



the painted box

by Wendy Thomson

Every time a letter arrives from Ontario with tales of cold and drifts and ice, I feel quite guilty. We're in our third week of very mild weather, more and more snow melting every day. We have very little left.

The phone rang Saturday morning as I was trying to decide which was the most important, washing dishes or changing beds. Martha, a neighbor to the south, was calling to suggest that, seeing it was such a beautiful day, I borrow a saddle and go riding with her and her daughter.

Of course, that solved the question of priorities around the house, as riding horses beats either dishes or beds any day.

It was 'round about lunch time, so I pointed the boys in the general direction of the refrigerator, told them to help themselves as Mom was taking the afternoon off, and set out.

Neighbours to the north of us had a saddle I could borrow, and old bucking-horse saddle by the look of the rigging, and I headed down the road to where the three horses blinked drowsily in the sun, enjoying the unexpected warmth of the day.

In spite of their obvious contentment, they didn't seem to mind being caught and led up to the house to be saddled. Saddling up—that was my first problem.

The horse, Bunny, (because she was born one Easter) was close to 16 hands and the saddle was very old and very heavy. After hefting it and eyeing up Bunny, I calculated that an effort to swing it up onto her back would only result in her being struck in the rump with 40 pounds of cowhide. (It felt like 70 and she looked 17 hands, as I stood there.)

So I got under the saddle somehow, balanced it on my collar-bone, then shoved it straight up her side, hoping it would stop at the top, and not go right over the other side and down on Martha who was saddling her Dinah right beside.

Next was the matter of getting on. The only way I could swing blithely on a horse with agility and grace, would be if it were no more than 10 or 11 hands. As it was, with jeans that hadn't been broken-in yet, the leggy horse, and short stirrup leathers, I couldn't even get a foot in the stirrup.

So Bunny and I headed for the bumper of the truck. From there, the height difference was considerably less, but I still had misgivings, not knowing the horse.

What does a person do if the horse decides to move off while the rider has one foot firmly on the bumper and the other foot just as firmly in the stirrup. Stand and yell "Whoa horse—for gosh sakes, whoa!"

Anyhow, that didn't happen; Bunny stood firm as though she'd gone that route many times before. And then we were off.

After a mile or so at a brisk trot, the three horses were willing to settle down to a steady walk. It was a perfect day for meandering; the wind had died down and the sun was bright. It shone down into the bushes and lit the insides of wooded sections so we could see quite a way in. Being so low in the sky, it made good shadows in the animal tracks; the open fields were patterned by fancy trails left by weasel, deer, porcupine, Coyote, and squirrel.

There were tracks I didn't know, and now and then birds I didn't recognize flew over. It didn't worry me overly much, though. It would have spoiled the afternoon to have headed out fully equipped with wildlife reference books to thumb through while holding the reins in my teeth.

Martha suggested we ride "uptown." This I got a quiet chuckle out of, considering that Buck Creek (uptown and downtown) consists of one store, but I didn't say anything other than to agree it would make a nice ride.

Before long, we'd covered eight miles, mostly on roads I knew, but partly on ones I wasn't familiar with. It's a great way to get to know the countryside.

There's talk around here of finding a cross-country route to Buck Mountain, eight miles east, in the spring. That'd be quite the ride too, and with luck I'll be shutting the doors on my unmade beds, locking the dishes in the dishwasher, and heading out again I hope.



THE REV. Bruce Eaton, right, was guest speaker at Trinity Sunday, in connection with the Ten Days for World Development program. His mother Lillian Eaton, centre, is an elder emerita at the church. Mrs. Bruce Eaton is on the left. Mr. Eaton is off to Zaire soon on another well drilling project.

