

*A friendly, active and open group.*

What a hot and muggy summer this has turned out to be. We are surviving it OK-ish, but I certainly would rather have the endless lazy sunny days of my youth. I know they are mainly a figment of my imagination, those summers, sixty to sixty-five years ago, when I was rambling around on my bike. I would join with friends and go looking for cool rivers, ponds, quarries and gravel pits to swim in. Things really were not that much different than they are now.

Or were they? I think that in my youth, looking at life filtered through the eyes of a young boy, helped me savour each and every day while traveling around on said bike, exploring the vast world those bicycles opened up for me and my friends. We would travel up to ten miles, more some days, searching to find a good swimming spot where we hoped there was no one else about so we could skinny dip in what we believed would be total privacy. Occasionally others would join us, or we were greeted by the giggling of girls which prompted us to scramble for our bathing suits. It was all harmless; things were definitely different then in some respects. We were not confronted by political correctness, heck, we would not even know what it was if it hit us on the end of the nose. And no, we were not supervised by our parents every hour of every day. We roamed free, engaged in harmless fun, and enjoyed every day without worrying about predators and all of that stuff we were not even aware of.

It was a freer world for kids in this country at that time. I was out the door first thing in the morning searching for my friends. We stayed out all day as well, coming in to the house only for a drink, a snack, or a meal, and then outside once more. It was dark before we were called back in for the night. No television, no video games (what are they anyway?), certainly no cell phones or tablets or I pads. A much simpler life, playing cowboys and indians (did I actually say that?), or best of all, hide and seek till way past sunset, we continued on until dusk was but a distant memory.

In our house there was a radio, my dad being a radio engineer, that was a given. On Saturday nights, we would sit around and listen to the hockey game during the winter months. You knew all the players as there were only six teams back then believe it or not. No television in those days in our home, but there were numerous live broadcast radio shows for all members of the family to listen to. No need to go to the movie theatre as nightly there were cowboy shows, comedy shows, women's shows, and a lot of drama to boot. There was lots of exciting stuff in our house.

When I was younger, bedtime came before some of the shows were over, so off I went upstairs, but then I snuck back to the top of the stairs so I could listen until

the end of the performance. This was not the bombardment to your senses that movies and television slam you with today. Back then you filled in all the details with your mind, and believe me that was great entertainment mainly because you were personally involved in each and every aspect of the performance. I will always have a soft spot in my heart for those shows. They taught me how to use my imagination, to think, to listen, to absorb what others were saying, to use my mind to fill in details that a radio broadcast can only hint at, to anticipate what is going to happen, and most important, to place myself in others shoes', to see the world from their point of view, and finally to understand that everyone is not the same, to open myself to accepting the differences we all bring to any grouping of people, and welcoming those differences as the very fabric of life as we know it.

Back to the present and the reason for this column ... August has once again been kind to the group at Glen Alda. Despite the rain we all gathered with guests to celebrate summer with corn on the cob, barbecued burgers, and freshly-made Octoberfest sausages which were accompanied by salads fresh veggies from the garden, and a great selection of home-made and store-bought desserts. Yummy for sure. Incidentally, the cooks were under cover, so no one got overly wet which was a bonus. Our next meal looks like sunshine so I hope the cooks carry on this delicious tradition.

September will open with our usual and much anticipated outing to Liz's cottage for our final barbecue of the year. This is yet another milestone in our calendar as subsequent meetings are back at the Glen Alda Community Centre where members share duties as hosts for the subsequent gatherings. Just a reminder for all of you out there reading about our various adventures in culinary cuisine - you are welcome to join this friendly, open and active group. Just give President Barry Rand a call at 705 656 1850 to let us know of your interest.

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