

BATHROOMS AND TOILETS

Until I was 12 years old none of the houses we lived in had inside bathrooms. They all had running water and kitchen sinks, but no bathroom facilities. They all had outside, 2 hole, pit toilets, located 30 or 40 yards from the back door. There was usually a plank walk from the back door to the toilet. The toilet was framed with 2x4's and covered with 1x12's butted together. It had a sloped roof and a hinged door with a hook lock on the inside. It was not insulated, lighted, or heated.

Outside toilets were not too bad in nice weather. There was usually a flashlight near the back door for night time trips. At night my brother or sister might go along with me. After all it was a "two holer".

The Wilson's next door had a 4 holer. One large hole, one medium hole, and two smaller holes. They had 5 boys and an uncle in that family. The toilet paper was usually last years Sears catalogue.

In cold weather I would put on a long coat when I went to the toilet. It was surprising how much warmth you could get from a candle. If it was windy out, the breezes would blow through and up, and many times blew the candle out.

In the cold weather we had a pot in each bedroom. This was a tinkle pot, and we would use it before going to bed or if we had to go in the middle of the night. Of course one of the first chores in the morning was to go dump the pots. This was usually one of the kid's chores.

The other problem of "no inside bathroom" was taking a bath. We only took a bath on Saturday, so that was the only day it was a problem.

Mom would heat up several pans of hot water on the stove and pour them into a large galvanized tub in the middle of the kitchen floor. Mom was the first to use the bath water. When she was done my sister or dad would use the water. Each of the family would take a bath [the cleanest one first, the dirtiest one last]. Mom would try to keep everyone out of the kitchen and would have a pan of warm water ready to rinse you off when you stood up after your bath.

We had a large cast iron range in the kitchen. In the winter time Mom would open the oven door and put the tub right in front of it. This would really keep us warm.

There was soap, a wash pan, and a towel next to the sink for washing before meals and at bedtime.

I imagine a lot of people are still living this way today.

THE SCREAMING TOAD

The last place we lived in Nebraska had about 5 acres of land and a large yard. Our dog, Mugs, kept other dogs and most other creatures away from the house. He would even attack toads when he found them. The strange part was that when he would bite the toad, a chemical on the toad would cause the dog to foam at the mouth, so we usually tried to keep the dog from the toad. We would pick them up, but thought that if they would pee on us, we would get warts.

I was alone in the back yard one evening at dusk, when I heard a high pitched squeal. I didn't have any idea what it was, so I started following the sound. It got louder as I got out in front of the house.

The front of the house did not have a front porch. It had a large concrete stoop at the front door. The sound got louder as I got to the one side of the stoop. It was nearly dark and I did not have any kind of light, so I got down on my hands and knees to see where the squealing was coming from.

There it was! I could see it! A toad was stuck in a crack in the side of the stoop. Its two back legs were sticking out and it was squealing. Poor thing, must have got stuck trying to get into the crack.

I decided to ease it out. I grabbed both hind legs and gently started to pull. After a couple of tugs it started to slowly

come out. I pulled it out about a foot, when it dawned on me that I must be pulling its insides out.

I wanted to get a closer look. But it was too dark. I had to bend my head way down next to the toad to see it. YIPES! I was looking at the head of a snake. The front end of the toad was in a snake's mouth. I dropped the toad, jumped up and ran into the house to get a flashlight and Mugs. Mugs could kill a snake in the wink of an eye.

When we got back out in front, I couldn't find a trace of the toad or the snake.

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QUARANTINED

In an attempt to reduce the spread of contagious diseases, it was the law during the depression, that anyone with a contagious disease would be quarantined. Once a doctor diagnosed a person to have a contagious disease, a man from the county would come to the house and tack a big red sign " QUARANTINED " next to the front door.

When a house was put in quarantine, people living there could not leave the property until the quarantine was over. Anyone coming to the house could not even go up to the front door. Supposedly anyone going into the house had to stay there or go to their own house and be quarantined there.

When I was 9 or 10 years old, I was diagnosed with scarlet fever. A contagious disease. A man from the county came out and put a quarantined sign next to the front door. It was during the school year which meant my brother and sister had to stay home too. I think that the quarantine was for three weeks.

Fortunately my case was pretty light and I was only sick for a few days. I don't think my brother or sister ever did get it.

The Rudder family, who lived at the other of the same block, was quarantined at the same time. We both built crossbows out of tongue and groove boards and innertubes. The arrows were made out of shingles. We spent the days tying notes to the arrows and sending messages back and forth.

