

feature

Finding support, hope in life with AIDS

by Lilli Ju

AIDS and HIV. So much attention has been given to AIDS and HIV in an attempt to educate and increase public awareness. Since their introduction to popular media in the mid-1980s, we've seen a huge amount of information being spurned

out — educational pamphlets, talk shows, TV ads, lectures, documentaries... But despite all this, misconceptions and prejudices still exist. All too often, the human side of the story is overlooked and forgotten. Remember: when you hear about AIDS and HIV, we are talking about human lives who have been dra-

matically affected by these 'things'. So what is it like living with AIDS or being HIV positive? The *Gazette* talked to Terry Martin, a Board Member of the Nova Scotia Persons with AIDS Coalition, about living with AIDS.

Gazette: Tell me a little about yourself.

Martin: I'm 45 years old. I'm a Board Member of the Nova Scotia Persons With AIDS Coalition. I no

longer work. I'm on disability. And I spend most of my days here in this place, the office, doing a lot of volunteer stuff.

Gazette: Do you have AIDS or are you HIV positive?

Martin: I was diagnosed with full-blown AIDS in the spring of last year.

Gazette: Is that when you first found that you were affected?

Martin: No, I found out that I was HIV positive in February, 1986. That's when I first found out. But I probably was HIV since 1980. So I went from really, really healthy until last spring when I got pneumocystic pneumonia. And that put me in the category of full-blown AIDS.

Gazette: What did it feel like when you first found out you were HIV positive?

Martin: Really and truly, I breathed a sigh of relief when I found out. Before I was putting it off and putting it off [testing for HIV]. I threw it on the back burner because I have other things in my life to deal with. I want to travel and all that. I thought about it. Waiting for my test results, I thought of suicide - I thought of all those stupid things. But then, just talking to some friends, this is called living with AIDS, living with HIV - not dying from it. So I ended up saying, "That's it. I'm going to really live as long as I can with it and deal with it." And I've been dealing with it pretty well.

Gazette: At the time you found out in 1986, there wasn't the level of awareness that there is today. How did you find that?

Martin: There wasn't a lot of stuff around. Well, this organization hadn't even started then. I couldn't find the information that I wanted. My doctor didn't know anything either at the time. So I just started working with my doctor and - my companion had also found out that he was HIV 2 months before me - so we needed a good doctor to find out some information for us. Once this place opened, all the information I needed was right in that library. I've done a lot of reading. I sent away for different information from Health and Welfare Canada.

Gazette: How has support from family and friends been?

Martin: I didn't tell my family until 1990. I just didn't want to burn my family with something like this. My family's very supportive. I have two sons who've been very very supportive. They're very very good. My companion, as we are both affected - we used to talk about a lot of things, you know. He knew more than I did. And this organization, here, has been a tremendous support for me.

Gazette: What's been the hardest thing to deal with about being HIV positive or having AIDS?

Martin: Oh. The hardest thing dealing with this... was telling my family. That was the hardest thing.



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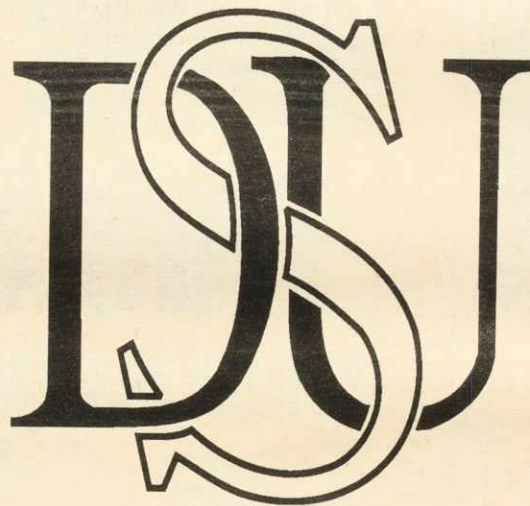
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Poll Location	Monday a.m.	Monday p.m.
SUB	9:00-2:00 pm.	2:00-8:00 pm.
Howe	9:00-1:00 pm.	1:00-6:00 pm.
Sherriff	9:00-1:00 pm.	1:00-6:00 pm.
LSC	10:00-2:00 pm.	2:00-6:00 pm.
A&A	10:00-2:00 pm.	2:00-6:00 pm.
Law	10:30-4:00 pm.	
Tupper	10:00-2:00 pm.	2:00-6:00 pm.
Dalplex	9:00-1:00 pm.	1:00-5:00 pm.
SBA	10:00-1:00 pm.	1:00-4:30 pm.
Social Work	Noon-5:00 pm.	.
Fenwick		.
Killam	10:00-3:00 pm.	
Dentistry	Noon-5:00 pm.	3:00-8:00 pm.
Dunn	11:00-4:00 pm.	



Poll Location	Tuesday a.m.	Tuesday p.m.
SUB	9:00-1:00 pm.	1:00-6:00 pm.
Howe	9:00-1:00 pm.	1:00-6:00 pm.
Sherriff	9:00-1:00 pm.	1:00-6:00 pm.
LSC	10:30-5:00 pm.	
A&A	10:00-2:00 pm.	2:00-6:00 pm.
Law	10:30-4:00 pm.	
Tupper	10:00-2:00 pm.	2:00-6:00 pm.
Dalplex		
SBA	10:00-1:00 pm.	1:00-4:30 pm.
Social Work		.
Fenwick	9:00-1:00 pm.	1:00-6:00 pm.
Killam	9:00-1:00 pm..	1:00-6:00 pm
Dentistry		
Dunn		

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March 28 & 29 1994