

Eastern Illinois University

The Keep

The Post Amerikan (1972-2004)

The Post Amerikan Project

4-1995

Volume 24, Number 2

Post Amerikan

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Recommended Citation

Post Amerikan, "Volume 24, Number 2" (1995). *The Post Amerikan (1972-2004)*. 275.
https://thekeep.eiu.edu/post_amerikan/275

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POST AMERICAN



BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL

VOL. 24

50¢

NO. 2

APRIL/MAY 1995

Dating tips from the Normal Police Dept.

Learn How To:

- * Enter Any Establishment After Hours
- * Meet Women While Drunk And Disorderly
- * Get Dates By Threatening Legal Action
- * Make Your Off-Duty Time Work For You
- * But Above all, Be Persistent!

*Disclaimer: the above tips have proven ineffective at Hot Shots, Normal, IL



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About us

The *Post Amerikan* is an independent community newspaper providing information and analysis that is screened out of or down played by establishment news sources. We are a non-profit, worker-run collective that exists as an alternative to the corporate media.

We put out six issues a year. Staff members take turns as "coordinator." All writing, typing, editing, graphics, photography, pasteup, and distribution are done on a volunteer basis. You are invited to volunteer your talents.

Most of our material and inspiration for material comes from the community. The *Post Amerikan* welcomes stories, graphics, photos, letters, and new tips from our readers. If you'd like to join us, call 828-7232 and leave a message on our answering machine. We will get back to you as soon as we can. Don't worry if it takes a while—we don't meet every week.

An alternative newspaper depends directly on a community of concerned people for existence. We believe it is very important to keep a newspaper like this around. If you think so too, then please support us by telling your friends about the paper, donating money to the printing of the paper, and telling our advertisers you saw their ad in *Post Amerikan*.

This issue of *Post Amerikan* is brought to you by...

Linda, Ralph, Sherrin and Winter
 Additional thanks to Jean, Deborah and David

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What's your new address?

When you move, be sure to send us your new address so your subscription gets to you. Your *Post Amerikan* will not be forwarded (it's like junk mail-no kidding!). Fill out this handy form with your new address and return it to us, P.O. Box 3452, Bloomington, IL 61702.

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 Youth Services of Mid IL.....828-7346

Due Date:

The due date for submitting articles to the *Post Amerikan* is: (please laser print your articles in columns of 3" using Palatino 10pt. type if possible.)

May 15th



Community News



Residue - at ISU Galleries until April 9

Residue, featuring the art of Eve Andree Laramee, Tom Denlinger, Laurie Palmer, and Lauren Szold, will run through April 9, 1995 at the University Galleries, ISU. *Residue* features four artists who explore notions of environment as both natural and fabricated conditions. Utilizing a variety of media in site-specific installations and process oriented in approach, these artists employ a poetic science in their examination of how meaning and function shift through material change.

University Galleries is located at 110 Center for the Visual Arts. gallery hours are Tuesday 9:30am-9:00pm, Wednesday through Friday 9:30am-4:30pm and Saturday-Sunday 12:00-4:00pm. For further information or to arrange a guided tour, please call the Gallery at (309) 438-5487.

Phone Disconnected

A measure to disconnect the phone line at the Post Amerikan was recently passed by a unanimous vote of 2-0. This decision was made because of lack of use, lack of funds, and lack of working answering machines.

If you need to reach the Post Amerikan, you can write us at P.O. Box 3452, Bloomington, IL 61702. For a more immediate response, please call 828-4473.

AAVS Offers Workshops

The American Anti-Vivisection Society is pleased to offer presentations free of charge throughout the U.S. and Canada on animal rights, anti-vivisection, and other humane and environmental issues.

If your group would like to host an education program, a fundraiser, a campaign or a community outreach event the AAVS will provide programs designed to fit your needs.

Program topics include: Animal Rights; Empowerment Workshops; Starting-Up (or Reorganizing) Your Group and Teaching Humane Issues.

All programs are offered free of charge. The AAVS will cover transportation costs. Your group is only responsible for food and lodging.

Rae Sikora, communications coordinator for The AAVS, has been a spokesperson for other species for 20 years, leading programs on the environment and non-human animals. She is a writer and humane educator with a background in cultural anthropology and outdoor education

For information on scheduling and/or other speakers, please call 1-800- SAY-AAVS.

Breadline Performs The Faust Triptych

The Breadline Theatre Group will be performing *The Faust Triptych* May 4th through June 5th, Thursday-Sunday at 8pm at Chicago's Greenview Art Center, corner of Greenview and Devon.

Breadline is a local theatre company comprised of ISU alums Robert Caisley, Keytha Graves and Michael Oswald, and ISU MFA student Paul Kampf. Joining the group for this production are three international artists.

The international artists who are working with the group are Xin Zhang, from the People's Republic of China, Gjorgi Jolevski from Macedonia and Dea Loher from Germany. Zhang has performed for fifteen years with the Beijing Opera and just completed a project with Lee Bruer and Leslie Mohn. Jolevski is considered one of Macedonia's premiere actors and Loher is an award winning playwright whose plays have premiered in Germany, London, Austria and Finland.

The Faust Triptych, is Breadline's retelling of the Faust myth loosely based on Goethe's, Marlowe's and Mann's versions. For ticket information phone (309)829-4190.

Peace Poetry Contest Winner Announced

The votes are in! After a long sequestration, Post members have picked a winner in our much anticipated Peace Poetry Contest. The winner is Matt Toczko.

The Post Amerikan would like to thank everyone who sent us their entries. We must admit, the decision was an especially difficult one.

Peace Begins w/Haiku

Windchimes whisper in
the stagnant Autumn twilight,
rusted lullabies

whose narcotic rose scents
escape into the spiral absence
of rays; the thin orange stripe
of sunshine incense dips out
of sight.

Suspended on the screen of unlimited twilight,
tomorrow's dewdrops weave heat lightning
threads across the misty sunset skyful
of celestial graying clouds. timeless
tombstones of yesterday's showers
drown summer's passion and its heat
in puddles. on the ground
the mosquitoes are not breeding

any more. the days are shorter ...

-Matt Toczko

Family and friends of PWHIV/PWA support group

The McLean County AIDS Task Force, serving both McLean and Livingston Counties, announces its April 18th support group for family and friends of persons living with HIV or AIDS. The group will meet at the First United Methodist Church, 211 N. School St., Normal at 7:00 pm.

This group, which meets the third Tuesday of each month, is provided as a free service to the community. discussion will include areas that are of concern to those who have someone in their life who is living with HIV or AIDS.

Task Force membership is not required to attend. You may call (309)827-2437 for information on this group and other Task Force activities.



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Alternative Health Care For Your Child

In my family and among people I know in the community, many think our choices about our children's health care is a bit extreme. We had both of our children's births in our home (and I am now a midwife helping other women do this); we don't take our children in for well-baby checkups, even when our children had medical cards through Public Aid and the state would pay for them (they do have a pediatrician they saw once who is their "official" doctor in case the need ever arises); our children aren't vaccinated by choice (my family thinks this is worse than when I lost my virginity); and our son isn't circumcised, which they think is a personal choice the parents need to make (I have asked them who gets permission from the baby before whacking off his foreskin, since he is the one who will be affected permanently by this choice).

None of these decisions were made lightly. I read constantly, everything I can get my hands onto. I have alternative book lists, names of great alternative parenting magazines (which I would be happy to share with anyone who asks!) and I think a lot. Most of my decisions have been made based upon what makes sense after I have read both sides of an issue. One of my favorite authors, Dr. Robert Mendelsohn, has written some the best materials on alternative health care: *CONFESSIONS OF A MEDICAL HERETIC*; *MALEpractice: HOW DOCTORS MANIPULATE WOMEN IN MEDICINE*; and my personal bible of children's health care, which no home should be without,

HOW TO RAISE A HEALTHY CHILD...IN SPITE OF YOUR DOCTOR. It isn't carried in local bookstores because it is so inexpensive, but can be ordered.

Dr. Mendelsohn, M.D., who died a few years back, practiced medicine for over thirty years. He started and edited a newsletter for many years called "The People's Doctor" which had articles on all different issues of health care and was a columnist for a while for one of the major newspapers in Chicago. He was the national director of Project Head Start's Medical Consultation Service, chairman of the Medical Licensing Committee for the State of Illinois, and was associate professor of Preventative Medicine and Community Health in the School of Medicine of the University of Illinois. He was also an all-around nice guy, as reported by my friend's sister who used to be his cook, and another friend who used him as her kids' pediatrician.

He viewed doctors as victims of the medical system as much as their patients were, being trained in schools that focus on interventive health care, rather than preventative medicine. As he said about doctors, "They emerge [from medical school] with their heads so stuffed with institutionalized foolishness that there is no room left for common sense." He believed the following things: Most things [illnesses] get better by morning; parents and grandparents are wiser than doctors; doctors can make healthy kids sick; you need to protect your children before they are born through good prenatal care and appropriate birth choices; and he believed in the importance of breastfeeding and nutrition for health and growth in children.

In his book, *HOW TO RAISE A HEALTHY CHILD...*, he outlines the three main rules to guide parents in diagnosing their children's illnesses:

RULE 1: If your child doesn't feel sick, look sick, or act sick, they probably aren't sick.

RULE 2: Give Mother Nature ample time to work her magic before you expose your child to the potential physical and emotional side effects of treatments that your doctor may administer. The human body has a remarkable capacity to heal itself—a capacity that in most cases surpasses anything that medical science can do—and it doesn't produce unwanted side effects.

RULE 3: Common sense is the most useful tool in dealing with illness. Your doctor is less likely to employ it than you are, and certainly no more able, because that's not what they taught him/her in medical school.

He points out in his book that every time you take your healthy child into a doctor's office for a well-baby check up (or yourself for a routine physical, for that matter), you are exposing your child to a multitude of illnesses. Remember who the other children sitting there are...the kids who are sick! Therefore, if your child was healthy when you took him or her

in, chances are they will come out unhealthy. Besides this, doctors have growth charts that are based on some "average" they have gotten from somewhere, but doesn't necessarily fit your child, and yet this is used as one method of diagnosing the "health" of your child.

Recently a friend of mine went through hell with a pediatrician here in town she had never seen before. It was one of those cases where her child truly needed care, her other doctor had moved away, and she went to the "new" doctor that replaced him. This doctor didn't know her daughter. She threatened to call DCFS on her for neglect if my friend didn't vaccinate her child by a set time for three reasons: The child had an ear infection that needed medical attention (which they usually don't but this was one of the exceptions, and was why my friend took her daughter to the doctor in the first place); the mother hadn't vaccinated her child (not through neglect, but through informed choice and personal beliefs about health care); and the doctor thought her daughter was "malnourished" because my friend's daughter was off the growth charts in size. The doctor never asked about her history, which would have revealed a healthy young girl whose father is 5'6", 130 pounds and whose grandfather is a retired jockey! Yet, my friend had to have her attorney draw up a letter to stop this doctor who spent no time getting to know her client.

I am sure you have all also heard stories of friends of your who were sick, went to one doctor, got a diagnosis, and went to another doctor for whatever reason and got a completely different diagnosis. I know another person who went to THREE different doctors in town and got a different diagnosis from each one. Interesting...

Back to Dr. Mendelsohn and this whole health care issue...he truly believed if it ain't broke, don't fix it. He felt that in most cases, if you are raising your child in a preventative manner, focusing on proper nutrition and exercise, that your body can heal itself better than any doctor. His book outlines all major childhood health issues and concerns, helping you to make an informed decision about preventative medicine, when interventive medicine is needed and when nature can do the trick. *HOW TO RAISE A HEALTHY CHILD...* is an excellent guide and saves many trips to the doctor (not to mention cutting down on medical bills in an already over-taxed system).

He also believed that in most cases antibiotics are entirely unnecessary. Frequently doctors prescribe antibiotics when they don't know what is going on and don't know what to do, and often prescribe antibiotics for viral infections, which have no effect on virus-caused illness. With most ear infections, if nature was allowed to take its course, they would heal up completely unassisted, and probably frequently

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do, as does most strep throat. By the time you get your child to the doctor and start treatment with antibiotics, and you see improvement in your child which you credit to the medicine, chances are it was the body already healing itself. You think the antibiotics did the trick, which isn't usually true, so this reinforces going to the doctor for common ailments. Yet, what isn't told to you is that antibiotics don't discriminate between the good bacteria and the bad bacteria, and ALL BACTERIA IS WIPED OUT OF YOUR BODY. This means the good bacteria that keeps your body healthy is wiped out with the bad (often causing yeast infections in women), which weakens your system, leaving you vulnerable to catching other illnesses much more easily.

Perhaps one of the most difficult tasks of parenting is seeing your child suffering with an illness. This is why it is so easy for us to run to the doctor at the first sign of any discomfort in our children, and why we feel so grateful for the "cure" our doctor gives to our child. The reality is, if you have built a good foundation of health for your child and yourself, there isn't much the body can't cure.

Remember that in our family we have been working on a firm foundation of health for our children: I had excellent nutrition during both pregnancies, chose homebirth as the healthiest and safest option for my children and myself, chose extended nursing for both my children (my two year old still nurses), and decided not to vaccinate. The big payoff is that my kids have never had strep throat, ear infections, or any major illness. They have had colds and flu, but have never taken antibiotics in their lives, and have never been to a pediatrician for an illness. They have truly been healthy children. One nurse in a pediatrician's office told me once that I was lucky. I told her that, no, it wasn't luck. It is preventing problems by thought and proper health care.

This is not to say that doctors are unnecessary, but they are greatly overused. Medicine is big business, and most doctors are getting rich off of it. They need your repeat business to make money, and thus obviously believe in routine physicals, lab work, interventive medicine, etc. However, if people would spend as much time shopping around for a good doctor as they do for a good car deal, they would find a partner in health care that supports their family's philosophies about health care instead of TELLING clients what they should be doing. Doctors can make sick children healthy and can save lives. Antibiotics save lives. Penicillin was truly one of history's most important discoveries, but a with anything else, you can have too much of a good thing. It is more important for you to become an informed consumer and a partner in health care with a doctor that supports your philosophies, rather than passively being told what you need to do. Question all procedures or prescribed treatments, and if this irritates your doctor, find a new one. Remember, you hire your doctor to work for you, not to be your parent and tell you what to do. Your doctor has no legal right to try to coerce you into any treatment (it is, in fact, unethical), and all decisions in health care are ultimately your choice.

