

# the painted box

By Wendy Thomson

A doctor friend once said something to the effect that when you get any kind of animal for a family pet, you must be resigned to the fact that you will outlive not only it, but probably many more. I've never counted the pets we've lost, but there seems to have been quite a string of ones poisoned, run over, stolen and lost. The hardest losses were Sue, Gord's little hound that someone deliberately shot, and my old Mama-cat. She was the first cat we had up here in Acton, and being the only one in this house, she rapidly became a real little character.

One day when I was away, she climbed the hydro pole for some reason or other, and that was the sad end. I guess one thing that makes it hard, is that we, being adults, are supposed to keep that upper lip stiff, and all that. But when you become so attached to an animal, the hurt goes very deep.

We lost Andy, our little ferret, last week, and what made that seem so bad, was the fact that ferrets die within a few days on their own. The thought of him, curled up under a bush in all that miserable rain, starving to death, was pretty down-heartening.

If you remember, we bought Andy a few months ago and found, much to our delight, that instead of being the vicious killer characteristic of the breed, he was quite the opposite. In fact, we had to shut him in his cage mainly to get a bit of peace. He insisted on climbing into everybody's lap and licking their hands off, then continuing up the arm and around the neck to clean a patch of hair. That wasn't too bad, but when he came to an ear, he whiffled in it, and most people found this intolerable. Come night-time, more that once I've had to take him out of 10-year-old Jim's pillow case, not so much for safety's sake, because being a ferret, he had that definite (VERY definite) musky smell. During the day, he slept in one of the laundry baskets downstairs, and I always had to go through the wash quite carefully before throwing it in the machine. Once awakened, he was overjoyed to have company, and insisted on trying to climb up my jeans. I suppose I was the only house wife who did the wash with a ferret clinging to her leg.

I've seen him, after a good run out in the fields, lie down on his back cradled in Jim's arms, yawn two or three times, then let himself be rocked to sleep.

Whenever I wanted to clean the house and couldn't keep an eye on him I'd have to put him outside in his cage, because the first chance he got, he'd crawl in behind the bath tub and go to sleep, and wouldn't come out. Then he'd come trotting out at the most inopportune times, like when there was company and he'd scare someone by getting friendly with their ankle bone, or appear when one of the cats was escorting a kitten down the hall and such.

Then one day he was gone. The hinge had worked loose on the lid to his cage, and there was no Andy. We hunted, and hunted, but we had no idea even of which way he had gone. There is bush to both sides of us, and the stream and pasture to the back, and our only chance of seeing him at all, would be if he ran across an open patch of ground just as we happened to be looking at it. Two days later, and no Andy; we gave up hope. Even if he'd tried to find his way back, the steady rain would have

## U.C.W. presents gift to quilters' hostess

Group two of Trinity United ladies met for the May meeting in the church parlor. In the absence of Mrs. Eaton, Mrs. Veldhuis opened with the U.C.W. Purpose and a poem, Anchor Sure and Steadfast.

Mrs. Cleave as devotional leader chose the hymns Happy Home and Bless be the Tie that Binds, with Miss Jean McLean as pianist. Mrs. Cleave's theme was Mother. Mother love is never exhausted; mother's apron strings are heart strings, she said. A duet by Mrs. Veldhuis and Miss Dorothy Simmons was very much enjoyed, I'm a Pilgrim.

Minutes were read and adopted. Mrs. J. Lambert gave the treasurer's report. 18 ladies answered the roll call. Mrs. Shoemaker gave an excellent report on the shut in's, reported visiting the Waldie Home and the Manor, also three car loads went to the tea at Parkwood Manor, where Miss Bennett resides. Regrets were expressed on Mr. and Mrs. M.

## New officers take places at meeting of Dublin W.I.

Mrs. Ed Norton, Mill Street E., was hostess for the regular monthly meeting of Dublin Women's Institute on Thursday evening.

