

Sick and tired?

I've been reading with interest the series of letters to the Editor that followed Alicia Hartman's article dated December 3, 1994 in the Collegian.

What interests me the most about the remarks of ALL writers, including Alicia, is how "sick" and "tired" everybody is...Alicia's "tired and doesn't care" about people dying from AIDS; John Champagne is "sick of reading columns like Alicia's that contribute to a climate of ignorance"; and Mike Simmons is sick of reading what he calls "shrill, illogical personal attacks leveled by alleged proponents of cultural diversity and tolerance toward anyone who disagrees with them."

People get "sick and tired" in lots of different ways on lots of different levels. A new Saturday night sport in Texas known as fag-bashing has taken a certain "sick and tired" to the extreme. Grizzly discoveries have been published in Vanity Fair magazine (Feb. 1995). I offer the following excerpts of where "sick and tired" to the extreme, along with being raised in ignorance of human beings different from oneself can lead.

In one incident at Reverchon Park, a high school kid, with his buddies, killed two gay men. He

bragged about it, how he stuck the gun in one victim's mouth before shooting him and stepped on the other man's leg and shot him as he tried to crawl away. From the Judge: "These two guys wouldn't have been killed if they hadn't been cruising the streets picking up teenage boys." (The two victims had not solicited the murderer for sex).

In another incident, Thanh and Hugh were surrounded while they sat at a picnic table with McDonald's food. Two assailants started pistol whipping them chanting "sissies," "queers," "faggots," and "gooks." They were beaten then ordered to stand against a wall. A 19 year old fired as his buddy urged, "Go ahead and shoot them. It's not hard to do." Thanh got a fatal wound to his stomach. In shock, he tried to run for help. What he got was another beating from the trio after they pulled his shorts to his knees as he died.

And then there's Donald Aldrich from Rockwell, Texas and his view that "the queers have everything." "I work all my life tryin' to have something nice and here they are, doing something God totally condemns in the Bible. They've got all these good jobs, can sit back in a air-conditioned building not having to sweat, and they've got money, nice cars and apartments. Yea - I resented that." He tells of

the time he and his buddies held a man at bay in a freezing lake for several hours while they fired shots over his head. The said intentions were to instill fear and see that pure unadulterated look of terror on the victim who didn't know if he was going to live, die or get tortured. "You could say I got a little bit of pleasure out of it." One of Aldrich's victims, Nicholas West, was driven to a remote spot. This is where it got really good for Aldrich. He discovered that West was so scared that he defecated his pants. "I thought it was hilarious. When you scare a man so bad that he literally shits on himself, that man is scared." He described the sensation as like being on drugs. "I enjoyed it, I really did." West was ordered to remove his pants and shoes. Seven shots after a beating and then the fatal bullet in the back of the head. An investigator's comment on Aldrich: "He's not perceiving he's doing anything wrong, because this is a fag. Not a store owner or a preacher. This is a fag."

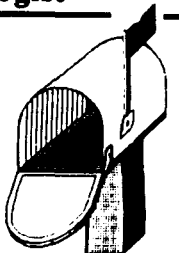
And finally there's a San Angelo high school newspaper headline: Students Declare War on Homosexuality. A portion reads: "In the dark of the night after homework is complete, teenage students stalk male homosexuals. 'I want them to die when we do it,' a student said. Bashers claim part

of the fun is from the adrenaline rush they receive. 'A couple of friends and I were driving down the fag drag, when we noticed there was whole carload of them sitting and kissing, so we got out our baseball bats, shattered their windows, and beat them. After we are done, they are on the ground in a bloody heap.'"

