

RE **ACT-B** ELIEVE

THE AIDS COMMITTEE OF THUNDER BAY NEWSLETTER SUMMER 1988

VOL. 1. ISSUE 1

How TO HAVE SAFE SEX:



The ReACT-Believe is published quarterly by the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay (ACT-B). The Committee was incorporated in October, 1987 and is a registered non-profit organization. Its charity number is 0779330-11. Receipts for tax deduction purposes will be issued for donations. Items for publication may be submitted to The Editor, P.O. Box 3586, Thunder Bay, Ont. P7B 6B2.

The AIDS COMMITTEE OF THUNDER BAY maintains an information and resource centre at 283 Bay Street in Thunder Bay. ACT-B operates the AIDS Information Phoneline at 345-SAFE (7233); the business line is 345-1516. Office hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. The AIDS phoneline is staffed by volunteers on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 12 noon to 2 p.m. Callers can speak to ACT-B staff or access a taped message at other times.

President's message

In this first issue of ReACT-Believe I want to review the origins and development of the Committee, and look toward the future. ACT-B was formed on a volunteer basis in January, 1986 to address the issue of AIDS in Thunder Bay. A lot of effort went into gathering information, providing it to the gay community, and trying to raise the awareness of the general public. We hosted the first public forum in Thunder Bay in November of that year. By October of 1987 we were co-sponsors of a city-wide AIDS Awareness Week, along with the District Health Unit.

We received funding from the Ontario Ministry of Health in December, 1987 and were finally able to begin to work in an organized way. By January the Board of Directors had hired an Executive Director, and Education Officer, and a part-time Office Manager, as well as established an office. In the months since we established an information phoneline with a solid core of volunteers, moved to more spacious quarters, began to develop a strong outreach program, and worked at establishing a strong organizational base on which to continue our work in the future.

At this point, I want to publicly express my deep appreciation for the work that has been done by all those involved with the Committee, the directors, the volunteers, and the staff. While everyone deserves a lot of credit, I particularly want to thank Michael, Serge, and Lawrence for the immense amount of energy they have put into their work, and for bringing us this far along as quickly as they have.

Now that we are well established it is

time to focus our vision on the future. We have many goals to achieve, and many projects at various stages of development. In order to succeed in our primary educational and support work we must strive to overcome homophobia, not only in the general community, but in the gay community as well.

At this stage, we also need to expand our membership. We are a registered charity, and I encourage everyone who has not already done so to purchase a membership; and, if able, make an additional donation to our support fund. As well, we welcome volunteers and potential board members to participate in the activities of the Committee.

To all those involved up to now, heartfelt thanks, and to everyone, let's work hard for a better tomorrow.

DAVID BELROSE

SUNTOON by Jim Phillips



ACT-B backs OAN call on drug availability

The 15-member Ontario Aids Network, which includes ACT-B, recently issued a call to the Federal government to accelerate approval of new drugs for treating PWAs.

The OAN urged Ottawa to "aggressively" seek new drug treatments, facilitate clinical trials conducted by community physicians, and accept the results of medically-recognized drug trials from other countries.

The Network said that drugs proven in combatting AIDS-related conditions should be available to PWAs in Canada, even though they may not have been tested in this country.

"Persons living with AIDS have the right to choose experimental treatments based on the latest information and the advice of their physicians," the OAN said.

ACT-B circulated the position paper to news media and Members of Parliament, Ernie Epp and Ian Angus, and also to several Northwestern Ontario members of the provincial legislature.

Dry Kisses & Stiff Kicks

Every issue of ReACT-Believe will feature an awarding of two kinds of prizes to people, organizations, and institutions involved with AIDS. The awards will fall into two categories: *Dry Kisses* (which are, of course, eminently safe sex) and *Stiff Kicks* (which speaks for itself).

Readers are invited to nominate their own candidates for either award.

In our inaugural issue, we throw our *Dry Kisses* to our dedicated volunteers.
Bravo!

Our *Stiff Kicks* go to the government of British Columbia. Victoria has been penalizing PWAs by charging them, retroactively, for the use of AZT, the drug of choice for treating HIV infection.

The AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay provides a wide range of services:

- *speakers* for educational presentations
- a *library* of brochures, books, pamphlets, clippings and videos
- confidential one-on-one *counselling*
- the *AIDS Information Phonenumber*
- *in-service sessions* for professional groups.

ACT-B maintains links with the medical and health care organizations in Thunder Bay. The Committee is a member of the Ontario AIDS Network and the Canadian AIDS Society/ La Societe canadienne du SIDA.

CANADIAN
AIDS
SOCIETY



LA SOCIÉTÉ
CANADIENNE
DU SIDA

Volunteer Profile - David

Volunteers help ACT-B function as a successful community-based AIDS organization.

ReACT-Believe will regularly feature profiles on our volunteers. Recently we spoke to David, a 30-year old who brings a lot of commitment to his work on the AIDS Phonenumber.

Q. David, what brought you to ACT-B?

A. "I think education is the cure. The more people are informed, and the more people are willing to inform others, then we'll be able to do something about AIDS."

Q. What do you think of your work here?

A. "It's like being a firefighter. It's more important to be there than to have 10 million fires to fight. Through education we can avoid having an AIDS crisis that we can't handle."

Q. David, what's been the single biggest challenge you've had as a phonenumber volunteer?

A. "It was the time a young man who'd just found out he'd tested HIV positive phoned and told me he was thinking of suicide. I still get freaked out when I think about it."

Q. How do you earn your living?

A. "I work at a paper mill here in Thunder Bay. When I'm not working, or involved with my union, I do a lot of work in art."

Q. How's that?

A. "I run a graphic arts service part-time. You see I studied art in different places; bronze sculpture in Mexico and I've also been to the University of Wisconsin and the Banff School of Fine Arts."

Q. How do you like to spend your free time, David?

A. "I like sports, swimming, mountain biking and, in the winter, downhill skiing. But I also like to party. I'm famous for that."

AIDS Awareness Week update

Planning for the 1988 edition of AIDS Awareness Week is already well under way.

"Living with AIDS" is the life-affirming theme selected for this year by the Ontario AIDS Network, the umbrella organization of community-based AIDS groups of which ACT-B is an active member.

ACT-B is chairing the steering committee for the event here. We have struck subcommittees for media relations, programming and keynote events. Final details on the program should be ready by mid-August. Some events will be sponsored by ACT-B, some by the week's co-sponsors such as the District Health Unit, local hospitals and educational institutions.

Volunteer help will be essential to make all of this happen the way it should. If you would like to lend a hand in making AAW meaningful for a lot of people, call the office at 345-1516.

Healthy sex house parties

ACT-B is reviewing its services to the gay community. In addition to our regular literature table and display at GTB social events, we have a number of new projects under development.

The first is a series of HEALTHY SEX house parties to start August 25th. The program is designed for gay and bisexual men to learn more about safer sex, to share their concerns with others in a small group setting. The house party format will be limited to ten participants, and held in a local home. The theme is supporting healthy sex attitudes and activities, in a casual and confidential atmosphere.

We hope to offer a half dozen of these workshops, about one every six weeks. If you're interested in coming to the first party, please phone 345-1516 and ask for Michael. The first ten people we hear from will get into the first party. Others will be put on a reserve list for parties later on. There already are some people signed up, so we anticipate the spaces will go quickly.

It's free. It's Thursday evening, 7-10 p.m., August 25th. It's the start of big things to come.

AIDS *Information* **PHONELINE**

345-7233



AIDS COMMITTEE of THUNDER BAY



70's



80's



90's



Copy deadline for the Fall issue of ReACT-Believe is Sept. 9, 1988.

The Editor will consider all submissions. The opinions expressed in ReACT-Believe are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the policy of the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay.

ACT-B moves to new home

Staff and volunteers won't have to worry about cramped quarters anymore.

ACT-B's educational and resource centre moved from its original location to a comfortable newer space at 283 Bay Street.

The move was completed by June 14. Volunteers Eleanor Jensen and Andree Langlois were enormously helpful. Their stamina - in very hot weather - helped us move the office furniture, typewriter, computer equipment, and hundreds of kilos of books and pamphlets. Thank you Andree for salvaging those sorely neglected house plants!

