

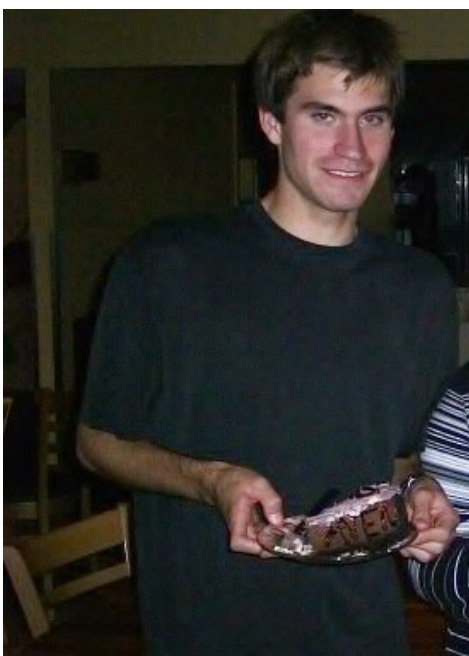
# AVENues

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

**For more information,** visit <http://www.asexuality.org>



*Asexuals let it all hang out at an AVEN meetup in Pittsburgh, PA – photos by CHILDOFTHELIGHT*

## Traversing the edge of the sexual world

by AMANDA ROJOD

I suppose my sexual thoughts and feelings just didn't get as far along as most people's do. While I never played "doctor", I remember sitting next to my neighbor on the elementary school bus and talking about how he played "doctor" with a female friend. At 12 years old, my then 13 year old boyfriend asked me for sex. I said no, though only because I thought you were guaranteed to get pregnant every time you had sex. He asked a few more times, but I always said no, and as a result, our childhood romance didn't last long.

You might find 12 and 13 a bit too young to be having sex, but that's the same age some of my classmates began having it. As seventh graders, we were all aware of a few boys in 9th and 10th grades who would have sex with us. Oh,

sure, I participated in the giggles and "that's the boy I'd sleep with," but I knew I wouldn't actually have sex with any of the boys.

As I got older, I had a few other relationships with boys. They always ended the same way – as soon as I got the impression the boy wanted sex, I backed out. There were guys I liked, but they were always much older than me. I used to use that to justify my lack of sexual feelings – "I'm not desiring sex, because the men I like are 30 years old, which means I won't have sex until I'm 30."

I think in some ways, I had it easier than most teenage asexuals do. I was a tomboy, and many of the boys thought

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## Letters to the editor:

### Upcoming meetings

Hello. I just joined AVEN today in hopes that I could meet more people who are like me, both for friendships and romantic friendships. As I searched through the website I was hoping that there could be a gathering, meeting, or reunion. Then I ran into your publication showing a picture of an "AVEN meetup" in New York. I also live in NY and would love to meet people in person if there is going to be a meeting soon.

Hope you may reply!

Diego

*Hi, Diego! You're in luck, because there are a lot of AVEN meetups going on around the world, and New York is a prime spot for them. Most meetups are organized by posting in the "Meetup Mart" section of our discussion forum.*

*If you're in the New York City / New Jersey area, an ongoing thread for planning meetups in that area is here:*

*<http://www.asexuality.org/discussion/viewtopic.php?t=13704> NYC AVENites been meeting up pretty regularly for quite some time. If you hang around there and post expressing your interest in attending a meetup, it's highly likely that you'll be able to meet some like-minded asexuals very soon. If you're further upstate, there are no currently active threads for you, but there are AVENites in that area too, so why not start a new thread suggesting a time and place and see who's interested?*

*The same advice goes for interested readers from places other than New York. There have recently been successful meetups in Portland, Toronto, London, and Seattle, among many others. If you'd like to meet asexuals near you, why not hop into the "Meetup Mart" and search for your own area?*

*(Remember to stay in safe, public places whenever you meet people from the Internet, even if they are asexual.)*

*Hallucigenia, AVENues Editor-In-Chief*

### Call for letters

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](mailto:newsletter@asexuality.org) !

## News from October

David Jay's September lecture circuit went well, with visits to more universities planned in the future. A downloadable visibility kit containing PowerPoint slides, outlines, and video kits is in the first stages of being put together based on these lectures. Other lectures on asexuality are being given by other AVENites at Brock University in Canada and in sex education classes in Virginia.

