

SENIOR SCAPE: Reflections on an Abundant Life!

By Christina Doyle

It is with a sad heart that I am privileged to write and hereby dedicate this issue of Senior Scape to one of our own.

Gerald Switzer, better known as Bud, was a man that was bigger than life itself. Bud, the tall, lanky athletic boy from Wallaceburg showed that he was going to make his mark on this earth early in his life.

Gerald's own mother nicknamed her young son Buddy after actor Buddy Rogers, which was shortened to Bud for years to come. When Bud was a boy, he sang in a church choir. He also loved to paint and he was good at it. His stature and physical strength made him an asset on any sports team.

Bud was competitive and his love of dancing had him search for the brightest and most talented dancing partner he could find to help him in competitions.

Lo and behold, enter Stella, a mini dynamo. A perfect match for Bud and what a match they were, winning not once but twice at the North American Ballroom Dance Championships. For the third dance competition Stella was ill and Bud danced with another partner and won that competition as well. So, he won three North American Ballroom Dance Championships.

Bud and Stella married and when children entered their life, Bud proved to be an exceptional father. The children, Scott, Leslie and Dana, all agreed that they had won the dad lottery. Every inch a father, a devoted husband and loved by all who knew Bud.

His caring of the children was surrounded in the gentle reminders that they should take their vitamins and absolutely no sugar in their diets. As Scott comments, "There were no Froot Loops or pop in my house, just Shredded Wheat, and Old South orange juice, which was not always enjoyed by the kids, but they knew where their dad was coming from."

This devoted father wanted the very best for his kids and he ensured that everyone was well taken care of, especially Stella. He was also a lover of nature and had respect for all human beings and animals.

Daughter Leslie reflected on how Bud wouldn't even step on a caterpillar and that same respect for animals is cemented into Leslie's own heart today.

Bud's gentle demeanour was evident in our Evergreen Choir at the Aurora Seniors' Centre in which he was a highly valued, respected and loved member.

As one of the original choir members of Evergreen, he and his wife Stella were a duo that had everyone standing on their feet whenever they gave a performance together, or when Bud sang solo.

The obvious admiration and love between Bud and Stella was a marriage made in Heaven.

Stella commented that there wasn't a day that he didn't tell her he loved her even in the last days he had on this earth.

Choir member Sylvia Gilchrist spoke beautifully at Bud's Celebration of Life, commenting on the last song he and Stella sang together "Friends for Life".

Indeed, Hadara Jacoby, pianist for the Evergreen Choir, who accompanied both Stella and Bud, stated that Bud loved life, was modest and sang with all his heart in which you could feel the walls shake.

A proud moment to be shared by the Evergreen Choir was when some of the members were able to travel to Niagara Falls to cheer on Bud at the Chartwell Seniors singing competition.

Margaret Walsh recalls the comment by one of the judges, Gordie Tapp, who said, "When you came out on the stage with your walker, I thought you would be playing the sympathy card until you opened up your mouth and began to sing."

Bud placed 3rd in a stiff and wide competition of Senior Talent across the country. With no vocal lessons backing him up, he mesmerized the entire audience!

Bud passed away from pancreatic cancer on July 9, 2017.

There will never be another Bud again, and to those of us who ever had a chance to hear Bud sing, paint or dance, consider yourself fortunate.

The lights are a little dimmer at the Aurora Seniors' Centre but our choir is ever so proud that such a light shone among our midst. God Bless You Bud as you continue to sing for the angels above!

HAPPENINGS AT THE SENIORS' CENTRE

The Evergreen Choir will start its practices again on Wednesday, September 6. If you are interested, the time is 1.30 to 3.15 p.m. You do not need to be able to read music.

Pickleball is played not only at the Seniors' Centre but also at the Family Leisure Complex. It is a fun sport and easy to pick up

particularly if you have ever played tennis, badminton, squash or any other similar sport.

Bocce is played every Tuesday and Thursday mornings. It is a great game and easy to learn. Unfortunately the weather hasn't co-operated very well this summer with outdoor sports, but they have still managed to get in quite a few games.