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EXPRESSIONS

THE E.O.N. NEWSLETTER



VOLUME # 2 ISSUE # 3

DATE March/April 1991

From The Editor



Well Ladies and Gentlemen, another issue of the world famous Expressions is here at last and it seems that another apology is in order. I let the month of March slip by without a newsletter.

I don't think you want to hear excuses so let's get down to business. This issue of Expressions contains some important articles as well as a couple that I feel you may like.

EON has another pancake breakfast scheduled for April 20th. Volunteers are desperately needed. This is a fund raiser to benefit EON and replenish the treasury.

The third floor is nearing completion and the bills will be due. This is our meeting place and your support is not only required but extremely important. The time has come to make a serious commitment to the success of EON. Without you the members there is no group. Please we need your help. Make EON the organization that all others will look to for example. With your help we can do it.

TGIC of Albany is sponsoring it's April Shower Soiree the weekend of April 6th. Check the enclosed registration form for details. It looks like a good time so send in those forms or call the number listed. Let's get as many of our members as possible to attend and show Albany some support. Be sure to check the schedule of coming events at the end of the newsletter. There's a lot coming up and you won't want to miss out on anything.

your sister
Diana Joell Askew

New Symbol for Gender Community

You might have noticed a new symbol gracing the banner of Expressions. Here is the story behind it.

A short time ago at a board meeting we realized that the gender community had no unique emblem or symbol with which to identify. The alternative community has its Lambda, and every one instantly recognizes the symbol of the American Red Cross. The EON board put their collective imaginations together and came up with the symbol that you see gracing the newsletter.

The E.O.N. Newsletter is a publication of E.O.N. Inc., 523 W. Onondaga Street, Syracuse, N.Y. 13204. EON is an affiliate of the International Foundation for Gender Education and the N.Y.S. Gender Coalition.

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The telephone number of the E.O.N. Hot Line is (315) 475-5611. If you have any questions, comments or special needs and you don't know who to talk to, call the Hot Line and leave a message. Someone will be in touch with you.

All submissions for the E.O.N. Newsletter should be sent to the editor at the following address and must be received by the 25th of the month to be included in the next newsletter issue.

Diana J. Askew
523 W. Onondaga Street
Syracuse, N. Y. 13204

E.O.N. MEETING SCHEDULE

1st Sat. of each month - 8 PM

Rap group and socialization

3rd Sat. of each month - 8 PM

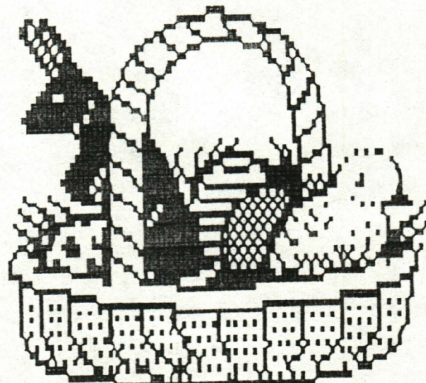
social evening which will include a special program - programs to be announced.

Last Wed. of each month

The two moons represent the union of the god Hermes and the goddess Aphrodite - the red moon (dark) of Hermes and the silver (light) moon of Aphrodite. This union resulted in a child called Hermaphroditus (the word hermaphrodite is a derivative of this legend). Hermaphroditus was both male and female together in the same being. According to the myth the god Apollo blest this child with the gift of song. The sun surrounding the two moons represents the god Apollo and the protection given to the offspring of Hermes and Aphrodite. The moon is also considered to be feminine while the sun is masculine thus becoming the embodiment of what is the main focus of the gender community and best represents its issues.

As yet the new symbol is unnamed. If anyone has a suggestion as to what we might call it, please contact us and let us know. The name should be something that best reflects its meaning.

We hope that this symbol will become the international emblem of the gender community and will serve to unite all of us into one family.



