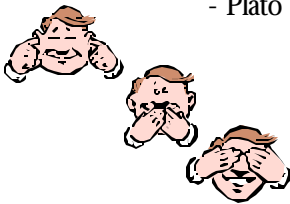


ARC News

For the AIDS Resource Centre — Okanagan & Region

“The cost of not showing interest in public affairs is to be governed by persons worse than oneself.”

- Plato



WHAT'S INSIDE...

Topher Talks	2
Reiki and Healing Touch	2
The Negative Viewpoint	3
Night of 1000 Dinners	3
Client Support	4
OAAS News	5
AIDS Walk 2002	5
PERSON Project	5
HIPPO Update	6
Core Training	7
Book Review	7
Notice Board	8

Human rights endangered in b.c.

Are you subject to discrimination? Are you feeling the pinch because of cuts - or concerned about upcoming changes to your disability status? If Bill 53, the *Human Rights Amendment Act*, passes its third reading in the Legislature, your right to appeal will be seriously reduced. (Last May, the BC Liberals fired the Human Rights Commissioner, Harinder Mahil. It seems that they are acting as if the bill has already passed.)

Some worrisome aspects of the proposed legislation:

- The BC Human Rights Commission is eliminated. This means there is no independent body to provide education programs promoting human rights, to conduct research, or deal with systemic discrimination.
- There will be no obligation to provide legal aid to human rights complainants.
- Individual complaints will now go directly to the Human Rights Tribunal, which does not conduct investigations; as a result, complainants unable to afford lawyers are placed at a disadvantage.
- The Tribunal can require mediation of a complaint and can dismiss cases where a claimant refuses a settlement offer.
- The Tribunal will be allowed to award legal costs against a complainant who loses - a major deterrent to lodging a complaint.
- Currently, the Human Rights Commission examines each case on its merits and only proceeds with some of them (many are settled or dropped). The proposed legislation does not eliminate this “gate-keeper” role as promised. The Tribunal can throw out complaints for a number of reasons, one

of which is the complaint not being filed within six months (reduced from one year).

Under this legislation, British Columbia will be the only province without a Human Rights Commission. Also, the new legislation does not meet the requirements of the United Nations’ “Paris Principles” on human rights. Now is the time to write to your MLA and let your views be known.

On October 7th, a group called Human Rights Defenders placed an ad in newspapers across BC, alerting people to this situation. The information for this article came from their web site, at <http://www.unofficialopposition.com>. (Links give MLAs’ contact information). Thanks also to the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities, who wrote a well-reasoned submission featured on the site.

Sold! Once, Twice, Thrice

ARC’s First Annual AIDS Awareness and Education Auction



ARC has some great items lined up for live and silent auction on **Saturday November 30th, 7 p.m. at the Performance Centre, 1379 Ellis St. in Kelowna.** A \$10.00 cover charge gives you the chance to participate in both auctions. Plus, you will enjoy the voice of Ellen Churchill and complimentary appetizers and desserts. A no-host bar will serve beer and wine.

Better get your cheque book ready!

TOPHER TALKS... A Client's Viewpoint

Why do I do this work?

I have been volunteering with ARC for the past 5 years, and over the 15 or so years before this I worked in the HIV/AIDS field in Ontario.

I have just come back from the Canadian AIDS Society Annual General Meeting. During one of the lulls in the day, I was sitting around a table talking with cohorts from across Canada. Our conversation went to who was missing from this year's meetings. As we brought up a name, we would mention if we had seen or heard of the person. For most of the names we were able to place them—still active in one area or another. We were able to breathe a sigh of relief when we could account for all the people.

Approximately a month and a half later, a fax came to the office announcing the death of a fellow activist from Toronto. This was a fellow who worked hard for AIDS Toronto, and I believe was the chairperson for their board. This was a fellow that I shared a drink with and had a long conversation about last year's ad campaign: "Welcome to Condom Country". A beautifully done campaign, with very provocative posters, of which I own three. His death hit me like a ton of bricks. I stood stunned for a few seconds thinking, "but he never said he was sick". Worse yet, he did not look sick. But a short 45 days later he is dead.

