



The Update

VANCOUVER ISLAND AIDS SOCIETY

DECEMBER 1989

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 11

A Message from Larry

It has been a very busy time for AVI recently and it will continue to be for the next little while. With the Pride & Spirit Benefit, the QUILT display, and our office expansion things seem to be moving very quickly for the society.

Although we are in the midst of change I would like to take time out to thank so many people for the hard work and contribution they have made to AIDS Vancouver Island. Suzanne and her committee for providing us with the fourth annual benefit, "Pride & Spirit." Wayne and all the people that have given so much of themselves to bring the QUILT display to Victoria. This one event has done so much to change attitudes towards AIDS and people affected by it.

Many, many thanks to the staff of the Technical Support Programme, along with Peter, Lorna, David, Jaïne, and Li for the pushing, pulling, packing and sweating during the recent move. We could not have done it without your help.

It always seems to happen at AVI that when you need help or you want to get something done people are there offering to participate in any way they can to get the job done. For me this is one of the great rewards that comes from being involved with AIDS Vancouver Island.

To all of the AIDS Vancouver Island family let me wish you a very happy holiday and a New Year filled with contentment, friends and happiness.

— Larry Frost

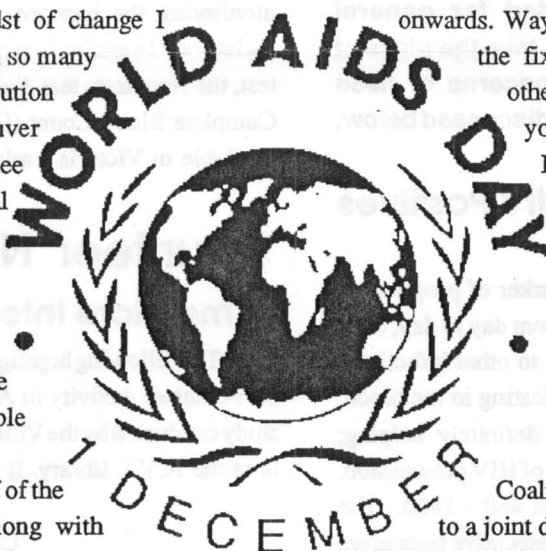
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The Volunteer Update is published monthly by the Vancouver Island AIDS Society. K.G. (Kat) Cruickshank, Editor. Submissions are very welcome and should be typewritten or word-processed. Deadline for written material is the third Wednesday of each month. Call Kat (384-1511) for more details.

XMas Party at Wayne's!

Wayne Cook, Ken Libbey and the other members of their household wish to invite all A.V.I. members, volunteers and staff to a Potluck/Open House/Hey Thanks for A Great Year Party on Saturday, December 9 from about 3 pm onwards. Wayne will be roasting a turkey with all the fixings; guests are expected to bring other dishes, salads, desserts, what have you...hey, you know the potluck rules. Don't miss it! Wayne tells me that this is becoming (or perhaps already is) an A.V.I. seasonal tradition and that the last one was a great success.



Hands Across The Border

The Vancouver Persons With AIDS Coalition and ACT UP Seattle invite you to a joint demonstration at the Peace Arch Park, Friday, December 1, 12 noon. People Living with AIDS/HIV and their supporters, from both Canada and the USA, will protest together against international border restrictions and unnecessary delays and restriction of promising drugs and therapies for all people who need treatments, regardless of their native country.

Both the Canadian and American governments deny entry into their countries of anyone with AIDS or HIV infection, or of anyone perceived to have AIDS or HIV. This means that Canada and the USA, along with the People's Republic of China, Japan, the United Kingdom and various others, are countries that refuse to adopt the recommended policies of the United Nations and the World Health Organization urging member nations to "avoid discriminatory action against HIV positive people, people with AIDS and specific population groups in a number of important areas, including travel."

For more information please contact Ken Mann at the Vancouver Persons With AIDS Coalition: 683-3381 / fax 663-3367.

Reference Material
NOT FOR LOAN
AVI Resource Centre

The Medical Column

Editor's Note: This month I received some information on post-HIV blood tests from Beth Pengelly, an R.N. with the Ministry of Health's STD Control Centre in Vancouver. In her covering letter, Beth made the excellent suggestion that more than one medical professional could handle the medical writing duties for the Update. So, continue to spread the word that we need medical writers...I think this could turn into an interesting forum for discussion...Many thanks to Wayne Cook for helping out with the editing of this material.

— Kat

The following article is intended for general information only. It is not meant to take the place of a doctor's advice. If you have concerns or need more information about the topics discussed below, please consult your physician.

