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Editorial/Opinion

A “home novelties” party

By Paige Cram, Collegian Columnist
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While other people are busy focusing on all the problems in the world right now, I’m doing my best to maintain a positive outlook. Lately it seems that every piece of news talks of the looming threat of one potential disaster or another, and while the war with Iraq and the academic and financial future of UMass are certainly important topics, we will drive ourselves crazy if that is all we think and talk about. We’re young and we should be having fun. Our biggest worry is that someone we love will be sent abroad. And I for one will not be cheated of my youth just because we are living in a time of turmoil. Yes, it’s scary. Yes, I’m worried. And yes, we should all be aware and educated about what’s going on in the world outside our little UMass bubble. But we can’t forget to still have fun and enjoy this time while we can. So, while everyone else talks about Saddam, Osama and Romney, I’m going to talk about something a little more trivial: my weekend.

This past weekend, my friend and I took a day trip to Boston. We did a little shopping and we ate dinner out, but the main point of our trip to the city was to visit my friend (everyone’s name has been changed to protect their innocence), Molly’s sister, who was having a gathering at her house. Now, this wasn’t exactly your typical Saturday afternoon gathering. I’m sure you’ve all heard of Tupperware parties where a woman comes to the house, does her sales pitch, shows her merchandise and offers all those in attendance a chance to make purchases. Pampered Chef, which sells all kinds of cooking utensils, offers a similar service. And, apparently there are companies that do this for all sorts of thins. The party that my friends and I attended this past Saturday was for “home novelties,” which we discovered was another name for sex toys. Yes, that’s right: sex toys.

I have to admit we were all intrigued when Molly first told us about the idea. None of us knew what to expect, but we imagined that at the very least it would be a hilarious way to spend an afternoon, so we got up early and took a little road trip to the eastern part of the state.

Missy, who was the salesperson for Athena's Home Novelties, began her presentation by reading a series of double meaning riddles: “A four letter word that means woman and ends in –unt.” Think you know the answer?

Next, she proceeded to explain a new version of hot potato, played by passing a rubber dildo from person to person, not with our hands but with our knees. We were quite an interesting sight: ten women in a circle turning red with laughter as we passed the bright

blue toy around to see who would be left standing with it between her legs. For each of these games and others, Missy provided tickets to the winner that were later used in a raffle to win prizes such as penis-shaped ice trays and nude decks of cards.

The final part of Missy's sales pitch was to have show-and-tell. She brought out her most popular selling items (and some of her personal favorites) and, one by one, gave a detailed explanation as she passed the items around the room. And let me tell you, the threats of terrorism, war, budget cuts and tuition hikes all go out the window when you're sitting in a room full of women who are passing around items like "Good Head", a lotion that came flavored in cinnamon, chocolate or mint, or the "Clitopatra," an eight inch rotating vibrator with the face of an Egyptian pharaoh.

After two hours or so, Missy's presentation was concluded. And as we all walked out to the car carrying our discreet brown paper bags full of goodies, we realized that we had, for a few hours at least, managed not to think about any of the things that worried us. For that afternoon, we were just your typical college kids doing some typical (okay maybe not-so-typical) crazy thing. Now, maybe not all of you will have the opportunity to attend a sex toys party, and maybe not all of you would want to, but the point is that you have to be able to kick back sometimes. Even with all the chaos going on in the world right now, you still have to be able to step back from the seriousness of life once and a while, and just laugh. Oh, and by the way, the answer to that riddle is aunt, so get your mind out of the gutter.