The AVEN website (as well as many of its non-English counterparts) went down and some posts were lost in mid-October due to various software problems. The boards are back up now and AVEN admins are working on preventing future glitches of this nature.

The Dr. Keith Ablow show will be filming an episode on asexuality soon, featuring many individuals and couples from the AVEN forums. Stay tuned for more details!

Asexuality and AVEN-related groups are popping up all over the Internet, including on Flickr, the prominent photo management and sharing website:

<http://www.flickr.com/groups/aven/>

The AVEN Project Team is still working to produce pamphlets on asexuality. We are still looking especially for pictures of asexuals from visible minorities, as well as quotes.

The Project Team is also looking for "stock" material on asexuality, such as letters to the editor, that can be sent to local publications by visibility-minded asexuals who are not confident in their ability to write such material themselves.

New Project Team elections will be held very soon.

LOVE – cont'd from page 1

of me as “one of the guys.” When guys don’t think of you as a girl, you don’t have too many coming on to you. Usually the only time they notice you are a girl is when they want advice on how to act with their girlfriend, and as soon as they get that advice, you go back to being one of the guys.

When I was 19, a man I had a crush on asked if I’d be willing to have sex with him. We engaged in phone sex a few times, but I must admit I never understood the point of that. It wasn’t all that uncommon for me to let my mind wander about something else, or to even put down the phone temporarily while he was speaking. A few months later, we did have sex.

I’ve been told that since I’ve only had sex once I can’t possibly know if I truly don’t like it. But, while my sex experience was limited to two days, I had it multiple times. From conversations I’ve had with sexuals, I’ve learned that my first time was quite nice compared to most people’s. I enjoyed the foreplay, and even had some fun during one of the sexual encounters, but before the weekend was over, I knew I’d never have sex with anyone else again. It wasn’t out of love, or anything like that. My decision was based on the fact that I found sex pointless, and well, kind of boring – and as an example of how into sex I was, I came to this decision during intercourse.

I still talk to the man I slept with – I’ve no hard feelings there, and I do enjoy his friendship. But I have no desire to have sex with him or anyone else ever again.

About a year ago, I really wanted a boyfriend. It’s hard finding a boyfriend when one of your most important criteria is that he not

want sex – that eliminates just about everybody you’d typically encounter. I read about [www.asexuallove.net](http://www.asexuallove.net) on AVEN, so I went and put my profile there. My first response was Luis, a drop-dead gorgeous Hispanic man in Florida. It soon became obvious that we were about as different as two people can possibly be. But since we both realized how unlikely it was to find an asexual mate, we talked for a few months.

Not long after I stopped talking with Luis, I responded to an ad from a Canadian. We began having lengthy conversations, and this time they weren’t boring. Soon he drove about ten hours to come visit me for a weekend. Then I went to stay with him for an entire week. We slept in the same bed, cuddled, kissed – I was thrilled, but I still had no desire for intercourse and neither did he. In the end, that turned out to be my only relationship that didn’t end because of the guy wanting sex. We ended it on mutual terms, realizing there were too many compromises we’d each have to make in order to be together. Like with Luis, I believe we were holding on to false hope simply because of how few of us there are. That’s the only reason the relationship lasted so long.

Now I’ve removed myself from [www.asexuallove.net](http://www.asexuallove.net). If I get an asexy boyfriend, it will be because of a friendship that got started on AVEN. In December, I’m going to meet the closest hetero-romantic male friend I’ve made on AVEN. But it doesn’t matter to me what becomes of my visit. I don’t care whether we meet, fall in love, and decide we can’t bear to part from each other. All I care about is having a wonderful time with a great guy, where I don’t have to worry that whatever I do will be interpreted as a sexual come on.

## Asexy Dance Moves

*A humor section by JULIE*

1. Do this: stick out your right hip and wiggle it hard and tri-directionally. Then make fists at the center of your body, and rotate them in an ecliptical manner. Try it now. How does it feel?
2. Hey, have you tried this one: hands/wings out to the side, bring them both up and down to the middle quickly in a flutter-like motion. Your tail sticks out simultaneously, and you bend at the knees while shaking and grunting semi-furiously. Try it. It’s hot...
3. I’m just trying to think of what would look elegant and beautiful, you know?

