

Daily Nebraskan

Since 1901

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Think twice Students should take advantage of HIV testing

Ignorance can be deadly. College is a time of exploring, expanding horizons and finding our place in the world. Some students go in search of the endless party, while others decide to stay home. Along the way, some of us make good decisions, but most of us have made a few bad ones, too. We may have learned valuable lessons from those bad choices, but there are also consequences to those decisions.

Those nights of excess or episodes of poor judgment bear potentially lethal effects that cannot be ignored.

That is why it was shocking to learn that students on this campus seemed uninterested in a new free and anonymous HIV testing center on campus.

At Big Red Welcome, some students who received the testing flyers promptly trashed them, declaring that they didn't have to worry about HIV because they're not gay.

No one, repeat NO ONE, is immune from HIV or the disease it causes: AIDS.

Scientists knew that in 1982 when they renamed the Gay Related Immune Deficiency (GRID) because the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome was proven to affect everyone.

Today, women and teenagers are the fastest growing HIV-positive groups.

If any of us have put ourselves at risk through our lifestyles or a single bad decision, we must get tested because more than our own lives are at stake.

If there is any chance that we may have been infected through some of the risks we've taken, we owe it to ourselves and our sexual partners to be tested for HIV.

Students on our campus seem to know the acronyms associated with this disease, but not the details of what puts them at risk.

Unprotected sex, either vaginal or anal, is the most common way to contract HIV, but it can also be contracted through oral sex.

Blood-to-blood contact through intravenous drug use, unsanitary tattoo needles or other means is another serious risk.

If you don't know what activities put you at risk for HIV, find out. At <http://www.thebody.com> you can take an anonymous survey that will help identify any risky behavior.

If you have concerns, get help and more information either at the University Health Center or the free testing center held at Cornerstone church on the second and fourth Fridays of each month.

Above all, don't risk your life or the lives of others foolishly. Know the risks and get tested.

Editorial Board

Sarah Baker, Bradley Davis, Josh Funk, Matthew Hansen, Samuel McKewon, Dane Stickney, Kimberly Sweet

Letters Policy

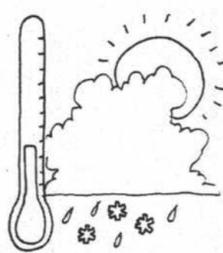
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IN ORDER TO PROTECT ENERGY COSTS FOR THIS WINTER,
THE UNIVERSITY CONSULTS SEVERAL WEATHER FORECASTS

THE NATIONAL
WEATHER SERVICE



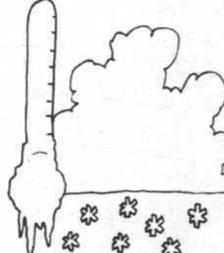
WARMER THAN
AVERAGE
BUT COLDER
THAN 1999
HIGHER-THAN
NORMAL PRECIPITATION

THE FARMER'S
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WARMER-THAN
AVERAGE
AND WARMER
THAN 1999
RAINY OCTOBER
SNOWY NOVEMBER

INSIDE ANY UNIVERSITY
BUILDING



FRIGID AND
MISERABLE
BECAUSE THEY WILL
NOT EVER TURN OFF
THE AIR CONDITIONING

Neal O'Donnell/DN
New 2000

Two people, two cultures, one fortune

Steven and Denise are friends of mine, and they are a couple who have been married in Lincoln for 10 years.



Leslie
Owusu

They're happy. But, people always seem to stare at them because they're an interracial couple.

But the stares don't worry them. What keeps this couple so happy is their strong love for each other.

In an ideal world where multiculturalism is fully evident, we should all embrace the idea of cultural differences, and society would not have a problem with Steven and Denise being together.

We would all be color blind if we accepted interracial relationships. But we all don't.

I can relate to why some people think that Steven and Denise should not be together.

Like some people who are against interracial relationships, I used to have a problem with interracial relationships when I was younger. I had preconceived notions that racial groups should stay within their groups.

Even though most of my friends were white, I still had a problem with the idea of a white person dating a black person or any combination of different races dating.

I questioned why anyone would want to date, or even marry, outside their race. It seemed to me that interracial dating was just not worth the long term problems because society does not accept it.

But who am I - or anyone else - to judge and decide who a person should be with?

Steven and Denise chose to be together, and they do not see their relationship as anything different.

My perceptions of interracial dating relationships have changed through my observations as I have matured.

My aunt Barbara fell in love and married a German man several years ago. Initially, we were all quite surprised. But my family accepts my aunt's significant other. My family does not look at him as different because he is white. He is simply my aunt's husband, and he is a wonderful man who treats his wife like a queen.

