

Columnist Seeking Advice

By Tim Treese

Original Characters by Amanda Treese

Hello, dear reader. For years I have dutifully provided this community with advice when the community needs it under my famous "Ask an Expert" column, but now, dear reader, I need to ask you to return the favor to me. You see, dear reader, I have a problem: all of my high school friends from where I grew up in central Iowa (if you haven't heard of it, it's a state in the middle of the country... Yeah, you get the picture) don't take me seriously ever since I moved to San Francisco (you know this one... It's the one with the famous bridge).

For example, when I go home and ask if folks want to go get a bite to eat, dear reader, they think I can no longer appreciate the more "basic" Iowa classics like deep fried cheese curds, hot beef sundaes, or pork chop on a sticks, and instead insist that I probably just want to go back to the one "fancy" burger joint in town (a burger, dear reader, is a classic American sandwich of unknown origin that contains beef on a bread-like bun ((gluten optional))), often garnished and accentuated with such condiments as ketchup, a fancy French tomato-based sauce).

The truth is, I really would rather go to the fancy burger joint, because local Iowa food is really really gross, but I can't, because that's the burger joint owned, operated, and executive cheffed by my ex wife, Clara-Lou. Clara-Lou and I met when travelling abroad in Florida (it's a common joke in Iowa that when you go to the coast you are "travelling abroad". Another common joke is to say "I've studied abroad... A broad or two.", which is a joke that tends to work better in spoken word than in written word, but the key to the joke is that "abroad" (meaning in another country, or in the case of Iowans on the coasts) sounds just like "a broad" (classic midcentury semi-crude slang for a woman)). I was in Florida looking for the original author of a song I found in a message in a bottle (another story for another article), and Clara-Sue (she would later change her name to Clara-Lou to get out of a jam involving some confusion about who was the first skateboarder to land a 900, yet another story for another article) managed to catch my eye away from my Rubik's Cube, and it was love at first sight.

We went from strangers to lovers in 15 days, to engaged in another 15 days, to married in another 15 days, to separated in another 15 days, to divorced in another 15 days. 75 days in total from strangers to mortal enemies, and in the process I lost half of my belongings, including my gourmet burger joint in Iowa. And dear reader, let me tell you it's in fact this exact gourmet burger joint in Iowa where Clara-Lou continues to work to this day (though she changed the name from Slim Tim's Burgers to Slim Clara-Lou's Burgers), and this exact gourmet burger joint is the one my friends always insist on taking me to. And they are stronger negotiators than I. For, dear reader, I have been to Slim Clara-Lou's Burgers for every single breakfast, lunch, and dinner back in Iowa for the past 2 years, and I am getting quite sick of it.

So, dear reader, please, please, please, give me some advice. I'll take anything.