

Editorials

Context Of Celebrity Hero Worship

The American people historically are a nation of people who tend to admire famous people for nearly any and all reasons. Movie and television actors and actresses, athletes, some politicians, university professors, clergymen, inventors, Nobel Peace Prize winners, writers, and, finally, even criminals. Significantly, and while not always for the best reasons, many such celebrities become role models and heroes and result in many people attempting to pattern their personal life after such people.

In a strange way that parallels being naive or plain stupid, far too many Americans even judge the value and concern for their health within the context of celebrity hero worship. If a celebrity is affected with a certain illness, only then is it viewed as something of social conversation and only then do we think seriously enough about it to visit a doctor to have the proper physical examination even when we may have had recurring symptoms of the possible illness.

A recent New York Times article began with this statement: "Rock Hudson's battle with AIDS has raised public awareness of the deadly disease in a way that educational campaigns have been unable to do.

Since the actor's illness was made public last week, AIDS crisis hot lines across the United States and abroad have been flooded with hundreds of calls wanting information on the illness." Likewise, following the announcement that President Reagan had cancer, the American Cancer Institute reported receiving 2,500 telephone inquiries for information on rectal and colon cancer, whereas they usually receive only 10,000 calls in a full year.

Little Higher Education For The Poor

Taking a cue from the United Negro College Fund (UNCF), Americans have begun to realize that a human mind is truly a "terrible thing to waste." Yet, sad to say, an American Council on Education (ACE) reports says "there's no free ride for" low and middle income families who are saddled with staggering debt in attempting to send their children to college even when tuition grants are available.

The ACE report says a survey of 15,000 tuition and similarly aided recipients at public and private colleges and universities in 1983-84 revealed the following:

-Low income families earning less than \$15,000 yearly, pay fully half the cost of their children's education.

-Middle income families, earning \$15,000 to \$35,000 annually, pay two-thirds the cost of their children's education.

The impact of this is better seen when it is known that even after grants are deducted, family education cost for each child in college range from \$2,500 to \$4,000 annually

Significantly, too, since AIDS was initially identified with the activities of male homosexuals, people developed a paranoid fear of being viewed as a homosexual if they talked about it or let it be known that they had AIDS. Similarly, it has been socially acceptable to discuss lung and breast cancer and cancer of the leg even at the dinner table, but rectal and colon cancer have been taboo.

In spite of these social influences on our attitudes, AIDS, for which doctors say there is no sure cure, has killed over 5,900 Americans in its relatively short history.

Likewise again rectal and colon cancer is one of the more deadly forms of cancer if not treated early, which is unlikely to happen if we don't talk about it and better educate ourselves about it.

In like manner, it is a well known fact that black Americans suffer from a much higher rate of hypertension and high blood pressure, yet relatively few of us take the proper precautions, use the proper medications, or even visit a physician.

Possibly, if Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had died from hypertension and not an assassin's bullet, black people might give more attention to this negative impact upon our health and life expectancy.

Let your physical feelings and your common, good sense influence your needs for health education, physical examinations and medication, not your emotional and psychological involvement with some famous celebrity; your health and your life may depend upon it.

at public tax-supported colleges and universities and \$4,000 to \$7,000 at private institutions.

Average annual cost is \$5,000 at a public college and \$8,000 - \$10,000 at a private school.

The ACE researcher, Scott Miller, wrote, "There's a gap between parents' aspirations (for their children) and their ability to save. Only 17 percent of families with incomes below \$10,000 could save for college - an average of \$120 per year.

With these rates, unless giving to the United Negro College Fund and similar college-university scholarship and grant programs, the minds of many minority youth indeed will be wasted. As black Americans we must realize that the future of black America, indeed the survival of the black family, which is the foundation of black values, culture and history, is dependent upon the advancement and development of black brain power now.

Yes, a mind is a terrible thing to waste. Let's not waste them, let's educate them.

UNITED COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP...NEEDED NOW!

