

The Kids' Table  
by  
Pamela Miller

Dear Pamela:

Please excuse this question, but what does Gen X mean? Do I have to take another test to apply to this group? What's the best way to bond with other members of the Gen X group? Also, how do you know when you're really in love? Does the 'no white after Labor Day' rule apply in Phoenix? Have you ever whistled 'Dixie' while visiting Dixie? And what is the appropriate amount to tip a belly dancer who is wrapping a pink scarf around your torso?

Confused in Chandler

Dear C in C:

Let's start with the last question first. From your query, it seems that you might have heard about our adventures in multi-national dance. We caught many people peeking through the Middle Eastern restaurant window, laughing uproariously at our LocSec's attempts to keep up with the dancer's movements. Half of the Ex Comm was enticed to get up and undulate in ways that nature had not intended. This writer was not up to joining the fray, but I might have been able to balance a sword on my head while writhing on the floor. (Okay, I'm lying. I've never balanced so much as a plastic knife on my head, writhing optional. You could poke an eye out like that.)

The tip should be the same as the price of your beverage order, unless you

ordered water. Then it's the price of the baba ghanooj appetizer. I hope this helps you.

Gen X is a SIG comprised of individuals who were born roughly between 1961-1981. I say roughly because there is no hard and fast rule for inclusion. According to Douglas Coupland, the writer who made up the term Generation X, the years of birth are 1961-1972. (Never mind that he created the term; he's just wrong.) The Baby Boomers have it easy. Everyone knows they were hatched between 1946-1964. You can technically be both a Baby Boomer and a Gen Xer. You can be Gen Y, but prefer to spend time with Gen X. The only rule is that you must keep your clothing on in the hot tub. Now take a deep breath and relax.

The key to truly bonding with the group was adopted from the movie Animal House: Road Trip. This year 8 people made a return trip to Corona, CA, for a Gen X barbecue and pool party at George Blombach's lovely home. (George advertised this party in the MAAM and three Southern California Mensa newsletters.) Nothing says togetherness like 10 hours in the car. With two cars needed for this year's trip, we were in contact via walkie talkies. This worked well in theory, but the range of said walkie talkies was one mile. The Andretti wannabe was warping the fabric of space and time in hopes of arriving before he had departed. The more cautious female driver of her precious 2004 Toyota Matrix wasn't. Even so, the slower driver actually beat Speedy to the party. (He blamed the delay on extra rest stops and a trip to Baskin Robbins.) Once at the party, the eight Phoenix people attacked the buffet. This shouldn't bear notice, but we chose to eat seated together, something we could have easily accomplished somewhere closer to home. While the others changed for the pool, I left the party to buy postcards to send to the people back home. (Yes, it was a day trip, but I like to send mail. And it just isn't a party unless your vacating the premises to write the record of something that you didn't attend.)

The party was in high gear by the time I returned from the post office. The hot tub was standing room only. People were throwing back "shots" the size of mixed drinks. The host was grilling. Children and pets were scampering. The other guests were enjoying Ryan's chocolate chip cookies. The conversation was silly, but that was mostly my contribution to it. The long drive was worth it.

I've whistled 'Dixie' in Dixie. For fashion tips, please consult someone else. As for love, I quote from Shakespeare's bloodbath, TITUS ANDRONICUS:

"And if you love me, as I think you do,

Let's kiss and part, for we have much to do."

Love comes from feeling, not thinking. Shakespeare knew that, but Titus was not the nicest man in the world. At the end of the play, pretty much everyone is dead. And that's all I have to say on that topic. Gen X, often.