

## Get a Life

By Joseph P. Guzzo

This expression “get a life” is used for people that are usually over consumed with something. Although I do “have a life” I must admit it may have been over-run by this position I accepted 17 years ago - Plumbing Inspector.

I have this tendency to analyze plumbing systems wherever I go, on or off the job. Especially toilet facilities, for which I consider my specialty, while others that are with me consider a nuisance. On my return back from the men’s room their saying something like, “*here he comes, I wonder how many code violations he found, how exciting.*” My Sons would be more blunt, “*OK Dad let’s get it over with, what’s wrong with the bathrooms?*” I just can’t help it.

One day on my way to school I stopped at a newly constructed donut shop. I won’t mention the Town in order to protect the embarrassed. My doctor said donuts are out, so I went in for a small regular, skim milk light and half a Splenda. Like a magnet I was pulled towards the men’s room. Before I even opened the door I found the first violation. The sign for the men’s room was on the door. The code requires the designated sign in Braille, with the National Handicapped symbol to be on the wall, adjacent to the door handle 60” to the center from the floor. I opened the door and right there before me was one enormous code violation, I was stunned, my eyes started to water. There was a urinal and a water closet next to each other, and the water closet was wide opened to the room, no stall, no door, no partitions, nothing. I said to myself... this is a brand new building, how could this be. I left quickly not bothering to look for anything else. I just had to tell someone. So I went up to the counter, but the guy was having enough trouble getting my coffee straight, he wouldn’t do. I made my exit in haste, mumbling to myself. I was so flustered I think I even left the change in the tip jar!

**Code, Basic Principle No. 23 Privacy For Toilets,** *In a room that accommodates more than one toilet or that incorporates a urinal and a toilet, each toilet shall be enclosed and each urinal shall be side shielded for privacy.*

**More Code, Section 10.10, 18, n, 5,** *In a toilet facility with more than one toilet, or with a toilet and a urinal, each toilet shall be enclosed. Each urinal shall be side shielded for privacy.*

This is in the code twice, how could it be missed by the architect, the builder, the plumbing contractor, and especially the plumbing inspector? Besides it is so basic, so common sense it’s almost inconceivable. And then I had this terrible thought, what about the women’s room? I wondered if the toilets were wide open like in the men’s room, with no enclosures. Perhaps this was much more than just a code violation. Could it be, perhaps, allegedly, all those people, the architect, builder, plumber and the inspector could all be members of a nudist colony. Or maybe even the donut chain, allegedly. This could be a nationwide nudist cult! The thought sickened me, not that there’s anything wrong with being a nudist, but the fact that I know the plumbing inspector and now I’m going to have nightmares.

This was huge so I had to tell someone and get this off my chest, it was consuming me. I wasn’t going to call the plumbing inspector because I did not want to be added to another hate list. My building inspector wouldn’t do, he would just tell me I’m getting

myself in more trouble, and mind my own business. I was going to call the State I.P.S. “Internal Plumbing Service” but I didn’t have time to be lectured, and I wasn’t in the mode for a heavy dose of arrogance. And then it came to me. I will tell someone that has to listen to me, my students.

I started right off at the beginning of class, ranting and raving. Ordering my 40 apprentices to open the code book to the appropriate section, and highlight it. I drew sketches on the board of men’s and women’s rooms with stick figures of people. One stick figure standing at the urinal covering his eyes with his stick figure hand, and one stick figure sitting on the toilet with an embarrassed look on his stick figure face. I went on and on for about an hour straight, pacing up and down talking about my cult conspiracy theory. And then it was break time. My students seemed to leave the classroom much quicker than usual. As I sat down on my chair catching my breath, as one student passed by he said, “dude M-Mr Guzzo you got to get a life.”

A couple of years ago my sons made me take up golf. Although I’m not that good, I heard it’s really not about being good. I just love being out there with my sons. But I think they had something else in mind. You see there is no plumbing out on the golf course I could inspect, or bathrooms I could analyze and get all worked up over, and they’re right, until of course we get back to the club house.

Although some of the details have been adjusted, this is a true story.