

DEAR ABBY

Write to Dear Abby online at dearabby.com or by mail at P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069



Dear Abby: I'm a gay man in my late 40s, partnered with a man in his late 50s. There are a lot of issues from my past that I try hard to move beyond and let go of. I was wrongly accused and convicted of a crime I didn't commit, for which I was sentenced to life in prison.

I sat in prison seven years before I was able to prove my innocence and regain my freedom. Even then, I was forced to accept certain requirements to keep my freedom, regardless of being proven innocent. Unfortunately, I'm finding it difficult because my partner keeps sharing my story with people who are complete strangers to me. When they meet me, the first words out of their mouths are things like: "You poor man, I'm so sorry," or "Wow, I can't believe you went through that," and "Man, you must be a strong person to have gotten through that."

How do I move past this, if he keeps telling people a story that is NOT his to tell, but mine to disclose if I choose to do so? The shame and embarrassment of facing this trauma on a regular basis isn't healthy for me. How can I get him to understand that he needs to stop doing it?

I'm afraid to say anything to him about it. He dismisses my feelings most of the time when I bring up things he does that upset me.

I love this man. He was one of only two people who stood by me during my trauma and made it possible to prove my innocence. He was also my "first." My love for him has grown over the years, but this issue of my story being revealed has to stop.

—Frustrated in the Midwest

Dear Frustrated: You not only have to speak up, but you also have to be heard. That your partner dismisses your feelings is controlling and condescending. He has no right to disclose VERY personal information about you with strangers.

You wrote that this is your first relationship. If this continues, it may not be your last. Present it to your partner in these terms. Couples counseling may save your relationship, but only if the balance of power is adjusted.

Dear Abby: I was friends with my guy before getting into a relationship with him seven years ago. The problem is, I feel like we are not growing. He is still living with his mom; we have no plans for the future, etc.

At least once a year, I ask him how he views our relationship, but I only get the same response that things are fine the way they are. I have started back in college while maintaining a full-time job, but I'm so frustrated I feel like giving up on the relationship and moving on. I'm stuck between a breakup and keeping a friendship. Any advice?

—Uncertain in Alabama

Dear Uncertain: Of course, your guy thinks things are fine the way they are. They are — for him. I'm delighted you decided to return to college and get your degree. By doing so, you are taking control of your life, which is moving in the right direction.

Please understand that you may not only outgrow the relationship, but also this young man. By all means, keep him as a friend if you can. Be a role model if he's able to learn from your example, but continue to broaden your horizons.

Hemp

Continued from A5

He notes that state agencies are working to better maintain contact information for people responsible for grow sites.

Part of the audit's purpose was to work out such kinks, helping to regulate irrigation

compliance on hemp farms elsewhere, Johnstone said. With about 1,000 grow sites, Southwest Oregon has about half the hemp operations in the state.

"We hope to take this process on the road to support other watermasters," he said.

Bruce Corn, a commission member and farmer near On-

tario, said he was concerned that less than 20% of the grow sites in Southwest Oregon were visited during the audit, which seemed to indicate the agency was short-handed.

"Eighty percent were lucky and didn't get checked," he said. "There appears to be a pretty large problem from the



Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press file

Chardonnay grapes grow at Hyland Estates in Dundee.

Wine

Continued from A5

An even more entry-level digital tool for rookie wine drinkers is called Tastry, which asks shoppers simple questions such as, "How do you feel about the smell of flowers?" Based on the consumer's answers, the tool recommends wines that could suit the person's palate, providing a digital sommelier-like experience.

Brown said wineries should think about how they can label their bottles, potentially using labels that signal a particular wine's characteristics.

In the winery, some vineyards are turning to computational blending, a type of artificial intelligence system that helps winemakers create blends that meet specific needs or appeal to particular demographics.

Some conference attendees

seemed enthusiastic in their comments: "This is amazing!"

Others appeared skeptical. "Would small, hands-on wineries really use this kind of computation blending?" wrote Lindsay Neilson, a wine scholar, in the virtual chat. In the vineyard, Brown said, there's room for technological innovation, too. Precision agriculture is making its way into wine-grape growing. In higher-end vineyards, fruit-picking robots are beginning to emerge. Some vineyards are using ultraviolet light treatments and other technologies to combat powdery mildew, a fungal disease. Some growers are even using Burro "cobots," a type of robot that collaborates with humans, to carry heavy buckets.

"The world is changing," said Brown, the consultant. "You need to innovate to remain competitive."

Malt

Continued from A5

"It was way more than I expected," Hutchison said Tuesday. "It's the first time I've entered."

He was the first malter to win two gold medals in a single competition, according to the Craft Maltsters Guild.

Hutchison competed against 27 other malters from seven countries, 17 states and one Canadian province.

