

ADVICE

Border guard

When it comes to women and cheese, be selective with boundaries

DEAR MS. BEHAVIOR:

After five months of meeting women on an online lesbian dating site, I finally met someone I liked very much. Betty seemed funny, smart and considerate. She is in her late 30s and was refreshingly sweet, not at all jaded.

We had five dates, each one more fun and intimate than the next. Betty initially called me

from work two or three times a day, even while traveling, and I felt like we were moving toward a relationship.

Last week, Betty stopped calling as frequently. She declined my Saturday night invitation, saying she'd be away for the weekend with "friends." I felt like something was up but didn't feel I could press it since we don't have a commitment.

But on Saturday night I went to a restaurant with some friends, and guess who I ran into? Betty was waiting in the lobby for a woman she'd met on the lesbian dating site!

Betty tried to pretend she didn't see me, but I walked right up to her and said: "I thought you were going away for the weekend. You're a liar." Betty apologized.

When her date walked through the door a few moments later, I ran up to her and asked if it was a blind date. She said yes. I said: "Good luck. Betty broke my heart. I hope she's nicer to you."

My friends say I was out of line. But I'm tired of being treated like shit, and my therapist keeps telling me I should express my feelings. Was I wrong to do so in this situation?

—T.

DEAR T.:

It would have been nice if Betty had clearly told you she didn't want to date you anymore, rather than letting you guess.

Some people delude themselves into thinking they're being "nice" by sparing someone's feelings when in reality they're just being avoidant and cowardly. Telling someone you don't intend to go out with her again in a kind way is actually more considerate than leaving her waiting by the phone or wondering if she had spinach in her teeth during the last date.

It would have been fine for you to ask Betty what was up when she started backing away from you if you could do so without acting angry or stalkerish. It's OK to try to get a sense of whether someone shares your feelings even if you don't have a commitment with that person.

It does, however, sound like you went too far. Warning Betty's blind date is not your responsibility, and it didn't exactly arise from altruistic motives. You should have better boundaries than that and, if you don't, you'll need to go to boundary school or risk scaring off other

prospective lesbo dates with your outbursts.

DEAR MS. BEHAVIOR:

Clearly this question is neither earth- nor relationship-shattering, but I remain curious, despite the fact that the food in question is likely long past passé in the big cities.

It's brie. And the question is, should one eat the rind or not? I

generally do, but my partner thinks my brie-havior is gauche. (We'll leave aside for the moment that I also like to top it off with orange marmalade.)

Out here in the boonies, we still like to serve fancy cheese that tastes like lesbian sex. So, please help solve this minor food etiquette mix-up.

—A Rind Is a Terrible Thing to Waste

DEAR A RIND IS A TERRIBLE THING TO WASTE:

Ms. Behavior consulted a variety of cheese sites on the Internet (CheeseMonthClub.com, ArtOfCheese.com, PatriciaWells.com) to assist with your inquiry.

The consensus seems to be that it's fine to eat the rind or not, and whether you'd want to would depend on the age and consistency of the cheese in question. If the brie is young and soft enough, it's desirable to eat, according to these non-judgmental dairy connoisseurs.

But your partner is probably concerned about the reaction of others, rather than truly repelled by your chewing and swallowing of the brie rind. If the two of you were home alone, sitting in the living room in your underwear, watching *Surprise by Design*, and you had your way with the cheese, it's unlikely he'd be offended.

Ms. Behavior suspects that this disagreement is metaphorical, with the cheese standing in for some other behavior(s) that your boyfriend wants to control. Are you messier than he is around the house? Do you have an open relationship that leaves him feeling threatened?

The struggle for power can take many forms. The danger in its enactment is that the controller often tries to infantilize the contollee. Don't let it happen if you want your relationship to remain sexual.

As for your silly allegation that brie tastes like lesbian sex, perhaps you should do a taste test before you spread this naughty notion any further. ☞

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MERYL COHN is the author of *Do What I Say: Ms. Behavior's Guide to Gay and Lesbian Etiquette* (Houghton Mifflin). Signed copies are available directly from the author. Send questions or correspondence to msbehavior@aol.com.



