

# Perspectives

February 23, 1995

## University of Washington Combats AIDS with "Safer Sex Week"

(CPS) - Last year, the University of Washington (UW) distributed 40,000 prophylactics during "Condom Week" to educate students on the Seattle campus about the dangers of AIDS. This year, joining condoms were pamphlets, speakers from family planning and AIDS organizations, and face-to-face discussions with health agencies at educational booths, and the week was renamed "Safer Sex Week."

UW's bolstered effort came about the same time that U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta announced that AIDS replaced accidents as the No. 1 killer of American adults ages 25 to 44.

"The university figured information and education and condoms were all-inclusive," said Renee Richardson, a coordinator of the University of Washington's Safer Sex Week. "Last year, we tried to be more entertaining to draw students out and invited Dr. Ruth Westheimer. Rather than 'Condom Week,' we wanted a different approach."

National studies have shown one in every 500 college students are infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. But on some campuses, the rates of infection may be much higher. At the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, college health authorities estimate as many as one student in every 150 is infected. This exceeds the HIV-infection rate among southern California's general population, which is estimated to be one in every 250 people.

But statistics indicate large city college campuses aren't the only ones affected by AIDS. The CDC said that AIDS now is the leading killer of young adults in 79 U.S. cities, including such places as Springfield, Ill.; Omaha, Neb.; and Tulsa, Okla.

"It was very alarming when we all first heard of it here," said Lori Griffin, a senior education major at Tulsa University. "In high school, it was something none of us knew about."

Statistics, however, indicate the college years pose the highest risk of infection.

"Young people in general are at risk, and college students are definitely at high risk," said Lynora Williams, public affairs director for the AIDS Action Council, a Washington-based advocacy group. "There's often a 10-year period from when people get the virus (and die) so the people getting infected are 15 to 30 years old."

While the majority of students understand that condoms are the best protection against AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, few students claim to use them on a regular and consistent basis, according to American Social Health Association.

A national study of sex practices taken last year by the University of Chicago indicated only 10 percent of Americans with one sex partner used condoms regularly. The information also showed only 30 percent of Americans said they used condoms at any time.

In 1993, about 35 of every 100,000 young adults died from AIDS. Meanwhile, about 32 per

100,000 died from accidents. Cancer, heart, disease, suicide and murder followed.

More than 441,000 Americans have gotten AIDS since 1981, and more than 250,000 have died, the CDC said. Worldwide, health officials estimate that more than 10 million adults and about one million children have been infected with the HIV virus since the pandemic started.

Meanwhile, American college students aren't the only students who are being targeted for AIDS education. In China, the nation's education departments introduced AIDS prevention and treatment courses in colleges this year. Of the 1,400 Chinese infected with HIV between 1985 and July 1994, more than half were between the ages of 20 and 29.

"The more targeted the message is and the more explicit it is, the better," said Williams. "People accept this information and understand it better if people don't speak in code."

## Hypocrisy Keeps The Bong Empty

Steve Cuttler

Columnist

I had never seen my friend as animated as he was at that party. His eyes were wide with indignation and spittle flew from his mouth as he preached the gospel of the fabled cannabis. His flock of listeners must have agreed with him completely because they made no comments through their half-lidded, bloodshot eyes. The biggest excitement came when the announcement was made that there were chips in the house.

"Why is it illegal?" my friend asked with outrage creeping into his voice. No one had an answer for him. In my opinion, there is no real answer. I am of the belief, not that marijuana is perfect and without fault—that is ludicrous—but if alcohol, a narcotic in its own right, is legal for anyone of age, then marijuana should be given the same right.

Marijuana is a drug that, if smoked, destroys your lungs and robs you of brain cells. This is the undeniable truth. However, it has a good side as well. There are, in fact, a few medicinal uses for cannabis, but I have never thought that that was a good enough argument for legalization. If marijuana must be illegal, so be it, but why is alcohol spared the wrath of the law and the even harsher wrath of public opinion? Is alcohol not dangerous as well? Is it not physically addictive? Does the abuse of alcohol not destroy lives? It most certainly does. Yet, it is still O.K. for a 21-year-old to go to a bar and order a beer.