--Marcee Murray

For more information on alternative health care, natural childbirth, homebirth or reading lists call Marcee Murray at 827-5843. If you want baking tips, sorry, but you'll have to call the baking goddess, Rochelle Hartman...

Green In Good Conscience?

Ireland is a country with a rich history whose children are fiercely proud of their heritage. Looking back on St. Patrick's Day, this is obvious. Every year, as March approaches, shamrocks and leprechauns begin popping up in every grocery store, gas station, and card shop. People who don't circulate a drop of green blood don the color and join the merry-making.

As with other holidays, however, the hoopla of the marketplace tends to shadow the true meaning of the day and what is really being celebrated. Now that the excitement has subsided for another eleven months, it is time to reflect on the significance of this observance, to recognize its essence, and to decide whether or not it is a good reason for celebration.

St. Patrick's Day is, of course, a celebration of St. Patrick. He was a man whom the church canonized because of his example of Christian ideals and dedication to Christ. His feast day is therefore a celebration of what he did and what he stood for.

Popular teaching depicts him as an Irish bishop who drove all the serpents from the Isle. First off, St. Pat wasn't Irish. He was born in Roman occupied Britain to an imperial officer and his local wife. Secondly, he did drive the snakes from Ireland, but there is much more to that story.

Forget any storybook images of St. Pat holding up a staff and by the "power of God" forcing all the snakes to crawl out to sea. By, "...drove the serpents from the Isle," the encyclopedia entries actually mean that he drove evil from Ireland. This perceived "evil" happened to be the people's native religion.

St. Pat began this task by encouraging the collection and destruction of uncountable pagan texts, one hundred and eighty of which he burned personally. In the 400's c.e., printing presses were unheard of, so each of those writings was a unique, irreplaceable work.

Along with the other missionaries, he began a conquest of coercion that ironically included the outlawing of wearing green on certain pagan holidays (because it promoted promiscuity... aka fertility rituals).

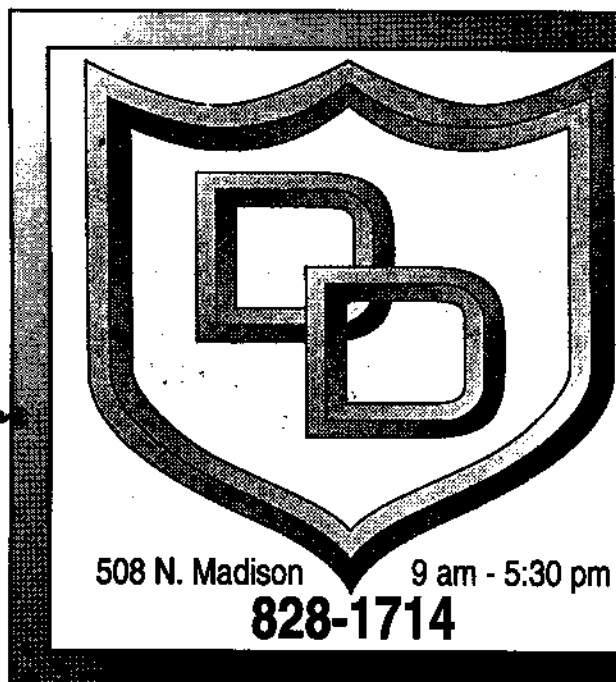
They made it illegal to observe Celtic deities on their holidays, replacing them with Christianized festivals. To this day, if you look at the calendar, almost all Christianity-based holidays coincide with older, pagan Sabbats. For example, St. Patrick's Day is four days before the Spring Equinox celebration, and All Saint's Day is on the Celtic feast of Samhain, or Ancestor's night. Even Christmas is right after the Winter Solstice, which marks the rebirth of the Sun God, and the list goes on. Even St. Pat's use of the shamrock to explain the Holy trinity was "borrowed" from Druidic teachings to explain the trine aspects of the God and Goddess.

One of the final blows in trying to stifle Celtic religion was the demonizing of the God and Goddess. The God known to the Celts as Cerunnos, Lord of the Forest and Wild Beasts, had horns, a tail, and cloven hooves. St. Patrick and the missionaries associated these traits with Satan, and decided that the pagan male deity was actually their personification of ultimate evil. Then they used Satan's association with serpents to stifle Goddess worship; the snake was a symbol of the goddess because of its closeness to the earth and because of its venom (the Goddess in one aspect is observed as a the keeper of the cauldron of death and rebirth) among other reasons.

St. Patrick could not have single-handedly accomplished all of these atrocities, for the effort to convert Ireland took generations of gradual, forced change. He is the recognized figurehead of these efforts, though, and to celebrate what he did is to celebrate ethnic cleansing. Understand that ethnic cleansing does not necessitate the killing off of the people in that ethnic group. By stealing the native Irish's religion, he stole the soul of their culture and thus cleansed the unwanted element from their ethnicity.

Next year, it might be a better moral decision to celebrate Irish heritage four days later than this man's feast day, for on the Equinox this observance can be made without reference to a "saint" who couldn't accept Eires children as they were.

--Matt Toczko



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Tubeless In The Heartland:

One day while talking with a friend at church, I mentioned a TV show I'd seen and asked if she'd ever watched it. To my surprise she replied that her family does not own a television and in essence never has. Living as I do in a household where the actions one might plan for any given evening occasionally hinge on what's airing that night, I must admit that my first reaction was incredulity, quickly followed by a sense that this antiestablishment-arianism was somehow immoral, revolutionary and blatantly un-American.

However, after my initial reaction, I could begin to see the possibilities that freedom from this technological ball-and-chain could entail. So I asked my friend if she would grant me an interview. She agreed, with the stipulation that they remain anonymous. (Of course, those of you who know them will probably guess... I'll do my best to be discreet.) What follows are excerpts of an interview between me and the Mom, Dad and 10 year old Son of a Tubeless Family.

The Foundations of Video Void

ME: Are you both originally from Bloomington/Normal?

DAD: I went to high school here. My family's been in this town about 100 years. I was born in Madison, WI.

ME: And you work for...?

DAD: I work in the corporate office of a large mid-western insurance company.

ME: Did you come to the area with a business degree?

DAD: I have a graduate degree... from Harvard. But by the time I finished the degree, I had changed my career plans.

ME: And how about you?

MOM: I don't come from Bloomington. I grew up in Cleveland and...(my husband) dragged me out here, kicking and screaming all the way from Boston.

DAD: It was a bit of a shock when we arrived.

MOM: We really have done very nicely here. Boston is the place we actually detached ourselves from television. We had a television at that point, but it wasn't a very good one.

DAD: It was my childhood television set. When I went to graduate school, my parents carried it out and gave it to us because they thought we needed a television. We put it up on a shelf and occasionally watched it. You had to hold the...not really antenna. Just a couple extensions cords that worked best when you held them and stood in just the right place. Didn't we use it for the Watergate hearings?

MOM: No, no. When you were in Harvard we used it once to watch *Farewell to Manzanara*, a documentary about the Japanese internment camps. The next year we lent it to the neighbors to watch a program on education. They didn't have a television either. Actually there were a number of people around there who didn't have television so it was not as if we were...

DAD: As strange as we are here.

MOM: As strange as we are here, yes.

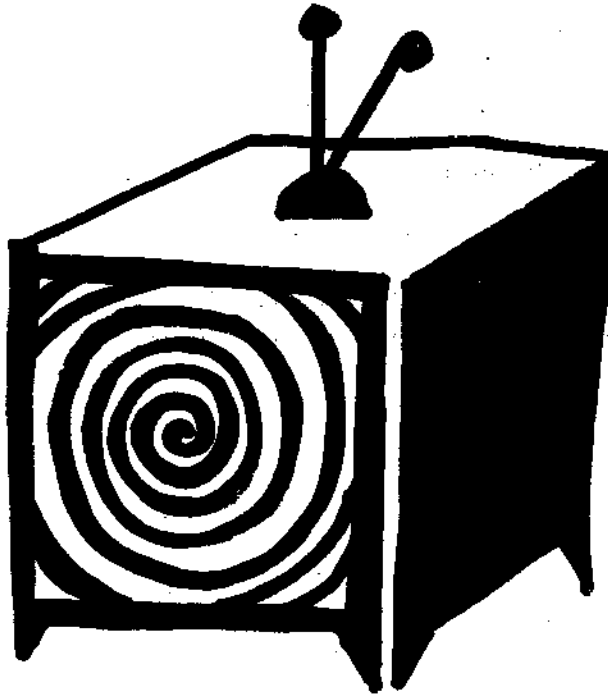
"We're Not Purists"

DAD: There are some interesting and worthwhile things there, but it would get watched too much. It would be a constant source of pressure. There'd be a lot of friction.

MOM: When we moved from Boston we decided we didn't want the television anymore. We even offered it to our neighbors downstairs and they didn't want it. So we put it in the trash. I remember as we were leaving seeing it out in the back alley on the trash heap. But I later found out that the neighbors had reconsidered, so they rescued it from the trash heap and brought it in. A few years later we went back to visit, and they still had the television. One of the knobs had fallen off and they were using pliers...

ME: [laughing] We've all had a TV like that!

MOM: They had a blanket around it for some reason...well, they had a young child at that



time. We still hear from those neighbors every Christmas, and I assume... That was the last television in our lives. When we moved out here we just didn't feel the need...

DAD: We watched the Bears when they were in the Super Bowl. I don't want to sound like I'm not aware...

MOM: And we're not purists, either. When we go to motel...

SON: Mom says, "Turn off that television, now!"

DAD: No...

SON: Yeah, Dad, yeah.

DAD: You get to watch it a little.

MOM: The grandparents let him watch, too.

SON: I like (one grandparents') better because (the other) only has one station, channel 12. All I get to watch is, "It's very important you make your 'contribution' now, and we'll give you this cute little thing if you 'contribute' \$60."

MOM: I grew up in a house that was essentially without television for a long time. My grandparents had it, but it wasn't accessible to me.

ME: It wasn't turned on as soon as you walked in the door?

MOM: No, it was years as I recall before... Of course we go back so far that television wasn't so important.

DAD: I was in first grade before we got one.

ME: I remember being in my playpen and watching *Miss Francis' Ding-Dong School*.

SON: [giggling] Francis Ding-Dong?!

ME: *Miss Francis' Ding-Dong School*.

DAD: It was a classic.

ME: It was a wonderful children's educational show that taught the alphabet and how to be good...

DAD: Like *Sesame Street*.

ME: It was early *Sesame Street*.

SON: I didn't think there was anything before *Sesame Street*.

DAD: In the beginning was *Sesame Street*?

No...

MOM: No, in the beginning was *Miss Francis' Ding-Dong School*. [All crack up.]

TV and the Single Child

ME: Now, how long ago did you adopt your son?

MOM: Almost 10 years ago. He's 9+, and he came to us as a baby.

DAD: He was just a few months old.

ME: At any point in his formative years did you think that maybe you should get television?

SON: Yes!

ME: I'm sure you did.

DAD: Every time we considered it we said it wouldn't really be a good idea.

MOM: Well, actually, I think we really don't have time. Where would we fit it in? I just don't know. This is the most relaxed... I never sit down (and just relax).

SON: I could do my homework while watching...

MOM: My guess is that people tend to watch television before they go to bed. Since we don't have one, we pick up a book and read, and it's not very long before we're out.

ME: Do you have a job outside the home?

MOM: No.

DAD: Church keeps her busy.

MOM: And I volunteer at our son's school. I'm doing a couple voluntary lunch-hour classes. They're not a big deal, but when you start adding it all up...

SON: And also, the reason I'd like to get TV, not only because I want to watch cartoons but also because (my teacher) says to watch the Weather Channel on TV. Why don't you block out all the other channels? I had to spend noon in the extra room just watching TV 'cuz I had to record "Weather Words" and I could have done it at home. That's why I didn't have it done.

MOM: It is taken for granted that most people have TV... I wasn't aware that teachers...

ME: They do assume their kids have TV. And while there's a lot of quality programming, there is far too much crud [there was a child in the room] being shown, too. Now I know that your son plays the piano, church keeps you all very busy, you volunteer, you have a big selection of games on your bookshelf, you read. In my opinion your life can only be enhanced when you're able to do these activities without the distraction of TV.



A Family Chooses Life Without Television

MOM: Yes. There's also a control issue. Television takes over, and when you're in front of it, you've lost that control.

SON: I really don't have time now to play with my friends or read a book. I have music after school, I have French after school, I have music theory after school, and also swimming... I also have a couple hobbies, too. I like building model cars, but I've got to save up my money to buy the kits.

ME: Do you see yourself wanting a television so much that you'd save up your own money to buy one?

SON: No.

DAD: No?

ME: You know, some kids will get a paper route or do yard chores to have extra money to buy something they really want. Is TV that important to you?

SON: Not really. I don't want to do work just for a TV. Another thing, I already get money from my mom and dad, so I wouldn't want to use the money for that.

ME: You're right, that would be a real issue, especially if you started to neglect your music or chores because of it.

SON: My mom would go up the wall... She's pretty strict.

ME: Your family always seems so harmonious, and I admire your sense of teamwork. Do you think television could negatively influence that?

SON: I don't want TV that bad. Sometimes after dinner we do flashcards together, or we do Brain Quest. Or I sit down with the encyclopedia and read, not because my mom is screaming that I need to learn something but...because there's so much interesting stuff to learn.

The Question of Peer Pressure

ME: Do your friends think that you're kind of weird not having a TV, or do you have other friends who don't have one?

SON: There's nobody else in my class who doesn't have a television.

ME: Is there any peer pressure?

SON: No, they just go along with it. I mean, in kindergarten and first grade there was a little, but by second grade they said, oh you're all right, and it's not even a concept anymore... I just forget about it in school. I just learn and do what I need to do instead of worrying about who's going to say, "You don't have a TV so you're a dope."

ME: If you did have a TV, what would you want to watch?

SON: Well, I like *Ghostwriters*.

ME: That's a PBS show, right?

SON: Yes. And I like *Wild America and Creatures Big and Small*.

ME: You mentioned *Ren & Stimpy*. How about *Beavis & Butthead*?

SON: *Beavis & Butthead*? What's that?

ME: Good! Keep it that way! [Dad chuckles.]

ME: *Beavis & Butthead*, no. Just say no, okay?

DAD: But you would like to watch a few cartoons.

SON: I sorta like the *Flintstones*. It's all

right, but I like nature shows a lot better.

