

Duretta's Scrapbook

A collection of stories, poems and jokes



By Duretta Wolfhard

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Duretta Wolfhard

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My Early Years

My father always loved spirited horses and we had some fine ones. We had some times, going out in the wagon, with straw in the bottom, topped with blankets, and carrying along a large kettle of stew and food for a picnic. We would go berry picking to a shack in the woods where the raspberries were luscious. My dad would build a fire in the big black stove in the shack, on would go the stew to cook until we had filled our pails with berries, then back for a wonderful meal, home again tired but happy. Of course, the next day my Mother had all those berries to can or make into jam. No freezer in those days!

My first car ride was very exceptional. I had gone to a Sunday School picnic at Harrison Park where there was a swift flowing river—the Sydenham. While watching a man fish, where the river was deep and swirling, I fell in! Luckily, I was rescued just in time! One man had a car there, so they bundled me up and took me home. I thought it was really worthwhile to be almost drowned so I could say I had had a car ride. There were so few cars at that time.

My father became very successful at his business and entered into competition as a "bill poster" in different cities. He won the award as the best bill poster in Canada then went on to win the award for the best in North America at Asbury Park, New Jersey in 1908, then the best in the world in 1909. He received plaques for these achievements. I have one now and my brother has one at his house. The other one seems to have become lost. In consideration of his prowess, he was offered the job of "Inspector of Advertising" for Canada and travelled across the country from coast to coast—all by train, taking 9 months to go to Vancouver and Victoria and the same to the East Coast. My mother took over the running of the business in Owen Sound, and the raising of the five children. We did have a housekeeper, Nellie, who was like one of the family and who certainly helped raise us all.

In 1912 two brothers Ed Gould and Harold Gould, both bank managers, came to my dad and wanted to start an outdoor advertising business in Brantford,

St. Catharines and Berlin. They would supply some of the money to start, but my dad would supply the know-how. He decided to accept, and so he sold his business and house in Owen Sound and we moved to Galt, a place which they thought was central to all the businesses. However, after two months my father decided Berlin was much more central and we moved here. The company was known as the Gould Leslie Advertising Co. and was a great success. After an illness with cancer, my father sold out his share to the Gould's in 1940 and retired. It is still in business here under the name of Gould Advertising. So this business has been a going concern since 1912, and it is now January 1997, eighty-five years.

I had passed my entrance exams in Owen Sound where I stayed to live with my Grandparents, and while there I became ill. The doctors there diagnosed my trouble as "Tubercular Hip", as there was an epidemic of it in Owen Sound at that time. However, one of the doctors advised my parents to seek an outside opinion and they brought me home to Berlin and took me to Dr. Kalbfleisch on Benton Street. He said it was rheumatism and I was in bed for over a month. My leg was painted with iodine and wrapped in cotton batting every day. It seems a strange cure today, but it seemed to do the trick and I was fine. The next school term I went to Toronto to Shaw's Business College and lived with my Aunt Lizzie on Fisherman's Point near Hanlon's Point. While in Toronto war was declared in 1914.

I returned home and went to Miss Lowes Millinery Store to learn the trade. I received \$1.00 a week and after being there for 2 seasons, they sent me to the Millinery Wholesales in Toronto to copy the styles. We made hats for summer from straw braid sewn on wire frames and from leghorn and panama hoods bought from the wholesale. In winter they were made from felt and beaver hoods, blocked and shaped. Some were trimmed with huge bows of satin or velvet ribbon and some with feathers, wings and quills. The prices were on the hats in code, "Rockingham" - the letters being the numbers one to ten, R-1-02-C3 etc. \$1.50 being R1M. From there I went to Goudies which was then Wesloh Goudies on King Street near Frederick. It ran back with an entrance on Frederick, which was a men's store run

by Mr. Wesloh who was Mr. Goudie's father-in-law. I was cashier there and we stayed open Saturday night. I had started going out with Harry a few months earlier and he waited across the street from Goudies until I was finished. Mr. Goudie used to stand at the door and as long as there was anyone in sight he wouldn't close the store. I had to wait and balance my books and put away the cash after we closed. Some nights as late as 10:30 or 11:00 p.m. You can imagine how impatient Harry became!

A position became available at the Bank of Toronto and I applied for it. The hours were better—no nights and better pay. When I applied, the position required typing and shorthand. My job at Goudies did not, so I was a bit rusty. When the manager gave me a letter in shorthand, to type, I couldn't even read my shorthand. I certainly thought the job wouldn't be mine! After a week the manager phoned me, and told me that the job was mine if I wanted it. When I finally went to work there, my job was Savings Teller and I didn't need shorthand or typing. Months later I asked the manager how I ever got the job. He said he called Mr. Goudie for a reference and was told he just couldn't let me go as I was going such an excellent job. "So", said the manager, "that was all I needed." No more working Saturday nights for me.

At that time in the bank, there was a huge copper coloured cage about 6 foot 5 inches high in which we worked at a high desk. One customer I had was taller than that, and he could look over the top at me. I felt like an animal in a cage. His name was Pritschaw, a real 'heel clicking' German. Remember that this was in the time of World War One. Everyone thought he must be a spy. Pritschaw was in the business of loaning farmers money on their farms—which turned out to be fraudulent. The 118th Regiment was stationed in Kitchener at this time and they became suspicious of this man. Several of the soldiers went to his home on Benton Street one night and forced their way in. They made him open his safe and when he did so, there was nothing in it but the Union Jack. Some time after this episode he disappeared and was never seen again. How could a man 6 foot 7 inches tall, built like a giant, disappear? He had such large feet, he had his boots made at the Merchants Rubber Company where they had to make special casts on

which to make the boots. They were larger than any boots they had ever made.

