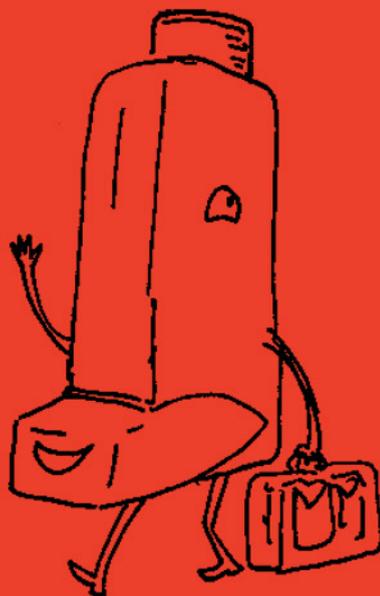


# ASTHMA GOES TO COLLEGE



MOMS *clean air* FORCE

DRAWINGS BY DANNY SHANAHAN

# WELCOME TO COLLEGE!

You made it! Congratulations!

Your college years will be among the best years of your life! College will foster your independence and prepare you for the “real world.” And what you learn both inside and outside the classroom will be mind-altering.

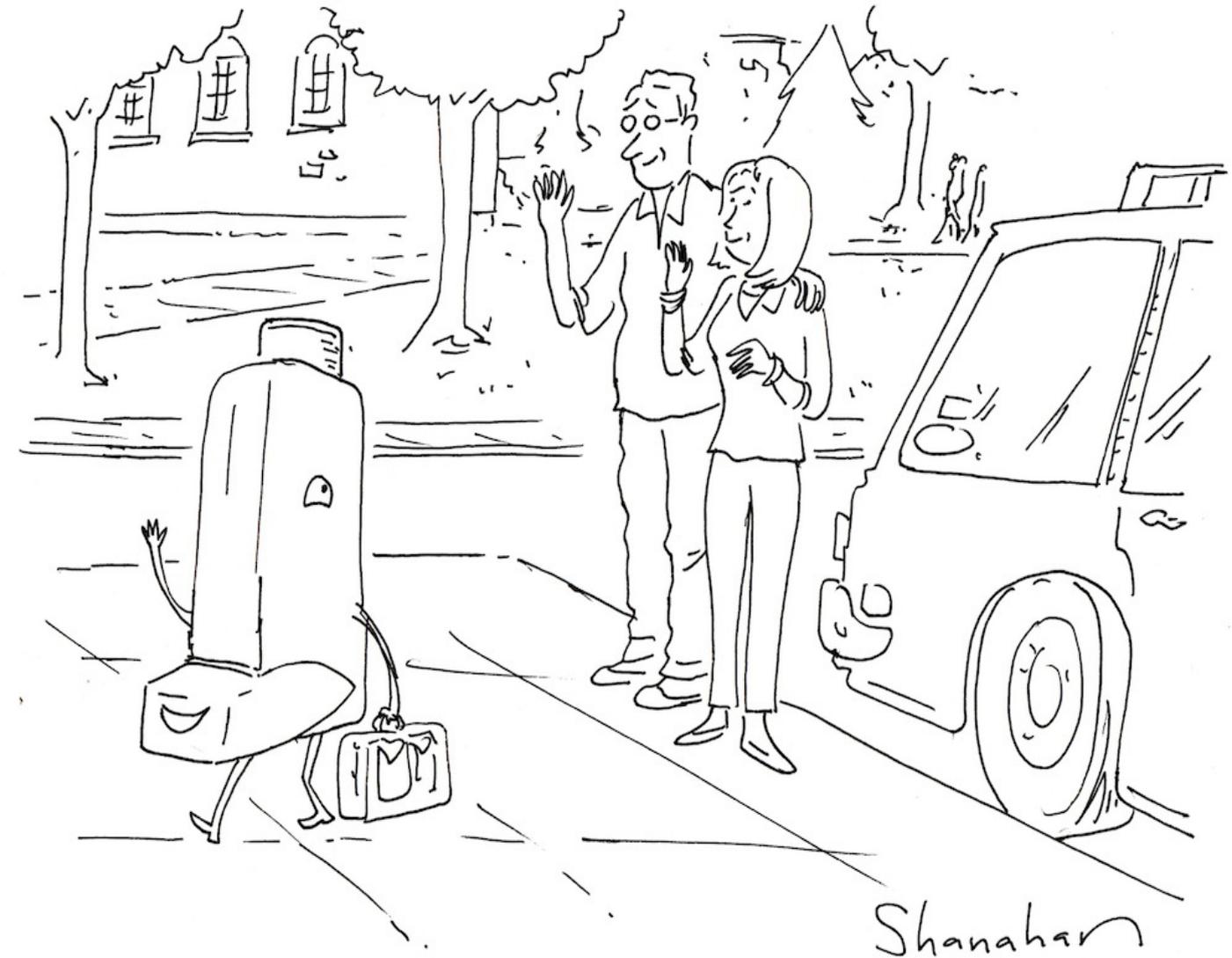
This is a big moment.

