

## **BIOGRAPHY OF MARIE DAHL BENDER**



Written by Marie H. Dahl in the 75<sup>th</sup> year of her life  
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# 1885



**NELLIE C. REHFELDT**

My mother, Nellie Rehfeldt, daughter of Charles John Rehfeldt and Pauline Brueckner Rehfeldt, was born on Election Day, November 3, 1885. There was a lot of excitement and celebration all over the City of Detroit.

Nellie was just a little 11-year-old girl when her Dad had an accident. He was a conductor of a local band, which played on the weekends on the roof of a beer garden. On May 13, 1897 during intermission Nell's Dad was socializing with the band and accidentally stepped off the roof and very badly injured his leg. It became infected, which in those days they called tubercular. Pauline begged her husband to let the doctor amputate his leg to save his life, but Charles steadfastly refused, and on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July, 1897 he quietly passed away in his own home. Charles was an invalid from the 13<sup>th</sup> of May until the 13<sup>th</sup> of July, so Grandma Rehfeldt had to go out to work to keep the family from starving.



**Pauline Brueckner Rehfeldt**

Eleven-year-old Nellie was taken out of school by her mother the day the accident occurred and Nellie stayed at home and cared for her dad every day.



She was with her dad the day he died. When he died, she notified her mother at work, then returned home to take care of the smaller children.

Grandma Rehfeldt was a good cook and baker. She loved to entertain her lady friends on her day off with luscious coffeecakes, etc.

Grandma Rehfeldt had a large family to worry over, John, Elizabeth I, Tillie, Hattie, Nellie, Elizabeth II, Charles and William. There also were 5 children who died in infancy. Aunt Tillie used to say that Grandma Rehfeldt had had a bakers dozen.

**1886**



**William Frederick Dahl**

My Dad, William Frederick Dahl, son of Frederick (Johann Friederich) Dahl and Minna (Wilhelmina Henrietta) Kaiser, was born on April 5<sup>th</sup>, 1886. The day after he was born there was a terrible snow storm, the biggest of the century. The snow was over 3 foot high on a level, and over 6-ft high in drifts. All the streetcars were paralyzed for three days until they could clear the snow away. People all over the City of Detroit were snowed in, and it was days before they could shovel out to go to work and shop for food.



**Minna Kaiser Dahl Henkel & Fred Dahl – 1886**

Minna spoke broken English all of her life in Michigan as she came to America at age 19. Here is a picture of Grandma Henkel taken in Germany at age 18 just before she came to America from Bischofswerde, East Prussia, Germany.



**Minna Kaiser Dahl Henkel – 1882**

Bill was just 14 years old when his beloved father Fred died of a bowel obstruction in 1900. He was buried in Mt. Olivet cemetery.

Bill went out to work to keep food on the table for his mom and the younger siblings. In his teen years he worried about his hair (the cowlicks), so he plastered it down with sugar water! There is also an interesting story about his hair told by his family years later. They said that when his dad died his hair was real blond, and with the shock of losing his father, his hair overnight started growing in a real dark brown!



**Nellie C. Rehfeldt Dahl – 1895**

Nellie was a tomboy, whenever the neighborhood boys teased her she went after them and knocked them down and started to punch them. One day she had enough of the neighborhood bully, so she grabbed him, knocked him down in a vacant corner field, and proceeded to beat him over the head with a pump handle. Her dad happened to be coming home from work and saw her pummeling the kid. Her dad, very proud of his little Nellie, yelled, "That's my Lolly, give it to him!"

She grew up to be a very beautiful girl. The neighborhood photographer asked to take her picture. He put it on display in his shop window on the avenue for over 6 months.



**Nellie Rehfeldt Dahl**

**1900**

Nellie was about 15 years old when she took her first job at a bookbindery on Jefferson Ave in Detroit.



**Nellie Rehfeldt Dahl**

She loved ice skating and dancing. Every Sunday afternoon she went to the dance hall, where she met Bill Dahl. She said they danced so many hours (5 to 6) that the next day her legs ached so badly that she swore she was not going dancing again. But the next Sunday Nellie and Bill were dancing again!

**1905**

When Bill began to get serious with Nellie he took her home to meet his mom and brothers and sister.



**Clara Dahl Fredrick, Minna Kaiser Dahl Henkel,  
Robert Henkel Jr, Robert Henkel Sr., Anna Dahl Galvin**

Mom said they were all sitting around a long table, she was shy to see so many, his mom Minna, brothers George, Frank, Tony, Fritz, and sisters Clara and Annie. Bill had a sister Bertha who died in 1888. Tony and Fritz were later killed in the First World War.

Nellie and Bill courted for 6 years and Dad was getting impatient. He wanted to get married. He said his life was wasting away. Would she marry him or not? Nellie did not really want to be tied down to homework and children yet, but still she did not want to give up Bill, so she accepted his proposal. They set the wedding date for September 6, 1906.

## 1906

Nell's sister Tillie loved her younger sister. She offered to make her wedding dress and have the reception at her home on Baker St. on Detroit's west side. Mom was a beautiful bride with her gorgeous white dress, trimmed in lace and silk, and rosebuds. Tillie arranged her hair with flowers and ribbons and a wreath. (Both Bill and Nellie had circles under their eyes. They told the family that they both didn't sleep a wink, they were so worried about getting married!) They were married at Sacred Heart Church (Bill's church as he was Catholic and Nellie was not), with Tracy Schneider and Otto Kaiser as witnesses.



**Bill & Nellie Dahl**

Mama received many beautiful gifts of china and silver besides household items, as well as gifts of money.

Mom said after a long, happy day was over and they finally retired to the room Tillie offered them for the night, Nellie took her nightgown from the overnight bag and Bill got his nightshirt. They were so bashful sitting on the bed to start undressing when Nellie noticed that the hems were sewn together! Bill soon discovered the same thing had happened to his nightshirt. Here they were fumbling with the small stitches and when finally they were finished, Nellie opened up the bed and here it was all filled with rice! I bet Tillie and her husband Chuck was laughing at their prank.



**Tillie Rehfeldt Doench Meinke Vandervoort**

Bill and Nellie left from the main train station in Detroit on the westside the next day and went to Niagara Falls for their honeymoon.

Mom said their first home was on Commonwealth on the westside of Detroit. Nellie and Bill were very happy together in those first years.

They used to visit his cousin Bill and wife Jenny in Woodslee, Ontario, on their Canadian farm. Cousin Bill used to tease Nellie with the naming of his horse "Nellie". They always had a good time, dancing and singing along with the

organ playing and a lot of good food. Jenny always loaded them down with vegetables to take back to the States, trying to hide it from the border guards. Once the border guard discovered the rhubarb that Nellie had stashed, and made her give it up. Nellie was furious! She said she bet the border guard took it home and ate it himself!



**Jenny & Bill Dahl of Canada  
Bertha, Isabelle, Walter, Beatrice & Ida**

## **1908**

Bill and Nellie were very happy with the birth of their first child, Mildred, born May 3, 1908. Nellie just loved taking her for buggy rides in the beautiful spring weather and visiting her mother Pauline and sister Tillie who read stories to her beloved mother every morning after breakfast for an hour or so before they started their duties for the day.



**Mildred Dahl Stocker**

## 1909

Bill and Nellie were expecting again. Another girl, Dorothy, was born December 27, 1909, also a pretty little blue eyed blonde.

Mama was pretty busy now, especially spring cleaning time, when she was doing curtains she had the bath tub full with bluing water to whiten the curtains. While she was hanging up the wash Dorothy was intrigued by the color in the tub and mama heard screams, came running, and here was Dorothy who had fallen into the bath tub of bluing. Mama grabbed her little girl and saved her from drowning.

## 1912



**Elenore Dahl Mc Kinin**

Nellie and Bill's life went on as usual, working and loving their little daughters, Mildred and Dorothy, when number three was on the way. Elenore was born February 12, 1912, a cute little curly brown-haired baby with brown eyes like Nellie. Elenore was a little spitfire and my, the temper she had, kicking and yelling until she was blue in the face! Elenore was born on Hastings Street.

Mom was getting bogged down with the children coming one after another on the average of 1 ½ years apart! And Bill was beginning to get a roving eye outside the home about the time she was expecting Elenore. So imagine how they felt when another child was on the way.

Mama wasn't feeling very well when she was pregnant with me. She had what she called Catarrh. I, Marie was born November 13, 1913 at 4:30 p.m.



(Mildred claimed that Pa told her to make supper for the doctor and him on the day I was born, so she opened two cans and mixed spaghetti and beans together and warmed them up. Bill hollered, but the doctor said that was just fine, after all, what did he expect of a 5 ½ year old child.)

I was very small, so they put me in a cigar box and stuck me in an oven to keep me warm! (Cigar boxes were larger in those days than they are now.) I was born on 1608 Holcomb in Detroit. When Dr. Edward Arens asked Mama what she was naming the girl, Nellie said, "Another girl, take her away!"

They said I was very delicate and sickly for awhile. I got whooping cough when I was only 6 weeks old. My dad struggled to get the phlegm out of my throat so I wouldn't choke to death. They fed me thin oatmeal gruel.

Papa used to affectionately call me "Wee Wee" because I was always so small. Mama said I was a "good baby". I guess I had to be, to compete with the rest of my siblings.



**Tillie Rehfeldt Vandervoort**

Aunt Tillie came to take care of the family when Nellie was confined. Poor Aunt Tillie worked so hard with all of the children, and she sewed pretty dresses for the girls, but Elenore really got on her nerves with her temper tantrums. She picked up Elenore and bounced her on the bed next to Mama and said, "Here, take the little dickens!"

I was baptized soon after I was born, as my father was afraid I might not survive due to my small birth weight and the whooping cough. Elenore, who had not yet been baptized, was baptized on the same day as me. She walked down the aisle to the baptismal font with our sponsors, Aunt Anna and Uncle Bud Rehfeldt. I thought I was Marie Anna until I was over 40 years old and that is what I was named by Aunt Anna at my baptism, but when I sent away for my birth certificate, I learned that my parents had named me Marie Henrietta. I had to change all of my legal papers. I learned just recently that I most probably got my name Marie from my dad's grandmother Anna Marie Fuerth, who, in turn, had been named after her mother, Anna Marie Busch.



The Dahl side of my family came from Oberboinghausen, Germany, a very small village near Gummersbach in Rhein Prussia.



**Charles (Bud) & Anna Kraft Rehfeldt**

Well, Bill and Nellie were soon expecting again. So much for birth control in those days! But were they ever happy after all – they finally had their dream come true – finally a boy!

## 1915

William F. Dahl, Jr. was born on February 17, 1915. Was he ever spoiled! A boy after 4 girls! Poor mom, she was so tired, nothing but work and taking care of children.

Bill and I were very close, always playing together because I was so little and Bill soon caught up to me in size. Mama said that the lady next door asked her if we were twins, and which one was LuLu. Mama laughed and said we weren't twins and that neither one was named LuLu, that that was just our pet name for one another!



Bill was always catered to and received the best toys, wagons, scooter, train, etc., and clothes. I remembered when Mama was so worried about Bill when he got pneumonia a couple of times on 1763 Baldwin Ave.

Mom had her hands full playing nurse when we all came down with measles and chicken pox. Elenore got erysipelas and Mildred got scarlet fever.

## 1917

Bill and Nellie were expecting again in spite of so called birth control. Mama was about 3 months pregnant when she noticed that her hands and feet started to cramp up; well into the course of the day it became so horrible that she had to go to bed. She became paralyzed and didn't dare move or she would scream out in agony! Grandma Henkel lived downstairs on Kercheval Ave. She would come upstairs to help out when she could, but she still had family at home. Grandma Rehfeldt would come over and help out when she could, too. Dad helped out when he was home, but dear little Mildred really took over as much as she was capable of. This went on for about 9 months. In fact, Shorty was born at home, the same as the rest of us were. Mama had reservations to go to the hospital for confinement but she hated hospitals, so she didn't tell Aunt Tillie that she was in labor until the baby started to come.



**Harold Joseph (Shorty) Dahl**

Harold was born August 21, 1917.



**Dorothy & Mildred Dahl Stocker**

When Dorothy was about 8 years old, she was sitting on the front steps on Kercheval Ave in Detroit. It was a two story flat, with her grandmother Minna

Dahl living downstairs, and Nellie and Bill and the kids living upstairs. It had two back porches, one on top of the other. Mildred was on the upstairs porch with her girlfriend and Mildred was feeling devilish. She leaned over the rail and spit at Dorothy. Dorothy told her to cut it out, but she just kept spitting at her. Well Dorothy soon had enough of that treatment, got off the back porch and went around the front to Kercheval. Just then her girlfriend was across the street and called to Dorothy. Her girlfriend had just been to the library and had an armful of books that she wanted to show Dorothy. Dorothy, not looking either way, ran right into the street, a truck swerved out of her way and just missed her, and a car driven by Mr. Zanith struck her, throwing her way up into the air like a little rag doll. She came down, striking the pavement very hard. The cause of death was listed as a fractured skull and multiple broken bones and massive hemorrhage. She did not die immediately on that 10<sup>th</sup> day of November, 1917, so the bystanders picked her up out of the street and laid her down in the corner drugstore to make her more comfortable and to prevent her from being run over again by someone else. She died just as her father Bill was approaching the drugstore, irritated by the huge traffic backup that forced him to park his car 1-mile away and walk home. He was stunned as all the bystanders fixed their eyes on him as he approached the drugstore, all saying in hushed voices, "Here comes the father now". He was taken into the drugstore where he viewed the broken, battered body of his just dead little angel. Bill walked out of that drugstore, crossed the street, walking home and sobbing, "My Mildred, my Mildred!" Just then Mildred came up to him and said, "It weren't me, Pa, it was Dorothy!" Elenore, just 5 years old, had witnessed the entire accident, and when she saw Dorothy fly up into the air, she went running upstairs to her mother Nellie, who was paralyzed in bed, crying "Dorty hurt! Dorty hurt!" Nellie, who couldn't move a muscle, became very fearful, wondering, Lord, what now, never dreaming that her little Dorothy was exsanguinating on the pavement just below.

Dorothy was laid out in Grandma Dahl's parlor downstairs. She was buried from St. Charles Borromeo Church on Baldwin just south of Kercheval. She was buried in "Baby Heaven" in Mt. Olivet cemetery by the railroad tracks.



**Dorothy Dahl**

Dorothy owned a cute Teddy Bear and a little footstool. After she was buried, Nellie put the cute Teddy Bear on the footstool in the parlor, and there it sat year after year. No one was allowed to go into the parlor or touch the footstool or the Teddy Bear. It was a very eerie memory for all of the Dahl children, to see that footstool and the Teddy Bear and to think of their little sister that was no longer there.

When Dorothy was a little older she always loved Mama's wedding ring, and was promised by Mama that she would give it to her when she was older. Shortly after Dorothy was killed, that ring just seemed to come apart in different places! That gave the family the chills! It was as though Dorothy had claimed the ring.

The man that killed Dorothy felt so terrible, he said he thought he killed his own girl as he lived in the same block and his daughter was blonde and about the same age as Dorothy. He did everything he could for our family when he saw all the trouble dad had with mom so sick and paralyzed. Mr. Zanith bought Mama a winter coat to attend Dorothy's funeral and later bought a vibrator and Dad, Grandma Henkel and Aunt Tillie took turns using it on Mama's body and limbs. She finally started getting feeling back in her body. Mama's paralysis also came to the attention of Dodge where Dad worked after Dorothy was killed and Dodge used to send a car to our house and they would lay Mom in the back seat of the car and drive her to Mount Clemens to the mineral baths. (In 1987, Sandy asked a famous Neurologist, Dr. Nancy Furstenburg, what was her best guess as to the reason for Mama's paralysis. She answered without hesitation when she heard it occurred in 1917 that there was little doubt in her mind that it was the flu of 1918 which did the same sort of thing to many people, except that Grandma was fortunate to have recovered to some degree.)

Another dramatic story about the flu of 1918: Mom and her next door neighbor both had babies of the same age. Each thought the other's baby was adorable and they used to like to sit at the dining room table and hold each other's baby. One day Mama sat holding the neighbor's baby and the neighbor held Shorty. The neighbor got up from the table somewhat earlier than usual and told Mama that she wasn't feeling too good, but that she had to go home and start supper. Mama was busy putting the finishing touches on supper when Dad came home from work and said "Nell, the funeral wagon is next door at the neighbor's house. You'd better go over and see what happened." Mama went over and came back in shock. The neighbor lady that spent the afternoon with her just dropped dead of the flu! Nellie came back home after the funeral wagon left with her friend's body and continued putting the supper on the table. A short time later Dad said, "Nell, the funeral wagon's back at the neighbor's house again!" Mama went over there again, and believe it or not, the baby that Mama held in her arms had just died! (Mama and Shorty never

got the flu, which strengthens the doctor's supposition that Mama had already had the flu when she was carrying Shorty.)

## 1918

About 1918 my parents moved to a rented home on Seyburn. Mama said Dad used to sit on the back porch every evening in the summer and watered the grass and flowers, and played with the children.

I guess Mama was very tired after a day with the small children and just getting back on her feet from being paralyzed, because she put us to bed about 4:30 p.m. Of course we didn't go to sleep. The boys jumped around on the bed and tore the curtains off the rod and gave me a hard time. I wonder what time we woke up the next morning?

Mama and Dad bought a home on 1763 Baldwin Ave between Kercheval and St. Paul in Detroit.

I remember Mama carrying baby Harold into our new house. Mama had on a long dress and high button black shoes and Harold had a long white dress and high black shoes.

The lady next door came over to introduce herself. Mrs. Viola Roehm and I were happy to hear that she had four children – Marie – Katherine – Buddy – Jackie. Their Grandma lived with them in a little cottage. In the summertime, us kids sat out in the Roehm's backyard playing; Mrs. Roehm cooked up sweet corn and threw the corn to us kids. It was very casual living in that house, but a lot of fun.

We would go up in their attic and play and sew for our dolls, and play card games and outside we played in the winter with our sleds and snow balling and played in the leaves. In the spring roller-skating and jump rope. Dad would tie a sled to the car bumper and go real slow around the block.

# 1920



**William Frederick Dahl Sr.**

Dad got a bad ear infection, which just kept getting worse. Ear infections were a very serious thing in those days as there were no antibiotics and could lead to a brain or a systemic infection and could and did cause many a man to lose his life. Dad was in agony from this infection and went to a doctor for treatment. The doctor recommended a mastoid operation to drain the infections. Dad was aghast when he discovered that the doctor had cut the nerve on one side of his face which resulted in paralysis on that side causing Dad to have a permanent droop on one side. His brother George tried to talk Dad into suing the doctor, but Dad never did.



**George Dahl Sr.**

I remember my big sister Mildred asking me if I wanted to go to school. I said "Oh yes!" I was seven years old by then. I guess Mama thought I was too little to start school. Mildred took me to school the first day to St. Charles Borromeo -Baldwin and St. Paul Ave. in Detroit. The nun was very sweet, to me. Every day they helped with my coat in the fall. I couldn't unbutton the coat because Grandma Henkel make the coat of very stiff material, and my little fingers weren't strong enough to cope with those strong tight button holes!

I sure loved school, in the mornings I used to sit on the floor of the upstairs hallway and use a buttonhook to put the loops over the buttons on my high black button shoes. We girls used to wear black stain bloomers and black cotton stockings.

## 1921

I walked two blocks to school and in the morning at 9:30am I was given milk and graham crackers for a snack. I sure enjoyed that treat. My Dad paid for it because they thought I was undernourished.

I enjoyed my school years and my friends next door, Marie and Katherine Roehm, and also my other neighbor, Ivy Hudson.

A cute Mildred school story: Mildred always wanted to learn to speak German as my Dad and his mother conversed mostly in fluent German, much to my mother's annoyance as she was not fluent in German. Mildred would ask Dad to teach her the language, which he never did. One day Mildred walked over to the German Lutheran school, which conducted lessons in German and enrolled herself. She was there a few weeks before Dad found out. Dad, a staunch Catholic, did not see the humor in Mildred's stunt. He spanked her good and sent her back to the English speaking Catholic school, St. Charles. So much for Mildred's German lessons.

I also loved Thanksgiving, and visiting with my Dad's cousins from Canada.



**A Dahl Family Reunion – Canadian & US Dahls**

In the dining room Ma had a big honey colored oak round table with a big pedestal underneath it. One day Ma was dusting underneath that big table



and when she was coming up from underneath, she banged her head quite hard and ended up with a big black eye! Everyone teased her that Dad popped her a good one and that's how she really got the black eye!

Ma also had a matching buffet of the same honey colored oak and it was in this buffet that she kept most of the kid's clothes. She would have our socks lined up in rows, one row for each kid. There were 4 rows horizontal and one row vertical. She would take a pair of socks out of each row each day for each of us kids. In the dining room Ma also had a Victrola for playing records, as well as a base burner fired by coal. Next to the big cast iron base burner with its eisen glass in front in the door, was a coal scuttle with a supply of coal in it for stoking the base burner. Next to the scuttle was a small shovel like a scoop for removing the coal from the scuttle and putting it into the base burner.

In the kitchen Ma had a huge cast iron stove fired by coal which she bought was in the house in 1920 when she bought it. Later she bought a modern gas stove with the inheritance she got from her mother Pauline Brueckner Rehfeldt when she passed away on November 12, 1926.



**Pauline Brueckner Rehfeldt – 1923**

Ma was so proud of the new gas stove; it was her pride and joy! We modern housewives would be horrified by the dirt and inconvenience of the earlier coal stove, which had to be filled with coal every time you wanted to cook, and then the ashes removed before you could put in more coal. And all the dirt of the ashes flying in the air which made a mess out of the kitchen. But to Ma this was the latest in modern conveniences in 1920. The Michigan Stove Works, who displayed their model stove at Jefferson by the Belle Isle Bridge for years and years, made the new stove. It was white cast iron and had a lot of chrome on it, which Ma loved to polish. It also had a side oven. The old stove had a plate warmer on the top, about five feet high, which was kept warm by the heat from the stovepipe which ran up the wall and out the chimney. It was into this plate warmer that I was placed to keep me warm when I was first born. It was a wonder that they did not asphyxiate me! When my five-year-old sister Mildred saw the doctor put me in the plate warmer she asked him with a wide eyed childlike innocence if he was going to cook her new little baby sister!





**5 yr old Mildred Dahl Stocker**

There is another cute story connected with this stove. It was prohibition times, so Ma made “near beer” for her and Dad’s consumption. You couldn’t keep the beer in the room where Ma made it because it would freeze. The only heat in the house was the base burner in the dining room that heated the dining room and the rooms upstairs through open registers in the ceilings, and the big stove in the kitchen.

So after Ma made it she moved it into the kitchen and put the bottles of beer behind the new stove to keep them warm. And there they would stay as Ma and Dad would gradually consume them. Well, Ma and Dad weren't big drinkers by any means, so come summer there were still bottles left behind the stove. One very hot June day, Ma and the boys ' suddenly heard POW! POW! POW! They ran out into the kitchen to see where this loud noise was coming from. And lo, and behold! All the beer bottles were exploding from the heat! Dad also made some bath tub gin once and awhile for himself and his company.



In our living room we had the piano which stood in front of the stairs which went upstairs from the dining room. We had a wooden rocker and I think I remember a black horsehair filled Davenport, but I'm not sure on this. (Elenore said I was right, that we did have a black horsehair divan, but that mom and dad got rid of it before we were teenagers.) There was of course, Dorothy's stool with her little Teddy Bear on top. And between the living room and the dining room were glass sliding doors that slid into the walls. Upstairs we had 2 bedrooms, a bathroom and an attic. Our bedrooms had painted metal beds in them. While we were little, Mildred and Elenore slept together and I slept with Bill and Shorty. When I got a little older and not such a pest, I moved into the girls' room. I don't ever remember any closets in the upstairs bedrooms. There probably weren't any because many houses in those days didn't have closets.

Ma and Dad slept downstairs in a bedroom off the dining room. Ma and Dad had a dark mahogany bedroom set. The dresser had ornate turned spindles

and a mirror was suspended over the dresser on these spindles. The bed was also a dark mahogany.

The attic had a normal ceiling so that you could stand up in it. In this attic we stored all of our out of season stuff as well as various "treasures" accumulated over the years that we just couldn't bear to part with. When dad left and we lost our home we pitched all these treasures out of the attic window into the backyard, as we didn't dare cart all this stuff to Norrie Day's house. What a pile that made in the back yard!



**Grandma Rehfeldt in front of the same kind of 5 ft wooden fence**

We had a solid 5-foot wooden fence between our house and the Roehm's. And coming out of back yard into the side of the house was a 5-foot wooden lattice gate.

I remember helping mom to iron on ironing days as Ma's wrist was very weak from the after effects of her paralysis. The irons were very heavy pieces of metal in those days. You'd put the first on the top of the burner of the coal stove until it got real hot, then you'd take it off and put a second one on the coal burner. You'd iron with the first one until you noticed that it wasn't doing a very good job anymore, then you'd take the second iron off the stove and put the first one back on again. And so forth until the ironing was finished.

A funny story about dad and the back yard. Somewhere, from someone, dad got a live pig! He brought the pig home to the back yard and then proceeded to butcher it and process the meat! What a job! Needless to say, dad did this only once. When I look back, I can't figure out why dad was ever interested in butchering a pig as he HATED pork. Dad had a bad stomach, a Dahl characteristic inherited by my brother Bill and my sister Elenore, and he couldn't stand pork, as it was too hard on his stomach. Whenever Ma served him pork he had a fit. He'd throw the plate and get up from the dinner table and storm off. Therefore Ma seldom served him pork. So why the pig?

When ma used to wash the kitchen floor she used to want to keep the floor clean for awhile, so when the floor was dry she would put newspapers all over the floor and leave them there for about a week and we'd walk over the

newspapers. Seems to me in looking back that the print from the newspapers would make the floor dirtier than our feet would!



**Nellie & Bill Dahl's home on Baldwin in Detroit**

The front entrance to the house on Baldwin was through the dining room. This entrance was close to the entrance going upstairs to the upper bedrooms. I don't ever remember Ma going upstairs and I think us kids used to do the housework in the bedrooms. This was no doubt due to the stiffness and pain left in Ma's legs from the paralysis. I remember my Monday job was to dust the stairway going down. Then Ma would check to see that it was done right.

Ma liked to keep the house neat. When she went downtown shopping, she would lock the house so we couldn't get in until she got home. So we'd sit on the back porch for what seemed like hours, waiting for mom to come back home.

## **1922**

Mama and Dad would decide to go to Belle Isle for a picnic supper. Mama sure was brave, getting the lunch ready, dressing the little ones, and putting Harold in the buggy and walking all the way to Belle Isle, at least 3 miles! Dad would meet her after his day's work and drive us home.

Another time they took us to Belle Isle and Mildred came down with the chicken pox! Mama had her hands full for the next 2 or 3 weeks! And in those days when you had a serious illness in the house they put a quarantine card on your door and no one could go in or out until the health department decided it was safe. When Mildred had scarlet fever Dad had to work so he wasn't allowed in our house. He had to stay with relatives until our house was "safe". While you were in quarantine, if your family needed medicine, food, etc. someone would come and set a basket on your porch, then after they left, someone would open the front door and bring in the basket.



**Wilhelmina Kaiser Dahl Henkel – 1920**

And then the good times at Belle Isle, when Grandma Henkel belonged to the German Arbeiter Club and her duties were to help feed the picnickers and serve the ice cream. Of course, she was more than generous with the portions of ice cream she gave to her own grandchildren, and as often as we came back for more!

Oh, the fun we had playing on the swings and teeter-totters and playing with all our cousins. Dad was a fervent Catholic and ma was a lukewarm Protestant. Her family had read the bible but only went to church on important occasions. Pa was high up in the Knights of Columbus and was on very good terms with the parish priests at Sacred Heart Church at 1000 Eliot in Detroit. He visited them often in the rectory. He went to church every Sunday and insisted that the children go too. One day Ma decided to turn Catholic like the rest of her family so Mrs. Stocker arranged that a priest come over to Ma's house and gives her instructions. After instruction, Ma was baptized Catholic, but Ma couldn't get to church often due to her muscle problem which prevented her from walking very far.



**Mildred Dahl Stocker**

Poor Mildred became very ill with scarlet fever and had to be taken to the hospital. When she started to recover, the nurse wanted Mildred to comb her hair and when she told the nurse she didn't have a comb, she made Mildred use another patient's comb, which Mildred really didn't want to do. Can you imagine the uproar when she came home and Mama found out the whole family had lice! Grandma Henkel said, "Nanu, I'll help you get rid of the bugs!" Dad took us over to Grandma Henkel's house and down to her basement.

Grandma stuck my head over the laundry tub and poured kerosene on my head. Boy, did that ever burn! Mama then had the job of fine combing the nits out of our heads and watching every night until we were rid of them. In those days the public health nurse came to the schools and checked the children's heads with a couple of toothpicks, looking for lice. I was so proud that I was clear of lice! The girl in front of me had real bright red hair and I was fascinated watching the lice jump around her thick head of hair. Dumb me, Ha Ha!



**Nellie Rehfeldt Dahl & Minna Kaiser Dahl Henkel**

Another cute Grandma Henkel basement story: Eddie and Mildred used to play in their basements when Grandma lived downstairs and we lived upstairs on Kercheval.



**Eddie Dahl**

Eddie used to open the connecting doors between Grandma's and our basements and then ask Mildred to snitch a bottle of Pa's beer for him. Mildred made a pact with Eddie - she'd give him beer if he would let her get into Grandma Henkel's big crock of fermenting pickles. Grandma used to make a huge crock of pickles, put gauze over the top of the barrel and let them ferment for several months before eating them. But Mildred never could wait that long. So Eddie let her into the pickle crock and Mildred ate herself sick on homemade pickles, then would go back to her own basement and Eddie would lock up the connecting door. One day Mildred was playing in Grandma Henkel's side of the basement when Grandma came down to do the wash, and on her way back up she stopped first to check on her pickles. She lifted the gauze, looked at the pickles, and exclaimed, "the pickles, she shrink!" Mildred both blushed from guilt and then tried hard to suppress a rising giggle.

## 1923

Uncle Bill and Aunt Jenny with their children - Isabelle, Bertha - Ida - Beatrice - Walter would visit us and Dad would drive us to Belle Isle and go through the greenhouse and then go see the animals in the zoo. When we returned home Mama would have a lovely Thanksgiving dinner ready to eat. Yum! Yum!



**Bill & Jenny Dahl & children**

I remember one time that my Canadian Dahl cousins came over to our house on Good Friday and then went Easter shopping in downtown Detroit. Then they came back to our house for dinner, then changed clothes, taking off their oldest raggedy clothes and putting on their new Easter Sunday best. This way they escaped paying duty on the new clothes. The next time we would go for a visit to their farm in Woodslee Dad would put their old clothes in the rumble seat and tell the border guards that these were our cast-offs that we were giving to some poor relations in Canada.

Another cute story about our Canadian Dahl family: Their model T Ford did not have enough power to get across the Ambassador bridge in forward gear. They had to turn their car around and drive up the bridge backwards until they got to the crest, then could turn their car around again and drive downhill forwards!

Another cute car story. Dad bought a model A Ford with Grandma Pauline Rehfeldt's inheritance. Well, after awhile the tires had some wear on them. During business hours Dad used to drive a brand new company car. And during one of these drives he got a brilliant idea. He pulled the company car up in front of our house on Baldwin, pulled off the 4 brand new tires and put the new tires on his model A, and put his tires on the company car. Shorty laughed about that years later, but with a sheepish, embarrassed grin on his face.





**Nellie & Bill Dahl – Christmas, 1928**

Then a sad car story. Dad drove by Ma's house on Baldwin in the middle of the day with the company car with Edna sitting next to him. Ma saw him out of the front room window and couldn't believe her eyes! It seemed like Pa wanted to get caught. It was right after that that Shorty found the pictures of Edna hidden in the garage and brought them in to Ma. Pa supposedly met Edna while she was standing at a bus stop waiting for a bus. Edna was a domestic at the time.

On the way to the farm, Dad always stopped in a liquor store in Windsor and bought something good to drink on the farm picnic. Detroit was dry in those days, but Windsor was still wet. Aunt Jenny did not much appreciate all those wet goods on the picnic, but she was soundly out voted by all those American cousins who had been developing a powerful thirst on the dry side of the river. George and Frank also brought their own wet rations along.



**Celia Chapp Dahl & Frank Dahl**

George Dahl, my dad's brother had a tavern before the prohibition, but during the prohibition his ad in the Polk City Directory read "soft drinks", but in reality George's tavern on Chene and Superior was a very popular blind pig. Those blind pig prohibition years were probably his most profitable. George served "near beer" and "bath tub" gin.

I remember going to visit George and Amelia and my cousins Harry, George and Virginia in their home above the tavern. I used to feel so bad when I visited Virginia after my dad left and I see Uncle George and he'd remind me so much

of my dad that my heart would ache with longing. To this day I can't see why Dad did that to us, and how he could bear to never see his kids again.



**George Dahl Sr., George Jr.'s wife, George Dahl Jr. & Amelia Dahl**

A funny Uncle George story: George would be in his tavern and Aunt Melie and the kids would be in the parlor upstairs whose window faced onto Chene St. Two beautiful young girls would be standing outside of the tavern door. One said to the other, "Ooh! Is he there! He's so cute I could just die!" Melie, steaming out of both ears, knew darn good and well that those young girls were talking about her George. And George had a way with the girls that turned their hearts to mush!

Ma had real dry skin, and like me sometimes she'd break out into eczema on her hands from hard work and harsh soap. But Ma's never got as bad as mine. Hers would get better with cocoa butter and was limited to her hands. When dad left I got a horrible eczema on both my face and my hands and it just didn't want to go away. I feel it was mostly from nerves as I was so upset when dad left and my life turned upside down.



**Nellie Rehfeldt Dahl – 1928**

Snowballs were my worst enemy in winters. How afraid I was of snowballs! I was just a little weak kid and I couldn't defend myself against them. My best defense was to run home as fast as I could. I never could throw a good snowball, and years afterward my Ed and kids used to tease me about my aim.



They said that as long as I aimed they were safe, as I was always very wide from the mark. But to watch out if I didn't aim!

On Saturday afternoons Dad took us to the Eastern Market on Gratiot Ave. and Dad and Mama would do the weekly shopping and buy goodies for us kids.

I used to spend the night at my girlfriend, Ivy Hudson's house on a weekend night. We would stay up until about 10 p.m. Her mom was real nice and used to entertain us kids. Ivy slept in what should have been the front parlor, but what her parents converted into a bedroom for her. It had a curtain over the archway instead of sliding glass doors like our parlor had. Ivy's dad wasn't a real nice man sometimes. When I would stay over night with Ivy we would change into our night clothes in the front parlor turned bedroom and sometimes when I would look at the curtain Ivy's father would be there peeking in at us. Ivy's mother caught him doing that and boy!, did she ever holler at him to get away from the curtain!

I remember Holy Saturday at Ivy's house. Ivy and I used to pal around her house until Holy Saturday afternoon, when her mom would make home made chocolate candy and then after 12 noon when Lent officially ended in those days, Mrs. Hudson would let Ivy, me and her brother sample the chocolate candy. Mmm, Mmm, good!

I remember visiting Grandma Henkel for a few days at a time. She used to send Cousin Eddie to the store for bread and milk, he used to get so disgusted, but he didn't dare talk back to Grandma! It was a very long walk to Van Dyke in Centerline, Michigan. It didn't do Eddie any good to grumble. Grandma would box his ears good and then he'd still have to go to the store.



**Minna Kaiser Dahl Henkel – 1920**

Boy, Did Grandma Henkel ever cook good. Her spice cake I just loved!

Then at night when I went upstairs to bed, what a high comfortable bed with a feather comforter and listening to the crickets and then in the morning to hear the roosters crowing!

There's a visiting Grandma Henkel's story I hate to tell: Me, Eddie and Ruthie and a neighborhood kid, William O'Herron were bumming around the neighborhood feeling devilish when we came upon this real estate office in the country. My cousins and I broke into that real estate office and just demolished it! I dread to think of all the trouble we caused that poor man when he came in and saw his files scattered all over! William O'Herron's father had just died and his dad made William promise him on his deathbed that he would become a priest when he grew up. With behavior like that, I doubt very much if he made it to the priesthood.

Another time I walked with Eddie, Ruthie and William O'Herron to 11 mile Rd and Van Dyke (Grandma lived off 10 Mile and Van Dyke) to a farm off 11 mile Rd. Somehow I let my cousins talk me into getting up on a horse. Dumb! That horse could have thrown me or took off at a gallop. I knew nothing about horses and would have been totally at his mercy.



**Ruthie Dahl, front, Marie & Bill Dahl Jr., 2<sup>nd</sup> row,  
Elenore Dahl McKinin & Eddie Dahl, 3<sup>rd</sup> row.**

One time Grandma Henkel walked all the way to St, Clement's Church on 10 and Van Dyke in Centerline, about 3/4 mile from her home. Grandma was over 60 by this time and that was a long walk for her. She gets to the church and as she is entering the church an usher shoves a basket in front of her and says, "Lady, the seat offering is 10 cents!" Grandma looked at him with disdain, and replied, "Nanu, this must be a show. I thought it was a church!" She then turned around and walked out and back home.



**Minna Kaiser Dahl Henkel – Christmas, 1928**

Another time, Ma, the boys and I went to church on Sunday. Ma's only money in the whole world was a nickel in her pocket. When they got into church, ma said to the boys, should I give the nickel or should we buy a loaf of bread with it? After much deliberation, they decided to put the nickel in the basket. The usher looked at the nickel, then said with disgust to Ma, Lady the seat offering is a dime! Ma sincerely wished that she had kept that nickel for a loaf of bread.



**Harold (Shorty), Marie, Nellie & Bill Dahl – 1927**

Another funny Grandma Henkel story: My sister Elenore worked with a girl who had met and fell in love with little, old irascible, gruff Grandma Henkel and kept bugging Elenore to take her to visit her. One day Elenore agreed, so Elenore and her friend showed up at Grandma Henkel's house on Friday after work, without prior notice to Grandma as there were no phones in either house in those days. A very surprised Grandma led them to her bedroom to let them drop off their things, and then later they all sat down to dinner. At dinner Grandma Henkel looked sharply at Elenore, and said very bluntly, "Whose idea was it to come and visit me? I know it wasn't yours." Elenore was so embarrassed because Grandma hit the nail on the head.



**Elenore Dahl Mc Kinin – 1929**

Then my visits to Canada with Uncle Bill and Aunt Jenny: She had a new baby Walter. I loved that little guy, especially rocking him while Aunt Jenny did her chores on the farm. There was only a few drawbacks on that farm for me -- I was afraid of their big Shepherd dog and I was terrified of the geese, those darn geese used to honk and chase after me while I was screaming with fright! I must have been a pain at times to Aunt Jenny and Uncle Bill.



**Celia Chapp Dahl, Frank's wife, with Walter Dahl of Canada**



**Anna Dahl Galvin, ?, Bill & Nellie Dahl, Celia & Frank Dahl  
1927 – this picture taken at the Woodslee, Canada farm**

On Saturdays my cousins Ida and Beatrice used to walk down the country road about 3/4 of a mile to the schoolhouse and we played school, and then go over to Aunt Susie's and Uncle Fred's to visit and enjoy their hospitality. Aunt Susie was a large, warm, happy person. The farm help would come in and join the girls in singing around the organ. We would pick berries and eat watermelon

and I loved to pump the water from the well. I even let the girls talk me into getting up on a horse - I felt like I was on top of a building! And boy, was I ever scared sitting up on top!

When Mom and Dad came to take me home, they always enjoyed themselves, drinking, dancing and singing



**Mildred Dahl Stocker with horse "Nellie"**  
**(Our Grandma Nellie was miffed that they named a horse Nellie)**

Aunt Jenny gave Mom rhubarb to take home, but at the border the guard took it away. Mama was so mad she said, "I bet he takes it home to eat!"

One day I was outside playing and Elenore joined me in playing a game of jacks. As I was about to pick up the jacks I noticed a couple of coins in the grass and showed it to Elenore. She talked me into giving her the "little one" (a dime) and keeping the "big one" (a nickel). Sweet of her, I must say. Ha! Ha!

When Grandma Pauline Rehfeldt's sister Louise died, she left her \$33,000.00. Grandma divided the money among her children while she was still alive. She wanted them to have it while they were younger and could really use it. She said that she had often wished that her sister Louise would have shared some of her wealth with her when she had the children at home and was in dire straits and a few extra dollars would have meant so much to her. Dad redecorated the house on Baldwin, built a new garage and bought a new Dodge car. Too bad Mama didn't save her inheritance, because a very sad period in Mom's life was about to unfold.

Elenore, Bill, Shorty and I loved to go to the show (De Luxe?) on a Friday night to see Tom Mix and Hoot Gibson. Cowboy pictures were very popular in those days. We would go to the movie maybe three times a week. Sometimes, Mama said she didn't have the money and Bill would start whining till Mama couldn't stand it anymore and she would tell us to look for empty milk bottles to cash in. She wanted a few hours of peace and quiet.

Shorty was still very young and he would crawl under the seats looking for candy or money. That was more fun for him than yucky love pictures with John Gilbert and May Wray!

The movies in those days knew how to get you coming back week after week. They never played a whole movie in one sitting! They would build the audience up to a crescendo of anxiety over the fate of the damsel in distress. The movie would then abruptly end at the most crucial moment and the lights would come on. The message, come back next week to see how it turns out, would be flashed to the audience. Of course you had to come back to see how the darn thing ended! Then they would start another thriller and once again take you to the edge of the cliff, then turn on the lights, to be continued next week. The most famous of these and the most popular in my time was called the perils of Pauline. She was a beautiful, vulnerable young woman who would be sought out by some obnoxious villain who would try to do her in the most bizarre manner. My favorite was when the villain kidnapped Pauline took her to the railroad track and tied her to it. Pauline was tied fast to the track, and Pup, you guessed it, the train then came right on schedule, barreling down on Pauline, tooting its horn furiously! And naturally Pauline was watching the train fast approaching and yelling her delicate little throat out for help! We always had a piano player there for emotional effect, as these were silent movies. The words would be captioned on the screen and the piano player would play to develop your mood. The faster the train came, the more furious the piano player would pound on the keys of the piano, and the faster the audience's hearts would beat. And just when you couldn't bear the suspense any longer, the lights would go on and you'd be told to come back next week. Next week the hero would come along just in the nick of time, untie the ropes, as the train would loom 25 feet tall over them, and pull Pauline out of harms way just as the train went roaring past.



**Amelia Posanski Dahl, Clara Dahl Fredrick & Ray Fredrick,  
Minna Kaiser Dahl Henkel, Robert Henkel Jr., Celia Chapp Dahl,  
George Dahl Sr. & Anna Dahl Galvin – 1942**

Dad was gone quite often or had his half-brother Bob Henkel over to play checkers. Or Aunt Clara, his sister, and her husband Ray Fredricks would come over to play cards and listen to the phonograph records. Some of our



unforgettable selections were: "Yes, We Have No Bananas", Eena was the Queen of Palestina", "Carolina in the Morning", "Over the Waves", "It was Midnight on the Ocean" and Caruso opera songs, etc.

I remember playing sandlot baseball with the neighborhood kids. They would throw the bat and placing fingers upward on the bat, determine who got the bottle cap and would thus choose first. I remember standing on the sidelines watching all the kids get picked. At the very end of the pick I would invariably still be standing there as yet unchosen. Then they would proceed to fight over who got me on their team. They would say; "You take her, no you take her," the other would say. And so it would go. You can guess what kind of player I must have been. (We know, mom, we played ball with you!)



