

Counterpoint

THE MIT-WELLESLEY JOURNAL OF CAMPUS LIFE

NOVEMBER 2001

Getting Some

Our latest sex survey

Boston's
Combat Zone
10

Local
Sex Shops
20

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Counterpoint

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Tea and Corona

Dear *Counterpoint*,

The Presidents of Phi Sigma, Tau Zeta Epsilon, and Zeta Alpha would like to express our concern regarding the October 2001 *Counterpoint* article "Tea and Corona: Let the Schmoozing Begin."

Societies are unique organizations that combine academic interests and social events. Because we have a visible social component, our academic contributions to the community are often downplayed. Our lectures, workshops, and events are open to all the members of the Wellesley community—students, faculty, and staff. We make a constant effort to co-sponsor our events with academic departments, student cultural groups, and special interest organizations. In addition, our social events have always been open to the Wellesley community and are free of charge. We are disappointed that our services to Wellesley College and the Wellesley community are often overlooked.

We welcome any questions or concerns about the role of societies on campus. Finally, we would like to discourage community members from passing judgements on the members of societies based on unfounded stereotypes and generalizations. Please feel free to contact us directly.

Sarah Beam
President of Phi Sigma

Jennifer Keser and Christine Frogozo
Co-Presidents of Tau Zeta Epsilon

Rhian O'Rourke
President of Zeta Alpha

Dear *Counterpoint*,

This is in regard to Lauren Collalto's article on the societies at Wellesley in the October 2001 issue of *Counterpoint* ("Tea and Corona: Let the Schmoozing Begin"). First, let me pref-

ace what I am about to say with the fact that I will only be responding to the section concerning Tau Zeta Epsilon (TZE). While there are innumerable errors in her article, I only have the patience to express my thoughts on the portion of her piece that was personal to me, as I am a member of TZE.

Now, it is amazing to believe that a mere twenty sentences can hold such a wide range of oversights and blunders, so we will have to go line by line to show just how inaccurate and unsound this section of her article is. She claims,



"Well, let's just say that I do not get the warmest reception." There is no explanation of what happened that made her feel this way, no anecdote about how she was treated, and no verification that it was a member of TZE who was not greeting her as warmly as she could have. Rather, we have a statement that is meant to hint to the reader that this is just assumed. We are to accept that she was not greeted warmly. Right. Something to keep in mind is that if she was late, which she claims she was, that means many of the members and the non-members who got to the tea on time were already in the dining room or living room talking, eating, and engaging in conversation. The point about teas is for non-members to seek out the members to discuss TZE with them and try to demonstrate a genuine desire to be

in TZE. If Lauren was showing up for the heck of it and waiting for people to come to her, she has the wrong view of what the teas are for. And I think if she had watched any of the other non-members and had seen how they approached others she would have realized that perhaps her experience was negative because she not only went in with a negative attitude, as is displayed in her writing, but also went in waiting to be showered with "Hello's" and "How do you do's?" The world does not work like that. And it certainly should not for you.

The next utter fallacy is in her use of the word "clique," when she says she passed "cliques of girls sitting on twin couches." Now, correct me if I am wrong (which I am not), but a clique is a small, exclusive group of friends, and is generally given a disapproving or antagonistic connotation. You must be confusing your experience with TZE that night with the last edition you read of the *Sweet Valley High* girls, Jessica and Elizabeth. For you see, cliques do not really exist past junior high school except in the minds of people who are so misguided and naive that they feel some insatiable need to label everything they see. It could not have been a clique because it was more than likely a blend of members and non-members, and thus, a mixture of friends and recently made acquaintances. Maybe the phrase you were looking for was "friendly, inclusive group of women joined to learn about each other and the purposes of an organization on campus." Because frankly, that is the only way to describe what you saw. Then you so coyly add at the end, "welcome to the schmoozing zone," which I took to be a sarcastic snide remark. Keep in mind you were attending a tea, at which one is expected to talk casually and chat, which is the English translation for that Yiddish word.

Reading on, the subsequent unqualified assertion is that your conversation with someone was "artificial." Oh, wise and sagacious one, how deep

and philosophical had you hoped to be that evening? From reading the rest of your article, your conversations with other society members centered on cheerleaders, rocks, and neon-pink flamingos floating in your alcoholic beverage. (By the way, are you twenty-one? You rebel, you.) And yet, they all received praise and TZE was awarded the big thumbs down. How arbitrary. How unjustifiable. Judging by how many people attended our first tea, it is a safe bet to say that it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for each member to have long, in-depth conversations with everyone who showed up. I am sure if you approached any of the women you met that night at another point to continue whatever discussion you were having with them, they would have welcomed the opportunity with open arms. My guess is that you did not try to do so.

Now, the botched mess I am about to comment on is what made me, perhaps, the most angry. You seem to have noticed “that the members are typically BCBG Max Azria—classic-trendy junkies who feed off of their matching Kate Spade handbags.” Hello, have we met? You must have missed me. I was the member who came in dirty sweats, an oversized white t-shirt with a GOP elephant on the back, my hair thrown up under my UMich cap, and wearing my wonderfully nerdy glasses. No makeup. No Kate Spade. Nothing designer about me that night, oh no. Perhaps you assumed by the way I was dressed that I could not have been a member of such a shallow and superficial clique. That is unfortunate. Perhaps instead of throwing around stereotypes and generalizations because you see a few pieces of evidence that point to what you wish to claim, you should actually evaluate all there is to see and draw some conclusions that are based on fact, not speculation and conjecture. Everyone at TZE is different, in their ethnicities, histories, personalities, styles of dress, composure, attitudes, goals, dreams, physical make-

up, and so on. I take offense to your total and sheer misrepresentation of the TZE community. It not only highlights your unmindfulness with respect to the members of TZE but also overlooks the diversity we strive to maintain. You make it sound like we are nothing but a bunch of mindless shoppers with daddy’s credit card, when, in fact, you are speaking of a group of highly intelligent, motivated, and hard-working women who take care of themselves. If a TZE member is wearing something nice, you are not looking at a spoiled rich girl, you are face-to-face with a strong, secure, wonderful woman who just may have had some extra cash to spend on something nice. Do not pass judgement on those who have expensive clothing, jewelry, or cars. It is just as wrong as someone passing judgement on those who do not possess these things.

Last, the final bungle worth mentioning is the concluding sentence. How dare you say something like, “Being familiar with soccer-mom culture, I can confidently estimate that the members of this society will probably also join those upper-class, luxury SUV-driving ranks as socialites one day”? Are you kidding me? What right do you have to make any claim as to the futures of the members of TZE? I suppose women such as Diana Chapman Walsh and Madame Chiang Kai-Shek would fit your description, as both of them were TZE members during their attendance here at Wellesley College. I beg to differ with you, Lauren. I do not think either of them fit the cheap, low, small-minded classification in which you have placed them. As for the current members of TZE, judging by their accomplishments thus far, I would say they are light years ahead of most of the people I have met here at Wellesley, which was a major factor in my applying to join last semester. You will see their names on books they have published, in art exhibits beneath their work, in legal and medical journals, in lights on Broadway, on the Billboard charts, in reputable newspapers as senior

editors and writers, or maybe even on future students’ registration cards as their professors. And even if some of them choose to become your vision of a soccer mom, I cannot imagine a group of women more compassionate, more dedicated, and more able to serve as role models for future generations, whether it be as a mother, career woman, or both.

In conclusion, your article was erroneous, questionable, and, in my opinion, unsuitable for print in a journal that claims to bring to light aspects of campus life. The next cover for *Counterpoint* should more appropriately read: Overrated.

