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Mom calls it quits!

My father, Wm Maurice, could be a bit difficult at times which often made life interesting. My mother Irene, and Dad had a typical marriage with the normal ups and downs that went with thirty-three years of living together. Mom only called it quits once which in itself was a miracle of sorts. What makes the story humorous was why she took leave of the marriage. My mother could make anything grow in the sandy dry soil of Port Maitland, -anything except roses. Mom was involved with the Dunnville Horticultural Society, being its president for a number of years. She had the most beautiful gladiolus, dahlias, snapdragons, peonies, and many other plants and flowers whose names I cannot recall. Her horticultural friends would give her new varieties of plants to try and often she had to purchase others, sometimes at considerable expense.

As mentioned in an earlier article, I would purchase four or five goslings as pets. Once they were large enough to let wander freely, they had the reign of the place, which included Mom's garden. This particular year Mom acquired a half dozen seedlings of some special flower. You have seen those yard ornaments of the lady bending over her garden weeding and all you can see is her better half and I don't mean her husband! Think of that as I tell you this story. There Mom is out in her garden planting her special new variety of flower she had long wanted to try. She is bent over as mentioned and planting one seedling at a time. With each planting she moves forward without turning around and plants the next. Finally she reaches the end of the row, stands up, stretches and turns to admire her work. There is nothing there! The goslings were following her and as quickly as she moved forward they ate her newly-sown plant. To add insult to injury one of them quickly grabbed her last remaining plant from between her feet and took off! That was all she could take! It was not the first time those goslings had been in the garden but it was damned well going to be the last time or Mom was gone!

A quick phone call to her garden and bingo buddy, Ethel Siddall, and Mom moved out! It took Dad more than three weeks before he agreed to do something about those geese. I don't know what he did because they remained free to go as they pleased much to the chagrin of both Mom and cottagers alike.

Some cottagers loved to feed them while others took a different view. I never had much problem with either view. Where I took, issue was when one of the feeding cottagers complained to my father that the geese were leaving droppings behind - good choice of words! Dad made me go around with a shovel and pail to remove the droppings. My logic is, what goes into the goose must come out the of a goose, so stop putting it in, and they will stop putting it out!

Our experience with pets extended beyond our mean-spirited geese. We had ducks, chickens, pigeons, pheasants, rabbits, crows, hawks, various other wild birds and animals, and of course cats and dogs. Sometimes big bad-tempered dogs! Every animal had a name Devil, Satan, Rags, Junior, Prince, Tiny and Chris are some that come to mind for our dogs. Chris was a pup won in a pool game by my brother-in-law, Jerry Ollen-Bittle and given to my brother David as a present on Christmas Day. My friend Aaron's grandmother, (Loretta Moore), a devout Jehovah's Witness, who lived up the road was not impressed with the names Devil or Satan and made no bones about telling me her thoughts!

During the late 50s and 60s, a family by the name of Purdy owned a cottage next to us. The Purdy's came from Buffalo and Bob was one of those men who loved to hunt and fish, and he loved dogs! Whenever the Purdy's were in Port, Devil, a large ugly and cowed Chesapeake Bay Retriever, with a bad temper as result of the bullying by a former owner lived in the Purdy cottage. Everywhere that Bob went, Devil went along. However, as Devil was usually dirty and often wet, he sometimes had to ride in the trunk. One Sunday morning Bob came over and said he could not find Devil and wondered if he was at home. He drove up and down the road visiting most cottagers looking for the old mutt but couldn't find him. My suspicion is that even if one of those cottagers knew where Devil was they were not about to tell! Time came to return to Buffalo, but Mr. Purdy stalled as long as he could, still looking for Devil. Mrs. Purdy (Alberta), finally convinced him it was time to pack up. Out to the car he went, opened the trunk and out burst Devil as happy as cricket under a log! The day had been scorching hot and Devil should have been cooked, but not that old mutt, he was in the trunk all the time enjoying his ride around the beach never making a sound for fear of being heard. It would seem that in the end, he was well named!

If you have items, you wish written about or pictures you would be willing to lend, please drop me a note. Let me know how you feel about these articles. William (Bill) Arthur Warnick 180 Rosslyn Ave. South HAMILTON, ON L8M 3J5 e-mail ywarnick@cogeco.ca **Phone 905 549-6086.**