Hutchison said he was pleased not only with the recognition from his industry, but because the awards validated his efforts to improve every batch of malted barley based on the feedback he gets from the brewers and distillers who buy his product.

"I'm always tweaking the process to make a better quality malt," he said.

Hutchison buys his barley from Cornerstone Farms, operated by the Melville family in Willowa County between Enterprise and Joseph.

"It's a variety of barley that does really well in these high mountain valleys," Hutchison said. "That's the key."

He said he's a small-scale malter, processing 55 to 60 tons of barley per year. That equates to about 20 acres of the grain, Hutchison said.

He has about 10 regular customers.

Hutchison usually produces two or three batches per month, each batch yielding about 2½ tons of malted barley.

The bulk of his business are the two types for which he won gold medals — pilsner and pale malt.

He said those are a chief ingredient in many types of beers, both lagers and ales, the latter

being more popular among the hundreds of craft brewers that have proliferated in the U.S. over the past few decades.

Pilsner, in addition to being a type of malt, is also a style of lager beer.

Hutchison said the prevalence of India pale ales such as Pallet Jack in the Northwest has cast attention on the role that hops plays in flavoring beer.

Most beer aficionados, he said, are at least somewhat familiar with hops.

Malt, by contrast, is something of a forgotten ingredient, Hutchison said.

He chuckles as he notes that people, on learning what he does for a living, ask him "how's the hop business?"

Hutchison has to explain gently that "that's not what I do."

Although the type of malt has a direct effect on the color

of beer — the shorter the drying period, the lighter-colored the kernels and the resulting brew — Hutchison said the malting process can also affect the flavor of the beer.

That's particularly so with beer styles such as pilsners, he said, which have relatively small amounts of hops, meaning the malt contributes much more to the beer's flavor palette.

Hutchison said he can't predict whether his awards will bring new customers for Gold Rush Malt.

For now, the pandemic remains a major factor.

With restaurants and bars closed or severely restricted for much of the past year, demand for his malted barley has dropped by 60% to 70%.

"I can produce more if the demand is there," Hutchison said. "We'll wait and see, I guess."

YOUR HOROSCOPE *By Madalyn Aslan*

Stars show the kind of day you'll have

★★★★★ DYNAMIC | ★★★★ POSITIVE | ★★★ AVERAGE | ★★ SO-SO | ★ DIFFICULT

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR SATURDAY, FEB. 20, 2021: Emotional, perceptive and sympathetic, you absorb life like a sponge and learn quickly. This year, you focus more on your mental strengths and you succeed admirably. There will be a huge change in your career path. If single, it won't be for long. Soon there are joyful announcements to make. If attached, you are too devoted to your partner. Clarity is the theme of 2021. LEO can be bossy.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ Today promises a variety of important emails and phone calls. You will be juggling several projects and appointments simultaneously. Confirm plans with others to avoid confusion, and much is accomplished. Tonight: Your great capacity for problem-solving is in evidence.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ You will be able to make purchases you've longed for, and it will be possible to use money to generate true enjoyment. Just be cautious about over-extending yourself. Compare prices and remember to budget. Tonight: Your famous love for luxury is satiated.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ You'll be enthused and motivated. Today will conclude on a very upbeat note. Many worthwhile projects will — finally — be in the works. Be versatile and creative in applying your talents; your earning ability will blossom. Tonight: A great sigh of relief.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★ Answers and inspiration come from within now. New appreciation of the peace and freedom of solitude develops today. Perform an anonymous act of kindness, and a deep sense of satisfaction comes. Tonight: You would benefit from a change of scene.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ Today finds your physical vitality improving. Depression lifts, and your faith helps you carry plans forward. Helpful guidance comes from friends. It's a good time to seek an opinion or request advice. Tonight: A conversation can be very significant. Listen closely.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Today is all about interaction with others. Remember the value of networking and improving your people skills. Maintain a balance between your personal and your professional life. Being well-rounded will better prepare you to reach your goals. Tonight: Surround yourself with loving energies.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ A flair for style and a yearning for practical achievement motivate you today. A plan for growth develops. You feel penetrating yet cautious. Keep your faith strong, but act independently. Relationships between family members are mutually enjoyable. Tonight: Contact a foreign friend.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Others tend to be generous if you seek financial advice or assistance. Your sensitivity and thoughtfulness win the loyalty of another. A message from a loved one who has passed on may comfort you. Tonight: An early night of restful sleep.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Others have a different viewpoint regarding love. Communicate. You will prevail if you respect the perspective of those you are intimate with. There is much exploring and probing in progress. Tonight: A wonderful dinner date with a loved one.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ Sunlight carries health-giving and antiseptic properties. Be aware of how the quality of light in your home is affecting you and adjust it until it's ideal. You'll be amazed at how proper lighting enhances your well-being. Tonight: Meditate by the light of a favorite lamp.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ Develop your creative potential. Purchase an attractive journal and matching pen to record your ideas. They're likely to be too good to let them fall by the wayside. Artistic endeavors of all kinds will flourish today. Tonight: Be patient; success comes.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Special projects can lead to a new career emphasis. You'll play host to visitors. Home improvements can be planned. Experiment with bold, bright colors. Children have much to teach you and can be a catalyst for change. Tonight: A new competitive quality develops.

