Letters to the Editor—November 1997

November 1, 1997

PWA-Prisoner with Attitude

As a prisoner living with AIDS, I must tell you that the $18,110 federal grant spent on an AIDS education video for city jails is ridiculous (“Jail Bait,” August 1997). Most of these prisoners can’t read or write and don’t give a shit about quality-of-life issues or prevention. The video is a waste of taxpayers’ money. These funds should go to housing and poverty-which create environments where AIDS runs rampant.

-Ralph Mendez
Great Meadow Correction Facility
Comstock, NY

Stress of KS

Your article on KS was very comforting (“Out Out Damned Spot,” August 1997). When I was first diagnosed with KS, I shut down and chose isolation. After some time I decided to “get back out there.” After five come-ones followed by five rejections when my potential suitors (two of whom were positive) found out about the KS, I went back into my shell.

I’ve tried most of the therapies Scott Williams mentions (and have scars, in addition to KS, to prove it). Protease inhibitors have worked the best so far, yet the marks are still there, and I just don’t look in the mirror. I’m at the point where I can go to the beach or pool and brave the looks an comments, but I haven’t been touched in way too long.

-Name withheld

NAC Attack

Judy Shabert’s article on low glutathione levels (“Those Darned Free Radicals,” August 1997) presents good information on the benefits of n-acetyl-cystein (NAC) in immune-compromised individuals.

However, PWAs who are undergoing chemotherapy for cancers, such as KS, should be cautioned about using NAC at the level recommended (2,000-3,000 mg per day). According to the

Herzenbergs, the leading researchers in the NAC study referred to in the article, NAC is the specific antidote for at least four cytotoxic drugs. Therefore, taking large doses of NAC could neutralize the cytotoxin, rendering it ineffective.

-Jeanette Dunn, RN, EdD
Kirkland, Washington

Tommy Gun

Sooner or later, without treatment, Tommy will feel the effects of the virus ("Tommy Morrison Wants You to Believe,' July 1997). I feel sorry for all the children he's lectured to. In some school systems it is difficult enough to get permission to educate kids about how to practice safe sex beyond abstinence, let alone having to worry that there's someone out there telling them they don't have to.

-Karel Sloane
New Haven, Connecticut

Morrison's perspective is one of the sanest views of HIV I have read in any of the popular magazines. I, too, have no idea why a perfectly healthy person would begin taking a pharmaceutical drug like AZT.

Somebody once said: "He died from too many doctors." I think we could say this today about allopathic medicine's response to a syndrome actually caused by recreational and pharmaceutical drug abuse.

-Jennifer Hill
Seattle, Washington

Coburn Conundrum

We read with great interest your interview with Rep. Tom Coburn ("Tom Coburn Talks AIDS," July 1997), in which he states that gay AIDS groups oppose his bill because they fear it will result in their losing money that the bill would redirect to women and "minorities" affected by AIDS. Wrong, Mr. Coburn! This is a distortion of your bill and a divide-and-conquer strategy.

We state here our unequivocal opposition to the Coburn bill and our support for the Pelosi/Morella alternative bill as part of a strategy to defeat Coburn.

On behalf of the thousands of women, children, youth and families we serve, our organization has committed all the resources at our disposal to see the Coburn bill go down in flames..

-Mildred Williamson and David C. Harvey
AIDS Policy Center
Washington, DC

Love Thy Neighbor

I support the position you took in your July editorial ("SOS"). I, too, am concerned about the "I've got mine and I don't care about anybody else" attitude that has become prevalent in American society, even among some people with AIDS who have access to adequate health care and treatment and who don't care about those who are less fortunate. Action is needed to better life for all of us.

-Howard J. McDonough
No address

Smooth Palms

I disagree with Betty Dodson ("Masturbation Manifesto," July 1997) that masturbation is something to be celebrated. Masturbation is an empty and selfish activity. It allows us to remove ourselves from the real passion and pressures of life, numbs us to our loneliness and encourages our isolation and self-centeredness.

Simple self-restraint in all its forms is the hallmark of a healthy society and maturity. If our body needs release from time to time, we have erotic dreams. We can live quite healthily without sex or masturbation. Encouraging the act of masturbation as a solution to our problems with sex is just dodging the real issues.

Masturbation is natural, but it is something that we are meant to grow out of as we enter society and maturity, and learn to put our fate in the hands of others. Sex, all too often, has nothing to do with love or true intimacy. It is mutual masturbation, nothing more.

It is little wonder that AIDS continues to spread; we are so habituated to putting our own pleasures before the needs of society.

-Paul Bjerk
St. Paul, Minnesota

Decker the Halls

I applaud Shawn Decker ("The Fleecing of Oprah," June 1997) for renewing my faith that someone special is out there for me. As a straight, HIV positive female, I have dating challenges, but I am sure that when I hook up with the right person, he will be capable of loving me.

I have been rejected many times. I have felt the anger, fear and the emotional roller coaster that

accompanies living iwth HIV. I have moved forward. I now want a fulfilling personal life.

-Bobbi Lee Wills
Nashville, Tennessee

Stop the Insanity!

The truest thing Rodger McFarlane says (“Painful Truths,” June 1997) is that *Sexual Ecology* belongs on the shelf next to *And the Band Played On*. Rotello shares Randy Shilts’ sensationalism, his penchant for selective misrepresentation of science, his eagerness to have sex police stop gay multipartner sex, and the poverty of imagination about creating a gay culture that is not based on either compulsory marriage or “compulsive promiscuity.”

Gay men who say that “gay men must be stopped from having sex” easily attain mainstream publishers and multimedia attention, so Rotello’s visibility is not difficult to understand. However, it is regrettable that *POZ* provides a platform for the propogration of ignorance from Rotello, Kramer, Sullivan and their fans.

-Stephen O. Murray, PhD
San Francisco, California

Corrections

In “Examined Lives” (September 1997), the name of AIDS peer counselor Tracie Etheredge is spelled incorrectly on page 75.

In the profile of Vimal Jairath, “Poet’s Corner” (October 1997), was mistakenly credited to Henry Goldblatt; Anderson Jones wrote the article.

In “Expended Access” (October 1997), a note was omitted that credits the People with AIDS Health Group and ACT UP/Golden Gate for their research assistance.

POZ regrets these errors.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/letters-12944-4858