, I will say, "I am offended. Making a joke about Gay Culture and or Gay people is just as rude and fascist as making a racist remark." People will usually apologize and sometimes a meaningful discussion follows. Either way, I am empowered.

On an obscure weekday sometime last December, I was in the bowels of the office, (i.e., the breakroom, by the coffee/tea cup in hand) making small talk with a few associates. I was asked if I had a boyfriend, and I found myself saying matter of factly "No, I have a girlfriend." A few people were taken by surprise, but most just continued with the conversation asking questions about how long we had been together or how we had met.

I walked back to my little cubical and my eyes fixed on... "And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we're liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

I also work a second job, with youth at risk. One day a youth used the phrase "that is so gay." I asked him why he said this. I explained how I was offended by it and that I was Gay. I told a co-worker (who is also Gay), and she said, "Oh it is not a big deal. They are just kids." I disagree, and I know that from that the relationship has deepened between the youth and me. He is respectful and has not made a homophobic remark in my presence.

WHY should we celebrate Gay Pride? Because.

• Because it is fun!
• Because it connects us.
• Because it connects me.
• Because it affirms my life.
• Because it gives us visibility.
• Because it is part of who I am.
• Because stereotypes still exist.
• Because we affirm our very existence.
• Because GLBT youth need role models.
• Because, "It feels good, like I knew it would!"
• Because society still assumes heterosexuality.
• Because playing small doesn't serve the world.
• Because I still have to stop and ask myself WHY I fear.
• Because we are brilliant, gorgeous, talented, & fabulous!
• Because when we let our own light shine, other people do the same.
• Because I want to hold my partners hand as we walk through the park.
• Because the affirmation and the celebration helps liberate us from fear.
• Because it is still hard to find the GLBT community - due to lack of visibility.
• Because when we're liberated from our own fear, we automatically liberates others."
TWICE THE PRIDE FOR A GAY DAD
By Chuck Hart

O

nly in the last year or two could I say I was proud to be both gay and a father. In 1998, after intensive counseling, I submitted myself, to a friend, to my counselor, and then to my friends and family that I am gay.

I thought myself selfish for wanting children when I obviously wasn’t father material (after all I was secretly gay). I doubted everything I did. I doubted my decision to marry, my motives, my ideas, my reactions, and my ability to care for my children. No one else doubted me. With all that nervousness, I have been a proud father from the day I learned my first baby was on the way. I shared so much about the baby-to-come at work that people ran when they saw a new sonogram picture. I was a proud uncle, but this was even more special.

The day my first daughter, Joy was born, my sister gave birth a few hours later to my nephew Ray in the labor room next door. I beamed with happiness with two new babies (but my Joy was the big ticket). As soon as it was time to attempt sleep on that busy night, the fears of being found out came to camp in my tired mind. Worried I would lose my daughter forever if anyone found out, I planned to stay hidden in the closet until this child graduated from high school. If she hated me after that, I would still have the memories from her childhood. I learned to pass for straight so well that it is second nature today, even after three years being out of the closet. My motive was good, even if the logic was seriously flawed.

Four years later when Becca (Bearcat) was born I felt the same way. I also looked at this innocent, cuddly, beautiful baby girl and thought to myself, “Eighteen more years until I can come out.” I wanted my girls to be out of high school before I turned their worlds upside down and caused them to hate me forever. (If we could harness the destructive draining energy of paranoia, we could protect the world against any threat.)

The girls were planned. We had the surprise of our lives four years later when Beau let us know he would join us shortly. I had a medical proce-

dure in Japan a year after Bearcat was born that was supposed to leave me sterile for life. It didn’t.

After a nightmarish pregnancy, Beau came into our world six weeks before his due date. I was extra nervous with Beau for a long time because he was a he and because of his fragile health for his first four years. Beau was almost six when I came home to Alaska. He had already begun his journey to Michigan with his sisters and mom.

I am so proud of being a father that it becomes difficult to avoid that subject. It is a huge part of who I am. I have fought long and hard to be able to visit and care for my children. Never once have I entertained the thought of giving up my emotionally punishing fight to see them.

I came out to my children in March 1999. They were all devastated. But within two months of telling Becca (11) and Beau (7), I was able to see them again. Joy wanted nothing to do with me for months. Eventually, one by one, they reached out to me on their own. Each time one of them let me back into their world, it was as if they had given me a reprieve. My heart sang as Becca, Beau, and eventually Joy came back to me. Their journey back to me was in stages and is not over yet.

Becca is the first to come all the way back to me. She has had a rough winter and has been in treatment at a residential facility in Anchorage since November 2000. Becca has worked through a lot of difficult problems, and we are expecting her to be released the day this issue comes out. I have spent my winter visiting Becca five or more times per week. We have rebounded. She wants anything rainbow (hats, necklaces, stickers, etc.). She loves my lesbian, gay, and trans friends, and even asks to go to identity’s Fourth Friday Potlucks.

Joy and I talk a lot, and she has a magic tear switch that she hits me with in every call and every time I get to see her (happy tears). Joy will graduate from Homer High School in May 2001. She lives with my parents so that she could keep her seat on the Kenai Peninsula School Board. I saw her last meeting in Seward on May 7th. She has come a long way to reach me, and she...
What better month than June and Gay Pride to claim or even reclaim and celebrate the diversities of our spirituality? Being spiritual can be radically different from being religious. Spirituality implies a personal connection with something greater than ourselves, whether we call that something God, Goddess, Spirit, the Universe, the Tao, Allah, Buddha, Higher Power, Higher Self, or one of the countless other names used by people all over the world. Religion, to many in our community, smacks of social and historical manipulation and the abuse of power and wealth. It reeks of politics and lies.

Amazingly, though, there is much historical evidence, especially before the rise of the patriarchy, that GLBT folks formed an intrinsic part of religious structures, often assuming roles of spiritual leadership. That was one of our functions in early tribal societies and among indigenous peoples, even up to the present. It is time for us to educate ourselves about those traditions, reclaim our innate right to spiritual experience, and reinvent its expression.

Each and every one of us holds within him or her an indescribable potential, and our community as a whole contains vast, untapped spiritual resources. As the forces of freedom and oppression and of love and fear continue to polarize the world, it becomes imperative that we understand who we are and how we want to be spiritually. Who are we? What are we here for on this planet? What contributions are we here to make?

