



Strength in Numbers

Colorado

<http://www.strengthinnumbers.org/>

The Official Newsletter for the Colorado Chapter of Strength in Numbers

Autumn 2008
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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Strength In Numbers is to provide social support and educational resources to HIV+ gay men around the world thereby helping to improve their quality of life, quality of health and their ability to help others. Our activities include operation of an interactive Internet-based communications system, development of programs that increase self-esteem and social interaction skills, organization and guidance of activities that increase physical abilities, and promoting volunteer opportunities by our members in HIV-related efforts including fundraising for treatment services and research (such as AIDS Walks and the California AIDS Life/Cycle) and HIV prevention campaigns.

<http://www.strengthinnumbers.org/>

FALL INTO THE NET

New support group for the newly poz

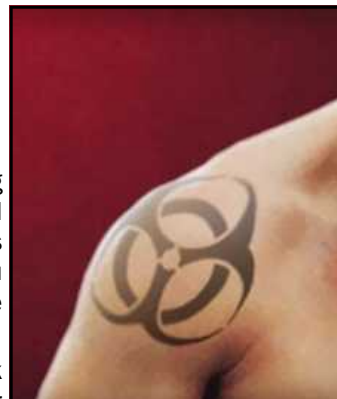
By Rick Smith

Hearing the words "You are HIV Positive!" can be challenging and life changing. You are probably unsure how you should feel and find you want to isolate yourself from the world as you adjust to your new circumstances. If this sounds like you then you may want to fall into a (safety) NET to keep you more balanced and strong.

Beginning October 1, 2008 the Treatment Education Network (TEN) will be hosting a pilot project we are calling the NET, for newly diagnosed gay men in metro Denver who are newly POZ. We invite each of you, who have been diagnosed within the last 3 years and think that you might need or want a safety NET as well as peer support and education, contact Rick Smith at 303-995-2940 and claim your place. This is an effort of TEN, a community organization in metro Denver which is peer operated for and by HIV positive people.

Our support series, the NET, will meet at **Denver Infectious Disease Consultants, 4545 East 9th Avenue**, starting on **October 1st** and continue meeting the first and third Wednesday of every month at **6:30 pm**. The curriculum will last 9 sessions and take place every other week. No fees. Be prepared for lively conversations, accurate information, candid questions

(Continued on page 10)



MY LIFE ON THE AIDS D-LIST

By Bryan Finch, AKA Miss Retro Virus



Public speaking used to be one my greatest fears during my formative years in Winnipeg, Canada. When I was diagnosed with HIV, this virus was only beginning to be spoken about in the Prairies of Canada, and wasn't taught about in schools. After hearing about a nurse at a local hospital who proclaimed that she felt a man who recently died from AIDS, "Didn't suffer enough." I knew the time had come to no longer be shy. I was invited, and accepted the invitation to speak to the nurses of that ward. That first speech felt good, and after seeing some of their views change, and feeling that I had made a difference, I was hooked. And I'm still doing it twenty years later.

Since my best friend had died two weeks before my positive test result, and many around me were also dying from this new disease, AIDS, I could only think, "When is my turn?" And I

(Continued on page 11)



SIN IN THE CITY

By Rod Rushing

Fall has always been one of my favorite seasons. The heat of summer is waning and a bit of cool drifts in. The trees start to show the change of season ahead and school begins anew. I love so much about school. Seeing everybody again and catching up on everyone's "What I Did on My Summer Vacation" story; wearing new clothes (yay sweaters!) and re-establishing friendships that had been on hiatus for a few months. Mostly, I love the learning mode that sets in. Hopefully

there are new things to learn about in this newsletter.

This issue has shifted focus slightly. In addition to the local perspectives from **Scott McGlothlen** (p.9) and **Jim Chandler** (p.4), I have also included some stories from poz guys who don't live in Colorado. Their unique perspectives have in common a passionate commitment to sharing their own experiences as visible poz men, and a willingness to make a difference.

Richard Kearns (p.7) lives in LA and is a poet and an activist. He works toward creating awareness of HIVers over 50 and the emerging needs that accompany this subset. He writes regularly at aids-write.

Brian Finch (p.1) has developed quite a reputation for himself in cyberspace. He has been a regular in the blogosphere for several years and is well known as an AIDS activist in more than one hemisphere. He is also smart, campy, and pretty damn hot. You can follow his colorful advocacy at his blog at acidreflux.

I admire these men immensely. They are intelligent, tenacious, and transformational. Additionally there are quite a few happenings in Denver this fall. I encourage you to consider them all within the context of further creating a healthier community between our caregivers, our city, and our gay brothers. We have perhaps become somewhat fractured, a bit disconnected, and unaware of our impact on each other. There are at least 200 gay men still testing positive each year here, and we have the chance to be around to help them navigate some rocky waters. I know I still need a hand from time to time.

September is **National Recovery Month**. (see *Focus on Recovery* pp 4-6). We all know (or might be) someone either who is either in that community or in need of some guidance getting there. I thought it appropriate to share some stories about recovery and give some resources in this area. It takes *cojones* to get help and to get honest about the circumstances that get one to the point of asking for it. I know I always find it extremely moving to witness that particular journey.

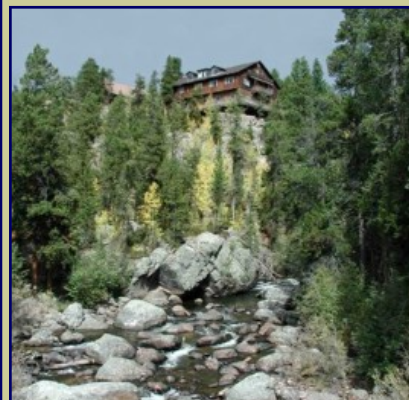
There is now another support option for new poz gay and bi men. It's a peer-led program and starts October 1. We also will see an organization being created for, and by, the HIV-positive focusing on education, treatment options and access, and social support. This will be named the **Treatment Education Network** (p.1) but shall go by its acronym, "**TEN**".

Again, I ask each of you to reach out and help create change in our city. Get involved to whatever degree you can. Volunteer at the forums. Attend the Planning Council meetings. Host a potluck and meet new folks. Bring a friend to the brunches or happy hours and grow our network. Write an article or a column for the newsletter and share your point of view.

