

The Wellness Issue

HIV and Mental Health

By David Chaillé, Staff Columnist

connection between the body and the mind.

Isolation

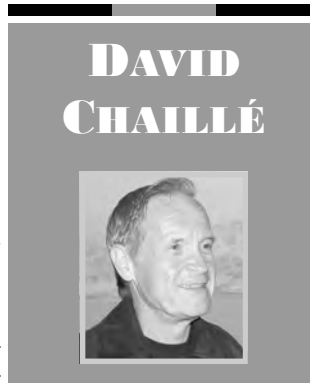
Many people with HIV suffer from fear, anxiety and depression. Frequently, HIV positive people tend to isolate in their homes or apartments. Because they minimize their contact with other persons, they do not get the visual and verbal feedback of interacting with others. This situation can lead to a distorted sense of reality that may progress to despair and depression.

Stigma

One of the underlying causes of social withdrawal is a perceived stigma associated with one's HIV status. Stigma takes the form of negative labels or stereotypes, disapproval, rejection, or moral judgment. Have you seen

(See HIV and Mental Health on page 8)

We all face challenges from time to time. Sometimes we perceive a particular challenge as a minor inconvenience and sometimes we view the challenge as a major traumatic event. We especially tend to react strongly to such events as the death of a loved one, a job loss, serious financial difficulties, a divorce or breakup in a relationship, or a significant health problem. In such cases, we often experience both physical and emotional responses to the challenge. Research has long shown that there is a strong



DAVID CHAILLÉ

Nutrients To Keep You Well

By Tammy Darke, MS,RD

Good nutrition is essential for optimal wellness. Nutrient needs are affected by HIV itself, medications, decreased appetite, decreased absorption, food intolerances, diarrhea, vomiting, aging and other medical conditions (e.g. heart disease). Here is a short list of some of the most important nutrients to consume for optimal wellness:



about 13 cups (3.0 liters) of fluid daily and women should aim for about 9 cups of fluid (2.2 liters) daily. Don't forget you can eat your fluids too! Foods that have a high water content are fruits, vegetables, yogurt, cottage cheese, ice cream, and soups. Try not to count on thirst for fluid needs: as we get older, our thirst mechanism does not work as well as when we were younger, preventing optimal fluid intake.

Vitamin D, the sunshine vitamin

It has been well known that vitamin D helps with bone health and calcium balance but increasing evidence is showing that this elusive vitamin may also help with immune function, and decrease the risk of certain types of cancer and heart disease. Even more alarming is the magnitude of data emerging regarding low levels of vitamin D in

(See Nutrients... on page 6)

Water is a nutrient too!

Approximately 60% of our body is water but medications, night sweats, and higher protein diets can lead to dehydration so more fluid is needed to stay healthy. The exact amount of water needed is debatable and varies on weather conditions, an individual's size, medical conditions, and exercise. In general, males should aim for

Inside this issue:

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| Random Acts of Art and Wellness | 2 | You Want To Be a Good Vegetarian? | 4 |
| Reiki: Let The Energy Flow | 3 | 12 Steps To Living Well With HIV | 5 |



People Who CARE
THE C.A.R.E. PROGRAM AND CLINICS ARE AFFILIATED WITH ST. MARY MEDICAL CENTER

Random Acts of Art and Wellness

(Or: Confessions of the Beaver's Daddy)

By Bob Pond, Staff Columnist

Yes, I, Bob Pond, am the “Daddy” of the odd little cartoon character, The Onion Beaver. He’s there in every issue of People Who Care. Always queerly dressed and offering some wry (some would say obscure) comment about the topic of the issue. Once in a while he steps back and it’s more personal (more on that later). For those who have been kind enough to wonder where he came from, or why an “Onion Beaver”, here is his origin story.

One night in the fall of 1975, I came home after an evening at Studio One. That evening was one of those magical nights when it seemed that every handsome man in the place wanted to dance (and more) with me. Confronted with too many choices (and too many Tequila Sunrises) I chose to come home alone, for a change. I had a book of blank pages and a fine-line marker, so I sat down to draw. A strange little character happened, and I captioned it “The Onion Beaver in a tuxedo refusing a sexual advance.” (he hadn’t yet found his “voice”). My lady roommate at that time was fascinated with Hustler magazine (their logo was a beaver in a construction hat). So that accounts for the “Beaver”. As to why the “Onion”—only the Tequila knows. And so he became a character I have revisited again and again for (count ‘em) 35 years.

Over time he became a way to let off steam, or just have a laugh at whatever’s grinding my butt to the bone today. He offered my partner Jeff a 40th birthday greeting (and an “Onion Beaver Fan Club President” T-shirt, which I also wore to give his eulogy), helped me keep hope alive for my acting career back in the day, and helped me memorialize the passing of family, friends, and pets.

When the subject of a newsletter came up at Peer Group, Kent Speirs asked me to draw a cartoon for it. I had no idea what to do, until I remembered my old friend the Beaver. He was obscure enough to do or say just about anything I needed him to, and besides, he dressed up nicely. It had been six or seven years since I’d last visited him. But he had been waiting patiently, and was ready for the spotlight again.

My father had always gotten a kick out of the Beaver, and he was very proud that he was going to be published after all that time. My Dad was my rock when I was first diagnosed with AIDS, so when he departed it was only right that the next issue’s cartoon saluted his passing.

This has been a bit of a long-winded introduction to the subject of my article. There are many ways that having a creative outlet can be just as important to our overall wellness as appointments with the doctor, or those damned pills we depend on.

