



# Newsletter

## Coalition Responds to AZT Challenge

I'm sure that by now few of us are unaware of the outrage to PWA's and ARC's, involved in the Vancouver clinical study of AZT, who opened their mail two weeks ago to be faced with whopping big bills for their drug retroactive to last July, 1987! The 300 of us on AZT had never been told there would be a price tag on the drug when we entered the controlled study and volunteered to be guinea pigs. We had been assured that the Fed's and the provinces, across Canada, had struck a deal where the provinces would pay for the total cost of the drug under existing Pharmacare systems. Foolish us not to get it in writing! Well our province has reneged on the deal and has become the only province to charge us for AZT. Our share, under the Pharmacare plan, will be \$2,000.00 per year, a price tag that few of us can afford. It seems typical of this Social Credit government that they insist on treating AIDS as a moral issue not a medical one. Our Premier, Bill Vander Zalm, with his Catholic, right wing views seems to impose his values on the government's response to AIDS in B.C. The equation is made that AIDS = Gay = sin = punishment. So I suppose that it is no wonder that Victoria tries to extract its pound of flesh from people with AIDS.

Now, to add insult to injury, Peter Dueck, Minister of Health in B.C., announced that the government would pick up the total cost of the expensive drug, Cyclosporin, used by transplant patients but would leave AZT users out in the cold. This can only be seen as a clear case of discrimination!

The Coalition reacted swiftly to this challenge on the right to survival for B.C. PWA's. At a well attended Board meeting, we planned strategy and launched an intensive media campaign to create awareness of this government action. Many PWA's at the meeting, and those that called the office were concerned not only in regards to how to pay for the drug, but also by the apparent breach of

AZT : continued

confidentiality created by the release of our names to the billing department. All of those on the study had been assured at the outset of confidentiality, and now there is some concern as to what might Victoria do with those names.

Currently , we are building a network of allies to fight Victoria. So far, we have the support of the B.C. Civil Liberties Assoc., the B.C. Ombudsman, Dr. John Blatherwick, Micheal Harcourt and the NDP Caucus, the Canadian AIDS Society, AIDS Vancouver, and hopefully, the Federal Center for AIDS.

And there has been some success to date. The huge retroactive bills have been cleared by St. Paul's, and current bills date from March 14th, 1988. These too will be challenge, our lawyers feeling we have a good case to fight those bills in any event. We will continue the pressure, and hope Victoria will drop it's billing vendetta on us.

\_\_\_\_\_ reported by Kevin Brown \_\_\_\_\_

COALITION PREPARES FOR CANADIAN CONFERENCE ON AIDS

Toronto is gearing up for the big Canadian Conference on AIDS, to be held May 15 - 18, and so are we at the Vancouver Persons with AIDS Coalition. We will be sending 3 - 4 delegates to represent Western Canada's PWA's, and our own Kevin Brown has been asked to chair one of the main plenary sessions, entitled " AIDS : the Reality ".

This conference is an excellent opportunity to network with other AIDS organizations and PWA's across Canada, as well as engage in some high level lobbying of representatives from the Federal Centre for AIDS. One of our main focuses will be the fight for greater access to experimental drugs, and the desperate need for increased research and funding in Canada. We also will fight for the rights of PWA's to play a greater role in the battle against AIDS. We CAN be part of the solution - not the problem!

COALITION RECEIVES INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

Warren Jensen, one of the founding members of the Coalition, has been asked by a representative of the planning committee for the Fourth International Conference on AIDS, to be Chairperson for one of the major sessions on " AIDS and Human Rights ". Warren's particular panel will discuss " Ignorance : a Tool of Discrimination ".

It is exciting that Canadian PWA's will have a voice at this most significant conference, and our congratulations goes out to Warren!

