



Memories in Time
Lifescapes Writing Group 2021
Brantford Public Library



14th Edition

Memories in Time

Brantford Public Library

Lifescapes Writing Group 2021

This book was written by members of the Lifescapes group, a memoir writing program sponsored by the Brantford Public Library.

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Foreword

Lifescapes is a writing program created to help people write their life stories, to provide support and guidance for beginner and experienced writers alike. This is our fourteenth year running the program at the Brantford Public Library and *Memories in Time* is our fourteenth collection of stories to be published.

On behalf of Brantford Public Library and this year's participants, I thank our contributing editor Paige McWilliams for her hard work, enthusiasm, and thoughtful insights. Together we extend our heartfelt appreciation to guest presenters Joan O'Callaghan, Melodie Campbell, and Mark Leslie Lefevbre for motivating us with workshops and engaging us in meaningful discussion.

To the writers, I cannot compliment you enough for your patience and dedication. I applaud your perseverance, admire your generosity of spirit, and am inspired by your willingness to learn. It was a genuine pleasure to watch your commitment to writing evolve over our months together.

The stories in this anthology are nostalgic reminders of simpler times and of the people who see us through harder times. They are wonderful memories to share and to cherish, and I thank everyone involved for making them part of our collective history.

Sincerely,

Robin Harding, Program Coordinator (Adult and Senior)
Brantford Public Library

Message From the Editor

Paige McWilliams

I would like to start with a huge congratulations to everyone who contributed to this very special memoir. This year was once again a difficult and strange one to navigate, but all of these authors persevered through the challenges presented to create something unique and amazing. This beautiful collection of stories could not have been made without each author's heartfelt honesty, sharp writing skills, courage, and dedication to sharing their stories.

I feel so lucky that I had the privilege to be a part of this project. Though we never met in person, the connections, and experiences I had with the authors as well as other team members who worked on this memoir are ones that will stay with me for life. Thank you for letting me be a part of this wonderful experience.



The Practice

By Brian Bosnell

Genesis

Carlos Castaneda started it.

He did! In my first year of university, I randomly picked an introductory anthropology course. The last class of the week was at noon on Friday. After that class, I quickly made it a habit to visit the campus bookstore. I always had some cash from my part-time janitorial job because Friday was payday. And inside, like some supermarket point-of-sale candy display, was *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge*.

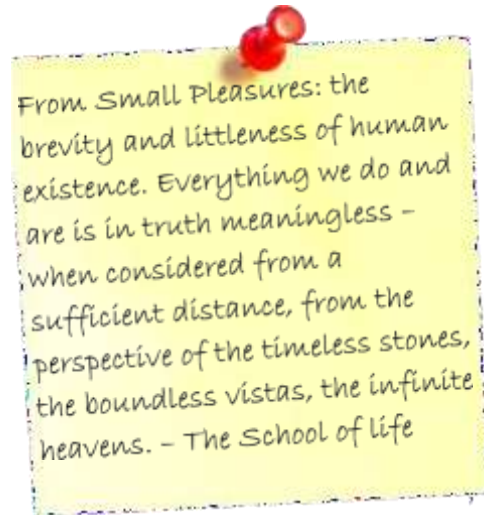
That was it. I was enthralled. I gobbled up Castaneda's metaphysics, sometimes falling asleep in a library cubicle with one of his books as a hard pillow. I missed Anthropology 101 numerous times because I was lost in his lessons instead. It did not stop when I left school, either. His last book came out more than ten years after my graduation, and I collected them all.

Castaneda was the first, though not the last to exploit my naïveté (but more on that later). Discovering his words started my journey as an acolyte and follower of many philosophers and schools of thought.

Meandering

After graduation I hardly read for pleasure. My prolonged pin-balling from job to job in the first dozen years after university determined that.

Once I settled into a part-time teaching position where job-focused reading and study was required, a shift occurred. Many times I would commandeer the photocopier (before the days of electronic copy counters) and copy a quote, or some text by the likes of Eckhart Tolle or M. Scott Peck or Deepak Chopra. I always photo-copied discreetly and disguised it as part of my next day planning.



Soon I had hundreds of snippets relating to mantras, to various forms of meditation practice, to sacred texts, and to various spiritual practices. To this day

I constantly rotate my weekly favorites from my desk shelves to the fridge, to bulletin boards and even to my computer screen (like the one above¹).

Once I visited a family friend who compiled an astrological reading for me. I still have that portfolio collecting dust somewhere.

For a moment I ventured into astrology. In the Chinese Zodiac schematic, I'm defined as a metal tiger. My totem animal is a symbol of strength and power. The Amur tiger photo that hangs just above my laptop (see left) certainly demonstrates that.

There were religious, poetic, even mystical undercurrents flowing through these years as well.

I had been confirmed in the Protestant church as a teenager. My half-time teaching position was with



the Catholic Panel. Never did I become a devotee, but I converted to Catholicism to have a chance at full-time employment, and I remember a course called The Rite of Initiation.

I ran across the works of Jonathan A. Goldstein, a quaint but readable biblical scholar and author who wrote a collection called the Anchor Bible Series. Perhaps certain sections were mandatory reading; I can't remember. What I do recall is that he was a vast improvement over the assimilation of The Catechism of the Catholic Church.


It was a time of transformation, of inspiration. I wrote some loosely defined metaphysical poems, including:

Changes

*90125 oscillations: YES:
Change, changing changes
Liberates.
Battery: event horizon
Swirls in Media Player.
Switch to plenoptic.
Frivolous technology
Takes me up.*

And

Null Set

*Post a glimpse of the truth, just a hint
And there'll be no LIKE 
As E.O. Wilson penned — Obsequious to imagined Gods
Uneasy silence, no comment.*

The Practice

As for mysticism, I enjoyed and would frequently quote from Rumi, Tagore, Gibran, and more recently, Mary Oliver. The intense lyrics of the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke caught my attention too. I even sampled Albert Camus, one of the existential philosophers for his answer to “What’s it all about?”

The Myth of Sisyphus reinforced (to me, at least) that life is absurd.

I am aware that thus far I must appear overly enamoured with and proud of the breadth of my reading list, though discovering author and super-reader Matt Karamazov certainly put me in my place.² But the loss of my father brought everything into sharp focus. His death commenced a narrowing to the present, both emotionally and physically. Many times I sat down with my father as his health declined, and delved into these teachings for ways to help.

Coalescence

For my own benefit, I have long sought relief for stress, never giving up and always keeping an open mind. It hasn’t been easy but I stayed the course, especially with physical remedies.

My deep breathing exercises and stress reduction techniques have helped me weather many a storm in the chaotic classroom. I have an app on my phone called Respire that I use to track and record my breathing exercises. I attend AquaFit

classes and practice my Eight Brocades Qigong forms in the pool.

I believed that my practice was well-developed until I ran headfirst into Yuval Noah Harari. In his first best seller *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* he



Left: After my retirement I took up Tai Chi. Now I am four years into that ancient form of movement meditation.

mentioned a meditation practice called Vipassana. It involves watching the breath without judgment, the simple rise and fall of your chest or the movement of air in and out of the nostrils. If the thought stream intercedes (and it always does), you just note the thought and return to breathing.

Intrigued, I checked it out. I started in November of 2018 at twelve minutes and kept a separate Vipassana log to document my progress. At the time of writing, I am up to thirty minutes, and of course I may add on at any point.

Here are some entries from my log:

Wed 12/26/2018 – Improved a great deal at recognizing and labeling aspects of the continuous stream of thoughts/the image of “lassoing” them back in and then letting them go fits. Day 42

Mon 2/25/2019 – Saw my Sufi (Tai Chi Leader) at Movati Athletic Club. His comment: “You’re happier than you were, say, a month ago.” Interesting comment. I told him about Train Your Brain and my Vipassana practice. Also reading Jon Kabat-Zinn’s Full Catastrophe Living. An excellent book about Mindfulness. Day 103

Wed 1/1/2020 – To 26 minutes next week.

Wed 7/22 – I refuse to miss a day. Now using “quietness without loneliness” quite often now. Extreme amount of patience now for certain tasks. Can watch myself as I perform a task. Slow motion like! Day 696

Amanda Palmer summed up my approach nicely in a quote from Tim Ferriss’ Tools of Titans:

Basic Vipassana meditation, nothing fancy, no crazy mantras, no gods or deities, just basically sitting on the earth as a human being and paying attention to your breath and your body and letting thoughts come and go, but [really] trying not to be attached to the drama that comes visiting.³

From Full Catastrophe Living I adopted the Full Body Scan. It’s a guided half-hour meditation that can be done laying down. Starting with the left side, you slowly breathe to and away from the extremities until most body parts have been

covered. The technique has been used in hospital settings with measurable positive results for chronic pain, post-traumatic stress, anxiety, and depression.

As Jon Kabat-Zinn likes to say: “As long as you are breathing there’s more right with you than wrong with you no matter what the condition of your body.”⁴

Another phrase that he uses often, particularly in his early writings, is: Wherever you go, there you are. It may have originated in the 1400s and seems to have peaked in general usage in the 1950s, but no matter. It lends a bit of humour to the mindfulness movement.

And then there was Thích Nhất Hạnh.

Forced to live in exile for forty years away from his native Vietnam, Thích Nhất Hạnh has written 130 books. As I write I am listening to one of his audio books. He has spent his entire life promoting nonviolence and raising awareness of the interconnectedness of all living things. He also founded the largest monastic community in the West. He has influenced my way of thinking in many positive ways.

As it turned out, this would be in direct contrast to the legacy of Carlos Castaneda.

Castaneda created Don Juan, a character inspired by and borrowed from library research and folklore. Castaneda was celebrated for his work and awarded a doctorate, only to have it retracted later when his research was challenged on academic grounds. After his exposure he lived the life of a hermit (an extremely comfortable hermit) off his earnings from his books. Despite his academic difficulties, Castaneda was a talented writer and sometimes recognized as one of the founders of The New Age Movement.