Happy Easter from EON

Busy Day for EON Membership

by Molly Kennedy

On April 20th, 1991 EON will have its hands full keeping a number of activities running smoothly. The day starts off with another EON sponsored pancake breakfast from 8:00 am to noon. Volunteers are asked to contact me, PLEASE!

At 1:00 pm, the third meeting of the fledgling New York State Gender Coalition will take place. Representatives from TGIC, Rochester CD Network, and Butterfly have confirmed that they will attend. You are welcome to attend and observe the meeting. There will be some time set aside for you to share your ideas with the coalition reps. You are asked to please not interrupt the meeting until that time.

EON has a regularly scheduled meeting set for Saturday night, April 20th. Amy Bartell, noted mixed media artist will be our guest. Amy has volunteered her talents to produce for us a "visual image" designed to illustrate important and often misunderstood issues concerning crossgendered persons. Amy's idea is to set up a traditional family photo setting using EON members as the "family". The idea is to challenge traditional family concepts and to show that we are people of unique value, not despite our differences, but rather in part, because of our differences.

Amy's work is well known, especially in the area of social justice art. Amy has strongly supported EON and we can't thank her enough for donating her talents and most of all, her friendship.

Amy has suggested that members who wish to be in the photograph dress in a manner which presents a strong image of who you are. In addition, bring along any accessories you might like to have included in the photograph. An example might be some object that communicates something important to you. It could be

a lock of hair, family heirloom, a book, or even photographs. Amy would like to capture our inner truth in a visual image. It would help if we dress and bring along objects that are images which shed light on our truth.

The photograph will be made into a poster size print and marketed on a wide scale. If you have strong security concerns you may want to choose not to be in the photo. Royalties from the sale of the print will pay production costs and help to restore EON's currently anemic treasury. A short, concise, and clever slogan or phrase will be included on the poster. Any ideas you have as to the verbal message to be conveyed within the work are certainly welcomed.

Furthermore, Amy will also be prepared to take portrait photos of EON members. We don't have a price list available yet but as soon as we do we will get the word out. This is a chance for you to have your crossgendered self photographed in a private secure atmosphere by an artist of great skill. Please let us know if you are interested.

As you can see, April 20th, 1991 will be an important day for EON, from fund-raising, to activism, to art, to fun, its all there for you. We all hope you will join in both the work and the celebration.

An Editorial

by Diana Joell Askew

Most men, regardless of sect, profess to believe that their God is a merciful God. Surely, then, it is enjoined upon man that he be compassionate, in imitation of his God. Yet, in practice, many of us unconsciously set limits to our compassion. The lines are generally drawn where we are confronted with a way of life that is seemingly so alien to our own that fear of the unknown leads us into harsh judgement of our fellow man. If we confuse difference with separation,

we are forgetting that all men are manifestations of the one God, and that no man may be set outside the human pale.

Even before Jesus, the Roman author Terence said: "I am a man: nothing human is alien to me." If each individual is sacred to God we might do well to perfect ourselves in the recognition of God's likeness in every one of our fellow man.

The natural by-product of ignorance is prejudice, and the only antidote for the disease of prejudice is knowledge. Both scientific knowledge and religious, or humanistic, awareness offer means by which prejudice against the crossgendered may be dispelled. Specialists in the physical and psychological sciences have long agreed, and offered convincing proofs to this effect, that masculinity and femininity are not opposites, but related polarities along the spectrum of human qualities. Our masculine or feminine identity is never so unambiguous as "common sense" may suppose.

Even if we are not scientifically inclined, each of us can prove this truth for himself. Look inward: honest introspection easily reveals that any one of us has some interest, characteristics, preferences and tendencies we may normally regard as properly belonging to the opposite sex. The current revolution in sexual roles, where our absolute definitions of masculine and feminine have begun to break down and shade into each other, reflects our growing awareness of this inner complexity.

