

# A Day in the Life of Lucerne Valley Market & Hardware - II

At the end of last week's exciting drama of "A Day in the Life . . .", we left you hanging, dying for more, wanting to hear the end of the story! Right? Well, no, I guess that's only "The Chosen" series, ending each season with unanswered questions that you want answered NOW. Our little tale isn't quite that gripping.

6. BUT . . . we were just about to enter the Deli Café, where four or five staffers are rushing around preparing ingredients, making sub and premium sandwiches, taking orders and payment, scooping Thrifty ice cream, and cooking at the hot stove, pressure fryer, or deep fryer. Talk about organized chaos!



Christina making a delicious breakfast burrito

I do not know how those people keep up the pace under the pressure of waiting customers. Sarah is the department manager whose assignment is to

organize the chaos; order from her various suppliers, watch costs and pricing and ensure that the menus are current; write the schedule for her staffers plus some others who are "borrowed" from other departments, and generally run around like a crazy woman. I call her Haggatha; she calls me Baggatha (you know, from HagBag, one of my infamous nicknames). I marvel at the food they produce. I'm not biased, of course, but I think our food is really great.

7. Ken Klaus and his Grocery Department. I could talk about this one for many pages since it's the one department I get most directly involved with. The Grocery department includes packaged foods, pet foods, health and beauty products, frozen foods, the bread and sweet goods and tortillas brought in by outside vendors, and also Carrie's liquor and beverage and dairy coolers. The grocery people do most of the receiving at both back doors, which interrupts them multiple times per day! This department is easily underrated because it looks easy to do – cut open a few boxes and place the contents on the shelf. What could be easier?

Ummm, hold on a minute. That's only a fraction of what goes on, and since the whole Virus escapade, when the supply chain was terribly damaged (and has not yet fully recovered), life has become much more challenging in the grocery department. All of the government interference during the Covid time blew up our grocery aisles, and still there are sections where we get what we get when we get it and have to try to make sense out of its place-

ment on the shelves. Our poor stockers have continually had to figure out where to put substitute items, get shelf tags made, fill holes, leave holes, just doing the best



Brenda stocking piles of pet food

they could under the circumstances.

The one aisle that is still a real mess is the pet food aisle. There are major holes and little supply to fill them with. The same is true of the section of large bags of dog food on an aisle on the north side of the store. Our regular wholesaler UNFI is a dismal failure at supplying pet foods that our customers like best, so we've had to turn to Walmart, Amazon, Chewy, and Tractor Supply to get the preferred sizes and brands. Just this morning as I write this, I received word from Tractor Supply that our shipping charge is changing from zero to \$1100+ for a regular weekly delivery of about 3 pallets of dog and cat food, with no notice to us first. Needless to say, that's impossible to absorb, so now we are down to Amazon, Walmart, and Chewy. Chewy cut us off for a while so that now I don't trust that they will continue to send us stuff. It's amazing how much time and effort go into keeping just pet food on the shelves!

Klaus has to deal with 15-20 suppliers, write schedules, watch his sales and margins, work around late deliveries, and apply incentives to unmotivated salesmen (and a few staffers now and then). My Grandpa used to say that the best motivator is a good swift kick in the you-know-where!! One of his favorite jobs (ha!) is finding a place for all the new items and displays that Linda ordered! Always blame Linda.

8. Joe and Bob. These two guys are really their own one-man departments, wandering around the store, hoping to look busy. Actually they ARE busy. Joe is the maintenance guy who keeps busy maintaining the many pieces of equipment, the store itself, the Wash



Joe working his magic to make stuff run

n Shop, and the whole shopping center. Bob works with Joe at times, but also oversees the departments, helping them get what they need for smoother operations. He also gets the wonderful job of escorting unsavory characters away from the store property, keeping this from becoming a homeless encampment. Much as we might feel sorry for homeless individuals, we cannot let them take over this place, especially as some are truly psychotic and even dangerous.

9. Last but not least are the Wonderful Women of the West Wall, or WWWW. That's us gals in the back office. We are responsible for a wide range of functions, including bookkeeping and accounting; graphics work from ad layout to many signs and other stuff; scanning price maintenance and shelf tag printing; payroll, hiring, and lots of administrative paperwork; dealings with government agencies and myriad regulations; dealing with the increasingly complex electronics; and support of the departments in many ways I'm not thinking of.



Linda, one of the WWWW

Just looking at the list makes me tired, and it reminds me how simple things were in 1975 when we started operating a store in Lucerne Valley, and how complex it has become.

Sometimes you hear someone answer the question, "Could you start this business again now, like you did so long ago?" The answer is a definite "No!", for two main reasons. One is that we don't have our entrepreneurial leader, Ernie Gommel, who had the spirit, the drive, and many talents needed to put together an operation like this. The other reason is the complexity demanded by the various levels of government, driving costs through the roof and maybe even making it impossible to get all of the "permissions" needed by the many agencies involved. Who would ever start a business in California these days?

Now for the secret I promised to disclose. Unfortunately, I kept the secrets secret from myself, too. So I can't remember the secret secrets I promised to tell you, since I kept them secret even from me!

The bottom line: this place is very complex, requiring people of intelligence and good spirit to pull it off. (So how did I get here?) There is much more to it than meets the eye. Occasionally a new staffer will remark how surprised he or she is to find out how much is involved when they thought it looked so simple.

And why do we do it? As many of you already know, we do it in obedience to God's calling that we serve this community this way. We enjoy the privilege of sharing His care and concern for those He sends our way. And that makes all the difference!

Linda Gommel

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Lucerne Valley Mkt & Hdw

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## On The Lighter Side . . . from the Web

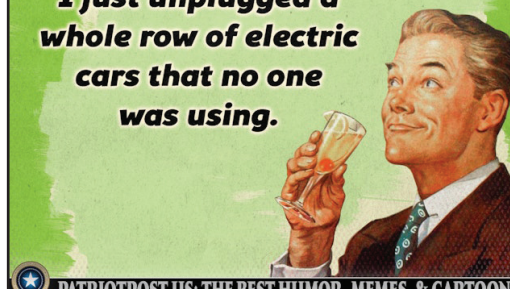
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I just unplugged a whole row of electric cars that no one was using.



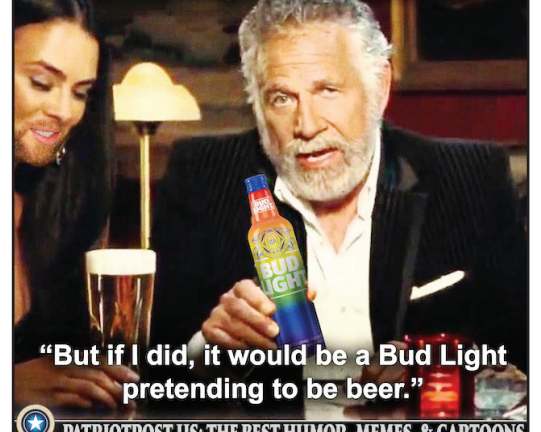
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How are we supposed to sample this?



And why is she wearing gloves? PATRIOTPOST.US: THE BEST HUMOR, MEMES, & CARTOONS

"I don't drink beer with men pretending to be women..."



"But if I did, it would be a Bud Light pretending to be beer." PATRIOTPOST.US: THE BEST HUMOR, MEMES, & CARTOONS