

Coming Out: An Intergenerational Interview

Part 2

by Kelly Leonard

The first portion of this three-part series appeared in the Fall 2008 Pride Lafayette Quarterly. Part two transports us beyond coming-out stories and into the exploration of how self-identification and gender expression—the gender one communicates through clothing and accessories—has affected the lives of those interviewed.

Our intent was to help draw a clear distinction between the concepts of sexual orientation and gender expression—a line that is often blurred by the way LGBTI culture promotes the use of variant gender expressions to try to communicate our otherwise hidden sexual orientations.

How did coming out affect your life?

Corey: I tend to treat it as a fact of my life, like having a large family. It's something friends need to find out eventually. People I meet find out that I'm gay and that I'm from a large Catholic family. Coming from a large Catholic family is much more of an issue with most people.

Ashley: Many people are surprised that I'm gay. They just thought I was artsy.

Rick: In 4th grade, the boys were all playing basketball and I was told to go play with the cheerleaders. Sometimes I was called "queer," but I didn't understand what that meant. I knew at that point that I was different. At 17, I was camping and I became extremely interested in the men wearing swim trunks.

I was raised in the Methodist church. Like the Catholics they are great at guilt trips. I knew from Sunday school and the Bible that it wasn't acceptable behavior.

Did you ever feel compelled to "try" to be straight or to fit a gender norm that you didn't feel comfortable with (e.g., by entering into a "heterosexual" relationship or by dressing in a particular way)?

Corey: In high school I sort of dated girls so I could sort of be ambiguous; but I never let it progress or let them get too close. There were a lot of fears in high school: fear of the locker room, fear of being found out. I didn't develop socially because of the energy spent hiding. I was so fearful and always protecting myself that I didn't learn to date or how to have a relationship. I didn't finally learn how to date until college.

Rick: [I did] in my senior year of college and for a year or two after. There really weren't any support groups and being gay wasn't accepted anywhere in society. I was being compelled to try and change. That sent me into the religious far right. I was involved in Intervarsity Christian Athletes, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and so forth. They were more into saving souls at that time and not so political. I came out to an elder in the church and he accepted me for who I was, although he didn't agree with it—that did the most for me.

Have you noticed any differences between your story and the story of those younger or older than you?

Corey: Society has come a long way. Maybe in Rick's time there was more fear. Being afraid of getting kicked out.

Rick: I really didn't know what would happen.

Ashley: I know my family would have kicked me out if I had come out earlier. My mom used to work with some gay women. I remember she used to say, "When you grow up, just don't grow up to be gay."

Has your gender expression changed much throughout your life? If so, how?

Corey: When I first started coming out on campus and was sort of developing a gay identity, I had a range of gay friends. Some were flamboyant and queeny and others weren't. As I hung out with each, I played with gender identity or expression by behaving like those around me. It was sort of like trying on hats. I just settled on being me. I do dance to disco!

Ashley: I wear whatever my mood is. I go through phases where I want to wear high heels and pink nail polish. Sometimes I paint my nails black, like when I'm working with paint. I sometimes will carry a Coach purse, but other times I'll carry a business card holder. I go with my mood.

Rick: I'm what I was eons ago as it pertains to my gender identity. I haven't changed much.

Kelly Leonard is Vice-President of Pride Lafayette, Inc.

We're Winning the Fight for Equality

by Randy Studt

Even with the setbacks of the 2008 General Election, Indiana Equality's leadership has pointed out the following success stories:

- Every State Representative that voted in opposition to Indiana's Marriage Discrimination Amendment in 2007 was re-elected.
- Newly elected pro-equality State Representatives include John Barnes, Ed DeLaney, and Mary Ann Sullivan.
- There are now openly LGBT elected officials in Allen, Hamilton, Marion, and Monroe Counties.
- Citizens for Civil Rights and Indiana Equality are reaching out to a wide range of allies to ensure that inclusive, state-wide civil right protections and bias crimes legislation

are put in place, while future marriage discrimination amendments are kept at bay.

