

*Dennis -
This comes
from a
briefing memo*

*to Members of
the Committee
prior to the
hearing
Dys P.9
Shays*

- One quarter of teen mothers live below the poverty level.
- Across all ethnic groups, delaying birth by one year leads to a significant improvement in subsequent economic status.
- For a Black family in which the mother began childbearing before age 16, the average income is only 96 percent of the poverty level. This rises to 236 percent if she is 26 to 27 years of age when her first child is born and to 275 percent if she postpones childbearing past age 27.

Finally, with respect to early childbearing's relationship to the presence of supportive environments, Advocates for Youth maintains that:

- Young women who are encouraged to question traditional gender roles and those who have high educational aspirations are more likely to avoid teen pregnancy.
- Teens who have healthy parent-child communications, high self-esteem and high educational aspirations are more likely to postpone childbearing.
- A positive attitude toward school has been significantly related to fewer non-marital births.

*Dubois
Fitch
Crime
Statutory
Rape*

The role of adult males in fathering the babies born to teenagers

In 1994, the Alan Guttmacher Institute, a nonprofit New York-based reproductive health research, policy analysis and public education firm, released the results of a survey entitled "Sex and America's Teenagers." According to the Institute, 39 percent of 15 year old mothers said that the fathers of their babies was 20 years old or older. For 17 year old teenage mothers, 55 percent of the fathers were 20 years or older. For 19 year old mothers, 78 percent of the fathers were 20 years of age or older. Thus, among teens aged 15-17, over half (51%) of the fathers of the babies were age 20 or older. (Attachment 5)

The Alan Guttmacher Institute report also indicates that large proportions of the very young teenagers who have become sexually active are victims of sexual abuse. Seven in 10 women who become sexually before age 14 and six in 10 who do so before age 15 report having done so involuntarily. (Attachment 5)

According to a 1995 GAO analysis, providers in residential care facilities for



parenting teens report that most of their clients were victims of sexual abuse. Recent research indicate that as many as 68 percent of teen mothers were sexually abused as children. (Attachment 7)

These research findings have produced a call for enactment and enforcement of more stringent laws against statutory rape, crimes defined only by the age of the victim without regard to any evidence of consent. According to USA Today journalist Patricia Edmonds ("Teen pregnancy revives laws on statutory rape," USA Today, March 28, 1996), the age of consent for statutory rape purposes is age 18 in 14 states; age 17 in five states; age 16 in 27 states and the District of Columbia; age 15 in two states; and age 14 in two states (Hawaii and Pennsylvania).

Dr. Henry Foster, who serves as Senior Advisor to the President with respect to teenage pregnancy issues and as White House Liaison to the newly created National Campaign, has explained that prosecuting statutory rape cases is "very important, because we know many of these sexual acts are not consensual."

Attachments:

1. Dr. Kristin A. Moore, "Facts at a Glance." Child Trends, Inc., January 1996.
2. Ruth Ellen Wasem, "Adolescent Childbearing: Fact Sheet on Trends and Consequences." Education and Public Welfare Division, Congressional Research Service, 94-983 EPW, December 8, 1995.
3. Ruth Ellen Wasem, "Welfare Reform: Adolescent Pregnancy Issues," Education and Public Welfare Division, Congressional Research Service, 94-591 EPW, December 7, 1995, citing Hoffman, Saul D., E. Michael Foster, and Frank Furstenberg, Jr. "Revaluating the Costs of Teenage Childbearing," Demography, Vol.30, No. 2, May 1993; and Geronimus, Arline T., and Sanders Korenman, "The Socioeconomic Costs of Teenage Childbearing: Evidence and Interpretations," Demography, Vol.30, No. 2, May 1993.
4. The Alan Guttmacher Institute, "Teenage Pregnancy and the Welfare Reform Debate," Issues in Brief, February 1995.
5. The Alan Guttmacher Institute, "Sex and America's Teenagers," New York, 1994 (News Release of 88+ page report).

