



MySA Keyword



Search in SA



SITE MAP

- ▶ CLASSIFIEDS
- ▶ REAL ESTATE
- ▶ DRIVE
- ▶ JOBS
- ▶ GIFT GUIDE
- ▶ SHOPPING
- ▶ YELLOW PAGES

SPORTS

A & E

TRAVEL

MARKETPLACE

MySA Blogs | Talk Back Forums

## Blogs

### Latest Entries

Scott Huddleston: Fluid problems not limited to VA

Sig Christenson: Ex-Walter Reed chief says, 'I'm not a bitter man'

Scott Huddleston: Ex Playboy model is 'Naked Reporter'

Scott Huddleston: Here's to a year for relationships

Getting a life after Iraq

Sig Christenson: A Christmas prayer

Scott Huddleston: A new way to say thanks

Sig Christenson: Hondo's Heroes

Scott Huddleston: AF doc saves Afghan infant

Scott Huddleston: American holiday is about sharing

### Archives

- January 2008
- December 2007
- November 2007
- October 2007
- September 2007
- August 2007
- July 2007
- June 2007

## Military City

« Previous | Main | Next »

January 08, 2008

### Scott Huddleston: Ex Playboy model is 'Naked Reporter'

She's earned a reputation as a respected Air Force training instructor, even while caring for her husband and two children. But she's better known for appearing nude last year in Playboy magazine.

And now, Michelle Manhart, a former staff sergeant at Lackland AFB, has made a top-10 list by sharing her story. What's more, she's joined the Fourth Estate as "The Naked Reporter."

The self-described national "citizen news website" called Orato.com has released its "Top 10 Citizen News Stories of the Year," based on online readership and input from its editors. Manhart's story, edited by Heather Wallace and posted in March, was ranked No. 2 on the top-10 list of stories on the Web site for 2007. In a news release, Paul Sullivan, editor in chief of Orato.com, called Manhart's story one about fairness, not sexuality.

"Michelle experienced an injustice and had the courage to talk about it, knowing fully well she would face controversy and scorn from many who felt she was justly punished," Sullivan said in the release.

"She can fight in my army any



**Sig Christenson**  
Sig Christenson is the military writer for the San Antonio Express-News.



**Scott Huddleston**  
Scott Huddleston covers military issues for the San Antonio Express-News.

• [XML](#) [RSS/News Feed](#)

### Local Headlines

- Man recovering after attempted carjacking, shooting
- Bill would forgive fallen GIs' VA loans
- Event to help vets, families navigate maze of aid agencies
- Texas is top state for Army recruiting
- Patient care changes, but family still seeks justice

### Post a Comment

Name

Email Address

URL

Remember Me?

Yes  No

Comments

(you may use HTML tags for style)

- [May 2007](#)
- [April 2007](#)
- [March 2007](#)
- [February 2007](#)
- [January 2007](#)
- [December 2006](#)
- [November 2006](#)
- [October 2006](#)
- [September 2006](#)
- [August 2006](#)
- [July 2006](#)
- [June 2006](#)
- [May 2006](#)

### Sign-Up

Enter your Email  
for updates

[go](#)

time," he gushed.

So much so that Manhart has since had her own bylined stories on Orato, including one posted Monday titled "[The January Hangover](#)."

Orato has dubbed her "The Naked Reporter," and has a photo of her wearing a military-style hat -- and nothing else -- in front of an American flag, arms folded in a show of discretion. I don't consider it porn. At least that's the story I plan to use if my bosses ask why I was looking at it at my work station.

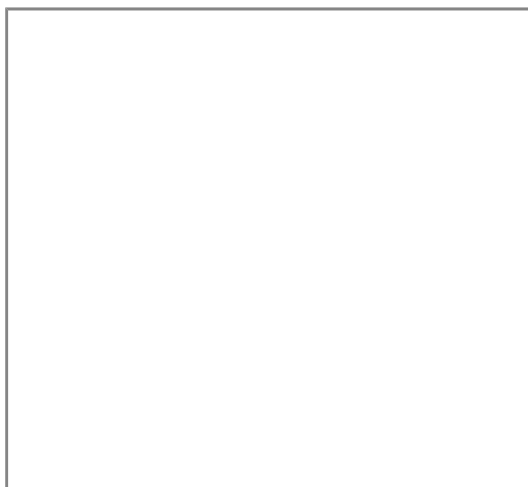
According to Orato's release, "when we read stories penned by ordinary citizens rather than ones spoon-fed to us by professional journalists, our preferences really provide a window into the soul of our global society."

I agree that one-person stories are often powerful, because they have texture and focus.

The problem, in Manhart's case, is that there are so many different opinions that it's impossible to tell the whole story without getting a strong reaction from others, namely the Air Force and members of our military community.

You might recall when my colleague Sig Christenson reported in a front-page story last Feb. 15 that Manhart had quit the service after being demoted to airman, taken off active duty and returned to the Iowa Air National Guard. She has said she was treated unjustly, that she was never warned not to pose in Playboy.

