

LET'S PLAY THE **OCA** WORD MATCH GAME

CORRECTLY MATCH 3 WORDS, ONE FROM EACH COLUMN

<b>O</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>A</b>
OBNOXIOUS	CLANISH	ABERRATIONS
OBESE	CALLUS	ABNORMALS
OBLIQUE	CANCEROUS	ABUSIVES
OFFICIOUS	CANKEROUS	ADULTERERS
OPAQUE	CAUSTIC	ANTAGONISTS
OPINIONATED	CAVALIER	ABNORMALS
OPPRESSIVE	CHAUVINIST	ACCURSED
OBSCENE	CHUMP	ABHORRENTS
OVERT	COCKY	AGRAVATIONISTS
OVERWROUGHT	COLLUSIVE	ABYSMALS

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**OPINION**

**Best condoms magically vanish**

**THE FINE PRINT**

BY PAT MALACH

Working in the news "bizness" (not to be confused with the ol' bizness practiced in Texas) is a constant battle of trying to measure and balance what's important and what's going to interest your audience.

One recent example of that tug of war between interest and importance could obviously be seen in the coverage of the William Kennedy Smith rape trial. Smith was acquitted of the rape charge in front of a live "gavel-to-gavel" audience on CNN. That night it was the top story on all of the network news programs and the next morning it was on the front page of all the papers.

You can debate for many moons whether the coverage afforded to a single rape case — one of approximately 90,000 reported forcible-rape cases in this country every year — is justified simply because of the name of the defendant. It's also important to look at some of the other stories that lost out to Willie in the coverage tug of war.

On a night when Willie's R-rated trial garnered the top spot on all three networks, one of the stories that lost out was a little tidbit about the Soviet Union being officially disbanded. The end of the Evil Empire, the Red Menace, the Communist Experiment, a country that has been key to U.S. foreign policy for the past 40 years, was judged to be less important than our apparent need to know when and where Willie ejaculated.

The nation's voyeuristic yearnings also dominated coverage on a day when Terry Anderson, an American who had been held captive for more than seven years, was finally reunited with his family, including a daughter he had never met.

Another example of pandering to the public's most base instincts happened just last week when the president got the flu and lost his chips at a state dinner. Sure, it was fun to watch Bush fall victim to something all of us can relate to, but how important was it really? Personally, I'd rather see what they were serving for dinner before it was partially digested.

Even with these examples, sometimes it takes a really glaring case of irony to make you realize how things can get twisted. Note the Jan. 14 issue of the *Emerald*. Pages 9 and 12 were devoted to a lively debate over whether Magic Johnson should be allowed to play in the NBA All-Star Game.

*The end of the Evil Empire, the Red Menace, the Communist Experiment, was judged to be less important than our apparent need to know when and where Willie ejaculated.*

One writer argued that because Johnson had officially retired from the league that he was ineligible. The other writer volleyed back with the argument that if Magic got enough votes he deserves this last game as a farewell tribute because he is one of the game's all-time greats.

Both arguments were well-conceived and articulated, and a lot of NBA and Magic fans will be watching this debate as it develops.

No problem there. Now turn back to Page 8. It carried an article about condom use and safety. It also had a picture of the world's largest condom — jumbo size. The sad part is that a related story with information about the top-10 safest condoms providing the most protection had to be axed because of lack of space.

Now the irony. Let's look at the value judgment inherent in these three pages. Thirty-nine column inches were devoted to the debate over Magic, a man who had to retire because he contracted the HIV virus due to his promiscuity and lack of knowledge about safe sex, and 27 inches were devoted to the story providing safe sex information to sexually active University students.

For those of you who haven't already moved on to *Calvin and Hobbes*, let me try and make things clearer. If Magic had been aware of the information provided in the condom story that was left out, the entire argument about his eligibility for the All-Star Game would be moot. He would still be in the league dazzling fans. So, instead of providing information that might help alleviate the ignorance that caused the tragedy in the first place, we end up debating if a victim of that ignorance should get to throw a ball through a hoop.

To me it's a classic case of the ol' switcheroo. Rather than having condoms prevent spreading the virus, we've got the virus (results) preventing the spread of the condom (information).

Pat Malach is the managing editor of the *Emerald*.

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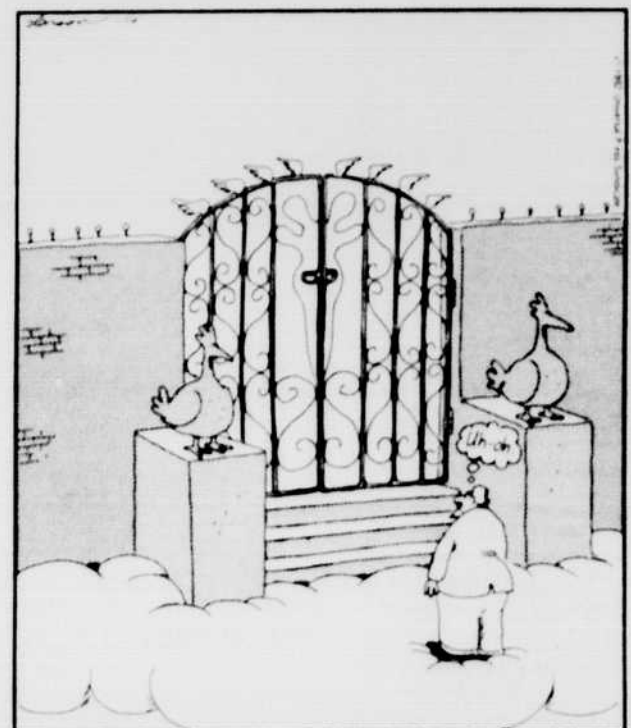
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**THE FAR SIDE**

By GARY LARSON



Colonel Sanders at the Pearly Gates