

Students here not immune from AIDS

By JANICE STUMP

Why are students so careless when it comes to major health issues? We have now had the second annual observance of "AIDS Awareness Week," and although there was an attendance at each event, the numbers were quite small.

Last year students told me they were tired of hearing about AIDS. I'm tired of *worrying* about AIDS myself, but I know there is a reason to be concerned. No, we do not have any diagnosed case of AIDS, ARC or HIV positive on our campus that we know of. I want students to know that other campus nurses in larger schools in North Carolina can no longer make that statement. We will be next. The statistics we are getting makes it very apparent that the smaller schools will be dealing with AIDS in the near future. It is estimated that one in every 300 students is carrying the AIDS virus. Considering we have about 1,000 people on campus during the day — anyone can calculate this math problem quickly. I send one or two people in for testing monthly. There are people here who are concerned enough to see if they are a carrier. Seldom does a day go by in my office that I don't hear of some type of high-risk AIDS behavior. Think about that — almost every day.

Let's check your knowledge of AIDS. There is no cure and there is no vaccine. When AIDS enters the bloodstream, it attacks the T-cells and this causes the body to produce antibodies to try to defend itself against the disease. For some unknown reason, these antibodies do not work. They are unable to destroy the virus. Because the AIDS virus destroys the immune system, the body is attacked by other conditions called Opportunistic Diseases which a normal, healthy person would not experience. These diseases are the actual killers of an AIDS victim. Example of these diseases are TB, a type of cancer called Kaposi's Sarcoma and a type of pneumonia, Pneumocystis Carinii.

The symptoms of AIDS are much the same as the symptoms of the virus over 250 people experienced on campus a few weeks ago. Loss of appetite, fever, night sweats, diarrhea, tiredness, swollen lymph nodes, lack of resistance, rash and weight loss are symptoms of AIDS in the early stages. As the virus progresses then the symptoms are more severe and the opportunistic diseases set in and the victim dies. If the AIDS victim lives longer than expected, the virus attacks the nervous system and there is damage to the brain. This may develop over years and is seen as

memory loss, indifference, loss of coordination, partial paralysis or a mental disorder. An AIDS victim can have one, two or all three of the above mentioned symptoms.

There is another condition you need to be aware of, AIDS Related Complex (ARC.) Patients with ARC have mild forms of AIDS symptoms without the opportunistic diseases. ARC patients will eventually develop "full-blown" AIDS.

ARC patients are also HIV positive. That is, if they take the AIDS blood test AIDS antibodies will show up in their blood. This means they can spread the AIDS virus to anyone they have intimate contact with. Take a minute and realize that these people may not even be tested, yet — they may feel sick and just think it's a virus or a really awful cold. These people may be having relationship without protecting their partner and then their partners have a new relationship and they don't use protection, either. Can you see how AIDS is not just a disease of homosexual and IV drug users?

You must understand that this disease is a threat to you only if you have a specific type of behavior. If you exhibit the behavior listed below then you should be tested for HIV antibodies:

1. Sexually active with more than one person or sex with a prostitute, male or female.
2. IV drug user or a sexual relationship with someone you know or suspect of a drug using.
3. Homosexual relationship or a relationship with a bi-sexual partner.
4. If you have become pregnant or

contacted a venereal disease, you could have contacted AIDS with the behavior you're exhibiting.

5. Any sexual activity without a condom and a spermicide is high risk.

6. If you use alcohol or drugs you run a risk of losing control and not knowing what you are doing or who you are with.

You can obtain a free AIDS test at the Rocky Mount Health Department any Thursday from 1:30 to 2:30. This is the health department on Thomas Street. The confidential test will screen you from your first sexual relationship up to the last three months. The test cannot check behavior within the last three months. You must wait three months following your last experience with no activity to be certain you are AIDS free. When you test negative, you must be sure to keep yourself that way by either safe sex or no sex. These are your only options. If you test positive, you must protect others from the disease and your health agency that gave you the test will help you learn how.

