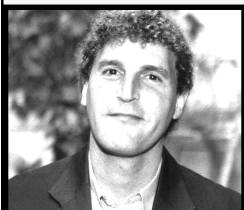


# PANEL NOTES

Volume VIII, Issue 2, October 2000

AIDS Legal Referral Panel

## Hirsh Surveys ALRP Present and Looks to the Future



*Bill Hirsh*  
*ALRP Executive Director*  
*photo by Jane Cleland*

Two recent events got me thinking about where we have been and where we are going. ALRP is going through a time of significant transition and so is our community. Just a few weeks ago the Bay Area Reporter noted that for only the second time in the last twenty years, there were no obituaries in their pages. The same issue reported that the reauthorization of the CARE Act would likely include significant reductions in funding for AIDS/HIV services in San Francisco. A system of care that has taken years to build and which still does not meet all of the needs of our community is about to unravel.

The other day in the hall I met a client of ALRP who I had not seen in several years. He is a sparkly gent with big blue eyes. We had helped him with an insurance discrimination case and he was effusive in his praise for our staff and panel attorneys. He said there were many AIDS service organizations that provided valuable service to the community but ALRP was truly exceptional. And in his case at that time we were helpful. We successfully resolved his problem, the staff and attorney interactions he had were uniformly positive, and he wanted to contribute something back to the organization that had served him so well.

In fact most of the time our clients love us. (And how often can attorneys make that claim?) Our reputation with our funders and with our community partners is great. We have struggled for almost eighteen years to meet the needs of people living and dying with this horrific disease. But we are nowhere near meeting the needs of our clients. People with HIV are regularly evicted without a skilled attorney to assist them. And once they are evicted there is no affordable housing available for them to live in and

continue their rigorous and tenuous medication regime. As our clients regain control of their health and (re)enter the work force, they need assistance with insurance issues, credit issues, and discrimination issues.

ALRP is part of a network of community based agencies that has put out fires as best it could with perpetually inadequate resources. Staff have been chronically underpaid, support systems funky at best, and there are no pension plans. Which brings us to the current transitional period at ALRP. We have moved to a new space where we are fortunate to have only doubled our rent. Several long-term employees have left ALRP, and we have a huge task ahead as we build a new vital team of dedicated staff. Some folks have commented that complacency is the most dangerous phase of the epidemic and this is certainly no time for business as usual at ALRP.

Our goals for the immediate future include:

1. Keeping our panel attorneys plentiful and appreciated. We leverage vast resources through the volunteers who serve people with HIV with great zeal and sacrifice. There are areas of law where we have large unmet needs. We have shifted into the provision of direct service for housing cases and we may need to take on more direct representation in other areas, especially if we can not attract the volunteer base to meet our clients' need for credit/bankruptcy and insurance representation.

# ALRP

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**Continued on page 2**

# ALRP

*Protecting and advancing the rights of people with HIV, the AIDS Legal Referral Panel provides free and low-cost legal services, and has an active public policy program. To volunteer, e-mail ross@alrp.org or call (415) 701-1200 ext. 306.*

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## PANEL NOTES

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*Design and Editor:*  
F. Ross Woodall

# Hirsh Views Present and Future

Continued from page 1

2. Greater outreach to underserved groups. Often we hear from our housing clients that other tenants with HIV are summarily evicted. We need to get to them so that they can avail themselves of our eviction prevention services. We need to attract panel attorneys and staff who can serve the diverse communities of San Francisco in a sensitive manner.

3. Fund Development. We need to cover our dramatically increased costs for rent and operations. Staff deserve salaries out of the poverty range. ALRP needs to build up a donor base, which will allow the organization's reserve to reach a secure level.

4. Housing. We need more affordable supportive housing for our clients. We must work with the coalition of groups fighting displacement of low income San Franciscans and preserving our limited

stock of affordable housing. Education for housing providers on their obligations under federal and state fair housing law is essential.

5. Law students. We love them and we need them. Students can help us in a myriad of ways from assisting clients, to taking on projects which have long been back-burnered, to building the base for the next generation of HIV advocates.

In any time of change, the challenges are difficult and the opportunities great. We have lost some fine folks who have provided invaluable service to the community. People like Irwin Keller, Rena Fischer and Eileen Hansen are irreplaceable. The good news is that we have fresh blood and vital energy to take on the transition ahead. I know I am up for the fight and I welcome you to join us.