Being poz and being gay in Denver can hold promise and joy. Laughter and fun does help put a smile on someone else's face. Maybe the only way stigma will go away is if we don't let it in. There is so much intelligence, talent, and creativity within us. I hope we learn to make the time to use these powers wisely.

—Rod

2009 RETREATS AT SHADOWCLIFF



The dates for the 2009 HIV Retreats at Shadowcliff will be **July 9-12** and **August 13-16**. If you would like more information about the retreat, or would like your name on the list to receive a registration form in the spring, send an e-mail to:

Shadowcliff@hotmail.com

or call Michael at 303.587.0233. More information is also available at:

www.shadowcliffretreat.blogspot.com

WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS NEWSLETTER?

The S.I.N. Newsletter is a quarterly publication and welcomes submissions from anyone on anything HIV-related. Deadlines are usually a few weeks prior to publication. We appreciate articles that have a maximum length of 500-600 words. All submissions are subject to editing for length and clarity.

Send articles or ideas to:

rebuiltdenver@yahoo.com

Put "Newsletter" in the subject line.

F o c u s o n R e c o v e r y



WATCH IT GROW

by Shawn Martinez

Only when a seed is planted can it grow. It goes without saying that providing a little tender care of light, water, soil and love promote a happy product. There is also something to be said for the quality of the seed you begin with, though even less adequate beginners can blossom into brilliance. Such details are the experience of the seed of recovery that has been planted in me.

At a time in the past, I foolishly believed that I could nurture recovery with just the ecosystem inside of me. Needless to say, I struggled greatly and failed miserably. I liked to imagine that I was seeking recovery only from the symptoms that I later discovered were band aids, for the things that really ailed me.

Now, I had grown quite nicely with the starter kit I came with, but never imagined the miraculous potential I had to thrive. Many attempts at relationships and the use of vices left me unfulfilled and starving for life. I tinkered with lame attempts of self will, only to realize I was running riot into dead ends and detours.

Longing for more, I had to find another way to feed my hungry spirit. It is without regret that one band aid, drug abuse, led me to such a treasure. I found myself engrossed in the Twelve Step Program of Alcoholics Anonymous; which promoted a connection with my Higher Power that continues to flourish.

Slowly, I have started to grow, reaching for the sun. I have been shown a way to live happy, joyous and free, to finally begin to know serenity: miracles grow, you might say. The twelve steps are like branches, and the principals attached are like luscious fruit, promising sweet nectar that gods would envy. Patience has become a close and cherished friend to me though she occasionally likes to test me, challenging my faith. What was once bitter shame, wrapped up in a tough nutshell, is now humble gratitude. I am no longer left to feel like a breeding pool of diseases, rather, a lucrative member of the orchard of life. I am strengthened by the power of having the diseases of HIV and addiction—not broken down because they have me. The more willing I grow toward letting my Higher Power, God, run the show, and the stronger my faith takes root, allowing my God to take my will for good, the more at peace I find myself. The more I strive to live with empathy and compassion, rather than sympathy and control, the greater that peace becomes.

As long as I water these gifts, feed them light and till their soil, I never again have to fight to live. Despite my trials and tribulations I will be just fine. The seed has been planted; now all that's left to do. . . watch it grow.

ADVOCATES FOR RECOVERY

www.advocatesforrecovery.org



Our Mission:

- To advocate for planning and policies at all levels of society supportive of recovery, and for more addiction research, prevention, and treatment.
- To educate the public about the disease of addiction, the consequences of untreated addiction, and the process of recovery.
- To dispel myths about addiction and the addict by sharing stories of recovery and by celebrating the successes of recovery.
- To reduce the stigma associated with addiction.

The aspen leaf in the AFR logo represents an important element of an aspen grove. Each grove grows by sending out runners from the root system, which then mature into individual trees that flourish and continue the process. Like the aspen grove, AFR grows its organization by members spreading the word, adding beauty, joy, and motion to the lives of others through the power of their stories of recovery.

F o c u s o n R e c o v e r y



ADDICTION RESEARCH TREATMENT SERVICES (A.R.T.S)

By Greg Tipton

A.R.T.S. Special Services offers free and confidential substance abuse treatment for people who are HIV positive. In September of 2007, we received a grant to address the emerging issue of methamphetamine use among gay and bi men. This inspired ARTS to hire a gay counselor who could develop a program for meth use among MSM (Men having Sex with Men).

My name is Greg Tipton and I am privileged to be that counselor. I now provide individual, as well as group counseling, designed for our community. One of the groups, called "Getting Off", is based on a Matrix Model of addictions treatment. I refer to this as the nuts & bolts of meth treatment, due to its emphasis on recovery and prevention. Studies have shown that this approach is far more successful at engaging clients in treatment for longer periods and achieving more results than any other outpatient approach.

The other group is "3-S" (Spiritual Self-Schema), which is based on meditation concepts. The mindfulness approach developed at the Yale School of Medicine using Cognitive-Behavioral methods drawn from Buddhist principles. People with and without any spiritual/religious belief system can make their own belief system as they develop and activate a self-schema consistent with a drug-free life and healthier behaviors.

Participants have found the two groups effective and complimentary. Both address not only the meth addiction but also issues around sexual addiction and self esteem issues.

For further information concerning our program contact Greg Tipton LPC, at:

A.R.T.S.

2121 E 18th Ave,

Ph. (303) 355-1014.

THE SPIRITUAL PATH THROUGH RECOVERY

by Rev. Jim Chandler, The Denver Church of Religious Science

Some of the most spiritual individuals I know are my friends in the recovery community. Their journeys are as varied as their addictions, and their experiences are as individual as their stories, yet they all share a quest for understanding, a belief there is something greater to be revealed, and a spiritual power within them, which others may talk of but rarely have actually put into practice.

To speak of addiction as a gift would be difficult to embrace, yet most individuals who have gone through addiction are searchers. I have found that addiction, in its many forms, is often a substitute for dealing with a world that does not reflect the inner truth about an individual.

Often it is a world that tells them they are not good enough. In some peoples' experience it is a world of sadness, anger, judgment, perceived evil, hostility, or a world where they don't feel valued or understood. Who wouldn't want to numb themselves from such a world? Yet, as we all know just becoming numb does not solve the discrepancy.

