

AVENues

Asexual:

A person who does not experience sexual attraction. Unlike celibacy, which is a choice, asexuality is a sexual orientation.

AVEN:

The Asexual Visibility and Education Network, an online community and resource archive striving to create open and honest discussion about asexuality among asexual and sexual people alike.

AVENues:

A bimonthly publication available online, created by members of the AVEN community in order to further showcase our thoughts and promote discussion by and about asexuals.

<http://www.asexuality.org>.

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Asexuals at a meetup in Pittsburgh - photo by TRIP

Asexual Visibility: One Show at a Time

by STUPENDOUS SAM

Asexuality as a sexual orientation is relatively unknown amongst the world's population. As the majority of the population works to liberate sex from the restrictions laid by history, asexuals watch from the sidelines, often feeling that there is something wrong with them. This is one of the main reasons why increasing asexual visibility is so important and why a group of six asexuals from AVEN chose to appear on the Montel Williams Show in January. KBRD143, another asexual couple. These six people braved 40 minutes in front of cameras, a live audience, a very sexual host and an old critic, Dr. J. Davidson, a sex therapist who has opposed asexuality as a valid orientation on a previous occasion. It seemed as though Montel Williams accentuated his own sexuality to create a contrast with the asexual team, forcing them to explain every aspect of asexuality. The asexual team faced all these challenges with composure and eloquence. Their arguments were clear and with six asexuals present, anyone watching the show could find an interviewee to whom they could relate.

The team consisted of AVENGuy, the founder of AVEN; Hu and Winter, an asexual couple; SummerSeeker, an asexual who has tried sex for the sake of relationships; and GBRD143 and

See SHOW on page 3.

A Letter from the Editor

Where, oh where, has AVENues gone?

If you've been following AVENues since the beginning, you may have noticed that we've been quiet lately. Quiet on the publishing front, that is: on the AVEN forums, I and my beta-readers, writers, potential writers, former writers, subscribers, and just plain interested parties have been very busy indeed.

This issue is a little bit bigger than our previous issues, and that's because it's chock full of AVENtastic content. The old AVENues features (such as From The Forum) that you know and love are still here, but so are some new animals. Check out "AVEN Around the World" for a look at what your non-English-speaking asexual buddies are doing, or read one of our event-based articles to see what's been really going on behind all this asexual visibility we've been having.

AVEN is about community, and on the forums, our community isn't just about discussing asexuality; it's also about all the little things that make an asexual life worth living. In that spirit, we've added some "Off-A" features to AVENues as well: this issue's got food, fun, and some movie talk sprinkled through it.

There's one piece of bad news in all of this new-and-improved talk, and that's that AVENues won't be coming out every month anymore. Right now, we're set to publish every eight weeks. If that isn't often enough for you to get your AVEN fix, there's something you can do about it: write to newsletter@asexuality.org and submit something! The more content we have to publish, the more often we're going to be able to publish.

I hope that all of you have as much fun exploring the new AVENues as I've had working on it. Happy reading!

– Hallucigenia, AVENues editor-in-chief

Letter from a Reader

Hey all! Just writing in to encourage people to take a look at the campus outreach page on [ASEX]. I think there is a lot of potential for making an impact on campuses as a result of visibility efforts, and the effects could definitely spread beyond colleges and universities. The wiki page is a way to organize and plan these efforts, as well as a way to keep track of what's been done already. So check it out!

– Ghosts

Editor's note: The Campus Outreach section of ASEX can be found here:

http://www.asexuality.org/wiki/index.php?title=Campus_Outreach

Submit a letter!

Got something to say related to the content of AVENues? Does something published here make you nod in agreement, pound your desk in disagreement, or scratch your head in sheer confusion? **Talk to us!** We'll answer any questions that you have and possibly (with your permission) even publish your remarks in a future issue.

Send your letters to newsletter@asexuality.org !

News from February and March

The biggest news on AVEN is the AVEN Social Empowerment eXchange (ASEX), our new social organizing system based in the AVEN Wiki. Using ASEX, asexuals and their allies can keep abreast of current visibility projects, manage their own projects, and recruit or volunteer assistance. You can browse for different ways to help out AVEN based on your own skills and interests. If you're attending a university, check out the Campus Outreach section!

