

Storage Space and Aha! Moments

By Marilyn Reeves

Seems like no matter how many shelves and cupboards you have, you always need more storage space.

I'm probably one of the few people in Windsor Gardens who still has the original layout for the 2-bedroom/2-bath condominium. My unit still features the three big rooms on one side of the central hallway – the living room, the master bedroom and the smaller bedroom in between (which I use for my office); and the four smaller rooms – the kitchen, the storage room, and the two bathrooms on the other side.

My kitchen is fair-sized, with room for a table and chairs, but a little short on cupboard space. I keep some of my larger items like my three big ceramic roosters on the top of my cupboard. And for a long time I also kept my big electric cooking pot up there too, as there wasn't room for it anywhere else. Not in my pantry which is loaded with food supplies, not even in my little storage room which is filled with shelves of stuff: Christmas stuff, sewing stuff, and just plain stuff-stuff. So every time I wanted to use my electric pot, I had to set a chair next to the cupboard, then pull my little one-step stepstool out from under my Comcast tower (it makes a good stand for that) and set it next to the chair so I could climb up to reach it.

Then one day it occurred to me that rather than keep my big glass cake dome on the shelf in my bedroom closet (yes, kitchen stuff even ends up in there), I would put it up high because I never use it anymore, and then put my cooking pot there in the closet instead. So that was my first 'Aha! Moment' in the cooking pot/cake dome saga. And climbing up and down – twice – I made the switch.

The second 'Aha! Moment' came when I thought, 'Why not give the cake dome to my daughter-in-law Mary, who might actually use it?' And I thought, 'Well, that will mean another climb from the step stool to the chair to get it down for her.' But then my third 'Aha! Moment' came when the kids came over for Easter dinner, and I thought, 'I'll bet one of my granddaughters could climb up on that chair without using the little step stool,' and – sure enough – Beth stepped right up on that chair, grabbed the glass dome, and stepped back down again, all in one fluid motion! Was I ever that young and agile? I don't know, I'm too old to remember.

I know the trend now for those with units like mine is to remove the dividing half-wall between the kitchen and living room, and eliminate the back-to-back pantry and linen closet. Some are knocking out the wall between the living room and second bedroom, creating one humongous great-room. And still others are tearing down the wall between the entryway and the storage room to use that space as a little dining alcove.

But what I keep wondering is: When they eliminate those extra rooms and their shelves and cupboards used for storage space, where on earth do they put all their stuff?