

Planes, Trains and Little Boys

By Sharon Murphy



My grandsons, Eric four and Jordan two, like most little boys, loved airplanes and trains. It was Fleet Week in San Francisco and I found this the perfect opportunity to take them on an adventure.

Saturday morning the skies were clear and the sun shone brightly as we boarded the BART train for our ride into the city. Several miles up the line we were joined by my friend Gail who was coming along to help me with the boys. The first order of business was to find a restroom and then have an early lunch. The fast-food restaurant we were going to didn't have a restroom and they suggested we go next door to the Hyatt Regency and take the elevator to a public restroom. I stayed in the ladies lounge with Jordan and changed his diaper while Gail took Eric into the restroom.

Shortly after changing Jordan, I heard the wailing sound of the fire alarm. I took him by the hand and calmly headed for the stairway. I saw Gail and Eric heading our way and noticed Gail had a shocked look on her face. She told me Eric had pulled the fire alarm!

People were starting to evacuate the building and men in Burgundy colored jackets with walky-talkies and worried looks were hustling up and down the stairs and everywhere. I managed to stop one of them and tell him my grandson had pulled the alarm and there wasn't really a fire. By now both boys were frightened by all the commotion and sobbing uncontrollably. The man used his walky-talky to alert the others there was no fire. The four of us made our way down the stairway to the sidewalk outside. We could see a couple of fire engines arriving that had been dispatched to put out the fire. We stopped and I explained to Eric that the red lever he had pulled was actually a fire alarm and that was why the siren went off and the fire engines were outside. The whole time I'd been talking with Eric I had been holding Jordan's hand but hadn't really noticed what he was doing. As we got ready to go I gently pulled on Jordan's hand but he didn't move. I pulled again, he didn't budge. This time I looked down at him only to find he had put his head between two wrought iron bars of a decorative fence and was stuck! Gail and I worked for several minutes before we were able to free him

We finally bought some lunch and headed over to the park for a picnic and to secure a place to watch the Blue Angels. The place we chose had a manmade waterfall and pond, with young children playing at the edge of the pond.

We decided to walk on the stepping stones that went behind the waterfall. Eric was our leader followed by me, Jordan and then Gail. We were walking on the stepping stones when suddenly we heard the roar of the engines of the Blue Angels' airplanes. Eric and I stopped to look up and watch, but Jordan took one more step that ended with him in water over his head. I turned around and all I could see were his big brown eyes looking up at me, he wasn't even moving. I quickly got him up out of the water and out of the pond. He was dripping wet and I had nothing to dry him with. A young couple who saw what had happened offered me a towel so I was able to dry him off. I didn't have a change of clothes for him so he had to wear his 49er jacket, a dry diaper and his wet tennis shoes that squeaked as he walked. We decided it was time to end our outing and go home!

Eric fell asleep sitting on the seat next to me, his head on my shoulder, with Jordan sitting on my lap happily chatting away. As we approached our stop, a young woman sitting on the seat in front of us, turned to me and said she had been on the same train as we were on the ride in to the city. She noticed once again how calm we all were and hoped someday to be a grandma and have a nice quiet day like we had.

I smiled and said thank you.