Spectrum

Students must exercise self-control

By Patrick Lannon
Ever since the sexual revolution, there has been an increasing amount of promiscuity. This increase is especially noticeable in the younger age groups. Teenagers who, just a few generations ago, may have been ignorant about sex, are blase veterans of countless encounters these days.

So what. Times change, right? The loosening of societal norms is a good thing, a true liberation. Don’t the benefits of freedom far outweigh the costs? Perhaps, but the evidence would seem to be against this conclusion.

To be fair, it seems that there are no real positive gains that can be attributed to promiscuity. On the contrary, there are many tangible losses. In return for a few minutes of passion, youth has gained an explosion of venereal disease, the horror of abortion, the threat of AIDS, the difficulty of single motherhood, and the trauma of too much too soon. The costs are indeed difficult to bear.

If promiscuity is causing all these problems, why is it so popular? The answer lies in today’s mindset. The current wisdom is that a young man or woman simply cannot be taught to abstain. Furthermore, people feel that since adolescents are going to have sex anyway, they might as well make it easy for them to do it “safely”—meaning with contraception.

There are several problems with this line of reasoning. The first is that it is a gross insult to young people. Are we animals that we can’t learn to control ourselves? If we are constantly told that yes, we are mere animals, and no, we can’t control ourselves, why are we surprised at the increase in violent rape? Aren’t we strong enough to choose the best—not easiest—path, once we have been convinced that it is a good idea? Why, then, do people simply avoid the subject of abstinence, the immediately obvious cure for AIDS and all of the other social evils mentioned above? Do they think we can’t handle it?

Furthermore, the concept of “safe” sex is a total myth. With contraception more readily available (and used) than ever before in history, VD, AIDS, and crisis pregnancy are out of control. Every year 1.2 million teenagers get pregnant, and almost a fourth of these pregnancies end in abortion. In 1986, approximately 20 million people contracted herpes. As for AIDS, it won’t be long until people realize that college campuses have been the perfect breeding ground for this horrible
disease. When health authorities preach about contraception use, they increase promiscuity without addressing the problems it creates. The lack of intelligence is mind boggling.

And yet, many are willing to take a few risks. "Look," they say, "at the beauty of the caring relationships which are now possible." The implication is, of course, that a man and woman cannot have a caring relationship without copulating like farm animals. Everything from soap operas to popular music constantly reaffirms the assertion that a real relationship is not possible without sex. As a result, people admit the sex in hopes of finding the relationship—and succeed in thoroughly destroying any possibility of the respect needed for such a relationship. It is just the way this society works.

It would seem, then, that we as students are not totally to blame for our unwitting complicity in causing social ills, but are the victims of the prevailing attitudes. I can only hope that there are some people out there who are willing to stop being victims. We must take our lives under our own control and reject the popular opinions when these opinions are damaging to us and our friends. We must rate our actions on common sense, not peer review. If we are to change society, we must become real radicals. Promiscuity is not cool, and it is dangerous. Promiscuity has got to go.