

Some of the **media coverage for House of Testosterone**, all of which I pursued myself. I also had 25 radio interviews across the nation that was arranged by Houghton Mifflin PR department; I set up interviews with five North Carolina radio stations as well as a TV appearance on San Francisco's ABC affiliate on its morning show anchored at the time by Spencer Christian. This interview is on my momsofboys.org website.

Also here are emails from my publisher regarding the success of the book.

Mothers go with the flow of bringing up sons

With Sunday being Mother's Day, I find my thoughts, not surprisingly, turning to toilet seats. The ups and downs of toilet seats, to be exact. Every

The final word

By Craig Wilson

mother's lament. Especially mothers of boys.

I asked my friend Mary if she had any thoughts on the subject, and she quickly agreed the problem has a certain universality. But having grown up in a house full of brothers, she suspects that her mother only wants to forget the years when the family bathroom was a battleground.

Sharon O'Connell, the only female in her house, wasn't so quick to dismiss the discussion. She had more than a few things to say about said seat situation

from a mother's point of view, and she wasn't taking this sitting down.

Author of *House of Testosterone: One Mom's Survival in a Household of Males*, she is surrounded not only by three sons and a husband, but a male dog to boot.

"The battle of the toilet seat is something I, and most women, gave up on a long time ago," she says. "We have to pick our battles in a household of men, and that's a losing one."

It's a can't-win situation, O'Connell says.

"The thing is, in a household of young boys, they don't even bother to put the seat up to begin with, which means the mom doesn't fall in the toilet in the middle of the night, but then there is the downside."

I grew up with one brother and one dad, leaving my mom



By Veronica Salazar, USA TODAY

the only gal in the house. Mom's rule was seat up, seat down, move on.

My cousin Martha also has two sons and a husband, leaving her the only gal in the

house. They have it backward. Her boys are good at putting the seat down, she says, but the problem is they don't always put the seat up when they need to.

Contrary to popular opinion, I think we men can be trained. We can stand corrected, so to speak.

And maybe it's not all our fault. Maybe mothers should take some responsibility here.

We had visitors recently — female visitors — who all weekend long put the toilet seat down and left it there, much to my chagrin.

And Maggie's.

Maggie is our dog, and while very much the lady, she still enjoys a sip from the toilet every now and then. This can be done, however, only if the seat is up. Hence the problem.

Maybe a mother could put

the seat up every now and then? Fair is fair. But let's not argue. It's Mother's Day.

All this talk got me wondering whether mothers of boys really do have it harder than mothers of girls.

The toilet seat issue aside, I think not. O'Connell doesn't think so, either. She says it's easier to raise boys.

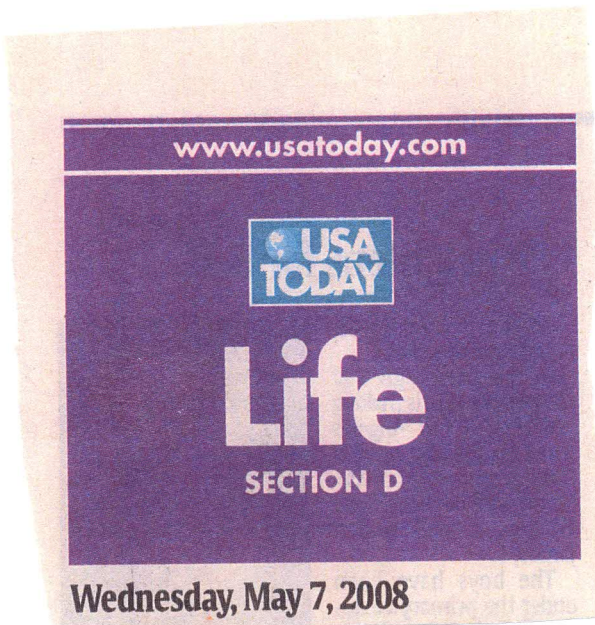
"Particularly when girls reach those middle school years," she says.

A midnight fall into the toilet is small potatoes compared with monitoring a daughter who changes her name to Monique and starts trolling for "friends" on Facebook.

So, all you mothers of sons out there, relax. It's your day. Have a seat.

Happy Mother's Day.

E-mail cwilson@usatoday.com



Craig Wilson column, USA Today



BROOKLYN BROOD Robin Graham with her four sons (clockwise from left) Kevin, 14; Paul, 26; Trevor, 18, and Adam, 11.

I'VE GOT MALES

Moms with all-boy households miss the special girly moments but make do with sports

By **GINA SALAMONE**

LINDA ROSE/DAI LY NEWS

nydailynews.com

DAILY NEWS

Thursday, February 15, 2007

Article in New York Daily News, 2007

- Pursued media coverage of my book about being a mom to only boys.

Bronx mom Lucinda Huff's two sons are just toddlers, but they're already obsessed with trucks, cars, wrestling and football. "My 16-month-old son knows how to tackle someone," she says. "It's so cute, but it drives me crazy at the same time. I am the only woman in my house and often feel outnumbered and just need something girly — anything."

She's not alone. Ladies with all-male offspring don't get the gossip, shopping trips and mushy movie outings that friends with daughters partake in. Instead, their days are spent refereeing roughhousing and tackling laundry baskets full of sweaty sports clothes.

Author Sharon O'Donnell unloads on life with her husband and three sons in "House of Testosterone: One Mom's Survival in a Household of Males" (Jefferson Press, \$19.95).

"My life is overtaken by going to basketball, football and hockey games that they play in," she says. "I enjoy watching them play all these things, but then you come home and they're watching something on television sports related."

"I'll come up to my room to try to watch something I want so I can relax, and then they're fighting downstairs and come up to find me," O'Donnell vents. "There's always someone getting hurt, going to the emergency room."

While she's never wished she'd had a girl in place of one of her boys, O'Donnell pines for a mother-daughter relationship.

- to get coverage in NYC paper, I localized the story by contacting a mom of boys in NYC to be interviewed

1st page

“I do feel I sort of lost a little bit of my femininity,” she says. “Right next door, we have a family that has three daughters. And they’re always out there dancing and painting their fingernails and doing all the things that I think would be neat to do with a daughter.”

Huff misses getting manicures and her hair done and dressing feminine.

“Now all I wear is sweatpants, jeans and T-shirts,” she shares. “Before I used to get all dolled up for no reason at all, put on a dress or skirt. But with a house full of males, I just don’t feel girly. I feel I need to be rough and rugged with them and ready for dirt and crazy stuff at any time.”

BACKYARD WAR GAMES

Jen Singer, creator of MommaSaid.net, calls her New Jersey home the neighborhood’s frat house for grade-schoolers. The fort and automatic baseball-pitching machine in her yard beckon the buddies of her 8- and 9-year-old sons.

“Boys — frequently, lots of them — spend their afternoons running around my yard in ski helmets and army jackets, using hockey sticks as guns, shouting directives like, ‘Okay, men. Let’s meet behind that boulder and practice rushing the enemy,’” she says.