In that same old notebook there are dozens of momentary

slices of my life on its pages. Some were notes on an idea for a play, or thoughts of a possible comic book and sketches of its characters. Some nights I just put my pen to the paper, and let it flow into free form shapes. I was reminded of all those hours spent with my sketches, my poetry, and my paintings of people and places in my past. I was also reminded that I didn’t even own a TV at the time, and didn’t miss it.

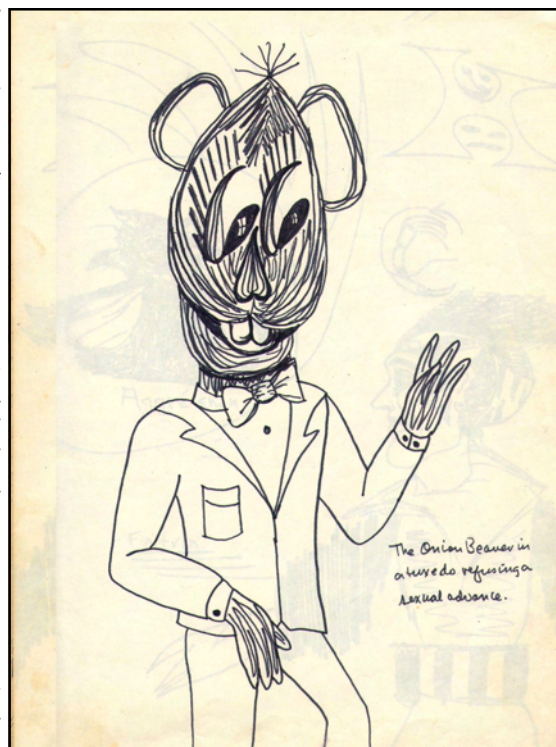
The overall point is that some thoughts and feelings don’t translate well into conversations with family, friends or loved ones. Some times it’s just easier to build a visual or verbal expression of them in some creative way.

And it doesn’t cost that much to do it, either. To be creative, you don’t need a computer with Photoshop and all the other bells and whistles. Nor do you need the \$100 set of oil paints and a stretched canvas. Try a kids’ water color set. They even come with a brush. If you have a

pencil and a notebook or sketch pad, or even a box of crayons and that brown paper bag from the food bank, you’re good to go. Give yourself permission to play.

Art and Craft are subjective by their very nature. So if writing and drawing are not your thing—try cutting pictures from a magazine and glue them to a piece of paper in a way that pleases you. You’ve just made a collage! If you have some old photos or cartoons from the paper, try scrapbooking. Pick up some yarn and try knitting or crocheting. Got a camera? Take a picture of the objects and shadows on your kitchen or coffee table. You could take a class and try your hand at ceramics.

(See Random Acts on page 10)



“The Onion Beaver in a tuxedo refusing a sexual advance”

Reiki: Let The Energy Flow

By Wade Clark, Staff Columnist

Dr. Oz recently explained how his wife, a Reiki Master, conducts Reiki treatments on his patients while he is operating on them. This is a new wave of health and healing treatment which includes the Body, Mind and Spirit. The combination of Reiki, an eastern practice, and western medicine are being used together because of the benefits patients are experiencing. Reiki is a complementary treatment like acupuncture or acupressure.

Reiki deals with energy, no matter what you call it: prana in India, Chi in China, elan vital in Europe, ki in Japan. There is no religion attached to it; it is pure energy. Reiki treatments are safe in any situation irrespective of disease or discomfort, but it is not a substitute for orthodox medicine. When it is integrated with orthodox medicine, the body is able to rebound quicker to achieve balance and harmony so that the benefits of the medication and healing progress more rapidly.

During a Reiki session, universal energy is transferred through the practitioner to the person receiving the treat-

ment. This is done by light touch while the person is fully clothed, although shoes may be removed. The energy is moved through the meridian lines similar to the process in acupuncture/acupressure. This process clears any blockages in the flow of energy, restoring a natural flow so that healing can take place.



As each one of us is unique, so is our experience with a Reiki treatment. But undoubtedly, one feels deeply relaxed as one's energy field is brought into balance. Many people say they feel as if they were lovingly being cared for and very safe.

Reiki treatments can be scheduled through the St. Mary Senior Center (you don't have to be a senior) which is located next to the CARE Dental Clinic. Reiki treatments are given by Susan Thomas, a Certified Hypnotherapist and Reiki Master. Sessions are \$20 for 45 minutes. To schedule, call Sandi Bazant at 562-491-9811.

The Senior Center also offers a 30-minute massage for \$20, available on Wednesdays.



People Who CARE

**Volume 9, Issue 2
Fall/Winter 2010**

**Edited by Paul Lovely
In Memoriam: Kent Speirs**

**Newsletter Staff Columnists:
Tammy Darke, M.S., R.D.
David Chaillé
Bob Pond
Wade Clark
In Memoriam: Louis Dixon**

**Guest Columnist: Madelynn Montoya
Cartoonist: Bob Pond**

www.careprogram.org

**People Who CARE
1043 Elm Ave., Suite 300
Long Beach, CA 90813
Email: paul.lovely@chw.edu**

All C.A.R.E. clients and staff are invited to send us comments, artwork, poetry, photographs, essays or other writing. Include your name, address, and phone number. All submissions are printed at the discretion of the editor.

People Who CARE is published by the C.A.R.E. Client Advisory Panel. The panel meets from 12pm-1pm on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at St. Mary in the Parr Health Enhancement Center, Bonzer Room. All are welcome.

So You Want To Be A “Good Vegetarian?”

Tips to thriving and being healthy on a vegetarian diet.