Let’s see: hunch you back over. Spread your feet 2 1/2 feet apart (that’s like three of your foot lengths). Now swing your arms like you’re sprinting, but keep your fingers spread. Cock head; please be bent at the knees; now bounce your hips from side to side.

*See DANCE, page 6*



*photo by CHILDOFTHELIGHT*

## From the Forum

*A selection of posts from the discussion boards on the AVEN website*

That's been an "A-ha" for me too, recently. The S's and the A's are clearly looking at the world through very different filters. It makes it so that you have to examine the most basic assumptions about how relationships are supposed to work, and how sex and physicality fit into them. It's hard to imagine that we feel different things when we touch one another, even in the most benign ways.

Case in point: today, Sunset and I were out on a day trip with the kids and, as we were standing there in the sun watching them doing their thing, I put my hand on her back and caressed her up and down a couple of times. Totally benign, I've done it a million times. But it suddenly occurred to me that maybe she didn't feel it the same way I did (because of conversations I've had on Aven). So I asked her "Did you like that or did it make you feel bad when I did that?" And she said "I hated it."

Wow. A very different filter. In the past I would have felt hurt and hopeless. This time I laughed and felt a sense of wonder at this beautiful, alien woman beside me.

*-Chiaroscuro, Sat Oct 07, "Relationship with someone who is sexual?" in Asexual Relationships*

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I think that being an older asexual means that you have finally become comfortable enough in your own skin to be able to resist the tremendous social pressure that insists you conform to expectations, pair up, build a nest, and spawn.

The transition stage is painful and awkward because our society isn't willing to offer any valid "plan B" for older singles who don't WANT to date in the traditional way. Being older means that you have finally acquired enough self-knowledge and self-confidence to invent your OWN "plan B" and then to implement it, regardless of what the status quo says.

In my case, it meant, among other things, losing about 80 lbs. and embarking on a healthier lifestyle - NOT to make myself more appealing, but to allow myself to be more self-sufficient for a longer period of time. I am very much aware of how socially isolated I am and of how that affects my probable future. Part of my "plan B" consists of expanding my social network to include more friends so that I don't have to be such a huge burden to only one or two people. In my case, I have found that I

DO need committed relationships with other people to be happy, but I have also found that they DON'T need to be of the traditional marriage type to be perfectly satisfying to me.

I have accepted reality.

Yup! Just as I suspected all along: I don't fit.

And I have accepted the fact that I never will.

Life, for whatever reason, has handed me an incomplete deck. I can't play "the game" with what I have been dealt.

SOOO ....

I have decided to use these bit and peices to make a wonderful castle of cards! Not only that - it is going to be the most politically incorrect, exotic, and hurricane-proof castle ever imagined!

I know that I can't shape myself to fit society's mold, so I'm not even going to try.

Being an older asexual means giving up the fear of making the wrong choice and embracing the freedom to make ANY choice!

*-GBRD143, Sun Oct 08, "Probing corners of what it means to be an 'Older Asexual' in Older Asexuals*

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We don't make things easy on ourselves by identifying ourselves as "not". Just like trying to define light versus dark--you have to come up with a meaning of one, and then the other's defined as "the absence of. . ."

But as BunnyK said, being sexual is more than just sex--it seems like a whole component of life.

Thus, lacking the desire to have sex (or however you define it) goes further, affecting conversation topics, behaviors, the way you look at things. . .all sorts of stuff...

If I were color-blind, I wouldn't know it--at least, that I was different from others--until someone was able to distinguish between things that I couldn't. Until then, I wouldn't know what I was lacking. But, once I did know, how would I be able to explain it, not knowing what I was "missing"? How can you define a not-ness?

*-Placebo, Sat Oct 14, "Defining Sexuality" in Older Asexuals*

## Featured AVENite: “Goonie”

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



**Name:** Goonie

**Age:** 23

**Preferred Label(s):** I prefer “still breathing.” It’s the only label I like.

**Bio:** I’m one of the US admins on AVEN. Before that, I was Site Comments mod. I participate heavily in Just For Fun and tend to use my admin powers to zap spammers into oblivion and roast trolls on a spit in your front yard. I’ve been known to hijack threads with complete insanity when I’ve had too much Pepsi or too much creative energy.

