

May 19, 1992

Dear Professor Capps,

Here is the Hildegard tape - it's an extra so please keep it. Also, I've enclosed the MT story, my parents' letter to the community, and my letter to friends following my Easter catharsis. Enjoy them!

I did have a ticket when I got back to my car. I have found out subsequently that I should ask for a visitors pass in such situations. I had parked where we always park for speaking engagements but didn't realize I only had a "C" lot pass. At any rate, I would appreciate you helping me get this waived.

I presume you saw Sunday's paper. Rather bold of the newspaper I thought! I'm very happy with the article, as you will see from the letter, it encapsulates the events well.

My phone # is 568-3724 and we are at 18 E. 56th St. Hope to have you visit someday!

Much love,
Mitch
Kincannon

SUNDAY

Giants stall L.A.'s march toward title

G1

DNA: The new genetic sleuth

D1

Santa Barbara News-Press



137th Year—No. 106 Oldest daily newspaper in Southern California

City Edition

Santa Barbara, California, Sunday, September 29, 1991

One Dollar



Mark Eliason/News-Press

Endorses 2 for city council

By Donald Murphy
News-Press Staff Writer

The Santa Barbara Women's Political Committee endorsed incumbent Harriet Miller and Planning Commissioner Elinor Langer for City Council Saturday.

The women's group made its choice after board members interviewed five candidates at the Goleta Library. The 15-minute interviews focused on three topics described by the committee as feminist issues: reproductive rights, affirmative action and child care.

"Both have been leaders on issues important to us," said Susan Rose, co-chair of the group's Elections and Appointments Committee. "They have demonstrated leadership in areas important to us."

Incumbent Councilman Rusty Fairly, attorney Alison Adams and businessman Bruce Rittenhouse also spoke, but were not endorsed.

Fairly provided the most contentious moments of the morning when he declined to spell out his position on abortion.

"I won't respond to you on that," Fairly said. It would not be appropriate to answer, Fairly said, since the council would not be expected to deal with the issue.

Board members pressed him. The public has a right to know Fairly's position, one member said. She cited Santa Maria, where the council allocated \$60,000 to Planned Parenthood but attempted to block the group from providing abortions at its new clinic.

"I don't agree with you," Fairly said. "I won't comment on that." Board member Margaret Connell tried another tack. The public should know where local officials stand on the issue, in case they run for higher office, she said.

Fairly declined to answer. A single issue should not be used as a litmus test for candidates, he said. Fairly offered to discuss abortion with members individually, but said again it would be inappropriate for him to take a public stand.

Fairly described positions on child care and affirmative action

Wheat fields and sky stretch as far as the eye can see in Mitch Kincannon's Montana hometown. It's his first visit to family there in nearly a year.

AIDS: A bittersweet trip back home

By Rhonda Parks
News-Press Staff Writer

SCOBEY, MONT. — Mitch Kincannon is home, really home. His mother, Irene, is in the kitchen preparing pot roast, mashed potatoes and gravy, and bread made from scratch. She's already baked caramel rolls — his favorite — for the morning.

Kincannon's snowy-haired, 67-year-old father, Don, is sipping a beer at the kitchen table, reading the Billings Gazette as fall's golden sunlight begins to fade in Big Sky Country.

Mitch Kincannon joins his father at the table, sharing with his parents news of what's new at Health House in Santa Barbara, where Mitch lives with five other men who have AIDS.

One would think that in the plains of Montana, people wouldn't take kindly to the disease, that they'd reject or shun the Kincannons. But for this Roman Catholic family and most of the 1,000 people of Scobey, Mitch Kincannon and his disease are accepted.

While strolling Scobey's downtown — a three-block stretch of Main Street — Kincannon is

greeted by Bev, who operates the fabric store and dry cleaners, by Burl, whose family owns the town's weekly newspaper, and by Ginger, the acerbic, brassy-haired barkeep and owner of Ginger's Bar.

Kincannon was born in this wheat-growing region, attended the only local school, delivered the newspaper, attended church here. Everywhere Kincannon goes the people here know him, the women greeting him with a hug, the men with a shake of the hand. They ask how he is doing, sincerity and concern etched on their faces.

The town's acceptance of AIDS is partly due to a letter distributed by the Kincannons to townspeople one day in January 1990.

It was the toughest letter the Kincannon family would ever write. That's why the messages were hand-delivered on a Friday night, so Irene Kincannon's co-workers, her customers at the bank where she works, and the other people in town could spend the weekend thinking about the news.

"Our family feels the timing is proper to share with you the fact

See KINCANNON, Page A 16



MITCH'S STORY



Mitch Kincannon and his mother Irene chat over a towering plate of his favorite homemade cookies — ginger creams.

Kincannon

Continued from Page A 1

that a member of our family was some time ago diagnosed as having AIDS," the letter began. "This is Mitch, the third oldest of the boys."

Passages from the the three-page letter include:

"We have known for many years Mitch was gay. He decided he would not hide it and told everyone shortly after entering college. Those were very trying and difficult times for Mitch . . . and difficult for us to understand at first also."

"We learned a good lesson in developing an open mind and accepting people for who they are, rather than what we want them to be. What we all know for sure was that we loved each other and he has always had our family support and acceptance since. Education and love took place and we worked through it all."

"We hope you handle this news intelligently and help pass the message a year since he's returned home to Scobey for a visit. Outwardly, he looks well: His 5-foot, 9-inch frame is a solid 175 pounds and most of the time he feels good. Yet there are the sleepless nights, the patches of thrush in his mouth, the persistent cough, nagging exhaustion, headaches, bouts of dizziness, dry, itchy skin, and sores that won't heal."

Still, he's not feeble or emaciated.

While Mitch Kincannon credits his mostly good health to a positive attitude and a vow to "live with AIDS, not die from it," he can't deny or escape the terminal nature of his disease. It's that knowledge that gnaws at him and feeds this sudden, almost inexplicable desire to return to the familiarity of home and family, to Scobey.

"For this journey home, there's a part of me that wishes I wasn't having to do it," Kincannon said mournfully. "I looked at myself in the mirror today and wondered what it would be like to be normal again."

Part of the journey home is for his family, too.

"A trip at this time is allowing my parents to see a healthy part of my life," he said. "I don't want them just to see the sick part of it."

He lets out a sigh.

"After all, there is so little time."

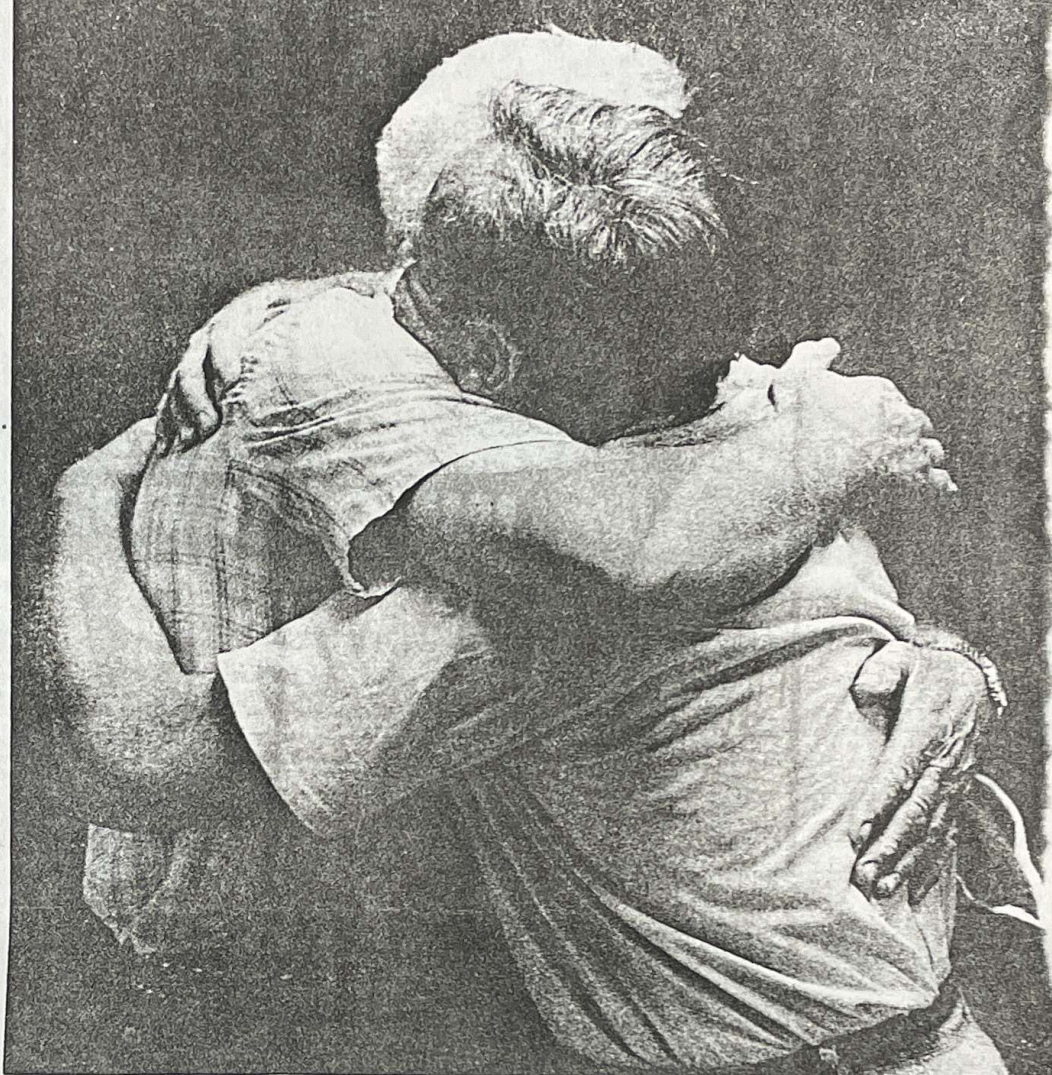
Since learning of her son's AIDS diagnosis, Irene Kincannon, 63, devours all the AIDS information she can find. She clips news stories

