

# the painted box



By Wendy Thomson

It's so easy to tell tales of animals, here. With the expanse of window in the house, (they are 4 feet wide in the dinette, 8' in the kitchen, 12' in our bedroom, 16' in the living room, and all but the kitchen are 6' in height), no matter where we sit with our tea, we can see a lot of what's going on outside. So far this year, we've seen all kinds of birds either flying past or stopping in the birch tree out the front (which also happens to be the dividing line between two pair of robins' territories and is a bit of a battleground), we've seen Rip dispatching a "noxious" grass snake of some sort, plus all kinds of squirrels, rabbits and such, going by.

Other years there have been raccoons, porcupines, snakes, deer, moles, blue herons, turkey vultures, pheasants, foxes, and I forget what else, as well as other people's straying cats, dogs, cows, horses, ponies, and pigs. I remember the first year we were here and I woke up to find a herd of cows in my tulip bed. This, to a "city girl" was a most frightening thing. I often wonder if, when I phoned Gord's Aunt Ed over on the next line to ask if they were missing any cattle, she heard the quaver in my voice.

But the best tales are born, of course, when the animal is not only out of place, but oddly so. We've had a cat and a goose that thought they were people, a pig that liked to chum around with the dog, a gosling that was taken in by a cat, a banty rooster that thought he was a goose till he met the dog and then he KNEW he was a dog, and so on.

One day, Rip had a squirrel treed up a fence post, and insisted I come have a look. It was the biggest, ugliest squirrel I'd ever laid eyes on, with scraggy fur, large, dirty, chattering teeth, and a moth-eaten tail. It was much later that I realized (dumb cluck that I am) that it wasn't a squirrel, but a ground hog. An easy enough mix-up, I suppose—they both have big teeth.

The most memorable event took place when our old Mama-cat brought home a "snack" for the kittens. No mouse or mole, this, but a half-grown weasel—alive! The kittens took one look and decided against eating so close to bed-time, and the thing retired unmolested in behind my potato bin. All this without my knowledge.

Come morning, the first thing I noticed was an odd smell in the kitchen, and I got down on my hands and knees to try to track down the stink. You can imagine my horror when I came to the potato bin, looked under, and saw something looking back!

When the milkman came, I was just about a nervous wreck from imagining this thing jumping out and grabbing my ankle. I didn't know what it was, but it neither looked nor smelled friendly, and I appealed for help.

The milkman took this all in stride as though it happened every day, identified the thing for me, called his boys in from the truck to help, then set about plotting the animal's downfall. Well, he thought that Mama-cat would finish the job if we ousted the weasel from behind the potato bin, but you know cats! Mama-cat wasn't going to make any rash moves, and wanted to bide her time. Down the hall the weasel went, into the bedroom and behind the dresser, and Mama-cat sat in front of it with her eyes closed pretending she was actually very tired and literally asleep on her feet.

The entourage must have been quite comical had anyone looked in—first Weasel scooting for his life, Mama-cat strolling behind, followed by the milkman with a broom, his two boys with two-by-fours, me with bated breath, then Beth and Jim (both of them toddlers still) with bloodthirsty enthusiasm.

The weasel wouldn't come out again, of course; he knew what was waiting for him out there and was no nit-wit. However, after a bit of gentle persuasion with the broom handle he put in a brief appearance and WHAM!! Exit one weasel.

From that day on, our nursery

## Wellington Centre W.I. district annual at Fergus

"Public Relations through Canadian Handicrafts" was the theme for the 65th District Annual of Wellington Centre held in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Fergus, on Wednesday, May 28. One hundred Institute members signed the guest book.

The president, Mrs. John Reid, presided with Mrs. G. Ostic the secretary-treasurer. Mrs. R. C. Moffat, F.W.I.O. Board member, did the ratification of District Directors.

