

## Easter Holidays

First published April 14, 2016 in Newswest

Back in the olden days of 1960, our week-long spring break was known as the Easter holidays instead of March break. It began on Good Friday and lasted over a week. Most years the Easter vacation was in early April, just when the snow was almost gone and the weather warmed up a little. These were the days when cabin fever overtook the kids on our street and we nearly broke down the door in our hurry to play outside. The days stretched on and on with a temporary break for supper. Then we were back out on the street, or running in and out of the neighbours' yards until the streetlights came on.

Suddenly the stores were full of bolo-bats, cups full of bubble soap, strap-on metal roller skates, and skipping ropes. Some lucky kids found one or all of these things on Easter morning along with their chocolate rabbits and hens.

At our house, an aunt and three cousins arrived from Montreal to visit for the entire week. My mom turned the house upside down, putting sheets on the living room couch and bringing out a folding bed. My room became a dormitory with two girls in the bed and two more camping out in sleeping bags on the floor. At night, we whispered and laughed until someone yelled at us to quiet down and go to sleep, which made us sail into uncontrollable hysterics. When the two boy cousins heard the racket, they sneaked down the hall to join the craziness. Needless to say by the end of the week we were all seriously sleep deprived and getting crankier by the day.

During the day we took our cousins to museums, theatres and to visit relatives around town. In the evening, at least once, a cutthroat Monopoly game started up, which lasted about two days, taking up every minute we could spare. Sorry could be a savage game as well. We loved Clue and all the girls wanted to be Miss Scarlett, the sexy blonde with the suggestive smile.

On Friday night, our hero Perry Mason the criminal lawyer was on TV. We admired his savvy, beautiful secretary Della Street, and the handsome detective Paul Drake so much that we set up some desks in the basement and played the roles of lawyer, secretary and detective. Of course we needed a couple of police officers and murderers as well, and those roles were highly desirable.

Sunday night TV was even better. Ed Sullivan was always fun with a variety of singers, acrobats and comedians, and the always popular talking mouse Topo Gigio with his signature phrase, "Eddy? Kees me good night?"

But best of all was Bonanza. We girls had heated debates about who we liked best, Little Joe, Adam or Hoss, and were riveted to the screen as they galloped their horses madly through the hills chasing various varmints.

On the last Saturday of the Easter break, our cousins packed up for their drive home. The fun was over. We sadly watched their little Volkswagen drive away down the street, hoping against hope that we would go to Montreal to visit them in the summer.