

Condom commercials deserve TV air time

The AIDS disease has developed a new controversy in the question of condom advertising — should it be allowed on television?

Nearly everyone agrees that condoms are an increasingly popular and effective form of preventing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, most importantly the spread of the AIDS virus. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop has said that using condoms is "the best protection against (AIDS) infection right now, barring abstinence."

However, many squeamish television executives and hypersensitive religious groups nonetheless oppose condom advertising, preferring to stress abstinence or even avoiding the issue altogether.

Really, there are two different issues at stake. One is the disease control and the potentially life-saving service condoms provide. The other is the activity for which condoms are intended.

Opponents of condom advertising feel that the public service and information aspects of condom advertisement is minor compared to the danger posed by exposing virginal American audiences to the fact that sexual activity really does occur outside of prime-time television.

What's worse, some executives argue that audience reaction to such commercials may prove to be negative. In this argument, viewer reaction drowns out the cry for using any means possible to curtail the spread of AIDS.

Eugene station KMTR, the NBC affiliate, has adopted a condom advertising policy, and station KEZI, the ABC affiliate, has said it would strongly consider airing such commercials.

KMTR's stance is strongly public-minded and stems from a conviction that the commercials will make a difference and leave the public better equipped to control sexually transmitted diseases.

On the other hand, executives of KVAL, the CBS affiliate, currently are not willing to accept condom commercials, asking where one should draw the line between informing and promoting.

The networks easily drew the line between entertaining and promoting sex in shows like "Dallas" or "Dynasty" in favor of airing the shows. Such shows not only display sex as an important and frequent part of people's lives, but demonstrate methods of courtship or seduction that lead to sex.

At the same time, stations have no trouble airing sexually provocative commercials promoting almost every product made, with scenes ranging from seductive women draped across hoods of cars to the affection lavished on "Spuds McKenzie," the Budweiser mascot.

Beer and cars, apparently, are sufficiently indirect in involving sex.

Cigarette advertisements were finally banned from television after mounting medical evidence of the hazards of cigarette use. However, condom advertisements are struggling to make it onto television, despite the mounting medical evidence of condoms importance both in disease control and birth control.

Perhaps a free-market approach would be best: let television stations air both condom commercials and commercials promoting abstinence, and we'll see which saves more lives.

Q. These MEN ARE:



A. WORKING ON STRATEGIC ARMS TREATY PROPOSALS

B. UPDATING THE THEORY OF RELATIVITY

C. TRYING TO FILL OUT THE NEW W-4 FORM

Letters

Proselytize

The juxtaposition of Monday's (Jan. 26) Letters submissions with that of Michael Cross' Statistics, and that of Matt Burlingame's Comfort, flanking the fantastic contribution of Wayne Johnson's 10 Heads merits careful consideration.

They illustrate the murky paths of religion gone awry. Not without cause did Sigmund Freud suggest that religious zealots tread a fine line between neuroses and psychoses.

They sound not unlike the taped apocalyptic and prophetic discourses made into a program by PBS of Rev. Jim Jones of the People's Temple. "In My Father's House: The Story of the Layton Family and the Rev. Jim Jones" by Min S. Yee and Thomas N. Layton, with Deborah Layton, Laurence L. Layton and Annalisa Layton Valentine, describes the tragedy of a well-educated family led astray by faith. Laurence L. Layton murdered Congressman Leo J. Ryan at Jonestown.

The story about former Mormon missionary, Mark W. Hofmann, guilty of murdering several people in a scheme to bilk the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints of large sums for claimed historical documents that could be embarrassing to that church.

It is difficult to find a religion whose history is not filled with torture, murder, sexual exploitation by religious leaders, political, social and financial crimes. All theist religions, even the most benign, bear the burden of intellectual crime in proselytizing concepts that are confuted by reason.

Bert P. Tryba
Eugene

Flesh n' blood

How many are there? On every corner of suburban America, you'll find some kind of church. However, where do you go for an atheist support group? Yes, I said the forbidden word: atheist.

Despite religious teachings, all atheists aren't Satanic worshippers or violently opposed to religion. On the contrary, this atheist feels very happy to enjoy each day without the threat of eternal damnation.

All I want to know is where do I fit in? Each church insists on placing my soul within their domain, but according to my beliefs, I have no soul. Does that make me evil? I sure don't feel evil, or am I just misdirected without religious guidance?

I'm tired of being considered as untouchable. I'm flesh and blood just like a Christian, Buddhist, Taoist, Mormon, etc. I have a purpose in life and I don't need a higher order to give me personal strength. So who else here is an atheist? Step up and be applauded if not by a Christian, then at least by someone who understands.

Joel A. Beath
Political science

Discretion

Though I am not a member of Lambda Chi Alpha or any other fraternity, I wish to make a statement in regard to Mr. Sliter's letter (ODE, Jan. 28).

One year and several months ago I was an associate member of Lambda Chi Alpha. During this time I gained a strong admiration for the members' use

of discretion of social activities.

In the great many public Lambda Chi meetings and functions that I attended, I found the majority of the members to be interested in long-term friendships with women and very opposed to the slanderous type of behavior Sliter suggests.

If these women have such little respect for themselves that they wish to prostitute themselves for a dip in a pool, and if these are the types of girls you enjoy, which apparently is the case since you put so much emphasis on the SWIMMING POOL, then I suggest that you purchase a POOL and offer free beer to any girls that wish to lay out in their tiny bathing suits.

The Greek system offers many young men and women the opportunity to get involved in group activities. These activities are no different than the activities that take place in the dorms, yet because these are Greek activities, people like yourself take every chance to down-grade them.

Eric Scott Tibbetts
Political science, psychology

Take a swim

Mr. Sliter, a Ralph Nader you're not (ODE, Jan. 28). Lambda Chi is fortunate that it is not filled with members who think as you do. At Lambda Chi, there is no written contract that states that "beer sluts" are any more welcome than any other women.

And as for the swimming pool — during spring term, there are just as many men with "few clothes" on as women. There is one reason for this: it is warm out; one of those phenomenal changes that Oregon undergoes once a year.

If the idea of summer attire and swimming pools bothers you, why not pick on the YMCA or the Elks Lodge? Better yet, avoid summer altogether, pick up your perversions and move to Siberia.

Petunia Weed
Lambda Chi Court member
Friday, January 30, 1987

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