This issue of Diseased Pariah News may be particularly offensive to some individuals. By breaking this wrapper, you are saying, in effect, that you are not an employee of, or an attorney for, Mattel, Inc.; nor are you a certain famous queer journalist; and that you will not hold DPN responsible for strokes incurred as a result of sudden fits of apoplexy while reading this issue. In addition, you are stating that you are a mature individual, at least 18 years of age, with exquisite taste and prophetic vision, for DPN has been shown to have incredible restorative powers, but only if you pick up this issue, walk directly to the cash register, put down those green crinklies, and pay for it. In order to receive, you must first give.
NOT SANITIZED FOR YOUR PROTECTION
Inside This Issue:
How to Tell if Your Loved One is Dead,
Chills & Thrills for Vegetarian Pariahs,
Unflattering Things About a Certain Famous Queer Journalist—and Much More!

SPECIAL (AND EXPENSIVE) REPORT:
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![AIDS Barbie with Wasting Syndrome and CMV Retinitis](image)

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SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

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Special thanks to Official Law Librarian Frances G. Joachim, Colonnister Billy P. H. the Bubble-Butt Surfboy Slaves, and of course the singular Mighty Lino Jeff.
Dancing in the Streets

I remember seeing a filminstrip in public school ("Health" class) when I was about 12. Where I went to school, Health class was taught by rank amateurs. One teacher seemed to have only recently learned the material from books, as evidenced by his bizarre pronunciations of words like "hormones" and "anorexia" (the latter being pronounced like the two words "a trophy".) But I digress.

The filminstrip we saw that day was about birth defects. One frame showed a picture of a girl with a cleft palate, which struck me as funny looking at the time. Without thinking, I laughed out loud. Of course I got dirty looks from some of the decent kids, and the teacher emphatically told me that it was not funny.

The girl with the cleft palate obviously hadn't heard me laugh, so she wasn't offended. No one in the room had any nasty congenital defect, so I hadn't directly insulted any one by association. But people took offense, and I learned an important lesson—that people are likely to find my sense of humor offensive. I'm not sure that's what the teacher wanted me to learn, but I don't know where he is now and I can't ask him.

These kinds of experiences mold our behavior and our feelings. Kids learn that they must be sad at funerals, they must be filled with the spirit at church, they must be happy at parties and on holidays. They must believe that our political system is the best; they must be patriotic and love our country. Burtoles are not sexy. You must dress well if you want people to like you. Long-term monogamous relationships are the ideal to aspire to. Birth defects and diseases are not funny.

The second most frequently asked question we DPN staffers get is whether or not we eat much flak for our demented sense of humor. (The first most common question is "Are those your real names?") In fact, scarcely anyone gives us any shit. The junior high school Health teachers of the world (and other people who think it's wrong to laugh at photos of birth defects) evidently make an exception for those of us who have contracted the particular disease we're laughing about. Like American Express cardmembership, infection has its privileges.

I've had so much fun throwing away ingrained ideas about what I should or shouldn't do that I wonder why everyone else doesn't feel the same way. I took it until I was 20 to accept my own sexuality, but when it happened it happened abruptly and felt fucking great. Years later, coming to terms with HIV infection also required throwing away preconceived notions, although the experience wasn't particularly abrupt or exhilarating. Adjusting to life with HIV meant giving up the idea that life was going to be totally unacceptable from that point on. Maybe you didn't feel that way when you found out you were positive, but your Humpty Editor did. Somewhere along the line, I'd gotten the idea in my head that infection with an insidious virus meant that enjoyable times as I'd known them had come to an end. Slowly, I discovered that people would still like me (some of them anyway), death wasn't immediately around the corner, and yes, the situation has an element of humor.

To be homosexual in America is to have learned to resist one particularly powerful form of societal conditioning. Some of us take that lesson much further, questioning all manner of conditioned behavior; others stop right there and are content to conform to any number of societal norms. Just how much to conform and how much to rebel is a personal choice; it makes no sense to force someone to be a nonconformist.

Unfortunately, being gay or HIV+ guarantees nothing about one's readiness to shed conditioned thoughts. Consider how many gay men continue to whine about the display of flesh at pride celebrations. Their letters of complaint appear in gay papers and in mainstream media. Why must we show our dark side to the world, they ask. Maybe these people miss the point because it's so simple: some of us have no respect for societal taboos about nudity and sexual expression. We feel that a society that cannot accept a naked human walking down the street is rotten to the core.

Consider these words, from a recent letter to the New York Times:

"Booms, genitals, and gyrating pelvises were the order of the day. One just happened to go out for a walk, the other by chance on Fifth Avenue." (signed Jonathan F. Alex, New York, June 28, 1993.)

Gotta love those words: "thrust out" and "choke on," indeed. There's more.

"Our community has been torn apart by AIDS, so why are we dancing in the streets? Let's dance in clubs. Let's dance on the street, but let the masses know that we're dancing on Fifth Avenue? Please understand, I don't like seeing my friends get sick and die, and I don't much like the thought of it happening to myself, either. But I refuse to sit on Fifth Avenue as we are on Fifth Avenue together, let's show our serious and angry face to America."

Let's face it. Let's listen for next year's parade. Hopefully, Mr. Alex will have formed his own marching contingent, with the banner "serious, angry, and proud!" Jonathan Alex and his ilk can enjoy the deep satisfaction of having not smiled, danced, or laughed on the whole parade route, having never shown any excessive flesh. They will sleep well at night knowing that they've set a fine example. No right-wing zealots will use video footage of them to incite hatred of gay people.

Why are we dancing in the streets? It kills me that someone would ask such a question. The parade are for us, not for the rest of the world. We dance in the streets because we like being in control of our own lives. Some of us have tasted the satisfaction of choosing our feelings and behavior according to our wills; we refuse to react in expected, sanctioned, and conditioned ways.

Returning to the question of why we're dancing when there's a fucking epidemic going on: we celebrate because we want to. Why shouldn't the burden of explanation be on those who assert that we ought to be morose during epidemics? And what is it about an epidemic that's so special, anyway? Is Mr. Alex suggesting that—even with the existence of flagbashers, the Republican party, and the like—if it weren't for AIDS, things would be peaches-and-cream enough to justify dancing on Fifth Avenue? Please understand, I don't like seeing my friends get sick and die, and I don't much like the thought of it happening to myself, either. But I refuse to sit on Fifth Avenue as we are on Fifth Avenue together, let's show our serious and angry face to America.

The same old question—do you behave as if the world were already the way you'd like it to be, or do you compromise. One is fun and satisfying: the other feels like you're six years old, starving for Mommy's approval. Now, which do you prefer?

—T. A.

GET FAT, don't die!

Lake O-Flikias's Faceless Stragannoff

1 lb. mushrooms, sliced
2-4 shallots, minced
2-3 shallots, butter
white wine (optional)
garlic salt
fresh ground pepper
2-4 dashes Worcestershire sauce
1 cup cream
lots of paprika
1/2 lb. cooked macaroni

Cook the macaroni, either in a toaster oven or in a pan, until they are lightly browned and smell nice. Set them aside to cool. Melt the butter in a large heavy saucepan over medium-high heat, and saute the shallots until they just start to turn translucent. Pour in the wine, if using, and let the mixture bubble for a few minutes. Add enough paprika to color the stragannoff, and let simmer a little more. Season with salt and pepper, and stir with the toasted macaroni. You! This dish works fine with the familiar button mushrooms, but feel free to substitute some fresh shiitake or oyster mushrooms. Chanel red macaroni is a little too fancy for this hearty dish, though. (And yes, the last ingredient on the Worcestershire sauce label is anchovies. C'mon, it's just a few fish molecules. Purists may use a dark vegetable bouillon like Dr. Bronner's Good Stuff, or go haring for that elusive vegan Worcestershire.)
DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL
by Emil Knightwright

Are your copies of DPN out on your coffee table, or are they safely hidden in a drawer? Do your parents know about your HIV status? Your co-workers? Many of us have little inner voices that tell us it's cool to be open about HIV status. Be careful—keep those voices at bay. There's a veritable laundry list of reasons to keep your HIV status to yourself. Not tired excuses like "I'll lose my job" or "I don't want people to worry about me," but serious reasons.

Mystery is sexy. Think of how hot strangers look from a distance, while your mind is supplying the details. Nothing you can be will ever compare to fantasy images, so keep the mystery going. As soon as a gay man finds out everything he wants to know about another man, he moves on to the next one. If you want your relationships (or whatever) to last a while, keep 'em guessing. Of course, this applies to all aspects of your life, not just your HIV status. If your money comes from a trust fund, for goodness sake don't tell your tricks—keep them wondering how you manage to live the way you do.

You can always tell people later if you change your mind. If you tell now and change your mind later, you're shit out of luck.

There's no conclusive evidence that the federal government is making a list of HIV-positive individuals, but there's no conclusive evidence that it isn't. Either. Why take the chance? Your best friend could be an informant.