People in recovery have turned this negative, destructive, and counterproductive journey into a powerful spiritual tool; a tool that transforms their entire life. The power to overcome addiction, a power we all have, is greater than any challenge we may face. That inner spiritual knowledge allows us to face challenges in life as opportunities for growth. It allows us to see people not as adversaries but as opportunities to practice acceptance and forgiveness; we no longer see evil or find the need to judge. Though the addiction itself is undesirable, recovery lifts us up to a new level of living and understanding, empowering the life we each wish to live from within, not a world forced upon us by others. The power is within us to change the world we live in, this truly is a spiritual path of transformation.

Blessings, in all ways!



F o c u s o n R e c o v e r y



W H Y N O T U S ?

By Ben Aragon and Hassan Latif

With more than 30 years combined recovery experience, Hassan Latif & Ben Aragon are working with HIV+ substance abusing men of all races. Together they provide support groups, relapse prevention as well as individual sessions to help promote a restoration to a drug-free healthier lifestyle.

As clients make progress, they are provided with a structural routine that provides them with more opportunities to learn and practice recovery skills that work, helping them focus on staying stopped comfortably from drugs.

Hassan and Ben direct groups which offer a more directed and psych-educational approach. Newer therapeutic models are used along with other services to promote successful recovery.

Services are provided free of charge and are funded by Ryan White Part A and MAI. Groups are conducted at two locations:

It Takes A Village

1475 Lima Street

Aurora, CO

Every Wednesday and Friday 11am-12:30pm

call Ben at 720-935-4159 or 303-367-4747

Brother Jeff's Community Health Initiative

608 26th Street (upstairs)

Denver, CO

Every Thursday 11-12:30pm

call Hassan 720-297-9694 or 303-293-0024

Most People Help Themselves. . . Why Not Us?

H O W T O F I N D A M E E T I N G

Simply locate your flavor of compulsive behavior on the left, and then click the link on the right to find meeting times and locations in the Denver Metro Area. It's that easy! Getting there. . . well, that's another story.

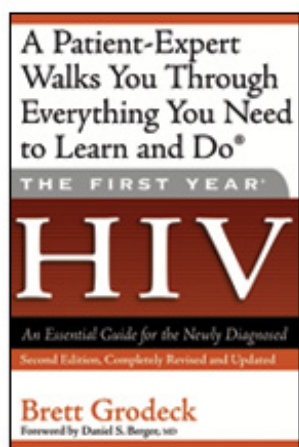
Crystal Meth Anonymous:	http://www.crystalmeth.org/index.php?option=com_sobi2&catid=94&Itemid=1
Sexaholics Anonymous:	http://www.denversa.org/
Alcoholics Anonymous:	http://www.daccaa.org/meetings.htm
RM Round Up:	http://rockymountainroundup.org/meeting.html
Narcotics Anonymous:	http://www.nacolorado.org/
Cocaine Anonymous:	http://www.cacolorado.org/meetings/browse.jsp?id=201
Overeaters Anonymous:	http://www.oa.org/index.htm?state=CO

POZ BOOKS BY TWO POZ AUTHORS

THE FIRST YEAR: HIV

Brett Grodeck

Marlowe & Company; Revised edition June,



The First Year—HIV is unique because it is written by someone who knows your struggle: a regular person who's lived with the virus for over 20 years.

A review by The New York Times called the book "optimistic" and "level-headed." Combining the human element with essential information about treatment

options, choosing the right doctors, the importance of diet and exercise, holistic alternatives and sex, the book transforms a complex disease into one that can be understood and managed.

This newly revised second edition offers new insight into the next generation of HIV medicine, new ideas about AIDS, alternative health, crystal meth, sex addiction, and getting health insurance.

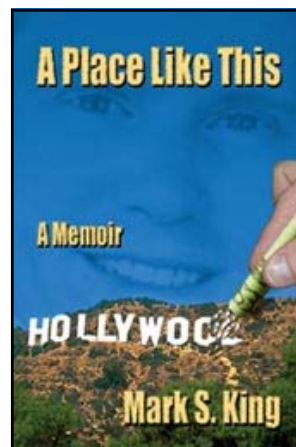
This new book is a supportive and educational resource for patients, counselors, case managers, health professionals, friends and family members who want to take an active role in the management of HIV.



A PLACE LIKE THIS

Mark S. King

iUniverse, 2007



Once you've won a car on *The Price Is Right*, been an actor, owned a phone sex company, been infected with HIV, slept with a movie icon and developed a drug addiction, you've pretty much *done* the Hollywood thing.

In this true, first-person account of the 1980's, Los Angeles transforms an all-American boy

from an actor in commercials plugging fast food to a gay phone line worker pushing fast sex.

King experiences firsthand nearly every gay social milestone of an astonishing decade—drug use, the phone sex trade, the onset of AIDS, Rock Hudson, assisted suicide, anonymous encounters, the early development of AIDS organizations and activism, and the Magic Johnson announcement. In *A Place Like This* King shares all of these experiences with disarming humor and startling candor.

For anyone who lived through those turbulent times, or those interested in what it was truly like, the book is a definitive account of that time and place.



i miss kissing

by richard kearns

i miss kissing
a lot
i miss russ
i miss jeff
i miss
too too many more
i miss
your cradling arms
i miss
my head on
your chest
i miss
yours on mine
i miss your
skinheat

i lived i
am alive i
persist in the
dwindling
sunlight of
twenty plus
years with AIDS
fifty seven & wondering
if i might
make sixty
if i want to
make sixty
if i can

i used to remember
what the world was
like without AIDS
i have forgotten it
like jeff's unmoustached
face, like russ' blue eyelights
& his calloused hands &
the promise we will be
reunited in valhalla
makes their brief images
flick like autumn-shadow'd leaves
'cross my inner fisheye
subliminal subluminal
insubstantial & perhaps
sub-transparent

socrates was a faggot
in addition to being a
man, most mortal
he is my grandfather
bickering plato too
writing it all down
they are our gay
forbears their
persistence in pursuit
of wisdom —their love —
is a signature
of their gay passions
matured & winelike
we are gay because
we cannot live
unexamined lives & thus
betray ourselves to
truth's call to action

i died & came back
as myself
my plumbing isn't what
it used to be but my heart
works better than ever
kiss me deep & long &
today & taste my joy &
think of how to say
goodbye

rk-

rk@aids-write.org



richard kearns is a poet and the publisher
of aids-write.org

<http://www.aids-write.org>

THE BEST NEW TV SHOW—*WITH A SERODISCORDANT RELATIONSHIP SUBTEXT*—THAT YOU'RE PROBABLY NOT WATCHING, BUT SHOULD BE.

by Chris Kenry



The Premise:

First touch, life; second touch, dead forever.

