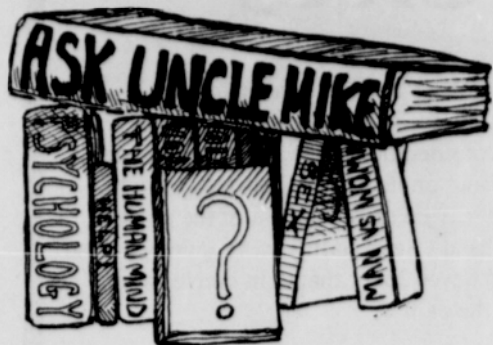


Dear Uncle Mike,

Who was it who said "Blondes have more fun." Mae West or Jean Harlow?

Frannie S., Portland



Therapy Page

Sometimes A Great Lotion



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Dear Frannie,

Uncle Mike has no idea. And, since he's not the information service at the library, he has no intention of rushing off into the stacks to find out. His guess would be it was either a brunette who was off her game or a blonde who had a hard time distinguishing between pleasure and excitement.

Dear Uncle Mike,

My boyfriend's being a pain. He says I should sip from the edge of the spoon instead of putting it in my mouth. He says it's just good table manners, I say it's stupid. What do you say?

Fed Up in Astoria

Dear Fed Up,

Off the top of his head, Uncle Mike would say your friend's an effete twit who should be encouraged to eat alone. Of all the things thoughtful humans have to think about in the last minutes of the twentieth century, your pretentious patrician wannabe is troubled by the way someone else uses a spoon. One wonders whether to laugh or to cry. In a kinder, gentler world, someone would snatch him from the table and drop him naked on the sidewalks of Calcutta.

Table manners are one thing, Byzantine food rituals are another. Having suffered through his share of overly decorous dining, Uncle Mike (who doesn't belch and knows which fork to use with his stir fry) is convinced the art of complicated eating was invented by people with too much time on their hands, inflated feelings of self worth, and a naked urge to make others feel like slobs. Uncle Mike would bet they were French.

As for you and your spoon, granted the usual rules of decorum, you have Uncle Mike's permission to do with it what you will. He resists the temptation to suggest a rude action involving your friend.

Dear Uncle Mike,

I got woke up again the other night by somebody's car alarm. Isn't this disturbing the peace?

A Victim in Cannon Beach

Dear Victim,

Absolutely. Unless you count the law. Paraphrasing the police person Uncle Mike talked to recently around midnight, speaking loudly enough to drown out the claxon horn of someone's personal auto security system: "If it were your car, you'd feel differently about the noise." No, Uncle Mike wouldn't. Even if Uncle Mike owned a car, he'd expect the metal brute to fend for itself and not be a nuisance when left alone. If it woke the neighbors, Uncle Mike would scold it and then rip out the offending circuitry.

But this is America and, thanks to the lobbying efforts of those who manufacture car alarm systems, any moron can have one. Never mind that the decibel level exceeds most community's noise abatement statutes; never mind that car theft is one of the reasons God made insurance companies; never mind that, judging from the sound of things, the owners scarcely leap up from their bar stools or beds to check if the machine doing the shrieking is theirs. There should at least be a law making car alarms personalized. Uncle Mike would feel a little better hearing: "Dan and Julie! Wake up! It's your car! Someone's trying to....aargh!" No, that's a lie. He'd still want to reach for his scatter gun.

Which brings us to America's current passion: leveling the playing field or, as it used to be called, getting even. If someone's personal siren three blocks away wakes Uncle Mike up, Uncle Mike should be allowed to put on his pants, walk up quietly and beat it senseless with a ball bat. Or, as an alternative, the law should supply Uncle Mike with the owner's home address so that, some night when he's feeling insecure, he could set up a public address system on their front lawn and do dramatic readings from the works of James Joyce. Uncle Mike has never denied his mean streak.

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It does not do to leave a live dragon out of your calculations, if you live near him.
J.R.R. Tolkien

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