and shares them with co-workers at the bank. She has been interviewed and has spoken at conferences. She has pinned fliers to bulletin boards in town about the county's only HIV testing site in Wolf Point, 60 miles from Scobey.

Irene Kincannon is a deeply religious woman, a faithful Roman Catholic. But she does not adhere to the church's narrow views about homosexuality, and she abhors the opinion of some fundamentalists that AIDS is punishment for aberrant sexual behavior.

"Sexuality is not chosen, it is discovered," Irene Kincannon said matter-of-factly. "Through all of this my faith has changed, and it has deepened."

She and Mitch are very close, and always have been. When he got ill in Santa Barbara last year with a pneumonia that frequently kills people with AIDS, his mother arrived to help nurse him back to health. Earlier, when he went to Washington, D.C., to see the AIDS quilt, his parents accompanied him.



Mitch Kincannon's father, Don, welcomes his son home to Montana with a loving embrace at the Wolf Point Airport early this month.

Mitch said.

heard about one another. Clark, native treatments. They talked of Scobey. "He had so much hope, Montana had cleared his head and warmed his heart."

"It's wonderful," he said of his visits with brothers and sisters, aunts, uncles, nephews and old school chums. Of the hours spent eating and talking at the kitchen table. Of the midday naps, the evenings in front of the TV.

"I used to think about getting out into the world," Kincannon said. "What I realize now is that Scobey is as much the real world as everywhere else."

Two days after Kincannon returned to Santa Barbara, he learned of the AIDS death of his 50th friend.

It was Paul Clark of Billings. Despondent but unable to cry, Kincannon sought solace from friends as soon as he got the news. He doesn't drink, but on this occasion he accepted a glass of wine.

"We were linked because we were Montanans," Kincannon said, slumped forward on a couch. "Tonight he is number 50. What a milestone."

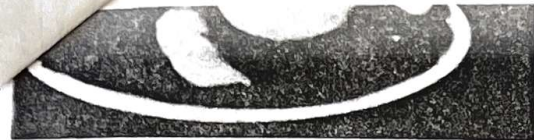
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"Each time there's one of these deaths it's a reminder of the one that came before it and, in a way, it's part of living my own. I just wonder when it all will end."



The Kincannon family enjoys a beef stew dinner on Saturday night. In the background, from left, are his mother, Irene, friend Mark Dighans, and his father, Don. At the table are Mitch, his nephew Lucas Dighans, his brother-in-law Bruce Dighans, his sister Lisa Dighans, and a friend of the family, Russel Motschenbacher.

This is the second in a series of occasional stories on Mitch Kincannon, a Santa Barbara man who has AIDS. For this story, reporter Rhonda Parks and photographer Mike Eliason traveled with Kincannon to his hometown in Montana.



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"The Kincannon Family."

During Mitch Kincannon's September visit to Montana, the seasons changed. One day it was balmy and warm, the next day cold and sharp, with a steely sky and brittle leaves falling to the ground.

"People are closer to the earth in Montana, closer to nature," he observed from his mother's porch. "Death isn't as separate here. It's part of life, like the seasons."

The people of Scobey, most of them wheat farmers, had just harvested their crop. It had been the most abundant harvest in 12 years, filling the silos and forcing the cop to store grain in huge piles outside. People hoped the rain would hold off until trains could arrive to haul the wheat to market.

"Thank you Lord for a bountiful harvest," read a signboard out front of a simple white church.

It's been three years since Mitch Kincannon's AIDS diagnosis, and almost a year since he's ventured home to Scobey for a visit. Outwardly, he looks well: His 5-foot, 9-inch frame is a solid 175 pounds and most of the time he feels good. Yet there are the sleepless nights, the patches of thrush in his mouth, the persistent cough, nagging exhaustion, headaches, bouts of dizziness, dry, itchy skin, and sores that won't heal.

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"More than anyone else, my mother has taught me what unconditional love is," Mitch said.

Irene Kincannon is proud of the townspeople of Scobey for their acceptance of AIDS.

"We are really, really lucky to be living in Scobey," she says. "I've never had a negative thing said to me. I can't imagine being in hiding."

Don Kincannon, a retired farm equipment dealer who dresses in western shirts, jeans and cowboy boots, also has been changed by his son's disease.

"In the last three or four years dad has shown more emotion than he's shown his whole life," observed Monte Kincannon, 39, Mitch's second-oldest brother who lives in Denver.

Mitch Kincannon recalls that since he's been diagnosed with AIDS, his father participates in the lengthy, long-distance phone conversations between he and his mother. "Before, he used to spend a few minutes and then get off,"



Mitch Kincannon's father, Don, welcomes his son home to Montana with a loving embrace at the Wolf Point Airport early this month.

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Don Kincannon is a quiet man, but it is obvious he loves his son.

"Knowing he was gay, I knew of the possibility" of AIDS, he said. "After it happened, well, it's something we as a family have to work through. But it's a tough thing to accept."

At 6 a.m. every morning, Don Kincannon joins a group of men — most of them wheat farmers and cattle ranchers — to "shoot the bull" and drink coffee at a downtown diner. Sometimes these men tell gay jokes.

"I doesn't bother me any," Don Kincannon said. "I know what's going on. But once in a while I'll mention Mitch, and their eyes get wide, like, 'Uh-oh, what have I said?'"

Most of Mitch Kincannon's trip to Montana is about familiarity — of friends, family and food. But on this trip he also made a new friend, Montana's best-known AIDS activist, Paul Clark of Billings.

The two had never met, but had

heard about one another. Clark, who also has AIDS, was the son of Scobey's superintendent of schools when Mitch Kincannon was a child. Irene Kincannon became reacquainted with the Clarks when she learned that their son, too, suffered from AIDS.

On the day the two men met, Clark, 29, was obviously sick but still was very handsome, with blond hair and translucent skin. He had been in and out of the hospital all summer. Dressed in jeans, an AIDS T-shirt and knitted booties, he was drenched in sweat, frail and thin. He hobbled when he walked, as if the bottoms of his feet had been burned or beaten. A member of his church sat nearby to assist in case Clark suffered another seizure.

The meeting took place in the tidy living room of Clark's parents' home in Billings. Clark and Kincannon greeted each other with a long hug. Each knew the pain and the challenges the other had endured.

They compared hospital stays and ailments, medicines and alter-

native treatments. They talked of faith and of family. They shared their fears.

The two men conversed as if they'd known each other forever. They were united by their affliction with AIDS and as gay men and native sons of rural Montana.

