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Gender. What does it mean? What does it mean to you? Does the trans- in trans-gender stand for transitional or for transcendence? The queer community is a living experiment based on these questions. Our very existence challenges society’s often narrow definition of gender and gender roles. In this issue, several writers explore the idea of gender, what it means to them, and hopefully, what it might mean to our community at large. One of the criticisms I often hear about the queer community is, “Why do they always have to be talking about that stuff?” The stuff being one’s sexuality and how it relates to one’s gender. I’ve always believed that Gay male liberation is the same thing as male liberation. Perhaps this is true for women as well. And my response to such criticism is always the same, “Well, somebody has to!”

In this issue you will find a couple of new names. Lanae R. Austin has joined the NorthView with a column about legal matters. Considering the lack of support our people receive within the legal system (i.e. Marriage), I believe her column will prove to be a valuable resource. Lanae will focus on questions from our readers and can be reached at: lanae@alaskanattorney.com. Also, please help me welcome the formidable C.J. Burgandy, a young cartoonist who has agreed to create a monthly strip designed specifically for our readers. To see more from this rising star and artist, visit her webpages at: http://Burgandycomics.keenspace.com, http://cjburgandy.tripod.com/index.html.

A special thanks to some new staff members here at the NV. Liz Fullerton has agreed to be our copy editor, which I’m especially thankful for since editing copy is my least favorite thing. (I always want to believe that the writer, as artist, meant affect and not effect - or is it effect and not affect?) Chuck Hart and Diana Wolfe have officially joined the NV as assistant editors. Chuck has decided to focus on community out-reach and can be contacted at: chuck838792hart@yahoo.com. Diana has decided to focus on women’s issues and can be contacted at: atdsw@uaa.alaska.edu.

Finally, congratulations to Ms. Teresa McPherson and Mr. Danny Templeton who, by the time you are reading this, will have tied the knot. That’s right, those crazy kids got married. My very best to you both, and thanks for all of your work with the NorthView!

Brian A. Ridder
Editor

Submit!
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, non-fiction, or poetry.
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With the cooler mornings, sounds of geese in the sky, termination dust on the highest of peaks, and changing colors out of doors, our Alaska fall season is set in motion. The early part of this season also denotes a time of celebration, change and newness for the Alaska lesbian and gay community. Labor Day weekend heralds an international gathering focused in Anchorage.

For nigh on thirty years, the Imperial Court of All Alaska’s Coronation has taken place this time of year. This year is no exception. The Imperial Court of All Alaska (ICOAAA) crowned their 29th set of Monarchs on September 2, 2001 at the Alaska Coronation Ball. This year’s theme was “Fulfilling Your Fantasies In King Solomon’s Mines.” Royalty, imarials, dignitaries, visitors and minions from throughout the International Court System traveled to this far north Empire and celebrated with us the crowning of Aurora Empress XXIX and Denali Empress XXIX.

Our Imperial Court of All Alaska is part of the International Court System. These Imperial Courts began as a West Coast phenomenon; San Francisco recognized as the founding court of all courts worldwide. Along with the Metropolitan Community Church, the Imperial Courts are the oldest gay and lesbian organizations in existence. According to the International Court Council rules, Imperial Courts survive for the benefit of the communities they serve. This helps to unite the gay/lesbian/transgender and bisexual communities. While acknowledging the serious aspects of life, as we know it, frivolity and merriment are key ingredients in making the court’s functions successful. This Imperial Court of All Alaska is no exception. We love to “Party!” and “Camp It Up!”

Alaska’s twenty-eight coronations were preceded by three Queen Reigns. Technically this gives us a thirty-two year history. During this time hundreds of thousands of dollars have been raised by the Imperial Court of All Alaska because of all of you and your participation at fundraising events, titleholder Balls and functions. Those dollars were immediately turned back to gay, lesbian, or traditional community non-profit groups for their use. This year the Pride Parade received significant financial support from the Court.

The ICOAA College of Emporers and Empresses has awarded scholarships funding higher education for the past nineteen years. These applications are available all summer long and screened by a committee to go to deserving community members, young and old. Community service awards and presentations are also a part of the ICOAA’s recognition programs.