“They track mud across my kitchen floor, leave a pile

of crumbs and empty juice boxes on my carpet that looks like the work of a band of raccoons, and they jump out at me from behind the bushes when I’m just trying to get my mail from the mailbox,” Singer says. “They are messy, loud and active — and I love it.”

Despite the barbaric lifestyle, local ladies wouldn’t have it any other way.

A single mom of four guys — ages 11, 14, 18 and 26 — Robin Graham of Brooklyn swears she’s had a smoother ride than those with daughters.

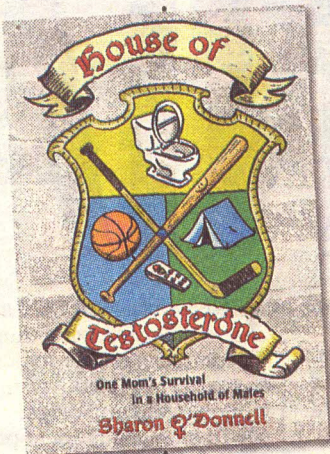
“I never wanted a girl,” explains the 47-year-old. “I grew up in a family of five girls. A girl has to have the latest fashions, get her nails done. Boys are simpler — get them a haircut, put them in a suit and tie and a pair of shoes, and they’re done.”

Singer, who coaches both of her kids’ soccer teams, agrees. “A tomboy myself, I love hanging out with boys, loading our automatic pitching machine and showing kids how to lift a soccer ball with their feet,” Singer admits. “With boys, you know exactly where you stand. There’s no talking about each other behind their

backs or emotional upheaval over a pair of shoes,

like my friends with daughters endure.

“Though it’s muddy and deafening at times,” she adds, “I love being the only woman in a male-dominated household.”



2nd Page

http://www.greensboro.com/editorial/books/humor-helps-woman-survive-house-of-males/article_195cf242-2be5-52ab-b57f-089c80d8b06b.html

Humor helps woman survive house of males

Reviewed by Anita Campitelli Apr 12, 2007



< >
 Review of
 hard cover
 1st edition
 in
 Greensboro, NC
 Newspaper

HOUSE OF TESTOSTERONE: One Mom's Survival in a Household of Males. By Sharon O'Donnell. Jefferson Press. 224 pages. \$19.95.

Sharon O'Donnell is the mother of three boys, ages 16, 13 and 7; she writes a column for The Cary News and developed the web site www.momsofboys.org. In her new book, "House of Testosterone," she has combined a number of her humorous columns that chronicle her family life — from debates with her husband over the size of their family (she won) to anxieties about their oldest beginning to drive.

O'Donnell shares many anecdotes about the big differences between males and females, from sense of humor to the need (or lack thereof) to share feelings. Her essays deal not only with her boys but also with her husband and will resonate with any woman who shares her life, home, remote control and bathroom with a male. She describes such confounding qualities as her family's inability to find items in the grocery store or refrigerator, their compulsion to compete (which can be exploited when persuading sons to eat broccoli) and their love of creative name-calling (doesn't work well in a school setting).

Although "House of Testosterone" celebrates (if that is the proper word) O'Donnell's particular all-boy family, any mother will recognize her own exasperation. How many of us will feel O'Donnell's pain as she listens to her husband comment on the many times the baby got "us" up at night (and be glad that the

author points out that getting “up” with the baby means putting one’s feet on the floor and getting out of bed)? How many of us will admire her ingenuity at avoiding conflict by surreptitiously whisking their son’s bike to the repair shop and back because her husband insisted on fixing the bike himself, yet months passed without him getting around to it? And how many of us will recognize our beloved spouses in hers when we learn that her husband didn’t even notice the boy riding the repaired bicycle or that hubby needed to ask his wife the child’s middle name when filling out forms in a hospital emergency room?

The O’Donnells have embraced those things that reputedly “channel” male energy in positive directions: Boy Scouts, camping and lots of sports. O’Donnell seems like a good sport herself: She spends much of her time shuttling her boys from one activity to the next, cheering them on from the sidelines and dealing with the dirty laundry they leave in their wake. She even consented to the purchase of a camper, which means when they go on vacations they bring along beds to be made, living space to be tidied and a kitchen.

Lucky in living near family, including sisters and nieces, even occasionally getting help with the laundry from her mother, O’Donnell nevertheless strikes a sober note in the midst of all her tongue-in cheek humor with the realization that she is outnumbered in her home and living among beings who cannot understand her, even if they love her. She offers her book and web site as a form of communion with other women in similar circumstances.

As a mother of four young men ranging in age from 12 to 23, I second her opinion that mothers of boys need each other to survive the experience and to reassure each other that we’re not as crazy as our families may believe. For all its humor, “House of Testosterone” addresses a serious need, the need that women have for the company, counsel and understanding of other women. In fact, because my kids are older than hers, I know that such understanding becomes even more important when sons enter the rebellious phases of adolescence. Believe me, Ms. O’Donnell: At your house (to use a metaphor you, as the mother of boys, will appreciate), the testosterone has yet to hit the fan!

Anita Campitelli teaches German at UNCG.



boys vs

■ often say that I spend more time and energy on my one boy than on my three girls. Other mothers of boys are quick to say the same. Forget that old poem about snips and snails and puppy dog tails, says Sharon O'Donnell, a mom of three boys and the author of *House of Testosterone*. "Somehow it's been changed to boys being made of 'fights, farts, and video games,' and sometimes I'm not sure how much more I can take!"

Not so fast, say moms of girls, who point out that they have to contend with fussier fashion sense, more prickly social navigations, and a far greater capacity to hold a grudge.

And as a daughter grows, a parent's concerns range from body image to math bias.

Stereotyping, or large kernels of truth?

"I think parents use 'which is harder?' as an expression of whatever our frustration is at the moment," says family therapist Michael Gurian, author of *Nurture the Nature*.

"Boys and girls are each harder in different ways."

Every child is an individual, of course. His or her innate personality helps shape how life unfolds. Environment (including us, the nurturers) plays a role, too:

"There are dif-

by Paula Spencer

Parenting Magazine

may need to be picked up and plunked in a time-out chair," Gurian says. They're also less verbal and more impulsive, he adds, which is especially evident in the toddler and preschool years.

These developmental differences contribute to the mislabeling of normal behavior as problematic, a growing number of observers say. Five boys for every one girl are diagnosed with a "disorder" (including conduct disorder, bipolar disorder, hyperactivity, attention deficit disorder, sensory integration disorder, and oppositional defiant disorder), says Stein, also the author of *Unraveling the ADD/ADHD Fiasco*. Some kids—most often boys—may simply fall on the more robust end of normal. They need more opportunities to expend energy and aggression, as well as firmer limits.



Say "Stop it!" much?

Boys do seem to have cornered the market on headlocks

Physical safety

Who's harder? Boys

"Much after-dinner wrestling here," reports Michelle Mayr, the Davis, California, mom of four boys, ages 5 to 12. "I'm constantly fighting to keep my house a home rather than an indoor sports center. Their stuffed animals' primary function is to be added to the pile of pillows everyone is launching into from the coffee table."

