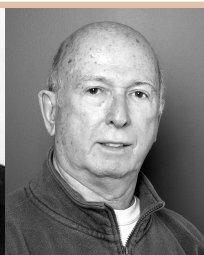
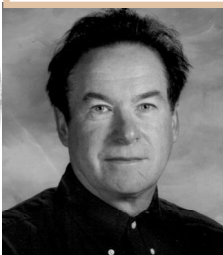


*Meaningful
Memories*

Lifescapes Writing Group
2015
Milton Public Library





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Lifescapes Writing Group 2015
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This book was written by members of the Lifescapes group, a memoir writing program sponsored by Milton Public Library

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Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	5
<i>The Best of Times</i> Mary Cummings	7
<i>Goodnight Sir</i> R. David Taylor	14
<i>Just Nothing</i> R. David Taylor	17
<i>First Drivers Licence</i> Ken Marvell	19
<i>My First Car</i> Ken Marvell	22
<i>Al-ask-a if Yu-kan (Alaska if Yukon)</i> Gillian Reynolds	25
<i>Synchronicity</i> Gillian Reynolds	32
<i>The Sadness and Happiness Trip</i> Sawsan Kondos	36
<i>Two Days in Spring, 1974</i> Eva Hegedus	40
<i>Photographic Memories</i> Judy Henderson	48
<i>Dublin 1947/48</i> Trevor Trower	54
<i>A Long Flight</i> Trevor Trower	63
<i>Dinner in Paris</i> Trevor Trower	66

Introduction

The members of Milton Public Library's Lifescapes writing group are pleased to present *Meaningful Memories*, the fourth annual anthology of memoirs produced by Milton Public Library.

Lifescapes provides beginner and experienced writers with guidance and support in storytelling and writing. The Lifescapes memoir program supports MPL's vision and goal to "facilitate the creation of ideas and experiences for people of all ages and backgrounds." Milton Public Library supports lifelong learning and encourages members of the community to be creators and not simply consumers.

Author and instructor, Larry Brown, visited the class to share his experience and expertise. Mr. Brown visits Milton Public Library frequently to offer a variety of writing workshops and we are very appreciative of the time he spends with us.

Over the course of the program, the stories shared, ideas exchanged, laughter and camaraderie make Lifescapes a highlight of the week. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the participants for all the time and effort they put into crafting their compelling stories.

Print copies of the anthologies are available for sale for a limited time. They may also be borrowed from MPL or viewed on the website, www.mpl.on.ca.

Joan Faehrmann
Adult Services Librarian
Milton Public Library
Milton, Ontario

May 2015



The Best of Times

By Mary Cummings

The breeze was warm. I relaxed in a lounge chair in a patch of dappled sun, dropped my book and closed my eyes. It was so quiet with just the sound of a boat in the distance, the cry of a loon, and the cicadas singing their songs. The whirr of wings as humming birds squabbled over nectar in the feeder could not disturb me, nor the patter of little feet as a chipmunk searched the deck for a stray peanut. I could vaguely hear children playing on the beach, and I loved the sound of their laughter. The smell of the pines made the afternoon perfect.

I think I fell in love with this place the first time I saw it, but that was a very long time ago. My mind thought back, many years. This is 2015 and I am a great-grandmother with many great-grandchildren. I remembered earlier holidays. I arrived in Canada in 1946 and three kids later, Rich and I still had no car. We did have holidays, though, thanks to the kindness and generosity of friends. I saw a lot of Ontario—canoeing on Kashe Lake, staying at Wasaga Beach and Lake Scugog. I also had a trip back to the U.K. for myself and two of our children.

Finally, we had the offer of a car from friends—a Dodge coupe, for the magnificent sum of \$250. They also told us of a holiday place they had liked, and thought we might want to check it out. It was about 25 miles north of Huntsville and they said that there was a nice sandy beach that would be safe for children.

So the following year we phoned to rent a cottage but there was no vacancy, so we booked something nearby. It was OK but we needed to see the recommended place. So we set off, the little one in a stroller, for the three mile trek. We'd not gone far when a kind driver offered all of us a lift—otherwise I don't think we would have made it.

The spot he took us to was beautiful. The hill sloped down to a lovely sandy beach, safe water with lots of sunshine. The cottages were sprinkled around the hillside and the beach was framed by a huge rock on the one side and a low rock that jutted into the water on the other. This

Meaningful Memories

whole place had been a holiday camp—a lodge with about ten cottages scattered attractively among the trees and down the hillside to the lake. It was aptly named “So-Ho- Mish.”

Our driver introduced us to the owners, Karol and Dorothy, whom we took to immediately. They were both very friendly. Karol, Polish and bearded, reminded me of Dr. Zhivago. Dorothy was very English and we liked her too. Karol had worked in the mines and Dorothy had been in fashion in New York, and they had been looking for a long time to invest in a place they could host for holidaymakers, one that had the sun in front all day long. This was 1956 and they had found this just a few years previously.

“We love your place here, and were wondering if we could book something?”

“Unfortunately, there is not much choice as the folks here, before they leave, book for the next year. However, we do have a small two bedroom cottage available, and there is a cot in the

living room. This might suit you.”

We went to take a look: no ceiling over the bedrooms and only a heavy curtain over the loo, but glory!—running water and inside toilet—enough for Rich and I and our three kids. So ‘book’ we did for the following year. This started our relationship with this place and its owners. It turned out that we stayed in this cottage quite a few times. It was pretty small and a steep walk down the hill to the beach, but we loved the whole place. One summer, I was quite ill, I think about the third year we’d been renting there, and to add insult to injury, the heavy rod that held the privacy curtain over the loo, fell and knocked me on the head. Sigh!

I think we stayed home the next year when our third little girl was born (1959) giving us four children in all. Through the years we booked different cottages, but could never seem to rent #10, the one right at the water’s edge.

Karol and Dorothy were great hosts. As it started to get dark, a highlight of the week was a wiener roast or, later in the season, they would bring corn. The kids would gather wood for the fire, ready to be made among rocks on the beach. It was a great time to meet other cottagers. Karol and Dorothy would provide everything, including a big case of pop. All the guests would gather



Walking up the hill to our first rental cottage

on the beach and we’d eat hot dogs and roast marshmallows. We’d sit around, sing camp songs and tell tall tales. If our son or his friend happened to be there, we’d have some guitar playing too. If it was warm, we’d go for a swim, or stay and enjoy the night sky, so full of stars. Occasionally, later in the year, there’d be northern lights. But the stars, too, were incredible—the Milky Way was a river of light, so brilliant and different from what we saw in the city.

This was a great time to get to know the other cottagers and, since so many came year after year, some good friendships were made. They were generous with their stuff too—taking the kids water skiing and offering boat rides and fishing trips.

Meaningful Memories

An important event for the kids was when the garbage was collected. Bill, the handyman, would come around supper time with the tractor and a small trailer to pick up our refuse, and would allow the kids to climb on board and be driven to the dump. This was a time of great excitement. They might even see a bear.

“Mum, Mum, I can hear the tractor!”

“Finish your supper, David”.

“Mum, he’s right here, we have to go!”

“You can go in a few minutes. Finish your dinner first.”

“Aw, Mum?”

“Alright, alright, run for it”

And away our kids would flee, and jump on board with the garbage.

One year, as we were packing up to go home, Karol and Dorothy came to see us. “Are you planning to book through to next year?” they asked.

“Of course.”

“Well, if you wish, you can have the cottage right next to the beach.”

“Number 10? But the Martins usually take that one.”

“Well, they haven’t booked through, so if you want it, it’s yours.”

“Do we want it? Absolutely!”

It was the nicest cottage with a door to the loo and much larger than the other cottages. All the cottages had wood stoves, but this one also had a nice bench around a corner window. We were over the moon. We would be able to see the kids playing on the beach, where before we’d been up the hill.

We would book year after year from 1957-74. Rich would have all August off, and we’d stay through until Labour Day.

Rich would have a great time playing with the kids. He loved playing horseshoes, later it was badminton, Frisbee and, more recently for me, Bocce Ball. At first, we just had a row boat; later came canoes and kayaks. The kids would play hare and hounds and clamber over the rock to gather clay from the “Clay Canyon,” from the next beach and make fantastic creations. Most fun was swimming and splashing around in the water. I preferred sitting under a shady tree with a book or lounging on the raft with my feet dangling in the water to cool off. In more recent years, I loved sailing with my grandson or, as the sun was setting, canoeing with my daughter and her small son to look for a beaver.

Of course, we had different vehicles through the years, starting with our Dodge coupe with the rumble seat, and we even had a new car one year. But whatever vehicle we had, it was always packed to the max.



The thrilling trip to the dump

Meaningful Memories

We would drive up on a Saturday. Rich always had to work until 4 p.m., so we'd pick him up and he'd drive from there. Guess who got to do most of the packing of the car? Though he was always faithful to get the stuff up top on the rack—play pen, etc. There was always so much last minute stuff to do at home, as I liked to leave everything ship shape.

“Now, kids, you have to help. Anne, get the diapers off the line. Deb, will you watch the babe? And please keep clean, etc., etc.” As a special treat, I would buy the kids comic books – “Classic Comics,” they were called, which were about various heroes. As I was doing the last packing up, there they would be in the car with their comic books, waiting, trying to be patient, anxious to hear the words, “Let's go!” We'd pick up Rich, he'd drive, and our very next stop would be in Nobleton, where they had the best ice cream cones!

The cottages were four miles in from the highway, over some very steep hills. Once, driving in late one evening in a fierce thunderstorm, we stalled near the top of this huge hill. Rich had to back down in the pitch black and pelting rain as we all held our breaths. But, he did it!



Grandchildren having fun, fishing

such luck! But there was always time to sit on the deck with a cup of coffee, listen to the birds, enjoy the breeze and the sound of the water. Or take a quick dip to cool off.

Life doesn't stay the same year after year. In 1974, we were surprised when Karol and Dorothy told us they were selling up. If we liked, we could buy the cottage we'd been renting. Of course, we liked, but we hadn't been able to raise the \$3,000 for the lots that had been for sale the previous year. What to do?

I'd been working part-time in the bank, so I went to my manager, told him we wanted to buy a cottage, and was there any chance of full time work so we could pay for it? He responded that wasn't a problem, and I got a permanent position.

The cottage was very basic. But my son-in-law was a keen helper, and right away he started dismantling the porch to enlarge our living space. He had great ideas for renovating and was a fantastic help through the years.

Then when my Mom died a few years later, in 1979, and left me some money, we were able to put in a basement, add another bedroom and a full bathroom.

So we rented various cottages. But it was the beach cottage that was the best. Sunning and swimming, playing, long happy days, then charades or cards at night.

For me, it was still quite a bit of work. I had to wash all our stuff, tho' in later years, I was able to take it to the Laundromat. We would stay all August, so there was shopping, too. I used to feed everyone a huge breakfast and I'd just about be ready to go down to the beach and settle in my favourite spot under a tree, when I'd hear, “When is it going to be lunch?” Oh, darn it all, I thought they'd all forget about lunch, but no

Meaningful Memories

We had a lot of company—family, friends, and we lent it a couple of times for someone's honeymoon. The time came when we'd go up there after Boxing Day and stay through New Year's. There'd be skating on the lake and cross country skiing, besides cooking a turkey for New Years. It was very cosy. We'd play charades at night, or Dutch Blitz, Cribbage or perhaps, Scrabble. Lots of fun things to do.

But time and tide wait for no man. Rich died and I spent a lot of time on my own up there, usually until Thanksgiving when family would join me.

After supper, I had a special routine. I'd run down to the beach, slip off my sandals, and run into the water. I loved to paddle to the other end of the beach where there was a rock that jutted out into the water, and a large one that was perfect for me to sit on. I'd wait there until the sun went down, enjoying the changing colours of the sky, listening to the call of a loon, or the splash of a fish jumping. When the first star came out, it was time to head back.



My son, David with his kids and their cousins

But it got difficult: cutting the grass, cleaning out the eaves troughs etc. One year my granddaughter and her friend painted the outside for me. But it was about time to quit.

Finally, I sold the property to one of my daughters and she and her husband have done a great job of looking after it. I used to go up with them in the winter, but recently it's just been some time in the summer—which I've enjoyed immensely. Navigating the snowy slopes just got a bit too difficult.

My family doesn't like me to drive up there alone anymore—boo—so it's time for things to change.

I did plant three white pines as a memorial of Rich. They are huge beautiful trees now—but otherwise I have said goodbye to a beautiful place which, I felt, was a very wonderful gift for me and my family from a loving heavenly Father. But I still have a kaleidoscope of fantastic memories. Seeing my children, and my grandchildren mature, get married, have babies, all with so many connections to this place. I remember them playing on the beach, swimming to the island, so much talk and fun around the table, making guacamole and helping me in a thousand ways. Memories precious in the storehouse of my mind. Almost as if these things are written on my heart.

There were some important events that happened there—good and bad.

Meaningful Memories



Admiring my broken arm

and we were alarmed. He was later diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, from which he never recovered.



Young Matthew—already an expert fisherman.

One day, a long time ago, a young man hiked all the way in from the highway to visit my daughter—eventually he married her, and became the best support and helper I ever had.

On my own up there, walking down a steep hill, I fell and broke my arm. I came back to the cottage, got in the car and drove to Huntsville Hospital, where they plastered me up. The doctor seemed to be a recent graduate—she more or less had a book in one hand as she fixed me up. It turned out that I had only broken my wrist, but she wasn't about to waste any plaster and she slathered it on, almost to my shoulder.

The problem came when I tried to return home. I'd parked the car but, with my arm in a cast, I could not get it into reverse. A friendly man helped me, and I drove straight ahead, back to the cottage. I had to go back to the hospital the next week for a fresh plaster job. There were other visits to the hospital for various family members, for cuts and bruises etc., but the saddest time was when one of our daughters had a miscarriage and lost her baby.

Rich showed his first evidence of illness while we were up at the cottage. He started acting really strangely,

and we were alarmed. He was later diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, from which he never recovered.

Then there was the time when the cottage almost burned down. My son-in-law wakened from sleep—about 1 a.m.—and thought he could smell smoke. No alarms were triggered. Then he spotted smoke coming up near the fireplace—seemed to be from underneath the cottage. He phoned the Fire Department. Meanwhile he and Deb hosed everything in sight and he ran up the road to watch for them. In that part of the country, the fire trucks fill up with water from the lake, to power their hoses.

The firemen managed to gain control, but the end wall of the cottage was gone. The Fire Chief said that when a fire starts like that (a beam underneath the fireplace had turned to charcoal), it's usual for the whole cottage to go up in smoke. Thankfully, we ended up with a whole new rock fireplace instead!

One of my grandsons is a fisherman par excellence. He kept me company at the cottage one week, just so he could fish. I absolutely do not like fish. One day he challenged me. "Nan, I bet if I catch a nice fresh pike from the lake and cook it for you, you'll love it."

Ugh—I'd heard that pike is oily, boney, and no one really likes to eat it. "OK Matt, I'm willing to try." (Please,

Meaningful Memories

fish, don't get caught.)

Before long Matt came up the path with his catch. He duly skinned and filleted it, battered and cooked it outside. It even looked attractive in small coated chunks. "Well, Nan, what do you think?"

"Matt, I have to admit, it was really scrumptious. Thank you." So now I know: I do like some fish, especially when it has been presented with so much love.

One of my most precious memories of the cottage was when I was on my own, in the fall. Something wakened me early. I threw my clothes on and ran down to the beach. The sand was covered in white frost and I felt I was in a wonderland. The lake was perfectly still, with a few wisps of mist rising off its surface, and the sky was a riot of colour. The moon was still shining in the west, but eastward the sun's rays were just peeking over the trees. Above, there was turquoise, pink, gold and every colour of the rainbow swirling around. The only sound was the cry of a loon. I felt as if I was held in a moment of time at the birth of creation, lost in awe and wonder. Thankfulness filled me. I was reminded of Psalm 19: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the earth shows forth His handiwork. ...Day after day they pour forth speech; ...Their voice goes out...their words to the end of the world."



Mary was born in London, England, lived through the Second World War, and came to Canada as a war bride in 1946. Here, she raised her children, and now has grand children and great grandchildren. She worked for some years in the bank, then cared for her husband, who died from Alzheimer's disease in 1982. In later years, she acted as an Associate counselor at the Christian Retreat Centre in Orangeville, Ontario. She is retired now and lives in the country.



Goodnight Sir

By R. David Taylor

The hallway was extremely dark as I left school after my first day of teaching. The only thing darker than the hallway was the way I was feeling: sad, confused and very disappointed with myself.

In October of 1992, I had applied for and was accepted to do an occasional teaching position for an absent business teacher at a city centre school in Toronto. The previous January, I had been laid off from the company where I had worked for 24 years. However, I was able to upgrade my unused teaching certificate over the summer and was now qualified to teach business subjects in Ontario high schools. I had not been in a classroom for 24 years but was very excited about getting a chance to teach and start a new life as a teacher.

