

AIDS. A young man calls: he and his wife use IV drugs occasionally, but they "aren't addicts or anything"; he doesn't want to get his own "works" because he's not really a user, so they just share with their friends. Is it *really* risky? A man calls about his wife, a nurse who was accidentally stuck by a used syringe at work; the hospital is running tests. They are already practicing safe sex, but they have a new baby; he wants to know if she should stop breast feeding until they get the test results back. A woman calls: a single mother with two small children, she has AIDS and needs a legal referral; she wants to write a will. A gay man calls: his lover died last week; he needs to talk to someone.

Most callers just want to know symptoms, or what is risky, what is not. They want some sort of reassurance. Some callers are repeats, lonely people; some are cranks, kids playing around or obscene callers. But most are genuine calls; we listen, and we try to encourage common-sense behavior without heavy moralizing.

8:52 pm

The last call of the night is a woman who works in health care for the Department of Corrections. She has a question about the life span of the virus outside the body. Could it live, say, in dried blood and if so, how long? Questions like this are difficult to answer; medical science

still doesn't understand the virus entirely. Each Hotline volunteer goes through an initial training that covers basic current medical data on the virus. We constantly receive updates; volunteers agree to be in the office a minimum of once a week in order to stay current on the information. But we don't know everything. I tell the caller what I do know. Then she asks about guards who deal with fights. Shouldn't prison workers be allowed to know who has AIDS? What exactly is the civil rights issue involved? We talk some more.

After her call, I forward the phones to the answering machines, get my coat and turn out the lights. Through the windows another damp

office building stares blankly back from across 2nd Avenue, a light on here and there in the dark night. Most of us look forward to working the Hotline, even after a long, regular work day. It feels good. It's not much I'm doing, but it's something.

OREGON AIDS HOTLINE

Local number: 223-AIDS

Statewide toll-free number:

1-800-777-AIDS

Hours of operation:

Monday through Friday, 10 am to 9 pm

Saturday and Sunday, noon to 6 pm

L E T T E R S

Cascade AIDS Project, Brinker controversy unfolds

To the Editor:

On March 20, 1988, I accepted the "open to the public" invitation to sit in on the monthly meeting of the Cascade AIDS Project (CAP) board of directors meeting. It was the greatest disillusion I've experienced since the '60s.

The first substantive item of business was the Brinker Trust Fund, known throughout our statewide community for enabling countless persons with AIDS/ARC to remain in their homes by paying rent, utilities, food and other basics for survival when those resources have been severed from the diagnosed individual. As Brinker Chair Cal Hackler pointed out, this service goal was defined specifically by Mr. and Mrs. Chester Brinker, Sr., upon the death of their son, whose name is memorialized in the fund's title.

I sat aghast as I listened to a litany of irresponsibility on CAP's part. When Brinker became a subsidiary of CAP 2 or 3 years ago, it was with the understanding that one of the Brinker trustees sit on the CAP board as a permanent liaison between the two groups, that Brinker operate autonomously of CAP and that CAP release to Brinker 24 percent monthly of its unrestricted donations. Only the first two conditions have been met.

CAP has made payments to Brinker only under duress. Regular monthly payments of 24 percent of the unrestricted donations have never come in. 24 percent of last year's successful Walk-A-Thon never was handed over. The impression I got repeatedly and consistently from CAP Chair Mike McGowan was that as long as Brinker was solvent, it didn't need the money. He clearly is either not knowledgeable about, or else he desires to withhold from Brinker the ability to invest unspent funds to create even greater resources for our suffering family members. Beyond that is the element of trust: A contract was made to pay that money over. It has not been paid. Over \$28,600 was overdue and owing to Brinker as of the end of February 1988 — providing that CAP's bookkeeping has been maintained on a regular basis, a proviso for which there seems to be no real foundation.

CAP's board members seemed largely unaware of this infidelity, and most appeared quite disturbed. McGowan's focus seemed to be maintaining punctuality with the agenda (after starting 10-15 minutes late) rather than with the issue of a promise not honored and a seriously outstanding bill.

When the motion passed to hire a mediator to discuss the problems between the two boards, I was more than shocked. A mediator was not needed. Someone to write a check to Brinker

for a sum in excess of \$28,600 was needed. That was all.

Throughout the 20-30 minute rambling, CAP Executive Director Tom Koberstein sat silent. I cannot believe that he was unaware of this failure of CAP to pay. Did he know something that the other board members did not? No CAP financial report was made available at the meeting. There was discussion preceding this item on the agenda of spending \$31,000 just to put on this year's Walk-A-Thon, but no hard figures given as to CAP's financial status.