- Indiana Equality is mounting a three-year campaign to expand the number of Hoosier communities with LGBT protections in their human rights ordinances. Partners include Lambda Legal, the Indiana AFL-CIO, the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana, and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.
- Nationwide, a record number of out LGBT officials were elected, including a third openly gay member of the U.S. House of Representatives. Our country has come far from the days of Harvey Milk.
- Three major bills await action by the new Congress. The Matthew Shepard



Hate Crime Act, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), and the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT) are likely to expire in the current congressional session, but are expected to be dealt with in the newly elected Congress.

CCR represents Indiana Equality in the Lafayette-West Lafayette area. See www.nlci.com/ccr or write CCR, P.O. Box 2461, West Lafayette, IN 47906.

Randy Studt is Indiana Equality State Chair

Tippecanoe County Ally Network Fosters Awareness and Understanding

by Kelly Leonard

As our community becomes increasingly welcoming to and inclusive of all individuals, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, it becomes especially necessary to raise the awareness of our workforce, government leaders, non-profit volunteers, faith communities, friends, and family members. Last spring, local organizations and individuals formed a partnership to address this need.

The group's current focus is a series of training seminars covering a wide range of topics, from health and education to legal issues and relationships. The training program is targeted to begin January 25, 2009.

Founding partners of the Tippecanoe County Ally Network include Pride

Lafayette, Inc.; Citizens for Civil Rights; and the Lafayette/Tippecanoe County chapter of PFLAG. These groups invite other organizations and individuals to join the mission to enhance awareness, foster understanding, and ensure the safety of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex.

Each partnering organization will be asked to contribute its special skills and expertise in conducting one (or more) of the seminars. This unprecedented partnership will strengthen ties with allies while engaging the greater community by increasing awareness and improving the quality of life for everyone.

Allies may support us in one or more ways. Please consider an organizational or individual commitment to assist with the planning and conducting of training sessions; organizational or individual monetary support; and/or participation in and completion of the training program. For the latest information about the Tippecanoe County Ally Network, please visit our page on the Pride Lafayette web site: pridelafayette.org/allies.

Kelly Leonard is Vice-President of Pride Lafayette, Inc.



Pride Lafayette, Inc., is a 501(c)3 registered organization aimed at supporting and strengthening the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) community of the Lafayette, Indiana area. Our focus is on fostering a sense of community pride, celebrating the diversity of our community, and engaging in service projects that support local citizens and create bonds among volunteers.

Pride Lafayette Quarterly

Pride Lafayette • 658 Main St., Suite 218, Lafayette, IN 47901 • 765-423-7579 • www.pridelafayette.org • <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/pridelafayette>

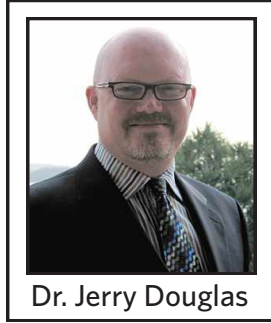
The *Pride Lafayette Quarterly* is published four times a year.

To be on our mailing list for a FREE copy, please send your mailing information to [Pride Lafayette, PO Box 4221, Lafayette, IN 47903](mailto:info@pridelafayette.org) or to info@pridelafayette.org

Bryan Bell - Editor-In-Chief
Marjie Gold-Vukson - Managing Editor
Michael Behrens - Layout & Design
Greg Seiters - Distribution
Printing by *CopyMat*

The views presented in the articles are not necessarily the opinion of Pride Lafayette, Inc., or Pride Lafayette Quarterly. We have MANY friends and allies who support our organization through volunteering and may be pictured or mentioned in that capacity.

Confidentially, Dr. Jerry...



Dr. Jerry Douglas

I've been seeing this girl for a while. She is pressuring me into not using protection for oral sex, but I'm worried that I can still be at risk for getting a sexually transmitted infection.

Oral sex can transmit gonorrhea, herpes, human papilloma virus (HPV), and syphilis. If you share toys, there is also the risk of chlamydia, trichomonas, and yeast. The risk of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) transmission is lower, but not impossible.

So, just like straight couples and gay men, lesbians also have to be aware of sexually transmitted disease (STD) and practice safer sex. When engaging in oral sex, dental dams can reduce the chance of transmission of STDs by preventing skin and mucus membrane contact. Toys can be covered with a condom and should be changed between partners.