ME: How about movies? Do you see many movies?

SON: I liked *The Lion King*.

ME: That was a cartoon. You like cartoons if they're quality cartoons.

SON: I saw *Jurassic Park* at a friend's house. It really scared me. They put it on the TV at 12 o'clock (midnight), and we stayed up until 6 and never got any sleep...(My friend) has a big screen TV and we watched it on that... It scared the creeps out of me, and I hid under my covers from the bad parts. Unfortunately I could see through my covers!... We also played *Mortal Kombat II*.

ME: On Nintendo?

SON: Yeah. And we played *Street Fighters*, and I couldn't get to sleep.

ME: Isn't that a really violent video game?

SON: *Mortal Kombat* is even worse.

ME: Well, how about music? What kind of music do you like to play on your stereo?

DAD: [pauses] How embarrassing.

MOM: The stereo's broken.

ME: Okay.

DAD: It's only been about 18 months, and we haven't gotten it fixed.

MOM: It's an old one, and we're thinking about getting a CD player.

DAD: I can't picture when we would listen to it. [A short discussion of musical tastes ensues. General preference tends toward Celtic folk by all parties, including yours truly.]

Are We Talking Politics Here?

ME: All right. When we first talked, you said that not owning a television isn't a "political" decision. But ultimately isn't it because you are bucking the mainstream?... You aren't so politicized that you won't even view it if it's available.

MOM: Yes, that's right, to an extent. But in fact...

DAD: When I'm around one I find I can't take my eyes off of it. It's very distracting. Which is why I don't want to have one around here, because I'm afraid I'd watch it.

MOM: It's not...I guess what I meant by that... I think everything is ultimately political, you know.

ME: If political equates a set of values.

MOM: Yeah, yes. But I would never try to impose my decision on anyone else. And I don't think that I judge anyone...

DAD: Except for some, of course.

MOM: Well, yes, but this is my house and my domain...and I'm exercising my privilege to live the way I want to. So in that sense it's political. I certainly don't expect other people to give up their televisions...

DAD: We don't necessarily think they're evil or stupid.

MOM: No, I don't, and I have considered there may be a time when we would get one. But right now...

DAD: We've never arrived at a time when it seemed appropriate... Yeah, I guess I have regularly thought about it. I mean, every week you get the ads and...you can get a TV for \$150. But I really don't think it would be the right thing to do right now.

A Future of Fahrenheit 451?

ME: Would you ever choose not to do something because there was (a program) on TV?

MOM: In a sense, TV has an antisocial quality to it. I mean, when kids get together to watch TV, they're not interacting with each other. They're just doing this passive thing. The only thing they're connected with is that television... I have this science fiction view of the future where people don't communicate with each other anymore. They just sit in front of their television sets. If you look around, it's pretty close to that right now. And you can't develop a relationship with a person when you're sitting in front of a television.

DAD: I wonder when other people talk to each other. (Now) we often feel we just don't have time to talk to each other...

SON: And you'd have a lot less if we got a television...

DAD: Sure, it would be a lot worse if there was a television around.

SON: ...You get stuck to that TV after you watch it for awhile. You get used to having it around, and you get used to not preparing for (necessary) stuff by sitting in front of it. It just takes the time of your life away... It sucks you away.

ME: You're right. It sucks your soul out. And all the things you find vital are gone because that time is gone.

MOM: From a political point of view, I am concerned that television has... I think there's been a decline in civic mindedness over the last 30, 40, 50 years. And I think television has a great deal to do with that, although people are better informed, or claim to be. They've got a lot of information coming in, but they aren't putting it back.

DAD: People can't sustain linear thought for more than 25 seconds, so that's why you have 10 second sound-bites. No intelligent discussion of the issues of the day.

MOM: TV's also really debased the political process as well.

ME: Look at Abraham Lincoln. He would never have been elected today.

DAD: His worst sin was that he was ugly.

SON: I don't think it should matter... It should be your personality.

ME: Media has become so insidious that commentators hold more power than our political leaders.

MOM: Yes, it's true. The Fifth Estate is so ready to criticize... And long-term, I think we've lost our sense of the long-term importance of things in part because the media evaluates every issue so quickly. The things that are important today, no one hears about tomorrow.

DAD: Major issues don't last a week on television.

SON: Like the O.J. Simpson trial.

DAD: Except that.

MOM: We find out all we need to know about O.J. from the tabloids at the grocery store.

DAD: Every week I spend a minute or so checking out the headlines in the tabloids, so I know what Roseanne is doing, so I can keep up with conversations in the office.

Continued



SON: Who's Roseanne? [Reassurances follow from Dad that the son has indeed seen this media icon while in a hospital waiting room.]
MOM: Oh, so you watched *Roseanne*?
DAD: She was squabbling with her husband. [I now reassure them that this is a very normal situation.]

Keeping Up With the Cleavers

MOM: A long time ago I read about someone who had evaluated the situation comedies of the '50's, and...the commentator that I was reading said that if you look at the household (of such families as the Cleavers), and compare it with the average quality of life or...material possessions in the country at the time, it was very atypical. It was far more affluent.

DAD: People lived in 1200 square-foot houses, but that was a 2400 square-foot one. [pauses] Could that be (part of) why women feel that they have to work?

MOM: Well, the commentator claimed that...programs like that elevated people's expectations to the extent that it may help explain why they feel they need to have so much income. Plus it also perpetuated a lot of disillusion because there are always people who can't attain that level. So in a sense it exacerbated the feeling of deprivation among have-nots.

DAD: Look at the subdivision around here. All these lovely houses! Twice as big as most people were raised in. And in order to pay for the houses, the wives are working. And too often, the television set is raising the children. And the television set doesn't do a very good job of teaching intellectual development or values... I don't mean to sound sexist in suggesting that women should stay home to raise the children, but somebody should. [A tangent is explored relating the loss of feminism, global resources and toothpicks. You just had to be there.]

ME: Anyway, to get back to the subject at hand, the progression TV tends to present is an optimum standard of living requiring conspicuous consumption, and in trying to attain it, families often set themselves up to fail.

DAD: I guess we've arrived at the conclusion that everything wrong with the modern world is because of television. [Everyone laughs.]
DAD: No, I don't really believe that!

The Information Highway Revisited

ME: TV does have the power for good. Look at how much public education comes from programs about environmental issues. By reading magazines, the same sense of urgency is difficult to display in print as can be graphically shown on TV.

MOM: It's so much easier to convey information, and it's so much easier for people to assimilate it. Reading takes time... To some extent, yes, television is a great disseminator of information, but I have a little anti-intellectual streak in me that says there are some things I just don't need to know. They're not relevant to my life. Because of that I'm ignorant on a lot of topics, and to think that we don't have television, there are these big gaps... Well, I do have a question about the people who watch television. Do you have friends that get together to discuss shows? I sometimes think that people refrain from commenting about television around us.

ME: That could be, but we are always asking or being asked if something was watched. I guess if people are aware of the choice you've made, it's going to be a moot point to ask you about it anyway, so why bring it up and possibly cause you embarrassment.

MOM: Occasionally there are references I know I don't get. That's just the way it is. One of these days we might get one...

SON: I don't want one. Then going to my grandma's house wouldn't be anything special.

MOM: You know we do have a computer. We're not entirely tech-free. And we're thinking of getting another one.

SON: I've got a lot of computer games. I like *Carmen Sandiego*. I'm a private eye on that.

ME: Well, I've taken enough of your time, but I knew you'd be perfect to discuss how you feel television and the lack of it has affected your family life.

DAD: I meet people who say they wish they didn't have a TV or that they never even watch it. Whether that's absolutely true or not I don't know.

MOM: There is an element...

DAD: People get intimidated...

MOM: They feel we're looking down on them, that there's contempt on our part, and I wish they wouldn't feel that way.

ME: It's all a matter of choice, and if TV is not something you choose, that can be wonderful because it leaves so many other options to fill lives and time with.

With that bit of banality, I left the Tubeless Family. I tried to imagine living in their world and realized that I don't have the moral fiber to join them in a place where the boob tube holds no sway. But it's certainly a nice place to visit every once in a while.

Epilogue: The Sunday after the interview, Dad Tubeless came up to me at church. It seems that one morning a few days after we talked, he saw a car parked at work with a baby seat inside and a bumper sticker proclaiming "Kill All Televisions." He plans to find that car again and put a *Post Amerikan* under the windshield wiper, along with a note to read this article.

We're talking 'bout a revolution...

RAF, with heartfelt thanks to JK, SK and GK (and Lavender the dog)

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Answer to puzzle





The Teachings Of Lynn Andrews: Another Reality

"Guard the mysteries, Constantly reveal them."
--Lew Welch

Alright, I admit it. I'm one of the few people from the sixties that didn't read Carlos Castaneda. I mean, I tried but after a couple of pages I just had to stop. He was getting on my nerves.

So it surprised me when I picked up a Lynn Andrews book and not only enjoyed it, but became enlightened from it. The reason I was so surprised was because people have been comparing this woman's writing to Castaneda's. I wish they'd stop. They're ruining her reputation.

Let's take a look at her first book, Medicine Woman. Sometimes you can judge a book by its cover and the artsy/new age graphics are just plain gorgeous. But more than that, this book has something to say--incredible!

Wait a minute, let me backtrack here. You're probably wondering who this Lynn Andrews is, is that her real name and does Book of the Month Club recommend her. Well, I don't know about Book of the Month Club, but I sure do. This is one classy lady.

Somehow Andrews fell through a crack in the cosmos which led her on a spiritual journey.

More specifically, it led her to Agnes Whistling Elk, a female shaman who changes her life. In Medicine Woman Agnes teaches Lynn to rely on her own personal power, to face fear head on and confront it, to look beyond what is so seemingly real.

All this happens via Whistling Elk's native American culture and it ends up shattering Andrews' Beverly Hills, "A Gucci on every foot" mentality replacing it with something more meaningful and real, self knowledge and insight.

Agnes is kinda like somebody's crazy grandmother that you can't help but love, still you wonder about her. You might say her cosmic cup runneth over. As Lynn's spiritual mentor she plucks juicy tidbits from the tree of wisdom and offers them up to the ravenous reader.

She teaches Lynn some hard lessons in this series of four books, Medicine Woman, Flight of the Seventh Moon, Jaguar Woman and Star Woman.

I could go into detail on each and every one of these books telling you that Andrews' arch rival and nemesis in all this is Red Dog, an evil male sorcerer. Also that he has stolen the coveted

marriage basket from Agnes and the Sisterhood of Shields, a kind of sorority of shamanesses. However, I want this woman's books to sell so that's all you're getting out of me.

While these books do have a special appeal to women, I think men might enjoy them, too. They do celebrate femaleness and that includes the "female" in men.

Another outstanding quality of all of Andrews books are the graphics, poetry and quotes that set you up for each chapter. I always did have a thing about foreshadowing.

I'll say one thing, Andrews is not without her critics. My only criticism is that sometimes Andrews, as her own main character, does things that seem really dumb. For one thing, she constantly sets herself up, well, like we all do. She keeps making the same old mistakes, well, like we all do. she just can't seem to get out of a vicious circle, well, like we all do at one time or another.

Maybe she isn't so dumb after all, huh? Eat your heart out Don Juan.

Marita Brake

A Single Mother On Public Aid Speaks Out

I feel most people stereotype Public Aid recipients as being dirty, uneducated, and promiscuous. For example, I took Sociology last semester and my instructor asked what we thought Public Aid recipients looked like. The majority of the students said Public Aid recipients were women who were poorly dressed, and their children were dirty and half-dressed. The students said that they believed Public Aid recipients usually haven't finished high school. A majority of the students also thought Public Aid recipients must be promiscuous, because Public Aid recipients' children usually all have different fathers.

You know the myth; now here's the reality

I don't feel it's fair for people to stereotype all Public Aid recipients this way, because some recipients are just victims of circumstance. I myself am a Public Aid recipient and have been looked down on by a lot of people, especially at the grocery store by the cashiers. When I say I'm using food stamps the cashiers become snotty and act as though they're disgusted. People have asked me where I work and when I tell them I'm on Public Aid, which is not something I'm proud of, they say "Oh" and then excuse themselves, as if I'm dirty or something is wrong with me.

Poverty is neither a moral failing nor a social disease

As far as being uneducated--that isn't true for me. I have finished high school, and I also completed Beauty School when I was in high school. I have chosen to return to school on my own to get a better education, so I can get a better job and get off of Public Aid. I go to school with a lot of other women who are on

Public Aid, and they also have chosen to return to school to better themselves. I don't feel it's right for people to stereotype me, since they haven't taken the time to get to know me and my circumstances. I know people don't want to butt in, but I would much rather have someone butt in than stereotype me in this way.

I'm sure most of the girls I go to school with would rather be asked about their situation instead of being stereotyped as "welfare queens."

You see hinges on my heels?

Just because I'm on Public Aid doesn't mean I don't feel an education is important to me as well as for my son. I also feel a lot of people stereotype Public Aid recipients as being promiscuous, which in my case is not true. I was married when my husband and I decided to have a child, so I got pregnant and had RJ. To make a long story short, my marriage ended in divorce five months after RJ's birth.

Obviously, I was not being promiscuous when I had my child. I'm not saying you have to be married to have a monogamous relationship with someone or to share a child with that person. Unfortunately, my husband started to do drugs, and I didn't want my son to grow up in that environment. My divorce left me in a bad financial situation, so I didn't have much other choice than to get on Public Aid. Even though I'm divorced, I don't run around and I'm not promiscuous.

Public Aid does not make my son and me ineligible for self-respect

I want my son to grow up to respect women and himself. I want my son to know that being

intimate with someone should be special. Living the way I do sets an example for my son. I respect myself enough not to be promiscuous, and to wait instead for the right man. Once again, I don't feel it's right for other people to stereotype me when they don't even know me. I know my situation and that I'm trying to better myself. Being on Public Aid is a means for me, and not an end.

I feel everyone has the right to be treated as an individual, and everyone should be given the benefit of the doubt. I know it's not my place to judge other people, so I would appreciate the same from those who look down on me because I'm a Public Aid recipient. I do know that some people abuse the Public Aid program, but not everyone is guilty of abusing it, or fitting the stereotype of the "welfare queen" I have discussed. Try to keep in mind everyone--even single mothers on Public Aid--should be treated as a person, not a stereotype--no matter what!

