

ARC News

January, 2004
Volume 8, Issue 1

For the AIDS Resource Centre — Okanagan & Region

Weapons of Mass Destruction?

"The AIDS epidemic is a real weapon of mass destruction ... 8,000 are dying a day"

- UN Secretary-General
Kofi Annan

Mayor's Forum on Community Safety and Harm Reduction

By Brian Mairs, OAAS Coordinator

On November 26, Kelowna Mayor Walter Gray hosted a public forum in a downtown theatre. Nothing unusual about that, but this time, the subject at hand was Community Safety and Harm Reduction, centering on the problems associated with injection drug use in the city.

This is something very near and dear to our hearts, as the sharing of needles and associated equipment is one of the leading causes of HIV and hepatitis C.

Mayor Gray explained: "this forum is intended to offer an opportunity for the community to discuss the growing issue of drug addiction."

The template for the day's discussion was the Four Pillars approach (Prevention, Treatment, Enforcement, and Harm Reduction), and Mr. Gray shared encouraging statistics from communities that have used the Four Pillars program including Vancouver, Zurich and Hamburg. He stressed that a "made in Kelowna" solution would be found, with the program modified to meet Kelowna's situation.



Mayor Gray of Kelowna and Catherine Williams-Jones of NOW Canada (forum moderator) have a moment's pause for thought. In the background: Inspector Bill McKinnon, Kelowna RCMP. *Photo:*

We were very pleased to see about 250 people attend the forum. Panel members included law enforcement, the fire department, religious leaders, business owners, social service agencies, former drug users, and the former Mayor of Vancouver, Philip Owen. Mr. Owen gave a brief history of how he became passionate

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ARC & OAAS have moved

After a series of setbacks that nearly drove Lance to drink, we have moved into our new quarters at 101 - 266 Lawrence Avenue between Water and Pandosy Streets. It's a single-story office building with only one other tenant. We hope the ground floor location will make us more accessible to marginalized people down-

town, who may have been unaware of our services when we were hiding on the second floor of a professional building. The new offices are nicely decorated (thanks to Lance's efforts) and they provide a warm and welcoming environment. Please drop by for a coffee and a chat!



101-266 Lawrence Ave,
Kelowna



Patently necessary: improving global access to essential medicines

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It's the time of year for round-ups and retrospectives. For backward glances, forward glances and resolutions. And for reflections on the same.

We're over the hump of millennial news hype (remember the Y2K problem?), but whether an apocalyptic mood has passed, or has merely become chronic, probably comes down to each person's resilience before the headlines of the day. Having emerged from the bloodiest century in human history we are well launched into more of the same as wars smoulder and retaliatory violence flares in hot spots of conflict around the world.

This is also the time of year when that rather tired little notion of a "time capsule" tends to reappear on editorial pages, as commentators ponder which trends and events would convey to someone in an alien future a sense of the present day. Leaving aside SARS, leaving aside the war in Iraq, there are other memorabilia from the domestic front of a frequently surprising year: same-sex marriage, marijuana liberalization, Commons approval of the use of human embryos in stem-cell research, the latter days of a Prime Minister's reign as peculiarly stretched as the lifespan of Bilbo Baggins, and the uneasy union of kissing cousins on the political right.

Sifting through the events of 2003, it strikes us that this has been a year marked by ideologic division and a lack of consensus. For some issues, for some people, there is no scope for compromise, as the intense public controversy surrounding same-sex marriage has demonstrated. (Will stem-cell research legislation also fly into a storm when the Senate reads this legislation in the new year?) Other debates — notably those centred on the war in Iraq — have been marked by a painful ambivalence.

Interesting, then, that one of the most important pieces of legislative business, the one that could have the most profound effect on the greatest number of lives, has caused no political divisions, engendered relatively little controversy, and opened no cracks in the social ore. This is the federal government's pledge to amend the Patent Act to allow the export of generic ver-

able to manufacture their own supply. This decision follows the unanimous and hard-won decision of the World Trade Organization in August to relax patent protections on essential medicines. It also follows the desperate pleas of Stephen Lewis, the UN Special Envoy on HIV/AIDS in Africa, for affluent nations to take decisive humanitarian action against the pandemic of AIDS.

