

"My first experience of India was looking out at the sunrise and watching a whole family of monkeys jump from roof to roof to roof and play in the morning. It was nice to be introduced to India that way." — Neal Delmonico, part-time philosophy and religion professor

All Eyes On: Neal Delmonico

Professor drops out of college to travel around India and follow his interests

BY BETHANY COURY
Staff Reporter

"He pronounced me dead," Neal Delmonico said about his father as a single tear slid down his cheek.

Delmonico, part-time philosophy and religion professor, dropped out of college to pursue his interest in Indian culture and experiment with one of its ancient religions, Hinduism, to the shock of his atheist father. Their relationship has since been reconciled, leaving that period to be remembered simply as "one of those growing pains," Delmonico said.

Delmonico grew up in Denver, Colo., where he said his family lived. To his family, going to a faraway place like India would have been like going to Mars. However, his interest in India started at an early age, before he even knew much about it. Much of this was influenced by Rudyard Kipling's "Kim." Delmonico said the book created an image in his mind of a mysterious culture so different from his own and much more interesting.

By the time he was 18 he applied to the Peace Corps, but they replied saying he first needed a bachelor's degree.

He went to the University of Colorado, where he studied Sanskrit and other ancient Indian languages. After two years he earned the opportunity to join The International Society for Krishna Consciousness, an offshoot of modern-day Hinduism, which needed secretaries with his language skills. He decided to drop out of college to follow his fascination.

He first arrived in Delhi, India, in 1973 at 3 a.m. and received an incredible first impression.

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out at the sunrise and watching a whole family of monkeys jump from roof to roof to roof and play in the morning," Delmonico said. "It was nice to be introduced to India that way."

His participation with ISKCON led him around the world four times visiting its international centers, and he would stay for six months to a year during each stop in India. But after six years, he said he became disillusioned with the organization and returned to the United States to continue his higher education, this time with a new focus.

"After I left that organization, I knew so much about India," Delmonico said. "I figured, 'Why not become a scholar in that area?' So that gave me a whole new set of reasons to go back to India: to learn the languages, to do research, to do post-doctoral types of things."

Delmonico went to graduate school at the University of Chicago and later became a professor at Iowa State University. He met his wife, English professor Elizabeth Delmonico, at a conference in Chicago. After marrying, he came to teach at Truman.

Although he no longer considers himself to be Hindu, describing himself as agnostic, Neal Delmonico still adheres to certain Hindu principles, such as vegetarianism and meditation. He said he tries to meditate every day for 15 to 20 minutes and finds a special kind of peace in midnight meditations.

"There's something about those quiet hours when everyone else is pretty much dropping to sleep that I find kind of magical," Delmonico said.

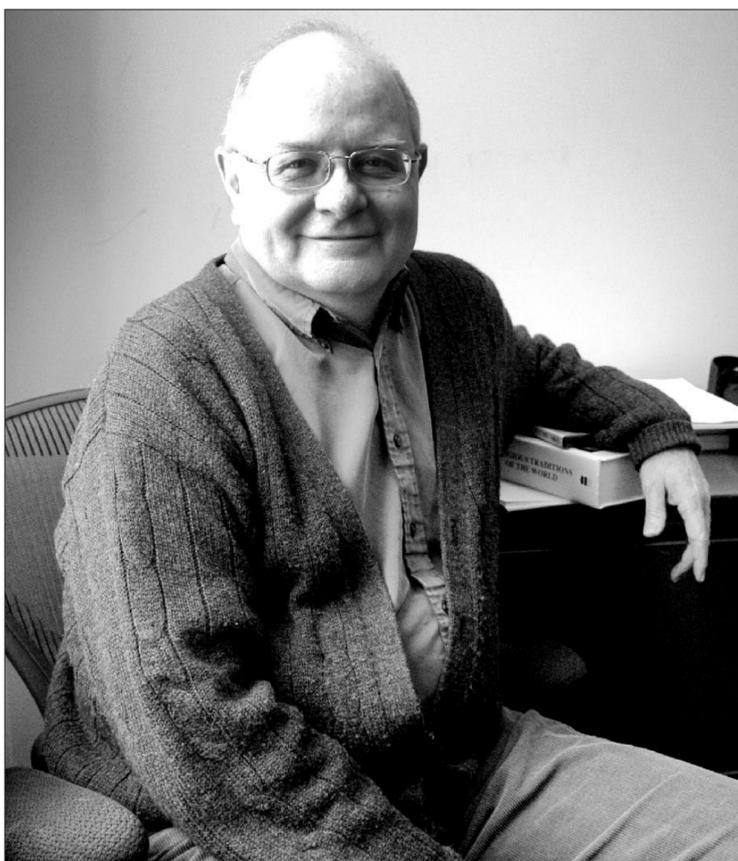
He also has kept up with scholarly translations of ancient Hindu texts. He has published several translations, continually laboring through texts on his own time as well as weekly with his colleague Lloyd Pflueger, professor of philosophy and religion.