If you tell one person, you've told them all. When people tell you they'll keep the knowledge to themselves, they don't mean it. Your days may be numbered, but you must remain unsafely focused on how you can make the world a better place for everyone. When you tell people about your status, you're in danger of being labeled an activist, with your credibility on all issues dropping to zero. Make Randy Shilts your role model! He kept his HIV status private for six years—no mean feat for a prominent gay journalist. Kept Randy's words on your refrigerator door for inspiration: "I don't want to be a professional AIDS patient. I'm more valuable to the gay movement as a journalist." (Replace the word "journalist" with the word of your choice.) And don't forget, the beauty of the unsavory path is that it's not without its own deeply satisfying rewards. Shilts acknowledged that if his HIV status had been public, he probably wouldn't have gotten as good a deal from the publisher of his latest book.

Don't be foiled by the seemingly uninhibited openly HIV+ people you see around you. They may appear to be fearless and well adjusted, but they've actually only succeeded from a head mentality. Think about it: you only see "HIV+" tattoos or stickers on people in urban gay ghettos, never in Boise or Winnemucca. And don't assume that a biohazard-icn tattoo indicates that the person is infected. It's more likely just a fashion statement.

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GET FAT, don't die!

Humpy Mae's Awesome Date-Nut Bread
1 cup chopped walnuts
1 cup dates
1 1/2 cups boiling water
1/2 cup sugar
2 tsp sugar
1/2 cup baking soda
1/2 cup molasses
1 cup grated orange or lemon peel
1/4 cup vanilla extract
1 cup flaked coconut
1/2 cup raisins
1/2 cup peanut butter
1 cup chopped pecans
1 cup chopped almonds
1/2 cup chopped nuts

Mix the first four ingredients together. Add the shortening and the boiling water let stand for 10 minutes. Beat the eggs to 350°F. Beat the cracking eggs. Add the vanilla, then the sugar and flour, beating the mixture with a fork. Add the date mixture, mixing it just enough to blend it in. Pour into a greased 9 x 5 x 3 pan and bake at 350 degrees until a toothpick comes out clean (probably a little over an hour).

Humpy Mae's Vaguely Japanese Vegetables
1 eggplant, sliced
2 to 3 inches
1 onion, sliced thinly
1 teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons mirin
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon dry sherry
1 tablespoon cooking wine
1 tablespoon sesame oil
1 tablespoon peanut oil
1 tablespoon sesame seeds

Mix the eggplant, onion, sugar, salt, soy sauce, mirin, soy sauce, and sesame oil. Blend until smooth. Stir in the sesame seeds. Serve over rice.

Biffy Mae's New World Tofu in Peanut Sauce
1/2 cups vegetable broth
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon paprika
1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon sugar
1/2 teaspoon dried basil
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme

Mix the ingredients except for the peanut butter in a blender. Add the peanut butter and blend until smooth. Serve over rice.

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"I don't want to be a professional AIDS patient. I'm more valuable to the gay movement as a(n)."

In a blender, combine the vegetable broth, peanut sauce, green chilies, bread or tortillas, and peanut butter and blend, blend until smooth. Set aside. In a large saucenpan, saute the saucenese 'n onion over medium heat until just translucent. Add the garlic and stir it around a little. Pour the blender blend in and mix thoroughly. Crush the whole cloves and peppercorns in a mortar, and stir in along with the cinnamon and chili powder. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Add the sauce to the blender, and simmer another 5 to 10 minutes. Serve over rice and garnish with the raisins. This is one of those Vegan gun-bombs, so be sure to serve this dish with something light and crunchy. Maybe we suggest a salad with cucumbers, tomatoes, and jicama in a light vinaigrette. (And do your tofu cubes delicious!!)
Eager Beaver

by Daniel Perdios

June: Ward, I'm worried about the Beaver.
Ward: Oh, what did the Beaver do now, dear?
June: Well, he refuses to clean his room. I always have to do it.
Ward: All right, dear. I'll mention it at dinner tonight.
June: It's more than that, Ward. Today I was up there cleaning his room and I had to put all his pornographic collection back into the bookshelves, and while I was there I found these needles. Ward, I'm worried.
Ward: Oh, June, he's just a boy. June: Ward, there was no bleach... and no condoms. I'm worried. He shouldn't have needles without bleach. And he should always have condoms around.
Ward: What did we teach him? Everyone knows to keep needles, bleach and condoms together.
June: Hun, I really don't want to have to lecture him again. Can we wait and see if it shapes up?
June: Ward, I don't know. Look at the phone bill for last month.
Ward: What are all those toll calls? June: Beaver's been calling the sex lines. It has to be Beaver. Beaver has a wonderful sex life with that pretty girl he's been seeing.

Ward: I guess.
June: Unless it's been you. But we have good sex, don't we dear?
Ward: Still. After all these years.
June: It's expensive, those calls.
Ward: Ha, ha. June: I wouldn't worry about it. He'll grow out of it. It's just a phase.
June: How's he ever going to have a sexually fulfilling relationship with someone if he's addicted to anonymous phone sex.
Ward: Well, (Chuckle) I wish they'd had phone sex when I was growing up.
June: Ward, I'm serious.
Ward: Okay, dear. I guess it is an expensive bill. Maybe we should just make him pay for the calls.
June: Oh, I don't want to do anything rash. Just a talking to will help for now.
[Enter Wally]
June: Hi, Wally.
Ward: Hi, Mom. Hi, Dad.
June: How was your day, Wally?
Wally: Oh, not bad. Got an A on my Biology test.
June: Good for you, Wally. I'm proud of you. June: Ward, why can't Wally talk with the Beaver.
June: Maybe you're right.

Ward: You know, brother to brother. Wally, our mother's a little worried about Beaver. Seems his room is a mess and he's been calling the sex lines.
June: That's pretty serious, Mom. What makes you think that?
June: I found needles in his room today and there wasn't any bleach or condoms with them.
Wally: Should know better than that.
Ward: Wally, would you do us a favor?
Wally: Uh, yeah, sure, Dad. What is it?
Ward: Would you talk to Beaver about this? Sort of as an older brother.
Wally: Sure, Dad. No problem.
June: Oh thank you, Wally. I'm sure it'll mean more from you that if your father or I did it.
Ward: Don't you think so, Wally?
Wally: Oh sure. No one wants their old man coming down on them.
[Exit Wally]
Ward: So now I'm the old man, am I?
June: Oh, I think it's cute, Ward.
The old man.
Ward: Does that make you the old woman?

[Cut to Beaver's bedroom]
Wally: Hey Beaver!
Beave: Hi, Wally.
Wally: Whatcha doin'?
Beave: Oh, nothin' special. Got a new magazine in the mail today.
The guys in it are so hot. I was just jerkin' off to it.
Wally: Oh, that's nice, Beaver. There's a leather section in here that I really like.
Wally: Beaver, we need to talk.
Beave: Sure, Wally. About what?
Wally: Mom's worried, Beaver. She said she didn't find any bleach or condoms with your needles when she was cleaning your room today.
Beave: Oh, Wally. Billy and I shared only once. And we only had oral sex today.
Wally: Beave, it only takes once.
Beave: Oh, I know, Wally. But I'm not gonna get it.
Beave: You never know, Beaver. I'd hate to lose my little brother.

Beave: I know, Wally. You're right. I won't do it again.
Wally: It's gonna buy some next week.
Wally: You can ask me, Beaver. I can give you bleach or condoms.
Wally: Or I can lend you the money.
Beave: Gee, that's really nice, Wally.
Wally: Sure, Beaver. Mom also wants you to pick up your magazines when you're done and put them away. Can you do that, Beaver? It's not asking a lot. Mom would appreciate it.
Beave: Okay, Wally. I'll try to be good now on.
Wally: Great, Beaver. Well, I gotta go now. I gotta be there for my dad now.
Beave: Hey, Wally?
Beave: You've got a picture of your favorite girl.
Beave: You're the best brother a guy could have.
Wally: Oh thanks, Beaver.
Beave: Can I have another nude photo of you?
Wally: I just gave you one last week, Beaver.
Wally: Beave, I know. But it's gotta be the Beaver.
Wally: Who did it this time, Beaver—Eddie or Billy? All right, Beaver, I'll get you one as soon as I can.
Beave: Gee, thanks, Wally. That's really swell.

[Back to the kitchen]
Ward: How do you plan on going with the Beaver, Wally?
Wally: Oh great, Dad. Beaver isn't going to forget the bleach or condoms again.
Wally: And what about cleaning up his room?
Wally: Oh yeah. He promises to keep it clean and put away his magazines when he's done.
Ward: There—see, June, it's best that I didn't do it.
June: Wally, what plans do you have for this evening?
Wally: Me and Mary Ellen are renting a room down at the Topper's Inn.
June: Oh, Wally. That place is such a dive. You shouldn't take a nice girl like Mary Ellen there.
Wally: Gee, Mom. Maybe you're right. We'll get a room upstairs somewhere. Thanks.
June: Wally?
Wally: Yeah, Mom.
June: Do you have your condoms?
Wally: Mom. I'm not the Beaver.
June: Of course I do.
June: Oh. Ward, Wally's becoming such a man.
Ward: Just like his old man.
[June and Ward walk offstage hand in hand.]
I'm on the phone with the clinic. The counselor says, "Well, you're positive." Blood rushed up from my gut—my face hot.

