



BDSM community bands together while educating members

Halie Brown
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She was always taught to be ladylike, she was told she was not supposed to talk about sex even with her husbands while growing up. But by practicing bondage, dominance, sadism and masochism, or BDSM, she defies that. By giving up control, she is free.

Laura, 50, who is identified by only one of his names to protect her identity, spent most of her life trying to find a man who was stronger than her so she could submit to him. She did not realize there was a community that she could reach out to and had found only controlling or abusive men until she came across BDSM, she said. The community helped her be less shy and open about herself.

"The more restrained I am, the freer I become," Laura said.

BDSM is a lifestyle involving multiple fetishes, said Charlie Simpson, a marriage and family therapist. Simpson typically sees people who are involved with BDSM when it creates a problem within their relationship, but sometimes people use BDSM to try something different things.

"It can be extremely bonding especially when both individuals



Taffy Kavanaugh Staff Photographer

Of adults in the U.S., 36 percent use masks, blindfolds and bondage tools during sex, according to a survey conducted in 2005 by Durex.

are excited and interested in BDSM," Simpson said.

Opal, 67, who is identified by only one of her names to protect her identity, is a self-described BDSM instructor who has participated in the BDSM lifestyle for more than 25 years. She generally thinks that the BDSM community is more accepting, she said.

It was the BDSM community that helped her through her divorce, and supported her by helping her pack and move. The community in general bands together to educate members, and prevent members from becoming involved with predatory situations, she said.

Brandon, 39, who is identified by only one of his

names to protect his identity found BDSM while he was living in Texas. His friend, who has a blood fetish, would invite him to see her shows at fetish balls. A fetish ball is a large gathering that takes place twice a year at clubs or warehouses where professionals perform shows for crowds on stages or sometimes in suspended cages, he said.

It was after watching her show with a fake blood bath in a tub that Brandon realized he was a voyeur, or someone who was interested in watching other people become aroused, he said.

In BDSM, there are two types of people, Opal said. There are voyeurs, who like to watch, and exhibitionists, who like to show off, she said.

Opal teaches people about different types of "play," or BDSM-related activities, and submission. Her specialties include knife, needle and fire play, she said. The goal of play is to give partners an endorphin and adrenaline rush.

The last play party, or gathering for BDSM-related activities, Opal participated in, she was approached by a man who wanted to learn more about needle play, which involves pushing syringe needles under the skin and poking them back out. He wanted to learn to impress another woman who was interested in it, she said.

See "Residents gain" on page 3

STI rates worst in four years nationwide

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Having chlamydia never crossed Jean's mind when she went to the UA Pat Walker Health Center for what she thought was just a yeast infection.

She knew something was wrong, though, after she woke one morning in October with one of her labia swollen. The night before, she had unprotected sex with a guy she met in her dorm, but she waited to get tested, not knowing if the inflammation and discomfort would go away on its own.

After a week of deliberation about whether she should go to the doctor, Jean, a freshmen student who is identified by only one of her names to protect her identity, decided to use the women's clinic.

A few days later, Jean got a call back with her results, confirming what she thought already — she did have a bacterial and yeast infection — but also revealing she had chlamydia, another bacterial infection that is the most common STI.

Jean was not alone in her diagnosis. More than 1.7 million Americans reported having chlamydia in 2017,

according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The number of nationally reported cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis have increased over the past four years. The 20-24 age group, which would encompass a majority of college students, leads most other age groups in number of cases, according to the CDC.

In Arkansas, Washington County has the second-highest percent increase of chlamydia cases, 23.8 percent between 2013 and 2016, among the five counties that have UA System four-year institutions in them, according to the Arkansas Department of Health. Jefferson County, where the University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff is located, has the highest increase in cases at 29.5 percent.

"I'm concerned. I started getting concerned a couple of years ago when we started seeing the rates go up," said Dr. Joanne Brown, chairperson of the Sexual Health Promotion and Clinical Care Coalition.

Common deterrents to getting tested include the cost of the tests, the stigma that still persists around STIs, lack of knowledge on the issue and access to quality care, health officials said.

See "PWHC STI" on page 3

Students abstain from sex, look forward to married life

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Senior Meg Medford is a Christian and believes in what the Bible says, including that marriage is a representation of how God loves the church. From the time she was a teenager, she knew she would save her virginity for her husband, no matter the difficulties it might bring. Years later, she looks forward to spending her wedding night, which is only 10 months away, with her husband.

Medford always knew she wanted to wait to have sex until marriage. She thinks that when someone has sex, there is a bond created between the people, she said.

"I didn't want to have to deal with making a bond and then having to try and get through the breakup of having this emotional bind to somebody," Medford said.

Before Medford started dating her fiance Seth Campbell during her junior year in high school, they discussed their boundaries and values. After coming to

college, they had to establish their own rules because they no longer lived in their parents' houses, she said.

"That part was really hard 'cause we were trying to figure out what worked best for us and how we can spend a lot of time together, because in high school when we started dating, we only saw each other like once a week," Medford said. "I think it made it a lot better that we talked about it beforehand and we knew what our boundaries were before we got to college, and they didn't change when we got to college."

Zach Morris, the associate college pastor of C3 and a UA alumnus, thinks people should save sex for marriage because he believes it is an intimate act that should be saved for the person you marry, he said.

"I just think that it is such an intimate act between people that it is not something that is recreational," Morris said. "It's giving oneself to another person with your most personal, physical gift."

He also wants his fiance, Livi Pennington, to know that he does not think of her as an object, Morris said.

"That's why we chose to wait," Morris said. "I want



Senior Meg Medford jumps Feb. 5 on her fiance alumnus Seth Campbell's back. Medford and Campbell have been engaged since Dec. 21, 2018.

Kevin Snyder Photo Editor

her to look at me as a man who does not look at her as an object but as someone who looks at her and her soul."

Morris and his fiance have been together for 2 1/2 years and have been engaged for five days. They hope to get married this summer, he said.

Medford and Morris both received very little sex education from their educational system, they said.

"It was essentially like

'Mean Girls', 'Don't have sex or you will get chlamydia and pregnant and die,' Medford said.

Teachers at Morris' middle school talked to students when he was in the sixth grade, but his father had already given him the sex talk, he said.

If sex education is included in high school health classes, abstinence must be included and stressed as the only sure means of avoiding pregnancy

and STIs, according to Arkansas Code § 6-16-1004.

High school students that live in states that prescribe to more abstinence education are more likely to become pregnant, according to the U.S. National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health.

In 2015, approximately 45 percent of female and 47 percent of male high school students in Arkansas reported having sex at least once,

compared to approximately 39 percent of female and 43 percent of male high school students nationwide, according to the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S.

Arkansas ranked as the state with highest teen-pregnancy rate in 2016, with approximately 35 births per 1,000 females ages 15-19, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Despite Medford and Morris both wishing to remain abstinent before marriage, they differ on their ideals of sex education, they said.

"You can't expect everyone to be abstinent all the time, and that's okay," Medford said. "If you don't believe the same thing as me, I'm not judging you at all. But I feel like if schools teach (sex education), people's lives would be so much easier."

Medford thinks that people need to know how to have sex safely, especially if they are not married, she said.

Morris thinks that parents should be responsible for educating their children about sex, he said.

See "Students" on page 3

Valentine's Day date spots in Fayetteville live up to the hype



Campus News Editor Beth Dedman reviews the best date spots in Fayetteville.

Arkansas sports brings two athletes love



After competing in sports their whole lives, they never considered it bringing them love.

Arkansas representative pushes for better access to birth control



Women weigh in on possible policy changes that would allow for over-the-counter birth control pills.

Editor's Note

Issue focuses on exploring stigmas around love, sex



Chase Reavis
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With Valentine's Day right around the corner, we decided to take a look into love, lust and all their facets on both the UA campus and Fayetteville community for

the February issue. Included in this issue are stories include dating in college, whether that be long-distance or not, and some taboo subjects that have to do with love, dating and sex, like STIs, stalking and BDSM. Because of the sensitive nature of these stories, many of our sources' names have been changed to protect them from any possible backlash.

