Staff Members and Volunteers
NorthVIEW continues to seek volunteers to contribute articles, poetry, reviews, photographs, and artwork.

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opportunity!
The Gay & Lesbian HelpLine is Looking for New Volunteers!
The HelpLine is an Information & Referral Line

To volunteer, you transfer the HelpLine to your number and answer from 6:00-9:00 pm One to two nights a month.

Call the GLCCA at 929-4528 and leave a message for Diana to find out the Details!
The “T” in our Alphabet

A friend of mine calls our community the “alphabet” community because we are “GLBT” or “LGBT” or “TBLG” and don’t forget the “I” for inquiring or sometimes for intersexed or the “Q” for either questioning or queer. We often include the “A” for allies. I guess he’s right – we’re an alphabet of diverse individuals, orientations, and genders. Right after I joined Identity, I met two wonderful people. This couple was a little bit different from others I knew, for the man is a female-to-male transgender individual and the woman a lesbian. We have since become very good friends. I have much appreciation for the strength and tenacity they both exhibit.

I’ve met several other transgender individuals and I’m continually amazed at the power their stories have had on me. One female-to-male individual I have known since he first began his transition. It has been a privilege to be a part of his life, even peripherally, as he has gone through transition. I remember how moved I was when he showed me his new driver’s license with the “M” for male on it. Maybe I feel such emotion, because I think how hard it was to come out as a lesbian, but how much more traumatic it must be to change one’s gender.

For me, gender has meant the disparity between women and men in our culture and society. I “came out” as a feminist at the same time I came out as a lesbian. I isolated myself from men, and it was not until I began to make friends with gay males that I overcame some of the anger and injustice I felt. I still feel strongly that there is an inequality that is more than just a glass ceiling or that I, or any other woman, earn 75 cents to the dollar. It’s connected to rights, power, and privilege of one gender over another. For a transgender individual, society is even less tolerant.

Now, I see gender in a much broader way. I believe that gender is much more than what is between the legs, to put it bluntly. Gender, and sexuality, depends on an innate sense of self, and how one defines that self. Too bad that we live in a society where one “sex” has so much over any other “gender.”

Identity began as the GAY Community Center back in 1977. A couple of years later it became the Gay and Lesbian Community Center, then Identity: the Center for Sexual Minorities. But it wasn’t until just a few years ago that Identity began to define itself as an organization for lesbians, gay males, bisexuals, and transgender individuals.

On another note, I wrote recently that we need volunteers for the HelpLine. Please consider becoming a HelpLine volunteer. We’ll offer training sometime around the end of March or early April. We received around 200 calls last year on our toll-free line, with 95 percent from Alaska Bush communities. There are still people out there without access to computers and the connectivity of the Internet.

It is interesting in light of this month’s theme that one individual who called from a Native village is struggling with issues of gender and gender identity. What isolation this person must feel in Alaska’s Bush where everyone knows everyone else and there is little or no privacy or safety.

Diana Sue Wolfe
Executive Director, Identity

March 2005
Gale Smoke: Queer Books

I am very aware of the complex identities with which most of us deal in our personal lives in answering that critical question made popular in the 1960s - who am I? There are issues of sexual orientation and gender identity, of course, as well as racial, ethnic, and religious dimensions, to name just a few. All of it is important in figuring out the jigsaw puzzle that creates an individual. And this is absolutely paramount in the biography of Audre Lorde entitled Warrior Poet (W.W. Norton and Co., 2004). It's an exhaustive account, based on extensive documents and interviews, and the author is the chair of the Women's Studies Department at the University of Buffalo (SUNY), Alexis DeVeaux.

Although Audre Lorde was born in Harlem in 1934, her parents had migrated to the United States from the Caribbean, and it gave the future poet some less than typical demographics. For instance, she was raised as a Catholic and her early education had that imprint. Also, according to the author, Audre's mother, in particular, had a difficult time expressing any love for her children - and her father was often absent. All of this had a profound effect on Audre.

Her intellect was evident early on and she eventually entered Hunter High School - a preparatory school for college in New York City (attached to Hunter College). This rather atypical education put Audre in a largely white environment, and she began experiencing prejudice. As would be expected, she would become hyper-sensitive about racism. That's why it is rather surprising that she married a white man.

Yes, even though her lesbian sexual orientation was evident to Audre, she did marry and had two children. Now, it was clear to Audre that Edward Rollins was a gay man, and, for that reason, there was always tension in the relationship, that eventually ended in divorce.

Audre did find a long-term lesbian partner - Francis Clayton - and, once again, her partner was white. Which was interesting since Audre was already highly critical of the feminist movement - of which she was apart - and felt white feminist women were entirely insensitive to the needs of poor women and women of color.

By this time a number of anthologies of Audre's poetry had been published and this, coupled with her master's degree, led to teaching positions at a number of colleges. (Audre never seemed to stay at any one college very long.)

Audre was always an outspoken warrior and it often seemed adept at breaking many of the bridges - especially professionally - along the way. And she didn't quit being a warrior when she finally dealt with her biggest battle of all: cancer.

The author divides Audre's life in two: the 'first life' is from 1934 to 1977 (pre-cancer) and the 'second life' is from 1978 to 1992 (when she succumbed to cancer). But even in the second life, Audre was a survivor. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1978 and eventually 'beat' it - however, not before she wrote many critical essays about coping with it. But, sadly, in 1986, Audre learned she had liver cancer. That was one reason she migrated to St. Croix - back to her parents' root - spending the last six years of her life in the Caribbean.

Although the work is long - almost 370 pages - Alexis DeVeaux is such a good writer, it was a pleasure to plow my way through it - and I hope some of you consider it as well.

