

Just what part of 'NO' did they not understand?

All the service academies are steeped in tradition. The newest, Air Force, seems to have developed a tradition of male cadets raping the women.

Worse, the victims are telling the world, if a woman reports such a crime, the norm is for the air force to call her a liar, or worse, and quietly force her out.

This is not about the argument over whether women belong in the armed forces. Or even about whether women belong in combat.

Women are in the service, for better or for worse. In the air force, as pilots and in a hundred other roles, they will find combat.

Forced to investigate, the air force says it has so far identified 56 cases over the last 10 years where women were raped or sexually assaulted at the academy. Investigators believe there will be more.

A squad of 17 investigators is camped at the Colorado Springs campus, digging deeper into the rape scandal.

Today, at least, the air force is taking the problem seriously.

It took a couple of brave young women to come forward and tell the nation what was happening.

They reported, and others have backed them up, that the academy did not investigate their claims. Instead, air force officials told them, essentially, that whatever happened was their fault.

One woman said her only mistake was trusting a senior cadet to give her a ride home.

Eventually, most of the victims left the acad-

emy and the air force. They went to other colleges where rape is viewed as a crime, not a sport, today. Where rape crisis centers listen to women and try to help them.

The men — they went on to become officers, if not gentlemen.

Though it seems like the women might have more integrity, that's the way it happened. They were punished for being victims, the men were promoted.

It's shameful that one of our vaunted service academies would foster such values. Rape has never been a military option for America, any more than we would sanction wanton killing of civilians or any other war crime.

But apparently, air force cadets are not bound to take a lady's word for it when she says "no."

The air force says it is investigating. The air force says it will clean house. The air force says it is teaching cadets that no really does mean no.

It should go beyond that. The young women who were wronged deserve an apology, and if they want it, another chance at the careers they sought.

And the men, the guys who wouldn't take no for an answer?

They should be sought out and either drummed out of the force, or invited to spend their next vacation in Leavenworth.

America, we should be ashamed that this was allowed to happen.

It's not what our military should be.

— Steve Haynes

MOM would end this problem

Have you received the e-mail that asks why the State Department doesn't send a team of mothers into Iraq to find Saddam's hidden stashes?

All the U.N. inspectors are men. Everyone knows that men can't find the laundry hamper or a jar of peanut butter sitting on a shelf right in front of them. But a mother can sniff out a diary two rooms and one floor away; she knows when the cookie jar lid has been tampered with; and she can smell a cigarette a block away.

A mother would march into Saddam's office with a wooden spoon in her hand, grab him by the ear and twist it until he told where everything was hidden. And woe to him if he tried to lie to her; she could see it in his eyes and would thump him good.

There's more than a little truth to that.

With the U.S. about to enter into an armed conflict with Iraq, this might not be the best time to leave the country. But that is exactly what we're doing.

Our second Mexico mission trip of the year was scheduled long before Saddam and his cronies ever thought of hiding their shame, let alone weapons of mass destruction.

We were to be in Mexico on Monday, the deadline for him to come clean or else. We're going to trust there won't be any problem getting back across the border.

This will be a reunion trip, of sorts. The team we are going with is the same team from Concordia University of Wisconsin that we accom-



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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panied into Juarez last year. They requested us as advisors again and we were more than happy to comply.

You never lose a friend; you just make new ones.

—ob—
Maybe I shouldn't brag about our corn burner. But I can't help it. I'm like the little old lady who received a phone call from a storm window company a year after she had them install new, energy-efficient windows.

The accounting office called her to say that she had never paid them for the windows. This really upset her and she said, "I'll tell you exactly

what your salesman told me: 'they'll pay for themselves in a year.'"

—ob—
Moisture or not, spring is struggling to burst forth. I've noticed buds on the trees, grass shoots popping up, and tulips and daffodils peeking through. It's the season and it's the cycle. Couldn't stop it, even if we wanted to.

From the Bible

The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. Luke 18:27b

Readers request letters

To the Editor:

I recently visited Maxine Plotts, who recently moved to a retirement home in Hillsboro, Ore. It had been at least 68 years since we had seen one another, but she looks good, gets around on her own two feet.

I am the former Dorothea Selby. It was very interesting after so many years recalling old memories.