Some of us have rejected our inherent spiritual natures along with the religious traditions we felt forced to abandon in order to accept our sexual nature. So just how do we go about reclaiming our spiritual natures? Looking back throughout history and attempting to determine who we have been and what roles we have played is the first step in discovering who we are as GLBT spiritual folks. Christian de la Huerta, in his book, Coming Out Spiritually, distills and synthesizes roles of 'spiritual functions' that gay people have fulfilled for millennia.

We have served as "catalytic transformers," acting as agents of change, helping to bring about reform, inciting social movements, and supporting the advancement of humanity. As Jesus of my Christian tradition exemplified, the role of spiritual teacher sometimes involves bringing down the "sword of truth" and smashing ignorance, lies, injustice, and social conditioning. Just a brief review of recent history shows an appreciation of how involved GLBT folks have been as catalysts for social evolution. How, you may wonder, is social activism classified as a spiritual role? Social activists often propel the evolution of humanity toward a more enlightened, evolved, and compassionate way of being. My personal decision to stay inside my Christian tradition puts me in this role of catalytic transformer within the structure of an organized religion.

We often "reflect diversity," holding up a mirror so that in its reflection society can better see itself. Author Judy Grahn believes that society does in fact use us for this purpose: "We are closely watched to see what constitutes the limit of a thing ... we are essential to them (society) knowing who they are." Having "outside status" gives us the necessary distance to see the bigger picture and help society determine its limits and boundaries.

Our spirit of humor and youthfulness that often brings entertainment, sustenance and a refreshing sense of joy to the world is another role. We are the "sacred clowns" who teach the world about not taking life, or ourselves, too seriously.

Throughout history, we have been responsible for creating, promoting, and supporting much of the world's art and beauty, and have done so disproportionately to our numbers. We are "keepers of beauty" in our artistic pursuits - attempts to give expression to a need deep inside humans to reach higher, to capture the ethereal essence, and to express the indescribable nature of the sacred.

We have also fulfilled the function of healers, teachers, and caregivers of all types. We are the shamans and priests, the guardians of the gates, the mediators throughout history who 'go between' the genders as well as between the physical and spiritual realms. We have an incredible spiritual heritage.

Whether we stay in a more traditional religion, or launch off in search of meaning through less tamed paths, it is crucial that we develop our own sense of spirituality, our own connection with the "divine." Regardless of which path or paths we choose, inner work - developing or deepening our connection to ourselves and to the divine - is crucial to our spiritual health and growth. In spirituality - as with most everything else - without conscious effort little progress will be made.

Next Month: "Coming IN and Coming OUT Spiritually"
A PRIDE OF LIONS
By Brian Ridder

Someone once asked me, “Don’t you hate those My Kid Made The Honor Roll bumper stickers?”

“No,” I said, “it’s the honor roll I don’t like. If my kid came home with one of those stickers, I would put it on the mini-van.”

I am one of the lucky whose parents have said time and again how proud they are of me. Pride is complex. It is the sense of one’s proper dignity or value, sometimes known as self-respect. It is also the pleasure taken in achievement, possession, or association. It is a certain kind of arrogance. It is the best of a group or class. And it is also what we call a group of lions.

I frequently tell the people in my life when I am proud of them.

Most get this puzzled, distant look on their face. Few know just how to respond. No response is necessary, really, because for me pride is not a selfish emotion. It is a compliment. It is my way of saying, “Good for you.”

In an era of sophisticated posturing and an ever-present “too-cool-for-school” mentality, pride has had to fight for survival. Along with fear, vulnerability, and embarrassment, we have also relegated joy, silliness, and pride to that which “dare not speak its name.” Homosexuality, of course, has been on that list for centuries.

Pride, it seems, is either reserved for parents or patriotism. Outside of that, it is considered excessive. It is the, “I have no problem being gay, but I don’t have to go around flaunting it,” routine. It is the object of ridicule stuck to a bumper sticker owned by a person whose child only wanted to be recognized for working hard in school. And it is the affirmation that it is good to be me.

But it is really better to be someone else, isn’t it? That woman who just won the lottery, for instance, or the guy with the beautiful body selling underwear. We are more comfortable celebrating what we don’t have:

“Dude! Great car.”
“I wish I had hair like that.”

Why it is that some people seem to have the lion’s share of good fortune? More often than not, it’s because we gave it to them. Fame, for example, is not its own accomplishment. Like pride, it is also a kind of compliment.

It is a question of ownership. We don’t express pride unless we feel somehow responsible. We lionize those whose CD we just bought, or applaud a national victory based on our citizenship. We are proud of our children precisely because they are ours.

My parents were not the type to showcase their children. They were not proud of us for doing what they wanted, or because we did as they thought we should. On the contrary, my sister and I embarrassed them more times than can be remembered. My mother was not proud of me when I gave that nice couple the bird, but she was when we saw them again, and I apologized.

For my parents pride was, and is, about struggling through a difficult world and doing your best to grow despite the hardships. For me, pride is not a selfish emotion. I do not tell my friends that I am proud of them because it reflects favorably on me. I tell them I am proud because it reflects favorably on them. In other words, I am not proud of Rosa Parks for staying on that bus because she did it for my people. I am proud of her because she did it for all people.

I do not celebrate Gay Pride only because I am gay, but also because you are gay. It’s my way of saying, “Good for you.” Together, then, there is Us - noble and lion-hearted.
PRIDE, continued from page 6

had the farthest to go. She has promised me an article for the NorthView for June. This will be a giant step for Joy. Joy and I have a terrific relationship, but Joy is still a fundamentalist Christian and rock solid in her faith, but now she is reading her Bible much more carefully. She has also been struck by the differences in her fellow church members’ Talk and Walk.

Becca wrote an article for this issue of the NorthView. Becca is the biggest little ally in Anchorage. She is truly passionate about fighting discrimination and homophobic remarks although she has never liked to see anyone picked on.

Beau is nine years now old and doesn’t really think too much about dad’s gay thing, but most nine-year-olds don’t think about such things. We have lively conversations over the telephone, and he is doing well in Ohio. Beau has severe learning disabilities, and as a result has not yet learned to read or write. We can not use the Internet. He misses me, and I miss him.

