

REMEMBER WHEN

Presented by VWBro Robert Black, P.A.G.C. , Frontenac District, Elginburg, ON at the District Divine Service – 24 May 15

I have received many emails lately that contain nostalgic photos that bring back memories of when I was growing up and how things were when we were young. At least some of us. I would like to pass on some memories of my childhood and perhaps they will bring back some memories of your own.

I remember when my Mom did the laundry with a wringer washing machine and hung the clothes to dry on a clothes-line all year round. There were no automatic washers or dryers. There was one electric appliance on the counter in the kitchen; a toaster. We didn't have automatic coffee makers, microwave ovens, food processors, etc.

I remember my Dads car. It was a 1951 Pontiac. It had a six cylinder engine with a standard transmission and got us to where we needed to go. There were no seat belts, air bags or warning devices to indicate you were going to be involved in an accident if you didn't slow down. It didn't even have signal lights. The driver had to put his/her arm out the window to indicate (to the vehicle behind) the direction they were turning. The car did have brake lights though. There were no power windows, power seats, air conditioning, elaborate sound system, GPS, or a voice inside the dash that you could tell to dial your phone or tune to your favourite radio station. The car did not park itself when you pulled up to an empty parking space. Riding in the back of an open bed pick up truck was a common occurrence. Heaven forbid today though.

Remember cell phones. I don't. No one had one because they had not been invented yet. The first mobile phone I ever saw was the size of a car battery. "Almost" everyone has a mobile communication device of one kind or another and heaven forbid if something goes wrong with it. It appears that the younger generation can't live without being connected to social media.

We were allowed to go outside and play without our parents knowing exactly where we were 24 – 7. We had no phones, ipads, play stations or computers on which to play electronic games. We had no big screen TV's with a satellite dish or cable to receive 500 channels (or so). Our little black & white TV got five channels from an antenna and served us well.

Growing up with a creek across the road from our house, my Mother always knew where to find us, as we were either fishing or swimming (in the summer time). I recall my Dad coming home from work, walking to the edge of the creek bank and hollering for us to come home for supper.

My wife (Anne) talks about being permitted (unsupervised) to go to the show on a Saturday afternoon in downtown Oakville. She was given a quarter. It cost 15 cents for admission and 10 cents for popcorn. If you were thirsty, you got a drink from the water fountain.

Remember the water fountains. Just about every town had one in the middle of their downtown area. They were in our schools, municipal buildings and some stores had them outside of their entrances. I don't recall ever getting sick from drinking out of a water fountain. Oh yes, we all drank out of the garden hose as well, and we are still here.

Remember when you fell down or cut yourself when you were a kid. You weren't rushed to the hospital to have a doctor look at you. Your Mom put some iodine on the cut and covered it with a bandaid and, unless you broke a bone, you sucked it up and carried on. Speaking of doctors, remember when the family doctor made house calls? Remember when there were visiting hours at the hospitals. The doctors and nurses attended to patients 24 hours a day. Family and friends were only allowed to visit at certain times. and for durations set out by the hospital.

But here we are today folks, many years later. They call it progress: all the inventions and innovations that we have witnessed throughout our lives. But, is the world really a better place (overall) than when we were growing up? I am not going to dwell on the state of our society as it is or lay blame on who is right or who is wrong. I am not going to try and understand why the young people today are not as committed and dedicated as we were when we ventured out in the workforce to find a good steady job and support a family.

We have reached our goals in life by being respectful of others and their beliefs, honest, friendly towards one another, committed to obligations taken, dedicated to our families, friends, employers and our faiths. We have lived our lives trying to be the best that we could be and by passing our values on to our children so they may be good citizens of the world as well. I believe that everyone of us in this room has asked themselves, how did the world end up the way it is today? If everyone lived as we have lived, and had our values. there would be no wars, conflicts, or animosity towards our fellow human beings no matter what part of the globe they come from.

We can't change all that is happening in the world, but by continuing to live our lives as we have, perhaps we can make enough of a difference that, (hopefully), future generations will take heed. I will admit that I am not a regular attendee of church, but I do believe in God. My church and the Masonic Fraternity have instilled many of my values that I live with each and every day.

I have in my hands two bibles. This black one, a leather bound zippered bible was presented to me by my Sunday School Teacher on February 15, 1959. Although it is not well used, I have always known where this bible is if and when I need it. This blue bible was purchased for me, by my wife when I was initiated into Masonry twenty five years ago. I have received all of my Masonic obligations with my hands placed upon it. I always know where this bible is as well.

Before closing I would like to read the following psalm from the bible that was presented to me in Sunday School.

PSALM 119 Verse 1 - 16

*Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.
Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.
They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.
Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.
O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!
Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.*