**Marie Dahl Bender – 1927**

Mrs. Viola Roehm, our neighbor next door, used to come over with her husband Fred and the grandmother. Mrs. Roehm played the grand piano and they would sing along. Mama made a nice lunch afterwards. Mrs. Roehm was a very nice woman, but very easy going with the 4 children and Mama's kids. In the summer she would cook up corncobs and throw the cobs out the back door for us kids to catch before they hit the bare ground.

I had good friends Ivy Hudson and Marie Roehm. Ivy lived 3 houses south from ours. We went to school together and did our homework in the evenings. Ivy had a brother George that loved to tease us. Ivy's mother was a very good seamstress. She made Ivy's dresses for the new school year and eventually Ivy's mother gave them to me because Ivy was getting taller and I was always small for my age.

## 1924

I loved school, I used to get up early and dress and sit down in the upper hall on Baldwin and put on my high top shoes, black stockings and a dress that Mama took out of the side board buffet. Mama always took care to give each one of us our clothes from that sideboard (buffet). Mama had our socks rolled in neat rows in a drawer in the buffet, one row for each kid. 4 rows went one way; one row went the other (horizontal and vertical).

I would be in church (St. Charles Borromeo at St. Paul and Townsend) at 7:30 am. I loved being there in the silence of the church every morning and listening to mass before school.

The nun let certain boys and girls watch the children to see if they acted up or looked around while the Mass was going on. Well, this girl told the nun I wasn't paying attention to the Mass. The nun called me up to the front of the class, glared at me, and told me to open up my hand so she could strike me with her ruler! I was mortified that she didn't believe me, I was a good kid and never gave any trouble, especially in Church! I never forgot her.

I made my first Holy Communion in May 1921 at St. Charles Church. I was dressed so pretty in my white dress, shoes, stockings and white gloves with a white prayer book and rosary, in those days they had a large communion class of children and we had our picture taken.

Then my confirmation day, Elenore and I were both confirmed together that year in November 1924. We were both dressed the same - white dress, shoes, stockings and a wreath in our hair. The ceremony was in the evening and I was so excited and worried that the Bishop would call on me to recite prayers, but I guess he called on the children who raised their hands. I think Mildred was my sponsor.



**Marie Dahl Bender & Elenore Dahl Mc Kinin**

Elenore and Mildred started dating and my, oh my, they sure kept Mom and Dad busy! Mildred would make dates with two boys for the same night and then tell Mom to answer the door and tell the boy she didn't want to go out with that she wasn't home!

And Mildred and her girlfriend would agree to go out with different boys, but they always worried about how presentable the fellow would look when he showed up for the date. This one fellow, his name was "Muxsie", an Italian vegetable peddler about 18 years old. He was in love with Mildred and coaxed her for a date. The night of the date Mildred and her girlfriend Agnes went down to the corner and stood at the entrance of the alley watching for Muxsie and his friend to come down the street one block away. When Mildred saw poor



Muxsie dressed in what he thought was the best of fashions, a Bowler Derby, white spats and tight pants, she turned to Agnes and said, "Do you want to go out with Muxsie and his friend?" Agnes said, no, so Mildred and Agnes hid out in the next block and let Mama do the explaining again at the front door.

Mildred had so many dates that Mom and Dad said she couldn't go out this one night that she was to stay in and help Mom with the dishes. Mom told her to take out the garbage, Mildred picked up the plate and spoon with the garbage on it, went out the back door to the alley, and threw the garbage, plate and spoon into the trash can, and went merrily along the way for an evening of fun! She figured the fun was worth the punishment when she came home!

Another time Mom told Mildred to go up to her room, she was not to go out that evening. After her hassle with Mildred, Mom went into the living room to relax and be alone for awhile. Something caught Mom's eye and here was a white sheet descending down the big bay window and a pair of legs and arms holding onto the sheet and Mildred dangling till she hit the grass and took off for another fun night.

## 1925

I always loved the holidays. Mama dressed us so nice for Easter. This particular Easter Sunday afternoon, a nice warm sunny day, I was sitting on the porch rail on 1763 Baldwin Ave. I was so pleased with my beautiful yellow dress trimmed in red plaid braid and my hair was curled and I had new black patent leather "Mary Jane" slippers and white socks. Boy, did I ever think I was cute! So cute I didn't even pay attention to Elenore and Bill & Shorty how nice they also were dressed.

Dad and Mom used to take us for a nice long drive after a good Sunday dinner.

The house on 1763 Baldwin Ave around 1925 was a home of happy memories. When Mama moved in she put Dorothy's Teddy Bear on a small footstool in the corner of the living room, and we children were not allowed in the living room unless we had company, then we knew enough to be on our best behavior!

I remember Mama spending a whole afternoon every other week making "near beer", root beer and peanut brittle candy for us kids. And Pa was busy upstairs in the bathroom making bath tub gin. (It was prohibition days!)

We had the old-fashioned iceboxes that had to be filled just about every other day and the melted water emptied every day. The iceman carried the big hunk

of ice on his shoulder gripped with long tongs. I wonder if they got arthritis later on in their older years!

Dad had a friend from the Dodge Plant that needed help with drafting plans. His name was Mr. Plath and he would bring along his wife to socialize with Mama. Well, while Dad and Mr. Plath were busy in the kitchen, Mama and Mrs. Plath stayed in the dining room that had a big base burner for heating the rooms. Well, it would get so warm and Mrs. Plath would start to fall asleep, her head would droop down and the hat she kept on her head had a big feather and it was so funny, the feather kept bobbing up and down as she was nodding her head!

Brother Bill and I used to pal around; we'd get up early on a Saturday morning and take a long walk to Mt. Elliott Cemetery, about 3 miles from Baldwin down Kercheval Avenue and the Grand Blvd. We played we were burying a treasure and go back a week or so later to see if it was still there.

Then in the summer we would start off for Belle Isle. On the way we would stop off at Jefferson and East Grand Blvd. There was a large church on the corner that had vines growing up the side of the building. Us kids would climb up the side of the building and then continue on our walk to Belle Isle, across the Bridge and go to the Bathhouse. Of course we didn't have money most of the time, so we would sneak in at the back of the building and go wading for a couple of hours. Boy that felt so good after the long walk, but then we would be so hungry that we wanted to get home quick. Sometimes we would hitch a ride on a milk truck, one time there was a lumber truck and I grabbed onto a piece of lumber, but I thought the lumber would come down on my head when the truck turned to go into the lumber yard!

Dad would give us nice times also, he would take us to the Fisher Theatre on the Boulevard. It was a gorgeous theatre in those days (1926?). They had vaudeville and beautiful music, then we would come home and hear it all over again on radio!

On the 4th of July, Dad bought a large bag of fire works, and after dark he would sit on the front step and shoot off the fire works and then go for a nice ride to cool off! To top off the holiday, we would have watermelon and a big dish of ice cream! Sometimes he would tell us that if we wanted ice cream on a Sunday evening we would have to take a physic "Sal Hepatica". Ugh, horrible tasting stuff! (My Dad's dad Fred Dahl died of an intestinal obstruction when he was only 49 years old, so my dad, who was only 14 when his dad died, was very worried about such an obstruction and so he felt that a physic would prevent that from happening.)

Also in the fall, Dad would come home in the early afternoon from Dodges (with the company car) and take Mom for a ride and me too if I happened to be out of school.

## 1926

November 12, 1926 Grandma Rehfeldt died of kidney failure (Bright's disease). She was laid out on my 13th birthday. Mama felt so bad to hear that her mother died, she was sick for quite awhile, Aunt Tillie would go and help take care of her. She died of kidney failure – the undertaker said he took 100 lbs of fluid off her. Grandma Rehfeldt was a good and gentle woman. She worked a good many years after her husband Charles died, raising her large family of 8 living children, John, Tillie, Hattie, Elizabeth I, Nellie, William, Charles, and Elizabeth II.



**Pauline Brueckner Rehfeldt**

I loved Halloween, so exciting, dressing up with anything I could find, most likely my brother Bill's clothes. We started out about 6 p.m. and walked the neighborhood with a large bag until about 8 p.m. Boy, was I ever tired and glad to put the candy away after I had my fill and a tummy ache. We hated getting apples! The next day, no school as it was a Holy Day in the Catholic School. We'd go to mass and then back home to our candy and playing in the leaves!

Elenore and I used to go to the neighborhood theatre, they had Vaudeville acts and I was lucky. I won a prize - a pair of silk stockings that Elenore would coax me to give to her being that I wasn't yet interested in silk stockings.

Another time her and I went to see a scary movie and when we walked home from the show we went right upstairs in our home on Baldwin. There was a large bathroom, sometimes I could see next door; this window looked very dark and dirty, and when I looked over I would see a very old man with a long, gray beard, walking back and forth. He was the father of our next door neighbor, Mr. La Pointe. His new bride wouldn't allow the old man downstairs in her home. The very old man was senile, but still he appeared to be very lonely up there all by himself.

Well, anyway, back to the large bathroom. Elenore and I started to talk about the scary picture we just saw, laughing and giggling and finally decided we had better go to bed. Elenore crossed the hall to our front bedroom; leaned down to take off her bedspread, when suddenly she let out a loud scream! There was a body in the bed! It started to get up in the dark. Elenore yelled, ran to the door, me beside her with my heart pounding like a trip hammer, and slammed it, and held it shut with all her strength! The body pulled it open, and here it was Dad! "What's all the noise about?", Dad said, "I just went up to take a rest. So much for kids seeing a scary movie!

As I had mentioned earlier, Mom had always dressed us up so pretty for Easter Sunday. Dad was an Engineer at Dodge's and made good money. We didn't want for anything. On Easter Sunday I just loved looking for my Easter basket and bunny.

Christmas was always delightful too, with the toys and my pretty baby dolls and Aunt Celia Chapp Dahl, Frank's wife, playing Santa Claus for us kids.

## 1927



**Mae Stocker, mother of George (Sonny) Stocker Jr.**

Mrs. Mae Stocker and the doctor owned a cottage at Island Lake out Grand River past Novi, Michigan. Every weekend in the summer Dad drove us to the cottage with Mildred and Sonny. We had so much fun, Mildred would meet her friends and one Saturday night they would go across the lake to a dance hall and dance the evening away.



**Mildred Dahl Stocker 1927**

On Sunday afternoon after I was through having fun in the lake with Elenore, Bill and Shorty I would go upstairs to my room and listen to the carnival music and the merry-go-round. It sure was a lot of fun there for us kids.

We went every weekend until the end of the summer, right into November. I actually went swimming on my birthday, November 13th. I had good circulation then!

It was a sad day indeed after Mrs. Stocker sold the cottage and Dad was gone.

Grandma Henkel was a dear soul, always wanting to help. She loved to sew for the children, pants and shirts for the boys and dresses and coats for the girls. She would suggest that Dad, whom she called "the Villie", bring home some car material and she would sew me a coat and dress from material she had left.

The dress she made me was so old fashioned that I hated to wear it. One day she came to visit us and she looked at me and said, "Nanu, Marie, why don't you wear the dress I made you?" I said to grandma in front of my Dad, (I hated to fib), "Oh Grandma, I'm saving it for Sundays!" She was satisfied then, and began to talk to my Dad in German, which my mother really resented, as her grasp of the German language was not so good. Dad spoke and understood fluent German, as that was the language spoken in his home by his parents when he was a child, and was also the language spoken in his Church, Sacred Heart Church at 1000 Eliot St. in Detroit. My mom on the other hand, spoke English in her home, her mom having come over from Germany when she was 3 years old and thus learning to speak English as a small child. Grandma Henkel, however, came over to America when she was 19 and her husband Fred was 35, and thus they never really got a good handle on the English language. Grandma Henkel always spoke with a thick German accent, used German phrases and prepositions, and gave our nouns a gender, such as "the pickles, she shrink!"

Grandma Henkel, on her way into our house would walk between the houses to enter by way of the back door. The neighbor kids would be playing between the

houses. Grandma would approach the neighbor kid, grab his shirt, shake it up and down, bringing attention to the missing button, saying, "The Clobber pins (her word for safety pins), the Ma too lazy to sew the button on?" Ma would just cringe with embarrassment for Mrs. Roehm, the neighbor whose kids it was. Fortunately for mom, Mrs. Roehm just laughed it off!

Ma used to buy most of her groceries from the corner store at Baldwin and St. Paul. Mr. ReBone owned the store. I used to play with his daughter, Louise. Ma used to run up a tab there and then dad would pay up on payday. After Dad left, Ma continued to run up a tab and when we moved out of Baldwin Ma owed that man \$100. I always felt so bad about this bill, and I always said I wish I knew where Mr. Re Bone went to, as I would have loved to repay him the \$100 Ma owed him. He didn't make that much money and he had a family to support. But Ma had no money to pay anyone in those days.

Ma always said as we were moving out of Baldwin that it was such a shame to lose a house after making 9 years worth of payments on it. Ma only owed another \$1500 and the house would have been paid up. Pa stopped making the payments in 1928.



**Nellie & William Dahl in front of William's car**

Our doctor in those days was the doctor on the corner of Kercheval and Baldwin, Dr. Lesperance. One day I was riding Bill's tricycle (Bill was the one who had all the neat toys in our family) when suddenly the bike flipped backwards, up into the air and landed on me. The bike cut my chin quite badly. I went running home to my parents who took me to Dr Lesperance. He decided that my chin needed a stitch in it. When he started to stitch my chin I screamed bloody murder out of sheer fright. He got mad at all the yelling and slapped me one.

When I think it over, he had his nerve to slap me, when I think of his kid, who was in my class at school. His kid used to have the most God awful temper tantrums, where he would stiffen up like a board and fall on the floor. I remember the nun trying to pick him up off the floor and him so stiff.

I can't remember my teachers in the first 5 grades in St. Charles Borromeo anymore, but I do remember the others. My 6th grade teacher was Miss O'Connor, the only lay teacher I had, but my favorite. She was such a nice person!

In the 7th grade I had Sister Mary Angela. She wasn't wound too tight, and ended up having a nervous breakdown over the boys in my class being out of control. The more hysterical she got, the more unruly the boys got. She finally had a nervous breakdown and they carted her away.

Our class got a reputation after that so in the 8th grade we got a real tough cookie, Sister Mary Florence. She sure got those boys in control fast!

Ma used to do most of her clothes shopping at Crowley's downtown. Her furniture shopping she did mostly at Gardner-White.

One day my girlfriend, Marie Rupert and I stood around watching the boys on our block box. Finally the boys turned to us and egged Marie and I on to have a boxing match between us. We agreed to in fun. We lightheartedly jabbed a little here and a little there. Next thing you know the jabbing got a little more serious, then both of us got mad and lost our tempers and soon we were slugging at each other in earnest! The boys stopped the fight at that point before someone got hurt! Thus began and ended my short boxing career.



**Mildred Dahl Stocker & George (Sonny) Stocker**

Mildred fell in love with George "Sonny" Stocker at the age of 17 as she worked at his mom's house and after a couple of years they married, on the 5th of June 1929.

The reception was held at Grandma Henkel's house on Harding in Centerline, Michigan. Dad was still at home on Baldwin for this ceremony. At the reception Edna, a girl he had been dating, showed up. She learned from relatives that Bill was Mildred's father. Edna was put out. She said, "Bill told me his niece was getting married".



## 1929

After Dad left Dodge Brothers Plant he moved to Syracuse, New York, and rented a room in a boarding house on 633 Onondaga St. Dad took a new job at Graham Paige in Syracuse, New York, because the Dodge plant in Detroit closed up because of the depression.



**Fred Meinke, Tillie Rehfeldt  
Meinke, Guy Fontaine, grandson**



**Nellie Rehfeldt Dahl, Tillie Rehfeldt  
Doench Meinke Vandervoort, Fred**

Dad left Mama to cope with the financial problems and 4 children to support and raise. Believe me, she was very frightened with no money coming in and knowing that she couldn't even pay the mortgage balance of \$900! Mama and the children remained behind on 1763 Baldwin because Dad did not know whether that job would last or not. Mama depended once again on her good sister Tillie to help out. He took temporary housing in a boarding house until he got on his feet. He wrote a letter to Elenore in July 1929, telling her how lonely he was without Nellie and the kids.

Wednesday 9<sup>30</sup> P.M.  
July 10, 1929

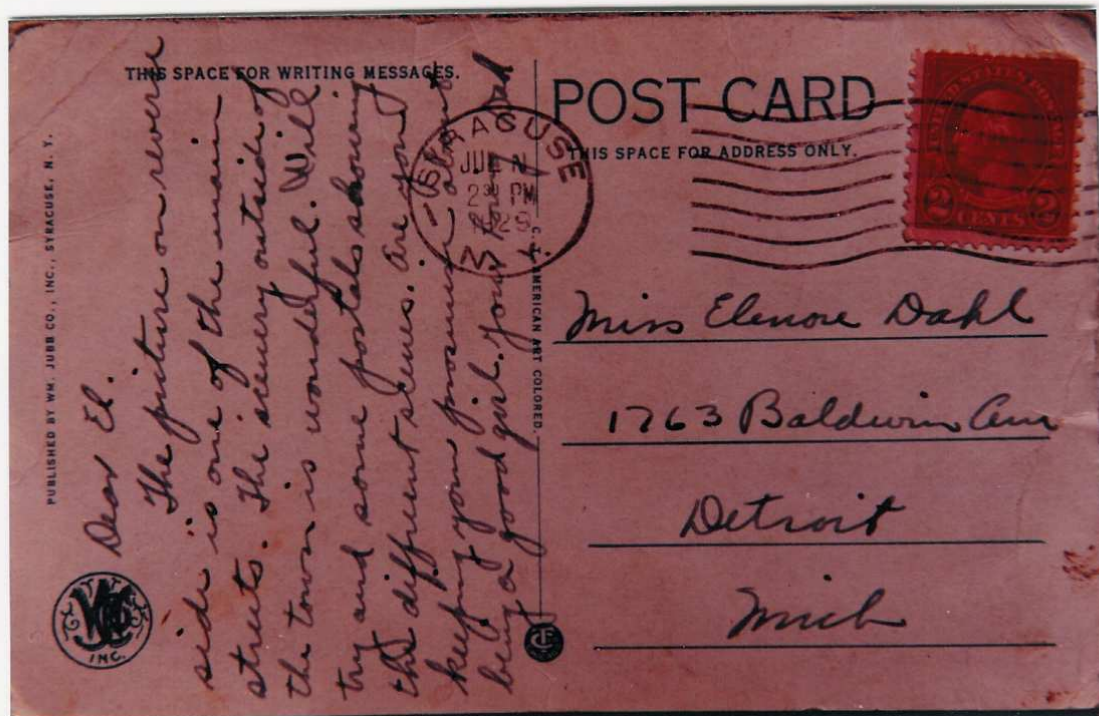
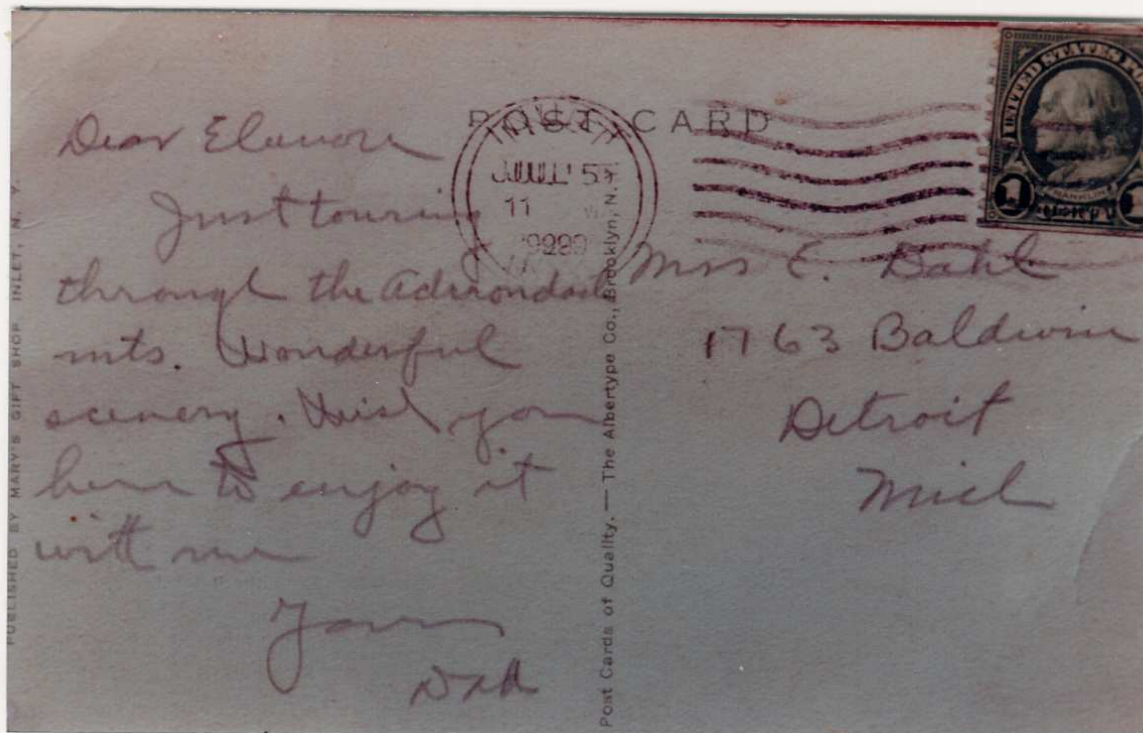
663 W Onondaga St  
Syracuse New York

Mr Dear Elenore

I do hope that when you receive this that you can honestly say that you have kept your promise you made me last Sunday to be a real good girl and give your mother any cause to cry or worry about.

How is the job at the five and ten anyway? Mine is fine as far as the work goes, but I am awful lonesome here without you youngsters and mother. I have been working overtime every night this week from 7<sup>30</sup> to 9<sup>00</sup> o'clock and am glad of it, even as tired as I get because it helps to spend the evenings. I go to eat at 5<sup>15</sup> P.M. I mean I go home first to clean up and then to a hash house and go back to the plant untill 9<sup>00</sup> o'clock. <sup>→ sounds funny after I work it</sup> This overtime won't last long not over another week, and then I certainly will be lonesome evenings. I realy cant except the hospitallity of the Ellers any more because I dont want to spoil my welcome. Well its bed time so Goodnight your loving Dad





Mama went with Mildred, Sonny and us children to New York to visit Dad over the weekend. When Mildred and Sonny were married a few months, Dad was in Syracuse, New York, living in a boarding house on Barrett Street and they

decided to take Mama and the kids to visit Dad. Mrs. Stocker and Sonny's brother Kenneth came along too as did Mildred, Sonny, Ma, Elenore, Bill, Shorty and me. Sonny's brother Bobby drove. We arrived at Dad's boarding house and had a nice visit with dad. Elenore, when she thinks back on that visit wonders if we really visited dad in his boarding house as the U.S. Census shows many people living in that boarding house, but when we were there, there simply wasn't that many people living there. We bade dad a fond farewell at the end of the visit; never dreaming that this would be the last time any of us would ever see him again! It was very sad for all of us, but not nearly as sad as it would have been had we realized that this farewell was a final as death. Little did we realize how soon all of our lives would be turned upside down.



**Kenny & Robert Stocker, Sonny Stocker, William Frederick Dahl Sr.**



**Marie Dahl Bender in front of St. Charles Borromeo School  
This is the door she entered to go to school.**

I sure didn't know yet that I wouldn't be able to go back to school in the ninth grade at St. Charles Borromeo, and would have to go to work as a nursemaid for children instead. Dad asked Mildred and Sonny to move to New York and live close by to him. But Sonny wasn't working in those days and he was living with his parents, Dr. George and Mae Stocker, so he didn't dare to venture out on his own yet. On our way back from our visit with Dad we stopped and had a picnic in the Adirondack Mountains and then we stopped in Niagara Falls. I'm sure Ma thought back to her last visit to Niagara Falls as a young bride

with much less cares on her shoulders than she had now. This is precisely the reason Ma did not want to marry so early – she didn't want so many kids and so much responsibility. Ma realized that a later marriage would mean fewer kids and a better financial and emotional start in life.

Pa did not see it that way. After Dad left, Mildred and Sonny made some inquiries in Syracuse. They found out that Dad had left his job for Hudson Motor Car Company and had briefly worked for another car company in the area. No one had a forwarding address for Bill.



**Virginia & John Dale, in background,  
Marianne Mc Kinin De Maria & Elenore Dahl Mc Kinin**

Years later one of the grandchildren, John Dale inquired about Dad to the Social Security Administration. They learned that no Bill Dahl with Dad's birth date ever collected Social Security. John then made inquiry to the FBI. They said he was checking passport files just in the nick of time, as they were about to destroy these records. After a thorough check they told him that no William Frederick Dahl born April 6, 1886 had ever applied for a passport. In all probability he never went to Russia as he would have had to apply for that job in his own name and he probably needed references from Dodge. John is presently checking in the Syracuse, New York area and he has found a Willie Dahl who bought a gas station in 1928, the year my dad started being missing from home a lot. This Willie had a son William who died in the 1980's when he was 53, and there is now a grandson William living nearby. John thinks this may well be the right William Dahl family. We will be checking into this further in the near future. We will also be checking his Knights of Columbus records with Sacred Heart Church in Detroit. We never saw Dad again after that visit. He simply disappeared. He left Graham Paige and the boarding house and was never heard or seen from again.

We heard from Aunt Anna Dahl Galvin, his sister, that Grandma Henkel, his mother, had hired a private detective to try and find him, with no luck. Aunt Anna also said that when the Second World War broke out that Grandma Henkel wrote to the Armed Forces and asked if they had a soldier by the name of William Frederick Dahl, born 5th of April 1886. They did not. She later



checked with the Social Security Administration, also with no results. Bill had apparently vanished without a trace. Uncle George's daughter, Virginia, stated that she had overheard her Dad tell someone in his saloon that his brother was going to Gorky, Russia with a contingent of Ford Motor Company engineers to open a plant there. Amelia, George's wife, swore that George was in contact with his brother after his disappearance and she tried everywhere possible to find him out. She accused him of getting letters that she never saw, and talking on the phone in secret and hanging up when the family got too nosy. George told them they were imagining things.



**Amelia Dahl, Clara Dahl Fredrick, Ray Fredrick,  
Minna Henkel, Bob Henkel, Celia Dahl, George Dahl,  
Aunt Anna Dahl Galvin**

Clara Dahl Fredrick, Bill's other sister, died in 1968 and her husband Ray remarried an old girlfriend of Clara's from way back. Clara's girlfriend told my daughter Sandy that she had met only one of Clara's brothers, a man with a mouth deformity from a botched mastoid operation. She said that he was at Clara's house on Savannah in Highland Park with a pretty woman a little younger than he was from Florida. Whether this was my dad or not is not possible to prove anymore as she saw him in 1930 and would certainly not remember him.

Dad's car sat in front of the house on Baldwin while Dad was in New York. One day in the middle of the night after Dad had disappeared, his car disappeared too. We often wondered if the car was stolen, repossessed, or if Dad came and took it.



**Nellie Rehfeldt Dahl, Mae Stocker, Kenneth Stocker – 1929**

It was very sad to move away from my childhood home in August 1929. Mama had to move out of the house at 1763 Baldwin, because she couldn't pay the balance of the principle on the house, \$900. Would that \$900 of the inheritance had been used to pay off the principle instead of wallpapering and erecting a new garage!

Mom was truly destitute when Dad left. She had no money, no job, and due to her weakened state from the former paralysis, probably could not have held a job. When Dad disappeared Mom had 4 children still at home, no money and depended on her sister Tillie to help out. Mrs. Stocker asked her crippled brother Norrie Day if he would take us in his little home on Peter Hunt off Gratiot Ave. Norrie took us in.

Mama put all of her furniture in the Ivory Moving & Storage warehouse. Norrie lived with his wife Alice and son Tony in a small cottage on Peter Hunt. Mama, Elenore, Bill and Shorty lived with the kind couple for about 5 months. He also helped Mom get a check and food from the city to help take care of the boys. I was so grateful to get Ivy Hudson's outgrown dresses in those days, as we sure needed clothes with my Dad gone.

I had to quit school in the 8th grade and get a job through Catholic Social Services. It broke my heart to quit school and leave home. I loved school and wanted to continue. And I hated leaving my mom and brothers after I had just lost my Dad. I always secretly felt that I was my Dad's favorite and it just crushed me that he would just up and leave me like that and never come back. I remembered how Dad would be so affectionate to me when he came home from work. He would always have a newspaper in his hand and when I would be sitting on the porch in good weather he would always tap me over the head with the newspaper and say, "How's Wee Wee?" I remembered how mom wouldn't get any of us anything for our birthday, but how Dad remembered and got me something little. Looking back over those memories at that time was unbearably painful.



I broke out in a horrible eczema at that time due to the severe emotional upheaval. I remember looking at my girlfriends with their father and I felt cut to the quick that I did not have my Dad anymore and did not even know where he was. I never could figure out to this day how he could do that to us kids. We still don't know what happened to him or where he is, although I'm sure he's dead by now. Looking back, there were tell tale signs that he was leaving. He used several aliases in the 1920's. In the Centerline Post Office he was receiving mail addressed to William Black and William Hall. He also used the alias of Paul Dawson. He also dated a girl by the name of Edna Giesregen. My brother Bill found a picture of her in the garage on Baldwin, which he took to Ma. Edna was tall, skinny and ugly. She couldn't find him either when he disappeared from New York. She actually had the guts to go to Norrie's house on Peter Hunt when Ma was living there and demanded that Ma tell her where Bill was! Ma got a letter forwarded to her from the AAA club from a fine, upstanding widow with 5 children who was romantically interested in Dad. Ma wrote back and that was the end of that.

My first job was working for Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Sweeney who lived at Massachusetts Ave., Highland Park, taking care of her two little children as a nursemaid. Her children Danny and Patricia were beautiful, and Mr. Sweeney had a lovely 8-year-old daughter from his first marriage. Mr. Sweeney's first wife died. I felt so bad for Mr. Sweeney's 8 year old daughter by his first marriage. She was the spitten image of her mother and when Mr. Sweeney looked at the girl it was with great sadness in his eyes as she always reminded him of his deceased wife. His second wife hated that child and treated her very meanly. I missed my Dad terribly and I was so lonesome away from my family.

When I was working for the Sweeney's I talked them into letting my girlfriend, Ivy Hudson, come over and stay at their house with me for the weekend. Ivy came gladly and we had a real nice time together. Ivy studied her algebra lessons that weekend and I studied with her, trying to learn some algebra, as it was a completely new subject to me. I had two wishes later in life out of this experience. First, I wish I had studied more with Ivy and had learned algebra for my own self-satisfaction, and secondly, I wish I had kept up with Ivy Hudson over the years. Ivy moved from Baldwin while I was working away from home and I never found out where she moved.

## 1930



**Herman, Marianne & Elenore Dahl Mc Kinin 1931**

Elenore met Herman McKinin at a dance hall. They married on February 22, 1930 and took Mama and the boys into their first home. Herman borrowed money from Aunt Tillie and Uncle Fred (her second husband) to get Ma's furniture out of storage. He also got the grand piano out of storage which Mama and Dad had purchased from one of the Brueckner relatives when the family moved to California. The piano created a big problem every time Ma had to move. The piano was very heavy and the moving company wanted \$5 to move this one item. It was a beautiful player piano and our family had many a happy time standing around this piano and singing. One day the boys had enough of moving this beautiful piano and one more happy memento was forever lost.

Herman was having a hard time to keep up the expenses for 5 people, as his work wasn't that steady with the depression and all. He took Elenore to the west side to live with his mother and dad and their family. Due to Herman's move and because of the depression, Mama and the boys lived in different homes maybe no more than 6 months at a time. Mama had the welfare help them and the check was never enough to buy decent food and pay the rent, so as a consequence the rent wasn't always paid and they got evicted. When Mama would get her check, she would buy goodies to make a good meal for her and the boys. Did they ever eat! But then they would run out of food before the next check, and would starve for awhile. Their life was one of feast or famine. Mama never did get the hang of managing a welfare check. She was used to Dad bringing in good money as an Engineer and paying all the bills and managing the entire budget without her input. Dad used to give us many extras that we all took for granted at the time.

The best of food, and in abundance, new clothes for every important occasion, toys for the boys, and even sending the wash out to a laundress for mom as her wrists were so weak from the paralysis that she couldn't scrub clothes over the washboard or wring them out. The laundry would come and pick up all the

dirty clothes and then bring them back wet and mom would hang them out on the line to dry.



**William F. Dahl, Jr.**

In these lean years Bill did odd jobs to help out, but he was 15 and 16 then and still in school. The Roosevelt government, as part of their New Deal, had a work program for youth that they called the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp, and Bill was called to work up north when he was 17. Bill had his foot run over by a steamroller and crushed. He had emergency surgery and they put a plate in his foot. His foot gave him trouble from then on.

Sonny took Mama to the welfare office for help, and it just so happened that Sonny's boyhood friend worked in that office and he was very kind to Mama, every time Mama had to go for her check he would call her name first. One day when he called her name, Nellie Dahl, Mom stood up and a sweet little old black lady stood up also, another Mrs. Dahl!

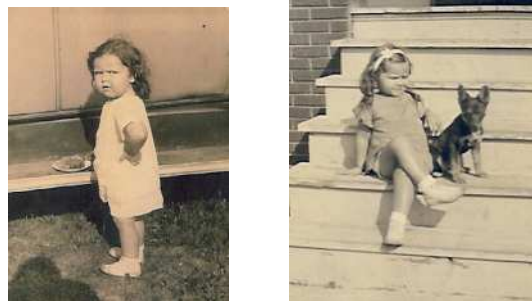
Mama had it hard in those days, walking about 3 miles to the welfare office in the hot and freezing cold weather. Many a time the people had to stand outside in the winter or be packed into a hot, sweaty building in the summer. But the welfare workers liked mom and saw that the boys got clothes and shoes and they helped her with the rent and food. What a fall from being the wife of an up and coming young Engineer for years!

Ma used to always try to impress upon the welfare worker what a good wife she was to dad. She always told the welfare worker that she always had a hot meal on the table for dad every night and the chair under the table at his place waiting for him. The welfare worker no doubt never told Ma that there might possibly be more to a good marriage than that. The workers wrote in their files that Ma was a lax, but good-hearted mother to the boys. "benign neglect" was the words the St Vincent De Paul social worker wrote in Ma's file.

One day after Pa left a neighbor came down the street and told Ma that Bill was down the alley totally stewed. A very embarrassed Ma went down the alley and brought a very blitzed Bill home and let him sleep it off. Bill was a very good kid for Ma and that was only an isolated incident.

Another time Ma and the boys were sitting in the dark as they couldn't pay the electric bill on time and the lights were cut off. Ma was very down as she knew

it would be awhile before she could get enough money together to pay the bill and get the lights back on. Meanwhile cousin Marie Rehfeldt's husband, Sonny Kraft stopped in Ma's house on the way home from prison. He had just gotten out that day and was headed home. Gee, Nell, he said, I see you've got no lights. How come? Ma replied that the Edison Company cut off her lights for non-payment. That's no problem, Sonny replied. Come here, son, he said to Shorty, and I'll show you how to get the lights back on. He stuck a slug in the light meter, and lo and behold, lights! Shorty was scared of getting caught and he marveled that a man right fresh out of prison would try something like that before he even got home. Especially considering it wasn't even his light meter!



**Marianne**

On August 7, 1930 it was a day of rejoicing and grieving. Both of my sisters, Mildred and Elenore, gave birth to their first child on the same day, one in the morning and one in the evening. Elenore had a beautiful little girl, Marianne. Elenore said originally she was going to name Marianne Marilyn but one day while taking a bus downtown she saw the name Marianne on a billboard and thought that was such a beautiful name that she decided she would use that name if the baby was a girl. Mildred gave birth to a big baby boy, who they named George III. However Mildred was in labor for hours and hours, the patients were piling up in Dr. Stocker's office, which was making him very nervous, so Dr. Stocker, the baby's grandfather decided to bring the labor to an end by reaching in and pulling the baby's head out with forceps. He did this with such force that he crushed the baby's skull. Little baby George died 3 days later and was buried in the Stocker family plot in Mt. Olivet cemetery in Detroit. Through the years every time Mildred would look at Marianne she could see how big her own little George would have been had he lived. Marianne thrived and was so adorable she won a baby photo contest. She later married Frank De Maria and had 3 children, Lorie, Patti and Judy.



**Lorie, Judy & Patti**

The Sweeneys, the people I worked for in Highland Park, decided to move to a brand new home in Birmingham in 1930. I decided not to move with them as transportation from Highland Park back to Ma's house on my one day off every week was already tough enough and took up enough time. But Birmingham, that was just impossible! How would I ever get back to Ma's from Birmingham? It would take over a half a day to get home, so I decided to take another job. Before I left Sweeney's Aunt Clara decided she wanted to invite me over her house for a weekend, so she talked to Mrs. Sweeney and got me a weekend off. Aunt Clara picked me up and took me to her home on Savannah in Highland Park where I had a very delightful weekend with Aunt Clara and my cousin Ruthie. We used to play card games in the evening to pass the time, as there was no television in those days.



**Clara Dahl Fredrick & Virginia Dahl Bohlen**

I next worked for Mrs. Austin Miller on a La Salle Blvd. for a short while, but I started to watch the ads in the newspaper and I checked out a position with Dr. and Mrs. Mayne on Renfrew and John R in Detroit. I was happy with them and their little boy, Kenneth.

Dr. and Mrs. Mayne were nice people to work for and their little son Kenneth was good most of the time, but one day he felt devilish, came out to the kitchen and demanded something from me. I told him "no", not now. He had a pair of scissors in his hand and tried to cut my dress, so I slapped him and he ran crying to his mother and told her what I did to him. She called me into the room and said I was not to chastise her child, that that was her prerogative. I told her he had no right to cut my dress and I was not at fault, and that I quit!

I went home immediately. After the weekend I went back to Mrs. Mayne's for my clothes. Well, she sure was apologetic and said she was sorry that she blamed me and that the doctor and she had chastised Kenny.

I did like her; she was a nice person, so I stayed with them until I decided to go to work for Mildred's sister-in-law, Lorraine Schneider. Lorraine lived much closer to Mama's home. The dress that Kenny cut was one of three new dresses that I had just bought so I was justifiably upset.

Mrs. Mayne was somewhat upset over the old dresses I was wearing while I was the governess for her child. She was well to do, lived in a ritzy, high-class professional neighborhood and was conscious of the image she presented to the community, right down to the dress of her governess. So one day she said to me that I was not to go home for a month on my day off as she felt that Mom, being so desperately poor, would talk me out of my \$5.00 per week pay. Instead she held back my wages for 4 weeks and at the end of the 4 weeks she took me downtown on the bus to Hudson's and bought me 3 dresses and a pretty Royal blue coat, hat and shoes. I was so proud to have such pretty clothes again. Mrs. Mayne even shortened and sewed the hems for me. I know she wanted to see me looking nice as much as I wanted to have those I pretty new clothes. That pretty Royal blue coat I wore on my wedding day, August 25, 1934.

Mrs. Mayne used to be very weight conscious. When she felt that she had gained a few pounds she went on a strict orange juice diet. She used to lie on the couch for days until she had achieved the desired weight loss. She died quite early and I had often wondered whether those frequent starvation diets caused her early demise. Her husband returned to Canada after her death.

I wanted something different so I got a job with the Eaton Springs factory. I had to walk about 2 miles from Mama's house on McClellan to work. It was sure nice to have the evenings and weekends to myself. But, alas, the depression was still on and the factory had to lay off again. So I was once more looking for work because Mama needed help with the rent and food.

An embarrassing story about my days at Eaton Springs: I always wore an apron when I worked there to keep my clothes clean because I couldn't afford to have to buy new ones. One day it was almost quitting time when suddenly my face turned beet red. Suddenly I realized it was that time of the month. I had no protection with me and I was sure I knew what had happened to the back of my dress. How was I going to get past all those men and get out of there without dying of embarrassment? Suddenly I hit upon an ingenious but dumb solution to my dilemma. I turned my apron around backwards and then walked clear across the factory; up one half set of stairs and then back down again and to my locker. I was sure that my apron turned backwards created more of a sight than if I didn't turn it around.

## 1931



**Earl Stocker**

In 1931 my sister Mildred had her second son, Earl, a most adorable little boy. And boy oh boy! was he ever full of life! Such a fun loving, happy, bouncy little guy. He was very very handsome, closely resembling my dad's brother George who himself was so handsome the girls used to peek into his bar and swoon over him. Earl gave us 7 years of joy and happiness.

## 1932



**Earl & Doris Stocker**

In 1932 my sister Mildred gave birth to a daughter which she named Doris. Doris was also a beautiful, fun loving lively child. She and Earl got along very well together and were fast friends and playmates. Doris was the only one of Mildred and Sonny's 4 children that survived into adulthood. George died 3 days after birth, Earl died when he was 7 years old of a burst appendix and then Mildred lost a little girl around 1944.



Herman and Elenore used to go on a lot of picnics when Marianne was a baby as it was depression time and none of us had any money. So we would have a good time by packing up a lunch and enjoying one of the beautiful parks in our area. Here are some pictures of Herman, Elenore, Marianne and Herman's mother on a picnic when Marianne was a year old.



**Herman, Marianne & Elenore**



**Herman's Mom, Elenore, Marianne**



**Marianne**



**Elenore, Marianne & Herman McKinin**

This is one of the few pictures taken of Herman's mother. She was a strict Russian from the old country and she ruled the household with an iron hand. She succumbed to cancer at the end of her life, but remained strong to the last. Elenore used to go to her doctor to get morphine for Mrs. Mc Kinin and the doctor used to tell her to make sure no one saw what she was carrying because many people would knock her over the head and take it. The day Mrs. Mc Kinin died she figured it was the last day so she gave orders to her family to cover the entire week.

Mildred told me that Sonny's sister Lorraine and Ray Schneider were looking for someone to take care of their 3 children, Mary 4, Rita 2, and little Pat, 4 months. What a dear little boy, he was so good and contented. The girls were also very sweet children.

When I was working for Lorraine taking care of her 3 children, Pat, Rita and Mary, I did the cooking for the little ones. And at every meal I couldn't get enough milk! I drank glasses of the stuff at every sitting. Lorraine's milk bill sure must have gone up! (Speaking of food bills, Nellie and the kids used to rack up tremendous food bills in those days, too. Nellie and the boys used to

eat a half-peck of potatoes and a whole double layer cake in one sitting! When one is deprived of food as we were in the depression after Dad left, food takes on an extraordinary importance and cravings develop as a consequence. We used to have days when all we had to eat for supper was fried onions.) Once we had nothing to eat in the house and we were really craving food. Then us kids got a brilliant idea! We told all the neighborhood kids that one of us had a birthday and we were throwing a birthday party! We told everyone to bring a dish for a potluck party. We, of course, were able to contribute nothing, but no one knew that and we sure did eat good at that party!

## 1933

I stayed with Lorraine until 1934 when I met Edward Bender. One day in 1933 or 1934 I went to visit my sister Elenore and her husband at their house and to stay for dinner. Elenore and Herman loved each other dearly and were a very good match. But oh, what a temper each of them had at times! I was in the kitchen and we were getting ready to sit down to dinner when all of a sudden Herman got angry. I don't even remember over what as it was trivial, and the next thing I knew he picked a tin of cupcakes and they went hurdling through the air, across the room, and landed all over the floor! Boy, was I ever scared! But it was over as soon as it happened and we settled down to a congenial dinner.



**Marianne, Elenore Dahl & Herman Mc Kinin**

Another time when Ma came to my house for the summer, as usual for the first 3 weeks I heard all the gossip of what had gone on at my brother Bill's and my sisters Mildred and Elenore. Then Ma would run out of happenings to talk about and settle down to a much quieter existence until she moved on and could again recite what had happened at my house, Bill and Elenore's to Mildred, and I so on, every 3 months.



