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When mom played ?Refrigerator Tetris?

by KEITH SCHELL

If we had video games in our youth, our mother probably would have become the undisputed Tetris champion of the world.

For those unfamiliar with Tetris, it was created at the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Moscow by Russian software engineer Alexey Pajitnov. Originally intended as a test for a new Russian computer, Tetris is a simple stacking game where you have a limited amount of time to stack different shaped blocks (known as ?tetrominoes?) into a matrix (playing board). The goal is to minimize gaps and fi ll the matrix completely, causing the blocks to disappear and earning points for your success.

Released on June 6, 1984, Tetris quickly became one of the most popular and addictive video games worldwide.

When we were growing up, Dad's job would pay him on Friday, and so like many other families, grocery shopping for our family was usually done on Saturdays.

Mom didn't drive yet, so Dad would take Mom and us kids into town on Saturday mornings to do the shopping for the upcoming week. Mom would go into the grocery store to shop for the family, and Dad would usually take us kids along with him as he ran his errands around town so Mom wouldn't be disturbed while grocery shopping. When we got home after finishing the weekly shopping, Mom would usually enlist us kids to help her bring the groceries into the house and put them away.

Once the car was unloaded and everything was in the house, Mom would tell me to begin to put the cold stuff away in the refrigerator while she began to put the other stuff away in the cupboards. I would try my best, but I always seemed to run out of space in the refrigerator before all the cold items were put away.

Usually, I would end up telling Mom there was no room left in the refrigerator for all the cold stuff that was still sitting on the table. When she was done putting everything else away, she would come back over to the refrigerator and, with an exasperated sigh, tell me to ?stand aside? so she could show me how it was done.

And with me watching in amazement, she would take the remaining cold items from the table and begin to play ?Refrigerator Tetris'.

I watched as she would stand this on its side, stack that up and down, turn this around so it would fi t lengthways, put that in the crisper with the vegetables, put this on top of something else on the middle shelf, put that on one of the shelves on the door, put this in with the eggs, place that on top of the cheese and the butter, jam this between jugs of juice on the door, and slide that in on top of everything else in the last remaining bit of space on the top shelf.

Somehow, she managed to fi t everything in the refrigerator before anything began to melt or spoil.

I couldn't believe how she managed to fit all that stuff in the refrigerator. She maximized every square inch of space on a weekly basis, and nothing cold was ever left out on the table.

If the Tetris matrix on the video screens ever looked like the inside of a refrigerator, our mother would have been a world Tetris champion. To this day, I have never seen anyone else able to stack a refrigerator like our mother did when we were young.

And she is still stacking strong to this day! Happy Mother's Day!