Where is the money? Does CAP have it? Or has CAP become so ineffective that people would rather give to Brinker, where they can see their money used directly for and with diagnosed people? Without Brinker's money to tabulate in with CAP's, would we perhaps see an organization whose health is no better than the people it is designed to serve?

With Brinker providing direct assistance to afflicted individuals, and with the State of Oregon having taken over much of the educational activities CAP was originated to perform, does that leave as CAP's primary product the many and excellent support groups it provides? All of these are facilitated by volunteers, anyhow. I have maintained active participation in these groups for well over two years. The essential support services they provide are truly outstanding. They ought to be maintained in prime condition.

Now CAP has chosen to spend more money — whose? — on a mediator to ameliorate feelings of basic social injustice and failure to pay. I can't help wondering if the 9 percent statutory rate of interest on many loans applies to this sort of debt. Banks mail notices to people who don't pay. Eventually, delinquent debtors are sent to collection agencies and then to bankruptcy court. Is CAP socially bankrupt? Is it living off a community name and letting other agencies provide the services for which we ostensibly pay with our donations?

These questions, and very likely others, need to be answered — and sooner than it has taken CAP to repay an organization which is working more fervently to assist people than anything I have seen in years.

Susie Shepherd

"Patti Rocks": blatant propaganda?

To the Editor:

I am writing about Eleanor Malin's review of *Patti Rocks* in the March issue of *Just Out*. I have been disturbed for some time that the

woman who reviews for you does not do so with a feminist, much less lesbian, perspective. Her reviews would fit comfortably in any of the mainstream papers in Portland. She reviews the art of the dominant-male culture by the standards set down by the dominant-male critics. She makes no attempt to evaluate the movies in the political context of a society that enforces heterosexuality and promotes the "cheerful darcy" theory of oppressed minorities and women.

Nowhere is this so blatant as in her review of *Patti Rocks*. This movie, according to Malin, shows up the boys and makes a strong affirmative statement about women. Ha! The boys get to talk about women in the most degrading terms possible, and they do this for a considerable portion of the film. The woman's so-called feminist manifesto is that she has decided to have and to keep the baby, and to raise it without any support from the man who fathered it. She's no whiney ball-and-chain running to lawyers for child support. Oh, no, she's an independent feminist. She makes choices. She doesn't let society dictate to her. She asserts herself, her biological imperative. She says, "Hey, before you tell me I can't get it, I'll tell you I don't want it." What a woman! And on top of that, having released him from all responsibility, she fucks him again!

There's nothing new here. We have been told for years that the liberated woman fucks men like a rabbit. So now, we're told, if she really has it together, she will want total responsibility for any children that might result from all this liberation. And she will go on fucking like a rabbit. Guess who benefits?

When the movie critic for a lesbian/gay paper gives column inches to such a blatant piece of propaganda and fails to evaluate the film in light of a lesbian perspective, she does a disservice to the paper and its readers. I cannot help feeling that if the paper were a totally lesbian publication such a review would never have made it into print.

Please hire a film critic who identifies with lesbian issues and values, one whose analysis goes beyond "We have let our men get away from us."

Caroline Gage
Portland

Eleanor Malin responds:

Patti Rocks is being advertised by its makers as a feminist film. The people who made it are all feminists, even the men. They didn't mean it as a recruiting device; if they did, it can't be working. They didn't mean it as a handbook on how to live one's life, either. Heterosexual women can get a little soft in the head over sex, just like men and lesbians can do, it's just that

they end up getting stuck with the unplanned pregnancies. Patti did suspect Billy was married, and they were using condoms, a far cry from the usual Hollywood situation where the sex is casual, unprotected, and nobody gets anything.

I don't think one must be a lesbian or even a woman to be a feminist. Some men have been walking out of *Patti Rocks* because they can't handle the sexist dialogue. Some women have been saying they should have stayed, to get the point. At any rate, *Patti Rocks* has caused the dialogue I predicted in my review. From the standpoint of art, raw, rough, and hard to metabolize as it was, the film gets across the negative aspects of macho reinforcement better than most other films. This arcane use of language against what adds up to a vast oppressed majority is a supremely efficient dynamic. Let's let those of us with our noses pressed against the pane get a chance to see what we're up against.

Eleanor Malin

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