

William Henry Bender



Born: January 2, 1948

Passed: June 15, 1982

William is the 4th child of Edward Paul Bender and Marie Anna Dahl. He was born on 4651 Alter Rd in Detroit, Michigan, moved to Sterling Heights in 1961 and to Chesterfield Township Michigan in 1975 where he passed away in 1982 at 34 years of age.



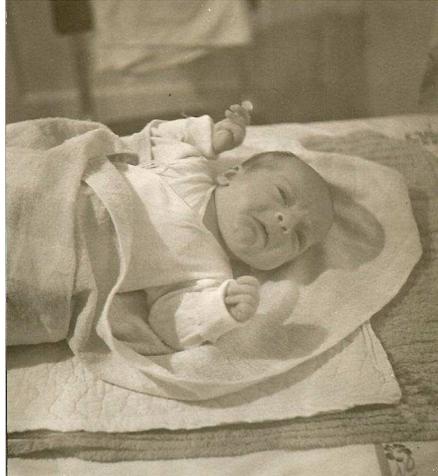
Marie and Bill 1949



Marie Dahl Bender & Bill Bender Jan. 1948

Bill, as he was called by the family, was born in Cottage Hospital in Grosse Pointe Farms on a cold and snowy day on the 2nd of January, 1948. He was delivered by Dr. John Mac Kenzie at 1:15 a.m.. He was by far the smallest of the Bender children, weighing in at only a little over 5 lbs. Marie said it was a very easy delivery due to his small size.

Bill had 3 siblings at the time of his birth, Nancy Marie, age 12, Michael Edward, age 10 and Sandy Jean, age 3. Marie was 34 and Edward was 39. Bill later had one more brother, Douglas Paul Bender, born in 1952.



Bill Bender - Jan 1948

His mom Marie had just finished cleaning up after an elaborate New Year's Day dinner when to her surprise she felt the first twinges of labor. That was a big surprise to her as Bill was not expected to be born for another 2 weeks. Marie and Edward brought him home on the 12th of January, 1948 to 4651 Alter Rd in Detroit, Michigan.



Sandy Bender

Before Bill was born Marie laughingly nicknamed Bill "Oscar". When Marie came into the house and sat on the couch in her living room, she carefully unwrapped the blankets from the baby. Sandy came walking up to get her first glimpse of her new baby brother. Marie held up her

hand to keep Sandy from getting too close, to protect Bill. So Sandy stood a little ways back, glanced at Bill, then said to Marie, “Ooh, Oxer, he’s ugly!” Marie’s feelings were hurt, but she had to smile, because she too thought he was a rather homely baby.



Bill Bender

As Marie studied Bill’s features, she became concerned as she felt that his face was lop sided. But then when she looked at her husband Ed she also felt that his face was also not quite symmetrical, so then she wasn’t so concerned any more.



Elizabeth Ott, Billa grandmother



Elizabeth Ott Bender



Fr. Reiman, Sophie Ott's grandson

Bill closely resembled the Ott side of Dad's family. When the other children were little the neighbors used to comment on how much they resembled our mother. But not Bill. He resembled many of the Ott members in our family.



Henry Charles Bender

Marie often commented on how Bill walked very much like his Grandfather Henry Bender. Hank would walk with a open stride, walking from side to side with an easy stride.



Bill Bender, 4 months

As time wore on, Marie and Edward did become concerned about this latest child. He did not develop at the same rate as the other 4 children. He was not able to hold his head up, so they had to put a prop under his chin to steady his wobbly head. He sat in an old wooden high chair. (Doug had a brand new plastic high chair). He sat up much later than the other children. He was never able to crawl, but moved about on the floor by rolling around. He needed assistance in learning to stand up. He was very late in learning to walk. Finally on Easter Sunday, 1949 Ed and Marie spent the entire day passing Bill back and forth between them until he got the hang of walking on his own.

Bill had an old very safe rocking horse. It was not the kind you sit on top of, rather it was an enclosed, close to the ground rocking chair where you sat on a bench seat inside of the horse. The outside of the horse was painted on both sides with pictures of a horse.

Bill had many allergies to food. His face would break out and mom would have to put socks over his hands to keep him from breaking open the skin from scratching. One time he even turned deep orange and Marie panicked and called the doctor. He told her to stop feeding him so many carrots! (Bill liked carrots and Marie had a hard time getting him to eat other sorts of baby food in a jar.)



Billy eating a carrot

Mom cut out most of the jars of pureed carrots but later Marie gave Billy a raw carrot. He loved chewing on a raw carrot, gnawing it down to a stub.



Bill Bender in his high chair

Even in his high chair Marie had to prop him up as he couldn't hold his body erect. And Bill, like his mom Marie, had very poor reflexes. When Bill fell, he would land directly on his head and receive a concussion as he could never get his hands up in front of him in time to protect his face. He simply smashed face first into the cement. He would then be very woozy and dad would say

that Bill looked like he was “punch drunk”. They would call the doctor who would say that Bill had a concussion and that they should watch him closely until he came out of it.



Nellie Dahl & Bill Bender

When Bill was very young he would often have very high fevers which scared Marie, Ed and the doctor. There was no apparent reason for these intermittent high fevers. We later learned that Bill had a medical condition that caused these high fevers in small children with this disorder. The doctor would have mom soak Bill in a cold bath water and on several occasions had them give him an enema to hydrate him as he would get severely dehydrated during one of these high fevers. In a day or two Bill would snap out of it until the next episode. There was no rhyme or reason as to the onset of these fevers. There was no other accompanying illness. Just high fever.



Billy Bender & Elizabeth Ott Bender

Billy is sitting on the arm of a chair with his paternal grandmother Elizabeth Ott Bender. This picture was taken in September, 1948. Bill was 9 months old. Grandmother Bender died 2 years later, on the 24 of September, 1950. (Bill closely resembled Elizabeth Ott Bender, Ed's oldest brother Arthur Bender and other members of the Ott family. He was the only child in Ed's family that closely resembled the Ott side of the family.)



Bill Bender

Bill is being held by his mom, Marie Bender. Mom said Bill was always a sweet kid and very even tempered.



Sandy & Bill Bender

Bill was really a very cute, very sweet kid. He was very easy going, with a sweet temperament. He was quite slow in all phases of his development, both physical and mental. He was very late in speech development. By the time he entered kindergarten he was enrolled in speech therapy and a special delayed development class.



Marie Bender & Bill Bender

Whenever Bill went for a ride in dad's 49 Plymouth he always sat on his mother's lap as there were no car seats in those days.



Bill Bender

We lived on a very busy street in Detroit, so mom was afraid to let Bill outside on his own especially because our back yard was not fenced in. So when mom would let Bill play in the back yard, she would tie a rope to his suspenders to keep from wandering in front to the busy street. One time Bill untied the rope and then carried the end of it into the house and handed it to his mom! So much for keeping the baby safe!



Bill Bender

Our back yard on Alter was mud, grass wouldn't grow because we had 2 huge cherry trees that provided too much shade to grow grass. So Bill played in the mud back there. He used to love to turn Sandy's tricycle on its side and spin the back wheel round and round. Bill would come into the house full of mud that spun off the wheel, landing on him.



Bill Bender

Bill used to remove his clothes and get into his pajamas on the couch in our living room while watching television. But he didn't want anyone to see him naked, so as he started to remove his street clothes he would say to the

other people in the living room, “Look the other way”, but with his little boy language it would sound like “ook the uvver way”.

When Bill was watching one of his favorite TV shows and he suddenly have to go to the bathroom, he would run to the TV and turn it off, go to the bathroom and then run back in the living room and turn the TV back on, thinking that when he turned the TV off the movie would stop and when he turned it back on the movie would start again in the exact same spot as it was when he turned it off.



Mickey & Bill Bender

In the winter mom used to dress Bill in a real cute, warm snugly snowsuit and send him out side to play in the snow. One time Bill stood next to his big brother Mickey and watched Mickey build a huge, tall snowman in the back yard, and then give the snow man stick arms. Bill would never participate in such things, he would merely stand by and not even really watch what was going on, just sort of be there.



Edward and Bill 1951

Ed loved Bill and would always be very protective of him as he knew Billy need more watching over than the other children. Ed was very affectionate with Bill and used to call him “boy, boy, it’s big Bill!” But in his earliest years he was anything but big. Bill was pitifully thin in his preschool days, gaining weight in his adult years.



Bill Bender

One night mom and dad went to the show and suddenly around 10 pm mom remembered that she forgot to turn off

the water heater. So she called Mike and told him to get Bill and Sandy out of bed and place them on the front lawn. So Mike put the 2 kids on the dewy front lawn and then ran down to the basement to turn off the water heater before it over heated and blew up through the roof. Once the water heater cooled off Mike took the 2 kids back into the house and put them back to bed.



Marie Bender & Bill Bender

When Bill was about 6 months old our family all went to Rochester State park on the end of John R Rd in Rochester. Mom was carrying Bill in her arms as we walked the river side trails together. (the Clinton River was extremely polluted in the 1940s and the water really had a foul smell to it.) Right in the middle of our walk a bee stung infant Bill on the lip which began badly swelling. That ended our walk as they had to take him home and treat the swelling.



Marie holding Bill, Sandy on bike, Nancy standing & Mickey

Bill was much younger than his oldest 2 siblings, Nancy and Michael Bender. Nancy was 13 years old when Bill was born, Mike was 10 years old & Sandy was 3.



Billy & Sandy Bender

Mom used to read bedtime stories to Sandy and Bill. The children's book mom used to read out of the most was the 365 bedtime stories. She would read the story of the day and then any other story we would ask for. Sandy liked the December 4 story of the twin black babies in the coal bin. She also wanted to hear the story of December 5. Bill

never asked for a particular bed time story. He just sat there on the couch and listened to mom read to us.



Sandy Bender & Billy Bender

Ed used to take high quality photographs of Bill in his earliest years. Ed used to put Sandy and Bill on the red kitchen chairs in the living room under very bright floodlights and spend a lot of time adjusting the speed and aperture settings on his camera. Using equipment that measured light and distance as the cameras were not automatic in those days, you either guessed or used those rather crude measurement devices.



Sandy & Bill bawling their heads off from being under the hot lights

Well, both kids would end up roasting under those red hot lights and would end up bawling their heads off before he even got his first picture! Ed tried to bribe them to be good by giving them the used flash bulbs to play with. (The flash bulbs were light blue in color and once they flashed they turned opaque. Each bulb could be used only once, so the kids had a number of flash bulbs to play with.)



Bill & Sandy

Mom bought Bill and Sandy balls with airplanes on them. Sandy and Bill treasured their balls. But when Bill and Sandy were playing with the balls, Bill's ball rolled out into Alter Rd and a passing motorist ran over and broke Bill's ball. The driver of that car got out of his car and gave Bill 25 cents to buy a new ball, but a new ball cost 29 cents so Bill never got a new ball.



Bill Christmas 1952

Little Billy used to get a lot of really nice presents for Christmas, the same as the other Bender kids got. One year Marie gave Bill a stuffed monkey for Christmas. After watching him play with the monkey for awhile Marie asked Bill what was he going to name the monkey? Bill replied, "monkey" which he pronounced MON Key. Ya, we know it's a monkey, Sandy said to Bill, but what are you going to call him? MON key was Bill's answer. So forever more the stuffed animal was named MON key. One of the really nice presents Bill and Sandy got for Christmas was a pair of walkie talkies. Bill also was very happy when he received a Davy Crocket outfit, including a coon skin cap

and a bowie knife. Bill loved swinging the bowie knife around, pretending he was fighting with an enemy.



Billy & Marie Bender

Dad used to get a Christmas tree the night before Christmas. He would use an axe to whittle down the sides and bottom of the tree because he would always buy a tree with a very thick stem that didn't fit into the base. After whittling it down he would then put the bottom of the tree into a red and green metal stand. Mom soon realized that she had to tie the tree to the wall and a large picture because Bill and Doug used to knock the tree over every Christmas and sometimes more than twice in the season. Mom had to replace the broken bulbs every Christmas when they bounced off the tree and broke. Bill never went with dad Christmas tree hunting or paring the bottom of the tree because he was one of the youngest children in the family. Sandy was usually the one to go with dad trying to find the perfect tree for a dollar!

When Sandy was 10 years old she invited Father Alexis Croke to our house Christmas morning and Marie was embarrassed for him to come into our house as there was Christmas wrap and toys all over the living room floor and

the tree had been knocked over again while she and Ed were at Christmas day mass.



Billy & Sandy Bender 1952

Mom bought us cowboy outfits one Christmas. Bill had a shirt, hat and jodhpurs. Sandy had on a hat, shirt, and cowboy skirt. Both Sandy and Bill had 2 guns and a holster. Sandy felt that the skirt was very scratchy as it was very stiff and covered with stiff fringe. Bill never complained about the comfort of his cowboy outfit.



Christine Stephens

Don's mother Christine Young Stephens came to mom's house on Alter Rd. with her cat. The cat ran into mom's kitchen and went under the kitchen table. 3 year old Bill ran into the kitchen after the cat and went under the table

and grabbed the cat by the tail. The cat scratched Bill, drawing blood. Bill learned to leave cats alone.