By **Madeynn Montoya, Guest Columnist**

About nine or so years ago after a particularly horrendous episode of Survivor, my 13-year-old self decided she would become a vegetarian to save the animals and be healthy. While I did succeed in doing my part to not eat meat, the healthy aspect of it all went right over my head. Essentially I became the carb-loving, vegetable-hating, fruit-loathing vegetarian. My diet was the epitome of “bad vegetarianism.” All I kept thinking throughout my teen years was; “I’m a vegetarian, that’s healthy for you. I eat better than everyone!” And with that naïve notion in my head, I ultimately ballooned to a scale-tipping 236 pounds by the end of my senior year in college. With my 5’5” frame and a BMI of 39.4 I was nearly teetering into Obese class III. My iron and iron saturation levels were well below the standard range, I had high cholesterol and elevated blood pressure. I was well on my way to a life of diabetes, hypertension, and malnutrition due to my poor food choices. But, one fateful night with the power of knowledge to back me up, I decided to take that first initial step to changing my life. I decided I was done being the “bad vegetarian.” It was time for me to take control of my life, my weight, and my health and become the quintessential “good vegetarian.”

Being a successful vegetarian is no easy feat. In order to be successful you have to be aware of your dietary needs. While vegetarians tend to generally have reduced chances of cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and hypertension, they may also be more susceptible to malnutrition if they aren’t aware of their nutritional requirements and intake. Although vegetarianism in itself is rewarding in many aspects, it may also pose a challenge for people living with HIV/AIDS who have increased nutritional needs. A vegetarian diet can be too low in calories and protein essential for maintaining weight and lean muscle mass long-term. That may be good for people who need to lose weight or lower their cholesterol but it can be a problem for an HIV-positive individual who may need additional protein, calories and other vitamins and minerals. However, as long as you are able to be fully aware of your nutritional needs and be smart with your food choices, there is no reason that anyone can’t be a successful “good vegetarian.”

Some key nutritional ingredients that vegetarians tend to lack and need to be aware of are iron, calcium, protein, vitamin D, vitamin B12, and zinc. Listed below are food items for each fundamental nutritional item that every vegetarian should know:

Iron: Sea vegetables like nori, wakame, and dulse are very high in iron. Less exotic but still good options are iron-

fortified breakfast cereals, legumes (chickpeas, lentils, and baked beans), soybeans, tofu, dried fruit (raisins and figs), pumpkin seeds, and broccoli. Eating these foods along with a food high in vitamin C (citrus fruits and juices, tomatoes, and broccoli) will help you to absorb the iron better.


Calcium: Milk and yogurt are top choices if you’re eating dairy products – although vegetarians will want to look for yogurt that does not contain the meat by-product gelatin. Calcium set tofu, fortified soymilk, calcium-fortified orange juice, green leafy vegetables, and dried figs are also excellent ways for vegetarians (and vegans) to get calcium.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids: Eggs and some products, such as soy milk and breakfast bars, are fortified with Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), an important omega-3 fatty acids. You can also try flaxseed, soybeans, and chia seeds.

Protein: Eggs and dairy products are good sources of protein, but also try nuts, peanut butter, tofu, beans, seeds, soymilk, grains, cereals, alternative meat products, and vegetables to get all the protein your body needs.

Zinc: If you’re not eating dairy foods or fish, make sure fortified cereals, dried beans, nuts, and soy products like tofu

(See Vegetarian on page 11)



PEER SUPPORT GROUP

**Wellness education & support
for people living with HIV**

3RD TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH

**PARR HEALTH ENHANCEMENT CENTER AT ST. MARY
1055 LINDEN AVE, LONG BEACH
GLENN ROOM , 2ND FLOOR**

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

**2011 SCHEDULE: JAN. 18, FEB. 15, MAR. 15, APR. 19, MAY 17,
JUN 21, JUL. 19, AUG. 16, SEP. 20, OCT. 18, NOV. 15, DEC. 20**

FOR MORE INFO, CALL (562) 624.4963

*SPECIAL THANKS TO LONG BEACH PRIDE AND
MOM'S PHARMACY FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT*

12 Steps To Living Well With HIV

By Paul Lovely, Editor

1. Accept the reality that you are living with HIV.

To live a full, healthy, happy life with HIV, you must first accept that it is a part of you. You may think this is obvious, but think for a moment about ways you might resist being HIV-positive, and your judgments about it. Do you have negative feelings about yourself for becoming infected, blame others, or fixate on your past mistakes that led to your infection? How do you feel about other people with HIV? Do you judge them harshly, and in doing so, judge yourself? All inner resistance is experienced as negativity in one form or another. And all positive change comes only after accepting what is.

2. Take personal responsibility for your well-being.

The power to live well with HIV dwells in you. You are responsible for your health. There are others—doctors, friends, family, lovers, therapists, pastors, pets, mentors, neighbors, and so on—who can support you, but none of them can make you healthy or happy. Investing others with the power to maintain your well-being is not only unfair to them (and impossible), but will invariably lead you to feel powerless, hopeless and frustrated. There are of course times when bad things just happen. But no matter what happens, you always have a choice about how to respond, to do what is best for yourself. Never give away this freedom to choose—it is one of the keys to your well-being.

3. Work effectively with your health care team.

A few things you should expect from your providers: a) that they are competent and have experience treating HIV, b) that they listen to you, c) their ideas about treating HIV are similar to your own, d) that they are respectful to you, and e) that they are available to you when you need them.

A few things that they expect from you: a) that you are honest about what is going on with you, b) that you carefully consider their medical advice, c) that you are respectful of them, and d) that you show up to see them consistently and on time.