In general, boys *are* more rambunctious and aggressive, experts say. Taking risks lights up the pleasure centers of their brains. Many parents find they have to keep a closer eye on what a son is "getting into," or use more bandages.

But letting kids explore—at the cost of a few scrapes and cuts—builds character, self-confidence, resilience, and self-reliance, says Wendy Mogel, Ph.D., author of *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee*. Boys, being natural risk takers, may need encouragement to slow down a little, but maybe girls need to be encouraged to take more risks. Look for opportunities for your daughter to jump off a wall, swim in the deep end, or try the bigger slide.

Communication

Who's harder? First boys, then girls

From birth, a girl baby tends to be more interested in looking at colors and textures, like those on the human face, while a boy baby is drawn more to movement, like a whirling mobile, says Dr. Sax. (These differences play out in the way kids draw: Girls tend to use a rainbow of hues to draw nouns, while boys lean toward blue, black, and silver for their more verblike pictures of vehicles crashing and wars.) In a nutshell, girls are rigged to be people-oriented, boys to be action-oriented. Because girls study faces so intently, they're better at reading nonverbal signals, such as expression and tone of voice. Boys not only learn to talk later than girls and use more limited vocabularies, they also have more trouble connecting feelings with words.



"While most girls share their feelings and details of events, my three sons honestly don't see that as important. I spend my days asking, 'What happened then?' or 'What did he say after you said that?'" O'Donnell says.

Important note: Because boys hold eye contact for shorter periods than girls, parents may worry about autism, since this can be a red flag. "It's a relief for moms to know that this is normal and comes from the way the brains are set up," Gurian says.

As girls get to be 8 or so, things can get harder: The flip side of being so adept at communicating is that girls exert a lot of energy on it. There can be a great deal of drama around who's mad at whom, who said what and why, and more. Start when your daughter's a toddler to establish an open communication, so she learns she can come to you for advice.

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FEBRUARY

Booksellers have also recommended the following titles:

FICTION

- EXILE**, by Richard North Patterson (Holt, \$26, 9780805079470/0805079475)
DON'T MAKE ME STOP NOW: Stories, by Michael Parker (Algonquin, \$12.95 paper, 9781565124851/1565124855)
JIMI HENDRIX TURNS EIGHTY, by Tim Sandlin (Riverhead, \$24.95, 9781594489334/1594489335)
MR. THUNDERMUG, by Cornelius Medvei (HarperCollins, \$14.95, 9780061146121/0061146129)
NAPOLEON'S PYRAMIDS, by William Dietrich (HarperCollins, \$24.95, 9780060848323/0060848324)
ONCE IN A PROMISED LAND, by Laila Halaby (Beacon, \$24.95, 9780807083901/0807083909)
TRAVELER, by Ron McLarty (Viking, \$24.95, 9780670034741/0670034746)
TWILIGHT OF THE SUPERHEROES: Stories, by Deborah Eisenberg (Picador, \$14 paper, 9780312425937/0312425937)
WINTERWOOD, by Patrick McCabe (Bloomsbury, \$23.95, 9781596911635/1596911638)

NONFICTION

- CURSE OF THE NARROWS**, by Laura M. Mac Donald (Walker, \$15.95 paper, 9780802715104/0802715109)
DELILAH'S EVERYDAY SOUL: Southern Cooking With Style, by Delilah Winder, Jennifer Lindner McGlenn (Running Press, \$29.95, 9780762426010/0762426012)
HOUSE OF TESTOSTERONE: One Mom's Survival in a Household of Males, by Sharon O'Donnell (Jefferson Press, \$19.95, 9780977808601/0977808602)
MY YEAR INSIDE RADICAL ISLAM: A Memoir, by Daveed Gartenstein-Ross (Tarcher, \$24.95, 9781585425518/1585425516)
SHE GOT UP OFF THE COUCH: And Other Heroic Acts from Mooreland, Indiana, by Haven Kimmel (Free Press, \$14 paper, 9780743285001/074328500X)
TEACH LIKE YOUR HAIR'S ON FIRE: The Methods and Madness Inside Room 56, by Rafe Esquith (Viking, \$24.95, 9780670038152/0670038156)
WAITING FOR DAISY: A Tale of Two Continents, Three Religions, Five Infertility Doctors, an Oscar, an Atomic Bomb, a Romantic Night and One Woman's Quest to Become a Mother, by Peggy Orenstein (Bloomsbury, \$23.95, 9781596910171/1596910178)

MYSTERY/SUSPENSE

- BAD BLOOD**, by Linda Fairstein (Scribner, \$26, 9780743287487/0743287487)
THE BLOOD SPILT, by Asa Larsson (Delacorte, \$22, 9780385339827/0385339828)
THE GRAVE TATTOO, by Val McDermid (St. Martin's Minotaur, \$24.95, 9780312339210/0312339216)
TRIPLE CROSS: A Steve Cline Mystery, by Kit Ehrman (Poisoned Pen, \$24.95, 9781590583029/1590583027)

For booksellers' quotes and other information on these books, including jacket images, please visit www.BookSense.com.

the
hard cover
version
of
House of
Testosterone
'as a
'notable'
book

THE NEWS & OBSERVER

Life, etc.

Life, etc.



Sharon O'Donnell chastises youngest son, Jason, 4, for yelling at his brother, Billy, 13. Middle son David, 10, plays guitar before ball practice. O'Donnell would like to start a 'Mothers of Boys' club for mothers who live in all male households.

STAFF PHOTO BY JULI LEONARD

Article in News and Observer, Raleigh, Nc
to promote my moms of boys.org website - before the book page 1

MOB rule

That's Moms of Boys, and one of them thinks a club of their own would be great

By KAREN GUZMAN
STAFF WRITER

She arrived home one October afternoon last year to find all the decorative plates gone.

Sharon O'Donnell had hung them, as a tasteful welcome, on a wall that greeted visitors entering her Cary home.

In their place this afternoon was a bold poster of Fenway Park, legendary home of the Boston Red Sox, with the solemn words "The Chapel" printed beneath it.

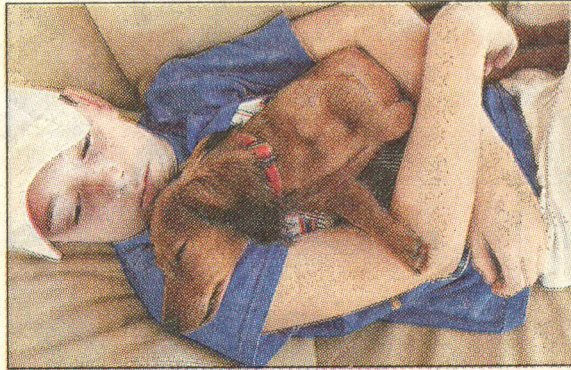
The Sox, beloved by her husband and three sons, had just won the World Series. Decor takes a back seat at such momentous occasions.

