

Nursing and homework can kill

Written by Bob Russell

Editor's Note: Due to the length of this story, it was broken into two pieces. The first portion was printed in the May 10 issue of the Enterprise.

After what seemed like an eternity trying to keep up with the vacuum cleaner, I had sucked down some dirt, a lizard that had snuck into the house, one of my wife's rings that fell from the table and \$5.67 in change that was under my favorite lounge chair.

Eventually, I began to find my forte in vacuuming, so I asked Judy if I could vacuum the sidewalk—there were pine needles and leaves that were bugging me—she “not so politely” told me I could not.

Instead, she countered, “It is time to dust.” Did you men realize that there are products used to dust wood and those can't be used to dust granite and neither product can be used to wipe down stainless steel stoves or dishwashers?

And don't dare use the same rag to do all of these! I was also directed to dust the top shelves of our nine-foot bookcase in the living room, even though the last time we saw the top of those shelves was when we put things up there that we didn't want to see closely on lower shelves—two years ago.

Exhausted, I was starting to become manic-depressive (sometimes confident and sometimes suicidal) in my cleaning duties (by that, I mean—my wife stopped yelling obscenities at me, realizing I was at least trying to help out). My last duty was to do the shopping for our food. Not a big deal, right? Uh huh.

Men, do you realize there are 837 kinds of meat sauce, 387 kinds of cheeses, 935 brands of canned vegetables and so on throughout the grocery store “food kingdom?”

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And you can get ounces of stuff, pounds of stuff, bags of stuff, boxes of stuff—and your wife has already decided that only one brand of a product in only one size will work. Also, my wife and I are totally incompatible in shopping. She wants “slightly green” bananas; I want mine bright yellow (OK, so mine spoil faster ... I am starting to understand).

I want Brussels sprouts; she HATES them; I like hot dogs; she is allergic to the mustard in them; I can eat any bread product; she is “gluten intolerant.” Suddenly, dashing to the market for a few things became a nightmare—after hours wandering every aisle looking for something I hadn’t even heard of, I had to get imaginative. I finally found some cute worker and let her help me shop (don’t tell my wife).

I could go on and on, but the bottom line: men are meant to do stuff like wash cars, mow the lawn or clean the garage or attic. (God made us that way, so don’t blame me.)

Women, the nurturers and caretakers of life, are great at cleaning the house, dusting, vacuuming and procuring food (look at the animal kingdom—the lioness goes and kills food for the male lion). Women cook expertly, and they are able to understand the most complicated washers and dryers. I will confess that both sexes can clean windows, though I refuse to do them inside the house—outside, I can use the hose.

This is not meant to be a chauvinistic piece—I realize there are a few men (my son included) who like to cook—and there are women who want to wash trucks and mow the lawn—but I am speaking to the masses out there. There should be laws enacted—after all, we have “child labor” laws. How about we men who only want to do guy things?

Somehow I survived the six weeks or so that my wife was unable to demonstrate her clear superiority in house duties, but I pledge that this will not happen again. I am putting aside a monthly parcel of money called the “Bob Russell Emergency Fund.” If and when my wife needs to have help again while incapacitated, I will hire help.

Perhaps some cute Hooters girl would like some extra money cooking, cleaning and doing the laundry. Besides, I know I could get some great wings and beer while the Hooters girl is helping

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me out (while I nurse my wife back to health, of course).

Bob Russell graduated from HHS in 1964 and resides with his wife, Judy, in Hot Springs Village, Ark. As has been reported earlier, Bob likes to write “tongue-in-cheek” articles and deeply appreciates the willingness of the Enterprise staff to publish his nonsensical rantings.

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