

Can a litterbug and green queen find happiness together?

Dear Dr. Brothers: I have heard the expression about how "opposites attract," but I am wondering if my boyfriend and I are really too far apart to stay together.

He is a great guy, but he is absolutely unconcerned about the environment.

He will even litter, and thinks nothing of throwing a cigarette butt or a cup out of the car window. I am very involved with the green movement at my school and always have an eye on my carbon footprint. Are we doomed to fail as a couple? — L.N.

Dear L.N.: I agree that opposites attract. Finding someone who is totally different from you can be very exciting.

Sometimes, if the match is truly made in heaven, you learn to ad-



Dr. Joyce Brothers

● Ask Dr. Brothers

mire each other's different culture, habits, look, social scene or whatever it is that originally separated you into two different types of people.

The common belief, though, is that opposites will sooner or later run out of things to keep them together, and their differences will begin to weigh on them and drive them apart. Of course, every couple is unique, and that doesn't have to happen, any more than

the couple who have so much in common have to fall into a stultifying safety zone of sameness.

Which brings us to you and your boyfriend. Opposites attract, but it's hard to sustain an attraction when the "opposite" part represents an attitude or lifestyle that you can't and don't respect.

This goes for your being appalled by your boyfriend's lack of a "green" conscience, as well as

his smirking disrespect of your stewardship of the environment. So I think that your failure as a couple is inevitable unless you can bring him around to your point of view. But trying to change others rarely works.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I am neither a lender nor a borrower, but I find myself in the unfortunate position of being some kind of go-between for my mother and my Aunt Sara, her sister.

My mom loaned her sister our extra TV and stereo about a year ago. Now Mom is setting up a guest room and wants them back, and my aunt says they were a gift!

They are both getting testy with each other, and I don't like being the "she said, she said" messenger boy

in the middle.

Is there a way to resolve this and make them both feel like winners? — B.D.

Dear B.D.: You have gotten yourself into a pickle, for there's rarely a situation as uncomfortable as the man in the middle between two friends or — worse yet — relatives.

They love each other, they love you, you love them — but try to take sides in an argument, which may have some validity on both sides, and you are very likely to end up as the pariah. It's nice that you want to make both your relatives feel like winners, but don't sacrifice your own integrity in the process.

Which means you might have to consider all the "evidence" and

come up with some helpful ideas on your own if you want to be able to honestly broker this deal.

I realize that what you want to do is simply bow out, stop the go-between routine and make your mother and aunt deal with each other.

But that may be really hard for them right now. If you stop repeating arguments verbatim and start adding phrases like, "Mom feels really bad that this has affected your relationship," or "Sara is embarrassed that she doesn't have the money to replace the TV," you might get the two of them to start softening their positions. And keep resolving neither to lend nor borrow.

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Being a secret shopper could cost money

By Paul Morrison

Kansas Attorney General

Dear Attorney General Morrison,

I've noticed a lot of advertisements online for "secret shoppers." The ads are looking for people to fill out surveys or write reviews of restaurants and retailers in exchange for free merchandise or money. Is this for real?

Dear Kansas consumer, While there are legitimate organizations that employ "secret shoppers" there are also a number of phony advertisements trying to scam you out of money. My Office of Consumer Protection has received a number of complaints from Kansans who have been caught in "mystery shopper" scams.

The scam typically works this way: you respond to an ad looking for a mystery shopper or an "investigative shopper."

The company tells you that you can earn money by purchasing items at retail stores or dining at restaurants.

The company then sends you an employment packet with evaluation materials.

There are a few different ways

these types of offers can cost you money.

Often, the company asks you to pre-pay for the application packet and for your purchase at the restaurant or store. Once the company has your initial payment, you may never hear from them again.

Another serious scam associated with these offers is check fraud. Sometimes, the application packet you receive will contain a cashier's check for \$1,000 or more. You are expected to cash the check, pose as a customer and wire the money to an address in Canada, usually within 48 hours.

This check is later found to be fraudulent and you are held responsible for the lost money.

Consumers should use caution when responding to "secret shopper" offers.