## Ali Hall Named Client Advocate

ALRP is proud to welcome our new Client Advocate Attorney, Ms. Ali Hall. Originally from Los Angeles, Ali attended Occidental College, where she earned her A.B. Ali earned an M.S. in Industrial and Labor Relations, and a J.D. from Cornell University. Before joining ALRP, Ali was an attorney with Littler, Mendelson, Fastiff & Tichy, and Berman, Berkley & Lasky.

Away from ALRP, Ali leads a busy life. An avid fan of the outdoors, camping, canoeing and hiking, Ali shares her love of nature through volunteer service for "Healing Waters," an organization that takes HIV+ people on outdoor adventures. An active athlete, Ali is a member of the San Francisco Dolphin Club, the prestigious swimming group. As a member of the Dolphin Club, Ali is in training for the Alcatraz Triathlon, the Trans-Tahoe Relay (a swim relay across Lake Tahoe), the "Polar Bear Cove Swim" (swimming in the San Francisco Bay on New Years Day), and in the "Polar Bear Swim," swimming in the SF Bay a total of 40 miles during the months of January and February. Brrr!

Also a gourmet chef, Ali lives with her partner of eight years, Michelle, in Bernal Heights. Ali and Michelle share their home with their red "weiner dog," Cecil, named from the cartoon character of the 1960's, "Cecil, the Sea-Sick Sea Serpent." As



*Ali Hall*

members of the Bethany United Methodist Church, where Ali is a Trustee, her favorite church celebration is "All Animals Day," when people bring their pets to be blessed.

As Client Advocate, Ali addresses requests for wills and powers of attorney, and helps clients with benefits, credit, and bankruptcy issues. As part of her position, Ali conducts seminars at Positive Resource Center and the San Francisco AIDS Foundation in her areas of responsibility.

ALRP's clients have already fallen in love with Ali, and we're sure you will, too. Give her a call at (415) 701-1200 ext. 304, or e-mail her at ali@alrp.org.

# A Day of Play for Board & Staff



On a recent very brisk and foggy Sunday afternoon in Golden Gate Park, the ALRP Board and Staff got together to share food, games, conversation and ideas. Volleyball, croquet, and far too much to eat were enjoyed by everyone.

The ALRP Board of Directors is now accepting applications for new members. The Board is made up of attorneys as well as people in many other professions and occupations. The time invested on the ALRP Board is time well spent to help preserve the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS. If you would like further information concerning Board service, please contact either ALRP Board Co-Chairs Janet Seldon @ (415) 782-8953 or Tom Burns @ (415) 543-9900, or ALRP Executive Director, Bill Hirsh @ (415) 701-1200 ext. 308.

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## Rena Fischer Says “Thank You”

*(Editor’s Comment: Over the last five years, Rena Fischer has been an integral part in the effort to provide people with HIV/AIDS an opportunity to secure their legal rights. Her creativity and vision gave ALRP campaigns and slogans that are memorable, e.g., “The Legal Community’s Caring Response to AIDS,” “Because No One Should Check Their Legal Rights at the Door,” and “How many lawyers does it take to protect the legal rights of people with HIV?” As Rena leaves us, we give our heartfelt gratitude and thanks to her. As the new Development Manager for UCSF/AIDS Health Project, she continues as a key participant in the battle against HIV/AIDS. Keep up the fantastic work, Rena. You’ll always be a part of ALRP.)*

For the past five years I have tried to come up with catchy ways to describe the profoundly meaningful work of the AIDS Legal Referral Panel. I leave this organization knowing at least one thing: the work you do is inspiring. Because of that, asking people to make their tax (to the

fullest extent allowed by law) deductible contributions to ALRP has been easy.

When I explain to folks that I actually enjoy the business of fundraising I usually end up saying something like, “I believe that people are obligated to give – and I don’t mind asking them to.” The truth is, I have asked a lot. So if, in the mad rush of asking, I have missed a few important “thank you’s” let me try to make up for that now. THANK YOU...for the volunteer hours you contribute and for the personal (or business) checks you write, a hearty and sincere thanks. And for adding a good bit of meaning to my life by enabling me to support the work that you do...thank you. And since this is a personal message, I won’t avoid including my favorite quote from the Book of Exodus, “Justice, justice shall you follow.” ALRP’s pursuit of justice is truly important. I will miss the good people of ALRP – and the good work that you do.