Bill went a number of years with Sandy and Michael and later also with Louise Reichard begging for candy on Halloween. We all yelled out "Help The Poor!" as we went from door to door. Bill was dressed up as a ghost for several years. He had a sheet on and he had black circles all around both eyes. He was slower moving than the rest of us and gave up going from house to house before the rest of us as he tired much faster than the other kids. Once he had his quota of candy in a Wrigley's shopping bag he had enough for the day and went home and showed mom his candy. Mom used to snatch a few pieces of her favorite candy from Bill's Halloween bag while the other kids were still out trick or treating. Mickey gave up going out on Halloween when he was about 12 years old.

One funny thing happened to Bill when he was on Ashland and Canfield on Halloween. One smart 20 year old guy put a five dollar bill in Bill's sack. Bill saw the \$5, his eyes got real big and he ran off the porch back to us. The smart aleck man ran real fast after Bill and got his \$5.00 back.



Bill and his records 1952

Bill loved playing kids' records, so Marie and Ed bought Bill a record player and a stack of kid's 78 rpm records. Bill would stand there by the hour in front of the record player playing his kiddie records. His favorite, which he played over and over again, was "froggie in the meadow". Marie would get so sick of listening to that song being played over and over again as she stood over the ironing board in the dining room hour on end.



Bill in front of our house on Alter Rd.

This picture was taken just as Marie and Ed were going to Niagara Falls for their first vacation. Bill stood at the curb

and whined as Ed pulled away. Mom and dad remarked how much Bill looked like Ed when he was that age. Nellie was at our house on Alter and watched Bill and Sandy that week.



Nellie Dahl & Bill Bender

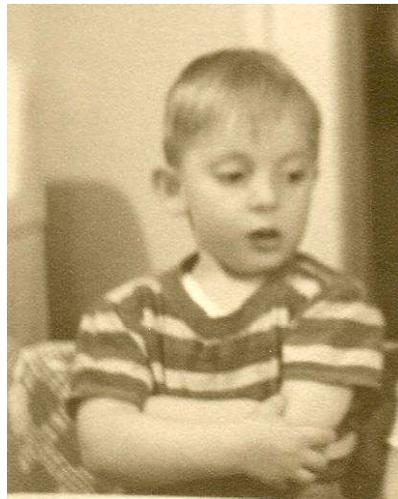
Grandma Nellie Dahl watched Bill that week. Bill had driven Marie nuts with all his whining. Once Ed & Marie pulled away Bill went back in the house on Alter. He gave his grandma Nellie Dahl absolutely no problem that week and when Ed & Marie returned home Marie was delighted to find that Bill had completely stopped whining.

Bill was quite thin when he was pre school but became a bit plump in his adult years.



Louise Reichard, Sandy, Leonard Ligotti, Bill Bender

Sandy had a 6th birthday party, the only birthday party she had other than her 5th birthday which was with adults. Bill was there that afternoon along with the neighborhood kids, Louise Reichard and Leonard Ligotti. Bill was 3 years old at that time. Louise's mother Birdie Reichard made the birthday cake.

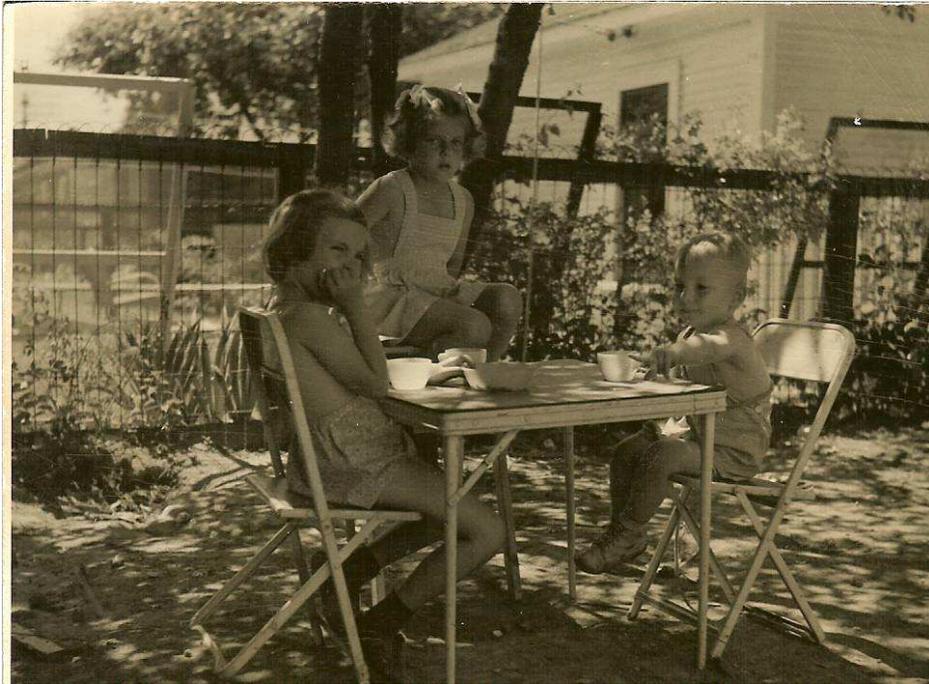


Billy Bender

Bill sure embarrassed mom and dad and really upset our Belgium neighbor, Victor Meeseman. Mr. Meeseman spent hours and hours putting in a new cement sidewalk in front of his house. Right after he finished smoothing the wet

cement and going in his house, Bill walks out of our house and walks right through all of the freshly laid wet cement. Mr. Meeseman got out his trowel and smoothed the sidewalk out again, mumbling in Belgian .

Bill took a very bad fall on Mr. Meeseman's sidewalk. He fell flat on his face, could not get his hands up in front of him, so down he fell and had a bloody face and another concussion.



Sandy Bender on left, Louise Reichard on stool and Billy Bender on right

Mom used to set us up for a tea party in the backyard in the summer time. She would make lemonade and give us some cookies.

In the summer time on a hot day we would sit in the shade of the cherry trees in the back yard or the shade in between the 2 houses. Mom would tell us kids to stay in the shade

in the summertime when the temperature would rise above 100 degrees F. Mom and dad bought Grandma Dahl a big, round powerful fan that very hot summer. She would sit in front of that fan most of the day every day as she was overly heated due to her weight (248 lbs) and the fact that she had an undiagnosed diabetes. Bill would also sit near that fan, but mom had to keep an eye on him so that he would not get his fingers into the fan blades as that fan did not have a guard on the outside like today's fans have.

Us kids used to go into the alley and throw water balloons at one another. Bill watched us and decided to throw a water balloon at a kid who climbed up a tree in the back of Calvin Seedolf's garage. So Bill took a large balloon filled with water and pitched it straight up at the kid on the tree. The balloon stopped just short of the kid in the tree, came sailing back down and hit Bill squarely on the head. Boy, did he get soaked! And he was one surprised kid!



Billy Bender

One time Bill was standing in front of Ligotti's house when he found 3 spark plugs. Bill decided to use the spark plugs as hand grenades, so he threw them as high as he could into the street on Alter Rd. The spark plugs came down and landed right on a woman's black Ford that she had just

picked up from the new car dealership. She jumped out of the car hysterical, wanting to find the kid who put several large dents in the roof of her new car, so his parents could pay for the damage. Bill saw her jump out of the car and he took off running through Ligotti's back yard and down the alley to our home as fast as his legs could carry him. Mrs. Ligotti was watering her flowers in her back yard and saw Bill running through her yard and down the alley. Then the woman with the new black car came walking into Mrs. Ligotti's yard and asked her if she saw a little boy run through her yard. Mrs. Ligotti, fully aware it was Billy that just ran through her yard, said she had no idea of any kid coming through. The woman was half hysterical, saying her husband would be so angry with her. That was the only time Mrs. Ligotti ever kept her mouth shut!



Bill Bender

Bill and Doug used to have some serious fights over what they were to watch on T.V. One of the kids would be watching a show on T.V. when the other kid would come into the living room and switch the channel. The kid who was watching the T.V. would holler and switch the channel back to what he had been watching. They would then

switch the channels back and forth hollering at one another. A big brawl would ensue and a lot of the time they never did get to watch one channel of another just flipping channels back and forth.

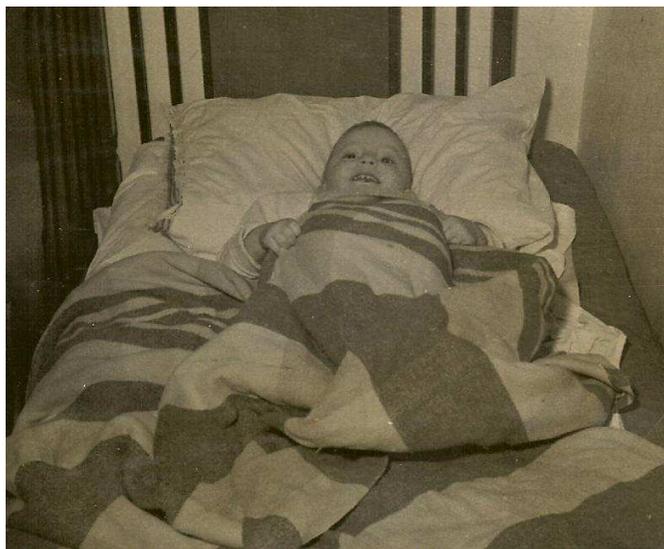


Doug Bender Sr.



Billy Bender

Another time dad called back home from his store and both boys jumped up to answer the phone. I Got it! No, I got it! Both boys would shout. They would both grab the phone, wrestling with it back and forth and then in the heat of the fight the phone would get hung up. Dad would be very angry. He said, what if that was a customer calling our house and heard all that squabble!



Billy Bender in his Hollywood bed

Billy used to sleep upstairs in the bedroom at the top of the stairs. He had a cot when he was younger and then later got to sleep in the Hollywood bed, which had a white padded headboard with metal thumb tacks all around the perimeter. Bill was a quiet kid and mom seldom had any problem putting him to bed at night.



Billy Bender on front porch of Alter

On more than one occasion Billy would throw a ball up in the air in the back yard and the ball would break Mrs. Meeseman's garage window. Mrs. Meeseman would very calmly go to mom and tell her Bill broke her garage window. Mom would apologize and pay for a new window.



Billy Bender

Bill had a miserable life once he started school. All through school the kids picked on him. When he went to kindergarten at Hosmer public school he used to hide in the bushes at recess time as the kids would torment him to no end. The same thing happened to him when he went to St. John Berchman's Catholic grade school.



Bill Bender

Bill was a very innocent little kid. On Mother's day 1952 Bill was walking down Alter Rd. when the neighbor, Richard Reichard, called Bill over to his house. Bill knew that what Richard wanted to do was not right so he went home and told mom. Mom went over to Mrs. Reichard and

told her what had just happened. Mom felt so very bad that she had to discuss this with Richard's mother on Mother's day.



Bill Bender

Bill could never climb a tree like the rest of us kids could. He couldn't even get to the first branch of our cherry trees. He also couldn't get on the garage's flat roof like the rest of us did. Mickey taught Sandy how to shinny up the cherry tree and drop onto the garage roof when she was 5 years old. Bill never got on the garage roof. One time Sandy and Louise were on the garage roof and Bill wanted to go too, so George Palsinski, who was the size of an 8 year old, but was a very strong 15 year old, offered to get Bill on the roof . George took a metal pronged rake and told Bill to put his feet on the prongs and to hold on tight to the handle of the rake. George had the kids in the alley put Bill on mom's 3 foot tall All can and step on the prongs of the rake. So Bill did that and George started pulling Bill up on the rake. Half way up Bill suddenly let go of the rake handle and fell backwards, smashing his skull on the

pavement in the alley. Once again, Bill had a bad concussion.



Billy

That was not the only concussion Bill got in those days. Bill was not able to ride a 2 wheeled bike so Sandy put him on the back carrier of her black bike and told Bill to sit side saddle, keep his feet straight out away from the spokes and hang on to the back of Sandy's seat. He did that until we turned the corner on Forest heading into the alley. Bill fell backwards off the bike and smashed his head once more into the cement in the alley. One more concussion!



Billy Bender and Sandy Bender ****

Ed and Marie took the whole family to Lion's Head in July, 1953. Marie had originally rented a hotel in Wiarton near Colpoy Bay. When Marie saw the broken down hotel across a busy street from the Georgian Bay, she had no intention of staying there as the hotel was a real dump and the hotel was across the street from the hotel and the kids would have to cross a dangerous busy highway . She told Ed to drive to Pacey's cottages on Whipporwill Bay in Lion's Head to see if Wilbur T. Pacey had a cottage open. When we got there Pacey had one cottage available, #3, and in the 2nd week he had a small cottage, #1. Dad's brother Norman and his 2 sons Gary and Richard were all there those 2 weeks. Dad , Norman and the boys all wanted to go fishing. Dad left Sandy and Bill with Marie and her mother Nellie. Marie had enough of doing a big wash and watching 3 kids, so she told Ed he had to take Sandy and Bill fishing. Ed and Norman were very unhappy with having to take 2 small kids fishing in a wooden row boat. When we all got to Miller Lake and Ed rented the boat, Norman started getting upset, saying we can't put the 2 little kids in a boat because they would make a lot of noise and scare the fish so Dad left Bill and I on the shore and took off in the boat without us. Dad left us all alone on the shore for over 2 hours. Sandy got very bored and decided to push the last boat off the shore and into the water. Once the boat was in the water Sandy put Bill in the boat and pushed it further out. She then jumped into the boat and rowed it into deeper water. The boat took on water and started to sink. Sandy jumped out of the boat and found out that the water was up to the top of her chest. She knew

it would be over Bill's head so she pulled him out of the boat and carried him to shore. Dad got nervous leaving his kids on shore so he came back and was shocked to see the boat was sinking just before the kids got out. He had Gary drive Bill and Sandy back home to Pacey's. Gary, who had no driver's license as he was only 15, drove like a bat out of hell. Norm's car hit the side of the rocks, damaging Norm's car. The kids were not injured. But Sandy told on Gary and Norman knocked his son around a bit.