Gale Smoke teaches Sociology 387: Gay and Lesbian Lifestyles at UAA. You can reach him at glsmoke@alaska.net.
2005 Pride Parade Grand Marshalls Have Long History in Alaska

Many know Mike Madill and Rita Sims through their involvement in the Alaskan gay community. "Mike and Rita" have so established themselves in this community that they are often seen as a single entity. But beyond their life here, many people know surprisingly little about their respective careers. This year's Anchorage Pride Parade Grand Marshalls have had quite busy and fulfilling lives.

Let's begin with Michael. Mike was born in French Camp, California and made his first bow at the age of four with his twin sister in the family act. They appeared throughout the country in various vaudeville circuits until his sister's marriage necessitated Mike's doing a single act. In 1940 he won the California State Championship for baton twirling and set records for high jumping and hurdles. After his discharge from the Marines, he joined the San Francisco Ballet Company, and was frequently a guest artist at Radio City Music Hall in New York City. Between 1956 and 1967 Mike headlined with acting partner Gil Johnson six times at the Music Hall.

Despite his classical background, he became better known in the commercial field for his acrobatic feats and novel presentations. In 1950 he joined the cast of television's "Your Hit Parade" under the Lucky Strike brand, and stayed for three years. In 1954 he became the assistant director of "The Texaco Hour" with Milton Berle, where he was also a regular performer. In 1955 he moved to CBS as director of the "Patty Page Music Hall." From 1954 until 1960, Mike worked with the Bob Hope personal appearance tour.

In 1968, Mike became head of the Speech Drama Dance Department at California State University Chico. In 1978 he moved to Fairbanks to teach Speech, Drama and Dance at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and also worked for a time at UAA. Mike retired from the State in 1995 and since then has had a succession of jobs, most notably with Princess Cruises in the Alaska Railroad catering division. With Princess on hiatus, he is working through the winter at Skipper's Seafood 'n Chowder House in Anchorage, his second winter to do so. In his free time, Mike can be found at The Raven, nursing a bourbon and 7 and socializing with the natives.

Rita Sims was born in French Camp, California, near Stockton. She began professional song and dance at age 3 with her twin brother Mike. They were known as the Sunshine Twins. In 1942 Rita competed for and won the title of Outdoor Girl of California. She went on to work extensively with the USO during World War II, traveling to hospitals and bases within the United States.

Rita earned a law degree from Stanford University in 1952 and operated a deed & title company for twenty years. Mother of three grown children, she moved to Alaska to join her brother Mike in 1990.

Both Mike and Rita have supported just about every aspect of the Alaskan gay community, and work extensively with the Imperial Court of All Alaska. They were named Perpetual Imperial Grandfather and Grandmother for the Court in the 1990's. In addition, Rita received the prestigious Peter Dispirito Award from the Imperial Court in 1999.

Both Mike and Rita are recognized icons in the community and their contributions have benefited many.

Michael Haase supports many glbt groups in Alaska and beyond and is a member of The Last Frontier Men's Club. Mike founded Alaska Gay Discussion, which recently celebrated its 5th anniversary. Visit him online at www.mikesmirror.com.
Lynne Sangster

My Friend Cam

My friend Cam has been in the GLBT community for a long time. This is someone you might see at a sing-along or at a lesbian or feminist concert.

The long-term, committed relationship in life for Cam is with a feminist whom I have known in Anchorage since before I came out. I could have sworn Barbara was born a lesbian. Until recently I did not know she had ever married a man or had children. I thought Barbara was born a dyke and bit off the heads of men for spite. I never imagined her with a man.

I never imagined a day would come that I would grow to love a lesbian/trans couple like I do Cam and Barbara. I accept them the way they are. They have not changed, they will always be my friends. They have not changed in personality, but are a couple who accept others as they are.

It’s a difficult but brave process that Cam is going through by coming out as transgender in a GLBT community that knows her. I hope we can all be accepting and loving.

Lynne Sangster is lesbian and writes for the NorthVIEW on a regular basis. She has a long-term relationship with her dog, Bear, for the remainder of his life. Bear is a 3-year-old lab/husky mix.

Rev. Johnathan Jones

MCC of Anchorage Celebrates Transgendered

For the Christians in our community, Easter is rapidly approaching and some of us will try to keep our Lenten promises to give something up, or maybe not. But, whatever we do during Lent and Easter, we should remember one thing: Easter is about humanity, the humanity of one man, who some call God, who died.

At Metropolitan Community Church of Anchorage, our focus as we lead up to Easter will be on the reality of humanity, the reality of the world we live in. You see, we all have the tendency to hide our heads in the sand, for it is much easier to hide and not think about what is happening in our world.

Whilst we won’t be able to solve all the problems in the world, my hope is that we can spend time looking at the issues that affect the lives of all people within our communities. And these may not seem like life-shattering issues to all, but let me tell you, for some they are.

For example, on Sunday the 7th of March, we will have a special celebration for the transgendered folk within our community. On this day, we will baptise a man into his new name and all of you are welcome to attend. Most of us may not deal with transgender issues personally, but there are folks within our community who do, and the aim of MCC is to support all of those within our community.

As queer folk, we often say, “God created me gay or lesbian.” I would encourage all of you to support the transgendered members within our community who know that God created them and loves them, just as they are.

Rev. Johnathan is the Pastor of Metropolitan Community Church of Anchorage. For more info about MCC or to contact Rev. Johnathan, visit www.geocities.com/mccanchorage.

Blessings to all,
Rev. Johnathan Jones
**Dad’s Corner: Chuck Hart**

Transgendered Friend Graciously Answers Nosy Questions

When I was ten or eleven, I heard of the famous Christine Jorgensen. It was the first time I had heard that there was the possibility of something more than “boy + girl.” This was also the first time it occurred to me that someone might want to change their birth gender. I knew she wasn’t who I wanted to be, nor who I wanted, but she had the courage that would take me thirty more years to develop. Understanding “boy + boy” took me decades to achieve.

The theme for this *Northview* is gender and I have a friend I feel comfortable asking some nosy questions. Rachel graciously agreed to be interviewed and provided her insights to her corner of our complicated world.

