

THE TAR HEEL

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On a deadly rampage

The frightening news about AIDS is spreading throughout the United States, leaving in its wake confusion and almost irrational fear. The deadly disease, first discovered two years ago, has already claimed the lives of 644 Americans. Because many of the victims afflicted with the disease have been homosexuals, AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) has sparked much controversy over how the disease is contracted and what can be done to prevent it.

The disease attacks victims by knocking out the immune system in a person's body, thus leaving it defenseless against a host of available infections. Unfortunately, there is no cure yet for the mysterious disease.

Most medical experts agree that AIDS can only be transmitted by intimate sexual contact or blood transfusions. But exactly why the disease is most prevalent among gays is not yet understood. Recently, despite the initial affiliation solely with homosexuals, the disease has spread to other groups as well: Haitians, hemophiliacs, and blood transfusion recipients.

One of the most disturbing factors about the AIDS crisis is that the public remains shockingly misinformed about the disease. Health agencies have been besieged with such questions as whether it is even safe to be in the presence of gays or to use the same public facilities as gay people.

For some political and religious groups, the fervor has provided ample opportunity to intensify personal vendettas against the gay community and lifestyle. But on the positive side, the media's interest in AIDS has won recognition of and new funding for the fight against the epidemic.

What really counts is to provide as much accurate information as quickly as possible to calm the growing national hysteria. Dr. Donald Armstrong, chief of infectious disease service at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, insists that AIDS is not exceptionally contagious. Let his word be heard.

Sexual Revolution antics backfire

By MIKE LEONARD

According to popular myth, the sexual revolution started sometime in the mid '60s with flower children, free-love and all that rot, and has perpetuated itself through the '70s to the present. What has puzzled me all these years is the fact that I am the product of a post-war baby boom — a sexual era if ever there was one — while at the same time a partisan of the sexual revolution.

If there was a revolution, it was obviously not in the field of sex. We are all hard-pressed to equal out parents' aptitude and determination in that area. But rather, the revolution seems to have been one involving our attitudes toward sex. We discovered (or at least thought we did) the hidden possibility that sex could be fun, free, non-fertile, and best of all meaningless. Hence the term, revolution. The old Bastille of sexual/matrimonial values was, in a manner of speaking, rammed.

Well, it was a popular revolution. Everybody got into it. A lot of heads rolled. Much groundwork was laid, but unfortunately not much came from it. Nothing was born out of the new attitudes and enticing ideas that spurt forth from those tumultuous days of the '60s. The revolution reached its climax in the '70s, a decade that will be remembered as the insidious and mundane period of this century, and it left in its wake single parents, palimony suits and genital herpes.

We have been left with a legacy that most of us don't fully appreciate — the legacy of promiscuity. The greatest flaw in the concept of sexual freedom that has ruled our society over the past twenty years is that sexual freedom is needed. No one in the '40s and '50s complained about excessive frustration, delayed adolescence, prolonged adolescence, skipped puberty or any other phenomenon that could possibly explain the advent of sexual overzealousness. Rather, the late '40s and '50s were marked by the prosperity and increased opportunity which always gets called progress. Americans started to get fat again. Fat like Americans used to be in the '20s before the Depression slimmed things down a bit. Yes, Americans are at their best

when there is a boom and there is plenty to be taken, had, shared and wasted. The only thing that wasn't being passed around like hot dogs and Cokes was sex. With the boom on food, sex could not be far behind.

But in the '60s there was suddenly this ideology, this religion, that had as its basis the "freedom of love" which clouded the simple truth that Americans were ready for some free sex. There was this belief that love was a kind of universal braille, and all that was needed was for everyone to touch one another. That was so convenient because everyone was just aching to "read" one another's bodies without the guilt their more pious parents endured or the long binding ties of matrimony that were welcomed because they could make good ole, get-down carnal fun legal.

Suddenly, fat Americans everywhere were filling their appetites gleefully while a war raged, a government grew more threatening, and a world clamored not to blow itself up. There was so much distraction and so much "live for today, for tomorrow we may be impotent" rhetoric that at the time it all must have seemed OK. We were too busy gorging ourselves on this new found freedom that we overlooked the fact that it tended to strip the value and meaning from everything intimate. Blase and self-conscious, we retreated to our bedrooms and popped The Pill.

We are now entering into the era of the body. For ten years we have been wallowing through the era of disco. The disco and the singles' bar, two of the most curious sexual devices ever invented by a culture, have almost become obsolete. Their great selling point was camouflage. Darkness punctuated by strobing lights for the eyes. Flirtatious fashions for the body and plenty of alcohol, cocaine, pot, amyl nitrate, qualudes, etc., for the mind. We have been so filled with false perceptions from styrofoam breasts to chemical hallucinations that it's no wonder that we've started to look at our bodies and cry.

