

She Don't Need Another Hero

DEAR MS. BEHAVIOR:

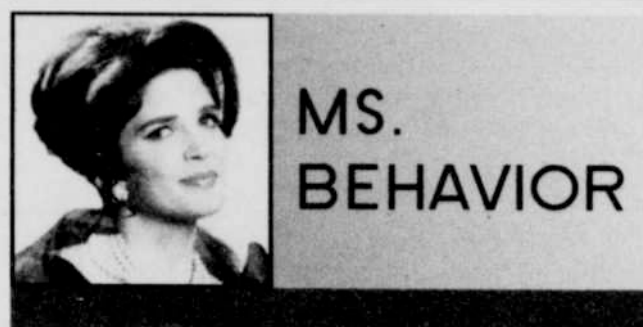
I'm not sure where to draw the line with my ex. Ronnie and I broke up several years ago, but we've remained friends. Ronnie is prone to depression and sometimes calls me when she's drunk and despondent. It doesn't bother me; I help her the same way I'd help any depressed friend. But it's more difficult since I've gotten a new girlfriend. Tammy doesn't want me to answer Ronnie's late-night calls and would prefer that I stop rescuing her when she gets pulled over for drunk driving. (Her father is a retired cop, so she never goes to jail.)

Is Tammy being unreasonable by asking me to ignore Ronnie? Or am I wrong in trying to help her? Does having a new girlfriend really mean that I have to ignore the old one?

—Torn Between Past and Present

DEAR TORN BETWEEN PAST AND PRESENT:

It's easy to conjure up the scenario: You and Tammy lying on the couch, cuddling in that hot way that lesbians cuddle. You feed each other ice cream, or perhaps massage each other's toes. Suddenly the phone rings. Ring! Ring! Uh-oh, maybe it's an emergency! You reach for the phone (dropping Tammy's foot), and check your caller ID. You see that Ronnie is drunk dialing you...again... Your body releases a burst of adrenaline as you say "Hello?" and you're back to feeling alive! Ron-



nie spills the details of her daily crisis while your ice cream melts. Tammy watches you shift into caretaker mode, as you deftly analyze Ronnie's mood and try to soothe her. Can you really blame Tammy for being annoyed or even disgusted? How could she feel anything but short-changed?

Saving Ronnie is not healthy for you and it's not healthy for your new relationship; worse, it doesn't even help Ronnie to be "saved." So, start screening her out. Don't take her drunk calls, don't solve her problems, and let her call someone else for a ride. But be forewarned; you'll soon have to figure out what to do with your sorry self when you no longer feel the rush of being a hero. You may be surprised at how lost you feel when you're not "helping" anyone.

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DEAR MS. BEHAVIOR:

My boyfriend Evan and I are about to have a baby with a surrogate. She's not even born, and nosy people already are asking, "Who is

Olivia's father?" When we explain that we'll both be fathers, the next question is, "But who is her biological father?"

We feel we should educate people about the insensitivity of the question, but on the other hand, this is a private matter and we want to be treated equally, regardless of whose sperm happens to have fertilized the surrogate's egg. (We've taken turns with the insemination each month, and know when the surrogate conceived, but don't want to share the info with the world.) Of course, the answer may become obvious to everyone once the baby is born: Evan is dark and 6'4" and I'm short and blond. But until then, how should we handle the rude questions?

—Papa and Dad

DEAR PAPA AND DAD:

Having to repeatedly explain that you're both daddies is tiresome, and you shouldn't reward rude questions with answers anyway. It's not your job to educate the public about the socio-political issues surrounding same-sex parenting. So, on the days that you feel weary of it, you could try a variety of responses and see which works best:

- 1) "We've cloned a baby in the lab. She's half him, half me. Don't tell anyone."
- 2) "We were drunk the night she was conceived, so we're not sure."

3) "If you're asking which one of us beat off into the cup, we can only tell you that we take turns." (If it's an immediate family member asking the question, you may want to substitute a different word for "beat off.")

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DEAR MS. BEHAVIOR:

Your response to the person who asked about keeping an old partner on his health coverage through his employer, as well as considering putting a friend on the coverage by declaring him to be a domestic partner, was right-on, but stopped just short of all the consequences that would likely happen.

Not only "may" his keeping the former partner on his active coverage (as opposed to COBRA) be considered fraudulent, it "is" fraudulent. And if he added a friend by calling him the domestic partner solely to get benefits coverage, not only would the insurer terminate the coverage, his employer would likely terminate his employment for fraud as well.

I look forward to reading your column in each issue.

