

Endings are Tough

It's time for the old fir trees lining the front of our property to be removed and replaced with young new ones.

There is a sadness to it that you can't deny like the close of a glorious era.

These "senior" fir trees came as mere saplings from Pennsylvania years ago with my husband when he first bought the property. He had dug them up from his parents' property and brought a touch of The Keystone State to The Empire State. He planted each one, and being a young man, he took it all in his stride. It was back-breaking work, though, and with his vision of a row of trees that would conceal the house from the road eventually, he lovingly accomplished his task.

For years the fir trees stood gracefully and shed their pine cones annually just in time for harvest decorations. When the snow would fall in clumps on the branches, it appeared like a magical fairyland, and it made the extended winter dipping into spring ever more wonderful. The fir trees shaded the property in the heat of the summertime claiming it one of the cooler spots in the neighborhood.

Now the fir trees have been hammered from seasons of road salt and frankly, they look their age. Some of them have so many dead branches that there is a potential safety factor involved, too.

It got me to thinking how you get accustomed to the same things like a pair of old shoes better from the wear and tear. You can't help yourself.

Even if you can handle change – it's a good trait to have in your toolbox – certain places or things die hard. Boy, did I dislike throwing some clothes into bags to give away over the weekend. I had to tell myself that I had had many wonderful times with that particular jacket, and it was the right moment to pass the love on to someone else.

When your bank branch closes or a favorite restaurant goes out of business, you are forced to switch things up a bit and permit the old familiar be a thing of the past. Those memories carry on and fill your conversations. You and I are creatures of habit.

Once there was a tree...and she loved a little boy.

So begins a story of unforgettable perception, beautifully written and illustrated by the gifted and versatile Shel Silverstein, *The Giving Tree*.

Every day the boy would come to the tree to eat her apples, swing from her branches, or slide down her trunk...and the tree was happy. But as the boy grew older he began to want more from the tree, and the tree gave and gave.

Shel Silverstein has created a moving parable for readers of all ages that offers an affecting interpretation of the gift of giving and a serene acceptance of another's capacity to love in return.

The huge fir trees standing on our property have long outlived their usefulness, and like *The Giving Tree*, they gave and gave with much gratitude in return from the owners.