

Forum

Student Opinion Matters

Americans must reach out to help African problems

SACHIE HOPKINS

Staff Reporter

For many years the people of the continent of Africa have struggled, fought and suffered. Slavery, war, genocide and disease have ravaged a place that is a mystery to most. Africa is where the pharaohs ruled and humanity began, where the Nile flows at the cradle of civilization, and yet the world has forgotten it.

Now it is the time for America to get involved. It is our moral responsibility to help those who cannot help themselves. Many are aware that there are problems in Africa, but few know the extent of the issues. The problems affect children, adults, the environment, the economy and animals.

Africa is home to 80% of the world's children living with AIDS. Last year alone 2.3 million Africans

died from the disease. That is the equivalent to the population of West Linn... 97 times over. AIDS is a sexually transmitted disease, but many in Africa receive the disease through unsterile needles used for vaccinations, or



are born with it because their parents had it.

Malaria is another incredibly serious disease that is contracted through

female mosquito bites. Most medicines have been ineffective or are too expensive for people to buy. Africans have tried to encourage the use of preventive strategies, such as sleeping under mosquito nets, but many cannot afford one. Malaria is more common in pregnant women and children. In

Africa, an adult dies of malaria every 15 seconds. In the time it takes you to say the word "malaria" ten children contract the disease and begin a usually fatal battle with it.

Africa's problems go beyond disease and many countries are in a debt cycle, they currently spend four times as much on debt

repayment than they spend on health care. African countries cannot afford to

"The biggest problem is not the disease, or the war, but our ignorance; the ignorance of those who can help."

take care of their people because they are constantly paying off growing debt.

The United States certainly has contributed to Africa's cause, more than most countries, but compared to the size of the problem, the size of our help has been wholly inadequate. The war in Iraq is currently costing Americans about \$2 billion a week. Whereas only \$2.4 billion was donated by the U.S. for AIDS in a year.

Despite the apathy the world has shown, some are going beyond the call of duty to do what they can. U2 rock star Bono has taken Africa's problems into his own hands and is currently urging the Bush

administration to give three billion to fight AIDS. Bono was also a huge supporter of the Live 8 concerts that happened over the summer of 2005. Musicians gave free concerts around the world while three billion people watched on 182 television stations there, or at home, to raise awareness of the poverty around the world, particularly in Africa. The concerts took place just before the G8 summit, involving eight countries of world power, meeting over important global issues.

The biggest problem is not the disease, or the war, but our ignorance; the ignorance of those who can help. The first thing Americans can do is to become educated on the issues. That way they can understand what they are doing to contribute to the problem and also what they can do to help solve them. We must remember that most of us in West Linn live privileged lives and we all need to stop and take the time to do what we can because it will make a difference.

Electronic voting machines are laughably easy to hack

NATHAN FISHER

co-Editor-in-Chief

Have you ever wondered how they count all the votes in the many elections for our government officials and laws? It may surprise you to hear that back in 2004 over one third of the country used electronic voting machines, most

didn't even leave a paper trail. Maybe that doesn't scare you yet, but it should.

The software used on these machines is closed source, which means only the people making money on them can see exactly how the software computes and handles votes. Any hacker can tell you that if

it has software, it can be hacked. Think of Windows XP, one of the most used pieces of software in the world, which is still hacked all the time despite it being out for more than five years. These voting machines and their software certainly haven't been around that long, and yet many states are chomping at the bit to get them.

Earlier this year the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University's law school released a report detailing the state of electronic voting. A excerpt from the report:

All of the most commonly purchased electronic voting systems have significant security and reliability vulnerabilities. All three systems are equally vulnerable to an attack involving the insertion of corrupt software or other software attack programs designed to take over a voting machine.

Wireless components on voting machines are particularly vulnerable

to attack. The report finds that machines with wireless components could be attacked by "virtually any member of the public with some knowledge of software and a simple device with wireless capabilities, such as a PDA."

The report also makes several suggestions for

improving the electronic voting process, but as it stands, it is far too insecure for mainstream use. Electronic voting scares me, and it should you, whether you are conservative, liberal, Republican, Democrat or Libertarian. We all vote and we should be able to trust that our vote counts.

Amplifier

West Linn High School, 5464 West A Street, West Linn, OR 97068
(503) 673-7843 • fax: (503) 657-8710 •
wlhs-amplifier@wlhs.wlwn.k12.or.us

The *Amplifier* is published approximately every four weeks by the West Linn High School Advanced Journalism class. Opinions expressed in commentaries and editorials represent only those of the writer, and are not necessarily the opinions of West Linn High School, its administration, faculty, staff, or student body.