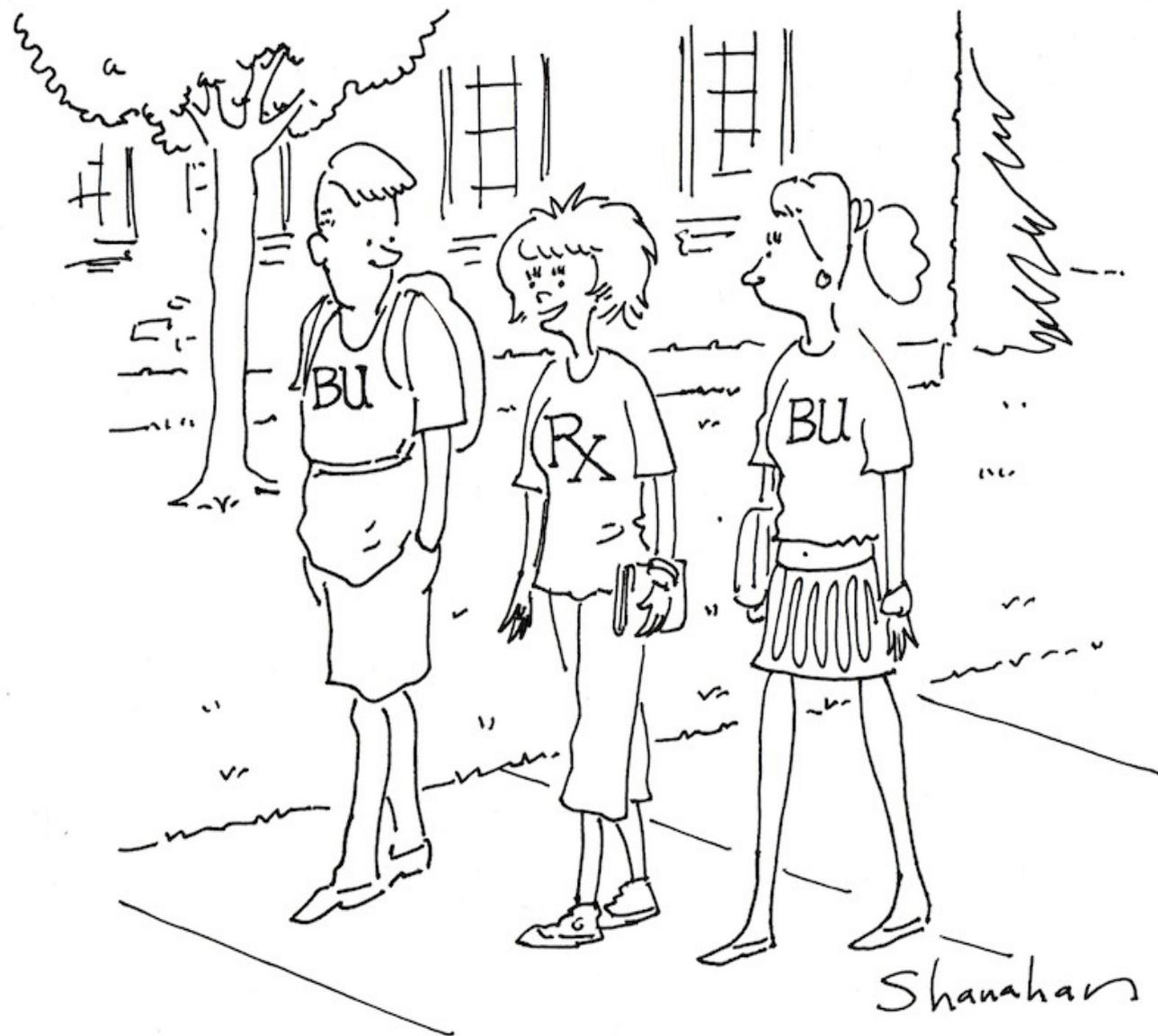
The last thing you want to be anxious about is your asthma – or even worse, having your parents hovering over you, nervous about your health, while you’re at school. So, how are you going to handle the fact that you have asthma? Well, first, it’s important to understand that...

