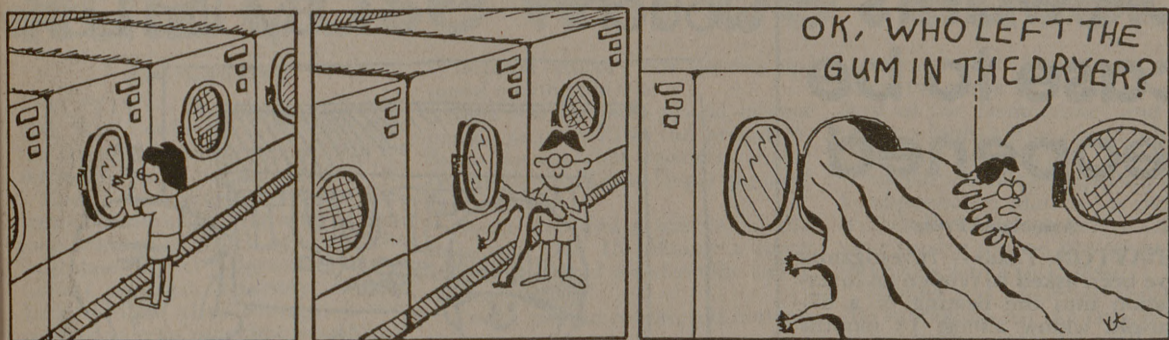


Waldo

by Kevin Thomas



Disease

Group fights ignorance of multiple sclerosis

By JEANNE ISENBERG
Reporter

Muscular dystrophy is a disease which became a household word with the help of Jerry Lewis and his annual telethon. Now some local people are striving to increase awareness about another widespread disease.

Members of a new organization at Texas A&M say they are working to bring multiple sclerosis out from under the shadows of Jerry Lewis and MD dance-a-thons, walk-a-thons, rock-a-thons and various other fund-a-thons.

Students Against Multiple Sclerosis, in its first semester, is participating in a national effort to increase awareness of MS, what it is, and to encourage help for those who have it, says Mark Board, president of the A&M chapter of SAMS.

"The National Multiple Sclerosis Society has been approaching chapters around the country after a test run for SAMS last year in several Big Ten colleges was successful," Board says.

Multiple sclerosis is a disease which affects the neurological system. Parts of the myelin sheath, an

insulation shield around the nerve fibers of the brain and the spinal cord, are somehow destroyed.

Scar tissue forms over the damaged myelin, and that is called sclerosis. When many areas of the brain and spinal cord are injured, the name multiple sclerosis is applied.

Sclerosis leads to interruptions in the flow of nerve impulses and possibly the total obstruction of certain ones, and when that happens the MS symptoms may show.

"Patients may have to deal with double vision, loss of bladder control, tingling sensations in the limbs, poor balance, spasms and eventually either partial or total paralysis," Board says.

"There's no cure yet, and it's not a good outlook for the victims of MS," Board says. "It hits people between the ages of 18 and 45 — not really young and certainly not old. That's one of the worst things — it hits people in their prime."

"The average patient, after a few years, ends up in a wheelchair. The mental damage is as much a part of it as the physical, because they just lose their will to walk. But with physical therapy, some people can come

back. We hope that SAMS will be able to help with that."

SAMS was organized at A&M with three major goals in mind.

"As to our first goal," Board says, "we're involved with the MS national fund-raiser, a rock star look-a-like contest."

"For some local flavor, though, we've turned it into a rock or country star look-a-like contest which will take place sometime around the end of February or the beginning of March."

Contestants will be recruited from the dormitories, fraternities, sororities and other organizations, and the contest will be held in conjunction with a big fund-raising party, he says.

"The winner will go on to regional contests and eventually to a national one," Board says. "That winner will appear on MTV with his or her or their act. The university of the winner will get a free concert. MTV is hoping to do for MS what Jerry Lewis did for MD."

Second, SAMS hopes to spread information and educate people about MS and how they can help its victims, Board says.

One of the SAMS advisers, Mary Catherine McBrien, agrees.

"I'd say we're hoping to create a lot of public interest in MS with SAMS," McBrien says. "I'd like to be their go-between with the community. I am an MS patient myself and work with the MS group in Bryan."

And third, Board says, more than anything else SAMS was established to help the victims of MS.

SAMS meets Tuesdays from 8:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. in Rudder Tower.

Koldus to talk about job, A&M's future at symposium

Dr. John Koldus, vice president for student services, will be the guest speaker at Wednesday's Sully's Symposium.

The Symposium, sponsored by Lambda Sigma, the sophomore honor society, begins at 11:50 a.m. in front of the Lawrence Sullivan Ross statue by the Academic Building.

Koldus will talk about his position at the University, the power and influences of his job and what the future of Texas A&M could be like, says Stacey Allen, chairwoman for Sully's Symposium.

At the conclusion of his speech, Koldus will answer questions from the audience.

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