

THE UPDATE



JUNE/JULY 1995

 AIDS Vancouver Island

ISLAND OUTREACH: IN PROFILE

COWICHAN VALLEY

AIDS Vancouver Island opened its satellite office in Duncan in September of 1994, delivering education, support and needle exchange programs to the Cowichan Valley.

The Cowichan Valley satellite of AVI grew out of a collaborative effort between the Cowichan Valley AIDS Network (CVAN) and AVI. CVAN was established in 1989 and committed itself to the dissemination of information about HIV/AIDS and to the provision of emotional and practical support services to persons infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. By 1994, both groups had agreed that a more formal presence was required in the valley to deliver education and support services.

An important impetus to the development of a satellite office in the Cowichan Valley arose from the identification of a need for a needle exchange program to serve injection drug users (IDUs) in the area. In 1992, the local health unit began a small scale needle exchange out of its offices in Duncan. The health unit distributed clean needles for ten months until it became clear that the various populations accessing the services of the unit were, at times, incompatible with one another. The exchange closed and Community Health Connections, a drug and alcohol counselling program, conducted a needs assessment for a needle exchange in the Cowichan Valley and submitted a proposal to the AIDS Secretariat.

Though the proposal did not, ultimately, receive funding it did demonstrate the need for a needle exchange program to service this area. As a result, AVI, in collaboration with CVAN and other community partners, opened a satellite office to deliver its programs, with the focus to be on needle exchange in the first year.

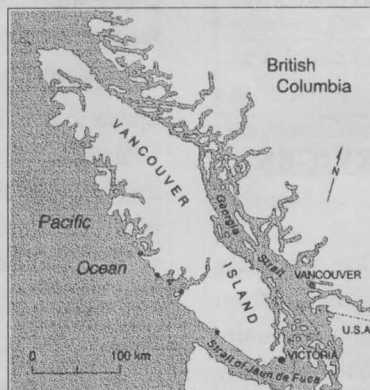
The development and delivery of a needle exchange program in a rural area offers numerous challenges. For many IDUs, an

assurance of anonymity and confidentiality are key to any decision to use such a service. It was decided that the best way to provide anonymity, confidentiality and flexibility was to offer a mobile service. In practical terms, a mobile service means responding to individual calls and meeting people at places of their convenience. This can mean going to someone's home, meeting at the corner store, or picking someone up and driving to a safe place. During exchanges we provide people with clean syringes, bleach, water, condoms, AIDS information, health promotion materials as well as referrals to other services.

It is difficult to measure how well the program is reaching the IDU population in the area. After six months, we have 12 clients and exchange approximately 600 syringes per month. For

a comparison of our progress, we can look to Campbell River where, after a year in operation, the needle exchange has 28 clients and dispenses around 900 needles per month. Using that as a benchmark, we are clearly on the right track. To some, however, 12 clients may not seem like a large number of service users. Again, when considering these numbers it's important to keep in mind the challenges faced in providing needle exchange services in a rural area. In smaller communities, as a local person said to me recently, "it is not uncommon for everyone to know what everyone else is doing." For people engaged in an illegal and

socially stigmatized activity like injection drug use, the eyes and ears of neighbours, friends and passers-by loom large. I have had clients tell me that people are too afraid to come forward for fear that the police are somehow waiting to catch them. Others want absolutely no one to know what they're involved in and some are adopting a wait-and-see attitude to determine if the service is safe. The people who have come forward have overcome these legitimate fears and concerns; some have taken on a leadership role for fellow users. (Continued on page 4....)



HELPLINE: 384-4554 (C

Reference Material
NOT FOR LOAN
AVI Resource Centre

LINE: 1-800-665-AIDS (2437)

CLASSIFIEDS

INCARCERATED HIV+ MALE seeks HIV+ pen pal for mutual support and information sharing. All correspondence will be routed through AIDS Vancouver Island Support Services Department. For more information contact Alicia at 384-2366.

GOOD FOOD! GOOD COMPANY! To all staff, volunteers and PWAs: a summer BBQ just for the fun of it is being planned for late July at Bev Reid's house. Please watch for posters in early July with date, time and place.

AVI's CONTINUING EDUCATION SERIES PRESENTS: THE POLITICS OF SEXUAL DESIRE. Thursday, August 10th, 7-9pm at AVI in Victoria. Presented by Pepper Schwartz, PhD, professor of sociology at the University of Washington in Seattle. She has published and spoken widely on sexuality and argues that the sexual roles and rules that society dictates do not describe the reality of most sexual encounters and relationships.



ON-LINE AIDS TREATMENT INFO

Victoria PWA is pleased to announce its on-line AIDS Treatment Library Database! For those of you with internet access, the dbase address is: www.vpwas.horizon.bc.ca Give it a try!

ARRIVALS

COORDINATOR, SUPPORT SERVICES

And The Adventure Begins...

Hello everyone. I'm Marc Lavoie and I'm your new Support Services Coordinator. I drove across the country from Ontario (oh god, not another easterner!) to join this community in its fight against HIV and AIDS. I look forward to adding my skills, knowledge and abilities to this already incredible AVI pool of people and energy.

I bring a diversified range of work experience to AVI. I place at your disposal my experience in Recreation Leadership,

Emergency Health Services (Paramedic), Adult Education and of course all of my HIV related experience in community based AIDS organizations from Eastern Ontario.

There is much that I look forward to learning and building together. As I rely on Roshni and Alicia to bring me up to speed, I have no doubt that we will make a strong team. Being an advocate for change, I embrace the opportunity to grow with AVI and this community and hope to serve both well.

You will find me to be friendly, approachable and eager to hear what you have to say. As I settle into this community for the first time, I hope to make a home here and make a difference. I'm very happy to be here.

SUMMER ASSISTANT

Hi! This is just a little blurb that Erik asked me to write to introduce myself to you all. I'm Robb Stewart, and I'm working as a Research and Writing Assistant this summer at AVI. As my title suggests, I spend most of my time at AVI in front of a computer screen. Actually, my job is a split one, which means that both Erik in Communications and JoAnn in Volunteer Services get to fight over me (JoAnn is winning). During my time at AVI I'll be working on projects for both departments.

