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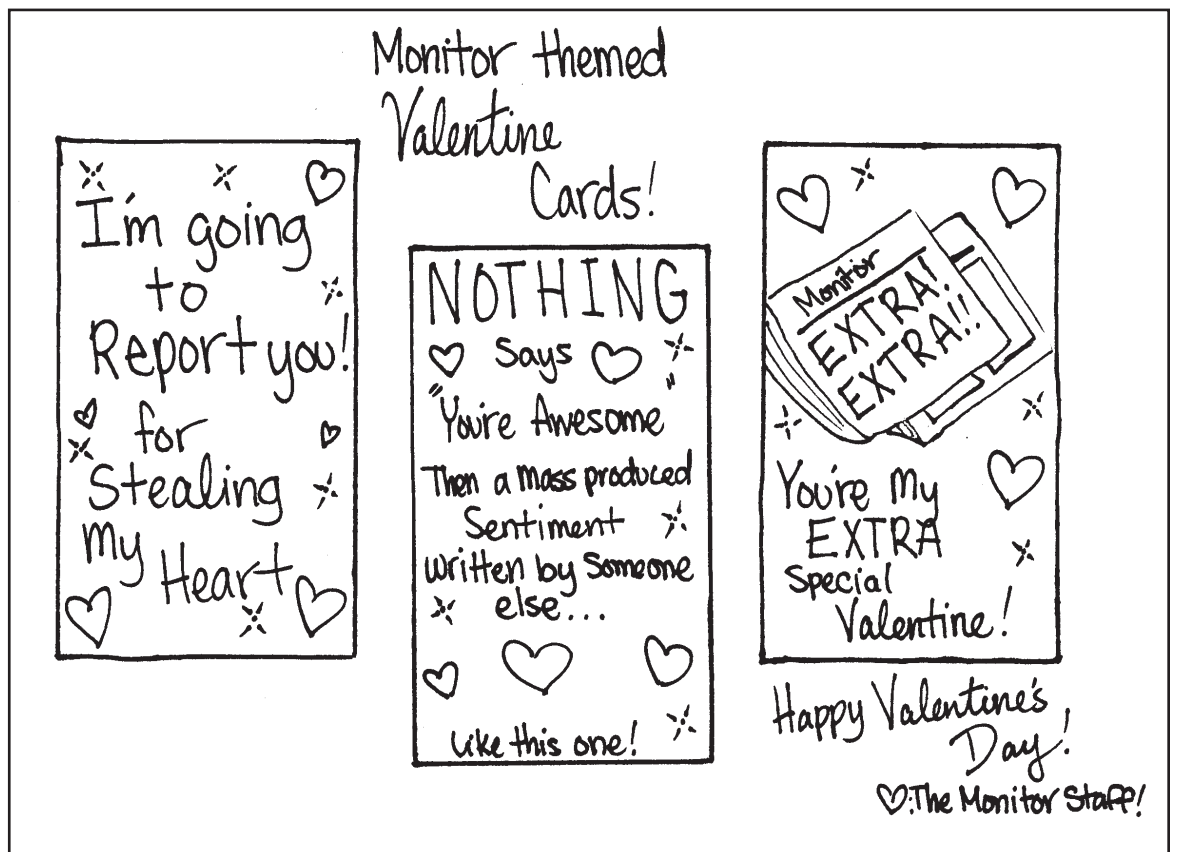


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OPINION

Accessible restrooms must be college priority

By **INEZ BLACK**
Staff writer

I remember a time when the color of one's skin determined if a person could use a public bathroom. With today's political correctness, restroom discrimination can fall below the radar.

Discrimination for access to this essential function exists for a group of Ohlone students, though the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides universal bathroom access.

Imagine if when you needed to use the bathroom, it was extremely difficult or impossible to do by

yourself? This is the reality for female students with disabilities at Ohlone. I have found no ADA accessible restrooms for females on the entire campus.

One professor commented that she found a female student in a wheelchair inside the bathroom at Hyman Hall, waiting for someone to come in so she could ask them to open the door for her and let her out.

As there is a male staff member using a wheelchair at Ohlone, there are two restrooms with push-buttons out of the nine public ones – one in Building 4 and another in Building 1.

