

# Activism

## No More AIDS, No More War *(from Page 2)*

risk "hurting the families" of the people stationed in the Gulf. (Members of my extended family are already in the Gulf, and it hurts enough to know that they've been sent there in the first place.)

Maybe the problem with AIDS is that it's something of an invisible killer. You can't put a picture of the AIDS virus on a poster like you can with Saddam Hussein and rile up the public temper to the point where we're willing to let our sons and daughters die to make the world a safer place. As long as the AIDS virus goes uncured, the world won't be a safer place, with or without Saddam Hussein.

America, your gay sons and lesbian daughters have been fighting for their lives for years now, fighting for ALL our lives in the hopes of freeing this country from the terrorist grip of AIDS. Our casualties have now gone beyond those tallied in most major wars, and there is no sign of ceasefire on the horizon. We've tried being polite and using diplomatic means to draw attention to this growing crisis, but the rhetoric of warfare gets us more attention in the public eye. America, it seems, values action over discussion, weapons over words, violence over compassion.

I don't regard the pop star Madonna as a cultural philosopher, but she painted a picture of America in red, white, and blue when she observed recently that "people are willing to go to a movie and watch someone get blown to bits for no reason at all (but) nobody wants to see two girls kissing or two men snuggling." This comes after MTV refused to air her "controversial" video for "Justify My Love," which featured scenes of same-sex cuddling that the singer admitted might have been "too strong" for the MTV audience.

Gay love (not gay sex, friends - just gay love) still equals filth and perversion in

the American mind, at least as we let it be decided by media and corporate entities. A recent trip to Burlington's newest retail video store led to the discovery that any movies with a homosexual theme are located in the "Offbeat" section. Women in chains being treated as sex objects by leering men, mutilated bodies piling up in senseless gore - these images are judged by mainstream culture to be "acceptable," even for the "impressionable children" who must be sheltered from any and all evidence of non-traditional lifestyles. The American Family Association, arch enemy of the gay movement, spends a great deal of time ferreting out even subtle depictions of gay life in TV programming in order to protect the children of America, ten percent of whom are going to grow up gay anyway.

But where is the AFA when the bullets fly and the knives flash, when the blood is spilled and bones are broken on network TV? And why have they not done more to help stop a disease which has devastated a huge number of families, *American* fami-

lies, in its unending arresting of lives? No, instead, they're busy making sure we don't know that Cole Porter was a homosexual, that we don't see "homosexual lovers as caring, sensitive, rational men" (the words they used to condemn the TV miniseries "People Like Us"), that we don't find out more about AIDS, and that our nation's sons and daughters continue to die because we continue to discount those deaths.

America, it's time to grow up. A

life is a life. That's a simple lesson. It's easy to learn. Every death from AIDS in this country should hurt us every bit as much as every death in the Middle East. We should be working hard to avoid war-like conflict, even to the point of abandoning war-like rhetoric, as we seek to find solutions to both the AIDS and the Gulf crises. That requires

effort on both sides, it's true, but then again, so does aggression. We must all strive to be the "caring, sensitive, rational" men and women that the AFA find so offensive when "gay" is added to the list of adjectives.

We must end both wars, at home and abroad, for every life saved, no matter whose, lessens the hurt we all feel and the guilt we must all carry in our hearts to know that we could have done more - that we could be doing more - to prevent those deaths from happening.

### Join The Fight!

#### Support The Vermont Coalition of Lesbians and Gay Men

in their work to pass legislation guaranteeing equal rights to Lesbians and Gay men in Vermont and insuring protection for People With AIDS and HIV+ persons. Contribute to our cause and add your name to our mailing list. We need your help.

Yes, I want to be a part of making Vermont safer for Gays and Lesbians. Add my name to your mailing list.

Accept my contribution of \_\_\_\_\_ to help with expenses and general coalition building efforts.

