

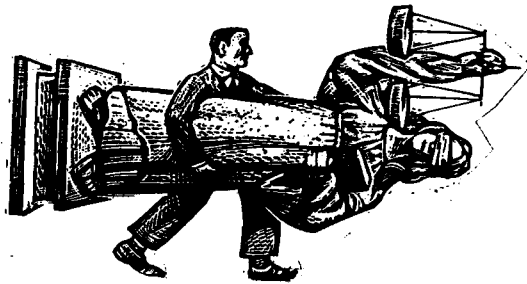
VANCOUVER
PWA
COALITION

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE #34 FEBRUARY/ MARCH 1990

AZT

A MORAL VICTORY



Vancouver Persons With AIDS Society filed suit against the Province of British Columbia in 1988. The Vancouver PWA Society charged the provincial government with discrimination in its policy which requires persons being treated for HIV infection to pay up to \$2,000 a year for AZT.

(B.C. is the only province in Canada where PWA's and HIV infected persons are required to pay for AZT)

"If we had been in a court of morality, we would have won hands down," said David Lewis, Chairperson of the Advocacy Committee of the Vancouver PWA. Society "But we were in a court of law, and it was very difficult to prove the discrimination in legal terms, even though we are still convinced it occurred."

Box 136, 1215 Davie Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6E 1N4
Suite #1, 1170 Bute Street, Vancouver, B.C. 683-3381

In his fifty page 'Reasons For Judgement', Supreme Court Justice Coultas blasted former B.C. Health Minister, Peter Dueck, saying he had "a regrettable ignorance of the disease that one would not expect from a Minister of Health."

Justice Coultas also found that "sexual orientation" is covered by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as far as categories where discrimination is illegal. This is a major victory for lesbians and gay men in that this sets a legal precedent for future cases.

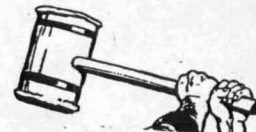
In B.C., AZT is currently only available on clinical trial from St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver. Mr. Justice Coultas found that it was "unusual and disturbing" that patients in clinical trials have to pay for their drug. Vancouver PWA has always advocated that members not pay the bills for AZT. Our position has not changed with this court ruling. "We are still advising all members to avoid paying bills to St. Paul's," David Lewis said. "There may be future remedies to these billings that would wipe out the indebtedness, and we'd hate to see someone pay the bill when it may be covered later."

A great debt of gratitude goes out to attorneys Dennis Dahl and Kevin Robb of Smith and Hughes for their superb representation. Also to John Dixon of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association.

"Even though we may not like the judgement, one can't appeal based on one's likes or dislikes. There must be legal grounds to appeal, and we don't see those in the judgement," says Kevin Robb.

We do not plan to appeal the ruling. ■

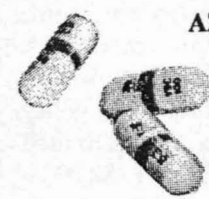
David Lewis
Advocacy Committee



Annual General Meeting

The annual general meeting of the members of the Vancouver PWA Society will be held on **Sunday March 25th, 1990 at 1:30 pm** at Gordon Neighborhood House, 1019 Broughton Street, at Nelson. All members are urged to attend and make your views known.

IN THIS ISSUE

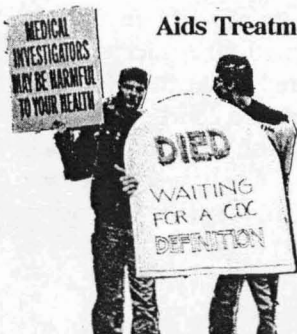


AZT: A Moral Victory 1

AIDS Activism 4

Roof Over my Head 6

Aids Treatment Highlights 8

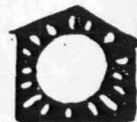


3 Year of Rapid Change

6 Informing Ourselves

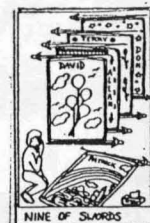
7 Focus on Women

20 Noticeboard



Thoughts Along the Way

15



A Year of Rapid Change

SINCE our last A.G.M. which was held April 2nd, 1989 it seems like more than a year has gone by in terms of the amount of growth and activity we have experienced.

The scale of loss of our friends, volunteers and members has also become greater.

Our voting membership has increased by more than a third in the last year and by the time of the Annual General Meeting on March 25th, there will be an estimated 75 percent increase in our numbers. An important factor in this expansion is the decision of the Board last year to open the criteria for membership to include all persons self-identified as HIV Positive. We have represented up to one third of all those with AIDS and ARC in British Columbia, and we will continue to reach out to the growing numbers in the future.

As we approach our third Annual General Meeting on Sunday March 25th, significant changes and accomplishments need to be acknowledged and celebrated. Along with growth in membership, our active volunteer base has increased which has made possible an increase in programs and activities within our structure.

... we will continue to reach out to the growing numbers in the future

We are working with other organizations and our contacts are increasing locally, nationally, and internationally. We have become recognized as a vital force representing the concerns, needs and rights of persons with HIV and AIDS. We are consulted daily for our policies and our points of view which are respected and given full weight by those involved in the decision

making that affects our lives. By empowering ourselves, we are setting precedents and are the first group of people with a disease to be so strongly represented. This is a new aspect of democracy both in Canada and internationally.

Our volunteers work hard to provide services and programs for persons affected by HIV and AIDS. We strive continually to improve them and make the best use of our resources. Committee members are working hard at this and input from members is needed and appreciated.

We will soon be embarking on a major review of the PWA Society's impact on the lives and well-being of our members, as well as our impact on the wider community. This project will be funded by the Health Promotion Branch of Health and Welfare Canada. This will provide us with valuable information to help us remain responsive to the needs of persons affected by HIV and AIDS and to the needs of the community at large. This will also leave a legacy by training members in the skills and systems needed to collect input for the future.

Our volunteers work hard to provide services and programs to persons affected by HIV and AIDS

As well as Programs our other major area of activity is in Advocacy. This is a far-reaching spectrum of many activities. We provide services to individuals in this area as well as working towards solutions with agencies and government in the areas of:

- housing
- financial support
- Human Rights/discrimination
- treatment/drug access/funding
- co-ordination of services
- home support
- ongoing organizational funding
- research
- education/counselling/information
- support for women, others newly diagnosed with HIV infection

Here are some highlights of the past year's activities.