The school had a reputation as a “tough one.” It was a former vocational school that now offered general curriculum courses. It was located by a busy intersection in an area with a large immigrant population, mostly Caribbean. The building was about 50 years old and looked rather run down from the outside but, in the spirit of positivity, I hoped it would have cheerful people on the inside.

Upon arriving at the school in the morning, I thought I would be given some orientation sessions about procedures etc. but the secretary just said, “Good morning, Mr. Taylor. Here’s your stuff. You need to go upstairs and see Mr. Chapman in the Business Office right away.” After searching the upstairs corridors for some time I finally found where it was and met Mr. Chapman. He was an elderly gentleman who was the Department Head and he immediately took me to “my room” and said, “Good luck.” He went on to say, “We have had a few others in but the kids really need to have someone here on a more regular basis.” He then turned and left saying, “If you need anything, I will be in the Business Office.” I felt he had been rather blunt as I stood alone in front of the empty classroom mortified and wondering what to do.

Meaningful Memories

Suddenly, I heard a commotion in the hallway by my room. I looked out. Two girls were having an argument about a missing wallet. They were coming towards me and when they approached the doorway they started pushing and swearing at each other. One slapped the other right in front of me, then seemed to jump on her and they began to roll around the floor pulling at each other's hair. I had no idea what to do or say so I stepped over them and went back to the Business Office.

"I have a problem," I said to Chapman.

"Already?" he replied.

"Yes, two girls are fighting in the doorway in front of my room and others won't be able to get in."

"Stay here," he said and promptly proceeded out the door. Soon he returned and said, "Everything is OK now. The bell is going to ring soon, so you had better get back there and don't forget to mention about parents night next Thursday."

I could sense he wasn't too impressed but I returned to the room and about 20 students were sitting at their desks when the opening exercises began. I didn't see the two girls but was anxious to get on with the day. After the exercises were over I proceeded to introduce myself and mention about the upcoming event.

"Next Thursday," I announced, "there will be a parent's night at the school and I will be glad to meet with your parents as your new teacher at that time." There was an eerie silence in the room when one boy at the back raised his hand.

"Sir," he said, "if you see my father, could you let me know? I haven't seen him for 17 years." The rest of the class seemed to giggle and were waiting for my response. I was taken aback and really didn't know what to say but responded, "Well, if you or anyone else has no one to come and speak for you, I welcome you to come yourself and I will speak with you." Suddenly to my amazement the class started clapping and I, for the first time, felt a bit relieved and started talking about my business experiences and what I would like to do with them in the course.

The rest of the day went rather fast as the other two classes were computer ones but not as demanding as the marketing one. At the end of the day however, Chapman came into my room and said, "The office was looking for your attendance sheets. What did you do with them?" Because I had never done any supply work, I was not familiar with any procedures. The sheets must have been in that stack of papers I was given at the start of the day. To make matters worse I couldn't find the stack and must have left it somewhere.

"How could you lose the attendance?" he asked, his voice rising. "You had better go to the office and explain yourself." I immediately went down to the office to report, "I'm afraid I lost the attendance sheets." I expected she would go crazy on me and tell me not to come back tomorrow but she calmly said, "Well, Mr. Taylor, we will have to get new ones, won't we? How was the rest of your day?"

"Everything was ok," I replied. "I'll more careful tomorrow."

"Ok," she said, "we will see you tomorrow."

I left the office and proceeded down the dark corridor towards the exit. I thought they would be thinking that if I couldn't do attendance, what else couldn't I do and would be looking for someone else to come in. I was feeling despondent and horrible over my attempt to start a new career. Suddenly I heard a voice in the hallway but I was more worried about my future than trying to make it out. As I approached the door the voice was getting louder and louder and it sounded like, "Good night, sir." It repeated itself and I responded, "Are you talking to me?"

Meaningful Memories

The hallway was very dark and I didn't see a group of students lying on the floor ahead of me in front of the door. To compound the matter, the school's population was about 90% black students making it more difficult to see anyone in the dark hallway. "Yes sir," replied the voice. "I was in your Marketing class this morning."

"Well young lady," I said, "good night and I'll see you tomorrow."

Right away I felt better and that I was a new person. I was no longer an old, dejected failure that no one wanted but I was now a "sir." I left the school with my head up and raring to get going with my new life. I told the secretary in the morning I'd be more careful with the attendance and was sorry about yesterday. "It's ok," she said. "We are just glad to see you back today." I found out later from Chapman that two other teachers had left the job because of the Marketing class.

I proceeded on with my teaching career and from that day on for 21 years I always referred to all male students as "sir" and all female students as "young lady." I was also grateful to have dealt with an understanding attendance secretary who could have been a lot worse under the circumstances.



A high school hallway



Just Nothing

By R. David Taylor

“What's wrong?” I asked the student, huddled alone and crying profusely in the corner near the hallway by my classroom.

“Nothing sir, it's just nothing,” she replied.

I knew from experience that “just nothing” was another way of saying, “Leave me alone, you wouldn't understand.” So I said, “OK,” and returned to my Accounting class where 24 students were waiting for me. Because the student (who I didn't know) seemed so distraught, saddened, and lonely, I asked a girl in my class to go and speak with her and see if she was alright. I then proceeded with the lesson from Chapter 5 of the textbook.

A few minutes later the student returned and I asked if everything was OK. “It's OK sir, it was just nothing,” and she returned to her seat.

I proceeded on with the lesson but casually wandered over to where the girl was sitting as I wanted to know what her definition of “just nothing” was. I spoke to her quietly so other students wouldn't be disturbed. “How do you know it was just nothing?” I asked.

“Sir, she saw a boy who she liked in the hallway with another girl and when she asked him about it he told her he just wanted to be friends with her and nothing else and he wanted to meet others girls as well. That is why she was crying and feeling sad.

“So how is she now?” I continued.

“Well sir, I told her to get over it, that he is just a boy and he is not worth it and there are lots of others around here. I told her as well that there are lots of fish in the sea and she needs to get on with things.”

I really didn't know what to say to her. I thought she had been rather blunt but I had asked her to go so I thanked her for her efforts and went on with the lesson. In time I popped my head outside the door and noticed the hallway was empty. I wondered though, what lesson if any had been learned today and who the teacher was.

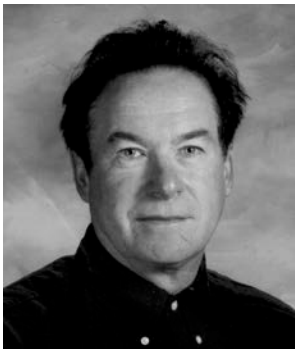
Meaningful Memories

The bell rang, so I dismissed the class.

In a few days I got my answer. I saw the girl in the hallway talking to some other girls and went over and asked her, "Is everything OK from when I saw you the other day?"

"Oh yes sir, everything's OK. I was upset over a boy but there are lots of fish in the sea."

"Good," I said and went back to my accounting world.



I am a retired teacher (secondary) who also worked in industry for many years prior to teaching. I was very fortunate to get a teaching position and be able to work my final years with young people. My short stories are about the experiences I had with them and the rewards they have given me. I also write poetry and have recently had one published. I really enjoyed Lifescapes and intend to continue writing stories on a variety of topics.



First Drivers Licence

By Ken Marvell

Going for your permanent driver's licence is a nerve wracking adventure for most teenagers who are looking forward to the independence and freedom from having to rely on public transportation, or rides from their parents or older siblings. Yes, having that driver's licence opens a whole new world where a teenager can come or go whenever and wherever they have a mind to.

I was no exception to this unique adventure when I turned eighteen years of age in August, 1960. Back then in Quebec, eighteen was the legal age when you could get your driver's licence.

I remember the events of that day just as clearly as if they happened just last year...

The company I worked for at that time was called Firth Brown Steels Ltd., a stainless steel service centre located at 4300 Cote de Liesse Road in Ville St. Laurent, Quebec. The day and time finally arrived. I left work early and got a ride from a friend to the nearest automobile licence bureau located a few miles further along Cote de Liesse Road, near Blvd. St. Laurent.

Arriving at my destination, I got out of his car and climbed up the wide cement steps of the dull brown brick building, and entered through a pair of large cream coloured doors.

Once inside, I looked around the huge government office, eventually seeing the clerk sitting behind a desk. I gave her my required forms and paid for the tests. Then I sat near other people who were there for the same purpose as I was. We all waited patiently for the driving testers.

Eventually, a heavy set, balding man, who looked to be in his early fifties walked towards me. As he got closer, I could hear him wheezing. He stood for a moment as if to catch his breath, then in a raspy voice he asked aloud, "Monsieur Marvell? Monsieur Ken Marvell?"

Standing up, I replied, "Yes, here I am."

Meaningful Memories

He came closer and introduced himself. “Je suis Monsieur Beauchemin. I am your tester for aujourd’hui.”

He led me to an area where there were some desks with chairs and said, “Asseyez vous.” I sat and he handed me some forms which had twenty questions printed on them. Next to each question was a True or False answer. I was to read the questions and circle True or False for each one. As I sat there looking over the forms I quietly said to myself, “Yikes! All True or False answers. No hedging or bluffing in this test. Ken, either you know the exact answers and pass this part of the test or you don’t and you go home on the next city bus.”

When I completed the written test, Mr. Beauchemin took the forms from me and placed an ‘answer key’ over the test to see how many answers I had right or wrong. I watched him as he did that and said to myself, “You would think by this time he should know the answers and not need the answer key.”

Next we went up a flight of stairs where we entered a room and there I saw what looked like make-ups of cars, each with a driver’s seat, steering wheel with a direction indicator, and a gas and a brake pedal. I sat in the driver’s seat and looked into a sort of viewfinder box. This is where I was going to be tested for vision and reflexes. Mr. Beauchemin said, “I will change the lights and signs from over here and as you see them change in the box, you react as if you are driving on a road. When the light turns green, press the gas pedal and when it turns red, stop as quick as you can by pressing the brake pedal.”

“Okay, I understand what to do,” I replied.

Being anxious about the test, the first time that light turned RED, I slammed my foot down on the brake pedal so hard, I thought for a moment that I might have broken it. Mr. Beauchemin immediately said in a grouchy voice, “**** I said press on the brake pedal. DON’T PUSH it through the floor into the room below!”

I said, “I’m sorry. I am nervous and I tried to respond quickly, without thinking of how hard I did it.” We continued and soon finished that part of the test. Phew.

Finally, time for the actual road test. As we walked outside, the heat and humidity of the mid August day hit us. I said to myself, “Ah, the physical road test. Let’s get this done.” Mr. Beauchemin and I walked out to the parking lot and soon we were standing beside an older, early 1950’s, medium sized, brown, 4-door sedan which had a standard floor stick shift in it.

Trying to remember what to do, I walked around the car to check the clearance for exiting and, hopefully, returning the car to this spot when we were done. Sitting in the driver’s seat, the heat from the closed up car enveloped me, almost smothering me. Mr. Beauchemin climbed into the passenger’s seat beside me. He handed me the keys then, to add to the pressure I was feeling, he said, “This is my personal car. No one has had an accident in it yet.” Then without another word, he pulled out his clipboard and started writing in it. As he watched, I sat for a moment, checked all the mirrors and adjusted the seat. I turned the ignition on to start the car and immediately the radio blared out some horrible sounding music. My hand fumbled for the knob and I turned the radio down, then off completely.

As his car started, the mufflers roared, causing the car to shake around us. A puff of black smoke billowed out of the exhaust and dissipated into the air. I put the car into first gear and we drove slowly out of the parking spot and eventually onto Cote de Liesse Road, where we merged into the now busy lunch hour traffic. Mr. Beauchemin said, “You chose a bad time of day to have your test. Beaucoup traffic now.” As he said that, I was sure I saw a grin come over his face.

Meaningful Memories

No sooner was the car in second gear than Mr. Beauchemin said, “Merge left. We are going to drive around this traffic circle.” I put on the turn indicators and also signaled with my left hand what my intentions were, and merged into that very busy circle with its intersecting roads and traffic lights. While doing this, under my breath I said over and over, “Please let me get green lights so I don’t have to shift gears. Please let me get green lights so I don’t have to shift gears.”

Just my luck: as nervous as I was with this being a major driver’s test, heavy traffic, an unfamiliar car with its owner, the tester, sitting beside me as we drove in double lanes of traffic around a busy traffic circle, I had to STOP for one of the RED traffic lights!

Taking a deep breath in order to try and relax, I put the stick gear shift into neutral and, along with hundreds of other cars, stopped and sat there waiting for that long red light to turn green. After, what felt like an eternity (probably just four or five minutes) of sitting in silence with beads of sweat trickling down our faces, the traffic light suddenly turned green and two lanes of traffic started to move. I pressed on the clutch and put the gear shift into first gear. Well, that was my intention but we didn’t move! Instead, that old brown car emitted a loud, grinding metal sound that I was sure could be heard by everyone within a hundred yards of us. Immediately Mr. Beauchemin shouted in a very loud gravelly voice, “Push in the clutch! Push in the clutch and hold it down!” As I slammed my foot down on the clutch pedal, he grabbed the stick shift with his left hand, jerked it around and pushed it back into first gear. I released the clutch and we started moving, encouraged to do so by a chorus of honking horns from behind us.

Once we were riding smoothly again, Mr. Beauchemin said in a quieter tone of voice, “That was not your fault. The gearshift often sticks when being put into first gear. My problem is I never know when it will happen.”

This ‘off handed bit of information’ helped me to relax a little as I continued making the drive around that busy traffic circle and finally back into the parking space where we began this ordeal some time earlier.

We got out of the car and I gave Mr. Beauchemin his keys, then I followed him back up the stairs and into the licence bureau. Mr. Beauchemin completed a little more paperwork then said to me, “You have passed the tests and you will receive your permit by poste dans une ou deux semaines. Congratulations.”

Feeling relieved that the tests were over and elated that I had my driver’s permit, while waiting for my friend to pick me up and drive me home, I started thinking about the first car that I would buy once I saved enough money to purchase a new ‘used’ one.



My First Car

By Ken Marvell

My first new (used) car was an old dark blue coloured Peugeot 403, circa 1955. It had an automatic transmission, direction indicators that lit up as they flipped out on either side of the car, and a push button starter. Last but not least, the major feature that convinced me to buy it from a co-worker was the unbelievable, “snap it up while you can,” price of \$200.

In my excitement to own a car, I was blind to all the faults with that used Peugeot; however, eventually those faults, which I accepted as challenges, soon revealed themselves to me.

A few of the more memorable challenges that I had with my first new (used) car were as follows:

When the weather was humid due to rain or snow, it wasn't unusual for me to have to press that push button starter fifteen or twenty times before the car would decide to start. It got that I was reluctant to wash the car.

More than a few times, while some friends and I were out in that car, my passengers would literally have to get out of the car, run around to the back of it, and push it along the street while I repeatedly pressed the push button starter until the car started. Once the car was running again, they would hop back in and we would continue on our journey.

One summer's night, during one of those frequent pushes along Decarie Blvd., in Ville St. Laurent, one of the people pushing my car jokingly said, “It should be called The Runzonly, as in it runs only when you push it.”

The other passengers unanimously replied, “That's a great name! The Runzonly it is.”

Since then, that's what my pride and joy, my first new (used) car was called.

The headlights of the 'Runzonly' were rusted all around the edges so I duct taped them in place to stop them from bouncing around or falling down while I was driving. Once they were duct taped to the rest of the car, which consumed half a roll of duct tape, the high beams shone

Meaningful Memories

brightly up towards the night sky and crossed each other about thirty or forty feet above the horizon. In fact, they were so bad that late one night while I was driving along a highway near Montreal, I was sure that an aeroplane momentarily mistook those high beams for landing lights at the airport and started to descend until the pilot realized the lights he saw were my head lights.

Eventually, the windshield wiper motor started acting up. One afternoon, while driving along the Metropolitan Blvd. in Montreal, it started to rain. As the rain got heavier, I flipped the switch to start the wipers but they didn't start. I had to pull over to the side of the highway, as best I could, and wait for an opportunity to get out of the car, lift the front hood, hit the wiper motor a few times with the palm of my hand to start the wipers, close the hood and jump back into the car...then... wait for an opening in the traffic so I could continue on my journey.

I grew up in a small village called St. Paul L'Ermite which was located about twenty miles east of Montreal. At the time of this story, I had friends who still lived there but I had moved to Ville St. Laurent, on the island of Montreal. Canadian Arsenals Ltd., an ammunitions manufacturing company, was located in St. Paul L'Ermite and in order to keep the streets and roads designated as 'private' on the property owned by Canadian Arsenals Ltd., the company had to close the entrances to their property for twenty four consecutive hours, once each year. To do this, they placed a guard shed at each entrance. To close the roads, they placed wooden road barriers across the roads to stop the traffic. A guard would stay in the shed and when a car came along, the guard would move the barrier to let the car pass, after which he would place the barrier back across the road until another car needed to pass. A simple thing to do, right?