We will add new room for private counselling, and we'll need some help with painting. Above all, we need area rugs/carpets, a door mat, stackable chairs (12 at least), plant stands, and picture frames for our many attractive posters which need proper display. If you have any items of this kind you'd like to donate or lend, do give us a call.

Calling all members!

Elsewhere in this newsletter, ACT-B president David Belrose writes that our organization is ready to put a major emphasis on membership recruitment.

It's through the building up of membership that ACT-B will be able to recruit volunteers, develop a source for moral and financial support, enhance its profile as a truly community-based social service and develop a pool of talent from which can be drawn future members of the board.

Membership in ACT-B has several benefits - they are listed elsewhere in ReACT-Believe - but the most important thing is the chance to be part of the solution to one of the greatest social and medical challenges this country has faced.

You Are Not Alone

A Column

by Michael Sobota

Alternative treatments and complimentary therapies

There have been two significant developments in the struggle with AIDS during the past 12 months that I'd like to talk about here. The first is the movement from AIDS being considered an acute, terminal illness to that of AIDS being looked upon as a chronic illness with occasional acute stages. More people who have AIDS are staying alive, and staying alive longer.

The second development is the mounting evidence that HIV is probably not the cause of AIDS. It may be necessary for HIV to be present, but of and by itself it may not be causal. This view is not universally accepted just yet, nor definitely proven.

Both of these developments shift focus to prevention and treatment methods. And this is very needed attention, as so much energy, time and money has been put into education up to now.

Traditional medicine does not promise either a cure or vaccine in the near future. But there have been breakthroughs in new drug treatments that can be invaluable to PWAs who pursue the medical model. PCP (the pneumonia that has been the number one cause of most AIDS-related deaths) can now be both effectively treated and prevented by the use of aerosolized pentamidine. This, along with other infection fighters, anti-viral drugs, and immune boosters give a lot of hope to PWAs. ACT-B has information about new treatments and can refer you to other sources.

Looking at both areas of prevention and treatment, the subject of complementary therapies comes into crucial focus. If HIV is not causal to AIDS, that probably means there are as yet unidentified co-factors involved. We have long known that diet, exercise, hygiene and psychology all play integral roles in our basic health. Any one of these can be a contributing co-factor to ill health.

PWA coalitions have been in the forefront of seeking out and using alternative, complementary therapies. When diagnosed with AIDS, self-acceptance and a strong desire to restore wellness become a challenge. Complimentary therapies offer avenues of personal empowerment, that is, taking responsibility personally in the healing process, rather than merely submitting oneself into the hands of traditional medicine. Changing and improving one's diet requires no one's permission or follow through but your own. The same with changing and improving exercise, reducing stress, meditating, visualizing, resting.

More is being written about complimentary therapies than ever before. ACT-B has a growing resource library of books, articles and tapes in this area. It is available free at our drop-in resource centre. Or phone us for updates and if you have any questions.



SILENCE=DEATH

I WANT TO HELP:

I support the goals of the AIDS COMMITTEE of Thunder Bay - mobilizing our community through education, advocacy and support to respond to the challenge of AIDS - and I want to be a member.

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP: \$5.00

(for individuals who wish to volunteer time and effort.)

SUPPORTING MEMBERSHIP: \$25.00 (or more)

(for institutions, organizations, groups and individuals who cannot commit volunteer time and effort.)

I would also like to make a donation to ACT-B for: \$ _____.

SEND THIS MEMBERSHIP COUPON TO:

AIDS COMMITTEE OF THUNDER BAY
P.O. BOX 3586
THUNDER BAY, ONTARIO
P7B 6E2

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

PROVINCE: _____

POSTAL CODE: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

ACT-B will issue receipts for tax deduction purposes for every donation of \$5 or more. Tax deduction receipts are not issued for membership fees. The list of members and supporters of ACT-B is kept strictly confidential.

All new ACT-B members receive free: A copy of AIDS: What Every Responsible Canadian Should Know, a subscription to ReACT-Believe, ACT-B's newsletter, and voting rights at the General Annual Meeting of the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay.



ON VACATION? KEEP IT SAFE!