



Inside this Issue:

Spotlight: Rob Crosman 2
 HRA Hires New Administrator. 3
 HRA Efforts Improve Radio Talk. 3
 Renew Your Membership 4

Providing educational experiences to help understand and interrupt the cycle of racism.

Spring 2009 | Vol. 12 Issue 1

Upcoming HRA and other Community Events:

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

May 19th - HRA Monthly Steering Committee Meeting (3rd Tuesday of each month)

May 26th – Community Dialogue on Race and Diversity, with featured speaker Dr. Martin Brokenleg 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at UAA Wendy Williamson; Free!

May 28-July 2 – Thursday nights, HRA’s “Building Alliances to End Racism” course begins.

June 16th – HRA Monthly Steering Committee Meeting

June 19th - Juneteenth at Delaney Park Strip, Free public Event. For more information call 276-4118.

June 13-21 - PrideFest, Anchorage PrideFest 2009.

July 4 - Parade. Bridge Builders encourages the creation of numerous floats celebrating the contributions of ethnic communities. Call 277-1882 for details.

August 15 - Bridge Builders Gala Awards Banquet & Ball, Saturday evening at the Captain Cook Hotel. For tickets/information call 277-1882.

Dr. Brokenleg Leads Community Dialogue on Race and Diversity

Dr. Martin Brokenleg, of the First Nations Ministry and Theology at the Vancouver School of Theology, will speak at a free public forum at UAA on race and diversity, Tuesday evening, May 26.

Dr. Brokenleg is an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux nation of South Dakota. His degrees are in psychotherapy and theology, used during a long career of teaching college courses on psychology and Lakota culture. Dr. Brokenleg is the co-author of “Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Our Hope for the Future.” He is also the co-developer of a process he calls the “Circle of Courage,” which works toward generosity, belonging, independence, and



mastery.

Dr. Brokenleg will be brought to Anchorage by a unique coalition of local agencies and organizations in the first of what the group hopes to be an annual visit by a seminal thinker in the areas of education, diversity, and community building. Calling itself ACDP, or the Anchorage Community Diversi-

[Continued on page 2](#)

New HRA Course Begins May 28th! Sign Up Now!

Do you want to help yourself and help our community heal the wounds of racism? Then a new six-week course, “Building Alliances to End Racism,” is for you. The class is available for those who seek graduate level college credit (1 credit) as well as those who do not need the credit option.

Long time educator and dedicated HRA Steering Committee member Dennis Arashiro will teach the course every Thursday evening from May 28 through July 2, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

The class will be held at UAA’s Rasmuson Hall (west of the Sports Complex near the center of campus), Room 207a.

The cost of the course is \$69 for tuition, plus \$50 for non-members and \$25 for members (materials and lab fees). Those not opting for credit pay only the \$50/\$25 fee.

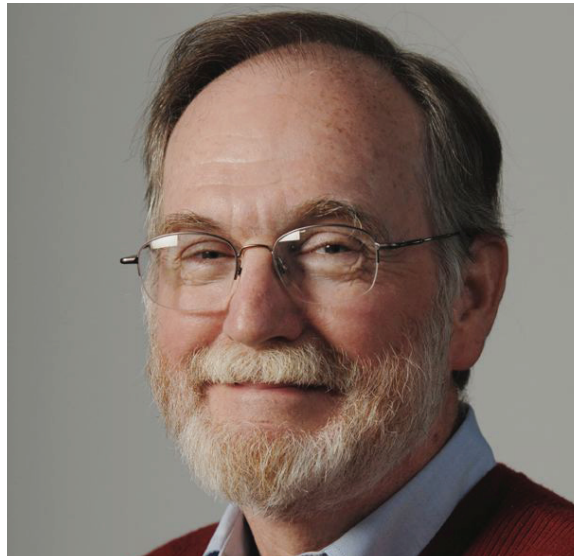
Anchorage School District teachers can check the district’s MyLearningPlan website for details on enrollment. Others can contact Dennis directly at 770-6981.

