

1962

GOLDEN HONEYMOON MEMORIES
ROLAND AND IRENE MAINVILLE

The first rays of dawn were just breaking the horizon as I heard mom coming up the stairs. As she entered my bedroom she came to my bed carrying a tray with my breakfast and a lovely rose and says to me "this is to celebrate your last breakfast as a single girl. Now let's eat as we have a long day in front of us." Then it hit me full force TODAY WAS MY WEDDING DAY -- the day we had been planning for so long -- it was finally here. It was also my 21st birthday. That was how August 25th, 1962 began.

Back then the latest wedding mass on a Saturday was 11:00 a.m. and when I arrived at the church at 10:55 I was met by Father Des D'Connor who advised me that "the groom was downstairs and rather green-looking". It turns out that his "friends" had taken him out the night before and had a great time buying and mixing him drinks and today my poor groom-to-be was very, very sick. The wedding march and mass proceeded with everyone wondering if the groom would last long enough to exchange vows. Needless to say, he did although a lot of the tenderness and love that he generally displays was missing. He promised me he'd make it up to me when we went on our honeymoon the next day to the Honeymoon Capital of the World - Niagara Falls.

We had a lovely breakfast and later a sit-down dinner and then a dance. It turned out the hall that we had rented would only hold 200 guests but by 8:30 we had over 400 people standing around the centre of the dance floor leaving no place to dance. We could hardly wait to leave the reception and did so at the earliest possible time heading for our suite that was reserved at the Senator Motor Hotel for that night. On arriving at the room my poor groom was still a little shaky and "forgot" the keys in the door. We were just settling in when two salesman mistook our room for theirs and walked in on us causing a bit of embarrassment.

We were up bright and early the next morning heading for Niagara Falls. Being young and inexperienced we had not made reservations. We were sure it would be easy to rent a room facing the falls where we could share our hearts desires and watch the falls. How wrong we were!! We ended up at a small motel on Lundy's Lane that had a "vacancy" sign up. The motel was rather far from the falls but we needed a place to stay so my new husband went into the office and was out in a few minutes explaining that we could have a room with single beds and a television or a double bed with no television. Since television was just coming into Timmins at that time he opted for the single beds with a television.

The next day we started our lover's tour of Niagara Falls and area. We began by going on the Maid of the Mist and then up Segrans Tower and then on to African Lion Safari. While we were there we were feeding the deer the kernel corn from the vending machines. The deer demolished all the corn we had bought and since they wanted more they started chasing us trying to find more.

We laughed and ran to the next area. A little later we got into our car to tour the area where the lions were. Since we did not have air conditioning in our old car we had the windows down and a giraffe came over to my side of the car and stuck his head in all the while swishing his tongue back and forth trying to lick our faces. I started to panic but my husband assured me he wouldn't harm us. A park official came by shortly and took the giraffe away and suggested we keep our windows closed. We proceeded down the road and had a few monkeys jump on our vehicle and they wouldn't get off and started pulling at the windshield wipers. All in all we had a great time. We took quite a few pictures so we would have a lot of laughs in the years to come.

By the time we got back to our room it had started to thunder storm and rain so we made a mad dash for our room where we spent a lovely quite evening. The next morning when we went out to our car we were horrified to find a window had been pried open and our camera and all the undeveloped film, together with our binoculars, were missing. We filed a police report but we never did get our belongings returned. We were very discouraged and that day we just spend walking around the Falls, hand-in-hand, and somehow the magic of the mist and smiling strangers lifted our spirits. We spent many hours visiting the museums and shows, and touring and somehow were able to forget all the bad events of the past few days.

We vowed that one day we would return to the falls and make it a real second honeymoon - one that had only good memories. We were going to do it on our 25th wedding anniversary but I ended up being in Toronto General Hospital so I guess it is still wishful thinking but one day we will be back at the Honeymoon Capital of the World and we will have that suite that overlooks the falls and many happy memories to bring with us to our retirement years.

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