Tourists

Continued from A5

Flexibility

A number of businesses told The Astorian they weren't only ready to welcome tourists back, they need them to return. Last year, several businesses closed their doors permanently; others are teetering on the edge.

But businesses said they also need flexibility in how they accommodate visitors.

MacGregor's, a restaurant and whiskey bar in Cannon Beach, asked city leaders to allow them to set up outdoor seating in three parking spots outside of the business. With ever-changing capacity guidelines for indoor seating and no parking lot or deck available, owners Holly and Chip MacGregor faced significant revenue shortfalls and few options for boosting business if they couldn't also provide outdoor seating.

Under state guidelines, restaurants in Clatsop County can only seat up to 25% of their capacity but also must maintain distances between tables. In smaller buildings, some businesses may not even be able to reach the 25% capacity allowance.

The MacGregors feel the city's decision could have come months earlier. Still, they are glad to have a little bit of insurance, though Holly MacGregor feels the benefits may be pretty equal to the harm at this point.

She is concerned about taking away parking options from potential customers in a city already infamous for parking woes. Besides, she noted, outdoor seating on the coast often means contending with the cold, the wet and the wind. She will need to have staff for the extra tables and find tents that don't blow away.

Though the number of reported coronavirus cases is dropping and people are re-

ceiving vaccinations, there is no way to predict what the landscape will be like in the spring or summer — or what restrictions will be in place.

In anticipation of continued restrictions, Sarah Lu Heath, the executive director of Astoria's downtown association, hopes to plan other types of experiences for visitors, perhaps outdoor exhibits or installations instead of events.

Both Heath and Reid know the tourist months this year will continue to be very different for visitors and visited alike.

"I don't think anybody has the illusion that they're going to come here and have the same experience they had pre-pandemic," Reid said.

While many tourism-based businesses have suffered, in many ways, tourism never really left the coast, noted Todd Montgomery, who leads the hospitality management program at Oregon State University-Cascades in Bend.

Even as virus cases soared across the state and public health officials urged people to limit unnecessary travel, visitors continued to flock to the coast on sunny days well into the fall and winter months. The coast provided attractive options for outdoor recreation as, increasingly, everything else was closed.

The Oregon Coast Visitors Association saw fewer national and international travelers, but more Oregonians who came to the coast for overnight stays or on daytrips.

Visitation was not evenly distributed. Instead, it seemed "patchy and somewhat unpredictable," said Marcus Hinz, the executive director of the visitors association.

In September, Seaside saw an increase in quarterly lodging tax revenue collected over the prior year. Meanwhile, Astoria reported a decrease of about 12% from July through

December compared to the same period in 2019.

Last year's visits came with challenges, too — challenges that will likely persist as industry leaders predict pent-up demand for travel and recreation will result in a busy summer this year.

Last year, state parks on the coast saw huge numbers of people arrive. They often left behind piles of trash on beaches and trails.

The visitors association also saw an increase in the number of people seeking out licenses and permits for hunting, fishing and camping for the first time. To Hinz, that indicated that "we need to try harder than ever to insert messages about etiquette and expectations into any communications they receive."

Instead of the inspirational marketing of the past, Hinz said the visitors association is focused on emphasizing instructional messaging about how to visit responsibly.

"We know visitors are coming, and all we can really do is manage the situation," he said.

Challenge

For businesses, one challenge with the return of tourism will be the ability to remain adaptable.

Montgomery believes times of disruption can open the door to great opportunities, but many tourism-based businesses on the coast are still recovering

from significant setbacks.

The businesses that survived into 2021 have already had to adapt — many times over. Restaurants turned to takeout. Hotels, bars and restaurants adopted technology to streamline their processes and reduce labor costs. Then they had to stay agile, pivoting quickly with shifting rules and guidelines.

They will need to continue to be nimble, Montgomery said.

He is struck by how differently people have responded to the pandemic. Some longed for indoor dining, and when it was offered again, they dove back in without hesitation. For other people, indoor dining continues to feel too risky.

Businesses will need to accommodate this fragmented customer base, perhaps for a long time to come, Montgomery said.

Then there is the labor pool to consider.

Preliminary research conducted through Oregon State shows a high number of workers in the hospitality and travel sectors are not seeking out jobs in those industries. They were discouraged by how their employers responded to the coronavirus and, in some cases, failed to protect workers.

These sectors struggled with a labor shortage even before the pandemic.

Now, Montgomery said, "I think the labor market just got harder."



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