

# Lets talk about sex baby

BY MEG BURIK  
Columnist

Sexuality exists on a continuum — many people aren't either straight or gay.

To explain continuum, imagine a horizontal line with one end labeled straight and the other labeled gay. Sure, there are people that orbit around one polarity or the other, either completely straight or completely gay, but there is a lovely range of sexualities in between.

It must be nice for those polar people, the absolute heterosexuals or homosexuals, to traipse about, unquestioning in their sexual preferences. But for the rest, floundering somewhere in the middle is not an easy existence.

Having a pretty label to slap on yourself like a name tag (Hello! My name is Homo) is convenient. It eliminates awkward questions from your family and friends ("So, got a special man in your life?"). It takes away the ill rapport you receive when you come out as bisexual or sexually open, because you don't quite fit in with either the straight or gay crowd. You can set your sights on one sex — Man-seeking-Woman, not Man-seeking-?

But for the label-less people, overcoming sexual ambiguity is less daunting when you know psychology supports you.

Alfred Kinsey pioneered research into the sexuality spec-

trum in the 1940s, publishing a ground breaking scale of sexuality that recognizes the fluidity of attraction. A rating on the scale of zero means exclusively heterosexual while a rating of six means exclusively homosexual. The numbers one through five relate to the blurred line between the poles.

Although there is no official test for the Kinsey scale, it provides a means of self-evaluation. I've discussed this scale with many people, "queerying" them about how they would rate themselves. Turns out many more people than I expected fall into the one through five range and aren't strictly straight or gay.

If sexuality really never has crossed your mind as something that is ambiguous and you have led a life of polarity, I challenge you to test the waters of uncertainty.

Maybe you are a sorority girl who always ends up with a fraternity boy at the end of the night. But one night, when Katy Perry's flirtatious "I Kissed a Girl" song blares on the speakers of the dance floor, you grab the entire room's attention by

lip-locking with a sister. Suddenly your head is sent spinning, and your stomach flips. Maybe that's not the Natty Light talking. Maybe that's your inner Kinsey Scale rating of a three, screaming your bisexuality.

In a society that is disproportionately judgmental of lifestyles differing from the heterosexual

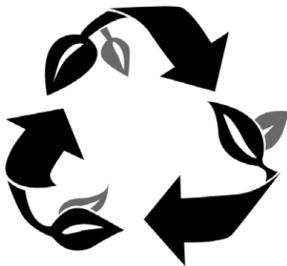
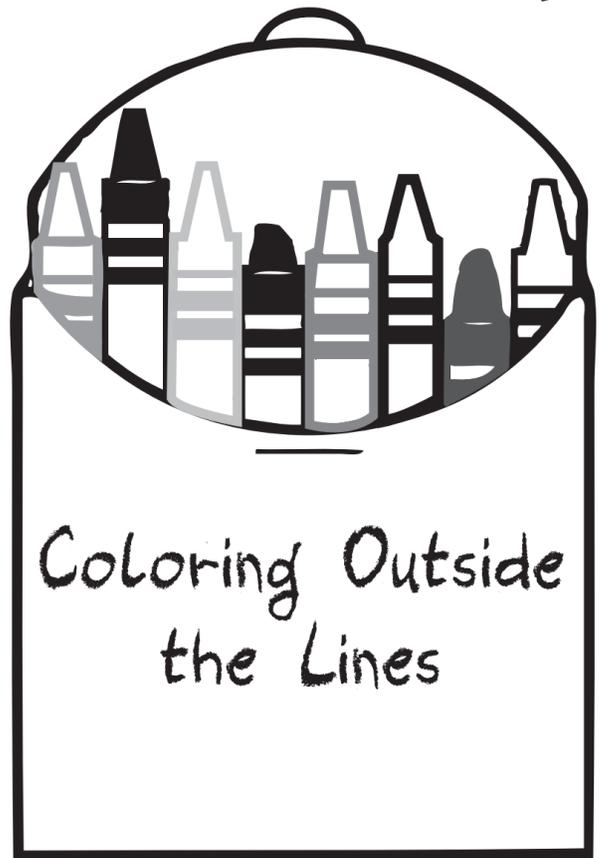
norm, given the number of people living alternatively, allowing yourself to reflect and realize a hidden Kinsey scale rating of four when you thought that you were a staunch zero can be intimidating. It is much easier to solely acknowledge heterosexual or homosexual

desires. Straddling the two in a balancing act of indefiniteness while juggling Kinsey scale ratings one through five is exhausting.

But imagine the possibilities. Allowing yourself to be open could lead to unexpected romances, finding genuine love where you never dared to look before.

