

the painted box

By Wendy Thomson

I've taken down the last of the Christmas decorations just recently, not because I liked the color they gave to the house, but because of the cats.

For some reason or other all nine (four adult and five half-grown) got into completely idiotic moods as part of the holiday festivities and kept things in a bit of an uproar.

Most of it seemed to centre around the Christmas tree, which was tall, sturdy, and quite bushy. Shortly after we stood it up in the living room and left it to settle, the cats vanished. It wasn't till we began decorating, and saw strips of tinsel and strings of glitter mysteriously disappearing inwards that we realized where they'd gone. In the crooks of the branches, the kittens were happily ensconced, leaving their perches only when someone approached the tree with an ornament.

Evacuate tree

At one time or other, each of us was quite startled by a slim paw darting out of the branches to bat the ball loose before we'd even had it hooked on. Once down on the floor, the ball was free game and the tree was almost upset time and time again as there was a concerted rush to evacuate.

We found it impossible to make everybody behave, and did the one logical thing — decorated only the very tips of the branches on the upper half of the tree, and nailed the tree-stand to the floor (having an unfinished house does come in handy sometimes).

We had tried shutting the cats in the bedrooms at night as various little "sit-around" decorations began turning up in various degrees of dishevelment, but even in the bedrooms, playtime was playtime.

Gord and I tried to sleep without moving a muscle, as that would provoke an attack from all quarters. But one night, after getting up twice, once to remove a cat from the wastepaper basket, the next to confiscate a Brazil nut that had been smuggled in and was being batted about the room with much vigor, I was awakened by a poke from Gord.

Feet on backside

"I feel that patter of somebody's feet thundering up my backside." And that was it. I threw all the cats into the hall and left the poor tree to their mercy.

It wasn't just the kittens who felt silly, either. Cock-eyed Cat, who must be nine or 10 now, decided to do as much of her travelling as she could, upside down, scooting up and down underneath tables, chairs, couches and beds, on her back, running along the underside of the furniture with her feet.

Her daughter, 8 year old Little Cat began turning up in the oddest places. It was a hazard to move or open anything, for there

she'd be sitting calmly and patiently. Thank heavens she didn't go for the "jump-out-and-bite-you" bit, but it was an awful jar to the nervous system to open the cereal cupboard, the toy drawer, or the dryer, and have a cat walk out.

Bit begonias

Also, she began eating begonias. I'm not much of a hand with house plants at all, and she wasn't helping any, I thought. But when the plants started to bloom twice as much as before, I just left her to it.

I guess the worst offender was Tansy-cat. Every morning when son Jim and I went down to the barn to do the chores, we'd roll open the doors and there was Tansy, sitting on the hay, delighted to see somebody. When we tried to throw out the hay, things got ridiculous. She acted as though she'd been sitting on a bale of catnip, and began to roll, and bite, and push, all the time purring to the point of idiosyncrasy. Whatever we tried to pick up, there was Tansy, sitting on (or in) it.

Oddly, her mood lasted only back to the house. On the way she deliberately stopped right in our path time and time again, making indignant noises when we nudged her in her tail feathers, but once home, she became all prim, proper and aloof.

Really, though, I couldn't count on that either. Once everyone else got going, tearing around the house, Tansy'd be right in there, hiding behind doorways and around corners, jumping out all stiff-legged and silly to bat someone's ears.

Swat dirty rascals

It was in the middle of one free-for-all that I tried to undecorate, and cats were in and out of the boxes, scattering tissue paper widely. In spite of them, I finished, except for the huge paper balls hanging from the beams. Just when I got balanced on a high chair, stretching as far as I could to undo the things, a kid decided to play "King of the Castle" on the chair. And there I was, with an armful of paper balls, while a great horde of cats advanced on the chair, and the "King" made his defence by hanging over the edge to swat the "Dirty Rascals" with the fourth foot and clinging to my ankle with the other three.

No, that wasn't "Holy Night" that I was singing. Nor was it "Sweet Georgia Brown". That was my own composition.

History of old homes at Greenock Institute

The Greenock W.I. met January 12 for their first meeting of 1971 at the home of Mrs. A. Winter. Mrs. A. Gates read a poem Sing Praise to God in Winter, followed by the opening Ode.

Mrs. C. Storey gave meditations. Thirteen members answered the roll call with "The naming of the first owner of your property and the year in which your house was built."

Crown Land
This was indeed a very interesting roll as each one told a short history of their property, several of which dated back to lands taken from the crown and which are still in the family name. A number of homes are over 80 years old and several were built within the last ten years.

Minutes were read and thank-you notes from shut-in friends who had been remembered at Christmas.

Training school
Leaders are to attend training school for the next 4-H Girls' Club which Greenock W. I. will again sponsor.

