

WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

From Trash to Treasure

Do you have lots of trash piles around your ranch? You know, that stuff you no longer use or it doesn't work anymore, so it gets thrown into a stack to throw away one of these days? Or maybe you're like my husband who believes you might need that something again someday, so you better not get rid of it.

I began this year with the intention of cleaning out our house and around the ranch and quite simply getting rid of everything we no longer used or wanted.

Interestingly, my cleaning out also has resulted in discovering new ways to use old stuff. Some call this repurposing.

We are probably only ankle deep in cleaning out my in-law's house. Although it feels arduous and sad for my husband, there have been some fun surprises uncovered that were long ago buried in closets, cabinets and drawers that haven't seen the light of day in a few decades.

In our own house, after 40 years together living in the same place, came the realization it was time to sell the China that had only been used at most two or three times.

The perfect buyer was found that was excited to obtain more of her discontinued China pattern. I was happy our wedding China gifts went to a good and loving new home.

Recently, I was shocked by a most unexpected discovery in a huge clump of steel rubbish. Part of the surprise for me was how often I had walked by this



(Left) Annette Bridges suddenly saw precisely what she was looking for in a huge clump of steel rubbish. (Right) That rubbish included the perfect pieces for a new T-shirt display. (Photos courtesy Annette Bridges)

ugly mound paying little to no attention to what was in it. Now, I suddenly saw precisely what I was looking for. I'm wondering if my discovery has anything to do with the gratitude and new appreciation I'm feeling these days as we continue to shelter on our ranch?

I have a shop space in a downtown store in Denison, Texas. One of my products is my Ranch House T-shirt line. With the addition of some new shirts, I needed a better way to display them.

For some reason this particular morning as I walked by the heap of discarded steel, I noticed the two old iron front porch posts that were on our farmhouse when we first married. I didn't like them 40 years ago and could not replace them fast enough.

The inspiration came to me how those two iron posts could make the perfect sides to a shirt display stand my husband could build. I was right about that. They were indeed perfect.

My rancher life continues to teach me to never say never, to stay open to new ways of using old things, and that it's okay to let go of stuff – even the beautiful and unbroken – that are no longer serving a purpose.

My mamma always taught us kids how grateful eyes would help us see what we have rather than what we don't. Apparently, grateful eyes can also help us turn what we once viewed as trash into treasure. ☺