

Teen's romantic relationship worries parents

DEAR ABBY: My daughter, "Chris," is 14. She'll be graduating from eighth grade in a couple of weeks. Over the last few months, I have been driving her and a group of boys and girls to the movies on Friday nights.

This has evolved into a romantic relationship with a 15-year-old boy, "Bob," who lives close by and is in her class. In her junior high school, this is described as "going out."

I know they kiss. They also dance together at a local hangout on Saturday nights. I could refuse to drive them to the movies together, but they would probably meet there anyway.

Chris has a level head on her shoulders. She's a good girl and active in our church. We talk openly together.

Abby, can you guide me in this? I trust my daughter, but I am also aware that 14- and 15-year-olds have a lot of raging hormones. Please advise.

— WISHES KIDS CAME WITH HANDBOOKS

DEAR WISHES: I agree that teenagers have raging hormones, and the most intelligent way to deal with it is to keep the teens occupied. You are already on the right track, keeping the lines of communication open, for which I applaud you.

I see no harm in your daughter being at the movies with this boy and a group of friends on weekends in light of the fact that you are providing the transportation and they are in a group.

But much of her free time should be occupied with constructive pursuits such as sports, volunteer work, music and activities that will give her "service credits" toward college. Develop her interests. Keep her goal-ori-



Abigail Van Buren

• Dear Abby

ented. Encourage her to develop platonic friendships. You can't prevent your daughter from growing up, but you can give her guidelines and make sure her time is well spent.

DEAR ABBY: From fourth to ninth grade, I attended a small Christian school in Delaware.

It was a great experience because the teachers and the students were able to really get to know one another.

One of the teachers, Mr. C., was one of the best a student could ever hope to have. Learning was fun in the subjects he taught, especially U.S. history. Can you imagine taking a class of 20 on an overnight camping trip to Gettysburg?

While talking to my mom, who was a co-teacher with Mr. C., about an upcoming business trip to Asheville, N.C., Mom mentioned that Mr. C. lives there and encouraged me to try to find him. Well, it turned out that Mr. C. was the only Mr. C. in the Asheville phone book.

We spent a wonderful afternoon reminiscing about his days as a teacher and mine as a student. Although I don't remember much about the subjects he taught, I will never forget the time he spent with us — laughing while we played football on the playground, crying when a classmate passed away. He was always there for us.

One of his favorite lines was: "Don't hurt him! He is the only one we have like him!" Now that I work with children, I find myself using

his favorite phrase.

Abby, please encourage your readers to take the time to look back and thank those teachers who made a difference in their lives. They helped to make us who we are today, and it would be rewarding for them to see the fruits of their labors.

— GRATEFUL IN NORTH-ERN OHIO

DEAR GRATEFUL: I have said it before and I'm pleased to say it again: Everyone wants to know that he or she has made a difference.

Teachers don't earn much in the way of salaries; letters and calls of appreciation from former students can be extremely gratifying to former teachers who have helped to shape our lives. So if you've been putting it off, why not do it now?

DEAR ABBY: "Burned in Victoria, Texas" wrote that she had been badly hurt after her three-year relationship with a man she had known since childhood fell apart. She asked for encouragement in entering the dating scene again — something she has been afraid to do since the romance ended a year and a half ago.

You advised that although the experience had been a painful one, it had been a valuable learning experience — and said (among other things) that it's worth kissing a few frogs once you finally meet Prince Charming.

I thought she could use some encouragement from someone who has been in the same boat. I, too, was convinced I would never become attached to anyone again.

Then I landed a job as a teaching assistant at the university I attend, and met "George." He asked me out several times; each time I gave him

the excuse that I was "too busy."

One evening he prepared a dinner of my three favorite foods (all by himself), packed it in a picnic basket, and brought it to me at the research office. We talked and laughed for hours, and I finally told him the real reason I wasn't seeing anyone.

He explained that there are nice men out there who understand and don't mind taking things slow — and he was one of them. We have been inseparable ever since. And he has kept his word.

My message to "Burned": There are kind men who will understand your feelings and cherish you for the wonderful person that you are. You and I are very much alike, and I assure you that all of your waiting will pay off in the end. You are not alone. You have support from another Texan.

— NO LONGER LONELY IN DALLAS

DEAR NO LONGER LONELY: Bless you for your words of encouragement. Dating can be arduous. It can take stamina, a strong sense of self-worth, and a sense of humor to make it to the end of the process unscathed. You are not the only Texas gal who reached out to "Burned."

Editor's note: Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, Calif. 90069.



Student News

Brewster resident accepts scholarship

HAYS — Bonnie Holm, Fort Hays State University senior, has accepted a \$600 Half-Century Club scholarship to attend Fort Hays State University for the 2004-2005

academic year.

She is a member of the Brewster School Board and is on the Fort Hays State University Dean's Honor Roll. Holm, daughter of Willis and Joyce Crabtree, Brewster, is majoring in mathematics.

Happening

Square dance club meets

The Shooting Stars Singles Square Dance Club, Hays, will have a square dance on Saturday, June 19, 8 to 10:30 p.m. at the Reed Center, east door, 317 W. 13th St., Hays.

Sam Lowe and Vernon Jones will call the squares and Ray Moran will que the rounds.

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