• S P O T L I G H T •

One day while teaching at the University of Alaska a student called him a racist and everything changed.

Rob grew up with a father whose academic career moved the family to far away places like Mexico City and Germany. Part of his youth was spent in Washington DC during a period when schools were still segregated. "I attended private Quaker schools where many Presidents' kids later attended," says Rob. The irony, he points out, is that that the historically equitable and progressive Quakers' school was also segregated. He was not oblivious to social issues, but he wasn't compelled to act on the racial inequities around him either. "I never saw these things as my issues or as my problem." Rob lived a studious life and dutifully sent out applications to satisfy a requirement while writing a novel, never expecting to receive a call from Alaska.

In 1985 Rob settled into a new life teaching English and Literature at the university. Eleven years later, the peace that had become his life was dis-



Rob Crosman

rupted by one word. While teaching Rob was confronted by a student who called him a racist. Rob was stunned. Another African-American student on campus came to Rob's defense and assured the disgruntled student that he was mistaken. The student apologized, but Rob was still disturbed and wondered what was behind the comment. His self-evaluation pushed him to explore issues around racism. He ended up in a life-changing workshop.

"Racism will be healed when

white men take initiative to heal it," said a facilitator at a "Talking Anchorage" forum in 1996. These words resonated with Rob. He attended many forums on race, and the discussion groups that formed afterwards. Out of this involvement Rob came to realize that he "possessed racist attitudes of which he was unaware." He now felt compelled to take action.

Rob became one of the founders of Healing Racism in Anchorage in 1997, and completed HRA's first course that year.

Since then he has been actively involved with educating others about racism. Besides his commitment as a board member with HRA, he is active with the National Coalition Building Institute; a consortium of universities building diversity workshops on campuses. He has begun co-leading workshops on campus and with HRA.

Rob is helping people to see what he once had to learn to see. Rob is our Spotlight this issue because he shows us that one can leave his comfort level to learn and to change. We honor his journey.

Dr. Brokenleg continued from Page 1

ty Project, the group is spearheaded by the Anchorage School District and Healing Racism in Anchorage.

Other project partners include Bridge Builders, the YWCA, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, UAA, the Alaska Native Heritage Center, the Municipality of Anchorage Mayor's Office of Equal Opportunity, the Alaska Railroad, the Sheraton Anchorage

Hotel, and AFACT.

While in Anchorage, Dr. Brokenleg will engage in a number of activities with the partner organizations, including a training breakfast for workshop leaders, the keynote address at the annual ASD Teacher Academy on May 27, and facilitation of a credit course as part of the academy. He will also meet with interns at the Alaska Native Heritage Center, and lead a diversity

session at the Mayor's Office of Equal Opportunity, and attend a potluck with AFACT members.

The May 26 community dialogue is free and open to the public. Margo Bellamy, Anchorage School District EEO Director, explained, "The evening will offer community members an opportunity to participate in a meaningful and authentic dialogue about race and diversity."

Welcome Diane Benson

Healing Racism in Anchorage is pleased to announce that long time HRA Steering Committee board member Diane Benson has been hired to serve as HRA Administrator.

In her new position, Diane will oversee general operations including fundraising, the website, the newsletter, membership recruitment and communication, PR, and consultation with the Steering Committee.

Diane comes to us with a long history of public and community relations skills, managerial and leadership experience, and cultural and advocacy knowledge.

And she has skills and experience that might surprise people. For instance, PBS featured Diane in an American Experience program about the Trans-Alaska pipeline construction, during which Diane was a truck driver. And before she received her Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing, Diane worked as writer, researcher and lay-out artist for a number of groups including United Tribes of Alaska (AI-TC), Tundra Times, AFN, and North Pacific Rim. In the 90's, believing in Alaskans' acting talent, she ran Northern Stars Talent Agency promoting and hiring out Alaska's talent around the nation and the world.