My dad didn't want to loose any time at work, so he couldn't come in the house. He slept in the barn. Mr. Rudder slept in a cave they had dug on his property. I can't remember what they did for meals, but I suppose mom fed them somehow.

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A RAT IN THE FEED BARREL

When we were kids living in Nebraska, my brother, sister, and I were all assigned chores.

My brother Dick took care of our cow, Tillie. He had to see that the cow got fed, had water, and was taken to good pasture. He also had to milk it twice a day.

My sister Marge was assigned daily house chores. These included making the beds and doing the dishes.

My job was taking care of the chickens. The number of chickens we had varied. The most we ever had was two hundred. In the spring we incubated new chicks. The average number was about 30.

My job was to feed them twice a day, make sure they had water, and gather the eggs. The chicken feed, which was cracked corn, was kept in a 55 gallon drum in the feed shed. I used a one gallon can to measure out the feed. The feed can was always left in the barrel.

One day, when I was about eleven years old, I went out to give them their afternoon feeding. It must have been a hot day because all that I had on was my underwear and bibbed overalls. I was bare footed. The feed in the feed barrel was very low. I bent over the edge of the barrel, feeling in the bottom for the feed can. All of a sudden I felt something run across my hand. I jumped back. The lighting was poor and I had to tip the barrel

towards the door to see in the bottom of the barrel. There was a rat frantically running around the bottom of the barrel. It had fallen in and couldn't climb up the slippery sides to get out.

We had a dog, Mugs, that was an excellent ratter. He would kill a rat in the wink of an eye. I called Mugs, picked him up, held him over the barrel, and showed him the rat. He was really excited, but when I tried to put him in the barrel, he would spread his legs and I couldn't get him in the barrel.

I figured the best thing to do was to give the rat a path to get out. When it came out the dog would catch and kill it.

I looked around and found an old broom stick. This would do just fine. I put the one end of the stick down into the barrel. Before the stick touched bottom, out came the rat. I still had a hold on the other end of the stick. The rat jumped from the stick -- inside the bib of my overalls -- down through my overalls -- and out my pants leg to freedom. I looked down at Mugs and he was still looking up at me. He hadn't even seen the rat. I was so mad that I turned around and scolded the dog.

HATCHING CHICKENS

When I was living in Nebraska one of my chores was taking care of the chickens. A couple of times, in the spring of the year, we hatched new chicks. This was quite a chore and everybody in the house helped.

Dad would buy 200 fertile eggs for us to hatch in an incubator. I think he must have rented the incubator. The incubator was a little smaller than a card table and had a big heated drawer, big enough to put all 200 eggs in it with room left around each egg. The incubator was heated with kerosine and I think we kept it in the storm cellar.

Before we could start we had to put a big "X" on one side of the egg and a big "O" on the other side. Then we let the incubator heat up to 104 degrees. We then we put the eggs in, with all the "X"s up. In the evening we would open the drawer and turn all the "O"s up. Every morning we put the "X" up, every evening we turned the "O" up. It seems mama hen moves the eggs around when she is hatching them and we had to do the same.

For three weeks we watched and waited. We had to make sure that the flame was always lit and that the incubator did not run out of kerosine.

After three weeks the eggs would start to hatch. That was the exciting time. The drawer had a glass front so that you could look in at the eggs near the front. The little chicks would peck a hole in the shell to break it. When the shell broke, out would come the little chick. He would be all wet and

kind of droopy looking. In a little bit the 104 degree temperature had the little chick dry and fluffy yellow.

Every once in a while we would open the drawer, take the dry chicks out and put them in a brooder. The brooder was like a big flat tin can with a light bulb in it. This was put down over the chicks to contain them and keep them warm. Most of the eggs hatched. A few didn't, and we never ~~k~~new why.

The chicks were kept in the brooder for a week or so, until they were strong enough to survive on their own.

SPLINTER BELLY

I arrived in Hawaii in early September 1945. I was transferred to the Seabees and sent to telephone school. In this school we were taught how to install and maintain telephone systems. One of things we were taught was how to climb telephone poles.

Pole climbing "hooks" are bent metal straps which fit in the instep of your shoes and up the inside calf of the leg. They are strapped to the leg at the ankle and above the calf of the leg. Each "hook" has a big pointed spike at the instep. This allows a person to climb the poles.

Each time you climb a pole, the spike makes a hole in the pole on each step of the climb. This hole makes a big splinter sticking out from the pole. You make a hole for each step going up and for each step coming down. Practice poles used for teaching climbing were soon full of holes and splinters.