--Melissa



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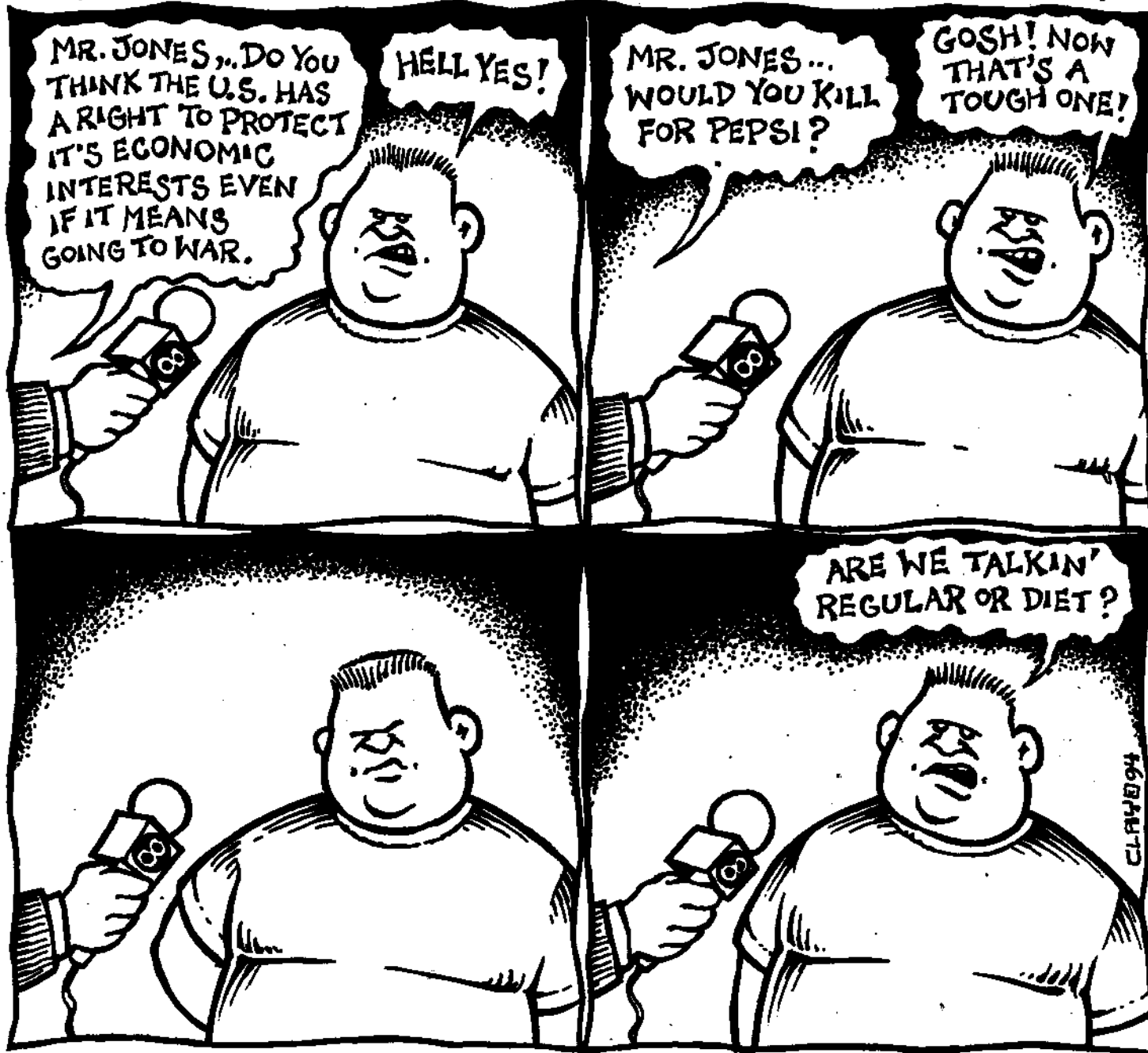
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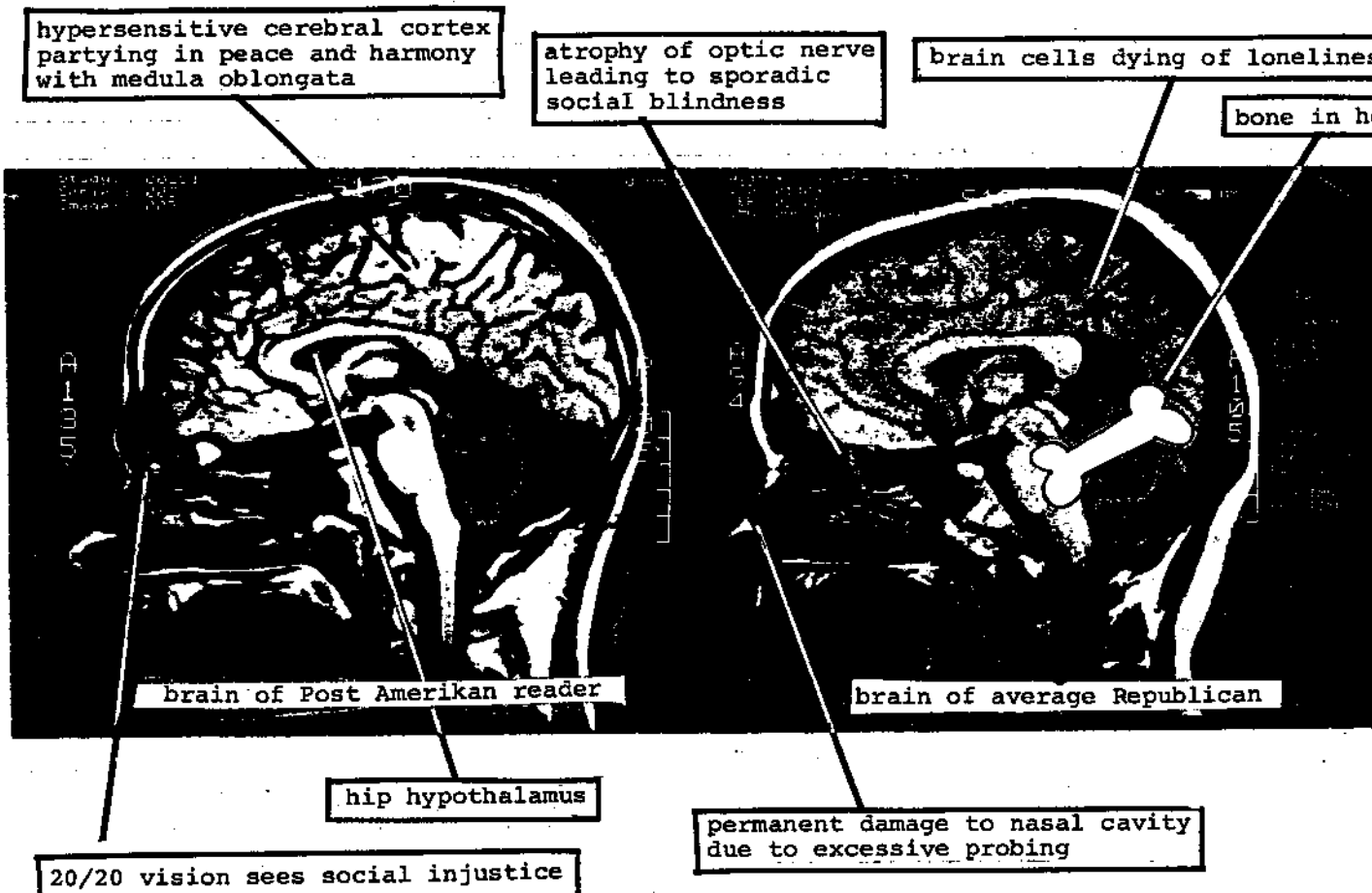
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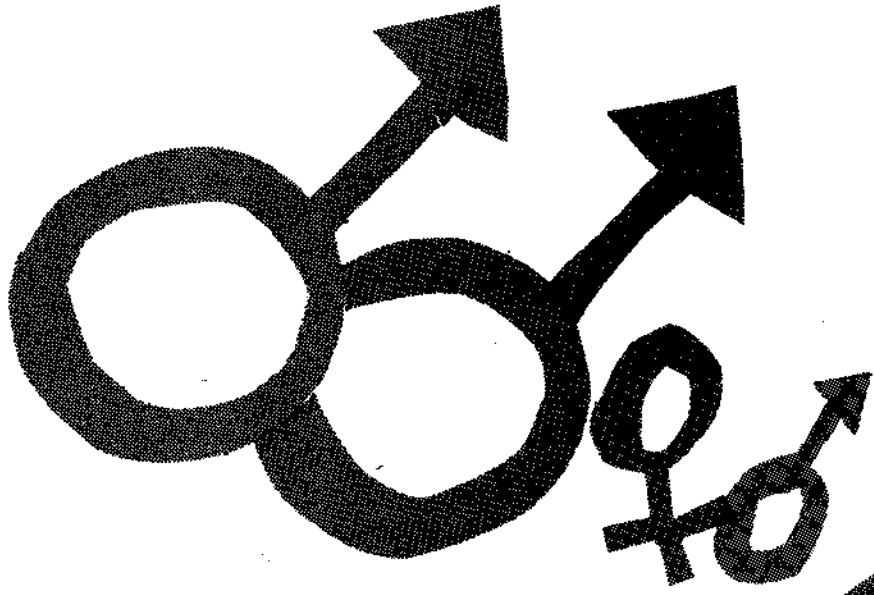
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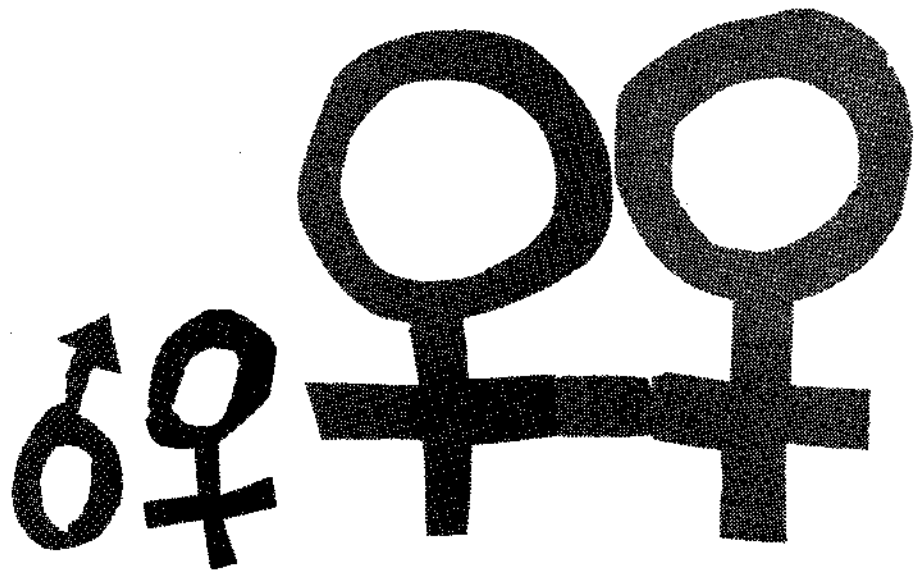


Gay &

Lesbian

Parenting

in B/N





Shared Joy, Shared Burden

Louise: I wrote this about lesbian parenting and gave it to my daughters to read. It inspired a lively discussion among us. We decided that readers would get a more accurate portrait of living as a lesbian family if we included all of our voices.

When Sherrin from the Post called and asked if I would be interested in writing about lesbian mothering in Bloomington-Normal, I found myself (somewhat against my conscious will) saying yes. My oldest daughter will graduate from high school this May. Like most parents, I both celebrate and grieve this passing.

As my daughter begins her adult life, I am slowly, reluctantly letting loose of my role as her protector, guide, and safekeeper. In two years my younger daughter will graduate. The beginning of the end of my mothering (at least in this primal, significant way) is now clearly in sight. I have been reflecting on parenting, on the cycle of life, and on my daughters' lives as my children.

Jo: We're very close. I think we're a lot closer than we would have been. We have a shared joy and a shared burden. Even though it's been a burden at times, it's also been an enriching part of our lives. So many kids our age hate their parents. I would never dream of sneaking out of the house. To betray your trust like that would be awful. Your trust is something I treasure. I think a lot of kids our age don't have that. It's like everything we do, we're interested. We're interested in each other's lives. It's important to us what each other is doing.

Alex: We want to know, and we want each other to know. You can come home from a really hard day and know that there's someone who wants to listen to you. Even if they can't fix it, you know that they want to be there for you. I can't think of anyone else I know that has a relationship with either of their parents like that. I think it's kind of arrogant to assume that it's because you're a lesbian, but I can't see any other reason, not that it doesn't exist. But I don't see it. You've shared with us, and we feel we can share with you.

Louise: This reflection in part has been a reflection of how my lesbianism has affected my daughters and our relationships. Clearly this impact has been heightened by Bloomington-Normal's homophobic climate. Bloomington-Normal is far from a Mecca of diversity-loving folks. While the diversity lovers live among us, generally, our lives have been too often influenced by hatred and fear.

Jo: It's awful that we have to become used to it, but we do. It's not something that we consciously think of a lot. When I do, I have Alex and you to talk to. It's so much a part of my life, the fear.

Alex: In Bloomington-Normal, in my speech class, I debated opposite a person whose argument for the exclusion of gays and lesbians from the military is that they might get beaten up. I still can't believe that he was allowed to attack gays and lesbians the way that he did.

Louise: While I know that many fear us, I know that that fear is reciprocal. I have feared the people my daughters and I live among, work

with, and sometimes even play with. That fear has led us to choose various degrees of in-the-closet behavior. Not wanting to live in the closet, at times, I have been out of the closet. However, depending on the context, I have been in the closet. I wonder how this schizophrenic in-and-out of the closet has been felt by my daughters?

Alex: I don't think that I've ever really been out of the closet. Some people know my mother, know she's a lesbian, and know that I'm her daughter. I don't think that anyone knows me and that my mom's a lesbian. It's kind of a family decision because no one of us has the right to out each other. You have to be careful, because anyone you tell could tell anyone else. That could affect anyone in the family. We could (and would) be excluded from so much. Oh no, don't invite them. Their mom's a lesbian. We have friends whose parents wouldn't let them come to the house anymore. Not that our friends wouldn't deal with it. But whether they would want to deal with it or not, their parents wouldn't let them.