O'Donnell left Fenway up for two days before replacing it with her plates. She has learned to compromise.

After all, this is the kind of thing that happens when you're the only woman in a house of men.

"We suffer in silence," O'Donnell says of all those moms treading water alone in a sea of testosterone.

Help could be on the way.



David O'Donnell hangs out with the family dog, Fenway, before baseball practice.

DETAILS

O'Donnell's club plan is fairly loose at this point. She's open to suggestions and can be contacted at www.sharonodonnell.com.

She also plans to establish Web sites for moms who would like to participate in a new club, but don't have time to attend meetings.

The sites, www.mothersofboys.org and www.mothersofboys.net will be available soon.

A writer and Cary News columnist, O'Donnell is gauging interest among local moms for a Mothers of Boys club.

Why is such a club necessary? Ask any woman deprived too long of intimate female friendship. There are some things men just don't get.

Like that really interesting two-way conversation requires both parties to respond with more depth than "Yes" or "No."

Or that the Three Stooges are not highbrow cinema.

And that noisy body functions are not funny and should not be engaged in as entertainment.

Stranded in a house of men, a woman can start to lose perspective on such matters. O'Donnell thinks a club would offer moms crucial female fellowship, as well as opportunities for activities with their sons.

"It sounds like a great idea," says Maryann Bucknum Brinley, author of "Oh Boy!" a collection of interviews with mothers raising teenage sons. "Mothers need

SEE MOB, PAGE 3E

MOB

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1E

to know that other mothers have been there, done that and survived it."

No figures are available on boy-only families, but a lot of boys are out there.

Baby boys born in the United States outnumbered baby girls every year between 1992 and 2002, according to the National Center for Health Statistics.

And although a plethora of helpful books about raising boys exists, only a few are aimed at the needs of the mothers raising them.

Sisterhood and sighs

These moms share a special sisterhood, O'Donnell says. It crops up when they meet.

"We sort of have a knowing look, and then you might exchange some things," she says. "The sighs start and the 'hang in there's' go back and forth."

It's important to note that every mother interviewed for this article stressed she loves her sons and would not trade them for a harem of girls.

It's just the lack of female energy, the balance of household yin and yang, they miss.

O'Donnell got the club idea from a similar organization in New Jersey, which patterned itself after another one in Pennsylvania.

Mothers of Boys, a group of about 40 women in Morris County, N.J., was formed in 2002 as a vehicle for moms to connect, let off steam and celebrate life with boys.

Members, who call themselves "MOBsters," meet four times a year to socialize and participate in charitable activities. The group has donated gifts to orphanages and sent a care package to a New Jersey soldier serving in Iraq.

But it's the common emotional ground that keeps these women together.

"The meetings just take on a life of their own," says co-founder Marybeth Wooters, a mother of five sons.

In the January meeting, a mother of four grown sons shared her wisdom with younger moms in the boy trenches.

"There's a connection that bonds us all, and then on a deeper level, there's this mom of four boys saying, 'Keep the faith. It's a great thing,'" Wooters says.

Bonding in busy times

O'Donnell's club plan is pretty open at this point. With families so busy today, she envisions something that won't require a big time commitment.

But heartfelt communication is one topic that's bound to come up. Necessary for women to bond, it can be real challenge with boys.

Especially as they grow up "and you start to see them stepping over into what

I call the 'guy zone,'" O'Donnell says.

She realized her oldest son had entered the zone one night when she picked him up after a middle school dance.

Waiting in the car, she saw girl after girl pop into a mother's car and begin spilling the beans about the night's activities.

When her son arrived, O'Donnell asked him how the dance had gone.

His response: It was dark. It was loud. That was all. No gossipy tidbits, no lovelorn confessions or broken hearts.

Disappointed, O'Donnell still strives to stay verbally close to her boys, so they'll know she's there and available if they ever really need to talk.

Sharing interests

Stephanie Mood, of Cary, has three boys, ages 10, 7 and 3. She, too, has noticed that it's more work communicating with boys.

She worries it'll be more difficult to maintain a close bond as the boys age and pull away from her.

"I don't want them tied to my apron strings, but I want them to want to call the house after they go to college," she says.

Shared activities help. But once again, moms and boys don't always have the same sorts of interests.

"About every weekend it's let's go to the air show, the train show, or play baseball," Mood says.

She still enjoys shopping trips, however, taking her 3-year-old along with her.

"He doesn't know any better yet. He's a prisoner," she says.

O'Donnell's sister, Gail Gunnells, of Raleigh, also has three boys. She gamely supports her sons' athletic interests and has learned to suppress the urge to take them to the ballet.

"The boys weren't into that," she says.

O'Donnell wasn't sure how her older two boys would react when she took them to see a production of "Annie" a few years back.

The night seemed to be going well until her older son disappeared during intermission. He reappeared as the second act was beginning, slipping back into his seat.

O'Donnell whispered to him, asking where he'd been.

He answered, without batting an eye. He had called his father at home to check the hockey score.

O'Donnell was crestfallen, feeling the experience of the play had been lost on him.

Then on the drive home, it all turned around. The boys began singing "Tomorrow" in the back seat.

That day the sun really did come out.

Staff writer Karen Guzman
can be reached at 829-4752
or kguzman@newsobserver.com.

Equal time

Enough of this X-chromosome griping. Life as the only male in an all-female household has its own frustrations.

And although few men might complain publicly — they'll pay for it privately — their miseries have been overheard and duly noted.

Among them:

■ The sacred air the bathroom takes on, stocked with mysterious supplies and potions.

■ The difficulty of getting into said bathroom, when you're jockeying with two or more primping females.

■ Noxious fumes of nail polish and hair spray.

■ The magnification of and importance attached to every fleeting emotion.

■ The inevitable hurt feelings that result when proper homage is not paid to these emotions.

■ Resulting hurt feelings morphing into grudges that last an unreasonably long time. Come on ladies, you know it's true.

■ The Lifetime channel.

■ The never-ending supply of sappy chick flicks at Blockbuster and the horror of sitting through one on a Saturday night.

■ Chintz.

■ Lacy doilies like your grandmother had.

■ Creepy dolls with eyes that follow you.

■ Cats, dogs, or any small mammals, being treated like human babies.

■ "Do I look fat in this?" in surround sound.

■ PMS. Enough said. Two or more women cycling together is bad news.

Karen Guzman

Page 3



Sharon O'Donnell plays basketball with her sons, Jason, center, Billy, right, and David, not in the photo, after school at home in Cary. O'Donnell says mothers who have only sons share a common bond and the need to get out of the all-male environment sometimes.

STAFF PHOTOS BY JULI LEONARD

Odd man out

Ever felt like you
don't belong?
Cary writer Sharon
O'Donnell puts her
experiences on paper.



*Cary Living,
Cary, NC*

By Christa Gala

In *House of Testosterone*, Sharon O'Donnell wittily writes about her survival in a household where she is outnumbered by the opposite sex. With her husband and her three sons ages 6, 12, and 15, O'Donnell bemoans the fact that even the family dog is a boy. There is no nail-painting or Cinderella costumes to buy. Instead, O'Donnell jokes that with boys, what she dreads most is not cleaning the toilets, but cleaning around them.

