

CONDOM-NATION

History, scope of condoms span from Rome to testing line

AGGIELIFE

BY STEPHEN WELLS The Battalion

ife would be better if the real world played like a commercial. A lazy Sunday pool party could turn into a carnal carnival with the addi-Aggies Up Lion of a certain brew of beer; airlines would actually care if the lug-There will be: ge ended up in the same country as the passenger, and the Trojan Man ould arrive on his horse with plenty of time to spare before the clothes in MSC 225. Sarah Elliot

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> For those who do not have a condom cowboy and his trusty ride to re-ind them to practice safer sex, this week has been set aside as Nation-3740 for n

> Society of National Condom Week began in 1978 at the University of California Military David Mayer and several students. The object was to use humor to get ross the message of safer sex through condom use. It has since blospervisor of med into a national awareness week and health symposium.

> Margaret Griffith, the health education coordinator at A.P. Beutel Health CUSS TWA enter, said condoms are a viable option for students who are looking to have sex without exposing themselves to all of the risk involved in a sexual relationship.

"People seem to want a way to have sex with no risk at all involved," Griffith said. "There's not one. Even inside of marriage, there's a risk of tting a sexually transmitted disease if one of the partners steps outside bounds of marriage. Condoms do provide a good protection against

Texas A& pregnancy, against bacterial infections like gonorrhea and syphilis and ainst the HIV virus.'

Rugby: The Although it was not until 1978 that a coordinated effort to spread the ord about condoms was begun, evidence suggests condoms have been ound since prehistory. In his book *Extraordinary Origins of Everyday* the polo fields Zachry parki ungs, Charles Panati explains the history of the condom. tices are open

Evidence suggests even the Romans and Egyptians used condoms one. No expe ade out of oiled animal urinary bladders and lengths of intestine. While essary. Ca 775-4220 for ese may not be the most romantic things to slip into on a cold night, ey beat the older stretched leather sheaths in comfort and reliability.

Just as scientists now honor Michael Faraday and Issac Newton by ming laws after them, randy young adults pay homage to the Earl of Waterski Tea ondom every time they enter a convenience store with a gleam in their will be pract

p.m. at the Dr. Condom was the personal physician to the adulterous King Charles who commissioned him to invent a device to protect all the king's lit-- they don't keep condoms in a wallet, where will they keep them? A wal-

tle men from venereal diseases.

Likewise, the word "rubber" was coined after the introduction of the thick, vulcanized rubber condoms of the 1870s, something men should consider when they complain about the comfort issue.

These older generation condoms pale in comparison to the latex condom of today. Often, the failure rate of a condom is not due to poor engineering or industrial processes, but the age-old guy tradition of refusing to follow directions.

There's a lot of user failure when people use condoms because, and I'm not saying this to be condescending, guys are not exactly noted for reading or following directions," Griffith said. "Condoms come with directions that people should read. There's a trick to using a condom prop-

Barring mistakes on the part of the do-it-yourself male population, today's condom is a lean, mean organ-protecting machine. Guidelines for testing condoms vary from state to state, but some tests are performed for every batch in every area.

Just as an artist cannot possibly paint a masterpiece with inferior brush-es, condoms cannot protect well if they are made from inferior latex. Before the first condom is poured into the mold, the entire batch of latex is tested.

"The FDA runs entire batches of condoms through a prescribed regimen with prescribed tests to determine whether or not they are safe," Griffith said. "Last year a batch of Lifestyles failed a test and the entire shipment was recalled. A warning was issued immediately.

Finished condoms must endure grueling torture tests on par with Navy SEAL training to prove their worth. One test, called the bursting test, pumps the condom full of air until it pops like a balloon. The tensile test stretches the condom until it snaps. Holes are discovered by either filling the condom with water and looking for leaks or by passing electricity through the condom.

For the majority of college students, electricity passing through a con-dom is not a common hazard no matter how good their partner is. A condom's kryptonite is heat, and some misinformation has surfaced about the effects of heat on a condom.

The first thing you should look at in a condom is the date," Griffith said. "And you want to store it in a place that is not too hot or too cold. I tell guys to keep theirs in a wallet They've heard all along not to do that, but they can for a short period of time without damaging the condom. If let is cooler than a pants pocket.

Females who want to protect their bodies should not harbor any doubts about carrying condoms with them.

Amy Barkley, a freshman general studies major, said carrying a condom is a protective measure against unsafe sex

"I think a lot of girls consider it the man's job to keep a condom with him for protection," Barkley said. "A lot of girls may think their job is to take the pill and count on the man to have a condom ready when he needs one. Pills won't keep you from getting a disease

Sexually transmitted diseases are a great threat to college students. As many as 33,000 Americans, most of them under 30, are infected daily with a sexually transmitted disease because of a lack of protection daily. Those who only use protection during genital-genital contact are reducing their risk of many STDs, but oral-genital contact can spread some forms of Hepatitis, which may ultimately lead to cancer.

Luckily, Americans are becoming more responsible. nine-hundred-million condoms were sold last year, 40 percent of them to women.

"I don't think it is a bad thing for a girl to buy a condom," Barkley said. "Maybe it meant you were a 'bad girl' a long time ago. Today buying a condom means you are trying to protect yourself and your partner when you have sex. It's not as criticized as it must have been for older people."

There is also more good news for cash-strapped Aggies. Condoms are cheap. Anybody knows to buy cheap they must buy in bulk, but going to a warehouse store for a gross of condoms can be quite embarrassing.

One attractive option is to buy from the various non-profit organizations interested in keeping disease and unexpected pregnancy at bay. With \$5, any Aggie can walk into Planned Parenthood and buy a dozen condoms with enough money leftover to buy half a pack of post-coital cigarettes

Beutel Health Center has another option available for students who would rather not have their parents asking questions about a check written out to Planned Parenthood. A box of ten Trojan brand condoms costs only \$2 and can be placed on a fee statement under the heading "phar-

Like last week's Sexual Responsibility Week, National Condom Week is stressing education over field study. Those students who would like more information about condom use or other sexual matters without resorting to trial and error can visit the health education center in room 016 at the Beutel Health Center.

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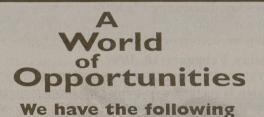
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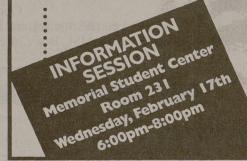
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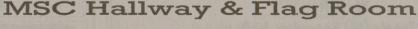
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