**Elenore Mc Kinin, Nellie Dahl & Marie Bender**

Another time in about 1944 Mickey was staying with Elenore and Herman as they liked Mickey and used to invite him over as they had no son of their own at home. Mickey said years later that he was sitting at the supper table eating with Elenore, Herman and Marianne. Suddenly a hot fight erupted. And it just kept getting hotter & hotter. Mickey said he was petrified. He was glued to his seat and was sure someone was going to get killed. He said the fear kept rising as the fight intensified. Suddenly, in the middle of dinner, Marianne slid off her seat and said quietly to Mickey that it was time to take a walk around the block. Mickey didn't want to go out walking because he was hoping that their presence in the kitchen might prevent a murder. Marianne was insistent that they leave the house now. Mickey said he had a very nervous and fearful walk around the block as mentally he remained behind in that kitchen. He walked with great dread back into the kitchen, scared of what he might see. To his utter astonishment, it was all over, the air was clear, and it was as though the argument never occurred! All that worry for nothing.

## **1934**

On January 11, 1934 a few weeks before Ed met me he lost his Grandmother Katherine Klein Bender. She died right on her birthday. She had been living with her daughter Elizabeth Bender Whittenberg in Grosse Pointe city. She was 90 years old.

I was visiting my Mom on my day off, it was in the evening when someone knocked on the back door and Mama answered and said, "Hello, Ed, come in". The date was February 7, 1934. Ed asked if his brother Norman was here, he wanted to show him his new used car he just bought. He never did show Norman that car. He was so busy trying to impress me that he forgot all about the car. This is the car Ed drove while we were courting. It was a convertible with a rumble seat. Ed worked at Hudson Motor Car Company earning \$35.00 per week. We spent that night playing cards, Ed, Norman, Shorty, Bill and I. Well, Ed never did leave mom's house until about 11 p.m. that night trying to talk me into going roller skating with him on my next day off! I wasn't sure about going out with him, but Mama said, "Oh, go, Marie, have a good time".

The first date with Ed was February 14, 1934. He took me to see the movie "It Happened One Night". The stars were Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert, and then after the show we went to Sanders Ice Cream Store on East Grand Blvd.



**Norman Bender, Edward Bender & Marie Dahl Bender**

Ed bought me a box of chocolates and when we parked in front of Mom's house on Townsend (he and his parents lived downstairs in this house and Mom and the boys lived upstairs. Mildred and Elenore were married by this time. Bill came out to the car to say "hello". I asked Bill to take the box of candy into the house for mom to keep for me until I got home and Bill misunderstood and gave the candy to Mom. Needless to say, when I got home from my date the chocolates were history. Ed didn't like the idea that I gave his gift to my Mom and brothers to gobble up! By the way, we never did go roller-skating. It was just as well; it would have been a disaster anyway! I had never been at a Rink before.

In the summer, Ed wanted to take me out on a Sunday afternoon, but I told him we would have to take Lorraine's children along because I only had Thursdays off until I asked for every other Sunday off too. We took the kids in Ed's convertible with the rumble seat in the back. Wow, when I think of the danger for those 2 little girls! We went over to Belle Isle and Ed wanted us to go canoeing, but the attendant said no way would he allow us to put the children in a canoe! Youth, Oh boy!

Ed and I were dating only three weeks when he started to speak of marriage. I said no; it was too soon for the seriousness of marriage.

Ed took me to a professional photographer and had a color portrait made of me before we were married. Many people feel it is the most flattering picture taken of me.



**Marie Dahl Bender, 1934**

Ed, who was a good and reliable person, treated me with respect and love, and I finally said "yes" and we were agreeable to marry August 25, 1934. I had gone to church faithfully all through the years, so there was no problem with fulfilling the Catholic Church's obligation of going to confession and being in the state of grace for me. But for poor Ed it was a different story, he hadn't been to confession since he got kicked out of the 4th grade of St. Anthony's off Gratiot in Detroit, so he wasn't sure where to even begin. Years and years of examining his conscience and loads of kid stuff type mischief on his mind. Ed asked around and got a good answer - go to the Capuchin Monastery, St. Bonaventure's on Mt. Elliott across the street from the Mt. Elliott cemetery in Detroit. So that's where he ended up in a confessional. He figured this was going to be easy from what he had been lead to believe by those he talked to. Hah! Ed never had such a rough time in a confessional in his whole life. By the time he finally survived that 3rd degree and looking back over what he had went through, he was sure that all his sins and the punishment due to them had more than been atoned for. In fact, leaving that monastery after having had such a wrestling match in the confessional and innumerable prayers to say afterwards, Ed kind of felt like he might have even had some extra credits due him on his balance sheet of life!

The night before we were married Ed and I were in a drug store, and I still don't know how it happened but I lost the wedding ring. It must have fallen out of my pocket, perhaps when I took my hanky out!

The next morning I met Ed at the corner and I was crying; I was afraid to tell him I lost the ring! His heart was in his mouth for a moment; he said he thought I changed my mind about marrying him. He was so relieved when he found out it was just a lost ring and I'm sure he appreciated the humor in Ma's ring that was so huge it almost looked like a drapery ring. He quickly said, "of course we'll still get married today", so we picked up Joe and Elsie and off to the church we went.

Ed and I decided to keep our marriage a secret from our families because it was in the middle of the depression and we didn't have the money for a reception and the parents had no money either in those hard times.

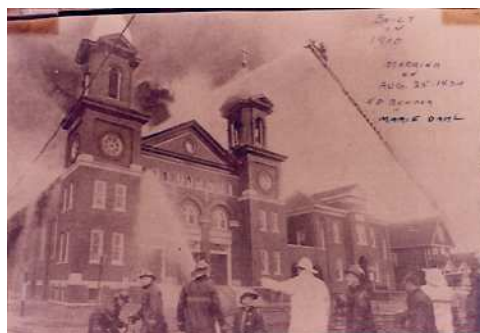
Ed told his mother that he was going fishing with some friends. (His mother told us later that she never did believe his story because Ed was all dressed up! And I told Mom that I admired her cheap, brassy ring, which didn't fit at all on my small finger, and could I borrow it and wear it?

I then told mom I was going to a party and I wouldn't be home until sometime Sunday. Our parents also depended upon us somewhat for support, and neither Ed nor I had the guts to tell them that we were leaving them and were about to strike out on our own.



**Marie Dahl, Edward Bender & Elsie Daniels – 8/25/34**

Elsie Daniels and Joseph Radtke were our witnesses. Elsie Daniels was my girlfriend and Joseph Radtke was Agnes Bender's brother (Agnes was married to Ed's brother Art).



**Our Lady of Sorrows Church**

We were married at Our Lady of Sorrows Church on Meldrum in Detroit. We were married at 8 in the morning. There was a marriage to be held after our wedding, so the red carpet was down the center aisle and the church was decorated almost in our honor! You should have seen the priest's face when he



saw that ring on the satin pillow! Ed and I laughed for years about what the priest must have thought of him. Ed scouted around for a Catholic Church that did not belong to the Roman rite as he had a bet with his sister in law Agnes that he could get married without the Catholic Church wedding banns being published in my parish or being announced in church. She claimed it was not possible so he went around to many different Catholic churches until he found that Our Lady of Sorrows was Belgian Catholic and would marry him even though I did not belong to that parish! We didn't have any relatives at the reception other than Joe. Then Ed put that ugly big brassy ring on that snow-white pillow. After the marriage Ed was so thrilled to be married that he ran out and totally forgot to pay the priest the customary stipend. The priest cleared his throat and told Ed as we were getting into the car that he was forgetting the marriage license. A very embarrassed Ed then remembered that he forgot to pay the priest in his excitement and promptly paid him the customary stipend. I bet the priest thought Ed was the cheapest fellow he ever knew! Poor Ed was so nervous that day! Little did the priest know what a wonderful husband and father he turned out to be for the next 47 years!



**Edward Paul Bender & Marie Anna Dahl Bender – 8/25/34**

Ed was on cloud nine and totally rattled. He drove us down Gratiot Avenue after leaving the church and he was so busy admiring his new bride that he drove right onto the center streetcar track and did not notice it or the fact that the streetcar was fast approaching. The streetcar blared its' horn, and Ed abruptly came back down to earth and veered out of its way. Our first day of marriage could have been our last! We then took Joe and Elsie home. I met Elsie's parents, very nice people. Elsie's sister took a picture of Ed and I; it was the only wedding picture I own. After awhile we said goodbye and started out for the day as man and wife! We sure didn't have much money, but we were very happy, we went out to Belle Isle, then in the afternoon went to a movie, had a nice dinner and Ed had reservations at a Hotel at Harper and Van Dyke. The next morning around 11:30 am we went for breakfast and then home to Ed's parents' house on Baldwin.

Ed had the last laugh on Agnes when he told her we were married without her knowing it and had the license to prove it! Agnes was furious as she had been



watching the marriage license column in the newspaper every day and Ed got the best of her. The notice never appeared in the newspaper because when Ed got his license he bribed the 2 newspaper men who were sitting in the marriage license bureau recording licenses not to record his. To Agnes' chagrin, they agreed. I was very happy with Ed; he was so good to me. I used to walk to Mack Avenue and watch for the streetcar around 3:15 p.m. Ed would give me a quick smile and a hug and we'd start off for home together.



**Art Bender Sr., Josephine Radtke, Mildred Bender Neff, ?,  
Agnes Radtke Bender & Norman John Bender – 1919**

Ed was always close to his baby brother Norman; they played baseball together, and they repaired radios and used cars together as well. One night they were in the garage working on a car and for some reason when they touched the metal of the car hood, they would get a sharp electrical shock! They said to one another, "let's have some fun and call Marie down to touch the car!" I gladly came down to think that I could help them. Ed said, "here, Marie, touch here". I touched the hood and said, well what else?" They looked at one another and said, "try here". I tried about 3 times and got disgusted that this was the only thing they wanted from me.

They were amazed that I never got a shock and wondered what had happened. They each tried it again themselves and each of them got a good wallop! They never did figure that out.

I was so happy when I found out I was pregnant. I started to buy baby clothes and sewing flannel to make diapers, and gradually buying furniture and a crib for the baby.

## 1935

One night when Ed was working nights I decided to spring clean one front bedroom. When I finally finished I took the pail of water and soap to the

kitchen. I opened up the basement door and started down when I must have splashed soapy water on the step. My foot slipped and I turned around and threw out my arms to catch hold of something, but all I did was knock down the canning pans all around my head as I fell down to the bottom of the stairs! Boy, was I ever dazed, Grandma Bender had Norman and Harold help me up to my bed. I thought that for sure I would miscarry, but the baby sure was tough if not surprised in what mama did!



**Elizabeth Ott Bender, Beatrice Bender Gamache & Marie Dahl Bender**

Ed and I used to go to Waterworks Park on Jefferson Ave near the Belle Isle Bridge. We would sit on the park bench and eat ripe black cherries and enjoy the cool breezes from the Detroit River. That summer was so hot one of the hottest in recent history!

We lived in the upper flat, and it seemed there was no breeze. One afternoon we got a heavy rainfall and I went downstairs to the backyard and stood in the rain with my dress and my big tummy and thoroughly enjoyed the cool rain.



**Nancy Marie Bender Stephens**

A week after the Holyday of the Immaculate Conception we moved from Baldwin to Sheridan Ave. On August 21 at 1:00 am while Ed and I were sleeping downstairs in the living room on the floor because of the heat I noticed that everything was different, little pains now and then all through the night and into the next day. Ed decided he had better take me to the hospital. The labor went on till the next morning and at 7:00 am a little girl, "Nancy" was born. She weighed 7 1/2 lbs. Ed came home from work and his Mom told him he was a father to a girl. Ed was kind of disappointed, being a sports fiend, he wanted the first to be a son. But he soon learned to love and enjoy his cute little daughter, whom he nicknamed "Nacky" and "Fancy pants".

About 10 days after her birth, I came home from the hospital with Nancy. I was so worried about all the responsibility! I put the baby on the bed and started to cry! I said, "What should I do with her?" Grandma Bender calmed me down and said, "Motherhood is a very special gift, you'll soon see that everything is just routine!" After about 3 weeks Grandma and Grandpa Bender moved to Sheridan Avenue over the A&P store. Ed was very tired from moving all day. We went to bed about 10:00 p.m. when Ed said "Oh, my gosh, I left my savings in the old place." He dressed as quick as he could and drove to the house on Sheridan near Townsend and got his life's savings of \$300.00 from behind a wall in the bedroom. He had to pry up the woodwork to get at it. It was a good thing that the landlord hadn't locked up the house yet.



**Nancy Bender Stephens**

In November of 1935, on Thanksgiving Day after a beautiful dinner that Ed's mother cooked, we used to play cards and shoot the pennies against the wall and tell jokes. And on Sunday evenings the whole family would listen to the radio to hear Frank Munn sing beautiful songs and listen to Fibber McGee and Molly.

Norman and Evelyn moved from Grandma Benders to a flat above the A&P store on Gratiot Avenue. They had to move because the babies were coming too

fast and there was no room for the growing family. Well, I decided I wanted to move also. We moved in with Norman and Evelyn for awhile.



**Grandma Lizzie Bender, Marie, Grandpa Henry Bender, Beatrice Bender Gamache, Mildred Bender Neff & Evelyn Reid Bender**

Well, after living with other people I wanted with all my heart to live in my very own house with Ed and baby Nancy. One spring afternoon, I put Nancy in the buggy and took a walk around the neighborhood and found a for rent sign in the window of a house. The landlady showed me the rooms in the upstairs of her home on Warren and Townsend in Detroit. It had a long hall with a wide stairway in the middle of the hallway and a kitchen off from the attic leading downstairs to the back of the house and outdoors. There was a bedroom and a front room for a living room. We only had a couch and a chair and a red rug for furniture. The kitchen had a table and 3 chairs, an icebox and a stove. The bathroom was a large room with an old-fashioned bathtub, a toilet and a washbowl. To cook I carried water from the bathtub to the kitchen. And on wash day I had one of the first Maytag ringer washers. I rinsed the clothes in the bathtub and hung up the wash in the attic, where Ed repaired radios when the weather was nice. When I first moved in this house I had to wash everything by hand with a scrub board. I asked Ed one time to wring out all the wash for me. Just one wringing session and viola! A washing machine. Amazing what a little forced labor can get you!

Speaking of washing machines, once when I was in the hospital having a baby I asked Ed to do some wash for the kids and he reluctantly agreed. After work, still all dressed up, he went into the basement and filled the washer. When the cycle was done he had to feed all the wringing wet clothes through the wringer, then put them on the line to dry. While feeding the clothes through the wringer he fed his tie through too and thought he was going to choke to death as the tie kept feeding inward, he couldn't stop the wringer and had nothing at hand to cut the tie. He said that was a very close call! I think he said he cut the tie with something he found close at hand in the basement. So much for men doing housework!

In the spring I would take Nancy for a buggy ride to Pingree Park and on the way home I'd visit Mildred, she lived across the street from me at 5002 Warren Avenue at her father in laws' house (Dr. George Stocker).

Mrs. Mae Stocker was a kind soul, every Christmas she would buy an enormous amount of gifts and anyone who came to visit. Mildred would go into Mrs. Stocker's bedroom and wrap a present for the guest, no matter whom!



**Marie Bender, Nancy Bender Stephens, Elizabeth Ott Bender behind**

Little Nancy learned to walk right on her birthday without any prompting; she just stood up and was on her way, exploring everything in sight. We lived upstairs in a house that had a long hallway, with a register in the floor. Nancy would go to Ed's toolbox, pick up some screws, and shove them through the register. The man and woman downstairs would laugh to see her little face looking down and watching the screws, going plink, plink, hitting the glass bowl on their buffet!



**Nancy Bender Stephens**

Nancy would wake up at 5:30 in the morning from the sound of the milk wagons being pulled by a horse. Nancy would love to imitate the sound of the horses' hooves on the pavement, clip, clop, clip, clop.....

## **1936**

Ed and I decided to move to 3898 Crane Ave in Detroit. My new landlady was Mrs. Pritchard, a very nice person. She loved Nancy and she would ask me if I would let her go to her home next door to play with her nephew. That was a very nice comfortable upstairs flat. Ed worked afternoons at Dodge Brothers and on payday (Friday night); he would stop at the Eagle Dairy on Forest Avenue and bring home malted milks for him and I. We never could finish one of those malts. The container was so huge you could fill a glass 3 times, all for 19 cents!

Ed loved all bran muffins in those days, so everyday I would bake a batch for him.

On Monday nights in the summer we would go to Jefferson Beach Amusement Park (this was discount night and all rides were 10 cents) with Norman and Evelyn.





**Norman John Bender**



**Evelyn Reid Bender**

Norman and I used to love the more daring rides. Norman and I went on the clutch shoes which went high up in the air and turned upside down and then stopped before returning back down again on a bet.

## **1937**



**Clyde, Grandpa Hank Bender, Francis (Skin) Bender & Art Bender Sr.**

In September of 1937 I knew I was pregnant again. I went to Ed's brother Art's house for a party when I was expecting Mickey and he pulled a real dirty one on me. I was never much of a drinker and Art knew this. While I was at the party Art gave me a drink and made me believe that it had little or no alcohol in it. I drank what he gave me and discovered about 1/2 hour later that the drink was filled with liquor. Boy, did I ever get sick. Ed brought me back home and I was sick for a whole week afterwards. I was very lucky that the baby was not seriously damaged by this rotten trick. I saw no humor in this and I never forgave Art for it, either. That wasn't funny.



## 1938

On Monday morning, May 16th, Ed went off to work and Mildred Neff came with her nephew Stewart to take me for my monthly checkup, but instead it was the labor starting up. When I arrived at the hospital, St. Joseph's on the Blvd in Detroit, the receptionist became more nervous than I was, and she said to me, "Don't have the baby here!"



**Michael Edward Bender**

Michael was born at 3:30 p.m. May 16, 1938. Dr. John E. Clifford delivered him. This time I did not suffer the edema I had when I was expecting Nancy. With Nancy I had gained 70 lbs., was full of water and was suffering from toxemia. When I started my pregnancy with Nancy I weighed 98 lbs., when I went into labor weighed 168 lbs. Things were much more serene with Michael's pregnancy.



**Mildred Dahl Stocker**

Mildred Stocker was taking care of Nancy for me while I was in the hospital with Michael. Soon after I went into the hospital, Ed went over to Mildred Stocker's to see how Nancy was doing. He couldn't believe his eyes. Mildred's children Earl and Doris were jumping off a high dresser and landing on a bed where Nancy lies. Ed picked up Nancy and making up feeble excuses, took her with him. Ed then called his sister Mildred Neff from a telephone booth, and said, "Mel, I got Nancy with me. I'm standing in a telephone booth. I just took her out of Stocker's house. They were jumping off a dresser and on to a bed where Nancy was laying. They were going to kill her, Mel! What am I going to

do with her now?" Mel chuckled; she told me it did not take much figuring out what Ed was really asking of her. "Bring her over here, Mel replied." Ed told me the whole story the next day when he visited me.



**Mildred Bender Neff**

Michael was baptized at St. Catherine's Church on the east side. Mildred and George Stocker were the sponsors. After the baptismal ceremony we all went back to our house and had dinner together, Ed, I, Nancy, baby Mike, Mildred, Sonny, and their two children, Doris and Earl. Who would ever dream as we gazed upon the beautiful choirboy face of angelic little Earl as he ate that last dinner with us that in less than 2 month's time he would be dead. A little waxen doll, 6 feet under ground, buried in his little First Communion suit, with a fresh rain falling on his newly dug grave. And all because his grandfather, Dr. George Stocker tried to save a few dollars by freezing Earl's appendix with ice rather than having surgery and removing the inflamed appendage. At Earl's wake a fellow doctor, who came to pay his last respects, went up to Dr. Stocker and said, "George, you knew better". Earl's appendix burst, he had surgery and it looked like he was getting better in the hospital, then suddenly Mildred got a call that he was gone. My mother was there at their house when Earl got sick. He came in from playing, complaining that his side hurt. Mom said to Earl that it was from drinking too much pop. She told him to lie down on the couch and rest and that he'd soon feel better. He didn't. Bad appendix seems to run in the Dahl line. A number of Dahl children had their appendix out before reaching adulthood. Mildred said just before Earl died, after he had his appendix out and was resting in the hospital, on a beautiful Sunday afternoon a ruby red glass in the shower suddenly split in two, from top to bottom. Everyone in the living room looked at one another and knew something momentous was about to happen.



**Upper: Mildred, Bobby, Nellie, Dr. George Stocker, Mae Stocker  
Lower: Bill & Shorty Dahl, Elenore & Marie Dahl, Sonny Stocker - 1929**



**Earl & Doris Stocker**

The first time it rained after Earl was buried, I just cried and cried. I felt so bad that the rain was falling on the grave of that little fellow. He was such a beautiful, handsome lad, even though full of life! He used to listen to the Lone Ranger on the radio, then pretend he was riding a horse, crying out, "Hi, Ho silverware, giddy up!"



**Earl Stocker**



**Doris Stocker**

Doris remembers when they were getting ready to lay him out in her home on Warren. She said she was in bed and listening to the undertaker pounding the black curtains up on the living room wall as a backdrop for the tiny casket. And she remembers getting the shivers, knowing that Earl was laying there dead in his casket a few feet away in the living room. She consoled herself with the knowledge that he had always been a good kid and she figured he wasn't going to come back and get her.



**Earl Stocker**



**Doris Stocker**

Mildred said shortly before Earl died that he woke her up in the middle of the night (he was not yet sick when this happened) and told her that he had just seen Jesus. Jesus told him that he was going to come and take him away real soon and to not be scared.



**Nancy Bender Stephens**

One Sunday afternoon Ed heard Nancy yelling for us on our front porch at Mrs. Pritchard's so he went running and found that Nancy had wedged her leg tight in between the spokes of the porch and couldn't get it back out again. So Ed gently grabbed her little leg and maneuvered it this way and that, but to no avail. The more he moved it, the tighter the leg was stuck. He was really worried by now as the leg was getting quite red. He was at a loss as to what to do and was about to saw the rung to free her leg. At this point I happened to saunter out on the porch to see what all the fuss was about and found a very worked up Ed and a worried Nancy pondering what to do next. This was definitely my forte. I was very calm and told Ed and Nancy to hold still, I would be right back and solve the problem in a jiffy. I came back with a stick of butter, rubbed it all over the leg and the two sides of the spoke, and Voila, out came the leg! Same trick every pregnant woman uses to get her rings off at night!



**Marie & Michael Bender**

Michael was a very good baby, when just 2 weeks old he slept the whole night through. He started to walk at 13 months and at 5 months he had been going around in his walker. One day in the early summer my neighbor; Mrs. Ivy Redding suggested that we go on a picnic to Pingree Park. I said, "Just give me time to buy the picnic food". Ed was in the front bedroom that he used for his radio repairs, so I asked him to watch Nancy, aged 4 and baby Mickey. Well, when I got back from the store there was bedlam! Nancy decided to go out the upstairs front door and she forgot to close the door. Baby Mickey in his walker pushed the door wider and started down the front stairs, walker and all! (Bang,

bang, baby screaming!) Ed, running out of the radio room, jumped down the stairs in great leaps, and caught the baby and walker just before he would have gone clear through the long glass door at the bottom of the stairs!



**Michael Edward & Nancy Bender - 1940**

We took him to the hospital but the dear little boy had no injuries whatsoever to his body, just to his nervous system. He sure was all shook up! The doctor said to keep him quiet for the rest of the day, so no picnic, but thank the good Lord that he wasn't badly hurt or crippled!

In the fall of 1938, my landlady, Mrs. Pritchard, rented the lower flat out to a young couple. The girl was no more than 18 years old and evidently she didn't know how to regulate the old furnace in the basement, because she opened up the damper and shoveled coal into the furnace and went upstairs to her flat. She dressed herself up for a party and went to her mother's house. She forgot all about the furnace and as a result the neighbor next door came over to get something out of the basement and noticed how hot it was in the furnace room. He opened up the furnace door and WHOOSH; the fire shot out of the door and started the old wood on fire! He ran upstairs to our flat, yelling FIRE! Well, Grandma and Grandpa Bender were visiting at our house because I was recuperating from an operation on my toe (in-grown toenail) and I couldn't walk yet! (The foot doctor was a butcher).



**Grandpa Hank, son Norman & Grandma Lizzie Bender – 1936**



The fire truck was outside with the hoses and the firemen told us to evacuate the premises. Ed carried me down the stairs to Mrs. Pritchard's' and Grandma carries Baby Michael and Grandpa helped our Nancy out. The firemen went through all the rooms of our house and started to chip away wherever they detected smoldering fire. Poor Ed, he had about 12 used radios in the back room where the firemen were using their axes! And there was no such thing as house insurance in those days for the average man.

After a couple of hours they let us go back upstairs. Oh, what a shock! The walls were all soot covered and the linens were all brown. And the stench of the smoke was terrible; we had to go home with Ed's parents! Ed was shocked at what the fire department had done to the apartment. They took their axes and chopped holes everywhere in the house. They even chopped up the kitchen cupboards looking for flames in the walls!

Mrs. Pritchard had our rooms painted and fixed up, but I still had a lot of work to do. The day I finally got to wash the kitchen floor I was all elated and proud of the way the house looked so nice again, but not for long! That afternoon, the combustion from the stovepipe exploded and the cap in the wall fell out and the dirtiest, greasy black soot went all over my clean floor! I sure was disgusted to start all over again with the greasy soot! Mrs. Pritchard rented the cleaned up lower flat to a lovely couple with a small daughter, Judy Roedding. Nancy and Michael played with her and the two little girls next door, Sally and Beverly Goulin. All the little ones got the whooping cough. That lasted at least 2 months. We have pictures of Nancy and Judy in the red wagon; you could see how drawn they looked from all the terrible coughing!



**Nancy Bender Stephens & Judy Roedding**



**Eugene, Donald, Mary & David Gamache**

Dave Gamache, Ed's sister Bea's son, tells a rather bitter story about this period on his life. Dave was a gangly teenager with a hollow leg, at that age where a kid can eat out the whole refrigerator and then ask mom what's for dinner. Ed Gamache had money, had a responsible white-collar job and made good money, but was he ever tight! He used to give Bea \$1.00 per day to feed himself, Bea and 4 teenage kids, a ridiculous feat even for those days. Consequently Bea had to ration everything in her life, food included, in order to make ends meet. One day Dave had just finished what he thought was a meager lunch and was still hungry when he got up from the lunch table. Dave then decided to walk up Gratiot Avenue to see what was happening there. Looking in the window of a local restaurant, Dave saw his dad sitting at a table with a very fine lunch spread out before him. Dave was very resentful that his dad was getting his belly full on restaurant food while Dave could not even afford the luxury of a second bologna sandwich!



**Bea Gamache, Mildred Neff,  
Sally Neff & Grandma Lizzie Bender**



**Edward Gamache**

## 1939

When little Mickey was first started on table food, he had a cute but peculiar habit. Whenever I put a sandwich on his tray, he would first smack it real hard, banging it into his tray and then he would pick the sandwich up, look under it, and then he would eat it. Ed and I used to laugh and say he was killing his food first.



**Marie & Michael Bender**

Mickey used to have another habit that scared Ed and I. When he was in his crib at night before he would go to sleep he would rock back and forth on his hands and knees and bang his head into the headboard of the crib. We were so afraid he would hurt himself!

Ed sold his radios to a business associate, Mr. "Pop" Wagner. He had his shop in Hamtramck on Joseph Campeau near McNichols in Detroit. Ed would sometimes take Nancy for a ride with him to Pop's place.

One day I was busy with baby Michael and didn't notice Ed leaving, but I did know that he had an appointment with someone, but being busy, I didn't pay much attention. I settled down little sleeping Mickey in his crib, then started looking for Nancy. I called all through the house, went outside and looked up and down the street for her, talked to the neighbors, but no one remembered seeing her. I was frantic by now, wondering where she had walked to or who had picked her up!

I was just ready to call the police when Ed drove up with little Nancy in the front seat! How relieved and happy I was to see her safe, but I sure told Ed what a terrible thing he did by not telling me that he was taking Nancy.

Another time he took Nancy to Pop Wagner's on Joseph Campeau in Hamtramck, and he told her to be a good girl and stay in the car, that he would be right back. Well, as always happened when he got together with Pop Wagner, they started shooting the bull and time slipped by fast. Well, to a little girl 4 years old, it seemed like daddy was never coming back! So she decided she would see what he was doing in that nice man's store. She got out of the

car and started to cross the wide, busy Joseph Campeau Ave. The traffic was heavy and they all started tooting at the little tot standing in the middle of the Avenue, dodging her with their cars!

Ed and Pop Wagner, hearing the horns, looked out the window and were horrified to see a beet red faced Nancy standing in the middle of the street with all that fast moving traffic swirling around her! Ed dashed out of Pop's store, ran into the middle of the street and scooped up his excited little girl in his arms and carried her to safety. He was very upset and reminded her that he told her to stay in the car, but she was worried that she lost him and went to find him in the store. Believe me, Ed didn't soon forgive himself for that trick!

Pop Wagner came to visit Ed at our house just before I had my teeth knocked out in a car accident. Pop saw me right after I put my hair up in pin curlers and put a babushka over my head. Pop said to Ed, "How old is your wife, 19?" Ed laughed and said, "No, she's 29!" (I always looked about 10 years younger than my age, a Dahl trait. I even won a prize at Bob-lo for fooling the age guesser in a booth. He guessed everyone else in the crowd but me. On me he was 10 years off.) Pop Wagner then said to Ed, She sure is pretty and a real nice woman. Take good care of her.

One Christmas Eve my brother Shorty (Harold) and I trimmed the Christmas tree at my house (Shorty wasn't married yet) while Ed was at Pop Wagner's drinking and having a good old time. While Shorty and I strung the lights, put on the bulbs, ornaments, tinsel and angel tree top, Ed was putting his finger in a light socket at Pop's store to see who could take the most juice! Dumb! Ed got home after 1 am, just about the time Shorty and I got all the toys assembled and under the tree.



**Harold (Shorty) Dahl**

Another time I almost lost my Ed on the way back from a drinking bout at Frank "Quicktest's". Frank Quicktest and Ed used to like to drink themselves under the table and then conduct business. It was a contest between them who could hold the most liquor and still be able to add a long column of figures. Ed said he used to do better than Frank because he would shut one eye when doing his adding and therefore could see the figures better than Frank. After Ed made some spectacular business deals, he started home about

1 a.m. He drove along McNichols feeling no pain, and bolstered by the liquor, Ed thought he was the world's best driver. As Ed barreled over the 9 sets of tracks at 6 Mile and Mound Rd., he remembered that he had just heard a "Whooooo" and suddenly his car rocked violently as a freight train just missed his car and went screaming on its way north. That sobered up Ed in a hurry when he realized just how close he came to the pearly gates!

## 1940



**Marie, Mickey, Nancy & Edward Bender**

Nancy started school at Pingree School in the Kindergarten. She loved school and would fuss after a few weeks about me walking to school to bring her home. She said she was a big girl now and knew her way home and how to look for cars before crossing the street! I used to put her and Michael down for an afternoon nap when she came home from morning kindergarten class, and she started to put up a big fuss over taking a nap, saying she was old enough to stay up all day now. On her 5th birthday, I gave her a party and invited her girlfriends next door, Sally and Beverly Goulin, and her cousins, Sally Neff, Mary Gamache, Virginia and Delores, Gary and Richard Bender.



**Sally Goulin, Mickey,  
Virginia, Richard, Sally  
Delores & Nancy**



**Richard, Virginia,  
Nancy & Gary Bender**



**Sally Neff Kujat  
Robert Neff**

Well, the day went pretty nice until after they had their ice cream and cake, then Nancy suddenly decided she would cool off with the garden hose and have some fun at the same time. She took the hose and started to squirt the children who were all dressed up in their best party clothes. On that finale, I figured it was about time that the children went home and for me to clean up the mess.



**Upper: Virginia Bender, ?, Sally Neff;  
middle: Richard, Gary & Nancy Bender, Mary Gamache;  
lower: Delores Bender, Mickey Bender**

Another time that year little Mickey, 2 years old, reached up for something on the large radio in the living room and somehow managed to tip over the whole huge radio on himself. I saw that radio start to go over and I was fortunately able to catch some of the radio before the whole thing landed on his little body. He still got banged up somewhat, but not what he would have had I not caught a corner of the radio as it was going over.

About the same time Mickey used to watch his dad repair radios. Ed used to ham it up a little for the little guy while he was watching. Ed used to take hot



leads, put them on the parts in the radio and say "Connect!" One day while Ed was at work Mickey wandered into Ed's repair area, picked up the leads, put them both on his little T-shirt, saying "Cornect!" He burned two holes in his little shirt and dropped the hot leads real quick!

Ed repaired radios, auto radios, and washing machines in our house. Ed used to have the cars backed up in the alley on weekends and he would install radios in all of them, like an assembly line. Meanwhile I would be busy answering the door bell for people that were answering ads for used washing machines, Maytag, Speed Queen, Good housekeeping brand, Kenmore, Signature, etc. I told every prospective buyer that my mother was breaking up housekeeping because of illness. It kept me very busy on Sunday afternoons, trying to get dinner, watch the children and run up and down the steps to demonstrate washers!



**Jean Lippert Dahl**



**Harold (Shorty) Dahl**



**Patricia & Thomas Dahl**



**Nellie Dahl**

My brother Shorty met, fell in love with and married Dorothy Jean Lippert in 1940-41. Ma made a few sassy remarks about Jean's red hair, which got back to Jean, so Ma and Jean got off to a rough start. Ma was living with Shorty and Bill when he got married, so Ma resented losing her supporting son. Shortly after this we decided to have Ma go from house to house, each kid taking Ma for the same amount of time. Jean did not like this idea as she was newly married and had not had time to adjust yet. So the rest of us ended up dividing Ma between us. Some hard feelings developed between Elenore and Shorty and a rift developed there. A rift later developed because of a blow up over Ed's business between Shorty and me. Ma felt so badly about those rifts and she so badly wished they could be patched up, but that was not to be until after her death. When I think back, how narrow minded Elenore and I were. Jean was just married, this was not her mother, and we should have understood and given it some time. It sure would have been much easier on Ma if we had kept our mouths shut. Ma had so desperately wanted to visit Shorty and was restricted in her visits due to this. The stupidity of youth! I used this experience in my own life to get Ed's two sisters, Bea and Mildred back together again later on. I told them that life is too short to carry on these rifts year after year. Ed and I sure were sorry about this one. And once it occurs it's so darn awkward to undo. It took us 20 years.



**Mildred Bender Neff, Elizabeth Ott Bender, Beatrice Bender Gamache**

Another time, I was at my kitchen table waiting, I guess, when I looked to see about baby Mickey, and oh my gosh! The back screen door was open; left open by you can guess who again! I ran to the back upstairs porch and here was little Mickey, 2 years old, holding onto the porch slat with his body dangling in thin air on the outside of the porch! Lord only knows how he ever got there in the first place! As I was going as quiet as I could, I reached down, put my hands around his little body and pulled him back up to safety! His little face was beet red and there was no doubt that he couldn't have hung on much longer! As I was rescuing Mickey the 11-year old boy Carl was told by his mother to go as quiet and quick as he could next door to my place and see if he could catch the baby as he fell! Oh my gosh, he could never do that without hurting himself also!

Another time Nancy and Mickey were playing together in the kitchen when Mickey turned on the gas stove and put his stuffed pig on the burner. Nancy saw the pig on fire, grabbed the flaming pig off the stove, ran clear across the kitchen with it and running out on the back porch flung the pig over the railing into the back yard. I was standing in the back yard hanging wash and suddenly I see this flaming airborne pig coming my way!

## **1941**

Sandy, Bill and Doug almost didn't get their start in life due to a family picnic that came dangerously close to becoming a tragedy. Ed, Norman Evelyn and I went to Cranberry Lake for a picnic and some swimming. We all went into the water, and then Norman and Evelyn returned to shore and Ed and I stayed in the water. I was further out than Ed was and suddenly I stepped from shoulder deep to over my head without warning. I totally panicked as I am no swimmer and as I came up for air I hollered for help. Ed heard me and ran out to where I was. He tried to swim to shore with me but I, in total panic, fought him like crazy and almost drowned him too. Ed finally broke loose from my

panic by swimming downwards and out of my grip as I was holding on to him for dear life and keeping us both under water. As Ed swam under and away from me, I thought, "He's abandoning me and he's going to let me drown!" But what Ed was doing was coming up for air, then going back down again and then he gave me one real hard shove out of the deep hole I was in. When he got through shoving me, I was in only waist deep water, but I was so panic stricken that I was still drowning as I did not realize that all I had to do to save myself was to stand up. Evelyn saw all the shenanigans in the water and said to Norm, I think you'd better go out there, Norm, I think Marie's in trouble. Na, Norman said, they're just horsing around. I don't think so, Evelyn said, get out there and help. So Norman started out to where Ed and I were. Ed was so exhausted that he was having a hard time fighting his way out of the hole that was also over his head. Norman got to me and helped me on my feet and then Ed got a second wind and got himself out of the hole. I almost drowned still even though I was now in shallow water as I was still on my knees and didn't realize that all I had to do was to stand up and my head would then be above water. We all went to shore; Ed and me totally exhausted. I started to get cold, both from the water and from the fright of what I had just been through. We decided to dry my clothes so I would warm up. I put a blanket around me and we hung up my clothes to dry. Evelyn picked up my bra and started to dance around the campfire with it to tease me.



**Norman Bender**



**Evelyn Reid Bender**

Edward and I were invited to Norman and Evelyn's house for our 7th wedding anniversary. We left our place on Crane Ave. and started off for Norman's place located in the Gratiot and 6 Mile area, on Wisner Avenue. It was a very rainy night August 25, 1941. Ed turned onto Wisner Ave and as we were talking Ed looked away from driving to say something to me, when all of a sudden, there was a brilliant light and Ed swerved the car into the curb to avoid the bright light and hit a parked car! The impact threw me into the dashboard and imprinted a couple of my upper teeth into the metal strip! Ed took me to Saratoga Hospital at Gratiot and 6 Mile immediately. The doctor took a look at my mouth; said Ed should take me to a dentist and gave me 2 aspirins and charged me \$5.00. Oh, the pain the next morning! My face was swollen out

like a monkey! I was in horrible pain and very sick for about a week. Mama kept coaxing me to eat, but all I could manage was liquids.

The first time I got back into a car I was so nervous. I kept seeing the oncoming cars coming right for us, and every car seemed as though they were about to hit us head on!

Right after that Ed was coming home from work in his car and suddenly he saw a wheel rolling down the street in front of him and wondered to himself who the darn fool was who lost his wheel and didn't even know it. He soon found out who the guy was when he slowed down for a light and his car went clunking down on the axle!

We had quite a bit of trouble with the fellow whose parked car Ed hit. Ed told the guy to take his car to two bump shops that Ed knew was honest to get two estimates and that Ed would pay the guy the higher of the two estimates and then the guy could get his car fixed where ever he chose. The man never did what Ed asked and a hassle ensued. Ed told the man his store address and told him to come to the store and negotiate with him there. The man came to our house instead as he apparently lost the store address. He asked me for the information. I didn't know what Ed wanted me to tell him so I told the man to leave his name and number and Ed would contact him. Five-year-old Nancy was listening to the whole conversation and she suddenly pipes up with "I know where my daddy is! His store is at and she gave his current address and the phone number. The man gratefully wrote down all the proffered information. When that men left I told Nancy never to talk to strangers like that and gave her a good spanking I was so mad at what she had just done!



**Mickey & Nancy Bender**

Another time Ed, Nancy, and Mickey were playing ball in a park and I was sitting on a bench watching them. Ed's wallet was too heavy in his pocket, so he told Mickey, here Mickey, give this to Mom. Mickey ran over real fast, threw the wallet on the bench, saying, here Mom! I did not see the wallet or understand that he had given something to me, it happened so fast. The wallet had immediately fallen through the crack of the bench and had fallen to the

ground. After the ball game we all went home, oblivious to the fact that the wallet remained on the ground underneath the bench. Ed thought I had it. I knew nothing about him taking the wallet out of his pocket. When we got home we discovered the mix up; Ed went back to the park, but no wallet. We were just sick! The wallet had \$500 in it! A few days later I was cleaning my house when a young man came to the door. Does Edward Bender live here, he asked? You found the wallet! I cried out. He had indeed found the wallet, and all the money was intact in the wallet. The young man said he told his father he found a wallet with \$500 in it and asked him what to do with it. His father's reply was, Son, if it was your wallet with \$500 in it, what would you hope the finder would do with it? Ed gave the man a \$50 reward for his trouble. The nice man did not want to take the reward at first.

We did have some good times with Norman and Evelyn. Ed worked afternoons and on the weekends we would get together about 10 to 11 p.m. She would bring her boarder along and a couple of her neighbors. Well, the men would be feeling pretty good after 3 or 4 beers. And this one night about 2:30 am this boarder started to relive his Army days and he would run down the stairs and start to yell "I'm shell shocked, I'm shell shocked!" over and over again. I would tell Evelyn to get him home before the landlord gives me trouble.

Another time Ma Dahl, Evelyn and Norman were visiting Ed and I, it was quite late again and we were playing a game at the kitchen table. Norman was feeling real good about now and he loved to tease Ma Dahl (which is what he always called her). Well, for the fun of it, he went into the next room and came out with a red pole and started to yell, "Watch out Ma Dahl!", as he came toward her. She threw back her hands and yelled and she hit the window pane and suddenly we heard a "Crash!" then "Tinkle, tinkle!" I said, "I can't let that glass lay down on the walk, the lady next door, Mrs. Boethe, will tell the landlady."

So I got the broom and the dustpan and went down stairs to sweep up and I looked NO GLASS! I went back upstairs, and they were laughing so hard at me! Here I forgot about the screen in which held the glass in the windowsill! Well, I thought it was time for me to go to bed, after making a fool of myself!



**Evelyn Bender**



Evelyn was a troublemaker in the family. She used to make up stories just to get a family member all stirred up. There was always just enough truth blended in to her stories and accusations that the listener wasn't sure whether to believe her or not, and how much of what she said should they believe. She used to tell me that Ed had his eye on this girl or that one but knew my Ed was a good man. I didn't worry too much, but it would always leave me feeling shaken and doubtful, as one can never be absolutely sure of anything. I sure would have hated myself if something was going on and I didn't break it up while I still had the chance. Nothing was ever going on, but due to Evelyn; I had a few bad moments.



**Nancy Bender Stephens**

Evelyn used to try to cause trouble for my kids, too. One day I was washing out the cupboards in the kitchen when she came over and proceeded to attempt to blacken my daughter Nancy's good name. I happened to have had very good tabs on what Nancy was doing, where she was going and with whom at that particular time. I was absolutely certain that this time around Evelyn was telling a wholesale pack of bold face lies, and I told her so in no uncertain terms. I was so mad and worked up that after I called her a liar I ordered her out of my house! She went and had more respect for me after that.



**Marie, Arthur & Agnes Bender**

Evelyn used to pull the same thing with Agnes Bender and her children too, but Agnes was very afraid of Evelyn as she was strong as a bull and Agnes was



afraid that if she mouthed off to Evelyn, Evelyn might flatten her! When Agnes saw Evelyn coming up her front walk at 4554 Neff, she would go into an emotional tizzy, exclaiming that she didn't want to let her in and was afraid to not open the door for her!

Evelyn used to go to Ed's store on Mack and Holcomb and hang around and talk to Ed and Norman before going on her way. One day Norman was fixing a washing machine, complaining about the physical exertion involved in turning the washing machine upside down and removing and replacing the worn parts. Evelyn put Norman down as being a weakling, saying she could repair that washer all by herself. Ed and Norman laughed at her, telling her they would like to see her try it. Evelyn rolled up her sleeves, got a good grip on that old washer and very efficiently and gently turned it upside down. She then found the right size wrenches, took it apart, replaced the worn parts, put it back together again, turned it over, plugged it in, filled it with water, turned it on and it worked just fine. Ed and Norman stood there with their mouths hanging open. I am sure my Ed made himself a mental note never to get into a wrestling match with that tough cookie.