In the Fund Development arena, my job involves working with the Fund Development Committee to draft documents, forms and policies for use by the department. This includes composing letters and updating AVI's new fundraising database for more effective fundraising in the future.

On the volunteer front, my main task is to assist with the update and revision of AVI's Policy and Procedures Manual for volunteers. This will provide guidance and direction to incoming and existing volunteers. I'll also be helping with the compilation of a core training package, containing modules specific to volunteer-assisted departments.

With a long-term commitment to community AIDS work (starting at CSAM in Montreal), human rights initiatives and queer activism, I am excited about the opportunity to work with the people of AIDS Vancouver Island. I hope that my skills and enthusiasm will grow -- and be of use -- to the organization during my 4 month tenure. The only thing I need now is a desk and a computer....

THE UPDATE

The Update is published bi-monthly as a service to members. One-year subscriptions are available for \$15.00. Typed submissions and letters to the Editor are welcome, c/o AVI #304-733 Johnson Street, Victoria, BC, V8W 3C7, or via EMAIL at ux846@freenet.victoria.bc.ca. The Update will print no sexist, racist or homophobic copy and will cover issues and events from perspectives which will initiate positive change in the work done by and for AIDS Vancouver Island. The appearance of any advertisements, treatment information or letters to the editor do not imply endorsement by AIDS Vancouver Island. Submissions may be edited for conciseness and grammatical correctness. AIDS Vancouver Island will not be responsible for errors or omissions.

Erik Ages (editor) c/o casper@islandnet.com

Newsletter Committee: Marilyn Branco, Kevin Knox, Lois Moon, Michelle Purdon

DEPARTURES

AARON SEVERS COORDINATOR, EDUCATION SERVICES

As this issue of the Update is dedicated to Island Outreach, that is where I'll begin. It's the easier stuff for me to talk about anyway.

I suppose the one image that stands out in my mind when I think of Island Outreach is the view from the ferry terminal on Denman Island looking across Baynes Sound towards Vancouver Island. From this vantage point one can see the row of mountaintops on Vancouver Island, black and foreboding, and connected one to the other as if the backbone or spine of some great beast. On days when the fog or clouds roll into the area (Buckley Bay on the Big Island) it is an awesome and powerful sight. On one hand, these mountains act as a metaphor for the way in which geography serves to isolate communities and people living with AIDS on the islands; on the other hand, the mountains personify the social challenges that we all face in this work: homophobia, heterosexism, racism, sexism, AIDSphobia, complacency, denial and so on. These land masses, in my mind, are the very real and inescapable forces on the islands that help shape how we live and respond to AIDS on the west coast.

Island Outreach has not been easy these past two years. I have been fortunate to have two first-rate colleagues in Shari and Peter, individuals who have gone out into communities day after day to challenge instances of discrimination, ignorance, and lack of support for growing numbers of PWAs who live outside the Capital Regional District. Shari and Peter have done much to assist with the development of regional responses to AIDS in the island region. Community based AIDS programs across the Island, including AVI, have much to accomplish to meet the increasing caseloads of women and men testing positive up-island, and the growing need for education and advocacy north of the Malahat.

Change is also in the air at AVI in Victoria! After almost 2 1/2 years, I've decided to move on. It was 6 years ago this month that I began volunteering with the AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT): first as a Helpline volunteer and then as an Intake volunteer with Support Services there (a well-kept secret, eh Roshni?). AIDS is a cause close to my heart, and AVI has certainly found a way into this usually well guarded space of mine. In 1993, AVI invited me to continue my work in the Canadian AIDS movement on the west coast. I have met, cared about and learned from so many men and women living with HIV/AIDS in our region. I feel honoured to have been a part of a response to HIV in this westernmost of Canadian regions.

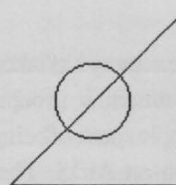
Education Services is at a different and, I believe, better place in 1995: a more utilized 1-800 Helpline service, an expanded volunteer Speakers Bureau, an open concept Resource Centre, outreach to men who have sex with men, a Women and AIDS Project, a workshop series for PWAs (a cooperative program with Support Services), and the groundwork has been laid for a number of community-based research projects. Island Outreach in both the southern, middle and northern regions of the Island has also dramatically expanded with the dedication of AVI's grass roots staff and the development of local AIDS service organizations.

All is not perfect, however, 15 years into the AIDS epidemic. As the number of new HIV infections rises across North America, tough new questions are being asked of AIDS health education: is it effective? is it failing a generation of gay men, of women, and of street involved people? Are we concentrating too much on the mechanics of safer sex, instead of probing the depths of people's values, beliefs and feelings and examining such things as self-esteem, self-identity, decision making and much more? Are we making the linkages between HIV, STDs and sexual health? I believe that such open and honest reflection is vital to ensuring that we indeed are on the right track with our prevention and health promotion efforts. And, that PWAs continue to have a pivotal role in the design and implementation of educational efforts.

AVI has challenged me more than I ever thought possible. It has also provided a meeting ground with so many varied yet like minded spirits: the committed and enthusiastic Helpline, Resource Centre, Education Committee and Speakers Bureau volunteers; the small yet dedicated members in the Women and AIDS Project and the community health research team (you are all too many to name, but I trust you know who you are!); and, of course, the staff members who have challenged, supported and most of all put up with me.

I am moving on a new job with the Ministry of Health as a quality assurance consultant with the continuing care division. It's an 11 month contract position, and I'll be responsible for agencies in northern BC. Certainly different, but it's a whole new learning curve for me.

Aaron Severs
Coordinator, Education Services



**Victoria
AIDS
Respite
Care
Society** 611 Superior Street
Victoria BC V8V 1V1
Tel: 604-388-6220
E-Mail: varcs@cyberstore.ca

COWICHAN VALLEY (continued from page 1...)

Because they believe in the importance of a needle exchange program, some of our clients have taken on the responsibility of exchanging needles not only for themselves but for their reluctant friends and fellowusers.

