

DIARY OF A MADMAN

The carefree days of simple vacationing are long gone. Tim's hair is starting to grow back.



Everyday we search for the Tiberius bust with two drunken fishermen Leo hired to assist us.



They operate the boat while Leo and I dive. Tim is the map-maker.



The work has made my body hard and tan. I suspect I've become somewhat of a sex-symbol to the local gals.



I tease them but none of them get any play because I'm too busy with work.



We work all day then we drink Tio Pepe and watch the sun set over the ocean.



Sometimes our assistants drink too much and get into a fist-fight.



They fight until one of them throws up from overexertion. Spain is beautiful.



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AIDS Facing the unseen enemy



I went to Washington, D.C. last weekend with my mother, Jean, and my older brother, KC, to see the AIDS Names Quilt. It's huge—about 15 acres and growing—made of panels bearing the names, dates, pictures, mementos, poems, images and words commemorating individuals who have died of AIDS.

It nearly filled the west side of the grounds around the Washington monument.

This was the first international display and probably the last time it will all be shown in one place because it's getting so big. In this one weekend it grew from about 22,000 panels to more than 27,000 panels with the panels brought from around the world for the occasion. The additions included the panel my brother made for JC, his partner of 14 years who died in July, just a few days short of his 45th birthday.

Not everyone who has died of AIDS has a panel on the quilt. In the United States there have been 226,281 reported cases (June '92); over 150,000 of those have died. In Nebraska (through September) 299 people have been diagnosed with AIDS; 207 of them have died.

It cannot be known how many other people carry the virus but

have not yet been diagnosed. The World Health Organization estimates there are 8 million to 10 million cases worldwide (World Press Review, Jan. '92, "How other nations suffer and cope").

The number of people infected with the virus include my brother who tested HIV positive nearly five years ago. He's one of the lucky ones so far, but he eventually may die of some AIDS-related infection. It angers me that some people find something amusing about that, but that's not the point here.

Besides the effect that AIDS will have on the human population—some kind of dent in the growth curve—it shares something else with the global threats more commonly considered "environmental." It is one of an increasing number of things that can effect us—things that can kill you—that you can't see, can't feel, can't immediately register with your physical senses.

The Industrial Revolution included an enormous increase in the knowledge and use of phenomena that are, in a sense, "extrasensory."

We've been messing around with things that require special instruments to measure or detect at all: from metallurgy to precision engineering; chemistry to particle physics; from electronics to telecommunications and microscopy to molecular biology.

But there is something all too human about the way we tend to

ignore what our unaided senses can't detect, even when we know better.

I suppose that is related to the way people can behave as if the minor impact of one piece of litter, one cigarette, one baby, or one vote won't really make much difference.

It's easy to ignore the fact that a minor impact multiplied by hundreds of thousands, millions or billions can become a global impact.

Our brains are not equipped to perceive that many things at once. And to conceive of that many things requires an intellectual process without the support of confirming evidence from our five senses.

Maybe that ability represents a milestone of development similar to the awareness of "object permanence" when an infant realizes that things don't disappear forever when they slip out of visual range.

I think there's something wrong with an education that fails to make these lessons stick.

Sometimes such lessons can be learned by actually seeing the cumulative effect of things too small to perceive. A small part, 1,100 panels, of the AIDS quilt will be displayed at the Civic Auditorium in Omaha the weekend of Dec. 5. There's no charge for admission though donations are welcome to support education about AIDS/HIV.

— Dan Clinchard

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