Want to  
Contribute to  
*PANEL NOTES?*  
Contact Ross at  
(415) 701-1200  
ext. 306, or  
ross@alrp.org

*What  
Clients  
are  
Saying  
About  
the  
Panel*

## Words worth More than Gold

*(Editor's Note: After each client of ALRP has been served, he/she is sent a "Client Comment" form to give feedback on his/her experience with ALRP and the assigned panel attorney. Below is a sampling of recent client responses.)*

*"I am very grateful for the chance to have the peace of mind that ALRP gave to me."*

*--Landlord/Tenant client of Fred Hjelmeset*

*"I can move forward with my plans with more confidence. Thank God you're here to help!"*

*--Credit/Bankruptcy client of Patrick McMahon*

*"Carol Gee was great to work with; an exemplary volunteer and all around lovely person."*

*--Will client of Carol A. Gee*

*"An important life issue has been resolved. I was treated very courteously and efficiently by the ALRP staff and attorney."*

*--Will & DPA client of Dorothy L. Fernandez*

*"Now if I get hit by a MUNI bus, I have my things in order. Larry was very friendly and did a great job. Thank you all very much."*

*--Will client of Lawrence R. Katzin*

*"I am now under much less stress. I'm very grateful to ALRP and to my attorney. Thank you to all. I am breathing much easier now. Thanks and love."*

*--Landlord/Tenant client of Shaye Larkin*

*"This service is wonderful. With all the stress that people living with HIV/AIDS have already, you make life a lot better. Thank you very much."*

*--Credit & Bankruptcy client of Michael Cooper*

*--Family Law client of Miriam Steinbeck*



# 2000 World AIDS Conference Report

## *Public Policy Director Represents ALRP at XIII International AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa*

ALRP was honored to have our Public Policy Director represent us at the recent XIII International AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa. Eileen Hansen was invited to speak on *Trends in HIV Reporting: Public Health, Human Rights and Politics*. Utilizing her 14 years of local, state and federal experience working on this issue, she focused her talk on the need for countries grappling with the question of whether to report those with HIV by name or by a coded, unique identifier system, to determine for themselves the most appropriate approach for their population. Some countries have been looking to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for guidance and there is a concern that countries will simply adopt the CDC's recommendations without analyzing the problems associated with name-based reporting, according to Hansen. The CDC released guidelines last year regarding the need for HIV reporting in the U.S. and, while biased toward name-based reporting, al-

lowed that each state should determine the appropriate system for their jurisdiction. The ALRP has long opposed HIV reporting by name, and Eileen has been in the forefront of the fight for reporting by unique identifier. This year, in California, due in large part to the tireless efforts of the California HIV Surveillance Coalition, co-chaired by Eileen, a non-name based system of reporting was finally funded by Governor Davis and will be implemented in 2001 .

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*“ALRP has long opposed HIV reporting by name.”*

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“I was enormously honored to be invited to attend the South African AIDS Conference,” noted Eileen. “Not only was I able to represent ALRP’s perspective on this critical issue, but I was also able to participate in a watershed event that, I hope, helped turn the corner with regard to raising the world’s consciousness about AIDS in 90% of the world. Time will tell, of course, but many of us – including me – left South Africa having been forever changed by our experience of seeing firsthand the horrific effects of apartheid and the tremendous struggle South Africa is engaged in on so many fronts. We vowed to take home our new-found knowledge and passionate commitment to turn the Conference into action.”

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## Update Your ALRP Contact Data

The AIDS Legal Referral Panel has a new home! Our offices are now located at the corner of 13<sup>th</sup> and Market Streets (on the south side of the Central Freeway). Enter the building through the parking lot.

Please use (415) 701-1200 plus the applicable extension to reach individual ALRP staff members.

All e-mail addresses remain the same.

Make sure you have changed all ALRP contact information as follows:

**AIDS Legal Referral Panel**  
**205 13<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**Suite 2170**  
**San Francisco, CA 94103-2461**  
**Client Line – (415) 701-1100**  
**Business Line – (415) 701-1200**  
**Fax Line – (415) 701-1400**

*Public  
Policy  
Notes*

*Please  
Note!!!*

Volume 8, Number 2

*Please join us for  
ALRP's Anniversarary Reception  
Honoring the Volunteers of the  
AIDS Legal Referral Panel  
Tuesday, November 9, 2000  
6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.  
J. J. Brookings Gallery  
669 Mission Street, San Francisco  
Emcee: Tom Ammiano,  
President, San Francisco Board of Supervisors*

*Honorees include:  
Gail Dekreon, Harold Kahn,  
Van Loben Sels Foundation, and Positive Resource Center*

