

UNFIT PARENTS?

Adoption by homosexuals destroys concept of 'family'

It grieves the heart to see the faces of children waiting to be adopted. Every time a stranger is chosen, it is a special moment, hope is up their eyes. They are like singletons wondering, "Are they interested? Will they find me attractive? Will they love and take care of me?" These children have been discarded, and no one denies that they need loving homes. They require protection and stability, they deserve the best. In a culture where they are already the victims of function beyond their control, is it cruel to deprive them of balance and sanity when they get a second chance? Such an environment is only found when children grow up in homes with both a mother and a father.

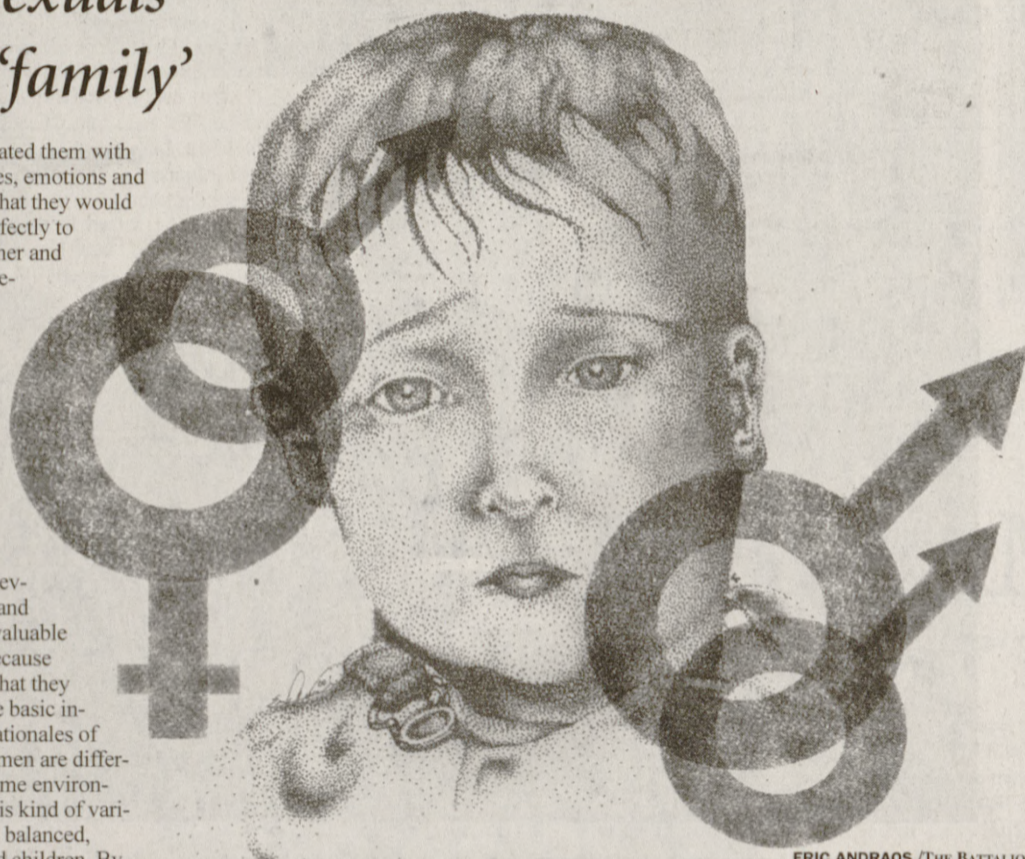
In a "roundtable" discussion that DiSawyer had with elementary school children during ABC's millennium coverage, she asked them to describe a family in the 21st century. Without exception, despite their familial backgrounds, socio-economic circumstances, gender, the kids defined a "family" as mom and dad with children. One child argued that children have been cul-



HEATHER CORBELL

Heather Corbell created them with unique bodies, emotions and instincts so that they would combine perfectly to love each other and procreate. Despite science's best efforts, it still takes one man and one woman to make a child. It always will.

