

## DEAR MEG



Meg Whitcomb

### Platonic friend isn't a threat

By Meg Whitcomb

DEAR MEG — Brenda and I are best friends. Brenda means a great deal to me, and she's told me I'm the only one who knows how she feels "inside." We talk about everything.

But Brenda's boyfriend doesn't like us being together. Whenever he sees us, he gets mad. All we're doing is talking. I'm not trying to take her away from him.

What can I say to the guy? He thinks we're fooling around, but we're

not. We've known each other since we were 2. — STEVE, DUBUQUE, IOWA

DEAR STEVE — Having a close friend of the opposite sex is a great thing. It helps us see each other realistically as people, not male or female stereotypes. But this special kind of closeness is rare. And often it doesn't survive a jealous suitor who can't believe that the relationship is strictly platonic.

Brenda can do a lot to reassure her boyfriend about your friendship, and so can you. One thing would be to double-date with a girl you are interested in. And remember, if you've been Brenda's friend since you were 2, you just may outlast him. If not, you'll want him as a friend, too. So don't monopolize her.

DEAR MEG — Our 5-year-old granddaughter May was the victim of a hit-and-run driver last month.

Our son and daughter-in-law are so devastated by the death of their child that they are unable to cope. But if they don't do something, it looks as if the drunken driver who was responsible will get off scot-free, or almost. He claims it was an accident and has

no previous record.

We are trying to persuade Ned and his wife to put up a fight, but they just say it won't bring May back. Is there any way we can help them see that justice is done? — GRIEVING GRANDMA, STATEN ISLAND, N.Y.

DEAR GRANDMA — Yes. You can get help from the Sunny Von Bulow National Victim Advocacy Center. The center was founded by Mrs. Von Bulow's children, who believe their mother, now in a coma, was a victim of attempted murder by their stepfather. Call (212) 732-8662.

Even though helping to punish the guilty won't bring an innocent victim back to life, it may help spare the life of another. And seeing justice done helps assuage the feelings of helplessness that torture relatives of dead victims.

DEAR MEG — Our daughter is 11 and has been bringing home horror stories about AIDS from her classmates at school. Two of the boys in her class are hemophiliacs. Someone started a whispering campaign that they had AIDS and could give it to other kids who touched them.

Sue is a good friend of one of the boys, and this upset her terribly. My husband and I have read everything we can get our hands on about the disease, and we still don't know what to tell Sue about this situation. We also worry about what advice to give her when she begins dating.

Is there any official source we can use for a family discussion? — BEWILDERED, LANSING, MICH.

DEAR BEWILDERED — Yes. Finally, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has put out an excellent, straight-shooting pamphlet, "Understanding AIDS." It contains authorities' answers to the most common questions about AIDS, its transmission and prevention.

It's possible that hemophiliacs or others who received blood transfusions between 1973 and 1985 could have contracted the virus. But it can't be spread by casual contact.

For free copies of the pamphlet, write: Public Health Centers for Disease Control, P.O. Box 6003, Rockville, MD 20850, or call the hot line: 1-800-342-AIDS. (Call 1-800-344-SIDA for Spanish.) You're absolutely right: AIDS education must begin at home.

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### THE TANNERY (Cont'd)

In the course of time, the hemlock bark became scarce, as the tannery had used up most of the available stock. Bringing the hemlock by train cost twice as much as the local farmers were paid and so a new tannery was built in Bracebridge, in the midst of the hemlock region.

The Acton Tannery was taken over by Philip Jacobi, leather dealer of Toronto, and Chas. Knees, a native of Sweden, took charge of the factory. The tannery produced cordovan leather from horsehide.

The Beardmore tannery at Bracebridge again ran out of hemlock, and because it was so far away from the offices and warehouses of Toronto, Beardmore's moved back to the Acton tannery, which stood vacant for ten years, and rebuilt and enlarged it. It was not until the 1950's that a substitute for hemlock was used.



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