**Richard, Gary, Delores & Virginia Bender**

Norman and Evelyn used to like to drink on weekends, and sometimes this got out of hand, and a fight would ensue. One time Norman and Evelyn got into it so heatedly in the upstairs on Farmbrook that their daughter Virginia had to jump out an upstairs window and go get the police to come break it up. Virginia was so frightened of her mother that she begged the police to take her away with them, otherwise her mother would beat her good for calling the police. Instead the police talked to Evelyn, then told Virginia to go back into the house, that they had talked to Evelyn and that everything was now okay. Virginia knew better. When she got back into the house Evelyn beat her severely. And believe me, Norman definitely got the worst of it that time. Evelyn liked Ed and used to make overtures his way, but my Ed had better taste than that, so I never was worried in that regard.



**Mary & Donald Gamache**

Don Gamache's first wife, Marilyn, used to like Ed a lot too, but that was cute. She loved to dance with Ed and we all giggled watching as Marilyn used to wiggle her derriere all over the floor much more than she moved her feet. She was a very pleasant, sociable girl. We were really sorry when she and Don got a divorce. She continued to come to family gatherings, however, so we continued to see her over the years.

On December 7, 1941, Ed and I finished Sunday dinner and were enjoying a quiet, leisurely day with Nancy and Mickey playing together and I was crocheting a dresser set while waiting for Ed to finish repairing a radio that had to be returned to the owner the next day. His workshop was in the front of the house, next to the living room, on Crane Avenue. All of a sudden, he came out of the room very excited, telling me that he had just heard on the radio that Pearl Harbor was bombed! We knew that meant war, and that Ed may have to go off to war.

Ed was exempted because of age, he was 33 years old, but Norman, who was 5 years younger, 28 at the time and had 4 children, was almost drafted! Ed wrote a letter to the draft board, telling of the hardship his wife and 4 children would go through, and that his brother's emotional stability was not too good. The letter did the trick and Norman was exempted. Norman was very grateful to Ed for keeping him out of the service.

## **1942**

Ed was laid off from Hudson Motor Car Company where he had been earning \$35 per week and was hired in at Bohn Aluminum and Brass Company, but he didn't stay long because the wages were only \$17 per week. Looking back on those depression days, I wondered how we survived, having to pay rent of \$35 per month, plus electric, gas, water, food, etc. Food in those days cost us \$7 per week for our family of 4, including Mickey's baby food. I guess Ed repairing radios and selling them helped us from going hungry.



**Nancy, 2<sup>nd</sup> from rt., Mickey, 3<sup>rd</sup> from right, Marianne, the tallest**

His next job was at Good Housekeeping shop in the parts department. He also did some deliveries and got into trouble with the company because the rear doors of the delivery van came open on a delivery to Ann Arbor and the merchandise was lost along the way. Ed never could figure out how that happened, as he never heard anything shift or drop. Good housekeeping shop was also low wages because of the depression.

Ed wasn't happy working in the factory or for other people as he was very independent and hated to take orders from some characters that didn't know as much as he did so he decided to open up a washer and radio business on his own. He had from 1935 to present been repairing washers and radios in our home and selling them through ads in the Detroit News. Now he decided to set up shop. He scouted around the eastside of Detroit and found a small store at Harper and Cadillac. We lived at 3898 Crane at the time, so the store was not too far from home. For the first 2 months we were very disappointed at the lack of business, so slow, it was a good thing that Ed still worked at Dodge's on the afternoon shift, and had my brother Shorty helping out after Ed went to Dodge's. Ed later moved to Gratiot Avenue near the Sears store. That store was also slow, as Sears was such a big competition for Ed.



**Patty Dahl**

In March of 1942 my youngest brother Shorty and his wife Dorothy Jean had their first child, Patricia Dahl. She was a really cute little baby and as she grew I always thought she resembled by brother Shorty and also my mother Nellie when Nellie was a young girl.

My landlady, Mrs. Pritchard, decided to make some changes for more money. She wanted to make my home divided up and Ed and I said, no way! She was going to make 2 apartments into four. So we looked for another house and found one at 2998 Sheridan Avenue, a downstairs apartment. It was the same house that Elenore's boyfriend's parents lived in, Harvey and Esther Hintz.

We moved in April and after we were settled Ed became friendly with the tenants upstairs, they were young and had a cute red headed boy. His father Paul was very hyper, he liked to play tennis with Ed, but Ed was too good of a player for him. Paul would throw his racket and accuse Ed of cheating.

One time Paul asked me if I would take care of their little boy overnight for \$10. I said "yes". Well, the boy developed a fever and I could not wait until they came home the next day! When old Paul arrived home, he came into the bedroom where I had put his child, the father looked at the boy and said to me, "Your Mickey (4 years old) must have hit him with something." I said absolutely, no way! Mickey was a good child, not at all mean; in fact he liked the little guy. You know, that couple never paid me, and I never asked for the money, I figured if he was that cheap, okay.

That house was not comfortable, it was July and we still had to keep a fire going to keep the chill out. By November, I closed up the large living room doors to the front room and made the dining room our living quarters. It was still so cold! The children were getting bad colds, I thought for sure they would get pneumonia!



**Mike, 2<sup>nd</sup> from left, Nancy, 4<sup>th</sup> from left. Communion Day**

My neighbor down the street had a little boy that Mickey palled around with. I asked her if she knew of any house for rent and she said her sister on Harding Ave near Harper had an upstairs flat for rent. Her sister, Mrs. Fletcher agreed to rent to us. We moved in the Saturday after Thanksgiving. It sure was a nice, comfortable house. It was wartime; the Second World War was raging in Europe and Mrs. Fletcher's daughter left our flat to join her husband in Germany.

## 1943

In the summer of 1943 there was a race riot in downtown Detroit. Mrs. Fletcher was very nervous about her younger daughter who had gone shopping downtown that morning and was not back until evening. It turned out that she had missed all the trouble because she went to her girlfriend's home.



**Doris, Mickey, Nancy & Marianne**

Nancy started school in the second grade at St. Margaret's Church school. She made her 1<sup>st</sup> Communion in this Church in May of 1943.



**Nancy Bender Stephens**

In July of 1943 Ed and I decided we wanted to buy a home of our own. Ed spent a couple of months in the late spring and found 2 homes that we had decided we liked - one on Manning Ave in the Gratiot and 7 Mile Road area and one at 4651 Alter Road. We decided to move on Alter Road. The purchase price of the home was \$4,500 with \$1500 down. We moved into Alter Road between Forest and Canfield. In July 1943 I was so happy to finally move into my very own home! The week before I was to move in I decided to go over and clean up the house and cupboards for moving day. Well, I was cleaning the kitchen cupboard when I saw a bug. I killed it and kept on cleaning. Then I

saw another bug and killed that too and kept on cleaning. Then I saw and killed another, then another! First one ran from right to left, then left to right, then top to bottom, etc! I was horrified! Cockroaches I guessed, for I had never seen one in my life! I squirted bug spray around and when I moved in I still saw them so I would not unpack a single thing, just left everything in the dining room. Ed talked to his sister Mildred Neff and Harold and asked if we could stay the weekend with them until the exterminator could take care of our home. After the exterminator's visit I was calmed down again. No more cockroaches or bedbugs, which I was sure those former owners had. What filthy pigs they were! They nailed the back door shut and used to take the ashes from their furnace through the whole house and out the living room!



**Mildred, Doris & Sonny Stocker**

One day my brother in law George Stocker came over to visit my new home. I started to show him the house, going through all the rooms with him and when we got to the basement, I said "Look at that large table that those people left us"! And then I started to scream! Here was a big dead rat caught in a rattrap that Ed had set! Ed had sprinkled powder on the table when he saw evidence of a rodent and when he found paw prints in the powder the next day, he had set that trap. Sonny said to me, "Do you want me to take care of it?" I said yes real fast. After he came back into the house, I asked him what he did with the dead rat and he replied, "I put it in your neighbor's garbage can". I said, "Oh Sonny!" He said to me, "You didn't want me to put in yours, did you?" I admitted that I didn't, but what would the neighbor think if she knew we put it in there?

After that, everything settled down and Ed took off the wallpaper and painted the rooms a bright, cheerful color. One day I decided to take a break from redoing the new house and hop on the bus and visit my sister Elenore on Coyle on the westside of Detroit. That was some trip, involving several transfers. After a long travel I arrived at Elenore's and would you believe, she was not at home! I was so disappointed, but I decided to just sit and wait for awhile as it was a nice warm day, it had been such a long trip, and she was bound to come home soon.





**Elenore & Herman Mc Kinin**

I had then sat down on Elenore's rounded brick steps and enjoyed the day. I did not have Sandy yet and Mike and Nancy were in school for the entire day. After sitting there for quite awhile, I decided that maybe she was not coming home soon after all and maybe I had better start the long trip back. I got up from the stairs and as I started walking down them, my heel caught on the rounded edge and I fell off Elenore's steps. At that point I sat back down to catch my wind and wait for my bruised muscles to stop hurting. After awhile I got up again, started down the stairs, and would you believe, my heel fell off the rounded edge and once more I tripped! I sat down once again, and shortly thereafter I was so happy to see Elenore coming down her street. I greeted her profusely, then told her that I had just fallen twice off her front steps. Her reply was, "Oh, Marie, what will the neighbors think?" On the way home Herman would drive me to a main bus route as the Plymouth line by Elenore's house was undependable and did not always run in the afternoon.

Frank Dahl, brother of my dad, William Dahl Sr. was married to Celia Chapp Dahl since about 1910. They never had any children even though they had wanted them. Celia and Frank went visiting relatives often and were popular with the Dahls of Canada. Frank acted as though he was sick most of their adult life together, while Celia administered to him and seldom had any health complaints that she would verbalize. But the Dahls of Windsor noticed that when Celia would take the bus to their street and then walk the few blocks from the main street to their house, she was winded and had to lie down for awhile. They soon found out the reason for this shortness of breath. In 1943 poor Celia suddenly died of heart failure. Her husband Frank, who was always ailing, lived on into his 80s, dying in 1959.



# 1944



**Alter Rd**

In March, I knew I was pregnant again. The saying is you buy a new home there is either a death or a birth. We had both; my Grandma Henkel died on my tenth anniversary, August 25, 1944.

Grandma Minna Kaiser Dahl Henkel had been ailing for at least a year with heart failure. She was living with and being taken care of by her youngest daughter Anna Dahl Galvin, who was very poor and had many children to feed and care for. Grandma Henkel had a hospital type bed in Ann's living room. Anna did everything for her mother as Minna was too weak from heart failure to be able to do anything for herself. Anna was very tired caring for her children and mother. A very aggravating story told and retold by the family is when Aunt Clara, her other daughter came to visit her at Annie's house. Clara was dressed up in very fine clothes and looked like she just stepped out of a fashion magazine. Annie was in her scrub clothes, waiting hand and foot on Minna. Clara sat down on a chair next to Grandma Henkel's bed and the two of them proceeded to run down poor Annie who was doing all the work! Minna died in Anna's house at 9144 Cadillac in Warren. The funeral was also held in this house. Elenore always wondered if her dad Bill Dahl Sr. was at his mother's funeral or not. Minna had a military style funeral with a caisson pulled by horses bearing her coffin from Cadillac to Mt. Olivet cemetery and had a gun salute at graveside as she was a Gold Star mother, having lost 2 sons. Tony and Fritz in World War I. She lies buried there with her beloved Fred who did at age 49 in 1900.



**The Dahl family plot in Mt. Olivet bought by Minna Henkel for family.**

Ed's dad Henry (Hank) Bender died on November 9, 1944 and my second daughter was on the way that year.



**last px of Minna Henkel with  
Robert Galvin**



**last px of Hank Bender  
with his Lizzie – 8/2/44**

My father in law Hank was also suffering from heart failure, in his case it was congestive heart failure in which he was slowly drowning in his own fluids. Hank was very tired for a number of years before his demise. When he was getting ready to go to work on his DPW job he would slowly put on his shoes, saying, "I'm bushed!" But he would go to work rain or shine, sweeping the streets on Gratiot Avenue for the city. Hank liked that job as he was a very sociable guy and loved talking to passersby. That job abruptly ended when a car ran him over and he was too injured to work. In those days there was no workmen's compensation so if you were hurt they fired you. After his injuries Hank rapidly got worse. Ed took his dad to Dr. Gerlach shortly before he died as Hank couldn't breathe. The doctor took one look at Hank and said to my Ed, "Get that man out of here before he dies in my office!" Real compassionate doctor, huh?



**Elsie & Harold (Elmer) Bender**

Shortly before Hank died we had a very surprising wedding in the family. Ed's brother Al (Elmer) suddenly announced he was getting married to an older widow, Elsie Dalton. Grandma Bender was quite upset as Al always lived with her and Henry and she wasn't so sure how this marriage would work out. It worked out wonderfully for both Al and Elsie. Some of Elsie's friends and

relatives asked her why she wanted to marry Al. She replied, "Do you know how lonesome it is to be all alone and disabled?" Elsie was confined to a wheelchair and Al took very good care of her. Elsie was like a mother to Al and reined him in and made him tow the mark. They had 11 happy years together until Elsie had a sudden heart attack and died in the spring of 1955, shortly after my mother Nellie died. Al came to visit me on Alter once in 1954 with Elsie in a wheelchair and then a number of times after wards when Elsie passed away. Mildred Neff and Ed and I took good care of Al and later Norman from that time until Al had to go into a nursing home in the early 1970s.

My son Mickey vaguely remembers visiting his Grandpa Bender shortly before he died. But all the 6 year old boy remembers is seeing his Grandpa at the top of the stairs looking down at him.

My fondest memories of my father in law was watching him rock in his wooden rocker, chewing tobacco and spitting in a spittoon at his side. Hank was a very quiet, very pleasant fellow. I always felt I could have had Hank in my house, but not my mother in law Elizabeth as she was quite severe and depressed.

I also remember my father in law for his cute jokes. "Why did the chicken cross the road?" To get to the other side." "The farmer rode to town and yet he walked. How could this be?" Answer: Yet was his dog.

I also remember with what enthusiasm Hank would listen to the baseball games on the radio. And how he could mispronounce so many words so cutely. Like Mickey Cockel (Cochren) Wan Dick (Van Dyke) Ebeling (Evelyn) Mee Ree (Marie, me).

Shortly after that Ed got a call from his mother saying the end was very near, he probably would die that day. So Ed rushed over to his parents' house on a Sunday afternoon. When he got there he asked where his dad was and they replied he was in an upper bedroom, so Ed rushed up the stairs. He found his dad Hank standing in the hallway with his hands raised over his head, leaning against a wall. Hank looked at Ed from under his arm. Ed asked why he was standing like that. Hank said he had to stand that way so he could breathe. Hank then looked at Ed with a little smile on his lips and said, "Son, all I have to leave you is my good will".

Mildred and Harold Neff came over to visit and I told them we were expecting again. Mildred piped up that she was never going to take me to Gratiot and 7 Mile shopping again as we were just there a few weeks before I got pregnant and almost every woman we saw had a big tummy. Mildred told me to watch out, that such things were contagious. Mildred could now say, see I told you so!



**Mildred Neff**

When Ed and I found out I was pregnant again, we decided that we had better expand our living quarters, make bedrooms up in the existing attic space on the second floor where Michael liked to sleep. Uncle Harold Neff was willing to help Ed with the building of 3 bedrooms and space for a future bath. It was during World War II and materials were hard to obtain. We had to use plywood for flooring because oak or pine flooring and plumbing was impossible to buy. We laid down 4 by 8-foot sheets of plywood, stained these sheets and polished and waxed them. What a chore these floors were to keep clean. The plywood would splinter and your rag would stick to the splinters when you tried to wipe the floor clean.

Food was rationed in those days too, due to the war, mainly meat, butter and milk. I used to go to the same stores week after week, and now that I was pregnant I had cravings for milk that my ration card didn't fully cover. So I used to play on the milkman's sympathies about being pregnant and thus at times got extras without having to have the stamps to cover the purchase. I also played on the meat man's sympathies at times. About this time in my life I went into the fish store on Mack Avenue, as Ed preferred their fish as it was very fresh and the price was right. One day I was standing in line and when this one woman, whom I had never seen before or since, came into the store, I had an immediate, overpowering hatred for her! I hated her so powerfully that my hatred was almost making me physically ill! And to this day I ask myself why this happened? I never met her in my life, its not that she reminded me of some one else as I have never hated anyone, and most certainly not to that extent. That is the one and only time that that had ever happened to me. A very queer experience! Mildred and I would go to 7 Mile and Gratiot by bus every Saturday night and have a good time shopping at Federals, Montgomery Wards and the Dime Store.



**Shorty Tommy Patty Jean**

I was 9 months pregnant with Sandy and due to deliver any day as my due date was December 2<sup>nd</sup> when I got a call from my brother Shorty saying that Jean just delivered a son whom they named Thomas Joseph Dahl. He was born on November 29, 1944, just 6 days before my Sandy was born. Little Tommy was a real live wire at home, but good as gold when we went on a picnic together. My Sandy was just the opposite – good at home and a terror on a picnic. Little Tommy's claim to fame as a young boy was when he threw the cat out the upstairs window!

Nancy was 9 years old when I told her that she was going to get a new baby brother or sister. At that time, in the spring of 1944, Nancy was going to St. John Berchman's school, on Warren Avenue and Lakeview in Detroit. She was in the 4th grade that year. Nancy invited me to the mother - daughter breakfast in the cafeteria after Sunday Mass. The group of mothers and daughters were all assembled in the hall waiting to go into the cafeteria to eat breakfast, when Nancy looked at a lady she knew and said loudly, "My mother is going to have a new baby!" I blushed and thought, "Oh gosh, such an announcement and I don't even show yet!"



**Nancy Bender**

However, there was something else going on in those days that immediately announced to the whole neighborhood that you were pregnant -- Park Davis paid \$5.00 per jug for your urine if you were pregnant as they needed it for research. Well, that was too much free pocket money for any housewife in our neighborhood to pass up, me included. So as soon as Sandy was on the way,



so was the Park Davis truck, making regular stops picking up the full jug and dropping off an empty one. I would look out the window, and see where the Park Davis truck stopped beside my house and knew who else had a new addition on the way!

One summer afternoon I was sitting on my front porch sewing flannel diapers for the expected new baby and Mildred Neff sewed flannel gowns, and blankets and made little sweaters and booties for the new baby.



**Bill & Dorothy**



**Dolato Dahl**



**Sharon Dahl Smith**

In 1944 my brother Bill fell in love with Dorothy Dolato, courted, and on the 24 of August 1944, they were married in Our Lady Queen of Angels Catholic Church. It was around this time that I revealed to them that Ed and I had another child on the way. I touched my brother's arm and said, maybe next year it'll be you and Dorothy and sure enough, that's the way it happened, also in December, on the 13, 1945 little Sharon was born.



**Art Bender**

When Ed and I were married for 10 years he gave me a diamond ring and wedding band to replace the ring I lost the night before our wedding. I was so happy to get that beautiful set from my Ed, once more showing his love for me. We were at a family gathering when someone noticed my rings. Ed's brother Art looked at the rings and asked me, "How did you ever deserve those?" I just gave him a look and thought to myself, I'm sure glad I have my Ed!

On August 25, 1944, my tenth wedding anniversary, my grandma Henkel quietly passed away in her daughter Anna Galvin's house at 8144 Cadillac. She had been sick in bed with a bad heart for over 5 months. The family was

kind of excited to see if my Dad turned up for the funeral, for he loved his mother dearly, was very close to her and always did things for her and no one could imagine that he would ever desert his mother. He used to balance her checkbook for her and pay all her bills and keep all of her financial affairs in order for her. Our family went to grandma's funeral but no one saw hide or hair of dad. But we always wondered if he had been there. One thing that always puzzled my sister Elenore was that the first day of the death notice when it appeared in the paper, my Dad's name was not mentioned. But on the second day it appeared, my Dad's name was listed as her son.

We always thought maybe Aunt Clara was in touch with Dad as they had been close and Aunt Clara would certainly not have told us if she did find Dad as she was loyal to him and not to us.

We had a second death soon after. Ed's dad Hank developed congestive heart failure and passed away on November 9, 1944 at the age of 75 years.



**Elizabeth Ott Bender & Henry Charles Bender – Sept 1944**

Mildred loaned me her daughter Sally's christening dress so I was now ready for the birth of my baby. I went into labor in the early morning hours of Tuesday, December 5, 1944. It was nice weather for that time of year yet, and there was no snow on the ground yet. In later years Sandy was sad that her christening dress was borrowed, as now she didn't have it in her possession.



**Sandy Bender**

Ed drove me to Cottage Hospital in Grosse Pointe. It was a very hard delivery for me but it was even worse for Ed. It was the first time he had ever stayed

with me for the labor. Dr. Mackenzie insisted that the men remain with their wives during labor, as he was a firm believer in two children families and felt if the husband saw how hard labor was on the wife, he'd stop having so many kids. Ed stayed with me, and he was utterly exhausted in trying to help me with breathing and pushing. My doctor, Dr. Mackenzie offered Ed a shot when it was all over with, which Ed gladly accepted, which he thought meant a high ball, and was he ever disgusted when the doctor showed up with a needle.



**Edward & Marie Bender**

After Ed left the hospital, he was exhausted and needed badly to unwind. After he got home and told Ma the good news he went on foot to the drug store on Warren and Chalmers and bought a pint of bourbon that someone told him was real smooth. He paid for the pint, left the store, uncapped it and started drinking from the bottle. He was consoling himself for the hard day he had and for the fact that the child was not a boy. In the pouring rain he was drinking from the pint, deciding if it really was smooth or not. By the time he got to the bottom of the pint he still could not tell, so he went into Dave's drug store at Warren and Maryland and bought another pint of the same stuff. He then proceeded on foot home to a warm dry house and a decent dinner.



**Mickey, Sandy & Nancy Bender**

My mom took care of Nancy and Michael while I was in the hospital with Cynthia. Ed went home and told her they had a daughter that they named Cynthia. We still had no phone in those days so our relatives all dropped by for the good news. They all asked Ma what it was and what did they name it. Ma

replied, it's a girl and they named it some damn name I can't pronounce, but they're going to call her Sandy.



**Sandy Bender**

One day Harold Neff came over while I was still in the hospital and he caught the tail end of the day's excitement. Ma's bed had broken overnight and had to be fixed. Harold laughed till he couldn't breathe and asked Ma what her and Ed had been up to. Ma, straight as they come, turned beet red and really got upset and flustered. That only made Harold laugh all the harder! Ma didn't think that a bit funny!



**Edward Bender**



**Harold Neff**



**Nellie & Sandy**

I brought my beautiful, healthy girl home 10 days later and I was so shocked to see the house across the street all finished. It was just a shell when I left for the hospital! Mama went to live with Mildred and Sonny about 3 weeks after Cynthia was born. Cynthia was a very good baby. She was baptized at St. John Berchman's Church on January 14, 1945. Mildred Neff and Harold Dahl were her sponsors.



**Sandy Bender Wilhelm**

Mildred tells this story about the christening with a mirthful smirk on her face, "I was holding Cynthia, unbuttoning the top button of her dress for the priest to anoint her with holy oil and just as the priest got there and was about to start the ceremony, Cynthia let out a very big loud burp! Well, the priest said, let's hope she develops a better attitude about religion later! One day early in 1945, when Sandy was still only about 1 month old, I suddenly got sick out of the blue and passed out cold in the kitchen. Nancy went running for Ed as he was still in bed, in those days in the back bedroom downstairs. Ed came running out, picked me up off the floor and carried me back to bed and then ran over to Mrs. Meeseman's to use her phone to call the doctor. I quickly recovered, and looking back wonder if it was too low blood sugar, but that episode scared both Ed and me and we were worried about what would happen if that happened again, how would I get help if I was home alone with the new baby. Also what if the baby got sick or in a predicament? So Ed and I got our very first telephone.

Shortly before I got my own telephone, one night I was sitting in the chair in my living room that faced west toward the dining room and kitchen, and I was feeding baby Sandy her bottle before putting her to bed for the evening. Just as she finished up her bottle and had drifted off to sleep something beside the baby suddenly caught my eye. There in the kitchen was 3 mice playing tag on the linoleum! They were having a great old time, running back and forth, dodging each other! Elephants I could handle, mice, never! I was so scared that those awful mice were going to come after me in the living room. The more I thought of those mice, the more graphic my imagination would become as to what those mice could do if they attacked me! It was too much for me to handle! In this one respect I take after my scaredy-cat mother. I put Sandy to bed real quick, tucked her in, and took off to Mrs. Meeseman's house and there I stayed until Ed's car pulled up. (Sandy's reaction to this story when she heard it was, "You were scared to death of the darn mice and what they could do, and you left me alone with them!") I told Sandy that the rational part of me knew darn good and well that those mice were more afraid of me than I were of them and that they would never come near either one of us, but the emotional side of me ran for dear life! Ed came home shortly, smiled a little over the story, then set 3 or 4 mousetraps. I checked the mousetraps and sure enough,

by afternoon, they were full. Once again my full stereo graphic imagination told me that if I took those mice out the traps they might come alive again and come get me for what I did to them! So once again, it was Mrs. Meeseman to the rescue! Do you want me to empty those traps for you, Marie, she asked? Oh, would you, I replied. Mrs. Meeseman very efficiently opened the traps and dropped the mice into the outside garbage can, and that was the end of that.

Not too long after I got my new telephone I was sitting in mass on Sunday at St. John Berchman's Church, when suddenly I remembered, I forgot to turn the hot water heater off! My kids were home and that darn hot water heater could build up enough pressure to rocket skyward through the floor. Suddenly I remembered, I got a phone now, I can just call home! I went into the hallway, found a phone in the church, picked up the receiver and I couldn't remember my own phone number! I had never called myself and so I soon forgot what the number was!

Sandy loved her playpen on the front porch. One day I answered the doorbell and a lady told me that Cynthia got beyond the baby gate and was jumping up and down near the front steps in her walker! I got her before she went down. Another time it was washday, a nice day in November, so I dressed her warm and put her in her playpen on the front porch. When I got done hanging my wash I went to check on her. I felt so guilty! Here she was fast asleep with her shoes and socks off, with her dear little feet half frozen from the cold!

She learned to walk at one year old. One day in the summer I had Cynthia in her walker on the drive way in the backyard. It was my wash day and I wanted to finish hanging clothes before I took her in to feed her. When I picked her up, she started to act like she was choking! I patted her on the back, but she kept having choking spells. I ran with her to my neighbor, Mrs. Spear, who had 3 children of her own, and asked her if she could help me.

After tipping her over the kitchen sink and slapping her on the back, she let up a lot of phlegm and I said, "Good, she seems okay now". I thanked Mrs. Spear and took Cynthia home. O Lord! she started choking again! I tipped her again upside down; when all of a sudden I see a very small piece of jagged plastic fall in the sink! I was so relieved, but the dear girl must have had a real sore throat. After a bottle of warm milk, she slept all afternoon.





**Sandy, Marie and Nancy Bender**

## **1945**

In February of 1945, I decided to decorate my house, all of the rooms, upstairs and downstairs. It took me two whole months of painting all the rooms and putting up new blinds, curtains, drapes, tile on the floors of 4651 Alter Rd.

It was April now, and I was just about finished with decorating. I was sitting on the couch in the dining room, because I had a few problems left in the living room that had to be finished. I was feeding little Cynthia her bottle in the morning when I heard a special news report on the radio. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had just died in Warm Springs, Georgia, the victim of a massive stroke! We were all worried about what would happen now as he had been president for almost 13 years, was just elected to his fourth term as president, the war was not yet over and we hated changing horses in mid-stream.

In May of 1945 my Michael made his first Holy Communion at St. John Berchman's Church on Lakeview and Warren in Detroit.



**Mickey Bender**

In May of 1945 my Nancy made her Confirmation at St. John Berchman's Church in Detroit, Michigan, Juliette Meeseman, our next door neighbor's daughter, was her sponsor.



**Nancy Bender Stephens**

In June of that year the Germans surrendered, and the war in Europe was now over! What wild celebrations there were downtown on Woodward Avenue! Confetti and ticker tape flew out of every multi-story office building! Back in our own neighborhood everybody bought a banana split whether they like one or not as we had been deprived of that treat throughout the duration of the war as bananas were an imported item and were not available in wartime.

In August an event occurred that scared us all, the first atomic bombs were dropped on Japan in the first week. (What was no doubt in all of our minds that week is wondering when someone is going to drop one of those on us?) Victory over Japan and the total end of the war happened in the same week. My neighbor on the other side of Alter near Forest had a baby that day, which she named Vee-Jay as a remembrance of that momentous day. I thought it was a screwy name to tag a kid for the rest of her life, but naming her that was Mr. Hornet's prerogative. Ten years later that girl appeared in the newspapers with an article showing her life 10 years after the end of the war.

In May of 1948 Marianne was celebrating her graduation from high school and her mom Elenore had a big party for her out on their beautiful grounds on Coyle. You will never see such a beautiful yard as Herman had. It was perfection in and of itself. He had every flower imaginable growing there in precise, well-ordered crowns and clumps. Everything fit together just so. He also owned the lot next door, which also was planted, in precise formal garden fashion. It was the closest thing to paradise.



**Nancy, Marianne & Sandy**



**Marianne**

Herman was also an expert at grilling outdoor hamburgers, another job he enjoyed. It was a lovely graduation party, one everyone enjoyed. Sandy was the star attraction that year as she was the new baby, being just 5 months old. Everyone took turns at holding her. And Dorothy and Bill had exciting news too that day, they were expecting their first child in December 1945.



**Herman & Elenore Mc Kinin**



**Bill & Dorothy Dahl**

We took several nice pictures that day which I treasure. When I look at those pictures I marvel at how little my Mickey was in those days. It seemed like he grew up overnight after Sandy was born. Our older children always look so much bigger and older next to the brand new baby.



**Michael Edward Bender**

Around that time Marianne had a boyfriend, Joe, whom Ma called "the Pill". Ma didn't like Joe at all, and neither did Elenore and Herman. They soon talked her out of seeing him and she soon met Frank De Maria, a very fine

man. A few years later, in February of 1954 they were married and moved to Mississippi where Frank was stationed in the service. We were amazed when we next saw Marianne, she had had a lot of Mississippi sun, which is much starker than Michigan sun, and was she ever a deep brown.



**Marianne Mc Kinin & Frank De Maria**

Once Nancy and Mike started a fire in the garage when they were about 7 and 10. They came running in to tell me as the fire was about waist high. Ed did not yet have his merchandise in the garage at this time. I ran outside and doused the flames quickly with water.



**Marie, Sandy, Bill, Nancy and Mickey**

## 1946

Ed and I bought Ed Snell's mother's table and buffet for our dining room. It was a beautiful, massive table and buffet. It was dark wood and had clawed feet on the table and chairs. The chairs were high backed with multiple curving slats. It was a very sturdy, durable set. The kids did many a homework assignment on this table and we had many a Sunday dinner and family gathering feast on this table. Sandy was very sad when sold this table in the 1950's to buy a new light blonde, limed oak table and china cabinet. Sandy wishes she still had the old set. I just got brand new beautiful curtains on Alter Rd. Nice lace curtains. Then one day Mickey brought home a stray dog and begged to keep it. I never had a dog before in my life, either at my parent's home or in my married life, but I reluctantly agreed. Mike brought the

dog in. Shortly afterwards we went out for the evening and as we pulled up in front of the house I was just sick. I looked at the front room windows and NO CURTAINS!

The dog had got frantic and had clawed up my brand new curtains to pieces! I marched into that house, and told that dog, OUT! The dog slinked out of the house. Mrs. McCubbin saw what had happened and called the dog pound who came and picked up the dog. Ed said no more new curtains. I knew I had to lay low for awhile till he cooled off. Three weeks later, new curtains. I always had a motto in my married life: if you really want it and your husband doesn't, think it over. If you still really want it, get it, because after all, it's just one big fight and then its over with and you got what you wanted. That worked for me because Ed was so kind and considerate and a real gentleman at all times regardless of how much he was provoked. I realize that if another woman with a different kind of husband tried that she might get knocked across the room!

Not too long after that I decided to spruce up the living room on Alter Rd. I ordered a new rug, mostly a light gray background with big flowers on it. I also ordered custom made slip covers from Wards, pink background with the same big flowers on it. It was so lovely! I was really pleased with it. Three weeks after I got it Nancy sat on the couch to do homework and spilled indelible ink all over my new custom-made slipcover! I could have killed her.



**Nancy Bender Stephens**

One day I was cleaning up in the back bedroom downstairs, when I saw an ugly wire sticking out of the wall about 7 feet off the ground. I got out the wooden ladder and my bone handled knife. I climbed up the ladder and proceeded to saw through the wire with my knife. Molten lead sparks suddenly started flying, and the bone-handled knife flew out of my hand and clear across the room! Good thing little Mickey wasn't playing in the room! Thus ended my brief electrician career.



# 1947



**Nancy, Marianne  
& Sandy**



**Nellie, Marie, Mike,  
Marianne & Nancy**



**Lila & Marianne**



**Marianne**

My sister Elenore's daughter Marianne Mc Kinin De Maria graduated from High School in the summer of 1947. Elenore and Herman had a nice party for her on their grounds. They had so many beautiful flowers that their yard and lot was like a botanical garden. Herman was a wonderful cook on the outdoor barbeque and he used to make the best charbroiled hamburgers I have ever tasted. We were kind of afraid to step on his lawn, though, it was so perfect that we thought it looked like he cut it with scissors instead of a lawnmower. I'm sure Herman was heart sick when due to his heart problems he was forced to give up his gardens.



**Bill Bender & Nellie Dahl**



**Sandy & Marie, 1947**

In April of 1947 I was pregnant again, this time I had a very easy pregnancy. While I was carrying this baby we called him "Oscar". Harold Neff had just about finished up the upstairs bedrooms by this time. It was really nice up there. Ed and I decided to move out of the back bedroom downstairs and into the bright, sunny, pleasant front dormer bedroom on the second floor. It had a beautiful, big walk in closet that was more than adequate for all of our clothes. I had the 50th wedding anniversary picture of Ed's parents framed in an 8 X 10 double frame and put it on our dresser. The other side of the picture frame had a nice illustration of a real cozy home with the "Bless this house, O Lord, we pray" superimposed over the picture. That picture remained on the dresser for many years until one day Ed asked me to remove it and put it away as he



missed his deceased parents very much and that picture as a constant reminder bothered him too much.



**Ronald "Pinky" Bender**

In 1947 the last of Norman's children was born, Ronald Bender, nicknamed Pinky. The family called him Pinky because he had such a pink cast to his complexion as an infant. The name stuck through the years. Pinky was not Norman's blood child, he was the son of Toots Manzel who married Evelyn when Pinky was a young man. Virginia said that Norman discovered in a locked box in Evelyn's room child support payment check stubs from Toots to Evelyn. Norman was greatly disturbed by this information but after thinking it over for a while he said to Virginia "Pinky was born under my roof so I guess that makes him my child".

**1948**



**Edward Paul & Bill Bender**

On January 1st we had a nice New Year's dinner and I just cleared everything away, washed the dishes and went upstairs about 7:00 p.m. to get something when I felt labor pains, believe me, this time there was no fooling around, they were getting real hard and close together.



**Mildred Bender Neff & her mother in law, Mrs. Neff**

Ed went after Mama to watch the children, but mom didn't feel up to it, so Ed asked his sister Mildred if her mother-in-law, Mrs. Neff would be kind enough to help out for ten days.



**Marie Dahl Bender & William Henry Bender**

Ed took me to Cottage hospital in Grosse Pointe. This time Ed knew better what lay ahead, he didn't bother staying around to help out or get a "shot" later either. My little son William Henry was born at 1:15 am on Friday, January 2, 1948. He weighed only 5 lb., 8 oz. the smallest of my children by far. The little guy had come 2 weeks early. He was baptized at St. John Berchman's Church. Ed's brother Art and his wife Agnes were the sponsors.



**William (Bill) & Marie Bender**

Big Bill, our pet name for the little guy, was a very good baby, but he had a number of problems right from birth. He couldn't hold his own head up, so we

had to put a support under his head when we put him on his belly on a blanket so he could see. I used to worry about the shape of Bill's head as it wasn't symmetrical when he was first born, but one day I was looking at Ed and when I realized that his head wasn't symmetrical either, I felt better. Bill also had one ear larger than the other. He was later in his developmental steps too, sitting up later and he never learned to crawl. He would roll wherever he wanted to go. Bill also had bad allergies from different foods he ate. Beets and spinach were the worst offenders. The poor little boy would break out into a rash, especially on his face, and I would have to put stockings on his hands to keep him from scratching that rash.



**Bill Bender**

Ed opened up his own business on Harper Avenue for awhile, but the business was much too slow, so he moved to 9110 Mack Avenue at Holcomb. The business was better there, but Ed needed more room so he later moved to 9100 Mack on the corner of Holcomb. Ed did a very good business there with washers, radios, and records and a little jewelry. At first Ed had younger girls at the record and jewelry counter, but all they did was lean over the counter and flirt with the boys who came in and steal him blind. Ed had had enough of that and hired his sister Betty to take over that counter. Betty was a faithful employee, a hard worker and honest to the penny. But Betty had one major fault, she loved little Cynthia. When Ed would take Cynthia to the store Aunt Betty would try on different little trinkets on Cynthia and tell her how cute she was and that Daddy wouldn't mind if she took it home with her. And there would go Ed's jewelry counter profits for the week!



**Betty Gamache**

Betty also used to come to our house on occasion and take Cynthia with her to the store. She and Cynthia would walk from Alter Road and Forest to Alter and Mack Avenue. I wondered to myself if she was going to have trouble getting a 3-year old to walk that far. But they managed okay. Then Betty would put Cynthia on the old fashioned electric streetcar. You would board that streetcar from a wide double door in the middle. The streetcar would take them from Alter to Holcomb. These quaint streetcars were later sold to Mexico City.



**Sandy & Bill**



**Mickey & Sandy**



**Nancy & Sandy**



**Sandy**

Ed took up photography for a hobby in about 1947. He snapped so many darling pictures of Billie and Cynthia. He developed these black and white pictures in his darkroom, which later became our upstairs bathroom. It was such a thrill to see the picture come to life right before your eyes. He would wash the pictures in our bathtub and then it was my job to put the pictures on a frame until they were dry. Ed used to then hang them on a line to dry completely. I felt sad that I didn't have many pictures of Nancy and Mike when they were toddlers.



**Bill, new born**



**Marie & Bill**



**Billy**



In those days, after my brother Bill got married, my mom lived for three months with Elenore, Mildred, Bill and I. Mom's clothes would be transported and stored in a "wardrobe", which was a portable closet. She used to get so worried that something might happen to her wardrobe and/or her clothes in transit! The move made her a nervous wreck! The men would put the wardrobe on the top of their car and tie it down good and then drive sensibly. Mom was so glad to see the wardrobe safely set in her bedroom in each house. Mom would spend at least an hour every day arranging and patting flat all her clothes in the wardrobe.



**Nellie Dahl & Billy Bender**

She would make her own bed every day and was very fussy about its appearance. If one of my kids sat on the bed, she would get very upset and remake the whole bed to get the indentation out of it. Mom also did the breakfast dishes every morning and she would help with the dusting. She couldn't do any more housework and she had the "shakes" real bad, was bent forward and walked with fast pigeon steps. She was somewhat bowlegged as a result of this neurological disorder. She had a hard time feeding herself and her hands, arms, mouth and head would shake, all in different directions. I used to sit and watch her and feel so sorry for her. Her head would involuntarily jerk sideways while she was at rest. And trying to read the newspaper was a sight to behold. The paper would shake if she touched it. Mom would read the newspaper by setting it in her lap and bending over to read it. But her legs were shaking, too, so the newspaper would bounce. And to make matters worse, my mother needed eyeglasses for reading, which she never got, as she did not want to be bothered by them. I used to offer to read

the paper to her, but she would always say, "No, you don't need to Marie, I'm almost finished now".



**Nellie Dahl**

And she'd keep on reading till she sampled all her favorite articles. She always had cereal and an orange for breakfast. She used to have some quaint sayings that I enjoyed hearing. She used to call the water tap on the sink in the kitchen the "pinstock" and she used to say, lets go into the parlor and sit on the davenport.

There was one thing that she could not stand. It was "schniddles". For those of you who lived after my mother's time "schniddles" means little pieces of fuzzie, paper, etc on the living room carpet. The kids always had to pick up the schniddles for Ma because she couldn't get down there. Nancy used to get so exasperated over having to pick up schniddles. One day when she just had enough she said to Ma in her sassiest voice, "Oh, Grandma, you and your schniddles!"



**Nancy**



**Billy & Nellie**

Ma loved to watch the Jackie Gleason show. Her all time favorite was the one in which Ed Norton came out of the sewer and asked Jackie Gleason, who was driving by on his bus, to loan him a quick \$5 dollar bill. Jackie asked what in the world he would need a \$5 bill in the sewer? Ed replied that they had a hot floating crap game going on. Grandma laughed so hard she couldn't get her breath and almost fell off her chair.





**Nellie Dahl & Marie Bender**



**Norman Bender**

Ma and Norman used to cut records together. Norman and Ma had many a laugh together and it can be clearly heard on the records. Norman teased Ma to no end, and Ma sang some of her favorite songs on the records with Norman. These were some of the happiest times of our lives. The saddest song Ma recorded is the one "There's a Fine Ship Sails on the Ocean". It ends with the words; "I wish I knew of an Eagle, I'd borrow its wings for to fly, and I'd fly to the arms of My Willie, and right there I'd lay me down and die". Ma hoped her whole life that her husband would come back.

When Grandma Henkel was dying in August 1944, she asked Ma to come and visit her. Mom said to Mildred, why should I make that long trip by bus in my physical condition? Mildred replied, "you should go mom. Maybe she'll tell where Pa is?"

When Ma heard that, she got right up and went over to Grandma Henkel's deathbed at 8144 Cadillac in Warren. Grandma didn't tell her where Dad was, she merely pressed a \$50 bill into her hand and told her it was her share of the inheritance.



**Minna Dahl Henkel & Bobby Galvin**



**Nellie Rehfeldt Dahl**

Grandma knew that the money Grandma got was from the U.S Government in 1918 when Tony and Fritz were killed, Tony in action in France, Fritz on a side of a boxcar he had hitched in upstate New York. It was much more than \$50 each that the five kids got and she was kind of insulted by it. But she didn't make any waves being grandma was on her deathbed.



**Sandy Bender  
Marie & Elenore**



**Mickey, Nellie, Patty, Nancy, Sandy,**

Easter Sundays in the 1940s were much more of a dress up occasion than they are today. Ever since Marie was a small child Easters were the occasion to buy a spiffy new Sunday outfit. First the Dahls of Detroit and Woodslee Canada went shopping in downtown Detroit for new Easter clothes and then once Marie married and had children of her own she carried on this time worn tradition. Here are pictures of Sandy in her new spring coat and hat and a nice big Easter basket full of goodies. Here also is a picture of the family in front of Elenore's house on Coyle on Easter Sunday, 1947.



**Patty**



**Tommy & Sandy**



**Aunt Jean**



**Mike, Patty & Nancy**



**Patty & Sandy**



**Tommy & Sandy**



**Sandy & Tom**



**Sandy & Tommy**

Looking at that picture of Patty Dahl, daughter of my brother Shorty makes me very sad for soon after this picture was taken a family rift occurred in 1948 and I didn't get to see my brother until the mid 1960s. What a waste of precious years we could have had together!



