

'You're as happy as you want to be'

By CHRISTINA GULEWITSCH
Times staff writer

Bernice Antaya subscribes to the theory that most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.

She made up her mind a long time ago, and now, at 55 years old, is fulfilled, well travelled, a grandmother, an artist and photographer. And she's happy.

Twenty-five years ago, however, Antaya might not have imagined it would be so. She was young, married and had seven children; the oldest, 11 and the youngest, just two weeks. She was at home with her gang when she received the news — her husband was dead, killed in an accident.

"I was shocked," she recalls. "I guess I reacted in the normal way."

Antaya didn't give in to self-pity. She didn't have time. "I was just too busy," she says. "With seven children I had to look forward. I couldn't be sad."

"Looking forward" meant seeking out her own interests as well as guiding her children toward independence. Everyone, she says, pitched in and toed the line.

"Oh yes," says Antaya. "Everybody had a job to do, some chore to complete. They each had responsibilities and nobody got out the door on Saturday until everything was done. I wasn't going to be stuck home doing the work. I had other things to do, too."

Discipline, she says, was not a big problem, even with four boys and three girls in the house.

"There was just one boss — me," says Antaya. "We worked things out together, though."

Together was an important factor in the An-

taya family, but self-fulfillment was just as high a priority. As a family, the Antaya's travelled twice across Canada, camping and tenting all the way. Individually, Antaya has been seven times to California, travelled in Florida, Hawaii, England, Scotland, Wales and crossed the Atlantic three times, once with a daughter on a tour of Europe.

Her children, now grown up, are all involved in "People-oriented" jobs, she says, and all had the opportunity to go to school and become what they would. Although the family wasn't wealthy, some clever investments by Antaya helped pave the way.

"When the kids were little," she says, "I would take them to the theatre, but we had to walk either there or back. We only allowed bus fare for one direction. We had to be careful with money."

When the youngest child was in college, Antaya went to work as an interpretive guide for the government, but she had already mastered photography and set up her own darkroom. She wasn't going to be left lonely and at home. The camera is still her companion and she also spends some time giving talks and showing slides at schools and libraries about her trips. She gives advice on travelling light.

She moved to Mississauga three years ago when her son asked her to be a live-in nanny for the two children. His wife was returning to work.

"I really like doing this job," she says. "I'm a paid nanny and I get to be with my family."

There's rarely a dull moment for Antaya. Between grandchildren, photography, painting with water colors and travelling, she hasn't the time to be anything but happy. She made up her mind about that.



GORM LARSEN/THE TIMES

Suddenly a widow, with seven children (the youngest two weeks old) the future could have been bleak for Bernice Antaya. Instead, she turned it into an adventure. Twenty-five years later, her children are launched and she still thinks life is a ball.

Crafts accepted for Artsfest juried show

Visual Arts Mississauga, in conjunction with Artsfest '79 presents its second annual juried craft show at the Art Gallery at Erindale College from May 24 to June 6.

The show, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Port Credit, will include six categories of crafts: ceramics, metal, textiles, wood, jewelry and glass. It is open to all craftsmen in the Toronto area and a \$5 fee covers three entries each.

Deadline for written applications is May 10. For information call Judy Leach at 823-2994.

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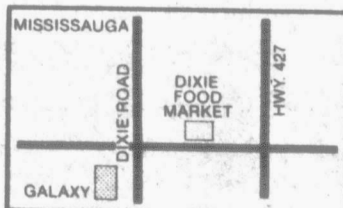
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