

## Couple are finalists for living room makeover

SILVER CITY -- Laura and Tony Peltier did everything right. They worked hard, lived frugally, and saved their money in order to buy their dream retirement home in Silver City.

In 2005, after saving for 10 years, they finally had enough to put down and make their payment affordable for them. It was the height of the real estate bubble and prices were still climbing. They found a home they loved in the Little Walnut area of Silver City. They were just a few years shy of retirement. They bought the home, and Tony continued to work in his position as an electrical engineer in Tucson, coming to their home in Silver City on weekends. Then the bubble burst, the recession hit and Tony was laid off from his job and they were never able to furnish it.

They gave up their rented house in Tucson, and moved into their mostly empty new home in Silver City. They brought with them their bedroom furniture and an old dining room set, but no living room furniture.

After they made the move, Arizona declined to pay Tony his extended unemployment benefits, because, they said, he had moved out of state. So, with no income, there was no money for extras, like a living room set, or even blinds for the windows.

Then, a few weeks ago, Laura was shopping online for some chocolate molds to make Christmas gifts for friends this year -- again, money is tight. After she made her purchase she got an e-mail about a contest -- CSN stores' "Living Room Search and Rescue."

The company was searching for the most recession-weary living rooms in the country, and the winner would receive a \$5,000 living room makeover, featuring furniture from celebrity TV designer Angelo Surmelis' new line of furniture: angelo:HOME, and CSN stores, and an in-home consultation by Surmelis and CSN's Room Rescue Crew.

Laura dashed off a quick e-mail entering the contest.

She was shocked to find out she was a finalist.

Her entry was one of the 60 finalists chosen from a pool of 6,000 applicants nationwide.

Now the company has opened voting on the contest's Facebook page. The winner will be determined by how many votes they get on the page. Voting ends Jan. 7 and the winner will be announced Jan. 8.

Peltier is quick to say she feels very fortunate and that there are many others much worse off than she and her husband.

"We've been dealt some blows, but we don't feel like we have any room to complain," she said. "We are doing all right. We can eat. Nobody is going to take our house from us."

They are also very private people, and sharing their story has been a little awkward for Laura.

"It's just a private thing and it's embarrassing," she said. "We've been together for over 35 years now and we've been very self-contained our whole lives. We've never depended on a community or anybody else. We'd like to have people over but we really can't ask them to sit on the floor."

But even if they don't win the contest, Laura knows they'll be just fine.

"For the last two years, I've grown every vegetable we have eaten. This summer, we put in a chicken coop and we have our very own egg supply. That's our goal, to be very self sufficient."

But it sure would be nice if they had a sofa to sit on.

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### Lend a hand

• To vote for Laura and Tony in CSN Stores Living Room Search and Rescue Contest go to:  
[www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=163734454157](http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=163734454157)

and vote for photo number 42. It's a picture of Tony Peltier standing in the couple's empty living room in Silver City.

• Voting ends Jan. 7.

Click photo to enlarge



Laura and Tony Peltier planned to retire to their Silver City... (Sun-News photo by Kalen Severe)

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