

Least Favorite Place

By Hap Hansen

My least favorite place to go is the grocery store. Grocery shopping is about nine hundred and fifty-fourth on my all-time favorite things to do. My zest for grocery shopping began to fade with the advent of the supermarket.

Mom and Pop grocery stores were easy shopping places. There wasn't much choice in merchandise variety, but there didn't need to be. As an example, grape jelly was good enough for most of us. We didn't need 54 kinds of goo just to put on our toast. And there were only one or two kinds of soap. Today, there must be a hundred. But the old original soap got me just as clean as the new ones. And I smelled clean too, instead of smelling like a washed Tutti-Frutti bar.

As you can probably tell, I hate to go grocery shopping. But I sometimes go, just out of curiosity. While thumbing through the coupons in the Sunday paper, I was amazed at the number of breakfast cereals I had never heard of. Dozens with strange names. There were too many kinds of cereal to count accurately. I do know they took up more than one aisle, top to bottom, with every conceivable kind. Wheat, corn, barley, oats and rice were all available, by themselves, in combination, and mixed with marshmallows, seeds, nuts, brown sugar and probably a good Kentucky Bourbon if I had looked long enough. There was even one called Honky-Tonks! I looked around for a piano bar, because about then, I needed a drink! It didn't take me long to realize that my tastes were far behind the times, breakfast cereal-wise. My cabinet contains corn flakes and Wheaties. I'm not sure I would know what to do with Lucky Charms, Count Chocula, Quarterback Crunch or Frankenberry! Should I eat them or play games with them? And the prices! I didn't know that one could pay over five bucks for toasted corn in a small box. Sometimes more!

I spend a lot of time in the frozen food section. In my freezer are seven different kinds of Jimmy Dean frozen foods. They are all microwaveable. If I ever sell my unit, one of the selling points will be, 'the oven has never been used!' But the microwave is beginning to show signs of wear. As with all Jimmy Dean products, I get my full share of salt, sugar and saturated fat. What more could I ask for?

I could have written a lot more about my least favorite place to go, but I had to stop writing to go grocery shopping and see if they would still take my credit card.