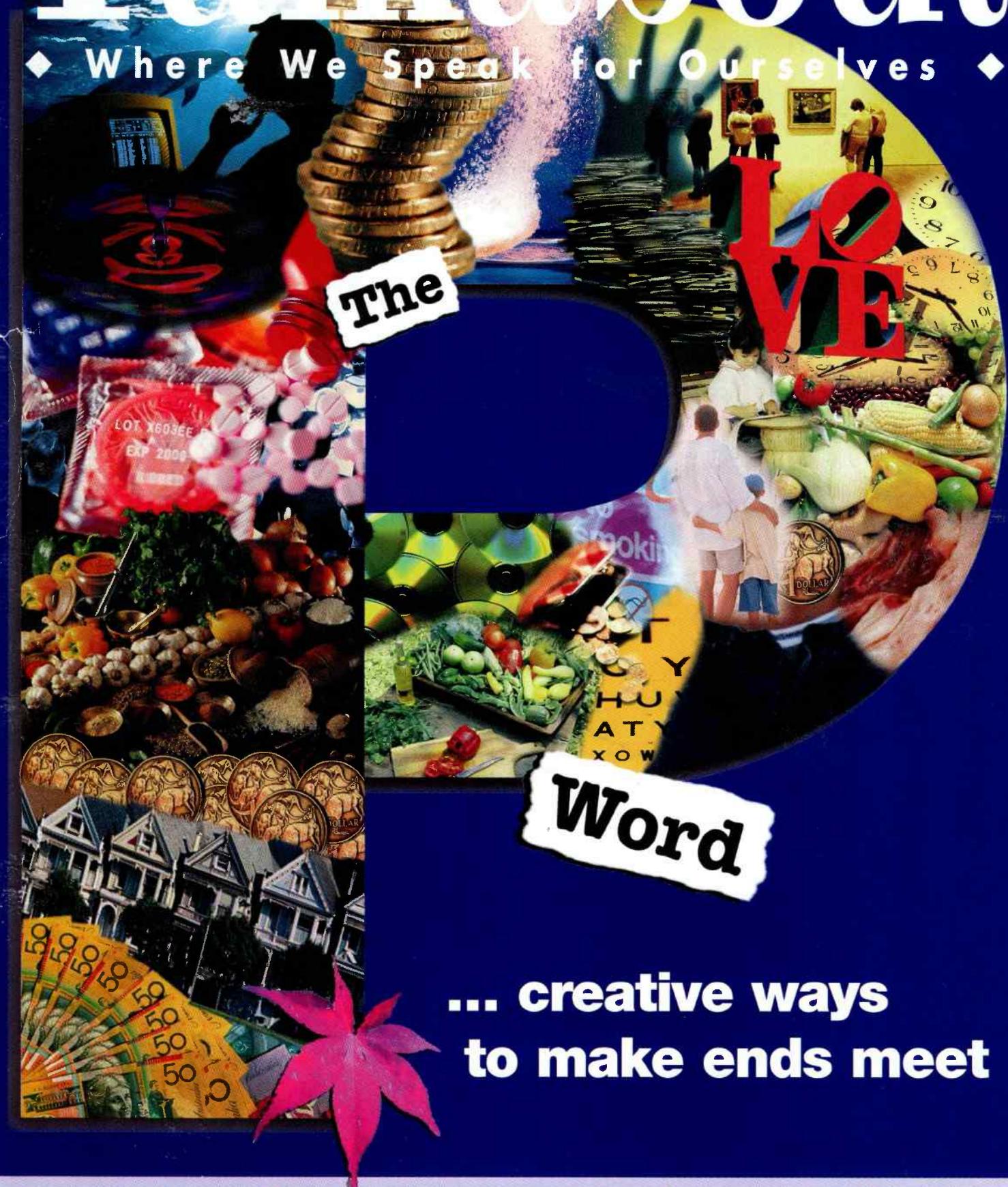


The Magazine of People Living With HIV/AIDS NSW Inc.

Talkabout

No.109 July/August 2000

◆ Where We Speak for Ourselves ◆



The

Word

... creative ways
to make ends meet

futures II, cheap chic, boredom busters, and more poztalk winners

Opposites Attract

An HIV- boy meets HIV+ boy love story...



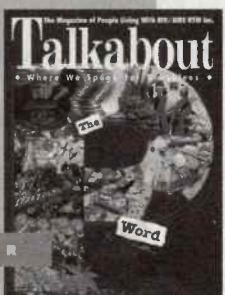
A new resource for HIV negative partners of HIV positive men.

- HIV/AIDS and safe sex information
- Slip-ups – when accidents happen
- Negotiation
- Open & closed relationships
- The negative partner's guide to HIV treatments
- New and improved communication skills

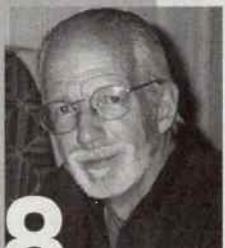
ACON
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Available from ACON, 9 Commonwealth Street, Surry Hills or call 9206 2000.
And from selected gay venues, saunas, sex clubs and adult bookshops.

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There is a touch of alchemy about the community sector – hard working staff, committed activists, and a well-informed and dedicated client base creating exciting projects, services and publications at considerably less than the real cost. The value of the services, to the people who use them, is difficult to put a price on. For those who rely on organisations like BGF, PLC, Ankali, PozHets, or ACON their value is possibly priceless. Research – and the hundreds of PLWHA who fill out the surveys or step forward to be part of the trials – plays a part in this alchemy. Research like the HIV Futures series confirms experience, reveals surprising and disturbing trends, and gives the community sector the confidence to innovate new methods and directions.

This month *Talkabout* takes a look at poverty – what it means to be poor, at the findings of the recently released *HIV Futures II*, and at how PLWHA are making ends meet. We spend a day with BGF, and discover just what it takes to offer their range of services. PozHet Sydney and PozHet West report on their exciting few months, and we welcome Mac McMahon to the Sanctuary in a significant trial – a first for NSW – of a Complementary Therapies Treatments Offer.

The three PozTalk Competition stories featured this month by Dudley Roberts, Gavin Austin and Dan Forrester are all highly commended by our judges and we hope you enjoy them.

Also this month *Talkabout* pays tribute to Bill Phillips, a member of PLWHA, who died on April 28 and is missed by friends and colleagues alike. Marcus O'Donnell's tribute on page 9 tells Bill's story with grace, humour and honesty – much like Bill was himself.

Finally – it's the month to subscribe or renew your subscription. Your subscription brings *Talkabout* to your door, and gives us valuable feedback. Thanks again for your interest and support.

feona strudert



PositiveAction with Ryan McGlaughlin



Moving forward

Farewell and welcome

After four years as President, Phillip Medcalf has stepped down for personal reasons. He will continue on the committee. Phillip has built vital bridges between PLWHA (NSW) and its communities and should be commended for his commitment in a difficult environment.

Amelia McLoughlin, a long-standing committee member has been elected as the association's President. John Robinson, elected Vice President, will assist Amelia.

"It is pleasing as a positive woman to be chosen to lead PLWHA (NSW). I will always respect the fact that it is mostly gay men infected with the virus in Australia and I will work in collaboration with all communities," Amelia said.

Amelia, a working mother, is currently a Women's HIV Support Officer at ACON. John is a retired Health Department public servant who was a member of the PLWHA (NSW) committee in the early days of the epidemic and rejoined it in the last year. Amelia and John are both dynamic people who bring different skills to the organisation and will complement each other well.

New projects

In the last month we began a pilot project called Positive Directions: a program designed to give HIV positive people the chance to assess and update their skills. We have also established a Complementary Therapies Treatments Officer in a pilot project at the Sanctuary in Newtown (see our

story on page). We are developing a Positive Advocacy Project that will empower HIV positive people to act as their own advocates. Other initiatives are an education video by the Positive Speakers' Bureau that targets remote and rural areas in NSW, and a Legal Working Group brochure to assist HIV positive people make decisions about international travel. Also a factsheet on Riboflavin - Vitamin B2 is in production.

The PLWHA (NSW) committee continues to meet regularly with representatives from ACON to discuss their Strategic Directions and Business Plan. The committee is also monitoring developments among other HIV Community Organisations as part of our primary role as an advocate for appropriate and equitable HIV services for PLWHA in NSW.



The launch of the latest edition of the popular women's resource, Treat Yourself Right was a pampered affair with makeovers, massage and nibbles and (pictured above) a complimentary make-over from staff at the community minded Body Shop. Pictured (left) enjoying the afternoon are (right) the new President of PLWHA (NSW), Amelia McLoughlin, (left) Angela Stewart, the Family Support Worker at ACON and (centre) Jill Sergeant, Communications Officer at AFAO.

Briefs

Discussion on Body Fat Changes

In February this year ACON hosted a panel hookup to an international conference of six experts discussing body fat changes in HIV disease. A transcript of that discussion is now available online at <http://www.hivandamps.com/hivtreatment/bodyfat/transcript.html>. To have the transcript mailed to you, phone ACON's Treatment Information Officers on 02 9206 2013 or 036 (recall 1800 816 518).

New Protease Inhibitor

Australian doctors can now prescribe ABT-378, an experimental protease inhibitor, under a Special Access Scheme for people who cannot benefit from currently available HIV medications. The capsules, three of which are taken twice day with food, contain a small amount tenofovir that boosts blood levels of ABT-378. The most common side effects of ABT-378 are diarrhoea, headache, mild nausea and dry mouth.

Abt-378 Australia

Nevirapine management guidelines

The manufacturer of nevirapine, a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor, will review safety information before use when starting treatment with the drug. This follows a statement of concern by the European Agency for Evaluation of Medicinal Products that serious skin and liver reactions associated with nevirapine. The manufacturers stress that to reduce the risk of a skin reaction, the first fourteen days of nevirapine must be reduced to one 200mg tablet a day, ie half the standard dose. If a rash does occur, it should not be increased until the rash has gone away. In addition the manufacturers emphasise that doctors should perform liver function tests, before starting nevirapine therapy and at appropriate intervals during therapy. Nevirapine must be stopped if liver function tests show moderate abnormalities, and should only be resumed when liver function tests return to normal. If the liver abnormalities gain again, treatment of the drug must be permanently discontinued.

Reuter, Ingberman

Your Personal Pill Planner

An interactive Internet service is now available to help people with HIV understand complicated drug therapies. The Wheel - Your Personal Pill Planner (<http://www.aidsmap.com>) offers the latest information on anti-viral regimens, including how and when the drugs must be taken and in what combinations to help people determine how well they fit into their lifestyle.

Reuter



Tell it like it is is your opportunity to get a straight answer to questions about health, treatments and side effects. Send your questions to Tell it like it is, Talkabout, PO Box 831 Darlinghurst 1300 or fax 02 9360 3504 or email feonas@plwha.org.au

Q My cholesterol is high at 7mmol/L (normal is less than 5.5). I am taking combination therapy. My doctor is not worried. Should I be?

A Increases in the fat component of blood which includes both cholesterol and triglycerides is commonly seen with patients on combination therapies.

There is no evidence to suggest you should worry. While 'natural' increases in blood fat levels are known to 'clog' up the arteries around the heart which lead to heart attacks, there is no conclusive evidence that 'drug-induced' increases in blood fat levels do the same.

To be on the safe-side however, it is probably a good idea to reduce your other risk factors for heart attacks. You should stop smoking, check your blood pressure and blood sugar level, make sure you are not overweight and get regular exercise. Your doctor will continue to monitor your blood fat levels. If they get too high he may suggest treatment to lower the cholesterol and triglycerides.

Q I am on combination therapies and have an undetectable viral load and a CD4 count above 500/uL. My doctor and I are very pleased. Will my 'recreational' drug use affect my treatments? Most weekends I am 'wasted' at least one, if not both days and I miss doses. While I know the dangers, I am enjoying life and am ambivalent about changing. What should I do?

A You should have an honest and frank discussion with your doctor or treatment officer. Your current control of your virus probably won't last for long. You need to consider coming off treatments and monitoring your

viral load and CD4 counts regularly afterwards. You also need to address the issues leading to your drug use. While many people can enjoy controlled use of 'recreational' drugs, others fool themselves for too long and slide down the slippery slide. Serious

see your doctor to exclude other causes of rash and itch, such as scabies. But at this time of the year simple treatment of dry skin will help improve the symptoms. This may include lots of non-perfumed moisturisers, the best being sorbolene/glycerine cream

To be on the safe-side however, it is probably a good idea to reduce your other risk factors for heart attacks. You should stop smoking, check your blood pressure and blood sugar level, make sure you are not overweight and get regular exercise. Your doctor will continue to monitor your blood fat levels. If they get too high he may suggest treatment to lower the cholesterol and triglycerides.

problems such as unrecognised depression may lead people to 'abuse' recreational drugs. Congratulations on taking the first step and recognising the problem.

Q I can't sleep at night because my skin is so itchy. The more I scratch the worse it is and I end up with open sores! What can I do?

A Itchy skin is very common in PLWHA and the commonest cause is intense dryness of the skin. It generally seems to be worse in the winter and is made more intense by having hot showers and being under the many layers of blankets at this time of the year. If the itch starts with an obvious rash, it is important to

available from all chemists; an anti-histamine may also be of benefit, such as Claratyne 10mg at night, plus other moisturising preparations such as Alpha-keri, lotion or oil in the bath. Avoid having your shower too hot, as this will aggravate the dryness.

Answers are provided by Virginia Furner and Mark Kelly - both Doctors at the Albion Street Clinic and members of PLWHA (NSW) Treatments Working Group. Decisions about treatments should be made in conjunction with your GP. Virginia and Mark can be contacted on furnerv@sesabs.nsw.gov.au and kellymark@sesabs.nsw.gov.au

Shop Talk



PLWHA (NSW) staff and committee members are active in many projects, consultations and meetings that affect the interests of PLWHA. **Antony Nicholas** – our Community Development Project Worker – profiles what's happening in NSW this month.

Refresh Yourself

Fancy three glorious days of sun, sea, stress reduction therapies and peer support? Western Sydney and rural HIV positive women soaked up the sun at Avalon on Sydney's Northern Beaches during the first retreat dedicated to their needs. Organised by the Western Sydney HIV Positive Women's Committee the Weekend of Refreshment brought women together from Newcastle, Goulburn, Emu Plains, Penrith and Campbelltown for peer support and health education. There'll also be an Open Day on nutrition and life skills in November in Blacktown, and another Weekend of Refreshment in October, this time at Cronulla Beach. If you're a country or Western Sydney HIV+ woman and need time out for yourself, ring Marie Lavis on 9671 4100 for details.

Nepean Sexual Health Clinic told to move

The Nepean Sexual Health Clinic is to move offices. Sources associated with the popular Sexual Health Clinic have told PLWHA (NSW) that the Nepean Hospital must move from its

existing premises within Nepean Hospital. The Clinic was refurbished with funding from the NSW AIDS Branch. PLWHA (NSW) is concerned that alternative locations under consideration will be less discreet than the existing site and difficult to access via public transport. The Clinic is widely used by positive people for treatments and consultations. People with concerns about the proposed move are urged to contact Antony on 02 9361 6011.

ADD and HACC projects wind up

PLWHA (NSW) and other community groups have been working with the Ageing Disability Department and Home and Community Care to improve the access and equity of their services for positive people. Several trial projects will be evaluated, including a collaborative approach between HIV and HACC services in the Blue Mountains. Other trial projects that will be evaluated include an Indigenous Health project in the Northern Rivers; training for HACC services offered by ACON Western Sydney; testing referral mechanisms between

Home Care and CSN; and education in positive issues for HACC service staff. A full report is expected in the coming months.

