

U.LIFE Meet the Undead Goeds

VAMPIRES HAVE INVADDED the campus, and it's going to take more than holy water and garlic to stop them.

"I really feel as though nobody would understand if I just came out and told them the truth," says Ohio State U. senior Greg Dearing, a self-proclaimed vampire. "I mean, how do you tell your friends that you have a taste for blood? Until now, it's something I've kept a secret."

OFFBEAT

Thanks in part to novels by Anne Rice and Margaret Carter, movies and role-playing games, the fascination with and study of vampires is quickly becoming a major part of pop culture on campus.

"It's all around us — you can't escape it," says Sharon Evanich, a grad student studying folklore at Southwestern U. in Texas. "They have vampire bars in San Francisco, Chicago and Atlanta. You can't swing a dead cat without hitting a vampire."

Evanich has participated in bloodsports — she watched a vampire enthusiast partake of her mortal blood. "It was very melodramatic," she says. "I pricked my finger and bled into his chalice. He made a big production out of drinking it."

English and folklore professors also note the soaring popularity of vampire culture portrayed in Gothic literature and history.

"[Vampires in novels] used to be nothing but a bunch of bloodsucking psychos, but now authors are starting to give them more human



Does being a vampire suck?

characteristics," says David Van Becker, professor emeritus of English at San Jose State U.

"I have to bear [the students] away with a stick!" says Elizabeth Miller, whose literature class at Canada's Memorial U. covers historic vampire works from John Polidori to Bram Stoker. "There is a revived interest in the Gothic, vampires in particular."

Students feed their interest in

vampires outside of class, too. Vampire: The Masquerade, created in 1991 by White Wolf Inc., is a role-playing game students play in either a dice-based or live-action version.

The Camarilla, an international Masquerade enthusiasts club based in Salt Lake City, reports that 50 to 70 percent of its current 3,000-plus membership is composed of college students.

"It's a great way to get out some frustrations, and it's a challenge for me. It forces me to be creative," says Michael Nicholien, a junior at Ohio's Hiram College who organizes Masquerade games on campus.

But beyond the books and games, how about a live interview with a vampire?

"I first started drinking blood when I was a kid and would cut my finger," Dearing says. "When I was a freshman in college, I met a girl [who was] into the same thing."

"I am what I am. I don't turn into a bat; but I can go out in the daylight. I like the taste of blood. And I do believe in vampires."

David Fong, Ohio State U./Photo by John Cox, Eastern Illinois U.



Not kinky sex. No sex.

Let's Talk About Sex (NOT!)

SOME STUDENTS AREN'T putting up with putting out. In a world where phone sex and cybersex are at your fingertips, there's a new college virgin on campus, and it's not the shy, religious prude of the past.

Debbie Yuan, a graduate of Columbia U., says she's enjoying the simplicities of life as a college virgin.

URGE

"I'm not a religious person, so my decision has nothing to do with religion," Yuan says. "It's just about family values and the way I was raised."

David Chamberlin, special assistant to the vice president of the Family Research Council, insists that the number of students who are saving sex for marriage is growing.

However, according to Koray Tanfer, a senior research scientist at the Batelle Memorial Institute, which conducts sex studies and surveys, sex among college-aged adults is not decreasing. He says the fear of STDs hasn't curtailed sex or the risky behavior associated with casual sex.

Esther Chen, a law student and UCLA graduate, says her decision to save sex for marriage is more about the breach of trust and the heartache that go along with premarital sex.

"There are times people think I don't have a life because I haven't done it," she says, but as a law student, a bass guitarist and vice president of the Christian legal society, Chen begs to differ.

Stephon Payne, a senior at Temple U. in Pennsylvania, says he and his fiancée have a stronger relationship because of their decision to abstain from sex.

"Instead of 'bumping and grinding,' we took the route of getting to know each other," he says. "[But] we do have urges to sex each other up."

But what about those who have had sex? Is there such a thing as a born-again virgin?

Chamberlin says yes: "We call it a clean slate. Students are learning the hard way that sex without marriage is empty."

Payne and his fiancée had both had sex with other people before they began dating but are waiting until they're married to have sex again.

Hugs, kisses and cuddles are as far as he and his fiancée go, he says, and finding substitutes for sex isn't difficult.

"We do other things together, and we're still sharing each other," Payne says. "Sex isn't the ultimate thing to give in a relationship."

Kia Morgan, Norfolk State U./Photo by Jay Clendenin, San Jose State U.



"It's scary for college vampires in the '90s — they always have to remember to practice safe sucks."