—David Meltzer, SPHR

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

OUTREACH

»AIDS & HIV

CAREAssist pays for health insurance premiums, prescription drugs and insurance plan co-payments and deductibles for eligible people with HIV/AIDS. Program of the Oregon Department of Human Services and the Ryan White CARE Act. (8 am-5 pm Monday-Friday. 503-731-4029 or 800-805-2313. www.healthoregon.org.)

CASCADE AIDS PROJECT (CAP) educates youth and adults about HIV prevention, supports people with HIV and their families and advocates for sound HIV policy and legislation on the national, state and local levels. Spanish-language assistance available. (Suite 300, 620 SW Fifth Ave. 503-223-5907. Oregon AIDS Hotline 800-777-2437.)

CITYGUYS hosts monthly HIV testing nights at The Escape and Steam; provides free risk reduction counseling, condoms and lube; and offers free rapid HIV testing and STD screening at the Men's Wellness Center. (5-9 pm Tuesday [HIV/STD] and Saturday [HIV only]. 928 SW Stark St. 503-445-7699. cityguys@cascadeaids.org.)

CLACKAMAS COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH IN OREGON CITY offers anonymous and confidential HIV testing and counseling for gay and bisexual men. No needles! Free condoms! Call for appointment or walk-in testing times. (3:30-6:30 pm Tuesday. 1425 Beaver Creek Road. Clinic: 503-655-8471. Information: 503-742-5382.)

CLARK COUNTY offers free rapid HIV testing and hepatitis A and B vaccinations to men who have sex with men in Vancouver, Wash. (5-6:30 pm Thursday. 3701 E Fourth Plain Blvd. 360-397-8098.)

COLUMBIA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH offers anonymous and confidential HIV testing, counseling and case management to anyone. Se habla español. We lend HIV books and videos and offer educational materials and free condoms. (503-397-4651 or 800-244-4870.)

DAILY BREAD EXPRESS provides home delivery of high-quality meals to HIV-positive individuals in need. Fresh meals delivered weekdays, frozen meals for weekends. Volunteers invited to inquire anytime. (Mara 503-460-3822.)

ESTHER'S PANTRY in Milwaukie provides food and personal care items to people with HIV/AIDS. Call to donate or for services. (503-349-4699. [\[houseofportland.org/programs/estherspantry\]\(http://houseofportland.org/programs/estherspantry\).\)](http://www.our-</p>
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FUZEON INFORMATION GROUP welcomes people contemplating, using or caregiving for Fuzeon recipients. Facilitated by experienced patients, nurses and social workers. (5:30-7 pm second Wednesday. 5525 SE Milwaukie Ave. RSVP to Julia 503-230-1202, ext. 235. www.ohsu.edu/partnership/fuzeon.html)

HEALTH, EDUCATION, AIDS LIAISON (HEAL) offers information about alternative views of AIDS causation and HIV testing. Call for a free packet of information. (503-227-2339. bwport@comcast.net.)

MULTNOMAH COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT'S HIV COMMUNITY TEST SITE offers confidential testing by appointment with or without your name. Some walk-in testing. Sliding-scale fee. Se habla español; other interpretation by appointment. (9 am-4:45 pm Monday-Friday except 11:00-4:45 pm Wednesday. 426 SW Stark St., Sixth Floor. 503-988-3775.)

HIV DAY CENTER offers hot meals, counseling, laundry facilities, clothing, showers and hygiene supplies, computers with Internet access, phones, mail drop, recreational activities, massage and haircuts. We are in need of volunteers to work in the kitchen, meal delivery drivers, massage therapists and folks to help cook lunch to clients on Fridays. Feel free to call Mara at 503-460-3822. (9 am-3 pm Monday-Friday. 2941 NE Ainsworth St. 503-460-3822.)

THE LINK, a social networking group for HIV-positive gay and bi men, meets the second and fourth Wednesday of every month for social events, discussions and other outings. (928 SW Stark St. 503-223-6339, ext. 555. thelink@cascadeaids.org.)

MANIFEST (formerly Q-LAND), a nonprofit men's wellness community, prevents and addresses HIV and STDs by empowering men to pursue their wellness passions together through programs like yoga, cycling, hiking, meditation, healing touch classes, vision teams, wellness coaching, information and referrals. (503-223-8822, ext. 1. www.manifestpdx.org.)

MULTNOMAH COUNTY OFFERS FREE HIV RAPID TESTING to gay, bi and trans guys in NE Portland. Se habla español. (5-7:15 pm Tuesday. 5329 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. 503-988-3030.)