On one hand, I feel taken advantage of, manipulated by his persuasive words. On the other, I am consoled by the knowledge that I am by no means alone in this.

Budd Hopkins turned out to be another problematic inspiration. His book, *INTRUDERS: The Incredible Visitations at Copley Woods*, reads like a nightmare come to life. It was so convincing that Hopkins bamboozled a leading psychiatrist into promoting it. This was during the heyday of alien abduction scares and once

again proof that even the most intelligent among us succumb all too easily. Later, after having taken in significant revenue, Mr. Hopkins confessed to passing his book off as non-fiction.

It has been quite the journey, and I have felt the benefits keenly. And as I sat with my father and watched the weight drop off his frame as if right before my eyes, I retreated into these teachings.

Cocooned in my naïveté as I stumbled into middle age, my thoughts on pain relief must have sounded like silly gimmicks being bounced off the harsh reality of his pain. For stress relief I offered up the idea of box breathing (inhale for four, hold for four, exhale for four, hold for four, and then repeat). I mentioned the four-syllable mantra of *aware breath in, aware breath out*. I even talked about candle-gazing as a form of meditation. I just did not realize that I was forcing my point of view. I rambled on when what I needed to do for him was listen and stay quiet.

It was one more valuable life lesson gained during my search for stress relief.

Subtleties

So, after hundreds of early morning sessions combined with breath work, what are some of the benefits?

First: I am capable of a heightened awareness of my surroundings.

I remember one instance, during a washroom break from a meeting, when I walked through a restroom door and spotted a tiny gossamer thread arcing its way between the back of the stall and the ceiling. It was virtually invisible until the ceiling light above the stall reflected off the thread in just the right way.

At another moment in time, I watched a single linden leaf twirl gently to the ground. Not a leaf falling to the ground, but a leaf attached to an invisible thread slowly rotating its way to the earth. If I hadn't been perched on my chair on the front porch and looking up at that precise moment, I would have missed it.

I'm sure that Annie Dillard mentioned this phenomenon in *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*. Certain spiders use what is called ballooning or kiting to release small threads of

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silk. Perched in a tree or bush above, a spider can descend on a thread or let threads dangle in the air. That's why I did not yell in amazement, although it *was* amazing.

A second benefit: people seek me out.

Or maybe they just seem to. Even in these restricted pandemic times, there's a certain grocery store – one that I'll call the common peoples' store – where I can be assured of opportunities for interesting conversation. Even with an obscuring mask on! It's a given ... or is it that I seek out and therefore find chances to mingle?

Third: I'm incredibly more patient.

Angry impatience used to define me. Now, when a task goes south, I will acknowledge that and seek a workaround.

And fourth: I'm able to mediate my temper.

Not entirely, mind you, but I am better able to step back, breathe and calm myself. I remain more aware of the possible consequences of words spoken or actions taken in the heat of a moment.

The changes are subtle from moment to moment, but the overall difference is incredible.

Where Am I?

At the time of writing, I am 924 consecutive sessions into my practice according to my One-Line-A-Day five-year memory book. I do not know why I have dutifully numbered them, I just know that I must not miss one. Perhaps it is because I want to “fall awake” every day as Jon Kabat-Zinn says.

I do know what my practice is not. It isn't a kind of power trip where I hold, “Look what I do, and you don't!” over someone's head. It's not proselytizing, either. If I mention my practice, most people smile and put it down to yet another of Brian Bosnell's eccentricities. So, I carry on recognizing other people's pain and my own mortality at one and the same time.

Meet the Author

Brian Bosnell is a retired elementary school teacher. Now, early in every day, he's learning to write and at any other time, he's a pathological reader.



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Trusting God Through Stormy Times

By Herbert Sormin

Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. Then His disciples awoke Him saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.

The Bible, New King James Version, Matthew 8:23-26

Memorable Pictures of Grace

In 1948, Papa was invited to be Financial Manager of Malayan Seminary (later called Southeast Asia Union College). We moved from Kuching, Sarawak to Singapore, where we lived in one of the staff homes with the ladies' dormitory above us. You could walk out the back gate and smell the delicious food served in the cafeteria, pass on to the badminton and basketball courts beside the Chapel, and to the guys' dormitories. I grew up there, from primary school through junior college, meeting people of different skin tones, cultures, languages, religious faiths, clothes styles, and food tastes.

My primary and secondary school years were challenging. While enjoying sports, youth, and church activities, I had a bad temper and got into a lot of trouble. But God had a way. He touched me through amazing people and pictures.

When I was in college in the late 1950s, Professor Philip G. Miller was President of SAUC. He was from Lacombe, Alberta and taught at Canadian Union College (now Burman University). Much later in life he would invite me and my brother Ed to my first Hockey Night in Canada game at the old Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto, and to his home in Airdrie, Alberta, but at that time his kind and godly ways led me to the teaching ministry.

As a pastor in Canada, I have found comfort in being surrounded by amazing pictures of Jesus.

There is a picture of Jesus dressed in a white robe with His hands steering the wheel of a boat through a storm. A woman holds Jesus' right arm with both arms, a girl holds on to Jesus' left arm, a man holds on to Jesus' feet, and another man reaches out to Jesus from the rear of the boat. Titled *Through the Storm* and created by an artist named Harry Anderson, it's the same picture that adorns the wall beside the newspaper stand of the School Library, and in the Children's Classroom, hanging on the walls of Six Nations Adventist Church.

I also have a replica that Tom Brownlee, Elder of the Six Nations Church, Ohsweken, brought to our home in Brantford at my request. Brownlee, a true Canadian from Toronto, was a business executive in the oil industry in Ontario and Indonesia. He retired in Port Dover and, after a few visits to the Six Nations Church, requested to have his membership transferred. He and his wife Sislyn are graceful Christians sent by God to help a struggling pastor ministering to both the Simcoe and Six Nations churches. Sislyn worked with my wife Su in cooking sessions (such as "Tasty Thursdays" at the community hall). Tom joined in preaching Bible seminars, visiting the sick, leading repairs, and restoring the 110-year-old church building. When I was down with medical issues and unable to drive, it was Tom who took me to Hamilton General Hospital and repaired our garden gate just before winter.

Another picture drawn by the same artist is of Jesus sitting with children touching his nail-scarred hands, their eyes of hope fixed on Jesus.

These images have been very important to me.

Despite the pain I was suffering when I was bullied, when I was punished for getting into fistfights, when I came home with a bloody nose, I also had Mama's loving embrace, men like Miller and Brownlee, and pictures of God's grace to affect me in a positive way and bring peace in troubling times.

Coming Together Through God's Grace

Dr. Irene Wakeham Lee grew up on the campus of Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Her family had served as missionaries; her father in Egypt, mother in England, and two older sisters in Africa and Brazil. Surrounded by missionaries and listening to their stories, she responded to God's call to teach at the Hawaiian Adventist Academy. She witnessed the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941 and could share stories of God's amazing protection through those troubling times. Upon accepting a call to teach at Philippine Union College (now Adventist University of the Philippines), she herself witnessed the baptism of Japanese prisoners of war outdoors on the college campus.

As a Professor and Dean of the English Department, and an amazing woman filled with grace and love, Dr. Wakeham supported and encouraged many overseas students. Shortly after I completed my MA comprehensive exams, she invited me and Su to her home for a sumptuous supper. It was listening to her stories that moved me to propose to my own Su there, as she held on to my hand and we stood under an umbrella in the pouring rain.

I remember it vividly.

"Su," I said, "pastors don't make much money. Will you join me in ministry?"

Her answer was yes, though she was also worried. “Bert, I don’t cook. I’m the youngest in my family.”

As of August 12, 2021, we have been blessed with 52 years together!

Thank you, Su. I remember that first meal with you in Ekamai vividly ...Thai rice, curry, and fresh veggies.



Irene, pictured here for an interview in 2018. Praise God for His blessings of love and grace through people like Irene Wakeham Lee. She and her husband James married at the age of 70 and celebrated their 30th anniversary in 2012.¹

Through the Storm

In 1966 I had the privilege of attending a youth fellowship camp in the Philippines. We left the college campus early Friday morning, riding for three hours in a bus heading northeast to Clark Air Base, Angeles City, Luzon, then on to a comfortable tourist ship, sailing for two hours across the South China Sea. Our destination: Potipot Island.

It was a beautiful sunny day. I remember blue ocean waves and singing praise (There Shall Be Showers of Blessing) as rain trickled gently over us. When we

arrived at the beautiful campsite dock, we were ushered to the front desk of the main building to the conference hall, adjacent to the cafeteria. There we registered as attendees and were told the location of our tents.

It was six persons to a tent. We unpacked and set up our camp beds time for supper. Rain continued to pour as we enjoyed our delicious vegetarian meal.

Then the camp director spoke to us. “Kamusta kayo! Welcome! I trust you are enjoying your meal! Listen, we just got news that a tsunami is on the way. Be prepared. No matter the storm, let us trust in God. See you at the service at seven PM.”

The weather grew worse during the service. That evening our hearts rang out in song.

*‘Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus
Just to take Him at His word
Just to rest upon his promise
Just to know, “Thus saith the Lord.”
Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him
How I’ve proved Him o’er and o’er!
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!
O for grace to trust Him more!²*

*When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.³*

*The Lord’s our rock, in Him we hide,
A shelter in the time of storm;
Secure whatever ill betide,
A shelter in the time of storm.
Mighty Rock in a weary land,
Cooling shade on the burning sand,
Faithful guide for the pilgrim band -
A shelter in the time of storm.⁴*

*In times like these you need a Savior,
In times like these you need an anchor;
Be very sure, be very sure,
Your anchor holds and grips the solid Rock!
This Rock is Jesus, Yes He's the One,
This Rock is Jesus, the Only One!
Be very sure, be very sure,
Your anchor holds and grips the solid Rock!⁵*

In closing prayer we reached to the Lord. No matter what, we will trust Him.

