

VANCOUVER
PWA
COALITION

Newsletter

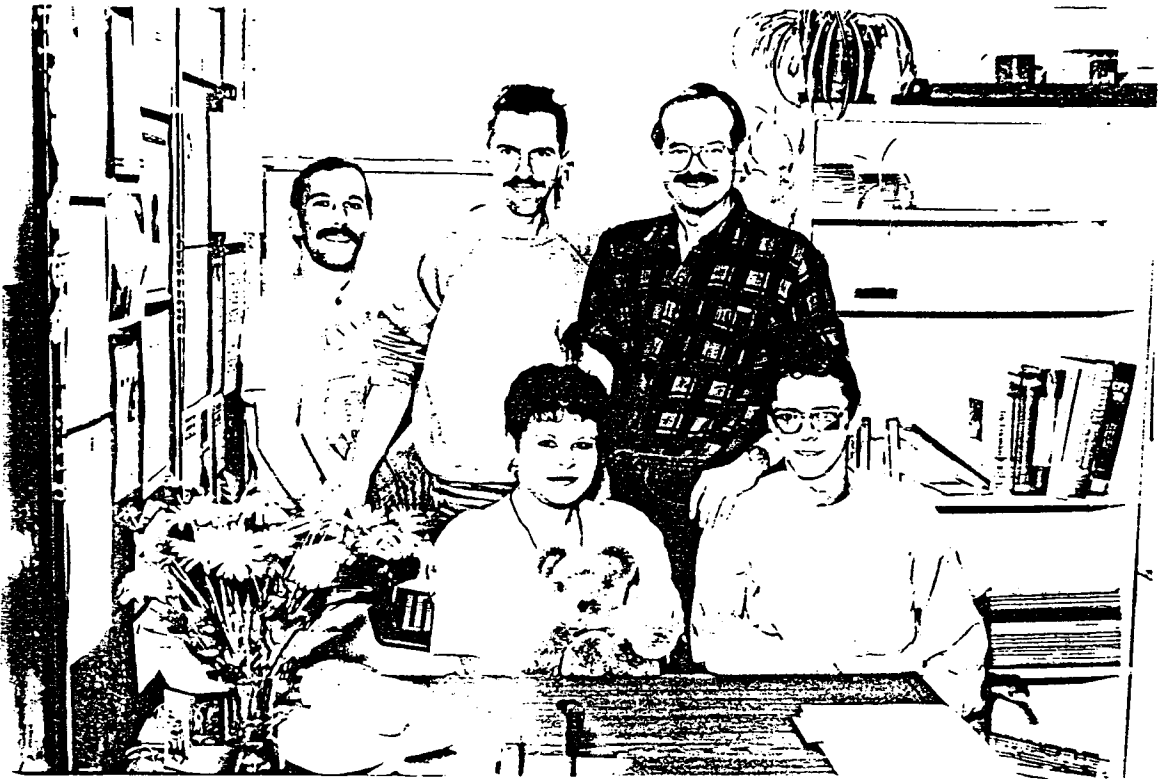


PHOTO BY DANIEL COLLINS

In our new office at last!

From left to right, top: John, Warren, Kevin
bottom: Sharon, Benoit.

Opening Space

Hi! Right here in your hot little hands you hold the first ever issue of our newsletter. We, in our collective wisdom, decided it was time to get out information on what we were doing in a more systematic and organized way (well, at least we're trying). It's all part of carrying out our aims and objectives, which are broadly speaking, to improve the quality of our lives in any way we can, whether through alternative therapies, group support, political activity, and so on ad infinitum.

