

Outside AIDS benefits hinder efforts in VT

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ers argue, "I just sponsored you for the Swim."

While her supporters in 1996 didn't question the appropriateness of her fundraising, Aranoff reported that one friend declined his financial support, and began a discussion with her that affected how she approached fundraising in '97. Aranoff acknowledges that she leveraged connections she had in Vermont's AIDS community as Executive Director of the Vermont AIDS Council in securing donations for the '96 Swim for Life. Many of the people that she tapped for donations are the very same who struggle to raise money for Vermont's local organizations, and she recognizes that the \$1,050 she raised for the Provincetown organizations would have been a significant contribution to any of our local non-profits.

Anxious to swim again in '97, Aranoff elected to provide her supporters the opportunity to sponsor her participation through contributions to either the Provincetown Swim for Life, or the Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights, on whose Legislative Committee Aranoff sits. Aranoff, a staff attorney at Vermont Protection and Advocacy, a federally funded agency that advocates on behalf of people with disabilities, and who has herself been confined to a wheelchair or dependent on crutches for the past six months since suffering a compound fracture of her left thigh in an automobile accident last spring, stated in her 1997 appeal letter to friends and colleagues, "My awareness of disability issues has been raised tremendously this year...As a result, I would like some of the money I raise to stay in Vermont to support advocacy efforts for people with any type of disability." In support of her swim this year, Aranoff collected \$255 for the P-Town agencies and just over \$200 for the VCDR.

Aranoff concedes that she didn't expect to be as successful last year as she was. The response to her appeal "shocked me. After the swim, I realized how much I, or anyone, could potentially raise, and I decided I wanted to do this in Vermont."

While it's awkward to be apologetic about raising funds for any worthwhile non-profit service organization, some Vermonters who have participated in P-Town's Swim for Life have avoided Aranoff's position by paying the registration fee out of their own pocket. Richard Alther, a long-time competitive swimmer who trains regularly from his home on the shore of Lake Champlain in Ferrisburg, reports, "I don't solicit contributions; I just pay my way."

Cheryl Elinsky, who re-

cently became the first Vermonter to swim the English Channel (see page 1), participated in the Swim for Life for three years. The first year, she collected \$300 in pledges, and "felt good about it." In the second year, like Alther, she paid just the registration fee, mostly out of her own pocket. By the third year Elinsky became disillusioned with the event. She appealed to event coordinator Jay Critchley for a waiver of the registration fee, explaining that her fundraising efforts in the small community of Brattleboro was disadvantaging the AIDS Project there. "I was asking the same bunch of people" that the Project relies on for its local funding. Critchley was unyielding, and Elinsky moved on to other events.

Dudley of Strafford, a volunteer at the '96 and '97 Swims for Life, and a former Provincetown resident, isn't convinced that there is any conflict of interest in supporting the P-Town agencies. Dudley believes that our community has a special relationship with P-Town, one that may justify Vermonters' support of their agencies. "We all go here. We take from this community, be it their water or whatever. A lot of people have come here to die. There are community resources here, and it's good to know this if you need help."

Other events, not associated with P-Town, draw significantly more heavily from Vermont. The Rutland Herald reported that the Boston-New York AIDS Ride 3 sponsored by Tanqueray, which began on September 13th, drew 47 riders from Vermont. That event requires a full \$1,500 registra-

tion fee per participant. Forty riders, at \$1,500 a piece, extract over \$70,000 from Vermont's communities for donation to the Fenway Community Health Center of Boston. Vermont's local AIDS organizations could fund 2 full-time AIDS Service Coordinators for a year, working right here in Vermont, with that same \$60,000.

Erik Blegvad, of Wardsboro, Vermont, participated for his third consecutive year in this AIDS Ride. Last year the Boston to New York event grossed over 6 million dollars. Neither he, nor William Perry of Hinesburg, new to this event, reported encountering any concerns about the out-of-state use of the funds raised. While Perry covered most of his registration fee with his own funds, Blegvad actively fund-raised, and was particularly pleased that he had been successful in securing individual donations as high as \$500.

High profile fund-raisers for AIDS, such as the Swim for Life and the Tanqueray AIDS Rides, play a role in the Vermont community by involving people who might not otherwise get involved in AIDS-related fundraising, and help to maintain an awareness of AIDS issues in the public mind. However, Tom Gardner of Essex Junction, a Vermonter living with AIDS, sums it up in saying, "It's wonderful that people are so willing to do something for AIDS. It would be even more wonderful if they were willing to do it for the people right next door."

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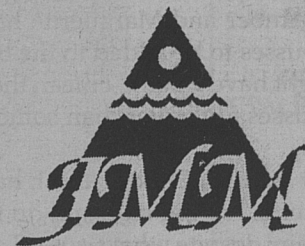
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NOTES ON NATHAN

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HEY, WHAT IT IS. I'M FINDING THAT WRITING EARLY IN THE DAY WORKS WELL FOR ME. KEVIN IS OFF TO WORK AT THE CRACK OF DAWN, AND NATHAN DOESN'T USUALLY EMERGE FROM HIS DEN OF SLOTH UNTIL EARLY AFTERNOON, SO I'VE GOT TOTAL PEACE AND QUIET FOR A FEW HOURS. IT'S GREAT....



SPEAKING OF NATHAN, I'VE BEEN TOLERATING HIM A BIT BETTER LATELY. SURE TOOK A WHILE THOUGH. LIKE I SAID BEFORE, HE'S AWFULLY SEXY, BUT DUMB AS A POST. I GUESS HE MUST LIKE ME FOR SOME REASON, BECAUSE HE KEEPS ALLUDING TO BEING FRIENDS. I'M NOT SURE IF I EVEN LIKE HIM OR NOT.



FOR ONE THING, HE SEEMS TO SPEND MOST OF HIS TIME SWILLING BEER AND FUCKING AROUND WITH AN ENDLESS STRING OF CUTE BOYS. HE OBVIOUSLY DOESN'T PARTICULARLY CARE ABOUT ANY OF THEM THOUGH; I NEVER SEE THE SAME ONE TWICE.



IT KILLS ME HOW CASUAL HE IS ABOUT ALL OF THEM. I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW HE CAN RELATE TO GUYS LIKE THAT.



OR MAYBE I'M JUST A LITTLE BIT JEALOUS OR SOMETHING.