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**THE COALITION BANNER WILL APPEAR IN THE PEACE MARCH, SAT. APRIL 23.  
ANYONE WISHING TO WALK WITH US PLEASE MEET AT THE KITS BEACH  
STARTING POINT BETWEEN 10:30 AND 11:00 AM.**

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HEALTH RELATED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE UPDATE:

-ACUPUNCTURE treatments are now covered by Health Related Financial Assistance.  
-The cost of Television rental for members who are in hospital will now be covered by Financial Assistance. Just make a request through our Financial Assistance program. Call our office to get a request form. (683-3381)

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**ANNOUNCEMENT!!!**

OUR FIRST ONE DAY EXCURSION WILL BE GOING ON **SUNDAY, MAY1st** to



**'THE REIFEL MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTUARY'**  
in Ladner



TRANSPORTATION WILL BE PROVIDED—BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH

WE WILL BE BACK IN TIME FOR DINNER!!!

**PLEASE SIGN UP IN THE OFFICE OR CALL IN AND LEAVE YOUR NAME,  
AND COME AND EXPLORE WITH US!!**

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**MEDITATION CLASSES :** " LIVING IN THE MOMENT " : A meditation class for PWA/  
PWARC's, sero-positives, friends and supporters. Insight meditation teaches us to be  
mindful and present in every circumstance in our lives, and helps us to develop  
equanimity and calm. Time is spent at the beginning of each class exploring issues  
particular to AIDS. Class meets every Tuesday from 2:00 to 4:00. For further  
information, please contact Kristin at 872-0431.

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WEDNESDAY NIGHT DROP - IN CENTER

Each Wednesday night from 7:00 to 9:00, our Drop - In Center will remain open for any PWA/PWARC's unable to come by during the day. It is an opportunity to meet other PWA/PWARC's, have a cup of coffee, and check out our library. There are no meetings as such...just an opportunity to get together on an informal basis.

Our Drop -In Center is located in the Gay and Lesbian Community Center, at 1170 Bute Street.

We hope to see you here!

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## INHALATIONAL PENTAMIDINE STUDY TO START : by Kevin Brown

Many Vancouver PWA's may soon be able to enter a controlled study to test the effects of Inhalational Pentamidine as a prophylaxis for Pneumocystic Carinii Pneumonia.

This is the promising treatment that the Coalition has heard about and lobbying in favor of for close to a year now. It also is a treatment that is becoming widely accepted in the U.S. to halt the reoccurrence of P.C.P. ( New York's PWA's swear by it )

The Vancouver study will be conducted by Dr. Lindsay Lawson, a valued member of the AIDS Care Team, and a doctor held in high esteem by the PWA Coalition.

There has been some controversy over this study, and a similiar one in Toronto, because of the use of a placebo, and the strict entrance criteria. I think PWA's and researchers will always argue over the ethics of placebos - we can only seem to agree to disagree. To be quite frank, it is better to have some research in Vancouver than no research at all!

I trust Dr. Lawson's integrity, and she has proven her committment to PWA's in this city. The Coalition applauds her as one of the few doctors willing to get involved in research.

The Coalition will still continue to fight for wider access to this new treatment, ( we have a few aces up our sleeves ) but in the mean time, if you qualify, you might check out Dr. Lawson's study.

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## LIBRARY CORNER

The following books have be acquired by our library :

AIDS: Passageway to Transformation ; by C. Norman Shealy and Carolyn M.Myss

SERENITY : Challenging the Fear of AIDS ; Paul Reed

PSYCHOIMMUNITY AND THE HEALING PROCESS ; New Edition by Jason Serinus

I DESERVE LOVE ; Sondra Ray

EVERYTHING YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT VITAMINS ; P.E. Norris

And the following Video Tape ( VHS ) :

OPRAH WINFREY SHOW ; April 6, 1988 ; " People who have reversed AIDS symptoms."

So, come on down, and check out these new additions to our ever growing library!

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## GETTING INVOLVED : by Brian

As a volunteer for AIDS Vancouver, and a member of the PWA Coalition, I recently attended the Buddy Core Training presented by AIDS Vancouver. The purpose of this training was to familiarize new and old volunteers with the needs of the organization. It was open to concerned people interested in being phone volunteers, buddies, office support...basically whatever Roy can find that needs doing. AIDS Vancouver and the Coalition play very important roles, and volunteers are a large part of both organizations.

