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★ AMERICA VOTES 2004 ★

## Catholics split over Kerry's platform

Catholic voters grapple with stem-cell research and abortion, which the religion condemns

BY MORIAH BALINGIT  
NEWS REPORTER

For many, the decision of who to support this presidential election will be a difficult one. Where candidates stand on several critical issues, including the economy and the war in Iraq, plays a key role in how people will vote. But many Catholics face a unique predicament: The Democratic candidate, Sen. John Kerry, is Catholic — some of his political platform, however, is not.

Kerry is pro-choice, while abortion is explicitly condemned by the Catholic Church. Additionally, Kerry supports stem-cell research, which the Catholic Church also opposes if the stem cells are taken from fetuses.

Catholics, constituting nearly 27 percent of the electorate, have traditionally formed a solid and reliable Democratic voting bloc, according to religionwriters.com. But according to an article from the Associated Press, the Democratic Party's stance on issues such as abortion and stem-cell research is causing that bloc to erode.

Bud Bunce, the communication director for the Archdiocese of Portland, which represents the Catholic churches on the western side of the state, said the Catholic Church does not advise its congregation on how to vote.

"The Catholic Church does not take any sort of stance on political candidates," he said.

But last spring, Portland Archbishop John G. Vlazny wrote a letter to the Catholic Sentinel, a Catholic publication, addressing whether or not Catholic politicians whose politics contradicted Church teachings should receive Holy Communion. Receiving communion is a critical part of a Catholic's weekly devotion.

Vlazny said that these politicians, in his view, should not receive communion.

"As a teacher ... I can clearly state that, when individuals choose not to be in communion with the Church by their public dissident in serious matters, they should refrain from the reception of Holy Communion," he said in the letter.

Vlazny added, quite controversially, that some Catholic voters should also refrain from receiving communion.

"If (Catholics) vote for (pro-choice politicians) because they are pro-choice, I believe they too should refrain from the reception of Holy Communion because they are not in communion with the Catholic on a serious matter," he added in the letter.

Many University Catholic students agreed with Vlazny's statements.

"If you believe strongly enough against what the Church teaches, then you should question your membership in the Church," graduate student Molly Emmons said in response to the letter last spring.

Former University student and practicing Catholic Mike Petersen said he felt Catholic politicians whose political views contradict the Church "represent my beliefs falsely."

KERRY, page 10A

## DEFENSIVE VICTORY



ERIK R. BISHOFF | PHOTOGRAPHER

Oregon running back Terrence Whitehead ran for 122 yards and a touchdown Saturday during the Ducks' 31-6 victory against Washington. See story inside on page 11.

## Men urged to up health exam frequency

The Health Center grants improved STI screening and contraceptive counseling through FPEP

BY KARA HANSEN  
NEWS REPORTER

In an effort to bring men's reproductive health services up to par with those of women, the University Health Center is offering comprehensive annual exams for male students.

The health center has offered the upgraded exam since the beginning of fall term and is strongly encouraging men to come in annually for sexually transmitted infection screening and contraceptive counseling through the Family

Planning Expansion Project, a government-funded program providing free birth control and access to low-cost reproductive health care to men and women whose incomes meet certain criteria.

While the services aren't new to those who qualify for FPEP, they demonstrate an expansion of offerings for men in a program that has traditionally catered to women. The improved exams will be longer and will combine contraceptive counseling with STI screening, health history and education.

"FPEP is primarily for contraception," said Annie Dochnahl, a health educator at the health center. "Since women have more options available through it and men only have one, men's access has been a little more limited."

The plan to improve men's services has been in the works since last spring, when it became apparent that many men were using FPEP services to get condoms, University physician Ben Douglas said.

"We wondered if there was some kind of corresponding thing we could do for them," Douglas said. "We looked at what we do for women's annual exams, which we do once a year, and we kind of came up with a similar thing."

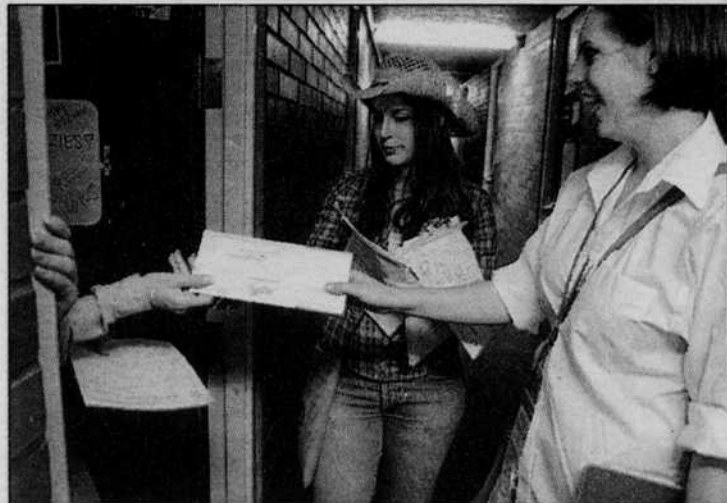
From July 2000 through June 2004, 1,440 males enrolled in FPEP at the University, compared with 7,803 females, according to statistics provided by the health center's medical billings clerk, Tricia Gregg.

Douglas said men have primarily used FPEP services in the past to get condoms and to be checked for symptoms of an STI. Now they can be screened if they have certain risk factors, and many college-age men do, he said.

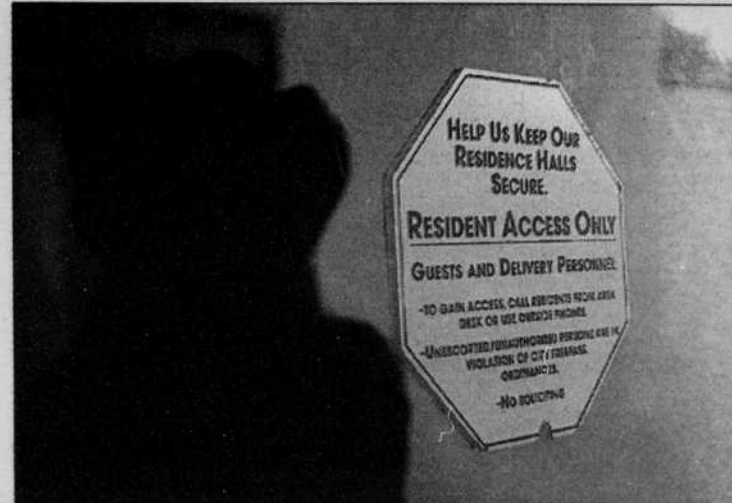
While individuals who have HIV or use intravenous drugs are considered high risk for sexually transmitted infections, those who have had a new partner in the past two

HEALTH, page 10A

## CANVASSING CAMPUS



Left: Senior political science major Dunya Chirchi, center, and junior medieval studies major Alexis Eudy pick up ballots in Bean Complex on Sunday. Right: Chirchi tries to canvass at Bean but is denied access. She was eventually allowed in through a back door.



TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTOGRAPHER