

Opinion

Don't blame children for being AIDS victims

State education and health officials are discussing guidelines for allowing AIDS victims to attend public school. The basis for the guidelines is the knowledge that AIDS can't be transmitted through casual contact, Dr. Robert Bernstein, state health commissioner, said. The action may help to dismiss some of the hysteria surrounding the fatal disease.

Many Americans fear AIDS because of its link to the homosexual community and especially its lack of a cure.

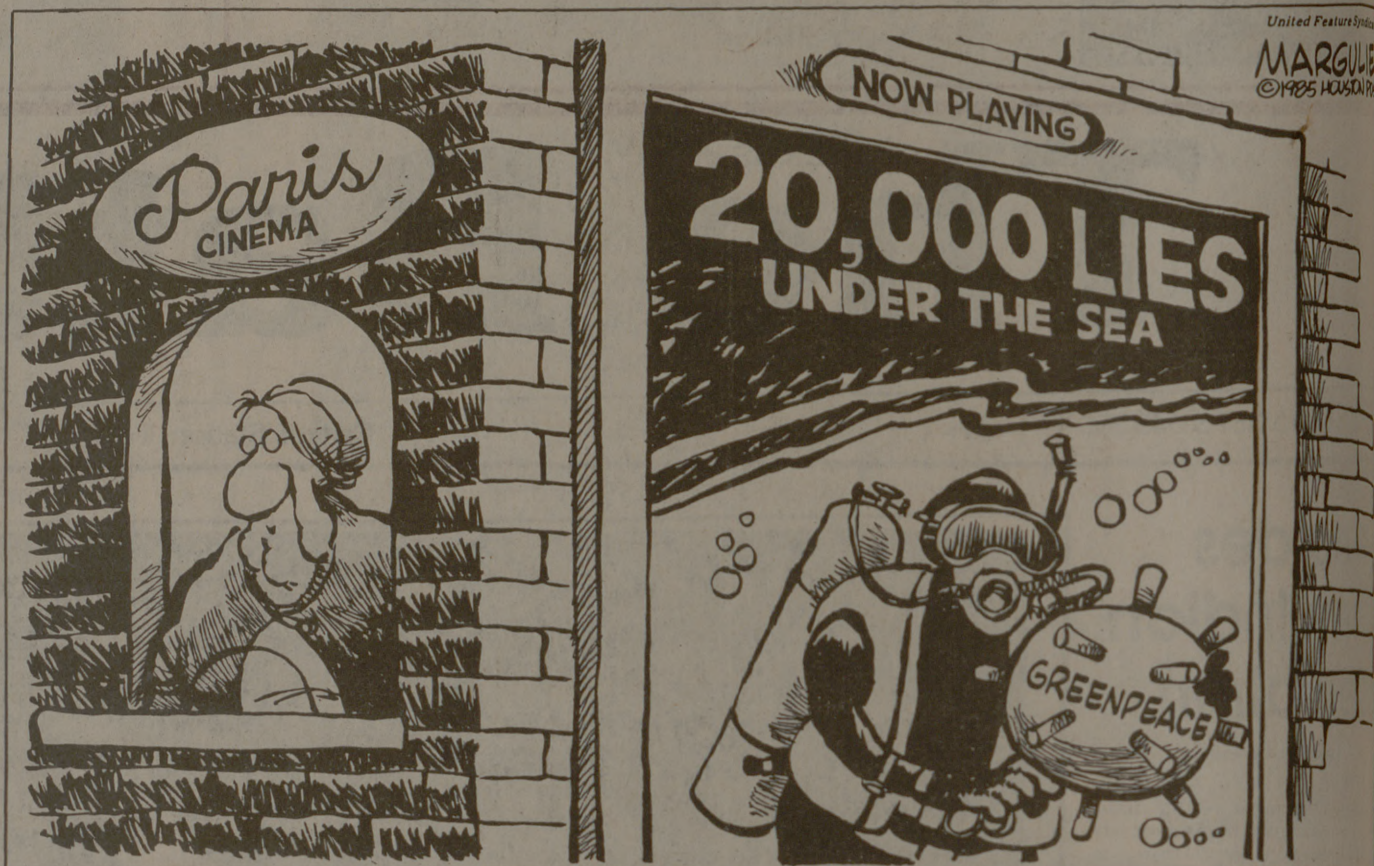
But fearing AIDS doesn't warrant discrimination against its victims. Children who have the disease shouldn't be kept from attending school merely because of the public's fear of it.

State health officials don't know of any AIDS victims currently enrolled in Texas schools, but it's good to see them making preparations in case the situation arises.