The Imperial Court of All Alaska has statewide jurisdiction. Two Ducal Courts hold functions and Balls to serve their own communities. There is a Duchess of Juneau and a Duchess of Fairbanks. Each year the Emporer and/or Empress travel to these cities to officiate the elections of a new Duke and Duchess. In late spring, the Juneau Duchess hosts their Femme Fatale show for the benefit of statewide AIDS assistance programs or Shanté of Juneau. Fairbanks take center stage in the summertime for their benefit show and Ducal events.

Every reigning Emporer and Empress of the Imperial Court of All Alaska names titleholders for their year. The higher your title, the more you will be expected to serve and work for the achievements of the Empire and Reign. Everyone that is anyone was in attendance at this year’s Coronation Ball. It was at the Anchorage Sheraton Hotel on Sunday, September 2nd at 5:00pm. Other weekend activities included an In-State Show on Thursday night, the Texas Party on Friday night, a “Campy” coronation of the E&F of Bear, Alaska (formerly known as Bird, Almost None-of-Alaska) during Saturday day. A local favorite held Saturday evening was the Out-State Show at the Sheraton. This was everyone’s chance to see all of the talented and pretty people who have traveled from points unknown to share our glory. Sunday was a Mignon Slofifest and Monarch’s Brunch, then the Coronation Ball. Monday was a Victory Brunch at Josephine’s and San Francisco Party in the afternoon. Details on all of these events can be learned by a call (907-276-9762) or trip to Mad Myrna’s.

Needless to say, all of the members and friends of the Imperial Court of All Alaska look forward to seeing you at next year’s Coronation weekend. Join us for any or all of the festivities. In “Peace, Love and Unity” I remain, HIM, Her Eminence, Aurora Empress IX Madeline, Co-chairperson of the ICOAA, College of Emporers and Empresses, twenty-three veteran and survivor of all of the above.
The Denali Sapphire Emperor XXIX, Eldon and The Aurora Arctic Flame Empress XXIX, Joani
photo courtesy of: www.geocities.com/icoaa/

Eldon & I would like to thank all for attending Coronation XXIX! We have many great ideas that are on the drawing board at this time. The next event is the step-down of Alaska MGA's which will be held on Nov 3, 2001. Please visit our website for times and places: www.geocities.com/icoaa/. We will be featured at the annual Unity in the Community, Nov. 10, 7 PM, at the Wilda Marston Theater - Z.J. Loussac Library. Also, the first ever Duke & Duchesses of Anchorage coronation will be held on Nov 17, 2001, at O'Malley's on the Green. Your Emperor & Empress have an open door policy and please feel free to contact us; we are here to serve the community, and we welcome all thoughts and ideas.

Hope to hear from you soon. Sincerely, Eldon & Joani XXIX

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Sex in Anchorage

by Pete Gregson

Sex. I happen to like sex. A lot. And I'm not ashamed to admit it. And, frankly, I'm not ashamed to talk about my sex life, either. You see, I like to cruise, and I like anonymous sex. I enjoy the rush that comes from the company of men I don't know and that I don't have to keep around. Yet in Anchorage, cruising for sex leaves a lot - a whole lot - to be desired.

There are three major ways for guys to cruise in this city. The first is the bars. Yet, in Anchorage, cruising the gay bars is tough. You see, I've lived here for one measly year, and I already know almost everyone at the bar by name or reputation (or both). That is one of the woes of living in a small town. Even when there are new faces in the bar, it is difficult trying to pick them up because either every other boy in the bar is hitting on them or because it is too much trouble working a boy in front of 200 people who all know me. I might fall flat on my face, or someone I know might be very judgmental in my choice of mate for the evening. I know I'm not supposed to care about peer pressure and the judgments of others, but knowing and doing are two different things. (I've had luck in other cities in cruising straight bars, but it takes time and effort, and this being Alaska, I'm often afraid of the redneck factor - theirs, not mine.)

The second way for guys to cruise in Anchorage is on the Internet. You can either put out a personal or else go into a chat room, usually the Alaska floor on gay.com. Sadly, that is about as bad as being in the bar. The last time I logged onto gay.com I knew over two-thirds of the thirty or so guys in the room. And worse is the all too real worry that I may go meet what I think is a hot guy and have it turn out to be a good friend. "Er, hi, Jim. Nice to see ya."