House of Testosterone, released in January 2007 by Jefferson Press, has been well-received locally. O'Donnell's first reading December 1 at Quail Ridge Books was well attended, and Book Sense, a nationwide group of independent book sellers, named it a notable book for February.

The impetus behind O'Donnell's work of nonfiction stems from her career as a freelance writer. Initially, O'Donnell wanted to put together a book of the parenting columns she writes for *The Cary News*. It was her husband who suggested she narrow the focus, including only the columns that talked about her being the odd man, uh woman, out. O'Donnell was reluctant, but soon realized it was a good idea.





Author Sharon O'Donnell with her three sons (l to r) David, 12; Jason, 6; and Billy, 15.

"In writing my newspaper column, I found that whenever I wrote about being the mom in a household of guys, other women in the same situation really related to it," she says. "They liked knowing that they weren't alone in their total frustration of living with all that testosterone—all the roughhousing, how loud it is, the competitive environment, the lack of communication, the bathroom humor."

The struggle of publishing

Few people know that getting a book published is akin to an Act of God unless you're Stephen King, famous, or infamous. O'Donnell is none of those and so the fact that her book exists today has a lot to do with her having the tenacity of a pit bull and the optimism of a lottery winner.

In September 2004, O'Donnell sent to several agents a query letter and a link to her website www.sharon-odonnell.com. A literary agent got back to her within the afternoon and said he wanted to represent her.

"That was different because I'd tried to get agents before with the motherhood columns and my fiction, and it had always been a long, drawn-out process," O'Donnell remembers.

Next, O'Donnell put together a complete book proposal, including a third of the book and nearly twenty pages of marketing material outlining her ideas and how she would pitch the book. "My agent loved the proposal and sent it out immediately," O'Donnell says. But things slowed from there.

"What happened was that they loved the writing—I got great rejection letters—but the problem was I didn't have a platform—nobody knew who I was. When you write these days for nonfiction, it's almost like you

Writing the
book was
actually like
therapy for me –
it felt good to
get those
frustrations
down on paper.

Sharon O'Donnell

have to have a syndicated radio show or something like that. I realized not everybody in New York City read *The Cary News*, she laughs.

"You have to have an audience in order for publishers to take the risk because it's so competitive today selling books; unfortunately people aren't reading as much as they used to," O'Donnell continues. "It's all about what kind of audience the publisher thinks that person is going to get."

That was the reality, but O'Donnell couldn't help thinking: Isn't good writing enough anymore?

"The answer is an emphatic no. You have to have a lot more than that," O'Donnell says. "It's very discouraging and disheartening. And you start thinking, 'why have I put all of my time into this?'"

Moms of Boys

At the beginning of 2005, O'Donnell was wracking her brain trying to prove there was an audience for her book. On the Internet, she happened upon a Moms of Boys group in New Jersey. She decided to launch a website dedicated to

moms of boys (www.momsofboys.org) providing a message board and other resources for moms.

"The website became its own entity," says O'Donnell. "It was my baby, and I was proud of it outside of the book, even though the two go together very nicely."

These days, the group roster numbers 100. O'Donnell decided these women would be a great focus group because, frankly, she was having second thoughts about her book's title. Originally, *Lady of the House*, O'Donnell liked *House of Testosterone* better. "I felt like it was a funnier title and something that would create more of a response and sum up the content of the book better." Her fellow moms agreed.

Sports analogies work wonders

As the months passed with no publisher, O'Donnell could sense her agent losing interest.

"I said 'Hang with me; just give me another shot,'" she says, figuring a sports analogy might help him keep the faith.

"I'm a big Red Sox fan, and he was a big Yankees fan," says O'Donnell. "When the Red Sox won the World Series for the first time in 86 years, they had come back against the Yankees after being down three games. It was the biggest comeback in sports. At the end of a letter to him I wrote: 'What if the Red Sox had given up?' I used that analogy because I knew it would speak to him. We had come that far; I wasn't about to start over again."

By November 2005, O'Donnell was just a few days away from signing a contract to self-publish her book when her agent contacted her. The news: Jefferson Press had an offer for her book. O'Donnell felt immense relief.

"I was tired of working on the computer until 2 or 3 in the morning and not doing things with my kids that I needed to be doing," she says. "It wasn't that I neglected them, but I didn't prioritize things the way that I should have because I was so focused on pursuing this dream. I was tired of feeling the guilt."

Future challenges

On February 15th, the *New York Daily News* ran a color spread titled: "You've Got Male." O'Donnell had pitched the idea and the publication liked it, but wasn't sure when

they would run it or what kind of folks they could interview. Through her Moms of Boys website, O'Donnell was able to contact some moms living in the Northeast who'd just posted, and they agreed to be interviewed. The article has led to several inquiries and radio interviews.

"The main challenge at this point is trying to get the book noticed on a national scale," says O'Donnell, pointing out the challenge of tracking distributed books. Her publisher knows a certain number have been sold to a retailer but not where in the country those books will appear. Still, she says, "I've sent out emails to all the independent bookstores, and I'm in the process of sending them to all of the Barnes and Nobles. I've done a lot, and I think I've made some inroads with all the radio and print publicity I've gotten."

It is O'Donnell's perseverance and faith, just as much as her writing, that's allowed her to capture the dream of publishing this book. If you're interested in checking out this local author, *House of Testosterone* can be purchased at most local book stores and online at Amazon.com.



Excerpts from **House of Testosterone**

By Sharon O'Donnell

From "Sure Signs"

Sure Signs You're the Mother of Boys

- Your most dreaded chore is not cleaning the toilets; it's cleaning around the toilets.
- Your weekend schedule includes more total hours of little league sports than it does sleep.
- The lamp in your family room is held together by Super Glue in three places.
- You can carry on a conversation about athletic cup sizes with the college-aged guy at the sporting goods store with no embarrassment whatsoever.
- You can get your boys to eat broccoli by telling them whoever eats the most, wins.



From "Midnight Grocery Shopping"

Just as I made it down the last aisle of the store – the dairy aisle – just as there was light at the end of the tunnel, I turned the corner to discover that the only cashier lane open after eleven was a self-service one.

My cart skidded to a halt, sending cans toppling and vegetables rolling. After spending a half-hour carefully selecting food products and searching in vain for those little packs of crackers with spreadable cheese, I didn't feel up to playing cashier that night. I watched as several people stood in line to scan their own items by using the 'user-friendly' computer. There was a man with beer and cereal; a young woman – probably single – with a Cosmopolitan magazine, a frozen pizza, and shampoo; another man with a carton of milk, some orange juice, and a box of Krispy Kremes. And then there was me.

My cart was so full I could barely see over the top. It would take forever for me to find all the barcodes on each of the items and scan them one-by-one. 'Self-checkout' was just the grocery industry's phrase for 'torture.' What were those people possibly thinking??? For Pete's sake, I'm grocery shopping at midnight; do they think it's been a good day?