Ms. Behavior
by Meryl Cohn

SPIRITUALITY

Metro: Spirituality

Ainsworth United Church of Christ is a multi-racial, multicultural, open and affirming church. Sunday worship is at 10 am; church school for children runs concurrently. (2941 NE Ainsworth St. 503-284-8767. aucc@teleport.com.) (7/03)

Anawim Community of gay men meets weekly for Christian meditation and prayer. (7:30 pm Thursday. 503-281-0722.) (7/03)

Atkinson Memorial Church is a Unitarian Universalist welcoming congregation in Oregon City. (710 Sixth St. 503-656-7296. www.atkinsonchurch.com.) (7/03)

Bible Abuse Recovery is a spiritual growth group for healing gay, lesbian, bi and trans people hurt and abused by distorted and manipulative views of the Bible. (503-760-5791. bibleabuse@yahoo.com. www.geocities.com/bibleabuse.) (7/03)

Bridgeport United Church of Christ is a community of progressive, political people exploring and celebrating the Christian faith. We are sexual minority and straight, multicultural and multiracial, and our children are valued members. (10:30 am Sunday. 621 NE 76th Ave. 503-258-0992. www.bridgeportucc.org.) (7/03)

Congregation Neveh Shalom, an open and progressive Conservative Jewish synagogue, extends a warm welcome to all sexual minorities. Shabbat services 8:15 pm Friday and 9 am Saturday. (2900 SW Peaceful Lane. 503-246-8831.) (7/03)

Congregation P'nai Or (Faces of Light) is a vibrant, egalitarian, Jewish Renewal congregation in Portland. Meets several times a month in various locations. (PO Box 42187, Portland, OR 97242-0187. 503-248-4500. www.pnaiorpx.org.) (7/03)

Dignity Portland meets for Mass on Sundays. (503-262-6947.) (7/03)

Eastrose Fellowship Unitarian Universalist, a welcoming congregation, offers Sunday service and children's religious education. (10:30 am. 1133 NE 181st Ave., Gresham. 503-665-2628. eastrose@teleport.com.) (7/03)

Faith United Methodist Church is a welcoming community of Christians in Troutdale that values and encourages all people in finding a place of belonging in the family of God. Sunday worship at 10:15 am; Adult Education at 9 am; children and youth at 10:30 am. Wednesday Prayers 6-6:30 pm. (27400 SE Stark St. 503-661-4520.) (7/03)

First Unitarian Church of Portland is an open and affirming liberal religious community offering a wide range of programs to nurture spiritual growth, community and social justice. Sunday service 9 and 11 am. (1011 SW 12th Ave. 503-228-6389. www.firstunitarianportland.org.) (7/03)

First United Methodist Church of Portland, a welcoming and reconciling congregation, believes no one is left out in God's family. Sexual minority potlucks held monthly. (10:30 am Sunday. 1838 SW Jefferson St. 503-228-3195. www.fumcpdx.org.) (7/03)

Gay and Lesbian Outreach (GALO) of St. Philip Neri Catholic Church celebrates an affirming Mass followed by a social. (7:30 pm Friday. Paulist Center, 2408 SE 16th Ave. 503-231-4955.) (7/03)

Integrity is a group of sexual minority Episcopalians and friends. Various locations throughout Oregon. (Bruce Mason 503-286-9111. brucepdxon@attbi.com. www.integrityusa.org.) (7/03)

Interfaith Spiritual Center houses spiritual directors from various world religious traditions, who are available for guidance, classes and retreats. (Second

Floor, 3910 SE 11th Ave. 503-233-2026, ext. 3. www.interfaithspiritualcenter.com.) (7/03)

Kesher Portland is a group for Jewish members of the sexual minorities community and their partners, spouses and supporters. Monthly social, religious and cultural events. (David or Laney 503-226-7079, ext. 14.) (7/03)

Koinonia Catholic Community is a progressive, small faith community that gathers weekly to celebrate Eucharist at Bridgeport United Church of Christ. A welcoming congregation, Catholic in tradition and Ecumenical in membership. (6 pm Sunday. 621 NE 76th Ave. 503-699-0473. www.koinoniacommunity.org.) (7/03)

Metanoia Peace Community United Methodist Church is a "house church" that brings gay and straight together. (Daily prayer 7:20 am, Sunday gathering 5 pm. 2116 NE 18th Ave. 503-281-3697. www.tearsoup.com/metanoia.) (7/03)

Metropolitan Community Church of Portland holds ecumenical Sunday morning worship services at 9 and 11 am. Sunday school for children is held during the 11 am worship service. (2400 NE Broadway. 503-281-8868. info@mccportland.com.) (7/03)

Portland Center for Spiritual Growth is a New Thought, uplifting, refreshing and exciting place of worship. Become a minister in our ministerial program. (10 am Sunday. Call for location. 503-777-0727.) (7/03)

Portland Church of Religious Science is a liberal, open, progressive New Thought community welcoming everyone to discover the spirit within. Change your thinking, change your life! (10 am Sunday meditation, 10:30 am service and junior church, 6:30 pm Wednesday prayer circle. 3983 NE 112th Ave. 503-261-0677.) (7/03)

Portland Radical Faeries meet twice a month with potlucks and circles at the full moon and the new moon. Open to all men seeking alternative spiritual growth and community. Coffee hours start 9:30 am Saturdays at 3 Friends Coffeehouse, 201 SE 12th Ave. (503-235-0826. otter@pccz.com.) (7/03)