"What if they announced tonight on TV there was a cure?" Clark asked Kincannon, his eyes sparkling. "Oh my God, I'd be so happy! I'd go out and get drunk. Someday there will be a cure, but I don't think I can wait."

Clark was upset about how ill he'd become.

"All I wanted to do was make some kind of a difference," he told Kincannon. "My health is really going down fast. I'm not afraid to die, I'm just afraid to get there."

"We are making a difference," Kincannon assured Clark as they exchanged goodbyes.

Kincannon left the three-hour visit feeling shaken and sad.

"I've never wanted so badly to give my health to someone," Kincannon said as a cab whisked him to the airport for a return flight to

Scobey. "He had so much hope in his eyes."

One month ago, Mitch Kincannon's list of friends who died of AIDS numbered 45. On this trip to Montana, he learned he'd lost four more. One of them, Mike, was a resident of Heath House, Kincannon's Santa Barbara home.

The phone call from Heath House to Mitch at his parents' home in Scobey came midmorning. Mitch had endured a sleepless night and awoke to somber skies and rain.

"It's not numbness, it's ... I don't know what it is really," he said, trying to put words to his remorse. "I feel like this is a war situation."

Another death, the rain, and the vast, rolling prairie outside his parents' house framed an introspective moment.

"It's a melancholy day," Kincannon concluded. "I can't help feel all the loss. All the loss."

Back in Santa Barbara late in September, Mitch Kincannon explained how the two weeks in Montana had cleared his head and warmed his heart.

"It's wonderful," he said of his visits with brothers and sisters, aunts, uncles, nephews and old school chums. Of the hours spent eating and talking at the kitchen table. Of the midday naps, the evenings in front of the TV.

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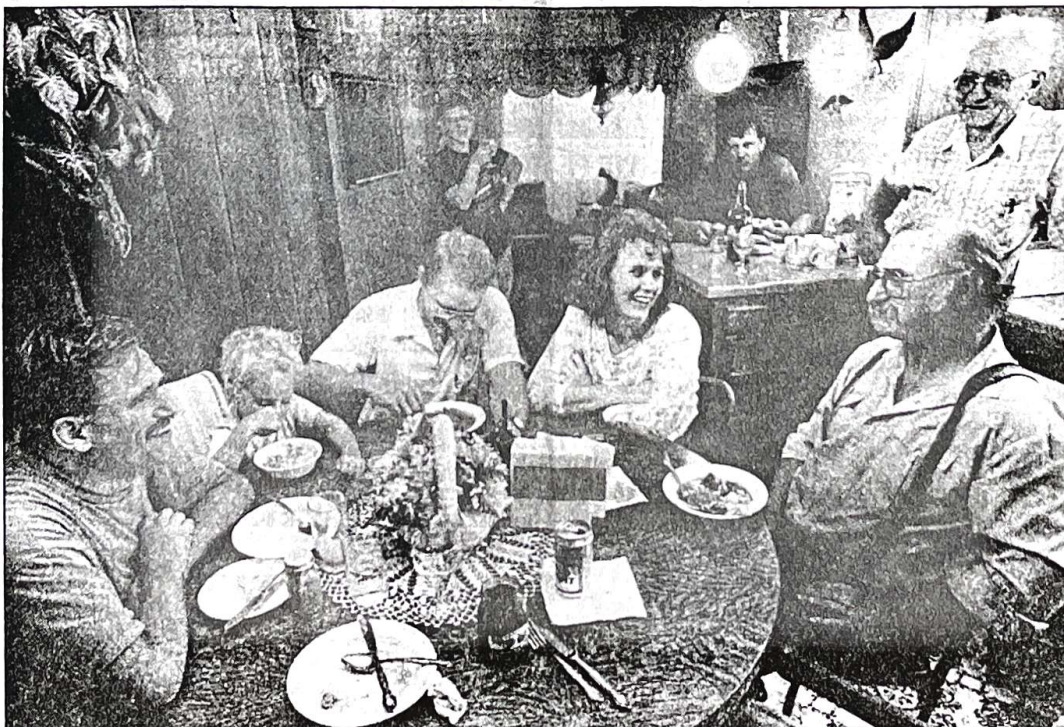
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AIDS: ONE MAN'S JOURNEY



A view of downtown Scobey. The community's population is 1,000.

Solid little town has deep roots in Big Sky Country

SCOBEY, MONT. — Sometimes the swarms of grasshoppers get so thick that signs are posted advising drivers to beware of slick roads.

Scobey, population 1,000, is the largest town in Daniels County, wheat country 17 miles below the Canadian border.

In a back corner at the Leader, the county's weekly newspaper ("Little Newspaper Doing a Big Job"), publisher Larry C. Bowler, 75, puffs on unfiltered Camels and bangs out the news on an old typewriter. He's been newspapering for 54 years.

"It's a baling-wire operation," he says. His brother is retired from the Billings Gazette. "He's a daily man — I'm a weekly man," Bowler tells a visitor.

His father, a watchmaker, acquired the newspaper in 1924, when the Leader's former editor got drunk one day, tossed the senior Bowler the keys and hopped a train out of town.

The news in Daniels County hasn't changed much over the years. Front-page news in the Leader includes wheat production numbers and who's had visitors from out of town. Inside is the latest on who's been admitted to the hospital.

The Montana sky is so big it overwhelms the senses, the land so vast it appears to curve on the horizon. Golden wheat stubble covers the flat plain as far as the eye can see. Pronghorn antelope graze in the distance.

Here the folks don't lock their doors. They leave their car keys in the ignition when they bed down for the night.

Mitch Kincannon's oldest brother, Terry, runs Dutch Henry's Club, a bar in Peerless, about 15 minutes away. When he's working out back, Terry leaves a note telling customers to help themselves and leave their money on the bar.

Scobey's one liquor store is located in the back of Tande's Toggery, a men's clothing store. Dr. Fitz, a family doctor, shares a storefront with the Scobey Rexall, a pharmacy and hardware store.

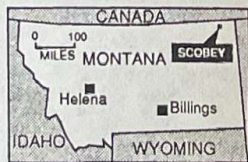
In the back room at the Ponderosa Bar, men play a friendly game of poker in a room stacked high with cases of beer.

Montana nights can be as dark as the inside of a coffin, except when the mysterious northern lights spill across the sky.

In the 1700s, Scobey was bison country, home to the Sioux and other Plains Indians. In 1832, fur



Mitch Kincannon's 18-month-old nephew, Zachary Dighans, gives his uncle a playful push on the chin.

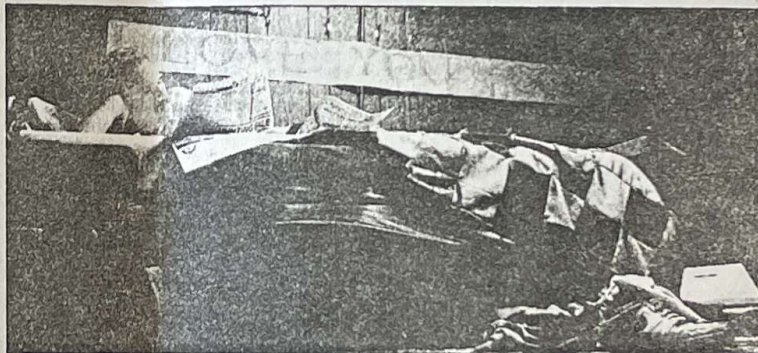


News-Press graphic

traders came, swapping whiskey and weapons for hides.

In the mid-1920s, Scobey was a boom town, the largest primary wheat market in the nation. Hotels, brothels and bars stayed busy all night and day. These days the busiest day of the week is Sunday, when Canadians drive down to drink beer in Scobey's half-dozen taverns.

— Rhonda Parks



Before going to sleep, Mitch Kincannon reads the Billings newspaper in his old bedroom. The sign on the wall is an ongoing joke between Kincannon and his cousin, Libby. It says, "I love you . . . Gotcha!"

Dear Friends and Associates:

Our family feels the timing is proper to share with you the fact that a member of our family was some time ago diagnosed as having AIDS. This is Mitch, the third oldest of the boys.

Over a year and a half ago Mitch was home and called the family together to tell us. At that time he was diagnosed with ARC and was undergoing and apprehensively awaiting test results. Then this last year in June, a year later, he came down with pneumocystis pneumonia and became very ill. At that point it was confirmed and he was diagnosed with AIDS.

