

MARY ELIZABETH MAXWELL'S

Life on the other side of those

Stained Glass Windows

Come to the stable...

This is a Christmas story without any tinsel or holly, and the only wrapping in sight was a blanket. It was told to me about a year and a half ago by a long time friend, Dr. Bill Bovaird. Bill died this past October, having spent his life as a veterinarian. He had become a legend in his own time.

It was Christmas Day in 1953. Bill was looking forward to having a real family day and preparations for the noon meal were well underway.

All seemed well in his animal world - the milk fever patients were recovering, the cripples were on the mend and dinner would be on the table by 12:30.

At 11 a.m., the phone rang and a voice said, "Sorry to bother you, especially today, Bill, but my little heifer is in trouble. She's in the creek."

The caller, an elderly farmer, lived alone about eight miles distant in the Caledon hills. It was no problem when the roads were clear, but more snow was beginning to fall when Bill left home. The barn on that farm was a poor one, and had no inside watering troughs. The old fellow had to let his few cattle out every morning for a drink, to a watering hole about 200 yards from the stable. He had dug a wide barrel into the creek bed, weighted it down with rocks and the tiny stream kept it full and overflowing. The old fellow had to break the ice frequently.

In some strange manner the yearling had been trapped in the barrel, pushed or slipped backwards down the creek bank and she was a prisoner in that perishing cold water. There was no block and tackle handy but Bill always carried a good length of rope. The farmer hitched up a horse, the men got a rope around the heifer somehow but they had to be so very careful in pulling her out. The heifer was exhausted from her struggles and the cold.

To get her to the barn they needed a stoneboat which had to be brought from under the snow. All this took valuable time, but once they got the heifer out and on the stoneboat with a blanket on her, Bill knew they still had a real problem. The stable was cold and no amount of blankets could warm that heifer sufficiently. She would get pneumonia for sure if she had to lay, still cold.

Necessity found a way. There was a pile of the best at the stable door with a thin plume of steam showing at the top, and that pile would be warm. By now the wind was getting up; the heifer wasn't moving under her blanket and time was of the essence. Bill said, "Let's grab two forks and dig a cave in the side of that manure pile."

They drove the stoneboat as close as possible to the side of the cave and rolled the heifer into it. They made sure she right side up, and they covered her completely up to her head with that warm soothing steaming straw and stuff, that they hoped would draw the cold out of her.

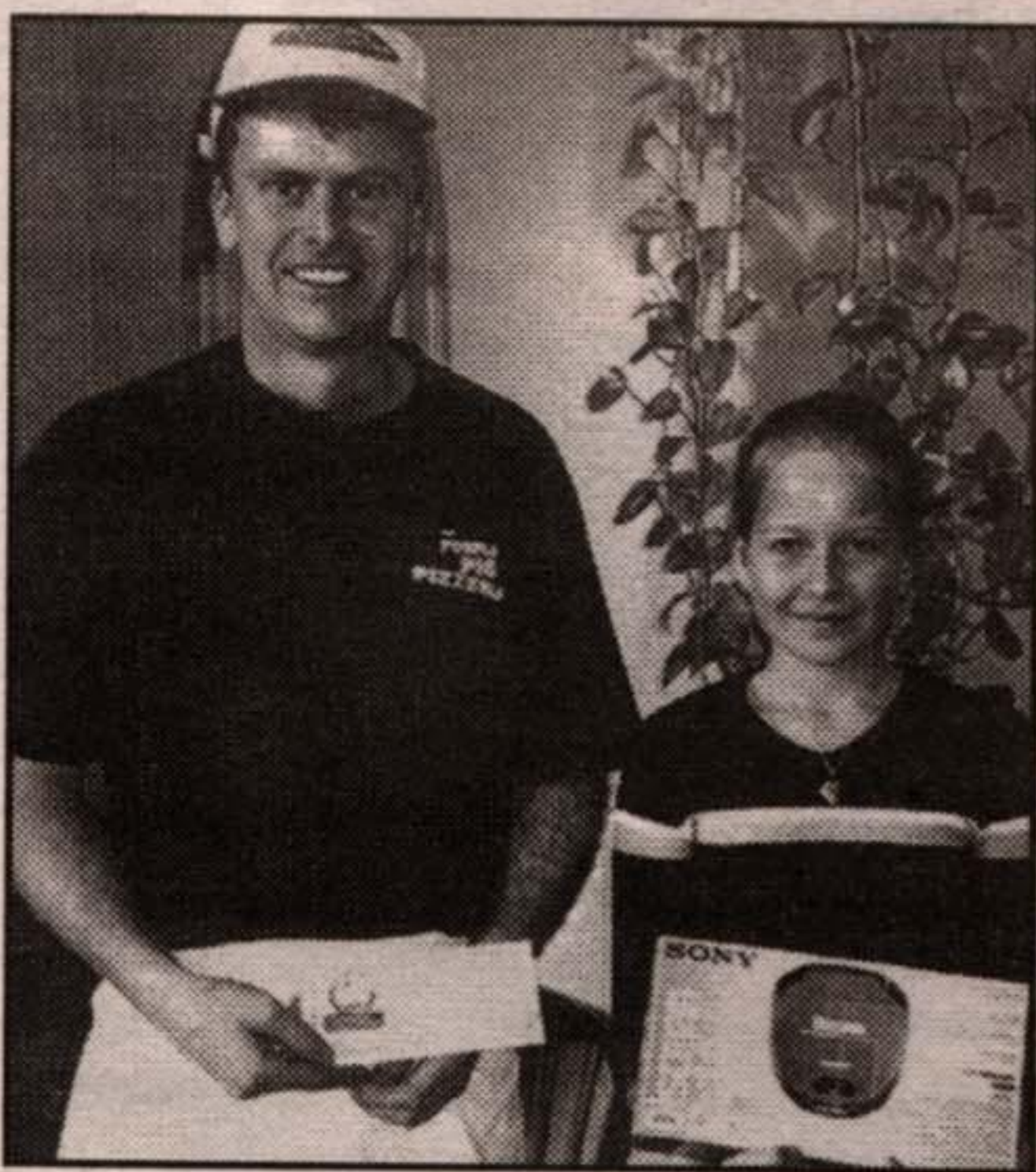
Now it was a waiting game. Would she make it or would they lose her? She lay without moving a muscle.

