

Cedar Rapids Lodge and the Amazing Toilet

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More about the toilet later, for now, hello from beautiful **Cedar Rapids Lodge** on Medicine Lake in Northern MN. My family and I have come here every year for the past 13 or 14 years to rest, relax and fish our brains out. Our kids have practically grown up on this camp ground and the owners, Pat and Steve Adler, are counted among the nicest people we know and they run a first rate resort. The lake is under fished and full of walleye, Northern, Crappie and hours of fun and enjoyment. Check out my son Mathew kicking up waves with his cooler than cool uncle Greg.



Now about those toilets.

As a guy I don't really notice toilets that much. I suppose it has to do with the fact that most of the time guys can use a toilet without the necessity of really becoming involved with it (other than, hopefully, the handle). Still, being at the lodge in a cabin for a week means I will be using the same toilet, more or less, for the duration of my stay. That being the case, on my second or third... uh... lengthy trip to the bathroom (you know, the kind with a crossword puzzle tucked under one arm) I began to notice an unusual sensation while... meditating. It seems that a warm breeze was blowing on my nether regions. What could it be?

In fact, when I flushed the toilet while seated I got sort of a "whoosh" of warm moist air on my behind. It almost seemed like a day at the spa or health club - except that the tea-tree smell was missing or hideously changed. Something else was bothering me. Each time I sat down on the toilet I was aware that the seat was warm. I should probably tell you that there are 13 of us in our little cadre - my father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law Randy and his family of 5, brother-in-law Greg (single and Hip) my own brood of 3 kids and my wonderful (and overworked) wife Ann. We have 2 cabins and use one of them as the gathering place for meals and entertainment - although we have managed to keep Dad from bringing the accordion for 14 years running. Anyway, that the seat would be warm is not so surprising - since the bathroom gets a steady stream of participants. Still, I found it odd that it was *always* warm.

I became convinced that the toilet water was heated - that's right, heated. I thought that the plumbing was routing water from the hot water header into the tank. So, after the next flush (those of you who are squeamish should stop reading here) I put my finger in the water... that's right, I put my finger in the water to confirm my suspicions. You'll be happy to know that I washed said finger immediately. What did I find out? The water was quite hot. It was hot enough to have come out of the sink hot water facet.

Naturally I went immediately to my loving family to tell them of my amazing discovery. They laughed roundly at me (I am, after all the son-in-law/brother-in-law), but then admitted sheepishly that they suspected the same thing. My brother-in-laws, both quite handy and experts at all sorts of manly things, were convinced that the tank was situated too close to a hot water pipe and was benefiting from radiated heat. I pointed out that, if that were the case, it would only be warm when the tank had held the same water for some time. This toilet, however, was *flushing* warm water with repeated flushes.

Steve Provides an Answer

We went and asked Steve Adler about his amazing heated toilet - thinking it was some new fangled bidet. He informed us that the plumbing is constructed to mix hot and cold water together to keep the tank from sweating. It seems his well water is so cold that without some hot water in the mix it would sweat like a large shirtless man with something to hide. The problem was that the mix of hot water was too high. It should make tepid water in the tank, not hot water. So the mystery was solved. But now that it's adjusted I miss that little breath of tropical air arising unexpected from that basest of inventions (sigh).