As time passes and trust continues to build, my hope is that more IDU's will come forward to use the service.

"So while we have 12 clients on paper, I would estimate that there are about 50 people actually using the service, one or two steps removed."

The needle exchange has enjoyed strong support from the wider community as well. The Cowichan Valley Needle Exchange Steering Committee, set up to oversee the needle exchange, consists of members of the First Nations community, the local health unit, the RCMP and CVAN, among others. Similarly, local press coverage has been favourable to the program.

As with the needle exchange, the development and delivery of support and education services also present a number of challenges in a rural setting. For a person living with HIV/AIDS (PWA) there is a greater sense of isolation than there is for someone living in an urban setting. For many PWAs it is not safe to be out about their HIV status with friends and neighbours. There is still a great deal of fear, homophobia and hostility that PWAs must face. Problems arise for PWAs in rural areas because many of the social and medical support systems do not effectively meet their needs. For example, some face interminable difficulties accessing the benefits and services to which they are entitled from the Ministry of Social Services. There are, of course, many Financial Assistance Workers who are knowledgeable about the needs of PWAs. Similarly with the medical profession in a rural area, there are many doctors who are knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS, but there is not the specialized knowledge that is available in Vancouver and Victoria. Faced with these limitations, many PWAs become more knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS than their doctors.

Other support work includes the following initiative among several community partners. Volunteers from CVAN are involved in organizing a Respite Care training based on the VARCS model. The goal is to develop a series of respite care support teams in the Cowichan Valley. It is expected that the training will take place at Malaspina College this fall.

In terms of education services, most of the activity has taken the form of presentations to schools and community groups. Demand has not been overwhelming. Some people speak of being overwhelmed and inundated with information on AIDS. That may be one piece of the explanation. Another is that there is some

resistance to AIDS education both in the Cowichan Valley and in smaller communities more generally. As someone raised in a very small community in BC, I can say with some authority that any topic that deals with sex and sexuality will not be embraced by all. At one school where I did a presentation, a teacher who'd been teaching in the area for 20 years told me that she was taking a risk by bringing me into the school to speak. That statement reflects a certain 'chill' that exists in the community with respect to any remotely 'controversial' material that may arouse the ire of a small but vocal minority in the community.

While there are many challenges to doing AIDS work in a rural community there are also many positive aspects that should not be left out. There are incredibly committed volunteers who dedicate endless time and energy to AIDS work. There is a greater sense of community here than in an urban setting which, among other things, makes it much easier to access formal and informal helping networks when someone is in need.

Peter MacDougall

INTERVIEW...

The following is an interview with a client of the Cowichan Valley Needle Exchange.

Q: What were you doing before needle exchange was available in the Cowichan Valley?

A: We were buying them from the drugstore.

Q: What do you think about needle exchange programs in general?

A: They're very good, they make it easier for me and for the guys that won't go out and get new rigs.

Q: There are some people who will not use the needle exchange, what are some of the reasons for that?

A: Some of them are blue collar and white collar workers and they just don't want to be known. The reason they come through me is because I am or was a heavy user and they trust me, they know me. Whatever I do for them is kept quiet and they know it.

Q: You're almost acting like a satellite needle exchange-- you take needles from me and deliver them to other people. What made you decide to do that, to take on that responsibility?

A: Actually, my daughter made me decide to do that. To stop the spread of AIDS in the Cowichan Valley. These guys have families and I have a daughter and I'll be damned if I want her accidentally growing up with someone who has contracted AIDS from being afraid to go get a clean needle.

Q: Are there people who are sharing needles in this area and are they people who are not using the needle exchange?

A: Ya, there are and it's kind of a shame because I've let the word out that people can just push my buzzer and I'll come out and make sure they have new rigs anytime, 24 hours a day. As long as they bring some back once in awhile, it's not a problem. There's a few that don't bring any back but you seem to make up for the lack for me there so I don't have a problem with running out, anyway.

Q: For people who don't know about the needle exchange right now, can you think of any strategies or ways that we can let people know?

A: No, I can't actually, apart from just keeping out there and plugging at it. There's still a few people that might use it if they knew about it. I don't know all the users in the area but sooner or later the people that are using me are going to have to come into the exchange and take some of the responsibility on themselves.

Q: Is it a question of trust for people? Will people feel more comfortable the longer the exchange is here and the more often people like yourself and your friends are using it?

A: Yes, that could be a good point; they're cautious people. They've been in jail, had things go wrong and trust is a big thing with them. It might take them a year, a year and a half or two years before they get confidence that they're not going to get turned in somehow.

THE COMOX VALLEY

Over the last 2 years, the Island Outreach Project (IOP) has evolved a tremendous amount, beginning as a very ambitious "project" that was meant to greater serve those outside the Victoria area - in essence, to provide more service in terms of support and education and in doing so, to put the "Vancouver Island" part of our name into greater action.

The IOP grew out of a conference, Network '92, which brought together people working on HIV/AIDS issues from across Vancouver Island. Funding was applied for, and in February '93, the IOP began. Since then, there have been more than 100 AIDS presentations across Vancouver Island and we are reaching more PWAs living outside the CRD all the time. Since this project began, over 50 PWAs have received service through Island Outreach. We work closely with many communities across the Island and have helped support community AIDS groups with planning, training and supporting initiatives including, among other projects, the establishment of a needle exchange in Campbell River. We also work with health units, street-based organizations, First Nations programs and individuals involved with promoting AIDS awareness and

creating a more supportive community for PWAs in their area.

The project's area of work encompasses the mid and north Island regions which translates to an area that spans Nanaimo to Port Hardy and out to the West Coast. The project is mobile out of necessity, travelling to communities to provide education to various groups and agencies and to provide support to those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. Community development is another important component of the project - we work with local groups to promote AIDS awareness and to help establish support for PWAs in their communities. The majority of the work has been done on the east coast of the Island - primarily in Nanaimo, the Comox Valley, Campbell River, Parksville, Port Alberni and the communities in the very north end of the Island including Port Hardy and Port McNeill.

