

## Solution to AIDS not abstinence

Don't wait on others to educate you about transmission of disease

It's been a little over a week since America has been shocked with the news of Magic Johnson having to retire from the NBA because he has contracted the HIV virus from heterosexual sex. I'm sure the news dumfounded fans around the globe, as it did me.

As much as I love basketball, there are thousands out there who enjoy it more than I do and they are suffering a greater heartache than I.

Magic's basketball talents were matched by very few and will be missed on the court.

Though watching the National Basketball Association playoffs will never be the same again, it is important to realize we have not lost his outgoing personality and winning spirit in our lives.

Earvin Magic Johnson is still very much alive and by the grace of God and that winning spirit that helped him take the Lakers to a number of playoffs appearances, Magic will be alive for a long time.

Though as much as I would love to give a memorial to his basketball career (notice "career," Magic, as a man, is in no need of a memorial) and go back over all of the wonderful passes and shots he made, my column is not about that. It's about something much more important: AIDS Awareness.

**Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome is real!** Some of us still have yet to get it through our thick skulls and tiny ears. AIDS IS REAL!

"But hopefully all will eventually wise up and become interested because we are destined to lose a lot more to AIDS if they don't. Stop waiting on other people to do your learning for you. Learn about AIDS for yourself."

In reading the articles in one of the major Houston newspapers following Magic's announcement of retirement, I ran upon an article with the headline, "Magic was the greatest and he is a Real Man."

I immediately asked myself, "What is the author attempting to say?"

Upon reading further into the article, the author never once gave his definition of a "real man," nor did he ever explain what Magic had to do with the missing definition.

Then I thought, maybe he's trying to get people to realize, in a very discriminating and rude way, that AIDS is not a homosexual disease. Society's definition of a "real man" has always been a man that is not homosexual; maybe he was trying to reach people who still have that opinion.

It's not the route I would have taken, if indeed, that is what he is attempting to do, but it is a very true point. AIDS is not a homosexual disease. Unlike humans, AIDS does not discriminate.

The following headline comes straight from the pages of The Battalion, "Heterosexuals cause spread in 75 percent of all AIDS cases," and I'm sure there is tons of information and people to back up that statement.

Magic is one of them, although he

has not contracted AIDS but has the virus that can lead to it. AIDS IS REAL!

While on the semi-subject of discrimination, it upset me that Magic was acclaimed "the hero" for revealing his news to the media.

I do believe that with people's current attitudes toward those that are infected with HIV or AIDS, it was a large step, but if we would stop discriminating against them, the acclamations would not be needed.

It hurt me severely to read in the paper about a pastor of a church who was afraid to reveal his case of HIV, contracted while working as a medical missionary, to his congregation and others.

People shouldn't need to live in such fear — open your minds and hearts, America.

Another article I read following the retirement press conference was about Vice President Quayle's "sure cure" for the AIDS epidemic — "sexual abstinence."

First, I would like to say I agree with his suggestion wholeheartedly.

Most cases are contracted through sexual intercourse.

No sex is safe sex — that's what I was taught and that's what I believe.

But considering we live in a sexually promiscuous society, his statement was naive, quite unreasonable and appeared to be not clearly thought out.

Until we build a completely perfect nation and world, we need to think of other solutions like safe sex using condoms and more independent education.

Americans suffer from something I call the "star syndrome."

Let's say something happens to a star or someone always in the media. Americans are usually shocked for the moment, then it drifts slowly from their memories.

I fear this, too, will drift slowly away as soon as more exciting or upbeat news occurs. I plead with you, don't let it slip away.

Take it upon yourself to say a prayer, if you are inclined to do so, each day for Magic and others infected with the HIV virus or those with AIDS already.

When you think about the prayer, you'll think about AIDS. When you think about AIDS, you'll hopefully want to know more about it.

When you want to know more about it, you'll take it upon yourself to look for information about it.

Then you will be able to educate yourself, as well as others.

This summer, I read a book about AIDS which was a mother's actual diary of what she and her son went through before he died of the syndrome. I took that book to work with me and read it on my breaks.

