

MY VIEW

No downsizing, but plenty of memories

Mom passed away nearly three years ago, so last week's Mother's Day, as with every day since then, was a day of missing her. As I grew up, she often said that our house was a "small hotel." It was a fixer-upper when we moved in, but Dad was handy and eventually it became a home for a family of six, still occupied by Dad to this day. There are five bedrooms, including two on the third floor (rarely called the attic). One of them has built-in worm-wood bookshelves; and there is a cozy little nook that was a favorite play space once grandchildren arrived. There's a roomy basement that includes a workroom and a canning storage room. Dad added a family room onto the back of the house and rebuilt a garage when a fire damaged the original one. The house already had plen-



Gayle Kerman, of Getzville, has the same penchant as her mother for filling storage spaces.

Going through box after box was a dust-filled trip down memory lane.

ty of storage areas with many closets and crawl spaces but when the family room and new garage were added, mom demanded crawl spaces above both. Through the years, she filled those storage spaces from stem to stern, basement to 3rd floor, and then some! As time wore on, and each of us kids had families and houses of our own, we would occasionally mention the idea of downsizing. Mom would chuckle a bit but that's where it ended.

Our parents were children of the Depression, which meant anything that could be of use, no matter how worn out, was saved. You never knew when some old thing might just come in handy or that someone in need would be thrilled to have it. In the meantime, into a closet or basement it went. Additionally, Mom loved trying new things and she was very talented. She took classes on sewing and tailoring, oil, watercolor, tole painting, decoupage, ceramics, cake decorating, knitting, crocheting, embroidery and

even more. As with any hobby, there was necessary equipment to acquire and materials to accumulate, taking up even more space. Not to worry, mom had a surplus of it, especially after her children moved out and on with careers. When she ran out of closets and crawl spaces, the area underneath every bed was fair game.

After she passed in 2019, my two sisters and I began the emotional and daunting task of sorting through all of mom's "stuff." We made some headway before Covid put everything on hold and recently we've gone full-out preparing for some upcoming yard sales. We're hoping to fill someone else's closets with lots of salvageable and useful goods, especially crafting items.

We knew that mom was a busy, talented woman. As kids, we often wore clothing she lovingly made and her afghans kept us warm, especially in the unheated third floor bedrooms. Many of the grandchildren were the recipients of beautifully decorated birthday cakes and their own afghans upon graduation. Not surprisingly, we also discovered some unfinished items. Going through box after box was a dust-filled trip down memory lane, along with new discoveries and surprises. We gained an appreciation for her endless talents, especially her artwork. We found beautiful paintings that had us asking why the walls of our house weren't adorned with them as we grew up. She was very humble in that respect. Many times, during what seemed like endless tasking and a good bit of tossing, not to mention dust-induced sneezing, we'd find ourselves looking skyward saying "Mom, why couldn't you have downsized?" I imagine that she just chuckled.

My View is a first-person column open to all Western New Yorkers. If your article is selected for publication, a photo of you is required. Email submissions to editpage@buffnews.com.