I am gay. That is my other major source of identity. I am proud of being gay. I am proud of finally being able to break out of the closet. I have a wonderful counselor, Gaby, and several friends to thank for helping me take cautious steps out of the closet until I had the strength to boldly leave that prison of forty-one years behind. Now, life is so free. I know that I can make a difference in my world. I have so much more control over my life. I have so much more control over my life since the coming out of February of 1996. I am a lot less paranoid now that the worst thing in the world (being found out) can’t happen because I am out, found or not.

I am proud to have the courage to stand up for my rights. I am proud to help others out of their closets at a pace that they are comfortable with. I am proud that I was able to take the first steps out of the closet on my own. I will be eternally grateful to my friends Art, Gordon, Ken, Sylvia, Howard, Gary, D.J., Kevin, Ronda, Robin, and Jim for their help and advice in my first twelve months out and beyond. I am especially proud that I will have Beau and Bearcat to walk with me in the PrideFest Parade this year. Family Pride in every sense of the words.

I also used the Internet for support and advise. I joined DadMail whose members are all gay dads or gay and considering fatherhood. I asked questions from the library computer and get very sound advice from other gay dads who had been through what I was facing. As I gained experience, I was able to help other more newly out gay fathers.

In February 2000 an anonymous poem was circulated on the DadMail list serv that sums up my pride in being gay. While it came off the DadMail list serv it applies to anyone gay, parent or not. When my aunt read this poem along with a letter telling her that I am gay (by e-mail) she replied, “Thank you for loving me enough to share this with me.” If anyone knows the identity of the poet, please let me know.

Voice Your Pride

Why do I have to tell you I am gay? Why can’t I just be quiet about it?

This, I hope, will explain why I don’t want to shut up about it...

I want to tell you I am Gay because:
I am fed up of hiding,
Bored of lying,
Annoyed of pretending,
Tired of sidestepping,
Drained of guilt and fear barricading me from you,

I need to tell you I am Gay because:
I like you and I value our relationship
And I am not at ease with a relationship based upon deceit

I need to tell you I am Gay because:
I want to be a positive and confident role model —
I want to counteract the offensive stereotypes that has plagued our community
And provide you with a gay person you can have pride in knowing

I need to tell you I am Gay because:
I want to be able to share my life with you
I don’t want to have to lie and say I was with a woman over the weekend
I don’t want to have separate bedrooms
And call the person I love my “roommate”

I need to tell you I am gay because

It has taken a long time to get to this place
Where I can share with you who I am
And I hope that you

Like me enough to stay in my life
For it would hurt me greatly
to sacrifice our friendship.
But if you can’t stay I will know that
You NEVER REALLY LOVED me
And to be honest
I will be better off without you.

“Coming out” takes many of us a very long time
It is a highway of much pain, agony, fear, sadness,
and anguish
However once we gain and win our own acceptance
and come to terms
With who we are....

Our lives can be full, prosperous, euphoric,
And fulfilled with awesome, loving people both gay
and straight.

Like a butterfly emerging from a cocoon
We can find our beauty and fly!

■ Anonymous

Chuck Hart is a single full time student at UAA, and father of two daughters, aged seventeen and thirteen, and a son, aged nine. Chuck is also a member of Identity’s Board of Directors. Contact Chuck with your comments at chuck838792hart@yahoo.com.
CONNECTING THE DOTS
by Trang Duong

Pride Kaleidoscopes

What I want to know is why are we proud to be lesbian, gay, bi or trans one month out of the year? Why not every month, every single day of the week, every moment of our lives? Of course, we acknowledge our pride as LGBT folks most of the time, not just in June. And I like the very public display of pride that "comes out" in June, the larger-than-life show-and-tell of our lives and our subculture that celebrates us all.

I would even go a step further and say that we could celebrate our whole-ness, the many facets of who we are. Often, we are pegged into the hole of being LGBT, without recognizing that we have full lives with many roles and dimensions. We are more than LGBT people. We are friends, lovers, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, daughters, and sons. We have our careers, our jobs, our educational pursuits, our future plans. We forget sometimes that we are like the kaleidoscopes we used to play with when we were kids. The tube itself was interesting if covered with a pretty fabric or was as boring as black plastic. But once we looked inside, we saw the multitude of colors, of shapes. Then we turned the tube and spun the shapes and colors into a rainbow of light and shadow. Who knew that such a beautiful world existed inside?

We are like that kaleidoscope, but we often forget to look within and see our many colors and shapes that make up who we are. The interplay of these things - our history, our backgrounds, our personalities, our families and friends, and so much more - mold us into a unique individual and remind us that there are many parts to the whole.

Let's take me for example. I'm proud to be a lesbian woman. I was 22 years old when I fell in love with my friend, an out lesbian. She later became my first girlfriend. When I came out, I felt like I was coming home. I felt so right, so clear to me that I loved women as friends, as lovers, as partners in life. But being a lesbian is only one part of the whole me known as Trang.

I'm proud to have a vagina. I'm proud to be a woman. My parents were disappointed that I was a girl, the first-born child. I grew up with that ugly truth, yet I have never wavered from the sense that I feel right in my skin as a woman. A person's gender colors their entire life, from the way they use the bathroom, to how they are paid in the workforce, to the expectations that society has for them. It hasn't always been easy, but being a woman is a deep, essential part of who I am.

I'm proud to be Asian American, of Vietnamese descent. I didn't always feel this way. In fact, growing up in the suburbs of California, I actually thought I was white. I was an invariable "Twinkie." It was internalized racism that made me long desperately to not be Asian. I refused to speak Vietnamese, and I could barely stand my relatives. What I wanted most of all was to be accepted. Of course, this didn't happen until much later, when I learned to accept myself. Now I appreciate how growing up in an Asian family has shaped my views on relationships, on race relations, on the importance of roots.When I went back to Vietnam in 1995, after having left 20 years before, my grandfather told me that I wasn't Vietnamese, that I was American. He didn't mean to hurt my feelings, but I felt bruised, that I didn't belong. I realize now that being Vietnamese-American is the melding of two worlds. I've learned to take the "best" of each of those worlds and make them into a unique slice of who I am.

