

Editorial

Lincolnite says homosexuals pose 'threat'

A Lincoln man seems to have made a career of spreading fear of homosexuals.

He reached a degree of local celebrity two years ago by leading a successful campaign against a proposed city ordinance that would have required landlords and businesses to give homosexuals equal opportunity.

The man, Paul Cameron, a licensed psychologist from Lincoln, was quoted in

an Associated Press story about a speech he made Saturday in Maine.

Cameron said, "Homosexual meeting places should be closed, gay bars, gay baths and public parks taken over by homosexuals should be closed and all practicing homosexuals should be required to register and their movements should be tracked."

Cameron, who is not a medical doctor, claims Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome has the potential to strike half of

the estimated 4 million homosexual men in the United States and that AIDS could be a threat to heterosexuals.

The director of Maine's sexually transmitted disease program said the cases of AIDS reported so far do not threaten the general public. He said if the infection was "highly contagious" there would be tens of thousands of cases, rather than the 6,000 nationwide that have been reported.

Cameron has argued in the past that

homosexuals pose a moral and physical threat to "normal" members of society.

Homosexuals are not less people than heterosexuals, bisexuals or asexuals. They should be accorded the same rights.

Cameron's comments appeal to the emotions and especially fear, but he does not back his assumptions with hard facts. One wonders how Cameron would react to a proposal to register white Anglo-Saxon heterosexuals because they have been known to contract syphilis.

Political 'macho gap' echoes lives of men, president's 'swagger'

If you lean over the edge of the gender gap and listen very carefully, you can hear something more than the static of pollsters down there. You can hear the echoes of men's lives.

Any gap among young men and women is worth looking at. This is the mating age, when the motivation to find some meeting of the minds and lives is greatest. But if it's a macho gap that hinges on what one has called the "swagger" factor, it's worth a stare.

Among the idealistic assumptions of the women's movement was the notion that as men and women led more similar lives, they would have more in common with each other. Another assumption was that machoism would gradually become extinct, as its favorite sons retired gracefully from active duty.

Now we are told that young men are attracted specifically to the wood-cutting, barbell-toting, horse-riding, Soviet-baiting, Marine-landing idea of a president. We are told that these men are drawn to a mythic father figure, in the form of a man older than their own fathers. Is this some sort of reaction, the much-heralded backlash, the proof of what some young women say despairingly about the "new man."

It is risky to make a generalization out of a polling difference, but I have the sense that we are witnessing the political expression of private conflict. The pollsters have told us that young men generally agree with young women on the issues, whether they are talking about the bomb or the deficit. What they disagree about is the image, the image of maleness.

