Neighbors Need Each Other

Mel Lavine

Special to the Times

It was one of those dog days. I wanted a holiday from politics. In fact I wanted a holiday from the news.

I fussed to the Lady Friend, “So what’ll I write about?”

“Tell them what happened while I was away in the Midwest visiting family.”

Simply told I was hit by plugged-up sinuses, swollen, watery eyes, and most alarmingly, vertigo, while the Lady Friend was gallivanting halfway across the nation, although, I concede, in furnace temperatures.

But I knew what to do.

I picked up the phone and called a next door neighbor. She had a key and was here in a moment.

Then she was off to the pharmacy, and found over-the-counter allergy tablets. They worked. After awhile the dizziness went away. Nonetheless, she insisted on driving me to the doctor who, after an examination, confirmed allergies to be the culprit.

When the same neighbor is traveling as she often is in her job, the Lady Friend and I look after her house, take in her mail and the newspapers, and feed the cat.

“Neighbors need each other,” said the Lady Friend.

She recalled a night a couple of years ago when the kitchen alarm in the house on the other side from us was ringing. She knew the couple were working late in their studio apartment separate from the house and unlikely to hear it.

The Lady Friend jumped out of bed, ran down the driveway in her bare feet, and rapped on the studio window. The neighbors came outside, heard the alarm, and tore upstairs. They got the pot off the stove in the nick of time.

The same neighbors have offered us the use of their truck when we need to take a load to the dump or convey something big.

A young couple in a house on the corner are sometimes in need of a baby sitter. The Lady Friend steps in. Every so often a pie or loaf of bread or fruit is at our door from their oven or garden.

We all have keys to each others' houses. And we even alert the bookkeeper in the dentist's office when it's time for her to move her car and avoid a fine on the day the street sweepers come through.

Maybe not a headline but good neighbors help to make a good life.

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