Or not. Maybe that Kinsey scale rating of zero is so pronounced you really will never deviate from your heterosexuality. It's a boy-meets-girl world anyway. If that's the case, great. But be kind to those who do waver.

"Allowing yourself to be open could lead to unexpected romances, finding genuine love where you never dared to look before."



BY CHRIS BONING  
Columnist

Well, I've given in.

When it comes to environmental issues, I try to pick my battles. Theoretically, I support most activities who are earth-friendly, practical and cause no harm to other people. But in reality, there are few initiatives with which I actively involve myself including, sustainable agriculture, community living as an environmental ideal and alternative menstrual products.

I now add one more issue to this list — clean energy in Missouri. Clean energy is any source of power that emits minimal amounts of pollution, and these systems generally utilize renewable resources such as wind, sunlight or ocean waves. Surprisingly, Missouri has been in the vanguard of the clean energy revolution. Rock Port, a small town in the extreme northwest corner of the state, is the first municipality in the U.S. to be completely powered by wind. Four wind turbines, located on farmland near the town, generate Rock Port's electricity and then

## The Little Green Diary:

# Power Shift gains support

some. The town sells its excess electricity to the Missouri Public Utility Alliance, a non-profit utility company in Columbia, according to the Maryville Daily Forum. At any rate, Rock Port serves as an example of how effective and practical clean energy is for powering towns and cities.

Last year during the election, Missouri voters passed Proposition C, a clean energy initiative that requires public utility companies to generate at least 15 percent of their output from a renewable energy source by the year 2020. At the moment, Proposition C is in the developmental stage with the state's Public Service Commission, the government agency that oversees utility companies, according to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. The first regulations originating specifically from Proposition C will go into effect on Jan. 1.

Meanwhile, another important clean energy campaign is building momentum in Missouri — Power Shift. Power Shift is a national organization urging President Obama and Congress to pass clean energy or climate change legislation on the federal and international levels. Truman has a unique link to the Missouri branch of Power Shift because the state's field organizer is recent alumnus Brett Wiley. Brett is a good friend of mine, and I know he has been working tirelessly on this campaign, as well as relentlessly recruit-

ing supporters for this cause.

Bringing about change on this scale takes more than the willpower of one individual though, and the Truman students Brett has recruited are just as tireless as he is — evidenced by the number of mass messages about Power Shift flooding my Gmail account. However, surprisingly few students have committed themselves to the Power Shift cause. This is frustrating because without supporters, important campaigns like Power Shift could wither and die, which is no good for anyone.

How can you support the movement? Come to meetings at 7:30 p.m. on Sunday evenings in the SUB Down Under. Or, if you need something exciting to do during Midterm Break, think about attending Missouri Power Shift's summit Oct. 16 to 18. There you can learn about every topic under the sun involving sustainability, from activism to eco-art. Also, a rally and a march to downtown St. Louis will occur near the end of the weekend. Think — how many times in your life have you gone to a rally?

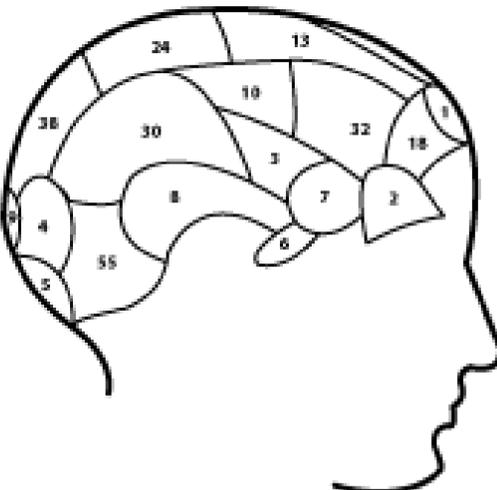
There are a variety of reasons why Power Shift, and clean energy overall, should be supported and, in the case of campaigns or organizations, encouraged to grow. First of all, as mentioned above, clean energy utilizes sources that are renewable and reusable. The same cannot

be said for fossil fuels like petroleum and coal. Missouri gets about 80 percent of its electricity from coal, according to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

Moreover, because clean energy uses sources like wind and sunlight that are easily available, it also is practical. Wind turbines can be built just about anywhere, but the extraction of coal is spatially limited to where it can be mined. This raises the question of what a town should do if it is located in a relatively wind-free spot, but solar panels are an option, as is buying wind power from another community, as exemplified by Rock Port and Columbia.

Finally, clean energy initiatives should be supported because they can provide jobs. Someone has to be there to erect a wind turbine or assemble a solar panel. Aside from clean energy allowing communities to generate income, these systems also allow towns and cities to feel independent because they no longer need to rely on corporate energy trusts — and that itself is an admirable goal.