Working as an activist in a field where every one dies sometimes becomes very depressing. I fear for all my friends and loved ones when they have not been heard from for a while. As one

friend says, he runs in fear when he hears that someone is sick. Not that he doesn't want to be supportive to his friends, BUT the fears that it could be him.

With the reality slap in the face of Charles's death, plus with constant reminders from my Parents, I once again need to re-evaluate my busy life schedule. Self-care is a major part of everyone's life. We just need to bring it back to being the primary focus.

Working in the HIV/AIDS field can be a very rewarding experience. I have gotten to meet some major movers and shakers in this field. But I have also lost as many friends and co-workers. To repeat a quote I used two issues ago:

"....grieve not,
Nor speak of me with tears,
But laugh and talk of me,
As if I were beside you...
I loved you so—'twas heaven here with
you"
Richardson
by Isla Paschal

"...Grieve not, Nor speak of me with tears, But laugh and talk of me, As if I were beside you...". This part of the quote rings loud in my ears ever since I first read it. This is almost my Mantra for the new millennium. I have lost many friends and co-workers, but the loss has been overshadowed but the richness that they have brought to my life.

So I continue with the work, but I remember (or get reminded) to take care of number one....ME

*"...he never said
he was sick.
Worse yet, he
did not look
sick. But a
short 45 days
later he is
dead."*



Reiki and Healing Touch

We are very fortunate at ARC to have Toshie as a volunteer every Tuesday. She is qualified to provide healing services using a variety of techniques: Reiki, Healing Touch, Therapeutic Touch and Relaxation Massage. You will feel energized yet relaxed, and pain will be greatly reduced after receiving an hour of Toshie's attention—and there's no cost to ARC clients.

Reiki: Translated from Japa-

nese, this means "Universal Life Energy". A Reiki Master, such as Toshie, is able to connect this universal energy with the body's innate power of healing. This powerful, yet gentle and relaxing, technique also assists in achieving balance and harmony within oneself. Reiki helps to relieve stress, headaches, chronic pain and insomnia.

Healing Touch: Developed and widely practiced by nurses

throughout North America, Healing Touch is used to influence the flow of energy throughout the body. Research has shown that it is effective in promoting deep relaxation and reducing pain, as well as accelerating the healing process.

Therapeutic Touch is a similar technique which uses the body's own electromagnetic field.

Clients: please phone ARC at 862-2437 for a free appointment.

The NEGATIVE Viewpoint (Affected by HIV)

By **Bill Litwin**

In reading over my article for the last newsletter, I was surprised at its negativism. Yes, my perspective is a negative viewpoint, as someone *affected by HIV/AIDS* ... that was a deliberate play on words ... but my intention was *not* to bemoan my situation.

In fact, I wouldn't want to change my situation, at all. We rarely meet people where the connection is simultaneously on the physical, emotional and intellectual levels. In fact, it has only happened to me on two previous occasions and honestly I didn't expect it to ever happen again. No, I consider myself extremely fortunate to have met this person and each day my life is enriched because of him and because he has become an integral part of my life.

One of the positive and enriching aspects of this relationship is that I have had to learn spontaneity ... the quality or condition of being unconstrained and unstudied in manner or behavior.

Generally speaking my partner is in very good health but that can change. His drugs are currently effective in maintaining his health, but are relatively toxic and play havoc with his system. One consequence is that his energy levels can vary from day to day or week to week. Some days he is just too tired to do anything. As a result, previous plans may have to be changed or postponed.

Conversely, when his energy levels are good, the result is the opportunity to change direction and do something new or different. We take full advantage of these times. As someone who lived by my diary and planned my life into a tight corner,

pire to and make part of my daily living – a bonus from where I am sitting.

This also means that I have learned to plan differently. Certainly for trips some advance planning is necessary, but generally speaking we plan for only a few weeks in advance at any given time. I have been able to leave my daily planner at the office and use only a monthly calendar for personal planning.

Initially, this lack of structure in my life concerned me ... I visualized myself like a ship without anchor or moorage, but in fact the opposite is true. Instead, I discovered this mysterious thing called 'free time', a time to do any number of things that I have wanted to do but could never schedule the time for. My perennial TO DO LIST that previously hung over my head like a Doomsday message has become a POTENTIAL PROJECT LIST that can be attempted in order of preference whenever there is a lull in activity.

