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## Child restraints for adults

by **Kimberly Gadette, For The Oregonian**

**Thursday September 11, 2008, 12:45 PM**

Thanks to the Internet, I just discovered that I'm "homely as hell." "An angry old woman." A "feminazi" and "probably unmarried." Though the mirror and my husband tell me otherwise, false assertions about my physicality and marital status are now embedded in the Internet blogging community. Why?

These slurs are in reaction to [my recent commentary](#) in which I chided parents/teachers/churches for exploiting the scantily-clad high school girl in an attempt to solicit customers for the fundraising carwash.

Instead of noting my concern about the lessons foisted on young girls, the mostly-male bloggers assumed I was censoring their right to ogle the female body at large. (Odd, though, since they usually won't ogle a female body if large.)

Time out. How about we put the invective on hold?

Echoing the topic of questionable underage behavior, let's examine our own actions. Mine included. Sure, we mouth all the right sentiments. We're proud of our First Amendment rights. We often cite the quote, "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." But in these highly divisive times, sides are taken and lines are drawn. But not in the sand, You Ugly Fathead. Cry Baby. Lard Butt.

We prefer the sandbox.

Sticks and stones may break our bones, but, wow, let's take another look at those names that will supposedly never hurt us. Names that deride sexuality and desirability, with a particular emphasis on the ever-popular triad of hair/face/wardrobe.

Case in point: Less than a day after John McCain's announcement of Sarah Palin as his running mate, a faked, photo-shopped picture of the Alaskan governor, dressed in a bikini while toting a rifle, hit the web like a speeding bullet. She was derided as a "stewardess," her teaming with Senator McCain summed up as "the Maverick and the MILF." A multitude of verbiage has been devoted to her retro hair bump.

It's not about a nearly-naked Gov. Palin standing with a gun, but rather, her stance on guns. Rather than viewing her body, we need to examine the body of her views: anti-abortion, anti-sex education, anti-global warming, pro-Creationism, etc. It's her take on oil drilling that hearkens back to the '60s -- not her hairdo.

Cindy McCain has been mocked for her expensive jewelry, wardrobe and rumored facelifts. One blogger described her \$300,000 ensemble on the first night of the Republican National Convention as: "A cross between The Count from Sesame Street, Big Bird and a banana." Another blogger declared: "That collar made her look like Jane Jetson!"

Did it matter? Or was it the fact that Ms. McCain beseeched the country to aid possible victims of an impending hurricane while dripping in diamonds? It wasn't the fashion; it was the fashion choice. What other inappropriate choices might this potential First Lady make?

As for Sen. Hillary Clinton's speech at the Democratic National Convention in full-throated support of Sen. Barack Obama, she could barely be heard over her outfit. "That tangerine-colored pantsuit.Â¸.Â¸.didn't Elton John wear that at the Grammys last year?" "Looked like a CalTrans worker on the Hollywood Freeway." The woman credited with creating 18 million cracks in the ceiling -- ground to nothing but a joke.

It's fun to hurl insults like a bunch of 6-year-olds. Don't we all love experiencing the guilty pleasure of superiority? But while we laugh, we dig ourselves deeper into our sandboxes. And the deeper we get, the harder it may be to stand up and take a clear look around. To hear, to seriously reflect on what someone's actually saying, rather than pointing out -- yuk! -- the wrinkled, thin-lipped mouth that's forming the words.

Or, we can regress to even more childish behavior -- while the Karl Rovian adults intervene and, like taking candy from a baby, make the decisions for us.

*Kimberly Gadette is a local and national freelance writer based in Hillsboro. Her weekly film reviews can be found on [livepdx.com](#).*

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Kimberly Gadette