SisterSpirit offers women's spirituality celebrations, discussion groups, a drumming circle, workshops and classes. Schedule of events available. All women are welcome. (Suite 102, 3430 SE Belmont St. Mailing address: PO Box 9246, Portland, OR 97207. 503-736-3297. sistersp@teleport.com.) (7/03)

Spirit Circle is for lesbian, bi or trans women seeking a welcoming community in the Catholic church. Meets every third Thursday in the St. Andrew Nativity School. (7 pm. 806 NE Alberta St. lbtspirtcircle@yahoo.com.) (7/03)

Southminster Presbyterian Church is a challenging, supportive community that welcomes all people. It is the first More Light Presbyterian Church in Oregon. Sunday school and nursery care. (10 am Sunday. 12250 SW Denney Road, Beaverton. 503-644-2073. staff@southmin.com.) (7/03)

St. Andrew Catholic Church invites all to join a diverse faith community for prayer and fellowship. (9:30 am Sunday. 806 NE Alberta St. 503-281-4429.) (7/03)

St. James Lutheran Church, a Reconciled in Christ congregation, welcomes all people for traditional, liturgical worship where we experience God's reconciling love that sets all people free. (9 and 11 am Sunday. 1315 SW Park Ave. 503-227-2439.) (7/03)

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church has been welcoming all people since 1863. (12:10 pm Wednesday and 7:45 and 10 am Sunday. Sunday school and child care at 10 am. Southwest 13th Avenue at Clay Street. 503-223-6424.) (7/03)

Trinity United Methodist Church is an open Christian community where faith and life intersect. All

invited! (10:30 am Sunday. 3915 SE Steele St. The Rev. Wendy Joy Woodworth 503-777-3901.) (7/03)

Waverly Heights Church (UCC) is open and affirming with worship, children's school and child care. (10 am Sunday. 3300 SE Woodward St. 503-238-1337. www.waverlyucc.org.) (7/03)

Wy'east Unitarian Universalist Congregation is an open and liberal religious community offering intergenerational services and religious education for children. It welcomes gay, lesbian, bi and trans members. Nurtures spiritual growth and promotes living by Unitarian Universalist principles. (4 pm Sunday. 3915 SE Steele St. 503-777-3704. www.wyeast.pnwd.uua.org.) (7/03)

Zion United Church of Christ, an open and affirming congregation, is open to gay, lesbian, bi, trans and heterosexual people who wish to worship in a Christ-centered, warm, caring, multiage/race/cultural faith community. (11 am Sunday. 2025 NE 23rd Ave., Gresham. 503-665-8741.) (7/03)

Washington: Spirituality

Abundant Life Center is A New Thought Community for spiritual awakening and transforming lives through love. A safe place where children learn to embody spiritual principles. (10 am Sunday. 10006 NE Ninth Ave., Vancouver. 360-573-2626.) (7/03)

East Vancouver United Methodist Church is reconciling and welcoming. (10 am Sunday. 5701 MacArthur Blvd. 360-693-4761. ourclarkcounty.columbian.com/273.) (7/03)

First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, holds two Sunday services, traditional and "less traditional" in an open and affirming congregation. (1220 NE 68th St., Vancouver. 360-693-1476. vanucc@aol.com.) (7/03)

God's Holy Territory is a charismatic, joy-filled worship experience in Vancouver where everyone is welcome: gay, lesbian, bi, trans and straight. (11 am Sunday service. Bible study 7 pm most Thursdays. 1500 NE 49th St. 360-885-9461. pastor@godsholyterritory.com.) (7/03)

Metropolitan Community Church of the Gentle Shepherd in Vancouver welcomes you. (10:30 am and 6:30 pm Sunday worship, 9 am Sunday Bible study. 2200 Broadway. The Rev. Harriet Barshofsky 360-695-1548.) (7/03)

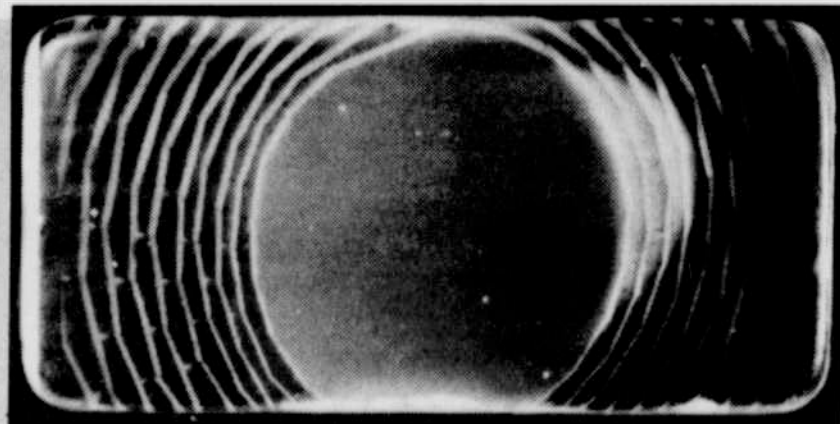
Michael Servetus Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, a Welcoming Congregation, provides a home for the liberal religious spirit. (9:15 and 11 am Sunday. 4505 E 18th St., Vancouver. 360-695-1891.) (7/03)

