

Birth control critical to teen-age education

The National Research Council, the prestigious working arm of the National Academy of Sciences, Tuesday issued a report calling for better information about and easier access to contraceptives for teen-agers.

The report suggested starting school-based birth control clinics, increasing sexual education with an emphasis on contraception and encouraging, but not requiring, teen-agers to seek parental consent for abortions.

The report's findings are good measures for combatting a problem many people are often afraid even to consider.

Teen-age pregnancies have a significant impact on society — \$16.6 billion in Federal Medicaid and food stamps in 1985 alone went to support families with a teen-age mother.

More importantly, teen-aged mothers are at high risk for health complications and face severely limited career opportunities if they chose to give birth.

In the United States a million teen-agers become pregnant each year, and almost half of them give birth. Simply hoping that teen-agers will stop being sexually active is not a solution.

Informing teen-agers of their sexual responsibilities and helping them avoid the crisis of teen-age pregnancy is important where they spend most of their time and meet most of their friends — at school. The school-based birth-control proposal is fundamentally sound.

Secretary of Education William Bennett called the proposal a "dumb idea," saying that common sense suggests school-based birth control clinics might prompt students to become sexually active.

We are disappointed Bennett did not see that common sense suggests enough students are already sexually active that a problem exists, and a school-based birth-control clinic might prompt students to begin to think about the responsibilities of being sexually active.

Give safe drivers credit without pulling them over

We wish the Springfield police happy holidays and thank them for the thought, but their Christmas-season program of stopping "exceptionally safe" drivers to present them with gift certificates is not a good idea.

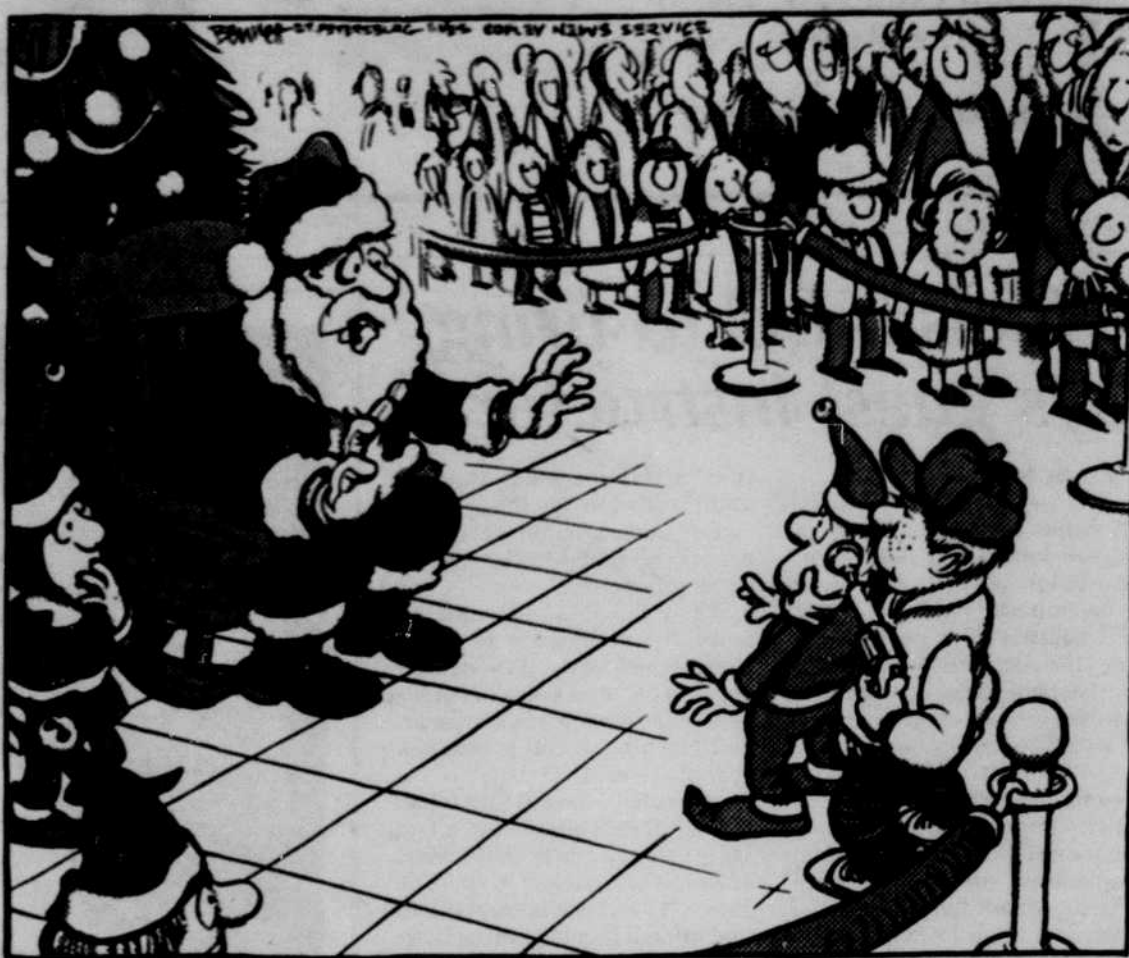
While safe drivers should be credited for wearing seat belts, driving at the speed limit, keeping their vehicles in good repair and the other criteria the officers are watching for, drivers should not be stopped unless they are breaking a law.