With the first reading of Bill C-56¹ in November, Canada became the first country with a well-developed generic pharmaceuticals industry to begin implementing the WTO decision. The final form of this legislation may well prove to be a model for others to follow; all the more important, then to get the model right.

It is sad, therefore, to see on closer scrutiny a piece of legislation that may prove to be more restrictive than the WTO deal itself, and less progressive in spirit than the Doha declaration of November 2001, which prepared the ground. The proposed Canadian legislation specifies countries that are eligible to apply for the import of Canadian generics. Why are countries such as East Timor and Turkmenistan not on the list? Bill C-56 also specifies a range of pharmaceuticals eligible for patent exemption. The WTO agreement requires no such limitation (a point much struggled over at the negotiating table). Third, the proposed Canadian legislation gives brand-name pharmaceutical companies a clear advantage in their so-called "right of first approval," which in effect amounts to 2 chances to match the price offered by a generic manufacturer. This provision, to the dismay of Médecins Sans Frontières and other humanitarian organizations, will reduce the incentive for generic companies to enter bids and hence undermine the competition necessary to drive the price of essential medicines down. We hope the bill will pass, but in a strengthened form.

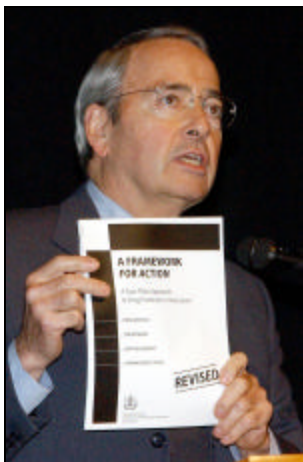
In the long night of December 2002 to August 2003, when the WTO's negotiations on drug patents were unresolved, an estimated 2.4 million Africans died of AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. As Canadian parliamentarians take a breather over the holidays, as the Liberal government retools its machinery under a new leader, as indus-

(Continued on page 3)

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Mayor's Forum (continued)

about harm reduction, and how it led to his expulsion from his right-wing political party and the election of another progressive Vancouver Mayor,



Philip Owen.
Darren Handschuh photo.

Larry Campbell. Mr. Owen is now a speaker and advocate for the Four Pillars approach, touring with the film "FIX".

While Mayor Gray acknowledged the seriousness of the problem of drug addiction and drug-related crimes in Kelowna, he expressed optimism that a concerted effort by the community and support agencies would have a significant impact on these issues.

Once a Four Pillars plan is in place, it will be possible to request financial support from the federal and provincial governments.

The 14-page transcript of the event is available on the ARC website at http://www.arcok.com/Four_Pillars_Forum.pdf

There is a meeting to form a Four Pillars task force on January 7, 2004, and to date 75 people have indicated an interest in attending to see if they can become part of a Kelowna-based, positive solution. If you are interested in being part of the task force, please let us know. *(Editor's note: deadlines for printing ARC News do not allow us to include results of the Jan 7 Task Force meeting until the next issue).*

It is important that current and previous injection drug users (IDU's) be active members of the task force. Without some serious input from this sector, the efforts of all the other caring and concerned citizens will mean nothing. Vancouver has an organization called VANDU - Vancouver and Area Network of Drug Users. We would like to see a "KANDU" form in Kelowna.

Though undoubtedly a large percentage of Kelowna's drug use is hidden in the living rooms and basements of our fair city, a substantial number of the homeless and marginalized citizens of our city also use drugs. It is far more likely—and appropriate—that the latter will form the group.

Last, but not least I want to acknowledge the community agencies that worked together on this project to make it a reality:

• Okanagan Aboriginal AIDS Society
• AIDS Resource Centre, Okanagan & Region
• NOW Canada
• Kelowna Gospel Mission
• Kelowna Boys and Girls Club
• City of Kelowna

If you have any questions, please call 250.862.2481, or send me an email: bmairs@oaas.ca

A Definition of Harm Reduction

From the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU)

Harm Reduction is a set of practical and proven strategies with the goal of meeting drug users "where they are at" to help users reduce harms associated with their drug use. Together with the citizens of Vancouver VANDU works to minimize harmful effects of drug use by calling for effective, well researched interventions such as legal maintenance of drugs, housing for users, safe fixing sites, employment opportunities and accessible detox and treatment.