You may notice there are similarities between these two sets of expectations. That is because a good relationship with a provider is like any good relationship in your life—it requires mutual communication, trust and commitment in order to thrive. The provider relationship differs in that your literal health is at stake. Don't settle for poor relationships with your providers. Clearly articulate your needs, while also keeping up your end of the bargain to make it work.

4. Make a thorough inventory of how your lifestyle affects your body, and make healthy changes where needed.

If you are like many Americans, your diet may not be the greatest, you might sit around too much, and you put at least a few toxic things in your body. These things can lead to serious health consequences for anyone, but more so for those of us living with HIV.

Now is the time to make healthy changes in your life, hard as they may be. It's crazy to work so hard to take care of your HIV, only to give your wellness away to some other disease or condition. So get honest with yourself about your unhealthy habits.

The first order of business is to take a long hard look at possible addictions. There are the big ones: cigarettes, alcohol and drugs. There are less obvious ones as well, but basically anything that you use or do compulsively to the extent that it is unhealthy needs to be looked at.

Look also at the rest of your lifestyle choices. Learning healthful sleeping, eating and exercise habits may not only extend your life, but will also improve the quality of your life today.

5. Confide in people you trust.

Studies have shown that people who confide their secrets, traumas, and feelings to others have livelier immune responses, healthier psychological profiles, and fewer incidences of illnesses than those who do not. HIV disease can be stigmatizing and isolating, and deciding whom to trust is difficult for many of us. But even having one or two people in your life that you can honestly share with can make a big difference.

6. Address grief and depression.

Grieving a loss or experiencing occasional sadness is a normal part of human experience. But over an extended period of time, depression can seriously disrupt your life (see "HIV and Mental Health" in this newsletter). Depression can be treated with lifestyle changes, alternative therapies, and/or with medications. Talk to your providers if you think you may be clinically depressed, and express grief to people you trust.

7. Do what you love to do.

Cultivate activities that you love. Discover work you do not for its utility, but for itself. Think of something that you love to do for itself, whether it succeeds or not, whether you are praised for it or not, whether you are loved and rewarded for it or not, whether people know about it and are grateful to you for it or not. How many activities in your life do you engage in simply because they delight you and grip your soul? Find them out and cultivate them.

8. Learn to forgive and let go of the past.

Forgiveness of ourselves and of others releases us from the past. When we are stuck, it usually means there is some more forgiving to be done. When we do not flow freely with life in the present moment, it usually means we are holding on to a past moment. It can be regret, sadness, hurt,

(See 12 Steps on page 11)

'Nutrients To Keep You Well' from page 1

those living with HIV, regardless of age. There are only a few food sources of Vitamin D, including fish, fortified milk, cereals and margarine. Most vitamin D is manufactured by the body, specifically the skin, as it is exposed to ultraviolet rays from the sun. Since many of us are advised to avoid excessive sunlight due to risk of skin cancer or medication interactions, this source of vitamin D is not a viable option. Recommendations for vitamin D supplements are controversial, since this is a fat soluble vitamin that in excess can damage the liver or kidneys. Most advise vitamin D-2 or D-3 supplements of 400-1000 IU per day. Remember to account for vitamin D from all supplement sources since multivitamins, calcium, and protein shakes often contain this supplement.

B vitamins are your energy releasers

B vitamins, vitamin B-1 (Thiamine), vitamin B2 (Riboflavin), vitamin B6 (Pyridoxine), vitamin B12 (Cobalamin), and Folate (Folic Acid) help release energy from the foods we eat. HIV and medications may cause our cells to need more of these energy boosting vitamins. Food sources of these vitamins include, grains, cereals, rice, pasta, milk, yogurt, pork, and dark green leafy vegetables. A B-complex type multivitamin may help in meeting your B vitamin needs.

Acidophilus for a happy gut

Our body is home to a 100 trillion bacteria. Most are harmless, and live symbiotically with us to help prevent infection and boost immunity. Check yogurt labels for live, active cultures such as *L bulgaricus* and/or *S thermophilus*, which can help with lactose intolerance by digesting milk sugars. Active cultures that help with immune system are *B lactis* HN019 (found in supplement products), *B lactis* Bb-12 (found in yo-plus), and *L casei* DN114001 (found in DanActive fermented milk). For irritable bowel syndrome symptoms look for *B infantis* (found in Align capsules).

Omega-3 Fatty Acids

These under-consumed fats may help prevent heart disease by decreasing blood clots, reduce inflammation in the body, play a role in improving mood and memory, and strengthen the immune system. Omega-3 fats act as an important medication to help lower triglycerides, a type of fat in the blood that can increase the risk of cardiovascular disease and pancreatitis. Some of the best sources of omega-3 fatty acids are from cold water fish, such as salmon (4 ounces = 1700 mg of omega-3 fats), sardines, mackerel, and tuna (4 oz = 200 mg of omega-3 fats). Other non-fishy sources include soybeans, tofu, walnuts, flaxseed, canola oil, and chia seeds. For a complete list of omega-3 fat foods and their omega-3 fat content visit: http://www.tufts.edu/med/nutrition-infection/hiv/health_omega3.html Aim for at least of 500 mg of omega-3 fats daily. High amounts of omega-3 fats, greater than 2000 mg, can cause blood thinning, easy bruising, and bleeding gums, so check with your healthcare provider before starting any omega-3 fat supplements.

Protein

More protein may be required to help maintain or build lean body mass in a person with HIV. Emerging research is showing that as we get older a slightly higher protein intake may also help prevent age related muscle loss. Men and women should aim for 0.6-0.9 grams of protein/lb (1.2-2.0 grams of protein/kg) of body weight. Good sources of protein include meat, fish, poultry, dairy products, beans, lentils, soy products, nuts and seeds, and eggs.