One rainy night during the twenty four hour closure, I was driving some friends back to their homes in St. Paul L'Ermite. In order to get to their homes, we would have to stop at one of the barriers. It was about 9 p.m. as we drove up to the road barrier. I stopped and waited while the guard put on his hat and raincoat, then he slowly walked over to move the barrier. I rolled down my car window and shouted to the guard, "Please hurry before my car stalls." He looked at me and shrugged as if to say, "Don't tell me how to do my job." Slowly he shuffled around to the front of my car and removed the wooden barrier. Well, he was just slow enough that by the time he moved that barrier, my car stalled! While the guard just stood there motionless in the middle of the dark, wet road with the rain beating down on him, I pressed that darn push button starter, over, and over, and over again. My friend Jack laughed and said, "That will teach him not to listen to you and to move at a snail's pace." We all laughed as we watched the poor guard standing in the teeming rain and we wondered why he didn't go back into the guard shed until we got the car started. After a good five minutes, the car finally started. Eureka! We were on our way and as we drove along the road, we watched the guard replace the barrier and go back into his dry shed.

I drove my friends to their homes, located a block away. To keep the Runzonly from stalling, when we got near their homes, I would slow down while they jumped out of my car, then pick up speed and continued on my way back to Ville St. Laurent. As I once again approached the now infamous road barrier to get off the private property, I flashed my headlights and drove slowly. The flashing caught the guard's attention and as soon as he recognized those crossed high beams, he ran out from his shed and quickly removed the barrier. While I passed the guard standing there, he signaled to me to keep on moving and yelled out, "Thanks! Have a good night." I made my way back onto the highways and before I knew it, I was back in Ville St. Laurent and enjoying the warmth and dryness of my apartment.

I kept the 'Runzonly' for a couple of years, eventually selling it to a neighbour of my parents who wanted to buy it for spare parts. By that time, the car had served me well.

Meaningful Memories

Over these many years, my family, my friends, and I have enjoyed many laughs as we fondly reminisce about my first ever new (used) car, The Runzonly.



I was born in Montreal, Quebec in 1942, the youngest of six children. The oldest was my brother Gordon, followed by four sisters, then me. When I was two years old, my family moved to a very small predominately French village, 20 miles east of Montreal, called St. Paul L'Ermitte, where I grew up and where my parents worked for Canadian Arsenals Ltd.

St Paul L'Ermitte was renamed Le Gardeur in 1978, which in turn has since become part of the town of Repentigny.

Retired from a career in sales, selling steels to industry, I continue to enjoy living in Milton, Ont., where I have been residing for 36 years.

I am married with three grown children and five grandchildren.



Al-ask-a if Yu-kan (Alaska if Yukon)

By Gillian Reynolds

Flying over the huge expanse of snow-capped mountains in the Yukon, I wondered if there was any land down there suitable for habitation. Then I spotted Whitehorse, lying in the flat plain of the Yukon River, which was glistening in the sunlight.

The airport seemed friendly and very small, compared to Toronto. I spotted our daughter Tamra straight away, her dark brown hair tied up in a pony tail. She greeted us with her lovely smile and hugged us warmly, as we waited at the carousel for our luggage to arrive. It had been almost a year since we had last seen her.

It was my fault that she ended up living so far away in a remote cabin, because of a phone call that I made to my brother Fred in 2003. Fred and his cronies were planning to drive three of their restored World War II Jeeps on the Alcan Highway, starting in Vancouver. Tamra, who was thirty-one and living in Vancouver at the time, was anxious to be part of this adventurous group and pestered me to ask her Uncle Fred if she could go with them. He said yes. And so, her fate was sealed.

On an overnight truck stop somewhere near the Arctic Circle, she met a tire-mechanic named Hugh Neff, a long-distance dog musher (also known as "the Gypsy Musher"). Addresses were exchanged and the next winter she went to visit him. Well, Tamra eventually succumbed to the siren sound of the north. She found a job in Whitehorse as a hydrogeologist and a cabin to rent on Annie Lake, which was off the grid and had no well or septic system. It consisted of three isolated cabins on three acres of land, surrounded by mountains - ideal for her, Hugh and his thirty dogs. A few years later, she bought the property.

If someone had told me when I was a twenty-something, free-spirited, gregarious law clerk, who spent my vacations cruising the Med and English canals or at Spanish resorts, that I would one day choose to go on a working holiday in the Yukon, I would have told them that they were off their rocker. But at sixty-six years old, in 2007, there I was, together with my husband

Meaningful Memories

Bryan, at the start of our mission, which was to help Tamra with renovations and do a bit of sightseeing as well.

When we walked out into the car park, I was immediately struck by the purity of the clean, fresh air. I felt invigorated as I filled my lungs with this healthy, energizing oxygen. It was a sunny, clear August day. The few puffy clouds in the blue sky looked almost artificial. They reminded me of the ones you drew when you were a kid. The majesty of the surrounding mountains created a feeling of protection.

Whitehorse is the largest city in the Yukon and also the capital, with a population at that time of only 24,000. After stopping off at a restaurant, supermarket and gas station, we drove the fifty minute journey down the Carcross Highway and onto Annie Lake Road. As we crossed the river, Tamra said, “There's a native encampment just up there. They are no problem. They keep to themselves. I just don't like to get too close when I take the dogs for a walk.” There were dogs barking and smoke coming from a chimney, which we could see through the trees. Around the



Tamra's cabin and part of the dog yard

bend, I was awed by the magnificence of the mountain range. Some of the taller mountains wore white cloaks, snowy reminders of the previous winter. It seemed strange because it was 26 degrees Centigrade that day.

As we drove into her yard, we were greeted by the sound of a dozen dogs barking with excitement. Each dog was tied up and had its own kennel, close enough for it to play with its neighbour. We found out later that the rest of the

pack were spending the summer with Hugh in Juneau, giving dry land rides to Holland America cruise passengers.

We adapted surprisingly well to the abrupt change of lifestyle: no TV, no heat or inside plumbing, and limited power. The well and septic field had just been dug but, not operational so water had to be pumped directly from the well into containers. It was a precious commodity, reminiscent of our old camping days. The outhouse was the other side of the dog yard. There was no way I was going all that way in the middle of the night. I preferred instead to water the bushes.

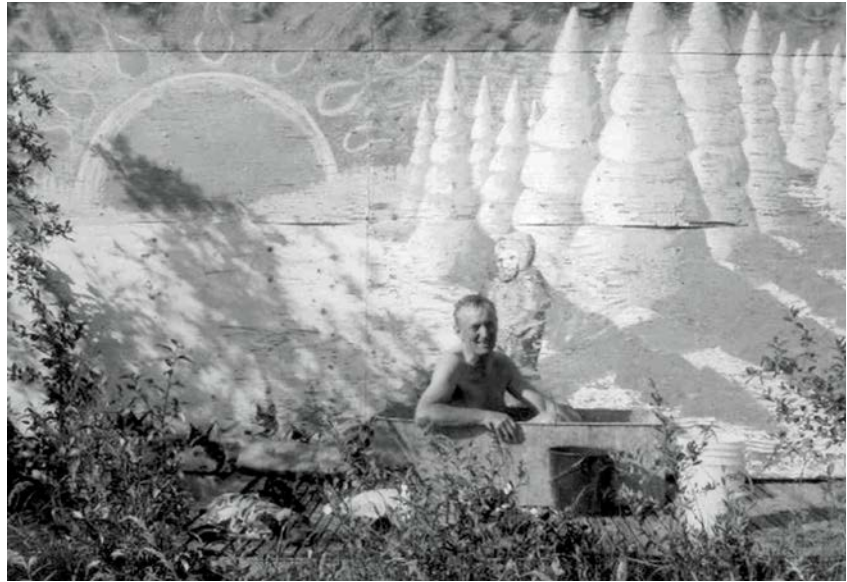
We found a bathtub sitting outside the sauna, which was right next to the lake. “I have an idea,” I said to Bryan. “Why not fill the bath with lake water in the morning and let the sun warm it up during the day? Then we can have a bath every night.”

“I suppose we could try it,” he replied without enthusiasm. I don't know whether the water was too cold or the sun's rays too weak. Either way, the experiment failed. The first time we tried it, the water was still icy cold. I screamed every time Bryan poured a jug of it over my

Meaningful Memories

head. We took photos. There was no second time. Instead, we had to make do with the public showers at the campground at the end of Annie Lake Road.

I think Tamra was first in line when they handed out common sense. She is also good at prioritizing. Living in such a remote location with limited funds, she had to become resourceful and a Jill-of-all-trades. There is a quote by Bob Proctor: “Anyone who ever accomplished anything did not know how they were



Bryan taking a bath

going to do it. They only knew that were going to do it.” That could be Tamra's philosophy. Sitting at the picnic table after supper, she told us of her short and long term plans to improve the property.

The first job was to sand down and repaints two dog boxes. These are fixed to the bed of a truck and used for transporting the pooches. Each dog has its own compartment with a door. It was a messy job, made all the more unpleasant thanks to the unusually warm temperatures. By the end of the day the heat and exertion had bathed us in sweat, which attracted the pesky black flies.

Another plan was to convert an old greenhouse that was attached to the cabin into a storage room and convert the storage room at the other end to a bathroom and laundry room. Whoever built the greenhouse obviously had no plan, no ruler, no pencil and no idea of how to build a structure. In hindsight, it would have been better to just knock it down and start again. The first thing was to strengthen the walls as much as we could, bearing in mind that nothing lined up. Pouring the concrete floor was an exercise in resourcefulness. We drove to a disused pit at the end of Annie Lake Road and filled plastic pails with gravel. Water was drawn from the lake. The sand? Well, that was just about everywhere, because the whole area used to be a desert. The only thing we had to buy were bags of cement. Bryan mixed it the old fashioned way: by hand. The smell of the wet concrete reminded me of when Bryan concreted the basement floor in our house.

It soon became apparent that three people working in a confined space is neither efficient nor safe. After a few caustic comments, Tamra stomped off in a huff, saying, “I’ll leave you two to it. I’m going to tar the roof.”

After she left I remarked, “I’d rather pour concrete than tar a roof.” Smiling, I added, “I never thought I’d hear myself say that.”

After we finished that job, there were plenty more waiting for us. Bryan helped Tamra build a puppy pen and I helped to clean out sheds and other delightful tasks.

Meaningful Memories



Tamra and Bryan overlooking Annie Lake

Lake surrounded by mountains is engraved in my memory.

One afternoon, we took three hours off and canoed around the lake. Annie Lake is a natural habitat for wildlife because there are only four cabins on it. It felt good to commune with nature.



Annie Lake

We could hear the mournful call of a loon. A lonely swan swam nearby. An eagle swooped overhead. On the other side of the lake, beavers were busily building their dam.

The reward for all the hard work was relaxing on the floating dock, sipping wine and drinking in the peace and solitude. My weary body soaked up the therapeutic warmth of the late afternoon sun. High up in the mountains Dahl sheep were barely visible. The air was clear and fresh. It almost took my breath away. The water was so still that the pine trees were clearly mirrored in the lake, which was mesmerizing. The spectacular view of Annie

The highlight of our visit was a road trip to Dawson City, “The Paris of the North,” unspoiled by tourism because of its remoteness. Tamra and Bryan were in the front of her Toyota Tacoma and I shared the narrow back seat with Maverick, the black

lab. The road passed through miles of “burns”—forest fires that had devastated acres of land many years ago where little growth had appeared, other than the purple fireweed which helps to hide the black expanse of devastation. Approaching Dawson, the endless piles of tailings were reminders of the Klondike gold-rush (1896 - 1899), when thousands of people spent months travelling up there to find their fortune. Few were ever rewarded for all their hard work and suffering. Many died in the attempt.

Meaningful Memories

Tamra also organized a trip to Juneau because Hugh wanted to swap some of his working dogs with the stay-at-homes. This entailed a two-hour drive to Skagway and a ferry ride to Juneau. It so happened that my cousin Doreen and her husband Tom were on an Alaskan cruise and stopping off in Skagway. They live in California and so we had only met them once before. Never missing an opportunity to kill two birds with one stone, I arranged to coincide our trip with their stopover in Skagway. I thought it would be a good idea to meet them for breakfast. It didn't quite work out as planned.

I had no idea how difficult it is to organize a few days away when you have animals to look after. Tamra was busily scurrying round feeding dogs, cleaning up the yard, packing, loading up with supplies and making last minute phone calls. Bryan and I were feeling rather helpless and a little anxious because we were late leaving.

Finally we set off, Tamra driving Hugh's truck with six dogs and Bryan driving Tamra's Toyota. She had to stop off at a neighbour's house. We were to wait for her at the end of Annie Lake Road. After a few minutes the truck passed us and turned left. "That's funny," I said. "I thought we would be turning right. Maybe she has to go somewhere else first." We set off in hot pursuit. "Why is she driving so fast?" I said, trying to figure out where we were on the map.

"I have no idea what the hell she's doing," said Bryan. Eventually, it dawned on us that we were following the wrong truck. We turned round and met her as she was coming back to find us.

Finally, we arrived at the Sweet Tooth restaurant. Bryan and I walked in sheepishly and found Doreen and Tom drinking coffee and smiling. In spite of our tardiness, they seemed happy to see us. "Where's Tamra?" asked Doreen.

"Oh, she's gone to the restaurant across the road to rescue Sophie. When we opened the truck door, she escaped and ran in there....probably causing havoc," I replied excitedly. "Oh, I'm so sorry we're late. You won't believe what happened!"

Doreen and Tom watched the three of us tuck into the big breakfast death platter: eggs, bacon and all the fixings. We were starving. After our short and sweet visit, we bid them a fond farewell. It was a few hours before the ferry was due. Tamra was concerned because the dogs were showing signs of overheating, due to the high temperature. She drove them to nearby creek to cool off.

When we met Hugh in Juneau he was wearing his usual torn jeans, a t-shirt and a cap (to hide his receding hairline.) Juneau is the capital of Alaska and only accessible by air or sea. The next morning we all flew to the island of Sitka for a couple of days.

Back in Juneau in the evening, we were sitting in a dimly lit saloon



Bryan, me, Hugh and Tamra in Sitka

Meaningful Memories

drinking a pitcher of beer and listening to the pianist playing honky-tonk music. The smell of beer, cigarette smoke and sawdust filled the air. Suddenly, the music stopped and Hugh said yawning, “I have to work tomorrow. Do you wanna come and see where I work and maybe have a ride on the wagon?”

“Oh, I’d love that,” I said. Little did I know what I was letting myself in for.

The first thing that hit us as we drove into the dog yard the next day was the ear-splitting sound of two hundred dogs barking.

Near the puppy pen, we listened with fascination as Hugh gave his presentation to the cruise passengers. “In a race, a dog can eat up to ten thousand calories a day. That’s even more than you eat daily on the cruise,” he joked. Everyone laughed.

After playing with the puppies, it was time to go on a ride. Bryan’s wagon set off first. While Hugh tied each of his fourteen dogs to the gang line, they were barking excitedly and jumping up and down. All the seats in Hugh’s wagon were full of paying passengers, so I had to stand on the rear platform next to him. The dirt trail cut through the trees. There were ferns growing either side and a carpet of green moss covered the forest floor, evidence of the wet, low-lying location.



The start of the dog sled ride

We started going faster. As we hurtled round the bends at break-neck speed, my heart started pounding. My breathing quickened. Beads of perspiration were running down my forehead. I held onto the bar for dear life. I had to force myself not to scream. The thought did cross my mind that maybe Hugh was trying to do me in!

After twenty hair-raising minutes, he finally shouted “Whoa!” and the

dogs came to a halt. I felt a sense of relief and accomplishment that I had bravely survived the white-knuckle ride. He turned to me and said with a sarcastic grin on his face. “It was a good job I slowed down round those bends.” I was just happy to have lived to tell the tale.

It was Hugh’s fortieth birthday the following weekend, so he came home for a few days. In the evenings we would sit in the lounge, which we shared with several of the older dogs, drinking in the view of the lake through the large picture window. It was light until around midnight, which meant you never realized how late it was. Sometimes Tamra, whose mind never seemed to switch off, would jump up and do something. Hugh would just carry on talking to us, apparently oblivious and not feeling any shame.

In 2011, Hugh moved back to Alaska. They divided up the dogs. Tamra ended up with forty, but that number has since grown. The yard is separated into enclosures, so that the puppies

Meaningful Memories

and retirees can be together. There have been many improvements, including the addition of two decks and indoor plumbing. She now has her bathroom and laundry room.

A couple of years ago, Tamra caught the racing bug. On February 7, 2015, she competed in the one-thousand mile Yukon Quest sled dog race from Whitehorse to Fairbanks, Alaska. She never ceases to amaze us.

Our working holiday at Annie Lake was an experience like no other. Learning to manage without all the things that we take for granted gave us an appreciation for all our modern conveniences. I know it's good to get out of your comfort zone, but as I get older I'm kind of comfortable with my home comforts. However, if you want to go, I'll Alaska if Yukon.



Synchronicity

By Gillian Reynolds

Sometimes we make a decision that changes our lives forever. Events fall neatly into place like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, and we know it was just meant to be. It's called synchronicity.

