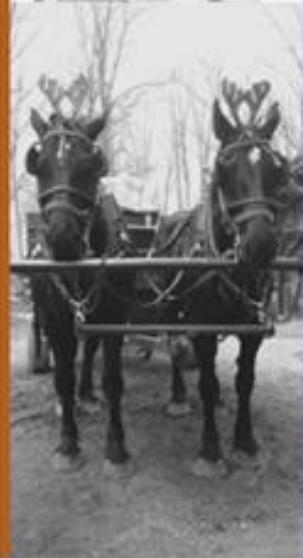





# Shared Memories

Brantford Lifescapes Writing Group 2018  
Brantford Public Library





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Brantford Lifescapes Writing Group 2018  
Brantford Public Library

This book was written by members of the Lifescapes group, a memoir writing program sponsored by the Brantford Public Library.

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# Introduction

*Lifescapes* is a writing program created to help people write their life stories, to provide support and guidance for beginner and aspiring writers. This is our eleventh consecutive year running the program at the Brantford Public Library, and *Shared Memories* is our eleventh collection of stories to be published.

A limited number of print copies of each edition are available for sale, with copies to be archived permanently in the library's circulating and local history reference collections. This year's edition was printed in large font and framed by wide margins to improve visual accessibility, and a PDF version will be available for download from the library website.

On behalf of Brantford Public Library and this year's participants, I would like to thank guest speakers Emily Urquhart (*Beyond the Pale: Folklore, Family, and the Mystery of Our Hidden Genes*) and Pasha Malla (*Fugue States*), whose visits were made possible through partnership with Wilfrid Laurier University and the efforts of professor Michael Ackerman. Thank you also to expert consultant Lorie Lee Steiner and Kelsey Harvey of the Department of Health, Aging and Society at McMaster University for your insights and your support.

Every year I am reminded anew of how much time, energy, and determination goes into the writing of these memoirs. Not every story makes it into the anthology, but every single writer that comes through the program (or even part way) helps to shape its growth and evolution. I am forever in awe of the courage it takes to invite readers into these private worlds – to lay bare personal thoughts and experiences, and indeed, literally create shared memories. It's been a privilege to work with and alongside all of this year's *Lifescapes* writers, and it is my great pleasure to help bring their words to print.

Sincerely,

*Robin Harding*  
*Coordinator – Adult and Senior Programming*  
*Brantford Public Library*





*"We are children running, laughing gathering leaves. Huge Oak Trees stand tall against a blue sky filled with billowing white clouds moving hastily across the heavens. Down below, here we are building a mountain of colours, in the ravine under the Oaks. In laughter, we chase each other, play hide and seek in our man-made mountain. We bury each other in leaves. We run and jump into the highest peak of Mount Leaves."*

*~ Excerpt: "Strolling Through the Diamonds"  
by Bertha M. Joseph*



## Victory Day

The day was May 8, 1945. In Amherst, Nova Scotia, all the church bells tolled non-stop. They were accompanied by the incessant honking of car horns; and, factories along with the Amherst Fire Department continually blew their whistles.



*The Halifax Herald, May 8, 1945  
Credit: Halifax News Archives*

Fire crackers exploded and guns were fired into the air. People ran from their homes weeping and laughing, hugging each other shouting "THE WAR IS OVER! THE WAR IS OVER!" The entire celebration seemed to go on forever. I looked up and saw Daddy coming home early from work. I felt confused and scared at the same time. Then I was in for another frightening experience. Daddy got dressed in his best suit and told Mama he was going to a big celebration

and that Hitler and Mussolini were being burned in the park. I didn't know it was just effigies; I thought it was real people.

When the celebrations ended and life restored to normalcy, we returned to childhood, school and play.

## A Peeping Tom

46 Spring Street was a wonderful old home, owned by Old CV (which is what I called him). He was not that old but he was ill and Mama was his Caregiver. Certain restrictions were put into place for us five children, one of which was: *the parlour was out-of-bounds*.

I could sit for hours on the front stairway. Through the coloured lead glass windows, the trees played games with the sunlight. Coloured light and shadows streaked their way past me into the parlour.

Ever so silently I would steal my way into the parlour. I sat on the chairs and loveseats and stretched out on the chaise longue. I inspected all the lamps, the shades hanging in numerous coloured beads and tapestries, touching everything. That was when I first felt someone watching me. I knew Old CV had caught me. Except I turned and saw no one. Peering into the hall, no one was in sight.

Suddenly, I felt icy cold and left the parlour.

At every opportunity I visited the parlour. In every visit to the parlour, I became unbearably cold. An unexplainable feeling of uncertainty and coldness penetrated the room, with unseen eyes watching my every move. I loved the parlour in the daylight hours; however, in the darkness of night, I had a fear of it.

During the war years, there were a lot of 'Peeping Toms' peeping in people's windows, or so the story goes.

When Uncle Pearle returned from the war and came to visit us, Daddy was excited, happy and thankful to see him. In the evening, everyone gathered upstairs in the back chamber. A lot of stories were told.



*Daddy and Uncle Pearle*

At some point Daddy sent me down stairs to get something. I believed my brother Eddie should go, but off I went when I was told the second time to do so. Upon reaching the bottom of the stairs I peered into the Parlour. The Parlour shades were never drawn day or night. A foggy yellow street light shone through the laced drapes, sending eeriness into the room. Through the windows, the huge oak trees loomed, while the wind played havoc with the leaves and bushes against the window panes. In the darkness of the night, fear overtook me.

I rushed back upstairs and told Daddy I saw a man looking in the parlour window. Well, you can imagine and, hopefully you can picture the scene that followed. Daddy leading the way, rushed down the front stairs; all the while, rolling up his shirt sleeves. You see he was once a Featherweight Boxer. Uncle Pearle was close on his heels, for he was a Soldier and also knew how to fight.

While Daddy and Uncle Pearle were out into the dark, in their search to find the fictitious character, Mama retired us to bed.



46 Spring Street. (Source: Google Maps, October 2016.)

Since those days, the large Oak trees at 46 Spring Street have been cut down and the ravine filled in and the land levelled.

The L-shaped veranda has been removed. The left window on the second floor shows where my bedroom used to be. The house has been downsized into apartments. Even the sidewalks have been removed in order to widen the road.

The vestibule is still there but the parlour windows are reduced in size. One tree that played games with the sunlight shedding magic over the stairway into the parlour remains.

The lively crowded neighbourhood has vanished, but lives on in my heart.

## School Days

Summer and Autumn were for making new friends and having lots of fun. However, from June to September, we were often reminded school would be starting soon, the day after Labour Day, to be exact.

In the last two weeks of August, we were getting our school bags ready with new pencils, scribblers, etc., for the first day of the school year. Mama was sending to Eaton's for our usual winter order of long underwear and woollens. Unfortunately, she never forgot to order those blessed long johns with the back door flap.



Right: Cabin Fever Vintage 40s Oatmeal Wool Onesie Long Johns  
(Source: [www.pinterest.ca/pin/545850417320178363/](http://www.pinterest.ca/pin/545850417320178363/))

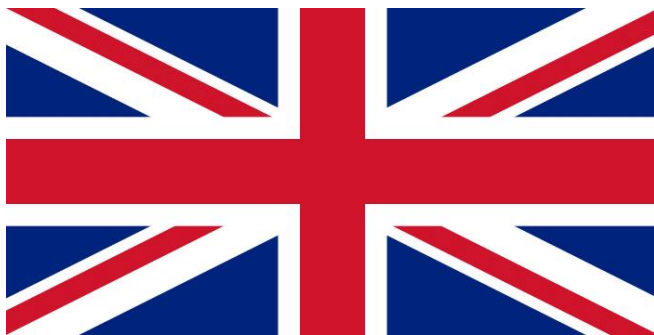


*Spring Street Academy, Amherst, NS (Postcard)*

On the first day of school I was filled with apprehension, as I was attending a new school.

It started out the same: we arrived at the school. The girls lined up at the right door and the boys at the left door. Entering the school, we again lined up at our room door, girls on the right and boys on the left. Entering our classroom we took our seats.

The daily ritual began. The Teacher entered the room, the children stood up to attention. We saluted the Union Jack, said our Pledge to our Flag, sang God Save Our King, said the Lord's Prayer and sang O Canada. On instruction we sat down.



*Above: Union Jack flag and King George VI (Wikipedia)*

This was followed by INSPECTION. We lined up row after row and walked to the Teacher's desk, where she inspected our nails, our ears. We lowered our heads, so she could see the tops of them, then returned to our seats. If our nails or ears were dirty, we were sent to the washrooms to cleanse same and a note was sent home. Once a month we made our visit to the Nurse's Office, to be checked for any Visitors that might take residence in our hair.

Every day the milkman delivered glass pints of milk to the school. The milk was given to the children whose parents prepaid for either white or chocolate milk. My parents did not always have the extra money for milk at school. Because we had milk at home, they did not believe it necessary. If a pupil was absent, their milk would be given to a child who wasn't on the milk list. On occasion I was chosen, and what a treat it was to be given chocolate milk.

## Shared Memories

Every morning the Teacher passed out cod liver oil capsules. Some children gagged and rushed to the fountain and sometimes to the waste basket. I didn't mind taking them and sometimes would even bite the capsule open. It was believed if we took cod liver oil every day, we would not get sick. We got sick anyway.

Windows were raised every day during the Fall, Winter and Spring, as fresh air was deemed necessary for our brains. We had exercises and would run around the room a couple of times until we were fit and ready to commence the topics of Spelling, Writing, and Reading. Except in inclement weather, we had a fifteen minute recess out of doors. After one and one-half hours for lunch we returned to school for the afternoon subjects.

The school year continued in this fashion every day until mid-June.

### **New Glasses**

By Grade 3 I hated to go to school. I kept saying I could not see the blackboard and I had a hard time reading because I couldn't see all the letters. I believed that saying I could not see, I wouldn't have to go to school. It just didn't work. I was taken to old grumpy Dr. Goodwin.

He lived in a big spooky-looking house on the top of Victoria Street. He kept putting lens in front of my eyes and, faster than a rocket flies through the air, he would ask, "Can you see better with this one, or with this one? Speak girl, I haven't all day."

I said, "That one," just to get him to shut up and let me go.

Well, I was sent back to him and he passed me a pair of glasses. He said, "Put them on and go home. You will see better now".

I walked out of his house onto the street. The world was all blurry. The glasses were too strong and made the world look weird. I truly could not see. What a time I had! I would only wear them when I was being watched. As time passed everyone got used to me not wearing my glasses and it all faded into oblivion, except in my conscience.

### **Marbles**

One of my fondest memories is of playing Marbles in the school yard. The pot hole was dug deep with the earth rubbed smooth to perfection. Then the competition began and everyone wanted to be the winner of the full pot of marbles. When I saw a yellow marble, I would fill all up with excitement. I loved yellow marbles and still do to this day. I hid all my yellow marbles so I didn't have to play them, but sometimes I lost out and had to play them in order to stay in the game. And, yes, I lost them.

### **Mama's Pharmacy**

Mama had her own pharmacy. When we were sick with colds and coughs, Mama would make up cough syrup. She would purchase a bottle of Pinex. Because it was concentrated, Mama would pour the concentrated syrup into a pot on the stove, add sugar and water and boil it and then pour it into small dark medicine bottles. One night I had a cold and couldn't stop coughing. I decided to self-medicate. By the time morning came, the cough medicine bottle was neigh empty and Mama was in a dilemma while I slept the day away. Mama also would give us a good dose of goose grease and molasses to ease our coughing.

### **The Measles**

Even though our Daddy was very strict and everyone believed us to be well-behaved children, we had our times of being mischievous and what we thought was funny. Like the time I had the measles.

The minute Dr. Myers diagnosed me with the measles, Mama imprisoned me in the bedroom with the dark green blind. I was tucked under heavy quilts to protect me from chills and pneumonia and, most importantly, the blind was drawn to protect my eyes. At that time it was believed one would go blind from the measles if they were not kept in the dark.

As soon as I heard the hall door close, I was out of bed and peering around that dark green blind, eager to see everything going on outside. I got caught, not by Mama but by my brother, Eddie. He came with a large bottle of Chapman's orange pop to give me a drink. He raised the window and we continued to look out and taste orange pop.

The only thing to see was a man coming down on our side of Spring Street toward Church Street. Eddie made a bet that I couldn't pour the orange pop unto the veranda roof and have it run down into the man's Fedora as he past. As the man got closer, I poured the pop out. As he past, it hit his Fedora. From the corner of the blind, we watched him stand still, look upward and remove his hat. He looked at it, shook his head, shook off his Fedora and walked on. Eddie told me I was in real big trouble. He was going to tell Mama what I did, about the open window, me peering out into the bright light and about the pop.

My brother and I were always playing tricks on each other. I knew he didn't tell on me because Mama never came to my room and it was never mentioned again.

### **The Iceman**

"The Iceman is coming to Town today," said Mama.

It was one of those hot, mucky days of summer, when the ocean lay quiet and peaceful and sent no cooling breezes our way. But, the good news was, the Iceman would be arriving on our street in midafternoon.

Few households had electric refrigerators. People who could afford it had an ice box. It had an upper compartment where blocks of ice were placed. This kept the food in the lower compartment cold. During the winter months, the ice was cut from frozen lakes, stored in barns of sawdust and delivered to customers' homes.

Everyone took turns watching for the ice truck. Then the moment arrived. We would all gather around the Iceman. Sometimes he pretended to be annoyed but then his unforgettable laughter filled the air, while he chipped off pieces of ice to fill our open palms. He would fill our palms again after his deliveries, too.

Some of the brave boys would run after the ice truck and hang onto the bumper. The melting ice water ran over the boys, cooling them, until their bodies shivered and their teeth chattered.

We were always filled with excitement when the Iceman arrived. Holding that piece of ice in our hands, chewing and sucking the cold water from it, brought us great comfort on those hot mucky days of summer.

## The Mosquito Sprayer



*Tantramar Marsh, near Sackville, NB (Source: Google Maps)*

On the salt marshes known as Tantramar Marsh, bordering on Amherst, Nova Scotia, mosquitos grew rampant by the millions. People as well as the animals suffered from numerous mosquito bites and effects of same. Thus to keep the mosquitos in check, the Town purchased a Mosquito Sprayer, which fogged the Town with DDT.



*(Source: Lisa Wade. <http://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2011/06/27/ddt-is-good-for-me-e-e/>.)*

The Sprayer drove up and down the streets fogging the ditches and surrounding area with the DDT. We were excited and happy children. We followed running in the fog. Others lay in the ditches waiting for the fog to cover them. This would go on throughout the Spring to Fall. We were running, laughing and having a good time in the fogging DDT, having no idea or knowledge of the hazard of such actions to our health and well-being.



### First Boyfriend

Roy Rogers was my first boyfriend. I was about 8 to 9 years old.

I collected all the pictures of Roy Rogers I could find. One day, I decided to post all the pictures on the bedroom wall. Daddy had just made this room into a bedroom for me. I took board nails and nailed all the pictures to the wall. Well, when Daddy came home from work and discovered what I had done, nails came out and the pictures disappeared. I assure you, the air is still blue over 46 Spring Street.

I was back into my old room sleeping with Sister Jennie.



*Roy Rogers (Source: Old Time Radio  
<https://www.otrcat.com/p/roy-rogers>)*

### Love Letters to Roy Rogers

My pictures were gone and I lost my own bedroom, but I still had my LOVE for Roy Rogers. I was always writing love letters to him, but I had no way to mail them. The pile of love letters grew higher and higher.

One day I learned something magic from Mrs. Keith, an old Lady who lived across the street. In her daily gleaning news from me, learned of my love letters. She had a solution to getting the love letters to Roy Rogers. She told me the magic formula.

When there was a red-hot bed of coals in the stove, I was to take my love letters and lay the letters on top of the coals and quickly close the stove lid. The writing on the letters would go up the chimney in smoke and land on Roy Roger's table and he would read them. Because he was a movie star and a great singer, he would not have time to write to me, but he would keep what I said in my letters, in his heart. She related many stories to me of how love letters were delivered in this manner. I was so delighted.

I went home and all my love letters to Roy Rogers went up in smoke.

## Trick or Treat

Autumn made its debut displaying our world in its many radiant picturesque hues. And then it was Trick or Treat time.

In October we would plan our costumes for Halloween Night. It was exciting going from door to door gathering treats and scaring folk. On Devil's night, the evening before Halloween, we would meet at Legere's on Clifford Street. There was a chair swing where I would sit with the others gazing up at the sky. We believed that any moment in time, we would see a witch with her black cat, ride her broom over the moon.

*HALLOWEEN NIGHT,  
by Bertha M. Joseph*

*It's Halloween Night;  
My nerves are tight.  
A Witch costume fits just right.  
My pillow case drags in the streets,  
As door to door I beg for treats.  
Then to the chair swing to take my seat,  
With my eyes glued to the Moon,  
I shall soon swoon.  
For I shall see  
Out of her lagoon,  
The Witch with her Cat  
Ride on her broom  
Across the face of the Moon.*

I was scared out of my wits, but I still did this ritual year after year.

Every Halloween night, it would rain or an early snow would fall. We dressed in flimsy costumes. We believed everyone who opened their doors were afraid of us. In our beauty or horror and, soaking wet, we nearly froze to death. However the most important thing of the evening was to get our pillow cases filled with treats, especially the home-made fudge.

## Winter

A chill might fill the air but the excitement of Winter coming filled our hearts. Everyone would run to the windows to see snowflakes falling and a storm brewing. We donned long johns, woollens, snow suits, caps, scarves, mittens and winter boots. The deeper the snow fell, the happier we were. It was a glorious time of snowmen, snow forts, coasting, snow ball fights, skating and making angels in the snow.

### *FIRST SNOW*

*By Bertha M. Joseph*

*Snowflakes tumbling down  
Swirl and play upon the ground.*

*North Wind comes to blow  
Snowflakes to and fro.*

*Bringing memories of long ago  
Making Angels in the snow.*

Our evenings were spent out of doors and under the stars. The freezing air reddened our cheeks and nose, but in our happy hours we never seemed to feel the cold. Only when tired and with clothes frozen stiff did we look toward home.

The windows glowed with light while white smoke rose to the sky from our chimneys. It was time to stop playing and go to the warmth of home, where a pot of hot cocoa waited for us on the stove. Mama was always there to help us get out of our frozen clothes. They were either hung on hooks in back of the kitchen range or stiffly stood by the wall until they thawed and were hung to dry.

I look back on memories of the wonderful days of my childhood, of which I have written a few of them above. I remember our free spirits, that there were no inhibitions. We were safe and free to run and play and wander far from home, returning when hungry or tired. The doors to our home were never locked and the neighbours' eyes were always on us, protecting us with love.

*About the Author*



*I was born and raised in Nova Scotia and since 1964 Brantford, Ontario has been my home. I am a proud Mother, Nana and Great Nana.*

*I love to write stories. I am writing Memories. My book is called Strolling Through The Diamonds. The "diamonds" symbolize the precious years of my life. These are my stories written for my children, their children and all their little children, who one day, like me, will wonder about those who lived before and from whom they descended. In reading my stories, they will come to know me and may grasp a little of what life was like so long ago.*



### **Autumn Found**

A passenger and I, me and myself, bump slowly down Rock Island Lake Road, off Highway 69's beaten track. With windows down, the two and a half miles affords us the laden scents of pines, blue spruce and cedar. The multitudinous displays are truly a vision of scarlets, mesmerizing yellows and flame oranges. An inhalation along with the stunning views herald the changing of this season. There is a culmination of the waltzing rhythm of the woods and wildlife – a tango in communication.

Slow ... down.



It's Thanksgiving and I'm appreciative of this phasing away of summer that my dear parents have been able to witness again and again. Their cherished sightline of the pine on the point is indelibly captured on canvas by a talented young painter named Claire Cherewka (*pictured, right*). This work from her creative gifts suspends forever, a scene that acknowledges a view my parents have had decades long. They've drawn strength from and communed with, in this, their sacred space. As leaves may be pressed between pages of a weighty book for preservation, so this painting stands. As the branches of their time are breezed along, the comfort and healing of seeing what their eyes saw is relayed.

And the same healing, as my mother so poetically, potently shared, may be transferred to an eldest daughter, indeed to all her daughters. A legacy endowed, by a creator our mother knew and was known by. How could one not pause and insufflate, feel the drifts of loving care and concern, etched, while we touch our earthly home, a creation gift for humankind?



*Left: at the wedding of Barbara Joan Foster and Robert Everett Wright.*



*Right: 60 years later.*

*Blush, October bush, pause and shush  
 Brook reflections and radiant clearings  
 Beaver-pond, downpour over cliff, balsam & white pine  
 October memory, majesty of trees, tamaracks, a golden-rosy time  
 Glorious quilted creek, smooth contour split rock, downed timber  
 Smoke lookout, fumed vapour, lake & land autumnal twilight dance*

## **The Rum (No-Bah Humbug) Festive Season!**

About the first week of November, for as long back as I can remember, Mom and her mom would begin baking for the holidays. A-frenzy it was.

There were all types of squares: date, real vanilla oh-so rich, those with pink marshmallowy icing, tarts: most notably butter ones, without raisins please, thick and gooey. Myriads of cookies: the crispy and flavorful coconut kind being quite our favourite, pies: mincemeat, apple and pumpkin.

Most of these passed-down recipes had come from our French-Canadian side, courtesy of the Tetreaults and Prevosts. The main signature recipe was the gorgeous fruitcake! This was serious business. All kinds of citrus, fruits, and nuts were lovingly, precisely chopped. These were added to multiple kinds of raisins and currants that were steeped in dark fragrant Captain Morgan's rum for weeks on end, which got topped up as the fruit plumped. (Earlier times may have seen the addition of a black Demerara Jamaican Rum; Mom's preference was Captain Morgan's.) Dark brown sugars and molasses were added. One of the final special ingredients was Mom's homemade strawberry jam. All combined eventually into the heavy iron Bundt pan suitably oiled and lined with thick coated brown paper cut diagonally to fit. That was a challenge so that it lay flat.

While Dad was away with the boys, gone hunting to fill the freezer, Mom would industriously get ready for the Holidays to come. Dad would arrive home one day to find mom had "dug out" and done up, spruced up the Christmas tree and lovingly decorated around our home. All of this preparation lent itself to our Christmas festivities in late November and December. This, by Mom, all for our family, for my two younger sisters and me.

This festive time was a touchstone moment in a beautiful memory as those times would oft mean finding Mom and Gramma giggling away as they had obviously sampled and enjoyed the special ingredient of the prized fruitcake, "THE RUM!"

