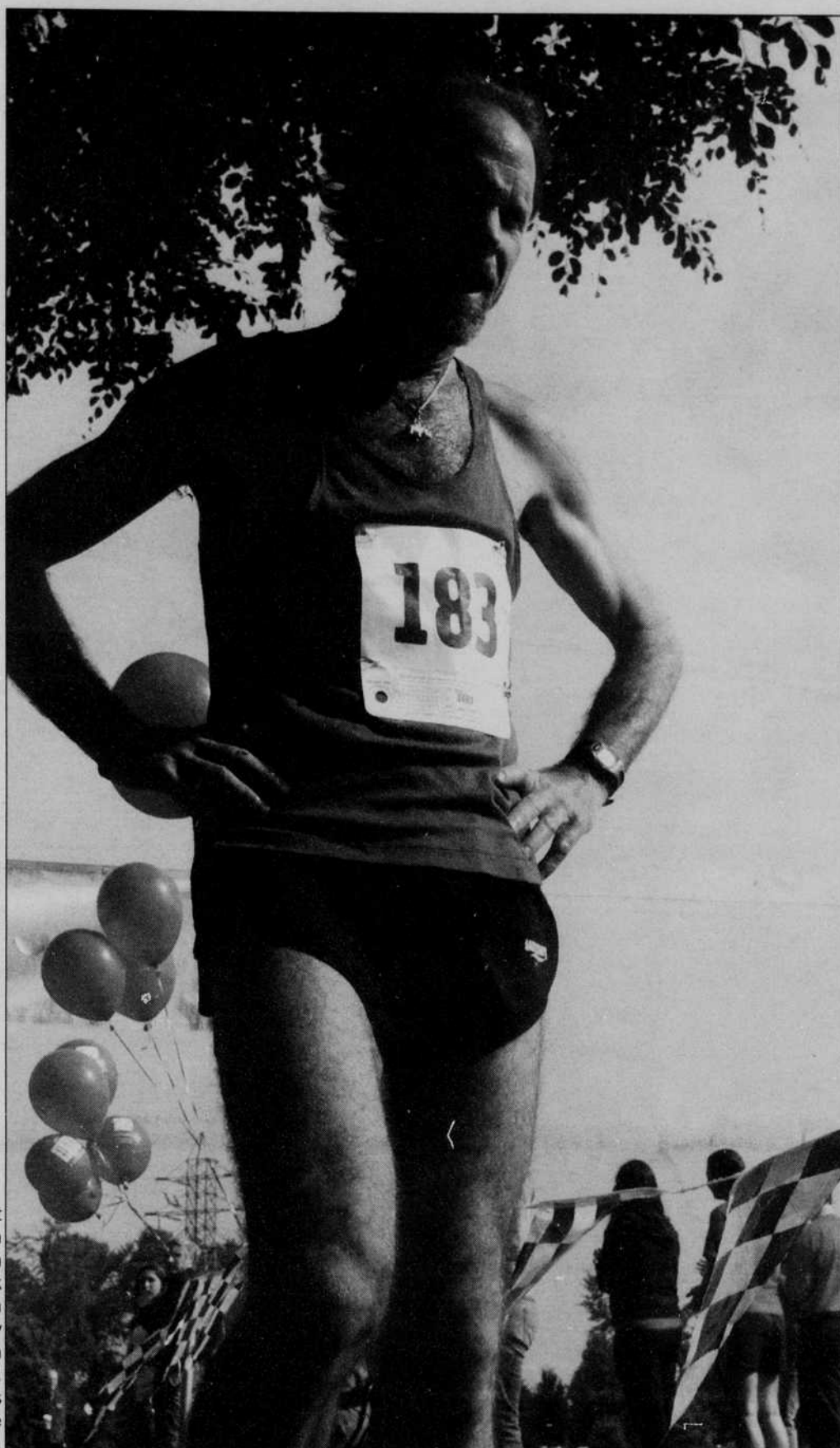




Scott Buttinghausen finished first in the 5k River Walk and Run on Saturday morning with a time of 16:54. The run was organized by the HIV Alliance.