One other customer of mine had a very long name which was hard to pronounce and to write. However, I managed to do both, but with difficulty. It was—Jno Slovenlovenkumcluski.

My aunt from Arizona and her husband came up to visit my folks. They owned a Spa in Phoenix, Arizona. I was so intrigued by their description of their place that I went back with them to work at the Spa. They taught me massage and hairdressing. It was so hot in Phoenix and I missed Harry so much—he kept writing that he missed me too. I went to Arizona in April and stayed till August and came home.

I went to work in the office at the Felt Company, a branch of Dominion Rubber. So glad to be home! Harry was now office manager of the Elmira Rubber Company also a branch of Dominion. He had started as office boy at the Merchants, after finishing a business course at R.C.I. when he was 16. He was very successful there and was promoted to Office Manager in Elmira. After a year there, he was made Factory Manager at 23 and we decided to get married.

How I learned to drive a car in 1918 and 1920

Harry taught me to drive his father's Buick in 1918. At that time one didn't need a driver's test or a licence. I thought I was doing very well until one night we were coming from Preston and I was driving up the old Preston hill, no paved road of course and a sharp turn at the bottom, so you couldn't get a run at it. I stalled half way up, Harry grabbed the wheel and we backed into a ditch. He couldn't get out and at that moment we heard a car coming down the hill. Harry grabbed the tow rope with hooks that he always carried in the car and called to me that he knew the sound of that engine. He got out on the road and signalled. It was Bill Phillips, his best friend. He slackened and Harry put the hook on Bill's bumper and out we came from the ditch.

I didn't drive much after that as I went to Arizona and lived with an aunt and uncle who had a health spa in Phoenix. I learned the hair dressing business from them and stayed from August to May. Harry kept writing that he missed me so, and also I missed him, so I came home and we were married that November, 1919.

The following spring Harry taught me to drive again and we now had Grandpa's Buick and Grandpa had a lovely new Studebaker "President".

Harry had to go to Montreal on business that summer and left by train from Elmira expecting to come home to Kitchener's C.N.R. station. I was to drive to Kitchener and meet him and bring him home. I wasn't at all worried about driving down, but was worried about coming home up the St. Jacobs hill which was a very steep and twisting road. Especially after my experience on the Preston Hill. However, I felt Harry would drive home and all would be well. When I got to the station in Kitchener Harry was not on the train. I went to my mother's wondering what had happened. Shortly after Harry phoned from Elmira because he had come home by C.P.R., which brought him into Elmira. I started home worried all the way to St. Jacobs about that hill. I climbed it beautifully and have had no problems since. I felt I could drive anywhere.

Floradale - 1920

It was shortly after the war and houses in Elmira were very scarce. We had two rooms upstairs in Mr. & Mrs. Weber's lovely large home, but in the spring Harry heard of a house in Floradale that we could rent furnished. It had a living room, large farm kitchen and a bedroom downstairs, two bedrooms upstairs, no bathroom—but with an outhouse outside the back door. There were three acres of land going back to a dam, and a barn with runway for chickens. We planted a lovely garden. All this for \$5.00 a month! I used to go back to the dam and fish and get enough fish for our dinner anytime I felt like it. We had chickens and one duck which became so tame we kept him in the house. He used to sit on the toe of my shoe, when he was very small. Like everything else he grew up to be a big duck and followed us all over.

Elmira

We moved into Elmira in August as we heard of a house for rent there and I was pregnant with Leslie in October. Our duck came with us and he used to go down to the corner and meet Harry when he came home from work. We gave him to a farmer when the cold weather came as we couldn't keep him in the house and certainly couldn't kill him. The farmer couldn't either and he became a great pet for his children. The house on Ernst Street was so cold, no matter how much coal we used, that we nearly froze that winter. Leslie our first child was born September 1920 and in the early summer we moved again to three rooms in Dr. Watson's large house. As there was now three of us, we decided to build a house on the corner of Ernst and Arthur. It was a lovely house of white stucco, with dark green trim. We did a lot of work ourselves and did all the landscaping as well. It was really a show place in Elmira. Our son Bill was born there in June 1923 and we just loved the location and the house. In fact, we enjoyed our years in Elmira. Harry progressed from Office Manager to Factory Manager while we were there, from 1919 to 1930.

The winters there were very severe and of course the roads were not ploughed. You just struggled through it with chains on your tires to help you through. There was a local train which we called the "Toonerville Trolley". We sometimes came down to Kitchener on that. It was not too reliable and one very cold and snowy Monday we tried to come home by train. However, the engine lost its fire box about 5 miles from Elmira and we had to be taken off and driven in sleighs with horses and fur robes over our legs back to Elmira. It was really cold and miserable. Harry was promoted to Factory Manager of Merchants Rubber Company in Kitchener and that winter was grim. There was more snow than usual and he was driving back and forth each day. One Friday night he brought his father with him for the weekend. The roads were awful. He filled his gas tank and started off. Snow was blowing and drifting. He used the whole tank of gas getting home—12 miles. He would get stuck then free and get stuck again. He eventually made it and was the last car that got through that winter. Even the bus was stuck and remained there for three months.

After that winter we decided we should go back to Kitchener. Mike Weichel had always said he would like to buy our house if we ever decided to sell. We contacted him and he decided to buy it. We hated to leave but the winters, with two small children and never knowing whether Harry could get home by train or not, was just too much.

