

## VIEWPOINTS

## EDITORIAL

## AIDS

Leading killer of city's men shows need for awareness



A report in the Journal of the American Medical Association released last week showed that AIDS and related infections were the leading causes of death to men between the ages of 25 and 44 in the city of Columbia.

To the twentysomethings, AIDS has become the twentieth century version of the Black Plague. The Grim Reaper has been scything through Columbia, leaving behind the withered bodies of men, women and children to line the Richland Memorial Hospital morgue.

For twelve years the MTV generation has lived under the spectre of AIDS and watched as words like "safe sex," "HIV-positive" and "monogamy" became part of the mainstream language. The disease has evolved from a "gay disease" to become the deadliest force on the planet.

The Clinton administration has failed to accept an FDA guideline to "fast-track" the approval of AIDS fighting drugs, or to adopt any enforceable policy regarding AIDS discrimination by health insurance carriers. Instead, people with AIDS are forced to fight protracted battles against escalating drug and insurance rates, in addition to their disease.

AIDS education has proven to be effective, but to what degree is still uncertain. Religious leaders have argued against it being taught in public schools because educators would be required to discuss "that other lifestyle." While noble in upholding their convictions, these leaders have failed to realize the crucial fact about the purpose of AIDS education. It's not a matter of morality, but a matter of survival.

Government is not responsible for the nightmarish spread of AIDS. The finger points solely to the American public.

Recently released studies have shown more than 70 percent of men under 25 years of age are not using condoms while engaging in sexual activities, and many were still engaging in high-risk behavior, such as multiple partners and sharing IV needles.

The sexual mores of this country have long been a target of criticism, and fairly so. Taken as a whole, these studies paint a clear picture of our country: America has become a nation of debauchery likened to ancient Rome. But hope remains. The sexual pendulum seems to be swinging back to a more puritanical view. Gone are the days of one-night stands; to come are the days of one-person relationships.

It seems America has not learned the lesson from AIDS, despite the bombardment of the warnings, TV and radio commercials, and newscasts telling the dangers of AIDS.

Until people learn about AIDS, and a cure is found, the Grim Reaper will continue to kill more than just Columbia's men between the ages of 25 and 44.

## Confederate flag represents history, not racism

"All that the South has ever desired was that the Union — as established by our forefathers — should be preserved and that the government — as originally organized — should be administered in truth."

— Gen. Robert E. Lee

The truth Southerners sought in relation to their government then is similar to the truth Southerners wish to be portrayed today. Many are compelled to show why the War Between the States was really fought and, hence, for what the Confederate flag really stands. However, the truth has often been sacrificed by misinformation and for the sake of political agendas. The war is so immense and complex it is an easy mark for revision and misinterpretation.

Despite these unfortunate circumstances, there are still those who know the truth of our history and are committed to revealing it. Edward C. Smith, a black college professor at American University, is one of these people. In a critique of Ken Burns' documentary, *The Civil War*, Smith said, "I think that if you look at the Civil War from the standpoint of the popular movie 'Glory' and from the viewpoint of Ken Burns' outstanding Civil War presentation ... They present it as a moral crusade — and of course that is not true... Burns' purpose... was to prove that the war was fought for the emancipation of slaves. That is not true."

As far back as the early nineteenth century, it was apparent the South and North were emerging as separate entities. By the middle of the century, the regions were virtually separate nations. On December 20, 1860, this became a reality when seven Southern states seceded from the Union. The reasons were cited as the disagreement over constitutional interpretation and the violation of states' rights, not the preservation of slavery.

Once war was unavoidable, thousands



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answered the call of the Confederacy to serve in the new Southern army, all the while following the flag that represented their beliefs on how the nation was supposed to be. These men did not represent the elite, rich planters of the South and even the North, who used slaves to enhance their wealth. These were common men like my great-great-grandfathers, one of whom was a farmer and the other a shoemaker, who barely made ends meet, and most importantly, who never once owned a slave.

