**How *NOT* to Meet Women**

**At the Cowboy Festival**

**“Shane! Shane! Don’t go!”**

*— A quote from the movie, “Shane,” taken completely out of context*

A good friend of mine the other day asked me if I could recall my most embarrassing moment. Well. There was birth. Other than that, I don’t blush easily.

With the Cowboy Fest just around the corner (April 18-21), I do recall a most embarrassing moment.

On the bright side, no pun intended, it was more of an embarrassing moment for someone else than me. It involved a porta-potty and a middle-aged woman of Homeric proportions.

For those of you who are die-hard yuppies or have been in an iron lung the past 671 years, the City o’ SClarita puts on one of the semi-wildest shows west of the Pecos. I qualify it with a ‘*semi’* because I’ve attended some Western soirees that were so wild, the body parts have yet to fall back to Earth.

Hmph.

Funny. The common thread in all those Sodom & Gomorrah wine & cheese mixers was Walt Fisher, dear childhood pal and past president of the California Cattlemen’s Association. Which is an entire different campfire outing.

Anywho.

The shameless plug is that there are still plenty of general admission tickets available. If you’ve never been, it’s worth it just to wander the historic movie set of Melody Ranch in Placerita Canyon AND to taste the peach cobbler. Boy howdy. That peach cobbler is beyond edible. It’s good.

Perhaps it was the peach cobbler that sent that woman to Andy Gump’s public facilities so long ago. Perhaps it had something to do with Tabasco.

Couldn’t speculate.

I remember it was about 10 years ago and we scheduled the Fest during a particularly windy April weekend.

The city contracts out for some very nice portable latrines — luxury versions that the likes of Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie would be proud to use on location.

These rolling outhouses are not gender specific. On the bright side, the interiors aren’t pink.

After a few soda pops, as with all beings sentient or not, Nature called me.

Loudly.

Clearly.

I sauntered up the steps to the row of restrooms, picked one that advertised: “UNOCCUPIED” and opened the door. Here’s a possible headline:

Came The Scream!

It was rather high-pitched and undignified. The woman inside was sitting on the commode, I imagine not merely to read the latest issue of Cosmo. She swore. She started to stand to grab the door. She realized that perhaps standing up with her undies around her ankles and skirt around her head wasn’t a ladylike thing to do. Add to that, especially with me and about 12,011 wide-eyed people all of whom had a wide-angle view of her naughty parts.

She screamed again. She demanded that I shut the door.

It was a reasonable request. And, I would have, too.

Granted. Myself? I was more than a little shocked. I thought I was going into an empty stall, certainly one free of hysterical ladies. It wasn’t my fault she didn’t bother to lock her door.

But there was a problem. That darn devil Placerita Wind, the one that carries Gene Autry singing Ghost Riders In The Sky. I don’t know if it was a noreaster or Santa Ana. It didn’t feel like an Arctic Express, but it was a stout breeze I’m estimating of the Category 5 / 200 mph-+ variety. The wind just blew the door out of my hand and slammed it wide open. And pinned it wide barn door darn open, so wide barn door darn open that the original crowd of 12,011 people who were standing near the porta-potty had now swelled to Easily Distracted People Who Like Obama numbers.

Everyone, except for me, was sporting a Western sheepish grin at the screaming lady, who was now stomping her feet and I’m guessing it wasn’t because she was constipated.

Weighing as much as a full-grown pampered Wisconsin dairy cow, she screamed for a third time, then offered some rather bossy suggestions about me attempting self-procreation laced with expletives and a plea to close the “gosh-darn door” only she didn’t use “gosh-darn.”

Being a gentleman, I did. I sort of had to put a shoulder to it because I think it came off the hinge a bit. Plus you had those cyclonic gusts working against you, along with the giggling and applause from the assembled multitudes, some of whom were voting for the poor woman to be pulled out of the stall, hosed down and weighed.

On the bright side (that pun again) there wasn’t enough time to arrange for the tourists to do The Wave, although I think one fellow who probably had too many beers asked her to expose her — ahem — “well-dimpled heinie.”

I think that was the ghost of Tubercio Vasquez, who had a history of strange relationships. If it wasn’t, this newsletter comes out in another six months or something and we’ll bury a contrite “clarification” somewhere in really teeny type, because we and Bill Hart aren't afraid of any darn rum-soaked ghosts.

I fumbled for an apology.

The latrine lady just reiterated her request for privacy.

I finally got the door closed and I wish I could attest that the portly woman in the XXXXXXX-large cowgirl outfit made it through the experience intact.

It’s not like I wanted to wait outside for her to come out of her domicile like a Pleistocene-sized gopher searching for Spring’s first shadow.

No.

I just moseyed to another porta-potty.

In Ventura County.

Inside, I made sure the latch was secure. Preferring to learn through science as opposed to suffering, I took off my tooled leather belt and cinched it around the handle to make sure the vengeful woman hadn’t followed me, hell-bent on prying open my door to a heartless and jeering rabble.

After all.

I am a public figure.

To tell you the truth, I can’t even swear that the woman lived through the experience.

Maybe the latrine sniffing dogs (and aren’t they all?) found her body the next day after she died from embarrassment. Or wind rash.

At the very least, I think those of you who weren’t planning on attending the 2013 Cowboy Fest should reconsider.

If the bands don’t pan out, or you can’t find the T-shirt of your dreams, you can hang around the porta-potties and hope for a lock malfunction and stiff wind. It’s actually those kinds of things that make lifelong memories and I think that’s how festival director Mike Fleming met his first two wives.

There’s still plenty of general admission tickets available for the cowpoke fest. It’s April 18-21 this year. Here’s how you can get more info:

Give a jingle to 661-250-3735.

Or, go to their website at: http://www.cowboyfestival.org

While the city will once again have portable lavatories for all genders including any yet to be invented, you might want to consider, ahem — going — before you leave the house.

And check the wind conditions while you’re at it.

*(John Boston has been named both Best Humorous Columnist in America and Best Serious Columnist in America, an entire passel of times. He has 119 major writing awards and a fetching disposition. He has lived in the Santa Clarita for many, many weeks and, at home, has his own indoor plumbing with a double-latch door.)*