

Belly Flop

by Bob Boucher 3/2013

We lived in a large two-story Victorian house occupying a one acre lot along Valley Street. Our home was guarded by two majestic maples one at either corner of the front yard. Our Right Flank defenders were a cherry tree, a Golden Delicious apple tree, a Concord grape arbor and a treacherous rhubarb patch.

Our Rear Perimeter was also protected by apple trees: petite Pippin and Macintosh, a big Baldwin, and a huge Russet. My brother and I loved those Russet apples with their rough rusty skins and sweet tan meat.

Our Left Flank along Birch Street was unguarded except for the lone two car outpost at the rear corner. The outpost guarded Grandpa's 32 Packard Limo and Papa's 28 Essex Terraplane Roadster. The Essex had an inside seat for Papa and Mama, and an outside rumble seat for Roland and I.

One day when we were 5 or 6, we decided to climb up on to the roof of that garage. We had no ladder. We found some wooden boxes behind the Nahas Grocery Store across the street. Five or six wooden boxes did the trick, and soon we were climbing onto the roof.

It was fun exploring the vista from that elevated altitude, but after a quarter hour we got bored and decided to climb back down. The wind had come up and had blown the boxes over. We could not climb down.

We both started yelling
Help! Help! Help!
No one heard our cries.

At last a gang of ninth or tenth graders came along. Why are you kids crying? We can't get down. It's too high to jump. We will catch you they offered. Two of them held hands making a safety net.

Jump! Jump! They advised.

Roland said to me,
Robert you jump.
I said O no
Roland you jump.
No one wanted to be first.
At last I volunteered.
I took a swan dive off the roof
toward those outstretched hands.

Laughing...

They pulled their hands away.