

LG: Crystal, I truly hesitate to ask, but are any of the old gang still alive?

CD: Sure. Mom's 94, still driving me nuts, still going strong, and so's Lois Moon. She's a bit older than Mom, I think. Dad's gone, of course. He passed in 2006. I'm pretty sure Audrey died, and the one who went to jail.

LG: Gail, the TV evangelist?

CD: Yeah, Gail. She's gone.

LG: Well, everyone wants to know, did Peggy marry Cort Cooper?

CD: Hell no. Though he did ask her. Cort's real old-fashioned. A kiss on the hand type of guy. What happened was, eventually his house kinda fell down, so he sold it as a vacant lot. He has an apartment in Bar Harbor now, plus his sister left him a condo in Florida, so you might say he's a friend with benefits.

LG: A lover with a property portfolio.

CD: Lovers? Please, this is my mother we're talking about! Let's not go there. They're good pals though.

LG: When your step-brother, Eugene, died there was a bit of a shocker because he'd left his share of the house and the bait farm to your mom's friend Grice. How did that work out?

CD: Shocker's right. At first I thought Grice and Eugene must have had a secret bromance, unlikely as it seemed, Grice being fastidious an'all, but looking back I realise Eugene wasn't altogether the dipstick I'd taken him for. He did it because Grice helped us a lot with Dad, when the dementia got bad. He'd upped sticks and come up to Maine with Mom and at the time he didn't get much thanks for it. So, fair dues.

LG: And half the property.

CD: Yes, which was fine. I inherited Dad's share and Grice has willed his half to me, so when he goes, I'll be sole owner. I've still got the bait store, on the side, but I run it as a dog rescue center now. No case too hopeless.

LG: And where's Grice these days?

CD: Montreal. He found lurve. Maurice is a younger guy, when I say 'younger' I mean 73. Grice just turned 80 but you'd never think it. He

hardly has a line on his face. Mom says it's due to living a worry-free life. No kids keeping him awake nights. She and Cort visit with him once a year.

LG: Tell me about Lois.

CD: She's good. Deaf and walking with a cane but she gets around. Time hasn't mellowed her. She still shoots her mouth off and being deaf she does it louder'n ever. Herb's not so hot. He's got congestive heart failure. Their daughter lives with them now.

LG: Sandie.

CD: Yes. Her husband died, quite young. He was a firefighter, got lung disease, after the 9/11 clear-up. Sarcoidosis. Sandie's very active in the Firefighters for Truth campaign.

LG: What you used to call a crazy conspiracy theorist?

CD: I did. Let's say I grew to wisdom. Mom and Lois talk on the phone most weeks.

LG: They're the great survivors.

CD: They are. They reminisce about the old air force days, about their time in England. USAF Drampton. I was young. I don't remember much of it. The little houses. And the siren that used to sound, if there was an incident. That's about all. Did Mom and Lois really see the King?

LG: They saw the train with his coffin, taking him from Sandringham to London. That was where they met Kath Pharaoh, waiting in the fog by the railway line.

CD: Right. I reckon that story got embellished over the years. You should call again, when Mom and Cort get back from Florida. She'd love to talk about the old days on Soapsuds Row. By the way, I have a three-legged Siberian Husky I need to rehome, if you happen to know of anyone.