We are all unique, beautiful beings with the deep knowledge that we consist of many parts of an astounding whole. Our round, voluptuous shapes cannot and will not be forced into the square holes that restrict us and try to control us. We need only reach out and turn the kaleidoscope to remember that all the pieces fit to spell out our pride. 

The NorthView Needs You

The NorthView is seeking artists to submit drawings and original cover art as well as submissions of illustrations and comic strips. Writers are asked to submit original fiction or poetry or to write for the May issue's theme of "Equality.

Submit!
(by the 10th of each month for the next month's issue)
Please submit work electronically to:
gregsonpete@hotmail.com
or
Identity@alaska.net

Gratitude

n: 1 the state of being grateful: 2 a feeling of thankfulness and appreciation
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IDENTITY PRESENTS
PRIDEFEST 2001

Under the Midnight Sun

June 20 - 24
Celebrating Diversity Parade
June 23, 11:00 AM
Marchers, Floats, Entertainers, and More

PrideFest Festival on the Parkstrip
Saturday, June 23 12:00 – 6:00 PM
Local Entertainers, Vendors, Food, Games, and More

Look for more exciting events throughout the week
Visit our website at anchoragepride.com for more information

Don’t Miss the Excitement!

Co-Sponsored by: Parents-Friends of Lesbians and Gays, The Imperial Court of All Alaska, The Last Frontier Men’s Club, and Metropolitan Community Church

WWW.ANCHORAGEPRIDE.COM
JUNE 20-24, 2001

EVENTS SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20, 2001

PrideFest Reception - Loussac Library. First Floor reception room, 6PM. Sponsored by Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) and the Metropolitan Community Church-Lamb of God Congregation (MCC-LOG). Reception for viewing of the Pride Month Display at Loussac Library, Third Floor. Display to run all month. Reception and display are free to the public.

PrideFest Kickoff Party - The Raven, 8PM. The Summer of Midnight Sun Party on the Patio, BBQ, entertainment, and more. The official kickoff party. Not to be missed. Free food. Look for PrideFest information and merchandise at the party.

THURSDAY, JUNE 21, 2001

“Rocky Horror Picture Show” - Mad Mynas, 8PM. Mr. Alaska Leather in conjunction with The Last Frontier Men’s Club (TLFMC) presents the eternal gay classic. The price is $7.50 and a prize will be given for the best costume of any character from the movie. Props for sale at the event. PrideFest information and merchandise at the event. “Let’s do the Time Warp again.”

FRIDAY, JUNE 22, 2001

Community Potluck - UAA Campus Center Pub. 6PM. Sponsored by UAA’s The Family and the PrideFest Committee. Special guest speaker. Please bring a dish to share if possible. All ages welcome. PrideFest information and merchandise at the event.

Roxanna Ward - UAA Arts 120, 8PM. Nationally-known comedienne/cabaret singer Roxanna Ward is the headline entertainer for PrideFest and will be featured in a one-night only show. She is brought to Anchorage by the PrideFest Committee in conjunction with BreakEven Productions and with help from UAA’s The Family. Tickets are $15 in advance and $18 at the door and are on sale at Stonewall’s and Metro. Get your tickets soon as this show will sell out!

SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 2001

Celebrating Diversity Parade - Downtown Anchorage on Fifth Avenue. Underwritten by The Imperial Court of All Alaska. 11AM. Parade Marshals are Katie Hurley and Arliss Sturgulewski. Parade will feature marchers, floats, and groups that represent the diversity of Anchorage. All GLBT persons and their allies should attend the parade. Free to the public. All ages.

PrideFest Festival on the Parkstrip - Flagpole at the Parkstrip. Noon until 6PM. Includes the Main Stage with six hours of speakers and entertainers, a large vendor’s court, a family court, food, games, and more. Fun for the entire family. Free to the public. Entertainment schedule can be found in the official PrideFest program on sale starting June 15.

“Slave” Auction and Strip Show - Mad Mynas. 8PM. $5 cover at the door. Come to Mynas to bid on the talents of your favorite people in Anchorage and to enjoy male and female exotic performers. Proceeds to benefit the Anchorage Gay and Lesbian Community Center and another worthy cause.

SUNDAY, JUNE 24, 2001

MCC Pride Service - Metropolitan Community Church, 2PM. Join Pastor Jan Richardson for a special Pride worship service. Open to people of all faiths and beliefs.

The Apollo Tea Dance - Jass Alley. Downtown at Fifth and I. Sponsored by Anchorage Young Gay Men’s Association (YGMA). $5 tickets in advance at Stonewall’s and at the PrideFest Festival. $7 at the door. Come celebrate the God of the Sun at a special Tea Dance. Special Guest DJ and light refreshments. Prize for the best sun-themed costume. All ages. ID required.

Mr./Ms./Mrs. Gay Anchorage Contest - Mad Mynas. 6PM Doors. 7PM Show. Hosted by ICOAA and Mr. Gay Alaska Bill Skitt and Mrs. Gay Alaska Sabrina Perez. Contestants will vie for the honor of the titles of Mr./Ms./Mrs. Gay Alaska.

WWW.ANCHORAGEPRIDE.COM
JUNE 20-24, 2001
EVENTS SCHEDULE

Celebrating Diversity Parade
June 23, 11:00 AM, Downtown Anchorage.

The Celebrating Diversity Parade, underwritten by The Imperial Court of All Alaska, is the first GLBT Pride Parade to be held in many years. The parade starts at 11AM. Lineup for parade entries and marchers is 10:00 AM at 7th and E. Individual Marchers should report to Parade Chair Dan Carter. Groups and floats must have a completed parade application on file and must pay a fee.

The parade route will start at 7th and E and will go down 5th to K and turn down K into the Parkstrip. Floats and marching contingents will include Identity, The Imperial Court of All Alaska, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, MCC, Mad Mynas, The Last Frontier Men's Club, Young Gay Men's Association, ICOAA Emperor and Empress, Ms. Alaska Leather, Alaskans for Choice, 4-As, Alaskan Klingon Club, People of Faith, and more. Individuals are encouraged to march with homemade signs in memory of those lost to AIDS or hate crimes or to express their personal pride. Awards will be given in several categories.