Almost all of my co-workers asked me why was I reading a book about AIDS. Instead of taking the book and slapping them over the head like I so often wanted to do to them for asking such a stupid question, I proceeded to tell them, "Because I want to learn more about the disease, and I hope you do, too." Some were interested, some were not.

But hopefully all will eventually wise up and become interested because we are destined to lose a lot more to AIDS if they don't. Stop waiting on other people to do your learning for you. Learn about AIDS for yourself.

Wake up world! AIDS IS REAL!



**Tanya Williams**  
Williams is a senior journalism major.

Overachievers need to get out of rut

## Find approval from within

Overachieving is a bummer. If you were the second child and your mom always said, "Why can't you be more like your brother (or sister)?" believe me, you don't want to be like your brother. Overachievers have a hard row to hoe. They become victims of their need for acceptance and worth.

The average Joe Overachiever accepts himself only to the degree which other people express approval of him. Different overachievers find different areas in which to succeed to get approval for doing well. I excelled academically because I found people responded affirmatively to good grades.

I worked hard to succeed in my "gifted and talented" classes. I neglected friendships and suffered the ridicule of peers with the consolation that older people approved of me.

So what if the guys teased me about picking my nose in class? Never mind that I didn't go on dates or even to the movies with my buddies. I felt superior to those immature goofs. And, after all, the teachers did like me.

I also became a sort of little adult in my search for approval. I wanted to do everything well so they'd think I was good (whatever that means). If adults seemed to approve of me, I felt okay because that must mean I'm all right.

During junior high, I tried sports, but the guys made fun of me until I gave up. I was too uptight about doing well to actually do well. It's funny, but I still wanted my peers to approve of me. When they didn't, I'd just try to be more winsome to adults.

Even when I used to get my blood pressure taken, I wanted it to be perfect. I would worry so much that my heart rate and blood pressure would double.

About that time, other kids were developing into other types of overachievers. Some turned into social animals. The more popular they were, the better they felt about themselves. They became the eighth grade class presidents and Students Against Drunk Driving officers.

Still others became addicted to athletics. Everyone, their parents, their friends, their coaches, liked the all-star.

Every type of overachiever has something in common. Every overachiever gets his sense of personal value from other people's expressions of approval.

They create a standard by which to grade themselves such that they know that if they live up to it, everyone

will approve of them. That way, even when people don't verbalize praise, the overachiever knows how "valuable" he/she is.

Once they set a standard, they constantly grade themselves against it. And the standard is very hard to change.

For me, the standard was straight A's.

In high school, I became even more immersed in my work. When efforts to make close friends failed, I became more reclusive. I thought I could get along without people, an excuse I made up to ease the pain of not trying anymore.

Besides, it did take lots of time to make everything perfect. My freshman year, I stayed up till 2 a.m. once making sure the map was colored just exactly right — the lines don't show, the color is even and the lettering is perfect.

Whenever life becomes stressful, most overachievers revert to hard work instead of therapeutic play. Most everything they do, they do to do it well rather than for fun alone. Play just doesn't make sense.

The overachiever doesn't know what he likes or enjoys. All his energy goes into succeeding so he can feel good about himself.

But for all the energy they put into excellence, few people other than themselves really care how well they do. People give him emotional "strokes," but the truth is they'd like the overachiever even if he/she didn't achieve.

When an overachiever experiences his first major failure, the perceived monster of "shoulds" will have been eating on him for years and finally have gotten to the tootsie roll center. Now it is critical that he either change to recognize his innate worth or be consumed by trying to keep his impossible standard (and change later). Overachievers need to destroy the standard for self-acceptance. Unfortunately, they normally just cry and lower the standard.

To survive, the average overachiever needs to learn something many of his friends learned a long time ago.

He needs to learn what his desires and needs as a human are and how to satisfy them. He needs to learn to love, to play, to have feelings and to take vacations. The overachiever needs to learn about himself, find out who he is and what he likes. But first, he must forgive himself and release himself from the impossible grading standard that has stolen so much of his life.



**Dwayne Parvis**

Parvis is a sophomore petroleum engineering major.