I don't know about you, but that strikes me as a bit strange. Who decided that this particular vice should be seen as immoral and wrong, but that this other vice is O.K.? I won't even bring up the fact that marijuana has been found to not be physically addictive, while alcohol has been, that is not the point. After all, both vices are bad for you. I am not disputing that. But if marijuana is illegal, then doesn't it stand to reason that alcohol should be as well?

I know that our country tried prohibiting the sale of alcohol before, I am not ignorant of this country's history. I also know that one of the main reasons that prohibition did not work was because the number of violent and alcohol related crimes skyrocketed.

Luckily, most marijuana users lack the motivation to stage a revolution, yet the principle remains the same. Alcohol is not legal because it should be. It is legal because the masses demanded that it be. So, once again, I state if marijuana, the wacky tobacco, must be illegal, then alcohol should be stricken from the record as well.

That little voice inside my head keeps screaming to me, "Two wrongs don't make a right! Making both substances legal would solve nothing." That is a valid point. Two wrongs do not make a right, but one right and one wrong is not a great average either.

It's the hypocrisy that really gets to me. I am not advocating the smoking of marijuana, nor am I advocating the drinking of alcohol, I just wonder what makes one O.K. and the other a taboo. It seems silly that such a big deal is made over a plant or a bottle of fermented grain. But the inconsistency with which the two substances are seen irks me to no end.

## V.M.I. MAY BE ALLOWED TO RETAIN ALL-MALE STATUS

(CPS) - After nearly five years of legal battles, the Virginia Military Institute may not have to enroll female students, according to a recent ruling by a federal appeals court.

And if the decision stands, officials from The Citadel are confident that the same logic used in that decision will apply to their case as well.

A judicial panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit Court voted 2-1 in favor of V.M.I. and the state of Virginia, finding that there are legitimate reasons for a state to run a single-sex, educational institution.

"A sex-neutral atmosphere can seem less distracting to late adolescents in an educational setting where the focus is properly on matters other than relationships between the sexes," wrote Judge Paul Niemeyer in his ruling. "If we were to place men and women into the adversative relationship inherent in the V.M.I. program, we would destroy, at least for the period of the adversative training, any sense of decency that still permeates the relationship between the sexes."

The court's ruling was based in part on Virginia's proposal to set up a "leadership training" program at Mary Baldwin College, a private institution for women. Although the court acknowledged that the program would not have the tradition of V.M.I., it would provide females with a similar, although not necessarily identical, background in military training.

The state will give Mary Baldwin College \$6.9 million to begin the leadership program if the ruling stands. The appeals panel also stipulated that V.M.I. officials must provide qualified managers and trainers for the new program.

Major Gen. John Knapp, V.M.I.'s superintendent, said he is pleased with the court's decision and hopes to put the matter behind the school and the state. "We need to move forward with our plans for Mary Baldwin College," he said. "There is a great Challenge ahead."

But Marica Greenberger, co-president of the National Women's Law Center, said that the matter isn't resolved yet. "This ruling goes against the logic of the constitution," she said. "I really can't see how

it would stand. The decision is based on illogical thinking."

Judge Dick Phillips, Jr., the dissenting member of the panel, called the proposed Mary Baldwin program a "pale shadow" of V.M.I.

Phillips wrote that the motivation behind keeping the school all-male was driven by a "stereotypical view of the proper role and capabilities of women in society."

V.M.I.'s legal woes began in 1990, when the U.S. Justice Department sued the school on behalf of a woman who was denied enrollment. In 1991, a district court ruled that V.M.I. could remain all-male, but that decision was overturned a year later by an appeals court, who ruled that the state of Virginia could not offer single-sex education for men only. The state was given the option of admitting women into V.M.I., severing all ties with the military institution, or developing a similar program for women. After Virginia officials designed the program with Mary Baldwin, the Justice Department appealed the 1991 ruling, saying the proposed program was not comparable to the V.M.I. experience.

