Touch of Gray

August 6, 2013 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

I can't remember when I first noticed that gray hairs had started sprouting on my head, but I remember very well the day I first noticed a gray hair on my chest. I stared at it in the mirror in total disbelief for far too long, then I plucked it with great satisfaction.

Before I knew it, as far as my body hair was concerned, gray was the new black. Salt and pepper was no longer restricted to food. I was thrilled. More than thrilled, actually. When I was diagnosed with HIV in 1992 at the age of 22, I expected to die before 30. Gray hairs, and all that go with them, were things I never thought I would live to see.

Although I have lived with HIV for more than two decades, my journey with the virus has been relatively stable, at least compared with others. I'm grateful that's the case. The ride has been much bumpier for those who have lived with HIV for 25 years or more, especially those who were on the front lines of the early fight against the virus.

In his latest book, Perry Halkitis, PhD, MPH, calls these longtime survivors "the AIDS Generation." He's not only a researcher of the topic, he's also a member of the club. He joins Cesar Carrasco and Kim Hunter on our cover representing the AIDS Generation. They're battle-scarred and full of survival savvy. Click here to read more.

Larry Kramer, another member of the club, has been very busy lately. The author and playwright is enjoying artistic success with The Normal Heart, his Tony Award–winning play, being made into an HBO film. He's also putting the finishing touches on his book The American People, which tells the history of gay people in the United States.

So he was not amused when he received a letter from his health insurance company in 2012 informing him that he had to stop using his local retail pharmacy and start using their mail-order pharmacy for his medications. Of course, he was having none of it—and he was not alone. People with HIV/AIDS across the country are facing similar restrictions.

Mail order is fine for some people, but the complaints range from mixed-up meds, delayed deliveries, spoiled shipments and privacy concerns. Click here to read more.

Although he doesn't live with the virus, Paul Kawata is certainly a witness of the AIDS Generation.

He’s been in the fight against HIV since the early days of AIDS. Click here to read about his goals for the future of the National Minority AIDS Council, including the 2013 U.S. Conference on AIDS.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/EdLetter-Longterm-Survivors-24326-2290