Signed,

Amie Broder
Tau Zeta Epsilon Treasurer

Dear Elizabeth,

I am writing with regards to the “Tea and Corona” article in last month’s *Counterpoint*. My first thoughts were to write to Lauren Collalto, but I then realized that she was a first-year and very inexperienced. I cannot believe that the editors could allow such an article to be published so that it can be read all over campus and further give societies a negative image.

Miss Collalto has only been on campus for five weeks. How could she know what societies are made up of or what kind of a role they play on campus? All she was fed was preconceived stereotypes of societies, therefore, she came in with a set opinion and a closed mind. I don’t appreciate the irresponsible actions of the Editors-in-Chief for letting this article be published. This is exactly the same kind of thing that happened last semester with the *Rolling Stone* article. I guess that you didn’t think about it that way because it was not hurting you by putting a label on you directly.

A little bit ticked off,

Michelle Whang

Learning to Drive

Behind the wheel in Boston



BY COURTNEY MCLEOD

My parents have always told me that they don't worry about me driving—they only worry about everyone else out on the road. The fear of what your driving compatriots might do to you is perhaps nowhere as great as it is in Boston, a city infamous for its rotaries, bizarre merging, and aggressive driving tactics, and where drivers have killed forty-four pedestrians since 1998. Driving to MIT several weeks ago, I literally came within two

inches of colliding with the car in front of me. This, of course, would not have happened if the driver of the offending Jeep Grand Cherokee had not decided to pull out in front of me at a busy intersection, leading me to hit my brakes harder than can possibly be good for a car. My close call is, unfortunately, not an anomaly. It seems to be the Boston way for drivers to cut you off instead of appropriately yielding right of way to oncoming traffic.

The amusing aspect of this is that Bostonians know they're bad drivers. In a survey conducted by the SteelAlliance, a steel manufacturer, 66% of those surveyed stated that they consider Boston an unsafe place to drive, as compared to a national average of 37%. On the SteelAlliance Safety Grade, which "measures reported acts of aggressive driving," Boston drivers earned an F. Cleveland and Detroit drivers merited an A, Los Angeles drivers a C, with Washington, DC, drivers only slightly surpassing Boston with a D.

The SteelAlliance's survey also found that "Bostonians are more likely to commit driving acts that they deem aggressive or dangerous. For example, in the past month drivers in Boston were more likely than their national counterparts to have flashed high beams (14% vs. 9%), made rude gestures (13% vs. 9%), driven over the speed limit (70% vs. 55%), honked their horn (41% vs. 29%), or talked on a cellular phone (46% vs. 39%)."

Compared to drivers nationwide, Bostonians differ in what they consider aggressive driving practices. On a nationwide basis, 93% of those surveyed called tailgating aggressive and 89% deemed passing on the shoulder aggressive, while in Boston 80% believed passing on the shoulder is aggressive and 78% felt that tailgating is also aggressive. The same survey from 1999 found that Boston drivers "are less likely than other drivers to consider flashing high beams at the car in front of you, waiting until the last minute to merge with traffic on the highway, double parking, or driving ten miles an hour over the speed limit to be aggression." Additionally, the 1999 sampling found that although "Boston drivers consider running yellow lights and driving ten miles over the speed limit to be aggressive and dangerous acts . . . many still admit to driving aggressively in the past month."

In addition to frustrating other drivers, aggressive driving habits have physical consequences, as well.

According to the Insurance Research Council, Massachusetts has led the nation in the number of auto accidents rates for the past decade, with accidents involving injury and property damage double the national average. Seemingly paradoxically though, Massachusetts traffic death rate is the lowest in the nation. The National Safety Council reports that Massachusetts has a rate of .08 deaths per 100 million motor vehicle miles traveled, which is half the national level of 1.5 deaths per the same number of miles. So does this make Massachusetts a safe place to drive? No—an estimated eight people a week still die as a result of automobile accidents in this state. Massachusetts' low accident-related death rate simply means that the high population density slows down traffic in congested areas and that the plethora of area hospitals allows those that are injured to receive quick treatment. Montana, Wyoming, and Arizona, with their seventy mph speed limits, open stretches of highway, and fewer hospitals per square mile have more than two deaths per 100 million miles traveled.

Even those who drive for a living do little to improve the safety of Boston's streets. Currently Boston's Hackney Carriage Unit, the agency that oversees the city's taxi industry, does not fire drivers on the basis of driving records. Thus, violations can pile up against drivers, but they will retain their jobs. A *Boston Magazine* expose on Boston cab drivers revealed that one cabbie, after getting into an accident with another car, drove off with the driver of the other car hanging onto the hood of his cab because the cab driver refused to exchange information. The court fined the cabbie \$1,025 and three months later the city renewed the cabbie's livery license. Surely one of the easiest ways to alleviate some of the aggression of Boston drivers would be to get those with a history of offenses off the roads.

As abysmal as Boston drivers are, Boston is not the only city that aggres-

sive drivers call home. Aggressive driving runs rampant up and down the East Coast, as well as across the country.

Connecticut launched a campaign against aggressive driving on its highways this summer, with teams patrolling sections of highways every Wednesday in August. Just hours after Connecticut began its endeavor to make state roads safer by sending state police and Department of Motor Vehicles inspectors out to enforce speed limits and driving regulations, a tractor-trailer struck a construction worker who was drawing chalk lines along an on-ramp of I-95, one of the state's main—and most dangerous—highways.

The *New York Times* reported on a survey of New Jersey drivers conducted by the Insurance Council of New Jersey and the state's AAA chapter, which found that 40% of drivers felt "highly to moderately stressed" while out on the roads and half of the state's drivers drive angrily. State and federal highway safety figures show that aggressive driving accounts for a third of the 280,000 traffic accidents that New Jersey witnesses each year.

States could take a lead from police in Edmonton, Canada, who are rewarding careful drivers with dinner at a local restaurant. Instead, most states have chosen to punish offenders rather than praising those who adhere to safe driving practices. Methods taken to reduce—if not obliterate aggressive driving—include passing legislation that specifically targets aggressive drivers, implementing electronic tracking devices at stop lights, and using helicopter patrols. Arizona, Delaware, Nevada, and Rhode Island are the only states that have laws against aggressive driving in place currently, although legislation is pending in several other states.

Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino has advocated installing cameras at intersections and fining drivers one-hundred dollars for running a red light. The camera would photograph the license plate of the offending car and the incriminat-

ing photo, along with a citation, would appear in the driver's mail. If Boston chooses to use the cameras, it would join the ranks of fifty US cities nationwide that do so. Oxnard, California, was the first city to adorn its intersections with cameras, and since doing so, it has seen a 29% drop in the number of injury-causing accidents.

Clearly, Boston is not alone in seeking to fight aggressive driving practices, as aggressive drivers are everywhere, but the question remains as to why drivers in some cities seem to be so much worse than drivers in other cities. Faulty driver's education could be to blame, but the requirements for obtaining a Massachusetts license don't seem exceedingly loose: applicants must complete forty-two hours of a state-approved driver's education program and twelve additional hours of instructional driving. The only place where unskilled drivers may slip through the cracks is in the policy that allows applicants who fail their driving test the first time to have eleven more chances at passing it before the Department of Motor Vehicles finally sends the applicant away for a year. This is, perhaps, not as bad as Kansas, where the written test is open book, or Missouri, where the driving booklet imparts such helpful bits of information as "trucks are not large cars" and where 55% of those who took the state driver's license test in 1999 failed.

What is more likely is that Boston drivers share what all Americans share: a certain level of self-centeredness. Add to that a lack of lane divisions on major roads, scanty street signs, the "Big Dig," no signs telling drivers which lanes are turning lanes, no left turn arrows, and drivers with enough money to pay off speeding tickets, and one has concocted what can only be a harrowing driving experience.

Courtney McLeod '03 (cmcleod@wellesley.edu) is proud not to have a Massachusetts license.