Willamette Valley: Spirituality

First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ is an open and affirming congregation offering worship and church school. Child care provided and wheelchair accessible. (9 am Sunday learning hour, 10 am worship. 700 Marion St. NE, Salem. 503-363-3660.) (7/03)

Morningside United Methodist Church is a reconciling congregation where everyone is welcome to participate in the full life of the congregation. (8:30 and 11 am Sunday. 3674 12th St. SE, Salem. 503-364-5013.) (7/03)

Sacred Souls honors all sacred paths, promotes peace and strives to create an environment that supports and promotes interfaith dialogue. Meets at the Oregon School of Massage. (6:30-8 pm Sunday. 440 Ferry St. SE, Salem. wholth@aol.com. www.sacredsouls.org.) (7/03)



Soundvision presents photographic work from the Pacific Northwest, Chicago and Belgium in *Stratum* through April 26

Washington: Youth

Triple Point offers education, support and advocacy to gay, lesbian, bi, trans and questioning youth in Vancouver, Wash. Meets 6-8 pm Tuesdays in the basement of Youth House, 1112 Columbia St. in Vancouver. (John 360-695-1325.) (7/03)

Willamette Valley: Youth

Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Transgender and Questioning Youth Group for ages 13 to 18 offers support, information and fun in Eugene. Free, confidential, adult-facilitated. (Drop in 4-6 pm Friday. Amazon Community Center, 2700 Hiway St. 541-684-3466.) (7/03)

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Youth Group for ages 25 and younger meets every Monday in Eugene. (5 pm. Koinonia Center, 1414 Kincaid St. 541-346-1134.) (7/03)

YOUTH

Metro: Youth

Flavors, a program of MultiQueer and Brother to Brother, is a social support group for sexual minority youth of color 24 and younger. Meets every other Sunday for food and socializing. Regular events and activities. (Des 503-228-3892 or des@lmfamily.org. Stephan 503-417-7991 or hey_stephan@hotmail.com.) (7/03)

The **Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)** fights to end anti-gay bias in K-12 schools. (12700 SW North Dakota St., Suite 180, #129, Tigard, OR 97223. 503-525-1177. glseu@glseuoregon.org. www.glseuoregon.org.) (7/03)

MultiQueer, a program of Love Makes a Family, provides advocacy to sexual minority youth. Offers resources and support in the community and the school systems, with a focus on support for youth of color. (Des 503-228-3892. des@lmfamily.org.) (7/03)

Outside In operates a clinic for anyone who can't qualify for the Oregon Health Plan as well as needle exchange services that include those who inject hormones. Can provide transitional housing for youth 20 and younger as well as for those HIV+ and younger than 23. Also plays host to VOICES (Voices of Individual and Community Empowerment from the Streets), a self-support group for queer youth. Needs volunteers of all ages. (10 am-6 pm Monday-Friday. 1132 SW 13th Ave. 503-535-3800. www.outsidein.org.) (7/03)

Vanguard Youth Services, a program of Cascadia Behavioral HealthCare, offers support and recreation to gay, lesbian, bi and trans kids 23 and younger. Programs include: **Clackamas County Sexual Minority Youth Connection (COSMYC)** provides opportunities for queer and questioning kids to get together for

free, fun and supportive social activities. Also one-on-one support and referrals to Clackamas County service providers. (503-969-0060. cosmycyouth@yahoo.com.)

Expression is a free art/expression support group in Gresham for queer youth. Hang out and have fun every Friday! (Jonathan 503-872-9664, ext. 28.) (7/03)

Pride Project brings together Washington County queer and questioning youth to plan and attend monthly social events. Also information, referral and advocacy services in Washington County. (Molly 503-260-5792. molly@prideproject.org.) (7/03)

Sexual Minority Youth Recreation Center (SMYRC) offers drop-in computer access, pool tables and an informal place to hang out. Weekly youth support groups includes Trans Youth Group and Personal Deity Proxy (a creative group). (4-8 pm Monday and Wednesday, 4 pm-midnight Friday and Saturday. 2100 SE Belmont St. 503-872-9664. TTY 503-231-9286. www.smyrc.org.) (7/03)

Youth HIV/STD Prevention Project provides fun and educational programs along with counseling and testing to queer youth in a friendly, relaxed environment. (503-872-9664.) (7/03)