

Rustling Up Some Grub

I often criticize city folks for having no idea where their food comes from, but recently it came to my attention there are some farmers and ranchers who have no idea how their dinner magically makes its way to the supper table either.

My friend Jack is no drugstore cowboy. In fact, he's never been in one. Or a grocery store either, for that matter. And Jack is no spring chicken, if you know what I mean.

Once a year Jack and his wife attempt to outrun the snow and go live where the climate fits their clothes. The last time they were in Arizona, Jack's wife was laid up after an operation and, for the first time in his life, Jack had to do the grocery shopping.

Out of the blue one day Jack's lovely wife handed him a list of the "other men" in her life: Orville Reddenbacher, Dr. Pepper, Oscar Meyer, Chef Boy-Ar-Dee, Snappy Tom, Uncle Ben and Jimmy Dean. You can imagine what a shock that was for poor old Jack, as he thought he had been his wife's "one and only" all these years.

By following a detailed set of instructions Jack found his way to these gentlemen's place of business: a "super store" where you could bank, buy your motor oil and buy a Big Mac all in the same building. Jack unknowingly parked in the handicapped space, which was appropriate because when it came to shopping he was definitely impaired.

Never having shopped for groceries, my friend was unaware of the age-old traditions of going to market. Instead of picking up a grocery cart outside the store Jack just appropriated one in the meat aisle. Then he went the "wrong way" down a crowded aisle causing a traffic jam in jellies.

For an hour he criss-crossed the store looking for lunch. It made no sense to him why they didn't put all the ingredients in one spot for a peanut butter, banana and pickle sandwich, but he couldn't find the bananas by the Skippy and he never did find the dill pickles.

And just like a man, Jack refused to ask directions. Had he known he would have been in the store for three hours he would have worn more comfortable boots.

Jack's emotions ran the gamut from anger to wonder. He got jealous when he strolled down the pet food aisle and saw how good the dogs and cats were eating and the cookie selection made him break out in chocolate chips.

When the store manager found Jack shaking in his shorts by the meat freezer, he couldn't tell if it was because the rancher was angered at the price per pound of beef or if Jack had just been trying to cool down from the Arizona heat and had stayed too long.

As all women know, shopping is not for sissies! Jack was clearly not aggressive enough and far too sensitive to the needs of others. He didn't cry over spilt milk but he did break down in tears when a candidate for Weight Watchers grabbed the last dozen cream puffs right out of his trembling hands.

By shopping when he was hungry, Jack had broken the #1 rule of procurement. He compensated by gorging on "free sample" bran muffins in the bakery and, thereby, learned rule #2: don't go shopping when you're in a hurry to go some place either!

Despite Jack's many revelations, his greatest shock occurred at the check-out stand when he read the "news" in the tabloids. He was deep into a pregnant man article when the clerk asked, "paper or plastic?"

Of course, Jack thought she was referring to his method of payment. By the time the checker yelled for a "carry out" Jack was ready. But he seriously doubted the smallish box girl could lift him.

It's the Pitts

Written by Lee Pitts

Once home Jack took a much needed nap. But when he awoke from his fitful snooze his convalescing wife asked him to go to the kitchen and prepare dinner. But that's another story about another place Jack had never ever been before.