Standing on the deck of Cunard's MS Queen Elizabeth 2 (the QE2) in Southampton, we had mixed feelings of sadness and excitement, relief and trepidation, courage and fear, as we watched the shoreline slowly slip away. The loud warning blasts from the ship's horn filled the air with a sense of excitement. It must have been very hard for our parents to see us go. Thirty years later, as we bid farewell to our daughter as she drove off in her little Jeep YJ to start her new life in Western Canada, I finally understood how they must have felt saying goodbye to us.

It was October 13, 1969, when Bryan and I set off on our trans-Atlantic voyage to New York and on to Canada. That was the year when man first walked on the moon. Back on earth, 400,000 people attended the Woodstock music festival in New York State and John Lennon and Yoko Ono released "Give Peace a Chance."

It was the ship's thirteenth voyage. Thirteen is supposed to be unlucky. Fortunately, Lady Luck was with us when we decided to leave our birthplace and ultimately adopt Canada as our country. Everything fell into place so neatly that we realized that Canada was not only our destination but also our destiny.

The reason we chose to sail rather than fly was simply this: value for money. The cost for the cruise was one hundred pounds, which was only a little more than the airfare. Besides, it was the opportunity of a lifetime—to experience life on a luxury liner. It took just five days for this majestic ship to make the journey. In that same year, John Fairfax was the first person to row solo across the Atlantic. It took him a little longer!

Meaningful Memories

I had always had a yen to travel. It must be the gypsy in me. Both my father and mother's sisters and their husbands had emigrated to America decades before I got the wanderlust.

By far the hardest part was breaking the news to our family and friends, who were shocked and sorry to see us go. Our parents were the most upset, especially my mother. My father was a little more understanding. I remember his philosophical words, "Well, if you don't leave England, I'm sure your kids will."

It was particularly hard for Bryan's parents. Two of their three daughters had already emigrated, one to Australia and the other to America, and now they were losing their only son. Shaking her head, his mom lamented, "All our kids are leaving us. What did we do wrong?" Of course, they had done nothing wrong and neither had my parents. They were great parents and we loved them dearly, as well as our brothers and sisters and all our friends. This made it exceptionally hard to say "Goodbye," although it was only supposed to be, "Au revoir."

People asked, "Why are you emigrating. Aren't you happy here?"

"Actually, we are not emigrating." I told them. "We're very happy here. We just want to experience life in another country for a year." We were young and full of curiosity and had the spirit of adventure. Well, maybe that applied mainly to me. Bryan would probably have been happy to stay at home. When we were dating he seemed to share my enthusiasm, but it waned somewhat after we got married on February 8th of that year. He started making excuses. "I guess, I should have written it into the marriage contract," I joked. "Anyway, we'll only be away a year."

Although that was our intention, we were told by Canada House in Birmingham that we would have to go through the process of emigration, which we discovered was quite complicated.

If someone asked, "Why Canada?" I would try to explain how we arrived at that decision: "Australia is too far away and the political situation in South Africa, too unstable. Actually, America is our first choice but you can't get there without a job lined up. So, our plan is to stay in Canada for a while and then move across the border. Should be easy. Anyway, it's only for a year."

Synchronicity is all about timing. It seemed to be the right time for us. Having recently tied the knot, we were renting a few rooms in my brother Fred's three hundred-year-old farmhouse. Our furniture was second-hand. We had no permanent roots. Bryan was unhappy in his job. It was now or never.

On board the magnificent liner, there was little time for regret or reflection. We were soon caught up in the excitement of living in the lap of luxury, a world of glamour that was foreign to us. Our days were filled from morning till night participating in many of the activities available on board.

Unfortunately, its thirteenth crossing turned out to be unlucky for the QE2. It was a very rough one. Sometimes the waves swelled up to sixty feet, which meant that no one was allowed out on deck. Even the inside pools were emptied, because the water wouldn't stay where it was supposed to.

None of this bothered us, because our spirits were as high as the waves. The turbulence rocked us to sleep every night, even though we heard strange clanking and grinding sounds from our inside cabin, which was in the bowels of the ship. It also rocked us to sleep in the cinema. We never did see the end of a movie.

Walking along the deck was quite a challenge. So was playing table tennis. To avoid being knocked off our feet, we had to hold on to the table with one hand. That was the only time

Meaningful Memories

I ever beat Bryan at ping-pong. Dancing was quite an adventure. One minute, we were gracefully tripping the light fantastic; the next minute the floor would tilt and we ended up huddled together at one end of the dance floor, stepping on each another's feet. Serving and eating food was no mean fete - keeping it down wasn't easy either! Fortunately, we were never physically seasick. Neither did we get sick of life at sea. There was so much to keep us entertained.

The passengers were mainly American or English. The difference in culture was brought home to us one afternoon, when we were indulging in afternoon tea served in fine china teacups. The waiters, who reminded me of penguins, were serving an assortment of delicate cakes on silver trays. A little old lady with stylish gray hair asked politely in her sweet English accent, "Excuse me waiter, may I have another cake?" A few minutes later I overheard a big Texan guy wearing a Stetson yelling, "Hey Mac, give us another bun."

Our packing cases were shipped with us on the QE2 and then transported by rail to Toronto, which we were told would take at least a fortnight. We spent those two weeks visiting my Auntie Ruby and Uncle Bert and Bryan's sister Ann, husband Frank and their families in Cape Cod and Boston, and learning about life in America. One of my cousins told Bryan that he would be eligible to get called up into the US army. That made us rethink our original plan to move to the States.

The final leg of our journey was the train ride from Boston to Toronto, which took about sixteen hours. I can recall sitting on the train, half awake, gazing out of the window, into the darkness and wondering why the train would speed up and then slow down and finally stop. Sometimes it would even go backwards. It was important that you were in the right carriage, because the train would split at some point. Then it would join up with another one. We were not impressed with the service or speed (or should I say, lack thereof.) There was no comparison with the fast and efficient rail service we were used to back home.

When we crossed the border at Fort Erie, the houses looked different - more like England, many with brick facing.

The first time I had a problem with the language difference was when the ticket collector, a big, burly black man, stopped by our seat and asked to see our tickets. "You goin' Tronna?" he asked gruffly.

"No," I replied succinctly "We're going to T o r o n t o."

"That's right," he said, "Tronna."

My cousin Gerry met us at Union Station. We were so happy to see his smiling face. I did not know if I would recognize him, because it had been years since we last met, but he had not changed. We stayed with him and his wife Rita and their four children in Scarborough. That was quite a culture shock. We were not used to all the noise and hustle and bustle of family life. Neither were we used to babysitting, which we had to do in the evenings, while both parents worked. It wasn't long before we started looking for a place of our own to rent.

When I phoned to check whether the packing cases had arrived in Toronto, I was shocked to hear that they had been there for two weeks and that we were paying a daily storage fee! I phoned Mrs. Roy straight away. We had shared a table with her on the QE2. She was the owner of a large trucking business in Toronto, and her last words to us were, "When you need a truck driver to move your packing cases, please give me a call."

When I asked if she could arrange to transport the cases, she exclaimed, "Oh, I'm so glad you called! I wanted to phone you, but I lost your number. I'm leaving for Florida in two days and I wondered if you would look after my house for me until I return in the spring." She made it sound as if we were doing her a favor! We could not believe our luck. She refused to accept

Meaningful Memories

money for rent, and insisted that she pay all the bills, including our telephone! We owe her a huge debt of gratitude. Her generosity helped to ease the transition from our comfortable life in England to our strange new world in Canada.

Our lucky stars were shining down on us. Everything was falling nicely into place. We were so happy. Life was very exciting. Every day was a new adventure. It was like being on vacation. The challenges of a new country are many but we met and overcame every obstacle with positive energy and a sense of humor. Of course, we were young and full of unbridled enthusiasm. Everything was strange - the currency, the place names, even the language. Both countries speak English but we soon found out, sometimes to our embarrassment, that many things were called by a different name. We discovered that in Canada you drive on a parkway and park on a driveway. Also, a pavement is something you walk on in the UK and drive on in Canada.

Anxious to find out all we could about Canada, we would listen eagerly to advice: “First thing you have to do is establish credit.” “Credit” - that was a dirty word in England in those days. “You have to get Canadian experience in the workforce. You have to start again at the bottom of the corporate ladder.” Fortunately, that didn’t happen to us. I think our English education and accent helped there.

Someone once said, “Canada had a wonderful opportunity to have French culture, English government and American know-how. It ended up with French government, English know-how and American culture.” American culture was fine by us. We found it refreshingly different.

A year after leaving England, we were still in Canada. During that time, we had made two very important decisions, which changed our lives forever. We abandoned our original plan to live in the States. We had fallen in love with Canada and felt more at home there, because of the British influence. We also decided to make it our permanent home and not to return to England. A few years later we became citizens. So we were English by birth, Canadians by adoption.

Synchronicity happens when things are “meant to be.” It seems we were meant to be Canadians, even though part of my heart will always be in England.



Born in Birmingham, England, during the war; married her childhood sweetheart and lived in a bungalow (which they helped build) near Coventry; divorced; married Bryan; immigrated to Canada in 1969; lived for thirty years in a bungalow (which they helped build) on the Niagara Escarpment, where they owned horses and grew fruits and vegetables; raised two children, one of whom lives in Guelph and the other in Whitehorse, Yukon; worked mostly as a legal secretary; moved to an Adult Community in Milton in 2002; enjoys yoga and aerobics at the Leisure Centre, hiking, biking and just being outdoors, and of course writing.



The Sadness and Happiness Trip

By Sawsan Kondos

She passes through my thoughts almost every day, a whisper of memory as light as the breeze of spring upon my face. She visits me in a dream many nights, as gentle as the touch of her kind lips when she kissed me. She passed away fifteen years ago. At the time, I was almost 54 years old. All those years, my mind was haunted by her soul around me. At first I thought



Me with my first-born son in Egypt, 1969.

that, after a few months, I would get used to life without her, especially as I am a mother and a grandmother. I have many precious ones in my life, but she is still in my thoughts.

The funeral service was held in the Coptic Orthodox Church at Heliopolis, Cairo. A lot of people attended the mass, dressed in elegant black. A few of them looked sad. Two ladies were whispering quietly. One said, “Why are they so sad; why all those tears for one who passed away aged 94 years? It’s the normal end.”

“Mothers are always the dearest at any age,” the other replied.

In the few years before my mom left our world, a strong friendship had grown more and more between us, perhaps because I had spent many years away from Egypt working in Kuwait. I could only visit my mom in Cairo once a year, during my summer vacation. After the Gulf War, I was back in Cairo. I had lost my job. It was a big loss to leave behind my friends, my house, my car and everything I had built in 16 years. In that dark time, Mom was a big support for me.

Meaningful Memories

It was the happiest time for me when I spent some time with Mom on her balcony chatting and a lot of memories we shared, with two cups of hot tea mixed with fresh green mint leaves that she usually grew in an old black pot and with her delicious homemade cake that melted in your mouth. No one can make it like her. Around us, birds landed on an old broken bird's table, picking at their favourite seeds. Down the balcony, two or three cats mewed, mewed waiting for some snack of cake and milk.



Me with my daughter, Cairo, 1972

Mom was always waiting for me preparing some subjects to discuss. She was interested in historical and nonfiction events. She was a woman

fond of the Old Testament stories from the Holy Bible, especially the book of Isaiah, the prophet who worked about 800 years before Jesus was born. She was a believer who trusted in God's will, believed that He will save those who trust in Him, and are waiting for Him.

One day she asked, "Have you read about King Henry the Eighth?"

"Yes Mom," I replied, "for sure."

"How many wives did he marry?"

"Um, I think five women ... no Mom, six starting with Catherine of Aragon—their marriage continued 24 years. Then, Ann Boleyn—he had her executed, and ending with Catherine his widow."

"Did he get a son from those six young wives, an heir to his throne?"

"I think not, Mom. There was a boy who passed away as a kid. After Henry, his daughter Mary ruled England and was followed by his daughter Elizabeth."

"See," she said, "It's not our work, it's God's will."

My Mom never had to work. She didn't attend university or college, but she had wide knowledge. When she watched an old historical movie, she would ask everything about that era. In her point of view, she considered that Abraham Lincoln was the best president in history as he, with strong hand, could get rid of slavery but she always repeated, "Their faith in God, saved them." She trusted that our faith can still do miracles.



My Mom in 1992

My father was working in the train station, in a small town beside Giza City. The Egyptian Railways Company gave him a house beside the station to be close in case of an emergency. That was in 1949. We could see the Pyramids from the attic of our house. A garden was in front of the house and a backyard, behind it. Mom used to raise some chickens, ducks, and rabbits in her backyard. She always bought them when they were small. We kept chickens (Katkot) with yellow golden feathers and took high care of them, till they got bigger. In the evening before dark, my mother would call them, "Koc, koc, koc.....koccccc!" They understood

Meaningful Memories

and gathered around her. She put them in a cardboard box and covered them with a soft blue blanket – no central heating in houses – she liked to protect her small chickens from the cold. Then they started to call, “soo....sssoooo” and after some time they stopped.

By the spring they had grown and they were ready to live in the backyard. They were playing and chasing each other, eating and enjoying their time. Every Saturday night we had a feast in our dining room with home-raised chickens or ducks, but I never ever tasted from my darling birds. Every one of them had a name in my mind and they were my favourite friends in my childhood.



Me with my Mom, Dad, three elder sisters and two brothers in 1949. My eldest sister had recently been married. My youngest brother was born one year after this photo was taken.

One day it was Sham El Nassim Day. That is an old Egyptian festival which means “first day to breathe the spring breeze.” It always comes on Easter Monday. My family invited all my aunts and uncles and their kids to spend the day in our lovely garden, with a lot of greens and the smell of roses mixed with Jasmine flowers. The scent was spread everywhere by the soft wind of spring. The bees would buzz, buzz, buzz around the flowers which made the smell like a honey taste in your mouth.

It was my sadness, when one of my aunties surprised me by saying to me, “What a pretty girl; you became a young lady. Your mom was so sad when she gave birth to you, as you were the fifth girl. She felt that she was cursed by having five girls.”

“No, no,” my dad replied nervously. “It was for a few days only after delivery. Come my youngest girl, give me a big hug.” As a little kid I didn’t have any interest in what she said. I understood after I became an adult that it happens for some mothers after delivery because of a change in hormones. I understood the traditional thinking in that area, preferring a baby boy rather than a girl and I found an excuse for my mom. But the hurting of some words is carved in our minds. I spent a long time feeling that I was not wanted because I was a girl and that made me try to buy love from my friends and teachers. For example, I used to represent my gifts to them to welcome me. Of course I am healing now from that, but it’s a lesson to watch our tongues.

After my dad passed away in 1966, my Mom moved to an apartment in the first floor building in Heliopolis. In front of her balcony, there was a little garden. She worked her hobby to plant a very nice plant with white flowers named Fuel. The flowers looked like Jasmine flowers but were bigger with a very nice strong smell that could fill the air on hot summer nights and

Meaningful Memories

decrease the feeling of heat. After Mom left us, the trees of Fuel died and were buried in the ground as they liked to share their owner's fate.

For some time I tried to stay and live in my mom's apartment, but it was so hard. She seemed to exist in every corner. In the dawn when it was still so dark and quiet, I awoke to drink water or for some medication and I saw her in the same corner in a white robe and scarf. She was raising her hands and praying. Another time I saw her in her kitchen, the smell of her baking cake in my nose. "Oh, Jesus Christ...is it a dream, or vision?" I felt so tired. The place that was lovely once was not now. I deserted it for good, gave away all her stuff as a donation and never looked back. The nice places are nonsense without our precious ones.

I departed Egypt and came to Canada where my kids and their families are. I started a new life. My memories are hiding in a deep and so small place my heart. I am enjoying my new life around my grandkids. I enjoy reading and helping newcomers, especially in my Coptic Orthodox Church on Nipissing Road in Milton.

In my small apartment, reading history books makes me feel that I am still sharing my Mom's ways.



Sawsan was born in 1944 in Egypt; graduated in Economic and Political Science, Cairo University, 1965; Married in 1968; Gifted by a son and daughter; finished her Masters degree in Statistics, 1974; With her husband, she transferred to Kuwait where she worked almost 15 years as a lecturer of Statistics. After her husband passed away, she immigrated to Canada, almost with the new century, to be near her kids, her four grandsons and her only granddaughter.

She enjoys spending time serving in her Coptic orthodox church in Milton, helping newcomers. Also, she likes to read historical books. She has participated many times in the Evergreen adult summer reading program at Milton Public Library.



Two Days in Spring, 1974

By Eva Hegedus

I fell for Zoltan in the spring of 1970, when he almost fell on top of me.

