



A Bathtub of Tadpoles

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This story was inspired by an interview with Lynne Nielsen, capturing the playfulness of times past and how they continue to write her story of 'today.'

In the 60s, entertainment for a child was a little different. Personal computers, video games, and tablets were non-existent. Instead, there was the radio and maybe two basic children's programs on TV. Seven-year-old Lynne had a special form of entertainment though. She had tadpoles.

Moving to Coquitlam in the 60s was like "moving into a forest". Lynne lived right by Como Lake Park, so she was surrounded by nature. Kids would go out all day and explore the forest, returning only for meals after their moms blew whistles to let them know it was lunch time. Kids would spend their entire summers outside.

For Lynne and her friends, days were full of adventures in Como Lake Park—climbing the giant rock boulder, swinging on the swing set, and perhaps the most unique—collecting tadpoles. Collecting tadpoles was a complicated business. It required catching them in buckets, dragging them home and dumping the buckets of tadpoles into the bathtub! Some tadpoles were placed into glass jars, some would go in the fish tank, and some would be released back to the park. Curious to see how the tadpoles changed and grew, Lynne and her sister would watch the tadpoles in the jars with amazement.

Like all kids, Lynne found herself in the occasional sticky situation during her time in the “forest playground”. While exploring Como Lake Park and the tadpole habitat, her friend ventured a little too far into the bog area and got stuck thigh deep in mud. In an honourable attempt to save her, Lynne followed her and wound up stuck herself! Fortunately, one of the older neighbourhood kids came to their rescue and pulled them out of the mud. Lynne was so relieved, she gave her rescuer a penny to show her gratitude, because that was all the money Lynne had at the time.

Today Lynne is a grandmother and she looks back fondly on her memories of growing up in Coquitlam. In fact, she has even taken her two grandchildren back to the very same park where she once played. Lynne’s childhood entertainment was not quite the same as today’s, but some might say that her tadpole memories at Como Lake Park are unforgettable.

- *Natalie Pope*

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