There has been some work out on the West Coast as well. Last year, we were invited to speak with all the high school students in Ucluelet which services all the youth of that age in the area. We also have done presentations in the remote village of Ahousat (an hour by boat from Tofino), as well as with the West Coast Women's Resource Centre based in Ucluelet.

Shari Dunnet

INTERVIEW...

AN INTERVIEW WITH DANIEL SCHULTE - Shari Dunnet

As we are focusing on life outside Victoria in this issue of the UPDATE, I've asked Daniel Schulte if he would relay his experiences and perspectives to our readership.

Daniel Schulte is a person living with HIV who has been actively involved with education through the AVI Island Outreach Program in the mid and north Island regions. In conjunction with the IOP worker, Daniel has done over 40 presentations to community-based agencies such as Hospice, Crisis Centres and local AIDS groups; Social Services offices; as well as schools across the Island - from Nanaimo to Port Hardy to the West Coast, including the very remote native village of Ahousat.

Daniel's story has given people a sense of what living with HIV is all about - especially for someone not living in a city like Victoria, where there is a fairly developed AIDS community and specialized medical and support services.

Shari: Daniel, to give our readers a sense of life in a small community, can you tell us what it's been like to be HIV+ and live in Campbell River?

Daniel: At first it was really hard. I was the first person that was "discovered" to have HIV in Campbell River. This was

Interview with Daniel Schulte continued on page 6...

DANIEL SCHULTE (continued from page 5...)

five years ago. I got my test results back and 6 weeks later, it was in the local paper - on the front page. They printed my full name. At that time, I was working as a bus driver and that's the angle they took: "local bus driver with AIDS."

My life, quite frankly, was a living hell for the next while. I faced a lot of discrimination and ignorance...to the point of people calling and making death threats to me and my whole family. I come from a large family and we all live in this area. Everyone was getting these death threats; whoever was making them was calling everyone with our last name. So, instead of being able to deal with the HIV thing by myself and then slowly telling people, I had to tell people quickly and also deal with calling the RCMP to trace these calls.

Shari: How do you figure the newspaper got the information on your HIV status?

Daniel: I was tested through my doctor at the time in a local clinic. Somehow the sheet that stated my test results got into the hands of the paper. I thought of suing the clinic but there was the issue of my health and I didn't need any more stress and also, I didn't have a doctor because when I was given my test results, the doctor also told me to get a new doctor, that he wasn't going to treat me any longer. I knew that if I sued the clinic I would never find a doctor that would take me as a patient and it basically came down to, I can live without the money but I can't live without a doctor so I let go of it.

It was such a stressful time. I felt like I was being attacked from every possible angle and it didn't stop for a long time. I guess I kind of chose which battles I was going to fight. When the newspaper first called to let me know they were going to put my HIV status in the paper, they asked me for an interview. It was put like, "either you can talk to us and we'll include some of your side, or else we'll go ahead with what we have." So, I only had 24 hours notice. I hadn't even told all my family at this point. I had to tell everyone that I was HIV+ and it was going to be in the paper tomorrow. That was really rough. I was working with Special Olympics as a coach and so we held an emergency meeting so I could tell the parents of the athletes and thankfully, they totally supported me.

Shari: Have you received much other support in your community?

Daniel: Well, I think it's been pretty much the usual story of you find out who your friends are. I had a lot of friends that did athletic stuff like white water kayaking, mountain climbing, and radical skiing. I'm gay and most of these friends were straight. When they found out I had HIV, I just basically didn't hear from them again. Over the last few years, the friends that have come into my life are real, there's a lot of honesty and that's

really great. I've lost a lot, but I've also gained a lot.

As far as Campbell River goes, I've had lots of name calling - just as much around being gay as around the HIV issue. But I've learned to just play the game back - to blow them a kiss or something - and it usually isn't a big deal at all.

Our church had a hard time with it all to begin with, but they're coming around. Basically, when it comes down to it, although I did live in Victoria and Vancouver for short times when I was younger, I wouldn't want to live there again. I love the wilderness. To me, living is about being able to head out in the bush and get away from "civilization." I have a little dog and we spend a lot of time out in the bush. I miss doing the athletic stuff - it's too dangerous to go white water kayaking now as I've had PCP a few times. But I'm glad I can still hike and be out in the wilderness. Plus, overall, there seems to be less games in a small town. Everyone may not like you or what you stand for, but they'll let you know and generally leave you alone. Sometimes in the city, it's hard to tell where people are coming from...there's a lot of game-playing -- something I've never liked and have less time for now.

Shari: What happened at work when the newspaper came out?

Daniel: Well, it was really bad. Of course, at that time, it was the talk of the town. They apparently sold more newspapers than ever before - they had to do an extra run because they sold out. So, the community knew that there was a bus driver out there with HIV and, of course, because it's a fairly small community they knew who that bus driver was. Soon, people wouldn't get on my bus. They'd be at a bus stop and when the bus pulled up and I opened the door, they'd see it was me and tell me they'd wait for the next bus. It was really hard to take. I mean, how was anyone going to get HIV from riding on the bus I drove? Really!

At work, they put out special pens and special paper for me to use. I wasn't supposed to touch the regular stuff employees had. I was also supposed to use a separate bathroom. The person who did the cleaning refused to clean my bus and so I had to do that myself. It got really hard. Thankfully, some of the drivers



Daniel

were great and didn't treat me like a leper. They stood up for me and showed me a lot of support and kindness. But not all of them were that way, and eventually I quit because I couldn't take the stress of it all and dealing with the community not wanting to get on my bus.... It was having a really negative effect on my health. That's something I've had to do a lot - prioritize things in terms of my health. Sometimes it seems best to just walk away. I guess that's part of why I've survived so long.

Shari: Did you continue to work as a coach with the Special Olympics?

Daniel: Yes. They were great. There really wasn't an issue at all. They knew what kind of a person I am and that was that. I did have some problems though with the local swimming pool.

They wouldn't let me come in the pool, not even on the deck to coach from the side - with my clothes and shoes on! I had to bring a lawyer in with me to inform them that, no, I did have rights and I was going to come in and coach. I couldn't believe the ignorance about how this virus is spread.

