

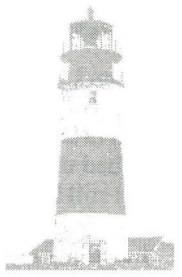
# 1999

**Mid-June to Mid-July**  
volume VI number VI

## IN THE AFFIRMATIVE

a newsletter for Maine's HIV/AIDS community

THE  
**AIDS**  
PROJECT



### Just So You Know...

#### Gay Pride Parade

The AIDS Project will participate in the Gay Pride Parade in Portland this Saturday, June 19th.

The Parade will lead off from Monument Square at 11:45 a.m. For those who can't walk the parade route, a car will be available.

T-shirts for TAP marchers can be ordered ahead of time from David Aaron Swander at TAP at 774-6877 or bought the day of the parade.

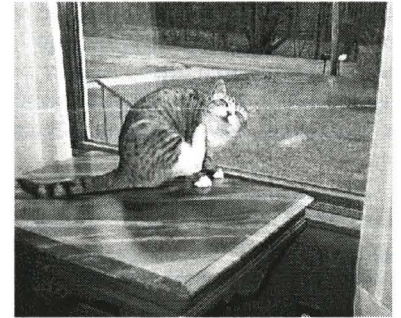
#### Stay Cool

What with the hot, humid weather of summer upon us, it is important for people with HIV to stay cool. On the really heavy, humid days it is recommended that you stay indoors with shades drawn, and use an air conditioner or a fan to keep cool.

Equally important is to remember that your medications need to be stored in a cool, dry place, and some medications may need to be refrigerated. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you aren't sure.

### By The Way: The Importance of Being A Cat

*by Mike Martin*



A few days ago, The Portland Press Herald's Bill Nemitz wrote a column about the amazing relationship between Rich Markham and his cat Shadow. I didn't know either Rich or Shadow personally, but like thousands who have ever been to Portland, I saw the two of them riding around town on a bicycle. Shadow would sit on Rich's shoulder, calm as could be, and the two of them were a sight to see as they traveled along their way. Shadow died recently after spending twelve years with Rich. Rich is understandably heartbroken. He credits Shadow with helping him to find peace and the ability to better relate to other people.

Cats and dogs and other pets have an amazing effect on people. They are said to lower your blood pressure. They are used in some places as therapy for people in nursing homes and for people with mental and physical disabilities. They give some folks a purpose in life, after loved ones have grown up, moved away, or passed on.

I have found my cats to be real treasures in my life. Currently I have four cats. Tigger is pictured above. The others are Fanny, George, and Sandy.

*CATS continued on page two*

#### **TAP's York County Clients Can Access The Internet**

York County Clients of TAP can use the computer at its Kennebunk office to access the internet. Call Denise Ferer at 985-8199 to set up a time to use the computer.

Also, clients can now e-mail TAP's Kennebunk office at:  
[www.tap2@mail.javanet.com](mailto:www.tap2@mail.javanet.com)

#### **Come On Out for a Walk!**

The Outdoor/Wellness Group is continuing throughout the summer! The locations for the walks will be given to you when you contact Denise Ferer, Case Manager, in TAP's York County Office by calling 985-8199. All those interested can contact Denise directly!

This group has been put together so that you can be outside enjoying yourself and having fun while meeting new people! Trips are held one Saturday for each of the summer months from 11:30 a.m. to approximately 2 p.m. Bring a lunch, a pair of comfortable shoes and your good spirits! Transportation is provided, if needed.

The dates for the summer walks are:

**July 10** (rain date - July 17)

**August 14** (rain date - Aug. 21)

When I was growing up, we always had one dog and one cat. (We also had, at varying times, a pig, a goat, a cow, and rabbits.) In short, we loved animals. When everyone else in my family had moved on and I was left with the family home to live in, I still had Missy, our cat, and BJ, our dog. Shortly after I tested positive for HIV, Missy, the family cat of 21 years, and BJ, the family dog of 13 years, died. Both deaths were like a death in the family.

After a little time, I decided to get a kitten. Well, decided isn't quite right. I found a little calico kitten in my flower bed one day after returning home from work. Scooter, which I eventually named her, was only weeks old and covered with fleas. After trying, unsuccessfully, to find her owner, I took her to the vet to be treated and then took her home to keep. She was the cutest little thing and brought a sense of joy to my home after the loss of our long-time family pets. But after a year, Scooter disappeared after I had let her outside to play. I was very sad and it took me a good six months before I decided to get another cat. Those six months were very quiet times in my home.

But one day I decided to go to a local shelter and get a cat. Fanny and George, already so named at the shelter, seemed eager to go home with someone. And since I couldn't choose between the two, I took them both. Then a year later, friends who hadn't heard I already had two cats, delivered a cute little calico cat to my door. I couldn't say "no" and so entered Sandy into my life. And when a relative of mine had a cat she could no longer keep, then came Tigger to the brood.

So here I am with four wonderful cats. I had no plans to become a multiple cat owner, but life is what happens while you're planning.

I read somewhere that cats think of their owners as their mothers, and owners think of their cats as their children. It certainly seems that way with my kids. When I come home after being away for a few minutes, or a few hours, or all day, they come to greet me at the door and are not happy till I have patted and spoken to each of them individually. It is a joy to come home to a house so filled with happy little creatures eager to see me. They have made my time with HIV a lot more bearable. They are a comfort. And I do think their affection has had a positive influence in my life. A purring kitty cat is like a little meditation. All my tensions and worries get shoved aside in their rhythmic kneading and purring.

There is also something to be said for their ability to keep me from totaling worrying about my HIV status and what awful things might happen to me in the future. They keep me grounded in the moment. They keep me from being self-absorbed. They let me give and receive love and affection. In short, it's good to have them in my home.

And as heartbroken as I have been over the loss of past pets, it has been one of life's greatest lessons to me that it is not only possible, but very important to know that the warmth and love of a pet is just around the corner. Sometimes around the corner means an animal shelter, or a friend whose cat has just had a litter of kittens, or at the back of a flower bed, but wherever around the corner is, there is something special.

So I can understand the bond that Rich had with his cat. And I can understand his sadness at Shadow's death. And I hope that Rich will someday get on his bicycle and, once again, he will have a loving cat perched on his shoulder.

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York County Case Manager  
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## New Targets in Campaigns to Halt AIDS

Washington Post (05/17/99)

New data indicates that adults over 50 are increasingly at risk for HIV infection. The study says older people are much less likely to have protected sex than younger people, primarily because they do not see themselves as at-risk. While the proportion of AIDS cases among older persons has stayed stable, an increasing number of older Americans report contracting HIV through heterosexual sex. 6,962 new AIDS cases among older Americans were reported in 1997. However, older African-Americans are disproportionately affected by the disease, making up 43 percent of the new AIDS cases among men and women older than 50 between 1991 and 1996. The CDC added that doctors are not as likely to discuss HIV-related symptoms with older patients.

## Anti-Angiogenesis Protein Effective Against AIDS-Related Kaposi's Sarcoma

Reuters (05/17/99)

The University of Southern California School of Medicine, reported at a meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology that use of the anti-angiogenic protein IM862 resulted in a complete or major response in 37 percent of AIDS patients with advanced Kaposi's Sarcoma. IM862, which is administered nasally, triggered a positive response for a median of 28 weeks. Adverse side-effects include headache, fatigue, tingling, and nausea, but investigators noted these seemed mild and transient.

## Alarm on Extent of AIDS

Boston Globe Online (05/12/99)

A new report from the World Health Organization ranks AIDS as the world's deadliest infectious disease, surpassing tuberculosis. Deaths from AIDS worldwide numbered about 2.28 million in 1998. Among all causes of death, heart disease is the No. 1 killer, with nearly 7.38 million deaths last year, followed by strokes, acute respiratory infections, and AIDS.

## AIDS Battle Facing Lethal Complacency

Boston Globe Online (06/06/99)

Activists are concerned that the effects of AIDS education, which has flooded most communities, is being lost among attitudes of complacency and denial. Their fears are reflected in the sobering fact that young people are one of the fastest growing segments of the HIV-positive population. While death rates from AIDS have declined, infection rates have remained steady since the mid-1990's. Many attribute this denial and complacency to youth and the publicity new drug therapies have received. However, the drugs are not effective in everyone, and they require a complex dosing regimen. "There's a level of denial about how complex these drugs are," notes AIDS Action's Larry Kessler. "There's a lot of misinformation about their success rates."