Always remember that a reputable company would never send you a cashier's check out of the blue, charge you money just for applying or guarantee you a position working with them.

Legitimate secret shopper companies generally do not advertise for jobs on the radio, in a newspaper's "help wanted" section or through unsolicited emails.

When considering a secret shopper offer, or any other potential scam, always remember that if it seems too good to be true, it probably is. As your attorney general, I will work to keep Kansans safe by spreading information and promot-

ing awareness of consumer issues. If you believe you have been a victim of fraud, or have any questions or concerns about consumer issues, call my Consumer Protection Division at (785) 296-3751 or (800) 432-2310.

Student News

Brandon Nemechek

SALINA — Brandon Nemechek of Goodland, was honored recently at an awards banquet at Kansas State University in Salina.

Nemechek received special recognition in technology management

for his work and dedication in and out of the classroom, officials said.

He graduated in May, 2007 with a bachelor's degree in technology management and associate degree in applied business.

Is there a gun where your children play?

Safe Kids Kansas joins gun safety advocates in urging parents to ask whether there are firearms in the homes where their children play. National Ask Day, June 21, is proclaimed by the Asking Saves Kids campaign to remind parents to ask, "Is there a gun where my child plays?"

In Kansas, 38 percent of households report having firearms in or around their home. Each year, in the United States, approximately 60 children ages 14 and under are killed by accidental gunshots and more than 730 go to the emergency room with injuries from gun-related accidents — not counting approximately 6,600 injured in accidents involving BB guns and other air-powered guns.

"Kids should not have access to guns," says Jan Stegelman, Safe Kids Kansas coordinator. "More than half of the parents surveyed who own guns and have children ages 4-12 said they keep a loaded or unlocked gun in the home."

According to a 2002 survey commissioned by the ASK campaign, 97 percent of parents who own guns "would not feel uncomfortable if asked about the presence of a gun in their home by another parent," yet 53 percent of parents

said they had never asked. "Parents should ask the adults in any homes their children visit whether there's a gun in the home and whether it is locked up where children can't get to it," says Stegelman.

Safe gun storage means:

- Guns unloaded and ammunition locked up in a separate place;
- Guns locked in a safe or lockbox or fitted with a trigger lock;
- Keys or combinations to gun locks and ammo boxes stored out of reach of children;
- BB guns, pellet guns and other air- or spring-powered guns stored the same way as firearms.

Also, says Stegelman, "Teach kids not to touch a gun and to tell an adult if they find one. Most kids cannot tell the difference between a real handgun and a realistic-looking toy."

For information visit www.usa-safekids.org.

Editor's note: Safe Kids Kansas, Inc. is a nonprofit Coalition of 67 statewide organizations and businesses dedicated to preventing accidental injuries to Kansas children ages 0-14. The lead agency for Safe Kids Kansas is the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. For information visit www.kansas-safekids.org.

State seeks public comments

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment is requesting public comments regarding a proposed electronic waste recycling and reclamation facility in Leavenworth.

Federal Prison Industries Recycling Business Group would operate the facility.

The facility would be located at 1300 Metropolitan Avenue in Leavenworth, and would receive, dismantle and refurbish electronics from federal, state, county, and city government, schools, and private sector organizations for recycling or future use.

The department will be accepting comments through July 16.

Written statements should be postmarked no later Monday, July 16 to Arthur Fink, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, 1000 S.W. Jackson, Suite 320, Topeka, Kan. 66612. Comments that are postmarked by July 16 and re-

ceived within one week thereafter will also be considered.

Comments will also be accepted via fax to 785-296-1592 or email to afink@kdhe.state.ks.us, if they are received by 5 p.m. on July 16.

A copy of the application and public notice is available on the state's Bureau of Waste Management web site at www.kdheks.gov/waste/.

Additionally, a copy of the permit application, facility plan and associated documents are available for public review through Monday, July 16 during normal business hours at the offices at 1000 S.W. Jackson St., Suite 320 in Topeka, and at the Leavenworth County Clerk's Office, 300 Walnut Street, Suite 106, in Leavenworth.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment will respond to all formal comments in writing.