Jo: I told my best friend. She'd been my friend forever and ever (since I was two). She already knew because she walked in on Mom and her friend kissing. She told her parents. Her parents love to have me come over there, but they don't like her to come over here anymore. It was nice to have someone to talk to, but it really wasn't worth losing the closeness in our friendship. That was the price of telling.

Alex: Sometimes I wonder if we shouldn't just all come out. In Bloomington-Normal, I think that it would be dangerous. Sometimes I think that it wouldn't be anything, that we're just afraid. Then you read about a gay bashing, or someone you thought was really humane makes some stupid comment. So, you react to the comment, all the while knowing that if you just said, "Hey, that's my mom you're talking about," it would have so much more impact. But what's our responsibility? Do we have a responsibility to educate?

Jo: You'd learn who your friends are. But, you'd also learn whose parents are homophobic. Would we really want to be friends with someone who wouldn't like us just because our mom's a lesbian?

Louise: I know that when we go to the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, the girls have bloomed. I don't know how much of that bloom is the freedom from gender norms and how much of that freedom is the freedom to be who they are.

Alex: The ultimate summer camp!!! You're not the minority anymore. Well, you're still the minority, but it's an age minority rather than a lifestyle minority. You can say what you want. Even though we're in the minority in terms of age, except for one experience, we've always been treated as real people—not some strange species called children.

Jo: In Michigan, it's being free. In Bloomington-Normal, we always have to watch what we say. Their parents may work with Mom. You could say something and not even think about it that could change their perception of you. n Michigan we're who we want to be.

Louise: Even the best attempts at creating a comfortable, supporting environment must fail to some extent as long as comfort and support outside of the home exist as exceptions rather than the rule.

Alex: One of our best friends, someone we all trusted asked Jo and I to go to the beach with her and her boyfriend and two other couples. She explained that she was trying to ensure that we had enough heterosexual influences in our lives. We were quite offended when we compared the small portion of our lives spent in the lesbian community to the constant barrage of heterosexual influence in everyday life, from the media to strangers passing on the street, to the relationships of close friends, to the assumptions inherent in almost every interaction we have outside the family.

Louise: I have expected my daughters to be not only be aware of both political and personal equality issues. I have expected them to use their voices to advocate for those under attack. Paradoxically, I have expected them to silence their voices to avoid attack.

Jo: I think that as opposed to people with heterosexual parents, you've expected us to be more open-minded than other people are. I think our friends and the people who know us expect us to be the defenders a lot. That has a lot to do with the fact that we are open-minded, because you expected us to be open-minded.

Alex: We in turn expect others to be more closed than we are. We don't expect people to be as open-minded as we are.

Jo: Our friends know that you don't make bad jokes around Alex and Jo. You just don't do it.

Louise: While my lesbianism and the hostile climate in Bloomington-Normal have clearly impacted our lives, I am tempted to deny their importance. After all, I am the person I am—strengths and warts. I would still be a strong advocate for humanism in all its forms. I would still be notoriously bad at picking intimate partners, and notoriously bad at extricating myself from destructive relationships.

Alex: Yeah. If I had to pick between a male jerk and a female jerk, I guess I'd pick the female jerk. At least they don't leave the toilet seat up.

Jo: Yeah, mom, your partners haven't always been the greatest. I guess that I expect more from women than I do men, so it hurts a whole lot more. That's one thing I've learned from you being a lesbian. It's just a sexist to have higher expectations for women as it is to have lower expectations for men.

Jo: I think people expect us to know about homosexual relationships in a way that's impossible for us to know.

Alex: Yeah. When I was in 7th grade, an adult heterosexual friend of the family (25 years older than me) asked me what to do about a woman who was sexually interested in her. Like I would know! I was 12.

Continued



Louise: These qualities have impacted Alex and Jo much more than the vagaries of a mother who identifies herself as a lesbian, but who has not been sexual in years. Why bother with the shit if the rewards aren't there, too? Simply because I am who I am. I want my daughters to be free to choose their relational partners on a basis other than what is expected of them. I want to know that the confinements of the closet have not suffocated me to the point that I no longer know who I am. And I need to know that the air my daughters breathe is not made stale by my choices, but rather has been purified to some extent.

Jo: We wouldn't want it to be any other way. So much of who we are is because you are a lesbian. Our trips to Michigan. Holly Near. Toshi Reagon. Chris Williamson. Heather Bishop.

Alex: So many of our choices would be closed. We wouldn't be aware. We'd maybe know that people who weren't heterosexual were OK, but we wouldn't understand.

Jo: Even our friends who are pretty open about most things, aren't about gender issues.

Alex: You expect us to be educated and not to fall into those awful teenage traps that are culturally dictated - the low self-worth, the supposed necessity of scraping every (almost) hair from our bodies.

Jo: You expect us to be knowledgeable about what we read and how it influences us, that what we read will be a part of us.

Alex: But that's not related to her being a lesbian.

Jo: In some senses it is.

Alex: Well it is, because if she weren't a lesbian, we wouldn't have access to that free-thinking community and those ideas.

Jo: The people that know that you're a lesbian want to know if I'm a lesbian or if I felt any pressure to be a lesbian. The only pressure

we've felt is to be ourselves. Most people our age don't even think they could be anything but heterosexual. But I know that I could be heterosexual; I could be homosexual; I could be bisexual. I don't have to choose right now. If and when we bring someone home, the issue won't be if that someone is male or female. The issue will be whether that someone will be good for us, and if we'll be good for them.

Alex: We're able to look critically at positive and negative images of heterosexual and homosexual images and lifestyles. We can pick out the stereotypes from the reality. We can see the good from the bad. I can't imagine being who I am without the experiences we've had that happened solely as an outgrowth of your lesbianism. It's affected every part of our beings.

--Louise, Alex and Jo

We Are Family

Rearing children as a lesbian is not much different from rearing children in any family. There are times of relaxing video family evenings together, stuffing Christmas stockings at 2 AM, surprise birthday parties, new puppies, and camping trips full of "roughing it" with Eli cheesecake. Also come unexpected trips to school to pick up a sick child, chats with the school counselor, wondering how the budget will allow for school supplies each Fall, chauffeuring a paper route when a child oversleeps, and searching the neighborhood when one does not come straight home from school. The only difference is that both parents who are active in the children's lives are women.

My own children are older than my partner's children, so they did not share life's common stages together. My boys were essentially grown when my partner's children were in high school. Before we attempted to combine families all of us had known one another for several years. One of my sons decided that the best solution was to move in with his father for a while. My other son continued to act as a teenager, mostly involved in his own activities - somewhat aloof from this "new combined family".

We attempted to live together in a common home, but because of the ages and developmental stages of the family members, we soon found that living in separate houses was best. I was personally dealing with the ups and downs of menopause, which was difficult for all concerned. (One aspect of lesbian lives that is not often addressed is how TWO women living together manage to go through menopause together!) We continued to be very involved in each other's lives but with space for each family's individualities.

Taking vacations together has always been a treat. When we were on holiday, we had the opportunity to feel safer, less guarded, more natural. To avoid the constant censorship of the Bloomington-Normal area, the idea of safety in the city was compelling. Sometimes I have felt that I was living for the next vacation, where we could hold hands as we walked down the sidewalk with no one paying particular attention.

I have often been asked, did I tell my children I was a lesbian? No, I did not discuss this with my children until they were grown. It was not safe to talk openly with my children. It would have put my boys in a vulnerable position because of the threat of a lengthy custody battle. I did not feel the liability was worth the risk. Out of curiosity, I asked my son recently if he knew I was a lesbian when he was growing up. He replied that yeah, he had always known but thought I did not want to talk about it. He always thought of me as Mom, and this was just part of me - not something to be questioned, just normal.

Families come in all varieties. The important thing seems to be developing a nurturing environment where all are comfortable and caring. The so-called nuclear family we started as was not particularly healthy. The father was rarely home because of work, and therefore spent little time with the boys. My job was to be mother and father to them, 24 hours a day. In our new modified family, they recognized my partner and I as the caregivers. She was the one who reminded them of those special days like my birthday and Mother's day, just as I did with her children. We tried to work together as a team in parenting. The important thing was that we were a family - regardless of how the neighbors, teachers or our culture may have viewed it. We have been there for one another. We will continue to be.

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"We Are Proud; We Are Gay;

Parenting in the 90s is difficult even under the best circumstances. Children being raised by two parents in a stable household are believed to have an advantage. The argument arises from the genders of the parents. There are two schools of thought regarding the gender of parents.

1. Two stable parents in a nurturing household is best for a child.
2. Two specifically heterosexual parents heading a household is best.

The second opinion is often negated by the vast number of single parent households in America. The majority of these households are single female head of households that hover just above or just below the poverty line. This type of family is still preferred by our society over same gender parents, regardless of how deprived or abused children are; it is still considered to be better than having gay or lesbian households.

There are quite a few lesbian and gay families in our community. We are vital and giving and add to the unique cultural mix of our community. Our children are the same as any other children you see in the playground, at church, in a school play, hanging out at the mall. Some of our children are even grown with families of their own. The fact that we are like everyone else gives the impression that we are invisible or don't really exist in our community.

Tom and I have been together roughly thirteen years. We have a typical teenage daughter in high school. I am the natural parent of our daughter, Heidi. We are the only family structure Heidi has been raised in since the age of two. Over the past decade or so we often heard from new acquaintances that they had no idea there were people like us in Bloomington, and more than that, we were so ordinary! Their astonishment was genuine.

The early years of our family were uncertain because we feared some attack by a right-wing person who would strip us of custody in the courts. We isolated ourselves within a liberal community of people in the early 80s. The idea of two men raising a very young girl could easily alarm people. So we set about building a web of legal documents and papers to protect ourselves.

The next phase of our family growth was to peer out into the community and world and try to find anyone else like us. We did not connect closely with the gay and lesbian community here for the simple reason we had a child. We soon encountered several lesbian households who provided us with some connection, but we could not find any gay men like ourselves. In the early 80s, from our point of view, it was uncommon for male couples to start or have families. The majority we encountered had children from previous heterosexual relationships. Monogamy and family in the gay male community would not seem desirable until well into the onslaught of the AIDS epidemic. Any type of role model for our family appeared to us to be nonexistent. We would have to model our family structure on our own morals and principles.

Raising a child is fraught with challenges day to day. The first serious decision was child care. This is a very 90s topic but was critical to us in the early 80s. We had some concern about child care because either Tom or I would be dropping off or picking our daughter up from day care and our relationship would be obvious. This proved not to be a problem because we held ourselves out as a family and we were obviously raising a happy and well adjusted girl. The people at the daycare center became our allies in short time.

Proper education of our children is a universal concern. We made the daring choice of sending our daughter to a Catholic grade school, even though we are all Unitarian. The primary reasons were that the teacher/student ratio was excellent and that our daughter would learn the basics of Christianity that we could not or would not teach her. During Heidi's years at St. Mary's grade school Tom and I held ourselves quite low key. We would attend large school activities together, but conferences and more intimate school functions were attended only by me. We weren't an openly gay family, but it was known among some people. For the most part I was perceived as a single father. This perception often put me in the oddest situations—the priest constantly kept trying to get me to come to Catholic single functions. It seemed that they were out to get me a wife, since fathers really weren't capable of raising children alone, especially girls. I had crashed into another wall of prejudice, that of the inept male heterosexual parent who can only provide and not nurture.

The Lover Speaks

I first met Ron in February of 1983. I wish I could say we met on some romantic picnic or at some very sophisticated party, but we met the way most gay men in Bloomington-Normal met in those days . . . late at night, under the sheets. On the way to Ron's apartment that first night, he explained that he had a daughter and that he would have to get her from the babysitter; and so my life as a gay co-parent began.

Even before meeting Ron I had wanted children. I was raised in a large family and when I left that family and later formed my "gay family," I knew I was missing out on the special gifts that only children can bring into your life. Some gay men and women who have these feelings go into teaching, and often into a lifetime of being in the closet. Some very brave gay men and women find ways to produce children of their own or to adopt. I was lucky; I met a man who was willing to share the role of parent with me from the beginning. I was also lucky because I met a three-year-old child who was willing to love me as much as I grew to love her and who accepted me as a second parent from the very start

What have been my biggest fears? That our daughter would be ridiculed by those who discovered that she was being raised by two gay men. That she would one day grow to hate me for exposing her to a sometimes hostile world. That Ron would become ill or would be killed in a wreck or some such thing and that I would lose all standing as our daughter's other parent. That our daughter's biological mother or or grandparents would descend upon us one day and take her away. That our daughter would become suddenly ill or incapacitated and that I would not be recognized as the parent in such a critical medical situation.

What have been my biggest rewards? The acceptance of our daughter and the love she has shared with me these thirteen years. The acceptance of her grandparents. The acceptance, protection and love shared by friends, by members of the Unitarian Church and its wonderfully supportive minister, and by certain of our daughter's teachers. The biggest reward, or course, has been watching our cute, blond-haired girl grow into a mature, intelligent, beautiful, self-assured woman.

How would I say we are different from other families? I would say that we are very much the same. We are all too busy for our own good. We eat spaghetti sauce out of the jar more often

than we eat gourmet. We argue about curfew, grades, dates, homework, too much time on the phone and especially about whose turn it is to do the dishes. We laugh together. We share hard times. We say "I love you" when we go to bed at night. If there really is a difference, I would say it is this: without the support most families take for granted, we have had to build our own support systems based on honesty, trust, and love. Those are the only three things we could cling to in both the bad and the good times. For many years we had only each other. For many years we and a very few others were the only ones who recognized us as a family.

I remember that day in October of 1993 when Ron and I were married before an audience of more than one hundred people. We had asked our daughter if she would present us with our rings, and she did with dignity and grace. Then, we all hugged. In front of God and a congregation of our friends, we acknowledged in that moment that we were a family who did hug, a family who was not afraid to publicly show our affection for one another, that above all other things in the world, we were a FAMILY.

—Tom O. McCully



We Are In The PTA"

The need for a family to connect with a community of spiritual people is fundamental to personal growth. The decision to find a church was something of an exercise in elimination. The majority of religions would not accept us and we had our own prejudices about Christianity. I was a "recovering" Catholic and Tom was a former Baptist. We were in need of a liberal theology and a caring community that we could grow as a family in. A friend told me about the Unitarian Church and that I should visit. Heidi and I were regular visitors for some time and then I decided to join the church. Tom didn't really get involved for many years because he felt the church should first have some outward signs of support for homosexuals. We lived our life openly in the church. Heidi and I thrived and I became a very active member of the congregation, participating in numerous committees and even teaching Sunday school on occasion. We were happy but not really out in the church and there were only a handful of other gay and lesbian members. This was all to change.