We became soaking wet as we ran to our tents afterward. Water ran beneath the camp beds. We changed to our pajamas, lifted our hearts in prayer, and tried to sleep. The tent swayed side to side and sleep was impossible. The storm raged all through the Sabbath.

Many tents were torn down and everyone sought shelter in the main building where hymn-singing and prayers continued. It became clear that we had to break camp and be evacuated.

On Sunday afternoon, motorized longboats started picking up groups of six for transport to the safety of Clark Air Base. A bus ride followed to the college campus in Baesa.

Through the years since, Potipot Survivors bump into each other in churches in Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, and across the country in Vancouver. Together we praise God for His loving care and share the hope that no matter what the storms of life may be – emotional, physical, financial – we can trust in Jesus!

On the Sea of Galilee

In 2014, Su and I decided to celebrate our retirement by taking a Bible Land Tour organized by the Ontario Conference.

The hotel was comfortable, a short walk from the Adventist Church, and to our happy surprise half the members were Filipinos. So was one of the Elders, the organist, and chorister.

Our daughter Linda is married to Seth Hisiger, of Jewish descent. Seth has connections in Jerusalem, and we had the privilege of visiting the home of Seth's cousin while we were there. We enjoyed a sumptuous supper, much like the meals at the hotel ... so many delicious Mediterranean fruits, plums, figs, apples, oranges, grapes, dates, and bananas, as well as meat and fish. We learned a great deal about the culture and family, including his work with non- profit organizations to help young people get jobs and her work designing online ESL programs.

Then there was a walk to the wailing wall, dipping in the Dead Sea, and a boat ride across the Sea of Galilee.

The boat rocked while lunch was being served – yes, we were on a boat, on the sea of Galilee! We all smiled as the boat continued smoothly to shore, with pictures of Jesus and His disciples on the same sea in mind. Wow! What a wonderful saviour we have in Jesus!



Herb, left, preparing to board a long boat on the river.

On Sarawak River

I am reminded of a time in Sarawak, Malaysia, when I was called to teach at Sunny Hill School and to pastor the bilingual Kuching Church. I was in Bangkok in 1969 for our wedding and Su joined the teaching staff. We took a long boat down the Sarawak River to Bako Island, enjoying our honeymoon with the white-tail monkeys.

There we met with Pastor Richard Hall, who had left his flourishing fishing business in Oregon, U.S. and taken the mission call to first Laos and then Sarawak. Also a pilot, he had use of two Cessna planes that had been donated by Quiet Hour Ministries, an organization based in California. He used the planes to fly into the jungle and occasionally he would fly us to indigenous tribal villages and visit the Land Dayaks, Sea Dayaks, Ibans, Dusuns, and others. We could fly there in only half an hour when boats required long hours.

Every time I'm in a plane, I reflect on one particular flight with Pastor Hall ...

After dropping us at an Iban village across the Sarawak River he wished us well: "See you later, before sunset." The Cessna plane took off, headed to where Hall would be preaching in another village.

After our own church service we had a joyous fellowship meal then walked to the pastor's, a beautiful home built on 15-foot tree trunks with the river running below. It was made of bamboo, including split bamboo floor and bamboo windows overlooking the air strip where we had landed. We chatted, sharing family stories and discovering we're both Bataks (an indigenous tribe from Lake Toba, Sumatra). Rain poured over the banana leaf roof.

Suddenly the radio phone rang.

"Hello! Hello!" a voice called. "Are the Sormins okay? I am sorry, I just crashed at take-off."

The plane had crashed on a sunken air strip that wasn't asphalted. Happily, it wasn't long until a military plane zoomed towards us, with Pastor Hall waving a thumbs up. We held hands together, thanking God for protecting Pastor Hall.

The next day the sun shone as Hall landed safely in the other Cessna.

Our travels with Pastor Hall, a man of stalwart faith in God, took us to many places. Flying in a modern Cessna jet, rowing on a wooden longboat, visiting villagers. Sharing the Good News that Jesus loves everyone, despite our differences, reassures us. His promise is sure ... He is coming again and will take us all to His heavenly Home.

When We Lose Friends

I first met Ron Sutherland at the Brantford Art Recreation Therapy Centre in 2016. We hit it off quickly. Soon we were exchanging gracious smiles and high fives!

To our happy surprise, the next year we found ourselves sitting next to each other at the Lifescapes program at the Brantford Public Library. Soon we were off to Tim Horton's, chit chatting and sharing life stories about our early lives in Singapore and Borneo.

I learned that his dad, a sea-captain with the Straits Steamship Company and later Harbour Master of Singapore, would sail through the Straits of Malacca, passing Sumatra and Borneo on the Indian Ocean, and then back to the United Kingdom. It's a small world!

Ron also told stories of his family and his love for Canada, about travelling in a camper to Vancouver, BC, going up to Hudson Bay, east to Nova Scotia, and camping up north in Algonquin Park and all across Canada.

These stories bonded us as buddies, for many of the places he travelled to were places that my family have treasured memories every summer since emigrating in 1977. I remember joining with hundreds of other new Canadians to sing "Oh, Canada, our home and native land!" at the Barrie City Hall a few days before Christmas in 1981. An amazing gift.

I was struggling with health issues when I received the sad news of Ron's passing. Rest in peace, Bro. Ron, Jesus is our Hope!

The year 2020 to 2021 was difficult. We endured several losses.

Early in 2020 my brother-in-law, Maarten Keyer, passed away in Surrey, BC. Maarten was of Dutch descent and had grown up in Indonesia. Before marrying my oldest sister, Alice, he'd been drafted into the Dutch Air Corps, served as a paratrooper, interned in Papua New Guinea, seen Indonesia gain independence, accepted Christ, sailed to the Netherlands, emigrated to Canada, and become a chef. He met Alice at Branson Adventist Hospital where she was a nurse. In the summer of 2019, their daughter Alicia was thrilled to walk the streets of the old Dutch district of Bandung, Java, where her dad grew up. A Christian gentleman and great chef, we were happy to celebrate his last birthday via zoom.

Dr. Ronald Wu Seng Ping was my childhood friend, soccer teammate, and classmate from primary through high school. He graduated from Loma Linda University in California, was happily married to Georgiana, and became a respected surgeon. He also passed away this year. He was great in helping me through my math and chemistry struggles when we were young, and he taught me by his life what it is to respect others in their diversity.

Then there is Laurence Chu. Laurence was a little older than me, a great badminton player, and a true Christian gentleman. We lived on the same campus in Singapore. His dad was an ordained pastor, Dean of Men, and my English teacher through high school. From junior college in Singapore we jumped ship for Australia (I didn't make it through Avondale ... he did). Later he completed his MA in Education at Andrews University in Michigan and married Edith Hiu, a childhood friend of my sweet Su. Shortly after we emigrated to Canada, Laurence and Edith moved to Bangkok where they taught at the same Ekamai International School (formerly called Adventist English School) where Su had served me my first Thai dish of rice, curry, and veggies. Laurence taught and ministered to the students of EIS for over four decades and in retirement continued to help other schools to grow. Every time we returned to Bangkok it was a joy to reunite with Laurence and Edith, sharing good times and reaffirming God's love and His leading. We joined many friends around the world via zoom at Laurence's funeral.

Jesus loves us equally; Jesus shed His blood on the cross for every human being. By His grace we will all meet again.

Covid 19 and the Future

On March 14, 2020, I had the privilege of preaching at the Paris Adventist Church. My sermon title was Walking With Jesus.

1 Timothy 3:15 says that the Church is the house of God, not a building construction but a house of people for the purpose of bringing erring sinners into a saving relationship with Him. In the Greek translation, the church, is ecclesia (meaning “called out” or “called forth”) as recipients of God’s grace. Christians are called to be Christ’s witnesses.

Walking with Jesus means witnessing for Him, every day, no matter what the situation.

At the close of the service I spoke to Pastor Gordon Pifher, a Paris guy, formerly Youth Director of the Ontario Conference and onetime director of Camp Frenda in northern Ontario (where our kids enjoyed summer camp, riding horses and canoeing). Pifher shook my hand and said, “I am so glad to be able to visit my aging Mom and worship with you. Unfortunately, I have to leave tomorrow before the US border closes because of Covid 19, but let’s keep trusting God despite the pandemic and the uncertainty of the times.”

How are we to be His witnesses through troubling times?

I don’t have all the answers. But I’ve been told: search the scriptures. When we do so in humility and prayer, God will lead us because walking with Jesus brings Hope. John 17 tells us that Jesus prayed for His disciples, His followers. There is no question that as Canadians we are all different people. We have different views regarding many things.

So, though stresses and strains are inevitable at every level in society, we all need to keep an attitude of humility, self-denial, and a desire for a good that is greater

than ourselves. Let us pray for one another, our neighbours, our mayor, Premier Ford, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, all Members of Parliament, our military personnel, police officers, all medical and frontline workers, because our God is full of grace. He hears our cry!

Not long ago, I was watching the evening news and was shocked to hear and view of the destructive tornado that hit the city of Barrie. Many homes destroyed ... floods of water gushing through buildings, vehicles turned over, families hurting and in tears. My heart went out in prayer for Barrie. We lived in Orillia for six years before being called to serve Owen Sound and Harriston churches in the fall of 1985, and still have friends living in Barrie. Thank God that no lives were lost during the tornado.

That tornado reminds me once again that, no matter where we may be, God's eyes are on all His children. Just like one afternoon in the summer of 1985 when we were travelling home on Highway 400 to Orillia – it was sunny when we left our parent's home in Toronto, but not for long. I remember hearing Linda and Clarence cheer as we passed Wonderland, where they'd had a great time the day before, but shortly after passing through beautiful Holland Marsh, thunder struck. Rain started pouring down. The highway was safe and clear and we were just minutes from Barrie, so I told the family that we would stop at the next gas station until the rain stopped. But the storm raged. With zero visibility I fixed my eyes on the taillights of the truck in front. Suddenly the lights disappeared. "Lord! Help us!" I cried. The car stalled. We prayed through the storm. As the sun cleared the view in front, I stepped out to clear the windshield because the engine had stalled.