I was asked to write this article because I came away so positive about myself, and my association with both groups. There are the benefits of personal growth and awareness from attending seminars and group activities ( such as Tuesday nights Support Meetings at St. Paul's ) by just being around people that care. Answering the hotline at Aids Vancouver four hours a week gave me an insight to the basic workings,, but being around 56 people ( at the Core Training ) giving of themselves, learning of our needs, was a revealing event. The patience and understanding of the facilitators led us to explore the far reaching aspects of AIDS...a new experience for many. Micheal Welsh effectively put us through the total experience of diagnosis, and the progression of AIDS, in this case to it's conclusion, death; a very emotional experience. I made some important decisions on how to make my life more complete.

I am looking forward to taking the entire Buddy training in June ( open to PWA members for self interest ), and to being more involved in the needs of our community.

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## FAIRY TALES CAN COME TRUE, IT CAN HAPPEN TO YOU : or EXCUSE ME, DOCTOR, DID I HICCUP? : by Chuck

It is the winter of '85-'86. The consensus among the 'experts' is that, of those who test HIV positive, about 20% will eventually develop AIDS.

At the same time, the 'Doomsday Few' say: You experts are mistaken. Without effective preventative treatment, 100% of those who test HIV positive will eventually develop AIDS.

It is the winter of '86-'87. The consensus among the 'experts', is that, of those who test HIV positive, about 35% will eventually develop AIDS.

At the same time, a 'small minority' say: You experts are mistaken. Without effective preventative treatment, 100% of those who test HIV positive, will develop AIDS.

It is the winter of '87-'88. The consensus among the 'experts' is that, of those who test HIV positive, about 50% will eventually develop AIDS.

At the same time, a 'significant minority' say: You experts are mistaken. Without effective preventative treatment, 100% of those who test HIV positive will eventually develop AIDS.

It is the winter of '88-'89. It is the winter to say " BULLSHIT " to the consensus among the 'experts'. It is the winter of our discontent.

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PROGRAM COMMITTEE : report by Benoit L., Alex K., Terry L.

The program committee is beginning a series of one day excursions for members. Our first trip will be to 'REIFEL MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTUARY' in Ladner on MAY 1st. Transportation will be provided. Please join us for a little bird watching!

—As of TUESDAY MAY 3rd the location of the Support Group Meeting will be changing from St. Paul's Hospital to the Coalition's facilities at 1170 Bute Street. It was felt by the members of the committee that a more relaxed environment and proximity to the library would be beneficial to the meetings.

—The Coalition's Drop In Centre/Library is open daily from 1-5p.m. and also Wednesday evenings 7-9p.m.

—The Coalition supplies St. Paul's Hospital with 9 Walkmans, they are on the nursing floors as well as in the Clinic (I.D.C.). ASK FOR THEM. Music tape donations are welcome.

—Members using Health-Related Financial Assistance will now find the Coalition policy on the back of the request form. We ask you to read it. The Program Committee will consider all suggestions of improvement to that policy.

—The Program Committee counts 11 members, meeting every Wednesday at 11a.m. at the office. We plan the Coalition's projects, activities, meetings, services, etc.... New members are welcome to attend and bring their ideas and talents. Call the office and ask to talk to someone on the committee.

—Thanks to the efforts of Terry and Jackie the Coalition has more Complimentary tickets for events than ever before. Please call the office for information and MAKE USE OF THIS GREAT SERVICE.

—WE ARE EXPANDING THE DROP IN CENTRE AND WOULD LIKE DONATIONS WHICH WOULD MAKE US MORE COMFORTABLE IE: PICTURES, PLANTS, AND TASTEFUL AND APPROPRIATE FURNITURE.

Additional reports from Personal and Finance Committees were unavailable at Press time, and will appear in the next Newsletter. For information on Advocacy Committee's activity, refer to the story on page one.

PERSONALS:

GWM has well furnished, large one bedroom to share with another GWM, PWA/ARC. I smoke, am easy to get along with, clean and friendly. 662-3026

PWA, primarily confined at home, unable to work, looks to reactivate his Stamp Collecting. If you have a collection you'd be willing to part with, ( donate or sell ) please contact 738-4840.