The meeting is merely to establish guidelines, not rules. But maybe the education of parents and students will help to quell the wave of over-reaction that many other states have experienced.

Children stricken with AIDS aren't to blame for getting the disease. They will have enough troubles dealing with the effects of the disease, they don't need to be treated like lepers.

The Battalion Editorial Board



Dealing with the trauma of a wife's lost luggage

(Whilst Art Buchwald is on vacation we reprint some columns from the past.)



Art Buchwald

One of the biggest problems of air travel is getting your luggage back at the end of the trip. For some reason more luggage is being lost now than ever before, and it's quite a headache for the airlines — not to mention the people who are flying.

What makes the whole thing mysterious is that if you're traveling with your wife, the airlines somehow manage to lose only *her* bags, the ones she absolutely needs if she is going to survive the trip.

There isn't a husband who has ever flown by air who hasn't faced this situation.

You get off the plane dog tired and wait at the baggage area. The carousel keeps turning and turning with everyone's luggage. You have all your bags in a matter of minutes. Your wife gets all her bags except for one — the large garment bag with all her dresses, costume jewelry and underthings. You wait an hour staring at the carousel, hoping against hope it will be the last piece of baggage off the plane. You don't dare speak to your wife. She finally speaks to you. "They lost my bag."

"I guess they did."

"What are you going to do about it?" she says, her lips pursed as if she's going to let out a scream.

"I am going to do *something* about it," you say, knowing in your heart there

isn't a damn thing you can do. But you have to show some machismo. You go up to a man in uniform. "See here, sir," you say in your sternest voice. "You people have lost my wife's bag."

The man looks surprised. "I'm sorry, I'm the pilot of the plane."

There is another official-looking man with a badge on his chest. "Sir," you say, "you people have committed one of the gravest crimes known to tourism. You have lost the luggage of an honest woman. Unless you produce my wife's bag in the next 30 minutes, I shall have to report you to the president of your company."

"I'm a customs inspector," the man replies. "Go talk to someone from the airline."

Your wife, who is over in the corner twisting her handkerchief, asks, "What did they say?"

"I'm narrowing it down," you say. "The pilot of the plane doesn't know where your bag is and neither does the customs service. So it must be someone else."

You are directed to a counter where one lone clerk is trying to cope with a large crowd of angry husbands. It is obviously the lost-luggage counter because all the women are huddled nearby wailing and tearing their clothes.

The clerk hired for his masochistic tendencies, is smiling as he fills out long sheets of paper taking descriptions of the lost bags.

You get to the counter and ask the stupidest question any air traveler can pose: "Where is my wife's bag?"

The masochist smiles. "New Delhi, Rio De Janeiro. It could be anywhere."

"I have a good mind to slug you," you say.

"Oh, would you please?" he says. "Most people just shout at me, but very few of them really hit me."

"I wouldn't give you the satisfaction. What are we supposed to do now?"

"Why don't you go to your hotel and get a good night's sleep? If we find your luggage, we'll have it delivered."

"Suppose it's never found?"

"Then you can come back here and I'll fill out another form."

You return to your wife. "Well," you say, "it's no problem. They know exactly where the bag is, and you'll have it in the morning."

This calms her down until you get to the hotel. Then you make a mistake. She's crawling into bed, you ask, "Where's your nightie?"

And she lets out a scream that can be heard all over the roofs of Paris.

Art Buchwald is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times Syndicate.

Mail Call

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.

Thanks to all who helped ease tragedy

EDITOR:

As President of the International Students Association, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers, both individuals and groups, that have aided the Mexican Students Association during the recent earthquake disaster. The unselfish actions have helped to lessen the blow of the tragedy and reinforced our beliefs that "Aggies help Aggies."

The Amateur Radio Club and other radio operators have aided students in obtaining news from the disaster area. Anyone that has been separated from their family will tell you that the absence of information during a time like this is extremely painful.

Also, those who are aiding in the relief efforts should be commended for their actions. It will be years before the effects of the earthquake are repaired and it would be impossible without their help.

Once again, I would like to thank everyone who has given their aid, time and prayers for the victims of the Mexican disaster.

Luis Rodriguez
President
International Students Association

Drinking age of 21 saves many lives

EDITOR:

I am writing in response to the opinions of the Battalion Editorial Board published Sept. 6. The tragedy being caused by drunken drivers on our highways is a complex problem to which there are no simple solutions. However, raising the drinking age is one of the changes which has been proven to save lives in Texas and elsewhere.

When the drinking age was changed from 18 to 19 in Texas, the death rate of 18-year-olds on our highways dropped 30 percent and has remained down for the past three years. During the same period, the average death rate of 19- and 20-year-olds has remained constant.