Our primary reason for letting you know about this in this fashion (by letter) is because it would be very time consuming to take each individual aside and person-to-person explain these circumstances over, and over, and over, and over, and ... well, you get the point. We would start feeling like our responses were prerecorded and nothing more than a tape recording.

It's not that we mind discussing it whatsoever, it's a matter of letting Mitch's old friends, and our neighbors and friends all know together in timely fashion as efficiently as possible. It's our hope that word will pass quickly along with a basic understanding of the situation so that if anyone wishes to discuss the matter out of curiosity, fear, support, or for whatever reason, we can do so intelligently without being quite so repetitious sounding.

One aspect that we would like to make crystal clear is that we appreciate your thoughts and support but do not solicit your sympathy. We do not wish to be plagued by feelings of sympathy from others when we don't even feel sorry for ourselves. We have experienced death in our family before and fortunately our family holds what we feel is a mature, healthy, and positive attitude about it. This is not to say we don't share in some degree everyone's natural fear of death and the unknown, and, while we certainly do contemplate as to what is actually on the other side, we simply do not care to waste time focusing and dwelling on it. We would much rather progressively continue developing and fostering a positive outlook on both life and death.

Mitch's mother spent two weeks with him while he was hospitalized in Santa Barbara when he became ill last June. He lost 45 pounds in the month of May. He was on oxygen for about a week. She was very impressed with the excellent care he was receiving.

Dr. Hosea was his Specialist and a very warm and human person, hugging his patients and supporting them emotionally as well as medically. He is very proficient in his knowledge of the disease. While she was there one night a Jesuit was there to see Mitch and Dr. Hosea came in and said he realized there is still a lot of fear and that education is needed so he volunteered to go speak at the Novitiate. It was learned

later that it was quite well done and well received by the Jesuits and the Novices, many of who Mitch knows. Mitch stayed at the Novitiate for some time during his recuperation after his hospitalization.

His mother also went along to the AIDS clinic that Mitch was to visit once a week. There she met another patient's mother, other AIDS patients, Dr. Gersof, and JoAnn a counselor running the AIDS CAP Program. Since Mitch had been on the road for some time and they hadn't seen him for awhile Dr. Gersof and JoAnn both found it impossible to hold back tears once they saw how sick he was. Dr. Gersof had said Mitch was his star patient. They had started him out on AZT the year before and even though his T cells were low he had been doing very well and had been quite stable throughout the year. Most patients can't take it for a year. The opportunistic diseases seem independent of that.

The doctor said that Mitch, not being an alcohol or drug user, and basically being a hard worker and keeping regular hours in the past, are all in his favor. He has become very close friends with JoAnn and it is evident that these are very dedicated people and have been touched by Mitch's gifted personality.

We've known for many years that Mitch was gay. He decided he would not hide it and told everyone shortly after entering college. Those were very trying and difficult times for Mitch accepting his feelings as bisexual, and, difficult for us to understand at first also. We learned a good lesson in developing an open mind and accepting people for who they are rather than what we want them to be. What we all know for sure was that we loved each other and he has always had our family support and acceptance since. Education and love took place and we worked through it all.

As most of you know, Mitch manages the Royal Liechtenstein Quarter Ring Circus, a traveling troop of actors that perform a variety of skills through opinionated comedy, around the United States. They are a Jesuit based operation originated by Nick Weber a Jesuit priest and still with the show. Although Mitch did not go on the road with the show when it started it's new season in August, he still plans to do the bookings.

Mitch is presently staying in the country close to Sacramento with Bev, a close friend of his who owns land there. She was a real estate agent in Santa Barbara, did volunteer work for the Jesuits, and that's where Mitch met her. She was with him when he was diagnosed with AIDS. She was also an RN and has had experience with AIDS patients and wants him to stay with her. He is still on AZT. She has an extra apartment on her property that we are welcome to come stay in anytime.

We have checked locally to see what the limitations for care are here and in the State of Montana, should Mitch ever be home and fall sick. At this point in time he is doing great. His strength is back and he has even gained weight. He feels good and is joking again like always. One good thing

about opportunistic diseases such as Kaposi Sarcoma(cancer) or pneumocystis pneumonia which AIDS victims are highly susceptible to, is that they are now individually treatable whereas 5 years ago they weren't. This delays his death and gives him more time.

Mitch has touched a lot of lives in his travels around the world. He has brought light and laughter to many, many people in his time. He is a special person and his life's work is a special and unique ministry. He has our total love and support.

It is our hope that our friends and neighbors and community will come one step closer to being educated about this disease that in the future may very well touch you through friends or relatives and more than you probably allow yourselves to realize. We hope you can handle this news intelligently and help pass the word along in a responsible manner. We ask for your thoughts and prayers for Mitch and thank you for your help and understanding.

The Kincannon Family

This latest article came out on Easter Sunday but the interview was done on Monday before Easter, preceding the strange and incredible story I now share with you. This is why I asked you to read the article first. I've not personally written to each one of you. I find it easiest to share in this form all that has taken place and not forget certain elements of the experience I've had over Easter each time I tell it.

On Holy Thursday about noon-time, we were having a tea/visit here at Heath House with Arianna Stassinopoulos Huffington who was touring several socially-conscious projects in Santa Barbara for her husband's political campaign. (You may have read one of her many published books--the latest is Picasso, Creator and Destroyer). As she walked out the door those of us present had a wonderful moment of "high" because we knew she had grasped and understood what we were sharing about AIDS. The phone rang and Debbie (House-manager) answered. She came to me with absolute fear etched on her face and said, "Mitch, it's for you." I answered and Steve Hosea, my doctor, informed me the previous day's blood work was positive for cryptococcal meningitis, a virulent yeast/fungus which surfaces in immune-suppressed people. I/We went from an incredible "high" to the depths of "low".

I had tried to imagine what this day would be like and here it was now. I was in shock--we all were--in what I now call the "OH MY GOD" stage. The conversation continued; some of it registering, some not. I do remember hearing the words treatable and curable. I remember the biggest fear was that it could be in my spinal fluid and, therefore, possibly my brain. I remember that, of two drugs available, the more effective intravenous Amphotericin B (called Ampho-Terrible by all) is a form of chemotherapy and produced very nasty side effects in my friend Dan. I feared it more than the cryptococcal meningitis. I also remember asking Dr. Hosea if I could wait until Easter Monday or was time of the essence? In that request, I found myself lamenting, "I want to go to Easter mass!" Later, I realized I was reverting to what seemed safe in my childhood. As a child, Easter and the mystery of church was comforting; safe. Reality hit quickly--I doubted whether I could even find a liturgy in this town that would speak to me at this crisis point in my life!

Thus began a surreal journey for myself and those around me. I felt like Alice In Wonderland where nothing was as it should be. I'd followed the rabbit through the hole and all was topsy-turvy.

That evening, as I lay in my bed, I slept very little. I did some free-flowing visualization work which opened up a flood of positive images coming in so quickly I could barely hang on to the images--one was my father who died last year. He said, "You are not ready to come over yet, you have work to do. You will recover." My entire body sighed deeply after hearing him but I also knew it did not mean I wouldn't have to go through the struggle with this infection.

The surreal atmosphere continued on Good Friday. The doctors, the Heath House staff, and I had moved out of the "OH MY GOD" panic. I started the oral medicine, called Diflucan, which has a 70-75% success rate. There was a 90%

chance that the infection was already in my spinal fluid given the titer ratio (1 in 16,000) measurement which determined the diagnosis. (Negative is good. For a positive ratio of even 1 in 2, treatment is started.) Blood work on Tuesday would tell if the drug was effective. If not, a spinal tap would take place and Ampha-Terrible would be used. My day was spent jumping back and forth between an all-encompassing knowing and tremendous fear.

A visit from my dear Minnesota cousin Libby, planned for the following week, was moved up and she arrived Friday evening. Her first statement was not even hello, it was "You look terrible." And I did. I had begun a soul-searching journey which took me to the darkest, most fearful side and the most light-filled, blessed side of my spirit. The sense of urgency was completely overwhelming. I felt it essential to work through as much emotional baggage as absolutely possible before my physical body would begin to heal.