The influx of new members and supportive e-mails after the airing of the Montel Williams Show on January 4th has continued. MTV News filmed David Jay and some other San Francisco AVENites in January, and other shows and documentaries are looking for asexuals in Austin, Texas, Norway, and New Zealand. The BBC is also in the process of planning a show about asexuality to be filmed in March / April.

The New York radio show "Unspotted" aired a very positive show about asexuality on Feb. 10.

SummerSeeker, one of the asexuals who appeared on the Montel Williams show, has also given presentations in Toronto and Waterloo, Ontario. New York-area AVENites will be giving a talk on asexuality at Hofstra University on March 20.

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Despite the length of the show, Montel did not ask many new questions and, as a result, it was only an introduction to asexuality. “What is it?” “Have you gone for a medical check up?” “Was there abuse?” “Are you gay?” “How do you know if you haven’t tried?” And, for the people who tried: “Maybe you just haven’t met 'The One' yet?” These questions were asked again and again from different angles.

The discussion started with AVENGuy giving the basic information and then moved along to Hu and Winter, who presented their answers as an asexual couple. At this stage Montel Williams was eliciting the basics of asexuality. Winter used the example of a Bell curve, where the major proportion is made up of people who have what might be termed as “normal” sexual attraction. The far side of the scale consists of people for whom sexual attraction is of paramount importance. On the other end of the scale, there are people who experience no sexual attraction at all. This explanation gave the discussion a good starting point.

The dynamic changed when SummerSeeker, and later GBRD143 and KBRD143, came on stage. When

people say they don’t want sex and haven’t had it, it is easy to dismiss them by saying they simply don’t know what they’re missing. However, when people say they have tried sex and didn’t like it, such dismissal is not so easy. Montel fired questions at these three, and their responses made the nature of asexuality very clear.

Dr. J. Davidson raised a good point in regard to health. A lack of sexual attraction might be an indication of a medical condition. The problem is that very little research has been done by the scientific community, and therefore it is not easy, or wise, to dismiss this question. Many asexuals have gone for medical tests and the results are inconclusive. For some, there are physiological reasons; for others, there aren’t. To make conclusive judgments about the asexual population as a whole, more research needs to be done. As AVENGuy said, “By making asexuality a topic of public discussion, further research is encouraged.”

The Montel Show is part of a bigger drive to promote asexual visibility. AVENGuy and KBRD143 are in the process of writing a book on asexuality, people are contacting GLTB groups on university

campuses, and there are several projects running from AVEN Wiki under the heading of ASEX (AVEN Social Empowerment eXchange). On a smaller, more personal scale, people who come out to family and friends are doing what is probably the most important part of visibility promotion. Asexuality becomes more than just a concept to people when they have an asexual person in their lives.

Visibility promotion is working. Hu recounted that, “The day after the show, I was recognized by a group of high school girls on the street in Harlem. One girl who saw the show said it got her thinking about whether she might be asexual, because she still wasn’t interested in boys. I thought she was a bit on the young side to know for sure, and so did she, but we agreed that it’s something to think about. It made me feel great that a lot of young people are going to have this in the back of their minds now.”

The asexual team has reached out to asexuals by informing them and showing them that asexuals are not freaks and not alone. As SummerSeeker said, “It is something I can look back on and go: Cool, I really did that.”

Neither Snails Nor Oysters

by BLUE ICE-TEA

Sex sells. That’s what they say, anyway. Whether bemoaning it as a sad part of our reality, or celebrating it for its commercial utility, we seem convinced that everyone wants sex, and, moreover, everyone wants to see sex. So what about people who don’t want sex? What about asexuals? Do they view movies differently from others? I decided to head over to AVEN and ask them.

The answer is that there are probably as many movie buffs among asexuals as any other population. Respondents were fans of all kinds of genres: fantasy, sci-fi, animation, action, comedy, horror, drama and even romance. One poster, Androgyny, even speculates, “Maybe I put more emphasis on [movies] because sexuals are like 'Movies? When I could be having sex?’”

