

DEAR ABBY

Write to Dear Abby online at dearabby.com or by mail at P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069



Dear Abby: For more than four decades, my stepmother, "Vera," and I never got along. We tolerated each other for the sake of my father, who has now passed away. I'm a 60-year-old male reader and unsure how to respond to some recent statements she has been making. For the record, I and many others always found Vera to be extremely self-absorbed and lacking in empathy. She often treated my father unkindly, bordering on abusive before and during his slow decline with dementia, even though she never had to provide any hands-on care. Yes, I know it's hard to always be patient in these cases, but Dad was never "difficult" or violent — just forgetful.

I call and visit Vera (who is now 87) occasionally, out of a sense of duty. A few times she has mentioned the unkind things she said or did to my father, not expressing remorse but possibly feeling some guilt.

Thus far, I have ignored these remarks, though I want to let her know I felt sad and angry about how she acted and could never live with myself if I'd treated my seriously ill spouse that way. Should I keep letting it go or express how I really feel?

— *Grieving Son in the West*

Dear Son: The next time Vera mentions the unkind things she said or did to your dad, feel free to speak up and let her know that not only did you notice but also how you feel about it. Frankly, it is admirable that you check

in on the woman at all considering how you felt about each other all those years. I don't think most people would do as much as you have done under similar circumstances.

Dear Abby: I have two wonderful grandparents I love very much. They are the most important people in my life, and I always think about them when planning anything in my life because I want to make them happy. The problem is I want to go to college out of state and pursue a career that isn't possible in the city or state they live in. They want me to live with them in a city I can't be happy in because of this.

How do I tell them I can't see myself staying there for the rest of my life? I know they won't be happy hearing it, but I don't want to disappoint them or make them think I don't love them anymore by leaving. Please help. I don't know what to do or what path in life to take.

— *At a Crossroads in Texas*

Dear At a Crossroads: You ARE at a crossroads. You're standing in the intersection of adolescence and adulthood. You deserve the chance to fulfill your dreams, so it's time for an adult conversation with your grandparents. Explain that you love them and don't want to disappoint them, and outline what your plans are regarding your education and your career. While they may be disappointed, if they love you as much as you love them, they won't stand in your way.

Former federal worker who sold knockoff bags with Oregon accomplice gets prison

BY MAXINE BERNSTEIN

The Oregonian

A former U.S. Department of State employee who used his embassy computer in Seoul, Korea, to sell over 5,000 counterfeit Vera Bradley designer bags and other products to customers across the United States was sentenced Thursday to a year and a half in prison.

Gene Leroy Thompson Jr., 55, and his wife, Guojiao "Becky" Zhang, 40, both pleaded guilty to conspiracy to traffic in counterfeit goods.

The two worked with an unidentified accomplice who stored and shipped the goods from a home in Nyssa, located along the Snake River on the

Idaho border.

Prosecutors say Thompson, as an information program officer for the U.S. Embassy in Seoul who held an "exceptionally trusted role" with the highest level of security clearance within the U.S. government, abused his position to facilitate the crime.

While responsible for ensuring the cybersecurity of the embassy, Thompson used his State Department computer to create online accounts for sale of the counterfeit bags on eBay, Poshmark and Mercari, and then provided the login credentials for those accounts to his wife, prosecutors said.

Zhang communicated

with customers and procured merchandise, and conveyed transaction information and a prepaid shipping label to an unidentified co-conspirator in Oregon, who stored and shipped the knock-off goods to customers across the United States. The goods bore counterfeit versions of the Vera Bradley trademark, according to the government.

The criminal scheme lasted from September 2017 through December 2019.

U.S. District Judge Michael J. McShane sentenced Zhang to eight months of home detention with GPS monitoring and ordered that she have limited ability to leave her home.

"In my mind, the misuse of government facilities to facilitate this crime makes it more onerous," the judge said.

The couple also must forfeit \$229,000, a substantial amount of their life savings that represents the gross amount of their counterfeit sales but more than they gained from their enterprise, and pay \$740.17 to Vera Bradley.

"There is a need for deterrence in these kinds of crimes," McShane said. "Privileged people don't get to engage in it and walk away, while we are sending underprivileged marginalized young men and women every day to prison in this country."

Kratom

Continued from A7

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, however, disagrees and considers the substance dangerous. In 2018, FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb said in a statement, "There is no evidence to indicate that kratom is safe or effective for any medical use."

House Bill 2646 would direct the Oregon Department of Agriculture to adopt rules to carry out the regulations and allow civil penalty for some violations of those rules. The bill would make it a crime to sell kratom to anyone under 21.

HB 2646 is the second attempt by Oregon Rep. Bill Post, R-Keizer, to get Oregon lawmakers to agree to a legal framework for the substance.

