

Pigs, dogs and squirrels made news in '97

We flew into 1998 on the wings of El Nino. This unruly weather phenomenon has brought in the New Year with mild temperatures and hope for a short and semi-snowless winter for we rural routers.

The month of January heralds not

just another beginning of a year, but also an anniversary of sorts.

Just two short years ago my first Rural Route Ruth column appeared in *The Tribune* newspaper.

It has been two fun-filled years meeting fellow rural folks who had stories

to share. Criss crossing our countryside, I've dug up stories on our past and taken a peek into our probable rural future.

The year 1997 had a lost dog named Jake spending a few days on our back deck waiting to go home. After a happy reunion with his owners, Jake later returned and left a plant in our driveway to thank us for all those dog treats.

After writing about the mysterious disappearance of socks and their possible whereabouts, I was set straight by plumber Tom Winters.

Missing socks just might be hanging around the inside of your washer and Tom adds they are a safety hazard.

So don't despair, maybe you didn't lose that pair!

One of my favourites is writing about the history of our hamlets and villages and special country spots.

Local resident of Island Lake, Peter Burdon, was quick to correct me when I wrote that the tiny island in the middle of the lake had been reclaimed by



Rural Route Ruth

Ruth LeBlanc

nature. Driving by, with great difficulty because of all the egg on my face, I did indeed see an island.

I stand corrected... long live the island in Island Lake!

Early last spring I wrote emphatically saying that weeds would no longer rule our yard. By mid-July, with weeds taller than the CN Tower, the Big Guy and I admitted defeat.

Weeds and squirrels took over the harder we tried to reclaim our yard. This year with my romantic anniversary gift — a fertilizer spreader — I plan to become my weeds' worst enemy, or so I hope.

One non-human, a pot-bellied pig named Pricilla, made for a great story.

This little porker gained great notoriety when later Pricilla led

an election race by choosing the cookie of her choice which represented a political party.

A concerned cat lover called me after reading my report of the Curious Christmas Cat.

I had noted the feline love of yummy tinsel and I want to assure everyone I am not advocating tinsel chow!

Thank you to all the folks who stopped me on the street to say hello and share a word or two.

One special moment came when an elderly reader came to the office explaining that her health problems would keep her home the night of the Festival of Lights.

Before you could say "Name That Tune," music was playing and your Rural Route Ruth along with sidekick Melissa were singing and dancing for her like a couple of Christmas fools.

That's my recap and now on to newer and better things in the upcoming new year.

Don't forget I love getting your ideas for stories, so drop by and say hello!

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