OHSU HIV CLINIC provides comprehensive health care for people living with HIV/AIDS. Services include HIV specialty care, psychiatry, counseling,

addiction treatment (including buprenorphine/suboxone), case management, same-day visits and online chart access. Appointments are available regardless of insurance. (503-494-8562.)

OUR HOUSE OF PORTLAND provides Oregon and southwest Washington's only network of integrated health and housing services for people with HIV/AIDS. Programs include Our House (24-hour residential care), Neighborhood Housing and Care, Community Services and Swan House. To volunteer, contact Kathryn Siebert. (503-234-0175. www.our-houseofportland.org.)

PARTNERSHIP PROJECT provides services to people with HIV/AIDS, their families and those at risk. Programs include HIV Case Management; Supporting Healthy Options for Prevention (SHOP), behavior change counseling to motivate people to protect themselves and their partners; and ALL ABOUT HIV, providing basic information for people living with HIV/AIDS. Se habla español. (Intake Line: 503-517-3590. SHOP: Laura or Kurt 503-230-1202 or 877-795-7700. ALL ABOUT HIV: 503-230-1202. Positive Living: Julia 503-230-1202, ext. 235. www.ohsu.edu/partnership.)

PORTLAND AREA HIV SERVICES PLANNING COUNCIL is a county decision-making body that identifies services needed for people living with HIV/AIDS and allocates federal funds annually in a six-county area. Need volunteers from all walks of life. (20 NE 10th Ave., Second Floor. 3653 SE 34th Ave. 503-988-3030, ext. 25703. www.hivportland.org.)

POSITIVE DIRECTION SERIES offers life skill workshops to people living with HIV/AIDS at Cascade AIDS Project. Topics include employment, parenting, health, women's self-image and sexuality, budgeting and tenant education. (Shyle Ruder 503-223-5907, ext. 202. www.cascadeaids.org.)

POSITIVE LIVING SERIES is a seven-week self-management series for people living with HIV/AIDS designed to assist you in taking care of your illness, give you skills to carry out normal daily activities and provide you with the tools to manage emotional changes. (Julia 503-230-1202, ext. 235. www.ohsu.edu/partnership/fuzeon.html.)

TALK is a five-week program for people living with HIV designed to reduce stress around talking about your HIV status and negotiating safer sex. New sessions start monthly. (Josh 503-223-5907.

jferrer@cascadeaids.org.)

PROJECT QUEST Integrative Health Center offers conventional and alternative health care, nutrition classes, support groups and recreational sports activities for people seeking a wellness focus to living and dying, especially those living with HIV/AIDS or cancer. (2901 E Burnside St. 503-238-5203. pquest@qwest.net.)

THE RESEARCH & EDUCATION GROUP provides access to HIV/AIDS research trials of new drugs and therapies for people in Oregon and southwest Washington. (2311 NW Northrup St. #105. 503-229-8428.)

THE RISK REDUCTION ZONE, a program of Outside In, provides a queer safe space that offers HIV, hepatitis C and STD prevention programs; Internet resources; peer counseling; referrals; and support groups in a nonclinical setting. (1030 SW 13th Ave. 503-535-3895.)

SELF-INJECTION MEDICATION SUPPORT GROUP provides a monthly education and support group for people taking any medication that requires self injection (Fuzeon, Insulin, Interferon, Vitamin B12, Testosterone) or those who are considering taking those medications. Providers, care givers and support people are also welcome. Group meets the fourth Tuesdays of the month from 1-2:30 p.m. at Our House at 2727 SE Alder St., Portland, OR 97214. (For information or to RSVP contact Julie Graven, RN Partnership Project Nurse Case Manager at 503-720-6939 or 503-413-6389 www.ohsu.edu/partnership.)

SOCIAL AND SUPPORT GROUP discusses HIV issues for men at Quest Center. Meet other nice guys, share information and have fun. (7-8 pm Tuesday. 2901 E Burnside St. Terry 503-253-2292.)

SWAN HOUSE is a specialized adult foster care home for low-income people with HIV/AIDS who need assistance with personal care, mobility, medications or drug/alcohol/mental health support. (Business: 503-786-4829. Volunteers: 503-234-0175. www.our-houseofportland.org/programs/swanhouse.)

TOD'S CORNER in Milwaukie provides clothing, household items, companion pet care, cremations and more to people with HIV/AIDS. Call to donate or for services. (503-349-4699. www.ourhouseofportland.org/programs/todscorner.)

continued on page 42