**How old were you when you felt that something was different about you?** I’m not sure. I do remember it was about the time puberty raised its ugly head (no pun intended). I remember knowing I was different, but was not really sure how or why. I had heard of “queers” but had never been approached, so I figured they didn’t want me either, so what was I?

**Did you have any doubts about being a woman?** It took a long time and a lot of therapy to admit that inside there was no doubt. I was in my late 40s-early 50s when everything came tumbling out. I remember hearing on the radio of Christine Jorgenson’s return to this country and the surgery she had had performed (the Barbie Doll look). But there was no way I would ever be able to pursue that, even though I was pretty certain I was “that way” also.

**What has been the best thing about physically changing?** Being able to pass “the test.” No matter what anyone thought or suspected, I didn’t have to be concerned about using the ladies’ room or being pulled over in my car, because now everything matches. I can go to the women’s locker room with no fear of embarrassment or worse. I’m finally as complete and correct as I can be.

**What has been the most difficult thing about the physical change?** Probably getting to the point where you are recommended for surgery. The Harry Benjamin Standards of Care for transsexualism are very specific about what is needed prior to reassignment surgery. There were more than two years of counseling, trying to get my head on straight so I could accept the way I am. Living as Rachel on weekends and now and again at night during the week, but having to return to Rich the rest of the time. Hundreds of hours of electrolysis to erase the effects of years of testosterone. A name change and transitioning at work while explaining to friends and family what was happening. The surgery was a piece of cake for me. I was also fortunate in that my insurance did cover the surgery minus my deductible by virtue of following the standards of care and documenting the medical necessity of the procedure. The rough part is getting to where you are accepted for surgery.

**What sort of emotional changes accompanied the physical?** While we who make the change never really approach the emotional turmoil a genetic woman experiences on a monthly basis, there is still a battle going on during the initial hormone therapy since testosterone is still being produced until after surgery. I found rather quickly that the tears would flow at the slightest stimulus, both joy and happiness, as well as during grief.

**You’re very active in several areas of volunteer work with two churches and the Iditarod. Are there other volunteer jobs you hold?** First, I should let you know that the Identity Helpline most certainly saved my life, in that it was my only way to connect to the community that helped me on my journey. The Helpline put me in touch with Dr Fred Hillman, who started things moving on the medical side. I also learned of MCC. Initially I was not interested, but called back and found out where and when they met. I’ve been involved now since August of ’91. MCC helped me accept myself in God’s eyes and made it possible for me to attend the United Methodist Church here in Chugiak.

I’m also an Amateur Radio Operator (HAM) and had worked with the Iditarod and other races providing communications on the trail. The FCC accepted my name change for my call sign. I could have asked for a new one, but was of the opinion I should not have to hide, for I had done nothing wrong. I did fear rejection by many of my friends around the state and country. Also, that Iditarod would not want anything more to do with me.
By and large, none of that has happened. I still work with the Jr. Iditarod and the Iditarod and count many of the champions as friends who knew me before and after. I have never been disrespected to my face. What may or may not be said about me behind my back I have no knowledge nor control of.

**Did you lose any friends or family in your physical change? Did you have a good support system?** I lost a spouse of 30 years. I must give her credit, for she really did try, but couldn’t accept what would have been a lesbian relationship. I have two grown sons, and though we keep in touch, we don’t have a lot in common. It was difficult for them so I try not to intrude in their lives unless asked. Some acquaintances accepted my offer to not stay in touch if they chose and that was okay. In ’94 after my name change and dissolution of marriage, I sent out one of those Christmas letters the likes of which many have not seen to try and explain who was on first and what was going on.

**Are you married, single, involved right now?** I’m single and have been for over ten years.

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**What gender are you attracted to?** Good question. Generally, and almost exclusively, females. I’ve met a couple guys I really liked, but I have no idea whether there could ever have been anything to it. I think I’m technically a 60-something-year-old virgin. Don’t you get to start over after the change? I’m not very comfortable in most social situations and actually quite shy. I’m not certain I’m ready to give up my independence to become involved with someone, even if there were someone. One thing I’ve found as I’ve met more F2M [female-to-males] up here is that I find myself attracted to them more so than a genetic male or even a genetic female. I think one plus about being TG is that you are ready to forget about plumbing and such and be attracted to the person.

One thought that comes to mind from time to time when I think back over my life is: Life is a bitch and then you become one!

Chuck Hart is a single father of three and a long-time contributor to NorthVIEW.
Transgender Heart

As a ‘little girl,’ I played as a boy—rough and tumble. Girls and their dolls bored me. How rough? I pushed Danny too hard, causing stitches; shoved another boy out of a tree house, thus a broken collarbone; boxed one, giving a bloody nose; used my powerful sidearm either for catch with my Dad or dirt clod wars; played Doctor with a naked lad, and the one girlfriend I did have, I staked out spread-eagle on our lawn, leaving her in the hot sun—all grist for the headshrinkers’ ball. However, I’ll bet some female-to-male transsexual/gender readers have had similar childhood experiences.

My point being? As a child, I knew contradictions and societal walls. I felt like a boy, but my parents made me wear those hated dresses for public functions. My pelvic region was a girl’s, although I had a boy’s torso. In my heart, I knew what I was. Maybe I lived a fantasy, maybe not. But I was my father’s ‘son’ back then. And in his dying months with Alzheimer’s and cancer, I became his son once again—his sweetest gift to me.

What destroyed my boyhood confidence and innocence? At age ten, a teenager pressured me to touch his penis and to let him put his fingers in my vagina (payback for being the Doctor at age six?). I was shocked and confused. Upon telling my parents, they made me check out numerous library books on sex, another embarrassing moment.

And the final blow? Yep, my period arrived to my dismay, disgusted me more than the horny groper! This absolute sign proved my mother right. I was the same as her and totally humiliated. My male persona shattered. I turtled up, working on survival. The year was 1963. It was the Midwest. And there were no support groups for baby GLBTs.

