

## Hudson's Corner: Going to Gundy's was part of the joy of growing up in Roland Park

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Gundy's is turning 70. I've known the Roland Park store, younger than the original, long closed Gundy's in Pimlico, most of its life. It came to Roland Avenue in the 1950's and occupied the space where Wachovia Bank is today.

Gundy's was the go-to place for children's birthday party gifts. I gravitated to the charm bracelets, miniature glass animals or china dogs and cats for friends' whatnot shelves.

The women behind the glass and wood cases were so friendly, my mother let me go to Gundy's alone.

She wouldn't let me walk from our first house on Roland Avenue because of Cold Spring Lane. She drove and shopped at the A&P, on the south end of the shopping center, while I went to Gundy's. Those first independent shopping trips were a rite of passage.

Before I knew the children -- Ibby, Jesse and Eddie -- I knew their mother, Mrs. Nolley, at Gundy's. She was one of the ladies who patiently waited while I stood on the wood floor staring at a case, trying to make up my mind. Once I decided, Mrs. Nolley wrapped the gift ready to take to the birthday party.

The signature Gundy's paper for children had a pattern of pastel bubbles resembling balloons without streamers. As is it does today, Gundy's curling ribbon created long pastel corkscrew curls, pink then for girls' gifts and blue for boys'.

At my own parties, I looked forward to packages in that wrapping. My favorites were the charm bracelets

I also liked the small white sewing baskets decorated with flowers. One special Gundy's gift was a painted wood sewing set. A smiling elf lay under a flower, whose center was the pincushion. A bucket beside him was a thimble.

When we were in our early teens, troll dolls and furry little mice dressed in bonnets, nightcaps, aprons and pinafores were the rage.

A few, not in costume but holding a kernel of corn, had long tails and could be used as bookmarks. Younger siblings sometimes used these dressed-up mice in their dollhouses.

I have no idea what I bought at Gundy's for the boys in my Roland Park Country School class. (RPCS had boys through the third grade in those days.). I do remember Silly Putty, soap bubbles and metal wind-up tops on a spindle with a tight spring. Maybe my mother selected the boys' gifts. Without a brother, I had no clue what boys liked.

What I realize now is that at a young age, I experienced at Gundy's what is a hallmark of life in Roland Park: camaraderie between residents and business people. Many who worked in the stores like Schneider's, Gundy's, Brentley's, Debra Barry, the Saville Shop and Dropstitch Studio lived in the neighborhood.

Some of today's second-and-third generation storeowners, however, undoubtedly remember that those in-store relationships often did not extend beyond the store. Like Gundy's owners Jean and Harold "Gundy" Gundersheimer, some owners were Jewish. Anti-Semitism, shamefully, was still common in Roland Park.

Seventy years has brought a lot of changes, including a diverse and more welcoming neighborhood, and still the friendly tradition of shops like Gundy's continues.

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