Shari: Do things seem to be getting better now?

Daniel: Yes. There seems to be more understanding. Like, when I was first sick, I was in the hospital with PCP. My IV bottle was running out and I was buzzing for a nurse. When a nurse finally came, she refused to switch my

bottle, so I had to walk around the hospital for someone who would do it. This is quite the feat when you have PCP. I had to go to another floor into the maternity ward before I could find a nurse that would change my bottle. After that, my family would stay with me during the day so I could sleep and at night, I stayed awake so that I could watch my bottle and when it needed to be changed, I found a nurse on duty somewhere in the hospital who would help me.


Now, the hospital is much better. The nurses joke around with me. It's way more human. I'm also finding that I'm way more comfortable to just put it out there. I was in a local health food store awhile ago buying echinacea and the store owner was talking to me about how much I should and shouldn't take. I just came out and said, "I'm HIV+ so it's different." I've been in there

lots of times since then and she's been totally cool. Another thing I noticed at first was that other people with HIV wouldn't be seen near me in public for fear of them being "discovered" and treated like I was, I guess. I can understand it, but it's hard. There's a few people now who seem to be willing to risk. But it's hard to say whether people will ever feel that comfortable to be really open. All I can say is that I'm feeling more that way. I guess I have less to lose since I was, basically, forced out of the closet with HIV.

Shari: Do you feel comfortable with your medical treatment in Campbell River? I know that's an issue for a lot of people in smaller communities - that they don't have access to expertise and care that is sensitive and knowledgeable.

Daniel: Well, I have a great doctor now. It took me seven doctors before I found him. Several refused to take me. I wasn't treated well at all. But, there was a survey done and something like 60% of all doctors in BC won't take HIV+ patients. I think that's outrageous. Anyway, my current doctor is wonderful. He respects my knowledge and it's much more like a consultation between the two of us. I'm hooked up with a doctor at St Paul's in Vancouver so I go over there every 3 months. Between the two I feel really comfortable. It feels like we all work like a team. So, I don't feel like I'm lacking medical care by living where I do. Maybe if I get really sick that might be different. But I'd still choose to stay in my community if I could.

Shari: I really like your story of skydiving as an analogy for what you've been through that you often share with audiences. I think it says a lot about what it's been like for you to have HIV in a small community. Would you mind sharing that with our readers?

Daniel: Sure. Well, I learned to skydive 2 summers ago. You see, I'm a bit...well, more than a bit of an adrenaline junkie. And after I tried bungee jumping a few times, it got real boring. When you sky dive, you are in a little sesna plane. You actually have to stand outside the plane on the tire and hold onto the brace that is attached to the wing. You're going 125 miles an hour and the air is just pounding on you. They've trained you the day before to let go when they touch your shoulder, and so - to your surprise when you're actually there - you do! You're falling through the sky with the ground getting closer and closer. You pull your shoot release and suddenly there's your shoot...a tangled ball in the sky. Then it straightens itself out and you float. Literally, float. There's not a sound. It's magic...it's unreal. Then you land and it's gentle. You just touch down lightly on your feet. This is with the new wing shoots. Well, that's kind of sorting it all out and a lot of confusion...still lots going on. Now, I guess I'm at peace with it really. The community seems to be mellowing out. I love living here. It's nature, as much as anything else, that keeps me alive. 



Schulte

WINGS HOUSING SOCIETY

Health Housing

The Vancouver PWA Housing Society (aka WINGS Housing Society) was incorporated in 1991, thus taking over the program from BC PWA, to administer the scattered housing subsidy program which is sponsored through the BC Housing Management Corporation.

Our approach to housing subsidies is innovative in that it is linked to the person, not the property. This means that subsidy holders are able to choose their accommodations rather than having to move into subsidized housing developments.

In the fall of '93, WINGS allocated 18 subsidies to be dedicated to residents of Vancouver Island who are HIV+ and meet the criteria. These subsidies are administered by the Island Project Team, a group of trained volunteers from the HIV+ community.

In order to qualify for a subsidy, a person must be disabled as a result of HIV related illness and earn less than \$1200 per month. Other criteria are utilized to evaluate individuals who most need a housing subsidy; we do not simply take the next applicant on the list.

If you feel you would benefit from the WINGS program, or would like more information on how to apply, criteria, etc., you're invited to contact Victoria PWA at 383-7494 or Roshni at AIDS Vancouver Island, 384-2366.

STREET OUTREACH SERVICES

All My Ancestors - by Bonnie Wright

This past year I have been enrolled in the Substance Abuse Worker Program in Alert Bay. It is the first of its kind for North Island College. The course was subsidized by the Native Band Council in the hopes of local band members enrolling in the course. More and more native communities have become involved in community healing on the long road of recovery.

The college itself takes up two floors of what remains of the residential school, St Michael's. Many say the ghosts are ever present as furniture is moved around sometimes at night. It is anticipated the school will be torn down in the next two years, but I'm sure the emotional scars will remain for the many Elders who spent their childhood years there.

Yes, I feel very privileged in having the opportunity to live in this remote community and experience the grass roots of spirituality. It has been an intense year of self-discovery and

much of our self-management course was focused around the Native Medicine Wheel and learning how to apply it to our own lives so we may be able to achieve a balance between the spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual. Taking part also in the ceremony of the sweat lodge helped me personally in my own journey of self-healing.

Leaving the best for last was having the opportunity to do my practicum with AIDS Vancouver Island's Street Outreach Services in Victoria. It has been the rarest gift of all in learning to open my eyes, my ears, and to open my heart. This has been a time to close the text books and learn not only from my co-workers but from the people who walk through the doors. They're the best teachers of all.

I know it was never by chance that this experience was placed in my path.

All my ancestors,

Bonnie Wright

OVER 40?

Prime Timers Victoria is a social, recreational, and educational organization for gay and bisexual men over 40. We meet on the third Sunday of each month, starting at 3 PM.

Contact us at 727-6669 for information on meeting dates and locations..

BIZARRE BAZAAR!