The third way for guys to cruise in Anchorage are the adult bookstores. Let me amend that. One adult bookstore. You see, the city of Anchorage decided that male-to-male cruising in bookstores was somehow a public nuisance (even though patrons were secluded behind locked doors and engaged in consensual private acts), so several bookstores responded by putting in security cameras and cracking down on cruising. Now the bookstore on Spenard serves as the lone place for truly anonymous cruising. That is it (and if I've left something out, please e-mail me right away and let me know). There are no cruising parks or rest stops (I'm not a big fan of cruising in such public spots anyway). There are no gay gyms or saunas. There are no sex parties. There are no male hustler areas or parking areas. There is nothing except for the bar, the Internet, and the Spenard bookstore. Woe is the cruising gay man in Anchorage.

What is worse is that gay men accept this. You see, there is a high level of sexphobia among gay men in Anchorage. Many of my brothers are very ashamed of the fact that they like and want to have sex. Frequent or anonymous sex with multiple partners is just not acceptable to society and to the purists in the gay movement. The public looks down on homosexuality mostly because of the black eye given to the movement because of gay male sexual activity. Gay male sex has led to AIDS, charges of moral degeneracy, and the public specter of gay men involved in perverted acts with multiple partners. Who doesn't know that old stereotype of the gay male?

So, to make homosexuality, and more importantly, homo sex palatable, gay men are trying to become "normal" members of society. You know the drill: dating, marriage, monogamy, and even (gasp!) celibacy. Therefore if they give in to their more base desires to have sex outside of those parameters, then they become ashamed because they are not living up to societal standards for what is and what is not acceptable. Proud gay men who are out and active are still ashamed of their sex lives and are often closeted in their sexual desires and activities. Internal homophobia and sexphobia are rampant in our community because of our desire to homogenize our sex to make it acceptable to society.

Anchorage is not a very cruisy city because many gay men are ashamed to cruise. This seems wrong - very wrong - to me. Somewhere in the very process of coming out, I thought we were supposed to lose the baggage of guilt and shame about our sex lives. If only it were that easy. For while we proclaim our attraction to and preference for the same sex, we still are not allowed in polite society - heterosexual or homosexual - to have multiple sex partners, to have sex outside our relationships, to have fetish sex, or to cruise for sex. We are most certainly not allowed to discuss these things openly and unashamedly.

I've been made for most of my youth to feel so much shame and guilt over my sexuality that I refuse now to feel guilt and shame about having sex with consenting, adult partners. We need to allow ourselves the sexual freedom that coming out has granted us. And hopefully, we can come to terms with our own sexual needs in the process and not be ashamed of our sex lives.

Maybe then Anchorage will be a more cruisy place. A boy can hope, can't he?
Happy Thanksgiving all.

I have actually already had an interesting Thanksgiving in the climax of the novel Breakfast with Scot by Michael Downing (ISBN 1582431264).

Ed and his partner Sam become the foster parents of Scot, Sam's nephew. Scot is a little flamboyant, o.k., Scot is more than a little flamboyant. Scot is a full and bonified Sissy, quite possibly Queer, and the plot of this novel revolves NOT about Scot or the amusing and traumatic incidents that ensue in his presence, but on how Ed and Sam and Scot come together to form a family. In the midst of forming their family Sam and Ed are also forced to face the facts of how they adjust their behavior to get by in a Hetero world.

Ed, who is our narrator, also undergoes the somewhat traumatic experience of suddenly becoming a parent.

"Having a child, I soon learned, is like having an open wound. People ask you about it. They give you advice and secret remedies. Friends tell you to ignore it for a while and see if it doesn't heal itself. Everyone assures you that it won't kill you. And then they show you their scars."

The novel's climax involves a Thanksgiving dinner where Scot's father, a diplomat, who has been out of the country and frequently out of contact for years, comes back on the scene with a new wife and son wanting a relationship with Scot.

Writing-wise this is a very bare bones type of novel. There are few of the lush, and frequently indecipherable, prose descriptions of scenery that have become a requirement of the American novel recently. Downing focuses on the conversations and actions of the characters. Instead of describing the making of a pot of coffee, for example, Downing simply says, "I made a pot of coffee." Over all, his writing style seems rather like a prose form equivalent to Haiku. This book is the most entertaining read I've had in a while and I would gladly loan this to my book loving friends! Remember! If there is a book out there that you think needs more attention you can e-mail Geoffrey at paxbear2.0@excite.com with the Title, Author, and ISBN. 

