Abstinance only part of solution

MUGWUMP



by Greg LeBlanc

Sex has been on my mind a lot lately...well, more than usual anyways. Yup, its Sexuality Awareness Week here at UNB, and that means that sex is all the buzz on campus. With such activities as Sex with Sue (not what it sounds like) and Sex Jeopardy (Alex Trebek, you've never had it so good), this week is gonna rock your socks.

South of the border, however, awareness may not be pushed so hard as it is here at UNB. There is a major movement in the US focusing on the promise of abstinence.

Groups who are advocating for abstinence say that there is a desperate need for celibacy in schools. Advocates say that the abstinence program will not just teach students to say 'NO' to sex, but to say 'YES' to a future without teenage pregnancy.

Some studies have shown that the programs work, with teens who went through the abstinence program actually having fewer partners, or are waiting longer to lose their virginity.

But on the other side of the fence, many groups are citing studies that show that abstinence programs may not be so successful. Research has shown that, although knowledge may increase about STIs, sex is still being had by many of the informed teens.

In fact, teens that do choose to have sex are actually using condoms less than before.

Overseas, there are proponents and opponents of the abstinence program.

Uganda has been one of the few success stories in Africa's fight against AIDS, with the rate of infection dropping from 15 percent to five. The main reason for their success is the ABC program, which promotes Abstinence first, then Being faithful with one partner, and finally Condoms as the last form of protection against the Africa's largest sexual scourge.

However, after receiving a huge shipment of condoms from the US, Ugandan officials had to throw many out because they were of poor quality. Things are so bad that men are using garbage bags for protection.

As an interesting side note, one man in Africa is making a mockery of fidelity. After lifting a four-year royal ban on sex with virgins, King Mswati sat as the centre of attention in a ceremony were 50,000 topless virgins paraded before his majesty hoping to become his 13th wife. In a country with the highest percentage of AIDS infection, this is obviously setting a bad example.

So, it must now be asked, do abstinence programs really work?

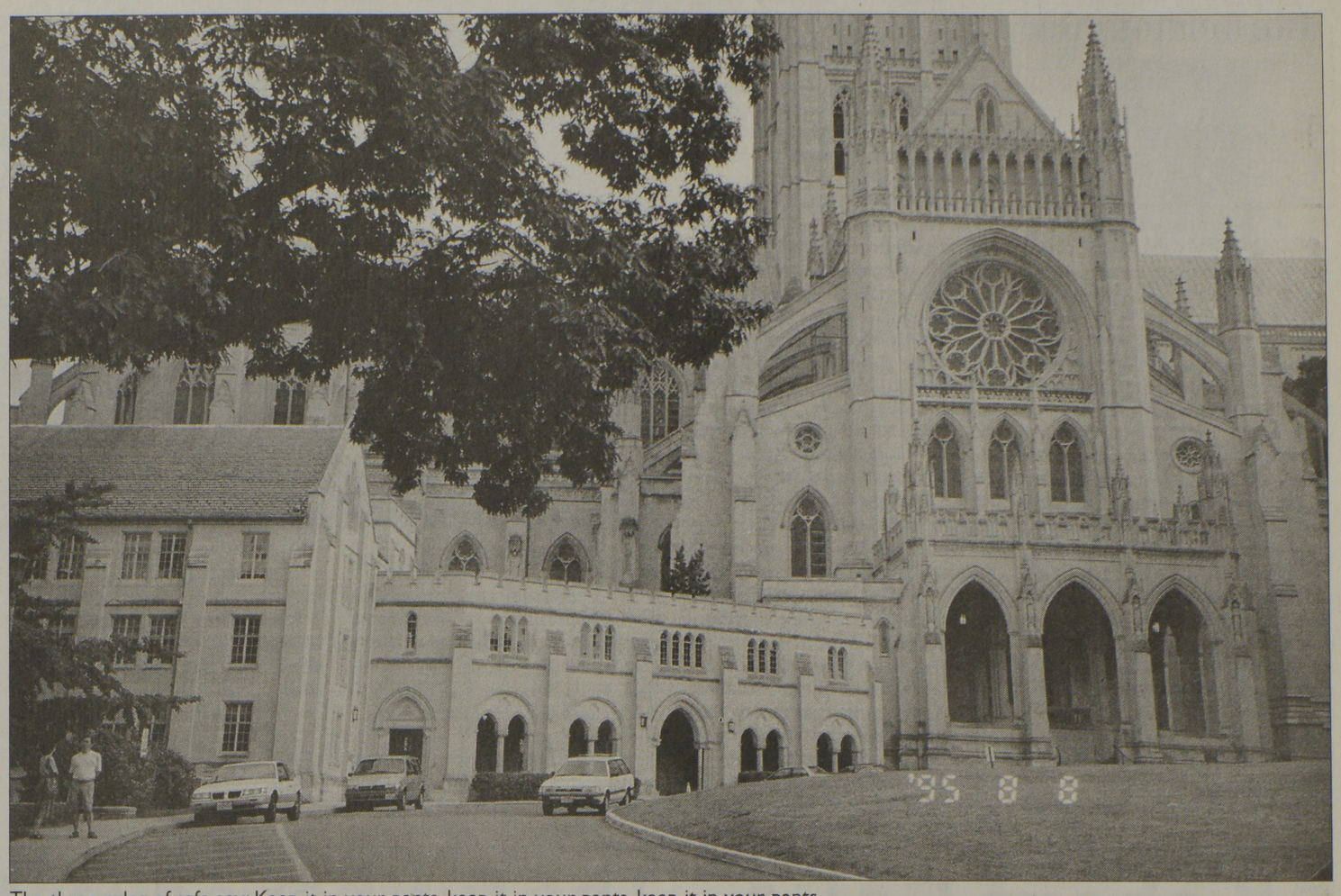
Well, yes and no.

