Mailbox

December 1, 2004

Down, Not Out

Black people in America are in a major state of denial [“The Demons Behind the Down Low,” September 2004]. Why are we pretending that a man having sex with other men [MSM] is something new to us? What’s new is that now you risk infecting a loved one with HIV. We need to come to terms with men having sex with men—so they will tell their female partners and others—and we need to realize that being an MSM does not make you less of a man. Also, we must face the role of crack cocaine in spreading HIV and the role of men coming out of prison undiagnosed. When it comes to HIV in the black community, we have to be up-front about who we are and what we do.

Tony Wafford
Los Angeles

ATAC Mode

Thank you for exposing readers to the AIDS Treatment Action Coalition [ATAC]—one of the most significant new national HIV organizations [“Hello, Our Name Is ATAC,” September 2004]. Never before has communication between Washington, DC, health experts and rural activists been encouraged so enthusiastically. For those who want to demand that this country step up to its HIV responsibilities, ATAC provides the best opportunity to feel connected and useful.

Gary Karch
Niles, Michigan

You state that ATAC began with a few activists who wanted to consolidate under a national umbrella similar to the European AIDS Treatment Group. It was never the goal to create a national board capable of representing all AIDS activists. We wanted to expand the activist pool, ensure an easy way to join it, provide a better means of communication and gain more community control over meetings with pharma. We encourage anyone who is interested to join us.

Bob Munk
Arroyo Seco, New Mexico

The Ronald

I was in high school when then President Ronald Reagan was not talking about AIDS [“Bedtime for Bonzo,” September 2004]. Although I didn’t pay much attention to Reagan, I was led to believe

that all Republicans hated me because I was homosexual. But now I wonder: Maybe Reagan just didn't have enough facts to say anything about AIDS at first. Living with HIV, I know all too well that treatments come and go, and what seems like a cure one day, turns out to be useless the next. As president, I wouldn't have thrown the country into a panic if I didn't feel confident about my information.

Brian Dî Crocco
San Francisco

PI in the Sky

Although the new protease inhibitor (PI) tipranavir may not be very effective in double-protease combos because it lowers PI levels, I want to clarify that research results so far do look very promising for multidrug-resistant HIVers ["Trouble for Tipranavir," September 2004]. I am anxiously awaiting Fuzeon and tipranavir data and hope they will be a good combination. I am also advocating for companies to perform interaction studies to look at their new drugs in combination with tipranavir and Fuzeon.

Nelson Vergel
Director, Program for Wellness Restoration
Houston

I've Got You, Babies

If Americans need to see Cher, replete with leather pants and a feather boa, strutting across a field of fly-ridden toddlers to make them aware of AIDS in Africa, I'm all for it ["Kissing Babies," September 2004]. And I don't think *POZ* should let some rigid liberalism block a potentially great publicity tool. We live in a consumerist country that revolves around pop icons, and AIDS activism will get a lot further if it uses that system to its advantage.

Josh Ward
Durham, North Carolina

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