Bill & Marie Bender

One time Marie just got done painting her downstairs bathroom a pretty lavender and when she was done she put the paint roller, the brush and the paint pan in the garbage behind the garage. Bill, about 4 years old, picked up the paint roller and painted his entire head, face and clothes with the lead based oil paint. When Sandy saw what he had done, she told Louise that she did not want to tell mom what Bill did as she knew Marie would just about die! Sandy ran in the house, told Marie what Bill had just done and then ran out really fast and got away before mom went ballistic over that oil based paint all over Bill and his clothes. Mom spent a lot of time removing the oil based paint with turpentine.



Bill Bender & Sandy Bender

From time to time Sandy gave Bill a hard time which he didn't deserve. One time Sandy was mean to Bill and when Bill said what she did wasn't nice, Sandy replied that it was not her that did that, that it was a girl named Marilyn who lived behind the mirror. Bill then went and looked behind the mirror and when he didn't see anyone there he told Sandy that there was no one back there. Sandy insisted that Marilyn was back there. Bill looked behind the mirror again, saw no one, and was very perplexed.

Bill was carrying a 50 cent Ben Franklin half dollar while standing next to the mirror in the downstairs back bedroom when he dropped the half dollar which rolled into the closet and fell down into a crack and disappeared. There was no way for us to retrieve the half dollar. I am sure the 50 cent piece remains under the floor of the closet.

In the evening while mom was watching TV I told Bill to come quick into the kitchen, there was a penny on the floor. Bill walked into the kitchen, bent over and started to pick up the penny. He quickly dropped the red hot penny. I had

held the penny over the gas range with a tweezer and then dropped the red hot penny on the floor.

The worst and most dangerous trick of all is when I blind folded Bill in the upstairs and watched him wander around. He walked to the head of the stairway and could have tumbled down the stairs. He walked onto the side and that is where I took the blind fold off him.

Another time Bill went into the basement and got into Ed's fishing equipment. Bill ended up with a bunch of fish hooks sticking in his corduroy pant legs. Marie had to carefully cut them out of his brand new pants as he would be stabbed with the hooks if she just tried to pull his pants off him.



Billy, Nellie Dahl & Doug

Nellie used to baby sit all of us Bender kids, especially in the summer when she stayed at our house. Mom had to go to the doctor as her skin broke out so Nellie was stuck with watching us. Bill gave her no trouble at all, but Doug

would not go down for a nap and would scream incessantly.



Bill Bender

Mom bought Bill a toy called “Bild-ding” It was a lot of plastic men in different colors made in such a way that you could hook them together head to foot, or foot to shoulder. Bill was fascinated with the men and spent hours hooking them together.



Bill Bender

One time Bill went down to the end of the alley on Canfield and saw Sandy and Louise playing in the vacant field there. Someone had dumped an old refrigerator in the field. Bill climbed in the refrigerator and closed the door. Sandy and Louise wandered off leaving Bill in there. Our neighbor, Mrs. Ligotti, came along, opened the refrigerator and had a

fit when she found Bill inside. She sure made a big stink over that, rightfully so.



Billy on lower left with his kindergarten classmates at Hosmer school

Like all the rest of us Bender kids Billy attended Hosmer public school on Canfield and Lakewood in Detroit. He went to Kindergarten and reading readiness in that school before transferring to St. John Berchnan's school at Warren and Lakeview in Detroit. Bill attended St John's from the first grade through the 8th grade till we moved to Sterling Heights and he attended Utica High School. Bill was always at best an average student. He took easier classes in order to graduate on time. He graduated from Utica High in June, 1966. He took up fencing in high school and was in the year book with his fencing gear.



Louise Reichard, Sandy, Leonard Ligotti & Billy

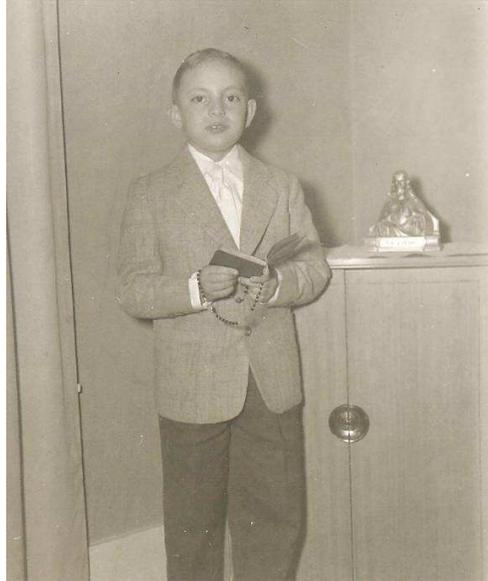
Us neighborhood kids used to play softball in the alley behind our house on Alter Rd. We used to play with Sandy, Bill, Louise, Leonard and Ronald Logrand. It was hard to keep the ball within the boundaries of the alley as the alley was narrow. You had to bat pretty much straight ahead. When Bill got up to bat as soon as he hit the ball he would sling the bat behind him, hitting Louise in the shins. She told Bill to drop the bat, not throw it backwards as it really hurt when he hit her in the legs. The next time Bill got up to bat he again got so excited over being able to hit the ball that once again he slung the bat backwards, whacking Louise in the shins. Louise threatened Bill with bodily harm if he did that one more time.

One time after we played baseball we stood in the alley around the back fence at the rear of Ligotti's yard. Billy was standing there by Leonard's back fence when his mother finished weeding and watering the flowers and vegetables in her garden. After surveying her work she went into the house to change into nicer clothes when her husband came home. Her bedroom window faced the back of the house. Her shade was drawn up so we could see

inside. As we were all standing there she pulled off her dress. Then she pulled off her slip. And then when she started to wiggle out of her girdle we all started laughing real hard! When she looked out her bedroom window and saw us all staring at her she got really flustered and yanked the shade down, but she yanked too hard and the whole shade came flying down! She started screaming at us kids as she pulled the curtains shut. Billy and the rest of us went running down the alley and to our homes as we knew how angry she would be as she came out of the house and went after us.

Sandy borrowed a 2 wheel bike from a home on Canfield near Manistique and brought it to our house on Alter Rd. and held the seat of the bike and tried to teach Bill how to ride the bike. Bill wobbled all over the place and never got the hang of riding a bike. Sandy returned the bike back where she found it.

Sandy got Mike's old black bike when Mike got his new Schwinn Panther. Sandy had a hard time learning to ride the 26 inch boy's bike. I could ride Louise's 20 inch bike with no problem but I was much too little to ride a 26 inch boy's bike. While riding this bike in the alley the fork suddenly broke loose from the frame, making it unrideable. Sandy asked dad if he could get the frame welded back together. When Sandy went back into the back yard the black bike was gone. Billy said he gave the broken bike to the sheeny man. Sandy ran up and down 3 alleys but was not able to find the bike.



Bill Bender 1st Holy Communion 1956

Bill made his First Holy Communion when he was in the 2nd grade at St John Berchman's school in May, 1956, the same year his sister Sandy made her confirmation. Mom set up the statue of Jesus and had Bill hold a rosary and a prayer book as dad took his picture in our house on Alter Rd.

When Bill was 9 years old Sandy again tried to teach Bill how to ride a bike. Again he wobbled from side to side. Sandy had Bill ride faster and told him to try to sit up straighter. Running with him around the block Bill finally got the hang of riding the bike. On Ashland Bill was riding okay and Sandy was tired of running so she let go of the seat and Bill kept riding upright. When Bill looked back and saw Sandy was no longer holding the seat he got really upset with her but kept on riding straight ahead.



Warren Stephens & Bill Bender

Bill posed with Warren Stephens, his nephew, on Easter Sunday, 1957. Nancy always dressed her children up on special occasions, like Easter and Christmas. Bill liked Warren, Linda and Donna and played with them when they came over to our house on Alter. Much later, when Craig was born Bill really liked that kid too and played with him when he came to our house on Diamond in Sterling Heights.



Bill Bender in front of Dad's new Opel

Bill liked going for rides in dad's new little Opel, which mom called his "Kiddy car". Bill used to drive Sandy nuts. When riding in the car Sandy would study her home work while Bill would reenact the latest war movie that he

watched, making lots of sound effects, pretending to blow off bombs and hand grenades. He also would sound off Ack! Ack! Ack! pretending he was firing a machine gun.

Bill loved eating chop suey, so on his birthday every year mom made him chop suey. He especially loved chow mein noodles so mom made sure she served those as well.

Bill and Doug liked going to the show on Saturday afternoons. They had two shows close to home – the Uptown at Mack and Chalmers and the Harper at Harper and Alter Rd. When going to the Harper they would leave a little early and slide up and down the dirt gully that was being dug to put in the I 94 freeway through from the inner city to 8 Mile Rd.

One time Bill saw a show he really wanted to go see but it was showing at Harper and Audubon, several miles from home. So dad had his delivery man drive the boys to that show and then gave Bill a dime to call dad's store after the show was over so the delivery man could drive the kids back home. After the show was over the 2 boys left the show. Bill started asking strangers which way was Warren and Alter Rd. Doug told him he didn't need to know, just call dad and they would be picked up. Bill continued to walk in the direction a person told him and Doug started getting real perturbed, saying call dad. When Bill ignored Doug and kept walking, Doug suddenly figured out why. "You ate the dime!" Doug said. You bought a candy bar with that dime! It was a long walk home.



Leonard Ligotti

Leonard Ligotti was usually a peaceful kid but this one time for whatever reason he struck Bill who was standing in front of Meeseman's house. Sandy saw him do it so she ran up to him and started pounding him on the back, hollering at him. Leonard fell onto his hands and knees and crawled home to his mother. He never again picked on Bill.

Bill had a good friend who lived three houses down from us – his name was Larry Carmack. Larry had a younger brother Johnny, but Bill never played with Johnny, Johnny was more Doug's friend. Larry was more peaceful like Bill, Johnny was more of a live wire like our Doug.

Johnny had sticky fingers at times. When he came into the house with either Bill or Doug he ended up going into mom's dining room dresser and stealing Sandy's prized Indian rubber ball. Bill went into Johnny's house and found Sandy's high bouncing ball. Sandy was very happy to have her ball back.

That same month the Church had a ceremony in the middle of the week and Bill was in the procession. He was dressed

in a page boy type of costume, a vanilla very satiny costume with gold fringe. He was told to put the page boy clothing on at home but to bring his street clothes with him as he was supposed to turn in the outfit and dress in his own clothes. Bill forgot to bring his own clothes so the nuns got a hold of me and told me to leave the classroom and run home and bring back his own clothes. I ran home as fast as I could but when I got home all the doors were locked and no one was home. I walked around the house and found an open basement window that I opened and jumped down into the basement. I found Bill's clothes and then walked out the front door and ran back to school. When I ran home for lunch I found Aunt Elenore and Doug sitting on the front porch. Aunt Elenore was scared to death, thinking some one had broken into the house. I told her it was me who went into the house to get Bill's clothes, she still would not settle down. To appease her I went in the house and went through every room, even checking under all the beds and in the closets, upstairs, main level and even in the basement. Aunt Elenore then went in and made lunch for us, but remained scared of a possible burglar for the rest of the afternoon.



Bill Bender 7th grade St. John Berchman

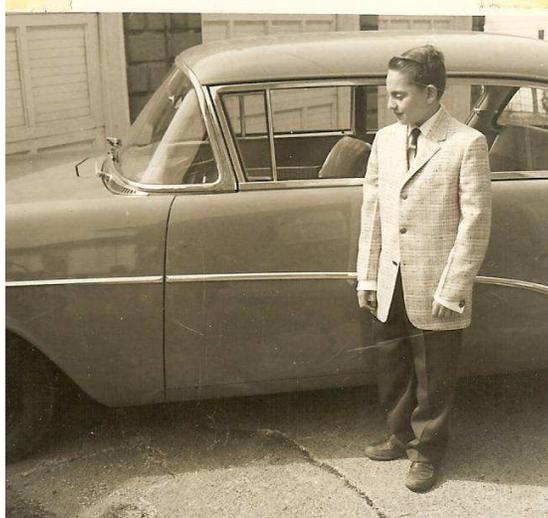
Bill's class sat in the balcony in the upstairs Church. One morning Bill got sick to his stomach and vomited all over the upstairs pew and kneeler. His teacher made him clean up the mess in spite of the fact that he felt very sick.

When Bill was in the 4th grade his teacher, Mrs. O Keefe accused Bill of picking on her teacher's pet. Bill had never picked on any kid and his sister Sandy knew that so she left her 8th grade classroom and went around the corner to confront O Keefe. O Keefe insisted that Billy picked on the littlest kid in the 4th grade. Bill said he didn't pick on the little kid. Sandy and Mrs. O Keefe met in the hall outside the 4th grade classroom. We got into a verbal shouting match. O Keefe put her finger and poked into my chest 3 times. I in turn, poked her in her chest 3 times. Sister Mary Falconeri was peeking around the corner and was looking at the altercation with great glee. Sandy felt she won that round. Bill was not reprimanded.