When Michigan raised its drinking age to 21, involvement in alcohol-related traffic accidents of 18- to 20-year-olds decreased 31 percent. A study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety found a 28 percent reduction in alcohol-related accidents in eight of the nine states where the drinking age had been raised.

Statistics alone do not make the argument for raising the drinking age. Raising the drinking age has been recognized as an effective countermeasure by the Presidential Commission on Drunk Driving, the Transportation Association of America, the National Transportation Safety Board, the American Auto-

mobile Association, the National Safety Council, the National Council on Alcoholism, the National Association of Governors Highway Safety Representatives, the National Parent and Teacher Association, Citizens for Safe Drivers, and the American Medical Association, just to name a few.

As for the man on the street, a Gallup poll showed that 77 percent of all people polled and 58 percent of the 18-, 19-, and 20-year olds agreed that the drinking age should be 21.

The idea that raising the drinking age will force young people to drink in less safe environments is not valid. Most teenagers already buy alcohol at liquor stores or grocery stores. Those who do drink in bars often become intoxicated. No matter where they buy alcohol, they drive home.

Some young people have been able and will continue to get alcohol illegally, but as the police and the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Control officials increase the enforcement of the laws we already have, as you so rightly pointed out must be done, the availability of alcohol to those under-age will continue to decrease.

We all need to recognize that no law is 100 percent enforceable, but the law sets the norm for responsible members of our society, and as the public calls for stricter enforcement, the police have and will continue to act accordingly. Not every murderer is arrested and brought to justice. At present, only one out of every 2,000 drunk drivers is arrested, but I am sure you would agree that we should neither make it legal to murder nor to drive drunk.

You also suggest that local establishments will lose business when the drinking age is raised. I am against continuing to sacrifice the lives of young people for the commercial gains of those who make their living by selling alcohol.

It is interesting to note that you do not mention the other businesses and jobs which also will be lost when the drinking age is raised. We will need fewer doctors, particularly those who specialize in trauma and plastic surgery, we will need fewer physical therapists, fewer insurance adjusters and yes, fewer mortuaries.

There are many business opportunities in our community, and I am confident that enterprising individuals who find a decrease in their business when the drinking age is raised will be capable of availing themselves of these opportunities. How about providing alcohol-free dance and recreation facilities where those under age can gather and enjoy themselves as starters?

Raising the drinking age is an important step toward controlling this killer of our young. A study conducted by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety indicates that raising the drinking age to 21 across the nation could save 1,250 lives annually.

I remember the words of one Con-

Mail Call

gressman from New Jersey whose promise to vote to raise the drinking age was bitterly opposed by the students from Princeton who he represented. He told his constituents that he would vote to raise the drinking age despite their opposition, because he wanted to give them the gift of life whether they wanted it or not.

K.W. Brown

SDI not that simple

EDITOR:

Once again, journalists have shown their complete inability to understand technical subjects. The latest episode in this ongoing saga occurred in last Thursday's Battalion editorial on the report by the Office of Technical Assessment discussing the Strategic Defense Initiative or SDI.

The Editorial Board based their criticism of SDI solely on the articles released by the major national press associations, and it appears no prior research was done to verify the accuracy of the wire reports. Thus, they totally misrepresented the conclusions of the report to Congress, either intentionally or not, to reinforce their apparent preconceived notions on SDI.

Anyone with a small amount of knowledge on SDI knows it cannot be a complete shield against all nuclear

weapons since SDI systems will be used against only one, and the most numerous, class of nuclear weapons — namely the ballistic missile carrying nuclear warheads.

All other ways to transport nuclear weapons, such as cruise missiles and strategic bombers, can bypass SDI except for the point of terminal phase defense of SDI which is ground-based.

By eliminating ballistic missiles, you have eliminated the possibility of a first strike since ballistic missiles take under 30 minutes to reach their targets while cruise missiles and bombers take several hours at best. Also, cruise missiles and bombers can be defended against with current or future air defenses. Thus, a vast majority of the nuclear arsenals can be rendered useless, also protecting the whole United States.

As one can probably tell, the SDI is a very complicated subject. By showing the Battalion's error, I hope in the future they will do their homework first so worthwhile editorials will appear based on truth and not half-truth. Also, for those who may care, the following two references will help describe the intricacies of SDI: "Weapons of Tomorrow" by B. Beckett, Plenum press, 1983 and "Ballistic Missile Defense" by A.B. Carter and D.N. Schwartz, ed., The Brookings Institute, 1984.

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