

Super Bowl Wars

By Leon Scott Baxter

(The Santa Barbara Independent – February 1, 2007)

So, my wife falls into the toilet last night, and she blames me... again. And, when I say “falls into the toilet”, I mean nothing of the kind. There’s actually no falling involved. No tripping. No stumbling. It’s a premeditated act. She decides to sit without first checking to see if there’s something to sit on. She’s not falling into anything. We should call it what it really is. The act is really nothing more than sitting in the bowl. And, it isn’t like this was the first time she’d experienced this phenomenon.

Funny thing is, I know my wife is not the only woman who has ever experienced getting to know the porcelain goddess on a personal level. Ever since someone put a seat on the first can, men have left it up, and women have fallen in. It’s the stuff of late night jokes, TV sitcoms, and women’s magazine articles. We men are made out to be the toilet seat bad guys. But, we’re really not the jerks we appear to be. We just think that you ladies should look before you leap... er, uh... sit.

Like in many households across this comode-loving country of ours, my wife and I have debated as those before us have, and those who follow us will. She complains: “I get up in the middle of the night, half awake, feeling my way through the dark, doing what I can to avoid the state of complete awakedness, as I make my way to the bathroom to relieve myself. When, suddenly, boom, my equilibrium is jarred awake, and I’m plummeting downward. Shocked completely out of any strands of slumber that had remained I’m struck with the startling sensation of cold, wet porcelain against my cheeks. Dammit, Leon. You left the seat up!”

I’ve done extensive research (okay, well I asked six of my buddies) and have found that this gripe is not uncommon in dual-gender households. As it turns out, most men (um, five... the other one was on a beer run) respond to this situation in similar ways. We know that it may appear that we only use the toilet from a standing position, but upon further investigation, you’ll find men do sit, too. We sit on the same seat that you sit on. We bend our knees the same way, and gravity pulls us to the ground with the same, if not more, force than it does you. Yet, most men haven’t fallen in. And, if a man does fall in once, he never does it again.

The reason: we look. It's that simple. We look. When we go to a restaurant, we don't walk up to the table and sit hoping there's a chair behind us. We look first. Now, you may argue, that since women sit 100% of the time and men just a small percentage, that women have more opportunities to fall into the can. And, we men have to hand it to you. You do end up on the seat more often than in the bowl. But, also, you have to admit, with so much toilet sitting starting back in your toddler years, shouldn't you have mastered it by now? Shouldn't you have made your mistakes and learned from them by this time? Shouldn't you know at your age to look first?

After the first or second fall, we would think you women would make a habit of checking the seat first. I mean, you never hear us complaining that you leave the seat *down*. Everytime we need to relieve ourselves, we men *have* to be sure the seat is up. So, when you've left it down, we are forced to lift the seat. Wanna know how we know to do this? We look! And do you hear us complain? Are there jokes about women leaving the toilet seat down? While we're hanging with our buddies watching the game do we gripe about the seat being down? No. It's our job to know how use the equipment by now.

But, there's something more going on here that we men obviously don't understand. I say this because if this falling in the bowl thing occurred exclusively with my wife, we'd keep it as a family secret and take her to weekly therapy. But, this toilet falling thing is virtually an epidemic in our society. It's traversed the generations. It affects both the rich and poor. Race, creed and color make no difference when it comes to the gravity that pulls them into the can. And, no matter how we may jest, we know women aren't dumb. To us, it seems simple, though...just look. You hear us say it, yet you still fall. What is it, ladies? Explain it to us. Because, I think when we finally know, when we can ultimately say, "Oh, now I get it. This makes sense," we'll be more apt to put that seat down for you. But, first we need to stand in your shoes. Help us with that. Most of us have never donned a pair of Mary Janes.

Here, let me take the first step on behalf of men in this opening up between the genders. Allow me to offer something to you that you probably don't know about us. You know those matching, fluffy, terry cloth shower caps for the toilet lid and toilet tank covers? We don't like them. It's really not about

the style. Men could care less about the interior decor of any room, much less the bathroom.

The problem: you put on these covers that make our thrones into stationery Muppets. And, when we lift the seat, Cookie Monster's fur somehow affects the mechanism that allows a toilet seat to remain up by itself. Thus, it falls. We're not blaming you. How could you know, what with you never having reason to raise the seat?

So, when we need to go, we have to use the left hand (right, if your a lefty) to keep the seat from slamming back down on the bowl. This is a problem, not because it's a two-hand job, but because we generally use the left hand for balance. Now that we're forced to concentrate on the lid *and* have relinquished our balance hand, we may have difficulty hitting our intended target. Next thing you know, we've missed the bowl completely and you're yelling at us for still not being able to pee in a toilet after all these years.

But, do we blame you? No. We suck it up and go back to the one-hand pee again. By the way, the same thing happens when you stack magazines on the back of the toilet or put those big baskets of smelly dried flower pedals or seashells back there.

Okay, so, there you go. Now, you understand why we sometimes might miss. Makes sense now, don't it? Your turn. Help us understand why you need us to put the seat down. Because this can be a huge first stride down the pathway of understanding each other. This could be an important step in accepting one another. Women of America (aw, heck... women of the world), find a man, any man, as soon as you put down this article: your husband, boyfriend, your dad or nephew, the postman, the butcher, the telemarketer that calls in the middle of dinner. And, tell him the truth about toilet seats. When you're done, tell another man. Then, tell your girlfriends to tell the men they know. We'll have this spread like toiletbowl bacteria. Let's finally put this to rest. Today is the first day of the rest of our toilet seat, problem-free lives. We can consider this the first of many truces in the Battle of the Sexes.