

Band-Aid Activism

Seeking accessible support

Sometimes, when our sense of personal power wears thin, we need to remind ourselves that we can make a difference. We've got the depressing reality of the smirking chimp in the White House, white supremacists running rampant, and an all-out right-wing assault on Sponge Bob. Yet our activist hearts drive us to step up, come out, and change something – anything.

Consider last Sunday. I was getting over a nasty cold and trying to muster the wherewithal to face another day under red-state rule. Determined to focus on something more uplifting than "friendly fire," I figured I'd catch up on household responsibilities.

I needed a chore I could accomplish despite my low energy. I was about to change the kitty litter when my domestic partner piped up with, "Let's tackle the bathroom cabinets."

That particular project rarely approaches the top of my priority list. Especially these days with all the meetings, marches, and lobbying for LGBTQ equality that the state of the union has forced me to add to my already-busy schedule. Who has time for cupboard cleaning?

But Wifey was raring to go, motivated, inspired. How could I refuse her? Why not flow with her determination to organize? Working together, I reminded myself, we could face anything. The people united will never be defeated. Multiply love by the power of two. We can do it.

A few days earlier, when I was burning up with fever, I couldn't even find the damned thermometer. I was in no condition to confront the tangle of tweezers, Q-Tips, loose Band-Aids, Band-Aids in boxes, and random empty Band-Aid boxes. The next time I come down with something, I'd rather not have to wade through all those bent-bristled toothbrushes, used up salves, creams, and ointments just to take my temperature. Retrieving a wash cloth to cool a fevered brow shouldn't require wrestling a snarl of disorderly towels and myriad lavatory detritus. I could do without a shelf full of past-date prescription bottles and a sticky glaze of unidentifiable dusty goo.

Mess is daunting. Our assorted loose tampons and pads left over from our golden days of ovulation are useless if we can't locate them when we have a fertile houseguest in need. Everything we might want is impossible to get with the current state of the cabinet – domestic and presidential.

Sooner or later everyone has to sort out their Ace bandages, gauze rolls, athletic tape, shampoo bottles, poison oak wash, and sundry back, knee, wrist, and ankle braces. We all need accessible support in the event of unexpected twists and strains. At some point we must make a difference. Don't mourn, organize. If not now, when?

Never underestimate the power of women. We heard the call to action and we responded. We sorted, tossed, recycled, and scrubbed. We voted out extraneous and expired has-beens. We cleaned up.

Our medicine cabinet is now sparkling and tidy. I am especially proud of the orderly new Band-Aid file, arranged from tiny to large, more than plenty to secure all skin wounds well into the next Democratic administration – may it come soon.

Our cupboard stands united. The washcloths are neatly squared and ready for easy retrieval, towels folded and sorted by size. Braces and wraps are stowed up high in a first aid basket with other only occasionally needed items such as the vaporizer and our heaven-sent, vulva-cupping "female" urinal, an item that should be routinely offered, but isn't – much like equal protection under the law.

We did it. Our shelves are clean and organized and we got rid of a lot of unnecessary junk – a process we are now free to pursue on a more global scale. Collaborating with my darling mate left me feeling successful and inspired enough to take on other challenging tasks. Today the kitty litter, tomorrow the world.

Living Out has appeared monthly in Eugene Weekly since 1999. To enroll in Sally's April 23 "Ignite Your Creative Spirit" workshop at Tamarack Wellness Center, e-mail sally@wymprov.com



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