That evening at Henry's Beach (my favorite beach), Libby and I watched the sunset. As we started to leave, I had a panic attack. I was certain, with high tide approaching us rapidly, we would not make it back to safety. All my worst fears manifested themselves in those panicked moments--I KNEW the infection was in my brain. I KNEW I was dying. I KNEW this was the beginning of the spiral downward. Logic and rationale tossed and tumbled in the waves.

Later, in the comfort of my own bed, I consciously chose to enter my fear however I could. Once again, it was essential to my health. Just as they had before, the visual images began to flow quickly. However, this time I saw and confronted frightful, warped faces grabbing at me and blocking my way. As soon as I recognized the fear, the faces dissipated and fear became illusion. One powerful visual image which remains for me was seeing myself traveling in a black-gray, dimly-lit tube. To my left, I was aware of evenly-spaced bumps on the tube wall. Suddenly, I knew I was in my spinal column. A hair-raising fear overtook me--I didn't know if I was moving up or moving down the spinal column! If I was going up, I knew without a doubt, the cryptococcus was in my brain. This image ended without me working through the fear and, given the events of the next 72 hours, there was no way I could have faced it then--the unfolding experiences needed to happen to me first.

You wouldn't have recognized me Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday. My mind detached completely and my heart opened more fully than I ever experienced before. My speech pattern changed radically. I "tuned or zoned out" mid-sentence much of the time. At one point, Libby asked if I were not talking about my feelings anymore. (We usually do alot.) I answered, "I feel like one big feeling; like my body is one giant emotion." I opened the closet door so completely on my emotions and the force was so great I could not shut the door again. A sense of Pandora's Box mixed with ecstatic excitement was ever-present. What would be next? A flash of anger? A peaceful joy? Love? A simple, loving embrace of myself and the world around me? All of it happened--and it happened over and over. So much insight flowed around and through me. For those of you who can understand, I was a channel for as much as I possible could handle--even in my vulnerable state.

Easter Sunday brought a mixture of surging emotions again. We were entering new territory with this latest article--my spirituality. An Easter greeting on my message machine from Debbie triggered sobbing tears. We often hear people say, "I'm not ready to die." I rocked back and forth on my bed sobbing, "I'm not ready to be sick." That evening, Barry, a 1st year resident doctor who is a dear friend as well as the Heath House doctor, Libby, and I sat on the front porch concerned over what was happening to me. At one point, Barry said to me, "You have done all this great, positive work. But I have to say, and I'm talking as your doctor now, I have seen your health progressively deteriorate in the past 6 months. Mitch, you have to realize you are a very sick man with AIDS right now." Believe me, this was difficult to hear. It hit hard. In my dreams I struggled with Barry the entire night--HOW DARE he tell me I was sick! Who was HE to know what and where I was inside my body! Only I could REALLY know!

I awoke on Monday and, somehow, I knew I had resolved the night's struggle. Barry's message had gotten through. I accepted the fact that, indeed, I was very sick. I tested myself. When I push myself too far physically a heaviness builds in my chest. This indication of too much stress would act as my gauge. I put my shirt and pants on--and felt it. So I rested until the heaviness subsided. I made my bed--and had to rest again. a 10 minute project took me 75 minutes to accomplish. I had observed physical compromise in all the residents and now, very possibly, my turn in facing it it had arrived. Could I handle it? The weakness increased.

I felt I had entered the eye of the storm--a little reprieve before the next onslaught. It was dead-calm. When I went downstairs, I shared this feeling with Debbie. She said later, "You looked absolutely awful. I thought to myself, We're losing him." A volunteer took one look at me and had to go out back and cry. I tried to eat a late breakfast even though it was an ordeal.

Dr. Barry called. The last cryptococcus antigen test done on me before this positive one had been over a year. I thought it had been done recently. I was panicked. Visual changes, headaches, and stiff neck are meningitis symptoms and I've had some visual problems for quite awhile. We decided to hospitalize me, do a spinal tap, and start Ampho-Terrible. So much for a lasting "eye of the storm!" I went to pack a few things and had to laugh when Debbie asked if I was taking any practical things? Perhaps, my toothbrush might be a good idea? I was packing only emotional support-type things such as music, crystals, books that inspired me, etc.!!

I must say, I felt a little better. The past few days had been an uneasy limbo. Now we were into action. I was admitted through emergency. After a dilemma over whether-or-not I should have mom come from Montana, I had Debbie call her. I realized I've included mom every step of the way with AIDS and I wanted her to be here with me. Blood was taken and Barry did the spinal tap while Libby helped me stay in the fetal position. We had no problems. He was happy the fluid was clear and sent it for lab tests.

I was taken to my room where the wait for the lab results began. The Ampho-Terrible was started intravenously, along with several counter-symptom drugs. The treatment would last 3 hours. Libby sat with me and Debbie was in and out. An hour into the Ampho, Barry called and said, "Good news! The spinal fluid was negative--no cryptococcus in it(my brain was okay!). Also, your blood work is finished.

Your ratio count has dropped so far into the negative it's immeasurable! We must have gotten it early and the Diflucan worked!" He hung up. I closed my eyes, sighed the biggest sigh of relief ever, and said a silent thank you to God, to the universe, to myself. It was reprieve! It was resurrection! Libby, Debbie, and I exclaimed, "A miracle has taken place!" As Debbie took her leave, I said, "The Diflucan worked, but also what I went through this weekend." We all agreed on that!

Later, as the Ampho treatment was finishing, we played a song called Strange Angels by Laurie Anderson, a performance artist. I first heard it in the film The Doctor--a story about a heart surgeon who, through his own trial with throat cancer, becomes a much more humane, loving person and doctor. For me, a dance scene in the film between him and a woman with an inoperable brain tumor captures the essence of the film; living each moment to the absolute fullest.

The music began. Suddenly, an odd feeling came over me. My body literally began to dance in bed. Short, jerky movements and then I started to moan and sigh. My chest lifted off the bed trying to fill space, expanding as fully as my physical shell would allow. I experienced tear-shaped wisps of white light/spirits flowing around me, surrounding me with ecstasy, profound peace, and comfort. I said to myself, "Dan(my dear friend who died in Oct.) has sent me the angels!"

At one point I thought, "Libby must think I'm having a seizure due to the Ampho-Terrible." I opened my eyes and saw incredible fear in hers. I smiled at her to let her know everything was okay and closed my eyes again. Later, she said she was just about ready to call the nurses! Near the song's end, I saw myself walking away with my head turned back over my right shoulder and I was waving goodbye. I focused on the image I was waving to and this is what I saw: All my friends who have died were there waving goodbye to me. My dad, Hildegard of Bingen, Peter, Dan Bill, Paul, Dave, Nona, and so many, many more. Though there was a sense of actual figures, it was more a deep, profound sense of their presence--and they were all smiling big, full smiles. Words came to me, "We've given you a glimpse!"

On Tuesday morning, Dr. Hosea told me the medical staff was baffled and confused with the dramatic blood test reversal. I responded, "Well, let me tell you about my weekend and last night!" I shared my tale and ended by saying, yes, the Diflucan worked, but what I had been through spiritually and emotionally worked also. He answered, "If you were to ask my professional opinion, I would say it was what you experienced this past weekend. The drug

could not have brought about such a quick, extreme reversal chemically." (He is a spiritual man who believes, through his medical work, he is called to helping people with AIDS as part of his life journey.)

Later, after an MRI(a cat scan is similar.) to make absolutely sure there were no brain lesions, abnormalities, or signs of infection, he returned to my room and said, "I have good news, and...I have good news! Mitch, you have a perfect brain! And, you can go home!" He also said the medical staff had decided my original blood work must have been a false-positive. It would go into the charts that way. I half-kidded him, "Could you put false-positive-slash-miracle on it?!!" We had a reverent moment of silence in the room--a quiet peacefulness while the sacredness of what had transpired over the past six days was acknowledged by both of us. Finally, I turned to him and remarked, "I'm not sure what all this was about or where it takes me--but I do know it's going to be exciting. A new part of the journey for me!" He agreed, gave me a big hug, and left.

I prepared for a Heath House volunteer to come get me. Marcus, a dear friend who had first taken me to the hospital, arrived saying, as he walked into the room, "It's out on the streets! Mitch has a perfect brain!" Needless to say, that line has been quoted many times since!

