

VERMONT'S VOICE FOR THE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY

# OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS

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## More Than Drag Barony of All Vermont Celebrates Third Year of Seving Its Community

The Baron (aka Kris Rowley, standing) and Her Regal Highness Dowager  
Baroness II Marina de la Mer - Amore Della Notte (aka John Edwards).



BY BARON KRISTOFF RAIMONDO  
REEVES SOUSA FUGETT DELLA  
NOTTE

I am the reigning Baron of the Barony of All Vermont and a drag king. Sounds very strange, doesn't it? Well, it is. This organization is definitely on the 'left' side of the norm. Actually, even when you understand what is going on, it still appears a bit wacky.

Put in its most business-like terms, the Barony of All Vermont is a non-profit organization that raises money for other non-profit organizations in the state of Vermont and the Upper Valley of New Hampshire. We support diversity in our membership, welcoming gay, lesbian, straight, bi, queer, questioning, and transgender individuals. We are a part of an international organization called the Imperial Court System that includes members from all across Canada, the United States, and Mexico.

In reality we're not so different from other benevolent charity organizations and clubs, especially the ones who have costumes or uniforms and esoteric rankings and feature trade-mark fundraising events. Think about Lions and Moose and Elks and Masons. Think about the guys in fezzes with their teeny-tiny cars and motorbikes in parades.

The court system has been in existence for about 35 years and has raised several hundred thousand dollars to give to non-profit organizations that, in turn, help individual communities. The Imperial Court System is the third largest non-profit fundraising organization in the country. The organizations we choose to give the money to are as diverse as our membership, ranging from child-related organizations to those dealing with HIV/Aids, Breast Cancer, and many other issues.

Our primary purpose is to raise money for charities. Our secondary purpose is to demonstrate to the general public that diversity is not something to fear. People from all walks of life can live together in harmony. As a result of our fundraising activities there is a third function of the Barony of All Vermont: to have fun. We raise money in a variety of ways and always have fun doing it.

Yes, this organization is very campy. The general structure is taken from the Royal Courts of England. We in Vermont are a Barony, which means we are a young group, only three years old, and still have to prove to the Imperial Council, the governing body of the court system, that we can sustain the group on our own. Our "Mother Court" is the Imperial Court of New York City.

Each member of the Court gets a title, which depends on if a group is a Court, Barony, or Ducal. The figureheads or "monarchs" are, respectively, Emperor and Empress, Baron and Baroness, and Grand Duke and Grand Duchess. Ranks within each group vary and members rise through them according to how much they want to do in the organization. Monarchs are elected to their position either by the group itself or, in some instances, by the community at large. Members pay an annual membership fee to join and fill out an application. We welcome any and all to join us!

All members volunteer their time and efforts and may do as much or as little as they wish in the group, depending on their personal schedules. Each member pays for his or her travel costs and the cost of 'fabulous' costumes and jewelry. When an event raises money, the Barony keeps 20 percent to cover operating expenses: renting the hall, paying the DJ, some props, and other expenses. The rest of the money raised goes to the event's designated beneficiary.

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