**Sandy & Marianne**



**Marianne**

My sister Elenore was so proud of her daughter, Marianne. Marianne was such a beautiful, classy young woman. And ever mindful of helping out her parents in times of need. Herman worked for Chrysler Corporation most of his adult years and in those days work was very sporadic, you'd work for 6 months, then get laid off for 6 months. Marianne had a part time job after school and when her dad was laid off she would help out with keeping the bills afloat.

Grandma Bender visited us on Alter Road on her 69<sup>th</sup> birthday. We have a picture of her sitting next to our infant son, Bill. Sandy vividly remembers standing next to Grandma Bender's chair as she poked Billy in the stomach, hoping that Grandma Bender would show some sign of affection to her also. It never happened. Our present to her was a box of pink underwear.



**Bill & Elizabeth Bender 1948**

My mother in law was worn out from the time I first met her in 1934 before Ed and I got married. She had a really rough, tough life. At age 51 Grandma Bender looked and acted years and years older than she really was. She would have had 14 children had they all lived and in fact many of them did live for several months after they were born and then they died of the Rh factor. This Rh negative blood ran in the Ott line of the family and many other later born Ott children died of this blood affliction. My mother in law had stomach cancer at this point in her life but none of us knew it until later. Grandma Bender had diabetes for years and needed to take insulin by injection. She lived with Norman and Evelyn after Grandpa Bender died and her life there was truly a miserable one due to Evelyn. Grandma paid for her insulin out of her old age pension check from the government but often Evelyn would take the check and keep the money, leaving Elizabeth without funds to purchase her insulin. She

used to have to go to her son Norman and tell him she needed her money from her check to get her insulin. When she would get her check with the money left over after she paid for insulin she would buy baking ingredients and make about a dozen different kinds of coffee cakes. She would line them up all over the kitchen and then let the neighbors know she had fresh baked coffee cakes. She would sell all of them the same day she baked them as she was a wonderful cook. I have used many of my mother in law's recipes over the years to make many delicious dishes. Grandma Bender had cataracts in the last years of her life, worse in her right eye. They didn't have corrective surgery in those days like they do today.



**Lizzie Bender**

One thing I feel really bad about as I got older was the fact that when Grandma broke her hip she wanted Ed to pay for her to go to Holy Cross hospital for surgery but we didn't agree to pay for her private care so she had to go to Eloise for the surgery. She was always afraid of Eloise as she had heard from many of her friends that when you go to Eloise they give you "the black bottle" to save money by getting rid of you. She was bitterly disappointed in her son Ed for not sending her to Holy Cross.



**Mel holding the microphone and Grandma Bender recording**

In the 1940s my Ed used to cut records of the voices of several family members. We still have some of those early 78 discs. Ed had Bernie, Bruce's wife sing on one of the discs. He used to laugh and say she would do way too much emoting the first 4 or 5 times she sang a song. She thought he was recording all 4 or 5 tries, but really he never started recording until she half wore herself out and then her song sounded much more natural at that point.

Then he would record. Ed also recorded Grandma Bender's voice on one of his records. He had started to record Grandpa Bender but after he said 2 or 3 words the record came to an end.

As Ma Bender got sicker and weaker, Evelyn and Mildred took her to a doctor. They were told she had stomach cancer and he suggested they operate on her to see what kind she had. Mildred nixed that idea fast and took Elizabeth into her home and nursed her there until her demise on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September, 1950. Mildred said she set up Grandma's sick bed in her dining room where it was convenient to care for her. She said those 6 weeks were taken up with 2 things – Grandma continually praying until she finally told God, "Someone else will have to pray for me now, I'm all prayed out". And the second fascinating thing that took up endless untold hours in those last 6 weeks – Lizzie spent hours and hours in conversation with her beloved Hank who had passed over in 1944. Mildred said many a time she would tip toe up to the head of the bed undetected to eavesdrop on the conversation, but no matter how silent she was, the conversation always abruptly ended when she was in hearing range and would take up again as soon as she left the area. How did they know? She often wondered.



## 1949



**Bill waving goodbye to us**



Ed and I were married 15 years before we had a vacation. Bill was almost 2 years old when we decided to go. We went with Mildred and Harold Neff to Niagara Falls and Mama took care of the children for us. I remember little Billy waving his hand at us as we pulled away from the curb. My, did he ever resemble Ed when he was a baby in his buggy! When we left for the Falls Bill used to drive us half nuts with his whining. When we got back from our trip Bill no longer whined. What a relief that was for us!



**Marie Bender, Harold & Mildred Neff**

I was so thrilled to be actually going to the Falls, just Ed and I, no duties for a change! Looking at the Falls as we arrived just before dusk, I thought of my parents Nellie and Bill on their honeymoon in 1906. I called this my second honeymoon, although I never had the first one - no money in 1934.



**Marie Bender 1950**



**Ed, Marie, Harold & Mildred Neff**



**Marie & Ed**

I almost lost my Ed on our second honeymoon, though! I was so mad at him when I saw what chances he was taking for some dumb pictures, but he was so far away that he couldn't hear me when I shouted at him to come back. Ed decided that he wanted some real close up pictures of the Falls, so he climbed straight up the cliff right next to the Canadian Bridal Falls so he could get right on top of them. He then perched himself on top of a round culvert pipe and started snapping away. The vibration from the water shooting through the pipe moved him along the pipe closer and closer to the Falls without him being much aware of it.



Suddenly he looked up and saw that he was awful close to going over and the vibration continued to carry him ever closer! He inched his way back to safety, taking care to keep his cameras safe. All the spectators at the Falls were pointing to Ed and talking about that crazy man up there next to the Falls. In spite of his stunt, Ed and I enjoyed it so much that he said we could go back the next year and stay a few days more. But, alas, this was not to be. We never got back to the Falls until most of our children were grown, in the 1970's. We got there the second time on Ed's birthday and he opened his birthday presents in the Cloverleaf motel.

The cabin we rented was on Lundy's Lane, called the Cloverleaf. Lundy's lane was just a two lane highway in those days and the accommodations a small one room cabin with just enough room for the bed and nothing else. The next time that we went back to the Falls were we ever shocked at how commercial it was. Our little white cabins were replaced with a modern two-story motel a block long and Lundy's Lane was a major commercial thoroughfare. Personally I missed the little cabins and the not so crowded atmosphere of yesteryear.



**Marie Bender & Mildred Neff**



**Mildred**



**Marie**



**Marie**



**Marie**



**Ed & Marie**

Ed and I went on another vacation with Harold and Mildred Neff. We went to Wildwood Resort in the Traverse City area of Michigan. We went fishing, and exploring. We always got along very well together on these trips. One other trip we took together was to the Rutherford's Look-About Lodge in Stokes Bay, Ontario Canada, about 6 miles from Lion's Head. We stayed in little cabins on these grounds. There was no running water so I bathed in the water on the

beach. Burr! Was that water ever cold! And we ate in the Look-About Lodge. Ed and Harold had no interest in the carrot and celery dishes at the beginning of the evening meal, but when they saw how skimpy the portions were they ended up devouring the carrots and celery before the dinner was over.



**Bill**



**Marie & Bill**



**Sandy & Bill**



**Nellie & Bill**

Bill walked at 15 months on an Easter Sunday, 1949. This was not spontaneous on his part. Ed and I decided that it was about time he walked, so we spent all of Easter Sunday holding him by his two hands, passing him back and forth between us until he got the confidence to walk on his own! By the end of the day he was taking running steps from one of us to the other. After that he developed walking first with help, then on his own rather rapidly. Bill was the only child who resembled Ed quite strongly as a child. We have a picture of Bill in front of the house on Alter Rd as we were leaving for the Falls and a picture of Ed in his buggy where the two looked quite alike. We used to laugh when we watched Bill walk as his walk strongly resembled Ed's father's walk, long straight purposeful strides as he shifted his weight from one side to another.



**Ed & Bill Bender**



**Ed & Marie Bender**



**Nellie Dahl**

Ma lived with us from June 1st to September 1st every year. She was great company for me and Ed always genuinely liked her and enjoyed having her company for those three months. We all had a lot of good times together and a lot of laughs.

Mom was very easy to spook. She was always afraid of something and the least little thing would bring one of her fears to the surface. Her worst fear when we went out for the evening and she was left to baby-sit the kids was THE BOOGYMAN! If you knew how afraid she was of THE BOOGYMAN you would know why I capitalized it! Any sound from the furnace pipes in the basement brought out the fear of the bogeyman. Those groans and creaks one heard all the time from the furnace was not the hot pipes when Ma was babysitting, but was proof positive that the bogeyman had come in through the basement and was about to ascend the stairs and get them all! Sandy built on those fears one night to have a little fun, but she soon learned that the bogeyman was serious business and one didn't kid about him!

Sandy started off with, "Oh, listen Grandma, what's that?" (On cue, creak, groan, went the furnace pipes.) "Footsteps!" "I hear footsteps!" A burglar (alias THE BOOGYMAN) must have gotten into the house through the basement window!



**Nellie Dahl**

Everyone was dead silent and listened some more. Creak, groan, creak, everyone heard. Oh, my God, he's walking across the basement and he's coming toward the stairs and he's going to come up the stairs and get us! By this time everyone was totally petrified, out of their mind, mad with cold fear! Ma got up out of her chair, walked with much too fast pigeon steps from her chair to the dining room table and grabbed the table to regain her balance and steady herself. Then she trotted along the length of the table, then on to the kitchen door and then into the kitchen. Shortly she came back with a big huge

butcher knife waving in her hands, shaking mightily and wildly as she ran for her life away from the kitchen door from whence the bogeyman would emerge. Sandy and Bill had enough. Their hearts were about to stop from sheer terror. They didn't know what to fear more, the bogeyman, which everyone was now convinced lurked in the cellar or Ma wildly waving the butcher knife in her shaking hand. Bill ran upstairs for bed right away. Sandy remained downstairs to see that Ma got safely back in her seat, then told her she was tired and had to go to bed. Ma was wild with fear. She did not want to meet the bogeyman single-handed.

Grandma begged Sandy to stay up with her. She said she would play checkers even though the checkerboard made her dizzy, or she would play rummy where Sandy could pick up the whole pile instead of just the top card. (Ma made up the rule that when you played rummy with her you could only pick up the top card and the excitement was too much for her heart when someone would pick up the whole pile! Well, Sandy reluctantly stayed up, they both calmed down and tried to ignore the bogeyman in the basement (creak, groan, though he sounded for the rest of the night) and played rummy. Then a little after midnight Ed and I came home and the bogeyman was quickly dissipated. Ma realized that I would notice how tired Sandy was the next day, so Ma said to me to get herself out of hot water, "Marie, the darn kid wouldn't go to bed on time".



**Sandy Bender**

Sandy would be upstairs in bed playing possum that she was sleeping and steaming from the fib she just heard her grandma tell me. With a little smirk on my face I knew exactly what had happened. I knew that Ma was so scared of staying up alone that she always talked one of the kids into staying up and then sent them scurrying for bed just as the car pulled up. And Ed and I could tell by the breathing which kid had just jumped into bed and was now trying to catch their wind while pretending they were fast asleep!

Ma was scared of bears in the woods too! One time we took her for a ride on Lake Orion Road and Ed thought he would have some fun by telling Ma that he just saw a bear in the woods. Now, who could possibly be afraid of a bear you have just passed doing 50 miles per hour? At that speed, with in 10 minutes that bear would be in another county! But that's not how Ma saw it!



She got so scared, upset and shaky that we had to turn around and go back home!



**Mike, Nancy, Harold, Virginia, Gary, Evelyn, Norm, Mel, Marie, Grandma Elizabeth Bender**



**Nancy, Marie, Harold, Mildred, Michael**

We would take Ma on picnics with us. Ma loved the picnics and all the fun and laughter. But mom had a problem that was no laughing matter. She had the runs 6 or 7 times a day. And any emotional upset or eating would bring out the problem in full force. When we would go to the picnic and eat lunch, mom would feel her problem coming on in full force. She would run as fast as she could for the outhouse! One time she was running as fast as her shaky legs would carry her and then she started dropping little cannon balls along the way. A strange kid who was having a picnic near us was watching: he dropped his jaw and gaped at the cannon balls. Suddenly Ma ducked behind a big tree and Sonny laughed so hard he had tears in his eyes when he saw a half moon sticking out from both sides of the big tree! Poor Ma!



**Sonny & Mildred Dahl Stocker**

Ed and I sort of had two families: Mickey and Nancy was the first set of kids and they were almost teenagers by the time my second set (Sandy, Bill & Doug) were out of infancy. We went on a lot of picnics with Ed and my sides of the family in the earlier years, but by the time the second set of kids were old enough to appreciate a picnic we almost never went anymore as we were older, no longer closely associated with our brothers and sisters and picnics just no longer held a strong appeal for Ed and me. We went to Kensington State park for picnic and swimming when Nancy was about 14, then to New Baltimore to the Lake St. Clair city park when Bill and then Doug were babies and our last picnics were to Plymouth State park in 1951 and Owen Sound city park, also in 1951. We also went on a picnic with my brother Bill, his wife Dorothy and their little daughter Sharon who played with Sandy on the swings. After that the picnic excursions pretty much petered out.



**Sandy, Sharon, Dorothy, Marie and Bill 1949 Rochester State Park**



**A 1936 Bender picnic**



**Bill & Sandy Plymouth**



**Marie, Art & Agnes**





**Sandy, Marie & Mickey**



**Sandy & Mickey**



**Edward**



**Norman**



**Mickey**



**Ed & Mickey**



**Edward**



**Edward**



**Norman**

Ed loved playing ball, baseball was his favorite but he also liked playing touch football too. Ed used to drive over to his brother Art's house and then to his sister Bea's house, would bound up the stairs to their bedrooms and roust their sons out of their beds to take them out to the ball field for a game of sand lot baseball. Norman played baseball with his brother Ed a lot too. Norman was a natural athlete and was very good at pitching. As a boy he almost made it into the minor leagues as a pitcher due to his skill. But he didn't have the consistency needed for day in and day out accuracy. The boys love to play with Ed, and they would play for several hours with gusto. Ed's sons, Mickey and Bill on the other hand, were never enthusiastic about playing – their interests laid elsewhere. I used to get aggravated at Ed spending so much time on the ball field and I used to insist that he come home in time to take the family out, usually for a country ride and later we would spend hours looking for a new home.

I used to encourage my kids to put their bathing suits on and run outside and play in the rain, providing of course, there was no lightening. If it thundered or threatened to have lightening, then much to the kids disappointment they had to stay on the porch and merely sit and watch the rain. Here are a few cute pictures of Mickey and Sandy out in the rain on a fine summer afternoon.



**Mickey 1949**



**Sandy 1949**



**Sandy, Billy, Louise**

Christmas was always a very happy and hectic time. Starting in October, Ed would bring from the store a large catalog of children's toys, the N. Shure Company's catalog. My job was to order the toys that the children wanted and then to hide the toys when they were delivered! Ed was always generous to all of us. All I had to do was mention something I would like and I would get it. He also bought me very pretty dresses, lingerie, and jewelry from the neighborhood fashion shops. He would tell the saleswoman my approximate size and she would help him pick out something he thought would be appropriate for me. Sometimes his sister, Bea helped him. He would tell her to pick out a dress for me from him. I always loved the clothes; they both had good taste.



**Bill Bender**



**Sandy Bender**



**Beatrice Bender Gamache**

Betty used to pick up used clothing for me from a high class resale shop in Grosse Pointe, where she would buy some slightly used excellent quality items from the rich ladies. Ed Gamache, her husband, told her not to do that, that it might offend my Ed. It did not offend either of us. I used to like to get those little surprises.



**Marie & Billy**

One beautiful day we decided to go on a picnic to Plymouth Park on the westside. Our picnic was abruptly cut short when baby Bill was suddenly stung by a bumblebee on the lip and his little lip swelled up badly. We watched him closely, but he got over it with no other side effect other than the pain.

One time I was busy with the housework when Mrs. Meeseman came over excitedly and told me the kids had a fire going in the garage. (Ed wasn't using the garage for his storage purposes yet, that came later.) I went out there and saw that Nancy and Mike had a fire about waste high and were frantically trying to put it out. Mrs. Meeseman and I threw water on it and it was soon out.



**Mickey, Sandy & Nancy**

One fall afternoon after school, Mike went downstairs to the basement to play. He decided he wanted to get into the coal bin. We had put a new hook and eye on to keep the door shut and it was hard to open. Mike tried to open it with his bare hands. He couldn't do it so he looked around for help and found a 6-inch stick and used that to force the eye off the hook. Suddenly the eye broke loose from the hook and the stick poked Mike real hard right in the eye! I was panic stricken! Ed rushed home and we took Mike to the hospital. The damage was not near as bad as we feared and the doctor treated the eye, bandaged it and sent Mike back home. When we got home I rewarmed the spaghetti dinner and put it on each child's plate. Sandy dug right into her spaghetti, then noticed that Mike wasn't eating his, merely playing around with it. Sandy asked him why he wasn't eating. Mike replied he didn't eat what he couldn't see.



**Mickey Bender**



**Sandy Bender**

Here is a picture of my daughter Sandy feeding her doll in her Dopey, Docky, Sneezy dress, as she called it. Mildred Neff bought this material and sewed

this dress for Sandy. Sandy loved this 7 dwarfs dress so much she wanted to wear it every day, but I had to put my foot down, she had lots of other dresses to wear. Sandy wore this dress to kindergarden then outgrew it. Sandy used to wear a lot of woolen red plaid jumper skirts with the criss cross shoulder straps to kindergarden. One day Nancy borrowed one of Sandy's jumper skirts to wear to a Halloween party. Sandy was amazed that her big sister who was almost 10 years older than her could fit into one of her skirts.



**Marie & Sandy**

I used to read to my children before bedtime. Sandy's favorite bedtime stories were contained in a book called "365 bedtime stories." Every night I used to read her the story for that day, the story for December 5<sup>th</sup> and the story for December 4<sup>th</sup> as it was a really funny story about 2 kids getting black in the coal bin. Sometimes when I was tired I tried getting away with just reading the story for that day but that just didn't work – there was a major protest until I read the December stories too. Doug's favorite stories were the Uncle Remus stories which I must admit I did a very fine job of reading it with the proper dialect and accent. Warren said he also loved to hear me reading these stories.

That scar on Sandy's right leg reminds me of another story worth retelling. I went to Gratiot and 7 Mile Rd shopping and left Nancy in charge of watching little Sandy. That turned out to be not so good of an idea. While I was gone Jay Bayer came over to our house and sat on the front porch with Nancy. Jay Bayer asked Sandy if she had a piggy bank. She said yes. He told her to show it to him. She brought down her golden glass liberty bell bank. Jay pulled a 50 cent piece out of his picket and told Sandy he would put it in her bank if she'd get lost and leave him and Nancy alone. She was more than glad to do it and in a flash she was off the porch and off the property, with the 50 cent piece resting nicely in her liberty bell bank. Sandy was bored as she couldn't find any kids to play with so she walked southwards down the alley looking for something interesting to do. She soon found something very interesting and challenging. The week before she saw the Michigan Bell service man climb up the utility pole at the corner of the alley and Canfield. She sized up that pole and decided she could do the same. She found there were nails sticking out of the side of the pole for about 4 feet up and then the rest of the way there were sturdy metal pegs. So she shinnied up to the first nail and then climbed using the nails and then the pegs. She climbed all the way to the top of the pole



where she found she had a very nice view of the entire neighborhood. So she remained up on top of the pole, just short of being in the wires, looking around, thoroughly enjoying herself. Suddenly Nancy noticed how late it was getting and figured I would be home any time now and Sandy was still no where to be found so she set out in earnest to get that pesky kid back home before I found my little 4 year old kid wandering the streets alone. She soon found the kid – way up high on the utility pole. She panicked. If mom got off the bus on Canfield she was bound to see a little kid on the pole. So she ran down the alley and demanded that Sandy get down now. Sandy didn't trust Nancy at all, so she said yes, she'd come down but for Nancy to get back first. Nancy got back, Sandy came down and when she got to the level of the nails Nancy ripped Sandy down off the pole and one of the nails ripped her leg open. Nancy told Sandy she'd give her a quarter if she kept her mouth shut about the leg. Sandy kept mum and collected the dough. I found out about the Jay Bayer 50 cent piece and confiscated it. The quarter I knew nothing about.



**Nancy**



**Sandy & Louise**

Boy, could those kids of mine ever get into trouble when they set their minds to it. One time Sandy and Louise were playing in the vacant field at Canfield and the alley. Billy tagged along, a most unwelcome guest. Some one dumped an old refrigerator in the field. Sandy and Louise put Billy inside and slammed the door shut and left. Mrs. Ligotti came along, opened the door and saved little Billy.

Mike, the best behaved of my kids, also got into his share of trouble on occasion. Once he took a Quaker Oats box and wanted to put some holes in it so he asked Sandy to hold it for him while he stabbed holes in it with his picket knife. Sandy didn't want to, fearing that he would slip and stab her. Mike told her don't be ridiculous, he wouldn't stab her, now hold it. She held it. The knife slipped and he stabbed her thumb. She bled. She hollered. He told her to shut up and held her thumb over cold running water in the bathroom until it stopped bleeding.

Sandy was playing blind man's bluff with little Billy when he was about 3 years old in the upstairs bedrooms. She blind folded him and he walked around in



the dark trying to catch her. He ended up in the stairwell and tumbled down the stairs. Fortunately he wasn't hurt bad.

Sandy swallowed a nickel in bed while almost asleep and it completely occluded her airway. She had the sense to run down stairs and into the bathroom and when she bent over the toilet that sort of imitated the Heimlich maneuver and that made the nickel come flying out of her throat. That was the second time my Sandy almost choked to death. (Our neighbor, Mrs. Schneck, did lose her 18 month old baby to suffocation. She filled a bath tub full of bluing, went to get her curtains, and when she returned to the bathroom the baby was face down, drowned in the bluing.)

Billy had several serious health emergencies due to his disability. Every time he would take a fall he was unable to get his hands up to protect his head and he would land with his head slugging against the pavement with a sickening thud. He would then have a serious concussion and would act what Dr. Hassig called "Punch drunk". He would gradually come out of it about 5 hours later. Another problem Billy developed repeatedly without any pre warning was he would get a very high fever and become delirious. Ed would get so worried he would call 3 doctors to have all 3 come out to the house to examine Bill. I was always a nervous wreck when Ed did this, fearing they would all show up at the house at the same time.

None of my kids ever broke a bone, thank goodness. I was so worried about my daredevil Sandy when I had heard that her best friend Louise had broken first one arm, then another and then later her leg. I guess all the milk Sandy used to pour for herself since she was 3 years old and pulling very heavy milk jugs out of the refrigerator and topping off a nice cold glass of the stuff was what protected her bones from some of the nasty spills she took.

Bill never learned to ride a bike until he was 9 years old, unlike my other kids who rode by the time they were 5 or 6. Sandy used to put Bill on the back carrier of her bike and told him to hang on real tight and when they took a turn, to lean into the turn the same as she did. Well every time Bill would lean way out instead of in and would fall off the carrier and smash his head on the pavement. It was also a miracle that he never broke a leg in the spokes of the bike as Sandy was always hollering at him to keep his legs out as he kept forgetting. Bill never learned to climb anything as his coordination was no good.



**Mickey**

Michael had a very dangerous habit that he practiced in the winter with gusto – he would run behind a car going west on Forest and would grab onto the bumper of the car and go sliding along behind the car as it dragged him on his way to St. John Berchman's in the mornings.



**Mildred Stocker and Sandy**

When I had company over I never let the smaller kids stay up beyond their bedtime as I felt visiting was for the grownups. I would feed the grown ups in the dining room and the kids would sit together around the kitchen table. Then by 8 pm they bid the company adieu and off to bed they went. Here is a cute picture of Mildred Stocker saying good night to Sandy as she sat on her lap in her underwear, ready to greet the sandman.

I used to give my kids cod liver oil all winter long in order to see that they got their proper vitamins. The kids hated that stuff as it tasted awful and had a very thick, oily consistency. It wasn't until much later that I found out that on occasion the kids were going into the bathroom and spitting the stuff out. I later learned that the government did autopsies on our soldiers killed in the Korean war and found out that boys who had received generous amounts of cod liver oil year round had bones that looked like lace. Too much of that caused an early osteoporosis.



**Sandy under the UV lamp**

Another health practice that Ed and I thought was a good idea to keep our kids healthy through the winter was to put the kids under an ultra violet lamp a few minutes each day to mimic sunlight and thus produce vitamins A & D. Little did we know in those days the harmful effects of UV light. The lamp came with goggles to shield the kid's eyes from those rays. The light emitted from the lamp was a violet color and the lamp ticked fast while on. It also emitted an ozone like odor.



**Sandy**

One time when Ed and I and the kids went on a picnic we stopped at the side of the road in the park and Ed and the kids ran down the embankment. Sandy was dressed up in her cowgirl best that day and was ready for action. When I saw what she was doing I was really upset with her. She kept filling her cowboy hat with dirt and carrying it up the hill and making a pile by the guard rail. When we were ready to get back in the car I refused to let her put that dirty filthy hat back on her head so I threw it away on the side of the road. Sandy was so upset with me I thought we were going to have a shoot out at the OK corral that afternoon!



**Sharon, Dorothy, Sonny, Mildred, Nellie, Marie,  
Elenore, Herman, Bill  
3 November, 1949**

In 1949 Ed and I decided to give Ma a surprise birthday party for her 64th birthday. Ma was living with me at the time so it was kind of hard, doing all that cooking and baking without her getting wise to what I was up to. I had to save all the decorating of the dining room for the last minute too so as not to let the cat out of the bag. Ed came home and asked Ma if she would like him to drive her over to her son Bill's house to visit him for a little while. Ma perked right up and said, Ya, sure, she would love to see Bill! So Ed helped Ma into the car and off they went.



**Rear: Sandy, Nellie, Sharon. front: Nancy, Mike, Marianne**



**Sandy, Nellie and Sharon**

Well, Ed took every back road in the city of Detroit on his way to Bill's to give me enough time to put the surprise party together. Then when Ed got on the westside he deliberately got lost and couldn't find Bill's house, all a diversionary stall tactic to hide the party. Ed then brought Ma back home. Ma was crestfallen that she didn't get to see Bill. By now the whole family was on

Alter with me and we were all hiding in the dining room and back bedroom, waiting for Ed to come home with Ma. We had the lights subdued so Ma wouldn't see the decorations in the dining room right away. Ma came in completely crestfallen and told me on the way in the door in a very sad voice, Marie, Ed got lost and couldn't find Bill's house. We then all jumped out in the open and hollered "SURPRISE!" Ma was then so happy and had a wonderful birthday dinner and celebration with us all. We have a picture of that birthday party. When I look at that picture it makes me feel so sad, because almost everyone in that picture is now dead, even my Ed who took the picture.



**Elenore, Dorothy, Mildred, Nellie & Marie**



**Elenore, Marianne, Nellie & Marie**



**Elenore & Herman Mc Kinin**



**Sandy Bender**

When Ed and I went on a vacation, we left Sandy with my sister Elenore. We felt very comfortable leaving her there as Elenore was most responsible and we knew our child would be safe with her. But Sandy was such a little dickens that we weren't so sure that Elenore would fare so well having her for a week! It didn't take Sandy long to go into action, either. First she meandered over to the neighbor's house on the corner, made the acquaintance of a kid named Carl who was about a year older than her and attended kindergarten. Sandy played with Carl most of the morning and then Elenore called her into lunch. After lunch Sandy went out again but this time things were kind of lonesome as Carl was in kindergarten for the afternoon. The next thing Elenore knows when she looks out the window to check on Sandy is that Sandy is merrily peddling down the street on Carl's tricycle. Oh, no, Elenore thought to herself, my niece just rode off with Carl's tricycle! What ever will Carl's mother think of me, letting the kid abscond with it! Elenore went outside, scolded Sandy for taking Carl's bike and told her to return it to where she got it from. Sandy's feelings were a little hurt as unknown to Elenore she had asked Carl's mother and had been granted permission to ride the cycle.



**Sandy Bender Wilhelm**

Later that week Elenore was in her back yard and keeping an eye on Sandy as she played with Carl and his friends back by the alley. The older boys had found a dead rat in the alley. They were all looking at it and exclaiming how big that darn dead rat was. Sandy walked over, took a look at it and declared loud enough for the whole neighborhood to hear, "Oh, that's nothing, you should see the big rats we have in our neighborhood!" Elenore could have died. If there had been a hole in the yard she would have crawled in it. Elenore told me she was mortified, thinking that the neighbors would wonder what kind of neighborhood her niece came from!





**Edward & Beatrice Gamache**



**Sandy Bender Wilhelm**

Bea and Ed Gamache kept Sandy the year before. Ed really got a kick out of Sandy and he loved teasing her that week and answering her million and one questions that would have driven a lesser man nuts. Their daughter Mary laughs at how they tried to give Sandy a bologna sandwich before putting her to bed and she demanded ketchup on her bologna. The thought of ketchup on bologna nauseated Mary, but Ed went out to the store and bought her ketchup which they never used, in order to keep her content so they'd have no trouble with the kid being she was in strange surroundings. Mary was kind of jealous at times of all the attention Sandy got from her father, as Mary was used to being big cheese in that house hold for years as she was the only girl and the baby to boot. Bea gave Sandy some of Mary's toys which she kept stored in the attic on Goulburn because she liked her. Mary kept all of her toys in immaculate condition and getting a toy from Mary's collection was like getting a new one.

Don Gamache, who was a teenager in those days, took Sandy for an evening ride in his convertible down Gratiot Avenue while she was visiting there. Sandy remembers sitting way down in the seat so she couldn't look out of the window, but that she could look straight up and see all the streetlights on Gratiot Avenue.

Harold Neff bought an old house that stood on the Grosse Pointe High school grounds. The school system wanted that house razed and removed so they put it up for bids. Harold bid \$400 and won. Now he had the Herculean job of tearing the house down and removing all the debris. The reason he bought the house was to use the building materials from this house to build a new house on Glenwood in Clinton Township. So he had to carefully tear everything apart to preserve the materials to use again in his new house. My son Michael spent hours and hours on that house tearing things apart. As a young teenager he never thought of it as work, to him in those days that was fun!



**Mickey Bender**



**Mickey**



**Mildred Neff & Bea Gamache**

One time Ed, I and Sandy took a Sunday afternoon drive to see how things were coming along on the razing of this house and to see if Mickey wanted to stay longer or not. While we were there Ed's sister Bea stepped on a nail which went right through the bottom of her shoe and right into her foot. Ed had to drive Bea to the emergency room to get her foot looked at and to get a tetanus shot. It was especially critical for Bea to get her foot attended to as she had been a diabetic for a number of years now and was thus prone to infection, especially in the foot as diabetics don't have good circulation in the extremities. And in those days there was only sulfa and penicillin for antibiotics.



**Norman John Bender**

Norman worked in Ed's store with him since the 1940's, first on Gratiot Avenue. then on 9110 Mack Avenue, 9100 Mack Avenue. and then 16389 Warren Avenue. Norman worked as both salesman and as washer and black and white TV repairman. But to tell the truth, Norman really took advantage of Ed through the years. Norman would sleep till noon or beyond, usually tripping into the store about 1 p.m. If he was not there by 1 p.m., Ed would really get uptight as he could not leave the store for lunch as there was no one else there and he'd have to close up, which naturally he didn't wish to do in the middle of the day.

One time Ed waited for Norman until 1 p.m. then lost his temper as he was hungry and there was no one to relieve him at the store so he could go to Alinosi's and get a bite to eat. So Ed stormed out of the store, locked it up, jumped into his car and raced to Norman's house on Farmbrook, about 1 mile away. Ed ran into their house, hollering, is anybody home. Sure, enough,

both Norman and Evelyn were still in the sack and were very indignant with Ed that he dared to wake them up on a Sunday afternoon. Sunday afternoon my foot, Ed replied, this is Monday afternoon! How could you possibly have lost 1 whole day? He dragged Norman out of bed and back to the store with him. Ed was very close to Norman and was always solicitous of his welfare.



**Norman Bender**

Norman wanted to buy the house on Farmbrook, but had no money for a down payment as they spent their money as fast as they got it. Ed had a soft heart and without me knowing it till much later, Ed gave Norman the money for the down payment. Naturally, Ed was never paid back.

Another thing that Ed allowed used to burn me up. Ed would allow Norman to go to the cash register every Saturday and pull out his own wages in cash. Ed was much too easy going with all his employees, Norman included. Another thing that upset me; Norman used to sit in the back repair room on Mack as well as on Warren and tell Ed in a loud demanding tone of voice how to run his business. Ed was ever the epitome of patience with Norman and seldom lost his temper.

Ed had a lot of trouble with employees. They were never dependable and caused Ed a lot of grief, from smashing up the truck to stealing, to not showing up. Kay Fraser was probably the most lovable of Ed's screwball employees.

Two funny stories involving Kay:

One time Ed had to back the big truck up in a tight space and as there were no windows in the back of the truck, his vision was extremely limited. So he asked Kay to stand at the side of the truck and guide him as to when to stop backing up. Okay, Kay said. Ed then started backing up and soon Kay was saying, Okay, okay, okay, and suddenly, CRASH!!! What the hell happened? Ed shouted at Kay, "I said okay!" Kay replied.

Another funny story. Ed was in his store on Mack Avenue repairing something, using his metal electric drill. Suddenly the drill shorted out and Ed was riveted to the floor and could not let go of the drill. The electricity was passing through his entire body and Ed was in agony. He told Kay to unplug the drill quick. Kay took a look at Ed, then ran up the stairs and out of the store and almost a whole block down before he stopped running. Suddenly it dawned on Kay, as

scared as he was for his own safety, that Ed was in a bad way and needed his help. Kay walked back to the store and back down stairs. Ed was still riveted to the floor and was almost exhausted from being shocked. Pull out the plug! Ed screamed. Kay thought he was going to die of fright, but he managed to pull out the plug and save Ed. It took a lot of will power on Ed's part not to strangle Kay for running away. Instead Ed gave her some credit for coming back.

I used to ask Ed why he didn't hire more capable help, someone of his caliber. Ed replied that if the man is too capable he is number one, expensive, and number two, is very likely to try to steal the business away.

When Sandy and later Bill were babies, I used to have to nudge Ed awake in the middle of the night every night in cool and cold weather in order for him to stoke the furnace to keep the heat from going out in our coal furnace. Ed used to be so groggy as he would put on his bedroom slippers and start to trudge down two flights of stairs to the basement. He would then shovel out the old ashes and put new coal in and make sure that the new coal ignited. A real pain in the ----.



**Ed Bender**

One day Ed had had enough of these nightly excursions. He called Michigan Consolidated Gas Company and had our old, huge octopus like furnace converted to gas. It wasn't that expensive in those days and now we had much cleaner, more carefree heat. Now the only labor involved was to remember to pay the heating bill on time. We had the Michigan Consolidated Gas Company come out to repair something on the furnace in the late 50's. They inspected the furnace and stated that it gave off carbon monoxide fumes far in excess of acceptable levels. The gasman made a great production of turning the gas off and said, Lady; I turned the gas off because this furnace is a hazard to your health. If you turn it back on when I leave, it then becomes your responsibility, not mine. When Ed got home, he went downstairs and turned the furnace back on again. We kept the same furnace until we sold the house in 1961.

When the Morilli family tried to buy the house on FHA, the furnace didn't pass inspection, so a new one was installed and the cost of the furnace was added on the purchase price and therefore the mortgage amount.

One time I thought I would save money and have the home insulated against the cold and weather stripping put on. When the workman came out and saw the furnace, he said, lady, I'm not putting the weather stripping on as it might kill you. You need the wind rushing through all the cracks in the house in order to provide a supply of fresh air to dilute the carbon monoxide. So we never got the weather stripping.

Ed suffered with hemorrhoids ever since I met him and then long before that. By 1949 he had a very bad problem and could no longer ignore this condition. He went to a surgeon who operated on him. Ed came home after the operation, and when the anesthetic wore off, he suffered the tortures of the damned. I felt so sorry for him and there was little I could do to help him. He sat on an invalid ring for weeks and weeks. And wouldn't you know it, due to the poor operative technique of this first doctor Ed's hemorrhoids soon returned in full force. Soon Ed was back in the same predicament all over again. Someone recommended a good doctor to Ed. Ed went to this doctor with great trepidation. Once again the operation was performed and Ed was soon back home. But he had such a pleasant surprise this time. The doctor managed to numb the area so that it lasted for several weeks and Ed suffered no pain whatsoever and was shortly back to work.



**Sandy Bender**

Mrs. Schneck used to get a kick out of seeing my Sandy running around the neighborhood. Mrs. Schneck used to tell me that all my 3 kids looked just like me. Mrs. Schneck used to live 2 doors south of me on Alter. We liked her, but we used to dread to see her coming; all she used to do was complain. She would sit on my back stairs on Alter and carry on about everything that upset her, which was just about everything. And she stuck like glue, you'd of thought you would never get rid of her. But we liked her; it's just that you didn't get anything done for the day when she came around.

Mr. & Mrs. McCubbin were our next door neighbors to the south. They were older, dour Scots, right off the old soil; they had an accent so thick you could cut it with a knife. They had a son Donald and a daughter Jean. Her kids were all older than Nancy. It seems that they always had some piddly complaint or other about my kids, especially my last 3. Sandy used to get quietly mad at them when they would accuse her of something that she had

nothing to do with. One time Mrs. McCubbin came to me with a tale of woe of what Sandy had just done. She told me it happened yesterday. I told her with a smug smile that Sandy was in the hospital so she would have to look elsewhere for the culprit.

But Sandy used to admire their beautiful flower garden. They grew spectacular irises and shiny, yellow, button like flowers. When the garden was in full bloom, Sandy couldn't help herself; she'd reach through the fence and rip out a few choice flowers. Mrs. McCubbin would fume over this. She told Sandy over and over that if she wanted flowers, tell her and she would cut some. But she looked too dour and unapproachable to Sandy, so she just kept reaching through the fence and ripping a few out year after year.

Mrs. McCubbin had an old bulldog that for years and years would be let out on the street every day and would invariably proceed to cross Alter Rd when the traffic cleared. He would then meander back about 20 minutes later. He was a gentle dog and never bothered anyone. Then one day Mrs. McCubbin's daughter brought home a new baby and stayed with her mother for awhile. The poor 12 year old dog felt so neglected and rejected by the sudden lack of attention that one day he deliberately walked out into traffic on Alter and got run over.

Mrs. Meeseman was the real gem of a neighbor. She had the patience of Job. No matter what my kids did, she never complained. Neither did Mr. Meeseman, but he wasn't near as friendly as Mrs. Meeseman. They shared a mutual drive and a backyard with us so they had a snoot full of my kids.



**Sandy Bender**

The next door north was the Spears house. They were exceptionally nice people, very gentle and kind. For the first 5 years they were married they were very sad, as they could not have any children. Just when they almost despaired of ever having any, she suddenly discovered one was on the way. After the first one, she had 4 more children in the next 4 years. They were so glad for the spontaneous reversal of their infertility that they never complained about having a house full. Their kids used to play with Sandy. Pamela was the same age as Sandy. We have a real cute picture of Sandy when she was about 3 or 4 years old kneeling on the couch looking out the window. It was the



middle of the winter and the Spear kids were asking Sandy to come out and play. Sandy had just been out for over an hour and was soaked to the bone when she came in. When they asked her to come out, she hollered through the front window, "I can't come out, I got freezing footses .



**Mickey & Bill**



**Mickey & Sandy**

Mickey used to make the neatest snowmen in the winter in the back, and sometimes the front yard. They would be three tiers tall, each section rolled into a huge ball and then one section set on top of another, with the largest ball on the bottom. He would then give the snowman coal eyes, nose and mouth and a stick for a pipe sticking out of his mouth. Mickey used to reluctantly let Sandy and Bill play with his snowman.



**Sandy**

Mickey taught 5 year old Sandy how to climb up the cherry tree and get on top of the garage. She was an avid learner for mischief, and the garage was soon her second home. No matter how many times I would holler at her to get off that garage, she would end up back on it when I wasn't looking.

One day Sandy got me real mad. She hid her bike in the garage and told me it was missing. I looked all over for that darn bike and figured that it had been stolen. When I found out that she had hid it in the garage I was furious and told her she could not ride it for a whole week. She was crestfallen and Ma immediately felt sorry of the kid and begged me to let her have the bike back.

Ma used to get me real mad sometimes. When Ed and I would get mad at each other, we would get into a real good argument sometimes.



**Nellie Dahl**

Ed was really kind to me all of our marriage so he would seldom really raise his voice and then only for a sentence or two. Not me! When I was good and mad, Ed knew about it. I told him loud and clear what was bugging me. Sometimes Ed would get his feelings hurt when I hollered at him. Ma would see that I hurt him, so she would say to me, Marie, be good to Ed, you've got a good man there. I would get so mad at Ma for taking Ed's side in the argument and I would tell her, Ma, stay out of this!



**Nancy & Mickey**

One time when Nancy and Mike were small I got so sick of seeing Ed's radios and radio parts all over the living room of my upstairs flat, I told him to clean them up, but he never did. He just kept working, repairing and selling the used radios. One day I had enough of all those parts all over. I lost my temper and said to myself, if he wants messy, he'll get messy and I threw all my mops, brooms, dustpans, etc down the front stairs. They all came to rest on the bottom up against the closed door that lead from the outside to our apartment stairs. When Ed got home, he opened the door and all the mops and brooms jumped out and attacked him. No dullard, he immediately got the message that I was real ticked off. Ma was with me when I threw all that stuff down the stairs, vicariously yelling at Ed the whole time.



**Edward & Marie**

Ma's response to my temper was, "Oh, Marie!"

Well, Ma expected fireworks when Ed got home. Ma was wound up tighter than a drum when she heard Ed approaching the front stairway. She really expected an outburst when he saw the mess. Ed opened the door, then valiantly fended off mops, brooms, etc. as they came flying at him. Ma and I were waiting for what would come next when Ed came up the stairs, looked at me and burst out laughing. He just threw back his head and pealed with laughter. Then he said very tenderly to me, "Lets go to the show, huh?"

Ed's laughter had completely dissipated my anger and frustration, and now I too saw the funny side of the whole situation. So I said, "Sure, Ed, let me get my coat." And I said to Ma, " Ma, don't touch a thing, I'll clean it all up when I get back."

Ma couldn't let all that junk sit there all night. Ma, who had so much trouble with stairs, spent the whole evening hauling all that junk back upstairs and putting it away into the proper closets.



**Nellie & Billy**

This picture of Nellie standing in front of my clothes lines in the back yard reminds me of a funny story. When Ma first came to visit me I naturally did her wash right along with the rest of the family's. In those days I had a washer but no dryer. So I would haul the wash upstairs in a wash basket and hang it on the lines in the back yard. I hung the entire wash, then stood back and

looked at it to make sure I pinned everything securely. When I looked at what I had hung on the outside line facing Mrs. Meeseman's I died of embarrassment but then saw the humor in the whole thing and burst out laughing! Ma's underwear was on the very outside and the leg holes in those were large enough to run a Sherman tank through, I swear! From that time on, I made sure I hung ma's underwear on the inside lines where they wouldn't show!