"Swing low/Sweet char-i-ot"—like ice it burns. My stomach shrinks, contracts. I'm disappearing like Alice, getting tinier and tinier because she ate the wrong thing.

I figured I would be positive, I knew it. I had sex with guys who were now dead. Enough of them. Who isn't positive these days? But, to actually hear it—was something else.

Eventually, I remembered to breathe. Thanked (yes thanked) the counselor, and hung up. My body calmed down. My brain reconnected. After finding out—after this revolution—that the rest of my life was going to be different from now on, forever and ever. My first thought was worthy of a queen: "Well, now, I'm never going to see Paris!"

Somehow I got through the day at work, the bus ride home, by telling myself "Oh, shut up." "But what about—" "Oh, shut up." "But you know—" "Honey. Darling. Baby. For now, please, just shut up?"

Home—tell myself the truth. I'm HIV+. I'm HIV+. And what about you Kitty Carlisle and Orson Bean? I didn't know what to do. So I did what I always do when I don't know what to do. I went to bed. Flat on my back I let my brain bounce back and forth.

What the rest of my workday going to be like? What about T-cells? What do they do? What the hell do they look like? What about wills? And sex? Telling people and not telling people? What to do, what to take? AZT or cucumber root? Should I wait for the certain cure? (If I live that long). How did this happen?

I always thought the actual cause of AIDS was just so much baloney. Literally. Folks ate carcinogenic baloney which destroyed their immune systems, and those who mostly ate cheap lunchmeat were—poor Haitians, drug addicts, and urban queers on the go. It made as much sense as anything else.

Lying there—sometimes my mind would go blank. I'd be a zero on the bed—nothing, nothing at all. And then, I had a vision.

I didn't know at the time I was having one—a vision with a capital "V". As a kid, I tried to see visions as the sun cast rays through the stained glass in gotic St. Hedwig's church. I'd squint my eyes, looking for something, but never finding anything except dust motes swirling in the colored air. I wanted to grow up and be a saint, to help others. My unclean acts and thoughts would probably prevent sainthood, but, well, I could at least be the Pope? Even at that age I realized what a ridiculous idea that was. I mean—a Polish Pope?

Sixth grade, I was the president of the Saint Dominic Savio Fan Club. Saint Dominic was the patron of this other late 19th century Italian saint, John Bosco, who had a particular calling to minister to young boys. Kids in class, not the serious ones like me, would sing

"Oh I love Bosco
Bosco is for me
chocolate flavored Bosco
with sunshine Vitamin C"

I thought this was sacrilegious—comparing a saint to chocolate syrup!

Now, Saint Dominic, he was one of those saints that kids were supposed to use for an example of the Catholic life. Like Saint Maria Goretti, another Italian teenager—who was stabbed repeatedly by her neighbor, resisting his sexual advances. She forgave him on her deathbed.

I'm there in bed, thinking. Why did I bother to give up drinking? Why did I bother to give up drugs? What the fuck good did four years of celibacy do me, since it turns out I was HIV+ the whole time? Then, I had this vision.

"Honey. Darling. Baby. For now, please, just shut up?"

"Oh Father..."

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Of course, I played Saint Dominic Savio in the school play. It was one of the perks of being president of his fan club. As he lay dying, of tuberculosis or something—he was twelve or thirteen—Saint John Bosco (played by the love of my life at the time. Kevin Wieszczybinski)—I was able to touch his Byzcereemed blond hair in the performance—so greasy and cool.

Dominic had a vision.

His breathing grew shallower as he clasped the tear stained hand of John Bosco. "Oh Father... I see... a bright... light. It's the most... beautiful light. So bright... Oh! Oh!"

And then he died.

Well, my vision thing, I have to say, wasn't like that. And it wasn't like Joan of Arc—angels weren't talking to me from shiny, cottony clouds, or Saint Bernadette, or that Lady of Guadalupe thing or what those kids in Portugal saw—the sun shimmer, then spin in the sky. I didn't see anybody in a misty light, or anything you might expect a vision to be like. I didn't go away. I wasn't transported. I was there in my bed the whole time.

This vision, these images, came into my mind's eye. I saw a bull, galloping toward me. He got so close I could smell his rich hide. Suddenly, there was lots of blood—spilling, pouring, into a chalice—a cup, full of bull's blood. That was it. That's all. It was over. I didn't really think about it. But, I knew then—somehow I knew, dammit, that what I had to do—if I wanted to live—was to put on black leather—the bull, and heavy black boots—(galloping toward me), to put on this, this armor—(blood, blood, spilling everywhere), get out of bed and walk out into the world.
Most of us know that in 1990, Congress outlawed the sale of "aromas", chemicals otherwise known as poppers, amyl, butyl, or by an endless list of brand names. The reasons for this ban are not entirely clear. Some of our august politicians say it had to do with the possible connection between poppers and Kaposi's sarcoma (KS). Others cite animal studies where rats, when forced to inhale the human equivalent of ten bottles per day every day for three years, developed catastrophic liver failure. It is Your Cranky Editor's opinion that after having been the brunt of a couple of years of finger-wagging by the President's AIDS Commission, and yet too squeamish to implement any of their recommendations, Congress picked a politically tidy way to appear as though they were doing something useful about the AIDS epidemic. Besides, they said, you can't argue with science.

Are poppers really dangerous to people? Sure—if you drank a bottle of the stuff*. As far as long-term mutagenic effects from inhaling go, we may never know for sure. The studies that show connection with KS are based on circumstantial evidence; that is, no report to date has been able to analyze and demonstrate and reproduce a mechanism where poppers cause KS. On the other hand, the rate of KS among people recently diagnosed with AIDS is one quarter of what it used to be in the early '80s. It appears that there are some personal or environmental factors necessary for the development of KS, and those factors aren't present in the same quantities that they used to be. Poppers? Other recreational drugs? Polo cologne? Who knows.

It is now illegal to sell aromas. It is, however, legal to sell carburetor cleaner. For example, Creative Marketing of Palm Desert, California, sells a carburetor cleaner that's guaranteed to invigorate your pistons, make your engine pulsate, and no doubt improve the performance of the rear differential as well. It costs $15 per bottle, and originally came with an introductory cork ring if you purchased three bottles. The order form had you state that you would use this product solely for automotive purposes, that you were at least 21 years of age, and that you weren't a law enforcement officer.

One of your fearless editors, being a do-it-yourself type, ordered some of this carburetor cleaner. He concluded that the vapors were less pleasant than past carburetor cleaners he had used while making manual adjustments to his hardware. Another of your editors accidentally inhaled this same product, and had an allergic reaction of epic proportions, including asthma-like impaired breathing and angry red welts that lasted for almost a day. Gee, maybe the stuff really was carburetor cleaner! This is how our story began.

A Brief History of Poppers

Some of our younger readers may be scratching their heads and wondering what the hell we're talking about. Well, pull up a chair, little one, and we'll tell you about the sins of the past. You see, there's this chemical by the name of amyl nitrite. Its main pharmacological use is for relieving angina, a severe pain in the chest that people with heart problems can have. Pharmaceutical grade amyl nitrite comes in small cloth-wrapped glass vials, much like smelling salts, which one would snap or pop open. You'd then inhale the released vapors. This is where the term "poppers" came from.

So why would little young (or at least young at heart) creatures such as ourselves be interested in a drug snorted by the cholesterol-ridden elder? Because poppers do more than just open up blood vessels; they seem to open up just about everything in the body. During an amyl rush, a person's pain threshold is elevated, and there's an incredible feeling of being—well, maybe not being alive, but at least being there. Someone once said that a good batch of poppers "makes you feel like you have eight assholes, and they all want to be f***ed." A dear friend of ours added that "poppers can make the dick that's in your mouth seem the biggest, juiciest, most..."
accult, best—no, the only—dick in the universe. Well, they're both right. A good bit of anmyl is light and sweet, with a visceral rush that seems to command the loins to pump to the rhythm of the accelerated heartbeat. When exposed to air, amyl nitrate degrades rapidly. A bad hit from old poppers causes a more cranial kind of pounding, with hotness around the ears not unlike that embarrassed feeling you got in elementary school, when the teacher singled you out for public ridicule.

Poppers had a place outside the bedrooms and smut hunts of America as well. Many a disco diva would take a hit while gyrating to a particularly moving line of "Gleam" and Cranky Editor would occasionally do a hit in Space Mountain at Disneyland, just before the rollercoaster ride started. (This was before the government and hidden surveillance cameras watch your every move within those attractions.)