Meet Ned. He has the power to bring dead things back to life with a touch of his finger. But if he touches them again, they die forever.

If he doesn't touch them within one minute, they can remain alive but something in close proximity will, consequently, die.

The Backstory:

Ned first discovers his power as a child when his dog, Digby, runs into traffic and gets hit by a semi. Ned touches the dog and it leaps up, revived. Soon thereafter, Ned's mother drops dead from a brain aneurism. He touches her and she comes back to life. But, since he doesn't touch her again within a minute, his next-door neighbor's father dies. This is a problem for Ned since his next-door neighbor is also his childhood sweetheart, Charlotte (affectionately known as Chuck), and he has essentially just killed her father. Later that night, Ned's unknowing mother comes in to give him a kiss

goodnight and. . . you guessed it, the kiss of death. Only this time, forever.

Now orphaned, Ned is sent off to a grim boarding school, and Chuck is shipped off to live with some elderly aunts, (two retired synchronized swimmers whose quirks and eccentricities make Auntie Mame seem as tame as Aunt Bea).

Flash forward several years and Ned has become The Pie Maker (he resurrects rotten fruit, giving it new life for his pies) and is the owner of a restaurant called *The Pie Hole*. An unscrupulous private investigator, Emerson Cod, discovers Ned's power and sees an opportunity. The two then embark on a business venture that goes something like this: they hear about a murder, go to the morgue, bring the murder victim back to life and find out who killed him, and then that information to solve the crime and collect the reward money.

This goes along fine until one day Ned discovers his long-lost love, Chuck, dead in a casket. He recognizes her, brings her back to life, but then decides to keep her alive.

The Interesting Part:

The one caveat of Chuck and Ned's relationship is that they can never physically touch each other, or Chuck will die forever. So, like any two people who find themselves in a sero-discordant relationship, Ned and Chuck learn to take precautions. They sleep in Lucy and Ricky twin beds (separated by several feet of floor space), they kiss through sheets of Saran wrap, they drive around town in a car divided down the middle by a slab of Plexiglass, with a rubber-glove hole to allow them to hold hands. . . It's all very sweet and quirky, yes, but as I was watching it I found myself oddly touched by their predicament, probably because it was so much like my own, and that of anyone else who has ever been in an intimate relationship where one partner is positive and the other is negative—a relationship in which both have to worry about protecting each other, and both have to find ways to be intimate that don't necessarily involve physical contact. It all sounds ridiculous, and ridiculously complicated, I know, but somehow it hits an authentic note, and is usually very funny.

So, check out the show. If not for the premise, then for the sets, costumes, and writing, which are all so fresh, colorful and bright, you can't help but smile. And if those aren't reason enough, watch it for Paul Rubens (AKA Pee Wee Herman) who has a recurring role.

The second season of *Pushing Daisies* begins on October 1st.

Check out past episodes at:

<http://abc.go.com/primetime/pushingdaisies/index?pn=index>



IRONY IN MOTION

By Scott McGlothlen

As I look back over my history of safe sex beliefs, one conversation continues to come to mind. It occurred to me when I met an old friend over coffee to catch up. He proceeded to tell me that he and his new boyfriend of six months were no longer using condoms. They were in love and would never lie to one another. If I recall correctly, about a week later, one of them had accidental, extra marital, drunken sex.

"If anyone of us is certain to not get HIV, it is you," he said while I proudly sipped at my mocha-frappa-whatever. I had just finished explaining to him that I wouldn't even perform oral sex if I had a canker sore in my mouth. One could only imagine the halo above my head, glowing so brightly. According to him, and several others, I was the poster boy for safe sex. No doubt I wanted it to look that way, too. I had a secret sense of moral superiority when it came to having sex responsibly.

One year later and an unseasonably strange flu put my "safe sex ego" in check. All it took was a broken condom and my passive fear of interrupting the moment to say, "Hey, pull out real quick."

I no longer needed to sympathize for those with HIV. I had become one of them. I don't know what impacted me more during that time; the fear of death or the sting of a rightly broken ego. And like all people who claim moral superiority, our soap boxes are eventually kicked out from underneath us.

The bittersweet irony of it all did not end with my diagnosis. Within a weeks' time, I got a phone call from a very nice man at Denver Health Hospital. His name was Raul and he could, perhaps, have been a guardian angel—but only if heaven functioned like the Department of Motor Vehicles. He sounded tired, annoyed, and desperately willing to link me to services for treatment. When I told him that I did not want his help, he insisted, saying that he was a case manager and I was now on his caseload.

"Caseload?" I had been working as case manager for years. I was not supposed to be on anyone's caseload. I was only supposed to have caseloads. So I did the most mature thing I could think of and I hung up on him, refusing to answer any of his phone calls. Funny enough, this only led to a later embarrassing moment of answering the door in my underwear, where I came face to face with a young woman from the Department of Health.

It felt like pulling teeth trying to convince these people that I could link myself to treatment on my own. And indeed I did. I got one of the best doctors around and joined multiple social groups. I almost did a complete one-eighty and became the poster boy for the newly diagnosed. Except that this time I did not want to be the poster boy for anything. I still wallowed around in my own pa-

thetic sense of irony, convincing myself that I did not deserve any of this.

Of course, the truth is that none of us actually deserve HIV. And none of us are really void of this ironic kick-off to the whole journey. There are the critics out there who point out the guys who they think "have it coming to them." Perhaps it is the twinkie boy who wants to impress his older suitor, or the overweight man who just wants his physical form to be validated. And we simply cannot forget the avid drug user. It is easier to point fingers at him than ever try to understand where his addiction comes from. The reality is that not many positive guys set out to get the disease, especially in order to hate themselves for it.

