

# Ever' Day Things

by Tom McBeth



## A trip to the supermarket is an eye-opening experience

I had to go to the supermarket the other day, and I had a flashback to when I first got divorced. The kids and I were holed up together, and somebody had to go and buy the food. Men, I can tell you, it's scary in those places. Ever' cross section of humankind goes to supermarkets, and experience has shown me it takes all kinds to make a world.

You get to see some real illuminating folks. I can tell you that they put earrings and little hangy-down thingamabobs in lots of places I would never have thought you could put 'em. Tattoos are real common, too. Lots of little kids are getting the wrong impression when it comes to lettin' 'em loose with a magic marker.

Folks put tattoos on their feet, arms, legs, hands, head and other parts I don't want to go into right

now. And it's folks who otherwise look normal — if there is a "normal" anymore.

There are cow-type folks like us, and then there is the rest of the world — and they are not like they were several years ago. I don't know where they all came from. You've got bikers, psychers and trikers; then there are readers, leaders, garden weeders, speeders, cottonseeders, hedgehog breeders, window wipers, apple swipers, kids in diapers, fat ones, skinny ones, short and tall.

There are all kinds of attire: overalls, shorts, jeans, shirts with jelly beans, sweat suits, three-piece suits, clothes with crazy cross-stitch seams, folks who are wealthy and those with no means, Model T drivers and vixin' connivers. It's real mind-numbing to realize that all of 'em have to eat.

### ■ Unnatural placement

I learned real quick that those grocery stores don't put lots of stuff where you'd think it should go either. Eggs and bacon

should go on the same shelf; so should ham and beans, ribs and pickles, bread and butter, coffee and cream, cereal and sugar, wine and cheese. Now I did notice that the salad stuff is all in kind of the same place. Peanut butter and jelly ain't too far apart. Pie and ice cream should be together, but they ain't.

Most of the time somebody would take pity on me and tell me where stuff was, and that helped. I think it was mostly to get me out of their way so they could get their shoppin' done. Most ever'body was nice, though.

It got to where I went shoppin' at night so I didn't have to embarrass myself so

much 'cause lots of folks — 'specially women — would laugh when I'd ask where something was. Oh,

yeah, later I noticed those signs, but it didn't help too much for quite a while 'til I got the hang of it.

I'd take my daughter with me lots of times, and she helped a lot. She'd kind of roll her eyes at me 'cause I'd ask why the butter and bread weren't together. I wasn't kiddin' either.

Folks will get plum irate with you about coupons if you don't have your ducks in a row. It is advisable not to take too long in the checkout line. Some of those gals will tell you off if you ain't in as much of a hurry as they are or if you don't know the drill.

When there are lots of folks in line or in the store, like right before a holiday, you'd better know what you're doin', or you're gonna get in trouble. Folks can get kinda ugly if you mess around or give the appearance of doin' so.

### ■ Finding treasures

There is lots of neat stuff there, though. They sell stuff for storin' leftovers,

something not too common at our house. There are brooms, mops, pots, pans, paper plates (big temptation) and all kinds of stuff. You can buy lots of neat kitchen stuff.

You don't have to make pie dough; you can buy it. I learned one Thanksgiving (my sister wasn't there) how to make pecan pie. My son told me later that the first ones had the texture of asphalt. I had been pretty proud of myself 'til he told me that. The first pumpkin pie I made, somebody told me it was pretty good fish bait. Sometimes you gotta let that stuff kinda run off like water on a duck's back.

I know the kids got pretty tired of weanies and kraut, spaghetti, and chili. So I had to learn to cook something else, like meat and 'taters. The thing that bothers me is, lots of folks don't have a clue when it comes to buyin' out of the meat case.

I wish it would have been easier for me to learn the ropes at the supermarket. It was pretty scary startin' out. Now I'm a veteran and can find things pretty easy. Ever' once in a while I get stumped, but then I also see women askin' for somethin' — gals who have been in there lots of times.

### ■ Help other folks

Just stop and think what it's like for folks who don't know what they are s'posed to buy. Sometimes they buy chicken, 'cause it's cheaper and they think it is better for them, instead of beef. Bacon costs more than 90% lean ground round most of the time. Bologna costs more than regular hamburger. Chicken nuggets, mostly skin and other throwaway parts, cost a bunch, and folks think they are a bargain.

Like I said, we gotta help folks figure out what is best for them to buy. Sounds like we're makin' some headway, but we gotta make it stick, long term. We'd better figure out how to get our stuff sold to 'em and make it easy for 'em to find it and eat it, or they won't.

That's what's the most scary about goin' to the supermarket.

*Tom McBeth*

