

The Cleaning Diaries

Day ?? (will quarantine be in effect forever...I might be okay with that)

Tuesday, April 28, 2020

Got a late start this morning since I was up until after 4:00 AM. Could. Not. Sleep. So I read. By the time I rolled out of bed, Sydney had taken everything out of our chest freezer and stuffed it in the small freezers we have in the garage and kitchen. No easy feat. She opened the door (or lid???) and unplugged it too. I suppose it had been empty for about an hour.

The giant blocks of ice stuck to the sides had started melting but hadn't made much progress. So I sped the process up. 😊 I plugged in a small space heater and positioned it just so. Then I grabbed a huge flat head screwdriver and hammer. Ten minutes later, the Arctic ice was in the yard melting. I must say that hammering those chunks felt pretty good.

Once it was all cleaned up with the ShopVac, Riley stretched to the bottom and wiped it out. I put four milk crates in the bottom upside down before stacking our food back. I was so tired of not being able to reach what was on the bottom in the corners. I literally had to lean so far in that my feet left the floor and I was always on the verge of falling in head-first. NO MORE! 🤖 I can reach everything now, baby!



The Cleaning Diaries

Day ?? (stopped counting—don't want to figure it out):

Monday, April 27, 2020

Put your reading glasses on, folks; it's a long one.

Today, Syd dusted and mopped the basement. I made sure to help her out with the Pine Sol to water ratio this time. She and I rearranged the furniture too. There's so much more space! (Probably because we got rid of so much crap.) But the real excitement was our trip to drop off our garage pile on Saturday.

For the last week, we've been squeezing through our little path in the garage. But Sonic came through for us last Thursday. Who knew loving crushed ice so much would actually help me clean out the garage. You see, we'd given up getting rid of the stuff until after May 15. The DAV drop off was full and not taking any furniture. 🙄 Low and behold, the DAV in Lee's Summit had lots of folks dropping off all sorts of things when Riley and I drove by on the way to Sonic to pick up drinks and another bag of ice. So I gave them a call and asked if I could drop off a desk. "Yes, we're here to 6:00."

So on Saturday, Syd, Riley, Denny and I loaded the truck, and Syd and I set off to unload our unwanted goods. We had an entire truckload, the bed and backseat. Syd and I arrived and unloaded everything. It was an easy set-up, giant boxed pallets for hard goods, everything else on the sidewalk, unload it yourself. I felt a bit flustered because people were literally throwing bags and other goods like a trashman throws your heap in the truck. We had breakables, and I'm sure that by the time they get unpacked, they'll be brokables. When it was time for the desk, the employee said we couldn't unload it. I told him, "I called ahead."

"I'll go check," he replied unenthusiastically and sauntered off. Syd and I were chatting and getting the desk ready to move when this angry-eyed woman came outside.

"NO FURNITURE!!!" Her face pinched up, and her eyes narrowed searching the crowd. Let's just say my inner Chuckie exploded to the surface. I slammed the bed of the truck and started to get in to leave. Syd saw a man with an ottoman start to turn around to his vehicle, and she barked at him, "I can sell that; put it over here." Then I changed my mind and marched to the angry woman puffing on a cigarette. She was taking rapid, short puffs like a suckerfish gasping for dog food at the marina.

"Excuse me, I called this morning and specifically asked if I could drop off a desk." While I wanted to snatch that cigarette, throw it down, and do a fire ant stamp all over it, I waited for the, what I can only presume, "manager" to reply.

Now, read this with your snooty, holier than thou snarl, "I'm sorry, ma'am. I can't take any furniture. I don't have room for it. I can't sell it. Did you get a name?" Seriously? She can't sell it? Good grief. That cigarette must've been laced with something a little stronger.

"No, she told me your hours and that I could bring the desk that I specifically asked about." Do you hear my mean mom voice? Funny, I was mostly calm. You know, kill more flies with honey.

"Well, I'm sorry," no she wasn't, "They," wrong pronoun, "should have said, no furniture, Halloween, or Christmas decorations. I can't sell them."

