

HUMOR

On Oct. 10, Congress (with the blessing of the president) approved a 49 percent increase in funding for a five-year, \$500 million program to teach teen-agers how not to have sex. I can understand President Bush's support for abstinence-only programs. If I were father of the Coors Twins, I'd encourage others not to procreate, either.

But after four years of screwing the country, Congress shouldn't be worried about teen-agers screwing.

In a move that is both colossally stupid and irresponsible, the program stipulates that contraception can only be mentioned in reference to its failure to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. That's right, folks—the government is now requiring educators to teach that condoms **DON'T** work. In a related story, black is now white and up is now down.



The Gospel According to Marc
by Marc Acito

Teaching sex ed without condoms is like teaching drivers ed without brakes: Accidents will happen. In fact, a recent report in Minnesota showed that abstinence-only programs actually led to **INCREASED** sexual activity. Apparently those kids up north are blowing a lot more than snow.

Teen sex has been on my mind a lot lately, though not in an illegal, perky way. When you've written a book with a title like *How I Paid for College: A Novel of Sex, Theft, Friendship and Musical Theater*, naturally the issue comes up from time to time.

And I've been taken to task by some critics who question the plausibility (or even the existence) of bisexual teen three-ways. One critic was so snippy she sounded like Ferris Bueller's jealous older sister. Obviously, these people had less fun in high school than I did.

For the record, 61 percent of U.S. teens have had sex by the time they graduate from high school, although a fair number of them do it on graduation night. Frankly, I don't care whether they go at it like monkeys in the zoo; my only concern is that they don't get pregnant or infected with HIV.

As a gay man who now receives e-mails from teen fans (always full of emoticons and exclamation points!!!!) I feel a certain responsibility to speak out on the subject. As with most issues in the culture war, this one's devolved into an either/or situation: You're

A dirty shame

Learning your ABCs and STDs



either a slut or a saint. But I fail to understand why these are our only choices.

Why not follow the "and" approach, as recommended by the Global Fund for AIDS and the U.S. Agency for International Development? They suggest an "ABC" route of protection from STDs: Abstinence first; if not, Be Faithful; and then, as a last resort, Condoms.

In fact, a study in England showed that teens who were taught to consider other forms of intimacy (such as oral sex) were 20 percent less likely to engage in full intercourse. I call this approach "Lick It, Don't Stick It."

Members of Congress (hardly models of sexual restraint) should stop trying to get teens to do what they won't do themselves and instead give them the skills they need to stay safe. For instance, I'd like to see "Lick It, Don't Stick It" instituted in high schools. There could even be

public service announcements starring Monica Lewinsky; I'm sure she could use the work.

The fact is it's simply unrealistic to expect hormonally imbalanced teen-agers to refrain from any sexual activity. You've got to throw them a boner.

Let's face it, there's a lot of peer pressure to go all the way when you're a teen. But what better way to save face than by sitting on one? Teen-agers (who aren't really ready for full sexual relationships) can instead content themselves with "fellationships."

Or what about good ole masturbation? I'm still angry that Jocelyn Elders had to resign as surgeon general because she suggested teen-agers let their fingers do the walking. I ask you: What better way is there to prevent disease or unwanted pregnancy than choking the chicken or petting the kitty?

I'm reminded of the first time I saw a safe-sex counselor back when I was a mere gayling. I asked him which sex acts were totally, completely safe from HIV.

"Well, there's no sex act that's completely safe," he said.

"What about mutual masturbation?" I asked.

"That doesn't count as sex," he said.

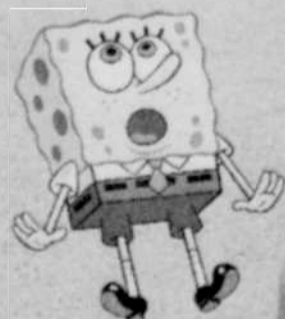
"Obviously you've never done it with me,"

I replied. In a society that permits teens to play video games in which people blow each other up, I just can't see the harm in letting them blow each other.

And that, my friends, is *The Gospel According to Marc*. **JM**

MARC ACITO's novel, *How I Paid for College*, was selected as an *Editor's Choice* by The New York Times. Write him at www.marcacito.com.

SPONGE MEETS WORLD



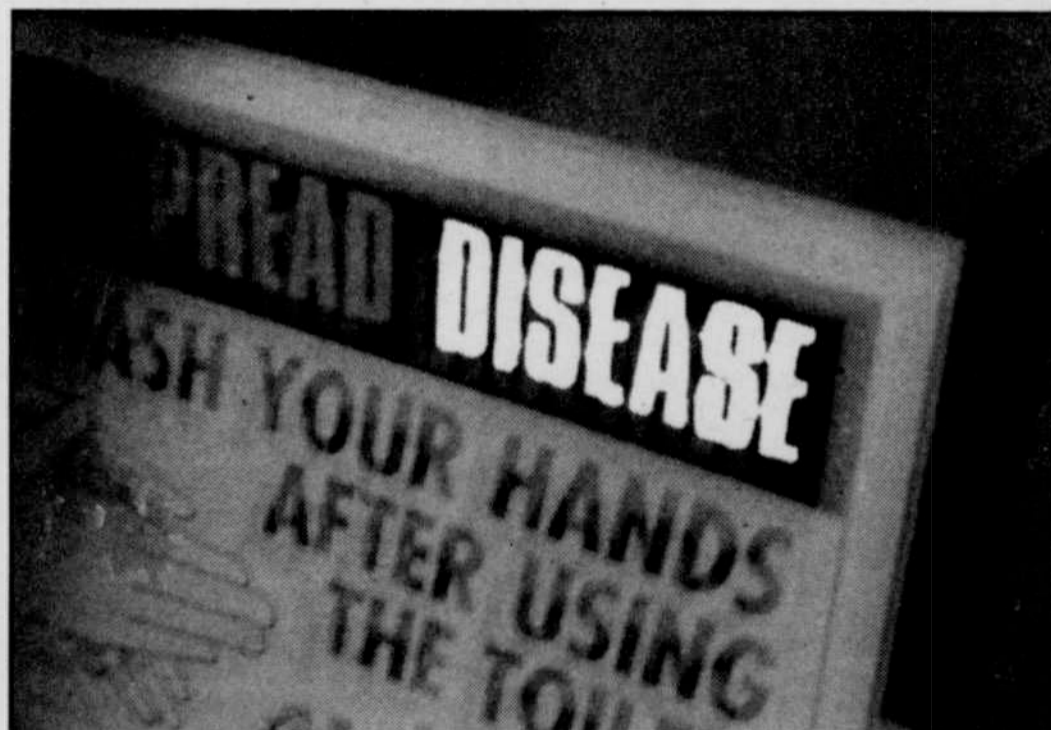
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SOME MATERIAL MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR CHILDREN
SOME MILD CRUDE HUMOR

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