October 20, 1993

One woman's illness has also become her crusade

By Krysta Shrieve
July 24th, 1993

The room fell silent. For a moment, all that could be heard was the creaking of the chair as Sherrie Tate rocked back and forth, her leg pain and her stomach churned more than just pneumonia. It was AIDS.

"I remember lying in my hospital bed and feeling an overwhelming sense of dread when the doctor walked in the room," Tate said. "He asked if I was an IV-drug user, and I said no. He asked if I was promiscuous, and I said no. He was making me feel like a street-walking drug addict, and it scared me."

"When I told him I had full-blown AIDS, the words hit me like a ton of bricks. I thought I was going to die."

"I didn't know about AIDS was that people died from it. And I just kept saying, 'Oh God, please don't let me die.'"

Tate, 41, was admitted into a Long Beach hospital for pneumonia. But on March 22, 1992, she found out that what had been making her back ache, her leg pain and her stomach churn was more than just pneumonia. It was AIDS.

"I was angry with him, but even at that point I didn't realize he had AIDS until he died of it. Soon after, I heard was the creaking of the chair as Sherrie Tate rocked back and forth, remembering the day her life was changed forever.

Sherrie Tate with her son Sal: 'I'm living proof that AIDS can happen to anyone,' she says. Daily photo by Janet Jensen

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Tate said the severity of her illness didn't sink in until later. Her mother Lorraine, who requested her last name be withheld, remembered the day Tate realized the extent of her illness.

"I remember sitting in the living room one day," Lorraine said. "I could see into the bathroom where Sherrie was combing her hair. Flatul of hair were coming out into her brush and she was crying as she flashed it down the toilet."

Although the incidence of AIDS per capita in San Luis Obispo County comes in well below the state average, the curve of increase here is rising steadily in all areas, including education activities; Why cover the toughest test on campus. By Anthony Hooper

On Monday, October 18, the County of San Luis Obispo Health Agency, 202 cases of full-blown AIDS have been reported, meaning 82 people out of every 100,000.

"It's nothing to be ashamed of," he said in a speech at Cal Poly last week. "It can be avoided and that has to be short of the highest mountain."

Chesher, a one-time NFL prospect, actor and Hollywood producer, brought to campus the story of life as a heterosexual AIDS victim to Cal Poly's Chumash Auditorium Monday afternoon.

In his heart-rending account of a promising life likely to be cut short by AIDS, Chesher implored listeners to "use their heads" and practice safe sex or abstain, because the disease "...is all over the place."

At 6 feet, 4 inches tall and 225 pounds, the 34-year-old Chesher defies the stereotypical image of an AIDS victim. "AIDS patients aren't always skinny like Olive Oyl, laying beside a 6-foot hole ready to roll in," he said.

A series of experimental treatments, including use of the drug AZT, has left Chesher with a relatively good health. He said his

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**UPCOMING**

- Sheriff's Office annual Christmas Bicycle Program — donate bicycles, Mon. - Fri., 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. / 781-4576
- Graduate and Professional School Day, all majors welcome — Oct. 22 / 756-6517
- "The States" service day in San Luis Obispo — Oct. 23
- Gilbert Reid Ballet dance auditions for "Carmen." — Oct. 23
  info: 544-2604
- Art and Design Professor Robert Reynolds' paintings and poetry by local writer Glenna Luschei go on exhibit in Cal Poly's University Union Galerie Oct. 22 / 756-6517
- 11th Annual Halloween Hoopla in Mission Plaza, 2 to 5 p.m. — Oct. 30 / info: 544-2604
- Last day to petition withdrawal from class — Nov. 5 / info: 528-0775

**SPEAKER:** Unprotected, heterosexual sex gave AIDS a window to ruin a life.

From page 2

I never knew anyone in my life who had AIDS," he said. "I didn't know how to handle it ..."

"My life changed forever — immediately — for one night of pleasure, one night of sex, from somebody I don’t even know."

Although not exactly sure where he contracted the dis- ease, Chessher seemed certain as to how he got it — from unprotected heterosexual intercourse.

"Someone once asked me how many girls I've been with," he said. "I told him one — one too many."

After his speech, Chessher was joined at the podium by his girlfriend, Tracy Naez, a psychology senior at CSU-San Bernardino. Having met Chessher in April 1992, she said she was as unaware of his affliction as he was. He was diagnosed nine months later.

"This man that I was going to marry and share my life with was suddenly diagnosed with AIDS," she said. "It was really hard."

Naez said she has repeatedly tested negative for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS — something the couple credits to their continued use of condoms.

"You get to see that people who have AIDS can have a relationship," she said.

But in December 1992, when a nagging cough and other flu-like symptoms necessitated a trip to the hospital, Chess- her got the shock of his life; He was suffering from PCP — a form of pneumonia — and was diagnosed as having full-blown AIDS.