If you go with the approach of abstinence only, you mainly scare teens into holding off to have sex, and show them that condoms are not effective.

If you go with the Uganda model, you get a little closer, by teaching that abstinence is good, but if you still want to do it, do it with one person, or use a condom.

But it still misses the point.

Humans love sex. Say what you will, but they do. Especially curious teens, who have just found out what an orgasm is and that kissing is wicked. Of course they're going to want to take the next step.



The three rules of safe sex: Keep it in your pants, keep it in your pants, keep it in your pants.
- Greg 2:28

So what do teens need to hear?

Well, first, they don't need to hear that sex will cast them into eternal damnation. Sex is natural, and with mutual respect and affection, can be fun and exciting.

But they also need to hear that sex isn't just something to do with the first girl/guy that turns you on. It's a serious matter, and with the risk of pregnancy and nasty diseases, it can knock the wind out of your lustful sails.

A well-rounded sexual education should teach teens to be comfortable with themselves, their bodies and their sexuality. Abstinence can be taught as a way of respecting your body and yourself; and saying NO is something that others should respect. But if you do want to have sex, play it safe. Wait until it's with someone you respect and who respects you. Wear a condom. And don't be afraid to talk about it with your partner, your friends, and, most importantly, your parents.

Parents should be the first ones to talk to their kids about sex. I know its hard, parents, but I don't care – kids need to hear about it from someone they trust, not some loudmouth on the playground.

And teachers, don't make sex education so boring ("intercourse is when a man inserts his penis into a woman's vagina") – cause really, sex is so much more fun than that.

Sex is one of the most wonderful and natural things in the world, and is an important aspect of any mature relationship. Sexuality is also beautiful, in all its forms, and if people were more open and comfortable with their sexuality, people would not have to feel insecure about who they are and what they feel.

In short, loosen up, give the full picture, and teach kids that sex is as much about emotions and respect as it is about penises and vaginas.

Attention students, grammarians

The Brunswickan needs a Copy Editor.

You would be required to proof the entire paper (roughly 35,000 words), all in one afternoon/evening (Monday). In addition to your standard spelling and grammatical checks, you would be required to improve the copy where necessary. For all of this, and because we are not a rich company, we will pay you $2,000 (for 23 of your Mondays).

We could use a keen eye like yours (not to mention the experience). We have two proofreading tests, but a resume and sample of your writing would help the selection process. Drop by Wednesday around noon and we'll set you up.

Can you find the error in this ad?

Notice: Must be a UNB or STU student to apply. Deadline for applications is Friday September 16th at 5pm. Candidates will be selected by September 22.

