

I'm All for Saving the Earth But...

I performed stretching exercises, secured the laces on my gym shoes, ran in place to build up endurance, then flipped the light switch and made a mad dash into the kitchen pantry.

I flung canned goods on the shelf and shoved pasta and peas into every available nook and cranny. "Faster! Faster!" I chided myself, "time is running out!"

I still had a half a bag to go when the warning signal flashed and poof!

Black out.

"Help, Help!" I shouted from the deepest, darkest depths of dry goods and non-perishables.

Suddenly I heard a voice say, "Go toward the light."

What light? I snapped.

A flashlight beam appeared and I stumbled toward it.

My husband stood on the other end, shaking his head. "Must you always make re-stocking the pantry such a dramatic event?"

"ME? Since you installed that flashing, automatic shut-off switch, I've had to train with the Olympic triathlon team just to put my groceries away before the pantry goes black."

"We're saving energy, not to mention money," he reminded me.

"Just flip the switch and move out of my way," I said, while running in place. "I've got to stock the creamed corn and the string beans before the next black out."

After the exhausting stock-a-thon, I decided to reward myself with a long hot soak in the tub. As I headed toward the bathroom, I felt someone behind me, and turned to face a full jury.

"You can't take a bath!" my kindergartener said, "My teacher says to save the water for the fish and take a lukewarm shower."

My older children set the stop watch and my husband waved the water bill.

After a school semester on saving energy and learning about the 3 R's - reuse, reduce and recycle, my children are out to save the earth and my husband is glowing like a light bulb, an energy saving fluorescent one, of course. He now has a small army of allies in his mission to reduce the utility bills.

I know I don't own this land, that I'm just borrowing it from my children, but I wish the loan included a few things I've grown accustomed to. Take, heat for instance! Maybe it's just a petty personal thing, but during the winter months, I happen to like the temperature inside my home to be warmer than the temperature outside.

While eating dinner one evening, with some difficulty due to the thermal mittens I wore to prevent frostbite, I gingerly broached the temperature topic: "Don't you think it's a tad cold in here?"

"Not at all," my family replied.

"Then how do you explain the frosts on these green beans?" I asked.

There was no deterring them. They were on a steady course and I was just an annoying obstacle, a piece of littler to be picked up and put in its proper receptacle.

SLIGHTLY OFF

by Deb DiSandro

My children routinely rummaged through the kitchen garbage removing all the recyclable items I had somehow missed.

They held up each indiscretion and stared at me as if I've just sold a secret to Russia.

"This is a number two, mom. You've got to look at the bottom of these containers."

"It's so dark in here I couldn't read the number," I said in my defense.

"The earth is crying!" my kindergartener explained.

"Then get her a Kleenex!" I snapped.

I was beginning to unwind. My teeth were gritty with toothpaste because I couldn't leave the water on long enough to rinse. Icicles hung from my wet hair and due to low wattage light bulbs, I hadn't worn a pair of matched socks in weeks! I was all set to tell my family they could save the earth, but I was moving to Mars, when my husband walked in with movie tickets.

"What's this?" I asked.

"Well, with all the money we've been saving on utility bills, I figured we could swing a babysitter, movie and dinner out tonight.

"Turn off these lights, kids!" I shouted. "And turn down the heat another two degrees. It's like a furnace in here."

If you can't beat em, join em.

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