ARE WE GOING TO SIT ON OUR HANDS AND LET BLACK COMMUNITIES CRUMBLE AROUND US? GRASS ROOTS COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS MUST EMERGE TO FORGE A UNITED EFFORT AGAINST CRIME, NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING, BLIGHT, AND DECAY.



Designer Drugs Are "Crucial" Weapons

Designer drugs - they are cheap and easy to make with no laws restraining their production. Is it possible that a law against designer drugs is a crucial weapon much needed to stop or slow the mass poisonings?

Victims of designer drugs suffer with legs and arms that are stiff and painful, some display demonic behavior, others die. A deadly copy-cat drug that looks, smells, and feels like heroin has stricken hundreds of users with symptoms like those of Parkinson's Disease. Oftentimes users of designer drugs die. The drug is called MPTP.

The problems or onset of designer drugs came in the middle 60s with the advent of PCP (angel dust). It cropped up in Los Angeles and quickly spread death and destruction throughout the United States. PCP caused almost demonic behavior in some users and killed others.

That is the risk with designer drugs. Hundreds of thousands may be as deadly as PCP or MPTP.

What then must be done? Some suggest that laws intended to control drugs have failed and laws pointing to that control of designer drugs will too fail. However, to maintain the sane-



Sabrina

ness of society something must be done. Failing to provide a weapon in the crusade against designer drugs would put society on a flight plan straight for disaster.

Designer drugs are cheap and easy to make. Underground chemists are now synthesizing potent, new and potentially hazardous drugs for abuse. These drugs have caused hundreds of deaths from overdose and irreversible brain damage in many other abusers.

Route that clandestine chemist move along is one beyond the law. Through a slight change of the chemical structure of a controlled substance - a new drug which produces the high, is not

unlawful. What is the profit? A basement entrepreneur can make \$2 million crop of designer heroin by buying \$500 in chemicals. All that has to be done, if law officials make one variation illegal, is to again alter the molecular structure deeming these drugs beyond the law.

Present drug laws require that restricted drugs be described by their precise chemical structure. Fentanyl, a surgical anesthetic, is restricted and can only be used by physicians with license to prescribe narcotics. The derivatives of the drug produce the same effects. The slight chemical difference makes them legal - entirely!

Designer drugs are not sold as synthetics but under fancy names such as "China White" (designer name for heroin).

An incredible challenge is present. Designer drugs can be made cheaply and easily and sold for large profits.

They appear to be growing at an alarming rate, they are considered the drugs of abuse of the future. Aside from that, designer drugs are very hard to detect and little is known about the side effects and biological effects of the use of such drugs.

If new drug laws will not make the difference, what must be done? Is it a drug policy that reverses society's puritanical, prohibitionist laws thus recognizing that drug abusers are human needed?

The Harrison Act passed some 70 years ago defines drug use as a criminal problem and not one of public health. Speculatively speaking, the government has driven drug abusers away from help and into a criminal atmosphere where treatment carries a negative stigma to the status quo. In addition, designer drugs are impure. It may not be the drug itself that causes problems but the gases or chemical reaction that create the severe hazard to society.

Outlawing the various changes in structure may not be the answer: if it is, do we then outlaw New Coke, carob and aspirin? Something must be done. The abuse of designer drugs is a social problem and a governmental problem. Both must wage a super effort to combat the dilemma. If not, American adults and children are leading the troops of the world to self destruction. What is occurring is mass poisoning like those of prohibition of 60 years past. Should restraints be lifted and the strong survive?

The Quality Life

"Sweating" Suddenly Found To Be In Vogue

By Ahmad Daniels
Special To The Post

Frank Shorter's marathon (26.2) victory in the 1971 Munich Olympic Games signaled the official beginning of the running boom in the United States.

Many heretofore sedentary individuals flocked to the tracks, roads, and bridge paths in droves in an attempt to pummel flabby bodies and even flabbier minds into something called shape.

