

TechNews

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Sex Tech

THE SEX AND RELATIONSHIP ADVICE COLUMN

Sweet Pseudonym
SEXTECH EDITOR

Q: My girlfriend and I have been together for a few years. Now that I'm at IIT, though, we're living apart. My friends are all telling me to end it now because long-distance relationships never work. I know where they're coming from, but I just don't know; I think we can make it. What do I do?

Long-distance relationships are brutal. When I first left for college, I was in

a similar situation. I was about to move 1000 miles away from my partner, and wasn't sure what to do. My partner and I had a discussion about it, and agreed that we would try to make it work. We continued to date for a semester before ending the relationship, but still remain close friends.

If I could go back, I wouldn't change my decision, but that isn't to say I'd be in a hurry to try another long-distance relationship. I would recommend that you talk to your girlfriend about it and see how she's feeling. Chances are she's considered the challenges of dating long-distance too, and because it sounds as though you've been dating for some time, it might be inconsiderate to take others' advice without listening to hers as well.

More than anything I think you should take an inventory of your feelings toward her and how well the two of you handle conflict. Have you been able to easily overcome obstacles together in the past? How well do you communicate with each

other, even when you're upset? It can be easy to misunderstand each other over text, on the phone, or on the internet when you can't always observe body language or show physical affection.

On that note, if the two of you have sex, you need to consider how long you can go without it. The way you interact physically is a big part of a relationship, so I would suggest trying cyber-sex or phone sex. If that isn't enough, would you consider an open relationship with specific boundaries? Would either of you be jealous?

Don't just end a good thing because your friends want you to. Bring it up with your partner, and allow yourself a test phase. If it doesn't work, don't frustrate yourselves and ruin your schoolwork and social life. Take a good look at the way you interact, and what you need from a relationship. If you can get that over the phone or via Skype, great! Just don't underestimate the hurdles of a long-distance relationship and make this choice knowing it's what is best for you.

Submit your question through
<http://tinyurl.com/sextech2>

Confessions of a cynic: 'Clinging to hope'

By Chris Roberts
TECHNEWS WRITER

Humans are utterly insane, aren't they? Do you ever sit back and take stock of all the ridiculous things people believe? Oh sure, you can try to dissuade them with facts and statistics to try to open their eyes to how things really are, but they stubbornly adhere to irrational beliefs. Sadly, I have found that I am not immune from such thinking. Despite what I have learned about science, history, and psychology, I cannot resist clinging to a belief which, for many people, all but flies in the face of common sense: I have hope in the American political system.

The strange thing is that I am neither an idealist nor particularly optimistic. I have developed a healthy amount of cynicism and have no illusions about politicians being free of corruption or of their corporate patrons having the same interests as the general public. However, I value my rights and access to information highly enough that I make an effort to stay updated, keep track of bills and politicians' positions on issues, participate in elections, and generally pay close attention to the news.

I know what you may be thinking: How could he be so deluded? After years of hearing about (nonexistent) death panels, terror babies (again, nonexistent), rape victims being accused of milking the healthcare system (via birth control and counseling coverage), attempts to erase Thomas Jefferson from history textbooks for religious reasons, and

accusations that the president is secretly an Islamofascist illegal alien of socialist doom, not to mention the undeclared wars that the nation has been waging, how could he stomach paying attention to politics, much less seriously think that it will lead to something good?



Well, I could make dramatic claims of fulfilling civic obligations or give fulsome praise to the Founding Fathers (a rather popular pastime these days). However, I have more practical reasons for keeping hope. For one, the nation has been through much worse than it is currently dealing with.

Think the job market is bad now? Look up the Great Depression; unemployment was between 25-37%.

Can't stand how long America has been at war in Afghanistan? The Vietnam War lasted for two decades and soldiers were drafted.

Secondly, I am growing to, grudgingly, accept that political news coverage has

become melodramatic political theater and that most of the actors involved feel compelled to overact. As such, I am learning not to give much credence to uninformed, hyperbolic commentary.

Third, while it is frustrating to have the political spectrum of the nation swing so far to the right that I find myself line-voting Democrat, despite not having strayed from the middle myself, I do not feel as alienated by the current political climate as many others do.

I was not among the Democrats who expected Barack Obama to be some sort of leftist messiah and were disappointed to find that his presidency can be thought of, in many ways, as being George W. Bush's third term of office (bailouts, military spending, government secrecy, the list goes on).

I am also not a member of the endangered species known as liberal Republicans. Polarization and internal purging has left conservatives who are pro-choice and pro-gay marriage on the fringe of the Republican Party. Irreligious Republicans face even worse alienation. The few atheist conservatives that I know have found themselves left without any meaningful representation in either party.

Overall, the situation could be much worse. It is often said that a cynic is just a disappointed optimist. I prefer to look to the combined wisdom of Voltaire and Winnie-the-Pooh: "...things cannot be otherwise than as they are; for as all things have been created for some end, they must necessarily be created for the best end..." "But, I don't suppose I'm right."

Photo courtesy of conservationbytes.com

Chicago's summertime stunning, short-lived

By Sukrit Mishra
TECHNEWS WRITER

I had heard a lot about the fun times that Chicago promises in the summer, so when my first summer here happened, I knew it was time to make the most of it. Six months of the very chilly winter season does make life mundane and despite the exciting winter events that one can enjoy, the heart longs to welcome the summer sun. Mid-May was when summer officially began and the plans started getting made.

As an international student planning to make the most of the three months, a perfect balance between work and play had to be struck. So school and classes made their way into the summer schedule. For the tough

school that IIT is known to be, the fast paced summer classes can be a challenge. However a little bit of sincere work can be enough to get one through. So with the summer classes going, the warm weather outside was too welcoming to ignore.

Taste of Chicago, where not only the city but people from other far off places come to enjoy the myriad food options that they can avail, free admission days to the Museum of Science and Industry, the Art Institute of Chicago, film festivals, shoreline firework cruises, Chicago blues festival, the MP3 Experiment Chicago, camping opportunities in the neighboring states, the recent Air and Water show were a few exhilarating events that this summer brought along. 4th of July brought amazing fireworks display at Navy Pier that was a real treat to the eye. Even the campus seemed abuzz with conferences like Teach America

that brought hundreds of people from different parts of the world together, students doing research work, projects, IPROs and orientation events, new faces and excitement around livened up our spirits. In the midst of these invigorating events that were not just fun and exciting but educational and informative, there was the lake where biking or simply sitting by the water for hours, reflecting and catching up with friends never seemed to grow old.

On the one hand when there are ample things to do in Chicago and explore the city that you may still be new in, the absence of summer upass for students even enrolled in summer classes can become a constraint that restricts the fun activities. However there is a lot more to be happy about than complain in this season. So there is absolutely no doubting that summer in Chicago is truly a fun time that everyone should experience.