

Advice & More

Readers respond to letter from widow who needs love, support

Dear Abby: May I respond to "Iowa Reader" (Nov. 10), the older woman who asked you where to turn when she needed to be hugged and listened to? I'm guessing she was married a long time and doesn't have any real friends — just people from her married days.

I suggest she get a dog. While dogs can't hug or hold, they do love unconditionally. A dog is always happy to be with you, and will listen even though it can't talk back. I would have died of loneliness had it not been for mine. Through her, I have met other older single people on walks and at the dog park. She has given me a way to make new friends and find some company. — Marcy In Oakland, Calif.

Dear Marcy: Thanks for your suggestion. I promised "Iowa Reader" that if other readers shared ideas I would pass them along. Because of you and other compassionate readers, I received a wide range of heartfelt, helpful advice. My newspaper readers comment:

Dear Abby: I discovered a wonderful way to receive much-needed human contact — partner dancing. I started with the Argentine tango, which might be a bit too much for some folks, but I have learned to absolutely love it. It's a safe way to enjoy an intimate connection with a member of the opposite sex, no strings attached.

It takes time to master the skills, but if you stick with it you'll find a community that shares a passion for a skill that's challenging and rewarding. Less-intimate forms of partner dance include swing, salsa and country



Jeanne Phillips
Syndicated advice columnist

Dear Abby

dancing. If you love music and movement, and could use some exercise, I highly recommend it. — Catherine in Hawaii

Dear Abby: I was faced with the same situation when my husband passed away. I joined a Sunday school and found what I needed. Often, the only hugs I get are from people in our group.

I volunteer in the kitchen and since I like taking pictures, I've been appointed the class photographer. Others have also utilized their hobbies to reach out to people. We go on outings, and I have made many "huggable" friends. I urge "Iowa Reader" to visit places of worship and find one that has an active senior adult ministry. — Jo Ann in Arlington, Texas

Dear Abby: I have been a licensed massage therapist for 20 years. I suggest "Iowa Reader" seek out one. During her hour on the massage table she will be touched, nurtured and encouraged to speak about anything on her mind. It's my job to not only make her feel safe and healthy physically, but emotionally as well.

For many clients, I am their only source of touch. It gives me great joy to know that in some small way I can make an important difference in their overall well-being. — Hugs From Maine

Dear Abby: Volunteering to

rock and cuddle low-birth-weight babies puts one in an environment where personal problems matter less.

Brushing and petting dogs and cats at the SPCA can provide meaningful interaction because socialized animals are more likely to be adopted. There are poetry and writing groups, peer-to-peer counseling at her Area Agency on Aging, and "contact" sports like pingpong.

Abby, I once read in your column, "The best way to have a friend is to be one." To not overburden any one friend, some conversations are best done with God. — Rachel L.

Dear Abby: I encourage her to offer to tutor or read to kids at her local elementary school, visit residents at a nursing home or work at a homeless shelter. There are lots of others out there who need hugs and attention. Volunteers receive far more than they give. — Dianne in Gainesville, Fla.

Dear Abby: I work for the YMCA where we have a wonderful community of middle-aged and older people who work out together, spend time visiting during our potlucks, and who have formed circles of lasting friendships. — Corinne in Oregon

Dear Abby: I went back to school, earned my master's and became a kindergarten teacher. I'm blessed with more hugs now than I know what to do with, and I'm told several times a week that I am loved. During summer vacation, my cat takes up the slack. — Linda in Pasco, Wash

— Write to *Dear Abby* at P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA, 90069 or www.DearAbby.com.

Hoarders often plagued by OCD

Dear Doctor K: I have an aunt whose house is filled to the ceiling with junk in some places. I worry about her safety navigating around all that stuff. I think she is a hoarder. What causes this, and how can I help her?

Dear Reader: If your aunt's house has become so filled with "stuff" that she can't get around easily, I'm inclined to agree with you. She may indeed suffer from compulsive hoarding. Hoarders accumulate objects of questionable value in large and disorganized amounts. Until recently, compulsive hoarding was considered a less-frequent symptom of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). But the majority of hoarders don't have other OCD symptoms, such as compulsions and repetitive behaviors.

Compulsive hoarders may have a hard time throwing things away. This is true even when the things in question aren't valuable or useful. One of my patients with this problem once said, "If I throw it away, it's gone forever." If it has no value, what's wrong with it being gone forever?

In many cases, compulsive hoarders may accumulate so much stuff that they can no longer use their home the way it's supposed to be used. They may



Anthony Komaroff
Syndicated medical columnist

Ask Doctor K

be embarrassed at the state of the home and withdraw socially. This can lead to social isolation.

