



Ask Joe

By Joe Swinyer

Dear Joe,

My girlfriend and I (both women) do not live together but do spend every evening together, also weekends, and we always vacation together. Currently we have no plans for a wedding or civil union. How do we tell our families of our relationship?

Do we actually need to tell them? If we do announce, when and how?

Signed,
The Town Crier

Dear TC,

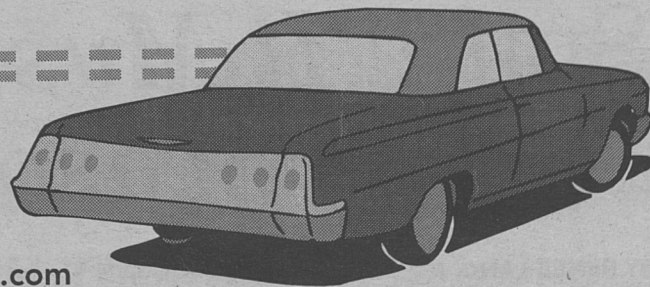
Relax, relax, relax. Since you spend nearly every waking hour (and some non-waking) together, those in your families who are attuned are already aware of your relationship. I doubt that those who are unattuned would be interested. If you perceive a need to verbalize the relationship to especially close loved ones, do so. Just a few words such as, "Mary and I are very close. We wanted you to know." will suffice. For the unattuned, let them remain in that state.

In the event of marriage or a civil union, then go all out! Have a ceremony, reception, announcements, the whole thing. That is the time for a general announcement and celebration. 'Til then, keep matters honest but low-key.

Judiciously,
Joe

T-BIRD AUTO Q&A

Gotta question? Need some advice about a car? Just ask, and I will try to help you out. T-BirdsQA@hotmail.com

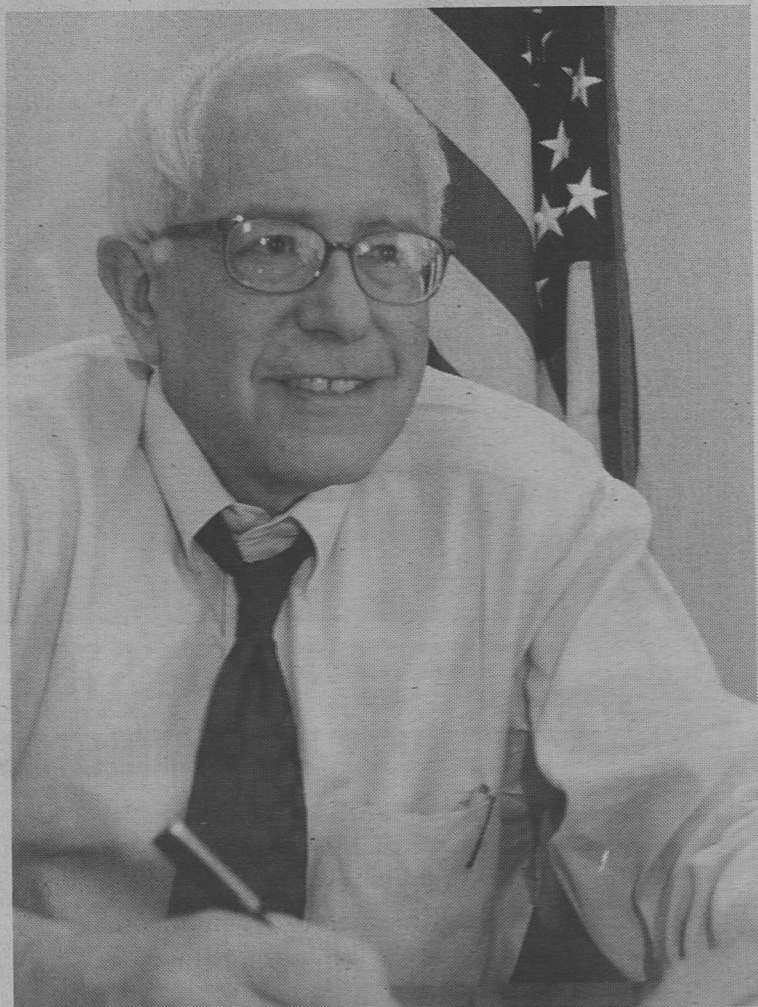


Hello! My name is Taylor. I am the manager of CarQuest, an auto parts store in Richmond, Vermont. I have been working in the auto industry for over 20 years, and I am here to help. Gotta question about your car? Hear a noise, gotta buck or a grind? Just ask and I will try to answer. No question is too silly and all questions are welcomed. I understand that it is hard to talk to mechanics, trust me; I have been doing it for 20 years.

So some simple things to think about now that winter is heading our way:

- Make sure you put dry gas in your car every couple of tanks. The fluctuation of temperature creates moisture in your tank. This can freeze your gas line. Dry gas helps prevent it.
- Good wiper blades are a must. Also use a good washer fluid with de-icer.
- Mid- to late November is a good time to put snow tires on.
- Anti-freeze: an inexpensive tester can be bought at any auto parts store to make sure you have the right mixture of anti-freeze to water.

- It is a good idea to have an extra hat, gloves and blanket in the car, as you never know when you might get stuck somewhere.
- Ice scrapers: think about getting a new one this year. They dull quickly and scratch rather than scrape the ice off windows.
- Jumper cables are a must. A good pair is cheaper than having a garage come to start your car. Plus you might be able to help someone else out.
- Keep more than a quarter of a tank of gas at all times.
- Keep a cheap bag of sand in the car. Not only for the weight, but it is great for traction if you get stuck on ice.
- Have an old small shovel or purchase one. It comes in handy when you slide off the road and need to shovel out.
- Make sure your car is running the best before winter. Remember, the cold works in mysterious ways and will either make it or break it.
- Thinking about getting a cell phone. They come in handy if you break down.



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