

## Soldier's stiff sentence may make others think

Maybe the next soldier who wants to beat or humiliate a prisoner will think twice.

Ten years is a long time in Leavenworth, where the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks is the polite name for the Army's penitentiary.

Ten years is how long Specialist Charles Graner Jr. will have to think about his sins.

Ten years for abusing prisoners in the now-infamous Abu Ghraib jail in Baghdad. An Army jury could have given him 15, and maybe they should have.

Graner didn't sound too contrite after the sentencing.

"There is a war on," he said. "Bad things happen."

That's true. War, in the words of W.T. Sherman, is hell. It makes men do things.

But in this country, we care. We know right from wrong, and we expect our soldiers to remember the difference. We always have.

Now that Private Graner has been judged, though, Americans should make some distinctions:

First, though he claims intelligence agents put him up to abusing prisoners to soften them up for interrogation, the jury did not buy it. He'd still be guilty, even if someone put him up to it. He did it willingly. He was having fun.

Second, though the media likes to talk about what he did as "torture," it is not. Abuse, yes.

Torture, hardly.

Making people do things to embarrass them

for sport is crude and reprehensible, but it's not torture. Graner and his pals force people to strip, took their pictures in sexually embarrassing poses, had them masturbate, force devoted Muslims to eat pork and drink liquor.

It's all disgusting, but in Iraq, there are many who know torture. Saddam Hussein and his minion were experts. Women were raped, men hooked up to electrodes, interrogators had many and worse methods.

That makes no difference, either. Our country is not going to tolerate soldiers who abuse prisoners, local citizens, or anyone else. Just because there's a war on, we're not going to abandon our principles.

We hope Mr. Graner will not be the last convicted in the Abu Ghraib scandal. If intelligence agents put these soldiers up to abusing prisoners, we'd like to see them in court, too.

And we hope the whole world is watching, because people should know not only that Americans can make mistakes, but that we can and will make them right.

War is never pretty, but it can be decent and honorable. That's our commitment. That's what this trial was all about.

Many nations wouldn't bat an eye at the type of behavior Charles Graner was convicted of. But this is America, and we like to think we are different.

— Steve Haynes

## Not really a laughing matter

Have you ever had something happen that, if the situation hadn't been so serious, it would have been the funniest thing in the world?

I've told you before that Jim and I, along with another couple, go into the state prison every Sunday for chapel services. Jim preaches the sermon, Ila plays the piano, Bob delivers one of his cowboy poems and I shake hands and remember names.

Each Sunday, we go through the security check. Our bags and Bibles are searched, we go through the metal detector and then we are "wanded" with a body scanner. It's a necessary step for everyone's security and we understand it and respect the seriousness of the situation. Bringing contraband into a prison is a serious offense, and we could lose our volunteer status.

To speed up the checking-in process and simplify things, we leave everything we're carrying on our persons in the gatehouse in a locker. That includes keys, coins, folding money, wallets and cell phones. We — literally — empty our pockets.

Now that I've laid the ground work, I need to back up a little. You see, Sunday was a fellowship dinner at our church and we had eaten there before going to the prison. Like most men, Jim stuck his silverware in the pocket of his jacket while he filled his plate.

Following dinner, we went directly to the prison, where we followed our usual routine. We signed in, stowed our personal things in the locker and started through the metal detector. The detector is so sensitive that it picks up metal belt buckles, zippers or buttons.

Bob, Ila and I had all stepped through and it was Jim's turn. He



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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had taken off his sport coat when we first got there and he carried it through with him.

You can imagine everyone's shock when, as he swung the jacket around to put it on, a spoon went flying across the floor. We all gasped as the officer in charge of our screening looked at the spoon, looked at Jim and then back at the spoon. We knew what he was thinking: "Aha. Contraband."

Jim had a stricken look on his face, and I know we shouldn't have,

but the rest of us burst out laughing. Jim began explaining about the dinner and how he had only used his fork.

The officer knew it was unintentional, but needless to say, the spoon did not go in with us.

Poor Jim. He is normally so careful.

On the way home, I said, "Let's see you dig your way out of this one."

To which he replied, "If I still had the spoon, I could."

### Photo Policy

The Oberlin Herald wants to emphasize photos of people doing things in the community. If you know of an event or news happening that we should attend, please call 475-2206.

Please be sure to allow a couple of days' notice so we can arrange to be there.

Space in the paper is limited and so is the time of our staff, so we may not be able to get to every event, but we will try.

Because space is so limited, we cannot run team or group photos, any pictures of people lined up or of people passing checks, certificates and the like. (We will always try to

make room for a story about any of these events, however.)

We do run wedding and engagement pictures and "mug" shots with stories and obituaries, when they are provided to us. Please remember that we need a clear, sharp picture. Dark or fuzzy prints will not work.

We cannot return photos unless you submit a self-addressed, stamped envelope with clear instructions for return. Other photos submitted may be picked up at our office within two weeks.

We can take passport photos if you provide a roll of color film. ASA 200, 12 exposure works fine. The charge is \$8.50 per person.



## Christmas tree haven for bird

Some people had a partridge in a pear tree over the holidays. I had a sparrow in the Christmas tree.

Steve warned me when I insisted on putting in a pet door that we would be finding more than cats inside the house. He was right.

So far, the cats have brought in a bird every three to four weeks.

Just after Christmas, after the children had all left and Steve was out doing errands, I was trying to solve the world's problems when Molly Monster waltzed into the room with a sparrow in her mouth.

Like a flash, I was after her, but she headed through the kitchen into the dining room, where she let go. Her prey immediately took flight, headed for the living room.