Bill and Doug 1959

Edward Bender bought an Opel Cadet in January, 1959. It was small enough that it could fit in the back yard on Alter Rd. Bill and Doug jumped into their dad's car and pretended to go for a ride. Ed took the family for a ride in a snowy night. He drove down Voigt Rd. The car slipped and slid around the road in the ice and snow. Marie called Ed's Opel the "Kiddie car".



Billy Bender on Easter Sunday 1959 in front of Ed's new Opel Cadet

Here is Bill on Easter Sunday standing outside his dad's car. Dad took us on many rides on this car. When Ed bought this car we still lived on Alter Rd. 2 years later we moved to Diamond in Sterling Heights. We took many a fun ride to Mighion's restaurant in Mt. Clemens for a broasted chicken dinner even though we half froze to death in that car for lack of a decent heater.

Going with Billy to an amusement park was so much fun! When Mr. Reichard took us to Jefferson Beach we had only 10 rides for \$1.00 Some rides were free with the Wonder bread coupons that came in the bread wrapper but those rides were the least desirable. When Mr. Reichard took us Bill was very quiet and just went along with us on the rides without making any noise.

However, once Billy grew up and went to an amusement park with us, he was a barrel of laughs. When Bill and I got in the first car on the roller coaster, 2 young teenage boys were right behind Bill and me. It was obvious to me

that this was their first time on a roller coaster as they looked quite frightened. As the roller coaster started up the first incline, the kids were hanging on with white knuckles. When Bill saw this he started saying in a real high falsetto voice, “I love my mother, I love my father, I don’t want to die!!” The kids behind us were petrified!

Another time Bill got on a roller coaster alone a black woman with really greasy hair sat in the same seat as Bill and put her greasy hair right on him. Bill was friendly to her in spite of her greasy hair rubbing all over his head.

Another time Bill and I got on the roller coaster at Boblo. It was a nice new metal roller coaster so we felt safe on it. That is, until it started to rain. The roller coaster sailed right past the exit and kept on going back up the hill and around the track again. The operators were very concerned. As we came around the bend heading into the end of the track, the operator took a big long pole and stuck it under the roller coaster’s wheels and that managed to stop it. I was a little bit concerned, Bill was not at all concerned. It was just one more adventure for him.

There was a new fangled Ferris wheel at Boblo. Bill was anxious to get on it. Craig was willing to go with him. Sandy had no interest in going on it – it looked much too scary to her. Instead of seats the ferris wheel had enclosed bubbles where 2 people sat in it, strapped in and the door closed shut. The cars went backward and forward and even spun upside down. As the cars were being loaded, Bill and Craig ended up at the very top and upside down. Bill

started hollering very loud. The operator brought Bill's car down and opened it up for Bill to get out. What are you doing? Bill said to the operator. Letting you out, the guy responded. I don't want out, Bill bellowed, I want to go for a ride! So the door was shut and Bill and Craig went up, up and away. Bill had the time of his life on that ride. Craig, on the other hand was trying to keep his cookies down.

The funniest thing that happened at the Geage Park amusement park was when Bill, Doug and I went through the fun house. The floors and walls were all crooked and we found ourselves flying across the room to the far side as it was hard to keep your balance. Then as you staggered your way into the next room, it was a saloon where the 2 desperados were having a gun fight with you in the middle. Boy, we straggled through that room quickly. But the scariest of all was the exit to the fun house. There were two ways to get out – either a small triangle with bright flashing lights that you had to crawl through, or a big hole in the floor that you had to jump into and fly through the pitch dark tunnel to the sidewalk down below. Bill was in front. Sandy was behind and Doug was behind Sandy. Sandy was concentrating on which way was safer, the flashing triangle or the dark tunnel. While Sandy was figuring out which way was best for us, Billy had his head turned around, talking to Doug and me. While talking, Bill steps full force right into the dark tunnel and goes flying down, smacking his arms against the sides of the tunnel. So Doug and I figure we had better take the blinking triangle so we don't land on Bill if he is sprawled on the sidewalk at the bottom of the tunnel. Doug and I come out

of the triangle and see Bill standing next to mom and dad, rubbing his elbows with a big scowl on his face. Doug and I burst out laughing. Bill grimaced, rubbed his elbows and said, “that ain’t funny!” But Doug and I thought it was hilarious.

Bill and Sandy went on the wooden roller coaster at Geaga lake amusement park. It felt so terribly rickety and when you went through the second hoop the wooden cross bar where the track went overhead, it was so low that you felt it was going to decapitate you. But when you went down hill you traveled under the cross track, but it felt not by much.



Bill & Taffy

Bill liked Taffy, as we all did. He played with her in the house but he never took her for a walk like the rest of us did. Bill was more sedentary, preferring to remain in the house.



Bill Bender Johnson's Harbor, Bruce Peninsula, Canada

Bill went to Lion's Head with Ed, Marie and Sandy a number of times. He stayed with us at the Glocca Morra and the Glencoe. He came to Lion's Head both before and after his service in the Army. Bill went with Ed, Marie and Sandy on Johnson's Harbor where we rented a wooden row boat. Bill took his turn rowing.



Edward, Marie and Bill Bender

Bill had just gotten out of the service when he went with us to Canada. Ed, Marie, Bill and Sandy rented a row boat and went fishing in Johnston's Harbor. Bill did some of the rowing that day. This picture was taken in August, 1968.

Sandy had to carry the luggage up the steep steps of the Glencoe as Bill felt too tired to carry the luggage, mom's kitchen utensils and cans of food. Bill had a lot of fun with Dad, Mom and Sandy on the sea shore.



Marie, Bill & Sandy

This picture of Marie, Bill and Sandy was taken in front of the Glocca Morra, Byron & Tessie Grieg's cottage. It was taken with Dad's Rolliflex camera in 1968. Bill was not too happy as he was suffering from Agent Orange but the rest of us had a most enjoyable time at the cottage. Dad taught Bill and Sandy how to skip the flat stones on the Georgian Bay. We loved seeing how many times we could skip a stone.



Sandy & Bill on the Georgian Bay, 1968

Sandy and Bill are standing on the rocky shoreline of the Georgian Bay. Bill just got of the service in Vietnam when this picture was taken in 1968. Bill was suffering a great deal in this picture.



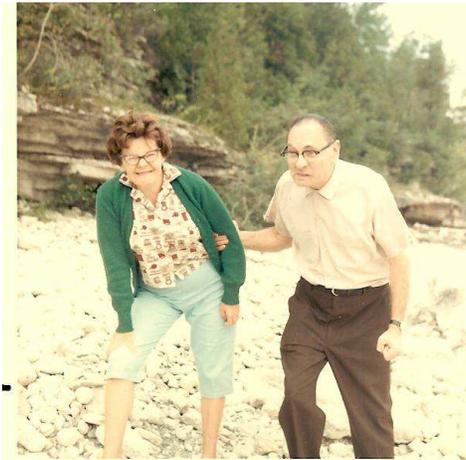
Mom, Sandy and Bill clowning around.

We are all enjoying a vacation on the Georgian Bay in 1968. We were clowning around on top of a tall Niagara escarpment on Whipporwill Bay when this picture was taken. This is one of our favorite pictures. It looks like Bill is about to boot mom clear over the top of the escarpment.



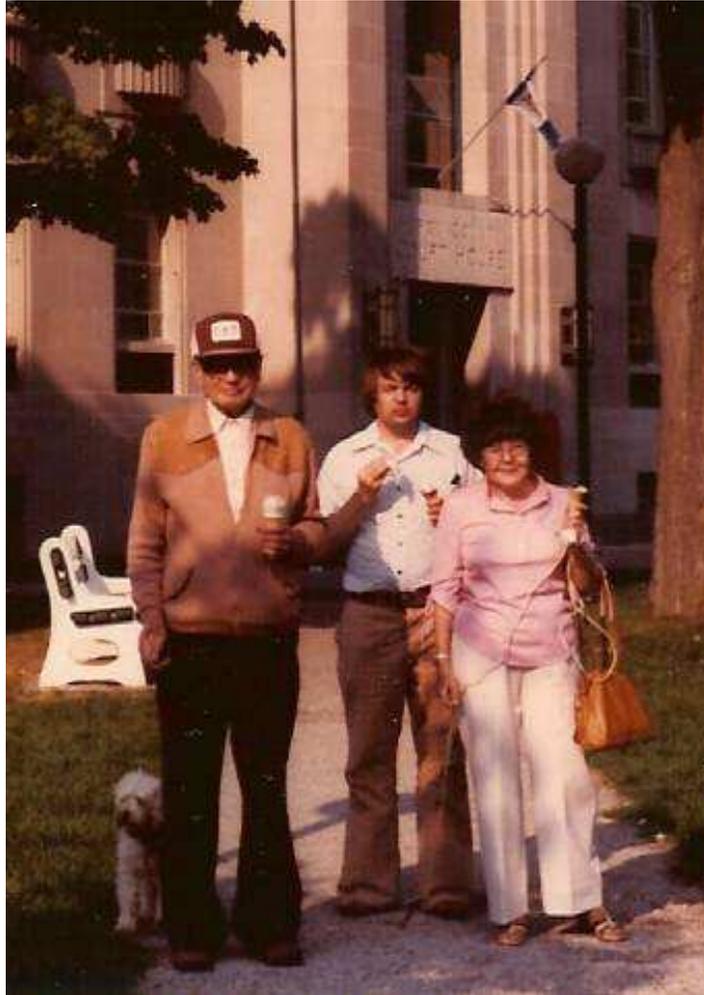
Ed, Marie and Bill

Bill and Mom are pretending to light a cigarette and Edward is looking on and grinning. Ed and Bill, as well as mom, never smoked. This was just all for fun.



Marie & Ed walking on rocky shore line

Marie, Ed, Sandy & Bill used to have a hard time walking on the rocks to the town of Lion's Head. So Marie and Ed were clowning around here pretending it was much harder to walk on rocks than it really was. Taffy used to walk to town on the rocks too, but the stones did hurt her paws.



Taffy, Edward, Bill & Marie Bender

This picture was taken in Goderich, Canada on our way home from Lion's Head. The courthouse is in the background. Goderich was a town who's downtown was built in a circle, with all the stores placed mainly around the circle with some of the businesses aligned along the side streets that formed spokes off the main circle.

We almost always stopped for lunch at one of the spokes that contained 2 restaurants. After eating lunch we would

stop at the ice cream parlor and order up cones for all of us and also the dog.

One time when Bill was much younger we stopped and ate at one of these restaurants in Goderich. After paying the bill Dad put a tip on the table and we all headed for the car. Bill came out of the restaurant last and came running up to Dad with the tip in his hand saying dad forgot his money! Dad took the tip money, walked back into the restaurant and put the money back on the table.

Bill and Doug were playing on the rocky shore in front of Pacey's when they got into a loud argument. Mom and Dad were in front of the cottage and got embarrassed by the loud noise so they told the boys to get up to the cottage. Bill ran up first. Doug started coming up after Bill when all of a sudden he tripped and fell on the rocks injuring his hand. Bill ran up to the cottage and just as he got near the cottage he turned around to shout a few more insults at Doug. Just as he did that he smashed his head into the cottage chimney, injuring his eye. Dad and mom took both boys to the emergency room of the Lion's Head hospital. The doctor took one look at Doug's injured hand and Bill's injured eye and said, "I can see what happened here"

Both boys loved throwing rocks into the bay. They would throw the rocks for hours at a time. Dad taught all of us how to skip stones in the bay. Dad could skip stones more than 20 times per throw.

Bill needed to go to summer school in order to graduate on time. Sandy had major surgery and was in too much pain to go to work for 6 weeks so Marie suggested that Sandy also go to summer school at Utica High and take a typing class. Sandy was only 16 and did not yet have a car or a driver's license so she took Nedra's bike the 2 miles to school. Sandy had a brand new 3 speed Schwinn but did not want to ride it to school and risk having it stolen. So she pedaled that 20 inch old bike daily. Boy, was Sandy ever angry when she found out that Marie told Bill he could ride Sandy's new 3 speed Schwinn to and from school. Marie insisted that Bill continue to ride Sandy's new Schwinn for the rest of the summer school because Bill would not agree to go to Utica High every day unless he could ride an easily pedaling bike. So Sandy gave in and allowed Bill to continue riding her new bike as she knew Bill would not finish his classes if he had to walk the 2 miles or ride Nedra's 20 inch hard to pedal bike. So Sandy had to suffer a lot of pain pedaling Nedra's bike with a fresh abdominal incision.

Bill went over to Mike Healy's house on New Year's night and got dead drunk. He stumbled back home and flopped into bed. He was so drunk that his head fell over the edge of the bed and Bill kept garbling, making loud, scary sounds. Doug was real scared and came down stairs into the living room. Sandy was also scared of Bill and left her bedroom and sat in the living room by Doug. Edward was awakened by the noise Bill was making and went into his bedroom to assess the situation. Edward was scared that Bill might die so he stayed by him until he calmed down.

All the next day Bill was still drunk and sick to his stomach. Mom was really mad at Mike Hurley for getting Bill so drunk. Bill never got drunk like that ever again.

Bill was going to Child Guidance in Mt. Clemens for counseling. Mom had learned to drive but was scared to drive that far in all that traffic so she asked her next store neighbor Ann Healy if she would drive Bill to Child Guidance if mom would due Ann's ironing. Ann gladly made the trade as she worked all day and hated doing the ironing. Marie was really proud of Bill as he was so polite to Ann Healy when she drove him to and from Child Guidance.