Becoming choked with emotion and stumbling over words, Chessher appeared on Monday to be reliving the horror he felt when he first heard the news.

CHERRY HILL, N.J., November 15

Chessher's personal story was "very important."

"Many people in our age group can be told a million times and they still think they're invincible," she con- tinued. "His emotions came across ... (and) he got his ex- perience across. I think it did affect people."

**SENATE:** In Washington, questions blossom regarding the U.S. presence abroad

From page 2

The Senate spent much of the day debating a measure that would prohibit spending defense dollars on any U.N. operation in which U.S. soldiers were under the operation- al command of a foreign officer.

Sens. Don Nickles, R-Okla., and 'Thad Cochran, R-Miss., modified the measure so it would not apply to NATO forces in Europe, would not affect troops in South Korea and would allow the president to declare an emerg- ency to place troops under foreign command.

Republican Sen. Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania said the provisions were more restrictive than the War Powers resolution, which Congress passed 11 years ago over Presi- dent Nixon's objections.

"There is a real danger that the Senate, the Congress, may be too late for the passions of the moment," Specter said.

But Specter also blamed the Clinton administration for creating a foreign policy vacuum.

"The problem is materially compounded by a president who regrettably has been indecisive, vacillating ... which makes the presidency a weak institution," Specter said.
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We will be on campus October 27, 1993
Letters

Children or Baker: Who should keep quiet?

By Anita Broughton

I always have to chuckle as I walk around campus and overhear students complaining about how long it’s taking them to get out of Poly.

Five years? It’s notin’. Six years? Chump change. Compared to me, anything less than 10 is trivial pursuit. Yo, that’s right. I’m here to boldly admit that this quarter marks my 20th anniversary as a resident of Cal Poly — as an undergraduate.

I’ve been here so long I remember when the stop signs said “WHOAH!” I’ve outlasted university presidents, faculty, buildings, departments and parking lots.

My wardrobe has conveniently come back into style only now its even more cool because its been “pre-washed” for me. And did I mention that bookstores are red hot and lunch counters are flourishing.

“I have a picture of a gang of bare behinds streaking the U.U. Plaza, but I can’t share it with you.”

I would venture to say only the furniture in the U.U. and the majority of departmental secretaries (who we all know run this place) have been here longer.

OK so I took a break, a long break, 14 years to be exact. But if Cal Poly says I’m a continuing student then that’s what I am.

Like my clothes, things have a way of coming back around.

My friends and I used to go to San Francisco to see the Dead at Winterland, a legendary concert hall. Anyway, after five nights at Winterland one of us would end up at Lyle Tuttle’s tattoo parlor on 7th St. and come home sporting the inevitable inky youth. My roommate’s parents called my mom and asked her to tell me to “stop it!” It was a bad influence, you see.

Back in the ’90s I was known around town as “the girl with the ring in her nose.” There was one pierced nose in town and mine was it. Remember, this was B.L. (Before Linnanxa). I believe it or not, there was only one place in town that served approposities and nobody knew what they were. It was a little cafeine mecca called “The Mouse” on Morro St. next to a head shop that ultimately got run out of town by the police.

When I started Cal Poly, fees were $60.00 per quarter and I recall that books still cost $200.00 a quarter and my job rent was only $75.00 a month! Funny thing though, I procrastinated long enough, I better go study.

Anita Broughton is still a journalism senior.
The information also says the virus sometimes fails to generate antibodies for six months or more; while some people never produce antibodies at all. So even if the Health Center tells me the blood test didn't find antibodies, I could be infected with HIV and unknowingly pass it on to someone else. This made the whole procedure seem slightly futile.

After paying the $16 fee to the cashier, I felt a little more apprehensive. Why did I just pay for a test that may not tell me anything conclusive? But I shrugged off my doubts and went on with the testing. The lab assistant who collected the blood performed his job quickly. In some inexplicable way, his efficiency helped allay my fears. I would've felt much worse about this experience if I'd unsuccessfully joked around in my arm for a while.

A few seconds after red liquid swirling into a small glass vial and then a Band-Aid over a cotton ball in the crook of my elbow, the procedure was done. I walked out of the Health Center feeling kind of numb and calm.

The idea of other people knowing that I've been tested for HIV doesn't worry me. Maybe that's just naiveté on my part. Maybe I'm one of those people who assume that because I got tested I have a serious reason, even if I consider myself infected with HIV.

But the way I look at it, if you're not infected, you're at risk. So even if I'm not just my first and only partner to tell me the truth about his sexual health, some of his past partners fail to inspire the same level of confidence in me. Some people lie, while others don't consider the consequences of their sexual behavior.

Because you chance that he contracted something that hasn't surfaced, I'm a little concerned. My lack of patience and my curiosity are making this difficult. I sure hope those results come back soon.

