

People

*By Mike Harris*

Let me introduce you to Roy. He is a person, very human, born in 1917 with the experiences of the people of his generation. Roy is not really exceptional in himself, but will be able to be flexible, observant, and have definite opinions and acquired skills in keeping the times in which he supposedly evolved. The name Roy evolved from the Jewish word "roiter" which translates "red head."

When Roy came to Windsor Gardens two and half years ago, he came for personal and family reasons, pretty much the same reasons all residents come here. A comfortable independent environment of people with a strong desire and ability to be independent as completely as possible with no desire to burden family, friends, or society. This in itself makes them "a unique and outstanding community."

In integrating himself into this community, the first anomaly that struck him was that the population was made up in the ratio twenty men to eighty women, another anomaly was the fact that there is another segment of the population that is not human. There are dogs! All sizes, mainly smaller breeds, he had not seen St. Bernards or Great Danes.

It is one thing to want to be independent, but hard to cut oneself off from intimate contact with humanity. Some sort of companionship helps to maintain a balance. He noticed these peculiarities soon after his arrival. There was something else that was a little out of line, the place was buzzing with activities all sorts of groups formed and seemed to be self-sustaining, people dropped out and others joined in. He did not understand in the beginning, but he finally caught on. As independence became impossible, due to the ravages of age, other services were needed and so independence became compromised.

Roy was and is not known for quitting. He is used to adversity and overcoming disasters, his generation joined society when the world was in a low place economically. Jobs scarce, and opportunities not too available, he and most of his generation learned to address needs according to priorities.

Food and shelter first, so the thought never entered his mind that he had to like what he had to do to make a living. Work was something for the poor to do, if there was anything other to it the rich would be doing it. So work was for the poor. The trick was to find a job that could lead to a good sized paycheck the quickest legal way.

In surveying the market place and residing in New York City at the time the first conclusion was get a job where the money is. After a week and registering with one hundred agencies on Wall Street with no response he knew something was wrong, but not what. His father straightened him out. He explained the economy in broad terms was divided in three sectors, Wall Street was controlled by the Protestants, Insurance by the Catholics, the garment industry by the Jews. Go to your own.

The next application got him a job. He started as a shipping clerk and in three years, due to a work ethic taught and inspired by his father, went from twelve dollars a week to the top pay of ninety dollars a week for a full-fledged cutter in men's clothing. Really top pay for a job in the garment industry.

(To be continued ...)