

Ask Carol

Dear Carol,

My parents live on the east coast. I try to take my children aged four and six back to see them each summer. My large family of seven brothers and sisters and their many children overwhelms my husband so he stays here. My father is very ill, his heart is so weak his hands and feet are turning blue. He has had heart surgery, but there isn't much more that can be done for him. My mother is very upset and worried. Some of my sisters live near her but they are so busy with their large families they don't have many hours to spend with Mom and Dad. I'd like to go back to spend some time with them but that means I'd have to leave my children and their busy schedules behind this time. My husband told me to go, but I hate to leave my family. Should I take care of my kids or my parents?

— Lisa

Dear Lisa,

Please read the letter you wrote to me. Your father is sick, your mother is worried, no one else can support them the way you can, your husband will take care of the children and it seems you can afford the trip. If you don't go and you miss this chance to spend quality time with your aging father you may regret it the rest of your life.

Dear Carol,

Summer is coming and I'm starting to panic. I lost my corporate job and now work from home for less money. My husband still has his full time job but money

is a little tighter than it once was. This past year I worked while my elementary school aged kids were in school and then had time to spend with them when they came home. I don't know what I am going to do this summer while I am working. I can't pay attention to them and work at the same time and they need supervision. I don't want them inside playing video games and watching TV all summer long and I can't afford to send them to camp. Do you have any suggestions?

— Working Wanda

Dear Wanda,

Could you hire a responsible teenager to take them to the park, beach or to classes sponsored by your town's recreation department or library? Are there parents of your children's friends in the same situation? Perhaps you could either share the services of the teen or take turns caring for each other's children for all or part of certain days of the week. I agree children should be encouraged to play outdoors. A wading pool, digging implements, balls, dress up clothes, chalk, art supplies, board games, toy cars and time to play creatively without adult direction will give your children the opportunity to play cooperatively, imaginatively, and creatively. They learn to negotiate, adjust the rules to meet their needs, communicate and take responsibility for their lives.

Send questions to askcarolnow@gmail.com  
Carol is a Life Coach available for private consultation in person or on the phone. •

Political Penguin

By Duane Plank

Like we don't have enough to worry about as we protect our wallets, this crazy notion of taxing grocery store plastic bags in good old Cali has apparently been floated by some in the "tax us to death" brigade.

Yup, according to the website www.stop-thebagtax.com, some California politicians are looking to raise your taxes if they don't hear from you soon."

According to the site, a 25 cent fee would be charged for each plastic bag that leaves the supermarket. I assume that the planet will be somehow be miraculously saved if we all are charged for our dreaded plastic bag usage.

One of the Assembly Bills being considered is AB 68, which would "prohibit a store, as defined, from providing a single-use carry-out bag to a customer unless the store charges a fee of not less than \$0.25 per bag at the point of sale." The verbiage goes on to say that "the bill would exempt certain customers from paying the fee." Think that one of those customers would be you or me? Ha, ha, ha!

I have been doing the weekly grocery shopping for the family for the past two-and-a-half years, and have gathered up about a half dozen of those reusable store bags. Which I forget to bring into the store at least half the time. So now, thanks to Al Gore and his cronies, I may get the opportunity to dig deeper into my wallet each time I try to feed mi familia. Oh, the humanity!

So Mr. Obama's nominee to fill the soon-to-be vacant Supreme Court seat of David Souter, one Sonia Sotomayor, will be facing confirmation hearings in the near future. Of course, Democrats and Republicans involved in the confirmation process are at odds over the timeline of the hearings and eventual vote to confirm.

Appears that the Demos favor a fast-track process, hoping to get the 54-year-old New York native Sotomayor through the hearings and ready for the bench before the month-long Congressional recess that begins in early August. By the way, any of you get a month-long vacation in August? Just asking.

The Republicans would like to approach the hearings in a more leisurely pace, and begin the hearings in September.

Either way, Ms. Sotomayor probably won't be facing a group of Republican politicos out for blood. That's because the smarties in the Grand Old Party seem to have come to the realization that the Latino vote, which has forsaken the GOP in recent elections, will be critical to expanding the Republican base, which seems to be dominated by Southern, white men.

