DEAR ABBY

Daughter's estrangement brings more questions for parent

EAR ABBY: A few years ago, my daughter went "no contact" with both sides of our family – grandparents,



DEAR ABBY

parents, aunts and uncles, as well as cousins. Since then, I have been struggling with how I should answer acquaintances who ask, "How is she doing?" as well as those who ask,

"Do you have children?" I have been told by friends and family that I should tell the acquaintances that I don't know why because she doesn't speak to the family. However, I have

found this response leads to more uncomfortable questions. I am embarrassed to have to tell people "Yes, but she does not speak to us" - and worse, try to answer "Why?" Lately, I have been telling people, "No, we don't have children" so I won't have to explain.

Can you advise me how I can answer these questions without explanations, embarrassment or lies? - FORMER PARENT IN WASHINGTON

DEAR FORMER PARENT: As a matter of fact, I can. Tell the questioner, "I have one daughter. We are estranged, and I don't

wish to discuss it further." Pe-

riod. It's the truth. **DEAR ABBY:** My boyfriend

and I have had a tumultuous relationship. Right now, it's good, but the issue I'm having is that his bed is super uncomfortable and so is his couch. He spent a lot of money for both of them, but I am unable to sleep or get comfortable on his couch. How do I tell him he needs to replace them or else I don't want to spend the night with him or watch movies on the couch at his house? - UNCOMFORTABLE **IN TEXAS**

DEAR UNCOMFORTABLE: Start by telling your boyfriend that you can't get a good night's sleep in his bed because the mattress is uncomfortable for you. Do the same thing after watching TV on his couch. If

your back needs more support, he shouldn't regard it a personal insult. Then invite him to YOUR place so he won't feel rejected.

DEAR ABBY: As I approach my 100th birthday, I wish you would educate people that a gift certificate for a meal from a restaurant or a donation to feed the hungry would be far more appreciated than bouquets of expensive flowers that wilt and die. It would also be a thoughtful gift to my caretaker, who prepares my meals and could use a break. Choices for seniors become fewer as we age, and good meals are one of the simple pleasures left. Thank you. - CEN-

TENARIAN IN GEORGIA DEAR CENTENARIAN:

Warmest congratulations as you near your milestone birthday. Your suggestion that a restaurant gift certificate is far more practical than receiving flowers (or an automatically renewing magazine subscription) is a good one. I hope readers will appreciate the spirit in which it was offered. I especially like the fact that you would use it to spare your caregiver the pressure of preparing at least one of your

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby. com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



The Sioux City Marina is shown in March. The marina was closed last season due to a dispute over who would pay to dredge silt out of the facility.

Marina

to operate the Marina and Jolly's. Any profits and losses are the city's to retain. RCH continues to pay the city \$18,000 in rent per year as established in the original ground lease.

License plate reader

The council will also be asked to consent to the location and installation of a license plate reader in the 5600 block of Old Lakeport Road for the benefit of Sergeant Bluff.

The Sergeant Bluff Police Department needs Sioux City's permission for the camera, which will "aid in the deterrence and investigation of criminal activity," as it will be within Sioux City limits.

"This License Plate Reader camera subscription will be paid for by Sergeant Bluff and will supplement the Sioux City Police Department's network as the newly installed camera will be shared with the Sioux City Police Department at no cost to the City of Sioux City," city documents Last fall, the city of Sioux City

installed a total of 19 cameras, which were purchased from Flock Safety with an \$85,000 grant from the State of Iowa Office of Drug Control Policy.

Seven of the cameras are for the city. Another seven are for Woodbury County, while five are for the Tri-State Drug Task Force.

Flock's technology platform is capable of capturing audio, video, images and recording data of vehicle descriptions and rear license plates. It also provides notifications to the police department, sheriff's office and Drug Task

The system doesn't detect motorists who are speeding or running red lights, but acts as a crimefighting tool for law enforcement officers.

Food

From A1

uniquely Laotian spin on some classic dishes."

Some of the "Let's Get Lao'd" food will be familiar to many people.

For instance, the stir-fried noodle dish of Pad See Ew is popular in both Thai and Lao cuisines.

But the Bahn Mi, a meat-and-veggie sandwich served in a baguette, is mostly associated with the Vietnamese while a Baked Sushi platter is a creative take on Japanese cuisine.

Many of these meals were made by Jenny Bouphasok, Dang Kethuongsa and Dee Xayabanha from their own recipes.

"A Laotian home revolves around food," Bouphasok said. "It is our love

language." Apparently, there is plenty of healthy eating going on in Laotian homes, according to Seevanhsa.

"Many of our dishes fall into the category of salads," she said, pointing to her own spicy beef salad as an example. "We loved our vegetables because it helps to cut down on the spiciness but it also gives the food both freshness and texture."

For many years, Asian cuisine meant mainly Chinese cuisine. Then with an increased popularity of sushi, Japanese food came into the mainstream.

Over the past decade or so, traditional Thai cuisine has been introduced to Siouxland, via both food trucks and more traditional restaurants.

Seevanhsa and her "Let's Get



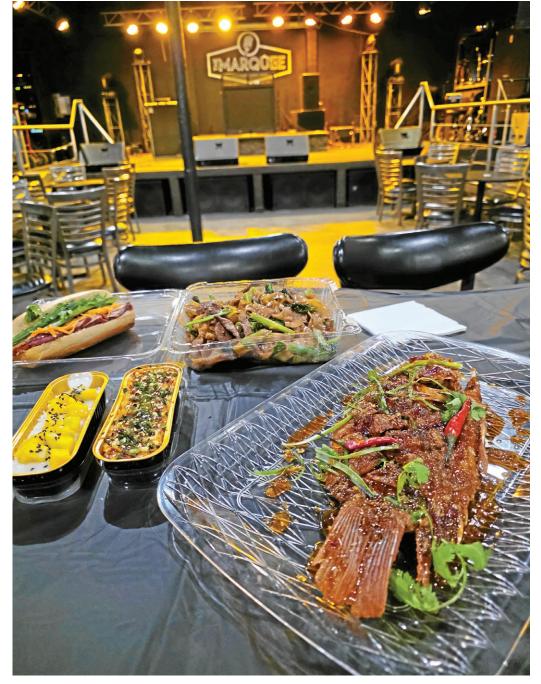
EARL HORLYK PHOTOS, SIOUX CITY JOURNAL

Gemma Mouw shows off a platter of chicken gizzards that will be available at Saturday's "Let's Get Lao'd" Food Festival at The Marquee. According to Mouw's aunt Polly Seevanhsa, a flavorful Bang-Bang sauce will elevate the deliciousness of the dish.

Lao'd" cooks want to introduce the unique flavors of Laos to the general

"Our food is spicy, sour, sweet, sour and, more importantly, it is very delicious," she said. "We can't wait to share it with all of Siouxland."

AT RIGHT: Typical Laotian food is packed with spices, flavors and color. The cuisine will be taking center stage at the "Let's Get Lao'd" food festival, beginning at noon Saturday at The Marquee, 1225 Fourth St.



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