Crime -
Stephan Raper

The fathers of teen mothers

Here are some startling statistics to ponder with your coffee this morning. More than half the fathers of babies born to mothers ages 15-17 are 20 years old and older. Only one of five of these fathers is under the age of 18. According to data compiled last year by the Alan Guttmacher Institute, two of five fathers of babies born to 15-year-old mothers are 20 years old or older. Among teen welfare mothers under the age of 18, the Urban Institute reports that the fathers of their children were on average 3.5 years older than the mothers.

Observing that only 1.2 percent of welfare recipients are mothers under the age of 18, as ACLU Executive Director Ira Glasser does in an effort to downplay the problem, in no way mitigates the disastrous long-term social and economic consequences of such behavior. The far more telling statistic is the fact that more than 50 percent of mothers receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) — the general welfare program — had their first children as teenagers. More than 3 of 4 current welfare recipients will remain on AFDC's rolls longer than 60 months. The average duration of current AFDC recipients is nearly 13 years, with a disproportionate number of long-term dependencies representing families that initially received benefits as teen mothers.

The long and the short of it is that out-of-wedlock teen pregnancy comprises a massive social problem that virtually guarantees the escalation of a host of interrelated, often community-wide problems that compound one another, all too frequently from one generation to the next: school failure, crime, drug abuse, child abuse, lack of work experience, entrenched poverty, etc.

In recent years, however, evidence has mounted steadily, confirming that so-called "adult-teen sex" contributes mightily to these problems. As such, it

deserves to be attacked on a separate front in the multi-pronged effort to prevent the type of behavior that robs mostly disadvantaged children of the opportunity to surmount real-life difficulties that already are oftentimes too much to bear. In California, according to a recent Washington Post article, authorities are pursuing adult sexual predators who have victimized under-aged children. Given its limited, but growing, resources, the state essentially targets those fathers who are failing to pay child support. Charging them with statutory rape and engaging in lewd acts with a minor, district attorneys across California are seeking to send the message that predatorial sexual activity with minors has important long-term consequences that extend far beyond temporary gratification.

It's about time. Much teenage sex is not consensual. Justice Department statistics demonstrate that about half of the nation's rapes are committed against girls under the age of 18. The Urban Institute cites a study showing that "three quarters of females who had sexual intercourse before age 14 reported having had sex involuntarily." Many abused girls later become easy victims for predatory adults. So too do demonstrably immature young girls seeking to live beyond their years. Society must protect the interests of its most vulnerable members, and for much too long, it has ignored a problem that has, not surprisingly, escalated to the outrageous level that the statistics above confirm.

California's aggressive approach, long overdue, will not solve the problem of teen pregnancy. No single approach will. But the solutions to a problem with so many diverse causes must necessarily be varied as well. With President Clinton having vetoed welfare reform that sought to address teen pregnancy, any progress in the states ought to be welcomed.

B.C.

There aren't many groups in these politically correct times available for parody or satire. One makes jokes at the expense of minorities, women, homosexuals, the handicapped and other groups sensitive to such slights only at the risk of a visit from the thought police and the loss of one's job.

But there is still one group out there that it is safe to treat with stereotype and caricature: Christians. Perhaps it is because they are more willing than others to turn the other cheek in the face of insults or because they take to heart the adage that mere "names will never hurt them." Whatever the reason, they are still considered fair game for jibes few others must endure.

Just before the beginning of the Christian holy week that leads up to Easter, Los Angeles cartoonist Paul Conrad, a Pulitzer Prize winner, drew a cartoon that portrayed the all-but-official Republican presidential nominee Bob Dole up on a cross in the manner of Christ's crucifixion, a crown of thorns spelling out the words "Christian Coalition" across his forehead. To draw an analogy between Mr. Dole's political burdens and the suffering of Christ on the cross is to downplay the latter, a notion that many people would doubtless find offensive. Imagine almost any cartoon treatment of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., say by a gunman labeled "affirmative action." Imagine further that this cartoon would run during Black History Month. You can guess the kind of outrage that would follow.