Worst sexual confusion? Seventh grade and the horrid Home Economics class. Girls couldn’t take machine or wood shop then, which I desperately wanted. A worse torture involved gym class and the girl’s locker room, where I had to shower with females or get docked points/grades. So, I kept my eyes down and counted the minutes till the bell. Yep, I know you’re thinking if I loved women, why wasn’t I cruising their bods? To me, it was intuitively wrong. So at twelve, I became painfully shy. My confusion and uniqueness had no definition, no outlet. I waited for a savior for years, not knowing that I would be my own.

Have a sex change? At thirteen, I rejoiced in a voice change like the boys. I acquired a baritone voice, helping my image. Fifteen years ago I seriously contemplated an operation, since I lived as a man, worked with men and loved it. But I never had the insurance or money (or the balls?). Unhappy with no option, I continued envying, vying and trying to better the men.

Have a mind change? Welding school brought an Epiphany. I accepted that I wasn’t as strong physically. Yet I worked as hard as the men, earning their trust and respect (albeit grudgingly) for not whining or backing away from a man’s job. I realized I was an equal, even without a penis. No more ‘second class citizen.’ It was exhilarating! Passing as a man, being part of the straight brotherhood, got me places, things and a respect that women will forever struggle to attain in this society.

All my life I’ve wrestled with maintaining my male identity in a woman’s body. Much of the masculine physical aspects of my life have been severely curtailed with the onset of my disability, leaving me a transgender in heart and attitude until I can reconfigure my persona. But I will. As for dress (shudder), I haven’t worn one in 33 years; only men’s clothes for me. I wear short or long hair, depending on the seasons. This sometimes creates confusion for the LGBT community, seems a majority swear by short hair. And after “Ellen,” the hetero community sees my visage, hears the deep voice, and often gets disconcerted or even hostile.

My view on identities? Maybe gender is hormonal or learned. Maybe it’s just a past life carryover. Who knows? What if life is truly maya/illusion? What if life is a stage and we’re players moving together through this dimension, performing according to what we know or feel? I think we make the choice of allowing the leviathans—swimming in our deep psychic seas—to surface and suck air or to forever circle wounded in the dark until death strikes. And if life is an illusion, it’s up to us which cloak of identity we wear. If it’s a stage, we choose which role to enact.

In the end, our physical sex isn’t going to matter much—other than which urinal bedpan we’ll need. What will matter more is how we pursued our chosen lifestyle, the lessons learned and the love shared.

So, live happy! Live free! Live proud! And get on with it!

identity
Gay & Lesbian
Community Center
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March 2005
Man with a Mission
An Interview with Juan Barbachano

Good Morning America, 20/20, Montel, Oprah, The Discovery Channel. I'm sure you have watched, or at least heard of, these national television programs. But you may not be aware that one of our own has recently been and is soon going to appear on these programs!

When asked why he is doing this, Juan Barbachano, a female-to-male (FTM) transgndered person who lives in Palmer, replied, "This is my way of educating people. There's nothing wrong about being transgndered, it's just different. When more people know this, ignorance will be erased and people in our society will be treated fairly."

Born Juanita, an identical twin and the oldest of six children in a Mormon family, Juan relays that he was aware at age three that he should have been born a boy. "I never felt like a girl, and my twin, Liana, was all girl." Juan always played the father when he and his twin sister would play house. He even played on his high school football team. Liana is still a Mormon, is married, and just had her eighth child. She and Juan remain very close.

Juan did not have a happy childhood, and suffered from abuse from his mother while growing up. His parents divorced when he was eight, and the physical abuse eventually subsided, but his mother’s verbal and emotional abuse continued. Juan was diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder at age 14, after a suicide attempt.

Juan started testosterone hormone therapy in 2001, and several months later had a hysterectomy. He transitioned while on his job as a courtesy van driver for an Anchorage hotel, a job he's kept for six years. His chest reconstruction surgery came in 2003, and his goal is to have genital reconstruction surgery before he turns 40. Juan is currently researching different methods and feels a new technique called the Cinturion Method, which he says produces better results and is a less complicated surgery, is his aim within the next few years.

After seeing a television special at a friend's house last year featuring an FTM identical twin, Juan contacted the psychologist in the program, Dr. Nancy Segal, because she stated that this particular person was the only known identical twin to become transgndered when the other twin did not. Dr. Segal is the Director of Twin Studies at Fullerton University in California, and has been instrumental in securing various speaking engagements for Juan and his identical twin sister, Liana.

When I asked him what keeps him busy in his non-working life, he said it was his weekly volunteering at the Gay & Lesbian Community Center of Anchorage (he's been a GLCCA volunteer for two years), studying for the GRE (he wants to be a Clinical Psychologist), and traveling for public appearances. "I didn't seek this out, but now that it's here, I want to embrace it." He has not received any compensation other than reimbursement for his travel expenses and lost wages.

Juan says nothing negative has happened to him because of his television appearances. His first was Good Morning America in October 2004, followed by 20/20 in November 2004. He taped an episode of Montel in February 2005 which will tentatively air Feb. 24th, and will tape Oprah in late February which should air sometime in March. And this spring, two British magazines will run articles about Juan and his sister, and they will also be featured in a three-part documentary on the British Discovery Channel. Juan has even reconnected with a distant relative who saw him on TV.

"I'm hoping to help other trans people who came from strict religious backgrounds, like I did, realize they are OK and that God loves them as they are." I asked Juan what he likes best about his life, and he replied, "It's improving. I'm now setting goals to make my life better, and not just focusing on staying alive. For so much of my life it was really [a decision of] 'change or die' for me - sometimes it comes down to survival, and you're just existing."

I'm so proud of Juan for the efforts he is taking to both change his life and to educate the masses. What a noble man he has become! Juan Barbachano is truly a man with a mission.

