

OPINION

Whines & Gripes

collected by Jillian Curtis

Dear suitemate: is it really necessary to wake me up every morning at 6:30 AM by blasting the Spanish channel? No me gusta.

BDH: a cobbler bar? Really? And we wonder why Americans are so obese.

I'd really appreciate if professors stuck to the posted office hours. Nothing sucks more than waking up to see you at 8 AM to find out you're not there.

Only at Meredith will you see someone wearing a mini skirt and full-out jewelry at an 8 AM in 20 degree weather.

To the girl in the library who was singing along to music videos on the top floor of the library: this is the QUIET section. Please resume singing in the shower where no one can hear you.

Dear Meredith Girls - if you still don't know the difference between there, their, and they're (as well as your and you're) at this point in life, you should have failed the English Comp exam. I suggest that you take ENG 090 or ENG 175 to sort out your grammar issues. You make the rest of us look bad!

Questioning the Preacher

Ashleigh Phillips, Contributing Writer

I never got the switch. I ate all the squash mush that Mama put on my plate, accepted that I had to wear miserable white panty hose to Sunday School, and shared my favorite colored Crayolas with my younger sister. Staying in the boundary lines, I was a happy little blonde bobbing throughout my early childhood, but I was still awfully curious.

At the age of four my adhering to the rules paid off, and I was able to graduate to big church in the sanctuary. I had proved myself to be a mature young lady and sat in between my parents on the ancestral family pew. Never had I heard our preacher from the pulpit. I knew him only as the man who bent down to talk to me and my cousins after addressing my parents when the service was over. Sometimes he would occasionally give us the best Jolly Rancher candy. So on my first day in big church as I listened to our preacher go through the announcements and prayer requests, I decided that I liked him all right. The service moved on into hymns, and I really enjoyed them. I definitely felt it was a step up from the sing-along cassettes with "Jesus Loves Me" on them that seemed to be on a loop in our playground back home. By the time our preacher started into the sermon, I was feeling good, grown-up, and overtly haughty because I was in big church while my younger sister and all the other babies were back in the nursery listening to sing-along

cassettes.

I don't know if I had any expectations as to what the sermon would be about: maybe the old nursery standards like Jonah and the whale or Joseph and the coat of many colors with an added twist of multi-syllable words that grown-ups use. When our preacher launched into his rhetoric, the story was one that I had never heard before. At first I was slightly offended because I had been coming to church since I was born and knew all the answers to the little Bible quizzes we'd do for fun in pre-school. I decided that I didn't like our preacher. He was ranting about fire, and he wouldn't stop. It would burn forever with an unimaginable pain. This fire would be the worst thing that could ever happen to me. Our preacher went on and on and beat the dead horse for what seemed to be an eternity.

I still sat back in the pew like a young lady, of course, waiting for our preacher to stop his flailing around and carrying on, but while I sat my mind was working a mile a minute. "Is what he's saying really true? Will the fire really be the worst pain I'd ever feel?" Everyone who raised me told me to stay away every time a match was lit, so I assumed that our preacher would be right. "But how does he know? How does my mama know? Have they ever felt the fire?" I decided then and there in the pew that I'd go home and prove this absolutely ridiculous man wrong.

After the sermon, I didn't accept the Jolly Rancher, and my family rounded up for our ritual Sunday buffet of chicken pie and corn pudding at the café uptown. We returned home, bellies full and content, and Daddy took me to the bathroom to wash my hands. It was cold season, and my folks were adamant about washing my hands all throughout the day, a task that I found rather petty. Daddy put me down so he could wash his hands after mine, and I saw the little flame in the gas heater flicker. The flame was a vibrant blue at the bottom. It attracted me like a fluttering bug in the night. This was my chance.

One, two, three. Quick deep breath. I looked down and focused on the frilly lace of my fancy church socks and stuck my little index finger in the blue of the flame. Damn. That crazy preacher of ours was right. I screamed. With one swoop Daddy yanked me up and slung the faucet at the sink wide open. As the cool water ran over my finger, I cried and Daddy told me that it would get better before I got married. But these tears weren't tears of physical pain; they were tears of defeat.

I had crossed the line breaking two rules. One, I had questioned the preacher and two, I had touched the fire. I didn't get the switch, but I got a burn and my first taste of rebellion. Despite the pain, I'm proud to say that I've been challenging preachers ever since.

Standards? How Low Can They Go?

Emily Gamiel, Contributing Writer

Public restrooms are the perfect illustration of a polluted atmosphere. Many questions come to mind when I enter a public restroom, and they frequently bring my mind to challenge the cleanliness and quite frankly, the moral principles of the people who use and manage these public facilities.

Let me tell you one thing: I will not touch that nasty, germ-infested handle. Therefore, I have learned to improvise and use my foot to quickly push the toilet handle before I have to catch myself of the side of the stall. What will happen when I become too old and fragile to lift my leg that high? Will I be forced to get over my fear? I think that I would rather forgo food and drink to prevent myself from hav-

ing to use a public restroom than grasp on to the toilet handle.

Sure, washing my hands is the best strategy for fighting off the common cold and influenza virus. As I exit a bathroom stall, I am almost always challenged with this question: is it more sanitary to wash my hands or skip the sink and stick with my Bath and Body Works Hand Sanitizer stashed in my book bag? When my eyes meet the sink and spigot covered in a somewhat distorted and congealed light apricot hand soap, I begin to have second thoughts and often think that sneezing and coughing for a few days might be better than touching the faucet or putting my hands anywhere near that porcelain basin. For now, I think I'll

stick with my hand sanitizer.

If I ever bring myself to actually wash my hands in a public restroom, I have to dry them, right? Wrong. Where are the people who are supposed to keep this place stocked with paper towels? Do they not get paid for this task? Nothing is worse than having to resort to my favorite sweatshirt or the side of my new jeans to dry my hands after I have washed them. Maybe I'm supposed to resort to the blower than requires me to touch the bacteria covered button to turn it on. Besides, someone who touched the toilet handle and contracted the germs off of the bottom of my foot may have used this machine before me. This makes me wonder if there is any way to thoroughly disinfect

your hands of the germs and bacteria most likely contracted while in the lavatory.

There are many questions that I will never be able to answer, especially about public restrooms. The pit of filthiness and sense of disgust cause my mind to wonder about the morality of the people who manage and use these sewage dumps.

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