

Fly on the Wall
10-14-2013 by Harry Zirkelbach

Some day not too distant, I expect a child to say to a parent, "What is a fly?" Told, they then ask, "Why would a fly want to hang onto a wall?"

My wife and I began talking about painting the walls inside our condo; it's been six years since we last changed that decor. We spoke of this so often, one child knew we needed to begin, chose the color paint, bought the first gallon, gathered siblings, and in a wink, recolored the west and north wall of the bedroom.

They left the remainder to us.

That was weeks ago. Since then I have been painting the remainder of the condo. The actual painting is repetitive motion, enjoyable to me. The moments before and after brushing or rolling paint, not so enjoyable. It means furniture moving and more taxing, deciding which "priceless" trinkets should be identified as the trash they really have become.

In the six years, time after time some memento was collected, part of a day lived. Now, several thousand items, they cannot now have equal value.

Each requires more time for evaluation now, that was given to the initial squirreling. Even trinkets retained, have to be viewed as of interest to us, as well as to those who will next look at the collected material. Because that will not be Barbara or Harry, the evaluation was given a more critical eye this time.

Over the week-end three baskets of papers and other pieces of history have been added to the trash dumpsters. And more will be added before the painting ends.

In effect, we place ourselves as “fly-on-the wall” in this evaluation. The problem, we can be nowhere as independent as a true fly. But it is a posture that adds to our other-world judgement. And to that end, there is this reminder - once in the trash, it is gone from our control.

That is not the same view I have in destroying articles like this, because each is made a part of the internet memory, through the cooperation of Dennis Knight and his creation “wg-wg”.

There, all can refer to what we’ve written, the paper never fading, the words as fresh, or dull, as he day created.

In four weeks of paint and rearranging, I found one fly, who was immediately eliminated without thought. Later, I regretted the cruelty, wondered where he had come from. Remembered not that long ago, the fly was a common pest, screens essential to keeping them outside all dwellings.

That child of tomorrow who asks, “What is a fly?” just might be prompted to make inquiry, because on that future hour, this child raised the question in perusal of the “wg-wg” site, and it entry “Fly-on-the Wall”.