It cannot be said, however, that men and women are valuable as parents because of the tasks that they perform. The basic instincts and rationales of men and women are different, and a home environment with this kind of variety produces balanced, well-adjusted children. By watching their parents, children learn how to work relationships around the most basic, deeply-rooted differences between men and women. It is not enough to put kids in gay homes



ERIC ANDRAOS / THE BATTALION

A child's need for balance is the most important issue in the movement against gay adoption. There are, however, reasons of a more political nature. For instance, most states will not place children in homes where unmarried adults live together. Homosexual couples are the exception, which, in essence, institutes reverse discrimination. Gay and lesbian couples can become the "co-parents" of a child when one partner adopts the biological offspring of another. If unmarried heterosexuals are denied adoption petitions because of alternative lifestyles, the conditions of gay homes must also be taken into account. Why would either situation be appropriate for a child, especially one who is already in a troubled situation?

Gay rights advocates argue that a couple's lifestyle should not be a factor in adoption proceedings. If they are not

evaluated on their alternative lifestyles, though, what will be considered? The lifestyle choices that are common among homosexuals have to be weighed with a child's best interests in mind. The gay community is often confronted with widespread sexual diseases and promiscuity issues. Further, the opposition to homosexuality that exists in society will inevitably filter down to children. These problems bring tremendous pressure to the lives of children in gay homes.

Children need two parents. They also need loving homes, encouragement, help and instruction. In combination with all of these things, they need a mother and a father to balance and serve as examples. Regardless of politics, this is the only kind of home that will produce children of peace, justice and love. And children, especially, know it.

Heather Corbell is a junior English major.

Gays deserve same rights as heteros in adoption cases



JESSICA CRUTCHER

Ever since the Civil Rights Movement of the '60s, the United States has been on a path toward equal opportunity and equal rights for every citizen — supposedly. The United States has accomplished this objective reasonably well in most areas. However, current anti-discrimination legislation falls miserably short.

For example, consider the current debate of whether homosexuals should be allowed to adopt children. Homosexuals have been accused of everything from being inefficient care givers to "morally corrupting" the children they adopt. However, the question of whether homosexuals should be allowed to freely adopt children cannot be a question of morality, but rather must be a question of legal rights. According to the first amendment, "the government shall make no law concerning the establishment of religion," hence, the government has no right to make laws based on a specific set of values.

By denying homosexuals the right to adopt, not to mention the right to marry, lawmakers have denied them the basic human rights that every other minority group in the United States has possessed since interracial marriage was legalized in 1967.

It is unrealistic to expect any couple, whether homosexual or heterosexual, to provide a child with optimum care when they are prone to be discriminated against in almost any given situation.

Therefore, homosexuals find themselves forced to provide inadequate care because they are provided with inadequate rights. If homosexuals were free from workplace discrimination and were allowed to legally marry, a much more "normal" and child friendly environment would result.

Critics of homosexual adoption have argued that gay couples are more prone to split up after adopting a child, since homosexuals cannot legally marry. If mar-

ried heterosexuals were the only ones allowed to adopt children, this argument might have more bearing on the case at hand. But it is also legal for single heterosexuals to adopt children. Not surprisingly, homosexuals are the only ones receiving criticism. This is a blatant case of discrimination.

Another common argument against homosexual adoption is that children are supposedly more likely to become homosexual if they are raised by homosexuals. The argument seems like valid concern at first glance, but studies show it is not logical. First, according to the Children's Aid Society of Toronto, "Studies

Homosexuals are being denied basic human rights.

have shown that the children of lesbian and gay parents do not differ significantly from children raised in heterosexual households in the development of gender identity or sexual orientation." Second, the supporters of this argument against adoption seem to be more concerned about the spread of homosexuality rather than the welfare of the children in question. Again, this is a case of a fear of those who are different, along with which comes the natural urge to suppress that which one does not understand.