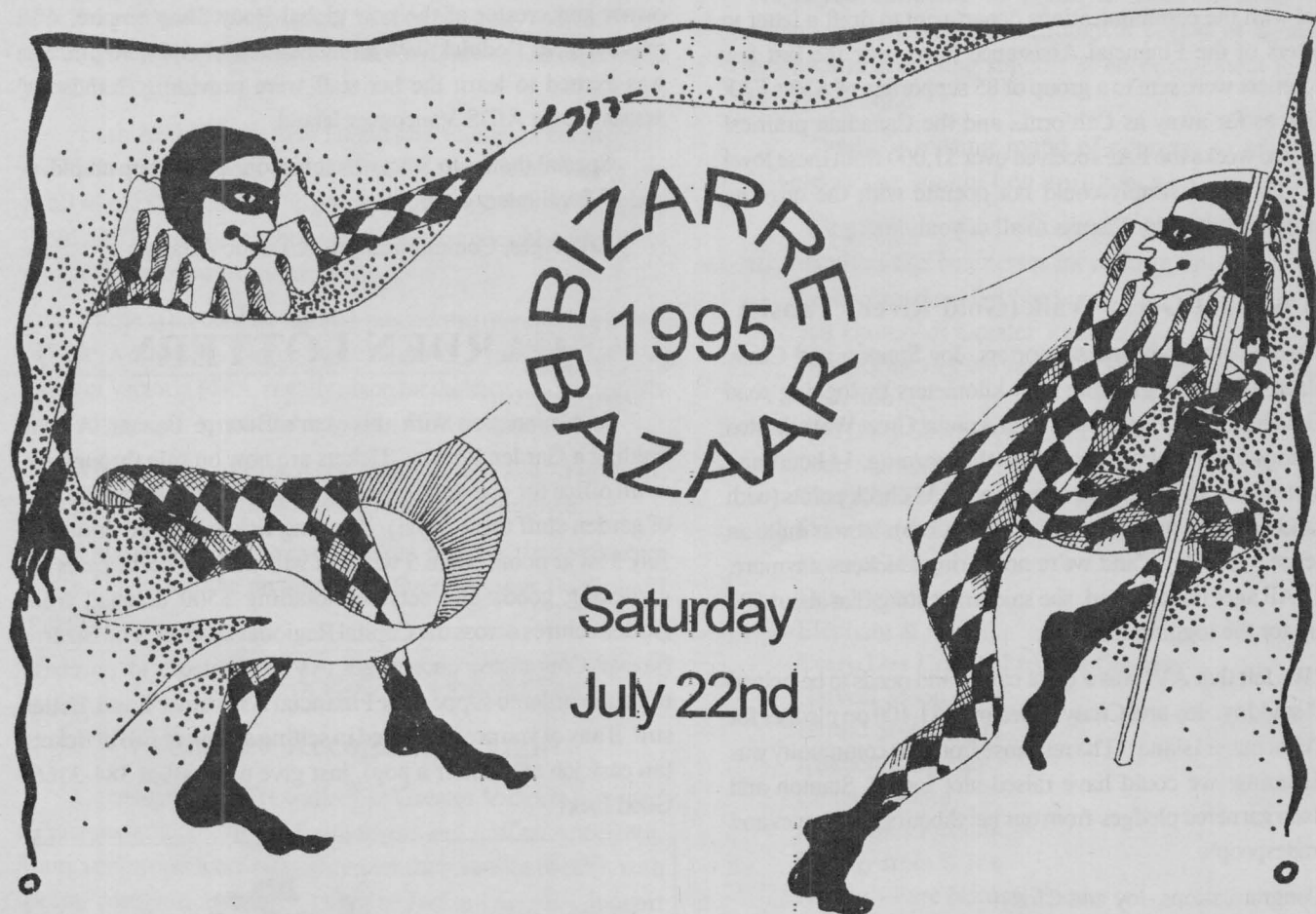
Bizarre Bazaar is here again, and we need your help! For those of you who're new to this event, it's a classy gently used goods sale that takes place on the grounds of Sir James Douglas School on July 22nd, the day of the Moss Street Paint In. Not only is it a chance to part with some of that too-much-stuff-in-your-life kind of stuff (spouses excluded, please), it's one of our most significant fundraisers, averaging between \$3000 and \$4000. The success of this event is critical for AVI's Financial Assistance Fund. Due to an increasing client load and increasing demand, the FAF is running a significant deficit.

So, over the next few weeks, a group of loyal volunteers will be calling you to invite you to drop-off gently used Bizarre Bazaar goods at the garage of Kit Mainguy (71 Linden Avenue) **ONLY AT THE FOLLOWING DATES AND TIMES:**

July 4, 6, 11, 13, 18, & 20 6:00-8:00pm

Saturday July 8 & 15 12:00-3:00pm

****No furniture or large objects, please. For more information, please contact Irene Hibbert @ 598-1559 or her office @ 370-8303.**



FUND DEVELOPMENT'S SUMMER SEASON

Hi, everyone! It's with great pleasure that I announce the formation of AIDS Vancouver Island's Fund Development Committee. Formed a little over two months ago, the FD Committee, comprised of the executive director, two board directors, four committed volunteers and myself, will be directing the workplan of AVI's fundraising engine over the next year. Initial work is being done on consistent policies and procedures to handle

incoming fund raising proposals; the committee will then be directing its attention to foundations, special events, corporate and community sponsorships, Victoria's first AIDS Walk, and preliminary planning for a bigger and better Artists For AIDS Lottery 1996.

The Committee welcomes input from readers of the Update! Those who have fundraising ideas, or who just want to get involved, should give me a call.

The Communications & Public Affairs department is also pleased that it's fundraising and contact management software is

up and running. Now growing by leaps and bounds, AVI's new database contains archival and current information on approximately 2,500 individuals who have or are currently contributing in some way to our organization. Quite a number! These include you, our members and volunteers, and local businesses, individuals and groups that are committed to community based AIDS work in our area.

