

January Round Up

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Well, that was a lot of work. The whole concept of re-doing my apartment seemed a little daunting at first, but I really wasn't expecting it to be quite as comprehensive a task as it wound up being. Tied in with working towards completing divemaster certification, actually diving, going to climbing school and, most importantly, spending as much time with my family up in Sacramento as I could, January moved like a freight train, deliberate and unstoppable.

I like the analogy of the freight train, primarily because of the inertia it retains. It's hard to get it moving, but once you do, it takes just as much effort to slow it down again. Momentum is key, it helps when your motivation slacks.

A quick look at what I was able to do on the apartment in January...

- Remove DVDs :: Done. They and their monstrous shelving have been removed from the wall, with the DVDs further removed from their dust jackets and placed into individual sleeves in a binder, and their dust jackets submitted to recycling. Their former location on the wall in my living room has been replaced by Egyptian papyrus, some Arabic art pieces and my frieze of the fall of Lucifer.

- Sort and Store Paperwork :: Done. I went through nearly half a decade of bills and accumulated paperwork. I decided that I really, really don't need to keep my utility bills from three apartments ago, so that got jettisoned. I realized I have access to all my bank statements on line, so those got shredded. I didn't need to keep the receipts for my motorcycle registration from 2006, so that got tossed. Essentially, I kept nothing. I am glad I went through it all because I found some really cool stuff in there, the most important being a Series EE Savings Bond I received for my second birthday from my late uncle Joey. It stopped accumulating interest in 1995, and it's sentimental value carries far more for me than its monetary value.

- Inventory Storage:: Done. I went through each box in there, consolidated a bunch of stuff, identified some things to keep, some things to sell and some things to put right back into storage. I think what I have in there now, is good to keep in there, and I made room for some things in there that I don't need on a daily basis, and don't need at immediate hand.

- Sell Unused Camera Gear :: Tried, but no go. I contacted several buyers, but they all got back to me with, essentially, "the economy sucks, there's no way we could sell it". C'est la vie. I guess that's what I made room in storage for.

- Sell Dresser and Vanity :: In Process. Had about a dozen no shows from Craigslist. Pisses me off. If you're going to say you're going to come look at the stuff, show up, or at least send me an email saying that you're not. Anyway, the ad is back up.

- Patch Walls :: On Hold. Can't do that until I sell the dresser, because I can't get to the walls behind the dresser and vanity right now. Patching the walls will be the last thing I do before cleaning the carpet.

- Frame and Hang Art :: Done. I framed and hung all the art I had sitting next to my bed, clearing that space up. I still have the seven lithos I bought for my birthday, but I want to do those a little more diligence than how I frame a couple of printed photos.

- Clean Carpet :: On Hold. Can't do that until the dresser and vanity are gone and I can patch the walls. No point doing a super diligent cleaning, just to muck the carpet up again with drywall dust and joint compound.

- Shuffle Office Items Into Storage :: Done. I actually wound up throwing / donating / recycling 99% of the stuff I didn't want in the office, so... bonus! Extra space was created!

- Redesign Office Layout :: Done. Man this one was a bitch. I had to disassemble my desk from it's "L" configuration and turn it into a wall length instead, while still having a ton of crap in the area. It was like a human sized version of those puzzles where you have to move the one empty space around to reassemble the picture, except the pieces you slide back and forth to shift the empty space are all 10 cubic feet in size and weigh 30 pounds. After the desk was rebuilt, I mounted the parts bin of electronics on the wall, mounted the lego bins on the wall, hung a few extra shelves, tucked stuff under the desk, etc, etc. Long and short, it's done and it works much, much better.

- Send Sample Film Out for Scanning :: Not Done. I just completely forgot about this one. Oops.

- Archive and Store Photos :: Not Done. Hard to do if you don't get your film scanned.
- Repair Desired Camera Gear :: Not Done / Not In The Budget. I would like to do this, but the framing and the new vacuum cleaner a few bits of new furniture for my closet, etc all cost a little more than I wanted to spend, so this, while enjoyable, is not vital and will have to wait.
- Cable Projector Cleanly :: Done. I have just a single HDMI cable that now runs under the rug.
- Re-condition Closet :: Done. Fantasticly too. The dresser is out, shelves are in, my clothes went into linen lined wicker baskets and the hampers went into the closet too. So did a bunch of suitcases, my ties, my belts, all my hiking clothing, thermal clothing and mountaineering jackets. This turned out way better than I hoped! And I was able to close my closet door for the first time since the day I moved in.
- Equipment Storage In The Apartment :: On Hold. That damn Dresser / Vanity is in the one spot where this will get installed. I have a pretty good idea for what to store and how to store it there, but I need the furniture gone so I can finish this.
- Hang Vitruvian Man :: Not Done. I didn't get around to this, because I need to get an extension ladder from building management to get up that high on the wall.
- Hang Curtains / Blinds / Shades :: Not Done. I will also need the extension ladder for this, and I need to swing by Ikea to get the blackout blinds I want.
- Upper Window Solution :: Me: "So, am I the only asshole that keeps a ladder in their living room to open the upper windows?" Leasing Office: "The upper windows open!??!" Well, apparently, there is no solution to this that is obviously presented. I'm thinking I can farkle something together with a crank, a worm gear and a long handle. Like a rack and pinion. We'll have to see.
- Build Home Entertainment PC :: Done. Oh is it done... and is it glorious. Well worth the effort.

So, that's the apartment. I also got in a night dive, took some divemaster tests, conducted a Scuba Review, did my 400m timed swim, my 100m timed tired-diver-tow (suuuuuucked!!!!), attended a Mt. Whitney orientation, got a good day of climbing and hiking in at Stoney Point, and spent three weekends up with my family.

The last weekend in January, which I had intended to spend entirely in Joshua Tree, got a little more complicated when it turned out I was the only person to sign up for the Intermediate Climbing school. The answer was to shift it from a two day group climb, to a one day private guided day, and focus that entire day on anchor building. That allowed me to go to Catalina on the 30th to finish the majority of the stuff I had left for Divemaster certification.

That anchor building class was fantastic. About 9 hours long, with the first half spent on the ground, learning how to set gear at a crag, how to evaluate rock conditions, how to evaluate placements, how to equalize, how to test, how to tie the system together... fantastic stuff. Then after lunch, we went to a top rope area, picked out some routes, and scrambled up and built real life anchors, from which I then rappelled. It was a solid day of having my head unscrewed with climbing knowledge just poured right in. Unbelievable good training from Steve Gerberding of Joshua Tree Climbing School.

So then. Onto February...