

# Editorial Page

# Would I Be Tolerant of Another with AIDS?

Jan Travers/Editor

## Grades do Matter to the Students

We have a new grading system. It's one that was supposedly initiated by students three years ago at University Park. It seems that the University Senate, consisting of representatives from the faculties and students at all the Commonwealth Campuses and University Park, felt compelled to allow a "finer distinction" within the grading system. However, in essence, what it will do is lower the grade-point average of many of our students.

There are a lot of serious students at Penn State Harrisburg. And by being serious students, we use the grading system as the measure of our success. There are a lot of A students at Penn State. (This is not an official proclamation but one based on self observation). An A is to signify excellence or exceptional achievement. But many of us get As by perseverance rather than exceptional intelligence. We may not be the smartest but we sure work hard.

Now with the new grading system, anyone who scores in the low nineties will no longer receive a 4.0 designation on the grade transcripts. He or she will receive an A- or a 3.67. This could have a substantial effect on grade point average.

The administration's reaction to this is that "grades aren't that important." If this is true, then why do they waste so much time giving us grades? Why not make all courses Pass/Fail, omit dean's list and academic scholarships.

Maybe 10 years from now it won't matter if we graduated from Penn State with a 3.0, 3.5 or 4.0. But for now, as we spend hours, losing sleep, studying for that next test or writing that next term paper, it has a demoralizing effect.

If you too are angry about the new grading system, fill in the form below and I will be happy to forward them to Bryce Jordan, president of Penn State.

Penn State Harrisburg

Name:

Major:

Expected Date of Graduation:

I strongly oppose the new grading policy because-----

Deposit in Capital Times comment box off the main lobby in stairwell.

By Michele Hart

A few weeks ago I was watching *NBC Nightly News* when a story came on about three boys from Arcadia, Florida who had been infected with the AIDS virus. I couldn't believe my eyes as the pictures rolled showing the burnt-out home the boys had lived in with their mother and father; a home that had been destroyed by arsonists. It was inconceivable to me that people could be intolerant and ignorant enough to destroy a family's home and all of their belongings because of AIDS.

As the piece continued I was encouraged by the fact that another community had allowed the boys to enroll in school and try to gain some semblance of order and security to their lives. But, once again I was upset because of the comments of a young mother whose son was going to be a classmate of one of the three boys. She said she'd keep her boy at home and teach him herself if she had to because she didn't want her son exposed to the virus. The reporter asked her what kind of risk she thought was involved if she let her son stay in school. She replied that one of the infected boys could bite her son or vomit on him, thereby exposing him to the deadly virus.

From what I understand, and I'm not claiming to know more than the average person, the only way you can get AIDS is from sexual contact with a carrier, or sharing a needle with a carrier. The virus can be in saliva, but not enough to infect another person through casual contact, and it cannot be transmitted from person to person by touch, like the common cold. Now unless this lady's son is a drug user who shoots up at the age of seven or eight, or is sexually active already, I couldn't see any reason for her to pull him out of school. At least that was my first reaction.

That story struck me strongly enough to make me sit down and think about it. What if it were my child that was going to be in the same class as an AIDS carrier? Could I be tolerant, or would I react as that woman had? Just how would I react to AIDS on a personal level? How does anyone react for that matter?

AIDS is not something we can ignore or assume that it will never affect us. Doctors are saying that in the near future it could affect most of us in some way or another. That's a scary proposition, and I don't think society is ready to handle it; not when houses in Florida are being torched and politicians, clergy, and lay people are calling for massive roundups and isolation of those infected with the AIDS virus.

When society stops passing judgments on those who have the virus, calling it a punishment from God or the devil's disease, and gets off of its morality soap box, only then can we begin to think in terms of dealing with the disease. Too many people think that those "horrible queers and faggots" (as someone said to me the other morning), are the only ones who have to deal with AIDS. Surprise, they're not the only ones who should be concerned. But, the

word is concerned, not paranoid, not abusive, not judgmental, not violent, not intolerant, concerned. The same people who claim to be open minded and accepting of anyone no matter what their race, color, or creed, are sometimes the first ones brandishing the verbal and moral judgments.

If this problem is ever going to be solved society has to stop pointing fingers and start holding hands. We cannot allow a few scared people dictate the way an entire population is going to react to the biggest health problem since the Black Death. The only cure for AIDS right now is education and prevention. We should be worried, not about how we're going to keep AIDS away from our own families,

but how we can keep it from all families. By learning as much as possible about the disease and its transmission we may be able to slow its progression. We cannot, however, stop the disease with violence and name calling, or by judging and dictating the lifestyles of others.