Remember, the more sexual

partners, the higher the risk. Women should consider STD testing periodically if they are not monogamous. Testing for gonorrhea, chlamydia, and HPV can be done during an annual pap smear. Blood testing for HIV and syphilis can also be done at that time. When in doubt, get tested.

Stay well, *Dr. Jerry*

Dr. Jerry Douglas is a board certified family physician with Clarian Arnett in Lafayette, Indiana.

Do you have a medical question for Dr. Jerry? Please send it to info@pridelafayette.org. Confidentiality will be honored.

She says that lesbians don't really have to worry about that stuff. Is she right?

Unfortunately, no. While lesbian sex is lower-risk sex, it's certainly not "no risk" sex.

Evening of Giving Benefits Local Organizations

by Staff Writer

More than 40 local not-for-profit organizations participated in the 2008 Simon Evening of Giving on Sunday, November 23, at Tippecanoe Mall. Simon Malls have hosted the charity fundraising event nationally for years; this is Tippecanoe Mall's second year to open its doors after hours for the cause.

Shoppers took advantage of store discounts by purchasing \$10 admission tickets. Richard Markoff, Executive Director of the Simon Youth Foundation, noted that \$7 of the ticket price goes directly to the

local charities and \$3 helps the foundation provide scholarships for at-risk youth. Pride Lafayette volunteers sold nearly 60 tickets, netting the organization close to \$400 from pre-event sales.

Pride Lafayette displayed an information booth prominently near the mall kiosk in the center court. Several people examined Pride's photos, brochures, and pamphlets. President Bryan Bell noted that the mall was much busier than it had been during the 2007 event. "One of our goals is to educate the public about the Lafayette LGBTI community," Bell said. "The visibility we were given was excellent. Many have looked at the display and smiled or stopped to learn more about

Pride Lafayette's mission and activities."

During the evening, shoppers were treated to free food from local restaurants and entertainment from groups including Tippecanotes and the Wabash Valley Youth Symphony. Information booths from the various organizations and a silent auction rounded out the evening, which was a great success.

Markoff said, "For the people who are coming, they have an evening of shopping all to themselves, they get free food, they get free entertainment, and they get deep discounts from the merchants who remain open. It's just an awful lot of fun."

Delta Lambda Phi Hosts 9th Annual Purdue Drag Show

by Christy Cooper

In 1999, when the Purdue University chapter of Delta Lambda Phi launched what would later become an annual drag show, it did so to a rather humble audience turnout. Quite a contrast to 2008's three-hour event held at Purdue's Loeb Playhouse, a venue chosen to accommodate the 550 people expected to attend. The first one hundred people at the door to bring a canned good for DLP's food drive, wear their Greek letters, or dress up as a drag king or queen received a \$1 refund on their \$9 ticket purchase. The dollars came in handy when co-emcee Monica Masters (Miss Ohio USA at Large 2002) reminded the audience that

"Tipping is not a crime, it's a city in China," encouraging the crowd to tip the drag queens generously.

In addition to Monica Masters, the drag queens at this year's event included Samantha Styles (Miss Ohio USA at Large 2006), Jade (Miss Ohio America 2007), Stephanie Sexton (Miss Ohio International 2003), Lady Angelica (Miss Ohio Entertainer of the Year 2005), and Akasha O'hera Reynolds (Miss Ohio USA 2008). Styles and Masters have served as the show's emcees every year since its inception.

Participation was a significant part of the drag show. In addition to their involvement in a best and worst dressed drag king and queen contest, appreciative audience members lined up at the edge of the stage to offer the drag queens dollar bills—usually by hand, but

occasionally by mouth, or belt buckle. The queens poked fun at audience members throughout the evening, making audience members laugh, clap, and shout in response. The performers also exchanged non-stop banter amongst themselves.

One audience member "of a certain age" noted that the show was not one of illusionists who presented themselves as real ladies, real queens, but as one of entertainers who emphasized the dress-up, the drag. Less regal, perhaps, and more raunchy, but the young audience ate it up.

Christy Cooper is the newest member of Pride Lafayette's board of directors.