The gay rights movement went into overdrive in the 1990s and the gay and lesbian community began to redefine itself here and nationally. We joined The National Gay and Lesbian Parents Association so we could hopefully reach others like ourselves. We attended gay pride marches and donated funds to organizations, as well as building our own library of gay and lesbian literature and magazines. We became politically active, locally and nationally, as the fight for our rights escalated.

This past summer our family attended The Stonewall 25 festivities in New York City. The national conference for the National Gay and Lesbian Parents Coalition was at this same time in suburban New York. This was the first time we had attended and it was a tremendous experience for all three of us. Heidi connected with the teenage crowd and we met other fathers much like ourselves. We met young male couples who had adopted children; this was new to us. The AIDS era was having its affect by creating a desire in gay men to start their own families. Gay men with children not from a previous heterosexual relationship had been a rare thing.

We marched in the Stonewall 25 march with the contingent of parents from around the globe. It was exhilarating to hear the roar of the crowd directed in support of us. We chanted to the crowd, "we are proud; we are gay; we are in the PTA."

Heidi followed her own youth group's agenda. Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere (COLAGE) is the name of our kids suborganization. Heidi was elected the spokesperson to speak on behalf of COLAGE at the rally held in Central Park. Heidi got up on the stage—the same stage shared with celebrities and activists of renown—in front of tens of thousands of people and stated the kids support of their parents. At that moment we had never been so proud of our daughter, of ourselves and of the movement.

We carry the flame of righteousness and it burns brightly in our home for the whole world to see.

—Ron Frazier

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Issues

"Unfit" in Nebraska

A statewide ban on foster parenting for gay and lesbian individuals has been implemented in Nebraska, infuriating local activist groups and sparking outcries of discrimination and prejudice.

Mary Dean Harvey, Director of the Nebraska Department of Social Services, issued the new anti-gay policy, saying it was in the best interest of the state to place children "in the most family-like setting," and not with gay and lesbian parents.

Harvey's policy ignores the exhaustive research that has found no significant developmental differences between children of lesbian and gay parents and those of heterosexual parents.

The new policy tears families apart, destroys the trust, love and care parents give their foster children and puts the youth of Nebraska in peril. Nebraskans of conscience must oppose the policy and make Nebraska safe for ALL families. Activists across the country must join in a call to repeal the policy.

ACTION: Register your opinion by writing, faxing, phoning or emailing Mary Dean Harvey, Dir., Nebraska Dept. of Social Services, P.O. Box 95026, Lincoln, NE 68509-5026, (402) 471-3121 phone, dss0003@vmhost.cdp.state.ne.us e-mail. Copy Governor Ben Nelson at P.O. Box 94848, Lincoln, NE 68509-4848, (402) 471-6031 fax, (402)471-2244 phone, gov0001@vmhost.cdp.state.ne.us e-mail. Write letters to the editors of local papers expressing your outrage especially if you are a gay or lesbian foster parent. Write: Omaha World-Herald, Public Pulse, World Herald Square, Omaha, NE 68102 or fax (402) 345-4547 & Lincoln Star-Journal, P.O. Box 81689, Lincoln, NE, 68501-81689 or fax (402)473-7291. Include a daytime number with your letter to the editor.

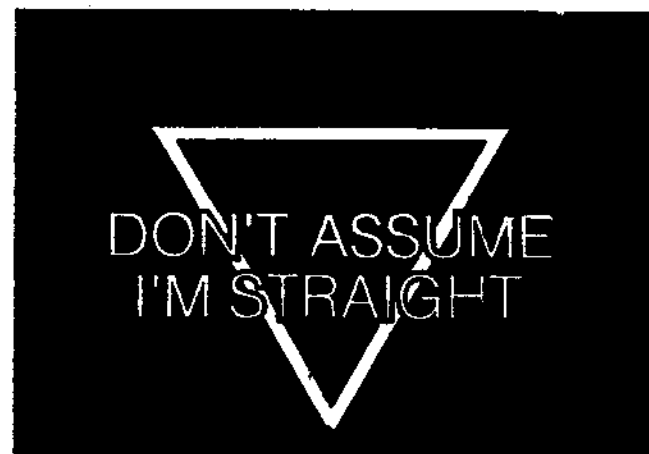
→ Lone Star Hate

An article in the February issue of *Vanity Fair* and a January 25 ABC Prime Time Live news piece both examined the trail of murder through Texas that has led to the deaths of eight gay men in 16 months. *Vanity Fair*, ABC News and "Prime Time Live" need to hear from their audience to offset the barrage of mail and phone calls from the Far Right condemning their work.

Meanwhile in Washington, DC, in the same week that ABC examined the relationship between anti-gay rhetoric and murder in his home state, House Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-TX) referred to openly gay Barney Frank (D-MA) as Barney "Fag." While he later apologized for what he called and "unintentional mangling" of Frank's name, it is clear that Armey needs an education from activists on the damage caused by hate speech.

ACTION: Commend ABC News, Roone Arledge, president, 47 W. 66th St, New York, NY, 10023, (212) 456-4000, (212)456-4968 fax: Prime Time Live, 147 Columbus Ave., 3rd floor, NY, NY 10023, 212-456-1600, 212-456-1246 fax: *Vanity Fair*, 350 Madison Ave, NY, NY 10017, VFAIR@aol.com, email. Educate Rep. Armey, write, call or fax: H327A-Capitol Bldg, Washington, DC 20515, (202)225-4000, (202) 225-7614 fax.

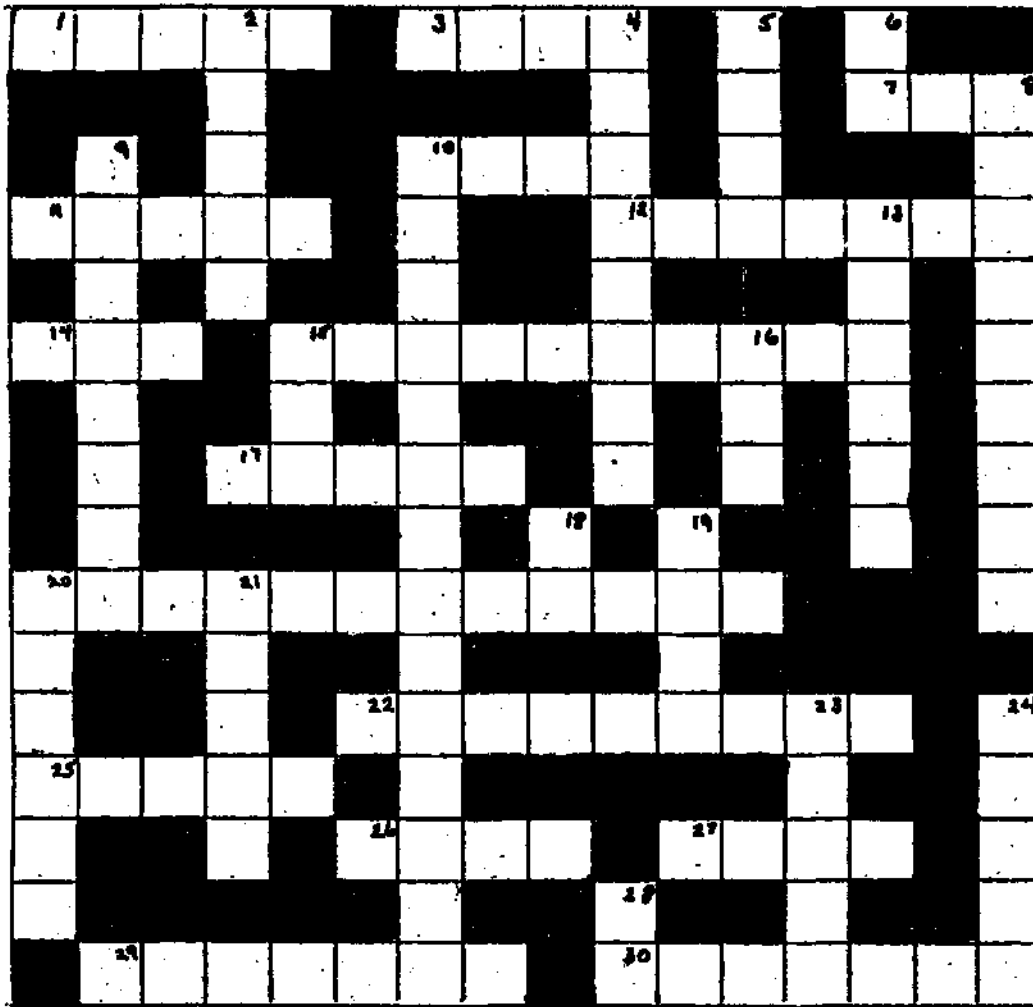
Source NGLTF Feb. 1995





Larger - than - Life Figures VI: Cartoon Con"fat"ential

No Diet Day



Spring is here and with it comes International No-Diet Day. This May 6th more than a hundred groups and individuals from over ten countries will celebrate the day to enjoy food, celebrate our bodies, movement and life.

Even if you're still dieting, you can celebrate No Diet Day. Here's how:

1. Make a pledge to refrain from dieting for at least one day. Don't count calories or fat intake. Don't feel guilty!
2. Eat when your body is hungry and enjoy the food you eat.
3. Refrain from weighing or measuring yourself for at least one day.
4. Exercise for pleasure and health. Concentrate on enjoying the movement and activity—not on many calories you are burning.
5. Throw away your diet pills.
6. Demand diet refunds! If you have recently spent money on unsuccessful diet products or programs, contact the diet company and demand your money back.
7. Request long-term (five year) diet "success" rates before spending any more money. Diet company advertising almost always focuses on current or recent dieters, because they don't want to discuss their long-term failure rate!

8. Educate yourself about the realities of dieting. Read fat positive magazines and books or watch size acceptance videos.
9. Join or organize a "Stop Dieting" support group. If none are available, try a general self-esteem group.
10. If you're considering weight-loss surgery, don't do it! These surgeries can cause death, lifetime health problems, and don't always result in permanent weight loss.

11. Contact the Central Illinois chapter of NAAFA at P.O. Box 363, Normal, IL 61761, (phone: 309-454-2128) for more information about No Diet Day!

(thanx to NAAFA)

ACROSS

- 1 Popeye's nemesis
- 3 Years after Beetle Bailey's Sarg
- 7 Did lots of marryin' in Li'l Abner
- 10 Yogi or Barney, e.g.
- 11 Rose is Rose's FA hubby
- 12 Warner Bros' corn-pone capon
- 14 Kryptonite color that makes the Man of Steel fat
- 15 This Freak Brother was famous for his cat
- 17 Matt Groening blue-collar Everyman
- 20 This turn-of-the-century German family featured 2 boisterous kids
- 22 Eek the Cat's beloved
- 25 Underground heroine who finds love as a Girl Blimp
- 26 The only penguin in residence at Bloom County
- 27 Wonder Woman's female Army friend
- 29 Dagwood's heavy-handed boss
- 30 The world's most famous hippo explorer, Peter ?

DOWN

- 2 Little Lulu's main squeeze
- 4 Torments Odie and lives for lasagne
- 5 Otto Soglow monarch, the Little ?
- 6 George Jetson's boss (init)
- 8 Zap Comix's underground sage
- 9 Ned Sonntag intergalactic super-heroine
- 10 Fr. Fred McCarthy created this 50's monk
- 13 Asterix the Gaul's hefty honcho
- 15 British barfly Andy Capp's zaftig wife
- 16 Snow White's bespectacled dwarf M.D.
- 18 Creator of 25 Across (init)
- 19 Mickey Mouse villain, Pegleg ?
- 20 Rose O'Neill's plump cherubs have become very collectible
- 21 Tom Wilson philosopher, best known for refrigerator-magnet wisdom
- 23 Harvey Comics not-so-"little" girl
- 24 Mustachioed no-good-nik foe of moose and squirrel
- 28 Porky or Petunia's initials

Becky Fox



I Pledge

that I will not diet for one day, on May 6th, International No-Diet Day. Instead of trying to change my body to fit someone else's standards, I will accept myself just as I am.
I will feed my body if it's hungry.
I will feel no shame or guilt about my size or about eating.
I will think about whether or not dieting has improved my health and well-being.
And I will try to do at least one thing that I was putting off "until I lose weight".

Signed _____

Address _____ Phone _____

For an International No-Diet Day brochure and a light blue ribbon, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to:
National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance (NAAFA), P.O. Box 188620, Sacramento, CA, 95818



Koop In The Land Of Anti-Fat

Koop's Crusade

What do ya do when you're a former surgeon general with time on your hands? If you're bearded Reaganite C. Everett Koop, here's one solution: cozy up to the diet industry and start a widely publicized "crusade" to Shape Up America! Funded by the likes of Weight Watchers, Heinz Corporation (makers of Lean Cuisine) and the Kellogg Company, Koop's program has \$30 million dollars pledged in funding to attack what he calls a "multibillion dollar drain on the U.S. economy"--fatness.

Koop's five point program calls for new public education efforts, workplace and insurance incentives for weight loss efforts, increased funding for school and community-based fitness and nutrition programs, physician intervention in obesity prevention and weight management, plus significant increases in federal funding for obesity research. Think we're talking about unbiased research here? Doesn't seem likely when Koop's program committee includes four researchers with close ties to the diet industry.

National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance (NAAFA) Executive Director Sally Smith had a few choice words to say about the heavy weight loss emphasis of Koop's program. "Koop is handing Americans a prescription for failure," Smith accused in a statement prepared after the December announcement of Shape Up America! "Instead of encouraging people to take another ride on the diet merry-go-round, Dr. Koop and his colleagues should be encouraging people to improve their health status independent of weight loss."

Also taking issue with Koop's statistics regarding the "costs of obesity," Smith noted that "He absurdly includes the \$33 billions that the diet industry rakes in annually, half of which is for diet soft drinks. Nowhere does he acknowledge that what he cites as costs of obesity are actually costs associated with treating the side effects of dieting and weight loss surgery."

