

FIRESIDE CHATS

For the first time since my Mom's passing, I returned to my parent's home on what has come to be endearingly known as a "Surprise Visit." These visits home are normally a mix of business and pleasure. Through the years my parent's predicted my arrivals intuitively with amazing accuracy.

While Mom's physical presence was missing, everything in the home remained as memories of daily banter, Holiday cheer, specific events, and seasonal decorations. Mom already had Halloween bags filled for the children. The trees planted for community improvement were garnished with decorative bows that she donated every season. Mom's charitable and loving Spirit, especially for the children, remains very much alive.

However, since September 15th, my Dad was alone with the memories of over 60 happy years together in everything he saw, sensed and touched. The reason for this "Surprise Visit", enroute to a business conference, was to provide two days notice to pack his bags for a weeklong lakeside retreat to my New England home.

Throughout the week we chatted for hours on the Adirondack chairs overlooking the tranquil lake with the fire pit at our feet in full blaze. We reflected and shared stories that evoked deep laughter about our life experiences in the Coal Regions of Northeast Pennsylvania, mostly about days when men were men and beer was a nickel a glass.

The stories shared many times over many years never seem to grow old. Several stories were shared for the first time, as the time was right. Every story holds a special place in time. But for the first time, I listened with a pen and paper in hand.

For the first time, I came to realize how easily good memories could be lost forever if not captured and kept alive. I realize how good memories reinforce the fabric of our lives. I realize how a good memory works to lighten the heart and refreshes the soul when shared in the Spirit of good company and with a true love of life.

When you have the chance, don't let those good memories get away!



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