

Things In Motion

All is change; all yields its place and goes.
--Euripides (485?-406BC)

DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR?

AS A CHILD, a young adult, and for all my working years, I prided myself on keeping a neat work environment. This carried over into my family life; the car was regularly washed and waxed, the yard was mowed and shrubbery was trimmed. Decorations for various holidays disappeared shortly after the holiday and trash simply wasn't allowed to accumulate in, on, or around the house. A neat freak? Perhaps.

Time did its thing and I found myself facing a new wrinkle: retirement. Suddenly the old familiar routines were out the window and at last there was lots of time for reading, writing, watching television and visiting friends--also time to paint the house, mend the windows and plant new shrubbery to replace that which froze because there wasn't time to cover it--WOW! So much to do and plenty of time to get it done promised the fulfillment of a dream.

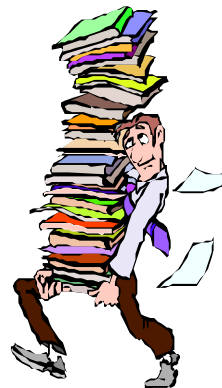
Then my son-in-law decided that he would build a house. Needless to say, I set out to help him as much as I could, and before I knew it, a year had passed—but the house was built and now I could get on with my own plans.

Then the opportunity came to join others in the family and open a produce store. Guess who wound up spending most of his time in the store—for two years. The lack of profit at last ended that enterprise and once again, I was free to do my own thing, which included 3 days weekly of rising at three o'clock and driving ten miles to sit with a grandchild, then get her up and ready for (first) day care, then school—and

driving her to and from those places for three days each week. This was to help my daughter and son-in-law whose work hours were not the usual eight to five. This went on for a total of nine years.

Wait! Another wonderful opportunity came to join daughter and son-in-law in operating a combination antique/crafts/junk store—which consumed six days weekly for two years. Then I was again faced with unlimited time to do all the things I had previously put aside...Wow!

During all the years since my retirement, I had gradually slid into less and less order in my surroundings. Papers first began to accumulate on and around my desk, then at odd places on my bookshelves. Eventually the clutter spread from my office to other rooms in the house. I made periodic efforts to restore good order, but the efforts were short lived, and by the time my wife and I decided to sell our house and move to a retirement community, we faced a huge problem of what to do with all the clutter. I had an even worse problem deciding what to keep and what to discard or give away. In the end I filled 147 boxes with books to keep and got rid of almost that much as trash. At our new home it took the better part of a year just to get 147 boxes of books unpacked and shelved. Three years later we still have several closets packed with assorted stuff—it may never be unboxed again. The walls of my office are lined with boxed miscellany; my desk is reached through a passageway and even the floor is littered by stacks of magazines and various computer components. I have been stripped of my former tendencies toward neatness and order—very effectively victimized by *endless clutter*.



No. 63, Autumn '09
Published for AAPA
by Hugh Singleton at
102 Azalea Trail,
Leesburg, FL 34748