

# Could you be a “hoarder”?

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The A&E cable show *Hoarders* is fascinating to me but I get nervous watching it. My wife suggests the discomfort comes from seeing my own behaviors in these folks. She says I’m a hoarder at heart and she may be right, but I think it’s more about envisioning my future.

The evidence is clear. When I find a machine nut and washer in the street on our nightly walks I’ll pick them up justifying the action with, “You never know when you’re going to need a nut or washer just like this one.” The hardware goes into a coffee can on my workbench.



Last week I saw a baseball in the middle of the street. Slowed down, opened the door, scooped up my prize and preceded on, all in one easy hoarding motion. The baseball now sits in a dish full of hard wrapped candy in my office. Why? I’m not sure, but it generated comment from my last visitor.

This hoarding idiosyncrasy hasn’t been a problem for me until now. With all three boys settled in their own homes and careers, we’re thinking we may be through raising kids, and we don’t need this big old house anymore. So, we’ve decided to sell the house once the market recovers a bit more and find something a little easier to manage. You know...a place more conducive to a “foot-loose-and-fancy-free” retirement.

Now comes the hard part. Separating myself from a life-long collection of stuff, which brings me back to the anguish I feel when the subjects of the *Hoarders* TV show must dispose of their treasures.

This morning I was cleaning out the debris from under the eucalyptus trees, when I broke the handle of the leaf rake about 18 inches from the top. Instead of throwing it away, I tossed it over by the garage door. “Heck, I’m sure I’ll need that thing someday.” Now, you’re thinking, “Well, a 36 inch short-rake may come in handy so why not keep it?” I agree... and that part of the tool continued to support my labor. What I kept was the 18 inches of broken wooden handle. Is that crazy or what?

So here are two questions for which I am soliciting input:

- 1) What practical use can I have for 18 inches of broken wooden rake handle?
- 2) If you have hoarding tendencies, what do you do to divest yourself of perceived treasures?

Send your comments to [ldecker@ldecker.com](mailto:ldecker@ldecker.com)

I’ll print the most unique in next month’s issue of the newsletter.