

I Been to London

I've been recounting the experiences I've had with neighbours. One of these neighbours was Eric Freybe, a Nazi Luftwaffen veteran of WWII. Eric, among other things, was a bit of a packrat. He scoured the back lane bringing home treasures with great delight. His two-car garage and front yard were filled with these treasures...old toilets in the front yard and a plethora of future use objects filling the garage.

Eric was a landlord. He occupied the basement to make the most money from the two suites above.

One morning, as my wife, Carol and I were talking with his two married grad student renters from the top floor suite, Eric joined the conversation. The guy was from here and the woman said she was from London. On hearing this, Eric piped up, "I been to London...thirty-nine times...got shot down over London - made it to the French coast! Got shrapnel wounds!" He then proceeded to yank up his trouser leg to reveal the scars.

Eric collected houses as well as detritus from the back lane. He told Carol his wife got upset when he was buying his tenth house. He then brandished his fists at Carol, saying, "I told her a thing or two and showed her my Luger - and she moved out!"

The neighbours between Eric and ourselves had a couple of interesting experiences with Eric. They had their windows frosted so they could no longer see the swastika Eric has plastered up in his side window. Mike informed us that having grown tired of Eric rummaging through his recycled bottles in the lane, he had glued a pop bottle in the bottom of his garbage can and he delighted in hearing Eric bashing the bottle with his cane, trying to loosen it.

Eric was "papa" to the Kalnyuk kids down the street who were displaced by their landlord and Eric subsequently housed them in a newly built bungalow he had built in the neighbourhood.