

Dear Carol



Dear Carol,

I've been dating a man for about four months and we've gotten along pretty well. I travel quite a lot for work and he lives about an hour away so we don't see each other very frequently. We talk on the phone, email and text. Last week my flight returning from a business trip was delayed more than once. I landed hours later than planned; I headed home and collapsed into bed. In the morning I found multiple messages from the night before from him on my home and cell phones asking where I was. The next day my boyfriend called and asked what time I'd gotten home. I told him I didn't know because the flight had been delayed. He said, "Don't lie to me; you know what time you got home." I was so surprised and shocked I didn't know what to say. I'm reconsidering the relationship. He seems like he wants to control me and he certainly doesn't trust me. That is not the kind of relationship I want to be in. How can I make him understand his attitude is wrong and to change?

Traveling Tess

Dear Tess,

There are two things you can request from him; one, an apology for doubting your word and two, a plan to keep that kind of behavior from happening again. He needs to convince you in words and deeds that he trusts you and will not try to control you. If this kind of thing happens again please rethink this association, this could be signs of an abusive relationship.

Dear Carol,

I like to send my children and others on my holiday gift list luxury items that they wouldn't normally buy for themselves; things like perfume, decorator items, jewelry and the latest fads. My daughter and her husband have been out of work the past few months and asked that my gifts be a little more practical this year, in fact, they asked for gift cards. I love shopping and giving people treats, it is my way of being creative. I don't think gift cards are in keeping with the spirit of the season. How can I make all of us happy?

Giftgiving Grace

Dear Grace,

Your children have made it clear that the gifts they would most enjoy are practical ones that they can use to obtain the things they really need. Can you buy one small luxury item for your children and devote the rest of their holiday budget to gift cards? If you love shopping so much, why not buy toys and other items for children in need? Toys for Tots, churches, hospitals and other organizations are in need of presents for underprivileged children. You could provide joy to your children with practical gifts and other children with your generosity and creative choices.

Send questions to askcarolnow@gmail.com or mail to Herald Publications

Carol is a Life Coach available for private consultation in person or on the phone

Political Penguin

By Duane Plank

War is hell, they say. Or so said Union General William Tecumseh Sherman in a speech to the graduating class of the Michigan Military academy in 1879. "You don't know the horrible aspects of war," Sherman said. "I have been through two wars and I know. I have seen cities and homes in ashes. I have seen thousands of men lying on the ground, their dead faces looking up at the skies. I tell you, war is hell!"

Seemed appropriate to quote General Sherman right about now, as our current Commander-in-Chief, President Barack Obama has decided to send an additional 30,000 troops into the drawn-out conflict in Afghanistan. Adding 30,000 troops, which the President said would be deployed at "the fastest pace possible so that they can target the insurgency and secure key population centers," would put the number of ground forces fighting the good fight in Afghanistan at around 100,000.

The President also said in his nationally televised address to the U.S. Military Academy that the United States would begin withdrawing troops in 18 months. The President's plan didn't seem to meet with any sort of overwhelming approval. Even partisan Democrats were a bit leery of what will be going on in Afghanistan in the next year-and-a-half.

Senator Al Franken, the erstwhile droll comedian of *Saturday Night Live* fame and now a politico from the state of Minnesota, didn't exactly wholeheartedly endorse his President. Said the bleeding heart Franken: "I need to be convinced that...we are not making an open-ended commitment and that there is a sensible way to pay for the war."

Local veteran politician Congresswoman Jane Harman was quoted in print as saying that "I disagree with the troop surge. I think that will make it harder, not easier, to achieve the objective."

And the objective, best I can determine, was/is to find the bastard Osama bin Laden, who is considered the diabolical mastermind behind the Twin Towers decimation, and rid the world of his sorry butt. Oh, and to root out and destroy the Al-Qaeda group of criminals. And defeat the Taliban. Multiple objectives that haven't been met since President Bush okayed the military op eight years ago, termed Operation Enduring Freedom.

Failed Republican Presidential candidate Senator John McCain, who I happen to be a big fan of and actually voted for some 13 months ago, was another skeptic of the Obama plan. Said McCain, who spent a good deal of time incarcerated in brutal conditions during the ill-fated Vietnam War, speaking of the President's plan to escalate and then evacuate, "That gives the wrong impression to our friends; it's the wrong impression to give to our enemies."

So Mac thinks that the new blueprint is a flawed plan, no matter whom it is directed towards. Like most policies and plans that emanate from Washington, nothing is written in the proverbial stone. As it shouldn't be. Policies and timelines are fluid, and can and will change.

Administration bigwig Robert Gates, who

also happens to be the Secretary of Defense, smartly told the assembled reporters, "I think the President, as Commander-in-Chief, always has the option to adjust his decisions." Yup, I say. Adjust, adjust, adjust. Whatever it takes. Probably easier said than done, though. But if we had just allowed the CIA and the other fantastic spionagers and sharpshooters who work for the good old US of A to do their jobs, oh say, 10 years ago, and point one of their trusty dusty firearms at the noggin of Mr. Pinhead bin Laden, a whole lot of lives could have been saved.

You are all with me, folks, when I say that you have to support the guys and gals over there putting their lives on the line for us back home, right? Whether you support or don't support the plans made by the current administration, support the men and women who won't be spending Christmas at home, again, with the loved ones. Maybe the supposed "hassle" of putting up the Xmas lights, of holiday shopping, won't seem to be such a big deal if you frame it that way?

On to some good news, relatively speaking, on the employment front. Apparently, the unemployment numbers are dropping. About time. Think that this damn recession is nearing its end? Well, only 11,000 or so folks were canned in November. And the guys paid to prognosticate, to forecast the dreary economic news, had expected about 10 times that many folks to be handed their pink slips.

Pink slip. What is the genesis for that unseemly term? Seems it dates back about 100 years. Kindly employers would, apparently, put the "pink slip" in the employees' pay envelope, telling the presumably hard-working gents that it was time to hit the bricks. Adios.

Okay, time for a little follow-up. When I first started penning the *PP* column this spring, the very lovely Miss California, Carrie Prejean, had just been screwed out of the all-important Miss USA crown because she actually had the audacity to give an honest opinion to a question asked of her by some weirdo lefty scribe who was allowed to work on the Miss USA television show.

Anyway, Ms. Carrie wasn't a big fan of gay marriage, which last time I looked at the Bill of Rights was one of her rights. Not to be a fan of whatever she wanted not to be a fan of. Or maybe that is an amendment thingee? Whatever. First amendment stuff, right? Well, Miss Prejean apparently had a skeleton or two in her closet (who doesn't?) and was finally canned from the Miss USA gig for some kinda breach of contract. Went on the old Net Sunday night to do some research, and was shocked to see some of the photos of the defrocked Miss Cali that appeared to be available. Didn't access them myself, I do have my journalistic integrity to uphold, right? But they are out there, folks.

Finally, less than a year until Jerry "Moonbeam" Brown retakes the governorship of the Great Bankrupt State from the hopelessly overmatched Arnold Schwarzenegger. Who can then go forth, write a book, with a lot of help from a ghostwriter, I assume, and make *Terminator Seven*, or whatever the next version of the franchise is. The countdown is on. •

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