

The Update

VANCOUVER ISLAND AIDS SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER, 1991

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 8

OUR THANKS TO

<i>Oxford Foods</i>	<i>7-Eleven Food Store - Oak Bay</i>
<i>Food Country</i>	<i>McDonald's - Hillside</i>
<i>Shop Easy - Cadboro Bay</i>	<i>First United Church</i>
<i>Thrifty Foods - James Bay</i>	<i>Grant Leier & Nixie Barton-Leier</i>
<i>Herald Street Caffe</i>	<i>David A. McCall</i>
<i>Benny's Bagels</i>	<i>Mill Bay AIDS Study Group</i>
<i>C'Est Bon Croissant Bakery</i>	<i>Rumors</i>
<i>Rebecca's</i>	<i>Bruce Barnard</i>
<i>Pluto's</i>	<i>Irene Tuck</i>
<i>Harpo's</i>	<i>Irene Hibbert</i>
<i>Rising Star Whole Foods Bakery</i>	<i>Jhona Hurda</i>

and to all of our wonderful volunteers and all of those people in the community who baked goodies, donated stuff and helped in so many ways.. You helped make our Bizarre Bazaar the best ever!

THANK YOU I THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

FANTASY AUCTION

Victoria AM is holding a Fantasy Auction Nov. 2 at the Royal BC Museum to benefit A.V.I.

What we have to provide are volunteers to help set up and to take down, as well as other general help.

So, if you would like to help, please leave you name with Li Decosas, Ken Libbey or Don Mathewson at the A.V.I. offices or call 384-2366 for more info.

And the Winner is...ANN REDWOOD

The lady with the gentle voice on our Helpline once a week!

Congratulations, Ann, you have won our July draw--a gift certificate to Green Cruisine in Market Square. Send in those time sheets, volunteers, and you could be our next winner!

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING???

Do you have 4 hours once a week to work on our Helpline; want to brush up on your clerical/computer skills; utilize those fundraising skills, while working on special events, enjoy speaking to groups, look forward to working one-to-one with a PWA or hospital visiting? Contact JoAnn at 384-2368 when she returns from holidays, Sept 9th to arrange an interview. Orientation training for volunteers will be happening soon, so act now! *send in application*

A.V.I. FOUNDER VOTED VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

On June 21, 1991, at A.V.I.'s Annual General meeting, Wayne Cook was awarded the Shawn Costello Memorial Award for Volunteer of the Year. It was in Wayne's home, in 1985, that AIDS Vancouver Island began. He along with four other men, were determined to provide support services and current information for their friends who were infected with HIV. In the past 6 years, Wayne has maintained a close association with the organization serving as President of the Board of Directors and now as Chairman of the Advisory Board, Wayne shares the award with Shawn Costello, to whom it was posthumously awarded in 1988-89 and Nairn Hollott, A.V.I.'s first Education Coordinator and Volunteer of the Year 1989-90.

Our congratulations and sincere thanks, Wayne!

The Volunteer Update is published third Thu

Reference Material
NOT FOR LOAN
AVI Resource Centre

itions are very welcome. Deadline for written material is the staff member at the A.V.I. Office at (V8W 3C7)

Classified Advertising

Our newsletter is featuring a new column this month. Classified advertising is now part of AIDS Vancouver Island's Update. Looking for a roommate? Want to provide a service or looking for a specific item. Check out our column or submit an ad to our office c/o the Update committee. Submissions need to be in by the 3rd Thursday of the month. We are unable to supply a reply box number service - you must be able to be contacted privately.

HIV+ male, 28, looking for HIV+ female, for roommate/companion. Call Wally 381-3196.

The Emergency Assistance Fund

Donations made to the Emergency Assistance Fund go directly to HIV+ persons in Victoria. This fund may be accessed up to 3 times a year for emergency purposes. Application for funds can be made through David Swan at 384-1511.

The fund operates on donations by individuals in the community. \$1,245.50 was raised at the Candlelight Vigil. We would especially like to thank Rumors Cabaret for their ongoing benefits at Club 1325. To date they have raised \$1,697.72 which has all gone into our Emergency Assistance Fund to benefit PWAs. Many thanks to the staff and volunteers at Rumors for some great entertainment and much needed financial resources.

Hospital Visitation

In hospital? Bored out of your mind? Want some visitors? Contact David Swan at 384-1511.

