

# IN MY OPINION

Caroline Porter

## Who should we fear most? "Straights" or "gays?"

What an odd thing, to have yard signs popping up around Galesburg saying, "Support the Boy Scouts." I really hadn't heard much about the Boy Scout organization around here until they were denied some funds from Knox County United Way. The current United Way board courageously followed their organization's policy of not funding agencies who have policies of discrimination. The national Boy Scout organization has adopted the policy of discriminating against homosexuals in their organization. I don't know if it's just in positions of leadership or the entire membership.

The issue for the Boy Scouts came to a head when an accomplished Scout and future leader of the national organization announced he is a homosexual. He was promptly kicked out of the organization. Most people don't know the difference between homosexuals and pedophiles and child molesters. Homosexuality is a preference for sex with the same gender. Pedophilia refers to mostly men who have a sexual attraction to children, mainly under the age of 12 or 13.

There is no information to suggest there is any connection between homosexuals and pedophiles. Often pedophiles are married and in positions of authority. They often choose vocations where they can be close to children — such as ministers, priests, coaches, teachers, counselors and yes, Scout leaders. According to the national Mental Health Network, most pedophiles never achieve their sexual fantasies about children. Instead, they have collections of pornography, hang around children, cruise the internet where they can privately get into chat groups with each other and with vulnerable children.

Pedophilia is considered a psychiatric disorder — a form of mental illness. Child molesters, however, are sometimes pedophiles but more often angry and frustrated adults who have been molested or mistreated as children and like to harm and murder people. Their relationships with other adults are failures, so they prey on children. A notorious child abuser in recent history is the female school teacher from Oregon who had a sexual relationship with a 13-year-old male student. She has had two children as a result, one born in prison. There have been two incidents in our area of female teacher's aides sexually abusing young boys.

Our goal as a society should be to protect our children from any kind of abuse or harm. But it's my belief that homosexuals are no more of a threat to our children than heterosexuals. Obviously, our young people have as much to fear from their leaders and teachers of the opposite sex as they do



those who may be homosexual — perhaps more. Homosexuals are in the minority and are secretive about their sexual preference because they fear negative reaction and discrimination.

There's really a very simple solution to the conflict between the area Boy Scouts and United Way. If the Boy Scouts want to discriminate against homosexuals — apparently they have that option. If we prefer not to support them because of this illogical and ignorant position, then we won't. If we don't like the position of the United Way organization, and I don't know how they could operate on any premise other than non-discrimination, then we won't support them. Both organizations are free to set their own policies.

Some local supporters of the Boy Scouts who have become paranoid and defensive about their discriminatory policy are religious kooks in the area, who for years have used religion and the Bible to discriminate against all sorts of human beings: minorities, women, liberals and anything moving who isn't white, Anglo-saxon, protestant, male. The true Boy Scout movement should try to silence these men, because they are certainly detrimental to the cause.

Let me be perfectly clear. I was in Brownies and Girl Scouts and enjoyed many years of Girl Scout camp. I was a Den mother while my son was a Cub Scout. (uh-oh) It was a fine program for young boys. But the program has been sullied by ignorance, hysteria and prejudice against a harmless group of people whose sex lives are none of our business and no more dangerous to us than our own.

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