

The Laundry Card

By Marilyn Reeves

I like our new washers and dryers which use cards rather than quarters, although I have to remember to replenish the funds on mine every so often. My personal preference is to keep between \$10 and \$15 on the card – enough that it will last me a few weeks, but not so much that if the card were to get lost or stolen I wouldn't be out a large amount of money. I did take the precaution of pasting a return address label with my name on it to the back of the card to ensure that it would be returned to me ... if found by an honest person. And so far, I have been good about keeping my card in a safe place. Until this past Saturday, that is.

When the timer went off for me to go downstairs to take my first load out of the washer and start a second one, my hand automatically felt in my apron pocket, where I'd placed my card earlier that morning. It wasn't there. Oh dear. Well, I must have gotten careless and left it in the slot. I was a bit concerned, because this time I had over \$30 on the card. The last time I had gone over to the Center to plump up the reserves, the only bill I had to use in the money machine was a twenty, more than I really wanted to put on the card, but it was all that I had, so my laundry card was carrying a pretty hefty balance. When I got back down to the laundry room, I looked in the slot. The card wasn't there, either. Oh, no! Panic time!

I ran back upstairs – well, huffed and puffed back up the steps to my apartment, if you really want to know – and started the search. It wasn't on the shelf where I normally keep it. It wasn't in my purse. It wasn't in my pants pocket. It wasn't in the kitchen or the bedroom or my office or the living room. It wasn't in the bathroom.

Well, what to do? I decided to go back down and unload the wet clothes into my basket and then call my sister Rosie to see if I could go over to her place and finish my laundry, then I'd check with the Administration on Monday to see about getting a replacement card. I figured I had just lost \$30, which was money I could ill afford to lose, but lesson learned.

But luck was with me that day. On my next trip back down to the laundry room I saw my bottle of fabric softener sitting on top of the washer. And peeking out from under the bottle was my card ... exactly where I had left it. I whispered a little prayer of thanks to whatever Powers might be listening and resumed the chore of finishing up my laundry. And every few minutes I rechecked my pocket to make sure my laundry card was still there. This time I wasn't taking any chances.