



ACT UP

This space is the newsletter of ACT UP/Portland and is made possible by a grant from the MacKenzie River Foundation and Just Out.

What does it take to make you ANGRY?!

- 300,000 people dead from AIDS worldwide.
- We live in the only industrialized nation besides South Africa without a national health care system.
- We, as lesbians and gays, are being beaten up on the streets and systematically legislated out of existence.
- We can legally be thrown out of our homes, jobs and schools.
- The courts can take away our children and deny us legal protection in family matters.
- The American Medical Association funds Jesse Helms.
- Doctors are spurning AIDS patients. Of a survey of recent graduates, 63 percent intended to exclude AIDS patients from their practices, and 60 percent agreed with this statement: "Most gay patients with AIDS have brought the disease upon themselves."
- The Portland Police commit hate crimes. At the Quayle demonstration, they engaged in acts of gay bashing and misogyny by calling demonstrators faggots, cunts and bitches.
- Our own Sen. Hatfield votes against pro-gay and lesbian legislation while hiding in the closet.
- The *Oregonian* neglects to report on our issues and lives. How could they ignore the Gay Games?
- Portland's only lesbian bar closed to become a topless joint. And the Embers, the alternate choice for many dykes, has been charging women a cover, while letting men in for free. The owner, Steve Suss, has openly said that the large number of women are less than welcome; he wants his bar to be a men's bar.
- And what about the loss of our women's bookstore? Our visible public community resources are vanishing!

What about the women?!

There are no AIDS prevention or education efforts directed at women in Oregon, yet the number of women with AIDS is rising twice as fast as the overall rate, according to Oregon Health Division statistics. What's more, women develop AIDS and die faster than HIV positive men, within six months of receiving an AIDS diagnosis on average in the United States. Yet the support services for people with AIDS that exist in Oregon are proving to be ineffective in meeting the needs of women with AIDS, and little effort is being expended to create services for the various groups of women being affected by AIDS. Hold your health care providers, your physicians, your community-

based organizations, such as Cascade AIDS Project, your county health departments and the Oregon Health Division accountable and responsible for this lack of attention! Health care is a right, not a privilege! A new focus for ACT UP in the coming year will be national health care, so join us and get involved!

Here are some facts about AIDS:

Eighty-four percent of the women who die from AIDS are women of color.

The fastest-growing numbers of new AIDS cases are among women, many of them poor and women of color, homeless women, single mothers, I.V. drug users, or sexual partners of I.V. drug users. These women have already been shut out by the system and have little or no access to health care or information. AIDS is the leading killer of young black women in New York and New Jersey.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) keep no records of possible lesbian transmission.

Twenty-five percent of the lesbian/bisexual women entering methadone treatment programs in San Francisco are HIV infected. The government is unwilling to research the risks for gay women or their rate of infection because, according to one CDC official, "lesbians don't have much sex."

There have been no AIDS Clinical Trials Groups (ACTG) specifically targeting women with HIV and related immune disorders.

Since women are excluded from drug trials, side-effects and standard dosages for women remain unknown.

AIDS will soon be the fifth leading cause of death among all United States women of child-bearing age, according to CDC researchers.

ACT UP builds legislative and health agendas

ACT UP is working together with groups around the state to begin building agendas and lobbying efforts to enact progressive health care and lesbian and gay rights legislation in the next Oregon legislative session.

Efforts to put together a comprehensive gay rights bill for the state of Oregon are being organized this month. A community meeting is scheduled for Nov. 13 in the Portland building at 7 pm. Work parties will be formed to detail ideas such as partner rights to employee benefits and insurance, anti-discrimination in jobs and housing, and domestic partnership rights. Get involved and help shape our legal rights as lesbians and gays!

ACT UP is also working with progressive health care advocates as a member of the Oregon Health Action Campaign (OHAC). A planning meeting took place in October to discuss OHAC's targeted goals for 1991. They are: To lobby the state legislature to create a single payer health care system for Oregon and fight for insurance reform, as well as to demand adequate funding for last session's SB 27, a bill that broadened access to Medicare benefits to all below the poverty level, doubling the number of those eligible, without increasing its already burdened budget.

Miller/Marlboro boycott rally

We joined other cities around the country on Sept. 28 in a day of action aimed at keeping the pressure on Miller and Marlboro. More than one hundred people joined ACT UP on Stark Street to dump a keg of beer in the gutter and burn a giant mock pack of Marlboro cigarettes in the street. Two ACT UP demonstrators were arrested toward the end of the rally for spray painting on the sidewalk. Guess who prompted the police, who were merely watching from the distance, to make the arrests? A lesbian who came out of CC Slaughters, the only gay bar on Stark Street not involved in the boycott. She would rather that fellow lesbians and gays go to jail for writing "Boycott Miller" and "Stop Helms" on the sidewalk than support an effort to stop hate perpetuated against us.

Oregon Health Division responds to community concern

The Oregon Health Division has responded to pressure from ACT UP and a number of community-based health organizations by restoring free condom distribution to previous levels after an abrupt cutoff. ACT UP will be joining other community groups in forming a coalition concerned with HIV prevention policy, which will work with and advise the state Health Division.

Join us!

ACT UP is a nationwide nonviolent direct action group organized to fight the multiple issues surrounding AIDS. We hope that the gay and lesbian community will join us in fighting AIDS, homophobia, racism and classism. Whether you join ACT UP, work in coalition with us, or contribute money or resources, we want you to know that we appreciate your support. Call 775-4763 for information about purchasing ACT UP tee shirts, hats, buttons, posters and stickers. Also, we are in need of an office space and a copying machine! If you can help, call us at 232-1038.

We meet the first and third Wednesdays of every month at 7 pm at the Metropolitan Community Church basement, on the corner of 24th and NE Broadway. Enter on the Broadway side. Call 236-7837 to put an item on the agenda for discussion or action.

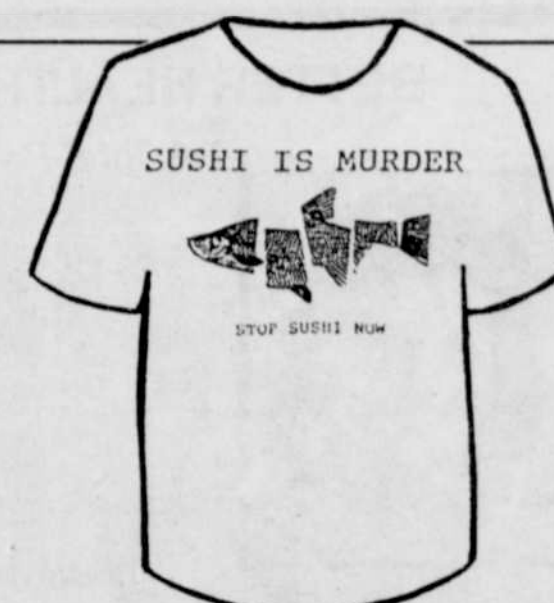
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