

Some thoughts on the 'sex issue'

After months of planning, failed attempts and empty wishes, I've finally put together the IC's first Arts and Life sex issue. Now, the first question you may have is, "What would possess you to create an entire issue revolving around sex?" Well, it's not that I'm some nymphomaniac perverted college student; I just felt that it would be an exciting and entertaining topic to cover.



Chevonne Harris

“ Sex is such a broad and wide-ranging topic that with only two-and-a-half stories, I've only managed to scratch the surface. ”

Yale University has had a campus-wide sex week and many magazines devote entire issues to the topic.

While I am excited to finally be finished with this issue, I have to confess that I'm not 100 percent satisfied with the final result. Sex is such a broad and wide-ranging topic that with only two-and-a-half stories, I've only managed to scratch the surface. But that's not to say the topics I've selected are mediocre or under par. Out of hundreds of possible topics, the winners ended up being green sex toys, a one-of-a-kind vibrator and bisexuality. Some of the runner-ups were college students who use Viagra, sex addicts, the latest and greatest sex toys, sex and plus size women, male prostitutes, sex positions, cervical cancer, HIV/AIDS in young people and college strippers. With so many choices, you can see how difficult it was to narrow it down to three stories.

One of my favorite stories in this issue explores environmentally friendly sex products and is an interesting look at the latest trend of green sex toys and products slowly gaining mainstream popularity. While doing research on the topic, I discovered that the sex toy industry is highly under regulated. Under the Food and Drug Administration, most sex toys are listed as "novelty items," which means they are not intended for actual use and therefore aren't strictly monitored. Who knew the majority of sex toys were made with harmful chemicals or created by environmentally harmful practices? You would think products made exclusively for the purpose of being inserted into the body would be one of the most highly regulated industries but that is not the case.

While I'm in love with the topic, I must say this was somewhat of a difficult article to write. With the concept being only a little more than two years old, there are very few companies that exclusively sell eco-friendly sex products.

On a side note: if there are any burgeoning entrepreneurs out there, I'd definitely recommend looking into this growing industry. The founder and CEO of Earth Erotics, a company that sells green sex toys, said her sales have been in the black since she started her business in 2007.

Although I went into the story exploring bisexuality with a playful attitude, after talking with students and faculty, I discovered that bisexuality is a very complicated issue, especially for those who consider themselves bisexual.

It always fascinates me how we as a society feel the need to

— Sex Page B3

Going green never felt so good

Environmentally friendly sex products provide hours of clean, green pleasure

Who knew you could get off by helping the environment? With our cars, homes and buildings going green, it was only a matter of time before the sex industry jumped on the environmentally friendly bandwagon — and rightfully so.

While they may provide hours of pleasure, many sex products are unregulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and contain harmful chemicals or are not made with the environment in mind. Thankfully,

small businesses and eco-conscious manufacturers are changing that and are slowly exposing the sex industry's dirty little secret. From whips made of recycled rubber from bike inner tubes, to all-natural lubricants and condoms, toys that are good for the body are now becoming great for our environment.

Under FDA regulations, sex products are listed as "novelty items," not intended for use, thus making it easier for manufacturers to create products that may contain harmful ingredients. Because of the lax

regulation, many sex products contain high levels of phthalates, also known as "endocrine disruptors."

Phthalates are most commonly found in jelly rubbers, an inexpensive plastic, a material most commonly used with dildos to soften and mold products. While jelly rubber has not been directly linked to cancer, many manufacturers, along with the Centers for Disease and Control Prevention advise customers to cover the products with condoms before using them for safety precautions.

According to Jasmine, 28, (she preferred not to use her actual name), the founder and CEO of Earth Erotics, a Portland, Oregon-based company that specializes in environmentally friendly sex products, there are several ways to tell if a product contains jelly rubber or phthalate: 1. Whether or not the material is disclosed. 2. If there are warning labels or health disclaimers on the packaging. 3. If the product emits a "chemical smell" (Jasmine said the lower the grade, the stronger the smell and the higher the amount of phthalate).

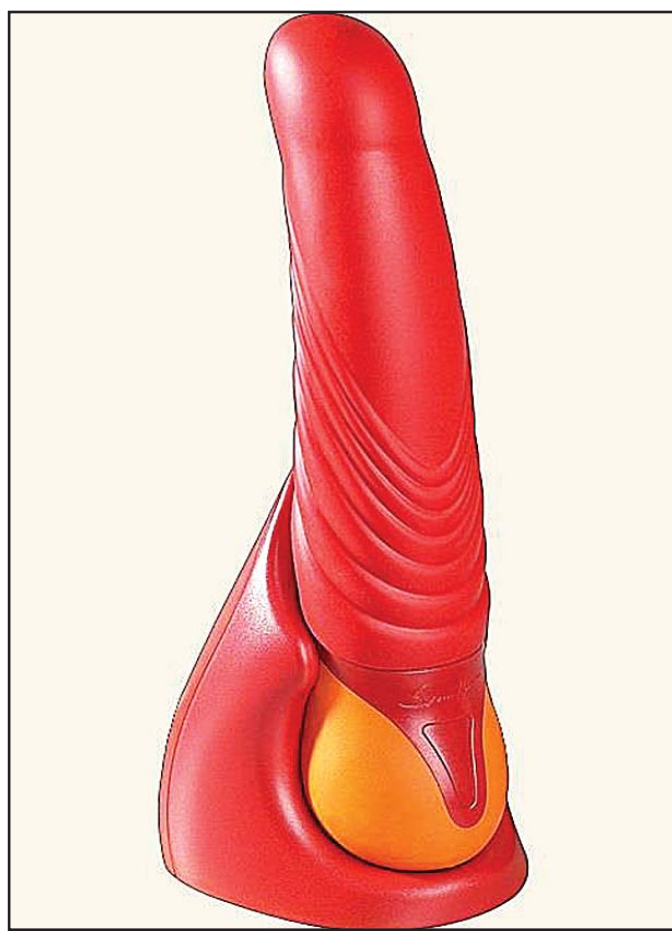
"Before I started [Earth Erotics], I had no idea sex toys contained so many harmful materials," Jasmine said. "I just assumed the things that were out there and for sale were obviously safe, and they really weren't. There are probably millions of individuals using toys that are potentially toxic."