*Dedicated to Mary Beatrice Henrietta Irene Foster nee Tetreault,  
"Pete" (Born Sherbrooke, Quebec, September 10, 1906 – March 11, 2003),  
Barbara Joan Wright nee Foster, and "Jo" (Born Montreal, Quebec, March 7, 1939)*

## **Dark Rum Fruitcake Recipe**

The following is a recipe handed down from Maude Tetreault nee Prevost (February 18, 1874 – July 11, 1927). She was the eldest daughter of Louis Prevost and his first wife Catherine McPherson, who was from Aberdeen, Scotland.

(Captain Morgan's rum is produced by Diageo. It's named after the 17<sup>th</sup> century Welsh privateer of the Caribbean, Sir Henry Morgan, who died August 25, 1688. During Prohibition time, Jamaican Rums made their way up here. Or perhaps Bacardi Rums were previously used. Often this recipe was doubled or tripled.)

**1 cup slivered almonds**

**2 cups sultana raisins**

**1 cup currants**

**1 cup seedless raisins**

**¼ cup each chopped candied orange and lemon peel (pineapple optional)**

**¼ cup candied citron peel**

**¼ cup each chopped red and green cherries**

**½ cup butter**

**½ cup dark brown sugar**

**¼ cup dark molasses**

**4 eggs unbeaten**

**1 cup flour**

**½ teaspoon each of salt and baking soda**

**1 tsp cinnamon**

**½ tsp each of cloves and allspice**

**½ cup quality strawberry jam**

**Dark rum (Captain Morgan's)**

**Chop peels, cherries, and fruit.**

**Soak in rum for a goodly length of time (weeks, preferred).**

**Cream together butter, sugars, and molasses, and add to the fruit mix.**

**Add eggs, one at a time.**

**Add sifted dry ingredients and blend until smooth.**

**Add good quality strawberry jam last.**

**Heavily oil and line Bundt pan with brown paper.**

**Bake at 270° Fahrenheit or 130° Celsius for approximately 3 hours. Keep a pan of water in oven at all times to maintain moisture levels.**



## Christmas 1969

The Year of Peace; over 400,000 converged for Woodstock Festival in New York.



Peace Symbol  
(Source: Wikipedia)

Woodstock had happened that summer. I had friends whose older siblings had gone. I had pleaded to go but to no avail. I was after all only 9. On my suggestion our family constructed a 6-foot peace sign out of thick metal coat hangers. We wrapped it in silver garland and with multicolored lights. It illuminated perfectly outside, between my sisters' and my bedroom windows. I enjoyed its glow all that Holiday Season. It became a cherished memory, a project with family and an ongoing wish for global peace.

The Pax Cultura is a designated symbol because of the signing of the Roerich Pact and Banner Of Peace Treaty in 1935. The "Red Cross of Culture" expresses the intent to safeguard and preserve the historical, artistic, scientific, and cultural buildings and identities within communities during times of conflict. It's good to remind ourselves about this valuable Treaty.



Pax Cultura  
(Wikipedia)

At the age of 9, my love of blues and jazzy music was cemented by listening to Hendrix and Santana. As a left-handed child who was slapped by teachers for writing with her left hand, I admired Hendrix for his versatility and talent as a left-handed guitar player. Woodstock featured about thirty-two musical icons gathered over three days to leave an everlasting legacy. Reading the list of artists who played, it's interesting to see what the different performers earned for their role in this historic event. Many of the artists featured are now gone, marking an end to an era of classic, authentic, musical creativity.



1. Jimi Hendrix	\$18,000
2. Blood, Sweat and Tears	\$15,000
3. Joan Baez	\$10,000
4. Creedence Clearwater Revival	\$10,000
5. The Band	\$7,500
6. Janis Joplin	\$7,500
7. Jefferson Airplane	\$7,500
8. Sly and the Family Stone	\$7,500
9. Canned Heat	\$6,500
10. The Who	\$6,250 (also reported at \$11,200, but <i>Variety</i> claimed that number was inaccurate)



From left to right: Carlos Santana; A partial playlist of iconic Woodstock performers; Jimi Hendrix.  
Source: Woodstock Wiki

## Blues

*"The Sky is Crying", Stevie Ray Vaughan and Lenny Breau  
We have Miles and Miles to go through Muddy Waters  
Hey George Buddy, you Guy, you  
This day is noose tight  
There is need of reprieve  
Our dragging feet, seek relief  
And as sunrays wane  
& breezes emanate  
I hear a Spoonful of Howlin  
From B. B. Kings Place  
Our excitement heightens  
As Monk signals escape  
A melodious Thelonious  
Rollins crescendo, "Little Wing"  
Satchmo, I chill  
unabashedly stare  
Lady Blues Holliday  
Low and slow the back beat  
Reverberation  
Chords renew faith  
Regeneration  
Auras morph from  
Murky to illumination  
Balancing weariness of  
Bodies and minds  
Our life-force harmonious  
Blood resonates acceptance  
Uniqueness pulsing  
Our communication complete  
Here, we comprehend  
Where, we crystallize  
When, we immortalize  
Our moment in time*

## Grampa

*Brilliant blue eyes & thick auburn hair  
Montreal man, who truly cared  
Open countenance, and an open mind  
Chats with him, would have been so fine*

*Saturday to Synagogue or Sunday to church  
Or "back-when" dear Grandpa, off to find work would go  
Those war/postwar years, a relentless search  
Door to door, maybe, exchange labor for goods  
Sixteen hour plus day, not uncommon for the times  
Wait for rationing, or hope, to bring home enough  
"dimes"*

*Stepping through the door, two daughters to embrace  
Settle onto piano bench, (self-taught)...ragtime to play  
Cousin Mel with a Draft, a classic finish to the day  
"Danny Boy" they would sing, with twinkling eyes  
Wavy hair both, big in the "sway"*

*Crossword puzzle & white/yellow or blue/green budgie so near  
Perched onto glasses or Grandpa's shoulder to chirp in his ear  
Or a banjo he'd play, nimble fingers plucking strings  
(How I wish we were all together, celebrating)  
A friend to anyone, no matter how far or how near  
Invited in for conversation, Van Houtte coffee, tea, or cigar  
Hospitable neighbor, pop in, Salut-la  
Share a cuppa, or Molson Export by the quart*

*Oh, to have climbed into your lap, with love surrounding  
Bear hug arms, or so I've been told  
How I wished you'd been here with us, until you'd grown "old"  
Taken away younger than I am now  
Your memory is transferred  
I am thus endowed  
Thank you, Mom; I know you feel him still  
And I do too!*

**Dedicated to Joseph Cedric  
Hiram Foster (October 23,  
1909 – March 6, 1955)**

*Married*

June 11, 1932 to Mary  
Beatrice Henrietta Irene  
Tetreault

*Daughters:*

Ann Beverley Burton nee  
Foster (January 27, 1934 –  
August 4, 2017)  
Barbara Joan Wright nee  
Foster (March 7, 1939)

*Granddaughter:*

Brenda Ann Wright  
(September 22, 1959)

**Photo Album: Joseph Cedric Hiram Foster**



*Left to right:  
Grampa and Mom  
(Barbara Joan  
Foster); Grampa;  
Grampa with a  
budgie; Grampa  
at a wedding.*



*Left to right:  
Family portraits  
c.1940 and c.1950  
with Gramma  
(Mary Beatrice  
Henrietta nee  
Tetreault), Mom,  
& Aunt Beverley;  
Grampa c.1940.*

*Gramma and  
Grampa:  
A lifetime of  
memories in a  
picture collage  
that adorned  
invitations to  
their 60<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary  
Party in 2018.*



## Edge of the Fray

In recognition of Brantford's residents and especially Eagle Place, displaced on Wednesday, February 21, 2018 due to the ice-jam and flooding of the Grand River.

Over 6,000 people were affected and many homes were evacuated for several days.

Our City of Brantford officials handled this crisis well.

To the tune of "Sittin' on the Dock of the Bay" by Otis Redding.

*Slippin before the sunrise suns,  
We'll be slippin when the twilight comes,  
Watchin the blue ice chunk-dance,  
With tree limbs and debris all askance.*

*Oh, we're slippin at the edge of the fray,  
Watchin Grand River roil away,  
We're slippin at the edge of the quay,  
Bidin' time ...*

*We's displaced from Eagle Place,  
And aheadin for motel laneway,  
Police knocked and said we need to vacate,  
Looks like we be hunkerin down aways away*

*And we're slippin on the edge of the fray,  
Watchin Grand River roil away,  
We're slippin at the edge of the quay,  
Bidin' time ...*

*Looks like this day's gone awry,  
Cause Grand's gremlins are ahavin' their play,  
Together and safe will more than suffice,  
Stay put here til they settle tonight*

*No longer slippin on the edge of the fray,  
Watchin Grand River roil away,  
We were slippin at the edge of the quay,  
Bidin' time ...*

*Now we're sheltered in a motel room,  
Three kitties just awanna go home,  
Thousands of acres by Grand's river-banks,  
Ain't none to safe to be around just yet,*

*So dreamin, slippin on the edge of the fray,  
Watchin Grand River roil away,  
We're slippin at the edge of the quay,  
Bidin' time ...*

**Miss JP: Our Souls – Human Experience**

*I press the red button to inject my metered dose*  
*While levelling up in that groggy haze of infused morphine, one fights for awareness*  
*There is an aged woman abridged from me*  
*With respirations breached by pain we share space*  
*We are enduring, synchronizing, relating in breath sounds*  
*We exchange in our moans and gasps*  
*As we journey she knows that she is fading*  
*And as we journey she knows that I am not*  
*Dear Auntie is attended to and calms so that her family may come bedside*  
*They slip by with whispered endearments, hallowed goodbyes*  
*She tries to stave off panic*  
*Then, our private conversation, more elemental and intense*  
*I grieve for her fading struggle and I vow to her in my unsteady air*  
*That I am here, that I am listening*  
*(I will recall her communications to me as she ebbed from this life)*  
*(I have faith that she will be remembered by those who truly knew her,*  
*whose life she was part of)*  
*In these final few hours I feel humbled and privileged to have become acquainted*  
*I will remember*  
*Rest in peace Miss J.P.*

**Web-page spews  
"Kill Prominent Jews...Blacks"**

**U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C.  
Security Guard – Stephen T. Johns (Age – 39)  
Deceased – June 10, 2009**

**Executed by an:**

**Aryan Proud  
White Supremacist  
Skinhead Designate  
Haughty Segregationist  
Neo Nazi Terrorist**

**D epraved coward**

**E gotistically destructive**

**A ttitude foulsome**

**T oxic savagery**

**H onourless brute**

**C opious convictions**

**A predatory stance**

**M etastasized sadist**

**P itiable, hate festering**

**G enerational gangrene**

**O n judgment by bullets**

**D enouncement by rifle**

**?**

**Extremism**

**Mutates**

### **Miscarriages**

*I grieved your concluded existences  
A shocking finish rendering me to my knees  
Obscured in damaged tissue I had resisted  
That you not be curettaged from me  
Blighted ovums unable to withstand  
A hostile environment, not conducive it seemed  
So fragile, so frail, gossamer like  
Ultimately feeling I had failed  
Was not to be, I will remember  
Miscarriages*

### *About the Author*

*Brenda Ann Wright was born in 1959 and raised in St. Catharines, On. Canada. She is the eldest of three daughters (sisters: Gail and Sandra) born to a "Port Boy" (Port Dalhousie, On) and "La Petit Maman" from Montreal, Quebec. In the early 1970's for Remembrance Day, The St. Catharines Standard selected her poem for publication. Entitled "Sons' Dying," it was dedicated to her Great-Uncle Alex who served in World War II. Brenda appreciates her association with members of the Lifescapes at the Brantford Public Library: (Thanks, Robin Harding!) Brantford Writers Group, Brantford Poetry Guild, Cavernofdreams.ca, and Barb Days', Brant Rant. Brenda has assisted on a number of published works/books, Anthologies etc. Brenda has a consuming/keen interest in music, (Blues, Jazz, etc. and the clarinet,) Poetry (Cohen, Neruda, Gibran, among others) and Literature. Brenda has preference for Historical Fiction/Non-Fiction, Biographies and Genealogy. Brenda has three daughters: Lisa, Marianne and Sarah, and the youngest, a son: Neil Mallette. Brenda is Nana to 8 grandchildren. How very important it is to record individual's life stories, so much can be learned historically, and it's a legacy for future generations.*







*Is it any wonder, given the volatility of sibling love, that we might feel anger at a brother or a sister for dying? How dare they die and leave us! We feel angry, but there is no recourse, so we usually end up feeling guilty.*

*--T.J. Wray*



*Perched on a chair in February of 1963. Her smile radiated from all her childhood photos.*

T.J. Wray said it well and I concur! I was twelve when my sister Leanne was born. There I was, a teenager when baby Leanne Margaret Bosnell thrusts herself into the household. There I am, a young adult ready to exit the home just as Leanne enters her teen years. I wasn't around, I wasn't there, and I didn't communicate or interact with my youngest sister as often as I could have or perhaps should have.

I had no control over that gap, but still, I retain a lingering sense of angst over my inability to intervene earlier, much earlier.

So! I was away at university for two years, home on every-other-weekend. I really didn't participate in Leanne's early formative years. I commuted to McMaster for my last two but was caught up in the frenzy that was the early '70s, snared in a web of friends, relationships, and the sense of the "my generation". I missed the critical time when Leanne's antagonistic life view, especially towards the main authority figure in her life – her father, my father – exploded.

It was Mum who told me that Leanne suffered from a correctable sinus or nasal problem. For a reason I can't recall – and Dad always had a reason – he refused the corrective procedure, even though the bulk of it would have been covered by insurance. I suspect that the refusal may have been a form of punishment. As young as she was, Leanne would stay out all night, or run with a crowd that Dad despised. It was a pattern that worsened until Leanne quit school and moved in with a boyfriend, all before the age of seventeen.

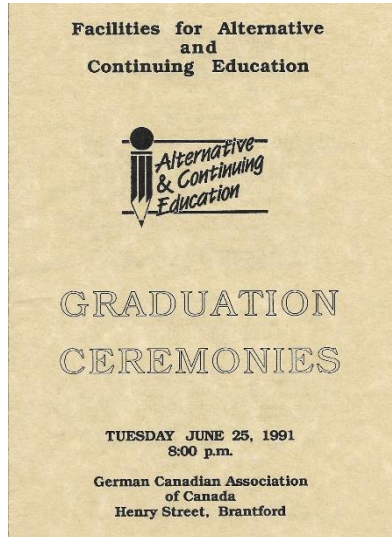


But there were always signs of potential. She escaped the first abusive partner to move in with a man who cared for her. Eventually she met her future husband. She held several jobs for an extended period. Yet the inevitable employer/ employee conflict would arise, and Leanne would quit in anger.

*Left: Leanne with younger brother Bruce on the front porch. Not quite the radiant smile. but content. I think.*

## Shared Memories

Her lack of a high school education really held her back. Eventually Leanne returned to school, worked extremely hard and graduated with her grade twelve. Mum and I attended her graduation. Dad did not. Once again, the potential shone through. She hoped – we hoped, we all hoped – for the past to erase itself and a better future to materialize.



*Leanne returned to school, worked extremely hard and graduated with her grade twelve.*

She deserved it. But within a year or so after a confrontation with her partner she moved back home.

Mistake! I found a long-lost untitled poem that she penned after yet another father-daughter fight.

*Wish I could get outta this place,  
You make me feel like such a  
disgrace.  
I just want to be part of the clan,  
But you can't except me the way  
that I am.*

*Don't know how I survived with so  
many stabs in the back,  
Is it me, or is it love you lack?  
Please, no more grey clouds in my  
blue sky,  
You don't know what it takes, just  
how hard I try.*

*Anything I try isn't good enough for  
you,  
If you don't want me around, tell  
me we're through.  
Don't leave me hanging on a fence,  
Crying out in my own defense*

*Leave me alone, can't you let me  
be,  
This is Leanne, this is me.  
It doesn't get much better, it won't  
get much worse,  
But I am your daughter, I'm not a  
curse.*

Off she went once more, to her on-again-off-again feckless soon-to-be husband. She moved in with his mother and brothers in a rundown duplex just blocks away from her Brock Street home.

Now the complications really started to add up: Leanne was diagnosed with anorexia, Dad was diagnosed with colorectal cancer, Leanne was said to be bipolar, and a quack denturist insisted that Leanne's jaw issues could be rectified with braces.

Mum intervened on Leanne's behalf but the denturist would not waver. Leanne believed in him until she lost all the bone in her jaw! It was a nightmare.

### **Orthodontic Nightmare**

The following is based on an interview I did with Leanne early on, regarding the regimen she had to follow with her braces. I originally used a pseudonym while writing it because my original intent was to incriminate the denturist (not by name) in a letter to the editor. It would have been obvious who it was. This supposed specialist oral surgeon had four – that's right *four* – other ongoing lawsuits simultaneous with Leanne's claim.

*Sunken-eyed, at ninety pounds, Leanne can't escape the metal in her mouth. The dream of a better smile has coalesced into a recurring nightmare for this young woman.*

*It started with a visit to her long-serving dentist. Several bottom teeth were out of alignment and one tooth grazed her upper lip that caused some minor ulceration. Leanne asked her dentist if it was possible just to file them.*

*He said no. "I can't. You should see a specialist for orthodontic treatment."*

*The specialist, an oral surgeon, suggested that more than orthodontic treatment was required. He advised surgery combined with the removal of several teeth. Orthodontics weren't possible because "the bite was too bad."*

*Leanne rejected surgery and returned to her dentist. Adamantly she declared: "NO surgery!"*

*He recommended an orthodontist who offered a “phased-in” treatment plan. This professional assured her that braces would do the job. “We’ll shorten the jaw and align the teeth without surgery.”*

*The standard length of time for placement is two to three years. After seven years Leanne was still practicing a rigid daily routine, starting with a special brush called a proxy brush to clean around the brackets followed by a vigorous round with a WaterPik. Then a second brush was used to remove material from behind the teeth. Two rinses followed a Listerine wash, then a final fluoride rinse. Imagine the quantity of mouthwash used! The ritual concluded with an application of Sensodyne toothpaste.*

*After a session of headgear placement, Leanne found herself choking during the night. The orthodontist noted his inability to move the molars back and mentioned surgery again.*

*Leanne protested strongly, because again she did not want surgery.*

*“Well, we’ll have to make your teeth fit your jaw, rather than making your jaw fit your teeth.” He removed four bicuspids, resulting in complete collapse. Receding gums, bone density loss and “exposure everywhere” took over. Leanne now suffered constant pain from tendonitis on the right side of the jaw, gum disease from bone density loss and chronic pain from prolonged orthodontic treatment.*

*Leanne reported communication problems, lack of respect, and non-acceptance of other professional opinions for seven tortuous years. She was certain that this orthodontist had not met the minimum standards of care. He even double cemented broken brackets.*

*One dentist confronted him face to face about this choice of treatment. His reaction: He quoted the worn-out African fable about the blind men and the elephant.*

*All opinions pointed to the removal of the braces. Intense pressure applied by Leanne’s mother resulted in a chart notation guaranteeing removal.*

*In response he concocted a lengthy waiver form of “legalese” (according to a lawyer), presented it to Leanne, and demanded that she sign, to absolve him from blame.*

*Leanne maintained a detailed paper trail including extensive notes describing each office visit but by then she was out \$5,000.00 and faced with dental problems beyond correction.*

*She begged for the nightmare to end.*

*Strict codes of ethics need to be developed and enforced; misconduct and mal-practice punished. Modern-day orthodontic torture must cease.*

Leanne did receive a settlement, but it was almost entirely consumed by legal fees and the physical damage was irreversible. As of 2018 he continues to practice, albeit under restrictions.

To this day I cringe when I walk past his office. I have no doubt whatsoever that his care and treatment was a significant factor in the evolution of Leanne's bipolar disorder. Only when Mum confronted the dentist with a Cease and Desist order did the braces come off, yet he continues to receive four or five-star ratings online. I once had a student mention in a health class that she was under his care. I felt the color drain from my face.

Of course, it was far too late for Leanne. She now had the additional burdens of the loss of all her remaining teeth, difficult and prolonged divorce proceedings, and ballooning mental health issues compounded by alcohol and marijuana use. She moved back in with a former boyfriend. If she did not drink and took her medication she remained lucid.

The problem was, she would come off her meds and binge.

### **A Revealing Anecdote**

I live in West Brant on the south side of the Grand River. For some time Leanne lived on the north side in an area named Holmedale. One day she leashed her dog, walked him to the river bank on the north side and threatened to jump in and drown herself.

After a frantic phone call from her partner, I was covering the south side of the river while searched the north side for her. I couldn't see her, but I could hear her. We actually yelled at each other across the water.

She didn't jump in that day. Leanne would threaten many times to take her life. It was a constant cry for help, a perpetual plea that was never answered.

## Attempts to Help

In August of 2001, I read about a Toronto Star reporter by the name of Scott Simmie. While on assignment in East Asia he suffered a severe downturn in his bipolar condition. He disappeared for some time. Miraculously, he resurfaced to reach out for help, and continues to write – write well – to this day.

I actually spoke with him over the phone. He took the time to call me to discuss my family's exasperation with Leanne.

He suggested that we:

- have a Justice of the Peace write an affidavit enforcing a seventy-two-hour stay in the hospital (since Leanne simply walked on previous occasions);
- make hospital management aware that our family would hold the hospital responsible for any injury to herself or to others if she was released before the writ expired; and
- contact In-Patient Mental Health or the Police for help.

I was grateful for the phone call and the suggestions. We did speak at some length but the goals, although written down and quantifiable, could not be met.

Several times I took Leanne to a Hamilton Employment Office to try to complete the paperwork for an ID card. The only piece of identification she had at that time was a cable bill in her name. She did not drive, therefore no driver's license. OHIP cards were lost or thrown away to be replaced and then lost again. Her doctor offered to help her complete the paperwork required to apply for a disability pension. So did several caseworkers. Leanne would never complete the process. She really became *identityless* in a world of rules and regulations.



*Throughout all of the trying times, there were moments like this – rare family moments.*

Yet there were extended periods of normalcy. Wherever she lived Leanne exquisitely maintained the property. She loved flowers, grew vegetables and enticed butterflies and birds to visit. She adored her dogs. After being invisible for months she would call and I'd go for a barbecue and ice cold beer.

But the clouds never dissipated for long. They gathered, and they shut out the sun! Each confrontation verbal or physical had consequences, cumulative consequences.