## **Farewell to Eileen**

The ALRP is saddened to announce that our longtime Public Policy Director, Eileen Hansen, has made the decision to leave her position in order to enter politics. While we are excited at her new endeavor, Eileen will be sorely missed by the ALRP. As our Public Policy Director for the past six years, Eileen steered the course of the organization's public policy work through significant changes in the epidemic. Under her leadership, ALRP took on the burgeoning epidemic in women and became one of the nation's leading experts in HIV and women. She created the first Bay Area HIV advocacy trainings and targeted her efforts toward training women with HIV to become advocates in the policy arena and in their personal lives. Eileen continues to be one of the national and state leaders working against policies mandating HIV testing of pregnant women and newborns and the reporting by name of those with HIV. Her AIDS work spans fourteen years in the Bay Area; previous to ALRP, Eileen was Executive Director of the National Lawyers Guild AIDS Network and President of the Board of Directors of the Women's AIDS Network. In her capacity as ALRP's Public Policy Director, she

worked at the federal, state and local levels and co-founded several organizations, including the California HIV Surveillance Coalition, the California HIV Advocacy Coalition (CHAC), and the California Alliance for Pride and Equality (CAPE). Appointed to two Mayors' HIV bodies, Hansen was Vice-Chair of the Mayor and Board of Supervisors' Joint Task Force on the HIV Epidemic from 1993 – 1994.

“I have been extremely privileged to be ALRP's Public Policy Director,” said Eileen upon making her decision. “It has been an honor to work for an organization that has focused its policy work on those most disenfranchised by the epidemic. ALRP understood that the nexus of class, race, gender and sexual orientation determines how people with HIV are treated and, as such, we have been able to bring a unique perspective into the HIV, health care and social justice arenas. I will greatly miss my full-time AIDS work and certainly, my commitment to the struggle against HIV will not end with this decision.”

We wish you well, Eileen! Your tremendous work will never be forgotten.

# Upcoming MCLE Trainings

## Landlord/Tenant Law 101

Ora Prochovnik, Director New College Housing Advocacy Clinic,  
and Joyce Jordan, ALRP Housing Attorney

5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., Thursday, October 12, 2000

Morrison & Foerster, San Francisco  
425 Market Street, 33rd Floor

Eviction defense, discovery techniques and navigating the courts.  
1.5 MCLE Credits.

## Landlord/Tenant Issues

Aleem Raja, ALRP Housing Attorney

12:00 to 1:00 p.m., Tuesday, November 14, 2000

San Francisco AIDS Foundation  
995 Market Street, 2nd Floor

Unlawful Detainer defense, SF Rent Control,  
sample pleadings and papers.  
1.0 MCLE Credits.

## Bankruptcy & Credit Issues for People with HIV/AIDS & other Disabilities

Thomas R. Burns, Esq.

5:30 -7:00 p.m., Wednesday, October 25, 2000

Morrison & Foerster, San Francisco  
425 Market Street, 33rd Floor

Returning to work, Chapter 7 versus Chapter 13, garnishment,  
rebuilding credit, planning for future medical expenses.  
1.5 MCLE Credits.

## Bankruptcy & Credit Issues for People with HIV/AIDS & other Disabilities

Thomas R. Burns, Esq.

12:00 to 1:00 p.m., Wednesday, November 15, 2000

San Francisco AIDS Foundation  
995 Market Street, 2nd Floor

Returning to work, Chapter 7 versus Chapter 13,  
garnishment, rebuilding credit, planning for future  
medical expenses.  
1.0 MCLE Credits.

**RSVP to Ross Woodall  
(415) 701-1200 ext. 306  
ross@alrp.org  
All trainings are FREE**

**THE UNITED WAY**

ALRP

Please designate  
AIDS Legal Referral Panel

**#3402**

ALRP

**in United Way campaigns throughout the Bay Area.**

You can contribute to ALRP through all Bay Area workplace campaigns. If you participate in a government employee or other campaign, you will find ALRP's designated number in the campaign directory of non-profit organizations.

**Questions? Call ALRP at (415) 701-1100.**

# ALRP

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Panel Notes

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## ALRP Wish List

Looking for a way to help a worthy cause? Need a tax deduction? Just want to spend some dough? Well, you've come to the right place! ALRP has office items that are broken, or that we simply need. These gifts would greatly assist us in providing services to our clients:

- Computer Network Server — *our Linux server just isn't working out*
- 11 Office PCs — *our present ones are almost prehistoric*
- Metal Storage Cabinets — *we have no storage areas*
- Metal File Cabinets — *again, no storage areas*
- Coffee/Hot Water Machine — *we need the caffeine*
- Fax Machine — *the present one is very unpredictable*
- Miscellaneous Furniture — *matching chairs, PC tables, etc.*
- Upgraded Software — *we're using some DOS-based programs*
- Office-Sized Plants — *we want to make our office welcoming*
- Cold, Hard Ca\$h— *our rent has more than doubled*

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