Wednesday, the House was filled with such joy. For once, one of us had beat the odds. Hope lingered at the edges of our joy but hope is passive. With belief, imagine what might be able to be done with HIV infection! I acutely recognize this experience has been a gift given to me and, though, I do not know where this gift will take me, I will honor it as fully as I capably can. I do know this "thread of truth" has to do with reclaiming who I am; claiming my own unique power. It also is about finding what is true and what speaks that truth to me. I am listening to that call.

Did or didn't I have cryptococcus? It will always remain a mystery. I DID have something which caused the symptoms and triggered the crazy ratio count. It's possible that other antibiotics I started right after the first blood samples were taken wiped out whatever it may have been. We do know they wouldn't have worked on cryptococcus.

Were the experiences I had a miracle? I use the word "healing" now. I accomplished this from within me--all the work I've done the past four years (if not my lifetime)came through for me steady and strong--my "tools" as I call them. To me, miracle somehow implies it came from the outside. I healed myself, if not physically, definitely spiritually and emotionally. I am the healing miracle. We are all. That is what the God-force is for me.

Was I "on the other side?" I do not feel I had a near-death experience. More so, I believe I was seeing it from another angle; a different dimension than where we observe our world and the universe. A glorious glimpse.--Did it really happen? With all my body, heart, and soul, I say to you, "Yes."

Santa Barbara News-Press

138th Year—No. 13 Oldest daily newspaper in Southern California

City Edition

Santa Barbara, California, Sunday, June 28, 1992

One Dollar

GOOD TIME LUAU



'Pig Out!' won Saturday's Lompoc Valley Flower Festival Parade Sweepstakes Award. The float was sponsored by the Children's Montessori School of Lompoc. Another photo on Page B 2.

Mitterrand on surprise Yugoslav trip

May reach Sarajevo

Associated Press

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina — French President Francois Mitterrand arrived Saturday in Croatia in an attempt to reach war-ravaged Sarajevo...

cord. He said he was 'greatly concerned' over reports of attacks initiated by Bosnian forces...

But in Nigeria, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali issued a statement late Saturday saying reports indicate Serbs had ceased attacks on the airport...

Mitterrand, speaking to reporters in Split, about 100 miles southwest of Sarajevo, said he hoped to meet with Bosnia's president...

See YUGOSLAVIA, Page A 13

Pilot lands disabled plane on Hwy. 101

By Jerry Cornfield News-Press Staff Writer

A rookie pilot landed a disabled airplane with six people aboard on Highway 101 near Goleta on Saturday morning...

The group was headed from Fresno to the Santa Ynez Airport to watch Saturday's air show. Heavy morning fog forced them to detour back to the Santa Barbara Airport...

'All of a sudden, the engine just quit. We started looking for a place to land. We looked and looked, and the freeway looked the best,' said Garrett, 36, who obtained his pilot's license just two months ago.

Garrett and John Hunt, the other adult passenger, spotted a break in traffic and set the aircraft down. 'It blended in nice. We just felt very lucky there wasn't anyone in the way,' Garrett said.

See PLANE, Page A 13

WEATHER

Clouds will yield to some sunshine/B 5

Table with 2 columns: Category and Page Number. Includes ARTS, BRIEFING, BUSINESS, CLASSIFIED, CROSSWORD, EDITORIAL, ENTERTAINMENT, FORUM, HORIZONSCOPE, LANDSCAPE, LOCAL, LOTTERY, MOVIES.

AIDS: ONE MAN'S JOURNEY



MITCH'S STORY

A summer celebration of living

This is another in an occasional series on the life of Mitch Kincannon, a Santa Barbara man living with AIDS.

By Rhonda Parks News-Press Staff Writer

June 1992. For Mitch Kincannon, it has been a month full of milestones.

Monday, June 22 marks the fourth anniversary of Kincannon's AIDS diagnosis.

For AIDS patients, living that long after diagnosis is indeed an achievement. Four years ago, AIDS patients rarely survived more than two years.

'I never dreamed I'd be one of those 'exceptional patients,' Kincannon said. 'I always thought I was a middle-of-the-road person, and here I am on the exceptional side.'

The following weekend he attended a night-time cruise and dance aboard the boat Condor. The event was a fundraiser for Health House, where Kincannon lives with six others with AIDS.



Mitch Kincannon and Dian Torres dance in the sunshine during the Gay Pride festival in Oak Park.

a county/western band played under a glowing sun. In between, Kincannon attended Circus Vargas when it came to town. In 1979 he visits with old circus friends and the smell of brought back memories of the good old days.

With a spool of thread perched upon his head, Kincannon was dubbed the 'sewing bee.' Another bee wearing a comically huge brassiere was to represent a 'boob-bee.'

See KINCANNON, Page A 12

Body may be kidnap victim

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — A body believed to be that of missing Exxon executive Sidney J. Reso was found Saturday in a rugged, forested section of southern New Jersey...

Positive identification of the corpse was not expected until sometime Sunday, the agency said in a statement released by spokesman Bill Tonkin.

FBI officials refused to release any other details or answer questions, but said more information would be released at a news conference late Sunday morning.

Reso, 57, president of Exxon Co.'s international division, has

See BODY, Page A 13

Auto slams parked car; two killed

News-Press staff report

Two people seated in a disabled car parked on the side of Highway 101 south of Carpinteria died early Saturday when a suspected drunken driver plowed into their vehicle, California Highway Patrol officers said.

CHP officers in Ventura did not immediately release the identities of the deceased pending notification of relatives.

The collision propelled the disabled car a short distance and struck a Goleta woman who, by coincidence, was standing near another vehicle stopped on the shoulder of the northbound traffic lanes.

CHP officers arrested Arturo Cruz Quintero, 22, of Panorama City, on suspicion of manslaughter and gross negligence due to driving while intoxicated.

Goleta resident Jacqueline Antles 32, suffered major injuries in the accident and was reported in critical condition at St. Francis Medical Center.

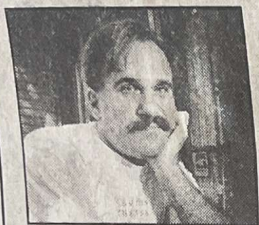
ay's Lompoc Valley Flower Festival Parade Sweepstakes Award. The float was sponsored by the Children's Lompoc. Another photo on Page B 2.

Len Wood/News-Press

tary intervention. Mitterrand began the surprise mission in Portugal after European Community leaders urged the United Nations to send troops, if necessary, to open the Serbian blockade of Sarajevo's airport for relief flights. But in Nigeria, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali issued a statement late Saturday saying reports indicate Serbs had ceased attacks on the airport and withdrew tanks in an apparent move to honor a June 5 truce ac-

posed trade sanctions. Some Bosnian officers in Sarajevo worry Bosnians will try to provoke Serb artillery barrages to force foreign military intervention. On Friday, Boutros-Ghali said Serb forces 48 hours to halt offensive or face unspecified sequences. Mitterrand, speaking to reporters in Split, about 190 miles west of Sarajevo, said he had met with Bosnia's president. See YUGOSLAVIA, P.