Laura Goss is the Development Director for the YWCA Anchorage, a practicing Nichiren Buddhist, and a bead artist. She lives in south Anchorage with Buddha, her 17-year-old senior feline companion.
2005 Arctic Heat Sizzles!

The Last Frontier Men's Club (http://www.tlfmc.com) chose their 2005 titleholders at the 12th Annual Black & Blue Ball held January 29 during their Arctic Heat Weekend at Mad Myrna's in Anchorage.

The winners are (from left) Mark Plimpton - Mr. Alaska Leather; Doug "Horse" Veit - Mr. Bear Alaska; Brady Hollifield - Mr. Alaska Levi; and C.J. Willoya - Alaska Bear Cub. Mark and Horse will represent TLFMC at International Mr. Leather and International Bear Rendezvous in 2006.

Judges for this year's competition were Michael French, TLFMC President; Paul "Teddy" O'Rourke, Mr. International Deaf Leather 2004; Frank Mabry, Mr. Alaska Leather 2001; Melba Cooke, Ms. Alaska Leather '97-'98; and Larry "Bear" Moore, Founder of THOR Leathermen of Orange County.

For more info, contact Michael French at info@tfmc.com. (photo by Kirt Beck & Roger Crandy)
MY PARTNER IS A WOMAN, BUT...

My partner and I celebrated our twelfth relationship anniversary this past November 13th. Some of people in the community know that our first real date was on a Friday the 13th. We celebrate every Friday the 13th, and there are often more than one in any given year. It’s our little in joke together. My partner thought there couldn’t be a better day to romance a psychic, white witch and goddess worshiper, and went all out figuring there was only one chance to really get my attention.

Whoever is the “head honcho” in the halls of heaven has a wacky sense of humor. I’ve had people tell me they were afraid to make my acquaintance because, as a psychic, I might be able to “read their mind.” (I don’t want anyone “reading” my mind because it is an invasion of privacy.) It is widely known and discussed among other psychics that the “great cosmic joke” is that a psychic cannot “read” the person who is her/his partner, even if they wanted to....

For all these years our relationship has worked, even though I’m a pagan and my partner is a Christian. The two of us are old enough, and I’d like to think wise enough, not to mess with something that works. After twelve years, I can tell when something is going on with my partner, can even “hear the wheels turning,” but I never have a clue what is going on until I am told in no uncertain terms – like in January of 2004.

I finally pinned down my partner and said, “What is going on with you?” The response I got was, “Yes, there is something going on.” When pressed further, the answer was, “I’m afraid to tell you just now.” When did that happen to us?

Our years together have not always been smooth by any means. I went into menopause – a horrible experience to say the least. We both lost our jobs. My partner’s father died. I broke my arm. We got evicted from our apartment and had to move. Candy got fired from a well-loved job. I had to have surgery to repair my arm. My grandson was murdered. We’ve been there for each other, worked as a team and got though it together.

Things got worse. One morning when I came home from work, Candy told me she was having suicidal thoughts and her counselor wanted her to put herself in the hospital. Stunned, I drove her to the hospital. She was admitted. Oh, Candy, what is so bad you can’t tell me? If you tell me you’re afraid to tell me something, my mind goes into, “What’s the worse thing that would happen?” You’re having an affair? “No!” You want to leave me and are afraid to tell me? Again the answer was, “No!” “Well, then what, for Pete’s sake!” At this point, she was bathed in sweat, looked absolutely terrified and said, “I have always hated my body. Never felt like I am a woman. I’ve always felt I was a man.”

My partner is no longer a “her,” but a him and is in a transition between gender. I know I just “outed” my partner, but I have his permission. His name is Cameron.

At this point, I know enough about this change to know it’s not an easy transition. Cam is happier now that I can see. After going through a really bad bout of depression, he smiles more, is more positive, has told his best friend and friends of the gender change, come out to the pastor of his Church, has started a web site in Alaska for transgendered issues, and changed all his clothing to menswear. The list moves on every day.

It’s hard to believe I was the scariest person for my partner to tell who he really is. I don’t remember giving my love with any conditions attached. A long time ago, I learned when you love someone, you can’t stop loving them. I’m not going anywhere. I’m staying in the relationship.

For over twenty years, I’ve thought of myself as a lesbian and don’t know what the heck to call myself at this point. I feel confused at what to say and how to proceed. Sometimes, I just sit down, could cry and do cry. Then I remember the "great cosmic joke" and have to laugh, too. I’m not supposed to know.
A Coming Out Story

Like an episode of Quantum Leap where he looks in the mirror and, instead of his face, sees the face of the person he has leaped into, I look in the mirror and who I see doesn’t match up how I see myself in my mind. I didn’t realize until I read my friend Mark’s poem, why I have such an aversion to mirrors. A friend of mine used to joke that I must be a vampire.

When I was a kid growing up in my neighborhood, the only kids my age were boys, Mike, Pat and Billy. The four of us were inseparable and we did everything that boys do: climb trees, rode our bikes like maniacs, climbed every hill we could get up, wrestled, played war and cowboys, and Indians and took turns killing each other over and over. We had a club and put a sign up that read: “NO GIRLS ALLOWED.” It never occurred to us that I was a girl and shouldn’t be a member of the boys’ club.

I was pretty content with my life until I hit puberty and my breasts started growing and I started my menses. I felt betrayed by my body. I hated every minute of it, especially when the boys changed how they treated me. I think they finally realized that I wasn’t one of them. My Dad quit wrestling with me after one episode when he brushed up against my breast. He got up off the floor and we never wrestled again and our relationship would never be the same.

I was attracted to girls all my life. My first crush was a female teacher and then from elementary school through high school, I had a crush on the same girl until she got pregnant and dropped out of high school to marry her boyfriend. I tried to be “normal.” I met a young man in my junior year and we dated (years later, he came out to me). I was engaged several times and married twice. When I fell in love with my husband’s youngest sister, I just figured I was gay and life went from there.

