

J.W.J.

# Should 'Magic' be quarantined?

By J.W. JOHNSON

"I'm sick and tired of seeing Magic Johnson being portrayed as a hero," Silas McMarnner yells. "It's his lifestyle which got him into trouble, and now it's his otherwise good image which is being used by politicians."

"Yeah, chipped in Roscoe Bismark," and those politicians could care less if he dropped dead tomorrow."

"But don't you think he's doing some good?" asks Spike Opchinsky.

And everyone at my Breakfast Club has an opinion about the anything-but-magical-scourge known as Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, terrifyingly otherwise known as AIDS.

(My own belief is that everyone has the AIDS virus and it's those among us who are particularly susceptible to environmental degradation whose bodies, first, permit the AIDS virus to become active and, later, then succumb to the side effects of the full-blown illness.)

Magic Johnson, of course, is that enormously talented and personable basketball player who recently announced that he is infected with the virus known to cause AIDS.

McMarnner's problem with the publicity surrounding Johnson's acknowledgement is that the activity which got Johnson into trouble is taking a back seat to Johnson's otherwise pristine image; indeed, his magic smile being used to tell people about the horrors of AIDS without enough emphasis on the behavior which caused the problem in the first

place. "Instead of him (Johnson) telling these kids that his behavior was wrong, he's simply telling them to wear a condom," McMarnner complains.

In other words, and according to McMarnner's Pilgrimage philosophy, Johnson ought to be as much publicly pilloried for his behavior as sainted for his courage.

And Silas has a point. Lost in much ballyhooed courage of Johnson in acknowledging his infection with the virus which causes AIDS are the "women, women and more women" which Johnson has admitted was his lifestyle.

Also lost in the AIDS discussion is that this disease, while deadly, affects a relatively small number of people, less than 225,000 people in the United States having been diagnosed with full-blown AIDS.

"And for the first time in history," says Roscoe, "we have a communicable and contagious disease which obviously presents a major and national health problem, but whose pregenitors have not been quarantined."

Why is that? "Because the vast majority of the people with AIDS are among the most talented, creative and brightest people we have," he says. And it's those same people who have access to the publicity machinery? He nods. "Therefore we've been made to feel guilty about even

considering a quarantine which at another time and place, and given the deadly nature of this disease, would have been done without even thinking about it."

However, the whole general problem with a quarantine is who, in fact, would be quarantined.

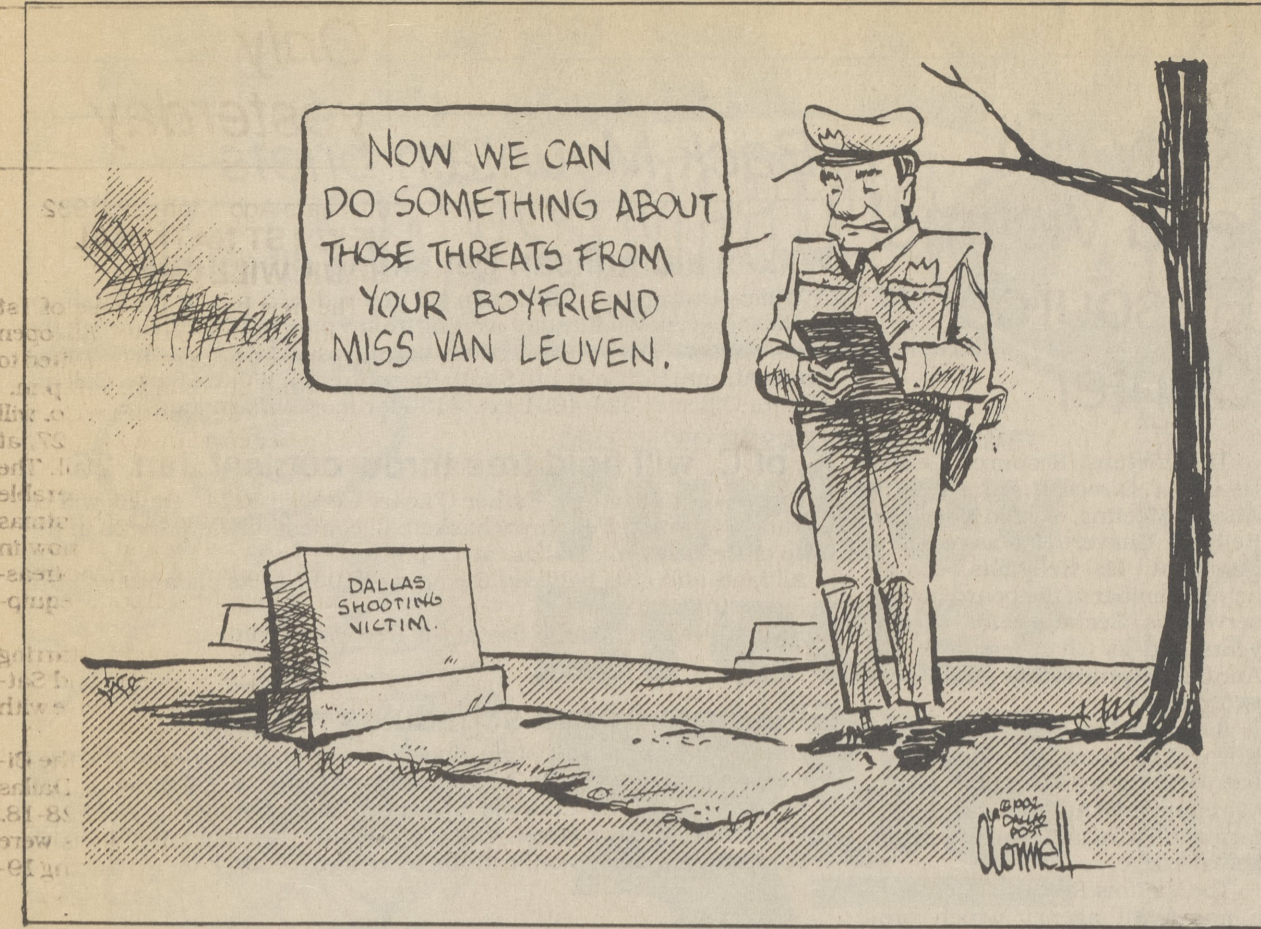
- Those infected with full-blown AIDS?
- Those known to have the AIDS virus?
- Those known to have ARC (AIDS related complex) illnesses.
- IV drug users.
- Homosexuals?
- Those who know friends of homosexuals.

