

ONCE SHE TASTED THE WATER JOEY NORMAN CAME TO STAY 01/18/00

A young man I should have recognized came up to me in the Nice n Easy the other day, gave his name, and told me how much he enjoyed my column. He was Bob Baker, who lives in Manlius and keeps in touch with the old hometown through the *Express*.

I was pleased to hear I was doing something to make his life more pleasant. The fact that his late father Artie was one of my best and first Old Forge friends made it even nicer.

We left Old Forge after nine years here and returned for good, three years later. I never really knew why until Leo Villiere explained it: "I knew you would be back. Once you drink out of these lakes up here you will always return." Sounds plausible to me and also explains why my subject this week is spending her golden years here.

She is Joey Norman, a street savvy Brooklyn native whose first sojourns to the Adirondacks began at an early age. Born in 1916, she remembers coming to White Lake on the train in the 20s. When she was 13 she stopped coming for two reasons – an abiding love of the seashore and the spiders in the house at the uncle's camp.

Her father was a seaman and away from home months at a time. There were four girls in the family who naturally became very close to their mother.

Growing up during the Depression, work of any kind precluded very much formal education or training. Joey acquired experience and skills in many diverse occupations, a situation that proved to come in handy over the years and kept the wolf from the door.

One of her first jobs was for Horn and Hardt, the first fast food chain to become popular in larger cities like New York. Her mention of the business and detailed description revived long forgotten memories imbued in my mind by my father at a very early age. He regaled the family at length with how one was able to select a variety of food from automatic vending machines, a phenomenon of epic proportions he witnessed on a trip to the City. At the time there was a term used to represent the process, but neither Joey nor I knew what it was. Can any old timers out there help? (*Editor's Note: Automat?*)

After a stint with Addresso-Graph Equipment, Joey worked for a short time as a file clerk with Blue Cross. The files were mounted on casters and her method of moving them got her fired. After a quick push, she hopped aboard and rode along with them. The president of the company walked through a door and intercepted a cart broadside. It sent him flying and Joey

packing.

Talk about a small world? Joey and seven other teenagers were arrested by Ted Schenk on Long Island for speeding. Ted, old timers will recall, operated a marina and cottage colony called Little Bayou here in Old Forge after his retirement as a policeman. It was located where Lecours Construction is situated. It's a long and funny story. Ask Joey about it.

Aside from drinking from the lakes years earlier, daughter Sue enticed Joey to relocate here. Sue grew to love the area after frequent trips to Old Forge with her grandmother. After marrying a local, Sue convinced Joey she should live near her. The rest is history and she now resides with her dear cat Chipper at Lakeside Terrace apartments.

Osteoporosis has limited Joey's movements, but not her creative talents. Her quarters are crammed with the results of her unending projects that she pursues with the verve of a teenager. The Christmas spirit at present dominates the scene. Sun catchers, plants, posters and art supplies take up every available space not already occupied by countless photos and other mementos.

As far as I could determine, she is the same old Joey who babysat our granddaughter in times of crisis. We at the *Express* were honored and thankful for her innovative and beautiful Christmas card.

Have a happy and healthy New Year, Joey.