



The British Columbia Persons With AIDS Society seeks to empower persons living with HIV disease and AIDS through mutual support and collective action. The Society has over 4400 HIV+ members.

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opinion & editorial . . .

## You're invited...

by **Paul Lewand**

**T**wo important BCPWA events are happening in August. The Society's summer Open House event takes place on Wednesday, August 1 and the Annual General Meeting (AGM) is on Saturday, August 18.

Although our doors are always open, our Open House is an opportunity for Board and staff to meet and mingle with our friends and supporters. New and long-standing members, representatives from area organizations, funders, donors, and other interested community members are invited to join us for an evening of refreshments, appetizers, brief presentations, and casual conversation.

The idea of planning regular Open House gatherings arose out of BCPWA's five-year strategic planning process, initiated in 2004. The goal was to encourage greater involvement in Society activities among existing and new members, and to provide a forum for discussion between the community and BCPWA representatives. The Open House offers a more relaxed atmosphere than a public meeting setting. Attendees are encouraged to ask questions about programs and services, operations, our funding structure, strategic plans, and other issues of interest.

The Society's AGM is another important gathering of our membership and supporters. The official business of the AGM involves distributing and presenting the annual report and financial statements, creating an arena to bring forward resolutions and amendments to the Society's by-laws, and electing a new Board of Directors for the forthcoming year.

From a member perspective, the AGM provides an opportunity to participate in

important decisions related to BCPWA, connect with other Society members, and participate in the election. Since the Board represents the voice of the Society's members, the election of the Board is especially important. Also, as a consumer-driven organization, BCPWA is unique in having a Board of Directors who are not only involved in the governance of the organization, but also in its day-to-day operations.

There are 11 seats on BCPWA's Board. Last year, to create a more stable structure of governance, staggered two-year terms were introduced. So, this year, five of the 11 Board members will be returning for a second term, while six vacancies will be filled by the election.

The AGM takes place on August 18 in the training room of the Society office at 1107 Seymour Street in Vancouver. Registration begins at 10:00am and the meeting starts at 11:00am. Lunch and refreshments are served. Your vote counts, so I hope you'll attend. If you aren't able to be there, you have the option of assigning your proxy to someone you trust. See page 19 of this issue for more details.

Whatever your preference—a casual Open House get-together and/or a more formal AGM—I hope you'll support your Society by attending one or both of these important and informative gatherings. ⊕



**Paul Lewand**  
is the chair of BCPWA.