Out of 6,769 undergraduate students polled in the Online College Social Life Survey, 27.21 percent of men and 28.07 percent of women indicated having had no sexual partners while the second highest percentage, 18.4 percent, indicated only having had one.

On the other side, 72 percent of undergraduate students participate in some kind of hookup by their senior year, according to the survey.

This shows our generation's beliefs and values are changing.

Since 1950, the median age for marriage has risen from 22.8 for men and 20.3 for women to 29.2 for men and 27.1 for women in 2015. Despite this upward trend, by 22 years old, 15 percent of women and 8 percent of men will be married, according to the 2015 5-year American Community Survey.

In 2016, the national average age for women to have children was 26.3, but in Arkansas, the average is lower, resting between 22 and 25 years old.

For the darker side of sex, Arkansas ranked in the top 10 worst states for chlamydia and gonorrhea, according to the Sexual Transmitted Disease Surveillance Report. This shows an upward trend in chlamydia in Arkansas since 2012, from 16,611 to 16,737

reports in 2016. However, the rates per 100,000 population have decreased from 563.3 to 562 between the two years.

Ranked seventh in reported cases of gonorrhea, Arkansas had 192.5 reports per capita in 2016. This is up 31.8 percent from 2012, when there were 146 reports per capita.

Statistics around interest in BDSM are muddy, but some researchers have found that as many as 62 percent of people reporting having fantasies about being dominated or dominating someone else sexually.

Every person's relationship and sex life is different. Some believe that having sex should only be one you marry, others look at it as a recreational activity. No matter the case, these are people we interact with everyday and are people whose stories deserve to be shared.



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Editor reviews student-recommended date spots

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With Valentine's Day approaching, I decided to find out the best romantic and fun spots that Fayetteville has to offer. I talked to students to find out what they thought the best places to have a Valentine's date were and went to those places to see if they lived up to the hype.

Now I may be a single gal, but that doesn't mean I don't appreciate some good food, fun and scenery. Of the places that students recommended, these five date spots came up the most frequently as the perfect date spots.

The most recommended date spot in Fayetteville was Mount Sequoyah. The scenery surrounding Mount Sequoyah was beautiful and made for a very peaceful afternoon. I love spending time in nature with people I care about, and I think that Mount Sequoyah is a perfect place to do that. However, the forecast for Valentine's Day is a high of 49 degrees, with the possibility for rain and ice, according to Accuweather.

I am all about taking risks in the name of love, but you might want to plan a backup date in case the rain ruins the romance. If the weather clears up, Mount Sequoyah would be a beautiful place to spend time with your significant other.

The best restaurant in Fayetteville for a date, according to students, was Bordinos. Bordinos has been at its location on Dickson Street since 2005. Before that, it was behind Smoke & Barrel beginning in 1996, General Manager Reese Roberts said.

But Roberts does not want



Morgan Browning Staff Photographer

A cross sits on top of Mount Sequoyah on Feb. 3, with a view of Fayetteville behind it. Mount Sequoyah is one of the most recommended date spots among students surveyed.

you to think of this as a place you can only take your date to when you are feeling fancy, he said.

"We're not just a special occasion restaurant; we're an any occasion restaurant," Roberts said.

Bordinos has 10-12 items that are constantly on the menu, but Executive Chef Matthew Barclay developed a speciality menu for Valentine's Day with options such as lobster bisque, charred duck confit, house made spinach fettuccine (which is made with their new fresh pasta machine), grilled beef tenderloin and, for dessert, a Chocolate Trio, which involves chocolate cake, chocolate strawberries and chocolate dipped orange peels.

"Bordinos is a little more expensive than most college students are typically willing to

pay, so it just makes the occasion feel classier and more special," freshman Nicole Dominguez said.

There is seating available for walk-ins, but if you want to secure your table for Valentine's Day, or any date night there, it would be smart for you to make a reservation, Roberts said.

Bordinos has specially decorated their space on Dickson street to have a romantic ambiance, with dim lighting, soft music and muted wall colors, Barclay said.

"It's pretty casual fine dining," Roberts said. "We like to provide very elevated cuisine. But we try to make it to where things are affordable. We like to make it where you could come three times a week if you wanted to or if you wanted to come in and go

all out and entertain for a client or celebrate a special occasion."

As a broke college student, I would only recommend Bordinos for a particularly romantic night with the person who means the most to you. If I wasn't living on tacos, I would go to Bordinos for every special occasion.

For people who do not want to be limited to one location for Valentine's Day and just want to spend time with their significant other, many students recommended a date on the Fayetteville Historic Square. The square is abundant in great places to get a drink, get a treat and go shopping.

You can start out your date

See "Roller skating" on page 5

New technologies eases long-distance dating

Emily Franks
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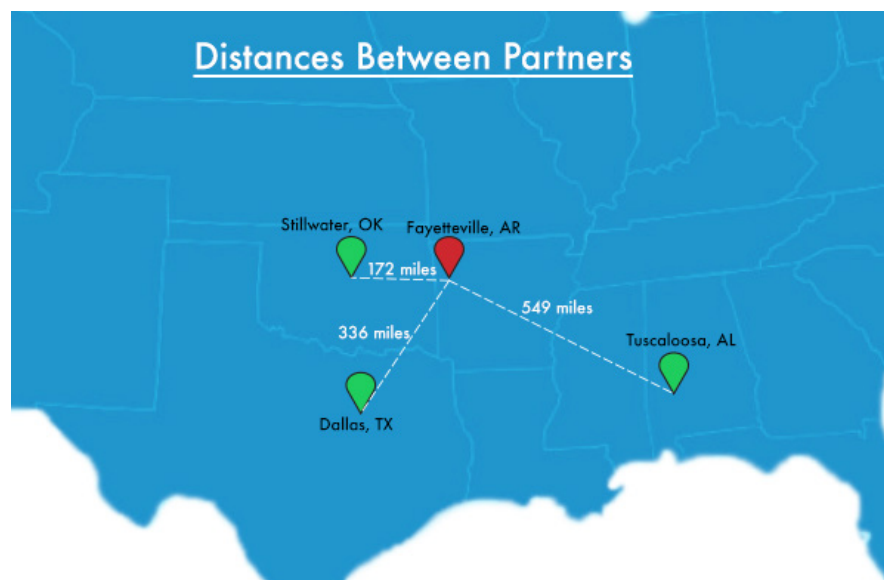
For Grace Clark, a typical Wednesday date night does not include dinner, a movie or putt-putt golf. The only requirements for a date night is a phone and a strong Wi-Fi connection.

Nearly 75 percent of college students report engaging in a long-distance relationship at some point, according to the 2012 study Predictors of Satisfaction in Geographically Close and Long-Distance Relationships. Though it might seem surprising, the same study found almost identical levels of anxiety and satisfaction in both geographically close and long-distance relationships.

Clark, a sophomore special education major, started dating her boyfriend the summer after her junior year of high school. Soon after the beginning of their relationship, he left for his freshman year at Southern Methodist University in Dallas just as she started her senior year of high school in Little Rock. Clark has since experienced the highs and lows of a long-distance relationship from the perspective of both a high school student dating a college student and a college student dating someone from a different university, she said in an email.

"Through our long-distance relationship, we have grown individually, we have grown together and we are still growing," Clark said. "We by no means have it all figured out, so we have to remind each other that we are both still learning."

Sophomore Abbie Kathol, a journalism



Graphic by Kevin Snyder

major, started dating her boyfriend, an Oklahoma State University student, when they met at a summer camp job after their freshman years of college, she said.

"I have always said there would be no way I could handle a long-distance relationship until now," Kathol said.

Though the distance makes maintaining the relationship difficult, she and her boyfriend have made an intentional effort to remember that they are both at their respective universities for a reason, Kathol said.

"The people we surround ourselves with and our various areas of involvement play a huge role in our development as individuals," Kathol said. "If we are constantly dwelling

on the fact that we can't be in the same place, we won't be able to truly value each other's life experiences and relationships."