He started his effort when some in Oregon's kratom in-



Mary Esch/AP file

A bill in the Oregon Legislature would regulate kratom.

dustry came to him, looking for ways to make the product safer for consumers and themselves.

Kratom as it's sold now is not labeled in any way, meaning it can be adulterated with many substances.

"There are no safeguards

for consumers whatsoever," said Jenn Lauder, the director of marketing and advocacy at PDX Aromatics, a Portland-based company that imports kratom from Indonesia and makes it into capsules and extracts.

Lauder is one of the backers of HB 2646.

The narrative around kratom can be bad, she said.

Deaths have been attributed to the substance, though supporters of kratom attribute that to adulteration. And the product has been recalled for salmonella. PDX Aromatics itself has had salmonella issues.

"We've been working really hard to counter the narrative," Lauder said.

According to Post, it is kratom producers that are pushing for rules. "The industry wants to pay the state to say, 'Your kratom is pure,'" he said.

Post himself is a kratom believer. Lauder gave him some capsules to try while she was educating him about the substance, he said.

It helped his back pain, Post said, and "I've been using it ever since."

YOUR HOROSCOPE *By Madalyn Aslan*

Stars show the kind of day you'll have

★★★★★ DYNAMIC | ★★★★★ POSITIVE | ★★★ AVERAGE | ★★ SO-SO | ★ DIFFICULT

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 2021: Charming, kind and introspective, plan several trips that are both educational and enjoyable. This year, expressing yourself artistically is high on your priority list, even if you step back from other activities. Give back by mentoring or volunteering for a group that shares your ideals. If single, you want to love and be loved, so it can happen. If attached, take your partner on an adventure. CANCER understands you deeply.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★★ Make sibling rivalry a thing of the past. Bite the bullet and contact them with a friendly message. Get your errands done early. Brush up on your time management skills, and everything will get done. Tonight: Try on a new outfit.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★★ Something you ordered may be delayed or out of stock. Do your research and find alternative products. It is never too early to explore vacation destinations. "Save more and spend less" should be your mantra. Tonight: Rearrange furniture to increase comfort.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★★ Today might bring messages from friends who you love hearing from. Observe the effect you have on others. People want to be around you but may drain your energy. You might need to define your boundaries. Tonight: Home sweet home.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★★ Volunteer for a cause you believe in, but do not feel pressured. Whatever you can do will be most appreciated. Time alone may be time well spent. Take a walk outside and enjoy your playlist. Tonight: Catch up on email.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) 11

★★★★★ Try out a new exercise, dance or yoga class, either in person or online. Invite friends along to sample the wares. Exchange ideas with people you admire. Get past your insecurity even if you get overruled. Tonight: Reading in bed.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★★ A speech or presentation may get you noticed by your peers. Sigh a breath of relief that you achieved your goal with flying colors. Celebrate your victory. Go to your favorite restaurant with someone you love. Tonight: Attend a weekly meeting.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★★ Mentor someone who wants to learn skills you have mastered. You might be surprised that others want to absorb your knowledge. This is not the time for modesty. Be proud of what you know and can share. Tonight: Chat with friends.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★★ Review savings or investment accounts. Carve space in your schedule to organize tax documents. There may be a problem you need to solve. A friend may arouse your interest in spy or mystery novels. Tonight: Update your wardrobe with accessories.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★★ Today brings people you love closer together. You might need to mediate and straighten out a misunderstanding between two colleagues. Remind someone special how much they mean to you. Plan a surprise they will never forget. Tonight: Get a massage.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★★ Exchange different points of view with a new team. Compromise is the keyword. Share social time after hours with co-workers. Aim to unwind and feel fit. Blow off steam at the gym or take a power walk. Tonight: A healthy dinner.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★★ Children and grandchildren have words of wisdom. Just listen. No need to respond. Creative urges are put to the test since you need your own space. Involve those closest to you and your problem is solved. Tonight: Work up a sweat.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★★ Connect with a relative you miss seeing. Be supportive, not argumentative, when you hear the latest news. Vehicles may cause problems, so be on the lookout. Shop for colorful home furnishings, but keep to your budget. Tonight: Turn on dance music.

Equity

Continued from A7

"In our view, these strong equity gains are a clear positive for homeowner balance sheets, as well as for overall additional consumer spending, should homeowners be desirous of tapping a portion of their equity gains," Jonathan Woloshin, a real estate and lodging analyst at UBS, wrote in a research note last week.

Rising home values and low mortgage rates spurred many U.S. homeowners to refinance

and cash in some of the equity in their home last year. Homeowners pulled out \$152.7 billion in equity, an increase of 41.7% from 2019 and the highest refinancing cash-out dollar amount since 2007, according to mortgage buyer Freddie Mac.