Amyl nitrate was originally easy to find in ampoules. Men and some women of a variety of persuasions would ensure freshness by cracking a single ampoule at a time and then dropping it into a special bidet-shaped inhaler. This would allow the single popper to last for about one fuck's duration, and the inhaler could be conveniently worn on a chain around the neck. Over time, these ampoules became harder to find without a doctor's prescription, and bulk amyl appeared on the scene. Still called poppers, this stuff was amyl nitrite, perhaps with a pinch of other volatile compounds. It was packaged in a distinctive small brown glass bottle, the dark color to protect the contents from degradation caused by exposure to light. In time, over-the-counter sales of amyl in any form for human consumption became illegal in many states. So people turned to buyl. Buryl nitrite doesn't supply as good a rush as amyl, but was believed to have a longer shelf life and cheaper to make. Various brands of aroma or "room odorizers" (Bath, Balm, Thrust, Hardware, names you may remember from the dim past) were made of this stuff. The majority of the buying public was satisfied, but if you were just too old-fashioned, locally grown amyl, sold as distilled fuel additive or something else equally frightening, could be found under the counter. In time, buryl nitrite was outlawed, and people turned to propyl nitrite. Congress finally got tired of this creeping rebellion and outlawed the sale of aromas for human ingestion altogether, using language that referred to broad categories of chemicals rather than specific compounds. As well see later, there are loopholes in even this intentionally broad-vested law. With the ban of aromas in 1990, these substances went underground. All sorts of expensive "solvents" in those suspicious little brown bottles started to appear in the classified ads of the gay rags. Carburetor cleaner, leather color, video head cleaner, silver tarnisher, and additives to reduce mildew buildup in your hot tub. As mentioned earlier, it was an unpleasant encounter with this grey market that planted the idea for this article. What finally prodded us into serious research was a catalogue from J.R.M. Manufacturing of New York. They weren't peddling carburetor cleaner, they were selling Bath, Balm, Thrust, Hardware, all labelled as "aromas! How could this be? On top of that, they also offered pharmaceutical anyl nitrite ampoules. Time for investigative journalism.

We collected six different samples of these questionable compounds from four sources across the country. The kind professionals at a nearby firm, Surface Science Laboratories, agreed to perform the necessary analyses for us at a fraction of the commercial rate. Humpty Editor will now take over and tell you about what we learned. We think you'll find the results very interesting.

The Proof's in the Pudding

Analyzing samples like these is a bit more complicated than you'd expect from watching old Barnam performances.

To find out what was in those brown bottles. Surface Science Labs used a variety of techniques: gas chromatography, mass spectrometry, infrared spectroscopy, and (to resolve one final detail) nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy.

The pharmaceutical ampoules contained several chemical constituents. H nitrite (C2H7N02), just like they're supposed to. (The U. S. Pharmacopoeia specifies either of two subtly different isomers of amyl nitrite for this product.) They also contained a small amount of an amyl alcohol (C2H5OH), probably a leftover ingredient from synthesis of the amyl nitrite.

The leather cleaner was found to be reasonably pure isoamyl nitrite, also with a minimal amyl alcohol impurity. Whereas the ampoules apparently had only one isomer of amyl nitrite, the leather cleaner contained two different ones, which isn't a big deal but suggests a less tightly controlled manufacturing process. The leather cleaner also contained a fair amount of an unreacted ester, probably glycerol triacetate, also known as triacetin. Triacetin is nontoxic and is used as a fixative in perfumery—which means it helps prevent rapid evaporation. However, it's also a solvent used in tanning, so use this cleaner with caution—it might affect the color of dyed leather.

Creative Marketing's carburetor cleaner was the most complex of all the samples—a very interesting brew. It had some amyl nitrite in it, yes, but that wasn't the main component. There was more amyl alcohol than amyl nitrite, suggesting slovenly manufacturing procedure. It also contained various esters and other unidentified compounds. We were impressed, but didn't try cleaning any carburetor with this melange of organic nasties. DPN notes that well-known, proven carburetor cleaners are available at auto supply stores for a fraction of the price of Creative Marketing's product, and they may well be less toxic.

The remaining three samples all contained isobutyl nitrite (C4H11N02). This has a structure slightly different from the reference isobutyl nitrite, and was sold by Aldrich Chemical Co., which could account for the difference in smell and subjective effects noted by our panel as a result of accidental inhalation.

Of the samples containing encouragement for unequivocal drug abuse. DPN encourages its readers to abuse all drugs wisely.
isobutyl nitrite, Rush was the most pure, evidencing good quality control. The Double Eagle brand and J.R.M.'s room odors were practically identical and only slightly less pure, containing some isobutyl alcohol impurity (probably leftover from the manufacturing process) and minimal amounts of other components.

After butyl nitrites were banned starting in 1989, propyl nitrite (C₃H₇NO) appeared for sale in some areas. Although our panel didn't have any samples of propyl nitrite available for evaluation, your HumPy Editor calls that propyl was distinctly inferior to butyl or amyl nitrite in smell and in subjective effect. Evidently tired of this cat-and-mouse game of new formulas, Congress later passed a more comprehensive law banning all volatile alky nitrites. Propyl, butyl and amyl nitrites are all alkyl nitrites—they have saturated hydrocarbon chains—so they should be illegal, right? Almost. The law allows sales for commercial purposes (e.g.-butyl nitrite, for example, is a jet propellant), which explains the labeling of our samples as leather cleaner, carburetor cleaner, and so on. Get 'em while you can.

Amyl nitrate and butyl nitrite are both somewhat unstable, decomposing when exposed to water or light, and last longer when refrigerated. They're also quite flammable, and can cause death if swallowed—people have committed suicide that way (not recommended).

Amyl nitrite ampuoles aren't used much in medicine any more, partly because it's hard to control the dosage of a drug taken by inhalation. Amyl has a bad rep in the medical community: "Its use is conspicuous and dramatic. Its administration is punctuated by the explosive noise of the vial breaking and by a putrescent odor. Everyone at hand is soon aware of it, some even suffering headache. Consequently it is usually limited to instances in which speed is the prime consideration." And, according to one textbook, "Amyl nitrite...and some related compounds have been drugs of abuse that have been claimed by some to produce a brief augmentation of sexual excitement—possibly as a subjective interpretation of the faintness and confusion consequent to hypoxia and cerebral hypoxia."

Huh, I guess whoever wrote that didn't get fucked.

Amyl nitrites relax various muscles, probably by interfering with enzyme systems necessary for maintaining muscle tone. They relax smooth muscles in the circulatory system, causing blood vessel dilation, which relieves angina by making the heart's job easier. The headache often associated with poppers is at least partially caused by dilation of blood vessels in the head. In addition, nitrites bond with hemoglobin in the blood; excessive doses can impair the blood's oxygen carrying capability. As mentioned earlier in this article, the link between nitrites and KS is unclear. Some think poppers are incredibly pernicious, while others say they're relatively benign when used in moderation.

Figure 1 shows the results from gas chromatography analysis of the leather cleaner. A gas chromatograph is useful for separating complex samples into their component parts for further analysis; different components take different amounts of time to propagate through the machine's column. Each spike in the graph corresponds to a particular component in the mixture. The spikes in this graph are labeled to identify the various components.

Note the contrast between Figures 1 and 2. Whereas Figure 1 indicates a relatively simple mixture, Figure 2 shows all manner of garbage. Our budget didn't allow for further analysis to determine the exact identity of each individual component of this stuff.

Nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy was used to nail down the particular isomer of butyl nitrite present in Rush and other brands, and to verify that it was an alkyl nitrite and not an alkenyl nitrite which wouldn't have been covered by the law.

We can't guarantee what will happen to you if you inhale any of these. Nor can we claim that this is a comprehensive study because of the small number of samples used. However, since we did purchase these products in the real world, the results reflect what you could receive if you were to buy them for your own use. As with all substances at the fringes of legality, caveat emptor. —T.A.
March/April '93 features articles on excessive punishments as treatment for behavioral disorders in psychiatric institutions and public schools.

When treating destructive behavior, it seems all too easy to forever extend the list of inappropriate behaviors ad infinitum. For example, hitting, biting, self mutilation, or destroying property are certainly things to be discouraged. With that in mind, early intervention would be the next logical step. By following that line of reasoning, improperly trained health professionals subject their detainees to electric shock, loud noise, and inhalation of ammonia for such signs of "intent to misbehave" as looking (or not looking) at the hospital staff, speaking (or not speaking) when (not) spoken to, having to use (or not use) the restroom, or a host of things that would go unnoticed in the outside world.

Along the same lines is an article about the overprescription of Ritalin to inner-city elementary school children who have been inappropriately labelled as hyperactive. In classes where as many as one quarter of the children are on Ritalin, one has to ask whether it is the children or the teacher that suffers from some sort of pathology.