Interestingly, Mr. Conrad's work was not the only cartoon treatment of Christianity available to the L.A. Times. As reported by this newspaper's Joyce Price last week, Johnny Hart, author of the popular strip "B.C.," drew one that portrayed the character Wiley

writing a poem entitled, "The Suffering Prince." The poem, which alludes to Christ's death and sacrifice, concludes: "Never to mourn the prince who was downed, / For He is not Lost! It is you who are found."

The Times, however, decided that this particular strip was not fit to print. A spokesman for the paper said the Times had been running Johnny Hart since 1968, but that "lately he's been running cartoons with religious overtones." Um, but didn't Mr. Conrad's cartoon have religious overtones? Yes, but that was, well, different. Said the paper: "The Dole cartoon was printed in the editorial section, and the nature of editorial cartoon is to provoke thought. We're not printing an apology."

The Times is making a distinction without a difference. What cartoon doesn't provoke thoughts, politically correct or otherwise? Just the title of Mr. Hart's cartoon provokes thought. Moreover, as anyone who reads "Doonesbury" can tell you, it's a very fine line between "funny" thoughts and "serious" thoughts when it comes to comics. So run both of the comics or neither. Anything less suggests, correctly or not, a bias against Christians that no other group would tolerate.

The Times' treatment of its cartoons may be emblematic of a much larger problem that pervades journalism. Last week the Media Research Center reported that the major networks devote only 1 percent of their total coverage to religion stories, notwithstanding the fact that there is a much larger audience for them than, for example, sports or politics. If journalists would start paying a little more attention to religion in their news coverage, they might learn to recognize religious bias when they see it.

Rostenkowski expected to plead guilty to two charges By Jan Crawford Greenburg and Michael Tackett Chicago Tribune(KRT)

WASHINGTON In the end, he could not bear the thought of a lengthy trial, the dwindling finances, the specter of friends and family being forced to testify, the front-page stories day after day.

Former Rep. Dan Rostenkowski, a man whose name always had "powerful" written before it, didn't want to put himself or his family through it, especially given the odds he might lose and receive a long prison term.

To avoid a trial on a litany of corruption charges, the Chicago Democrat is expected to plead guilty to two felony corruption charges, possibly as soon as Tuesday.

Rostenkowski has signed a plea agreement that will give him 17 months in a federal prison and a \$100,000 fine, lawyers close to the case in Washington said.

Until he enters the plea in U.S. District Judge Norma Holloway Johnson's courtroom, he can change his mind. Lawyers close to the case said they were concerned that he would be under enormous pressure from friends to reject the plea agreement, just as he was almost two years ago when he turned down a much better deal.

But longtime friends and associates said they believed he would stand firm and plead guilty to two of the less serious charges contained in the indictment.

"I think he just doesn't want to put his family through it anymore and his friends," said one.

The investigation of Rostenkowski began as part of an inquiry into abuses at the House Post Office. The probe gradually encompassed other allegations, including paying people for doing little or no official work and obtaining gifts at taxpayer expense for friends and family.

Ultimately, prosecutors charged him in May 1994 with 17 corruption counts for allegedly defrauding the government of more than \$660,000 over a 20-year period.

Under the plea agreement, Rostenkowski would not plead guilty to any charges associated with the House Post Office, such as trading stamps for cash, one lawyer said. Johnson would have to accept any deal worked out with prosecutors.

Rostenkowski had repeatedly maintained his innocence, most recently in an interview last month on CNN's "Larry King Live." But acquaintances said the investigation had taken an increasing personal and financial toll on the man once routinely described as the "powerful chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee."

Though the prosecution's case was no stronger in fact, Rostenkowski had just succeeded in getting four counts of the indictment against him dismissed they said Rostenkowski seemed in recent weeks like a man who was "ready to put it all in."

Some who have recently advised him said the weight of his legal bills, by some estimates well over \$2 million, coupled with the uncertain fate of a criminal trial added to his decision to enter a guilty plea.