Thanks for the boys

Sharon O'Donnell and I arrived at the cafe, and the support group meeting immediately commenced.

O'Donnell and I share a special kinship — lone female in a House of Testosterone.

So within moments of shaking hands and swapping introductions, we were chatting like sisters about what it's like to exist in a — how to put this? —



Ruth
Sheehan

sensory-rich environment.

The taste:
"How many packets of hot sauce are you going to put on that taco?" (Answer: one more than brother.)

The sounds:

"Is that a thundering herd? Nope, five boys are playing upstairs." (No, no one is dead.)

And, of course, the smells:
"Oh my God, Tucker put your shoes back on, and somebody open the car windows!"

I met with O'Donnell over coffee, which competes with Chardonnay as the miracle elixir of motherhood, to talk about the trials and travails of household estrogen deprivation as documented in her book of funny essays named — you got it — "House of Testosterone."

O'Donnell, who has written a column for The Cary News for almost nine years, is also founder of the group Moms of Boys and mother to three boys.

They are: Billy, who at 15 stands 6 feet 4, is an avid James Bond critic and, duh, plays basketball.

David, 12, is a sports fanatic whose specialty is baseball.

And Jason, 6, is a first-grader whose mission is keeping up with the other two.

THE NEWS & OBSERVER

O'Donnell is just a little farther down the adolescence trail than I am. (My sons are 10, 8 and 3). She says her boys, including her husband, tend to communicate in single syllables and grunts. (Mine, by contrast, talk endlessly.)

But on most issues, we in the mini-support group definitely could relate.

There's the inexplicable refusal to wear sweaters, or dress shoes, or shirts with collars. There's the unnatural aversion to toothbrush and hairbrush.

At home, there are the mountains of laundry, the piles of (often reeking) sports gear.

There is the remarkable transformation of a host of inanimate objects into guns. And daggers, and lasers, and blow darts.

(According to one of my sons, this is because boys alone are born with the ability to make the full range of weaponry noises. Who knew?)

And of course, there is the issue of the toilet seat.

O'Donnell said that she worried, when putting the book together, that some of the material would be clichéd.

As a member of the support group, I reminded her that it's only a cliché until you land in cold water in the middle of the night.

Yes, I've been there.

O'Donnell said she has learned over the past 15 years that as a female you have to find the humor in the testosterone or you will certainly cry.

Funny, though, O'Donnell and I agreed, that for all the sounds and smells, our boys are what we're most grateful for on this day — and every other.

Happy Thanksgiving.

"House of Testosterone" will be available at a reading/premiere at Quail Ridge Books at 7 p.m. Dec. 1. For more information about this and other signings, as well as how to pre-order the book, visit www.momsofboys.org.

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+ or rsheehan@newsobserver.com.

Skirt magazine
feature, The News
and Observer

twenty-four

7

with

Sharon O'Donnell

Freelance Writer and PR Consultant, Cary, NC

Photo by Beth Riley

My family: married 20 years to Kevin, sons Billy, almost 17, David, 14, and Jason, 7.

My work: I'm a freelance writer and author of *House of Testosterone—One Mom's Survival in a Household of Males*.

What keeps me awake at night: My sons' futures, tragedies in the news or in lives of friends/family, making to-do lists in my head.

If I could be totally wild, I would: Tell my family I'll be gone for two weeks and then just take off somewhere by myself.

The nickname I wish I had: Ms. Organized.

If I had a vanity plate on my car, it would say: 4GUYS&DOG.

Whose diary would you most like to read? My oldest two sons' if they had one (which they don't, let me make clear).

If I had a vanity plate on my car, it would say: 4GUYS&DOG.

I'd like to learn to: Play the guitar or piano, to speak another language, or to roller skate. But I'd settle for just learning how to parallel park the SUV.

Always... have a purpose in your life whether you are 15 or 95.

Never... be caught without your make-up on when you run into an old boyfriend.

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- photo in Skirt magazine, News and Observer
- with sports equipment and laundry = world of boys

Published on Sunday, May 04, 2008

Fayetteville,
NCFayetteville
Observer

O'Donnell is surrounded by men

Meredith Jacobs

No doubt about it, Sharon O'Donnell could use some girl talk when she visits Fayetteville on Friday.

The author from Raleigh doesn't hear much of it when at home. There, she is seriously outnumbered. O'Donnell and her husband have three sons, which means it's unlikely she gets to touch the TV's remote control during prime time, much less see the end of "Project Runway" or "Gilmore Girls."

Care to guess how O'Donnell spends her vacations, which she describes in her book "House of Testosterone: One Mom's Survival in a Household of Males"?

- (a) Luxuriating in a resort hotel getting massages and drinking brightly colored frozen drinks?
- (b) In a camper eating beans and burgers?
- (c) Shopping in the New York City's fashion district before dining in a five-star restaurant?

I won't give you the answer. Why bother? You know it already.

And bless this poor woman's heart, even the family dog is a male.

But fun can be abundant for a sole female and queen among men at home. In "House of Testosterone," she shares some of those advantages.

"The mom of a boy will eventually reap her reward for doing the potty training; that wonderful time when her son is too tired to go to the ladies' room, so Dad has no choice but to take him to the men's restroom, which then leaves Mom with five convenient minutes to eat or shop in peace."

That same mom can also arrange time away from her job of overseeing the house's majority by scheduling a book-signing. O'Donnell will be at Barnes & Noble Booksellers at 7 p.m. Friday. The book is \$12.95 and has been published by Houghton Mifflin of New York.

Now, the girly side

Pat Fortenberry's book, "More Than Makeup: A Guide to Finding Strength and Leadership Within You," tells about her modest upbringing in Bogue Chitto, Miss., to becoming a top sales director with Mary Kay before her retirement. In this motivational memoir, she shares her insights into business, sales and leadership.

Fortenberry and her husband live in Fayetteville. They have two children, who are adults.

Her book is \$19.95 or, in paperback, \$14.95, plus shipping and handling. She sells it through her Web site at www.patfortenberry.com.

Book events

Tuesday, May 6: Oliver North will sign copies of "American Heroes: In the Fight Against Radical Islam" at Barnes & Noble Booksellers in Fayetteville at 8 p.m.

Thursday, May 8: Roy Parker Jr. will sign copies of "The Best of Roy Parker Jr.: Reliving Fayetteville's Storied Military History" at Southern Pines at The Country Bookshop at 4 p.m.

Friday, May 9: Sharon O'Donnell, author of "House of Testosterone: One Mom's Survival in a Household of Males," will be at Barnes & Noble Booksellers in Fayetteville at 7 p.m.

May 10: Jim Wise, author of "On Sherman's Trail: The Civil War's North Carolina Climax," will be at The Regulator Bookshop in Durham at 3 p.m.

May 15: Nancy Peacock, author of "A Broom of One's Own: Words on Writing, Housecleaning, and Life," will be at The Regulator Bookshop in Durham at 3 p.m.