"100% Slave Labor"

Buyer beware



BY RAJAY KUMAR

So let's face it. Life's been pretty good to you so far. Whether you're at Wellesley, MIT, or wherever, you're in America, and life in America is pretty good. We can worship whatever we want, we can get an education, we have paved roads, excellent universities, and there are bathrooms all over. One thing that saddens me, though, is that there are people all over the world my age and younger who will really never get even a taste of what I have experienced for over twenty years. I'm talking about a lot of people, but right now I'm going to focus on people who we will never meet but whose work we have encountered too many times: the sweatshop workers.

I can't imagine imagine having to work in a sweatshop. I'm furious that anyone has to work under such terrible conditions. They spend most of their days standing, working with their hands to put something together. They aren't unionized, so they are treated badly and can't even ask for a raise from the few nickels they get for the time they spend making clothes, toys, or shoes that someone with a life they can't even imagine will use. Where's the fairness in that?

And now another indignity. Nike, which notoriously uses sweatshops to make shoes, has started making ads that capitalize on this fact. According to adbusters.org, they now have billboards in Australia that sport a picture of a soc-

cer cleat and say, "THE MOST OFFENSIVE BOOTS WE'VE EVER MADE. 100% SLAVE LABOUR." It's one thing if they use sweatshops and then feel ashamed and take further action. It's indefensible to use sweatshops as a marketing tool. It's nothing more than capitalizing on someone's suffering.

Companies are going to get more brash and arrogant if time passes and nobody really does anything. Maybe that's even happening now. You know what, though? We don't have to let them get away with this. We should follow the example set by Jonah Peretti, an MIT graduate student, who tried to get Nike to stitch the word "sweatshop" on a pair of shoes in their promotional campaign to personalize them. Of course, Nike rejected the idea, but the ruckus he caused received national attention. And this was just one person. Nike is not a bunch of guys trying to make an honest buck; it is a group of greedy executives who are willing to step on the children of developing countries. They crossed the line when they decided to exploit child labor, and with their latest advertisement, they've gone so far past the line they can't even see it anymore.

I hope you are as angry as I am at this. It's too easy to get back to your studies and say, "I'm too busy to care right now," but you know you can't say that without feeling a little guilty.

We, as a generation of college students who will indeed be running the world someday, have to let people know that this is unacceptable. We are not going to give up our ethics to purchase what we are told is the latest fashion. We are not going to live life as consumers first and humans second. We are going to raise hell until these companies admit that they are doing wrong.

URL: <http://www.adbusters.org/creativereistance/36/1.html>

Rajay Kumar '02 (rkumar@catgufu.mit.edu) has no witty blurb to describe himself.



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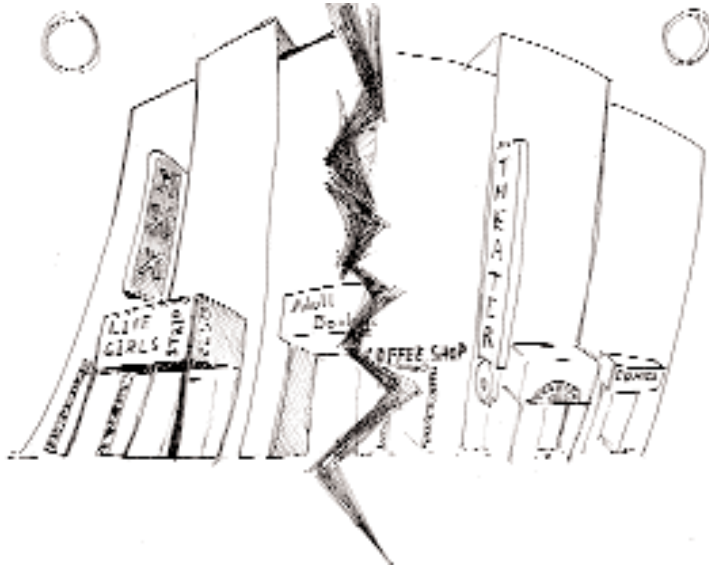
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The Combat Zone

Phasing out Boston's red light district



Kate Webbink

BY ARIELLE SIMON

Boston, home to more than fifty colleges and famous for its high concentration of students, is anything but a college town. While Boston has a reputation for being exceedingly liberal, its history is steeped in restrictive Puritan values. In fact, even today, Boston maintains many of its religious traditions, keeping on its books a series of blue laws to govern anything perceived as sinful or, for that matter, fun.

Almost every major city in the US has a red light district, contributing to the ten-billion-dollar-a-year adult entertainment industry. But Boston's seedy Combat Zone was phased out years ago. At its peak, the Combat Zone was home to more than thirty-five adult establishments. Considered a high-crime area, the City of Boston created a plan to revitalize it. Currently, the Combat Zone houses only Boston's lone strip club—the Glass Slipper—and two adult bookstores.

The community effort to improve the Combat Zone, located between Boston's Chinatown and financial districts, began as early as the 1970s. But it

was not until the mid-'90s that the tremendous changes, which eventually transformed the area, began. It was then that the city shut down its largest strip club, Naked i Cabaret, which marked the beginning of the end for the Combat Zone.

A little over a decade ago, Boston began implementing a series of zoning laws that would change the city in remarkable ways. It restricted the availability of adult entertainment from strip clubs to bookstores. Moreover, the city gave financial incentives to drive out adult entertainment establishments. In doing so, it successfully changed the Combat Zone from an area known for its sleazy clientele to an up-and-coming neighborhood. It became much safer, cleaner, and, as Chinatown's community argued, a place where one could raise a family.

Zoning laws are known to be an extremely effective way of improving neighborhoods. The laws range from dictating the restriction of business in residential areas to curbing high-crime, red light districts. They have been used

in many cities, including New York, to improve neighborhoods and property values. When you walk through Times Square today, Disney stores and theaters replace much of what used to be overflowing with strip clubs and prostitutes.

While zoning laws clearly have their benefits, they also have their drawbacks. Government restrictions on what is and is not obscene can be problematic. Indeed, many question whether states and districts have the constitutional right to determine whether a business is appropriate. However, the consensus has been ambiguous, at best.

In 1991, the Supreme Court ruled on the legality of restricting strip clubs. In a 5-4 decision, it declared that while states cannot ban nude dancing in places other than bars and clubs, they do have the right to restrict behavior that is "truly obscene." The decision noted that nude dancing is "marginally" within the "outer perimeters" of First Amendment protection.

The Court's decision indicates its deep ambivalence on zoning laws. The ruling essentially repeated what was already considered law—namely, that obscene behavior is not protected by the First Amendment. The Court in no way indicated what acts should and should not be considered legally obscene.

One wonders what is "truly obscene" and who gets to decide. Legally, obscenity is defined as material that tends to "deprave or corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences." Yet, even that lends itself to much interpretation.

The First Amendment has been routinely interpreted to protect "expression" but not "conduct." But, because nude dancing is often considered "expressive conduct," the Court has found itself with its hands tied. Its rulings have mainly indicated that it is difficult to draw the line between what is pornography and what is behavior.

Another indication of the government's indecisiveness towards zoning adult entertainment is its stance on

hardcore pornography. While banned from public adult theaters, hardcore pornography is rented legally by adults. It is not the viewing of this type of pornography that troubles people but the thought of its visible presence in their neighborhood.

Like strip clubs, pornography has come under fire for being obscene and harmfully influential. Because pornographic publications are words and pictures on paper, banning them has been consistently considered a violation of the First Amendment. However, since there is some sort of personal interaction at strip clubs, the debate becomes less clear. Moreover, strip clubs are a neighborhood presence in a way that adult video or bookstores are not. There is a certain community harm associated with red light areas that are often subject to higher crime rates and general sordidness that comes from the presence of strip clubs and their customers. Thus, there is a greater impetus for people to push for banning them.