Not all professional organizations have chosen to affiliate themselves with Koop's boondoggle. The Society for Nutrition Education declined to become a part of Koop's coalition, stating that while they supported the group's focus on physical activity and prevention, they also supported "a new weight paradigm that opposes fat phobia, deals honestly with the difficulties of long term maintenance of weight loss, accepts the goal of health promotion and quality of life rather than slenderness, and recognizes the rights of heavy people to make decisions about their own goals and behavior."

Since the announcement of Shape Up America!, ads for the program have appeared in the Sunday papers, typically paired with a blurb for an affiliated diet product. One recent Shape Up! ad in The Pantagraph, for instance, was followed by an ad for Ultra Slim-Fast, "proud sponsor" of Koop's campaign. (There's a healthy option for ya: 200 calories of powdered crap!) For the diet industry, riding on the coat tails of the well-known Koop helps to restore the tarnished veneer of

legitimacy. Despite humongous profits, the past few years have been ominous ones for the diet industry--what with threats of congressional regulation, lawsuits and general growing public distrust. Shape Up America! is the diet industry's dream: an army of diet doctors forcing "intervention" on a fattening populace.

Which brings us to one of the nastier parts of Koop's proposal: workplace incentives for weight loss. On paper, this sounds pretty innocuous, but in practice, it's been anything but. In the past, companies like U-Haul have interpreted "incentive" to mean financially penalizing those employees who don't successfully participate in so-called "wellness" programs.

It's a scam, and like so many scams in the land of anti-fat, it's done under the guise of "helping people." One quick indicator of the program's basic fraudulence: on bottom of the ad announcing Koop's program, in the smallest legible lettering possible, is the following statement: "Shape Up America! recognizes that some people have a genetic predisposition to overweight conditions, and others may suffer from eating disorders," followed by a recommendation to contact your physician before undertaking any program of diet and exercise. If Koop and his program were sincere, that little disclaimer would have been as prominently displayed as the rest of his ad. . .

--Bill S.





News From Voice For

ACLU Obtains Permanent Injunction

Low-income women in Illinois won an important victory December 2 when Cook County Circuit Court Judge Everett Braden ruled that the state must pay for abortions that are medically necessary to protect a woman's health. The women and their physicians, represented by the ACLU challenged the Illinois statutes which prohibit use of state funds to pay for abortions, even when the pregnancy will result in a grave, lifelong impairment to the woman's health.

"This ruling returns some compassion for women who suffer from medical conditions aggravated by pregnancy," said ACLU Reproductive Rights Project Director Colleen Connell. "Forcing a woman to continue a pregnancy when that pregnancy seriously endangers her health is unconscionable."

One month after Judge Braden issued the ruling, Governor Edgar announced that the state would not appeal. Unfortunately, newly elected Attorney General Jim Ryan announced in January that, over Edgar's objection, he would try to appeal. It is discretionary with the Illinois Supreme Court as to whether it will allow the appeal.

At issue in the suit was a 1977 Illinois state law that allowed state reimbursement for abortions only when a woman would die without an abortion. Lawmakers instituted the restrictions shortly after the Hyde Amendment, a federal ban on Medicaid funding of most abortions, was first passed.

The class-action suit, *Doe v. Wright*, was filed in Illinois on behalf of low-income women in Illinois whose health would be endangered should they continue a pregnancy, yet who are denied Medicaid funding for abortions because their lives are not in imminent danger. The lead plaintiff, a 16 year-old rape victim Jane Doe, was seen by several doctors who concluded that continuation of her pregnancy put her at risk of health complications such as pregnancy-induced hypertension, which in turn can lead to compromised cardiac, renal and liver function, hematological abnormalities; endocrine and metabolic changes; and stroke. In addition, a physician determined that carrying to term would have severely affected Doe's emotional

and psychological development, and perpetuated the adverse psychological implications of the rape.

Doe's abortion was eventually paid for by private donations. However, until Braden's ruling, countless other women whose cases are never brought to the public attention continued to suffer from medically dangerous pregnancies under the Medicaid funding ban. Cases in which funding would have been denied under state restrictions include circumstances in which a woman suffered from sickle-cell disease (long associated with a high rate of pregnancy complications), or was at risk of septic abortion due to the presence of an IUD that could not be removed, or had a history of psychiatric illness treatable only by medication that would damage the fetus.

ACLU attorneys argued that the ban on funding such abortions violated numerous provisions of the Illinois Constitution, including the Equal Protection Clause, the explicit prohibition on gender bias (the ban affects only women) and the prohibition on special legislation. In addition, the Illinois Constitution's privacy provision and due process clause render a flat ban on state funded abortions illegal.

"This decision vindicates the rights of Illinois' most vulnerable women," said Connell. "We hope that it sends a message that the courts will no longer stand for legislators playing politics with women's lives."

Judge Braden's ruling marked the Reproductive Rights Project's second abortion-funding victory in December. In late November 1994 Project attorneys successfully challenged a ban on reimbursing abortions for Medicaid-eligible women who became pregnant as a result of rape or incest.

A federal court entered a Temporary Restraining Order against that portion of the Illinois Medical Assistance Code, which is inconsistent with federal law. That law, pursuant to both the 1994 and 1995 versions of the Hyde Amendment, requires that states reimburse rape and incest abortions as a condition of receiving federal funding for the state Medicaid program.

Source: The Illinois Brief- ACLU

CHANGING SEX HABITS?

Nearly one-third of Americans say they have changed their sex lives to avoid AIDS, including using condoms more and having sex with fewer partners. Some, according to the survey, have given up sex entirely.

Even those at extremely low risk of getting the disease are being more careful, though researchers found that people with the greatest chance of AIDS are doing the most to protect themselves.

"People respond to the idea that sex is potentially a life or death decision," said Joel A. Feinleib of the University of Chicago.

The findings of the Sex in the Age of AIDS survey are based on newly analyzed data from the National Health and Social Life Survey, the largest random survey ever conducted of American sexuality.

The study, much of which was published in a book last year, was based on 90-minute interviews with 3,434 Americans about their most private acts and preferences.

Source: JET

Lesbian Couple Appeals Decision

Arguing that granting adoption rights is in the best interest of a lesbian couple's children, the American Civil Liberties Union in January filed a motion to appeal a state court decision which denied the request of Mary, a lesbian, to adopt her partner Kathy's children.

The ACLU became involved after the guardian ad litem challenged an interim adoption order granted to Mary. The order allowed Mary, a physician, to put the children on her health insurance, which made it possible for Kathy to stay home and parent full-time.

The children were put in danger of losing their insurance, however, when Cook County Circuit Court Judge Marjan Staniec ruled in November 1994 that although married couples and single people can legally adopt children, that privilege did not apply to two unmarried people, even when the adoption may be in the child's best interest.

"We believe that the Circuit Court's decision is flawed," said Geoffrey Kors, Director of the ACLU of Illinois' Gay and Lesbian Rights Project. "The statute clearly states that persons may adopt, and that adoption decision should be made in the best interest of the child. Nowhere does the statute limit adoption to married couples and single people. Also, the Constitution prevents the enactment of laws that deprive people of equal protection and due process. Since lesbians and gay men cannot marry, a law denying them the right to adopt would violate these constitutional protections."

Not allowing the adoption will have serious ramifications for the children.

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Choice

"If the adoption petition is ultimately denied, my partner will have to go to work so that the children will be covered by her insurance, and we will have to put them in day care," said the partner seeking the adoption. "The other option is that my partner, as a "single parent," would be eligible for public assistance. Also, if something were to happen to my partner, I would not have the right to raise the children in the only home they have ever known."

Last year, the ACLU successfully represented another lesbian seeking to adopt her partner's child. It was the first time an Illinois court recognized the right of an unnamed couple to adopt. However, Circuit Court Judge Stephen Yates' decisions are not binding on other Circuit Court judges. The Appellate Court could set a binding precedent.

Source: Illinois Brief- ACLU

Racial Characteristics shouldn't be factors in genetic research

Researchers recently concluded race is merely a "useless" term for a superficial characteristic, and scientist should abandon the use of racial differences in analyzing genetic diversity among humans.

The findings were revealed during the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Because differences in color are conspicuous, it "makes us think that races are very different, while they are not when we look under the skin," Dr. L.L. Cavalli Sforza, a genetics professor at Stanford University, said in the Los Angeles Times.

The professor has criticized the book *The Bell Curve*, which argues that apparent racial differences in measured intelligence can be attributed to genetics. With the tools of molecular biology, scientists can peer past superficial human characteristics to explore more powerful, underlying genetic unities and differences, making old racial categories look increasingly arbitrary and irrelevant, experts said.

C. Loring Brace, a biological anthropologist at the University of Michigan added in the Times: "Race is a social construct derived mainly from perceptions conditioned by events of recorded history, and it has no basic biological reality."

"Social scientists are confronted with a dilemma in that they use racial categories in order to conduct their research studies, to compare and contrast life chances or social and economic progress; at the same time there is an understanding that race has no biological reality," explained Michael Omi, an expert in ethnic studies at the University of California at Berkeley.

Source: JET

Arlen Specter Supports Foster Nomination

Support for Dr. Henry Foster's campaign to become the first Black man to hold the post of U.S. Surgeon General has been increasing. Even from the most surprising places: the top ranks of the Republican party.

Pennsylvania Senator Arlen Specter held a private meeting with Dr. Foster. Specter is the only pro-choice Republican presidential candidate and one of the pigs who attempted to crucify Anita Hill during the Clarence Thomas nomination hearing. Specter blasted those who would deny Foster the post of the nation's top doctor based on the fact that he performed abortions in the past.

"I don't like seeing a person railroaded before they are given a chance to express himself," said Specter. "I am prepared to go to the mat on the Foster nomination on the issue that no one ought to be disqualified from being surgeon general of the United States for performing abortions, which is a medical procedure legal under the U.S. Constitution"

Source: JET

Newt to attack abortion rights

During the second 100 days of Gingrich Rule, brace yourself for what promises to be the most vehement attack on abortion yet: an attempt by the right to persuade Americans that abortion increases women's risk of breast cancer. The battle lines are being drawn, and so far, most pro choice groups have played right into Newt's hands.

The trouble began last November, when the Journal of the National Cancer Institute published a study by epidemiologists at Seattle's Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center showing that for women under 45, induced abortion doubles breast cancer risk. "Approximately 1 woman in 100 develops breast cancer by age 45," says Janet Daling, the study's lead researcher. "Abortion raises that risk to about 2 per 100."

The risk depends, in part, on a woman's lifetime exposure to estrogen and the changes the hormone triggers in breast cells. Reproductive events-age of first menses, childbearing and breast-feeding history, age at menopause, spontaneous (miscarriage) and induced abortion-all affect estrogen exposure, breast-cell development, the breast cancer risk, as do environmental factors, such as exposure to organochlorines.

Anti-choice forces who got wind of Daling's study fired off op-ed pieces like the one by Lynn Murphy in the San Francisco Chronicle, who hailed the report as "the 26th study showing that abortion greatly increases risk of breast cancer." Murphy urged "a moratorium on abortion until it's proven safe."



Unfortunately, most pro-choice groups have focused on the study's potential bias and limitations. With the exception of a few balanced fact sheets by some women's health organizations, pro choice groups either dismiss the alleged association or concede the possibility of increased risk but call it "infinitesimal."

Such denials do a disservice to women and set pro-choice groups up as sitting ducks for GOP sharpshooters. Women deserve the facts. Mother Jones magazine conducted a search of the medical literature from 1985 to the present. The uncovered 24 studies dealing with abortion as a possible risk factor for breast cancer. The findings were mixed.

Nine studies show that induced abortion may increase the risk of contracting breast cancer, by as little as 10 percent to as much as 100 percent; 4 studies of spontaneous abortions show they increase risk. Abortion before a first full-term pregnancy appears to increase risk the most (one study shows risk increasing with the number of abortions). Eight studies, 7 of which were of induced abortions, show no increased risk. Finally, 3 studies show that abortion decreases breast cancer risk.

At least four more studies are in progress; preliminary data from two suggest that abortion does increase breast cancer risk.

If abortion is linked to breast cancer, the risk increase appears to be modest, on the order of that observed in women who have taken the pill for many years or used post-menopausal estrogen replacement therapy (ERT), or who had their first period before 12, their first child after 30, or no children at all. The risk increase appears much less significant than the risk of having a mother or sister with the disease.

Continued



When the right starts advocating a "moratorium on abortion until it's proven safe," progressives should infuse the debate with something it has largely lacked - perspective. Pro-choice groups should not fall into the trap of defending abortion as absolutely safe. It may not be. Women should have access to all information that affects their health-and the right to choose what to do. For example, ERT may increase breast cancer risk, but it decreases the risk of heart attack, making it a reasonable, in fact, potentially lifesaving choice for many women. And Newt and his pals should not be allowed to frame the debate within the narrow construct of banning abortion. After all, there are risks to carrying a pregnancy to term, will the right declare a moratorium on childbearing? Congressional hearings must address our broader obligation to investigate all causes of breast cancer, and to find a cure.

Source: Mother Jones

HELMS SEEKS LAW TO RESTRICT GAYS IN GOVERNMENT

In January Jesse Helms introduced legislation that could limit the ability of gays who work for the Federal Government to form employee associations.

The measure would ban the spending of Federal money to promote or carry out any program for Government employees that "would compel, instruct, encourage, urge or persuade employees or officials to embrace, accept, condone or celebrate homosexuality as a legitimate or normal life style."

Gay rights activists say the measure, which they call the first such bill to be introduced in the new Republican-controlled Congress, would sharply curtail the activities of groups made

up of gay or lesbian Federal employees. These organizations, which exist in 22 Federal agencies, as well as among Congressional staffs, do not receive Federal money now, although some have in the past. But leaders of some of these groups say the measure, if enacted, could bar them from meeting in Federal offices, using interoffice mail for communications or posting notices on bulletin boards. Such things are currently permitted for other groups, including Black or Hispanic employee organizations, as well as personal clubs like Weight Watchers.

In January the Republican majority in the House barred lawmakers from spending any of their office money on space and staff for various legislative caucuses, including the Congressional Black Caucus and the Women's Caucus. But the Helms measure is the first to try to halt any Federal support for groups formed by civil service employees of political employees.

"As a gay staffer, I am greatly threatened by something like this," said Robert Raben, a staff member of Representative Barney Frank, a Massachusetts Democrat and one of a few members of Congress who is homosexual. In fact, rumor has it that several Republican Congressmen are gay, including Dan Rostenkowski's replacement Michael Flannagan. But perhaps we shouldn't be surprised, after all, as someone once said "you don't have to be straight to be a jackass."

