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Bouts with nostalgia symptomatic with writer

By BRUCE STAPLEY

While recognizing an overdose of nostalgia can impede a person's ability to progress in a healthy manner, I'm quite convinced we all need to dig up our 'old stuff' every now and again.

This became evident the other day as I spoke with Terry Gray, a high ranking official with the York Region Board of Education. He keeps a print of the Old Huntsville Town Hall on his office wall. It's a constant link with his roots, and he readily admits he could tell you a story for every brick the old building contains.

He was born and raised in that town, and while he's gone on to become a key player in the fastest growing school system in North America, he claims he'll always feel the need to 'go back' occasionally, so to never forget just what it was that helped mould him into the solid citizen he is today.

A walk through the old graveyard, so often a morbid invitation to tears and regrets, is for this man a delightful reconstruction of a past rich in characters. Terry will read the tombstones and remember what each name contributed to his boyhood. Teachers, local merchants, aunts and uncles, all have their own distinct identities.

As so often happens when I allot an hour for an interview, much of my time with Terry was spent discussing matters of philosophy, instead of his assessment of education in the region.

From Where I Live

Bruce Stapley



We compared childhoods, and spoke of the importance tradition and history play in a well balanced life. We both expressed concerns about just what so many of today's children will have to look back upon, when they reflect on a childhood spent moving from place to place in a world of laser fast change.

And we concluded, yes, it's a tough time to be raising a family. There are so many frightening things looming out there. The wrong kind of mistake today can cost a child his or her life, whether Mom and Dad forgive them or not.

Churches are doing their level best to maintain traditions and rituals, so important in providing stability in a young person. Yet we still get hung up on denomination and doctrine, missing the point as to the timeless contribution the church has made to strong personal growth, and learning to accept people as they are.

I have built over 500 pieces of pine furniture in my life, both as a hobby and for a living. Most were either sold, or given to relatives. But the first piece I ever built, in the living room and kitchen of a basement apart-

ment in Agincourt, remains with me now, and always will.

Sure it's basic, a little plain. But every time I look at it, I see it as being symbolic of a talent I never dreamed I could develop. It became the forerunner of a means of making a living that would carry me for many years, while defining my lifestyle.

It has seen six different houses, has been in my son's bedroom, my daughter's room, living rooms, kitchens and dining rooms. It will always have a place, and will continue to serve as a link to an ever diminishing past.

Yes, the recent fad towards things nostalgic is of value to most people, provided it's not overdone. No one will argue the Los Angeles Dodgers baseball team, one of the most lucrative clubs in all of sport, should have stayed in Brooklyn. Yet ball fans will always look back somewhat longingly to the days of Duke Snider and Roy Campanella, when the 'Bums' of Brooklyn were legend.

You can never go back, that's true. But it sure doesn't hurt to carry around a few significant articles, some 'stuff' from days gone by.

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