



Newsletter

THIRD YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Well this month marks three years since my diagnosis. What is it like to be alive three years after being told that I have AIDS? Since I haven't been dead yet for three years, its hard to make a comparison (Sorry, all my emotional and spiritual growth hasn't changed my warped sense of humour).

Death seems to be one of the major issues facing us in regard to our condition; and while I no longer view it as "negative", it certainly wasn't a welcome thought when I was diagnosed. Though after the initial shock wore off, I had to admit there was a certain irony to the situation. About a year before diagnosis I had finally come out of a prolonged midlife crisis (upon reflection, I must admit my life seems to have been a series of existential crisis), a time of feeling powerless, depressed and all those other wonderful dramatic scenerios. So when I received the news, I thought, why now, why not a year ago when I might have appreciated it? And then I thought, oh shit, have I sabotaged myself again? Because if I have, I've really done it this time. So there I was, looking at my death; it seemed pretty inevitable, the whole issue of AIDS seemed (and still seems) to be surrounded by doom and gloom, especially by the medical establishment. Could a condition of this magnitude really be nature's way of telling me to drop dead? Anyway I decided no it wasn't (no one has ever accused me of being agreeable). I decided, that yes, with my past history I was responsible for my condition, and that yes, I could do something about it, and that even if I died from this (and I am going to die sometime anyway, and so are you, dear reader), I would live fully in the time I had. Which sounds noble (or stupid depending on how you look at it). I was lucky in that I had for some time been living a lifestyle in which attempting to live by spiritual principles was an important facet. I realized I had to put my money where my mouth was; for instance if I really believed I was being cared for by a Higher Power, I had to assume this experience would benefit me and it would be for the best no matter what happened.

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THIRD YEAR ANNIVERSARY CONT.

One could say (and ~~may~~ have) that I have a positive attitude, which is true (most of the time); "positive attitude" is a catchword (catchwords?) that people seem to use all the time as if it's a magical incantation. I found it took (and ~~takes~~ a lot of effort to develop and maintain positivity. Now I know that my having survived for three years makes me exceptional (so far; I don't think it will be that unusual in the near future), and I wish the experience meant I had lots of answers for others seeking to do the same. Well I don't think I have anything unique. I do think I have some things in common with other long term survivors of AIDS and other illnesses, notably cancer. Like them, I feel responsible for my life and health and am actively doing something about them in a holistic sense, that is mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. More specifically, I do a lot of meditation and visualization, and have taken courses and workshops in related areas. I feel that this has been the most help to me, but then, I feel in my case the emotional component is the biggest factor in my health. Nutritionally I've cut down on fats, sugars and salt, and I don't drink alcohol or caffeine; other than that, I have not done any special diets. I must admit I'm a bit more open minded when I consider special diets now; when I was first diagnosed, I looked at macrobiotics and thought maybe I would rather die. I take the usual vitamins and supplements, nothing elaborate. I exercise, doing weights and lots of walking. Along the way I've also done (or had done) reiki, massage therapy, psychic healing, hypnotherapy etc. Another very important thing for me has been my belonging to support groups, among them the P.W.A. Coalition; for me it's another case of putting my money where my mouth is; if I believe it's a good idea to have a support group, and if I want that support, I have to get involved. You know, after I made that decision that I wanted to live, it seemed that I received a lot of support in that decision.

People brought me positive articles, or talked about their own experience with life threatening illnesses; most of all they cared about me. I have personally never experienced rejection because of AIDS. What I have experienced is a lot of love. That's an overused word but it's the only one that seems to fit. A while ago, I was talking to an acquaintance whom I had not seen since diagnosis. In the course of our conversation I mentioned being diagnosed with AIDS, and she shared her bout with cancer. She had chosen a different approach than I had. When I mentioned that for me, these have been the best years of my life, she said "I don't think you're supposed to feel that way". Which made me think of how we chose our experience. Mine has been good. So here I am after three years, I still haven't been hospitalized or had any treatment or any other secondary infections; if it weren't for the fact that the occasional new lesion still appears, I would be in excellent physical health. Emotionally I feel better than I ever have before; I feel good about myself and about life. I feel as if every day is a gift (and it is, isn't it?). I know that I am loved and that I love. I consider myself very fortunate.