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Behind The Face
by Kristara

I was Empress Twenty-Six,
and before that Seventeen.
And there's never been one quite like me,
you will soon see what I mean.

'Cause I'm the Empress of Alaska,
from Hope out into the bush.
And when you walk into my kingdom,
you'll be hopin' you could touch my tush.

I can go through men like water,
toss their carcass out in the street.
But what I want is someone macho,
Who's had a little too much to eat.

But you better not leave your wallet,
better call your bank for more.
Cause when the well runs dry of money,
I'll be showing you the back door.

'Cause I'm the Empress of Alaska,
from Hope out into the bush.
And when you walk into my kingdom,
you'll be hopin' you could touch my tush.

I can dress like New York City,
I can walk like Jackie O.
You can call me anytime of the day,
but you better not call me a 'HO.

I'm the girl you never prepared for,
so be ready for what comes next.
I'm a sexy, saucy, Aucoin beauty,
I'm the EMPRESS Triple X.

'Cause I'm the Empress of Alaska,
from Hope out into the bush.
And when you walk into my kingdom,
you'll be hopin' you could touch my tush.

Editor's Note: The above poem was written by one of Kristara's MANY admirers, who wishes to remain anonymous. (Hmmm?) If you would like to further your admiration of the one and only Kristara, please visit her websites:
http://albums.photopoint.com/jj/
AlbumIndex?u=1397861&a=10440764&i=0
http://www.adNetworkru.com/st/2895628.htm
It was June. "Celebrate Diversity," they told us; they told me. I smiled and waved my rainbow flag high and marched along with them. I trash-talked the mayor. I partied on the Park Strip. I avoided breeders. Then I went home.

I did not go to the library. I did not view the display. I did not make a comment about it. "N... n... no... No... NO!" my spirit inside was crying out... slowly, fearfully at first, but louder still until the point I wanted to scream. But I did not. I did not scream. I did not talk. I said nothing. I was silent. I stayed home.

Last year I was at a meeting of The Family over at UAA. A noted therapist with a very unusual first name was the guest speaker that day. The group participated in an exercise where each person wrote a question about an issue he or she wanted to discuss. My question came up: "If gay people could form their own country, would you move there?" He read my question aloud to the group. His response was so fast I almost did not hear it. "No; I believe in celebrating diversity" he sneered in response. Shot down. No discussion. Next question.

I was so taken aback I did not realize my outrage. I did not speak out. I asked the question to open up discussion. There was no discussion. I did not speak. I did not defend my idea. I sat there thinking "But the Jews got their own country (Israel). Freed slaves got their own country (Liberia). Just last year the Inuit got their own territory in Canada (Nunavut)." My mind went on and on. The meeting was over. I went home.

Not long before that, I was standing in the checkout line at Fred Meyer. I was minding my own business. Someone came along and opened the door to my mind. I noticed an old man and an old woman. Together. I noticed a mother and a father. Together. I noticed a boyfriend and a girlfriend. Together. I saw over 100 people there, all males and females together. In pairs. Then the angels spoke.

"OH MY GOD! He was born on the wrong planet! How could this have happened?"

"I don't know."

"Does The Father know about this?"

"Yes, yes He does."

"Well then, why didn't He say anything? Why didn't anyone notice all these years?"

"I don't know... it must have been some kind of mistake."

"What about his parents?"

"Well, according to The Book he is in the right family... but somehow born on the wrong planet."

"I don't understand. How could this have happened?"

My mom just looked at me like I was a silly drama queen when I told her this story. How could I make her understand that it was real? How could I make her understand that I actually heard those voices; that it was not my imagination?

How could I make her feel the panic I felt standing there in Checkstand 14? It really happened. It was real. It was as real as the earth under our feet; as real as the sun over our heads. Every atom in my body wanted to run. Anywhere; away. My mind pleaded "No, it can't be true! I'm on the wrong planet!" I was shaking. I almost dropped the bread onto the floor. Somehow I made it out of the store with a receipt. My mind was reeling. My spirit was shaken. I was disturbed. And then I went home.

