

Opinion

Public Enemy No. 1 has educators running scared

Like many people, I usually don't get much exciting mail. In fact, it's nothing for five or six days to go by without a single piece of correspondence finding its way into my mailbox. Actually, I receive mail on such a rare basis that I've decided not to set myself up for disappointment anymore and so I check my box just once a week.



Suna Purser

I used to look at those "lost letters" that somehow sneak out of the mailboxes and put themselves in a pile on the ground. I would browse through them thinking my personal mail might have hidden itself among all those Publisher's Clearing House envelopes and political brochures. But no. No such luck and now I don't even look through the "lost letters" anymore.

03805801 And as I stopped going through the "lost letters," I eventually stopped reading that junkmail (except for the bills, of course). Now that stuff is deposited directly in the laundryroom trash can.

Recently, on one of my weekly excursions to the mailbox, I opened it up only to find the standard fare: bills, a newsletter from Joe Barton, a Publisher's Clearing House Sweepstakes form, and ... "something else."

This "something else" was an 8 1/2 by 11-inch, eight-page, blue and white brochure addressed to "Postal Customer." On closer examination, I discovered it was from C. Everett Koop, M.D., Sc.D., Surgeon General. It even had his picture on the front.

At the top of the brochure, in huge blue letters was the title "Understanding AIDS." Below that, also in big letters was "A Message From the Surgeon General," in which Dr. Koop told me, "This brochure has been sent to you by the Government of the United States. . . . I feel it is important that you have the best information now available for fight-

ing the AIDS virus, a health problem that the President has called 'Public Enemy Number One.'"

As I stood there amazed, I thought, "When in my lifetime has the government undertaken a massive mailing on a health-related issue? In fact, has the government EVER done such a thing?"

During a recent conference in Houston, Dr. James Mason, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, made a frightening statement: "... no one can deny that AIDS and HIV virus risk imperil world health in a dramatic and fearful way."

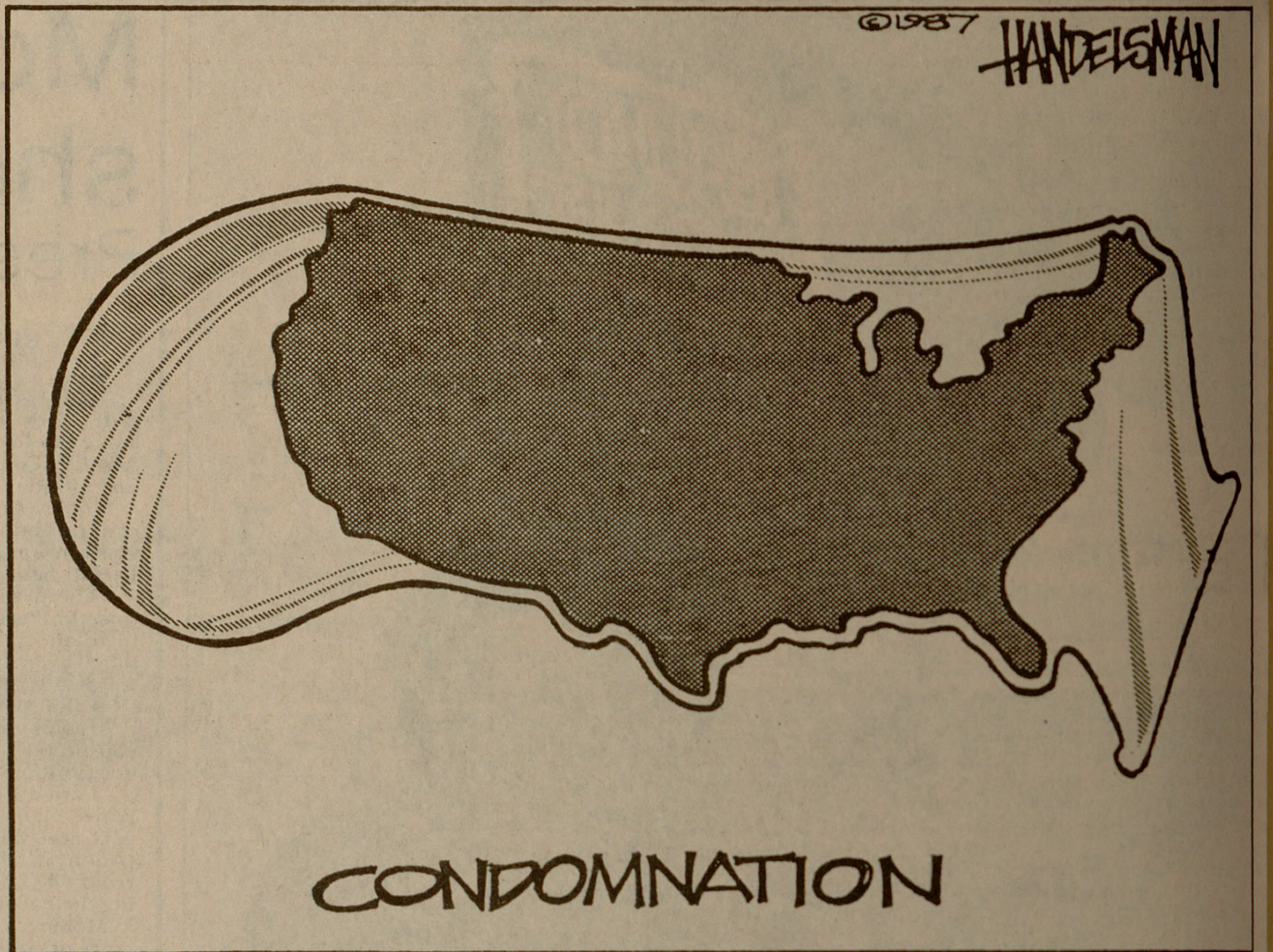
At that same conference, Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima, director of the World Health Organization (WHO), said more than 108,000 cases of AIDS have been reported to WHO. BUT officials of that organization think the actual number may be more than twice that.