Patents

(Continued from page 2)

try leaders and lobbyists regroup and strategize, the clock of suffering and death keeps ticking for the uncounted millions of people in developing countries afflicted by treatable infectious disease. If we can salvage just one political achievement for the year 2003, let it be the will to pass an amendment to the Patent Act that sets a worthy standard for the world.

1. Reference: Bill C-56, *An Act to amend the Patent Act and the Food and Drugs Act*, 2d sess, 37th Parl, 2002-2003 (1st reading 6



Kate Alexander, Editor

This newsletter is the official publication of the AIDS Resource Centre—Okanagan & Region (ARC). It is published four to six times a year. The materials in this newsletter are meant to be consistent with ARC purposes which are: a) to promote awareness of HIV/AIDS, b) to develop and provide educational resources, c) to support those infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS. Even so, the opinions and comments within this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect ARC policy. The newsletter does not endorse the use of any particular treatment or therapy. The Board, staff and volunteers of ARC do not accept the risk of, nor responsibility for any damages, costs or consequences of any kind which may arise or result from the use of information featured in this newsletter. Persons using the information provided through this newsletter do so by their own decision and hold the society's board, staff and volunteers harmless. Submissions for publication may be sent to our office at any time; publication deadline is three weeks prior to publication date. Submissions will be returned if a request is made in writing and an address is provided. Reprinting and distributing this newsletter is openly encouraged.

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2nd Annual ARC Gala & Silent Auction

Join us at 7 p.m. on **Saturday, March 6th, 2004** at the **Rotary Centre for the Arts** for a great evening of food, wine and entertainment! Enjoy fabulous entertainment by Ellen Churchill, and bid on some fantastic auction items. Tickets only \$15 each ~ available at ARC and Bernard Callebaut Chocolates (in Guisachan Village).



A letter from South Africa

By **Neal McKenna**

The best way to get a job done is to roll up your sleeves and simply do it yourself. That's exactly what Nelson Nhabinde and Bonkazi Mphulanyana did following the year 2000's World Conference Against Racism held in Durban. Starting with nothing more than an idea, **HAPYD** – the **HIV/AIDS Awareness Project for Youth Development** action group – was created.

"As the conference was coming to an end," says Nhabinde, "we came to the conclusion that we must put out our own platform. Our mission was very basic – to provide and render services to children infected with, or affected by HIV/AIDS – particularly AIDS orphans and other vulnerable children. We quickly drafted a proposal letter to get funding and started handing it out to the delegates."

Today HAPYD is an independent, non-profit organisation registered under the South African Department of Social Development. Its mission has been redefined to

"provide for and render services to" HIV/AIDS infected or affected children, ages 0 to 7-years. "HAPYD presents a valuable and essential service," says Board member, Miranda Post, who hails from Merritt, BC. "A lot of these little people fall through the cracks."

"...South Africa's department of Social Welfare does provide financial assistance to members of the immediate family in supporting AIDS orphans," Post continues. "It amounts to about R150 per month per child. It isn't very much but at least it's something. However, for other fam-

for a relative's orphaned child, it's a different story. For them, it's a lot trickier to get financial help from the government and this is where HAPYD attempts to fill the gap."

"When we work in Soweto, we identify children who are orphans or vulnerable," says Bonkazi Mphulanyana. "We go to their homes to identify their needs – financial requirements, school, daycare, clothing, food – whatever they need. It is tailored to each child."

HAPYD is also hard at work in the community. "One person in ten in South Africa has HIV/AIDS," Nelson Nhabinde further explains. "So, in the schools, we teach children to become accepting of one another if classmates have HIV or AIDS. We strive to offer support and care, and to teach the children to do the same. We don't want the kids to become outsiders because they have been abused or they have AIDS." Beyond this, HAPYD works in community centres to help infected adults find gainful employment by doing beadwork and crafting other items for retail sale. Daycare is provided for their children and on-the-spot healthcare is also available.