"Fine."

I went back to Syd and hopped in the truck and told her about my conversation. While I was driving to Sonic—crushed ice calms the nerves, I said with a grin, “Well, the joke’s on her. We unloaded two bags of Halloween decorations and an entire box of Christmas lights.” Insert snorting laughter.

Don’t get me wrong, I understand the real problem. The drop-off sites are overwhelmed with everyone cleaning out their homes since they’re quarantined. I also understand what poor management looks like. One of the employees walked past me grumbling, “I just unloaded this, and now you want me to put it back, God 🤡.” Another employee was doing the toddler grab and bounce while yelling at folks where to put stuff. I heard him growl at another lady, “I have to take a break; I’m about to pee myself.” The queen, hive, and worker bees aren’t a team working together there.

I also understand individuals have lost their ever-lovin’ minds because they have to stay home and teach their kids or work with the risk of contracting the corona. Well, I’m from the school where you put your big girl pants on and do what has to be done—even when you don’t want to or don’t like it. So, DAV suckerfish smoking manager lady, get it together! Lots of people out there are struggling. You have a job. You have work to keep your employees busy. Everyone is getting paid there. Seriously. Everyone. Is. Getting. Paid. There.

By the way, we took that dang desk home, and Denny burned it on Sunday. 🔥🔥



The Cleaning Diaries

Day 28: Saturday, April 18, 2020

Syd dragged my unmotivated rumpus down to the garage today. She cleared out a shelving unit and the last closet of junk in the basement. I went through everything. I can't express how tired I am. I mean, I knew we had a boatload of stuff no one wanted to look at. The more I find, the more I feel like a bit of hoarder. We had two boxes and 2 duffles full of Christmas lights. I asked Denny if we could get rid of some. "Why?" he replied...indignantly I might add. I got rid of the Christmas tree for Pete's sake. I kept the Christmas lights organizers and put a few strands in each. That has to be enough. The rest are going bye bye.

I couldn't believe how many candles and candle holders I had too. Several were PartyLite which were pretty expensive in their day. We received them as wedding shower gifts in 2000. A few were still in the original box too. I kept the candles in case the power goes out but most of that stuff is in the get-rid-of-it pile. The pile has grown so big that I'm going to have to call the Federation of the Blind for a pick up. It's too much to deal with for a drop off, and the last time we went there, the drop off area was packed to the gills. Denny gripes at me every single time he goes into the garage. Too bad! 🙄

We didn't find any treasure today. Denny put restrictions on us too... no donating Harley Davidson stuff and some of the things that belonged to his grandma. He had three empty Harley tins. I put them on his work bench. Maybe he can fill them with bolts or something. The Grandma Dorothy stuff, I just put back in the cabinet downstairs. It's all small and fragile. My curio cabinet just doesn't have enough room for all of the tchotchkes. Maybe I should rotate them out sometimes.

Our next big job is daunting to say the least. It's all of the tubs of Christmas ornaments. I can't tell you how awful that is going to be. Once I go through them, we have to find a home for the reorganized tubs. I'm hoping that we can get the tubs to fit in the closet we cleaned out. There's so much that I'm cringing as I type. Arg...

'Til the next time.

The Cleaning Diaries

Day 21: Friday, April 11, 2020

Syd dragged me downstairs tonight! I was completely against sorting, organizing, or cleaning on a Saturday night. I finally conceded around 7:30. Syd thought maybe we should clean out another closet that's downstairs, but I opted for smaller. We had taken two boxes of unknown contents to the garage. And what treasures did we find! Two boxes of pictures. I found all of my class pictures from elementary and middle school, my senior pictures, and some other really old pics, even my grandparents when they were young. Even though we didn't look at every single picture, it was fun to go through some. One of my highschool boyfriends earned a, "he was handsome" from Syd. 😊 I handed Syd my fifth or sixth grade class picture and said, "Find me." She asked how old I was and replied, "I'll just look for Riley." She found me after scrutinizing each face carefully.