Raben said "It is the only legislation that I can think of that is targeted at a group of people, and it's frightening to see the machinery of the legislature geared up against me as a gay man."

So far the measure has not attracted any co-sponsors, and it is doubtful that the Senate will consider the bill any time soon because Republican leaders say they first want to pass measures that are part of the Contract with

America, the party's political manifesto, in the first 100 days of the new Congress. They're probably right, first things first, punish teenage mothers and those working at minimum wage jobs, then threaten the civil rights of women, people of color and gays and lesbians.

Last July the Senate approved a similarly worded amendment to the Department of Agriculture's appropriations bill by a vote of 92 to 8, although it was later dropped in a House-Senate conference. And the reluctance of Congress two years ago to allow gays to serve in the military was indicative of the tenuous support that gay and lesbian rights has on Capital Hill.

Leaders of gay rights groups say the amendment was able to garner support last year because it included language barring the use of Federal funds to recruit homosexuals for employment in the Federal Government (yeah, like that's happening a lot). Voting against such language would open lawmakers to the charge that they are willing to support affirmative action programs for gays, something that even some gay rights advocates acknowledge would be politically unpopular.

"If you read the provisions, they are repulsive, but brilliant," said Leonard Hirsch, president of the Federal Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Employees organization who works at the Smithsonian Institution. "They set up opponents for attack ads in the next campaign. If someone votes for them, in the next campaign they can be accused of voting for homosexuality in the Government"

In a statement he entered into the Congressional Record on Jan. 4, Senator Helms said he was introducing the measure to save taxpayer dollars and because "the Clinton

Administration has conducted a concerted effort to give homosexual rights, privileges and protections throughout the Federal agencies - to extend to the homosexual special rights not accorded to most other groups or individuals."

Helms did not specify what rights were being granted to gays that were not available to other Federal employees or groups.

Source: New York Times

JENNY JONES SHOW SETS UP GAY MAN TO BE MURDERED

In the never ending battle for daytime television viewers the Jenny Jones Show went so far as to set up a gay man for murder.

Jones was taping a show that included having a gay man appear talking about a crush he had on an acquaintance, a straight man. Jones' producer invited the straight man on to the show under the pretense of meeting a secret female admirer, in other words, they lied to him. Once they had both men on the show the gay guest discussed his crush on the straight man. Enraged and feeling that he had been humiliated on national television the straight man left the show and the next morning shot the gay man to death.

If you are a fan of Jenny's please write her and let her know just how enraged you are that she could be a part of such a tragedy. While you're at it, let her know that you're switching to Phil or Oprah.

Source: Public Radio



Chile Slated To Join NAFTA

At the Summit of the Americas held in Miami in early December, Chile was officially invited to join Canada, the U.S. and Mexico in the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Eduardo Aninat, Chile's finance minister, eager to get the process underway, stated "Chile is small, far away, there are no border problems, do it quick."

Others in Chile do not share his enthusiasm. Chile's largest trade union, the Unified Workers Center, refused Chilean President Frei's invitation to send representatives to accompany him to Miami, protesting what it considered Frei's, and NAFTA'S pro-business bias.

"We're going to call one work stoppage after another," stated Arturo Martinez, vice-president of the Unified Workers Center. "We are not going to stand back with our arms folded and watch while the country's wealth is handed over to the private sector, nor are we going to allow the transnationals to come in here and invest because in the end, it won't even be Chilean capitalists who control our state enterprises."

The long-term goal of the conceivers and supporters of the trade agreement is to create a hemisphere-wide 'free-trade' zone.

CIA Client State

Finance Minister Aninat's statement of Chile's size and distance is loaded with irony when the historical relationship between Chile and the U.S. government is considered. Seymour Hersh, in outlining the U.S.-Chile relationship, states, "By the mid-60's, Chile had become widely known in the American intelligence services as one of the CIA's outstanding success stories."

Hersh goes on to say, "the agency had managed to penetrate all elements of Chile's government," the primary goal being to "encourage American multinational corporations to do business within its borders." The desire to control Chile is explained by the U.S. government/corporate penchant for cheap labor, other nation's natural resources and an inflow of capital from the Third World.

Enter Allende

But capitalism met its match in Chile. In Sept. 1970, Chileans elected a socialist as President, Salvador Allende, who received 36.6% of the vote in a three-way race, winning by 39,000 votes out of three million cast.

Ronald Reagan has criticized the late Allende because of the narrow margin of Allende's electoral victory, but in fact a greater percentage of the electorate voted in Chilean 1970 election than voted in the '80 U.S. presidential election; indicating Allende was elected under more widespread national support than Reagan was in his 1980 victory.

Allende's party was called Popular Unity. According to researcher and writer Teres Hayter, "There was more freedom of expression, less imprisonment of political opponents under Allende than anywhere in Latin America at that time or under previous governments in Chile."

Allende, in a speech to the United Nations in 1972, described his Chile as "a country of unlimited cultural, religious and ideological tolerance and where there is no room for racial discrimination."

Draining the Wealth

The Allende government's economic philosophy included the principle that a country's most valuable resources, in Chile's case the copper mines in the north, should go to build and sustain the nation itself, its infrastructure, schools, health care, etc., NOT sent abroad. Eighty percent of Chile's copper mines, among the richest in the world, were controlled by Anaconda Copper and Kennecott Copper, both U.S.-based companies.

Another important U.S.-Chile connection is ITT. During the '60s and through today, ITT remains a corporate monolith with direct links to the CIA. ITT's Chilean account was valued at \$150 million. Allende wanted to nationalize the Chilean phone system and pay compensation, but ITT was unwilling to accept Chile's terms. ITT's Chilean holdings were then nationalized.

"Make the Economy Scream"

The most important link between the CIA and ITT was John McCone who, before becoming the director of ITT, had been the director of the CIA. Both institutions worked in a concerted effort to undercut the economy of Chile, influencing the IMF, World Bank and U.S. Aid to drastically alter trade relations in a move to ostracize Chile from the world economy and undercutting Chile's attempts to better the lives of Chile's poor and middle class.

Anti-Allende demonstrations were financed and staged under the direction of the CIA/ITT, according to documents released under the Freedom of Information Act. When the Chilean economy faltered under this pressure, the U.S. and other capitalist powers pointed out the "failure of socialism."

In spite of all this, Allende's popularity remained. In early Sept. of '73, a million people attended a rally in Santiago to show support for their president.

The End of Freedom

By Sept. 11, he was dead. General Augusto Pinochet staged a coup d'etat, assassinating the president and several of his supporters.

In the process of establishing his reign of terror for capitalism, Pinochet imprisoned, tortures and murdered tens of thousands of citizens simply because they wanted to improve their lives and their country, and put people above profits (including the infamous "Stadium" massacre where Pinochet's men used an axe to chop off the fingers of nationally-famous folk guitarist Victor Jara, before unleashing machine guns on thousands of arrested Allende supporters being held in the arena).

"OUR Bastard"

Immediately following the coup, Washington normalized relations with Chile, now led by a dictatorial regime. Pinochet remained in power for more than 16 years, and established a "free market" system. A president was selected in the early '90s, but Pinochet remained head of the military.

The Present

Currently 40% of Chileans live in poverty. Aninat believes the foreign investments gained in "free trade" will alleviate poverty, but others point out that for the labor unions and the poor it hasn't happened in over twenty years of "free trade" and it won't under NAFTA because the trickle-down theory is viewed by them as a fraud.

--Brian McAfee



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Miracle The White Buffalo Calf

Last August 20, something happened on a ranch near Janesville, Wisconsin that many people of the Native American culture consider to be a miraculous sign of hope and the fulfillment of an ancient promise. Early that morning David Heider, the owner of the ranch, went out to check on the buffalo that had been due to give birth and saw a sight that amazed him. There beside her huge mother, lay a tiny buffalo calf with a coat of pure white.

At that point he had no idea of what it meant, but he did know that a white buffalo calf was a rare being indeed. And as word got out of what had happened, his phone started ringing. He was contacted by several Indian tribes who asked if the calf was male or female. When he told them that it was a female, they asked if they could come to see her.

Soon, those who were drawn to see her, Native and non-Native alike, started arriving. The Heider's counted 235 people on Labor Day alone. By mid-November they estimated that approximately 30,000 people had made the journey. Some had come from as far as Ireland, Japan and the Netherlands.

The media has also responded to the event. *People Magazine* had an article about her, and the *Discovery Channel* did a segment on her, among many others. So the world seemed to be beating a path to the Heider ranch to view the female white buffalo calf name "Miracle."

On November 19, some friends and I made the trip up to Janesville to see her. We are not Natives by heritage, but we are very interested in that culture and believe in the necessity of learning to connect with Mother Earth in a more natural and peaceful way. It was a beautiful, sunny Saturday and we were able to leave Bloomington by 9am. We arrived in Janesville around noon, and found a restaurant and had lunch. Then we followed Route 351 West about 10 miles to River Road (which is really along a river) and took a right turn and the ranch was within sight.

Several neighbors have provided space on their land for parking at \$2 per car. We parked and walked to the Heider land. We signed the guest book that was provided. There is no charge to see her but those who wish to make a donation to help with the expenses incurred by allowing public access may do so.

At that time the viewing time was Saturday and Sunday, from noon to four pm. They would have to stop allowing the public viewing during the winter but would let it begin again in the spring.

The first thing I noticed was that the whole neighborhood seemed to have gotten involved. It must have been a shock to everyone's system to have gone from their ordinary lives to becoming the caretakers of a place of pilgrimage. But they seem to have undergone the transformation gracefully. Everyone I talked with, from the man acting as guide and security, to the young woman sitting at a table selling photos of the calf (one dollar each), seemed filled with enthusiasm and told stories of what they had seen and learned. That in itself may perhaps be thought of as miraculous.

As we walked back to the enclosure where Miracle and the other buffalos were kept, we noticed the beautiful, colorful gifts that people had brought to express their love and devotion. There were medicine wheels, dream catchers, prayer bundles, tobacco offerings, feathers, crystals, and other items of personal or symbolic value. Someone had left a rosary. Someone had left a button reading "Help Mother Earth Survive". Someone else had put up a small painting on a post that read "The gathering is near!" The impression made on me by that outpouring of giving was that the Native cultures were truly still alive and flourishing even after the hard centuries that they have been through. For that I was very grateful.

I then looked through the fence and was able to pick out Miracle from the rest of the herd. She has darkened considerably since her birth.

The guide told me that the Lakota medicine people had recently explained that, according to prophecy, her coat would turn from white to black to red and back to white. He said they expected to see, at some point, a yellow cast to her coat so that she would wear all the four colors of mankind that her coming was to help unite. They will watch her closely to see what unfolds.

On that Saturday, approximately 50 people of all ages and backgrounds had come to see her. It was a peaceful scene and everyone, even the children, seemed to respect what was happening. You could hear question being



asked and answered as the group reached for understanding.

The reason her birth is so important is because of a story that many tribes tell. "One summer so long ago that nobody knows how long", a beautiful young woman appeared to them. It was before the Europeans arrived to change everything. She gave the people the sacred pipe and taught them how to use it properly. She also told them that a very difficult time was coming when it would seem as if all that they cared for was lost.

At the end of that dark period she would return and help to heal the Earth and to reunite all people at a new level of peace and justice. She then walked away, but before she disappeared her shape shifted into a white buffalo calf. The people have been waiting for her return ever since.

Now it appears as if she is here again, and people are responding. Recently, runners arrived from Texas. Think of the commitment it would take to run that distance. What would you run 1,000 miles for? It may truly be that on that ranch a miracle has occurred.

—Gregg Brown

Background

Miracle, the White Buffalo Calf, was born on the Dave, Val, and Corey Heider farm on the morning of August 20, 1994. Miracle is a female calf and seems to be healthy with no problems. she is considered to be the first white buffalo calf born since 1933. Being a white female calf, Miracle is extremely important in the religious beliefs of many American Indian tribes.

The Heiders have started raising buffalo in 1989 as part of their collection of exotic animals on their 45 acre farm on the southern edge of Janesville, Wisconsin. The herd currently consists of 8 breeding cows and 5 calves and yearlings. Marvin, the bull and sire of Miracle died Thursday, September 1, 1994, from numerous ulcers in his abomasum, the fourth stomach of buffalo and ruminating animals.

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The Heiders are currently allowing visitors to go up to the pasture's fence in order to see Miracle and her mother but are not allowing visitors into the pasture for safety reasons, as buffalo are wild and unpredictable animals. Visiting times are currently Saturdays and Sundays from 12:00 noon to 4:00 pm. These hours are subject to change with the season and family commitments. Please call (608) 752-2224 for current visiting hours. The Heider farm can be reached by taking I-90 to Avalon Road, Exit 177. Go west about 4 miles to the Rock River, then turn right for 1/4 mile.

When visiting Miracle: Please obey the following policies;

*Stay on the Road, do not feed or pet any of the animals.

*Don't touch the fences, (They are Electrified) Parents MUST keep children away from the fences.

*No Cameras, handbags, or packs are allowed past the reception area.

White Buffalo Trust Funds

To help the Heiders with caring for Miracle, additional security fencing to allow people to visit and see her, and additional help with the visitation times, a trust fund has been set up. You can make donations at the farm or send them to Bank One, 100 W. Milwaukee, Janesville, WI 53545 in care of the White Buffalo Trust.

After that day, the buffalo were plentiful

One summer so long ago that nobody knows how long, the seven sacred council fires of the Lakota Sioux came together and camped. The sun shone all the time, but there was no game, and the people were starving.

The chief sent two young men on foot to hunt. The men climbed a high hill to scan the whole country and met a beautiful young woman who floated as she walked.

One man desired the woman and tried to touch her, but he was consumed by a cloud of snakes and reduced to a pile of bones.

The other man returned to his camp and told the people the holy woman was coming. When she arrived, the woman gave the people a sacred pipe and taught them how to use it to pray.

"With this holy pipe, you will walk like a living prayer," she said.

The woman also told the Sioux about the value of buffalo, women and children.

"You are from the mother earth," she told the women. "What you are doing is as great as what the warriors do."

Before she left, she told the people she would return. And as she walked away, she rolled over four times, turning into a white female buffalo calf.

After that day, the Sioux took care of the pipe, and buffalo were plentiful.

—From the Janesville Gazette, Thursday, September 1, 1994, Excerpted from John Fire Lame Deer's 1967 telling.

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