AIDS: ONE MAN'S JOURNEY



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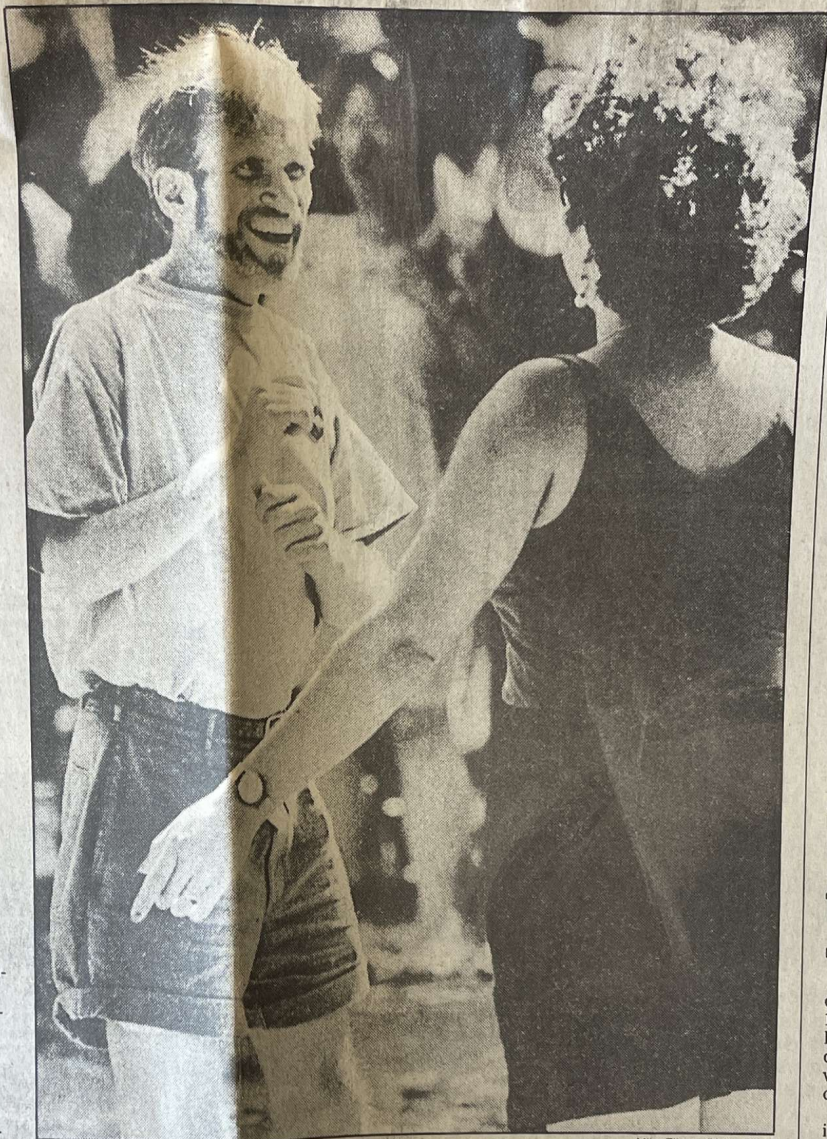
June 1992. For Mitch Kincannon, it has been a month full of milestones. Monday, June 22 marks the fourth anniversary of Kincannon's AIDS diagnosis.

For AIDS patients, living that long after diagnosis is indeed an achievement. Four years ago, AIDS patients rarely survived more than two years.

"I never dreamed I'd be one of those 'exceptional patients,'" Kincannon said. "I always thought I was a middle-of-the-road person, and here I am on the exceptional side." Kincannon is looking thin, but well. And he's been out living — and celebrating — with gusto.

Late in May, he was a guest speaker at an AIDS conference in his home state of Montana. He returned in June to celebrate at Santa Barbara's Gay Pride prom, where 200 people dressed in all their finery delivered a standing ovation to Kincannon during the community awards ceremony.

The following weekend he attended a night-time cruise and dance aboard the boat Condor. The event was a fund-raiser for Heath House, where Kincannon lives with six others with AIDS. The next day, he sat at the Heath House fund-raising booth during the Gay Pride celebration at Oak Park, taking breaks now and then to dance with friends as



Mike Eliason/News-Press

Mitch Kincannon and Dian Torres dance in the sunshine during the Gay Pride festival in Oak Park.

a county/western band played under a glowing sun.

In between, Kincannon attended Circus Vargas when it came to town. In 1979 he spent one year on the road with the troupe. Visits with old circus friends and the smell of cotton candy, popcorn and wild animals brought back memories of the good old days.

Next came the Summer Solstice Parade. For weeks, Kincannon worked diligently on his costume. He was part of one of the parade's rotund bumblebee contingent, complete with a giant beehive from which a campy, outrageously costumed "queen bee" em-

erged. With a spool of thread perched upon his head, Kincannon was dubbed the "sewing bee." Another bee wearing a comically huge brassiere was to represent a "boob-bee." Still another member of the hive wore a towering beehive hairdo. This was "Aunt Bee." Not that the celebrations and active pace Kincannon keeps haven't taken their toll. But he is conscious more than ever of pacing himself. In fact, he told himself not to feel too badly if he wasn't able to make the entire

See KINCANNON, Page A 12

Body may be kidnap victim

Associated Press

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See BODY, Page A 13

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AIDS: ONE MAN'S JOURNEY



Dressed as the "sewing bee," Mitch Kincannon helps keep Summer Solstice Parade-goers in stitches.



Dr. Barry Chadsey, who has been on the front lines of Mitch Kincannon's battle with AIDS, shares a good-bye hug with his patient. Chadsey leaves for Sherman Oaks in July, where he will partner with AIDS researcher Dr. Michael Gottlieb.

Kincannon

Continued from Page A 1

parade route. But he did "As odd as it may sound, it was such a sense of accomplishment," he said. "It's joyous. I want to live and keep enjoying life. Even in this tragedy called AIDS, I'm finding places where I can celebrate the big and the small things in life."

In recent months, Kincannon's T-4 helper cell count has dropped from five to two. In healthy people, about 1,000 T-4 cells help stave off illnesses. The depletion of the cells in people with AIDS is a key reason they are so susceptible to illnesses.

Earlier, Kincannon had hoped to hang on to his five T-4 cells by giving them names: Mitch, Kate, and Peter, Paul and Mary. "I guess Peter, Paul and Mary went on tour," Kincannon cracked. "I have two damn T-cells and here I am in a parade."

The month of June brought other milestones, not all of them happy ones. After bouts of weight loss, listlessness, and two hospital stays in the past six months, Kincannon received a definitive diagnosis for MAI, *Mycobacterium avium* intracellular. The disease is a cross between a bacteria and a fungus, and it attacks the intestinal system, making it difficult to eat and causing severe abdominal pain. Even before the tests came back, Dr. Barry Chadsey put Kincannon on medication for the disease.

"This is our big killer," Chadsey said. "This is it right here. Sixty to 70 percent of all AIDS patients autopsy have MAI." MAI causes what is known as "wasting syndrome," a condition in which AIDS patients wither away and die.



Examinations of body and soul have brought Dr. Barry Chadsey and his patient, Mitch Kincannon, together as friends.

"There is an element of acceptance" about the diagnosis, Kincannon said. "Things may come at me as I travel down this road."

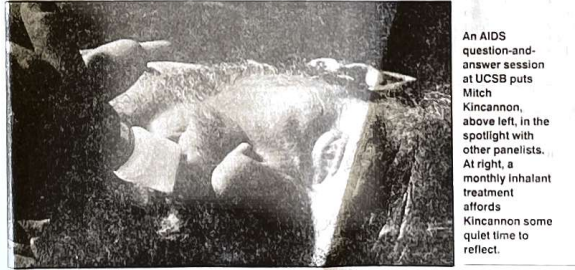
The end of June also marks the first anniversary of Heath House. Kincannon was one of the first residents to move into the seven-bedroom residence for AIDS patients. In Heath House's first year, 13 residents died. Kincannon and only one other person are among the original residents.

Another milestone: Today, June 28 marks the birthday of Mitch's dear friend Dan Hiatt, who would have been 32 years old. Hiatt died of AIDS in Kincannon's arms on Oct. 4, 1991. Kincannon and Hiatt had been diagnosed with AIDS within weeks of another. They were like brothers.

"I miss my friend," Kincannon said. "Dan's life was cut short by this disease. As we know life, I'll never see him again."



Mike Elason/News-Press



An AIDS question-and-answer session at UCSB puts Mitch Kincannon, above left, in the spotlight with other panelists. At right, a monthly inhalant treatment affords Kincannon some quiet time to reflect.

New doors open for AIDS specialist

By Rhonda Parks
News-Press Staff Writer

"It will be very hard to lose Barry," Mitch Kincannon said slowly. "There's a connection there that is very deep. Part of that is that we're both trying to find our way through this."

"Barry" is Dr. Barry Chadsey, a young Santa Barbara doctor specializing in AIDS treatment. Now he's moving on. Chadsey leaves Santa Barbara in July to embark on a new journey of his own. He has been hired to work as a partner with researcher Dr. Michael Gottlieb of Sherman Oaks, renowned for being among the first in the country to track mysterious immune deficiencies that began killing gay men in 1981. The deadly syndrome would later become known as AIDS.

For Chadsey, 32, the job is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to work on the cutting edge of AIDS science and patient care. For Santa Barbarians who have worked with Chadsey, his promotion is bittersweet. There is overwhelming pride, as well as pangs of loss and sadness.

