

The ASPE Museum of Fantasy Fixtures

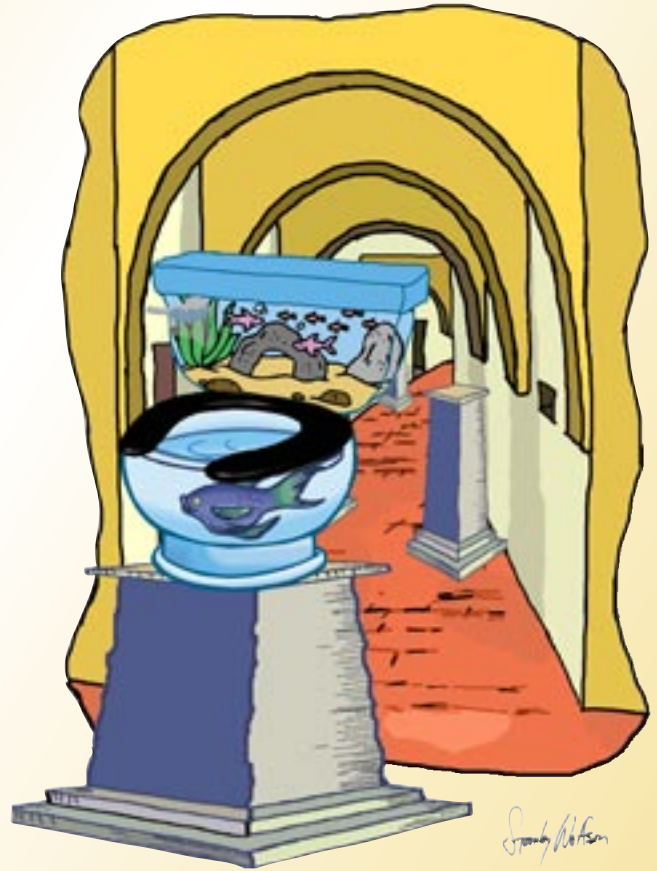
The Aquarium Toilet

Here's a fantasy fixture that's enough to make any aquarium fancier sure to drool! This aquarium water closet was created as the ultimate decorator accessory for the McMansion crowd. It was unveiled a number of years ago at the famous Monterey Bay Aquarium in Monterey, Calif., to much fanfare and set up as a special exhibit. Installed in the exhibit as a "working" toilet, the aquarium toilet had many admirers. Orders were soon pouring in to the manufacturer, and his "million-dollar marketing gamble" had paid off!

Aquarium toilets were soon shipped throughout the world for installation. However, immediately complaints also started pouring in. Although meant as a decorator item, when the toilets were received, they were apparently being installed by a plumber as a regular fixture. Many fixture owners loved to actually use the aquarium toilet as a "facility." After flushing, they couldn't understand what happened to the fish in the lower bowl. They kept disappearing. The fish in the "water storage-tank" would get swept by the exiting water vortex to the bottom of the bowl but, with a little ingenuity, the owners figured out how to put some wire mesh over the outlet to keep those fish from flushing away. The owners were horrified and complained about the suffering the little fishes went through everytime the bowl was flushed. Of course, there was that period of time when the tank had to refill, and the shock of the new cold water and the lack of any filtration, heaters, or water ph fixatives also took their toll on the fish.

No matter how the manufacturer tried to explain the decorative purpose of the aquarium toilet, people kept using it as a regular facility. In time, the PETA folks (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) got wind of the fish cruelty and sued the manufacturer. The court ruled that the toilet was indeed a device of torture and issued a stop order. The manufacturer was soon inundated with lawsuits and ceased operations.

We're sorry to report that this unique decorator item is no longer available. ■



NFEE Developing Plumbing Physics Kit

Plumbing-industry leaders and the National Foundation for Energy Education (NFEE), a not-for-profit organization, are currently developing a Plumbing Physics Presentation Kit for use by teachers or plumbing professionals. The Kit will contain hardware and supplies for engaging demonstrations and student investigations, a program guide to assist teachers and plumbing professionals conduct a 45- to 120-minute program, and the History Channel's video, called *Plumbing: The Arteries of Civilization*.

"Your teacher probably didn't use plumbing applications during the class to reinforce the concepts of air and water pressure," says Jerry Katz, president of the NFEE. "However, thanks to an industry initiative, science students will soon be learning about the practical applications of hydraulics and pneumatics in plumbing."

The Kit will be developed and field tested during the 2004-05 school year and will be ready for distribution in September 2005. Besides seeing several science demonstra-

tions and obtaining related plumbing-application information, students will also learn about the career opportunities in the plumbing industry.

The estimated cost of the Kit to plumbing professionals will be about \$150. National sponsors are currently being sought to provide the funds to develop and field test the kit. Teachers will receive a free Kit if they agree to participate in an online survey both before receiving and after using the Kit. Regional plumbing sponsors will be encouraged to conduct a full day or after school program for science teachers to train them on the kit's use and concepts.

For more information about the Kit, or to make suggestions for a Kit activity and application, contact Jerry Katz by phone or fax at 703-860-0951 or by email at NRGed@nfec.org. ■

