

Singin' in the rain: Sunshine does not equal fun

Does she like sunshine on her shoulders? No way. This writer would rather let it rain.

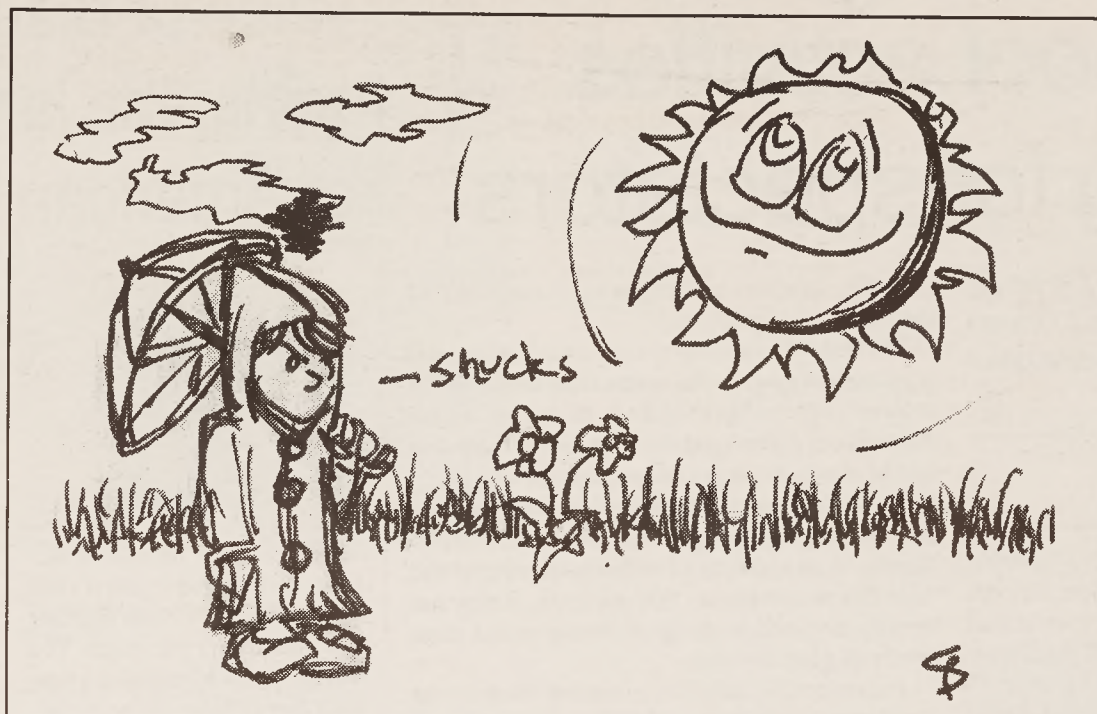
By Hannah Harrison
Staff Writer

Sunny days make me want to vomit. Perhaps only I feel this way, but clear skies and sunshine are completely unrepresentative of how I feel most days.

I wish the weather could be an expression of my moods. That soggy, gray, "dreary" day the majority of human life despises makes me wake up with a smile.

In the summertime, when it rains, in great torrents of fury, I am not bummed about missing a day sitting by the pool and tanning. I am excited and in awe of the magnificent clouds and thunder claps from the sky.

As a child, my mother used to create a "Bear Cave" out of two chairs, a blanket, and the side of our kitchen counter. Underneath the structure, my little brother and I would play the "Stupid Tourists Run into a Bear Cave to Seek Shelter from a Sudden Storm" game.



Peebles graphic

We would spend hours taking turns playing the role of "hungry bear" or "stupid tourist." We looked forward to this game on those indoor days, although I do not think the aforementioned title is exactly what we used to call the pastime.

I am a big kid now, and instead of hiding under a blanket with a big dysfunctional yellow radio/

flashlight thingy, 500 pillows, and my brother, I sit on our covered porch and watch the storm. Sometimes I am inspired enough to write a poem about the weather. Usually, however, I just sit there.

In the fall, I enjoy visiting cousins in their rural town of Gold Hill, North Carolina. I hope every time I travel south that it will rain for the duration of my trip. My

relatives live in a large home constructed in the 1860s: hardwood floors, four fireplaces, and constant sub-zero temperatures. Nothing is better than piling into one of their tiny beds underneath large, heavy antique quilts and listening to the rain patter swiftly on the tin-roof.

