

Appointment with Pohlman Home Alone



By Ralph Pohlman

My long-time mate has had a hip problem for some months, which had become so severe that it was taking her forever to get me my coffee, to take out the garbage or to go get the mail. Clearly something had to be done. I called the orthopaedic surgeon down at Markham-Stouffville Hospital who understandably recognized the urgency of the situation.

It also had occurred to me that life is a great circle and, as the saying goes, "what goes around, comes around". By that I mean that a number of years ago, just after the last ice age, when we weren't yet married, I found it impossible to get her into bed. Now I couldn't get her out of bed. You see what I mean.

So, in mid-September she went into hospital where they carved out her worn-out old hip and cobbled in a new one. I wonder whether she will have trouble getting through the metal security detector at the airport.

Anyway, for almost two weeks, I was on my own which, aside from making semi-quotidian (that is a word I don't get to use very often. I think it means "daily") trips to the hospital, meant I had to look after the place and myself.

This entailed a number of new and interesting experiences such as the semi-quotidian (there's that word again) feeding of the animals, a dog and two cats, scooping out the kitty litter, learning how to work the dishwasher (I had to do that when the sink was full, although I did think about going out and buying new dishes), the washing machine and dryer. She had given me the appropriate technological instructions from her hospital bed.

We have a wicker clothes hamper in our bedroom and over the years I have tended to toss my underwear and socks (in the days when I wore socks) in the general direction of said hamper. Magically, I thought, they turned up a couple of days later, all folded, in my dresser drawer. But lately, since herself has been in hospital, I notice that although I toss my underwear toward the hamper in the same way, the next day it is still sitting there and not in my drawer. Maybe there is something wrong with the hamper. I will soon run out of underwear and may have to go buy some.

I also had to feed myself, which means wandering around Sobeys putting stuff in a cart with a wobbly wheel. She complains that it is more expensive when I do the grocery shopping, but that is simply because she doesn't buy the essential stuff like chocolate milk or butter tarts.

I got out our big Dutch oven and made about two gallons of chili, then divided it up into freezable serving portions. You should note that I am dangerous to be around after I've eaten chili. When she is home, Lois is always trying to make me eat greens and salads, peas, beans, spinach and other rabbit food, just like my mother did.

At one of my hospital visits we had a sort of conversation. "What are you eating?" she asked. "Chili," I said. "Well, that's for supper. What did you have for lunch?" "Chili."

Actually, when at Sobeys, I noticed in one of those cold bins a hunk of meat enclosed in mesh called a "cottage roll". I realized I could boil it up and eat off it for three or four days.

I have never really lived alone and have discovered

that there are a lot of advantages to it. I can walk around naked in the house, letting it all hang out, so to speak. I don't have to answer the phone if I don't feel like it. Lois cannot let a ringing phone go unanswered. I can get up in the middle of the night and watch TV with the sound turned up and I can sit in the bathroom and read for as long as I want without anyone shouting, "Are you finished in there?" or wanting to come in and brush her hair.

For breakfast I can drink chocolate milk right out of the carton (thus saving on dirtying a glass) and eat my chili out of the plastic thingy while standing in front of the fridge. The other thing is that she always wants a clean cup for her coffee. I am just as content to drink my coffee out of yesterday's cup. After all, it only has dried coffee in the bottom of it.

Oscar, one of our cats, has a regular routine. First thing in the morning he wants out. Then about an hour later he will be at the window, trampling the petunias in the window box and meowing to come in. Being let in, he immediately heads for his dish and gobbles up his breakfast, then heads for the door where he pukes. At least it's on the tile. I have become pretty good at grabbing some paper towels and cleaning up the cat puke, which I hurry to do before the dog eats it.

The place is starting to look like it might have been visited by Hurricane Katrina. Maybe I'll get someone to come in and clean it up before Lois gets home on her crutches so she won't tumble over the piles of newspapers or other recyclable stuff. I hope she gets here soon.

Calling all dedicated followers of fashion

By Kate Gilderdale
Stouffville Free Press

Parkview Home Building Fund and the Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation will be the beneficiaries of the Cruise Into Fall Fashion Show featuring Whitchurch-Stouffville firefighters and Stouffville's top models, sponsored by Headlines Salon & Spa.

The show, presented by the mayor's Foundation, will feature fashions by Chic Thrills, Europe by Design, Oakridge Outfitters and Complete Feet. Door prizes, a silent auction and vendor booths are all

part of the evening's entertainment. Music will be provided by Brian Roman, whose interpretations of popular standards have won him a legion of loyal fans.

Cruise Into Fashion takes place from 6 p.m. Oct. 12 at Christ Church Anglican, 254 Sunset Blvd. in Stouffville. Admission is \$25 each, and includes appetizers and beverages. Wine will also be available.

Tickets are available from Oakridge Outfitters, Chic Thrills, Headlines Salon & Spa, the Lebovic Leisure Centre and Fame International, or by calling the mayor's office at 905-640-1910 ext. 227.

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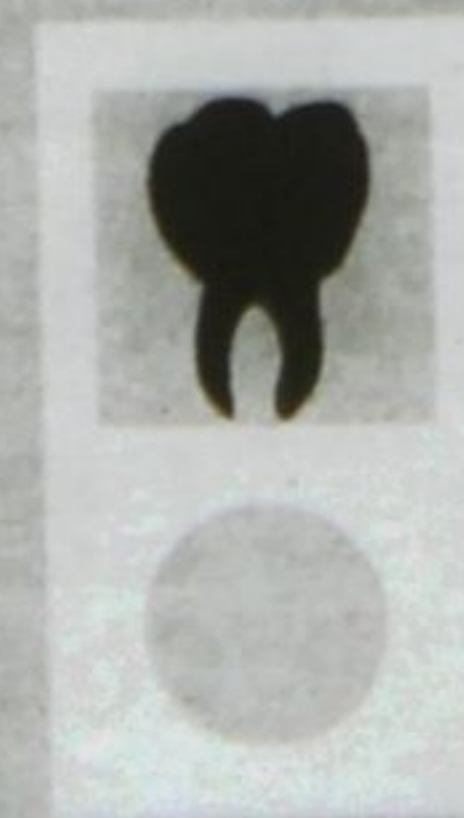
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