The Cottage

One summer we took a cottage at Wasaga Beach and we all enjoyed that change. Our cottage at Port Dalhousie was rented from Dominion Rubber. It had at one time been the bathhouse for the employees. While we were at Wasaga, we heard the Port cottage was to be sold so decided to drive there and buy it.

The Meunier's and ourselves drove down one evening. The Copelands who were also at a cottage at Wasaga drove down too. They were ahead of us and told us of a shortcut and to follow them. Before we got to Orangeville a cow jumped out of the ditch and we couldn't avoid hitting it. The Copelands noticed our lights were not behind them and came back. Our car was badly damaged and Ruth Meunier and I were hurt. They took the four of us in a third car and brought us home where we went to see Dr. Levine. I had my glasses broken and glass embedded in my face, which the Doctor soon cleared up, but Ruth had her nose broken which was straightened.

Next day we borrowed Grandpa's car and continued on to Port Dalhousie where we negotiated the purchase of the property. After a couple of years we decided it was too small and we sold the cottage to the Meunier's. They moved it over to the far side of the lot and we built the new one. They paid us \$250.00 for it and we paid \$900.00 for a Halliday's Reddy Cut cottage. This was in 1941.

We had some wonderful years there. First we had Kate our maid and housekeeper who was 240 pounds, a wonderful person, good cook, good company and a treasure. Our children and their friends, and our friends spent wonderful holidays

there. First we called it "Kissing Cottage" then, "Honeymoon Cottage", then "Lullaby Bay". When we first had the cottage my mother and dad came down, and Grandpa Wolfhard then the children and their girlfriends and boyfriends, then their spouses and then the grandchildren. Even the great grandchildren. Even the great grandchildren had some wonderful times at Grandpa's cottage. So five generations of Wolfhard's enjoyed holidays at Port.

When Harry took sick of course I could not look after the cottage, so Leslie and Bus moved down from Burlington for the summer as Bus could look after his business just as well from the cottage. I think they enjoyed it very much. Leslie loved the gardening and it looked beautiful. However, Bus died of a heart attack in March of 1982 and Harry died after a lingering illness in August of that year. So of course there was no one to look after it, as Bill had a lovely home with a pool they enjoyed.

The man next door had always said he would buy if we ever decided to sell. So that fall we sold to him for \$70,000.00. After 40 years of enjoyment we hated to part with it and all the memories, but financially we did all right. The people who bought it tore it down and built a modern, year-round house.

Montreal Diary 1944

August 1st

Harry just came home and told me we are to pull up all our roots here in Kitchener and move to Montreal. I've never lived in a big city. Sure it's fun to visit, night clubs, picture galleries, and all the stores with their gala displays. You get ideas even if you don't buy. Well of course we have some very nice friends there and my young brother Ralph too. Perhaps it won't be too bad. At least it will be fun next week to go down and look for a place to live. I hear they are having housing troubles too. Oh well, as Harry says, if you live right everything works out. Time will tell.

August 7th

The big city. Here we come, hoping for the best but a bit worried too. Started off all right anyway. We couldn't get train accommodation at first but at the last minute landed a drawing-room—must be living right. Fingers crossed. Wonder how Leslie and Jinx are getting on at the cottage. Leslie is being a courageous girl with her hubby Bill being in the worst spots around Falaise and Caen. She is doing very well. Of course being our daughter we must have given her some of her fortitude. Now I really wonder if we have had any ourselves to give.

Jinx has been a help to her too. How she likes to play with her and Jinx looks at her with the usual sad eyes of a Spaniel and cuddles up to her as though she was a little puppy. Leslie's job picking fruit will help keep her mind off things too, and of course having Elaine as company all summer has been grand. Elaine has been a marvellous companion, full of life and jollier than any French teacher I ever had. The younger generation really have something.

Well perhaps we were just as smart. Anyway we had fun and now its grand to

watch the next generation follow through. Guess I don't need to worry, but here we are in Montreal. Leslie in Port Dalhousie, and our Bill on the high seas on a Destroyer and Leslie's Bill over in France. Like so many families just now, we are spread all over the map. Just keep them all safe God and that is all we ask.

August 8th

Telephoned Ralph from the hotel this morning and he wants us to stay with he and Vera, while we are house hunting. His car is at my disposal and that will perhaps be a help—or will it? How will I know where to go? Think I had better stick to street cars. Have called a couple of agencies—nothing to rent, may even have to buy, but that seems so final. Home is still in Kitchener and when the boys come back, I hate to think they won't be coming to the old home. After all it's only a house, but it holds so many memories. I wonder what they are thinking about over there in France and in that ship on the Atlantic? Thank goodness we have the cottage and that will hold us all together in the summer.

Hold on! Where am I going? I'm still in Montreal trying to find a roof over our heads!

What a lovely city—the beautiful churches, the parks, and the glistening St. Lawrence as we saw it from Mount Royal today. I hope the people will be equally lovely, because I'm beginning to think once we live here it won't be the Museums and Art Galleries and night clubs we will be interested in, but the people we meet. Hope they like us, after all I'm only a small town girl and still a bit scared of the big city.

August 9th

We were invited out to the Simpson's for dinner last night. What grand people. They also had as guests a couple from the town of Mount Royal who are moving to

New York. We may get their house—will look at it today even if it is Sunday. Must be living right. The house was a bit large, but if the family comes with us to Montreal it will be ideal. Saw the owner and everything is settled. Except for a few minor details, we can move next month.

August 10th

Leaving for home tonight. Travelling very light. Only my purse and coat over my arm. I can't even wash my face for I won't have any make up to put on and I feel bad enough without that.

What a climax to all our good luck, and right living.

