

NEWS AND VIEWS

For persons who are living with HIV/AIDS, their families, friends, and supporters

The Nova Scotia Persons With AIDS Coalition

ISSUE 9,
SEPT1990

In Memory Of Someone Whose Memory Wasn't Always The Best John McGillivray Died — Halifax, July 17, 1990

At "The Coalition" we have had some success recently at making a Video. If the call of the Muses had truly intoxicated us we might at this time be planning an extravaganza to commemorate, surprisingly enough, the death of yet another member. I can see it now ... a convent full of ... er ... brothers bustling around singing rhetorically, at the top of their lungs, "How do we solve a problem like, John?" The fact of the matter would be that we would all be singing with the same loving consternation as the sisters in *"The Sound of Music"*.

To pretend that John wasn't often a problem would not be honest and would only bring smiles to the faces of Mrs. McPhee, Head Nurse Barb and staff on Manor 2, Wilson and the Hostel committee, Raymond from the Realms of glory, Vida, Street Nurse and Resident savante of Gottingen St., Henry Capstick, and astonished doctors in medical establishments across this city.

The star of our show, the indulgent Mother Superior with the most frustration because she was most present to the situation, and yet the wisest, most insightful, understanding person in John's latter day experience, would have to be Joan.

John simply was a wonderful, wonderful problem for us all. His history remains a mystery and rightly so because he was so unique. His journey from back-water Cape Breton to Halifax via the glitter of New York and Vegas assumed something of the stature of "urban Myth" and the most amazing thing about it is the fact that it appears to all be true ... at least we think so.

John, himself apparently could well advise on sets, costumes and perhaps even make-up for our commemorative production since he had been a very successful Interior Decorator moving in the best, most fashionable, circles in the Big Apple. Those of us who bore the brunt of his scathing remarks about the austere, yea Spartan, decor of the Salvation Army Hostel, the Early Acadian Provincial Dump of our own Hostel, and the classically purist lines of Northwood space, probably gulped embarrassingly at learning this.

Similarly we may have been surprised when he raved a little about dogs and we would indulgently ask whether what he owned had been a tail-wagging-dog type Heinz '57 only to have him roll back his eyes in disgust to inform us, "no! It was an Afghan". To

make conversation we might have commented on the heat only to have him respond that it reminded him of Vegas. The snow would remind him of Aspen ... and on it when. Was John citizen of the world or charlatan? Who knows? Do we have to know?

He was a unique character a man with a wealth of experience either in fact or in fantasy who lived the last two years of his life when most of us knew him, from pillar-to-post. We were privileged to have been, alternately, pillar or post. He lived largely in moments, moments of reverie, moments between periods of fairly serious dementia. Thank God he had these wonderfully refreshing moments and does it matter if they were factual or not?

He drank deeply at the tap of bitterness having had a crippling stroke here in Halifax some two years ago. He lived on the street, came kicking and screaming, or at least shouting and demanding, into our hostel and our lives. Led us through the many meetings of "What do we do with John?" discussions to the difficult decision of having to arrange adult protection services "for his own good" — that awful phrase which is so real but inevitably sounds so cruel. The only thing the process did for us it seems is to take us into famial experience we may not have had otherwise. John was important to us. He was another FACE of AIDS. He required us to expand our vision, bend our assumptions and, not least of all, open our hands. Who gets AIDS, street people or interior decorators? John reminded us that both do. If he didn't experience the latter he sure knew the language and we heard it in the moments when it slipped out between the more routine grumbling.

If it seems like a riches-to-rags story, know that it was in fact the whole gamut of rags-to-riches-to-rags. Amazingly enough John didn't even own his own name. Two children of some undetermined relationship were fostered by the same mother but in fact their names were mixed up by Children's Aid so that John became Bill and Bill became John. Some persons with AIDS' lives start that way. Others end that way. John died at Northwood Manor on July 17, 1990 of complications from AIDS. Goodbye John McGillivray, whoever you were.

Fr. Mike McDonald
for N.S.P.W.A.C.

Nova Scotia Persons With AIDS Coalition AIDS Awareness Week

Testing, Early Intervention and Treatment NOW!

Sunday, October 14th

Ovation 90

Celebration of Life!

Exciting Fundraiser at Neptune Theatre

Tuesday, October 16th

The Test For HIV Antibodies

Who should have it? When? Who to talk to? Why Test?
The emotional, psychological and physical implications
for yourself and others

Wednesday, October 17th

Nutrition Night

Dinner for persons living with HIV
Discussion on nutritional supplements

Thursday, October 18th

Early Intervention

(for the prevention of opportunistic infection associated with HIV)
What is it? How real is it?
When should one consider early intervention treatments/drugs
How to work with your doctors to get the maximum benefit

Friday, October 19th

Treatments

What is there? What's been tested? What's coming down the road?
A presentation by Martin Delaney of Project Inform, San Francisco

Saturday, October 20th

Effects of the Psyche on the Immune System

A presentation by Bernard Lapointe, Principal Health Adviser at the
Federal Centre for AIDS
and a physician practising in Montreal at Clinique L'Actuel
(a health clinic with 2300 HIV patients)

Complementary Therapies

What are they? What do they do?
Also, local resources available.

For more information contact NSPWAC at
Phone: (902)-429-7922
or write to P.O. Box 1374, PS North
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3K 5H7

Nova Scotia Persons With AIDS Coalition

Presents

Emotional and Psychological Aspect of AIDS

A Series the 2nd Tuesday of every month

October 9th, 1990

Sexuality — Romance and sex after diagnosis

November 13th, 1990:

Relationships/Loneliness

December 11th, 1990:

Spirituality

January 8th, 1991:

Organic Brain Syndrome

February 12th, 1991:

Families Dealing with AIDS: Extended and Biological

March 12th, 1991:

Grief and Bereavement

April 9th, 1991:

Losses: Creativity and Productivity after diagnosis — job, physical ability, your dentist etc.

May 14th, 1991:

Stress Management: Non-medication techniques

June 11th, 1991:

Wrap-up evaluation, and open house at the NSPWAC office

Resource persons for this series are:

Avery Kempton

Dawn Ross

Heather Ferguson

Mary Petty

Brenda Richard

Diane MacDonald

Joe Leblanc

Michael McDonald

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

Open General Membership Meeting of the Nova Scotia Persons With AIDS Coalition to discuss the structure of the organization with particular emphasis on issues of MEMBERSHIP.

Who Can Belong?

How Can One Belong?

How Does The Board Relate To the Membership?

Discussion will lead to a decision regarding voting procedures at the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

Monday September 17 — 7:30 p.m.
Board Room — Offices of NSPWAC