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
JANUARY 2009					HAPPY NEW YEAR OFFICE CLOSED New Year's Day	Community Center Office Hours 6-8 P.M. 2	3
	Sunday Brunch Bunch 11 A.M. 4	5	Community Center Office Hours 6-8 P.M. 6 PL Board Meeting 6:30-7:30 P.M.	7	Diversity Roundtable 11:30 A.M. 8 Community Center Office Hours 6-8 P.M. Technology Committee 6:30-7:30 P.M. Drinking Liberally 7-9 P.M.	PL Game Night 6-10 P.M. 9	10
	Sunday Brunch Bunch 11 A.M. 11	12	Community Center Office Hours 6-8 P.M. 13	14	Community Center Office Hours 6-8 P.M. 15 Coming Out Discussion Group 6-7 P.M. Tippecanoe Co. Ally Network 7-8 P.M. Drinking Liberally 7-9 P.M.	Community Center Office Hours 6-8 P.M. 16	17
	Sunday Brunch Bunch 11 A.M. 18	19 <small>Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday (observed)</small>	Community Center Office Hours 6-8 P.M. 20 PL Volunteers Meeting 6:30-7:30 P.M.	21	Community Center Office Hours 6-8 P.M. 22 Drinking Liberally 7-9 P.M.	Community Center Office Hours 6-8 P.M. 23 Monthly Dinner 7 P.M.	24
	Sunday Brunch Bunch 11 A.M. 25	26 <small>Chinese New Year</small>	Community Center Office Hours 6-8 P.M. 27 CCR Monthly Meeting 7-8 P.M.	28	Community Center Office Hours 6-8 P.M. 29 Drinking Liberally 7-9 P.M.	Community Center Office Hours 6-8 P.M. 30 5th Friday Carry-In Dinner During Office Hours	31

SUNDAY BRUNCH BUNCH is a group that meets at area restaurants every Sunday. They meet at 11 A.M. for brunch from October through March and 7 P.M. for dinner from April through September. Locations are announced weekly via the email listserv.

CITIZENS FOR CIVIL RIGHTS is a political and social action group focused on preserving and protecting the civil rights of all members of the Greater Lafayette community. CCR's monthly meeting is held at the Pride Lafayette Community Center.

COMMUNITY CENTER OFFICE HOURS are a time to come on down to the Pride Lafayette Community Center and learn about our organization, hang out, play games, and have fun in a safe and accepting place!

PL BOARD MEETING is held each month for individuals to bring ideas, concerns, and suggestions to the board of directors of Pride Lafayette. This meeting is open to anyone. Items for the agenda should be sent to president@pridelafayette.org by the Monday immediately prior to the meeting.

PL VOLUNTEERS are the core of our organization. Click onto www.pridelafayette.org/volunteers.html for details.

DRINKING LIBERALLY meets Thursdays at the Lafayette Brewing Company. Attendees believe that community-building and grassroots organizing shouldn't be a chore; it should be fun. They have a great time at their weekly meet ups, but they also have a political and social impact on the community. For more information email lafayette@drinkingliberally.org.

GAME NIGHT is our once-monthly evening when we go all out! We play cards and games, and stay until at least 10 P.M. Everyone is welcome to come out and join the fun! Cards Night is held at the Pride Lafayette Community Center.

DIVERSITY ROUNDTABLE is a group that provides diversity leadership within Lafayette, West Lafayette, and Tippecanoe County and promotes strategies to achieve a culture that values diversity as evidenced by attitudes, policies, and practices. Everyone from the general public is invited to attend. There is no membership requirement. They meet at the YWCA at 605 North 6th St., Lafayette from 11:30 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

MONTHLY DINNER NIGHT is a gathering at an area restaurant. Meet new people and dine with friends. See our calendar for information about each month's destination. Everyone is welcome!

TIPPECANOE COUNTY ALLY NETWORK is a group planning for the upcoming allies training program, a community effort to educate advocates about LGBTI issues.

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE is open to anyone interested in helping with the technology needs of Pride Lafayette.

5TH FRIDAY CARRY-IN is a time to gather and share a meal at the Pride Lafayette Community Center. Bring a dish to share if you're able and come join us for an evening of networking, food, and games.