I am sure that either or both of us

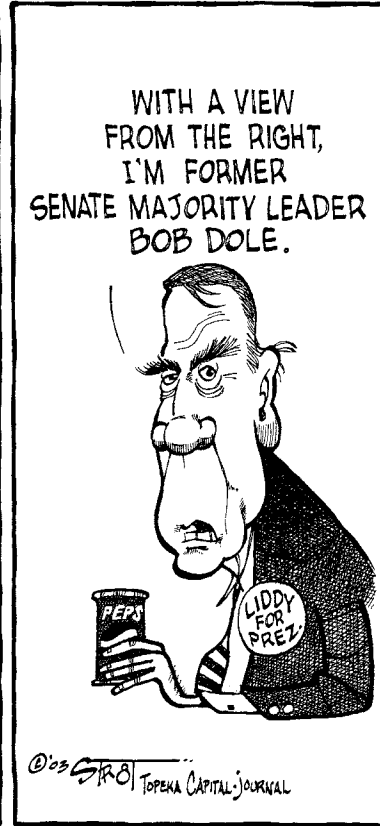
would appreciate hearing from old schoolmates in Oberlin.

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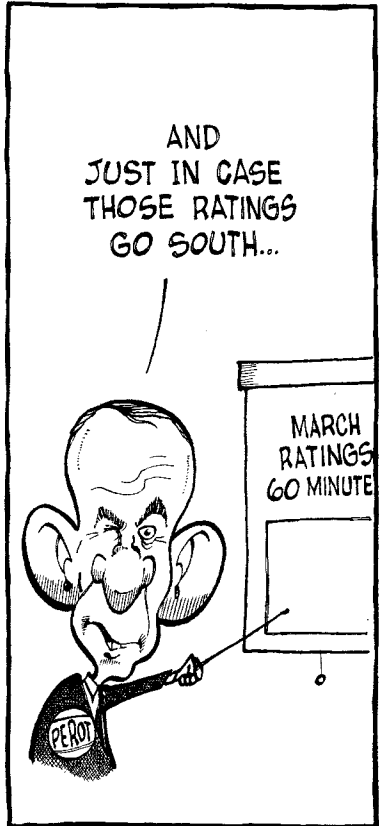
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WITH A VIEW FROM THE LEFT, I'M FORMER PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON.



WITH A VIEW FROM THE RIGHT, I'M FORMER SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BOB DOLE.



AND JUST IN CASE THOSE RATINGS GO SOUTH...

Please don't bring them with you

*Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet
Eating her curds and whey
Along came a spider
and sat down beside her
And frightened Miss Muffet away.*

And what did Miss Muffet become when she grew up? A biology teacher.

Youngest daughter was afraid of everything that crawled when she was little. A garden spider would send her screaming for the house. A house spider would send her into a frenzy of stomping, hitting and smashing. Sometimes she even killed the spider.

Last week, she called us from Lawrence to say that the tarantula had arrived in the mail.

I don't know if I was more amazed that my little Miss Muffet had gotten a spider or that the U.S. mail had delivered a poisonous insect.

I don't know how her junior high science classes felt about the new arrival but, she said, it was a sensation in the teachers' lounge.

The social studies coach grabbed the newly arrived arachnid and chased both of the sixth-grade teachers around the room with it. Since he was, and hopefully still is, married to one of them, I suspect that he is in the dog house at home.



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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While daughter was happy to get the tarantula and three leopard frogs from the postman, she was worried because her scorpion hadn't come. A scorpion lost in the mail. That conjures up some weird thoughts.

She was worried that the poor thing would die, since the school was closed for a snow day and then it was the weekend. What if? What if? What if? she moaned.

What if someone else opened up her package? I wondered. Instead of a shipment of computer disks, they get a poisonous bug. They could talk about their computer bug for years.

Actually, daughter found that the scorpion has not been sent out from the biological supply house. She didn't know if they were suspicious of her personal credit card, used to insure shipment, or if the bug was on back order.

How do you back order a scor-

pion?
I was fascinated by how all these creatures are shipped.

The tarantula, she said, came in a clear plastic box that looked like Tupperware, except there were air holes in the lid. The frogs came in a larger, round opaque plastic container like a gallon of ice cream.