The members of the Kodaly Ensemble, distributed among three buses, were on their way to Cleveland, Ohio. They would be performing Hungarian dances and songs in front of a packed auditorium. Zoltan sang in the choir. He had decided this was his chance to introduce himself to a certain dancer. I was that dancer. As the bus picked up speed on the highway, I could see him weave down the aisle in my direction, but I didn't realize his intentions at first. Then he stopped and blocked the access to where I sat, half way down the bus. Just as he leaned in to talk to me, the bus jerked and he almost toppled forward. I caught myself thinking that I wouldn't mind too much if this handsome fellow did land on me. Then I heard his low, soft voice. "Eva, can I interest you in a game of scrabble?" How could I not fall for a man with such a soothing voice and original approach?

Our courtship began on that trip and would culminate in wedding bells two years later. Beyond my initial physical attraction to him, I loved Zoltan's zest for life, his enthusiasm, and his energy. What I had to offer was a more thoughtful and balanced approach. While he tended to get very intense and jump into projects feet first, I held back until I was sure the project made sense. I found an element of humor in most situations. He rarely did.

Both our families had fled from oppressive regimes in Hungary. We had experienced lean years as our parents scraped by in Canada. But there had also been much love and many good memories during those years. We both adored our fathers. The saddest day of in my life, so far, was the day my father died of a heart attack. I was eight. Zoltan soon came to understand why my mother had been nicknamed "tough cookie" by her friends. With every single calamity life threw in her face, my mother only grew stronger. She and my dad had come to Canada to secure a better life for their three children. Even the death of my dad (the only man she would ever love), would not stop her from achieving their original goal. Her trump cards in life were her strong will and her fierce love of family.

Meaningful Memories

Our wedding had included traditional vows including the “for better or worse, in sickness and in health” phrase. We hadn’t a clue what life had in store for us but we couldn’t imagine anything as horrible as what our parents went through. In any case, we were confident that we knew each other well after four years together.

As it turned out, we didn’t know each nearly as well as we thought. Two days in the spring of 1974 would reveal two very different extremes of where life could take us. Our first child was born on March 27, 1974; the event would mark the new high point of our married life. But just six weeks later, I would not recognize the man who joined me at my mother’s house. Our lives could easily have spun out of control on that day, had it not been for my mother’s ability to stay calm and rational in the eye of a storm.

In August of 1973, we were thrilled to learn I was pregnant. The books I read gave me a lot of facts about pregnancy. However, none of those books described the psychological transformation that would take place. The baby, so tiny at first, took over my hormones, my body, my emotions and finally even my identity. Instead of one person, I was now two people sharing one body. The experience came to a peak during the last hour of my labor on March 27, 1974.

Just before noon on that day, I screamed, “Help me!” at the top of my lungs. Suddenly, the baby, after staying still through twelve hours of increasing waves of longer contractions, turned head over heels and completed either a 180 or a 360 degree somersault. I wasn’t sure what direction he or she now faced and I panicked. This could be trouble. I instinctively screamed for help.

It’s hard to believe from today’s perspective, but this hospital, and many others, did not allow husbands into the labor or delivery rooms. I had been alone for all of my labor. So it was a sweet moment indeed, when a nurse came running into my room and checked my progress. As soon as she checked me, she yelled for backup. The baby’s head was crowning, and we were minutes from birth.

Two nurses rushed me into the delivery room and helped me turn onto my side. Minutes later, the anesthetist was beside me, and I could see Dr. W. scrubbing in. I finally had everybody’s full attention. I was told to stay completely still, pant, and not push. Somehow, I don’t know how, I did just that. The needle entered my back at exactly the right spot and delivered exactly the right dose of medication. Within seconds I was floating, free of pain, but completely alert. After 20 minutes of unproductive pushing, I finally managed to bear down well enough for Dr. W. to get in with forceps and pull my baby into the world.

Just seconds after the birth, I heard “smack, slurp, smack, slurp” and wasn’t even sure if the noises came from the baby. As the doctor lifted my beautiful pink-complexioned baby girl on high, I could see she had the index and middle fingers of her right hand firmly planted in her mouth; she continued to suck loudly on those two fingers. Now I understood why two of the nurses had been smiling. I zoomed in on her dark, alert eyes. She had looked up at the bright lights and was



*Kristina, two weeks old.
April, 1974*

Meaningful Memories

tracking them across the ceiling. She was so perfectly calm, in fact, I could almost have imagined her saying, “Well that wasn’t so bad, mom. What’s next?” The doctor remarked that she was a perfect size and seemed very strong.

“Have you picked a girl’s name?”

“Yes, her name is Kristina...Kristina Susan Hegedus.”

Kristina Susan Hegedus had a perfect head, long tapered fingers, and the correct number of fingers and toes. I smiled at her chubby thighs which had to have come from me. Even her umbilical cord was beautiful to me. The twisting, opaque, bluish-pinkish cord was inches from my eyes. It still pulsed with my blood and still joined her body to mine.

From now on, she would be able to explore the world outside my body. She would feel the touch of her parents, hear the sound of their voices. For that matter, she would finally hear the sound of her own voice. A nurse placed her on my chest. Now I felt her soft, warm body. I felt her heart beating fast next to mine. I cried as I experienced her separateness and closeness in the same moment.

Only my son’s birth, 19 months later, could match the high I experienced that day. Only the word “miracle” adequately captured what the whole experience meant to Zoltan and me.



Zoltan with Kristina, 1974

I felt sad for Zoltan. He had been denied those first precious moments because of hospital rules. He had to wait till mid afternoon, to finally see and hold his daughter. He too would fall in love with his daughter as he held her for the first time. During his ten days of daddy leave from his job in Milton, he rocked her, sang softly to her in English and Hungarian, made funny faces and sounds up close to her face. Both Kristina and I loved the sound of his gentle voice. He kissed her head, hands, back and belly. Kristina never failed to react with happy baby sounds if one of us approached her.

Far too soon, however, Zoltan went back to his shifts at the School for the Deaf. He drove there each day from our apartment in the west end of Toronto. He also had a part-time job as organist and choir master of a children’s choir at

St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in the east end of Toronto. He spent a lot of time just driving back and forth from home, to Milton, to the east end, to the west end and back to work. Now that we had a baby, I resented the long hours he spent away from us. One night, when he came home at midnight, I confronted him.

“Zoltan, your ‘part-time’ job at the church, plus your full time job at the school, equals two full time jobs. Think of all the time you spend organizing music, practicing pieces, holding rehearsals. You say we should hold the baptism soon, but that puts extra pressure on both of us. And now, to make things even worse, you’ve gone up to your parents’ farm for the last couple of Saturdays to help. Enough already! You can only slice a pie into so many pieces until there’s nothing left. Pretty soon there will be nothing left for your wife and child. I need you to stay with Kristina sometimes, so I can shop or get to my appointments. You need to think of us as a priority now that you’re a father.”

Meaningful Memories

“Dear, I understand why you’re upset, but this will only be for a few more weeks. Then I’ll be off for the whole summer. My parents are desperate to get approval for the KOA project. They have already invested money and 10 years of their lives to get a KOA camp ground built on their property. We’re caught between the reeve giving us the go ahead and the Niagara Commission deciding there can be no campground on this part of the Escarpment.”

I didn’t complain again, but I didn’t like Zoltan’s hectic schedule any better: I felt he was juggling too many tasks, shortchanging us, and getting shortchanged on sleep as well. Kristina was now 4 weeks old. We set the second Sunday of May as the baptism date. Zoltan’s cousin, George and his wife Gyongyi, were thrilled to be the godparents. Gyongyi was sewing a beautiful baptismal gown for Kristina; she also designed the invitation that we sent out. I went to stay with my mom for the week before the baptism since Zoltan was away so much. He promised to join me there on the Thursday before the baptism. At 10:00 or 10:30 my mom’s phone rang loudly three times before I could pick it up in the kitchen. I was holding Kristina.

Zoltan’s voice sounded edgy, rushed, and loud. “I’ll be there by 2:30 or 3:00. Don’t bother with lunch, I’m not hungry anyway and I have so much to do. I prayed for extra energy and God must have been listening! I feel so pumped up...feel like I could run three marathons. I’ve been able to go without a rest for about a week now. Let’s hope I can keep it up and everyone else can keep up with me. Bye, love you, gotta go.”

I barely squeaked out a “bye” before he hung up. My stomach did a few flips and I couldn’t hide my concern from my mom who had come in from the garden and was now standing close to me.

“That was Zoltan on the phone. He’ll get here by about three and we should go ahead and have lunch. But mom, he was talking so fast and loud I barely knew it was him. He didn’t even ask about Kristina or the baptism. He’s pushing himself far too hard and seems to think he doesn’t need sleep. I’m getting really anxious about him.”

“My Baby, don’t get too worked up before you see him. He’s just one of those intense Hungarians. Is it time for Kristina’s lunch? I can see she’s rooting around on your shirt.”

“Yes, you’re right, I’ll go nurse her.”

I kept myself busy with the baby. I fed and changed her, then I took her for a ride in her stroller on Neville Park. The time I spent with her kept me from being preoccupied with Zoltan’s odd behavior.

I had my lunch, put Kristina down for another nap and was tidying up when I heard clomp, clomp, on the stairs to the front veranda. My mom came to find me. By the time we reached the living room, Zoltan had already stepped into the house, loaded down with two battered briefcases and 4 other bags chock-a-block with God knows what.

We were both shocked when we saw Zoltan; he looked almost like a twin brother who had been through a war. His green eyes were lit up with an intensity I’d never seen before. They darted about, not really focusing on any person or object for more than 2 seconds. There were dark circles under each of his eyes; his face was gaunt; his arms were thin. Usually he took care to wash, shave and put on a fresh shirt when we went out. Both he and his clothes needed a good scrub judging by the stains and body odor. His brown moustache and hair both needed to be groomed.

He launched into a monologue, talking so fast that he dropped and slurred some of his words. He took only short gasps of air.

“I have a thousand things to do...no time for baptism, maybe in summer. Sorry. Need everyone’s help to seal the deal on KOA...we might even have to hire some hotshot lawyer from

Meaningful Memories

Toronto to contact our MP in Ottawa...10 years our family's been dealing with one idiot or dunce after another....went to Georgetown counselors and the Reeve to find out why they are sitting on their asses. Don't they know that putting a KOA on Hwy. 7 between Acton and Georgetown will put Georgetown on the map? Can't they see that? I sure hope you and your mom can see that, Evi. Our family and our KOA will be the toast of the town and we'll have our names in every publication...It's a David and Goliath story and we all know who won. Everybody around me must be taking sedatives. They are moving like snails...same thing with the choir and congregation at church on Sunday...they were as quiet as mice during the Gloria. Finally, I couldn't take it anymore and yelled down from the balcony to the congregation, "SING LOUDER, SING BEAUTIFULLY!" but then Father Neil yelled back at me, "This is not choir practice, Mr. Hegedus. Continue with mass." I met Father Neil outside the church because he wanted to discuss what happened. On my way out of the church I made more noise banging against the pews, something like Jesus with the money lenders. Outside, after mass, Father Neil told me I needed to see a psychiatrist. He thought I was having a breakdown. "Don't come back to church until you get help....please, it's for your own good." Those were his last words. I'm never going back to that place."

Zoltan stopped there. He was completely out of breath and had finally run out of words. Then he gave me a hard peck on the cheek saying, "Sorry, dear, forgot to do that...but you do see why I will need your help, don't you?" I felt bile from my stomach creep up into my throat. My knees gave out. I had to sit down. I couldn't come up with a single word as a reply to his last question. Thankfully, my mom stayed as cool as a cucumber. She talked to Zoltan as if nothing unusual was happening.

"Zoltan, you will collapse if you try to keep up this pace. You are talking and moving so fast I can't keep up with you at all. Maybe that's how you seem to other people too. But everyone reaches a point when their body is telling them to get some sleep. If you can't relax, I can give you a half of one of my sleeping pills. You'll feel much better after sleeping for three or four hours. Your mind will work better and you won't be impatient with everyone. Did you realize that you are sometimes yelling?"

"Oh dear, I'm sorry if I was rude. I will rest as soon as I make an urgent call to my dad."

Inspired by my mother's approach and her calmness, I found something to catch Zoltan's attention. "Darling, you have been going full tilt for six days now. Even God rested on the seventh day."

He relaxed for a second: "You got me there. I don't put myself above God. I will go and sleep and maybe take that half pill. Maybe I'll take a slice of bread upstairs with me too."

He was true to his word and headed upstairs. My mother and I could hear him moving back and forth between two bedrooms.

"Baby, I'll take Zoltan that sleeping pill and a sandwich. I'm also going to call Dr. K to come to the house as soon as he can. Because the two of them are friends, I think Zoltan will respect what Dr. K. tells him. That priest wasn't far off the mark about Zoltan having a breakdown. Do you not think Zoltan's behaviour could be caused by a mental illness? You're shaking your head. I don't want to scare you, but I've seen some of this crazy talk before when you were away in France. Zoltan came to the house, all keyed up and loud. He asked me for money for one of his projects. I told him I needed to keep my savings in the bank in case of emergencies."

"Oh, mom, he just can't be ill...he might lose his job and then what will happen to us? We rely on his income completely since I lost my teaching job last year. But it is a good idea to

Meaningful Memories

call Dr. K to the house. My mind just isn't functioning any more. I'm so glad you can think clearly and can act for me."

From that point, things moved quickly. Dr. K was at the house by 4:30 and went in to talk quietly to Zoltan. After thirty minutes, he came down to us. "I've given Zoltan a very strong sedation that will take effect in about twenty minutes. I think his behavior is due to a chemical imbalance. To be absolutely sure, he will need a proper assessment in a hospital. Zoltan is willing to go and speak to the psychiatrist at Etobicoke General. He is frightened; his thoughts are moving faster and faster; he is having strange visions. Sometimes he is sure he sees or hears someone in the room. I told him Dr. M. is the best psychiatrist I know. He asked if his dad could take him in the morning. Eva, he would like to see you before the sedation kicks in. He's worried that he has frightened you."

I went straight up after thanking Dr. K. I was relieved that we were so much closer now to getting help. I no longer had any doubt that Zoltan had an illness. When I opened the door, Zoltan was sitting slumped forward on the edge of the bed. All the fight and intensity had drained from his eyes; he just stared down at a random scattering of papers, bibles, rosaries, musical scores and photographs (some of Kristina and I) that covered every inch of the floor. He looked up at me.

"Oh darling, I think I am going round the bend. I couldn't find the baptismal candle I bought for Kristina and I was convinced someone came in and took it; I thought that person was hiding in the room. When your mom came in she found it in 3 seconds. Do think this doctor in Etobicoke can help me? My head is just spinning faster and faster. Please just hold me until I fall asleep."

I lay down with him. I held him until his grip loosened, he relaxed, and he started to snore. All the time we embraced I kept whispering, "Just sleep. You'll feel better soon, I promise. I love you and I won't leave you. Kristina needs her daddy back."

Zoltan went to Etobicoke General in the morning with his dad. He would spend 2 full weeks there and was treated very effectively with Lithium. Dr. M. explained that Zoltan had had a manic episode and that mania (the "up" end of manic/depressive or bipolar illness) responded well to Lithium. However, the exact dosage for Lithium needed to be determined under supervision. Zoltan's biggest fear during those two weeks was that he'd be given shock treatment with electrodes. He saw patients who



*Eva, Zoltan and Kristina with Father Andrew
July 8, 1974*



*Kristina in her baptismal gown
July 8, 1974*

Meaningful Memories

had received shock treatments and the sight frightened him. But Dr. M. assured Zoltan that he wouldn't need shock therapy. It was only ever used, he explained, to treat depression that didn't respond to any of the available medications. He told Zoltan that he would be able to return to his full time job in about a month. This doctor was the kindest, most approachable psychiatrist Zoltan would ever go to.

Zoltan was able to return to his job; his supervisors at the school were very accommodating.

We were able to hold Kristina's baptism on June 8th at St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church, the same church in which we were married. The service went off without a hitch. Every time the priest said a line, Kristina replied with a line of babble in her own language. She thought it was a game.



Zoltan with Kristina (1 ½) Eva with Gabor (2 months)

As it turned out (which was unfortunate for both of us), Zoltan would always be prone to manic episodes whenever he went off his meds. The three side effects of the meds that bothered him the most were a constant dry mouth, the tremor it caused in his hands and the sluggish feeling it gave him, as if he were slogging through mud. Being on the meds, however, allowed him to keep working at the school for the next twenty eight years. He was a wonderful father to our daughter and our son. Now that we are both retired, we are able to

enjoy time with our four beautiful grandsons. He has always told me how grateful he is that I came every day to the hospital with Kristina back in the spring of 1974.

I asked Dr. M., at one point, what had triggered Zoltan's mania in the first place. Dr. M. looked at Kristina, who was in my arms. "As beautiful as little Kristina is, the birth a child can overwhelm a new parent and trigger some kind of episode. In Zoltan's case, it was mania rather than depression. And it was him rather than you because he had an underlying chemical imbalance. I would say the two of you are very lucky that he has this form of bipolar illness and you sought help at the first signs of trouble. Family support is crucial for dealing with this illness. The two of you seem to love each other. That will go a long way in helping you get through the tough times ahead."