A hoarder's home can become so disordered and unsafe that it's difficult or impossible to navigate. Hoarders are much more vulnerable to falls and serious injuries, particularly if they are older than 60. As we age, our reflexes and balance get worse, and our muscles get weaker. Add in a house full of things to trip over, and you've got a prescription for serious injury. Also, dust and mold can cause asthma and other allergic reactions.

Unfortunately, family interventions don't always help. They can cause rifts in relationships. If you want to help your aunt, be available to her, but it may be best to leave the heavy lifting to the professionals.

What to do? First, ask your doctor to help you identify a mental health professional who can help. Most moderate-sized communities have professionals

with special experience dealing with compulsive behaviors. Once you get that name, you can have a talk with your aunt. OCD and depression are sometimes tied to compulsive hoarding, and there are effective treatments for both.

Hoarding also can be an early sign of dementia. If you think your aunt's memory, her ability to speak or her ability to organize her activities is starting to fail, a neurologist can be helpful.

Another approach to finding a therapist with experience in the treatment of hoarding is to check the hoarding section of the International OCD Foundation website, ocfoundation.org/hoarding.

A behavioral therapy program may help your aunt. These programs help hoarders recognize and deal with their distorted thinking or beliefs. They also help strengthen hoarders' organizational and decision-making skills and manage anxiety. Therapists may also make home visits to help with sorting, organizing and discarding. In short, there are many options to help your aunt.

— Dr. Anthony Komaroff can be reached at www.AskDoctorK.com or Universal Uclick, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, MO, 64106.

'Whiting out' can cause death

Dr. Wallace: My best friend and her boyfriend have found a new way to get high. They inhale typewriter correction fluid. They say it gives a great high, is not habit-forming and is relatively safe. I know that you will encourage me not to get high on this fluid. That's not what I'm looking for. All I want to know is if it's relatively safe. No lectures about drug use. Save your time. I've heard all about it from my parents, teachers and others, so I don't need to hear it again from you. Do you get the message? — Nameless, Baltimore, Md.

Nameless: Your information will be found in the following letter to me from a Kingman, Ariz., police officer. He wrote to me several years ago after working on a case involving three teens who sniffed correction fluid. His message is also loud and clear but very tragic. Get this message. I sure hope you do.



Robert Wallace
Syndicated advice columnist

Between 12 & 20

If not, you could become a "John Doe."

Dr. Wallace: I am a police officer working exclusively with students ranging from preschool through high school. Recently, I was witness to a tragic incident involving a young lady and the practice, so-called, of "whiting out" (sniffing typewriter correction fluid). Our agency was requested to check out three kids acting strangely in the rear of a local shopping center. I was the responding officer and found two girls and a boy about 15 years of age. Their nostrils and upper lips were covered with correction fluid and all of them had reached their "high."

One girl, who appeared to be the promoter of the incident, (I will refer to her as Jane Doe) laughed repeatedly and kept assuring her friends that the police could do nothing, but I arrested each of them for the use of the inhalant.

At the police department, I spoke to Jane and her friends. Jane's friends were receptive to my warnings, but Jane closed her ears. Less than a week later, I responded to a medical emergency call at a local youth spot. When I arrived, Jane Doe lay on the floor of the girls' restroom — dead.

In her hand, she still held the plastic bag that she had used to inhale her last breath containing the fumes of correction fluid. Jane Doe died of respiratory failure. — Allan Mullen, Kingman, Ariz., Police Department.

— Write to Dr. Wallace at rwallace@galesburg.net.

Groups plan events, activities

• **Coastal Scene calendar continued from 1B.**

PERFORMANCES

Saturday

Jan. 24

• **True North Brass**, a Canadian brass ensemble at 7:30 p.m. at St. Simons Presbyterian Church, 205 Kings Way, St. Simons Island, as part of the current Island Concert Association season. Details: 638-2220.

SOCIAL DANCE

Thursdays

• **The Golden Isles Shag Club** meets for free lessons at 7 p.m. Thursdays at Ziggy Mahoney's, in Retreat Plaza, St. Simons Island. Shag dancing with DJ Wayne Bennett will follow the lessons.

• **The Golden Isles Ballroom and Social Dancers** has beginner ballroom and Latin dance classes from 7 to 8 p.m. Thursdays at First United Methodist Church, 624 Ocean Blvd, St. Simons Island. Intermediate ballroom and Latin dance lessons are held from 6 to 7 p.m. Thursdays at the church. Intermediate dance classes will be held at 6:30 p.m. with advanced classes at 7:30 p.m. Fridays at the YWCA, 144 Scranton Road, Brunswick.

Fridays

• **Dance Lessons** by Lucy will be from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Fridays at Sabor Latino Cafe, 87 Ballard Plaza. Beginning at 8 p.m. There will be an open country-western dancing until 11 p.m. at the cafe. Details: 261-1078

• **Golden Isles Ballroom and Social Dancers** will hold intermediate dance classes at 6:30 p.m. Fridays with advanced classes at 7:30 p.m. Fridays at the YWCA, 144 Scranton Road, Brunswick.