On the lighter side, there's a Consumer Reports style comparison test of some of the popular forms of operant conditioning in psychiatric institutions. Mouth's fearless volunteers braved The Rolling Pinch (deemed "merely uncomfortable" by the medical establishment), the classic Nine-Volt Battery on the Tongue, the invigorating Ice-Water Bath, and finally Oral Hygiene Therapy (aka. Washing Your Mouth Out With Shaving Cream). Yum! Mouth is available at a variety of yearly (six-issue) subscriptions: a few bucks for the impoverished, $12 for the basic cripple with an income, $20 for aiding and abetting disability rights, $36 for monolithic institutions (two subscriptions plus money for one hardship case), and $48 for good-hearted professionals (one sub plus moolah for three hardship subs). Send your legal tender to Mouth, 61 Brighton St., Rochester, NY 14607. Add $5 for foreign subscriptions. Mouth is available on audiodiscette for those who are visually or lexically impaired.

Olympia AIDS Task Force provides direct services, education, and outreach to the Thurston County area of Washington State. If you would like to provide practical support, man the switchboard, help with educational presentations, or assist on committees, please contact Nunez at the OATF office, 203 E. 4th #304, Olympia, WA 98501 or call (206) 352-2375.

Hot diggity! Our friends at Being Alive have launched CONNECT!, a friendship network for HIVers. Subscribers receive a newsletter with almost a thousand persons, and are updated on Being Alive-sponsored events in the Los Angeles area. CONNECT! adheres to the "put up or shut up" rule, which means that you must place an ad in order to receive the newsletter. The cost is a minimum donation of $10, and you there's no limit to the size of your listing (though moderation is appreciated, I'm sure). For more write CONNECT! c/o Being Alive, 3626 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026.

Do you know of a worthy organization that's too poor or politically correct to pay our exorbitant display rates? Let us know, and we'll give them a few free paragraphs here in the Resources section. —B.T.
One is beguiled into investigating these shapes. If viewed through the celebrated lens of skepticism, logical and dignified patterns may emerge.

Sensual, liquid darkness speaks to us in the universal tongue of sexuality. The tension between its inviting shadows and the rigid order of the day both titillate and horrify the reader.

The eye is drawn to fulsome, rounded shapes where it may dwell for some time. It is here that the wise merchant will best showcase his wares.

Wanna be famous? You know where to send the photos. Carnal offers help, but aren't necessary.
Age: 25
Height: 5'10"
Weight: 70 pounds

Likes: Caffeine, testosterone, ethanol

Dislikes: IQs less than 160, bumpy penises, epitaphs that rhyme
Some of you may have noticed one of the most pressing (and depressing) of all the crises facing us who have survived into the '90s: the Acute Boyfriend Shortage (ABS). The Boyfriend Shortage was brought about by the increasing popularity of the exclusive private club known as the Dead Boyfriends Society (DBS). So far, over 100,000 young men have paid the initiation fee and joined DBS, leaving a huge gap in the Potential Boyfriend Pool (PBP) and leaving thousands of us Without a Black Buddy or Movie Date (WFBOMD).

If you think I'm imagining things or perhaps exaggerating out of an overactive and twisted sense of reality, then try this simple test on yourself: think back to the time you had a boyfriend. Come up blank? Can you remember back that far? Still don't believe me? Here's another test: open up your little black book, the one that used to be filled with page after page of phone numbers of cute guys. Chances are it's like mine, and looks less like an address book and more like a Directory to the Afterlife. I've spent a small but very real fortune on magic markers to put in all those little black X's.

In the past, I always maintained that the best way to deal with ex-boyfriends is to kill them when you break up. That way you won't have to run into them on the street. It's an ideal that I've aspired, but seldom lived up to. But then, we live in a less than ideal world.

As attractive as the idea of shooting several of my ex-beaux is, I've been spared the expense of having to buy a gun to do away with Those I No Longer Date (TINLD) because of... The Dead Boyfriends Society! (By the way, a movie by the same name is already in the works, directed by Fassbinder, written by Colin Higgins and starring Rock Hudson, Brad Davis, and a cast of thousands.)

My best friend David (also dead, different club) used to say that the reason my boyfriends die is because I'm so hard on them. I think this assessment is a bit harsh, even if nearly every man I've ever slept with is dead.

Going to the trouble of catching a fatal disease just to get away from me seems a bit extreme. Still, I don't totally discount the possibility. The afterlife is, according to those who claim to know, peaceful, perfect, and probably doesn't include neurotic, demanding, egotistic lovers with all their insecurities.

In 1980s, my true love joined the DBS. Having been basically single since then, I've thought about this topic a lot. My conclusion: I need to get fucked long and hard and repeatedly over a number of years until I'm going to feel good about the subject. A number of years. But how to fulfill this need?

There are all sorts of services available to those in need: hot meal delivery, food banks, free clinics, shelters, transit discounts, support groups, counseling, and a host of others. So why not a Boyfriend Placement Service? I'll tell you why not: it's the insidious creeping influence of the Dead Boyfriends Society and the resulting Boyfriend Shortage! There are no boyfriends left! Boyfriend Pool empty.

To save you some trouble, I list for you here the major avenues that are, in my experience, ineffective for finding a boyfriend: burning candles or incense, paying to any of the major or minor gods, blind dates, being fixed up by friends, art openings, bars, cafes, dinner parties, church services, support groups, cruising the supermarket, personal ads, chance encounters, and especially begging, whining, pleading and throwing things. Nothing seems to work, and, after years of research trial and error, I've come up with no solutions.

Recent statistical data indicate that you are more likely to die in a plane crash than meet the man of your dreams. Not only that, statistics point to the fact that you'll probably be dead by the time they publish the next statistics. Again, my friends tell me that I'm too negative. Bullshit!

By all indications the boyfriend is an endangered species, encountered (if at all) only in obituaries, old photo albums, and group-song songs from the '50s. Fortunately for those of us left without one, there is no Dicko Shortage!
How can you tell the difference between a dead PWA and a living HIVer? You may assume that this is an easy task, but a friend of mine recently came across two checklists designed to help those who are confused by such issues. It was printed in a manual for “caregivers” of PWAs, written from a “death-teacher” (i.e., “let me share the spiritual charge of your death and/or terminal ‘healing’ by hugging you while you slowly expire”) perspective.

The first check-list offers “Signs and symptoms of approaching death.” It warns: “Not all these symptoms will appear at the same time and some or all may never appear.” Be that as it may, here are some of the listed indicators:

- Increased sleeping during the day, difficult to arouse.
- Confusion about time and place and identity of close and familiar people.
- Death rattle. (Never a good sign.)

Those of you who fail to correctly interpret the helpful hints listed above can try the next checklist for “Signs of Death.”

- No breathing.
- No heartbeat.
- Loss of control of bowel and bladder.
- No response to shaking or shouting.

I have some misgivings about that last item, “no response to shaking or shouting,” as it conjures up uncomfortable images of the slightly inebriated caregiver slapping a PWA corpse while yelling, “Yo, dude! Are you alive or what? You!” Therefore, I would like to propose some additions to the “Signs of Death” checklist, in the hope that these subtle clues can clinch the question without resorting to raised voices or agitating dying HIVers.

APARTS DEVOURING CORPSE. The presence of large scavenger birds (e.g., crows, vultures, bald eagles) nibbling on your ex-lover’s body generally indicates death. In the future, when housekeeping for terminal HIVers, avoid leaving unscreened windows open.

Persistent mortuary sales pitches. Repeated calls from funeral services vendors may be premature, but you might as well check. They often have better access to hospital records than you do. Remember that—at least in California—special surcharges for handling HIVer corpses have been ruled illegal.

Abrupt cessation of sarcasm. If your caregiver no longer makes nasty comments when you perform Louise Hay-style affirmations over him with your crystal, it may be that he’s developed a more “healing” attitude, or he may just have crooked.

Relatives looting apartment. The sudden presence of distant aunts, cousins, siblings, parents, etc. (who previously shunned the HIVer as an unpennatenter sinner) shuffling about the premises and pocketing small (or not so small) valuable items such as watches, rings, cash, carpets, artwork, furniture, appliances, etc. may be a sign of death. It is, however, an unreliable indicator as such activity can occur will before termination in a competitive family. Loudly announcing that it’s time to change the sicky’s adult diaper or bedpan is a good way to clear the room of these offensive vermin.

If you have come across any reliable and informative warning signs, please let us know about them. PWAs are at the cutting edge of thanatology, and seem likely to remain there for some time.

—M.B.
Advice for the Loveworn

Aunt Kaposi's Returns!