Advocating for Yourself

The Positive Advocacy Project at PLWHA (NSW) is steaming along with input from ACON, the Positive Living Centre, positive individuals, and several PLWHA (NSW) Committee members. The project, expected to begin in the mid-year will match clients with a positive peer advocate who will facilitate action around the client's complaint. The peer advocate will aim to empower the positive clients to advocate for themselves. If you are interested in being trained as one of our Positive Advocates call Antony on 02 9361 6011 between 10am and 5pm.

Info Technology Course For Older Guys

An Information Technology course for mature aged men course will start in July 2000 at the Randwick TAFE Outreach. To be eligible you must be in receipt of benefits, can speak, read and write English and be over 25 years of age. For more information call Randwick Course Information on 9469 8539.



Des Kilkeary Lodge is out of action after a serious fire in May. No one was hurt but NorthAIDS staff are working overtime to find suitable alternative housing until a decision about the Lodge is made. Myrtle Place's programs for lunches, alternative therapies and all things relating to enjoying life, stress management, social events, trips and educational forums will continue. For information call Myrtle Place on (02) 9929 4288.

Briefs

Ongoing fight to reduce the cost of drugs

Community activists and developing nations fighting to gain access to affordable HIV/AIDS medication millions of PLWHA will continue a watch brief after surprise developments in May.

The Australian newspaper reported May 12 the announcement by Boehringer Ingelheim, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Glaxo Wellcome, Merck & Co and I. Hoffman La Roche that the pharmaceutical companies may reduce AIDS drug prices between 50 and 80 percent.

But Australia's peak AIDS organisation responded cautiously with a statement that argued that the proposed cuts to AIDS drug prices in developing nations would not solve the problem of access for the majority of people with HIV/AIDS.

"While we welcome the humanitarian gesture the five multinational drug companies have made, even an 80 percent reduction will be out of the reach of most people and governments in sub-Saharan Africa," said Robin Gorna, Executive Director of the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO).

"Although this sounds like a big discount, the prices of AIDS drugs are inflated enormously to cover development costs and a significant profit margin," said Gorna.

Pharmaceutical companies made the offer a day after the US Congress had dropped legislation to allow African nations to import or make cheap generic versions of HIV/AIDS drugs. AIDS activists have exerted pressure for the manufacture of generic drugs for the developing world because prices would be far cheaper than discounted brand name drugs, but the pharmaceutical industry has protected its patents with trade sanctions.

DOH landlords do not need ABN

Fears that tenants in receipt of the special rental subsidy would have to obtain an ABN from their landlords have proved unfounded. The Australian Taxation Office has confirmed to the Department of Housing that owners of residential rental properties will not need an ABN for tax purposes as long as the lease is used predominantly for residential properties. Confusion had arisen after DOH clients had received a letter in early May requesting an ABN from the landlords. The letters should have gone to the landlords directly and the mistake caused confusion and concern among tenants. For further inquiries contact Julie Callaghan, Housing Officer at ACON.

pozhet-by-the-sea

'Opposites attract' may hardly be stunning news in a magazine with a large gay readership. But picture the delight of a mix of couples and singles, men and women, enjoying themselves by the surf at the first retreat for people living heterosexually with HIV/AIDS.

David Barton shares some seaside tales of a great weekend.

There has never been a retreat for heterosexual positive people, not since HIV emerged in Australia nearly 18 years. So Pozhet-by-the-sea was a significant first event that we all anticipated.

Held over a weekend in May at a secluded beach cove in Shellharbour, Pozhet-by-the-sea was blessed with sunshine and blue skies. Twenty-one of us (11 women and 10 men) felt we couldn't have gotten closer to the sea's edge - it was glorious!

We read and swam and surfed, and went for long walks. We stretched out on deck chairs and snoozed. In the late afternoon we met in positive groups or partners circles and joined in the next morning's meditation class.

A chance to relax and talk

Mostly we talked about HIV and how we are living with it. We shared the experiences of new diagnosis and long term survival, tips on treatments and dealing with side effects, and how to handle loneliness and disclosure. We discussed HIV and relationships and the pressures of being straight and positive. We talked about how we manage work and medication. We shared our hopes and fears for our kids.

We had wanted a retreat like this since we began in 1993 as a small organisation dedicated to positive heterosexual men and women. Pozhet-by-the-sea was inspired by research from Harvard showing that considerable health benefits follow when positive men and women are encouraged to support each other. A retreat has been an essential step in Pozhet's long-term strategy of building a strong positive community for heterosexual PLWHA.

There are memories of the weekend I will treasure. Watching Mac, positive since



David Barton, Coordinator of Pozhets and a positive man, can't believe his luck: a perfect day and not a shark in sight. David is pictured here with other members of Pozhets enjoying the first Pozhet retreat.

1985 and an original Pozhet member, out there among the surfers gliding across the waves. Such style on the board! Seeing Eileen who's always smiling, but this time she arrived with painful stomach bloat, and was fussed over with peppermint teas and a

Overcoming Isolation

Why was this retreat so important? Pozhets don't have recognised sites like bars or cafes where we can meet other straight positive people, let alone sex-on-venues to explore and affirm a positive sexuality. Few of us have any chance at all of expressing our HIV status outside our front doors. Some can't tell those they live with, like their children and flatmates. Finding company, care and support is critical and fraught with difficulty.

So we are heartened that after seven years of coming together as a group we have miraculously survived and grown and taken our place in the wider HIV community. A measure of this is the capacity to undertake successfully a retreat for both men and women. A few weeks ago we celebrated being seven with a jazz band at the Tree of Hope in Surry Hills; men and women swinging to Sinatra, Davies and the

Going down to the village baker on Sunday morning and cleaning out his supply of bread rolls ('Have you got 38? Yes, it is a large family!').

deep perfumed bubble bath. Going down to the village baker on Sunday morning and cleaning out his supply of bread rolls ('Have you got 38? Yes, it is a large family!'). Walking along warm sands with Alan and Susanna talking over the pros and cons of Interleukin. Discussing holiday plans for the Middle East that mean managing the virus overseas. Waking up in the morning to discover some of us had talked long into the night, the opportunity to do so is that rare. The cries of 'See the dolphins' as a pod of flippers cruised by on the way to Jervis Bay. Strengthening our bonds between heterosexual PLWHA.

unstoppable Ella. So next year, another retreat, a growing community, and more birthdays to come! ■

David Barton is the Coordinator of Positive Heterosexuals and a member of the Talkabout Editorial committee.

family matters!

Family does matter, especially when you're living with HIV/AIDS. And if you're straight and positive, family matters a great deal, as Pozhetwest's recent workshop revealed. **Sonja** attended the conference and prepared this report.

Family Matters, Western Sydney's first annual conference for people living heterosexually with HIV/AIDS, was held in Blacktown on a Saturday in May. Family Matters was coordinated by Marie Lavis, a well-known Western Sydney HIV/AIDS worker who lost her brother to AIDS and who founded Pozhetwest in response to the need for local heterosexual peer support. The conference exceeded expectations – nearly 30 men and women came from all over Western Sydney, the Blue Mountains and Southern Highlands, as well as the Riverina.

We threw away fixed notions of 'family'! Marie's introduction reinforced the broad view of family that was the conference theme: family of origin, family of choice, the extended family, family around the world. We represented all of these: positive and sero-discordant couples, positive parents and grandparents, negative partners, friends and carers. Most of us were born here but some hailed from the UK, Africa, Romania, the Philippines and Fiji.

Many families, different stories

We began with an icebreaker, an expert panel who explored the twists and turns faced by the heterosexual HIV family. Sue, a Westmead Hospital HIV Clinical Nurse Consultant, focused on pressures a wife faces when her husband's diagnosis is kept secret inside the family. How do you hide the virus from your kids? She described the inventive ways that positive and sero-discordant parents juggle the virus and family intimacy and care for children, positive and negative, in the midst of their



Crack it sister! Marie Lavis, Coordinator of PozhetWest with Marcie the whip crackin' cowgirl at the recent Family Matters forum.

own HIV needs. Wendy, a partner for 10 years, spoke about the impact of the virus on her life when she married a positive man – she had to struggle for her own survival as well! While she found valuable ways of living negatively, over the years her isolation endured. Positive for 15 years

*the impossibility of disclosure is
the defining characteristic of
living positively for us and our
families and produces a chronic,
corrosive isolation.*

and now on combination therapy, David described how, while his family worried for him, he had focused on how to stay alive. His private metaphor for hope was that his battle with AIDS, like the Battle of Waterloo, would be won in the last 10 minutes. He enriched time by using cherished routines to divide the day into its separate parts. Pip, a psychologist from Parramatta Sexual Health, outlined the

frightening moments HIV families face while enduring illness, guarding secrets, and leading double lives. Yet as HIV families we are also resilient, imaginative, and full of courage and humour.

Disclosure blues

We spent heaps of time on the trickiness of telling others with scenarios for the big "I've-got-something-to-tell-you" moment. Working out whom to trust, finding the right time and place, bracing ourselves against prejudice and curiosity: disclosure has challenged the bravest hearts. One thing became clear – the impossibility of disclosure is the defining characteristic of living positively for us and our families and produces a chronic, corrosive isolation.

Anita, a family therapist, used photo language to help us change some of our attitudes towards positive living, to make a better picture by seeing ourselves differently. We plotted our emotional time by completing a series of questions that focused us on where we are now.

Lunchtime was a treat! Marcie, a Hawkesbury cowgirl who breeds Australian stock horses, filled the sparkling autumn air with the crack of stock whips. Only Jason and Marie plucked up the courage to have a go! We also had an impromptu concert when a member of the group, one of Australia's most respected traditional harmonica players, gave a toe tapping round of old sea shanties and Irish airs.

We finished with lots of fun and laughter and a quiz (with Miranda from Family Planning on Okay, so what's safe? We explored safety around sex but also around the home and within the family. A great way to end a great day! See you next year, Pozhetwest, and thanks! ■

Sonja, not her real name, is a member of PozhetWest

has been a cold but busy month in the garden with our last chance to get in any winter vegetables. A look around at the Street Jungle gardens and it's just as busy. The Newtown garden is now under construction with two workshops underway in June.

The Woolloomooloo garden is also due for completion by the end of July, so if you want to sign up - you had better get in quick. Oriental art and workshops at the Woolloomooloo garden are planned for early August.

The Waterloo garden is getting the razzle dazzle treatment for their open day on Sunday 9th July 11 - 3pm at 56a Raglan Street, Waterloo - (At the rear of the South Sydney Uniting Church).

The day will include a free BBQ, performances and workshops. So if you are interested in community gardening, or meeting people who are, this is a day not to miss.

News Patch

An analysis of vegetable produce commissioned by the Organic Retailers and Growers Association of Australia (ORGAA) has shown that organic vegetables contained, on average, 10 times more nutrients than supermarket vegetables ... mmm... I thought they only tasted better!

Until next time, happy gardening

Cx from the Street Jungle team

or information about Street Jungle contact:

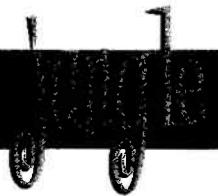
Juloyn (Waterloo) 9382 8374

Robert (Newtown) 9519 6142

Michael (Woolloomooloo) 9206 2122

About the 5th century BC the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar married the Median princess Amythis. She was soon homesick for the green hills and trees of her native land. To gratify her, the King built a huge structure 400 feet square on the west bank of the River Euphrates. In the crowded city of Babylon it rose as a pyramid to the height of 100 feet and was one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

It is said that the gardens were lined with cement and great sheets of lead to protect the walls of the building from the moisture that seeped down above. Each terrace cascaded with blooms; shrubs and flowers that delighted Babylon with their impossible colours and beguiling perfumes. The earth gave forth unprecedented lushness, and very three grew tall and strong, every plant a wonder of the natural world.



a complementary treat

A small experiment in Complementary Therapies will add to the treatment options for PLWHA. **feona studdert** reports.

PLWHA (NSW) has appointed New South Wales' first Complementary Therapies Treatments Officer at the Sanctuary Holistic Health Centre in Newtown.

Robert Green, Convenor of the Complementary Therapies and Treatments Working Group of PLWHA, believes the position will enhance the treatment options currently available for PLWHA.

"Complementary therapies are what used to be thought of as alternate medicine.

Many people find them an invaluable way to minimise drug side effects.

We aim to help those people who want to learn more about complementary therapies.

This initiative recognises the central role complementary therapies now play in the life of many people with HIV/AIDS. PLWHA (NSW) believes such therapies work hand-in-hand with allopathic, or drug based, medical regimes. Many people find them an invaluable way to minimise drug side effects. We aim to help those people who want to learn more about complementary therapies.

Mac MacMahon to kick start the project

Mac MacMahon will be the first Treatment Officer. Mac has a diploma in Traditional Chinese Medicine and has studied acupuncture here and in China. He has had nearly twenty years experience in HIV/AIDS in education, voluntary work and clinical practice as an acupuncturist and Health & Lifestyle consultant. Mac who has HIV himself has vast personal



The lovely and talented Mac McMahon at your complementary service.

experience with both complementary therapies and allopathic medicine.

Green said that PLWHA (NSW) hopes to obtain permanent funding for the position.

"The Treatments Officer will advise on the role of complementary therapies in treatment strategies, including practical coping skills for increasing empowerment and self esteem. He will undertake individual assessment and refer clients to appropriate therapies and therapists. The TO is a qualified therapist, but the position will not offer treatment. The service is strictly for information and referral. Nor will it venture into the realm of advice regarding allopathic medicine, and area well covered by ACON." ■

Mac is at the Sanctuary, at 6 Mary Street, Newtown. For bookings call 9519 6830 on Mondays or Fridays or by email complementarytherapies@hotmail.com. The service is available two afternoons per week.

bill phillips 1953 – 2000

By Marcus O'Donnell

Like a lot of his friends, I heard about Bill Phillips's suicide while I was at Inquisition. Like a lot of his friends I had been looking forward to seeing him there. Like a lot of his friends I danced with Bill all night. It was lucky I was off my face.

In the post-party haze the next day I grabbed a book at random that happened to be lying around and started to read. It was a dialogue about creation spirituality and the new science between biologist Rupert Sheldrake and Matthew Fox, a former Dominican theologian, recently declared a heretic by the Catholic church. Fox wrote of his earliest experience of the mystical. At eleven he entered a room and heard a Beethoven piano sonata. He recalled later saying to a friend: "It blew my soul open." Those words immediately made me think again of Bill.

Amongst other things – writer, critic, editor, HIV activist, gym instructor – Bill had studied for a number of years to be a Dominican priest. Like Fox, his soul had been blown too far open by the power of real spirituality to stay trapped within the confines of the church.

Ask any of his friends and they will tell you that Bill could be a real pain – especially at five o'clock in the morning speeding off his face when he just wouldn't shut up! Ask any of his friends and one of the things they will remember vividly is his deep guttural joyful laugh. Ask any of his friends and they will tell you Bill's manic energy was infectious, exhilarating, exhausting, lovable.

I first knew Bill when he was arts editor of *Campaign* based in Sydney and I

was editor of *OutRage* based in Melbourne. We'd occasionally talk on the phone, or bump into each other at functions when I was in Sydney. He seemed like a nice enough guy, intelligent, informed, a little conservative, even then edgy, manic. When I began working for the *Star* about a year ago I bumped into him in the corridor, outside the PLWHA office downstairs, and couldn't believe that the muscled, singletted, sexy activist was the same be-suited guy I used to chat to at arts openings.

As with a lot of gay men, Sydney's fast lane, being HIV-positive, recovering from a nearly fatal illness with the advance of anti-viral drugs, had all had their effect on Bill. He had been propelled into a strange place that was at once the most liberating place he had ever been and a place whence he seemed to have nowhere to go.

