Our New Home

By Chris Sandbert

We had found our dream house in a place called Rossmoor California and made an offer. It was accepted, but then we had to come up with a 20% down payment. We'd only been married 6 months and were both under 30 years old, so we figured we could pay down the debt over time, even if we moved in flat broke. During college I delivered Coors beer during the summer, and my boss lived in Rossmoor. It's a higher end neighborhood near the coast about 20 miles south of Los Angeles. My boss was a decisive man and had claimed: "There is but one place to live and it is in Rossmoor." That worked for me, so I set my sights on that lovely, quiet neighborhood. Since then, Beth and I had spent many Saturday's driving through Rossmoor looking for any house that we could afford. They were all priced way out of our range, but we kept looking. Then one day it happened - we found a "fixer upper" and made an offer. We were elated when the offer was accepted, but then reality set in. We had to come up with the down payment.

Two months later we found ourselves sleeping on the floor in our new home. Surrounded by boxes and paint cans that took our last few dollars, we had set about the task of painting the inside walls. We were giddy over our bright future and our empty house. Our belongings consisted of an old bed, a book case made from cinder blocks and wood planks, some thrift store furniture and my kegger frig complete with an empty Coors keg. No appliances, but the stove and dish washer worked, and our realtor even popped for a new ceiling fan. Tank and Bronco, our two big dogs, loved the overgrown back yard full of lizards and rats and possums, but even with all that fun, they preferred lounging inside the house. It was like Disneyland for us.

When we moved in, there was a lot of junk in the house and garage, so we bagged it all up and piled the bags near the front door – ready for the trash truck whenever it showed up. We didn't

know the trash truck schedule yet. We also bagged up our dirty laundry and planned to invade Beth's parents' home to use their washer and dryer (and their laundry soap too). We had several bags full, so the time for washing had become a priority. We kept those bags safely in the spare bedroom, so we wouldn't confuse them with the trash.

Friday morning, I was lying in bed, pajamas and all, when I heard the trash truck coming down the street. I bolted up and ran to the front door, grabbing trash bags and running them out to the parkway in a mad dash. I got them all out there just before the truck arrived and was relieved as I slowly walked back to the house. "OK, the truck comes on Friday mornings." Later that afternoon, as we prepared for our trip to Beth's parents' house, I remembered the dirty laundry and went to the spare bedroom for the bags. No bags were there so I called out to Beth, "Hey Bazinsky (my pet name for her), where are the clothes bags? I can't find them in the spare bedroom." From somewhere at the back of the house I heard her reply "I moved them into the living room so we wouldn't forget to take them tonight. They're off to the side, away from the ones full of trash." My heart dropped as I searched frantically – first the living room, then the kitchen and dining area. The bags were nowhere to be found. Beth came slowly into the living room with wide eyes and it hit us both at the same time - I had thrown away our clothes along with the trash.

Fortunately, it was one week until Christmas and we put out a plea to our families. We needed new clothes. We had thrown away almost everything we owned including our underwear, work clothes, pants, shirts and socks. All we had left were a few items that we rarely wore.

Our families came through with flying colors, piling dozens of gifts under their respective Christmas trees. Everything we needed was there. Of course, each item was carefully wrapped in its own trash bag.