

We live two tenths of a mile from the road. One day last week, Laura saved me from an uncertain and ultimately nonproductive walk down that lane, and on down the road for at least half a mile. It is good to have good neighbors, and better yet when they are at home when you have need of their neighborliness. In this case, the neighbor is also a relative, but even if she were not, I am sure she would have come to my aid.

On this particular day, Runo and the beekeeper were working in our bee yard, and there was no vehicle here at home. That is seldom a problem; I don't often go anywhere that requires a car. Anyway, I was busy at home, getting a midday meal started and ready for Runo and our friend.

I had taken an unbaked pie shell from the freezer, intending to fill it with a "maple walnut" mixture that is similar to pecan pie—very runny when poured into the pan. But, that was okay. I have a steady hand.

Before I took that step, though, I began to think about that nice ceramic pie plate that I was about to put into a hot oven straight from two weeks in the freezer. Would it break? I didn't want to chance losing the pie plate, and I had a several-times-used foil pie plate of the same size. I slipped the pie shell from the ceramic dish and transferred it to the foil pan. And, it went into the oven. Problem solved.

Then, I started a dough for buns for sloppy joes. I had other bread in the freezer, but this ground beef, spice mixture always tastes best, I think, on a bun. And, I had plenty of time.

Soon, though, I detected an oven odor that was way too "brown" smelling. Sure enough, the foil pan had sprung a leak, and the pie filling was dripping down through the rack and onto the pizza stone on the lowest level of the oven.

I quickly slid a rimmed cookie sheet under the pie and scraped away from the pizza stone as much of the gooey liquid as I could. But, it continued to leak and began to smoke. A lot of baking soda stopped that, but I knew that there was no way I could bake the buns that were now formed and rising on the baking sheets.

I could have discarded the dough and chalked it up to bad luck—or bad karma—on this particular day. I could have taken bread from the freezer and called it good.

These buns, though, were made of a dough that combined unbleached wheat flour with einkorn flour. This ancient grain is

expensive, but very good, and I didn't want to lose my dough. So, I sent a message to Laura, just asking if she were at home this morning. She soon called.

"What's up?" she asked.

"If you are going to be at home, I have a major favor to ask," I told her.

"Sure," she answered. "What can I do?"

She drove here, picked up the two pans of rolls, took them home—having started her oven before she came—baked the buns, and delivered them back to me, ready for Runo and the beekeeper to enjoy with their meal.

Not everyone has relatives like we do here in our neighborhood. That is too bad! We could not have better neighbors than we do, and mostly, we are all related.

So, sometimes, we are lucky, even when we commit an error that sets into motion a chain of events that are not what we intended in the beginning. I can't make the mistake again that led to outsourcing my baking. I crumpled up that foil pan and put it in the recycling.