

Let's talk about sex, baby

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There are many options for contraceptive methods, but the best choice for individuals depends mostly on lifestyle and preference.

Raffy R. Luquis, Ph.D., assistant professor of health education, recently explained the different kinds of contraception to Penn State Harrisburg students in a seminar entitled "Contraception: Let the Choice Be Yours."

According to Luquis, over 49 percent of pregnancies in the United States are unintended and could have been prevented with the proper use of a contraceptive method.

"Sometimes people don't talk about it [contraception] until it's too late," he said.

Luquis explained that the major categories of contraceptives are hormonal, chemical, barrier, natural, permanent, abstinent and emergency. He detailed many examples of each kind.

One of the most widely-known methods of contraception is oral pills, which are a hormonal method. Hormonal means of contraception prevent ovulation in females by thickening mucus membranes to prevent sperm

from penetrating. When properly used, the pill is 97-99 percent effective. Human error, such as forgetting to take the pill on a regular basis, is responsible for the one to three percent of failure. This method has few side effects, can treat acne and has reversible effects. However, it can be adversely affected by smoking and certain medications, said Luquis.

Another method of contraception discussed was Norplant, which is not currently available in the United States. Norplant involves inserting a small capsule under the skin of a female's upper arm. It provides protection for one year and then dissolves. Despite its convenience, said Luquis, the cost is a drawback. A year's worth of protection costs between \$500 and \$750.

Groans emerged from the audience of over 100 students, mostly male, when the method of sterilization was approached by Luquis, who enhanced this part of his slideshow with a large picture of scissors. Sterilization is permanent and can be performed on both males and females. However, many couples opt for the male to undergo the procedure because it is significantly less expensive. While female sterilization, which requires general anesthesia,

costs \$2,000 to \$6,000, male sterilization only costs \$250 to \$520.

Emergency contraception is also an option available to reduce the chance of pregnancy within 72 hours of possible coitus. "This should be one of your last choices. But sometimes accidents happen," said Luquis. This kind of contraception, commonly called "Plan B" or "Preven," is only available by prescription. However, the FDA is exploring the possibility of offering it over the counter.

Finally abstinence is the only "100 percent effective" way of preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Many people practice abstinence because of religious beliefs, fear of pregnancy and to focus on other aspects of their relationship, said Luquis.

Other methods that Luquis discussed include contraceptive patches, hormonal shots, vaginal rings, condoms, diaphragms, spermicides and the rhythm method.

"It [the seminar] was pretty informative. Very informative actually," said Chris Renshaw, 17, a freshman computer science major. "I knew a lot of this information already, but there was stuff I didn't know about too. It was very informative."

The future of contraception holds much advancement for males, said Luquis. "Thermal briefs" may soon be available and will use either body heat or external heat to suppress sperm production. The "invisible condom" may also be available in the future and can be sprayed on to an erect penis to act as a second skin, preventing pregnancy. Additionally, an oral contraceptive for men is also being developed.

According to a recent report by www.smartersex.org, "Only 60 percent of women know how to use a condom correctly and most say (60 percent) they would still have sex even if their partner refused to wear a condom. What's more, in separate research, Planned Parenthood reports that of 100 women whose partners use condoms, about 14 will become pregnant during the first year of typical use."

The report also said that 87 percent of men know how to properly use a condom. For the report, 1,051 students between the ages of 18 and 24 were surveyed.

For more information on contraception and other health issues, visit Health Services in Olmsted W-102.



Photo by Kelly Nagurny

Dr. Luquis, assistant professor of health education, holds a female condom for all to see as he discusses contraceptive choices.

PSH students voice opinions on upcoming election

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As the Presidential Campaign nears the home stretch, it is quite obvious to everyone that this is one tight race. The race between incumbent, George W. Bush and Senator John Kerry, has the potential to be one of the closest in our nation's history. For months, the polls have shown a virtual dead heat between the two candidates.

Both candidates have said that one of their aims is to get the young people out to vote. Adults 18-24 represent the smallest number of people that actually

go to the polls and vote. M.T.V. has launched a campaign to get the younger adults to the polls. Their campaign is built on a principle of 20 million people of voting age, that don't vote. And in an election this tight, those 20 million, if they do vote, will swing the vote in one direction and decide who will lead this country for the next four years. Since the majority of those 20 million are young adults, it's no wonder that both candidates have set their sights on the younger voters.

The Capital Times interviewed over 70 students at Penn State Harrisburg, from varying majors, to get a better idea of how the young people at this school are

voting. Out of students interviewed that said they would be voting, 47% were supporting Sen. Kerry; President Bush received 43% and 9% said they were undecided. This poll mirrors those conducted by sources all over the country. This race is a dead heat here at Penn State just like the rest of the country, and the undecided voters will decide the winner.

Some of the students were asked what issue most affected their decision. An Education major said she was supporting Sen. Kerry because he had a better plan for education and that is the issue that will most affect her life. A Communications major

said she was supporting Pres. Bush because of his views on abortion and gay marriage and because she agreed with the War in Iraq.

This election has gained a lot of attention, even more than presidential campaigns in the past. The country is so evenly split on the issues that the winner may be the person who can draw out the most support from people who don't normally vote. Both sides are claiming they have had millions of new voters register for this election. Such hot topics as the War in Iraq and the War on Terror have gained the public's interest and record numbers should be expected at the polls

on November 2. It is hard to believe that after how close the 2000 election was, Gore lost New Mexico by 230 votes, that this race is shaping up to be even closer. Perhaps the public learned something from the 2000 election: that every vote does count.