I never thought I had a choice. I resigned myself to being a female the rest of my life. I fell in love with Barbara and decided I wanted to spend the rest of my life with her, so I settled in to live as a lesbian. It wasn’t a horrible life. I tried to belong in the community. We took over the women’s coffeehouse and did that for a few years until Mariah and Joanne closed the women’s bookstore and then we took over Pride on the Parkstrip and did that until it got too big for two people to put together. I did Celebration with Barbara a couple of times and I tried to fit in.

In February 2004, unemployed, depressed, suicidal, dealing with chronic pain and a body that was betraying me again this time by falling apart, I ended up in the psyche ward at Providence for almost two weeks. It was after I got home that I knew I couldn’t keep living this way. I had known several male-to-female transsexuals and hadn’t thought anything about it, but a woman I knew in the community had transitioned. At the time something had clicked and I had shoved it away, stuffed it deep down inside, after all Barbara was like “Super Lesbian” and I thought she wouldn’t stay with me. She had even said that after over 20 years of being married to the same man, she just wasn’t interested in being with a man ever again.

It took me several more months of procrastinating and thinking about it and finally after talking to my counselor and a trusted friend, I sat down for the talk with Barbara. It’s funny what happens when you let your imagination run away with you. While I was concerned she would leave me if I told her who I really was, she was worried that I wanted to break up with her. Needless to say we were both surprised.

Last year, Barbara and I celebrated 12 years together. She already knew at that point that I wasn’t willing to continue to live as a woman. I love her and I didn’t want to lose her, but I needed to be true to myself and I couldn’t ignore this need that is growing more and more insistent in me. I’m just starting this transition and I have a long way to go. Barbara’s still here and has stated that she’s not going anywhere. There are no more secrets between us and we are closer than ever. Fortunately we both have a very twisted and warped sense of humor and we both see the irony in this.

My depression that had started to overwhelm me again during the holidays has lifted. Due to the generosity of a friend, I will soon be starting on testosterone. I’ve been able to purchase the accurements I need to start living as a man. I’ve shared this article and Barbara’s article to my mostly straight friends online and they’ve been great. I guess this is my way of coming out to the community.

So if you’re around the community center on a Monday or Friday, don’t be afraid to stop and say hi. I answer to Cam or Cameron these days. And for those who are curious, Barbara still considers herself a lesbian and probably will the rest of her life. I don’t mind, after all isn’t it every straight guy’s fantasy to sleep with a lesbian?!

Cam has been an active part of the Alaska GLBT community for many years. He volunteers at the GLCCA twice a week and in his off time collects and reads mysteries and has discovered No Limit Texas Hold ‘Em Poker on TV.
Adopt-A-Day!
Adopt-A-Day!
Adopt-A-Day!

Thank you,
January Adopt-a-Day Sponsors!

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28 TLFMC for Arctic Heat Weekend
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33 Nicole Blizard—Happy Birthday

You too can adopt a day at the Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Anchorage for only $50. What a great way to honor your friend’s birthday or anniversary. Help us keep your center’s doors open in 2005!

Adopt-A-Day!
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Adopt-A-Day!
EVENTVIEW

Identity Programs

Winter & Spring
Living Out Loud Youth Program

June

October
Pride Conference

Daily
Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Anchorage (GLCCA). Ste. 103, 2110 East Northern Lights Boulevard, Anchorage. 907-929-4528

Nightly
Helpline for GLBT information and referrals (6 PM to 11 PM). 907-258-4777 or 888-501-9876

Monthly
NorthVIEW news magazine

Anchorage Events

Mon
AA Gay, Joyous, and Free, 7 PM, GLCCA

Tues
PFLAG, 7 PM, third Thursday (except November & December), Immanuel Presbyterian Church, 2311 Pembroke St., 566-1813

SLAA (Sex & Love Addicts Anonymous), 8 PM, 566-1133

Line dance lessons/dancing, 7-9 PM, Mad Myma’s

Wed
IMRUI, 5:30 - 7 PM, first and third Wednesdays, GLCCA, 566-MIMRI, leave message for more information

GLSEN, 7 PM, second Wednesday, GLCCA

“Karaoke Night” hosted by “K” Entertainment, 8:30 PM, Mad Myma’s

Thu
SLAA (Sex & Love Addicts Anonymous), 5:30 PM, Anchorage Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 566-1133

Friends and Family Support Group, 6:30 PM, 263-2050

Country Dance Night, lessons 7-8 PM, open dancing 8-10 PM, Mad Myma’s

“Karaoke Night” hosted by “K” Entertainment; 10 PM; Mad Myma’s

Fri
Lunch, everyone invited (HIV+, volunteers, and friends), Noon -1 PM, Alaskan AIDS Assistance Association (4A’s), Ste. 102, 1037 W. Fireweed Ln., 263-2050.

“Friday Night Divas Show,” 9 PM, Mad Myma’s

Sat
SLAA (Sex & Love Addicts Anonymous), Noon, Anchorage Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 566-1133

Sun
Buddhist Morning Service, 11 AM, White Lotus Center for Shin Buddhism, 123 E. 11th Avenue., 258-1851

Center for Spiritual Practices & Education Worship Service, 11 AM, 8050 Old Seward Highway, 522-9940 (Rev. Guy Johnson)

Metropolitan Community Church Service, 2 PM, Immanuel Presbyterian Church, 2311 Pembroke St.

Northern Exposure Bowling League, 4 PM, Park Lanes, 4350 Ames Ave., 561-8744

Sunday Dinner, 5 - 8 PM, Mad Myma’s, 276-9762 (Jim)

Fairbanks Events

Tue
PFLAG, 5:30 PM, third Tuesday, 604 Barnette Street, Room 101, 907-458-PFLAG.

Fri
Free anonymous HIV testing, 3:30 - 5:30 PM, Interior AIDS Association, 710 Third Ave.

