

## RANDOM REFLECTIONS: The Kitchen Table

By Kathryn Wishlow

Lately, I find myself creating a lot of busywork in order to distract me from thinking about so many things happening that I did not cause, I cannot fix and just need to let go of. Drawers are getting cleaned out and lost things are getting found. Dusting everything in sight (because with the furnace going so continually, the house gets really dusty) is a chore that takes concentration and all of my attention. Of course, I have window sills filled with rock samples.

While I was carefully wiping my kitchen table down this week, it stirred up some memories. Over forty years ago, we bought that wooden table, six chairs and a matching sideboard at a lawn sale out on Clear Lake Road for \$350.00. It was all thickly painted a 1940's green but had great lines, was very solid and handmade out of old maple. Our project that winter was to carefully strip off the ugly green to reveal the wood underneath. It was actually in super condition and with a light sanding, staining and oiling we had our first real dining room set.

That table had many uses over the years other than its original purpose. It was padded and became a ground floor change table for our firstborn. It saw family gatherings on all special occasions.

It came with us to our second house where it finally had a proper dining room space. That table saw more card games and buffet barbecues than you can imagine! Then it was moved to our farm in Alliston where we actually hired an Italian plastering master to create a wonderful ceiling pattern to show off the antique chandelier above it. More meals, more games, birthday parties, present wrapping, crafting and lots of fun happened at that table.

Everywhere we went, it went. The move to Bancroft meant that old, dining room table was re-purposed and became my kitchen table since it seats six people so nicely. My husband decided to refinish the top with a hand-rubbed, French polish to surprise me about fifteen years ago. It looked amazing at the time, but how to properly care for that finish became a bit of an issue with it getting so much everyday usage.

Now that table hosted people from all over the world. As a bed and breakfast, we had guests from England, Bolivia, New Zealand, Ireland, Russia, China, Netherlands, Mexico, Germany, United States, Japan and even Egypt. These guests were teachers, engineers, accountants, chemists, nurses, pilots, doctors, actors, musicians, professors, lawyers, ice climbers,

rally car drivers with teams, adventurers on their way to Algonquin Park and even once a professional soccer player from Australia. We had many laughs as well as serious discussions about our concerns. We had the benefit of sharing stories of our lives, hopes, dreams and problems with a huge variety of people ... all around our kitchen table.

That old maple table has been everywhere, heard everything, witnessed recessions and stock market crashes, seen us change jobs and careers, been moved many times, survived our children and pets, seen happiness after weddings, sadness after funerals and still stood strong. My point? There are times when like my table, we will witness many changes ... some good and some not. Right now, we need to stand strong and sturdy and not be afraid of change, but adapt, show our flexibility, strengths and perhaps even repurpose ourselves.

*(Kathryn Wishlow belongs to White Pine Writers Inc., a local group of like-minded authors whose first book "The Art of ... RePurposing Yourself! is available locally & at Indigo/Chapters. More items are coming soon so follow them on FaceBook or [www.whitepinewriters.ca](http://www.whitepinewriters.ca))*