You are not alone.

There are roughly 22 million college students in the US.  
About 9% report having been diagnosed with asthma.

There’s a minefield of asthma triggers at college, but with planning and management you can breathe easier.





"It's my little reminder."

## STAY OUT OF THE ER WITH A WRITTEN MANAGEMENT PLAN

Asthma is the third-ranking cause of hospitalization in young adults and it accounts for approximately 500,000 hospitalizations each year. While shielding yourself from asthma triggers at college can help you stay on top of attacks, sometimes you don't know what triggers an asthma attack. This is why it is so important to bring an up-to-date asthma action plan from home that tells you, your roommate, your coach and the Health Center what to do during an attack.

Here's a plan to help you stay out of the ER:

Get support – tell your roommate, Resident Assistant (RA), and friends.

Contact the Student Health Center and let them know you have asthma. Follow your doctor's advice about medications and keep prescriptions filled – don't run out.

Treat asthma attacks when they occur. Ask your doctor to suggest the name of an asthma specialist near campus in case of an emergency.

Keep track of ozone alert days. Ozone is a known trigger, and you may not be as familiar with weather patterns in your new town as you were at home. So check the news and the Air Now app. Both will keep you up to date on air quality in your college town.

# KNOW YOUR TRIGGERS

So, you need to explain the disease to your new friends, right? Here are the basics: Asthma causes swelling and inflammation in the airways that lead to your lungs. When asthma flares up, the airways tighten. This keeps the air from passing through easily and makes it hard for you to breathe.

Asthma triggers exasperate these flare-ups, or asthma attacks. For years, your parents were able to help protect you from indoor and outdoor asthma triggers. Now it's up to you.

Knowing your triggers can help keep you out of the college health center, and keep your parents tucked safely at home where they belong!

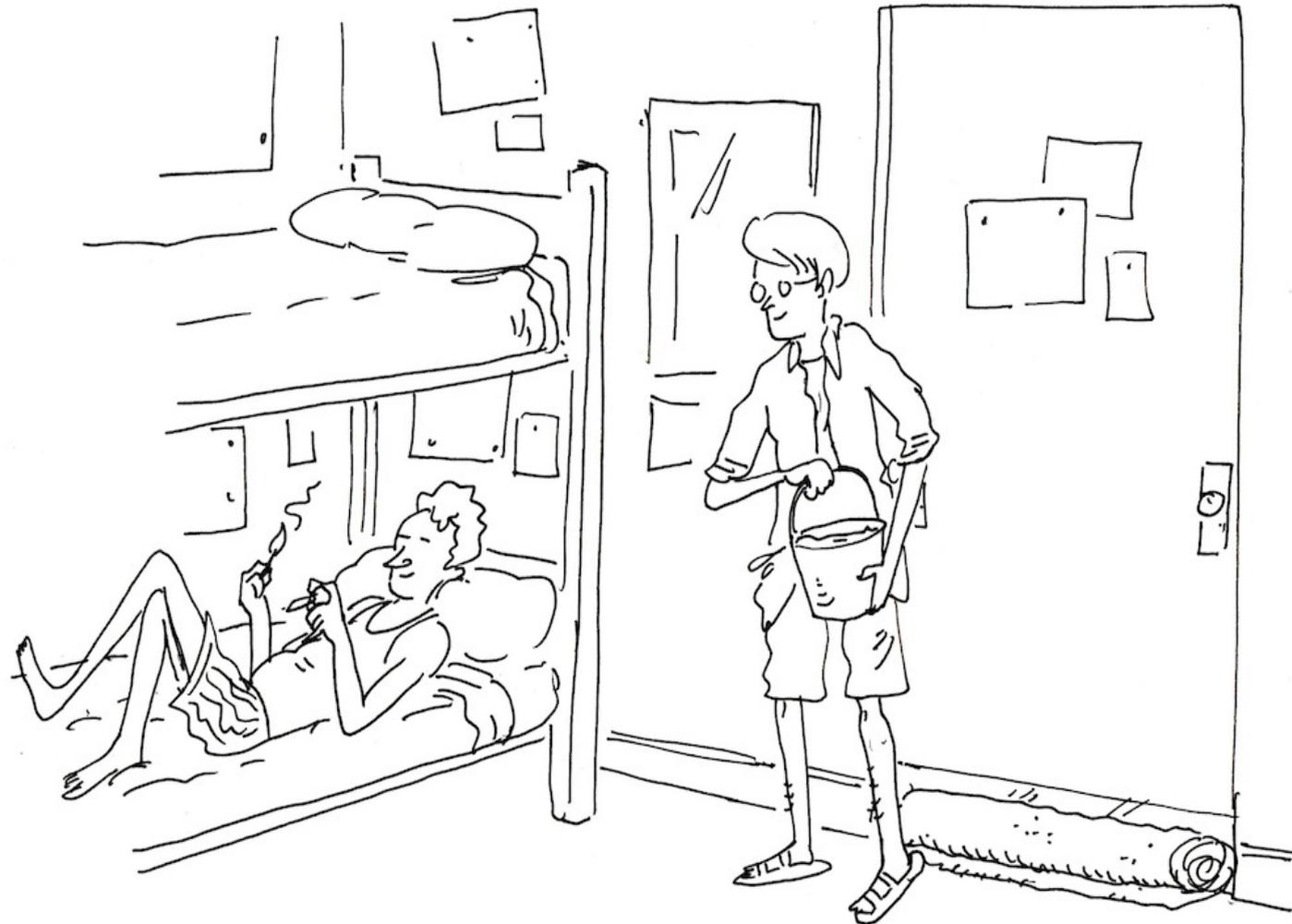
**Dust** – BYOP: That's Bring Your Own Pillows. And don't forget allergy-proof covers, a mattress cover, and a vacuum with HEPA filter. Dust and wipe surfaces with a damp cloth, not a feather duster. Clutter breeds dust. Give dust the boot with fewer places to hide.