After parking the car on Victoria St. just off St. Catherine's, Ralph locked it with our bags inside and because it was only 7:30 p.m., we decided to see a movie—which turned out to not be a very good one.

When we walked back to the car the first thing that met our eyes was the no-draft window was smashed. We were afraid to look! Sure enough, our two bags were gone. Harry's nice new Rawhide and the bag I had borrowed from Leslie—with all my best clothes, six pairs of nylons, and all my jewellery.

The Police were given a description of everything but gave us no hope of finding our things. Of all the times Leslie wanted to borrow a pair of my nylons and I always said "no". Now I'm beginning to remember some other things in that bag. Glory if the police find it and I have to identify the bag and contents—will my face be red. Perhaps the faces of the police too!

Let me think what was in the bag. Yes, a switch was in it, I thought I might wear—well at least it was my own hair. I had it cut off when we started wearing our hair short. There was also a pair of false rubber busts I bought to wear with a bathing suit—now I'll never know how I would have looked as Lana Turner. Someone will

get a kick out of that when they open the bag. And oh dear, all kinds of intimate things you take along on a trip. I'm almost beginning to hope the police never find the bag! No I'm not either. I want my jewellery. Harry's Dad gave me a lot of it or the money to buy it. All those lovely turquoise pieces from Florida and the lovely diamond and onyx ring I liked so well. I do hope they find it. Of course Harry's bag was just shirts and ties and socks, at least they can be replaced. And surely one of these days I can find him another electric razor. He is going to look funny too when we get on the Port Dalhousie boat in the morning without a shave. He will match me with my day old makeup, and not even a comb.

At Port at last, everyone feeling sad, poor old Jinx has been sick all the time we were away. The vet says its some kind of paralysis. Although Leslie says she is much better today. I feel so sorry for her she can't wag her tail and wants to, to welcome us home. I believed she missed us. Everyone is talking about our losing our luggage—says it serves me right for hoarding nylons. But it wasn't hoarding—it was being careful of them just the way they told us on the radio. Leslie is tired dear girl, looking after poor old Jinx and working too. Now I'll take over.

Queen Street South

In 1930 we rented a house on Queen Street South that Grandpa Wolfhard owned. Harry's sister Eda and her husband Bob had lived in it but after Grandma Wolfhard died they decided to move in with grandpa.

It was a very nice house and very central. Grandpa was still in the hardware business on King Street. We really enjoyed Kitchener and my parents lived there too. In fact, shortly after we moved there, they built a very nice house on Queen Street South too. They lived there until my father died in 1945 and my mother in 1953. We bought the house, and have rented it mostly to the family. Peter Wolfhard is living there now with his wife Lyn and son Steven (in 1985).

I think both our children enjoyed their school years. Leslie played badminton and won a great many trophies. Bill was more interested in skiing and was an exceptionally good skier. He also won awards at diving and swimming too. In the summer he went to camp and of course, we had the cottage which we all enjoyed a great deal.

* * * * *

Our house on Queen Street South has also been torn down for city improvements. We had some wonderful years there as well. From 1920 to 1942 the children made many friends and we entertained a lot of ours and theirs.

I Remember

Hockey

Kitchener Auditorium, Queen Street South
I.O.D.E. Queen Ann Chapter

Girls played hockey against the Fatmen of Kitchener, proceeds went to the war effort. Mr. Ritz engineered the whole thing, but did not play.

I was the youngest player and was very nervous. I got out on the ice and couldn't seem to skate, looked down and found I had my skates on the wrong feet. So I had to go back to the dressing room and change. We wore dark skirts and sailor blouses with white or light coloured sweaters. This was not a team, just a bunch of girls who wanted to make money to help the war effort. It was well advertised and we had fun. If a man fell, the nearest girl was given a penalty.

Being only 15 years old I did not know many of the rules of the game. However, we made a lot of money that was used both for the Red Cross and the war effort. Mr. Ritz owned the drug store at the corner of King & Queen. I did not know the man.

Dominion Rubber Company

They made rubber bathing shoes, caps and bathing suits. The bathing suits were beautiful and lovely colours. With my husband being in the company, naturally I had them all. However, as I had a small bosom the suit didn't fit too well. To improve this discrepancy, I bought a pair of falsies, but I couldn't sew them or pin them into the rubber. I just tucked them in and hoped for the best. We had a picnic at our cottage on Lake Ontario and we all went swimming. Suddenly there was one of my falsies floating away from me. One of the men swam out and returned it. My most embarrassing moment!

Grandpa Wolfhard's Clock

Wm. Kutt, Grandma Wolfhard's brother-in-law made them a beautiful oak Grandfather clock back in the year 1918. It had a Pequegnat clock movement and chimed. It was in the hall of their home when Grandpa died in 1948, between Christmas and New Year. At that moment the face fell off the clock and it stopped. It was relegated to the basement and later to our own basement, where it stood until 1985. Our grandson, Bill Fraser, admired it and Harry said he could have it. He took it to the apartment he and his bride, Brenda had rented on King Street in Waterloo. He made a new face for it, polished the brass pendulum and got it in working order and we were so proud of it. Brenda was a teacher, but was home for the Christmas holidays in 1971. On Wednesday of that week at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the clock started to shake and continued to do so for almost 5 minutes. There was no trucks passing and no reasons for the shaking. We found out from Bob Menzies that Grandpa had died at 3 p.m. the Wednesday, between Christmas and New Year. Rather an unusual happening!