In her lengthy article for Orato, Manhart said it was common knowledge in the Air Force that she had submitted photos to Playboy, and that no one had told her she shouldn't appear in the buff in the the magazine. Playboy took an interest, and agreed to shoot her in a local house in the spring of 2006. Without providing a timeframe of events in the article,



Subr



Manhart said she contacted her supervisor, then her chain of command, as soon as she learned the photos shot would be published.

Shortly before the six-page section appeared in Playboy's February 2007 edition, Manhart was relieved of duty as a drill sergeant as the Air Force began investigating her off-duty activities. That was reported by the Express-News the day the magazine hit the stands last Jan. 12.

In her Orato article, Manhart said she was moved to a desk job where she had no phone and no personal contact with others; forced to sit at a desk all day; charged with dereliction of duty and accused of failing to represent the Air Force appropriately; then finally given an administrative demotion, despite favorable performance reviews. She announced in mid-February that she had quit the service.

Orato.com allows members to post feedback to its stories. The responses to Manhart's have been heated, sometimes personal and occasionally ugly. Some have said the article is too sympathetic. A few have defended her. The online exchange has meandered into unexpected areas, like religion and infidelity.

I personally, through online chat forums, have seen a few primary threads of thought on this case that each fork off into a cluster of sub-threads. One thread is a general view that this case is proof that the military, where women make up roughly 15 percent of the total U.S. force, is still too much a man's world. Despite policies aimed at discouraging sexual harassment, the Air Force culture still is engrained with an old school, "boys will be boys" double standard that permits the sale of Playboy on its bases but discourages female airmen from posing nude.

Another thread of thought is



that this is a non-story. Manhart made her choice to pursue her dream to pose in Playboy. Some say that making a big deal of her dispute with the Air Force only gives her publicity for her career in modeling -- and now online writing. Others say posing in Playboy doesn't advance the cause of military women but pulls it backward.

Because of Air Force policies aimed at preserving the privacy of its personnel, the service has said little about the case. It has said that posing in Playboy "does not meet the high standards we expect of our airman, nor does it comply with the Air Force's core values of integrity, service before self and excellence in all we do."

I suppose that as it now expands and revamps its basic training program to turn civilians into rugged warriors ready to work as a team in today's unforgiving battlefield, the Air Force isn't terribly interested in new-age social reform. Manhart's breakthrough attempt to try to balance the life of a TI at Lackland -- the Air Force's "home of basic training" -- with that of a Playboy model might have suffered from bad timing.

One thing I know is that we may try to follow up on Manhart at some point and do another story. If we do, I doubt it will be one of those "spoon fed" jobs.

shuddleston@express-news.net

---

## Comments

Scott!!! WELL DONE!!!! I follow Michelle's story where she is and what she is doing (being an ex military female of 22 years and now a military parent). Spite people's comments that there are better things to report on. I disagree, this woman still supports the military 100% in all that she does to include a Calendar that

she has been apart in to raise money and awareness to the thousands of troops returning wounded from the war. She is using her "fame" in support of many causes and even through all the scrutiny; she still holds her head high and talks positively!!! I am thankful that you have decided to spread the word on where she is now, we are always looking for her here in San Antonio. More positive reports like this one is GREAT opposed to the alternative where we could read about Brittany Spears and Michelle if you read this: hold your head high and keep pushing! We know you are a great person standing up for what you believe in and what you rightfully deserve!

Posted by: Denise at January 11, 2008 02:18 PM

Scott - Slow business day for the military writers at the Express-News, Huh?? I would think that there would be a much more interesting venue to pursue with regard to the military than than a self-seeking, self-promoting ex-SSgt whose idea of success is to parade around naked and hoping it causes a ruckus. Gee, I guess she is getting what she wants/wanted. This is not newsworthy and a follow-up would be one of those Scott Huddleston endeavors for ANOTHER slow news days. Manhart deserved to get booted. Conduct unbecoming an NCO. Conduct unbecoming any member of the Armed Forces. Her backing by Orato says it all....a self-seeker seeking acknowledgement from a self-seeking entity..ORATO !!! Imagine that. Scott, stick to the stories about the real men and women of the AF who proudly serve and sacrifice daily for our right to be who we are - and keep their clothes on and don't seek acknowledgement other than for a job well done...and YES, Manhart has her rights as well..this is AMERICA...we just don't need to be reminded of it - lest you "EXPOSE" a new, more printable side of her persona...IF SHE HAS ONE.

God bless and have a great day, Scott. See you around !!!

Posted by: Michael at January 10, 2008 02:54 PM

[Feedback](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms Of Service](#)  
[EN Subscription Services](#)   **Advertising:** [Info](#) | [Disclaimer](#)  
**About Us:** [MySanAntonio.com](#) | [Express-News](#) | [KENS 5](#)  
Portions © 2008 KENS 5 and the San Antonio Express-News.  
All rights reserved.

**HEARST** *newspapers*