**Pests** – Keeping your dorm room clean should keep pests at bay. Get rid of bugs as soon as possible, using physical, not chemical, deterrents. Mice and roaches (and the waste they leave behind) can trigger asthma attacks. If you know pesticides trigger your asthma symptoms, contact the facility manager to find out whether your dorm is routinely sprayed, and with what. You can work with them to make sure their pest control routine doesn't leave you gasping for breath.

**Mold and Mildew** – Check the ventilation system in your dorm room for leaks. Moisture is a breeding ground for mold. Remove mold and fix the conditions that lead to mold growth, or it will just come back. Bleach is a respiratory irritant, so stay far away during cleaning. For serious mold contamination, change dorm rooms. Be sure to let the college officials know there is a mold problem.

**Smoke** – Hey, smoke happens...from cigarettes, incense, and other sources we won't mention. Smoke is especially harmful to asthmatics. Keep it out of your dorm room. And know when to leave the party. (Good life advice for everyone!)

**Stuffed Animals** – That beloved stuffed animal your roommate secretly hugs for security may be filled with dust and dust mites. Stuffed animals are like pillows. They need regular cleaning, along with the sheets and towels. If you notice asthma symptoms in your room, and you suspect Paddington has something to do with it, tell your roommate you are struggling with your asthma. Explain about dust mites, and ask her to reconsider washing her stuffed animal in hot water.



Shanahan

## NEW DIGS, NEW FRIENDS

Tell your buddies you have asthma. Talk with your roommates about how they can help you keep your place clean and the windows closed on high-pollen days. Show them where you stash your inhaler. Let your roommate know that smoking and burning incense are deal breakers.

## THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Hanging out can be a walk in the park for asthma sufferers  
—or a run to the ER.

## BAD AIR DAYS

Ground level ozone and soot is formed when air pollution from cars, power plants, and factories interacts with sunlight and heat. Ozone irritates the lungs and can trigger asthma attacks. Soot particles can lodge deep in the lungs and enter the bloodstream.

When local ground-level ozone levels exceed federal limits, TV, radio, and online sources will broadcast a Bad Air Day. Know what these alerts are. Keep windows closed during high ozone and high pollen days, and stay indoors as much as possible.

# SPORTS

Exercise is good for your body and can be a much-needed diversion from studying.