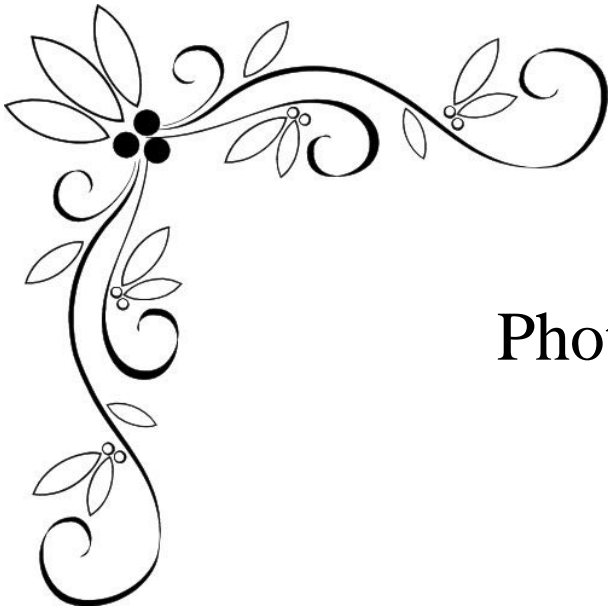
Suddenly, it made so much sense to me. I had heard of post-partum depression in women. This was just the other side of the coin. Zoltan had experienced an extreme high instead of a low.

Meaningful Memories

Forty years later, a plaque hangs in our kitchen. The plaque spells out Zoltan's advice to family. "Don't try to understand me, just love me." I have tried ever so hard to understand him. I don't get very far. That leaves love, and no one ever promised us that love was going to be easy.



Eva and Zoltan Hegedus have been married for 43 years. They have two children and four grandsons. In this story, Eva describes the events and impact of two days in spring, 1974.



Photographic Memories

By Judy Henderson



My sisters, Mary and Kendra, and I wearing our red jumpers made by Mom. Harry Hinkley also took photos for my wedding to David Ernest Brunner on August 25, 1984

“Say cheese,” demands Harry Hinkley, the photographer in our small town of Hanover. He has to work quickly. His subjects are my two little sisters and me, and we are unaccustomed to sitting still for very long.

Today is a very special occasion. It is autumn, 1965 and Mom and Dad have taken us to get our photograph taken at his studio.

“Judy,” he says to me firmly, “you stand in the back, since you are the tallest. Mary and Kendra are little so they will sit in front of you.” Our placement in this picture is logically pleasing. Yet it also reflects our obvious birth order. At five years old, I am the eldest sister. Brunette-haired and round-faced, I have a twinkle in my blue eyes that spreads all the way to the dimples in my cheeks. My three year old blonde-haired, blue-eyed sister Mary, sits in front of me on my left, her trusting little smile revealing pearly white baby teeth and those same trademark Henderson dimples. Kendra, at aged two is the baby of the family and sits beside Mary. She shares my hair colour, the hazel eyes of our mom and a slightly worried look all her own as she peers, wonderstruck at the photographer.

Suddenly, there is a brilliant and blinding flash

Meaningful Memories

and an audible ‘click’ of the large black box and our images are captured for posterity.

“Lovely,” says Mr. Hinkley, decisively, as he reappears from underneath the blackout cloth that affords an optimum view of this image. Turning to my parents, he states authoritatively, “Bob and Reta, your friends and family will be very pleased to receive this picture for Christmas.”

This is a proud moment for Mom and Dad. Their three little girls have behaved pretty well and they look so adorable in their freshly pressed, long-sleeved white cotton blouses and matching red polyester jumpers sewn by Mom. My parents look forward to mailing this photograph with Christmas cards. Nanna and Grandpa Henderson in Niagara Falls and Grandy and Papa Tennier in Oshawa will coo and smile.

“Such a lovely little family,” state both sets of grandparents proudly, when they open the Christmas letter and see the picture inside.

“Darling girls,” reflects Nanna to Grandpa from the comfort of their beautiful Victorian home near the Horseshoe Falls. “Bob is so proud of his little family.”

Meanwhile, over in Oshawa, Grandy reminisces as she considers our family photograph. “Reminds me of much earlier times when our own daughters were that age. Reta has done a lovely job dressing those children on a shoestring budget,” remarks Grandy wryly to Papa from their tiny, brick, working class home in Canada’s automotive capital. She studies the colour photograph again with thoughtful admiration for her daughter’s sewing skills. Papa has just returned home from his assembly line work building cars at General Motors where he has worked for decades.

Of course, this is what I imagine occurred all those years ago. My grandparents’ encouraging words are surely what I would say today, if I had grandchildren of my own. Yet the pride and happiness they undoubtedly felt at viewing that photograph almost fifty years ago, are surely the same emotions I have for my own two daughters, now aged twenty-one and eighteen.

So many memories, I think contentedly. It is the present day, and I sit comfortably in my suburban Milton kitchen, looking at childhood photographs that have not been viewed in years. We really did have a lovely, carefree childhood.

I am lost in thought. Funny how memories tucked away for so long can suddenly tumble out from a photograph as if on their own accord, demanding to be acknowledged. Who really remembers what they were like, who they were, or what they did when they were so little?

Yet photographs have a unique way to recapture lives once lived, emotions once shared, and thoughts that are all but lost to time.



*Mom and I taken in a Chesley photographic studio in
1960*

Meaningful Memories

I turn back to the photograph album, allowing myself to be transported back in time, wondering where my memories will take me next.



My grandparents—Grandpa (Joseph Charles Henderson) and Nanna (Alice Mary Perks) who travelled from Niagara Falls to celebrate my first birthday in July 1961. At that time my parents (Robert or ‘Bob’ James Henderson and Reta May (nee Tennier)) and I lived in a rented Chesley farmhouse.

July 1961. This photograph must surely commemorate my first birthday. Grandpa and Nanna sit rather uncomfortably on the firm, grey, living room sofa in our rented Chesley farmhouse. I squirm happily on my prim and proper grandmother’s lap.

“Please take the photograph, Reta dear. This child will not sit here very much longer, I’m afraid,” Nanna commands somewhat nervously as she peers out at my mother from behind ‘cat-shaped’ glasses. “Besides, we have dinner to get on with,” she adds, noting the savory aroma of pot roast with carrots and potatoes coming from the kitchen.

Mom smiles, unaffected by the comment. She positions the flashcube atop the Kodak camera, peers into the viewfinder and prepares to capture this special moment in her first child’s life. Out-of-town family rarely visit and she is thankful for the company, even if it

is her mother and father-in-law.

“Yes, please dear. We travelled all morning to get to your ‘neck of the woods.’ I want to walk about the farm with Bob while you women finish making the meal,” adds Grandpa authoritatively.

Grandpa also appears slightly on edge. It could be their long drive from the ‘falls,’ as all of the Henderson family lovingly call their hometown of Niagara. It could also be because Nanna has whisked away his crutch and cane so they would not appear in the photograph. As a victim of polio in the first decade of the twentieth century, he relied on these and on extraordinarily heavy, shapeless, black boots which strapped to his legs with braces to provide stability for walking, albeit with great difficulty. Yet his crusty personality must have served him well. He remained independent his whole life, maintaining an active membership in the Fort Erie Boat Club and operating a successful optometry practice in the front office of my grandparents’ gracious home.

Mom takes the shot and Nanna places me gently on the floor with my favorite satin-edged flannel blanket. A woolly hand knit lamb made by Mom or perhaps Nanna, is placed into my chubby baby hands. I flash a toothy smile, and all adult tension is diffused. Our silky red-haired Irish setter called Pat, nestles up beside me, my protector while the adults are temporarily

Meaningful Memories

gone. Boots, our black cat with the white feet, ambles up to join our cozy duo. I babble and gurgle cheerfully and they smile back, as only devoted pets can do.

When dinner arrives I am whisked into my chrome-plated highchair with the melamine tray and red vinyl seat. For my birthday dessert there is a single candle marking my first year of life. Little fingers and a beaming face are sticky with remnants of Mom's delicious homemade cake with pink icing. This has been a grand day for everyone.

Our time on that farm in rural Chesley where my first birthday took place was short-lived. By 1962 Dad had been promoted to regional salesman for the United Co-operatives of Ontario and our family moved to the small town of Wingham. Dad had a degree in agriculture from the University of Guelph, an achievement which for his generation was still unique. Although he was born and raised in urban Niagara Falls, he had inherited the Henderson tradition to appreciate the natural world. He employed this love in promoting new products to farmers.

At this time, our family also expanded with the birth of a brand new baby sister for me. Mary was her given name.

"We are calling her Mary Ellen," I can imagine Dad telling Nanna excitedly on the rotary telephone. "Mary has been a fine, Henderson family name for generations."

"That's wonderful news, dear," Nanna would say, reflecting proudly on her son's sensitivity to tradition. She herself was a volunteer at the Niagara Falls Historical Museum and a member of the Niagara branch of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire. "Your sister Mary will be so happy. Now we have two little granddaughters named Mary- Mary Elizabeth, your sister's new daughter, and your own child, Mary Ellen."

"Yes of course, mom, but we were also thinking of you, too- and your name, Alice Mary," Dad would have said enthusiastically, reassuring his mother of her importance as the 'matriarch of the Mary's.'

Years later, in 1991, my sister would continue this same tradition but with a new, modern twist, when she named her first born daughter, Kyla Marie.

I was two years old when Mary was born. Content from the outset, as second born children can often be, Mary had much patience as I vied with her for the attention of our mother. Mom watched over us carefully but not fretfully. One morning I escaped Mom's watchful eye as she attended to the needs of my baby sister. Thinking to set off on an adventure of my own, my attempted independent stroll down the sidewalk of our quiet, tree-lined street was short-lived. I was quickly located, whisked back home and from that time forward attached by a long harness to the tree in our backyard whenever I played outside.

Yet, I loved our expanded family. Now I had a little playmate. Photographs from that time show Mary and I always together, a sisterly bond that continued to grow as we ourselves grew. I treated her like my dolly, dressing both of us in a variety of hats, shawls and mittens. My games of peek-a-boo and



My sister Mary and I in 1962. I treated Mary, who was 4 months old, like my dolly, taking her for rides in my pink doll carriage.

Meaningful Memories

pat-a-cake would elicit peels of baby laughter from Mary that made us both giggle with glee. I took her out for rides in the backyard in my little red wagon or my pink doll carriage and we played in our sandbox made by Dad from four two-by-four inch plywood boards fastened together. Mom was always close by, singing songs from her own childhood and gently supervising as she sat in a lawnchair knitting.

By 1964 our family had once again relocated. We now lived in a 1950's suburban home in the small town of Hanover. Our address was 275 10th Avenue. This would remain our home from that time forward. I was four years old and I had a new friend, Susie McDevitt, who lived across the street. We would be friends for many years. At the time, we were both nursery school age, so three mornings a week either Mom or Mrs. McDevitt walked us down our street; past the fenced-in Catholic school where the big elementary students learned; past the old, towering, yellow brick Catholic Church with the bell and steeple located on the hill, and onward to the nursery school teacher's home around the corner. We would always be dressed in clean, white knee socks, leather shoes with straps and a homemade dress or skirt. Once there, we would play and sing; dance and dress-up; and colour, count and hear stories with other young children from our neighbourhood. It was a magical time which I shared when I returned home, full of enthusiasm for the fun, friends and learning of the day.

"Well hi there, Judy," my smiling mom would say, opening the front door for me upon my escort home with Susie and her mother. "How was your morning?"

"Oh, Mom, it was so fun! Today we wore grass skirts and big flower necklaces and danced around," I can hear myself responding enthusiastically, referring to Hawaiian dress-up day. "Then we sang the new song 'I'm a Little Teapot' and even pretended we were teapots! I'm going to show you. We had apple juice in teacups and cookies for snack and I even drew a picture of my favourite thing!"

Mom and my sister Mary were always eager to hear about my adventures. While Mom fixed white bread baloney sandwiches and Campbell's tomato soup for lunch, Mary and I would play school, with me as the teacher, of course. But now there was a third sister added to our growing family. At one year old, Kendra was always included in our playschool but as a shy baby, our boisterous play sometimes ended in fretful tears for her.

On days that mom would wash the kitchen floor, we would make a big tent using the kitchen chairs relocated to the carpeted living room. Mom helped us cover them over with old bed sheets. My sisters and I would take our dollies, Dinky cars and trucks that Dad had given us—his little tomboys—as well as colouring books, crayons and picture books. We spent the whole morning hiding out there in our secret fort while the floor was drying, peeking out from time to time to check on Mom.

Sometimes we got to turn on the console television and watch the popular morning children's show called "Romper Room," which aired in black and white. The host, Miss Betty, played games and sang songs, just like my nursery school teacher did. Only now my sisters and I could join in together. Miss Betty had a magic hand mirror that she looked through to see the children who were watching the show. Knowing this always encouraged us to behave our best.

"Maybe Miss Betty will see us in her magic mirror today," I would say to Mary, feeling hopeful.

"Let's stand really close to the television so she can see us. Then she will call out our names!" Mary would reply with a ready solution.

We would have our own hand mirrors ready to look through, pretending to see each other.

Meaningful Memories

“Miss Betty will say, and now I see Judy, and Mary and Kendra in my magic mirror,” Mary and I would say together, smiling with anticipation that it might actually happen. And oh, how we wished it would have!

After lunch we would all have a short nap and then it would be outside to play in the backyard sandbox or to the newly constructed park across the street where other neighbourhood children gathered.

Dad would be home for supper. While Mom made dinner, we sat on the couch with Dad, the four of us cuddled up together. Supper was followed by bath time. Mary and I would play and ‘swim’ in the tub while Mom got Kendra ready for bed. Story time would follow. Mom and occasionally Dad enjoyed reading *Mother Goose*, *Grimm’s Fairytales*, and of course the ever popular *Golden Books* for children. My favourite story was the *Poky Little Puppy*. We even had tape recordings of that book and others. We would stop the tape recorder at select passages, committing to memory funny phrases and tongue twisters that we would later laughingly recite while the tape played along.

Passages such as, “And down they [the puppies] went...roly-poly, pell-mell, tumble-bumble, till they came to the green grass; and there they stopped short,” I still remember even now, fifty years later.

Years later, when my own daughters were young, my husband and I would also read them that story and many others from my childhood. To this day, the *Poky Little Puppy* is immortalized as an ornament on our Christmas tree. This cherished keepsake, like the memories unlocked by my childhood photograph album, reminds me of those sweet, innocent years of my youth.

But my carefree preschool years were drawing to a close. The following year I would begin morning kindergarten, walking to school with neighbourhood friends Susie McDevitt and Timmy Winkler. I would make many lifelong friends, like Anne Hutton and Jackie Traverse while attending Dawnview Public School where my love of learning would formally begin.

Yet, those happy recollections of early life at home with my two sisters and my mom have remained with me, warming my heart, even during the saddest of times. During Canada’s centennial year another sister, Rae Anne Reta would join our family. Then seven years later, in 1973, we would proudly welcome a new, adopted brother, named Adam Robert. That same year I would complete elementary school and prepare for yet another milestone of life in high school. But that, dear reader, is a story for another time.



Judy Henderson is an occasional teacher who works at the local high school. She is a retired museum curator. She attributes her love of learning and of history and art to her grandparents who greatly influenced her childhood. Her Mom and Dad inspired her love of literature and language. Judy wrote this story for her daughters Tasha and Rachel. Thanks to her sister Mary for all of the fun memories and to husband David Brunner for the encouragement to write about them.



Dublin 1947/48

By Trevor Trower

This is the way I would like to remember Dublin. I guess I was in love with the city and its cheerful atmosphere. We could think about the wonderful names that we had heard about and some of the deeds that patriots had accomplished. The city was beautiful, sitting astride the River Liffey. You could stand on the bridge and lean against the stone bulwarks and watch the grey swirling water slowly meander past. O'Connell Street, Dublin's main down-town street, was alive with neon and the stores were full of many of the things we could not buy in the United Kingdom. There was no such thing as rationing in Ireland at the time; rationing was accomplished by price. Many working Irish had hardly enough money for the essentials and several times a day we would find ourselves approached by some poor person asking for the price of a bar of soap. It was my observation that much of the poverty in the back-streets was caused by excessive use of alcohol. I saw this as a national curse.

I was twenty when I arrived in Dublin, straight from Rhyl, North Wales, a healthy and enquiring young man. I was a photographer by trade, and had my savings safely in my back pocket. I traveled from Wales to Ireland on the Cambria II, the Holyhead to Kingston big ferry boat. Captain Marsh, who lived in Valley, Anglesey, was the Captain on the ship that day and when I told a crew member that Captain Marsh was my uncle, he immediately took me to the bridge to see him. "Well, well," were his first words to me. "So you're little Gracie's boy." We chatted for a few minutes and then as we were approaching port, I went back to my quarters and prepared myself and my motorbike for arrival. We debarked in the port of Dunloaghare and headed for Dublin on my new Velocette 350cc motorcycle. I noticed as I drove along that there were many four and five story tenements and all the streets seemed to be embedded with tram rails. I was directed to Mount Street Crescent where I found good lodgings with the family of McKeagans.

