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EON (Expressing Our Nature)
PO Box 6293
Camillus, N.Y. 13031

EXPRESSIONS

THE E.O.N. NEWSLETTER

VOLUME # 2 ISSUE # 1 DATE January 1991

From The Editor

Finally, after all this time, that for which you have all waited patiently is here. Yes that's right ladies and gentlemen another issue of the fabulous newsletter. I must, however apologize for the lateness of it. The month of December was extremely busy and there just wasn't enough time in a day to accomplish even half of what was to be done. I will try not to be this late again. Because December's Expressions is so late and January's is due I am combining the two issues. I hope you all enjoy what it contains.

There is so much to tell you I hardly know where to begin. We held our first election at our December meeting with the following results:

- o President - Charliss D.
- o Outreach Director - Molly K.
- o Membership Director - Audrey M.
- o Secretary - Michelle K.
- o Treasurer - Marsha S.
- o Publications Director - Diana A.
- o Hospitality Director - Jackie A.

Congratulations girls! These are your officers for the next two years. I know that you all wish them well and will give them your support.

Our Christmas party on the 15th of December was a smashing success. We had a little over 150 people in attendance from the parish and the alternative community. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and the meal was delicious. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who gave of their time and talents to make this event the success that it was. It is greatly appreciated.

Work on the third floor is progressing in leaps and bounds. The demolition of the wall in the main room has been completed and the debris has been removed and carted away. The ceiling spaces have been insulated and the wiring running along the floor has been relocated below the floor boards. An electrical contractor has been consulted and as soon as he gets the okay the electrical service will be installed. A leasing arrangement has been reached with the church and EON officially has leased the third floor from the church.

Our certificate of incorporation has been signed and notarized and has been sent to

The E.O.N. Newsletter is a publication of E.O.N. Inc., P.O. Box 6293, Camillus, N.Y. 13031. E.O.N. is an affiliate of the International Foundation for Gender Education and the N.Y.S. Gender Coalition.

Editor ..... Diana J. Askew
Contributing Editor ..... Cathy Napier

Board of Directors

President ..... Charliss D.
Outreach Director ..... Molly K.
Membership Director ... Audrey M.
Secretary ..... Michelle K.
Treasurer ..... Marsha S.
Publications Director .. Diana A.
Hospitality Director .... Jackie A.

The telephone number of the E.O.N. Hot Line is 1-716-251-2316. 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
P.O. Box 6293
Camillus N.Y. 13031

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 - 8 PM

the state government for approval. As soon as it is processed we will become the first and only incorporated entity dealing with the gender issue in New York State. We also have a new set of by-laws now and a copy has been sent to each member.

Our membership has grown in the last two months and I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all of our new brothers and sisters to the EON family. We look forward to meeting you all.

The first meeting of the New York State Gender Coalition was held on December 15th. Molly K. is EON's representative to the coalition and we wish her all the best. I know she will do a wonderful job in representing EON.

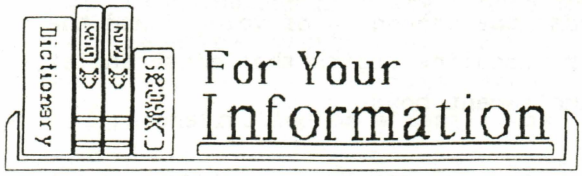
Two new meeting dates have been established. The board of directors will meet on the first Monday of each month and in addition to the two Saturday meetings for the general membership a third day has been set aside for those who may find it difficult to attend meetings on weekends. All of you are invited to attend this meeting to be held on the last Wednesday of each month.

And finally an appeal to you the EON membership. In order to insure the goals for which EON was originally established are met the Board of Directors needs to know from you what you as members expect to receive from your association with EON. At future meetings you will be asked to make those wishes know to the board so that they can be addressed. Please give

this matter some serious consideration. It is for you that EON was formed and it is of the utmost importance to us as board members that your needs be met. It was by your vote that we become members of the board and it is our responsibility to serve your needs in every way we can. So please, if there is a special need that you have or a topic you would like to see discussed at one of our meetings let one of your board members know. We can't do it if we don't know what it is.