<http://sis.nlm.nih.gov/hiv/nutrition.html#a3>

2011 LBLGBT PARADE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are seeking volunteers to assist with the annual Long Beach LGBT Parade on Sunday, May 22, 2011.

Positions / areas to be filled include:

Staging
Banner Carriers
Parade Participant Monitors
Parade Route Monitors
Parade Barricade Monitors
Runners
Disbanding
Water Cart

We are requesting a minimum of 4 hours of volunteer time. Position shift times will vary, however the entire volunteer schedule for Parade will be between 5am and 2pm.

Please respond with the following information to Parade@longbeachpride.com :

Name: _____

Contact Number: _____

Best time to Contact: _____

Position / Area interested in: _____

Any questions, please contact Parade Co-Chair Michael L. Dixon
at **562-606-7555**



CARE Welcomes Hetal Petal, MA and Welcomes Back Raul Diaz, RN



You may have noticed some new faces around the CARE clinic.

Hetal Petal is one of our newest medical assistants. She helps our patients as they arrive, checking their vital signs, and making sure they are comfortable in the exam rooms. Hetal and the other medical assistants are also responsible for assisting our doctors and nurse practitioner with procedures, orders, prescriptions...and of course, injections!

This is Hetal's first job as a medical assistant, after completing her training at Cerritos College.

Raul Diaz first came to work at the CARE Clinic in 2003 as a medical assistant, where he worked for 3 years before completing his training as a Registered Nurse.

Raul began his career as an RN here at St. Mary, working with inpatients on the medical/surgical floors of the hospital.

Now Raul has returned to CARE as a clinic RN, much to the delight of patients and staff alike. "It feels like coming home," says Raul.

CARE Hours of Operation

C.A.R.E. CLINIC

(562) 624-4999

Monday—Friday 8:00am—12:00noon 1:15pm—4:30

LAB HOURS (by appointment)

Monday—Friday 8:00am—11:45am 1:15pm—4:15pm

Clinic and Lab are closed on the 2nd Wednesday and the 1st Thursday of the month from 8:00am until 9:30am for Staff Meetings.

Remember to bring your insurance card every time you have lab work done.

C.A.R.E. PROGRAM OFFICES

(562) 624-4900

Monday—Friday 8:30am—12:00noon 1:15pm—4:30pm

Program offices are closed on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 8:30am until 1:15pm for Staff Meetings.

C.A.R.E. DENTAL CLINIC

(562) 624-4949

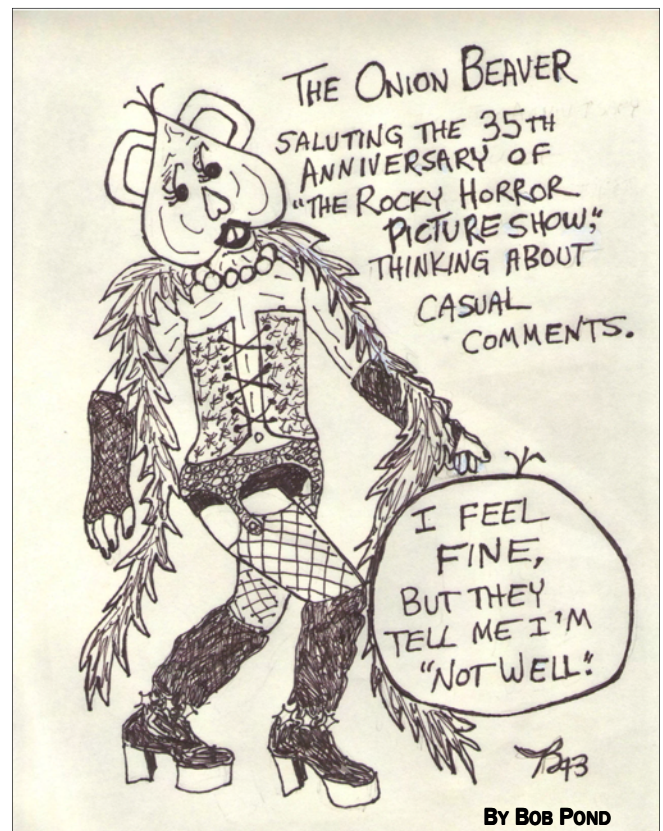
Monday—Friday 8:00am—12:00noon 1:00pm—4:30pm

Dental Clinic is closed on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 8:00am until 10:00am for Staff Meetings.

www.careprogram.org

Services offered include HIV testing, outpatient medical care, dental care, ADAP registration, nutritional counseling, mental health services, case management, benefits assistance, food bank and HIV treatment counseling and education.

The Onion Beaver



BY BOB POND

'HIV and Mental Health' from page 1

dating profiles online in which the person insisted that you must be "clean" (referring to being free of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV)? Have you feared approaching another person because you feared being rejected? There is a long history of stigmatizing people with illnesses or disabilities. For example, cancer cannot be passed from one person to another, but ignorance, fear, and anxiety sometimes results in people avoiding cancer patients. The best way to combat stigma is through knowledge of the facts.

HIV was first noted in the Gay Community in the early 1980's. It was often reported in the news as the "Gay Cancer." During these early years, little was known about the disease and there was no treatment. Fear was rampant. Most non-Gay people ignored the growing epidemic because they didn't identify with that sexual orientation. The medical experts, however, knew better. They soon realized that HIV was a virus and viruses do not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. Later in the epidemic, HIV was also associated with intravenous drug use due to direct contact with infected blood on the needles.