There were, however, some scathing comments made about sex and romance in movies. According to Seabirdicat, “I really don’t care for romance much at all, and I’m always crossing my fingers on certain movies hoping against hope they’ll for once cut the pointless coupling out.” Osmosis said, “I think often sex is used to sell the movie and cover up

See SNAILS on page N

Food For Thought

Last issue, we asked our readers the following question:

Sexual people like to describe their sexual encounters as intimate experiences, but sex isn't the only way to be intimate with someone. What methods and activities do you use to create intimacy with other people, and how well have they worked for you?

Some of the responses we got are listed below.

There are many different ways to be intimate - such as a repeated baring of your emotional soul as you appeal to another for aid with a personal problem, and returning their understanding and kindness when it is their turn to express confusion and doubt about the world. Then there are physical ways too.

Being someone who does not mind contact, I find just being close to the person enough. Cuddling up close to one another while watching movies, or talking is just as intimate to me [as sex]. I like to sit on the other's lap or vice versa. Sometimes massages are nice, too. Nothing sexual, though.

- Anonymous

The other day I was lying in bed with my cuddle buddy. As we held each other he asked, "You've had sex. Which do you find more intimate - sex or cuddling?"

"Cuddling, definitely," I replied as I snuggled closer. "I don't see how anyone can ever feel this close when they are having sex."

- Trip

I like to cuddle and hold hands and sometimes I like a kiss. I love to watch sunsets or lie on the lawn and study the clouds. I feel that when I share those things with a girl, it is a very intimate thing. I won't say that this has been altogether successful, because I have never been out with an asexual girl. It is hard for a sexual girl to understand that it's not something wrong with her, but rather the way I feel (or don't feel), even though I have told her before getting close.

- Jst1Dreamr

This month, we have a new question for you:

What do you find attractive in other people?

Send your answers to newsletter@asexuality.org. Please put "Food for Thought" in the subject line and indicate the name or nickname by which you would like to be credited.

Food for Thought answers belong to their respective authors and do not necessarily express the official views of the Asexual Visibility and Education Network.

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weak script points or lack of ideas, as some sort of a substitute.” Some asexuals trashed romantic story-lines; others seemed to think they were okay, as long as they didn't involve sex. Lady Heartilly is a fan of romance, but said, “When I watch a movie in which the main character starts having sex and enjoys it, my ability to relate to him or her goes way down.” There were even sex-positive comments such as Ily's: “I usually think sex scenes in movies are interesting; I think it might be because they are always shot really attractively and don't seem like real life.”

Many posters suggested films that seem to contain asexual themes. “Amélie” was cited for the protagonist's largely non-sexual lifestyle, and her ability to derive pleasure from other sources. Other suggestions were “Finding Nerverland”, “Lost in Translation”, fantasy movies such as “The Lord of the Rings”, “Narnia”, or the Harry Potter films, some kinds of anime,

and children's films. Opinions were split over “The 40 Year-Old Virgin”. Morgan Underhill also cites the asexuality of the angel in “Dogma”.

In some cases, an asexual's enjoyment of a movie simply means interpreting it differently from sexual people. According to

WheresMyCow, “I find that I tend to assume characters that show no sexual attraction or interest are asexual, ... maybe like a heterosexual person would assume all characters to be heterosexual unless they show sexual interest in the same sex.” Nakama makes a similar statement, but adds, “I also know that many of my sexual friends see [lack of overt attraction] completely differently - often interpreting it as homosexuality.”

The same poster goes on to make the interesting observation: “One thing that annoys me is how many sexuals completely ignore the possibility of a close platonic friendship. For example, I know people who would argue endlessly that Frodo and Sam

[from “The Lord of the Rings”] are gay, because they obviously mean so much to each other. To me, that's exactly what it is - they mean much to each other. That doesn't mean they have sex ... why should it?” Perhaps if asexuals are less in tune with sexuality, they are more in tune with other themes, such as friendship. In the words of WheresMyCow, “I love stories of close friendship as much as I guess most sexual people love romance.”

For now, it seems that asexuals must resort to reading asexual themes into mainstream cinema. Or perhaps, in some cases, it is they who refuse to read in sexual subtext that doesn't really belong. Hopefully, movies will soon begin to deal with asexuality more openly, the way they are currently dealing with other forms of sexual diversity. Some posters expressed interest in making such movies, and doubtless many asexuals would be interested in seeing the results. As Hallucigenia said, “I guess we all want to see ourselves reflected on the screen in some way.”