Mom went with Bill to Child Guidance but was chagrined when Mr. Bell suddenly said to mom, "You've got quite a temper at times, haven't you?" Mom was shocked when Mrs. Bell said that, but when she thought it over she realized Mrs. Bell was right.

Bill drove to Judge Havey's house in Sterling Heights on Suncrest lane by the Clinton River and he and Doug drank some booze on that dark dead end street. All of a sudden Bill sees red and blue flashers right behind his car. The policeman charged the 2 brothers with underage drinking. They went to court and the judge told Bill and Doug they were not to associate with one another. Bill said how can that happen as both brothers sleep in the same bedroom!

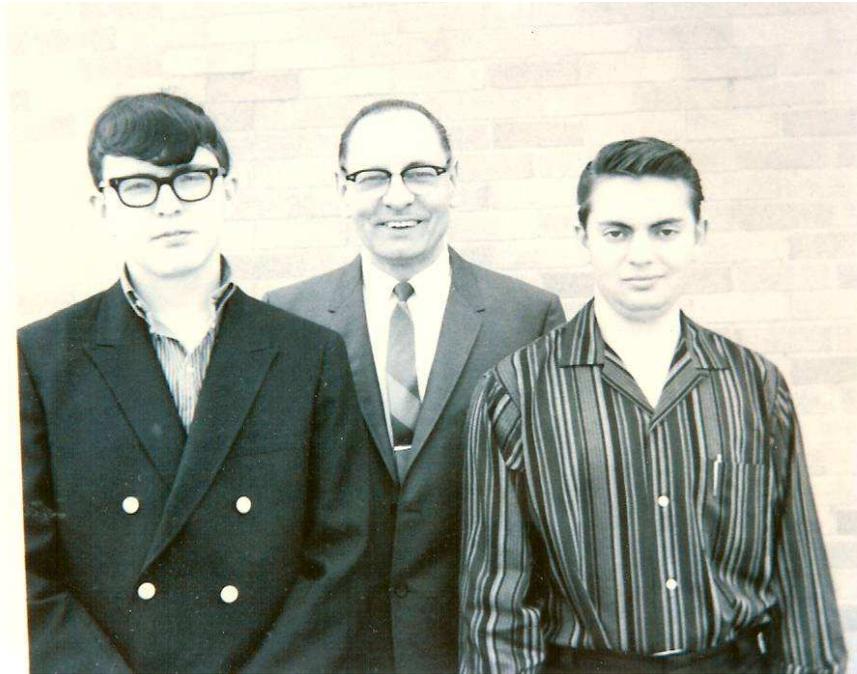
Frank Alfter was Bill's best friend in high school. Frank's father was in the military service and the family just came

back from a number of years in Japan. It was a tremendous adjustment for Frank because in Japan he had personal servants to provide for his every need, but now in Sterling Heights his family had to pinch every penny to make ends meet.

Frank Alfter joined the Civil Air Patrol and convinced Bill to join the CAP with him. Bill was very proud to be a member of the Civil Air Patrol and loved wearing the uniform. Bill was very proud to keep his uniform shoes spit shined and his uniform clean.

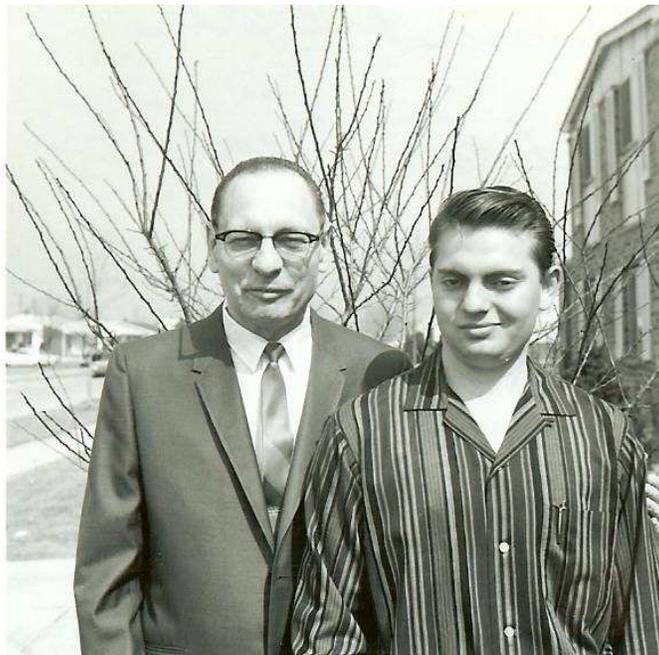
Bill got a job while in high school stocking shelves for Food Fair at Canal Rd and Van Dyke. Edward used to pick Bill up in the evening when his shift was over. One night when Ed pulled in to the parking lot to pick Bill up he saw another stock boy going after Bill with a tire iron in his hand. Dad stepped forward, talking sternly to the other stock boy. Dad then had Bill go quickly into his car and took him home, thus averting a serious situation.

Poor Bill was taunted by his family for his weight. Looking back Bill was not as overweight as we made him out to be. And being on insulin would have tended to make him gain weight. And to tell the truth, Bill's weight was none of our business.



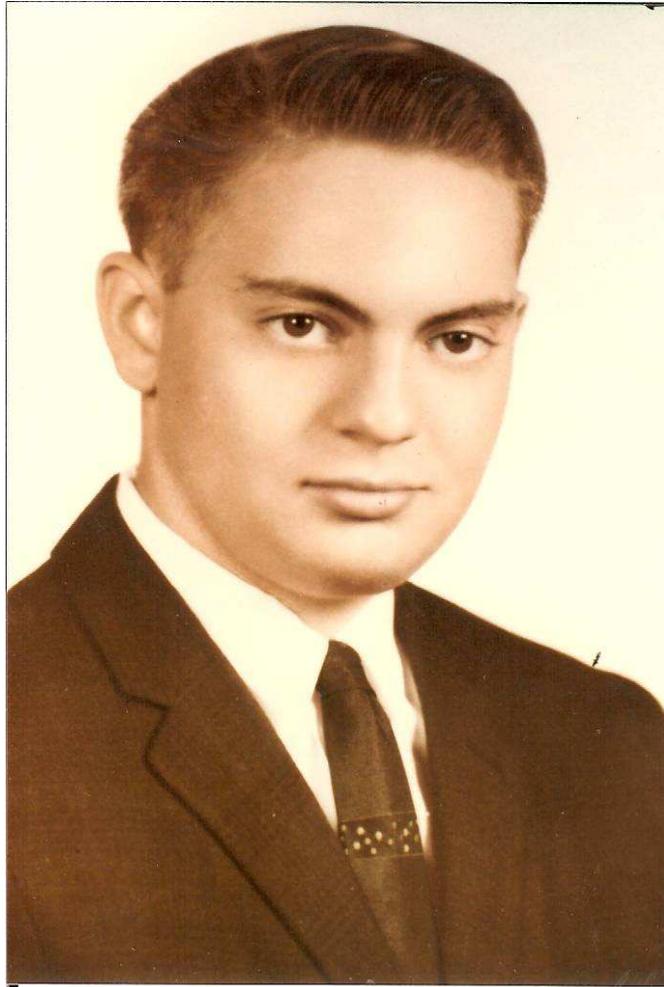
Doug, Edward & Bill Bender

Sandy took this picture in front of Diamond in Sterling Heights. This was not a happy time for the family.



Edward & Bill Bender

This picture was taken on Diamond shortly before Bill went into the service in Vietnam.



William Henry Bender 1966

This is Bill's graduation picture. Sandy drove Bill to Utica High School to have this picture taken. As she was driving him to the school she realized how handsome he looked. This was by far the best picture that was ever taken of Bill. He was so proud of graduating from High School.



William Bender 1966

Here is a picture of Bill in his cap and gown. Bill had a job at Food Fair at Canal and Clinton River Rd just east of Van Dyke in Sterling Heights. He had a small white Valiant. Ed went to pick up Bill after work and found him in an altercation with another stock boy. Edward soon stopped the fight and drove Bill away from the parking lot and back home.



Sandy, Bill and Edward Bender

Mom, dad, Sandy and Bill went to Niagara Falls in June 23, 1968. In this picture Sandy, Bill and Edward are standing

in front of the American Falls. We celebrated Dad's birthday while at the Falls.



Marie, Bill & Edward

Bill had a really good time taking pictures of us at Niagara Falls. Bill was using Edward's camera. Bill was so happy taking his dad's birthday pictures. Our whole family had such a happy time on that vacation.



Marie, Edward & Bill at Lundy Lane

We stayed at the same motel that mom did in 1953 at the Lundy Lane up hill from the Falls. There were many young honeymooners in the motels up and down Lundy Lane. They made us feel like old fogeys.



Sandy, Bill and Marie in the Lundy Lane motel in Niagara Falls

Bill was having a fun time taking a picture in the inside of the Lundy Lane motel of Marie and Sandy. We had a really good time that week.



Sandy, Bill and Edward at the American Falls

When we left the motel on Lundy Lane we spent the day at the Falls, walking up and down the Falls and also around the corner up the Clifton Hill to visit the museums.

Bill had a white little Valiant car before he went into the service. All while Bill was in the army his mom drove that car. Marie loved that car as it was small and easy to handle. She went mostly grocery shopping with that car. When Bill came home on leave before going to Viet Nam he drove that car. He was mostly careful in his driving those few weeks he was home.

While Bill was at home on leave he went to visit a good friend he had met in basic training. His friend was very upset over being in the service and so while he was home on leave he was driving very wild. Within 2 weeks of being home he got into a car crash and died. Bill was very upset over losing a good friend.



Bill in Fort Rucker, Alabama



Doug, Marie and Bill – Fort Rucker

Bill tried to enlist in the Army but was turned down by all branches of the service. Then at the end of the month when the recruiters had not made their quota for the month, Bill applied again. They had Bill interviewed for possible induction. When they asked Bill why he wanted to join the service Bill replied in a loud voice, “Ack, Ack, Ack! I want to kill those Gooks!” Several recruiters looked over at Bill and just rolled their eyes and shook their heads. But they inducted him into the army and sent him to Fort Rucker for helicopter repair training. (When his brother Doug read this he just had an incredible look on his face

and said “Bill doing helicopter repair!” Bill didn’t have an ounce of mechanical aptitude in his whole body.)

Edward was so very upset when he heard that Bill was joining the army. He felt that Bill was incapable of protecting himself in a wartime situation. Marie, Edward and Sandy went to the airport to see Bill off to Vietnam. Ed and Marie were so very afraid that he would be killed in action.



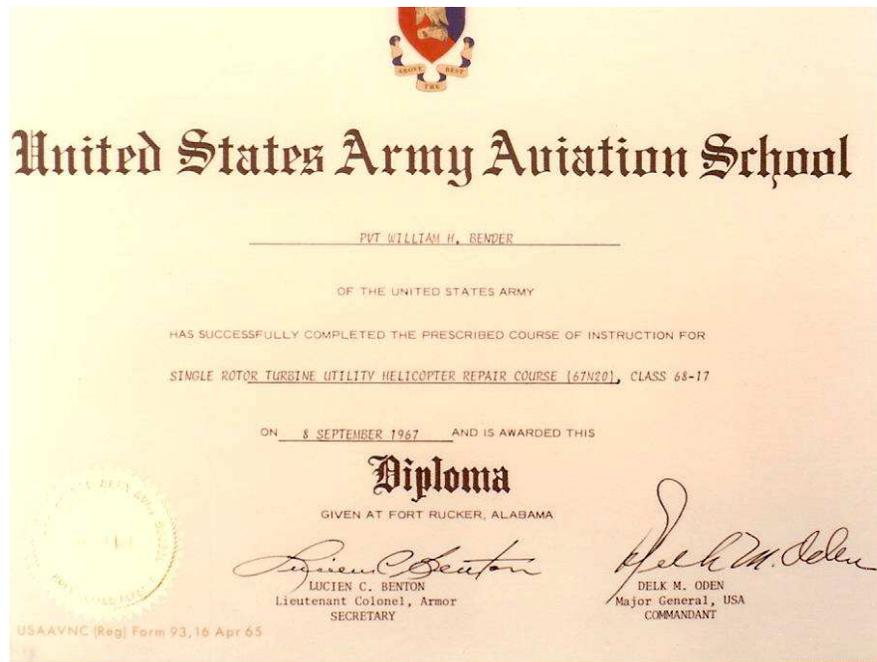
pfc William Bender

Once Bill was in Vietnam he wrote his mother faithfully every week and she wrote him back. Then when Bill stopped sending letters Marie as beside herself with worry. She just knew that something happened to Bill. Weeks went buy with no letters from Bill. Then one beautiful sunny day in the summer mom got a phone call, when she picked up the phone there was a very hard to understand female voice who asked to speak to mom. Mom got hysterical and dropped the phone, sure they were going to tell her that Bill was dead. Mom then hollered at me to answer the phone, so I ran into the dining room from the kitchen and picked up the phone. A woman with a very heavy accent told me that she was a Japanese phone

operator and mom had 3 minutes to talk to Bill. So mom picked up the phone and talked to Bill. He told her he was in a hospital in Japan. Before being in a hospital in Japan he was in a hospital in Saigon for over a month.