Like most non-profit agencies, HAPYD is constantly on the lookout for new sources of funding. "In addition to the American Jewish World Service," says Post, "HAPYD is supported by the Nathan Cummings Foundation and the Margaret Stenger Foundation. Although that might sound quite impressive, the financial support we receive from them is not sustainable and we're constantly searching for other sources. As a matter of fact, individual members

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What's the connection?

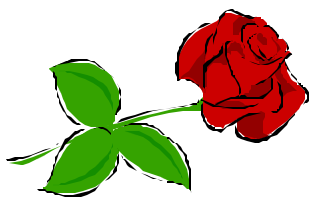
Neal McKenna used to live in Kelowna, where he was a frequent contributor to *Okanagan Life* magazine. He also helped us with our Acts of Choice program. Now he lives in Johannesburg, because...

Neal's partner **Navin Vasudev** (who was on staff at ARC), got a plum job with **Civicus**, an international alliance dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society (www.civicus.org).

HAPYD has its headquarters at the Civicus building in Johannesburg.

Volunteer Appreciation Social

We invite all volunteers from ARC and OAAS to join us for a Volunteer Appreciation Social Open House on Wednesday, January 21st, 3:00-7:00 p.m.



Come in and see our new office and allow us to thank you for all you do to assist and support us!

Volunteer Profile: Marie amaron

ARC's Resource Centre (a.k.a. the Library) has one resource we just couldn't be without: Marie Amaron.

Marie keeps a low profile, but you might meet her if you come in on a Monday afternoon. She's one of those incredibly efficient people who keep a system running so smoothly you don't have to think about it—it's because she's a Virgo, she says.

But Marie does not meet the usual stereotype of a librarian...back in the 1930's, Marie was a professional dancer in Europe, working in such high profile companies as the Folies Bergères in Paris and the Sporting Club in Monte Carlo.

During WWII, Marie joined up as a WAAF—the Women's Auxilliary Air Force in Eng-

land—and there met and married a Canadian war correspondent. They had three kids and lived in various parts of Ontario and Quebec. Since her divorce 30 years ago, she's lived in BC. Though she's had a variety of jobs, she's never worked in a library until now.



Marie is our longest serving volunteer, with an amazing 7 years of service. "This is my way of paying my respects to my two best friends in the whole world—younger gay men who were also dancers, and who died of AIDS back in the 1980's," she says.

She challenges other elderly people to volunteer. "ARC has been very welcoming. I've found my niche here—I love books and I can work independently."

Speakers' Bureau Training

On Saturday, January 24, ARC is offering a day-long workshop on AIDS education.

Getting the word out to people at risk prevents infections and reduces discrimination. Educating those who care for people with HIV creates understanding and better care.



If this sounds like something you'd enjoy, call Kate at 862 2437. Training is free of charge to ARC volunteers. Core Training is required, but you can arrange to take it at the next opportunity.

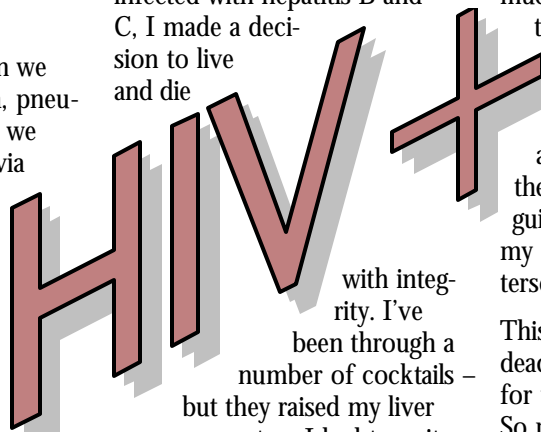
Richard's Rant

By Richard Babcock

I find it curious that when we think of cancer, leukemia, pneumonia, multiple sclerosis, we have a pretty good idea (via television, personal experience, friends) of what that person is going through. The pain they are suffering, the stages they face, the treatments they endure and the way they die.

Yet, when you mention HIV or AIDS, no one has a clue.

I liken it to having the flu, 365 days a year. Diagnosed positive in September of 1998 and co-infected with hepatitis B and C, I made a decision to live and die



with integrity. I've been through a number of cocktails – but they raised my liver enzyme count so I had to quit. I'm currently on some that seem to be working – 30 pills a day.

