

# How read this !!!

television ratings system opens market for disclaimers to protect American public



**DAVE JOHNSTON**  
columnist

"USPS-L" could give love notes a high priority, "USPS-B" could indicate bills and "USPS-B+" might announce overdue bills.

After removing surprises, it is time to address offensive behavior that people should be aware of in advance. Anyone likely to be offended can see the large disclaimer and avoid the situation.

Stand-up comedians could wear signs around their necks announcing whether their act will include tasteless jokes.

Instead of banning books from grade school libraries, the cover could simply display a warning of content — everything from inappropriate adult scenarios to racial slurs could be summarized into five-letter rating system.

After surprises and offenses have been eliminated, there are only a few areas left to take care of.

Lecturers could be rated on a scale of one to ten on the "Snooze Scale" indicating how boring their speech will be. Audience members can regulate their caffeine intake according to the rating system (a rating of two means a chocolate bar, but a rating of nine means the bottomless cup of powdered Vivarin).

McDonald's could avoid lawsuits by printing "Hot enough to boil steel" on its coffee cups. When Parking, Traffic and Transportation issues parking passes, the fine print could warn that "this permit guarantees neither a parking space, nor mercy from our uniformed forces."

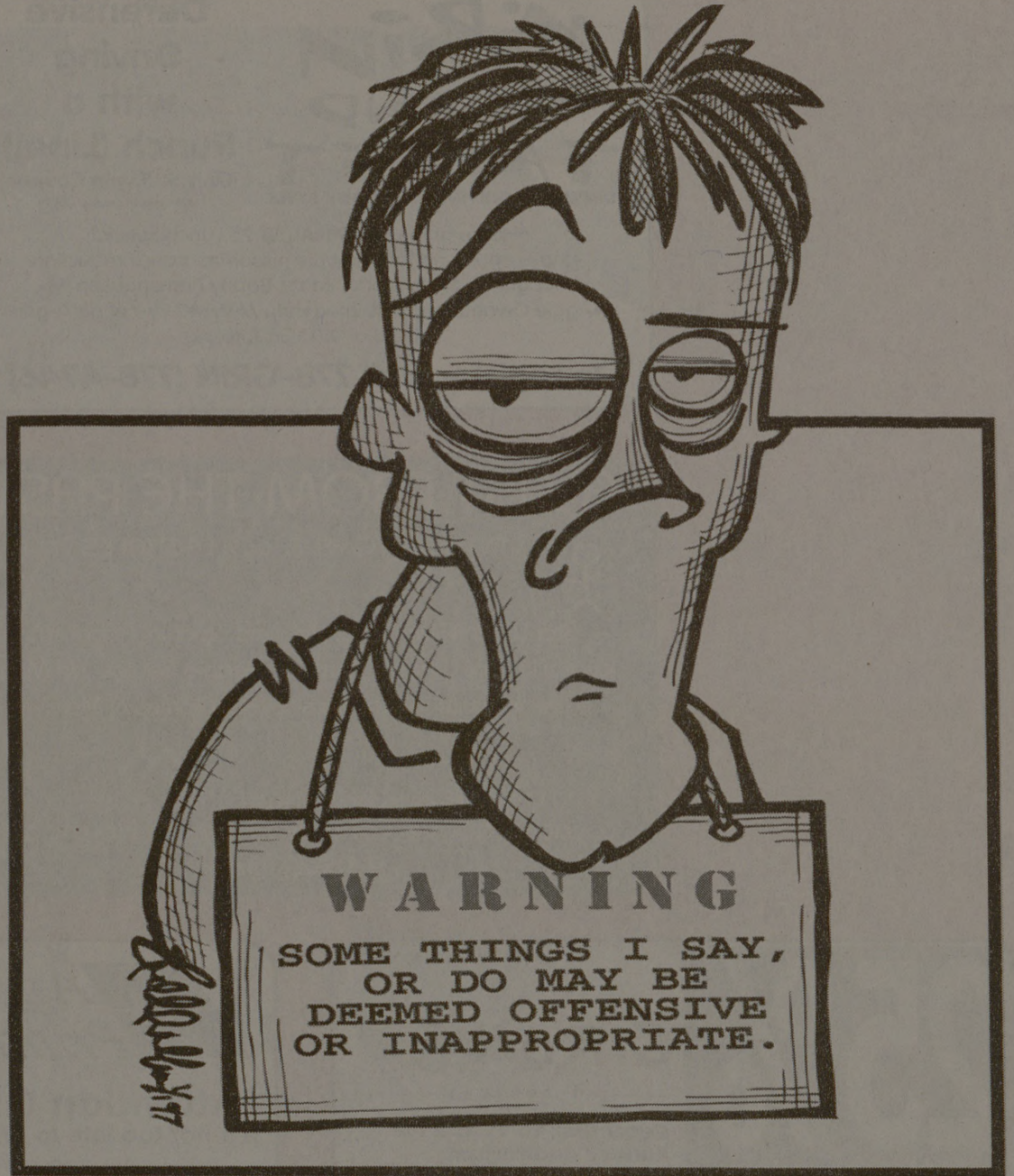
Isn't it much better to be informed.