Bill said that 2 extremely upsetting incidents happened to him to send him in the hospital. First he was on midnight guard duty in Da Nang sitting on a wall eating his can of C rations when a helicopter flew over his head spraying him and his C ration with Dow chemical poison used to strip the trees from all their leaves so our men could see the Viet Cong who were hiding in the trees. Bill may not have realized that the Agent Orange spray fell into his C ration can as Bill said he was fighting off rats that were trying to get into the can to eat his food.

And shortly after that Bill asked his commander for permission to move into the other bunker because all of his friends were in the other bunker. They had to get permission for the move so while Bill was waiting a Viet Cong snuck into the camp and threw a hand grenade into the other bunker where Bill's friends were sleeping. Bill and all of his men in the second bunker received a severe concussion but were ordered to remove all Bill's dead friends from the other bunker.



Bill went into shock and was sent to the hospital in Saigon where he remained for several weeks. After being in that hospital he was sent to a hospital in Japan where he remained for a number of weeks. It was from this Japanese hospital that he was allowed to call mom.



Bill, Marie and Edward at Bethesda Naval hospital

Several weeks later in March 1968 Bill was flown to Bethesda Naval Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. Once we

were told that Bill was in Bethesda Marie, Edward and Sandy drove to Maryland and were able to visit with Bill. Bill was very edgy and was not able to sleep most of the time at night. We visited tourist sites during the day as they had Bill working days and could only visit his family after 4 pm. We took Bill out to dinner and stayed visiting with him until he had to go back to the hospital for the night.



Bill in Bethesda Naval hospital

Bill was in Bethesda Naval hospital in Maryland for several weeks before we were able to come and visit him there. Bill made this huge valentine card and had his picture taken with his head sticking through the bottom of it.

After a number of weeks Bill was flown home to Michigan where mom and dad picked him up from the airport. What a surprise they had once Bill was home. He paced the floor like a caged animal and could hardly sleep at all at night. His nerves were shot for the rest of his life. He had been poisoned with Agent Orange. Agent Orange never leaves your body. It destroys your nerves permanently.



Bill & Marie in front of Bill's Dodge Swinger
Wild Willie, his "Red Menace" Dodge Swinger & Marie

When Bill got home from Bethesda Sandy helped Bill apply for a VA pension and social security disability. It was a tough fight but in the end Bill won both pensions due to his being poisoned by Agent Orange. Our government did not admit our boys were poisoned by Agent Orange until after Bill died. Shortly after Bill died mom was offered \$3,000 for Bill's death but she refused the money feeling she could not profit from Bill's death. The absurdity of the situation was if Bill was alive they would have given him \$10,000 but once he was dead they would only give his family \$ 3,000.

The social security worker was very solicitous of Bill. He helped Bill prove he had 40 quarters of work in by going through the phone book looking up every employer and determining how long Bill worked to each one. In the end the worker found enough quarters for Bill to qualify.

The VA worker, on the other hand, was rotten to Bill. He tried every which way to disqualify Bill for benefits. The worker tried to shame Bill out of applying for disability payments by asking Bill if he would be willing to have his

mother's milk flow into his mouth. Bill said yes. He got his VA disability pension.

Bill used his pension money to buy a Dodge Swinger with a 440 engine. The engine was so large that it stuck out of the hood of the car. Bill loved revving up that engine and racing the car on the newly constructed M 53 Hwy. One time when Bill gunned his Swinger full throttle trying to beat his friend, he started to lose control of the car and started to swerve near the telephone poles. The other guy in Bill's car begged him to shut down! Bill did not shut down, he just kept gunning the car and swerving all over the freeway. Fortunately, he did not strike anything on the freeway.

Bill's friends, when they watched Bill with his wild driving, called him Wild Willie. Bill liked that name.

Sandy had to take her car in for repair and she told Bill she needed to borrow his car for the day as she had 8 home calls to make for her job. Bill refused to let Sandy drive his car. Ed told Bill in a firm voice that he had to let her borrow the car for the day as he did not work and Sandy had to make the home calls. Bill refused to tell Sandy where the friction point was on the clutch. Sandy got into the car, turned it on. It roared like a lion! Sandy slowly let the clutch up, feeling for the friction point. At the very top of the clutch the Swinger lunged forward, immediately doing 40 mph in 1st gear. Sandy flew through the intersection on Delvin and headed full speed ahead to Donley. Sandy disengaged the clutch to stop it from flying.

All through that day Sandy would put the car in neutral for 3 or 4 hours before she got to a clients house. One time as Sandy pulled away she heard one of the teenagers remark “Racy broad”.

Another time Sandy’s car broke down so Edward told Bill he had to pick her up at the bank at 16 ½ and Van Dyke. Bill picked me up at rush hour. When I got into the car Bill roared ahead, swerving all over 3 lanes of Van Dyke. Sandy told him to drive normally. Bill just laughed like a demon and flew over all the lanes of traffic. Bill was just showing off but driving like that was dangerous as he had little control over the car. That was the last time I drove with Bill.



Marie, Craig, Karen, Bill, Doug, Michael, Edward & Sandy

Bill was in Doug's wedding party on June 19, 1976. He looked so nice all dressed up in a wedding tuxedo. All of us had a very happy day that day. We took pictures in St. John's Lutheran Church, in front of the church and at the wedding hall in Flat Rock. Bill was very well behaved but Doug could not say the same for his brother Michael. The Church bells were ringing for the procession down the aisle to begin and everyone was in a serious panic as the best man, Michael was no where to be found. Just as the Church bells stopped ringing Michael walks through the front door of the Church, looking cool as a cucumber. Later on, Michael made the comment that maybe he should have taken off work that day.

Bill bought a Honda motorcycle. He seldom rode it as he was afraid of it. Doug rode that motorcycle more than Bill did. A rotten high school student from down on the corner of Diamond burned Mike's garage down and with it Bill's motorcycle. Bill got the insurance money for it. Doug also lost his Ford Falcon in that fire.

Bill seldom played baseball with Dad, Sandy and Bill and Mike. He was never very good at sports. And he never had any interest in sports except fencing.

When Craig came to visit our family Werner took Bill, Craig and I out to the Shelby Inn, a very high class restaurant. Werner ordered an end cut on the prime rib for Bill, Craig and I including all of the trimmings. We were stuffed to the gills after eating all that food. When we finished eating Werner took the 4 of us to the drive inn

movie on Gratiot and M 59. We saw a double feature. When the first show ended the intromission came on the screen showing a bunch of hot dogs, pop corm and drinks dancing across the screen. Bill, who was in the back seat, said, "Let me out!" Werner, Craig and I said, "Bill, you're not going to buy more food! We are all stuffed, we are so full from the Shelby Inn dinner". Bill said in a strong voice, "Let me out!" He went out and bought a hotdog, drink and popcorn which he brought back to the car. The rest of us didn't feel so good thinking of eating all that extra food!

Werner had a 24 X 48 picture of his beloved mother in a ordinary frame hanging on his living room wall. When Werner saw the beautiful frame Bill had on his picture he asked Bill if her would sell it to him. Bill agreed and Werner paid for it and removed the oil painting from the frame, took it home and put his mother's oil painting in Bill's frame. When Bill saw Werner was not using that other frame, Bill asked Werner to give him the mother's frame for his oil painting. Werner felt that Bill was an Indian giver, but he gladly gave Bill the plainer frame that had hung on Werner's mother's oil painting.

Bill had some very nice oil paintings that he bought from an Art gallery on Van Dyke in Utica. An especially nice large oil painting was an oriental one that Bill had hanging in his apartment in Utica and later in his condo in Dino Circle in Chesterfield. Once Bill died Mom sold all his oil paintings and art work.

One time on Dino Circle Marie looked out her front window and saw a vacuum cleaner demonstrator ring Bill's door bell. Bill left him in. The salesman stayed at Bill's house for over an hour. When the salesman left Bill came right over to mom's house and showed her a signed contract he had just negotiated. "Why in the world would you buy an expensive vacuum cleaner, Bill!" Mom asked Bill. Bill never vacuumed a carpet in his life. Bill replied, "I had to sign or he wouldn't leave!?" Mom took the contract from Bill's hand, called the number on the paperwork and cancelled the contract as by law you have 3 days to cancel a contract when it is negotiated in your home. Bill was so relieved to be out from under that vacuum cleaner contract.

Bill used to stay up late at night every night watching TV and listening to his state of the art stereo. He did very little reading except for men's magazines. Mom kept a sharp eye on whatever magazines was laying on Bill's coffee table .She always walked in ahead of Aunt Mildred Neff and if she detected Playboy magazines on the table mom would quickly flip the cover of the magazine over.

Bill slept late every morning. He had no reason to get up early. He never went to morning mass after he graduated from high school.

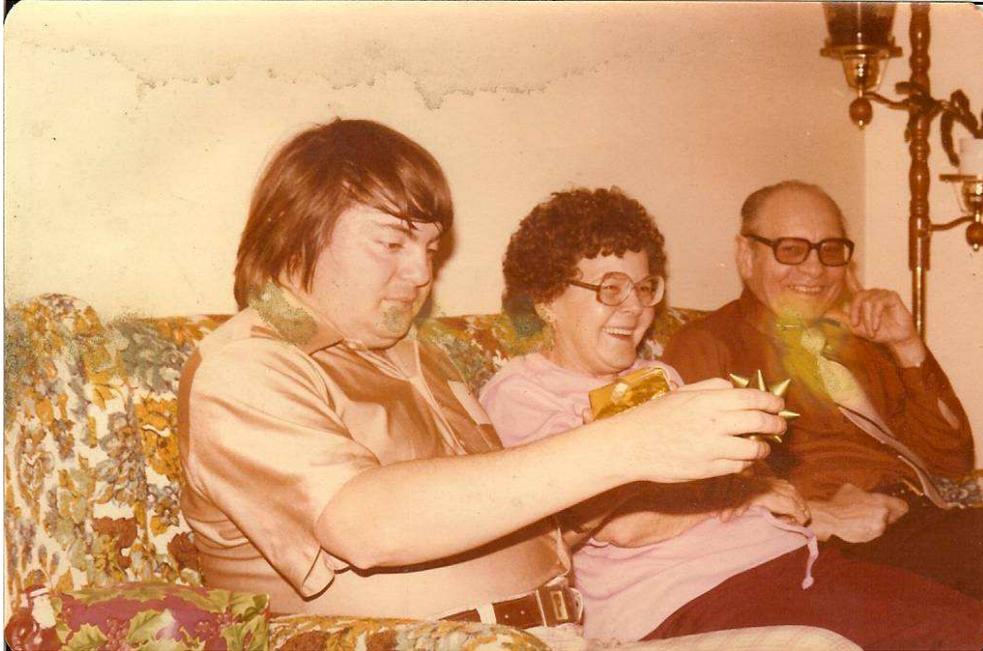
Bill was a clean living guy. He seldom if ever drank alcohol or took street drugs. Almost all of his medicine was prescribed for him by a doctor.

He never gambled his money away. But he was very generous with his money to his relatives. He bought candy for Doug's kids. He paid mom for cleaning his condo and he gave mom over a hundred dollars to help make ends meet every month.



Bill Bender

Right after Bill got home he developed a serious case of diabetes which we feel was caused by Agent Orange. We first felt that Bill was diabetic was when we were coming back home from Lion's Head and stopped to eat at an old restaurant in Southhampton. As we were eating lunch Bill kept drinking and drinking 4 or more glasses of orange pop. The more he drank the more thirsty he became. Then he had to urinate often and still was very thirsty. When we got back home mom and dad took him to the VA hospital in Allen Park and there they found out that Bill had a serious case of diabetes. Bill was put on insulin right away and remained on large amounts of insulin for the rest of his short life.



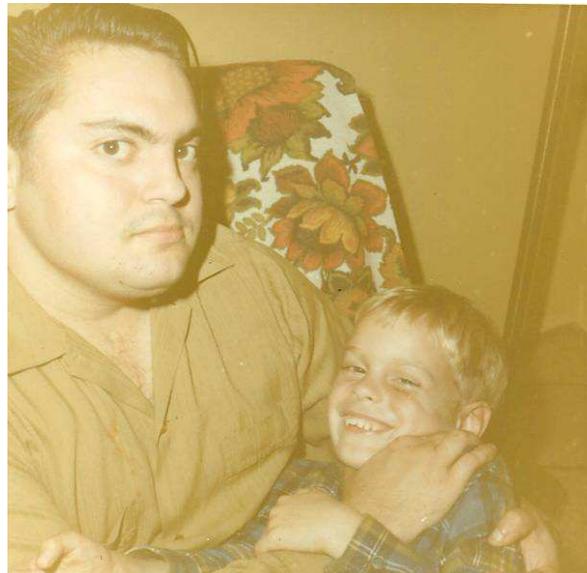
Bill, Marie & Edward Bender

Bill is opening his present from Nancy at Christmas time. Bill always loved the wonderful presents Nancy sent him. Nancy always sent well thought out and expensive Christmas presents to all of us in a box full of wrapped presents. Nancy and her family were in California. We certainly missed having the Stephens family here for the holidays.