From my observation post at the edge of this and other con-

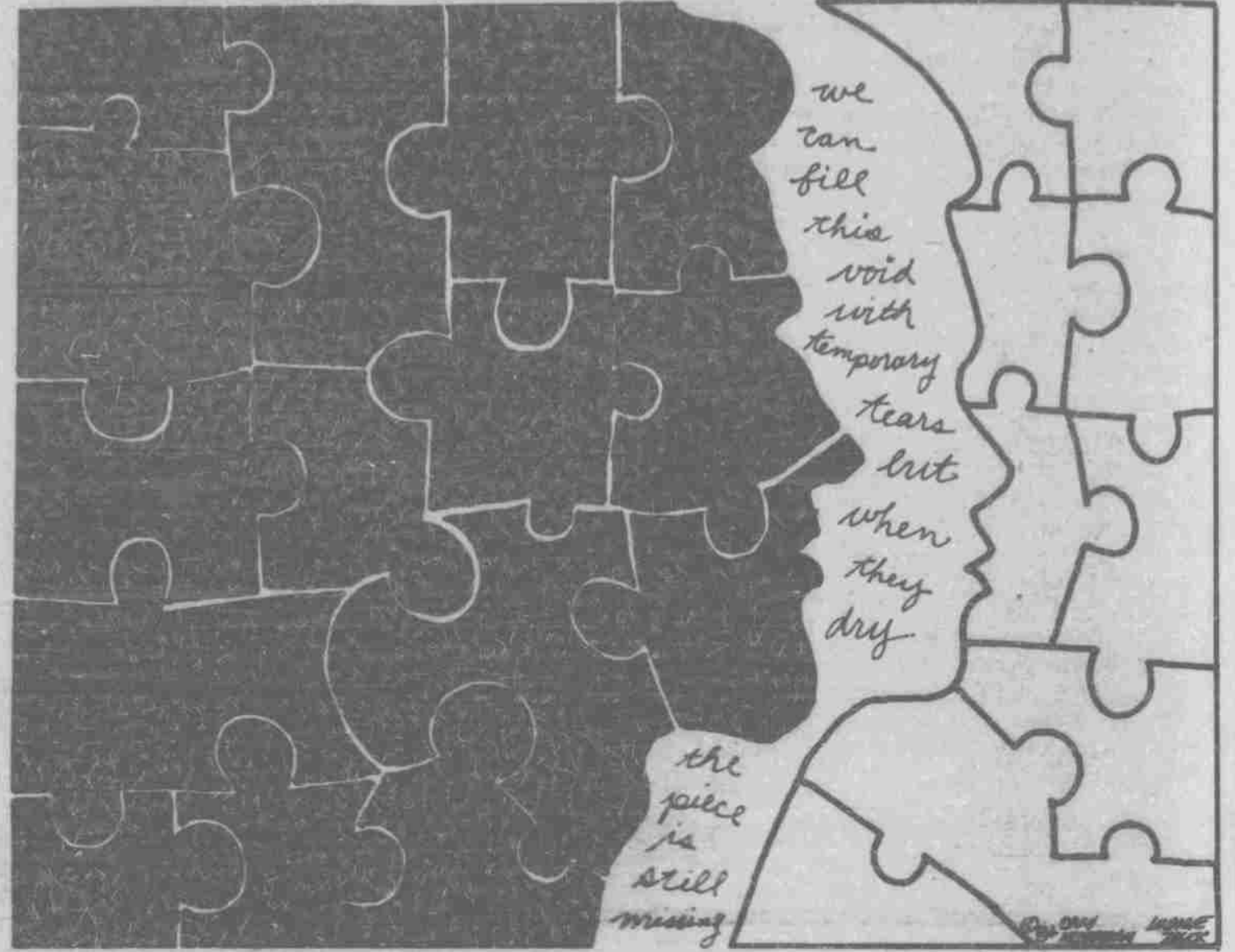
For over a year, the president's people have argued that the gender gap isn't women against Reagan, it's men in favor of Reagan. Theirs was essentially a debate

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about whether the cup was half-empty or half-full. But now, when Reagan's cup runneth over, the argument is getting more attention.

From the female side of the gap, we hear concerns about women's rights, the fairness issue, and especially peace. From the male side, we hear concerns about leadership, toughness, strength. Indeed, there are people ready to dub the gender gap with a new name. The Macho Gap.

What is most intriguing about the difference between male and female voting preferences is that they run strongest among the young. The latest New York Times/CBS News poll showed that among 18- to 29-year-olds, men prefer the Republican ticket by 57 to 30 percent while women prefer the Democratic ticket 46 to 41 percent.



sciousness gaps. I have seen a whole lot of ambivalence about images, from women as well as men. Young women today are psychologically outfitted with briefcases and fancy underwear, with assorted outfits suitable for managing by day and loving by night — all charged on our very own American Express card. Even the new Miss America, whose hobby is collecting soap, describes a career as part of her traditional values. Many women have dealt with ambivalence by simply incorporating all the old and new female images into one (often impossible) ideal.

Men have also been living with the double messages of the age and of the women in their lives. They have been told to be strong

but not dominating, to be vulnerable but not weak, to be caring but above all don't be a wimp. Most young men accept the need for trust and peacekeeping at home, but they may remain more suspicious than women of the hostility and toughness of the world "out there."

