

Enduring Rose

I got engaged in 1965 in Pullman, Washington and my fiancé and future wife, Mikell, notified her extended family - aunts, sisters, mom and grandma to collect coupons from the Betty Crocker cake mixes. By redeeming these coupons, you could get stainless steel flatware, which we got before our marriage and subsequent trip migration to Edmonton, Alberta, for me to pursue a doctorate in Political Psychology.

The flatware had an embossed raised rose on each piece and we used them for our everyday table utensils. We lived in a couple of different houses and two years later, lived in a co-op house with another couple, very near the university.

After driving a Volkswagen van for a couple of years, I bought a used Toyota Land Cruiser because I wanted to make it around the backcountry in the wintertime.

About six months later, I discovered the engine in the Toyota Land Cruiser needed to be rebuilt. I embarked on the laborious task of taking out the engine with a pipe tripod and a coffin hoist in the back yard. To remove the engine, I had to take out the radiator, all the hoses and the gasline and uncouple it from the transmission. The Toyota garage in Edmonton rebored the cylinders and resurfaced the valves and sold me the pistons, piston rings and bearings, which I reassembled in the engine on the dining room table, much to the dismay of my housemates and my wife.

The reverse process of returning it to the Toyota Land Cruiser was accomplished in the back yard.

After reassembling all of the component parts exterior to the engine, I was ready to try out the new motor, but before starting it, I was advised to put in a can of STP, which was a very slippery lubricant, to protect the bearings before the oil pump could lubricate them. This I put in with a funnel in a one inch hole, where the distributor would soon be re-installed. Most of the STP went in through the funnel, but a little remained in the can; which my OCD told me that I should scoop out with a spoon to not waste any of it. I used the now named, "Rose", a wonderful grapefruit spoon from the stainless steel tableware set. The slippery spoon in the hole slipped from my clutches and tumbled down into the oil pan, where, if left there, it would have ruined the new engine.

I was now faced with the onerous task of the complete reverse process of extracting the engine. Removing the extracted oil pan in the back yard, I removed "Rose" and then reassembled the oil pan with new gaskets and completed the task, in about a day, of putting the motor back in and hooking everything back up.

Some of "Rose's" companions were lost in various moves and changes of relationships. I have two daughters with my second wife and their half-sister from my first marriage. All three girls really loved "Rose" because she was the best grapefruit spoon anyone had ever used. She was narrow, sharp and perfect.

My daughters all liked grapefruit, as did I at the time. They fought over "Rose" and Gen teased each other over "Rose", threatening to steal her. One daughter told the other that she had taken "Rose" to her office for lunch (grapefruit). There was great hue and cry, even though it wasn't true.

Now they are all grown up with their own families and lusting after the one remaining grapefruit spoon that still remains in my silverware drawer.