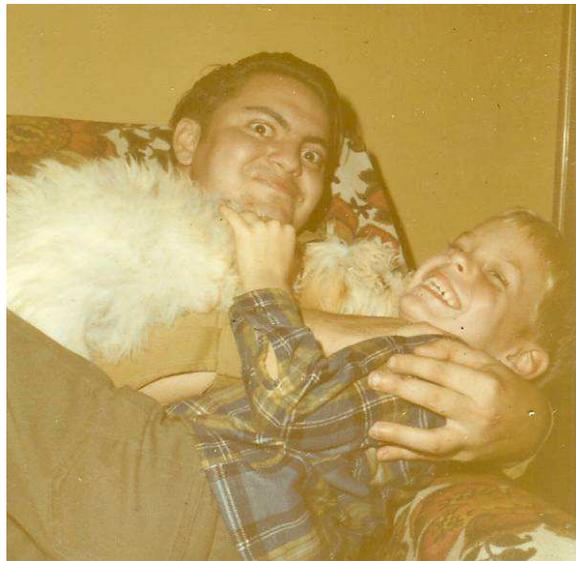
Craig Stephens on left and Bill Bender on right

Bill was really excited to hear that Craig was coming to visit us so he went along with the ride to the Detroit Metro airport to meet Craig and Nancy. Craig was older on this visit so he was not as much fun to tease and play with as he was when Craig was 6 years old.



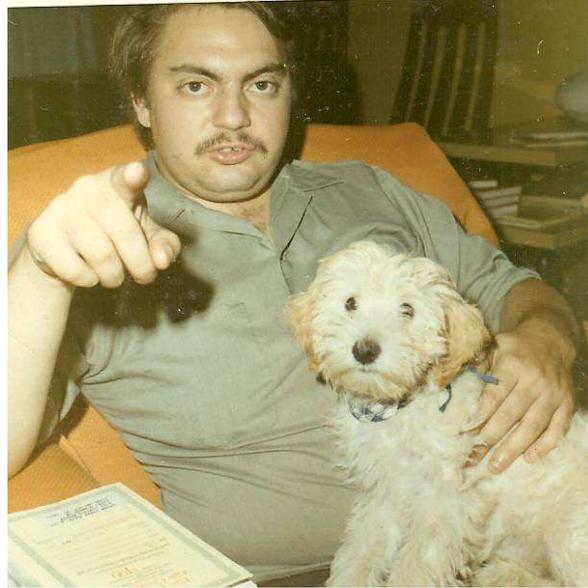
Bill Bender teasing Craig tephens

Nancy came back to Michigan to visit us almost every year. She brought Craig with her as he was a preschooler and therefore free to travel. Bill loved playing with Craig. Bill played Old Maid with Craig all afternoon. When Sandy came home from Wayne State she saw Craig was rather down cast. I asked Craig why. He said earlier in the day he was winning about 50% of the time but later in the afternoon he never won anymore. Sandy grabbed the Old Maid cards and found that the corner of the Old Maid card was bent. I told Craig and Bill. Craig said to Bill, "You'd cheat a little kid?" Bill let out one big belly laugh. Craig started winning again, but later in the evening he was losing again. Sandy looked at the Old Maid. Bill had bent another corner of the Old Maid card! By the end of the week all the cards had all 4 corners bent!



Bill, Taffy & Craig on Diamond

Bill and Craig loved horsing around with Taffy. They had a lot of fun together on that trip in October of 1970.



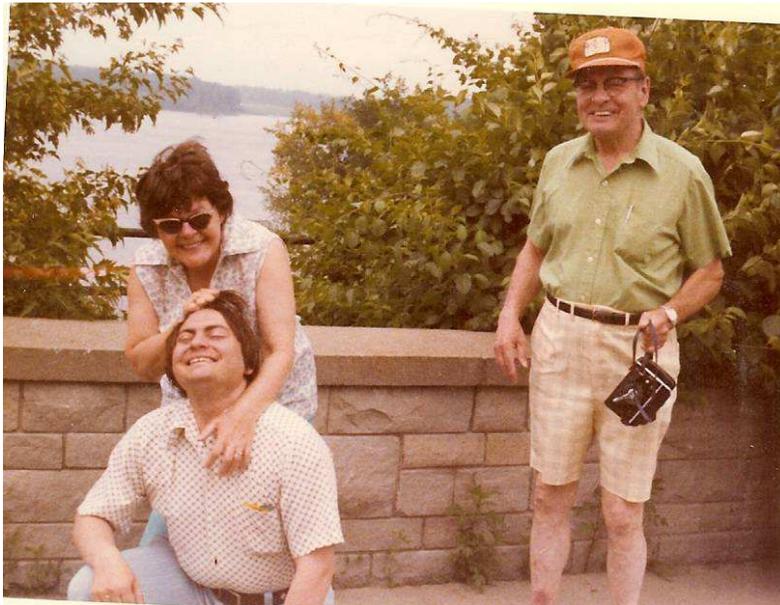
Bill holding Taffy 1970

Bill Doug and Sandy took care of Taffy at our house. Mom gave her 6 weeks probation so we all made sure that she did not soil the carpets. We just about caught the urine before it hit the floor we were so diligent. Doug was the most diligent of all in mopping up over Taffy. She was soon trained.



Bill Bender teasing his mom, Marie Bender May 1971

Bill was teasing mom in the backyard on Diamond on Mother's day, 1971. Dad and I bought mom a backyard swing with on overhead and we were assembling it when Bill started teasing mom..



Marie clowning with Bill, Edward smiling

Bill used to go on vacation with Marie, Edward and Sandy. Mom used to love clowning around with Bill, especially on vacation. In this picture we were out in the eastern States.



Marie, Edward & Bill Bender out east

Here is another vacation that Bill took with Mom and Dad out east. Bill is thinner in this picture. It was right after he got out of the service.



Bill, Marie and Edward assembling mom's mother day swing

Edward and Bill are assembling Mom's mother day present. This was May 11, 1971. After the swing was

assembled Ed sat on it with Shelley and Mikey on either side of him.



Bill with mom on her new swing

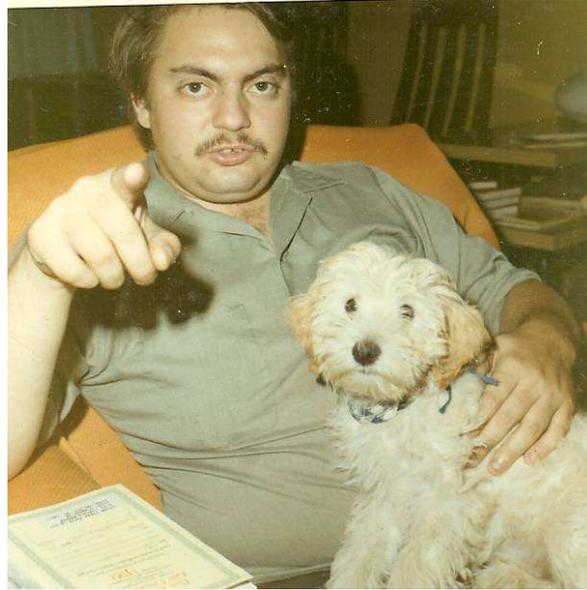
Mom also sat on the swing with Bill. She is leaning towards him with affection. Mom was very happy to receive her new covered swing.



Steve Trendal holding Taffy in the middle

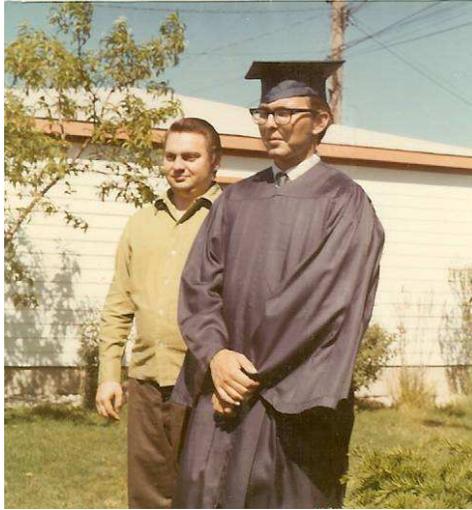
Bill called Sandy up one September day in 1970 and told her that Steve Trendal had a cockapoo puppy for sale. Marie heard the conversation and said, no! no dog! Bill kept talking, saying how cute and fluffy Taffy was. Then Marie said 6 weeks probation! Sandy ran right out of the door before Marie changed her mind. When Sandy got to the Trendal's house she met Bill. Sandy asked where Taffy was. Bill pointed to the dog pen. Sandy saw the mother, Hopey dopey. She was much larger than a cockapoo should be and Hope was black colored so Sandy was disappointed because mom would not accept such a big dog. Then Bill said, no, Taffy is not that big, walk around the mother , she is behind. When I walked around Hope,

Bill was right. Taffy was a small white, adorable dog. Bill picked her up and put her in Dad's car and I drove our new puppy home.



Bill and baby Taffy

Bill is the one who brought Taffy into our house. He called Sandy, telling her how cute 8 week old Taffy was. We begged and begged Marie and she finally relented, saying we can keep her if she behaves. In this picture baby Taffy's ears are taffy colored. Later on her ears turned white.



Bill & Doug Bender

Bill was present for Doug's graduation in June, 1971. Bill could have lost his brother this day. Doug's friend Froehip called our house to invite Doug to a graduation party down at 17 Mile and Dodge Park. Sandy knew Froehip was a drunk and had injured passengers in the past so she told Froehip that Doug wasn't home. Around 2 am Froehip was driving home when a 52 year old drunken man coming home from a wedding plowed into Froehip's car killing Jim who was sitting in the seat Doug always sat in.

Bill went to California to visit Nancy, Don and their family. Nancy treated Bill nice and took him to various attractions in her area. Bill really enjoyed his visit to Nancy.



Marie, Bill & Sandy

Mom and Dad sold their house on Diamond Drive in Sterling Heights and moved to a 2nd story apartment in Dresden Manor on Canal Rd. Sandy moved to a 2nd story 1 bedroom apartment in the same apartment complex. At the same time Bill got a brand new apartment further down on Canal Rd. It was according to your ability to pay, and Bill only had to pay \$125 month for the rent which included water. Michael bought mom and dad's house on Diamond.

Bill had his friends over to his apartment on Daisy Ct. in Sterling Heights. Some friends like Bob Mac Donald were good guys and others were a bad influence. When we moved to Chesterfield mom and dad no longer worry about who Bill was hanging out with.

After Bill lost is license to drive he still wanted to go to the meetings at the DAV in Shelby. Some of those fellows who also attended meetings would stop by and take Bill to his meetings.



Edward, Bill & Marie

Mom, dad, Bill and I stayed in our Sterling Heights apartments from 1972 to 1975. Mom & Dad's first apartment was on the second floor of the middle building. When the corner ranch type apartment became available mom and dad moved into it. It was like having your own ranch home. But Dad had a lot of problems with young men taking his parking place or parking behind him and blocking him in.



Marie, Edward, & Bill Bender

So in 1975 Ed, Marie and Sandy started looking to buy a house. We settled on a condo at 28558 Dino Circle in Chesterfield Township at Cotton and Sugarbush Rds. Bill found a condo right next door to Ed and Marie for a \$1000 less as the driveway was at an acute angle making it hard to get in and out of the garage. But Bill did not drive so the getting in and out of the garage was not an issue.

Bill had to rent an apartment on Cotton road for several months until his condo was finished. Bill got in a lot of trouble with the other apartment renters because he played his music really loud while they were trying to sleep.



Bill

Once Bill moved into Dino Circle mom would clean house for Bill once a week. Bill was a generous fellow and would pay mom for keeping his condo organized and clean.

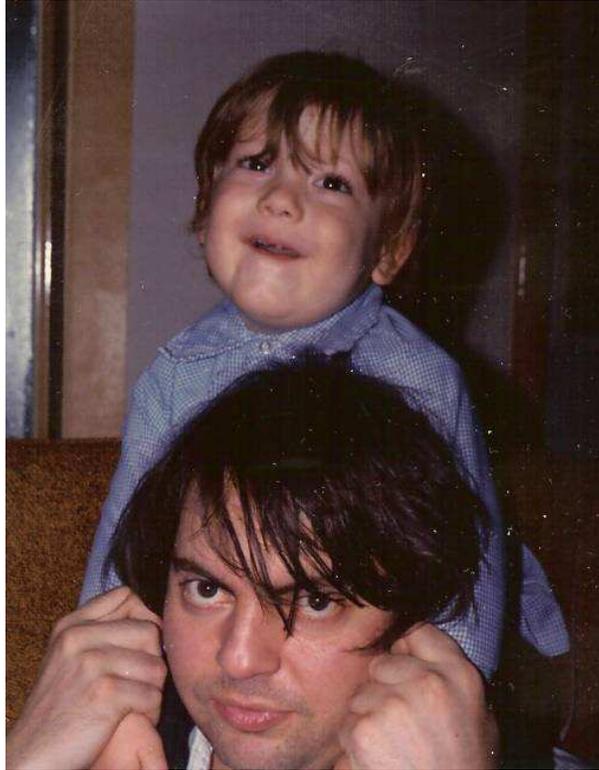
Mom also paid all of Bills bills and helped him keep control of his money. Mom made sure that none of Bill's friends suckered Bill out of his money.

Bill got a one time payment from his disability so mom put it in the bank for him as he was known to spend money as fast as it came in. The money remained in the bank until Bill passed away. Mom then used the \$3,000 to pay for Bill's funeral.



Bill & Shelley Bender

Bill loved Doug's children. He played with them, bought them candy and took them to the park at the end of Grant Park and put them on the merry go round and pushed them on the swings. The children enjoyed playing with Bill. Bill cracked Werner up when he called Shelley and Mikey "the rug rats" . Bill had a very good sense of humor.



Mike Bender II & Bill Bender

Bill loved entertaining little Mikey. He carried Mikey around on his shoulders. Mikey loved a ride from Bill on his shoulders. When Mikey heard that Bill had died, he said “Does this mean that Uncle Bill isn’t going to take us to the park anymore?”