I tell everyone I'm HIV and still positive (which is sometimes a lie) and I try to tell them how much I have fulfilled my desire to change for the better, and to find some inner peace and closure. I don't have to bottle up my emotions any more because I don't do the things that make me feel guilty any more. While some of my behaviours may seem quite terse, at least I'm always truthful.

This disease will either kill you dead or kill you alive, so let's try for the latter and tell our stories. So people, when they hear HIV/AIDS, will know what we endure, to the best of our abilities.

*To remain whole,
be twisted!*

*To become straight,
let yourself be bent.*

*To become full,
be hollow.*

*Be tattered, that you
may become re-
newed.*

- Lao Tse,
Chinese philosopher,
6th century BC

ARC Staff: Comings and Goings



KATE Alexander
Educator & ARC
News Editor

Our regular readers must have the impression that ARC and OAAS have a cast of thousands, as we introduce new smiles almost every issue. Though there's enough work for dozens, in fact we are now at the staffing level we are funded for—two at OAAS and nine plus a casual at ARC.

Some of those smiling faces have moved on. **Melissa Hill** (Volunteer/Marketing Coordinator) decided to make health and family her priority, leaving last June. We have hired Karen Alexander to take on that challenging job. **Chris Jenner** (Client Support) is working in London, England and we hear she's enjoying that adventure. Our summer students, **Hin** and **Beau**, are of course back to school (but we hope they come back).



KARIN Bauer
Client Support

The various practicum students are volunteers, and stay for one to three months. We really appreciate the diversity they bring. Our latest practicum student, **Rosamond Graham** of the OUC Social Work program, starts this month.

Our full complement of paid staff:

- **Daryle Roberts**, ARC Executive Director and OAAS Acting Executive Director. He's been the big boss since 1997
- **Brian Mairs**, OAAS Coordinator (off reserve) Associated with ARC and/or OAAS for 8 years

Karen Alexander Introduces Herself



KAREN ALEXANDER
Volunteers/Marketing

I am very excited to have joined the team at ARC AIDS Resource Centre as the Volunteer and Marketing Coordinator! It is both an honour and a pleasure to be able to work with such a wonderful and dedicated group of individuals, both staff and volunteers.

I have a rather varied and extensive background in the volunteer and not-for-profit sector as a Volunteer, Director and Staff member. Most recently I served as Executive Director for the Central Okanagan Heritage Society, and am currently serving my third term on the Board of Directors for C A S E Y (Community

Against Sexual Exploitation of Youth). Prior to finding my "niche" in non-profits, I worked for many years in the local hospitality and tourism industry with formal education in B.C.I.T.'s Hospitality/Tourism Management Program.

I was born and raised in Kelowna and continue to enjoy life here with my husband Scott and our two young daughters, Mary and Danielle. In my free time I enjoy spending time with family and friends, gourmet cooking and reading, and volunteering in support of my children's and community activities.

I look forward to meeting everyone associated with ARC ~ if there is any way I can enhance the quality of YOUR volunteer experience here please give me a call!

- **Julie Desautels**, OAAS Outreach Worker (on-reserve). With OAAS and/or ARC since 1993
- **Lance Talbott**, ARC Administrative Manager, has been with ARC since June 2003
- **Terri Ross**, ARC Client Support Worker, was hired after a successful practicum in 1998
- **Kate Alexander**, ARC Educator/Speakers' Bureau Coordinator, started in June 2002
- **Crystal Brower**, ARC/OAAS Bookkeeper, hired in September 2002
- **DeborahJoy Bolton**, ARC Client Support Worker, started in August this year. A.K.A. "DJ"
- **Karen Alexander**, ARC Volunteer/Marketing Coordinator, is the newest staff member, who arrived on December 1, 2003
- **Karin Bauer**, ARC Client Support Worker, casual/on call. She started in October 2003.

Yes, there's potential for confusion. **Karen and Kate share a last name.** There's even a slight resemblance, though as far as they know, they're not related. Remember: Karen is the smaller of the two, and wears glasses. Kate is the one that wears weird coloured shoes. **Karen and Karin share a first name, almost.** But their names are pronounced differently. Karin (pronounced Careen) is much taller.