Many of our activities, of course, require money. So, many hugs, kisses, and sincere gratitudes to all those wonderful people and organizations who have contributed funds to us; especially since they have all been far too tasteful to ask what we're actually doing with the money that they have so generously provided. Just so you can stop wondering (and we know you were wondering); here's what we've been doing with the money since our organization was formed in March:

- The demonstration in Victoria for a Viral Lab required money for transportation and signs. (Have you noticed we are now going to get a Viral Lab?)
- A celebration dinner for those of us who have survived more than a year. (Not a large gathering at that time.)
- Petitions for the release of experimental drugs; which led to sending two of our members to Ottawa to speak with the Minister of Health. (Experimental drugs will be released in the near future.)

- Networking with groups and individuals in other cities.
- Alternative therapy workshops i.e. showing of Louise Hay video and discussion.
- Office rental and office equipment.
- Library of audio and video cassettes, and books.
- Rental of facilities for Tai Chi and Healing Circle.
- Producing the Newsletter.
- Providing funding for any P.W.A. or P.W.A.R.C. to attend workshops of their choice.

Future plans include more workshops, retreats, sending delegates to the National A.I.D.S. Conference; and, in case this is beginning to sound too heavy, we also want to set up a fun squad to hunt up worthy but hopelessly frivolous events.

So, if you want more information, or if you want to get involved, call the office. We'll be more than happy to help you, (That's on our good days; on our bad days, just leave a message.)

GALA OPENING OF THE NEW P.W.A. OFFICE
WILL BE HELD SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1986,
BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 1:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.
at SUITE #1 - 1170 BUTE ST.,
683-3381

Drug Info

AZIDOTHYIMIDINE (AZT)

An anti-viral drug developed by the BURROUGHS AND WELLCOME Co. in the USA.

First heard about this drug in the October 85 issue of LANCET. Since then, it has been used in strictly controlled clinical trials in the US. This drug seems to be the most promising substance so far. It does not kill the virus or cure AIDS, but it does seriously disrupt the growth of the virus, on the genetic level. Patients treated with this substance seem to respond well - general condition improves. The virus decreases in the body. The drug is taken orally, and does have side effects: headaches, upset stomach, disruption of white blood cell count in the bone marrow, anemia. Recent news from the US say that the substance may be available for more wide spread use by November. It has been tested only on PCP patients. As for Canada, we hope that if it is released in the US, it will be made available in Canada. A lot depends on the decision of the head office of BURROUGHS AND WELLCOME - they make the last choice if Canada gets it. The Coalition continues to lobby Ottawa to secure this substance. We may also have to lobby BURROUGHS AND WELLCOME. If we are successful, the drug may be in use by January for trials. For more information, contact the coalition, or Dr. Karen Gelmon or Dr. Hillary Wass, at 684-4228.

RIBAVIRIN

An anti-viral substance produced by "VIRATECK" in southern California, a subsidiary of ICN DRUG Co.

First heard about Ribavirin from the September issue of New York Native. Some AIDS patients were trying this drug along with an immune booster called Isoprinosine. Both drugs were not available in the US or Canada, but were obtainable in Mexico. It was thought that in strong doses, the Ribavirin would disrupt the growth of the AIDS virus while the Isoprinosine gave a kick to the immune system. I took this drug, smuggled from Mexico, for four months (oral medication: 1800 mg. of Ribavirin and 3 grams of Isoprinosine daily - 3 weeks on, 1 week off). I experienced few, if any side effects, though its main problem is anemia, disruption of the red blood cells, reversible when drug usage is stopped. Since there is no viral lab in BC yet, it is not possible to test results of the drug on my body. Because of constant lobbying on the part of doctors and the coalition, Ottawa has released Ribavirin for use in Canada, on compassionate grounds. If interested, contact our office, or get a referral to see Dr. Karen Gelmon, who is handling the drug. Cost of this drug is not yet clear.