MUSIC

Thursday

• **WharfRatz**, 7 p.m., Sea Jays, Jekyll Island.

• **Three of Us**, 8 p.m., Village Inn and Pub, St. Simons Island.

• **The O'Reallys Open Mic Night**, 9 p.m., Loco's Grill and Pub, St. Simons Island.

• **Michael Hulett**, 9 p.m., Millhouse Steakhouse, Brunswick.

• **Defunk**, 9:30 p.m., Wee Pub, Brunswick.

Friday

• **John and Rhonda and Fredd Kopp**, 5 p.m., The Shak, Brunswick.

• **The O'Reallys**, 6 p.m., Hampton Inn, Jekyll Island.

• **Tony Adams**, 6 p.m., Emerald Princess II, Gisco Point.

• **Eddie Pickett and Friends**, 6 p.m., Latitude 31, Jekyll Island.

• **Paul and Jason Ivey**, 6:30 p.m., Captain Stan's, Woodbine.

• **Randy Mason**, 7 p.m., Sea Jays, Jekyll Island.

• **Jay & Travis**, 7 p.m., Zachry's, Brunswick.

• **Ric Minnix**, 8 p.m., Sand Bar and Grill, Jekyll Island.

• **Keenan Carter**, 8 p.m., Ziggy Mahoney's, St. Simons Island.

• **Fully Loaded**, 8:30 p.m., Village Inn and Pub, St. Simons Island.

• **Matt Williams**, 9 p.m., Loco's Grill and Pub, St. Simons Island.

• **Backbeat Boulevard**, 10 p.m., Wee Pub, Brunswick.

• **DATM**, 9:30 p.m., Legends, Brunswick.

• **Honey Blue**, 10 p.m., Murphy's Tavern, St. Simons Island.

• **DJ Jess and Ziggy**, 11 p.m., Ziggy Mahoney's, St. Simons Island.

Saturday

• **Tony Adams**, 6 p.m., Emerald Princess II, Gisco Point.

• **Dukes of Glynn**, 6 p.m., Latitude 31, Jekyll Island.

• **Six Guns South**, 6:30 p.m., Captain Stan's, Woodbine.

• **Jay & Travis**, 7 p.m., Sea Jays, Jekyll Island.

• **Josh Alves**, 7 p.m., Zachry's, Brunswick.

• **Backbeat Boulevard**, 8 p.m., Palm Coast Coffee, St. Simons Island.

• **Keenan Carter**, 8 p.m., Ziggy Mahoney's, St. Simons Island.

• **The O'Reallys**, 8:30 p.m., Village Inn and Pub, St. Simons Island.

• **KnuckleDown**, 9:30 p.m., Island Lounge, St. Marys.

• **DJ Jess and Ziggy**, 11 p.m., Ziggy Mahoney's, St. Simons

Island.

Sunday

• **Tony Adams**, 1 p.m., Emerald Princess II, Gisco Point.

• **Charlie Dennison**, 7 p.m., The Shak, Brunswick.

• **Honey Blue**, 8 p.m., Loco's Grill and Pub, St. Simons Island.

Tuesday

• **Pate Hall hosts Trivia**, 9 p.m., Loco's Grill and Pub, St. Simons Island.

• **Trivia**, 9 p.m., Gnat's Landing, St. Simons Island.

Wednesday

• **Trivia**, 6 p.m. Sand Bar and Grill, Jekyll Island.

ART

Through January

• **St. Simons Island Library**, 530 Beachview Drive, St. Simons Island, will feature works by Ed Hose. Details: 638-8234.

• **The Jekyll Island Arts Association will host an exhibit featuring artists Dot Starkweather, Peter Wager and Mark See** from noon to 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays at Good-year Cottage, 321 N. Riverview Drive, Jekyll Island.

• **Glynn Art Association** will host its 24th Annual Coastal National Juried Art Competition, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays in the Visual Arts Center, 529 Beachview Drive, St. Simons Island.

• **The Brunswick-Glynn County Library**, 208 Gloucester St., Brunswick, will present the Coastal Georgia Quilt Guild as the featured artist in its main hallway from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays and from 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays.

• **Southeast Georgia Health System Outpatient Care Center Art Gallery**, Starling Street, Brunswick, will present its annual tribute to Sidney Lanier and the Marshes of Glynn, with an exhibit of oils paintings by Glenda Cason from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays.

They Are Here!



The 2012 Pet Calendar

**\$3.00 Each Available at The Brunswick News
In Our Brunswick & St. Simons Offices**

THE BRUNSWICK NEWS