A letter was read from the Chinese foster child. Current events were given by all. The historical research conveners Miss E. Pearen and Mrs. Ralph McKeown had

prepared a varied program.

Special history
A history of Crewsons Corners was given by Miss Pearen which had been prepared for her by Mrs. A. Diamond, a lady well over 90, who now lives in the village of Rockwood. She had drawn sketches of buildings long since gone. Mrs. C. Aitken read an essay on Maple Wood Farm, one of our pioneer farms.

History shown
The Tweedsmuir book was on display. The motto "Things kept in use never rust" was given by Mrs. R. McKeown. She asked, do you let your talents rust or do you use them? Skills will come back to us even after 20 years if we put our mind to it.

Friendship is another thing we must not let rust. Be sensitive to other people's feelings, and may we always be ready to say "I am sorry" and let the rust gather on bygone hurts and quarrels.

Lunch served
The meeting was closed by the singing of the National Anthem followed by the Institute Grace. A delicious lunch was served by the hostess and assistants. Mrs. R. Sinclair thanked the committees and hostess.

The February meeting will be held at the home of Mrs. C. Allan, Churchill Road, Acton.



SHERIDAN advertising student Janice Cox, of R.R. 2, Georgetown, joined the staff of the Free Press for experience this week as part of her course. She's the daughter of Esquering councillor Len Cox. —(Staff Photo)

Free Press Women's Page

Ladies' Aid meets on day of storm

Due to the very bad storm last Tuesday, the attendance was depleted at the Knox Ladies' Aid monthly meeting. Mrs. W. J. McIntyre presided and read an

opening poem "Happy New Year". Roll call was answered by "something good about my next-door neighbor."

The secretary's report was read by Mrs. G.S. Matthews. A full monthly report and an annual financial report was given by the treasurer.

Thank you notes
Many thank-you notes were read from folk who had been remembered at Christmastime. It was decided to do some

quitting in the near future. The Scripture lesson was read by Mrs. J.C. Dennis and prayer was offered by Miss Robina C. Clark.

Amusing book
In the absence of Mrs. O. Moran, Miss Clark read amusing excerpts from Sam Levinson's Book, "Everything except Money". Repeating of the Lord's Prayer closed the meeting.

A dainty lunch was prepared by the lunch committee and all enjoyed a social chat over the tea-cups.

New hours begin

The first coffee hour at St. Alban's church is being held this morning (Wednesday). The organizers hope to welcome anyone who'd enjoy an hour's chat, from homebound mothers with young children to Golden Agers. The coffee hour is being held twice a month on Wednesday mornings, from 10 to 11 a.m. in St. Alban's parish hall.

Dance, social evening planned by Auxiliary

The January meeting of the L'Arche Auxiliary was held at the Acton Public Library with five members present. It opened with the prayer for the retarded read by Mrs. J. Conroy. Christmas gifts were sent to four young people from Acton, who reside at the Ontario Hospital School in Orillia.

The trainees from the A.R.C. workshop are still enjoying bowling every other week at the Acton Bowling lanes.

Workshop
Samples of the ceramic work being done by trainees at the workshop were on display at the meeting. There were candle holders, coasters, candy dishes and trays, and several others. All had a very professional look.

Arrangements for the Spring Dance, to be held at the Legion Feb. 27, are well in hand. Tickets may be obtained by calling Mrs. J. Conroy, 853-2063.

Social evening
The next general meeting will be a social evening to be held Feb. 12 at the workshop in Hornby. Once more this year we will be having the Flowers of Hope campaign, with door to door canvassing, thus making closer contact with the public.

The next meeting will be held a week early, Feb. 17. Once more a welcome is extended to anyone interested in joining L'Arche Auxiliary.

District W.I.s see objectives

On Friday, January 29, ten members of the executives of Wellington Center, Wellington South and Halton District Women's Institutes met at the home of the Board member Mrs. R. C. Moffat of Eramosa.

Mrs. Moffat gave the main points of the provincial president, Mrs. Zoeller's, memo. The main projects at present for W.I. branches are the contributions to Mac Donald Institute which in the past three years of 1967-70 amounted to \$32,000; but in the period of the year 1970 the Women's Institutes gave \$38,000 to other organizations. Members should change their thinking, or the obligation of \$75,000 will not be met by 1972, they were told.

Conference planned
The Officers' Conference is to be held April 28 and 29. Registration fee per delegate is \$35. Those eligible to attend are secretary-treasurers, public relation officers, and members - at-large from the branches, also district and area presidents.

The Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario are still needing funds with which to pick up the option on the Erland Lee Homestead, co-founder of the Women's Institutes. To date there is only \$7,800 in this fund.