In order to deal with all of the pics we unearthed, we cleaned out a tub full of gift bags. I swear, I don't buy gift bags. I give every gift I can in a bag. HOW DO I END UP WITH MORE GIFT BAGS? Three drawersful to be concise...plus, several had to go in a wrapping paper tub that I have because they wouldn't fit in anything. When I opened that particular tub, it was FULL of wrapping paper scraps. Why? Why do the people in this house cut off 3-inch wide strips of paper that's 3-feet long and toss it into the tub like someone else might use it later? Trash! There were like 30 weird sized scraps of paper. I obviously haven't been in that tub for a while...since I use bags, why would I? I cleaned it too.

Sorting, organizing, and cleaning always works out a little differently than I think it will once we start. I thought I'd find two boxes of stuff to donate, but I found treasure instead.

The Cleaning Diaries

Day 18: Wednesday, April 8, 2020

I've been remiss in my cleaning duties...kinda. I've done laundry, dishes, the usual everyday junk. Tonight, Denny bit out, "Been making real progress on the garage, I see."

"What do you care?" I snorted.

"Called anyone 'bout that desk?"

"No. What do you care?"

"I can't get to my lawn mower!"

I felt a little bit bad, so after dinner, Syd and I rounded up all of the empty plastic tubs and stacked them neatly in the laundry room. We also grabbed FOUR copy paper/book boxes of paper, crafts, and odd stuff that I'd sorted a while back, and we put ALL of it away. We worked for two-and-a-half hours. She had to sit in front of the file cabinet for about 30 minutes while I just handed her stuff. I had three years worth of car repair receipts. 🤖 What was really awful, one of our insurance folders was so gigantic that it wouldn't even fit in the hanging file pocket. We passed it off to Denny to go through and condense. I'm sure he's cussing me. He just burned a big box of "shred" stuff and now I'm filling it back up. Syd kept saying things like, "Why do we have to keep this?"

We found six old cell phones in the file cabinet. My first smartphone only had a 3.2 MP camera! What? How did we function? 🤖 One of the phones had a slide up screen with the qwerty keypad. Do you remember those? I loved it. Syd snatched the thing up, unwrapped the cord with a snap and started playing like she was eight years old. Goofball.

Probably the most annoying box was the craft supplies. I literally had to lay everything out on the desk and sort those stickers, decorative straws, fake flowers, and a million other things. We had to get all of my organizers out of the craft cabinet and put all those tiny things away. Syd was like, "You've got to be kidding me, mom!" 😊 I never know what I might need for a craft, display case decoration, or bulletin board. It's usually organized...well, it is again. Bahahahaha!



The Cleaning Diaries

Day 7: Saturday, March 28, 2020

I've been grading student writing most of the afternoon (two classes finished, woot woot). So, I put Sydney to the task of mopping the laundry room. She may have overdone the Pine Sol to water ratio. She said, "I put about equal amounts in." 🤔 I went to get something out of the freezer and got a little woozy. 🤒

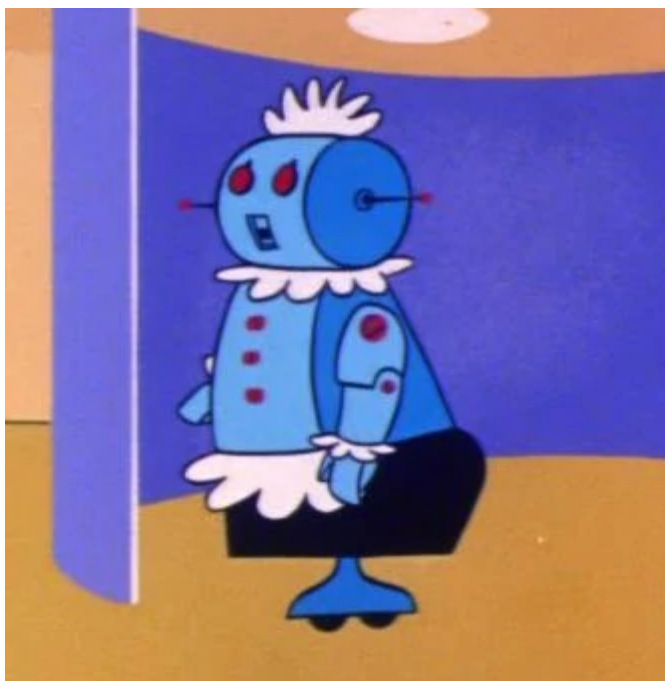
Riley was in charge of vacuuming up all of the dust bunnies and hairballs (three girls with lots of hair and a dog--arg). Riley then had to tell us about finding hair woven into her underwear. 🤒 Never a dull moment even with cleaning. I asked Denny to be in charge of the file cabinet stuff. He's napping. 🤒 He was able to get rid of the old TV but not the old desk.