Still, it is not entirely clear that there is a difference between these two types of adult entertainment, at least in the way in which they are constitutionally protected. Print and video pornography, the Court has ruled, are expression, and while they can be restricted to adult audiences, they cannot be banned. On the other hand, strip clubs do involve live interaction and, of course, nudity (which, as conduct, is illegal in most public areas). Strip clubs are arguably not all that different from print or taped pornography.

While strip clubs have not been banned outright in Boston, they have been heavily restricted. And some may argue that other sorts of expression, such as political demonstrations, are routinely restricted in terms of location and space. However, zoning laws restricting adult entertainment are particularly problematic because the concern is over what is and is not appropriate, unlike the regulation of parades and political demonstrations, which are generally predicated

on concerns over fire hazards, safety, and traffic disruption. For the restriction of public gatherings, the city does not make a moral judgment of appropriateness but, rather, over logistics. Nevertheless, zoning laws over adult entertainment originate from questions about obscenity and appropriateness.

The problem, then, with zoning adult entertainment is with the implied moral judgment. Red light districts bring with them crime and decreased property values, but the implication in phasing one out is that adult entertainment brings moral decadence to a community. Whether zoning violates the Constitution is still unclear, but it certainly violates the notion that government should not dictate moral codes. While there are certainly benefits to zoning—especially for the people who live in red light districts—the costs can be far greater. Still, many are ambivalent over whether the cost-benefit analysis adds up. As the Supreme Court indicated, questions over indecency are easiest left unanswered.

During the mid-'90s, in the midst of the Combat Zone's transformation, Mayor Menino was quoted by NBC's local network, WHDH, as saying that he "wants to protect the Chinese Community from this garbage." Clearly, there is more at stake than simply the revitalization of a neighborhood. Menino used city legislation to forward

his own belief system—that adult entertainment has no place in Boston. Similarly, many of Boston's blue laws propagate value judgments that are not completely appropriate for a government to mandate, particularly because they are steeped in religion.

Menino has also been cited by the ACLU for his plan to air pictures of convicted johns—customers of prostitutes—on television in an attempt to publicly humiliate them. Perhaps this would cut down on prostitution rates in Boston, just as zoning has cut down on strip clubs, but at what cost?

Today, Boston's Combat Zone is on the brink of being entirely obliterated. After the opening of a Ritz hotel nearby, property prices of the once-depressed area skyrocketed. Even its name will soon be lost. City officials and neighborhood residents are embarking on a plan to rename the area the "Ladder District," for street patterns between Tremont and Washington, erasing the area's sordid past.

While Boston may be in some ways safer and more prosperous since zoning out the Combat Zone, legal and moral questions remain. Certainly, the new-and-improved Boston is not, as Menino recently contended, a "fun" place to be.

Arielle Simon '03 (asimon2@wellesley.edu) goes to New Hampshire for her adult entertainment.

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The Sex Survey

It's not the size of the sample, it's how you use it

BY ASHLEY JOHNSON

I'm confused. I feel like I'm surrounded by virgins here at Wellesley, but then I read all about our wild sexual exploits in *Rolling Stone*. Which is it? Are we sluts or are we prudes? I'm confused about MIT as well. I've been warned time and time again not to go to any frat's roof deck, but when I think MIT, I think Unix and eunuchs. There's only one way to answer these deeply troubling questions: a sex survey.

Yes, this past month *Counterpoint* began the massive undertaking of determining just how much Wellesley and MIT students are getting. We spent our weeknights handing out 287 surveys at all the Wellesley dining halls. Our efforts were rewarded with an excellent sample size of 12.5% of the student population for Wellesley. At MIT we did slightly less well with 236 students, a not so stellar 2.3% of both grads and undergrads. As you surely have realized, there is room for error in our pseudo-scientific study,

but we guarantee our results to be 100% nearly accurate.

Let's begin with what we all want to know most: the virginity quotient. According to nationwide surveys, approximately 17% of college students are virgins. Well, that's a completely unrealistic number considering the size of our problem sets. So it should be double that, right? Not quite. Try a 60% virginity rating for Wellesley and 47% for MIT (54% of the women are virgins vs. 39% of the men). Interestingly, the older graduate students don't help MIT's ratio of virgins all that much. Without them, 49% of the undergraduate student body is virginal, a mere two point increase.

As you can see, the MIT/Wellesley statistics for virginity are rather high. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in every five college students has lost his or her virginity by the age of 13. By the age of 19, 80% of males and 75% of females

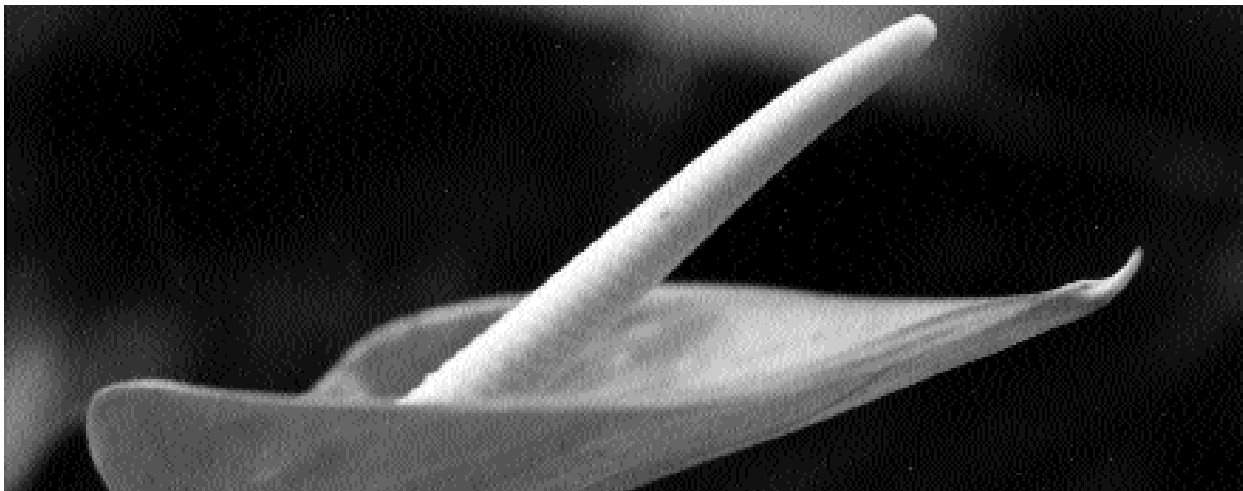
have lost their virginity. This means that a higher percentage of Wellesley students are virgins than are the nation's sixteen-year-olds, as indicated by the National Center for Health Statistics. Right now you're probably making excuses for your school's sorry percentages. After all, your course load is demanding and you can't possibly hope to have as much amorous congress as the public university students you're lumped in with. Well, in comparing the *Counterpoint* percentages with the Ivy League, MIT and Wellesley still come up short. Princeton, the Ivy League with the lowest statistics, is only 44% virgin in their undergraduate population. Much to many students' chagrin, their Harvard neighbors are merely 41% virgin. When considering graduate students, 35% of MIT grads are virgins, compared with UCLA, where only 14% are.

The numbers look even worse when one considers only sex that students have had since coming to college. Only 31% of Wellesley students and 43% of MIT students have made the beast with two backs since arriving.

So, we've established that MIT and Wellesley students are getting less than other schools, but exactly which students are doing the wild thing and



Kate Webbink



which aren't? Besides considering class (figure 1), our survey broke it down by major and dorm (figures 2 and 3), calculating those categories that had four or more respondents. Wellesley's wildest are studio art majors. Apparently, they're 100% hymen-free. Fitting their stereotypes, math and chem/biochem majors are doing the worst at Wellesley; the two are tied at 83% virgin. At MIT, humanities majors are getting the most action with only one out of five being a virgin. On the other hand, at 73% virgin, MIT biology majors may want to start brushing up on the reproductive system.

