

# Gentleman, Start Your Sneakers

## ■ Month-long Rainbow 350 trek to raise funds for PWAs

BY LAURA MILLER

BRATTLEBORO — Four years ago, Louis Bazzano, a young truck driver living in Massachusetts, suffered a heart attack. His doctor advised him to start walking five miles a day as part of his rehabilitation. At some point, he decided that if five miles was good, 10 miles would be even better.

So, starting May 25, 1999, Bazzano will begin walking 10 miles a day — in a straight line across the state of Vermont. His six-week-long trek will take him on a 350-mile round trip walk from Brattleboro to Burlington, where he hopes to arrive just in time for Burlington's Gay Pride March on June 19.

Along the way, Bazzano will visit most of Vermont's AIDS Service Organizations, as the purpose of his walk is to raise funds for people with AIDS. There are about 350 people living with AIDS in the state of Vermont, Bazzano estimates, and his intent is to walk a mile for each of them. "There are about 1200 people in Vermont with HIV," Bazzano is quick to add, "but I thought 1200 miles might be a bit much for the first go-around."

Bazzano has wanted to do this

kind of fundraising for some time. Although he is HIV-negative himself, he has lost four close friends to the disease. Since 1995, when he was forced to give up his job as a trucker due to his heart condition, he has made a career out of volunteering. He works approximately 90 hours a month for the Brattleboro Area AIDS Project, assisting with the newsletter and working with outreach programs. He proudly dubs himself "the Condom Queen of Brattleboro."

Due to its status as a publicly funded service organization, the BAAP could not accept his money. In fact, it was quite a struggle for Bazzano to find someone who could accept the funds without losing their government funding. Finally, he was directed to the Vermont People with AIDS Coalition. "He just came to us out of the blue," says Danny Gates, a member of the PWAC board of directors "Here was this wonderful, darling man who wanted to walk across Vermont to help AIDS victims, and no one could take his money."

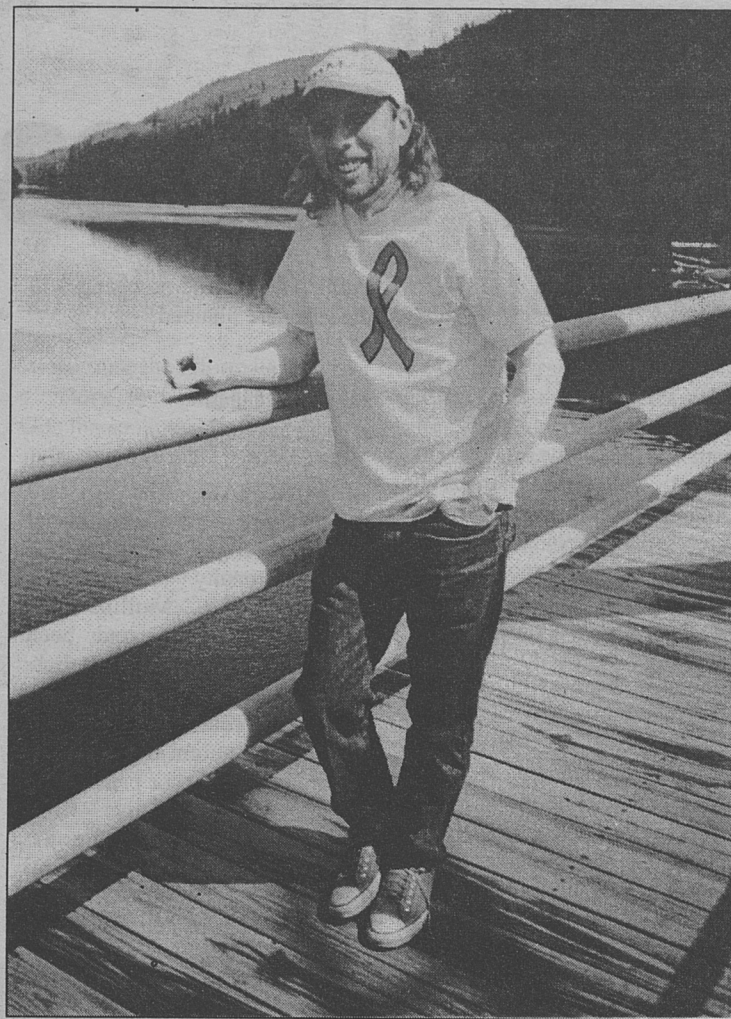
It was a match made in heaven. PWAC is in many ways a unique organization. Formed in 1990 by Vermonters with AIDS, it is a non-partisan, consumer-based organization that exists mainly to educate the public about AIDS and assist PWAs however possible. PWAC currently runs 4- and 5-day retreats

