



Rotary Club of Sedona

District 5490, Club #1230
PO Box 2170
Sedona, Arizona 86339
www.sedonarotary.org

Service Above Self

Jan 29, 2008

Pud Colquit, Challenges for Sedona and the Mayor

Upcoming Meetings:

Feb. 5th Jack Seeley, Volunteer Police
Feb. 12th Rob Adams, Challenges for Sedona and the Mayor
Feb. 19th Eric Levitt, City Manager, City Finances

What does "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water" mean?

[[Phrase Finder Derivations Discussion](#)]

Reply to: [Re: Don't throw the baby out with the bath water](#) posted by Victoria S Dennis on April 27, 2007

Version I

It means "take care, when getting rid of outworn and unnecessary things, not to jettison something important along with them". It originates from a 15th-century German satire, and was used by Martin Luther. (Do not believe anybody who tells you that it derives from mediaeval bathing habits - i.e. that peasant families would all use the same bathwater till it was so filthy that the baby could go missing in it. This is an Internet myth. See articles here:

<http://www.deproverbio.com/DPjournal//DP,1,1,95//BABY.html>: and at
http://historymedren.about.com/od/dailylifesociety/a/bod_baths.htm

Version II

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children -- last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water." This site has lots of such humorous stories.

Version III

In days of yore, when homes had baths which were portable (for both adults and children) a necessary activity at the end of bath time was to 'throw out the bath water'. A father who had observed his overworked, and invariably tired, wife struggle with a willful child, would, as the small child's bath was carried to the back door to dispose of the waste water in the back yard, cry "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water". This expression came to mean that even when frustration with a situation or a malfunctioning device drives you to distraction, and you feel that you must be rid of it, you should pause, and consider if a valuable, or maybe irreplaceable, element would be lost by precipitate action, i.e., "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water".