

Baby Talk

Watch out for the ticking clock

It could be a time of life or time of year thing, but babies are suddenly everywhere! I became an aunt at age 10 and feel I've been ready to have my own kids ever since. But it was only in the past couple of years that I began embarrassing myself in public over them.

I was recently out at dinner making eyes with this adorable infant in a highchair, who happened to be sitting just beyond the left shoulder of a woman I'm pretty sure thought I was hitting on her.

I find myself playing impromptu hide-and-seek with toddlers while their parents are busy being adults having conversations with other adults.

In other words, my baby fever is spiking.

I first began preparing for the preparation of becoming a parent by attending a Portland seminar for prospective queer parents called "Maybe Baby" last fall. While I've known since puberty that I want to physically birth a child (I do not have these cramps for nothing!), I was happy to learn about the variety of ways queers can add children into our lives. In her one-day workshop, lawyer and social worker Lauren Mac Neill did a fantastic job of calmly relaying statistics and resources to an excitable crowd of expectant queer couples.

My cultural tradition tells me that someone will always be trying to hurt, take advantage of or insult



Out of My Mind
BY MALKA GEFFEN

So this spring the wife and I visited some friends in California to pop the big question. "Do you want to help us start a family?" we asked. Blank stares spoke volumes about how vague that question was. "Can we have your sperm?" got to the crux of the matter. Immediately, the woman in the couple answered with a spirited "Yes!" The man, the one with the goods to give, was a tad more taciturn. I tend to talk nervously to fill silences, so I rambled about all the reasons we chose to ask them. The woman and I were roommates when we started dating our significant others. We all became so close through the years that the wife and I asked the couple to officiate at our commitment ceremony. By the time I saw the welling of tears in the man's eyes, I knew we were golden.

But months later, when we hadn't heard back from them about their final decision, we began to fear the worst. We started preconception sessions with a midwife to best understand our insemination options should we have to go with an unknown donor. We found out two key things. First, chances of conception are much higher using fresh sperm. Second, inseminating within the state is the only way to guarantee protection under Oregon law, which explicitly removes a donor's legal relationship to a child conceived via donor insemination.

What to do?

Even if our friends agreed to the plan, we can't afford to fly them out each month. And I sure as hell don't want to pay for frozen sperm when it takes an average of seven attempts to get pregnant.

Our focus turned briefly to our local male friends, of which we have few. Some are married and planning to have kids of their own; some are tube-tied,

which adds complexity to an already challenging venture; and some are flat out not interested.

As I watch my best friend go through the baby process, I sometimes think, "What the hell am I doing?" and other times think, "When is it going to be me?"

In my right mind, I know my day is coming—at least my day to start physically trying to get pregnant. And I know that we will get "the stuff" one way or another. Until then, I can take vitamins, good care of my body and comfort in the fact that the wife and I are going to be kick-ass moms. 10

Staff Writer MALKA GEFFEN has plenty of room in her head. Fill it by e-mailing malka@justout.com.



This '70s baby is ready for a baby of her own.

me. This is where I also garner my fear of litigation. So, I've felt sure that if the wife and I were to use a known donor, he or his family would come after us and take our baby—no matter what contracts we sign. At least they would want to have a ton of influence over the raising of the child, which I simply won't share with anyone but the wife.

Last year, my best friend, her mother, her partner and their babydaddy attended my Thanksgiving dinner. I thought it could be awkward having the would-be parents, grandmother and sperm donor at the same table getting woozy on tryptophan. Then I realized that family is naturally uncomfortable no matter what its makeup, and the idea of a known donor became a little less daunting.

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