And lastly there is a plan in the works for a Valentine's Day soiree to be held at the Parish House. This is going to be jointly sponsored by EON, MCCS and the AIDS Task Force. More details will follow as they become available.

The Board of Directors and the entire Newsletter staff hope this Christmas was a Merry one and extend wishes to you and yours for a happy and prosperous New Year.



From the Science Desk

Master of Sex

Reprinted from the January issue of DISCOVER Magazine.

"Why can't a woman," whined Professor Higgins, "be more like a man?" The answer, geneticists have known since 1959, resides somewhere on the Y chromosomes (women have two X chromosomes, while men have an X and a Y). So for the past three decades they have been groping their way along the Y chromosome in search of the precise bit of DNA that actually determines maleness. Their search may finally be over. In July British researchers announced the discovery of a gene that could well be the master switch of sex. Seven weeks into a pregnancy, it turns an embryo that would otherwise become a girl into a boy.

The new gene - jointly identified by groups at the Imperial Cancer Research Fund and the Medical Research Council in London - is tiny, constituting barely a thousandth of a percent of the DNA in the Y chromosome. Tests in mice show that after the gene is switched on, a cascade of genetic events takes place, and the testes begin to form. The testes go on to pump out testosterone, which in humans subsequently provokes the sprouting of

beards, the deepening of voices, and the other masculine traits that cause anxiety in adolescent boys.

The process of sex determination, explains David Page, a molecular biologist at the Whitehead Institute in Boston and another key participant in the gene search, is like "one of those plays that has two endings, where you decide halfway through which ending you want." Like the actors in such a performance, the various genes that guide the development of reproductive anatomy - male and female - are present in both XX and XY individuals, but they play out different denouements. To produce a male ending, all you need is that switch on the Y chromosome. This insight was crucial to the recent discovery. Genetic screening had revealed that some rare males - one in 20,000 - have two X's and no Y. In 1983, however, Page found that such XX males actually did have fragments of a Y that had somehow been shuffled onto one of their X chromosomes. After examining the Y fragment that several dozen of these men had in common, the Page team zeroed in on a particular gene. In 1987 they proposed that this gene might be the sex determiner.

Unfortunately, for all the media hoopla at the time, it turned out to be a case of mistaken identity. In December 1989 a study reported finding three XX males who lacked Page's gene, and the investigators had to go back to the lab.

No wonder, then, that British researchers were nervous this past summer when they announced they'd found another candidate gene in XX males, not far from the one located by Page. The British have not actually called their gene the sex maestro yet. What they will say is that the circumstantial evidence in its favor is compelling. First, the gene is on a very small Y fragment, the smallest piece of DNA known to be necessary for maleness. The small size of the fragment decreases the chances that there's another gene contender lurking on it undetected. Second, the gene appears to produce a protein of the type that can bind to DNA, suggesting that it regulates other genes - the hallmark of a master gene. Third, the gene springs into action just before the embryo starts to develop distinctly male sex organs.

As a final clue to its importance, genes of almost identical structure have now been found among an arkful of mammals, including mice, rabbits, chimpanzees, horses, and tigers. "You'd expect a gene with a vital function like sex differentiation to be conserved all the way through evolution," observes Andrew Sinclair, one of the British researchers. To really clinch the case, however, his colleagues are inserting the gene into XX mouse embryos that would normally become female to see whether they develop into males.

As for Page, he says he would be "very surprised if this new gene didn't constitute part of the sex-determining switch." But he isn't writing off his earlier finding just yet. He notes that

certain XX individuals who have the new gene but no other part of the Y chromosome are only partially masculinized, whereas those who have a larger Y fragment are more completely male. Maybe, he muses, it takes more than one gene to make a man.