Taavi

TAI-CHI CLASSES GOING OUTDOORS

The Coalition's Tai-Chi classes will be held outdoors for the summer season. The classes are also moving from Friday nights to Sunday afternoons (1:30 pm). The meeting place for the group will still be at the VGLCC, 1170 Bute St. From there, we will go to the park or to the beach. When it rains, the classes will stay indoors, at the VGLCC. Call the office for more information.

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Coalition.

GET WELL/STAY WELL BY W.J.

Egg Licithin - Is AZT's image tarnished for you, especially when the greedy assholes who make it, seem dead set on making your wallet as anemic as your blood? Would you like to be taking SOMETHING, and find yourself in the only lineup in town, waiting for a date with B&W's little charmer, knowing full well what a toxic bitch she can be? PWA's in N.Y. are now offering an alternative "egg licithin" for \$200 per kilo. We won't need Sherlock Holmes to figure out that its really AL-721. You have to go to this guerrilla lab in person to get the stuff. No mail orders. Don't despair. Make it yourself! The home recipe is published in the March 9th, New York Native. I whipped some up in 10 minutes at a cost of \$1. per day. If you'd care for a more professional product, that's a published procedure available from your local Bio Med library. Two PWA's I know showed this procedure to an organic chemist. "Yea, I can make this", he said. Negotiations are under way for price and production. I'll keep you posted on the results. Gee, maybe Vancouver will have Canada's first guerrilla lab! Then we can join the more than 40 U.S. centres where this is going on. If you want photocopied info on this subject, send us a SASE. No fats, fems, cops or patent lawyers.

Syphilis & AIDS - Have you noticed all the articles in the N.Y. Native lately? In the March 16th issue, the N.Y. Committee of Concerned Physicians urge PWA's to get tested for syphilis since "all the clinical signs and symptoms associated with AIDS have also been described in syphilis". KS was first described by Kaposi in a group of syphilitic patients. Hmm. They say the standard VDRL is inaccurate. Get the FTA-ABS & MHA-TP instead. This stuck in my mind so I ran to the VD Clinic and asked for these two tests. I thought I'd have to beg for them but they were happy to help me, and no one freaked out when they knew I had AIDS. I read another article about

agressive penicillin treatment being used in W. Germany with great results. My tests came back negative. Shit. I'm back to AIDS.

Sunshine - Watch out for sunburn, girl, cause it'll leave your white cells tucked out for weeks. Even one trip to Electric Beach can depress your system. Of course, if Fake 'N Bake gets rid of your dermatitis, and you stop itching, you won't care about those white cells. If those little buggers can hide from HIV, they can survive anything.

PRAYERS ANSWERED

Dear God, thanks for the VCR. That angel called again today to say they have purchased the machine and will deliver it on Tuesday. He convinced his boss that it was a worthwhile project. They want to remain anonymous, which is fine by me. Now, Big G, since you know everything and everyone, please shower them with good karma for their generosity. And throw around a little of that Shiva dust for the rest of us. Happy Easter!

HOME CARE SERVICE

Although the P.W.A. Coalition does not provide any homecare services, Medox Health Services Inc. offers assistance to people on long term disabilities. They will prepare meals, clean your apartment, go grocery shopping and assist you in getting to doctors appointments when necessary. Depending on your monthly income they will charge you accordingly. If your monthly income is \$664. or less, per month, there will be no charge. If your monthly income is \$800. they will charge you \$2.26 per day that they visit. If you would like more information on these services, feel free to call our office.

Sharon Holtzberg

BABA TAAVI'S SPIRITUAL CORNER

There are many helpful signposts on the road of life; its too bad that so many of us are functionally illiterate.

FUNDRAISER

On April 5, 1987 Tony Vincent, assistant mgr. at Paul Y. Mansions (1150 Burnaby St.) held a fundraiser collecting donations, pennies from the fountain and pop and beer bottles from the tenants and friends. It was a huge success; \$877. was raised! Thankyou all for your donations and thank-you Tony for your work on this fundraiser and your caring.

VITAMIN B-12 SHOTS

I had my blood tested and found out my folic acid level was OK, but my vitamin B-12 level was below average. The last couple of weeks I've been tired and lacking in energy. Yesterday I got my first B-12 shot from my doctor and my energy level seems to be back to normal. I will be taking one shot per week for four weeks and then one a month. It will be interesting to see if there is a difference in my bloodwork.