So the journey of coping with HIV begins with the sardonic twist of ever having received the disease in the first place. Yet by the end of all this coping, there is a new sense of irony; one that is more uplifting and empowering. Among the men I have met, most of them claimed that HIV actually became one of the best things that ever happened to them. The common theme being that the disease gave them a new outlook on and a new appreciation for life. I understand this. And while I don't know if I could ever make the statement that HIV is the best thing ever, I could certainly see how it has become a catalyst for a lot of amazing things. Even though I am not fully done with my journey to acceptance, the storm clouds have cleared up somewhat and I can see a lot of the things that I am lucky to have that would not have been there otherwise. In other words, this is our reward for coming to terms with such traumatic disease. We, like others facing some level of mortality, are given a chance to truly understand the fact that some of the most painful things in life are also the same things that make life most beautiful. That is pretty amazing.

"So now what?" you, as a reader, might ask. Well, after some guys are done coping, they may ignore this new, profound knowledge and continue on a path of self destruction (which may actually never really be coping). But hopefully many will make the choice to really take this irony and put it into motion. One option is to take this little wisdom and trot off into our own forests and build a better life for ourselves. No doubt those who are liberated by these facts can put them to good use in their own lives. People who have gone through trauma and made it to the other side are often additionally equipped to handle more of life's lovely surprises.

For some guys, it is possible to take this irony, put it into motion, and take it even further than this. Once we know how it can benefit our own lives, we can use this knowledge and apply it to the lives of others. For instance, people who are at the beginning of their diagnosis do not yet have the pleasure to have journeyed through the storm of coping. They are still wallowing in the initial bittersweet emotions, feeling like the irony leads only to a road of despair. Those who have pushed on through to the other side are the ones equipped to help others travel through that storm. In a way, this almost sounds obvious. But it is the

obvious things in life that are often the most overlooked.

Helping others by using your own history of coping goes beyond simply donating money, or joining the AIDS walk. These things are absolutely beneficial to the HIV community, but you do not need to have actually suffered from HIV in order to do them. Interestingly enough, putting your irony in motion may not even require *this* much work. One could simply show up to local HIV social functions. The more faces that are present, the more people can easily brush off feelings of loneliness or isolation. Also, the bigger variety of guys that show up, the more others will have somebody to relate to. Then there is the option to directly mentor the new guys, just to show them that life can be a success with or without HIV could have an amazing impact.

And for some, the concept can be taken even beyond all of that. There are a lucky few who will be able to use their history to help others outside of the HIV community, whether it is in their job, or as a volunteer. Certainly grief does not only come in the form of HIV. People all over suffer from some kind of loss in their life and depend on others in order to make them feel human again.

I personally may not be through the storm quite yet, but I was lucky enough to have had an opportunity to help others in my field of work. Recently, a client of mine was diagnosed with diabetes. After completing the required job tasks at hand, I sat and talked with her about all the ways she might be feeling and the various things she could do in order to manage better. I never revealed any information about my HIV. I did not need to. It only took about an extra five minutes of my time and by the end of it, she declared that I was by far the wisest twenty-six year old she had ever met. She probably did not know I was secretly bonding with her at the time. And yet bonding with a mentally ill woman twice my age managed to help me in my own bizarre way.

We have all heard the cliché that whatever doesn't kill us can make us stronger, if not physically, then perhaps emotionally. This strength helps us each better our own lives. But in a unique way, it can also help us better the lives of others. Not all of us may have the ability to do this, but steps of any size can make an impact on those around us, whether it is showing up to a gathering, or taking your experience directly to the community.

I may not be at the end of my storm. But after a year of being HIV positive, I can feel the irony shift from hopelessness to inspiration. I have taken little steps here and there to do my part and the results have been worth my time. I can only imagine what it will be like once I am able to put the puzzle pieces of my life back together again. Because in life, the only thing more beautiful than the irony of disease is getting the opportunity to really put that irony in motion.



CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?

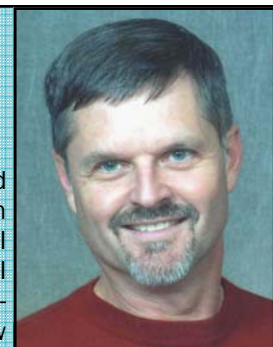
By Rod Voris

Being a gay man with HIV and wanting to lend a hand, in my case, literally, I went a step further and started trying to move forward with my heartfelt desire to provide "outreach" to brothers and sisters in the gay and HIV+ community by volunteering to provide sign language interpreting for SIN events that I was planning to attend. Even though the numbers of hearing impaired are not great at those events, I had the privilege of meeting and getting to know at least one brother I could reach out to. Then recently, I met another brother who is deaf, and who later disclosed to me that he is poz, as well. How nice it was to be able to tell him and his partner (who can hear) about the SIN group. I invited them to the very next SIN Educational Forum (see p. 13) and they showed up! The forum was a bit high-browed for me, and trying to translate the chemical names of the drugs into sign language was overwhelming, but the participants seemed to enjoy the fact that at least someone was trying to do so. More important than the information provided, was the chance to meet other SIN members, and even another deaf person (one who simply showed up and didn't know there would be other deaf people—let alone an interpreter), and to socialize a bit. Imagine being HIV+ and deaf and having only the Internet and/or your doctor as the sole means of information about your disease. And imagine having no else to share with. I am so grateful that in a relatively short time I have already been able to serve as an interpreter for a couple of people, and to help the group reach out to them.

Now, what I hope this group will do is to stretch beyond ourselves a little and reach out to our deaf brothers and sisters. Don't be afraid to approach and make them feel welcome with a smile, a hug, a handshake, and to even sign to them if you know a little sign language. Or, if an interpreter is with them, have a conversation with them. Ask about their conversions, meds, lives and interests. Sometimes as we reach out, we can actually help ourselves.

If you are aware of others who are deaf, or hard of hearing, and poz, let them know they are welcome to our gatherings and that, as often as possible, I will be there to provide interpreting services. Little by little, I hope to let our poz, gay/lesbian brothers and sisters know that they are not alone. Hugs!

—Rod



Rod Voris, is a nationally certified sign language interpreter, and has been HIV+ for almost 4 years.

rodterp@q.com



THE NET (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 1)

TREATMENT
EDUCATION
NETWORK

and thoughtful answers. This program is designed to be success focused and will include the following ideas. Many experienced HIV positive men find that most of these are part of their experience throughout life.

