

Editorial

Eliminate paranoia surrounding AIDS

Ignorance and confusion about how AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is contracted has resulted in mass paranoia directed at a few public victims of the illness. The need for increased AIDS research is directly tied to the need to eliminate the paranoia surrounding the disease. Reducing paranoia would help change the tendency toward ostracizing victims by creating a climate conducive to public support for AIDS sufferers.

Ryan White, a 14-year-old Indiana boy, serves as one example of the need to combat AIDS hysteria. A victim of hemophilia, a hereditary condition that impairs the blood's ability to clot, White contracted AIDS 15 months ago. Family members trace contraction of the disease to the use of a powdered blood derivative hemophiliacs use to help their blood clot.

Hundreds of parents and students from his junior high school pooled money and resources to wage a legal battle that prevented White from attending his public school. After pushing their own case through the courts, White and his parents finally secured an injunction allowing him to attend classes last week after a 15-month absence. But his stay was brief — on the very day he returned to school, a county circuit judge ruled that White's presence violated a 1949 state law regarding communicable diseases.

Community members are again collecting money and holding meetings to coordinate a legal fight to ban Ryan from the school. But even if he is excluded, the threat of AIDS remains. Ryan, and every other victim and potential victim of AIDS is still without a medical solution.

The potential for political and social persecution of AIDS-associated groups and individuals is staggering. And it contributes to a climate of fear and ignorance about the disease. And recent opinion polls indicate public attitudes toward homosexuals have hardened due to AIDS. Of the 17,000 diagnosed AIDS cases in the United States, more than 70 percent have involved homosexual or bisexual men.

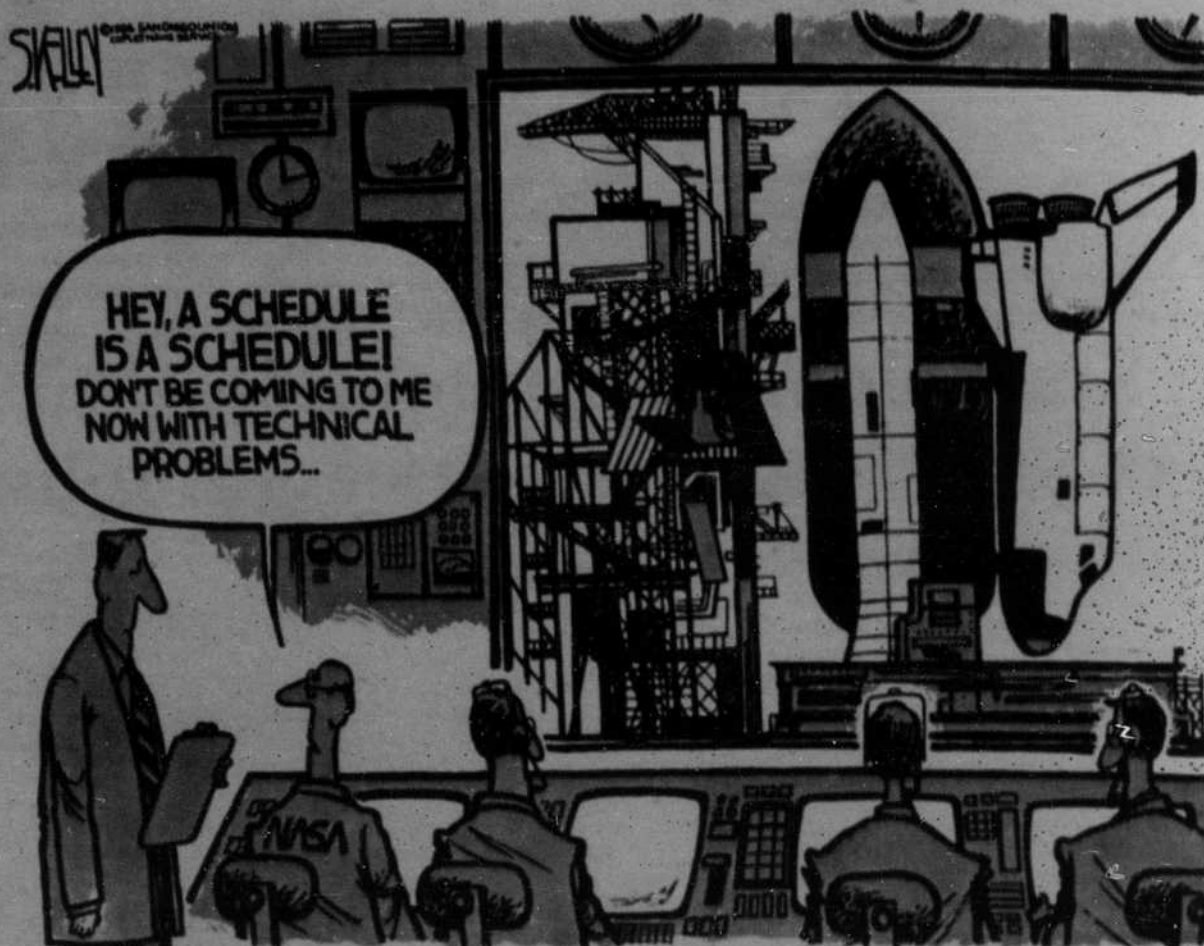
A December Los Angeles Times poll found 77 percent favored banning homosexuals from donating blood, 51 percent favored banning people with AIDS from having sex, 51 percent favored quarantining AIDS victims, 48 percent believed people with AIDS antibodies should carry special identification, and 45 percent supported testing job applicants for the virus.