"Still, in the big scheme of things, that isn't very many people," you might say. While that may be true, at least for now, the statement isn't quite so "accurate" when the issue is brought closer to home.

The Lone Star state ranks fourth in the nation in the number of reported AIDS cases. As of August 12, approximately 5,000 Texans were diagnosed as having this deadly disease. In a preliminary report released last month by the Legislative Task Force on AIDS, as many as 30,000 more Texans are expected to be diagnosed with AIDS by 1991.

But there are things all of us can do to change that grim prediction. In his brochure, Dr. Koop urged practicing safe sex by using condoms and spermicides. And in fact, every once in a while, you see promos for condoms on late night television. Drug stores have them prominently displayed in the aisles. Today condoms are cool!

Even a couple of enterprising Aggies got together a few semesters ago and started a 24 hour, on- and off-campus condom delivery service. I wonder . . . are you savvy guys still out there? At one time, rumor had it these founding fa-



thers (no pun) were assisting other Texas universities in starting similar programs.

Regardless of whether or not this is true, SOMETHING is going on out there on Texas campuses. In opposition to a board of regents' ban on contraceptive distribution by the campus health center, students of Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity at Southwest Texas State University sponsored a beer bust, dance, and safe sex health fair Saturday night.

Organizers gave away brochures on AIDS and sexually-transmitted diseases, free condoms, and local health experts presented lectures on pregnancy prevention, AIDS, and sexually-transmitted diseases. The rally was a huge

success and showed up the regents' ban, which also applied to Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Sul Ross State University in Alpine, and Angelo State University in San Angelo, since these universities fall under the board's control. I wonder if the board at Southwest Texas State received Dr. Koop's brochure?

Let's face it. Sex is here to stay — along with its pleasure and problems, such as AIDS. Important precautions such as having safe sex, educating the public (students ARE part of the public), and using condoms — all measures supported by such diverse people as the Surgeon General and the Lambda Chi Alpha members — are imperative if we

are to bring "Public Enemy Number One" under control.

I praise the students at Southwest for their concern and responsibility in condemning the university's board of regents for its head-in-the-sand attitude. Dr. Koop says, "Get involved . . . encourage you to practice responsible behavior based on understanding strong personal values."

Thanks, Dr. Koop, for a piece of government "junk" mail that really opened THIS postal customer's eyes to the real reality of "Public Enemy Number One."

Anthony Wilson is a senior journalism major and opinion page editor at The Battalion.

There she is, Miss America — and gosh, what a bimbo!

I watched the Miss America pageant Saturday night. And I was not impressed. It seems these pageants and general elections are becoming more and more alike each year — I can imagine the day when no one will be able to tell the difference.

Becky Weisenfels
Guest Columnist

The pageant received new coverage this year, trying to focus on the intelligence of the participants and that the pageant foundation is the single largest source of scholarships for women.

Of course, that doesn't mean they didn't have a swimsuit competition. A person's I.Q. is always so much more evident when they wear fewer clothes.

It's the same in elections — we try to focus on the intelligence and ideals of the candidates, but, gee, by the way, notice how Dan Quayle looks like Robert Redford? I have read more about that resemblance than I have about what Quayle stands for in the election.

I have read about how Dukakis has a big nose and how Barbara Bush ought to dye her hair.

When's the swimsuit competition, guys?

