

Lucky the squirrel loved the taste of grog

I had a squirrel a few years back that had a problem.

He drank. Molsons, Moosehead, Labatts LaBeer draft on tap, it didn't matter one iota to Lucky.

That squirrel could drink with the best of them, and often did.

Getting the tops off bottles ceased to be a problem once he discovered the beer parlor at the old McGibbon Hotel.

He became a regular. Many an afternoon he whiled away sipping draft beer and eating pretzels.

It didn't cost him one red cent. His drinking buddies kept him in funds.

Lucky became a bit of a celebrity around the four corners of the Main Street. When he was sober he was fun, friendly and easy to handle. Too much of the hops and yeast and he became hopping mad.

Let me explain how he became part of our household.

At one time we lived in the apartment over the old liquor store on Mill St. which is now the C and S Printing Shop. It overlooked the four corners on Main Street.

From our living room window we could watch special events, and had a squirrels eye view of Santa stopping at the intersection to give out candy and oranges to the kids.

By this time Lucky had grown a lot and was used to being picked up and caressed. The squirrel got more pats than I did. It was not unusual for us to find Lucky on our head, shoulder or forearm while we watched the events below.

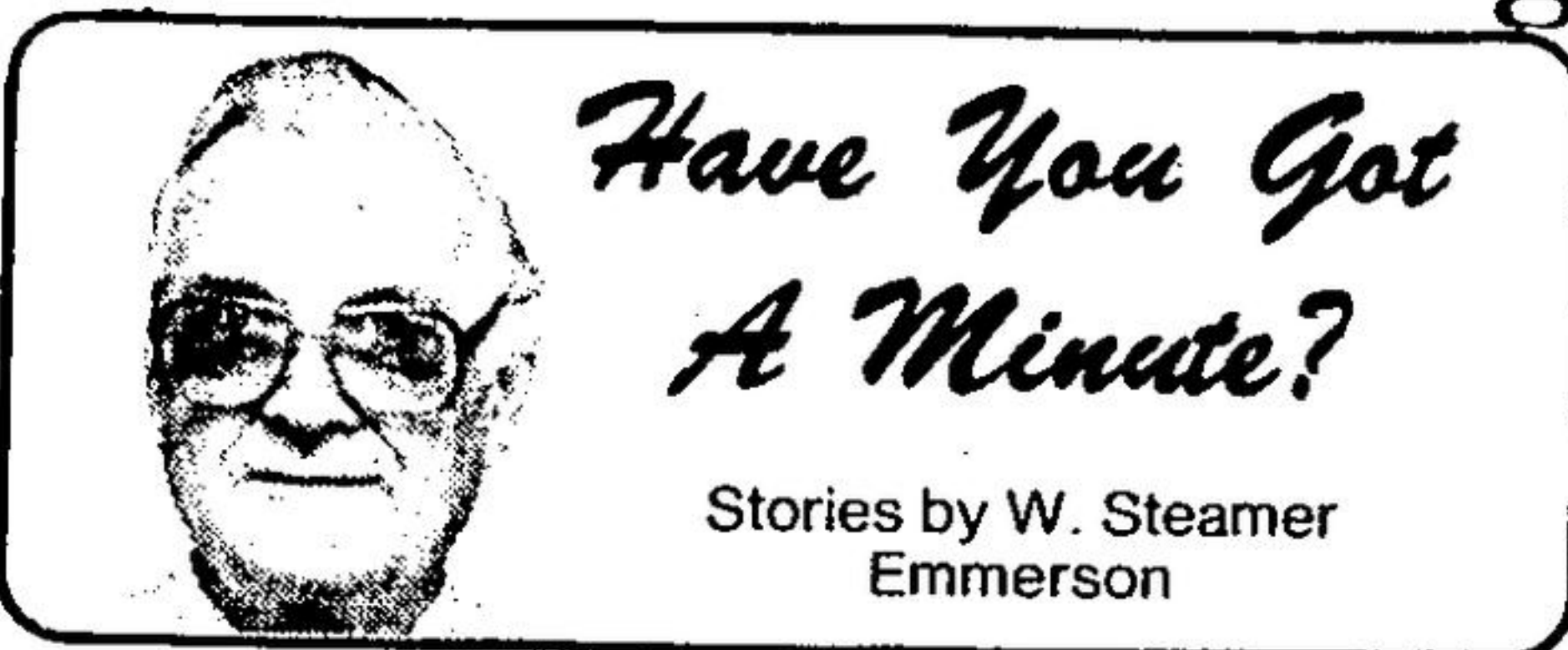
People would look up with dismay to see me in the window with Lucky on top of my head.