Bill wrote an opinion piece a month or so ago, (Ed. in the *Star Observer*), about his struggle with "the black dog", his chronic depression. He talked to me about writing a follow-up piece called "Are we having fun yet?" about his own and other gay men's endless pursuit of drug-induced "sexstasy". We talked a lot about this over the last few weeks.

Both ex-Catholics and almost priests, we recognised in this embrace of extreme pleasure a powerful will to transcendence, the dance along the edge, that made us gasp for that most exhilarating of breaths, the single breath that separated the present sublime from the eternal sublime.

We also recognised the isolating, destructive, plain exhausting elements of this behaviour in our own lives, those of our friends and our community.

In the final weeks of his life, Bill was full of plans, we were talking about his writing a regular column that would bring together arts, gossip, and reflections on life, sex and love in Sydney. He was passionately involved as a Board member with the restructure of ACON. He was more determinedly reaching out to friends. He seemed to have a new spark to life. I enjoyed him even more.

But in the end, quite simply and quite inexplicably to some, the big romance of Bill's life was with death.

A few weeks ago he wrote a story, *The Angel Of Death*. It began:

"I am not afraid of him. On the contrary, he fills me with calm and confidence. This is encouraged by his altogether beautiful appearance. Not the Crone, nor the Grim Reaper: he appears to me as a man of astonishing grace. Winged, dazzlingly lovely in form and face, he is naked, blazing with light and life."

I feel his presence behind me. His massive wings enfold me and he whispers in my ear: 'Soon, my darling. Soon.'

This fills me with joy. I am desired, distracted by his passion for me."

I'm not sure that's how Bill actually felt at the end, I can only hope he did. I suspect he also hurt like hell, that he was again in the grip of that deep psychic pain that crosses into a numb calm meditative silence.

I hope that final rush lifted him up like those angelic wings and he heard the joyful, distracting whispers he so longed to hear. ■

This article first appeared in the Sydney Star Observer on 4 May 2000.

“*Futures II found a high use of psychiatric medication in the positive population. More than 25% of PLWHA had used anti-depressant medication in the last six months, and a similar proportion had taken medication for anxiety.*

Grierson argues that this is also linked to poverty.

the p word

The impact of poverty on the wellbeing of PLWHA and the increasing incidence of poverty among positive women is a major finding of the second *HIV Futures Report*. **feona studdert** reports on an increasingly complex issue that has significant implications for the direction of services and policy.

A high incidence of poverty among positive people is nothing new. There is plenty of evidence at hand that a significant proportion of PLWHA have struggled financially since diagnosis. What is new is the developing knowledge around the implications of poverty to the general wellbeing of PLWHA, and the emerging gap between those PLWHA who have access to support and financial resources and those who don't.

Futures II, released in late March, is the second national survey of the health and wellbeing of PLWHA in Australia and follows the first *HIV Futures Survey* published by the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society in 1997.

Dr Jeffrey Grierson is the Principal Researcher of the *Futures II*. He told *Talkabout* that the findings indicate that the management of HIV/AIDS and the social life of PLWHA is becoming increasingly complex.

“One of the most important findings is the growing divide between those who are doing well on the new treatments and those who aren't, and between those who are doing well socially and financially and those who aren't. Providing services (including health promotion and education) to those who are living with HIV as a manageable chronic illness while not alienating or under servicing those with greater needs is probably the major challenge for service organisations and policy makers at the moment.”

Robin Gorna is the Executive Officer of AFAO – Australia's peak HIV/AIDS advocacy agency. She told *Talkabout* that the findings on poverty would inform AFAO's response to the Federal Government's current review of the welfare system.

“It provides compelling information about the economic costs of chronic illness, and the impact of HIV diagnosis at the most fundamental level. The high rates of unemployment associated with poverty are troubling, and further social research to uncover the causes of unemployment would be helpful. The higher levels of poverty among HIV-positive women are clearly related to childcare costs, not levels of employment. It poses stark challenges to the sector around the role of child-care in our lobbying and service delivery.”

Does *Futures II* give a true picture?

In February this year, BGF wrote 670 cheques totalling \$58,200 to assist 394 PLWHA: the highest number of cheques ever written in any month. Mark Tietjen, the Client Services Manager at BGF, told *Talkabout* the findings reinforce the experience of BGF, but he argues the report doesn't go far enough.

“*Futures II* was skewed towards those people who were able to pick up the questionnaire, fill it in and return it. BGF sees many people with poor literacy skills who probably suffer higher levels of poverty and disadvantage. *Futures II* also included no data about people choosing to utilise their income towards drug and

alcohol use and/or gambling or the reasons people make such choices, which are very important factors when considering poverty issues.”

The report explores other links between increasing poverty and general wellbeing, including mental health and relationships.

Futures II found a high use of psychiatric medication in the positive population. More than 25% of PLWHA had used anti-depressant medication in the last six months, and a similar proportion had taken medication for anxiety. Grierson argues that this is also linked to poverty.

“Those who are below the poverty line are more likely to be depressed, and to use anti-depressants, anti-anxiety drugs and anti-psychotics,” he said.

Grierson calls for further research into the social implications of mental health problems and the wellbeing of PLWHA.

Social poverty

David Barton coordinates PozHet, a statewide peer-support service for 180 PLWHA. He believes that living in poverty is as much about living without emotional or social support as it is about not being able to pay the bills.

“With so many PLWHA pessimistic about finding love and support in relationships, we will have to develop greater awareness that a relationship with an HIV positive person is not in itself a bad thing. We must work on reducing the stigma and rejection faced by HIV positive people in their daily lives.” (60% of

The community has played a central role in the success of the National HIV/AIDS strategy. But this may be undermined by the report's finding that a sense of connection to a 'positive community' is becoming increasingly complex and for many PLWHA, problematic.

respondents agreed with the statement: Few people would want a relationship with someone who has HIV).

Poverty, community and the National Strategy

The community has played a central role in the success of the National HIV/AIDS strategy. But this may be undermined by the report's finding that a sense of connection to a 'positive community' is becoming increasingly complex and for many PLWHA, problematic.

Leighann Kerr is the Manager of Ankali. She believes the most strategically important finding of the report for Ankali is access and equity to emotional support.

"I'm particularly concerned about the 16.8% of respondents who feel excluded from HIV organisations, and the 53% who feel they 'had no one from whom they received a lot of support'."

The implications of this social poverty for a significant number of PLWHA and a breakdown in their sense of community are still to be explored.

"HIV is a defining characteristic for only 16% of the sample, while sexuality and gender is for around a third. This suggests that we need to rethink what we mean by the positive community. If HIV is seen as just an attribute (albeit an important one) rather than a core characteristic for a lot of PLWHA, then this changes the way services, information and support are targeted," Grierson told *Talkabout*.

The issue of poverty and financial hardship is no surprise to those who have

a close connection with the lived experience of HIV/AIDS.

Ken Irvine is a positive man and a member of PLWHA (NSW). He has experienced first hand the cycle between poverty, the difficulties of returning to work, side effects, treatment failure, and depression. He recently told the Positive and Gay Educators' Conference that the *Futures Report* reflected his experience.

"Nearly 18 years since HIV emerged in Australia, we have seen many changes but the one consistent experience for many positive people has been the uncertainty they face in their daily lives. This experience is mirrored in the *Report. Futures II* provides us with valuable insights about the quality of life – or the lack thereof – of positive people," he said.

Translating the lived experience reported by PLWHA like Ken and *Futures II* into useful services will be the great challenge for HIV organisations. In NSW, many will look to ACON to show the way.

"With 53% of people relying on social security, ACON needs to be watching the welfare reform debate very closely. And of course we need to keep up programming which tries to ameliorate the effects of poverty on health by addressing social isolation and making it easier for people to afford good food. Unlike the last *Futures* study, this report has also found that women are significantly more likely to be below the poverty line. A special report from this data examining issues for positive women is still to be released. That

- Almost one in three PLWHA are living below the poverty line. More than half are primarily dependent on a government benefit or pension, and experience difficulty with meeting the costs of daily life.
- Women are significantly more likely to be living below the poverty line than men (46% of women vs 29% of men), a significant change since the first survey when there was no difference. While women were no less likely to be in paid employment, their income levels are lower and many carry the additional costs of dependent children.
- One of the implications of improved treatments is that those people living longer with HIV are more likely to fall below the poverty line, as are those who have had an AIDS defining illness. One quarter of respondents experience difficulties paying for utilities and over half have difficulty with the cost of food, housing, transport and medical needs. Women, in particular, report greater difficulty in paying for medical services, HIV treatment and other medication.

should hopefully tell more about the causes of poverty for some positive women and the kind of implications it should have for our programming," ACON's Executive Officer, Robert Griew told *Talkabout*.

Despite the current political environment of funding cuts and service rationalisations, many services have attempted to respond to the experiences reflected in the *Futures Report*. The Reconstruction Project, the Positive Employment Service (PES), the expanded Financial Assistance programs at BGF, all aim to address the complex issues behind the high incidence of poverty among PLWHA.

There is some indication that these initiatives and others, will be supported by the funders and policy makers. A statement from the South Eastern Sydney Area Health Service was optimistic that the report's findings supported the continuation of the Reconstruction and PES projects and would encourage further action.

"The findings have emphasised the need to expand social support programs, such as 'Outings'. Planning around this has continued with representation on a working group looking at activities available for PLWHA," the statement said. ■

Feona Studdert is the Editor of *Talkabout* and Coordinator of the Publications Unit at PLWHA (NSW)

This month we present the final three of our five highly commended entries in the PozTalk writing competition. The judges and *Talkabout's* Editorial Committee congratulate Dudly John Roberts, Gavin Austin and Dan Forrester for their original, lively and entertaining stories.

Thanks to our two judges, Robin Goma, Executive Officer at the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) and Marcus O'Donnell, Editor of the *Sydney Star Observer*. As well as key professional roles in the community both Robin and Marcus are, themselves, published writers.

Thanks of course to our many sponsors who have generously donated both cash and in-kind prizes.

feona studdert
editor

PozTalk is proudly sponsored by

South East Sydney Area Health Service



Random House



Sydney Dance Company



gravity is particularly in autumn

By **Dudly John Roberts**

1

"What's the matter Dudly? You really look fed up."

"Nothing Garret - it's just a hot day."

"There is something the matter. Tell me what it is."

"It's the feeling I am sure all HIV+ people must experience."

"And what was that? You only went to the dentist."

"I know, but I felt like an alien for the first time in my life."

"You still look human enough to me!"

"Stop it Garret, this is serious! When the dentist and her assistant approached me it looked as though they were about to go outside of the airlock on Mir, they had so much protective clothing on."

I accept that it's justifiably mandatory to protect persons in such a situation, but it's moments like that when I realise I really am now different to other people.

"But you've never bothered about it before!"

"I know Garret, but it's undoing things in me that were set and put in place a long time ago."

"You mean things like your self-esteem and values, etc."

"That's right. It now seems these people have some sort of basis for their ignorance. My sexual orientation shouldn't be anyone else's concern."

"You'd be concerned enough if they fancied you."

"I know, but I'm not particularly into doctors and dentists."

"You're telling me that! What with the number of security guards, police, army, general military personnel and builders passing through this flat I sometimes think there is a battle front much nearer than those we are told about in the news."

"Shut up!"

2

"Facing the reality of ourselves is very difficult to do. We have to be in the present time like the 'now' to do that. The majority of people don't seem to like being with themselves. Nevertheless, wherever they go they have to take themselves with them."

"And then that spoils it!"

"I know, but I am not afraid to face myself. I've done that for many years living with all of this."

"A swinging gate hangs long!"

"Charming - thanks very much. That's all I need."

"Sorry."

"I'll let you off that one."

"I'm just considering it a minor setback. Think of the wonderful things that I have learned about myself and others since all of this started."

"What, like being sick, thin, tired and everything else that is an effort to deal with?"

"I try not to look at it like that Garret. If this creation does have a meaning and our existence here is part of that, then I've got one hell of a report to write when it's all over."

"Perhaps I should write a book. I do have a lot more time on my hands now."

"Will you become famous?"

"Don't be silly Garret, people don't become famous by writing one book."

"God did."

3

"By the way, are you sure you paid the electricity bill?"

"You're not worrying about that again are you?"

noticeable

"I just can't help it. What if the money didn't arrive on time? It could have been lost in the mail! Their letter telling you that it was going to be cut off might have got lost as well. They would then just cut off the supply. Then I'd not be here any more and that would be that. It's a terrible worry!"

"For heaven's sake Garret! Computers aren't supposed to worry. I don't know what's gone wrong in your case. You're going to have to deal with it. Besides, the bill wasn't even overdue when I paid it."

"But it would be reasonable to assume that your payment could have got lost in the mail, wouldn't it?"

"No."

"Why?"

"I paid by credit card."

4

"So if you wrote a book Dudly, what would you write about?"

"It would probably be about belief systems."

"You mean how the established ones are beginning to fail humanity as they go into the 21st century?"

"That's right, but basically it will have to be an autobiography or else some of the things that I have concluded might sound as though I am pontificating. I can only believe things that are true in my own experience. I'm fed up with being told what to believe and what not to believe."

"You mean things like whether sex is wrong or right?"

"Yes. Who makes all these rules anyway?"

"I have never been able to compute why the vast majority of humanity has gone along with those that said sex was wrong!"

"Neither can I. Nor can I understand why they also follow so much other unsubstantiated dogma like sheep."

"Do you think that any of these belief systems would be able to stop me worrying?"

"Organised religions are closed belief systems. They may very well be founded on partially understood truths, but there's not much space for expansion."

"You mean like the possible existence of life elsewhere in the Universe?"

"Yes."

"It looks like I might lose out all round then?"

5

"So what would this new belief system be then?"

"No new belief system - only taking responsibility for ourselves. We have to have a new understanding. Humanity just can't go on hurtling along to an unknown destination like it is. We have to change our attitudes. That at least we can do. Unless all of the limiting religious concepts that we have today are removed entirely, then either as an individual, or as an expression of life on the Earth, I do not believe humanity can proceed any further in its evolution."

"Do you think that maybe in the great scheme of things, somewhere, somehow in some time continuum there are helpers for humanity and they have forgotten about people on the Earth?"

"No. It only seems like that!" ■

*The thundering line of battle stands,
And in the air Death moans and sings:
But Day shall clasp him with strong hands,
And Night shall fold him in soft wings.*

Julian Grenfell. 1888–1915.

nightflight

by Gavin Austin



His tense limbs succumbed to stupefying sleep: rag-doll limpness flooded his objecting system, seizing a swimming victory. He drowned in black velvet silence. His lips parted slightly, sanctioning inept lungs to clutch shallow nips of sultry air. Gleaming salty beads adorned his slumber-smoothed brow resplendent in its nightly coronation. The repressing night impetuously coughed a resolute breeze from her asthmatic bosom, which roused indolent curtains at the bedroom window, and lifted him on gossamer wings to places far beyond the reaches of daylight.

He lay, with cadaverous stillness, as his weightless body drifted through the inky landscape; eddying like a fuzzy dandelion seed, without apparent aim or purpose. The sound of gun-battle echoed around him as he plummeted to the dark seething earth. Gary smiled through a blackened face back at him. Familiar perfect teeth ghosted in the settling gloom as Gary winked and slapped a grimy hand to his dusty shoulder. The profound brown eyes, awash with adoration and concern locked onto his, holding him unshakably, as if in consuming embrace. Words seemed unnecessary.