Our bodies, too, will bear this out, for it is quite apparent that to some degree we all carry the characteristic physiognomy of the "opposite" sex: the nipples of the male, the clitoris of the female.

We have only to intensify, by many magnifications, the sense of discomfort our own slight conflicts in sexual identity produce, to begin to understand the motivation of the crossgendered to

resolve a conflict that is absolute, and hampers at every turn his desire for a fulfilled life.

Some persons who sincerely believe that they object, for example, to sex reassignment surgery on moral grounds may concede that the highest morality lies in providing relief from suffering, yet deny the right to this relief to the transsexual. These same individuals may hold that suicide is a mortal sin, while refusing to recognize that the transsexual who does not obtain medical help may well, in his desperation, choose death as the only alternative to his radical alienation from life.

Most religious philosophies affirm that the goal of life lived within a religious context is totally functioning, fulfilled man - man alive. The realization of the integrity, the wholeness, of each individual is his inalienable right before man and God. The transsexual, torn by the conflict between his physique and his psyche, often miserably unable to function even on a minimal level, let alone to fulfill his unique individual talents and contribute them to society, knows he can claim this God-given right, now that there is expert professional help available to him. Who would deny his suffering fellow man such help on moral grounds?

The spiritual integrity of the transsexual requires that his physique be adjusted to his inner sense of self. Since we no longer equate physical alteration with mutilation in the case of most surgical procedures, can we not apply the same standard of judgement to sex reassignment? Then we may more readily acknowledge that a spirit in conflict with a body is justified in claiming the right to be freed from this handicap.

The philosopher of religion, Alan Watts, in one of his many publications, *THE BOOK ON THE TABOO AGAINST KNOWING WHO YOU ARE*, discusses the basis of this claim to

self-realization. "Every individual is a unique manifestation of the Whole, as every branch is a particular outreaching of a tree.... Thus the soul is not in the body, but the body in the soul.... (The individual) may be seen ... as one particular focal point at which the whole universe expresses itself.... This view retains and, indeed, amplifies our apprehension that the individual is in some way sacred." In other words, the crossgendered are as sacred as all others in the expression of the mystery of God's universe.

It is in behalf of the right to fulfillment of the sacred individuality of the crossgendered, and in the highest traditions of morality and brotherhood, that I write these words. If they serve to enlighten those who read them and bring understanding and affirmation to those who live them, then they will have served their purpose.

Pink Rabbits and Magic Kitchens

Anonymous

I remember waking one day long ago when the world and I were both very young. I stumbled out of bed and new to walking, I wobbled down the stairs grasping the railing all the way as I headed for the kitchen.

The kitchen was warm from hours of cooking. The wonderful aroma of mother's sauce welcomed me to the heart of our home. Mother and sister sat together at the kitchen table rolling meatballs. I scrambled onto a chair and took a seat at the table next to mother. In the distance, I could hear that Daddy and my brothers were watching a football game in the family room. I could hear them yelling, cheering and cursing at whatever it was about football that caused men to yell, cheer and curse. I felt comfortable and at home sitting next to

mother and sister; I recall faintly, how far away, strange, and foreign were the sounds echoing from the family room.

Wanting to join in and help mother and sister, I reached for the bowl of finely ground meat and friendly spices that mother and sister magically transformed into little balls that the family would later eat wondering how it was that other families survived life and Sunday afternoons without magic meatballs and mother's sauce. I wanted to learn the magic, to sit forever at the table.

As I reached for the bowl, mother grabbed my wrist sharply and said, "NO!"

"Please, Can't I join in and help?", I asked.

With eyes that said don't argue, mother said, "NO, go watch the game with your father and the boys."

I couldn't understand this. Why must I watch the game while my sister gets to stay and help? I tried once more, "I'd rather stay here mom, pleeeeeease."

In a tone growing more harsh, mother answered my final plea, "NO, you don't belong We'll finish dinner You go watch the game."