Looking for a new volunteering experience? Good bedside manner? We need volunteers with active listening skills and pleasant personalities with free time during the day to visit people in hospital. Contact JoAnn Reid at 384-2368.

In Memoriam

On July 27th, 1991 at 10:20 am, Thomas Emmett O'Connor passed away in the San Francisco Veterans' Hospital, his beloved Pacific Ocean outside his window and friends by his side. Tom fought for eleven years when doctors did not have any answers for him. He set out on his own to find them. The result was his book "Living with AIDS: reaching out". He wanted to share with others and to help them live with their disease. He faced death as he had lived his life: as a learning experience. He taught me that there is nothing to fear in death just as there is nothing wrong with fighting like hell for life.

I met Tom when he came to Victoria in the summer of 1988 after being invited by AIDS Vancouver Island to share his knowledge. I knew instantly that he was going to become a special part of my life. Thomas brought warmth, strength and unconditional love to my life. When my time comes to pass from this earth, I hope I can do it with the same grace and spirit. Goodbye my mighty warrior, 'til we touch again.

"Death is only a horizon. And a horizon is nothing save the limit of our sight" - Rossiter Worthington Raymond.

Joy McQuarrie

Wanted

Do you enjoy travelling to exotic lands?
Driving fast foreign cars?
Fulfilling every dream and fantasy you've ever had?
Well don't look at us, we're only the fundraising Committee, not Alladin's lamp...
And what we are looking for are people who are interested in working together at:
Special Events-(Bizarre Bazaar, Candlelight Vigil etc.)
On-going Events - (movies, Dances, Seminars)
Grants and Licences-(Casinos, Raffles)
External Liason-working with outside organizations who hold fundraisers for A.V.I.)
We also need people with skills to contribute (art/media, clerical, sword swallowing, etc.) to help raise money for A.V.I.
So, if you would like to see what we're all about, our next meeting is on September 26, at 5:00pm at the A.V.I. office
For more information call Don Mathewson at 386-0414.

"Living with AIDS - 4 women speak out"

Heather is a 29 year old single parent with a six year old daughter. On the day of our interview, casually dressed in t-shirt and jeans, and tired from having moved into a old duplex the day before, Heather was friendly and uncomplaining. If she didn't have AIDS, Heather would still be doing the job she loves instead of living with discrimination, isolation and an inadequate income.

When you have AIDS, people assume you're promiscuous or you're a drug user. They think you did something wrong or you wouldn't have it. I don't think I did anything wrong, unusual, or different than my teenage friends.

I found out I'd been infected after returning to Victoria with my baby daughter. I'd been here six months and was dating someone I'd met through work. We were talking one day about the crazy things we did in our teens. I mentioned I'd tried heroin. Now, I'm not a druggie, in fact, I was a real wimp. I couldn't even look at the needle. My friend looked horrified and asked if I had been tested for AIDS. I didn't get what he meant. In my wildest dreams I never thought I could get AIDS. I thought it was a gay disease. He refused to see me until I was tested and it finally bugged me enough that I went for testing. I was sure everything would be fine.

It was embarrassing to tell the doctor "All these years ago I did this..." Three weeks later the doctor's office called me in. My doctor said the test was positive, there was no treatment and I'd about five years to live.

I didn't tell anyone for a month. I was convinced I'd lose my job, my friends, and my family. It nearly drove me crazy. The first thing I did was have my baby tested. That was very traumatic. When her tests came back negative, the nurses in the doctor's office sent me flowers. I didn't see my friend again. We were just dating so it was easy for him to back out. I understand.

I suspected the one-time experience with heroin was not when I was infected. It was more likely to have been through sexual intercourse. We didn't use condoms. Pregnancy was the big concern and I was always on the pill.

Looking for the source of my infection, I examined my life. When I was 12, we lived in a logging camp. I was the only teenage girl there and I didn't have any social life at all. I took correspondence courses until I was 15. Then I was allowed to finish high school courses at College. After I graduated, I worked in a small town health food store. There I fell in love and lived with a man for almost four years. When he was killed in a motorcycle accident I sold everything and started trucking around the States in a van. At 23 I got

married there and my daughter was born. I didn't know much about my husband before we got married and it turned out to be a big mistake. I left him, bringing my baby to Canada.

After I found out exactly how HIV is transmitted, I phoned the people I had sex with in the last ten years. I was still in touch with them; in fact we exchanged Christmas cards every year. They were all tested and the result were negative. The person I shared the needle with was tested too, and was OK. It baffled me for the longest time until I remembered two more people. I still can't find the one I suspect.

