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Mike Cohick

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The Ivaroy

MIKE COHICK

MY FATHER WAS ONE OF NINE CHILDREN, next to the youngest. Of the nine, seven stayed in the Burg after they married and raised families. There were 26 of us cousins (or “cuzzins”, as they said back then), but that is another story.

The second oldest was Roy. Roy became a Methodist minister and had retired before I was old enough to be aware. Roy married Iva and they had four children: Katherine, Bishop, Jim and Mary Ruth, who was the youngest. She was two years older than I was.

Roy lived across Main Street from my house and just up a couple of houses. His house backed onto the mill race. His property was verdant and a pleasant place to be on a warm summer’s day.

As I said, Roy was retired. I was about ten. Many an afternoon, I walked over to Roy’s house and we played anagrams. For those of you who haven’t heard of anagrams, it was a primitive ancestor to Scrabble. The main differences were that there was no board, no multiple word scores and no points on the tiles. Also, there were a lot more tiles. Roy would put the tiles in a box, mix them up and spill out about two dozen onto the table. The object was to use all the letters on the table. Whoever used up the last letters got points. Then another dozen letters were dumped out. Roy played a tough game. It was in these sessions that I learned words like viz, syzygy and chiffon.

THAT SUMMER, THE IVAROY WAS THE SENSATION OF THE BURG. EVERYONE HAD TO COME BY AND ADMIRE IT.

One spring, Roy hired some workmen to build an outdoor pavilion in his backyard. It had a concrete floor, four sturdy pillars in each corner holding up the rainproof roof, a barbecue at one end and a table with parallel benches at the other end. It looked out across the heavily flowered backyard toward the mill race and the grove of trees beyond. It was a beautiful place. Roy christened it the “Ivaroy,” amalgamating his name with this wife’s name.

That summer, the Ivaroy was the sensation of the Burg. Everyone had to come by and admire it. Roy and I moved our anagrams game outside into the Ivaroy for the rest of the summer.

Roy’s younger brother, Jake, came by to check out this marvelous structure. Jake was building a new house at the far north end of the Burg, where Main Street rejoined the bypass. Jake was smitten by the Ivaroy. He directed the builders to replicate it at his new home. When Jake and his family moved in, they held an open house. Jake proudly showed off the new pavilion in his backyard. “This is my Ivaroy,” he said.

When someone pointed out to Jake that “Ivaroy” was not the proper name for such a structure, that his brother had made up the term from his and his wife’s name, Jake piped up and said, “It’s still the Ivaroy. That sounds so much better than calling it after my wife and me, the Beulahjake.”