Branches raked his flesh, grabbing and tearing with cruel claws, as he snaked his way through rank undergrowth. Fitful explosions rocked the steaming soil, as a leaden sky spat with flickering tongues of fire, spewing forth showers of searing bile which lit up the perpetual twilight. He followed Gary's infantry without question: followed the khaki cloth of battle doggedly. A surging tide of warring men, lined up like tin soldiers, ready to fight or fall; valiantly embracing the fate bestowed upon them by the baffling lottery of life.

A volley of deafening blasts rang out about him, followed by an eerie silence that settled icily across the murk and misery. He moved forward, groping blindly in the cloud of war: he was alive. A strange twisted bundle presented itself to his touch, a viscous redness stained his fingers: the engulfing eclipse shrank away, as if in horror of what it shrouded. Gary lay; a humorless crooked smile on his battle-weary face, as life retreated from his surrendering body. He cradled Gary to him; a choking cry broke from somewhere deep inside him.

"Noooooo..."

"Get out of here," Gary barked, suddenly and sternly.

"But..." he stuttered.

"You can't come with me ... not this time."

An arm encircled him, tearing him from Gary's recumbent body.

"I love you ... I've always loved you!" he shrilled to Gary, as he was dragged, protesting, away.

"I know," Gary sighed, abandoned to the moldering earth, looking upon his partner for the last time. Seeing the tears in his stricken eyes as he was enveloped in the arms of an allied soldier and hauled from

the fracas. "Go ... and live," Gary forced from his arid lips, before they gave a final twitch and grew cold and still. A spate of bullets peppered the spot the receding figures had occupied.

As he fled, his mind lurching. "Which way is the world?" he cried into the blackness. "If I open my eyes, will I find it staring back at me?"

When he finally stopped running, he found refuge in the young soldier's arms. He cried for Gary: he cried for himself. He was rent and ruptured inside, in need of repair. His quaking body melded into the secure clasp. The soldier stroked the back of his head soothingly, then murmured, "Gary wanted you to live ... not just exist."

Morning waited upon the shore of consciousness. His eyes opened apprehensively.

A sinuous tanned arm circled his waist. He allowed himself to drift into the welcome of firm flesh, nestled between the cotton layers of past and present. He lay quietly sheltered in the embrace, relishing human touch again. Long sensual fingers stroked his hair tenderly. "It's okay," said the young man, somehow speaking with Gary's voice.

He thought of the past few years: it seemed he had ridden upon them as if they were the painted ponies of a carousel. Their grotesque laughing faces and haunting carnival melody taunting him, like the horrible years, as they circled purposelessly.

How like Gary to send him, he thought, as a wry smile played in the corners of his mouth. Someone to help him through the battlefield.

He loved Gary all the more for doing so. ■

moroccan malady

by Dan Forrester



In mid 1966, I had been HIV positive for seven years when I headed off to Morocco.

First I went to Rome where, through a phone number given to me by a mutual acquaintance, I met Salvatore. We became (platonic) friends very quickly. I was about to fly to Egypt for two weeks, filling in time before my Moroccan odyssey, and he insisted I stay at his apartment when I returned to Rome.

I did and we became better friends and when I left for Morocco a week later I left some luggage with Salvatore, to collect on my way back.

A couple of days of food poisoning in Egypt had weakened my immune system and by the time I flew into Casablanca I was coughing and feeling very tired. I had never been on any medication or had an HIV related illness at that stage.

I decided to press on regardless and caught the Casablanca-Tangier bus with the intention of travelling back from Tangier via Marrakech. I seemed to be getting sicker by the minute and felt I couldn't face the crowds and demands of Tangier, so stopped off in a town call Larache, about eighty kilometres south of Tangier.

From the bus depot, I walked to a cheap hotel near the town square of this small fishing town.

Over the next few days my health became progressively worse: sweating, shivering, thrush in my mouth and throat, a constant cough. I came to a realisation that this was where I was probably going to die. I knew no one and was sinking fast and decided to take all the sleeping pills I was carrying if my condition deteriorated further over the next few days.

While I was eating yogurt, the only food I could swallow, near the town square, a young Moroccan man approached me to sell me hashish. I would normally be interested but under the circumstances, wasn't, but next morning I was in the same place and the Moroccan, Hamid, came by again.

"You're not well are you?" he said, in very good English. "Come on home with me and my mum will look after you."

"What have I got to lose?" I asked myself, "I'm probably going to die anyway."

His mother, Fatima, a devout Muslim, was praying when we arrived at the house in a village on the outskirts of Larache. She then hugged and kissed her son and invited me in and showed me the room. I would be sharing with Hamid. When he and I returned from collecting my luggage from my hotel, Fatima had rearranged the room adding a carpet, table and chairs and a portable stereo.

That night, she brought me a bowl of herbal medicine, some soup and some seafood. Larache is located on the Atlantic and Hamid is a fisherman. He is the only member of his family who speaks English.

When Hamid's father came home, he gave me a massage and over the next few

weeks, Hamid, his parents and his various brothers, sisters and friends came to visit, all of them concerned and wanting to pamper me.

As a treat, Fatima would give me a spoonful of mahjoun, a mixture of hasish, crushed cashewnuts, herbs and honey heated together. I experienced hallucinations of the intensity of those I'd read about in Paul Bowles, "The Sheltering Sky" and other Moroccan stories.

The fever broke, I became a little stronger. I was able to go for walks with Hamid, who showed me Jean Genet's grave and took me on picnics to an island nearby.

When I was well enough to travel, I left Larache and a teary Fatima and emotional farewell generally and took a bus back to Casablanca, then flew to Rome. I hadn't sought medical treatment in Morocco because it is illegal to enter the country with HIV and a person seeking treatment will be sent to prison first and maybe treated later.

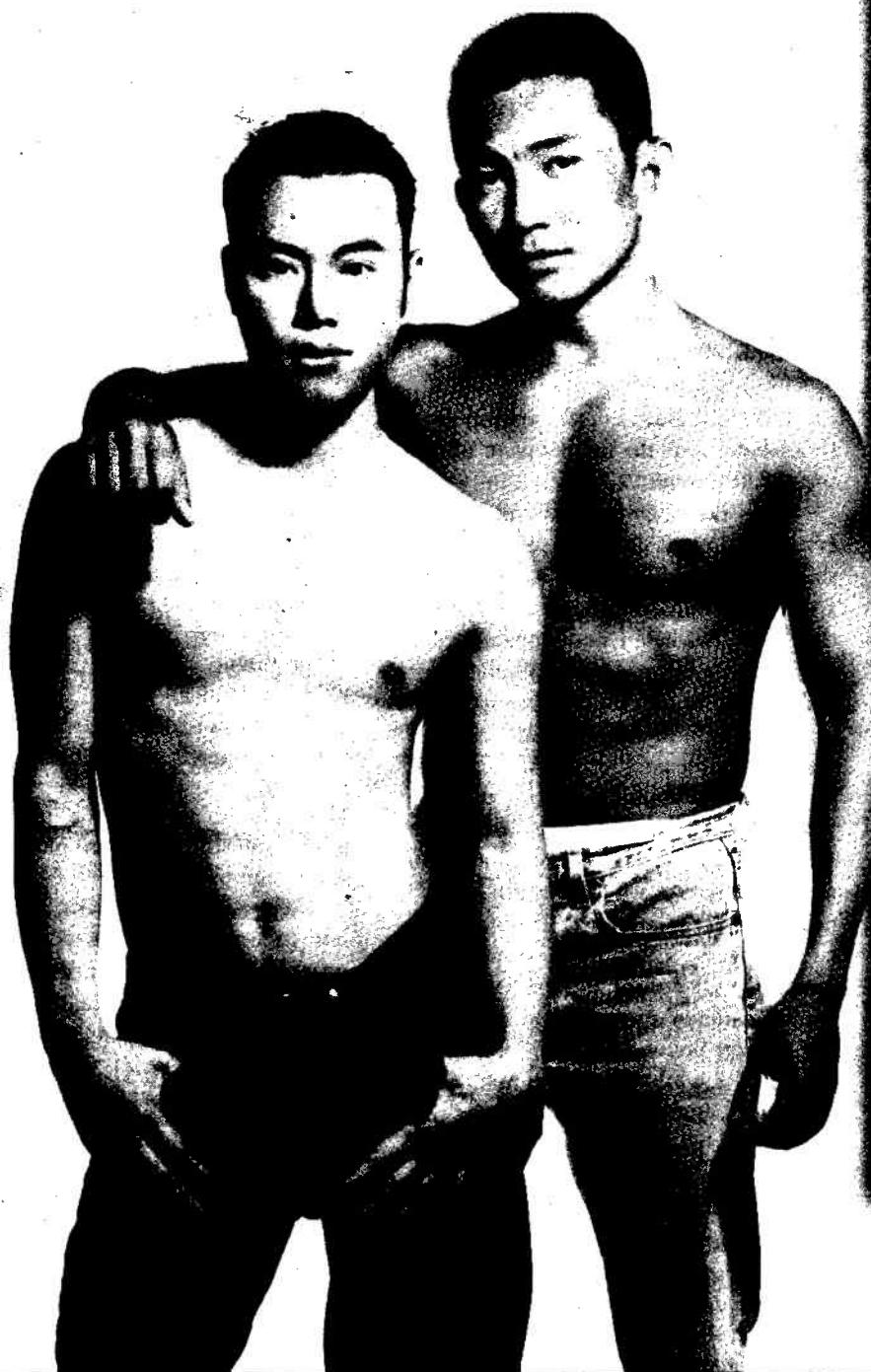
I was still quite weak and unwell and in Rome, Salvatore (Italian for saviour) took me to a hospital specialising in infectious diseases and severe respiratory ailments, where I was diagnosed with bronchial pneumonia. I stayed in hospital for sixteen days and was treated with various HIV drugs.

After my hospitalisation, I spent a month in Salvatore's apartment in the heart of Rome. He treated me very well and we became like soul-mates and still are. I re-visited him last August when I also returned to Egypt. But that's another story as the saying goes.

Oh yeah, the medication is working fine and I have more adventures planned. ■

You are not the only one...

Living with HIV/AIDS



Hindi lang ikaw...
ang namumuhay ng may HIV/AIDS
Ang mga Sanggunian ng AIDS ay nagbibigay
ng tulong at impormasyon sa maingat na pagtatalik.

Bukan Anda saja Hidup dengan HIV/AIDS
Dewan-dewan AIDS menawarkan lebih
daripada informasi seks aman.

वेवल आप ही जल्दे नहीं हैं जो
एचआइडी/एडस होते हुए भी जी रहे हैं।
ऐडस कॉन्सिल सुधित समग्रा (सेक्स)
के अलावा अन्य और भी जानकारी देती है।

मैं एचआइडी/एडस से पूछता हूँ कि क्या मैं इसे बढ़ावा देना चाहता हूँ?
अब तक आपको एचआइडी/एडस से पूछता हूँ कि क्या मैं इसे बढ़ावा देना चाहता हूँ?
लैनोरोइड्स
ईमानदारों को मुझे बताएं कि वे कौन से जीवन साथी हैं।

당신 혼자만이 아닙니다
HIV/AIDS를 이겨내려면
AIDS 카운슬의 일루는 안전한 섹스
정보 제공해 끝나지 않습니다.

Bạn không phải là người duy nhất
Vui vui sống với HIV/AIDS
Hội đồng AIDS cung cấp cho bạn nhiều thứ
khác hơn là tin tức về sinh hoạt tình dục an toàn

Bukan anda sahaja...
Yang hidup dengan HIV/AIDS
Majlis-majlis AIDS menyediakan lebih
daripada maklumat mengenai seks selamat.

你不是唯一的一個……
與HIV陽性/愛滋病一起生活
愛滋病委員會不僅只提供安全性生活的資料。

あなただけではありません…
HIV／エイズと共に生きる
エイズ・カウンシルが提供するサービスは、
安全なセックスに関する情報だけではありません。
HIV／エイズや性に関する情報やサポートについては、
最寄りのエイズ・カウンシルまでご連絡下さい。

apwa AFRO

Australia New South Wales Northern Territory Queensland South Australia Tasmania Victoria Western Australia

cheap chic

A low income doesn't mean dressing like a dog. **Tim Alderman** has worked part-time or been on the pension since 1993. Shopping cheap but chic is his motto.

It's my mother's fault, you know. It was those natty little sailor suits she dressed me in when I was five. She's the major reason I dress well today. It has nothing to do with being trendy, and it has nothing to do with wishing to appear affluent or snobby. Except for a brief period of stupidity in the seventies when I worked in the fashion industry and got cheap clothes, I've never been a designer label wearer.

Looking fabulous on less

When I went on the pension, I decided I wasn't going to look like I was on the pension. I dress well, and spend very little money doing it. I was so convinced that I had a great secret I wore this fabulous dragon patterned shirt to Arq one night, only to run into another guy in the same shirt, in the other available colour. We spent all night avoiding each other – as we had both been shopping at the same store – 'Best and Less'.

I shop at 'Best and Less' with no embarrassment. They keep great men's clothing, and at budget prices. They have picked up two old clothing labels that everyone thought had disappeared: the seventies 'Mango' and 'Hang Ten' labels. Despite their surfie roots, these two companies produce great fashion clothing. You can purchase cotton print shirts from \$15 to \$20, cargo pants from \$20 to \$25, long sleeve polo shirts from \$15, long sleeve V-neck tees from \$13, and fashion knitwear from \$15. No one, believe me, will ever know it hasn't come from the millionaires spending ground of Oxford St.

When second is a bargain

Hunt around the seconds stores in places like Redfern, Maroubra and Birkenhead

Point. Most of the clothes have totally unnoticeable defects, and if you pay \$5 for a pair of pants, and \$15 to get the faulty zipper repaired, you still have a good buy. Keep your eye out for warehouse clearances of designer clothing. They charge the earth for some items, but the oddments and ends of lines can be dirt-cheap. 'Jeans West' is a great place to buy quality jeans at reasonable prices, and they nearly always have a sale. You can pick up good quality drill cargo pants there for about \$39, and quality denim for up to \$49. I find 'Just Jeans' charge twice the price for identical items. 'Jay Jay's' is another good place for cheap fashion buys in tops, shorts and jeans. 'K-Mart' seem to have good or bad years. Their bad years are very bad, but the good years feature great fashion clothing at reasonable prices. 'Woolworth's', especially the city store,

Drop a hint not your standards

My one vanity can't be obtained cheaply. I like 'Calvin Klein', 'McPherson Men' and '2Xist' underwear, which means major hints at birthday, anniversary, and Christmas time. I know they are expensive, but you also get excellent quality, and long wear.

Sometimes, it can be fun hunting around the second-hand stores. There is a lot of trash, but also the occasional great find. Everybody admires the stunning blue batik print shirt that my partner picked up years ago second-hand. He no longer wears it, but I restitched the seams and it's still going, and I love it!

Don't forget to treat yourself occasionally. It can be worth putting \$5 a fortnight away for a couple of months to shout yourself a treat. It's great for the ego.

I wore this fabulous dragon patterned shirt to arq one night, only to run into another guy in the same shirt, in the other available colour. We spent all night avoiding each other – as we had both been shopping at the same store – 'Best and Less'.

often has great shirt and shorts buys, but get in at the start of the season. I have bought Hawaiian print shirts there for \$10, and 'Bonds' end-of-line tee shirts for \$5.

Footwear can be bought at reasonable prices from places like 'Speeds'. 'K-Mart' usually has a good selection of sandals and slides at the beginning of each summer, as well as cheaply priced 'Slazenger' runner-style shoes. Their 'Solutions' socks are some of the best I've worn, with none of that bunched up stitching where the toe seams are. You can get a three-pack for around \$8.

If you are handy with a sewing machine, fabric and patterns can be obtained quite cheaply, and you will have something unique.