Others may automatically equate HIV with a same-sex orientation or with intravenous drug use. In the early 1980's, some people experienced the death of many friends when poor or no treatment was available for HIV. Despite dramatic medical advances in HIV treatment, these historical experiences still influence some people's attitude towards HIV.

If you are Gay or if you were in an HIV positive group, have you ever mentioned a friend who was hospitalized or passed away? Did others make an assumption that the person had HIV or AIDS? Recently, I was at a social event and commented to a friend that my partner had passed away last year. The friend, without any further information, asked, "Did he die of AIDS?" The reality was that my partner was HIV negative and I felt a little offended by the knee-jerk assumption.

Realize that stigma is often associated with irrational thinking and is often used by people to further justify the inequalities in society and to perpetuate discrimination (homophobia, racism, sexism, etc.). You can empower yourself by confronting the myths and to the degree you are comfortable by speaking out about the facts.

Myth: People with HIV are a public health risk.

Fact: HIV is difficult to catch and cannot be contracted by casual contact. According to recent research, there is about a 92% probability that an HIV positive person will not infect another person provided that he/she has been on treatment with an undetectable viral load for 6 months or more.

Myth: HIV is a death sentence.

Fact: With current treatments, HIV is a manageable chronic disease like diabetes. Living longer with HIV is now the norm rather than the exception. Recent search indicates that most persons with HIV who are under treatment will live a normal life span. In fact, as HIV positive people we tend to adopt a healthier lifestyle (exercise, nutrition, quit smoking, no drug use, safe sexual practices) and we get more frequent medical check ups and care. A recent study showed that HIV positive people tend to live slightly longer than HIV negative people.

On an individual level, an HIV positive person may stigmatize himself or herself. For example, a person may feel guilty or blame himself/herself about a past behavior that the person associates

with HIV (drug use, alcohol use, unsafe sexual practices, denial, lack of adherence to meds). This guilt may translate into low self-esteem and a feeling of being less worthy. It may be helpful to put everything into perspective.

Living in the "Now"

The past is etched in stone. You cannot change it. Learn from your past mistakes, but don't obsess about them. No one is perfect therefore every human being makes mistakes. I recently saw the following quotation that humorously encourages us not to dwell on the negatives of the moment: "When your life is passing through hell, don't stop to take photographs."

The future cannot be determined: No matter how much time you spend planning or worrying about something, it will usually end up differently than you expected. For example, my ex-partner was very fearful of needles. If he knew that he was getting a flu shot in two weeks, he would worry and feel the pain of the injection every day. He put himself through a lot of agony. Often, when he got the flu shot, he hardly felt a thing. Have you ever lied in bed at night just thinking about a problem or what you had to do the next day? Psychologists refer to this run-away self-talk as the "monkey mind" that keeps chattering and inventing all kinds of scary scenarios. One way to counteract such run-away thoughts at bedtime is to simply focus on your breath and on progressive relaxation of your muscles.

We live in the present. It is the only thing that we have real control over. Some people tend to postpone happiness with comments such as "When I retire, I will travel to Europe and have a great time"; "When I find a partner or spouse, my life will be complete"; "When I get a better job, I will be happy." Happiness is not something to be postponed for some indefinite time in the future. You might find it useful to embrace the sentiment in this proverb: "Live life every day. This is NOT a dress rehearsal." Similarly, don't put off actions that will improve your life right now.

Depression

Everyone feels sad or "blue" from time to time. That is normal. However, long-term chronic depression is more than just feeling down. Real depression is an illness and is often caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain. A person does not just "snap out" of depression. Without treatment, depression can severely disrupt your life. Gay and bisexual men are almost 5 times more likely than heterosexual men to be diagnosed with panic disorder and three times more likely to be diagnosed with major depressive disorder.

Here are some signs or symptoms of depression:

- Feeling sad, empty or down most of the time
- Getting less enjoyment or pleasure out of life
- Having less interest or withdrawing from usual activities
- Feeling hopeless, pessimistic or worthless (Have you ever heard an HIV positive person describe himself as "damaged goods"?)
- Feeling angry, restless or irritable
- Have problems sleeping (insomnia or inadequate sleep)
- Withdrawing or isolating
- Feeling tired or experiencing a loss of energy

(HIV and Mental Health on next page)

'HIV and Mental Health' from previous page

- Unexplained changes in weight or appetite (both extremes: overeating or having no appetite)
- Experiencing poor work or school performance
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Low motivation
- Low sex drive
- Physical symptoms not responding to treatment (headaches, digestive problems, chronic pain)
- Thoughts of death or suicide or suicide attempts
- Feelings of excessive guilt

Severe depression has been linked to faster progression from HIV to AIDS. It can interfere with keeping medical appointments and in adherence to HIV medications.

Some reasons people don't seek help with depression:

- Feeling shame or embarrassment
- Equating depression to weakness
- Thinking that it will just go away by itself
- Fearing what other people will think

Suicide

Suicide stems from depression and a sense of hopelessness. The person panics in the moment because he/she sees no solution on the horizon. It is well known that many people have jumped off the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. Most died, but some survived the fall. Interviews of the survivors revealed that every single one change his/her mind halfway down. We can assume from these interviews that those who died also regretted jumping.

If you know someone who expresses suicidal thoughts, ask the person to call you. Often the suicidal person will change his/her mind in the time it takes to make the phone call.



In The Now

Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday, 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

September 14th and 28th, October 12th and 26th,
November 9th and 23rd, December 14th and 28th

Parr Health Enhancement Center
2nd floor at St. Mary's Hospital
1055 Linden Ave.
Long Beach, CA 90813

C.A.R.E. Program's New
Heterosexual Support Group
In The Now is a supportive
educational network where you can
share experiences, learn from others,
ask and answer questions. Drinks
and snacks are complimentary.