I'd like to give you a few examples of the kind of support we've received just in the last few months:

Financial Assistance Fund Mail Out

Recently, one of our board members, Leam McLachlan, worked with the communications department to draft a letter to supporters of the Financial Assistance Fund over the last few years. Letters were sent to a group of 85 supporters of AVI's FAF who live as far away as California and the Canadian prairies! Within two weeks the FAF received over \$1,000 from these loyal donors. The fund simply could not operate with the ongoing support of such people. Thanks to all of you!

18th Annual Great Walk (Gold River / Tahsis)

Two of our up-island supporters, Joy Stanton and Cindy Nicholson, walked a grueling 62.5 kilometers by logging road from Gold River to Tahsis for the 18th Annual Great Walk, hosted by the Lions Club. They began at 4 in the morning; 14 hours and 57 minutes later, they finished after passing 12 check points (with water and gatorade provided by the Lions Club). "It was quite an experience," said Joy, "and we're not spring chickens anymore, either!" All ages participated, she said, indicating that about 500 lined up for the logging road trek.

"We felt that AVI was a great cause, and needs to be helped along," said Joy. Joy and Cindy raised over \$1,100 on pledges for AIDS Vancouver Island. "The response from our community was overwhelming; we could have raised alot more." Stanton and Nicholson garnered pledges from our neighbours, colleagues and local tradespeople.

Congratulations, Joy and Cindy!

Cook's Out To Lunch 1st Annual Barbeque

Will Langois and Scott Mercer of Cook's Out To Lunch in Victoria's Cook Street Village participated in an outdoor BBQ with the Royal Bank on June 3, 1995. Will and Scott served up hamburgers to passers by, and by the end of the day had gathered \$167.50 in donations for the Financial Assistance Fund.

Cook's Out To Lunch is also a new sponsor of AVI's Coinbox Program. On behalf of everyone at AVI, thank you, Will and Scott

Body Shop providing assistance to AVI's Coinbox Program

The staff of the Victoria Eaton Centre Body Shop, after their incredible help with the Artists For AIDS Lottery in the winter, took over the collection of AVI's Coinbox Program in the spring. Each of the Body Shop staff people have a coinbox "route" of local businesses to monitor and maintain. This new system is now working beautifully, and AVI, with help from the Body Shop, will soon be approaching more businesses to support our successful coinbox program.

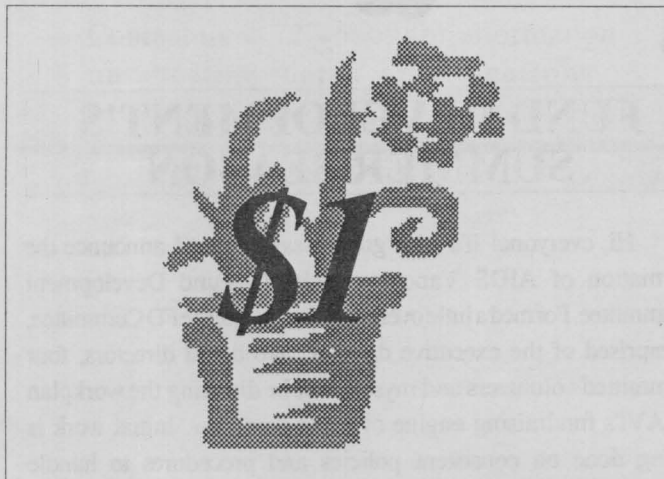
On Friday, June 2nd, AVI's Coordinator of Communications and Public Affairs was invited to meet with Anita Rodnick, the owner and creator of the now global Body Shop empire. AVI presented Ms Rodnick with an annual report and gold pin. She was excited to learn the her staff were providing "hands on" assistance for AIDS Vancouver Island.

Special thanks to Stacey Hutchinson, Body Shop employee and AVI volunteer extraordinaire!

Erik Ages, Communications & Public Affairs

GARDEN LOTTERY

In conjunction with this year's Bizarre Bazaar, AVI is holding a Garden Lottery. Tickets are now on sale through the main office for one dollar each (a bargain if you know the cost of garden stuff these days!). Winning tickets will be drawn on July 31st at noon, when 5 winners will win gift certificates for gardening goods and services totalling \$500 donated from garden centres across the Capital Regional District. The Bizarre Bazaar Committee encourages AVI volunteers to purchase tickets in order to support the Financial Assistance Fund. Better still, if any of you are interested in selling a book or two of tickets (an easy job at a dollar a pop), just give us a call at 384-2366. Good luck!



LESBIAN & GAY PRIDE PARADE A SUCCESS!

Victoria's 2nd Annual Pride Parade, held on Sunday, June 18th, was a great success. Approximately 600 people marched down Government Street in parade regalia to the lawns of the legislature. The parade, this year, went far beyond the borders of the CRD, with delegations from Port Alberni, Galiano and Salt Spring islands, and members of the Lesbian Avengers from Seattle.

Brian Teixeira, Chair of AVI, announced to the crowd that "homophobia has got to go!" Teixeira rightly indicated that fighting homophobia, both external and internal, is an integral part of AIDS work.

Both AIDS Vancouver Island and Victoria Persons With AIDS Society were out in full force for the parade. Thank you to all of the volunteers who participated, and special thanks to those who helped string the magnificent arc of rainbow balloons that AVI contributed to the event.

Those who couldn't attend missed the memorable image of Dale Weston, Executive Director of AVI, and Billy Lennox, Chair of Victoria PWA, regally placed at the back of a convertible dressed as..... (you'll have to find out for yourselves!).

Thanks, too, to Erik Ages, Dale Weston and Alan Elder, who participated on the Parade Planning Committee.

Photographs of the event, taken by long time volunteer Kevin Doyle, will be on display at Everywomans Books until mid-July.

VOLUNTEER NEWS

Volunteer Recognition Night

Once again the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria provided a gracious welcome for AVI volunteers and staff on April 28th. Many volunteers were recognized for their service to AVI, with special recognition awards going to Jackie Dineen - Support Services; Peter Binkert - Street Outreach; John Hodder - Administration; Uwe Walter - Fundraising; Margie Pringle - Education Services and Darlene Taylor, President, Cowichan Valley AIDS Network (CVAN) for her on-going support of the Island Outreach project.