Feeling all the hurt of the unjustly accused, I gave up trying to make magic in the kitchen and began to wander towards the strange and fearful sounds still emanating from the family room.

Before taking that last step into the family room I looked back at mother and sister and gave the look of pain and fear that all children have perfected. For a moment, as she raised her hand, I thought she would motion me to return to the magic kitchen. A brief smile percolated within and broke across my face only to vanish in a whisper as mother waved me away saying, "Go on now, shoo!" Rejected, I took that last step into the family room.

I looked around for a place to be; every chair was occupied by Daddy, my brothers and grandfathers. "Where do I belong?", I thought. I wanted to crawl up on Daddy's lap as I had so often done in the past. Somehow, though, I knew I was no longer welcome on Daddy's lap as I was no longer welcome in mother's kitchen.

Trying to make a place for myself, I found my best friend Jane, a stuffed pink rabbit which had fallen behind the couch.

Using Jane as a pillow, I lay on the floor in front of the television and watched the incomprehensible mass of color, speed, motion, and violence that was football. I pretended to be interested and yelled and cheered when the others did. Then, in a voice I had never heard my Dad use before but would become familiar during the rest of my life, my father said, "Son, isn't it about time you gave up that rabbit? Why don't you give it to your sister?"

"Yeah!", chimed my brothers in unison, "pink rabbits are for girls."

With the pain of realizing for the first time that I was "different", I finally understood this strange morning. I was what was called a "boy" - my sister was what was called a "girl".

Boys did certain things and girls did certain things. I had never attached the words or their meaning to men before. Now I knew the truth, girls made magic in the kitchen, had pink rabbits, and sat in Daddy's lap. Boys watched football games, made a lot of noise, and sat alone.

Father would use his new voice with me from now on and I would spend my life obeying it and trying to be the man he was and wanted me to be. "Daddy" was now "Father". Gone was Daddy's voice - comforting me, protecting me, helping me.

I was no longer his child, I was his son. My sister would always hear her Daddy's voice, I would never hear it

again.

It struck me that something was terribly wrong. I liked pink rabbits and making magic. Still, everyone thought I was this thing called a "boy". "I'm a girl", I thought, "Why can't they see that?"

Puzzled, I got up from the floor and took Jane with me upstairs to my room. With Jane, keeper of all my secrets, I knelt and prayed to the great god who mother had said made me. I prayed that everyone could see what I really was. Over and over I prayed but God doesn't listen to pink rabbits and little girls on busy Sunday afternoons.

I looked around my room at the evidence of my exposed boyhood. Bats and balls, sneakers, and helmets. They were all gifts that I never played with. Into my sisters room I went. It was my favorite room in the house. I put on a dress as I had done many times before, but now it was different. For the first time I was overwhelmed with a new emotion I would later learn to call shame.

It was different because as I had just been officially proclaimed to be a boy, I was "breaking the rules" by wearing a dress.

I looked at myself in the mirror enshrouded in shades of delicate in pink and in endless lace. Though ashamed I could not, would not take off the dress. I clung to my friend Jane and whispered into her long floppy ears that we would keep the secret that I was really a girl from the rest of the world. I vowed never to give up my pink rabbits and dreams of making magic in the kitchen. I would live their lie and keep myself safe from shame.

Alone, far from their scorn, I would be me, a girl. A girl who made magic alone in her room with a pink rabbit named Jane standing witness to her silent truth.

As years passed, I perfected the illusion

of manhood and thereby protected myself from shame. I have yet to find a place in the family room and am still kept from the magic of mother's kitchen.

I am no longer a little girl and was never a little boy. I am not yet free of fear and shame. Yet my magic is too wondrous to be contained within the confines of even the largest bedroom. Our special, unique magic is beautiful.

It will take more than whispered moments to ease a shame learned over a lifetime but we have begun. Even now I stand half-way between the shame at the center of my maze of loneliness and the joy which awaits on the other side. The time approaches where my our silent truth must be given voice.