"What? Oh! Thank You, Lord, for saving us!"

For right in front was a 30-foot drop. I stepped back to the car, reached out to hold my family, and together we prayed, thanking God for His mercy and care.

Yes, once again, no matter the storm, rest assured that we can trust God. He hears our cry!

Trusting God Through Stormy Times

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Gold

By Kathy Roberts

Shark!

I kick my legs like mad. My hands scoop deep into the water.

*I see the dorsal fin. I feel the terror. Swimming for all I'm worth,
I break away. I'm losing him. But can I keep that lead?*

Based on each athlete's results from the Regional Competitions, the Provincials, and two Meets in Michigan and Rhode Island, the coaches announce our eligibility for the Canadian Team that will compete in the International Cerebral Palsy Games.

The games will be held during the following summer of 1982 in Denmark. The residual effects of my brain tumor classify me in this category for competition.

We each need to enter five events. I'd switched from Track events to Field events, so Shot Put, Discus and Javelin were obvious choices for me. Before I became disabled, I was a lifeguard and swimming instructor so, I enter a swimming event. Makes sense to me. I look them over.

Aah, there it is. Olympic size pool – 50 meter open. I won't have to make a turn. If I do the backstroke, I won't even have to worry about my breathing. Perfect!

My eyes continue to scan the list of events. *Air pistol?*

I used to have my hunting license. I shot a partridge once. I carried it back to camp, rocking it in my arms like a baby. Then Dad cleaned and prepared it for supper. *Delicious!* That justified it.

My license had expired, and I was no longer eligible to reapply. But I still knew how to do it, so I entered air pistol. I took the required courses and even did some practicing in Hamilton. Then officials in Denmark decided to withdraw the event and offer archery instead.

OK ... it's still aiming. I did get a bull's-eye at the Regionals, so it shouldn't be that big a deal. I was attending University of Waterloo at the time. One of their brochures boasted an archery club.

At least I can keep practicing.

"Excuse me miss. Is everything alright?" Even in the dark I can see the big white letters that spell CAMPUS SECURITY on his jacket.

Oh good, a big strong man. "It's this wind. May I take your arm?" I asked.

"Sure."

"I have a lot of trouble walking anyway, but this wind makes it really tough."

I guess I do look pretty suspicious. Like maybe I've got a machine gun in this long, skinny case and my erratic steps probably look like I'm drunk. Yeah, I'd be suspicious too.

"I'm just going up to the gym. We have archery practice from seven to nine." I added.

"And what about when you're done? How will you manage?"

"Oh, I'll ask someone for a ride home. People are really good about helping."

This isn't the first time I've been questioned by security. The police have even pulled me over a few times. My best defense is to keep talking. Eventually they

realize I'm not drunk OR crazy and I'm not out to hurt anyone.

After the school year ends, I return home to Hamilton. I make a spreadsheet. I list exercises down one side and days of the week across the top. One day upper body, one day lower. In addition, we meet on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday with a local coach that my husband found.

This week the coach focuses on preparing me for shot put.

He tells me to do deep bends with my arms hanging down between my knees, while holding a shot-put. On the up-thrust, I release it, forcing it high into the air. Then I run to get out of the way. I worry it might come back to land on my head. Logically that wouldn't happen, but at that moment, my body chooses flight mode. Being a runner, my legs are already in shape. This exercise only strengthens them.

A few months later, the day finally comes when my husband and I are to report to University of Windsor for training camp.

Over the next four days, time seems messed up. By the last night, it feels like we are eating supper in the middle of the night. I don't question it except that it seems odd when the sun goes down earlier and earlier each day.

Later I will discover that the coaches gradually adjusted our clocks in preparation for travelling to Greve, Denmark, where it is six hours ahead.

Athletes from different provinces arrive. New people, people I've never met. Now the team is 23 strong plus 15 support personnel and coaches. All athletes are expected to be on the field by 9:00 a.m. to support our teammates. We sleep in the dorms and eat our meals in the cafeteria.

On the last day, our coaches hand out uniforms.

WOW! This is so cool!

Now we're a REAL team – not just a rag-tag group of athletes from different provinces. A Canadian team! And at 28 years of age, I finally get to go abroad, halfway around the world in fact. Some of us are laughing hysterically, some are beaming with pride, and some are just grinning ear to ear. Next, we are told to

change into our uniforms and report for a photo shoot. We've just moved up another notch on the excitement scale!

The photographer arranges us to make a more "balanced" picture.

Ironic! Most of us struggle with balance issues.

After a hefty lunch, we take a bus to Toronto airport. On July 15, 1982, we board Air Danmark. *Hmm, they spell it with an A.* But when we landed in Kastrup, Denmark, everyone else spells it with an E. *I guess it's just that airline.*

Inside the plane, there are double seats on either side of a narrow aisle. I'd been on a plane once before, while in college. I flew standby and was so distressed about missing my first class in January that I didn't remember any of the trip afterwards except meeting my friends in London. They'd brought a red carpet!

We find our seats. I get the window seat. A couple hours later, the cabin lights dim, and it's recommended that we sleep.

*Sleep? **No way!** We're much too wired!*

One by one, people begin to drift off anyway. I close my eyes around 11:00. At 2:00 am, the captain's voice came on saying that we're making a 20-minute stop in Iceland to refuel. We "could" disembark, but not leave the airport.

*"**Could**" disembark? Are you kidding? This is a once in a lifetime chance. Of course I want to get out.*

Most of the girls and coaches go down the steps and across the tarmac.

*Brr ...! It's freezing out here ... and it's pitch-black. I can't see anything. Too bad, 'cuz I'll never get to come back. But I **was** in the country!*

I make a beeline for the gift shop.

I paw through overpriced souvenirs and finally decide on a pair of mitts. They're not authentic but they do have the Icelandic pattern printed on them.

*And I bought them **in Iceland** – that's what's important to me.*

Back on the plane we fall asleep right away. In the morning, a Smørrebrød is announced. One of the coaches translates that loosely as a Continental breakfast so I expect the usual coffee and a bagel.

Whoah!

This is a veritable feast. We have coffee (the fragrance wafting in first), **and** fresh squeezed orange juice, full of pulp. A “proper” Danish with raspberry jam and cream cheese, snuggled around a muffin full of fruit and nuts. On a separate plate comes a thin slice of very dark bread (rugbrød). Rugbrød is a very dense rye bread. I love the chewiness! It’s served buttered with a thin slice of mild cheese, with grapes on the side. Now **that’s** what I call breakfast! Rightly or wrongly, I usually judge a place by its menu. I **knew** I’d like Denmark!

When we do get to Denmark, we are refreshed and not at all jet laggy. Now that time-shift at training camp makes perfect sense. From the airport in Kastrup we take a bus to our assigned sleeping quarters in Greve. We’re staying at a Kinderskol. We’re in two large rooms, one for the guys and one for the girls. Each room is lined with rows of single cots. The mattresses are firm and surprisingly comfortable.



Each athlete receives a welcome package. In it is a commemorative plate (see mine, left), our schedule of events, and various brochures advertising discounts at local businesses. I go over my itinerary. Swimming is in the morning. Shot put in early afternoon and discus at 2:55 pm. The next day I have archery in the morning and javelin in the afternoon.

Good. Well spaced.

After lunch we get ready for the opening ceremonies. Our uniforms are bright red with white lettering. Athletes gearing up for competition, we all **beam**, marching on to the track. We stand proud with the Canadian flag!

The bleachers are full and spectators cheer each team from all nineteen countries. Dignitaries make welcome speeches. A huge batch of multi-coloured helium balloons is released. The crowd quiets and the Games flag is raised.

Her Royal Highness, Princess Benedikte of Denmark, declares: "Let the Games begin!"

After lunch I watch the other competitors. They're so much better than I am. I'm up.

I pick up the discus, stretching my fingers wide to cover the flat side. I wind up, moving my arm in horizontal arcs. I release. It falls way short of the others. My heart sags.

In shot put, I cradle the shot between my fingertips in the hollow of my neck just below and to the right of my chin. With the biggest push-off I can muster, I thrust the shot up and forward. Alas, not even close to the front marks. The next competitor is in a wheelchair.

What?! Was she mis-classified? Didn't her country use the same criteria?

Her effort makes a dull thud, closest to our starting circle.

Yeah, I know how you feel. We both may as well give up now.

Surprise! Archery is outside. I practiced in the gym and the target was much closer. Oh well ... when you're shooting a rifle, you have to adjust for wind. I should be okay.

"Uh-oh." I turned to my husband. "I can see the target to shoot, but I can't tell exactly where my arrows land. Could you be as precise as you can and tell me?"

The woman beside us overhead me and asked, "Would you like to use my husband's binoculars?"

"Could I? That'd be great. Ahh, that's much better. Thank you!"

We introduced ourselves. Her name was Heidi. She spoke English well, but her husband didn't at all. He'd competed in previous years. This year, they just watched with interest.

I'm up again, for archery.

Aghh, my arrows are all a little to the right and down a bit.

I'll adjust. That breeze is just barely there. OK, aim higher and to the left.

Hmm ... not much better. They're up there now, but further away from the bullseye.

Oh well I can only do the best I can do. That guy next to me is really good though. He's even got a scope attached to his bow.

I didn't know we could sit down. But I haven't trained that way. Better not change too much.

"Uhh ... Kathy," said Heidi. "We have to go now."

"Oh. Okay," I said, taking off the binoculars and handing them back. "Thanks for letting me ..."

"Oh no, no. You need them. I'll give you our phone number."

She doesn't even know me, and she trusts me? Wow.

"Oh. Ok. I'll put them in this zippered pocket, so I don't lose them."

