

Welcome Home

# BEYOND THE SCREEN DOOR...

By O.A. Rosenkrantz

*... lies a squeak that triggers sweet memories*

The screen door slams, and my aunt Nancy is there on the back porch, carrying a tray of lemonade and cookies, calling the kids in for a snack. Then the screen slams again, and I'm up at the cottage, stepping out on the deck with an early morning cup of coffee in my hand to watch the mist rise off the lake and listen for loons

Few sounds are as able to awake memories in my head as the sound a screen door makes when it closes. I hear that familiar creak-and-slam sound, and I am whisked back in time to the summer job I had on a farm, and the feelings of heading out to the fields early in the morning, and coming home in the dusty evening, exhausted after a full day of working outside.

Apparently I am not the only one to associate the sound and the look of a wooden screen door with pleasant memories. Whether ornately decorated to resemble something Ann of Green Gables might have been familiar with, designed to be aesthetically pleasing as much as to keep flies out, or simple and utilitarian, screen doors are appearing on the front and back doors of houses all over these days, replacing the old aluminum screens on the front and sliding screens to the back yard.

The screen door we have just installed on our own house came just in time for what passed as summer this

year, and I awaited its arrival with the kind of anticipation usually reserved for Christmas. When it was finally up and painted, I spent practically the whole weekend walking in and out of the door, letting it slam behind me until the kids finally had to ask me to stop because I was giving them a headache.

Now, it has been said that you can't go home again, and I found that to be true with regard to the screen door. Each door has its own special sound when it shuts, and the addition of springs, latches, and hooks will give each door its own special rattle and squeak. The screen at the cottage had a lazy, elongated squeak to the spring that closed it which perfectly suited the relaxed mood of the place. Being old and rusty, the spring would invariably fail to keep the door closed all the way, and the sound the door made was a kind of half-hearted bang followed by a wheezy squeak as the door swung back out a couple of inches.

The farm screen door was much used and well-oiled, and had an efficient, over-achieving double-bang-rattle to it. When the door slammed shut it was held tight as the spring pulled it firmly against the jamb, while the hook that locked the door at night rattled on the wood. The lady of the house was notorious for her cleanliness and aversion to bugs, and it had to be a quick fly

that could slip in before the screen door closed.

Aunt Nancy's screen had one of those automatic-door closing devices on top that looked a bit like a bicycle pump and used compressed air to close the door. It sighed and wheezed asthmatically after someone opened the door, and closed the screen firmly against the jamb. But this being Aunt Nancy's home, a simple hook was not good enough to lock the door at night. No sir, her screen had a very fancy brass handle and thumb-latch affair which clicked into place when the door closed, so the sound Aunt Nancy's door made was a kind of creak-wheeze-slam-click sound which I'm sure could not be reproduced anywhere else.

My own new screen door is still in the process of figuring out what kind of sound it will call its own. At this point it still makes a vibrating double bump against the weather-stripping around the jamb, a sound that will change as the stripping wears down and some kind of latch affair is added to the door.

But as far as I am concerned - and in spite of interior evidence to the contrary - the house is now complete, made so by the addition of a screen door, whose own, unique slamming sound I hope is being recorded favourably in the memories of my own children.

## MY TEN COMMANDMENTS

Thou shalt not worry, for worry is the most unproductive of all human activities.

Thou shalt not be fearful, for most of the things we fear never come to pass.

Thou shalt not cross bridges before you get to them, for no one yet has succeeded in accomplishing this.

Thou shalt face each problem as it comes. You can handle only one at a time, anyway.

Thou shalt not take problems to bed with you for they make very poor bedfellows.

Thou shalt not borrow other people's problems. They can take better care of them than you can.

Thou shalt not try to relive yesterday for good or ill, it is gone. Concentrate on what is happening in your life today.

Thou shalt count thy blessings, never overlooking the small ones, for a lot of small blessings add up to a big one.

Thou shalt be a good listener, for only when you listen do you hear ideas different from your own. It's very hard to learn something new when you're talking.

Thou shalt not become bogged down by frustration, for 90 per cent of it is rooted in self-pity and it will only interfere with positive action.

—ELODIE ARMSTRONG