Mailbox

April 1, 2004 By Staff

TONY'S ANGELS

What struck me about the Tony Kushner interview ["Born Again," December 2003] regarding his Angels in America script was Mr. Kushner's notion of the gay community's role early on in the epidemic. In the midst of being told that AIDS was its comeuppance, this community had to consider its collective identity while aspiring to belong to the human family. Hopefully the film will reach into the blurred consciousness of the gay community and the masses, reminding everyone that AIDS is more scathingly cunning and ruthless than ever.

--John Kelly
New York City

POZ's December cover line "Will the second coming of *Angels in America* make the country care about AIDS again?" prompted me to take an informal poll. The consensus was that the country would view the film as a history lesson and soon forget about it, since *Angels* represents AIDS as it used to be. Respondents seemed to say, "Hope so, but don't know." Can a television movie change how people feel, think or react to an issue? Absolutely, as long as we don't forget the issue after we hit the off button on the remote control.

--Michael Chainey
Provincetown, Massachusetts

THE BUG STOPS HERE

Bill Krutch and the rest of King County's MSM HIV/AIDS Task Force have missed the boat big time with their Seattle Manifesto ["Editor's Letter," December 2003], a prevention call to arms that holds gay and bisexual men accountable for their bedroom behaviors. The manifesto boils down to this: If you are HIV negative, do whatever you want. But if you seroconvert, blame an HIVer, because they've perpetrated an "act of violence" against you. HIV negative people have the most to lose, so *they* need to be responsible for protecting themselves. King County should focus on educating HIV negative men about the unpleasantness of HIV instead of creating an "us vs. them" dynamic between positive and negative gay men.

--Philip Stangel
Seattle

I was surprised and disappointed by your Editor's Letter. I don't view the manifesto as moralizing at all; I find it a refreshing piece of common sense. At the risk of sounding like a Bible-beating

Republican (which I am not), we *do* have a responsibility to those with whom we share this world. Making sure you keep yourself and others safe from acquiring HIV is a no-brainer. I'm surprised anyone even had to write it down.

--Anthony H.
Via the Internet

There is nothing inherently inflammatory in the language of the Seattle Manifesto. Asking HIVers for accountability and responsibility under all circumstances is a moral high ground. I applaud the Seattle Manifesto. It simply calls a spade a spade.

--Claudia Debus
Oakland, California

DRUG BUST

Addiction is a serious issue in the HIV community ["Knowing When to Stop," December 2003]. We take exception, however, with your contention that methadone treatment is controversial. Every reputable medical and drug treatment organization agrees that medication-assisted treatment, including methadone, LAAM and the new FDA-approved medication, buprenorphine, is the best treatment option for chronic opioid addiction. You did a huge disservice to opiate-addicted readers by omitting safe, effective medical options for treating addiction.

--Chris Kelly
Director, Advocates for Recovery through Medicine
Washington, DC

POZ *Responds:* *We regret our vague use of the word "controversial"; writer Tim Murphy clarifies that the placement of methadone clinics has caused controversy in some communities. Medical experts have confirmed methadone as a safe, legal and effective treatment for opioid addiction—not as the best among various treatment options, which include total abstinence from all addictive agents, as well as harm reduction and moderation management. That is for each person to decide for him- or herself. Visit www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov or www.harmreduction.org for more methadone insight.*

CUTTING CORNERS

I would like to request that your magazine refuse to accept advertisements from Abbott until the drug company rolls back its recent price increase on Norvir. If Abbott needs to gouge the AIDS community to cover research and development costs for the drug, it shouldn't be spending money on full-page, full-color glossy magazine ads.

--Harry C.S. Wingfield
Birmingham, Alabama

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