Leanne developed peripheral neuropathy. All of those bruised ribs and falls, bumps, and cases of pneumonia took a toll. To remain mobile she had to use a walker. The stress on Mum was immeasurable.

Leanne looked like seventy in a worn-out fifty-year-old body.

### Loss

On the day of Dad's funeral – ironically, it was Leanne's birthday – she refused to attend.

When Mum took her last breath Leanne was right beneath her two floors down. Mum had sworn off any kind of Celebration of Life event so my other siblings and I decided to do an informal graveside service instead, and to gather at one of the local halls. We invited Leanne. She came and acted beyond reproach.

Leanne's partner's mother also attended. It's important to note, because she had had several heated discussions with Mum over Leanne's living arrangements with her son.

After Mum's death, Leanne retreated even more. Phone calls stopped and she stayed indoors, a recluse confined to the little cottage her partner owned. A visit from any one of her siblings would not prompt an answer at the door.

Until April 30, 2015, when a knock on the front door no longer mattered.

I recall the time was 7:20 am. With my school day planning completed I would have closed my eyes for a couple of minutes while the coffee for my thermos perked. No one calls this early in the morning, after all.

It was my brother who said "Leanne's gone, Brian. She's gone."

Startled from my reverie I wanted to say "Gone where?" but intuitively I knew what he meant. He went on to describe how she had fallen in the night, that her



## Shared Memories

spouse had picked her up, conscious, placed her back in bed and continued to check on her periodically. Upon the last check, she didn't respond. She had died. Her partner had called Bruce with the police still in the house and the coroner on the way.

If a person dies at *home* the police must be called. I emphasize *home* for a reason. For years Leanne and her partner had lived in East Ward in a well-maintained cottage. I assumed that Leanne had died there. Wrong! She died as she lived. When I drove by *that* house on the day of her death it was boarded up, with a for sale sign on the front lawn and legal notices posted on the front door. Came to find out that Leanne had died at her partner's mother's house on Terrace Hill.

Financial difficulties had forced them out. For how long, we will never know.

There were other unanswered and disconcerting questions, too.

- On the death certificate – that I had to send away for – why was her partner listed as “friend”, even though Leanne had lived with him for eight years or more?
- What happened to the furniture and other items of value (jewelry in particular) from Mum's estate?
- Why weren't the surviving siblings (the true next-of-kin) informed about the cremation and burial details?

When we went to place an obituary in the local newspaper we had to rely on the grace of a secretary to phone around, to confirm which funeral home was handling the arrangements. In a matter of hours and without our knowledge (myself, my sister, my brother) Leanne had been cremated and buried in an unmarked plot.

A “Jane Doe”, *identity-less*, Social Services burial.

Leanne had mentioned interment with our parents, but that didn't happen. Her former partner lied to my brother about that.

We (my siblings and I) sought legal advice. We talked to the director of the funeral home that handled the arrangements and I talked to a close friend familiar with Social Services protocol, but with no satisfactory answers.



After some time her final resting place was determined. We were given a numbered map but needed assistance to find the spot. Moving her to the parental site was deemed impossible. The location was marked with a tiny flag a few square centimeters in size and we still missed it given a general autumn leaf cover, our stumblings in the grass and our failure to interpret a pint-sized map.

We persevered, however, and managed to set a marker almost two years after her death. *(Photo, above left.)*

When I dismount from my bicycle to sit on a nearby bench I'll mourn the life of a sister lost.

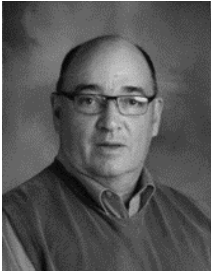


*Leanne at rest.*

*A final ironic twist: in the tiny space near Leanne's grave, marking the site below, two Native flags ripple in the breeze. The top flag is The Warrior/Unity Flag and the bottom flag is The Flag of the Five Nations (Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk).*

*These two flags will indelibly mark her final resting spot and symbolize for me the travails that not only a sister has faced, but by association, countless indigenous people have suffered.*

*About the Author*



*Brian Bosnell is a retired elementary school teacher who spent twenty-six years teaching youngsters from JK to Grade 8. He is now an avid reader by day and a writer by night.*



My name is Chantelle. I have a genetic disorder called CHARGE syndrome. I am legally deafblind, and the main attribute of my syndrome is that I am stubborn, determined and insist on taking on at least eleven trillion projects at once. So, focusing on a single task is a challenge when I want to do everything at once, and that is not even taking into account how tricky everyday tasks are with a multi-sensory impairment.

Sometimes it is awkward to get started on a memoir. I want to write, yet a part of me feels that a memoir should be something that happened years and years ago, and not just in the last year. I remember being told by many people that one day, years from now, the adventure I now have with my adaptive trike, will be a memoir for people.

## Shared Memories

Even the act of sitting down to write seems to be an exercise in staying focused. Our lives get so busy that it can take some determination and bribing myself in order to write. I constantly think of excuses to procrastinate. Would people want to read about my trike? Perhaps I could tell about my first ride, but I feel that there is just as important of a story behind why I need an adaptive trike. I finally managed to make myself sit down on the third floor of the Brantford Public Library.



*My adaptive trike.*

A nice bright yellow sitting area with a wall-sized window that faces south, so the sun is currently shining, reflecting off of the snow outside, as I sit and ponder how to start talking about my adaptive trike. I find my brain making yet another excuse to why I can't write about my trike; there is snow everywhere and my trike is currently in storage. This light blue bike with silver mud guards and six speeds instead of just three, aiding me in climbing hills. It is light weight, making pedalling a breeze. I find I am missing riding because of the snow and ice on the sidewalks. I make myself focus on writing this story. So, back to the library, I look around the third floor with the sitting areas along the wall, and islands of tables along the centre that seem to create a nice track. Right now I would happily ride my trike around the third floor, but it is in storage, and somehow, I don't think the librarians would be too keen on that idea, so I will just write.

A few years ago I was still able to ride on a standard two-wheel bike. I would explore trails around Brantford. My favourite biking spot was a trail in West Brant that went from Cockshutt Park and ended in D'Aubigny Creek Park. Riding in the morning was particularly enjoyable. I would bike to a nice shaded area to sit by the Grand River and watch the fish leaping out of the river. My vision is not good enough to see the fish leaping, but I do love seeing the splash and watching the ripples while the sun is still low in the sky. This spot always seems so magical in the early morning. The deep green leaves on the tree seem to stand still, and the whole world seems frozen in time, and the only movement is myself and the fish who that by now is back under the water with its breakfast fly. It is moments like this that make riding very special for me. Riding always makes me feel calm, focused and rejuvenated.

In spite of my limited visual field and malformed semi-circular ear canals, I still tried to keep biking. However, I was having increased incidences of crashing into bushes and trees, and losing control, and falling off my bike. It was becoming clear that my balance was getting worse. My injuries were getting progressively more serious, and as much as I wanted to keep riding, it was evident that it was no longer safe for me to ride. After a particularly bad crash where I bruised my entire right calf and cut my hand, I reluctantly gave away my bike. So for several years I had no set of wheels. At first I did not mind, but I really did miss riding. I missed the ability to move at exhilarating speeds that I had travelled with my old bike.

Gradually I started looking around for different adaptive bikes. I remember when I was in high school I tried out a friend's adaptive trike. It was a very heavy one-speed model. I knew this was not quite what I wanted, though it did offer the stability of being three wheels instead of just two. I knew this was not quite what I wanted, but safety and stability is what I now need, and I knew I needed something.

I tried riding on a stationary bike at the gym, but I quickly realized this was not enough. I missed the exhilaration of riding outdoors.

I looked into many suppliers and vendors. I soon found the type of bike I was looking for, though the price was quite high. I was not completely deterred. I was determined to figure out how to afford one. I found the Ethan Wolfe Recreational



Assistance Program, a special bursary offered by the CHARGE Syndrome Foundation. This bursary is in memory of a young boy with CHARGE syndrome who really enjoyed sports. I found that each year the bursary would allow individuals with CHARGE to participate in recreational activities from such as swimming, going to camp or adaptive

biking. Since this potential source of funding was available to apply for, I went to Cyclepath in Brantford, and found a three-speed trike that I was interested in getting a price quote. The sales person I talked to was very friendly and showed me many options as I talked about what I was looking for. Finally he showed me a

six-speed model. I was in love with the design of the bike. At last I had found what I was looking for. I was even able to order the colour I wanted, Blue, because well, a certain British science fiction show about a time traveling alien in a TARDIS ... Doctor Who!

So I put together the application for the adaptive trike. It was an intro into why I wanted to receive funding to acquire the adaptive trike.

*Hello my name is Chantelle McLaren. I am 38 years old, live independently and have CHARGE syndrome. I have a craft business. I also enjoy going to the gym. I used to love to ride a bike, but my balance was never good, and it has gotten unstable enough for me to not be able to ride a normal 2-wheel bicycle safely. With my restricted visual field, I would feel safer with the stability of the tricycle that is not available on a street bike. I would like to get an adult tricycle so that I could continue to be further independent. I would use it to go to the grocery store, pharmacy, and to use it to get to activities I enjoy. I live in a town with limited bus services that do not always suit my needs. Having a trike would allow me greater opportunity to engage in social activities, being able to decide to travel back home on my own schedule, furthering my independence.*

*The trike would allow me to return to biking, an activity I enjoyed so much in the past but needed to stop after several bad falls. I miss being able to ride trails and being out in nature taking photographs and just being able to explore the trails and bike paths around town.*

*I am hoping the cost of a helmet, safety flag and bike lock can also be included.*

It was such a fantastic feeling when I found out my request for funding was accepted and I finally picked my trike. I have my journal entry from my first day of picking up the trike.



*I picked up my trike this morning!!!! :) I love it. Riding it was perfect! The colour is perfect. Everything about riding it just feels so natural. I know I can explain it in a way that CHARGErs understand. When turning on a 2-wheel bike you are supposed to turn with the bike but that feels all wrong and is why I lose balance and fall. On this bike to keep it steady you turn against the bike which is what feels better and keeps the feeling of stability. I have to say the weather is lovely.*

*The power went out at home so I went up to get my bike in the morning instead of this afternoon. I went to get a coffee and after I bought my coffee the power went out. I got my bike and was riding home and it just felt so natural like I have been riding one of these my whole life.*

*I thought about Ethan on my way home. I feel like a part of his spirit was with me as I rode home. I just had a smile on my face and felt like I had the "CHARGE energy" around me. It is that special feeling when I am around other CHARGErs. I felt so much love and energy. I am joking on messenger right now with my CHARGE family and I think we all agree that I must be superCHARGEd haha!*



I think my next project is to get a DSLR or a compact mirrorless camera so I can take even more photos while exploring around Brantford on my trike.



Reprinted with permission from the CHARGE Syndrome Foundation:

**What else can look like CHARGE syndrome?**

There are many other conditions with features that overlap with CHARGE, including 22q deletion, Kabuki and VATER. Evaluation by a clinical geneticist and lab tests can help determine which condition is present.

**Development in CHARGE syndrome**

Children with CHARGE have developmental delays. These may be due to:

- Medical issues
- Sensory deficits (hearing, vision and balance disturbances)
- Brain/intellectual differences

Many have normal intelligence, but most children and adults with CHARGE will need life-long assistance due to their sensory deficits regardless of their intellectual level.

**Deaf-Blindness**

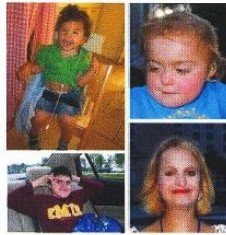
Most children with CHARGE are not totally deaf or totally blind. However, children with any combination of some hearing loss and some vision loss are classified as "Deaf-Blind." These children need to be evaluated by specialists in this area.

**Early diagnosis and intervention for hearing loss and vision loss are critical to development of communication.** Deaf-Blind resources can be found through the National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness [www.nationaldb.org](http://www.nationaldb.org)

**What happens to children with CHARGE?**

CHARGE is medically and developmentally one of the most complex conditions known. There is no other identified group within the population of people with multi-sensory impairment who have so many medical problems, of such complexity and severity, and with so many hidden or delayed difficulties.

**Yet, no other group has shown such a consistent ability to rise triumphantly above their challenges than individuals with CHARGE syndrome.**



CHARGE Syndrome Foundation, Inc.  
800-442-7604  
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A BETTER WORLD FOR PEOPLE WITH CHARGE SYNDROME

THE CHARGE SYNDROME FOUNDATION

**WHO ARE WE & WHAT DO WE PROVIDE?**

The CHARGE Syndrome Foundation provides support and outreach to families and individuals with CHARGE syndrome. We also gather, develop, maintain and distribute information about the syndrome, along with promoting awareness and research regarding its identification, *causa* and management.

Our mission is to lead and partner to improve the lives of people with CHARGE syndrome locally, nationally and internationally through outreach, education and research.

- Our resources include:
- New Parent Packet
  - Professional Packet
  - CHARGE Syndrome: A Management Manual for Parents
  - Webinars on selected subjects
  - CHARGE Accounts, a quarterly newsletter
  - Provider database
  - Parent to parent information
  - Links to other resources
  - Clinical database/registry
  - Biennial conferences for families and professionals



**What is CHARGE syndrome?**

CHARGE is a complex genetic syndrome that may be obvious at birth due to the combination of birth defects and medical features. It also affects the senses and behavior.

- Some of the medical features
- Heart defects
  - Cleft lip and/or palate
  - TE Fistula or Esophageal atresia
  - Choanal atresia
  - Facial palsy
  - Swallowing problems
  - Breathing problems

- Some of the sensory features
- Vision loss
  - Hearing loss
  - Balance problems
  - Behavior issues
  - Sleep disturbance

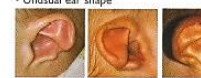
**What causes CHARGE syndrome? How often does it happen?**

- CHARGE is a genetic condition, with mutations in the CHD7 gene on chromosome 8 being the major cause
- Sporadic – there is usually only one person in a family with CHARGE
- Occurs in about 1/8,000 births

**How is CHARGE different from other syndromes?**


Features that are common in CHARGE and rare in other conditions include:

- Coloboma of the eye
- Cranial nerve anomalies, including facial palsy, swallowing problems and lack of sense of smell
- Unusual ear shape
- Choanal atresia - blockage at the back of the nose
- Absent or abnormal semi-circular canals - balance problems
- Abnormal cochlea - a type of hearing loss



Yes, I want to support the Ethan Wolfe Recreational Assistance Program. My contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Method of payment:  Cash  Check  Credit Card  Visa  Mastercard  American Express  Discover  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Exp: \_\_\_\_\_ CVV: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please make checks payable to CHARGE Syndrome Foundation, Inc.  
 You may also use the Donate button online at [www.chargesyndrome.org](http://www.chargesyndrome.org)  
 This gift is  in memory of  in honor of \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Charge Syndrome Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. All donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.




**A Better World for People with CHARGE Syndrome**

**Our Mission:**  
 We lead and partner to improve the lives of people with CHARGE syndrome locally, nationally and internationally through outreach, education, and research.


- Provide a broad network of support to individuals, families and professionals
- Engage in knowledge acquisition, development and dissemination
- Promote innovative scientific and clinical advancements
- Champion the lifelong potential of people with CHARGE syndrome

**CHARGE Syndrome Foundation**  
 318 Half Day Rd #305  
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**Toll Free: (800) 442-7604**  
**Fax: 1-888-317-4735**  
**Email: [EWRAF@chargesyndrome.org](mailto:EWRAF@chargesyndrome.org)**



**Ethan Wolfe Recreational Assistance Program**



*Everyone Deserves A Chance To Play*



**What is CHARGE?**

CHARGE is a complex genetic syndrome that occurs in about one in every 10,000 births worldwide. It is an extremely complex syndrome, involving extensive medical and physical difficulties that vary from child to child. For more information on CHARGE, go to [chargesyndrome.org](http://chargesyndrome.org)

**What is EWRAP?**

The Ethan Wolfe Recreational Assistance Program provides individuals with CHARGE syndrome the opportunity to

participate in recreational activities. This program is need-based and was created by a generous gift from the Wolfe family and friends. During Ethan Wolfe's 12 years, his life was enriched by an adaptive bike, special recreational camps, swimming lessons, music class and so much more. David & Jody Wolfe, together with the CHARGE Syndrome Foundation, wish to honor Ethan's memory by providing other individuals with CHARGE with similar, fun activities.

**What Does EWRAP Cover?**


- Adaptive recreational equipment
- Adaptive sporting activities/teams
- Specialized camps
- Special recreational programs

*"She will continue to have fun and develop the social/life skills that she might not otherwise have the chance to experience."*  
 - Melissa, parent of Hannah who received gymnastic classes

**Why do individuals with CHARGE require special recreational equipment or activities?**

- Many are born with absent or malformed semicircular canals resulting in poor balance
- Most also have:
  - sensory issues
  - impairments of both hearing and vision
  - developmental delays and behavioral issues

*"My family is beyond excited and we can't wait to take it out for a spin."*  
 - Victor, parent of Antonio who received an adaptive bike





**Enchanted  
Forest**  
by  
**Diane Bandura Miller**

Deep in the woods about mid-November appears a magical village, decorated with twinkling lights and green cedar boughs. There is excitement in the air.

An Elf Academy is decorated with giant candies and gingerbread. Tiny tables are set with games and toys. Clothes pegs line the wall, draped with colourful elf costumes. A decorated sleigh stands ready for photo ops.

The horses in the barn are brushed and their harnesses cleaned and polished. A wagon is decorated with swags of evergreen boughs.

Mrs. Claus's Kitchen is cleaned and swept, long tables are set out and covered in Christmas colour. Firewood is piled neatly by the big wood stove at one end of the very large kitchen. A clothesline by the fire holds long red underwear, socks and other décor. An old sewing machine sits idly by. A small fireside table is set with a lovely tea set, and a rocking chair awaits its special guest.

The Elf Staff Room (*pictured left*) glows with treasure-filled gifts alongside a big bucket containing lumps of coal. The Flight Academy is readied with tiny work aprons and little yellow hard hats. Tiny desks sit in front of a large satellite tracking monitor.



A big red sleigh is set up in the courtyard, along with a reindeer feeding station.

Santa's Cabin is festooned with evergreen boughs and sparking lights. A big desk overflows with letters from children. A little table and two chairs are set with two special mugs. Three Nutcracker Soldiers stand on guard by the door. A brightly decorated Christmas tree fills one corner of the room, and in front of the tree are two chairs, one for Mrs. Claus and a large chair for Santa. A little bench sits between them, ready to welcome special guests. Drums, train sets and an assortment of test toys sit all around the room.

It is Christmas Town at Mountsberg! Santa's vacation place, a place where he comes before Christmas each year to meet children personally before his long voyage Christmas Eve.



Santa and Mrs. Claus arrive at Mountsberg about the middle of November each year. While Santa busies himself training the Elves and reindeer, Mrs. Claus bakes cookies for children to decorate during their visit. Santa's helpers get icing, sprinkles and hot chocolate ready. The kitchen buzzes and the fireplace glows with warmth.

When the children arrive, they await their departure for Christmas Town at the Elf Academy where they play games and dress up in little elf costumes before a 20-minute ride

*Left: Santa and Mrs. Claus in Santa's Cabin.*

## Shared Memories

through the forest to Christmas Town. The sound of horse hooves on freshly fallen snow begins the magical ride.



*From left to right: Reindeer understudy. Arriving at Christmas Town. The North Pole.*



When the children and their families arrive at Christmas Town they are ushered to Mrs. Claus's kitchen to decorate cookies, colour, and wait to be called for a visit to Santa's Cabin. Afterward they tour the rest of Christmas Town, including the Flight Academy and Elf Staff Room, where the elves make and decorate gifts as per Santa's requests. There they will notice a bucket of coal for boys and girls who have not made it to Santa's "nice" list.

The children may not see the elves because they are shy and swiftly run away to hide when they see someone coming. If the children are very quiet and watch carefully they may see one or two elves peeking out from behind a curtain.

*Above: It may be for boys and girls on Santa's "naughty" list now, but a long time ago the gift of coal was considered a very special gift because people used it to heat their homes.*

Oh what fun it is to ride in a wagon pulled by two big horses (*pictured right*), singing Christmas songs along the way to Christmas Town.

Portraying Mrs. Claus during Christmas Town is a fascinating and magical experience. Seeing the anticipation on children's faces as they approach Santa's Cabin is awesome.

It is an honour and a privilege to look forward to continuing my role at Mountsberg's Christmas Town.

The staff have commented that the Santa and Mrs. Claus positions are the best jobs at the park ... I believe it is true.

The entire staff at Mountsberg is welcoming, considerate and totally awesome!



### **Stories from Christmas Towns Past**

There was one little boy about 7 years of age who had already talked to Santa and was leaving when his Mother reminded him that he had something else to talk to Santa about.

As he walked timidly back toward Santa his head was down and he said, "A boy at school told me that you hate me." His Mother commented that this happened last Christmas and he had been mentioning it all year making him a little nervous about his visit.

As the young boy stood in front of Santa, both Santa and I answered together: "Santa loves everyone!"

Santa spoke with him a while and, as he was leaving, the young boy asked if he could hug me. I said, "Yes, of course." We hugged, and I reminded him that Santa and I love him and his family, adding that his friend might find himself added to our Naughty List.

His Mother looked at me with a tear in her eye. "Your words mean so much to us. I

## Shared Memories

can't thank you enough."

Another family arrived at Santa's Cabin with a crying baby. They were passing the baby around as they entered the cabin, trying to get her to stop crying. After I greeted them and walked the crying baby's siblings to see Santa, I sat down in the Mrs. Claus chair and asked if the mother of the crying baby would like to sit her on my knee for a picture.

She said, "Oh yes, that would be wonderful!" and passed the crying baby girl to me. The baby stopped crying instantly, looked at me, and smiled. The family said, "How did you do that?"

I replied, "It's magic."

The baby, about 11 months of age, didn't take her eyes off me the whole time she was there. This has happened a couple of times, including another day with a baby boy who also locked his big eyes on me until the family left the cabin. Magic surrounds us at Christmas.

Sometimes I surprised Santa and other visitors when I would launch into another language, able to speak to some and/or at least wish them a Merry Christmas in their own language.

Other Mr. and Mrs. Clauses at Christmas Town tell amusing stories, like the one about the boy who asked Santa for a bra for his Grandmother, and sometimes the stories are more emotional. One time a child asked Santa to bring back his mother who had died.

This is the most difficult type of question to answer.

I believe that Santa replied: "There are some things that Santa cannot do, even when combined with all the powers of The Easter Bunny and The Tooth Fairy. But your mother will live in your heart forever."