Parade Marshals for the 2001 Parade will be Katie Hurley and Arliss Sturgulewski. Katie Hurley was Chief of Staff to Territorial Governor Ernest Gruening, Chief Clerk to the Constitutional Convention, and she later served as a member of the House of Representatives, as a candidate for Lt. Governor, and has served as a leader and active member of the Alaska Democratic Party.

Arliss Sturgulewski was elected to serve on the Alaska State Senate from 1978 through 1992 and was the Republican candidate for governor of Alaska in 1986 and 1990. She is an active leader in the Alaska Republican Party.

It is vital that all GLBT persons and their allies in Anchorage turn out for the parade as participants or as spectators. We want to show Anchorage that we are a vibrant and significant part of the community.

PrideFest Festival
Saturday, June 23 Noon until 6PM.

The PrideFest Festival will be a six-hour extravaganza that should not be missed. The Festival will take place on the Delaney Parkstrip between I and J at the flagpole. The festival grounds will include a large Main Stage with six hours of entertainment, a vendor's court, a family area, and food vendors.

Entertainment for PrideFest 2001 is a showcase of Anchorage talent. Entertainers will include Lisa Parker, Kristara, Kevin Holts, Coby, Frankie with Robin and Steve, Colleen Codic, Eve, Ellen Foreman, Local Hoax, Delores Catherino, Frank Tano, and many more. Emcees include Trang Duong, Kristara, Frankie Mabry, and Victoria Shaver. Speakers will include a diverse group of Anchorage GLBT community members and allies. Look for the full lineup of entertainers in the official PrideFest Program on sale June 15th. Entertainers will need to check in with Entertainment Chairs Frankie, Victoria, or Kristara, thirty minutes prior to their scheduled performance time. A completed entertainer application needs to be on file for all entertainers.

The PrideFest Marketplace is expanded this year and vendors will include A&L Enterprises, A.W.A.I.C., Amnesty International, Mad Mynas's, PFLAG-Anchorange, Radical Arts for Women (RAW), S.T.O.P. AIDS Project, Stonewall'd, The Last Frontier Men's Club, Young Gay Men's Association (YGMA), S.T.A.R., 4-As, ICOAA, Pride Jewelry, Half Moon Creek, and more. Vendors will need to check in with Vendors Chair Michael French no later than 11 AM. All vendors will need to have a completed application on file and will need to pay a fee.

The PrideFest committee will be selling programs, T-shirts, and mini rainbow flags.

Festival attendees are encouraged to bring a picnic, blankets, lawn chairs, rainbow flags, and all of their friends. Please stay all six hours and enjoy the sun (hopefully), the fellowship, and the entertainment.

WWW.ANCHORAGEPRIDE.COM
Volunteers Needed for PrideFest

We need many volunteers on June 23 and the weeks before to help make PrideFest a success. People are needed for the following tasks:

Staff for merchandise and information tables at the bars on the nights of June 8-9, June 15-16 at events June 20-22
Staff for merchandise and info table at the Festival on June 23. One hour shifts.
Parade and Festival Security on June 23 from 10AM to 6PM. One hour shifts.
Festival set-up and breakdown on June 23 from 8AM to 10AM and from 6PM to 8PM
Staff for the Family Park on June 23 from noon until 6PM. One hour shifts. Face painting, carnival games, etc.
Poster and flyer distribution, especially June 18-22
Sell raffle tickets at events, the bars, and anywhere else
Solicit raffle donations June 1-June 10
Gophers for special tasks on June 23

If you want to volunteer contact info@anchoragepride.com or call 258-4777.

Even if you can’t volunteer you will help our cause just by showing up at the parade and festival.

Thanks to our sponsors

PrideFest would not happen without the support of many community sponsors. Sponsors include Title sponsors Identity and The Imperial Court of All Alaska. Thanks to the Board of Directors for both organizations and for their support of PrideFest.

The Anchorage Press, Mad Myrrnas, Mendel and Associates, Bud Light, Gay.com, PlanetOut, and ID Lube are our other major donors for PrideFest. Thanks so much to them.

Other donors include The Last Frontier Men’s Club, PFLAG, Coca-Cola, Nana Corporation, Carrs/Safeway, New NW Broadcasters, Snow City Café, MCC, and Humpys.

Thanks to our Volunteers

Identity would like to thank the steering committee for PrideFest 2001. This committed group of individuals have spent thousands of volunteer hours making Anchorage PrideFest 2001 happen. Their thanks go to:

Jim Mohr-Chair
Dan Carter-Parade Chair
Michael French-Vendor and Marketplace Chair
Pete Gregson-Communications Chair/Sponsors Chair
Frankie Mabry, Victoria Shaver, Kristara-Entertainment Chairs
Jan Richardson and Jane Schlittler-Library Display
Tom Rachel, Norm Schlittler, Cass Miller, Rick Wright-Steering Committee

Thanks to our many other volunteers who have and will make PrideFest happen. Your help is greatly appreciated.
Macadamia Nut and Coconut Tart
from Emeril Lagasse

2 CUPS MACADAMIA NUTS
1 (10-INCH) PIE CRUST
1 CUP SHREDDED COCONUT FLAKES
4 EGGS
1/2 CUP SUGAR
1/2 CUP (PACKED) LIGHT BROWN SUGAR
1 CUP LIGHT CORN SYRUP
1/2 TEASPOON PURE VANILLA EXTRACT
1/8 TEASPOON SALT
4 TABLESPOONS BUTTER, MELTED
1 TABLESPOON FLOUR
8 SCOOPS OF VANILLA ICE CREAM

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Place the nuts on a baking sheet and toast until golden, about 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and cool completely. Using a sharp knife, roughly chop the nuts. Line a 10-inch tart pan with pastry. Sprinkle the nuts and coconut over the pastry. In a mixing bowl, beat the eggs. Combine the sugar, brown sugar, corn syrup, vanilla, salt, butter and flour. Mix well. Pour the mixture over the macadamia nuts and coconut. Place in the oven on sheet tray and bake for about 45 to 50 minutes, or until the filling sets. Remove from the oven and cool completely. Serve each piece of pie with a scoop of ice cream.

