

Sound Advice

Each summer we speak with our many clients about their children's and grandchildren's education plans, often including leaving home for the first time, to attend school in another city. With that in mind, we thought you would like to read a story written by Mary Ann about our porchlight robins.



Porchlight Robins

By Mary Ann

Every spring, robins come to roost on the front lights of our home on Gardiner Avenue. I recall introducing myself to the first of many mother robins who chose our porchlight to build their nests from materials gleaned from our yard – dried out Virginia Creeper vines and grasses, shreds of paper, and anything else they could salvage.

Anyway, the first mother robin that I ever met would swoop down at me when I appeared on the front deck, warning me that if I meant to do any harm, she would

launch an attack. I kept my distance, but every morning when I went out to retrieve the paper from the driveway side, I would softly greet her. I would say “Good Morning – I won’t hurt you,” or I would whistle a little melody. Eventually, she let me take my tea on the front deck without a fuss. I often talked to her, offering a bit of news from the morning paper, sometimes to discuss my feelings on motherhood, and ultimately, I told her that her secret was safe with me.

I know why she chose the porchlight with its modern

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design and flat top – the lights turn on automatically at night and create a warmth to incubate her eggs and provide a shelter from the predatory squirrels that have populated our neighborhood over the last decade. A squirrel could not very easily scale the brick wall to reach the light. Sometimes I would laugh,

imagining a squirrel rigged up to “rock climb” the wall.

We found our social balance – all the mother robins and me. Every year the building of a nest held within it a promise of life and I would happily share the news to my family, friends and neighbours. I watched mother robin sitting on her eggs until little beaks appeared, and ultimately cheered when they took flight, leaving an empty nest that I would take down some months later and marvel at its construction.

Since we have had many nests, mostly the transition from building the nest to leaving the nest was without incident, until one day tragedy struck. A baby robin fell out of the nest and was lying on the step, traumatized, frozen with fear, a little heart beating so hard, and I worried. I recruited my husband to help – he put on new gardening gloves and carefully placed the robin back in the nest. Mother robin continued to feed her brood and I breathed a sigh of relief.

One morning I heard screeching so loud I wondered what the problem was. I peered through the side window of the door and I could see mother robin on the rail of the deck, flapping her wings and squawking at the nest. All the baby robins had taken flight but one little beak remained, and I wondered if it was the fallen robin and perhaps there was an injury. Again, I worried.

Mother robin was unrelenting and continued her scolding for some time. The next morning, I was nervous and I looked up at the nest and lo and behold,



the last little beak was no longer there. I was ecstatic and it made me realize just how much we are alike! Robins find a home for their progeny; they are protective; they feed them; they teach and mentor them; and sometimes they scold them. They fly away.

One summer afternoon I was pulling out dandelions from the front lawn. I had just watered and everything was fresh and dewy and there was a robin standing so close to me I could just reach out and touch it. I whispered to the robin and asked: “Hey, why aren’t you afraid of me?” but it just stood there in a rainbow of droplets looking very calm. I am not known to be a magical thinker, au contraire! But I do think that little robin knew me.



Rod's New Work Schedule

I'm Back! After spending the better part of the last 2 years working and living in Toronto, I will now be spending more time in Regina. In the coming months, I look forward to sharing with you in conversation and *Sound Advice* articles some of the experiences and lessons learned working in a large city. I will continue working with all the team at The Tyler Group, but with a reduced set of responsibility for day to day client meetings. I will continue to support my colleagues with specific contributions, such as writing each issue of *Sound Advice* and providing ideas to improve our service to our clients. In the meantime I wish you all a pleasant summer holiday!



THE TYLER GROUP Financial Services

2330 McIntyre Street, Regina, SK S4P 2S2

Phone: (306) 525.5250

Fax: (306) 585.6117

Email: info@thetylergroup.ca

Toll Free: 1 (877) 225.5250

Toll Free Fax: 1 (877) 255.0122

www.thetylergroup.ca

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