

SHELL SHOCKED

The Frog in the Toilet

By Art Stevens

It happened for the third time since Sanibel built the new sewerage system. I opened a toilet in one of the bathrooms and there sitting on the side of the toilet looking at me with wary eyes was a huge frog.

Now I'm a non-scientist to begin with, let alone an expert on toilet piping and the like, so I have no idea how the frog got through the plumbing all the way above the water level.

But I did care about the mental state of this misplaced frog that had no idea where it was or how it got there. The issue now was how I was going to get this poor, frightened frog out of the toilet and back to nature.

I would guess that opening the lid on a toilet bowl and seeing a frog sitting there is not your everyday occurrence. I guess I am one of the chosen few to be granted this unique privilege. I assume it was some kind of providential test – to determine if I had the moxy to transport this poor little frog from an unknown future back to the vegetation outside where I assume his frog friends were wondering what was keeping him from their lunch date.

Can you imagine what it's like opening a toilet bowl and seeing a frog sitting there? At first I thought that someone was playing an April Fool's joke on me. But when I eliminated that possibility and realized that the frog had made its way through the pipes to reach an uncertain future I began to admire the adventurous streak it displayed.

It was like coming home from dinner and finding an elephant sitting in your bathtub.

I got a dust pan and a spaghetti pot with a drainer to try to capture the frog. But once I opened the toilet lid the frog sensed danger and its survival stimuli went to work. He jumped out of the bowl and hopped everywhere to get away from me. I had forgotten to close the door to the bathroom and the frog was soon hopping all over the house. He was always one hop ahead of me.

He must have tired out because I finally got him into the spaghetti pot and covered it with the drainer. He was captured. I took the pot outside and let him out in the vegetation. At first he didn't budge. He couldn't believe that freedom was at hand. But he got the idea and hopped out of my life. I was relieved and proud. I had sent wildlife back into its natural habitat.

The second time it happened I couldn't catch the frog even though I had closed the door to the bathroom. I just couldn't get him to sit still. When he started walking on the ceiling I knew I needed help. I called Buzz Murphy and after having a good laugh over my frog ineptness he quickly managed to corral the frog and haul him back to nature.

This third time has proven to be the most difficult experience of them all. This frog refused to be captured and hopped with the kind of energy I've rarely seen in frogs. After successfully eluding me for about a half hour he found the tiniest crack under a cabinet below the sink and slithered into it.

He slithered into an area that has no opening and I have no idea where it leads to or where the frog is now. I can only hope that this frog has found a shortcut to the outside world and is once again having insect lunches with his buddies in the woods.

But he may still be in some mysterious chamber behind the sink and may need my help to get out. Every night I listen for

cries for help: “Ribbit, ribbit, ribbit.” But there haven’t been any frog cries of alarm nor frog sightings recently. I hope that this frog has found his way out somehow and is laughing about the whole toilet bowl incident with his buddies.

And I also hope that I will not experience any more frog sightings in my toilet bowls. Life is hard enough without adding additional trauma to the act of opening the lid on a toilet bowl.