Peace Talks

by Dr Sam Graceffo

Psychotherapists have long noted the differences exhibited by men and women when each gender expresses their thoughts and feelings - dissimilarities which often lead to serious and painful misunderstandings. In the recent book *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* (William Morrow and Co.), author Deborah Tannen, professor of linguistics at Georgetown University, examines the differences in styles of communication between the sexes.

Tannen believes that men enter communications as individual competitors, in order to seek feelings of power and accomplishment. They try to keep the upper hand so they can feel successful, powerful, or independent. Women also value status and independence, according to Tannen, but they tend to focus on intimacy and closeness. Thus conversation becomes a way to avoid isolation and achieve a sense of connectedness - a notable contrast to the male's competitive striving for power and

accomplishment.

Differences in goals affect conversation. Women are more willing to reveal secrets, emotions, and weaknesses. Although this kind of conversation may increase vulnerability, it tends to produce a desired feeling of intimacy. Men, however, are less willing to disclose anything which may be viewed as a weakness. Instead, impersonal yet safe topics such as sports, work, or politics tend to be discussed more often by men.

When it comes to problems, women discuss difficulties in order to elicit understanding, support or empathy, whereas men hear the problems as something they have to solve. Consequently, this leaves women still missing the emotional support they were seeking. As for men, when they bring up problems, they usually want a solution - and are frustrated if they receive only understanding.

Further, women tend to ask more questions when listening to someone's problems, mainly as a way to show concern and interest.

On the other hand, men are more likely to change the subject for fear that focusing on the dilemma makes it seem more serious - and would make the problem-plagued person feel worse.

Women also tend to give more verbal and non-verbal feedback, largely in the form of frequent signals of attention ("Uh-huh," "Yes, dear," "I see"). Men do just the opposite, and become uncomfortable and passive after listening for long periods of time. In fact, men are likely to respond with challenges or statements of their own.

In other differences, women like to maintain steady eye contact, when they speak in order to support the feeling of connectedness; men tend to look away since eye contact might suggest hostility or sexual flirtation. There's even a

difference in how each sex tells a joke. Men tell a wealth of funny anecdotes in order to seize center stage and provide a feeling of power and accomplishment when people laugh. In contrast, women are less likely to remember or tell jokes, but they're quicker to laugh at them.

Tannen's observations can only help improve communications between the sexes.

Learning the conversational patterns of the opposite sex - and recognizing those differences - are essential if we are to minimize needless miscommunication.

Cold Winds Blow through Gender Gap

by Erna Bornbeck

reprinted from the Herald Journal

If there is anything that has maintained the gender gap, it is the common cold.

I know, the virus may be the same, the symptoms and prognosis equal, but there are definite differences between a man's cold and a woman's cold.

What used to be speculation has now been verified in a study of the sexes. To begin with, a woman's cold is always her fault. She asked for it.

She didn't wear a hat when she brought in the groceries from the car or she let herself get run-down. (She ironed until midnight instead of going to bed and getting some rest.)

On the other hand, men figure a cold is God's way of telling them to slow down. They're working too hard. This probably accounts for why 65 percent of the men polled take off from work to stay home, while 78 percent of the women polled came in and spread the virus to the entire office.

The treatment of a cold is quite

different between the sexes. Men tend to drown it in whiskey or a hot toddy and talk it to death. Women guzzle down over-the-counter remedies and walk it to death. There is no evidence to support either method.

Generally, women are more optimistic about recovery. They figure a cold will take a couple of weeks to run its course, and they will live to see a sunset or another Mel Gibson film.

Men never see the light at the end of the tunnel. They are convinced that unless a cure for the cold is found - and soon - they are destined to become the subject of a depressing six-hour miniseries about a family without a daddy.

Probably the most significant contrast is in terms of compassion.

