

A father's legacy lasts for generations

By JANET DUVAL
Herald Special

There are many legacies that parents can pass on to their children. One of the best is an appreciation for things that they love themselves.

In my father's case, that legacy will be the annual three-generation family canoe trip.

We've just returned from our fifth summer ritual, all 11 of us, ranging from the three-year-old Toasted Marshmallow Master, up to the expedition organizer, my father, who will be 70 this year.

So far, we've chosen the Kawarthas for our trips. The teenagers are agitating for tougher stuff, maybe white water next year. The teenagers' parents are thinking more in terms of thicker sleeping mattresses, and shorter portages. Grandfather says he'll go anywhere.

He won't admit it, but it's not

Seniors for the Future

always an easy prospect for him. The arthritis in one arm is so bad that he regularly recruits a grandson to help the hand into the shirt sleeve.

But the payoffs are immeasurable. We've listened to birdcalls at dawn, paddled up to insect-eating pitcher plants, fished on uninhabited lakes, and splashed in sparkling waterfalls that cascade down rocky terraces.

We've survived the affectionately labelled Swamp of Despair, negotiated the Rocks of Wrath, and bolstered each other along on arduous portages between lakes.

There are enough strong arms to carry the canoes and packs on these overland hikes, but the gadget that really makes these trips possible for a senior is

"Peter Porter."

Dad made it: two bicycle tires on an axle that fits snugly under the back of the canoe. Someone at the front can just pull the boat along, up and down the trails and into the next lake. You can leave some of the lighter packs and equipment nestled inside the canoe.

For me, the magic moments of the trip often come at the end of the day. You enjoy a leisurely coffee after dinner as the sun sets and the loons call across the lake. Some of the children sing camp songs as they wash the dishes together.

The uncles strap food packs up a tree for the night, to prevent animal invasions. Others are out fishing. You can hear their hoots every time they haul something in. One fish was caught with the

leech that cousin Scott found on his toe.

Later, under a black sky studded with stars, we gather around a fire for skits and songs and reminiscences. Everybody takes a turn, from the little one who does pantomimes, to his grandfather, who recalls for us canoe trips of his youth.

Some day, I suppose, he won't be coming with us. But as long as there's another lake ahead, another mossy clearing to sleep on, and a campfire waiting, some of us will be on the canoe routes again.

And there will always be happy memories of the man who made us love it so much.

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By the looks of the bulging bags of food held by Loblaws store manager Ron McEachern and Love in Christ Food Bank volunteers, Dorothy Connell (middle) and Shelagh Law (right), many grocery shoppers were doing just that—buying food and dropping it off in the Food Bank box. The drop-off box was set up in conjunction with Loblaws' customer

appreciation day—Thursday and with every food item put in the box, customers earned a draw ticket for five \$50 merchandise certificates. Though the drop-off was just a four-day thing, Love in Christ volunteers wish to remind people food boxes are in Miracle Mart and the A.P. on a regular basis. (Herald Photo)

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