

A New Face in Town

by Alyssa Ganezer

Sticker shock. That's what Kent Siria, manager of the new Sit 'n Sleep mattress store in Santa Monica, went into when he was looking for a place to live near his new job.



"Where's the rest of it?" he asked, when told the rent of a small apartment off Second Street.

There was no more than the 1400 square feet he'd been shown, he was assured. He'd have to make up his own mind if dumping the commute from Covina would be worth it.

After one day of driving to his new job, Kent decided it was worth it.

Giving up his new assignment for Sit 'n Sleep would have been unthinkable. When I go to work, "it's like family," Kent says. "It's the best place I've ever worked."

It's clear that whatever Kent gets into, he'll get into in a big way.

Kentucky born and bred, Kent had intended to get a job in the coal mines, like his father and grandfather before him. But his first day in a mine, he found himself in a never-ending tunnel only four feet high, constrained to stoop all day. When he came back to the surface, he said no thanks to the coal mines. Later, he discovered his father had arranged his trip to the worst possible tunnel, hoping he'd give up the idea.

Instead, Kent joined the Marines, together with a friend. The friend injured himself out, but Kent stuck it out - while figuring how to start his next career in the meanwhile. After pulling his duty on base, he moonlighted selling furniture at Al's Woodcraft. He became such an asset, Al's offered him a management position as soon as he was discharged from the service.

Looking for a sales job in 2007, Kent said everyone told him to try to get into Sit 'n Sleep. "I'm so glad I did," Kent says now.

Once he got past the sticker shock on his new apartment, he's glad to be in Santa Monica, too. "I can hear the waves crashing."

It's a long way from a coal mine.

*Below: Kent Siria, watched over by Larry Miller
Photos by Alyssa Ganezer.*



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