for gay men with AIDS, at which it offers various workshops on nutrition and other aspects of living with AIDS. It also runs a buyer's co-op that lets individuals buy nutritional supplements at wholesale prices.

Participants must generally pay for workshops and other services, but PWAC offers "scholarships" to those of limited economic means. The more funds PWAC receives, the more scholarships it can offer, and the more it will be able to expand into holistic remedies not currently available through the other AIDS support organizations.

"The holistic and alternative medicines are something we really want to expand into," explains Gates. "For many of us, myself included, protease inhibitors are ineffective and have some pretty nasty side effects. At any rate, people can get those drugs anywhere. But holistic medicine, nutrition, yoga, massage therapy — these are all things that can reduce stress and prolong life, and these are the things we want to make more available to people with AIDS."

The Rainbow 350 coincides somewhat with the BAAP's "Walk for Life," which will be conducted on June 5, but Bazzano had to start his walk earlier in order to make it to Burlington for Pride. Accordingly, his walk is being managed and organized primarily by PWAC and by Michael



Louis Bazzano, long-time Brattleboro Area AIDS Project volunteer, will walk a mile for each of the approximately 350 people in Vermont living with AIDS. We're sure he'll tie his shoe before he leaves.

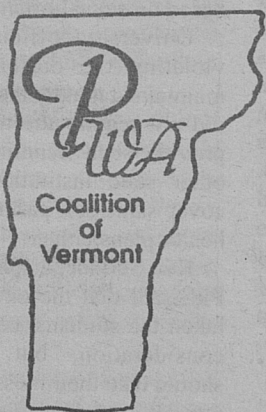
Gigante and Tom Ziniti, close friends Bazzano says have been instrumental in putting together this event.

However, planning is not yet complete, and along the way he welcomes all the support, moral and otherwise, that he can get. Even if you're just driving by, he says, "if you want to throw me some cookies, go for it." He is

planning on a six-day walk week, with at least one day off a week to allow for rest and/or bad weather. On the bad weather days in particular, he would appreciate having a place to stay indoors. He would also welcome the opportunity to shower along the way. "I think I can go a week without a

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## Rainbow 350 Walk PLEDGE FORM



Yes, I want to help Vermonters living with HIV and AIDS!

Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \*

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\*Please make checks payable to VT PWAC and mail with this completed form to:

VT PWAC  
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Montpelier, VT 05601

Vermont People With AIDS Coalition  
Tax Identification # 03-0331279

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1-800-698-8792

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### BRATTLEBORO AREA AIDS PROJECT JOB POSTING: Gay & Bisexual Men's Program Coordinator

The Brattleboro Area AIDS Project is looking for an energetic and enthusiastic individual to coordinate the Project's Gay & Bisexual Men's Program, a community-based HIV prevention program targeting the region's gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM). The position is full-time with benefits, to begin July 15, 1999.

Please send resumé and cover letter by Friday, May 21, 1999 to:

Attn: Susan Bell  
Brattleboro Area AIDS Project  
P.O. Box 1486  
Brattleboro VT 05302  
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