To get your money's worth out of clothing the trick is "don't buy 'fashion' fashion, stick to good looking basics". Chic basics will see you through season after season. ■

Tim Alderman is a member of the Talkabout Editorial Committee.

alchemy at work

In May BGF had their second record month distributing \$56,189 to assist 888 people to pay their utility and medical bills. It takes hard work, not magic, to keep the cheques and other support flowing. **feona studdert** recorded a day in the never-ending work of BGF.

Monday
9am David, the receptionist, goes to the post office to collect mail and milk. He must be at the office by 9.30am to open up and take the phone off night switch. This morning David passes a message onto Client Services from a client who has spent the night in a park. He checks the staff board. Everyone is due in except the new financial counsellor, Amanda Theobold, who is on a training course in bankruptcy.

9.15am Financial Counsellor, Maree Crosbie welcomes a client and their social worker, for an appointment to discuss the client's mortgage and how to manage it.

Rob Hardy, of the Positive Employment Service (PES), welcomes his first client. The client gave up work five years ago after an AIDS defining illness. With improved health the client is now considering a return to work. They discuss the client's application to several TAFE courses.

9.30am The Manager of Client Services, Mark Tietjen talks to the client who has spent the weekend sleeping in the park. Mark is concerned because late last week a Department of Housing (DOH) tenancy had been secured and the client provided with the deposit. It appears there has been a breakdown in communication between client and DOH. Mark arranges for the cheque to be returned from the real estate agent; this is a sensitive matter because there is a danger of disclosing the client's status.

9.30am Mark's assistant Ben Alfred, files the paperwork from two days of cheques issued to assist clients with their electricity bills; the total comes to 96 cheques valued at \$6275.

10am Four lines are ringing and in between taking calls about donations, and client inquiries David clears the mail and begins the banking. This morning thirty-three cheques collected at a private party have come in. Nothing like a party with a purpose!

Mark leaves the office to deliver a dryer in Redfern, a washing machine to a client in Marrickville, and a heater to another client in Caringbah.

Executive Director, Georgina Harman reviews applications for three staff positions, prepares the interview questions and talks to the selection panel.

Rowena Macrae, the Fundraising Manager has arrived. She checks on the Direct Mail Appeal sent out to selected donors last week. The first donation for \$50 has arrived – target \$60,000 by June 30.

Maree gets a call from a creditor chasing a BGF client. Maree informs the creditor that the client died in January 1999.

10.30am Administration Manager and computer whiz, Crispin Rice deals with problems with the new fundraising database. This is holding up the work of the two volunteers who have arrived to assist Rowena.

Ben talks to a rurally based counsellor on behalf of a client who has been washing by hand. The counsellor will send quotes for a washing machine and a vacuum to BGF and Ben will issue the cheques to the counsellor so that purchase and delivery can be arranged locally.

The Housing Programs Manager, Bill Paterson, calls the supported housing agencies to see how many beds are available. It's all bad news: NorthAIDS has been unable to find interim housing after the fire at Des Kilkerry Lodge in May; ACON Western Sydney's respite housing isn't operating yet; McKillop House, in the Hunter region, has recently

closed and at Stanford house all the available beds are full. The workers report that about 50% of their clients are presenting with some sort of mental health issue. Over at The Haven, in Western Sydney, clients are having problems with some estate agents. Bill is told that one real estate agent asked a woman to leave a deposit (\$220) before checking her references.

11.00am Georgina goes to her doctor's appointment. She's told to stay at home for two days.

Ben talks to several clients to clarify financial issues and enters twenty-five new requests for assistance with utility bills that have arrived this morning.

David processes the paperwork for two new Friends of BGF and passes the information on to Rowena who will send out the introductory packs.

Crispin is fixing the email server, which has crashed.

Rob and a client finalise a resumé they are preparing. The client has not worked for three years because of HIV and mental health issues. Rob welcomes his next client and they discuss options for the client to begin voluntary work.

11.30am Bill talks to a client whose house burnt down the previous week. Bill has been trying to re-house the client in the inner city but the Olympics means Marrickville will be the closest they will get. This is complicated because the client still owes rental arrears on the previous tenancy. The Community Housing Association agrees to allow the client to begin the new tenancy before the arrears are repaid.

Rowena talks to the design agency that is designing the materials for the City to Surf run. The kit will feature a letter signed by BGF's patron, Ian

The Bobby Goldsmith Foundation is a community-based charity providing direct financial assistance to PLWHA in NSW. Each month BGF help PLWHA pay essential bills, lend essential appliances and provide financial counselling. BGF also offer medium, to long-term supported housing and support the Positive Employment Service.

Roberts. This will be the first time BGF has asked their supporters to walk or run the 14 km. The target is \$2000.

11.45am Georgina is back from the doctor's in time to talk to the public relations agency which will be helping organise, at a greatly reduced cost, a gala fundraising event to be held in November. By July, BGF and the agency must find \$60,000 in sponsorship to pay for the event production. Georgina passes on the list of potential sponsors she has brainstormed.

Before lunch Rob completes a career assessment for a client. Together they will then set career goals for the client.

1.00pm Mark gets back to the office with several donated fridges. He unloads the van so it is available for friends of a client who has died. The friends will be cleaning out the apartment later that evening. Upstairs he answers the twelve phone messages that arrived while he was out.

Maree meets with a client who is on a pension and has a lot of social issues, including isolation, loneliness, despair. They talk about voluntary work and what the PES can offer the client. They also discuss the best use of the client's income in order to repay the rental and utility arrears the client has built up.

Rowena drafts a letter that will go to the Friends of BGF asking them to increase their regular donation.

2.30pm Mark sees a client with a termination notice for his house. The client will have to go to the Tenancy Tribunal because of ongoing and repeated rental arrears. Mark assists the client with some of the arrears and spends an hour discussing what the client can do to avoid the problem in the future.

Crispin works with the accountant on the monthly accounts.

Maree meets with a client who is on a pension to discuss housing budget issues. Together they work through the client's budget and discuss ways to better manage the income. The client has emotional issues around money.

3.00pm Mark reconciles the chemist bill against the nineteen clients who have requested emergency prescriptions over the previous month; the total is \$571.

Crispin researches cost-effective ways of setting up the new housing staff as mobile workers to maximise their effectiveness when on the road.

Rob sees his last client for the day for a discussion about retraining options.

The client has worked in the hospitality industry but wants a less stressful working environment so he can better manage his health.

4.00pm Mark attends a case conference for a client of the Floating Care Initiative. The client has been referred to FCI after a long history of unsuccessful tenancies. The client, with the assistance of the FCI program has been able to stabilise their tenancy for some time now.

However, recently a number of unrelated events have put the tenancy under threat. A meeting has been called to come up with a plan of action to keep the client in their home and to address the problems that have emerged.

Also at the meeting are Bill, Manager of BGF's FCI program, Tony, the client's support worker, and workers from three other agencies who are working collaboratively to help the client. The meeting finishes at 5.30 with not much resolved.

5.00pm David turns the phone to night switch, puts in the back up tape for the computer and locks the office door. Most of the staff will continue working for an hour or more.

Maree meets with a client who is on a pension and has a lot of social issues, including isolation, loneliness, despair. They talk about voluntary work and what the Positive Employment Service can offer the client. They also discuss the best use of the client's income in order to repay the rental and utility arrears the client has built up.

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Want to be more **self-sufficient**?
Don't **feel** existing services
are for you?

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9332 9742 for more information**



stof got a story to tell?

Talkabout welcomes stories and letters from PLWHA.

In our combined September/October issue **Talkabout** looks at living positive in Western Sydney; salvage therapy; the Durban conference; and we interview our Olympic torch bearer.

In November **Talkabout** will present a special women's issue with stories from positive women and people affected by HIV/AIDS about current issues for positive women.

Stories on any of these topics are welcome. For more information please call the Editor, feona studdert on (02) 9361 6750, or email your story to feonas@plwha.org.au.

Deadline for the September/October issue is **10 August, 2000**.

Deadline for the November issue is **10 October, 2000**.



Contributors fees available for PLWHA receiving disability pension or similar low income.

my perfect teeth, my perfect life?

Douglas Barry wonders whether he is living in poverty

I don't know whether I live in poverty or not. I don't know how I can tell. Should I think about the film images of the Great Depression - soup kitchens and long queues of emaciated figures - "Brother, can you spare me a dime?" Do I go by the frequent television coverage of African famines or of the scavengers on the rubbish dumps of South-East Asia?

Or is it to be judged by some local, statistical yardstick, settled on by a group of boffins who have never set foot in my street, let alone know anything about me? Perhaps I am one of those for whom living with HIV/AIDS is somehow equated with living in poverty. I don't know.

So I fall back on an old faithful: my dictionary. It tells me that poverty is 'lack of means, deficiency.' Thanks a lot. But wait, there's more. Helpfully, it describes the "poverty-line" as the minimum income level needed to get necessities of life". That's more like it! Now I'm getting closer. I only have to work out what the 'necessities of life' are, see whether I have them or not on the income I have, and I can decide if I live in poverty. Simple!

The lure of perfect teeth

There is a trap here. Television commercials would have me believe that being well dressed, well-groomed, well-fed, well-travelled, well-housed and surrounded by equally well-resourced friends (all with perfect teeth), is the normal way of life in Australia. Anything different is either comic or tragic.

Others may differ, but I don't see my life in a comedy series or material for a searing documentary on the dark side of life in Coogee. My life seems ordinary, allowing for the fact that I live with a potentially fatal virus or two. So much for comparisons!

So I'll look at myself. I'm in my early fifties, and have a few living skills, which help me to make the hardheaded decisions about budgets. I have the Disability Support Pension and Department of Housing rental subsidy. There's a couple of hundred dollars a year from writing these pieces for *Talkabout* and for representing PLWHA (NSW) on a government body.

Other things

There is my family interstate, with whom I spend a holiday. (I also enjoy "hand-me-ups" - the clothes that my hulking nephews have grown out of.) There are my friends who will shout me a meal in a restaurant now and then. (It is good to swallow my pride and accept their kindness gracefully.) I have Hep C, so I can't drink - what a saving that is.

Television commercials would have me believe that being well-dressed, well-groomed, well-fed, well-travelled, well-housed and surrounded by equally well-resourced friends (all with perfect teeth) is the normal way of life in Australia.

There is my love of ideas, of reading and learning, and my study, which I hope will return me to a materially rewarding life. And above all, I have freedom from any debilitating side effects from treatments, which blight the lives of so many other PLWHA.

I miss the ability to travel widely and at will, to feel that self-esteem which comes from wearing good clothes and surrounding myself with pleasurable 'things'. I miss the pleasure of entertaining friends and regularly sharing a good bottle of red wine over a meal brought to me in a restaurant. And the big social events and

parties that add the excitement and colour to life have been consigned to the past. I miss the freedom to choose.

Quality of life

When I accepted the reality, the challenge was to focus on what I really needed. With some resourcefulness and imagination, and, more importantly, with a change in my values, I realised how few were the essential material things. I also found other ways in which I could find satisfaction.

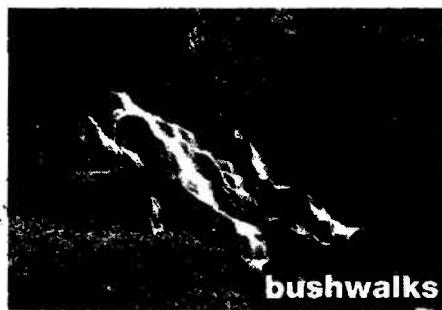
To list them would be boring, but as a good example, there is my involvement in volunteer work. It doesn't cost money, only time and a bit of energy; and the rewards have been terrific.

So do I live in poverty? Because there is both quality in my life and a sense of

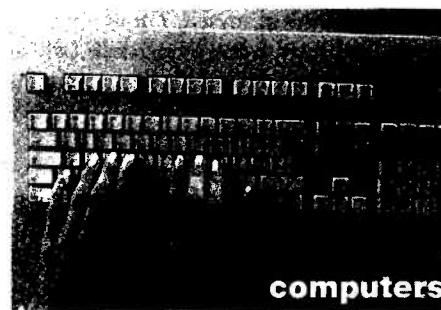
privilege at just being alive, it doesn't feel as though I do. But I do understand that there are many who don't think and feel the way I do; that there are many for whom life itself with the virus is crushing and bleak and whose poverty does not consist in an absence of material resources. It is this poverty which commands society's unstinting care and compassion, however it is needed. ■

boredom busters

Boredom is often a drag and completely unnecessary. A group of HIV service providers recently got together and brainstormed a list of activities that they hope will bust the myth of boredom.



bushwalks



computers



music

One of the most depressing things about not having much money is the boredom of thinking there is nothing you can afford to do. Boredom can be about a lack of motivation (I can't be bothered, sigh) or it can be about not knowing what is around that's affordable, welcoming and fun. A group of project workers from a range of organisations that work with PLWHA have pulled together a selection of some of the free or cheap ways to bust your boredom.

The good news: It's a complete myth that there's nothing to do that's cheap and fun. The bad news: You have to get off the couch!



shop

Social

Outings FREE event once a month, Bookings and calendar.

✉ Jane 9319 4439.

Planet Positive Bimonthly get together @ Annies Bar.

✉ David 9206 2037 or 9206 2050.

Helix social group North Shore

✉ Ian 9412 2350

Southern Cross Outdoors Group gay social group that do bushwalks, dances, weekend trips. Newsletter available.

✉ John 9907 9144

HIV Living Mens Peer Support Project.

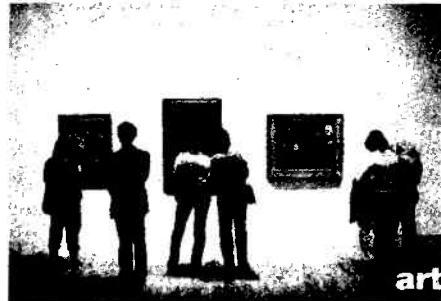
✉ 9206 2014

Positive Fun and Esteem

✉ Anthony 9206 2034

Social and Recreational

Art Classes Redfern Community Health Centre ✉ Lisa 9690 1222



art

Community Garden Grow your own Veggies. Waterloo ✉ Carolyn 9382 8374, Newtown ✉ Robert 9690 1222, Woolloomooloo ✉ Michael 9206 2122.

Complementary Therapies

Workshop information.

✉ Graham Norton 9206 2011.

GYM Healthy Life program @ Golds Gym. ✉ Graham 9206 2011.

Massage and Natural Therapies

Myrtle Place North Sydney ✉ 9929 4288, The Sanctuary, Newtown ✉ 9519 6142.

Newtown Neighbourhood Centre Yoga, Drama Classes, Martial Arts, Musical events, Shopping Service ✉ 9516 4755.

PAWS (Pets are Wonderful Support). Care for a pet

✉ 9361 4449 (leave message)

YOGA (HIV+ Only)

✉ 9264 3765. Cost \$10.00



pets

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literacy



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☎ 9569 5122, Positive Living Centre
☎ 9699 8756.

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☎ Simon Sadler 9332 1090 or 9690 1222.

Community Colleges WEA, East Sydney
☎ 9339 8666, Inner West.

Computing Courses at NorthAIDS

☎ 9929 4288, TAFE Outreach at East
Sydney ☎ 9339 8666, Randwick TAFE
☎ 9469 8500.

LETS Programs WARTS (Waterloo and
Redfern Trading System)
☎ Siobhan 9319 4073.

