I’ll Stand by You

Our cover subject, Ed Barron, is a long-term survivor of not only HIV, but also many other conditions.

May 18, 2020 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

I am writing this letter from my living room in New Jersey. This is far from the first time that I’ve worked from home. However, it is the first editor’s letter I’ve written from home. Yet another sign of the times.

I hope that by the time most of you read this note, the stay-at-home orders to fight COVID-19 will have been lifted. I hope that we can all return to a somewhat normal life in the near future. I hope that we all get to see the other side of the pandemic.

For now, those are only hopes—and I have to confess that I do not really believe they will come true by the time you read this letter. Nonetheless, I am clinging to those hopes. I am learning to balance my optimism with reality, one day at a time.

I’ve done it before. When I tested HIV positive in 1992, I had to learn how to have hope for the future despite staring at the reality of my life in New York. That was four years before effective treatment. The retrovirus was killing people all around me. A sense of foreboding was omnipresent.

Of course, I’m not alone in having this déjà vu. Long-term survivors of HIV are well versed in this experience. Although that knowledge can be helpful in the era of COVID-19, it is not a silver bullet. This new coronavirus has its own challenges.

Our cover subject, Ed Barron, is a long-term survivor of not only HIV, but also many other conditions. He has successfully overcome his share of obstacles. In the process, Ed has become an activist and a role model.

For example, on June 5, he will participate in New Jersey’s celebration of the annual HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day. For Ed and many other long-term survivors, the key to embracing resilience is sticking together. Click here for more.

Living through a pandemic once would be enough for anyone. Doing so again is not something any of us wanted. For those who saw the early AIDS crisis up close, the similarities to, and the differences from, COVID-19 are especially apparent.

Longtime journalist Hank Plante bore witness to the early days of AIDS. He was one of the first openly gay reporters in the country. As such, Hank brought a personal perspective to his reporting about the HIV epidemic. Click here to read his reflections on the retrovirus and the new coronavirus.

COVID-19 has taken center stage in our lives, regardless of whether we like it or not. In acknowledgment of that fact, we are introducing a new section to POZ magazine: Basics. As with the Basics on POZ.com, this new section in the print magazine will cover the basics of subjects you need to know. The inaugural print Basics (click here) is all about COVID-19. Future print Basics will cover other subjects.

The new coronavirus has changed how we live, work and access health care. As a result, we want to know how COVID-19 has affected you. Click here to take our survey.

Although COVID-19 has demanded our attention, this print edition of POZ was originally planned as an LGBT-themed special issue-—and it still is. LGBT people and topics are everywhere. We hope you enjoy it!

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/stand-long-term-survivors