The men made tea for themselves in the house, but checked her every few minutes. Finally about 4 p.m. she wanted to get out, and they cleaned her off quickly, put a fresh blanket on her and with help she wobbled into the barn to a freshly made bed of straw in a box stall.

As the two men stood and looked at her in the early dusk of that Christmas evening, the little heifer raised her head toward them, and the old farmer said, "There was a miracle in another stable a long time ago. And now this one."

The memory of that Christmas stayed with Bill the rest of his life.

Just call him Pepé



Ten-year-old Katelin Parkinson, a grade 6 student at Eramosa Public School, won the "Name the Pig" contest at The Purple Pig Pizzeria in Rockwood. For her efforts, Katelin received a Sony Discman, a T-shirt and a certificate for a Family Meal Deal from Purple Pig owner Todd Smith.

"I thought of pepperoni and came up with Pepé, because I like pepperoni pizza," she stated happily.

PHOTO BY DEBORAH QUAILE

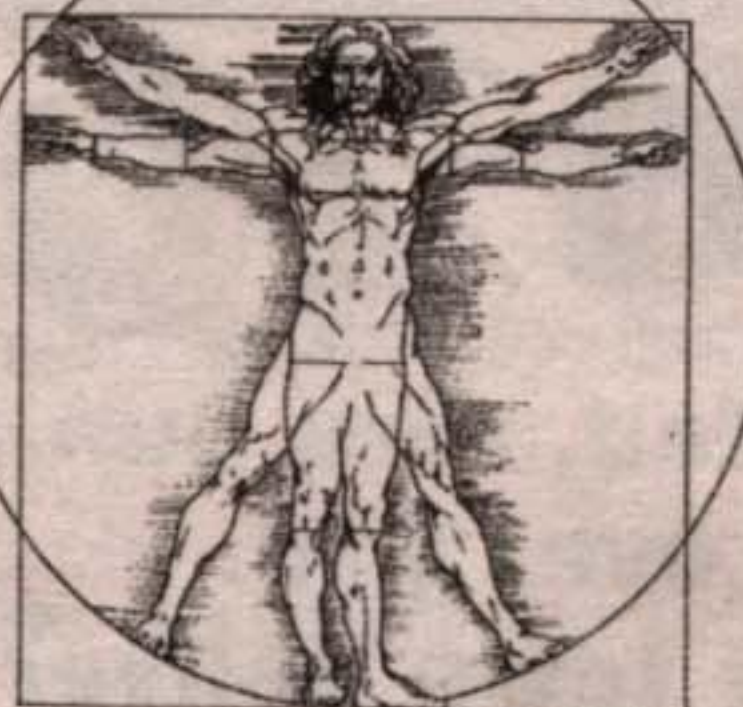
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