Some children did not ask for gifts but that the world be at peace. Others had long lists of requests which sometimes included pages cut out from catalogues and newspapers. Some children came with handmade gifts for Santa. Some came dressed as elves.

Some did not want to leave Santa's Cabin.

It is an enchanting place.

## Things that Surprised Me During My Time in Christmas Town

When Santa asks children where they get their ideas about gifts for Christmas, most children say, “The Internet.”

I learned that Santa does not travel around the center of the world, from side to side. He travels from top to bottom to stay ahead of the sun.

Santa is over 1700 years of age.

Mrs. Claus is over 1500 years of age.

The three Santa Clauses I worked with were professional, and each brought their own style and related to the children in a delightful, respectful and magical way. Working with them was a pleasure.



*Santas and Mrs. Clauses (Christmas Town 2017)*



## Shared Memories

### *About the Author*

*Born and raised in Toronto, I was a City Girl. After marrying my husband Jim I became a Country Girl when we purchased land in North Milton. My most important role in life began when giving birth to two beautiful daughters.*

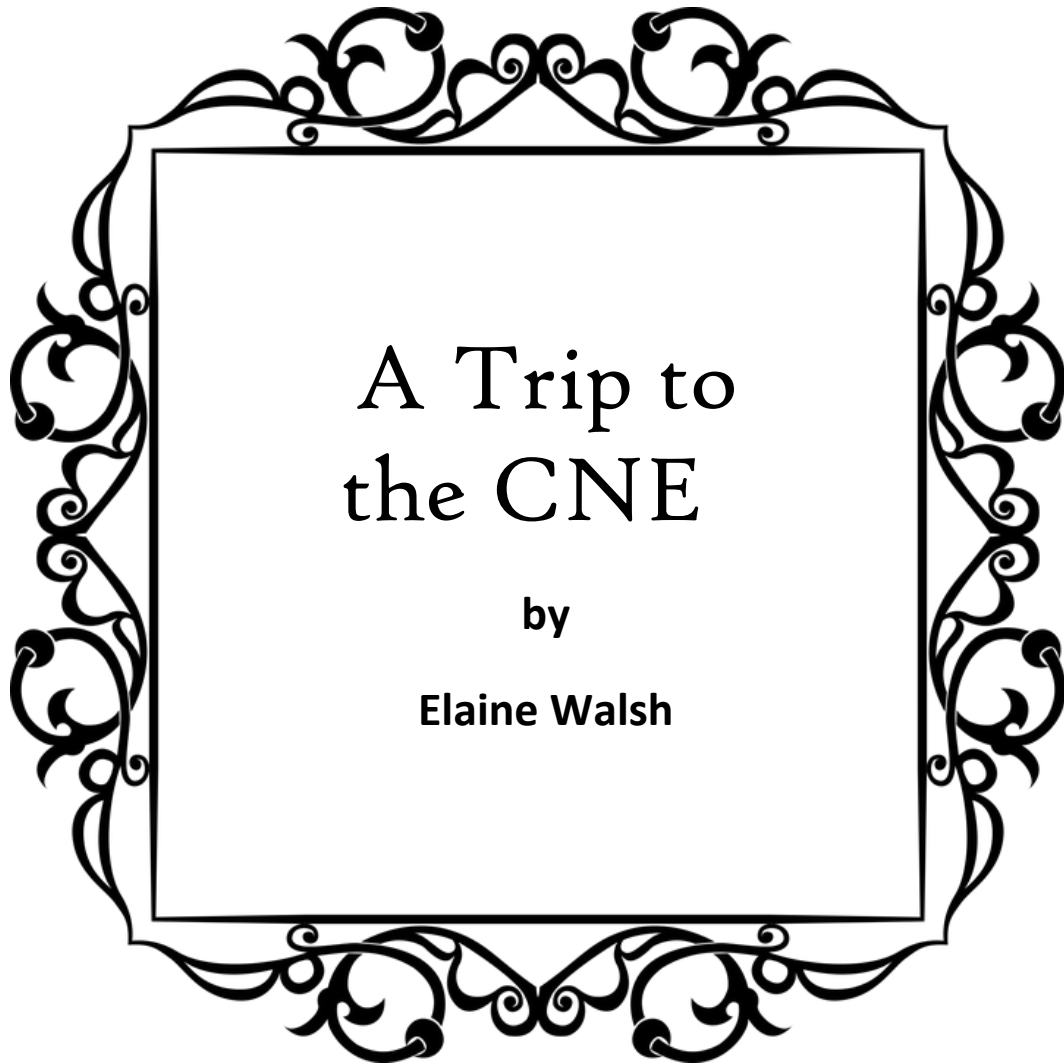
*After completing a finishing school program I was asked to teach modelling and self-improvement at Jennifer Parkington's Finishing School in the west Toronto, then was hired as corporate model for the Ontario Jockey Club, also looking after special groups and VIPs in the Publicity department of both Thoroughbred and Standardbred divisions of horseracing.*

*After our daughters married I went back to College and University to study Psychology (which my husband claims gave me an irritating personality), Art and English.*

*Later in life I accepted a position of editor/photographer/writer/publisher for the Canadian Camper, a newsletter for motorhome and trailer camping enthusiasts.*

*I now enjoy volunteer work in my community of Milton, ON, and with musicians in Nashville. At Christmastime I play a role as Mrs. Santa Claus at Christmas Town Mountsberg.*

*My life has afforded me several careers and experiences and the story continues.*



This story took place in the 1970s.

My husband Carl was a transport driver and he worked a lot of overtime. Whenever we went on a holiday he was always the driver. One day I decided that it would be nice if we could take a trip where he didn't have to drive at all.

It didn't take me long to find a bus trip going to the CNE on a Saturday.

## Shared Memories

I bought four tickets: one for Carl, one for my mum, one for my five-year-old daughter, and one for myself. The bus would pick us up two blocks from our house. I didn't tell Carl until the night before we were to leave. He didn't seem all that thrilled but I was sure he would like it once we got going.

Early the next morning we all walked the two blocks over to where the bus was to pick us up. As soon as Carl spotted the bus he said, "Let's go home and get the car."

"Please, Carl," I said. "I did this for you."

When he saw the bus driver he was even more emphatic that we get the car. The driver was wearing a pink shirt and a chain drive wallet and cowboy boots. At the time I didn't recognize this as a sign that this may not be a very responsible driver.

We were the last passengers to be picked up and the bus was full. We took our seats at the front of the bus. They were in terrible shape – duct taped together, with stuffing falling out.

Things went smoothly until we started down the Hamilton Mountain. The bus driver was having a hard time holding the bus on the road and we nearly went over the side. Of course, I didn't realize it at the time, but Carl did.

We continued on to the CNE. The driver knew where the bus entrance was, but there was a slight up-grade to the entrance. Well, he stalled the bus and couldn't get it going again!

Carl had had enough. He told me to tell the lady who managed the trip to get everyone off the bus except our family. People did as they were told, and soon the only people left on the bus were the lady, the driver, and the four of us. Carl jerked the bus driver out from behind the wheel, which didn't sit well with the driver. Carl had no trouble getting the bus up the small grade and started driving between the wire fences.

The guy with the pink shirts began protesting. "I want to drive my bus!"

Carl got up from the driver's seat with the bus still moving. I was sure we were going to run into one of the fences but the bus driver got it under control and we proceeded to the bus parking lot.

After the bus was parked, Carl went over to the driver. "You get this bus fixed before we go back," he told him, "or get us another bus."

The four of us made our way to the Exhibition. After an hour or so Carl wanted to go back to the bus, to see what the driver was doing.

The bus driver was nowhere near the bus.

Carl tracked him down in the Carlsbad Pavilion, drinking beer.

Carl went back to the bus and crawled underneath. He discovered that the front shocks were not properly hooked up, the tire rod ends were very loose, and the muffler was both leaking and falling off. The air compressor had only one belt on it and it was loose too. The bus was a piece of junk. It was a Fritz John, made in Brantford in the 1940s.

Carl decided there was nothing he could do. He found us and we tried to enjoy the rest of the day.

That night after the fireworks all the passengers met back at the bus. Carl informed the lady in charge of the bus that it was unsafe, and we would not be getting on. He asked for the phone number of the person who owned the bus.

She gave him the phone number and when he called it, he told the person what was wrong and that if the bus left the parking lot we would phone the DOT (Department of Transportation) and have it impounded.

After about 30 minutes or so a nice Canada Coach Line bus pulled up, and we all went home in style.

We never took another bus trip again.

Some years later we were invited to a two-week vacation in Hornepayne. Hornepayne is where the train going west from Toronto to Vancouver stops and changes engineers.

As it happened, the man who invited us to his home was an engineer. He asked Carl if he would like to see how a train worked. Carl did, and accompanied him over to the train yard.

## Shared Memories

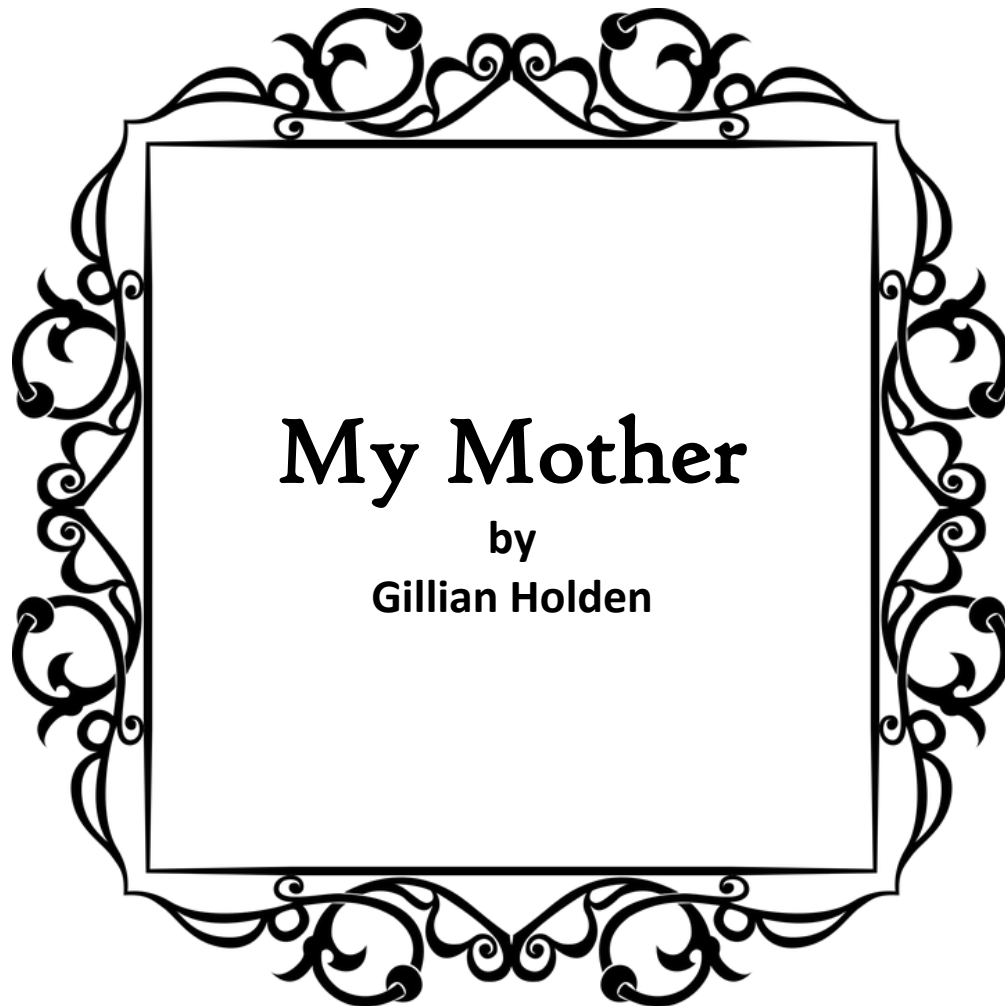
After they came back, Carl had one thing to say.

“We can go to the Exhibition by train now, because now I know how to drive one of those too!”

### *About the Author*



*Elaine Walsh has lived in Brantford nearly all her life.*



I am sitting with my mother in a long-term care facility where she lives now. She can't speak anymore, so we sit together. I do the talking. The recreation staff have put together an afternoon sing-a-long. In the background Theresa Brewer is singing "*Put another nickel in, in the nickelodeon...*" My mother loves it and has a permanent smile on her face. Her fingers tap to the tune and I drift away to memories of my childhood.

Such good memories. Such funny memories. It is so important to keep the good ones.

I miss making snow forts in the snowbanks on the roadside because there was little traffic to make it dangerous. I miss coming into a warm house on a freezing cold day and finding my mother has a pot of soup simmering on the stove.

## Shared Memories

Most of all I miss my mother. The woman she was, who was always there during my childhood, keeping me safe, correcting me and letting me have a wonderful childhood.

Some of the funniest memories I have are of my mother's friend Jean and the antics they got up to together.



*Me in the middle.*

My mother wore many hats. The way she managed her home, her work ethics and the way she attended her family, definitely came from her life in the army. Beds made, shoes polished by the front door ready for the next day, a place for everything and everything in its place.

She had another side. She loved to party. She loved to dance and sing. Many a Sunday morning I awoke to the Coldstream Guards playing full tilt on the record player.

She was also quite a character. When she got together with her friend Jean all rules blew in the wind.

One day Jean and my mother decide to perm and colour their hair for an upcoming party. They did each other up, wrapped their heads in towels and took their coffee out to the back porch while waiting for the egg-timer to go off.

Little did they know that the back door had locked behind them!

As usual they were laughing and talking and lost track of time. Then ... panic. They managed to pry the bathroom window open but neither of them could fit through. Time was ticking along.

I arrived home from school for lunch and they grabbed me, shrieking hysterically, and hoisted me up to the window.

"Get yourself through and go unlock the back door!" my mother hollered.

They dangled me head first until my hands touched the bottom of the bathtub then let me go. I opened the back door and they ran by me, knocking me sideways in their haste. My mother put her head under the kitchen tap and Jean ran to the bathtub.



*Left: Mom and Jean in the photo booth at Woolworth's*

When all the kerfuffle died down they stood looking at each other. They both looked like bright orange pan scrubs. Then, as always, they nearly doubled over laughing.

Nothing seemed to phase them. They just 'kept calm and carried on.'



Jean and my mother were always up to something.

On Saturday mornings we shopped downtown Brantford and went to Woolworth's for apple pie and ice cream before heading home. Then on one such Saturday, just as we finished our treat and prepared to leave, Jean and my mother went ahead of me. They dashed out of the store in double time.



I followed them through the door only to find them up the street by the Right House, falling about and laughing. They were doubled over.

"Come on, Gillian!" they chorused.

I hurried to them. To my surprise they had both stolen a doughnut from the bakery department as they ran out the door.



I do not remember what I thought of it then, but the memory of that day is still strong. I do remember sitting on the lions at the post office where we would catch the bus for home. The two of them were still chattering and laughing, bursting at the seams.

I am just glad they didn't forget to put me on the bus.

### **Keeping the Memories Alive**

The music has stopped and I return from my daydreaming.

Alzheimer's and dementia is a cruel disease. The ones who are left to look after these souls see only a shell of the person they once were. My mother was a vibrant person, a very happy, secure woman with a zest for life and many, many friends. This disease robbed her of who she was, and now you can count on one hand the people who love and visit her.



## Shared Memories

When I visit my mother now – oh, that smile. It is still there. Big as her life.

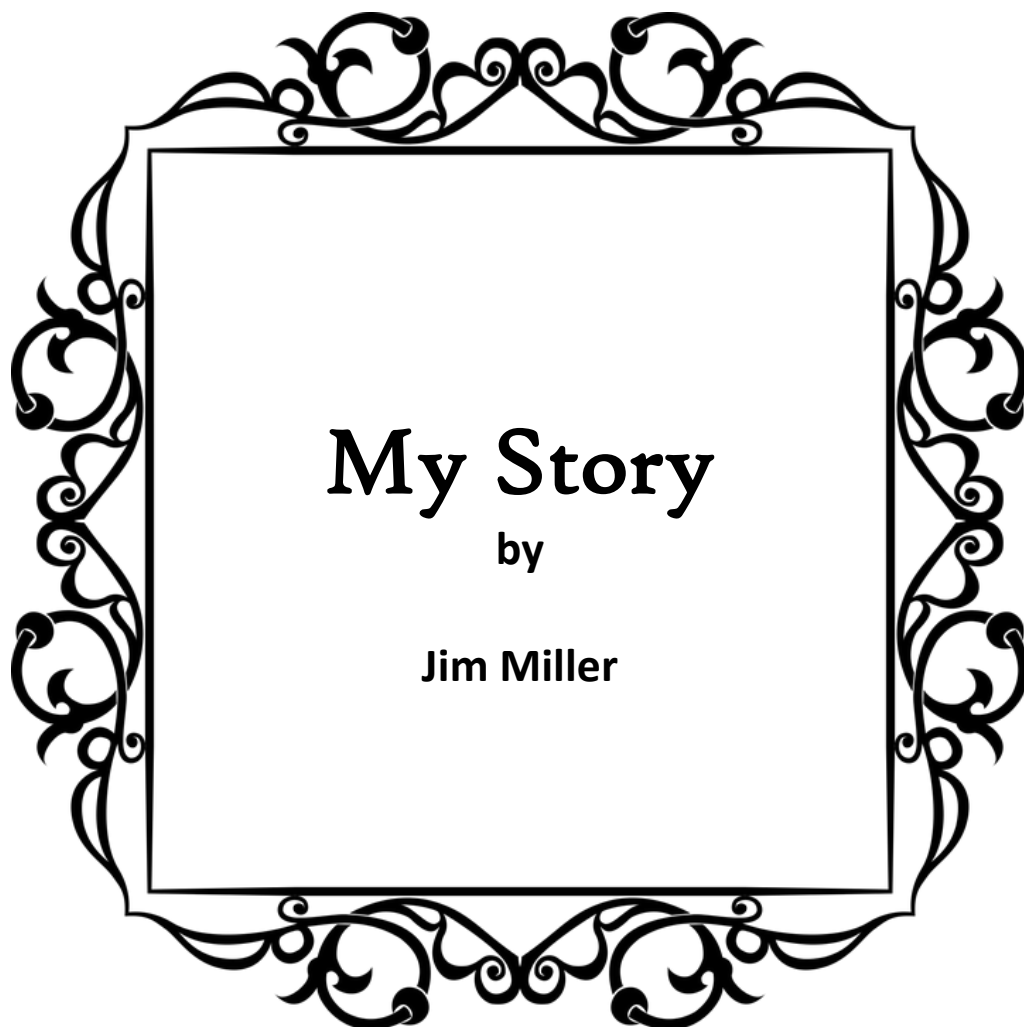
Everyone should write something about their life. Life is short. Life is fragile. Life is important. No one should have to search to find out something about their background. It is my turn to keep the memories alive and look after her.

Memories. So many memories. Keep the good ones.



### *About the Author*

*Hi. My name is Gillian Holden. I have been writing poetry and journals for about 60 years. It is time to put pen to paper and write a story. My hobbies are scrapbooking, genealogy, card-making, sewing children's jackets, and writing class. There are not enough hours in a day.*



I don't know when I fell in love with the sound of the guitar.

It might have been watching "B movie" cowboy heroes or watching Elvis on Ed Sullivan's TV Show. But it all had new meaning and challenge when I was listening to a late-night radio show from West Virginia and heard a guitar player named Chet Atkins.

His style of playing was magical and very difficult. It involved the process of having your right-hand thumb doing one thing (playing the bass line) and your fingers playing the melody. At the same time, your left hand held down certain strings to form the chords. I struggle with it to this day.

## Shared Memories

I had played off and on all my life but decided to get serious when I retired in 1997. My decision led my wife and me to a 1998 Chet Atkins convention in Nashville Tennessee, where guitar players from all over the world gathered to celebrate Chet's life and legacy.

I was amazed at the talent and the enthusiasm of the participants and was thrilled when an opportunity arose to meet my hero. Although he was in failing health I was able to meet and talk to the man who had such an effect on my life and the lives of others.

My wife and I have attended every year since, and even became part of the staff for the convention in 1999.



*Jim talking to Chet Atkins at breakfast. Chet's wife Leona is to the right.*

On the long drive home from that first convention, I pondered our meeting and after many attempts I came up with a poem. It helped me to describe my feeling and admiration of the man who caused me so much frustration and enjoyment for sixty plus years.

I was doubly thrilled when the journal of the Chet Atkins Appreciation Society (CAAS) published my poem in the January 1999 issue of *Mister Guitar*.

HANDS  
By Jim Miller

*I shook hands with a man today  
He'd caused my life to go a certain way  
And I thought as our hands closed around each other,  
How one person's life can affect another.*

*This boy grew up in East Tennessee,  
Not much different from you and me,  
But the hands of another changed his view,  
When he heard Travis pickin' he just kinda knew.*

*He'd always been partial to wood and strings  
The sound kinda like when an angel sings,  
So he practiced hard for that Muhlenberg sound,  
And when it all came together, a new style was found.*

*From this point forward through good and bad,  
The love of the music was all he had.  
But his fingers kept working and never let him down,  
Pickin' the licks for the Nashville sound.*

*His hands have touched greatness in his time  
And just for a moment it was closed around mine.  
And I thought of the people he'd met every day,  
Who had somehow touched greatness in C.B.A.*

*When his hands set to work caressing his guitar  
The troubles of the day just drift afar.  
A smile overcomes a frowning face,  
And the world seems to be a better place.*

*So when I see what his hands have done for you and me,  
That gentle guitar picker from East Tennessee.  
I'm might grateful that I saw and met,  
The legend and the man we all know as "Chet".*

## Shared Memories

### *About Jim Miller*

*Raised in Toronto, my family moved to Cookeville in 1957. I graduated high school and completed an apprenticeship in Automotive Technology in 1961.*

*I attended York University and Wilfrid Laurier University, and completed a successful High School teaching career in 1997.*

*I met and married my wife of now 55 years in 1963 and have two daughters and four grandchildren. We built our home on our property in Milton, where we have lived for over 50 years.*

*Other interests include volunteering at our local senior centre in convening a guitar club and jam session and participating as MC for the Chet Atkins Society in Nashville each year. My wife and I also enjoy travelling and working on our twenty-seven-acre home and property.*



*"When we die, things that we have done for ourselves will be lost in the grave; but, what we have done for others will gain immortality." - Thomas Paine*

### **Voices in the Night**

It would be a very long time before I learned the story of the voices from the dining room. As a child I drifted in and out of sleep in the upstairs bedroom, never quite hearing what was being said but knowing that one of the voices belonged to my father. It happened over and over again but I never did ask who was talking late into the nights those many years ago.