Free Press Family Page

Y's Menettes prepare for Musicales

The month ahead will be a busy one for the members of the Acton Y's Menettes. Once again, they will be preparing and serving the buffet for the upcoming Y's Men's dance. The next meeting will be held at the home of Nancy Aldridge and hopefully plans will be finalized for Fashion Musicales. This will be a showing of ladies' spring fashions by Marilyn's Village Boutique, and of children's wear by Toddlers to Teens, to be presented late in March at M. Z. Bennett school. As sponsors of this event, the Y's Menettes will all be very involved with advertising, decorating, selling tickets, and even some members or their children modelling fashions. This is their major project of the year with the proceeds of the show being directed toward Y work in Acton.

Coffee

Instant coffee will come to the rescue of thirsty councillors, denied water at the Seventh Line Administration building. Clerk-Administrator Doug Pritchard said it seemed the easiest solution as a thirst quencher.

Postpone service

The Salvation Army service at the United Church Sunday was cancelled due to the icy driving conditions. Salvation Army families were contacted by phone to inform them the service will be next Sunday afternoon instead.

Trinity United church had been booked for this Sunday at 2.30 p.m. Sunday School will also begin this Sunday for children of Salvation Army families, or anyone who wishes to attend. It will be in the Y.M.C.A. beginning at 2 p.m. Families with previous Salvation Army affiliation have been requesting services here in town. Capt. Porter from Guelph is organizing them.

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Ladies' Aid elects slate of officers

A fine turnout of ladies attended the regular meeting of Knox Ladies' Aid on Tuesday, February 22, with two ladies joining.

A special part of the program was when Mrs. J. C. Dennis spoke to the ladies of the retirement of Mrs. W. J. McIntyre as president of the organization, of her fine leadership, hard work and loyalty for the past ten years. A few verses composed by a friend further described her dedication to her work during all these years. Mrs. D. S. Morrison presented her with a beautifully initialed purse as a tribute.

The new president, Mrs. Murray presided and opened the meeting with a reading "A Valentine for you". Judging by requests for banquets, it is going to be a busy spring and summer for the ladies.

The new drapes that have been hung in the foyer of the church were inspected, and all thought they enhanced the windows greatly.

Mrs. A. Near spoke a few words and told the ladies of the Open House in Guelph on Sunday in honor of the nineteenth birthday of Mrs. Pearl Kennedy, held at the home of her nephew, Reid Matheson and Mrs. Matheson. She had many callers wishing her the best on this special occasion. She still retains her love and interest in Knox Church here.

Roll call was answered by Say, Sing, Pay or Play, and it was quite interesting. Scripture reading was read

by Mrs. W. J. McIntyre and prayer by Mrs. Griffen Sprawl.

Mrs. Morrison and Mrs. Murray served a lovely lunch of birthday cake and ice cream in honor of Mrs. McIntyre, whose birthday is coming up early in March. A daughter and two daughters-in-law were present for this special occasion.

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Valentine theme for February 15 meeting

A meeting February 1 of the Acton chapter of Beta Sigma Phi at Diane Tappin's was a busy one with final plans being made for entertaining Xi Delta Beta chapter from Georgetown on February 15.

There was also some discussion about plans to sell daffodils for the Ontario Cancer Society.

On February 8, the local chapter was entertained by Georgetown's Zeta Alpha at the home of Jeri Stoddart. The evening started off with everyone having famous names stuck on their backs and each person was to guess the name after asking three questions. They then played Court Whist with the high prize won by Maureen Burrows and the low prize by Susan Johnson. Wine was served and relish trays were passed around throughout the evening and then a lunch of sandwiches, dessert and coffee was served later.

February 15 was the evening they entertained Xi Delta Beta. It was held at Donna Moore's house and entertaining was done on the Valentine theme. Each of their girls received a name tag and corsage made by Acton women as they arrived. A punch was served first, followed by a buffet dinner of chicken a la king, salad, rolls, dessert and coffee. A game of "Name That Tune" was played after dinner with prizes going to the winning team, the "Sharps".

In hospital

Roberta Nessel is a patient at Guelph General hospital.