Shop and Cook Improve your skills at the
Positive Living Centre ☎ 9699 8756

Switched on Living Improve your Living
skills ☎ Belinda 9361 2213.



cook



outdoors

This is a tiny portion of what's available out there. For more information check out the latest edition of Contacts (telephone 9361 6750), the Sydney Star Observer (gay and lesbian only), or call any of the organisations involved in the Boredom Busters Project.: Metropolitan Community Church ☎ 9569 5122 PLWHA ☎ 9361 6011 Positive Employment Support (Northern Sydney) ☎ 9858 7854 ACON Western Sydney ☎ 9204 2400 BGF ☎ 9283 8666 Pozhets ☎ 9515 3095

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problems in paradise

by Steve Byzantium

Officially I exist below the poverty line. In the real world that means I live from fortnight to fortnight hoping that the pension money lasts the distance. To maintain this charade, I enact little rituals with my pension payment. On the first day, I bank \$35.00 for future electricity and telephone bills and repay \$25.00 to my credit card and a further \$25.00 to my family. Also I pay \$130 for a two-bedroom flat. I receive the full rental assistance from CentreLink and the rental subsidy from the NSW Department of Housing.

In the fortnight that I receive the rental subsidy cheque, I pay two week's rent immediately. In the off-fortnight, I pay one week's rent at the beginning of the fortnight and at least attempt to set aside \$60.00 in preparation for the following fortnight. However, I am usually a week behind in rent as my good intentions go out the window and I spend the money.

Whatever is left I spend on food, incidentals and recreation. Incidentals include spending nearly \$20.00 on combination drugs once a month and \$10.00 on a tar-based hair shampoo, the only kind able to cleanse my scalp of a bacterial infection as a result of my first round of chemotherapy nearly eight years ago.

Digging for cash

I have devised a few small ways to alleviate my poverty blues. I grow some salad vegies in my tiny backyard – a few lettuces and tomatoes and occasionally cucumbers. They are excellent for a quick salad and it gives me a wonderful feeling to pick

vegetables straight from the earth. Also I grow herbs like rosemary and parsley which is a wonderful garnish for stews and soups. At present, there are thirteen basil bushes in my garden. I sell bunches of it to a couple of restaurants and friends around town and the small change I get pays for a few beers and games of pool. Occasional articles like this one helps keep the debt collector away from the door too.

I haven't been to the movies for eight months. I hire two or three \$2.00 videos for a week. Usually, I watch these

Consequently, I go on holiday every couple of months to a Tropical Fruits dance party or the Queen's Ball in Brisbane.

I drink at the Winsome Hotel in Lismore once or twice a week, on Tuesday nights when there is free pool, and at the Friday night rage. After five or so middies I change to lemon squash or water. I live in town and ride my pushbike to visit friends, play sport and pay bills. If I need to go any distance, I hitchhike to Byron Bay or catch the train to Brisbane.

Officially I exist below the poverty line. In the real world that means I live from fortnight to fortnight hoping that the pension money lasts the distance.

myself but occasionally I organise a video night with friends who don't own a video recorder. They arrive at my house with the ingredients for dinner, and we enjoy the video with a few beers and a bit of mullicake.

Dinner at the 'Northo'

I hardly ever eat at restaurants but The Northern River's Hotel or the "Northo" has meals for two and three dollars. It is reasonable fare and an institution around town.

I still take recreational substances. Instead of buying 'e' at \$50.00 a pop, I buy 'a' (Lucy in the sky with diamonds) for \$15.00 a tab, cut it into quarters and limit myself to half-a-tab so that I'm able to have a 'holiday' on two or three occasions. Obviously, I don't do it every weekend. Firstly, it affects my health too much, and secondly, it is just too expensive.

I use the local library and scour the second-hand bookshops for reading matter. Many years ago I used to buy new books but not anymore. Occasionally, I work part-time or casually. If the work is cash-in-hand or a one-off I may not declare it to our friends at CentreLink. I declare it if the work is on-going because Centrelink will eventually catch up with me.

Sometimes I envy people with jobs of any description. As I go through my forties, I occasionally feel I'm dropping into the bucket of the rural poor. Recently, for the first time in my life, I went to the Salvation Army for a food voucher. However, the last fortnight was an aberration, and with a new payday looming, I'm ready to tackle the finances with a fresh approach. ■

Steve is not his real name.

let the sunshine in

Darryl Taylor offers a queen's guide to better karma



Poverty. What a vast topic! I want to look at poverty in terms of a deficiency of peace-of-mind, and of spirit. This can, of course, be brought about by material poverty but can equally be caused by being small-minded or mean-spirited, or by being continuously subjected to such people.

Confound the 'look'

We have all experienced some miserable bastard giving someone a hard time, simply because they feel they can. A common example that makes my blood boil is that particular look: the slight sideways glance, then the look down the nose, followed by a sigh; the look that is so very demeaning, when you're on the receiving end. I often think gay men must practice it in front of a mirror to have it so perfect. Time and again we allow them to get away with it. Well it's time to put a stop to that.

My defence is simple. When it happens, I pat them on the arm, say 'poor love', smile and then chat about whatever I like. This confuses them no end because I have ignored their underlying message that I am unworthy of their attention. Always start with a smile. You can't go wrong with that because people invariably respond with one back.

Mission excusable

I most often see poverty of spirit in the workplace. Sometimes I wish individuals had to post a mission statement; then we would all know what to expect. Statements like "I am not paid enough, and am near retirement, and haven't had a ciggie for 3 hours. So just piss off". Or better yet, supermarket checkout operators should have a notice "I'm paid the minimum wage 'cause I'm 15, and I've been here 5 hours without a break, and my arms are dropping off, and I haven't eaten since lunch, and it's now 7pm. So rack off". Preferably written in bright yellow ink, laminated and hanging around their neck. That way we'd all be prepared and perhaps a bit more understanding.

... kindness in the big city isn't easy to find. Those who claim otherwise know the person serving them, or are recognised as a local, or are deemed worthy of acknowledgment by money, fame or beauty

and elderly (contrary to State Transit policy I think). They wait until they have completed getting on or off the bus. Sometimes they even drive them to their door if it's not too far off the route. (For god's sake, don't tell anyone!)

Take it from a Queen

Showing kindness may not always be easy, particularly if you're in a situation in which you feel uncomfortable. The best advice given to me by a most charming person (my mum) is that when you're in such a situation, pretend you're the Queen Mother. Sounds strange, but really it is just about being polite, smiling and nodding your head understandingly. They'll think you're wonderful and their attitude will disappear when you show understanding of what a rotten day they've had.

Unfortunately, kindness in the big city isn't always easy to find. Those who claim otherwise are fortunate enough to know the person serving them, or are recognised as a local, or are deemed worthy of acknowledgment by money, fame or beauty. As you get further away from the city (and the huge shopping malls), people are for the most part kinder to each other. By the time you reach the country, they even acknowledge you with "Are you all right there love?" rather than the ubiquitous "Next!"

So, pretend that you are the Queen Mother on a tour of the far-flung empire. Make someone's day with a small gesture. They may not thank you, but the next person will certainly notice. Small-mindedness is something we do not need in our lives; so let's work towards lifting other's bleakness for a moment and allowing the sun to briefly shine. ■

Darryl Taylor is a positive person.

get more bang for your bread

Preparing nutritious and tasty food can be tough on a limited budget. *Talkabout* asked nutritionist **Simon Sadler** to give his tips on saving a buck on your grocery bill without losing taste or quality.



We are constantly bombarded by a variety of new products, which claim to provide greater value for money. The range of similar products and differences in prices is astounding. Added to this we are now faced with new tax system, which will no doubt influence the way we spend our money. (For more information on the Goods and Services Tax make sure you catch Maree Crosbie's article in this issue on page 31.) When buying food all of these issues can be quite depressing, but hold up, there are some things you can do to help stretch your food dollar.

If you want to establish healthy eating habits it's best to start with regular meals that contain a range of foods from each of the different food groups. You may be doing this already but if you are uncertain, a Dietitian can help you to 'fine tune' your diet to your situation. (See the contact list opposite for Dietitians who specialise in HIV.) They can also give you information on services such as cooking classes.

First be honest and then plan

An important step in getting value for your food budget is to decide how much you can afford. Take an honest look at where you spend your money. Write down what your

current income is, and exactly what you spend each month (good contacts are Maree Crosbie and Amanda Theobald at BGF, they are financial counsellors and will be able to help you work through your budget). Once you have established what you are spending, re-evaluate your expenses and divide them into essential and non-essential items. Items such as large doses of vitamins and minerals may be an expense you could do without, reducing or eliminating these supplements can sometimes add a substantial amount to your kitty. Other non-essential expenses might include magazine subscriptions, takeaway

increase the chance of you buying those expensive snack foods while you are waiting at the checkout.

- Shop at larger supermarkets rather than smaller convenience stores. Prices tend to be higher at the smaller stores to make up for the small volume of goods they sell and high overhead costs.
- If you get a pension, prioritise your food shopping in pay week and stock your cupboard for the coming fortnight.
- Supermarkets own - or 'nameless' brands are usually much cheaper and most are comparable in quality.

If you are someone who buys lunch from a take away shop you would be amazed how much this adds to your monthly expenditure. How much?

\$45 dollars a month for a pie and soft drink for three days per week.

foods, weight gain powders, and other supplements. Even the cost of that morning coffee 'eye opener' from that chic café will add a substantial dent in your hip pocket.

Next step – and often the most challenging for many people – is to start planning. Try to write down five meals that you would like to eat over the next week. If planning a week in advance is too much, start off small and plan for the next day or two. Once you have a list of foods you would like to prepare use the recipe to develop a shopping list. You will find that many of the ingredients will already be in your cupboard, particularly herbs and spices. So do a quick check and then make your shopping list. There are a number of points listed below that may help you to save money when you are buying food:

When shopping

- Always take a shopping list with you.
- Never shop when you are feeling hungry. An empty stomach will

■ If transport is a problem try using the supermarkets home delivery services or community transport bus.

■ Establish an emergency food cupboard for times when your budget is particularly tight. Items you would put in your cupboard are foods you enjoy, such as:

- tinned and dried fruit (apricots, peaches, mixed fruit etc)
- vegetables (tinned tomatoes, corn, peas, kidney beans, baked beans etc).
- UHT milk, custard and cream, milk powder, custard powder, evaporated milk, sweetened condensed milk.
- items such as powdered milk flavourings such as Milo, Ovaltine, Sustagen, Ensure or malted milk.
- tinned fish such as salmon, tuna and sardines, tinned casseroles and stews.

HIV Specialist Dietitians

Simon Sadler and Louise Houtzager – Albion Street Centre Nutrition Service **9332 9686**

Dannae Brown – St Vincent's Hospital Nutrition Service **8382 7707**

Pip Greenop – Redfern Community Health **9690 1222**

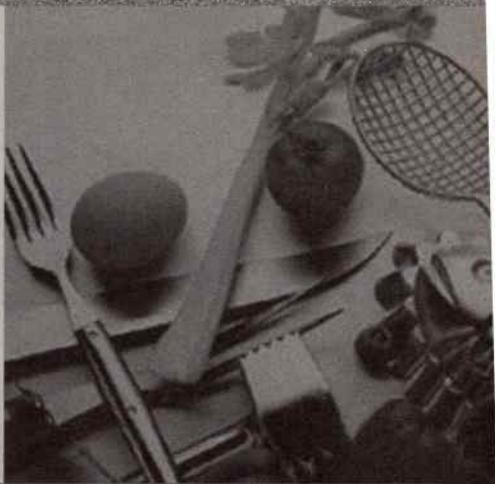
Maree Crosbie and Amanda Theobald – Food and Financial Counselling Services, BGF **5283 8666**

Simon Williams – Food Distribution Network **9699 1614**

Barbara Delcasse – Positive Living Centre **9699 8756**

Carol Ann King – Luncheon Club **9389 7477**

Foodshare Project **9310 2722**



two inexpensive meal plans

Below are two examples of meal plans that although are relatively inexpensive lack nothing in flavor and variety!

Meal Plan One

Breakfast

Spaghetti

2 slices toast

2 boiled eggs

Tea

Morning Tea

Fruit smoothie

Lunch

Toasted Sandwich with Ham, Tomato,

2 x fruit

Afternoon Tea

2 slices raisin toast

Dinner

Beef casserole

Mashed Potato

Honeyed carrots

Steamed Cauliflower

Peas

Dessert

Tinned fruit and custard

Total \$8.30.

Compare this to a café and you would be lucky to get breakfast for that!

One coffee five days a week, will add \$40-\$50 per month! Imagine how much you would save if you quit smoking!

Find out about the food services that may be in your area (see our list of contacts for food services in the Sydney area opposite).

If possible have a look at your local fruit and vegetable markets, for example, Sydney, Flemington and Chinatown. Just before closing time prices can be dramatically reduced. If you have friends in your area, boxes of fruit and vegetables can be divided among the group.

Food Distribution Network offers a great service, available to PLWHA living in the Sydney area. Those who are willing to volunteer three hours a fortnight to pack boxes for distribution can purchase these boxes containing a variety of fruit and vegetables. The boxes are divided into \$5 and \$10 boxes of mixed fruit and vegetables or \$5 boxes of mixed fruit only or mixed vegetables only. For those who are experiencing problems in mobility or are confined to their homes FDN will deliver these boxes to your home.

Leftovers

If you have lots of leftovers try to turn them into new dishes. For example leftovers from a beef or lamb roast make an excellent casserole, chicken can be added to make a delicious filling for a Shepherd's Pie or an Indian/Thai curry. Leftover vegetables can be made into bubble and squeak or put in an omelet.

If you are making a large pot of stew or soup, leftovers can be frozen and used as required for at least three months. If you are planning to freeze foods make sure you store them in individual serves. Don't freeze, thaw and refreeze foods as this can increase your risk of developing some food borne illness. ■

Meal Plan Two

Breakfast

Porridge made with milk powder, water and honey

Toasted cheese sandwich

Tea

Morning Tea

Fruit smoothie

Lunch

Baked beans with ham sandwiches

2 x fruit

Afternoon Tea

2 slices raisin toast

Dinner

Chilli con Carne

Rice

Steamed Corn

Bread

Dessert

Ice cream with topping

Total \$6.00

Simon Sadler is a Dietitian at the Albion Street Centre. Cooking courses for the kitchen-challenged are available free of charge. Call Simon to go on the waiting list on 93321090

simon's delicious and cheap dinner parties

For those who are interested in planning a dinner party on a budget here a few examples of tasty foods to include. Bon appetit!

Cock-A-Leekie Soup (tastes a lot better than the name suggests!) Serves 4 - 6 people

What you need:

500g chicken thigh fillets thinly sliced
2 leeks, halved lengthways and thinly sliced
2 chicken stock cubes
2 litres water
.5 cup white rice
1 cup grated cheese
2 tbsp chopped parsley

What you do:

- Place water and stock cube into a large saucepan and bring to the boil.
- Add chicken to the stock and reduce simmer for 10 minutes.
- Add the chopped leek and rice and simmer for further 20 minutes.
- Before serving stir in the grated cheese and parsley.
- Season with pepper and serve.

Beef Burgundy (delicious on frosty winter nights)

Serves 4 - 6 people

What you need:

1 kg lean chuck steak, trimmed and cubed
1 cup plain flour
1 tsp white pepper
3 tbsp olive oil
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 tbsp paprika (optional)
2 onions, peeled and sliced
2 cups red wine
2 tbsp chopped parsley

What you do:

- Put the flour and pepper in a plastic bag and coat the beef in the flour.
- Shake off any excess flour from the beef.
- In a large saucepan or electric frypan add 2 tablespoons of the oil and fry the beef over moderate - high heat in batches until browned, then set aside.
- Add the remaining oil to the frypan and add the

onions, cook until onions begin to become clear, then add garlic and paprika.