- Recently we had a judgement in the AZT case we launched in the BC Supreme Court against the BC Ministry of Health to fully fund the drug. Although the case was ultimately dismissed, we are encouraged by the favourable comments of the judge.

- We have made advances in the area of housing which will soon come to fruition.

- We are lobbying aggressively to keep borders open for international travel for HIV infected persons.

- We have had meetings on the issues facing us with local and national politicians including the Mayor and City Council and the Federal Minister of Health and Welfare.

- We are a very active member of the Canadian AIDS Society (CAS). Our member Don deGagne is the PWA member of the CAS board, and he very capably represents us, influencing activities at that level. CAS is sponsoring a national PWA meeting here in March.

- As well, we have had direct input (and through CAS) into the National AIDS Strategy proposed by the Federal Government in partnership with the provinces and others.

On the local level, we do our best to address the needs of our members and potential members with information and programs as well as through our liaison with others such as AIDS Vancouver, St. Paul's Hospital, BC Coalition of the Disabled, Ministry of Social Services and Housing among many many others.

It's impossible to include all the projects we are currently involved in within this short overview. I would like to acknowledge and thank all of our volunteers who work tirelessly towards the achievement of our goals. What we've created here is an organization where we empower ourselves to improve our lives and those of all who are affected by HIV infection and AIDS. This in a true sense includes our whole community. ■

Alex Kowalski

Chair, Vancouver PWA Society

AIDS Activism Takes Atlanta



John Kozachenko Photo

ON January 8th and 9th the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP), held 2 days of actions in Atlanta, Georgia. The second day saw the activists march on the Centre for Disease Control to demand an HIV inclusive definition of AIDS. 35% of those who are seriously ill from HIV infection in NYC and DC do not fit the current CDC definition of AIDS and are therefore not eligible for benefits such as housing, and access to treatments.

I found the action at the CDC very reminiscent of the FDA action in October of '88, where activists once again went to the source with national demands for much needed policy changes. Also its potential for reclaiming control over ones illness and the movement away from the "victim role" does not go unnoticed.

Over 300 activists marched on the CDC and took part in various actions. A group of women suffering from CDC defined symptoms

such as cervical cancer attached banners to the front entrance and "died-in" at the doorway, later to be arrested and charged with interfering with Government property and defacing government property.

Several groups scaled the building and attached banners which accused the CDC of being complacent in the AIDS crisis. They were arrested and held by rubber gloved officers on the roof top for several hours without having their demands for drinking water complied with. Joy DeVincenzo of Brooklyn requested drinking water at the CDC entrance so that she could take her AZT, and was refused.

Another group occupied nearby CDC property and were arrested and charged with criminal trespass. By the end of the day 49 persons in all were arrested and forced to pay a bond of \$240 to assure their appearance in court.

In the past there have been those who have accused the activists of inappropriate actions, but going into the second decade of this crisis it becomes obvious as to the failure of the government agencies and the justification for such actions. Without our direct involvement these agencies will continue to treat us as if we were little children that they know what is best for. ■

John Kozachenko

DDI Patients Questionnaire

We are collecting data on the side effects of DDI. Share your experience so we can learn from one another. All members currently taking the drug are asked to contact David Lewis at 683-3381 for a short questionnaire on your reactions to DDI.

March 25th 1pm Annual General Meeting

THE Annual General Meeting of the Vancouver Persons With AIDS Society will be held on Sunday, March 25, 1990 at 1:00pm at Gordon Neighbourhood House, 1019 Broughton Street, at Nelson.

The annual Meeting is a time for the full membership of the Society to receive the Annual Report of activities from the previous year, as well as to consult the financial statements and express concerns and needs to the Directors of the Society.

It is also the meeting at which members of the Board of Directors are elected for the coming year. All current Board member terms expire at the Annual General Meeting, and a new Board is elected to take up the helm for the coming year.

Members of the Board of Directors must be full members of the Society, and all Board members must agree to volunteer time to serve on at least one committee or sub-committee of the Society.

ANY full members or existing Board members who wish to serve for the next year must either notify the Nomination Committee of desire to stand for office before the meeting or through nomination from the floor at the AGM.

A maximum of 12 Board members may serve each year. To register your self-nomination for the Board, please contact Richard Ryan of the Nomination Committee at the PWA offices. We welcome all full members who wish to get active to join the Board. Board members serve as representatives of the entire membership, for the purpose of administering the business and planning affairs of the Society. ■

See you at the Annual General Meeting!

Sunday, March 25th, 1990 at 1 pm
At Gordon Neighborhood House

Informing Ourselves:

Should the Vancouver PWA Coalition Advise and Inform Members About Treatments?

I've often heard it said that "Giving treatment and testing advice is a job best left to doctors and qualified medical experts, not to a self-help organization such as ours." This is not well thought out, for the truth is that many of our doctors are nowhere as well informed about AIDS treatments and testing as are some of our best informed members.

In my opinion this is the single most valuable service I presently perform for our members and it is the service I most fear will not be provided when I'm gone. I think that our first priority must be to pass on to our members the best and most up to date advice we can find -not simply avoid stepping on the toes of doctors who sometimes give questionable or outdated treatment advice to our members.

I recall only six months ago when many of our doctors were trying to enroll their patients in the Canadian Ribavirin Trial. Greig Layne of the Advocacy committee, and I both knew that Ribavirin was probably the least promising of any experimental AIDS treatment. Our Advocacy committee spoke out against this trial. We mailed out the latest, discouraging research on Ribavirin to all the doctors on our mailing list. We severely criticized this trial and what has been the result? Abruptly but quietly, the Canadian Ribavirin Trial was ended several months ago. As it turned out we gave our members better treatment information and advice than many of their doctors were giving them.

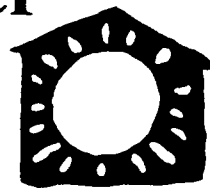
LAST week I was talking in our lounge with two members about DDI. One member said his doctor was not putting any of his patients on DDI so far because "...from what I know, it's just as likely to do more harm than good." The other member said his doctor has put seven of his patients who couldn't tolerate AZT on DDI so far because, "Although a lot of questions remain to be answered about DDI, there is little question about what will happen to such patients without any antiviral treatment. DDI seems a better bet than no treatment at all."