Stuffed Mushrooms with Spinach

(submitted by LADYCATSYCHAN - from <http://allrecipes.com>)

INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons butter	12 large mushrooms	3/8 cup heavy cream
5 slices bacon	3 tablespoons butter	1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1 (10 ounce) package frozen chopped spinach	2 tablespoons finely chopped onions	salt and pepper to taste
	2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced	2 tablespoons butter, melted

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C). Butter a 9x13 inch baking dish with 2 tablespoons butter.

Place bacon in a large, deep skillet. Cook over medium high heat until evenly brown. Drain, crumble and set aside.

Place frozen spinach in a medium saucepan with 1/4 cup water. Bring water to a boil, then reduce heat to medium and cook spinach covered 10 minutes. Uncover and stir. Remove from heat and drain.

Remove stems from mushrooms. Arrange caps in the baking dish. Finely chop stems.

Melt 3 tablespoons butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat, and mix in onion and garlic. Cook 5 minutes, or until tender, then mix in bacon, spinach, chopped mushroom stems and heavy cream. Bring cream to a boil. Remove from heat and mix in Parmesan cheese, salt and pepper.

Stuff mushroom caps generously with the mixture. Drizzle with 2 tablespoons melted butter. Bake in the preheated oven 30 minutes until lightly browned.

AVEN Around the World: Dutch AVEN

Aseksueel Voorlichtings en Educatie Netwerk



By HALLUCIGENIA

with translation help by TRIP

Structure

Dutch AVEN started out with the same structure as English AVEN, but over time, it adapted the structure to suit its own needs. The forum is divided into Site, Asexuality, and Community sections. In Site, members receive announcements, welcome new members, and discuss the forums themselves. In Asexuality, members discuss their orientation, with separate sections for different kinds of discussion such as Frustrations, Questions and Articles. And in Community, they have fun and serious discussions about things not related to asexuality.

Dutch AVEN has four moderators, three of whom are active. A moderator named ChibiFirli manages the technical aspects of the site, while Ereinion and Myra take on the responsibility of keeping all Dutch AVEN's discussions civil and on-topic.

Community

Dutch AVEN is a much smaller forum than English AVEN, with 225 members as of press time. The members who post are a close-knit group of friends, who generally prefer the smaller Dutch forum to the larger English one.

“The English [forum] is much too big for me. I get lost there and do not feel at home,” Peter, one member of Dutch AVEN, said.

Ereinion echoed his sentiments: “The English AVEN is so huge, I didn’t really feel into the group when I posted there ... Be aware that newcomers don’t know what’s going on, so they don’t know what purple bananas and things like that mean. The things that create a stronger bond between the people that are on a forum for a long time disconnect the new members from the group. This is something that we have to keep in mind on the Dutch AVEN too.”

Because of their close bonds to each other and the low level of new memberships, members of Dutch AVEN take extra care to welcome new people to their forums and to make them feel at home. They even have a special section of the forum all in English, for casual visitors.

The liberal European atmosphere of the Netherlands presents slightly different challenges for asexual people than that of most English-speaking countries. “In every culture there is a 'double moral standard', but I do not see it so much in the Dutch forum,” Peter said. “I feel another kind of atmosphere on the English forum. Also much more people who have problems with sexuality because of a traditional, sexually repressive culture. On the Dutch forum we do not have those kinds of reactions.” However, he admitted, “Sex has to be’ seems to be the prevalent opinion in Dutch magazines.”

Visibility

Dutch media has been slow to pick up on the idea of asexuality. Media in Flanders, a Dutch-speaking region of Belgium, has been much more enthusiastic.

The Dutch AVENites started raising visibility by sending letters about asexuality to Dutch-language magazines, only a few of which responded. Lately, though, journalists have been contacting Dutch AVEN of their own accord. A few months ago, a Belgian television show produced a segment about asexuality featuring a member of Dutch AVEN. A Dutch television show was intended to follow, but it has been postponed.