Two Follow-up Tests for HIV Positives T-4 Helper Counts

The T-4 cell count is a general marker of progression to AIDS, although T-4 levels fluctuate from day to day, even in healthy sero-negative people and due to other infections. The T-4 test does not tell if HIV is replicating in the blood, nor whether a particular treatment is definitely helping; though it is useful for periodic monitoring of HIV progression.

Normal T-4 cell counts range from 480 - 1800. The overall trend of numbers over several consecutive tests gives an indication of HIV progression. For example, if the T-4 count is less than 500 the test should be repeated every three months; if it is greater than 500 the test should be repeated every six months. If the T-4 count falls around or below 500 on two consecutive tests or if it shows a steady decline to 500 in repeated quarterly tests, immune modulators (such as AZT) may be indicated. Some examples: Labs usually use a count of 400 as a treatment indicator. Medical Research Centers (U.S.) use 500 as a cut-off for eligibility for clinical trials. KS and ARC conditions do appear sometimes when the count is above 600.

It is important to have the test done at the same time of day and at the same lab.

The Quantified P24 Antigen Test

This test is used as a predictor of HIV progression. It detects the actual core protein molecule (P24) of the virus. The more rapid the rate of replication of HIV, the higher the P24 count will be.

This test is used in clinical studies to measure the effects of anti-viral medications such as AZT. P24 counts will decrease with AZT, dependent on the dose.

Some and perhaps most HIV+ people have this antigen circulating in their blood serum before antibodies are produced. Disappearance of P24 from the serum may reflect a latent phase of infection. Reappearance of the antigen may indicate disease progression.

Most asymptomatic HIV+ patients do not have detectable levels of P24 in their blood serum.

There are several other blood tests designed for monitoring the immune systems of HIV patients. These include a P24 antibody test, the Beta 2 Microglobulin (B2M) test, the Neopterin test, liver and renal function tests, and the Complete Blood Count (CBC). Many of these tests are not available in Victoria - ask your doctor.

— Beth Pengelly, R.N.

Volunteer News

Some More Interesting Statistics...


The following highlights are taken from "An Assessment of Volunteer Activity in AIDS Organizations in Canada", a study conducted by the Village Clinic. The complete document is in the A.V.I. library. It makes interesting reading!

— Li Decosas

Coordinator of Volunteer Services

Some of the highlights:

- Volunteers comprise approximately 90% of the entire AIDS work force within member organizations of the Canadian AIDS Society.
- Volunteers spent an estimated 237,140 hours in service to community based AIDS organizations.
- Volunteers spent over 90,000 hours in direct contact with the clients of community AIDS organizations in the last twelve months.
- Working professionals comprise approximately 39% of all volunteers in community AIDS organizations in Canada.
- Almost all volunteers receive training which can last for as long as 40 hours before they begin work in an organization.
- Most volunteers cannot participate in an organization before they have completed a training program.
- Most volunteers are provided with an opportunity to participate in conferences and continuing education.



WOMEN'S

SUPPORT • GROUP

for

HIV +

AIDS


- *confidential*
- *safe place to talk*
- *information on health care*
- *education*
- *support from other women*

WHERE TO CALL FOR HELP:

384 - 4554



1175 Cook Street, Suite 222
Victoria, B.C. V8V 4A1

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| | | | | | 1  Quilt Exhibit 11am - 9pm | 2 Quilt Exhibit 11am - 9pm |
| 3 Quilt Closing Ceremonies 4:30 pm Candlelight Vigil 5:30 pm | 4 | 5 ☾ Helpline meeting 6:45 pm | 6 Family, Friends & Lovers Support Group 7:30 pm 923 Burdett | 7 Business meeting 12:30 pm Women's support group 7:30 pm | 8 | 9 Xmas Party at Wayne & Ken's. Potluck. 3 pm. |
| 10 | 11 Support meeting 6:45 pm | 12 ☉ Board meeting 7:30 pm Begbie Hall, Royal Jubilee Hospital | 13 Family, Friends & Lovers Support Group 7:30 pm 923 Burdett | 14 Business meeting 12:30 pm Women's support group 7:30 pm | 15 Technical Support Programme contract officially expires — Bye, everyone!! | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 ☾ | 20 Family, Friends & Lovers Support Group 7:30 pm 923 Burdett | 21 Winter solstice. Business meeting 12:30 pm Women's support group 7:30 pm | 22 | 23 |
| 24 / 31 | 25 Office closed | 26 Office closed | 27 ● Helpline service only | 28 Helpline service only | 29 Helpline service only | 30 |

*We can never know what to want,
because, living only one life, we can neither
compare it with our previous lives
nor perfect it in our lives to come.*

— Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*