RAISE
Roanoke Area Interfaith
Stewards of the Earth

Greetings from RAISE! This month's newsletter is a letter that our member, Jane Gabrielle McCadden, wrote to the *Roanoke Times* (maybe you'll see it in print soon!) It was signed by several RAISE members.

To the Editor:

The environmental crisis is not environmental. It is spiritual.

> *"I used to think the top environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and climate change. I thought that with 30 years of good science we could address these problems. But I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed and apathy, and to deal with those we need a spiritual and cultural transformation, and we scientists don't know how to do that." -*
>
> -Gus Speth, Founder of the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Indeed, this seems to be the case with Roanoke City's five cent bag tax. On a recent afternoon in the Kroger self-checkout, customers encouraged each other to "just press none" when engaged with the "how many bags?" query. Clearly, lying about how many bags one takes to avoid the 5 cent bag tax seems a small sin in the grand scheme of things. However, it IS indicative of how dismissive humanity has become about the state of our common home: Earth.

Roanoke City doesn't want you to pay a bag tax. They want you to bring your own bags, and become conscientious about the litter in your city. If one's reaction to that is lying about how many bags one uses, then one is neither conscientious, nor truthful.

With regard to the bag tax at self-checkout, either Kroger should assign a "bag tax cop" to monitor customer truthfulness, or they should eliminate bags altogether at self-checkout. Like the HOV lanes on our congested interstates, a luxury if one is carpooling, self-checkout becomes a luxury for those that bring their own bags.

Please consider that as a human being, we are not separate from the habitat and biosphere of this planet. The Creator made us an integral part of all the swirling habitat around us, coevolving with the biosphere. As such, we owe each other a debt of care and responsibility. The City cannot tax you into taking this responsibility. Only you can do that.

Signed by members of RAISE, Roanoke Area Interfaith Stewards of the Earth

Interested in joining RAISE? Find us on Facebook or write us at roanokeaise@gmail.com!