

Q&A ON THE NEWS;
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Colin Bessonette Do you have a question on the news - local, national or international?

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Body

Q: Where can I get information about State Department warnings on travel to foreign countries? --- Ralph Sanders, Lawrenceville A: You can listen to such warnings (as well as consular information sheets with facts about various countries, and public announcements) 24 hours a day by calling 202-647-5225 from a touch-tone phone. Or you can get printed information by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the Office of Overseas Citizens Services, Room 4800, Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20520-4818; write the name of the requested country or countries on the outside of the envelope. The information also is available from travel agents, and can be found on the State Department's home page: <http://www.state.gov> **Q:** At the end of the movie "As Good As It Gets," a statement of dedication in the credits lists three names, one presumably a pet. Can you explain? --- Jackie Prucha, Dunwoody A: All three are related in some way to Jim Brooks, the film's director. And all three are deceased. One was Ted Bessell, actor and close friend of Brooks; another was Diane Brooks, his sister; the third, Boo, was the director's dog. **Q:** A commentator at the Olympics said a hockey player had dual citizenship in the United States and Canada. Is that legal? I thought people who emigrated to the United States had to renounce citizenship in all other countries. --- Mark Charles, Marietta A: It's not illegal, but it can be confusing. Oddly, the current U.S. nationality laws don't specifically refer to dual nationality, and because of the problems it may cause, the U.S. government doesn't endorse dual nationality --- even though it recognizes the existence of dual nationality and permits Americans to have other citizenships.

The U.S. Supreme Court has stated that dual nationality "is a status long recognized in the law" and that "a person may have and exercise rights of nationality in two countries and be subject to the responsibilities of both." Dual nationality results from the lack of a uniform rule of international law relating to the acquisition of nationality. Each country has its own laws, and its nationality is conferred on the basis of its own independent domestic policy. Sometimes the laws differ, and sometimes one country's laws are in conflict with those of another.

One of the requirements for U.S. naturalization is a renunciation of other nationalities. However, some countries don't recognize naturalization in a foreign state as grounds for loss of citizenship, so a person from one of those countries who is naturalized in the United States keeps the nationality of the country of origin. **Q:** If you live in one county and buy a vehicle in another, which county's sales tax rate applies? --- Bob Rudoff, Lawrenceville A: The sales tax rate in the county where you live is the one that applies, said Vanessa Cantrell of the Georgia Department of Revenue. If you buy your vehicle in a county where the tax is lower, and the dealer assesses the tax of that county, you will be billed for the difference, she added. **Q:** Do taxpayers pay for the free advertising on those official signs near highway exits naming gas station brands, restaurants, motels and so on at that exit? --- Charles

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Mayfield, Covington A: The Georgia logo sign program was privatized in May 1995. Since then, no taxpayer dollars have been used in administering the program, according to Chris Myers of the state Department of Transportation. Statewide, there are 10,000 logo signs. Georgia Logos Inc., the company that administers the program, charges fees to the establishments whose names are listed. The company points out that the state lost money when it was operating the program, but now the state is paid \$ 50,000 a year for the life of the 10-year contract. **Q:** Since her retirement from tennis several years ago, what has Martina Navratilova been doing? --- Debbie Clay, Draper, Va. A: She retired from the singles circuit in 1994, but she hasn't stopped playing tennis or being involved in various causes. In December, she took part in the Virginia Slims Legends Tour in Florida. Other projects include providing "color" as a commentator for HBO's Wimbledon coverage; working for charities that benefit animal rights and underprivileged children; and working to aid lesbian and gay causes, such as promoting the Rainbow Card, a Visa card that raises money for gay civil rights groups. Navratilova, whose permanent residence is in Aspen, Colo., also writes; her third mystery, "Killer Instinct," written with Liz Nickles, was released last fall.

Graphic

Photo :

Mug of Martina Navratilova.

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