He said the texts are like riddles that, if solved, reveal secrets of the world. This is what he and Pflueger are trying to do.

Pflueger said he and Delmonico could spend an entire semester studying a simple two-page

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Neal Delmonico
Part-time philosophy and religion professor



Amy Vicars/Index

Part-time professor Neal Delmonico has ventured from America's societal norms, traveling to India and studying Hinduism.

prayer because a common word in Sanskrit could have 50 different, and sometimes opposite, meanings. He said they both bring their own ideas and expertise, leaving no end to the levels of meaning that can be discussed. He said it's a privilege to have Delmonico at Truman because it's rare to find someone at a small university with as much knowledge of India as Delmonico has.

"He has just tons of stuff that he's coming out with," Pflueger said. "I think he has his own little printing industry at home. He's put out a lot of books in that area."

Elizabeth Delmonico, said her husband's dissertation on Rasa, the intense emotions a person can experience from reading Hindu texts, is one of his acclaimed works. She recalled a time when they were invited to dinner by award-winning Indian writer Girish

Karnad, who had read Neal Delmonico's dissertation and was so impressed he requested to meet Neal to talk to him face to face.

Elizabeth said this encounter was just one of the many adventures they've had in India together, but the bigger part of India's appeal for Neal is the diversity of its culture, which gives it so much flexibility and freedom.

Although Neal has lived collectively seven to eight years in India, he said it's been more than a decade since he's been there. He said he's looking into opportunities to go back soon, such as a semester-long study abroad trip to the city of Bangalore.

"India is a beautiful place," Delmonico said. "The people are the most hospitable, kind people that you could imagine. ... There's just this charm to the place."

Center provides free condoms to students

BY ANNE REBAR
Staff Reporter

A student comes up, grinning, and grabs about a dozen condoms out of a bowl on the table in the Centennial Hall foyer and stuffs them in his backpack, while others covertly slip them off the table and sneak them into pockets before quickly walking out the door.

The Women's Resource Center is providing free condoms during the month of March to promote safe sex across campus. WRC Health and Safety committee member Maxine Brenner has helped organize the event on campus.

"We think it's really important to promote safe sex because, honestly, you're in college," Brenner said. "You're probably going to be having sex, or at least a lot of the population is, so it's important to promote using at least two forms of contraception if possible to prevent STIs. It's a good health measure."

The WRC obtained 500 condoms through The Great American Condom Campaign, which, through a partnership with Trojan, distributes nearly one million free condoms each year. The campaign seeks to reduce unplanned pregnancies and the spread of STIs through safe sex education, according to the campaign's official Web site.

Brenner said the WRC wanted to

hand the condoms out around this time because Midterm break is coming up, which is a time when a lot of sexual accidents can happen. A table was set out in Centennial Hall on Monday and Tuesday so students walking past could take as many free condoms as they liked. For the rest of the month the condoms will be available in the WRC on the first floor of the SUB.

"Some people don't come up to the table because they are too shy to admit that they want a condom," Brenner said. "Really though, everyone uses them, or will use them in the future, so it shouldn't really be a taboo thing. They have an expiration date of four years, so you can take it to be safe. You never know when you're going to need one."

WRC director Sarah Ehrhard sat at the table Monday, asking passing students if they would like some free condoms. She said WRC members had been pretty busy both at the table and at the center itself with students looking for free contraception.

"We've probably gone through a hundred so far out of five hundred, so people obviously are looking for them," Ehrhard said. "There's no other place in Kirksville to get free condoms, and a lot of people don't want to have to pay to have safe sex, so this is a good way to promote it on campus where people might not have a lot of money."

The plain Trojan lubricated condoms

are contained in a small cardboard envelope with instructions for use printed on the inside, which Ehrhard said was good because a lot of the problems people have with condoms not working are due to putting them on improperly.

Ehrhard said she felt distributing the condoms was important because of the high percentages of STIs on college campuses. Many STIs go undetected at first, and she said that can lead to them being spread if safe sex isn't being practiced. She added that she noticed more women coming to get the free condoms, which in the past has been somewhat of a taboo.

"Girls tend to only pick up one, whereas guys have been taking more," Ehrhard said. "But I still think it's becoming more and more accepted for girls to be getting condoms too and not worrying about walking around with them on campus."

Freshman Jeff Denight walked up and took his free condom, and said that he was happy to take advantage of getting them for free. He said he thought providing free contraception on campus was a good idea, so students had no excuses not to be smart.

"It's better to teach people to be safe rather than to try and tell them not to do anything," Denight said. "They are still going to do it anyways, so you might as well help them be safe about it."



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Junior Courtney King (left) hands out free condoms Tuesday afternoon in Centennial Hall.

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