

# Closing our eyes doesn't solve problems

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Several weeks back I read about a proposed ban in Texas on over three hundred items from health books in Texas schools. Items ranging from AIDS hot-lines to Dr. Jack Keorkian are being swept under the bed like monsters in the night.

Nationally, over three hundred and ninety five attempts to ban education from schools took place last year. Books such as *Of Mice and Men* and Anti-Drug programs such as Quest were the biggest targets.

Almost half of the attempts made each year are successful.

Interestingly enough, Pennsylvania is second only to California in attempts to pretend that if we do not talk about controversial issues, they will go away.

I truly believe that education is the key to survival and a person will not develop into a productive, rational, caring human being without all the facts. Furthermore, it is not enough to wish book banning away. Not anymore than AIDS, incest, teen pregnancy, or prejudice will go away if we just don't talk about it with our children.

During my life I have had the pleasure of meeting and the pain of losing some very wonderful people.

Last year I was the best man at a friend's wedding, or perhaps the second best. The month prior his brother had died of AIDS and I was asked to take his place.

If it matters, yes he was homosexual.

I know it is taboo to talk about people that are different, his family now wishes someone would have

talked about it. A latex condom and some education may have prevented his death. Condoms, like seat belts are not 100 % effective, but if enough people start using them lives will start being saved.

On the other hand, if we close our eyes maybe AIDS will go away.

Most people never want to open up about controversial issues. Not so long ago I met a young lady who for almost ten years had been molested by a family friend.

Nationally there are 130,000 children who report being sexually abused each year! Most incidents however are kept silent like secrets on a playground. Yet there are people in this country who don't want our children to know that no one has a right to touch their bodies. As a result many victims live a silent shame for a lifetime, at least AIDS takes your life

quickly.

A chance does exist however that if we close our eyes children will no longer be fondled.

mother quit school and was thrown out of her house. Leaving the mind to wonder about the mother and child's future.

The last time I saw the mother she was lying face down, stoned on Valium and unable to hear the babies's screams.

Unconsensual sex isn't the only way to ruin a child's life forever. Many teenagers engage in sex every day in this country. A million or so teenage girls get pregnant each year. That's two million teenagers having sex that we know about. For arguments sake I'll bet an additional one or two had sex and didn't get caught.

A former friend was one of the unfortunate victims of early motherhood. The baby's father

told her it couldn't happen the first time. Four parents and how many teachers that could have told them that yes indeed, once may just be enough? After the baby arrived the But if we close our eyes teenagers will stop having sex.

In keeping with the obvious tradition that is becoming the norm in many communities, I will stop talking about sex. That is because I have a recent story I would like to share.

A good friend called the other day to discuss a recent job offer. Somehow we got on the subject of racism and he told me about a five year old who said, and I quote "shut up nigger" after Jay told some children on a playground to stop fighting.

That is something that I will never have to experience in this lifetime. Yet I feel that everyone should be aware that it takes place

every day and banning *Huckleberry Finn* from elementary schools will not make it go away.

But if we close our eyes prejudice might just disappear.

In the time that it took me to put this article together one hundred and twenty people were forcibly raped, fifty new HIV cases were reported, twelve hundred teenage girls became pregnant, and countless people will be beaten, harassed, killed and forgotten because they are different. Families will lose children and children will lose childhood because of a lack of education. I firmly believe that the only way to combat these problems is through a ton of education and some common sense.

Or if we close our eyes, America's problems will dissipate once this paper is placed in the trash.

## Rapes forgotten, problems remain

Paul Dan Taccetta  
Capital Times Columnist

We've had a Peeping Tom, then vandalism and theft. This year we have rape and vehicle stereo thefts. What's next, murder?

While on leave of absence for Fall, 1993, I was relaxing at home in York one night and turned on the television news to hear that there was a rape and an attempted rape at PSH. A sarcastic, 'told you so' emanated from within. Not because I thought it was funny, but because I knew that the administration was probably very embarrassed.

Lest there be no doubt, I believe that rape is morally and criminally wrong. The news reports on all local stations did not paint a flattering picture of our precious protected environment. For two years, as a Resident Assistant (R.A.) at Wrisberg Hall, I preached security to residents and officials.

I wasn't the only one concerned. I remember seeing two Residence Life surveys in which Wrisberg women were concerned at the lack of lighting outside the dorm. I had stated the same fact before, as well as the fact that bushes were extremely tall. I recalled that university officials at my previous Penn State campus ordered

maintenance to trim and remove bushes around the dorm for safety. But other negligence I have noted over three years surprises me that serious crimes such as rape and burglary haven't occurred sooner.