Durb

CONSCIOUS LIVING, CONSCIOUS DYING

This was the theme of the weekend workshop with Stephen Levine I had the opportunity to attend early April in Seattle. Stephen Levine, like Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, has worked for many years with people in the process of dying. As well, he is considered a spiritual teacher by hundreds of people attending his workshops across the U.S. I had read Stephen Levine's book, "Who dies", a few months after being diagnosed with AIDS, a year and a half ago. At that time, I was reading a lot of "dying stuff". But "Who dies" rang a different bell, by making myself ask questions like: "Who or what dies when I physically die?", "Am I more than just a physical and emotional being?", "If there is something more permanent, how do I get to it, and how do I start the journey inwards?". On the bumpy road that often follows a diagnosis of AIDS,

those questions would help me create some space inside myself, some room for investigation. Learning to know myself, to be aware, to be "here now", were giving a new meaning to my life, a meaning I had lost while busy doing something else. From there, healing was now possible, whatever form the healing takes. Going into that journey has helped me to stay healthy, as much as the work I'm doing at the emotional and physical levels. The recent weekend with Stephen Levine has been another stepping stone. Questions were suggested by Stephen: "For what healing did I take this birth for?", "What is it that I have to heal in this life?". The idea of living in the present by dying to the previous moment and being open the next one, was present all weekend. John Lennon was quoted as saying that "life is what happens while you're busy making plans". Accepting oneself, opening one's heart and letting go of resistance, are also central to Stephen's teaching. As he beautifully said: "The further your heart opens, the further it will close. Open your heart to the fact it's going to close". Stephen also shows much compassion for the mind; "let it sink into your heart", he says. The workshop was mostly composed of question and answer periods and guided meditations. Stephen's great sense of humor also gives to his workshops a feeling of lightness. I think of him as a joyful person, and hope to be able to see him again in the future.

B.L.

HOLISTIC CTTEE. NEEDS INPUT

The Coalition's Holistic Committee is looking for new members. So far, the Committee has been in charge of the Alternative Therapy meetings. It also organized the Jason Serinus workshop (mid-February) and the weekend retreat at Galiano Island (1st weekend in May). If you have ideas for future workshops or activities, please leave a message for the Cttee. at our office.

WORKING WITH CRYSTALS

It has been well over two years since my being diagnosed, but before this awakening should I have ever told a friend that I purchased a new crystal, the response would have been "So you finally did buy that Baccarat vase you wanted at Birks?" Well the Jewish princess is still in me, except the values have changed slightly. The only crystals I speak about these days are the natural and smokey quartz kind and the list can continue. For many, owning a crystal these days is like buying a new Armani outfit at Holt's. Something that is the latest in chic... or a new topic to casually drop while having a drink with the girls. For those such as myself, and an even larger number of people, to work with these crystals can allow you to relax more freely and even to reach that outside energy that surrounds us all. The results can be amazing. Last year at one of the Coalition's Tuesday night open meetings our guest speaker was Lesely Grey, a woman who talked about crystals and their energies. My first opinion about this well dressed yet down to earth lady was total skepticism, which is how many friends react when I speak about my working with crystals. "What is this crap?" or even better, "How can holding a stone in my hand open me to a more spiritual level?" Sound familiar? Then I remembered what Louise Hay says about dropping all criticism, which is something I'm still working on. I did that evening, which opened me to a new teacher and a friend. I began seeing Lesely privately which she does in the calm surroundings of her home and most recently I was able to attend a six week crystal workshop she gives at the Healing Centre. Thirteen people attended, and these weren't the earth shoe types or the curious thinking they too could enrich their lives after seeing Out on a limb on t.v. We were there to learn... to experience... and to share. Each week working with a different crystal and opening up the various chakras of our bodies. And learn we did... experience... you bet.

Share... and plenty! Working with crystals is not a remedy or crutch for any type of illness or difficulty I myself and others may be facing. But my work with Lesely and by myself has given me the ability to reach a higher part of consciousness that helps let go of some of that mental garbage inside. The 1st steps in the healing process. I know for sure that I sleep more peacefully and my health has been extremely stable. So love yourself and put a crystal under your pillow. Your dreams may be sweeter (Baccarat vases, Armani outfits?). Or just a happier you. For more information on upcoming crystal workshops, or those who wish to meet privately with Lesely Grey, her phone number is available at our office.