Which doctor gave the best advice? Did both doctors give good medical advice to their patients, although they gave opposite advice? Were both wrong? Are there any rights and wrongs or simply differing opinions when it comes to experimental AIDS treatments?

Often the best advice can be found close to home in the experiences and intellect of our own members. That is why we must work, learn and grow together so we can overcome this disease together. If we all give of the best of ourselves, we will achieve the best for all of us. ■

Chuck P.

A Roof Over My Head!



REALIZING that many PWAs are unable to find a good place to rent at a price they can afford in the present overheated housing market, PWA Society members have gotten together to learn what we can do to improve the situation. Our Housing Needs Project was formed to identify the housing needs of PWAs in various circumstances, and to figure out how to work toward the provision of more affordable housing suitable to meet those needs. Representatives of

other community groups such as AIDS Vancouver and the YWCA Housing Registry have joined with us in a project steering committee, and we have had several productive meetings.

The first project has been working with the Centre for Human Settlements at the University of BC towards a study of the housing needs of PWAs in Vancouver, which has been the inspiration for a proposed national study to be set up by Health and Welfare Canada.

The City of Vancouver Health Department has set up meetings of groups and organizations serving the housing needs of PWAs and HIV infected persons, and we have made many valuable contacts. Their first project will be to list the services available through these participants and the areas of expertise they are prepared to offer. They are developing a City of Vancouver Housing Policy for PWA's.

There are a number of proposals and projects under way, including:

- a proposed interim care facility which would offer living independently with an on call care component.
- more residences such as McLaren House for people able to live independently.
- expanded Palliative Care Units in the Hospitals
- proposals to enable people to continue to live in their own homes

We have worked with the co-op housing movement to find places for PWAs in existing co-op buildings as they come vacant. Through PWAs and speakers sent out from our Speakers Bureau, the message is reaching them that our members can make excellent co-op neighbors and their need is real and immediate, as shown by our waiting list of several dozen PWAs.

We are working with the Women and AIDS Network to ensure that their concerns are heard.

We want to ensure a variety of housing situations that is right for persons wherever they might be on the spectrum of HIV infection. ■
Douglas Starratt.



Focus on Women for World AIDS Day 1990

DOCTOR Hiroshi Nakajima, Director-General of the World Organization (WHO) announced formally that the theme for World AIDS Day 1990 will be Women and AIDS. Addressing the Eighty-fifth session of the Executive Board during the debate on the global strategy for the prevention and control of AIDS, Dr. Nakajima said the focus on women on December 1 1990 will reflect the increasing impact of AIDS on women, as well as the crucial role women play in preventing infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and caring for HIV-infected people and people with AIDS. This programme will be undertaken within the broader framework of women, health and development, particularly at the national level. ■

Women and AIDS Network

A group of women who are professionally and personally involved in the issues surrounding AIDS and HIV infection welcomes HIV positive women to come to our drop-in space. Meet with other women to share and obtain information in a supportive environment the First and Third Tuesdays of each month at the Vancouver Women's Health Collective, No. 302 1720 Grant Street., 7:00 to 8:30 pm. Call 255-9858 between 7:00 and 8:30 pm during drop-in evenings for particulars.

Daytime phone contacts are 683-3381 Vancouver PWA Society (Jackie) or 687-5220 AIDS Vancouver (Bridget) Children welcome.

AIDS Treatment HighLights Research News

Acyclovir May Help De- lay Disease Progression.

"Acyclovir(ACV), a drug commonly used to treat herpes, may find a new use in people infected with HIV. Although research indicates that the drug does not have direct anti-HIV effects, it seems to slow the rate of HIV replication in test tube studies. (Cancer Detection and Prevention 1989; 14(1): 179 abstract 384:23.)

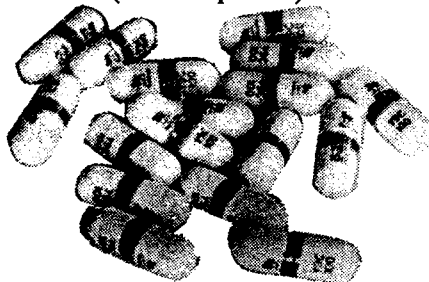
Researchers in Dijon, France, have completed a placebo-controlled trial on ACV in 24 HIV-infected patients. The patients were divided into two groups, placebo and ACV groups. The ACV group was given 50mg/kg once per week with 1g probenecid, for four months. While one patient in the placebo group developed hairy leukoplakia and another became p24 antigen positive, no changes in symptoms were seen during the study period.

Laboratory tests revealed that the average T4 cell count of the placebo group fell from 883 cells at the beginning of the study to 761 cells by the fourth month. Another important index of immune system function is the chemical Beta-2-microglobulin (B2M), levels of which rise as HIV infection worsens. Blood levels of B2M went higher in the placebo group, while, in the ACV group, it decreased. (Lancet 1989; 2:335-336.) Why this effect occurred is not entirely clear. ACV is an anti-herpes drug and herpes viruses are thought to worsen HIV infection.

IT is possible that the high doses used in this trial inhibited herpes viruses such as CMV, HSV and EBV, all of which are known to cause immune suppression". ■

Sean Hosen
AIDS Action Now, Toronto

Comment from Chuck: Several studies have also indicated that the combination of AZT and Acyclovir may be more effective than AZT alone. I have been using this combination for more than two years now and my condition does appear to have stabilized (if not improved).



How AZT & DDI Work.

"Many people still ask how AZT works against HIV. AZT works in two ways: by competitive inhibition and by chain termination. First AZT, a "pro-drug", is converted into AZT-triphosphate by cellular kinase enzymes. In competitive inhibition, AZT triphosphate binds to reverse transcriptase at a site that ordinarily binds to physiological nucleoside triphosphates. In chain termination, reverse transcriptase is fooled into incorporating AZT triphosphate in a growing chain of viral DNA in place of the normal substrate thymidine triphosphate. The attempt to add the next link is thwarted because AZT triphosphate lacks the hydroxyl group needed to forge a chemical bond between links. The virus cannot repair this mistake, and viral DNA synthesis comes to a grinding halt. Other dideoxynucleoside analogs such as DDI appear to work with the same mechanism". ■

Dr. Michael Gottlieb
PWA AIDS Action Newsletter

Lithium May Reduce AZT Side Effects.