It wasn't until my father died that I learned the story of the voices in the night, but the story really starts back to when I was eight or nine years old.



*Mom and Dad*

During summers my parents operated the refreshment booth in the park and inasmuch as there was living accommodation attached to the refreshment booth, the family would often stay at the park overnight rather than going home to our nearby house.

I had a friend whose family lived in a large tent in the park. His father and mother were such nice people and his

father in particular welcomed me to come and play in a sandbox he had made for his son. We would play for hours with our little metal cars and trucks in the sandbox until my mom called me for supper.

My father became well acquainted with my friend's father, a Métis Indian, and Dad appreciated his generosity and hard work in keeping the park free of refuse when he wasn't at work at his regular factory job.

In the winter my friend's father and his family would move from their tent in the park into a small apartment. My mom and dad would invite the family to our home from time to time and it was clear that Dad really admired Bill. Bill always had a job and looked after his small family well, but his jobs didn't seem to last long. I didn't understand why Bill was 'let go' from his jobs.

One day, I heard my father say, "Bill, there's a new Ford plant being built near Oakville and it's time for you to apply for a job there. I'll drive you to the plant and you can apply for a job."

Dad did just that and Bill was hired. He stayed in a room in Oakville through the week but returned to Brantford on the weekends. Bill's family prospered and eventually were able to buy a car so that he didn't have to stay in Oakville but could come home each evening. Eventually the family was able to buy a small home of their own and moved closer to the Ford plant. Bill's family remained friends with my mom and dad, even as their son grew up, went to school and then college, developed his own successful business, married, and raised his own family. Our families continued as good friends over many years. I grew up myself, went to college, got married, and raised a family. Bill and his family were always a joy when they came to visit us in Brantford.

Bill came immediately when my father died. He helped us through our grief and the funeral arrangements and provided us with strength to see it through.

It was following the funeral that Bill told me all about the muffled voices I'd heard in the dining room those many, many years ago.

My father was an intuitive man. He figured out why Bill would get a new job, work hard, get promoted and be given more responsibilities, but then lose that job when someone decided he couldn't do the work required.

And so it went, until my Father determined the truth: Bill couldn't read or write.

As Bill told the story, he said that one day after losing yet another job, Dad said to him, "Bill, we're going to get you a good job that you will be able to keep," and that's when the long nights and the muffled voices from the dining room began.

My Dad spent long hours into the night working with Bill at the dining room table teaching him to read and write, and never letting Bill give up.

Apparently it took almost a year until my Dad felt that Bill was skilled enough to take on a new challenge, and that's when he took him to the Ford plant in Oakville where Bill filled out an application form (by himself) and was hired.

The rest was history. Bill was so successful that he moved up in the company very quickly. Over the years he and his wife were able to purchase a small business that she ran while he continued at the plant.

I had never truly realized the impact of not being able to read and write on so many lives. When I started tracing my own family history, I learned that several generations ago my own ancestors were in the same situation. I learned how they, functionally illiterate and with few possessions, left their homelands and built new lives in a new country. I remember one in particular, a woman who couldn't read or write, and her only means of support was to be a domestic servant. What a struggle that must have been and how courageous those ancestors were!

Like my ancestors, Bill had left his home in the far north to come to Ontario and try to make a better life. He told me that my father had changed his life, and there were tears in his eyes as he told us the story of the late-night voices in the dining room.

I'm so proud to have had a father who spent his life seeing the best in everyone and living his life with generosity of spirit.



### **A Broken Promise**

“Mom, I made a promise a very long time ago and I think it’s time to break that promise.”

Promises come into our lives in many forms and many ways. Some are made to be kept and some are meant to be broken. That promise was made and broken for the best possible reasons.

As a single parent raising four very young children, it was always a struggle to make ends meet financially. Although I was secure in the knowledge that my parents were always there to support me and the children, my sense of personal integrity was such that I wanted to be responsible for myself and my family.

One day I met a wonderful lady at one of our single parent meetings at the church. I was drawn to her immediately, admiring and almost revering her for her kindness and consideration to all. Mary was older than me. She was well educated and had a fine full-time career in her field of expertise. One might think that she wouldn’t have too many worries, but her job required long hours and was very stressful. She had also been abandoned by her husband of many years in favour of a younger woman and was raising three boys on her own.

Her life was quite different than mine and she faced different challenges, but she was a single parent and that’s what we shared. After a very long day at work, she would go home, take care of her boys, keep her house in order and complete the myriad of tasks required as head of the household.

It sounds almost easy, but it wasn’t.

One day, during a conversation about nothing in particular, probably commiserating about our plight, she confessed to me that sometimes she came home from work so tired that she could hardly put one foot in front of the other and that she often collapsed into sleep before being able to get her sons off to bed and clean up the supper dishes, never mind trying to do her housework. She mentioned that she couldn’t afford to pay the going rate for someone to clean her house.

I knew the feeling well.

At that time, I had an infant and so I had no hope of a full-time job as yet, but had been able to make ends meet by taking day assignments for a part-time business agency providing typists, stenographers, clerks, etc., to companies who needed temporary help. We were paid by the skill required for the assignment. Typing

earned the lowest hourly rate, stenographers who could do shorthand rated higher, bookkeeping was a bit more, and so on. Of course, whatever I was paid when on those assignments was diminished if I had to pay a sitter.

I thought about Mary's housekeeping needs and said to her: "I will clean your house if I can bring my baby along, and I can do that for less than it would cost you for a professional cleaner."

She thought that was a brilliant idea, told me to spend my time, vacuuming, dusting, cleaning the kitchen and bathroom, and generally tidying up. She gave me a key to her house and we had a deal. She always left the money on her kitchen table and when I was finished, I locked the door after myself and went home tired but feeling good that not only had I helped out a wonderful person but earned a few dollars into the bargain. I cleaned Mary's house one day a week.

I had been about four months into that regular job, shortly before Christmas, when I finished up sooner than expected. I decided to clean out the fridge and tidy the cupboards before leaving.

I had never looked in her fridge and, when I opened the fridge door to begin the cleanup, there was virtually nothing in it. No milk, no vegetables, no juice, no turkey, nothing that looked like a Christmas dinner. I thought about enjoying a great Christmas with my family, my mom and dad, my sister and her husband and children, along with loads of presents and a huge turkey.

Seeing that empty fridge really upset me. A hurried examination of the pantry cupboards revealed only a few staples there.

That evening when my father came home from work, I was still brooding about my friend and the upcoming Christmas holiday. My father asked me what was wrong, and I burst out crying. I sobbed out my story about my friend Mary and that she wasn't going to have much of a Christmas with her boys. I almost felt guilty for having a family that could provide for me and my children. Mary's parents had long since passed away and she had no siblings to help her out.

My father helped me to gain my composure and in his soft spoken and gentle way he told me that he would not see my friend go short. He told me that we could go shopping and he would look after her. I didn't want her to feel beholden and I wondered how my Father could look after her and the boys without them knowing. He asked me if I had a key to her house.

"Of course," I said. "I don't go to her house to clean until after the boys have gone to

school.”

“Well,” he decided, “we’ll go shopping and we can simply take our Christmas gift and leave it while the boys are at school. You can make sure you leave before they get home from school, and Mary need never know.”

That sounded like a good plan to me. Dad and I went grocery shopping. We selected a huge turkey, all the trimmings, lots of milk, oranges and other fruits and vegetables – indeed, enough to prepare a pretty nice Christmas feast. It was all packed up in boxes and off we went to Mary’s house to deliver our Christmas present. Dad parked in the drive, I unlocked the door and we carried everything into the house and put it all away in the fridge and the cupboards and Dad took the boxes away. There was no visible evidence of anyone, other than me, having been in the house.

Dad drove away with the comment that I surely didn’t have to worry about my friend anymore. He took the baby with him so that I could get on with my cleaning tasks. I remember that he didn’t even ask me anything at all about my friend. He just trusted me to have nice friends and whomever was my friend must be okay. That’s just the way he was.

Dad and I had been so busy putting everything away and feeling so good about our surprise that I thought of nothing else. After Dad left, the cleaning began. I went into the boy’s bedroom and there in bed was Mary’s middle son. He was about nine years old at the time. I was startled. I asked him why he wasn’t at school and he told me that he had gone to school but the teacher had sent him home because he seemed to have a warm forehead.

Now, what was I to do? I really didn’t want Mary to know where all those groceries had come from. I looked him in the eye and I wrenched a promise from that little boy that he wouldn’t ever divulge to his mother or his brothers how all those groceries got into the fridge and the cupboards.

I guess I must have made my point as I shook my finger at him and made it clear that he was never, never to tell.

“Do you understand?”

“Promise.”

“I mean it. Don’t you dare *ever* tell anyone. Promise me again.”

He said, “Promise!” sounding almost scared.

When I spoke to Mary over the holiday period, she told me that someone had provided her with Christmas Dinner and she was almost crying because she didn't know who to thank for making it one of the best Christmases that she and her boys had ever had. We never spoke of it again over the many long years that we've been friends.

Years passed, our kids went off to college and university. They married, and we became grandmothers. Sadly, one day Mary told me that her middle son was dying of terminal cancer and he was just in his early forties and would be leaving behind a wife and two young kids.

I tried to comfort her. I couldn't even imagine what it must be like to raise a son and then lose him so early in his life.

If there was ever an angel on earth, it would be Mary. She was a brave and strong woman and she got through it.

More time passed.

In her late 80s Mary and I were having lunch together. She had been through a lot in her life and we were simply talking about growing old. As we sipped out tea and reminisced, laughed about taking our kids camping, and other silly things we'd done over the long years as friends, I mentioned my father and how much it had meant to me to learn from his kindness.

She looked at me and said, "I know what a kind and giving person your father was. Just before my son died, he said to me: 'Mother, I made a promise to one of your friends a very long time ago and I promised I would never tell you, but under the circumstances I don't think she'd mind now'."

Her son told her all about the day Christmas dinner arrived and who had made the gift. He had kept that secret for over 30 years.

Mary didn't tell me for another almost 30 years that her son had finally broken his promise to me just before he died. We just looked at each other and the tears were streaming down our cheeks.

We both knew my father's goodness. He touched so many lives.

Mary and I are still friends, although our visits are fewer now that we don't drive at nights and we live much quieter lives. Mary is over 90. We share that bond of friendship that comes from struggle, faith, kindness, joy and love ... and a broken promise.

**The First Date**  
**(as told to me by my father, Thomas Wesley Bott)**

Tom's heart beat wildly as he and his best friend Carmen moved up the muddy dirt track toward the small but attractive farm house. It had rained for most of the day and the track was difficult to navigate. Tom had already been warned about his most recent acquisition and prayed that it wouldn't let him down.

He and Carmen were at their first stop to pick up the pretty young lady with whom Tom was besotted, and in a car rather than a horse-drawn carriage.

Tom had purchased his very first vehicle for \$4.00 and a cord of wood and had been seen driving about the village and showing off his electric car. Mr. Gawley had warned Tom that he expected to be pulling him out of the ditch with his team.

If that happened it would not bode well for the chance to court Mr. Gawley's daughter Addie.

Tom watered his horses at the Gawley farm and had been smitten the first time he met Addie at the farm gate. She was tiny and slim and had the most beautiful smile. Her dark hair was naturally curly and its volume was always held up with a pretty coloured silk ribbon. She didn't look like most farm girls, no trousers and rubber barn boots, but always dressed in pretty frocks that complemented her trim figure. She was eleven years Tom's junior but the age difference couldn't deter him from wanting to court this beautiful girl.

He had asked Addie's father for permission to escort her to the village hall dance. Mr. Gawley said yes but his piercing blue eyes made it very clear that Tom had better not have any accidents with his new-fangled contraption. Tom assured him that he would take good care of Addie and the date was approved.

Carmen, Tom's best friend, was courting another local girl and the two of them planned to make the outing a foursome, picking Addie up first and then Carmen's girlfriend.

Tom drove up the track very carefully. He alit from the car, went to the door and knocked gently. Addie opened the door looking like an angel. Tom helped her into the back seat of his new car and made sure that she was comfortable. This would be Addie's first ever ride in a car. She was an experienced horse woman and had her own horse and carriage. This 'car ride' was to be her first experience getting around without her own trap.

Tom had heard the story of how Addie challenged the local Sherriff to a buggy race into town and then won. The story went that she was already tying up her own horse at the local livery stable by the time the Sherriff arrived, and it had been difficult for the Sherriff to admit defeat – and by such a very young woman! Tom knew that there could not be any difficulties with his car or he would surely lose the admiration of his date ... and her father.

The car was turned around and began the return trip down the muddy track. It was about half the distance to the farm gate when catastrophe struck. The car engine stopped, and they were at a silent standstill.

Oh my goodness, how could this have happened? All Tom could think about was having to return to the house by foot to ask Mr. Gawley to pull the car out of the mud.

They sat in the car for a second trying to make sense of this disaster when Carmen began to laugh with great gusto. Tom had decided to get out of the car and return to fetch Addie's father when Carmen confessed that he had flipped the toggle switch on the battery pack to make the car stop. He had thought it would be a fine prank to scare Tom. It did indeed scare Tom, but he was so relieved that he wouldn't have to call for help that he forgave Carmen for the misdeed, cranked up the car, and there were off once again.



*Tom and Addie, married.*

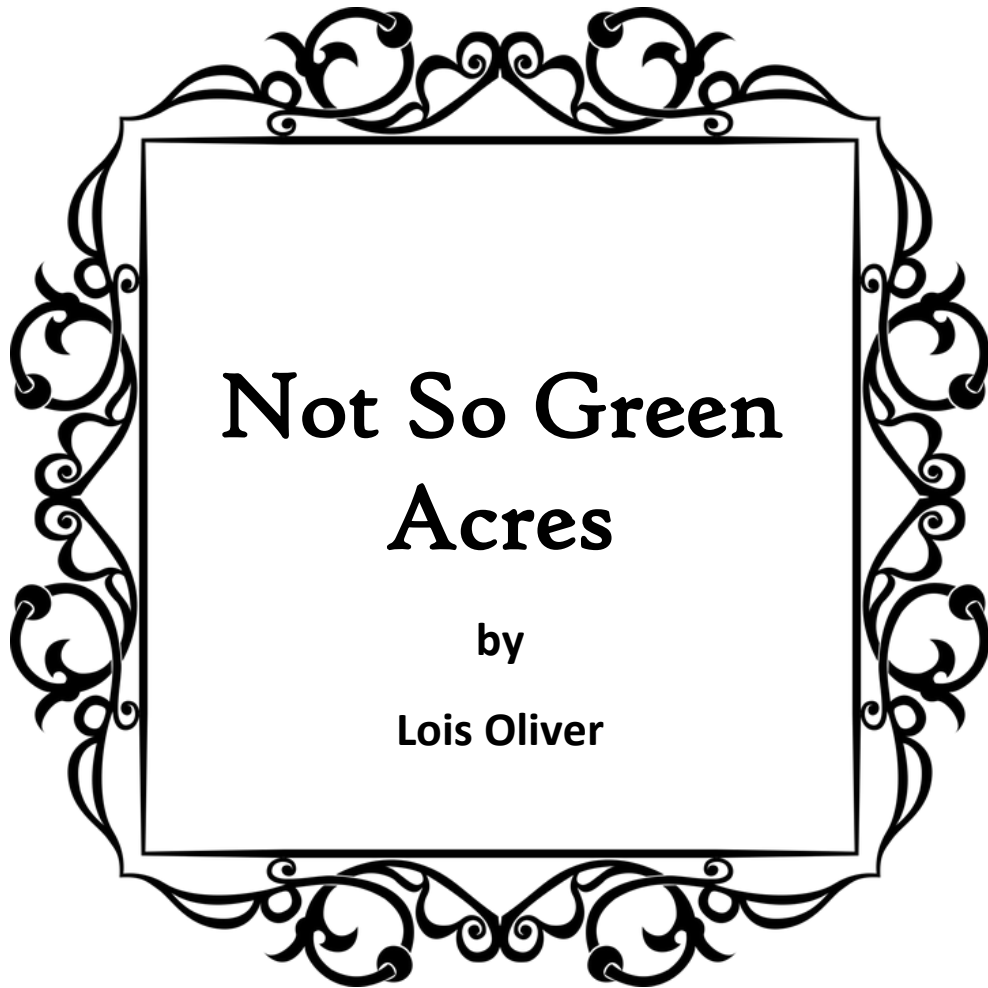
The dancing over, the girls were delivered back to their respective homes all safe and sound. Tom and Addie continued to court and eventually married. Tom and Carmen remained friends for years and often laughed over and over again about Carmen's prank.

The story ends with: "And they all lived happily ever after."

*About the Author*



*My name is Kay Ridout Boyd and I am the mother of four successful and wonderful children, one daughter and three sons. I am retired from being an Academic Chair for many years at Mohawk College in the Adult Continuing Education Faculty. I studied Chemistry at Ryerson and worked for several years for Fisher Scientific Company in Toronto. I have been very active in the Brantford community having served on many boards and committees over the years including The Chamber of Commerce, St. Joseph's Hospital and Glenhyrst Art Gallery of Brant and so many more that I can hardly remember them all. I enjoy doing needlework, quilting, reading, writing and traveling ... and lots of other neat stuff.*



**Not So Green  
Acres**  
by  
**Lois Oliver**

In my younger days I was what would be described as a typical City Girl. I lived with my family in the North West area of Toronto but always dreamed of living right downtown. Working in an advertising agency in the city gave me the opportunity to enjoy the constant vibes of the city, with the proximity of tall buildings, theatres and restaurants, and busy people rushing everywhere. My favourite pastime was walking over to Eaton's and Simpson's on my lunch hour to shop and take in the fashion shows, and in the evenings I went with my friends to dances all over the city.

As I was always interested in cooking, I enrolled in a night course at Ryerson Institute of Technology in what is now called Culinary Arts. I also enrolled in another evening course at Walter Thornton Modelling Agency, which led to my interest in fashion.

Yes, I pretty well lived up to the image of a Downtown Girl!



## Shared Memories

When I met my future husband Bob, he was a very charismatic, social, outgoing person. He introduced me to an active social life with both personal friends and also many business events. After we were married we entertained a lot at home, which gave me the opportunity to use the skills I learned at Ryerson.

Over the years we were blessed with three wonderful children: Vicki, Brian and Leanne. We lived happily in a bungalow in suburbia near our families, many friends, and my favourite shopping plaza, Yorkdale Mall.

It was a wonderful life until Bob was offered a management position in Brantford, Ontario. After he commuted back and forth for a while he came to me and asked if I would consider moving to Brantford; not just to Brantford, but to an old farmhouse on the outskirts of the city! His company owned 9½ acres with a farmhouse, barn, and silos on the property. The company plant was just down the highway. The house and acreage was offered to us, which I thought would be temporary until we found somewhere to live in Brantford proper. Little did I know that we would live there for 24 years.

Bob brought me to see the farm on a cold, rainy, dark March day. Needless to say, I was not impressed, as it was on busy Highway #2 between Paris and Brantford. All I could think of was our three children (and our dog) living on that busy road, and leaving their friends, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. When we got back into the car he asked, "What do you think?"

I almost replied, "You have got to be kidding," but could not give him a sensible answer without getting emotional.

The company he worked for was being bought out by a company based in England. He would be the only Canadian representative and would have to travel to England periodically. As we did not know anyone in Brantford, the prospect of this new life was very daunting. There I was, the Downtown Girl who dreamed of living in downtown Toronto facing life in a corn field in Brantford!

The company was kind enough to offer to cover the cost of minor renovations and decorating the house to my liking, which made it much more appealing. How could I refuse?

While the renovations were taking place that summer, I drove down with the kids several times to acquaint them with their new home, and to supervise the decorating.

One day I took them into Paris for lunch. When we drove down the hill to the Main Street I had the strangest feeling of going back in time. We found grab bags and ice cream mellow rolls, which I hadn't seen since I was growing up. We were so impressed with how friendly the people were, saying "Hello!" when we passed them on the street. The shop keepers were so nice to the children.

Moving day, with many tears and apprehension, was August 21<sup>st</sup>, 1970. Bob jokingly remarked that "Your parking spot has been retired at Yorkdale Mall and the flag is at half-mast."

Our introduction to country living included a herd of cattle that belonged to the farmer across the road but resided in our barn, swarms of flies, a silo, mice, groundhogs, bats and a cat called Monster. Even our boxer dog was afraid of him!



*Our new home.*

Water came from a well, so when in winter we sometimes went without. The well was encased in a pump house that was eventually blown down in a winter storm.

My parents and two friends came to help us move in. While we were struggling with furniture and boxes Bob took the kids into Paris to outfit them in cowboy boots and hats. He then occupied them in the field beside the house by teaching them to ride the horse that he had bought for them.

Our first crisis transpired on a Friday, while the moving crew took a rest on the front verandah, watching the riding lessons. Bob was demonstrating his expertise as a rider when he fell off the horse onto the gravel driveway. As his forehead was cut and bleeding, our friend took him to Willett Hospital in Paris where he was diagnosed with a slight concussion. On Sunday, after my parents and friends went home, Bob broke the news to me that he had to leave on a business trip.

There I was, in this strange house, with a dog and three children who were none too happy about going up stairs to go to bed! When I finally got them settled I stood looking out the dining room window at the back of the house. All I saw was darkness.

I had to ask: "What am I doing here??"

Two weeks later the kids started school. Our eldest daughter had been in junior

high in Toronto and had to go back to a public school for Grade 8, which was very upsetting and difficult for a shy 12 year old girl. Our son attended a rural school for Grades 5 and 6, and our youngest daughter would be starting kindergarten. A school bus picked them up, but being the new kids and not knowing anyone made them very nervous. It was certainly not like walking to school with their friends.

Our youngest daughter attended kindergarten in the mornings, and that first day I waited at the end of the driveway at noon for the bus to bring her home. I waited and waited, just about hysterical, and finally called my husband at the plant, screaming "My baby has been kidnapped!" We called everywhere until we finally found the bus driver when he finished his route. He found her asleep at the back of the bus. As she was new to the area he didn't know where she lived and neither did she.

This was not a happy beginning for our new life.

