

American morality questioned



BY ROXANNE WARREN
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I love America, but like everything in this world, it has its flaws. Some of the flaws are quite serious.

Last Tuesday, the state of Virginia took a two-year-old boy named Tyler away from his lesbian mother, Sharon Bottoms. The child's grandmother, Kay Bottoms, was granted custody after court hearings revealed (and I use the term loosely) the mother was unfit.

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When I first heard that the state of Virginia had taken a lesbian's child away, I knew the woman had to be a piece of work: a drug dealer, perhaps a junkie prostitute or child abuser. No?

Then she must not be able to provide for the child financially. Wrong again. I had to see the news report two or three times before I realized Sharon Bottoms' true crime. She is a 'social deviant'.

Bottoms is a lesbian who lives honestly and openly with her lover, April Wade. Together, they created a loving home in which to raise Tyler, Sharon's little boy. In the United States of America, this constitutes grounds for removal of a boy from his natural mother.

Richard Ryder, Kay Bottoms' attorney told Connie Chung's 'Eye to Eye' that "I don't think either of them (Sharon Bottoms and Wade) is fit to raise a child.

Well la-dee-da, who died and put a red-necked bigot from Richmond in charge? I don't proclaim to be privy to any specialized information, but I am not aware of any

studies proving conclusively that growing up in the care of a caring, financially able couple that happens to be homosexual is harmful to the welfare of a child.

Judge Buford Parsons, who made the ruling in the case, agreed with Kay Bottoms, who said that the child would grow up so confused that he wouldn't be able to differentiate between men and women. Oh, please. That assertion shows absolutely no respect for a human being's capacity for basic intelligence.

Sharon Bottoms openly admitted to engaging in oral sex, and is thus guilty of a felony according to Virginia law. Why this is a law, I do not know.

The United States has often demonstrated, through past court decisions, that a woman almost has to be an axe murderer before the court will find it necessary to separate mother and child.

The only purpose I can see in such a law is victimization. Point and case, Sharon Bottoms. If put on the stand, speaking the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, and asked the 'oral sex question,' I'd be willing to bet half of the state of Virginia could go to jail right now.

The manner in which judicial intervention in civil matters is being used, and an increasing number of the results, are downright terrifying. The implications of the precedent set by the Bottoms case are sobering to say the least.

I know that Utopia is virtually impossible. Besides, a perfect world would most likely be boring. Regardless, the public cannot continue to tolerate the infliction of the tenet of morality that now looms menacingly in our legal courts. It is unacceptable to allow this loathsome attempt to stifle and ostracize the diversity of belief and culture to continue.

From the Sap...every Tuesday and Thursday
Only in the Rebel Yell

Campus apathy painful to educational environment



BY NICHOLAS HALEY
MANAGING EDITOR

Remember the Barrick lectures last year?

How about the open lectures presented by the philosophy department?

Okay, maybe neither of those things appealed to you. Or maybe you didn't know about them. That's alright, nobody else seemed to, either.

So where is everybody spending their time out of class? It appears most students are going directly to class, and then straight back home.

The fact is, student participation at UNLV is pathetic and, with sagging athletic interests, it seems headed for an all-time low.

Over the last year or so, UNLV has hosted a plethora of great speakers. The list includes tennis great Arthur Ashe, former umpire Dave Pallone, TV host Morton Downey, Jr., President Bill Clinton, Vice President Al Gore, billionaire H. Ross Perot and gun-control activist Jim Brady. The list goes on but why bother.

The response? Weak. Yeah, we had a great turnout for the president right before election day. But on issues of local interest and education, student turnouts have been, let me say it again, PATHETIC.

Remember the big debate, athletics vs. academics, that's supposedly tearing our school apart? Surely most of our campus as well as many in the community would want to attend a discussion on UNLV's most volatile subject, right?

Such an event took place last February with Jim Weaver, athletic director and Chris Hudgins, English

department chair as the speakers. Approximately 50 people showed up. Everyone else was either at work or at home, hoping "The Simpsons" wouldn't be a rerun.

The apathy doesn't end with guest lecturers, either. Few manage to take an hour or two from their busy schedules to visit the Marjorie Barrick Museum, check out what's on display at the faculty art exhibit or even take in an athletic event. All of these things are free, on campus, and require little effort to find out about.

For those wishing to be more than just a spectator, there are yet more opportunities left by the wayside at UNLV. With a shortfall of students participants, KUNV has recruited many volunteers not affiliated with the university.

Only three years ago, KUNV was voted the best college radio station in the country. It's too bad more students weren't a part of it.

It's time we stopped using the athletic department as a barometer of UNLV's academic prowess and instead turn our focus to what the school presents with academically.

Student Government has had an even tougher time filling in the gaps. With almost no undergraduates running for election, seats are frequently appointed without election and still others remain unfilled. All that's required of a senator is to attend weekly meetings and make at least one speech.

In return, a senator shares control of a \$600,000

budget, has the opportunity to work first hand with the Nevada legislators and gains leadership experience that can benefit any professional career.

Last year, a handful of Student Government officials lobbied successfully for a tuition freeze that will save UNLV students millions this year. Imagine what could be accomplished with the support of the student body.

But people aren't getting involved. Either no one has the time or the interest to make the most of their college careers or their educations. And with basketball and football attendance figures down, the UNLV community can't even draw upon a relatively strong sports program to hold it together.

In fact, athletics are as guilty as anything for campus disillusionment. Students of UNLV as well as members of our community have blamed the basketball program, President Robert Maxson, Isaiah Rider, Jr. among others for the shabbiness of a UNLV education. It's time we stopped using the athletic department as a barometer of UNLV's academic prowess and instead turn our focus to what the school presents us with academically.

The fact is, our university continues to offer many ways to supplement the standard classroom education with training labs (like the Yell), guest lecturers, museums and more.

Since none of these things are required, it's up to the students to find out about them and make themselves go. How many can sacrifice one evening per week for the sake of their education? How about one per month?

Students who simply go to class leave with degrees, just like everyone else. But the more involved students leave with contacts, practical experience and an awareness of what they could have been missing.