

Life's little ups and downs

Riding elevators can be an 'uplifting' experience

Have you ever watched people? People watching is a very healthy hobby. As an official people-watcher, you can observe what others do to embarrass themselves, and thus avoid the same behavior.

The hobby has one drawback. It makes you very self-conscious, for while you're watching others, you are aware that they might be doing the same thing. This can lead to unfortunate mental consequences such as severe paranoia, and contusions, concussions or abrasions.

ON WITH THE SHOW

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The latter comes from constantly watching behind you to see who is looking at you. As you watch over your shoulder, you fail to see such obstacles as dogs or sidewalks and fall flat on your face. This can be very embarrassing and extremely unhealthy for the body.

The former comes from obvious reasons. Paranoia is delusions of persecution. Believing that everyone has their eyes upon you, watching your every move, certainly is one form of persecution, even if it is self-inflicted. How can anyone feel comfortable and unoppressed if everyone is staring at them as they fall over dogs and sidewalks or even innocent passers-by?

As a fanatical people watcher, I have observed some queer behavior in my time. Some of the oddest conduct I've noted, that seems to be the most common among people, and especially students, occurs on suspended cages used for the purpose of hoisting people from one level to another.

Have you ever noticed how important some people's shoelaces become once they enter an elevator?

For instance, there are shoes. No matter whether they tie or not, it seems very important to people to inspect their shoes closely and observe their condition. Maybe they're deciding whether or not to buy a new pair.

A lot of people inspect their fingernails or even chew on them. Personally, I do chew my nails — but not on elevators — mainly when I'm writing or out of cigarettes. I have never found my fingernails fascinating enough to be able to look at them much longer than a few seconds. And usually an elevator takes at least 25 to 30 seconds to reach any destination.

Some people are foresighted enough to bring reading material on board with them. They simply waltz onto the elevator and immediately begin reading furiously as if they were going to be tested on the material as soon as they disembark. I think this is one of the best ploys to avoid human contact, on board or off.

Most people get on and immediately face forward or lean against the wall, completely avoiding eye contact with the other people. It's as if they looked into

the other passengers eyes, they would immediately turn into a pillar of salt like Lot's wife.

I wonder how many State students have completely memorized the buttons and lighted floor numbers above the door — a good number by the amount I've seen stare at them for the duration of their ride. It is amazing to see how many things there are to look at in an elevator besides the others on board.

My favorite trick is to get on and wear dark glasses and surreptitiously watch people during the ride with a very mysterious smile on my face like I'm saying to them "I know what you're up to." This makes people think you are a mind reader or something and makes them very, very nervous.

Using this ploy, you can watch people doing all kinds of things to avoid human contact. And they can't do anything about it because they can't see what you're doing or watching.

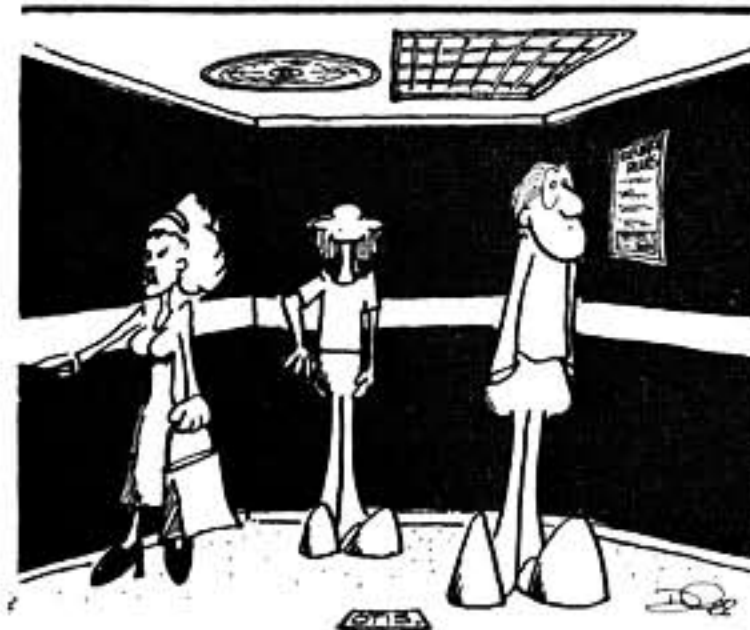
So, what do people do if their fingernails are perfectly groomed, their shoes brand-spanking-new, have no reading material available or have seen the numbers enough to know them backwards, forwards and upside down? They do things to annoy other passengers.

A favorite among these ploy-deficient people is to push all the buttons — *several times*. This is very frustrating to those who have to ride to the top or bottom floor. Especially if the elevator is in a 10-floor building.

While a view of each floor can be educational, who feels like being educated on an elevator? Plus it extends the ride even longer and forces people to invent new things to look at to avoid contact with other passengers.

Another trick is to rush on the elevator and push the floor you want first. This is very annoying to those who waited patiently for an elevator to go up and you happen to be going down.

Not everyone dislikes riding elevators. There are those who will wait as long as five minutes to go one



Third floor ...

Second floor ...

First floor ...



Staff photo by Jim Frei

Avoid all eye contact in elevators.

floor. While they hate looking at others as much as the rest, apparently they get some sort of kick out of riding for 12 seconds on this modern-day convenience.

Elevators can be fun. You might make the best friend of your life riding an elevator. I have never understood what could be so offensive about looking at someone on an elevator or even striking up a conversation with them.

But apparently there is something offensive, for most people will treat you like you have the plague or something if you try to make any sort of contact with them while in such a closed place. It is like you are intruding on their space.

Writer's note: If any of you can throw some light on the subject of being offensive by trying to be friendly to someone on an elevator, I would appreciate hearing from you. In the meantime, I'll stick to my dark glasses and Mona Lisa smile.