Growing up in Toronto, we were surrounded by family and friends. Living in a completely opposite environment was quite an adjustment for all of us. The kids were very lonely, with little to do when they came home from school. Still, our son had played hockey in Toronto so he joined the Brantford Minor Hockey League. We enrolled our youngest daughter in figure skating at the Paris Figure Skating Club, and to this day she is still involved in the figure skating world. (Her daughter, too.) Our eldest daughter settled in more when high school started and she became involved in many school activities.

The farmer and his family lived across the highway and our children became friends with their son and daughter. They would go across to the barn to help with the cows. They had a very fascinating experience when they watched a calf being born. I was a little shocked when they came home so excited to tell me all about it, but I realized that they were growing up and considered it an early lesson in procreation.

While the children attended school I occupied myself driving around to become acquainted with the area. I kept a map beside me at all times so that I could find my way home, and drove out into the country looking for antique stores and auction sales for furniture to fill the large rooms in the farmhouse. My mother and I had fun exploring the countryside and finding interesting treasures. We found antique wash stands, side tables, old lamps, copper pots, and my very favourite, an old copy of the Purity flour cookbook that I remember my

grandmother using.

The dining room and kitchen were very large and our old furniture from the little bungalow looked out of place. One day I was poking around the basement when I discovered an antique dining room table with beautiful carved pedestals; it was covered with old paint cans and soap powders. There was also an upright gramophone in a cabinet.

I took them to be refinished and was fortunate enough to find eight chairs to match at a local antique shop. The table and chairs fit beautifully into the dining room as did the gramophone, which we turned into a beverage cabinet. The same dining room suite and gramophone are now in my youngest daughter's dining room. She wanted to keep it as it brought back memories of all the good times with friends and family that took place around that table. She also reminded me that when she thinks of the farm, she recalls everyone ending up on the front verandah after our celebrations.

A beautiful pine cupboard with glass doors was built into one corner of the dining room from floor to ceiling. There was also room for a large upright piano on the other wall, upon which perched memorable pictures of family and friends.

The living room featured a wood burning fireplace and an original wood mantel. Beautiful oak floors and high baseboards ran all through the house. My favourite part of the house, however, was the kitchen. There was a built-in sideboard with a tin counter and a bin for storing vegetables. A large window overlooked the driveway and the corn field, which was great for seeing everyone coming in. The nicest part of living there was the company we had and the camaraderie around the harvest table. Many a get-together was held around it and everyone would vie for a seat on the custom-made benches.

I still have them. It is always difficult to let go of things that hold so many memories.

We had an arrangement with the farmer to plant two acres of sweet corn in the field beside the house and plow the driveway in the winter. In exchange he would use the other 7½ acres for his crops.

As our son wanted to make some spending money, he started selling the corn at the side of the road. It soon developed into a lucrative business for him, providing Calbeck's Grocery Store and Tollgate Fruit and Vegetable Market with corn. We

## Shared Memories

would all go out early in the morning to pick the corn and deliver it by 10:00 am. Even my mother and father would come to help. When the family woke up at 7:00 am we would look out the window and see them out in the field picking. Dad loved to sit out front, selling the corn and chatting to the people.

We were very fortunate that our families and friends thought it was a great weekend get-away spot. As a result we had a lot of company. We even had the Managing Director of the English company and his family stay with us. They had never seen a barbecue before, and when he returned to England he had a barbecue shipped there too.

Another Director came during the corn season, and went back to England raving about corn on the cob.

The farm was a wonderful place to entertain. We had large family reunions, golf tournaments, corn roasts, skating parties on a pond in the back field, snowmobile parties and barn dances. We cross-country skied around the perimeter of the property, and I would take the dogs for their walks while I skied. At our corn roasts we would have 50 or more people. All our friends from Toronto would come with their children, who enjoyed picking the corn and exploring the barn. They would go home with their car trunks full of corn. We had a friend from Brantford who played a banjo for sing-songs, and a good time was had by all!

Needless to say, I was not used to farming or gardening, so I thought it was time I learned. I planted tomatoes, peppers, beans, radishes, carrots and potatoes. My mom and dad came one weekend, and Mom said "Your radishes should be ready."

I replied that "I haven't seen them come up yet." I didn't know that I had to dig under the ground for them. It gave my Mom a good laugh!

I was out picking weeds one day when the farmer stopped on his tractor and said, "That's the first psychedelic garden I have ever seen." I took that as a compliment as I was pretty proud of myself!

I scattered zucchini and pumpkin seeds in the field, and later we were inundated with zucchini and pumpkins. We had so many that we would tell people to come out and help themselves. Our kids would say "How are we having zucchini for dinner tonight?" I made zucchini casserole, zucchini fritters, and zucchini loaves - whatever I could think of to use them.

I also had a little herb garden outside the back door, and was out picking herbs, wearing a colourful patio gown, when friends from Toronto arrived for the weekend. They both laughed and said I reminded them of Eva Gabor from Green Acres.

Our families and friends said they couldn't think of a more unlikely couple to live on a farm. Bob was not a "fixer." He didn't know one tool from the other. He was more interested in fun things like horses, snowmobiles and motorcycles. He had been the first person to have a snowmobile in our subdivision in Toronto, and of course the snowmobile came with us.



*My mother, preparing to snowmobile.*

Unfortunately I did not have the same interest in snowmobiles or motorcycles. On Christmas Day he took me down to the plant for my gift (which I thought would be a dishwasher.) I was not too excited when there sat another snowmobile. He said he bought it for me, but I knew he wanted another one so that he and our son could ride together. Eventually he acquired two motorcycles, one vintage and the other more modern. He bought all the riding gear for them and really looked the part of a typical biker. He joined The Motorcycle Riders of America and rode into Oakville every Sunday to meet his riding pals. We had to enlarge the garage to accommodate all his toys.

When we entertained our "Gourmet Dinner" friends from Toronto some stayed overnight in a motel down the highway. We had many laughs over the first time they stayed there as it advertised colour TV in every room, but it turned out that in each room the TV was painted a different colour: red, blue, yellow and green.

Our dinners always had a theme, complete with decorating the house and serving meals that fit the theme. One memorable dinner we hosted was in October around Halloween. We put a large sign over the door that said "Brant County Feed Company," and Bob and I dressed in overalls, red and white checked shirts and rubber boots. We both wore straw hats. Mine had golden pigtails attached, and I had a blackened tooth to complete the picture. Bob held a pitchfork and chewed on a piece of straw. The house was decorated with bales of hay and corn stalks.

## Shared Memories

Our guests came as the Queen and the court jesters. The Queen was one of the men dressed in a royal blue velvet cape and a crown. The Queen opened the festivities with a speech in a British accent, beginning with “On behalf of the British Empire ...” and we served pumpkin soup, roasted pig tails, corn on the cob, zucchini casserole and apple cake. The jesters wore a variety of colourful outfits.



*Left: Bob and I, in costume for the “Brant County Feed Company”*



*Right: Entertaining “the Queen” and a court of jesters.*

Unfortunately, it was not always fun things that took place at the farm.

We had settled into country living when the major snow storm of 1971 hit. The children were stranded at school and Bob was on his way home on Rest Acres Road when his car was hit from behind. Thankfully he was not injured, but he spent the night at the apple farm nearby. Once again we experienced the kindness of the local people when a neighbour down the highway picked up the kids and brought them home on his tractor. Bob finally got home the next day.

In 1978 we had another snowstorm that stranded people on the highway. Bob had his snowmobile at the plant and brought them over one at a time on it. I fed them hot soup, toast, tea and coffee. My dad was with us at the time, recuperating from an operation. All the excitement did not help his recovery.

One beautiful fall morning Bob and I took our coffee outside to sit at the picnic table and enjoy the sunshine. He looked around and declared that he was going to burn the dead grass and dry bushes down the side of the property. I noticed that it was getting quite breezy, and was about to say “Don’t do it” when he threw the match. The fire spread so fast that I could not see him in all the smoke. He was yelling “Get water!” I was running with pails of water, but it was useless. I

ran into the house and called the fire department. By this time the fire was heading toward the barn when they arrived. Thank goodness they came promptly and caught it before it spread to the barn.

After they left we went inside to the kitchen, took one look at each other, and started to laugh.

Our daughter was coming home along the highway when she saw the fire engines leaving. When she came into the kitchen and found us laughing, she yelled. "Call me crazy, but did I not see fire engines leaving our driveway?"

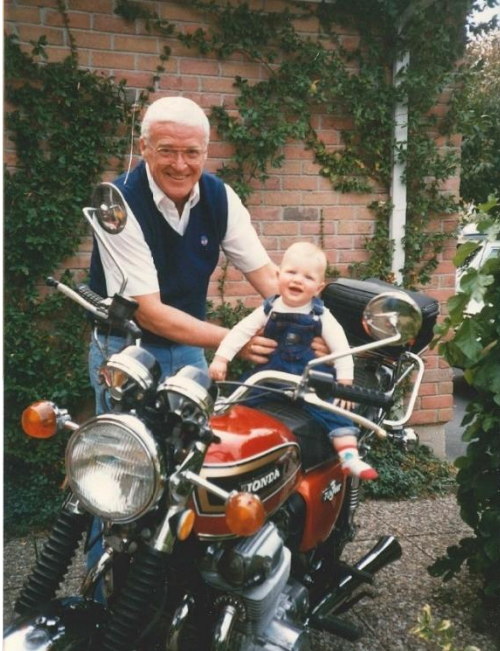
A few months later we were attending a function with the local neighbours when one of the men came up to us and jokingly asked, "Started any fires lately?" He was a volunteer with the local fire department! I'm sure our country neighbours had a good laugh about the City Slickers.

One day a woman and her son knocked on the back door, asking if we would mind them seeing inside the house.

She explained that they had lived there several years ago. She also told us that her husband had inherited the farm from his father, but sadly, he had been killed in the silo, which led to her and her children moving out west. She told us that the stairway off the kitchen led to a bedroom which was the maid's quarters. (Currently it was our son's bedroom, and when he was older it was very convenient for him to sneak up the stairs when he came home late!)

I became curious about the history of the farm and found that there had been an inn for travellers on the back end of the property, beside the CN Railway track, built in 1854. The original house was built in 1914. When our visitor's father-in-law bought the house, he pulled it down and in 1923 built the existing house and the barn. One wall of the old cellar was retained in the new house so that part of the cellar was all stone. In 1970 when we moved in, our laundry facilities were in this old stone basement, which wasn't very pleasant for doing the laundry! Even the kids and the dog wouldn't go down there. The word they used to describe it was "creepy." Still, as described previously, the beautiful features in the rest of the house compensated for the basement.





*Left: Bob and first grandchild Jamie, on his motorcycle.*

When I think of the farm now, I remember the large maple tree that I could view from the kitchen window, the regal row of evergreen trees lining the other side of the house, the large oak tree that shaded our back entrance, and my walks up the hill beside the barn.

Even though it was a complete contrast from our little bungalow in Toronto, it was a happy place. My only regret is that I would have loved my grandchildren to have been able to enjoy it.

It wasn't meant to be.

We were very fortunate to have had such a happy life but it all came to an end in 1992 when Bob passed away from a sudden heart attack. He had just turned 59.

He was a runner, rode his bicycle and his motorcycles, worked out at the YMCA, played golf, tennis, and racquetball, took vitamins, and was president of the company he worked for. He lived life to the fullest. His motto was "Stop and smell the roses."

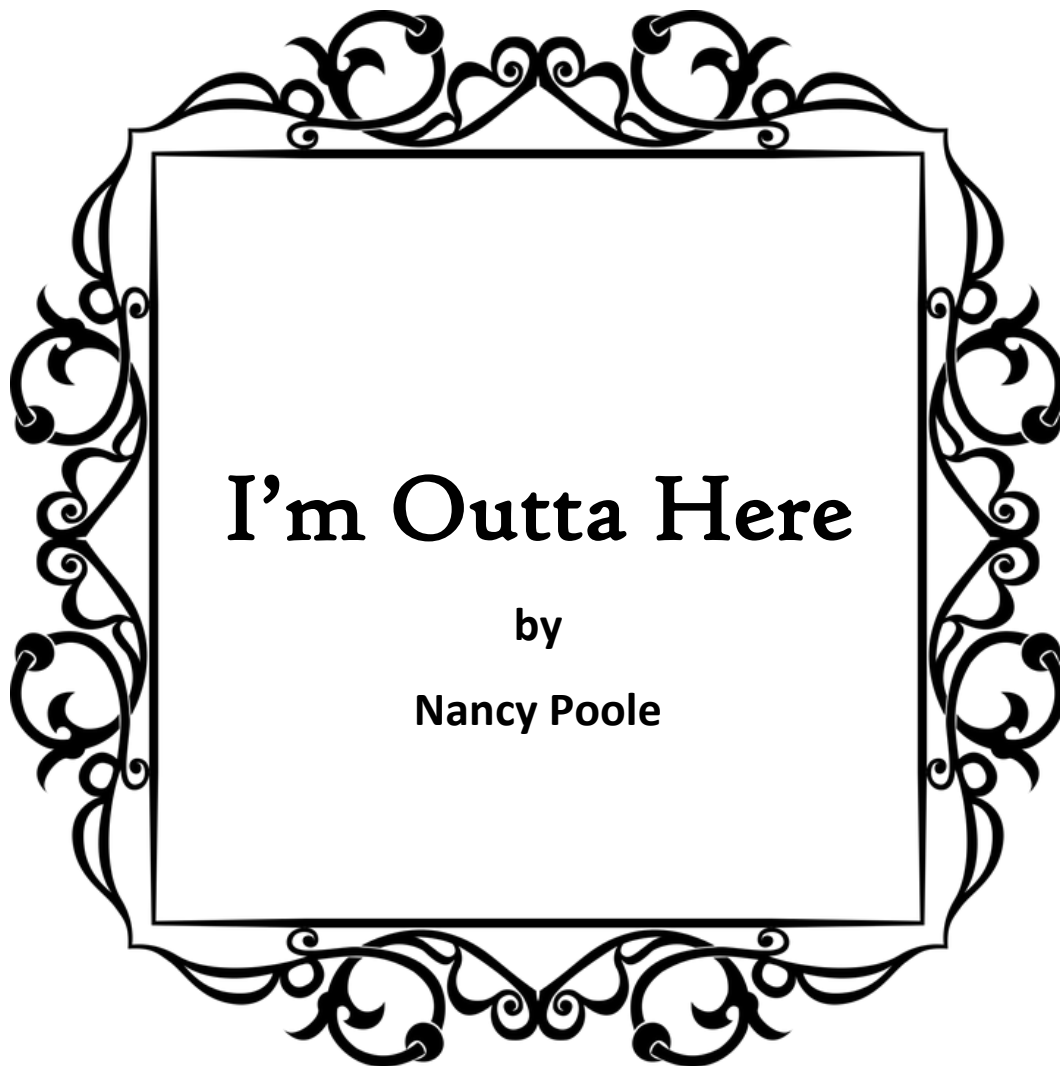
By this time our children were married with homes of their own and starting their families. Bob lived long enough to enjoy our first two grandchildren who lived in Calgary, but was deprived of knowing five more wonderful kids who would live in St. George and Brantford.

I stayed at the farm for two years until it became too lonely and difficult to take care of on my own. This was the opportunity for the City Girl to move back to Toronto, but it was more important to be near my children and grandchildren. I sold the farm, which was difficult to do as Bob loved it so much, and moved into a lovely new condominium where I immediately felt safe and secure.

It was not a happy ending to all the good times, the fun and the laughter we had there, but we will always have our special memories.

*About the Author*

*I grew up in Toronto and moved to Brantford in 1970. I have one daughter in Calgary, my son in Brantford, and my youngest daughter in Paris, Ontario. I have seven grandchildren in their late teens and twenties. I have fulfilled my dream of sharing one stage of my life living on a farm.*



“Do you still think dogs are better than men?”

After we broke up, my ex-boyfriend posed the question. Years ago he had warned me that they required as much attention as children.

“Yes!” I said emphatically. “A dog won’t leave me or divorce me, and he will never hold a grudge or be mean toward me.”

As I look back over the years some of my best memories have been with my pets.

When I was quite young I didn’t realize how important our little Heinz-57 and a fluffy, dark black mutt named Spotsy would be to me. The spot in Spotsy came from the white spot on his chest just between his front legs.

There are pictures of him in the backyard, playing with my sister and me and my neighbor Caroline. My sisters were older than I and wanted nothing to do with me, so I would play with Spotsy instead. I had the most fun playing in the growth of overgrown lilac trees my sisters had fashioned into rooms. There was even a kitchen and an old antique washstand that was falling apart to serve as a stove. When mom wanted to find me, she called Spotsy, and he'd emerge from where I was playing. My mom knew Spotsy would look after me.

One day Dad called a family powwow. Spotsy was so old that it was difficult for him to get around, and he had to put to sleep, or whatever that meant. (I didn't know. I went to sleep every night but woke up every morning.)

Dad said we were going to look for another dog, but he said in no uncertain terms that the dog would be my older sister's dog. Spotsy had apparently been my oldest sister's dog. It dawned on me much later in life that, by this logic, I could have been ready to attend university before my own chance to own a dog arose. I would be unable to raise and keep the dog at that point.

As a family we set off to get our new dog. Dad wanted a Collie but was rather dissatisfied with the results of the search on their first Saturday out. We returned home all feeling somewhat disappointed.

The next Saturday we set off again on our quest. I enjoyed watching a pen of full of boisterous and playful Collie puppies. One little pup stood by the edge of the pen, sticking his nose out of the fencing to lick our hands and moving close enough to get pets.

This dog picked us out. He was the one.

His name was King.

### **King**

On the way home, Mom and Dad sat in the front seat of the station wagon while we three girls sat behind and our new puppy named King was in the back. King threw up I went back and used paper towels to clean it up because my sisters were grossed out.

We had canned dog food ready for King. He was to be Penny's dog but that evening she opened the can of dog food, saw the contents, and immediately announced that she was going to throw up and could not feed the dog.

I fed King that night and every night after that.

I not only fed King, I played with him and immediately formed a strong bond with him. No one complained and King became my dog by default. I thought Prince to be a better name for the dog, but as most often happens, King grew into his name. Mum and Dad notwithstanding, in my heart I believed King to be the most important member of our family.

We lived in a spacious seven-bedroom farmhouse. According to the rules, King was not to be allowed upstairs where all the bedrooms were. He was to sleep in the oil room (off the kitchen, located between the main house and Dad's workshop) instead. King was not to receive food from the table.

The first two rules were adhered to, but the third, not so much. Even Dad gave me scraps from the table for me to give to King.

King's first few nights with us were hell. It was hard to listen to his pathetic cries. Eventually he settled at night but was so happy to see the family and especially me in the mornings.

We had a large property with huge lawns on three sides of our house. King did not venture beyond the lawns except to do his business in the woods behind our house. We almost never put a leash on King and we never had to take pick poop off the lawns.

Every summer our parents rented a cottage for two weeks. King was very excited during his first summer with us, dancing and getting in our way as we loaded suitcases and so on into the car. Dad wanted me to shut King in the oil room but I suggested we put King in the back seat of the car where he could look out the window. King was happy to watch everything happening.

We took King's leash with us when we went to the cottage but he generally didn't need it there either. He stuck close to the cottage.

One summer my aunt came to stay with us. So she could have her own room I was to share a foldout couch with my oldest sister, Doria. In the middle of the night Doria called out, "Nancy, wake up! You have to move over. I am right on the edge of the bed, and I am going to fall out if you don't move over."

Indeed, Doria was on her side perilously close to the edge of the bed. On the other side of me was King, lying on his side. As King stretched out I had moved

away from him and closer to my sister. I had a laugh out of the situation but my sister did not see the humour in it at all.

King and I played a lot together and seemed to develop our own special communication. Mom and Dad got a kick out of us playing 'hide and seek.' After dinner, they would relax with coffee while King and I played. I would instruct King to stand on the far side of the kitchen so he couldn't see where I was hiding. After I hid, I'd call him to come and find me. King would bound through the kitchen and dining room and into the living room where I hid each time. If he found me he barked a happy bark as if to say, "I found you!" If he couldn't find me he'd retrace his steps back into the kitchen, as if I might have snuck back.

We'd play the game a few times. My parents enjoyed watching King stand by the back stairs, cocking his head from one side to the other as if listening for clues as to where I was hiding.

One time Dad ran over one of King's paws. The veterinarian took X-rays but did not find any broken bones, probably because there was snow on the ground and the snow had cushioned King's paw.

King limped and favoured that paw for a while, retreating to his bed in the oil room. He didn't eat.

I worried about my boy. I began giving him the crusts off my egg salad sandwiches. I realized he was well on his way to recovering when he started to limp while favouring his *good* leg! I teased him and accused him of faking it, and he just danced around wagging his tail.

King had different-sounding barks depending on the situations.

He had a happy bark when the kids walked in front of our property on their ways home from school. It was as if he had his own internal clock, because he wanted to go outside and wait for the kids right about three o'clock. The kids would yell, "Hi King!" and King would dance and bark.

If he recognized a car that drove up the lane, King would dance around the car and had a different bark.

He could be a vicious watchdog if needed.

One night a neighbour came from across the street to our door with a pair of hedge clippers in his hands. Mr. Grant said a forensic patient from the nearby

psychiatric hospital had been in the neighbourhood and held a knife to a neighbour's throat. Their neighbour talked the guy out of the taking his car, and the guy had crossed the street and was hiding behind our house.

Mr. Grant said to lock our doors and call the police if the guy showed up. We locked our doors, and the guy soon showed up and started banging on our door. Mum dialed the police and tried to hide behind the doorway to the kitchen. Mum was petrified and her voice was shaky. They wanted Mum to stay on the phone until the police got there.

King went ballistic. As the guy was knocking and saying, "Let me in. I know you're in there!" King jumped at the door and growled and barked viciously.

Finally someone from the police knocked on the door, telling us that the guy was in custody. Mum was still shaken when she opened the door but beginning to settle down.

King was perfectly calm. He sensed that the danger was over. But then, King was so protective, especially of me. One day when Mum was shouting at me, King came and stood right in front of me and growled at *her*. She had to laugh.

My dad died when I was seventeen. Of course I was upset, but I think I was just as upset that mom would have to sell the house and property. People were not allowed to have pets in apartments if the lease stated thus back then.

It broke my heart, having to give King away. He was my best friend.

Mum found a good home for King at a nearby petting zoo. I went to visit him once. The owner of the petting zoo said King was the official greeter. I'm not sure he remembered me, but he was very happy, and everyone loved him.

### **Rocky**

I've been married and divorced twice. Neither husband wanted a dog. Now that I have Rocky, I think I should have said, "I'm outta here."

I don't trust people who don't like animals, especially dogs and cats. I find that people who own and love animals are happier and more compassionate, a bit of wisdom that comes from my own personal experience and research.

