Mailbox

June 1, 2001 By Staff

Pray Tell

As a novice Buddhist I know it's important to show my gratitude, so I am writing to thank *POZ*'s RonniLyn Pustil for the profiles on religion ("Choosing Our Religion," February/March 2001). Few AIDS organizations pay attention to the spiritual needs of people with HIV. It brings me joy to read that my fellow survivors are not forsaking their faith, even in those cases where their chosen religion doesn't allow room for them. Kudos also to Diane Goldner ("Zen at Work"). I am proof that Zen practice (or its equivalent) can have a profound effect on one's well-being. Diagnosed six years ago, I now have 780 T cells and an undetectable viral load. HAART plays a role, but my daily meditations and exercise routine, along with whatever vitamin and nutritional supplements I can get here in prison, are just as important in keeping me living, not just alive. I learn these things from *POZ*.

-- Ron Wilson, Northeast Correctional Complex, Mountain City, Tennessee

Thank you for the inspirational interview with Paula Peterson ("Choosing Our Religion," February/March 2001). Blessings like this article, along with minimizing stress, eating fresh fruit and vegetables and getting enough sleep, have helped me avoid meds (and viral resistance) for the 14 years since I was diagnosed with HIV.

-- Jimi Sage, Bremerton, Washington

We Asked For It

Brad Peebles solicited success stories, and I have one (Publisher's Letter, February/March 2001). I did the whole bar-bathhouse-bookstore-phone-sex scene for my entire adult life -- until three and a half years ago, when I met a man on a phone-sex line and my life was changed forever. From the start we talked for hours, sharing our deepest thoughts, hopes and dreams instead of sex. Soon we moved in together. A year ago we learned that he has AIDS and that I am HIV positive. We don't know who gave it to whom, and it doesn't matter. We love each other more and more each day and will be there for each other through everything. *POZ* helps.

-- Todd La Flame, Via the Internet

As an HIV positive gay man diagnosed 13 years ago, I agree with Peebles: Casual sex is a not-very-satisfying substitute for intimacy, and I know all too well the emptiness that exists when intimacy is absent. The need for intimacy doesn't fade with age -- it gets more urgent. My fondest hope is that we will each find a loving, enduring relationship that can carry us through the rest of our lives.

I can think of nothing more satisfying and fulfilling.

-- Dan McLean, Houston

Peebles hit the nail on the head, as *POZ* does 99.9 percent of the time. I look forward to every issue and read each one many times. *POZ* was the first AIDS magazine I got when I was diagnosed, and it made me feel that I was not alone.

-- Bob Skinner, Via the Internet

Brain Food

I've had AIDS Dementia Complex (ADC) twice, so I was gratified to read Bob Lederer's "The Brain Drain" (February/March 2001). When I was diagnosed with encephalopathy and encephalitis in 1994, my doctor said my symptoms were just part of these conditions. After I'd lost nearly all my mental and motor abilities, a neurologist told me to get my affairs in order -- there was nothing that could be done for me. I finally found another neurologist, Elyse Singer, MD. Her first words to me over the phone were "I'm not going to let you die." She put me on 2,000 milliliters of AZT per day and made sure I had the support I needed to take my meds and get to my many medical appointments.

People consider dementia an end-stage condition. As a result, many rights and responsibilities are taken from those of us with the disease. More research is needed to learn how to repair the damage to the brain and give ADC survivors a chance to return productively to society.

-- Michael Sausser, Culver City, California

Props to *POZ*

I came across *POZ* after learning about a year ago that I have AIDS. I had 2 T cells and could hardly breathe from PCP [Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia]. I was glad to find a magazine that gives so much information and encouragement -- all the more necessary because so many doctors have become nonchalant in the face of protease inhibitors and other meds, forgetting that there is still no cure and we have a real fight to wage.

-- Michelle, New York City

Corrections: POZ *regrets that there were numerous editing errors in April's "Biz of AIDS" issue:*

In the interview with Bruce Walker, MD, ("LTNP? UB2") Tomas Hanke, MD, was mistakenly credited as a co-inventor of the Remune vaccine. In fact, Hanke was a member of the team that invented a different experimental vaccine, DNA-MVA. Walker was also misquoted as saying: "We have to be cautious not to measure therapeutic vaccines by HAART." Walker actually cautioned against measuring the "effectiveness" of therapeutic vaccines "by the same criteria" as those used in studies of HAART.

In "AAT Ease," it was misstated that blood could be "turned into" an HIV-fighting substance. In fact, blood could be turned into "a source of" such a substance. In the same item, the statement

that “most people’s bodies do not contain the protein” should read “do contain” the protein.

In “Living Large on Small Change,” the amount of food stamps Waver Lynn Franklin receives was mistakenly reported as $259 per month. Franklin receives $59 each month in food stamps; the total amount she spends on food each month is $182, not, as printed, $382; and her total monthly income is $671, not $871.

Finally, a guide to financial services for Chicago HIVers is available from the Test Positive Aware Network, at 773.404.8726, not the AIDS Foundation of Chicago.

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