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## The Short Happy Swap of Sister McCalley's

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The  
Short  
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Sister McCalley's mind was still sharp.

She sent this item to the Swap Column of the VICI WEEKLY TRIBUNE:

"Will swap custom, hand-sewn queen-size patchwork quilt for 39 pieces of Cherry Blossom Depression Glass. SM 526-8834."

She knew that Zeb Pike had the glass, for she was with his wife, Stella, when Stella bought it in Amarillo three years before she died—and Sister McCalley knew that Zeb slept on a queen-size bed and loved to flirt with women, the "girls," he called them.

Sister figured she had a market for the glass in Enid through her antique shop in Vici, and though she loved the quilt, there was a chance she could one day get it back. For she was not only a lonely widow, but she had a certain fondness for old Zeb, despite his bachelor ways of a rooster among the widows— by imagining he could keep 'em all happy.

Sure enough, Zeb called Sister about her offer of the swap and came over later with glass in his one-and-a-half ton new pick-up truck.

Sister McCalley had another idea. If Zeb would take his truck and drive up to Steamboat Springs, Colorado and pick up an antique bedroom set for her, she would give him the quilt,

and he could keep the precious glass, and so the deal was made. She ended up by inviting herself along to make the trip with him.

By the time they started back to Oklahoma a week later, she had married Zeb at a place in the Panhandle of Texas called Dumas.

At home, they slept in the queen-size bed under the fancy patchwork quilt. Zeb died in his sleep three months later.

Sister McCalley-Pike was beside herself for the longest time.

Then one day last summer, this advertisement appeared in the Swap Column of the TRIBUNE: "To swap—a Victory Garden cookbook for a new Jane Fonda Workout Book or a Shirley Temple Pitcher. SM 526-8834."

Sister McCalley was in business again. But she had turned feminist, so to speak, though she still bought her pants from L.L. Bean, and slept on the queen-size bed, wearing headphones, though there was no one else around. Her

"new girls' club" used her antique shop for their meetings, and the entire set of the 39 pieces of the Cherry Blossom Depression glass sat on the shelves under a "Not for Swap" sign.

—By Aaron Baker

(AARON A. BAKER, a regular WESTVIEW contributor when he lived in Burns Flat, now resides in Shreveport.) \*