

Stalling Around with Bathrooms

Written by Alex Baer

Thursday, 04 August 2016 14:28

We used to make fairly regular advances in our culture. Some were dubious, many were trivial, but, overall, we seemed to be tracing a generally positive pathway forward. Now, it seems we're just stalling -- unable to get a grip on things, so to speak.

This is not news. Way back before the Earth's crust cooled and dinosaurs appeared, we used to go get coffee. Cream and sugar were the only tricky, ponderous variables which might throw us off our games -- especially, first thing in the morning, before we'd had our coffee.

Now, you're lucky to get out of a coffee order with under ten adjectives and after having made 62 ordering decisions. This is called Freedom, and with it comes the Stern Burden of Responsibility. But, I sometimes long for the simplicity of Formica countertops in a streamlined establishment looking and sounding nothing at all like the cross of a plumbing store and a steam locomotive factory.

(Sometimes, I object to modern life, and become furtive in my interactions -- humorous only to me, of course, as I suggest the foam heart on the surface of my undulating Grande Maximo Robusto-sized Triple-shot Mocha-Latte Cappuccino, with White Swiss Bittersweet Butterscotch Biscotti Bits, and Zest of Fresh Spanish Blood Orange Rind, be applied from right to left, versus left to right. Then, of course, I have to find a new place for coffee. Again.)

But, never mind. As often happens with coffee, this brings us galloping to bathrooms. Like getting a coffee, getting up and *propelling oneself toward a bathroom facility* used to be a simple event. (Sorry for the awkward lingo there. It's just that "

going

to the bathroom" and "

going

to the bathroom

" both sound a lot alike, and can be very confusing to non-native, and to native, speakers of our language.)

Going to the bathroom, however, has not changed much since Evolution rested its case, stood back, gazed at us, and said, "This looks like trouble," and "Uh-oh," and "Now what?" and so forth. However, locomoting oneself to the bathroom facility has also hardly changed much: You are here, and the facility is over there, and some transporting of oneself (or both, toward each

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other) is required and then accomplished (with any luck). Modes of doing so -- the means of travel -- may have changed some, but not the need to do so. Unless one lives in a bathroom, presumably.

Thus, it is now possible to arrive at a facility at high speed and fall into it, off balance, from your out-of-control Ferrari HoverSlab 5000 (pat pend), or from your old-fashioned Segway, neither of which is a particularly graceful segue of a dismount, bathroom-wise.

But that does not mean The Wise People (should that be "The Whys Guise"?) at the Supreme Court should not leap into the modern free-for-all about bathrooms. Everyone is getting into the act -- which is fitting, since, as has been pointed out, when it's your time, you'll know it, and go. (Or was it, *we all have to go sometime*, or just what?) Whatever.

Having arrived at the bathroom facility, there is now a renewed complexity to the Go-or-No-Go decision. (This choice is graded on a Pass-Fail basis, like most of life, and will haunt participants until much older, also like most of life.)

Downshift: I really *do* get that we humans are more complex, evolving beings than previously acknowledged, and that our societies are also following patterns of our complexity not previously thought much about, if at all. But, this whole bathroom issue seems to have erupted out of nowhere into a mega-crisis. I am frankly still bending my head around it.

Meanwhile, I am perplexed that SCOTUS, and so many legislators, and regional, state, and local officials, and civic leaders, have rushed aboard this issue in such apparent distress. Not to demean any legitimate concerns, but, *don't we have far more pressing problems in this country* ?

Of course, the point is well taken: When you *really* have to *go to the bathroom*, there *is* no more pressing concern. In the interim, we get the thrill of being human, and trying to figure out ways to keep down our decision-making-about-bathrooms to far less clock time than we're already taking on our decision-making-about-coffee-orders.

Ah, Progress!

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There is also the unanticipated potty humor of SCOTUS, and Republican lawmakers, launching offensives into the nation's bathrooms -- especially at a time when the GOP is, for example, so *dead-set*

in **resisting** government intrusion into assault weapon and large-capacity ammo clip purchases on the one hand, but so

lively

on **insisting** on government intrusion of a woman's doctor's exam room, and her decision-making, on the other.

I was going to suggest we all be adults about this latest brouhaha -- but that's how we got here in the first place.

Postscript on Porcelain

I can hardly wait until transporter technology is finally available, to further complicate everything from prank phone calls, pizza delivery orders, and arriving in a bathroom stall. I mean -- think of the billions of bucks a sensitive, workable, bathroom-beaming app would generate!

By then, at least, it will be possible, in a sense, to *fax* yourself to a lush vacation spot for a few hours, so as to recoup from the ordeal of having misdialed the bathroom, and ending up in the plumbing fixtures department of Home Universe Barn. Tricky for a sec, that one. (Cruel and unusual punishment, that, too.)

And, frankly, I can't talk about butt-dialing right now. My coffee has run its immediate obstacle course and is seeking escape -- *as is my mind* -- and I still have to decode if I am a Buoy or a Gull (or is it a Winch, a Wench, or a Whench?) in this theme-park of a coffee shop!

Today's Bonuses:

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And now, a few words about bathrooming -- complete with colloquialisms, be warned:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJ2sUHeTOMw>

If that hasn't got you chuckling at humanity, maybe this will: □ music from genius-guy Carl Stalling, who made Looney Tunes really go:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1U9Jaq3CVE>

Finally, rounding out the three-fer, from Moby, the tune, Porcelain:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QhZnEagfjTQ>