Nearly 70 percent of men who have colds say their wives do things to make them feel better. Yet only 51 percent of women say their husbands go out of their way to offer to help in their time of need.

This is a no-win situation for men. Women are famous for being nurturers. We treat a man with a cold like another child: put him in bed, turn on the TV, put a remote tuner in his hands and a straw in his mouth.

Yet when men try to do it, we are reminded of the commercial where the mother is in bed with a cold while her husband walks around with the burned imprint of an iron on his shirt, and the living room looks like an abandoned bomb shelter.

I know this: When a man gets the same cold as his wife, he is sicker and suffers more. My husband told me.



Calendar of Events

TGIC's April Shower Soiree - April 6, 1991
Albany, NY

Motel accomodations at the Econolodge - \$40.00 per night single or double

Dinner \$25.00 - Your choice of Roast Prime Rib of Beef au jus or Breast of Capon
Cordon Bleu

Music provided by TGIC's own DJ Jennifer

TGIC
P.O. Box 13604
Albany, N.Y. 12212-3604

IFGE's 5th Annual Coming Together Convention - April 8-14, 1991
Denver, Colorado

For Information and Registration
The International Foundation for Gender Education
P.O. Box 367, Wayland, MA 01778
1-617-894-8340

Host Organization
Gender Indentity Center
of Colorado
Box 11563, 3715 32nd Ave
Denver, CO 80211
1-303-458-5378

California Dreamin' 91 - May 1-5, 1991
Anahiem, CA

Sponsored by Powder Puffs of Orange County and Crosstalk

Hotel accomodations - \$78.00 per room per day single occupancy
\$88.00 per room per day double occupancy

Tours of Hollywood, shopping tours, dinner , and shows

Powder Puffs of Orange County (PPOC)
P.O. Box Anahiem, CA 92812 (714) 779-9013

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Spring Fling - May 3, 1991
Rochester, N. Y.

Sponsored by the Rochester C-D Network

\$20.00 - details to follow

C-D Network
P.O. Box 15731
Rochester, N Y 14615 (716) 251-2132

Paradise in the Poconos Getaway Weekend - May 16-19, 1991
September 19-22, 1991

4 days/3 nights - \$275.00 per person double occupancy
\$50.00 refundable deposit to hold reservations

Price includes receptions, parties, all meals, lodging, workshops, tax, and gratuity

Creative Design Services
P.O. Box 9091
King of Prussia, PA 19406 (215) 640-9449

The 11th Annual Provincetown Spring Outing - May 28 - June 3, 1991
Provincetown, MA

Sponsored by The Tiffany Club of New England

Registration fee - \$100 per person
\$150 per male/female couple

Hotel accommodations - \$55.00 per night per person shared occupancy
\$90.00 per night single occupancy
\$90.00 per night couples

The Tiffany Club of New England

P.O. Box 2283

Woburn, MA 01888

(508) 358-2305

Be All You Want to Be - June 5-9, 1991
Cleveland, OH

Registration fee - \$280.00 per person
\$270.00 per person CD/GG couple
\$75.00 deposit

Price does not include hotel accommodations

Be All Weekend

P.O. Box 5124

Willowick, OH. 44095

(216) 463-4865

A Weekend with Wildside - June 21-23, 1991
Toronto, Canada

Registration fee - \$255.00 per person

Price includes 2 nights at the Brownstone Hotel, breakfast each morning, and Saturday dinner

Take a Walk on the Wildside

429 C Dundas Street East

Toronto, Ontario M5A 2A9 Canada

(416) 864-0420

Regular Meetings

Albany - 2nd Saturday of the Month - 145 club 8:00 PM
4th Friday of the Month - Club Room

E.O.N. - 1st and 3rd Saturday of the Month - 8:00 PM
Last Wednesday of the Month - 8:00 PM
Trinity Episcopal Church Parish House
Onondaga St & Midland Ave

Rochester CD Network - 2nd Friday of the Month - 6:00-11:00 PM