Supporting clean energy initiatives isn't difficult — all it takes is joining a group like Power Shift, writing letters to members of Congress or simply educating others about the advantages of renewable energy sources. After all, to quote, ironically enough, an ad produced by Caterpillar Inc., "There are no simple solutions. Only intelligent choices."



BY ELIZABETH NECKA  
Columnist

Last Friday, I disturbed my roommate's nap by screaming along tone-deaf to my music at the top of my lungs and dancing like a crazy person in my bedroom. It was a release after an exhausting and stressful week and quite the sight to see.

Occasionally, I'll respond to my stress in another manner: journaling, hysterical laughter, crying, running, eating or sleeping. I've even been known to rip up papers that remind me of stressful tasks (but only once I no longer need them). Now that we've made it through the first round of midterms, I'm very aware of my roommates' stress- and anger-releasing habits: they pace, they clap their hands or rub a pencil between them. They fidget, they itch their heads and they even have more frequent bowel movements! Chances are at least a few of these apply to you as well.

As our stress and anger build, we need some way to release them and therefore exhibit many of these different behavioral responses. Psychologists refer to this as cathartic release, or the purging of distressing feelings. Think of people as soda cans. If we shake them up, the contents are under pressure and will explode unless you tap the lid gently before slowly opening.

But does tapping the lid really work, or is that just

## The Truman Experiment:

# Stressful weeks might cause spontaneous dancing

some myth we picked up from a cool kid in elementary school? Do all of the means of releasing our stress work equally well, or at all? Did my crazy dancing really do anything other than disturb my sleeping roomie?

One psychologist decided to find out. In his study, Brad Bushman provoked students and then asked subjects to hit a punching bag with a picture of the person who had upset them, hit a punching bag as a means of physical exercise or do nothing at all.

According to traditional catharsis theory, hitting a punching bag should have been the most effective manner to release pent up anger and distress. By letting our anger out through hitting a pillow or writing a note to someone who upset us without the intent of ever delivering it, catharsis psychologists suggest we purge ourselves of negative emotions in a socially acceptable manner. However, Bushman's study found the opposite. The participants who hit the punching bag while thinking of a particular person were ruminating, or continually thinking, about what made them upset. Instead of effectively relieving ourselves of stress, we're actually just fueling the fire and letting it build on itself. These participants were angriest after the study was completed.

Instead, Bushman says we should distract ourselves to relieve our anger, for example by trying to become physically fit and working out, or we should ignore the problem. Sure, he's got some empirical evidence to back himself up, but I have serious issues with this conclusion. Using my own experiences as support, I can say with conviction that ignoring a problem only makes it grow to a disproportionate size until it's out of control. Freshman year, my suite mate and roommate created a tense living situation in which differences were swept under the carpet to bubble and churn instead of being swatted out from the get-go. Although they could have discussed and dissipated unfriendly feelings or figured

out a way to live with one another, they took the ignorance-is-bliss route and pretended not to know how upset the other was. Believe me, it was an uncomfortable living arrangement.

Personally, I love to journal. Writing is my way to clear my head. Once I get my thoughts on paper, everything looks more rational and reasonable, and I can logically approach whatever it is that is upsetting me. I'm ruminating while I journal, but this is an effective purge for me because then I can move on with my life.

I can get on board with Bushman's suggestion that we distract ourselves. Distracting ourselves from our bio midterm with

our English midterm probably isn't beneficial because both are equally distressing, but taking a moment to go for a bike ride is. The point is that we physically release the build-up, which is why using television or Facebook as a distraction probably doesn't really decrease stress or anger.

So although throwing darts at an ex's picture on the wall might not be the best approach, I cannot agree that ignoring what caused the breakup is any more constructive. Pretending that a failed accounting exam won't affect your grade is no more relieving than punching a pillow while thinking of your professor's face. You'll be just as angry and disappointed either way. I recommend a compromise between Bushman's two suggestions. Go out there and run a 5K, lift weights or dance like a crazy person until your roommate wakes up. Maybe journal or talk to

a friend to get it all out, and then, distract yourself with activities that require you to throw your full self in, like a brisk swim or an Ab Blaster class.

We all need to practice catharsis sometimes, whether we're angry, hurt or just stressed out from classes. But I have a feeling that the "right" way to release depends on the person.

By the way, Mythbusters debunked can-tapping. Unlike cathartic release, it does nothing whatsoever. Similar to how we'd look punching a pillow, we all just look like idiots before opening our pop.

"Think of people as soda cans. If we shake them up, the contents are under pressure and will explode unless you tap the lid gently before slowing opening."