

## Getting them while they're young in the Third World

Advocates in technology are perhaps enabling "gender-cide" in cultures that favor male offspring, according to *South* magazine. Because fetuses can now be tested to determine their sex, parents are able to abort less valued female fetuses. India has 23 million fewer women than men; in cities, laboratories that determine gender of unborn babies are often strategically located near abortion clinics, and advertise their proximity. Likewise, South Korean women frequently choose to abort female fetuses, and hospitals report that far more male than female babies are being born since the advent of gender-testing.

However, one need not go so far afield to find indications that traditional attitudes to children are breaking down. A survey reported in *The New Republic* reveals that drugs are four times as popular a source of pleasure or satisfaction than grandchildren, according to over 1500 Americans. Other things more popular than grandchildren: Food, hobbies, drinking, "just taking it easy," daydreaming, and clothes. Opines reporter Joe Queenan: "A society that loves its clothes 17 times as much as its grandchildren should certainly be better dressed than this one."

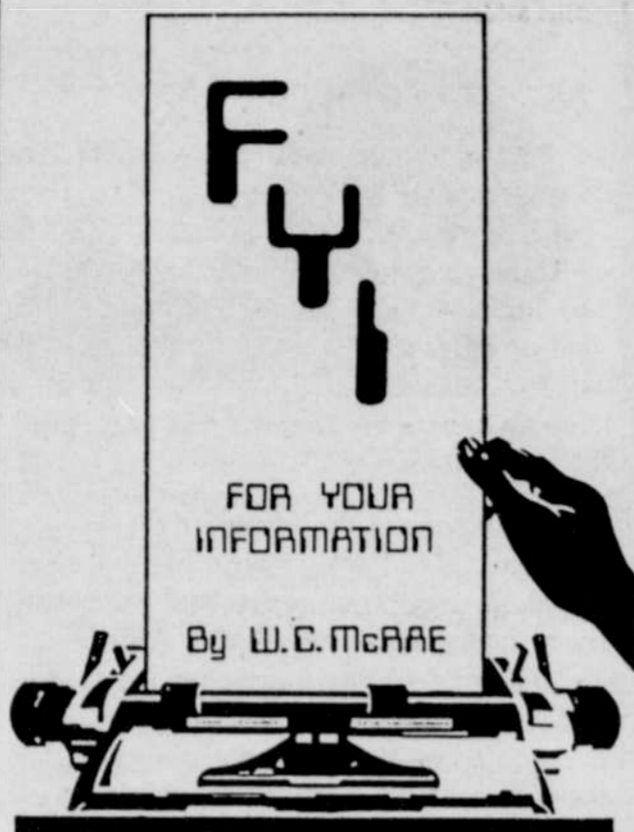
## Court rules on handicap bias

The US Supreme Court ruled March 4 that laws barring discrimination against handicapped people also protect those specifically suffering from contagious diseases. Although the case that prompted the decision involved infection with tuberculosis, the ruling was cited as a major victory by AIDS activists.

The court's ruling rejected a Reagan Justice Department memorandum of last summer which held that contagiousness or perceptions of contagiousness were not "handicaps" under provisions of 1973 federal handicap protection legislation. The memo specifically cited AIDS. However, in March the court ruled that the basic purpose of the law is "to insure that handicapped individuals are not denied jobs or benefits because of the prejudiced attitudes or ignorance of others" including discrimination based on "irrational fear" of diseased people. However, Justice William J. Brennan, Jr., in a footnote, declined to rule whether or not the law protects "carriers" of the AIDS virus who do not suffer physical symptoms. The court's current ruling specifically deals with handicap bias related to discrimination based on physical handicap brought on by contagious disease. Handicap or perceptions of handicap must be present to qualify for handicap protection. Since some people infected with HIV are not physically impaired, the court did not decide the status of these individuals under the law.

## Tax the Gays!

Your *Just Out* would be taxed for "deviant sexuality promotion" under a bizarre "tax-the-immoral" scheme, if a Nebraska psychologist and major loon has his way. Paul Cameron, a discredited psychologist who has made a media living through fitful, virulently homophobic pronouncements, revealed a new plan to harness homosexuality: Tax it. According to *The Advocate*, Cameron, in the newsletter of his Institute for the Scientific Investigation



of Sexuality, proposes that producers of sexually explicit material be levied a "genital photograph federal stamp tax," and other taxes be assessed against literature that promotes or advocates gayness. Explicit heterosexual erotica would also be taxed, but at a lower rate: The greater the transgression, the greater the tax. Conversely, Cameron proposes tax breaks for the moral, to "encourage social virtue" such as "chastity before marriage."