The problem is that while we strive to fix our ailing bodies with whirlpools and nautilus machines, we leave our mental attitudes back in a flabby, pre-1973 posture. The huge amount

of physical freedom allotted to the individual left him mentally overloaded, too confused with all that rubbing and bumping to see if it was a thigh or a foot, or maybe a heart, that he was touching. He has never gone back to find out. The legacy that we have been passed is one of desensitization. We have felt off so much that we are no longer feeling. We have made the intimate commonplace and promiscuity predictable. And that is not to mention the genital diseases that we are just beginning to take for granted.

I am afraid that the fitness phenomena is only one more episode in the tale of the human peacock strutting its stuff now in health spas nationwide. Every time I hear a talk show doctor endorsing the health benefits of this new business, I can't help seeing Victoria Principle bobbing in a whirlpool, looking as sultry as possible while some drooling doctor monitors her vital signs. She'll probably die of a stroke at fifty from all that steaming.

We are basically a generation devoid of sexual spontaneity. Everything we do with one another suffers from too much scrutiny, too much attention to the nuances of sex appeal, too much expectation and rigorously pre-conceived ideas. We are not sexy or healthy or hot. We're self-conscious. We wear our Calvin Klein's with the lines of apprehension gained from years of passing mirrors. We have lost the kind of grace and naturalness that is inherent in the human form. Of all of God's animals, we are the only ones that actually worry about "getting lucky."

This is the summer beach season. You know, the time to shed those extra pounds and get into that bathing suit that really wows the boys or those trunks that make the women wish they lived in the lining. Summer, beach music, boardwalks, skin and sex. In my mind there's a couple of fourteen year olds lying peacefully under the pier. Nice. Except he's flailing, pleading with his condom and she wishes she had a diaphragm.

Mike Leonard is a senior Interdisciplinary Studies major from Lexington.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Haw River frolic

To the editor:

The article "Challenging the Haw River" (*Tar Heel*, June 23) by Les A. Hamashima did an excellent job of describing both the attractions and the dangers of this exciting stretch of whitewater. He pointed out the need for checking the water level on the day of the trip.

Unfortunately, the guidelines he gave are for the paddlers' gauge which can be found painted on the southwest piling of the U.S. 64 bridge (the Pittsboro side). The telephone numbers are for the federal gauge at Bynum. This gauge measures feet of water above the bedrock while the paddlers' gauge has a 0 set rather arbitrarily as the minimum water level for a fun run.

To convert the federal numbers to the paddlers' gauge merely subtract 4.7. Thus, a reading of 6 feet on the federal gauge is 1.3 feet on the paddlers' gauge; this is a fine level for the upper section and too much for anyone but an

expert in an open boat on the lower.

The correct telephone number to obtain the reading on the federal gauge is in Raleigh (860-1234). The reading is broadcast only between 9 and 11 a.m. The Durham number is presently inoperative.

For a safe trip:

1. Check water level before putting in. A heavy rain in Greensboro may cause high water here the next day; 2. Always have at least two boats in the party; 3. Wear lifejackets. They are the best protection you have; 4. Be prepared for cold water. Especially in the spring and fall the water is often much colder than the air; and hypothermia is the major cause of fatality following a capsizing.

The Haw River is a wonderful local resource. Let's all enjoy it safely.

Elizabeth Fowler
Carolina Canoe Club

WXYC's 'anarchy'

To the editor:

Re: WXYC's Ken Friedman. Get this guy out of here! I mean — who does he think he is? Where does he get off on telling people what's anarchistic and what's not? Who or what is he — Yassir Arafat? Che Guevara? Fizz? *The Anarchist's Cookbook*?

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines anarchy as "absence of any cohering principle, as a common standard or purpose."

"It's station policy that we shouldn't play the same artist more than once in a given set."

Ken Friedman said. The fact that he follows the rules implies that he conforms; that he conforms means that he coheres to the standard.

Therefore: non-anarchism; non-"rejection of all forms of coercive control and authority" (same page, same dictionary).

"Anarchy in the PM?" I dare say not. More like "Harmonious Consignment."

Tori Clement
Chapel Hill

Letters?

The *Tar Heel* welcomes letters to the editor and contributions of columns for the editorial page.

Such contributions should be typed, triple spaced, on a 60-space line, and are subject

to editing. Contributions must be submitted by noon each Monday.

Column writers should include their majors and hometown; each letter should include the writer's name, address and telephone number.