

## I VOTE FOR THE INDOORS

A good deal of the profits (if there are any) from the Milford Fair are put into a fund by the Fair Board for the eventual installation of flush toilets at Mount Tabor. You would agree with this project if you were forced to use the present facilities. This was particularly the case during the wonderful concert that was held the evening of the Fair. Together with being wet and smelly, which the outhouses were during the day of the Fair, at night they were as dark as the inside of a chimney, requiring a good deal of desperation to force one to use them. It had to be unutterably worse for the women.

There are some people who, reportedly, are great fans of the outhouse. I am not one of them. I have a friend who claims it's a great spot for solitude and meditation. He's installed dutch doors so he won't miss anything while he's there, and has it stocked with the latest issues of "Cottage Life" and "Ontario Out of Doors".

That may be all well and good, but I want to give my thanks to Sir John Crapper, who invented the indoor flush toilet, and is memorialized by having both his first and last names associated with his invention.

First of all, the indoor toilet is warm. In winter, the outhouse is as cold as penguin dung, and unless you manage somehow to make like a hovercraft, the seat sears your bottom with cold. At one place I know, the toilet seat travels in and out of the house with each trip to maintain some vestige of warmth. No quick scan of "Life's Like That" in the Readers Digest in November.

On the farm on Manitoulin Island, we built a two holer because in winter, the well won't stand up to the pressure of an indoor toilet. We did a good job of it, with partitions and electric lights. For the first few years, night-time was the time to visit, because while the outhouse was well built, we ran out of money and time when it came to the doors. No, there were no doors, and the biffy faced the road. If there is anything that will hurry a trip to the outhouse, it's traffic on the road. I imagine drivers must have thought the inhabitants didn't want to miss anything. Like the poor family who couldn't afford a suit for their son, so they bought him a hat and sat him by the window.

On our family farm in Blackville, N.B., the outhouse stood on a long, slow rise from the Mirimichi River. The wind surged up from the river and created a gale from the bottom up. Not only was it icy cold in winter, the force 10 winds blew the

Sears Catalogue paper right back up the hole. In summer it blew every yellow jacket and wasp up there, and it took a brave or desperate person to block those holes with his backside.

Wasps and things aren't the only wildlife to be found in the outhouse. All manner of species from the insect world find it a pleasant place. Snakes seem to be fond of outhouses, maybe because there's mice. In the north, porcupines regularly chow down on portions of the outhouse, weakening the structure to a point where there's a real danger of falling in. Yuck.

I'll take the inside facilities, thank you, though one lady told me that on an evening visit to her indoor toilet she was startled to find a large snake curled placidly about the seat. Good thing she turned on the light first.

That's not to say that flush toilets are perfect, mind you. In England, they have a kind of flush where you pull a chain and the water rumbles down from an overhead container. Gregory Clark wrote a story once about an American who pulled the chain just as a buzz bomb hit the house. He stumbled from the wreckage mumbling his apologies for the destruction.

It seems to me that very few advances have been made since the invention of the indoor toilet. I'm a little over six feet, and I'm sure they haven't raised the height of the thing since people averaged around five feet tall. I sit there with my knees around my ears like a spider in a matchbox. Still, indoors is vastly superior to outdoors.

I think that people who remember the outhouse fondly probably haven't used one in quite some time, and most certainly have not been forced to use the facilities at Mount Tabor. The passage of time mellows our memories, and that's probably a good thing.

- GEORGE UNDERHILL



SERVICE, PARTS  
AND RESTORATIONS

SPECIALISTS IN  
JAGUAR, ROVER AND  
OTHER QUALITY  
EUROPEAN AUTOMOBILES

**RICHARD COPPLE**  
DIRECTOR

SOUTH BAY  
RR#3, PICTON, ONTARIO  
CANADA K0K 2T0

TEL: (613) 476-8074  
FAX: (613) 476-1550