

## Promises Made, Promises Kept

*by Mike Harris*

Marriage vows, almost all marriage vows as far as I know, are pretty much the same. I, with the permission of the Rabbi conducting the ceremony, added the codicil, "... in addition I promise that you and ours will never know of hunger or lack of shelter, so help me God." The Rabbi did not recommend this addition. There was no prohibition, so at my insistence he included the phrase. I am happy to report that in sixty years of marriage this vow was never broken. It always gave me many moments of pleasure that our family were always well provided for.

Another great moment of joy came from my son. As a Cub Scout he participated in the "Pine Box Derby." When I insisted that he make the vehicle he wanted me to help. I declined, saying it was his project, I would help where it mattered. I must admit it was not a work of art and he wanted to drop out. I did not let him saying, "Beauty will not win, function will." To this he pointed out that there were four boys in the troop whose fathers were engineers. I insisted and promised him he would win. When the event took place and all the pretty cars were vanquished he proudly proclaimed, "When my father makes a promise you can take it to the bank!" Yes it was a moment of joy.

The next moment of joy that I cherish, involved my daughter. The custom at our Synagogue was that on completing the ceremony of bar or bat mitzvah the child was given if they wanted it, a two week trip to Israel. My daughter very much wanted to go with her peers. When she asked I explained that I would give her a choice: two weeks now or a whole year in Israel upon her high school graduation. I would borrow the money for the trip now but would have time to arrange and not have to borrow four years from now. She asked one question, "Is that a promise? A whole year instead of two weeks?" My answer was, "Yes, that is a promise." "I will take the year," was her reply.

Four years later, with her the proper documents and an airline ticket, she spent a year in Israel, for me a great moment of joy.

Promises made are one thing. Promises kept, those are special.