## Latent Infection of CD4 Cells Provides a Mechanism for Lifelong Persistence of HIV-1, Even in Patients on Effective Combination Therapy

*Nature Medicine (05/99)*

Since combination therapy for HIV-1 infection lowers the level of plasma virus to undetectable levels, using the combination therapy treatment for an extended period of time may eradicate the infection. But researchers say the virus can remain dormant in resting CD4 cells. A team of scientists described the decay rate of the inactive reservoir in 34 adults who are taking combination therapy and whose plasma levels had fallen to below a detectable level. On average, the half-life of the latent virus was 43.9 months, which could mean eradication could take as long as 60 years if the source of the latent virus holds only  $1 \times 10^5$  cells. As a result, the scientists say, latent infection of dormant CD4 cells provides an opportunity for HIV-1 to remain in all patients, including those who consistently take antiretroviral therapy.

## HIV Respite Is Brief

*Washington Post Online (05/09/99)*

For patients with HIV, stopping antiviral drugs offers only a brief respite before the virus appears in the blood stream again, according to data from an ongoing National Institutes of Health study. NIH launched the study to determine if HIV patients, whose infection was sufficiently controlled by drugs for a lengthy period, could indeed halt treatment and rely on their innate immune system to control the disease. But the latest finding adds to mounting data that suggest existing antiviral drugs will likely not cure HIV infection. Researchers are continuing to study the patients' immune systems to figure out why some patients relapsed quickly, while the virus remained undetectable in others for as long as 12 weeks after halting therapy.

## AIDS Drugs: Giving It a Rest

*Business Week (05/14/99)*

Some AIDS patients are participating in an unusual strategy of fighting HIV in which they take carefully monitored breaks from their complex drug regimens. The primary force behind this approach is the recognition that existing treatments cannot eliminate HIV. Recent data, for example, indicates that it could take up to six decades to completely eliminate the virus. Taking a break from the drugs could also give the patient's body an opportunity to recover from the extreme side effects the drugs can cause. Researchers warn that HIV almost always bounces back when the treatments are stopped, but some theorize that the scheduled drug interruptions could enable the body to contain the virus, somewhat like a vaccine.

## Minnesota to Study HIV Transmission

*Minneapolis Star Tribune Online (05/12/99)*

Researchers at the University of Minnesota, funded by a four-year, \$1 million grant from the National Institute of Dental Research, are examining transmission of HIV through oral sex. Scientific literature contains at least five cases in which HIV was transmitted orally, and monkeys can be infected with the virus by swabbing their tonsils with an SIV-containing fluid. Dr. Timothy Schacker, lead investigator of the new study, says the research is partly to correct perceptions that oral sex is much safer than other kinds of intercourse. Participants will be couples, one of whom is infected with HIV. Schacker believes that over the two-year study, some of the uninfected partners will contract HIV, despite counseling about the dangers of oral sex.

## Most Frequently Used Alternative and Complementary Therapies

*Journal of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care (05/99-06/99)*

Investigators from Bastyr University AIDS Research Center looked at the most popular complementary or alternative medicine (CAM) that AIDS/HIV patients practice using data derived from peer-reviewed journals reporting on 1,016 participants in the Alternative Medical Care Outcomes in AIDS (AMCOA) study. The most popular CAM activities were aerobic exercise (64 percent), followed by prayer (56 percent), massage (54 percent), needle acupuncture (48 percent), and meditation (46 percent). The list was rounded out by support groups (42 percent), visualization and imagery (34 percent), breathing exercises (33 percent), spiritual activities (33 percent), and other exercises (33 percent). In most cases CAM was found to be of benefit to the mental health of the patient.