The late-January decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals not only clears up V.M.I.'s situation, but may pave the way for a similar ruling for The Citadel, South Carolina's public all-male military institution.

The Citadel is currently appealing a decision to admit Shannon Faulkner, the 19-year-old graduate of Wren High School in Powdersville, S.C., who was accepted to The Citadel after having Wren officials delete all references to her gender on her transcripts. Faulkner was later rejected after Citadel officials learned she was female.

"We would assume that the same thought process that went into the V.M.I. case would apply to our case as well," said Major Rick Mill, spokesman for The Citadel.

Mill said that the school would be willing to pay \$5 million to help set up a training program with an all-female institution, similar to V.M.I.'s arrangement with Mary Baldwin College. But, he added, "There haven't been any schools showing signs of interest yet."

The Citadel's case is currently being reviewed by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit Court. The panel includes Judge Paul Niemeyer, who authored the decision on the V.M.I. case.

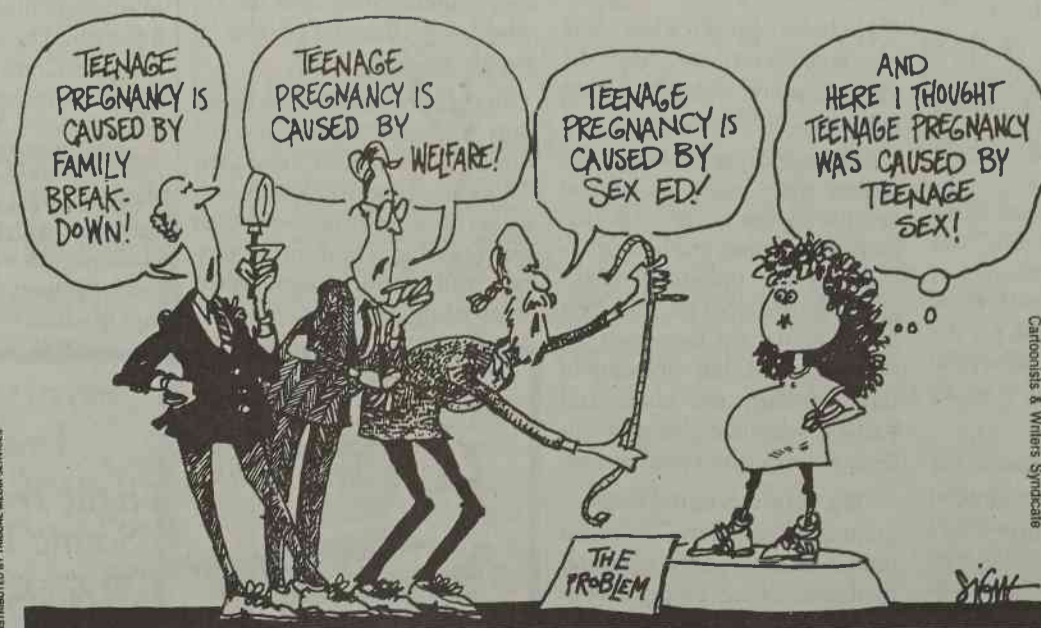
## "GET OFF THE CROSS" STUDENT TIRED OF COMPLAINTS

After reading your dim-witted, whiny, incoherent, and rambling diatribe, Mr. Edwards, I believe your best course of action is to take Dr. Lovacchini's advice, and get counselling.

The only fault I have with *The Blue Banner* is using valuable space for your crapola. This is space that could, and should, have been devoted to individuals with something

truly important to say. I honestly hope the reason for publishing your gobbledygook was to illustrate to the campus community what a crackpot you, indeed, are. Get off the cross, Edwards. There are too many real people in this world who need the wood.

Randy Marrs  
Senior  
Mass Communication



SIGNE  
PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS  
Philadelphia  
USA