

# Flushamatic — the ultimate bathroom fixture

The age of digital technology has brought mankind an array of products, services, and gadgets that were beyond most imaginations merely a half-century ago.

Every evening before retiring, we can set our computerized coffeemakers to turn on when our digital alarm clocks wake us in the morning so the coffee will be fresh when we step out of the shower. In many homes, even the shower is computerized. Those who can afford the luxury can program a single use micro-processor to automatically set the water temperature and pressure of the spray in a state-of-the-art showerhead to their liking.

That's just the beginning. We can then program microwave and convection ovens to cook our dinners so they are piping hot when we come home from our high-tech offices. Crock pots can cook all day so pot roasts and stews are nothing short of epicurean delights created by a digital chef slaving away in the kitchen while we're staring into computer monitors making the bucks to pay for it. And while all this is going on, a computerized robot vacuum cleaner sweeps our house. It doesn't take lunch breaks, leave lame excuses on our answering ma-



**You can't beat a system you can't understand**

By Sam Bari

chines for not showing up, steal, or make international calls on our telephones while we're at work. And best of all, it doesn't raid our liquor cabinet or send us a bill.

Then there are the modern computers — true living examples of higher technology at its best. They do everything from balance our virtual checkbooks to make airline, restaurant, and hotel reservations in less time than it takes to dial a travel agent and get connected to an actual live person. We can shop around the globe and purchase everything from flowers and insurance, to stocks, bonds, and commodities on foreign exchanges.

We can view movies on DVDs, play music and computer games on laptops weighing less than 5 pounds, and watch television or listen to radio stations from every corner of the earth. Just about everything our hearts, minds and bodies desire can be ordered via computer and delivered to our door, or someone else's. Virtual malls generate more revenue than malls made of bricks and sticks.

There is no doubt — computers have changed our lives and brought us amazing stuff.

Notwithstanding, for a country that is allegedly on the so-called "cutting edge" of the latest technology, a society that is continually "raising the bar" for the world standard of living, and

boasts about being the "market leader" in all things convenient, I do not believe we can claim the gold medal in a really important area of space-age gadgetry. The truth is, we are in the outhouse age where the latest models of top-of-the-line toilets are concerned.

That's right, we are losers, we are lame, and we wallow at the bottom of the bowl when this necessary little, shall we say "commodity" (all puns intended) is the topic of discussion.

Apparently, if we want to do our business in high style, we have to do business with the Japanese, the true masters of magical modernity. A company called Toto (not of Oz fame) employs the wizards who design, manufacture, and market the coolest, hippest, most far-out, world-class commodes in the marketplace.

These toilets clean themselves, come with coatings that resist germs and automatically flush when the user is finished. Each toilet has an actual remote control keypad that includes a noisemaker button that makes a flushing sound to cover any rude sounds you might want to disguise while seated.

However, there is a drawback. If you don't read Japanese, you could be in a heap of trouble.

The remote control programs a variety of features that are as complex as the console in a lunar landing module. Press the wrong button and the world as you know it could change for the worst.

These toilets are equipped with

temperature-controlled seat-warmers, built-in bidets that shoot (also temperature controlled) streams of water on your backside out of a squirt gun shaped like a toothbrush. The bottom-washer function, combined with a blow dryer, is designed to do away with toilet paper.

Other buttons automatically open and close the lid. The button for men lifts the lid as well as the seat, while the button for women only lifts the lid. These wonders of modern technology even flush automatically, and when you are finished, they are capable of spraying your derriere with perfume if you so desire. I suppose you might want to use that feature if you hold a position in high management, but other than that, I think perfuming your bottom is a bit over the top.

So, if you visit Japan and are confronted with using one of these top-of-the-line bathroom gizmos, be prepared. There is a very good chance that the experience will far out-reach your expectations, especially if you blindly press buttons and start functions that you don't know how to stop. You could have water spraying, seats going up and down as they heat up, blow dryers blowing, noisemakers continually going off and find yourself stranded on a mechanical monster you can't control.

Believe me, after cornering the market in the toilet zone, the Japanese are feeling flush. It's part of a system that we backward Americans have yet to understand.

## Computer and household hazardous waste collection Saturday

Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation will host two free special waste collections on Saturday, April 8, from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the Narragansett Town Beach.

The collection is part of a larger Earth Day celebration including a beach cleanup and recycling collection for rechargeable batteries.

Cell phones, monitors, CPUs, printers, scanners, keyboards, mouse devices, laptops and other computer equipment will be accepted for free. In addition, an Eco-Depot collection will be available so residents can drop off household hazardous waste. No appointment is necessary for this collection.

Some examples of household hazardous waste accepted include poisonous and flammable items such as cleaners, pesticides, automotive lubricants and home improvement supplies like paints, thinners, stain, fertilizer, weed killers, pool chemicals and propane tanks. If you are unsure about how to properly dispose of a product simply look for any label displaying the words "caution," "danger" or "warning".

Improper disposal of both electronic and household hazardous waste can pollute the environment and pose a threat to human health.

## Help plant trees at the town forest

Tree Warden David Nickerson and the Town Tree Preservation and Protection Committee invite all islanders to grab their gloves and shovels and join them at the Town Forest to help plant 300 native American seedling trees on Saturday, April 15, starting at 9 a.m. The forest is between the Melrose and Lawn avenue schools. Call Judy DiBello at 423-1241.

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