

Palmetto Bay news

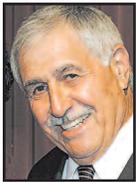
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Aren't men supposed to be able to fix things?

BY ERNIE SOCHIN



Of course I can fix it — famous last words of a skilled do-it-yourselfer before embarrassing himself on behalf of the entire male population.

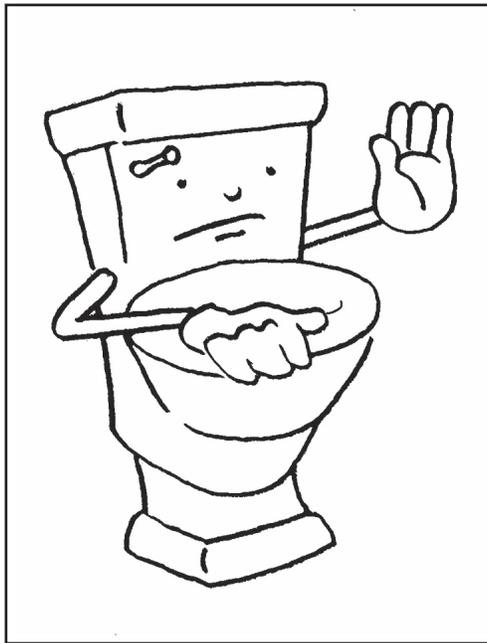
Just prior to writing this article, a simple little plastic clock in our bedroom began to beep. My maintenance assistant assumed that it must need a new battery and proceeded to install one all on her own. One problem however — she was unable to close the battery compartment.

“Let me have it.” This coming from someone who many years ago built his own radios, transmitters, and many other sophisticated devices and always considered himself to be quite handy.

My wife set a timer to see exactly how long it would take me to close the little battery compartment. After 45 minutes of cursing, I finally handed it back to her and said, “Here, you do it.” She took one quick look, noticed that there was a piece of plastic protruding where it shouldn't have been, and used a file to correct that. In a few seconds she had the clock sealed up and ready to go.

This was not my first embarrassment as a male fix-it person. A while back I noticed that our toilet seat was not seated properly and that the only solution would be to buy a new one. We did that, except I could not remove the old one because the bolts were thoroughly rusted and wouldn't budge no matter how hard I tried with my garage full of wrenches.

I finally figured that with all that rust a simple tap with a hammer and screwdriver would loosen the nuts and bolts. Little did I know that toilets are actually made in two



Don't touch me!

halves and when I gave that bolt its first tap it was proven to me. The toilet totally opened up, all of the water poured into the bathroom and then onto our carpeted hallway with you-know-who screaming at me for attempting something beyond my skills.

“Why didn't you call the plumber?”

Of course I didn't have to answer because what self-respecting male would call a plumber to replace a simple thing like a toilet seat?

Okay, so I was not so good at toilet seats but several weeks later I had to replace one of those little handles on an outside faucet. I did this with ease except it didn't look quite straight after I screwed it on, so I decided to take another one of my many wrenches and give it a slight turn to straighten it out.

It worked, except that it sheared the faucet

flush with the wall and allowed water to come pouring out which was impossible to stop without shutting off the main water supply to the house at a time that my wife was attempting to do laundry. Naturally, at this point we actually had to call a plumber who asked us why we always call for help on Saturday when he must pay his employees double time. When else am I going to make my home repairs?

Fortunately I have a daughter who was smart enough to become a top-flight attorney and showed up just in time to give me a great piece of pro bono advice. She suggested that next time something needs to be fixed in our house, that I go away and then come back after the called-for service person was finishing, at which time I could complain and say, “Why didn't you call me? I could've done this easily.”

At least this would have saved me the embarrassment of having people know that I cannot perform simple chores around the house. Thank you, Lori!

Of course when it comes to automobiles, who other than a man will tackle a repair with a complex vehicle? Driving home the other day I noticed that service-engine-soon light flashing and I began to have nightmarish thoughts of bringing it to the dealership and spending several hundred dollars for them to mess around with it. My mechanic's assistant suggested that perhaps I should check the gas cap to make sure that it was secure. It wasn't. I tightened it and that solved the problem.

Do you see where I am going with all this? Bad enough that the women at my gym are lifting heavier weights than I would even attempt and now they seem to be excelling at kickboxing and martial arts. Where will it all end?