All my life I have felt different than the most people around me. It started in childhood. I was not Indian. I did not speak Spanish. I did not participate in fist-fights. I did not fail at school. I did not drink Mexican beer up there by the mesa. I did not drive a truck. I did not stay in the desert and do nothing.

In college at UAF it continued. I was not from Juneau. I was not from a city. I was not an engineering student. I did not have a student loan. I did not have my own apartment. I did not wear a Columbia parka. I did not listen to rap music. I did not wear black and pretend to contemplate art. I did not have sex in the dorm. I was not an atheist or an agnostic. I did not get a good job after graduation.

I still feel different as an adult, despite lifelong efforts to the contrary. Sure, I have tried surrounded myself with other gay men. Even this has limits. I do not go to the gym. I do not hang out at Mad Myrna's. I do not think "straightacting.com is a good idea. I do not smoke. I do not like Judy Garland. I do not watch "Will and Grace" or "Queer as Folk."

This is going on three decades now. At first I thought maybe I should be more like other people. Diversity--I cannot be like everybody. Then I thought maybe I should find people more like me. Diversity--everybody cannot be like me.

When I have tried to bring up this idea with people continued on next page...
I know, they give me the same look my mom gave me. "I don't understand what you're talking about. I have always fit in."

But where do I fit in?

I am sick of diversity. I am tired of being different. I am growing weary of people not understanding each other. The Lord knows I have tried otherwise.

Maybe the mayor is right. I would rather leave the breeders and their ways to this world. I would rather go where men love men and this is taken for granted. I would rather live where I do not have to swim against the current of society and thought and law.

I want to just be. I want to go home.

Pride Conference Thank Yous

by Pete Gregson

The 2001 Alaska Pride Conference was a great success. Over 200 people participated in Pride Conference activities. Thanks to everyone who helped make the weekend a success:

Thanks to the two sponsors Identity Inc and the Pride Foundation. Their continued support of the Alaska Pride Conference and of so many things in our community is greatly appreciated.

Thanks to all the planning committee members: Pete Gregson, Jennifer Eisenhower, Jim Mohr, Victoria Shaver, Scott Turner, Lisa Jamelson, Brad Year, Erin Evans, and Tom Rachel. Their hard work made this event the success it was. It took literally hundreds of volunteer hours from the committee members, and they have a lot for which to be proud.

Thanks to our fabulous keynote presenters Barbara Gittings and Kevin Jennings. Their words and their actions continue to inspire us. They are both true life GLBT heroes.

Thanks to all of our workshop presenters: Dr. Mim Chapman, Melba Cooke, Martha Giffen, Susan Nimna, Pete Gregson, Teresa McPeason and Danny Templeton, Denise Trujillo, Molly Coulter, PFLAG, Chris Pearson, Jack Darnell, Mike Kiernan, Frank Mabry, Cass Miller, Nancy Blake, Dan Carter, Jackson Steele, Jennifer Eisenhower, Jack Klausie, Victoria Shaver, and Jackie Buckley. What a wonderful wealth of knowledge we have in our community. Thank you for taking the time to share yours with all of us.

Thanks to our volunteers: Steve K., PKen, Lacy, Treyana, Barb, Suzi, Steve G., Al I., Al K., Faith, Dawn, and Laura and all those who helped clean up after the potluck and on Sunday evening. Thank you. Thank you. The small things need the most hands and make the biggest difference. Thanks for giving the community your time.

A special thanks to The Last Frontier Men's Club for taking care of all the food prep, serving, and cleanup. Also thanks to them for letting us use their website for registration. What an incredible club that continues to give so much to our community.

Thanks to GLSEN and to the Alaska NEA for all of their work helping publicize the Conference to Alaskan educators and for all of their work with workshops.

Thanks to the many participating organizations and businesses: Identity, GLSEN, TLFMC, PFLAG, ARC, HRC, 4-A's, ICOAA and HMIM Joannie Carver, Mad Myrnas, The Raven, Every Blooming Thing, and an extra-giant thanks to Stonewall'd.

Thanks to a great group of interpreters: Erin Evans, Joan Hooler, Rachel Hollander, and Ray MacKechnie.