B.B.

DONATIONS

Thanks to the following people and organizations who have donated money or services to the PWA Coalition in the past month. If we have missed anyone, our apologies and our heartfelt thanks.

James D. Trenholme, Larry Townsend, Brian Pattison, English Bay Bowling League, Douglas Davies, M.K. Blaker, Lorraine Cunningham, Mack's Leathers, Keith Johnston, Vancouver Crises Centre, D. Drache, King and Queen of Hearts Ball, Trash, Blair Smith, Daryl Carter, Zodiacs, Michael Soboto, Hugh Moreton, Jack (King of Hearts), Vancouver Men's Chorus, Actors Equity, Story Travel and John Kozachenko.

PERSONAL COLUMN

G.W.M., P.W.A. Couple of symptoms Would like to meet someone in similar situation, for Mutual Massage & Communication. Must be a positive thinker. Remember Play Safely! Reply to Drawer C, PWA Coalition 1170 Bute St., Vancouver.

IT HAPPENED TO ME AND IT COULD HAPPEN TO ALMOST ANYONE

Unfortunately we are all prone to making mistakes, some less than others, never the less it all boils down to being human and a part of our lives. In addition to this we have other human faults and shortcomings. We are all born with a great deal that is good in us, that some or most people tend to disregard when we falter. They seem to remember more our indiscretion rather than our good deeds. Somewhat similar to our so-called justice system. It's in fact there to protect and to govern the imposed laws of our constitution. This to me is justifiable. However this, like all other systems is not without faults. I was sentenced to a federal prison in Alberta due to pleading guilty to an illegal infraction. And I am in agreement that the sentence was indeed warranted and justifiable as per my guilty plea. However, it is one thing to be incarcerated for a crime with the same constitutional rights in prison as the general inmate population, but it becomes something else when an inmate with ARC is deprived of his constitutional rights. Just to mention a few, I was deprived of adequate medical attention, much needed exercise outings with recreational privileges, access to the institution's library for reading materials, regular counselling or to have someone to talk with in respect to my AIDS Related Condition and the list goes on... coupled with being ostracized. Aside from the infringement of my constitutional rights, the stress factors and traumatizing of head-games imposed, associated with being imprisoned with ARC; one must deal with impulsive, relentless near to impossible to control suicide tendencies and fear. The irreversible traumatizing after effects are complex and inevitable regardless of how strong minded you are. I thank God each day for the strength and courage it took to endure this isolation and nightmare unjustifiably prolonged by our justice system. This experience was the very most painful devastatingly frightening obstacle I ever had to

endure. In working extremely hard each day to think positive and to persuade myself that, I will survive this, I came to realize we cannot and will not allow them a victory so that they could expose others to it. In some confusing and mysterious ways, I feel that I succeeded in surviving this ordeal because it was predestined. To actually fight the negative obstacles and win my battle, gave me the initiative to launch an appeal to insure or try my best to make certain no other prisoners with AIDS or ARC would ever be subjected to the same unbearable nightmare I was forced to face. I will not quit or ignore these factual injustices. At the present time there are two others imprisoned with ARC or AIDS that I'm aware of. Provisions with appropriate policies must be organized and put in effect for treatment in accordance with the problems imposed on inmates subjected to AIDS or ARC in the correctional systems. I'm appealing to your sense of understanding. Your assistance is urgently in this ongoing matter to help alleviate one concerning problem of most importance. That is, these inmates need a friend to correspond with on a regular basis. These men and women face being disowned by family and friends because of AIDS. If you cannot afford the paper and stamped envelope I would be pleased to provide you with same, addressed to an inmate in a prison in Canada. Rest assured that if you are concerned about giving your personal address when corresponding with these inmates, please don't be, an alternative address can be provided. I don't have all the answers but I will strive to do as much as I possibly can. Many thanks to Rev. Ernie Lacasse for taking the time to write me a few lines regularly while I was isolated in a health care unit in an Alberta prison. For the time it took to read and reread his letters it seemed to alleviate a lot of thoughts about where I was. If you can help in the foregoing matter please call the PWA Coalition office at 683-3381 and leave a message for J.R. Sincere and kind regards J.R.

