

Researcher says kissing not likely to transmit dreaded AIDS virus

Associated Press

Kissing has not proven to be a method of transmitting the dreaded AIDS virus, a San Francisco researcher says.

The virus has been isolated in saliva, but only 10 percent of saliva samples drawn from patients with AIDS contained the virus, said John Morrow, a researcher at the University of California at San Francisco.

Getting the virus into the bloodstream appears to be necessary to transfer it from one person to another, he said after making a presentation at the Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research last month.

"It hasn't been shown that it can be spread by kissing," Morrow said. "If it could be transmitted that way it would have surfaced by now," he said.

Morrow has worked with Dr. Jay Levy, a researcher who helped discover the AIDS-associated retrovirus at the University of California at San Francisco. The retrovirus is one of three viruses identified as the cause of the lethal disease.

Jorg Eichberg, another researcher working with

Morrow and Levy, said the secret to transmission seems to be getting the virus into the bloodstream.

"When you get the virus into the mouth of a person without any lesions, nothing will happen," Eichberg said.

"I'm 100 percent certain if you swallow the virus into your stomach nothing will happen."

A person with cuts in his mouth might have something to be concerned about, he said.

AIDS, or acquired immune deficiency syndrome, is a disease that cripples the body's immune system, leaving the victim vulnerable to infections and other diseases, including cancer.

Research has shown it is spread by sexual contact, contaminated needles and blood transfusions. The virus is most likely to strike homosexuals, abusers of injectable drugs and hemophiliacs.

As of Aug. 22, 1985, there had been 12,599 cases of the disease in the United States. There have been 6,338 deaths since 1979.

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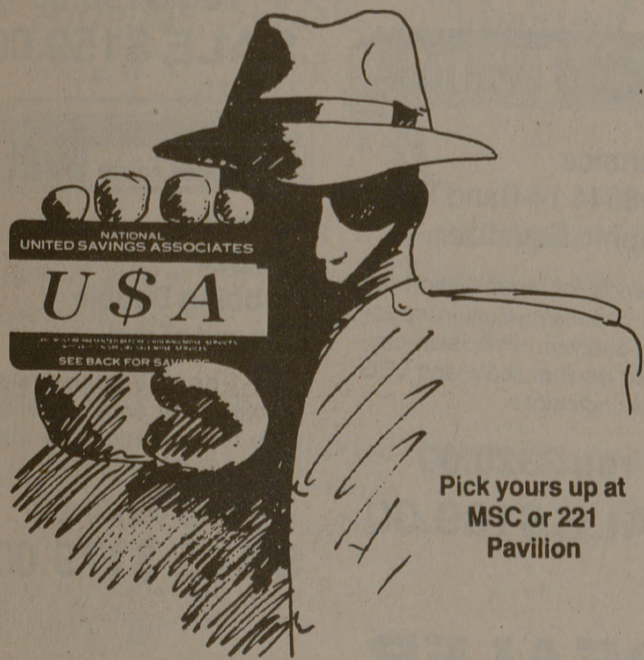
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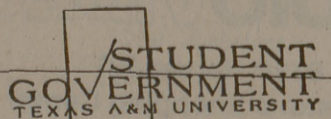


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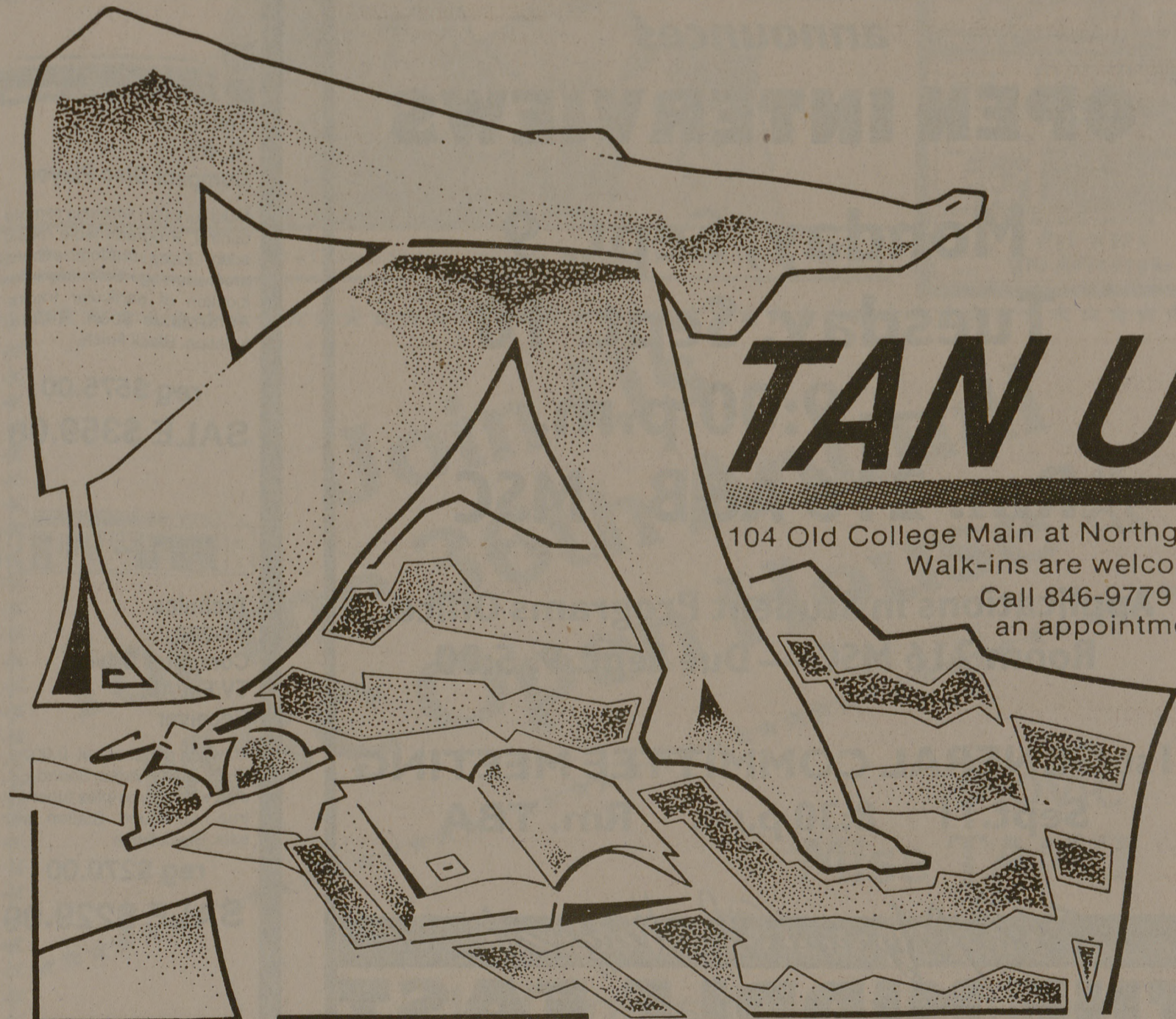
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