**Marie Bender**

We used to buy just all our groceries from the C.F. Smith store at Canfield and Marlborough. Neal and his wife were such nice people! They would always wait on you and were so friendly and courteous to all. He would walk around with you, you would point out what you wanted and Neal would take it off the shelf and put it on the counter. Kids loved to see Neal get things off the top shelf. For instance, the cereal was on the very top shelf, about 5 feet up. When you would ask for a box of corn flakes, Neal would get his 8-foot pole out with the hook on the end. He would then touch the top of the box with his hook, give it a fast tap downwards and the box would come flying off the shelf. He would then catch it as it came plummeting earthward. Neal never missed a box. That pole had pincers on the end of it, so that Neal could open up the pincers and grasp an item and then pull it off the shelf. He would then put all your groceries in a box, add your bill by hand, then you would pay him and leave your groceries there. A little while later you would hear a tap at your back door and here was Neal's delivery boy bringing home your groceries in a little red wagon. We always gave the kid a 25-cent tip, although tipping wasn't required. Neal didn't sell meat, when you wanted meat; you went next door to the meat shop. The man in the meat shop was not as friendly and at times we doubted his honesty. Neal and his wife were raised as adopted brother and sister. When they grew up each got married and had a child. Neither marriage worked out, and in their middle years Neal and his adopted sister fell in love, combined their families and married. They were a most happy couple.

The C.F. Smith store had a writing contest in the fifties and I decided to enter the contest. We were supposed to write a short statement as to why we liked to shop at the C.F. Smith store. I was thrilled when I was notified that I was the winner of this writing contest! I won a very nice appearing lady's wristwatch. The two C.F. Smith stores in my neighborhood fought over me, each stating that I was their customer. I soon made it clear to the contest officials that I was Neal's customer.



**Mildred & Harold Neff**

Every November for a number of years we had a very happy custom. We would drive over to Mildred and Harold Neff's house and they would drive us down South River Road in Mt. Clemens to a turkey farm. That was so much fun to get out of your car on that farm and see all those turkeys mulling around in a pen. They were so colorful, each different from the last by some subtle variation in shading. We would look over all the live turkeys, then point out the one we wanted. The proprietor would then tag that turkey and we would put down a deposit. Next weekend we would go back and our freshly dressed and plucked turkey would be waiting for us in a water trough.

We used to snicker at how the proprietor would weigh the turkeys. He would pull them out of the trough, making sure the cavity was filled with water, and then slop it on the scale full of water, and getting it weighed real fast and off the scale before the water ran back out. Mildred also swore that he managed to get his thumb on the back of the scale as well. But we loved those fresh turkeys. While we were inside putting down our deposit, our kids Sandy and Bill 5 were walking around outside, looking at the turkeys through the chicken wire fence. Bill, 2 years old at the time, stuck his finger through the chicken wire and was promptly bit by a curious turkey! He learned to keep his fingers out of the pen after that!



**Sandy & Billy**

Another funny fowl story. I bought a fresh killed chicken from the meat man, brought it home, then doubted the wisdom of my purchase as I had to defeather the chicken, a lousy, messy job. I had the chicken setting downstairs

on the table in the basement till I had enough time to pluck it. We had Sonny and Mildred over that day, and I said jokingly, "Hey, Sonny, I'll give you 50 cents if you pluck that chicken for me!"



**Sonny & Mildred Stocker**

He took me up on that and plucked the chicken, with feathers flying all over my basement. His wife Mildred was disgusted with him, saying , "Oh for land's sake, Sonny, all that messy work for 50 cents!"

Milk and milk products, bread and bakery goods were delivered by truck to your home in those days. I remember Nancy imitating the milkman with his milk driven wagon at 5 am. She'd go clip, crop, clip, crop, repeatedly.

A fruit peddler also delivered fruit too. That was usually a hand drawn cart. They'd holler out, "Bananas, peaches, tomatoes!", as they would slowly walk down the street with their carts laden with every imaginable fruit. The housewives would run outside clutching their change purses in order to make their weekly purchases.

With the milk man and bakery man we would have our standing orders but would often end up buying little extra goodies like a coffeecake or whipping cream. They were good, solid men, those deliverymen, trustworthy, dependable and usually cheerful. Our clothes were also picked up by the cleaners who came to your door. I remember one time I had to go somewhere and told mom to point out all the spots on my dresses to the cleaner as he would specially mark them right at the house to pre treat the stain before sending it through the cleaning solution. The cleaner came, ma picked up the dresses and one by one pointed out the stains as I had told her. She suddenly came across a big red blotch on the back of one of the dresses. The cleaner got a real funny look on his face when he saw this red blotch. When Ma saw the look on his face and it suddenly dawned on her what this blotch was, she turned beet red, redder than the blotch! The cleaner's name was Frank Tobatto. He was a good looking guy who got a new kid about every 10 months. He had kids coming out of every nook and cranny and his domestic life was one big hullabaloo. His kids used to literally hang from the chandeliers at his house. He later bought an expensive house in an expensive neighborhood in Mt. Clemens and I often wondered what those kids did to that house!



One day it had just snowed and the world was a blanket of newly fallen snow. It was too much temptation for Mike and Tommy Cronin. Mike and Tommy never made it back to St. John Berchman's after lunch. They got out Tommy and Joe's new sled and spent the afternoon sledding down the Cronin driveway and right into Alter Road!



**Mickey Bender**

Mickey used to pal around with the Cronin kids who lived just one house south of the Reichards on Alter. One Saturday afternoon Mrs. Cronin hired a babysitter and went shopping. The babysitter gave the 10-year-old boy, Tommy, some money and told him to go to Dave's drug store and buy her nail polish. He never made it. On the way Tommy swerved into oncoming traffic and was struck by a car and killed.

Tommy and Joe had a sister Patty who was very musically inclined. She would only have to hear a song once then she would be able to sing it all the way through and keep a good melody. The Cronins had a lot of sorrow in their lives at that time. It was not too long after they buried Tommy that the marriage fell apart and they had to sell much of their furniture and move away. It's very possible that Tommy's death was greatly responsible for the divorce. The house that the Cronins lived in was later the scene of another very troubled marriage. The Le Poudre family lived there in the 50's and that man was quite violent toward his wife and family. He struck the family often leaving bruises on her and the children. The wife and children were nervous wrecks and the kids were very hyper as a result, which further added to their domestic turmoil. In the late 50's they sold their home and moved back to French Canada.



**Louise, Sandy, Leonard & Bill**

The next house north of the Cronins belonged to the Reichard family. Mr. Reichard was the nicest, finest man you would ever want to meet. He was friendly, quiet and generous. He liked kids and was forever taking one or more of the neighborhood kids somewhere with his own daughter, Louise. Mrs. Reichard was a very hard, cold woman. She was strict all out of proportion to need and was as selfish as her husband was generous. She couldn't stand to see Louise share her toys. Mrs. Reichard was very hard of hearing and became suspicious of what the kids were saying behind her back. And she was right in her suspicions. We did talk about her because she was so cold and hard. She used to beat Louise with a whip like thing for minor infractions. The Reichards' son Richard was very musically talented. He could hear a song once and play it entirely through without error on the piano. But Richard had many, many severe emotional problems, which the neighborhood boys detected when they were quite young.

Mrs. Reichard used to dress Richard up as a girl as she had wanted a girl when he was born. She used to walk him around the block with a balloon tied to his wrist and raised him in an effeminate manner. Mr. Reichard was disgusted with his son's girlish ways but was unable to stem the tide. Richard used to sit on the front porch in a most delicate way when he was a teenager, dressed all in pure white. It used to sicken me. My Mike could not stand Richard and seldom associated with him.

Reichards' daughter Louise was as masculine as her brother was feminine. She was a real tomboy and hung out regularly with Sandy until they were about 11 years old. Louise would come to our back door over and over and instead of ringing the doorbell her mother had to teach her to call out Sandy's name in a singing voice. This way Mrs. Reichard would know the door was not for her and she wouldn't be constantly answering it for some kid.

The Reichards' kids got the most expensive Christmas presents on the block. I refused to be intimidated by the Reichards' generosity as we spent much too much money on the kid's toys as it was, but still less than 1/5 of what the Reichards spent. They typically spent over 100 dollars per child, sometimes

200 each. We would spend between 100 and 200 dollars on just the kids for Christmas, plus Nancy's family, quite a tidy sum for those days.



**Mickey on Christmas, 1948**

Our typical Christmas on Alter started with trimming the tree on Christmas Eve, then after the kids were in bed we snuck out the presents from their hiding places and assembled some of them. There were Christmases where Ed had his once a year quota of drinks, then at 2, 3 and sometimes even 4 am in the morning, he would be blurry eyed and miserable trying to push tab A into slot I B. after tightening down bolts XX and ZZ

Our kids were up before the break of dawn. Often they would have to go to the bathroom in the middle of the night and you had to go downstairs and past the Christmas tree to get to the only bathroom in the house on those days. The kids would stop and stare in awe and wonder at the newly decorated Christmas tree, lightly shimmering as it caught faint rays of light from the streetlights outside. Then they would stare at the multitude of presents underneath the tree with expectation. Sandy always knew what one present was right away. Ed and I often gave her a doll buggy with a new doll lying inside. Sandy liked her dolls, but was very rough with them. They were as apt to turn into punching bags than as companions. She slept with her dolls. She especially remembers the doll with the cloth body, very realistic teeth and eyes that opened and closed. She also remembers her twin dollies with vinyl molded hair.

Mike had some very neat toys too. He got a very elaborate garage one-year with cars to travel up and down the ramps. He also had an expensive and very complete erector set with a motor that would open and close bridges, etc.



**Billy playing his new records**

Bill's most memorable Christmas present was when I bought him a record player and lots of kids' records. He used to stand for hours over the record player playing the "Froggy in the Meadow" record. Bill and Sandy also had several elaborate cowboy outfits, complete with guns and holsters. Sandy used to complain that the plastic fringe on the skirt itched. Bill used to have chaps that fit over his pants, so he didn't have the same problems. Bill also got a new bike for one Christmas that took him forever to learn to ride. He was 5 years old before he got the hang of it. Sandy had to hold on to the seat and run herself ragged clear around the block and onto Ashland while Bill leaned dangerously first to one side, then the other. When Sandy finally realized that Bill was sitting upright and peddling faster, she cautiously let go of the seat and Bill was independently launched. When he found out that he had been riding independently, instead of being jubilant over his accomplishment, he was furious with Sandy for letting go!

Just before Bill got his 20-inch bike, Sandy was walking down Waveney near Manistique when she saw a bike she thought would be perfect for Bill. She just up and took that bike as it was leaning up against the people's fence, brought it home, and tried to get Bill to ride it. He tried quite often unsuccessfully. Sandy finally gave up on Bill and one day walked the bike back to where it belonged. The lady came running out of the house so glad to see the bike back. She asked Sandy a lot of sticky questions so Sandy said she found the bike, asked around where it belonged and some kids told her it belonged there. The lady forced \$5 on Sandy. Sandy did not want to take the \$5 as she knew she was the one who took the bike in the first place. But rather than get in a stickier mess and make the lady even more suspicious, she took the money. The lady thought it over then scoured the neighborhood, found out where Sandy lived and came and talked to me. I calmed her down and gave her the \$5 back. Sandy told the lady the George Palzinski who was a welfare urchin living over the Johnson Milk Depot was the one who stole the bike. George was fresh out of the youth shelter for wayward boys and was so longing to get picked up and put back again as he and his sister had alcoholic parents who drank up all their money, then slept off their stupefaction while the kids were hungry and penniless. George used to have to wear his sister's clothes at times when all his were dirty and the drunken mother had not done the wash in ages.

One day George was so hungry, he put on his sister's clothes, went down to the Johnson Milk Depot below his apartment and begged the buxom, over 50 ladies there to give him and his sister something to eat for free as they were very hungry and had no money. Over and over the Johnson ladies would give him freebies. George then went to play ball with our kids on that Saturday morning after he had had a free hostess cupcake as his breakfast, and warned all the kids if they laughed at him dressed in girl's clothes, he would rearrange their faces for them. As George was the toughest kid in the neighborhood for sure, no one laughed, at least to his face. My kids used to be so disgusted with his drunken mother passed out on the couch in the middle of the day. The dad was sprawled out too, but the mother in that condition had more of an ingression on the kids.

Getting back to the bike story, George told all the neighborhood kids that if they ever got into a scrape with the law, that they should tell them that George did it and George assured them he would gladly take the rap. So that's what Sandy did, she told the lady that George took it and gave it to her for Bill and she didn't know the bike was lifted. When the cops heard the name Palzynski they knew he was a habitual offender, went to his house, he confessed everything and they hauled him back into court and then the detention center. George was ecstatic. He considered the youth home as a much more fit residence than with those drunken parents. He said he had better schooling than the public school, more individual attention, he had a good bed and three good meals a day, a library that he loved to study in and there was always a full baseball team easily assembled in short order. George was just very sad that he was leaving his sister behind to cope with those parents alone.

I never figured out how George's sister ever made it on her own as George was a much better beggar, having much more charm and persuasion than his sister.

Two other George Palzynski stories merit retelling. George was very powerful and had a lot of strength in his forearms. He was 4 years older than Sandy but was shorter than her due to malnutrition over the years. One day Sandy, George, Louise and Ronny climbed up on our garage. Leonard Ligotti and our Bill could not climb the garage, as they were not as agile and facile as the other kids were. George felt sorry for them and came up with a practical solution. He told Sandy to drag the all can, about 2 1/2 feet tall, and a rake out of the garage. George then climbed up on the garage via the cherry tree, Sandy threw up the rake to him and then he stood on the edge of the garage in the back and lowered the rake over the edge and just above the all can. Sandy lifted Leonard on the all can, he put his feet into the rake, hung on to the handle and George hauled him up. Then Sandy put Bill on the all can. Bill put his feet on the rake, grabbed the handle and as George was hauling him up, for some reason he let go of the handle of the rake, fell backwards and hit his head sickeningly

hard on the pavement in the alley. Bill was only semi-conscious and goofy acting, a condition that Dr. Hassig had termed "punch drunk". Bill recovered in 24 hours.



**Bill & Sandy**

Bill was punch drunk several times in his childhood. He had very poor coordination and when he fell he never got his hands up in time and would splat right on his head.

Another George story. One day George climbed way up high in a huge elm tree on Alter just south of the Warren alley. I mean, George really got up high! He was all the way to the top of the tree and was sitting there surveying his kingdom, when suddenly a flash rainstorm came and soaked him and the tree. George soon found that the tree was slippery than blazes and he couldn't get back down without killing himself and he was getting tired and wanted out of that tree. Suddenly a man pulled up and parked his brand new black car right under that tree, got out and went into the Venetian blind store on the corner. George looked that car I over and decided it was the right ticket out of his dilemma. George inched his way to the other side of the limb, hung out, aimed and then free fell right on the brand new car, whomping in the hood. The guy came running out of the store threatening to kill George. George ran like the wind and no one squealed as to who he was or where he lived.

## 1950



**Mickey**



**Sandy**



Ed and I and the kids went to Belle Isle on a picnic. I was busy with Bill who was the baby. Mike and Sandy went exploring and came upon the Carillon Tower that was built with donations as a memorial to Nancy Brown who wrote a women's advise column for the Detroit News. The Carillon Tower had a moat around it that was about 5 foot deep. Mike stood there studying what appeared to be a stone in the moat. Thinking it was a stone, Mike stepped onto it, and lo and behold, it was not a stone, but only green moss floating on the water in the moat. Down Mike went into the moat. None of our kids could swim at that time, so Sandy went running back to Ed and I screaming that Mike was in the moat. Ed dashed over and pulled Mike out of the moat. Later that day, Mike was back over at the moat studying the moss as he still thought it looked like a stone, not moss. Ed and I were fearful that in bending over like that, he might fall in again.



**Mickey Bender**

Another time that year Ed, kids Ma and I decided to go on a picnic to Rochester Park. We went the back way into the park as the leaves were starting to turn and it was a beautiful ride. However, as we got near to the park entrance, we encountered a sign that said, bridge unsafe, do not cross. It was drizzling out all of a sudden and we decided to eat our picnic lunch in the car instead of in the park. After we ate the picnic lunch, Ed sent Mike out to jump up and down on the bridge and see if it gave any under his weight. It didn't and the bridge looked okay to dad, so he slowly drove over the old bridge.

We used to love to go to Rochester Park and climb the steep hills. Of course, ma couldn't do this, so when she was with us we couldn't do that. But in subsequent years we'd all be climbing impossible hills, me included. I don't know how they ever talked me into that, but they always did. Straight up like mountain goats, we would climb. Grabbing onto tree roots for help. But then the next day, Monday, I was always stuck with the job of getting all those dirty, mud caked clothes clean again! The Clinton River stunk so bad in those days from pollution that took your breath away. Ed and Sandy would walk across the water on fallen tree limbs, but you would never catch me doing that. I had more sense and more respect for my own life! And I would get so mad at them for taking those kind of chances. They knew darn good and well that they couldn't swim much better than me, especially in that swift current.



**Sandy & Bill at Plymouth Park**

We'd also go to the Warren Park off Chicago Road in Warren. The kids used to like to ride the old rusty farm equipment abandoned there and Ed used to like to play ball with the kids. We also liked to go to Plymouth Park. One time I remember being on a picnic there and after we ate the kids went on a real high slide. Nancy talked 3 year old Sandy into going up the slide too. She had no trouble getting up, but I'm sure she was scared to death getting off the ladder and onto the slide. Then Nancy, who was behind her, got impatient and gave her a push down the slide. Sandy was wearing only a sun suit that day and the hot metal slide burned her arms. We had to put butter on the burns and she was not in the best of moods toward her sister Nancy.



**Sandy & Boots & Edward Bender**



**Sandy and Sissie**

Mildred Neff had two Springer Spaniels, Boots and Sissie. I was afraid of those dogs and would not go into Mel's backyard on St. Clair in Grosse Pointe City because of those dogs. One day I looked out the back door and found my 3 year old Sandy sitting with those 2 dogs. I sent Ed out to fetch her as I was not about to go near those dogs. Ed took his camera with him and snapped a couple of adorable pictures.



**Mike & Sandy**



**Sandy**



**Sandy**

I used to dress my kids up every Halloween in home made costumes. My best costume was an elf costume that my kids wore when they were about 5 years old. Mike was cute dressed up as a bum and Bill was adorable one year dressed up as a ghost.



**Billy & Sandy**

My kids also used to love to dress up in cowboy outfits including guns, holsters and hats. Those black cowboy outfit we very impressive looking but the kids said that fabric chafed and itched.



**Bill & Sandy**

One day Ed and I bought Bill and Sandy two balls which they really enjoyed, but in retrospect that was not a good idea as we lived on a busy street and before the day was over Sandy's ball went wildly bouncing out into traffic on Alter. She started to run after it, but my admonition to her to never run into traffic must have made an impression on her for just as she was running off the curb she stopped and looked anxiously after her ball which soon bounced under the tires of a passing car which squashed and burst the ball. The man

driving the car looked at Sandy's sad face, stopped and gave her a quarter to buy a new ball. The cost of a new ball was 29 cents and we never got a new one for her for safety sake.



**Mike Bender**

One day Ed and I went to the show on a Saturday night and left Mickey in charge of babysitting the kids. Ed and I were enjoying the show, when all of a sudden I sat bolt upright and said, Oh, no! I forgot to turn off the hot water heater after I took my bath! (In those days hot water heaters were not automatic. You had to turn them on and off by hand. If you forgot the water continued to boil ever more furiously until the pressure would build up to such a high level that the heater would blow up and rocket skyward, a very dangerous situation.) I then ran to the phone and called Mickey and told him to get the kids out of the house for safety sake, then turn off the hot water heater and stay outdoors with the kids until the heater cooled down sufficiently so as not to be a danger. Mickey went upstairs, woke up Sandy and got her out of the house, sat her on the grass and told her to stay there. He then ran back upstairs, picked up the sleeping Billy and carried him down and out and told Sandy to keep an eye on him and make sure that he did not wander away. Bill cried for a little bit out of fright and the unaccustomed surroundings, then fell back to sleep in the front lawn. Sandy found it very queer that she was sitting in the wet dewy grass instead of her soft, comfortable bed. But soon the crisis was over and the kids were snuggled back in their beds.



**Bill & Sandy**

Another time when Bill was about 2 years old the doorbell rang at 2 a.m. Who in the devil can that be at this hour, I asked myself? Bleary eyed, I went downstairs and opened the front door. Standing in the door was Shirley Meeseman, daughter in law of my dear neighbor, Mrs. Elodie Meeseman. Yes,

what is it, I asked. Shirley replied in her snottiest voice, shut your son Bill up. He screaming and hollering and he's going to wake my baby up! I went back upstairs, and sure enough, Bill was having a very bad nightmare and was hollering his head off. I gently woke him up, comforted him, and soon he was sleeping soundly. Shirley never apologized or was in any way friendly with me after that.

One day my kids pulled a dirty one on a poor Negro man. He was doing business with the Speedway 79 gas station at the corner of Ashland and Warren when my kids came along and were fascinated, as we had no Negroes in our area. Our kids suddenly started yelling, "Nigger, rigger, ten pounds of liver on your upper lip!" The guy's feelings were hurt and he followed my kids down the block. The kids were terrified, ran like the wind, then Sandy and Bill rang a strange woman's doorbell and told her the Negro was after them. The Negro quickly disappeared when he saw the kids seek shelter in that house and they walked home without further incident.

We had some big excitements about the buxom Johnson Milk Depot ladies in the middle of the summer one of the years in the middle fifties. We had had a serial murderer in Detroit in those days, randomly selecting and murdering his victims in the grizzliest manner. Finally one day the police caught him and he confessed all, which the newspapers and television quickly picked up on.

What he confessed shocked us to the quick. He had said that his next victims were going to be the Johnson Milk Depot ladies who waited on us day in and day out. They used to wear low cut dresses and their milk jugs used to practically lie on the counter as they leaned way over and took your order.



**Louise & Sandy**

Next to Johnson Milk Depot was the Marseilles Beer Store. Both men who ran this store in the 50's were crooked to the little kids, constantly short changing them. But we liked to buy their ice cream, which we ate only on Sunday evenings. Ed got to like buying a carton of vanilla and a carton of chocolate and then putting a slice of each in a bowl. Sometimes we made tin roofs. When I was expecting Doug I could not get enough of tin roofs! (With Sandy it was cream puffs). Sandy pulled a fast one on the new owner of the Marseilles beer store. As the guy was busy trying to short change Louise, who was too smart to get duped very often, Sandy upped and stole a yo-yo right in front of



his nose. With his eyes right on Sandy he didn't see it. I didn't find out about this until it was too late to return the yo-yo. I had a very effective way of ending shop lifting. With several of my kids, when I caught them with ill-gotten goods, I would march them right back to the store and make them give it back and apologize. That upset them so much that it cured the shoplifting.



**Louise, Sandy, Leonard & Bill**

Summer evenings of 1950, Mama and I would sit on the front porch after dinner and watch the children play games with their playmates on the front lawn. They would play with Louise Reichard, Leonard Ligotti, Ronald Logrand and the Carmack kids. They used to ask for a sheet from me, then put a kid in the sheet and the rest of the kids would keep the kid suspended in the sheet, giving him a rough ride inside. Those were warm, carefree nights, but when the streetlights came on we would get nervous and decide to put the kids to bed, for our greatest enemy, polio, was raging strong in those days, paralyzing and killing children at random. We didn't want our kids to get overtired and possibly become susceptible.

One child we knew, Marie Goetz, did get it and was paralyzed in the 2nd grade and did not return to school until the 7th grade and then on crutches and walking very stiff.

I used to have a hard time keeping the younger children out of Alter Road, but my biggest problem was with Bill as he seemed to understand the danger of this street less than the other children did. We had no fence in those days, so I had to watch him like a hawk, but I felt bad that come summer he could never be outdoors unless I was there too, so I came upon an ingenious idea. I got a long length of rope, tied it to Bill's suspenders. That way he was free to play anywhere in the back yard but could not get as far as the alley or the street. That worked very well for awhile, until one day Bill came in the house holding the loose rope, telling me it came loose and I should retie it again! So much for the rope idea. Once he learned to untie the rope I was back where I started.





**Billy on a rope**

One day Sandy and Louise were walking toward our house in the alley and Sandy stopped, stood there looking at Bill with a dumb look on her face and said to Louise, "Should I tell mom!" "If I tell mom, there's going to be a lot of big excitements!" "I'd better tell mom, he might get poisoned otherwise".



**Sandy, Louise & Billy**

Louise had a "I'm glad it's not my brother" look on her face. Sandy came and told me, "Mom, you'd better come and look at Bill. NOW!" Oh, oh, was my response, what now? I could have died when I saw Bill. He was sitting behind the garage and he had just taken an old roller and painted himself from head to foot in oil base bright pink paint. Head, hair, eyes and all. Body, clothes, feet, shoes; he didn't miss a thing. First I cried, then I proceeded to clean him up with turpentine as he cried cause it burned.

Soon after that disaster I hear him calling to me from the basement in a pathetic tone of voice. I went down there and found Bill covered from waist to foot in fishhooks. They were all hooked into his pants. I had to cut up a brand new pair of corduroy pants to get all the fish hooks out without stabbing him.

Cynthia was a very big help to me in watching out for her little brother Bill. Bill loved to follow her around and go to the school ground with her and watch while she played ball, or swing on the swings at the Father Corrigan park at Warren and Alter. Or he would play ball with her in the alley. They'd play with Louise Reichard, Leonard Ligotti, Ronald Logrand, Auggie Nicocia and Jerry Westingburger, and Ronnie's little sister, Barbara.



**Sandy & Billy**

Bill would have a very nasty habit of getting real excited when he hit a ball and would throw the bat backwards and hit the catcher. One time he was having a real winning streak with his hitting and threw the bat at the catcher every single time. He caught Louise in the shins without fail. Finally on the 6th time Louise made such an impressive presentation of what she was going to do to his body if he threw that bat one more time that Bill got the message. What Louise had in mind to do to him made the Spanish Inquisition look like child's play.

Sandy did her best to see that the other kids did not pick on Bill too much, as Bill was not very good at defending himself.



**Leonard Ligotti**

One time Leonard Ligotti, who was Sandy's age, was picking on Bill and hitting him and Bill was too little to get him back. Sandy saw Leonard hitting Bill, so she stepped in and pounded Leonard so good on the back that he went crawling home on his hands and knees to his mother. His mother came over to my house shortly afterwards hollering what my horrible Sandy did to her poor Leonard. First of all, I knew her poor little Leonard was not the innocent party and secondly I felt that he should have been old enough to defend himself without having to hide behind his mother's skirts.

The nuns at St. John Berchman's School always commented on how strong and capable Cynthia was. When she was in 5th grade they had a big safety program of protecting the children. They made new routes for the children to go home from school so that the Catholic School kids would be going home the

same way as the public school kids and they figured there was safety in numbers.

Cynthia kept going her tried and true way home and someone snitched on her. The nuns patiently went over the new route with her and explained the dangers of being waylaid or kidnapped when traveling alone. Sandy burst out laughing over the absurdity of the picture they were painting, and said with a gleam in her eye, "I'd just like to see the guy who'd try to kidnap me!" (Sandy was the biggest tomboy in our family as well as in the neighborhood.) The 5th grade nuns looked Sandy over, looked at one another with a knowing look in their eye and admitted, any guy who tried to kidnap her, they said, would definitely get the worst of it!



**Sandy**

Poor Mrs. Meeseman, our next door neighbor to the north. She was such a nice, kind, patient woman with my brood. I don't remember how many times that the kids playing in the alley would break a garage window and she would tell me kindly and patiently about it. Each time, Ed would pay her, and Mr. Meeseman would repair it. Mrs. Meeseman was a Belgian woman who had had a hard life. She lived in Belgium most of her life and had come over to America in the 1930s.

One day 5 year old Sandy was playing with a nickel. In those days the nickel had a buffalo on one side and the head of an Indian on the other. Sandy studied the nickel and then looked from the nickel to Mrs. Meeseman who was in her back yard hanging wash. Suddenly Sandy ran into the house with the nickel in her hand and said, "Mom, look, Mrs. Meeseman looks just like the Indian on the nickel." I privately admitted to myself, but not to her, that indeed there was a resemblance!



**Sandy**

On summer day Mr. Meeseman spent the whole Sunday afternoon putting in a new cement sidewalk in front of his house. Several hours later he put the finishing touches on the sidewalk, smoothed it one last time, and went into the house to rest. Out came our little Bill, and walked right through the middle of the whole new wet cement sidewalk! Mr. Meeseman came back out, got down on his knees and while mumbling something in Belgian that we couldn't understand, patiently smoothed out the footprints of the little monster! Bill didn't do this on purpose or for meanness, just was totally oblivious to the new cement until he was shoe deep in it, then walked the length of it instead of stepping out to the side. He just didn't know any better.



**Billy**

Our houses were very close together with a small mutual driveway in between the homes. One very warm summer evening Ed was sitting at the kitchen table next to the open window hoping for a stray breeze to come his way while he was eating supper. Doug had just finished eating and had just gone outside. Doug had had a bad habit of scraping his feet on the pavement and Ed was trying to break him of this. Suddenly Ed heard the scraping of feet along the mutual driveway just outside the kitchen window. Ed, sure it was Doug as he had just left the house, called out the open window, "Pick your feet up, dupus!" Sandy looked out the window, rolled her eyes heavenward and said to Ed, "Dad, its Mr. Meeseman out there!"



**Doggie**

Ed was so embarrassed; he got up from the table and walked between the kitchen and dining room, taking care not to step in front of one of the windows and be seen by his neighbor. Another time Doug was following Mr. Meeseman and had expressed great interest in his chewing tobacco. Doug loved to see him take it from his pouch, wad it up and stick it in the side of his cheek. Mr. Meeseman noticed the undue curiosity out of the corner of his eye. In a move totally uncharacteristic of Mr. Meeseman as he was always a stodgy, but model neighbor, he stopped and asked Doug, "Want some?"

Sure! Doug replied. Mr. Meeseman took some tobacco out of his pouch, wadded it up into a ball and showed Doug how to put it in the side of his cheek and suck on it. Doug felt like a grown man. He put the tobacco in the side of his cheek and strutted like a man. About 3 minutes later, Doug suddenly got a strange, then a green look on his face, pulled the plug out of his cheek, dashed into the house, made it to the bathroom and heaved his guts inside out. So much for his first experience with tobacco!

Sandy used to make Mrs. Meeseman a nervous wreck. Mrs. Meeseman used to say she just couldn't look out her back window. Mike taught Sandy how to climb the cherry tree and get on our flat roofed garage when she was only 5 years old. She soon learned the easiest way to get down. She would walk over to Mrs. Meeseman's side of the garage (both garages were attached and both flat roofed), hold on to the roof of the garage, lower herself over the side, dangle and then kicking away from the garage, free fall onto Mrs. Meeseman's soft grass.

Sandy also used to love to practice playing ball as it made her dad very happy. Sandy used to bounce the ball for hours up I against the Meeseman's house and catch it as it came off the house or the roof. Once in awhile Mrs. Meeseman would go and tell Sandy to bounce the ball off her own house as Mr. Meeseman was trying to get to sleep. But on most occasions Mrs. Meeseman had the patience of a saint.

Ed had a truck driver named Kay Fraser who made all his I deliveries for him. Kay Fraser was a lovable screwball. He used to get in so many accidents Ed couldn't remember one from another after a while. Ed was at his wits end with truck accidents. But he had had other truck drivers before Kay and they

weren't any better than Kay. Suddenly Ed struck upon an idea. Mickey used to go on deliveries with Kay Fraser after school and even though Mickey was only 12 years old he was over 5 foot tall and was a most responsible young man. So Ed taught Mickey how to drive the truck and had Mickey drive and Kay be the helper. This worked out very well. All deliveries made on schedule and no more bashed up trucks. There was one problem however, the appliances were awful heavy for a 12 year old growing boy and he did kind of bend under all that weight. But he never complained and he just kept working.



**Mickey**

One day Mickey and Kay were making a delivery off of East Grand Blvd when someone plowed into Mike. He didn't have a chance to avoid the accident. Mickey felt so bad! He knew he had been chosen to drive so there would be no more accidents and he had taken his responsibilities very seriously. The police were called and they called dad right away and told him to come to the accident scene as soon as he could. The policeman met dad at the scene and told Dad that Mickey was such a fine, responsible, clean cut young man and he felt so bad about the accident that he was almost in shock. The policeman said that dad should not use him for a truck driver yet as Mickey was much too young for such responsibility.

Mickey worked inside dad's store too, but he hated sales and stayed away from the selling floor as much as he could. Mike shows up in the Polk's Detroit City Directory for 1951 as working for dad.

Nancy was becoming a very pretty young girl and very popular with the boys. I had to keep my eye on her. She wasn't happy at the Catholic school (St. John Berchman's) so she coaxed me into letting her go to the public school. She said she was much more popular among the public school kids than the Catholic school kids as the Catholics were more socially immature. So I let her go to Jackson Junior High. Nancy palled around with the Schneck kids, Eldon, Gary and Diane. Nancy had a crush on Eldon and many an afternoon you could see her sitting on his front steps. Nancy also was a friend with Marilyn Spaulding and Sally Valentine. She also dated Jay Bayer, a fellow I wasn't too fond of.



One day I was very angry when I found Nancy sitting on their front porch swing, after I had just found out that the Schneck kids had all caught head lice from some one in school! I had enough of that when I was a kid and the trouble my mother and grandmother had to clean our heads! I was lucky, though, none of my kids ever caught anything. Eldon Schneck also developed a crush on Nancy, but Nancy was busy trying to make up her mind that she liked better Jay Bayer or another suitor she met in school. Poor Eldon was relegated to third place.

Eldon got jealous of Nancy's lack of attention to him and once he decided to play a prank on her. I was out shopping at Gratiot and 7 Mile Road and Nancy was left to baby-sit Sandy and baby Bill. While she was babysitting she was sitting at the kitchen table doing her nails and rolling up her hair. The doorbell rang and Sandy jumped up to answer it. Eldon had rang several times earlier and when Nancy went to answer it, he was hiding in the bushes to aggravate her. When Sandy came to the door Eldon appeared and asked Sandy if she would like to earn a quick 50 cents. Fifty cents was a fortune to a little kid in those days, so she jumped at the chance. Eldon lit a firecracker with a long fuse and he told Sandy to run real fast and put it in Nancy's penny loafer. Sandy did it, then Eldon rang the doorbell again and Nancy was about to put her foot in the shoe when the firecracker went off. Nancy was furious and Sandy bore the brunt of Nancy's ire.

Another time Nancy was babysitting Sandy and Bill and I was out shopping for clothes again. Nancy started getting really bossy with Mickey and he had just about had enough. When he got mad enough, and it took a lot to make Mickey mad, he went into the kitchen and got a butcher knife and threatened to carve Nancy up. The two kids spent some time running around the dining room table, with Nancy trying to keep half of the table between her and Mickey. Mickey would never have hurt her; he just wanted to get back at her for harassing him. Young Sandy sat on the sidelines and watched the whole thing, wondering who was going to get whom. Naturally, you can guess who squealed on the kids when I got home.



**Nancy, Sandy, Marilyn, Marie, Bill & Mickey**

Jay Bayer used to come over and court Nancy on the front porch. Sandy used to have a glass liberty bell bank at the time. Sandy used to stand on the porch and make herself very visible when Jay Bayer came over. Jay used to give Sandy a quarter for her bank for getting lost while he was over.



**Sandy**



**Nancy**

Ed used to love to tell another story about Sandy and Nancy. One day Nancy had her friends over and they went to the dining room table and sat down together. Three year old Sandy sat down at the table too and was very quiet, she just sat and listened. Nancy told Sandy to scram. Sandy said no, that it was her house too. Nancy got very mad and told her to get lost now. Ed was in the process of getting up from his chair to tell Nancy that the kid wasn't doing anything, so let her sit there. Sandy again said she wasn't budging. Nancy reached over and hit Sandy in the head, knocking her right off the chair and sent her sprawling on the floor. Ed was livid and was about to really step in now, when little 3 year old Sandy picked herself up off the floor and got right back on the same chair. Ed found this a very interesting turn of events and decided to sit back down and watch the action. Nancy hit the kid off the chair again. The kid got right back up. Nancy screamed and hollered at the kid, the kid just sat. Finally Nancy left the dining room table in tears. The kid still sat. Ed was amazed at the guts of the little kid.

Sandy was always a strong kid. When she was only 3 years old Ma and I used to be amazed at how she would get a heavy glass half gallon bottle out of the refrigerator and pour herself a glass of milk without spilling it. The container was almost as big s she was!



**Sandy**

Sandy used to have some bizarre ideas for play. One very hot June day she put on her hottest pair of long pants and her galoshes to play outside. I was about to get heat stroke just watching her play in those clothes!



**Sandy**

I never could keep Sandy clean, either. I would dress her up in an adorable sun suit and send her out to play, wagging my finger in her face and telling her not to get dirty. She would be back in 20 minutes covered in grime from head to foot! I would wash her all up, put on clean clothes and send her out to play again. Twenty minutes later, another grimy disaster. She would go through 5 new outfits in one day.



**Sandy**

Ed loved to take pictures of Sandy and Bill. He has some real cute ones where Sandy just learned how to dress herself and Ed took serial shots of her getting ready for the day. My sister Mildred loved these pictures and showed them to all her friends at work.



**Mickey & Bill**



**Bill**



**Mickey & Sandy**



**Sandy**



**Sandy**



Another time Ed got some cute shots of Bill and Sandy playing in the first big snowstorm of the season. Ed even ran into the basement in order to get a shot looking out of the basement window to be at the kid's level.



**Mickey & Sandy**



**Sandy**



**Mickey & Sandy**

Another time Ed got some cute shots of Mickey and Sandy by forcing Mickey to let Sandy play with his trucks in the mud in the back yard. (We never had any grass until the last few years we lived there.) Mickey never let Sandy play with his trucks, so this was quite an event in Sandy's eyes. I curled Sandy's hair for the picture. Mickey was very proud of his big new metal truck that he had found while out alley picking. He got plenty of new trucks from us, but this new found treasure was something special at the time.



**Sandy & Bill**

Ed got some cute shots of Bill and Sandy indoors playing with his used flash bulbs but this picture taking session ended in a crying jag as the lights were so bright and hot. Ed took so long setting up exposures that the kids got hysterical and then walked away.



**Sandy**

Ed also got some cute shots of Sandy feeding her baby doll in the dining room on Alter Road. Sandy got a new doll every year, but I she was very rough on dolls. The dolls were used for punching bags more than they were mothered.



**Sandy on her new bike**

One time Nancy was real excited because Ed bought Sandy a bright, brand new expensive tricycle with a red seat and vanilla fenders. Nancy was jumping with joy waiting to see how excited Sandy would be when she came downstairs from her nap and saw her new bike. They were all waiting for Sandy to squeal with delight. Sandy woke up, came down and immediately set eyes on her new bike.



In a dead pan voice she said without emotion, "Oh, my new bike" and got on it and started to ride it around the living room. Nancy was so disappointed!



**Billy with Bild-ding blocks**

Bill got some really nice baby toys. The best among these was a neat enclosed wooden rocking horse. Bill spent many an hour rocking that horse back and forth. Bill also had a Johnny jump up that fit in the archway between the living room and dining room. He also had a walker and a very nice wooden high chair. I always bought my kids interesting toys to play with. Michael's favorite toys seemed to be his garage set and his erector set which even came with a motor. The first construction he made at Christmas time was a bridge that the motor raised and lowered by means of that motor. Bill had cute "Bild-Ding" men that hooked together by hands, feet, head, etc. Doug had lego blocks that just came out when he was about 7.



**Bill with Sandy's tricycle**

But Bill's favorite toy seemed to be Sandy's red tricycle. No, he never rode it up and down the block, or around the backyard either. What he did do with it was to dump it over on its side and spin the wheel. He would put more mud on it and spin it some more. He did this for hours and hours. He loved that trike more than Sandy did!





**Sharon, Bill, Debra & Mrs. Dolato**



**Nellie & Sharon**

## 1951

In May of 1951, right on Mother's Day my brother Bill's wife, Dorothy presented him with a beautiful baby daughter. Bill was kind of disappointed that this baby was not a boy but he had to admit she was so beautiful, just like his first daughter was and is. They named this baby Debra Dahl.



**Nancy & Josephine**

In Junior High Nancy also made a new friend that was classier than most of her friends. Her name was Josephine. Her uncle owned a confectioner store and the kids hung around there and had a good time.



**Mickey, Marie and Nancy**

When Nancy was 15 years old she went to a football game with her friends, and in the stands across from her she noticed a young fellow that made her heart throb. She thought he looked like the then popular movie star, Audie Murphy. What she noticed most about that handsome young fellow was his blue eyes. Nancy told her friends at that football game that that was the fellow she was going to marry. The girls just laughed at her, little realizing that this would soon come to pass. Nancy went to a relative's wedding, Mildred's daughter Sally, and before the evening was over Nancy had managed to catch the bouquet. Oh, Mildred said, Nancy will be the next to get married. I just smiled at such a preposterous idea. My 15-year-old daughter would never be the next to get married! She was I just a kid yet.



**Nancy with the bouquet at Sally Neff Kujat's wedding**

Nancy was introduced to Don through Don's friend, Red. History started for Nancy. She and Don dated for a better part of a year. When they met they were both in the 9th grade at Jackson Junior High. Don lived with his parents, Christine and Hunter Coyle Stephens in a World War II Quonset hut on Algonquin. We were very nervous about the differences in their backgrounds. Josephine's mother was quite upset; saying that Nancy could do better.



**Don & Nancy Stephens**

Then when Nancy and Don were in Southeastern High School for a little over a month, Nancy talked Don into eloping. So Nancy and Don went to Angola, Indiana with both of Don's parents. But the minister would not marry them because Nancy was underage and had no parental consent for marriage. So they all drove back to Michigan and told me what they had tried to do. I was

doing the weekly ironing when they all appeared at my house. I decided to talk it over with Ed. Ed was against them getting married this young. But Nancy had histrionics and made a few dire threats about what would happen if they weren't allowed to marry, so in the end Ed and I very reluctantly gave our consent. We were scared to death for the future of these two babes in the woods who were dropping out of their first year of high school to embark on such a major decision in life.



**Red, Don, Nancy & Josephine**

The next morning Mrs. Stephens, Don, Nancy, Red, the best man, and Josephine, the maid of honor, and I went back to Angola, Indiana for the ceremony. I was so sad, and thought, what a marriage! No religion and the Justice of the Peace was a terrible person, he swore, took out a card and said, "here, call this number for me if you change your mind!" I had wanted Nancy to have the marriage locally, but Nancy became very hyper and said she had her blood test for Indiana and didn't want it taken again. She just wanted to get it over as soon as possible. We talked about postponing the marriage. Don was agreeable, but Nancy was adamant. She wanted to get married NOW!



**Hunter, Don, Nancy and Christine Stephens**

It was a very long ride home and into the evening and Red was driving the car. He suddenly lost control of the car, slid across the highway and got a flat. I thought we were dead for sure. I was scared to death and figured that was the end. But he got the car safely under control again and he then got the car to a garage. We didn't get home till around 11:00 p.m.

Well, I went up to bed and had a good cry. What a wedding! Nancy and Don stayed with his parents, Christine and "Red" Stephens in the Quonset hut on Algonquin for a couple of weeks, then they moved across the street from me in an upper furnished flat owned by Mr. & Mrs. Van Heusen. Nancy used to visit me just about every day and tell me about her landlady! Mrs. Van Heusen, who we all jokingly called Mrs. Van Deusey, was so proud of her very old fashioned furniture, and how worried she was about Nancy not taking good care of her furniture. She was especially proud of the picture she had on the living room wall, 2 cows in the pasture!

Nancy was very talented in decorating and she really made the living quarters pretty, but she just couldn't do anything about that big old cow picture!



**Mrs. Van Heusen's house on the right**

Nancy and Don used to giggle when they came over and tell how abusive Mrs. Van Heusen, who weighed over 200 lbs., was to her husband who might have weighed 100 lbs. soaking wet. Mrs. Van Heusen used to shout at him and bounce him off the walls in the evenings!



**Edward & Marie Bender**

Ed and I gave Nancy and Don a nice wedding reception at the Harmony House the first of December.



