Collecting… or Hoarding?

When does a collecting hobby cross the line? I've heard of people who collect things and sometimes get kinda crazy about it… Like this one guest on Dr. Phil who collected Star Wars stuff. No problem there, but once he started talking about the details of his obsession, it became obvious he had an unhealthy problem. His wife felt like she came in second place to the Star Wars stuff all the time, and he even had a storm trooper costume he wanted to be buried in. When Dr. Phil pointed out the fact that the guest would never fit into the costume, he insinuated that he would be dismembered or whatever it took to get his body into the costume for burial. I guess it's easy to say you've crossed the line when your spouse or the people you live with start to get annoyed and ask you to give them more room for *their* stuff and to get rid of the things you collect. Or maybe it's obvious you have an unhealthy addiction when you start to spend more money on your collection than things you should be spending it on to ensure a healthy lifestyle, like food or clothing. Anyway, the reason I'm bringing this up is because my husband and I are developing an extreme board game collecting hobby. It started years ago when we visited a few garage sales and saw some games we both had as kids, so we picked those up. Then we started visiting thrift stores in the area, and we enjoyed doing that so much that we visit often and pick up several games each time we go… it's kind of like treasure hunting — you never know what you'll find. Games are anywhere from 25¢ to $3 and since they usually have all the pieces, it's a pretty fun hobby to check out all kinds of different games.

Now, we've moved to a bigger house and have allowed ourselves a big game closet. The problem is, we're getting so carried away that we've outgrown the game closet — there are games now stacked on the floor since we've gotten so many that they no longer fit on the shelves. When we go out to thrift stores, I

can't even remember what games we have and I'm always tempted to buy more, but my husband says, "we already have that one". It's really not that big of a problem, I guess we just need a bigger closet… we do invite friends over nearly every weekend to play games, so we are getting use out of them; it's not like they just sit on the shelves (or floor!) collecting dust… And the only family member whose living space is getting crowded because of all the games is the parrot. He's been screaming at me while I fold laundry so much lately that I don't mind if he gets crowded out! But I can just tell that it's becoming an addiction because when we're at the thrift stores, I always feel like getting new games, even if we already have them apparently… I don't see an end in sight, but I think it's still in the collecting stage; it hasn't graduated to hoarding yet. After all, the duplicate board games we have are only for spare parts, and the other day, I had a brainstorm: If we knock out one of the walls in our game closet, we can combine it with another large closet and have more than twice the space for all the games! For some reason, my husband doesn't share my enthusiasm for this idea…