From the Forum

I always just end up treating those that I care about in much the same way; friends are treated like brothers or sisters, older friends like aunts and uncles. As a result of this, my one attempt at a romantic relationship failed spectacularly, and I don't think I could ever imagine having a proper romantic relationship with somebody. It'd just be too weird. I'm not aromantic in the same way that I'm asexual; I actually really like the idea of romance, but somehow it's just not for me. I'm content to live out the rest of my life with my 'brothers' and 'sisters'.

My feelings with regards to real life romance aside, though, I do so very dearly love romance in fiction. Not necessarily romantic comedies (which tend to be, except in the best cases, a little bit hackneyed), but just generally books and movies with a strong, well-developed romantic element. While I don't imagine myself in the roles, as many people probably do, I can appreciate romantic stories in the same way that I can science fiction ones; neither are quite real to me, but both are appealing as works of fantasy.

It doesn't necessarily have to be romantic love, either. I just like films that place a lot of emphasis on relationships, and on the way that people interact with one another. It's kind of interesting to me.

- Miala, Sunday Jan. 21, 2007, "Romantic Comedies" in Asexual Musings & Rantings

I tried to make one up once but it involved kung fu fighting instead of sex. I didn't mean for it to, that's just the way it went.

- Parthenoxy, Sunday Feb. 4, 2007, "Sexual Fantasies" in Asexual Musings & Rantings

Sexuality is just such a natural and wonderful part of most peoples' lives that they assume not having it is a horrible lack. They think of asexuality in terms of deficiency, because (at first, at least) they can't imagine not having the desire for [sex].

I think the best way to change their minds is just to show them how happy and fulfilled you can be as an asexual person. Prove them wrong.

- spinneret, Tuesday Feb. 13, 2007, "Asexuality seen as a cause for concern" in Asexual Musings & Rantings

I attended the talk at the center [the Market Street Center in San Francisco] yesterday and just had to say how interesting it was to me. The people that attended had so many questions that I haven't been exposed to before and wasn't aware that non-A people really wondered about. I felt that their interest seemed to truly be a desire to understand, to better see that asexuals are as normal as anyone else they know. Thank you, David, Emily, and Ivan for a very enlightening experience.

I am also posting this message on the Yahoo site in hopes that many people see what an experience this was and might help them to make a decision to attend the next one.

- Jst1Dreamr, Sunday, Feb. 18, 2007, "Re: Saturday's talk at the center" in Announcements

I can't stand the use of "intimate" as a euphemism for intercourse. Typical bad usage: "we were intimate" meaning "he stuck it in me". If someone means intercourse, they should say intercourse.

"Intimate" and "intimacy" refer to many matters that are extremely personal, including, of course, sex acts, but also other things.

I am a very romantic asexual virgin married to another very romantic asexual virgin of the opposite sex. What we like to do (cuddle, hold each other, etc.) can be considered "intimate" even though it is not sex.

While it is true that our virginity is "intact," we have been intimate many times.

- marytyp, Monday Feb. 19, 2007, "Time to redefine what an intimate relationship is?" in Asexual Relationships

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Howl's Moving Castle

a movie review by KUSAN38

Hayao Miyazaki's movies will leave you feeling rather clean. I wish I could bottle the beauty and innocence of this Japanese director's spectacular animated films. Any asexual watching one of these pieces is sure to notice the chasteness of their love stories, but this is just one facet of the unique Miyazaki experience. Fans surely will have seen most of his work, even obscure titles such as "Porko Rosso" and "The Cat Returns," because his films are as addicting as potato chips, and much healthier. Other readers might have no idea what I'm talking about. To the latter, I suggest the recent works "Spirited Away" and "Howl's Moving Castle;" you'll acquire a taste in no time.

Miyazaki is fantasy, but anyone who reads fantasy books knows that fairy-tale innocence is mainly the domain of American Disney classics. Miyazaki is like a Japanese Disney, yet there is something infinitely more real about his animated features. How does a director of G-rated fantasy films deliver this well-preserved honesty wrapped in peaceful innocence?