775 Queen Street South

My mother and father built this house on the corner of Queen and Highland in 1936. It has been a lovely home temporarily for most of the family. After my father died, my mother had it made into a duplex and Leslie and Bus lived in the upper apartment after Bus came home from overseas. They then moved to Owen Sound. Bob and Helen lived there until they had children and bought a house on Patricia. Bill and Ellie also lived there when they were first married. It has served the family well. After my mother died we rented the lower floor to the Woodalls and no family upstairs. Then Peter Fraser got married and lived in the upper for some time. Peter was transferred to Edmonton and Peter Wolfhard and his wife, Lyn, moved in. They stayed there until 1989. I gave the house, valued at \$70,000.00 to Bill to offset the Vermont Street house I bought for Leslie after Bus died when she moved to Waterloo. This was in 1987. Bill then sold it to Peter and Peter eventually sold it when he bought a new house. So it is now out of the family.

War Years

Then the war came along in 1939. It was a dreadful time. Bill had been on the lake freighters in the holidays under a brother of Ruth Meunier, Captain Bird and a brother-in-law of Ruth's, Captain Jack Allen. Jack Allen's ship was sent down to South America in the winter to transport bauxite for the allies and was torpedoed and sunk with all hands. Bill was so upset with this that he joined the Navy and spent the war years, first as gunnery teacher in Hamilton, then as an A/B on the H.M.S. Middlesex. Bus and Leslie were married in June and we had a beautiful wedding reception at Forest Hill Gardens after the ceremony at the Anglican Church. We had over a hundred guests at a sit down dinner in lovely surroundings for less than \$100.00 and we paid an extra \$1.50 for a room for her to change from her wedding gown to her going away outfit. The wedding dress was made at Magda Lang's, of white Chantilly lace over eggshell taffeta with a long train, and a cap of Battenburg Lace made by Miss Lowes. She looked beautiful.

Bus was in the Army by this time—a Lieutenant in the Scots Fusiliers. They spent some time at the cottage for their honeymoon and later Bus was sent to the Welland Canal to guard that with his regiment. After he was posted overseas, Leslie came home. Then we were moved to Montreal and Leslie came with us. Bus was reported missing, and we received word he was a prisoner near Brunswick, Germany where he remained until the war's end. Bill's ship was torpedoed in the Atlantic and he was in hospital from January to July, 1945 in Halifax.

What a blessed relief when the war was over and both boys returned home safely!

Family Notes

Bill was married to Eleanor Knechtel in Kitchener on February 2, 1946 and we came from Montreal for the wedding. They had their honeymoon at Limberlost Lodge in the Muskoka's, skiing.

After Bus came home he started a tire store in Owen Sound and built a house on 6th Street across from the school. They had two lovely boys, Bill and Peter. Bill is now 40 in 1987 and is President of his company, "Compass", in Brockville. Peter is with a water softening company in Edmonton. Bill has one son, Jonathan while Peter two sons, Simon and Aaron, both born on December 18—Simon in 1974 and Aaron in 1976. Peter who married Rosemary Karges, was divorced and a few years later (after having Simon and Aaron) married Roseanne.

Simon and Aaron spend part time with their Mother and part time with Peter. Both are fine boys and good scholars. Bill Fraser has a son Jonathan now 6 years old and a very intelligent and clever boy.

Our granddaughter Susan (Bill and Ellie's daughter), is married to Andy Kalbfleisch and they have a darling daughter, Beth, who was born on July 16, 1977. Susan has written two books on skipping, which have been published in several languages. Andy has his own business which manufacturers skipping ropes. The ropes are put together by handicapped people in Hamilton. Sue teaches school in Hamilton and also coaches the "Hamilton Hoppers" skipping team who have won a great many firsts in skipping. They travel all over Canada, the United States and Europe. Sue also works as a volunteer with the Heart Foundation.

The 1980's

We have certainly had our share of sadness in the last ten years. Leslie's husband, Bus (Bill) died of a heart attack in March of 1982. My beloved husband

died in August of the same year after an illness of 3 1/2 years. Then Bill's wife, Ellie, died in August of 1986, after three years of A.L.S.

Leslie met a wonderful man in May of 1984, who we all liked very much. A kind and thoughtful person. They were married here in my house in July of 1986. After a year and a half of happiness they went to Florida in February 1988 where Bob died on the 20th of an aneurysm. She was devastated. It was a tragedy.

I celebrated my 90th birthday on January 1, 1989. My family were all here. It was a wonderful occasion. The Frasers from Edmonton and Brockville, the Wolfhards, the Kalbfleisch family from Hamilton, Bill and Leslie. They are so wonderful to me. I have such a caring family.

1989

This has been quite a year. Leslie met and likes a man she met through the church, Ray Fowler. We all like him very much. Don't know whether it is serious or not, but time will tell. In the meantime it is wonderful for her to have a friend to take her to dinner, the theatre and golfing. When you are a widow, it is a very lonely life. I know.

Bill has become very friendly with Esther Treusch. We are so pleased. He has gone through a very difficult period. He had a stroke while Ellie was so ill, and then her death was just a few months later. We have known Esther for many years. She is a very fine person. We knew her when she was Esther Weber and later she married Reg Hoddle and had two daughters. Reg died at a very early age and after being a widow for some years, she married Bill Treusch, a widower with five children. What courage she must have had to take on seven children to look after and a new husband. Those "children" are now all married with children of their own. A really wonderful family. Bill Treusch passed away in 1984.

Leslie and I flew down to Florida in April to visit Bill. He bought a prefab house, near Sarasota in a retirement park. Small but very nice. It was very hot— between 85 and 90 F—too hot for me!

