

# Short Memories

## Bit-O-Honey Bear

IN 1965, our family traveled on a vacation from Philadelphia to Florida by way of Skyline Drive and the Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee. Being city kids, the only place we had ever encountered bears was at the zoo.

As we ascended a remote road, we saw a couple of cars pulled over to the side to watch a big black bear about 20 feet off the road.

My brother, sister and I convinced Mom to throw some candy out to entice the bear to come toward us. Mom dutifully unwrapped a Bit-O-Honey candy bar and threw it out. As the bear chewed on it, Mom unwrapped another one and threw it a little closer to the car.

As the bear chewed the second treat, it decided to pay Mom a visit. Mom's window was down about 6 inches.

When the bear put its front paws on the side of the car to lift itself up, Mom screamed and threw the bag of remaining candy bars out the window.

While all of the commotion was going on, Dad snuck around to the side to take a picture. Fortunately, the bear was satisfied with the unwrapped Bit-O-Honeys and lumbered away.

We were so proud of the paw prints on the car that we didn't wash it for the next month. Looking back, I'm not sure who was crazier—Mom for feeding the bear or Dad for getting out of the car to take a picture!

—Edward Huttlin, Fargo, North Dakota

## A Real Doggy Treat!

MY PARENTS allowed me to accept a Scottish terrier puppy from

our neighbors, the McNabs, who had a true Scottish name.

The name we decided on for the little ball of fur, tucked in the top of my sweater to keep her warm, was “Cootie,” after a species of lice plaguing our soldiers in Europe in 1918. I was a boy of 8.

As there was not a leash law in our small town of Cassopolis, Michigan, Cootie was allowed to roam our neighborhood. The last stop on her forays was often a visit to Mrs. Martin, a blind lady who spent much of her time on her front-porch swing. She lived with her son and daughter-in-law next door to us.

Cootie frequently brought Mrs. Martin little gifts, such as a bone or some other doggy treasure. One day, when Cootie laid her gift at our neighbor’s feet, Mrs. Martin called her daughter-in-law. They found the gift to be a lady’s purse. To their surprise, they found that the purse contained \$1,000 in cash.

They immediately made inquiries and found the owner of the hand-bag. It belonged to a widow who lived just behind us on the next street. The lady had just sold her home, and the money represented the entire proceeds of the sale. It was determined that the purse had likely gotten mixed up with some trash.

Cootie soon became a local heroine and was recognized in the Cassopolis Independent Vigilant, the weekly newspaper.

—George Greenawalt, Columbus, Nebraska

### **The Stranger’s “Grab” Bag**

ONE SULTRY afternoon, in the early 1940s, my sister, LaDon, and I were sitting on the dusty driveway of our remote Utah farm cracking black walnuts on a flat rock. We didn’t even hear the horse coming until it was in our driveway.

Startled, I looked up at the face of the rider. He was a stranger!

“Do you have a little brother?” the man asked. As he spoke, my eyes fell on the feed bag hanging from the saddle horn. It was big and lumpy and moving violently.

LaDon and I looked at each other, and we knew what was happening. Mama had warned us, “Beware of strangers. They might kidnap you.”

We ran to the house, pounded into the kitchen and gasped out the horrible truth to Mama: “There’s a kid-napper out here gathering up little boys. He’s got cousin Pab, and he wants Larry! Don’t let him take him!” I wailed.

Mama calmly went out to meet the stranger, who said, “Afternoon, ma’am. I was riding the range this afternoon and found me a motherless lamb. I figured if you had a boy, I’d give it to him and he could raise it on the bottle.”

Weak with relief, we watched as the stranger opened the bag and pulled out the little lamb, which was to become the favorite pet of our brother, Larry.

—Arva Westley, Mesa, Arizona

### **Birthdays and Freedom**

OUR BABY BOY, Tammy (short for Talmadge), was born July 4, 1944. When he was 2 weeks old, I received a telegram from the government informing me that my soldier husband, Nick, was missing in action somewhere in France as of July 4.

In late fall, I was notified that Nick had been located in a German prisoner-of-war camp. When he received word of the safe arrival of his son and the coincidence of the birth date, Nick’s first comment was, “My wife and I both went through hell that day.”

Nick arrived home safely 2 weeks before Tammy’s first birthday.

On July 3, 21 years later, our son became the father of his own bouncing baby boy. This explains why the time around July 4 has

been a special one for the Hutton family.

—Blanche Hutton, Columbus, Indiana

### **Fish Reeled Them In**

IN THE EARLY 1960s, when we lived in Westminster, South Carolina, I caught a 5-pound bass while fishing with my dad. Being very proud of the catch, I drove around showing it to friends.

In downtown Westminster, I spotted my cousin in a car, pulling up beside a curb. I pulled up behind him and honked my horn. A man stepped out from the passenger side and I realized he was a highway patrolman.

The patrolman came back to my car and said, “What’s the trouble here?” It soon dawned on me that my cousin was taking his driver’s license test.

Red-faced, I said to the patrolman, “I didn’t know you were in there and I wanted to show this fish I caught to my cousin.” When the patrolman saw the fish, he called to my cousin, “Come back and look at this fish!”

I apologized for interrupting the driving test, and they said, “No problem.” I never did find out if my cousin passed the test.

—David Adams, Lithonia, Georgia

### **Life with “John Rooster”**

NOBODY ELSE but Dad would have “John Rooster” for a pet. That rooster was smart, conniving and mean.

We also had a smart fox terrier named “Punkie,” and Dad set the dog and rooster at odds with each other right from the start. “Punkie, go get John Rooster!” he’d say. About halfway through the chase, JR would stop abruptly, turn around and start chasing Punkie.

My mom, my cousin and I never went to the privy without a sturdy broom. John Rooster respected the broom, having been whacked with it a few times. On hot summer days, we might leave the outhouse door open, and JR would pace back and forth like a sentry, as if to say, “I dare you to come out!”

One day, I rode my bike over John Rooster’s back when he ran in front of me unexpectedly. I looked back, expecting to see a dead chicken, but John Rooster shook himself, flapped his wings and let out the loudest cock-a-doodle-do I’d ever heard. I was glad and sad at the same time.

Another day, JR came home with a broken wing and a crossed bill, apparently having tried to tackle a car on Highway 40. Dad massaged his bill with ointment and hand-fed him warm milk and bread for several weeks. As gratitude the next spring, when Dad was bent over the Oldsmobile’s hubcaps, that rooster flew at Dad’s back with his spurs out, showing all the gusto he could muster.

John Rooster finally met his end on a frigid night when the chicken house got too cold for him. My mom, my cousin and I each breathed a sigh of relief, but he sure had made our life exciting.

—Joan Trabon, Oak Grove, Missouri