Mailbox

October 1, 2004 By Staff

THAI'D TOGETHER

I laud *POZ* for bringing attention to Thailand's underserved MSM [men who have sex with men] population in "Lost in Paradise" [July 2004], however, I would also have liked an examination of how Asian and Pacific Islanders (A & PIs) in the U.S. experience the epidemic. Just as MSMs are a hidden and ignored population in Thailand, so are A & PI equivalents in the U.S. The article suggests that Thailand's people and government need to be more open about homosexuality and adopt a gay identity to combat HIV and stigma. But we need to ask whether outing gay men and HIV status in the U.S. has actually made our society more open. Or if it has created another closet for men who fear coming out because AIDS stigma and homophobia are intertwined—and because emphasis is placed on individual responsibility for the epidemic rather than structural inequities. This helps create underground—or down-low—communities that are more difficult to reach for HIV prevention.

--Jih-Fei Cheng
Asian & Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDSNew York City

DARN LOUD

I went to Howard University, and there are a lot of down-low brothers on that campus, as you discussed in "His Diff'rent World" [July 2004]. I dislike men who are DL. What is the point? You cannot be true to the people you are with, and it is unfair to both men and women who do not know what they are getting into. And these men are also giving us gay people a bad name, because some people think we cause HIV.

Society and the church cause these men to be afraid of what may happen to their career or social standing if they come out as gay. But support groups about these issues are very limited on black college campuses. I encourage students to start groups to give gay men a place to go for comfort and to let them know that they are not alone. I also tell my friends to be themselves and stop trying to please everyone.

--Phillip Huffins
Durham, North Carolina

HEP CAT

I was featured in "C No Evil" [July 2004] because as an HIVer coinfected with hep C, I have had unusual success with the hep C treatment. As reported in the article, I'd lost my appetite from the treatments, but since then, my appetite has come back, and I have put on about 15 pounds. It

feels good to have my stomach hurt because I'm full rather than because of hunger. And I've had a follow-up viral-load test. It's been eight months since my last shot of pegylated-inferon, and I am still undetectable. The medical people say that I am cured. But I just say I am hep-free and healthy.

--Bill Ballard
Yonkers, New York

EASEL DOES IT

Like Angelo Ricco, featured in "The Art of Healing" [July 2004], I put my HIV-related art into a show at the Broadway House residential AIDS-services facility in Newark (NJ). Participating in the show made me appreciate life and its beauty despite the stigma attached to HIV. I want to encourage more HIVers to leave their mark through art, which can also serve as a personal history that will contribute to a better understanding of HIV. The medications to treat physical symptoms are not enough. We need exhibits like the Broadway House's as a positive and side-effect-free treatment to the challenges that every person with HIV faces.

--Leilani Capuli
Belleville, New Jersey

SURVIVOR ALL-STARS

I have noticed that *POZ* has evolved into a magazine that's more about prevention than the actual plight of long-term survivors. In our society, HIVer issues seem to have taken a backseat over the past several years to still woefully inadequate prevention activities. We now have waiting lists to enroll in ADAP. And in Louisiana our federally funded food-assistance program gives little thought to the special needs of the immuno-compromised. I hope that *POZ* has not forgotten its activist mission as a magazine for HIV positive people and will again focus on these core issues of our long-term survival. Or should we just give up?

--Norman J. Tauzin
Lafayette, Louisiana

POZ *responds: What has changed is not our activist mission but AIDS politics—not least Bush's crusade against condom sense and HIV science, partly in the name of "Prevention for Positives." Don't give up on us, Norman. Vote pro-PWA!*

Send letters, including name, address and daytime phone number to: The Editor, POZ, *One Little West 12th St., 6th Floor, New York City, New York 10014; or e-mail us at: letters@poz.com. Printed letters may be edited as well as posted on the* POZ *website, www.poz.com. We regret that we cannot answer all mail.*

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.