"Lithium is a drug that has been used for decades to treat mood disorders. One of its common side effects in such use is to cause a rise in the patient's white blood count. AZT, on the other hand, lowers a person's white (and red) blood counts. This has led researchers to wonder if Lithium could be used to reverse AZT's harm to white blood counts. A recent report (among others) suggests lithium can do so. Doctors describe a PWA whose white blood count dropped from 4700/ml before taking AZT to 2900/ml after 3 months on the drug at full dosage. After taking lithium for 9 days (300mg three times a day), his white count had gone up to 9200/ml. Other doctors state in the same report that lithium appeared to raise the white blood count in 4 out of 5 of their patients on AZT. A phase I/II trial of lithium is underway at the Bronx Veterans Administration Medical Centre in New York City.

Lithium probably will not bring about big boosts in white cell counts for most people on AZT. I tried it for 6 weeks about a year and a half ago to boost my white count, with no noticeable benefit. There's a chance, however, that it might help some people dramatically, or help others somewhat. Until something better comes along to raise white counts (such as "GM-CSF," now being tested), people on AZT might want to try lithium, which is cheap and can be bought by prescription at the corner drugstore." ■

PWA Coalition Newslines
May 1989, Issue #44

Comments from Chuck: I suffer from recurring AZT-related anaemia and bone marrow suppression, and required 14 transfusions during 1989. I started on lithium (300mg three times daily) four months ago. The most dramatic improvements I have noticed is in my "netic"

count, a measure of bone marrow activity, During the year before I commenced lithium therapy, my netic counts averaged 10-20 (normal is 40-120). During the past month or so my netic count has averaged 50-60. In addition, several other of my blood indications have improved. I also require transfusions less often than before I started taking lithium. Whether these improvements are due to the lithium I cannot say, but I certainly do not intend to discontinue taking it.

DDI Produces Severe Side Effects in High Doses

"Researchers said this week that high doses of the experimental AIDS drug DDI causes severe side effects in patients.

The New York Times reported Wednesday that many of the patients taking high doses of the drug are beginning to experience extreme pain in the limbs and the pancreas.

DDI has received much press coverage since the International Conference on AIDS in June when early reports indicated it stops the multiplication of HIV without the side effects often caused by AZT. Now, more than 10 months into the second phase of studies, some side effects are showing up.

At the lowest effective dose, 500 to 750 milligrams a day, one in 14 patients suffered pancreatic pain. At 800 to 1400 milligrams, two of eight patients experienced pain in the limbs and one had a swollen pancreas. At higher than 1400 milligrams, seven of 11 patients had painful limbs and one had a swollen pancreas." ■

Being Alive, December 1989

Comments from Chuck: Participants in the Canadian DDI trials are receiving a very low dose of DDI, 500 mg daily, so the risk of severe side effects should be greatly reduced.

Chuck P.

Ongoing Events

Mondays:

Advocacy Committee Meets at 10:30 am in our offices to deal with access to treatments, human rights, political and legal issues. Members are encouraged to attend and get involved.

Art Therapy Group Use the visual arts to explore personal issues and concerns. No experience necessary – this is not just an ordinary 'Art Class' Facilitated by an experienced Art Therapist, Noel Silver. Contact the PWA Society office for further information.

Buddy Support Group: For buddies, sponsored by AIDS Vancouver. Meets every second Monday at 7:00 pm. March 5th, March 19th and April 2nd at AIDS Vancouver, 1272 Richards Street, Vancouver, B.C.

Tuesdays:

Program Committee Meeting: Meets at 11:30 am at the Society's Offices to develop and facilitate individual programs eg: Retreats, RISE, Support Groups etc. Members are welcome and encouraged to participate. Contact Brian P.

Personnel Committee Meets at 1:30 pm at the Society's Offices – works to provide policy and assistance in organizing human resources (volunteers and paid staff). You may have a talent or experience that would help. Come and find out. Contact Richard R. at the office 683 3381

"Living in Each Moment" Meditation Class: From 2 pm – 4 pm This class is open to PWAs/PWARCs, Sero-positives, friends and supporters. For more information and location, please contact Kristin at 872 0431.

Women and AIDS Drop-in 7:00 to 8:30 pm For women to seek out information and support concerning AIDS/HIV First and third Tuesdays of each month at Vancouver Women's Health Collective, No. 302, 1720 Grant Street. Call Jackie at 683-3381 or Bridget 687 5220 during office hours, or during the Drop-in time at 255 9858

PWA Support Meetings: 7:30 – 8:30 pm, at the PWA Coalition Living Room Lounge, at 1170 Bute Street. These meetings are open to PWA/PWARCs only. Discussions about concerns held by the group at the time of the meeting. Talk about your fears, concerns, and triumphs.

Wednesdays:

Living Room Lounge: Our drop in centre/library is open Wednesday evenings from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm, at the Coalition office, 1170 Bute Street. There is no meeting as such, just an opportunity to meet other Persons with HIV infection, ARC, or AIDS, have a cup of coffee, and check out our library. If you can't stop by during the day, make sure you come by Wednesday night.

Healing Circle: 7:30 Sharp – 9:00 pm on the first floor lounge of the Comox Building of St. Paul's Hospital. Come and experience some loving time, deep relaxation, meditation, bodywork & the joy of sharing. Co-ordinated by 3 professional facilitators: Léla, Donald and Maria. This weekly event is open to all members, their friends, supporters, etc. For further information contact Donald at 682 2989

Thursdays:

Finance Committee: Meets jointly with Executive Committee. Works to ensure proper financial procedures and puts forward funding proposals.

Executive Committee: Meets 10:00 am March 1st, 15th and 29th, also 1:30 pm March 8th and 22nd at the Society's Offices to coordinate the business of the Society and to prepare for Board Meetings.

Board of Directors Meeting: every second Thursday at 1:30 pm at the Society Offices. Meetings March 1st, 15th and 29th. Open to all interested members. This your opportunity to stay abreast of Coalition activities, and have a voice in our future. The four standing committees (Advocacy, Finance, Personnel, and Program) are always open to new volunteers, and welcome your participation.

Thursdays (continued):

Get Over It: AA Meeting of special interest to HIV concerned persons. 7 pm in PWA Coalition's Living Room Lounge.

