

ADVICE

Excommunicated

Sometimes it's a bad idea;
then there are the other times



Ms. Behavior
by Meryl Cohn

DEAR MS. BEHAVIOR:

A few years ago, I came out to my family about being gay. My parents are still somewhat furious; they call it "destroying the family name."

I had explained to them that, while off in college, I had something serious happen to me. I had hoped that they would support me while I was seeking therapy about being raped. Of course, they think it was a situation that I caused.

Now that I am older and made up in my mind that I am happy being with a guy, they refuse to talk to me. I was told by them not to visit when I come back home from school.

I have other family members to visit, but I would like to be able to visit my parents and my siblings when I come home for the holidays. What should I do? Respect their wishes and not visit or just say the hell with it? I need your help.

—Lovable Noel

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DEAR LOVABLE NOEL:

If saying "the hell with it" means just showing up at your parents' door with your good wishes and a holiday fruitcake, it doesn't seem like a good idea.

Your parents don't seem ready to welcome or support you, which is quite sad and also their problem. If they blame you for being raped and won't talk to you or let you visit because you're gay, they have problems so serious that they should have their own reality TV show.

Unfortunately, your parents are unlikely to get help for themselves, but it's good that you've sought therapy, at least to deal with the trauma of having been raped. Spend time with other family members who'd like to see you, including your siblings if they're open to visiting with you away from your parents' house.

Send a holiday card letting your parents know that you care about them and hope to be able to spend future holidays with them. It's best to leave the door open to the possibility of a reconciliation someday; some people do eventually have a spiritual awakening (or an aneurysm) that makes them realize life is short.

In the meantime, try to develop relationships with your extended family and your friends. And someday, when you're in the mood, write and publish a book about your childhood and your

coming-out process. Make sure to notify your parents anytime you have a television appearance.

DEAR MS. BEHAVIOR:

I'm a long-term member of a lesbian poetry group. We meet twice a month to share our inspiration and our writing.

Through the years a woman named Dora has shown up several times.

Each time she comes, she brings a bundle of lesbian sonnets and asks for our feedback. We politely sit and listen and carefully critique her work.

The poems are mediocre, but that's not the problem. Dora never reciprocates by offering suggestions to others; she never even comes to the group unless she needs feedback on her own work. In fact, the last time Dora did this, we implemented a new rule requiring new members to come and listen at

least five times before reading their work.

Dora recently called and asked me for directions to our new location, so I know she's planning a comeback. I may be the only member still in the group who knows about Dora's past history. Should I warn everyone? Should I try to prevent Dora from once again dumping her poems on us and then leaving?

I worry that she'll get mad.

—Fed Up

DEAR FED UP:

Selfish participants in groups (like selfish lovers) need to be stopped, even if you need to shame them. If Dora shows up and expects everyone to respond to her work, let her know that her past participation led to a new rule that helped the group to better define itself. Then explain that the new rule requires each poet to come five times before reading her poetry.

Who cares if Dora gets mad? What's she going to do? Throw a chair? Maybe she'll think you're mean and she'll write a poem about you. Either way, it seems better than having to sit through an evening of lousy lesbian sonnets. ☐

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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.

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) (7/04)

Anawim Community of gay men meets weekly for Christian meditation and prayer. (7:30 pm Thursday. 503-281-0722.) (7/04)

The City Church, Portland's "oldest gay-affirming Christian church," offers a spirit-driven church for today's diverse generations. (10 am Sunday communion and worship service. 6:30 pm Sunday worship service. 3830 SE 62nd Ave. 503-775-5024.) (7/04)

Congregation P'nai Or (Faces of Light) is a vibrant, egalitarian, Jewish Renewal congregation in Portland. Meets several times a month at Portland State University Campus Ministries. (PO Box 42187, Portland, OR 97242-0187. 503-248-4500. www.pnaiorpxd.org) (7/04)

Eastrose Fellowship Unitarian Universalist, a welcoming congregation, offers Sunday service and children's religious education. (10:30 am Sunday. 1133 NE 181st Ave., Gresham. 503-665-2628. eastrose@teleport.com. www.eastrose.org) (7/04)

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.) (7/04)

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) (7/04)

Gay Men's Labyrinth Project meets quarterly for a walking meditation and wisdom circle on the labyrinth. (Dale 503-233-2026, ext. 3. www.interfaithspiritualcenter.com) (7/04)

Integrity is a group of sexual minority Episcopalians and friends. Various locations throughout Oregon. (Bruce 503-286-9111. brucepdxor@attbi.com. www.integrityusa.org) (7/04)

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) (7/04)

Keshet Portland is a potluck group for Jewish members of the sexual minorities community and their partners, spouses and supporters. Its purpose is to help build bridges with the larger Jewish community. Monthly social, religious and cultural events. (David or Laney 503-226-7079, ext. 14.) (7/04)

Lesbian Christian Fellowship meets for study and social outings. Committed Christians and still-unsure welcome. (Barbara 503-760-5791.) (7/04)

Longview United Methodist Church is welcoming and reconciling. (10 am Sunday. 2851 30th Ave. 360-425-4927.) (7/04)

