

## My brother's burden

**Dear Annie:** My older brother is disabled. He was quite functional after he first had a stroke, but did not take care of himself. He wouldn't take his medications, ate unhealthy food, drank too much and watched TV all day.

As a result, he is now very disabled. Has difficulty walking, talking, falls a lot and cannot control his bodily functions. On top of that, he is stubborn and lies constantly. His kids and grandchild moved out because they were tired of dealing with him.

He is my brother and I am doing what I can to keep him out of a nursing home — paying for a caregiver, making sure his house is repaired and providing financial support. The problem is that it has become impossible for me to take him with me when I attend out-of-town family gatherings. He refuses to use a walker or wheelchair, which means it takes an extraordinary amount of time to get him places — to the point that we have missed events.

I have a great deal of trouble getting him in and out of the car. I am unable to pick him up when he falls. I just cannot bathe him or change his soiled clothes, that is way too much for a sister. My family all live in a rural area of the state and there are few resources for assistance. I cannot afford to pay for a caregiver to accompany us; I can barely afford his home care.

How do I tell him that I can no longer take him on away trips to visit family? I attended our nephew's graduation without telling him, and he found out. I am starting to feel really depressed about this. The rest of the family have tried to help, but gave up on him for their own sanity. I would be so grateful for any advice you have.

— **Drowning**  
**Dear Drowning:** More than 40 percent of caregivers have symptoms of depression, according to a report from the Family Caregiver Alli-

ance. That's not surprising. The emotional and physical labor of caregiving can be incredibly draining and lead caregivers to neglect their own needs. I encourage you to make a therapy appointment today. You deserve support as much as your brother does.

Toward that end, be upfront with your brother. Tell him that you'll no longer be taking him on long trips, but that you'll continue offering him support in other ways that you can. Stating your limitations is not giving up on him; it's making it possible for you *not* to give up on him. You can't care for anyone, including your brother, if you don't first take care of yourself.

If you need more confidence that you're doing the right thing, try a thought experiment: If the tables were turned, what would you ask of him? What would you expect? Then you'll see that you've been more than patient with him, and he is asking more of you than is fair. Sweet sister, know that your big brother is lucky to have you, whether or not he's capable of recognizing that at the moment.

**Dear Annie:** I have a little more advice for "Solo Soul-Searching," who wrote in asking for tips for her cross-country trip.

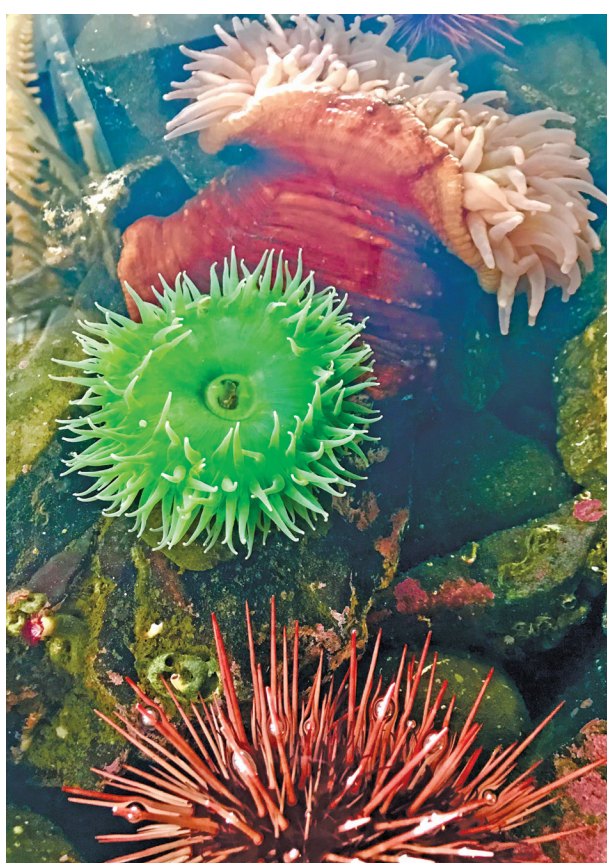
Last June, we drove an RV from Texas to Utah. Going through New Mexico and Arizona was kind of terrifying. You must be very prepared, especially in the summer, with lots of water and gas. Gas stations are few and far between. It's very desolate out there. It was scorching hot, even in the mountains of Utah. — *Robin R.*

**Dear Robin R:** I've had few experiences more nerve-racking than driving through a long stretch of desert as the gas gauge dipped terrifyingly close to "E." Ample water and fuel should always be top of mind for the cross-country traveler. Thanks for writing, and happy trails in the future.

**DEAR ANNIE**



**ANNIE LANE**  
Creators  
Syndicate Inc.



**LEFT:** Sea anemone and urchins at the bottom of Sitka Bay.



**RIGHT:** Starfish at the Sitka Sound Science Center.  
Photos by David Campiche

## Sitka: Sitka Sound Science Center takes ocean and river science to the classroom

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In Naselle and on the Nemah River in Pacific County, modern day hatcheries supply our fishing waters with chum, silver and Chinook salmon. In Chinook, the oldest hatchery in the Northwest is gearing up again after a decade long sojourn.

In Alaska, these hatchery programs spread across the state.

On Baranof Island, there are five hatcheries that produce hundreds of millions of 6-inch fry. Five percent return as mature salmon. Until last year, the industry had grown back to numbers that reminded old timers of earlier salmon booms. One hatchery in particular, the Sitka Sound Science Center, has drawn a lot of attention.

Researchers from Portland State University, the University of California, Santa Cruz and others gather here. Even the Coast Guard pitches in. The Sitka National Historical Park is intertwined into the program. Under study: kelp forests, subtidal surveys, salmon and rockfish observations, biological monitoring and studies of ocean acidification, just to mention a few.

Though small, the center features a sweetheart aquarium open all year to the public. This is a visit into the subtidal world of underwater plants, fish and organisms that inundate these coastal waters. Good science is the key. Outreach manager, Sandy McClung, seems appraised on every aspect regarding regional and global environmental events. Her

eyes and ears are glued to our children's future. This science center captivates the imagination.

Protecting natural resources is a game we can win, McClung said. And she has answers. To add a slight twist to Henry David Thoreau, "in science lies the preservation of the planet."

The Sitka Sound Science Center takes ocean and river science to the classroom, beginning with kindergarten and expanding through high school. The guiding force is simple enough: Get the kids involved. Share with them the penetrating aspects of a changing world. Pique their interest now, and you will set a moveable standard.

Washington state's governor knows. Breed salmon, he says. He is

now pulling dollars from state funds for that very purpose. Say what you wish, but Jay Inslee is on a binge to save the planet. As a candidate for president of the United States, he has put, as his single pressing issue, a plan to fight global warming.

Meanwhile Sitka (Sheet'ka) gallops along. The boats come in daily with loads of bright fat salmon, huge halibut and white fish, like lingcod or sable fish. Tourists flock to this lovely city on the water. They catch the fish. They eat the fish. Does this remind you of home?

*David Campiche writes the column, "Close to Home," focusing on connections between the Northwest and Columbia-Pacific region. He lives on the Long Beach Peninsula.*

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