

## The lost art of Thumbwrestling

Some people admit to being 'all thumbs' when it comes to love

This column is about something very, very innocent and child-like. It is about Thumbwrestling with a capital "T."

Thumbwrestling is huge. It's the sport with a Napoleon complex. A sport that requires not an ounce of physical ability, save the ability to oppose one's own thumb, yet it breeds some of the biggest egos this side of the National Football League.

Thumbwrestlers are cocky. They exude confidence. And they hate to lose. It would be a lie for me to pretend that I don't exhibit these same characteristics. My Thumbwrestling prowess is known — nay, feared — across the Bryan-College Station community. Like Miyaguchi Seiji in *The Seven Samurai*, I live only to perfect my skill.

My days as a champion digit-wrestler had an unlikely beginning. Like many of the greats before me — Wellington Scott, Joe "Mama" Besser, the Iron Thumb — my career is not the result of someone with grand designs on the future. It is something you fall into, get stuck in and decide that, not unlike a butterscotch waterfall, it is actually a nice place to be.

It all began for me late in my adolescence, at a time when my body was still discovering itself, and when I discovered another important part of my development into an adult: love. It was my first girlfriend, the fair Lola, that had me saying, "One, two, three, four, I declare a thumb war."

I was a shy youth, and around girls I was transparent. Lola, being the fair lass she was, liked me for my shy tendencies and my inability to stand closer to her than 8 feet. She thought it was cute. But my friends, the ones who teased and prodded me to "get some," never let me forget what a wuss I became around my young love interest.

Finally, I decided that my best strategy would be to work in small steps. I'd begin with a small goal, simply to hold her hand. As it turned out, the only way I

knew how to ask for even this minor engagement was to challenge her to, yes, "THUMB-WRESTLE."

It worked like a charm.

Soon we were holding hands all the time, but to my surprise, it was always a competition of the fat finger. I found that I won the majority of our bouts, and soon I became disinterested in the fair Lola. It was too easy. I began eyeing other girls — girls with long fingernails.

My Thumbwrestling became an obsession. I searched long and hard for the perfect challenger, and along with that, perhaps the perfect mate. It be-

development as a romantic adult stopped. I never went past the Thumbwrestling stage — never into kissing, never ventured into putting my hand in a girl's back pocket like they did on "The Wonder Years." It just did not interest me.

Which brings me to my college days, where, like surely every other incoming freshman male, I was astounded by the number of beautiful girls at every turn of the eye. And it all seemed to me, as aggressive as it sounds, as a fresh supply of competition.

What I found to the case, however, was that college girls were no Lola's. They were not the Peggy Sue's or the Sally May's that I had been accustomed to humiliating back at home. These girls had experience.

It was a rough transition, and, to tell you the truth, I did not Thumbwrestle anybody my first two years in college. Girls had a much more intimate knowledge of the male palm and thumb than I could have imagined, and, as a result, I found myself, when facing my first match in over two years (her name was Bruiser Betty), losing like a vegetarian at a pie-eating contest.

That is, if the pies were made out of T-bone steak. Ok, that was a forced simile. I apologize.

Anyway, faced with this humiliation, I did what previously seemed to be impossible in my eyes. Something I would never sink to. And before you judge me, remember — I was in a low place at this time.

I Thumbwrestled a guy. But all that is behind me now. I've gotten back in the game, perfected my moves, and today I battle with the best of them. And I have discovered that there are girls out there, many who have never even had a man's thumb pinning their own to a four-finger mat. There are, if you can

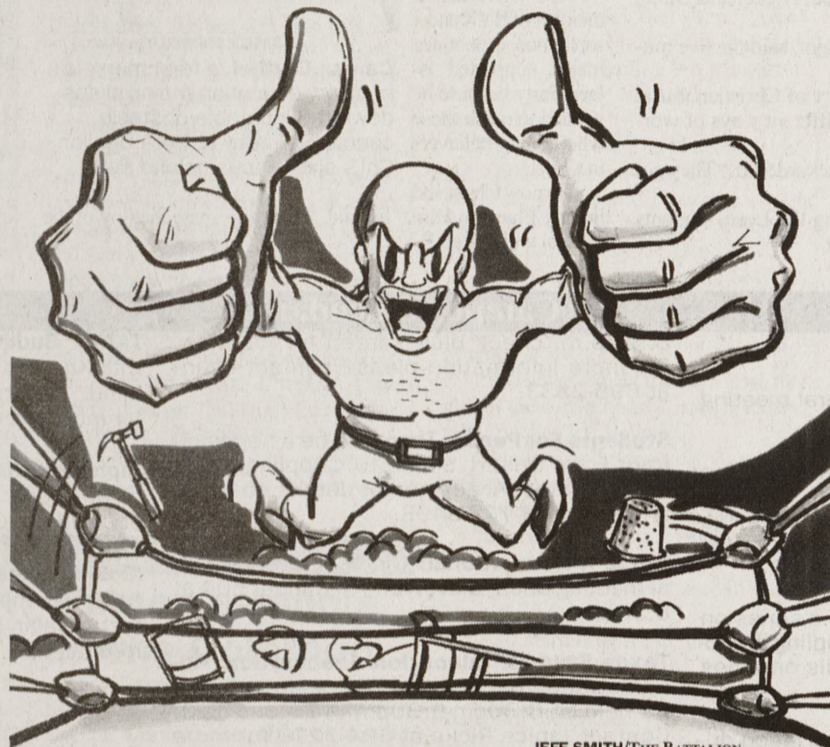
imagine, the few who have never heard of the dreaded index finger "tag-team" move, of thumb-parries and thumb-ballestras. And those are the chaste girls I'm interested in meeting.

And once again, in case you've forgotten what I said earlier — I'm just talking about Thumbwrestling.

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JUAN LOYA



JEFF SMITH/THE BATTALION

came a quest akin to that of Red Sonja, who, for those unfamiliar with the tale, would only marry a man who could best her in battle, the irony being that whoever was strong enough to defeat her could also annihilate her. Fortunately for me, Thumbwrestling has not been shown by any stretch of the imagination to be lethal.

I should also mention here that this is where my

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**693-9905** Plan ahead: Before you drink, set limits and designate a driver. Stick to your plans.

Eat a high protein meal before you drink and continue to eat while drinking.

Alternate with alcohol-free drinks throughout the evening.

Avoid group drinks (i.e. trash can punch). These are very easy to drug, and you can never know what exactly is in them.

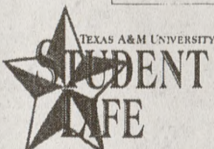
If you go together, leave together. Do not leave a friend behind, even if someone says he/she is okay. Check for yourself.

There is **0** risk in abstaining from alcohol.

Always know what you're drinking, and keep an eye on your drink.

Drink no more than one drink per hour, not exceeding 2 drinks for women and 3 drinks for men in one day.

Drink plenty of water before going to bed.



Remember: Zero drinks if you are under 21, driving, operating equipment, planning on having sex, taking medication, trying to conceive, pregnant, nursing, or alcohol dependent.

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