Editors-in-Chief

Roya Elizeh

Nathan Fisher

Lauren Levine

Business: Lauren Levine

Photo Editor: Cole Fiala

Section Editors

News: Lauren Levine

Forum: Sarah Chicoine

Features: Roya Elizeh

Entertainment: Mike Gorgone

Technology: Nathan Fisher

Staff Reporters

Margaret Adams, John

Campbell, Emmalie Cox, Hilli

Ciavarello, Christopher Erbin,

Chris Garfield, Jacob Gianuzzi,

Russell Hill, Sachie Hopkins,

Nicole Hutchinson, Logan

Kelly, Simon Kirch, Hillary

Krippaehne, Calley Lathrop,

Jaimie Lorenzini, Sydney

MacNaughton, Ike McGin-

nis, Kelsey Schrader, Mary

Scofield, Megan Stump, Kate

Tolan, Lexi Welp

Photographers

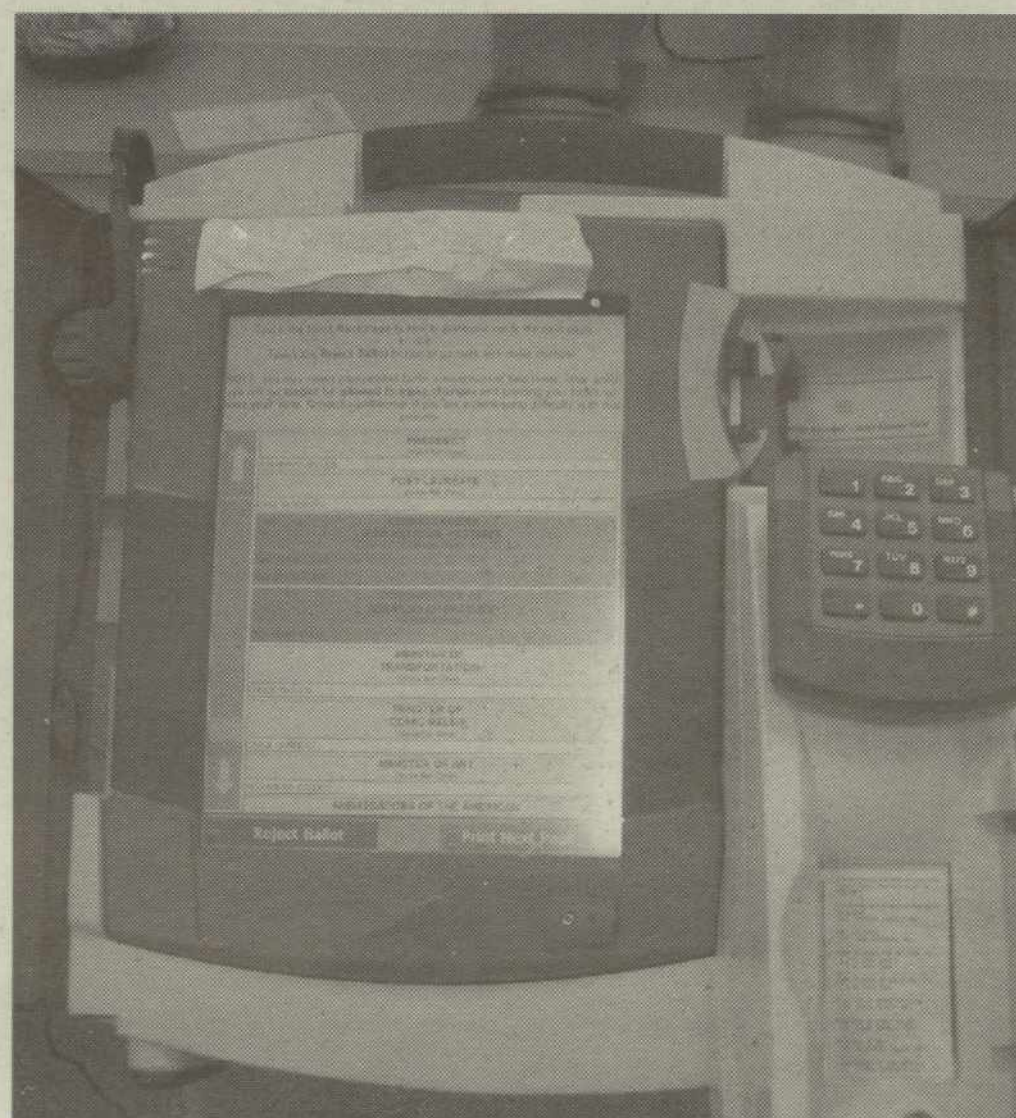
Sarah Chicoine, Malia Chong,

Cole Fiala, Chris Garfield,

Nicole Hutchinson

Adviser

Ann Breynne



Many states are adopting electronic ballot machines despite evident security risks.

Courtesy of internet