Seeing how happy my aunt and uncle are made me realize that it really shouldn't matter what color a person is when it comes to relationships and love. They make their relationship work, like Steven and Denise do. Just like any other couple.

My brother's girlfriend is white and my brother does not see his relationship as anything unusual or different. He says that as long as he is happy with his woman, that's all that matters.

Looking at interracial relationships from the perspective of my own family has made me recognize that there is no problem with interracial relationships.

Nobody should have to sacrifice anything to be with the person they love.

Interracial relationships can work.

I realize the many problems and barriers facing interracial couples - such as my aunt and uncle, my brother, Steven and Denise - may encounter, like raising a family.

It is very important that when children are involved, interracial couples should allow their children to understand and celebrate both cultures.

Steven and Denise do not see race or color as a barrier. Instead, they embrace their differences.

Society should not feel that it is a problem if Steven and Denise choose to be together. It only becomes a problem if people choose to make it one.

Interracial couples are simply two humans who love each other. In order for a relationship like this to work, both cultures and families need to understand each other.

What makes Steven and Denise's relationship work is that they have honesty, trust and acceptance of each other.

For this couple, racial differences are not an issue.

In order for interracial relationships to work, people need to be more open and accept that we are all the same. We are all a part of the human race.

Today, the U.S. is racially integrated more than ever. The number of interracial couples is increasing every day.

When it comes to love, color should not be a factor. Steven and Denise prove that interracial relationships can work.

My aunt and uncle and my brother show that different races can be in love and be truly happy.

Everyone should have the right and freedom to be with whom they choose, regardless of race. Others have to respect that.

Letters to the editor

Abel Ally?

I found the staff opinion column, "Hollow Meaning," that ran in the Daily Nebraskan on Sept. 27 very offensive, making a gross generalization of students in Abel Hall.

From what I gather from the column is that anyone who lives in a "party dorm" cannot support a safe environment for homosexuals. This is a ridiculous notion. I, along with others, have had an "Ally Safe Space" card on my door for the past three years in Abel.

That said, as a student living in Abel, I am opposed to the Abel Residence Association's bill to place an "ALLY Safe Space" card on their office door. I think ARA should serve as a representation of the stu-

dents in that dorm. Even though I support a safe environment, I do not think most students in Abel believe in what the "ALLY Safe Space" card and the upside-down pink triangle mean.

What I am highly offended by is that I, along with other students with similar beliefs, were clumped into a group known as "partiers" who are involved in "alcohol-induced vomiting." That kind of behavior, which does not exist on the level the column may make people believe, has nothing to do with whether or not I want to make my living area a safe space for homosexuals or anyone else.

Jay Saunders
Senior
Broadcasting

Frame by frame, her name

Hopelessly lost within my own infatuation, I see Volleyball, frame by frame.

11:37 a.m. - A strand of hair plops into her face. She brushes it back, placing her hand on the top of the pith helmet.

11:37.35 - She leans back in her chair. She sighs.

11:38.23 - She scootches back up in the chair again, plops her right hand to directly below her chin and, closes her eyes and lets out one of those burps nobody hears. Musta drank a soda this morning.

11:41 - She twaddles her swish-swish pants, looking off and to her right, the direction of recollection, thinking of someone, twaddling, thinking of his penis, or her vagina (as if I would know at this moment).

11:52.3 - Speaks for the first time, regarding her misunderstanding of Hemingway's iceberg, the short story mantra he stuck to for most of his career.

A story is an iceberg, he would say, as the words that make it on paper comprise that ice that resides above water, while the remainder is the back story, all the questions you know the answers to, all the bloody secrets and pimples and dark corridors that congeal to produce one line of dialogue.

All the pain, the time and hurt, the lies and guts, the hail damage, the tiny secluded moments of dreamt-up scorn that plug the holes in your brain - this is the iceberg.

Volleyball doesn't get it. I've heard the athletic department provides test banks for them to scour over, thus producing the desired grade in the desired class, thus granting them what I think is called "eligibility" to play their little games. The iceberg wasn't in the test bank, it seemed.

11:59.34 - She turns to a classmate to ask an innocuous question.

12:01 p.m. - Another question.

12:05 - Twaddles the swish-swish pants again.

12:08.59 - Yawns

12:12.14 - Rolls her eyes at the analysis of the *spherrrrrrre of innnnnfluencce*.

As class ends, Jaime has chipped away the remainder of her Dum-Dum and we turn our separate ways. She goes to the library to study and sleep; I, to the union. Today, the plan changes.

