Final Chapters

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NEW YORK The once-massive flagship that spawned the classic “face” of ACT UP (mad-as-hell Harvard Law grad forsaking suit-and-tie for boots-and-bandanna) is now home to only 15 to 20 regulars staging zaps to demand drug access for ground-zero sites like South Africa.

PARIS The City of Light still boasts a small but *très fort* chapter that maintains its longtime focus on global treatment activism while tending to homegrown issues like prevention among IV drug users.

SURVIVE AIDS ACT UP/Golden Gate changed its name two years ago to distinguish itself from the dissidents who “hijacked” ACT UP/San Francisco. The group is now seen by the HIV med establishment as a buttoned-down treatment advocacy group whose members, chuckles a source at *The Bay Area Reporter*, “haven’t been ’acting up’ for quite some time.”

EAST BAY This Berkeley/Oakland chapter focuses on the global AIDS movement, says cofounder John Iversen, but also supports local needle-exchange efforts -- when such a center in Oakland burned down recently, likely due to arson, the chapter forked over a thou from its tiny budget to help it reopen.

SAN FRANCISCO Early ACT UPs decided not to patent their name on the ideal that “anyone, anywhere” could found a chapter. “That was a serious mistake,” clucks Iversen now. To wit: the ragtag band who snatched the name of mouldering ACT UP/San Fran, reviving it as an HIV-doesn’t-cause-AIDS denialist group. At first, the renegades (whose $1.6 million annual proceeds from its “pot club” are currently under legal scrutiny) caused “confusion, alienation and misinformation” -- until its pill-tossing attack on Project Inform head Martin Delaney earned it a restraining order that has left it the laughingstock of AIDS activism’s mainstream.

ATLANTA Claiming on its website that “the old [ACT UP/Atlanta] abdicated its responsibilities a long time ago,” another group of hijackers last year directed this chapter’s focus, says gay paper *The Southern Voice*, more to “animal-rights PETA things than AIDS things,” nabbing some recent

press attention for harassing the head of the Yerkes Primates Center at Emory University.

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