

Bad Things Come In Threes

Ok, so no one in the family has bad health (at least not yet, we'll see what happens in a few weeks after the stress from the holidays and everything I'm about to unload takes its toll) and for that I am very grateful, but we have been hit by some bad luck in the past few days.

First was worst – my husband's hard drive went *kaput*. No warning; he just went to work Monday and found that virtually everything he had worked upon for the past 5 years or so is **gone**. Software he had written, info for clients that are now going to be extremely unhappy – **everything**. There are few options; everything he read on the internet about this problem raises little hope. He can send the hard drive away to a company with special equipment, but it's doubtful they can fix it, plus the price tag would be \$1500-2000. Basically there is no hope for the hard drive, and it's essentially as if he was laid off from his job less than a month before Christmas.

As if that wasn't enough, we noticed the other day that we no longer have a metal flap guarding our van's gas tank. We have no idea what happened to it, but now that it's missing, we are going through gas about twice as fast as we should be. Of course the car is no longer under warranty, so it will cost who-knows-how-much to fix it. The glove box broke months ago, and the tires are getting pretty bald (all 4 of course). We were going to get everything taken care of at the same time, but with no income now, that won't be happening.

And for #3 – our mortgage company decided to buy us extra disaster insurance for our house. Except it's not their treat – we have to pay for it. What happened is that we switched insurance companies about a month ago, trying to save money. Apparently there was some sort of mix-up, and everything was not transferred smoothly, leaving us lacking in the disaster

area of the insurance. So the mortgage company got us some of their own choosing, added \$300 to our monthly bill, and sent us a letter about it after it was too late to avoid paying this monthly fee. I hate insurance companies!!!

Don't mean to complain, like I said earlier, at least no one is ill and we do still have our health – that is the most important thing. And if it's really true that bad things happen in threes, then we should be done with the bad news for at least a little while, right?

Car Problems and lots of fun

I was going to take my car in today to see exactly what was wrong with it. It started up fine after charging the battery, but this morning the battery was dead again. Hmmm, didn't seem to want to hold a charge. I tried the jumper box and it was no go. I hooked up the charger again, but the battery would not charge up. I took the cover off of the battery and found out the problem. The four year old batter was leaking acid and the sides were bulging. After 4 years, I guess the battery gave up.

Now it was off to town to get a battery. First to Wally World, no battery for my truck. First Car Part store, no go. They could order it for tomorrow... How do I get around? I'll try the dealer. Dealer was a no go too, they could get it tomorrow too. So I stopped at the next Car Part store. Yes, they had one (maybe). The guy knew there was one there this morning, but he thought it may have been sold. They went to check and it was still there. Yeah.

I got home and installed the battery and the truck started right up. So for now I will keep an eye on the truck to make

sure the battery isn't getting drained by something. But with the looks of the old one, and a strange smell that was no missing, I'm sure it was just the battery. So for now, the truck is up and running.

Special thanks in this to my newlywed daughter and her husband for driving this old man around town looking for a battery. Also thanks to the Admin for the use of his battery jumper. It only worked once, but that wasn't the fault of the device.

I do have a question. Why do new cars and truck enclose the battery in a box? You can no longer see the battery and lose visual clues as to its condition. I think I would have looked for a battery sooner if I had seen a side bulging.

Bad Luck Turns Good!

We've been hit with some bad luck lately in our household. First, our beloved family dog of almost 11 years was diagnosed last week with a few potentially life-threatening illnesses. Aside from our obvious concerns about our dog's health, this has also incurred large vet bills. Next, we lost our expensive digital camera while trick-or-treating, and it contained priceless family photos, including the kids in their Halloween costumes. Finally (hopefully!) our car decided to conk out – engine wouldn't turn over. My husband did some research online and found that it was most likely the pass-key system, which can be quite costly to fix. While we were trying to jump start the car to fix it ourselves, the keys got locked in, which also stalled our efforts to fix it.

However, the bad luck is slowly changing to good, an unheard of phenomenon for us as people who have experienced more than an average person's amount of bad luck, I'd guess. For a few

years, we really got dumped upon, one horrible thing after another, but we've also had more than our fair share of good luck in life as well, especially lately, and we count our blessings every day. But rarely has our bad luck turned good like this. Yesterday, as I was walking my daughter to school (no car, remember?), I found a \$10 bill on the sidewalk. I immediately felt guilty and thought about how much I would like the person who found our digital camera to turn it in, so we called the police – again – and asked if anyone reported it missing. So far, they haven't, which means I get to keep it. The police must be getting sick of us by now since we've called about 10 times in the last few days looking for our camera and trying to get into our locked car... but oh well, in a sleepy rural town such as ours, I'm sure they're just happy to have *something* to do. So anyway, I find the \$10, and I think I get to keep it, and then I walked to the local car dealer yesterday, and they gave me a key to get into my car for only \$2.50 when we thought it would be at least \$35 for a locksmith! So we find money, save money getting into our locked car, and then today we find out that our car is still under warranty, so the expensive pass-key replacement system will be covered!!! HOOORAY!!! And get this – we are under warranty for **only 24 more miles!** What a blessing of a coincidence, although it makes me afraid to drive the car for fear that something else will go wrong and next time, it won't be covered!

But anyway, besides the vet bills, as far as the car goes, I think we actually came out ahead on the whole deal. We saved \$ on gas these past two days when I had to do all errands on foot, I found the \$10, and there's no charge for repairs, so yeah, we're actually \$10+ ahead! Hopefully everything will go ok with the car repairs so that we can still make it to the early Christmas celebrations we had planned for this weekend in Illinois. And they say bad things happen in sets of three, so hopefully this is it for at least a little while anyway...