I was a pretty good climber up to about 15 feet. Above that I was not very good. As I got above 15 feet I would get my body closer and closer to the pole. The higher I got the closer I would get to the pole. This was bad, because the closer to the pole you got, the more apt you were to "cut out". This means the spike would not go into the pole and you would have to grab onto the pole to keep from falling.

To wrap your arms and legs around a pole full of splinters was not much fun. It was even less fun to shinny down a 30 foot pole. As time went on I got a little better, but there for a while I was known as "SPLINTER BELLY".

RATS

In the fall of 1945 I was transferred from Hawaii to Okinawa. The trip was made on a troop ship, and only took about 10 days. A typhoon had hit the island just a couple weeks before we got there, and everything was a mess. There were no living quarters available, so we were given temporary housing right on the beach of Buckner Bay. The housing was tents [about 12 ft. square]. A piece of plywood was put on the ground and the tent erected over it.

Four men were assigned to each tent. We were given army type cots to sleep on. Two cots end to end on each side of the tent. We put an old orange crate at the end of the tent and kept snack food there. Peanut butter, crackers, silverware etc. We weren't there very long before the rats moved in.

We seldom saw the rats in the day time, but it was common to wake up in the middle of the night by one galloping across your bunk. No one ever got very excited about them, and I never heard of anyone getting bit.

Our biggest hazard was Leon Sinknecht. He slept across from me next to the door flap. In the middle of the night, the rats would make so much noise in the orange crate that they would wake Leon up. He had a bolo knife [a knife about 2 feet long], he would let out yell of profanity, and throw the knife at the orange crate. Whing-whing-whing it would spin through the air and crash into the orange crate. He usually hit the orange crate, but never

hit a rat. It did quiet them down long enough for everyone to get back to sleep.

Another problem we had is that things would disappear. More than once I would wash a pair of socks and hang them on a line across my corner of the tent. I would awake in the morning to find one or both socks missing.

We were only in this camp for maybe 6 weeks. Then we were told to tear down the tents and pack them up. We took the tents down and lifted the plywood floor, and there were all the missing items. The socks, the silverware, and a few trinkets. It seems these were pack rats, and they were living right under our floor. I don't really remember seeing the rats when we lifted the floor. Just the booty.

Fri.Sept5,

Dear Hermie,

Hi again.Received your letter a while back and was glad to hear from you.Our trip to Florida was fun.Most of Dick and Marges kids and grandkids were there.Two of our kids couldn't make it.(money problems).We took some pictures.I'll try to remember to bring some when I come to see you..

Yes we are plannig on coming to Chicago sometime after the 16th of September.We are going to drive to Chicago.Then Dick Marge,and I and our better halves are going to fly to Oregon to visit our uncle and celibrate his 92nd birthday.When we come back we are going to stay in Chicago for a day or two before returning to Pittsburgh.

I don't know if I'll see you before or after the Oregon trip,but I'll try to call a day ahead of time and I'll have to call and get directions.

I hope the weather is better for our trip than it has been here..We have had rain rain rain..

Your handwritting is very good. I'm glad that you noticed the firm, bolld hand in my signiture.I have always tried to pattern myself after Tarz Tayler The strong silent type(MRRUMPH)

bj: announcement
Date: 97-02-03 07:51:39 EST
From: PITCC12.LAMMEL01@SSW.ALCOA.COM (PITCC12.LAMMEL01)
To: Karen_Agud-CAVS05@email.mot.com, Jfschmidt@aol.com

Mom and Karen,

Here's the announcement that went out last week about my new promotion:

"Bob Hughes and I will announce tomorrow for company distribution that Gus Agostinelli--V.P.--HR--AFL, will leave the company April 1 and be replaced by Jim Michaud. Jim will complete his assignment in defining the most effective/efficient architecture for HR processes in Europe through the HR Network. Jim will be replaced as Director--HR--Benefits by Mary Ellen Lammel. Mary Ellen joined us about five years ago after considerable experience in financial operations with manufacturing companies. She brings a finance and process orientation to continue our pursuit of proper balance of efficiency, simplification and customer satisfaction. She will attend HR Network meetings as appropriate and will also be in contact over the coming weeks with individual members of the IR Council. "

I couldn't find Jamie's address again - doesn't it start jsschmidt?

Anyway, so far its been work, work, work and politics, politics, politics (my least favorite subject). Not much fun. Mom sorry I didn't call yesterday, I was scrambling to catch up and never did get my bills witten, finally fell into bed at 11:30. Good thing I feel better in the morning, else I would never get out of bed. Bruce has pool tonight, and I think I'll take the kids to McDonalds. They can run off some energy there, and I can read through piles of papers.