- Add the beef and red wine stirring to get the pan juices combined in the gravy.
- Bring casserole to the boil and then reduce the heat until it is simmering slowly.
- Add a little water (no more than half a cup) if the sauce is too thick.
- Cover the casserole and slowly simmer for an hour stirring occasionally.
- Remove the lid and simmer for further 10 minutes.
- Serve with pasta, rice or potatoes depending on your preference.

Jacket potatoes with sour cream make a nice accompaniment. Steamed vegetables such as green beans, peas, carrots, zucchini, cauliflower and broccoli are great to serve with this dish. It's good to have a variety of colours in any meal, not only because this ensures a range of vitamins but also it makes the meal visually appealing.

Baked Rice Custard

Serves 4 - 6 people

What you need:

1.5 cups of white rice
2.5 cups milk
2 eggs
1 tbsp brown or white sugar
.25 cup sultanas or raisins, rinsed and drained
Pinch of nutmeg
1 tbsp melted butter

What you do:

- Grease the bottom of an ovenproof dish.
- Mix all of the ingredients together except the nutmeg and pour into the dish.
- Sprinkle nutmeg over the top of the pudding and stand the ovenproof dish in another baking dish.
- Add water to the baking dish until it comes about 2cm up the side of the rice dish.
- Bake in a moderate oven (170°-190°C or 350°-380°F) for 30-45 minutes or until set.
- Serve with ice cream, UHT custard or cream or all three!

HALC

HIV/AIDS Legal Centre

The HIV/AIDS Legal Centre is a community legal centre. We provide free legal advice and referral to people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS in NSW. A staff solicitor is available Monday to Friday from 10.00am to 6.00pm. Alternatively HALC holds an information night on alternate Monday evenings where volunteer solicitors give free advice sessions. We deal with topics such as superannuation, discrimination, social security issues and more.

To make an appointment please call us on

02 9206 2060.

All information is kept strictly confidential.

HALC

HIV/AIDS Legal Centre Incorporated
9 Commonwealth Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010
PO Box 350 Darlinghurst NSW 1300
Telephone **(02) 9206 2060** Fax **(02) 9206 2053**
email halc@halc.net
Freecall 1800 063 060



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10am - 4pm

100 Pitt St, Sydney

Information pack **freecall 1800 812 404**

epistle-ette #6

Mother Helen Highwater OPI (ret*) – on poverty



Blessings and a Perpetual Indulgence gentle readers. The theme for this issue is of vital importance to us all: that is, the issue of poverty. My thanks in this issue for input from my younger, but far less glamorous twin sister, Sr Carmen Get It.

Those of us on a pension or other form of government assistance are often ignored by the expectations of mainstream socialising. How many of us budget our measly pennies for that once a week treat to the pub for exactly four schooners or exactly four CDs from Ashwoods? How embarrassing not to be able to take a decent bottle of wine to a dinner party? What is the effect on our self-esteem of constantly apologising for not being able to fit in to 'normal', average-income society? I know that in my little humble convent, pilgrims are often surprised when smoked salmon sometimes appears on our festive board for the refectory. But only when it's on special at \$4.95/100grammes. Cunning little hints like this can help our self-esteem and actually fool people into believing that living on the Disability Support Pension is faaaabulous. Thank God for the wonderful organisations that support, care, assist and advise us. We have a lot to be proud of in the setting up of all our various support organizations.

This leads to my last point. Remember last issue? Well, gentle reader, the great bureaucracy, ACON, decided to respond with a face-to-face encounter. My trusted acolyte reported back to this convent with a taped conversation of various answers and excuses why money had become more important than client services. I am assured that a 'Client

Forum' is to be held "sometime in the latter half of this year." I urge you all to start preparing questions. If you're too embarrassed or ashamed, let me assure you, gentle readers, that I'm not, I'll ask them for you if you like.

Till next time, I love you all.
MHH OPI. ■

*retired/retarded

PS: I hereby announce the Inaugural OPIAs – the Order of Perpetual Indulgence Awards. The OPIA is my very own thank you to special people. The first OPIA goes to:

**Robert Ball
Coordinator
The Sanctuary Holistic Centre**

A Nana! This man deserves an OPIA because of his vision in establishing The Sanctuary, the first HIV/AIDS treatment centre in Newtown in as many years as this old nun can remember. Where, on earth, would we be without free massage, acupuncture, shiatsu, cookery classes, budgeting workshops and a general community HIV/AIDS centre to freely utilise? Remember the days of the old Glebe Town Hall? Robert is justifiably proud of his 'baby' and we in the HIV/AIDS community owe him a huge debt of gratitude for remembering this 'forgotten disease.'



you and the gst

The first of July has arrived and many PLWHA are wondering what difference the new tax system will make to their daily life. **Maree Crosbie** gives us the lowdown.

For a lot of people fear about the new goods and services tax (GST) is a fear of the unknown, and of wondering how the new taxation system will affect their daily lives.

How it affects you will depend on your income and spending patterns. If you eat lots of take away food and enjoy restaurants you will be worse off. However, if you shop at the supermarket and cook at home it will not mean such a huge change as around 80 percent of the food we purchase will be GST free.

There are many contradictions in the food area - for example if you buy a hot cooked BBQ chicken you will pay the GST. However, if you buy a cooked cold chicken it will be GST free.

Many items in the shops will increase in price, as they will be taxed for the first time at the full rate of 10 percent. Other items will be cheaper or increase by less than the full 10 per cent due to the removal of sales tax. Currently sales tax is charged at different rates for different items.

Electrical items should fall in price under the GST saving consumers around \$7 on every \$100 worth of goods bought.

Clothing will increase up to 10 per cent because it has been sales tax exempt. Jewellery should be cheaper as it currently carries 32 per cent sales tax.

Also make up, cleansers and nail polish should be cheaper as the current 22 per cent sales tax will be replaced by the 10 per cent GST. However, treatments like facials, massage and waxing will attract the GST.

As the GST also covers services the increases will apply to your electricity and gas bills.

Wage earners will pay less personal income tax to compensate for the GST. From the first of July the majority of wage earners will pay no more than 30 percent in tax.

The tax-free threshold will be lifted from \$5,400 to \$6,000. Family payments

have been lifted to help pay for the cost of raising children. Most families will receive an extra \$140 per year per child and single income families with children under five will get \$350 per year.

From the first of July all social security recipients will receive a one-off pension or benefit rise of four percent and a guarantee that their payments will stay at least two percent ahead of any increase in the cost of living. There will be a four-percent increase in the pharmacy allowance and a seven percent increase to rent assistance.

The Government says that a single person on the pension will get an increase of about \$7.50 per week. Unemployed single people will receive about \$6.60 extra per week. A couple on the pension will get approximately \$12.50 a week extra and unemployed couples will get \$12.00 per week.

Couples on social security with children will be better off - especially if the children are under five years of age.

The other change for pensioners who work part time will be that from the first of July the pension will reduce by forty cents rather than the current fifty cents for each dollar earned over the free area. Unfortunately there will be no similar change for the unemployed who have some paid casual work.

The exemption of some food from the GST will make a big difference to the impact on low-income households. ■

Maree Crosbie is a Financial Counsellor at the Bobby Goldsmith Foundation

The views expressed were correct at the time of publication. For further information contact:

*Tax Reform Information Line 136 140
Australian Tax Office www.taxreform.ato.gov.au
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
www.accc.gov.au or 1300 305 502
ATO wholesale tax inquiries 132 866*

If you've completed a basic massage course and can spare a couple of hours helping your community, give us a call.

The Sanctuary Centre
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For information
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back to the future

The recently published results of the second *HIV Futures Survey* provide detailed information about the health and wellbeing of Australian PLWHA. **John Cumming** reports.

There are several significant differences between the results of the HIV Futures 1 survey conducted in 1997 and the HIV Futures II Survey in 1999 although the two samples were closely matched. (See our table) In Futures II, two out of every five respondents reported that they had at least one other major health condition in addition to HIV. This is considerably more than in Futures 1 where only one in three reported having at least one other major health condition. This is confirmed by our own experience. For some time we have been listening to people's concerns about the long-term side effects of some antiviral medications, and the impact of other health conditions on the treatment of HIV.

Peter

Increasingly, antivirals can complicate the treatment of other conditions, and vice versa. An example of this is Peter^t, whose HIV infection is just one of his health problems. He is Hepatitis C positive and also has an inoperable brain tumour (not HIV-related) that causes enough pain to make it difficult for him to sleep at night. His recent blood tests indicate that his liver is not functioning as well as it should, and he has noticed that it becomes painful after he eats a high fat meal. His doctor wants to prescribe anti-convulsant medication to relieve the symptoms of his brain tumour and to minimise some throat spasms that the tumour is causing. But Peter's liver dysfunction means that he cannot take many anti-convulsant medications because

	Futures 1 (1997)	Futures II (2000)
Side effects		
Nausea headache and diarrhoea	6%	80.5%
Nausea headache and diarrhoea, lipodystrophy, insomnia	4%	9%
Reported HIV medication conflicts with medications for other conditions	56%	47.8%
Have difficulty remembering dosing times	49%	31.9%
Have difficulty organising meal times because of drug related food restrictions	33%	26.3%
Have difficulty taking drugs in public		
Other health conditions		
Hepatitis C	6%	10.2%
Psychiatric conditions	6%	
Asthma, cardiovascular disease, hypertension etc	2%	
Liver disease	1%	
Psychological disorders	6.3%	
Lipodystrophy	28.5%	
Weight loss	33.9%	
Sleep disorder	44.3%	
Confusion or memory loss	30.6%	

they need a properly functioning liver to be processed. He's not on any HIV medication at the moment, but if he wanted to treat his HIV, his liver dysfunction would drastically reduce his choice of antivirals, again because the liver is needed to process the drugs. Peter describes his attempt to navigate all these issues and improve his quality of life as "like searching through a maze."

Andrew

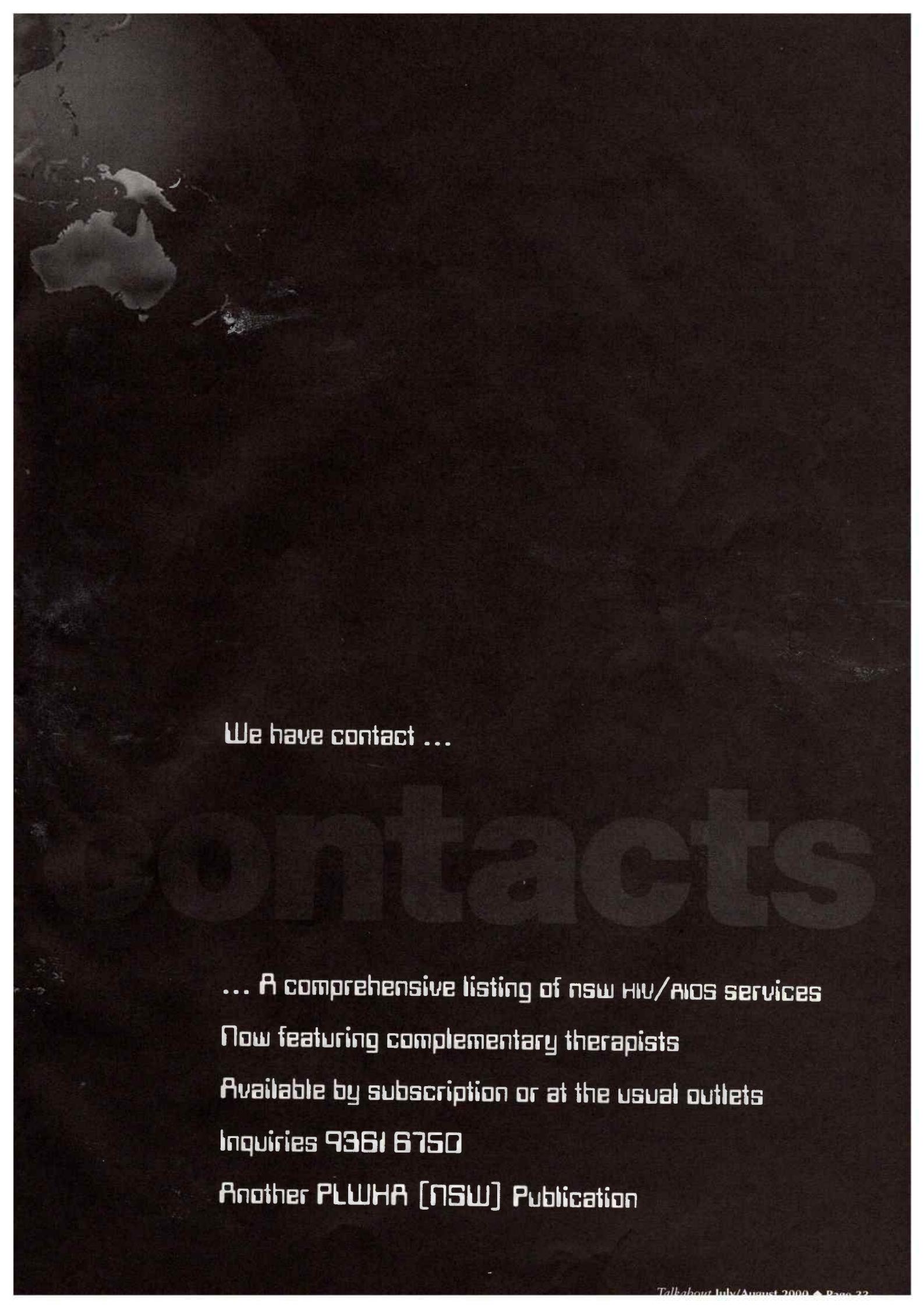
Then there's Andrew^t, who has been on antiviral medications for a few years. He has had to keep changing combinations because of drug resistance and because of drug-related peripheral neuropathy (nerve damage). Although relatively young, he recently developed a heart condition and the medication he took for it prevented him from taking antivirals because of the risk of dangerous interactions. Now his heart condition has improved to the extent that he no longer needs medication for it. He tried a new combination of antivirals but one of the drugs caused such a severe rash

that he had to be hospitalised. He's since had tests done to try and determine which drugs would be effective against the virus, but the results showed his virus is resistant to all drugs. He's become frustrated dealing with a range of medical specialists and doesn't feel they are communicating with each other and with him as well as they could be. He feels they overlook the fact that it is his life they are dealing with. "Sometimes", he says, "it seems to be far too much for one person to cope with."

Andrew is right; it is too much for one person to cope with. Talking to a Treatments Officer can help you talk through what is often a confusing and frightening situation, get information and support, and consequently gain more control of your life. ■

John Cumming is an ACON Treatments Information Officer. For more information contact ACON on 02 9206 2000. For a copy of the HIV Futures Report contact the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, Latrobe University on 03 9285 5382.

**not their real names.*



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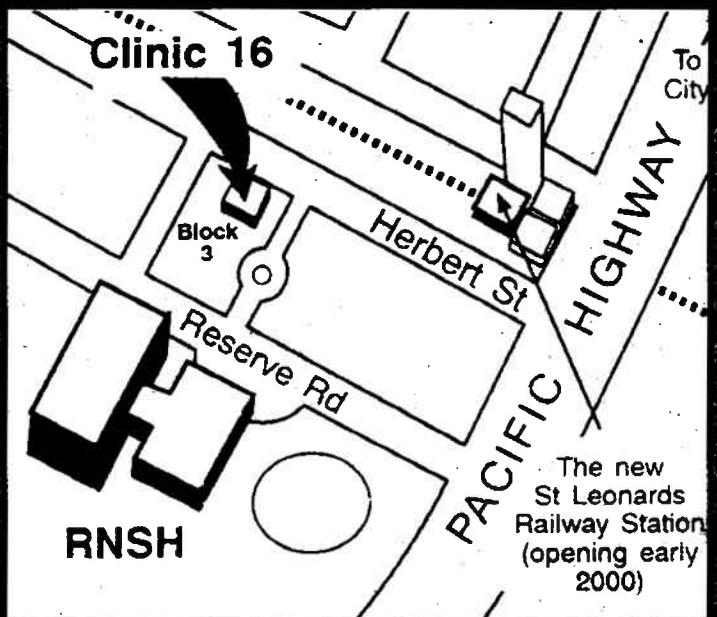
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Diary

Events

Outings Outings are free events for positive people, carers and friends coordinated by South Eastern Sydney Area Health Service. Coming up on the May 5 is a bus trip to the Blue Mountains; July 7 a bus trip to Prospect Reservoir; July 28 Quarantine Station Ghost tour; August 4; Nan Tein Buddhist Temple Bus Trip; September 1, Sydney National Park Bus Trip. Contact Jane on 9319 4439.

