

*It is fitting that the Mothers' Day issue of the "Mirror" include a tribute to a mother as well as a tribute to the kindness of neighbours.*

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## IN MEMORY.....

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It all started in 1980; we were taken around the county to look at properties. It was winter and everything was covered with snow, in fact at one property located at the bottom of a very steep hillside track a farmer kindly got his tractor and helped the agent drive back up a hill to the road.

That day we ended up in South Bay and the rest of the world ceased to exist. Charles fell in love with the place and we made what we felt was a very reasonable offer. It was not accepted for the owner, like most farmers had a mind of his own and it was firmly made up. We then left for our winter vacation in a very disappointed mental state; but whilst the waves rolled in and the sand trickled between our toes we decided that the only way to get this piece of land was to pay up. After all, life is too short to treat every transaction on a sensible business basis.

Charles made me promise to spend not one penny on the old farm house. Nothing was worth redoing, so we washed the ceiling, walls and floors and wallpapered the walls to keep them standing and then came to spend every other weekend from June on. We enjoyed the orchard and trips in the moonlight to the "Golden Two-Holer".

My mother Helene Blondin who lived with us in Montreal took to the countryside and spent most of her summers here doing her handicraft that she loved. It kept her busy from morning till night.

Six years passed in blissful enjoyment and then something happened: I don't know whether we finally decided to retire or just got older and fed up with all the driving. At anyrate we decided to build a permanent home, so we did. In the meanwhile Charles retired and I followed shortly after. The only one who never retired was my mother, she just kept going from morning till night.

In May 1989 we arrived lock, stock and barrel and became permanent residents of South Bay. From then on we enjoyed the best of summer living here and wintered in Port Charlotte, Florida. The best of both worlds.

Six years later we lost my dear Mother. However she did manage to spend one last winter in Florida with us, that was her wish.

So far I have not spoken much about the people. They are the real reason that we are here. From day one they were helpful, generous and kind. When we came to "camp" in the old farmhouse at Christmas the stoves would be on, the door open (Otherwise too hot), a Christmas tree made up with red rag ribbons, and pin-ups warming the walls. In the winter snow mysteriously never blocked our door and in the summer a path was always trim through the orchard so that we could get to the lake for our daily bath. Farmer neighbours tended the orchard and it went on and on. Too many people to name and so many kindnesses to remember.

They are friendly and like to "visit" anywhere: it takes all day to do the weekly grocery shopping, not because you buy so much but because you stop all the time to "visit" with your neighbours and friends in the stores and streets. They wave, they offer help, they share their excess produce with you .....and when you grieve they show you by all sorts of means that they care.

My dear friends and neighbours; your caring for my Mother during her illness, your cards of sympathy, your donations to the Cancer Society, the luncheon for our family and friends and your gift of trees have overwhelmed both Charles and myself. We, and the whole family can only say - thank you all.

They say that you are still a newcomer to the County after 20 years. For us it will be 15 years in June and if this is being new then we want to stay new all the time.

*Danise and Charles Henry*