Mailbox

August 1, 2005

“C" Here

When Tim Murphy interviewed me for “Hep Cat” [May 2005], it was apparent he wanted to dig up dirt on the story’s subject, Hep C activist Jules Levin. He used my quotes to convey the opposite of my intended meaning. It is inappropriate for AIDS activists to publicly lash out at each other. Portraying drug users as pitted against gay men is irresponsible. Put the energy you spend propagating dissension among HIVers into exposing the AIDS genocide promoted by the U.S. government.

—Beri Hull Washington, DC

Tim Murphy responds: I didn’t twist Beri Hull’s words. I used a portion of my interview with her to demonstrate a tension in the HIV community.

Status Symbol

I was deeply touched by Haitian AIDS activist Esther Boucicault Stanislas [“The Brave Lady of Haiti,” May 2005]. While doing AIDS research in Haiti, I found that people didn’t want to be called HIV positive because of the prejudice. Some husbands don’t even want their wives to know. That Esther stood up and publicly acknowledged her status is very touching. I am sure she inspired others to do the same.

—Ketty H. Rey, PhD Edgemere, New York

Bugged Out

My entire adult life has been consumed by HIV activism, but after reading Walter Armstrong’s Editor’s Letter [May 2005], I thought to myself: “Fuck it.” He writes, “But we’d rather risk getting carried away and infected one crazy night than live our days frozen in fear.” Does he really believe those are the only two options? He also says, “Being negative is nothing to be proud of.” Really? I thought everyone who stays negative should be proud. If there is anything that would make me feel I haven’t wasted my life working long hours as an activist for little pay, it’s that people want to stay negative.

—Anonymous via the Internet

Walter Armstrong responds: I stand corrected. Fear and failure aren't the only options. With hard work and luck, you can stay negative, which is its own reward.

In "Big, Bad Media Bugout"[May 2005], writer Jeff Hoover includes author Charles Kaiser's quote, "A person who is HIV positive has no more right to unprotected sex with someone else than he has the right to put a bullet through that person's head." If a neggie partner decides to enjoy unprotected pleasure with his/her positive lover, is that equal to a bullet in the head? If the positive partner is undetectable, isn't he/she less likely to transmit the virus?

—Rodger Shaheen Tennessee Colony, Texas

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