Oh great, a leftover live spider and a gallon of spotted frogs. Sounds like a banquet for a hawk, but I hope I don't find it in my fridge.

Daughter is rather partial to bringing her leftover science projects home. Last year she had a hamster running all over the place and this year there's a turtle hibernating under her couch.

If I have to deal with one of her "pets," I hope I get the frogs. Those I can handle. They don't bite. They don't sting. And if I get tired of them, I can always go fishing.

Our cup runneth over and over

Evan and I smiled. It had been a pretty good day. Nothing had overflowed.

It was supposed to be a nice, cheap ski trip.

A new valve on the water line ensured that we could open up the house, stay there and save motel expenses. A slab of ham and some bread meant we could avoid overpriced ski-area food.

And of course, we believed this would all work out.

Our wives had no interest in spending four days in the cold and snow, so they stayed behind.

Other invited guests demurred. Maybe they knew what was coming. The first hit of trouble came when Ron, the cabin guy who opens and closes houses (in real life, he's a carpenter), called.

When he had gone to turn on the water, he said, it sputtered up through the casing around the key. Not a good sign, especially since the valve had been installed new last fall to allow us to turn it on in the spring.

Ron said he'd called a plumber, the water district maintenance man and a back hoe guy. It sounded expensive.

By the next day, they had the water back on and had filled the hole. It was expensive, but it was OK to come on out.

And so we drove on into the night. We got there too late to eat at our favorite Mexican restaurant, but we had Chinese instead. We drove on to the house.

It was cold. There was some water on the floor in the laundry room, but we wiped it up. We didn't know this would become a pattern.

We built a fire, filled the hot tub and went to bed.



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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At least the blankets were warm. Come morning, things started to unravel.

The hot tub, it was cold. We traced the problem to a seal on the pump which was admitting air. We went back to the bathroom to take a shower, and found water on the floor. Lots of it, and more, coming UP out of the shower. It didn't take long to find out where the water was coming from, or why.

One look in the sewer cleanout out back showed it was full of ice.

Apparently, ever since Ron turned the water on, it had been backing up in the sewer line.

We called Ron, who came out, and shook his head. The water district guy was unreachable. The city crew said they'd try to clear the line with their water jet.

Evan and I mopped up the back room and bailed out the shower, six 2 1/2-gallon buckets worth of foul, nasty water.

We went skiing. We were late, but that at least that went well.

We got home anticipating a shower, but no dice. The bottom of the stall was filling up again — neighbors upstream who thought their sewer was working were still flushing — so we bailed again. We soaked in the lukewarm hot tub. It felt good, but we shivered when we got out, and built up the fire.

We fixed the seal, but by then it was bed time. Since we'd stoked the fire so much, we had to peel off the covers. That's weird in the winter at 9,000 feet.

The next day, we went to the valley to get potatoes, stopping at the Mexican restaurant on the way back. That made us a little late, but we went skiing again.

When we got back, the shower had drained and the toilets worked. We could shower!

We decided to wash the nasty towels we'd mopped the floor with in celebration. But when we started the washer, the water ran out onto the floor. More towels and a mop were needed, we reconnected the lint filter, and things were good.

Saturday, we spent the morning cleaning up, packing and hauling 400 pounds of potatoes back to the truck. We were a little late to the ski area, but it was one of God's own days: sunny, 40 degrees, lots of powder, and the runs were golden. Warmer than Kansas, actually.

We started the long drive back tired, but happy.

Nothing had overflowed. Life was good. And we made it home by 3 a.m.

The skiing was good, but the trip wasn't easy. And I've got a hunch it wasn't cheap, either.

Opposition denies debate request

To the Editor:

Over the past couple of weeks, several people have asked me about a public debate between Ken Shobe and myself regarding the mayoral election. After due consideration, I decided that it was time to challenge Ken to such a debate.

I called him on the phone Friday evening and asked if he was interested in having a public debate and his answer was, "At this time, I am not particularly interested." He stated that he felt our views were presented well enough in *The Oberlin Herald* and that a debate was not necessary.

Letter to the Editor

So, unless Mr. Shobe changes his mind, there will not be a public debate.

It's too bad, though. I was really

looking forward to it.

Steve Smith
candidate for mayor
Oberlin



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