June Kinoshita

From The Legal Desk

Repeinted from FAMILY LAW by Judith Areen

The extreme unusualness of this case of sex reassignment in infancy lies in the fact that the child was born a normal male and an identical twin, without genital malformation or sexual ambiguity. The idea of sex-reassignment would never have been entertained were it not for a surgical mishap at the age of seven months in which the penis was ablated flush with the abdominal wall. This mishap occurred when a circumcision was being performed by means of electrocautery. The electrical current was too powerful and burned the entire tissue of the penis which necrosed and sloughed off.

The parents were young people of rural background and grade- school education. They were understandably desperate to know what could be done and suffered through a rather long saga of finding no answer. Then a consultant plastic surgeon, familiar with the principles of sex reassignment, recommended reassignment as a girl. The parents agonized their way to a decision, implementing it with a change of name, clothing and hair style when the baby was seventeen months old. Four months later, the surgical first step of genital reconstruction as a female was undertaken, the second step, vaginoplasty, being delayed until the body is full grown. Pubertal growth and feminization will be regulated by means of hormonal replacement therapy with estrogen.

At the time of surgery, when we saw the parents in person for the first time in the psychohormonal research unit at Johns Hopkins, we gave them advice and counseling on the future prognosis and management of their new daughter, based on experience with similar reassignment in hermaphroditic babies. In particular, they were given confidence that their child can be expected to differentiate a female gender identity, in agreement with her sex of rearing. They were broadly informed about the future medical program for their child and how to integrate it with her sex education as she grows older. They were guided in how to give the child information about herself to the extent that the need arises in the future; and they were helped with what to explain to friends and relatives, including their other child. Eventually, they would inform their daughter that she would become a mother by adoption, one day when she married and wanted to have a family.

During the follow-up time of nearly six years since surgery, the parents have kept in close contact with us, making visits on an annual basis to get psychological support and guidance. The mother's

observations and reports have provided us with an insight into changes in her rearing practices towards the sex-reassigned child, and into the different way that she rears this child as compared to the twin brother.

The first items of change were clothes and hairdo. The mother reported: "I started dressing her not in dresses but, you know, in little pink slacks and frilly blouses . . . and letting her hair grow." A year and six months later, the mother wrote that she had made a special effort at keeping her girl in dresses, almost exclusively changing any item of clothes into something that was clearly feminine. "I even made all her nightwear into granny gowns and she wears bracelets and hair ribbons." The effects of emphasizing feminine clothing became clearly noticeable in the girls attitude towards clothes and hairdo another year later, when she was observed to have a clear preference for dresses over slacks and to take pride in her long hair.

Related to being dressed nicely is the sense of neatness. The mother stated that her daughter by four and a half years of age was much neater than her brother, and in contrast to him, disliked to be dirty: "She likes for me to wipe her face. She doesn't like to be dirty, and yet my son is quite different. I can't wash his face for anything . . . She seems daintier. Maybe it's because I encourage it." Elsewhere in this same recorded interview, the mother said: "One thing that really amazes me is that she can be so feminine. I've never seen a little girl so neat and tidy as she can be when she wants to be. . . . She is very proud of herself, when she puts on a new dress, or I set her hair. She just loves to have her hair set; she could sit under the drier all day long to have her hair set. She just loves it."

Of course, girls and boys are not only prepared differently for their reproductive role as mother and father, but also for their other different roles, such as wife and husband od financial supporter of the family and caretaker of children and house. The mother of these two children gave a good example of how her children were copying aspects of the wife and husband role. The parents were quite open in showing affection to each other in the presence of their children. The mother observed how her son would copy some of his father's behavior: "Like he'll bend over and give her a kiss on the cheek or he'll give her a hug . . . and if he (my husband) gives me a swat on the fanny, he'll go and give her a swat on her fanny, too." The boy was clearly the initiator of affection, copying what he saw in his father's behavior. The girl copied some of her mother's responses ---"If she's in an affectionate mood, she'll like it; but very often she'll say, don't do that. . . . If he's been playing some place and comes in the house to where she is helping me . . . then she'll give him a little hug like she's glad to see him."

Regarding domestic activities, such as work in the kitchen and house

traditionally seen as part of the female's role, the mother reported her daughter copies her in trying to help her tidying and cleaning up the kitchen, while the boy could not care less about it. She encourages her daughter when she helps her in the housework.

