

# you had “what” on your front lawn?

TEXT BY REVEREND TONY MARCIANO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CHARLOTTE RESCUE MISSION

I grew up in a town in New Jersey where pink flamingoes adorned many a front lawn. No, not the real ones, but the plastic ones. Since we walked to and from school, (no, not uphill both ways – my town was one mile square and one third cemetery) every now and then we would come across a house with two pink flamingoes. Only homeowners who were rich could afford them.

My wife tried to put pink flamingoes on our front lawn. I explained to her that somewhere in our HOA covenants was a line that said, “Under no circumstances are pink flamingoes to be placed on the front lawns of any home in this neighborhood. The sight of such will immediately plummet house values.” She wanted to put them in our back yard, but I reminded her that no one would see them. I am most blessed – I have no pink flamingoes anywhere on my property.

However, (and you know that a “however” cancels everything you just said) there was a time when my lawn was adorned with something that wasn’t written in the HOA covenants. My son, not my wife, announced during his junior high years when he spent his time in the art department that he wanted to place three disco dancing pilgrims on our front lawn. Think of John Travolta in the movie *Saturday Night Fever* wearing that famous white suit. His

one hand pointed up, over his head. His other hand pointed down.

I hesitated. I procrastinated. But Thanksgiving was coming. He made a template out of cardboard and asked me to cut three disco dancing pilgrims out of the good three quarter inch plywood I was saving for the important project. After putting it off for a while, God reminded me that my son was the important project, and the plywood was only a “tool” to speak value into his life. I traced the three pilgrims onto the plywood, took out my sabre saw and carefully followed the lines. When I had cut out the third, I thought I was done. I was only beginning.

He then took my good model car paint (did you catch the word “good”) and proceeded to paint all three pilgrims. Being an artsy person, he did a really good job. John Travolta would have been proud to wear that dark blue pilgrim suit. For a moment, I thought I was done; not in our family.

My son drilled little holes in the feet of each pilgrim and put wire stakes in them so they would sit on the grass without falling over. I complimented him on how well they looked. He looked at me and said, “But we’re not done. I have to put a spotlight on it.”

Back to the garage where we pulled out extension cords, flood lights, timers, etc. We set it up. It lit up. In fact, it lit up the front of the house.

If you drove past my house that Thanksgiving or the next two, there were three brightly lit disco dancing pilgrims on my front lawn. The HOA President came by to discuss the covenants. I reminded him we had no pink flamingoes on our lawn as the covenants required. We had three disco dancing pilgrims which is not mentioned in it. He grumbled as he walked away mumbling under his breath that these people had to be from New Jersey. No, we lived in North Carolina.

Let me encourage you to express yourself. Be creative. Don’t worry about what other people will say about you. Be yourself and have fun. ■

*Rev. Tony Marciano is the Executive Director of the Charlotte Rescue Mission. The Charlotte Rescue Mission provides a free long term Christian recovery program for men and women who are addicted to drugs and alcohol. For more information, visit [www.charlotterescuemission.org](http://www.charlotterescuemission.org).*