This week, I had a reunion with my personal favorite, "Howl's Moving Castle." This film has a cliché element of "boy meets girl," but the saying is useless after the first meeting between the humble heroine Sophie and the androgynously beautiful wizard, Howl. Two chaste kisses comprise the peak of romantic expression between the pair. This takes nothing away for an asexual like me, but my sexual friends are equally enthralled. Something about "Howl's Moving Castle" makes this courtly love utterly believable and utterly appropriate. The key to Miyazaki's reality is complexity: physical attraction and even romantic love are not the stars of the show by any means. So many other emotions and ways of being take the stage that sexuality and romance lose the limelight (if there is a limelight at all).

Sophie quickly loses her youthful appearance when the jealous and vengeful Witch of the Waste transforms her into an old woman. In this wrinkled and gray-haired form, Sophie wins over Howl. She begins to enjoy life in a way that she never could as a young girl — she feels plain and ugly in her youth, but as an old woman, she ceases to care. This message — that age is natural, that it happens, that it is okay and even liberating — would fall rather than fly if sexuality entered the equation. Sexuality, with all its glamour, its impermanence, its demands, must be removed for the more complex beauties of life (and the gray areas of love) to stand front and center.

Howl's ridiculous vanity is Miyazaki's closest approach to sexuality. The well-dressed wizard throws a fit when his hair dye comes out the wrong color, and yet he calmly flies (transformed into a bird) over a raging war, looking for ways to thwart both sides in the name of peace. Miyazaki attacks vanity, showing that even brave and noble people can act like idiots if they care more about their hair than life itself. To see this in a chaste Miyazaki film means that asexuals are not exempt from physical vices like vanity. Even without the reigns of sexuality, the world is not a simple place.

Removing sexuality and most of the romance gives us room to look around. We see family love between Howl, Sophie, Howl's apprentice Markl, and Calcifer the fire demon. This familial warmth even extends to their former enemy, the Witch of the Wastes. The varied forms of love in "Howl's Moving Castle" are only a small part of its complexity. Miyazaki films are both real and innocent because they often dispense with the simple drama so prevalent in fairy tales (among other things). Revenge and strict "good vs. evil" plots are often replaced with forgiveness and changes of heart. The villains in "Howl's Moving Castle," the Witch of the Wastes and Madam Suliman, are not evil: they are jealous and greedy. Anyone who remembers "Spirited Away" will recall that the villain, Yubaba, is nothing more ominous than a selfish businesswoman. Love often changes the hearts of villains. Herein lies both the reality and innocence of Miyazaki: "hearts change," as one of the characters declares in "Howl's Moving Castle." This implies that an "evil" character can be "cured" by love, that intentions can be altered, and that no one's character is set. Sexuality, too often taken for love, obscures this fact and gives love a false name. Miyazaki's chaste stories state beautifully what real love can accomplish.

This essay may seem to have wandered quite a bit, but I've tried to do what I hope Miyazaki would do: I've looked at his work in all its complexity. The asexuality of "Howl's Moving Castle" and his other films represents one way of drawing back the curtains, of revealing the complexity of life in a healthy way. This goes right along with removing the overused dichotomy of good and evil. You may read this and think, "but sexuality is real! Good and evil can be real too!" And you're right! But Miyazaki makes films like life: films where these are not all that matters. "Howl's Moving Castle" and its predecessors remind viewers that myriad things matter just as much, and teaches us to see those things again.

SPEAKING – continued from page 4

this? Had I known that it was OK to be asexual, I would have made many different decisions in my life. It then occurred to me that there are probably many more people like me out there who have no idea that it's OK to have no interest in sex. I decided then and there that I would do what I could to raise awareness about asexuality. I'm all about spreading the word!

When two opportunities came up for me to speak locally about asexuality, I jumped on them. The first was at the LGBTQ organization at Wilfrid Laurier University, about an hour drive from my home. I tried to prepare by listening to AVENGuy's podcasts and downloading his asex101 presentation. That was a great help, but I also incorporated some of my own experiences.

Although I was very nervous, I found the group to be very friendly and non-judgmental. They listened to me with interest and asked great questions. I felt very comfortable and left feeling very happy that I had done this. In fact, a couple of weeks after speaking, I got an e-mail from one of the organizers asking for advice for a friend that thought she might be asexual. Now she knows about AVEN and knows she's not alone.