Rain is therapeutic. Wet weather does not depress me any

more than the miserable halls of the "learning institution" where I waste away my days. While others claim clouds worsen their load of troubles, I consider rain to be comforting.

While on the third floor of the main building, it is soothing for me to gaze out the classroom window, an activity in which I partake on a regular basis, and watch the rain fall all around.

To look outside and see birds chirping blissfully, leaves wafting in the light breeze, and sunshine glittering on each tiny blade of non-existent grass on the front lawn is maddening. Cheerful days such as these make me long for freedom...and a hunting rifle.

With the spring and inevitable "rainy months" steadily approaching, I happily look forward to feeling rejuvenated and refreshed. For those who are not fans of downpours, they should keep in mind the little saying that goes, "April showers bring May flowers."

Perhaps the rain will dampen a few schedules for a little while, but spring is just around the corner. Somewhere. And we all know which season follows spring. I hope.

Solutions to HIV/AIDS epidemic lie with national government, social response, not private care

The United States could learn a lesson or two about giving from two, much less fortunate, nations and their people who are battling with AIDS.

By Tal Fish
Reporter

"And I am looking forward to looking back on these days when on every corner someone holds a sign that says I am homeless, I am hungry, and I have AIDS."

These words from the song "On Every Corner" by Ani DiFranco ring very true in our country today.

According to the Central Intelligence Agency, more than 850,000 people are living with HIV/AIDS and 20,000 people die from the disease every year in the US.

However, the nightmare does not end with our nation. Two countries in Africa and South America are both battling HIV/AIDS. The differences lie in how the nations are dealing with and responding to the disease and their death rates.

In the African country of Malawi, there are 800,000 people living with AIDS. 70,000 Malawians are killed yearly by

AIDS. In 2001, USAID provided \$7.2 million HIV/AIDS assistance to Malawi, an increase in \$1.2 million from the previous year. One of the most successful programs in Malawi has been the Malawi AIDS Counseling and Resource Centre. Their main focus is to promote voluntary HIV counseling and testing services.

The country has taken many other initiatives as well such as training health workers to improve infection control procedures at health facilities.

Approximately 57% of the total reported AIDS cases in Latin America and the Caribbean are in

Brazil. It is estimated that more than 600,000 Brazilians are infected with HIV/AIDS. Brazil ranks second in the Western Hemisphere after the U.S. in the number of reported AIDS cases.

While there are more than 600,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in Brazil, only 18,000 of those die every year. This difference is due to the drugs that the Brazilian government makes available to its citizens. In 1992, the government decided to manufacture its own anti-AIDS drugs.

Today, government labs produce 5 generic AIDS medications. Brazil will spend \$400 million this year to distribute medicines to 81,000 AIDS patients. Four years ago, the government spent half that much, but only served 20,000 patients. The government's involvement in

the war on AIDS is largely responsible for the decrease in price.

Government involvement is essential to the prevention and treatment of AIDS. Brazil has become a model for the rest of the world due to its success with the distribution of medication. Social activism is also much stronger in Brazil, another attribute to its success.

A government should be responsible for taking proper care of its citizens, especially in a country where AIDS is extremely prevalent. AIDS is a terrorist that kills millions without using a single bomb or weapon. "AIDS Defense" must be worked into the budget of the Malawian government, the US government, and any other country where HIV/AIDS haunts the nation with pain and loss.



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The *High Life* Staff welcomes comments in the form of letters to the editor from students, faculty, and the reading public. Letters may be turned in to the office or emailed to Grimsleyhighlife@hotmail.com. All letters must be signed. The staff reserves the right to reject any letter containing libelous statements, the right to edit for length and grammatical errors, and the right to ascertain the truthfulness of its content. The *High Life* is published eight times a year and is produced by the students of Grimsley High School, 801 Westover Terrace, Greensboro, NC 27408. The *High Life* functions as a medium for creative journalistic pursuits as well as a training instrument for aspiring journalists, artists, and writers. The *High Life* functions as a public forum for student expression.

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Letter to the Editor

Kudos to Molly Chadbourne for her thought-provoking column ("Bush administration's war on condom use") in the most recent *High Life* and kudos to the editorial staff, Ms. Rozelman, and Mr. Gasparello for allowing such a potentially controversial piece to be published. The publication of [Chadbourne's] column reflects an openness to the expression of ideas which is an integral part of what makes Grimsley the best school in the district. Thank you.

Debbie Guttentag