

"Sweet n' Sour"

(Cont. from A2)

and I never found chewed up socks or the remains of snacks left on the table scattered around the house. And his bed was a throw rug next to Rodney's. I have a feeling he did not sleep on the floor but on the bed close to his buddy. When Rod went for a walk in the woods, which he loved to do, he was never alone for Stubby, with his short little legs doing double time to keep up, long silky ears flopping and stubby tail wagging, was close by his side. They had many a tramp through the endless woods that surrounded our place.

Now I, as the caretaker of the house, had made it clear that dogs and cats were nice to have around, especially on the farm, but I meant "around" not inside. The outside was where they belonged. The barn loft had plenty of hay for cat beds, hens nests, plus enough for cow feed. The porch was good enough for the dogs. That was where I fed them and a bed was made close by for a dog to guard their domain. That is what I had been

taught as a child and I guess my thinking was, "what was good enough for Maw, is good enough for me." I soon found out she was wrong and maybe I had better change the record my memories had been stored on.

Rod had named him Stubby when he found out the stub beneath a wisp of long curly hair was all he owned for a tail. But that little stub could get attention as quick as a long furry one. He was so cute when he tried to wag his tail and his whole rear end could just wiggle. And, if he could have laughed, I am sure he would have giggled at the sight. He was blond and his hair just beginning to curl into waves over his body and his ears were long enough to make a frame around his face. He was truly a very pretty young dog with a personality to match. And, even though we were all his family and keepers, he knew Rodney was his buddy and master. Mat was headmaster, I the cook and Judy another buddy he could always depend on to feed him bits of leftovers and play with him when she was free to do so. Oh, yes, HE DID become a house dog and his

favorite place to sleep, was upstairs next to Rod's bed. Stubby learned early not to touch anything such as a dish of candy or snacks left on the coffee table (are today's children as well trained?) He had his ups and downs with accidents and man's cruelty. One day he came in with a face so badly swollen he couldn't eat and Mat decided he had been bitten by a copperhead and the best cure was to allow him to take care of it himself. Animals have a strange instinct of what to eat or do to heal themselves. I knew he couldn't open his mouth wide enough to eat regular food so I scrambled eggs and handed him for several days. Another time, he came limping in with face and neck swollen till we could hardly recognize him. This time, evidence showed he had been beaten with a club or stick. He probably had gotten in the way of a moonshiner or someone up to mischief and they wanted to get rid of him. They almost accomplished it for this time he was even worse than when he had been snake bitten. We bathed him carefully and I held him in my lap to feed him food. I had al-

ready chewed then carefully placed it in his mouth so he could swallow it. I warmed his milk and kept plenty of fresh water close by. By this time, Polly had joined our family and did her share of coddling him through his ordeal. She has always been gentle and caring of animals and maybe her gentleness and special care gave him the will to live. He survived by wasn't out of the house much for a long time. Another freak accident happened one day when a neighbor stopped by for a short chat with Mat and Stubby, wanting to join in, came flying around the corner of the house and ran into a sharp axe leaning against the corner of the porch. The first joint of his front foot hit the sharp blade and, with a little yip, he went to Rod to hold his foot up. You could the most hear him saying, "fix it." There was no way we could do it this time so Mat, Rod and the neighbor wrapped him up and, for the first time in our life, we paid a vet to take care of a pet. The joint had been severed and had to be sewed back on. But, once again she survived and Rod took off for college. Stubby missed him. You could tell by the way he kept looking for him and still slept by the bed upstairs as if he expected his buddy to come in and take his usual place. When age began to take its toll on him, his trips upstairs became less frequent and he slept beside our bed downstairs. One day, when I decided to do a little spring cleaning and began with the floors in the kitchen where he was lying

beside the door, without me saying a word, he quietly moved to the dining room. Same thing happened when I began on the dining room. Between the living room and our bedroom was a little hall with the stairway leading to the rooms above. So, when he had to leave the dining room, he took a long look at the living room, a glance at the stairs, a long peep into our bedroom, another glance back at the cleaning pail I was carrying then slowly walked through the living room. He stopped at the foot of the stairs, looked into the bedroom and back to the cleaning pail, another look upstairs and began the painful climb up the stairs to Rod's bed. He knew without a doubt, I wouldn't be cleaning up there and he could nap as long as he pleased.

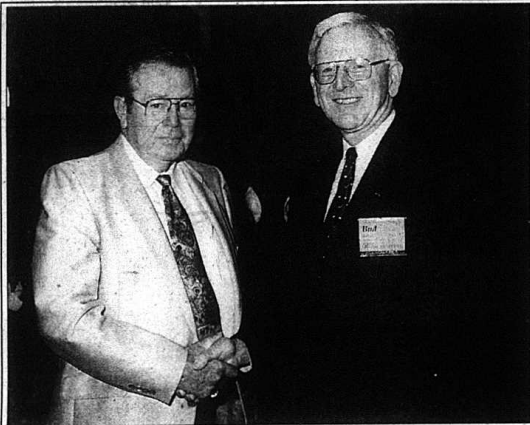
I think it was Rod's first year at Berea College when one night I became disturbed with Stubby's actions. We had hardwood floors and his toenails always made a clicking noise when he walked on this. This

night they would click to the front door, then to our bed, back to the door, upstairs then back down, all the time winning in a soft voice. Then I knew he was trying to tell us something was wrong with Rodney. Mat and I lay awake till daylight when a neighbor came to tell us Rod was in the hospital. That was before phones were in our area. It didn't take us long to get dressed and on our way to Berea. When we arrived, he told us the story of how he had walked the streets all night with pain from a tooth he had filled that day and an air pocket had been caught beneath it causing pain that medicine couldn't stop. When daylight came, he had gone to the hospital and was still groggy from something the Doctor had prescribed.

Stubby began to falter when he tried to follow Mat to the barn or chase a rabbit out of the garden. So once again, Mat took him to a vet. The vet thought it was time to put

him to sleep but Polly, a young teenager now, didn't think so. She began to use her weapon, tears, to get us to let her keep him a while longer. They brought him home and he improved enough that Polly had the joy of lending to him till she entered high school. Then, one day, Mat came in carrying a box and laid it down on the porch. I knew something was wrong and looked up into eyes brimming with tears. "Stubby is dead," Mat said, "I am going to bury him." He had wrapped him in a coat and placed him in the box. Evidently he had a heart attack.

How could I tell Rod his beloved buddy was gone? I wrote him with tears staining the page I was writing on, then looked at the pap box casket and said a tearful goodbye to Stubby. I then laid a flower from the vase on it and watched as Mat carried him to a spot in the back yard that would be the beginning of the pet cemetery.



Billy McHargue, left, was presented a Pin by Bud Cox, past president of the Funeral Directors Association of Kentucky, during the 119th convention held recently at the Hyatt-Regency Hotel in Louisville, Ky. The Pin was in honor of serving as a Licensed Funeral Director of Kentucky for 50 years. Billy began working in Mt. Vernon at the Cox Funeral Home in 1947 as an apprentice under the direction of William H. Cox, Bud's father.

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