**Edward, Donald, Nancy and Marie**



Aunt Mildred Neff had her usual snide comments about the young marriage and the probable reason for its haste, which much to her disappointment, was not the case. My Aunt Clara also put in her cutting remarks, which was also par for her. She had the sharpest tongue in my family. Her husband Ray also put his two cents worth in that day. He asked one of the relatives how old Nancy was and when they replied 16, Ray replied, "Oh, well then, she'll probably have 5 or 6 marriages then".



**Clara Dahl Fredrick**

The cute thing about the situation with Aunt Clara is that I had not even thought of inviting her to Nancy's wedding reception as she was Nancy's grand aunt, had hardly ever seen Nancy, or even me for that matter for years. I really thought she would have no real interest in coming and I did not want to make her feel as though she was forced to give a present. Aunt Clara showed up suddenly on her own and told me, "I know I wasn't invited to this reception, but I don't take hints". Believe me, I had no intention of snubbing or excluding her and I told her so. Everyone didn't think the marriage would last because of their tender age, Nancy just turned 16 and Don just 18. In spite of all the thoughts to the contrary, they were happy and had many good years together. Nancy and Don's favorite song through the years was "They tried to tell us we're too young".

In September of 1951 I found out I was pregnant again! I was really upset about this pregnancy. With Nancy getting married now I felt that I was too old to have another child. Having another child about the time that my daughter would probably be having her first did not thrill me at all. But as with the others, Ed and I settled down to the idea; if the good Lord was sending him, we'd just have to accept him.

I didn't feel well at all with this pregnancy. I guess a lot of it had to do with my age, as I was 38 at the time. I felt queasy all of the time. I would eat and then feel better for a little while and then the food would make me nauseous again. When I was about two months pregnant I started to spot. I thought, oh, good, I'm not pregnant after all! But the pregnancy continued. About ten years later I read that sometimes when a woman is carrying twins she loses one of them in her second month or earlier and continues to carry the other baby to term. One of the dead giveaways that this has happened is that one of the babies is left handed and the hair whorls a certain way. Doug was left-handed and his hair whorled in the manner described in the story. I was the right age for twins and twins do run in Ed's side of the family. The baby was getting larger and caused such bad backaches that I couldn't sit for any length of time and all I could think of was that I hoped the day would end soon so I could go to bed, but that didn't help much either. Around the first of June, I coaxed Dr. Shirley Gilroy (a man) to do something about bringing on labor a little sooner to get it over



with. He was a very conscientious doctor and told me to try to be patient a little while longer, that it was better for the baby. I was also worried about the baby's health because of my age. I had so hoped that nothing was wrong with him and when he was born I checked him over from head to foot much more carefully than I had my other children.



**Bill & Nellie**

One day Ma came excitedly out of the downstairs bathroom on Alter, running towards me as fast as her shaky legs would carry her, saying breathlessly, "Marie, you want to know where Mrs. McCubbin hides her money?" "She keeps it under the mattress in the front bedroom, right across from the bathroom window!" I really chuckled, all the years I had lived there and I hadn't the foggiest notion where Mrs. McCubbin hid her money. Ma comes to visit me and spies on the neighbor while sitting on the pot!



**Harold & Mildred Neff**

One day I wanted to show Ma the upstairs as Harold Neff had finished it off so nicely and I was so proud of our new living quarters. Ma really wanted to see it, but she was scared to death of the stairs. We finally talked her into going upstairs. She climbed the stairs by leaning forward and climbing the stairs with her hands and feet as though it was a ladder. Ma really enjoyed seeing my spanking new upstairs, but she shook the whole time she was up there with fright over the thought of having to get back down. She had such a furrowed, worried look on her face as she stood at the head of the stairs, facing the dreaded prospect of having to get back down. With much assistance from us Ma sat down on the top stair and then with us in front of her, she bumped down one stair at a time on her rear end. It went pretty smooth, but gave her such a fright that she never had any interest in climbing stairs again. Her neurological problem was so bad by now that she bent far forward, looking at

the floor due to the curve in her spine, and she could easily lose her balance and pitch forward if she did not hold onto something for support. Her steps were very short and fast and she developed a rather bow-legged stance. She shook from head to toe at rest, but much more pronouncedly so when upset. Her head jerked involuntarily when she was sitting in her rocker. I doubt if she noticed it much as it was so quick and spontaneous. It became very hard for her to eat, dress, or do any work. Threading a needle was beyond her between the shaking and the poor eyesight. She often gave the needle over to Sandy to thread and was so grateful when Sandy would thread it on the 1st or second try. Sandy couldn't figure out what was so difficult about threading a needle as she was too small to place herself vicariously in Ma's position.



**Nellie & Marie**

**1952**



**Mike**

In June of 1952 two things happened in close succession. First my oldest son, Michael graduated from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade at St. John Berchman's grade school and was enrolled in Servite High School. Then two weeks after Mike graduated he became the proud big brother of a rather noisy baby brother.

Around midnight, June 19, 1952 Ed took me to the Art Center Hospital on Woodward Avenue and Kirby around the corner from Wayne State University in Detroit. That was my worst labor! I thought I would never survive that one

okay. The labor seemed to go on forever and I was exhausted from the pain. The doctor decided to give me caudal to ease the pain, but then I started to freeze all over. The anesthesiologist remarked, "A very poor caudal subject". That made me feel real good! Douglas Paul was born on Friday, June 20th at 4:45 am. He weighed a whopping 9 lbs., 2 1/2 ozs.!



**Marie & Doug**



**Bill, Nellie & Doug**

We took Doug home 3 days after he was born. After all my other babies I had a ten-day rest in the hospital. I now had 4 kids and I just wasn't up to going home and taking on all that work after only 3 days. It seemed that it was over two years before rested up and got my strength back.

Doug was a pistol right from the start. When the doctor smacked him on the posterior to get him to breathe, he had a real temper tantrum and screamed until he turned blue! The doctors had to put him into an incubator to get him pink again. Doug continued to be a very hyper, nervous baby after we took him home. He cried every other hour, day and night, until after he was over 2 years old. I was worn to a frazzle! I never got my proper sleep and all that screaming put my nerves on edge.



**Marie & Doug**

Doug looked about 2 months old when I brought him home from the hospital, he was so big! We put him in Sandy's doll buggy on the front porch in a diaper and a tee shirt. Was that ever a hot summer!



**Douggy in Sandy's buggy**

I bought such beautiful clothes for Doug. He had everything all new because I threw out all Bill's baby things just 2 weeks before I got pregnant. I just knew I would never have another baby. I later learned from friends and neighbors that throwing out the baby things is very dangerous. It's a sure ticket for another new baby! A week before I went to the hospital I had two suitcases packed, one for me and one for the new baby. Ed came to pick me and Doug up and no clothes! He forgot them at home in his rush to get there on time. Poor Doug, who had such nice things, went home in rags. I was so devastated, thinking of all the pretty things I had in the suitcase for him! And naturally, the hospital gave me their worst clothes, as no doubt no one ever returns the borrowed clothes, they're too busy with the new baby!



**Marie & Doug**

Boy, it was a hot day when we brought Doug home, and then at the end of the day I was mortified, it was my Ed's birthday and I forgot all about it! The next day I made him a nice birthday dinner and apologized. He forgave me knowing the circumstances.



**Marie & Doug**

Too bad my nerves were so bad in those days because Doug was such a cute Butch! The Lord should have given such a little spitfire to me in my earlier as one of my first children when I had more patience and more energy!

In the fall Ed would take the whole family to Rochester park and we would all walk the railroad tracks by Yates cider mill and then work our way into the park from there. One time when we were walking the tracks we felt the vibration and heard Whoo! Whoo! Boy, did we ever get off the tracks in a hurry! We stood by the side of the tracks as the train went swooshing by at a high rate of speed.



**Doug & Sandy**

Ed and Mike took turns in the fall of 1952 carrying Doug. Was he ever a chunk and so slippery in his pink snowsuit. He kept slipping out of all our arms! He kind of cut the walk short that year.



**Doug with chipmunk cheeks**

And did Doug ever have chipmunk cheeks! One day Ed was smiling looking at Doug and then he asked me, "Just how thick are his fat little cheeks?" I said I wasn't sure, so Ed put his finger in Doug's mouth and felt his cheek. He couldn't believe how thick it was! It's over an inch thick! Ed exclaimed.

Mike liked his new but noisy little brother. Doug looked so big till you put him on Mike's lap. We have a picture of Mike holding Doug and Doug just takes up a small part of Mick's lap.



**Marie and Douglas Bender**



**Doug, Nancy and Don**

In November 1952 Nancy and Don decided to get married in the Catholic Church. They were married in St. John Berchman's Church with Father Verweil performing the ceremony. I was so very happy for them that day! That was what I called a real marriage ceremony. It was Thanksgiving Day that they were married and expecting Warren!



**Marie, Nellie, Warren & Nancy**

Nancy had been somewhat sore with me when she was first married as I told her to wait at least a year before starting a family to make sure the marriage was stable. I felt that if it didn't work out being a divorced mother with a child at 17 would have been a real tragedy in those days. Don worked at Briggs Manufacturing plant in those days. We had a real funny situation in those days. There was a very crude, rude masculine 50 some year old woman named Madeline working at Don's plant. And every time Don got off work he would hear Madeline running after him, yelling yoo-hoo, Don! can you give me a lift home? Don used to try his dragnets to duck out without her on his tail. Even



when Nancy picked Don up with the car Madeline would run up and jump in the car and expect a ride home.

Another real funny repeated incident was the woman crossing guard on Jefferson on Don's route home. He HATED her and made no bones about it. While being stopped at the intersection waiting for the old bitty to let him pass, he would hang out the window and hurl all manner of insults her way. It got to be game between them. She used to look for Don every day and when she saw his car she would jump out in the middle of the street right in front of Don's car, put out her hand with a very exaggerated motion, blow her police whistle and bring him to a halt. Don used to threaten to run her over and used to put his foot on the brake and then rev up his engine pretending to be about ready to pop a wheelie right over her fat body. She used to hurl insults right back at Don. One day she stopped him as the first car, as usual and was walking kids across the street while eating an ice cream cone. Don stuck his head out the window, hollering at her, "Go ahead, you fat pig, stuff it all in! Cram it in, it'll fit!"



**Sandy Bender**

Sandy was getting sick every month in those days and we did not yet realize it was because her kidney was gradually dying. We took her to doctor after doctor and each one gave us a different answer. One quack thought maybe it was pinworms and gave us a prescription for a worm medicine. We filled the prescription. It was very pleasant tasting cherry syrup. We got home in time to make lunch. I placed the bottle of medicine on the counter. Doug was just walking and was everywhere at once. I made the lunch for all of us, and put him in the high chair half way through making sandwiches as he was into everything and driving me nuts. I turned around to give him his sandwich and milk, and lo and behold, he was sound asleep with his little head resting on his tray. Sandy said, how could he possibly conk out that quick after having just tore up half the kitchen. Suddenly she said, oh, oh, look mom! He drank the whole bottle of medicine! Sure enough, there was the bottle laying on its side on the counter without much liquid left in it! I called the doctor and he told me to make Doug throw up, which following his instructions, I was able to do. He started coming to then and was all right by supper. But what a scare!



**Doug in his new highchair**

Ma used to spend a lot of her time looking out of the window and seeing who was coming or going as there was not a lot she could do to help me due to her neurological condition. Ma loved to tell me who got a job, when they came and went to work and what they wore. She was especially observant of who bought a new hat.

## 1953



**Norman**



**Marie, Art & Agnes**



**Richard Virginia Nancy Gary**

In the summer of 1953 Ed decided to take his family and Norman and his two kids for a vacation to Lion's Head, Ontario, Canada in the Bruce Peninsula, about 25 miles north of Wiarton. What a beautiful vacation spot! The first time we saw it we were with Art and Agnes in 1951. We had reservations at Look-about Isle Resort on Lake Huron just south of Red Bay on Old Woman's River. We stayed at the Lodge (a beautiful cedar building with a large fireplace in the middle of the room.) They served meals to all the guests. And there was dancing and sing-a-longs around the outdoor campfire. The sunset was gorgeous! We left there in 1951 after 3 days to explore other parts. Ed liked to scare the dickens out of Agnes by driving up and down and around the snaking, winding roads at higher than called for speeds and telling her that they might meet another car up on one of the hills, or around one of the horse shoe curves.



**Agnes Bender**

Agnes believed that this was very possible and was worked up to a fever pitch. Ed knew what was coming or not coming as he surveyed the landscape while on the top of the hills but Agnes didn't know this. Ed lost his brand new muffler on one of the rough, winding dirt roads. He had to stop at a gas station and get it repaired. All roads on the peninsula in those days were dirt, even Highway 6. And you wouldn't believe how steep highway 6 was leading out of Wiarton! It went straight up a cliff. When Ed has his Opel loaded in 1959 he couldn't get up that hill with that small engine and had to take a back road around Wiarton. Many farmers refused to drive to Wiarton in the daylight. They said all those twists and turns with those darn fool American tourists on the road were too dangerous! They preferred to drive at night so they could see the oncoming headlights shining over the hills.

In 1951 we drove to Midland and made reservations on a steamer that took us to the 30,000 Islands. We disembarked at Honey Harbour where the shoreline had beautiful resort homes. We took a boat tour through the 30,000 Islands. The Captain of the tour ship was a young man, and as he maneuvered the ship through the twists and turns around the islands for about 4 hours, he came to a spot with many large, submerged, hard to spot rocks. That was time to call in "Davy Jones", the real Captain who was about 80 years old and who had maneuvered this ship all of his life but had retired about 10 years ago. After racking up the boat a few times, the young Captain put the older one back into service for this one spot. He sure knew his way around those rocks, just as smooth as could be, and he had nothing but scorn for the lack of expertise on the part of that young whippersnapper who now navigated the ship.



**Art, Agnes & Marie**

In 1951 we stayed in a private boarding home that evening and the next morning we had a very good home cooked breakfast, orange juice, eggs, bacon, toast and coffee. Then we were on our way for more exploring, this time the martyrs shrine in Midland. We walked around the beautiful grounds and I walked up the hill to the Shrine, and then went inside to say some prayers. Ed, Art and Agnes went in with me, then after a time left. I didn't notice that I was all alone until I saw the parish priest about to lock the doors. Was he ever surprised to see me. If he hadn't seen me, I would have been locked in for the night! No way could I have been heard through those solid walls!



**Lion's Head, Ontario, Canada**

Then we went sight seeing again and this time ended up in Lion's Head, Canada. We were cruising along the dirt country road that follows the Georgian Bay when we saw a sign that said Cedar Grove Cottages. We stopped and saw Wilbert T. Pacey up on the roof nailing the shingles on the spanking new, almost finished cottages. Art suggested that we stop and look at the cottages. They were all brand new cottages with cedar trees growing all around and we were so fascinated as we got our first glimpse of the trees, rocks and the beautiful Georgian Bay! Uncle Art fell in love with the area and wished with all his heart he could move to Canada.



**Clyde Bender**

The next summer he took Agnes, his son Clyde, with his new wife Olive, to see this beauty spot once again. We also desired to see the Georgian Bay again, so when Douggie was 13 months old I saw an ad for a cottage on the Georgian Bay on Colpoy Bay, just north of Wiarton. I sent a \$5 deposit for the cottage for the last 2 weeks of July 1953.



**Doug, Nancy & Don**



**Billy & Marie**



**Sandy**

We got there on a Saturday afternoon. We had Ed, I, Ma Dahl, Sandy, Bill and Doug with us. I took one look at that dilapidated hotel that was supposed to be a cottage and the swamp all around, and I said to Ed, "We can't stay here, the kids would drown!" The building was a very high, narrow block, so desolate looking and across a busy highway from the water.

Mama agreed that it was dangerous and ugly! So Ed suggested that we try for Mr. Pacey's cottages and see if he had a vacancy. Mr. Pacey was a very outspoken older farmer who lived one-mile inward from Whippoorwill Bay. He couldn't stand "those dumb Americans"; he was only interested in their money!

He was sure a hard working man, he built those cottages all by himself, using his team of horses to pull huge rock slabs out of the bay to use as foundations. Then he framed and finished the cottages in his spare time. During the week he worked on his farm. Once the cottages were completed, he would come over every Saturday and clean all 4 cottages himself. And some of the people he rented to were real pigs! The Cotton family spit their bubble gum out all over the floor and then stepped on it all week. Pacey spent hours scraping the gum off the floor. The pigs went on Mr. Pacey's black list and were never welcome back there again.

In those days, Mr. Pacey rented out the small 2-bedroom cottage for \$25.00 per week and the large three-bedroom cottage for \$35.00 per week. Mr. Pacey was able to give us cottage #3 for the first week, a nice large 3 bedroom cottage, but then we had to rent the smaller 2 bedroom cottage for \$25 a week the second week as all the big cottages had been previously rented out.

Mama loved to sit and watch the big steamers and commercial fishing boats go up and down the Georgian Bay. They would toot their foghorns as they went by. Pacey did not warn us about the water. We all drank water out of the tap and within 24 hours we were all deathly ill at both ends. We were taking turns at the bathroom and were doubled over with stomach cramps. Ma was taken real hard with stomach cramps and vomiting and I was real concerned about her. Norm's boys would go storming out the front door and upchuck in the bushes. What a way to start a vacation. But we were soon better and we

learned to boil the water that came directly from the bay before drinking it. Bill was about 4 and he came into the cabin the 2nd afternoon and said he didn't feel too good. Bill came to me holding his stomach which was really bothering him, and said, "Mom, I think I'm pregnant!" Mama and I laughed so hard, and then wondered where he ever got that expression?

Ma would take an afternoon nap every day because she slept in the middle bedroom with Sandy and Bill and she said they tossed and turned so much and kicked and hit her in their sleep that she couldn't get enough rest. Ma would get up in time to help me get dinner on the table for the family.

Ed and Norman would go off fishing everyday and I got fed up with being stuck with all the kids so one day when they were going fishing on Miller Lake, I told them to take Sandy and Bill fishing with them. So they took the kids with them and were gone for hours, and hours and hours. If I knew what was going on I would have been furious and weak with fear for my little kids.

Norman told Ed, "You're really not going to put those noisy kids in the boat with us, are you? We'll never catch a fish with them on board". So Ed told the kids to stay in the car while he and Norman and the kids went out fishing. They left in the boat and went so far out that they disappeared for several hours.

Sandy, never one to sit idle, looked for something interesting to do. The guy who rented them the boat had all his usable boats rented out, so he disappeared for awhile. Sandy hit upon a marvelous idea. She found one boat that was not rented. She found some oars, pushed the boat in the water, put Bill in the boat and rowed her way out into the lake. When she got into about 7 feet deep water, she noticed that the boat was fast filling up with water. She decided it was time to row towards shore real fast. She got to about 3 1/2 feet deep water when the boat was now about 1/2 full of water and wasn't moving too well anymore. She gingerly let herself over the side of the boat and discovered she could touch ground in chest deep water. So she had to beg a hysterical Bill to jump into her arms and she then carried him till he could touch ground and not have his head under water. Bill then continued to cry his heart out until Ed, worried about his kids, decided to row back to shore and check things out. When he saw the boat sunk in 3 1/2 feet of water he got upset, as he knew the kids could have drowned if they went out further. He decided it was time to get them home to their mother. But it wasn't time to quit fishing yet, so he asked Norman's 15 year old Son, Richard, who had no driver's license, to use Norman's car and drive the kids back to the cottage. Richard drove them back, all right. At 70 miles per hour on a twisting, turning, dirt back road! At the place where they kept a live Bear, at Clark's Corners, Richard lost control of the car and smacked up the fender of the car on an embankment. He regained control, then drove a little more sensibly the rest of the way home. When Norman saw his fender all crumpled up at the end of the



day when he was back at the cottage, he asked his sons Richard and Gary what happened. Neither one of them had a clue as to what had happened to the car. They feigned total innocence. Little Sandy piped up and told the whole story about the harrowing trip home and the loss of control and hitting the embankment. Norman got so mad at Richard and bopped him a few good ones. You could hear Norman shouting at Richard for miles. Richard could have strangled little big mouth Sandy. Richard became Bill's buddy and Gary Sandy's buddy for the duration of the vacation.



**Sandy & Bill**

In the first cottage Ed and I slept in the south corner bedroom, Ma, Sandy and Bill slept in the middle bedroom and Norman and Richard slept in the bunk beds off the kitchen. Gary slept on the couch. In the second, little cottage, Ed and I slept in the middle bedroom, Ma, Sandy and Bill in the other bedroom, Norman slept on the couch, and the two boys slept in the car. One night they came barreling into the cottage at phenomenal speed, darn near caving in the door in the haste to get in! Richard and Gary swore they saw a Bear lumbering down Isthmus Bay Road and they weren't about to stay out there and make his personal acquaintance! They slept on the floor the remainder of the night.

We all slept well at the cottage in spite of those hard, flat mattresses. All except Ma, that is. Ma complained how Sandy and Bill moved around all night, bopping her in their sleep. She took an afternoon nap to catch up on her lost sleep. In the evening we would play cards and in the small cottage we would laugh, here was baby Doug standing up in his crib, pulling the drape aside to watch his mommy and daddy. Doug would walk both on the hard wood floors of the cottage as well as the tall sickly grass outside on the soles of his feet and the palms of his hands to protect his tender knees. This position soon got too hard on his little back, so he took to standing up and taking his first halting steps instead. He was getting pretty good at toddling by the time we went back home. Well, I sure loved the idea of him walking, no more dirty hands or overalls, but when we got back home to the soft carpets he immediately went down on all fours again. I grabbed him by the suspenders, pulled him upright, and said, "Oh, No, buster get up and walk!"



**Sandy & Marie**



**Sandy & Marie**



**Marie & Sandy**

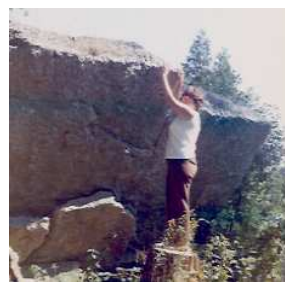


**Sandy**

From then on he walked. The children spent many hours down on the rocks, which is what the beach on the Georgian Bay is composed of. Cynthia was just 8 years old when she built a large, beautiful rock fort all by herself in about 7 hours! Ed and Sandy loved exploring the area and climbing the cliffs whenever they were up there.



**Marie & Sandy**



**Marie**



**Marie**



**Sandy & Edward**

We would all take long walks along the seashore and gather up stones and skip them across the water. Ed was always the best stone skipper; he could pick the best stones and make them skip 7 times or more. He taught us that the ones with two flat sides were the best. He usually preferred the light blue slate colored stones to the white ones. Sometimes we would just throw them in the water as far as we could. Bill used to spend hours on the beach throwing rocks into the water. The children loved to take bread down on the rocks and throw pieces up in the air. Lo and behold, where a few minutes ago the shoreline was completely deserted, from no where a mass of seagulls would appear, flapping their wings and honking to see who could catch our attention and thus get the most food!



**Donna, Marie, Edward & Sandy**

Many an hour we have explored the back roads leading to no where. Mama would go with us on these rides but she was scared to death of coming face to face with a grizzly bear! She would sit in the back seat and hold onto the car strap for dear life! (There used to be a strap on dad's 1951 Pontiac that hung down just in front of the back seat in order to help the rear seat passenger in and out of the car. This used to be Ma's safety device; the more frightened she got the tighter she would hang on to this strap.)

One Monday afternoon I was hanging up a large laundry that I had just washed over a scrub board in the little cottage, with Ed's help in wringing out all the soaking wet clothes. Pacey walked by the 4 lines of wash hanging on the north end of the property and looked at me with amazement. I could see he thought I was crazy to leave a comfortable home with all the modern appliances to scrub dirty diapers and overalls over a wash board!

But I enjoyed every bit of the work and so did the rest of the family and especially dear Grandma Dahl. One bit of work I put my foot down on, however. Ed and Norman had all the enjoyment of fishing in the boat all day at Miller Lake, Johnstone Harbour, Pinetree Harbour or Red Bay, and then they would bring home the fish for me to cook. I gladly cooked the fish for them, but I told them cleaning the fish was not my department, I hated that job and I had enough work to do. Ed and Norman mumbled it out and Norman ended up cleaning the fish, which we gladly ate. Fresh pan-fried fish, which in those days came from crystal clear, unpolluted water!

That last Monday we took Mama for a ride to Owen Sound, about 30 miles one way. We went through neat dime stores and stopped at the ice cream store, boy were they ever big in 1953 and only 5 cents, and so delicious!

Ed found the buy of the century that year in Owen Sound. He wore ties every day of his life and he found a clearance counter where he got all the ties he could ever want for 5 cents a tie. Ed went wild in that store! He bought dozens. They were modern, conservative designs. Mom sat on a park bench on the corner when she got tired. Ed soon joined her and the whole family was put to work rolling Ed's new ties and putting them back neatly into the bag. We ate lunch there at the Dime Store.

At last the sad day came. We packed up and started on our way home, a few days early because I was tired of playing pioneer woman and we thought it best if Ed got back a little early. He could check on his store, which he was worried about, as our teenage son Mickey was running it by himself.



**Mickey**

The drive home is very scenic. First we pass through forests of pine and cedar in the Bruce Peninsula. Then we connect with highway 21 and drive through an Indian Reservation. We pass through many romantic sounding towns with English names, like Tiverton, Incardinate, Wiarton, Goderich, Ipswich, Exeter, St. Joseph, Kin tail, Mar, Southampton, Elgin, etc. We then see the Georgian Bay many times as we travel south on Highway 21. When Ma was with us we stopped at the hotel on the southwest corner in Southampton. We first went into the hotel on the northwest corner but we didn't like it as well. Ma enjoyed her last vacation lunch. She loved the ride home and surprisingly, didn't have the runs coming or going. Ma almost didn't go on vacation with us, as she was very fearful of having the runs ever hour or so. Ed faithfully promised to stop every time she had to go, so Ma finally agreed. But we never had to stop specially for Ma. We were so glad we took her, for she died shortly afterwards and this was her last vacation.

It took us 6 hours to drive home to Alter Road. It was a leisurely and very pleasant trip. We used our 1951 dark green Pontiac Chieftain, which was one of the best car Ed ever owned. He loved that car and put about 100,000 miles on it. He had a 1949 Plymouth, which he liked, but every time it was damp out, the darn thing refused to start. Ed walked to work many a day when he had that darn car. After 1 1/2 years he had enough and went to a new car dealer where he found the 1951 Pontiac. He used his 1949 Plymouth as a trade in, on a dry, sunny day of course! When he went back a few days after turning in his old car as a trade in he saw several potential customers drooling over his clean, low mileage trade in. (Naturally, when the lot got done with it, the car had a lot less mileage than when turned it in. Dad just smiled sadly, shook his head and said to him, "Lord help the poor sucker who buys that car. I hope he likes walking in the rain".



**Marie, Nellie, Warren and Nancy**

We arrived back in Michigan about 7:30 p.m., tired but happy. Everyone was ready for bed. Ma and the kids were asleep before their heads hit the pillow. Soon after we got home Don walked across the street and told us that Nancy had gone into labor.

The next morning, August 1, 1953, she delivered a son, Warren Donald Stephens. Little Warren was baptized at St. John Berchman's Church in Detroit. Ed and I were his sponsors. Nancy stayed with me during the day for a week after she got out of the hospital. The doctor had given her a lot of scary warnings on what to look for, so she came to me so she could rest and have the experience of an old veteran at having kids. She had an awful time with abscesses and had to give up breast feeding Warren. Those abscesses were very painful and I felt to sorry for her, especially when the doctor had to cut a number of them out.



**Warren Stephens & Marie Bender**



**Marie, Nellie, Warren & Nancy 8/1/54**

Nancy moved to Montclair near Harper soon after that. It was a big, spacious, nice upper 2 bedroom apartment. I helped her on moving day. Nancy had inherited a 3 foot tall Statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and she was very fond of that statue. Wouldn't you know it, I was carrying that statue into the house when I tripped and dropped the statue. It broke into smithereens! I felt so bad! But once it's broke there is nothing you can do.

I was helping Nancy one day in her new flat on Montclair hanging up wash in the back yard. Little did I know how horrified would be if I knew what was going to happen to Don very soon. Nancy told me a little while later that Don was on his way to work in the wee dark hours of the morning, stamping his feet loudly as he walked through the back yard on his way to the garage to scare away the rats that were scurrying around there. When he got into the car and put his foot on the gas pedal, he was horrified to feel a rat crawling up his leg on the inside of his pant leg. Before he could figure out, "what now", he put his hand tight over his pant leg above where the rat was to block his progress. He then reached inside his pant leg and pulled the rat out. He was very lucky he wasn't bitten!



After that Don and Nancy noticed at dusk the rats running around the backyard, the same spot where I had been hanging up wash! They decided to move after that; they needed a loan of money to buy a little home because Nancy knew she was pregnant again and wanted a home to call her own by the time the new baby arrived.

The four of us started to drive around the city looking for a home that was reasonably priced. They finally found a cute little white bungalow in Berkley, Michigan, at 2324 Franklin, near Coolidge and Catalpa. It had 2 small bedrooms upstairs in the back of the house, a living room and kitchen in the front. It had a full basement. It was a comfortable, well-built home, sunny, airy and easy to heat.



**Shirley & Linda Stephens**

Nancy was very happy in her new home and Don soon expanded the living quarters, paneling the basement walls and laying tile on the floor. Nancy had Don move her dining room table and buffet into the basement. Warren had his own bedroom in the basement, which he loved, although it was a little cooler than the rest of the house.



**Marie & Edward Bender**

Nancy was a very good cook and homemaker for such a young girl! We had many a good time on Sunday afternoons; going to the park at Woodward and 13 Mile Road and having a nice picnic lunch, which Nancy would make for us. We played baseball and touch football there, always enjoying our Sunday afternoon outings.





**Doggie**

We had a funny story attached to that park. We were all enjoying our picnic lunch when suddenly we noticed Douggie was looking a little kooky. When I looked at him again a little later, I said, Oh, Oh! he's got red spots all over him! The beginning of the measles! Naturally 10 days later dear little Warren came down with them too.



**Sandy, Marie & Mickey in New Baltimore park**

Another funny park story, but not at all funny at the time. We used to go to New Baltimore and sneak in their municipal park when the guard wasn't looking. First we would have the littlest kids run in and then we would follow at a distance behind when the coast was clear. We used to take Ma too so she could enjoy watching the water and the boats coming and going on Lake St. Clair. The kids used to be somewhat apprehensive about going into the water as there was about a 2-foot drop off at the beginning. There was a wood dike holding back the water that the kids used to have to jump or slip off the dike. The little kids used to be scared that it might be over their heads so Mike and Nancy would have to go in first to prove to Sandy, Bill and later Doug that it wasn't all that deep. One day Sandy finally went in but it was almost up to her chin and she was apprehensive. Nancy played with her awhile and when she calmed down, left her alone and went to jump in off the dock in deeper water and dog paddle back to the ladder. Mike and Nancy could swim, but not too hot. Sandy was playing in the shallow section and then I put baby Bill in a puddle where the water was washing over the dike so he could cool off on this rather hot day too. I turned my head to check on our belongings and when I looked back, no Bill! I was frantic! Sandy yelled that he fell overboard. I hollered at Ed who was standing back about 10 feet with cameras all around

his neck, to jump in and save Bill. Ed, who was always most gallant, failed me this time. He told me to jump in, that he didn't want to get his cameras wet! I jumped in and pulled out a rather water logged Bill. He was soon none the worse for his dunking. But I was steamed up over Ed being more worried about his cameras than the kid. And I hated jumping in and getting wet too, though, as I was in street clothes and was now soaking wet.



**Marie & Bill**

They say history repeats itself and in our case it did. Another summer some 4 years later I put Doug in the same puddle and as he was a very active little guy, he ended going overboard as he was thrashing about so much he lost his balance and plop, in he went. I hollered to Ed to save him, and yup, once again, Ed had the cameras around his neck. This time I got into the water real quick as I knew what the answer would be and rescued little Doug. But Doug didn't let us off as easy as Bill did. He came up screaming his bloody head off and just kept on screaming! From the pitch and intensity of the scream, it was obvious that nothing was wrong with his lungs!



**Billy & Marie**

We also had the same story at Barker's cottage in Lexington. Bill fell over in a high wave, I yelled for Ed and again we couldn't risk drowning those blasted cameras, so in I went. Mildred Neff went to Barkers before and she talked us into going with them one year when Sandy was 5 years old. We had all the kids with us, except for Doug, who wasn't born yet. What a slam bang place that was! They had about 9 cottages all lined up very close together in a line going from the lake to the road. Mildred and Harold Neff were in cottage #3, but we were further back in about #7. All you heard all day long was the loud slam, bang of the many cottage doors as the kids came and went to the beach.

I never could figure out that Harold and Mildred were ever interested in going back to a place like that!



**Harold & Mildred Neff**

Mildred and Harold invited Bea and Ed Gamache to come up, which they did for a few days and stayed with Mildred and Harold in their cottage. The cottages were somewhat primitive and dark, but we all had a good time, swimming during the day, all playing cards together at night. And boy, did they ever have some high waves at Barker's! They were over 3 feet tall at times. One day Sandy went in the water and was disappointed, as she could not join her Aunts who were out in water over Sandy's head. Suddenly the Aunts went further out and were now in shallower water. Nancy told Sandy she could stand up out there, but Sandy reminded Nancy that she would have to get through the deep part first and she didn't know how to swim. Nancy then picked Sandy up to carry her over the deep part. Sandy screamed bloody murder, as she didn't trust Nancy one little bit, fearing that she would drown her. Well Sandy got out to the sand bar and was with her aunts. Then both her aunts left suddenly and Sandy found herself standing out there all alone. After awhile the wind picked up and the waves started crashing in nose deep on Sandy. She got real scared and started shouting for help. Mildred, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> cottage, heard Sandy, came back out and rescued her.

We had a very bad incident happen, which I was not aware of until after I got back home. It seems that Barker's 12 year old boy was trying to lure the younger children to come with him under a blanket so he could play "doctor". The younger kids were quite frightened and avoided him like the plague. When they saw him coming they would run to an adult. When I found out about this I was upset with my little kids that they didn't tell me right at the time so I could have kept a closer eye on them.

Ed was wearing a new style shoe, which had just come into fashion, which instead of having the traditional flat leather soles, had rippled crepe soles. Sandy used to love to get up right next to where Ed was standing and drop stones of just the right size right next to his feet and watch the stones disappear when Ed stepped on them and they got caught in the ripple. Then that night she would pull them back out the ripple to use again the next day.



**Doug Bender & Warren Stephens**

Nancy was scared of spiders, I mean, really scared! And she had plenty of them to be scared over in that cottage. It gets a little wearing on your nerves after awhile hearing a kid scream over every spider she sees.

Ed would swim out into the wild waves and scare me, as I was so concerned that he might be pulled under by those wild waves, and what would I do with no husband and all those kids!

When Doug was a little baby Ed and Mike went out in a boat with Kay Fraser and Ed's brother Norman to go fishing in Caseville. They left very early in the morning, with Ed's Scott Atwater motor in the trunk. They had all their fishing gear in order and were looking forward to a fun day of sun, water, boat and fishing. All went well and they were in Caseville about noon, rented the deepest, biggest boat they could find as Ed felt that they were safer and he felt they were worth the little extra money. Little did that party know that by the end of the day how desperately they were going to need the extra depth and length of that bigger boat. Ed attached the Scott Atwater to the back of the boat and Norman, Kay and Mickey filled the boat with supplies, none of which was a life preserver. Kay tossed in a can of worms, never realizing that before this day was through this can would have saved his life. They threw a pair of oars in for good measure, although they were not needed as Ed had the motor. Then Ed got in the back of the boat, let out the choke, gave the pull cords a full good rips, and the engine came to life. Ed let it roar for a minutes to warm up, then let in the choke threw it into forward gear, increased the speed, and they were off! They went way out to where Ed heard there was good fishing and then dropped their lines and waited. They didn't have long to wait, one after another the lines jumped. Ed used to help the others get the hook out of the fish's mouth, holding them by the gills, and then throwing them into the bucket they brought for that purpose. Suddenly Ed noticed that the bigger boats with powerful motors were all heading to shore. He looked up and saw some clouds on the horizon. Ed figured a storm must be brewing so he decided that they had better follow suit and head to shore. Ed pulled on the Scott Atwater rip cord, then again, again, again, ad nauseum..... nothing happened. Ed was plum worn out, so Norman told him to move over, he'd get that darn thing started. After Norman was worn to a frazzle, he turned it over to Kay and then Mickey. One dead motor.... They checked the gas, still plenty there. They

played with the choke until they were sure the darn thing was flooded. Then they waited until they thought it wasn't flooded anymore. Nothing.... Ed was getting very nervous as he saw the clouds getting blacker



**Michael Bender**



**Edward Bender**

and the waves getting higher. Ed finally said they would have to row in. Ed took the oars and headed to shore. There was some argument as to where they were heading, but Ed had very carefully studied the shore line as he set out so he would know where to go back to, so that's where he headed. The 2-foot waves, became 3 feet and the rain started coming. Ed rowed with even greater determination. The 3-foot waves became 4 foot and Ed started to sweat with nerves. Ed started giving out so he had Mickey take one oar and Mickey did great for a 14-year-old kid. Ed told him he had to stroke with the same force and at the same time as Ed in order to keep to one course. The 4-foot waves became 5 feet and Ed knew they were in great danger of capsizing if he didn't hit the waves just right. He went at an angle, being careful not to hit them straight on, nor sideways. Mickey continued to row with strength Ed never knew that he had for such a young, skinny kid. Ed had long ago ordered Kay Fraser to bail out the water as it came rolling over the side of the boat in ever increasing volume. Norman was also ordered to bail. Ed looked back to see how they were coming along and found Kay Fraser had ceased to bail and was on his knees praying for deliverance. Ed blew up and screamed at Kay to bail while he was praying or the boat would soon fill with water and sink. Ed had to get real rough with Kay to keep him bailing again, as he was totally hysterical with fright, crying out with fear and unnerving the other men.



**Mike & Marie**

Several huge yachts came by and Ed begged them to take Mike and Kay onboard, but fearful of capsizing, they refused. Ed told them to at least inform the coast guard that they were out there and in mortal peril due to the storm whose waves were now reaching 7 feet. In fact in between waves you could see the sandy bottom as that is a relatively shallow bay, which is the reason that the waves become so high and violent in a storm. Ed prayed and hoped for safety, especially for his young son Mickey. Ed was very surprised that his son showed no fear in this situation, or even later when he was safely back on shore. At about 2:30 am the next day, Ed finally reached shore, many miles down from where he had rented the boat, due to the fact that he had to cut into the waves at an angle to prevent capsizing. Ed praised that extra deep boat for years and years afterwards.

Meanwhile I was pretty sure by now that I had lost both my husband and oldest son. I was sick with worry and grief. I had no idea where Ed was other than Caseville, and I had no idea whom to call. I thought maybe the State Police, but then what could I tell them or they me? Suddenly at 4:30 am I heard a car pull up out front. Mike and Ed had dropped off Norman and Kay and were now safely back home. My worry turned to anger that they had put me through all this for a fishing trip in a storm. I felt like hugging and braining Ed and Mickey all at the same time. I had spent hours and hours trying to figure out what I would ever do with 3 small kids and no husband and no income. Ed had two insurance policies, one for \$5,000 and one for \$1,000, but how far would that go in supporting us? What a relief that he was back home!



**Herman & Elenore**

That Scott Atwater motor had a few more sequels to this story before we retired it for good. First Elenore and Herman asked to borrow it for fishing on vacation. Ed told them they were welcome to it, but that that darn motor had a reputation of going out as far as you wanted it to, but that it would never start for the return trip. Herman told Ed not to worry that Herman knew all about motors and would tune it up before hand and it would run like a top. It did run like a top, too, on the way out. After Herman's vacation he returned the motor, saying to Ed, You were right, it goes out, but it never comes back!

Some years later Frank Tobatto, the cleaning man heard that Ed had a motor for sale and wanted to buy it. I told him right out, Oh, Frank, you don't want to buy Ed's motor, it goes out as far as you want it to, but it never starts for the



return trip. Frank got the motor for what he thought was a song, and with a little fine-tuning he figured it would purr like a kitten. It did, on the way out. Frank had feared for losing his life once when a storm came up and he couldn't get the darn thing started again. Like Herman some years before, Frank got mighty sore from rowing! No amount of repairs ever got that motor to start on the return trip.



**Marie showing what she thinks of rowboats**

I used to love to go fishing, but from the shore where I knew I was safe. They got me out in a boat once in awhile, but I was scared stiff every time I was out there and I really didn't enjoy myself due to fear. Even with my Mae West life preserver on I still did not relax. Ed used to have to stay to shallow waters with me in the boat and stay in inlets to lull me into security. But boy, was I ever a good fisher! No matter who was in the boat with me, my fishing was always better! I always caught the most and the best fish every time we went out, in the boat or on shore. Norman used to get jealous of me! I think Ed secretly did too. I was a bit of a pest as they had to put the worms on and the hook out as that was not in my idea of a good time fishing. We had many a good dinner from my fishing expeditions.

We went fishing at Wild Wood, near Interlochen Music camp by Traverse City. Ed and I went there with Mildred and Harold Neff about 1950. We had a good time there, also fishing. We stayed in a lodge, where the lodging and the food were all included in one price. First the owner of the lodge brought out cut raw vegetables. Harold Neff passed them up saying he preferred meat and potatoes. Ed felt the same way. However after the meal was served, really delicious cooking, but very skimpy portions, Ed and Harold ended up fighting over the appetizers to fill themselves up! We went fishing a lot at Wild Wood and again, I was very successful at catching fish. They had really nice, very high wooden swings which Ed and I enjoyed. We walked into the wooded area and Ed and I have some very nice pictures of us standing on fallen trees.



**Mildred Neff & Marie Bender**

Some times when Ed and I went fishing and I caught all the fish, Ed would cajole me into changing lines with him so he could have the luck. He would leave my line exactly where it was, I would take his and leave it where it was, and as a sudden, the fish would now come to my new line! This used to so exasperate Ed!

When Ed had his store on Mack and Holcomb, there was a young, handsome, very personable doctor just starting out his practice in an office on the 2nd story at Mack and McClellan. Dr. Hassig used to come to dad's store to buy and to just shoot the breeze with him when things were slow. Dad liked him very much, introduced him to me, I liked him too, and when he moved to Mack and Manistique in the 1950's I decided to use him as our general practitioner. He wasn't too brilliant as a doctor, but his personality was terrific. He used to say to me when Sandy got so sick with the dying kidney, that he was real good at curing a cold, but that he was out of his league when it came to serious illness. He used to refer Sandy to specialists a lot.

Ed moved from Mack and Holcomb and went to Warren and Courville, to 16389 E. Warren. Ed noticed that his business was going steadily downhill after the war and one day he asked several of his old customers why this was happening. He got the same reply from all of them, "Haven't you seen what's happening to your neighborhood?" Dad asked, "What's happening?" The customers replied that since the war, which enticed flocks of Negroes up from the south to fill the jobs in the auto plants, which the white men going off to war had vacated. They came up here by the carloads full and had moved into the Mack and Holcomb neighborhood in large numbers. Dad did not believe this so he went for a walk at lunchtime all through the neighborhood on the advice of his customer and was shocked at what he saw. Every block was predominantly black. That's when Dad knew he would have to get out of the neighborhood.

Ed and I loved to go to the Eagle Dairy right across Holcomb from his store and buy malt. It was huge, it came in a metal container and you could fill up a 8 ounce glass 3 times from that I metal container, and a malt cost only 30 cents. Well, Ed and I started noticing more and more black faces appearing and then we felt so sorry for the owner of the store as the blacks slit every soda fountain

seat in the place with their knives. They had been such nice seats! What a crying shame!