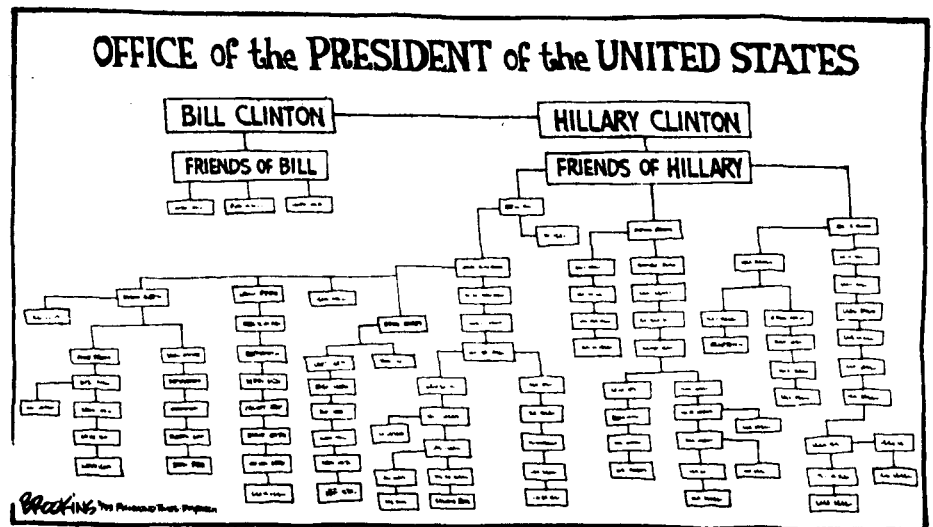
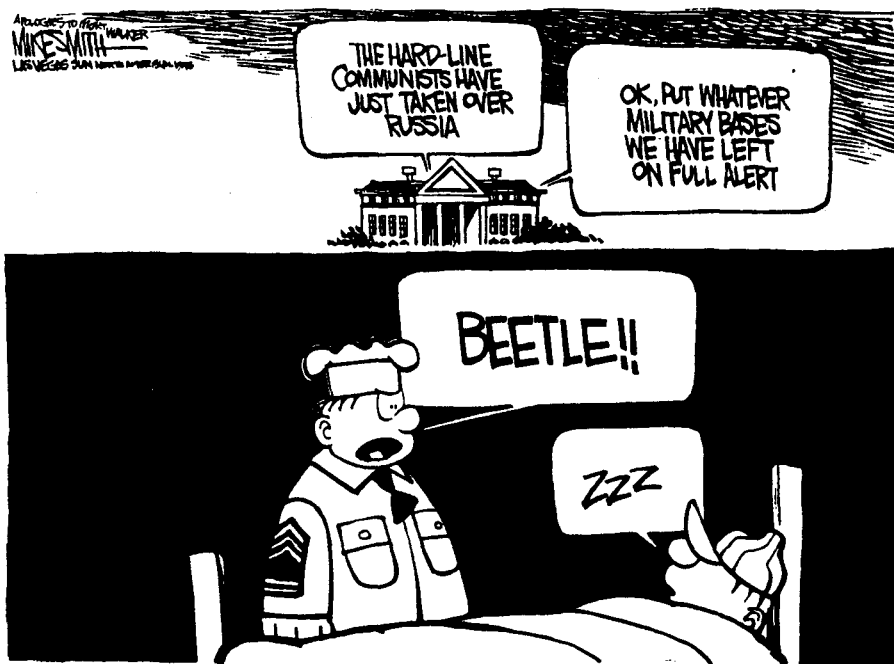
Where does all of this leave YOU? Anyone feeling sick or sickened? In the dark and still of a movie theater last summer as the credits rolled after Schindler's List, my friend said, "I wanna stand up and say to this audience that feeling sick and weeping about what you just saw is not enough. Remember how you feel RIGHT NOW and go DO something about it." I hear that. How much does one have to SEE to be able to FEEL compassion for those among us who are suffering? People who discover they ARE NOT heterosexual and people who discover they ARE HIV infected do enough soul searching ...enough self-blaming ... and doubting ... and hiding. They don't need anybody telling them if you wanna play you gotta pay. They know all about paying.

And then some.

Sue Daley
Staff psychologist



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