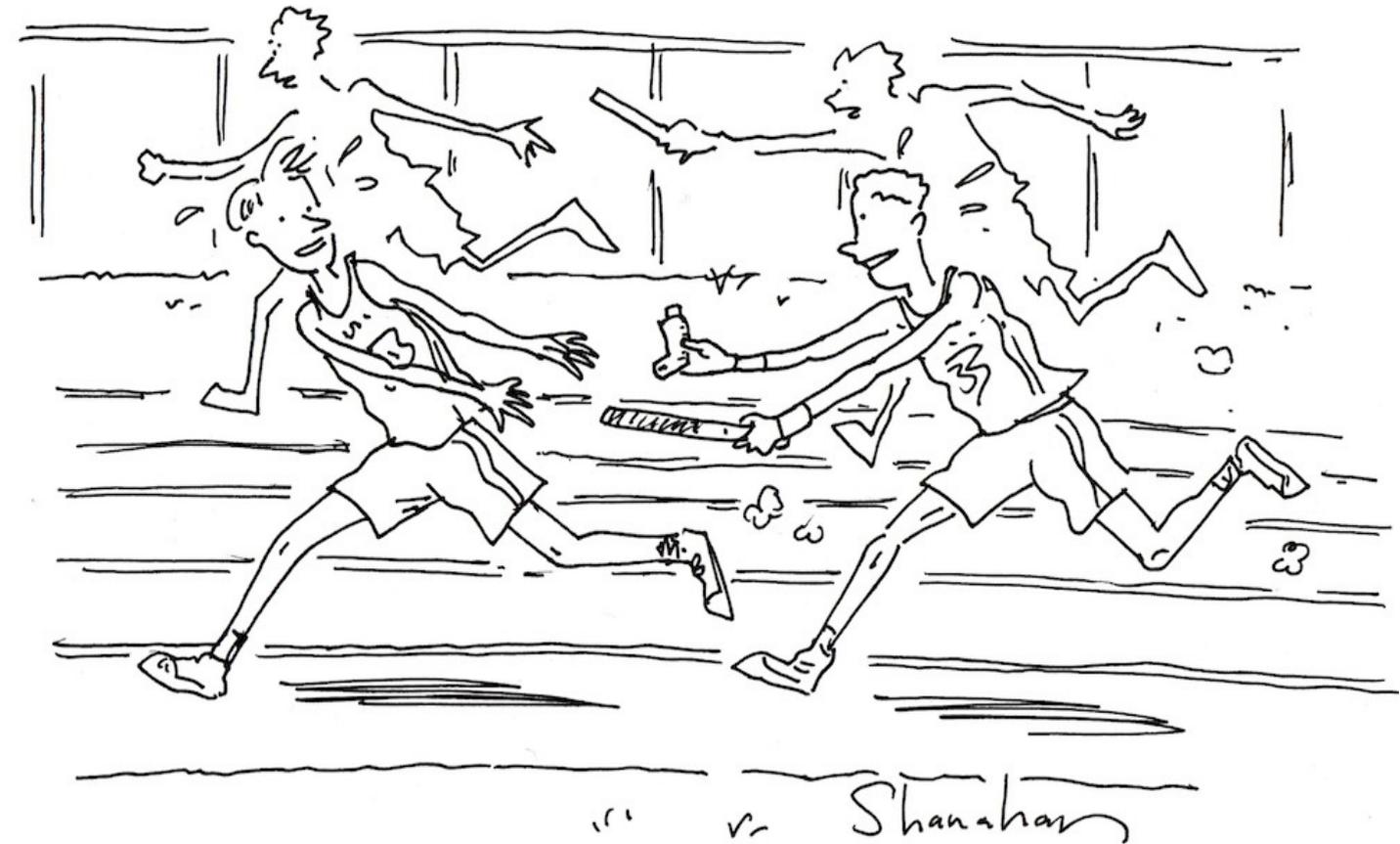
Working out is one of your best defenses against disease.

If you do not experience asthma symptoms from sports and exercise, get your game on.

If exercise makes your asthma worse, let your friends, coaches and teammates know you have asthma.

Keep rescue medicine easily accessible during your workout in case of a flare-up.

Skip outdoor workouts when pollen or mold counts are high.



# PEACE, LOVE, AND CLEAN AIR

College is the perfect time in your life to fight for someone you love.

You!

And you can make these awesome years even better by fighting for clean air.

The best way to control the air on campus is to support strong laws that protect our air.

Advocate to keep our air pollution laws strong.

We share the air. Keep pollution out.



# FIGHT WITH YOUR MOM – ABOUT SOMETHING IMPORTANT

Clean air. Every day scientists and medical researchers are zeroing in on air pollution as a major cause of asthma and a trigger for severe attacks.

The rising temperatures and extended heat waves caused by global warming are also terrible for asthma sufferers.

