

# She Has Reciprocal Trade Pact

Whoever first said, "Neither a borrower nor a lender be" may have given bad advice, because, chances are, if he had lived in our neighborhood he would have starved. The closest grocery store being a good half-hour's walk, if you don't have transportation at your disposal. And, anyway, who wants to jump into a car every time you need a cube of butter when it's more convenient to borrow from your neighbor?

Not that we don't practically run a shuttle service between our home and the supermarket as well, because with seven kids continually foraging for food, we are depleted of so many items that Old Mother Hubbard's cupboard looks like a well-stocked larder next to our stripped shelves.

Take milk—which we do at the rate of six or more quarts a day, but apparently still not enough to quench the thirst of children who seldom drink water; we run out of it

so often that I suspect our closest neighbors order an extra quart from their milkman just to keep us supplied.

Moreover, there are times before we eat dinner when I feel I should give a weepy testimonial speech in the manner of a typical Oscar winner at the Academy Award presentations:

"I would like to — sob, sob, — thank all of the wonderful people — the Paisleys, the Blacks, the Cushings, the Hofers, the Carrs, the Chamberlains, the Ericksons and many, many others — with out whose assistance this dinner and a few others would never have been possible."

As you might have surmised, the "reciprocal trade pact" I have with the neighbors is embarrassingly one-sided. Though Lord knows, I practically ring door-bells asking if anyone wants to borrow, say, a bottle of Worcestershire sauce, the one item of which I seem to carry a large inventory. May-

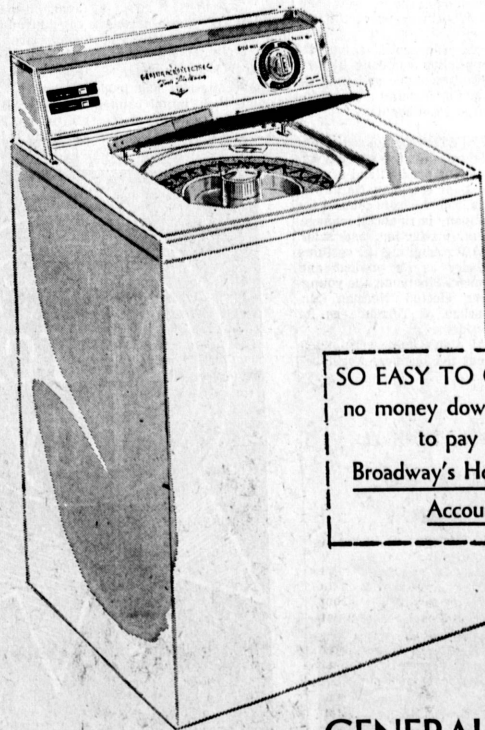
be because I seldom use it but, nevertheless, bought six bottles on special four years ago.

But wouldn't you know that on the rare occasion when one of the neighbors does want to borrow something from me, I won't have it. In fact, they probably intercepted one of my kids enroute to their house to borrow the same item.

In looking back on my childhood I do not recall my mother, who also had a large brood, facing the same problem. The reason being there was always a handy grocery store to which she could send one of the kids. That's why I say, "Bring back the corner grocery store!"

They tell me, however, that present zoning laws forbid the establishment of a grocery store in our residential neighborhood, just when I thought I had the enterprising idea of opening one up. Why, I even had as a starter six bottles of Worcestershire sauce.

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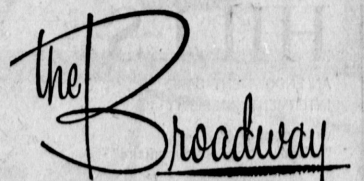
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