Body Positive Support Group: For those testing HIV positive. Confidential Discussion Group meets Thursday evenings at 7:30 pm in PWA offices 1170 Bute St. at Davie. For more information contact Kenn Mann at 683-3381

Coping with Loss and Grief: Sponsored by AIDS Vancouver Meets the First and Third Thursdays of each month, from 7:30 to 9:30 pm at St. Andrews Wesley Church Library at Nelson and Burrard. For more information call Joy Moon at 299-4828.

Fridays:

PWA Caucus This bi-weekly meeting held at 2 pm March 2nd, 23rd and April 6th at the PWA Office provides an opportunity for all members to have input into the policies of the PWA Society. Come and make your voice heard!

Movie Night: get together at 7:30 pm in the Living Room Lounge with video screening at 8 pm. See poster in the lounge for this week's attraction. Munchies provided.

Saturdays:

Body Positive Drop-in: Open to all HIV infected persons or persons with AIDS/ARC to meet others for support and to seek out information. Held in the PWA Society's Living Room Lounge Saturdays from 11 am until 3 pm For more information call the PWA Society at 683 3381.

Living Positive Evening Support Group for people affected by HIV and AIDS. Inspired by Louise Hay's Healing Circle, the focus is on loving oneself, relaxation, visualization and sharing experience, strength and hope. A positive approach to living with AIDS. PWA Society's Living Room Lounge 7:30 - 9:00 pm

Referral information available at the office during office hours Monday to Friday (10am to 5 pm) for people looking for medical services, alternate therapies, and other services

Other Events, Groups and Committees

Living Room Lounge our relaxed drop-in centre is open Monday to Friday from 10am to 5pm and Wednesday evening from 7pm to 9pm

Monthly Medical Forum March 7th A forum for the medical community and the consumers of those services (our members and other concerned individuals). First Wednesday of every month at 7:30 pm Topic for Wednesday, March 7th at Gordon Neighborhood house will be Palliative Care with representatives of St. Paul's Hospital PCU discussing their special services. Topic for April 4th will be Aerosol Pentamidine with Dr. Lindsay Lawson.

International Women's Day March & Rally March 10th The theme is Anti-Homophobia. Assemble at Oppenheimer park 12 noon, march to the Art Gallery. For more information call Caz George at 736 9094.

"The Normal Heart" 8:30 pm March 11th play performance is a PWA fundraiser. Sound Spectrum Theatre at 929 Granville Street. Concerns the origins of the Gay Men's Health Crisis in the early years of the AIDS epidemic

PWA Social Night Shaggy Horse March 18th 7 pm to midnight. Snacks by Doll & Penny's, entertainment. For HIV/PWAs, friends and supporters Treat yourself to your very own fundraiser!

Coronation 90 March 24th

Annual General Meeting of the Vancouver PWA Society March 25th 1pm at Gordon Neighborhood House 1019 Broughton

"Love on the Plastic" March 25th Special PWA Benefit performance at the Gandydancer. 876 4165 for info and reservations

"Slave Auction" March 30th A PWA benefit hosted by VASM 9pm Ms. T's Cabaret

Potluck Dinner Social to be arranged for March at a place TBA. Call for details.

Passive Immunotherapy (PATH): Promising New AIDS Treatment

THIS blood treatment procedure consists of drawing plasma rich in antibodies against the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) from donors who are seropositive but healthy. This plasma is treated to inactivate the AIDS virus, then is transfused to recipients suffering symptoms of advanced HIV disease.

Initial research conducted by Dr. Abraham Karpas, Assistant Director of Research, Department of Haematological Medicine at Cambridge University, as reported in the *Lancet* (Sept. 17, 1988) indicates that PATH may dramatically reduce the rate of disease progression in those suffering from AIDS/ARC.

Generally speaking, Dr. Karpas' patients gained weight, experienced fewer symptoms, and developed far fewer opportunistic infections compared with the periods before this treatment was commenced. On the average, recipient's T4 and T8 counts increased by more than 50%, an indication of improved immune function.

The positive benefits from passive immunotherapy lasted from four to eleven weeks, dependent upon the amounts of antibody-rich plasma transfused. Amounts ranging from 55 ml. to 500 ml. per transfusion were tried. As the beneficial effects of the transfusions gradually wore off, T-counts declined and symptoms of HIV disease reappeared. It seems that, if HIV antibody-rich transfusions are to be most effectively utilized as an AIDS treatment, they will be required on an ongoing basis.

DOCTOR Karpas started ten patients on passive immunotherapy in March, 1988. This group consisted of four ARC patients with a wide range of clinical symptoms, as well as six advanced AIDS patients. Of the four ARC patients, two remained in full remission 18 months later, with both showing increases in their HIV antibody levels and T4 counts. One ARC patient died of a heart attack unrelated to treatment. The other ARC patient died of non-Hodgkins lymphoma. Of the six advanced AIDS patients receiving passive immunotherapy, two were still alive 18 months after treatment began. Three AIDS patients died after receiving passive immunotherapy for 7, 16, and 16 months respectively. The sixth AIDS patient was lost to follow-up. While it is discouraging that five of Karpas' patients have died, we should keep in mind that all suffered symptoms of advanced illness before treatment was commenced, and several were bed-ridden.

Dr. Karpas has noticed that ARC patients seem to show the greatest benefit from this therapy. He suggests that passive immunotherapy may be most beneficial if treatments are commenced early, before the recipient demonstrates symptoms of severely depleted T4 counts.

In addition, Dr. Karpas' work suggests that passive immunotherapy may be effectively employed in combination with antiviral treatments such as AZT.

I attended a PATH meeting recently in Toronto, at which Dr. Elliott Block (Medicorp Inc.) updated us on various international PATH studies. Unfortunately there has not been enough research done to form an opinion as to the effectiveness of passive immunotherapy as an AIDS treatment. Nevertheless, the evidence to date is that the side effects of PATH are negligible, and numerous study participants have experienced dramatic and prolonged improvement in their conditions and T4 helper cell counts and P24 antigen levels. ■

Chuck P.

PATH

Passive Immunotherapy Trial in Vancouver?

ON February 6-7 I attended a meeting in Toronto to discuss the possibility of commencing a PATH Trial in Canada. This meeting was attended by representatives of Medicorp (Montreal), Ontario Ministry of Health, Jewish General Hospital (Montreal), AIDS Action Now (Toronto), Toronto PWA Foundation, AIDS Committee of Toronto, and myself representing Vancouver PWA Coalition.

