

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2008

## Easy-to-open containers, part two

Way back in 2004, I wrote a column about easy-open containers and how I thought they were destroying everyone's psyche because they weren't easy to open at all. It was fun to write and other than my recent "shoe column," which chastised the shoe industry for giving us all bunions, corns, tough-as-nails calluses and aching feet, that's the one column that people seemed to enjoy most.

So, I thought rather than talk about how the stock market is going up and down like a

yo-yo or how we're all sitting on the edge of our seat waiting for Election Day to arrive, I'd take a moment to share a bit of fun with the hope that perhaps you've found yourself in the same situation.



**Generations**

**Peg DeMarco**

For example, have you ever just polished your nails, or worse come from a nail salon, and wanted to open a can of Diet Coke? It's next to impossible to do it without a knife, followed by a couple of swear words that would make your grandmother blush, and finally a geyser of Coke spouting in the air like Old Faithful. Either they're making that tab stronger or I'm in dire need of a B-12 shot.

A lot of containers these days are double dipping. Not only do you need the strength of a body builder to twist off the cap, but then there's a cardboard tab that you have to get through as well. You're supposed to tug on this tab and the whole cap is supposed to easily pop off. Not so. Not once have I been able to get that tab off without breaking a sweat and, frustrated, I'm reaching again for my best friend the knife.

There are other products that have been particularly annoying lately, and I'm not talking about the impossible-to-open aspirin bottles, which we all know were invented light years ago by someone despising the elderly. No, I'm talking about impossible packaging that promises to seal items tighter than me trying to squeeze myself into a dress made for Angelina Jolie.

There's the lunch meat plastic bag with a strip at the top. Ideally, you're supposed to pull the teeny tiny slit at the top and the strip should easily tear off. That's the first problem: finding the slit and having the strength to pull it to the end. If you master that portion of the regimen, you're home free to load your sandwich with mouthwatering ham or turkey. The mayo or mustard is then smeared neatly on the sandwich and you cut the sandwich in half like Mom used to do in the good old days. However, before you take your first bite, her words of warning stop you and you put down the coveted sandwich. You remember her saying from adolescence to adulthood that once air hits food, mold will start growing faster than George Clooney can grow a 5 o'clock shadow.

And that, my fellow Americans, is when frustration truly sets in because not once have two sides of my plastic bags come together.



THE NEWS HERALD

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To further illustrate, let's take an average day for any one of us and walk it through. We get up and many of us need an allergy capsule because the ragweed shows no mercy and doesn't know when summer ends and fall begins. Ideally, you're supposed to push the capsule through its

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# NOTHING'S EASY: Sharpen your knives to open

## tamper-proof products

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cardboard enclosure and it should easily pop out. But of course it doesn't and soon the counter is a melting pot of red, white and yellow granules when the knife misses the mark after several attempts.

Next, you're ready for a bowl of cereal, but it's a new box and after several attempts to pull the heavy duty-plastic apart, another knife has found its way into your hand.

A few hours later, at lunch, it's time for a bottle of water, soda or tea. You've got a six-pack and it should be a matter of simply pulling a bottle loose. Once again, that's in an ideal world. In reality, you're tugging on the bottle so hard that, nine times out of 10, your fingers sweat from heart-pounding perspiration and anticipation, until eventually the bottle becomes a missile sailing across the room.



FILE PHOTO

### Tamper-proof products.

And, finally, what better way to end a tough day than with a bowl of ice cream. Your favorite flavor, Rocky Road Loaded with Caramel and Everything but the Kitchen

Sink, is sitting on the counter before you. You're the first human in your house to dig in, but there's some sort of plastic around the outer rim of the container. Even the ice

cream has gone to the other side.

I realize that manufacturers are trying to keep children safe and items fresh, but my suggestion hasn't changed from the one I made in 2004. I implore the supermarkets to take the lead and create a new aisle just for people like me who have the courage to gamble with fate. Make a special aisle just for us, accessible only with a password, remote controlled device or some other security feature to keep the younger, dexterous, tamper-terrified crowd out. Only products simple to open should line the shelves — with nothing more complicated or difficult than an easy twist, pop, turn or flip.

I'm excited already, but in the meantime, I'm sharpening my knives...

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