Kathol and her boyfriend maintain their relationship through nightly phone calls and frequent letters, she said.

Sophomore finance major Kyle Haverty started a relationship with high school senior Lucas Jones when she was a high school sophomore. A few months later, Jones left to play basketball for Eastern Illinois University, which was six hours away from Haverty's hometown of Kansas City, she said.

About 10 months into the relationship,

See "Internet" on page 7

PWHC STI numbers not available, officials mull offering free testing

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For Jean, the costs of STI medication and the potential embarrassment of people finding out were reasons she did not seek out treatment sooner, she said.

She knew she could never let her parents find out about the chlamydia because if they knew, she would be “taken out of school right f----- quick.” She still has not told them that she ever had the infection.

The fear of them finding out was in the back of her mind when she got tested, and she did not know how much the costs at Pat Walker would total, she said.

Costs themselves vary depending on a few parameters: insurance coverage, test type and payment method.

The health center offers testing at discounted rates for people who want to pay out-of-pocket but does not offer free testing like some other universities and the Washington County Health Unit do.

Mary Alice Serafini, executive director of Pat Walker Health Center, would like to offer free STI testing for students in the future, but there is not enough money in the health center’s budget. Even if some money freed up, Serafini would like to offer free flu vaccinations first because it is a preventative measure for a more-common infection, she said.

“The bottom line is trying to keep that balance between being able to recruit and pay and retain

people and being able to offer some very good deals to our students,” Serafini said.

Serafini has been approached in the past about getting free testing, she said.

“I’ve had people in the medical staff asking me that years prior, and now I’ve had the public asking me — students asking me,” Serafini said. “We just have to prioritize within that budget.”

The University of Kentucky, where Dr. Joanne Brown works, offers some free STI screening to its students because its health fee, which is a \$160 fixed amount per semester, covers the cost. Comparatively, Arkansas offers discounted prices for STI testing through the revenue it collected from billing students’ insurance and the health fee, which costs students \$108.75 based off a 15-hour-credit hour semester.

Besides the costs of the actual tests, prescription prices can also keep people away, especially if they are still using their parent’s insurance, which is common for students, Dr. Joanne Brown said.

“Other challenges are that often, people (like) young adults are covered under insurance plans through their parents or their guardians,” Dr. Joanne Brown said. “But they’re worried ‘If I go and I had these tests done, then the explanation of benefits is going to go to my mom or dad, and they’re going to see that I went in and had screening done.’”

Jean asked pharmacists at the Walmart on campus how her prescriptions would show up on her insurance record, and

they told her the names of the medication would not be included because of HIPAA laws, she said. She was nervous about having her insurance pay for the three medicines she needed and asked how much it would cost her out-of-pocket.

They told her it would be \$500.

There was no way she could cover that cost, she said. Still wary about her parents finding out, she had to risk judgement if she wanted to get better.

With insurance, she paid about \$25.

Jean was also embarrassed at first about having to live with chlamydia, not so much because of her perception about the STI, but because of other people’s perceptions and how it could affect her relationships going forward.

“Telling someone that is definitely like something I’m still scared of because it’s like, ‘Oh, immediate rejection,’” Jean said.

Jean was also concerned about going to the Women’s Clinic at the health center because she was worried about running into people she knew on campus, she said.

That concern is something Serafini and other Pat Walker officials have tried to fight, she said.

Pat Walker officials do not keep aggregate numbers of how many positive cases of STIs come through the health center because they do not think those numbers would be able to give an accurate picture of what the STI climate is at the UofA, they said.

This is mostly because they do not see every student who goes in for testing, and they do not want



Photo Illustration
UA Pat Walker Health Center offers both urine testing, which is used for chlamydia and gonorrhea, and blood sampling, which is used for syphilis, herpes and HIV.

to skew numbers that do not accurately reflect the trends that the Department of Health and CDC have compiled, Serafini said.

“How it’s characterized could lead to somebody not wanting to come in and get tested or not thinking it’s as big of a deal,” Zac Brown said. “As a communicable disease is reported up to the Department of Health or to the CDC, it makes sense to use those numbers as opposed to just what we see from the students that we have here.”

Dr. Joanne Brown totals the number of positive cases the University of Kentucky has each month and releases the data to students because she thinks it is

important for that information to be public so students can assess their own risk and take the necessary precautions.

Dr. Joanne Brown and other health officials stressed how important it is for people to alert their partners once they know they have an STI but understand it can be an uncomfortable talk to have.

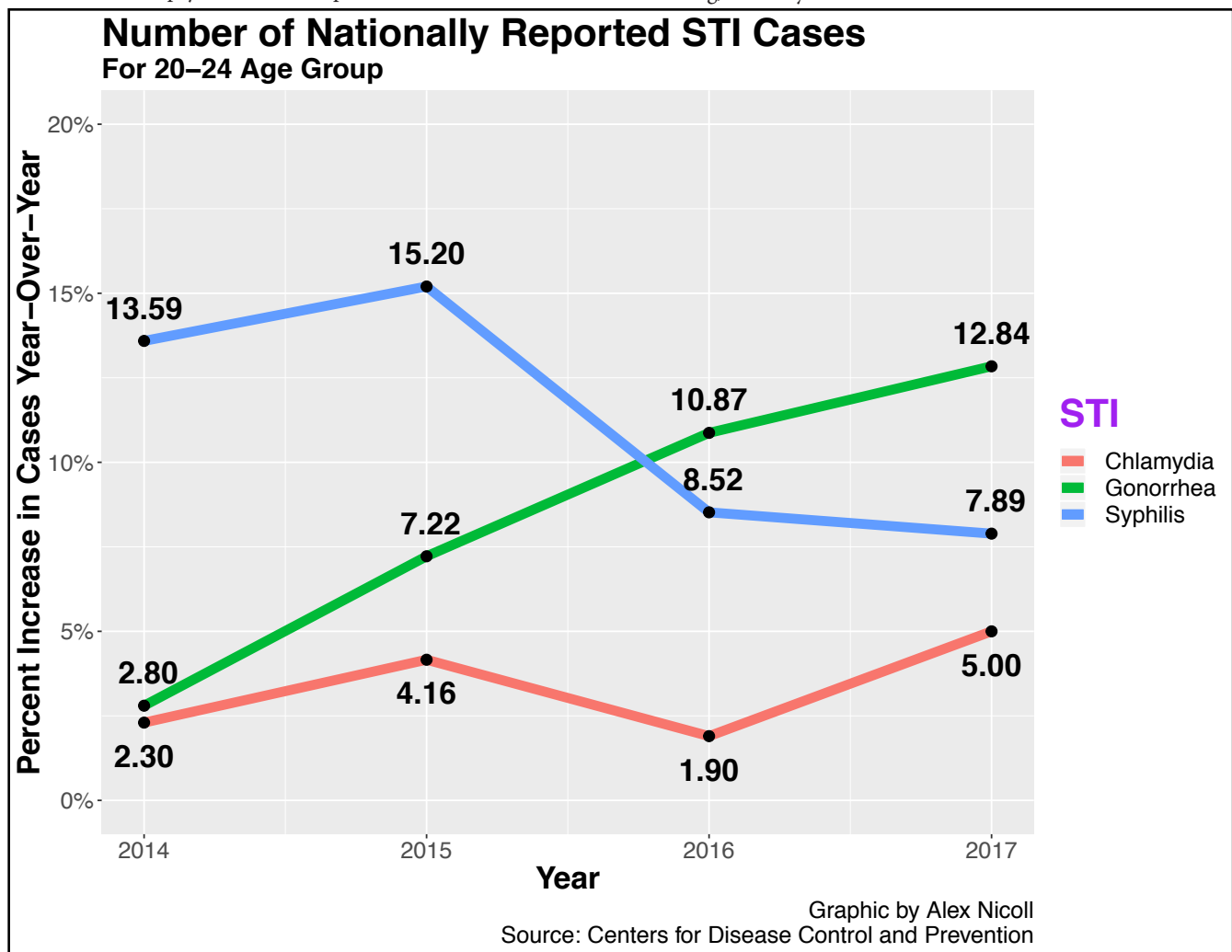
Students who want to get tested can visit the Pat Walker Health Center, the Washington County Health Unit, the Fayetteville Planned Parenthood and other clinics in the area.

