

When It Comes to Shoes, Slippers Are My Solemate

By Irv Sternberg

I am not a shoe person. Yes, I'm aware that some people collect shoes like stamps. (With apologies to Simon & Garfunkel, "Here's to you, Mrs. Marcos. Jesus loves you more than you will know. Wo, wo, wo.>").

I haven't bought a new pair in years, so it's hard for me to identify a "favorite shoe." But I can quickly tell you about the shoes that I didn't like.

Through most of my adult life I've worn "dress" shoes. It was mandatory working for a corporation, along with the suit and tie. I hated those shoes. I could seldom find a pair that fit me right. They pinched and pressed and sometimes squeaked even after breaking them in. Seeking a more casual look, I bought a pair of J&M cordovan loafers that I wore to work 25 years ago. For my daughter's wedding, I bought a pair black dress loafers made by Florsheim. I still wear them on special occasions like weddings, funerals, bar mitzvahs and the World Series when the Rockies are playing. They badly need a good shine.

So what *do* I wear most days? Since my retirement I've concentrated on comfort, not appearance. For years I wore Reebok sneakers, or "tennies," as they're called here in the West. A few years ago I switched to New Balance, a nice white leather shoe with sturdy laces and a strong arch. They feel good. And when washed they look brand new.

I also have a pair of Rockport shoes with Velcro straps. Quite comfortable, although aging rapidly. And I have a pair of Hush Puppies, a suede leather shoe, also with Velcro straps. They too are comfortable. As are the boots at the end of my fishing waders. They are not handsome-looking or the most comfortable shoes I possess, but they enable me to wade into a stream, toss a fly into the current, and participate in my favorite activity.

All things considered, my most favorite footwear are my two pairs of slippers. I wear them constantly at home—from the moment I get out of bed until I return there. They are wearing out, and I was hoping to find a new pair a few months ago but could not find any in local stores. Of course, I didn't shop at Nieman-Marcus, but I'm not about to drop fifty bucks on a pair of slippers. I like my feet, but not that much.