All parties agreed to work together toward establishing a multi-centre Canadian PATH trial including Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, and to try and get Canadian PATH trials underway before the end of 1990.

Dr. Elliott Black, Chairman of Medicorp, the company holding the U.S. and Canadian patent rights to PATH, updated us on the various ongoing PATH trials.

Everyone agreed to set up a Canadian PATH Task Force, which will meet in Toronto on May 3. In addition, there will be a meeting in Toronto Feb 23 of representatives from AIDS Action Now, AIDS Committee of Toronto, Toronto PWA Foundation, and the Vancouver PWA Society, to develop a common strategy as well as to select representatives to sit on the Canadian PATH Task Force.

A great deal of work needs to be done by our Coalition if we are to have any hope of commencing a Vancouver PATH trial before the end of 1990. If you have organizational or administrative abilities, and are a go-getter, we need your help! Contact our Advocacy Committee (683-3381), and become actively involved in our PATH Committee.

Infopacks on Passive Immunotherapy are available through the office library. ■

Chuck P.

BC Funding Soon for tests?

HIV P24 Antigen (P24) and Beta 2 Microglobulin (B2M)

IN February of 1988, representatives of PWA's Advocacy Committee first met with Dr. Julio Montaner, chief of Infectious Disease Clinic St. Paul's Hospital, and Dr. Michael Rekart, Director of STD Control, Ministry of Health, to discuss AIDS-related blood test availability in BC. At this meeting, it was agreed to work towards getting P24 and B2M testing funded in BC. (For an in depth medical explanation of P24 and B2M testing, see January Newsletter).

It has been a long and frustrating year since, but your Advocacy Committee is finally able to report some concrete results.

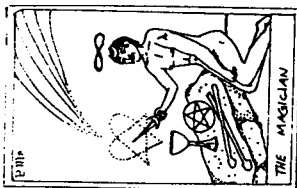
On February 9th I met with Dr. Haley, Hematology Dept., St. Paul's. He informed me that B.C. is gearing up to provide P24 and B2M testing soon for persons with HIV infection.

Note: P24, B2M and Neopterin blood tests are presently obtainable in BC through the Vancouver PWA Society. The blood is drawn at a Vancouver medical laboratory twice monthly and sent by courier to Seattle, where the analysis is done. Contact our offices (683-3381) for further information. ■

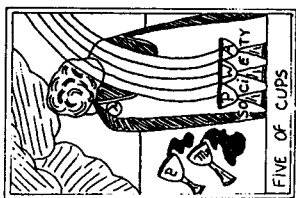
Tests funded in February!

Dr. Montaner informs us that P24/B2M testing is now available here for HIV patients who have a "legitimate medical need" for such testing. If you think you meet this criteria, contact your general practitioner and inform him that he can order these tests through Dr. Montaner. Don't try to contact Dr. Montaner yourself. Chuck P.

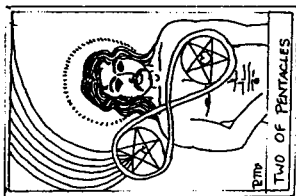
A Tarot in



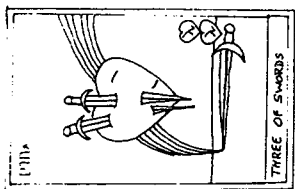
Transition:



The Transformative



Power of the Heart



On impulse, I began doodling, and this is the result: traditional Tarot images expressed in a way that expresses my feelings about AIDS. I call it a Tarot in Transition.

Tarot is an ancient form of divination which has its origin in ancient Egypt. The images are a record of spiritual teachings in pictorial

form. Each picture illustrates a concept and tells a story. Our modern playing cards are progeny of the Tarot, the suits and images greatly simplified.

The results of my doodling illustrate my perception of the experience of the gay man of the '80s as we pass into the '90s.

An underlying theme is my belief that even in adversity, the human spirit can rise triumphant. Nowhere is this so clear as in the PWA Society. I believe that through love we can heal ourselves and transform the gay subculture. Healing in its highest sense can mean different things for each of us, like the healing of our bodies or the healing of our relationships with one another or our families. It can also mean learning to care for one another beyond the physical exploitation of our sexuality.

The astrological symbols signify Pluto in Scorpio, which represent the "Plague Years" of AIDS.

Rainbows are used throughout, not only as a symbol of hope, but as a very ancient cross cultural symbol of gay community. It is our gay flag and could be understood as a pathway of our transformation into a New Age. In a world where everybody else is pressured to conform, gays have often been pathfinders, innovative agents of change, and unacknowledged leaders.

The path before us leads through the red of Love through the colours of diversity to our rightful place in the lavender. This last narrowest band of rainbow colour separates the seen from the unseen at the edge of the unknown Beyond, expressive of our true nature as ones who can cross between the two worlds.

Some of our friends have passed beyond the colours of our vision, yet through our love they still live with us. The transformative power of the heart is our greatest strength and truly a place of serenity amid the pain of loss. ■

Thoughts Along the Way

Has this golden age of the individual drawn to a close? Perhaps a new paradigm is emerging that recognizes that individual actions can have fatal consequences for others. But is our Democracy so fragile that it can be destroyed by a viral epidemic? Are the foundations of individual liberty so shaky that human-kind themselves will undermine them from fear of contagion? The moment any of us are persecuted, then freedom is denied to us all.

Cher Marcesa

Discrimination

HAVE you been discriminated against because of your HIV/AIDS status (real or perceived)?

Do you know someone who has been? We'd like to know the details. It is not necessary to give your name. But it is important that we have the information so we can record all cases and use this documentation to lobby for changes to human rights legislation and discriminatory practices.

We're looking for instances of discrimination in employment, housing, access to health care (dental, medical), access to public services, treatment in correctional facilities, etc.

Please contact us with details.

Advocacy committee 683-3381

Compassion

I recognize that AIDS is one of the great tragedies of our age. It behooves those in private life and in government whose actions affect the well-being of those suffering the disease to act decently, fairly, compassionately.