Most people should go in for HIV testing at least once in their lifetime and get annual screenings

for other STIs like chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis, according to CDC recommendations.

Dr. Joanne Brown thinks people who engage in more “high-risk sexual behaviors,” like having multiple sex partners, should get tested more frequently, recommending every three to six months, she said. Most of the CDC recommendations are for women or LGBTQ men, but straight men should also bear the responsibility to get tested, Brown said.

“It affects everybody. It doesn’t matter what your race is, what your class is, what you know, who your parents are,” Dr. Joanne Brown said. “If you’re having sex, you’re at risk.”



STI/HIV Testing Out-of-Pocket Costs

Pat Walker Health Center
Chlamydia and Gonorrhea: \$40
Syphilis: \$18
Herpes: \$21
HIV: \$33

Planned Parenthood
Fees range from \$150 - \$250

- Specific prices depend on individual’s needs

Washington County Health Unit

No fees for people who do not have insurance or wish to not file insurance

Sources: Zac Brown, PWHC; Emily Miller, PP; WCHC

Residents gain liberation through restraint, bondage Student, alumnus look forward to wedding night

Continued from page 1

“It started out as him, myself as a (submissive person), and I was going to show him how to do needles. A quick, ‘Here’s how to be safe,’” Opal said. “We ended up with at least half the people there standing around watching and had a mini class.”

A submissive is a person that relinquishes control to a dominant, or someone that takes control, Opal said.

Needle play is the quickest way to give participants an adrenaline rush, Opal said. But needles are small, so with a large crowd they are not as visible and flashy as fire or knife play.

As an altru-hedonist, Brandon’s main kink is pleasuring his partner before himself. Hedonists, or altru-hedonists are not true hedonists who mindlessly seek pleasure only for themselves, but the term, he said.

“For me, it’s that build up,” Brandon said. “It’s that tease. And that’s also domming myself, because I’m holding back and keeping myself from having my way with this person. I’m controlling myself and making them come first and again, and again, and again, until they’re too worn out or finally reach that point that they’re like, ‘Let’s finish this off. We’re done,’ and then we cuddle.”



A collection of toys commonly used by people in the BDSM culture hang on racks at Condom Sense on Feb. 3.

An important part of BDSM is aftercare, which involves taking time after playing with a partner to hold them and make sure they are alright, Brandon said.

By participating in BDSM-related activities, that partner opens themselves up and places their trust in their partner. In films like “Fifty Shades of Grey,” the importance of taking that time to comfort a partner is missing, he said.

“I felt (BDSM) was portrayed in a more manipulative and controlling way,” Brandon said. “It’s not about trust, and the whole thing is about trust,” Brandon said. “It’s not power and control. You trust each other so much that they’re willing to submit

their safety to you because they know you wouldn’t take it too far.”

If things go too far, or negotiated rules are broken, BDSM can create psychological trauma, Simpson said. BDSM can be traumatizing if someone is forced into the lifestyle to save a relationship, or if they are dominated to the point that they feel uncomfortable.

For young and new submissives especially, it is important for them to have the ability to talk about the lifestyle and being a submissive with someone else. Some think being a submissive, or someone that relinquishes control, means they are not able to do anything and must obey

completely, Opal said. It helps newer members know how to be safe.

In order to keep the community safe, members of the BDSM community in Northwest Arkansas vet their members to keep out predators who may abuse other members, Opal said.

Munches are lunch meetups that help introduce new members to other people in the community. After having a munch, members may receive an invite to play parties, Brandon said.

“Because we share this kink, we share so much more of ourselves emotionally than in our vanilla lives,” Opal said.

Student, alumnus look forward to wedding night

Continued from page 1

Morris thinks that parents should be responsible for educating their children about sex, he said. “I really appreciate that (the sex talk) came from my parents,” Morris said.

He also wishes that educational systems had abstinence programs that were not black and white about not having sex, but rather focused on the joy that comes from waiting, he said.

“God created sex and gave us the capability to do so,” Morris said. “It’s an intimate act for people to do, and by waiting, I believe there’s more joy from doing it that way.”

Once Medford’s future children are at an age to learn about sex, she thinks she will want to encourage them to practice abstinence, she said.

“I feel like when I have kids I’ll definitely push them towards abstinence,” she said. “But that’s a choice that you have to make for yourself, and you’re going to reap the benefits or the consequences either way.”

Waiting to have sex can be difficult at times, but Medford said she knows it is worth waiting until after her wedding in December.

“On our wedding night, it’s going to be the most awkward thing in the entire world,” Medford said. “But there’s so much love in that and so much acceptance and grace that I don’t have to worry about it.”



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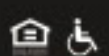
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“The Bachelor” makes students question stigma around virginity

Audrey France
Staff Reporter
@Audy50

In the 23rd season of ABC’s “The Bachelor,” a specific factor is drawing viewers to watch this year’s bachelor find a wife, and it’s not his former NFL career; it’s his virginity.

Colton Underwood revealed his abstinence when he was a contestant on the 14th season of “The Bachelorette” during summer 2018. He then starred on the 5th season of “Bachelor in Paradise” for a second chance. He left broken-hearted, but was a fan favorite and was chosen for “The Bachelor.”

ABC made sure to market Underwood as a virgin in this season’s trailer, mentioning it four times within one minute. The 30 potential partners on the show often make comments about his virginity to one another, usually with a negative connotation.

“They are making him sound less manly for being a virgin,” senior Summer Chase said.

Chase thinks it is Underwood’s personal choice to be a virgin, and ABC is framing his virginity in the wrong way and using it as a marketing strategy, she said.

“In this culture, it’s very rare to find a virgin, so I feel like they are shocked and taken aback,” sophomore Emily Gean said.

His case attracts attention because it’s unusual, and it’s working, Gean said. Chase and Gean are both abstinent because of their faith, and think “The Bachelor” will pressure people to lose their virginity, they said.

“The show makes people think it’s weird and odd to be a virgin,” Chase said. “It’s getting annoying that they bring it up so often.”

Junior Zan Johnson has a different take on how Underwood will influence viewers. He thinks the audience is mainly female, meaning there will not be as big of an effect on men, he said. But if anything, it will push others to abstain as well because of Underwood’s fame. Marketing is the reason for reiterating Underwood’s virginity throughout the show, but it should not be as promoted as it is because sex isn’t a necessity in a dating relationship, Johnson said.

“A relationship is more than the physical aspect,” sophomore Hunter Spor said.

Senior Amarachi Onyebueke, an avid fan of “The Bachelor,” thinks Underwood is not going to cause more or less abstinence, she said.

“I’m not discrediting him, but I have my doubts,” Onyebueke said.

The thought of an NFL player being a virgin is hard to believe, Onyebueke said.

“That profession itself, when it comes to girls and sex, isn’t presented in the best light,” Onyebueke said. “He has a lot of temptations, so it’s surprising to hear that he still is one.”

Though religion is a typical reason to remain abstinent, Underwood said that wasn’t his reason for waiting. During his time on “The Bachelorette,” he said he wasn’t saving himself for marriage; he was waiting for the right heart.

The idea of waiting for the right person probably isn’t something that will last or affect people, said Shalini Choudhury, a lecturer in the Department of Sociology.

Choudhury thinks that a movement that steps away from the traditional idea of masculinity is on the rise, and Underwood is at the helm, she said.

“He’s the face of the new man,” Choudhury said.

Masculinity is very narrowly defined and encompasses being dominant, non-emotional, tough and chasing accomplishments, which all fall under toxic

masculinity. Underwood challenges the majority of those stereotypes, Choudhury said.

“He’s stating he isn’t sexually

Toxic masculinity pressures men to drive fast cars, have a younger girlfriend and be insensitive, Choudhury said.