LAUREN WIMER | SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

HIV: Alliance helps clients with finances

Continued from page 1

Rodrigues said. He raised \$2,000 from 80 sponsors this year, asking each of them for \$18 — \$1 for every year he has been infected with HIV.

"Not long ago this was a death sentence," said Development Assistant Lani Edholm, who helped put together Saturday's River Walk.

"Every six days, a new case of HIV is diagnosed in Lane County," Edholm said. "You can carry the virus for 10 years and not know you have it."

She said the fastest-growing demographic for infection internationally is people ages 15-24, but in Lane County men who have sex with men are most at risk. However, if the virus is not controlled in Lane County, the statistics in the region could quickly change to match the international at-risk demographic, putting a larger percentage of the population in danger.

Volunteer Jim Robinson set up a memorial where participants could pick up a red-ribbon pin to symbolize someone who is fighting HIV or has been lost to AIDS and walk on behalf of that person. He said he would like to build a permanent memorial in Eugene.

"It's important for this event that

people understand the gravity of the situation," Robinson said. "Forty-four million are infected internationally."

Community leaders, including Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy and Eugene Police Chief Robert Lehner, walked with volunteers and fundraising teams on balloon-lined paths along the Willamette River. Drag queens waved a rainbow flag, and 23 members of the percussion group Samba Já beat drums as they crossed the finish line.

The alliance wanted to raise \$30,000 this year, and Development Director Michele Erickson said she believes the group may have come close.

The alliance has more than 700 volunteers who make up about 70 percent of the organization. University sororities Gamma Phi Beta and Alpha Phi Omega helped set up the free breakfast.

"I couldn't have done it without them," Food Manager Heather Penman said of the sororities' contributions.

During an awards ceremony hosted by KVAL-TV's Seth Wayne, prizes were awarded to the teams and individuals who raised the most money from family and friends. Volunteer Christin Bregman single-handedly brought in \$2,160, taking first place.

Team CHUCK (Cure HIV Using Caring Kids) took first place for teams, with a total of \$2,500 raised.

"We've been incredibly successful," Youth Program Director Niki Martin said. "Last year we talked to 10,000 (Oregon) youth, and this year we want to reach 15,000." She said the alliance focuses on at-risk teens in shelters, rehabilitation centers and public schools.

"College students have a whole new set of risks," Martin said. "We forget that they're experimenting with things they've never done before, and when people drink they make different decisions."

Lang said the alliance helps clients get their finances in order, and in some cases it also helps pay for medication.

The alliance helped Rodrigues pay to see specialist after experiencing a variety of harmful side effects from the medications a general practitioner had prescribed him.

"I'm on my fifth cocktail of medication," Rodrigues said. "Right now I only take eight to 10 pills a day."

The HIV Alliance is always looking for interns, volunteers and donations. For more information, call 342-5088.

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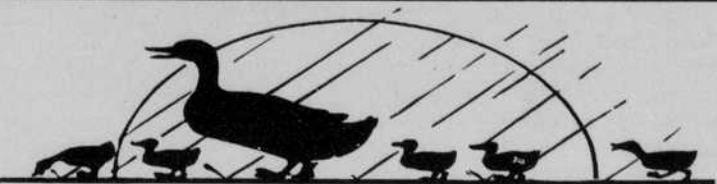
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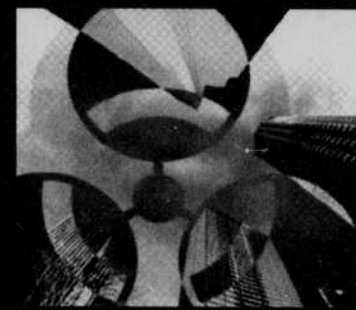


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