Meaningful Memories

I spent the first day in the city of Dublin gaping around the city centre and eating cream which bore no resemblance to the stuff that we thought was ice-cream where I came from. In the Metropole restaurant for dinner, I had the best meal of my life—roast beef and all the trimmings. I returned to my lodgings very tired, full and happy. I had noticed a few other things which did cause me a bit of concern, but I remember at the time thinking that I could live in this city for the rest of my life.

Mr. and Mrs. McKeagan had two very nice daughters who helped their parents run the establishment. They were hard-working girls, a little on the heavy side with a passion for dancing. The one about my age had a lot of thick golden wavy hair; she wore it loose and it reached way down past her waist. Ever since, I have never seen such beautiful hair. Very early on in my stay she showed an interest in teaching me to dance the tango. I am afraid to say that I disappointed her terribly. I was a little clumsy and never really learned. She was very strong and would twist and turn me about as if I was a light-weight. When she had her arms around me, she would hold me very close and I could feel every part of her body pressed up to mine. I suppose most young men would have seen this habit as a stroke of good fortune, but in all frankness it actually took my breath away. She had a large soft mouth and would give me a kiss and it made me feel sort of lost somewhere, but it was very pleasant and I would never discourage her in this action. The older sister was a dancer too but, thank heaven, she liked older men who were more accomplished.

In the centre of the crescent on which we were located, was a big old church known as “The Pepper Canister Church.” I was never able to learn why that strange name. In front of all the houses on that street were heavy iron railings with wrought iron gates attached. There was a story that the famous patriot Michael Collins used the roof of our house to escape the police during the time of the “black and tans.” Our landlord, Mr. McKeagan, was a Scot and like most Scottish people was very proud. He wasn’t a big man, about five foot six I would say. He was quite pale and thin, but also like a lot of Scots, he was as tough as he was kind. He didn’t approve of any liaison between guests and his daughters, but in my case he overlooked the proximity of me and his young daughter. Whenever he would catch her kissing me he would smile and pretend not to have noticed. I thought he was a pretty good sport. I would occasionally hang around the kitchen like a pet dog and after a while when she thought the coast was clear, she would come at me and envelop me in her strong arms and smother me with the most wonderful soft, warm kisses till my head was quite dizzy. Mind you, in all honesty the relationship went no farther than a kiss. Maybe it would have done if the opportunity had been there.

There was one incident which took place which I must relate. A very large young black man from an African country had a room on the third floor. His everyday dress was the same as that he would wear in his home country. He always wore a tall round gold-colored hat, something like a crown, and his outer garments were colorful and reached to the ground. He had a habit of creeping around the house and frightening the ladies. Mr. McKeagan took a dim view of this and told him so. The gentleman was attending medical school at Trinity College. His main contribution at the breakfast table was that he found the climate to be very cold. One day we noticed that there was smoke coming from his room on the third floor. Upon investigation it was found that the African student had bought an electric fire and hid it under his bed when he left the house; the silly man had failed to switch it off and it had set fire to the room. I thought at the time, how could anyone who was that stupid become a doctor? When he came back to the

Meaningful Memories

house that evening he found that Mr. McKeagan had stacked all his belongings on the side-walk and sent him on his way. Mr. McKeagan was a very direct man.

Since quite a young boy, I had been working in the photography business. I saw an opportunity to make a good living in that trade so I started a photo shop in the basement of a building in Merrion Square. The upper floors housed the Portuguese Embassy. I built my darkroom lab with material purchased in the Kodak outlet. The prices of everything needed were so much cheaper than the costs in the U.K. It only took a few days, then I was ready for business. My company name was registered as Super Snaps. I planned to operate in the dance halls and clubs in the city using electronic flash equipment which was quite novel in 1947. My first item of business was to approach the dance hall owners and obtain some sort of arrangement giving me permission to operate. The owner of the Olympic Ballroom thought that was a great idea and gave me carte blanche to use his property.

I must say that ballroom dancing was a very popular sport in Dublin and elsewhere in Ireland, and the Irish were very accomplished at the sport. The price of entry to the hall was very little, about a shilling. The band of Ronnie Munroe was first class and had a very large following. I would go to the hall on a Wednesday and Saturday evening; the pictures I took on Wednesday I would deliver on a Saturday and so on. The owner watched the action and noticed that some customers were returning to the hall more often as they wanted to collect their photos,



I am wearing one of the blazers we had made to identify our "Super Snaps" employees. The blazers were maroon with gold piping.

so, me being there was good for business. The Olympic was a very large hall, the biggest in Dublin at the time. Several hundred customers would enjoy their dance on a Saturday night. Alcohol was not served. Drunks were expelled by force in no uncertain way. The refreshments served were, tea, coffee, cakes and cookies. It was a lot of fun and there were very few fights.

Business was good, my prices were very low, and I began to make money. Before long I found I had to have help and was able to hire a young chap about my age to work as my assistant. His name was Paddy Sullivan. He loved to dance and when there were no photos to take, he would ask me if he could go on the floor. I always agreed and he really seemed to enjoy the job. I became known as Super and my assistant, Snap. Early on in the evening I would stand on the stage, introduce myself to the crowd and tell them about the photography, price etc. and also the names we went by in the hall. Everything went well. To add to the evening's entertainment, I would offer a free picture to anyone who could do some assignment. For example, one time I told the group that anyone who brought me Snap's shirt would get a free photo. Well what a to-do! Dozens of young women attacked Snap and got him into a corner. There was cheering and whooping it up from the crowds and all the while Snap was yelling for help under a pile of noisy girls. Eventually a cute brunette brought me the tattered remains of Snap's shirt and demanded her prize. I didn't know it before but Paddy did not have a shirt, just a dickey he wore for the dances. I didn't know he was so poor. He was so upset, I told him not to worry, I took my shirt off and we both finished the evening un-shirted with our ties about our bare necks.

Meaningful Memories

I gave him extra money to get some shirts so he was altogether quite pleased with the evening. Sometime later Snap invited me to his home for Sunday dinner. I accepted his offer and at the prescribed time I joined him and his family in their fourth floor walk-up flat. Mrs. Sullivan had prepared a large rabbit with potatoes and turnips for dinner. Mr. Sullivan kept up the conversation in a cheerful and grateful way, for me having given his son Paddy a part-time job. There were nine children including Paddy who was the oldest at 20 years, a few months younger than me. Everyone was well behaved. The children's clothes were clean, if a little shabby. We sat altogether at the enormous dining room table. The rest of the room was bare. I was seated at the head of the table beside one of the youngest little girls. How pretty that little girl was and she kept staring at me with a smile that just wouldn't come off. Mr. Sullivan gave a prayer thanking God and the Virgin Mary for the food. Mrs. Sullivan served us great bowls of the stew making sure we all had a piece of rabbit. I was given the largest portion of meat and the family waited patiently for me to start eating, so they also could eat. I started to eat a potato and the rest of the table tucked in to their dinner. My portion of meat was the hind quarters of the rabbit and as I began to separate the meat from the bone a section of colon containing several balls of feces floated free. As far as dinner was concerned that was its end for me. I was embarrassed and explained that I wasn't hungry and left the apartment as soon as it was decent. Paddy continued to work with me but I no longer ate at his home. Paddy's Dad was a great big cheerful man who had recently started a job waxing cars for a living. He had approached several car owners around Merrion Square and contracted to clean and wax their cars on a monthly basis. He did his work while the car owners were in their offices. I would see Mr. Sullivan occasionally and we would wave and greet each other.

Cleary's Grill Room across from the Metropole on O'Connell Street, became my favorite place for a hot lunch. For three shillings and six pence you could get the finest lunch in Ireland. This was a very popular place and I noticed that about a third of the customers were clergy in their uniforms as well as several nuns. This struck me as odd as there was so much poverty at that time. I remember that the menu on a Wednesday would be: oxtail soup, lamb chops, cabbage and potatoes, followed by apple pie and custard and coffee. We never had anything like that in Wales. The last meal I had in Rhyl, N. Wales was at the Evans Café on the high street and the menu was bangers and mash for one shilling and nine pence.

The next move I made was to make an appointment with Mr. Fitzpatrick, the owner of the Balalaika Ballroom, and discuss photography at his place. The Balalaika was famous for the dance competitions which were held there. The band of Jack McKay was excellent and popular and the surface was the only one in Ireland that had a sprung floor. The location was just past Nelson's Monument closer to Phoenix Park. Nelson's Monument was bombed once while I was there, and subsequently was removed by popular demand. My interview with Mr. Fitzpatrick turned out successfully in that, like the Olympic, I was given carte blanche to do photography there. There was a minor glitch: when I introduced myself and gave my name, he declared that he was familiar with that name from the old days, referring to his active IRA days. I assured him my father was from Cork and also had been active in the IRA, not mentioning, on the other side of the conflict. Mr. Fitzpatrick held a ministerial position in the National government and was very active in his demand for a United Ireland. I eventually built up a reasonable business in the Balalaika and had some very happy times there.

There was one occasion which turned out to be quite rough: the English and Irish rugby teams had met in Greystones that day and the Irish team had been beaten. To finish off their trip to Ireland, the English were to be given a party at the Balalaika. I was there to ensure the

Meaningful Memories

occasion would be recorded for posterity. The evening progressed nicely and the English team arrived after they had completed a visit to most of the pubs in the area. They arrived cocky, belligerent and tipsy. The guests were looking for trouble and to put an end to the situation, the band leader cut short the program by starting to play the Irish National anthem—The Soldiers Song. The dancers stopped what they were doing, turned to face the stage and adopted their stance of respect. Not so the English team who continued to insist on dancing and loud talk. At the end of the anthem, Jack, the bandleader, who was a short stocky man with a gammy leg, limped over to the biggest of the players and held him by the lapels and told him he was an ignorant bastard. The footballer drew back his arm to punch Jack who unhinged his artificial knee joint and kicked his man in the back of his neck. The man fell like a sack of potatoes and the fight was on. The fight lasted about twenty minutes before the police arrived. I had escaped to the bathroom to protect my camera and found that it was occupied by two large men having their own private brawl. I was glad when the Garda finally came and arrested the ringleaders and took them off to jail. The evening being over, we all went our separate ways. There were several other dance halls in the city but I found that the two dance halls I was engaged in kept my evenings quite busy.

It was approaching Christmas, and I thought of several ways to do extra business. I went to schools in the area and took pictures individually of the children and sold them for sixpence a postcard. The nuns (teachers) did the selling and distribution and I gave 10% of the take to them for the school funds. The young ladies who were sales clerks in the big department stores were all so pretty in their simple brown uniforms. I took hundreds of pictures of them at work and sold them all at one shilling per postcard. What a wonderful street O'Connell Street was, said to be the widest street in Europe. In the busiest part of the street was the Post Office, still bearing its proud scars of bullet and shell wounds from the time of the "troubles." This part of the city was the main terminus for the tramway system, an excellent service to nearly all parts of the city, cheap friendly and efficient. Unfortunately change for the sake of change seems to take place everywhere. The tramway system must be closed to make way for modern smelly buses.

The day came during 1948 for the scheduled last tram ride. This tram was to proceed from the O'Connell terminus to the suburb of Rialto. Every young Irishman was determined to take that last free ride. I also was determined to be on that tram. Well the time came. The tram which was licensed to carry eighty persons, left with at least two hundred on its inside and at least a hundred more clinging to its outside and platform. It was jammed to suffocation with hundreds of disappointed citizens milling about outside. I was on the back platform hanging on to a safety bar for dear life. The tram started to lurch away on its final trip heading for the bridge and Grafton Street. As it picked up speed, first one then another of its riders lost their hand hold and dropped or was thrown off the tram. I lost my grip just as we were crossing the Liffey and fell in the roadway, dusty but unhurt. It seemed to me that the Irish always took their fun seriously. The following day in the newspaper headlines was the story of the last tram and the shambles of a bus service that took months to straighten out. Also the editorial which lamented the demise of the tram-service was able to insinuate into the account that the English were somehow responsible. Later I did notice that there was a deep-seated animosity against anything English.

That spring there was a meeting held in O'Connell Street—a meeting of all true Irishmen to celebrate the anniversary of the 1798 potato famine. Apparently, though there had been a good potato crop, much of it ended up thrown into the Liffey resulting in wide-spread shortages of food for the Irish public. A great platform had been built near the Post Office, and dozens of

Meaningful Memories

loudspeakers had been mounted on the lamp posts on both sides of the main street. This meeting was well advertised and several politicians were scheduled to give speeches. The day arrived and thousands and thousands began to arrive and take their place along the street. Later it was declared that nearly half a million people lined the streets to hear the story being told for the hundredth time how the English had caused them such terrible hardship. The speeches began. How damned clever those speakers were. Once again the crowds were moved to anger by the stories told of their oppression by the English. How the English had separated their God-given beautiful country, and all the while the crowd was getting more and more agitated, stamping their booted feet to the rhythm of the speakers' call, the big Tannoy speakers vibrating as the passion of the whole affair rose to a fever pitch. Then the Minister of War stood and began his speech which roused passions even more. I tried to make myself inconspicuous and kept my mouth shut as I felt that there was trouble that day for anyone who was thought to have been English. Then suddenly, this speaker with the golden tongue started to shout, "Arms against the North, arms against the North, arms against the North!" while the crowd took up the chant and a hundred thousand began to stamp their feet to the rhythm of the call. I personally felt it to be safer to be somewhere else and, avoiding as many of the crowd as I could, I escaped home to safety. I had expected that the huge crowds that thronged the city center were surely marching on Ulster with whatever arms they could find and try to unite the six counties to their twenty-six counties where in God's eyes they belonged. Strangely, very little was reported of the meeting in the newspapers and everything carried on peacefully as before. I felt a bit foolish thinking how anxious I had been for my safety. So many incidents happened to me in the year I spent in the Free State, I grew to love the people who were as kind as the charm of the country itself.

The city of Bray was located about twelve miles south of Dublin with a very pleasant promenade beside the Irish Sea. Even though the summer season was still two months away, I negotiated with the city council for permission to become the promenade photographer. I paid the fee of one hundred pounds and expected to make a fortune during the summer. Well summer came but even at the height of the holiday season, you could shoot a cannon load of grape-shot down the promenade and hit no one. It was a beautiful waterfront, yet was not a popular place for a holiday. We closed up shop and took the outfit to Greystones and did photography near Dawson's Amusement Park. The entire season we hardly made our expenses but learned a very good lesson: Ireland was certainly not England.

From early in my youth, I was an enterprising person. Many kids delivered newspapers before school, or assisted delivery men on their rounds. The work ethic was instilled in many poor kids when they were quite young. I did this too and the sixpences earned went to buy food for the family. I added to my many enterprises a new one which brought a lot of cash into the family coffers, that being manure. I would collect around the local fields, animal manure in my little four wheel trolley, and sell it to my neighbors. I had a group of regular customers who would purchase all I could collect and they would use it on their vegetable gardens. My income from the enterprise exactly correlated to the amount of my efforts. I was used to all kinds of work, so when the situation arose in my Irish venture where I had free time, I would always figure some way to extend my repertoire. So here I was with free time on my hands in one of Europe's most exciting capitals. I decided to go to Glendaloch, a beautiful town about forty miles from Dublin, and see what was happening. I went by bus to that spot which was the home of Saint Kevin. This was a very pretty place where crowds of St. Kevin's aficionados would gather. Many would sit for a moment in a place on the cliff-side known as St Kevin's chair; others more brave, would be lowered over the edge of the cliff to a small cave where it was

Meaningful Memories

believed that the famous saint slept. Two large strong men made their living by lowering sightseers on the end of a rope so they could see into the cave. I gave the “guides” a pound note to lower me down where I would spend an hour or two praying. I was lowered down with my photo equipment, entered the cave and spent the next two hours taking photos of the people visiting the cave. This had never been done before and I made a lot of business. All good things come to an end and when the guides found what I was up to, they brought me up and threatened to toss me into the lake (Glendaloch) if I didn’t cut them in on the profit. Well I was in no need of partners so left what should have been a nice little business and headed back to Dublin. Buses in the forties, in Ireland were not what you see today. They were noisy and slow especially when climbing over the Sugar Loaf Mountains to the west of the city. At the bus stops, occasionally we passengers would be entertained by pipers or tin whistles being played hoping for a few pennies. I remember one young bare-footed, shabby dressed young girl playing the tin whistle. The girl, totally without make-up, was unusually beautiful. Today she would be toasted on the screen around the world, but then she was satisfied with a few small coins she was able to collect.

During the “*Hunt Ball*” season, I traveled around the country to the major communities and took pictures at the events. Quite often the participants would ask me to take their pictures and for those few weeks the circuit was quite profitable. I made a lot of friends on this trip and one man by the name of Corscaddon seemed to like me and offered to let me be the photographer at his four star hotel/casino/dance hall located in Greystones. Later I went to see him at his hotel and the board agreed to let me use their property with a few provisions attached. Later this proved to be quite a success and the Corscaddons were very pleased to see that I was making some business.