The last time I faced my troops on these pages, a year ago, I thought I was dying. That is not an unusual situation for your Aunt Kaposi to find herself in these days, but worthy of note nonetheless. As I recall, I wrote the first installment of Aunt Kaposi's Advice to the Loveworn lying on my back with cryptococcal meningitis in the Cedars Sinai AIDS ward. "Shake and bake" JV on the right arm, blood transfusion on the left. You can imagine what a wonderful time I had, gagging away, putting dementia to good use benevolent do-gooders of the now-my-hospital attendants watching me write on a yellow legal pad to all my beloved parish. The response from DIN was overwhelming. Letters and inquiries poured in from all over the immune-suppressed globe, wanting to know more of my joie de secret. How I manage to know everything and absolutely dip shit at the same time. And do I have the solution? The answer, my dear parish, is yes, yes! Of course, and not a minute too soon. To win, you must surrender. Yes, Aunt Kaposi has returned with the key to everlasting life (or a few more months, whichever way you look at it.)

I told you then in the Fall of '91 that you wouldn't see me again until I gained ten pounds and got my hair back. And here I am, la vieja.

The truth is your Aunt Kaposi has gained back over thirty pounds of what she lost to the little virus. I look fabulous. From 145 to 177 pounds of pure muscle and intermittent diarrhea. I have a tan, and more T cells than I care to claim. And my hair is curling lustily again, with the right shampoo.

The last time I wrote you was the day before I went home from the hospital. As it turns out, they wanted me to stay longer and then continue my "shake and bake" treatment as an outpatient for four months. I said, no way. Let me out of here. Give me a pill, or give me death. You Aunt Kaposi confesses she was not a good trooper about the catheter. Out, damn tube, I insisted to my trusted physicians. So instead of receiving amphetamine for four hours intravenously three days a week for several months, I take a pill, once a day, for, like, luck. La chayim.

And as luck will have it, it worked. The meningitis retreated over the months to a scarce speck of its former glory.

And your Aunt Kaposi is back to answer all your questions. In person. A true survivor of brain damage.

First, a quick word on diarrhea.

After I got out of the hospital, I was vomiting and shitting constantly. I decided to put my head down on my pillow (I couldn't lift it anyway) andexpire to the Great Victory reserved for all mortals: death. But then something happened. My neighbor Tory baked me three dozen delicious chocolate chip cookies. I ate them all within a few hours, and before I knew it, my energy started to rumble. I remembered that all-important first principle of continuing existence: surrender to the sweet and succulent.

Unfortunately, after that my diarrhea continued for eight or nine months.

I tried every remedy there is to plug me up. All the medications, mainstream, experimental, alternative, herbs, drops, needles, enemas, diets of all shapes and forms, nothing could convince my parasites to cool it.

It's very hard to fall in love these days. Even harder with diarrhea.

But that's what happened to your Aunt Kaposi.

Your Aunt Kaposi decided one day to fall in love with her diarrhea. I decided to let it all run out. Surrender to the shit.

I borrowed $5000 for food, stuffed myself every day, and exploded on a thousand toilets consequently living like a roving reporter,I packed it in, every kind of food I could imagine, then transmitted it into a torrential stream of liquid. I learned, for the first time, how to really let go. I didn't actually have a choice, or so I was reassured. The doctors told me it's impossible for us girls with low T-cells (mine were down to 3.2, or 1, like the traditional Hops) to rid ourselves entirely of Cryptosporidium. I said, thank God, I'm sorta used to my parasites. I kinda love the frequent L.A. to Texas. I packed it in, every kind of food I could imagine. I was able to imagine a minaret until there were other advantages as well. Think of all the reading you can get done if you start a bookshelf next to your room. At first, I was horrified to be living fount of shit, like everybody else. Then I saw the light rushing down the bowl. Diarrhea is perfect. You can build a good life around diarrhea. I wanted to bring my diarrhea to Geraldos or Oprah's show (People Who Love Their Shirt) but then I thought, no, only a parish would understand the bliss of zero anal retention. Surrender to that shit.

Now the latest development and most current impossible moral challenge for Aunt Kaposi is when a big red lump formed on the tip of my nose last month. I guess I forgot my sunscreen for the Gay Pride parade, and the next day, voila an earthquake right on the end of my fucking nose. I tried powder, cover-up, ointments, zit cream, Chinese cocaine, wheat grass, acupuncture, salves, and spells. But it just got bigger and bigger. Every time your Aunt Kaposi looked in the mirror, she saw the Phantom of the Opera. I don't mean the guy in white with the expression of pus and blood, but to me, your Aunt Kaposi, it was quite tragic. I thought, this is it. I cannot survive such ugliness. They can do anything to my organs and bowels, but not my face. My face which radiated so much beauty in bygone decades before video cameras.

Then, days before major surgery was scheduled to remove the blight, Aunt Kaposi looked in the mirror and decided, no surgery. No, she's bigger. And I was perfectly content to carry forever (or a few months, whichever way you look at it) my featuring cespoul on the tip of my nose. Surrender to the grotesque and unsightly.

Suddenly, the doc called up and said the lab says it's not cancer. I won't need the surgery after all. And he prescribed pills galore, all of which I have devoured. Your Aunt Kaposi takes more pills than anyone. For me, taking pills is a full-time job. And I'm good at my work. I know instinctively the pills I take 5 times a day, 3 times a day, once a week. I get a call from some minaret to fall to my knees and absorb Allah. And so I am happy to report that I have gained back all my weight, the diarrhea visits only when it's welcome, and the bloody look is almost invisible now with the right makeup.

In addition, I have a new serenogrape honey, all the love, happiness and money I need. A deeper sense of peace and contentment that I've ever known. And next year, I have as my goal to achieve full artistic recognition.

How does Aunt Kaposi do it? Well, everyone who sees me on my abyss of utter demolition to rise like a phoenix on these illustrious pages, offering gratuitously all her well-earned wisdom and experience!

The answer, my dear parish, is the same for each and every one of you. Stigma with style, child. There is no time to hate. Ritualize your perversions. You are not alone. Unless you're lucky I have discovered it is good for the immune system to master foreign bodies and characters that no one knows. And I also call it chi. The Japanese call it ki. Aunt Kaposi calls the life force "Wheeeeee!!!!"

Stay alive, my dear parish, and do well. To your neighborhood soon, bearing her hula hoop and legal drugs and possibly unsightly skin eruptions. Don't ask what you can do for you, ask what you can do for our cure. There's nothing wrong with our bodies and characters that a little death can't improve. Surrender to the good fight.

Love forever (or next month, whichever way you look at it.) —K.S.
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GET FAT, don’t die!

BY BIFFY MAE

Truly Tasty Spanakopita

1 pound mild feta cheese
2 medium onions (chopped)
3 eggs
freshly ground pepper
3 cups filo
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 pound fresh spinach (or 8 ounces frozen spinach)
1 pinch of nutmeg
1 package filo (6 sheets) dough, thawed

Thaw the filo dough according to the package’s instructions—this may take up to 24 hours. Combine the eggs and cottage cheese in a bowl. Crumble the feta and mix it in, along with several shakers of nutmeg and a few grinds of pepper. Set aside. Heat the olive oil and sauté the shallots until they are translucent. Add the fresh spinach and stir until the leaves are thoroughly wilted. (If you’re using thawed packaged spinach, cut the heat under the spinach and stir it in.) Fold the sautéed spinach and shallots into the cheese mixture. (Now for the fun part: handling the somewhat temperamental filo leaves. Create a 9 x 9 x 3 glass or ceramic baking pan. Lay down several layers of filo dough, and brush these with olive oil. Spread a layer of spinach over this, and top with another layer of filo. Brush this layer with a little more olive oil, and sprinkle the chopped parsley on top. Repeat this whole process, starting with another layer of filo, until you have used up your ingredients; about three complete layers. Finish the top with one last layer of filo, brush with yet more olive oil, and sprinkle with a little nutmeg. Bake this monstrosity at 350°F for 45 minutes, or until the top is a golden brown. Serve with fresh fruit.

TOFU One classic and always popular solution is tofu, less gloriously known as bean curd. Tofu is made from soybeans in a process similar to the way cheese is made from milk. Unlike cheese, tofu does not require rennet, which is an enzyme obtained from the lining of cows’ stomachs. Tofu usually has a bland taste but readily absorbs the flavor of whatever it’s cooked in. If you can find it fresh (that is, going to the tofu shop and having the TofuGen lose a steam-packet of it in your outstretched bag), it has a mild nutty flavor that is well worth the extra trouble. Tofu comes in many different shapes and sizes, from soft to extra firm, and is also available in smoked or seasoned varieties. What do you do with this macroporphic bean curd? Cut it up and put it in the stir-fry that we talked about earlier (Biffy Mae suggests getting the extra firm kind which won’t fall apart), drop it in soups, or put it in a salad, but never ever make a cheese cake with it. Some things are sacred. Also worth checking out is tempeh, a cousin of tofu which is used in Rhieta Lou’s Surprising Tempeh Adobo on page 38.