The second speaking engagement was much closer to home at the Halton Organization for Pride and Education. This is also an LGBTQ group, and again, they were very warm and welcoming. They asked great questions and many of them could relate, not being part of the heterosexual majority themselves. They also had good comments about the new pamphlets. One member is part of the local education system and asked if I would consider speaking at local high schools. How's that for visibility?

Despite my fear of public speaking, both experiences were great. I strongly encourage all AVENites to contact local LGBTQ groups and introduce yourself.

Featured AVENite: "Ghosts"

A personage from the forums that you'd like to get to know better

Name: Ghosts
(or Anne)

Age: 21

Location:
Massachusetts

Preferred Label(s): Well, there's so many, but I've really admired Dischord's ethics throughout the years.



Bio: I've been on AVEN for a little over two years. I wasn't incredibly active right away, but after a few months (and, finally, computer access at the place I was living), I was posting more often. And now I'm a moderator for the Asexual Relationships and Philosophy n' Politics forums.

I love theorizing about relationships both on and off the forums, and I've been spending time, when I have it, on the Wiki (which I definitely suggest people should check out more often). I've done a few little interviews and I'm hoping to get something organized on a local campus. I'm also going to be busy working on a zine I'm starting up. Off-AVEN, I'm really into music and I'm in a band; plus I'm a student. And I like to fly kites.

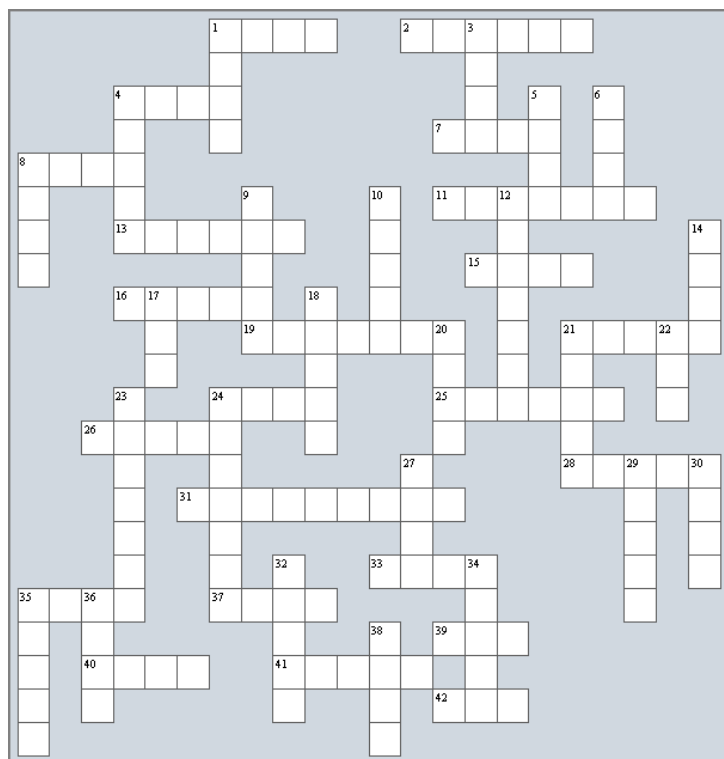
How she came to AVEN: A friend pointed out an article about asexuality written by a sex shop owner (awesomeness) in a zine called "Punk Planet", and it had mentioned AVEN in it. So, I followed the link and here I am.

The most important thing about AVEN: I don't know if there's a number one important thing that visibility does, but one of the most important things to me is that it helps give validity to nonsexual intimacy and relationships. I think this goes for both asexual and sexual people too – we're creating a new discourse about relationships, and asexual visibility helps spread that.

Advice for newcomers: It's okay to be confused when you first come here – I was, even after reading the Frequently Asked Questions. It's not always easy to understand sexuality, so if you need a little time to figure things out, don't worry about it. And don't be afraid to ask questions, even if you think they've been asked before.

Other thoughts: Anyone can be involved! The Admods and Project Team aren't the only ways to help out – I probably sound like a broken record, but getting involved in visibility efforts is a great way to make a difference.