The same hatred and fear of the unknown that fueled slavery and segregation is now fueling discrimination against homosexuals. Thirty years ago, interracial marriage and multi-racial families were jeered at as being immoral and unnatural. Today homosexual couples wishing to start a family are dealing with the same prejudice. It took a Supreme Court decision to overturn the racial prejudices of the '60s. Eventually, a similar decision will be made on the behalf of homosexuals. The right choice must be made now.

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It is not really about homosexual rights. It is about the need of children.

ally conditioned to describe a family's way, but their ability to explain their answers contradicts such a statement. These children inherently recognized that the debate over whether or not gay couples should be allowed to adopt is not about sexual preference. It is not really about homosexual rights. It is about the needs of children.

Both sexes bring unique benefits to parenting. When He made life, God created a man and a woman to worship

where they may only occasionally encounter role models of other genders. According to psychologists, marriage counselors and children from divorced homes, there is absolutely no replacement for growing up with a mom and a dad. Dr. Jeffery Satinover, a psychiatrist who has testified against homosexual adoptions, has said that "the evidence is overwhelming that the absence of [a parent] in a child's life is damaging ... It's not simply the homosexuality — it's the homosexual ideology."

'Smart guns', dumb idea

President Clinton's new plan ineffective, avoids real issues

When Wedgewood Baptist Church was attacked, it was done with a 9mm semiautomatic and a .380 handgun, both of which were killed. When students in Conyers were killed, the student used a .22 rifle and a .357 Magnum, a sporting rifle and a pistol. The Jonesboro killers used a variety of hunting rifles. At Columbine, shotguns, a hunting rifle, and an illegally bought, owned, transferred and modified DC-9 automatic pistol were used. The worst massacres of recent years are all involved sporting guns and handguns. Despite the data, President Clinton has called for further enforcement of existing bans on assault weapons, a ban to track guns through ballistics testing, and further development of "smart guns" that only fire when held by owners. The calls for registration and smart guns is only impossible to implement, but it is scapegoating at its worst.

The Clinton plan aims to regulate mechanisms in the barrel leave specific and registered striations, or markings, on each and every bullet fired from that gun. These striations could be used to match a bullet fired in the commission of a crime to the database.

Unfortunately, this will not work, according to Michael S. Criminalist III and Supervisor of the Houston Police Department Firearms Lab. Lyons said normal striations discovered by forensics, made famous through shows like "Law Order" and "Perry Mason," are microscopic markings created by the bullet's passage over tiny imperfections on the inner of a gun's barrel. These imperfections are left by the manufacturing process, dirt, gunpowder loads, wear and tear and not only change with time but also depend on the position of the bullet.

Lyons said adding distinctive markings to barrels to leave striations will be impractical because any marking intentionally left will be too large to vary based on the .22 bullet is smaller in circumference than a barrel. Lyons also said the barrel plan is useless, as current production techniques render any marking of the barrel useless, since barrels are interchangeable. If the barrel of gun No. 1 shoots someone after trading barrels with gun No. 2003, the investigators will focus on the barrel of No. 2,003, not No. 1.

Lyons said a better system would be to track guns by ejected shells, since cartridges carry striations from many different barrels of the gun. However, it is very easy to collect ejected shells, and investigators and registrars will encounter the same problem of size. A .22 cartridge is as small as a .22 bullet.



CHRIS HUFFINES

Smart guns have their own problems. Smart guns contain an electronic receiver in the handle that prevents the gun from firing unless a special transmitter is nearby, usually on the wrist of the hand holding the gun.

While it is true that the advent of smart guns will reduce police fatalities (a great number of police officers are shot by their own weapons) and in-home accidents, it is also true that it will neither eliminate them nor reduce crime. If little Johnny sees that daddy only shoots targets with his gun while wearing a bracelet, little Johnny is also going to want to wear the bracelet. And if little Johnny pulls the trigger, whoever he shoots is going to be just a dead as if it was not a smart gun.

