

COMMENT

A rose is a rose, is a rose ...

By Ted Brown
tedbit@hotmail.com



A Ted Bit

As we make our way through life, we find ourselves remembering, observing, and reminiscing about various things. It could be good times, happy times, even sad times. And I often find those 'milestones' that pop up in our minds can always elicit some sort of emotion.

The Sidekick had one of those days last week. It was the first anniversary of the loss of her mom, Betty, who died Sept. 29 last year. Betty and her husband Al lived in Qualicum Beach, on Vancouver Island. They lived in their nice little bungalow, and Betty had lots of social groups in the town, while Al had his garden.

Together, they enjoyed life to the fullest.

But early in 2014, Betty announced to her six kids— The Sidekick being the youngest— that she had cancer, and was terminal.

It was a tough year for those six siblings. Only one lived locally, in Nanaimo, B.C., while the others were scattered across Canada, from Montreal, Ottawa, Sunderland, Limehouse, and Brandon, Man.

And since Betty was not likely to see Christmas, they all took turns traveling to Qualicum Beach, to spend a week with their mom.

The Sidekick had the last week, and returned in late August—a tough trip to make, knowing she had to say a final good-bye to her mom.

The morning of Sept. 29, The Sidekick received word that Betty had passed away, so she boarded a flight to Vancouver within two hours. She stayed with her sister-in-law, as her brother was at sea at the time— he had to make the 36-hour sea voyage back to Nanaimo.

Sadly, Al died a week later. The Sidekick and her siblings certainly had a lot on their plate.

This past year, The Sidekick has experienced numerous 'Mom' moments, when she's driving home, and thinks to herself, "Oh, I must remember to tell Mom about..." then realizes Mom isn't there to tell anymore.

Although geographically they had miles between them, mother and daughter were im-

mensely close. Through Facebook and the telephone, they shared jokes, family stories, and sometimes just propped each other up, like mom and daughter often do.

Losing her mom created a pretty big void for The Sidekick. This spring, for Mother's Day, my four daughters gave The Sidekick a rose bush, to plant in memory of Betty. She was overjoyed— she cried.

I planted it in the front yard, and watered it diligently. We waited for the first rose to appear. Instead, little bugs infested it, and at one point, I was afraid it was going to shrivel up and die.

I trimmed off the bad stems, and kept an eye on it, and by fall, it had come around.

It had developed deep dark green leaves, and I noticed a bud on one stem.

I was excited— I wondered if it would make it. The Sidekick happened to notice it too. Most days we'd check out that bush as we walked past it.

The morning of Sept. 28, the bud broke open— just a bit. It was enough to see that the rose was going to be yellow.

The next morning, as The Sidekick backed out of the garage, the rose was in full bloom.

It was perfect— round, even, a beautiful shade of yellow.

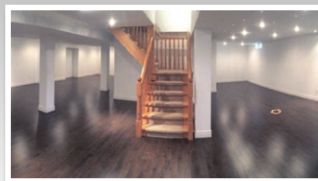
And it was growing in full view of the front driveway, where The Sidekick could see it as she left for work every day.

Today, there are two full blooms and another bud on the way— it just keeps getting better.

I know The Sidekick looks at the rose, and is reminded of her best friend, and mother. It's one of those warm fuzzy feelings that overcomes us as we remember those who are no longer with us.

Nothing can bring them back, but having that yellow rose in full view, reminds all of us that Betty's spirit is still with us today, and every year, as that rose bush grows, she will remain in our thoughts.

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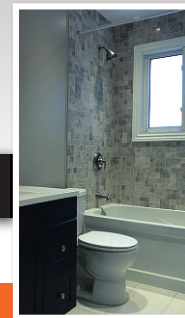
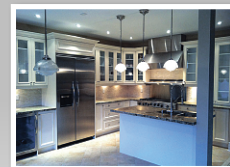
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