

where we got our treat, a 7-up. At the nursery, I would make sure to show her how to pick and choose a healthy plant. “Mi’ja, you have to feel the plant, make sure it doesn’t have growths on it, you have to smell it, it has to smell good like the earth when we pull the weeds, remember?” “Yes, I like to smell the flowers.” “They have to be standing straight and firm, not wilted or turning brown.” I would buy my plants, guessing how much we could carry all that distance from Commerce to Tampico St. And, we would, once again, make the stop and get our refreshment halfway home.

Sometimes, I would ask one of my grandchildren to write a letter for me to my parents. I would tell them what to write. Writing a letter, was not what I wanted. I would

have liked to be near them to tell them what was in my heart. It was heartbreaking for me, and the children saw how I felt.

My admiration of my grandmother is so great! I am always in awe, when I think about her, how difficult it must have been to just leave her parents and family and country knowing that she would never see them again. In those days people didn’t just pull up and leave country and family everyday. It had to be something so devastating to families to do that, like a war or revolution.

Mildred DeLong Hilbrich

”Don’t Take Any Wooden Nickels”

By: Roze Livar

Ever since I was a kid, I have heard my Dad say this to everyone upon leaving. “Don’t take any wooden nickels!” It always brought a smile to everyone’s face. As a child, I was familiar with tokens or wooden nickels and I’d think, why not?

As a teenager, I would cringe at the “corny” line. “Ugh! Please don’t say it, especially to my friends,” I’d say to myself. “Why can’t he just say, bye and leave it at that?” It wasn’t until I grew older, that I learned the wisdom behind my Dad’s silly little phrase.

What he was saying to everyone, in essence, was, “Know what is true and know what is fake.” He didn’t want anyone to be “taken in, lied to, fooled or deceived.” I believe he wanted to say this to us,

“Know the true value of something or someone and know the difference between what is real and what may be a cheap imitation.” While a wooden nickel may get you a trade on a trinket, it is not actual currency. Although both may be used to trade for goods, you can’t take the wooden nickel to the bank and cash it in for five pennies.

Today, on your Birthday, Pop, I’m doing my part. I’m speaking and standing up for Truths, no matter the costs. I’ve taught my kids and now my grandkids to do the same. I’m hearing you say, in that accent I miss so much,

“Hey... keep your peepers peeled!”

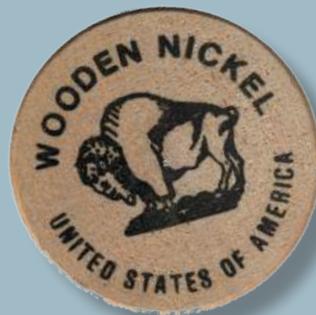
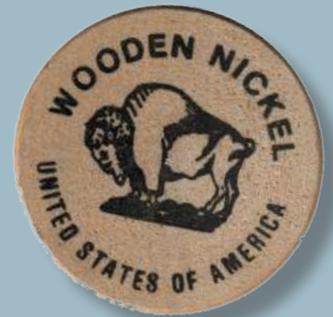
(Eyes wide open, be aware) and especially,

“Don’t take any wooden nickels!”

All my Love Pops,

All the Time,

Roze



Roze Livar

Roze Livar is a current member of Teatro Esperanza. She is a local actor and advocate for the senior community of San Anto’. She very much enjoys listening to stories as well as telling them through playwriting, short stories, musical parodies, poems and acting.