



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.

living⊕ editorial board

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living⊕ magazine

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think ⊕

opinion & editorial . . .

Our 50th issue

by Wayne Campbell

The planning and production of the 50th issue of living⊕ gave our editorial board the chance to look back—and ahead—at BCPWA’s bi-monthly magazine.

The roots of living⊕ can be traced back to one of BCPWA’s earliest resources. To publicize emerging support groups, events, advocacy issues, and treatment information, our first newsletter was printed in October 1986. Ten years later, with the release of protease inhibitors, the volume of information created a demand for a separate publication devoted exclusively to HIV treatments. *BCPWA News* and *TIP News* were produced in alternating months until it was decided to consolidate the two into a single bi-monthly magazine. The first issue of living⊕ was published in July 1999.

And the rest, as they say, is history.

History reminds us of the pioneering voices behind the magazine—contributors like Chester Myers, Tom Mountford, and Michael Linhart—who exemplified BCPWA’s self-empowerment model in their writings about HIV treatments and public policy issues. Although, sadly, they are no longer with us, the spirit of a consumer-driven magazine has endured.

Living⊕ has been a critical tool in BCPWA’s mission to foster PWA empowerment. More than 50 percent of the publication’s content is contributed by HIV-positive writers. The magazine provides members with current information on prevention, treatment, clinical trials, complementary and alternative therapies, nutrition, and all aspects of disease management. And feature stories have covered local, regional, and global issues,

from HIV in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, to rural BC, to sub-Saharan Africa.

Over the years, the magazine has gained recognition and respect from throughout the AIDS community—HIV-positive readers, researchers, clinicians, traditional and alternative health practitioners, and activists. We’ve operated on a shoestring budget, with a part-time managing editor and art director coordinating content and design. Overall, though, it remains a volunteer effort: the editorial board generates story ideas, while our team of volunteer writers, editors, and proofreaders produce a publication of exceptional quality.

It is also said that the more things change, the more they stay the same. In reviewing early issues of living⊕, it became apparent that the political battles of that time are still being waged today. BCPWA remains grossly under-funded relative to increasing rates of HIV infection. And we’re still battling the same social conditions that exacerbate stigma for people living with HIV: homophobia, sexism, poverty, and addictions.

As the editorial board envisions the future of the magazine, we are committed to producing content that reflects the changing face of the epidemic. We recognize that experiences of those newly diagnosed are very different from those diagnosed over 20 years ago. ⊕

Wayne Campbell
is the past secretary of
BCPWA’s board of directors
and the chair of the
living⊕ editorial board.

