

points of view

'A' is era's new scarlet letter

MODERN TECHNOLOGY makes going to the dentist these days much less painful. And fluoride treatment makes the chance of having an actual cavity more remote.

So why was I still so nervous when I went to the dentist one afternoon earlier this week?

Because even though my Bloomfield Township dentist is a woman—as is the hygienist—and even though they wear rubber gloves... and even though I'm sure they change the little plastic cover on the saliva sucker and sterilize their instruments, still I worry about the cunning, sadistic HIV slipping into my body in some way and causing AIDS.

And there's reason enough for all of us to worry.

AIDS is no longer something out there that infects only males, homosexuals or intravenous drug users.

AIDS is attacking your neighbors and mine.



Judith Doner Berne

LAST WEEK, we learned that Mary Fisher, daughter of Farmington Hills billionaire philanthropist Max Fisher and his wife, Marjorie, tested HIV-positive. Mary Fisher went up down the street from my family. She graduated from Kingswood School, now Kingswood Cranbrook, in Bloomfield Hills. She went to the University of Michigan.

Now an artist living in Boca Raton, Fla., she retains her suburban Detroit ties. Last May she had a one-person show of handmade paper at the Linda Hayman Gallery in Farmington Hills.

Fisher says she contracted the vi-

rus from her former husband, who at one time was an intravenous drug user. He, too, has tested HIV-positive. Luckily, the couple's son has apparently not been infected.

The same day Fisher made her situation public, vowing to work to defeat it and the stigma which surrounds people who have it, our Birmingham paper's lead story was about Bloomfield Township resident Lisa Shoemaker, who contracted the virus from her Florida, yes, dentist. Shoemaker's situation began in 1988 when she lived in Florida and had her dental work done by David Acer. Acer is the dentist who didn't tell anyone he had AIDS until shortly before his death. Shoemaker, back in Michigan, didn't see the notice he published in a local newspaper saying he was infected and urging his patients to seek testing.

Shoemaker had already had an AIDS test, as a result of literature she had received from the government. When she tested positive, she

thought it was as a result of relations with a former boyfriend. But he tested negative. It took a while to connect her infection with the dentist.

LIKE THE OTHER scourges of our time, alcoholism, drug abuse and cancer, few of us will escape from this life without the knowledge that a friend or family member has AIDS.

So we must learn all we can and make sure that this information is part of the new ABC's. Gone are the days when A stood for APPLE. It is now A for AIDS and ALCOHOLISM. B for BIRTH CONTROL. C for COCAINE. D for DRUGS.

They are every bit as important to our children as the old ones. We may have to rewrite the "letter people's" script to get that point across.

Judith Doner Berne is assistant managing editor for the Oakland County editions of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

Regulators will feel the squeeze

WHEN GOV. John Engler cuts a budget, he doesn't cut everywhere.

The one-third for education is his sacred cow. The one-third for social services is the Democrats' sacred cow.

The last one-third takes the hit: Department of Natural Resources, which does environmental permitting as well as parks. Agriculture, which keeps the gasoline pumps honest. Commerce, which does financial regulation. Labor, in charge of workplace safety. State Police. Attorney General. Courts. Prisons.

Courts and prisons won't be cut much. The real squeeze is on all "other."

Engler rarely talks in detail about it. He uses abstractions like "downsizing" and "reducing the intervention and cost of government."

Phil Power, chairman of this company, suspects Engler has a Reagan-esque hidden agenda about backing that portion of state government. I worry about it, too, particularly since Engler has a "cut and cap" property tax plan that, if passed, will quickly bite \$1 billion out of the general fund.

SO I PUT the question to Engler directly, starting with financial institutions.

"Well, we probably have one of the better Financial Institutions Bureau in the country," Engler said. "It's in the hands of a civil servant today who is acting commissioner, and he doesn't want the job full time. But frankly I haven't seen anybody come along who I think can do a better job."

"We had fewer problems in Michigan than almost any state in the country."

Q: "If regulation is cut back, will that continue? I have a whole string of questions."

Engler: "It depends. I don't think we're doing enough in the Insurance Bureau. That's probably on your list. (It was.) We've inherited some very unpleasant situations when we took office. Mr. (David) Dykehouse has moved very promptly to deal with those. That's protection for the consumer. But if we don't do our job, it's going to be very costly to the consumer."

Q: "THE LIQUOR Control Commission says it lost inspectors. LCC says it has only 47 inspectors for 83 counties. Does that bother you?"



Tim Richard

Engler: "It does, especially when their staff is 500. Everybody's out in the warehouses moving cases around, arranging for them to be shipped and running the stores."

That's precisely my point. There's an inherent conflict. On one hand, we're running a business and trying to get the liquor out the door. On the other hand, we're regulating so that it isn't sold to minors, so we don't sell drinks to someone who's intoxicated so they don't go out and drive. We could accelerate the hearings when someone's charged with a violation.

"I am not comfortable with the way it's run at present... I'd like to have them focus on regulation."

Q: "IF THAT whole regulatory section of the budget is squeezed, at some point do we run into the danger there'll be too little regulation?"

Engler: "We're not close to that today. But certainly, conceptually, that's a concern. You don't want to reduce staff to where they can't carry out their responsibilities."

"What you want to do is encourage staff to become more interested in quality management. In other words, what can I do with my time that pays the most important dividend? How can I improve through use of modern information technology?"