Within the last two weeks, he told longtime friends in Washington and in Chicago that he was in debt. The money raised for his legal defense, he told them, was all gone.

"He confided in friends that he's hard pressed by continuing legal bills in excess of \$3 million and prospects of \$1 million more if he went to trial," said one Chicago Democrat, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

Then, about two weeks ago, prosecutors issued a round of subpoenas to members of Rostenkowski's family, friends and former employees, requesting their appearance at his upcoming trial on a host of corruption charges.

"That raised the specter again," said one acquaintance. "It wouldn't just be painful and taxing for him, but for lot of people he cared about."

It also had become increasingly clear in the investigation, now nearing the end of its fifth year, that prosecutors were confident in their case against him and resolute to win at trial, scheduled to start May 15.

If convicted on any one of the counts, Rostenkowski could face a prison term of 3 to 5 years under federal

sentencing guidelines.

Last month, Johnson dismissed charges that Rostenkowski lied to Congress about alleged schemes involving ghost employees on the payroll, personal purchases at the House stationery store, cash-for-stamps at the House Post Office and vehicle leases in his district.

Nevertheless, the government's case was strong, lawyers said. Among those who had directly implicated Rostenkowski were former House Postmaster Robert Rota, who pleaded guilty to misdemeanor charges.

Bolstering the prosecution's confidence was a swift verdict in a case against one of his alleged ghost payrollers, a former Chicago city employee suffering from advanced Parkinson's disease.

Lawyers said it was hard to imagine a more sympathetic defendant, yet the jury was unswayed. The employee, Robert Russo, was sentenced to 10 months in prison for lying to a grand jury investigating Rostenkowski's finances.

That case also illustrated how tough the judge could be on the defense. During the Russo trial, also in Johnson's courtroom, she often came across as pro-prosecution, lawyers said.

For Rostenkowski, the decision to plead guilty stands in stark contrast to his defiant statements when he was first implicated and then indicted.

At a dramatic Saturday news conference in July 1993, with his portrait adorning a wall in the hearing room of the Ways and Means Committee, Rostenkowski categorically proclaimed his innocence.

"I want to make it absolutely clear that I have committed no crime and have engaged in no illegal or unethical conduct. ... I am frustrated and angry with these false allegations."

By May 1994, with an indictment imminent, Rostenkowski's then-lawyer, Robert Bennett, had entered into plea-bargain negotiations with prosecutors. Eventually, Bennett negotiated terms under which Rostenkowski would plead guilty to a single felony count of concealing a material fact, pay a \$38,000 fine, serve six months in jail and resign from Congress.

But Rostenkowski, encouraged to fight the case by such friends as former Illinois Rep. Marty Russo, rejected that option and issued another defiant statement: "Federal prosecutors threaten to indict me if I fail to plead guilty to a series of crimes I did not commit. I will not make any deals with them. I did not commit any crimes. My conscience is clear. ... I strongly believe that I am not guilty of these charges and will fight to regain my reputation in court."

But that reputation already had suffered greatly. After his indictment, he lost what had been one of the safest congressional seats in the nation to a political unknown, Republican Michael Flanagan. That loss was perhaps the most profound measure of how far Rostenkowski had fallen.

The investigation that precipitated that fall, ironically, started out having nothing to do with the congressman or any allegations of official misconduct. The probe started nearly five years ago when workers at the House Post Office discovered that thousands of dollars and one of their colleagues were missing.

For a long period, the probe focused primarily on low-level workers. But after numerous post office workers, many of them patronage employees, were indicted, the probe turned to the hierarchy of the office, then directly to Rostenkowski.

Former Postmaster Rota said as part of a plea agreement that he had exchanged cash for stamps for a congressman later identified as Rostenkowski. Rota provided prosecutors with precise details of dates and amounts of federal money he said he passed to Rostenkowski.

The indictment of the former House Post Office chief of staff, Joanna O'Rourke, also implicated the congressman when it charged that O'Rourke used a special House Post Office account to send by overnight mail personal items to the home of a congressman, later identified as Rostenkowski.