I heard a song this morning, something about "feel like a junkyard dog", and I thought, boy that's exactly how I feel today: mean, snippy but with my tail dragging down between my legs. In need of good grooming and lots of love! So today I'm an HR junkyard Dog. Watch out!

Love you guys!!!

Muzz

----- Headers -----

From PITCC12.LAMMEL01@SSW.ALCOA.COM Mon Feb 3 07:51:21 1997
Return-Path: PITCC12.LAMMEL01@SSW.ALCOA.COM
Received: from mail-gw.atc.alcoa.com (mail-gw.atc.alcoa.com [132.226.16.22]) by emin08.mail.aol.com (8.6.12/8.6.12) with ESMTP id HAA10217 for <Jfschmidt@aol.com> Mon, 3 Feb 1997 07:51:21 -0500
Received: from SSW.ALCOA.COM (mch1.ami.alcoa.com [147.154.1.10]) by mail-gw.atc.alcoa.com (8.7.6/8.7.3) with SMTP id HAA25081 for <Jfschmidt@aol.com> Mon, 3 Feb 1997 07:50:48 -0500 (EST)
Received: by SSW.ALCOA.COM
(Soft*Switch Central V4L40P1A) id 592348070097034FPITCC12;
03 Feb 1997 07:48:07 EST
Message-Id: <PITCC12.LAMMEL01.592348070097034FPITCC12@SSW.ALCOA.COM>

F I N C H E S

There was a time when I was fooling around the work bench in my garage that I took a soda liter bottle, burned some holes in it and stuck a couple of small dowels thru it for perches, and then hung it up on the eave of my roof to see if any birds would nest in it.

The following spring, two finches were very busy bringing bits of grass and twigs and soon the mother finch laid four small eggs, not much bigger than jelly beans.

My kitchen window was quite close so we could get a pretty good view, as they were very scared if we got near.

I had surgery early that spring and had quite a few visitors who were interested in the birds and each time they came they would ask about them.

The eggs finally hatched and we could occasionally get close enough to peek and see them. They finally feathered out and the nest was very crowded.

My daughter Marjorie was watching one morning when the mother finch came and crowded in the nest and one by one each little bird would stick its tail far out the hole and do its duty outside. That was the first we knew that they potty trained so as not to have a messy nest.

Shortly after the weather warmed up, Marjorie was cleaning the gutters and got a little too close and one by one they came out and flew away, never to come back. It is always a learning experience to see what good parents most of Mother Natures creatures are.

Big Daddy

HAPPY 80TH BIRTHDAY

You made a swing set for gymnastics in the back yard and then almost had a heart attack when the bar broke on it's maiden voyage and Greg did a flip in the air and almost landed on his neck (You're an electrical engineer, not mechanical) Gregg

You made me a Frankenstein costume from boxes, an old coat, mask—You worked a long time on it, and then I could not see out of it, so I carried it all night. James

Halloween- You stapled Gregg's ear to his mummy suit.
James and Gregg

Helping me with my homework — especially math
James

I went with you to buy a pool table for the family for Christmas and the 8 ball had a hole in it from use as a gear shift! James\

The infamous first trip to Maine in 1970. It was the first time we spent time with you away from Mom (You were very naughty!) James & Gregg

Backyard Croquet in the summer and Barbecues (Well done!) All

The Steelers games at the house and the good dug out seats from
USS for Pirate baseball

Listening from the top of the stairs to you and Mom and the
Riley's on your Friday night late night card games all

Letting me finish your beer James

Taking walks on the golf course in Lakeland Florida – looking for
gators. James

Flying my Lion King kite in Roswell Park and LOSING IT!
Sophia

Skittles! Sophia

When I was little I came home from ballet class with a tutu on.
You called it a “one one” and it cracked me up! Olivia

Every time I would drop something, you'll say “don't drop that!”
Olivia

When you were staying with us during Jared's illness, I was really sick and had laryngitis. I remember coming home from the hospital, sitting at the kitchen table with you, having a toddy to help my throat and talking for several hours. Deniece

You would come up to my room when I was on bed- rest with Jared and teach me to play chess Deniece

When my parents went away on vacation you came down to take care of me. Jared

For making the best breakfast ever! Jared and Zach

When I sprained my ankle you spent a whole day driving me around to the hospital and to get food and you called me names like gimpy, hop a long etc. Zach