Chadsey came to Santa Barbara as an intern at Cottage Hospital one year ago. In a short time, he endeared himself to the commu-

ity for his care and treatment of AIDS patients — most of it done without pay on his own time — despite 80-hour work weeks at the hospital.

One of those patients is Kincannon, with whom Chadsey has shared more than just test results and medical remedies. There is a true friendship. In a hospital room on Oct. 4, Dan Hiatt struggled with his last breaths as Kincannon and Chadsey comforted him during his descent toward death. Hiatt became Kincannon's 52nd friend to die of AIDS.

As others died at Heath House, Chadsey was present. When Kincannon's weight plummeted in December, Chadsey came to his room and dispensed a long hug before having Kincannon transported to the hospital for observation.

And Chadsey took charge during Kincannon's frightful Easter week ordeal and hospital stay. Tests showed cryptococcal meningitis had invaded Kincannon's brain. Medical treatment began immediately. Meanwhile, Kincannon's fear propelled him through a strange and enlightening spiritual transformation. Later tests showed no traces of the debilitating brain infection, a reversal. Kincannon considers nothing short of

a miracle. While the two men have shared some dramatic emotional and medical experiences, some of Chadsey's fondest moments with Kincannon have occurred outside a clinical setting.

"I remember best the candlelight vigil," Chadsey said. "Kincannon one recent evening during dinner. 'Walking arm and arm and remembering all of the people we have lost.'"

"Through it all, the two men have developed a strong bond. 'I have a feeling I'll be driving back and forth a lot,' Chadsey said.

The two men plan to keep in touch by telephone and Kincannon is considering driving to Sherman Oaks once a month for appointments with Chadsey. Working in private medical practice will give Chadsey a chance to try new therapies for people with AIDS — therapies often hampered by financial constraints in public health care services.

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AIDS: ONE MAN'S JOURNEY



Mike Elison/News Press

Dressed as the "sewing bee," Mitch Kincannon helps keep Summer Solstice Parade-goers in stitches.



Mike Elison/News Press

Dr. Barry Chadsey, who has been on the front lines of Mitch Kincannon's battle with AIDS, shares a good-bye hug with his patient. Chadsey leaves for Sherman Oaks in July, where he will partner with AIDS researcher Dr. Michael Gottlieb.

Kincannon

Continued from Page A 1

parade route. But he did. "As odd as it may sound, it was such a sense of accomplishment," he said. "It's joyous. I want to live and keep enjoying life. Even in this tragedy called AIDS, I'm finding places where I can celebrate the big and the small things in life."

In recent months, Kincannon's T-4 helper cell count has dropped from five to two. In healthy people, about 1,000 T-4 cells help ward off illnesses. The depletion of the cells in people with AIDS is a key reason they are so susceptible to illnesses.

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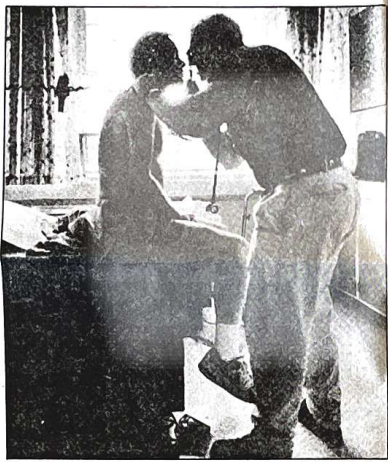
"I guess Peter, Paul and Mary went on tour," Kincannon cracked. "I have two damn T-cells and here I am in a parade."

The month of June brought other milestones, not all of them happy ones.

After bouts of weight loss, listlessness, and two hospital stays in the past six months, Kincannon received a definitive diagnosis for MAI, mycobacterium avium intracellulare. The disease is a cross between a bacteria and a fungus, and it attacks the intestinal system, making it difficult to eat and causing severe abdominal pain. Even before the tests came back, Dr. Barry Chadsey put Kincannon on medication for the disease.

"This is our big killer," Chadsey said. "This is it right here. Sixty to 70 percent of all AIDS patients autopsied have MAI."

MAI causes what is known as "wasting syndrome," a condition in which AIDS patients wither away and die.



Mike Elison/News Press

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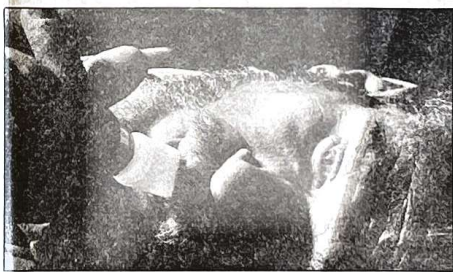
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Another milestone: Today, June 28 marks the birthday of Mitch's dear friend Dan Hiatt, who would have been 32 years old. Hiatt died of AIDS in Kincannon's arms on Oct. 1, 1991. Kincannon and Hiatt had been diagnosed with AIDS within weeks of another. They were like brothers.

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An AIDS question-and-answer session at UCSB puts Mitch Kincannon, above left, in the spotlight with other panelists. At right, a monthly inhalant treatment affords Kincannon some quiet time to reflect.

New doors open for AIDS specialist

By Rhonda Parks News-Press Staff Writer

"It will be very hard to lose Barry," Mitch Kincannon said slowly. "There's a connection there that is very deep." Part of the reason they're both trying to find our way through this.

"Barry" is Dr. Barry Chadsey, a young Santa Barbara doctor specializing in AIDS treatment. Now he's moving on.

Chadsey leaves Santa Barbara in July to embark on a new journey of his own. He has been hired to work as a partner with researcher Dr. Michael Gottlieb of Sherman Oaks, renowned for being among the first in the country to track mysterious immune deficiencies that began killing gay men in 1981. The deadly syndrome would later become known as AIDS.

For Chadsey, 32, the job is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to work on the cutting edge of AIDS science and patient care. For Santa Barbarians who have worked with Chadsey, his promotion is bittersweet. There is overwhelming pride, as well as pangs of loss and sadness.

Chadsey came to Santa Barbara as an intern at Cottage Hospital one year ago. In a short time, he endeared himself to the communi-

ty for his care and treatment of AIDS patients — most of it done without pay on his own time — despite 80-hour work weeks at the hospital.

One of those patients is Kincannon, with whom Chadsey has shared more than just test results and medical remedies. There is a true friendship.

In a hospital room on Oct. 4, Dan Hiatt struggled with his last breaths as Kincannon and Chadsey comforted him during his descent toward death. Hiatt became Kincannon's 52nd friend to die of AIDS.

As others died at Heath House, Chadsey was present. When Kincannon's weight plummeted in December, Chadsey came to his room and dispensed a lung hug before having Kincannon transported to the hospital for observation.

And Chadsey took charge during Kincannon's frightful Easter week ordeal and hospital stay. Tests showed cryptococcal meningitis had invaded Kincannon's brain. Medical treatment began immediately. Meanwhile, Kincannon's fear propelled him through a strange and enlightening spiritual transformation. Later, tests showed no traces of the debilitating brain infection, a reversal Kincannon considers nothing short of

a miracle. While the two men have shared some dramatic emotional and medical experiences, some of Chadsey's fondest moments with Kincannon have occurred outside a clinical setting.

"I remember best the candlelight vigil," Chadsey said to Kincannon one recent evening during dinner. "Walking arm and arm and remembering all of the people we have lost."

Through it all, the two men have developed a strong bond. "I have a feeling I'll be driving back and forth a lot," Chadsey said.

The two men plan to keep in touch by telephone and Kincannon is considering driving to Sherman Oaks once a month for appointments with Chadsey.

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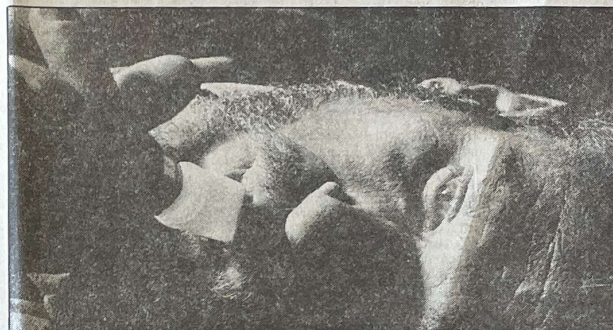
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