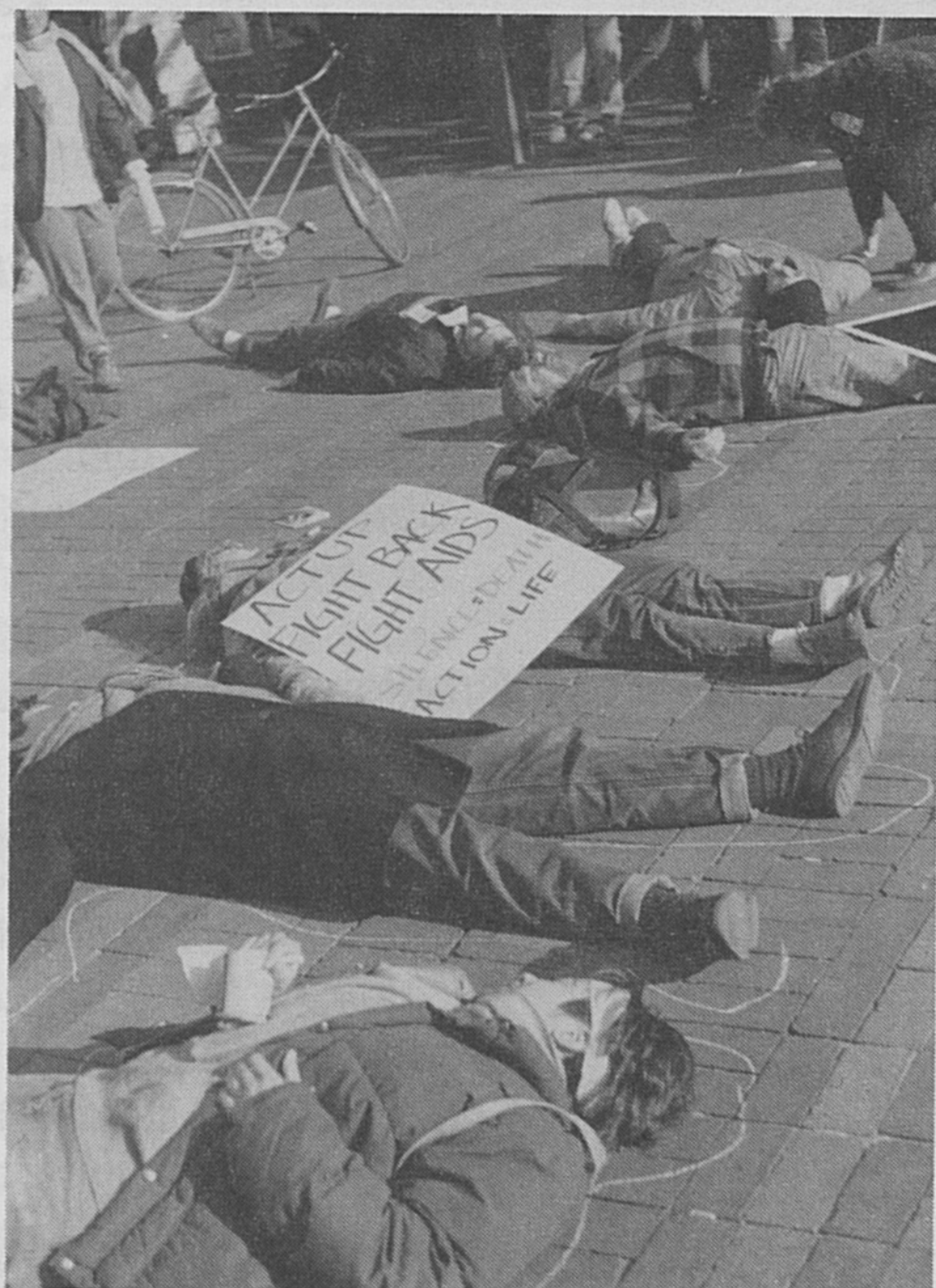
See Address on Resources Page

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**THANK YOU!**



ACT UP "Die-In" in Burlington on December 1