Have I succeeded? No, but each day I make a little more progress and am a little more spontaneous. Much of the credit for my success goes to my partner. He has shared the life skills that he has learned that allow him to live a full participating and productive life, in spite of the challenges that he faces each and every day. Truly I am fortunate that this person's journey of life has crossed paths with mine.

Bill Litwin is on staff at the AIDS Resource Centre as the Office Coordinator. His partner is a volunteer and member of the Speakers' Bureau.

NIGHT OF A THOUSAND DINNERS

For those of you who were planning to host at this event, originally set for November 2nd, we apologize that it is rescheduled because of a timing conflict with another major event. The new date is:

Saturday February 15th, 2003.

Please call Bill Litwin at 862-2437 for more information.



Kate Alexander, Editor

This newsletter is the official publication of the AIDS Resource Centre—Okanagan and Region (ARC). It is published four to six times yearly. The materials in this newsletter are meant to be consistent with ARC purposes which are: a) to promote awareness of AIDS and related diseases, b) to develop and provide educational resources, c) to support those living with AIDS and those diagnosed with HIV+, and/or their significant others.

Even so, the opinions and comments within this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect official ARC policy. The newsletter does not recommend, advocate or endorse the use of any particular treatment or therapy described as information. The Board, staff and volunteers of ARC do not accept the risk of, nor responsibility for any damages, costs or consequences of any kind which may arise or result from the use of information disseminated through this newsletter. Persons using the information provided through this newsletter do so by their own decision and hold the society's board, staff and volunteers harmless. Submissions for publication may be sent to our offices at any time; publication deadline is two weeks prior to publication date. Submissions will be returned if a request is made in writing and an address is provided. Reprinting and distributing this newsletter is openly encouraged.

ARC's office is located at:
**#202, 1626 Richter Street,
Kelowna, BC V1Y 2M3
Phone: (250) 862-AIDS(2437)
Toll Free 1-800-616-AIDS(2437)
Fax: (250) 868-8662
Website: www.arcok.com**

Terri's Back !

By Terri Ross

Client Support Worker



Client Support is happy to accept donations of gifts for clients and their families, particularly those suitable for older children, ages 9 to 14.

Well Hello!!! As many of you know I (being Terri Ross or better known as Ethan's mom) have returned from my maternity leave and am back at ARC four days a week. I am once again travelling to Penticton every second Tuesday and Vernon every second Friday. A lot of you have probably already guessed that I have mixed feelings about being back; I love my work and I am happy to see all of you, but I sure do miss my little guy. The past year was one of the most wonderful years of my life, getting to know Ethan and learning all the different aspects of being a parent was new, exciting, and very rewarding.

All right, that is enough mushy stuff. I just wanted to let everyone know that now that I am back I am ready and able to assist you with whatever quandaries arise in your life.

I should also mention that in the past two weeks the new **Disability Act & Regulations** came into effect and a lot of people received letters from the Ministry of Human Resources. I want to assure you that there is no need to panic—most People Living with HIV who are receiving Provincial Disability will not be affected

and will continue to receive their benefits undisturbed. However, a few individuals will be asked to reapply, which is unfortunate but nothing to panic about. Call and make an appointment with me so that we can go through the application and complete the Assessor's portion. We have three months to re-apply for Disability so it is important that you call immediately to avoid unfavorable consequences.

If you have any questions regarding the new Act do not hesitate to call. Of course, you are more than welcome to come in and say hi—but you must be prepared to look at tons of baby pictures!!!



Terri wouldn't let us publish a picture of her, but we found a better looking one, anyway. Introducing BABY ETHAN!



Winter's a-coming: time for flu shots

Flu shots are free for those living with a chronic illness like HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis C, and for their families and caregivers. Health care and emergency services workers and those over 65 are also encouraged to come in for a free immunization. ARC strongly recommends that all clients receive flu shots and the pneumonia shots that are also available. (The pneumonia vaccine is usually needed only once; flu shots must be

repeated every year.)

Call the Flu Info-Lines for times and locations of clinics in the Okanagan.

Kelowna flu info line: 868-7715

Penticton flu info line: 493-7109

Vernon flu info line : 549-6306

In other communities, call your Health Unit for information.

