

## **View from the Rear Pew**

Brent Skinner - April 2013 1.2

Toilet training. It is an interesting term. It gives me visions of tracksuits, silver whistles, and lonely runs along empty beaches accompanied by the theme music from "Rocky". Unfortunately, the reality of toilet training is so very different.

You see our grandson Henry has now begun his toilet training. Our grandson is a blonde, blue eyed, dynamo who (at least in the eyes of his doting grandfather) is pretty close to perfect except for some serious personal hygiene issues. He is now 2 years and 9 months of age and is quite big for his age. We are now having to go into the adult aisle of the store to get him diapers and frequently having to explain that he is a jumbo sized 2 year old and not merely a repulsive 4 year old with a speech impediment.

He is also a very stubborn and independent minded little boy who does not take kindly to unsolicited narrative comments such as: "big boys use the potty", "Isn't it nice to have dry pull ups?", " Thomas the tanker engine uses the potty" or " get your little butt on the potty right now!".

Instead, using the potty must be his idea and entirely on his own terms (e.g. with the bathroom lights off and with the toilet lid raised).

This isn't to say that old Grandpa can't provide some encouragement and positive conditioning. The kitchen pantry is stocked with toileting rewards including chocolate racecars, fruit flavored suckers, toy knights in armour, and a complete set of Star wars action figures. Even more reinforcing, is the dramatic histrionics accompanying every successful bowel movement (Henry's and not mine, of course). Grandpa leaps in the air, does the goal line chicken walk, screams in exultation, followed by a "high five" hand slap. (I haven't expressed so much emotion since the Saskatchewan Roughriders won the 1966 Grey Cup.)

Toilet training is draining. (Apparently, more for me than my grandson.) I don't know if I can keep it up. This is the third week of training and, on a good day, our "clean and dry" score is only about 50%.

I am concerned that I am depleting my stock of celebratory gestures and really don't know what I will do when Henry moves on to other accomplishments such as scoring a winning goal in soccer, getting a Queen's Medal in Boy Scouts or the Nobel prize in Physics. I have this mental image of an old guy doing wheelies with his electric wheelchair, screaming "YAHOO" at the top of his lungs while showering an entire auditorium with chocolate malt balls and gummy bears.

See you at Henry's grade XII graduation!