Diane has worked with hundreds of volunteers to great success, including service with our newly elected mayor as the Cultural Coordinator for the 1996 Arctic Winter Games. Besides running for office (readers no doubt remember her as a strong contender for Alaska's Congressional seat in 2008), she has dedicated herself to projects involving healing sexual abuse.

Throughout her life Diane has volunteered with non-profits, beginning with a board member appointment to the Fairbanks Native Association at the age of eighteen, to serving today on local and statewide boards; namely veteran's and women's organizations. Diane is also an MOA Commissioner on Americans with Disabilities.

We are thrilled to have her. Look for more and better communication about the good works HRA is doing, thanks to Diane Benson.

To receive the newsletter or make submissions, contact:

Healing Racism in Anchorage
PO Box 92086
Anchorage, Alaska 99509-2086

healingracism@gmail.com
ph: (907) 561-3238

HRA EFFORTS IMPROVE RADIO TALK

Update on Clear Channel and the Anchorage DJ's

"Safety – safety and humor – are what made it all work," mused Gary Donovan, Vice President/Market Manager of Clear Channel Radio, as he discussed the five-session workshop that HRA and the Alaska Native Heritage Center (ANHC) conducted a year ago.

Hurtful comments by two of KBFX's most popular on-air personalities prompted the workshop series. Charged with promoting racism at worst, and extreme insensitivity at best, the company asked ANHC for help -- which in turn contacted Healing Racism in Anchorage to partner in leading 12 of the company's managers through racism awareness to action plans.

This past May 7, a year after the workshop series, the group met for an hour to look back at the experience and reflect on changes in themselves and the station.

Participants agreed that the experience left a mark on them – both the trauma of suddenly finding themselves in the cross-hairs of public censure, and the process of learning why the remarks created such an outcry. There have been changes, Donovan reported: a local advisory board is in the process of being established; a revamped local public affairs program will be added to the programming later this month; and the stations have offered to help craft and air PSAs about community activities, including some related to diversity.

The consensus was that the workshop series was precisely what was needed. Dena Munroe explained, "People ask me: 'Wasn't it awful having to go through the workshop?' I say, 'No, it was a very positive experience.'" Others expressed gratitude and all declared themselves far more aware of what's going on in the community. Chris Wilcox noted, "Now when I see stories in the paper about Native-oriented programs at East and Bartlett High Schools, I understand what they're about and why they're so good."

Andy Lohman echoed other staff members, "We've moved from a defensive posture of trying to figure out what we can't do that might rile people up, to a proactive stance of looking for ways we [can help the community]." ANHC's Vice President of Operations, Debbie Call, summed up the outcome: "You've become community builders now."

But no change in behavior or attitudes could have come, all agreed, without plenty of good will, a non-judgmental workshop environment, and large doses of humor.

update your membership!

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL (MARK ONE)

- Student or Senior (60+) (\$7)
- Regular (\$20 to \$99)
- Contributor (\$100 to \$249)
- Supporter (\$250 to \$499)
- Sustainer (\$500 to \$999)
- Benefactor (\$1000 to \$2499)
- Healer (\$2500 and above)

Our funding comes from three sources, workshop fees, donations (and grants dedicated to specific programs), and membership dues.

You can help HRA meet its mission by sending an unrestricted gift or becoming a member at one of the following levels. All donations and memberships are tax deductible. Memberships are for the calendar year. Make checks payable to Healing Racism in Anchorage and mail to HRA Membership Chair, PO Box 92086, Anchorage, AK 99509. Sorry, we cannot accept credit card payments.

Check out our Website:

www.anchoragehealingracism.org

It's changing and getting better!

• F E A T U R E D Q U O T E •

“Any system that calls for Natives to leave their Nativeness at the door is doomed to failure. If the education system demands that Native children leave their identity at the door, the system is doomed.”

Byron Mallot when speaking at an education conference.



Healing Racism in Anchorage

PO Box 92086

Anchorage, AK 99509-2086

To:

www.anchoragehealingracism.org