Now, everyone knows that it's a long ride between MIT and Wellesley, so where should students go to ensure that the Fuck Truck keeps its promise? Well, Wellesley's Shafer Hall is apparently a good place to score—only 25% of its residents are virgins. On the other side of the campus is Davis, with a steep 87% virginity rating. At MIT, Wellesley students should avoid Random House like the plague. Counter to perceptions, our survey shows it to be 100% virgin. However, East Campus, like Shafer, is only 25% virgin.

While we're on the subject of the Fuck Truck, we should address exactly how much DNA is being exchanged between the two campuses. Fourteen percent of Wellesley non-virgins have practiced parallel parking in bed with an MIT student and 19% of MIT non-virgins have bumped pelvises with a

Wellesley student. Ironically, neither college chose the other as the top campus they preferred to date (figure 4). However, Wellesley students who had sex with MIT students were more than three times as likely to prefer dating

someone from MIT as the rest of their peers. MIT students who had sex with Wellesley women were nearly eight times as likely to prefer dating Wellesley students. Perhaps the two campuses should hook up more often.





How *Rolling Stone*-ish are the few lucky souls who are doing the horizontal mambo? Well, not very. Considering all the non-virgins on campus, 41% of Wellesley and 32% of MIT students have only had one partner (figure 5). It seems that many Wellesley and MIT students are comfortably monogamous. Only 9% of those who have gotten it on at MIT have been with more than 10 people and the number is 7% at Wellesley.

But really, these numbers say very little about how much couch rugby is actually going on. That's why we asked how much sexercise people had gotten in the past four weeks. At MIT, 36% of all students had engaged in the sport of heavy breathing in the past four weeks; at Wellesley only 19% had. Of all the non-virgins at MIT, 64% had gotten it on five times or less in the past four weeks, although 15% had done it more than fifteen times. Overall, at Wellesley, 82% of the non-virgins had copulated five times or fewer, and 7% had done it more than 15 times overall (figure 6).

Also, despite what *Rolling Stone* says, Wellesley's "prison effect" has not

turned everyone into lesbians or desperate women who will shag anything that moves. Only 14% of the campus define themselves as something other than heterosexual. Only 1% of the student body has had sex with a campus police officer,



dining hall worker, or professor, and that number is 1.6% for MITers. Of the non-virgins at MIT, 15% of them have had sex with more than one person in 24 hours, and 26% of those students were doing it in a menage a trois. Wellesley non-virgins are a bit wilder; 17% of them have had sex with more than one person in 24 hours, and 42% of them were doubling their pleasure at one time.

At MIT, 22% of all students have had a one-night stand. Wellesley has a much more modest value of 12%. It can be said that we value monogamy, as nationally 51% of male students and 42% of female students have had a one-night stand. Fifteen percent of Wellesley non-virgins have had sex in their room while their roommate was there. MIT students are apparently a lot less self-conscious, as 38% of them have. Twenty-five percent of the Wellesley non-virgins have had sex on campus in an area not within a dorm. For MIT the number is 42%. MIT libraries must be more accommodating to shacking up.

Wellesley and MIT students are particularly wild in one area: unprotected sex. At MIT, 57% of non-virgins have



had unprotected sex. And even though Wellesley women have Health Reps, Sexual Health Educators, and RAs all throwing condoms at them, 61% of non-virgins still have had unprotected sex. As high as these numbers are, they're still lower than the national average. According to the CDC, only 37.7% of college students used a condom during their last sexual intercourse.

With all the unsafe sex going around, it might be smarter to just stay at home and satisfy yourself. But even though masturbating is sex with someone you really love, not many Wellesley and MIT students are doing it. Or, at least, they aren't admitting it. National studies show that approximately 94% of men and 70% of women have had the safest form of sex. However, only 28% of Wellesley women, 20% of MIT women, and 68% of MIT men have admitted to self-serving in the past four weeks. Incidentally, although computer geeks have the reputation of flying solo the most often, it is actually aeronautics and astronautics majors at MIT and Women's Studies majors at Wellesley

that are being their own best friends the most. While MIT students are known for liking high-tech gadgets, only 2.5% of the campus will cop to owning a vibrator. At Wellesley, the number is 10%, with the greatest concentration at

Lake House (figure 7). Wellesley students have also, astonishingly, embraced the Internet more than MIT students. Eight percent of them have admitted to having online sex, but only 5% admit it at MIT. As the numbers seem surpris-



