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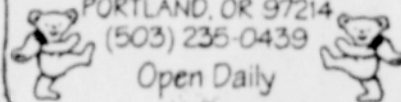
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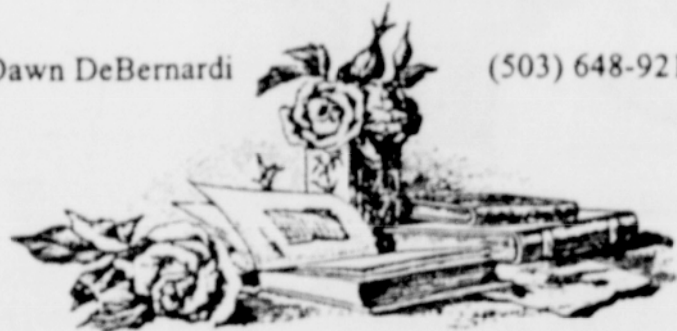
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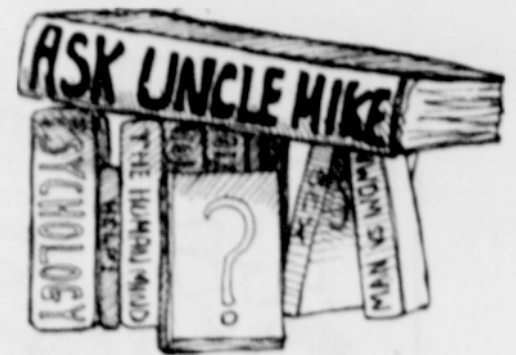
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Dear Uncle Mike,

My husband of fifteen years went out for drinks after work with his buddies last week and wound up in a topless bar. I'm furious. He says I'm making a big deal of nothing. I say if he wants to look at a naked woman, he should come home. Who's off base here?

Forty and furious, Cannon Beach



Dear Furious,

Uncle Mike would call it a tie.

First off, your husband is a fullblown nitwit to think you'd file his little adventure under the heading 'Meaningless Larks'. When it comes to naked young women there are, for clothed wives of any age, no meaningless larks. There is only disloyalty and betrayal. Closely followed by contempt, disgust, outrage, and murderous fantasies. Uncle Mike would never think to call your husband stupid, but most men know this by the time they're old enough to go to a nudie bar.

As for you, Furious, Uncle Mike would strongly suggest you not go upside his head with a skillet. Give him the benefit of the doubt. He might have watched the ballgame on TV the whole time. It could happen. No, that's a lie. If he tells you this, go for the skillet.

The important thing is not to lose your sense of perspective and proportion. Uncle Mike has no illusions you'll believe this, but your husband's appreciative ogling was not a hostile act directed at you. Small comfort, you were probably the furthest thing from his mind.

Nor is it an indication that he would, at the drop of a g-string, run off with someone young and restless to someplace warm and exotic and fall apart over several hundred gin rickies.

Men, bless their little stimulus/response systems, like to look at naked women. They like it even more when the naked women pretend to flirt with them. If history (and certain episodes of Wild Kingdom) are any indication, this has been going on for a very long time --- at least since women realized the effect this behavior has on men.

Uncle Mike, recalcitrant old dog that he is, sees nothing intrinsically evil in this. As with most exchanges between humans, the critical factor is attitude. The wise never allow the game to play them.

There are, to Uncle Mike, few sights as amazing as a middle-aged husband in a nude bar who honestly believes the woman taking his dollars is dancing just for him.

It's a pretty funny world.

Dear Uncle Mike,

Which drug do you think is more dangerous -- marijuana or alcohol?

Marlene W., Beaverton

Dear Marlene,

First off, Uncle Mike denies any first-hand knowledge of controlled substances. Even those that grow out of the ground right there in front of God and everyone. He too has never inhaled.

This said, Uncle Mike must wonder if your question is serious.

In the years of hands on experience Uncle Mike has had with sour mash whiskey, he's learned his decision-making powers when 'stoned' (if he'd ever been stoned, which he never, ever has) are leagues ahead of those he possesses in the state drug abuse counselors call 'God's own drunk'.

Dipping potato chips in chocolate syrup and watching one's lava lamp is much healthier than driving home when one can't walk or telling your life story to those who only wish you'd go away.

As for the most dangerous drugs, here's Uncle Mike's short list. Money, Gasoline, and Television.

Dear Uncle Mike,

My girlfriend rags on me because I won't eat lobster. I say the things are too ugly to put in your mouth. She says I'm neurotic and have no class. What do you think?

Dave S., Eugene

Dear Dave,

The first thing that crosses Uncle Mike's mind is that he must be reaching the bottom of his mail bag.

Not knowing you (and you shouldn't confuse this with a desire for the two of us to get together), Uncle Mike cannot in good faith disagree with your friend. You may be neurotic and irretrievably gauche. But, that you refuse to eat lobster is hardly damning evidence.

If it's any consolation, given a choice between eating an underwater insect and nothing, Uncle Mike prefers to chew bark off trees.

UPPER LEFT EDGE MAY 1994 11