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In My House, If It's Broken I Bought It

By Rev. James L. Snyder

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Often a store has a sign with the warning, "You break it, you bought it." This is to keep people from carelessly handling the merchandise.

I'm thinking of another sign, which should be posted all through my house. "If it's broken, I bought it." This is not to say everything in my house is broken, but to point out that everything has a breaking point. And, it's not to say I can't fix anything. I just can't fix anything that is broken.

A case in point; my easy chair.

A man's easy chair, especially mine, is control central of his world. My easy chair is so situated that I can easily access my entire world. Whoever invented the easy chair must have been a genius, at least in my book.

To the left of my easy chair is a small stand with a light. On this stand rest various works in progress. I will admit some are in slow progress, but that's the way I like it. I can reach into this pile, pull out some work and spend a little time on it. Also on this stand is a well-stocked container of pens and pencils.

Someone in our house, and I will not mention any names, has suggested getting rid of this pile. There are times, and this is one of them, I do not pay attention to certain suggestions.

To the right of my easy chair are various items. I have the telephone, the remote control and a variety of reference books, all within easy reach.

In My House, If It's Broken I Bought It

At the foot of my easy chair leans a small notebook computer.

As you can see, my easy chair pulls my world together in a harmony of delightful reach-ability.

Recently, a situation developed with my easy chair. Last week as I sat in it, working on my computer, catching up with some work projects, I heard a funny sound.

B-O-I-N-G!

I could not place the sound, so I ignored it. It's the manly thing to do. Whenever something happens I don't understand, I resort to the old ignoring routine. Sometimes it's the only thing that really works. Then I heard the sound again.

B-O-I-N-G!

This time the sound was much louder but before I could really do anything about it, I heard the sound

for the third time.

B-O-I-N-G!

Suddenly, my easy chair quivered. Then everything collapsed, and as I went free-falling, my whole life passed before my eyes. Fortunately, as it turned out, it was not my life but everything on my stand flipped in the air and came showering down on top of me. Papers, books, the remote control and millions of pens and pencils smothered me in a heap of confusion.

For a brief moment, I did not know what happened, or where I was.

The only redeeming aspect of this incident was the simple fact that the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage was not home at the time. I say "simple fact," but the truth of the matter is it is much more complicated.

My first job was to extricate myself from the mess. Secondly, I had to pick up everything before my wife got home.

As it turned out, that was the easier part of my job. The most difficult, and I admit it, was trying to fix my easy chair. It turned out to be broken in places that completely and absolutely confounded me.

Several months before this my wife insisted I throw out this antiquated easy chair and get a new one. Looking back now I see it was a foolish thing to do n but then I laughed at her and told her in no uncertain terms that this easy chair was in perfect condition. She just looked at me, shook her head and walked away.

With panic as incentive, I gathered up the pieces of what used to be my easy chair and tried to figure how to put it all back together. I went to the garage, got some tools, a roll of wire and several rolls of

In My House, If It's Broken I Bought It

duct tape. Working at the speed of a husband in trouble I managed to put the chair back in what I thought was good shape.

Sighing a sigh of relief, I carefully tested out the chair. Much to my pleasure and delight, it cradled me as afore. Leaning back in my chair, I could not believe I had pulled one over on my Better Half. Nothing matches an easy chair properly broken in.

Later that evening my wife and I were sitting together watching television. Out of the blue, she brought up the subject of my chair. "Don't you think," she reflected in one of those wifely moods, "you should replace that old chair of yours?"

"Ha!" I said with the confidence of a fox who got away with a plump chicken. "This chair has a few more good years left in it."

Just then I heard a familiar sound.

B-O-I-N-G!

Everything collapsed, and as I went free falling my whole life passed before my eyes. Looking up into the smiling eyes of my wife, she simply said, "My, how time flies."

The whole incident reminded me of a verse in the Bible. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Corinthians 10:12–13 KJV.)

Rev. James L. Snyder, is an award winning author and popular columnist living in Ocala, FL with his wife Martha.

Keeping Your Home Secure While On Vacation

By Christine Bettridge

Imagine returning from your holiday to find your windows broken, your cars and possessions stolen and your pets gone. Your space has been violated.

Relax it shouldn't be necessary to answer that because with the proper preparation you can discourage intruders and have a carefree vacation.

Worry shouldn't be on the agenda when you are vacationing. Your holiday is a treat that should be enjoyed without stressing about the safety of your home. By planning ahead you minimize your risk of something going wrong while you are gone.

Depending on how long you will be gone there are a few common sense things you can do for your

In My House, If It's Broken I Bought It

home, pets and possessions.

Discourage thieves by getting a house sitter. This is the best way to ward off trouble. If you know someone who will regularly stop by your house – water your plants and turn on the lights you are lucky. If you have animals you might want to think about hiring a house sitter for while you are away. This way your pets are properly cared for and your home is safer. Peace of mind is worth some extra money. If you are going to hire a house sitter – make sure you use reliable and trustworthy service! Ask around.

If you can't get a house sitter the goal is to make your house look lived in. It's a good idea to have a trusted neighbor to look after your home. Someone who can keep an eye on your property and who has a contact number for you should anything go wrong.

There are all kinds of timers you can buy that make it seem like there are people in your house. Light timers and radio timers can be very effective in deterring criminals.

Think about the state of your lawn before you leave. Overgrown grass is a loud signal that there is nobody home.

If you are going to be gone long enough for your post to pile up make an arrangement with a neighbor to pick it up – a pile of unopened mail is an obvious signal to criminals that nobody is home.

Even if you aren't going away for a long time there are some things that you need to do every time you leave the house.

- Always lock your door and leave a key with someone to check on your home while you are gone.

- Turn on the radio/TV and leave some lights on

- Do not leave your spare key under the doormat or in any of the equally obvious hiding places. Rather give a copy to someone else and don't have a spare key anywhere in your garden while you are home. If you MUST hide your key on the property be creative! That blue rock in the backyard under the tree behind the shed is a better/safer bet.

- Develop a reciprocal relationship with your neighbors. Watch their houses when they are away; keep your eyes and ears open for strange happenings and ask them to do the same for you. Group together and form a neighborhood watch of some sort.

If you follow these tips you can be sure your chances are good that you will return to a secure house. If something has happened while you were out; here are some signs to look for

- Broken windows or door should be a major alert that something is wrong. Don't go inside! Call the police and have them check the property.

- If you think you have been broken into don't touch anything; you want to keep the scene preserved for investigation.

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