

From Behind Our White Picket Fence Week 142
By Freddy and Eddy (www.freddyandeddy.com)

Sex and the “Psychological” Recession, Pt. 1

We have sort of become a nation of whiners. ~ Phil Gramm



Going into this summer, we pondered whether or not we'd emerge still in business. Industry-wide, the adult sector is reeling. The porn dollar, once impervious to bad fiscal cycles, fell victim to internet cannibalism as a glut of free content flooded the data pipes through YouTube knockoffs, while the toy and novelty sector braced for the coming storm of lower purchasing power accompanying job losses and a weak dollar. Locally, a shock wave rumbled through the retail sector as Babeland closed their LA location, while Drakes, Coco De Mer, and other adult mainstays struggled to stay afloat after the Valentine's Day

slowdown. With more bad economic news pounding the CNN.com headlines daily, we slashed and burned our own expenses in preparation for the worst. Last summer, for example, we struggled through August barely keeping the doors open and our rent and mortgage paid, respectively. Would summer 2008, with the extra expense of keeping Mom in assisted care, possibly lower revenue, and even worse economic predictions (via higher gas prices and home foreclosures) be our business's death knell?

It's a funny thing, finances; when things are going well – no matter what one does for a living – the general state of happiness that accompanies financial security seems to override most other concerns (and judgment). Putting that three grand on a credit card to go on vacation or get that hot tub at Costco might not be paid back right away, but the 21% annual interest it'll accrue if it's not can be managed (and justified psychologically), until money is moved to knock it out. Stretching to put the kids in a private school requiring a shlep across town, when there's a perfectly good public school down the street, seems downright reasonable. In fact, when the dough is flowing in consistently we completely understand how easy it could be to jump into an overpriced house out in the boonies, drive 100 miles round trip to work, and worry about the ramifications of such a decision down the line.

Sexually, you just feel hornier when you're driving that nice new SUV to your 3200 square foot house in Hesperia with the jet skis parked out front, don't you?

Until it all falls apart. In our very first column three years ago, we mentioned some friends who defiantly moved to Temecula to find affordable housing, good schools, and new career opportunities they felt they'd never secure living in Santa Monica in a one bedroom apartment. Unwilling to invest their savings in a tiny property here on the Westside, they loaded up the truck, to coin a phrase, and moved into a monster house

where, indeed, those dreams actually came true. Their neighborhood teemed with life and excitement one would expect in a brand new community, they both got decent jobs, and the local school was staffed with competent teachers and administration who could – shockingly – afford to live near the school. We can't deny a tinge of envy as we watched our son play with all those kids when we visited; they biked without any irrational parental fear, the entire neighborhood smelled of barbeque, and life seemed to take on a simple quality we remembered nostalgically from our own childhoods.



Fast forward to today, however, and the story turns decidedly dark. Our friends have been forced to move due to their rental home being foreclosed upon (apparently the landlord's tenth) and their jobs have disappeared. The wife now walks dogs to supplement their income and her husband is working part time as a paralegal. Their entire neighborhood now, in fact, is gone. And when we say "gone," we mean GONE.

This is NO exaggeration, either. Every home is empty, the families moved to wherever, and the scent of outdoor cooking is replaced by the dusty fragrance of emptiness. The bustling development that had been spreading their way of life into the vast tracts of open land has come to a stop, with half way built homes sitting like skeletons in a parched desert. It all seems right out of Pixar's "Wall-e," in which any day we expect the little robots to come rolling through to scrape the detritus off the dirt and pile it into skyscraper-like edifices to remind us of our conspicuous consumption. It would be downright hilarious if it weren't so tragic.

And how are we fairing among this psychological recession?



Join us TONIGHT from 8-10pm for a very special edition of "In the Flesh," which will feature adult industry icon Nina Hartley reading from her latest book, sharing stories, and chatting about her life in the sexuality industry. Carly Milne's wonderful brainchild continues with Nina and other authors sharing their works in our intimate garden patio. Free to all and we only ask for a small donation to the Rape and Incest National Network.

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