

Holiday Stress Test

Dear Tim:

I'm going to my girlfriend's house for Thanksgiving this week. Although we've been going out for quite a while, it will be the first time I've met her parents and been around her family. I want to make a good first impression and, since I could see myself marrying her, I don't want to do anything that might give my girlfriend second thoughts about me. Any suggestions?

—First Timer on Fishing



DEAR TIM

Dear First Timer:

As someone who tends to speak his mind, I'm not sure I'm the guy to come to for this kind of advice. So here's what I'm going to do: I'm going to suggest you do the opposite of what I would probably have done in your shoes. That should put you on the right path. First, don't question who her father voted for. That's not going anywhere you want to go. Find out who his favorite team is and say something intelligent and flattering about them. Even if it's Michigan. And bring a six of Samuel Adams from aisle 1. It's domestic but it tastes

imported. A smooth move. As far as mom goes, you can't compliment her cooking or her decorating enough. But don't go overboard or you'll come off like Eddie Haskell. And give her a box of Esther Price candies from the refrigerator case between aisles 1 and 2. She'll think you're thoughtful and have good taste, which I'm assuming is true. Good luck. And if you make it out in one piece, you'll have one more thing to be thankful for.

Dear Tim:

As funny as I find my Hot Tamale apron, I think my guests are no longer laugh-

ing with me. Anything new in culinary comedy?

—Comedienne on Crompton

Dear Comedienne:

Are you kidding? There's always something new. The question is *How merlot can you go?* Would a *Play it again salmon* dishtowel liven things up? If so we've got a whole rack of humorous hand towels between aisles 1 and 2. Trust me when I tell you they'll have you cleaning up at your next party.

Dear Tim:

How is it possible that I'm the one who always arrives just as they run out of paper? I have a husband and two sons, so I expect it in the bathroom at home. At the copy machine it's almost a cliché. But at the voting booth? I'm tired of waiting and improvising. From now on I pack my own. Do you guys sell in bulk?

—Short Sheet on Shrewsbury

Dear Short Sheet:

Remind me not to ask if you want paper or plastic.

Dear Tim is presented as a public service by Tim Huffman, owner of Huffman's Market. Write to him in care of Huffman's Market, 2140 Tremont Center, Upper Arlington, Ohio, 43221, stop by and say hi or visit www.huffmansmarket.com.