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Students say 'ja,' 'sí,' 'oui' to informal group conversations

French, Spanish, Italian and German programs hold informal meetings to practice conversational speaking

Jennifer Bear

Campus/City Culture Reporter

A student walking into Pegasus Smokehouse Pizza midweek is likely to find more than just pizza and beer. Wednesday evenings, the pizza parlor becomes a cultural hub when Tertulia and Le Cercle Français, groups from the Spanish and French language programs, have weekly conversations without ever slipping into English. Informal gatherings like Tertulia and Le Cercle Français, as well as conversation groups from the Italian and German programs, offer a chance to converse outside of the classroom in a relaxed setting where students can eat and drink while they speak

Sophomore Anna Metz said attending a group helped her because she often became flustered when she first began to speak Spanish.

The first night I went I felt a little awkward and didn't talk as much as other people," Metz said.

Enrico Vettore, Italian GTF and organizer of Serata Italiana, said most beginners are like Metz and prefer not to speak the first few times they attend a conversation group. He added, however, that the majority of students who attend Serata Italiana, which meets Thurs-

days at 6 p.m. at Pegasus Pizza, ease up after a few weeks and begin participating. The conversation is less restrained than in a classroom setting, and the more advanced speakers don't correct newcomers or dictate conversation, Vettore said.

Associate Professor Emeritus Helmut Plant has been helping to organize Stammtisch, the German conversation group, for more than 30 years. Every Tuesday evening at 8 p.m. Stammtisch, which means "table of regulars," meets at Track Town Pizza.

Stammtisch attendance extends beyond just University students and faculty, Plant said. German immigrants and German-speaking community members often sit in with the group on Tuesday nights.

He added Stammtisch has not only helped people to improve German comprehension and conversation, it has also nurtured the growth of a lot of close friendships. Plant said many members of the group go on hiking and skiing trips that he organizes, and afterwards they often stop for coffee and pie.

Hilary Fisher, supervisor of the first-year French program, said the attendance at Le Cercle Français usually falls in the range of 25 to 40 people. Fisher said the increased enthusiasm for the group meetings reflects the efforts of the GTFs to drum up support. She added that Le Cercle Français attracts many

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Students Having Smarter Sex, Says New Survey, But More **Education Needed**

New research about the sexual habits of students
Survey results suggest that three out of four is offering a positive look at what might really be happening behind closed doors.

New survey results suggest students ages 18-24 take sex and monogamy seriously and that more men than women in this age group say they are virgins. The survey also showed that most students know the basics of "safe and smart" sex (using both barrier and hormonal contraceptives), but there is still a need for more communication and reliable resources.

For the Smarter Sex Survey, sponsored by Bacchus and Gamma Peer Education Network and Pharmacia Corporation, makers of DEPO-PROVERA® Contraceptive Injection (medroxyprogesterone acetate injectable suspension), 1,051 men and women ages 18-24, currently enrolled in school, participated in an online survey that asked about various sexual topics ranging from contraception to sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

The survey revealed that about 34 percent of males surveyed have not had sex, compared to 18 percent of females surveyed -in part because more women than men reported being in infections (STIs). Depo-Provera should not monogamous relationships. In general, both men be used by women with known or suspected and women scored well when asked about STIs, pregnancy, unexplained vaginal bleeding, HIV, and contraception - with 89 percent breast cancer, blood clots, liver disease or a agreeing that monogamous couples should get history of stroke. Some women using Depofirst tested for HIV before they stop using Provera do experience side effects, with the condoms. .

on relationships, emphasizing the importance of for them, young women should consult their monogamy and healthy relationships. On health care provider. For important product average, those surveyed had 1.2 sexual partners information, visit the Web site at during the last year.

knowledge they need to make smart sexual health decisions. But more information is always beneficial," says Drew Hunter, executive director, Bacchus and Gamma. "If students truly *When taken as scheduled - just four times a know the facts, we should see a further reduction in unintended pregnancy and STI transmission making it one of the most reliable prescription in unintended pregnancy and STI transmission

To provide more information about smart and safe sex, a new website, www.Smartersex.org has



women (73 percent) do not use a condom as a back-up method when they have missed a birth control pill - the form of birth control used by most women surveyed. And, more than half of the survey participants (62 percent) believe they can tell if someone has an STI "just by looking," even though the two most common STIs, chlamydia and HPV, may not exhibit any noticeable symptoms

"A problem is that women and their partners don't always use contraception correctly or consistently, which puts them at risk," says Margaret Bridwell, MD, OB/GYN, and Director of the University Health Center, University of Maryland. "With so many birth control methods available that do not require daily dosing, such as DEPO-PROVERA®, we hope that information on www.Smartersex.org will encourage women to discuss with their healthcare providers what birth control options may be better suited to their

Depo-Provera does not protect against HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted most common side effect being irregular menstrual bleeding or spotting. To find out if Likewise, men and women share similar views Depo-Provera is the right birth control option www.depoprovera.com.

"The good news is that most students have the For more information on the Smarter Sex Survey and sexual health topics or to test your own "sex smarts," visit www.SmarterSex.org.

contraceptives available to young women.

been established to help college students manage their sexual health safely and smartly.