



As of this writing, I haven't shaved for about two and a half weeks. I have endured comments like "scruffy," "scroungy," etc. each of them unfortunately well deserved. Beards in their infancy have an unfortunate resemblance to simple slovenliness.

I am debating whether to enter the Frontier Days beard and moustache contest. It costs only \$5, which sounds like a bargain, since for that I would get an official Beard and Moustache T-Shirt. I am assured that it is a high quality T-Shirt, well worth the money.

Unfortunately, I have two problems with the contest. First, do I need another T-Shirt? I already have one that reads: "Find the Sanchez Library," and another one with "Pacific Manor Drill Team. I got that one for marching in the Frontier Days Parade last year carrying a quarter inch electric drill.

That should establish my credentials for making a fool of myself in public. (No comments about this column, please.) I once got myself a T-Shirt with the heading you see above these words. If you can imagine anyone going around with his own face on his chest, you know that that takes a bit of ego, or callousness.

Unfortunately, that shirt was boiled to death by the family washing machine. I asked my wife to please wash it in lukewarm water. Do you suppose she really? ...No, of course not.

The second reason I am reluctant to get the official T-Shirt is that they left out the "E" in "moustache." Not only am I a compulsive proofreader, but I'm not sure I want to wear a T-Shirt that might cause some people to think me illiterate.

Even without getting into the official contest, Frontier Days provides a good excuse to get through the first couple of months of a new beard. It may wind up looking distinguished, but at first it's more likely to be scratchy, scruffy, and disreputable. At least during Frontier Days its kind of vaguely patriotic.

After I get through that early period, I'd better be careful to avoid what happened the last time I grew whiskers. One day I decided to trim it a bit. First one side...Then an attempt to balance...then I tried to balance that. By the time I was finished balancing, I was clean shaven.

The time to start a beard is on vacation, where you can be away from people for a few weeks. This may be why more men don't start a beard.

If men, like male gorillas or chimpanzees, never shaved, most would have beards down to their navels. Since apes don't and men do, have beards, when do you suppose beards got started?

One thing I do know. If the E.R.A. gets passed, women may be combat troops, firefighters, and even full-fledged Rotarians, Kiwanians, and Lions. But they will never be bearded. It's one area where equality will never arrive.

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