

College Sex

(Continued from Page 1)

thing to say. "Um...how's it going?"

"Who is this?"

"Well..." I kicked the wall. I wasn't even sure she knew who I was. Fingers crossed, I told her my name.

"Oh yeah," she said finally, "now I remember — the guy with the respiratory condition, right? You know, I always wondered why they let you in P.E., you were always gasping and..."

"Say," I said, shoving a casual voice through trembling lips, "What're you doing Saturday night?" How unbelievably original, I mused glumly.

"Huh? Oh, Saturday night I'm...uh...washing my homework."

"What?"

"I mean, reading my hair...I mean..." There was a sigh, "nothing, I guess. Why?"

"Great!" I said. Damn, I thought, where does one go on a collegiate date? This was Eugene, good old there's-lots-to-do Eugene. Surely I could think of something better than....

"Dinner and a movie?" I heard myself saying.

"Sure," the voice in the earpiece said resignedly "What time?"

"Seven," I said and the depressing onslaught of déjà vu was complete. Every date I had in high school was at seven Saturday night, and all had been accepted like this one — about as enthusiastically as Socrates accepted his hemlock.

And every date that I had ever been on had been set up on Thursday, which was that day, and the interim had always been an ordeal of visitations by thousands of nameless anxieties about the upcoming event that haunted my waking and sleeping hours. Every possible catastrophe was run and rerun through my mind in such an endless profusion that by Saturday I was convinced that no matter how horrible the date was going to be, it couldn't be as disastrous as my malicious imagination had pictured it.

As usual, I was wrong.

The calamities began even before I stepped out the door, for during my traditional pre-date shave I suffered my traditional pre-date nick; or, more precisely, gash, leaving me scarred, anemic and almost shirtless as the crimson tide from my chin flowed over

my dress shirts as fast as I could change them.

The procession of mis-events continued unhesitatingly after I exited the dorm. My car non-started perfectly. I was late enough to make Sheila angry, but early enough to make a mad dash to the restaurant seem worthwhile, and we arrived just in time to miss our reservation. We crossed the street through a gloomy drizzle and dejectedly munched DC burgers while I tried to make conversation.

"So...what's your major?"

"Health and recreation," she answered.

There didn't seem to be much else to say, so we stared mutely through the grease-streaked windows into the damp night.

Movie time was 9 — it was a campus flick called "Roofer Madness." A friend of mine had recommended it, saying it was a hilarious, campy anti-shingle film of the 1930s, guaranteed to loosen up the iciest relationship.

As we shuffled out of 150 Science three hours later I made a mental note to look up my friend later so I could strangle him. Aside from the fact that it started a half hour late and the place was so choked with shingle smoke that we could hardly breathe, the movie was plotless, characterless and almost criminally boring — celluloid tripe of the lowest order.

But we endured it, and perhaps it was best that the film was such a travesty, for it ended the nightmarish date of a consistently depressing note. Like broken

steeds, we trudged back to Sheila's dorm, where, in a last-ditch effort at chivalry, I put her card-key in the slot, only to have it gobbled up and spit back at us in shreds. After 15 minutes of shouting, Sheila's roommate finally got out of bed and let us in.

I felt like a kidnapper returning his victim.

"Well," she said, "thanks for the nice time."

"Thanks for saying that," I said, "but tonight was about as enjoyable as the Inquisition and we both know it. I'm sorry, Sheila — for some reason everytime I go on a date the Fates and my own insecurities gang up to put a double whammy on it. I don't know...maybe I should just give up on women..."

"...Or on dates," Sheila said. "Why don't you try coming over and just talking sometime?"

"Sure," I said, but my heart wasn't in it. We seemed to have nothing in common, and I couldn't think of a single topic that we could discuss. Tired and depressed, we exchanged the most passionless kiss imaginable and she slipped into her room.

I should have left then, but her roommate's voice passing easily through the thin door stopped me.

"Well...how was it?"

The sigh was so deep and profound that the door seemed to vibrate.

"Man," I heard Sheila says wonderingly. "College sure isn't the mad sexual whirl I thought it would be in high school"

I smiled. We had plenty to talk about after all.

Solar system understanding changed through observation

By CAL PIERCE
Of the Emerald

The discovery of life on Mars could top off the U.S. bicentennial celebration if a July 4 Martian soft landing is successful, a space geologist told University listeners Wednesday.

Planetary exploration and new earth-based observational techniques have changed our understanding of the inner solar system, said Robert Strom, a long-time NASA research associate.

Strom, a member of the Department of Planetary Sciences and Lunar and Planetary Laboratory at the University of Arizona, spoke of recent exploration of

Mercury, Venus, Earth, the Moon and Mars.

These bodies, Strom explained, are called the terrestrial planets because their small sizes and high densities are earth-like. Since all five occupy orbits near the sun, they are closer for scientific study than the distant giant gaseous planets like Jupiter.

Extensive photographic evidence of former water erosion on Mars, including meandering river beds, makes discovery of life on that planet more likely than ever, Strom said.

He noted the U.S. plans to soft-land a Mariner instrument package on Mars July 4. The probe will attempt to detect life.

"Even if the tests are negative,

that certainly won't rule out the possibility of life on Mars," Strom said.

Vast seasonal color changes on Mars, once regarded as signs of vegetation, are now known to arise from movements of wind-blown dust, he said.

Mars possesses "the largest known volcano in the solar system," Strom noted. "Mons Olympus" towers 80,000 feet over the Martian landscape and is some 350 miles in diameter.

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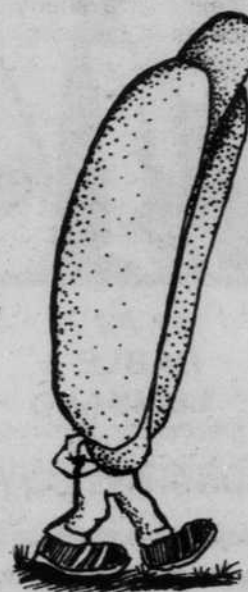
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