Spending time at your house in the morning before school - Zach

I remember going to lunch in the USX Tower - We would eat at the Grog Shop on Fridays. Our waitress was Cassie, but the "C" came off her name tag so it said "Assie". Dad thought that was so funny. (Muzz)

Here are my food memories of dad - He invented "blackened chicken" - long before it was "hip". He liked peanut butter and

mayo sandwiches (actually pretty good). I remember mom and dad making f

rench fries and watching studio wrestling on Saturday nights. Then dad decided he had to go on a diet and everything was translated to "beer units" – I could have a piece of cake, but that would be the same as 3 beers – I think I'll have the beer! (Muzz)

We were all in church – maybe for Karen's first holy communion? It was remarkable because dad was there with us. Half way through the ceremony someone around us farted and it was really potent. Dad kept making faces as if he were the one who farted – embarrassed faces. We couldn't laugh out loud because we were in church and that just made it funnier. I am sure all of our shoulders were shaking up and down though. (Muzz)

Once I crawled in bed with him when I was little and I remarked on all the hair on his chest. He told me it was his onion patch and that he could pick onions and held the salt in his belly button. (Muzz)

When we were little, Dad would take us to South Park swimming pool – it cost ten cents admission. We would beg him to go every Saturday, and every now and then he would agree. I remember going to Myrtle Beach every summer. Mike bought the alligator and it was so much fun to watch everyone ride the waves. I can picture dad on that thing – riding into shore and grinning. (Once we got mom in the water too – we were trying to see how many we could fit on a double raft.) (Karen)

I remember shopping for Christmas trees. I remember it would be a week before Christmas and it would always be cold and miserable out, and we would all sit in the car and point and poor dad had to show us the tree we were pointing to. We were very selective and inevitably when we found one we liked and brought

it home it would be crooked or have a bare patch. Then one year Dad said he'd had enough – he was buying an artificial tree. We kids were so upset, we went out ourselves and got a real one.
(Muzz)

One time when I was little I was in the bathroom trying to set my hair with pink foam curlers. I could not get them in right – they kept falling out. I think I was crying. Dad noticed and came in and set my hair for me. (Muzz)

When Zack was born, he would always be fussy from about 6 to 8 at night. Dad would sit in the red chair every night and hold Zack and watch Married with Children. We always teased that Zack had his hand in his diaper, just like Ed Bundy. (Muzz)

I remember Dad's "famous" Halloween costume – the whistling belly button. He wore an old grey sweater and tucked the "arms in the pocket. The hat ended at his chest and his "man breasts" were his eyes, and the belly button was his mouth. He would push his stomach in and out and whistle. (Karen)

Dad took me and the kids fishing at our lake. I think I had more fun than the kids! But I know they enjoyed because they always ask me to take them fishing. (Karen)

After I had Jake, mom and dad came down to help out. Dad could always get that pacifier in Jake's mouth. Even if it took 10 times!
(Karen)

I remember after a huge storm, dad piled us in the car and we drove around the neighborhoods to check out the fallen trees etc.
(Karen)

Dad was always fun swimming at the pool. He would lie on his back and bring his knees up to his chest and say he was a dirty old man swimming. (Karen)

Both mom and dad would help us with homework. Mom was the English expert and dad the math expert. As much as I hated the math then, dad always knew how to explain it and make it fun. I got to enjoy solving math word problems. (Karen)

The Schmidt Steeler parties were not only a family favorite, but my friends Jill and Sue remember them well. (Karen)

Thanks to dad, I got my first job out of college at U S Agri-Chem - Sorry dad! (Karen)

In Florida, dad and I would take a creature walk looking for alligators. One time during our walk, dad spotted a huge spider web with a gigantop spider in the middle of it. That ended my creature walks with dad. (Karen)

Jamie was always their favorite!!!!!! (Karen)

Okay, Jamie stole all the good ideas and memories. Of course he did, he never has an original thought. Gregg

Dad as the manager of the Cardinals/Hawks baseball teams. We always won the final game of the season. That was always the only game we won every year. I guess we didn't spend much on ice cream. Gregg

My Dad the hero,

On one of our annual camping trips Jamie was climbing down a hillside when he stirred up a hornets nest. All I remember was the sound of a tea-pot, wait...that was Jamie screaming at the top of his lungs. When I got close enough to see what was happening all I saw was a swarm of hornets circling Jamie's head and Dad swatting them away while he tried to lead him away. Of course, I froze. I remember thinking how brave that was. Gregg

Watching Steeler and Penn State games with dad. (Bruce)

Timing the grilled chicken to our cigars. (Bruce)