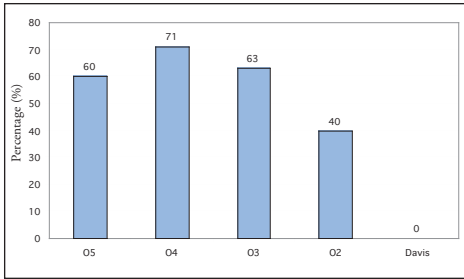


Figure 1a: Percent of students that are virgins in each Wellesley class

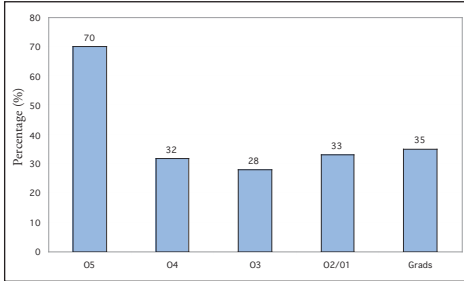


Figure 1b: Percent of students that are virgins in each MIT class

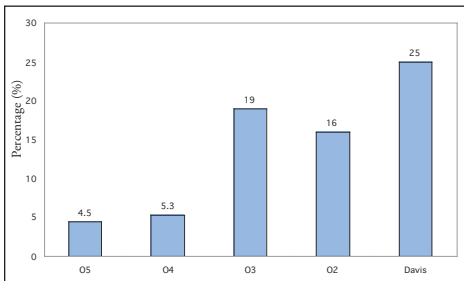


Figure 7: Percent of Wellesley students that own vibrators, by class

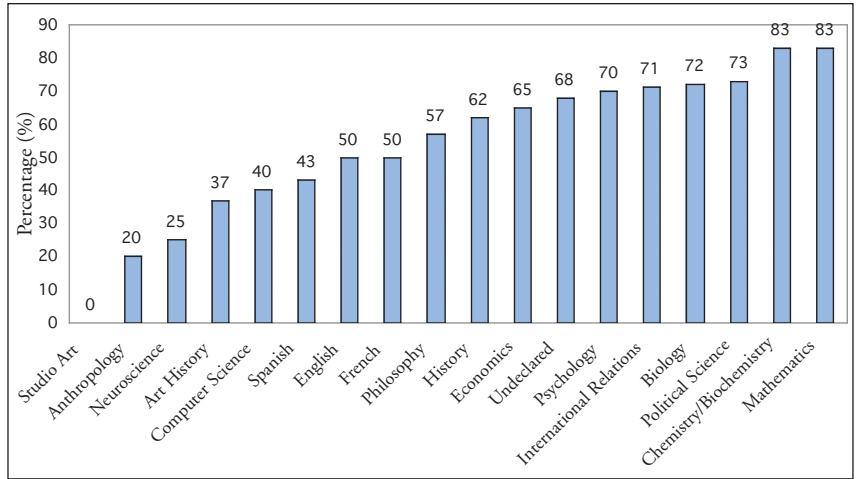


Figure 2a: Percent of students that are virgins, by Wellesley major

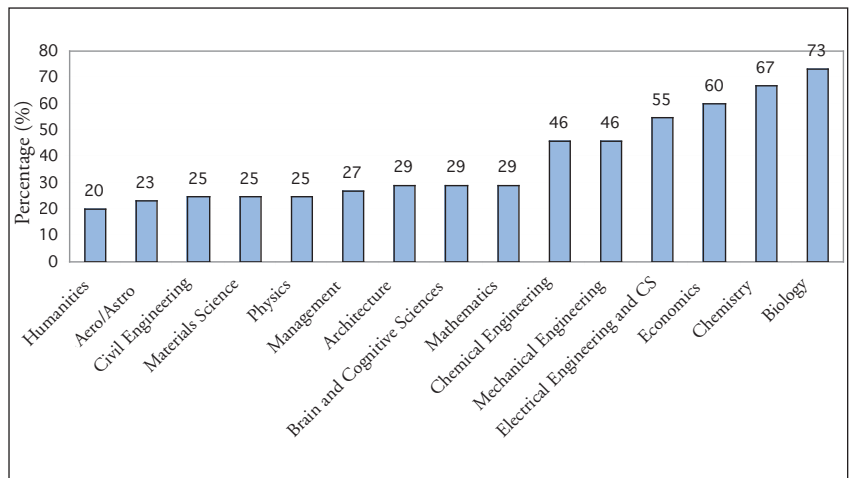


Figure 2b: Percent of students that are virgins, by MIT major

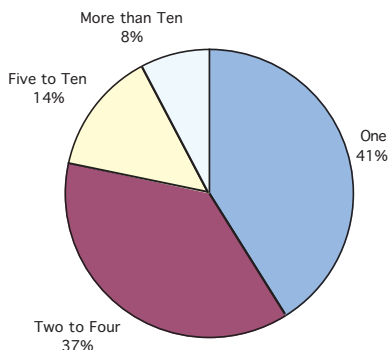


Figure 5a: Number of sexual partners Wellesley non-virgins have had

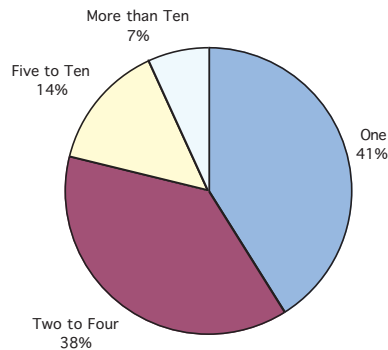


Figure 5b: Number of sexual partners MIT non-virgins have had

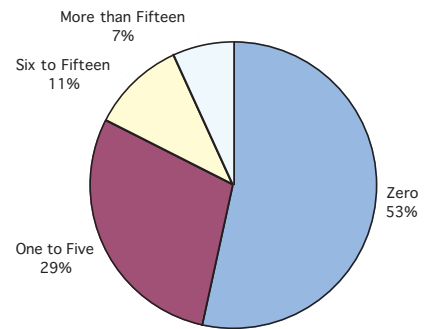


Figure 6a: Number of times Wellesley non-virgins have had sex in the past four weeks

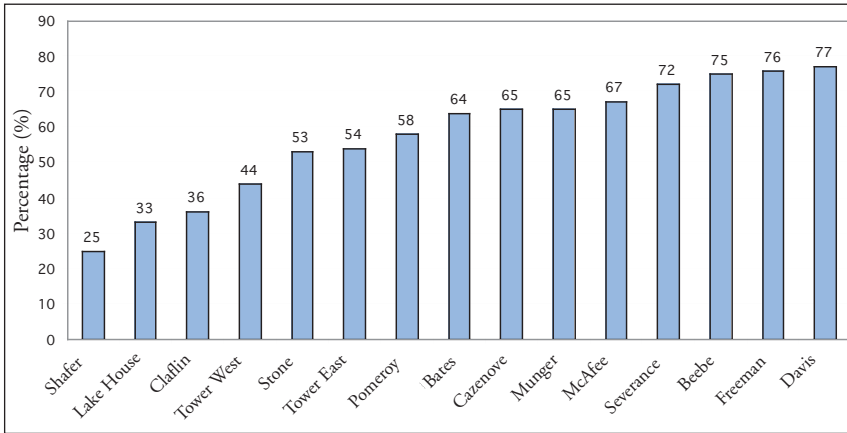


Figure 3a: Percent of students that are virgins in Wellesley residence halls

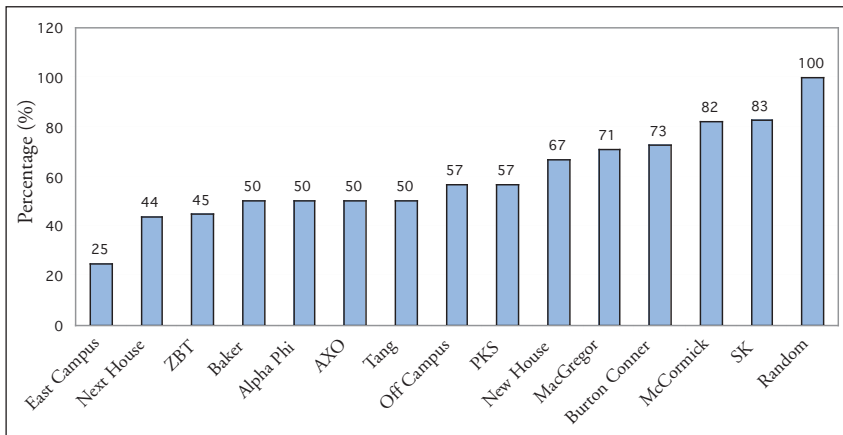


Figure 3b: Percent of students that are virgins in MIT residences

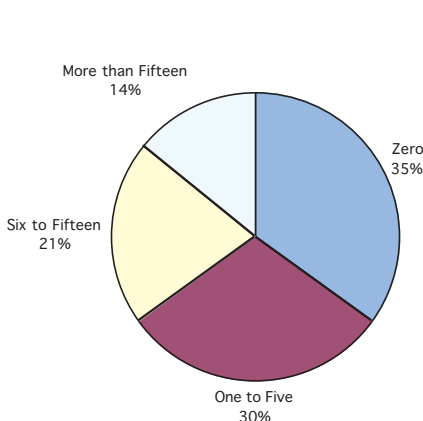


Figure 6b: Number of times MIT non-virgins have had sex in the past four weeks

Figure 4:
Top 5 colleges Wellesley women prefer to date from in the Boston area.

1. Harvard
2. MIT
3. Wellesley
4. Boston College
5. Tufts

Top 5 colleges MIT students prefer to date from

1. MIT
2. Harvard
3. Boston University
4. Wellesley
5. Boston College

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ingly low, I'd say that both campuses are either a little embarrassed or need to work on embracing their sexuality more fully.

The bottom line is that most of us aren't getting any. Most of us are just about as far from *Rolling Stone* as can be. This would be fine, even wonderful, if it were a conscious choice, but from all the people I saw moaning in frustration because they didn't have anything interesting to put on a sex survey, I know that isn't true. Many of us are horny and frustrated, thinking that every other student around us is engaged in the merry rites of spring. This survey demonstrates that celibacy is the rule, not the exception. You don't have to feel like a social leper because you're not dancing between the sheets. If you're a virgin, accept it and be proud. Then, when the right opportunity knocks, go out and make the carnal connection.

Ashley Johnson '04 (ajohnso2@wellesley.edu) knows far more about people's sex lives than is appropriate.



Kate Webbink

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girl on girl action
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Exposing Yourself

College students and the prevalence of unprotected sex

BY EMILY LACROIX

We all learned it somewhere along the line, probably in ninth grade health class. Even if we were never taught it formally, the connotations are pretty clear: “safe sex” sounds like a good thing; “unprotected sex” resonates certain doom.