## Combination Approaches "Ideal" In Patients With AIDS Wasting Syndrome

*Reuters (06/08/99)*

AIDS-related wasting syndrome remains a serious problem for patients with the disease. The *New England Journal of Medicine* outlines a good approach to the syndrome. Physicians managing patients with AIDS-related wasting should conduct a nutritional evaluation; apply specific nutritional supplements when required; limit use of appetite stimulating drugs to patients with weight loss associated with low food intake; check for underlying opportunistic infections, cancer, gastrointestinal disease, and hypogonadism; and use high-dose growth hormones with caution. Researchers note that combination therapies, such as testosterone supplements with exercise, are often most beneficial.

## Just So You Know...

### Mark Your Calendars!

**The Women's Leadership Luncheon**  
to benefit The AIDS Project  
will be held on  
**Thursday, October 7, 1999.**

**The 14th Annual Spring for Life Art Auction**  
to benefit The AIDS Project  
will be held on  
**Saturday, March 25, 2000.**



Layout and Design by  
**Bald Man Publishing**

## IN THE AFFIRMATIVE

*In The Affirmative* is a monthly newsletter published by The AIDS Project for people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. Letters, articles, or other submissions should be sent to: *In The Affirmative*, c/o The AIDS Project, P.O. Box 5305, Portland, ME 04101, or call (207) 774-6877. Submissions can be printed anonymously as long as the person submitting the material includes his or her name and phone number for verification.

News, information, and features are as up-to-date as possible prior to publication. Any medical information included in this newsletter is submitted for the reader's information only, to be used as the reader so chooses.

**Next Issue  
IN THE AFFIRMATIVE**

**Mid-July 1999**

## SUPPORT GROUPS FOR PEOPLE INFECTED AND AFFECTED BY HIV/AIDS

### TUESDAYS

**Time: 10:30 a.m. to noon**

**Group: HIV Infected/Affected Drop-In Support Group**

A meeting for people living with and affected by the virus.

Location: Portland, TAP, The Meeting Room, Suite 632.

Contact TAP at 774-6877 for more info.

### THURSDAYS

**Time: 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**

**Group: HIV Infected/Affected Drop-in Group**

A TAP-sponsored meeting for people

living with and affected by HIV/AIDS in southern Maine.

Location: Sanford, Unitarian Church, located at the corner of Main St. (Rte. 109) and Lebanon St. (Rte. 202).

Contact Denise Ferer at TAP at 985-8199 for more info.

**Time: 12 noon**

**Group: Open Lunch for TAP Clients/Staff**

An informal luncheon gathering of TAP staff and clients.

Location: Portland, TAP, Conference Room.

Contact Daniel Schnorbus at TAP at 774-6877 for info.

**Time: 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**

**Group: People Living with HIV/AIDS**

A drop-in support group for anyone with HIV/AIDS.

Location: Portland, TAP, The Meeting Room, Suite 632.

Contact TAP at 774-6877 for more info.

## CLIENT SERVICES MEDICAL ASSISTANT FUNDS

An important reminder to clients:

There are funds available to TAP clients with financial need for the following items: Routine Dental Care, Routine Eye Care and Eyeglasses, Vitamin Supplements, Non-Prescription Skin Care Products, and Non-Medicaid Medication Co-pays.

There is a dollar limit to how much a client can receive in any fiscal year. Contact your case manager for assistance.

### WELLNESS AND YOU PROGRAM

A stress reduction and physical activity program designed for people living with HIV/AIDS. In this program individuals can participate in a variety of supervised physical activity, education, and specialized stress management segments. Contact Daniel at TAP at 774-6877 for more information.

### IMMEDIATE SEATING

For free tickets to area events as they become available, sign up for "Immediate Seating." Call Daniel at TAP at 774-6877 for more information.

### THE MEETING ROOM

This room is used by TAP in Portland for support groups, counseling and testing, and some client/case manager meetings. Located in Suite 632, it provides more privacy for people served by TAP.

Enter from the High Street side of the building.

### I.V. LEAGUE

Meetings of the I.V. League support group are held on Thursdays from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. at First Parish Church at 425 Congress St. in Portland. (Use the right side entrance and ring the bell.) This group is for IV Drug Users past and present.

For more information, call Steve Farrell at 874-8775.