Mr. Obama crushed John McCain with the Latino voters last November, and if the leaders in the Party of Reagan, seeking to reinvent itself before the mid-term elections of 2010, oppose Sotomayor too stridently, they risk incurring a further deterioration of their dwindling Latino base.

Sanctuary city alert! Do you know what a "sanctuary city" is? According to the smart folks who compile dictionaries and other fine reference books, a sanctuary city is "a

term given to a city in the United States that follows certain practices that protect *illegal* immigrants." Did you get that? Cuz if they are illegal, they must have broken some type of law. Yet lawbreakers are given protection. By the city. Great, in these dicey times, we need to spend time and money protecting people who are here illegally.

Do you know where the first sanctuary city was/is located? Not too far from here. Not far at all. Seems that back in 1979, Los Angeles became the first sanctuary city safe haven for illegals in the United States. Don't it make ya proud?

And here is some heartwarming news from our neighbors to the North. Seems that the City of Oakland will now begin creating ID cards for the illegal immigrants. Perfect!

What's the big deal, you might ask? Might as well ID the illegals--they are here already and apparently aren't going anywhere soon. As we the taxpayers continue to pay for their escapades, cradle to grave. No problem there; the fine Golden Bankrupt State is awash in extra cash, right?

But sometimes the grave isn't theirs. Do you remember the tragic case of Jamiel Shaw Jr., who was murdered in Los Angeles by dirtbag Pedro Espinoza? Seems that Espinoza, an illegal immigrant gang member, had been arrested the day *before* the murder on assault charges, but was released back into the streets.

Turns out that because of sanctuary city policies, Espinoza's legal (or illegal) status wasn't checked, so the scumbag, in the country illegally and charged with a crime, was handed the keys to his jail cell, probably given a pat on the back and an "attaboy," and then slithered back to the streets, where he senselessly murdered Jamiel Shaw.

And how about this one? In good old sanctuary city San Francisco, illegal immigrant Edwin Ramos allegedly murdered Anthony Bologna and his two sons. Ramos and the Bologna family members apparently had a traffic dispute, so Ramos, who had been convicted of two felonies by the SFPD while he was a juvenile, murdered the Bolognas in broad daylight.


So the SFPD had two convictions against the swine and federal officials knew about Ramos' legal status, but nothing was done to rid the country of this vermin because of the wonders of sanctuary city policies. So he killed three innocent folks.

To recap: Ramos was convicted of two felonies, government officials knew that he was an illegal immigrant but did nothing, and he was released back into the Streets of San Francisco, where he terrorized and ultimately murdered three human beings. Over a traffic disagreement.

We can't blame the Guv for individual cities turning their boundaries into safe havens for *illegals*. Can't even blame the Mayor of L.A., one Anthony Villagariosa, who is apparently more concerned with campaigning for Governor than he is in effectively managing his city environs.




I'll have to go back to my source books and reread the definition of illegal. I must be missing something. •

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EarthTalk

From the Editors of  
E/The Environmental Magazine

Dear EarthTalk: How can I recycle my old mattress if the place I buy a new one from doesn't take it? What do mattress companies do with old mattresses when they do take them? Do they recycle any of the material?

— J. Belli, Bridgeport, CT

A typical mattress is a 23 cubic foot assembly of steel, wood, cotton and polyurethane foam. Given this wide range of materials, mattresses have typically been difficult to recycle—and still most municipal recycling facilities won't offer to do it for you. But along with increasing public concerns about the environment—and a greater desire to

recycle everything we can—has come a handful of private companies and nonprofit groups that want to make sure your old bed doesn't end up in a landfill.

The Lane County, Oregon chapter of the charity St. Vincent de Paul Society, for example, has spearheaded one of the nation's most successful mattress recycling initiatives via its DR3 ("Divert, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle") program. "Keeping [mattresses] out of landfills is a matter of efficiently recycling them so their core materials can be reincarnated into any number of new products," reports the group, which opened a large mattress recycling center in Oakland, California in 2001. (Why hundreds of miles

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