

Lost and Found

I came to Canada in 1969 with my wife and baby daughter, Molly. We drove from Pullman in a Volkswagen van and Molly was 4 months old.

I came to do a PhD at the University of Alberta and we lived in a number of different places, married student housing to begin with and shared houses with other grad student couples and in 1971, shared a house with Mike Urban and Veronica McGill. Mike was working on a Master's degree in Russian politics and Veronica worked as a social worker at the Family Kids Crisis Crisis Prevention Centre; basically, a lost and found for kids.

We had had a late night and my wife, Mikell and I agreed that in the morning when she went off to teach high school English, instead of her taking Molly to the babysitters as she usually did, that I would assume that role.

In the morning, when I woke up, I realized I had to rush my paper to the typist and dashed out of the house, oblivious to our child care agreement from the night before. I didn't hear three year old Molly because she was still asleep and I mistakenly thought I was alone in the house.

I was sitting on the front steps at 5 o'clock, when Mikell arrived home solo from her teaching job and I said, "Where's Molly?" And she said, "Where's Molly?"

When we came into the kitchen, we saw evidence that Molly had climbed up on the counter, probably looking for cereal and left out the back door in the snow in late November - barefoot and wearing a diaper.

Veronica had arrived home after we had phoned the police who told us that an older woman down the lane had seen Molly and brought her in and called them. The police said they had taken her to the Child Protection Branch, who we then called, to discover she was there.

Veronica talked to them, assuring them that we were good parents and would be right there to pick her up. They told us there that sometimes when parents were alerted, they left their kids there for three or four more days. Molly was glad to see us and for the next few months, would not let us out of her sight.