New to ARC News?

We have increased our circulation yet again. If you sponsored the AIDS Walk, collected \$50.00 or more in pledges or donated that amount, you've been added to the list.

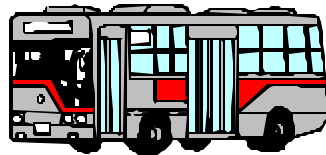
While ARC News is expensive to print and send, we believe a larger circulation is worth it for the increase in AIDS awareness. However, if you are putting it directly into your recycle bin, God(dess) forbid, please drop me a line and I'll take you off the list. Or, we can send you an e-mail alert when it's posted at www.arcok.com to save a printed copy.

If you are not on the mailing list but want to be, I would be happy to add your name.

Editor: Kate 862-2437;
educator@arcok.com

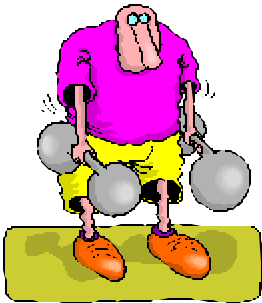
BUS Passes

The AIDS Resource Centre continues to help our clients access the bus pass program through the Ministry of Human Resources; all you have to do is call **1-888-661-1566** to order your bus pass. Bring in the signed application and let us take care of the rest.



ACCESS PASS Parkinson Recreation Centre

I expect many of you have made a New Year's resolution to get back in shape. The **Parkinson Recreation Centre** (PRC) has a program called the Access Pass, which allows people who are on disability to use the pool; gym and weight room, and the AIDS Resource Centre will help with the cost of this pass for our clients. To get the pass, go to PRC on **Tuesdays between 10 a.m. and noon** and ask for Louise; you must bring identification with you as well as a cheque stub proving that you are on disability. The Access Pass is very reasonably priced, so take advantage of this program and get out, socialize, and get in shape!!! If you have any more questions about this just give your support worker a call.



HAPYD *(continued from page 4)*

of our Board often contribute their own money to pick up the slack."

Fieldworkers and the small staff that operates the HAPYD office often have to wait well past the end of the month for their pay envelopes. "When it comes between doing the payroll or buying packets of food or vitamins for maybe 60 kids, the kids get first consideration," says Post. "It's really very difficult to keep it all afloat. Typically, there isn't enough funding for basic things like ink cartridges, stationery, bus fares or a health insurance plan. But somehow, everyone keeps chugging along and we make it through another day."

In 2003, HAPYD expanded its programmes beyond Johannesburg to include children living in Cape Town and Durban. And now, besides assisting in providing food and shelter, HAPYD also has also become a resource centre where condoms are freely distributed and information on HIV/AIDS is openly shared with the community. For more information about how you can help, contact HAPYD at news@civicus.org.

Resources for positive women

Oak Tree Clinic Women's and Family's HIV Centre

The Oak Tree Clinic, part of Women's and Children's Hospital in Vancouver, provides care for women, children, and youth with HIV/AIDS. They also provide support for affected families.

The clinic offers medical consultation, educational services, access to clinical research, and consultation for community health care professionals and agencies. Self-referrals are accepted.

4500 Oak Street, Vancouver, V6H 3N1
Ph. 604-875-2212 Fax: 604-875-3063

OUC STUDENTS' UNION OPENS WOMEN'S CENTRE

The Okanagan University College Students' Union has opened up a Women's Centre at the North Kelowna campus. The new Women's Centre is an important asset not only to OUC, but to the community as well. "With 100% of Provincial funding for BC's Women's Centres being cut as of April 2003, the opening of our Centre couldn't come at a better time," states Rosamond Graham of the Students' Union. The Centre is a safe space for women to access information, referrals to services within the community, and support from their peers. The Centre is run solely by volunteers and generous donations. If you are interested in volunteering, have something to donate, or would like more information about the Centre, please contact Rosamond Graham at vpacademic@oucsak.bc.ca or 250-762-5445 ext.7283

Flaming Arrows

The Aboriginal community never fails to amaze me. If we are not fighting for social services funding, we are fighting each other over why we didn't get funding, especially from the Feds.