Focus Groups

**By Brian Mairs,
Program Coordinator**

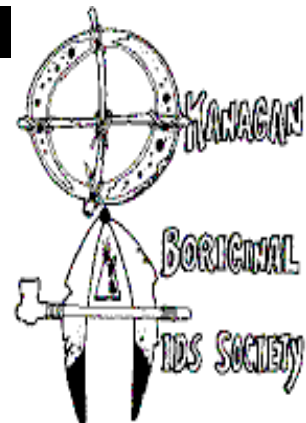
Between now and the end of November, the Okanagan Aboriginal AIDS Society will be asking people throughout the Valley to be involved in focus groups to determine what educational needs exist in our communities. An anonymous questionnaire will be conducted with the answers tallied and sorted for each community. At press time we are still working out when we will be in which community, so if you want to participate in one of the groups, please call our office with your name and number so we can advise you when we will be in your area. The area we cover is from Princeton, East to Highway 97, and from Osoyoos to Salmon Arm. Our phone number is (250) 862-2481. We're looking forward to collecting the data that will eventually assist your entire community.

FORE!

**By Brian Mairs,
Program Coordinator**



Despite the millennia of hostilities, the kind folks from the Shuswap Nation invited some of us from the Okanagan Territory to Salmon Arm for a friendly game of golf at the end of September. In total, 53 people participated in the annual event, which saw me drowning a couple of balls in water traps and coming close to doubling par on each hole. This Innu had an excuse as there are very few golf courses scattered across the tundra, but we all had a good time meeting new and old friends to the north. Our thanks to Larry Johnny for organizing the event and inviting us to share a meal with him. Larry has long been involved in the Aboriginal health sector, serving as a board member of CAAN (Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network). Larry was behind our foursome when he came within 20 centimeters of hitting Julie (OAAS Outreach Worker) with a bad slice. Already Julie and I are planning on returning next year to shave a couple of strokes off our three-digit score (did I mention this was a Par 3 course?) and learning how to duck when somebody yells FORE!



(250) 862-2481
www.aaas.ca

OAAS Annual General meeting



The Okanagan Aboriginal AIDS Society is holding their A.G.M. between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m., November 7, 2002, at the boardroom of the Okanagan Indian Band in Vernon. Come out to meet the Board of Directors and find out more about the Society. If you are interested in serving on the volunteer board, this would be a great time to ask questions and have your voice heard.

PERSON Project

The PERSON Project has now wrapped up after 17 weeks out in the community. Its primary activities were providing information, referrals, needle exchange, and harm reduction materials. During the time it was running, the project distributed 4237 condoms, handed out 2314 clean needles and took in another 974 used needles. It made 1102 contacts with the community, with the majority being street involved or homeless people. The program will be missed by those who utilized it, but be assured we are seeking more funding for next year.

Aids walk 2002

Thanks so much to all those fine folks who walked the walk to fight AIDS on Sunday September 22, 2002. Our honorary chair was Rhonda Victoor; she did a great job of promoting the walk and leading the crowd. Again, Bernard Callebaut Chocolates must be commended for raising the most money, both as a team (the Chocolate Chips) and individually (Tracy Hansen, co-owner). Thanks also to all our sponsors and volunteers who made this another bumper year.



Rhonda Victoor and the Care Bear set off from the Dolphins

HIPPO update

By Mark Perry and Navin Vasudev

HIPPO Coordinators

Besides our ongoing projects such as presentations on Hepatitis C (working closely with ARC's Speakers Bureau), we are taking on some new, yet related, issues.

One such issue is to better understand intravenous drug use, since sharing contaminated needles and other drug equipment is a high-risk activity for catching Hepatitis C. In collaboration with the PERSON Project, we have been able to learn some of the concerns and needs of Kelowna's I.V drug using population. Accessibility of new needles and disposal of



Thinking of a Tattoo or Piercing?

I want my artist to:

- Be informed about Hepatitis and HIV
- wear latex gloves
- Have a studio with an autoclave sterilizer
- Use only single-use needles and razors
- Use fresh ink for each customer
- Use only single-use piercing needles and new surgical steel jewelry

HEPATITIS SUPPORT Groups...contacts

VERNON:

HepLife. Call Sharon at 545-3092.

