

The Gratitude of the Giver

I love Halloween. Not just because we have been giving popcorn and cider for more than 30 years to an ever increasing - this year exceeding an astounding 300 - number of neighborhood children and presumptive adults, some of whom masquerade as parents. I love it for what I get which is far more than what I give.

One special favorite of mine is a certain kind of jeune fille still young enough to get all costumed up, radiant, freshly shampooed, positively electric with sparks flying in all directions. These are the girls who at age 12 or 13 travel in packs, and are in love with many things but especially the word *so*. This is *so* cool, this popcorn is so good, this is *so* much fun, you guys are *so* nice to do this... as they Ooh and Ah the big popcorn machine, laugh at my silly jokes, and without skipping a beat scramble down the porch on their mad dash to break the next set of hearts.

So it doesn't get much better than that, for me at least. It brings back all the memories of our own daughters at that brief intersection between innocence and what comes next, when the house was alive and kicking with a life force that to this distant day, sustains us.

Every year, there is at least one moment when it looks like our little distribution system will crash. Perhaps there are more than 30 plus 'customers' on the porch and all the way out to the street, clamoring for their popcorn/cider fix. A mob is a mob no matter how well intentioned. We labor mightily and thus far have always made it through. What

satisfaction we feel! It takes at least two weeks before the strong smell of popcorn oil leaves the house so the taste of the whole thing literally lingers on. What a glow, what a kick we get from such a silly thing!

We are known as the 'popcorn house', and all year long are congratulated for our generosity, for making a scene that has become part of the community, what one looks forward to, and as the years go by, what one looks back at. *So* my gratitude is boundless. I couldn't be more pleased with myself if I had won the lottery.

What a strange way to become a destination, what a good way. If you are around, come by next year. We will be glad to welcome you-

"Popcorn, Popcorn, get you're your hot buttered Popcorn, who wants some Popcornnnnn....."