I was perfectly healthy until 1989 when I got a cold which lasted for two months. Antibiotic didn't work and I kept getting sicker. By December, my doctor told me it was PCP - a type of pneumonia that people with AIDS get. He told me to close down my business and go to bed for a month but I had to keep working; it was my only income. When I ended up in hospital my friends really came through for me. They took care of my daughter and didn't want her to see me looking thin and horrible, hooked up to oxygen and IV, so I talked to her on the phone every day. I was afraid they would hang a sign on my door telling people I was HIV positive. It was really just my fear. The nurses were very kind.

Quite a lot has been explained to my daughter. I carefully avoid the term AIDS because I don't want her repeating it at school. She knows that even when I don't look sick that I am, and it's not going to go away. I've talked to her about my will and what will happen to her should I die. So that's all arranged. I probably wouldn't have done that at 29 if I hadn't got AIDS.

My health has improved. Other than catching colds and flue a lot, I'm fine. I look healthy, but my T-cell count has continued to go down - it's now 90. I only know one person with a count lower than me and they're very sick. The T-cells attacked by HIV are counted so you can track the progression of the infection. A normal healthy person has about 1,100 - 1,500 T-cells in a millilitre of blood. Even a really sick person with a normal immune system won't go down below 800 though cancer patients may go down around 600. HIV is active when the cell count gets down to 500 and when it's at 200, you are diagnosed with AIDS, whether you have symptoms or not. Cell counts fluctuate quite a lot. Even a cup of coffee will put your cell count down a couple of notches.

With no guarantee that I'll live to old age, I've cleaned up family hurts and grudges from years back. Actually, I've been pleasantly surprised by most of my friends and family.

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I didn't get as bad a reaction as I thought I would. It's very difficult to tell people. The fear of rejection is enormous. At first, everybody steps back. They do some reading, figure it out, and then come back and say, "Well, what do I do now? What are you going to need?" A couple of friends couldn't deal with it. That's OK, though it hurt at the time. The friends that stick around are truly my friends. The others were just acquaintances. People are either acquaintances, or they know. There's no such thing as a friend that doesn't know.

AIDS discrimination is sometimes subtle. Though you can't be fired for being HIV positive there are lots of way you can lose you job. I lost my licence to do childcare. To get a licence you must have insurance and this means passing a physical which is impossible if you're HIV positive, even if you are well at the time. There's absolutely no reason why people with AIDS can't do childcare. Certainly if we can look after our own children without infecting them, we can look after other people's. Losing my licence was the end of my career. We live on a disability pension of \$960 a month; rent alone is \$675. I've been on the list for subsidized housing for eight months. I told them about my health because I can't wait three or four years. It looks like I'm not being considered because of AIDS.

I've made a lot of positive changes. I used to push myself a lot but now I try to keep my stress level down, rest, and eat well. It's become almost a religion to focus on three meals a day and get enough rest and exercise. I pay attention to really basic things like spending quality time with my daughter. It's hard to think about the future. I don't know whether I'm going to be around. I don't feel the need to go to school, to get a new career, any of that stuff. My goals aren't long term. They're real close - just week to week.

(Taken from the Booklet "Living With AIDS - 4 women speak out" an AIDS Vancouver Island project. Frances Hunter - editor)

World AIDS DAY
"Sharing the Challenge"

The Civic Orchestra of Victoria, will present the works of Cole Porter and music from Broadway at a benefit concert in support of World AIDS Day, on Sun., Dec. 1, 8 pm at the UVIC Centre Auditorium. Check the Civic Orchestra brochure enclosed and watch for more information, ticket prices & details in next month's newsletter.

(Wayne Cook, Linda Graham - WAD Committee)

"AIDS Mastery Weekend" Workshop Returns to Vancouver

"I went to it to try to learn how to die with more understanding and peace, but wow, was I ever surprised - I left the weekend feeling really good instead of sad, and really strong inside about taking charge of my life and living it fully, whether or not AIDS eventually does anything awful to my health. It sure wasn't the 'go-up-on-a-mountain-and-hum' event I was worried it might be!"

[Evaluation comments from T.G. participant in last year's "AIDS Mastery" Workshop].

