

Movin' on down the line

by Alicia Hartman
Co-editor

Three weekends ago I had to move out of my house. Not by choice, however. Let me explain.

My dad works at General Electric.

Enter theme: *GE, we bring good things to life.* Picture the mother and daughter sitting under GE's *soft, white* lights, doing what, I don't know.

My dad works at GE and has been transferred to Virginia.

I had two choices with whom I could move in with: Grandma and Grandpa, or my aunt and uncle and their teenage daughter. I raised my teenage sister so I figured I'd have no problem raising my cousin.

I couldn't decide who I wanted to live with so I stayed with Grandma and Grandpa for a week, and then I went to my aunt and uncle's for a week. Somehow I managed to live out of an egg box for two weeks. I don't know how I did it. Economizing isn't

one of my specialties.

I've been in my new home about two weeks. There are two things I miss about not having my parents around.

One: my mom doing my laundry. I've done five loads to date. And may I add, I haven't ruined anything (yet). I needed assistance with the first two loads, but I was capable of finishing the rest by myself.

Two: I miss my dad's car. When mine didn't work (which is 99.9% of the time) I could always use his. I'm in some serious trouble without his car. If he would've just given me his car, it'd eliminate all these problems.

Just because I'm 19 years old and couldn't do laundry three weeks ago doesn't mean anything. If someone else does it for you free of charge, why worry (or care)?

I also can't cook, but I'm an expert at microwave cooking and I make a damn good bowl of cereal.

I don't believe in cooking and

doing laundry because I'm going to be Career Woman. When I grow-up, I'm going to make lots of money and hire someone to come in and cook and do laundry.

I also don't want any rug-rats



(a.k.a. kids) because I want to spend all my money on me and only me, me, me.

The hardest thing about

moving is trying to remember a new address and phone number.

The first form I filled out at the registrar I had the right address, the wrong phone number. The second time I had the wrong address, the right phone number. And FINALLY on the last form I had the RIGHT address and the RIGHT phone number.

Learning a new address and phone number is so hard.

I'm going to miss my house. I've lived there for 15 years. I've sat in the same seat at the kitchen table to do my homework since I was in kindergarten. (I'm a very sentimental person.) The kitchen floor is worn right down to the floorboard because I've sat there so much.

In our garage, in the corner by the door is written:

July 90
Alicia
Andi

My sister and I will always be remembered by whoever buys our house. When I wrote that in the cement three summers ago, my dad yelled at me because it was so

big.

I wanted to be remembered though. Doesn't everybody?

On Wednesday, October 20 we had to say goodbye to our home.

We (my mom and I) went through the house collecting all the "pluggies," those advancements of technology that you plug into the socket and emit a flowery aroma.

We checked closets, lights, dripping faucets and running toilets at least 29 times. My mom had to clean the *entire* house. She swept and dusted *every* room and *scrubbed* down the bathrooms.

As we made our final exit, we locked the door for the *first* time, not the last. We trusted our neighbors, and my parents don't believe that psychos exist in small towns, so we never locked our house.

My move hasn't been that bad of an experience. And by the way, if you're looking for a house there's a beautiful home located in North East...

A look at the government's policies

by Dave Barry
Syndicated Columnist

Health-care reform, NAFTA, "Reinventing Government" -- these are issues that deeply concern you, as an informed American, in the sense that if you read one more word about them, you are going to puke. Nevertheless we intend to address them today, because we are a professional news commentator, and we feel that it is our responsibility, from time to time, to refer to ourselves in the plural.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

This is an important issue, because many Americans are not receiving adequate health care. We certainly are not. We haven't been to our doctor's office in several years. Don't get us wrong: We love our doctor, whose name is Curt. He sits right behind us at Miami Heat basketball games, and we're deeply impressed by the wisdom of his observations, such as: "He's a *bird!*" And: "This guy is a *bird!*"

But for the first time we want to visit Curt's office, he suddenly, without warning, put on a *business suit* and

what it must feel like to be a Thanksgiving turkey. And THEN he made us take a "stress test" wherein we had to run on a treadmill with wires attached to our skin and radioactive chemicals flowing through our body. So now we're afraid to go to Curt's office, because we don't know WHAT he might do to us next. We're afraid he might have purchased a soldering iron.

Thus our only option, if we developed a serious medical problem, would be to do what millions of other Americans must do: Go to a Miami Heat basketball game. Our plan would be to get Curt's attention by dropping subtle hints. ("Hi, Curt. By the way, we have a large lesion!") Then, during timeouts, Curt could diagnose our condition by asking medical questions. ("Could you try not to bleed on my pocket?" And: "How come you're referring to yourself in the plural?")

But this is not a long-term solution. For one thing, it doesn't work during timeout season. What we need is health-care reform. We need health-care reform that would require doctors to *look at* their patients and *listen* to their complaints. We need

you ever had the plague? Navel discharges? Eyeball worms? Any trampoline-transmitted diseases?") Also, just to make sure, doctors should be required to wear a full-body restraining device like the one Dr. Hannibal Lecter wore in "Silence of the Lambs" to keep him from turning the other characters into Corpse McNuggets. This would make all Americans feel more



comfortable about medical care, and this starts to think about the important issue of NAFTA.

NAFTA is an acronym standing for "North Atlantic Treaty Organization." This acronym is not to be confused with the acronym for "North Atlantic Treaty Organization."

another. For example, the United States could trade North Dakota, Kansas and a state to be named later to believe this would create jobs in the moving industry and guarantee that Canada would never again win the World Series.

Leading the support for NAFTA is President Clinton, who favors it because it is a humongously boring government thing that only he understands. Leading the opposition is "H." Ross Perot, the feisty, popular, plain-spoken maverick billionaire space alien, who believes that the real purpose of NAFTA is -- and he can prove this with charts -- to disrupt his daughter's wedding.

Which side will prevail? That is a question that remains to be answered, unless it already WAS answered, and we missed it. We frankly haven't been paying much attention to NAFTA, because we're so excited about

REINVENTING GOVERNMENT

This is a brainstorm from Vice President Al "Mojo" Gore, who, while carrying out his vice-presidential duties as stated in the Constitution ("The vice president shall wear a nice suit") noticed that the federal government, in performing its many functions, demonstrates the collective wisdom of a sponge. (Gore had to notice this during his 15 years in the House and Senate; he

was busy passing laws giving the government new functions to perform.)

As an example of bureaucratic inefficiency, Gore noted that the government agencies go through an absurdly complex procedure simply to purchase ashtrays.

"It's ridiculous," he pointed out. "The agencies should just steal them from motels, like everyone else."

So the administration has a bold reform program under which the government would take such radical steps as -- get ready -- **REQUIRING FEDERAL AGENCIES TO ANSWER THEIR TELEPHONES.** Of course this would require intensive employee re-training programs ("OK, you hear that sound? We call that 'ringing'"). Also, there would be some health risk to the thousands of elderly people who have been hanging on the line ever since; many of these people would suffer heart attacks if they were to suddenly hear an actual human voice. Fortunately for them, we will soon have health-care reform, so they can all be treated, regardless of income level, at the basketball game of their choice.

Dave Barry is a syndicated columnist from The Miami Herald.