

STEVE LOVES A PROJECT

By Terri White

My husband Steve retired nearly two and a half years ago, and he's enjoying the good life. You know, sleeping in, riding his bike, playing his guitar, reading, generally moseying around in slow motion. But it's not all roses. Well, maybe it is because those rose stems are decked with thorns. You get my drift.

Yes, there are those weeks of projects. And Steve loves a project according to my 96-year old mother. In years past when we visited my out-of-state parents, she gave him a to-do list for our week's visit. It kept him busy. Because Steve loves a project.

Meanwhile back to the retirement-living mode. Steve still loves a project. When asked how retirement is treating him, he routinely responds, "Now I don't have to ignore all those unfinished projects staring at me."

Unfinished, newly thought of, you name it. First, he makes a plan. Then he ignores it for a while until you-know-who reminds him of said project. More plans. Then the money spending spree at a man's favorite store. Pick your fave: Home Depot? Lowe's? McCoy's? Rowlett's? He usually makes the rounds. Collecting supplies, of course. But for some reason, he's missing in action for an extraordinarily long time. But, hey, it's a guy's field trip. There's a lot to consider for some future unknown projects.

Finally, he rolls up his sleeves and dives in. Oops! Rather, he sticks in his big toe. (That's a figure of speech for those scratching their heads at this dumb essay.) Enthusiastically tearing out the old stuff is by far his favorite part of any project. It involves strange male noises that I can't repeat here. "Boy, that was fun!" he exclaims.

Now to measure and remeasure; then measure some more. Done. Then he glances at his copious notes. Out to the barn for sawhorses, saws, and assorted other tools. Set it up. Time for lunch! Or is it breakfast? Not sure.

By mid-afternoon, he's in all-out-get'er-done mode. Soon the sky darkens as the sun fades. Where did the time go? But wait! He loves show and tell, so now I'm involved. With pride, he points out his accomplishments, "Look at the _____ I installed" includes all the gritty details. "Lovely," I ooh and ahh.

Put away tools, supplies, and various materials. Take a shower. Eat supper. Bedtime. He snuggles up to me asking, "What's heavier than a sawhorse on a rainy day?"

Not remotely registering on my radar, I reply, "Huh?"

"A wet sawhorse." I can't stop giggling because. . . really?

Repeat this process for several weeks. Even months on said project. But, of course, more challenging bedtime questions to baffle my befuddled mind.

How's retirement treating you, Steve? Steve loves a project.