Soybeans also yield soy milk and miso paste. Despite what some nutritionists claim, soy milk does not “taste just like milk”, but it isn’t bad, and can be used for drinking and cooking. In fact, carnivorous pariahs who are having problems with lactose intolerance might want to give soy milk a try. Miso is a fermented paste of soybeans. It has a flavor hard to describe, but it goes with just about anything. Dissolved in water, it forms an excellent stock for drinking on a cold day or using in soups and stews. You can also brush vegetables with a little miso and bake them, as shown on page 4.

BEANS While soybeans are known mostly by their derived foodstuffs, plain old regular beans are also an economical protein source. One 65¢ bag of black beans can last you for a week. (Actually, there’s a third class of herbivore that wasn’t mentioned at the beginning of this article, the socio-economic vegetarian. Biffy Mae was one of these in his impoverished college days. The main drag about this seemingly perfect food is the amount of time needed to cook them properly. With the exception of lentils and limas, the simplest pleasures are harder and harder to come by. For several hours, preferable overnight, and then simmered for a couple of hours. You can cheat and buy pre-cooked canned beans like Biffy Mae did. Just steam them up.)

Then there’s the issue of flatulence. Bean farts arise from a naturally occurring sugar called raffinose. Raffinose molecules are too big for human sugar-digesting enzymes to get their teeth around. The bugs that live in your gut, however, can metabolize raffinose and the resulting intestinal gas is the product of their good fortune. For the HIVer with digestive problems, flatulence may not only disappoint you from your friends’ good graces, it can be painful. One way to reduce the chances of getting gas is to cook the beans with rice, through this method isn’t very dependable. For those of you who insist on modern living through chemicals, there’s a food additive called Bifid-O, which is supposed to placate the raffinose demons. Be careful though, some people are allergic to it.

Garbanzo beans (also called chick peas or ceci beans, though not really a true bean at all) are the basis for a number of middle eastern dishes. Falafel is made from ground up dried garbanzos and spices, which is then mixed into a bread dough and formed into dumpling. Falafel is often served in a pita bread sandwich with crunchy vegetables and a tangy yogurt-based sauce, but it goes well with marinara sauce too. Humus is a paste made from mashed cooked garbanzos, used as a dip. Ground garbanzos blended with grains or beans form the basis for a wide range of “garden burgers” which can be done up real tasty. Finally, for those calorie-pickers among us, nothing beats nuts. Nuts and seeds like sesame and sunflower are the simplest pleasures of life’s confectionary. High in protein and just swimming in oil. Lightly toasted almonds brighten up any stir-fry, while pine nuts complement starchy vegetables like carrots, rutabaga, or ambrosia! Cut it up and put it in the stir-fry that we cast aspersions on earlier (Biffy Mae suggests getting the extra firm kind which won’t fall apart), drop it in soups, or put it in a salad, but never ever make a cheese cake with it. Some things are sacred. Tofu is a food that doesn’t taste as good as it used to. This “taste perversion”, a change in the way we perceive flavors, is caused by HIV, drugs used to treat HIV and OIs, or both. A metallic or soda-like flavor is not uncommon*, and greens and cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower may seem especially malignant. It’s hard to be enthusiastic at chow time when one

GRAINS Biffy Mae’s friends who dutifully eat their underseasoned vegetable medleys do so with brown rice. Brown rice is nutritious. Brown rice is wholesome. Brown rice tastes like cardboard. (The same goes for whole wheat pasta, yuck.) Okay, maybe you’re into that sort of thing, but don’t feel like you have to limit yourself. Try the aromatic basmati or earthy wild rice, available inexpensively in bulk at many supermarkets. Check out couscous, a kind of pasta that makes a nifty hot cereal for breakfast. Cornbread or whole grain muffins are a nice alternative when you get tired of steamed rice. Plain or bread is one of the things in a pastry for a parish to eat. Bread and inoffensive, yet warmly comforting, bread is not merely a vehicle for sandwich items, it’s a worthy food by itself. In fact, if you’re in the process of tying up your assets into durable goods before declaring bankruptcy or going on social security then get a bread machine. A piping hot loaf programmed to be ready in the morning is one of life’s great satisfactions. (Biffy Mae recommends the Zojirushi brand Home Bakery.)

TASTE PERVERSIONS For the HIVer, some things that didn’t taste as good as it used to.

*Courtesy of the U.S.D.A.

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Page 33
GET FAT, don’t die!

Biffy Mae’s Emergency Minestrones

1 medium onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 Tbsp Tablespoon olive oil
parsley, sage, and thyme
1 large can V-8 juice
1 bag of mixed frozen vegetables

Brek! The executor of your boyfriend’s estate is coming over and you haven’t a thing for dinner! In a soup pot quickly sauté some onions and garlic in olive oil. When the onions are translucent, add your favorite Italian seasonings, and sauté for another minute or so. Add the V-8 juice and the frozen veggies. Bring to a boil and simmer for 15 minutes. Add some dry macaroni and cook for 10-12 minutes more. Serve with toasted bread and butter.

Biffy Mae’s Little Bean Salad

1/2 pound yellow wax beans
1/2 pound green beans
1/2 pound fava bean pods
1 red bell pepper, cored and chopped
raspberry vinegar
bottled Italian salad dressing
poppyseeds, salt, ground pepper

Snap the wax and green beans into 2-inch pieces. Open up the pea pods and take out the beans. Discard the pods. Mix all of the beans together, and rinse them off on HIGH for 5 to 10 minutes, or until they are just steamed throughout. Remove from the microwave and blanch in cold water. Drain the beans, pop the fava out of their tough skin, and toss them into a salad bowl along with the bell peppers. Sprinkle with the raspberry vinegar and salad dressing. Shake on the dressing to taste, and toss lightly. Chill before serving. A great lunch item for warm weather.

Don’t feel guilty about eating foods that orthodox vegetarian guidelines might frown on. If you’re getting all of your nutrients and having fat, that’s what’s important. A quick look at some of the recipes in this issue will give you an idea of what’s possible without having to kill insects or think about your physician before making any radical changes to your diet. He or she may have comments or suggestions for the particulars of your medical situation. (And try Luke-O-Plack’s Faceless Spaghetti, by the way. 99% of our nation’s Brussels sprouts are grown not far from where Biffy Mae lives, along a fifty mile long section of coast between San Francisco and Santa Cruz. Just think, one small thermocol device to wipe out practically the entire American supply!)

The Official Truth

Finally, a note on variety. All the suggestions mentioned above refer to the staples of your diet, so after ingeniously preparing your vegetarian slurry, reward yourself with something you like, especially dessert. Break up the heaviness of your main dishes with light and crunchy things, so you don’t feel like you’re carrying a gut full of mud from the Mississippi delta.

BIG RED RIBBONS

When asked by The Advocate her opinion on the Boycott of Colorado, pop princess Debbie Gibson said, “I think it’s stupid...I went and did a radio promotion recently, and I whipped out my jacket with the big red ribbon on the back and wore it. For me, that says a lot more than not going at all.”

Yeah, Debbie. I’m sure the radio listeners of Colorado Board that big red ribbon blaring over the airwaves. And I was just wondering: what the hell does your red ribbon have to do with the Colorado amendment? Ah... the red ribbon. Pinned to lapels initially to show solidarity with the struggle against AIDS, now a gargantuan fashion trend the likes of which haven’t been seen since 1983, when Madonna introduced those armloads of black gummy bracelets.

Maybe in 1987 you bought that Tracy Chapman album, you bought every Bob Dylan album released on compact disc, and so you called yourself politically aware. You called yourself an activist. Now you got that red ribbon and you don’t need to actually DO anything cos you’ve already proven how goddamn much you care. Nobody’s gonna say you’re not politically correct, nobody—and certainly not yourself—is gonna call you a narcissistic asshole.

If you can tell me why you’re wearing that ribbon (besides “I’m concerned about AIDS”) then okay. I’m with you. If not,

GET YOUR FUCKING RED RIBBON OUT OF MY FACE.

In a brown paper bag, place that bundle inside a plastic bag, and put the whole thing in the veggie drawer.
Porn Potato has always grown to a different diurnal rhythm than his fellow panthers in the fields. In the sunshine, these felines with the prevailing ideologies were discussed as youthful, fancy later on, the snakes that Porn Potato encased were much deeper and much madder nerves.

When yours truly read Brave New World in high school, I found himself defending Aldous Huxley’s utopia. How could I fantasize such a sizzling regime, my English teacher demurred. Perhaps I was a communist, accused my classmate. I tried to explain that the society depicted in Brave New World was truly bizarre, because it offered a comfortable place for everyone. Sure, the social structure consisted of five rigidly ordered classes, and everyone who wished to live indoors was expected to sacrifice their individuality for the smooth operation of the social machinery. But, Porn Potato argued, the planners of this same society realized that there would be people who couldn’t fit in. They were given reign over the world’s “free islands,” located in the hospitable South Pacific, where they could swim, fish, and count the stars. What could be better than dancing under the coconut palms and discussing philosophy, while the rest of society toils to maintain the infrastructure? Honestly, the libertarians have been doing that sort of thing for years.

