



the ADD of Motherhood (AKA THE MULTI-TASKING MAMA)

By Lisa A. Beach

"I'll be back out in a minute," I said to my husband Kevin as we were sitting on the back porch reading the Sunday paper. "I need to go throw a load of laundry into the washer."

On my way upstairs to gather a load of white clothes, I notice my son's soccer cleats on the steps. I gingerly pick up the smelly footwear, toss them onto his bedroom floor and run for the Lysol to eliminate that "teen boy smell" from his room.

After spraying a hefty dose of disinfectant, I see a sports bottle sitting on my son's dresser. The bottle's dripping condensation just taunts me with the threat of an impending water stain, so I whisk it away to the dishwasher where it belongs.

As I load the bottle into the dishwasher, I notice the haphazard way that things are just shoved into the top rack. Small ice cream bowls sit right-side-up, just waiting to collect water. Knives perch precariously, ready to slice off a fingertip at any moment. Cups lay sideways, as if they were just tossed in arbitrarily. *Doesn't anyone in this family have spatial awareness? You can fit eight more glasses in here!*

While rearranging the top rack, I notice an open box of cereal that someone left on the counter from breakfast three hours earlier. *Would it kill anyone to close a box around here? Or put it away?*

Hoping the Frosted Flakes have not turned to floppy flakes, I close up the box and put it back in the cupboard.

I look on the shelf below and realize we're down to our last can of cat food.

As I write "cat food" on our grocery list posted above the phone, I notice a reddish smudge (blood? ketchup?) stuck to the receiver. Ew, gross.

I grab the canister of wipes and clean the phone smudge with the vigor of a surgeon's pre-op scrub. Since I used the last wipe, I toss the empty canister into the recyclable container, causing the overflowing plastic bottles to fall all over the floor.

I gather up the bottles, carry everything out to the larger recyclable container outside, and dump it all in. On my way back inside, I step over a puddle. *A puddle on a rain-free weekend?*

Who left the hose on? I wonder, as I walk over to shut off the faucet and head back into the house.

Feeling productive, I realize that I've just prevented a fall on our stairs, a smell overtaking our second floor, a water stain, a finger amputation, a box of cereal from going stale, a starving kitty, a communicable disease from spreading via our phone and a higher water bill next month. I am one multi-tasking mama, I think as I walk with a get-'er-done swagger.

"What took you so long?" Kevin asked, as I walked back out to the porch 30 minutes later. "I thought you were just starting a load of laundry."

Oh crap. ■