The indictment returned against him by a federal grand jury went far beyond those allegations, with charges of stealing hundreds of thousands of dollars, obstruction of

Crime - Statutory Rape

The crime of teen sex

By Arnold Beichman

One of Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes' wisest maxims is that it's sometimes more important to emphasize the obvious than to elucidate the obscure.

The obvious is the fact that men who have sexual relations with girls below the legal age of consent are committing the crime of statutory rape, a crime for which they can go to jail. Rarely is there such a prosecution. Perhaps it is regarded as politically incorrect to try the male responsible for adolescent pregnancy for what is defined as a crime in state penal codes.

California Gov. Pete Wilson has undertaken to emphasize the obvious. Last year he proposed a teenage pregnancy prevention program with a \$12 million price tag.

Arnold Beichman, a Hoover Institution research fellow, is a Washington Times columnist.

This year he has proposed to increase the 1996-1997 cost to \$16 million. What is unusual about the program is that it is going to deal with a crime long ignored by state and local governments:

One-fifth of the governor's 1995-1996 \$12 million appropriation — \$2.4 million — was budgeted for the prosecution of men who engage in sex with girls under 18, the California age of consent. For the coming fiscal year, Mr. Wilson has increased the prosecution fund by \$6 million for a total of \$8.4 million. The objective is to strengthen enforcement of statutory rape laws statewide. Every state has a statutory rape law which prohibits adult males from having sexual intercourse with girls under the age of consent. States have different age limits, from 16 to 18.

The Wilson policy represents a major change in the approach to teenage pregnancy. Instead of pressuring teen-age mothers with threats of welfare-benefit cutbacks or distributing condoms in the classroom, or telling pubescent and ado-

lescent girls "just say no," the governor proposes to get after the adult fathers with the threat of prosecution and jail sentences for statutory rape. The assumption here is that a 13- or 14-year-old girl can no more give meaningful consent to sexual activity than she could consent to work nights as a stripper in a bar.

California is facing a dramatic statewide increase in out-of-wedlock pregnancies. Whereas in the 1960s in California 10 percent of births were to unmarried women, today births to unmarried women of all ages account for more than 30 percent of all live births. In 1994, nearly one-fourth of all births to unmarried women in California were to teens, age 19 or younger.

According to the Guttmacher Institute, the majority of births nationally to adolescent women (70 percent in 1992) occur out of wedlock. At least half of the babies born to teen-age girls are fathered by adults. These adults are violating a law that has for too long been more honored in the breach than the observance.

Statutory rape used to be penalized. That's why a long time ago, the coarse alliterative expression for girls under the age of consent was "Quentin Quail." This was a

reference to the then-San Quentin prison where a convicted defendant in a rape case might do time.

The Guttmacher Institute's findings are based on 1989-1991 survey data from the National Maternal and Infant Health Survey of the National Center for Health Statistics. A full report of the survey is to be found in the August 1995 issue of the jour-

Statutory rape used to be penalized.

nal Family Planning Perspectives.

Between 1989 and 1991, 10,000 underage mothers were interviewed. The survey found that half of the fathers of babies born to mothers between ages 15 and 17 were 20 years of age or older. Twenty per cent of the fathers were six or more years older than the teen-age mothers. The survey found a significant correlation in age between the sex partners: the younger a mother was, the greater the age difference between the girl and her partner.

The question of sexual abuse arises from a finding that about 18 percent of women 17 or younger who have had intercourse were, they say, forced at least once to do so. In such cases, the adult male could be tried for aggravated sexual assault.

In California, a survey showed that of 47,000 births to teen-age mothers in 1993, as many as two-thirds were fathered by men who were of post-high school age. With high school girls, fathers averaged 4.2 years older than their partners. With junior high school mothers, the fathers were on average 6.7 years older.