Civil rights activists and public officials have reported an increase in official complaints of discrimination against homosexuals and AIDS victims. Many have lost jobs and friends, and have been evicted and refused medical care after word of their illness spread.

Yet the most striking aspect of AIDS is the lack of evidence that it is contagious through casual contact. Transmission requires intimate contact, most likely through the blood stream. To date, there have been no known cases in which the AIDS virus was transmitted except through sexual intercourse or direct exchange of blood.

Discrimination against AIDS victims has produced a mind-set that associates extreme degradation with victims of the disease, as if they were modern-day lepers. Further, there is a growing feeling that AIDS victims deserve to be punished and legally discriminated against. This attitude justifies the persecution of gay and non-gay victims — people like Ryan White.

But if all the citizens favoring the exclusion of AIDS victims from their workplace or community instead supported the victims and their families, a significantly healthier environment would be created for the discovery of an AIDS cure. And that is the only sure solution to the problem.



Letters

Dig deeper

So, the Emerald editors are going to defend the militarization of campus by the CIA and ROTC on the grounds of protecting their right of free speech. Oh...

When in the last 30 years has the CIA or the U.S. Armed Forces stood for freedom of speech? In Vietnam? In Chile? You're going to have to dig deeper than that to discover what motivates our military masters, Emerald editors. Try the corporate "bottom line" here and overseas for starters.

Do you really think the Army or the CIA tolerate freedom of expression within their own ranks? Geesh.

Roscoe Caron
Education

Another breach

Since the Afghan debate is growing old, let's look at another case of the violation of "national self-determination" by a communist country — the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia.

In 1975, the Maoist Khmer Rouge took over Cambodia and quickly proceeded to turn it into a slaughterhouse. Remember

"The Killing Fields"? Well, that was the Khmer Rouge.

In four years, the Communist madman Pol Pot was responsible for the deaths of 2 million people. He also launched fierce border raids against Vietnam. Vietnam struck back with full force, invading Cambodia and knocking out the Khmer Rouge. They then invited in international famine and medical relief teams. The Vietnamese invasion and the subsequent international relief aid *literally saved the Cambodian people from extinction!*

The Khmer Rouge, with Asian Hitler Pol Pot *still in command*, now fight the Vietnamese fiercely from border camps near Thailand, and they do it with U.S. aid! The Khmer Rouge are one of three factions fighting Heng Samrin's Vietnamese puppet government. The other factions (Son Sann and Prince Sihanouk) are politically more desirable, but militarily helpless.

Vietnam has repeatedly offered peace talks with Sann and Sihanouk, but quite rightly they refuse to negotiate with Pol Pot. Sann and Sihanouk refuse to negotiate with Vietnam and this year the Vietnamese pounded their border camps to give them some incentive. The Khmer Rouge are making military gains, and if the Vietnamese don't hold (or if they withdraw, as Reagan demands), the genocidal Khmer Rouge *will be back in power!*

"Self-determination," anyone?

Irrational view

Michelle E. Loew, in your letter "For men only" (ODE, Feb. 13), you condemned Sports Illustrated's "Swim Suit" issue as being on a par with pornography.

The issue is not intended to be a "guide" to the latest bathing suit fashions, for I doubt that many men are truly interested in the upcoming fashions or prices of women's bathing suits. However, most men are interested in seeing how women *look* in the bathing suits, which is exactly what the issue shows. Is that so bad? I suppose women never admire good looking men in bathing suits.

And how did you conclude that because Sports Illustrated prints pictures of women in bathing suits, that men only like women's sports to give them a "break from 'real' sports"?

Sports Illustrated does not "exploit women's bodies in order to make money" any more than Cosmopolitan or Vogue does, and they're women's magazines. Sports Illustrated does not exploit any more than Playgirl and GQ exploit men's bodies for money. But I suppose you've never looked through Playgirl before, or have ever even heard of it, being as self-righteous as you are.

So don't blame Sports Illustrated for your obvious irrational attitude toward men. Why don't you direct your vengeance toward real issues of discrimination, like women not having to register for the draft.

Glenn Sacks
English

Michael Kramer
Junior, Business

Letters Policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing fair comment on topics of interest to the University community.

Letters to the editor must be limited to 250 words, typed, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned in. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style. Letters to the editor should be turned into the Emerald office, Suite 300, EMU.

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