

## One of the Greatest Modern Inventions Of This Century

I asked several individuals recently what they thought were some of the greatest inventions of this century. Some of the answers were plastic, the zipper, polyester fabrics, telephones (cell phones too), TV, air conditioning, electricity, computers, automobiles, the Wii, I Pads and so forth. Their answers depended a lot on their age. What child even knows of a life without cell phones, the computer gadgets or even the automobile. They have no concept.

Over the Christmas holidays I sat next to my 4 year old grandson who was playing “Angry Birds” on the I pad as well as numerous other games. He was really good, too. He knew what he was doing. He said, “Grandma, it is your turn.” Yea, right; I kept losing the image. He would patiently show me again how it worked but it was no use. Wow, I am so not connected with their world.

**In my opinion, one of the greatest inventions of this century is indoor plumbing.** Those of us, who are old enough to remember those old days, are quite happy to say goodbye and good riddance to the old out house.

Perhaps many of the readers of this article are not familiar with the “out house” or sometimes referred to as “the necessary.” If you are not, then you have been greatly blessed in your life, and every time nature calls, you should thank your lucky stars for modern bathroom fixtures.

Early in this century a chamber pot was generally located under a bed or in the corner of the bedroom. That sufficed for a time although it was a smelly job to say the least.

Later came the building of a little structure adjacent to the house known as the Out House. One often had to brave the cold and freeze his fanny walking out into the dark and the unknown.

Martha Sanchez of Lebanon kindly let us take a picture of her Out House that she acquired some years ago. She had it moved from LittleHollywood, a small community existing in the 1940’s east of Safford, to her property. It was not for actual use,

but she has a very interesting collection of things in her yard reflecting days gone by. Pictured here is her Out House.



The Out House was generally a one holer, some two holers; however, I have seen a twelve holer before. Don’t ask me how that worked, but I took a picture of one located in Ohio next to an old schoolhouse. It did say Boys Out House, but then I did not see a convenience for the girls. Perhaps they had a convenience located elsewhere or they studied at home.

Then we come to the lovely convenient item of toilet paper which is generally soft to the skin. Well, in the days of the Out House, we had to use a sheet of old newspaper or a page out of the Sears and Roebuck Catalog. While sitting and concentrating one could work that sheet really well and catch up on the news and all the latest Sears products available to purchase.

There were still out houses being used in the 1950’s. There are some still being used in remote areas of the world today. Of course, occasionally, when we are away from home, we may have use of the modern Out House: the PortaPotty, which is much nicer and cleaner.

In the 1950’s the Out House was often rearranged by pranksters in this very county. Of course my lips will remain forever sealed but if one tied a rope around the structure and just moved it back a bit, well, you can imagine what happened when Dad came out for one final trip before bedtime and fell into the hole. Or, then you have grandpa out there smoking his pipe

and occasionally causing a fire and running as fast as he can holding onto his pants.

I have a dear friend who mentioned that when he was a child he fell into an outhouse. He yelled to the top of his lungs until his Aunt came out to rescue him. She was laughing so hard that it took quite a bit of pulling to get him out. I asked him if he was permanently traumatized. I guess he is all right as he is still alive and well today.

I remember our family using the Out House years ago when we were staying at our old cabin at Turkey Flat on Mt. Graham. Taking the flash light and imagining bears at every corner, it took a great deal of courage to walk out there. At night while sleeping on the screen porch we would hear the bears scrounging about through the garbage pit which was very close to the Out House. Then one cannot forget the several daddy long leg spiders that had made their home in the Out House too.

Here is a picture of a boys twelve holer in Ohio.



**Graham County boys: right Keith Perkins, and in red jacket, Nolan Reed**

Again the writer extends many thanks to those inventors , because of their ingenuity and hard work, brought us modern indoor plumbing. Aren't

we glad we live in these times! Never take such modern conveniences for granted.

Submitted by Sue Dette Crandall Reed