It has been well documented that Aboriginal populations in Canada are well overrepresented in various areas of health concerns including: diabetes, HIV, hepatitis, Foetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effects (FAS/E), and drug abuse (including alcohol and tobacco

abuse), yet health Canada continues to give contracts to organizations other than those specifically designed to assist those most in need.

Most of us can live with the institutionalized bigotry as we continue to educate bureaucrats about hierarchy of social need based on race, but from time to time the government will award two or more contracts to one Aboriginal organization for specific work, leaving the rest of us out in the cold.

This is where we get "flaming arrows".

The have-not agencies find

ways to simultaneously smile at the agency with the money, while plotting ways to ensure the wealth is redistributed in the following year. The funded agencies are well aware of this and smile back while protecting their data closer than they would their own children. All that the non-native community sees is the infighting between the Aboriginal organizations, and they try to stay out of the way.

Bitter?

No, not me, I'm the one with the fire extinguisher trying to keep things civil, but I need a little help in doing so.



(250) 862-2481

www.aaas.ca

Introducing (again): Top AIDS Walk FundraiserTracy Hansen

Tracy Hansen and his team, the Chocolate Chips, from Bernard Callebaut Chocolates, won the top walker and top team awards for their amazing efforts in collecting pledges.

Not only that, but Tracy has won the **top walker award for the entire Pacific Region for the 3rd year running!**

Tracy collected \$3065, while the Chocolate Chips' team total was \$4200. Other top teams were Our Lady of Lourdes and Starbucks. The total raised by all walkers in 2003 was just short of \$23,000.

Thanks to all our walkers, pledges and volunteers, and to Tracy in particular. You are awesome!



Tracy Hansen displays his award—for the third time.



New Pride Centre at OUC

The Okanagan University College Student's Association welcomed about fifty guests for the opening of the Pride Resource Centre on October 6, with special guest Svend Robinson, Member of Parliament for Burnaby-Douglas, giving an inspiring speech .

Director Krista Gallant, who is also president of the OUT at OUC club, would like to thank all of those who came to support the centre and invite people to drop by and check out the great resources for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered students. The centre is located in the downstairs of the Student Services Building at the North Campus, and can be reached at 762-5445 ext. 6209 or at prideresourcecenter@hotmail.com.

OUT at OUC—and a few other places in Canada— MP Svend Robinson cuts the ribbon.

Improving access to public schools

By Kate Alexander, Educator

"Rub the chapstick on one balloon, and water-based medical lubricant on the other". These were the words of my predecessor, Ron van der Meer, trying to do a condomless condom demonstration for teachers.

In this subversive presentation at a Professional Development day last October, ARC intended to help teachers feel comfortable when dealing with sexuality, drugs and death, all part of AIDS education, and to encourage teachers to use our services.

Though we are one of the approved agencies for giving presentations in public schools, ARC has received few invitations. Youth are one of the At Risk groups identified in the provincial HIV/AIDS strategy. What's the problem?

School District 23 (Kelowna) no

longer employs dedicated Family Life Education teachers, and it seems other Okanagan school may soon lose theirs. Fortunately, Family Life is still part of the provincial curriculum. So why don't teachers come knocking at our doors? I'd have thought teachers would jump at the opportunity to bring in free guest speakers (some of whom are living with HIV).

At a meeting Ron and I attended with the Clara Sulz, Director of Primary Education in charge of the Family Life program for SD 23, we discovered that there are a couple of barriers. One, the teachers don't know about us. Our mail outs to teachers get waylaid by the school district (the rationale is that teachers would be overwhelmed with junk mail). Two, they may not trust us to follow the curriculum to the letter. Fair enough—teachers stand to lose their job if

it is discovered that, for instance, they allowed condoms into their classrooms.

School District officials consider that giving a condom demonstration is equivalent to an anti drug educator letting kids sniff a marijuana plant.

It became very clear to us that policies are largely dictated by those parents who write or call with concerns.

On January 28, ARC will give a 15 minute presentation to the Board of School Trustees (those elected to provide direction to the District). With your help, we can change harmful policies. Please lobby your kids' teachers or principal, or the School Board Trustees of SD23 for **comprehensive** AIDS education—including both abstinence messages and **complete** instruction on condom use.