In between relationships with men, I bought some dogs for my son – a very stupid Cocker Spaniel and two sweet-as-pie King Cavalier Spaniels. But these dogs did not have as much influence on my life as King, Rocky, and Lacey. (More on Lacey later.)

Finally I decided to get a Border Collie from a breeder, who interviewed me like you wouldn't believe. It was tougher than a job interview.

Rocky, short for Rockefeller, was eight weeks old when I was able to pick him up from the breeder. She said that he was one of the more mellow puppies. I'm not sure that was true because Rocky was very full of energy and wanted to play all of the time. I could not seem to wear him out. He would play ball for as long as I had the energy to keep up with him.

Rocky is and was so comical. As a puppy he'd jump on my bed and drop a ball somewhere near my head. He'd look at me and then the ball and back again. As soon as I got the ball, he'd jump off my bed and stand ready. When I threw it down the hall he would scamper after it, a process repeated until I got out of bed. I'd also throw the ball for him from the open kitchen. Rocky never seemed to tire.

Rocky has a strong herding instinct so he would follow me around the house, including to the bathroom. However, one day when I was sitting on the toilet and he had the ball, I told him that I could not get the ball from way over there and he should use his paw to push the ball to me.

He looked at the ball and then his paw, and then used his paw to push the ball to me. Clever Rocky.

Rocky has always watched me like a hawk. When I put on my makeup in the morning, he knew I was going out, and he stuck close to me in case I forgot to take him. Some days, he would get right underfoot.

I worked and felt guilty about caging Rocky during the day, so I got a baby gate to keep him in the walk-in closet next to the bathroom.

One day I returned home to find Rocky at the door. I think we were both startled. I didn't say anything, and it was like he knew he wasn't supposed to be there because he ran back to the bedroom and jumped over the baby gate.

Rocky and I moved to Brantford a few years back. While the moving guys brought in the boxes and furniture, I put Rocky in his crate so we wouldn't get in the way.



## Shared Memories

After they left, Rocky acted like, “All of this is good but, when are we going home?” As soon as I brought out his little doggie bed he knew he was home.

I didn’t realize that Rocky associated me in my pajamas that I was going to bed. One night, Rocky was lying on my bed with his head on my pillow. I tried to shoo him off my bed, but he thought it was a game and got right back on. I had to jump under my covers when the opportunity arose.

Rocky did that a few nights in a row, but a thought came to me how I could fix his wagon. I said, “That’s your bed now, and this is my bed,” and I pointed to his little doggie bed in the corner. Rocky looked at me, stood up and looked at me. Then, he jumped down beside me on his doggie bed. I gave him a slight push and said, “No. That’s your bed now,” and he just pawed me as if to say, “Come on. You’re just kidding me.”

The next times Rocky was on my bed, all I had to say was that I was going to sleep on his bed. He’d beat me to it.

One year before Christmas time, I was in Zellers when I saw a toy squirrel with no stuffing. Rocky always took the stuffing out of stuffed toys, so I thought this toy to be good idea.

When I got to the car and settled in, I said, “Santa gave me something for you. It’s in one of the bags.” As soon as we got home and the bags were on the floor, Rocky stuck his nose in the bags as if trying to find out what I had for him.

I gave the squirrel to him. I dubbed the squirrel Mr. Squirrel because all of his toys were Mr. Something Other – Mr. Rubber Chicken, Mr. Bone, and so on. Rocky was enthralled with Mr. Squirrel. He threw it up in the air and caught it, put it near me to throw for him, and had a good old time.

The problem was that Rocky continued to play throughout the night and I woke up a couple of times with the squirrel in my face. The next night I decided we both needed sleep, so I grabbed Mr. Squirrel when Rocky wasn’t looking and hung him over the shower curtain rod.

Everything was fine until Rocky followed me to the bathroom and spotted Mr. Squirrel. He spent the rest of the night outside of the bathroom watching Mr. Squirrel in case the fake rodent



*Mr. Squirrel on the shower rod.*

decided to jump down off the shower curtain rod and go outside.



*Mr. Rubber Chicken  
No. 4 and Rocky.*

Rocky enjoys most of his toys. Before Mr. Squirrel, Mr. Rubber Chicken was his favorite toy. Actually, Rocky has had four rubber chickens. He chewed up the first two, but when I caught him chewing on the third, I gave him a firm “No” and told him that if he chewed that one, I wouldn’t get him another.

He must have heeded my warning because he never chewed the third one. It fell apart from use and age. He still has Mr. Rubber Chicken number four – who wears a bikini, for some reason.

As a young dog, Rocky had had boundless energy.

I’d take him to the park, hit his ball with a tennis racket because I throw like a girl, and it seemed that he only needed a short rest and he was up again. One day I threw the ball for Rocky about thirty times! Then we went for one a long walk and Rocky was still ready to play after we got home.

I have had disabling medical issues for years, so I decided to get Rocky trained to be a service dog. He’d already had general obedience training that he didn’t really need. Rocky was always so easy to train because he just wanted to please me.

Rocky really does not need to be on a leash, but he likes it because it means he is going somewhere with me. He also likes wearing his Service Dog vest.

Rocky has been quite the Service Dog. The law mandates that service dogs must be allowed to go everywhere I go including on the bus and into stores and restaurants. He goes everywhere with me. He keeps me safe and warns me when I’m not doing so well so that I can rest and/or take medications.

Some people are quite rude about Rocky being a Service Dog because he doesn’t act like a seeing-eye dog. I recently ran into a woman who voiced her belief to the bus driver that Rocky was not a true Service Dog. Rocky was trained by professionals to be a Service Dog, I told her, and moreover it was none of her business ... not that she paid any attention.

People all over Brantford know and love Rocky. Now that he is getting up in age,

## Shared Memories

he doesn't tolerate the heat that much, so I leave him home on really hot and humid days. The drawback to that is that people worry when they see me without Rocky. They are relieved that he is not sick or worse.

Rocky is so patient wherever we go, and people often don't know he is there. Oftentimes, people don't even know Rocky is on the bus until we get up to disembark.

Having Rocky with me has introduced me to more friends than I have ever had in my whole life. He has been quite the icebreaker. I used to be quite shy and probably seemed stuck up. Now I talk to people with whom I probably would've never talked to before. I have a lot of admiration for some of these people.

Rocky is a very quiet dog and rarely barks. Other dogs growl and bark at him, but he doesn't bark back. He barks some when people come to our apartment door, but when I say, "It's okay Rocky," he settles down.

The only other occasion Rocky barks and sounds vicious is when he and I play, but that is all in fun. I tell him he is a bad dog, and he growls all that more.

He will bring a toy to me without dropping it because he wants me to chase after him, and when I ignore him, he drops the toy nearby. Rocky stands a ways off ready to get the toy after I throw it.

It's funny to watch Rocky when I talk to his toys. I'll say: "You want to go out and play, but that bad dog Rocky won't let you? I know he's such a bad dog. You need to jump way over him and make a run for it." Then I throw the toy.

Sometimes Rocky catches the toy right away, and sometimes it goes over him. When he gets it, he brings the toy and growls at me. We repeat this over and over, and Rocky never seems to tire of it.

I have to talk to Rocky as if he's a human being because he doesn't seem to understand me if I talk to him as if he is a dog. It never ceases to amaze me how much Rocky seems to understand.

As Rocky is thirteen and slowing down, I am faced with retiring him. He has done his job and it is my turn to look after him. He has arthritis in his rear end, but it isn't as bad as it was. He is on medications and special food for senior dogs with joint issues. Prior to the medications and food, he struggled with getting up. It is much better now.

Little by little, I want him to get used to staying home.

I have even considered buying him a bunny that he could watch and that would entertain him.

At the pet store he beelines right to the enclosure where they have them, along with hamsters and gerbils. People chuckle when they see him. It seems as if Rocky could stare at the bunnies all day. I just leave him by the enclosure while I do my shopping and get what I need. I have to tear him away when it is time to go.

At some point when I wasn't home Rocky began to chew on weird things, like my books and my toothbrush, not the usual things that dogs like to chew on such as shoes and furniture. As he didn't chew things when I was home I decided he needed company.

He needed a cat.

It was not kitten season so I ended up at the SPCA, looking at cats in cages.

### Lacey



My gaze landed upon at beautiful cat with gorgeous markings, a tortoise shell (*pictured, left*). She was kitten-like because she was malnourished and she was missing part of her one ear because someone had left her out in the freezing cold. Her name was Lacey. I liked it, so I didn't change it.

Lacey was pacing in her cage and crying. The lady at the SPCA let me hold Lacey, but Lacey did not seem to want to any part of it. She was scared. I said I would take her, and paid to have her spayed and get her shots.

I learned later that if I had hadn't taken Lacey, she probably would have been put down. Cats that did not want to be picked up or held are generally deemed as not adoptable.

At first Lacey was scared silly. For the first 24 hours, she hid somewhere in the apartment. I found her the following day. She needed to come out of hiding and see the whereabouts of her litter box and food and water dishes. She also needed to meet Rocky. It was the funniest thing to see him almost tip-toe to see her, but she hissed at him, and he jumped back.

## Shared Memories

By the next day Lacey was right at home. She strutted around the apartment as if to say, "I guess I will let you live here, too." From that night forward Lacey slept on my bed.

One night Lacey was crying and I sensed something was very wrong. I tried petting her to sooth her to no avail. In the morning, I found the problem. Frostbite had left the last couple of inches of her tail stiff as a stick and the damaged area had fallen off during the night. That must have hurt my little cat.

I believe someone must have abused Lacey and that she suffered from PTSD. Lacey did not want to be picked up, which left me something of a dilemma. I had to decide whether to leave it at that or force the issue.

I decided that, because of her fears, she needed to learn to trust, and that started with picking her up and giving her hugs.

I put Lacey on her back and stroked around her head and neck. Eventually she stopped struggling and gave in. She enjoyed this so much that it didn't matter if I held her all day. I'd pick her up and stroke her head and face until my arm got tired and I had to put her down.

It took quite a while to break down her walls, for her to feel loved and safe. I was moved to tears the day she crawled onto my lap and fell asleep. That was a big step for her.

Lacey got out one night. I looked all over the apartment for her and found that the screen in my bedroom window didn't fit properly. She must have pushed on it and climbed out. It was one of the hottest days of the summer. I was so worried about her. Rocky and I combed the neighbourhood, looking for her.

We met up with a lady who feeds stray cats. She said that a cat matching my description of Lacey had been hit by a car, and had been removed by the SPCA. I was so upset. I had to know for sure if that cat was Lacey, so I brought my camera to the SPCA and showed pictures of Lacey. I was told, "From the pictures, I don't think the poor cat was yours."

I was as quite put out with this lady telling me that story and assuming that the cat was Lacey. I shed tears needlessly.

Lacey returned the fourth day just as Rocky and I were heading out to look for her. She had a 'devil-may-care' attitude, as if she had just gone for a stroll. I

didn't scold her. I was just happy she was home.

I tried to fit the screen in properly but the very next day Lacey growled and popped the screen right out. I saw her do it but she was gone before I could stop her. I tore out of our apartment to the back of the building, where I found her shaking with fear.

There was another cat hissing and growling at Lacey. I shooed the cat away and took my darling cat home to our apartment. White duct tape solved the problem of the ill-fitting screen.

Lacey could sound like a really mean cat when she had a screen between her and whatever animal was on the other side, but she became a real scaredy-cat when she didn't have the screen to protect her!

Lacey learned to adore Rocky. She would try to get close to him but he wouldn't have any part of it. I'd scold him when he growled at her but it didn't work. Still, although he didn't want Lacey to get too close to him, he was very gentle with her.

He hated it when I scolded her. Usually I only chastised her when she used my furniture and walls as scratching posts. It got to the point that, as soon as he heard her scratching, he'd run to her as if to warn her before I could utter a word.

Lacey seemed to talk in her own little language.

My patio was surrounded by a six-foot fence. I devised a screen to hang over the sliding patio door with an opening at the bottom so Lacey and Rocky could go in and out. Lacey would meow when she came inside. I'd tell her where I was in the apartment, and she would come and meow to say "Hi."

One day I told her I was in the kitchen, but she stayed in the living room still meowing. I went in to see what was up, and to my surprise, she had brought in a nice juicy worm for me. I have to say that all gifts are not desirable, but they can be precious when given by a cat like Lacey.

Lacey died last Thanksgiving weekend. I was devastated.

## Shared Memories

A veterinarian once told me how it was so nice it was for me to rescue an adult cat I did not look at it that way. I chose Lacey, and she accepted Rocky and me. I really thought Lacey's previous owners were terrible and that it was deplorable that they left her out in the freezing cold, but it was their loss and my gain.



King, Rocky and Lacey all had big impacts on my life.

When I question whether God really loves me, I think he did not have to give me the most intelligent, loving and personable creatures I have ever encountered

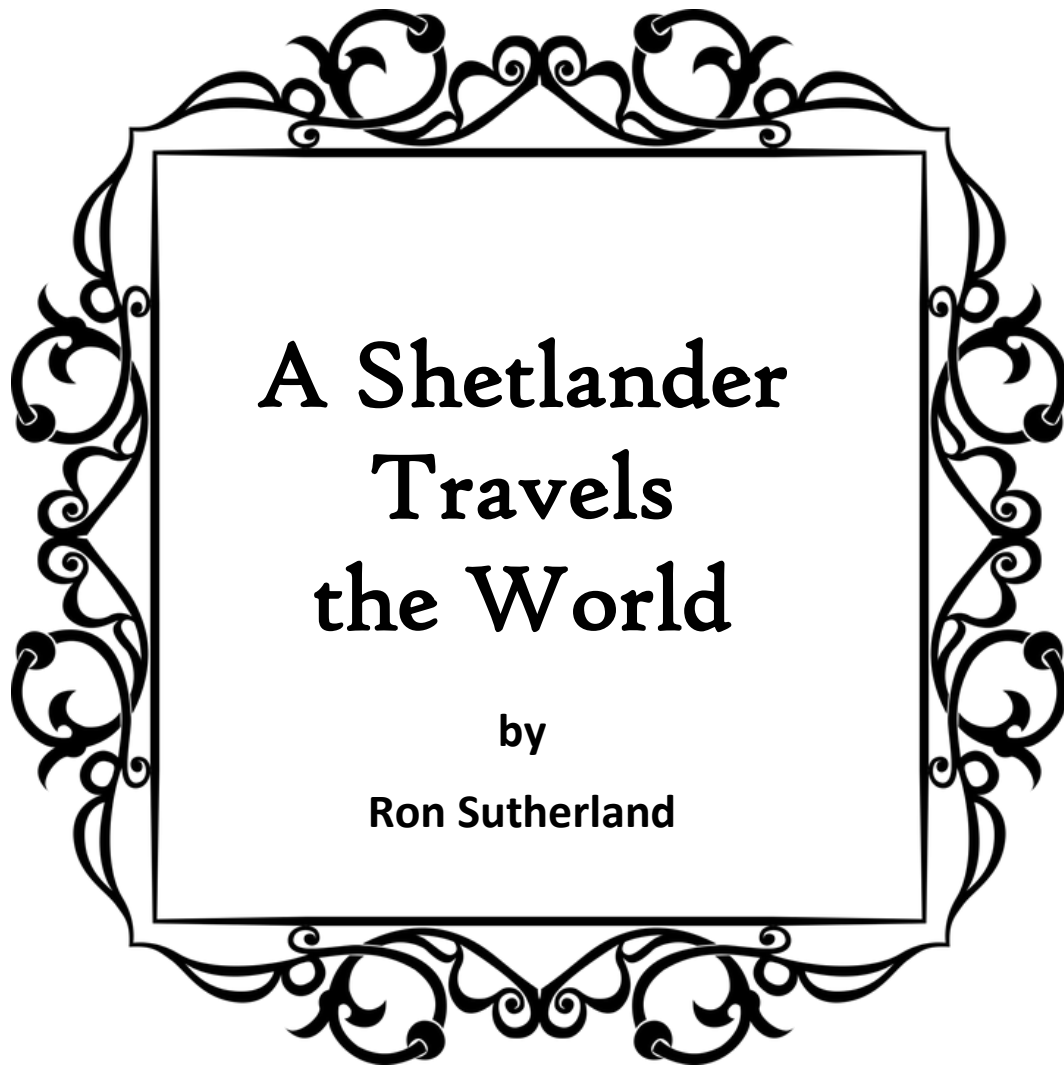
### *About the Author*



*Nancy has had a long and interesting career as a University-educated Registered Nurse. She has many fascinating stories about her childhood and her experiences as a nurse.*

*She has always loved to write letters to her families and friends who begged for more. She started writing non-fiction in the 1990's and was amazed at how easy it was for her. She often felt the ideas were God-given and she only put the ideas on paper.*

*Nancy lives in Brantford, Ontario with, Rocky, the smartest of all Border Collies. She has published three self-help books: **Ignite the Do Within You**, a general self-help book; **The Bitter Journey of Alzheimer's: One Wife's Daily Log**, a helpful guide to dealing with those with the terrible disease of Alzheimer's; and **Forgive Me, Forgive Me Not**, a useful tool employing simple, concrete steps toward forgiveness.*



**A Shetlander  
Travels  
the World**

by  
**Ron Sutherland**

Shetland is a small group of Islands north east of Scotland, halfway to Norway, in the North Sea. This is where my dad was born and grew up. He left there as a sailor, a cabin boy, and travelled the world in merchant ships, eventually becoming a ship's captain and harbour master.

After the War he retired and became a farmer in southern England. This is where I was attending the English equivalent of a boarding high school. Then when I came home for the holidays I would help him by ploughing some of his 50 acres of land with an old Fordson Tractor and then planting it with spring wheat. At other times I got to help by picking apples in his large walled garden, or working in the



## Shared Memories

greenhouses where he had both fruit and vegetables. Dad started telling me stories about his growing up in Shetland, as we gathered chicken eggs, or as he hand-milked one of his two Jersey cows.

“I was born close to the hamlet of Voe,” he said. “In a small house that overlooks the North Sea, on the east coast of the main island of Shetland. Eventually there were twelve of us kids and I was sixth oldest. We went to the one room school some six or ten miles up the loch from us, and that is all the education I got before I went to sea.

“One day Dad and an uncle walked some 20 miles into the large town of Lerwick, to buy paint and other supplies. “We spent the night with my oldest sister and her family, before we walked back carrying all the things we had bought.

“I remember the day a government excise man came to the house and gave us our surnames, we all became Sutherland, so they could tax us. Before that if two fellows were called Sandy the one living at the end of the Loch would be called Sandy Loch-End,” he said.

“Later I moved to live with my oldest sister in Lerwick while I worked at the docks, until I got a job as a cabin boy on a ship a running between Lerwick and Aberdeen on the north east coast of Scotland.”

Dad worked many ships after that. During WWI he worked on the tankers bringing Texas oil to the British Isles. The next place he told me about, he was on the east coast of Australia where he attended the Naval College in Sidney and got the “Letters” to become second mate and eventually first mate and ship’s captain. Over these years he started working on the ships between Sidney (Australia), Hong Kong (China) and Singapore (Malaya).

Every few years he would get a few months off and a boat ticket to go home to Shetland for a holiday with his family. It was on one of these trips home that he met my Mother. It may have been like this!

During the trip to Egypt, Dad, being a ship’s officer, got to know the ship’s captain.

One day as they were sailing through though the Suez Canal, the Captain said “I have a few missionaries coming aboard when we dock in Port Said. Would you like to entertain one of them at supper tonight so that we can make them feel welcome aboard for the trip home to England?”



*Dad in Tropical Uniform, in Malaya*

Tom readily agreed. That evening he put on his best and spiffiest tropical uniform and sat down at the head table with the ships’ officers. His name tag read Officer T. Sutherland and next to it was another saying, Dr. M. Bird.

Tom had just finished ordering a plate of delicious curried pork from the waiter when this very proper English lady sat beside him and smiled. “Dr. Bird, I presume?” Tom said. “You must be the first lady doctor I have had the pleasure of meeting!”

“Oh! Thank you. Yes, we are a rare breed.” Dr. Bird replied, “Please call me Margaret. I prefer it, Officer Sutherland,” she said, looking at his name tag.

“That’s a nice name Margaret, but please call me Tom,” he replied.

Margaret picked up the menu and perused it. “Tom can you recommend anything here? It all looks so good,” she said.

“The pork and rice curry is the chef’s specialty and I have ordered it for myself. It smells so good!”

Later that night they were still together. Up on deck there was a shrill blast on the S.S. Orkney ship’s horn as she sailed past the Mediterranean seaport of Alexandria, towards the red sunset and the old light house replying with its flashing beacon.

## Shared Memories

Tom introduced Margaret to his Navigator friends and guides in the night sky. Orion strode up the sky at the stern of the ship. Off the port bow, over Crete, were the Seven Sisters and Great Bear. Overhead was the full moon.

Several days later they must have left the S.S. Orkney in either South Hampton or Greenwich and gone to their respective homes, Mother to London and Dad to Shetland. Some years later, they were in Hong Kong together and were married by an Anglican Minister in China.

Their first home together was in the Philippines, then they moved to Sandakan on the island of Borneo (the world's third largest Island)\*. The first home I remember was a beautiful two story house overlooking the jungle and the harbour. This is



*The front of our new house.*

the harbour that Dad's ship steamed into with fruit, vegetables and dairy produce, when he was going north from Australia. Then one day everything changed. Dad must have been offered a position as ship's Captain with the Straits Steam Ship Co., sailing out of Singapore, Malaya.

We moved to a nice large bungalow north of Singapore. It was out on stilts over the water, overlooking the straits of Malacca, where again we could see Dad's Ship go by and he could blow his horn when he went by up the coast or around parts of the island of Sumatra.

When my parents could see the Second World War coming we all moved to the south of England. Mum and Dad bought a semi-detached house in Petersfield south of London. Later my sister and I started going to a nearby school.

Dad bought a new car, a Morris minor if I remember correctly, and we went on the only holiday trip I remember taking with him. First we drove to Dover, caught the ferry, and then drove to Paris, where we spent several days. Next we drove to Interlaken, Switzerland and the home of Mr. and Mrs. Mender, where we had two

or three wonderful weeks with a beautiful view of the Jungfrau Mountain. Finally we drove back to our new home in England.



*Left: My Dad, sister and I at the back of the house looking down garden before there was a garden. This is Captain Sutherland in his Regular Uniform shortly before he left for Singapore, his leave over.*

He was Harbour Master in Singapore when the Japanese invaded Malaya. Dad had command of the last ship to leave before the Japanese arrived.