Ray drove us to the airport and was very helpful. He also picked us up and drove us home when we flew back a week later. We had a lovely holiday. In May, Bill and Esther decided to marry. We were all pleased. Bill really has a big family now. Esther had a cottage in Southampton—a really lovely place right on the lake. They took me there for a few days in July.

Bill and Esther were married here in my house in June. Esther's brother-in-law Rev. Earl Treusch officiated. Her oldest daughter Karen was her maid-of-honour and Bill's son Peter was his best-man. It was a lovely wedding, even though it rained and we couldn't be in the garden. A few months later Leslie and Ray decided to marry. We were all very pleased. The wedding was in the chapel of their church on November 18 and was very, very beautiful. I was matron-of-honour and was very honoured. The reception was here at my house. Leslie sold her house and Ray sold his and they bought a beautiful home on Westmount Road about 5 minutes drive from me. I'm so glad to have them so close. It was very interesting to be asked to help look for a house for them and we spent a lot of time going from place to place. However, the house they chose is perfect and with the best furnishings from both houses, it is a dream home. They are very happy.

Bill and Esther are spending most of the winter in Florida where they have bought a larger house in the same park, having sold the smaller one.

Leslie and Ray are spending two weeks in Ixtapa, Mexico.

On my 90th birthday—90 Gifts

My family had a lovely party for me and my grandson and his wife from Edmonton, Alberta arrived a few days ahead and we had a lovely visit.

They brought a most unusual birthday gift. Ninety small parcels, beautifully wrapped. The smallest was several round chocolate truffles, each with a white ribbon. Next, small jars of jams and jellies and then small bottles of honey and

packages of tea. Next, 14 brass, oval picture frames with pictures of each of the family. Beautiful. Next size was sachets for my dresser drawers, small size wines of several brands and a dozen white taper candles. Image the work of planning and buying all these items. Then they hid them all over the house. What fun to discover little surprises in the next couple of days.

Hello There! October 8, 1997

October 8, 1997

Hello there;

Well at 98, I've ended up here, in a very nice Senior Citizen's Home. It has nice people, funny people and some that are downright queer. Those I feel so sorry for. Most of these people are on the fourth floor and have Alzheimers.

For some months I was on the second floor and met some very nice people. Of course they were all old people. Some with stories to tell. We played Bridge in the lounge. Nice to have a game again.

My problem is poor circulation, so I have to sit with my feet up on a rubber wedge or on a chair with my feet up. One can't play Bridge with one's feet up. So I gave that up. Now I just read or write and watch television. I am finding out a lot about politics and finances that I didn't know before.

I have a wonderful companion, Cecile Mowatt. She was a registered nurse and looked after Harry when he was sick. We have a great time watching "Wheel of Fortune" and reading the paper. She writes notes for me and cheques that I sign. As you can see my writing is not as good as it should be, my hand shakes. I can't paint anymore either. The year before I came in here, I painted and wrote 70 Christmas cards.

The first month I was here, I gained 20 pounds. I use to be very active, gardening, walking etc., here all I do is sit. I have a wonderful chair, like a Lazy Boy, only this puts me up on my feet and I can also lie almost flat out and sleep. It's worth its weight in gold and cost me \$700.00, but it is worth every cent.

At the date of writing this I've lost the 20 pounds I gained and I'm back to my 120

pounds. No pastry, no gravy, no sugar or cream. I just watched my diet and did a few exercises.

I was on the second floor at first, in a lovely room, with my own furniture and paintings on the walls. Just lovely, but I fell backward over the bathtub and broke four ribs and my right shoulder bone. I had to go to the hospital for about three weeks, then I went to the fourth floor infirmary for about 4 months. On this floor is where all the Alzheimer patients are. I didn't like that too well. Some queer things happened. A very nice gentleman was there and wandered in the halls. One day after lunch I was sitting in my favourite chair, my feet up on the rubber wedge and fast asleep as usual, when I was wakened by a knock on my door. I woke up fast to see this man in my other chair fast asleep too. They soon got him out. Really funny.

A few days later my kind companion took me for a walk in my wheelchair in the park. When we returned this same man was sitting in a chair. He had gone through my desk and moved a beautiful bouquet of roses into the clothes cupboard. It took about three days to get things back to where they belonged. We rang my call button and a nurse came to get him and told me to keep my door closed. I didn't like that so I was moved up to the 7th floor. I like it here with the pleasant staff, good service and I can have my door open when I like.

They have barbecues frequently—chicken and ribs in the garden when weather permits. There are also music and games. We also have different stores come and show their wares, such as Tender Tootsie shoes, Snowden ladies wear and they also carry some men's things as we have about ten men here. In the autumn we have Stationery cards, writing paper and envelopes. There also is a very good hair dressing salon and a very good laundry where you can send your washable clothes and it is back the same day—no charge.

This is a wonderful place for elderly folks. No shopping for groceries, no cooking, no cleaning, just a quiet caring home, with nursing care when you need it. A lovely breakfast tray in your room in the morning. There comes a time for most of us when

we need help and I would recommend this way of life for most elderly people. There is a lounge on all floors, so nice for a get together for conversation or t.v. or just sitting.

When I came in here, after selling my lovely home, furniture, and things I had gathered over the years, I was pleased to find I had room for everything. I also figured the cost of this home, as compared to living in my own home and found it was almost the same, when you figure taxes, insurance, outdoor maintenance and upkeep such as food, electricity, gas, and so on.

I just wonder what the maintenance here must be? I think I'll find out. There are about 100 people, it is 7 stories high, large dining room and main lounge. It has a beautiful, well kept garden, comfortable furniture, a fountain and a pool. We also have trips for shopping or just to see our lovely city—its trees and gardens. We sometimes go by bus or taxi.