Canadian AIDS Conference in Toronto Nov. 14-16/86

ACTION/DIRECTIONS

Join others in Canada who are working on AIDS prevention programs, support services, public education and public policy issues. The conference will provide an overview of services being provided in Canada, and of ongoing issues being

faced by service providers and those affected by AIDS. Action/Directions will be an opportunity to share information and resources, to clarify health concerns regarding AIDS, and to learn from the experiences and insights of those working in the field. We are quite excited about the Vancouver P.W.A. Coalition's participation in the upcoming Canadian AIDS Conference. It is our hope that we can link up with the newly formed Toronto P.W.A. Coalition and jointly act as facilitators for a workshop on P.W.A. Coalitions, their formation and place as integral components of AIDS organizations across Canada. At present, we have four delegates, who will be in attendance during the conference. Warren Jensen, Taavi Nurmela, Sharon Holtzberg (does not have AIDS but is of invaluable service to us) and myself, Kevin Brown. We leave on November 12 and return on November 19. A full report will be available in the December newsletter.

Life-Aids

An evening of sharing needs, fears, hopes and therapies, for P.W.A.s, ARCs and their supporters. People with backgrounds in healing, counselling and alternative therapies attend those meetings. A place to explore different ways of coping with AIDS. Every Thursday at 8 PM, at the Healing Center, 1730 Victoria Drive. For details, call William at 687-4225.

Toronto PWA's Organize

Received great news, several weeks ago, that a new P.W.A. Coalition has been created in Toronto. The spokesperson, Jim Bozyk, told us they were so impressed by the Vancouver P.W.A. Coalition that their support group was inspired to form their own coalition patterned after ours! Congratulations were immediately sent off, along with a cheque for \$200. to help them get started, and we hope to build solid ties with this "sister" group in Toronto. It's nice to know that a great idea can catch on - who knows, there may be a National Association of Persons with AIDS, Canada, in time. Their address:

Toronto P.W.A. Coalition
Box 1065, Station Q
Toronto, Ontario, M4T 2P2

News from the U.S.A.

NAPWA- National Association of People with AIDS (USA).

During August, I was fortunate enough to be able to attend the initial NAPWA meetings, being conducted in San Francisco at the same time as the Gay Games II. NAPWA is almost entirely composed of persons with AIDS, who were representatives of all the different coalitions from across the U.S. They met to form a strong unified organization that would actively promote the needs and desires of persons with AIDS in the U.S. They formed principles of:

- 1- self empowerment of P.W.A.'s
- 2- refusing the victim role
- 3- becoming equal partners with health care workers and those providing social services
- 4- promoting educational programs
- 5- taking control of their lives again
- 6- helping to find solutions to problems surrounding AIDS and the public's perception of AIDS

Their chairperson is Bobby Reynolds.

Louise Hay

in Portland Nov. 15 & 16th

This metaphysical counsellor has benefited many people with AIDS and ARC. If you are interested in attending the weekend workshop, we can help arrange billeting for you in Portland. As for the listed \$110. cost for the workshop, the organizers in Portland have assured us that they want Vancouver area PWA's to attend their workshop, whether they can pay or not. So don't let money stand in your way! Broke? We'll pay your airfare to Portland... and back! We can also sponsor 6 broke PWA's to attend this workshop. Call the office for details.

Healing Circle

The coalition invites you to an evening of relaxation, meditation and visualization. PWA's, ARC's, friends and families gather to share their healing energy, every Sunday at 7:30 PM, at the VGLCC, 1170 Bute St. Everybody is welcome. Call the coalition for details.

Legal Services

Free consultations available to PWA's and ARC's.

Tai Chi

Learn the ancient chinese "meditation in motion" and get some light exercise too! Classes are free Wednesdays and Fridays, 7:30 to 9:30 PM, at the VGLCC, 1170 Bute St. These are open to anyone. The way the class is structured you may join it any week and begin to learn the Tai Chi movement

Explore Alternative Therapies on your own

Have you found a practitioner, workshop or treatment that you think might help you to stay or get well? The coalition will sponsor you to take your chosen course to better health up to a maximum off \$200. Call for details.

BABA TAAVI'S

Spiritual Corner

Thought for the day: don't take life too seriously, you'll never get out of it alive.