The zipper trick you learn as a girl in high school, how to manipulate your zipper to either zip quickly (PULL! PULL! PULL!) or meander it across your backpack, maybe open it up a few times just to check that you've got all your stuff.

You do this to make time move or stall it, in this case, now I want to stall it, because Volleyball packs like new ketchup pours, before heaving the bag on her shoulder like there's a load of curling stones in it.

I pick up a stray pen from the desk to the left of me, and search uselessly for a pocket cranny to stick it in. She's still phullumping across the room. Now she wants to ask the teacher a question.

12:22.56 - I read the mouthed words of "out-of-town." Teach shakes her head. Pats Volleyball on the back. I search my purse for a stick of sugarless gum. In vain.

12:23.15 - It becomes painfully clear that in order to follow Volleyball out, and possibly muster up my crappy courage to say something entirely meaningless and fawning (because I am deep, deep, deep in artist inspiration here), I must ask the teacher a useless question of my own, except I have none, wait! I've

got the missing sphere. A comment of reassurance would do Teach good.

12:23.29 - Close up on Volleyball now, I see the remnants of scratches on her neck, tiny brown skid marks ready to sink back into the skin. I see her lips, dried and skinned over, little folds tucked into the fleshy part of them. She spies me looking. I think, and purses her lips inward to moisturize. I see her ears, smaller than mine. Her hair, a tangled mess.

I see it all, and all at once, from 14 inches away. The screen widens and opens to the universe, the clutter moves and pops behind her. I imagine her face, backlit by the sun, against a dock, not lost, but clearly seen, wind blowing hard, strands wisping her face, holding to the skin, then releasing, whirling around her in chaos. The scenes fold upon my eyes like those hairs. Just like Nadia said.

I am an orbit in her solar system, my pulse not *bum-bum, bum-bum bum-bum bum-bum bum-bum bum-bum bum-bum bum-bum*, like a constant timpani drum awaking to the echoes of a dead-zone ritual. Her move has a rhythm, and I'm inside it.

"Did you need something?" Teach draws me out with her voice, which bangs against the air like forks bang against tin prison plates.

Just wanted to tell you, I say in sweet prose, that I will most definitely have that sphere of influence next go-around. I keep it short, and even that isn't quite enough, because Volleyball turned to leave, head down and scooting fast, and I feel like a slingshot, going too far around the moon to get back again. Teach is talking to me, giving a short, tin-banging lecture about how many points she'll have to deduct and

i don't care!

And I nod my head profusely, clasp her wrist and smile a "I gotta go" and turn. Volleyball is finding her way up the stairs and I can not not not not run because that will look so stupid but if I walk like this and meander up these stairs then I've got to plan an angle to intercept her.

Instant obsession is like a geometric trap of logic.

So I do that hard half jog in the opposite direction, dodging who I can, my change jingling in backpack mesh pocket, praying to whatever God that my hunch that she'll go toward the volleyball courts plays out and guys are squinting their eyes and girls are rolling theirs at the pretty, pretty girl, in hurry for nothing they're sure.

I hit the outside and see her nearly parallel with me, heading in the right direction, about 100 feet away from, and now there's a new quandary, as in: How do I look pedestrian and still make a casual beeline that intercepts her before it's too late? A droplet of goo plops off my forehead. I'm sweating.

I feel so stupid, time stopping right in this moment for me to feel that way, naked and alone watching some girl in swish-swish pants make her way to practice, or whatever.

I think of the hole in language Nadia told me about, where there's an absence for explanation for the emotion, where everything blurs and there's just you and whatever.

12:24.27 - I close my eyes and the clutter pops yellow, purple, yellow. And whatever God help me, I am overwhelmed with the most self-centered, pukiest thought I've ever conjured up in my brain.

So this is what it must be like to look at me.

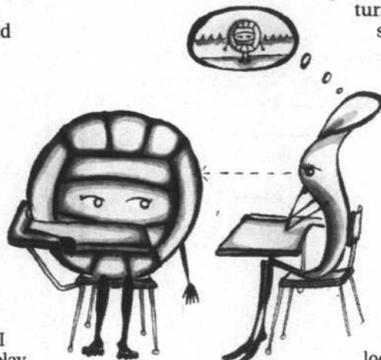
12:25.34 - And I so give my obsession of myself a name, this silent subject that has become my immediate muse:

Calgary Johnson.

This is her name. This is my icon. And her letters blast with the trademark of a girlish script, forged with a purple pen, half print/half cursive.



Petaluma
Watson



Megan Cody/DN