There are lots of things to do here or you can be as quiet as you like. Wheelchairs and walkers are used when needed. I phoned a friend of mine the other day who is about my age and is in another senior citizens home. She had only been there a few days and I asked her, "Well, dear how do you like your new home?" She replied, "It's all right, but it's all old people."

Well my dear, I have to go down for dinner. No slaving over a hot stove, I just get into my wheelchair and a pleasant young girl comes and wheels me down to my table, where we have good food and conversation. Then when our meal is over she comes and brings me back. What luxury. I listen to the news and weather and at six o'clock my lovely companion arrives and I certainly enjoy her company.

We go through the park and how pretty it is. The trees are beautiful this time of year and the flower beds glowing with colour, mums and begonias in all their beauty. Burning bushes, red as fire, every kind of tree, some turning colour and evergreens. I must say Kitchener should be proud of this lovely park. Back to my lovely room to have a walk down the halls with my walker. Good exercise for my

legs and chat with some of my neighbours. Then back to my room and t.v. plus prepare for bed. I'm all tucked in, after a sponge bath and a back rub with Keri lotion, by 9 p.m.

I'm up at 6:30 a.m. then after a wash, etc. I'm ready for my favourite breakfast. Then I get dressed and am ready for the day. I watch the news and weather. The weather doesn't worry me, but it is nice to know there will be a sunny day ahead or very glad to be here where I am, snug and dry on a rainy day.

Later one of the staff comes in and puts my feet up on my rubber wedge and I doze for about an hour. During the morning there is a class for exercise for those who care for that, or art lessons, or you may listen to organ music or different entertainment. And then a very nourishing lunch of your choice.

Some very funny episodes occur from time to time. Here is one I really thought was good:

We gather in the main lounge in the evening. One evening a lady who had been living here for about two weeks went over to a gentleman in the lounge and said, "You look just like my third husband."

He replied, "I do."

She said, "Oh, yes! Just exactly."

He asked, "How many times have you been married?"

She said, "Twice."

This is the best place to spend your golden years, in my opinion.

Have a happy day!

Your friend,

Duretta

Humour: Stories, Jokes and Riddles

What Are Seniors Worth?

We are worth a fortune:

Remember, old folks are worth a fortune
with silver in their hair, gold in their teeth,
stones in their kidneys, lead in their feet
and gas in their stomachs. I have become a little
older since I saw you last and a few changes have
come into my life - frankly, I have become a
frivolous old gal.

My Five Friends

I am seeing five gentlemen every day. As soon as
I wake up, Will Power helps me get out of bed.
Then I go see John. Next, Charley Horse comes
along and when he is here, he takes a lot of my
time and attention. When he leaves, Arthur Ritis
shows up and stays the rest of the day. He does not
like to stay in one place very long, so he takes
me from joint to joint. After such a day,
I'm really tired and glad to go to bed with Ben Gay.
What a life; Oh yes I'm also flirting with Al Zymer.

P.S. The preacher came to call the other day.
He said that at my age I should be thinking
about the hereafter. I told him, "I do all the time.
No matter where I am, in the parlour, upstairs,

in the kitchen or down in the basement, I ask
myself - now what am I here after?"

(Original author unknown, but obviously female)

A Good Story from Leslie

The other day I went into the local religious book store where I saw a "Honk if you love Jesus" bumper sticker. I bought it and put it on the back bumper of my car, and I'm really glad I did. What an uplifting experience followed! I was stopped at a light in a busy intersection, just lost in thoughts of the Lord, and I didn't notice that the light had changed. That bumper sticker really worked! I found lots of people who love Jesus. The guy behind me started to honk like crazy. He must really love the Lord because pretty soon, he leaned out his window and yelled "Jesus Christ!" as loud as he could. It was like a football game with him shouting "Go Jesus Christ! Go". Everyone else started honking too, so I leaned out my window and waved and smiled to all of those loving people. There must have been a guy from Florida back there because I could hear him yelling something about a "sunny beach", and I saw him waving in a funny way with his middle finger stuck up in the air. I asked my two kids what that meant. They squirmed, looked at each other, giggled and told me that it was the Hawaiian Good Luck sign, so I leaned out the window and gave him the good luck sign back. A couple of the people were so caught up in the joy of the moment that they got out of their cars and were walking toward me. I bet they wanted to pray. But just then I noticed the light had changed to yellow, and I stepped on the gas. a good thing I did because I was the only driver to get through the intersection. I looked back at them standing there. I leaned way out the window, gave them a big smile and held up the Hawaiian good luck sign as I drove away.

Praise the Lord for such wonderful people!

THE UNFORGETTABLE

McKay, yes that's my name ----- old John McKay

A pioneer? ----- Well I've been here I'd say

Ten years at least before the other folk

In yonder village had been born. They spoke

to you of me? thought I could tell about

the early days in here. Well George Corbet

in the village talks a deal. But

(Seventy-five years old he is) --- But he'll

Be just a child so high --- when on this land

I cleared the bush that stretched on every hand

Eternally --- But many a long year has passed

away since then, for just a near as I can say,

I must be ninety now, -----

A long way to remember, anyhow -----

(My Sarah could have told you to a year

How old I was, and much beside, I fear

I have forgotten of the early years) -----

When first we came in here and made our blaze

Along the River Bank ----- I was a lad so high ---

The only neighbour that we had this side the Stage

Line was old Davidson whose shack was up the stream,

three miles, Dead now these thirty years, no doubt -

My father and John Davidson came out in thirty-seven,

And they went to Jail because they struck the blow

that drove the nail into the heart of all our ancient

wrong, But you are young Sir, and this thing was long

Before your day. Oh well now let me see, if only

Sarah were just here, why she could tell you all

about the early days far better than can I.

