

The Two Believers

By DON SMITH



EDDY AND MARY ARE THE owners of beautiful Glen Echo, the property on which members of the Toronto Gymnosophical Society sunbathe, camp, swim and enjoy themselves as nudists.

The forerunner of today's T.G.S. struggled for several years on rented properties with varying degrees of success but it became evident that the club would get nowhere until it had a piece of ground it could call its own. Constant searching, answering advertisements and making inquiries eventually located the present Glen Echo which even at first glance appeared to be an ideal site.

At this point Eddy and Mary stepped into the picture by offering to purchase the land and utilize it on behalf of the club. This was no easy thing for them to do. They are not by any means a wealthy young couple. Raising the down payment and meeting mortgage payments has been far from easy. However, they were, and still are, blessed with a great faith in the nudist movement.

Eddy has an instinctive love for all nature. The members of T.G.S. are sure that he knows every tree in the park and speaks to them all on a first-name basis. The need to remove a branch from a tree is given as much thought and careful attention as Eddy would expect of a surgeon preparing to remove one of his arms. This love is tempered with a true woodsman's sense and knowledge, for he never fails to remove a tree (after due consideration) if it is hindering the growth of others.

Eddy was born in Poland and Mary in Saskatchewan but they eventually met in the course of their work in the hotel business. During their honeymoon they discovered a mutual interest in nudism and they spent much of that two weeks cycling around Wasaga Beach looking for places sufficiently secluded to indulge this interest. How does a newly-wed couple suddenly discover that they are both interested in nudism? Well, the truth of the matter is that they both spent their childhood on Saskatchewan prairie farms and had never heard of a bathing costume until they moved to Toronto.

Eddy and Mary spent several holidays in nudist clubs in the U.S.A. where they made many friends and the deci-



Glen Echo has brought years of hard work to Eddy and Mary. Upper left photo shows their first view of site.

sion to devote their life to the nudist movement.

At this time (1955) the old Toronto Sunny Glades Club had more or less disintegrated for want of a good property but Mary and Eddy looked up the survivors and offered to help search for a suitable site. Eventually a newspaper advertisement caught Mary's eye and a week later she and Eddy went out to view the property.

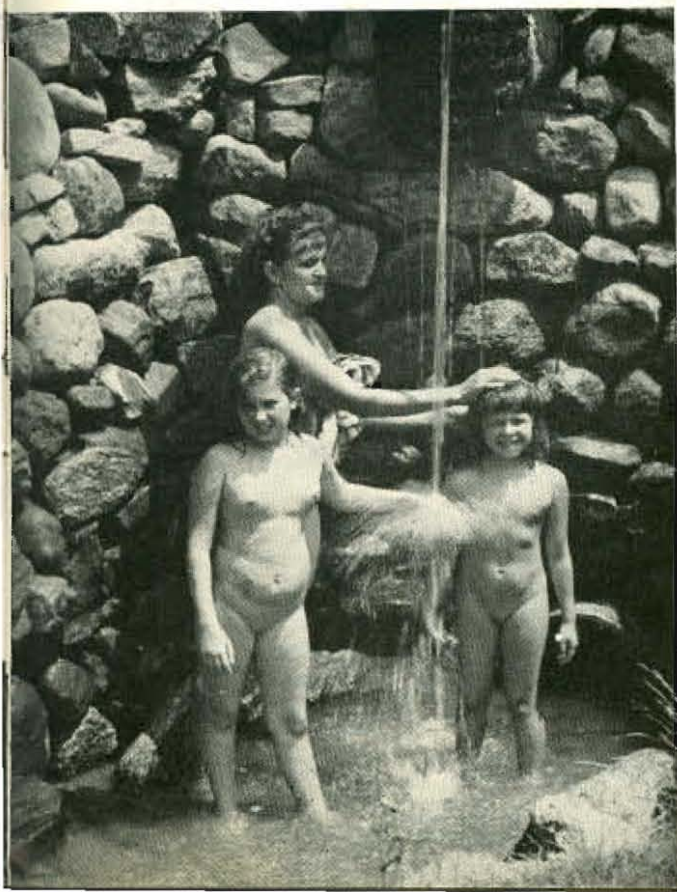
The management of the old club accepted a proposition on the basis that Eddy would buy the land, develop it as a nudist resort and in effect lease it to the club on the understanding that he would be an ex officio member of the management. The club agreed and was reformed as the Toronto Gymnosophical Society.

The happy relationship that exists between members of the club and Eddy and Mary has through the years been responsible as much as anything for the great success of what is now Canada's largest nudist club.

To achieve such a success in so short a time obviously requires two unusual personalities. Eddy is thickset and



Background in view of pool shows why Glen Echo is called one of the most attractive nudist properties in North America. Eddy and Mary have invested in it their life savings and eight years of hard work.



stocky, inclined to be gruff. He thinks very hard before deciding a course of action, then having made the decision, neither Mary nor the club can change his mind. This is not so formidable as it sounds, because when it comes to land and trees, Eddy knows a great deal. Mary, on the other hand, is more easily swayed by the opinions of other people and usually gets these ideas over to Eddy before he has made his decision. Mary is the public relations expert of the pair! While Mary insists that she is not good-looking, she is a really well-formed specimen of nudist womanhood, the mother of two daughters aged 11 and 14, an enterprising, active and enthusiastic wife.

The eight years of development of Glen Echo have been a strain and a worry. The enormous amount of sheer physical labor required in the early days, the cost of hiring bulldozers and draglines, the laying of sod, later the construction of a first-class snack bar, flush toilets and showers have made it a long hard pull. But Mary and Eddy seem to thrive on it.

At the last Eastern Canadian Sunbathing Association convention, Dr. Hsley Boone called Glen Echo "one of the most attractive and well-designed clubs I have ever seen." Eddy and Mary believe that to own it is more than adequate reward. ■