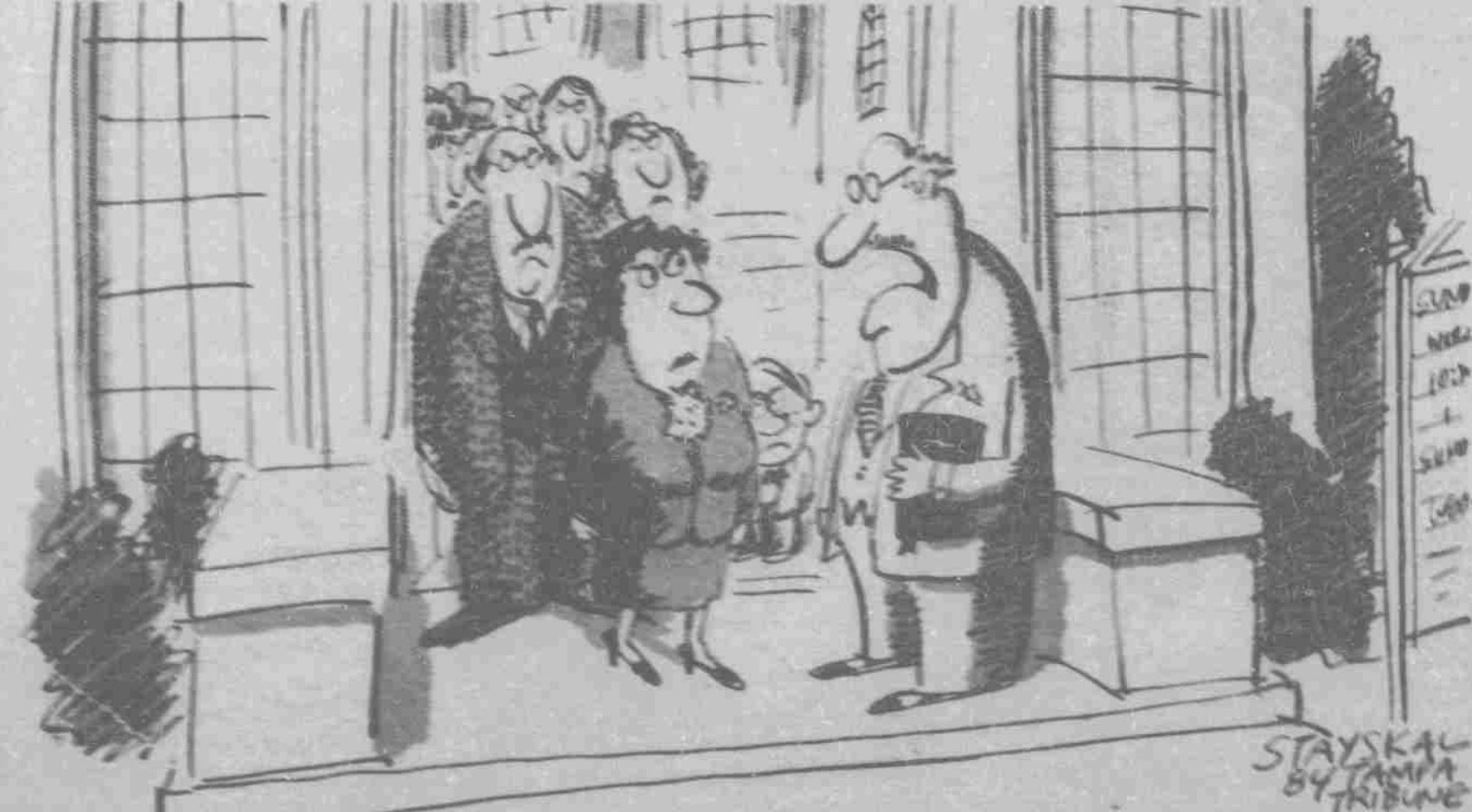
My sense is that these men are attracted by both the Mario Cuomo peacekeeping "family" man and by the Reagan swagger. It may be the contour of their ambivalence. Like women, they would rather not choose between images but include them all into some fanciful creature. Their ideal would also mix traditional and non-traditional. They would be part caretaker and part protector and part boss — the semi-

tough, independent, in charge, connected man.

Political campaigns are always more complicated than theories and, in the end, young voters are judging candidates, not ideas or psyches. We are picking a president and not a spouse.

But at the bottom of this gender gap, there is a distinct majority of young men who like the swagger. Many of the women they are likely to know and love and marry are uneasy with that posture. It makes me wonder what body language their generation will be able to share.

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