I read a pre-pageant write-up in McCall's magazine. It focused on former pageant participants who were now successful businesswomen.

One former Miss America contestant was talking about those grueling interviews: "The first thing they asked me in nationals was what I'd say if someone

wanted my views on abortion, premarital sex and military spending. You had to be up on current events just to realize what they were talking about."

Yeah, if I didn't read the newspaper every day, I would have NOOOO IDEA what premarital sex was; nor would I have an opinion on it.

Of course, the questions are exactly the same in elections — Mr. Bush, what do you think of premarital sex, abortion and military spending? Of course, the answers are always the same round-about answers we can read on the back of any Cheerios box.

That former Miss America contestant obviously wasn't up on her cereal box covers if she had to think before answering those questions.

Then I saw the pageant. Every girl began by giving her name, state and where she was attending school. I was impressed when I realized every participant was pursuing a college education. So they ought to be intelligent women capable of giving thoughtful answers to the questions in interviews, I thought.

But few were the contestants who even answered their questions.

One of the girls, Miss California, was asked why, in her opinion, such a small percentage of young voters exercised their right to vote.

She said she didn't have the answer, but she did take the opportunity to remind every American to get out there and vote, vote, vote. Good answer. Too bad it doesn't go with the question.

But then, does this sound like something you would hear in any election?

Tune in to the next debate and watch as the candidates step ever so carefully to avoid stepping on anyone's toes. No, today's younger voters aren't apathetic; heaven forbid we should face the truth — that the fate of the nation is in the hand of a small percentage of people who care enough to vote.

The thing is, neither the Miss America contestants nor the candidates for public office want to admit that they have an opinion. They want to rely on dodging the question and giving vague answers in the hopes that everyone will be noticing how charming they are and ignore the fact that they aren't answering the questions.

But I almost fell off of my couch when the announcer said that Miss America is "the most sought-after delegate from the United States."

I can picture Gorbachev now. Vice President George Bush: "I am leaving for the airport in half an hour to come to the USSR. Can you meet me at the airport, Mr. Gorbachev?"

Gorbachev: "Oh, George, are you sure that Miss America can't come? I would really prefer to discuss these matters with her."

How can other countries take us seriously when they seek Miss America before George Bush or Henry Kissinger?

But she probably has the same charm and lack of substance that most of our politicians. The only difference is that she only gets to keep the job for a year.

Becky Weisenfels is a senior journalism major, managing editor and guest columnist for The Battalion.

Mail Call

Aggie Code revised

EDITOR:

Finally, the NCAA sanctions have been announced. It will be many weeks before the dust settles and no doubt, these pages will be filled with editorials, pro and con. No matter what Coach Sherrill did or does, he will have his detractors.

His protestations that the punishment does not fit the crime, does not leave one with a sense of optimism about the integrity of Southwest Conference football.

However, the real tragedy, bowl games notwithstanding, is that the Aggie honor code has apparently been revised. It now reads: "Aggies do not steal or tolerate those who do." Winning isn't everything.

W. Marc Connolly
Graduate student

Dormitory lock-ups justified

EDITOR:

In response to the comments made by *The Battalion's* editorial staff on Sept. 6 regarding the new 7 p.m. lock-up policy in the residence halls, we would like to offer the following observations:

1. If we, as residents, were acting as adults, accepting all the responsibilities that go with that title, we would be locking our room doors at all times, and there would be no thefts or assaults in the halls. As it is, at any given time in any residence hall here at A&M, any individual can enter someone's room without hindrance. Careless adults simply don't bother to lock their doors (or even close them) when leaving, even for a few minutes.

2. The escort policy is not only reasonable, but perfectly logical. Adults who live in apartment complexes have their guests call before coming over.

Perhaps the adults of the editorial staff should spend a little more time trying to understand the rationale of this policy before screaming, "Jail! Police state!" Rather than condemn the administration, and stir up dissension among the residents, you should applaud the fact that they are putting the safety and protection of on-campus Aggies first.

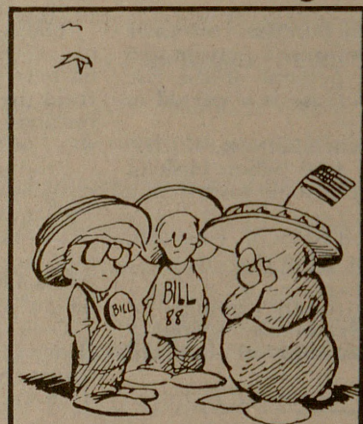
Kristi Kibbi, graduate student
accompanied by seven signatures

EDITOR'S NOTE: Telephones which can be used free of charge have been placed outside residence halls so that guests may call the person they're visiting and be admitted and escorted in the dormitory.

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

BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed



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