Of course, there is a tragic downside to the whole proposal. The effects would be similar to what has already occurred in other areas with ratings.

Since the implementation of movie ratings, movies have become much more graphic because the studios can hide behind the ratings system. Hints of this trend are evident on television as well, and the only sites that use internet ratings are pornographic sites seeking some form of protection from the law.

Unfortunately, an all-encompassing set of disclaimers and warnings would only give participants a license to abuse social mores. While ratings may warn the public of things they consider unacceptable, they also increase the need to be warned.

Dave Johnston is a senior mathematics major.



# HIV spread solved by looking for help, not seeking revenge



**JAMES FRANCIS**  
opinion editor

When a plague spreads, water consumption or microscopic bacteria that attaches human skin on the ground, a natural occurrence. No one would expect a person to spread the disease, but many people could begin to put an end to it. This is the case with outbreaks, ranging from the common cold to cholera, infest the human and attack our bodies.

HIV, however, does not fall into this category. For all general purposes, it is spread from person to person through the share of bodily fluids such as semen, vaginal fluids or tainted blood transfusions. This is why unprotected sexual intercourse is such a high risk in today's society.

The question arises as to why an individual, knowingly diagnosed with HIV, would make an effort to spread the virus to unsuspecting partners. Although this question might not have a direct response, the situation behind it certainly possesses an interesting and mind-boggling story.

Nushawn Williams, described by an Associated Press wire report, was a "20-year-old drifter." But, in passing through Jamestown, N.Y., authorities believe at least nine girls have tested positive for HIV from direct sexual contact with Williams. Authorities also estimate "more than 100 people may be at risk of HIV through direct or secondary contact with Williams."

One troubling aspect of Williams' contact with these girls is that the youngest partner identified is age 14. And although this may be enough to shock most people, the real tragedy is Williams did not have anybody to talk to or confide in about his affliction. Instead, he combined all his worries and had sexual relations with young girls in order to get revenge on his life which has now been cut short.

According to the latest federal survey, conducted in 1993, 53 percent of United States high-school students

are sexually active, but 47 percent of these students do not use condoms. The AP report stated Williams' contact with these girls should be an eye opener to all teenagers concerning their vulnerability and fear toward HIV. This, however, is a sad way people have to learn about being safe when it comes to having sex.

We live in a day and age where people run from a street beggar asking for a quarter because they believe the person has ulterior motives, such as robbing them or causing bodily harm. It would seem Williams must have had the mentality of the beggar, being afraid no one would listen to his problems or take the time out to assist him in getting medical aid.

Currently, Williams is jailed on a drug charge in New York. The AP report stated, "Chautaugua County District Attorney James Subjack has filed a statutory rape charge against Williams and plans assault charges for each of the six women he is believed to have infected after learning he had the virus."

This is the type of story which could have had a better ending. And

it almost makes one wonder what was done after Williams was told he had HIV. Did the hospital doctor, nurse or clinic official simply give him the diagnosis and walk away? Or was an attempt made to give Williams counseling or extended medical care for his illness?

Either way, obviously something could have and should have been done to put Williams at ease before he went out and spread a terminal disease to approximately nine young girls, and possibly many others.

This is exactly the type of situation where a qualified and accredited HIV/AIDS counselor or psychiatrist would work. Although people in the medical profession have to possess certain public relations skills to deal with situations such as death, they cannot be the only voice of reason for someone who has just been diagnosed with HIV. Referring an individual to a counseling service does not make the best outcome either.