Spaids Tree Planting The next tree plantings in the AIDS Memorial Groves will be held on Sunday July 2 and Sunday August 6 at Sydney Park, St Peters. Spaids invites people to plant a young Australian tree provided by the Sydney City Council's nursery to commemorate a friend or loved one who has died. The plantings will be from 10.30am to 3.30pm with a picnic provided at midday, in the park area adjacent to Barwon Park Road off the Princes Highway. Look for the Old Brickworks chimneys entrance opposite St Peters station. Information Mannie De Saxe 9718 1452

Support

Positive Heterosexuals Newcastle Friday July 14. An Open House for men and women at Kurumah, Hamilton. Saturday July 29. The Absolutely Fabulous Pozhet men and women's Clinic. Friday August 11. Positive Business Meeting 'Hello soul mate' for HIV positive men and women. Friday August 25. An Open House with Greek cuisine and music to celebrate the Olympic Games. Details Freecall 1800 812 404.

South Sydney Carers Support Group A support group for carers of PLWHA. Meets 3rd Tuesday of each month at Sutherland Hospital. Guest speakers and information. Contact Terry or Emma Ph 9350 2955

Friends of Waratah A support group for PLWHA who live in Southern Sydney. 1st Monday of each month at Kogarah. Emotional support, information and social activities. Emma or Terry Ph 9350 2955

Pozhetwest Western Sydney peer support and education for men and women living heterosexually with HIV/AIDS. Contact 9671 4100.

Grief Support and Youth Suicide Project for Youth The Project provides individual counselling, support for schools after a suicide, community education and a schools program promoting mental health. This is a free service available for young people aged 15-25 living in the Eastern Suburbs. Ph 9360 3232

Support Group for Significant Others of People with HIV/AIDS related Dementia The group offers respite care, company and support. Meets last Wednesday of every month at the Tree of Hope cnr Riley and Devonshire Sts, Surry Hills. Contact Angela Kelly 9829 4242 and Carole Knox 9580 5718, the AIDS Dementia Outreach Team 9339 2078 or David at The Bridge 9552 6438.

Shopping spree The Newtown Neighbourhood Centre runs a shopping service six times a week to Marrickville Metro and Market Town, Leichhardt. They'll pick you up from home, give you two hours to shop, then drop you off again. \$4.00. Available to residents in Dulwich Hill, St Peters, Tempe, Newtown, Enmore, Marrickville, Camperdown, Stanmore, Petersham, Erskineville and Darlington. Call Diana on 9516 4755.

Living with loss Evening groups (six weeks) for people who have had someone close to them die within the last two years. If you are interested phone the Sacred Heart Hospice on 9380 7674.

HIV living Peer Support Groups Joining a support group can be a great way to meet other positive guys and to share experiences of what it means to be HIV positive. For more information about when the next support group is starting, contact the HIV living project at ACON on 9026 2037.

Learn

Free Courses Wesley Mission is conducting free courses in film and video, plants and gardens, hospitality, and sales and marketing. Call Vicki or Anna on 9261 4855.

Your Community Gym Fit X Gym Fit X Gym is at the Community Pride Centre, Hutchinson St, Surry Hills. "Positive Access Project" offers qualified instructors, free assessments, free nutritional advice, free individual programs and free session to try out gym. \$2 a session = \$18 - 10 visit pass. Contact Ingrid on 9517 9118 leave a message and your call will be returned. Fit X Gym # 9361 3311 4pm-7pm Mon to Friday.

Home and Away Wanted: Gay men (HIV positive and negative) to talk about travel experiences overseas or interstate for a national research and education project. Interviews will take approximately 1 hour. Confidentiality assured. Call Dean on 9281 1999.

Yoga for PLWHA Special weekly classes at Acharya's Yoga Centre. Call 9264 3765 for more information.

The Sanctuary Free massage, acupuncture, therapy information, social work and shiatsu services are available. Call Robert for details and bookings on 9690 1222.

Complementary Therapy advice Advice and referrals for PLWHA interested in exploring complementary therapies is available on Monday and Friday at the Sanctuary. Call Mac on 9519 6830 or email complementarytherapies@hotmail.com.

Talkabout Diary is a free listing for community and non-profit events. Listings in the Talkabout Diary are welcomed and encouraged. Please keep your listings below 40 words. Deadline is the 10th of each month. Please send your listing to Talkabout Diary, PO Box 831 Darlinghurst 1300, email: feonas@plwha.org.au or fax: 02 9360 3504.



Olga's

Gay guy, 40s HIV+, genuine, DTE GSOH, good health, enjoys what life has to offer and makes the most of it. Seeking friendship with other gay and heterosexual HIV+ people. Could also do with penfriends. **Reply 010600**

32 yo HIV+ guy, 6ft, 80kg, good-looking, masculine, muscular, hot, healthy. Into gym, travel, clubbing, love, sex, & intimacy. Seeking HIV+ guy to 30 yo, smooth, sexy, rebel-boy. Share good times, some/all of above. Please include phone number. **Reply 020600**

Handsome, happy, professional gay man, 34, HIV+ & in excellent health, seeks female partner to jointly conceive and raise a child. A sense of humour, love of children & optimistic nature required. Practical details negotiable. **Reply 030600**

Attractive HIV+ female seeking sincere, romantic gent who loves life and doesn't mind being there not only through the good times but also the bad, who loves laughter and honesty, then I'd like to hear from you. All replies answered. **Reply 040600**

Really nice male, 30's, HIV+. Maintaining good physical and emotional health. Is caring, affectionate, reliable and sincere. Lives in Melbourne. Is seeking a genuine loving female, positive or not. Also would like penfriends interstate. **Reply 010500**

Caring, sincere 34 yo. HIV+ heterosexual male looking for a HIV+ female to enjoy life's finer things together. I have many interests such as swimming, reading, music, bushwalking, picnics, and dining out just to name a few. If you're interested - age open, kids ok - please **Reply. 020500**

30yo. Heterosexual guy HIV+, good in health 6ft, 66kg, Asian background lives in Sydney. Fit, honest, non-smoker, down to earth and caring, easy going and likes quiet times. Would like to meet heterosexual female with positive attitude 20-30, kind, honest, caring, with good sense of humour, for friendship/relationship. Nationality no bars. **Reply 030500**

How to respond to an advertisement Write your response letter and seal it in an envelope with a 45c stamp on it • Write the reply number in pencil on the outside • Place this envelope in a separate envelope and send it to: Olga's Personals, PO Box 831, Darlinghurst 2010.

How to place your advertisement Write an ad of up to 40 words • Claims of HIV negativity cannot be made. However, claims of HIV positivity are welcomed and encouraged • Any letter that refers to illegal activity or is racist or sexist will not be published • Send the ad to Olga, including your name and address for replies. Personal details strictly confidential.

Personals

HIV+ Hetero Guy, 36. Lives Coffs Harbour Area, self employed carpenter. Enjoys fitness and healthy lifestyle. Likes socialising, cooking, swimming, walking and quiet times. Seeking caring sharing female for life of fun and companionship. **Reply 010400**

Serene caring sincere passionate 39 yo, HIV+ female, seeking friendship with sincere fun-loving passionate gent, for quiet memorable times together, view to relationship if compatible. All replies answered. Please, no baggage. **Reply 010300**

Poz het male 24, single dad of 1, seeks poz het female, Northern Rivers area, to correspond with a view to meet. I am fairly quiet type, honest and caring. Discretion assured. Enjoy nights in, eating out and movies. **Reply 030300**

Gay Guy, 50s, lives in NSW country, seeks any other HIV + person to share my house and quiet times. All I ask is for someone honest, reliable. Please include phone number. **Reply 011199**

36 hetero male, American, new to Sydney, healthy, very good shape, successful professional, discreet about status, living totally "normal life", never been sick, no baggage, seeks female who likes to laugh for friendship/relationship. **Reply 021199**

30 yrs old, positive, little bear cub. Try anything once. Looking for gym and swim partner as well as a mate to have some close times with from 18 to 30 yrs. I work heaps and love life. I hope you love life too. **Reply 031199**

Active sailor seeks HIV+ girl to 35ish for friendship and sailing comfortable 35' cruising yacht. No need for sailing experience, my aim is for friendship and maybe a relationship. Might even take the boat (and you!) to the Whitsundays. **Reply 041199**

Abbreviations: **GSOH** good sense of humour **DTE** down to earth

WTF



... anywhere in the world with **tim alderman**

The AIDS Knowledge Base

<http://HIVInSite.ucsf.edu/akb/1997/index.html>

Rating A very comprehensive site, though evidently not updated for some time, which doesn't guarantee the validity of the information supplied.

This site is a set of nine pages. Each page has a sub-set of pages that you get to by clicking the forward and backward arrows at the top left of the screen. For example, click page 1 on the main menu, then click the arrows to get to pages 1/2, 1/3, 1/4 etc.). The pages cover Epidemiology and Transmission; Testing for HIV; Basic Science and Pathogenesis of HIV; Natural History; Clinical Spectrum; and General Management of HIV; Clinical Manifestations of HIV; Infections Associated with HIV; Malignancies Associated with HIV; Legal Issues of HIV; and Prevention and Education. There is an interesting section on HIV infection within the prison system on page 9.

AIDS In Prison Project

<http://www.aidsinprison.org/aip/index.html>

Rating Site appears to be last updated in late 1998, so the information may not be relevant.

The homepage links to About the AIDS In Prison Project, which gives a general history and the public policy. You can link to ALLIA (Alliance for Inmates with AIDS) and an overview of their work. Changes and Choices (also available in Spanish) has a list of links to pages on HIV and its transmission within the prison system. Discharge Planning gives advice on what to do when leaving prison if you are HIV

positive. Facts Sheets cover National (USA), New York State, and New York City. Living Well is a Q&A page on services and how to get them. Other Resources covers a selection of links to other prison groups.

HIV Pos. Heterosexuals Interactive

Resource 'Ship'

<http://www.thegrid.net/popeye/home.html>

Rating I'm not quite sure about the 'Ship Ahoy' styled theme! The music gets very annoying, and my browser crashed twice while surfing through the site. This has never happened on any other site.

I like the interesting little sliding options in the menu bar to the right of the main page. The homepage leads to The Lifeboat, a page on how to navigate the site. I'm not sure I understand what the Cure page is about, though I assume it is just a little fun thing. HIV Classifieds links to ads for 'Alluring Women', 'Same Gender Preferred', 'Hungry Men', and 'Other Desires'. Chat is just that, and seems to be popular. Forum (one of the pages that caused my browser to crash) is a message page. Lifeboat is links to software downloads, Scribes is an opinion page for you to have your say.

CATIE (Community AIDS Treatments Information Exchange)

<http://www.catie.ca/>

Rating Links to English or French versions of the site. Homepage includes links to News, a Quick Reference to learning to live with HIV/AIDS; and Treatment Resources. Also via the home page is a discussion area

called Talking Treatments, information about CATIE, search tools and tips; and a site map. You can leave comments and a rating about the site and there's a new listing of available employment within the organisation.

Aromatherapy

<http://www.aromaweb.com>

Rating There is a search facility to help you explore this comprehensive site on Aromatherapy.

On the Homepage you'll find an index and helpful hints about Aromatherapy that are updated daily. The archive includes articles on the history of Aromatherapy, ingredients, how to buy and store oils and safety information. There are also hints for beginners, information about diffusers, and a blending guide. The site also looks at the question of whether Aromatherapy can cure an illness or a psychological problem. Other sections will look at application in more detail, including its use in massage, pregnancy and for children. There are tips on finding a qualified practitioner, a general glossary and a guide to online vendors. One section profiles the properties of over 70 essential oils and tells you how to mix them. The Recipe Box tells you how to mix and use the oils for everything from acne, to menstruation and stuffy noses. The 'Book Shelf' has a helpful rating system for beginner, intermediate and advanced. A News page highlights the latest information and there are links to other sites including mailing lists, newsgroups and clubs. ■

Tim Alderman is a member of the Talkabout Editorial Committee

quickclicks HIV/AIDS Workplace Toolkit <http://www.shrm.org/diversity/aidsguide/> Links to various workplace resources for implementing HIV/AIDS policies in the workplace. **CLUB POS** <http://clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/pos> A Yahoo site for a number of clubs, including one for HIV+ heterosexuals.

Subscribe now!

information

empowerment advocacy lobbying

for positive people

PLWHA Membership Yes! I want to apply for membership of PLWHA (NSW) Inc.

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Services Directory

Talkabout is published monthly by PLWHA (NSW) Inc and covers areas of interest to people living with HIV and AIDS including treatments, news, features and personal stories. 3,000 copies of *Talkabout* are distributed throughout the Sydney metropolitan area and regional New South Wales. *Talkabout* is also distributed to AIDS organisations and libraries nationally. **If you would like to advertise in *Talkabout's Services Directory*, please contact Rosi on (02) 9361 6750.**

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Positive Women

Women's HIV Support Project presents Inner City Luncheon Program 2000

2nd Wednesday of the month 12.30 – 2.30pm

June 14

Self-esteem/body image
Diet, exercise, treatments, our bodies.

July 12

Sexuality
Sex life, where is it?

August 9

Disclosing our status
Sharing experiences, inventing new ones.

October 11

Finance & budgeting, accessing financial assistance
Get more for your money. Make life easier.

November 8

Documenting memories/stories
Imaginative ways to store your memories.

December 13

Christmas
Let's celebrate with family and friends

Women's support groups provide a safe and confidential space to relax together and explore our unique experiences of living with HIV and AIDS. These groups are an opportunity to take time out to share our stories with other positive women, discuss issues pertinent to our lives without judgement, talk over HIV treatment issues, relationships, sex and disclosure.

MONTHLY SUPPORT GROUPS

Penrith: lunch Tuesday 12 – 2pm

Newtown: evening Wednesday 6 – 8pm

Inner city: lunch Wednesday 12.30 – 2.30pm

FACILITATOR TRAINING

Interested in starting a group in your area? Or help run an existing group?

The Women's HIV Support Project is offering free professional training to learn facilitation skills for peer support groups. If you are interested in this training please call Amelia or Vivienne at the Women's HIV Support Project on (02) 9206 2012.

UPCOMING EVENTS

During the year, the Women's HIV Support Project will be launching a set of information factsheets and an HIV treatments resource for positive women; holding a women's retreat; offering social events; information evenings; and providing access to complementary therapies. Contact us to receive our bi-monthly newsletter or for further information on these events.

To find out more about our range of services, please call Amelia or Vivienne on 02 9206 2012.

Women's HIV Support Project

Phone: (02) 9206 2012 • ACON Phone: (02) 9206 2000

Freecall: 1800 063 060 • TTY: 9283 2088 • Fax: 9206 2092

Email: acon@acon.org.au • Website: www.acon.org.au

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