The officers will discontinue their attempt to issue the gift certificate if the driver does not notice or stop, and this year the officers will only honk their horn and flash their headlights rather than using their emergency signal as they did last year.

These measures make the program better, but there is still a stigma attached to being pulled off the road by a police officer; many motorists will be embarrassed and inconvenienced.

As a public relations effort, the police officers would do better to simply be courteous to the violators pulled over for legitimate reasons.

Alternately, the officers might make note of a safe driver's licence plate number to mail the certificates, then honk and wave without stopping the driver.



... All right, kid ... you'll get the Rambo Commando set!..

Letters

Good food

Thank goodness for dorm cafeterias!

Ben, the sophomore, vegetarian philosopher (ODE, Dec. 9) is another spoiled child. Has he made food suggestions? Did he volunteer to be on the food committee?

For about \$3 a meal, it's an offer we can't refuse. In fact, we would be quite surprised if it isn't the best deal in town. Care to open the cafeteria to the general public and see what happens?

Dorm cafeterias are convenient. We eat when we want, how much we want with variety and choice; more often than not there is something palatable included.

Dorm cafeterias allow us to focus on our studies. Not many of us look forward to the amount of time it takes to prepare meals.

Dorm meals allow us time to relax with our friends. We look forward to the meal times we share together.

Sure, there's an occasional off night. Vegetables are sometimes overcooked. But is it a rip-off?

No way! Ben, if you can find a better deal, take it!

Though it may not be socially acceptable to say so — thank goodness for dorm cafeterias?

McClure Hall
First floor

Undeserving

How on earth can the University give a Pioneer Award to Ken Kesey?

Anyone who has read his article in the June Esquire could find no reason to honor him for "the spirit of independent thought and individualism." He shows none of that in the article.

Rather — like any other Bible-thumping, anti-gay bigot — he derides gays as the cause of AIDS (I thought it was a virus) and complains about how hard it has made it to "pick up girls."

Kesey says that AIDS came from monkeys and then launches into a confused statement about what God says about screwing animals, and how to use crankcase oil. Kesey then compares his "girls" to jellybeans, and says that he has more "jellybeans" than gays do.

Sound like a Pioneer? No. Bigots have been around for ages. It isn't often, however, that this pillar of learning decides to give what used to be a prestigious award to one.

Scott Seibert
Counselor

On the brink

We balance on the brink of the ultimate disaster.

The government should be a "rumor control" agency, serving as the "clearing-house" for digesting and distributing information. It should be investigating matters affecting the population, examining the relative data and delivering the product thereof in a truthful, open manner to the people, and it should implement any corrective measures necessary for protecting the public from harmful practices.

Instead, it has become a propaganda machine of professional liars, whose only aim is to establish elaborate deceptions designed to serve the special interests supporting the people in office.

Such corruption is resulting in the destruction of the health, security and general well-being of the nation and ultimately the entire world.

The government represses any meaningful social progress. It greedily feeds off perpetuated divisions (such as racism, sexism and religious bigotry), turning "we the people" against each other.

This diverts attention from itself, the true source of the harm and threats. It can be viewed as an indentured servant of multi-national power structures, employing debts, threats and all manners of ingenious webs of deceit.

These multi-national structures own and control the national and global media as well.

We are not alone. All nations harbor these bums.

Only when we are purged of such decadent polluters of the truth can we then achieve harmony, peace and a just and stable security for humanity.

Tommy Walen
Eugene

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