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Tuesday, January 15, 2008 c:/wklylt8.8wc10

 (2008 NHN&WR letter/story/poem/card #02, (Can/US friendly))

**Mom & Pop**

 We are somewhat annoyed.

 A small, friendly hardware store, … *“just around the corner”* mind you, has closed. Somewhat in the manner of the Baltimore Colts sneaking off to Indianapolis in the middle of the night. For Canadians this would be like waking up and finding the Montreal Canadiens in Windsor. Its demise triggers this special epistle prior to selective memory removing same from consciousness.

 We understand that malls and super stores have their place, but golly … need a few screws? Crank up the family car, drive two kilometers (1.2 miles) to a building about the size of the old Forum (Madison Square Garden), park (ha!) and then:, try to find what you’re looking for, ask for help, never see the same clerk twice, then hazard the checkout line or that fun-filled self-checkout station. The latter incidentally, also with a line. Phew, … for young folks this would probably be the end of the expedition, but for seniors maybe not. ( *“Where on earth did we park our car?”* ) Anyway, arriving home you would have: burned expensive litres/liters (Gallons) of fuel, added to worldly pollution, not gotten much exercise and received impersonal service. Ah, … but wait! The little packet of screws is two cents less than it was *“around the corner”* . Good Grief, what matters as long as one thinks they save loonies (dollars). Hope no one moves to Mexico, adding pesos, oles and whatever would be too much

 We will REALLY be annoyed if our favorite grocery store (also *“just around the corner”* ) goes down the tubes the same way. It is further away than a big ‘Super Store’ which is only a driver, three iron and wedge from our home. (Wait a minute, maybe 40 years ago, but change that to: driver, three wood, 5 iron, 9 iron and chip.) One constant, in the lives of most all, is food shopping. Depending on one’s generation, food shopping habits are deeply ingrained. We can remember food shopping with mother when still in early grade school. Mom with her list stood on one side of a counter, store-owner on the other side. Bohacks in West Hempstead, L.I., N.Y. actually. Think the NHL Islanders play hockey on this very site today. (For Americans, NHL stands for National Hockey League.) But we digress, … after familiar and friendly greetings, shopping ensued. Store-owner had the neatest gadget for grabbing cans off top shelves. It was a long stick, squeeze handle on one end, grabbers on the other. Store-owner would select a can, lift it off the shelf, release the squeezers and catch the can as it fell down. Fascinating for a little tot who was wont to say en route, *“Mommy, are you going to buy something on the top shelf?”.* When mom reached the end of her list, all purchases neatly lined up on the counter were boxed and carried out to the car by store-owner. And funny thing, … almost everything for sale in that store was eatable. Ah, as the Bard would say, ... *“therein lies the rub”.* When we shop for food we like to be in a food store.

 Our favorite grocery store is just that. Only food (well, maybe a few batteries and paper plates), open all the time, friendly, stable personnel, delivery available and open check-outs commensurate with traffic. Ah ‘Check-outs’. We did a supermarket critique years ago which addressed all too familiar check-out types. Let’s see, they were: ‘The Exact Changer’, ‘The Coupon Queen’ and ‘Oops, forgot the butter, be right back’. That was a good letter, maybe we’ll resuscitate that one some day. Hmmmn, giving the ‘kiss of life’ to it will depend on remembering the data name. Fat chance there.

 Anyhow, our food store with only food in it deserves a toast, *… “Long live the small Mom & Pop type store”.* Unfortunately, for your staff, actual toasting must be deferred till Spring, but hey, … we’re saving them up, have no fear.

 In closing we must admit one adverse thing about the grocery store we frequent. The majority of our co-shoppers, shuffling along with canes & using shopping carts as walkers, look like they are in their 60’s or early 70’s. If they let go of the shopping cart with both hands they’ll fall down as in *“Help, I can’t get up.”* Being around old people be tiring.

Lucile, Bailey & Ken.

Ottawa

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