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Heart of the Mountain

Mens' Room Mixup

Patricia Brown Davis

It's September, a month that makes me recall my kids' "What I did on my Summer Vacation" papers at the start of the school year. Neither their teachers nor mine ever assigned a "My Most Embarrassing Moment" essay. If they had, I know exactly the tale I would have told.

My husband and I and another couple were vacationing on Aruba in 1970. One evening while having dinner in a local restaurant, still feeling the affects of the long hot summer day and plenty of refreshments featuring the island rum, I heard the call of nature.

Spoken English wasn't as popular as their Papiamentu or Dutch—the official language. I asked the waiter where the restroom was. He understood me better than I did his answer, but there was only one hallway (on the right) from the dining room, so I turned, and made an immediate right into the first door I came to.

Soon, sitting in a quiet stall, I began to feel relief from the terrible pressure on my bladder. Then I heard someone enter the restroom, and, just as I put my hand on the stall's door handle, I heard two male voices.

My first thought: "What are those men doing in the ladies room? Then another male voice joined the two. My fuzzy brain finally clicked; "Oh my God; I'm in the men's room! What'll I do?" My first thought: "Just stay put and when they all leave come out of the stall."

But there seemed to be a constant stream of people coming and going. I felt trapped. Even if I dared to make a verbal plea, I didn't know their language.

Back at the table, my party suddenly noticed I'd not returned. They discussed what to do. The other woman said, "Well, she went in the right direction; I'll go check and see if she's OK."

She finally returned; "She's not in the



Pat and company, Aruba, 1970.

COURTESY PATRICIA BROWN DAVIS

ladies' room." More table discussion. Finally, my husband said, "You don't suppose she went into the men's room? I'll go check."

Meanwhile, I remained in the stall, contemplating for my mad dash to freedom, when I heard the door open again.

"I'm never getting out of here!" I thought in great frustration.

The men stopped talking with the arrival of this latest "visitor."

"Patrice! Are you in here?"

It was my husband!

I meekly replied, "Yes!"

"Damn it all! Stay in there until these men are done. I'll let you know when it's OK to come out!"

Time passed. He finally said, "Coast is clear."

I came out of the stall, quickly washed my hands, finally noticed the urinals, and listened to a long streak of derisive words as we returned to the table.

My face was hot with embarrassment, but the room was too dark for anyone to see. However, I was sure every man in the place was eyeing me with amusement.

After several minutes, I managed to relax enough to chuckle about my predicament, which, of course, they've never let me forget.

Patricia Brown Davis is a professional musician and memoirist seeking stories about the Wellsboro glass factory. Contact her at patd@mountainhomemag.com.