

Water Works

Indisputable rationale for reproductive freedom



Every Thanksgiving I thank my poor parents, rest their souls. It's a wonder they lived as long as they did, considering the toll I took on them. The expressions on their faces after my various antics loom large in my memory and keep me thankful I never had kids of my own.

As a child, I caused a lot of household damage, most of it involving water. Had my energies been channeled into more scientific pursuits, I might have become some kind of genius in the field of agricultural irrigation. But left to my own devices, my experiments veered toward home flooding.

By the time I was 6, I'd completely saturated the entire square footage of our three-bedroom house – twice. In my first episode I tried to replicate a TV commercial. In it a bathing beauty in a tall glass tank smiled underwater and held up a successfully retrieved, still-ticking Timex watch. Having no glass tank, swimming pool, or other body of water, I improvised.

I took my mother's Lady Bulova wristwatch from her jewelry box and brought it into the lab – my parents' bathroom. I closed myself inside the shower stall, plugged the drain with a rubber stopper, crammed my mom's entire collection of shower caps into the under-door crack, and turned on the water. I sat in there on the pink-tiled shower floor playing with Mom's watch while my tank filled. My experiment was interrupted by the screams of my mother coming home from work to a sheet of water flowing out from under the front door.

My second flooding incident entailed even more water. My cousin Wendy had come over to play one hot summer day. Before Mom left for work she told us to *be good*, a weird instruction for a couple of 6-year-olds. Our idea of *good* had, just the week before, included giving all the stuffed animals full-body shaves with dad's electric razor.

Wendy and I loved our dentist's fancy fish tank and wanted to make one of our own – big enough for us to be the fish. I was going to be a neon tetra. Wendy would be an angel fish. We stopped up the crack under my bedroom door and dumped some pennies onto the floor so we could dive for them once the water was deep enough. I climbed out the bedroom window onto the picnic table and into our front yard. I handed Wendy the garden hose through the window and turned on the spigot full blast. The hose sputtered a little, then started to flip around like a crazy snake.

It sprayed all over my pink floral wallpaper before I could climb back in and help Wendy wrestle it into submission. We wedged it between my mattress and the dust-ruffled box spring where it made a beautiful fountain pouring out water onto my bedroom floor.

Our squeals and giggles should have alerted my baby-sitting big brother, but he just sat in the family room glued to "Spin and Marty." Wendy and I were stomping around on the sploshy carpet when a car pulled up the driveway and tooted its horn. We climbed out onto the picnic table and waved hi. Wendy's mom leaned out the driver's window and asked did we want to go out for ice cream. Naturally we did. The 6-year-old brain being incapable of retaining awareness of running water at the same time ice cream is involved, we hopped into Auntie Phyll's wood-paneled station wagon and drove off.

And now here comes Thanksgiving, the holiday that reminds us to be thankful. I thank my dearly departed parents for never mentioning the cost of replacing the carpet or the Bulova (which did not keep on ticking). Above all, I'm thankful that – for the time being, at least – reproduction is not mandatory.

To take action against the right-wing assault on reproductive freedom, visit www.naral.org Writer Sally Sheklow performs with the improv comedy troupe WYMPROV! and welcomes comments at sally@wymprov.com

women are sending some sort of unspoken message with clothing or gestures. I sincerely hope that you never attempt to give advice to today's youth again, because you are without a doubt clueless in your expectations regarding love and relationships.

Astrid Shadle
Eugene

rate or lower group we help enable and justify our extreme exploitation and deplorable treatment of non-humans.

I am a former New York state "animal cruelty investigator," which is another example of the misuse of the word animal. The correct term would be "non-human animal cruelty investigator." I have seen with my own eyes the horrific world of animal food, testing, and fur industries. What goes on in these industries is so disturbing most people can't bear to watch video. We are all animals. We all love life and we all tremble with fear in the shadow of death. We all deserve respect and compassion!

Joshua Welch
Eugene

ANIMAL KINGDOM

The recent "Best of Eugene" edition gave me an opportunity to address a problem which most of us are part of. The question was asked to many of the award recipients: If you were an animal or vegetable, what would you be and why? Since human beings are animals this question is quite misleading. Webster's primary definition of animal: a multi-cellular organism that can move voluntarily and can actively acquire food and digest it internally. I was never the best science student, but I did learn that humans are part of a group called "the animal kingdom."

Somewhere down the line, most humans have made a decision to form our own little elite group. I recognize the enormous effect language we use has on our perception of the world. The language we use creates our reality. Just look at recent public policies such as the "Clear Skies" initiative or the "Healthy Forest" initiative which would indicate positive environmental change but do nothing of the sort. The outcome is millions of Americans believing these policies are cleaning up the environment. That is their reality. Just like when we refer to animals as a sepa-

POLARIZED NATION

What now? Now that George W. Bush is yet again our president, I ask myself, what do we do next? Our country is already more polarized than it has ever been as we continue to fight the wrong war, rape our forests, increase our unemployment rate and confuse family values with blatant discrimination and disregard for separation of church and state.

Our Earth and the American people cannot withstand four more years of President Bush if he continues to ignore both as he has done in the past four years. Can we have a peaceful revolution? What would that entail? I know that by voting, I volunteer myself to participate in this "democracy" whether or not my candidate wins. I do, however, fall into the age bracket (18-24) that could be targeted by an imposing draft. I may want to establish my own family some day, and do care

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