The whole problem with a quarantine is knowing who, in fact, to label a leper.

And then, where would you quarantine such persons. At whose expense? For how long? Do you break up families? And would the so-called "Bubble Boy" who also suffered an immune deficiency, have to be quarantined?

To be sure, AIDS is a frightening specter hanging over this country, indeed, the entire planet. Medical science is working hard to find some answers. Bringing it under control will not be easy.

And you can also be sure that if this were an affliction of primarily white, straight males, the emphasis on what is being done, and what to do about it in the meantime, would be vastly different than it is today.



## A. Case for conservation

# Exactly what is a conservationist?

By ALENE N. CASE

The calendar is turned to January thirteenth. The atlas shows that we are located in the northeastern US where winters are cold. I walk out to our small garden, push back a sheet of black plastic, and begin pulling fresh carrots for dinner. I stop and laugh, wondering whether anyone would believe me. Then, I ask myself whether keeping vegetables fresh under plastic is consistent with my role as a conservationist. What is a conservationist anyway? Is there a difference between an ecologist and an environmentalist? Let's examine some important definitions so that you will know exactly what I mean when I use such terms in future articles.

"The science of ecology is devoted to understanding interactions between organisms and their environments." This definition was included in a recent publication of the Ecological Society of America which was reviewed by many prominent ecologists. The key word here is science. Ecologists study a branch of biology and may or may not be involved in environmental concerns.

Environmental scientists study the environment - the soil, water, air, rocks and biota. Therefore, they often have no biological background. They may study the weather, the circulation of the oceans, or disposal of hazardous materials. Environmental science is often concerned with pollution and its effects.

Ecologists and environmental scientists may also be environmentalists but not necessarily. The word environmentalist implies activism. These activists are those who march at the site of a proposed nuclear plant or landfill, who collect petition signatures to save a wilderness, or who express support for environmental legislation. Environmentalists who get politically involved are known as Greens. Some environmentalists who are not scientists tend to reverse the old Sierra Club motto and blindly oppose any progress. It is imperative that all activists seek out the facts and get as much input as possible from ecologists and environmental scientists.

A naturalist is a person who pays detailed attention to the world around him. This person knows when the birds migrate, which flowers bloom first each spring, and where to find the largest fish. He can tell what year the last big ice storm occurred by looking at the shape of a white pine tree. Obviously, such a wealth of knowledge could be quite useful to all of the other groups discussed here.