The fan base is mainly women, according to ShowBuzzDaily’s audience map.



Morgan Browning Staff Photographer

Sophomores Mackenzie Lewis and Andrea Donati sit on their couch Feb. 5 as they watch “The Bachelor.”

experienced, so he’s letting women know he’s safe, that he’s not a player,” Choudhury said.

Many movies are about young adults attempting to lose their virginity so they are not a loser, she said. Underwood is changing the conversation by not being embarrassed to tell the world, but masculinity also plays a part.

Underwood drives a Bronco and fell in love with an older woman, Becca Kufirin, on “The Bachelorette” and “Bachelor in Paradise.”

“They are choosing to continually bring this guy back, and they like that he’s kind-hearted and vulnerable,” Choudhury said.

“Women are choosing a guy like him,” Choudhury said. “He treats the girls kindly. It’s like there’s a chivalry to him that women prefer rather than the traditional toxic masculinity stuff. And there’s now a mainstream movement around this.”

Online dating redefines romance, relationships, intimacy

Clare O’Hagan
Contributing Reporter

Although she found her significant other through an online dating app, senior Kendall Byrd thinks dating apps are superficial.

“Finding something real on apps is like finding a diamond in the rough,” Byrd said.

Five percent of Americans who are married or in a committed relationship met through online dating apps, according to a 2015 study by Pew Research.

Popular dating apps such as Tinder have more than 50 million active users, and the average user spends about 90 minutes on the app daily, according to a 2018 report by Psychology Today.

Senior Kendall Byrd, an advertising and public relations major, uses Tinder, Bumble and Hinge and likes them for different reasons, she said.

“I like Bumble for giving more information, like what they might be looking for, if they drink or smoke, their religion, if they’re active and their height,” Byrd said. “I like Tinder for the ability to ‘super like’ someone and Hinge because you can like a picture or comment someone has made.”

Byrd’s use of apps was successful, and she ended up dating a man she met on Tinder when she was a freshman and sophomore, she said.

Byrd thinks it is easy to get

discouraged while dating online because people often do not want to really get to know their matches, she said.

“I hate dating apps, honestly,” Byrd said. “I’m only on them because my friends tell me it’s the thing to do right now. The fact is, it’s hard meeting people at my age because of how superficial everything is.”

Fayetteville resident Trinity Rose Duncan, a 40-year-old transgender woman, used Plenty of Fish, Just She and Tinder after she transitioned, she said.

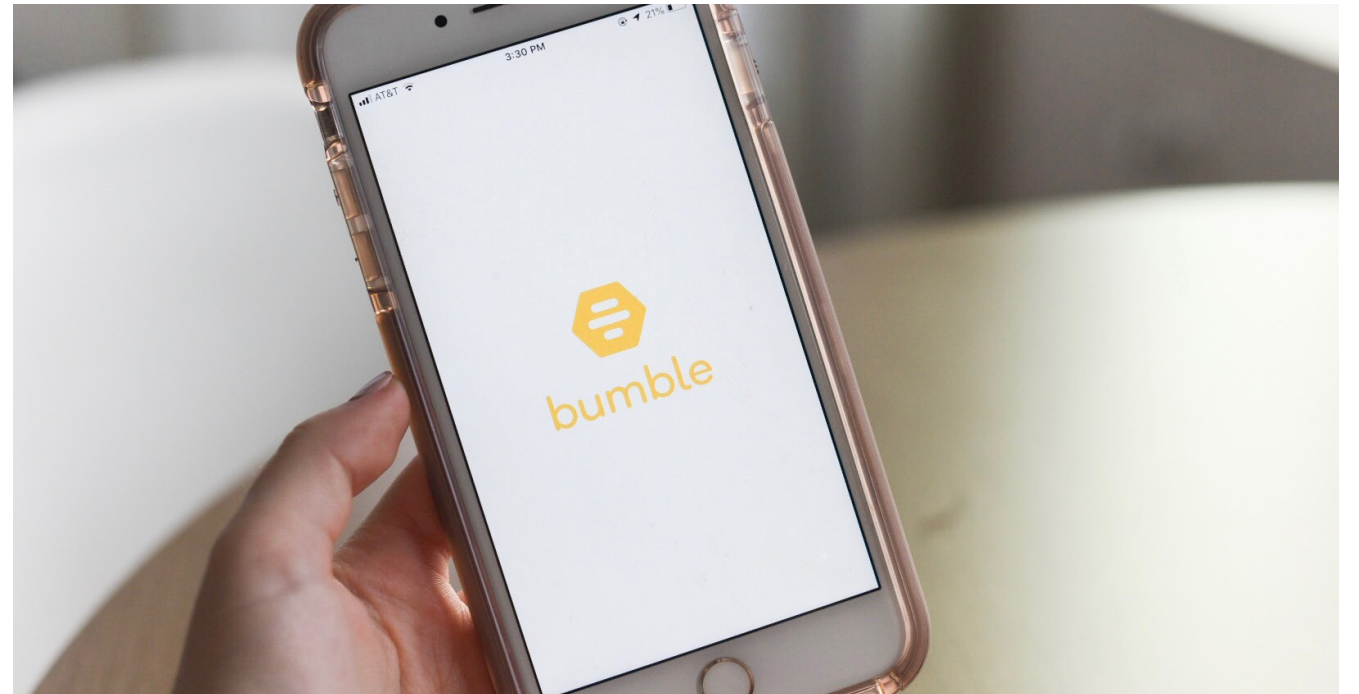
“People are sometimes just really difficult on dating apps,” Duncan said. “They expect ‘super girl’ or whatever you want to call it. They expect perfection and then realize they’re not even perfect themselves.”

Online dating apps though have not changed Duncan’s perspective on dating and relationships, she said.

“I have very strict guidelines when it comes to dating,” she said. “I’m not perfect and I don’t expect anyone to be perfect, but there are certain things I won’t accept in an individual, like drug use except marijuana, and heavy drinking. Also, if I meet somebody and they don’t like animals, I’m just like, ‘no.’ There are certain things I can’t get past.”

Sophomore Brian Bohannon, an advertising and public relations and French major uses Tinder and has mixed feelings about it, he said.

“It’s kind of weird, to be honest,” Bohannon said. “I guess in theory it’s nice because it



Katie Beth Nichols Contributing Photographer

Of 18-24-year-olds surveyed in 2015, 27 percent reported using online dating apps, according to the Pew Research Center.

makes it easy to meet people, but judging them in that kind of way has kind of a predator-like vibe to me.”

Using Tinder made him realize that dating was simpler than he previously thought it was, Bohannon said.

“In high school, I thought relationships were this thing to be idolized and sought after,” Bohannon said. “After I saw how people were using dating apps so nonchalantly, it made it easier for me to talk to people on the app and in person. It taught me through trial and error how to talk to people who I didn’t know previously.”

Jennifer Becnel, a human environmental science professor, thinks there are a couple different types of online dating apps that people use for entirely different reasons, which could impact the outcome of the relationship, she said.

“Online dating apps let you do all of the text-based dating before you do anything else, so you can really prolong that getting-to-know-you period that otherwise you’d do initially when you ask somebody out on a date,” Becnel said.

Amanda Williams, a human environmental science professor, thinks that people become more

intimate when talking about things through text, but might not be as open when physically seeing each other, she said.

“When you see each other, it’s super awkward because you realize, ‘Oh, I don’t know this person, but we’ve had all these conversations,’” Williams said.

Becnel thinks that people are not always their most authentic selves online, which can also make things awkward upon the initial in-person meeting, she said.

“It changes the progression of intimacy,” Williams said. “So, whenever there’s face to face, there’s this slow build of getting

to know each other with the peak being love, marriage, babies, but it’s kind of backward now. Apps speed up intimacy because you’re trying to learn as much as you can about each other and then the expression of romantic feelings is that peak.”

Williams thinks dating apps are not a good way for college students to meet their spouse because it does not predict how people will change, she said.

“While it does open your world to a new community of people, you still have to go through the old-fashioned ways of getting to know someone,” Williams said.