"...it became clear to us that [school district] policy is largely dictated by parents who call with concerns...."

To contact the Board of Trustees for SD23:

Chair: Moyra Baxter
mbaxter@sd23.bc.ca

Vice-chair: Caryl Horan
choran@sd23.bc.ca

School District Office
phone: (250)860-8888
fax (250) 860-9799

A complete list of Trustee contact information is found at:
<http://sd23.bc.ca/districtinfo/brdoftrustees.html>

C'est la Vie ...C'est La Mor te*

Thoughts from this side of the coin

I have tried to live without thinking of my fate
I'm not sure whether to live to die,
Or think more than a day ahead and pursue life.

I notice it affects my personal contacts.
They feel I don't care –
I'm just afraid.

I am my own judge
And have leveled harsh punishments on myself
In the hope of growing.

It's funny that only two weeks ago
I realized how much energy and work
That I had put into my quest for integrity.
(Five years later)

That feeling of pride washed over me,
As a wave on the rocks,
Cruel, but an excellent test of commitment.
What's left is a frightened man,
Alone in a world of labeling and prejudice.

I may have brought it on myself –

But I have changed,
I'm no longer that fool.
I don't do those old behaviours any more.

I try to tell those still suffering people
To use me as an example of what not to do.
My wish is that no one has to suffer –
A few safety precautions are all that's necessary.

Too bad I have to be dying, to smarten up.

Since I'm facing my own mortality,
My attitude has been very introspective.
I'm learning to say no...I'm learning slowly.

I've never worked so hard to be me;
I hope you never get sick!
If you do, look for that man or boy in yourself,
The one with the NAIVITE.
Still curious about life –
He deserves a chance
In life and death.

R. Babcock

*That's the life...that's the death

NOTICE BOARD

ARC's Hours

Our client service hours are
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Speakers' Bureau

We provide free, interactive HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C presentations that are geared to your group's needs. Call Kate to book a presentation: 862-2437



Want to volunteer as a speaker?

Speakers Bureau Training is offered on Saturday January 24th. See page 4 for details.

Gala and Silent Auction

**7 p.m. on Saturday, March 6th,
Rotary Centre for the Arts.**

Ellen Churchill performs.
Tickets only \$15 each.
See page 4 for details



New! Chiropractic Care

Dr. Derek Ginter will be paying visits to ARC. Call 862-2437 and speak to your support worker to arrange for your free session.



Reiki & Healing Touch

Clients: enjoy the relaxing and balancing benefits of a quiet hour with Toshie. Call 862-2437 to book your free Tuesday session.

Client Support Hours

Kelowna

Drop-in hours are Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to noon. At other times, an appointment is necessary.
Call 862-2437.

Outside Kelowna, call 1-800-616-2437 to book an appointment (dates below), which will be between 9 am and 4 pm. Sorry, no drop-ins.

Vernon: Every second Wednesday, including Jan 14, 28; Feb 11, 25; Mar 10, 24.

Penticton: Every second Tuesday: Jan 6, 20; Feb 3, 17; Mar 2, 16, 30

South Okanagan and Similkameen. Call for an appointment, which will be on the second Tuesday of the month.



Free Coffee

Starbucks provides FREE coffee for ARC clients. Please ask at the reception desk.

ARC Membership

For a small fee, you can support ARC by becoming a member. For those who are already members, it's time to renew. Membership entitles you to vote on issues that affect the agency, and the fee helps cover the cost of this newsletter.

The fees for membership are:

\$12/year - individual; \$25/year - agency; \$100 - lifetime

Please take the time to fill out this membership application and drop it off at our office or mail it to:

ARC, 101-266 Lawrence Ave, Kelowna, BC V1Y 6L3



ARC Membership application

Members must agree to uphold the aims of the Society and maintain confidentiality.

Name: _____

Mailing address: _____

Postal code: _____

E-mail address: _____

(Check here ? to receive ARC News by e-mail only)

Fee paid: ? \$12 (individual); ? \$25 (organization);

? \$100 (lifetime).

Make cheques payable to **AIDS Resource Centre**