

Mrs. Frances Schoen-Newspaper
University of Oregon Librarian
Eugene, Oregon
97403

The Portland Observer 25¢

'Magic' Is Still Magic!

Magic Johnson is a fighter. He doesn't grit his teeth and scowl. He disarms you with his smile.

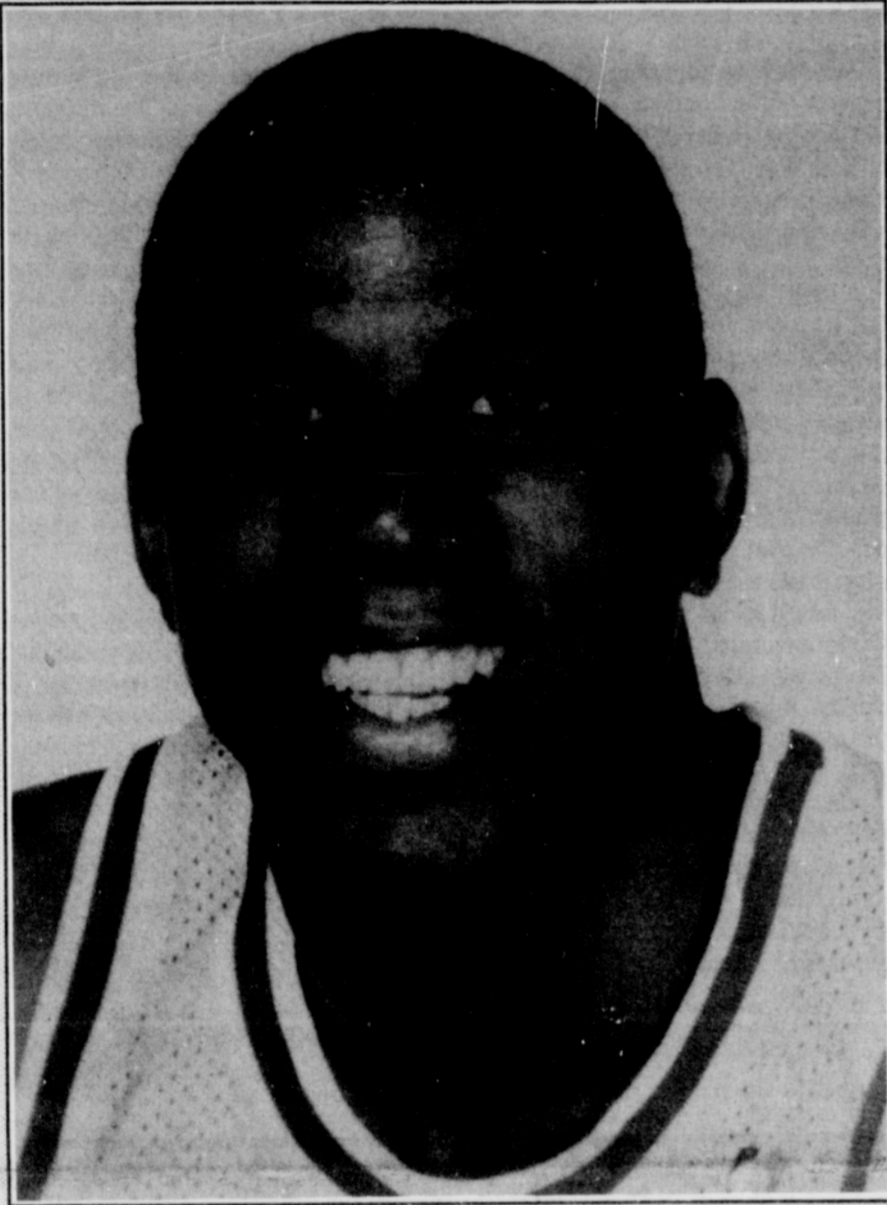
BY BILL BARBER

Think of all the times a referee made a close call against him. He never got nose-to-nose with the ref. He would just give him that patented Magic smile that said, "I don't deserve that call, but I'll accept it. I'll deal with it." You know the smile. We have all seen that Magic smile.

Most of the people I talked to in an informal survey never knew anyone who was HIV positive. But everyone knew Magic Johnson. I doubt there was any time in recent history that more people around the world were affected by someone else's medical problem.

"Because of the HIV virus I have obtained, I will have to retire from the Lakers today," he said. In the few seconds it took to make the statement on Nov. 7th, the world was catapulted into the harsh reality that AIDS could happen to anyone. The shock of looking at your own immortality through a TV screen has shaken all of us who "know" Magic Johnson.