Roller skating fun, affordable date idea

Continued from page 2

by getting a cup of joe from Jammin’ Java, or, if you want a more romantic atmosphere for your morning caffeine, stop in Savoy Tea Company for a classy cup of tea or a cute cup of coffee in an antique-style café.

After coffee, you can kill some time by supporting local businesses in shops like Block Street Records, Cheap Thrill and Dark Star Visuals. Make a game out of exploring some of Fayetteville’s most eclectic shops.

After you have managed to work up an appetite, you can also get lunch at a Fayetteville staple, Hugo’s. However, reader be warned, there is a superstitious legend that Hugo’s is bad luck to couples who go there on their first date.

Jason Piazza, the owner of Hugo’s, refuted the rumor.

“To the contrary, we have couples celebrating

anniversaries of their first date all the time,” Piazza said.

If you are already settled into a relationship or you are willing to tempt fate, grab a burger with the person you love. If this is a first date, maybe play it safe and get some grub from Tiny Tim’s Pizza, Taste of Thai, Little Bread Co. or Petra.

A date on the square is a great, non-stressful place to spend Valentine’s Day.

If you are not yet comfortable with the person you are taking out for Valentine’s Day, the square might not be the date idea for you. This date can leave a lot of dead time and could become just a shopping trip. If you are trying to impress somebody, take them to one location. However, if you are completely comfortable with the person you are with, this is a great way to just be together.

For the weird people of the world who like waking up early in the morning, students recommended Arsaga’s at the Depot for brunch. The Depot is a very comfortable location with

beautiful exposed-brick walls and an aesthetic that will look great with any Instagram filter.

There is not a ton of seating, so I recommend getting there early, but the wait for a table is not too bad, and you can get coffee while you wait. It can get a little loud, but it is not so loud that you are not able to hear the melodious voice of your date.

The most popular dish at Arsaga’s is the Brezinski, Director of Operations Ava Arsaga said. The dish includes two eggs, two strips of bacon, roasted potatoes, cherry tomatoes, avocado, lemon aioli and two pieces of the fluffiest sourdough I have ever eaten. Arsaga’s has sriracha readily available to put on your eggs and offers some of the most decadent strawberry jelly I have ever had. I highly recommend putting the jelly on your sourdough toast. Welcome to heaven.

Read the rest of Beth Dedman’s story on uatrav.com under the headline “Editor reviews student recommended date spots.”

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OPINION

Alternative dating methods provide concrete connections

Emma Richardson
Columnist

Puritan Coffee and Beer on Dickson Street was filled to capacity, and I had no backup plan. I was not 10 minutes early as I had originally intended, nor was I entirely sure my hair was completely dry. But there I was, armed with a thriving sense of skepticism and my favorite jacket, ready to find love, or at least an interesting story from meeting someone new.

In the era of instant gratification, we expect quick results for everything, even falling in love. With dating apps and late-night direct messages setting the bar for romance, the only thing missing is genuine intimacy. But as any rom-com will tell you, intimacy takes time and commitment — unless it doesn't.

In a 1997 study, psychologist Arthur Aron from University of New York at Stony Brook developed 36 questions that aim to create a sense of intimacy between any two people over the course of afternoon coffee.

Social media platforms market these questions as a foolproof mechanism for falling in love, but it should be noted that the original study promised no such thing.

Aron theorized that by asking three sets of questions of an increasingly personal nature, two strangers could form a connection akin to that between friends who have known each other for years. So, there I was, in the crowded coffee shop, about to divulge my most personal fears and goals to a complete stranger.

I walked in, barely on time, to meet Tony Dutton, a music education major. I'm not one for preamble, so we dove right in to the 36 questions. The first few were simple enough: If you could have dinner with anyone, who would your pick be? What do you feel most grateful for? Do you have a secret hunch about how you will die?

The second set of questions turned the pressure up a bit. They pertained to bad memories, and dreams or secret ambitions. The questions also required that we tell each other something we liked about the other person.



Photo Illustration

Kevin Snyder Photo Editor

This turned out to be key to the whole method.

At several points during the process, Tony and I discussed, as per our instructions, what we considered were other person's most positive attributes. Interestingly, the longer we talked, the more thoughtful and personal the compliments became. As we learned each other's life stories, I found myself developing a genuine respect for the stranger sitting across from me. We had much more in common than I anticipated.

Going over the questions later, I noticed that none of them focused on anything negative. While this is certainly reasonable, I realized it was also a testament to the contrived nature of the experiment.

The questions were intentional about fostering positivity exclusively. To be fair, I did feel like I had known Tony for much longer than three

hours, but true intimacy goes beyond sharing personal details. Further intimacy requires mutual growth, which can sometimes require focusing on the negative rather than positive aspects of an individual.

Here's the skinny — while these 36 questions might be a great starting point, they can't reasonably guarantee a soulmate, and I don't think that was ever their purpose. I had a meaningful and encouraging conversation with a complete stranger, and as I drove home, I felt less alone.

At one point, Tony brought up the cultural pressure to be in a relationship and how people are often not viewed as successful or even happy unless they have a significant other, which is something I have noticed as well.

I've frequently spoken to friends about how I feel comfortable, even empowered, as someone who is single most of the time, but that doesn't mean

that there isn't an opposing ideology that dominates our cultural landscape. Learning to live outside of that is hard and can feel isolating. But talking to another person who felt the same way reaffirmed me in my feeling that there is nothing wrong with being happy with yourself and just yourself.

As Aron predicted, these questions do seem to forge a connection between two people. Divulging my insecurities, fears and painful memories was much more nerve-wracking than I expected. Being at the mercy of these 36 questions took gumption, and I think that was by design. We were both nervous, and no matter which questions were posed by Aron's study, we both had to answer. We were in it together. For me, this also fostered a sense of trust. I was free to talk about intensely personal topics because he was too.

There was a part of me that felt the conversation opened up romantic potential, but I also think that romanticizing any kind of connection is encouraged in a culture where your relationship status is reflective of your personal worth. In our lovesick society, we are quick to turn the smallest flicker into a romantic flame, but that isn't always the case.

By getting to know Tony in a setting like this, I found myself becoming friends with someone I did not expect to have much in common with. And with so much threatening to divide our society, we could all use a little more of that.

Emma Richardson is a junior English major and a columnist for The Arkansas Traveler.

Male birth control could alter gendered contraceptive norms

Joah Clements
Opinion Editor

I was 18 when I watched United Nations Women Goodwill Ambassador Emma Watson's 2014 address to the UN about gender equality. Growing up, my peers had only enforced the stereotype that the term "feminist" was simply a frivolous title, one that teenagers tossed around as trivially as other generic high-school classifiers like "goth" or "nerd."

Watson's speech stood out because she provided concrete examples of the everyday discrimination she faced throughout her life. That was when I first realized the imperative

that was, and is, feminism, as well as its importance in breaking down the remaining barriers that prevent the equal treatment of women in American society. In an era of American politics in which many of our leaders seek to make Planned Parenthood defunct, defending contraception options is especially important in feminist discourse.

The progress of social activism is rarely linear, however. In particular, our society's tendency to entrust an overwhelming portion of contraception responsibility to women is just one of the remaining anachronistic obstacles to gender equality.

And before you get ahead of yourself, reader, I have already

considered the counterarguments to my stance. Contraception options for women are, after all, plentiful compared to those available to men.

Women have access to birth control pills, shots, implants, condoms and emergency contraception, while men have the exhilarating choice between using a condom or getting a vasectomy. Additionally, condoms have a real-world failure rate of around 15 percent and vasectomies are largely irreversible, so neither option is wholly on par with the more popular forms of birth control for women.

The discrepancy in options is probably the result of difficulty differences when it comes to suppressing fertility in women versus men. For one thing, small doses of hormones are used in

the women's birth control pills to prevent ovulation, but the required dose to stop sperm production is much higher, so a conventional birth control approach is much less feasible for men.