- Dealing with Diagnosis
- Disclosure to Others
- Sex and HIV
- Big Treatment Questions
- Financial Considerations
- Social Networking
- Spirituality
- HIV Education
- A Personal Support Network
- Sharing What You Know

If you have any questions, are ready to fall into the NET and join me, then please call me at 303-995-2940 to schedule an intake interview to reserve your spot in the NET. We are limited to 15 people so please be sure to call soon!



LIFE ON THE AIDS D-LIST (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 1)

was sure it wasn't far off. Remember, at this time there were no treatments, and really no hope of finding any anytime soon.

So in that grim climate, speaking out gave me a sense of purpose; even a sense of taking control over the despair I felt when I realized that in the next few years, my life would probably be ending. From my initial talk to the nurses I expanded to schools, med students, public servants, doctors, conferences, and eventually got into television, newspaper, and radio. In fact, my own father found out about my status through an interview I did, which, at the time, I thought to be the perfect way to get back at him for being an absentee father. As it turned out, I made my point quite clearly.

To be completely honest, public speaking was also my rebellious side coming out. I grew up as a painfully shy kid who felt as if he never fit in anywhere. As far back as grade school I felt shut out. Junior high and high school were even more painful as the harassment became daily. On top of it, I suffered from severe asthma and was highly medicated as a child, my first clinical trial occurring at the age of 12.

It was no wonder then, that as a lonely, young gay boy I'd let anyone who showed me the slighted attention boink me, condom or not. It also should be no surprise that drugs and alcohol were in my life from a very early age; they were my way to cope and fit in.

The one thing that got me through my early years was a very offbeat sense of

humour. As a kid I loved Monty Python, and Saturday Night Live. Anything that had dark humor, or too taboo subjects, or anything that could take a painful situations and turn them into the absurd, as was done in my all-time favorite dark film, *Happiness*.

During the 80s, a few guys with AIDS from San Francisco created a Zine, *Diseased Pariah News*. Some felt this was in bad taste, but I loved it. They dared to laugh at the unspeakable and still, to this day, two of their creations, the AIDS Barbie, and the Malibu Home Hospice,

School for the Seropositively Charmed, and is still working on glamour-filled antiretroviral once-a-day dosing. Her line of antiretroviral-infused make-up has been a big hit for the girl on the go. Acid Reflux has generously created the Acid Reflux T4 Cell Foster Care Plan so that you can sponsor my immune system cells so that they no longer pay the price of my misguided youth by withering away in a lifetime of poverty.

Although there is plenty of levity on the site, many moments are serious, too, as I've taken everyone along on my journey

through rehab, and all the events of life in recovery, through my experience enduring mega-mega HAART, fighting for access to experimental drugs, and on my travels to places like Africa.

Today, two years after starting the blog, I'm still having fun, and have proclaimed myself the "Kathy Griffin of AIDS" due to my last appearance on public access television, where I was featured between the modern dancers and a guy selling scorned woman hot sauce. To reflect this change,

the title of my blog is now, Acid Reflux Presents: My Life on the AIDS D-List.

Last night I had a date with a 23-year-old HIV man who tested positive eight months ago. Listening to the questions he asked it was clear to me that we need role models out there. Since it looks like I'm not going to die young and pretty after all, then I might as well stick with showing the newly-infected young folk that you don't have to hide.

The Beauty of Undetectable

My friends just couldn't put their finger on why I look so ravishing these days!

That's when I told them about Miss Retro Virus's new Anti-Retroviral infused time release make-up.

copyright: www.acidrefluxweb.com

are among my personal favorites. Then, too, there was their Innocent Victim of the Month page. To put this last item in context, the 80s were all about "innocent victims." Cute white children, wives, and transfusion recipients were innocent victims. The rest of us—the fags, drug users, whores, etc.—were guilty.

Today I live in Toronto where, inspired by my friends at *Diseased Pariah News*, I decided to create my own site, Acid Reflux (www.acidrefluxweb.com). There, my fictitious character, Miss Retro Virus, has been busy with her Charm



COMMUNITY EDUCATIONAL FORUMS



The Community Educational Forums have had a successful first year in their new "evolved" format and organization. The forums are informative and useful presentations on HIV and HIV-related topics and are organized & conducted with the belief that knowledge is power.

The forums also afford an opportunity for poz people to socialize and network. The forums are usually held on the second or third Tuesday of each month in the community room at Our Saviors Lutheran Church, 9th & Emerson St. (enter on the side from Emerson). A free catered dinner is served at 6:00 pm and the presentations begin at 6:30 pm. The educational forums are coordinated each month by a small group of individuals (also living with HIV) who are not associated with an agency (hence the motto: *"by the community, for the community"*). We welcome volunteers and participants in this effort. If you would like to help with planning (or have suggestions), or you are able to volunteer to help out at the forums once in a while, please contact Michael at:

forums.colorado@gmail.com

(303) 587-0233.

Upcoming Education Forums*:

October 14:

STDs, STIs & HIV

November 18:

"Lessening the Impact" (of HIV in our lives)

December 16:

Interactive HIV "TV style" Quiz Show (with our annual traditional Christmas homemade dinner festive event)

January 13:

Resistance Development & Management

February 10:

Cognitive Impairment

March 10:

Highlights from the CROI HIV Conference

April 14:

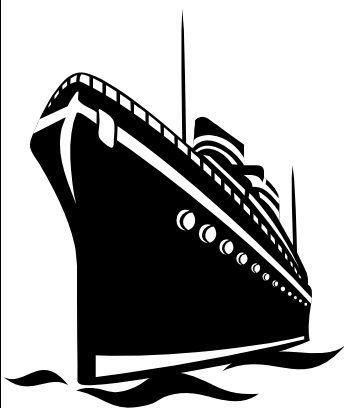
Aging & HIV

May 12:

HIV & Mental Health Issues

*All forums are subject to change. Check the SIN website -calendar section- for updates

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS POZ CRUISE ADVENTURE MAY 3 - 10, 2009



Join us for our Maiden Voyage for members of SIN and our friends as we sail the magnificent Western Mexican Riviera. We will be sailing the Carnival Splendor, which will be less than one year old at the time of sailing. This magnificent ship offers activities for people of walks of life—lay on deck with a Margarita in hand, swim and snorkel, rock climb, play miniature golf, and be sure not to miss the famed Carnival water slide!