Aldo Leopold once defined conservation as "a state of health in the land." Webster lists "care and protection of natural resources" as one definition. In another dictionary, the word "preservation" was used. I'd like to stay away from the latter definition because of the negative connotation that "preservationists" have acquired as radical extremists. The second defini-

tion sounds logical but it has one flaw: it implies that we are conserving nature for ourselves. Conservationists must admit that to live is to use resources and produce wastes. But, we also must try to maintain the overall health of the system - the land.

I consider myself an ecologist by training who tries to live according to the conservation ethic which occasionally leads me to environmental activism. So, what about the carrots and the black plastic? If I can serve my family sweet-tasting vegetables, which have not been sprayed with pesticides or trucked thousands of miles, by reusing an old piece of plastic, I figure I have done my job as both mother and conservationist.

Everyone wonders from time to time whether anything she (he) does makes a difference in the wider world. Columnists are no exception. So, it was with considerable interest that I read in last week's paper that Kingston Township had chipped this year's discarded Christmas trees. When I talked to Jeffrey Box (township manager) a couple of weeks before Christmas, he indicated that the trees were always burned. We agreed that this was an outmoded method of disposal. Obviously, he brought the matter before the supervisors and a decision was quickly made to change the system. Thank you, Jeff Box. And, yes, the innocent question of one citizen can sometimes help improve the environment.

## Library news

# A family of toy stuffed animals is on display

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The display case at the Back Mountain Memorial Library is featuring a collection of fuzzy Sylvanian family animals including their own house; borrowed from Elizabeth Albee of Harveys Lake. Elizabeth is 9 years old and is in the fourth grade at Lake Noxen Elementary School. The little fuzzy animals include bears, mice, rabbits and racoons. Their arms, legs and heads move and they can stand or sit by themselves, except for the bears. They can also have their clothes changed and interchanged with each other.

The house is part of the family collection; the drawers open in the kitchen, there is china and pots and pans for the animals. The windows and doors open, the roof of the house can be taken off. The house has two floors in it and the inhabitants include Mother, Father, Grandparents, children and babies. There is a teeter totter for the animals and a tree house with a ladder for them to climb, and a swing.

Elizabeth's grandparents gave her the original set when she was six years old and she has received additions for birthdays. This makes an interesting and fun display for

the winter months and will be here until Feb. 12.

New books at the library: "A Thousand Acres" by Jane Smiley is a novel which takes us into the world of a thriving Iowa farm: one thousand acres-unencumbered, un-mortgaged-of the richest, flattest, most arable land on earth. The time is 1979. Larry Cook, a proud and exacting farmer, unexpectedly decides to retire and turn over his valuable holdings to his three daughters, Ginny, Rose and Caroline. A powerfully dramatic work.

"Fugitive Nights" by Joseph Wambaugh is a story set in glamorous Palm Springs and its ever-mysterious desert and gives a suspense novel that used that glamour and that awesome desert in equal measure. The fugitive is indeed a strangeman. All that is known of him is that he speaks with an accent, is bald, is carrying

a flight bag, and is adept at covering his tracks. This is a skillful, baffling, entertaining and suspenseful novel.

"Such Devoted Sisters" by Eileen Goudge is a story of love, betrayal, and ultimately, reconciliation. With a shattering act of betrayal, a jealous sister spurs a chain of events that will shape the destinies of two generations. Dolly, Annie and Laurel are the sisters and Joe is torn between two of the sisters he loves equally, but for different reasons. This is a blockbuster filled with passion, drama and momentum for irresistible storytelling.

"Hideaway" by Dean Koontz is a profoundly felt and terrifying novel, that compels us to explore the meaning of death and the transcendent power of love with sociopathic evil. An accident victim dies en route to the hospital, a brilliant physician resuscitates him!

## EMT seminar set for February 12

Mercy Hospital, Wilkes-Barre, will host a special seminar for all emergency medical technicians and paramedics on Wednesday, Feb. 12, beginning at 7 p.m. at the Ramada Inn on Public Square.

A social hour will follow the presentation. Open bar and hors d'oeuvres will be served. Anyone interested in attending the seminar should contact John A. Consalvo, M.D., at Mercy Hospital, 826-3163.

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Sun., Jan. 26, Woodlands Inn, Wilkes-Barre  
Doors open 1 PM, Show starts at 2 PM

Wed., Jan. 29, Holiday Inn, Dunmore  
Doors open at 7 PM, Show starts at 8 PM

Sun., Feb. 2, Genetti Manor, Dickson City  
Doors open at 1 PM, Show starts at 2 PM

Featuring the music of "Fancy Dancer" and the "Gerard Mayer Band"