Sweating, a biological process long associated with citizens of the lower working class, was suddenly found to be in vogue among the nobility. The two martini lunch, long a standard among business persons, was now being challenged by a health conscious group that would rather discuss that major account while running a few miles.

Who would have believed a race that attracted only 128 runners in 1970 would, only eight years later, attract 12,000 eager competitors while several hundred thousand more urged them ever onward—that race, of course, is the New York City Marathon. When I last ran through the Big Apple, there were in excess of 15,000 runners! This number does not include the untold number of unofficial runners or the thousands upon thousands of runners whose applications had to be rejected so race officials could conduct the race in as safe a fashion as possible.

Running has indeed made its mark on America and the benefits accrued through running are numerous. However, research has shown that similar benefits can be attained through walking.

It was not too long ago walking was viewed to be the world's most popular (and only) mass transit system, but not much more. In



Ahmad

today's world of escalators, space shuttles, and subways, walking has suddenly emerged as a popular form of exercise.

I personally enjoy seeing groups of blacks briskly walking along Beatties Ford Road early in the morning. They always wave and yell, "Good morning" as I run by dripping with hard earned sweat.

Whether these men and women know it or not, regular walking can help them lose weight, give them more energy and tone flabby muscles. It can assist in the prevention of heart disease, relieve the pain of angina, alleviate mental depression and ease some of the pain of arthritis as well as reverse some of the physical aspects of aging. Walking can increase the efficiency of your heart and lungs, keep you limber, heighten your awareness, and make you feel good about yourself.

(Who can say what bearing walking or any aerobic exercise could have on black men, who are seven times more likely to be murdered

than white men, if indeed exercise assisted them in feeling better about themselves?)

Books on other forms of physical conditioning make similar claims. But one thing is certain: the only exercise that will do you any good is the exercise you do. And walking is very easy.

Walking, like running, is an aerobic exercise, that is, to avoid a lot of medical gibberish, they produce what is called the "training effect"—a strengthening of the body's heart lung system. Many find running to be next to impossible while others think it is boring or too time consuming.

Of course, there are other exercise-physical activities you could do that are more fun and less strenuous (bowling, golf, basketball, tennis, etc.), but these are not aerobic. An aerobic activity must elevate the heart rate to a certain level and be maintained for 30 minutes. This activity should also be done a minimum of three times a week.

Walking, and this is very important, is a lifelong activity. (I am forced to digress here and admit that one of my major gripes with the school system is that it teaches our children group sports that will not be with them in their adult years. Not only is this foolhardy, but it fails to raise the children's pulse for 30 minutes. Is it any wonder, therefore, creeping obesity is so rampant among today's youth?) Neither does walking require expensive equipment because all you really need is a moderately priced pair of running shoes or shoes specifically made for walking. I strongly urge you to stay away from discount stores that offer shoes from a table. You do not have to spend a fortune but you certainly

want to buy shoes that are not going to cause irritation, blisters, or calluses.

In next weeks column, we will discuss, among other things, how to select a walking-running shop, your target heart rate, and staying with it. I hasten to add that you should first check with your doctor before starting any exercise program if you are over 40, are on any medication, or have a history of heart problems.

Editor's Note: Ahmad Daniels, exercise and wellness consultant for Alternative Lifestyles, provides private and group seminars on exercise, nutrition, stress, and other health-related concerns.

Critical Issues

Critical issues facing the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools during the 1985-86 school year will be among the major topics of discussion at the annual CMS Administrators' Conference in Wilmington through August 2. Those issues include religion in the classroom, health education, teaching writing skills, the use of computers in instruction and the introduction of dance and foreign language programs in elementary schools.

The conference will be held at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Principals and other administrators who attend will stay in dormitories and eat meals at the campus cafeteria. The conference is held each year prior to the opening of school.

The first session begins Wednesday, July 31, at noon and will deal with critical issues. Thursday, August 1, will be devoted to details of the Career Development Program.

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