You all are at higher risk for other sexually transmitted diseases than when I went to college in 1964-69. I think that's the scary figure, because leaving an STD puts you at a higher risk for HIV.

— Amy Hooper

STATISTICS: Expanded definition of victims boosts AIDS numbers in San Luis Obispo County

From page 1

The largest majority of total AIDS cases in San Luis Obispo County — 55 percent — have occurred in the 30- to 39-year-old range. Most have been white, and 44 percent say they contracted the virus by male-male sexual contact.

The number of full-blown AIDS cases in the report rose sharply for the beginning of 1993. But Bollinger noted this was partly because the federal government redefined its standards for that status to include three new diseases symptomatic of AIDS and a T-cell count of below 200.

During the first six months of the year — when the new standards went into effect — 68 percent of the cases reported were a result of the expanded definition.

The next few months were more illustrative of the extent to which people were coming forward.

TATE: SLO woman's AIDS diagnosis prompts her to fight against misconceptions, stereotypes

From page 1

The majority of people are having heterosexual relations, so it's all the more important to educate the public about the dangers of AIDS.

•

The county's steepest rise comes from within its three institutions: California Men's Colony, California Youth Authority (El Paso de Robles School) and Atascadero State Hospital, the report indicated.

Within the institutional population alone, 65 percent of the cases reported were reported. This was up from 55 percent in 1992. The largest majority of total AIDS cases in the county — 55 percent — have occurred in the 30- to 39-year-old range. Most have been white and 44 percent say they contracted the virus by male-male sexual contact.

Bollinger said San Luis Obispo — and especially its institutions — contain transitory populations. That means many of those diagnosed here with AIDS actually contracted it elsewhere, she said.

When told me I had full-blown AIDS, the words hit me like a ton of bricks. I thought I was going to die.

All I knew about AIDS was that people died from it.

And just kept saying, 'Oh God, please don't let me die.'

— Sherrie Tate
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QUILT: Emotional symbol of, memorial for AIDS victims will arrive at Cal Poly on Friday

From page 1

The display is a combination of deep emotion and harsh reality — an effort to increase education and understanding regarding AIDS by personalizing the disease that has claimed 171,890 lives.

Friday, from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday and from 10 a.m. to 12 a.m. Sunday. Closing ceremonies are scheduled for Sunday at 11 a.m.
Rodeo rides away from Poly quietly

By Amy J. Miller
Daly Staff Writer

Cal Poly's annual fall rodeo vanished from the campus as quietly as the dust kicked up by bulls and broncos this weekend settled in Collett Arena.

And while the rodeo is nothing but a memory to many, others never even knew it happened.

Many of the faculty, staff and students contacted on Monday said they hardly noticed the event took place.

For those who noticed, many said they thought rodeo is a "great sport" and "lots of fun." "It think it's great ... it has a lot of different aspects to it," said Susan Rains, a human resources department receptionist.

But, several others said they could care less if there was a rodeo on campus or not. Some professors didn't know there was one on campus.

Foundation Executive Director Al Amaral said he was aware of the rodeo and supports its presence on campus. "I think it's a good sport," Amaral said. "It's an appropriate sport for the college. It's another example of the extensive extracurricular activity of the students here."

Some students, however, said they are opposed to the sport. "I have heard that they tie ropes around the animals' genitals," nutritional science junior Andrew Field said. Field said he is opposed to the use of flank straps or electric prods used to make broncs and bulls buck.

"The Humane Facts" brochure the rodeo group passed out explained the use of a flank strap and an electric prod, asserting they are not used in a way that would torture or hurt the animals.

On the other side of the rodeo issue, Peggy Koteen of Action For Animal Rights was there for about two minutes before leaving.

"They treat these animals like royalty," Burdick said. "They're a source of income."

"I love animals," she added. "I wouldn't be backing something that hurts animals." She said the common story about binding an animal's testicles to get it bucking is not true. She also said that 99.9 percent of the broncs in rodeo are geldings, or castrated. The other 0.1 percent are mares. "They don't have testicles to tie up," Burdick said.

She said the theory that flank straps, shearling-lined strips of leather placed behind the horse's flank area, injures the animal is nonsense.

"I've never seen or heard of any damage caused by a flank strap, and as for the argument that it covers the genitals - that's impossible," veterinarian Susan McCartney said in the "Humane Facts" brochure.

As for the electric prod, the brochure said a prod produces 5,000 to 6,000 volts of electricity, but virtually no amperage. And because amperage - not voltage - causes burns, the prod causes a mild shock, but not injury, the pamphlet said.

Koteen said she is circulating a petition to ban the use of electric prods at rodeos. She said she is also trying to stop calf roping at rodeos.

"Calf roping is so horrendous," Koteen said. She said a calf is stopped in its tracks as it runs 20 mph.

"All of the (rodeo events) are upsetting to me," she said.

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