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October 15, 2011

CHUTTERS

Last Saturday the weather was summer-like spectacular as we headed north with about 20 other motorcycles on our annual Masonic fall foliage ride. Our lunch stop was a wonderful little Greek pizza place in downtown Littleton followed by a walking tour that took to Chutters and the Historic Thayers Inn – neither of which I had ever heard of before. Even though I been in New Hampshire for over 30 years and these two places go back to the 1800's --- I am only discovering them now. I have to admit that my only other trip to Littleton was by snowmobile and that trip didn't take us downtown

Chutters is the home of the World's Longest Candy Counter which at 112 feet runs the entire length of the store. Walking into the store is like stepping back in time – to when life was little more simple and a lot less rushed. Now 112 feet of glass jars filled with every conceivable type of candy makes Chutters a wonderfully unique kind of place. When confronted with so much variety it doesn't matter what your age – you feel like the proverbial 'Kid in the Candy Store'!

A short way down the street the Historic Thayers Inn provides another glimpse of the past while still serving the needs of the present. Even our very brief look inside left us with the feeling that here was a very comfortable place that knows how to celebrate its rich history while still actively making new history.

While the motorcycling was great with both weather and foliage working to our favor , I was as pleased with our discovery of these two old places along with getting introduced to Littleton. It felt very much like finding an old friend that you have been out of touch with for years. It made me wonder how many other '*old friends*' that are out there who I haven't noticed.

These two establishments are just like many older friends --- they are not fancy and they don't have flashing lights trying to draw you in. They don't pretend to

be anything they are not and they welcome you in just as you are. How many of us have older acquaintances who we have never really paid much attention to? These are people who you might know their name – but little else about them. Maybe you know who they are from church or from a club or group you belong to or perhaps you know them to be a neighbor --- but do you really know anything about them other than their name and maybe where they live. For most of us there a great many people who fit that description and each of them represents an opportunity for us and for them.

When we don't take the time, when we do not take the initiative to visit with and listen to our older friends we shortchange ourselves. We miss the opportunity to discover not only something about them – but about ourselves as well. There is a reason why there is an easy connection made between grandchildren and grandparents. Parents are very often in the role of teaching, guiding, explaining and correcting – talking to their children. Grandparents take on a different role – one that is based on listening instead of talking --- and that makes it easy for a close bond to be created.

What makes older friends so special is not just that they have interesting stories to share based on a lifetime of experience --- but that they are equally willing to listen to our stories as well. We might start out by thinking that we are doing them a favor – but we will quickly realize that it is the other way around -- and that is we who have them to thank!

I never paid any attention to Littleton and in that process shortchanged myself because it includes these two old friends (and I am sure a great many more) that were just waiting to be discovered!

So if you happen to be inclined to head north of the notch you just might want to get off at exit 41 and stop in at Chutters for a special treat.

And while you are at it ----- why not take the time to stop in and check on an older friend living a bit closer to home.

You just might be very pleasantly surprised.....

Age Well!

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