

## THE BAG LADY

by Evelyn "Pat" Barton

In this day and age, almost everywhere you look, something is made out of plastic. There is plastic dinnerware and stemware, cars made out of fiberglass (which is plastic reinforced with glass fibers), plastic surgery to obliterate the scars borne from burn injuries, or remnants of domestic violence, to conceal flaws or rejuvenate the body's cells so to eliminate the signs of aging, plastic people (who are not their authentic, true selves), plastic containers, toys made from plastic materials, and a myriad of other everyday products, including the common "plastic bag," which, in itself, can be used for many purposes. I discovered (or maybe even invented) a very unique and creative use for a plastic bag. Allow me to share my story ...

One day I went to use the sauna at the clubhouse at the apartment complex in which I lived. In order to do this, I had to walk through the men's restroom, which was located downstairs in the garden level of the building. I went into the sauna room, stripped naked, and, then, realized I needed water to put on the hot stones. Therefore, I walked into the restroom to get the water from the sink, when the door to the sauna room closed. As I attempted to open it, I discovered it was locked. Then, I heard someone coming down the stairs. In a panic, I yelled, "Oh, no! I can't let anyone see me like this!" I had to think very quickly about what to do, as I was scurrying around in circles, like a chicken with its head cut off. I didn't want anyone to see me naked, and I didn't want to hide in a stall, envisioning a man opening it to find me there. I looked all around me to figure out what I could do to save myself. Suddenly, I noticed a very large black, unused garbage bag, sitting in the trash can in front of me. I snatched it out of there, made a hole in one end of it to stick my head through, while my feet stuck out the other end. I was only 4'11", so it fit perfectly! Before the person got to the bottom of the stairs, I ran out the back door, next to the men's bathroom, which, to my surprise, led to the swimming pool area. There were people at the pool, looking at me as if they had just seen an escapee from the state mental hospital!

Then, as quickly as I possibly could, under the constraints of a garbage bag, ran to the side of the building where I encountered people playing tennis. They couldn't help but notice me there with the black, plastic bag covering my body, excluding my feet and head. They stopped what they were doing, and gawked at me, because they couldn't believe what they were looking at.

Finally, I arrived at the front door and went in to explain my situation to the leasing agent at the desk, so she could unlock the sauna door for me. A stout man, who was sitting there inquiring about an apartment, looked at me with a facial expression, which said, "Oh, my God, do I really want to live here?" When I told the leasing agent what had happened, the man in the chair overheard our conversation and chuckled so hard, two of his shirt buttons popped off! Later, I shared my story with some personal friends, who aptly named me "The Bag Lady." I guess you could even say I gave new meaning to this term. Needless to say, plastic bags can be used for purposes one can't even imagine.

