

Viewpoints

In memoriam

On Saturday, Dec. 4, I went to Snider's Family Meats to purchase a few things for my weekend cooking. For more than a decade, Snider's has been a frequent stop on my weekend errand route.

When I stepped foot in the shop, I knew this visit would be different. Snider's counters were almost empty. There were no other customers in the shop. I noticed a hand-lettered sign indicating the shop was closing. That day was Snider's last day in business.

I asked one of the employees why the shop was closing. He said the recession had changed buying habits. For many people the type of food Snider's sold was a luxury rather than a necessity. Business had dropped off, and the shop couldn't justify staying open any longer. It was time to close.

Snider's wasn't the only local market to close its doors. On Dec. 31, Dick's Market will close. The Layton grocery market was a landmark in Northern Utah, having operated in the same location for over two decades under the names of Tom's, Dan's Market, and most recently Dick's Market.

In Ogden, the well-known restaurant Ye Lions Den closed a year ago. Having operated since 1964, Ye Lions Den was a favorite for many Ogdenites. For many years Ye Lions Den was a Standard-Examiner's Readers Choice award winner. For several years, it won awards in multiple categories.

I don't recall the first time I dined at Ye Lions Den, but I do remember the scones with raspberry butter. Many Ogdenites will miss both the restaurant and the scones.

In 2010, Hollywood Video closed all of its Ogden stores. One of these storefronts was located about a block north of Snider's,

and that venue was also a regular stop on my Saturday errand route. Since it closed, I still haven't found a convenient locale to rent DVDs.

In 2008, the economy entered into one of the most significant downturns since the Great Depression. Given the magnitude of the recession, it was inevitable that some businesses wouldn't survive.

Still, there are obvious reasons to lament the closing of a business. Patrons will no longer enjoy the products and services offered by the business. Employees will be displaced, and

with current economic conditions finding work won't be easy. The community will lose the tax revenue that had been provided by the business.

To this list I would add one additional cause for regret. Even though new businesses will open when the economy turns around and consumers begin to spend, those new businesses may not bear a passing resemblance to those that were forced to close.

Snider's is more likely to be replaced by a meat counter in a discount store than a locally owned, family business. Hollywood Video will inevitably be replaced by downloaded videos from the internet, and there won't be an opportunity to

ask employees behind the counter what videos they would recommend. When an independent restaurant closes its doors, it is likely to be replaced by a national chain like Applebee's, or Chili's or Olive Garden.

Most of those reading this column have a favorite Ogden restaurant, grocery, or other business. You might consider making a special effort to give these businesses your patronage this holiday season. Doing so might keep them going through 2011.

Top of Utah Voices



Michael Vaughan

■ Commentary

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