

# Living large

## Discrimination of overweight people ignored



**BARB CHURCHILL is a graduate student in woodwinds performance and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.**

This week's People magazine couldn't have come at a better time. The headline trumpets "larger size people," who are attractive, including Oprah Winfrey, the model Emme, Carnie Wilson, and other singers and actors. This headline could prove to be the most positive story told about "bigger people" in years, as it pointed out that "thin has not always been in." It is gratifying to read that most are starting to understand that we are not all the same size as Cindy Crawford.

However, not everyone is as enlightened as the writers for People magazine. Some people fail to recog-

nize "larger size people" as important, interesting, or even as human. This was emphatically pointed out to me a few days ago. I was out playing video games, just trying to unwind. However, I was about to get a rude awakening. Some kids, ages 10 and 12, decided that I was too heavy, and they made fun of me. It's frustrating, when people judge you solely on your appearance. It is doubly frustrating when the people doing the judging are small children.

At 5 feet, 11 inches tall and more than 200 pounds, I have often faced this problem. If I were male, this would be no big deal, as the standards for male beauty are not "set in stone." Men can be tall and big, or short and skinny, and women will consider them attractive.

Unfortunately, the standards for female beauty do not vary as much. What seems to be desired is thin, cute, "feminine" (whatever that means) and busty. Usually, I try not to let it upset me, because there is very little that I can do about my appearance. The only time I get upset is when there are people who are déclassé enough to judge me for something that I can't help.

Some of you might be thinking, "OK, Barb, why don't you just go on

a diet?" Oh, I wish. I've tried everything - SlimFast, Healthy Choice dinners, low-fat meals, exercise, you name it. I've consulted doctors and nutritionists, who say there is no medical reason that I am my current size. I do the right things. I eat a well-balanced, low-fat diet, and exercise daily, walking more than two miles per day. Although the exercise does help my asthma and endurance, it hasn't dropped my weight. However, even at my imperfect size and with my asthma, I recently passed a cardiovascular fitness test. How many of you people at more "normal" weights can say the same?

There are so many misconceptions about "larger size people." Most people think that we eat too much, which may not be the case. Most people think that we don't exercise, when most of us do. Some people, like these ill-bred children, think that just because you are a "larger size person" you are fair game for verbal abuse. Finally, many people think that we "larger folks" don't deserve to have good love relationships, because "who wants to date a fat person?" This is absurd and nonsensical. We "larger size individuals" deserve the best that life has to

offer, just as our more-fortunate thin brethren do. Why does my weight have to dictate whether or not I can be your friend (or more)? My worth as a person has nothing to do with how much space I occupy on this earth.

Fortunately, there are some people who can look beyond the fact that I am not a perfect size. However, the question remains: Exactly why is it OK to make fun of a heavier person? And, why is it OK to be rude, and disregard our feelings by pointing out problems that we surely already know about (and are working on), just to feed your own egos? People magazine showcased Emme, the size 14-16 model, as also having this problem. One photographer told her that he would be a "laughingstock" if he photographed her because she is "too big" by his standards. She has been told by Armani and Donna Karan that if she wants something designed for her, she had better lose weight.

Why was this indisputably beautiful woman - who is in good shape and health - told something so ridiculous? The answer lies in the fashion monopoly, which would prefer that we women be model-thin, leggy, tall and "cook-

ie-cutter perfect." However, Emme, at her size 14-16, is a "perfect size" for today's woman. She is comparable to Marilyn Monroe and Jayne Mansfield, who were (and still are) considered sexy, fit and beautiful.

I am not a perfect size. I admit this freely. Neither are many of the women who were profiled in the recent People magazine. However, just because I could play linebacker for the football team if I were a bit younger and so inclined, does not mean that I have no feelings. I am doing the best I can with the body that God gave me, just as Oprah, Emme, and others are doing their best with their bodies. "Fit" means more than fat. And anyone with half a brain must realize that we are all born different - some fat, some thin, some short, some tall, some dull and some bright. Maybe, someday soon, people will grant us "larger size individuals" the respect that we are due as fellow human beings. We need to be free of unnecessary verbal abuse. And as for those intolerant children out there, may they learn that our value has nothing to do with how perfect (or imperfect) we are on the outside. True beauty, after all, comes only from within.

# Digital wasteland

## High-definition TV promises high-definition garbage



**TODD MUNSON is a junior broadcasting major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.**

I went down to the local Laundry Lunacy a couple weeks ago for my third and final laundry excursion of the year, and came away scared of the future. But before we get to my stunning realization, I'll answer a question you might be wondering. Why does Todd only do laundry three times a year? It's simple arithmetic friends. I own 121.75 pairs of underwear. With 365.25 days in the year, that means I only have to wash my drawers three times a year. As for the rest of my wardrobe, it's earth-tones all the way. They hide dirt and stench like no other color in the spectrum. Also, when it's time to wash them, there is no separation of whites and colors, since they're not exactly either.