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YOU ASKED FOR IT SO HERE'S YOUR CHANCE

OUR FIRST MONTHLY POT LUCK DINNER!

SATURDAY APRIL 16, FROM 6:00 P.M.

FOR MEMBERS AND GUESTS

#703-1222 PENDRELL ST. PHONE 687-6551

PLEASE PHONE THE COALITION OFFICE AT 683-3381 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

OUR POT LUCK DINNERS WILL NOW BE HELD MONTHLY ON EVERY 3RD SATURDAY.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED AS FUTURE LOCATION HOSTS, PLEASE. LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU FOR A PLEASANT EVENING!

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WALK....WALK.... LET'S ALL WALK ON THE THIRD ANNUAL WALKATHON!

Our third annual walkathon around the SeaWall will begin at 11:00 am on Sunday June 26th. Starting at the English Bay Bath House, the 10K walk will follow the SeaWall around to Devonian Park. Last year, with your help, we were able to raise over \$12,000! This year, we hope for more participants and fuller pledge sheets, so start asking your friends for their support and pledges. Funds raised at the Walkathon go to support programs for PWA's, such as Holistic Health, Egg Lecithin, Retreats, and Advocacy Projects. Pledge Sheets will be available early in May from the office. We at the Coalition welcome your participation — whether you walk or pledge. See you in June!

BULLETIN BOARD FOR HOLISTIC HEALTH & ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES

Regularly, we receive phone calls and letters from Holistic Practitioners and people supplying health products and services. A large number have come forward over the last two years, offering help. We now have a Bulletin Board in our Drop-In Center to post information regarding these products and services. Posting of information DOES NOT mean that it is endorsed by the Coalition. Also, it is up to the person interested to get in touch with the product/service supplier. Suppliers should send us all relevant information in an appropriate format for posting, and a business card for our files.

## ONGOING EVENTS

**TUESDAY SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS** are now held every week. Those meetings are open to PWA/ARCs only. Discussion surrounds concerns held by the group at the time of the meeting. There is no specific topic, just a chance to talk. Support group meetings are held every Tuesday night from 7:30 to 8:30 in Room 127, main floor of the Comox Building, 1056 Comox St. at St. Paul's Hospital. PLEASE NOTE AS OF TUESDAY MAY3rd THE LOCATION OF THE SUPPORT GROUP MEETING WILL CHANGE TO THE COALITION'S DROP IN CENTRE, 1170 BUTE STREET- SAME TIME.

**HEALING CIRCLE:** Every Sunday night at 7:30 P.M. This one hour comprises two visualisations and hands on work. A time for relaxation, healing and getting centered. Everybody is welcome. It's in Room 113 (Main Floor) of the Comox Building, 1056 Comox, at St. Paul's Hospital. PLEASE NOTE : THE SUNDAY APRIL3rd HEALING CIRCLE HAS BEEN CANCELLED BECAUSE OF EASTER.

**NEXT MONTHLY MEMBERS'MEETING: MONDAY, MAY 2nd, 11:30 AM AT**  
THE OFFICE

All members are invited to attend. The four committee chairpersons will give an update and answer questions about each committee's work. Also, an update on the activities of the Board of Directors. Members will be informed and asked to give their input on issues currently being dealt with.

We see the monthly members' meetings as an occasion for members to get information and voice their suggestions on the Coalition's projects, activities, and services.

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE

## ANNOUNCEMENTS :

**HAIRCUTS :** Haircuts available at my home for members of the Coalition for the low price of \$6.00. Call Terry at 687-6551 for a relaxing haircut, coffee, tea, and pleasant conversation. Available most evenings and a couple afternoons.

**REIKI :** A gentle yet powerful healing art which is excellent in the management of fear, pain, and stress in general. This offered to Coalition members free of charge. Please leave a message with Jackie at the office - 683-3381.

**A.A. & HIV :** Alcoholics anonymous meets every Thursday at 7:00 pm in the Coalition lounge. It is open to all - HIV positive, Pwarc's, Pwa's, as well as friends, lovers and supporters.