The survey showed that among California mothers between the ages of 11 to 15, 51 percent of the fathers were adults, 40 percent were high school boys, 9 percent junior high school boys. Another survey in the state of Washington showed that of 535 mothers ages 12 to 17, the average age of the father was 24. More than two-thirds of these teen-age mothers said they had been sexually abused.

It is possible that a few jail sentences for statutory rape — and why not prosecutions for pedophilia as well? — may influence adult males to leave children alone. Go to it, Governor Wilson.

How not to control chemical weapons

By Kathleen Bailey

Biotechnology, pharmaceutical and chemical companies beware! The U.S. Senate may soon ratify an arms-control treaty whose verification provisions will have profound repercussions for companies which depend on proprietary formulae and processes for their competitive edge.

The treaty, called the Chemical Weapons Convention, is intended to ban chemical weapons. It allows international inspectors, under a process called challenge inspections, to enter any facility in the United States or other party to the treaty.

The inspectors may take and analyze samples, as well as interview personnel and review pertinent records to try to assure that there is no prohibited activity. All facilities — not just chemical manufacturing sites — are subject to challenge inspections because chemical weapons are so easy to produce in small, nondescript locations. Despite these intrusive measures, cheating is unlikely to be detected, as Director of Central Intelligence John Deutch has acknowledged.

Not only will the verification scheme not work, it poses a genuine threat to U.S. industry. The danger is that an inspector may observe or collect information for reasons unrelated to treaty verification. What if a knowledgeable inspector happens to notice critical process information during a challenge visit to a pharmaceutical firm? Will he keep the secret when he returns home, even if offered incentives to share it? Or, what if an industrial spy is placed as an inspector visiting a

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U.S. biotechnology firm? Will anyone notice the samples she clandestinely takes? Although the treaty recognizes the need to protect proprietary information, it will be exceedingly difficult to do.

Treaty proponents point out that there is a mechanism for dealing with abusive or frivolous challenge inspection requests. The treaty's Executive Council may, not later than 12 hours after receiving the inspection request, decide by a

Cheating is unlikely to be detected.

three-quarters majority whether to deny the request. The Executive Council is comprised of 41 members: nine African, nine Asian, five Eastern European, seven Latin American and Caribbean, one shared by Asia and Latin America and 10 from Western Europe and others (the United States is an "other"). No seat is reserved for any country, including the United States, this even though the U.S. portion of the treaty's budget is 25 percent.

The odds of a U.S. company winning an appeal in such a short timeframe with such an Executive Council is probably low. Another option for a company objecting to a senseless inspection is to turn to the U.S. Constitution, whose Fourth Amendment guarantees against unwarranted searches and seizures. The problem is that any court challenge will probably follow an inspection. Proprietary information may already have been lost by that time. If this treaty presents such dangers to U.S. business interests, why haven't companies objected to it?

I decided to find out by calling a

number of U.S. pharmaceutical and biotechnology firms. None of the companies had heard of the treaty. Similarly, I learned that few chemical companies are aware of the treaty, although they will bear the brunt of the requirements to file production declarations and submit to routine as well as challenge inspections. Nevertheless, the Chemical Manufacturers Association and some chemical companies advocate the treaty.

There are at least three reasons for this support. One is that the chemical industry does not want to be on the side of the devil. No U.S. firm wants to explain why it opposes a ban on chemical weapons. It would be a public relations nightmare.

A second reason is commercial. Some apparently believe that the treaty will ease U.S. export controls on chemicals by supplanting the Australia Group, a Western cartel that limits exports of a wide range of chemicals. The new treaty also requires export controls, but on a smaller number of chemicals. U.S. officials say, however, that the United States supports the continuation of the Australia Group regardless. The chemical treaty thus is not likely to bring export-control relief.

A third reason is the mistaken belief that not ratifying the treaty will inhibit U.S. trade in chemicals. The treaty does prohibit parties from importing certain chemicals from nonparties. But the restriction applies only to sales of highly dangerous noncommercial chemicals usable in or as weapons-compounds in which there is little or no trade by U.S. companies anyway. Trade in common commercial chemicals would be unaffected.