YIELD: 8 SERVINGS

IN THE BOOK STORE
A BOOK REVIEW COLUMN
by Geoffrey Stewart

I have always been a book fiend. I usually have at least one or two books with me at all times, and I am usually reading at least two at a time. This combined with the fact that I am working at a book store and need to get off my volunteer butt and write something for the Northview made a book review column a natural. Now being that this column appears in the newsletter of a gay community organization, you might expect that each and every book reviewed will relate to the gay community or have a significant gay character. Sorry! I am afraid I am one of those queer heretics who, while an out and proud homosexual, doesn't feel the need to have everything I say, do, read, watch, wear, listen to, and have sitting around my house emphasize or involve my queerness.

So although I will usually have a book or two with a gay focus or theme, I have to paraphrase Gertrude Stein.

"A book, is a book, is a book." - And this is a book review column.

CHOCOLAT
by Joanne Harris
ISBN# 014100018X

The story of this book, basis for the popular film of the same name, begins when Vianne Rocher moves into the town of Lansquenet just after Carnival and opens a chocolate shop in the town square during Lent. Pere Reynaud, the village Priest, objects to this and later opposes her Chocolate Festival planned for Easter Sunday. The conflict between these two provides a line for the conservative and bohemian souls of the town to align themselves along through out all the events that follow. These events include the persecution of visiting gypsies by some of the townsfolk, the evolution and escape away from her husband of a battered wife, and the changes in the lives of many other townsfolk as a result of the addition of Vianne to the 'recipe' of their town.

I like how Harris alternated her protagonist from chapter to chapter between Pere Reynaud, and Vianne. At first, we only access their immediate thoughts and surface memories, but as the novel moves towards its unique climax, we gain more access to the deeper thoughts and memories of these two intricate people. Of course, the fact that they both keep secrets and dark episodes in their pasts doesn't hurt the dramatic conflicts.

I would eagerly recommend this book to anyone looking for a pleasant weekend read.į

NorthView
A Tale of Two Clubs

My partner and I recently had the pleasure of spending a few days in Portland, Oregon, following a business trip. We saw a couple drag shows, learned a little about our comfort zones, and experienced an unexpected sense of gay pride in the company of Portland’s diverse queer community.

It took some on-line sleuthing to find the gay clubs in Portland. Since we’d heard clubs in some cities are either all-men or women-only, we phoned ahead to make sure they were open to both genders. As a straight-appearing couple, we also needed to be sure they were “straight-friendly,” since that’s how we’re sometimes read.

I phoned Darcelles and was told it’s an open club specializing in cabaret-style drag shows attended by both gays and straights. So we went. We enjoyed the show, but couldn’t help noticing the crowd was mostly straight people out for a night of entertainment. Darcelles is a great host who makes sure her guests have a wonderful time, but the evening was a little flat. We didn’t expect to spend an evening in a gay club surrounded by straight people. Heterophobia maybe?

The second club we visited was Embers. When I phoned ahead, I explained we were a lesbian/trans couple visiting Portland, and we wanted to see a good drag show in an open club. The sweet-voiced young man who answered the phone told me Embers was perfect for us. He said the club was frequented by both men and women, gays and straights, transsexuals, transvestites, drag queens, drag kings, and everyone in between. Danny and I had found our Fruit Bowl.

We arrived early to get a good table. As the club began to fill up, we felt more and more at home. The diverse crowd did indeed include all the colorful folk the young man had mentioned and a few more. Danny met another transsexual man and they talked transition while I people watched at this colorful gay oasis in the heart of Portland.

Then the show began: tall, proud divas in their Saturday night best strutting their stuff for an appreciative crowd. A young James Dean-like drag king vowed the women in the audience. Another drag king proved tuxedos are really meant for women. There was even a Little Person, who strutted and swaggered and proved testosterone sometimes comes in small packages.

We applauded, laughed, whistled and cooed, oohed and aahed, and of course tipped the hard-working men and women who so thoroughly entertained us. THIS was the show we’d hoped to find. Sitting there amid gays and lesbians, transsexuals and transvestites, and even a few progressive straights, we felt comfortable and happy. And something else. We felt pride at belonging to a huge circle of queer folk, even in a city where we knew no one.

Towards the end of the show, I went to the bathroom. While I waited in the long line outside the women’s room, an attractive transvestite joined my sweeterie at our table. Danny is a charmer but he was out of his league with this particular lady. Apparently, she wanted to rock his world and was only slightly discouraged by the fact that he was in a monogamous relationship.

I knew none of this when I returned from the bathroom to find the tall, sequin-gowned diva at my table. I admired her jewelry, and she told me she was a fifth-grade teacher and that her former partner was also named Danny. Then she said good-bye to my Danny and went on stage for her next number. My sweeterie and I looked at each other and smiled—we definitely weren’t in Kansas anymore.

A couple days later we returned to Anchorage with great memories of our weekend in Portland and with the knowledge that wherever you go, there’s no space like queer space. It’s a big Fruit Bowl out there and we’re proud to belong.
THE REUNION, PART II
by Jen Kohout

When I arrive at the hockey field on the second day of the Women Athletes Reunion weekend, the 2001 Duke field hockey team is warming up for a scrimmage against Wake Forest. Field hockey is in the fall, but the University has arranged an off-season game so that former players like myself can realize just how slow we've gotten since graduation. The grass field is now covered in Astroturf and as a result, the game is faster than I remember. Was I ever that quick? That agile? If I've learned anything from my older compatriots back in Alaska, it's that age is a state of mind. I'm continually inspired by the enthusiasm and passion with which they live their lives. Most of the time I successfully incorporate their life-affirming attitudes into my own aging process. Then I find myself in a tiny fluorescent-lit changing room watching a woman with large pale thighs trying to squeeze into a new swimming suit, and I'm repulsed. Age, I decide, looks just fine on everyone else but myself.

The Duke team finishes its warm-up and the players jog off to the sidelines for water and Gatorade. With eleven players per side, a generous-sized field, and a constant flow of play, field hockey is similar to soccer. The main difference is that players use a waist-high, slightly curved stick to advance the ball. The result is twenty-two people, running at high speed, while swinging heavy wooden clubs. Turns out that in addition to being faster when I was twenty-two, I was also braver. Of course, it's easier to be brave when you're still covered by your parents' health insurance.