For information call:
Danielle Pembroke
714-658-6881, or
Paul Lovely
562-624-4963



If you experience such thoughts, call 911 for emergency medical help, go to the nearest emergency room or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-8255. Ask someone to stay with you until help arrives.

Body Changes

Some HIV positive people experience certain body changes that affect their self-esteem. These changes can result in social withdrawal and depression. Fortunately, there are medical treatments to reverse or to minimize these changes. For example, injections of Radiesse and Sculptra can significantly improve the appearance of the face. Based on income guidelines, the makers of these products offer patient assistance programs that minimize the cost. For persons covered by Medicare, the doctor's fee is also covered.

Positive Attitude

People who have a positive attitude and optimistic outlook do better and live longer. They are resilient and tend to adapt to changing situations because they take action to improve their situation. They see themselves as empowered rather than feeling like a passive victim of their circumstances.

Last year, I attended a bereavement group in which one woman became my negative role model. She had lost both her daughter and her sister in an automobile accident. Since the accident, she had attended the bereavement group and had remained isolated from others and was constantly depressed. The accident occurred over 10 years ago and this lady had not made the slightest progress. Essentially, she was using the bereavement group as a way of prolonging her mourning.

Having met this lady, I decided that I would take the opposite approach. I immediately joined a number of social clubs and became quite active in volunteer work. By interacting with other people and by contributing to the community, I gained a sense of empowerment and started to enjoy life again.

Complimentary approaches

There are many ways that you can maximize your mood, your energy and your overall health. The following is a menu of possibilities that you may wish to explore:

- Self-empowerment: Learn as much as possible about HIV and your health. Keep active socially. Participate actively with your medical provider.
- Minimize or avoid the use of alcohol
- Avoid toxic substances such as methamphetamine (crystal meth).
- Join a yoga class.
- Seek talk therapy or counseling: Sometimes just talking about your feelings will make things better. Besides professionals, it can be helpful to simply talk with a friend or relative.
- Learn meditation and breathing exercises. Mindfulness meditation eases anxiety by 44% and reduces symptoms of depression by 34%. This approach was studied in Boston and later duplicated locally at UCLA with favorable results for HIV positive individuals.
- Try acupuncture and acupressure treatments.
- Exercise (gym workout, walk, jog, hike, dance, swim) to improve body function and stimulate endorphin production that will improve your mood and increase your energy. Note that research has shown that persons walking in nature

(HIV and Mental Health on next page)

'Mental Health' from page 9

have less stress than people who walk in the city — so walk in the park or along the beach. The sunlight will also help your mood. Be aware that your mind may tell you that you are too tired to exercise, but the exercise will probably give you a significant energy boost.

- Try bio-feedback
- Testosterone replacement: Men who have low testosterone often have symptoms that mimic depression (low sex drive, lack of energy, sad, irritable, poor school or work performance). In such cases, your doctor may prescribe Decadurabolin injections or topical application of Androgel or Testim.
- Vitamins and Supplements: Vitamins E, C and B complex taken regularly are clinically proven to reduce stress. Warning: some supplements can interfere with HIV medications. In general, it is advisable to avoid St. John's Wort and Echinacea.
- Support groups (HIV specific, Alcoholics Anonymous, Crystal Meth Anonymous, etc.)
- Having a pet
- Nutrition: Try chamomile tea, flavonoids in dark chocolate, warm milk, oatmeal since carbohydrates help you produce the calming hormone serotonin. Similarly omega-3 fat in fish like salmon boosts serotonin and suppresses the production of the anxiety hormones cortisol and adrenaline. Follow a diet rich in proteins because they are important for the production of neurotransmitters that regulate mood.
- Sex is a natural stress reliever. If you practice safe sex, you will also avoid infections that may harm your health and/or increase your anxieties.
- Relax in a hot shower, steam room, sauna or Jacuzzi
- Aromatherapy
- Get a massage
- Avoid unpleasant topics (turn off the news if it seems too negative)
- Getting plenty of rest. Develop better sleep habits (same sleep schedule, no TV in bedroom, no lights)

Resources:

Biofeedback: Health Psychology Associates, 1045 Atlantic Blvd., Suite 806, Long Beach CA 90813, (562) 590-5594

Yoga (free/donation classes) <http://www.yogadude.net>

• Thursday – Sunset Yoga in Rose Park, 8th and Orizaba in Long Beach, 5:15 P M

• Saturday - Yoga in Rose Park, 8th and Orizaba in Long Beach, 11 A M

• Tuesday – Shore Books, 3064 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 6:00 P M

• Wednesday – Seal Beach Center for Spiritual Living, 500 Marina Dr, 10:00 AM

Meditation for Beginners: 1:30 pm–2:30 pm, first and third Sunday of the month, [Unity Church of Long Beach](http://www.unitychurchoflongbeach.com) 935 East Broadway Long Beach, California 90802

Orange County Gay Positive Men Social Group: <http://www.meetup.com/OC-GAY-POSITIVE/>

'Random Acts' from page 2

Small theaters always need someone to help paint scenery or pound a nail, if you're not up to playing "Macbeth". Go to a bar or coffee shop that has karaoke and sing a couple of tunes. Get a kids' coloring book and have some fun—you're the only one who would choose those colors. Get a lump of clay and make a sculpture of your cat. Even if someone else doesn't think it looks much like a cat—you know what it is, and that's the most important bit.

