

Dear Gertrude & Alice

We're on vacation... see you next month!
D & A

Shilts Blasts Government Delays

Randy Shilts, author of the best-selling book "And the Band Played On: Politics, People and the AIDS Epidemic" spoke in Burlington on January 26. More than 800 peoplepacked Ira Allen Chapel UVM to hear Shilts recount the history of the AIDS epidemic in this country.

Recounting the ineptitude, indifference and inexcusable delays by government, scientists, and institutions, Shilts maintained that the problems were best summed up as "insane." The failure to begin basic research early, the American/French battles over discovery of the virus, delays in clinical trials of new drugs, the lack of direct education, and scientific labs scrambling for research money were among his examples.

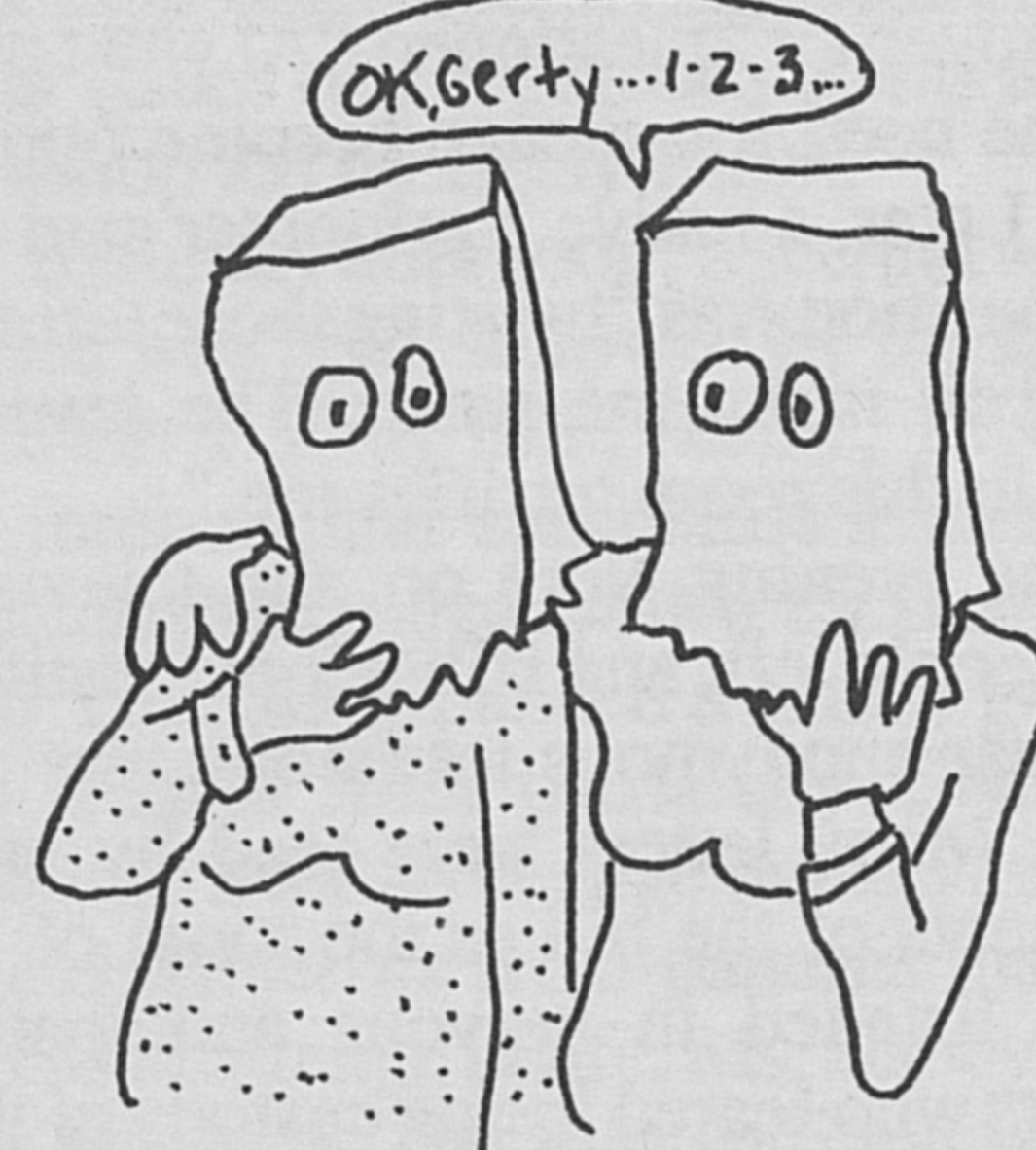
"The government and the scientific community seem to feel no great need to

rush on research and treatment, for them it is business as usual. But in the face of an epidemic of these proportions, we cannot afford to carry on business as usual. Time lost can be measured in lives lost."