I’m a kid at heart. I will pretend to speed skate down the road at night. I have no issues sitting in the street seeing who can kick an empty cigarette box the farthest or running and jumping on a

bottle of lotion to check out the splatter pattern. In my spare time I enjoy writing fiction that tends to makes no sense to anyone but me. I have some awesome friends who support me in all that I do even if I don’t always realize it.

**How she came to AVEN:** I came home from a business conference crushed. I started browsing the net on how to deal with relationships. Lo and behold there was an article on asexuality; I lurked for a few days and then joined.

**The most important thing about AVEN:** The most important thing to me about AVEN is the social aspect. Since I have joined, I have found many supportive friends where I live. However, there are just some issues that I have to get that wonderful AVEN perspective on.

**Advice for newcomers:** AVEN is a wonderful place to find out more about yourself. If you don’t believe me, dig up some of my old threads and look at the difference. I have changed so much in the year and a half I have been a member.

**Other thoughts:** Thanks!

### First post:

Hello,

I recently had a very big AHA moment in my life. I realized many things, including the high possibility that I am asexual.

It has been a rough semester all around (I work in an education setting so I judge all time by semesters). I already felt like an outcast (female in computer science), but when my colleague told me he was dating, I felt worse. I no longer had single friends! Of course, the timing was really bad because it was already a tough time at work. Recently, I attended a conference with two other colleagues. Everything was fine until we spilt to our rooms at night. I actually broke down crying because I had no “significant” one to call at night. Then I found this sight. Doh! If only I had known this earlier. It is nice to know that there is a “support group” out there.

*-Goonie, Thu Apr 28, 2005, "Aha!" in Welcome Area*

### Latest post (as of press time:)

*Goonie's latest posts are short ones – welcoming newcomers to AVEN, playing message board games, and helping people with the recent rollbacks.*

DANCE – cont'd from page 3

4. Start by softly chanting "Ping-chang-ugh-ughh". Then gently roll your head in a circle, back to your back, forward to your chest. Spring forward in baby-leaps, knees bent out towards the sides (try for a 90 degree angle, please). Roll your butt around in short, stern circles. This one makes you feel amazing...

5. Clasp your left knee firmly with your right hand. Grip your right butt cheek with your left hand. (I'd like to see extreme power put into this butt-grip move, folks.) Next, puff out your cheeks, then let go; repeat in millisecond frequencies or close to it. Rotate your shoulder blades, both at the same time, while jiggling your left knee, and barely fluctuating your right hand. Heave your body forward and continuously moan, "aagghh, aagghh!"

6. Squat down, spread eagled and laughing. Okay. Now pump your biceps, primarily, in a "butter-churning" rig-a-mor-ole, while diving your neck in small energetic soars down towards the ground, and simultaneously bulging your eyes. Start pumping harder, please. Now, pretend you're catching salmon with your elbow to femur ligament at the same time, and please give me crude hock-like vocalizations at some sort of fixed interval (your choice).

All right, go at it! Own it, for fleece sake!

## Expectations

*a poem by CHARLIEPYRO*

We look into each other's eyes,  
Pause,  
Take in the moment.

Leaves blow past,  
Red, brown, orange,  
In a magical breeze,  
Right out of  
Pocahontas.

She runs a hand down my cheek  
and  
I smile,  
Blink,  
Take her hand.

We don't kiss.  
That's how they do it in the  
Movies.

We don't need the movies.  
We're happy  
Just like this,  
Our souls bound together,  
But our bodies  
Apart.

You might need that kiss,  
That sex,  
That special connection.  
Our special connection is this  
Moment,  
The bright moon above us,  
And our love around us.



*photo by CHILDOFTHELIGHT*

Are you asexual, questioning, and/or interested in asexual topics? AVENues wants your submissions!

**Format:** Letters, articles, short stories, poetry, essays, comics, photography, visual artwork.

**Topics:** Asexuality in general, the life of an asexual, asexual relationships, sexuality and asexuality in the media, advice for asexuals, things you've learned about or from asexuals and/or AVEN, asexual humour, etc.

You can also nominate people or posts for our From The Forum and Featured AVENite sections, bring asexual visibility-related news to our attention, or make general comments and inquiries.

Send all of this stuff to [newsletter@asexuality.org](mailto:newsletter@asexuality.org).