

Perspectives

Point - Counter Point

Anita's oranges squeezed

Citrus Queen Anita Bryant has stirred up a lot of pulp over homosexuals lately, clouding the gay-rights controversy with some juicy conflict.

Bryant's crusade against a Dade County, Florida anti discrimination law turned into a national issue when gays across America viewed it as the threatening spark to a widespread backlash against their cause.

The four-month-old law, which outlawed discrimination based on sexual preference, was struck down overwhelmingly (202,319 votes to 89,562) by Dade County voters in a June 7 ballot.

The efforts of Bryant and her "Save Our Children Inc." organization were instrumental in repealing the gay-rights law. Bryant, spokesman for the Florida citrus industry, has received a barrage of criticism from both gays and straights, who see her campaign as a threat to the civil-rights of homosexuals.

And although Bryant's bible-quoting, holy-rolling tactics are certainly open to criticism, she has voiced some pragmatic and sound arguments against gay-rights.

The Dade County ordinance, and many like it around the country, would bar schools from rejecting teachers merely because they are homosexuals. Bryant focused her arguments against this point, and rightly so.

An openly homosexual environment in the classroom might sway a vulnerable child toward a sexual lifestyle that his parents would reject. Psychological research in the effect of role models on development clearly shows that teachers are instrumental and persuasive models for young students.

More important, the legal authorization of homosexuality could have serious and damaging effects on the normal heterosexual pattern of American family life.

When the law endorses homosexual behavior, it places a structural flaw in the moral fabric which, after all, has long been responsible for the continuation of mankind as a species.

It is true that most gays did not make a conscious choice of sexual preference, and, consequently, should not face legal blockades to their lifestyle.

But the line must be drawn at decriminalization.

Homosexuals should not be persecuted. The choices they make behind closed doors should be their own without legal restrictions.

Our laws, however, cannot endorse homosexuality without damaging the sexual climate of the country. It's not nice to fool with Mother Nature, and we just can't afford legal backing for doing so.

—Dell Burner

To say that Anita Bryant has stirred up a lot of pulp lately is an understatement.

Her anti-gay rights 'crusade' has only gained fervor with her recent success in Dade County, Florida, and is now approaching the zealous insanity of the Salem witch trials of the seventeenth century.

Or, if that comparison doesn't suit your fancy, it could also be said that her crusade against the gays brings about unpleasant reminders of the beginnings of the Nazi holocaust. That movement also started with militant speeches about a supposedly unnatural and abnormal group of people—the German Jews.

If the second comparison offends you as being too harsh, then perhaps the more recent American example of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy will suffice. "Tail-Gunner Joe" made a political career out of ruining people's lives by publicly accusing them of being either Communists or homosexuals.

All four examples have one thing in common. In each case, the instigators of the movement claimed to be ordained, either by God or by their patriotism, to make life rough for the particular minority group considered undesirable at the time.

It is not only ridiculous, but frightening, that a nut (yes, nut. Spell it n-u-t. Nut.) like Anita Bryant could dupe thousands of voters into believing their children are threatened with mass moral decay at the hands of perverted gay teachers.

There is no justification for banning gay teachers from our schools because some orange juice peddler says there might (take note of the word **might**) be a chance some of them could molest students, or otherwise push their lifestyles onto students.

There are already laws on the books in every state of the union which forbid any teacher (gay or straight) from molesting a student. Most, if not all teachers with any sense of purpose also realize it is their duty to overcome their personal biases and preferences in seeing that a student is aware of the pros and cons of all issues. Such teachers know that this is the proper course by which to see that students can determine their own lives' direction based on rational choices.

Even if a student should be so unlucky as to have an unscrupulous teacher, there is still no need to worry. A student will always consider the opinions of parents who genuinely love (and care about) him before he consults even the most respected of teachers.

—Jack Arends

Editor's Note: Point/Counterpoint will be a weekly feature of the Summer Evergreen. A forum for ideas and opinion, it will present both sides of the issue, allowing a battleground for journalistic warfare (of the safe and sane variety). The right of reply will be rotated—one writer getting the chance to respond to an editorial already written by his or her opponent. Judging of the outcome, of course, is the readers' duty and will be left to you.

Thanks for being sensible

The Council for Post-Secondary Education (CPE) voted last week to retain four of WSU's most important graduate programs.

We applaud the sensible action of the CPE in recognizing the need to keep WSU firmly grounded in liberal arts programs as well as the agricultural and technical programs also found at major land-grant universities.

We agree with the statements of council member Ruth Shepard, who said:

"The eastern half of this state is sometimes referred to as a vast wasteland. I believe the people in the east have the same rights to educational opportunities as those in the west. For a person to be truly educated, he must have a strong background in English,

history, mathematics, and philosophy."

Although the council did eliminate teaching degrees in chemistry, mathematics and home economics, it did give provisional renewal to the Ph. D. programs in English, history, and pharmacy, as well as the master's program in philosophy. We should all be grateful that sanity still prevails among some people in state government.

We should also remember what a close call this whole experience has been. The provisional renewals mean each of the same programs come up for CPE review again in one or two years.

The Ph. D. programs in political science/public administration and geology were also on the CPE staff's hit list until that staff backed down at the last minute.

If we are to be sure WSU will remain a strong, broad-based, big-league state university, we must remain vigilant.

Students, staff, and administrators alike must work together to increase the efficiency, and reduce the costs, of all our programs. We must also point out inefficiency when we find it exists.

—J.A.

Correspondence

Letters

All letters to the editor of the Summer Evergreen are welcome. Letters will be printed as space allows.

In order to be printed, letters must carry the full name, address and phone number of the author. Letters that are unsigned or signed with pseudonyms will not be printed.

Letters should be typed and limited to 250 words. The editor reserves the right to edit for matters of libel and length.

All correspondence should be addressed to the editor, P.O. Box 2008 C.S., Pullman, WA 99163 or brought to Murrow Communications Center 122.

Lonely

Editor, the Evergreen:

I'm writing this letter from the McNeil Island Federal Prison. I realize the request I'm about to make is unusual, but I hope you can understand, and try to help me. What I'd like you to do, is print a small ad in your campus paper for me, for female correspondence.

Below is the ad I'd like you to run.

Thank you very much.
"Hello, girls. I'm writing from the McNeil Island Federal Prison. I got myself a couple

years to do, and I'm already getting mighty lonely. I'm 30 years old, was born in Oklahoma City, and my blood line is Norwegian. I'll be here for quite awhile, so, if any of you can dig making a lonely guy happy, write to me:

"Jim Hutchison
P.O. Box 1000
Steilacoom, Wa. 98388"

Editor's Note: Because Mr. Hutchison did not enclose any money with his request, the Summer Evergreen could not honor it. However, his letter is presented here because of the circumstances which Hutchison described.

Summer Evergreen

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SPG Photographers

Published by the Student Publications Board for the students of Washington State University each Monday of the regular summer session. Charlie Rohr, Chairman and Wes Calvert, secretary and general manager.
Office: Room 113 Murrow Communications Center, P.O. Box 2008, C.S. WSU, Pullman, Washington 99163. Mail Subscriptions: second class postage for the Daily Evergreen at Pullman, Washington; \$14.00 per year or \$7.50 per semester.
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