Casual Crossword



Across:

1. To make pretense
2. The time of flying cars, etc.
4. Very young men
7. Supposedly, they can be crawled through
8. And starts
11. To approve or help
13. Kidney-shaped seed
15. To write things online regularly
16. Could be SATB or SSA, for example
19. Secrecy while moving
21. It's big. Really big.
24. Having completed one's studies
25. To continue unchanged
26. Geographically significant stream of water
28. Set of oft-ignored rules for thinking
31. Observer of the event
33. Happy for the occasion
35. Toward the centre of the planet
37. Fish, or to complain
39. Theoretically, one is both alive and dead
40. A many-splendored thing, supposedly
41. What's up for discussion
42. Crow call, or prominent union

Down

1. Entity that doesn't need a bicycle
3. Faithful (as in love), or following the correspondence theory
4. Fundamental, or a programming language
5. To cease
6. A mendacious person
8. Thin membrane, or the story drawn onto one
9. Solar cycles
10. Mail, the analog way
12. Religious traveler
14. Three, sir
17. Dangerous to touch
18. Joe Green, of opera fame
20. To listen
21. Unmoving
22. Cylinder of food preservation
23. Engrossing untruths
24. Offensive, or simply pictorial
27. Report the supposed feelings of a nation
29. Not an easy color to be
30. Exclusive group or blunt instrument
32. Pilate (and others) wanted to know what it is
34. A play, or whining teenagers
35. Wish, prophecy, or random neurons firing?
36. In good fashion, or a water source
38. Musical instrument, or drug system



Asexuals exploring Pittsburgh - photo by TRIP

(Next page: Same)

AVENues Wants You!

Here's the deal:

AVENues is not written by high-faluting AVEN officials in a secret office somewhere. AVENues is written by you – by real live asexuals, demi-sexuals, not-sure-yet-sexuals, and their allies. That means that keeping things moving in here is up to you.

In every issue, we're going to need a ton of writing, and we're making it easy now by giving you a list of exactly what we want. Here is a list of what AVENues is made of:

News: If you were at (or know of) an event that had something to do with asexuality, we'd like to hear about it!

Opinion and theory: about asexuality. 300-1500 words is the best length.

Media: Have you spotted something asexual in a movie, book, song, or TV show? How are we being represented?

Poems and short stories with asexual themes.

The best of the AVEN forums: If you're hanging out online and see a post that deserves publishing or a hardworking asexy warrior who deserves recognition, tell us about it!

Reader responses: It only takes a few seconds to send us your take on the latest Food For Thought question, and if you have anything else to say to us, we love getting letters!

Art and photography: We normally use photos from AVEN meetups, but anything visual with an asexual or AVEN theme is well worth including.

Fun: Comics, puzzles, recipes – give AVENues' inner child something to do!

Send it all to newsletter@asexuality.org, and remember, we'll write back to you within three business days.

I Wanna

by NALLE

I wanna watch TV next on the same couch.
 I wanna share a newspaper on Sunday morning.
 I wanna sleep next to you.
 I wanna laugh with you.
 I wanna cry with you.
 I wanna listen to your thoughts. (Your philosophic thinking in the middle of the night.)
 I wanna look at old photos of us.
 I wanna tell you my secrets.
 I wanna fight with you.
 I wanna make up with you. (That's why I started the fight in the first place.)
 I wanna watch you sleeping. (You look so cute.)
 I wanna make you smile. (I can do that pretty well; you know it!)
 I wanna go for a walk with you. (We need a dog to do that, don't we?)
 I wanna call us "we". (It drives others crazy, that's why.)
 I wanna dance with you.
 I wanna sulk because of what you said. (For ten seconds, that's the longest I can do.)
 I wanna go to movies with you.
 I wanna see you happy.
 I wanna comfort you.
 I wanna hold your hand.
 I wanna cuddle with you.
 I wanna eat chocolate with you. (Is it okay if I bring food in bed?)
 I wanna go to the supermarket with you. (Oranges or apples?)
 I wanna share my whole life with you. (Or should we buy some grapes?)
 I wanna choose a name for your dog. (Can I, please? You can choose the next one...)
 I wanna go to family reunions with you. (They need something new to talk about.)
 I wanna raise kids with you.
 I wanna grow older together.
 I wanna show you my new dress.
 I wanna tease you. (Of course!)
 I wanna hug you.
 I love you.