### Mail Call

#### Feducia's tasteless columns waste paper

What happened to tasteful columns in The Battalion? If there are no decent columns for the opinion page one day, then please don't print crap for the sake of printing. What was the point of the butt crack column? Is this not the same person who wrote the story on farting? These are not appropriate conversation topics and do not belong in our school newspaper, which to visitors, represents Texas A&M as a whole. Why does Stacy Feducia get room to print her opinion of women's fashion and make fun of those cute "clown suits" when she proves she has no basis of fashion sense.

To correct the fashion critique, women do not buy men's jeans so they can air their butt cracks. Actually, I do not know of any stylish woman who wears men's jeans because, Feducia dear, real women have curves.

Please pull your head out of your butt crack and write on something of value.

Robin Lidiak '91  
Patty Colling '91

#### Stations have right to set price of gas

I read with some dismay the Mail Call letter from Paul Hendriks on gas prices in The Battalion (Nov. 8).

I have a few things to say about this issue myself. Hendriks notes that gas is cheaper in Austin than in Bryan and uses this as a justification for low gas prices in Bryan. Is this supposed to mean gas should be priced equally across the whole nation? Hendriks somehow implies that it is wrong to make a profit. If that is so, then why are gas stations in business in the first place? In order to fill the tank of Hendriks' car?

I have a few suggestions for Hendriks if he does not like the price of gasoline in Bryan. He can drive to Austin to fill his tank, or he can open a new gas station which will sell gas cheaper than the other gas stations in Bryan. That is what our free country is all about. To suggest gas stations somehow "owe" us cheap prices is morally reprehensible.

Byron Takitzis  
A&M staff member

#### Thanks for taking up treehouse issue

Stacy Feducia's enthusiasm for our treehouse alternative is a welcome change from the growls I was getting from the Westlake Island Property Association and our stick-in-the-mud neighbors. The negative reaction was so bad, I was thinking of moving. I let it be known in an article that we were being ostracized for our sticking up for our children's rights to be children, and we got a lot of fan mail, some of which was from real estate people.

I feel what Feducia and the people at Texas A&M are

doing is sincerely supportive of us. You really make this into a football game instead of a war I was sure I had lost, and it isn't fun to lose. But when Feducia called and said she was writing an article about us and calling on architecture students to design a different version to please the architectural committee, I realized I had a friend in Texas. My husband was born in Amarillo, but I have white cowboy boots. Can I be an honorary member of the Lone Star State? I like the way you handle individuality.

I think that is the issue here. The Californians are noted for being kooky, but, in real life, they don't even know what democracy is. They sign their rights away when they buy their homes. I realized this is too late. I can buy a house almost anywhere and it's the same thing. Codes, Covenants and Rules and run by an oligarchy.

Thanks again for your help. It's no accident that the name of your newspaper is The Battalion!

Mary Jacobs  
mother of Gary Jacobs

#### Political correctness censors individuality

Some know that political correctness entails changing "black" to "Afro-American," spelling woman "womyn" and eliminating negative terms from "official papers." But what most don't realize or haven't considered is that PC is practically censorship. These changes may seem insignificant, but the implications aren't.

First, if black is to be changed to Afro-American, what will we call whites? Perhaps I could be described as Scottish-English-German-American? (Anglo-Saxon won't work because then Asians would have to be called Mongul-Americans.) Besides, pride is within, it's not a classification. Second, changing woman to womyn also tries to instill individuality through mob identity. Being an individual is establishing an identity no matter what title is placed on a person. Third, eliminating negative terms from official papers is censorship. Now they want "blacks" disallowed in government documents. In two years, it'll be newspapers, then conversation?

PC's biggest failure is that it tries to instill pride and strength through titles, but that won't cut it. I am Crystal, defined by my actions, perhaps clarified by my associates, but still me. I separate myself by my hard work and unique abilities, no matter what others call me. That's what being strong is about, being myself.

Crystal L. Cates '95



#### Have an opinion? Express it!

The Battalion is interested in hearing from its readers. All letters to the editor are welcome. Written letter must be no longer than 200 words. Letters must be signed and include classification, address and daytime phone number for verification purposes. Anonymous letters will not be published. The Battalion reserves the right to edit all letters for length, style and accuracy. There is no guarantee letters will appear. Letters may be brought to 013 Reed McDonald, sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111 or can be faxed to 845-5408.