What an unusual place this was, often we would see donkey carts as pretty as could be, taking their owner for a trot around the town or shopping or even taking the family to church. I was amazed how many pubs there were—sometimes three or four on a short block and they all seemed to be doing business. Draft Porter seemed to be a very popular pint and it was very inexpensive. I tried a pint of the drink and found it bitter and nasty. Apparently one can get used to the flavor quite quickly, but a cup of Irish tea was as good as anywhere in the world.

In those days in Ireland, we started the day with a good breakfast. We would meet for breakfast in the dining room. Not all boarders were there at one time. Some had left for work before the last sitting at eight o’clock. We would be served by the two daughters a meal of bacon, eggs, sausage, and fried bread. There would be a big pot of tea for us to help ourselves. One of the men was a neon sign installer, and his company had a huge number of orders. He had just installed an enormous sign on the corner of O’Connell Street overlooking the River Liffey. The sign read, *PLAYER’S PLEASE*. He was always looking for more workers to join his installation crew.

The most note-worthy of the boarders was a thin, neatly dressed Irishman about twenty-six. He was a belligerent man who vented his anger on me. I had no idea why, maybe it was because I spoke with an English accent. On this particular day, we were at breakfast and he was staring at me and tapping his fork on his plate. Terry O’Connor was his name, and he kept repeating, “You are an English bastard. You are an English bastard.” I didn’t appreciate the comments and asked him to change the tune. He wanted to fight me and I agreed to meet him in the back garden. I had noticed a pair of épées and demanded that we settle our differences with these. Well we started the fight, I had forgotten to tell him that I had belonged to the Royal Naval

Meaningful Memories

fencing club. We had a brief set-to and having disarmed him, I asked him to shake hands and try to be friends. Terry accepted my offer and we did become tolerable friends after that.

I had seen worn on a good number of people's lapels, a little pin about the size of a nickel. On the pin there was a red heart and the word "Pioneer" in gilt at the bottom of the pin. Thinking this was a religious symbol, I said nothing. Later I began looking at the lapels of men's jackets and I noticed more and more of these pins. I did eventually ask a friend what was the significance of the pin. He replied the badge is worn to let others know that they are teetotalers. They had sworn off alcohol for their lifetime. In many cases the individual would swear with his or her priest. In the majority of cases when the PIONEERS were at a party, they would not be invited to drink alcohol. Sometimes young people would take the pledge, sometimes a reformed alcoholic would. It struck me at the time that this may have helped a lot of people to stay sober.

The famous Abbey Theatre was located off Grafton Street, and just across from the theatre was McQuaig's Bar. A large group of young men had decided that it would be interesting to see how many people could ride in an Austin Seven car. The men would drive the car to the front door of the theatre and there disgorge its load. Naturally, McQuaig's Bar was to be the fulcrum of the event. I remember the evening well. After several drinks the party began to get aboard the little car. You may recall that that car was designed to carry four people. How eight men got into the car is impossible to imagine, but with the windows open and body parts hanging out the windows, the deed was accomplished. Not content with this achievement several tipsy young men were able to climb onto the roof and hang onto the exterior of the car. There was singing and shouting as the car made its way to the theatre. The back axle of the car broke at that point and the police were called to clear the mess away to make safe space for the theatre-goers. The adventurous young men made their get-a-way back to McQuaig's and continued with their normal business. I thought to join that group and with my camera at the ready, entered the Pub. I introduced myself to the group but was not made welcome. The one who seemed to be the leader asked me if the color of my tie had any political significance. I was wearing a red tie at the time, which I assured them had no significance whatsoever. I made my exit as quickly as decency would allow.

The pubs were a source of some revenue for me, and there was a lot of action going on in the little pubs alongside the Liffey in the vicinity of Burgh Quay. There in a pub which apparently was the centre for some illegal activities, I started to take some flash pictures and was quickly hustled to a private room, there an older man with a gun drawn on me asked me to explain my activities: was I working for the police etc. The whole atmosphere was completely new to me and I was allowed to leave when I was relieved of the film from my camera. I didn't go there again.

I had met an older, married couple at the Balalaika, during a waltz competition. They were English from Yorkshire. They wanted to introduce me to some friends they were having for tea and, thinking they might be useful in my career, asked me to come along. I agreed, being assured that Mr. Devalera, the Irish past president would also be there. The place for the reception was at their general store not far from the pedestrian bridge across the River Liffey. Well, I attended the tea as arranged but found that I was the only guest and was introduced to the daughter of the couple. The girl was quite tall and good looking enough to turn the head of most young 21 year olds. I asked if Mr. Devalera was coming to tea, this question being ignored. We sat down to tea and it became obvious that I was asked there for the specific reason, hoping that I would become paired with the daughter. The daughter, I am happy to say, was of zero interest to

Meaningful Memories

me even when it was insisted that high friends of the government were after her themselves. Bemused, I escaped from the situation as quickly as I could.

Another couple I met was from Rhyl: Mr. and Mrs. Ford who owned the fish and chip shop near the entrance to the Marine Lake. They were nice people and also had a daughter!!

At the far end of the promenade of Bray, was Dawson's Amusement Park. Mr Dawson was a big fat jolly man with a red face and a great mass of white bushy hair. He and his wife ran the park and any money that was made from tourists was made by him. They did not have a daughter. We got to be good friends and he told me that his place would be a good spot for photography. So we saw quite a bit of the Dawsons that summer. And I did do some business there. Just about fifty yards to the south of the amusement park, was a large natural swimming pool. Erosion and weathering had created a bath in the rock on the beach, about the size of an average house and up to ten feet deep. High tide would replenish the water in the pool. The City had built a three meter high diving board there and I noticed this was the one amenity which was in constant use. What a marvelous place and what a wonderful country.

Phoenix Park, just outside the city of Dublin, was a dream for sport. Various kinds of football were played there over the weekends, and the national game of hurling was very popular as both a playing and watching sport. I watched this game being played just once, and to see thirty young active men on a field who seemed to me, intent on crippling each other was quite exciting. The game I watched on that cold autumn day in 1948 saw at least three disabled men being carried off the field. The background to the match was an enormous stockpile of cut peat, which not only was a cheap commodity for warming your house, was also a source of laboring work for the unemployed.

Of interest was the fact that contraceptives and the "News of the World Newspaper" were banned from Southern Ireland. To purchase these items would cost about three times the price you would pay for them in the U.K. On the other hand, the Irish Sweepstakes tickets were openly on sale whereas in the U.K. they would be bought surreptitiously.

The movie industry did very well in Ireland, and it surprised me that though Ireland was famous for its playwrights, authors, actors and theaters, there was no movie making industry. I remember one of the rare visits to the cinema: the Metropole was showing a new British movie, Hamlet. The major stars were Laurence Olivier and Jean Simmons. This was one of the first color films that I had seen and it won acclaim in Dublin.

Frequently I would hear stories of the deeds of the Black and Tans. This was a group of quasi-military soldiers who were supposed to have quelled the Irish Rebellion, and in so doing perpetrated many crimes against the populace. One Irish friend told me that there was a period when groups of armed Black and Tans would ride around the city in a truck and the IRA would toss grenades into the truck out of windows or crowded streets. A lot of damage would be done this way. My friend told me that the B and T's would cover their trucks with chicken wire and the grenades would bounce off causing mayhem amongst the Irish. Not to be outdone, the IRA would put hooks on the grenades and that technique would cause more death and wounding. This type and battle continued until the peace was declared. Another friend told me her uncle had his ears cut off by the B and T's as some sort of punishment. Where the truth exists I have no way of knowing, but the stories kept alive the animosity between the cultures for a long, long time.

After nearly a year in Ireland I was getting homesick for North Wales and my family. I closed up shop and sold my equipment and returned to Rhyl. What a wonderful year and what great memories.



A Long Flight

By Trevor Trower

It took us fourteen hours and one minute to fly to London from London that day and when we landed at London Ontario we were all very relieved. Our Captain, Mickey Found, told us that our flight had been a duration record of some kind.

There was nothing really unusual about the flight. We departed London Heathrow on time with a full load of passengers. We were destined for Toronto with a stop at Montreal. The flights were always long and tiring in those days, and the sound of the engines hour after hour added to one's fatigue. My god, the noise, and because of our lower altitudes often turbulence would add to one's discomfort.

This day we had been advised that the weather on the Eastern seaboard was nasty, with low cloud, fog and freezing rain. We planned a direct flight to Montreal with alternates of Halifax and St. John. We also had loaded as much extra fuel as was possible as reserves. After several hours we were advised that the East Coast weather was worsening and it was necessary to revise flight plans. It was necessary for the cabin staff to be kept up to date on flight progress as this airplane had eighty four people to be catered for.

It was normal from a flight operation standpoint to fly this plane type at a 'constant speed' for a balance of fuel economy and schedule. This meant that as the plane burnt off fuel it increased speed, and the pilots would reduce power to maintain speed at the same time saving fuel. The news that East Coast weather was now below limits meant our flight plans must be changed—Halifax and St. John were no longer available as our alternates. Now it was necessary to reduce power to maximize our range. We pressed on for Montreal.

Hours later the captain made an announcement to the effect that we were passing over Quebec City and would be descending to Montreal shortly. People began to gather up their gear

Meaningful Memories

and put on their coats etc. preparing to deplane at Montreal. We prepared for our landing knowing that the weather was doubtful.

I noticed an elderly fully dressed lady wearing two hats making her way to the galley area where the main door was located. She was struggling to open the cabin door. She was trying to get out of the plane as she had misunderstood the announcement thinking we had already arrived. Fortunately I was able to prevent her from her foolish act. Thank heavens; if she had opened the door a crack, the cabin pressure would have blown her out into the frigid space and for sure the lady would have had no more troubles (in this world at least).

We were almost on the ground when the freezing rain started again and we were forced to abort our approach and landing. We increased power and climbed, heading for Toronto with just enough fuel to get there with a little fuel left over for a margin of safety. We had been flying for twelve hours and our destination was ninety minutes away. By now many of our passengers were showing signs of anxiety. The passenger call buttons were constantly ringing and the attendants were doing their best to re-assure the passengers that everything was in order. We commenced our approach and again we were warned by the control tower that visibility had become zero and we were forced to abort our Toronto landing.

The enormous weather system that was causing problems for airliners in the general area was moving to the east and advice indicated the tail end of it was almost over London Ontario Airport. We climbed to five thousand feet and squeezing the last of our fuel headed west and a few minutes later were able to begin our approach with the weather clearing nicely. Finally everything was going our way. When the undercarriage was lowered the Engineer (Boyd Moore) reported to the captain that the nose-gear was indicating “unsafe”, the locking pin indicator light showed red. Very quickly Capt. Found adjusted his controls and climbed to two thousand feet flew past the control tower to confirm whether a visual check was possible. This was not in the cards. Climbing to four thousand feet, with our gear down, we arranged to do a visual check from within the aircraft.

This was quickly organized. Boyd opened a hatch in the cabin floor about eighteen by twenty four inches. He, myself and the other male flight attendant (Rudy Saretsky), climbed down into the baggage area while the stewardess stayed in the cabin, in this way communication was relayed between the cockpit and the engineer. Boyd, followed closely by myself, proceeded forward in that cramped and noisy area until Boyd was able to lean out through the open nose-wheel door, checking that the nose-wheel was safe. My role during this maneuver was to hold Boyd by the belt in case he should fall out. After some use of the relay system, messages to and fro, the undercarriage was declared safe. We immediately started our approach while we scrambled out of the bowels of the plane taking our places for the landing.

What a relief. The buffeting of the air flowing over the fuselage and open nose-gear door of the plane at one hundred and fifty miles an hour was, to say the least, frightening, and the noise was almost deafening. I was looking out of the window as we crept closer and closer to the runway. I could see now that we were passing over the threshold of the runway at about fifty feet. Suddenly there was the familiar sound of the big main gear tires biting into the concrete surface. With complete smoothness we made contact with the runway and safety, then a loud roar of approval came spontaneously from the throats of those tired and anxious people. About a minute later the outboard right engine quit and we watched that big four-bladed prop just sitting there seeming to remind us how close we were to having been in serious trouble, while we taxied up to the terminal building.

Meaningful Memories

Mickey thanked us for our efforts during that trying flight and advised us that its duration had been fourteen hours and one minute. We hung around for an hour or so while we re-fueled, then loaded up and off to Toronto. The final leg of our flight was twenty five minutes. Another perfect landing and our day's work was done, a few hours late, but safe and sound. The crew had been on duty for more than nineteen hours since our crew-call in London.



Dinner in Paris

By Trevor Trower

My friend Paul Giraud and I were having dinner in a popular restaurant a short distance from the Eiffel Tower in Paris during the summer of '65. Paul was a big easy-going French-Canadian, always ready for a joke and always a ready smile. That particular day we had, as typical tourists, fought our way to the top level of the Tower and enjoyed the incredible viewscape of this delightful and historical city. We had spent a couple of hours of a beautiful summer's day enjoying our Tower's visit and were both very hungry and thirsty. The two of us had found seats in this large open-air restaurant, lucky as the place was packed. We made ourselves comfortable and my friend Paul said, "Well Trev, now you can practice your French; you can order dinner." Under more relaxed conditions, I would have accepted the challenge without protest; but the crowds, the obviously harassed and overworked staff, as well as our dire need for food and drink made me balk at the challenge. I appealed to Paul's better nature only to have him reply with a big smile, "No Trevor, you speak French or go hungry," at which he sat back in his chair, lit up a cigarette and watched for developments.

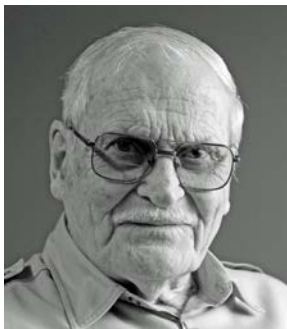
The waiter in our area was a tall, thin, tight-lipped man, wearing a typical waiter's outfit of a dark suit with a dirty white apron tied about his waist. He was practically running from table to table as I tried to get his attention. My waves and my body-language elicited zero response from this obviously tortured man who, it seemed to me, was going out of his way to ignore us. Paul was enjoying himself watching me become more and more frustrated. "Paul," I said "what's the polite French for waiter?" to which Paul replied "Garçon." In considering this information I decided the literal translation of the word "Garçon" was boy. How could I, a polite Anglo-Canadian address a man of such obvious years as "boy?" So the very next time the waiter came close to our table, I raised my hand and called, "Monsieur, s'il vous plait." Not only was there no response to this appeal, but I saw the beginning of a sneer appear on the waiter's face as he

Meaningful Memories

pointedly moved away from our table. I tried twice more to get the waiter's attention in this manner while Paul seemed to really enjoy the joke. "What's the matter do you think Paul?" who replied, "he's teaching you a lesson Trev. The waiter is called Garçon and he's telling you you're a stupid foreigner."

Feeling a bit embarrassed I decided to try a different approach and the next time the waiter came by I called loudly, "Garçon!!" Immediately, the waiter veered in our direction and with a servile smile said, "Oui, messieurs, voulez-vous quelque chose?" "Oui," I replied in my best French, "Nous désirons une bouteille de vin blanc et le menu pour dîner." I noticed Paul looking at me with an I-told-you-so look on his face, at the same time adding, "Not too bad Trev, I think he understood you." Well I did feel better now and we chatted while we waited for our wine and menu. A few minutes later, the waiter swept by with a chilled bottle of white wine, two glasses, and our menus. I enjoyed my success as I poured two glasses of wine for Paul and myself.

As I was about to take a sip of my wine, I noticed a fly in my glass. Now many might have removed the fly and carried on – but not me; as our waiter came near I again called loudly "Garçon, il y a une mouche dans mon vin," upon which the waiter grabbed my glass, peered closely into it and then with a sneer returned it to me – "Mais non monsieur, ce n'est pas une mouche." (It's not a fly) and about to leave our table I called, "Vraiment, garçon c'est une mouche." The waiter repeated his denial and took off to attend to other customers. Paul with a laugh said, "Trev, the bugger probably put the fly in your glass himself." I tried again to get the waiter's attention and by now I noticed that a number of other customers were enjoying this farce. I tried again to get the waiter's agreement that there was a fly in my drink, only to have him retort, "Mais non, monsieur. Ce n'est pas une mouche; c'est un moucheron." (No sir, it's not a fly; it's a gnat.)



Trevor Trower was born in Southampton, England. After a 35-year career with Air Canada In-Flight Service, Trevor retired and pursued various hobbies such as model trains, model radio-controlled boats, woodwork and archaeology. He trained in photography and became quite skilled with a camera.

In the last few years, his passion for writing short stories and particularly poetry resulted in the publishing of three collections of his work. A number of short stories and poems have been published in magazines and on the web at BBC North Wales.

He currently lives in Georgetown, Ontario with his wife of 58 years, Kay Thompson. They have 5 children.