

COMING THURSDAY...

— 'The new 'F' word', part 4 of Women's Issues and...  
— A Valentine's Day Special

# Lifestyles

February 11, 1992

THE REBEL YELL

9

## Women and AIDS

WOMEN'S  
ISSUES  
Part 4 of 7

♀ ???  
♂ ???



### AIDS rates increase dramatically for women

by Kimberley McGee

An epidemic is sweeping across the world with 345,533 people in 162 countries dying from a preventable disease, according to the Center for Disease Control. AIDS has infected not just homosexual men and intravenous drug users, in fact women have the largest proportionate increase for acquiring AIDS based on the estimate for 1989 to 1990.

The statistics for women are frighteningly real. Within the past year and a half the amount of women infected has tripled, placing women in second place for rising AIDS cases.

Already 133,233 women and men have died from AIDS in this country alone. Yet many still have unprotected sex. To many involved with AIDS it is a phenomenon as to why people still choose to shrug off the alarming numbers and constant reminders of AIDS through the media and prominent citizens such as Magic Johnson.

Increasing numbers of women are becoming infected with HIV each year and are not aware they have contracted the disease.

"Women die quicker because women do not get tested until they get sick. Men stay healthy because they get test-

ed (before they get sick)," said Nancee Lee of AFAN, (Aid for AIDS of Nevada).

However, there is no reason for women to become sick at all. But they do and this is mainly due to not taking the steps to prevent exposure from the HIV antibody.

Although a woman may feel that her partner is not at risk for having HIV, and therefore she cannot be, there is no way to look at a person and tell if they are high risk.

According to the American Red Cross, risky behavior such as sharing drug needles or syringes with a person who is infected, having sex with someone who is infected, and putting your mouth or tongue on the penis, vagina, or rectum of someone who is infected.

But how do you know if that person is infected? There is no way to know for sure unless you are willing to take the responsibility for your own life and

### Communication can add years to life

Communication is one of the most important aspects of a healthy relationship. As a part of a couple it is pertinent to ask questions about the others past, to know who that person is. The AIDS cases for heterosexuals has risen to 78 percent, over half of reported AIDS cases. Yet people still do not want to talk about it. Maybe it is just that they don't know how. Here are a few suggestions from the American Red Cross

on how to approach this touchy subject:

→Realize that your concern for your partners' past does not mean that you distrust him or her.

→You should be concerned for your happiness and health as well as for your partners'.

→Discuss protection from infection of the HIV/AIDS and realize that you are both responsible.

→Both you and your partner should be aware of how to

avoid contracting the AIDS virus.

→If faithfulness is in doubt in your current relationship, get tested!

→More than likely, your partner shares the same feelings you do.

By talking about AIDS before having sex, you are already acting responsibly and courteously to your partner. Wouldn't you want to be treated the same way?

practice safe sex.

"Women need to be in control of their own body. Condoms are a sign of respect. If I respect you I'll insist you wear a condom," said Lee.

Condoms used with the spermicide Nonoxynol 9, which kills most of the HIV antibody on contact, is one of the safest ways to have sex with an untested partner.

If exposure is likely, the symptoms of HIV are not obvious so testing is essential for any person who has had unprotected sex. AIDS is diagnosed when infected people begin to develop major complications that uninfected people would not normally contract. Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia, (PCP),

see AIDS page 11

## SAFER SEX WEEK

### Safer Sex Week is a time for responsible thinking

by Kimberley McGee

National Condom Week, Feb. 10-14, began in 1982 by students at different universities along the East coast.

"Here at UNLV we decided to take it further," said Ray Rodriguez, health educator, at Student Health Services. And they have.

This week at UNLV has been deemed "Safer Sex Week", and Rodriguez' goal is to educate students what safer sex is.

"There is a lot of misconception of what safe is," said Rodriguez. "Safe means without risk," and that applies to birth control and protection from disease. "There is no 100 percent safe sex

except abstinence and monogamy, so we use the term 'safer sex' rather than safe," said Rodriguez.

"While there is a National Condom Week, (Student Health Services) wanted to concentrate more on the four most important aspects of safer sex which are

see SAFER SEX WEEK page 10

### Acceptance, Affection and... Abstinence?

by Georgia West Babb

Abstinence. To some people this is not a word in their vocabulary, to others this is a word they wish they would have heard earlier and to still others this is a way of life. People who practice sexual abstinence do so for a variety of reasons.

Fear of AIDS, religious beliefs, or a bad past experience contribute to the decision for abstinence.

"It seems unethical to have sex for no other purpose than just to have sex with people you might not see again, even in the next few days," said student

William Holt.

The AIDS epidemic has helped promote the abstinence message to some students.

"People who make a decision for abstinence, are remaining abstinent longer," according to Ray Rodriguez, Health Educator at the UNLV Student Health Center.

Larry Thiel of Rebel Christian Fellowship emphasizes that human sexuality is all the physical, spiritual, mental and emotional traits that make up a person.

"Under each of these categories, we

can make a case for abstinence. The physical category would include avoiding AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases. A spiritual aspect would include the belief that God invented sex, Madonna didn't. And we believe sex is a gift from God, intended for marriage. Some students are emotionally scarred from previous relationships. I try to challenge students to consider the long term consequences of their actions," said Thiel.

One student, who did not want her name published, thinks that, "Our society has devalued sex and that takes

away some of its allure. We're talking about humans with dignity and self-control, not animals. Sex is not an inevitable action that just happens."

Kelly Mast, author of Sex Respect, writes that, "We often confuse our needs (which must be satisfied) with our desires (which we would like to satisfy). We curtail our desires for food, drink and possession; they don't rule us."

Marie, a Criminal Justice major, says she does not feel pressured by her dates to have sex. "I abstain for personal

see ACCEPTANCE page 10