KELOWNA:

HEPKOP. Call Lisa or Elaine at 766-5132 or 768-3573.

PENTICTON:

Hepatitis Support Group. Call Alex or Sandra at 487-1589.

OLIVER:

Hepatitis C Society of Oliver. Call 498-4598.

used needles are some of their challenges, despite the success of the daytime needle exchange that currently operates downtown. Both the limited hours of the current needle exchange, and its geographical distance from other districts of Kelowna, make accessibility of clean needles a challenge for some users. HIPPO did a 'quick and dirty' survey of some pharmacists in the Okanagan to determine what their role is in the distribution and safe disposal of needles. Our study shows that while most pharmacists do sell needles for non-medical use, they do not provide information on safe needle use or disposal. This concerns us. We will provide pharmacists with information on harm reduction and Hepatitis C support groups and resources.

We also hope to focus on promoting safe needle disposal boxes around the city – a practice that has been successfully established in cities such as Calgary. The Health Authorities there have been very helpful in providing us information on the program, which has reduced the numbers of improperly discarded needles.

We are writing a proposal for another year of funding. Working closely with Personal Service Establishments, such as tattoo shops, piercing shops, and beauty salons, is a major focus for this proposal.

Finally, we encourage anyone who has questions about Hepatitis C to contact us, and we will do our best to help.

Hepatitis C Collaborative Circle

By Navin Vasudev

Hep C is still a silent and hidden epidemic, little known by the community at large. The Hep C Collaborative Circle, a collection of support groups in BC, was born out of a need to make Hepatitis C visible and heard by one and all. And to a large extent, this attempt seems to be on the road to success.

The main objective of the Circle is to share information and

coordinate mutual support and action that will strengthen the capacity of individuals and groups throughout British Columbia. The second conference of the Circle was held in Vancouver from September 27th to 29th. More than 40 people from Hep C organizations attended. Speakers representing Health Canada, VANDU, Addiction Services and other agencies took part in the Circle.

Interestingly, this conference featured a mix of strategic planning and skills building. The highlights of the conference were discussions and decisions regarding the government's responsibility toward individuals infected with Hep C through the blood supply.

All in all, an interesting and exciting gathering of a group with a strong desire to improve the lives of those infected and affected by Hep C.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Core Training

Core Training Dates:

Friday Nov. 15

6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Saturday Nov. 16

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Nov. 17

1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Location: Okanagan
University College
KLO Campus.

**Pre-registration is
mandatory, as space
is limited. Contact
Kate Alexander at
862-2437.**

Core Training is the tool we use to train our volunteers. It is extensive and intensive, interactive, fun, educational, challenging, and it is available to anyone with interest, regardless of their intention to volunteer.

Benefits:

- Confidence in understanding the risks of HIV and knowing how to reduce or eliminate chances of exposure;
- Increased level of comfort in discussing issues around sexuality and substance use;
- Many employers take volunteer activities into consideration when hiring.

Items we will cover:

- knowledge of HIV/AIDS; how it is transmitted;
- how it is *not* transmitted;
- testing, and the window period;
- risk reduction;
- disease progression;
- opportunistic infections;

- current treatments;
- treatments and vaccines under development;
- treatment failure and side effects;
- global and local HIV/AIDS statistics;
- social justice and determinants of health - poverty, ethnicity, age, gender, education, abuse, ability, marginalization and access to care, i.e. why some people are at greater risk than others;
- psycho-social and economic impacts upon individuals; families and communities;
- barriers to prevention;
- Hepatitis C—disease transmission, progression, treatment and issues;
- talking to children and youth.

A highlight is the panel discussion with people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, who tell their personal stories of living with the disease.

Those who complete Core Training receive an attractive certificate. If you then begin to volunteer actively, you will be reimbursed the \$15.00 course fee. The course is offered free of charge to OUC Students.

STITCHING A REVOLUTION: BOOK REVIEW

Stitching a Revolution: The making of an activist

By **Cleve Jones**

Review by Melissa Hill

Having spent most of the 1980's in a sheltered existence in a small town in Canada, it was rare to me that the impact of a disease such as HIV found its way into our pristine community. Reading *Stitching a Revolution* was an eye-opening glimpse of how it felt to be at "Ground Zero" during the first ripples of the devastation that AIDS would cause in Gay communities, and the rest of the world.

