This Positoid’s Life (September-October 2008)

October 22, 2008 By Shawn Decker

I’ve been writin’ a lot of blogs with no pictures and my camera has been screaming for attention. So here’s the last couple of weeks of This Positoid’s Life, with nifty captions. Enjoy!

Saturday, September 27: Bruce gets married! Bruce is a good friend and merch man for Bella Morte (here, from left, Gopal former and founding member, Andy, Bruce, Micah and Tony).

The weekend of October 11, Gwenn and I were off to Connecticut for Mark and Sasha’s wedding. Mark’s uncle, Donald, founded American Home Federation, a company that assists in the

management of bleeding disorders. Mark works for the company and is a fellow thinblood and good friend. We became pals after Poz did a backpage story on Gwenn and I's wedding back in 2004, so it was really cool to be there for the big occasion, especially for someone who has been through all the same medical dramas.

A couple days later, it was off to Beaumont, Texas, for the Triangle AIDS Network conference on HIV. I spoke solo last year, but this year Gwenn and I went together to speak about being in a sero-discordant relationship.

What was interesting about this year was that Hurricane Ike had ravaged the community about a month before the conference. There were blue tarps on roofs that were waiting to be fixed, and rain water caused more flooding the night before we flew back home.

And speaking of home, another speaker, Tom Donahue of Who's Positive, was at the conference, too. He dropped me a line quite a few years ago, just after he tested positive. Well, turns out he's been living in Charlottesville for a year, and the first time we met in person was in- you got- Texas.

One of the problems brought about by Hurricane Ike as it pertained to the conference was the host hotel- they were closed longer than expected, which meant the conference needed a new home. It also meant that Gwenn and I and the rest of the speakers spent a night or two at a Catholic Retreat Center in the woods. I picked Room 13, just because I thought that was funny, given my love of Friday the 13th movies.... well, the joke was on me when I woke up that morning, and there was no power!

Everyone knows the power goes out before you bite the bullet. Fortunately, the only thing I missed as a result wasn't a limb to a machete-wielding maniac, it was a shower.

The conference went well, and it was nice to see some new faces this year, and some familiar ones from last year's conference.

On the way home, I posed with some cardboard cut-outs of the two respective presidential tickets, and I had a revelation...

Look at McCain, he's the only one of the four who was ballsy enough to pose for his cut-off without a big cheesy grin. That's enough for me, consider the Rebel Without a Cure a full-fledged member of the Team of Mavericks. (I figure that, being a smartass with AIDS, my endorsement probably hurts.)

Then this past weekend, Gwenn and I spoke at the 4th Annual Conference on HIV in Maine, where

my ego was stroked by quite a few people who knew me from my column in Poz. One very nice person said she's been reading it for over ten years now... another stopped me in the hallway and apologized for gushing. I encouraged her to go on, then later she asked when Synthetic Division was going to play in Maine... hey, maybe someday Tom can sell those photos to the Pozarazzi after all?

Oh, and with all the above Gwenn found time to judge the Miss Hill City pageant in Lynchburg, Virginia, while I was at home with Andy of Bella Morte, watching Bernard Hopkins box Kelly Pavlik's ears. If any sporting event should make cocky democrats, who believe in polling, nervous, it should be the sight of the 43-year old Hopkins dismantling the previously undefeated Kelly Pavlik.

All of this is the perfect tie-in to my column in this month's Poz magazine. It's about, what else, pageants. You read read "Life's Rich Pageant" at poz.com. (For a trip down memory lane, here's a column I wrote for Poz in 1998, "Kid Gloves".)

If this blog seems long, well, it may be the last one until the after life. Just found out Erin Weed is coming into town today. I thought I heard her cracking her knuckles on the voicemail message.

Pray for the thinblooded maverick.

Positively Yours,

Shawn

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