That night our coaches collect our uniforms and wash them. Somebody got grease on theirs, so they all got washed again ... and again... and again. The phone number is gone. The paper is a hopelessly matted clump.

That afternoon, I approach the javelin field.

*Boy, this looks like a popular event. I think **everybody** is throwing.*

I wait in the sidelines until I'm called up. After our first attempt, we're rotated to the end of the list. We're allowed three tries in total but only our best throw will be counted.

I take the javelin in my right hand, extending my index finger along the corded part to direct its flight. Leaning back, I raise my left arm to make a T shape with my body. I relax. My left-hand falls limp. I slant back and wind for the throw. Pitching forward, my right arm follows through, and I release, hoping it will fly beyond the others. The tip picks into the ground. There are only two marks ahead

of me, but three more competitors. Will they pass me? Will I get to be on the podium again?

Meanwhile, back at the pool ...

Our swimsuits were donated by Speedo. One of our coaches recommended and confirmed our orders. Now, stuffing my body into a suit two sizes too small, I hunch my shoulders and step through the door of the change room onto the deck. The acrid smell of nervous sweat and too many excited bodies packed into an overheated room assaults my nostrils.



Photo credit: David L. Roush

I slip into the cool water. It feels like sliding between clean cotton sheets. My suit stretches. My skin relaxes.

“Swimmers, take your marks.”

I get into a kind of crouch position against the wall.

“Get set.”

I spread my toes wide, wiggling them for my best footing.

The gun explodes.

My push-off shoots me way out front. I’d been a long-distance runner on the track team in high school. My legs are strong. But I’m not a sprinter.

How on earth am I going to keep this lead? A shark! A looming shark. Yeah, that’ll keep me going.

It’s up to adrenaline and my imagination to keep it that way. Years of discipline and training, holding that lead through the last lap - even some acting experience, believing it’s real – is all going to work in my favour now.

My arms stretch back further. My fingers scoop deeper. I kick more frantically. At last, my forearm hits the end of the pool. Not a second later my head touches the

flutter board someone slid down to protect my head. I stop swimming. I look around.

No shark. Good. He's gone. My face splits into a grin. *I beat the shark!*

My legs are rubbery. I can't get out of the water right away. When I do, outstretched hands help me step up to the highest tier of the podium.

I hear the Canadian anthem begin. I hear the thick, muffled sound of the flag unfurling. An even wider grin spreads over my face. The world applauds. I beat the shark, which means I beat all the other swimmers too. A Canadian success in a field dominated by the Scandinavian countries.

Closing ceremonies come too quickly. We queue up alphabetically by country.



O Canada starts to play. Our team practically struts across the backstretch, our chests swelling with each note. More countries join us. Then more file in and lineup on the field in front of us. Every competitor is beaming with pride, even those with no medals.

My medals clank with each step. All three of them – Bronze in Archery and Javelin, Gold in swimming (see mine, left). We're one happy team! Exhausted, but very, very happy!

Reflection

Denmark is a socialist country. There are no extremes, everyone is equal. The focus is on the well-being of the other. Happiness, recreation, and children take priority. Their work ethic lends to pride in workmanship. The country's culture of openness allowed us to compete in Denmark.

Gold

These Games were one of the early forerunners of the Paralympics. In 1982 there were four disciplines: wheelchair, amputee, blind and cerebral palsy. Over the years there have been a lot of negotiating of details to combine these competitions into full and comprehensive tournaments.

The games have become a lot bigger and a lot more complex, and we continue to strive towards equality on the world stage.

Source

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Meet the Author



I've been an athlete, a counselor, a lifeguard, a swimming instructor, a hunter, and a librarian. Currently, I'm a retired volunteer and writer.

I've been living in Brantford since 1985. I was busy raising children for the first twenty years or so and now I enjoy being a Grandma.

My personal interests include but are not limited to: reading; writing memoir; and challenging myself to create within different forms of poetry. I also enjoy cooking, theatre, sewing, knitting and most forms of crafting.

I will continue writing for Lifescapes as well as reaching out to a broader audience.

Through writing these memoirs, I hope to merge my past more smoothly with my present. I feel this year's memoir does that well.

Of course, I knew all these facts and feelings, but to put them into writing makes them solid ... solid gold, that is.



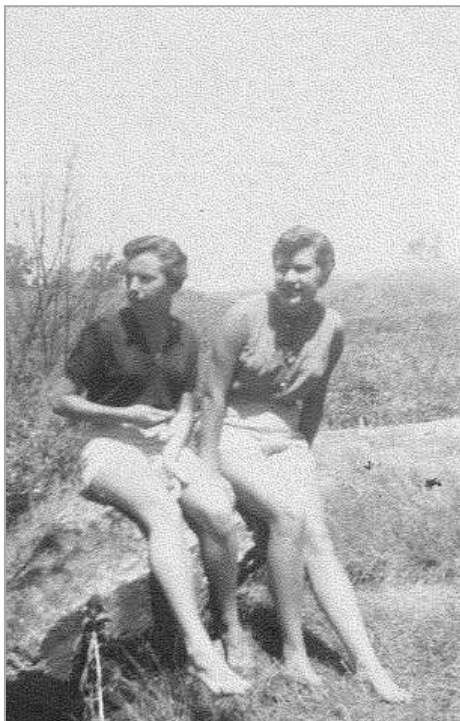
Memories

By Lois Oliver

While sorting through a countless number of old photographs I began to reminisce about my earlier years.

Music and dancing have always played a large part in my life. In my teenage years my best friend Diane and I went to all the local high school dances where we danced the jive to songs like In The Mood by the Glenn Miller Band and slow-

danced to Moonlight Serenade, which was always, sadly, the last dance of the night. Along with two other friends we took street cars (also known as The Red Rocket) to dances all over the city of Toronto.



We also went to Diane's family cottage on weekends and danced every Friday and Saturday nights to the songs of entertainers such as Kay Starr, Frankie Laine, Nat King Cole, and Louis Armstrong.

One particular photo that prompted a special memory was a picture of Diane and me sitting on a large rock on the grounds of a beautiful resort in Muskoka called Milford Manor (left). As we had heard that dances were featured every night, we thought this would be a fun place for a holiday.

Even though we were both eighteen at the time our parents would not give their consent unless Diane's older sister accompanied us.

Preparing for this great adventure, we shopped for just the right beachwear, bathing suits and dance clothes.

Even taking the train from Union Station up to Muskoka was an adventure. Prior to this trip I had only been to Michigan with my parents to visit relatives.

As we checked into the resort we were told that, unfortunately, our luggage did not arrive with us. It was so humiliating walking around the resort for two days in the same clothes we arrived in. We were the talk of the resort! Everyone there were basking in the sun in their bathing suits, and we wore the same skirt and top morning, noon, and night! When our luggage was finally delivered the third day a celebration was in order. We dressed up in our new clothes and went to the dance that night.

Standing on the edge of the dance floor watching everyone dancing, we all agreed that one particular fellow was the best dancer there. Much to my surprise, he came over and asked me to dance. I felt like I had won the jackpot! We danced together every night and afternoon at a dance hall close by in the town of Bala.

Unfortunately, that summer romance had to end when we went home, as I lived in the west end of Toronto and he lived in the east end. In those days it was a long way to go back and forth. It was probably a good thing as I had not told my parents that he was 27 years old!

Later that year Diane invited me to go to a Christmas party with her and her boyfriend. I was unaware that he had talked his best friend into coming to the party also. It was meant to be though, as he turned out to be my future husband.

The following week I answered the telephone one evening. When I asked who was calling, I found he had quite a sense of humour. He replied, "Who do you think it is, Sam Spade?" I was really not too impressed!

He asked me to go out on a date that week, but I told him I was busy that night. I was going to play hockey with Diane. She was to be the goalie and I would play right wing, although neither one of us had any experience with hockey other than watching the Toronto Maple Leafs play on television on Saturday nights. Bob insisted on picking me up to go to the arena, tied up my skates, drove me back home, and the romance began.



A winter wedding.

When we became engaged, I said that I did not want to marry until I was 21. Two years later I turned 21 on October 31st and we settled on December 3rd for our wedding day. To this day when I hear September Song I still hear Bob constantly singing *For it's a long, long while from May to December*.

My fantasy was a winter wedding. I envisioned a full moon shining on the crest of the new fallen snow, wearing a white velvet gown while carrying a

bouquet of white poinsettias with winter greenery. My sister and Diane would wear burgundy velvet dresses and carry red and white poinsettias.

My dream unfortunately, did not turn out as planned. On December 3rd there was freezing rain all day, ending with icy roads and minor accidents up to the reception.

Our anticipated honeymoon trip was also affected by the storm as it entailed flying to Florida. We sat in Chicago Airport most of the day still in our going away outfits. I was wearing a pillbox hat and long white gloves with my dress and coat, but it was the large white mum on my lapel that indicated we were newlyweds. We attracted a lot of attention at the airport until Bob finally asked, "Would you please take that darn flower off?"

It was not a good start to a romantic honeymoon!



Attracting attention at the Chicago Airport.

It seemed at that time that the Gods were against us. One week before the wedding Bob picked me up at my office downtown, took me to one of the most expensive restaurants in Toronto, ordered champagne, then took my hand and declared, "I have something to tell you. I have lost my job."

The company where he was employed as Sales Manager had gone bankrupt! He lost his wages and his commissions that he was anticipating using for our honeymoon.

Of course, I immediately said, "We will have to cancel our trip."

He, as always the eternal optimist, replied "We are still going. We will manage."

Bob would never let anything stand in his way. We finally arrived in Florida after our delayed flight. We then rented a sporty convertible, checked into our reserved motel, walked the beach, laid around the pool, went out for fabulous dinners, and then arrived home with pennies in our pockets. We had to cash pop bottles for groceries!

Shortly after we settled into our new married life, we had another incident that was very disturbing for both of us. I worked in an advertising agency downtown Toronto. Quite frequently I was the first person to open in the mornings. The agency was on the second floor of the building.