He has that effect on people. Listen to people when they talk about him. People who have never met him face-to-face, speak of him as if he was the tall guy who lived in the house next door. It couldn't have had any more of a devastating impact on our lives if it had happened to the guy next door. He asked people to think before they acted. It's advice we have all heard before. When Magic says it, it has a whole new meaning. Magic is one of the most quotable figures in America. "I think sometimes we think, well, only gay people get it... It's not going to happen to me." And here I am saying that it



can happen to anybody." People, not just kids, will play it safe now. Not just because of what he said, but because if it can happen to one of America's greatest role models it CAN happen to any-

body. Some critics say the increased awareness will blow over in a month or so. Maybe they shouldn't sell Magic's efforts short. He'll be out there fighting

this dreaded disease, just like the champion he has always been. Magic Johnson is one of those rare "Citizens of the World" who destiny smiles on to make a contribution that has an impact on the entire planet. We all feel saddened and cheated by what has happened to him. If there is a bright side, Magic has found a new purpose in his life. He will save countless lives of people he has never even met. He has left a legacy on the basketball court that thousands will remember. He embraces the opportunity to create a legacy on the world through AIDS education that millions will remember.

His cheerfull smile and positive smile are trademarks. They are a large part of the Magic package. Johnson, at 32, said at the news conference he plans to use his status as a celebrity to help educate people about AIDS and the virus that causes it. That is so typical of the man. Putting other people first. It seems haunting to paraphrase what he told a reporter when Michigan State suffered a particularly bitter defeat. "Sure we want to win, but it's a basketball game. It isn't like we're saving lives." Now he has an opportunity to do just that. Through education. "Life is going to go on for me, and I'm going to be a happy man," he said. Out of respect, we won't talk about Magic Johnson in the past tense. He is the same man he was before Nov. 7th. Except now he doesn't play professional basketball. He would probably tell you he has a more important job. Like the man said: "When your back is against the wall, you have to come out swinging."

Magic Johnson still sounds like a fighter.

Three Words Every Black Person Should Know: AIDS Doesn't Discriminate

How Do People Get The AIDS Virus?

AIDS is not just a white homosexual male disease. Many black men, women and children have AIDS. And, just as AIDS affects us all, not everyone is at risk. And even those people who are at risk, can protect themselves if they take reasonable precautions. Being safe from AIDS is up to you. It's your responsibility to protect yourself and those you love. It starts with knowing the three ways people get AIDS: By having sex with someone who has been infected with the AIDS virus. By using a needle or syringe that have been used by someone infected with the AIDS virus. And, by being born to a woman who has been infected with the AIDS virus.

What is AIDS?

AIDS stands for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. It is not as complicated as it sounds, but it is deadly. AIDS is a disease caused by a virus that destroys the body's ability to fight off illness.

The AIDS virus alone does not kill, but it makes it so that your body is unable to fight off other diseases. (Such as pneumonia or cancer). And those are the types of illness that can kill.

One of the most frightening facts about AIDS is that once you get it, you can carry it around for years without knowing it. And you have it forever. Right now there is no known cure for AIDS, and no vaccine that prevents it. But fortunately, the AIDS virus is hard to catch and that's what makes it preventable.

How Can You Tell If You Have The AIDS Virus?

The only way you can tell if you've been exposed to the AIDS virus is by having a blood test. The test looks for changes in your blood caused by the presence of the virus. If you test negative, that doesn't mean you can't get AIDS, it just means that you didn't have it when you were tested. If you test positive, it means you've probably been infected.

You can have the AIDS virus without having AIDS, or without even appearing or feeling ill. And you can transmit the virus to others. If you are worried that you may have been infected, find out about the test. Often it is available free or at low cost.

What's The Relationship Between Drugs and AIDS?

If you use mainline drugs, even if

you're just 'dabbing,' you should know that sharing needles or syringes is one of the most direct ways of transmitting the AIDS virus.

How Do Babies Get AIDS?

A mother can pass the AIDS virus on to her baby before or during birth. Women who want to have babies should have blood tests, because if the virus is in their own bodies, there is more than a chance that they will pass it on. So if you do anything that puts you at risk, remember, you're not only threatening your own life, but risking the lives of those you love, including the life of your unborn child. It's a fact that most babies who are infected eventually develop AIDS and die.

How Do I Discuss Safe Sex With My Partner?

First of all, learn as much as you can about AIDS. Second, be frank. AIDS kills, so the thing you don't want to do is put yourself at risk. If you have oral, anal or vaginal sex with an infected person, chances are you will become infected too. That means man to woman, woman to man, man to man, woman to woman, all of it! And because there is no cure, we all must work at preventing its spread.

Right now, the most effective way to prevent AIDS besides not having sex is a condom. Even though you might not want to use one or even though your partner might not want to use one, learn how. And learn to use them properly. Your life may depend on it.

What Do My Children Need To Know About AIDS?

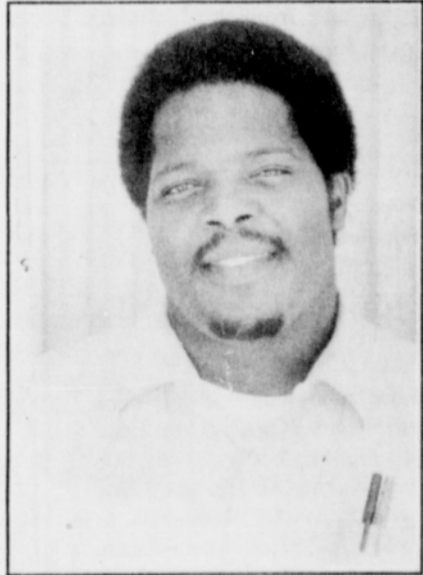
Your children need to know everything that you know. If they are old enough to be experimenting with sex, they need to be taught how to keep themselves from risk.

