

COLUMBIA SPECTATOR

ARCHIVE

Columbia Daily Spectator, Volume CXIX, Number 60, 21 April 1995 — Protest? What protest? [ARTICLE]

Protest? What protest?

Editor:

The other day, I was walking down the stairs to the first floor of Carman, and the sign hit me: "*BE ANGRY ABOUT AIDS!!*" The sign stated that AIDS is over-funded when compared with other terminal diseases, and further, that people with AIDS are glorified and made into martyrs. I felt sick to my stomach and immediately began work on a letter to the *Spectator*. The next morning, the protest signs were up: "*BE ANGRY AT THE COLLEGE REPUBLICANS!! The College Republicans have resorted to lying to you about AIDS. Go to the College Republicans' meeting, fight their deceitful propaganda. This flyer has been created by students in outrage at the stupidity that exists at Columbia. Go and let the College Republicans know that their ignorance is something you won't stand for.*"

"Aha!" I thought. "There are other people who find the College Republicans' flyers offensive!" On Wednesday at 9:00 p.m., I went to 413 Hamilton. I was prepared to be angry; I was prepared to be among people who held the same viewpoints I did about the College Republicans' agenda. I looked into the room, and no protestors were anywhere. I thought that surely the person who posted the sign must want to attend his or her own protest.

So I looked around Hamilton,

thinking maybe the protestors had gone to a different room. I looked, waited outside, and when it was 9:15, I went back to the room, figuring the protestors would be there by now. I walked into a room chock full of ... five College Republicans! "Uh, hi, yeah, I'm here for the protest," I said.

"So are we," said one Republican. "We haven't started our meeting yet because we're waiting for them to show up." They started the meeting anyway. They made their arguments; I made mine. Granted, I probably did not make much of an impact. After all, there were five people there who supported the meeting, and I was the only one who did not. I am also a lousy debater.

At 10:10 p.m., the meeting ended—no one had shown up. Whoever put up the flyers, I hope you are reading this. I hope you realize exactly what hypocrites you have been. I was waiting for you to show up at your own protest, and so were the people against whom you would have protested. Did you forget when creating the flyers that Melrose Place was on at the same time as the meeting? Perhaps, in your "outrage," you had forgotten this crucial appointment you had made with your boob tube.

I have heard since I arrived here in September that Columbia was not at all the hotbed of activism it once was. I had heard that students were hypocrites—all hot air and no action. I was skeptical of this hasty judgment until I realized that people here don't go to their own protests. Next time you want to be trendy and pretend you're going to protest something, perhaps at the bottom you should add that you, as leaders of the protest, will be off doing other things.

Elizabeth Nickerson, CC '98