

CHRIS HALLIGAN Major ills snubbed for AIDS



To me, the whole country seems to be neglecting many other tragic sicknesses affecting millions more people than AIDS.

It was a typical Wednesday morning. I awoke at the chime of 7 a.m., exactly four hours from when I went to bed, stumbled down to the kitchen to brew my first pot of joe, and proceeded to the front porch to get my Lincoln Star. Everything was right on schedule, until I opened up my paper and read the headline splashed over the front page, "Johnson Scolds Bush." My morning was ruined.

As usual, we got to hear about the AIDS epidemic and its devastating effects on America's society. We heard the cry for more federal funding for research. We got to see our president, again, put on the burner about yet another subject that people think he is neglecting.

To me, the whole country seems to be neglecting many other tragic sicknesses affecting millions more people than AIDS.

Having not been under the impression that Earvin "Magic" Johnson, our HIV-infected sports god, was a political aficionado, I read about how he went to Washington, D.C., to tell President Bush he was irresponsible in the handling of the so-called unavoidable AIDS epidemic. He told our president that "he needs to do a lot" and that "he hasn't done a lot."

This is certainly a profound statement from an individual who probably didn't care much himself before he found out that he was one of the "innocent" victims.

It was a good thing I hadn't eaten my Wheaties yet, because they probably would have found themselves back in my bowl after reading that article.

Although our divine Magic's hypocrisy can make even the strongest of stomachs churn, I began to realize something even more sickening. AIDS has become the "trendy disease."

Everyone's talking about it. One would think the Black Plague had returned from the Dark Ages to eliminate the sinners of the 20th century. It seems as though Her Majesty Elizabeth — Elizabeth Taylor, that is — has received more press about her contributions to the AIDS foundation than the fall of the Soviet Empire has.

Magic Johnson jerked more tears out of this country when he publicly announced that he had contracted the AIDS virus than when our hostages were finally released from Lebanon.

Where have our priorities gone? Possibly, we are, again, victims of

misinformation. So instead of focusing solely on the AIDS problem and filtering more and more money into research on the disease, let's first look at the statistics regarding AIDS and some of the less "popular" diseases that are affecting our country today.

According to the National AIDS Information Clearing House, 202,843 diagnosed cases of AIDS have been reported in the last 10 years. That averages out to about 20,000 cases a year. Of those 202,843 cases, 130,687 people have died. Federal funding for AIDS research already amounts to \$4.25 billion dollars annually. AIDS, with the exception of several extremely isolated cases, is 100 percent preventable.

The American Cancer Society reported 1.1 million new cases of cancer in 1991 alone. Of that number, 514,000 people died of the disease last year. With the exception of the 191,000 cases of lung and oral cancer caused by smoking and chewing tobacco, the disease has a very low preventability rate. Cancer victims are almost always predisposed to contract the disease by heredity.

What's even more shocking than this is that federal funding for research about this disease is zero.

According to the American Diabetes Association, a whopping 6 percent of the American population has diabetes. That amounts to about 14 million cases. Diabetes kills more than 150,000 people a year and is

completely unpreventable, although sometimes controllable through extremely stringent environments.

Again, federal funding for research, according to the Diabetes Association, is nil.

The American Heart Association reports that 65.9 million Americans have one or more forms of heart or blood vessel disease. Of that number, 978,500 of these individuals will die in 1991. That is 46.6 percent of all U.S. deaths in 1991. Surprisingly enough, heart disease is caused by heredity and is only about 20 percent preventable.

Federal funding? Nada.

AIDS is a disease that has devastated various groups in our society. It has robbed us of gifted artists. It has wiped out entire populations in Africa while continuing to spread its black sheet over that entire continent. However, on our homefront, AIDS is still extremely isolated and affects a small proportion of Americans compared to other diseases. The facts speak for themselves.

Magic Johnson's contributions to AIDS awareness are unprecedented, and he must be given recognition for this contribution. However, Magic also must be held responsible for his own affliction, and the public must realize that his irresponsibility is not something that should be glorified. Unlike the AIDS babies and those who contract AIDS through blood transfusions, Magic is not martyr material.

While he is going to Capitol Hill and blaming our government for lack of action pertaining to AIDS and asking for even more money to be pumped into research, millions of silent deaths are occurring throughout our country that aren't receiving front-page coverage, deaths caused by diseases that AIDS in no way, shape or form can compare to in terms of sheer numbers.

To bring this closer to home, ask yourself how many people you know who have been affected by AIDS and how many people you know who have been affected and killed by any of the other diseases I mentioned (fathers, mothers, friends?). Now ask yourself how much your priorities have been railroaded by the "trendy" disease.

Yes, the issue of AIDS must be addressed. Possibly, however, we are blowing it a bit out of proportion.

Halligan is a junior political science major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Victim, not assailant, worthy of public attention, concern

It seems that something very important is being overlooked in Tuesday's discussion of the Daily Nebraskan's coverage of the Scott Baldwin incident ("Front-page photo sparks objections," DN, Jan. 21). Baldwin was not the victim here; he was the perpetrator. The victim was an innocent woman, Gina Simanek, who was brutally attacked and is now in serious condition with a closed head injury. It is this woman who deserves the concern of the campus, the police and the media — concern that, to date, has been in short supply.