You have to try everything in your power to educate your children about sex, drugs and the kind of life-style that put them at risk of the AIDS virus. Likewise, you should let them know how you don't get AIDS.

You don't get AIDS from a mosquito bite, or from people who prepare food, casual contact at work or school, church or the movies. You won't get AIDS from a toilet seat, a handshake, a hug or even a kiss. Not even from sharing food or donating blood.

If you'd like to know more about AIDS you can get helpful confidential information from the National AIDS information line, 1-800-342-AIDS. It's open 24 hours a day.

A.K. Rucker Gives 155%. Do You?



A.K. Rucker

earned his recognition as August Bus Driver of the Month.

On the field, Rucker's coaching involvement in Whitaker Youth Football is reducing gang activity one child at a time. His team finished third Sunday in the Portland Youth Football Association City Championships at Cleveland High School.

"I'm not one to take a lot of credit for what I do, but the people in my neighborhood are glad Tri-Met recognizes something good out of the Northeast," Rucker said. "I accepted the Driver of the Month award on behalf of the community, not just me. Something good does come out of Northeast Portland, not just gang activity."

Whitaker Youth Football takes boys-as young as 7 and 8-away from the lure of gangs, involving them in a busy season of practice and games. "As one of the program's 22 coaches, I try to get all the kids I possibly can off the streets and onto the football field," Rucker said. "The first priority is sports

for these kids. It's their last hope."

"More kids go to junior varsity out of this program than any other," Rucker said. "It's the only program in Northeast running four teams at the same time. There's a pretty big commitment on the field. It's the best youth football program in the city. I'm not the cause, but I'm glad I play a big part."

Tri-Met Bus Mechanic Rellie Benton, 42, of Northeast Portland, introduced Rucker to Whitaker. Rucker joined after seeing the impact of gangs outside his window. "With crack houses and gang houses across the street from me there were drive-by shootings. I thought about being a big brother, but I wanted to do something to make a difference and give kids a place that's positive to go," Rucker said.

The success of the football program can literally mean life or death. "We try not to kick any kid off the team. We try to get them to stay on the team so they won't get in gangs and then they won't get shot. We'll find a

place for them so we won't have to throw them back out in the streets." If parents are not available, coaches will drive kids home after practice so they won't have to walk across gang territories after-hours.

Whitaker has come a long way. Equipment was sparse in the beginning, and kids who never played football before were afraid to join because they'd get hurt. "Every year we had a couple of broken arms and back injuries," Rucker said. But he put his skills in sewing and working with upholstery to good use by designing a rib pad which helped give players confidence, and reduce the number of injuries. And Tri-Met donates buses to get players and equipment to games.

Rucker, 32, has been a Tri-Met bus driver 10 years. "I really enjoy the job and interacting with people," he said. "I've become a lot wiser since I've worked for Tri-Met. It's been like a school for me." Rucker has tried to

continued on page 8

Outstanding on the job and on the field, Northeast Portland's A.K. Rucker is a role model for co-workers and youngsters alike.

On the job, Rucker's outstanding work record and rapport with his peers

Town Hall Looks At Going Broke

Going broke used to be something that happened to other people. Then Oregon's own car-wash giant Dan Hanna went bankrupt. Now, Tom Peterson has sought chapter 11 protection. Private citizens are faring no better. Bankruptcy filings in Oregon have risen 19% this year alone. You, and people who owe you money, are closer to losing it all than you might think.


Americans are more in debt than ever before: consumer debt now averages 83% of annual disposable income. Nor can we look to government to set the example. The federal debt has reached 2.5 trillion dollars. Will the bill come due in the 1990s for a decade of decadent spending in the '80s?

What should be done about our debt-ridden society? U.S. Bank has pioneered an innovative ad campaign

to encourage responsible use of credit. Have ad agencies fueled our appetite for material things? Are banks to blame for inducing us to "charge it"? Is it our own fault for not taking responsibility for our financial choices? Is borrowing good for our economy and country? Is declaring bankruptcy a good solution to debt problems or a last resort? How can you protect yourself? Join Jack Faust and his guest for this timely debate on Wednesday November 20th from 8-9 p.m. For seat reservations, please call Frank Mungeam, Alison Highberger or Liza McQuade at 231-4620. Guests should arrive at KATU studios (21st & NE Sandy Blvd) between 7:00-7:15 p.m. The public is welcome, but reservation are required.

This program will be aired December 1st at 6 p.m.

Perspectives



I Was Right About Eternal Vigilance
By McKinley Burt

Page 2

Entertainment

A Word About Vesta


Page 6

Sports

Trailblazer Robert Pack is a Keeper
by Bill Barber

Page 7

Kid Talk



When I Grow Up I Want to Be... Students From Humboldt Elementary School

Page 12