Unhappy Half-birthdays and Random Ramblings

September 28, 2008 By David Weiss

In April of 1981, Sandra Ford, a drug technician at the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, noticed an unusual number of requests for pentamidine, the drug used then (and now) to treat PCP pneumonia. Within months, articles appeared in The Lancet and New England Journal of Medicine that described unusual clusters of Kaposi?s sarcoma in gay men. Those discoveries, as we all know, led to the identification of what would later become known as HIV and AIDS. Next month will mark 27 and ½ years since Ms. Ford made her observation. Back in the late 80's or early 90's I remember Anthony Fauci predicting that no cure for HIV would be found, if at all, before 2005. Unfortunately, he was right. Nonetheless, things are better than they were. Those of us with access to good care are living longer and healthier lives than we could have imagined back when HIV was identified, but there are still many who do not share that good fortune.

As we all know, our government is bailing out Wall Street, to the tune of $700,000,000,000. Seven hundred billion dollars. Seven hundred billion. That?s a lot of zeros. By my admittedly rough calculation, that?s enough scratch to keep every single HIV positive man and woman in the United States in Atripla (at retail!) for the next 35 or 40 years, with change left over for strawberry flavored condoms and an occasional Dove bar. We might all be broke, but we?d be happy and healthy.

Having said that, I?m now back in NYC, packing up my life to move to Southeast Asia with Eva, Cupcake and Ginger. I?ll be leaving in 12 days. If you?ve never flown around the world, it?s a fascinating experience - on my last flight we flew over Iran and down to Dubai, then over India and Thailand. Highly recommended. This time I?m stopping off in Sweden for a month, and after that it?s on to the Philippines. I hope that I can vote there, as the spectre of McCain (and Palin, yikes!) driving the U.S. even further down the road to economic and social ruin scares the **** out of me.

If B.O. makes it to the White House, and the Earth hasn?t been eaten by a black hole from the ?Large Hadron Collider? (and the Web hasn?t been swamped with bad LHC sex jokes) I?ll be back as soon as I??ve settled down.

See you soon,

David

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* Football prediction: The Giants go 12 and 4 and make it back to the Super Bowl in ?09. Anyone who disagrees can find me on the beach....

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