Cameron does not disclose how much he estimates his immorality tax would generate, nor what he would intend to do with his "sin dollars." I wager the money would go to the Contras.

## Public health officials back gay rights

Kristine Gebbie, State Health Division Administrator, and Charles Shade, Multnomah County Health Officer and representative of the Oregon Public Health Association, on March 14 endorsed House Bill 2325, which would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. According to both officials, if equal rights were to be guaranteed to gays, then addressing the public health problems of AIDS would be vastly simplified. According to Gebbie, "There are substantial segments of our society who are fearful of collaborating with public health officials and becoming openly involved in combating this epidemic because of their fears that they are not protected as full-fledged citizens of our state." Referring to the AIDS/HIV Policy Report, Gebbie stated, "The report is full of discussions of compromises and adjustments that are made to deal with fearful people. I think this bill is one way of removing [these fears]."

## AIDS risk and race

The general public is not equally at risk for AIDS, because race is an ignored and suppressed contour of the AIDS epidemic, according to Richard Goldstein, writing in the *Village Voice*. AIDS is largely a disease of gay men among whites. However, the "general population" that AIDS supposedly now threatens is made up largely of the urban, ethnic poor. A black woman is 13 times more likely than a white woman to get AIDS; a Hispanic woman is at 11 times the risk. Hispanics make up 20 percent of the population, but account for 39 percent of all Americans with AIDS.

The fact that AIDS is a crisis for minority communities has largely been ignored,

both by the medical establishment and by minority activists, according to Goldstein. Unlike the gay community, which early on banded together in the face of the health crisis, minority communities have been slow to admit the crisis in their midst, perhaps due to unwillingness to identify themselves with groups conventionally at risk for AIDS. To draw attention to AIDS in ethnic communities might be construed as contributing to that minority's own oppression. However, fully one half Hispanic and black people with AIDS are heterosexual.

## AZT approved for use

Azidothymidine, or AZT, an anti-viral drug used in the treatment of AIDS, was approved March 20 by the Food and Drug Administration, making the drug available, at least in theory, to a larger population of people with AIDS. AZT has been shown to prolong the lives of some people with AIDS, although its long-term effect is not known. It is not a cure for AIDS.

However, availability of the drug is problematical, even though it has now gained governmental approval. AZT was initially distributed free to those who satisfied strict experimental criteria. Now, the drug will be available for a price, and those who have already benefitted from AZT may not be able to afford its cost, estimated at \$10,000 a year by *The New York Times*. Medicaid policies will not pick up the bill until states individually OK expenditures for the drug. Also, it is not clear if the manufacturer of the drug, Burroughs Wellcome Company, will be able to produce sufficient quantities of the drug

to meet the new demand. Between its cost and assumed unavailability, AZT treatment may be a false hope to many already infected with HIV.

## ACLU funds lobbyist

The American Civil Liberties Union, using funds from its February Portland rally and other fundraising efforts, has hired Laurie Inacy as fulltime lobbyist for House Bill 2325, Oregon's gay rights bill. Inacy, a Bend native, is at work in Salem, where she assists Stevie Remington, ACLU Executive Director.

According to Jann Carson, ACLU assistant, HB 2325 is tentatively due out of committee sometime this month. However, she strongly urges people to write their legislators in support of the legislation. Some legislators are receiving mail 25-1 against the bill. "The opposition is getting organized, and we need to respond. We need to generate contact to legislators," urges Carson. Contact the ACLU for information, 227-3186 in Portland, 345-6162 in Eugene.

## Entertainment, briefly

*The Knife*, a musical about a man who undergoes a sex change operation, is playing at The Public Theatre on Broadway. Harvey Fierstein has a new play, called *Safe Sex*, on the New York stage, and has been to Hollywood looking for a director for the film version of *Torch Song Trilogy*. Marc Christian, Rock Hudson's final, ingenue lover, supposedly tells all in his kiss-and-tell opus. He's calling it *Between Rock and a Hard Place*.

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