Homeowners also tapped into the equity in their home via a home equity line of credit. The volume of such lines of credit more than doubled in 2020 from a year earlier to \$74.9 billion.

Low mortgage rates, strong demand and a record low inventory of homes for sale na-

tionwide have fueled home sales and pushed home prices higher since last summer.

Sales of previously occupied U.S. homes climbed 5.6% in 2020 from a year earlier to 5.64 million, the highest level since 2006 at the height of the housing boom, according to the National Association of Realtors. The national median home sales price jumped 12.9% to \$309,800. In Bend and Redmond, the median sales price for a single-family home in February was \$575,000 and \$373,000, respectively, accord-

ing to the Beacon Appraisal Group of Redmond.

The strong demand for homes continued in January, with sales ticking up 0.6% from December and almost 24% from a year earlier. By the end of January, however, the supply of homes on the market nationally was down to a record-low 1.04 million units. That amounts to a 1.9 months' supply. A balanced housing market tends to have a 6-month supply. The Realtors group issues its February home sales data next week.

Castparts

Continued from A7

Precision Castparts makes heavy metal components for jet aircraft and other industrial products. It was among Oregon's biggest companies when it sold to Berkshire Hathaway, Warren Buffett's investment firm, for \$37 billion in 2016. Its Redmond plant was one of the region's largest employers, with about 450 employees in 2019, according to Economic Development for Central Oregon.

Precision Castparts struggled last year amid the downturn in global aviation, and because of Boeing's setbacks with its 737 MAX plane. The company laid off 40% of its global workforce.

Its revenue had been stagnant for several years, though, and earlier this month Buffett admitted that he'd overpaid by \$10 billion for the Portland company.

Precision Castparts didn't immediately respond to a message Thursday seeking comment on this week's court ruling, so it's not clear whether the company will seek to appeal to the Supreme Court. Anderson said the union is hopeful it will not, and that negotiations can now begin.

"We typically haven't had this kind of relationship with them, especially with Warren Buffett promoting himself as pro labor," he said. "The ball's in their court. It's my hope they wouldn't do something like that."

DEATH NOTICES

Michael Joseph

Pankratz
of Redmond, OR
December 16, 1944 -
March 12, 2021

Arrangements:
Autumn Funerals of Redmond is honored to serve the family. 541-504-9485
Memories and condolences may be expressed to the family on our website at www.autumnfunerals.net
Services:
A family service was held.

John "Chuck" Charles

Webb
of La Pine, OR
September 23, 1952 -
March 15, 2021

Arrangements:
Baird Memorial Chapel of La Pine is honored to serve the Webb family. Please visit our website, www.bairdfh.com, to share condolences and sign the online guestbook.

Shirley Jean Dexter

of Terrebonne, OR
Feb 23, 1933 - March 15,
2021

Arrangements:
Autumn Funerals of Redmond is honored to serve the family. 541-504-9485
Memories and condolences may be expressed to the family on our website at www.autumnfunerals.net
Services:
A graveside service will be held at the Terrebonne Pioneer Cemetery on Monday March 22, 2021 at 1:00 PM
Contributions may be made to:
St. Charles Hospice, 2275 NE Doctor's Drive Suite 3 Bend, OR 97701

OBITUARY DEADLINE

Call to ask about our deadlines
541-385-5809
Monday-Friday 10am-3pm
Email: obits@bendbulletin.com

OBITUARY

Jane Selisch

March 21, 1936 - March 6, 2021



Jane Selisch left us on March 6, 2021. She was born in McMinnville Oregon March 21, 1936 to John and Ellen Harrington. After graduating from McMinnville High in 1955 she was introduced to Walt Selisch and they were married shortly after. They had two boys, Max and Kurt. Jane was a 4th generation Oregonian; her maternal great-great grandparents traveled the Oregon Trail in a covered

wagon and settled in Oregon City spring of 1853. Walt and Jane moved from McMinnville to Bend in 1969, owned Bob's Sporting Goods for a number of years then started Selisch Insurance Agency which they operated until their retirement in the mid 1980's.

Jane enjoyed hiking, skiing, playing cards, wildflowers, bird watching, trail rides on her horse Buddy, and her many friends. Walt and Jane traveled extensively in their motorhome after retirement. Arizona in the winter, and Campbell River, BC in spring for salmon fishing. They also traveled to Maui on numerous occasions and the beauty of the island was another of Mom's favorite places. Unfortunately, in her later years she suffered from dementia but always had a smile on her face, could recognize family and friends, and continued to be the loving person she always had been.

A memorial service will be held at a later date. She leaves behind her husband Walt, sons Max and Kurt, and grandchildren Sam, Reid, and Avery. She is preceded in death by her granddaughter Brooke. In lieu of flowers, please donate to the Alzheimer's Assoc: www.act.alz.org/donate.

