



# Mailbox

December 1, 2006

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## **POSITIVE CASHFLOW**

Thank you for your feature article “The Money Pit” (September 2006), which helps readers keep financially healthy while living with HIV. After seeing the story, several readers contacted me here at the National Working Positive Coalition, where we teach AIDS service organizations (ASOs) how to educate consumers. Our mission: to help people living with HIV make informed choices as they try to boost their income and pursue life-affirming goals. Many people have questions regarding the impact of earned income on public and private benefits. They are surprised at how many options they have for returning to work (or entering the workforce for the first time) with little modification to their financial safety nets. In short, it is possible to increase income, save for the future and contribute to the community while keeping those hard-won protections intact.

**MICHAEL J. VAN ESSEN, LOS ANGELES**

## **DON'T METH WITH ME**

I hope to keep seeing coverage in POZ about crystal meth and HIV positive men. In your September 2006 article about hepatitis C (“C’ Ya in Bed”), one expert you quoted mentioned the connection between meth, HIV and hep C, yet nobody is asking the hard questions about the drug. Are doctors giving serious consideration to why their positive patients use meth in the first place? Maybe it’s because many are suffering from depression, especially those who are on disability and can’t work. Yes, meth makes you feel invincible and gives you the energy to feel like you can have sex all day and all night. Meth is the Superman drug. But it also creates dark and chaotic thoughts and actions. I had invited it into my life and was able to get out before it unraveled too far. I have watched too many men be eaten alive by this drug.

**DALLAS, VANCOUVER, BC**

## **AFRICAN QUEEN**

I am an activist, advocate and author of *Unchartered Waters*, a book on HIV/AIDS and women in sub-Saharan Africa. Stigma—and the fear of it—are things that are battled every day in Africa. That’s why I think POZ’s editor in chief, Regan Hofmann, is a woman of courage for disclosing her status so publicly in your magazine. The fight against AIDS will not be won until people can deal with it openly. It is especially encouraging to see a woman leading the fight because we believe that in Africa, AIDS has a woman’s face. In our fight, we need women on the front lines.

**MARJORIE MANDULI-BOLZ,  
BONN, GERMANY**

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