Shilts' harshest words were saved for the Reagan administration. "First the Reagan administration did as little as they possibly could to fight AIDS, and then they lied about it," he told the crowd. He was amazed, he said, that in the President's State of the Union address, not once did Ronald Reagan mention AIDS.

The press, said Shilts, ignored AIDS for a long time, "going through fits of minor interest and then forgetting it, returning to the topic only when it appeared white, non-drug using heterosexuals were vulnerable." The media coverage of AIDS changed dramatically in 1985, when it became

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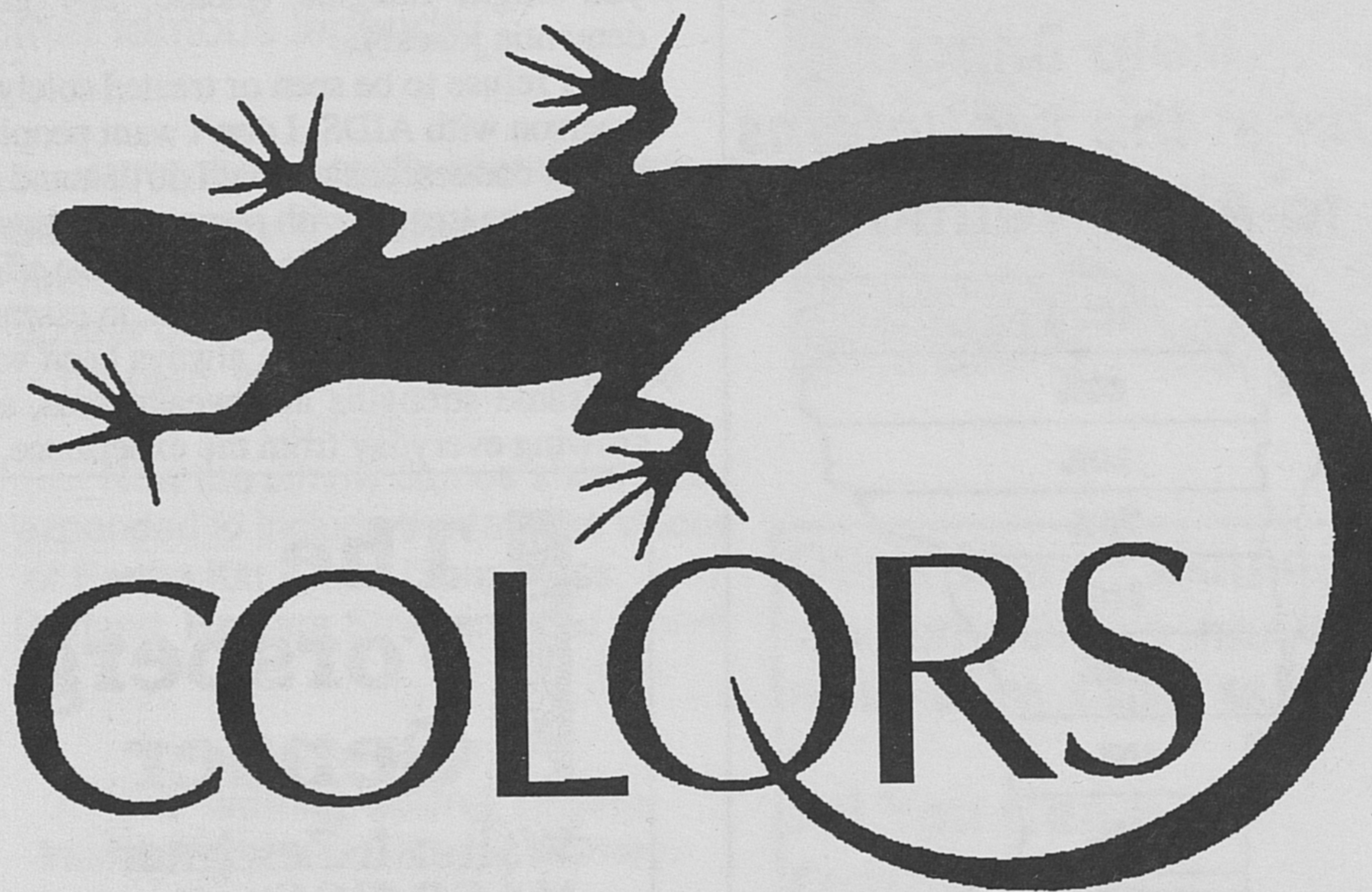


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known that Rock Hudson was diagnosed with AIDS. "In AIDS coverage, Rock Hudson was the equivalent of the Christian calendar's BC and AD, the period before and after the birth of Jesus."

"Today, we see more media coverage of AIDS than before," Shilts told the audience, "but much of it is shallow and superficial, ignoring the real issues of federal politics and funding, instead giving undue attention to insignificant developments and scare stories."

He was outspoken about the media



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