The Cleaning Diaries

Day 5: Thursday, March 26, 2020

Well, today's work wasn't very satisfying. Paperwork. I had several large piles of stuff going back to 2017. Oh my goodness, my eyes are still rebelling. The only way I knew how to tackle this undertaking was to label several boxes: Sydney, Riley, file cabinet, other, recycle, burn, and crafts. I felt a little like Rosie the Robot on the Jetsons, "A place for everything and everything in its place." I got all of the weird gift bags and tissue paper put away pretty quickly and several little wallets that I found. The papers are all in their labeled boxes which took about two hours. I suppose I'll start putting them away this weekend. My marriage certificate was in that heap. Don't ask; I have no idea.

Today's work did provide to be potentially fruitful, however. I found a series of gift cards: Visa, Panera, Ulta, McAlister's, Half Price Books, Starbucks, and Fandango. I have to check to see if they still have any value, but I'm pretty excited. Can I get a whoop whoop?



The Cleaning Diaries

Day 4: Wednesday, March 25, 2020

Today was much more better! 🤗 After office hours and IMing several of my students, Syd and I trudged to the garage to go through all of the once-beloved items we pulled out of the tiny basement room. No tears were shed when stuffed animals were tagged and bagged. (Or is it bagged and tagged?) No whining occurred when I said, "These small containers will fit under your bed." No sighs were signed when I threw away some of the pillows I had been saving for far too long for my classroom. I even found a home for the bread machine.

We dropped off two truckloads today. It sounds like a lot, but we barely made a dent. We might be able to unload my desk tomorrow. Be afraid. Be very afraid. It's the really frightening pile o' hoarders mess.



The Cleaning Diaries

Day 3: Tuesday, March 24, 2020

I'M TIRED OF RAIN AND CLOUDS! Seriously, I miss March: In lion an out like a lamb and April showers bring May flowers. The weather is jank.

The dog across the street is driving me crazy! Bark bark bark.

I've worked on school stuff all day.

7:30 PM still working 🥱

9:30 PM still working 😞

The Cleaning Diaries

Day 2: Monday, March 23, 2020

I haven't been downstairs yet; Denny is sleeping, and it's our first day of school. Padlet broke. At one point, it wouldn't load and gave the prompt: Traffic Jam. 😊 A couple of my students posted like 20 times too. That was fun to filter through. Took five minutes to delete C P's posts about being down to one last piece of cake (rofl).

After office hours the girls and I ran our last errands. Traffic was wild. This man in an older Cadillac Escalade drove through Sutherlands' parking lot at about 60 MPH; he cut across diagonally, didn't stop, and then turned like a maniac, practically on two wheels, onto a side street. When we got to the edge of the parking lot, he was speeding around the corner blowing through a red light. Corona scare? I doubt it. He was reckless and foolish. I hope he didn't hit any of the senior citizens that are out. So many old, old people were shopping today. While at Sutherlands, a hunched old man cut right in front of us; I guess six-feet of social distancing means something else when you fought in WWII or Vietnam.