Mr. Justice Coultas

Supreme Court of British Columbia



The Hero Deed

LIVING WITH HIV disease sometimes feels like being on the edge of neuroticism. Some may feel like they have been removed from a society that should be valuing us and helping us in our struggle to combat this dreadful disease. But that help is slow. Rather, the world of HIV disease is an uncharted territory, a world of total unknowns. Living with HIV disease is new for us all and it is an experience that requires a sense of authentic being. Unfortunately, this process of remaining strong in the wake of despair is not always so easy. Our new life of living with AIDS is like nothing in our previous experience. But we must continue to plug along. Either we sharpen our HIV strategy skills or we don't. What we must choose is clear if we are to continue to go forth. Being left on your own to deal with surviving is no picnic. You don't have to imagine what a deteriorating immune system is like before you realize you're in a difficult situation. It takes determination to bring an awakened sense of combat into an area where we have not yet journeyed. As we move forward adapting our personal strategies we live the life of a hero indeed. ■

MAP

On the Shelves

We would like to thank all those who generously donated books and tapes (audio and video) last month.

New Acquisitions

"Positive Living and Health" The complete guide to Brain/Body healing & mental empowerment. (505 pages) Short items to help you improve your health and well being; Two items that can heal emotional wounds and boost your immune system. 31 different mind/body healing techniques explained and rated for effectiveness.

"Secrets of Positive Thinking" audio tape introduction to various techniques to release natural positivity. Guides you through a relaxation exercise.

"Catastrophic Rights" audio tape The February Monthly Medical Forum on Catastrophic Rights, with guests Dr. Martin Schechter, Dr. David Salisbury and John Dixon is available from the PWA Library. This is worth checking out if you missed the forum.

We hope to soon add books on herbs/herbal remedies for reference use. ■

Ted E.
PWA Library

Talking books

available to PWA's with impaired eyesight or too weak to hold a book & turn pages. Call Ron Dutton 738-2433; He will send a form to be signed by your doctor. Free delivery and free cassette player rental.

Laurie V.

A Note sent with 6 pairs of Slippers:

"Saw in the church leaflet you could do with some slippers. If these are O.K. I'll keep knitting."

K.S., Kelowna, B.C.

"The Normal Heart"

March 11th Fundraiser Performance

LARRY Kramer's controversial play about the forming of the Gay Men's Health Crisis during the early years of the AIDS pandemic will be performed in Vancouver at the Sound Spectrum Theatre, 929 Granville Street in Vancouver Tuesdays through Sundays March 10th to 25th.

PWA member Douglas Gardner is producing and directing the play which will be performed March 11th as a special benefit performance for the Vancouver PWA Society. Watch for posters closer to the dates of performance or call the PWA office for more info at 683-3381

"Slave Auction"

ON Friday March 30th, 1990 at Ms. T's Club, 339 West Pender Street, from 9 pm till closing, Vancouver Activists in S. & M. (VASM) will hold their monthly pub night, including a "Slave Auction" to raise funds for the PWA Society. This is a change of pace entertainment event that has been very successful in many European and North American cities.

Of course you mustn't take the word 'Slave' too literally when you hear of this event. In actuality, only consenting adults will be presented to auction off their services as house-cleaner, cook or whatever else you need.

The \$3.00 cover charge can be waived for PWA's who can get their tickets in advance at the PWA Society offices. Doors open at 9:00 pm, with the Auction at 11:30 pm. So get on your leather and mosey on down to Ms. T's for this fun event! ■

Debt Assistance Is Available

For many people with HIV/AIDS, an income reduction occurs. Where once a person was earning a good income, often times people with HIV/AIDS find a drastic income cut to a bare subsistence level on GAIN for the Handicapped or Disability Pension.

Debts entered into with good intention of repaying them, can often become nightmare responsibilities where collectors harass people trying to get payment on credit card or other bills. People with HIV/AIDS need to know there is really no shame in finding oneself insolvent.

A great many options exist:

- 1) Make repayment arrangements with creditors where they accept reduced interest and payments until debt is retired.
- 2) Make a settlement offer to creditors for lump sum retirement of all debt.
- 3) File bankruptcy and eliminate all debts entirely (except those owed directly to Revenue Canada for taxes).

The BC Government has a debtor Assistance Service that can assist people with HIV/AIDS in reorganizing their debts, or referring for bankruptcy to a firm like Smythe and McMahon.

Peace of mind can be had by sitting down with a Debtor Assistance Counsellor. It's wise to attend to these affairs, call them at 660-3550 in Vancouver, 387-1747 in Victoria, or 828-4511 in Kamloops. ■

Disability

Benefits:

Getting Your Fair Share

What do you do if you can't seem to get government or other bureaucrats to see your

point of view? A good place to start is to get some help from an advocate. That is someone who can help cut through the red tape to get the medical, social service or income assistance to which you are legally entitled.

The BC Coalition of the Disabled has an office at Cambie and Broadway with two advocates on staff. For more than a year, Garry Colley and Robin Loxton have been helping people with a disability get their fair share of benefits through a project called Advocacy Access.

Funded by the Law Foundation of BC, Advocacy Access receives an average of 25 calls every day from all over BC. Office Coordinator Ninel Hoffman said, "Most calls are from people who have a problem with their source of income. The advocates will return the call as soon as they are available and usually they can tell the caller how to solve the problem very quickly."

Having worked in the field for years, Garry and Robin have a lot of answers when it comes to the economic, social or legal rights of people with a disability. They have forms to help people get GAIN for Handicapped benefits and crisis grants when they need it. Other benefits for people with a disability include a gas tax rebate, BC Ferry reductions, grants to make homes accessible and subsidized housing.

"We help people with all kinds of physical, mental or emotional disabilities and we invite people with AIDS who have a problem or a question to call us." says Garry Colley. "There is no reason why people with AIDS should not have the same benefits as other people with a disability."

Advocacy Access is open from 9 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday at 211-456 West Broadway in Vancouver. In the Lower Mainland call Advocacy Access at 872-1278. Call toll-free from anywhere in BC at 1-800-663-1278. A Telecommunication Device for the Deaf is available. ■

Dan Guinan
AIDS & Disability Project
B.C. Coalition of the Disabled

PWA's Living Longer

Health Study Reveals

THE San Francisco Department of Public Health has just released a study showing that people with AIDS are living much longer.

The report, published in the latest issue of the Journal Of The American Medical Association, looked at the survival rates of PWA's diagnosed between July 1981 and December 1987.

The study found that the situation of PWA's diagnosed with pneumocystis carinii pneumonia had improved more than that of PWA's diagnosed with Karposi's sarcoma, and that patients infected through blood transfusions died earlier than others.