The treaty verification scheme will have serious effects on U.S. businesses, yet won't accomplish the intended goal of catching cheating. American companies should take a close look at the Chemical Weapons Convention now. If they wish to object, they must act quickly. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted out the treaty on Thursday and the full Senate may soon ratify it.

Women show the sporting spirit

Maybe you're sick of reading about the overpaid basketball creeps who head-butt referees, shout obscenities at the crowd, run halfway down the court without bouncing the ball, shove and elbow opponents as long as they can get away with it, and act as though they're the only player in the arena when they slam dunk the ball.

I'm not writing as a woman who is suddenly shocked to discover that athletes are often coarse, rude, ruthless and stumped for an answer when someone wishes them good morning. My father was a sports promoter, and I grew up in a house where boxers with cauliflower ears and assorted Washington Redskins and Senators drank Scotch whiskey with steak at the dinner table. When we talked about the Washington Senators, we talked baseball, not politics.

Suzanne Fields

I have no more illusions about athletes than I do about politicians. I've seen them up close and personal. But I do care about the elegance of sport, the graceful body that defies gravity while working magic with a ball or bat, whose skill connects talent with teamwork, who competes to win, but who deep down understands it's how you play the game by the rules that allows you to win.

The crowd may whoop it up when Dennis Rodman of the Chicago Bulls bangs his head against a referee, crashes a water cooler, strips off his

Suzanne Fields, a columnist for The Washington Times, is nationally syndicated. Her column appears here Monday and Thursday.

jersey and shouts the four-letter words that comprise his vocabulary, but anyone who loves the game thinks he was lucky the league was so wimpy as to suspend him for only six games and to be fined only \$20,000. After all, the San Antonio Spurs got rid of this consummate rebounder because they believed his mean, selfish, erratic behavior cost them the playoffs in two earlier seasons.

Some fans even want the rules made stricter, to raise the baskets to make the slam dunk less dependent on rampant pituitary glands, to enforce the rule against "traveling"

Women's basketball, the magazine reports, is gaining in popularity now that better-trained athletes are playing it and cable TV is showing more of it. Some men scoff that male viewers only watch it to watch jiggling female flesh, but that seems to be only a small part of the reason why the American Basketball League will launch eight teams this fall. Players will earn about \$70,000 each.

Women's basketball no longer has to lure spectators as it did in the 1940s, with beauty contests and players in sexy satin uniforms exposing bare midriffs. The

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(or else dispense with the dribble altogether).

Nor are real fans of the game crying over the seven-game suspension and \$25,000 fine for Nick Van Exel of the Los Angeles Lakers for head-butting a referee. No team will win for long by beating up the referees, though you have to give these head-butting players credit for understanding that by using their heads they are risking the least vulnerable part of their bodies as weapons.

Not so long ago, basketball was not a contact sport. Stephen Smith, the editor of Civilization magazine, whose daughter plays on her high-school basketball team, observes that the way the women play the game makes real fans nostalgic for the game as we once knew it. The women aren't as fast as the boys, but they're just as fearless, often as reckless, and they play with "finesse and teamwork." What they don't have is the crude swagger. (Nobody remembers the last time one of the women was arrested for off-court rape and mayhem.)

woman's version of the sport has come a long way from the one-dribble game that Senda Berenson, a phys-ed teacher, introduced to her students at Smith college in 1892 to prepare them for the working world of competition.

It's not likely that basketball equips women any more than it equips men for competition in the larger world, where brawn is less important than brains, unless you count those who get big contracts with Nike, Reebok and Converse.

But the competitive game sure beats playing for an amateur all-women's six-team league in Northern Virginia, made up mostly of women over 40, who have no rules, no coaches, no fouls, no rankings, no playoffs, and most important of all, they don't keep score. They do have referees, though it's not clear why.

If Mr. Rodman and Mr. Van Exel are ever suspended again (and they no doubt will do something to deserve it again), maybe they should be exiled to a women's league. The ladies might civilize them.