We were both in hot pursuit. The bird seemed to be headed for the front window, but suddenly spotted what looked like a safe haven. It dove into the Christmas tree.

The cat and I both came to a screeching halt and started staring intently at the tinsel- and light-festooned branches for a brown wing.

I looked high while Molly looked low, then she jumped onto a chair to check the middle of the tree. She has better eyes or a better nose, because she came up with the bird first.

However, I was armed with a couple of paper towels and a strong desire to not have more feathers spread all over my house — we'd



### Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes  
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been through the bird thing before.

I grabbed the bird out of her mouth and headed for the kitchen door with the cat hot on my tail.

I could feel the little heart beating under my hand but figured any bird that had been catted twice probably was a goner. Still, I wanted to toss the corpse as far as I could in hopes that the cat couldn't get it back before I had a chance to run downstairs and block the cat door.

I threw the bird as hard as I could and watched in amazement as it took wing and flew over the neighbor's roof.

Molly was disgusted. I had not only stolen her lunch, I had thrown it away.

I felt good. I had won a battle with a cat, which doesn't happen every day.

A few days later, I wasn't so lucky.

I decided we could get more dogs adopted at the Norton animal shelter if we put their pictures in the pa-

per, so I went out with the animal control officer to take dog pictures.

The dogs were great, though almost impossible to photograph. They were either trying to kiss me or run away. After a lot of laughter and licking, I got the happy faces of three dogs.

There was only one cat at the shelter, and it had escaped. It was hiding under the cat kennels, and I said I would help catch it.

After all the excitement with the dogs, though, the cat was not in a good mood. As soon as I laid hands on it, it turned and went for me with all 10 front claws.

My left hand looks a little like Fearless Leader from the Rocky and Bullwinkle Show.

The scratches aren't deep. It was my own fault. A day later, the animal control officer said, she was able to catch the cat with no problem. Timing is everything.

So, I won one and I lost one. Fighting with cats, that's pretty good.

## Dog begins to earn her keep

We've had more complaints about the cat columns, so I thought — just to be fair — I'd bore you with some stories about my dog, Annie.

I don't write about Annie too often, because I prefer to let the statute of limitations expire first.

Well, actually, she's doing a lot better these days. I haven't paid a fine on her in nearly three years. Escapes are no longer on her daily to-do list.

And she actually is starting to earn her keep a little.

Annie, you'll remember, was wilder than wild when we got her from the pound in Goodland. Though she's a purebred Brittany, her first owner left her at the lockup. The Humane Society ladies said there were papers on her, but since we had no plans to breed her, and they don't allow that anyway, we never saw them.

Just as well. Purebred, huh? Pure devil is more like it.

If you let her off the leash, that dog was gone. She'd take off down the street at a steady 25 mph, never hesitating as you yelled and shouted. There was no way to catch up. Once, a guy clear across town found her and called. Usually, the dogcatcher got her.

Confined to the pen, she'd dig her way out. Finally, we tied her to the fence post and double-latched the gate. That almost stopped her.

Funny thing was, while I never could find her when she escaped, the police chief always could. The first time, she got off with a warning. The next time, she was expensive.

We tried taking her in the field. She'd run about a mile ahead and



### Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes  
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listen to no command. I tried a long leash, but that was just a tangle.

Then she met up with Mr. Shock Collar. People who knew her when are amazed. She still takes off like a shot, but I can call her off a rabbit or a cat. She's learned to behave — and come when I call.

Well, sort of. A year ago, if she took off, she'd be back in half an hour. Today, she just runs around the house a few times. Anyway, she hasn't run off in more than a year. I get compliments on the way she obeys. And she's learning to hunt. Being 5 may have helped to settle her down. I'm not sure.

She's been hunting several times this year. The first day was nothing spectacular. The second, she pointed a covey of quail and held them rock solid until my brother-in-law and his son were in position.

Those quail about gave me a heart attack when they got up.

Later that week, she pointed and held a pheasant. Before, she'd usually bust them a block ahead of the gun, but not this time. She's done it again since, too, so maybe it wasn't just an accident.

And the last few weeks, she's been learning to retrieve. The other day, she found the pheasant skin we use for scent training and brought it

to me. Let go, too.

That didn't do any good the other day when I shot a pheasant. It hit the ground and was never seen again. She tracked it to the fence line, though.

I don't think she'll ever be a perfect hunter, but she's at least fun to work with now. And when she's on point, she sure is pretty.

Maybe I'll keep her.

Who am I kidding? One look into those big brown eyes, and I'm lost.

Of course I'll keep her. Which makes the improved behavior and the lack of tickets all the nicer.

### From the Bible

Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Malachi 3: 16, 17

## Reader would miss *The Herald*

To the Editor:

I cannot be without my paper. Most of the write-ups are about second generation people from when I lived on a farm by Dresden.

However, I come to Oberlin and visit my brother, Rhomine Smith, and my son owns the house in Dresden that was mine, so we come to Decatur County pretty often. That

will always be home. My son is now an engineering teacher.

Your weather usually hits two days after Denver.

I sure enjoy the 125-100-75-50

and 25 yesteryears, also the museum right by it. I clip both out.

Keep up the good work!

Arlee (Smith) Williams  
Westminster, Colo.

## Nice to see lengthy Jennings items

To the Editor:

I recently received my Jan. 5 issue of *The Oberlin Herald* and was

very pleased to read such a fine and lengthy publication of Jennings news items. Kudos to Louise

Cressler.

Dr. Jack Bainter  
Indianapolis

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