On a side note, did you know Sutherlands will cut boards for you? I did not, but I was happy to pay 75¢ for the second cut. I had to use my math skills today, ya'll. I needed two shelves that were 44.5 inches each. Should I buy the 12-foot, 10-foot, or 8-foot board? (I actually knew the answer to that, btw.) When the employee grabbed my board to cut, he said, "Forty-four and half. Wait, two? Is this board over eight feet? It's going to be close." Seriously, he made me doubt my math skills for a minute.

Hy-Vee was a little hair-raising; some of the super old people were coughing. Many donned a surgical mask or even a bandana-like mask cowboy-style. Many people wore winter gloves or latex gloves. Shelves were VERY picked over and some of the elderly were shaky about what to get or where to find things. Sydney helped a man find scalloped potatoes, and Riley let a lady know she was in the right aisle for pasta. Thank goodness the Belefonte Chocolate Sensation ice cream was still in the freezer. I'm not sure we could have survived without it. (Don't worry about us, we bought three boxes of cereal and a bag of crushed ice from Sonic as well.)

The veterinarian's office only allowed two people in the reception area at a time. A very elderly woman was talking to one of the doctor's in the parking lot. I overheard a few of her questions; they were about general information like what is closing and what she should do. She asked about getting supplies for her pet. 😞 The woman was frail-looking. But Dr. G answered her questions like a champ. When I left, another employee was answering questions again for the same woman. I wished she had someone with her. I think she was lonely and afraid.

Wal-Mart Grocery pickup had the best moment for gawking, however. First glance: a grey minivan with the back open and a dingy sea of blue fills the back. Second glance: the sea is a tarp attached to the ceiling of the minivan just behind the second row of seats. (Syd: Oh my gosh, is that for the corona?) Third glance: tall gentleman getting out of the van with a face mask. (Brandy: What is that?) Last glance: Wal-Mart employee backing up, man standing by his door, the tarp gently lays over the folded third row and the trunk. (Syd: I just can't Corona any more.) (Brandy: M-m-m-my Corona. M-m-m-my Corona. Aye aye aye...)

Much later today: Finished putting shelves up and moving all my cooking tools and containers. Score!!!

FYI: Never feed Emma asparagus. The gas will make your eyes water. Peeewwww!



The Cleaning Diaries

Day 1: Sunday, March 22, 2020

Since we're stuck home for the next month or so, I decided we'd clean the basement out. Holy hoarders, Batman! We took the items out of one little area maybe an 8' x 8' space. I can really pack the crap into tiny spaces. It's a skill. We found cute little bags inside of tote bags inside of travel bags inside a cabinet. Now, all of those bags are inside of trash bags to donate. If we were going to see people in the near future, I might organize a yard sale. But alas, quarantine.

Denny set up a sawhorse table in the garage for me. It, of course, is heaping and surrounded by big plastic tubs. Oh, good gravy! The plastic tubs are full too—six for Christmas decorations and ornaments alone. The pillow situation is redonculous! I have fabric to cover them but the basement is Hoardersville rather than Brandy's Basement o' Craftastic Creations.

We also have this shelf unit to hold extra kitchen aids (Crock Pots, blender, baking pans...) and some extra foodstuffs. It was a hot mess (not now though). I found an open bag of melting chocolate from Riley's 2nd or 3rd-grade birthday. Trash. Denny saved two coffee pot carafes. "Why?" you ask. "In case I break one," he replies. He also has two plastic filters and one of those little pod cleaner things that go inside the coffee pot. They're not new.

Three drawers had presents like Hallmark photo albums, a Narnia movie, and a beaded necklace and Christmas containers or tins to put treats in. I found three boxes of Christmas cards (one I didn't know I had) and three or four open boxes of Valentines. One of them was X-Men.

I wish I had taken a couple of before pics; although, I'm not sure justice would have been served to the number of things crammed into such a small space. Spread out in the garage, the image is a bit overwhelming. The after pic of the shelf makes me feel a tiny bit accomplished.

The girls and I will attack the area again after Denny wakes up. He still has to work tonight. Not sure how long that will last. Hopefully, he can keep working a little longer.