Planes attacked the ship as they were leaving and injured several people, including Dad, but they continued to sail to S.E. Sumatra where his ship evacuated an air force base and picked up a lot of women and children. Then they passed through the straits to the Indian Ocean. The trip to Ceylon and the port of Colombo, took several days, and was uneventful. Unfortunately, Dad was in rough shape because his mate was a dentist who knew little about being in command of the ship. Dad stayed on or close to the bridge for the whole trip and had little or no sleep and he still had his injuries, including to his head.

Meanwhile my mother, sister, and I had moved. We were living in a large old farmhouse close to Privett, some 30 or 40 miles from Petersfield. Here my Mother had the house full of mothers convalescing after child birth, along with their children.

At breakfast one morning, as the three of us sat around the large old kitchen table, Mum said excitedly that "I just got a phone call from Dad. He has just landed in the south of England and I told him to catch the train to London so that he can find us." He caught another train to Alton, a town nearby, then finally a Taxi brought him to the front gate. There he was, in his white Tropical uniform but so very tired. It was good to see him and he gave us all hugs and kisses.

After a few days a friend of his took him to a military hospital where they took

## Shared Memories

care of his various ailments. It took several hospitals and more than a year before he was home with us again. He was so much better, but he never went back to sea.

Our happy life in Privett came to an end when we moved to East Grinstead. The 50-acre estate of Oakleigh had a large manor house on it. The house had been well used by the Canadian army before they left for Europe during the War. Mum, Dad and a Land girl spent considerable amount of time replacing broken windows (there were some 100 windows in the house, Mother said), painting, and cleaning.

My Sister and I were off at boarding school at the time. When we came home the house was full of war wounded, convalescing after surgery at the local hospital. Among these men were RAF and RCAF Pilots who had been shot down in burning planes and had had skin grafts from which they were recovering, a new procedure, at that time. These were Dr. MacIndoe's "guinea pigs".

While Mother continued to look after the main house Dad started on the rest of the estate, which consisted of several features: a rock garden, a hedged rose garden, and an artificial lake to produce ice.

These were all overgrown with weeds and shrubs, a result of years of neglect. Two large fields were also showing the same neglect and the results of war games, but eventually Dad cleaned them up and planted them to crops. There was also a large rectangular walled garden. The walls varied in height, probably from 8 to 20 feet in places, and had to be repointed eventually. Along parts of two adjoining walls were greenhouses where eventually he grew tomatoes, lettuce and other crops he sold locally. In the centre of the walled garden were four or five large garden plots where cabbages and other crops were grown. Each plot was surrounded by apple, pear and other fruit trees, and a paved path. This is where Dad spent most of his time and he taught me many things when I came home from boarding school.

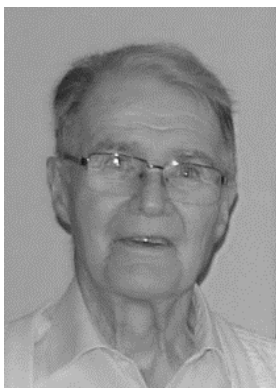
Dad worked here for many years while I went to New Zealand and finally settled in Southern Ontario, Canada.

Eventually Dad gave in to his love for Scotland and bought a small house south of

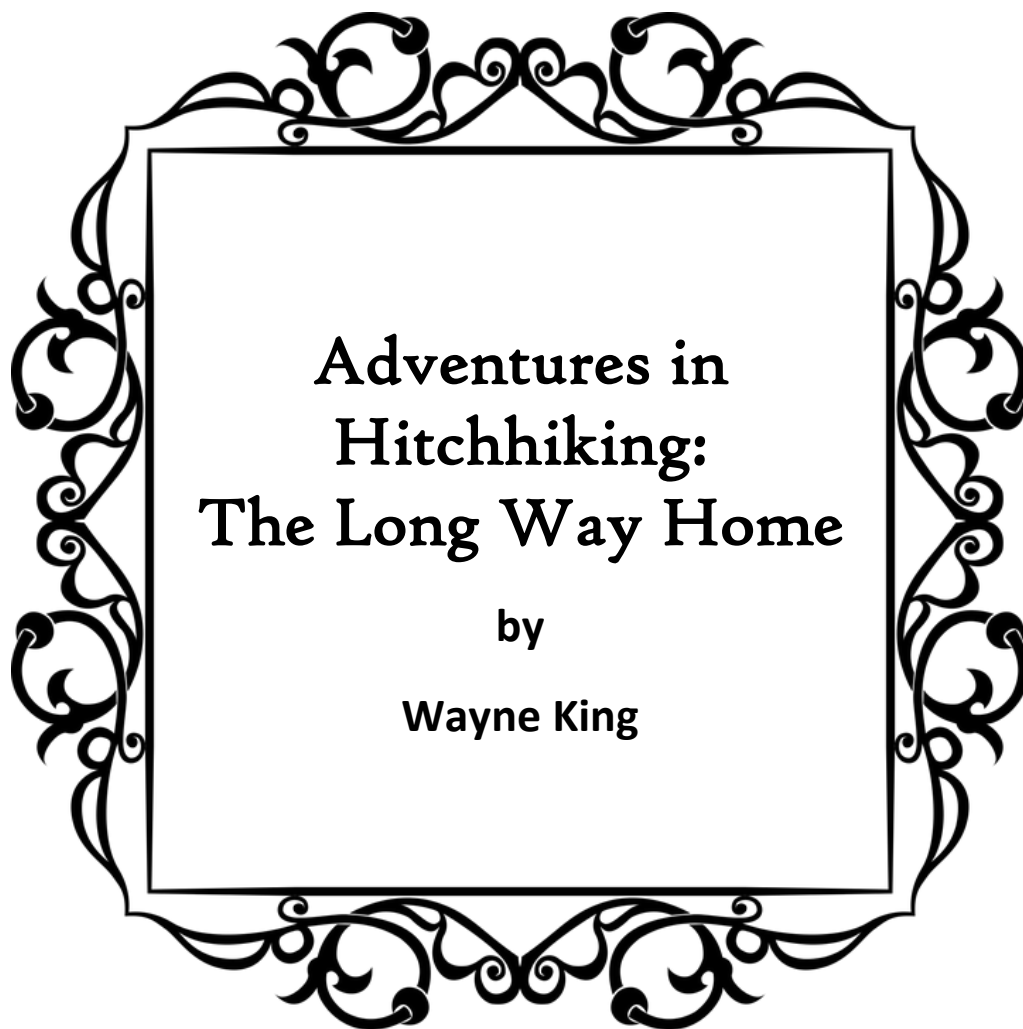
Glasgow in the town of Ayr, close to the sea and not far from Paddies Milestone. Over the years ever since I left home, every month or so he would send me a letter (and he did the same with my sister) telling us how things were and what he was doing, I did manage to answer some of the letters. He was not able to come to our wedding, but my wonderful wife took up answering his letters and so got to know him quite well as a result. Then I and my young family did have a couple of very nice visits with him, for a few weeks. But that was the last time I saw him. Scotland and Canada being too far apart for my family to cross very often.

\*P.S. The Island of Borneo is the world's third largest island after, Greenland and New Guinea. The Book "The Last Wild Men of Borneo" By Hoffman, Carl, gives a nice overview of the recent history of the Island.

*About the Author*



*I grew up in the South of England during the Second World War. After the war I was fortunate enough to see several European countries, and traveled to several other places before arriving in Canada in 1959. Here I met a wonderful lady who eventually became my wife. We have enjoyed life together ever since. We have lived in several places in Ontario and have taken a travel trailer from coast to coast of Canada. In 2009 we arrived in Brantford to be close to our daughter and her family. Fortunately this also makes us closer to my sister's family, who live in southern Ontario. We enjoy living in suburbia where we can read, write and garden all we like.*



**There's Got to Be a Morning After**

I shook myself awake. "Boy, I'm feelin' rough."

"Yeah, me too. I could use a coupla aspirin."

"No one to blame but ourselves. Just had to have that last drink."

"You didn't exactly say no."

"Calm down. We're all tired. Got a long trek ahead ... let's get movin'."

We began packing.

Long John glanced at his wallet, then announced: “I got enough dough” – meaning money – “left for the train to London and for the bus to Saint T” – short for St. Thomas. “No cash to spare for food. Got enough smokes. I’ll be at the parents’ in time for supper.”

Taking a long breath, he added, “What a surprise for them.”

Campbell (never call him Cam) and Yours Truly nodded. “Sure will be. It’s been a while.”

“We have to be at the Station before nine. Good thing we checked the schedule yesterday.”

“Too bad Wayne and I spent most of our money,” Campbell noted. “Got no choice, we’re thumbin’. At least we got enough dough to get us out of Montreal.”

I added my two cents. “At Dorval we’ll be out of this crazy city ... clear cruisin’ home.”

Thumbing from downtown Montreal would be ridiculously futile. Dorval gave us a good starting point for thumbing five hundred miles (eight hundred kilometers). The prospect of thumbing didn’t faze Campbell and I at all. We had hitched a lot over the last few years.



*On the road. Got no choice. (Google Images)*

We were ready for whatever came our way ... or so we thought.

### **Why Were We in Montreal?**

Good question! Let’s go back in time so I can explain our situation.

Campbell and Yours Truly left St. Thomas earlier that spring of 1968 to look for work out west. On our way we picked up John, who was living in Toronto. We just showed up on the spur of the moment, but John was gung-ho, ready to go. Campbell’s vehicle, a ‘61 Chevy Biscayne, gave up its ghost at our terminal point, Calgary, Alberta. Its appetite for engine oil never satisfied.

After a few weeks Campbell and I decided to return to St. Thomas when the jobs we hoped for never materialized. John decided to return with us even though he had





*Downtown Montreal, late '60s. We partied hearty. (Google Images)*

found work. So it was that the previous Saturday (it was now Wednesday) we boarded an east bound train at Calgary. Tickets cost us forty-five dollars each.

Although we decided to return home, none of us were in a hurry. We made a last-minute decision to take a bit of a detour to visit Montreal instead of going directly on to St. Thomas. This meant that instead of heading south,

Sudbury to Toronto, we would instead head east, Sudbury to Montreal ... almost the opposite direction ... a slight detour of over five hundred miles (eight hundred kilometers). The plan was that after arriving in Montreal late Monday, we would spend Tuesday enjoying the sites. Wednesday we would catch the train and bus home to St. Thomas. As you now know we had partied hearty, leaving Campbell and I broke. We had no other choice but to thumb.

Now let us return to the story:

### **Farewell Montreal**

Ready to go, we shouldered our meagre belongings, bade our gracious host a fond farewell, and exited onto Rue Sainte-Catherine. A short but brisk walk to Central Station cleared our heads.

The weather looked ominous. The sun tried repeatedly to break through the vast banks of grey, low lying clouds. Would it rain? The hitchhiker's nightmare. Would Old Sol abandon us in our time of need?

Whatever the weather we had no choice. We had to move on. We purchased our tickets.

John's fare cost ten dollars and he set aside a buck – equivalent to a modern dollar, or loonie – for the bus to St. Thomas. Campbell and I might have paid a buck at the most for our tickets to Dorval. When we had finally completed our transactions, all of us were for all intents and purposes broke.



*The Port of Montreal in 2015, and beyond it the centre of Canada's largest city in 1968.  
Photo by author.*

## On The Road

A short wait later we boarded our train.

“Yeah, Montreal’s crazy. We wouldn’t have found our way out of that maze if we’d thumbed from downtown.”

The three of us sat together until Dorval, where Campbell and Yours Truly bade John a fond farewell. John would be home in eight to nine hours, just in time for supper. For Campbell and me, thumbing meant our estimated time of arrival was unknown. With luck we could arrive before dark. However, we were under no illusions about the distance to be covered. We also realized that there was a good chance we could be thumbing at night.

But we faced a more immediate challenge. I studied the sky and wondered aloud, “Will the rain hold off?”

“There’s a lot of cars. Shouldn’t be a problem getting a ride,” Campbell replied as we walked away from Dorval station toward the nearby highway.

We scored a quick ride just as the rain finally fell. It was a short ride but got us out in the country, easier for prospective drivers to pull over.

Campbell exuded confidence. “We’re almost at the 401 and good old Ontario. At least people can tell we’re heading T.O.” – short for Toronto – “way now we’re past the Ottawa exit.”

Confidence is great, but the reality was that rides were few and far between that gloomy day. We made some headway, but not nearly as much as we had expected. Cold rain fell off and on from leaden skies with no sun in sight. We spent more time thumbing outside in the rain than seated comfortably in cars.

After all, who wants to pick up two wet strangers?

Later, much later, night was coming on. Car headlights shone out like yellow cones as they hissed past two damp hitchhikers.

Exasperated, I finally vented. “The rain won’t stop. We’re only in Cornwall. It’s dark as Hades. No one can see us. There’s no cars anyways. I’m soaked. The rain keeps comin’, I can’t huddle under this bridge all night. It’s damp and cold as a dungeon.”

“Wayne, we gotta keep hitchin’. No other choice”

## Shared Memories

“Can’t do it. I’m goin’ into town. See what’s what.”

“Ok. I’m gonna keep thumbnin’ – I’ll walk down the road a bit. See what happens.”

Before Campbell disappeared into the gloom of night and mist we wished each other good luck.

“See you in Saint T.”

### Alone

I scrambled up the highway embankment and found myself in a quiet industrial area. A high school loomed out of the night a short distance away. Here and there street lights lit my way.

*Thank goodness, it’s only drizzlin’ now.*

*Cars parked at the high school. Kids must be workin’ on ‘em in the shops.*

*I’m gonna try the car doors. Maybe I can rack – meaning sleep – in a car. Yes, the door on this one opens; there’s room on the back seat to lay down.*

I made myself as comfortable as possible under the circumstances. My trusty gym



*A multi-purpose gym bag held my worldly possessions and served as a pillow too. (Google Images)*

bag held my worldly goods and rested my weary head. A thick wool sweater topped with a leather jacket valiantly endeavored to warm my core. I changed into a dry shirt and socks, removed my soaked desert boots to dry, but kept my wet Jeans on. I had to be ready to bail out of the car in case I had to vacate suddenly. Preparations complete, I fell into a deep sleep.

I awoke at dawn. A hot June sun burst through the car windows filling the car with light and heat.

I had mostly dried off during the night and despite rough quarters I actually felt rested. The new day found me filled with boundless energy and optimism.

*The weather looks great. Not a cloud in the sky. Time to move on. Get out before someone discovers me.*

## On The Road Again

Back on the highway I barely had my thumb out when a car stopped.

“Where yah headin’?”

“St. Thomas, south of London.”

“Oh yeah. Quite a ways to hitchhike.”

“Sure is, but I’ve done a lot of hitchin’.”

It turned out to be a short ride, followed by yet another short ride.

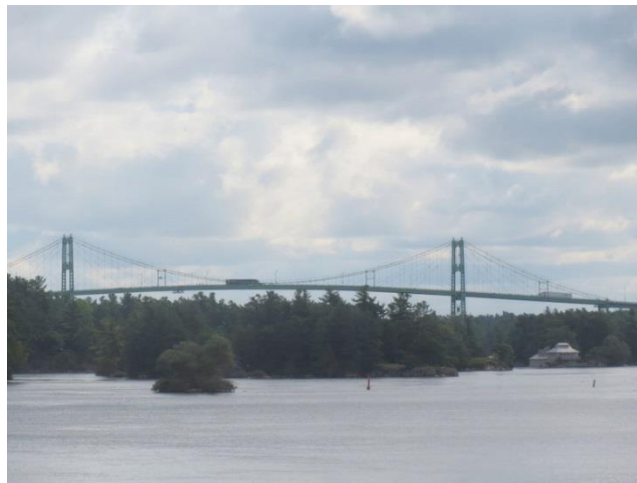
*At least, I’m movin’. It’s still early, not even nine. Maybe make it to the parents’ place for supper.*

“I’m turnin’ off here. You’re not too far from Brockville.”

I alighted from my ride’s car, immediately impressed with the way the sunshine and fresh, clean air amplified the beauty of the Thousand Islands.

The 401 was still under construction in this area in 1968. Pine trees and poplars grew tall and thick, but allowed intermittent views of the broad St. Lawrence and many of its islands. The earth had a reddish, iron tinge. Ancient rocky, limestone outcroppings showed where road construction had leveled and blasted through these splendid remnants of the Ice Age.

I walked and walked waiting for the next ride, but not really caring, so taken was I with the splendor of my surroundings.



*Above: the Thousand Islands bridge between Canada and USA. Photo by author.*

### Lady Luck Returns

*Here comes a loner* – meaning, one person occupying a car and supposedly more ready to pick up hikers. *He's bound to pick me up.*

"How far yah goin' sir?" My latest chauffeur inquired.

I told him.

"Well, I'm headin' for the Falls. I can take you as far as the 427.

"That would be great,"

*Don't think I could get a better ride than this ... gets me through T.O.*

"I gotta stop at the Kingston service centre. Mind the delay?" my ride inquired.

"No, not at all."

The driver finished filling his car with gas, then turned to me. "I'm gonna have breakfast. Will you join me?"

*Will I join him?* "Thanks, yes I will."

I didn't have any money, which he likely surmised. This was Thursday morning. I hadn't eaten since Wednesday morning and that was just a chocolate bar. Tuesday was a day when I drank too much and ate too little. Could he tell I was hungry? I had become almost used to that feeling.

Seated in the restaurant we chatted while consuming juice, rashers of bacon, toast and scrambled eggs. I drank tea. We talked the usual small talk about the election, Trudeau, Vietnam, our home towns, Expo '67.

"I'm full. Do you want my toast?"

I eagerly accepted his offer. *After all, who knows when next I dine?*

With a full stomach and a good ride the outlook appeared excellent for Yours Truly. The car seemed to glide the rest of the way, even through Toronto.

In those far off days the 427 was a bypass on the west end of Toronto. About the only signs of civilization were Malton Airport (which later became Pearson International) and the Molson Brewery. No towering apartment buildings, though they were soon to come. In 1968 you could still hitch the 401 in Toronto, even at Yonge Street, but you had to be stationed at an "on" ramp, not the highway itself.

Too dangerous, even then. The 401 at 427 junction marked the first spot in the west end of T.O. that was in the country, allowing a hiker to thumb safely on the gravelled shoulder.

My ride let me off. I was eager to thumb, having only 125 miles (200 kilometers) left to reach home.

*A couple of more rides should do it.*

I stuck out my thumb and pulled out a ride in record time. A second ride and two hours later I was finally free of the 401. I stood at my penultimate destination – the 401 and good old Wellington Road, twenty kilometers north of St. Thomas. A busy road to be sure, but a piece of cake to hitch, even though getting there might take two rides.

I felt lighthearted, fully prepared for the final leg of my trip.

### **The Final Ride, Dead Man's Curve**

*Ok, it's four o'clock. How long will this take?* No time at all as it turned out.

A gentleman of about my age picked me up. He wore his hair in a well lubricated pompadour and sported a short leather motorcycle jacket. I don't remember the car too much except it was yellow outside with a green interior. (A popular colour combination in the sixties.) Hanging from the rearview mirror was one of those ubiquitous green coloured scent modules. You know the one, shaped like a Christmas tree with the strong smell of pine emanating from it? Green and white wool ding-balls strung along the top of the interior windshield complemented the scent module's colour. I automatically checked for coloured glamour lights, but none were evident.



*Left: Pine scented.*

*Right: A sporty late 60s vehicle. (Google Images)*



## Shared Memories

We cruised south away from London quickly entering the countryside. As we roared down Wellington Road my antenna tingled.

*He's driving much too fast...gotta be over sixty! (Miles per hour, not kilometers!) He's either trying to scare me or he doesn't know how to drive. The Glanworth curve is coming up. It's dangerous. It'll do no good to show fear though. Only encourage the fool. Stay cool.*

The old Shangri-la song, "Leader of the Pack," started playing in my head.

*... I begged him to go slow, whether he heard  
I'll never know. Look out! Look out! Look out!*

Unlike the Shangri-las I was not inclined to beg my driver to slow down. I stayed calm. After all I had survived Campbell's driving. Surely this guy couldn't be scarier. At least he appeared sober. I kept up my part of our conversation about St. Thomas and people we knew.

Then it came into view. The Glanworth curve is actually two ninety degree curves. Driving from London, Wellington Road takes a long, sweeping right then a quick, sharp left before the straightaway resumes. Down through the years the curve has become notorious for a number of high profile car accidents that had claimed numerous lives. In other words, the curve must be respected.

The music continued, but it wasn't from the radio. This time the lyrics of Jan and Dean's 1964 hit song, the ominous "Dead Man's Curve" thundered through my head.

*(Dead Man's Curve) is no place to play  
(Dead Man's Curve) you'd best keep away  
(Dead Man's Curve) I can hear 'em say  
Won't come back from Dead Man's Curve*

My driver hunched his shoulders and tightened his grip on the wheel as we dashed into the first curve. Was that a smirk on his face as he quickly turned his head and glanced over at me? *Checking for my reaction?* I stayed cool, even when we hugged the edge of the pavement. At least he left room for oncoming traffic.

We sped out of the first curve into the short straightaway. *So far, so good.* He maintained his speed into and out of the second curve until finally we hit the straightaway.

*We made it! Did he hear my sigh of relief?*

That ordeal over, it was all clear sailing to St. Thomas.

The next thing you know I was standing on the corner of Flora and Talbot, a short 10-minute walk to my parents'. I surprised them at their supper.



*The Notorious Glanworth Curve is still notorious fifty years after my adventure. The City of London recently installed a variety of safety measures – including rumble strips, lights, and reductions in speed limit. (St. Thomas Times-Journal.)*

### **What's Left to Say?**

When Campbell walked down the highway at Cornwall he was picked up in less than ten minutes. He arrived home early the next morning.

John arrived at his parents' – just as planned - in time for Wednesday supper. They hadn't seen or heard from him for months.

No, this was nowhere near the end of my hitch-hiking career.



### *About the Author*



*I was born and raised in St. Thomas, Ontario, but have lived in Brantford for over thirty-five years. I am married to Sharon and father to Amy, Aaron and Ian. My work career was in sales/marketing for a variety of businesses, both local and international. Interests include gardening, history, photography, brewing and genealogy. Thanks to being retired I am able to devote more time to creative writing and reading. Major influences on my writings include Jack Kerouac, Mad Magazine and Lifescapes, but I have many more influences, too numerous to mention.*

*For another hitchhiking adventure see the 2013 Lifescapes Anthology for my memoir Adventures in Hitchhiking: My First Beer.*