

## 11-30-12 Oh, The Stuff!

Oh, how my children love to make fun of me! I guess that's only natural; we did the same thing, right? They make fun of my lists, my concerns, my hobbies and my stuff! It is true that I have a lot of stuff; what people think of it depends on their backgrounds and lifestyle, I suppose. Most people enjoy visiting my home because it promises an interesting tour of art and bohemian collections. My grandchildren are my biggest fans, with my daughters saying, "Mom, you know it's like visiting a museum for them, don't you?" So, they make fun but they enjoy it, too!

They don't understand my car, though. It is a traveling health agent office and has been for years, now. I sometimes wonder, "Is it really my car?" My stuff has to come out of the car in order for me to go to the transfer station (aka "dump"). It needs to be hauled in to the house when I travel and then hauled back into my car when I return. I'm used to it but I'm ready to turn over a new leaf, or turn in my traveling office for an actual, personal use vehicle and leave most of my gear in the office! Really; I'm taking steps!

I began to make room in the office just last week and put some thought into what I needed with me at all times and what could be centralized. The clipboards for housing, kitchens and perc tests could be stored and brought out to the car as needed. The same goes for the accompanying bags. The pull tie container with rain jacket, waterproof pants, gloves, shirt and socks: that has to stay. Ditto for my rubber boots and "Public Health" overcoat. I never know when I'll need my carbon copy notices for site visits. Some of those need to stay in the car. Finally, my small cross shoulder bag for the "unusual home inspection" will stay. It has spaces for small notebook and pen, flashlight, gloves, mask, disposable booties and even a disposable lightweight suit.

I was glad I had that stuff, too, when I recently received a call from dispatch. If I get a call and it's a house, it usually means that I need to make decisions about the health and safety of the occupants' environment. That means I need to be aware of my own health and safety when I make that visit. At home, I changed into washable, durable pants, jacket and shoes. When I arrived at the site and asked a few questions, how relieved I was that I could turn to the red bag and pull out gloves and especially those disposable shoe covers! I could have donned my trusty rubber boots but why go home and wash off my boots when I can dispose of a thin covering instead? I have enough in my car without adding germs to it!

Under the car seats you can always find a few trash bags and small plastic bags. The trash bags have come in handy for packing up a dead fox or raccoon, shot by the police for suspected rabies cases and the small bags for disposing of my used gloves, mask and wipes, etc.

So, I walked toward the house feeling somewhat prepared. I even brought with me one of those plastic bags for the shoe covers and gloves and carefully placed it over the picket of a mini edging fence. Nothing prepared me for what I witnessed inside but that's a story for

another time! Suffice it to say that I guess it's a good thing I am not squeamish. Actually, I couldn't do the job if I was!

For right now, I'm just trying to change my ways and clean up my car but no sooner do I resolve to do so and there is the need for this and that! And my little plastic bag blew away! So, now I've cluttered the environment with another piece of trash and, because I recently cleaned my car and did not put the ten little bags back under the seat but only one, I wasn't prepared! In my line of work, not being prepared to handle the gross, smelly and dirty means preparing to actually have to handle the gross, smelly and dirty! Well, I washed my hands with sanitizing wipes (a few times) but my car floor had to carry the disposable shoe covers and gloves, turned inside out, of course! It is days like that when I envy the agents/inspectors with sturdy town vehicles. If I had one, I wouldn't care what make, model or color! But would anyone share it with me? Hmm...

Go ahead and make fun of me, my children, for my stuff and now for believing in Santa, but I'm adding a town vehicle to my wish list!

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