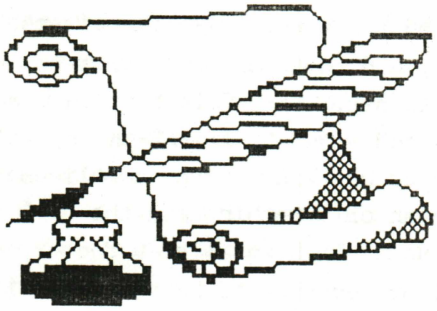
Rehearsal of future roles can also be seen in girls' and boys' toy preferences. The girl in this case wanted and received for Christmas dolls, a doll house, and a doll carriage, clearly related to the maternal aspect of the female role, while the boy wanted and obtained a garage with cars and gas pumps and tools, part of the rehearsal of the male role. His father, like many men, was very interested in cars and mechanical activities.

According to today's standards, not only boys, but also girls often pursue a career. Regarding school and future plans, the mother formulated her own hopes, when the children were a year and ten months old, by saying: "Oh well . . . I am leaving it up to them, but I would like for both of them to go to college and university, and have some kind of a career. That's what I would like for both of them. . . . As long as they get their high school, at least my daughter. My son, it's almost essential, since he will be earning a living for the rest of his life." This standpoint represents the opinion of many parents who encourage education and career plans to a stronger degree for boys than for girls. By the time the twins were five years and nine months of age, they expressed clearly different goals for the future. According to their mother,s report: "I found that my son, he chose very masculine things like a fireman, or a policeman or something like that. He wanted to do what daddy does, work where daddy does, and carry a lunch kit, and drive a car. And she didn't want any of those things. I asked her, and she said she wanted to be a doctor or a teacher. And I asked her, well, did she have plans that maybe some day she'd get married. like mommy? She'll get married some day --- she wasn't to worried about that. She didn't think about that too much, but she wants to be a doctor. But none of the things that she ever wanted to be were like a policeman or a fireman, and that sort of things never appealed to her. So I felt that in a way that's a good sign. . . . I think, it's nice if your boy wants to be a policeman or a fireman or something and the girl wants to do girl things like a doctor, or teaching, or something like that, and I've tried to show them that it's very good. . . .

The girl had many tomboyish traits, such as abundant physical energy, and a high level of activity, stubbornness, and being often the dominant one in a girl's group. Her mother had tried to modify her tomboyishness: ". . . of course, I've tried to teach her not to be rough . . . she doesn't seem as rough as him . . . of course, I discouraged that. I teach her more to be polite and quiet. I always wanted those virtues, I never did manage, but I'm going to try to manage them to --- my daughter -- - to be more quite and

ladylike." From the beginning the girl had been the dominant twin. By the age of three, her dominance over her brother was, as her mother described it, that of a mother hen. The boy in turn took up for his sister, if anyone threatened her.

The examples of different rearing practices towards girls and boys here presented, are by no means a complete sample of the cues and reinforcements parents offer to their children. Most parents give them without conscious effort, routinely.



The President's Corner

SHARING - Charliss Dolge

I often think that the best sharing comes when it is not easy to share. Achievements that are remarkable seem to be preceded by struggle: something has been fought for and won.

Those of us who attended the Autumn Accord will recall the moment when Chris Hughes prefaced his after-dinner meditation with a request that we hold hands with the others at our tables.

There is a certain kind of vulnerability that has been programmed into us over the years whenever physical touch is suggested on occasions other than those of introduction, greeting or farewell.