### Pap Smear Can Help Cut Gays' Cancer Risk

*San Francisco Examiner Online (05/18/99)*

Doctors may begin recommending Pap smears for men who engage in anal sex. Research published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* indicates that Pap smears appear to be a cost-effective way to detect early signs of anal cancer in HIV-positive gay and bisexual men. Anal cancer—which is hard to detect because it has few symptoms—is associated with the sexually transmitted human papillomavirus, as is cervical cancer. Statistics show that while the rate of anal cancer in the general population is 0.8 per 100,000, the rate is 35 per 100,000 for HIV-negative homosexual men and about two times as high for homosexual men with HIV.

### More Teen AIDS Feared

*London Free Press Online (05/23/99)*

New statistics from Health Canada indicate that of all new HIV infections between 1990-95, half occurred among individuals aged 23 or younger. They noted there is risky sexual behavior among the country's teenagers, and called for increased sexual education in schools. Data suggests a low prevalence of HIV infection among Canadian youth, but a Health Canada HIV/AIDS report notes that sexual behavior statistics indicate the situation could be quite different. A 1992 British Columbian report found that 33 percent of boys and 28 percent of girls aged 12 to 18 reported being sexually active. However, of these students, 30 percent of boys and 24 percent of girls had already had at least four sexual partners, and just 64 percent of boys and 53 percent of girls reported using a condom during their last encounter.

### Anti-AIDS Campaign Uses Gritty Words to Educate Youth

*CNews Online (05/21/99)*

The Canadian AIDS Society's campaign, "AIDS: Not in This Body," is taking a new approach to educating young people between the ages 14 and 24. Surveys have indicated that young people take straight and comprehensive talk about AIDS more seriously than information that hedges around the issue. Accordingly, the program will feature explicit brochures and posters that will be distributed to schools and communities throughout the nation about risky sexual behavior and how to safely use sex toys and drug needles.

### Stress May Speed Progression to AIDS

*Fox News Online (05/24/99)*

A psychiatric researcher at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill links stress to the rate at which HIV-positive men progress to AIDS. Her team's report followed 82 HIV-positive men for 5.5 years, assessing them periodically for stress and their perceived level of social support. Researchers found that HIV positive men in stressful situations with little social support were two to three times more likely to develop full-blown AIDS, as compared to individuals with lower stress and more support.

### Dangers of Vaginal Infections

*United Press International (05/25/99)*

A report presented at the Annual Clinical Meeting of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in Philadelphia called for more aggressive treatment and screening of sexually transmitted diseases for women and their sexual partners. Dr. James McGregor, a professor at the University of Colorado School of Medicine in Denver, noted growing evidence that vaginal infections have much faster and more harmful effects than previously believed. McGregor cited research which found that common and curable vaginal infections significantly raise a woman's risk for HIV infection.

### Poll: Public Support for Sexuality Education

*U.S. Newswire (06/02/99)*

Findings released by the Advocates for Youth and the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States indicate that Americans overwhelmingly support sex education for students in junior high and high school. Concern over the transmission of HIV and various other sexually transmitted diseases seems to have solidified support for sex-education in schools. The poll, conducted by Hickman-Brown Research, was conducted in February and March 1999, with 1,050 adults throughout the country. According to the survey, 72 percent of respondents agreed that "preventing HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases are public health issues and should be left to scientists and experts, not to politicians." Over 80 percent of the participants said that teenagers should be aware of how to guard against unplanned pregnancy and STDs, and 70 percent disagree with the law that provides federal funds for education that encourages "abstinence-only-until-marriage" but does not allow use of the money for contraception or pregnancy and STD prevention education.

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### AIDS HOTLINES

Questions about HIV/AIDS?

Call toll-free

National AIDS Hotline:

1-800-342-2437

Maine AIDSline:

1-800-851-2437

### HIV WEBSITES

Check out these websites:

[www.hivpositive.com](http://www.hivpositive.com)

[www.thebody.com](http://www.thebody.com)

[www.projinf.org](http://www.projinf.org)

for info on HIV and AIDS.

### TAP ON-LINE

Visit our new website at: [www.aidsproject.org](http://www.aidsproject.org)

To e-mail The AIDS Project,

send your message along to:

[tap@aidsproject.org](mailto:tap@aidsproject.org) (Portland)

or [tap2@mail.javanet.com](mailto:tap2@mail.javanet.com) (Kennebunk)