Of the nine women's bathrooms, none have automatic doors. Though there were no female faculty members requiring accessible bathrooms when the doors for Buildings 1 and 4 were installed, they should have been added for the women's restrooms.

This problem affects more than students using wheelchairs or crutches. People with neck, back, and arm injuries, or with disabilities affecting strength or balance, find it difficult to open the over-sized, solid doors at Ohlone which, even with good hinges, are extremely heavy.

And if you are able to open the

doors to get in, it shuts on you if you are slow going through. Wheelchair user Nathan Torres, who is studying medicine, said, "there should be retractable springs on the bathroom doors, which would slowly close the door, and allow enough time to get through in a wheelchair."

Accessing the toilet stalls isn't any easier. Ben, an accounting major who uses a wheelchair, stated, "Restrooms in [many] buildings... cause problems for wheelchair users... Most people can use them, but on Building 1's second floor, if you are completely wheelchair bound and need your chair to enter the stall, it is not usable."

Director of Facilities Lucky Lofton indicated proposals were submitted to the state addressing these problems, and it is a definite concern of the college. To install the automatic door for one women's restroom is \$10,000 to \$15,000.

Money is tight and upgrading these doors to ADA standards would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. But a few corporations had a great year, and maybe they can be approached by Ohlone's grant writers. From experience, I know this is a viable option for the college to consider. Please start with a couple accessible bathrooms for women at Hyman Hall and on the Quad.

Learning to play it safe is no joke, seriously

By **ANKITA CHHABRA**
Staff writer

So...let's talk about sex.

That's all it is, just three simple letters put together that make up one of the most dreaded topics that people still avoid talking about. I had a friend back in high school who was a devoted Christian, and her motto for all the so-called "sinners" was that, "You either live by the words of God or you die by the diseases which are a punishment." Pretty cruel words, don't you think?

I thought so too, until I realized how many uneducated teenagers are out there that have not been made aware of the risks involved with not practicing safe sex. The fact that a girl can end up with an unexpected life form in nine months is just one of the many results.

First off, I want to say I understand the religious viewpoints on this issue. The idea is that sex is a "grown-ups" thing, and us "kids" should just wait to get married and then learn about the birds and bees. Okay, I see their valid point there; I mean who wants their little 12-year-old talking about how mommy and daddy put them to bed early because

they wanted to have sex?

Let's grow up people! If not today, then tomorrow, because the sooner teens learn about safe sex the better. I'm not just advocating sex education because I think those extreme religious folks are insane for not wanting their kids to know about sex, but because it's fun and healthy.

Sex education is really important, like no joke.

I know for a fact that if I were a parent, I would want my child fully aware and educated about all those "icky-goopy" things about sex – and the nice things too. Yes, sex can be nice, in case you didn't

know. For example, a day's worth of coitus burns up to 3,570 calories and having sex for just half an hour can burn up to 85 calories. And it relieves stress!

I feel like a lot of people choose to avoid the topic of sex because they are uncomfortable with the fact that they might actually have to disclose something personal. But everything we talk about these days is personal. Take, for instance family matters, emotions about daily decisions or even private health issues. So if you can talk about all that, then who is to say sex can't be talked about the same way. Yes, the vocabulary might be a bit more racy, but that is

simply the nature of the topic.

Why shy away from one of the best things on this planet, and one of the most-thought-about things in our heads? We are all mature people here, so it should not be such a taboo to bring up sex and to encourage others to learn about it. Religious or not, everyone should be educated about safe sex rather than go out into the world not knowing.

Embrace those feared questions and concerns, and go get some words of advice or help if you need some, and even recommend a friend to learn about safe sex. Being safe and educated will only help you, not take you to hell.

CAMPUS COMMENT >>>

What was your best Valentine's Day?



Jovi Tambaoan
POLITICAL SCIENCE

"Any Valentine's Day is good because it's also my birthday."



Prisma Walia
BUSINESS

"My boyfriend in the Navy paid me a surprise visit with roses."



Wynn Aung
BIO-ENGINEERING

"Hanging out with my boyfriend back in my home country."



Stephanie Cobarrubia
POLITICAL SCIENCE

"I was ambushed when I woke up."



Chris Clifton
ENGLISH

"I went to a home for the elderly and played bingo."