One morning I stepped out of the elevator into the reception room, turned the key in the lock of the glass doors leading to the main office and heard a loud bang! I walked down the hallway, looked around, then noticed that one of the executive's office doors was open. He was slumped over in his chair with a gunshot wound to his head. I was so shocked that I froze! Just then, one of the male employees arrived, called the police, then called my husband. Bob took me to the police station as a witness. As I was so traumatized, I was so thankful that he was with me. It took a little time for me to go back to work and walk down that hallway. I eventually left the agency and took a secretarial position in a company closer to home in the northwest area of Toronto.

From then on, we were blessed with three children and led a happy life with family and friends.

Diane married two years after me, but sadly, her marriage was not a happy one. Her husband turned out to be very critical and abusive. Her parents stepped in and took her back home. It was so devastating for her that she never remarried.

Bob was hired as General Manager of a concrete pipe company in Brantford. We had to move to Brantford, and as our lifestyles were so different Diane and I eventually lost touch.

As we had a very active social life in Toronto with family, friends, and business associates, it was very lonely when we first moved to Brantford, except when they visited on weekends.

However, when our son began playing minor hockey here and one of our daughters enrolled in figure skating classes, we became acquainted with other parents who eventually became close friends.

The one request I made in moving to Brantford was that I hoped to join a curling club. As I had previously curled in Toronto. Besides attending all the hockey games and figure skating practices and competitions I was also busy with weekly curling and bonspiels where I met other curlers.

I also joined a world-wide organization called Beta Sigma Phi Sorority. I was very reluctant at first, but my husband encouraged me to join to meet new people. This is now my 50th year in which I have participated in bi-weekly meetings, charity events, fashion shows, city council meetings and many social events. The most important aspect has been not only the friendship with the members of my own chapter, but also the women from other chapters in the city.

We have had so many memorable times over the years, but also sad times together. We each have our own individual lives, but if anyone needs help or to celebrate, we are there for each other. We have seen all our children grow up and now, also our grandchildren. I am so thankful that I joined so many years ago.

We also had a group of friends consisting of ten couples that was formed by the men starting an investment club. We had many parties and get-togethers for over forty years, although we never did accrue riches from the investment club.

With three of the couples, we started a gourmet dinner club which also lasted over forty years. They were always theme dinners; our houses decorated and menus according to the theme.

We also went to one of the couple's cottages with the other couples. It started when all our children were of the same age all the families would go for a weekend. As the children grew up and had their own busy lives, we increased the weekend to a week. Each couple was in charge of the meals for one day. It was like a gourmet 'eatathon'.

We took part in our own version of the Olympics, consisting of horseshoes, dart throwing and paddle boating. The couple that had the most points were the winners and were presented with a trophy by a disguised queen. In the evenings

we had mock court trials, charades, and talent contests. To this day, we still talk about the fun we had.

Thanks to our relationship with couples from my sorority group and hockey, a dinner club was started. Our monthly get-togethers were full of fun and laughter plus delicious food.

We had many memorable dinners over the years, but as time went on each of the men passed away. Our dinner club is now reduced to four women. We get together for monthly dinners, going to theatres, exercise classes and memorable trips. We have travelled to many beautiful places, including living in a chateau in Provence, France, and touring Tuscany, Rome, Florence in Italy and the Danube River Cruise, visiting historic cities such as Prague, Vienna, Budapest and Nuremberg.

Even though we have all have had sadness in our lives, we have many wonderful memories, we all have our own families who we cherish, and are blessed with special friends.

Having reached this stage in my life, music still gives me the same enjoyment as it did when I was young. I still listen to my favorite music from my era while I enjoy reading a good book.

Oh to be young again!!



The Mystery Christmas Box

By Margo Karolyi

“Maybe it’s a playhouse,” I whispered to my sister Sharon. I’d been begging for one for the past two months. Ever since I’d seen the little house Margie Campbell’s parents had given her for her sixth birthday in October. It was painted white, with a porch across the front, gingerbread trim all around the roof, and real glass windows. It even had two separate rooms inside.

If I had a playhouse like that, I’d spend all day every day inside it playing with my dolls.

“I don’t think it’s big enough,” Sharon said. Her hands were on her hips as she eyed the huge box that had mysteriously appeared in the living room overnight. Wrapped in mismatched holiday paper, it was shoved in as close to the Christmas tree as possible. We couldn’t find a tag anywhere on it, so we didn’t know who it was for.

“Besides,” she added, mimicking what Mom said every time I brought up the subject of Margie’s playhouse. “Margie Campbell only got a playhouse for her birthday because her father is a doctor.”

I didn't see what Margie's father being a doctor had to do with anything. ANYONE could order a playhouse from the Eaton's catalogue. Not that I'd seen one as big or as fancy as hers in there, though (and I'd gone over the Christmas Wish Book so many times, I practically had it memorized). I would have been happy with the Instant Assembly one ("Only \$49.99 Complete"). Daddy was always fixing things around the house, so I figured he could put playhouse together on a weekend.

(I had no idea who built Margie's playhouse, but I didn't think it was her Dad. It didn't look like it had come from a do-it-yourself kit. And Dr. Campbell was way too busy bringing babies into the world to have had time to build something like that anyway.)

"Maybe it's something for Bobby," Sharon suggested. Bobby was our one-and-a-half-year-old brother.

"I hope not," I replied. "He's already got way more stuff than he needs."

I'd just turned four when Mom had Daddy pack up all the baby stuff that had been piled in a corner of the basement to give to Mrs. Jackson. She was (according to Mom) "having another baby surprisingly late in life". The bassinette, crib, highchair, diapers and blankets had been around a long time. They'd been used by my older brother and sister (who were now teenagers), then by Sharon (who was two-and-a-half years older than me), and finally by me.



Mom said she didn't need any of it anymore and was glad to get rid of it. Sharon and I were happy to see it go too, because its removal meant we had a lot more room to play downstairs.

Not much later, though (just after New Year's Day in 1958) Dr.

Left: My family, spring of 1955 (before Bobby came along), sitting on the front step of our house: Me on Mom's lap, Terry, Gail, Sharon.

The Mystery Christmas Box

Campbell told Mom that SHE was going to “have another baby surprisingly late in life” too.

“I can’t possibly have another baby,” Mom kept saying to Daddy. “I’m going to be forty next month.”

She sure didn’t seem happy about it, but I guess you can’t send a baby back once you find out you’re going to have one.



Jimmy Jackson's second birthday, February 1960, with Mrs. Jackson in the background and me, Sharon, Jimmy, and Bobby in front.

Since Mrs. Jackson had already had her baby (she called him Jimmy), Mom couldn’t ask for the baby stuff back. So, she and Daddy went out and bought all new furniture and diapers and bottles and stuff. Then Daddy moved things around in their bedroom to make room for it all. (We only had four bedrooms in the house. Mom and Daddy had the big one, Terry and Gail each had their own, and Sharon and I shared one. There wasn't any extra room for a new baby!)

By the time Bobby was born on July 1st, there was a LOT of stuff crammed into the corner of Mom and Daddy’s room.

More had been added in the last year and

a half (toys and clothes and things). I honestly couldn’t see how Bobby could possibly need anything else. Certainly not something as big as what was in the box under the tree. I was definitely pinning my hopes on the idea that whatever was inside that present was something for Sharon and me.

“Well, if it’s not a playhouse,” I prodded Sharon, “What do you think it is?”

“I don’t know,” she answered, shrugging. She seemed to be losing interest in the mystery. “I guess we’ll just have to wait until Christmas morning to find out.”

“How many more days is that?” I asked, even though I knew. I’d been taking rings off the paper chain I’d made in school since the first of December, and I knew exactly how many were left.

“Two,” she answered over her shoulder as she skipped down the hall towards our bedroom. “Only two more days ‘til Christmas.”

I could hardly wait.

Christmas Morning

The sun wasn't up yet on Christmas morning when Sharon and I crept out of our beds and down to the living room to see if Santa had come.

He had! On the far end of the couch, where Santa always put my gifts, I found a brand-new Barbie doll and two outfits for her! I held it up to show Sharon, who was already hugging the big black stuffed poodle Santa had left at her end of the couch. She'd seen it at Eaton's Toyland when we'd gone into Toronto with Mom right after my birthday in November, and asked Santa for it that same day. I'd politely asked for a Barbie with black hair (mostly because my own hair was black, but partly because Sharon had gotten a blonde Barbie for her birthday in April and I wanted mine to be different).



Visiting Santa at Eaton's Toyland in Toronto, December 1959.

We sat quietly in the living room, playing with our Santa gifts and whispering between ourselves. About a half hour passed before Mom and Daddy came in with Bobby. He ran right for the metal ladybug pull toy Santa had left for him and started dragging it around the room. Mom hollered two or three times for Gail and Terry to get up (muttering “teenagers” each time afterwards). When they finally wandered out of their rooms, we took our stockings down from their hooks on the mantle.

Sharon and I sat side-by-side on the living room floor and dumped the contents into piles in front of us. There were no surprises there; Santa pretty much always put the same things in our stockings every year. There was an orange at the

The Mystery Christmas Box



My Christmas stocking (which I still use to this day!)

bottom, some underwear, tights, crayons, a tiny puzzle, a little bag of Christmas candy, a toothbrush and toothpaste, and a candy cane.

Our stockings weren't very big. We'd gotten them a couple of years before when we'd visited Santa at Eaton's Toyland. A nice lady had asked us our names, and while we were talking to Santa she'd embroidered them onto two stockings using a big sewing machine. They were given to us before we left.

Bobby had a bigger stocking, but it wasn't nearly as special.

After everyone had emptied their stockings (and before we gave in to the temptation to eat any of the candy), Mom announced, "Breakfast before presents".

Sharon and I took our Santa gifts and stocking contents down to our room and laid everything out on our beds (after making them, of course). Then it was back to the dining room to eat.