In this campaign, it isn't possible to be confused as to who supports what. These candidates couldn't disagree more on the issues. In case you've been in a cave for the last year, here's how the candidates stack up on some of the issues: Pres. Bush is against gay marriage and gay adoption while Sen. Kerry sup-

ports civil unions and gay adoption. Sen. Kerry is against oil drilling in the Arctic, and Pres. Bush supports drilling. Sen. Kerry also wants to repeal Pres. Bush's tax cut.

These are just a few of the many issues in this campaign. Of course there is the War in Iraq which is going good or bad depending on which side you talk to. It is so important to go out and vote. Some of the issues mentioned affect every American and if we don't agree with one side, we can easily vote for the other candidate. The important thing is, as the M.T.V. campaign says, let your voice be heard.

Students meander out of classroom into 'The River'

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When selecting a course, most students want to choose one that is interesting, challenging, and fits into their schedule. How about one that revolves around a field trip as well?

"The River" also known as "I Hum 300W" fits into all of these categories. The Susquehanna River, the topic for the entire semester, is what we are studying in depth. The River has shaped so many aspects of life in this state, country and even world and since it is right in our backyard, taking a trip down the river was a no-brainer.

Professors Eton Churchill and Glen Mazis, along with Career

Services Director and paddling expert Karl Martz originally planned a three-day trip that included camping and canoeing. However, with the flooding and high water levels, the trip had to be postponed until Saturday, Oct. 16.

Finally, the day of the trip had arrived. I had watched the weather channel all week, planning how many layers of clothing I would need to go canoeing. It was only supposed to reach 60 degrees, and combined with the wind, a few layers would be needed. However, instead of the three-day trip, it was consolidated into a one-day canoeing excursion, which alleviated all of the supplies we would have needed for camping.

We all arrived at Fort Hunter

State Park around 8:45a.m. that morning, all not knowing what to expect. As we carried our canoes towards the river, I wondered how I would do out on the water. I had never canoed before, so this was a new experience for me. One fear I had was falling into the water, which several of my classmates shared with me. With the reassurance from the faculty, however, I hoped everything would be okay.

After a few quick instructions, several safety warnings, and one last prayer, we got into our respective canoes and began our journey down the Susquehanna. Since Churchill, Mazis, Martz, and other faculty would be joining us, I knew that we would be helped if the need arose- which, it did.

My partner and I had a little trouble steering, which is done by the person who sits in the rear of the boat, called the stern. However, after a quick lesson by Karl Marx, and positive encouragement from all, we were able to keep up with the group and truly experience all the river had to offer.

My arms began to feel weak after paddling several miles, but the motivation inspired me to keep on going. We were nearing a bridge, and as we were instructed we had to get on our knees and paddle even harder.

The ironic thing was that even though the waves were much worse than normal conditions, we all agreed that somewhere we got this inner strength that invigorated us to paddle harder.

One can also realize that when on the river, there is no sense of time. Even though I had to be somewhere later in the day, time surpassed me quite fast and before I knew it, four hours had already passed. The bitter wind pinched my exposed face and hands, while my hoodie and sweatpants felt the effects of the rain that had started to fall halfway through the trip.

Even with the rain and the cold, the constant paddling kept us warm. Just the scenery, which included everything from refrigerators that had been dumped in the water to decoys of birds and ducks, kept us intrigued. Since the river affects many industries, we got to see first hand everything that the river virtually touches on a day-to-day basis. We were able to see all of the good and bad the Susquehanna had to offer. No longer was it "just a river," to us; the river in a sense become a part of us as we approached take out at Indian Steps.

As I reconcile the day's events, I really am glad I decided to go on the trip. Not only did I learn a new skill, I saw the river like I



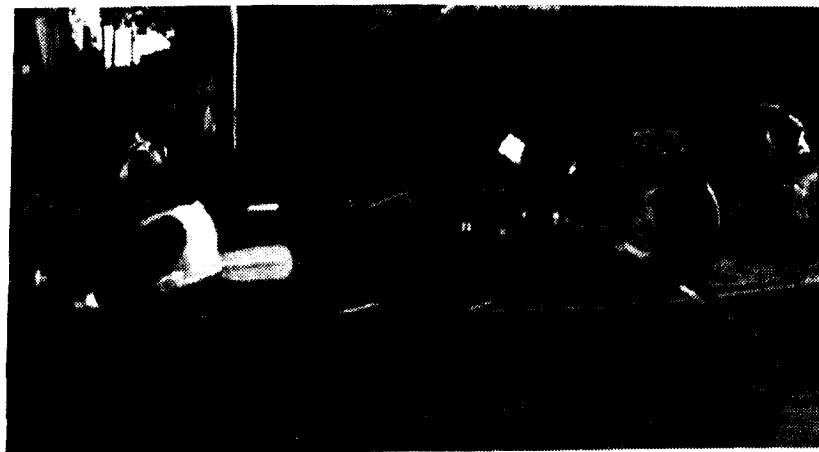
Photos by Jessica Pouchan

These students paddle tandem down the Susquehanna River as part of a class at PSH. The students paddled approximately six miles from Fort Hunter to City Island.

never saw it before. I never realized that so many industries such as the coal, transportation, food, etc, rely on the Susquehanna River for its natural resources. The history of the river is very fascinating and important because it has made the surrounding communities what they are today.

I plan on taking another canoe-

ing trip, but next time it definitely will be in the summer. Some advice for those of you who do not want to miss out on the river experience-learn the basics first, bring a water bottle, an extra set of clothing, and a positive attitude. With these things in mind, you too, will see a new side of the Susquehanna - the river of dreams.



Several students arrive at their destination along the City Island boat ramp after a long day of paddling.