

## A Small Community

By George Underhill

Last month, I was in the hospital for a couple of weeks, both Picton and Kingston. I was asked if I was going to write a column about my stay. No, I am not. Who wants to hear about my "bed of woes?" No one. Who wants to hear about hospital food, bureaucracy, how the food tastes, or how boring a hospital stay is? No one. There's a lot of sick people in the hospital. Do you want to hear about them? I thought not. So I will talk about something else.

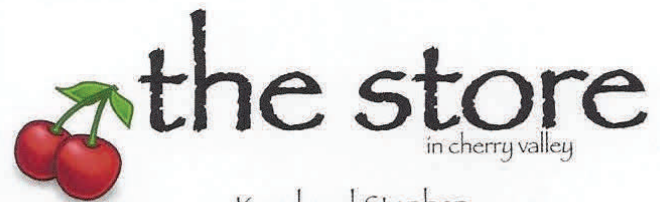
I've been thinking about the benefits and joys of residing in a small community. I was taken by ambulance to Picton hospital at 8:00 on a Sunday morning. Our church service was held at 10:30, and by that time an announcement was made and prayers said for me. How did they know? I'm pretty sure it wasn't an angel of God, but however it happened, I was grateful and comforted by their concern. Since then, many in our small community have called with good wishes and support. It's a good place to live. If you have plans to conduct an extra-marital affair in our community, however, it would be absurd to think for one minute you could keep it a secret.

There are, of course, disadvantages. If you have a craving for delivery of a pizza or Chinese food and plan to indulge it, better plan on moving to town. In my Toronto daughter's urban neighborhood, you can get a great variety of hot and tasty meals, fully prepared, at your local supermarket. You can, if you wish, walk to most retail establishments. I was doing a little household job, was short of a needed item, put down my tools and walked to the hardware store. But these advantages are greatly offset by the peace of our neighborhood. At night, there is absolutely no noise except for the singing of American toads or spring peepers. No sound at all. The silence is deafening. In the city there is always background white noise of aircraft, traffic, sirens and gunfire. I'll take Milford.

We live in the last house on a dead end gravel road. This adds to the serenity, but in the winter....oh, the winter. We're isolated to a large degree and don't go out as often. Not that we have anywhere to go, but it's nice to depart the frozen wastes of Smith's Bay for the hubbub of Picton and maybe, if we're adventuresome, Belleville. It's a bleak commentary when the high point of the day is the arrival of the snow plow. It would be nice to live in the Edward Building where we could watch


people crash into one another at the three-way stop at the crest of the hill.

You know people here and meet them grocery shopping. It's a rare occasion when you don't meet someone you know and exchange a little gossip at the grocery store. In the urban stores, you're mostly concerned with getting in the checkout line in front of the doofus with a cart load of groceries and coupons. But our stores don't have the vast selection of city stores. It seems that most things in life are trade-offs. I wish that wasn't the case. I want the best of everything.



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