However, we are not in health class anymore, and our knowledge of sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, and prevention needs to be put to practical use. Memorizing names of STDs and their symptoms to be rattled off for a quiz no longer suffices. As reported by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), two-thirds of the annual cases of STDs occur in people under the age of twenty-five. Irresponsible sexual behavior has definite risks, and unless you actually practice what we all know, you may very well have to suffer the negative consequences, whether they be infection or unintended pregnancy. Nationally, 12% of sexually active college students are affected by unintended pregnancy each year. Chlamydia infects the same percentage, while herpes is present in more than 25% of college students throughout the country.

A study conducted in 2000 at the

University of Southern California revealed that many of the consequences of unprotected sexual activity are due more to complacency than to ignorance. Education about contraceptives and STD prevention is generally complete among most college students but, unfortunately, knowledge doesn't always translate into action. Statistics show that only a third of college students regularly use condoms during intercourse, compared to a 50% rate among high-school seniors. This lack of protection results in one in five young adults being treated for an STD before the age of twenty-one.

Research from the CDC indicates that 75% or more of college students—but obviously less for Wellesley and MIT, as our sex survey's results illustrate (see page 16)—are sexually active. Although 52% of students are concerned with using precautionary methods to prevent pregnancy, only 38% are concerned about protecting themselves from disease. Many tend to use unreliable methods, such as the rhythm method or withdrawal, which provide no protection from STDs. And also remember that contraceptives, like birth control pills or hormonal implants, do

absolutely nothing to block these diseases. The only contraceptive methods that are effective in protection against STDs are barrier methods, such as the condom or female condom. Failure rates with condoms vary from 15% for the male condom to 25% for the female condom. However, most of the failures can be traced to improper use.

Almost half of college students report having sexual intercourse with multiple partners during the past year. Moreover, those with multiple partners were significantly less consistent in overall condom use, particularly (no big surprise here) when alcohol and/or drugs were involved. Studies have also shown that approximately 13% of college students report that they have never engaged in any form of safe sex practice. These behaviors place young adults at considerably increased risk for contracting STDs like syphilis, chlamydia, gonorrhea, herpes, and HIV. About 43% of students stated that they did not use protection because they were “in love” or trusted their partners. Keep in mind that the risk of an STD increases with the number of sexual partners and sexual encounters you have. A stable relationship in which both partners are monogamous is ideal but often difficult to achieve in college. So, even in relationships, it makes sense to continue to take the necessary precautions to protect yourself from infection.

Whatever the causes for these irresponsible behaviors, whether it be alcohol, drugs, environment, peers, or a false sense of security, the fact remains that college students are at a great risk of contracting STDs due to their lack of precautions and unsafe practices. Until college students begin to believe that their sexual activity puts them at a real risk, the numbers for STDs and unwanted pregnancies will remain unnecessarily high.

Emily LaCroix '04 (elacroix@wellesley.edu) had to hide her collection of condoms for Parents' Weekend.



Sarah Ligon

Leather and Body Chocolate

Boston's sex shops



Sarah Ligon

BY EMILY FLITTER

First there was reproduction. Simple, two-beings-procreating sex. Sure, it made those first primitive humans feel good, but it was mainly a biological function designed to propagate the species. Then there was civilization, language, the discovery of fire, the invention of the wheel, and the realization that sex feels REALLY good and that a couple's options stretch far beyond the missionary position. It was, no doubt, this last lightbulb over the head of some caveman (or woman) that thrust humanity into the state of enlightenment it has achieved today. From the frescoes of Pompeii to the prose of de Sade, history is filled with innovations in the pleasure department that turn an already-awesome physical act into something divine. As societies evolved with the invention of—among other things—edible underwear, the

possibilities for orchestrating the ideal sexual experience became endless.

The concept of having fun with sex has spread to all ends of the earth, including our own icy city. In fact, beneath all those layers of thermal underwear they pile on in the winter, Bostonians have a wicked sex drive. Incredulous? Just check out a couple of the many pleasure shops around town, where even the wildest forms of desire are brought within a customer's reach.

Condom World (332 Newbury Street, Boston) is a good starting point for any newcomer to the sex shop world. The music, floor, and presentation of the products all support the trendy Newbury atmosphere that Condom World maintains. Inside this flashy little boutique the customer is on his or her own. This is not, however, such a bad

thing, since most of the items inside Condom World are standard and self-explanatory. At the front of the store is the largest array of condom brands a fornicating individual could ever want, let alone need. There are condoms for men of every shape and size, sporting every imaginable color and texture, and even some for women. In fact, Condom World is the only one of the six stores in this review that stocks female condoms. In addition to the obvious, the front half of the store is also full of party games, gag gifts, and other light-hearted novelties, such as peppermint peckers and glow-in-the-dark condoms ("light up your life," says the label).

Further back are the sex toys: dildos, vibrating plastic vaginas, butt plugs, and climax beads. This is the more serious section of the store, which meets some basic masturbation needs, as well as some experimental ones. The toys are all name-brand, prepackaged devices. Details and special design features help to differentiate between brands of sex toys that follow the same basic concepts: some dildos are plastic and battery powered; others are rubber, with spikes or ribs as their main appeal. There is less variation among the butt plugs and the fake vaginas, whose design options are not fully represented here, though they still come in several different colors. In the very back of the store is a display case full of jewelry for piercings . . . everywhere. The prices in the store range from moderately high to very high which, given the location, is not surprising.

Because there is not an overwhelming continual demand for joke supplies, the store attracts many browsers but few buyers. Condom World is worth a visit, but its prices make it an impractical choice when shopping for anything besides party games and decorations. Unless one is in need of a very special kind of condom, a local drugstore or gas station is more than sufficient. Leather: no. Body chocolate: yes.

Sweet & Nasty (90 Massachusetts Avenue #A, Boston), around the corner from Newbury Street, is a sex-shop-cum-bakery. A dark, cluttered store (next to that Fleet ATM lobby that is never open), Sweet & Nasty has a homey feeling to it. A radio murmurs behind the cashier's counter, tuned in to the news. It is, overall, like a relative's house, except that most people's grandmothers don't bake penis cakes for Thanksgiving dessert. The cakes, decorated to order, are the centerpiece in a store that sells a tantalizing array of chocolates and candies, all along the theme of sex. Guaranteed, the only place to find a pair of tasty chocolate titties, surpassed only by the cream-filled penises, is here. The chocolate cakes, all handmade in the bakery in the back of the store, are the most simple aphrodisiacs available; and probably the most reliable. The lore surrounding the connection between good food and good sex is what draws customers to Sweet & Nasty.

In addition to the food, Sweet & Nasty's cluttered shelves also stock racy greeting cards, edible underwear (which cannot exactly be called food, but is rather like a Fruit Roll-Up), gag gifts, and other light-hearted novelties. The selection is limited to the tamer end of the fetish business. More penis pasta, less punishment pieces. The salesperson is friendly (unless you are a journalist with a notebook and a camera) and helpful to wanderers from the street, cheerful and familiar to those who arrive to pick up their orders. Leather: no. Body Chocolate: of course!

Hubba Hubba (534 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge) is for people who like bondage-dominance/sado-masichism (BDSM). Anyone in need of thigh-high vinyl boots, goth clothes, or a very sexy Halloween costume will not be disappointed. Hubba Hubba's wardrobe section is the best around, with a range of items from t-shirts with twisted slogans on them to floor-length, body-hugging leather dresses, laden with zippers,

laces, and snaps in provocative places. The costumes, mostly for women, are imitations of ordinary uniforms for jobs like nurses, waitresses, and maids that have been shrunk into incredibly short, tight outfits designed to fulfill role-playing fantasies. In addition to clothes, the store also has a fairly large section of bondage implements: wrist and ankle braces, harnesses, handcuffs, and even face masks. An array of whips completes the already comprehensive stock of punishment gear Hubba Hubba offers. A sizable sales rack makes the store a haven for bargain hunters.