Northern Lights Alternatives (Canada) has scheduled another "AIDS Mastery Weekend" for November 22-24, 1991 here in Vancouver. This primarily experiential weekend is not for AIDS facts and information, but instead for personally exploring how AIDS affects people's lives and what you can do to empower yourself to take better charge of how you are responding to it - It's about choices and feelings and your own responsibility to yourself to live as fully as possible right now. Several local P.W.A.s and friends/ family took part in this experiential event last year and will be helping assist the workshop leaders with this one in November. Although this is not yet a frequent event in Vancouver, the Mastery weekends happen monthly all over the U.S. and eastern Canada and are consistently well-attended and well-received by the P.W.A. community.

There will be an information meeting Wednesday evening, September 25 at 7:30 P.M. at Gordon House where Bill Ekins (one of the workshop leaders and the Administrative Coordinator of Northern Lights Toronto), along with several P.W.A.s who took the workshop last year, will be on hand to give further details and answer any questions you might have. The workshop requires a registration fee, but no P.W.A. will be turned away due to lack of funds.

THE LOCAL CONTACT PERSON FOR THIS EVENT IS JUDY WEISER (ASSOCIATE MEMBER OF P.W.A.), AND SHE WELCOMES ALL ENQUIRIES AT 689-9709 (IT'S HER OFFICE, SO PLEASE EXCUSE THE FORMAL MESSAGE MACHINE TAPE). IF YOU WISH TO TALK DIRECTLY TO P.W.A.S WHO TOOK THE WORKSHOP BEFORE, SHE CAN ARRANGE TO HAVE ONE OF THEM RETURN YOUR CALL.

AIDS VANCOUVER ISLAND

Our Staff

Executive Director-	Li Decosas	384-2366
Coord. of Administrative Services-	James Austin	384-2366
Program Clerk-	Isabella luke	384-2366
Coord. of Support Service-	David Swan	384-1511
Psychotherapist-	Claudia Mimick	384-1511
Street Outreach Coordinator-	Jaine Mullally	Pager
Street Outreach Worker-	Norman Mullally	388-6275 #1542
Coord. of Volunteers-	JoAnn Reid	384-2368
Education Coordinator	Joan Shanks	384-2366

Our Programmes

AIDS Vancouver Island is a not-for-profit community based group which provides AIDS education, support and advocacy services to Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. A small staff and over 100 volunteers offer the following services:

- *trained speakers to talk to interested community groups
- *resource library - books, reference materials and audio/videos
- *Helpline - supportive, trained volunteers will listen to concerns & answer questions about AIDS & transmission of HIV; the Antibody (HIV)Test, Safer Sex;caring for people living with AIDS; referral & resource information.
- *Support - individual counselling by trained staff, for anyone infected or affected by HIV/AIDS; support groups; emergency financial assistance.
- *Advocacy
- *Street Outreach - AIDS/HIV prevention information; anonymous & confidential needle exchange for IV drug users; condom distribution & Safer Sex information for street oriented youth, adults and the agencies serving them.

If you would like to become a member of AIDS Vancouver Island and/or if you are interested in joining our dedicated group of volunteers, please complete the form below and return it to:

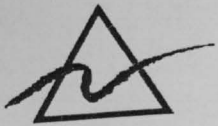
**AIDS Vancouver Island
#304-733 Johnson St.
Victoria, BC V8W 3C7**

Yes, I am interested in becoming a member of AIDS Vancouver Island and receiving the monthly "Update" newsletter. Please send me more information.

Yes, I am interested in applying to volunteer with AIDS Vancouver Island. Please send me an application form.

Name _____

Address _____



AIDS VANCOUVER ISLAND

SEPTEMBER, 1991

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1 ☾ Labour Day HIV & PWA Support Group meeting: to be announced	2	3	4 Family/Friends/Lovers Support Group 7:30 pm 923 Burdett	5	6	7
8 ●	9 HIV & PWA Support Group 7:30pm	10	11 Family/ Friends/ Lovers Support Group 7:30 pm 923 Burdett	12	13	14
15 ☾	16 HIV & PWA Support Group 7:30pm	17 Board Meeting 6:30pm	18 Family /Friends/Lovers Support Group 7:30 pm 923 Burdett	19	20	21
22 HIV+ Persons Pot Luck Supper 4 pm Kobe: 727-9985	23 ○ HIV & PWA Support Group 7:30pm	24 Support Volunteer Meeting 6:30 pm	25 Family/Friends/Lovers Support Group 7:30 pm 923 Burdett	26	27	28
29	30 HIV & PWA Support Group 7:30pm					

COMING EVENTS

October 7th - 13th AIDS Awareness Week