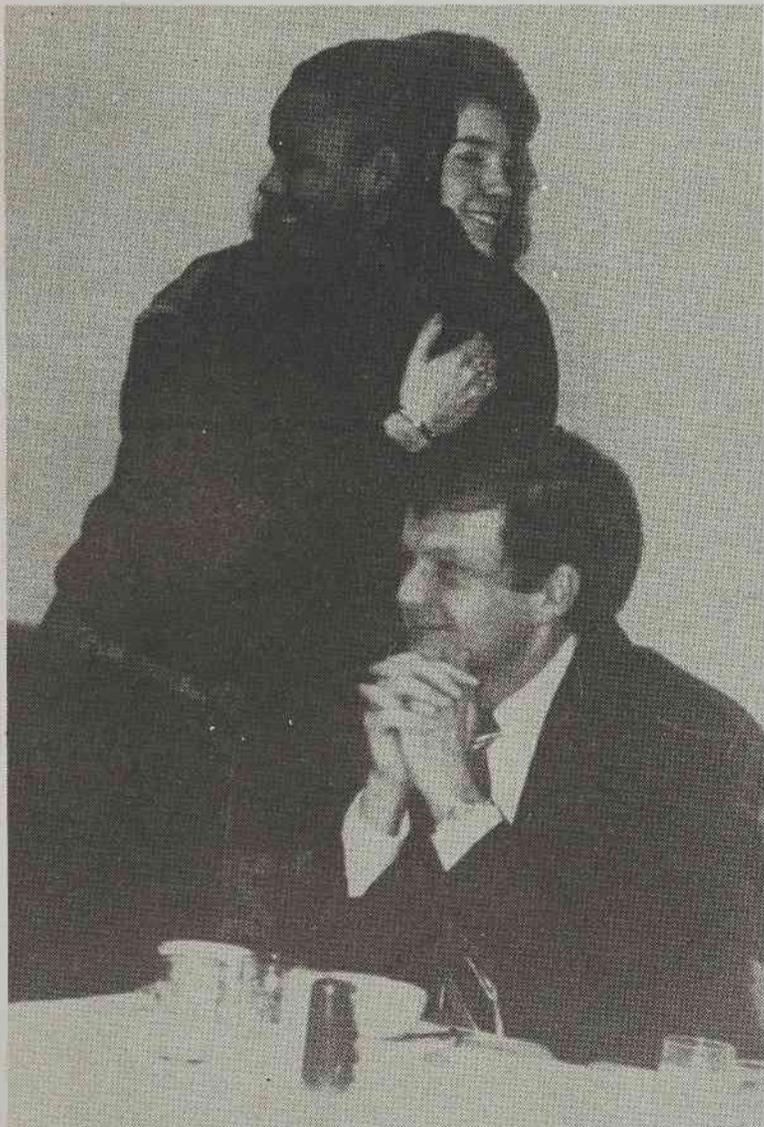
You can not get AIDS from activities of daily living. You will not get AIDS from a toilet, eating utensils, swimming pools, doorknobs, hugging, shaking hands, etc. This is called casual contact. It is not spread by cat scratches or mosquito bites. You cannot get AIDS from donating blood. It is only by intimate contact that AIDS is spread. If we have an AIDS or ARC victim on campus, you will not get the disease from them unless you are intimate.

If you have not been sexually active this is not the time to feel pressured to become active. If you have never been sexually active and don't use IV drugs please don't think AIDS will never enter your life. Your chances of losing a friend or loved one to this disease is high.

Even if you don't lose someone, we will all be affected financially. In 1991 (three years), it is estimated that we will be dealing with 270,000 AIDS victims. Supportive services for these people will cost us between \$8 to \$16 billion. This number can be reduced with education and prevention. As an educated person others will expect you to have this knowledge and share it. As a caring, responsible person, we expect you to use appropriate behavior.

For more information contact the right source. Please do not depend on Tabloids. Such agencies as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Red Cross, Public Health Services are knowledgeable and up to the minute. Phone numbers such as AIDS Hotline 1-800-342-2437 and national AIDS Network at 202-546-2424 can get you information quickly. Dr. C. Everett Koop, the Surgeon General, writes many articles in national magazines, he is our top health official. Any article from the C.D.C. (Center for Communicable Disease Control) in Georgia will be responsible, up-to-date and worth reading.

Stop by your Student Health center. We have information we would be happy to share. All of us together can change the statistics and help save lives.



KING CELEBRATION—Student Government Association President Bobbie Jones embraces SGA Senator Amy Seate during celebrations commemorating Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. See stories on page 1. (Photo by K.A.S.)

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CAREER PLANNING • COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

HARDEE'S is recruiting students, from all majors, looking for a fast career track. Presentation Monday, Jan. 30, at 10:30 a.m., in the Student Activities Center.

PEEBLES department stores are recruiting May graduates for their Management Training Program. Interview appointments must be arranged in Cooperative Education/Career Planning Department by Jan. 30!

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT summer job applications due now! Check on positions with Cooperative Education/Career Planning.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE recruiting for full-time positions on Feb. 22, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Seniors only! See Career Planning by Feb. 1.

FEBRUARY WORKSHOPS — 6 p.m., Student Activities Center:

Feb. 7 — Overview of Cooperative Education/Career Planning; student presentors.

Feb. 13 — Resume writing: Your Personal Commercial.

Feb. 22 — Dress for Success: Fashion Show.

Feb. 28 — Interviewing Skills: Winning the Game.

PLANTERS BANK is still accepting applications for full-time positions. See Mrs. Elliott as soon as possible.

SENIORS — Watch your mail for our letter.