



## Breaking Up Is Hard To Do

By John Dunlap – Editor, SSA Globe

Recently, I had to do something that was very difficult for me and it involved a breakup. No, not from my marriage or anything like that, but from my self storage facility. My wife and I discovered that we had enough space to take our belongings out of the Concord, North Carolina self storage facility that we've been using for well over five years now. That's not such a bad thing, but saying farewell to the two guys who own and operate the facility, Marvin and Gene, was difficult.

You see, they embody some of the best qualities that any owner/operator or facility manager can have. While both are basically well past the age of retirement, they love their jobs. They love the people who come and store with them. They are both extremely funny and a pleasure to be around.

I liked them both so much that anytime I had to go to my unit, I couldn't leave without dropping in for a visit in their office. Maybe it was their brand of down-home humor, maybe it was the fact that they both took such a genuine interest in my life and have shared in the joys of our three-year old twins from the time they were born—whatever the case, I loved my visits with them.

At Christmas they had cookies and hot chocolate ready to hand out. In the spring Marvin was ready for golf—he even gave me two tickets once for the Wells Fargo Open in

Charlotte (formerly the Wachovia Open) just because he knew I liked golf and he happened to have them. Marvin always has a golf club in his hand, even while wheeling his golf cart around the self storage grounds. He's the every-man's Bob Hope.

Marvin also has autographed pictures of Lee Trevino, Jack Nicklaus and a host of other golfers on the walls of the office. I tried getting Marvin out for a round of golf, but I think his heart was more happy taking care of customers, so much so that his apartment was right above the office.

On one visit I found two salesmen who stored their products with Gene and Marvin. One was a guy who sold Viagra and the other sold bakery goods. Their units were right next to each other and we joked what would happen if the walls came down and they started mixing the two products together in one presentation—obviously, the bakery goods would follow the Viagra, but everyone would end up happy.

So you can imagine my sorrow when I said goodbye to Gene and Marvin upon emptying out my unit. Even though I've written about and met many wonderful people in self storage, it still was hard to hand them back the lock. I hope that they rent that unit really quickly and I still plan on getting by to see them from time to time.

But breaking up is hard to do! ❖