Fire exit doors at the dorms were being propped open 24 hours a day. Residents refused to adhere to the rules and officials refused to enforce them. It had been suggested to Housing many times in years past that keys for or alarms on the fire exit doors would absolutely improve security. I recall a couple of incidents as an R.A. that resulted from people trespassing in the dorms.

It wasn't until this recent incident that the process was accelerated to a solution. Now the dorms are locked tight all day, most of the time. New fire exit doors keyed for resident use have been installed after a two year delay. However, I still observe some doors occasionally propped or rigged open all day or night long.

New courtesy telephones have been installed at the dorms for visitors. No telephone numbers are displayed at the phones though. The old phones constantly did not work, and Housing was reluctant to fix them since they were damaged repeatedly. The new phones are vandalism-resistant. It's amazing the solutions that we can come up with when forced to!

dogmas in the fourteen-year gnomon of gradual nuclear extinction; whose motor vehicle operators squat glaze-eyed and dysfunctional at green lights ever since the mill shut down.

What—no more bowling, beer, brawls and obesity on the weekends? M-town, gangrenous grotto of contagious, conundrum 4-way stop signs whose culture center is the underpass at Fox's (Blue Room bar, inclimate weather) and night life is championing which common-law wife sustains the loudest and most imaginative expletive through the rear cab window of the grungiest Ford pickup (blinded by NRA decals, of course).

Far worse, PSH had instituted its a \$120 annual parking fee. My car—'85 Escort, 116,000 miles, rusting hatch, twelve coats of Nu Finish—wasn't worth that much. What would I be paying for? Perchance this tariff will afford better security.

I needed a respite. "Let's go to Hawk Mountain," said Tonya, my tarot temptress and New Age mentor. "We were going to go there last November when we

### Shame on P. S. You

New windows were installed outside the dorms in Summer, 1992. There was little, if anything wrong with the old windows. They did not look modern and were not

efficient. But how efficient is a propped fire exit door in mid-winter? The old windows also had frosted glass for the first-floors for privacy and security. The new windows do not offer privacy and are equally as secure.

Meade Heights residents probably wonder when the houses will get new windows. Almost all of them don't lock. Some do not have screens, and they are large enough for Roseanne and Tom Arnold to climb in. Outside air blows through like paper. Locks on the doors are so old and outdated that they offer no security. Duplicate keys from past residents exist since there is not the "Unlawful to Duplicate" wording on them.

So why do the dorms get priority for the windows when they were not needed? Did someone get kickbacks for the contract?

Additional lights were installed at the dorms after the rape scare, in the exact spot that the two Wrisberg residents expressed concern a year before. Hmhmhm. I wonder whether the lights were the result of the safety concerns or the rape scare? It's amazing how fast we can react when forced to!

Meade Heights did not get additional lighting when the Peeping Tom was on the prowl or after the rape. It seems as if a bandage is being placed on the affected wound and preventative measures ignored.

Campus Police. We have a police force. Theoretically, they should be more effective than the security guards at other campuses. I just do not see it. Although, I don't have proof and did not record dates for the following, I remember two instances in which I needed to contact police between 2 a.m. and 4 a.m. The officer on duty was most assuredly sleeping in the back office. I cannot say how I know and I do not know who it was, but it disgusted me. In several other instances, they were not responsive either. Others are critical of their effectiveness too, as I read the

November 15, 1993 issue of The Capital Times supplement on Campus Safety.

In their defense, the administration is not supportive of their services which puts them in a catch-22.

The escort service operated on a 24 hour basis there for awhile. I see that its reverting back to a limited schedule. Temporary precautions are over. The hype has faded I guess.

Communication to students about the attacks was criticized. The number of students who do not think there is a lack of communication in general at PSH can fit into one bathroom. Unfortunately, the administrators probably don't believe this because people do not express this and no one asks.

We all go about our business and wait for improvements that will never come.

Apparently, lessons were not learned. I hadn't heard anything from university officials about the recent rash of car stereo thefts until word-of-mouth accidentally reached my ear. Then there was an article in the last issue of The Capital Times.

So, all-in-all, I return this semester to some physical

differences in the environment. It seems that everyone, except the three people involved in the assaults (two victims and a perpetrator) has forgotten the serious incident lately. Everything goes back to normal until it happens again. Administration would like the public to forget because it embarrasses the college. Take a look at the crime statistics in the previous issue of The Capital Times or ask Police Services for a copy and get involved. Express your concerns to different departments and keep alert. Crime is on the rise in all forms on campus. We are not immune.

On the subject of the last issue, I want to correct an error that I noticed I had made and add a comment or two.

