



# STORIES OF A SWAMPER

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# EXCERPTS FROM STORIES OF A SWAMPER

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## Chapter 1

*Years ago, actually more like decades ago; I had decided I wanted to try different adventures every September, and for a number of years I did.*

## Jump, go ahead and jump!

At an altitude of 4,000 feet, guided by the instructor, you exit the airplane with the static line automatically deploying your main parachute during a free fall of up to 5 seconds. You then steer your gliding canopy down into the landing field with the assistance of a ground radio instructor who transmits instructions to the radio attached to the front of the harness. ***At least that is what is supposed to happen.***

Now, that particular week-end it was too windy for beginners to go up but more experienced jumpers were allowed to go and we decided to stick around and watch them drifting peacefully down. Unfortunately, this was not the case because of said wind and some of these experienced people ended up hanging from trees and being slammed into the cars in the parking lot by buffeting chutes. ***Any sane individual would say okay not coming back next week but no, we did go back....***

***(to be continued)***

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## Chapter 2

# LET'S GO DIVING, IT WILL BE FUN!!

Have you ever wondered why the cow jumped over the moon or how the caramel is put into the chocolate bar or why (to bring things down to earth) it rains every Victoria Day Week-end and Hall'o'ween?

If you can answer these simple questions than you might be able to tell me why a fairly sensible woman who has a high regard for her personal well-being would spend the Victoria Holiday Monday scuba-diving in Tobermory in the pouring rain in fairly rough waters.

They pile all their gear, and for those uninitiated to the sport, this includes a mask and snorkel, fins, wetsuit (or dry suit), weight belt, a buoyancy compensator which is somewhat like a life jacket and inflates with air to help you rise or stay on the surface, and a regulator and tank without which you cannot breathe underwater. A hood, gloves and boots complete the ensemble. Everything but the weight belt and tank are tossed into a duffel bag which is then lugged out to the truck.

***(to be continued)***

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## Chapter 3

# Whitewater dreams in a Marmalade River!

Another adventure I went on talked into by friends? was the September a group of us decided to tackle white water rafting.

Rafting is a complete experience with time for body surfing (swimming rapids), cliff jumping, or swimming off the floating island (your raft). The scenery along the way is quite spectacular. Each trip is about four to six hours in length with a hearty BBQ half way down the river...and you will think it is the best BBQ you have ever had because you are outdoors and have survived so far and you will need the sustenance for the next leg of the trip.

***(to be continued)***

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## Chapter 4

# DRAGON BOAT RACING IN BC

Some years ago, when we lived in B.C., Ken (my husband) and I joined a dragon boat race team from the hotel where he worked – the Pan Pacific – *you know the one with the sails down in the Harbour*. We didn't have any experience but we were in the amateur, 'fun' category where you were participating to enjoy "camaraderie" with fellow staff while getting some exercise and enjoying the great outdoors. It seemed like a great idea at the time!

Now, these races were probably no more than four or five minutes long which doesn't seem all that difficult but you are paddling at a frenetic clip for the whole entire time while (theoretically anyways) being in sync with everyone else in the boat. At one end of the boat, you have a drummer who keeps the beat and you dip your paddle in – keeping time to it while the steersman who in our case seemed to be a sadistic escaped lunatic screamed at you constantly to "Reach, Reach, reach you bloody bastards".

***. (to be continued)***

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## Chapter 5

# YOU'RE FIRED!

I don't want you to get the wrong impression right off the bat so let me assure you that this tale of mine has nothing to do with the President to the south of us or to his past reality program from TV. You know who I'm talking about.

A few years ago, I was conversing with my nephew who had recently married; he and his wife had just bought a new townhome, and learned that she was pregnant with her first child; so, she told her employer the exciting news and was subsequently fired for her efforts, though they assured her it wasn't due to the pregnancy. .... **Uh huh!**

it was hard for me to relate to her dismay at this news and her concern, as

I have been fired on numerous occasions, some with just cause, others, not so much; I have never felt it was a big deal – not psychologically in any event, a few times it was financially critical but I have always managed to secure other employment. I expect it's my charm that does it. My husband, on the other hand does not feel that this is a great achievement in life and that it is nothing to be proud of. *What does he know!*

***(to be continued)***

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## Chapter 6

# GAMES NIGHT AND THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY

You are not meant to get along with every individual on the planet but when you choose your friends you are likely to choose those that see eye to eye with your ideology. You do not have that luxury when it comes to family. More often than not they are completely different from you and actually not someone whom you would choose to be friends with but sometimes you do end up having an appreciation for the differences between you and a respect for that different viewpoint. That is one of the reasons I feel sorry for only children.

Whether putting together a jigsaw puzzle or filling in a crossword from the New York Times (both often viewed as a peaceful, solitary, dare I say – contemplative pursuits) it often escalated into war as to who was quicker at it, or who had to rely on outside assistance from either parent or dictionary. A game of euchre could spark a vicious tirade of verbal abuse in an attempt to intimidate or bully you and this could be from your **own partner** chastising you for playing your weak and feeble hand whilst they were in possession of an unbeatable lone hand, and by God you should have passed – usually accentuated by a heavy thump of the fist on the table causing the deck of cards to levitate three inches.

***(to be continued)***

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## Chapter 7

### THE KEEPER OF THE PASSPORTS

Recently on a trip to Arizona I found out that I am the Keeper of the Passports, a dubious honour at best. All I know is that my husband left his passport with boarding pass neatly placed between the covers in the mesh pocket of the seat in front of him on the plane –and somehow this became my fault. We were on our 2nd full day in Scottsdale and I had quite innocently asked if he wanted to put his passport in the safe with mine so we'd know where they both were when we headed home again on the Sunday.

After a frantic search through dresser drawers, the closet, our suitcases, back pack and my purse there was nary a trace of the sacred document needed to get out of the country. I tried to remember the last time I'd seen the passport. We had to show a boarding pass to get on the plane so I knew it had come with us; I just wasn't sure how far.....

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