

Dear Uncle Mike,

As one man to another, do you ever think a significant part of premenstrual syndrome is self-indulgence? Are women as out of control as they'd like us to believe, or they just taking their suffering out on us? Should they be indulged? At what cost?

Victimized in Portland

Dear Victimized,

Because Uncle Mike doesn't believe in death and so doesn't fear it, he'll resist the urge to pretend your letter never reached him. As one man to another, Uncle Mike would suggest you stop asking questions like this. Premenstrual women can detect innuendo at great distance.

Does Uncle Mike think PMS is partly self-indulgent? No. Uncle Mike thinks it's altogether self-indulgent. It's from this its great horror springs. The lunar chemical imbalance women go through, many would say entirely too often, evidently makes the world, and every unsatisfactory and irritating bit of it, a personal matter. The way you daub your mouth with a napkin can be, for she who yells, a snide reference to imaginary weight gain. The formulas of body chemistry are no laughing matter, and this one seems to prevent so much as a thought of self-restraint. The blurring out of lunatic venom and accusation can be, from safe distance, a sight to behold.

You ask if our ladies of the moon are as out of control as they'd like us to believe. Man to man, Uncle Mike dares you to find out. He only hopes they're as out of control as they'll get. As it is, he's seen them do things that curled his hair and made him sleep lightly. Are they taking their suffering out on us? Is this a serious question? Uncle Mike has seen the chemically unbalanced take it out on furniture, small animals, and trees. Any portion of the world will do, but the universal law governing the chaos of their emotions seems to dictate that, the closer they feel to you, the more efficient the abuse gets. Should we indulge them? If you've got a better idea, Uncle Mike is all ears. Until then, he'll go on indulging them whenever it's not possible to avoid their company. He avoids them with great zeal and sees this as giving them their space.

Uncle Mike read a story once about a primitive tribe whose women would, in response to mysterious inner signals, walk a short distance from the village and build a small getaway hut. Uncle Mike sees this as genius, and wonders that any culture but theirs has survived.

Dear Uncle Mike,

Why are potatoes called 'spuds'?

Robert D., Molalla

Dear Robert,

Before he begins, Uncle Mike would like to thank you for your question. Other people ask Uncle Mike advice on personal matters the details of which he'd rather not know. You ask about potatoes. Uncle Mike likes you.

Potatoes are called spuds not because they were invented by someone with a silly sounding name, but because of a confusion. A spud is a tool, a tree branch cleverly carved by hungry rustics. It has a long handle and a foot piece which, when pressed down by the foot, makes a six inch deep hole in the dirt. The potato is, of course, what you put in the hole. It's a funny world.

Dear Uncle Mike,

Where do you stand on the issue of killing the rude?

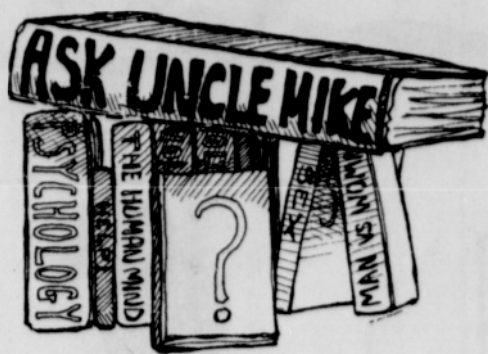
Your bartender, Cannon Beach

Dear holiness,

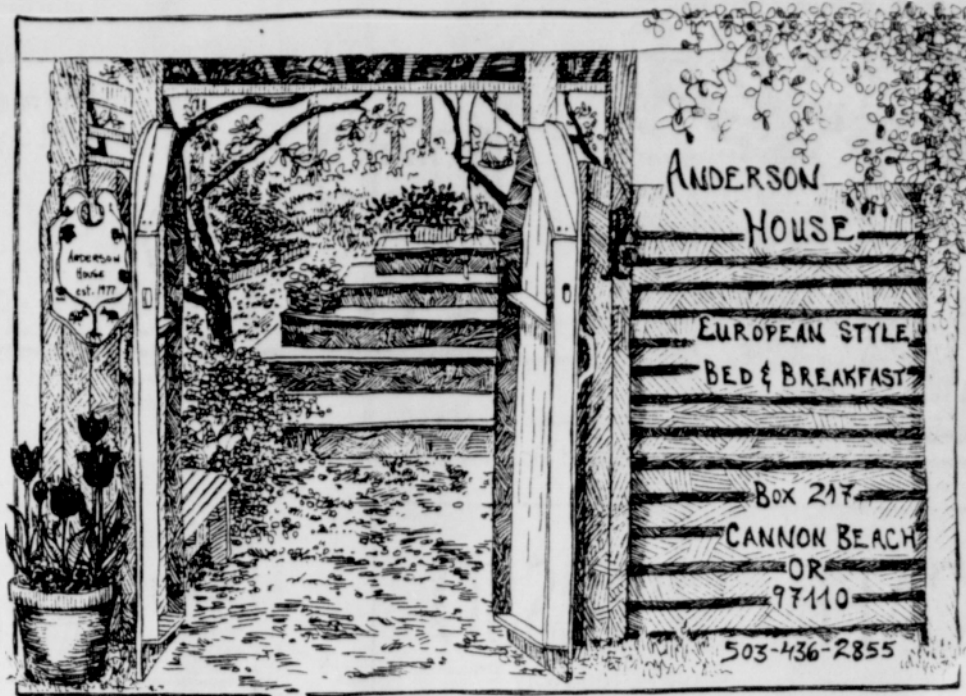
Uncle Mike likes your question nearly as much as the one about spuds. Uncle Mike is, dam, pretty much opposed to killing anybody. Not because he's nice, but because it doesn't really change things. Like large caricatures of children, the rude must be taught to behave. As a member of the service, or servant, sector of the American dream, you're given many opportunities to deliver the teaching.

Within the guidelines set by the person able to fire you, never let the rude confuse you with personal staff. Explain, with as much charm as you can muster that you're here to provide a service, not to be the service provided. As a human, you're not part of the bill and any dealings you have with each other must be based on at least the appearance of mutual respect. Without civilized behavior on their part, all bets are off. Assure them they don't want to see that.

Uncle Mike heard a nice story about a waitress who'd reached critical mass. Leaning over the offending couple's table, she said in menacing, maternal tones, "Listen, if we play together any longer, we're going to quarrel. I work here, so it's you who gets to leave." A statue should be built to this woman.



THERAPY PAGE



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Where ignorance is bliss, it's foolish to borrow your neighbor's newspaper.
Frank McKinley "Kin" Hubbard, 1868-1930



"He Who is Not Busy Being Born, is Busy Dying."

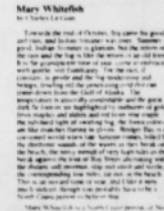
Bob Dylan



"I have always depended on the kindness of strangers."

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Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 1770-1831

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