

# **Sex Toys 101 sheds light on traditionally taboo subject**

## **Representatives from Castle Megastore came to MU to talk shop about proper use and care of sex toys as part of Pride Week**

**By: Rebecca Johnson**

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While sexual paraphernalia is usually hidden away in the back of a closet or in a sock drawer, yesterday it was brought out into the light during an information session in the MU called Sex Toys 101.

Two representatives from Castle Megastore, an adult retail store in Springfield, brought samples of products and their combined 10 years of experience in the adult entertainment industry to lecture and answer questions on a subject that is usually taboo.

At times, the seminar seemed more like a science class, as the two women went into the type of material used for different products. This is because a recent trend has the industry becoming more conscientious toward hygienic and hypoallergenic products.

Jenny Rodriguez, assistant manager of the store, explained that the sex toy industry is not FDA regulated, and that some adult products are allowed to be made with materials that have been banned in children's toys.

They also offered advice, such as the need to replace a sexual product every six months and how to keep them clean - usually with any sort of antibacterial soap.

While there was a lot of information given, Rodriguez commented that what was on the table was really just the tip of the iceberg.

"This is just 101. There is so much more out there," Rodriguez said.

The two women stressed that the best thing anyone can do for his- or herself when deciding what to buy is to do the research and to not be afraid to go into a store and ask questions.

More than just fun and informative, the class helped to shed the stigma of something long to be thought of as dark and shameful.

"It was really fun. It is good to know that people are out there to help you gain

knowledge," said Caitlin Hendricks, a sophomore in psychology.

Rodriguez admitted that she believes men actually have a harder time when it comes to being able to talk about sex, at least in an educational sense. She said this could be due to men often being associated with sleaze when they begin to talk about sex.

The audience was small and mostly women, but those present were comfortable enough to ask questions and even try products.

One of those present was Lynne Anthony, a senior in psychology, who was not shy about finding out the information she wanted.

"I am interested in safer sex and being educated," Anthony said. "And I figured it would be a fun event to come to."

The class was one of many events put on during Pride Week, an annual celebration on the OSU campus for the LGBTQ community.

"When I first heard about it, I said "We need to do this," said Padraic McGraw, a member of the Pride Week planning committee. "Basically, this is about education, knowledge about safer sex and dispelling many of the myths ... everyone should have fun."

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