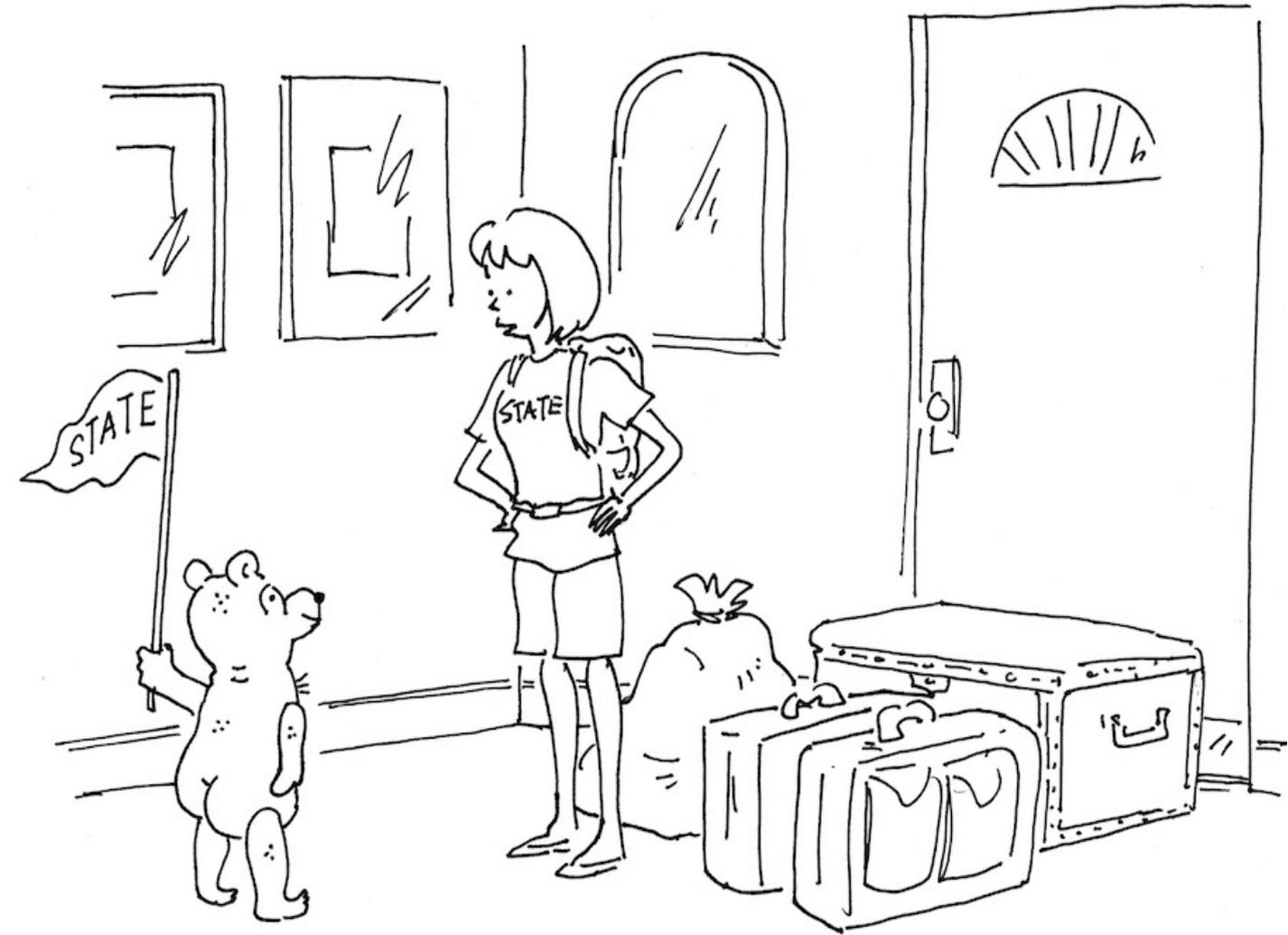
At Moms Clean Air Force you can learn about important rules and laws that protect our air and find out how to write to your elected officials to stand up for clean air.

So join us in honor of your mother—and unite with more than 150,000, dads, aunts, uncles and everyone who ever had a mother—to clean our air!

[www.momscleanairforce.org](http://www.momscleanairforce.org)

Here's one dad's humorous, yet serious story about sending his asthmatic son to college. [Read More](#)

Share this ebook with your friends and family and online. Use #asthmaMCAF as the hashtag, and we'll be looking out for you!



Shanahan

"You missed a spot."

MOMMS  
*clean air*  
FORCE

FIGHTING FOR  
OUR KIDS' HEALTH