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Read about life in a male-dominated house

By CHARITY APPLE/Times-News
May 13, 2007 3:01 AM

No matter where author and newspaper columnist Sharon O'Donnell goes, she is confronted by mothers of boys. Usually they're worried about obvious things like how to communicate with sons, but there are a few who worry about things that might never happen.



O'Donnell

"You wouldn't believe how many women say that since they have boys, they're worried about the fact that they may put them in a rest home when they get older or may not come to visit at all," O'Donnell said in a recent interview from her home in Cary. "(I tell them that the trick is) getting in good with the daughter-in-laws."

O'Donnell followed that statement with a chuckle. As a mother of three boys, she has realized that laughter really is the best medicine. Her book "House of Testosterone: One Mom's Survival in a Household of Males" has chronicled her life with husband Kevin and their three sons, Billy, 15, David, 12, and Jason, 6.

Nine-and-a-half years ago, O'Donnell started writing a humorous family column for the Cary News, for which she's won a number of awards. She decided these snippets of everyday life would make a great book.

"It is sort of like a photo album in words," she said. "Every day provides you with more material."

The 195-page book is a humorous look at life with boys. From that age-old question "Are you going to try for a girl?" to piles of laundry to potty training, O'Donnell keeps it light. But the subject matter is so real-to-life that all mothers, regardless of their children's genders, will understand what she's saying.

"I've even had one mother of all daughters come up to me and say 'My girls and I always sort of look at my husband and think 'what's the matter with you?' Your book gave us some insight as to why men act the way they do.' Stereotypes are stereotypes for a reason. I try to address that in my book."

O'Donnell also developed momsofboys.org, a Web site providing information and support for mothers of boys.

"Moms of boys are so incredibly busy that I thought it would be nice to have a site where mothers could come to ask questions or find out information," she said. "I think (as mothers of boys) we struggle to retain our identity and femininity. I definitely was trying to look at life as the only female." Even O'Donnell's dog is male; he's named Fenway for Fenway Park.

When she was younger, O'Donnell said she never really imagined having daughters. She was a tomboy and still gets out in the yard and plays ball with the boys.

"We do talk about sports and movies," she said. "My oldest son has critiqued 'Spider-Man 3' and can tell you what should've been left out or added to the movie to make it better. Having common interests like that leads to more conversations. And my second one does so much with the third one. He's watched his brothers play sports, so he's really athletic, too."

Most weekends will find O'Donnell and her family on the sidelines of a ball field, and this weekend is no different. David has a baseball tournament, and even though today is Mother's Day and her 45th birthday, O'Donnell said the family doesn't have anything special planned.

"My mother and my husband's mother are local, so we'll spend it with them," she said. "We'll just spend the weekend together."

O'Donnell will also be part of a local author's night Thursday at Barnes & Noble Booksellers, at Streets at Southpoint in Durham. The event begins at 7 p.m.

"House of Testosterone: One Mom's Survival in a Household of Males" is \$19.95 and can be ordered at Books-A-Million at Burlington Square Mall in Burlington or purchased online at amazon.com.

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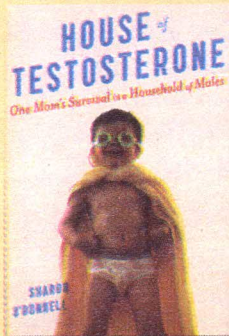
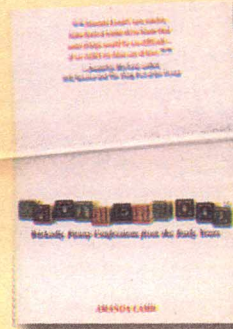
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Burlington, NC

For the times that a word of encouragement from Mom makes all the difference, Judy Cooley has written and illustrated *Mom Says I Can* (Shadow Mountain, \$17.95). When Max is a pirate, Mom says he's tough. When he's a cowboy, Mom says he's the fastest ever. And his search for the world's greatest treasure leads him to Mom's arms.

Moms who don't have a sense of humor need to get one. Fast. Two local authors have done their best to help mothers get a giggle out of the job for which there is no 401K.

In *Smotherhood* (Skirt!, \$14.95), WRAL-TV reporter Amanda Lamb touches on topics from playdates to holidays on Xanax. The mother of two has covered Hurricane Katrina, flown in fighter jets and interviewed presidents, but she still can find the humor in a tantrum-throwing toddler.



Cary resident and writer Sharon O'Donnell chronicles life as the only gal of the family in *House of Testosterone* (Houghton Mifflin, \$12.95). Whether honoring the inventor of the epidural with a postage stamp or addressing issues particular to mothers of all boys ("Are you going to try for a girl?"), O'Donnell sees the funny in both being the mom and the only one in her house who watches *The Sound of Music*.

Both helpful hints and humor are included in *The Moms' Book: For the Mom Who's Best at Everything* (Scholastic, \$9.99) by Alison Maloney.



From listing heroic moms to offering party themes to making suggestions for getting reluctant kids out of bed (Barry Manilow at full volume), the book covers a remarkable array of topics, much like a mother's typical day.

Carolina Parent ★

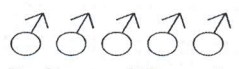
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A Book Review By LEON FOSTER, County Commissioners' Office



House of Testosterone



By Sharon O'Donnell



Sharon O'Donnell, a freelance writer and award-winning newspaper columnist, initially wanted to put together a book of the parenting columns she writes, but decided to narrow her focus on how she's the odd woman out.

"In writing my newspaper column, I found that whenever I wrote about being the mom in a household of guys, other women in the same situation really related to it." – Sharon O'Donnell

"House of Testosterone" is a book on the trials and tribulations of raising three boys, four if you include the husband. O'Donnell shares her stories of welcoming her third son into the world, resisting the gravitational pull of the "guy zone," and running the household immersed in a world of sports, bathroom humor and laundry. I found this book to be very funny and heartfelt for those who raise children, let alone a houseful of boys.

I chose this book because a friend of mine is currently raising three boys and at times finds herself wanting to pull her hair out while running for the hills. I came across this book and bought it for her after reading myself. It has helped her a great deal.

Sharon O'Donnell states that with her husband and her three sons ages six, 12 and 15, she bemoans the fact that even the family dog is a boy. From midnight grocery shopping to using sports analogies to get her boys to eat broccoli, O'Donnell shows how it may be hard but not impossible to raise boys. She had trouble publishing this book because she wasn't famous or infamous, but continued to pursue it because she felt it would help women in her same situation.

I found myself relating to this book in some ways as well. It reminds me of when I was little and my mother at times would say "I wish I had all girls."



Q&A

Houseful of boys inspires writer

Sharon O'Donnell has been a columnist with The Cary News for nearly nine years. Her "The Home Front" columns have been a humorous take on battling at life and all its curve balls with her husband and three boys.



