

RAINBOW ROWELL

T-shirt trend tells troubling tale

A few years ago, I saw a T-shirt that said, "It's not who you are, it's what you wear. I mean, who really cares who you are anyway?"

We like to express ourselves with our T-shirts. We imagine we're telling a little bit about ourselves with what we wear.

Our hobbies, sports we like, fraternities, sororities, residence hall floors. All of this is very descriptive.

So what are all these people wearing the Co-ed Naked Sports-wear trying to get at?

I saw my first Co-ed Naked shirt last year — Co-ed Naked Wrestling, I believe it was. I didn't think much about it. I certainly didn't realize it was the beginning of a national phenomenon.

Now everything is co-ed and naked. Every sport, profession and hobby — nursing, weight lifting, softball, chess.

The Co-ed Naked trend troubles me. I don't like any trend that excludes people, and some professions will never have their own Co-ed Naked shirts. Co-ed Naked Proctology? Day care?

Probably not. As if proctologists' lives aren't unpleasant enough, now they're shunned by the trendy.

Still, the Co-ed Naked fad isn't the most offensive T-shirt craze. I'd hand that laurel to the myriad of T-shirts that show organisms — animal and vegetable, geckos especially — in various sexual positions.

I'd like to say something horribly funny about gecko sex T-shirts. The whole idea about gecko sex T-shirts should be horribly funny. But it kind of gives me the heebie-geebies, so I'll move on.

To No Fear Gear. For those who



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have better things to do with their time than staring at T-shirts, let me explain. No Fear T-shirts have sayings like:

"It's if you win, not how you play the game — NO FEAR!"

"On the edge of a mountain, in the middle of an electrical storm, choking on a wad of jerky — NO FEAR!"

"Cancer runs in your family — NO FEAR!!"

I was talking to a No-Fear aficionado the other day, and he told me that No Fear used to be just for cool motorcycle riders, or stunt bikers, or something like that. He also said that he'd been wearing No Fear since the seventh grade.

(Isn't that always the way it is? "Oh yeah, I got my first pair of Birkenstocks in kindergarten. They're way passe now.")

He said he was kind of annoyed that everyone had jumped fearlessly on the No-Fear bandwagon. He also said he hated those nasty Co-ed Naked shirts.

I wonder if the entire Co-ed Naked crew hates the No Fear wearers, too. We could be on the verge of a T-shirt clan war.

If this happens, my money is on No Fear. They brag about bad sportsmanship and life-risking

danger, and besides, I make it a practice to never bet on naked people.

But if the Big Johnson gang enters the fracas, all bets are off and take shelter.

In less offensive news, I've also noticed a lot of Christian knock-off T-shirts lately, shirts that play on a well-known product line or saying. For example: "God's Gym. His pain, your gain" and "He who dies with the most toys still dies."

I wonder if any of those Christian T-shirt manufacturers will play on the Co-ed Naked theme. Maybe "Co-ed Naked Mating for Life" or "Co-ed Naked Gardening."

Or maybe not. I don't think I'll be investing in a Co-ed Naked shirt anytime soon. Most of my interests and habits require clothing. I guess I shower, but I haven't seen a "Showering Naked by Myself" T-shirt yet.

And besides, I don't like to wear shirts I can't wear in front of my mother. And I'll bet a million bucks my mother falls on the anti-Co-ed Naked side of the fence.

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JAMIE KARI

Girls grow up, boys stay boys

Most people do not grasp the concept of the gender war until they are in their twenties. I, on the other hand, became an adamant adversary of the female sex around the age of 5.

Enrolled in Blue Door Nursery School, I was an academic all-star, in preschool terms. Perfect in everything from napping to numbers, the only black mark on my record was my "ability to work well with others," as worded by the report card. But it was the girls in the class to whom I attribute my troubles.

The boys in my preschool class never associated with the girls, and the girls did likewise with the boys. Both sexes had their leaders to keep them in line. I was in charge of the males, while a loud, spunky brunette named Kristen was at the helm of the "you-ain't-no-boy" group.

Kristen and I did the majority of the fighting for the sexes. We fought for the building blocks, the soccer ball, the playhouse — all in the name of our respective gender.

One of those particular fights, which would prove to be my last at Blue Door, pitted Kristen against me to see which sex would get to play with the firefighters' clothes. I got in the first punch.

"Kristen, girls aren't firemen," I said with a cocky smirk. "Everybody knows that."

But Kristen, even at 4 or 5 years old, carried her feminist club card with her 24-hours a day.

"Shut up, Jamie," she whooped. "We girls can too be firemen, if we want. Give us the clothes, otherwise, I'll beat you up."

Now, Kristen had me by at least three inches and 10 pounds. Candidly, she scared me. But I stood up to her. I had to; the rest of the guys were watching.

Standing in front of the toy box of firemen's gear, I crossed my arms over my chest.

"Tell you what," I replied, "if you want the firemen's stuff, you're gonna have to get past me."

Without hesitation, Kristen charged me. Like a fullback, she



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extended her left hand in front of her oncoming body. On impact, her hand went halfway through my mid-section. I staggered back a few steps and fell into the box of firemen's clothes, legs sprawled open and dangling over the side.

Kristen stared at me for a while. Then, in another act of feminist fury, she reached down, between my legs and into the crate, pulling out a shiny red fireman's helmet and putting it on her mop-like hair.

"Excuse me," she trumpeted, "but I think you were in my way."

The entire class, boys included, burst into laughter. But if Kristen thought she had won the fight, she was wrong.

Dejected, and in physical pain, I got up and walked away. The girls scrambled for the box, trying on mini-firefighters' coats.

I left the room for several minutes, only to return wielding a nice-sized broom. Kristen and her girls, still celebrating their victory, had their backs turned. They had not seen me reappear.

Tip-toeing behind Kristen, I cocked the broom back. Most of the boys spotted me, and a few started to giggle. Kristen swung around to see what was so funny, and as she did, I let loose a swing that would have made the Babe jealous.

The blow caught Kristen right above the left ear, cracking the helmet and sending it flying off her head. As the helmet hit the ground, so did Kristen. Needless to say, my days at Blue Door were over.

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has been 15 years since the Battle at Blue Door, I never let up in the fight between the genders.

But perhaps it's time to raise the white flag.

Growing up, it was the boys versus the girls in everything we did. Neither side really cared for the other. The boys raised hell together, played ball together and — no matter what — stayed together. Girls were the arch enemy, and they did their best to antagonize and compete.

By high school, girls had evolved from beasts like Kristen into decent young women. We boys still raised hell, still played ball and still kept our distance from the girls. But the girls suddenly became tolerant of their opposites.

As much as I hate to admit it, the girls matured much faster than the males. Girls were the "civilizers" of our adolescence. It was as if they wanted to reconcile. And some of the boys started to give in.

Now in college, I see more and more of my male warriors fall. When one of my friends starts "going" with a girl, he changes; his behavior improves, his interests are altered and he becomes responsible. A few of my older friends have even gotten married. Indeed, they have become new men, resembling nothing of the little boys I once knew.

Perhaps it is time to throw in the towel. Maybe it is time to surrender. But this time, it seems there will be so much more lost than just a box of fireman's clothes.

Kari is a junior news-editorial and political science major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist and staff reporter.



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