"We spend far too much time issuing a license and not enough checking up on the licensee after the fact. Some of it is administrative slowness in responding to new technology. We're encouraging employees to come to us with new ideas."

A "bright light" in 1991 was the Civil Rights Department, which reduced staff slightly, the budget was smaller, but it resolved more cases because it changed the processes by which they made decisions."

He cited a backlog in workers comp cases that has been wiped out, and a snafu in cosmetology licensing.

In short, Engler thinks we're not close to danger in cutting the regulatory area. I say we're close.

Learning doesn't come through osmosis

QUESTION: My son is entering sixth grade next year. He has done quite well in elementary but will now begin receiving letter grades. I know my son will have more homework in middle school, when he has six teachers instead of one. What are some techniques for parents to use to establish the right pattern for academic achievement?

ANSWER: The home is where A students are made, not during the school day. Believe it or not, between birth and age 18, a child spends only 9 percent of his/her time in class.

All A students I remember came from homes which used many of the following techniques. And you can't start children too early if you are looking for a scholarship down the line.

• Homework is the priority. A quiet, well-lighted place is set aside. Dictionary, rulers and pencils are available.

• An established regular study time is set aside. Your child spends some time every day on schoolwork, even if it is review.

• During study time, the TV is off and phone calls will be returned after the study period is over.

• Discuss homework and see that the child does the most difficult

• DOING YOUR own homework at the same time can have an effect. Write your letters, pay bills, balance your check book, sweep the floor.

• Make your son or daughter the teacher. If it is a history, geography, science or literature lesson, set aside some time and have them tell you what they have learned. Ask them questions until you understand.

The renowned educational philosopher, Dr. Francis Langor, said, "Unless a student can verbally and clearly articulate back to another person what has been learned, I doubt they understand."

These simple concepts have been known for years and those parents who follow them have the A students. This is a way of life, not a topic for your son/daughter's endless discussion and debate until the child manipulates the environment for the child's own pleasure.

OBVIOUSLY there must be some flexibility such as if a critical phone call comes in. However, don't buy the "I don't have any homework" routine unless your child is an all-A student.

By tradition, the Japanese set aside two hours a night for home-



Doc Doyle

work monitored by the mother.

Nothing comes easily. However, clearly established goals, a specific work plan followed consistently is the only road I know for the future scholarship candidate. Learning, simply said, does not come via osmosis.

QUESTION: My daughter just received her social studies term paper back. There was a grade on the front cover, but not a comment throughout the 20 page paper. Some of the things my daughter wrote are not even fact. What should I do?

ANSWER: On the high side, the teacher thoroughly read the term paper and gave a grade based on his experience. On the low side, he breezed through the paper, took into consideration your daughter's over all grade average for the year and put that grade on the paper. Maybe he had a golf match that afternoon.

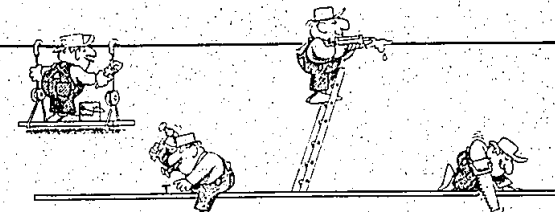
The worst I ever saw was the English teacher years ago, when I was an assistant high school principal. Near the end of her career, she was worn out and should have retired but didn't.

THE KIDS knew she only read the introduction and the conclusion of term papers. So one of our very bright and clever students wrote a beautiful introduction and a brilliant conclusion in his term paper on students' rights. However, on the 10 pages in the body of his paper, he quoted word for word from writings by John Donne, the great English poet. He received an A.

Most teachers commit themselves to the task of thoroughly reading and commenting on term papers. A few cheat on kids.

What should you do? Meet with the teacher and tell him of your concerns. If you are right and your daughter's facts were totally wrong in the paper, he may take responsibility or rationalize away knowing he has tenure.

James "Doc" Doyle, a former teacher/school administrator, is president of Doyle and Associates, an educational consulting firm.



WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR YOUR HOME THIS SPRING?

Are you dreaming of a new patio? Perhaps you want the latest in air conditioning or heating? Maybe you're toying with the idea of new furnishings.

Spring is the time we shake off winter, look around and decide on a project that involves something new and different for the place we call "home."

The more adventurous among us tackle the changes themselves. Those with fewer power tools or who haven't unlocked the mysteries of interior decorating, will hire an expert.

If you're looking for a lot of

experts and an equal number of ideas under one roof, you'll want to check out the annual International Builders Home Flower and Furniture Show March 14-22.

In fact, you can preview the show on Thursday, March 12, without ever leaving your easy chair because we're printing a special section in conjunction with the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan that'll be totally devoted to the show.

Filled with exciting ideas for just about anything you'd like to do to your home, you'll just have to spend some time with this section!

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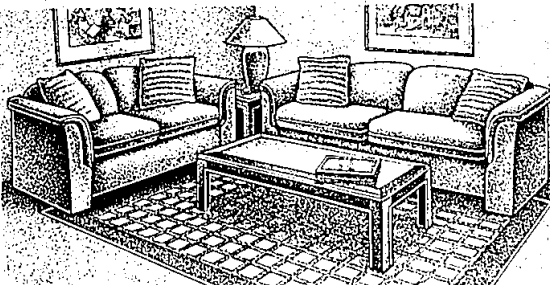
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