Now the Daily Nebraskan is being criticized for running a picture of Baldwin being apprehended by the police. The picture tells the story that needs to be told — this is what happens to people who commit acts of violence against women. It's not pretty — pretty isn't the

issue. It's not racist — race is totally beside the point here, and those students who turned it into a racial issue on the basis of the DN's picture are both stupid and cruel.

Scott Baldwin, who was not the victim, deserves to be incarcerated, examined and if necessary, treated for whatever illness led him to commit this act of violence. Gina Simanek, who was the victim, deserves to be supported, honored and to have the whole, awful story told, in both pictures and words. If the photo had been one of Gina lying on the street, bleeding and broken, would the outcry now be so loud and passionate?

Pat Mirenda
associate professor
Department of Special Education
and Communication Disorders

Ever Get A Pal Smashed?

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Micro Madness Free Microcomputer Classes

The Computing Resource Center is offering free microcomputer seminars to UNL students. The seminars will feature an introduction to Microsoft Word for the Macintosh and WordPerfect for IBM machines.

Lab Location	Dates	Times
Introduction to Microsoft Word for Macintosh		
Andrews	Thursday, January 23	3:30 - 4:30 p.m.
Burr-Fedde	Tuesday, January 28	3:00 - 4:00 p.m. 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Schramm	Thursday, January 30	3:00 - 4:00 p.m. 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Neihardt	Tuesday, February 4	3:00 - 4:00 p.m. 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Introduction to WordPerfect 5.1 for IBM		
Sandoz(IBM)	Wednesday, January 22	3:00 - 4:30 p.m.
	Thursday, February 6	3:00 - 4:30 p.m.
Advanced WordPerfect 5.1 for IBM		
Sandoz(IBM)	Wednesday, February 5	3:00 - 4:30 p.m.

King's birthday, ideals deserve observance

Once again the Daily Nebraskan has made a major faux pas. Mr. Phelps, you obviously do not understand what people mean when they call for a holiday observance ("MLK's ideals mean more than day off," DN, Jan. 20). The point in making Martin Luther King's birthday an official university holiday is so that people can take time out to reflect on King's dream and what they have or haven't done to further it. In your case, you haven't done much reflecting. How can anyone with any semblance of an idea about the political and social ramifications of the Civil War possibly call Abraham Lincoln "one of the most

radical abolitionists in history." We do not celebrate his birthday and rightly so. Lincoln was only seeking to further politicize the war. He did not give a damn about African-Americans or their plight.

In reference to Public Enemy's "By the Time I Get to Arizona," one should understand that the members of this prophetic and visionary group are not seeking the approval of white America. Their song is a reflection of what appears to be the violent foundation America was built upon.

I believe that Black Americans are slowly growing tired of the economic deprivation, the lopsided media cov-

erage and the unflinching racist beliefs that we so often see. We are tired of white Americans trying to set agendas for us. It is true that there will be many students sleeping in if the Board of Regents decided to allow an official holiday for King's birthday. However, there will also be many of us who will think of ways to bring to fruition the dreams of a great man whether it be by the means he used or not. Finally, you all better hope Public Enemy gets to Arizona before I do.

Tamika Simmons
senior
news-editorial

Baldwin photo draws praise from reader

"Tasteless" and "appalling" is how this student describes the attitudes of those who protested the front page photo of Andrew Scott Baldwin that ran on Monday ("Football player cited for assault," DN, Jan. 20).

I think these fine people should apologize to Gina and her family. All they can think of is how Baldwin will be insulted by the photo. They don't think of what he allegedly did to Gina, which is far worse than mere "insulting and demeaning."

In a hospital bed lies an innocent 23-year-old woman, engaged to be married this spring. Gina is one of those few nice people who is a friend to everyone, not just to people she hangs with. She might have permanent brain damage. But

do these people care? Not about her. Only about Baldwin's precious image do they care. Because that's what really counts, right?

I will never forget the look on my husband's face when I told him that it was Gina, his high school classmate. I haven't seen him that hurt in a long time.

I say "good for you, DN." If these people are so offended by the ugly truth portrayed in the photo, maybe you should have run a full color photo of what Baldwin allegedly did to Gina's head. Would they be offended by that? Probably not.

Yvonne A. Sabatka
freshman
journalism

Photo not pleasant, neither was attack

While the photo ("Football player cited for assault," DN, Jan. 20) was graphic, it told a story and it told the truth. We heard the gory details of the Jeffrey Dahmer murders and we saw him, including when he was being led away by police. We see graphic portrayals of blood and guts every week on "911." Andrew Scott Baldwin did an ugly thing and was seen in an equally unbecoming photograph. Perhaps you'd rather see a shot of him in his football uniform catching a pass. I think not.

Should the newspaper print only nice stories, uplifting portrayals and pleasing photographs?

Praise the DN photographer for capturing the shot.

Michelle McDonald
graduate student
law

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