

the last word

463-1998



Coping When the Grass is Greener??

by Jamie Buckingham

Like most folks, I've always taken a septic tank for granted. All I knew was it was out there, buried beneath the green expanse of my side lawn, faithfully performing its lowly duty.

But last Friday afternoon it began taking orders from some Ayatollah—and went into rebellion.

First signs appeared in the downstairs bathroom, between the laundry room and my study. Washing machine water began bubbling up through the shower stall. I was peacefully tending sheep and goats at my typewriter when Jackie began to scream.

I calmly suggested to Jackie that she stop screaming and turn off the washing machine. Then we went to work with towels and a mop. Fortunately, the water had only overflowed into three rooms and I was able to salvage most of the manuscripts floating around my study.

Jackie suggested I call a plumber. I said it was probably only one of my socks stuck in the drain pipe. That was reasonable, since scarcely a washing goes by that at least one of my socks doesn't disappear. Occasionally they stick to the inside of a leg of my trousers, held there by static electricity, and do not turn loose until I am running through the Atlanta Airport or standing in line at the post office to mail a package. This time, however, the sock had obviously gone down the drain and stopped up the pipe.

My friend, Al Reed, who was helping put up a gutter on our patio, said he had the same trouble last year and fixed it by stuffing a garden hose down the air vent pipe which sticks up through the roof. Aside from losing my balance and almost falling off the roof, all I did was get 45 feet of my brand new 50-foot garden hose stuck in the vent pipe. After being bitten by a spider I descended the roof in a cheerful mood and entered the house just in time to hear Jackie flush



the toilet next to the shower stall.

All pandemonium broke loose. The soapy water from the washing machine was bad enough, but this time it was an entirely different matter. Besides the obvious problems, the entire east end of the house was under water.

I commanded everyone available and we went to work with mop and towel again. Rugs had to be dragged outside, closets emptied, bookcases moved.

I put a huge sign on the bathroom door daring anyone, on a threat worse than death, to use it. Then I went upstairs to take a shower.

Ten minutes later, standing under a steaming shower with my head filled with shampoo suds, there was a wild pounding at the door. "You're flooding us," Jackie screamed. I grabbed a towel and rushed downstairs. Somehow it had never occurred to me that the upstairs bathrooms emptied into the same place as the downstairs bathroom—through the shower stall and out into my study. It was almost midnight when we

finished and I was standing on the patio in freezing weather rinsing my hair under the garden hose.

The plumber, who arrived two days later, said the septic tank was clogged. The septic tank man, who arrived a week later and charged me \$462.00, said I needed a new drain field.

The grass may be always greener over the septic tank, but have you ever seen what a back hoe can do to a beautiful lawn?

All Moses had to do was put up with grumpy people, scorpions and wandering bands of Amalekites. He also seemed to have pretty good control over the water situation, with that staff and all. And in the Sinai, of course, modern plumbing was pleasantly unheard of. But to be dependent upon a septic tank is something I wish on no man—even a Moses.

So we're feeding it plenty of yeast to keep it happy, washing socks by hand, and saying a little prayer.

Now, if someone can only tell me how to get a garden hose out of the air vent in my roof I'll be able to praise the Lord without having to add "anyhow." ☿