These men left their homes and families, running the risk of never seeing them again, to face the unknown threats of a larger, better-equipped opposing army in unknown regions in potentially terrible conditions. It is ridiculous to think these men would give up so much and suffer so greatly just so the small number of planters could keep their slaves, especially since they had never had a part in it. As Rita Mae Brown, author of "High Hearts," said in "Attack on the Colors" that "it is inconceivable that 90 percent of the white men would fight so that 10 percent could remain rich."

It is also interesting to note that George Randolph, Confederate Secretary of War, was a grandson of Thomas Jefferson; Confederate General Joe Johnston was the grand nephew of Patrick Henry; and General Robert E. Lee was the son of Revolutionary War hero Lighthorse Harry Lee. From this, it is obvious there was a

bond between the Revolution and the War Between the States, and these men would not risk destroying what their famous relatives had worked so hard to create just so a small segment of society could have slaves.

The misleading belief that the South fought the war only to secure the institution of slavery has led and still leads many to attack the Confederate flag as a symbol of slavery and to attack those who fly it as insensitive and racist. The fact remains that Southerners fought to defend the new nation they created based on the ideals of constitutional integrity, states' rights and the guarantee of personal freedoms set forth in the Constitution by our founding fathers. Southerners were trying to preserve what they felt was quickly being abandoned. It was this, not slavery, for which they gave their lives.

Therefore, I do not feel the Confederate flag is a symbol of racism and slavery, and people who support its flight rather than its removal from public display have not regressed. The flag is a symbol of the bravery, honor and suffering of the Confederate soldier and the strength and sacrifice of the Confederate woman during the struggle of the war.

Although the true meaning of the Confederate flag has been made known, there are many who still wish to see it removed from public display. Instead, why not heed the words of the late W. Earl Douglas, black journalist for the Charleston News and Courier about the flag: "No! don't furl that Confederate flag... Let it fly as a testimonial to real men and real women who would rather work and fight than shed tears and beg for government charity. Finally, let it act as a cohesive force, drawing all Southerners together in the cause of freedom."

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## Clinton, Congress display unfair, poor representation

"No taxation without representation!"

Prolonged warfare with France incurred a British deficit which was passed onto the American colonists by taxing daily usage items, like paper and ink, led to that now famous battlecry.

In return, America demanded representation in Parliament to decide colonial affairs, otherwise they would not pay their taxes. The British leaders had lost touch with the Americans and failed to realize society had changed. To combat the vacuum of real leadership, the patriots broke from England in the hopes of establishing a government representing the wishes of the people.

On May 27, 1993, by a slim margin, the House of Representatives narrowly passed President Clinton's deficit reduction plan, which public opinion polls show a plurality of the people do not support.

Clinton is asking the American public to pay off the debt generated by the Cold War by hiking taxes on everything from gasoline to Social Security benefits. He



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believes taxing the wealthy protects the interests of the middle class.

Our congressmen are supposed to represent us. It seems as though they have forgotten the individual. But when one looks at it, it is easy for them to forget us. On average, one congressman represents about 575,000 people and one senator represents about 2.5 million. How can it be possible for a congressman to stay in touch with the people, when there are so many of them? Taking those numbers into account, how can self-proclaimed populists, like Clinton, claim to represent "every" American.

Clinton feels that sitting down and talk-

ing to a homeless person, or eating barbecue in a trailer park makes him "like us," and therefore can be forgiven for any indiscretion. But how many of "us" ride in limos and get \$200 haircuts aboard Air Force One?

Clinton appears to be nothing more than another Washington insider who compromises everything and stands for nothing. Clinton doesn't seem to know the meaning of the word "no." It is non-existent in his vocabulary. Representation is lacking not only in the Clinton administration but in Washington.

Clinton ran on a platform of change, but has brought nothing but stagnation. Clinton and Congress have ignored the wishes of the people by pushing the tax plan. In his first months in office, he has changed one thing: our old battlecry.

It now reads "taxation without representation." Now, it captures the very heart of the Clinton presidency.

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