Instead of sitting through another rerun of "Two and a Half Men" or "The Simpsons", you've taken that time to express yourself. There is something in the world that wouldn't exist without you. Your thoughts and life experiences have given us something to look at or listen to that is uniquely you. If others like and appreciate your efforts, so much the better. If they don't—so what? You've gotten out of your comfort zone and usual routine.

Life can deal out healthy rations of crap on a daily basis, and we all have to cope with them. But rather than sit and brood over it for days at a time, or letting it stew in its own juices over and over—use some of that juice and try something new for a while.

If you're not feeling tactile just now, try to give yourself a creative break from your usual day. Not many of us can just jet off to San Francisco when we feel like it, but we all can get to a different part of town and check out the shops and architecture for an hour or two. Even a grocery store can be interesting, as every store caters to the ethnic mix of their customers. Discovering a new fruit or vegetable can be fun (insert your joke here). Try a new recipe with your discovery, or just bake yourself an "un-birthday cake" and go crazy decorating it.

Give another chance to one of those classic books you hated in high school. Or pick up a book by an author in a different genre than your usual read. Pick out a movie that might not be something you'd normally watch—it could surprise you.

Anything away from your same-old day to day routine can be a new and creative outlet. Just doing something different, or being somewhere else, or being someone else for a little while can really recharge your batteries for the challenges reality has a habit of piling on us. Even if all you can think of to do is make brown squares on brown paper, you'll feel better, trust me. You've carved out a moment that belongs just to you.

And who knows—you might even find a longtime companion like the Beaver...

'Vegetarian' from page 4

and tempeh are part of your diet so you can meet your daily requirement for this important mineral.

Vitamins B12 and D: While items like fortified soymilk and fortified breakfast cereals tend to have these important vitamins, it's a lot harder to get enough vitamin B12 and vitamin D. So in this case a supplement may be needed.

In addition to vitamins and minerals, vegetarians need to keep an eye on their total intake of calories and fat. Vegetarian diets tend to be high in fiber and low in fat and calories. Diets that are high in fiber tend to be more filling, and as a result strict vegetarians may feel full before they've eaten enough calories to keep their bodies healthy and strong.

It's also important to keep in mind that there are different types of vegetarianism. Your typical vegetarian is a lacto-ovo-vegetarian meaning they don't eat beef, pork, poultry, fish, shellfish or animal flesh of any kind, but do eat eggs and dairy. There are also other forms of vegetarianism, including lacto-vegetarian (no eggs, but do eat dairy) and ovo-vegetarian (no dairy, but do eat eggs). If one was to completely cut out meat, eggs, and dairy they would be considered a vegan. There is also a pescetarian who is one who doesn't eat meat, but will eat fish or seafood as part of their regular diet.

So where am I now? Since my lifestyle change and becoming a "good vegetarian" I've managed to take control of my life. Through exercise and healthy eating alone I've managed to lose 90 pounds. My BMI is now 24 and considered average, my iron levels are normal, my cholesterol is perfect, and my blood pressure is well within the standard range. The way I feel now is almost indescribable. My lifestyle change has helped me feel less tired, stronger, happier and healthier.

Before you embark on any diet change, vegetarian or not, it's important to discuss your nutritional needs with your doctor or dietician. This way you two can work together in making sure you get the adequate nutrition you need.

'12 Steps' from page 5

fear, guilt, blame, anger, resentment, and sometimes even the desire for revenge. Each one of these states comes from a space of unforgiveness, a refusal to let go and come into the present moment. Love is always the answer to healing of any sort. And the pathway to love is forgiveness. Forgiveness dissolves resentment, and is the most valuable gift you can give to yourself.

9. Always say yes to the present moment.

Realize that the present moment is all you ever have. The more you are focused on time—past and future—the more you miss the now. Become aware of the trap of time: the compulsion to live through memory and anticipation. This creates an endless preoccupation with past and future and an unwillingness to honor and acknowledge the present moment and allow it to be. The compulsion arises because the past gives you an identity and the future holds the promise of salvation, of fulfillment in whatever form. Recognize that both are illusions.

10. Inhabit your body fully.

To stay present in everyday life, it helps to be deeply rooted in your body; otherwise the mind will drag you along like a river. Body awareness keeps you present, and anchors you in the Now. Develop healthy practices such as yoga and meditation, or any sport or physical activity that engages your body and your attention fully.

11. Express gratitude in your life.

"If the only prayer you said in your whole life was, "thank you," that would suffice." - Meister Eckhart

12. Be Awake.

"Love springs from awareness. The first act of love is to see others as they truly are—not as they are in your memory or your desire. The second ingredient is to see yourself—to ruthlessly flash the light of awareness on your motives, your emotions, and your needs. If you achieve this kind of awareness of the other and yourself, you will know what love is."—Anthony De Mello

Local Wellness Resources

Long Beach Parks and Recreation. Hundreds of low cost classes ranging from tennis and dance to cooking and computers. Visit online at: www.longbeach.gov/park or call (562) 570-3111.

Yoga Dude. Instructor David Hennage offers some free and low cost yoga classes at various local studios and outdoor locations. Visit him online at: www.yogadude.net or call (202) 361-9546.

The Infinite Yoga & Movement. Low cost classes offered based on suggested donation/ability to pay. 517 Pine Ave, long Beach. Visit online at infinite.us or call (562) 708-7681.

Meditation. Various classes/'sits' offered locally. Visit online at www.longbeachmeditation.com or call (562) 804-5570.

C.A.R.E. TO DINE

Thanks to all our participating restaurants and everyone in the community who dined for CARE on August 12, 2010.

We raised over \$20,000 that will be used to provide direct food assistance to our clients.

