



# My son, a



# tinker-of-all-trades

By: Carole Christman Koch

My son, Kevin, the only boy in a family of four children, was a tinker-of-all-trades. When he was around 11 years old, I was a divorced Mom living in a modular home on my brother's land. I also worked as a bookkeeper for my brother's sanitation business.

At this time, we did not have a garage and Kevin begged me to consider him bringing his bike into his already small bedroom during the winter months. Instead, I gave him an old plastic tablecloth, suggesting he cover the bike with it.

A couple days later, when I came home from work, my son was waiting at the door, "Mom, I've solved the space problem by rearranging the furniture in my room." Instead of arguing, I headed directly to his bedroom. Upon entering, I found his bed posts entwined with long, heavy chains. Nearby was a hammer, nails, and ladder. I asked what his plans were. He replied, "I saw a photo in a magazine where they hung the bed from the ceiling." Needless to say, I allowed my tinkerer to bring his bike in, but everything had to stay on the floor.

Another endeavor he pursued was car washing. After the job was done, he proudly announced, "Mom, I washed the engine, too. It really was dirty!"

Since my brother's business was in our backyard, I knew Kevin often watched my brother doing mechanical work on the trucks. Yet, washing the engine didn't seem right, so I told him so. He then stalked off, "I know what I'm doing."

Next day, when I was ready to go for groceries, I couldn't start my car. I then yelled for my car washer. After he checked the engine he told me, "I think the plugs are wet, but don't worry. You won't be late. Be right back." He then ran into the house and returned with an extension cord and the hair dryer and proceeded to dry the plugs. It worked.

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Kevin never gave me much time to recuperate from his escapades. Within three weeks, after the engine episode, he again asked to wash my car. I agreed, thinking he learned his lesson.

After a short time, I heard him yell, "Mom, I think I flooded the engine. It will have to sit awhile then it will be OK!"

I quickly ran outside to the car and stopped suddenly. There before my eyes were all sorts of square, round, and oblong engine parts, scattered on the ground. I screamed, "What are you doing?"

He yelled, "This is the way you dry the flooded parts faster. Air reaches them much better. You don't trust me!"

There was nothing I could do but wait and see how my tinkerer son resolved this. After a length of time, he put the parts back in place, but the car didn't start. Then Kevin remembered he had filled the plastic jug for the wipers with water with a large hose, which was too big for the hole, and it splattered all over. I glared at him and he turned and darted for the house, returning with his familiar survival kit--hair dryer and extension cord. It worked. I could then start my car.

In the next months, my children and I moved into an apartment. This is when Kevin's father gave him a TV for his bedroom. One day, I returned home from shopping when he excitedly told me, "I rigged up the TV." Knowing I hadn't purchased wire or anything else needed to "rig up" a TV, I ran for his bedroom. He did have everything connected.

He had bought the wiring himself, drilled a hole in the landlord's wall, and ran the wire under the hall rug, tacked it to the back of the living room sofa and attached it to the TV in the living room. It also worked.

The next evening, while watching TV, sparks flew behind the TV. I quickly pulled the plugs and questioned my tinker son. He said there was no chance it was his wiring. The TV repairman later told me different.

Kevin's escapades in tinkering served him well. Today, he is 49 years old, works for UGI in HVAC and I'm proud of my tinker-of-all trades son. ◊



This charming story is a reprint, locally a Kutztown Patriot/Hamburg Item. We thank Carole for allowing us to republish. Center Photo, Carole's son, Kevin Sicher