In the glass display cases at the cash register are numerous accessories essential for any leather lover. Liquid latex, which comes in a jar roughly the same size as the body chocolate jar, is an instant, literally skintight outfit—just open and pour—to be peeled off later. Some jewelry, studded collars, and hair dye are arranged around the liquid latex. Beside these are one or two rows of dildos of various shapes and sizes. Unlike those sold in Condom World, the dildos in Hubba Hubba are not packaged and none are electronic. A few are made from translucent blown glass with intricate swirls of color inside, the kind of sex toys that could potentially double as table ornaments during the day, without too many guests guessing their true function.

In the store's entryway are stacks of flyers that seal Hubba Hubba's connection to the punk/goth scene. But the store is a good choice for anyone, regardless of his or her favorite hangouts, looking for sexy clothes or costumes. *Best of Boston*, 1998. Leather: definitely. Body chocolate: no.

Eros Boutique (581 Tremont St. #A, Boston) is an establishment full of contradictions. From the street it is easy to miss. Only a small sign bearing its name and a thin arrow pointing to the stairs marks the entrance to the second-story shop. The store's location, in the heart of the upscale South End, seems to

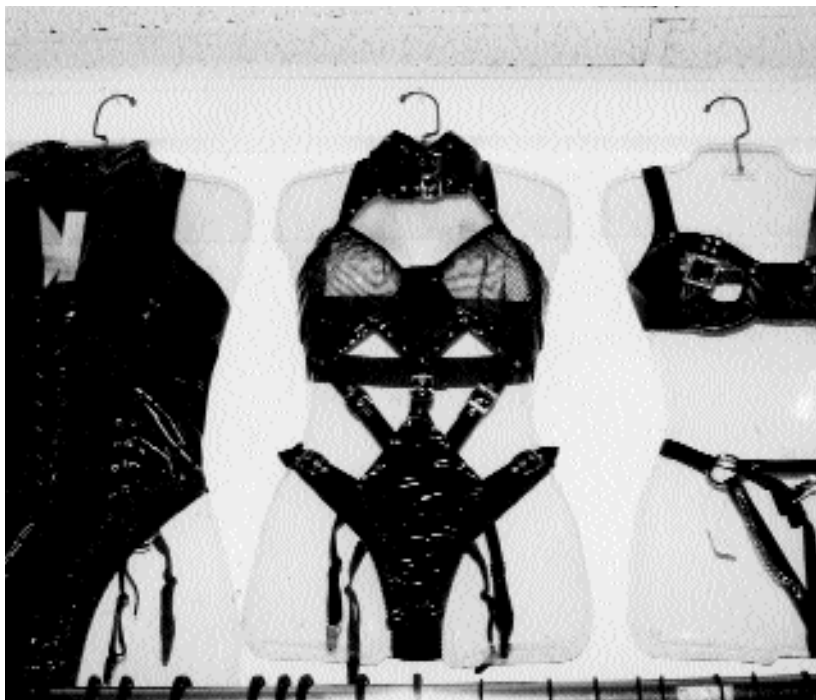


Sarah Ligon

have seeped in through the ever-open door; the decor in the stairwell is tastefully suggestive, its walls lined with Mapplethorpe photographs of lilies. Once at the top of the stairs, however, the atmosphere becomes more intense, with an industrial feel. The products are all arranged on racks and shelves, with one or two tables scattered around the room on which a single item is featured. This minimalist style matches the seriousness with which business is conducted inside. The Eros Boutique is for men who know exactly what they want and

largest variety of scented Kama Sutra candles diversify the stock, as do the contents of the display case at the front of the store. Spiked collars, chains, and other heavy-duty jewelry dominate the display. Eros Boutique also has its own assortment of flyers, as well as *The Scarlet Leather*, a mini-magazine put out by the New England Leather Alliance.

On the wall over the top of the stairs is a huge neon banana. This sneaky humor is in perfect harmony with the store's environment. Despite its high prices, Eros Boutique is a good resource



why they want it, although the expertise of the salesperson is readily available and often needed. What leather is to Hubba Hubba and chocolate is to Sweet & Nasty, rubber is to the Eros Boutique. Restraints and pleasure-enhancing contraptions are in abundance, to outfit acts that focus on the anus.

This store is more focused on men: butt plugs and cock rings outnumber dildos, and many of the rubber devices have pumps and are designed to expand around a penis in much the same way as a blood pressure gauge tightens around a forearm. Some massage oil and the

for items hard to find elsewhere. Leather: some. Body Chocolate: nope.

Amazing Video (1258 Boylston St, Boston) is the largest video porn store in the area. VHS, DVDs, and CD-ROMs are all available for rent and purchase. The store also offers a basic variety of sex toys, condoms, and other paraphernalia.

The warehouse-like setup is divided into two large rooms. The front room is rather sparse, scattered with costumes, massage oils, lubes, and accessories, such as feathers, a few toy whips, and some assorted condoms. Up a few stairs is the actual video store, with a separate regis-

ter and row upon row of porn. The videos are divided into categories based on either fetishes or sexual orientation, each category occupying its own few shelves, with even a section for foreign porn. The selection is immense and diverse, with something for every porn-seeker, unless he or she is looking for a plot. There are feature-length films devoted entirely to women's bare feet, as well as numerous spanking stories, whose covers sport pictures of women whose bare buttocks are bright red.

Also in the video room is a wall of dildos. Fake vaginas are more numerous here than at Condom World, and more elaborate. There are just as many dildos, all prepackaged for a cheaper price. There are one or two different brands of inflatable dolls (female), and there is even an inflatable rubber vagina. In addition to the more serious sex toys, there is a magazine section that far outdoes, in selection, diversity, and number, any normal bookstore or newspaper stand. It carries an expanse of extremely obscure magazines with specific focuses for various sexual orientations.

Overall, the store is reasonably priced. "Ladies save 10% every Tuesday," reads a poster on the front entrance. It is a must for anyone in the market for a feast for the eyes. Leather: no. Body Chocolate: no.

Grand Opening (318 Harvard St. #32, Brookline) is not easy to find. It is on the second floor of the Arcade, an indoor alley of small boutiques. With windows blocked by white fabric, its *Best of Boston* signs for 1999 and 2000 are the only things visible from outside. Inside the store is pink and white. It is tiny and can easily become crowded with too many customers. There are plenty of attentive and helpful salespeople packed behind a tiny checkout counter. Grand Opening, as indicated by its title, is a store for women.

A wall of books is one notable feature—no other sex shop has nearly as many. The collection of lesbian literature

is about the size of that of any large bookstore. Other titles on the shelves include instructional books about massage techniques and women's health. Grand Opening also carries one or two lines of bath products, including Dirty Girl, a brand found elsewhere in stores like Anthropologie and Jasmine Sola.

As far as sex toys go, the presentation is similar to that of Hubba Hubba. Dildos are lined up on a shelf without any wrapping or covering, and more lie stacked in a hanging basket. Each must come to his or her own conclusion about unpackaged dildos, and Grand Opening is not the place to look for brand names. The store does not sell a large number of sex toys or games—it focuses is more on literature, body products, and accessories for women. There are even a few items sold just as knickknacks, with less function and more display value. Its prices are on the high end but not outrageous, and many of its products are hard to find elsewhere. Leather: no. Body Chocolate: ought to be.

Clearly, no two sex shops offer the same selection. Each has a unique focus, and together they compile a stock of all of the most necessary and interesting sex props. Sex can be fantastic without the help of a single item from any of these stores, but their products have helped many people, both single and involved, achieve additional fulfillment. A tour of the shops is a way to expand the mind and the imagination and to overcome any reserves or hang-ups about sex. It can also be quite an amusing experience and is definitely worth the effort. Happy hunting!

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Counterpoint

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