

From Behind Our White Picket Fence Week 163  
By Freddy and Eddy

### **Resolutions...**

With the Xmas rains passing through and giving SoCal a thorough and refreshing rinse, our region has gone into postcard season, with clear sunny days offering stunning views of the snow capped mountains to the east, and Catalina Island to the west (it looks so close you could reach out and stroke its outline across the bay). When we moved here in 1984, it was in large part due to such coffee table book scenes, showing Los Angeles smog-free and glistening as though suspended in its own sunny universe. To us, this place seemed almost mythical, yet inviting all the same; unlike say, New York, which seems almost foreboding and impenetrable to all but those raised in its grittiness.

It's no wonder we come across so many east coast transplants here, but rarely encounter or hear of anyone going in the opposite direction. Indeed, we attended a going away party for a lawyer/friend who decided to move to Manhattan (she said she needed a "tougher" environment in which to succeed), wishing her well as she packed her bags and headed off to her small, \$2800.00 per month apartment. Exactly one year later, she's back, kissing the sunny ground upon which she heaped scorn, thankful for the friends who've welcomed her back without judgment and for the chance to once again walk outside in December. Southern California may pose its own set of vigorous urban challenges, but it does so gently and with civility unmatched in perhaps any city of such diversity and density. As such, we once again have so much for which to be thankful, despite obstacles and setbacks that might have derailed our optimism slightly in 2008.

Turning the page on this past year, though chronologically insignificant, is symbolically important for a number of reasons. First, we can take advantage of the post-holiday slowdown to focus on a number of tasks that need attention (the Little Sexy Black Book, Love LA, and website maintenance, to name a few), and second, we can finally come to grips with getting our marriage back on track after allowing it to be derailed by the introduction of the demented mother into our household. If you've followed our column for any length of time, you know the story. If not, the quick version is that Alicia's mother is suffering from severe dementia, as well as advanced Parkinson's disease, resulting in erratic behavior (we're being mild here) that required moving her into assisted living the last two years. Unfortunately, at over \$3000.00 per month, combined with the loss of her life savings in a scam similar to the Madoff scheme, we could no longer afford to keep her in the local facility, resulting in us moving her into our home in mid-December.

In a word, this transition has been a complete disaster and has brought our marriage to the brink of failure. Though we knew she was in bad shape, Mom's dementia is actually far worse than we'd ever imagined. Her brain functioning is barely above a 4 year old, while her emotional mood swings range from mildly ugly to downright mean and belligerent. She's already accused me and our female tenant in our back apartment of attempting to rape her, while Alicia has had to physically tackle her into bed (with me threatening to

restrain her with straps) at night to get her to go to sleep. Her physical problems brought on by Parkinson's have led to two falls (and countless close calls) requiring trips to the emergency room for cuts and bruises, as well as denture repair from a particularly nasty landing on our concrete patio at work. We've become prisoners to caring for her and the situation reached comical heights last weekend as we attempted to attend the Bassnectar show at the El Rey, leaving her in the care of a friend for the three hours we'd be gone. Approximately half way through Bassnectar's (phenomenally killer) set, we got fed up with all the text messages from her babysitter and left the show to return home. Once back, we found Mom up at 1am and in a furor, spouting nonsensical accusations and ordering us out of our own home before another well-timed tackle ended the charade.

At that moment, we faced up to the conclusion that Mom had to go, this time as a ward of the state and to a facility that we could afford, regardless of the quality of care. If this means moving her into a smelly mausoleum for old folks and makes us out to be horrible people, so be it; such is the desperation of getting Mom out of our home. Resentments are boiling over on all sides – our son witnessing everything – and the cancer must be removed before it destroys the entire organism that is the Denchasy family.

Though undeniably accompanied by guilt, this decision brings with it a sense of liberation as we finally part with the Mom we used to know, a woman who led a harsh existence on a farm in Victoria, B.C. among 16 siblings, raised by a father who wanted only male children and viewed his daughters as mere servants. Her life is now lost in a jumble of confused dementia and physical degradation, somehow pushing onward through some sort of biological will to live. Whether she somehow continue to will her 78 year old body on for months or years (she's stubborn, so reaching the age of one hundred isn't so far fetched) is entirely up to her; at this point, we have to turn our attention to survival of our precious family.

Freddy and Eddy – aka Ian and Alicia Denchasy – can be reached via e-mail at [freddy@freddyandeddy.com](mailto:freddy@freddyandeddy.com) or by calling 310-915-0380. Their store address is 12613 Venice Blvd., LA CA 90066 and all articles are archived on their website.