It also found that PWA's treated with AZT lived 50 percent longer than those who weren't.

"While it may be too early to gauge the effects of current therapies on the ultimate outcome for patients with AIDS, this study brings hope that AIDS and HIV infection will eventually be manageable as a chronic illness," said George Lemp, author of the study and chief of surveillance of the San Francisco Department of Health's AIDS Office.

PWA's given AZT lived, on the average, 21.3 months after diagnosis. Those who did not get anti-viral treatment lived an average of only 14 months.

"We have entered a new era, where drugs against specific opportunistic infections have been shown to extend the lives of AIDS patients." Lemp said.

Overall, people diagnosed with AIDS in 1981 lived an average of 10 months after diagnosis, compared with an average survival of nearly 16 months for those diagnosed in 1987.

THE study did not examine the situation of HIVers who were not diagnosed with AIDS per se, such as people with ARC or less severe HIV-related infections.

"These figures are particularly significant because San Francisco has the most accurate picture of the HIV epidemic of any city in the world," said George Rutherford, director of the city's AIDS Office.

By looking up and contacting participants from this study, and matching them up with their blood samples, taken and carefully stored long ago, a uniquely accurate picture of the development of HIV is being formed. ■

By Michael C. Botkin
Bay Area Reporter
Jan. 25, 1990

Shellfish Poisoning

Medic Alert To PWAs

To avoid vibrio vulnificus infection-- which is almost always instantly fatal-- avoid eating raw shellfish (i.e., oysters). If you wish to eat shellfish, cook it thoroughly, for at least 6 minutes. Once cooked, avoid mixing cooked shellfish with raw shellfish in the same container. Vibrio infection is caused by eating raw shellfish that has a microorganism in it that is particularly harmful to people who are immune system compromised.

David Lewis

Chuck Grochmal

1952 -- 1990

Popular columnist writing for Toronto's Xtra newspaper, Chuck had many fans across the country. "It takes a person of unusual strength and self-confidence to be a public person with AIDS . . . Chuck had that strength and confidence; he had presence." said his editor Ken Popert at Xtra.

SOME things Chuck said: "For almost two years I've been pursuing the hopes & dreams I'd been putting off, so that when I die it will be the ending of a full life"

"Don't die of ignorance -yours or your doctor's"

"Is sex with a condom so bad that risking AIDS is reasonable? I wouldn't be so bothered by all this if so many of you weren't involved. But you are and I don't want to lose you."

Chuck wanted to teach us about AIDS and he succeeded, with grace and wit and style.

Adapted from Xtra Feb 9, 1990

Volunteers

Program Well Under Way

IT'S hard to believe two months have passed since I joined PWA on a half-time basis. Time flies when you're having fun (or is it just that I'm getting older). I'm pleased to report that our volunteer program is well underway. Systems are now in place and new volunteers are currently being screened, trained and placed in our various programs.

I'm meeting individually with all of our volunteers in order to know more about them, and the work they do. In the next few months I plan to develop a volunteer recognition program in order to recognize those volunteers who contribute so much to our organization.

The Helpline column is a new addition to the newsletter and will keep you informed about some of the volunteer job opportunities available. If you would like to help please feel free to contact me for more information. A catalogue of volunteer opportunities is now available. Please drop by and ask to see it at our reception desk. I look forward to hearing from you Mondays and Tuesdays all day or Wednesday mornings at the PWA Society office. 683-3381.

Carol Lowen

HelpLine

Volunteer Opportunities at PWA Get Involved!

Typist

A volunteer is needed to help with typing and other clerical duties. Good Typing skills are required for this position, some office experience would be helpful. Hours are flexible.

Librarian

To coordinate operations of the library and supervise volunteer library staff. Exposure to filing systems and clerical procedures is necessary. Library experience would be a definite asset

Switchboard Assistants

Volunteers urgently needed to answer telephones and provide information to callers. Orientation will be provided. Hours flexible.

Committees

Newsletter

Writers, Typists, proofreaders, photocopy operators, put your skills to work. Help make this newsletter a lively forum for members and an up to date source of information to help us all live our lives to their fullest potential

Advocacy

Volunteers needed to help with the vital work of this committee. To get involved in issues that affect you and all of us, simply show up at a Monday morning Advocacy meeting and volunteer. Put your talent and energies to work!

Finance Committee

Needs persons with expertise in financial tracking and the writing of proposals for funding and grants. Contact Chris Sabean, General Manager or Alex Kowalski, Chairperson.

Notice Board

Low impact aerobics classes for HIV+ people are being set up. Leave a message for Brian H. at the PWA office 683 3381. Sign up now and exercise your way to health!

Teddy Bears given good home
We would love to have some plush bears and other critters for the Living Room Lounge

Afghans needed in solid colours for members in hospital.

Don't forget the AGM on March 25th 1 pm at Gordon House 1019 Broughton Street
See you there!

Join The Speakers Bureau!

March 21, 1990

Volunteers are requested to come out to be Speakers for the Vancouver PWA Society's Speakers Bureau. A training will be held on March 21, 1990 from 10 am to 5 pm at the PWA offices. This is a great way to get out and meet the public and make a difference! To register your intent to attend the training, call David Lewis at the PWA office, 683-3381, as soon as possible.



The Shaggy Horse Presents

K.T. Warner and the Sandbox Revue
in

Night of a Thousand Laughs
for the second

P.W.A. SOCIAL NIGHT

March 18, 1990
7 pm to midnight

Drink specials and MOCK-tails (non-alcoholic)

Snacks by Doll and Penny's

Treat yourself to your very own FUN-RAISER !!!

Open to all HIV/PWA's, friends and supporters

(next date is April 15, 1990)

THE VANCOUVER PERSONS WITH AIDS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED BY THE VANCOUVER PERSONS WITH AIDS SOCIETY: BOX 136, 1215 DAVIE STREET, VANCOUVER, B.C., CANADA V6E 1N4. OUR OFFICE IS LOCATED AT SUITE #1, 1170 BUTE STREET, VANCOUVER, B.C. V6E 1Z6 PHONE (604) 683-3381 FACSIMILE 683-3367. THE VANCOUVER PERSONS WITH AIDS SOCIETY IS A REGISTERED NON-PROFIT SOCIETY (REG.#0760124-11-27)

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