Thanks to the many individuals who provided scholarship money and housing. You know who you are and your support means a lot.

Finally, thanks to everyone who participated. The success of this event was due to the community being involved. Thank you.

See you all at Alaska Pride Conference 2002!
Shopping for Enlightenment

by Jen Kohout

Asking Karen to join me on this post-work outing seemed like a good idea at the time but as we near the foreboding double doors, I’m sorry I did. It would be easier to turn around and walk back to the car if there wasn’t a witness.

“You know, Karen, we could always do this another night.” I mumble, my resolve fading with each advancing step.

“We could...” she offers, sensitive to my mercurial moods, “...but we are here and it’s not very crowded.”

“True.” I concede, a sucker for practicality. My loafers continue their forward momentum.

When we reach the front of the building, Karen pulls open the doors and strides inside Nordstrom as if she owns the place. I slink behind her like a shoplifter on parole. When we walk by the shoe section, two women inspecting a pair of expensive leather boots look up. I can hear their thoughts: “Look at those high-water Chino’s. Where did she get those clothes? The discount rack at Salvation Army?” I half expect the sales woman behind the fragrance counter to shout: “You! The one wearing light tan clothing after Labor Day! What are you doing here? Impostor! Get out!”

This shopping paranoia isn’t new. I have a long history of mall-induced angst. I used to blame it all on my mother. Mom’s attempts to instill in her eldest daughter a fashion consciousness met with more sulking than success. We spent far too many Saturday afternoons driving home from Saks in a tense silence after another dressing room stand-off, where she would deliver to my fluorescent cubicle an endless litany of blouses, skirts and blazers and I would deliver an equal number of reasons why they weren’t quite right. Truth was, I preferred my cousin Greg’s rugby shirts to anything Mom picked out. Invariably, she would enlist the assistance of a professional sales person and the two of them would barrage me with compliments about how marvelous some skirt and sweater combination looked on me until I gave in and mumbled my acquiescence.

Crediting Mom with my shopping phobia really just scratches the surface though. I hate shopping because clothes are an expression of gender and I have yet to find a department store with an “Androgynous” section. My options are “Men’s” or “Women’s” in big black letters and I find that I am comfortable in neither department.

I remember the first time I used the word “androgynous” in public. I was at work discussing a case that involved the dumping of road fill into a large river. I was concerned about the potential impacts of the gravel on the salmon that hatched and then returned years later to spawn. The word I should have used was “anadromous.” Instead, I made a passionate argument about the ecological harm to “anadromous fish.” When a co-worker started laughing, I turned as red as a Chinook in late September. To be perfectly honest, I wasn’t exactly sure what anadromous meant at the time but I knew that it had to do with gender and I figured anything with that many syllables had to be embarrassing.

I grew thinking of myself as a Tom Boy. And when I came out, it all made sense. “I get it!” I thought, “I like Greg’s hand-me-down jeans rather than Saks polyester dress pants because I’m a lesbian.” Years later when I read the transgendered classic Stone Butch Blues, I realized that my logic needed updating. My gender identification and my sexual orientation are linked but not synonymous.

The insight was liberating — at least on an intellectual level. It obviously didn’t alleviate my shopping anxieties. Society demands a lot based on gender — how I behave and what I wear are good examples. In an attempt to strike a balance between those societal constraints and my own sense of self, I found a niche just to the female side of midway. Most days, my self-appointed location on the gender continuum works just fine for me. Once in awhile, it doesn’t. On those days, my chosen spot feels precarious, or uncomfortable, or just downright dull. On those days, I wonder what it would be like to have a wardrobe that featured expensive leather pumps. Then the curiosity fades and my ankles are safe — at least until the next shopping expedition.

Gender: Daughters, a Son, and Dad

by Chuck Hart

Gender doesn’t make a big difference in my relationships with my children. Stereotyping just doesn’t work for me in my relationships with my children because they all have some traits that are traditionally thought to belong to the other gender.

I have two daughters. One might be tempted to think that they would be similar in personality since they come from the same genetic material, and were raised by the same parents. I have one son, being a different gender than his sisters one might be tempted to assume that all of his personality traits would be different from his sisters. One would be wrong.

Sara is eighteen and lives in Michigan. She is planning to begin a teaching degree at Olivet Nazarene College...