Rates for our amazing cruise are as follows:

- Inside Cabin (no windows) \$475.00
- Cabin with picture window \$595.00
- Cabin with private verandah \$765.00
- Suites rates upon request.

Rates for 7 days of sun and fun will include all meals, private social events open only to our guests, and each cabin will receive a \$100.00 ship board credit for

spending money while on the ship.

For further information and reservations please contact:

Paul B. Stalbaum
Universal Travel/American Express
1425 SE 17 Street, Ft Lauderdale, FL 33316
(800)735-0401, or 954-761-1500 (ext. 241)
paul@universal-travel.com
Reservation forms can be found here:
http://www.gaytravelfl.com/pdfs/SIN_Res_Form.pdf



HIV+ PEOPLE LIVING LONGER THAN EVER BEFORE



The number of HIV-positive people living in the United States increased 11 percent from 2003 to 2006, which experts attribute to life-prolonging antiretroviral therapy, Bloomberg News reports.

According to a study published in the October 3 edition of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, the HIV-positive population rose from an estimated 994,000 in 2003 to 1.1 million in 2006. A separate study published in *The Lancet* in July found that combination therapy, introduced in 1996, extended the life expectancy of newly infected 20-year-olds by 13 years. They're now expected to live, on average, to age 69 (HIV-negative people in the industrialized world generally live to be 80).

The CDC expects HIV cases "to keep increasing over time as treatment prolongs the lives of infected people and new infections outpace deaths," said Richard Wolitski, acting director of the agency's Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention.

COLORADO HIV/AIDS FACTS AND FIGURES

Cumulative^a AIDS and HIV (not AIDS) in Colorado
Cases Reported Through June 30, 2008

Category	Persons Living with AIDS		Cumulative AIDS Cases		Cumulative HIV Cases	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Total	4458	100.0	9170	100.0	6440	100.0
Sex						
Male	3975	91.3	8374	91.3	5755	89.4
Female	483	8.7	796	8.7	685	10.6
Race						
White-not Hispanic	2794	62.7	6234	68.0	4420	68.6
Black-not Hispanic	675	15.1	1150	12.5	856	13.3
Hispanic	892	20.0	1629	17.8	982	15.2
Asian/Pacific Islander	39	0.9	52	0.6	50	0.8
American Indian/Alaska Native	39	0.9	71	0.8	51	0.8
Multiple Races-not Hispanic	19	0.4	34	0.4	14	0.2
Unknown	0	0.0	0	0.0	67	1.0
Age at Diagnosis (yrs)						
<13	7	0.2	31	0.3	34	0.5
13 - 14	3	0.1	7	0.1	4	0.1
15 - 19	19	0.4	33	0.4	150	2.3
20 - 24	153	3.4	267	2.9	891	13.8
25 - 29	527	11.8	1207	13.2	1450	22.5
30 - 34	930	20.9	2072	22.6	1433	22.3
35 - 39	1036	23.2	2120	23.1	1124	17.5
40 - 44	809	18.1	1515	16.5	676	10.5
45 - 49	500	11.2	967	10.5	349	5.4
50 - 54	266	6.0	469	5.1	172	2.7
55 - 59	122	2.7	259	2.8	82	1.3
60 - 64	52	1.2	126	1.4	43	0.7
≥65	34	0.8	97	1.1	32	0.5
Transmission Category						
Male						
Male-to-male sexual contact (MSM)	2813	72.7	6084	72.7	4090	71.1
Injection drug use (IDU)	313	7.2	600	7.2	357	6.2
MSM and IDU	397	11.6	974	11.6	563	9.8
High-risk heterosexual contact ^b	197	3.0	251	3.0	165	2.9
Other ^c	255	5.6	465	5.6	580	10.1
Subtotal	3975	100.0	8374	100.0	5755	100.0
Female						
Injection drug use (IDU)	124	25.7	233	29.3	170	24.8
High-risk heterosexual contact ^b	269	55.7	409	51.4	323	47.2
Other ^c	90	18.6	154	19.3	192	28.0
Subtotal	483	100.0	796	100.0	685	100.0

HIV RESOURCE PAGE

CLINICS AND/OR CLINIC REFERRAL:

Denver Health Medical Center
ID Clinic: 303.602.8755
STD Clinic: 303.436.7463
<http://www.denverhealth.org>

Howard Dental Center
303.863.0772
fax: 303.832.7823
<http://www.howarddental.org>

University of Colorado Hospital
720-848-0191
fax: 720.848.0192
www.uch.edu

AIDS Drug Assistance Program
303.692.2783
Project Manager: Thelma Craig 303-692-2274
Enrollment Coord.: Santos Rivera 303-692-2716
www.stdhivco.org

ARTS (Addiction Research and Treatment Services)
303.355.1014
<http://www.artstreatment.com>

Children's Hospital HIV Program
303.764.8233
<http://www.chipteam.org>

It Takes a Village
303.367.4747
info@ittakesavillagecolorado.org
for HIV positives. 2nd line : also resource for HIV+ African Americans and HIV+ incarcerated.

Servicios de la Raza
303.458.5851
<http://www.serviciosdelaraza.org>

Denver Infectious Disease Care
303.393.8050
www.didc.us

VETERAN'S SERVICES

The American Legion Department of Colorado
John McCartney, Department Service Officer
E-mail: aldso@coloradolegion.org

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES:

Mental Health Corp of Denver
303-504-1669
fax: 303.757.5245
carlclark@mhcd.com

Denver Health Outpatient Behavioral Health Sciences (OBHS)
303.36.5690
http://alcoholism.about.com/od/tx_co/qt/dhmc.htm

Cameron Gridley Psy D.
303.557.0824

Tony Miles PhD
303.282.4483

Keith Swain, counselor
720-252-9575

REGIONAL AIDS PROJECTS:

Boulder County AIDS Project (BCAP)
303.444.6121
fax: 303.444.0260
<http://www.bcap.org>

Northern Colorado AIDS Project (NCAP)
800.464.4611
fax: 970.4848.4497
<http://www.ncaids.org>

Western Colorado AIDS Project
(800.765.8594
fax: 970.243.5791
<http://www.westcap.info>

Colorado AIDS Project (CAP)
303.837.1501
fax: 303.837.0388
<http://www.coloradoaidsproject.org>

Southern Colorado AIDS Project
800.241.5468
fax: 719.578.8690
<http://www.s-cap.org>

The intention of the Resource section is to provide a concise practical HIV guide for the community to reference. If you have a resource, or have accessed an HIV resource that has been beneficial, please submit it to the SIN website, message section, so that it may be added.