Mom made pancakes and scrambled some eggs while Daddy ran a sharp knife around the sections of grapefruits he'd cut in half for each of us. It was a much better breakfast than the bowl of cold cereal or toast and jam we usually had. Daddy asked for seconds TWICE. Sharon and I were getting pretty antsy by the time he finished up and the table was cleared.

Then we had to wait again until both grandmothers arrived. Grammy Cook (Mom's mother) and Grammy Nell (Daddy's mother) lived in separate apartments upstairs, and they weren't early risers. By the time they came down and we were all assembled in the living room, Sharon and I could barely contain our excitement.

Individual gifts were passed around (one at a time) and opened eagerly. We all admired what everyone else got and Mom made sure we thanked each gift giver properly.

There was the usual assortment of pyjamas, socks, clothes, books, and a small toy or game for each of the children. The teenagers got clothes and records. There was bath powder and soap for the grandmothers. Daddy gave Mom her usual bottle of White Linen perfume and a pretty new nightgown. Daddy got socks and a shirt-and-tie set.

Wrapping paper and gift boxes were passed to Daddy, who carefully removed any tape before folding them up for reuse the following year. Mom took the ribbons and bows and put them in a plastic bag for the same purpose.



Christmas Day 1959. From left to right: Grammy Cook, Grammy Nell, Bobby, Sharon, and me.

To my amazement, through all of this, no one even mentioned the giant present that loomed larger than all the other gifts under the tree. As interested as I was in my small collection of personal items, I nearly couldn't stand the suspense.

Finally the mystery box was the only present left. Sharon and I held our breath, waiting for SOMEONE to say SOMETHING about it. Daddy finally looked over at Mom, who was sitting in her rocking chair, right next to him in his recliner.

"Aren't you going to open your last present?" he said, nodding towards the box.

"That's for me?" Mom asked. She sounded a little surprised, but not exactly excited.

"Well, I guess it's really for the whole family," Daddy said. "But you should be the one to open it."

Sharon and I exchanged a look of abject disappointment. The "whole family" wasn't going to be getting a playhouse. Or any other kind of nifty toy. I don't think Daddy even knew where the toy store was, and he'd certainly never been to Eaton's Toyland with us (Mom always took Sharon and me - and Bobby this year - to Toronto on the bus to see Santa).



Sharon, Me, and Bobby next to the Mystery Christmas Box.

I guess he COULD have ordered something exciting for us from the Eaton's catalogue, but it didn't look like it. Still, he'd bought SOMETHING from SOMEWHERE and wrapped it up, so we were still curious to know what was inside.

Mom knelt down by the box and started peeling back the tape holding the mismatched paper on one end. Bobby toddled over and started ripping at the loose bits, gleefully tearing off the paper and tossing it aside.

Way to go, Bobby, I thought to myself. Someone had to do something to get this over with!

Pretty soon I could see a few letters and some numbers on the end of the box, but I couldn't make out what they were or what they meant. It wasn't until Bobby and Mom got the paper off one whole side and I saw the picture that was there that I had some inkling of what was inside.

"Stereophonic High Fidelity AM/FM Radio Phonograph," Mom read from the side of the box. Her voice was a little flat, like she was seriously disappointed.

I think she'd been hoping it was an automatic dishwasher or an electric dryer. Or a washing machine that didn't have a wringer on top. Mom washed a lot of dishes, not to mention diapers and all of our clothes. She could have used some help in that department.

But it looked like she wasn't getting what she wanted either.

(I did wonder for a brief moment if Margie Campbell's family had a stereophonic high-fidelity AM/FM radio phonograph. I was pretty sure her mother had a dishwasher and a modern washer and dryer, but maybe now we had something they didn't have. I'd have to check the next time I went to her house to play.)

Epilogue

That hi-fi system had pride of place in the living room of the new house we moved into four years later. Twenty years after that, it travelled to Grand Bend (Ontario), when my parents retired there (where it once again graced the living room).

Somewhere along the line, the radio stopped working but the record player remained functional for a number of years, and Mom would occasionally put on one of her Guy Lombardo, Ann Murray, or Christmas in Hawaii records to listen to (she had a rather eclectic selection of LPs).

Finally, in the mid-nineties, the record player gave out as well. My father removed the electronic “guts” from inside and the case was repurposed as a blanket box (which, at the time of writing [2021], Sharon is still using).



The former Hi-Fi, circa 2021, repurposed as a blanket box.

I must confess that Sharon and I did sort of get a playhouse that Christmas. Late on Christmas Day, Terry dragged the box the stereo system had come in down to the basement. The next day my father cut windows in the sides and rigged up one end to act as a door. Sharon and I used the crayons we’d found in our stockings to decorate it, inside and out. Of course, it wasn’t nearly as nice as Margie Campbell’s playhouse. But it was the perfect place for us to play with our dolls - all day, every day - for the rest of our Christmas vacation.

Meet the Author

Margo Karolyi is a former college professor who retired to the rural paradise of Scotland, Ontario, where she spends her time reading, writing, and puttering in her garden (when the weather permits). The Mystery Christmas Box is one of several memoir pieces she has penned about her long and varied past. She also writes short stories, poetry, and longer works of romantic women's fiction, some of which can be found on her blog at <https://theothersideof55.wordpress.com>



My Son

By Patricia Faith

My son and I were visiting Montreal and staying at the house of my friend, Millie.

Millie was the most wonderful friend I had in the little village I used to live in. It was about one hundred streets going east from downtown Montreal, and what a beautiful place it was!

Sometimes I came from work and school and was very tired. That little fellow of mine would come to me and sort of sit on my leg and touch my face oh so gently. I had to smile at him. He was such a loving child and so kind. His gentle touch on my cheek just sent shivers through me.



Millie, Patricia and son

I remember giving him the biggest hug I could and promising: "I'm okay, just very tired. I will go to bed early tonight and rest up for tomorrow. It will be a great day in Montreal visiting Beaver Pond on Mount Royal. You can even sail your boat."

The river was just so beautiful in summertime.

Big ships passed our house where we once lived by the river. It was amazing to see how the ships pulled the water from shore and then sent the biggest waves rolling back in. As a child I was always able to go play by the river with an old, leaky rowboat. We all knew to stay away from shore when the ships went by.

One would never realize how beautiful the east end of the island was too. Then again, all of Montreal looks beautiful to me.

It was farm country. I used to go and get the milk and bread that was delivered daily at the end of the pathway. I remember walking with my brothers and sisters down the street to the village grocery store to bring home cardboard boxes that were collapsed.

Inside our home there were no walls to separate rooms: just a framing of two by fours dividing the rooms, but no plaster or doors to say there were rooms in the house. We attached these pieces of cardboard to the walls with small tacks on the joists. Lo and behold, we had walls and we could pick our bedrooms. One each for the boys, the girls, and mom and dad.

Life there was a blast. Once we went frogging during the evening and caught a whole bunch. My brother Bob found cages and we put all the frogs in them. That night, when we all went to bed, those frogs stated their unhappiness. Mom was so upset with us that she went out two days later, opened all the cages, and set the frogs loose. She was pretty upset with us too.

My brother told her he was going to try to sell them to restaurants. They would cook frog legs to sell in the restaurant so we could have money.

Imagine that! It made our day. We all laughed at her for dumping the frogs.

There I go, remembering so much. I used to write about things that happened all the time after I started school. This was because I was switched from French school to English. To make the day go faster I used to write all kinds of stories when something happened.

My Son

Still, it was a difficult time for me. Even with a name like Burke-Smith I didn't speak a word of English. The teachers that came into class did not realize that I didn't speak English either.

Sometimes the children could be quite mean to me. I was pushed down the stairs one time and broke my two front teeth. I became a very mean child back and learned to defend myself. Once I took a chance to get even and pushed another student, who also fell down the stairway. So be it!

Most of the time, though, I was in a world of my own. The days went by so fast.

Montreal was home to so many memories. And years later, I would have a great time back on top of the mountain with my son. We had a big picnic lunch there. Millie came along and the three of us played soccer.

Together we made more memories in Montreal, and it was still beautiful.





All Hail Hayling Island

By Wayne King

Nineteen Fifty-Seven

One of my all-time favorite summers ... Mum, sister Janet, aged nine, and Yours Truly, aged ten, spent the whole summer and then some, in England. Grandparents George and Lily Crump and Mum's brother, Uncle George Crump, hosted us at Page Street in beautiful Westminster.

A highlight of that special summer? A two-week vacation within a vacation on Hayling Island in mid-July. Over the course of sixty plus years memories have faded, but enough remains to relive a wonderful time.

Let's Listen In

"Mum, where's Hayling Island?"

"On the (English) Channel. Close to Aunt Sook's in Eastleigh."

Mum elaborated. "We've rented a cottage on the seashore...two weeks. We'll have fun. There's beaches, carnivals - lots of things to do."

Shortly Thereafter



A coach (Canadians call it a bus) whisked us away to our Hayling Island beach house.

The stucco clad cottage featured many windows. Short walks took us to the sandy beach and a nearby amusement park.

Left: Hayling Island beach house.

A Bonus

Our vacation within a vacation turned out to be an informal Crump family reunion. Three of Grandpa's sisters, great aunts Sook (Susan), Maude and Liz, dropped in throughout our stay, accompanied by members of their branch of the family.



Top row left: Grandpa Crump, Mum, Great Aunt Sook, Aunt Alice, Great Aunt Liz, Grandma Crump. Middle row left: Great Aunt Maude, unknown daughter of Aunt Alice holding son, Cousin Joyce. Bottom row, left: Yours Truly, Ellen and Janet.

Transportation and Communication

In these days of immediate communication, it's hard to imagine that we broadcast our plans by letter and word of mouth. I'm not aware of anyone in the family who possessed a phone. My grandparents certainly did not. No TV at the beach either.