None of my field hockey teammates have arrived yet, so I find a shady spot on a small rise at the end of the field and sit in the grass. This place is a touchstone for me. The field, the bleachers, the towering oak behind me are so familiar that they give off an aura of timelessness. For a person who usually associates the passage of time with breakneck speed, this is a foreign sensation. It leaves me acutely aware of how much I've changed in the past fifteen years and how much I haven't.

When I was in college, playing hockey was how I defined myself. I didn't have a clue what I was going to do with my life, but I knew that I was a Duke field hockey player with a mean tackle. On game days, when I walked across campus decked out in my royal blue team sweats, my awkward adolescent shuffle was replaced with long, confident steps. After fifteen years, that self-conscious shuffle still resurfaces occasionally, but the self-image has diversified to incorporate a wider and deeper understanding of who I am.

Down on the field, the two teams line up to start the game. I glance at the bleachers and realize that several of my fellow teammates have arrived, straggling in from their hotels. It's a warm day, even by North Carolina standards, and I'm reluctant to abandon the shady hill for a sun-baked bleacher. I'm also struggling with reunion-induced anxiety. "Come on, Kohout, get moving," I tell myself, "you haven't flown 2000 miles for the weekend to sit here the entire time reconnected with a piece of Astroturf."

As I approach the bleachers, I smile and wave. Barb and Kathy are huddled over a scrapbook while their husbands talk about sports or all-season tires or some other guy-thing. I find it interesting that most of my teammates have brought their husbands with them as if to illustrate the progression of their lives. My partner stayed home. In fact, it didn't even cross my mind to ask Karen if she wanted to go until the evening before I left, when a friend who had stopped by to return a book inquired why Karen wasn't accompanying me. Karen's answer, "I wasn't invited" was followed by an awkward pause until Karen eventually smiled and added "...but I really wasn't interested." The pause was quite effective, and I made a mental note to be a bit more direct the next time.

Washing dishes later that evening, I wondered why I hadn't invited Karen. Internalized homophobia? I suppose on some level, I knew that going by myself would be easier. No awkward introductions required. But that wasn't all of it. Truth was, I didn't invite Karen because I needed to go alone. My feelings about college were ambivalent at best. Intellectually, I knew that I couldn't change the past, but I still wanted to. I wanted my memories of college to be those of someone who had been comfortable with herself and at peace with the world. Since wrestling with ghosts was best done alone, I'd opted for a solo trip.

The hockey game is over and I'm standing in line at the Durham Ben & Jerry's salivating over rows of multicolored ice cream containers. Kathy, Barb, and the others have headed back to their hotels to shower in preparation for our team dinner later this evening. I'll soon rejoin them, but when I spot a neon cow sign on my way to the car, I opt for a detour. I've earned a couple of scoops. My teammates and I spent the rest of the game looking at faded color pictures and laughing at familiar stories. Then afterwards we grabbed sticks, lined up with other alumni from the 1980's and took on

See REUNION, continued page 20
THE FACE
A woman with a lot of Soul!
Interview: Behind the Face of Kristara & In the Life of Kris
By: Victoria Shaver

On Growing Up

NorthView: Where did you grow up?
Kristara: The Philippines until I was 15, and then I came to the US.

NorthView: Tell me about your family.
Kristara: My dad was in the military as were my brothers. My mom was a businesswoman. We were well off and had maids, and they helped raise me too. We were close. My family was and still is protective.

NorthView: As a child, what adult were you closest to?
Kristara: As a child I was very close to my mother - I have always looked up to her as my role model.

NorthView: What was your relationship with your mother like?
Kristara: My mother and I were very close. She died when I was 15.

NorthView: You mentioned brothers. Do you also have sisters?
Kristara: Yes. I have two sisters and four brothers. I am the youngest, the baby of the family. So I was an Empress and a queen from early on! (We laugh).

NorthView: You said your brothers were in the military. Did you ever consider going into the military?
Kristara: No, they (family) did not let me be in the military because they were afraid I would get hurt. As you can tell by now, I was very sheltered and protected as a kid. I was also very lucky to come from such a good home with loving and accepting parents.

NorthView: What was school like in the Philippines?
Kristara: I actually went to a private boarding school.

NorthView: When did you start the boarding school? And did you like it?
Kristara: I first went to the and may I add, ALL-BOY boarding school when I was eleven years old. I wanted to go to the school.

NorthView: Why?
Kristara: Girl, I was going to school to be a priest! But more than that, I wanted to go because it was prestigious and private, and - of course - I was a girl, an all-boys school!

NorthView: So were you raised Catholic?
Kristara: Yes, Catholic! And very, very!

NorthView: So how did you get to Alaska?
Kristara: Via Japan Airlines (Laughter). My sister was already up here. I came to live with her after my mother died.

NorthView: How did your life change?
Kristara: Well, everything happened at once. My mom died, a major move to another country, and I had to learn how to do laundry, cook, and do basic chores. I had never even seen the kitchen when I was growing up. We were very protected.

NorthView: Was the language barrier a problem?
Kristara: Language was not a problem because I was born and raised in the Philippines. I could speak English in the boarding school, but I went on to learn Tagalog. On any other day, we were fine. The equivalent of an American quarter every time we spoke anything other than English.

NorthView: How was it different?
Kristara: There were no tall buildings, limited shopping. In stead of taking days it only took us hours to shop. Alaska was also not as open or diverse as I expected it to be. It is normal in other countries. European countries, the cultural differences, to see two men holding hands, arm in arm, whatever. It is a sign of friendship, hugging and kissing about expressing your friendship. It does not mean you are gay. But here in America it is this way.

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Identity
NV: What is the one thing you wish you could change about the differences?
K: I think it is not just Anchorage, but anywhere in the USA - it is hard to know your neighbors. But in the Philippines, you know someone ten blocks away. Here I do not even know my next door neighbors and we both have lived here for years. To each their own they say. I would change that.

NV: If you would have stayed in the Philippines would you have been empress of a court or raised money for charity?
K: No, not in the Philippines, because there is not a court system. I am not sure in terms of charitable organizations, but I don't really think I would. I was not allowed to socialize with poor people. You socialize with your class. So coming here made a huge difference to me.