Cleve Jones, a Gay Rights activist and one of the first to work on the front when AIDS was so badly misunderstood and stigmatized, provides a frank and

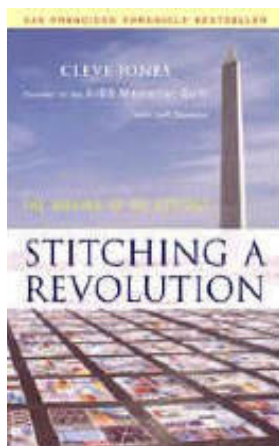
touching look at his life, including the sorrow of watching many of his friends and colleagues die so quickly. To describe it in his own powerful words, " Little did we know back then that there was a terrible stalker shadowing this gaudy, never-ending party, and that our own streets would soon seem as war-torn as those of Isherwood's* youth... People died fast then. One day you would see someone who looked fine. A month later he looked bad. Two weeks later you'd see his name in the obituaries."

Stitching a Revolution, a story of great sadness and heartache, is also the story of one man and his vision of a quilt, each panel commemorating the life of

someone's brother, friend, sister, mother, the life of someone's friend. From this vision grew the greatest memorial ever made, 43 tons of fabric spreading the length of 24 football fields taking ten years to complete. One and a half million people were in attendance at its first public display, sharing the sorrow, the pain and the love. The NAMES project, small in its beginnings, huge in its impact, rolled out in all its glory to the steps of the White House. *Stitching a Revolution* is a story of hope and determination; the messages it delivers are deep and profound.

ARC is pleased to introduce this review column. All books and videos we will review are available in our library.

* Christopher Isherwood: writer of *Berlin Stories*



NOTICE BOARD

Okanagan Entertainment Book, 2003

ORDER YOURS NOW!

Coupons and "two-fers" for lots of great eateries, golf, skiing, etc. Only \$30.00. To pre-order call ARC at 862-2437, or drop by at 202-1626 Richter Street.

ARC Hours

Effective immediately, our client service hours are **9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

Client Support Hours

Kelowna

Terri Ross has drop-in hours at ARC on Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. At other times, an appointment is necessary.

Vernon

Every second Friday, including Nov. 8, 22, Dec. 6, and 20.

Princeton

Please call for an appointment, which will be on the second Tuesday of the month.

Penticton

Every second Tuesday: Oct. 29, Nov. 11, 25, Dec. 10.

If you live outside the Kelowna free call area, call **1-800-616-2437** to book an appointment. In Kelowna, call 862-2437.

ARC News On Line

www.arcok.com

Please contact Kate to receive an e-mail notification when each newsletter is published:

kalexander@arcok.com
Electronic transmission of newsletters would save ARC printing and mailing costs.



Free Coffee

Starbucks provides FREE coffee for our clients. Please ask at the reception desk for your coffee the next time you come in to the ARC office.

Reiki & Healing Touch

Enjoy the relaxing and balancing benefits of a quiet hour with Toshie. Call 862-2437 to book your free Tuesday session.

AIDS AWARENESS WEEK

In the week leading up to World AIDS Day, we will be distributing RED RIBBONS for donation. Volunteers are needed for two hour shifts on the following dates:



Friday, 22nd November 2002
Saturday, 23rd November 2002
Thursday, 28th November 2002
Friday, 29th November 2002
Saturday, 30th November 2002

With 9 locations, this works out to 27 – 36 volunteers each day. The ribbons each come with a card explaining the significance of the ribbons, and why we are fundraising—because there is still no cure for AIDS.

Please contact Bill Litwin, volunteer coordinator, at 862-2437 or wlitwin@arcok.com.

Speakers' bureau



Would you like a speaker to come to your group or organization? We have over 20

trained volunteer presenters, who can appeal to audiences from kids to seniors, church groups to sex-trade workers.

We can do anything from one-hour "speaks" to two-day workshops on HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C. Some of our speakers are living with HIV or HCV, and will enrich the presentations with descriptions of their personal experiences. All presentations are interactive, and we strongly believe that there's no such thing as a stupid question. To book a speak, call Kate Alexander at 862-2437, educator@arcok.com