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Fri. May 13	May 28	June 4	June 11	June 18	\$319	Mar 14
Fri. May 20	June 4	June 11	June 18	June 25	\$339	Mar 21
Fri. May 27	June 11	June 18	June 25	July 2	\$369	Mar 28
Fri. June 3	June 18	June 25	July 2	July 9	\$369	Apr 4
Fri. June 10	June 25	July 2	July 9	July 16	\$369	Apr 11
Fri. June 17	July 2	July 9	July 16	July 23	\$399	Apr 18
Fri. June 24	July 9	July 16	July 23	July 30	\$399	Apr 25
Fri. July 1	July 16	July 23	July 30	Aug 6	\$399	May 2
Fri. July 8	July 23	July 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	\$399	May 9
Fri. July 15	July 30	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	\$399	May 16
Fri. July 22	Aug 6	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	\$399	May 23
Fri. July 29	Aug 13	Aug 20	Aug 27	Sep 3	\$399	May 30
Fri. Aug 5	Aug 20	Aug 27	Sep 3	Sep 10	\$399	June 6
Fri. Aug 12	Aug 27	Sep 3	Sep 10	Sep 17	\$399	June 13
Fri. Aug 19	Sep 3	Sep 10	Sep 17	Sep 24	\$369	June 20
Fri. Aug 26	Sep 10	Sep 17	Sep 24	Oct 1	\$339	June 27
Fri. Sep 2	Sep 17	Sep 24	Oct 1	Oct 8	\$339	July 4
Fri. Sep 9	Sep 24	Oct 1	Oct 8	Oct 15	\$339	July 11
Fri. Sep 16	Oct 1	Oct 8	Oct 15	Oct 22	\$339	July 18
Fri. Sep 23	Oct 8	Oct 15	Oct 22	Oct 29	\$339	July 25
Fri. Sep 30	Oct 15	Oct 22	Oct 29		\$339	Aug 1

Charters Toronto to Belfast

Departure Date	15 days	Choice of Return Date	22 days	29 days	Price	Must Book Before
Wed. May 11	May 26	June 2	June 9	June 16	\$319	Mar. 12
Wed. May 18	June 2	June 9	June 16	June 23	\$319	Mar. 19
Wed. May 25	June 9	June 16	June 23	July 7	\$339	Mar. 26
Wed. June 1	June 16	June 23	July 7	July 14	\$369	Apr. 2
Wed. June 8	June 23	July 7	July 14	July 21	\$369	Apr. 9
Wed. June 15	July 7	July 14	July 21	July 28	\$369	Apr. 16
Wed. June 22	July 14	July 21	July 28	Aug 4	\$399	Apr. 23
Wed. June 29	July 21	July 28	Aug 4	Aug 11	\$399	Apr. 30
Wed. July 6	July 28	Aug 4	Aug 11	Aug 18	\$399	May 7
Wed. July 13	Aug 4	Aug 11	Aug 18	Aug 25	\$399	May 14
Wed. July 20	Aug 11	Aug 18	Aug 25	Sep 1	\$399	May 21
Wed. July 27	Aug 18	Aug 25	Sep 1	Sep 8	\$399	May 28
Wed. Aug 3	Aug 25	Sep 1	Sep 8	Sep 15	\$399	June 4
Wed. Aug 10	Sep 1	Sep 8	Sep 15	Sep 22	\$369	June 11
Wed. Aug 17	Sep 8	Sep 15	Sep 22	Sep 29	\$369	June 18
Wed. Aug 24	Sep 15	Sep 22	Sep 29	Oct 6	\$339	June 25
Wed. Aug 31	Sep 22	Sep 29	Oct 6	Oct 13	\$339	July 2
Wed. Sep 7	Sep 29	Oct 6	Oct 13	Oct 20	\$339	July 9
Wed. Sep 14	Oct 6	Oct 13	Oct 20		\$339	July 16
Wed. Sep 21	Oct 13	Oct 20			\$339	July 23

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