A report of the United Nations was next presented, and it was suggested that each branch have a United Nations meeting. The dates for the district annuals were confirmed as follows: Wellington Center - May 11; Halton May 19; and Wellington South May 25.

Halton's turn
Mrs. Moffat read the

qualifications of a board member. It is Halton's turn to appoint a board member in 1971. Each member was asked to speak on a highlight or workshop of the past year. All present felt that there is a great deal to be learnt from workshops and district days, and look forward to more in the future.

Free Press Personals

High school vice-principal Joe Bray and Mrs. Bray have returned from Houston, Texas, where he attended an education conference.

Mr William J. McIntyre has been a patient in Guelph Hospital for a few days.

Mr and Mrs. Mansell Nellis have enjoyed a two-week holiday in Bermuda.

Many friends regret to hear that Mrs. M. McCullough had the misfortune to fall and fracture her left arm last week.

The Rev. Harry Dawson and the Rev. Gordon Turner attended sessions of the Anglican General Synod and the United Church general council in Niagara Falls last week. The subject of church union is of particular interest to the two local clergymen.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Smith and daughter Leslie of Toronto visited his mother and sister Mrs. Anna Smith and Wanetta Smith on Sunday.

Mr. William Mainprize underwent surgery in Guelph General Hospital last week and is recuperating at home now. His many friends hope for a return to good health soon for him.

Mrs. Louis Major from New Liskeard was in Acton attending the funeral of her brother-in-law Mr. A. Villemaire, 86 Wallace Street, also his son Gerald from Calgary, Alta; Eugene from Scotland, Ontario with his wife Peggy, and Louis from Oakville with his wife Joan.

The Rev. A.H. McKenzie is attending a refresher course for Presbyterian clergymen in Montreal.

Bandmaster George Elliott and some of the band members attended a day-long seminar in Waterloo recently.

Free Press briefs

NOISY SNOW we have these below-zero days. It squeaks under big boots of all makes and sizes.

SOME RURAL church services or Sunday schools were cancelled because of the bad driving Sunday.

THE FLOWERS of Hope campaign will be held again this year with garden seeds in exchange for donations.

MILTON IS holding its first Snow Carnival all next week. Some of the events are in Kelson park. There's a parade Saturday morning, February 13.

ACCORDING to tradition, the groundhog must have seen his shadow Tuesday, indicating six more weeks of winter. That's for those people who prefer tradition to facts, as outlined in last week's Free Press!

Vince entertains full time now

Vince Mountford, well known Brampton master of ceremonies and entertainer, resigned last week after nearly 42 years' service with Canada Packers.

Mr. Mountford would have been employed by his firm for the full 42 years in April. He resigned last week due to the fact "I just don't feel like sloggng through the ass-snow for another three months."

Once a hobby

Considered one of the most sought entertainers and masters of ceremonies in the province, Mr. Mountford has become increasingly busy in the past decade in what was once just a hobby. He has acted as MC ever since the start of the famed Old

Time Fiddlers' contests in Shelburne 21 years ago.

Mr. Mountford may be retiring from his business firm but expects to be busier than ever in the entertainment world. At the present time he is organizing and will supervise a series of Caribbean cruises.

He started his business career with the Harris Abattoir firm in Toronto and has been representative for his firm in the Brampton district for the past 25 years.

Mr. Mountford has been honored by his firm at several banquets since his retirement was first announced and a huge send-off party will be held at the Skyline Hotel in the near future.

Come to dance by snowmobile

At the dance Saturday night at Acton Meadows golf club, over 30 couples arrived by snowmobile. The group, all from Georgetown and area, came together by back roads. With their bulky snowmobile suits zipped off and hanging on the coat rack, the snowmobilers were right ready to dance to the music of the Shaynes.

Open house tour soon

An open house will be held at Credit Valley School of Nursing, Port Credit on Feb. 27 and 28. Faculty members and students will be available to tour guests through the building and answer any questions. Young and old alike are welcome to attend. Open house hours are 1.30 to 4.30 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 27 and 1.30 to 4.30 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 28. Refreshments will be served. Several local women attend the school.

One in four at school

Enrolment in Ontario elementary and secondary schools has exceeded the two million mark.

Statistics released by the Ontario Department of Education show that more than one in every four Ontario residents is attending either elementary or secondary school. Altogether there are 2,021,909 students in the kindergarten to

Grade 13 population, an increase of 35,113 over 1969.

Boys continue to outnumber girls 1,047,387 to 974,522.

Statistics also show that for the third consecutive year the number of schools in operation has decreased. In 1968 there were 3,055 schools. In 1969 the total had dropped to 2,923 and in September 1970, the number stood at 2,818.

In 1970, the number of teachers increased by 3,043 to 92,972.

Y meeting

The Y board is meeting again tonight (Wednesday) for elections and to map plans for the year.

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