Mailbox

January 1, 1997

Grillo Talk

Thanks for the cover story on Brian Grillo of Extra Fancy ("It's a Goddamn Beautiful World," *POZ* No. 17). Grillo reminds me of a gay male version of Courtney Love, the lead singer of Hole. Both of these frontpersons have lyrics that deal with subjects such as the desire to debase ourselves with drugs, destructive relationships and unsafe sex.

It annoys me that certain record companies are reluctant to sign Extra Fancy because of Grillo's HIV status. Yet how many of these same record labels have signed bands that have members who are addicted to heroin? Apparently heroin is hip; HIV is not.

Christopher Krakora,
West Chester, Pennsylvania

Body Worship

I find the editorial comment attached to the quote from J. Daniel Stricker to be snide and counterproductive ("Say What," *POZ* No. 17). Stricker's comment is not "ignorant stigmatization," but simple observation of fact. *POZ* should not use its editorial soapbox to ridicule those who state unsavory truths about gay life: In this case, the unabating worship of physical beauty by gay males.

James M. Donovan
New Orleans, Louisiana

***Editors**: The "ignorant stigmatization" referred to Stricker's assumption that people with Kaposi's sarcoma* automatically *must cover their lesions.*

Drug-Free and Happy to Be

I have been receiving *POZ* for several years and give it generally high marks for its coverage of the lives of PWAs. The down side is that I have come to feel that I know the people writing for the magazine. I was so sorry to read of Kiki Mason's passing; his columns were wonderful.

The one area that I don't think *POZ* has represented sufficiently is the number of long-term suvivors who eschew treatment with antiretrovirals, including myself. Our community is literally medicating itself to death, a consequence of personal despair, hopelessness and the larger background of a pill-popping society.

Virtually all of the long-term survivors I know do not treat their HIV. There has to be something in this. Thanks again for a generally great magazine.

David McNabb
via the Internet

Finding the Music

Enjoyed your October issue (*POZ* No. 17), especially the rundown on the small-label CDs being released by AIDS-friendly artists. One question: Where can we buy them? Unless they are distributed by major labels, the independent releases can be hard to track down. I have found some David Friedman's Midder Music CDs at Tower Records, but if you try to special order, you'd better plan on livng a long time.

I've followed *POZ* since the beginning, and Kiki Mason's death, like the loss of a great friend, hurts. I wish I had known him. I've also followed the editorials, guidance and medical reports of Sean Strub; and Sean, please know you have the best wishes and karma vibes coming at you from the hinterlands.

Thom Heinrichs
Long Beach, California

***Editors**: Tower Records can be reached at 800.275.8693 from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. EST.*

Blood on Whose Hands?

At the International AIDS Conference in Vancouver this past summer, activists from ACT UP/San Francisco took the drastic step of assaulting the corporate-sponsored AZT promoters, smearing them with fake blood and overturning the conference tables.

Neither the quick approval of the *New York Native* nor the just-as-quick disapproval of *POZ* (Gazette, *POZ* No. 17) did full justice to this desperate action, which was almost completely blacked out by the mainstream media.

The Vancouver demonstration was an action that deserves condemnation, but only by people waging a non-violent struggle against AZT.

I would apologize to Margaret Fischl, Paul Volberding and anyone else who was assaulted, but I must insist: No more business as usual in the world of AIDS, and no more activist rituals as usual either.

Felton Davis
New York, New York

Disillusioned Subscriber

I am a Muslim, African (in) amerika *[sic]*, sentenced to life in prison, heterosexual and, yes, HIV positive. I have been receiving *POZ* for at least six months now for free, and I want to thank you for all of the information that was and is useful to me in my struggle to stay healthy.

However, there are many things in *POZ* that offend my sensitivities, and have caused me to cancel my subscription. It seems to me that your publication is more interested in advancing the homosexual agenda than it is with AIDS.

Rasheed Mujahid
Trenton, New Jersey

Cheap Shot

I found your Gazette article "Pitiless Piety" (*POZ* No. 17) both amusing and sadly predictable. I am also a PWA who has to swallow many horse pills each day, but I cannot imagine how yet another thing in my mouth would make the whole mess go down easier, especially communion wafers.

Instead of exploring why Mr. Maccianti's lover would want to take his meds in this unorthodox and seemingly unpalatable fasion (perhaps he actually *believed* that those little wafers could heal his body in ways that the drugs couldn't), you jumped on the church for defending what it deems holy and sacred. I wonder if your ire would have been the same if he had wanted to use ritual objects of some trendy P.C. "spirituality," say Native American or Buddhist.

I would love it if people with AIDS were always right, and everyone else was wrong, but it's not that simple. I don't feel entitled just because I have HIV.

Stephen de Francesco
New York, New York

***Editors**: The Catholic Church does not deem an unconsecrated wafer "holy and sacred."*

Next Month

The excerpt from Tarnished Sequins (POZ *No. 18), about AIDS Project Los Angeles' Friends of Fashion event honoring Calvin Klein, has generated considerable reader comment. Look for an extensive discussion of the issues raised by this excerpt in the February 1997 issue of* POZ.

Correction

In POZ *No. 15, the 1996* POZ *Givers Guide mistakenly listed Michael Seltzer, former executive director of Funders Concerned About AIDS in New York City, as a member of the Givers Guide*

panel. He was not. POZ *regrets the error.*

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