SIN COLORADO

LIST OF UPCOMING EVENTS

October	November	December
Community Education Forum 10/14/08 6:00 pm (topic on p.13) Our Saviors Lutheran Church, 9th & Emerson St.	Community Education Forum 11/18/08 6:00 pm (topic on p.13) Our Saviors Lutheran Church, 9th & Emerson St.	Community Education Forum 12/16/08 6:00 pm (topic on p.13) Our Saviors Lutheran Church, 9th & Emerson St.
Hike:— Emerald Lake Rocky Mountain National Park 10/11/08	HIV Support Group 11/12/08 Rose Medical Center 4545 E. 9th Ave.	HIV Support Group 12/10/08 Rose Medical Center 4545 E. 9th Ave.
Halloween Pot Luck 10/31/08 6:00 pm see SIN calendar for details		Holiday Pot Luck 12/13/08 6:00 pm see SIN calendar for details
Recurring Events:		
SIN Happy Hour Thursday 10/16/08 6 -8 pm The Eagle (1475 36th St)	SIN Happy Hour Thursday 11/20/17/08 6 -8 pm The Compound (900 Broadway)	SIN Happy Hour Thursday 12/18/08 6 -8 pm To be determined
Sunday Coffee Talk/Brunch		
10/5/08 11 am – 1 pm Panera (13th and Grant St.)	11/2/08 11 am – 1 pm Panera (13th and Grant St.)	12/7/08 11 am – 1 pm Panera (13th and Grant St.)
10/19/08 11 am – 1 pm Hamburger Mary's (17 th & Washington St.)	11/16/08 11 am – 1 pm Hamburger Mary's (17 th & Washington St.)	12/21/08 11 am – 1 pm Hamburger Mary's (17 th & Washington St.)
10/19/08 11 am – 1 pm Aurora Brunch @ Apple Creek 10600 E. Iliff Ave.	11/8/08 11 am – 1 pm Aurora Brunch @ Apple Creek 10600 E. Iliff Ave.	12/13/08 11 am – 1 pm Aurora Brunch @ Apple Creek 10600 E. Iliff Ave.
Free SIN Yoga Tues. 4:30 pm (2670 S Gilpin) Wed. 5:15 pm (770 S Broadway) Sat. noon (770 S Broadway) Questions? Call Phil @ 303-358-3563	Free SIN Yoga Tues. 4:30 pm (2670 S Gilpin) Wed. 5:15 pm (770 S Broadway) Sat. noon (770 S Broadway) Questions? Call Phil @ 303-358-3563	Free SIN Yoga Tues. 4:30 pm (2670 S Gilpin) Wed. 5:15 pm (770 S Broadway) Sat. noon (770 S Broadway) Questions? Call Phil @ 303-358-3563

All events are subject to change. Check the online calendar to confirm times, dates and locations

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SINColorado/cal///group/SINColorado/?v=2&t=1214812800>

REMEMBRANCE: *CARL E. FRAZIER*

On Saturday, July 12, 2008 at approximately 3:40 a.m., Denver police responded to the 3100 block of W. 14th Avenue on a report of a shooting. Upon their arrival, officers located Carl E. Frazier dead of apparent gunshot wounds. Police have no suspects in the case. Carl was a active S.I.N. member and a contributor to this newsletter. He had many friends within our tribe and he will be greatly missed. His sister, Kathy, wrote the following remembrance of him.



Carl at his recent graduation ceremony from the University of Phoenix

A TENDER FAREWELL TO A BELOVED FRIEND FROM HIS SISTER.

Clean laundry in the dryer ready to fold and put away. A damp towel hanging over the shower curtain. Leftovers in the refrigerator. Shirts fresh from the dry cleaners slung over the couch to be put away. Opened mail on the desk regarding his classes that started in September. By all accounts, Carl was planning on coming home to his life. Never in his wildest dreams did he think that when he left to meet friends for a Friday night out on July 11th that he'd never be returning again. And never in a million years did I ever think I'd get a phone call notifying me that my little brother had been found shot to death.

My brother would be the first one to tell you that I was a much better "preacher" than I was someone who practiced the advice I always feel the need to give. I wish I had a penny for every time I've reminded Carl and other friends that "everything happens for a reason" and "God never gives you more than you can handle." I'd give anything to be able to believe this advice right now. Lately, I've found myself struggling to keep it together for my parents and trying to remind them that Carl would not want us to stop living but to celebrate his life and remember all of the good times we've

shared throughout his 41 short years. It's hard to do when there are no answers for why this terrible tragedy happened.

As time goes on and the investigation has still not been able to provide any answers but has actually led to more questions about how and why this murder happened, I have come to the realization that I need to try to find a way to accept Carl's passing. I am reminded of a quote by Abraham Lincoln, "And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years." Carl exemplified this message! There was no obstacle too great for him to tackle. I'm so very proud of everything he's done for every community in which he lived. It wasn't until his death that I realized how important it was for him to make sure all of his friends (old friends, and those he still hadn't met) felt like they had family and acceptance wherever they were. Carl was just my brother to me....I never thought of him as gay, or as a geek (ok...I may have called him a geek more than once; but I'm a geek, too, and proud of it!!).

Growing up in a small town, it was hard from him to be who he really was. How awesome that he never passed up on an opportunity to move to a new city and meet new people. How awesome that he never let HIV stop him from living his life to its fullest, and never stopped encouraging his friends to do the same. He always said life was too short not to have fun and explore the world.

I know in my heart that my little brother would not want his death to be for nothing – it's up to me, and all those people whose lives he's touched, to carry on his mission. Carl was all about friends and family...and Carl was all about fun. It's up to us to make sure we never leave someone sitting home alone, afraid to talk to anyone or afraid to face one of life's next challenges. I've learned so much about the strength and brotherhood within your community. Please be there for each other like Carl was there for you. And please help keep Carl's memory alive by inviting someone new to coffee, or to the next social, or by giving someone who looks like they're hurting a hug. Carl valued family and friends more than anything in life. Let's pay that forward for him.



Carl and Kathy on a recent trip to London.

—Kathy Anderson (Carl Frazier's sister)