One old gal was heard to say to her husband, "look at the squirrel, look at the squirrel." He replied, "look at the size of the nut it's got."

Lucky was the family pet until he started to tipple.

Invited friends, with us, to view these special events were offered a sociable drink. Those that asked for beer soon found Lucky quaffing their brew.

Some guests were won over by this impudent little thief while others went in to complete shock and thought they were experiencing the D.T.'s.



Lucky got to know the drinkers and established an instant rapport with the ones that liked to knock back a few cold ones.

Little did we realize he was about to become a squirrelaholic.

The bigger he got the more he consumed.

My niece found Lucky on the ground beneath a huge elm tree in the park. By the look of him he was just a baby and needed help to survive.

She brought him home to me and with her at my side I headed for Stu Young's drug store for help.

Just as we arrived so did Dr. Joe Chamberlain and between the two of them they devised a formula, delivered up an eye dropper and even a small baby's bottle with nipples to feed him and give him strength.

I thought both of them were wonderful to give such care and attention and not send a bill.

Under their professional care

Lucky grew by leaps and bounds.

Before long he was sitting on his hind legs twirling Ritz biscuits between his paws and devouring it like a flash. Strawberries were consumed like a speeding bullet. Small ice cream cones made from larger ones were licked lickity-split.

His thirst was worse than his appetite.

Everyone around the neighbourhood knew he was ours and those that weren't afraid would offer up little goodies to entice him onto their head or shoulders.

It's when the regulars at McGibbon started taking him into the beer parlor on their arm or shoulder that the problems started.

Lucky was an entertaining and charming drinking companion.

He couldn't say when. Jean McGibbon, a lovely lady

and a good sport, asked me if I could keep Lucky at home. She felt there might be a problem with the Liquor Control Board or the Humane Society if they had a spouter in the beer parlor when Lucky was lapping up someones beer out of their mug.

When Lucky had a snootful he could be difficult. Several times I went in at Jean's request to take him home.

It was leaps and bound time. He would leap just as I was about to pick him up and bound across the floor to another table.

It was embarrassing to be called by Jean to come and get him.

I usually waited till I knew he was so loaded he couldn't leap or bound.

Professional help was needed for Lucky.

Chas. Sayers was the local veterinarian in those days and listened with interest and compassion as I explained the symptoms and carrying on by Lucky at the hotel.

Naturally the day I took Lucky to the vets he was sober, playful and showed no signs of his addiction.

Charlie checked him out quite thoroughly and I could tell he was going to say the squirrel seems fine in every way.

Sure enough he said "Lucky's fine, but I'm a little bit worried about you Steamer, do you drink a little on the side."

CMHA to hold open house

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Halton Region Branch will hold an open house at its new office in Burlington Thursday, September 20 from 2 to 7 p.m.

The Burlington chapter of the CMHA is located at Suite 200, 460 Brant St., Burlington. Telephone is 681-6776.

The Burlington chapter includes both office and program space and opened on July 30. Information about programs in Burlington and all other services of CMHA will be available that day from staff and volunteers of the branch.

Everyone is welcome to attend. Please call either 845-5044 or 681-6776 for more information.


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Walt Elliot



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