“Outlooks,” 5:30 -7 PM, KUSI-FM 91.5

Socializing and dancing, 9 PM - 3:30 AM, Club G (mix crowd), 150 Farmer’s Loop

Arctic Bears, first Friday, 907-479-8680

Sat
Socializing and dancing, 9 PM - 3:30 AM, Club G (mix crowd), 150 Farmer’s Loop

Sun
Homophonic Radio, 3-5 PM, KUSI-FM 91.5

Juneau Events

Wed
Social gathering after work, Summit Lounge

“Women’s Prerogative,” 9 - 10 PM, KTOO-FM

Fri
Juneau Pride Chorus, 5:30 - 7:30 PM, Resurrection Lutheran Church, 907-779-6167 (Marsha)

Sat
PFLAG, 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM, first Saturday, Mendenhall Library Conference Room

PLEASE HELP KEEP THIS SECTION CURRENT!
SEND NEW AND UPDATED LISTINGS TO
NORTHVIEW@IDENTITYINC.ORG
ORGANIZATIONS

Adam and Steve, a social group for young gay, bi, and questioning men. Weekly activities and fun community events. Also offers the monthly M-group, a fun workshop on sex and dating. Run by a Core Group (meets every first and third Tuesday at Four A's at 7 PM) who plan all activities. Come meet new young queer men in a safe and supportive environment. 907-263-2081. www.adamandsteve.org

Alaska AIDS Assistance Association (Four A's), provides supportive services to persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families and in the elimination of HIV infection and its stigma. Many services cater specifically to women. 1057 W. Fireweed Ln., Ste 102, Anchorage. 907-263-2050 (Anchorage), 800-478-AIDS (statewide).

Alaska Civil Liberties Union, a membership-based non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to preserving and defending the guarantees of individual liberty found in the Alaska Constitution and the U.S. Bill of Rights through litigation, education, and legislative advocacy. We are the Alaska state affiliate of the ACLU of the United States (ACLU) P.O. Box 201844, Anchorage, AK 99520-1844. Phone: (907) 276-2258, Fax: (907) 258-0288, Email: akclu@akclu.org.

Alaskans for Civil Rights (ACR), a locally organized and operated statewide political organization dedicated to obtaining full civil rights for lesbians, gay, bisexual, transgender, polyamorous, and intersex people in all aspects of personal and public life. 907-566-ACR1. AlaskansforCivilRights@yahoo.com

Alcoholics Anonymous: Gay, Joyous, & Free. AA group for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered individuals, and their allies. Open non-smoking meeting Mondays 7 PM to 8 PM at the Gay & Lesbian Community Center of Anchorage (GLCCA).

Anchorage Women's Political Caucus. Open to all women. 7pm, first Wednesday. Elmer's Restaurant: New Seward and Fireweed.

Arctic Bears. First Friday. Fairbanks. 907-479-8680.

Aquarian Foundation services. 8 PM Wednesdays, 11 AM Sundays. 8500 La Viento Drive, Anchorage. 907-349-9955.

Breast and Cervical Health Check, a cancer screening service offered by the Alaska Department of Health & Social Services, Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. Free breast and cervical cancer screening is available to women ages 18-64 who have no insurance or whose insurance does not cover these services. Call the YWCA of Anchorage for eligibility guidelines, enrollment, and group presentation opportunities. 907-644-9620 (Anchorage), 1-800-410-6266 (statewide).

Celebration of Change, a performance of women artists for women. celebrationofchange@gmail.com

Committee for Equality, Box 34202, Juneau, AK 99803. bsara@geci.net

Fairbanks Gay Youth Group. 907-457-3524 (leave message for more information).

The Family (a UAA Student Club), hosts discussion groups, potlucks, and various other social, political, and awareness activities. You DO NOT have to be a UAA student to attend. Many that do attend UAA are non-traditional students. www.uaa.alaska.edu/clubs/council/thefamily

Gay & Lesbian Community Center of Anchorage (GLCCA). The Home of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered Individuals and Our Allies. The GLCCA is a safe space to meet, hang out, hold or attend a meeting, or use the resource library or computers. Staffed by trained volunteers 7 days a week. 3-9 PM Mondays through Fridays, 12-6 PM Saturdays and Sundays. 2110 E. Northern Lights Blvd., Ste 103 (between the Burger Cache & Don Jose's). 907-929-GLCCA, glcca@identityinc.org

Gay & Lesbian HelpLine, an information and referral line sponsored by Identity, Inc. The HelpLine is staffed by volunteers and provides information and referrals to businesses, professionals, and service providers supportive of the goals and objectives of Identity, Inc. 6 - 11 PM daily. If you need information or would like to be a part of this service, please call 907-258-4777 (Anchorage), 888-901-9876 (statewide).

The Gay Club (a UAF student organization), c/o Student Activities Box 4, Wood Center, University of Alaska, Fairbanks 99775. 907-474-6507, fhagla@uaaf.edu, www.uaaf.edu/agla

GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network). Membership is confidential. We welcome educators and non-educator allies who are interested in the problems of GLBT youth in our public schools. Anchorage 907-562-7161 (Fred) hillman@alaska.net, Fairbanks Lisa Slayton or Jeff Walters c/o GLSEN, PO Box 85315, Fairbanks, AK 99708. 907-457-2787.

Identity, Inc., a nonprofit Alaska corporation concerned with issues of sexual and gender identity. Identity envisions a world where all are free to express and be proud of their sexual and gender identities. The mission is to build the infrastructure for a strong GLBT community in Alaska. Programs include the Gay and Lesbian HelpLine, NorthVIEW, PrideFest, Living Out Loud Youth Conference/Seminars, and the Gay & Lesbian Community Center of Anchorage. P.O. Box 200070, Anchorage, AK 99520-0070. 907-929-GLBT. www.identityinc.org

Imperial Court of All Alaska (ICOAA), sponsors the Memorial Day weekend Eklutna picnic, the Fur Rondy parade float for the GLBT community, PrideFest Festival on the Parkstrip, Labor Day weekend Coronation, and numerous other events. PO Box 104032, Anchorage, AK 99510-4032. www.icoaa.org

IMRU2, the social group for GLBT youth, ages 13 to 18. We eat, chat, watch videos, plan events, and do lots of laughing. Join us and call your friends. 5:30 PM, 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at GLCCA. 907-566-IMRU2(4678) to leave message.