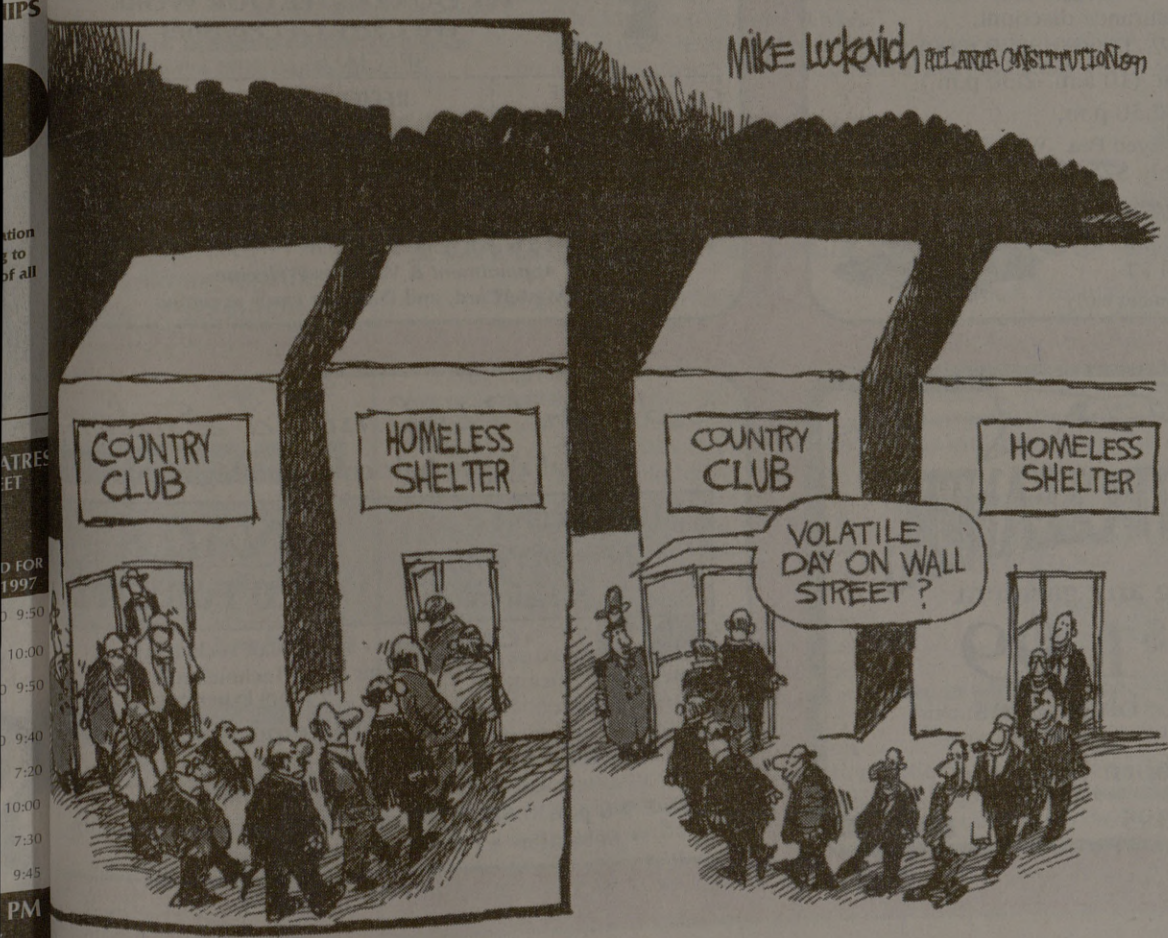
When diagnosed with a fatal disease, it has been proven people resent the bearer of the bad news; they no

longer want to see the medical worker, and hearing his or her voice only fuels their anger and emotional distress.

Medical facilities always should have an on-call counselor to help an individual given such tragic news cope with his or her feelings and future plans. In this manner, situations such as Williams' would have a higher probability of not occurring. And in his case, nine girls with their whole lives ahead of them and others who may have come in contact with them, would not have a debilitating disease.

We need to start taking better care of each other in America. It is not hard to lend a helping hand to someone in a life-altering situation. Usually, all a person needs is someone to talk to, a shoulder to cry on or a simple word to let him or her know that everything will work out for the best. With this in mind and if put into practice, there will not have to be stories filled with sorrow such as Williams' and the girls involved.

James Francis is a junior English major.



## MAIL CALL

### R.C. Slocum has coaching potential

In response to Ross Brewer's Nov. 3 Mail Call:

Thank you, Ross Brewer, for having the guts to say what should be obvious to everyone — R.C. Slocum is not in John Mackovic's class, and he never will be.

For example, Mackovic only needed five years to lose 21 games, whereas it took Slocum eight (and I might point out Mackovic pulled out far ahead this season).

Mackovic managed to post three losing seasons in just six years, while Slocum has yet to manage even one.

If this is not an embarrassment, I do not know what is. I do not think Slocum even golfs on the weekends.

But, to give credit where credit is due, I think Slocum is capable of

raising his level of coaching to that of Mackovic.

If he starts today, maybe he can devise a game plan to allow Baylor to win again this season. I'm afraid this is not likely; it would leave the Board of Regents no other choice but to follow the course outlined by Brewer, that being to fire Slocum after the Big 12 championship game (can't axe him before the team takes the field, now can we?) and have A&M's new coach in place by the bowl game.

This will give us someone to join the illustrious ranks of Jim Meyers and Tom Wilson. Hmmm ... I think Mackovic will be looking for work about that time.

Jayme Blaschke  
Class of '92

### Football attendance disappoints student

I was hoping students would finally decide to turn out for the most important game of the season, but I was disappointed once again. Have students not realized by now we are in the Big 12 Conference?

The University of Texas is not the only opponent on our schedule, and if we wanted to go to San Antonio, we had to beat Oklahoma

State University. Also, this was the most exciting game I have ever seen, and the electricity at the stadium was unmatched by any prior game I had ever attended.

I was happy to see the entire team's players go over to the student side after the game for the War Hymn and express their gratitude to all the students who did come to the game.

If the students who decide to stay away from the games want to booze it up instead, that is fine. Others of us would rather not have that type of behavior in Kyle Field anyway. You can go to Austin, where I am sure you would fit in.

Kelly Minear  
Class of '89

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

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