It should be noted, though, that there is a problem with arguing that all this is the sole cause of a lack of birth control options for men. After all, there is really no telling for sure which factors have made research on these options take as long as it has. Perhaps studies would have started or concluded sooner if the American male population were more interested in shouldering some of the contraception responsibility.

Despite all the aforementioned complications, researchers at the University of Washington are much closer to developing a commercially viable men's birth control pill than you might

assume, with few reported side effects so far. Essentially, in a few years, it seems the remaining obstacles to the adoption of birth control by men will be cultural, not scientific.

A 2017 poll by Healthline indicated that a majority of men would be opposed to taking a birth control pill, and a January 2019 poll by polling firm YouGov found that 50 percent of men were opposed to the idea because of possible side effects such as mood swings and weight gain.

The latter of these two polls is probably the most telling of the gendered birth control stereotypes that our culture experiences because mood swings and weight gain are also side effects of the birth control pill for women. The practical drawback to this inequality is

that unintended pregnancy is far more than an inconvenience for women. In the absence of a range of viable birth control options, it seems that men have grown comfortable letting women bear the majority of that burden.

As with any multifaceted problem, a multifaceted solution is required to overcome what now presents yet another barrier to feminism and therefore gender equality. A commercially viable form of birth control for men is a great first step, but our society will subsequently have to learn to shift contraception responsibility toward men in order for that scientific development to prove effective.

Joah Clements is a senior English major and the Opinion Editor for The Arkansas Traveler.

"Through our long-distance relationship, we have grown individually, we have grown together and we are still growing."

- Grace Clark, UA sophomore, special education major

Students in long distance relationships navigate obstacles, pg. 2

THE ARKANSAS TRAVELER



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Online dating offers safety to LGBTQ community

Hunt Cummins
Columnist

Mobile dating apps and online dating sites are quickly becoming the center of modern matchmaking. The internet has created countless new avenues for connection, allowing users to find partners from anywhere in the world, drastically increasing the size of the dating pool for everyone. It's become a major industry as well, with the industry-leading mobile app Tinder expected to rake in nearly over 800 million dollars in revenue this year.

Companies like Tinder, Bumble, Grindr and Her often boast of their successes, highlighting those who have found long-term relationships on their platforms, but there are still detractors nonetheless. The most common criticism, of course, is that these apps are merely vehicles for one-night stands and other promiscuous circumstances. Although these criticisms are valid, they predictably understate the benefits to the LGBTQ community.

While everyone benefits from the wide net cast by online dating, the LGBTQ community benefits most acutely. Dating apps, including both mainstream ones like Tinder and Bumble and LGBTQ-specific apps like Grindr and Her, take the LGBTQ-

friendly environment created by locales like gay bars and clubs and bring it to the rest of the world. This instantly expands the dating pool, especially for those in rural areas, or in cities that lack a prominent LGBTQ scene.

Safety is another major concern in the LGBTQ dating scene. Members of the LGBTQ community are especially vulnerable to violence, from both individuals and from governments. Just this week, Jussie Smollett, an openly gay actor, was the victim of an apparent hate crime in Chicago. Homosexuality still remains a

friendly environment created by locales like gay bars and clubs and bring it to the rest of the world. This instantly expands the dating pool, especially for those in rural areas, or in cities that lack a prominent LGBTQ scene.

Similarly, these apps take the guesswork out of sexual orientation, preventing the types of violence to which LGBTQ people, gay men and transgender women in particular, have often been subjected.

The men responsible for the murder of Matthew Shepard, one of the most notorious hate crimes in American history, famously used a so-called "gay panic" defense at trial, claiming that they were so shocked by the advances of a gay man that

people are expected and respected, where people can be straightforward about their sexual orientation and gender identity. In addition, these safe spaces separate the vulnerable from those that would attack them. They prevent people from getting into dangerous situations in the first place.

Even if a predator were to attempt to use these apps to specifically target the LGBTQ community, the social nature of these apps allows for warning networks, allowing users to rapidly share news and information about the assailant so that they can protect themselves.

None of that means that there are no issues with LGBTQ-friendly dating apps, of course. As with any other online dating service, Grindr and its competitors can absolutely enable the same promiscuity that is often used as a critique of mainstream dating apps.

Regardless, LGBTQ people are certainly entitled to be as vapid and shallow as anyone else. When the alternative is loneliness, discrimination and violence, there isn't much of a comparison.

Hunt Cummins is a senior finance major and columnist for The Arkansas Traveler.

Dating apps create varying degrees of anonymity that can protect the LGBTQ community.

criminal offense in 74 countries. In some of them, it can be punishable by death.

Dating apps create varying degrees of anonymity that can protect the LGBTQ community. They prevent those in the closet from being spotted going to LGBTQ-friendly bars and clubs, which can help them evade the discrimination that can accompany being outed. This is especially true of those that come

they were compelled to viciously murder him.

In 2016, a transgender woman was viciously stabbed after she revealed to a sexual partner that she was trans. Clearly, LGBTQ-friendly environments will be invaluable until toxic mentalities about LGBTQ people are a thing of the past.

Dating apps create communities where LGBTQ

Arkansas athletics spark love connection

Brandon Davis
Sports Reporter
@brandonsdavis19

As fall break was in full swing, the night became the most important in the lives of two athletes who had returned home: junior softball outfielder Sydney Parr and former Razorback baseball player Evan Lee.

A rainy night in central Arkansas could not stop the most important night in their lives, especially when it ended in The Capital Hotel, a historic hotel located in Little Rock.

For Parr, it seemed larger than life when she was dropped off in front, she said.

"As I walked in, it seemed like a movie," Parr said. "People were standing around and Evan was standing by himself in the center. I approached him, hugged him and then to follow, he said hello and got down on one knee and said he loved me and asked me to marry him."

While Parr and Lee were in love with sports in high school, that common passion sparked them to bond together, leading to a life together.

The two, growing up 21 miles away from each other in North Little Rock and Bryant, had made marks on their individual high school sports careers. Parr was a three-time state champion with the Charging Wildcats, a three-time All-State and three-time All-Conference team member and was part of the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette All-Prep First Team. Although the Wildcats lost to the Bentonville Tigers in the 2016 state finals, Parr and her teammates did something most high-school athletes only dream of doing: making it to



Courtesy of Sydney Parr

Former Razorback Baseball utility player Evan Lee proposes Oct. 13, 2018, at the Capital Hotel in Little Rock, to current Razorback Softball outfielder Sydney Parr.

four consecutive championship appearances.

While Parr was part of a history-making softball team at North Little Rock, Lee was making his mark on a nationally ranked baseball roster that went 31-2.

After Bryant finished with a state title and was named the No. 3 ranked team in the country according to MaxPreps, Lee's position as the best left-handed pitcher and the third-highest overall ranked player in Arkansas made him desirable, especially after going 9-0 as a starter with 80 strikeouts in 52 innings. Lee's postseason accolades included the 2016 Gatorade Player of the Year and a first-team All American selection, according to American Baseball Coaches Association and Rawlings.

Although Parr and Lee officially met through mutual friends before college, the spark

of everlasting love began prior to that day, Parr said.

"He told me once we started dating that he saw me at a baseball game freshman year of high school," Parr said. "Ever since that day he saw me many years ago, he had always had his eye on me in hopes that once we got to college, we would meet up."

For Parr, sports have not been the only thing to bring the two together, but it has been the key mostly, she said.

"I feel as though everything happens for a reason," Parr said. "Sports helped bring us together because if it wasn't for him playing baseball and me being at a game, he would have never seen me. In addition, we both have a love for baseball and softball, and we connect in that way."

College brings difficult trials to everyone, especially

for athletes. The constant early mornings, practices and team meetings throughout the day and catching up on homework at nights is a challenge. After traveling almost every weekend around the country, the life of a single athlete is tough enough.

For Parr and Lee, it can create new roadblocks because one team would travel while the other played at home and vice versa. However, both players found time and made it meaningful.

"We basically ran on the same sport schedules because baseball and softball are so similar," Lee said. "We got to see each other in our spare time and it helped allow us to get extra work in as well as personal time together with matching schedules."

