

was a gift, accompanied by a card that read, "Your garden inspired me to start my own garden."



**Tip of the month:** Collect salvaged "junk." You too may know a promising Rembrandt that can turn it into garden decor.

(Credit for illustrations by Sally Lackaff, another Rembrandt.)

Please send your comments, questions and suggestions to June's Garden, P. O. Box 74, Cannon Beach, OR 97110.

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**NO MEANS YES**

by Myrna Uhlig

Having decided on a title, I am reminded of something entirely different from my intended subject. Then again, I suppose sex and politics have quite a lot in common.

Like many other young, naive and nubile females, I spent my fair share of time espousing my platform from the backseat, defending my right to remain clothed and chaste. I once overheard the highlights of my latest debate as related by my opponent to other members of his party. His all-knowing spin doctor came to a conclusion other than I would have expected, "They all SAY no, but they MEAN yes."

I HAD experienced this contradictory phrasology in a more openly-sanctioned political process.

My stepfather was one of those young men who dropped out of school at an early age to help support his family. Worse, his sporadic attendance had left him unable to read. He brought home the San Jose Mercury News every night. None of us kids knew that he only pretended to read it.

Then my half-sister came along. She was born a true book lover, and magically appeared on the nearest available lap-book in hand. My step-dad 'read' to her most often. Rather, he described the action according to the illustrations. When she complained that he didn't read a particular book the same way last time, he made efforts to focus on the printed words. By the time she was four, she'd patiently tell him, "No, Daddy, that's not what it says--try again."

There was a one-room schoolhouse with huge windows facing the road about a quarter-mile from us. The year before my sister's long-awaited enrollment in that squat, Spanish-style little school, the local school board decided to close the old building. They put it to a vote of the community.

As I recall, there was no voter's pamphlet to pore over and decide before-hand the correct response for the desired result. Mom coached Bob to read the question thoroughly, and crossed her fingers; knowing she couldn't be with him when he cast his ballot--and that his reading level had only progressed to "The Cat in the Hat." She came home from the polls in a dither. The all-important question was worded in such a convoluted way that casting a 'yes' vote signified a desire not to close the school, while at first glance, 'no' appeared to be the appropriate response.

The school is now a private home--those wonderful windows are gone, their replacements much smaller; the playground only a bare patch of ground. I've no idea how close the tally truly was, but in my house it was an accepted fact that my step-dad's 'no' vote caused the demise of that cute little one-room school.

The fact that Bob wasn't an accomplished reader perhaps has little to do with his casting a vote contrary to his intention. I, for one, have noticed over the years that many questions on my ballot have been couched in confusingly muddled terms. I try to make it a policy to give the benefit of the doubt, and not buy into conspiracy theories, but...

So, though I'm fairly certain that 'no' doesn't mean 'yes' in the politics of young love, it very often does in the polling place. You be careful out there.

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