The reports of the Standing committees' conveners were given for Agriculture and Canadian Industries by Miss Winelda Fasken; Citizenship and Education by Mrs. Clarence Beatty; Historical Research and Current Events by Mrs. Charles Allan; Home Economics and Health by Mrs. Ed. Archibald; Resolutions by Mrs. Albert Sobol; Tweedsmuir Curator by Mrs. Irvine Black; Public Relations Officer by Miss Elva Pearen; Fed. of Agriculture by Mrs. J. Baldwin; Safety by Mrs. Lloyd Lang; Temperance by

Mrs. R. Fletcher. Mrs. Mel. Allan and Mrs. Jack Sargent, Belwood Institute, sang a duet "Whispering Hope". Miss Elva Pearen gave the report on the Officers Conference at the College.

Mrs. Barbara Flewelling, home economist for Wellington County, gave an encouraging report of the 4-H clubs in the county. All the institutes in Wellington Centre sponsored the "fast club" "Separates for Summers".

The tables for the noon luncheon were very attractively decorated in the W.I. colors, and also on the tables were the candles which had been made for the contest—an arrangement featuring hand made candle to be used on a luncheon table. The judges, Mrs. O. McConkey and Mrs. T. Miller announced the winners: 1st Mrs. George Piercey, Elora W.I. 2nd Mrs. N. Jamieson, Ennovenille W.I. 3rd Mrs. H. Van Batten, Fergus W.I. Rev. W. Young of St. Andrew's Church welcomed the guests.

Mrs. R. C. Moffat, F.W.I.O. board member strongly stressed that they should encourage Women's Institute Courses and when they have meetings to prepare to avail themselves of all material available and to really make meetings worthwhile.

Nine Life Members were presented with Life Membership Cards and blue and white corsages. These were Mrs. Annie Jamieson and Mrs. W. R. Green, Ennovenille W.I.; Mrs. J. M. Abbot, Mrs. G. Scott, Mrs. F. Clayton (a member for 62 years) Erin W.I.; Mrs. W. B. Wettic, Living Springs W.I.; Mrs. W. Robinson and Mrs. H. Carter, Speedside, and Mrs. W. Ballantyne, Greenock W.I.

Hillsburgh W.I. provided the entertainment for the afternoon. Mrs. David Barbour read Life Begins at 60. The theme "Public Relations through Canadian Handicrafts" was given by Mrs. Edgar Gray.

The roll call, An Article of Canadian craftsmanship suitable

for an extension course, was very well answered with such items as mosaic tile, painting, liquid embroidery, and others. The "In Memorium" was given by Mrs. Alf Woods.

The new slate of officers for 1969-70 is as follows: Honorary president, Mrs. John Reid, R.R. 2, Hillsburgh; president, Mrs. Edgar Gray, Hillsburgh; first vice-president, Mrs. Lloyd Lang, R.R. 2, Hillsburgh; second vice-president, Mrs. Albert Sobol, R.R. 5, Rockwood; third vice-president, Mrs. Clarence Beatty, R.R. 1, Oryton; secretary-treasurer, Mrs. George Galt, R.R. 4, Fergus; assistant secretary-treasurer, Mrs. Reg. Brett, Box 1029, Fergus; Federated representative, Mrs.

John Reid, R.R. 2, Hillsburgh; alternate federated representative, Mrs. E. D. Kniff, Elora; area convention delegate, Mrs. Edgar Gray, Hillsburgh; alternate convention delegate, Mrs. Lloyd Lang, R.R. 2, Hillsburgh; public relations officer, Mrs. Elva Pearen, R.R. 3, Acton; auditors, Mrs. Angus Reynolds, Fergus; Mrs. William Mann, R.R. 1, Fergus.

Conveners of standing committees, Agriculture & Canadian Industries, Miss Winelda Fasken, Elora; Citizenship and Education, Mrs. Cecil Warrington, R.R. 1, Oryton; Historical Research and Current Events, Mrs. Charles Allan, Elora; Home Economics, Health and Safety, Miss Donis Fines, R.R. 3, Acton;

Agriculture, Mrs. Alf Woods; Fergus; Curator, Mrs. Irvine Black, R.R. 3, Fergus; In Memorium, Mrs. Roy Black, Fergus; Federation of

Resolutions, Mrs. Arthur Wheeler, R.R. 5, Rockwood; Temperance and Drug, Mrs. Richard Fletcher, R.R. 1, Fergus; Federation of

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