POLICY CHANGE

Uproar followed the BCCLU's Globe & Mail article recommending mandatory tracing. Partners identified in this way would then be compelled to take the test and so on. Not surprisingly, many people got steamed over this. Some wondered whose rights the BCCLU was defending anyway. After meeting with interested parties the BCCLU board developed and adopted a new policy calling instead for voluntary measures. Now that that's over with, the BCCLU is working to bring forward anti-discrimination legislation for the city and the province. Like the L.A. Ordinance, this could mean protection at work, home and play for everyone from PWA's to those merely suspected of contact with the virus. So far, everyone is hopeful but no one is holding their breath.

The Vancouver Men's Chorus presents "MAPLE SYRUP" at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre, May 1 & 2 at 8:00 pm. Tickets: VTC/CBO.

"SEXUALLY ACTIVE"

A special report about AIDS for everyone sexually active. Panel guests will include representatives from AIDS Vancouver, The Vancouver P.W.A. Coalition and other safe sex activists.
Saturday, May 9th. 3:00 - 5:00 pm.
Vancouver Cooperative Radio
CFRO 102.7 FM/Cable

CANDLELIGHT AIDS VIGIL

During the later part of May a candlelight AIDS vigil will be held to coincide with the International AIDS Vigil.
For date, time and location contact
AIDS Vancouver at 687-2437

"The true greatness of a person does not lie in riches and power, but in character and goodness. Everyone is human, everyone has their faults and shortcomings, but everyone is born with a great deal that is good in them. And if one were to begin by encouraging the good, instead of smothering it, by giving poor people the feeling that they are human beings too, one would not need money or possessions to do it."

rheal 1986

NEW AND IMPROVED

As you can see, the newsletter has gone through some changes. Along with the proportional spacing type, we've decided to change the format and use colour.

John Kozachenko

P.S I'm still looking for a part time job.

"THE IMMUNE SYSTEM: AIDS, PREVENTION AND TREATMENT."

Dr. Ron Waling N.D. from Bellevue WA. will be at the West End Community Centre Auditorium, Friday May 15 7:30 pm. Everyone is welcome! For more info please call Claudine at 732-0341.

ONGOING EVENTS

Sunday Afternoons: Tai Chi

Learn the ancient chinese "Meditation in Motion". Open to Everyone.
From 1:30 till 3 pm. Meet at the VGLCC
1170 Bute St.

Sunday Nights: Healing Circle

Open to PWA's, PWARC's, friends and supporters. One hour of relaxation, visualization and sharing of healing energy.
It's from 7:30 till 8:30 pm, at the VGLCC,
1170 Bute St.

Mondays at 11:30 am.: Business Meetings

Open to PWA's & PWARC's. One way to share responsibilities and decisions in the PWA Coalition. The business meetings are held at the Coalition office,
1170 Bute St.

Tuesday Nights: Self-Support Group

These meetings are open to PWA's & PWARC's only. We focus on people's feelings about specific topics.

May 12: Spirituality

May 26: Hospital experiences/Dealing with medical personal

Tuesday Nights: Holistic Therapy

These meetings are open to everyone. It is an occasion to explore the holistic approach to health.

May 5: Louise Pohl, Healing meditation using the five elements of the chinese system

May 19: Linda Galloway, "Empowerment and Healing... They go Together!"

Tuesday night meetings are held at the St. Paul's Hospital, Comox Building - 1056 Comox St., Rm. LM-5 in the basement,
from 7:30 till 8:30 pm.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - MAY, 1987

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| | | | | | 1 RETREAT | 2 RETREAT |
| 3 RETREAT HEALING CIRCLE | 4 BUSINESS MEETING | 5 HOLISTIC THERAPY | 6 | 7 POT-LUCK DINNER CALL OFFICE FOR DETAILS | 8 | 9 |
| 10 TAI CHI HEALING CIRCLE | 11 BUSINESS MEETING | 12 SUPPORT MEETING | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 TAI CHI HEALING CIRCLE | 18 BUSINESS MEETING | 19 HOLISTIC THERAPY | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24/31 TAI CHI HEALING CIRCLE | 25 BUSINESS MEETING | 26 SUPPORT MEETING | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 FUNDRAISER AT CELEBRITIES |