Also, since smart guns only work by physically blocking the firing pin, filing off the blocking piece will be an easy method around a smart gun, albeit an illegal one. Of course, criminals holding up a liquor store or shooting children will likely not balk at breaking laws.

The rhetoric surrounding gun control in the wake of these shootings has focused on dangerous assault weapons. But, the vast majority of weapons used in these shootings have been revolvers, semi-automatic pistols and long arms like sporting rifles and shotguns. With

These calls for registration and smart guns is not only impossible to implement, but it is scapegoating at its worst.

only two notable exceptions, assault weapons have not figured into the crimes, and yet, the rhetoric has continued, stirring up the public at the expense of the truth.

Only twice have automatic weapons been used, and in both cases the weapons were submachine guns, not full-fledged automatic weapons. The gunman who opened fire in the Los Angeles Jewish Community Center, despite having been committed and being on probation, managed to acquire both a pistol and an Uzi submachine gun. Both of these are clear violations of his probation and existing gun-control laws. The third-party purchase of the modified DC-9 by the Columbine shooters was also illegal. Current gun control laws should have prevented these crimes.

The nation is faced with two options with which to cure the cancer of violence that has invaded it. This country can regulate wisely and then enforce those regulations, or this country can engage in the self-examination that will allow it to realize there is more to violence than the immediate and easily-blamed cause.

The first solution will work, and it will curtail violence. The second solution is better, and like all better solutions is harder. Unfortunately, President Clinton's gun control plan does not address the latter and only pays lip service to the former.

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THIS IS CENSORSHIP

Tech faculty proposal raises First Amendment issues

On Sept. 9, Texas Tech University's student newspaper, *The University Daily*, published an entire paper with the words "This is censorship" printed repeatedly across its pages. This statement was inspired by a federal court decision in support of the recall of 2,000 student yearbooks at Kentucky State University and the removal of the school's student newspaper faculty adviser for failing to censor some material in the newspaper critical of the university.

While *The University Daily's* actions may have been motivated by the Kentucky State court case, a recent proposal by Dr. Jerry Hudson, chairperson of Texas Tech's School of Mass Communications, may show the student paper what censorship really is. Hudson has put together a plan for restructuring the school's student media outlets. For *The University Daily*, Hudson's proposal calls for a faculty member to act as "newsroom editor" and for all student editors at the paper to be replaced by university staff personnel.

Hudson's proposal goes on to say that the "newsroom editor" would also teach a class and would use the students enrolled in the class to publish stories in

The University Daily.

This suggestion seems like it could produce a student paper that serves only to publish what the "newsroom editor" wants and certainly to prohibit running stories that criticize Texas Tech.

The changes outlined in this proposal severely endanger one of the major voices for Texas Tech students and undermines the very purpose of a student newspaper.

If this proposal is passed, the student newspaper would become little more than a newsletter for the university. Certainly a student newspaper's job is not to repeatedly attack the university, but in order to represent the student body and serve as a means of daily news, *The University Daily* must have the freedom to pursue stories without bias and without being under the thumb of a faculty "newsroom editor."

Federal district court decisions have mandated that college students, unlike high school students, should have First Amendment rights in their student publications. Faculty input and advice is important in producing a professional work of journalism. However, student writers and editors should still have the opportunity to produce a newspaper that says what they want to say, not what somebody tells them to say.

The possibility of a student newspaper being placed under the direct control of faculty members is scary by itself. That this possibility is being seriously considered by university administrators is more than scary — it is a threat to all student publications at Texas Tech and elsewhere. Currently, *The Battalion* has a faculty adviser, but in the by laws of Texas A&M's Student Media Board, no member of the faculty is allowed to determine the content of the newspaper or any other student media source.

This clause allows *The Battalion* to operate as an independent news source, free from direct University regulation. *The Battalion*, and other student newspapers who have the same administrative structure, are aimed at a student readership, rather than the will of a faculty "newsroom editor."

If Hudson's proposal is passed in Lubbock, the chance of A&M's student publications suffering a similar fate goes from being far-fetched to being an all-too-real possibility.