

[Page 63 - Hilda Mleczo of Glace Bay: Keeping Love's Record Alive](#)

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Hilda Mleczo of Glace Bay: Keeping Love's Record Alive On October 17, 1989, after weeks of the doctors' wondering was it an ulcer, was it leukemia, was it a heart attack, Hilda Mleczo wrote to her friend Jean LeBlanc, "Henry has Aplastic Anemia • the barracuda of anemias...." For a total of 830 days, Hilda kept a journal of the days when nothing happened and you watched, and the days when too much happened and you wanted to bang your head against the wall. Hilda Mleczo has always written about ordinary life- ordinary life that included love, war, a new country, a house she built nail by nail at her husband's side • just ordinary, extraordinary life. She asked who would be interested in a journal of her husband's last days. We think a lot of people, each for their own reason, will find Hilda's journal of interest, and moving. By August 1990 Henry was still picking berries, but the doctors said he could die any time now, in his sleep. January 1991: "I asked how long Henry had left, and (the doctor) never answered me. I said, 'Will we have another Christmas together?' He replied, 'No.' I continued, 'Summertime?' The doctor said, 'No, but s****' you're getting close.'... I have written the obituary notice already and given that in to the undertaker. He said it's fine, and that all he has to add is the date and the place. Henry's suit, shirt, socks, shoes, underwear are all ready, hanging in my closet." For our selection here, we pick up the journal in the final month of Henry Mleczo's life, on August 12, 1991. From Hilda's Journal

AUGUST 12, 1991 No change as I wait and wonder when the end will come for Henry. AUGUST 13, 1991 Henry was home for four hours, his legs are swollen and his fingers are swelling also. He has an awful bruise on his side, as well as a big, thick lump. He saw Dr. Brennan today, who said the swelling is because Henry needs more blood. He was only transfused Aug. 7th, less than a week ago. He has been given water pills to take down the swell- WE BUY AND WE SELL AND WE'RE AS NEAR AS YOUR TELEPHONE Sid's Used Furniture Phone 564-6123 436 Charlotte Street, Sydney. Henry took pains in his chest while still home but afterwards, when I phoned the hospital before I went to bed, the nurse told me Henry was fine and free from pain. AUGUST 14, 1991 Henry didn't want to come home today, his legs, hands and fingers are swollen and painful. Still on water pills. Dr. Brennan says the swelling is because he needs more blood. AUGUST 15, 1991 Another transfusion--2 units--the blood count being very low. Henry was a red color, like sunburn, but had tiny little red spots under his skin, the blood going haywire. The swelling of his hands and legs continued despite the water pills. I watched for two hours while the nurses, four of them, in turn, searched for a vein. He is all punched out and they put him through a lot of pain, poking him with needles. He never said anything, just pulled a face and stayed quiet. The head nurse said to me, "Henry is a marvellous S & M Trucking Ltd. • General Trucking • Local & Long Distance • Loader & Trailer Rentals • Float, Flatbed, Drop Deck Service D- OFFICE • -I 567-2260 FAX 564-1443 • ' I • • -'as' Operating in: IAA'SL'NS. NB, NFLD, ' • =' |pEl,o'' ,PQ, p and the U. S. A. Donald Sives Manager L GARAGE & DISPATCH • i 564-2011 IF BUSY CALL 564-0204 ' SYDPORT INDUSTRIAL PARK • SYDNEY • NOVA



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