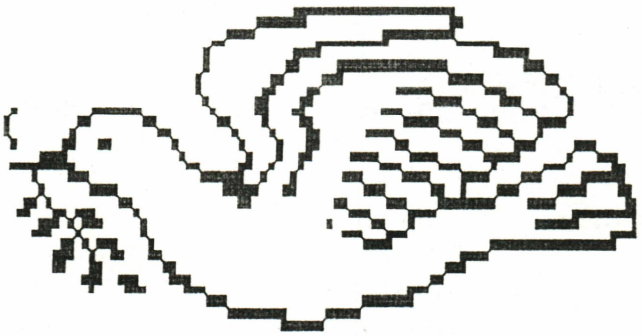
I noticed this as I glanced around the room as this request was made, and I also heard it in the nervous laughter and the attempts at humor directed at this request. There was just enough of this kind of reaction to make it significant.

However, after a time that took a little longer than was necessary, all hands became joined. Now, I am not suggesting that the struggle some had with this was whether or not to decide to join hands, for who would not and thereby be conspicuous?

I am thinking about an internal process that eventually, step by little step, undoes or reverses all that deep and unhealthy conditioning that we have been subjected to over the years. Especially as genetic males, we have learned many, many reasons to fear intimacy - not just the expressions of it, but even the need and desire for it.

It is my hope that EON continues to provide a context wherein we not only have the opportunities to dress as our feminine selves in the company of others, but that it keeps growing as a place where the individual's victory over emotional and spiritual levels as well as the physical level is made possible.

Here again is the Autumn Accord meditation that was given to us by Chris Hughes. As we consider this message, let us not fear the larger sense of self, meaning, and worth that it confers upon each and every one of us as a member of our gender community and as a member of the whole of society. Rather, let us take it into our hearts and try it out, little by little, one day at a time, as we "shoulder gravely the unique vocation which is both your privilege and duty to fulfill . . . "



You are entering a dimension not only of sight and sound, but also of mind. You have entered the EON zone. I'd like to welcome you and I hope you packed a light lunch.

I'm pleased to report that there has been an increased interest in our group by Ithacans. Interstate 81 has been log-jammed by perspective members and Ithacans have been ringing our phone off the hook to find out about the club.

A national Gary Numan convention will be rocking the parish house on the 27th of July with a D.J. and live band. EON and parish members are invited with the cover charge. Others please feel free to call me (Cathy) at (315)487-4502.

"Behold the fantasy. Wanton feelings in the line of sight. Horizon beckons smiling souls. Closer now, can just grasp, you'll never wish again. I sing you, behold the reality."

Cathy Napier
"Earthstar"

THE AUTUMN ACCORD MEDITATION - by Chris Hughes

May we learn to join hands and reach inward together
to that central source of Power
which is both the origin and sustenance of the universe.
This Great Spirit, known by a thousand names, animates all living things.
It is the foundation of truth, the primal wellspring of love.
It both impels us to seek the attainment
of the ultimate reality of ourselves, and calls us
to forever strive for more heightened bonding
with our fellow creatures.

This is the ultimate challenge and mystery of life:
We do not become whole until we learn to love ourselves,
we cannot love ourselves
without giving the peace we have found to others.

So when we love ourselves we become
the children of this Great Spirit of a thousand names;
We become the sacred shamans of humanity,
We become the prophets who proclaim truths others do not want to hear;
We become the oracles who are seldom understood,
but who whisper warnings to a tormented convulsing world;
We become the clowns who show those going about mundane daily routines

the dignity of pain, the nobility of self sacrifice,
the glory of suffering for what is true and good.
We become the priests and priestesses who bring a semblance
of humor and color to a monotone society,
And by knowing the mystery of a thousand names
we restore the ancient balance
of Heaven and Earth.

So dare to celebrate your differentness now -
Be vast enough to include all people in your circle of brothers and sisters;
Be generous enough to serve
as a channel to the force of power and life
that is the source of all being;
Shoulder gravely the unique vocation
which is both your privilege and duty to fulfill,
That we become the harbingers
Of a New Age On Earth, the exemplars
of a world where all people can dwell
in understanding and unity,
The gentle ones who can see past the appearances and illusions
which divide one from another, down
deep to the central core of love
that is in all of us.

And through the time of tribulation
that is still with us today
May we remember the ancient Aramaic word
Maranatha, It Is Coming
Maranatha, It Is Coming

THEATER

Calendar of Events

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

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