

LADDER

12-08-2014 by Harry Zirkelbach

Everyone is on a ladder of some kind. Of course you knew that.

Initially there's the familial ladder of life beginning with birth. Its in a linear fashion, parents, siblings, Aunts, Uncles, cousins, then adds neighbors, play companions, every soul non-competitive.

Daily life blossoms into the school years, adding other than the relative ladder of companionship. The child finds competition. There the individual learns, life will become cherished extensions to our very breathing, genuine friendships, life long, give and take. Or a branch withered for lack of attention. The tree of life is not limited to duty, and obligation, implied in blood relationship.

Each ladder imagined here, defines a life. It is pieces of these ladders that become fables, on which all who wrote a letter, told a story, built a dream, recreate themselves in that more perfect image they imagine. It is in daily contact between owners of ladders that the next rung is built. Fortunately, the ladder we are on each moment is weightless, invisible, only ours to fully know.

Those in Windsor Gardens have discarded many ladders, embraced rungs remaining, family and old friends, then reaching out, add extensions through acceptance of new branches.

Meet a new face, no ladder visible, but any conversation discloses steps of both ladders. "I have nothing to hide" in these conversations, is certainly an exaggeration, but protects frailties. What we are, in effect, flawed copies of an imaginary perfection.

I'm sorry, I wasn't listening, tell me more about yourself.
You are a writer.

May I change the subject to a specific ladder.

After considering the general "ladder," I have a memory of a great ladder which I want to share with you. My sister's husband, Harold, had a intimacy with things primitive which he shared with his four sons, male work companions. He bought a home-away-from home in the woods in Allegheny State Park some 60 miles east of his home, in Northeast, Pennsylvania. A simple, 650 square feet on the main floor, full basement. The sole entrance, from into the basement. Unlock the

basement door, walk to the center of that room, see the ladder there, climb it, push the trap door into the living quarters, climb into the house.

This unique ladder dominated. It consisted of one 4" x 4" board, ends firmly attached to the trap door, floor below. At ten inch increments, alternate sides, an eight inch wide 2x4 firmly attached.. That was the whole ladder. The climber put a foot on the lowest right board, climbed to enter. opposite or leave. An idea, unique, rugged, dependable, space saver.

The building, designated The Camp, made it possible for Harold to bond with 4 sons, male friends. As years pass, women of the family demand access to this retreat. An outside stairway, second floor outside porch are built, providing easy access to The Camp, the ladder entry abandoned, the trap door to the second floor removed. The special ladder to the main floor remained, useless.

The Camp rapidly lost the masculinity hinted by that one-of-a-kind ladder. By then Harold, sons, male companions were older, liked the difference.