She knew the way of putting things.
She was the only girl of Davidsons'
And by the rushing swirl of waters at the forks,
I used to see her every day, until she came to be
my wife.

When father died and left this land
To be mine own, and I cold take her hand
With honesty, -- though there would be much toil
In poverty and stress, to break the soil
Still hardly tamed, and push the forest back,
And I must bring her to my shack
Of forest logs, -- and yet joy has it's birth,
Full often in the humblest spots on earth.

And so we found it Sir ---- I'll not forget
The day she was my bride. I see it yet
That day in May, as clear and fresh as song;
Like snow the wild plum blossoms waved along
The river there ----and her all dressed in white
And down the trail beside the stream you might
Have seen the travelling preacher on his mare -
A Bay she was Sir --- never day so rare ----
Ah, well a old man's fancy, that no doubt

All that is over now. If you'll look out
There in the orchard a grove ----
A grove of lilacs all in bloom, that's where
I drove the stake that marks her final resting
place ----

Just twenty years together, then her face
Was gone forever ---- When our day's of toil
Were ending ---- all the place was cleared, --
The soil

Was rich, ---- the mills were turning at the
falls, and all seemed promise ----

Well, Well, this recalls
Nothing that interests you; I did not mean
To Talk so much as this; --- but what between
Your asking me about the early days,
And how an old man's memory often strays ----
Well, well come on in where we can sit
and have a bite and rest yourself a bit.
I cannot talk like her at all but then -----
Just step inside and I will try again.

Cameron Kester

Cameron Kester and his wife, Mary owned the Signet Newspaper in Elmira and
this poem of his was printed in the paper dated, Thursday, November 28th, 1925.

* * * * *

The Mother Superior was asking a group of girls who were graduating from a
convent what type of career they were planning. One girl said she would like to be
a nurse, the next one said a lawyer and the next one said she wanted to be a
prostitute. The Mother Superior said, "What did you say?" The girl repeated what
she had said. The Mother Superior sighed and said, "Oh, I thought you said a
protestant."

* * * * *

A man and his wife were having difficulty with their sex life. One night he got quite
angry and said, "This is no good. I'm going to a hotel."
After about three days he decided to go home. He said to himself, "what am I doing
here? I've got a lovely home and wife." So he left the hotel and went home.

There he found his wife in bed with another man. She looked up, smiled and said, "It's all right darling, I'm just getting a second opinion."

* * * * *

My sister-in-law who is a terrible driver, was pulled over by a policeman for driving over the speed limit. He asked to see her driver's license and she replied she couldn't show it to him. After much arguing he said he could take away her license if she didn't show it to him. She replied, "If you must know, it is inside my corset." He threw up his hands in disgust and said, "Oh go on, but cut down on the speed." Imagine the laughs the police officers at the station had when he told them later.

* * * * *

Four Jewish ladies had a date to play bridge. The day before the game one of the ladies realised she couldn't attend. She phoned Mrs. Klein and asked if she could play in her place. Mrs. Klein said she would be glad to play in the other lady's place.

The woman said, "I'm sure you know the conventions."

"Of course I know the conventions," replied Mrs. Klein.

The day of the bridge game arrived and the play began. During the game Mrs. Klein and Mrs. Cohen were partners. Mrs. Cohen bid 2, no trump and put her hand up to her heart, she wanted a bid of 3 hearts. Mrs. Klein put her hand up to her left side and looked confused, thought a minute, then passed.

After the game Mrs. Cohen said to Mrs. Klein, "Mrs. Klein, I thought you said you knew the conventions."

"I do know the conventions," said Mrs. Klein. "When you bid 2, no trump and put

your hand over your left tit, I thought, left tit, left tit....so I left it."

* * * * *

What happens to good and bad girls when they die?

Good girls go to heaven, bad girls go to the Virgin Islands to be recycled.

* * * * *

An elderly woman had a nephew who looked after her affairs very efficiently. She called her lawyer Dick one day and complained that her nephew wouldn't talk to her and wouldn't listen to her. She asked Dick to talk to him and see what was wrong. Dick called the nephew and he said, "Oh dear, I know what it is. I've got an answering machine. I'll have to get rid of it."

His aunt called Dick a few days later and thanked him for talking to her nephew. She said everything was fine now, but said he had really been an ass hole.

That from an 86 year old.

* * * * *

A school teacher's pupils were misbehaving and noisy so she gave them an assignment. They had to write a sentence using the words, religion, sex, royalty and crime.

In no time one little boy stood up and said, "Teacher, I've got it."

She said, "All right, read it."

"Oh God, the Princess is pregnant, who done it?"

* * * * *

A man was hit by a car and taken to the doctor's office. He was later sent home by taxi. When he arrived home his wife wanted to know what the doctor said was wrong. He replied that the doctor said he had a "flucky". Neither knew what a flucky was. His wife then phoned the doctor who just laughed and said, "I told him he got off lucky."

* * * * *

In Ireland away back in the 14 hundreds, they didn't have courts to try thieves or felons. When a man or woman was suspected of committing a crime they were tried by a group of their peers. A relative could be present and tell a riddle. If the person on trial could answer the riddle correctly they were pronounced innocent, if not they were guilty.

Riddle: Gold & Silver have I none.
 But this man's father is my father's son.

Answer: The man being tried was the son of the man asking the riddle.

* * * * *