The neat thing about Laundry Lunacy is that it's so much more than your average Laundromat - wall-to-wall televisions, a fully loaded snack bar, and a vintage "Defender" game machine tucked away in the corner.

You all know where I was, only I won't say it. I have this hang-up about gratuitous name dropping, unless of course you are my good friend Katie Turpin of Jefferson, Iowa, who kindly bought me a pint of Guinness in exchange for appearing in this space.

Five rolls of quarters later, I sat down, weary from loading my Underoos into half the washers in the joint. From my bag, I pulled the night's reading, a book by Nobel Prize winner Noam Chomsky.

Five pages into it, I felt my brain

and eyes wander to the television tucked neatly into the counter. Glorious, lifelike color; 45 channels, and mind-rotting pleasures only six inches away. The past two years of my life have been cable-free and as a result, my grade point average has launched into the stratosphere of the upper 2.7 range. Except for my addiction to "The Simpsons," I now try to stay away from the tube in general. I think this is because, as a first generation latchkey child, television was my friend and baby sitter for most of the '80s. Tonight, as if I were a recovering crack addict delivering a pizza to the local crack house, resistance was futile.

Flipping on the television, I surfed with reckless abandon, and stopped at my good friend, the wrestling show "Monday Night Raw." Only this wasn't the rasslin' I remembered. Where was Hulk Hogan, The Junkyard Dog, George the Animal Steele? I was shocked and appalled. The great heroes of yesteryear were replaced by jackasses like "Dudlove," a fat, toothless Hessian in a tie-dyed outfit wrestling under the guise of a hippie. This fool made "Leaping Lannie Poffo" look cool. A few choke-holds later, I turned the channel in sorrow when Vince McMahon had the audacity to compare Dudlove to my idol Jimmy "Superfly" Snuka.

I stopped at MTV, ready for some mind-expanding music videos. Instead, it was "Oddville," a program of truly stupid people doing truly stupid tricks. I did find it mildly amusing when a woman blew her chance at fame by failing to recite the first 10 lines of the Canterbury Tales while standing on her head. Maybe there were videos on VH1.

Not only were there videos, there were "Pop-Up Video," the epitome of info-tainment. I later learned that this is VH1's highest-rated show. My respect for Duran Duran grew immensely when I found out that Simon and the boys suffered through seasickness to make "Rio."

I turned off the television. Stunned by the utter cesspool television has become, I had my revelation.

In only a few short years, the crap you see today will become high-definition crap, as America makes the switch to high-definition television.

In a nutshell, HDTV is essentially regular television with a quadruple shot of espresso. Instead of the conventional 525 lines of resolution of conventional television, HDTV has 1,080 lines resulting in an almost 3-D picture. The sound is supercharged to THX levels. And you can surf for days on end without hitting the same channel because the digital signal of HDTV allows for almost limitless channels. This a TV junkie's pie-in-the-sky.

So what's the problem? Cost. Because HDTV is broadcast on a digital signal rather than today's analog signal, every piece of broadcast equipment must be replaced. More than \$2 billion will be spent just replacing TV towers. Local stations fear HDTV, because they have to purchase all new equipment by the year 2006. That's when the law says the digital signal will take over for good.

Did I mention your brand-new television is incompatible with HDTV? Trying to pick up HDTV with your current set would be like trying to play a compact disc on a record player. Don't worry. In a couple years the cost of HDTV will have dropped from \$14,000 to a paltry \$2,000 for your average set. Save some money for a new videocassette recorder too. If you're like me, and only watch a small amount of television, you can shell out money for a price-to-be-determined converter box to at least make your set HDTV-compatible.

The most appalling aspect of HDTV is that there will be no improvement in the quality of programming. Even the Advanced Televisions Systems Committee says there are certain things in life even computers cannot be expected to



MATT HANEY/DN

accomplish. Imagine the fun of paying thousands of dollars to see high-definition Urkel.

When the time comes that you are forced to go to HDTV, refuse it. Read a book, ride a bike, meet your neighbors, do anything but succumb to that high-definition TV wasteland.

If enough people hold out, network execs will be forced to create worthwhile programs as a last ditch effort to lure us to HDTV.

To make that happen, I want to brainwash you with a quote from Bartholomew Jo-Jo Simpson, "TV sucks."