Bill lived in a red brick condo on Dino circle next to mom and dad in Chesterfield Township. He owned 2 televisions and an expensive stereo. He watched both TVs at the same time as he listened to the stereo full blast. One day Sandy came over and sat on the floor in his family room right next to the speaker. Bill turned on the stereo full blast and the sound reverberated right through Sandy’s abdomen and chest. Sandy thought that it felt that your innards were

being moved. BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! you felt reverberating straight through your chest.

The neighbor across the creek threatened to punch Bill if he didn't turn down the stereo while his baby was sleeping. Bill turned the stereo down.

Sandy had 2 mopeds, a white one and a maroon one so one day she offered to let Bill ride her maroon moped while she rode her white one. She gassed both mopeds up and allowed Bill to ride with her through New Baltimore and onto Foss Rd. Bill followed behind Sandy and all was well until they rode onto Foss Rd. Bill lost control of the moped and started riding right into Sandy. He skinned the side of her moped and her arm. Sandy had both of them turn around and ride back to Dino Circle. That was the last time they rode together. Bill did not have enough balance to be able to avoid running into Sandy on her moped.

Bill never controlled his blood sugar. He never controlled his diet. He ate everything without regard to its sugar content. He did shoot insulin but he did not properly calibrate what amount was needed. Bill did not understand what a diabetic diet consisted of. When our family went to the Riviera restaurant in Chesterfield township Bill would order ala carte choosing many items of high sugar content. He would say, "I'll have, and I'll have and I'll have" naming many high sugar items and then he would add, "but give me sweet and low because I am a diabetic". Some people would call Bill a gourmand because he always liked good food in larger quantities.

Due to Bill's lack of controlling his diabetes he started having many health problems. He often had acidosis from high blood sugar. He suffered from it so often that he started showing ash on his skin from the continuous very high blood sugar. There was an odor on his skin from the ash. When Bill passed on his brother Mike inherited his expensive watch, but Mike was surprised to see all that ash stayed on the metal.

Bill started having leg pain from circulation problems due to arteriosclerosis from high blood sugar. He also had the start of cataracts from his diabetes and also due to his use of stellazine that the VA doctors prescribed for him.



Bill Bender

Bill had frequent visits to Allen Park VA for the rest of his life. First they treated home for diabetes and soon after treated him for nerve damage due to agent orange. As the years rolled on Bill became more and more upset. Dad and mom also became quite upset over the shabby treatment Bill was receiving at the VA hospital in Allen Park. The psychiatrist in the hospital was high on drugs and was totally mentally out of it. While Dad, Mom and Bill sat nearby waiting for their appointment a disturbed veteran

was sitting talking to the psychiatrist, the psychiatrist was so high he didn't hear a word the patient was saying to him. The patient raised his voice, demanding the psychiatrist's attention. The psychiatrist was high and paid no attention to the patient. The patient became so angry that he jumped over the desk and started punching out the psychiatrist. The psychiatrist wore very shabby clothing. The lining on his jacket was pinned with a safety pin and the whole lining hung down from his jacket. The veterans deserved much better treatment than they were receiving at that hospital.

The male patient who came in in front of Bill was a really slim guy who was wearing white go go boots and a dainty white purse. The Allen Park VA hospital was always a circus every time they went there. And they were giving Bill medicine that was always far too potent and made him far too spaced out. He never needed that heavy dose of medication. And the stellazine gave Bill cataracts. The incompetence of that medical staff there made Bill much worse than if they had never medicated him. When Bill was first in serious condition due to his being poisoned by Agent Orange, shaking uncontrollably from permanent nerve damage they drugged him with drugs so powerful that he was delirious, telling him that that was such an improvement over how they used to treat shell shocked and air born poisoned men by placing them in a bath tub full of cold water to calm down their nervous condition. How much better that would have been for Bill if they had not pumped him full of serious drugs that had worsened his condition and made him so depressed and angry. Bill had very few happy moments once he was discharge from

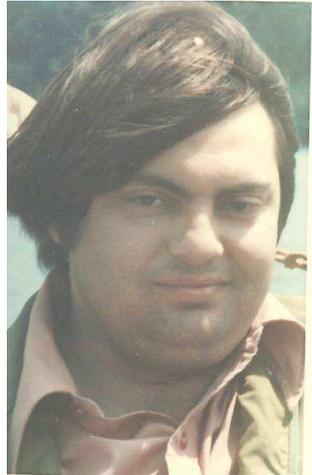
service. And his anger caused serious problems for innocent people. When Bill was driving north on Van Dyke in the area of 14 Mile Rd he was driving in the middle lane. Mr. Cieslega was also in the middle lane putting gas in his car as he had run out. Bill ran right into the guy's car which pushed the opening of the gas ring right into the man's skull, causing a number of bone chips to break loose inside his head, necessitating surgery to remove the bone chips.



Bill Bender

A few years later Bill's Dodge Swinger was misfiring. Every time the car slowed down it stalled. So when Bill got to 23 Mile Rd and Van Dyke and the light turned red Bill went right through the red light so his car wouldn't stall. He struck a car at that intersection, injuring a family of 4. The State Police came to our door on Diamond and asked Bill to surrender his driver's license. They told him he would have to have a psychiatrist sign off that he was safely able to drive a car. Bill knew that due to all those psychotropic medicines that the VA hospital was giving

him that he would not be able to pass a test to get his license back so for the rest of his life dad drove him wherever he had to go.



Bill Bender 1982

In Easter, 1982 Bill said he was very unhappy and did not wish to live any longer. As he was sitting in mom and dad's house on Grant Park he said that he wanted to pass into eternity as he said his health was very poor and he was in great discomfort.



Bill Bender

The final blow came on May 13, 1982. President Ronald Reagan said he wanted every veteran to be re evaluated to see whether each person's pension should be cut off. Bill was given an appointment on this date to see if his pension would continue or not. He was highly agitated as he went to his appointment and was even more upset when the

interview ended. Dad was driving Bill and mom home when Bill blew up and struck mom in the face, giving her a bruise. Dad pulled over to the side of the road, got out of the car and calmed Bill down. Then they proceeded home to Dino Circle.

A short time later Bill called Bob Mac Donald's sister and told her he shot too much insulin and he was about to go unconscious. Yvonne called an ambulance and Bill was taken to St. Joseph's hospital in Mt. Clemens. The hospital brought Bill back to consciousness and the next day Bill was very angry still over his health and the interview he had yesterday.

The hospital brought Bill's blood sugar back to normal and then proceeded to feed him lunch and dinner. However, they did not monitor his blood sugar and while Bill was eating his dinner his blood sugar plummeted to nothing and the food he was eating landed in his lungs, asphyxiating him and causing him to go into convulsions. Bill's brain was destroyed by lack of oxygen and he went into a coma. Bill was unconscious for 30 days before he died. St. Joseph's hospital transferred Bill to the VA hospital shortly before he died because they did not want to have to fill out paperwork telling why Bill died. It was obviously their error in not monitoring his blood sugar that caused him to go into a coma. So by sending Bill to the VA hospital it would relieve them from filling out damning paperwork as to the cause of his death.

Mom and dad visited Bill daily in St. Joseph's hospital. It was so painful to them to see Bill in a deep coma. Mom monitored his hygiene, making the aides keeping him clean and dry.

Bill was treated very poorly in the VA hospital. When Mom and Dad would come to visit Bill he would be very unclean and Mom would have to demand that Bill be cleaned up.

Two days before Bill died Mom said to Dad that Bill was dying. "OH NO!!!" Dad shouted. Dad just could not believe that Bill was about to die. Dad went into total shock. On June 15, 1982 the VA hospital called and told Mom that Bill had passed away and asked that the family come to the VA hospital to fill out the paperwork. So Sandy drove mom there as Dad was in total shock and was incapable of driving or doing anything. He couldn't move or speak. Mom and Sandy drove to the VA and filled out the paperwork.

Mom and I then went back home in time for lunch. We were all incapable of putting even the most simple of meal on the table. Dad said, that's okay, I don't need to eat. Marie and Sandy managed to put a simple lunch on the table, but even we were not capable of doing it. It was unbelievable that 34 year old Bill was gone.

Marie and Sandy went to Sullivan's funeral home and made the final arrangements for Bill. She arranged to have a VFW come to the funeral parlor and perform a ceremony.

She also arranged for St. Lawrence Church to say a rosary for Bill and to have Bill taken to St. Lawrence for a funeral mass.

Marie picked out Bill's funeral flowers for she and Edward, and also flowers for their children. Mom chose strictly red, white and blue, Bills favorite, and also the colors that would match his military service.

Nancy and Craig flew in to Detroit for Bill's funeral. After Bill was buried Nancy stayed for the better part of the week visiting with mom, but most especially with Ed as she could see how devastated he felt. Nancy had many heart felt discussions with her Dad that week and cherished the time she spent with him, especially when he passed away so suddenly the next week.

Our immediate family came the first day at 1 pm. It was so difficult to walk into the funeral parlor and see Bill, so young, only 34 years old, laying in a casket. When Sandy first saw Bill, she was overwhelmed and had to look away and catch her breath. Edward was psychologically destroyed. From the time Bill died until 2 weeks later when he himself died, he was totally within himself. His grief was overwhelming. Edward sat on a chair in the very back of the funeral parlor. Many of Ed and Marie's close relatives came. They paid their respects up front to Bill and then they walked to the back of the funeral parlor to talk to Edward. Marie held up well as she always did in times of sorrow. She met with and talked to all the visitors.

Edward wanted some pictures taken of Bill in the casket but Marie discouraged that so it was not done.

In life, Bill's problems always showed on his demeanor. But in death he looked so peaceful and all his facial expressions were normal. On the day we buried Bill Sandy thought he looked a lot like Doug, which he never did in life.

Aunt Elenore had been visiting mom and had gone back to her Mc Kinin relatives when she heard Bill was gone so on the day of burial she came back to the Sullivan Funeral Home just as they were about to close the casket.

From the funeral parlor, Sullivan drove Bill's body to St. Lawrence Church on Utica Rd in Utica. Bill had a Catholic funeral mass which pleased Marie and Edward.

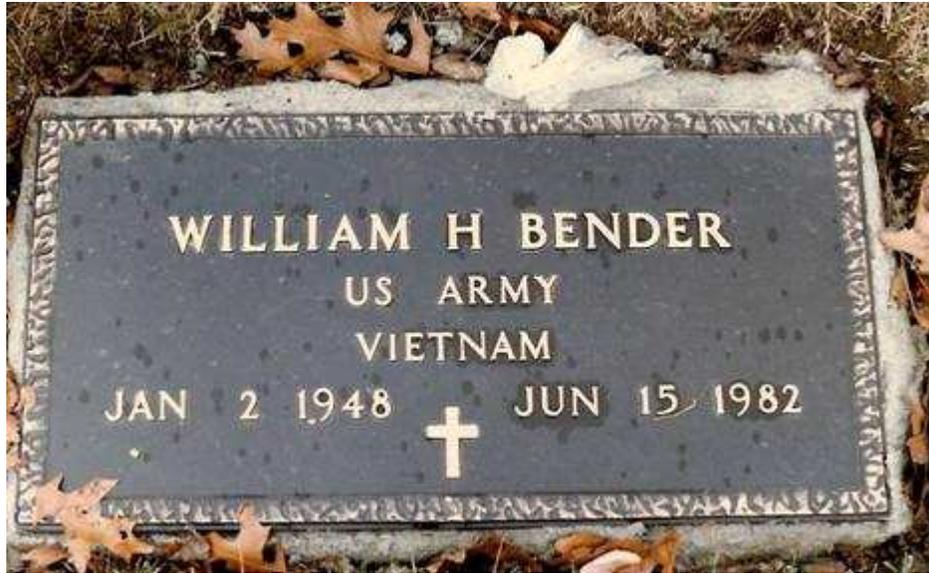
Afterwards Bill's body was driven to the St. Lawrence cemetery in Utica for burial. Sandy had gone to the St. Lawrence rectory and purchased 16 cemetery lots for our family. Bill was the first person to be buried in these newly purchased lots. Werner told Sandy that someone in the family should remain behind till the burial was complete to make sure that the body was placed in the proper grave and that nothing was removed from the casket. The whole family was present at the gravesite to the burial and afterwards the family went for a funeral lunch at the VFW hall as that was what would please Bill as he was quite attached to the VFW. Sandy and Craig stood by the gravesite until the burial was complete.

2 short weeks later the grave next to Bill was opened for our beloved father, Edward. Edward died of a broken heart over Bill's untimely death. As the family stood before dad's open grave we saw the whole side of Bill's vault exposed. It was an eerie feeling to see part of Bill's vault exposed only 2 weeks after he was buried.

Our family then went to Bill's house and members of the family took what possessions they wished from Bill's home. Mom cleaned up Bill's house one last time and then she sold his house.

She had his furniture and whatever possessions were left brought to her garage and had an estate sale. She managed to make \$3,000 from the sale of Bill's and Edwards possessions.

Nancy was very much affected by Bill's death. She was so ecstatic when a few month's after Bill's death he came to her and told her he was very happy and was having a great time on the other side.



**Saint Lawrence Cemetery
Utica, Michigan**

This grave stone marks Bill's final resting place in St. Lawrence cemetery in Utica. Bill is buried to the right of his father Edward Paul Bender and mother Marie Dahl Bender.