Mailbox

October 1, 2005

Y'All Wrong

Kai Wright's "Southern Discomfort" [July 2005] wrongly stated, "Alabama is the only state in the country that segregates positive prisoners." I am a positive prisoner living in one of two all-HIV dorms with about 700 other HIVers in South Carolina.

At the central classification prison that all inmates pass through for up to 30 days, HIVers are put in solitary confinement. For me, that experience brought to mind being on death row for the crime of being HIV positive.

Gary Hinson
Broad River Correctional Institution, Columbia, South Carolina

POZ responds: According to the ACLU Prison Project, Alabama is the only state that segregates positive prisoners. However, many prisons operate under secrecy, and Broad River would neither confirm nor deny the segregation. We have alerted the ACLU about the situation.

"Southern Discomfort" does a disservice to HIVers in the South. The devastation of HIV is a critical issue, but your article may cause misperceptions. It is not true that North Carolina receives half as much federal ADAP funding as Connecticut. Last year, North Carolina received $14.3 million, while Connecticut received $11.3 million. The article also disparagingly refers to the so-called CAEAR Coalition (Communities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief). At CAEAR we have been actively advocating in Washington, D.C., to support HIVers since 1991. These inaccuracies will only fuel regional discord at a time that demands unity.

Patricia Bass
Chair, CAEAR Philadelphia

POZ responds: The article should have read that when comparing Ryan White's primary funding mechanisms, not including ADAP, Connecticut received more funding. The phrase "so-called" was intended to convey "the group known as." POZ regrets the error.

Sweet 'N' High

Like River Huston, I'm a sugarholic ["Forbidden Fruit," July 2005]. I just finished two weeks on the South Beach Diet Phase 1—no sugar, no fruit, no booze. I've already lost six pounds. I've also lost my taste for sugar. Now, in Phase 2, the diet allows fruit. Yesterday's peach gave me a better sugar orgasm than peanut M&Ms ever did. This morning's nectarine was like the first coke I ever

snorted. When you're busy stuffing your face with table sugar, I guess you just can't appreciate what Mama Nature already created.

Greg Haynes
Huntington Woods, Michigan

Like River Huston, I used to go on sugar binges. Friends would send me clippings about Krispy Kreme's stock rising and ask if I was responsible. I'm relieved to discover from River's column that I may have had help. I've managed to almost completely cut sugar out of my diet and lost most of the weight. But I don't think I've gotten through the "I'm entitled because I'm dying" thing completely. Actually, I didn't understand that motivation until I read it in the column. Thank you for helping me understand myself a little better.

James Davis
East Hollywood, California

Tropical Solution

In "On the March!" [July 2005], HIVer Joe Rattner implies that Hawaii is Mormon country filled with rampant drug use and poor HIV care. This is not true. I've lived in Honolulu with HIV for 23 years and have received excellent care. Plus, I've never even met a Mormon, much less one on drugs. Many people in the medical field and volunteers for local nonprofits are furious that he stated they provide poor care. He has unfairly stigmatized these islands. If he is so displeased, he should pack his bags and go back to New York City.

Gene Stocks
Honolulu

Write of Way

I was disappointed with the fact that nearly all the winners in the "Hot Type" writing contest were journalists or other writing professionals [July 2005]. I'm sure there were really great submissions by regular positive people that showed true feeling but went unnoticed. You should dedicate room in a future issue for amateurs like myself, even if it's not for a contest. I'm sure my poem "Saving Private Ryan" is powerful enough to share with others who can relate to my situation.

Anonymous via the Internet

Bottleneck

Your suggestion to use pill baggies for meds when traveling is great ["Zip 'Em Up," July 2005], but readers should find out about the laws in the state they are visiting before leaving home without their prescription bottles. I'm a social worker in Texas, and I have clients who have been arrested and thrown in jail for the night for not having the bottle.

Allison Vogt
Houston

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