Metanoia Peace Community United Methodist Church is a "house church" that brings gay and straight together. Daily morning prayer and

Sunday evening worship. (503-281-3697. www.tearsoup.com/metanoia) (7/04)

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 service. (2400 NE Broadway. 503-281-8868. info@mccportland.com. www.mccportland.com) (7/04)

The **Nichiren Buddhist Temple of Portland** offers several weekly gatherings. Everyone welcome! (10 am Sunday. 7:30 am Tuesday and Thursday. 7:30 pm Wednesday meditation. 2025 SE Yamhill St. 503-232-8064. www.nichiren-shu.org/portland) (7/04)

Northwest Two-Spirit Society of Portland welcomes new members from the native LGBT (Two-Spirits) community to join our council and organize or attend monthly meetings. (Amanda 503-869-0076. thesebraids@go.com) (7/04)

Peace Church of the Brethren is a welcoming congregation. (11 am Sunday. 12727 SE Market St. 503-254-6380.) (7/04)

Portland Center for Spiritual Growth is a center for worship, growth and leadership that adheres to an all-inclusive spiritual philosophy similar to 12-step, Unity and Religious Science. (503-777-0727. www.portlandcenter.org) (7/04)

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) (7/04)

Seventh-Day Adventist Kinship is a support organization for LGBT people, their families and friends. (PO Box 7320, Laguna Niguel, CA 92607-7320. 866-732-5677. office@sdakinship.org. www.sdakinship.org) (7/04)

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) (7/04)

Southminster Presbyterian Church is an active member of the Community of Welcoming Congregations. Sunday school and nursery care. Classes, community service activities and events for all ages and interests. (9-9:30 am Sunday chapel service, 10 am Sunday community worship service. 12250 SW Denney Road, Beaverton. 503-644-2073. staff@southmin.com. www.southmin.com) (7/04)

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.) (7/04)

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. www.stjameslutheranportland.org) (7/04)

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. 1432 SW 13th Ave. 503-223-6424.) (7/04)

Waverly Heights 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) (7/04)

Wy'east Unitarian Universalist Congregation is an open and liberal religious community offering intergenerational services and religious education for children, youth and adults. It welcomes gay, lesbian, bi and trans members. It nurtures spiritual growth and promotes living by Unitarian Universalist principles. (4 pm Sunday. 5 pm in summer. 3915 SE Steele St. 503-777-3704. www.wyeast.pnwd.uua.org) (7/04)

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.) (7/04)

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. Rev. Kathleen Verigin. 360-573-2626.) (7/04)

East Vancouver United Methodist Church is reconciling and welcoming. (10 am Sunday. 5701 MacArthur Blvd. 360-693-4761.) (7/04)

First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, holds services in an open and affirming congregation. (10 am Sunday worship, 11:15 am adult education. 1220 NE 68th St., Vancouver. 360-693-1476. vanucc@aol.com) (7/04)

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 360-695-1480.) (7/04)

Michael Servetus Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, a Welcoming Congregation, provides a home for the liberal religious spirit. (9:30 and 11:15 am Sunday. 4505 E 18th St., Vancouver. 360-695-1891.) (7/04)

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. (9:30 am Sunday learning hour, 10:30 am worship. 700 Marion St. NE, Salem. 503-363-3660.) (7/04)

Three directors,
one Bertolt Brecht
in *The Exception
and the Rule* at
Lightbox Studio



YOUTH

Metro: Youth

Flavors, a social support group for sexual minority youth of color 21 and younger, meets on weekends for food and socializing. Regular events and activities. Flavors is a project of Love Makes a Family's MultiQueer program and is supported by Brother to Brother. (Jaye 503-228-3892 or jaye@lmfamily.org) (7/04)

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. glsen@glsenoregon.org. www.glsenoregon.org) (7/04)

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 LGBTQ youth of color. (Jaye 503-228-3892 or jaye@lmfamily.org) (7/04)

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. Needs volunteers of all ages. (10 am-6 pm Monday-Friday. 1132 SW 13th Ave. 503-535-3800. www.outsidein.org) (7/04)

Sexual Minority Youth Resource Center, a program of Cascadia Behavioral HealthCare, offers support and recreation to gay, lesbian, bi and trans youth 23 and younger. Offers drop-in computer access, pool tables and an informal place to hang out. Weekly support meetings includes Trans Youth Group and the creative group Personal Deity Proxy. (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) Other programs include: **Clackamas County Sexual Minority Youth Connection (COSMYC)** provides opportunities for queer and questioning youth ages 23 and younger to get together for free, fun and supportive social activities. Offers one-on-one support, referrals and information on HIV and STD prevention and resources for adults who work with LGBTQ youth. (503-969-0060. cosmycyouth@yahoo.com) **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) (7/04)

Eastern Oregon: Youth

Eastern Oregon Center for Independent Living offers support and advocacy to gay, lesbian,

bi, trans and questioning youth in Eastern Oregon. (541-889-3119 or 866-248-8369. ecol@ecol.org. www.ecol.org) (7/04)

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.) (7/04)

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 Hilary St. 541-684-3466.) (7/04)

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.) (7/04)