Interior AIDS Association (IAA) Fairbanks offers medical and dental program assistance, "buddies" (volunteers who help HIV & People Living With AIDS), meal delivery & food supplement program, lending library, and counseling support. 907-452-4222 (for assistance or volunteering information).
OVERVIEW: RESOURCES

The Last Frontier Men’s Club, a social club for the Levi/leather/bear community. Brief business meeting & potluck social at 6 PM second Sundays at Mad Myrra’s, 530 E. 5th Avenue. “Dinner Night Out” and several campouts are open to all throughout the summer. Check the website for information and list of community events. TLFMC, P.O. Box 202054, Anchorage, AK 99502-2054. 907-338-3862. info@tlfmc.com www.tlfmc.com

Metropolitan Community Church of Anchorage (MCC), a predominantly gay/lesbian/bi/transgendered Christian church where ALL are welcome to worship a loving and compassionate God. 2 PM Sundays, Immanuel Presbyterian Church, 2311 Pembroke St. (East of 24th Ave. & Boniface Pkwy.). See website for location map and calendar of current events. 907-258-5266. mccanchorage@yahoo.com www.geocities.com/mccanchorage

OLOC (Old Lesbians Organizing for Change) & Travel 50 Two groups for women over 50. 907-868-2662. roseebethlevno@hotmail.com

OPAL, a social organization open to all Lesbians. OPAL sponsors different events throughout the year and occasional potlucks. 907-345-3818 (Anne) opal@gei.net

Out North. Cutting edge art, theatre, film, educational programs, and more. See online calendar. 3800 DeBarr Rd., Anchorage, AK 99508. 907-279-3800. volunteer@outnorth.org www.outnorth.org

PFLAG of Anchorage (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians & Gays). Meetings: 7 PM third Thursdays except November & December. Immanuel Presbyterian Church: 2311 Pembroke St. 907-566-1813 (voicemail). Straight spouses support group meets the 3rd Sunday of each month at 5 PM at Immanuel Presbyterian Church.

PFLAG of Fairbanks, promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered persons and their families and friends through support, education, and advocacy. 907-45-PFLAG (for meetings and events).

PFLAG of Sitka (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians & Gays) Meetings: 7 PM second and fourth Sundays. Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Hall: 408 Marine, Sitka. P.O. Box 6515, Sitka, AK. 907-747-3674. sitkapflag@yahoo.com

PrideFest Steering Committee of Identity plans and presents the annual Anchorage Gay Pride Week events in June. Meetings start in Sept. The committee invites and welcomes corporate and individual sponsors, parade entries, entertainers, volunteers, and more. 907-929-GLBT prideontheairport@yahoo.com


Shanti of Juneau, offers support services to persons with HIV/AIDS and their loved ones, as well as offering comprehensive HIV prevention and educational information. 222 Seward, Ste 200. P.O. Box 22655, Juneau, AK 99802-2655. 907-463-5665, 800-478-AIDS (2437).

Southeast Alaska Gay & Lesbian Alliance (SEAGLA), a non-profit volunteer organization that provides a support network for lesbian and gay people in Southeast Alaska. Publishes monthly newsletter Perspective. P.O. Box 21542, Juneau, AK 99802. 907-586-GAYS.

S.T.O.P. AIDS Project. Center for Drug Problems provides education and outreach specific to injection drug users and their sexual partners regarding HIV/AIDS prevention. Free anonymous HIV testing is provided on a walk-in basis. 1 - 4 PM Mondays and Wednesdays. 907-278-5019 (Anchorage).

Support Group (Soldotna), a group of people with HIV, AIDS, families and friends. 907-262-2589 (Jan).

Women’s Ultimate Frisbee. 10:30 AM Sundays. West end of Delaney Parkstrip. 907- 278-5179 (Jen or Karen). Jenkout@aol.com

E-MAIL LISTS

Alaska Gay Discussion, providing an opportunity to discuss gay issues relevant to Alaska and a calendar of events. Participation available via website and/or e-mail. For more info contact Michael Haase at michael2001@gei.net or michael2001@palm.net. http://groups.yahoo.com/group/alaskagaydiscussion

Alaska GLBT News, a weekly state-wide e-mail notification service distributing news and information about upcoming events of interest to the Alaska GLBT community. To receive these notices or to submit an item for distribution: alaskagbtnews@yahoo.com

Anchorage Pride, a mailing list for information concerning Anchorage & Southcentral Alaska’s GLBT community. http://groups.yahoo.com/subscribe/anchoragepride

Fairbanks Pride, a mailing list for information concerning Fairbanks & Interior Alaska’s GLBT community. http://groups.yahoo.com/subscribe/fairbankspride

Grizl List, a mailing list for the Women’s Community. Event announcements, inquiries, issues discussion, and relevant topics of concern for women. Delivered every Thursday. Grizl_list@gei.net

National and Political GLBT News, Landmark case decisions and other newsworthy announcements from national organizations. To join, send an e-mail to: bsara@gei.net

PUBLICATIONS

Alaska Women Speak, a publication by/for Alaskan women. 907-689-7922.

The Anchorage Press, an alternative weekly paper that is not focused on the GLBT community but is friendly. There is a large personals section. 907-561-7737.

The Perspective, a newsletter published for the Southeast Alaskan. SEAGLA, P.O. Box 21542, Juneau, AK 99802-1452. 907-586-GAYS.

The Pink Ink, a newsletter published in Fairbanks for the Fairbanks GLBT community. Interior Newsletter, c/o PFLAG Fairbanks, P.O. Box 82290, Fairbanks, AK 99708. 907-45-PFLAG.