

**Flying solo,
a touchy subject**



SEX

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We may be touching on a subject that makes people a little uncomfortable, but it's something that most people have either done or have thought about doing. The first topic for the new and improved sex column will be masturbation. This, as most people know, is the act of stimulating ones own genitalia in order to get sexual arousal, usually ending in an orgasm.

Many people think of masturbation as a safer alternative to sex, which is true because there is no way of getting pregnant or catching any sexually transmitted disease. This is not a how-to on masturbating. The goal is to make one more aware of what it may be, what is normal and if it is or is not bad for one's health.

When asked if sex or masturbation is better, Phat Tran, sophomore at Clackamas Community College said, "Fornication with a woman delivers me to a stage of complete ecstasy while masturbation reminds me of how lonely I am." While most people would agree to this, it is a nice way to relieve stress.

Masturbation is not a new thing to the people in the world. It has been around for hundreds of years. Even in ancient times, it has been recorded that men and women would masturbate.

There are a lot of myths about masturbation. People think you can go blind, get acne, grow hair on your palms or die from pleasuring yourself. So while one is walking down the street and you see either a blind person or someone who has quite a lot of acne, or extremely hairy hands, don't assume they masturbate uncontrollably. This is just a myth.

Many people wouldn't confess to masturbating. Men more commonly will joke around about pleasuring themselves, while women keep it to themselves. Masturbation is normal. It's normal if you do it and it's normal if you don't. There are many ways that people can masturbate. "A range of ways is 'normal,'" said Paul Joannides, a psychoanalyst in Waldport, OR.

Another myth about masturbating is that it is bad for you, for men it's been said that it can reduce the amount of semen they can produce and makes them infertile. The truth about it is that it doesn't reduce the amount of semen any man can produce and it most definitely doesn't make them infertile. For women it was believed that it reduces their chance of ever becoming pregnant and reduces their sex drive. In fact, this is almost opposite. It actually stimulates ones hormones and can give women more of a likely possibility to get pregnant.

Dildos and fleshlights have become quite popular sex toys, being sold in many sex shops all across the world as well as on the Internet. Masturbation aids are something people talk about more and more and they aren't as embarrassing as they once were to own. No matter if you use a toy or just your hand, reaching the climax is all that matters because it is medically proven to relieve stress and improve ones day.

"It can improve a depressed mood," said Kathleen Segraves, a sex therapist and associate professor of psychiatry at Case Western Reserve University and a therapist at Metrohealth Medical Center in Cleveland, Ohio. "Not clinical depression, but the 'blue funk' days."

"With solo sex, there is no distraction and you can focus on your own experience without making sure someone else is having a good time," Segraves said.

In conclusion, if you choose to masturbate or have fun with a partner, it is your choice, but being safe is key. Just remember, lock your door, use protection or any necessity and have a good time.

PLAYWRIGHT: THE LOST BOY

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"There are so many schools being closed right now. The classroom sizes are out of control. All of this is supposed to be saving education when it's really, well, it's killing it," said Mach.

One of the most frequently recurring themes of the play is that there is no measure of education.

"I read a book, it's by Diane Ravitch, called 'The Death and Life of the Great American School System,'" said Mach. "[is the book is about the] potential that comes with the testing for test masters and software creators that are getting an awful lot of money off of the public school system," as well as that "I mean, it's in the higher education too, but the story just sort of manifested itself."

Mach, in regards to her involvement in the production of the plays themselves, stated that she attended the auditions, but that she did not make any final decisions about anyone involved; including directors, actors and the theater companies themselves.

During the "talk-back" which took place after the Jan. 12 show, Ellen Fader, a retired librarian with her Master's degree, described the show as "theater of the absurd. Unfortunately, this is a reality."

The "talk-back" gave the audience a chance to comment on the play or ask questions and clarify. In response

to multiple questions pertaining to the topic of race, the director stated he believed there was an "emphasis on poverty over race."

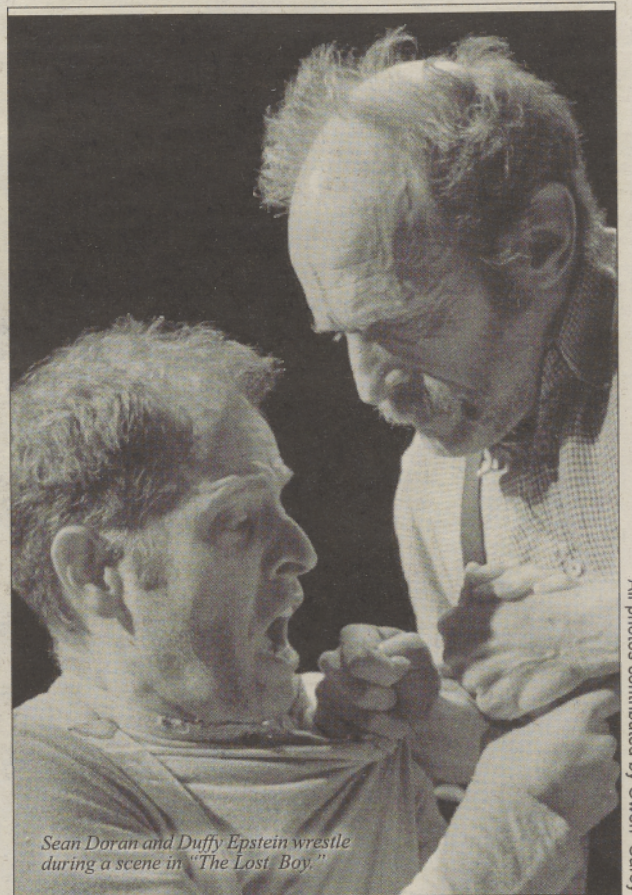
Mach's husband, Bruce Burkhartsmeier, a high school teacher at West View High School in Portland, is performing in the show alongside Jacklyn Maddux, Maureen Porter, Jon San Nicolas, Rolland Walsh, Gavin Hoffman and is directed by Philip Cuomo the executive director of Portland Actor's Conservatory.

The show runs through Feb. 3. Additionally, "The Lost Boy" is being performed at the Artist's Reparatory Theater off of 15th and Morrison in the downtown Portland area. The play has won the Angus L. Bowmer award for drama at the 2011 OBA and is about a young boy from a rich family who has been abducted and is being held for ransom. The play has been described as colorful and takes place in Pennsylvania amidst a circus in the mid 1870s.

The recurring theme of the play is exploitation, specifically in reference to a parent's vulnerability.

Linda Davis, who was visiting Portland from New Hampshire, described the play as "eye-catching."

"The Lost Boy" stars Michael Fisher-Welsh, Dana Millican, Sam Dinkowitz, Luisa Sermol, Gray Eubank, Sean Doran, Duffy Epstein and Doren Elias. The show is directed by Allen Nause and runs through Feb. 10.



Sean Doran and Duffy Epstein wrestle during a scene in "The Lost Boy."

All photos contributed by Owen Carey

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Artists Dana Millican & Michael Fisherwslh perform together in the play "The Lost Boy."

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