O'Donnell

O'Donnell has written a new chapter in her life, literally. Her first book, "House of Testosterone: One Mom's Survival in a Household of Males," is being published by Jefferson Press of Chattanooga, Tenn.

We asked O'Donnell about the book and related matters as she prepares for her first book signing on Friday, Dec. 1, at Quail Ridge Books and Music in Raleigh.

Q Many writers dream of getting that elusive book deal. How did you get yours?

BOOK SIGNINGS

Cary News columnist Sharon O'Donnell will be at Quail Ridge Books and Music in Raleigh to sign copies of her new book "House of Testosterone: One Mom's Survival in a Household of Males," on Friday, Dec. 1, at 7 p.m.

She'll also be at the Cary Barnes & Noble on Jan. 9 at 7 p.m., and at the Cary Public Library on Jan. 31 at 7 p.m.

A There were lots of books about motherhood on the market, so I had to come up with a motherhood niche, so to speak. That niche was being a mom in a houseful of males ... I received many complimentary rejection letters from Random House and others. Eventually, a relatively new

SEE **O'DONNELL**, 10A

O'DONNELL

FROM PAGE 1A

publisher in Chattanooga, Tenn., saw the synopsis of my book that my agent had posted on Publishers Marketplace, asked for the proposal and sample chapters, and signed a contract with me for publication.

Q Is most of the material culled from your Cary News columns?

A Most of the essays are combinations of parts of columns I wrote for The Cary News mixed with new material. Some are totally new. I think three or four essays might be pretty close to the original version in The Cary News, but most have additions.

Q What's your favorite story from the book?

A I'm not sure I have a favorite essay because I like different parts of various ones, but I do think the one entitled "The Guy

Zone" probably captures the whole idea behind the book. It shows how difficult it is to deal with sons and husbands because their communication style is so different from that of a female.

Q How do you get your boys to do chores? Put the toilet seat up?

A We don't give them a regular allowance, but tell them they should help out around the house simply because it's needed and in turn, their dad and I will

pay for and allow them to do certain things like go to movies or pay for participation on a sports team. I'm still working on that toilet seat thing. It's a losing battle.

Q We got a kick out of your "Mom's Vacation Rules for Guys — three camping trips equals one resort trip for me." Are you a camper — the kind who can do without a blow dryer and an iron?

A I'm not a camper. When we go camping as a family, we stay in our travel-trailer camper with air conditioning/heat and a bathroom. And even that's tough for me because of having all of us in a small space together and because I feel like I should cook and do laundry. I mean, when I go on vacation, I want it to feel like a vacation.

Q You write about the TV show "Nanny 911." How do you think your family compares

to some of those families? Are you a strict parent? How do you keep control in a house full of testosterone?

A I like to think we're not in as bad of shape as some of those families, but at times we might be close. ... I wouldn't say we are strict in the sense that most people think of the word, but our boys know what our expectations are and know we will be disappointed if those expectations aren't met. We keep enough order in the house that we get by from day to day, but I wouldn't say things are exactly in control as in everything runs smoothly.

Q What are your best attempts to put a little estrogen into the household?

A I like to try to make the guys talk about their feelings or thoughts more than simply giving one-word replies to questions. ... From time to time, I'll take the guys to a play I think they will enjoy. I also try to get them to dance.

Q One local columnist recently said that when someone tells you your son is "all boy," it's not a compliment. Do you ever hear that? Do you agree with her?

A I still hear it about Jason (my 6-year-old). Most of the time, people who say this mean a boy is full of energy, which my guys all were. None of this is necessarily "bad." ... I think that most people who say "He's all boy" are simply expressing empathy for the poor mom who has to deal with all that energy and competitive nature — at least that's the way I take it.

Q Tell us about your Web site, www.momsofboys.org.

A The site includes links to other Web sites, articles about boys, advice from other moms, suggestions for books and movies for both moms and sons, humor for moms of boys, a message board and other things about raising sons.

Q Did you write this book to entertain, teach, inspire?

A Humor is the main gist of the book, of course, but to provide a true picture of what it's like to be a mom of boys, I had to include some poignant anecdotes, also, which I think are inspiring and touching.

Q What do you think a mother of all girls could take away from your story?

A Her first reaction will probably be a sigh of relief that she doesn't have to deal with the bathroom humor and all the other stuff. Actually, I think a mother of all girls can relate to some of what is in the book, particularly the parts about dealing with husbands and the chapter on women's work never being done; yet, she will see all of this through a different light.

Q What do your kids think about their mom sharing their "moments" with Cary News readers, and now in book form?

A OK with my writing about their experiences in The Cary News, though ... sometimes there are certain things that I should not write about — no matter how funny or moving it might be. I'm afraid [Jason] might sue me in the future for defamation of character or something. He, by his very nature, does a lot of funny things in these essays, and hopefully they will all be things he can look back on and laugh about.

Q Where is your book available?

A The book will be available at my book launch Dec. 1. After that, it will be available for pre-order on Amazon.com and then in book stores nationwide in late December.

To read an excerpt or to hear O'Donnell read from her book, go to www.carynews.com.

— Wendy Lemus
Staff Writer

ABC, San Francisco

April, 2008

Tips listed on website
in conjunction with TV
interview
on
website



ABC,
San
Francisco
2008 -
April

Better understand your boyfriends, husbands and even sons, while still retaining your identity as a woman.

If the men in your life have ever driven you crazy, this may provide some relief. Sharon O'Donnell is a mother of three boys and the author of "House of Testosterone: One Mom's Survival in a Household of Males," and shares her advice for moms in this situation.

Sharon's tips on how to survive raising boys:

1. Savor the Moments - One day my 7-year-old might be 6'5" like my 16 year old, when he climbs into my lap. Sometimes I remind myself of this and to appreciate that moment.
2. Dig Deeper - Tap into emotions, don't let them give one word answers to things you know they have an opinion on.
3. Find a good time to connect with them.
4. Bring Out Their Nurturing Side - Show affection to them. Pets also help to do this.
5. Knowing When to Advocate for them and when to step back.
6. Have fun with them - Shoot hoops in the driveway, follow their favorite sports teams with them.

Ways to retain identity as a woman in a household of guys

- Nurture friendships (Don't put them on the backburner)
- Find your passion and pursue it.
- Make sure you have some alone time.
- Pamper yourself (even if it is just spending some time getting ready to go somewhere)
- Don't feel guilty about taking the time to do this.

Lessons Learned about Male/Female Relationships

- Try to accept that the male brain is wired differently.
- You have to connect the dots. (Guys don't explain things like we do.)
- We talk about feelings while they feel compelled to report sports scores.
- Women need to feel understood, while men don't feel that need.
- Vent to friends before you explode.
- They are not being rude intentionally; they are sincerely oblivious.

From book: "Some Sure Signs You're the Mom of Boys"

- You can get your sons to eat broccoli just by telling them whoever eats the most, wins.
- They flush only when your in the shower.
- Your son thinks PMS is the new Playstation video game system.
- Your most dreaded chore is not cleaning toilets, but it's cleaning the floor around the toilets.

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