NV: Is the Philippines still separated by class in this way?
K: Yes, I think so, but it has also changed a lot. I have not been there in forever so I do not really know.

On Coming Out & Pride

NV: So tell me your coming out story.
K: I guess I do not really have one. I never came out. I have always been out.

NV: Can you elaborate on that?
K: Well, I guess I have always known who I am, so I have always lived that life. I have always loved men. In school, I was always falling in love with my male teachers. From the time I was born, I was a Transsexual. As a child, my mother and Aunts would always dress me in more feminine clothing. So when my dad bought guns for the boys and dolls for the girls, I would get a doll. They knew. I knew. Period.

NV: Wow that is great. Do you think that this acceptance is related more to your family and family being really cool or the Philippine culture being open and accepting?
K: I believe it is more of my upbringing, but the openness of the Philippine culture also helped.

NV: What is PRIDE to you?
K: Pride is when you are able to go out some place and be who you are. Blend in and be a part of the life around you. I think what we are missing in this community (the Anchorage-at-large community) is the ability to be able to go into any group with out being labeled as a freak or something like that. People just need to accept each other. I guess I am one of those people who do that. Just live. I do not have one of the gay stickers on my car, but I just am myself.

NV: In what ways do you show your pride?
K: By doing shows, and being involved in The Court System, and doing the charity work and fundraising.

NV: As a newly-elected Identity Board Member, what are your top 3 goals?
K: Girl, I already am a member, do I have to answer that? (laughter). Seriously, being a member of an organization is always an honor to me - it is always an avenue for me to widen my circle of friends and most of all to be the link to all the gay groups in town. Fundraising, fundraising, and more fundraising. It is a lot of work, but to me, helping a charitable organization means a lot.

NV: Why did you run for the Identity Board?
K: Girl - fame and glory? (laughter) - I guess I would like to learn more about what the organization has to offer the community. For years I have found joy being so involved with the International Court System, so I guess being a member again of another group will definitely get me so high.

NV: Do you plan on running for Empress again?
K: Am I allowed to answer that? How about I will say that I have acquired more gowns and shoes!!

On Trans Identity & Community

NV: When did you start living as a woman?
K: (She laughs) Yesterday!

NV: You're not going to tell me, are you?
K: Girl that will tell you how old I am.

NV: Oh, Kristara, I won't tell anyone. How old are you?
K: I am Twenty-through. (Lots of laughter). Seriously, I have been wearing dresses since I was a child. My mom, sisters, and aunts dressed me in dresses and feminine clothing. Growing up in the Philippines, they were so open to this kind of lifestyle.

NV: So you are not going to tell me your age, are you?
K: Nope! (More laughter)

NV: What is the Trans Community like here in Alaska?
K: I think you should ask other Trans too, because I am sure their answers would be different than mine. It has been my experience to know that there are a lot of Trans in Alaska, but most are not out. I am talking Trans 24-7 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) not just on-Weekend-Trans. The 24-7 Trans mostly live in the straight community.

On Kris

NV: So are you always The Fabulous Kristara, Empress 17 & 26?
K: Of course Girl! And I am also Kris.

NV: What is the difference?
K: Kristara is my stage name. Doing the shows and being on stage, it is a natural high! It is like flying, like sunshine hitting your face, like swimming in the ocean girl! Like buying a new pair of stiletto pumps. It is fun! That is who I am on and off stage. The person not everyone knows, or thinks they know.

see KIRSTARA, continued page 20
K: Girl, it is Shawn Michael. Because he is cute and blonde. And it is that All about him attitude.

K: What else... about you... would shock people.

K: I am not materialistic. That is part of the act. But I do have tons of shoes. I am not denying that. (Giggles) I am not into expensive gifts. It is the thought that counts. I really appreciate small things. Like someone saying thank you.

K: Ok, I know there is a lot more we do not know about Kris. What else?

K: I am a professional during the week. I have a 9-5 job. 401 K, retirement, the whole bit.

K: Ok, next question; (drum roll please) what is your dream job?

K: Without hesitation Getting old. Because you loose your looks when you are old.

K: Why do you think looks are so important?

K: It's a bad question. (Laughs) Every thing is based on your looks. It is the image. You can not preserve your looks for the rest of your life. I know I am putting too much stuff on my looks. But you and I both know that people treat you differently based on a lot of things. How pretty you are is one of them. If I am not pretty, people will treat me differently.

K: So your deepest fear is getting old, but what about being alone?

K: OK getting old and being alone. (Laughter)

K: When I was trying to come up with questions to ask, I called a friend and asked him what he would want to know about you.

K: One was your deepest fear, which you had answered and the other one he wanted to ask was: "Why do men decide to become women?"

K: Because I felt it. I don't know. I felt that thing. That is I am, Do you know what I mean?

K: No. (We laugh)

K: I think I would look bad as a boy. And I could not have as many shoes! (More laughter). Seriously, I did not choose. It is my calling to be one.

K: So would you say that it is the same as when straight people ask GLB's why they "have to" or "decide to" be gay?

K: Yes, exactly. I am who I am. (Does anyone else hear a drag number playing in the background?) I was born this way. I will live this way. I will live my truth.

K: Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

K: I will be Empress again. I enjoy doing that sort of thing. I love charity work.

K: And will you still be doing your Friday Night Divas?

K: Absolutely! I enjoy doing it.

K: Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

K: I will be having plastic surgery like crazy! (Laughter) I will be Thirty-through by then! (More laughter). Seriously, I will hopefully still be doing things for the community. An of course, taking care of myself. And living my life. Just like everyone else. Only I have more shoes! And you will always have me, the fabulous Kristara!

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Dear Editor,

I have been regularly following the articles submitted by Teresa McPherson, and thought I would take a minute to express my appreciation for her and her partner Danny's courage in sharing their lives and transformative process in the North View and Klondyke Kontact. I have always considered myself to be an objective and accepting individual, but realize that these articles have forced me to confront my own discomfort over the realization that one is trapped in the wrong gender, and the even more uncomfortable notion of actually doing something about it. I have found the articles illuminating and touching and wish Teresa and Danny well as they find their place in society, and thank them wholeheartedly for sharing that journey with me.

Tess Bensussen