Fourth St. is the dead-end street to the dorms, not the street from Rosedale Avenue to the Olmsted building that has no sidewalk for Meade Heights pedestrians. That is Fifth St. Also, in a few recent visits to Meade Heights, I notice that snow remains covering the sidewalks and fire hydrants. (Walk in the street, and if you get hit, sue the university and use this column as reference.) I have also heard a half-dozen or more people complain that their driveways do not get cleared. I do not know the policy for this. Call Housing at 948-6244.

## Columnist journeys to Hawk Mountain

Jeff Feehrer  
Capital Times Columnist

"...the prayer-ah of-ah faith-ah shall save-ah the sick-ah!"  
What the...?

I snapped awake, bent upright and dizzy amid cavorting gray shadows. Rhonda Shearer and "Up All Night" on the USA Network had metamorphosed to a televangelist.

What time was it? Was I late for work or for class? What a scheduled, skittering little soul I am, paranoid with hours, must be late for something.

I had rolled over on the remote unit, touched a button, found Cinemax Adult Theater. That meant it was Friday night.  
The world was normal again.

I was me, in my living room, still with my relishments—acts of God, yellow journalism, teething infants, term papers, ZZ Top's "Legs" (should be fifty minutes longer)—and my repugnances: optimism, the Nietzsche seasons of fall, winter and spring, and Middletown, a rat terrier burg of blue-collar, redneck

### Feehrer's Fissure

were engaged, remember? It'll make you feel better."

"Can I speak frankly?" I said. "They had to ditch Mitch...or expand the strike zone to first and third base."

"You can get directions from your sister."

"Admit it. He's talent by association. If the guy'd been on any other team but a pennant winner, they'd have junked him in mid-season. He should've been losing for the Mets or shucking sunflower seeds in the Senators bullpen and refusing Gregg Mace interviews."

"We both could use this time away," Tonya said, also enchanted by Native American lore and lode.

"Turn right at Dreher'sville," said my sister.

Beneath a glowering sky, we wheeled over route 61 for the migratory landing zone of raptors: Sunday afternoon when you're in love. A youthful voice telephoning a radio talk show

proclaimed the rapture of Neo-Nazi Christians and the commentator assailed him with Herodesque fervor. Religion, like hypothermia, seemed to be in the air.

The pensive psychotherapist beside me listened. "Isn't that a paradox?" she addressed the dashboard dial, then made a scoffing noise and changed stations.

Actually, I was contemplating the third species of Noah's descendants inhabiting my mobile home. There had been the field mice and their ensuing holocaust by Velveeta and Victor traps. Last winter the community's felines had clawed entrances through asbestos insulation to my heat ducts, emanating scratchy, slithery, invisible noises all night eerie enough to blanch Sigourney Weaver.

Plywood patches sent them elsewhere, maybe to their owners. Now I had the class Arachnida

loping down from my ceiling, finding an ear, opening my refrigerator, lounging in a sneaker, doing those clandestine things spiders and Bob Packwood do while I sleep. In the shower I'd reach for the soap and there'd be

something huge and hairy lurking behind the Jergens. I thought the ex-wife had returned.

Signs, portends...apocalyptic.

Ascending Hawk Mountain with us, on a path stonier than my left ureter, were leafless, lifeless black trees that lanced frost-colored clouds. The forest was deserted, dank, depressing.

I felt better.

"Indian country," said I to the woman who really had endured a sweat lodge. Tonya smiled dreamily, a nimbus or lost sunlight glowing her face. "I bet Chief Manischewitz trod this very trail," she said.

I, the skeptic, merely continued. An aerial breeze shattered branches and rained acorns. "Listen! Feel that? The spirit of Mogadishu accompanies us." She radiated, pilgrim nearing her Mecca.

North Point, overseeing a deep and distant concavity spiked by miniature maples, was a bouldery perch reminiscent of that scene in

"The Greatest Story Ever Told" where Satan tempts Christ. But we weren't alone. Two sanctuary guides emblazoned with Schwarzenegger binoculars and commanding upper sleeve patches

called out strike coordinates like "Sharp-shinned, north ridge, two glasses up!" and "Red-tailed, south pinnacle horizon!" Huddled families trained lenses heavenward and shutters clicked sky specks.

As we trekked for colonization, melancholia dimmed me like this fading afternoon. Enjoyment has an awful price, I realized: it always ends; whereas realism, anticipating and exhorting the worst, the darkest, bleakest, the pessimistic, is terminated by fun.

"Did you like that?" Tonya asked while we threatened our femurs and exhaled on frostbitten fingers. I had to smile.

Selah, believers.