As an alternative to potentially harmful products, a handful of innovative manufacturers have taken it upon themselves to create eco-friendly, phthalate-free sex products. Leading the pact is Jasmine and her Earth Erotics company, the first company in the U.S. to exclusively offer green sex



Courtesy of Earth Erotics

The "Soul Ecstasy" dildo (above) is made from 100 percent glass and has virtually no impact on the environment.



Courtesy of Earth Erotics

The "Sinnflut Rechargeable Vibrator" (above) is made from 100 percent silicone, one of the most environmentally friendly materials used to make sex toys.

products. Created in 2007, Earth Erotics offers a variety of phthalate-free and jelly rubber-free sex toys.

According to an organization called Pollution in People, most products don't outright state they contain phthalates, but will disguise the chemical under various names including: DBP (di-n-butyl phthalate), DEHP (di-[2-ethylhexyl] and DMP (dimethyl phthalate). Known to interfere with the reproductive system, phthalates are commonly found in plastics materials such as shower curtains, children's toys and also several perfumes and cleaning products. Phthalates have also been linked to cancer and have been shown to cause birth defects and are banned in California and Europe.

Of all the eco-friendly materials used for sex toys, glass is possibly the most environmentally friendly, Jasmine said. Made from natural products and hand-blown

from local artists, glass sex products such as anal plugs, anal beads and dildos are easy to sterilize, are recyclable and have virtually no impact on the environment, Jasmine said. Generally, the products are heated in a kennel and cooled for 24 hours. Once hardened, Jasmine described the glass as nearly indestructible.

"Environmentally wise, you can't do any better than glass," she said. "Its ingredients come from the earth and are usually made locally. They're also a work of art and are very beautiful."

Silicone and elastomer, a rubber-based material, are other popular green materials used to manufacture sex toys, Jasmine said. Earth Erotics offers everything from 100 percent silicone, rechargeable vibrators to elastomer c-rings and dildos.

Several adult stores in the

— Green, Page B3



Graphic by Joseph Herr / IC

Many people who identify as bisexual say they are often excluded from gay and straight communities.

Bisexuality presents challenges for many

Complexities and dualities of identifying as bisexual and the exclusion many face

By Chevonne Harris
Arts and Life Editor

How do you define your sexuality when you don't fall onto either side of the sexuality spectrum — when you're not quite straight enough for the "heteros" or gay enough for the gays?

While being attracted to both men and women may sound like the best of worlds, for many in the bisexual community, it is a silent curse, filled with isolation and confusion. Often resented by both gay and straight communities, many people who identify themselves as bisexual, or are attracted to both men and women, struggle with the never-ending task of finding themselves in a world forcing them to choose sides.

When it comes to labeling someone's sexuality, the problem is

not the person's sexuality, but society's need to place people into categories, said Megan Mahon, the interim clinical counselor for the Main Campus Counseling Center.

"In our culture, we expect people to be either heterosexual or homosexual, and people who are bisexual fall in between, and a lot of people do not understand that," Mahon said. "Bisexuals identify as bisexual because they don't feel like they belong anywhere. People give them messages like 'You need to make up your mind' or 'This is a stage or a phase,' when in fact they're just being who they are."

Mahon, who has counseled several gay, lesbian and bisexual students, said this need to label someone's sexuality often contributes to the identity crisis

— Bisexuality, Page B3

■ HOT ITEM

Good vibrations, better sensations

Company creates hi-tech sex toy that vibrates to the beat of an iPod

By Chevonne Harris
Arts and Life

You'll never look at your iPod the same with the Naughtibod, a revolutionary sex toy that combines the sounds of music with the pleasures of a vibrator. The Naughtibod is a vibrator that connects to an iPod, laptop, home stereo, iPhone or any other music player and vibrates to the beat of the music.

The device comes with a three foot "freedom cord" that connects the vibrator to the music device

and has an additional outlet for headphones.

The device can also be used as a traditional vibrator. It comes with two detachable heads, one with an outlet for a music device and another which controls the vibrator's seven speeds. The Naughtibod is made by OhMiBod and comes in four colors: bubblegum (pink), licorice (black), blueberry (blue) and green apple (lime green). The toy is made by OhMiBod and is available online only.



Courtesy of OhMiBod.com

The "Naughtibod" is made by OhMiBod and retails at \$69.99.