With this willingness to kick sacred cows, Porn Potato hoped to lead you into the alternate reality of Meis Kock. With a title like that, the viewer would rightly expect to be seduced by erotic images of fraternal community, the willingness to use and be abused by power, to be carried away by the spell of der Führer and national socialism; and perhaps realize some unflattering things about themselves and human nature. Sadly, the best thing about Meis Kock was the box it came shrink-wrapped in.

As the tale begins, we find ourselves in the not-too-distant future of a brown earth gone red. The national economy has stalled, shopping malls lie in ruins, and Pizza Hut’s stand gutted. None of this is obvious in the video, which opens with a young waf wan¬dering through the California redwoods; one has to read the packaging to capture all of these suble nuances. The waf is very unhappy...living in the shadow of the apocalypse is one thing, but damnit, there aren’t any batteries left in the world to power his cond¬ominium-sized ghetto blaster. (We’re not even sure what he’s doing out in the woods. He has no camping gear to speak of, unless his boom box unfolds into a tent with room for a sleeping bag.) While pooping on a stump, he spies five goosestepping youths March¬ing up along the trail.

These boys belong to a movement called The Solution. They dress in nifty uniforms, and swear their allegiance to a banner that’s supposed to look Nazi-esque, but more closely resembles the national flag of Thailand. There’s this big rally coming up, and the local group leader, Colonel Crotch, is busy giving orders. “You, parol the perimeter. You go back to the fort, and you...” he turns to Brief Sergeant Schwanzstecker. “...come back to the tent with me.”

Col. Crotch is a shapely but slightly dried-out looking waf. Sgt. Schwanzstecker is comely but looks not much like a youngup to be fast-forwarding out with the rest of The Solution’s juvenile. Despite these slight aesthetic imperfections, they waste no time getting down to business, rolling around on the sleeping bags while exchanging lots of passionate smooches. (Nice to know that even neo-Fascists have a tender side.) They teasingly fondle each other through their garments...gradually shedding one piece at a time, until their left in nothing but their socks and stoneworts. What a feat for the eyes!

Col. Crotch, despite the complexion of having had a barrel ashamed from his cheeks, is lean and shapely in all of the right places, with a magnificent set of buns. They’re ample and round, but not too big, the color of Stay-Puff marshmallows. They’re firm, but not so much that they don’t yield tantalizingly under Sgt. Schwanzstecker’s kneading grip. Schwanzstecker himself is golden and godlike in his leanness, and goes Crotch’s body with a fer al intensity.

Col. Crotch starts out giving the orders, but eventually control is relinqu¬ished to Schwanzstecker. First, Crotch orders Schwanzstecker to rack his dick. Then he kneads over Schwanzstecker and fucked his face, his big low hangings hanging against the other’s chin. There’s a pleasant contrast between Crotch’s ivory buttstocks and the taut stomach and heaving chest of Schwanzstecker, with the grinding of lips and genitalia in between. Porn Potato likes that.

Reciprocity is the order of the day, and the two eventually end up in a fairly well proportioned sixty-nine. Normally Porn Potato fast-forwards through this act, so PC in concept but rarely photogenic. These lads are the exception though, their manu¬cal intensity saving the day. Then, with Col. Crotch on his back, Sgt. Schwanzstecker sticks one finger in the Colonel’s buttholhe, then two, then three. A nice slow priming of the equipment before Schwanzstecker in¬serts his ample tool and begins pumping away. Das gefällt der Pornkaroffel sehr. After a while, Schwanzstecker grabs Crotch’s ankles and thoroughly plows the weak fields of his Fatherland. Unfortunately, the videography suffers in the cramped quarters of the tent, so much of the
At this point, the viewer is encouraged to hit the rewind and put in a new tape, like Porn Potato should have done.

What follows is the indoctrination of the young wafl saw in the beginning of the video by other members of The Salvation. Unfortunately, they all look awkward and underwhelmed, perhaps wanting to be somewhere else or worrying that they may have left the oven on before leaving the concentration camp.

Later on, what could have been a really hot scene with deKommunize taking liberties with two of the young gooses-teppers was totally lost to poor planning, poor chemistry, and poor dialogue. De Kommunize is dark, angulated, and trans-senile, but ends up lamely wrestling himself while the other two boyscouts try vainly to copulate. Eventually, the wafl becomes annoyed with all of this banality, rips off his velcro armband (velcro Hitler must be rolling in his grave!), and goes back to pimping on his stall in the redwoods, leaving everyone with lots of unanswered questions.

Questions like, what is the official status of buttfucking in the youth corps? Are these young lads screwing because of The Salvation or in spite of it? Or, as Porn Potato hopes, are they militant homosexuals hellbent on recruiting the nation's young people, as the rabid fundamentalists have always accused? Porn Potato could support an agenda where brotherhood and frequent practice of sodomy replace loitering in the ruined shopping malls and ravaged arcades of the non-too-distant future.

On a scale of one to five eyes, Metis Rock barely opened one and a half.

Supplementary scores: Surrealism-two Kafkas; reduction-love-frustration-high; and political correctness-too much of the wrong kind. The first vignette is worth checking out, but don't rely on this video as the sole entertainment for your next orgy. As for Porn Potato, he's ready to sit down on a jerk off to a nice long viewing of Salo.

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**Bi*fy Ma's Killer Cobbler**

1 cup Bisquick  
1 cup milk  
1 cup sugar  
3/4 stick butter  
1 big frozen blackberries (4-6 cups)

Back by popular demand. Mix the first three ingredients together. Melt the butter and pour into a 9 x 9 baking pan. Pour the batter over the butter. Drop the fruit on top and bake at 350°F for about an hour, or until the cobbler is golden brown and bubbly.

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Porn Potato encourages movie makers to submit their videos for review.
Thought-provoking DPN postcards! Red and black on matte finish cardstock. Ask for "You're Soaking in H!" or "Roy & Kimberly". Sorry, "Piss Jesse" no longer available. 50¢ each.

5
Official DPN buttons, featuring the lovable One-ounce. Black, red, and white. Also available: "Porn Potato Likes That!" and "GET FAT, don't diet" in black and white. 2-1/4 inches in diameter. $1.00 each.

3
KISS ME, I'm a diseased pariah! Feeling awkward about telling the guy you just brought home about your seashells? Let your T-shirt do the talking for you. (And he will have no choice but to compliment you on your fine taste in clothing and literature.) Black and red on white. Large or Extra-Large: $12.00 each.

4
Tired of those nasty old T-shirts but don't know where to buy? Try Captain Condom's Original Party Pack! 15 assorted condoms, plus 3 lubricant samplers and instructions: $4.00 each.

1
The blood of over 100,000 Americans who have died of AIDS, Mr. President? Why, you're soaking in H! The graphs for our first cover. Red and black on white. Specify Large or Extra-Large. $12.00 each.

2
Official Condom Tester. Commissioned to our readers at the Condom Resource Center, this epic design (as seen in Condom Corner) will attract the attention of everyone from同志 to service station attendants to presidents and kings. Red and black on white. Specify Large or Extra-Large. $12.00 each.

This large eye design features Barrack's classic stance: Blue, yellow, and black on white. Specify Large or Extra-Large. $12.00 each.

4
KISS ME, I'm a diseased pariah! Feeling awkward about telling the guy you just brought home about your seashells? Let your T-shirt do the talking for you. (And he will have no choice but to compliment you on your fine taste in clothing and literature.) Black and red on white. Large or Extra-Large. $12.00 each.

The torso is Tommy's. (He's single.)

7
Tired of those nasty old T-shirts but don't know where to buy? Try Captain Condom's Original Party Pack! 15 assorted condoms, plus 3 lubricant samplers and instructions: $4.00 each.
Ask for Diseased Pariah News at these fine bookstores:

A Different Light, San Francisco, CA
A Different Light, Los Angeles
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City Lights Bookstore, San Francisco
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Lambda Rising, Washington, DC
People Like Us, Chicago, IL
Glad Day Books, Boston, MA
Sons & Daughters, Grand Rapids, MI
Sons & Daughters, Southfield
A Brother's Touch, Minneapolis, MN
Dreamhaven Books, Minneapolis
Brothers & Sisters, Albuquerque, NM
A Different Light, New York, NY
Oscar Wilde Books, New York
Giovanni's Room, Philadelphia, PA
Powell's Books, Portland, OR
Sundance Natural Foods, Eugene
Alfi News, Seattle, WA
Bailey-Coy Books, Seattle
Beyond the Closet, Seattle
Bulldog News, Seattle
Fremont Place Book Co., Seattle
Left Bank, Seattle
M Coy Books, Seattle
Red & Black Books, Seattle
Steve's Broadway News, Seattle
Tower Books at Selected Locations
(Inquire Locally)
L'Androgyne, Montreal, Canada
Little Sisters, Vancouver
Octopus Books, Vancouver
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