Nominees for the **Michael Redfern Memorial Award** - Speaker of the Year were Daniel Schulte (Island Outreach); Owen Blom; Hannah Cowen; John Hancock & Chris Vollan. The award was presented to **John Hancock & Chris Vollan** with our congratulations & appreciation for the fine work and

commitment to AIDS education demonstrated over the past year.

There were six nominees for the **Shawn Costello Memorial Award** - Volunteer of the Year: Jackie Dineen, John Hancock, John Hodder, Didi Mitchell, Christine Morissette and Maureen Morrison who together have given over 25 years of service to this or other AIDS service organizations.

AVI's Volunteer of the Year for 1994-1995 is Christine Morissette. A volunteer with AVI since 1988, Christine served 4 years on our board of directors, the last two as Chair. Thank you, Christine, for giving so much of yourself to this organization, guiding us through a period of tremendous growth and providing support & encouragement to staff & volunteers alike.

Finally, a rousing round of applause to all of AVI's volunteers - we couldn't do it without you!

We gratefully acknowledge the following individuals, organizations and businesses for making this event possible:

Anne Brander (and her harp)
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria
Bagga Pasta - Foul Bay & Cadboro Bay
Benetton
The Body Shop - Victoria Eaton Centre
Cafe Mexico
Cheryl's Gourmet Pantry Ltd.
Complete Cuisine
Danny Stanyer
Don Mathewson
Elephant & Castle
Every Last Crumb Creative Catering
Harvest Moon Cafe
Herald Street Caffe
Kitchen Etiquette
Linda Graham
Milestones Restaurant
Murray from B.J.'s
Nature's Fare Natural Foods
Ned Lemley
Oak Bay Flower Shop
Oak Bay Marina Restaurant
Sands Funeral Chapel
Scents of Touch - Piedad Escobar
Spinnakers Brewery Pub & Restaurant
Starbucks Coffee
The Stickey Wicket Pub & Restaurant
Sunset Candle Company - Ruth Dixon
Teri Wood
Zackery Bean

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Volunteer Bouquets -- by John Hodder

For 2 1/2 years, vivacious Helpline and Support Services volunteer Kerri McCauley has embodied the enthusiasm, energy and commitment volunteers bring to AIDS Vancouver Island. Kerri is greatly impressed by the friendliness of Victorians and AVI, even loving our rainy days.

Born in Lincoln, Lincolnshire, 40 miles east of Nottingham and 100 miles north of London, Kerri and her husband emigrated to Canada 10 years' ago. Since then they have separated - one April Fool's Day, her husband announced that he was gay and promptly left her!

Kerri and her family, consisting of father, mother and older brother, Joe are very supportive of one another. Every two years they exchange visits between England and Canada. Although she appreciates her English background, Kerri wouldn't want to live there: she says there is too much violence and lack of medical accessibility.

The majority of us have known acquaintances, friends, relatives or lovers who have become infected with HIV. Kerri is no exception, as she discovered when she returned to England, 5 months' pregnant and learned that a dear friend, Tom, had been diagnosed with AIDS.

Two months' later, Kerri returned to Canada via Seattle. At the airport, she and her partner found themselves in an uncomfortable predicament with American immigration officers. Was it her clothes? attitude?? or maybe the nose ring!?! Although Kerri was only passing through the United States in order to make a connecting flight, she was questioned as to why she was carrying so many baby clothes. Since she was not big with child, they didn't believe that Kerri was seven months' pregnant and accused her of trying to bring clothes over for sale. She was detained for six hours - strip searched! - causing her to miss their connecting flight to Vancouver Island. Eventually they released Kerri and she and her partner left on the next flight out. Her water broke and she was rushed into the Royal Jubilee Hospital where they were refused admission because the hospital no longer delivered babies; and she was hurriedly transferred to the Victoria General Hospital. Kerri's son was born 11:37 p.m., only two hours after her arrival in Victoria. The premature baby was kept in hospital for 20 days. Today, son Ezra is now a healthy four year old. He's the special joy of his mother and father (who's been Kerri's partner for six years). They work hard and successfully at raising their child but choose not to live together.

Kerri graduated from the University of Victoria and earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Theatre). Rather than studying

VANCOUVER Island AIDS Society

(non-profit registration # 0756957-11-28)

MANDATE

AIDS Vancouver Island shall confront Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, prevent its spread through education, support all those affected by the disease, and advocate on their behalf.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIR Bryan Teixeira
VICE-CHAIR Linda Bouchard
TREASURER Lisa Ty
SECRETARY Ross McKinnon
MEMBER, EXECUTIVE Bob Milne

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

Brenda Macevicius Darlene Sharpe
Karen Dickey Leam McLachlan
Karen Gallagher Glen Peers

STAFF

Executive Director Dale Weston
Acting Coordinator, Administration John Hancock
Program Clerk Isabella Luke
Coordinator, Volunteer Services JoAnn Reid
Coordinator, Communications & Public Affairs Erik Ages
Research/Writing Assistant (Summer) Robb Stewart
Coordinator, Education Services Aaron Severs
Education Assistant Barb Chester
Coordinator, Support Services Marc LaVoie
Support Worker Roshni Narain
Support Worker Alicia Parker
Support/Education Worker (Comox Valley) ... Shari Dunnet
Coordinator, Street Outreach Services Claire Dineen
Street Outreach Worker Bart Wittke
Comm. Dvp Wrkr (Cowichan Valley) Peter MacDougall

theatrical theory, she now wishes she'd spent more time gaining practical experience. With business partner and friend of nine years, Carolyn Mark, they have been producing a comedy show for three years. CHICKS IN THE NABE has performed at Java Coffee and Exchanges Gallery in Victoria and played three art galleries in Vancouver. They're off to Nelson this summer. Their production employs various skits involving barbecuing red meat and their most famous routine in which they portray waitresses. Kerri and Carolyn often get ideas from people watching at a bar. CHICKS IN THE NABE gets its name from the movie "Boys in the Hood." A dream is to travel to New York and perform in a comedy show.

Kerri's next goal is to gain Canadian citizenship!