Read the rest of Brandon Davis' story at uatrav.com under the headline "Arkansas athletics spark love connection."

Internet, social media impact relationships

Continued from page 2

School sophomore. A few months later, Jones left to play basketball for Eastern Illinois University, which was six hours away from Haverty's hometown of Kansas City, she said.

About 10 months into the relationship, Haverty and her boyfriend broke up because of jealousy and communication issues, she said.

"It didn't work because of the distance, and we also couldn't communicate well because he was constantly busy with workouts and adjusting to college," Haverty said.

Sophomore marketing student Patrick Wingfield dated his girlfriend for two years in high school. The couple decided to break up at the beginning of their freshman years when she left for the University of Alabama, but they have since gotten back together because they realized their relationship was worth it, he said.

Beyond the typical complications of college dating, long-distance relationships create additional obstacles involving miscommunication, traveling on a budget and navigating social media, Clark said.

"Any relationship has its ups and downs, but not being able to spend quality time together and be able

to talk through things in person places an extra strain on a relationship," Clark said. "I think that one of the biggest things that helps us is planning ahead so you have something to look forward to. When it's time to leave again, we always have another visit planned so we are not leaving saying, 'I'll see you when I see you' but instead, 'See you in 28 days.'"

Social media has eased the bitterness of weeks without seeing his significant other, as it provides an additional form of communication, Wingfield said.

Any relationship can have its ups and downs, but not being able to communicate often puts extra strain on relationships, Clark said.

Social media has been a point of contingency in her failed long-distance relationship though, Haverty said.

"Social media made it more difficult because he would get upset with me when I would be with my friends and not be responding to his texts and vice versa," Haverty said.

Kathol's advice is to stay positive about the distance so that the relationship as a whole will reflect that same attitude, she said.

"Obsessing over the inconveniences of the distance will only create a negative outlook on the entire relationship," Kathol said. "Be positive and excited about what is happening and what is to come."

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UA women support legislation to expand birth control access



Kevin Snyder Photo Editor

The Pat Walker Health Center Women's Clinic offers various types of birth control, including long-acting reversible contraception, birth control pills and three-month shot.

Tegan Shockley
Contributing Reporter

Some female students support legislation that aims to make birth control available without a prescription from a doctor in Arkansas.

Arkansas 69th District Rep. Aaron Pilkington (R) introduced a measure the Arkansas State Legislature Jan. 15 that would make birth control available at a pharmacy with a prescription from a pharmacist, he said.

The House Committee on Public Health, Welfare and Labor will consider how House Bill 1164 will affect restrictions on birth control Feb. 18, according to Arkansas State Legislature.

"Allowing pharmacists to prescribe birth control essentially makes it over the counter," Pilkington said. "The reason we did it is because a lot of insurance companies will pay for it that way."

Kathleen Paulson, the gynecologist at Pat Walker Health Center Women's Clinic, supports this type of legislation, she said in an email.

Some services available at the clinic include contraception like birth control pills or intrauterine devices and emergency contraception like Plan B.

Paulson is aware of other states with pharmacists that can dispense birth control pills without a prescription, she said.

When a patient goes to get a prescription for birth control, doctors will review their medical history, family medical history and check their vital signs, Paulson said. Then they will discuss their priorities, like having a regular period or avoiding hormones, with the doctor.

It is legal to get birth control with a prescription obtained online or from a pharmacist in Alaska, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, New York, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, D.C. and Washington state, according to Planned Parenthood.

"I think anything that eliminates barriers to contraception is a good thing as long as measures are built in to protect patients," Paulson said. "If her medical history has any red flags at all, the patient will not be able to get birth control pills over the counter but rather will have to be seen by a medical practitioner."

Junior Madison Pendergrass, a finance major, has used four different types of birth control, including birth control pills, patches, shots and an IUD, she said. Pendergrass needed a prescription from a doctor for every form and thinks it would be easier if women did not need a prescription.

"I would feel so relieved,"

Pendergrass said. "I could just go get one, right, and I would be, 'Alright kids, who's sexually active?'"

Pendergrass has two daughters and was pregnant with the first at 19. She thinks birth control is essential, especially with her experience, she said. When she turned 18, her mother stopped paying for her prescription after she received another Depo-Provera shot in March. Depo-Provera shots last approximately three months, so the birth control was no longer effective in June.

"I was like, 'I'm going to be wild, and I'm not going to use anything,'" Pendergrass said. "And then my daughter was conceived in April. I got real lucky because her dad stuck around."

Pendergrass is one of the many cases of teenage pregnancy in Arkansas.

Arkansas had the highest teen birth rates in the country in 2015 among females ages 15-19, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The teen birth rate is 32.8 per 1,000 female teenagers, compared to the national average of 18.8, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Pilkington, who was on the Arkansas National Conference of State Legislatures Women and Children's Health Committee, recognized the high rates of teen pregnancy, he said. The committee started to research how other states addressed the issue with birth control access.

"(Other states have) seen a decrease in the amount of abortions in the state, which I think is something a lot of Arkansans would really like to see," Pilkington said. "At the same time, it expands (birth control) access as well."

Junior Whitney Bloodworth, who is pursuing a bachelor's degree in management, has used birth control pills since her junior year of high school and has had no issues with it, she said.

"I got it for acne," Bloodworth said. "When you first get on it, it definitely does mess with your hormones. It literally just rebalances your entire body system, hormone-wise. But now that I've been on it for a while, I haven't had any problems. It's just a daily part of life."

Pendergrass's experience with the pill was very different. She had multiple problems, including abnormal bleeding, bad cramps, acne and weight gain, which affected her behavior, she said.

"I'm surprised I had friends," Pendergrass said. "I was mean — horrible to everybody."

She used birth control

patches first, which she liked, but her mother threw them away for an unknown reason, Pendergrass said. Then she used her mother's prescribed pills and switched to the shot because of her bad experience. After receiving three shots, Pendergrass was left to get her own prescriptions.

"Now I'm on the IUD," Pendergrass said. "I can't sing its praises enough. My face is clear. My moods are more stable now."

Most people start taking birth control when they become sexually active, said Zac Brown, assistant director of communication at the Pat Walker Health Center, in an email.

"There are many reasons for a person to start using birth control, mainly being to protect against pregnancy when being sexually active," Brown said. "There are other reasons patients start using birth control, such as period regulation and acne control."

Birth control pills are the most commonly used form of contraception by students who visit the Women's Clinic, followed by the Depo-Provera shot, Nexplanon implants and IUDs, Paulson said.

"The pill is by far the most popular because it's the most well-known and is the least invasive," Paulson said. "Women like all the other health benefits of the pill beyond contraception, which include cycle regularity as well as decreased PMS, acne, hair growth and ovarian cyst formation."

In a 2017 National College Health Association Self-Report survey at the UofA, which had 1,022 respondents, 59.5 percent of students who reported sexual activity said they used the birth control pill, according to the survey. Using a condom and a condom plus another form of contraception were also highly reported.

Students who want birth control can get prescriptions from the UA Women's Clinic, according to UofA Health. People must make an appointment and bring an insurance card, a list of medicines they are currently taking and a list of allergies. Students pay for services through insurance or they must pay out-of-pocket.

Several different short-term and long-term contraception options like the pill, IUD, implant, diaphragm, a shot and condoms are also available to students at the clinic, Brown said.

"As far as deciding which method is best, this is a matter of personal preference," Brown said. "Finding the right birth control depends a lot on a patient's lifestyle, their health conditions and convenience."

Bloodworth's parents' insurance covers her prescription. She thinks accessing birth control has not been difficult, so the legislation would not really affect her, she said.

"I think more people would get on it," Bloodworth said. "While I don't need it, that may change in a few years when I get off my parents' insurance. Right now it's not a big deal, but it would be nice to be able to walk into the store and pick up some birth control."

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OPENER: FOXING
FEB. 16 8PM



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MAR. 1 8PM



RONNIE MILSAP
MAR. 23 8PM



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