The new officers took their places for the first time—Mrs. M. McCullough as president and Mrs. C. McIntyre as secretary. The Institute Ode was sung, followed by the reciting of the Mary Stewart Collect and Lord's Prayer. A two-minute's silence was observed in remembrance of the passing of a beloved member of the branch, Miss Minnie Somerville. She was a life member of the group, and while not able to attend its meetings recently, always retained a keen interest in all its activities.

The roll call "A farm experience" brought out many amusing experiences that the members had had during the year.

Reporting on plans made by the bus committee for the annual sojourn, Mrs. J. A. Van Fleet outlined a choice of several trips that were under consideration. One will be further pursued.

As the talent number of the month, Mrs. C. Armstrong introduced Joe Petric, who played three delightful accordion solos which were very much enjoyed by the ladies.

A request for pies for the booth at a local auction sale on May 24 was made by Mrs. E. Wilson.

Final returns of the canvass in support of the Canadian Cancer Society as given by Mrs. E. Norton was most gratifying.

Decoration Day at Fairview Cemetery will be on June 1, and some of the members will help with the planting of the geraniums. No sandwiches from

the members are required this year.

Ten members signified their intention of attending the Halton District Annual at Boston Church next week. Scotch Broom Institute will be hostess. A preview of the two minute skit to be given at the district annual was enacted by a couple of members.

Four ladies had attended the annual TB dinner from the Branch at the Pine Room, Oakville, the night previously. Mrs. A. Near, Mrs. J. A. Van Fleet, and two members from the board, Mrs. C. Britton and Mrs. J. Blyth. Mrs. Near gave a very interesting and comprehensive report of the activities of the Halton TB Association the past year, and told of the efforts that are being made to keep tuberculosis under control in the county.

The new president, Mrs. M. McCullough, had attended the Officers' Conference at the University of Guelph recently, and reported on the splendid attendance of members attending from all over the province. There had been good sessions with a wealth of interesting information given. Mrs. McCullough brought back a splendid report of the conference.

Mrs. John O'Gorman, as agricultural convener, gave a very interesting and instructive paper on Agriculture as the basic industry of the country, which vitally affects all people.

A bountiful lunch was served by the hostess, Mrs. E. Norton, assisted by Mrs. G. Collins, Mrs. I. McDougall and Mrs. A. Near, and a social half-hour was enjoyed.

Mrs. A. Near was courtesy convener.

## Guests from Windsor enjoy week-end with Acton Guides

It takes more than rain to dampen Girl Guide spirits. Over the weekend 38 girls from Windsor were guests of the Acton company for a full slate of activities despite the weather.

The visitor arrived by bus shortly after lunch on Saturday, at the Scout and Guide Hall for introductions. During the afternoon they toured the Halton County Museum at Kelso.

No Guide program is complete without a sing-song and the girls staged a Hootenanny in Prospect Park Saturday night to the accompaniment of Hector Dalgle on his banjo.

On Sunday it was off to church at St. Joseph's Catholic and St. Alban's Anglican followed by informal guided tours around the town.

Before leaving in the afternoon, each guide leader

received a leather wallet donated by Beardmore and Company. Acton guides were given little autograph books from their new friends. Billet hostesses received home-made gifts.

## Weddings make news

Wedding in the family soon? The Free Press is happy to publish wedding accounts and pictures—but not too long after the happy occasion, please!

We have forms available at the stationery store and at the plant office. Pictures can be returned.



ACTON SCOUT AND GUIDE Mothers presented a Guide flag to the Acton company last Wednesday evening at a meeting. Holding the new emblem are Mrs. B. Ginger, captain of No. 1, left, and Mrs. M. Strongtharm, captain No. 2 company, right. In the middle are Mrs. W. Edser, Lieutenant, Scout and Guide Mothers Gladys Davidson and M. Schonnop who made the presentation, and District Commissioner Louise Forbes.

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