Few English families boasted their own car. I remember one gentleman, Derek, who drove himself and his wife to the cottage in an Austin, but that was it. It would be a few more years until Uncle George purchased a vehicle.

I loved the sounds of travel. The wheeze of coaches, lorries (trucks) applying their air brakes, high pitched horns, and sirens blaring their warnings.

Musical Interlude

My theme song for the summer became, Freight Train (composer Elizabeth Cotten). British radio played it extensively. A catchy tune describing the thrill of travelling. Perhaps a railroad themed song caught the spirit of my own travels. Perhaps it reminded me of St. Thomas, The Railroad City.



Unknown child with donkey and baby frolic in the sand. Hopefully stoop and scoop laws were observed.

Talking Weather

The weather surprised us Canucks, but not the English. It rained, or rather threatened to rain, every morning of our stay, although, I don't recall it ever actually raining. The sun often made a belated, but always welcome, appearance, early in the afternoon. I swear the only day with clear sunshine turned out to be, ironically, the morning we left. Maybe it just seemed that way.

The weather didn't discourage us. Although the sky often looked grey the water could be warm. Grey skies didn't keep us from the beach or other outdoor activities. We enjoyed playing amongst the crashing waves while a potential storm brewed overhead.

At the Beach

At home I enjoyed freshwater swimming at the Waterworks pool or the beaches of the Great Lakes. Hayling Island's main beach bordered on the English Channel. The wide and long sandy beach accommodated many vacationers just like ourselves.



*The Adults left: Grandma Crump, Mum, Uncle George, Great Aunt Liz.
Swimmers: Janet and I in front. (Yours Truly is looking to fill his mask with water so he
can splash someone.)*

I had never experienced saltwater swimming, but that didn't stop me. Janet and I, blessed with the energy of youth, dove and swam every day we could. I quickly acquired a black swimming mask to reduce eye sting. Swallowing a bit of salt water could not be helped, but never became an issue.

Janet sported a bathing cap to protect her permed hair from the salt. Mum, Grandma Crump and Aunt Liz were strictly waders. Cap not required. Uncle George enjoyed the occasional plunge. Protecting my hair? Not a priority.



English on the Beach. Top row, from left: Great Uncle Tom Mason, Great Uncle Harry Bondsfield, Uncle George. Second row, from left: Great Aunt Liz, Great Aunt Sook, Grandma. Grandpa sitting, front and center.

Senior members of the family, who did not want to participate in water sports, shared a limited number of deck chairs on the beach. The guys even removed their suit jackets, loosened their ties and rolled up their sleeves. The gals typically wore cotton print dresses when not in the water.

A Picture of Sartorial Splendor



I wore powder blue jeans, never shorts, short sleeve shirts, especially a T-shirt featuring a full colour, full length print of Davey Crockett in all his glory.

Many years later a couple of great nieces speculated on the brand of running shoe I wore in various photos.

Due to unpredictable weather a jacket was often required. Sometimes I donned my Ivy League style sports car cap when the weather got serious. My suit remained unworn and forgotten in Westminster.

Left: Janet and I entertain a monkey.

Carnival

If we weren't frolicking at the beach the family attended one of the many carnivals or amusement parks in the area.

The adults played and played and played bingo, while Janet and I took advantage of the rides and fun houses. I preferred the haunted houses with their clattering rail cars, spider webs and screams. Janet and I endured bouts of boredom hanging around the Bingo Tent because Mum had to be attentive both to us and the Bingo mob.



Left: Uncle George, Grandma and Great Aunt Liz snack between Bingo games.

A Janet Story

Janet and I dared enter a mirrored maze for the first time. Mum stayed out. The mirrors confused us almost immediately. Despite our intention to stay together Janet and I soon found ourselves separated.

I quickly realized: *Hey, we could get lost.*

Somehow I battled my way out, but Janet stayed too long. Outside Mum and I watched in horror as Janet collided with mirror after mirror in her quest for the exit. Janet's face flamed red with frustration. Time slowed down until each moment seemed an eternity. We were on the point of forming a rescue party when Janet finally emerged.

Portsmouth

We visited neighbouring Portsmouth, headquarters of the Royal Navy.

We hired a small power boat to tour the harbour and view the warships. Amazing! The United Kingdom still boasted a very large navy winding down from the Suez Crisis.

I observed a number of warships including, at least, three aircraft carriers. Most painted Mediterranean Blue.

A Mum Story

Dad used to say about Mum, "Lily was born on an island (Britain) but won't go in the water. "Sail in an ocean liner, yes ... but nothing smaller."

A previous photo showing Mum in the water is unique. The only time I ever saw her in a bathing costume.

Of course Mum declined a ride in the small boat when we cruised Portsmouth Harbour.

Visiting Aunt Sook

Like most of the Crumps, Aunt Sook was witty, always ready for a laugh. She rarely wore her false teeth which increased her comical demeanour.

Aunt Sook and quiet husband, Great Uncle Harry Bondsfield visited us at the beach. We returned the favour.

The Bondsfields lived in nearby Eastleigh, a suburb of Southampton. Standing at their front gate, I stared up and down the street amazed at the endless run of tall brick row housing. A sweeping curve up the road only emphasized the length of the street and the uniformity of the homes as they faded in the distance.

I don't remember much about the inside of the Bondsfield's home. I spent time in the small but private back yard, lush with greenery and backing onto a service alley.

Uncle Harry no longer raised a hog or chickens but did tend small vegetable and flower gardens. Mum showed me where Uncle Harry built an Anderson air raid shelter for his family's protection during the Blitz.

Aunt Sook possessed awesome organizational skills, honed by being the oldest of the ten Crump children and for providing for her children and their families. Mum and Dad married in Eastleigh because of Aunt Sook's ability to overcome the challenge of war time rationing.

I became notorious for my consumption of Aunt Sook's home baked cookies. She brought an ample supply when she visited us at the cottage. Aunt Sook baked a batch the day we visited her.

Oh, that fresh from oven smell. Simple, plain cookies. Delicious.

I composed a parody dedicated to Aunt Sook.

Sing to the tune of Close the Doors, a popular song back then by Jim Low.

*Close the doors they're comin' in the window
Close the doors, they're comin' up the stairs.
Close the doors, they're eatin' Sookie's cookies.*

I rarely went past three lines, due to popular demand.



The Gravel Beach. No one swimming. No deck chairs... Everyone wonders: "who recommended this beach?" Spot Great Aunt Sook (centre, hand over mouth) attempting to hold back her laughter. Dedicated to the Crump Family.

The Kings Visit

Mum, Janet, and Yours Truly, travelled via coach, to nearby Romsey to visit Great Uncle Charles H and Great Aunt Hephzibah King. I remember debussing at the center of a pretty country town. From there, we enjoyed a short walk to the Kings'.

Uncle Charlie was very old by the standards of the day - eighty-five years. To my young eyes, he looked exactly like his older brother, my grandfather. A gardener, by trade, Uncle Charlie had retired from Lord Mountbatten's estate.

The Kings lived on the village outskirts in a typical English cottage amid luxurious gardening. I remember the cement walkway in their back yard that led from the house to their outdoor privy with its flush toilet. The interior of their home was cool and dark. We sat at a large table and chatted.

We did not stay long. They were quiet, not used to visitors, and may have been a little hard of hearing. I am glad to have met them.

Cookies Again

I can't remember a time that I didn't have a sweet tooth. The only negative part of the whole trip was that I came into conflict with Great Uncle Tom Mason over the scale of my consumption. He encouraged me to eat less. Aunt Sook didn't seem to mind my weakness. I ignored Uncle Tom as best I could.

I certainly understand why British baking is popular in recent times. The local bake shops boasted baked goods that are finally attracting notice in North America. I especially remember cream horns and greengage tarts.

Other Kids

"The Menace" and "Caveman" visited us at the beach. They were grandchildren of Mum's cousin, Alice, a daughter of Great Aunt Sook. I cannot remember their parents' names. The Menace, real name Ellen, enjoyed a reputation within the family for "bad" behavior even though only seven years of age. She seemed quiet enough around Janet and I. Caveman was the baby. I don't remember his real name. Perhaps Ellen was jealous of the attention lavished on her baby brother.



From left: Ellen AKA "The Menace", Yours Truly holding "Caveman", sister Janet.

The Masons

Great Aunt Liz Mason was the youngest of Grandpa Crumps siblings.

Mum said she could be very embarrassing to be with (for a quiet person like Mum) as she was not afraid to speak her mind, to total strangers on numerous occasions.

She was devoted to husband, Great Uncle Tom. Unfortunately, he passed away only a couple of weeks after our vacation. I have described his funeral preparation in the 2017 anthology.

After we left England in September, newly widowed Aunt Liz moved in with Grandma and Grandpa Crump (and Uncle George.)

Aunt Maude

I don't remember Aunt Maude at all. Her and Aunt Sook's daughters served as Mum's bridesmaids.

An End and a Beginning

Good things do come to an end. One hot, sunny day we left Hayling Island, probably forever, but thankful for the memories.

The summer of Nineteen Fifty-Seven turned into a formative one for me, a step on the road to maturity and the character I am today. I learned to get along with most adults. At ten years I enjoyed reading but, inspired by my experience, I expanded my scope to include History and Geography, both of which turned into lifetime interests.

Meet The Author

Born and raised in St. Thomas, Ontario, I have made my home in Brantford since nineteen eighty-one. I am married to Sharon and the father of Amy, Aaron and Ian. My work career focused on sales/marketing for a variety of businesses, both local and international. Interests include gardening, history, cycling, photography, brewing, genealogy and walking/tai-chi/yoga.

The time has come to publish “All Hail Hayling Island”. I procrastinated for years before I finally wrote this memoir of a vacation-within-a-vacation. It was fun to illustrate the story with the wonderful photos taken by my Grandfather and Uncle.

Memories are made of this. Once again I thank the Brantford Public library for supporting the Lifescapes program. I look forward to future writings.