Ed moved into 16389 E. Warren between Audubon and Courville in the 1950's. He soon was very disappointed as the business in this location was not as good as Mack and Holcomb was before the end of the war. Ed still called his store Mack TV and Appliance, the same name he had used on Mack Ave. Ed had pondered what to call his first store. He decided not to use his first or last name, as he was just a little shy about doing that. He then settled on using the name of the major thoroughfare, Mack Avenue.



**Warren Stephens**

When Nancy lived across the street at Mrs. Van Heusen's house she used to come over my house almost every day and bring little Warren with her. She used to do her washing at my house, as she had no washing machine at Van Heusen's. We would sit and talk, as either she or I would run up and down the stairs on Alter to change loads. The other one would watch the kids, Douggie and Warren. Douggie and Warren did not get along at all together and it was one battle after another! I used to get exhausted trying to keep those two appeased and apart. Warren learned to walk at about 8 1/2 months on Alter.



**Doug Bender & Warren Stephens**

I remember him coming over to my house and crawling up and down the front porch steps on Alter Road. We used to worry about him falling off the side of the stairs or going into Alter Road which was a very busy thoroughfare. When I think back it was amazing that only the Cronin boy died as Alter was treacherous for a small child. I remember when Bill was 3 and 4 years old sometimes he would slip out of the house or out of the back yard and skip down the middle of Alter Road with all the cars slowing down to miss him. I

would run like the dickens down the middle of the street after him, scoop him up in my arms, and bring him back into the house.

Another time when Sandy was 3 years old Harold was building the upstairs and I was up there helping him and I told Ma to keep her eye on the little kid and see that she didn't get out of the house while I was busy. Sometime later Ma was hollering that the kid opened the front door and was running loose down the middle of the street! I flew down the front stairs and out the door and rescued the kid from the busy street. I was a little perturbed at Ma that she didn't keep the kid in the house and she replied that Sandy was just much too fast for her, that one minute she was playing in the house, the next minute she was gone!



**Sandy**

One Tuesday I was ironing as usual and Douggie was playing in the dining room near me. I always kept the children away from the ironing board, as I was afraid that they might pull the iron on them. Douggie then crept into the kitchen and was playing there. I was content because I could hear him crawling around so I figured that he was all right. Next thing I knew Douggie got up off the floor came to me and said, "HOT! HOT! HOT! He was just whispering the word, but he said it very emotionally, so I knew something was really amiss! I said, Douggie, what's hot?

You go show me what's hot! Then Douggie lead me into the kitchen, pointed at the iron that he had put on the linoleum floor and plugged in and said "HOT!" I thanked him for showing me the iron, unplugged it and put it on the sink again. There was a big black permanent scorch mark the exact shape of the iron in the linoleum. It was because of this black mark that I retiled the kitchen about a year later. The linoleum was much prettier than the tile we put in later. The linoleum was a beige yellow background with geometric lines going through it in a repeating pattern. The tile was gray with colored specks in it.

The bathroom tile was a sturdy red and black rubber tile. When I replaced the kitchen tile I also tiled over the red and black squares with the same gray tile. About this time I decided to paint the bathroom a pretty peach. Sandy helped me to paint the room. As soon as I got through painting, Sandy and I took a step back and took a look at the finished room. We then looked at one another

and said simultaneously, "That color's gotta go ". The next day when it was dry we painted it a more neutral color and we were much happier.



**Billy, Nellie and Douggy**

Ma used to watch Doug for me while I went to the doctor in 1953. I developed a horrible eczema on my hands after Doug was born. My hands became raw meat hooks, and boy, did they ever hurt! They cracked and were bleeding and the cracks were oh, so painful. I remember after putting Douggy to bed and trying to clean up the kitchen, my hands would hurt so bad that I would put my head down on the stove and just cry with the pain! Ed felt so sorry for me that he insisted that I go to a skin specialist. So all that summer I went to the skin specialist while ma watched the kids. The skin specialist only made my hands worse! He gave me many salves and creams and they only further aggravated my condition.

Then by chance I went to a chiropractor by the name of Dr. Simich, and boy, what a difference he made in my hands in only a short period of time! He took me off the salves saying that I now had far too much copper in my system. He did spinal adjustments and put me on a diet, which included large amounts of watermelon. He also determined that I was allergic to dust and certain harsh detergents. I soon became much better. By the end of the summer my hands were essentially cleared up. And I knew which detergents to stay away from so my skin stayed clear. Ed used to buy me "ALL" detergent by the 50-lb. barrel. That was the first thing that had to go. ALL, it turned out, was about the worst thing for my skin. I switched detergents and was greatly improved. With ALL, even if I did not do the wash, just folding a wash that had been washed in ALL, or even sleeping on a sheet washed in ALL would cause my hands to break out. For my dirt allergy, I took to wearing rubber gloves, which helped quite a bit.

Ma, however, had a devil of a time babysitting Douggy. Douggy was very high strung and screamed day and night. Ma was determined to put him down for his afternoon nap and thus have a little peace for a few hours while I was gone. Ma used to pick him up, carry him with great difficulty to the dining room chair on the northwest corner of the dining room, then put him in her arms and gently rock him to sleep. After he fell asleep she would rock him some more just to make sure he was sound asleep. Then she would gently place him in his crib in the downstairs front bedroom. No sooner would his head touch

the pillow, then he would be screaming again! She'd pick him up and carry him back to the same chair, rock him to sleep, with 15 extra minutes after he fell asleep for good measure, then walk him to the crib and oh so gently lay him down. Yup, you guessed it, WAHHH!!!!!! Ad nauseum.

One day Sandy was sitting with Ma and talking to her while ma was rocking Doug to sleep. Sandy and Ma had the only disagreement they ever had in their lives with one another. Ma thought Sandy went outside, but Sandy was sitting under the big old thick dark dining room table, unknown to Nellie, and brooding. After a half-hour Sandy realized that sitting there brooding made no sense, so she crawled out from under the dining room table, with its lace tablecloth, and came out right next to Ma. MA, who had no idea Sandy, was under there almost had heart failure when she saw a big shadow come out from under the dining room table!

Ma sure was glad when my hands were better. She was sick of taking care of a screaming baby who just wouldn't go to sleep!

When Doug was 13 months old we decided it was time to potty train him so Nancy offered to drive me to the store one evening to buy Doug a potty-chair. We went to Mack and Seven Mile area and bought one. It was quite dark when we started home. On the way home we passed Ed's store on Warren and Audubon, and while passing the store Nancy looked in to see if Don was still there. While Nancy had her eyes off the road, the fellow in front of her soon stopped and she didn't, as she didn't see him stop. CRASH!!! We plowed right into him! I was so worried for Nancy as she was 9 months pregnant expecting Warren and I was so worried she might be hurt. Nancy saw the crash just before it occurred and she knew she couldn't stop in time, so when she knew the crash was inevitable, she just threw up her arms and started crying hysterically! The man in the other car was so concerned and solicitous. He was willing to do anything. He just wanted Nancy to stop crying! He told her he would pay for his own car, for her to just calm down! I got Don from the store and he wasn't able to calm her down much either. We took Nancy home to my house and she spent the balance of the evening lying on my couch crying her heart out. Don and Nancy had a lot of bad luck with cars in those days, it seemed like every six months one of them was having an accident.

Then we started to potty train Doug using the new potty-chair. We set the potty-chair in the dining room by the buffet and put Doug on it every several hours, trying to get him to use it. Like any other little kid, he sat on the thing and played around until I got disgusted and was sure he'd never get potty-trained. And he kept trying to get off it and wander away. We finally started using the waist strap to tie him down. Then I tried to divert his attention from crawling off the potty-chair by giving him toys to play with. We gave him a ball for one hand and a large south of the border cowboy hat on his head. We used



to stand there smiling at how cute he looked and we knick named him "Poncho el Stinko" in his south of the border hat.

Bob Barr was Mike's best friend through his high school days. Bob had gone to St. Juliana's Grade School while Mike had gone to St. John Berchman's so that they did not meet until they both entered the 9th grade at Servite High. Mike and Bob were opposites in personality, Mike was quiet, reserved and dignified, while Bob was a real hell raiser, full of the devil and a real extrovert. But they both really liked one another and were fast friends for many years.

One time Mike went over Bob's house and they were lifting weights together, each urging the other on to press ever higher weight limits. Mike was doing this at the Barr's house when suddenly his back went out real bad and he was in bed for the better part of a week. Mrs. Barr kept him at her house and didn't even tell us about how much Mike's back hurt until later. I really liked Bob, he was such sunshine when he walked into the house, but he loved to tease me. One time Bob and Mike were sitting together in the kitchen and I suddenly had a feeling they were up to something, so I walked closer to the kitchen to listen in on what they were saying. Bob got wind that I was standing around the corner, so he quietly got up from his chair, came around the corner, picked me up by my waist, carried me under his one arm holding me by the waist. He spun me around three times in the dining room, then dropped me on a bed we had set up there as I was painting one of the bedrooms. I was so mad, so embarrassed, and yet deep down, I had to chuckle, although I wouldn't let him know it! I tried my best to show my anger and disapproval, but Bob was so mirthful over what he had just done that I simply couldn't stay mad at him!

Bob was a wild driver. He had a car for awhile before Mike got one, so Bob would roar over from his house and pick up Mike on the way to school. One day Bob roared up with several kids inside, through open the door and told Mike to hop in real quick, which Mike did. Suddenly, with Mike having only one foot in the car, Bob started flying down the street with Mike hanging more than half out of the car. The other kid helped pull Mike in, the door slammed shut and they were on their way!

While we were in Canada they talked Mike into having a rather wild party at our house. We never knew as Mike had cleaned up the house so thoroughly. Just Mrs. McCubbin let the cat out of the bag. We thought it was good that Mike had a party for his friends, as he needed to be a little more outgoing.

The Barr boys were just as wild at home. The boys used to get together and have fun upstairs in their home and when they had to use the bathroom they decided to have a contest instead. They tried to see who could best hit the house next door from out the window. I bet the neighbors just loved to live next door to those kids!

Another time the Barrs bought Bob chemistry set. Boy, was that a mistake to give him chemistry set and turn him loose by himself. Bob was a brilliant student and he soon realized that the stuff in the chemistry set was awfully tame and that you could supplement it with better stuff in the drugstore. Experimenting around with this and that chemical he soon got the desired effect and then some.... he ended up darn near blowing away the basement wall!!! It was a very lucky thing that he wasn't seriously injured.

About 1956 Ed decided to help Mike get a car of his own. But a side effect of getting the car was that Mike ended up losing to Sandy his brand new, immaculate Schwinn Panther bike that he had bought himself with his own money. Ed figured with a car Mike wouldn't need the bike anymore and without talking it over with Mike, just gave his brand new bike to Sandy. That wasn't right and unknown to us Mike was quite resentful at having to part with his brand new expensive bike that he had still intended to ride. Mike bought a 1956 Ford, a beautiful two-toned car, with white on the top and a very light gray on the bottom. That car lasted until 1963 when the engine went bad and threw a rod. Sandy had to pick Mike up from 12 and Van Dyke where the car gave out on his way to Dodge Main early in the morning and bring him back home. Mike then bought a mint green 1961 Plymouth second hand.

## 1954

We had some big excitements on Alter Rd one day. When we woke up we found a car really badly smashed up on Alter Rd. It was a big, heavy car and it was totally demolished back to the back seat. Mr. Reichard, Louise's father, was a policeman and he asked what had happened there the night before. What a gruesome tale he told us.... the car was full of very drunken people coming home from Whitey's when they missed the curve and ploughed into a parked car in front of Kling's house. The impact was so violent that it hurdled the back seat forward at a high rate of speed and had cut off the woman's legs who was sitting in the back seat and she had died right there on the spot.

One day Bill put me in an absolute panic! He was playing with a metal ball about the size of a marble when suddenly he came out running and told me he had swallowed it by mistake! I was so scared that he might poison himself or that it would get caught somewhere and need to be cut out! I called Dr. Hassig and explained what Bill had swallowed and asked him how dangerous it was and what we had to do about it. You'd better watch out! Dr. Hassig warned. Real scared, I asked why? Dr. Hassig replied, because when it comes out, it might crack the pot!

For Christmas, 1954, I had a big family gathering for my side of the family. Elenore and Herman were there, as were Bill, Dorothy and their 2 children, Sharon and Debbie, Mildred, Sonny and Doris, Ed, I and our kids and Ma. I spent almost all of my time before dinner in the kitchen cooking, coming out just briefly into the living room to talk to Ed and the guys and Ma. The women were in the living room briefly and then came out into the kitchen and the dining room to help me to get the dinner on the table. Ma remained in the living room, as she was too unsteady on her feet to be able to help us. The men were all sitting on the south side of the living room, and after a few beers the main topic of conversation was a shoot out that Sonny said he had with some intruders who had broken their way into the City County building. The conversation was pretty lively at that point.

Poor Ma, she sat all by herself in her wooden rocker on the northeast corner of the living room and just passively listened to Sonny's shootout. Sandy sat with Ma briefly, and said a few words to her, but generally Ma was all alone until we served supper. When we think back on that day, we feel so sorry that on this, Ma's last Christmas, she was alone so much. How much we would have gathered around her that day if we knew that this was it, that we'd never again have another Christmas with Mom!



**last picture taken of Nellie Dahl**

## **1955**

One day about the first week in March, 1955 I got a call from my sister Mildred that Ma, who was staying with the Stockers at the time, wasn't feeling well and was in bed. Ed and I went to Stockers to see Ma shortly after we got the call. Sandy wanted to come along but we felt she was too young to see Ma sick and besides Mildred said Ma had the flu so bad that she was asleep most of the time.

When we got to the Stockers Ma woke up briefly and knew us all, but she would fall back asleep before being able to carry on any kind of a conversation. Stockers said they took her to their family physician, Dr. Baumgartner, and that he had said that the old lady had the flu and to take her home and let her

sleep. So this is what the Stockers did. I didn't know anything about medicine so that sounded reasonable to me. Elenore came out to see Ma too and she didn't like the looks of Ma sleeping all day and all night. After Ma slept about a week and showed no signs of increasing alertness, Mildred became very worried and called Elenore and asked her if she'd take Ma as she didn't know what to do for her anymore. Elenore said sure and came and got Ma. Ma slept in the back seat of the car all the way over to Elenore's. Elenore gave Ma a bath, trimmed her hair and the few hairs, which grew on her, chin on a mole and then put her to bed. However as soon as she could Elenore took Ma to her own physician. The doctor took one look at Ma, took a quick blood test, and then told Elenore that Ma was in a diabetic coma and would have to go to the hospital right away.

Ma was transferred by ambulance to the hospital, a small one on the west side by the name of Plymouth General. The doctor warned Elenore that he could soon bring Ma out of the coma with no problem and that she would regain consciousness in a matter of a few days, but that a coma is very hard on the heart. He said it was very probable that she would come out of the diabetic coma nicely, then die on heart failure some time later. Within two days Ma was out of the coma and better than her old self. Boy did she have the spunk and the fight in her! She would shake those IV's in her arm and tell us to take the damn things out of her arm. We told her we couldn't, as they were what was helping her to get better. Ed and I visited her again on Wednesday and she was better mentally than she had been in awhile. She was laughing, joking, happy and full of life. We were all talking about where Ma would go when she got out of the hospital in a few days. Elenore and Herman were going on vacation over Easter and Mildred was terrified of taking care of Ma while she was so sick, so Ed and I volunteered to have her come to our house. But boy, was I ever scared and upset over the thought of having to give Ma daily insulin injections! And Ma hated and feared needles, so I really wondered how that was going to work out. And I was so scared of hurting Ma or not knowing how to do it properly. But as I stood next to Ma on Wednesday, laughing and kidding with her and having a good old time to all appearances on the outside, my stomach was being tied in knots. I soon realized what that peculiar smell was that I smelled on Ma that night, it was the smell of death! I had smelled that before on both of Ed's parents and I told Ed I would never forget that smell. And now to my horror I smelled it on my own mother. I was so upset. But then I figured, it can't be, she's so well. Surely she'll be coming home with Ed and me in a few days.

On Thursday my sisters visited Ma. I couldn't go because Ed worked till 9 p.m., I didn't drive, so he agreed to drive me every other night while Ma was in the hospital. When my sisters were visiting Ma, Ma suddenly told them that she saw Earl last night, that he said he was coming back to take her with him. We were stunned to hear Ma talk this way as you NEVER talked about death in front of Ma. It got her so scared and upset that she wasn't herself for quite a

while afterwards. And now here she was bringing up the subject herself with no qualms or fears. It sure wasn't in character for Ma! Sandy remembers telling Ma that she was the only grandparent that she had left, that all the rest of them were dead. Ma became very pensive and upset over this conversation, but then she recovered a little and decided to give the little kid a scare back. She lunged forward in her wooden rocker, putting her face very close to Sandy's and telling Sandy, when I die I'm going to come back and haunt you! (Thus far Sandy hasn't seen hide or hair of Ma's ghost).

Suddenly, at 4:30 am on Friday, March 25, 1955 my phone rang. On the first ring I knew in my heart what news that phone call would bring. With a heavy heart and lead in my feet I got out of bed in the front bedroom upstairs and walked down the stairs and into the dining room to answer the insistent phone. It was my sister Elenore, telling me that the hospital had just called, informing her that Ma had just quietly passed away in her sleep. A few minutes before, Ma's heart just quietly stopped beating in her sleep, just as the doctor feared might happen. It was so hard for me to adjust to. How alive Ma had been just 36 hours before, better than she had been in years! And now she was gone.

When I look back on Ma's last few years, I could see her gradually getting older, feebler and her memory became less acute. But at the time I took it for granted. The doctor figured that Ma had had diabetes for at least 15 years before she went into a coma. Ma loved sweets and now we all felt so guilty for giving her the sugar she craved. Sandy had heard that it was Ma's wedding anniversary on September 6, 1954, so she took part of her allowance and bought Ma Squirrels, her favorite candy. Ma loved that bag of Squirrels, and talked about that wedding present on the Wednesday evening before she died in her hospital bed. And we all remembered all the sugar pop we bought for Ma at her request. We all felt like we had personally nailed her coffin shut! Ma loved root beer and Coke the best. She would sometimes give Sandy money and have her go to the beer store at Warren and Alter and buy her a 6 pack that she would split with the kids.

Ma was always a big eater, a fact that we smile at when we look back today on some of her binges. Her best eating splurges were at Mildred's house, as Mel, Sonny and Doris loved to eat too in those days. One time Doris bought Ma a whole bag full of groceries, including a jar of pickles and a jar of olives. Ma and Doris ate the whole bag full at one sitting, with Ma eating the lion's share. Then Ma, fully content from her little party, asked Doris to go back to the corner store and get her another jar of pickles as she still had a taste for another jar full. Doris refused, saying, "Grandma, no! you'll get sick if you keep eating like that".

But on the other hand we are so glad that Ma didn't have one of her few pleasures in life taken away from her by a strict diabetic diet. We felt that Ma

was better off going quietly than having to suffer daily insulin injections and a diet full of foods she wouldn't like.

When Ma died all of us kids got together at my house and together we planned her funeral. We decided to lay Ma out at Van Lerberghe's Funeral parlor at Warren and Lakeview, about 10 blocks from my home. We decided to have her funeral mass at St. John Berchman's Church at Warren and Lakeview and then we would bury her at Mt. Olivet Cemetery at Van Dyke and McNichols in the Dahl family plot purchased by Minna Dahl Henkel with the money she got as the mother of two fallen World War I soldiers (Tony and Fritz).

Even my brother Shorty was there. I had not seen my brother Shorty since about 1948 when there was a big blowup between Ed, Shorty and Ed's brother Norman. Shorty, Ed and Norman had a few drinks on a Sunday afternoon when suddenly both Shorty and Norman started attacking Ed, telling him they thought that they should both be getting a share of the profits from Ed's store as though they were partners. They were just employees and Ed was really hurt by this attack. Ed was not about to make anyone a partner in the business he had started himself back in 1935. It ended up where my brother Shorty got another job somewhere else and we didn't talk to him again while Ed patched up his differences with his brother Norman. I was very hurt that I had to stop seeing my brother while everything was smoothed over with Norman. But Ed was my husband and he was very good to the kids and me and so had to stand behind him.

Shorty was very nervous and very friendly at my house that 25th of March, but unfortunately I was not ready to patch up the rift. The rift ended in the late 60's when Sandy was a teller at the Bank of the Commonwealth at 16 1/2 & Van Dyke and my brother walked in and went to her window. Sandy told him she believed she was his niece, that she was the child of Ed Bender and Marie Dahl. Shorty stepped back from the window, read her name plate, then colored pink and said very shyly, yes, that he was her Uncle. Sandy forced the reunion on all fronts and soon we were all sitting in my dining room on Diamond, making up for many lost years. We were all so glad that the separation was over, Ed included. We had many good times with Shorty and Jean and their family until Shorty's early demise on the 27th of August, 1984 in Beaumont hospital in Royal Oak.

I cried all day long the day that my mother died. When Ed left me in the morning I was crying, and when he got back in the evening, I was still crying. Ed told me that was enough, that my mother had had a full life, was happy most of the time during her stay on this earth and would not want me to carry on crying like this.

Sandy and I were the first ones in the funeral parlor at noon on Saturday. We had had an early lunch, then walked over down Forest Avenue to Lakeview,



then down Lakeview to the side entrance of Van Lerberghe's. We went into the funeral parlor and saw the black 3-foot high standing sign with Ma's name on it pointing to the middle, large viewing room. Sandy and I went in and saw a strange woman in the casket. We then left the room and reread the sign outside. It definitely did point to the room we had just walked out of. We turned around and went back. Standing in the doorway of that room and looking at Ma across the room for awhile, you could see it was her. I could see it immediately for that's how Ma looked years and years earlier when I was a little kid. But Sandy couldn't see it because she didn't know Ma when she was young. The undertaker had erased 40 years from Ma's face and figure. It was amazing how young she looked in that casket!

Ma would have turned over in her grave if she could've seen 2 what they did to her hair! We told them that Ma NEVER curled her hair and to leave it straight. They refused; knowing how much better it would look curled. So they curled it. It looked real nice, but it sure wasn't Ma!

Ma always wanted to have a nice funeral. She used to talk to me about that. She always said she wanted a lot of flowers and a lot of relatives to come. Ma certainly got her wish. The entire funeral parlor was covered with flowers. She had over 25 arrangements, all very nicely done. And she certainly got visitors, by the carload. All us kids and our families were there. Most of the Dahl relatives from Woodslee were there. One of the Dahl cousins from Canada said to us, "I hope you were good to your mother!" I thought to myself, what a thing to say! If we hadn't been good to Ma, what could we do about it now? Of course, we all know we were good to Ma, but it is human nature to remember most the few things you didn't do for Ma. Like just the other day Elenore and I were reminiscing about Ma, as tomorrow, November 3, 1988 will be Ma's 103rd birthday. Elenore said she remembered so well Ma's 65th birthday. She came to my house and picked up and took her to sign up for her old age pension, as she was now old enough to collect one. After the signing was complete Ma asked Elenore to spend the rest of the day with her. Elenore knew that she had to go back to Marie's house as we were having a party for her in a few hours at my house. So Elenore fibbed and told Ma that she was real busy and had to get back home. Ma was so disappointment. She said, "Aw, Elenore, it's my birthday today." To this day Elenore feels so guilty when she thinks of how disappointed she made Ma, and the "Aw, Elenore, it's my birthday today" echoes in her ear still today, some 38 years later.

Her brother's Bud and William Rehfeldt and their families were there. Her sister Elizabeth was there. And dad's side was there too. Aunt Clara and Uncle Ray Fredrick were there, Aunt Clara putting in her usual 2 cents worth. Uncle George and Aunt Amelia Dahl and their family were there. Aunt Anna Dahl Galvin, Paul and their family was there. There were only 2 conspicuous absences, Ma's warm, friendly sister Tillie, who had had several strokes and

could no longer travel. But Tillie sent her dear friend to convey her condolences and to tell her all about the funeral when she got back to Tillie's house. The other absence was glaring - Nellie's husband Bill. Nellie loved Bill to the day she died and it was always her heartfelt wish that Bill would one day come back to her. Grandma would have quickly forgiven Bill everything, all Nellie wanted out of her last years here on this earth was to fly to the arms of my Willie, and right there I'd lay me down and die". Her most fervent wish came to naught.

Bill was terribly conspicuous by his absence. But a real funny thing happened. Elenore and the kids were tallying up the hospital and funeral bills and had readily agreed to split all bills 5 ways. But before the bill was complete Aunt Clara came forth to Elenore and gave her \$300 for Ma's funeral, telling her that Grandma Henkel had left this money in Clara's care for Nellie's funeral expenses. Aunt Elenore, not easily buffaloeed, asked Aunt Clara where the 11 years interest on this \$300 was. Aunt Clara glibly replied that she had use of the money so she withdrew it and used it and now she was turning the principal over to us kids, but had no intention of paying any interest on that money. This story seemed kind of fishy to Elenore and we all wonder if that money really came from Grandma Henkel, or if dad was still alive and it was conscience money from him? We always suspected that Aunt Clara might have been in touch with dad through the years and kept mum. Aunt Clara did not much like Ma and would have supported dad if he chose to take off.

Grandma Henkel was seriously considering taking us all in when dad had disappeared and we were losing the house, but Aunt Clara stepped in and squelched that idea real quick. She told her mother she had enough work with Annie's kids and didn't need to take on Bill's as well. But it did bother grandma that she didn't help us more. With the money from Aunt Clara, with its dubious origin, really helped to defray the funeral expenses. There was only a little over \$100 left for each of us to pay.



**Nellie Rehfeldt Dahl**

On Monday, March 28, 1955 we all gathered in the funeral parlor at 9 am to pay our final respects to Mom. That is when the finality of death really began to set in and I realized that I was never going to see Ma again. Ma started looking more like herself now, with each passing day her features relaxed more and she began to take on more familiar features. The final prayers were said by Father Verweil, then we all filed past Ma's casket one last time, and then the

casket was forever sealed shut. The pall bearers, one of whom was my son Michael, then carried the casket to the north entrance of St. John Berchman's Church. That church was one of the roughest for a funeral mass, as the pallbearers have to carry the casket up a whole flight of stairs. Mike thought his back was going to give out for sure. Ma's weight, plus the weight of the casket was just too much for the 16 year old youngster, let alone for the grown men. Mike said he could feel and hear Ma's weight shifting around in the casket as they carried it at an angle up the stairs. Grandma had her funeral mass, and then the casket was carried back down the stairs and put into the hearse. We then followed the hearse in our cars up Warren Avenue to Dickerson, north on Dickerson to Outer Drive, along Outer Drive to Connor and then on Connor to McNichols. We traveled McNichols to the entrance to the cemetery on Van Dyke and McNichols. We then got the burial permit from the office and continued on our way to the Dahl Family Plot in section 48.

Uncle Frank lost his wife Celia in 1943 and buried her in the Dahl family plot. He then moved to Florida and got married again. He told Nellie that he had no use for this cemetery lot as he would be buried in Florida with his second wife and asked Ma if she would like his plot. Of course, Ma wanted that plot, and thanked Frank for it. In this plot Ma lay only 1 section away from her little 7 year old Dorothy who was buried in baby Heaven in 1917 and only about 50 feet from little Earl who came back and got her at the end. Without a doubt this plot pleased Ma very much.

We all gathered around the open grave with the casket sitting over the gaping hole, suspended by two straps. The priest gave his final commendation and farewell, then told us to each step up to the casket and put a rose on top as a symbol of our last farewell.



**Mike, Nellie, Marianne, Nancy,  
Marie expecting Sandy 1944**

I was thinking of my last funeral there in 1944 when as pregnant with Sandy and Ma was standing next to me then. I was remembering when we all knelt down next to Grandma Henkel's casket in that little family plot and when we all got back up, how Ma put her weight so heavily on my shoulder. I was 5 1/2 months pregnant, I thought I was going to die! And now 10 years later, we were burying Ma.



**Elenore, Nellie Dahl, Minna Dahl Henkel**



**Nellie Rehfeldt Dahl**

How fast those 10 years went by! Now my Nancy was standing next to me at Ma's funeral and she was now expecting Linda and was 7 1/2 months along. Nancy stepped forward to put the rose on Ma's casket and suddenly she started to slip on the mud and for a moment there we were terrified that she was going to completely lose her balance and fall under the casket and into the gaping hole! She talked about that scary experience for quite some time afterwards!



**Elenore, Marie, Marianne and Edward standing over Nellie's grave**

Afterwards we all went to my house for a funeral luncheon. On the way back home we passed the Ojibwa Indian sign on Connor Avenue advertising herbs for good health and I couldn't help but think of my next door neighbor, Mrs. Meeseman, who was Ma's age and much healthier. Mrs. Meeseman swore by these Indian herbs and lived into her late 80's. I couldn't help but wonder if these herbs kept her in better health than Ma.

The funeral luncheon was very cozy and cordial. Afterwards we settled up quietly on the bills. A few days later we met again and divided up Ma's worldly goods. Elenore almost threw out Ma's purse but then decided to look it over better. She was glad she did, for inside the lining she found \$125 that Ma had been saving in case she got sick to help on the bills. Her bills were paid by now, so we used the money to buy her a headstone, one to match Celia's, a stand up one. It stood for about 15 years, then the cemetery knocked it down

flat to better mow over it. Disgusting. I would rather have seen some high grass around the stone rather than knock the stone down flat.

Another funny sharp tongue Aunt Clara story....

Aunt Clara bought nice evergreen shrubs for her parent's grave. It's a family plot and she wanted to put the shrubs on either side of the large upright stone. The cemetery told her she couldn't plant them herself, that she was to leave them at the gravesite, notify the office that they were there and the cemetery would plant them. So this is what Clara did.

Then the next time Clara went to visit her parent's grave the shrubs were nowhere to be seen. The office claimed they knew nothing about the missing shrubs. Aunt Clara then went to visit my sister Elenore and her husband Herman on Coyle and she immediately noticed that Herman had just planted some new shrubs that so happened to be of the same type and size as the ones she bought for her parents' graves. True to style Aunt Clara gave Elenore and Herman the real 3rd degree. Elenore and Herman, who are as honest as the day is long, were insulted by Clara's snide insinuations.



**Linda, Nancy, Don & Warren Stephens**

Nancy and Don found a cute little white bungalow at 2324 Franklin in Berkley, Michigan in the spring of 1955. Nancy was very happy in her new home. She settled in just in time for the arrival of her second child.



**Sandy, Nellie, Sharon**

Nancy and Don came over to our house on Sunday, May 15 for Michael's birthday. Mike was going to be 17 the next day so we were celebrating on Sunday. I was in the process of cooking a very fine Sunday dinner with all the

trimmings when suddenly in the morning Nancy went into labor. By the time I had the dinner all ready I suggested that she had better get to the hospital being this was her second baby, but she said, "oh, no, I'm staying to eat dinner first!" She ate all of her dinner and then when I brought the dessert out, she got a funny look on her face, and then she said to Don, "I think I'd better skip desert and get to the hospital!"



**Linda Marie Stephens White & Nancy Bender Stephens**

Nancy said later that she paid dearly for eating that heavy meal just before delivery. Don took her to St. John's hospital in Detroit where she soon delivered a darling little girl, Linda Marie Stephens on May 15, 1955. We were all amazed at how similar her profile looked to my mom Nellie Dahl, right down to the crease in the nose, who had just passed away 1 1/2 months earlier. Linda was baptized at Our Lady of LaSalette Church in Berkley. Her sponsors were Johnny Goldwater, a friend of Don's and Elenore Ball and a neighbor on the next block.

Elenore Ball had two children, Susie and Johnny. Both children were born completely covered in thick hair, more like a monkey than a child. The hair later fell off. When Susie was in her 20's she had a series of sex change operations and became "Scott".

Another interesting story about Nancy's neighbor across the street. The neighbor had had twins and was as busy as all get out. One day she called Nancy excited and said, Nancy, could you come over here right away! I need you! Nancy came right over puzzled as to what was wrong. What she found was her neighbor holding the baby's hands and repeatedly counting fingers. She said to Nancy, "Count their fingers and tell me how many you get?" Nancy counted, blinked her eyes and counted again. Once more she started over, touching each finger. Unbelievably, each count came up as 6, not 5. Her neighbor took the kids to the doctor, who was surprised that he had missed that when the babies were delivered. But the 6 fingers were so well fitting that it did not look out of place. The doctor did not want the kids to grow up as side show freaks so he cut a middle finger out of each kid's hand and this hardly showed afterwards.





**Sandy & Douggie**

Doug was always a pistol. He had temper tantrums you would not believe unless you lived through them yourself! We would be watching television all together when suddenly out of the blue Doug would throw a temper tantrum. He would scream and yell, throw himself on the ground, pounding the floor with his hands and feet, coordinating hands, feet and mouth together. In the middle of this temper tantrum, a Faygo Commercial would come on the television. These were extraordinarily cute commercials. Doug would stop his temper tantrum completely, come off the floor, sit up and watch the commercial through to its end. After the commercial was over, he would fall back down on the rug and continue with his temper tantrum. I would get so mad at him doing this I used to whap him a good one! His favorite was a south of the border character called Poncho and his donkey. They used to walk along leisurely and sing so cute! The kid screaming on the floor wasn't nearly so cute.

In 1955 we all went on a picnic, Ed, and I and the kids as well as Nancy, Don and Warren. After we ate Nancy was exhausted as she was 9 months pregnant, so she lay down and took a nap while we played. Some weeks afterward she was upset with Ed when she saw that he took some pictures

**1956**



**Michael Bender I**

In June of 1956 my son Michael graduated from Servite High School in Detroit. He then went on to Henry Ford Community college and took a few courses there, but then decided to go into the electrician apprenticeship program at Chrysler Corporation in Highland Park. When computers came into vogue later he went into computer programming and repair. When Chrysler Corporation closed down the Dodge plant in Highland Park Michael had two choices – to move with Chrysler to Lordstown, Ohio or to join the Tank Plant in Warren, Michigan. Mike decided to go with the Tank Plant. He worked there until he retired in the 1990s.

In the summer of 1956, I loved to visit Nancy in Berkley. I would dress up little Douggie, 4 years old by now, and take the Warren bus from Alter Road to downtown Woodward Avenue. Doug loved the bus ride. Sometimes we had to wait almost 30 minutes for a Woodward bus to go as far as Berkley. We got off at Catalpa and walked about 3/4 mile to Franklin, taking a short cut through some open fields by Nancy's house. Nancy and I would have a nice time talking mother and daughters thoughts and ideas. After Warren and Doug had their naps we would take them for a stroller ride up Woodward, have dinner, then Ed and Don came home after work around 9:30 in the evening and we'd go home after a very pleasant day.

Nancy, Don, Don's parents, his sister Shirley and her husband Jack Jackson used to come over to her house for family gatherings and our family would be invited as well. We would all have dinner together and then the men and kids would go off to play ball. Ed and the kids used to marvel at the extremely awkward stance Jack would have when he tried to hit the ball. He would lean over sideways so far you would swear he was going to fall over sideways! Yet he managed to hit the ball fairly far. They would play at the playground just across the street from Nancy while we women sat and visited. Shirley was such a sweet young girl, but she was not too strong emotionally.

Shirley was taught how to drive by her husband Jack who was a lovable screwball. Shirley then went to take her driving test. She flunked the actual driving part quite bad, scaring the examiner out of his wits with her erratic and dangerous driving. Well Shirley was not about to give up and went back again and again, at least 4 times. She managed to get the same examiner every time she went. On the fourth try he gave her the license. He told her that her driving had not improved one iota, it was just that he valued his own life too highly to risk having to get in a car with her behind the wheel again!

Shirley drove us to the drug store once while at Nancy's. Shirley attempted to park the car, missed and drove right over the cement curb. "OOPS! I missed! ", Shirley said. Then instead of backing up, she just kept driving forward and drove over the abutment with her front wheels too, then over the grassy meridian and then back onto the road. She then circled the place once more going into the same parking lot, and believe it or not, driving over the same abutment once more. Nancy by then was losing her patience and told Shirley

to back up over the abutment and park. Giggling, Shirley did as she was told. Then after we got out of the drugstore, we started home when suddenly Shirley left the road in the dark and started driving through fields. Shirley, smiling, informed us it was a shortcut to Nancy's house that she always drove to Nancy's this way. So bumpety, bumpety, we went through the rough fields. Then Shirley momentarily lost her way until Nancy gave her directions. Needless to say, that was the last time any of us got in the car with Shirley. I guess we kind of learned first hand what the driver's license bureau test or was talking about.

Another time Shirley picked me up from Alter Road and drove me to Nancy's in Berkley. Then in the evening Jack drove me home. I vowed never to get in the car with either of them again. First Shirley was about to have a nervous breakdown and she later told me that she didn't remember one thing of her drive on the way to Nancy's house. When Jack took me home he took their short cut through the vacant fields and made me a nervous wreck. I much preferred Ed's staid driving habits.



**Shirley Stephens**

One time Ed's driving was not so staid was on New Year's Eve, which was the only time he drank in his older years. Ed would refuse to drink at any other time as he said alcohol made him feel too good and forget his problems and he considered that very dangerous as it would be easy to make that a permanent crutch.

Every New Year's Eve he felt on top of the world! Boy, Sandy and I hated him driving us home as he had a very heavy foot, thought he was the best driver in the world and used to enjoy seeing how many red lights he could "safely" sail through on his way home. He used to heartily enjoy his wild ride and brag about what a good driver he was! We were never so glad to see our house on Alter and realized that we had managed to live through one more wild New Year's Eve ride home.

In 1956 Sandy was supposed to go to Louise's house for her birthday party on March 22. Sandy came home from school and said she didn't feel too well. I reminded her it was Louise's birthday party in a few minutes. Sandy sat slumped at the kitchen table and said that maybe she would skip Louise's party, as she didn't feel good enough to go. Boy, I knew she was sick then, as she never missed one of Louise's parties. I took her immediately to Dr. Hassig's

office, he found the pain was in the right lower abdomen, he took a white blood cell count and found it considerably elevated and said it was appendix and that Sandy would have to go to St. John's hospital for an immediate operation. Well, Ed and I didn't waste a moment's time as we remembered what happened to little Earl and we didn't want the same thing to happen to one of our children. Ed left work and drove her right to the hospital. Dr. France, an excellent surgeon was called in, he had another blood test taken and said it was most probably appendix and an immediate operation was in order. Within the hour the appendix was out and our daughter was soon back in a regular hospital room, safe and on her way to recovery. That was on a Friday and it was a very emotional time of the year for all of us as it was approaching the first anniversary of Ma's death on the 25th of March. When Sunday was approaching Sandy knew she couldn't go to Church as she was in the hospital and she felt bad about it as she had Sister Mary Esther that year, who was working very hard on Sandy to turn her from a heathen into a religious kid and her tactics were working very well. Suddenly Sandy came up with a stroke of genius. It bothered Sandy very much that her dad was not going to church with us every Sunday, so she tried to use a little psychology on him. She said, Dad, I can't go to church this Sunday as I'm stuck here, so could you go to church for me? Ed said sure, he would be glad to, and he went to church every Sunday for the rest of his life from that Sunday forward. Ed became more religious than all the rest of us combined, something he inherited from his mother Elizabeth who was very devout all of her life. (She used to exasperate her husband Henry by making him get up at the break of dawn on Sundays and go to early mass at St. John Berchman's.

Henry had a bad heart, was very tired, and sure would have appreciated staying a few extra hours in the feathers on Sunday, but no luck.) Ed prayed for all of us continually every day of his life, right up to the very day of his death.

One day when Nancy lived in Berkley, a strange man came to her door carrying an unconscious Linda in his arms and when she answered the door the man asked her if this was her little girl.

He then told her he found Linda lying unconscious next to the slide across the street and he assumed she must have fallen off the top. Nancy thanked him, then put Linda down and frantically called Don at work. Don, who was very strapped for money in those days, told Nancy not to take Linda to the doctor or hospital as he could not afford to pay for it. By this time Linda had come to, although she was groggy and lethargic. Nancy watched her with deep concern for the next 2 days but Linda rapidly returned to her old self again.



**Linda Stephens White**

Ed used to participate in contests when he was in business, and the prize usually was a trip to one of the islands. In 1956 we won a trip to the Bahamas. It certainly was a tropical paradise and such a nice change of pace to go on such a trip in the middle of the winter. But Ed decided to go swimming one day and was soon dragged under by the undertow. It scared the heck out of him and he soon found himself swimming in shallower water. One interesting thing about the Bahamas was that it rained every day at about the same time for 15 minutes, then it would clear up and be sunny again. One interesting highlight about the island all the police were about 7 feet tall! This was my first trip on an airplane and Ed had said later that he was so worried about me being worried, that he didn't have time to be worried himself. Ed talked incessantly to me when I was getting on the plane to try to distract me from the fact that we had to walk out on the runway and climb a flight of flimsy portable steps to get into the small plane. He didn't distract me. Those stairs really had me worried, as naturally did the entire plane trip.



**Marie & Edward Bender**

## **1957**

In April of 1957 Nancy knew that she was pregnant again. Nancy was not feeling very well then, she was having trouble with Don's father who was living in their home at the time. He was a heavy drinker, going back to when he was only 12 years old and he tried to tell his son that he was not drinking these days. (Fat chance!)

One day Nancy had trouble with the furnace so she called Consumer's Power Company asking them to send out a service man for repairs. Two men came out to fix the furnace and after they were down in the basement for just about a whole day, Nancy had to go downstairs for something and she noticed that both men were smirking at her. For the life of her she could not understand why they were smirking. When they came up and reported to her that the repairs had been completed, they had the same silly smirk on their face. Puzzled, Nancy watched them pack up their tools and leave. Later, the next trip down to the basement, she was so mortified she could have died! Oh my gosh, they had found a whole bunch of empty whiskey bottles hidden above the furnace ducts, and they had carefully removed everyone and neatly piled them into one of her wash baskets! Nancy just knew with those smirks on their faces that they thought she was a secret alcoholic! She was so mad at her father in law, Red.

Nancy decided to go on a diet while she was carrying this child as she said she was sick of being "fat" (all in her imagination, she was a very good weight). As a result of this diet, she had a lot of trouble with her nerves from all this dieting and when she was 9 months pregnant she weighed only 7 lbs. more than before she was pregnant. She was so thin I could see all of her ribs.

Nancy was 8 months pregnant when she came to my house on Alter Road very upset and badly frightened. She stopped at Don's sister Shirley's house and found that Shirley was having a nervous breakdown. She was screaming and smashing the door down. Shirley was a very small person, wherever she got the strength from is beyond me. Shirley was screaming at Nancy, calling her names and saying terrible things about her. Shirley grabbed Nancy during this screaming treatise and Nancy was scared to death for her and the baby's safety. Somehow Nancy managed to extricate herself from Shirley's grip and came straight to me in a near hysteria. I calmed her down as best as I could, although this turn of events was a big shock to me too.

Within a month Nancy had another big shock to her nervous system, Don's mother suddenly flipped out and started breaking up all her furniture and throwing it about. So now both Shirley and Mrs. Stephens were in mental hospitals. Mrs. Stephens was taken to Northville where she remained for years and years. They had her so drugged up that it was a crime. When we came to visit her she didn't even know us and the last time Nancy and I went Mrs. Stephens, got up from the chair, walked over to the locked door and started licking it. That was too much for Nancy to bear. We had to leave at that point and we did not go back after that. Nancy was so terrified by Shirley and Mrs. Stephens' mental illness that she wanted no part of seeing them in that condition. Nancy never forgot the insults that Shirley hurled at her during that breakdown and they were never again as friendly as they once were.



## 1958

On the 16 of January 1958 Donna Christine Stephens was born. She was back home with her mother in 3 days in her little home on Franklin. Donna was baptized shortly afterwards. Gertrude and Arthur Crane were her sponsors. She was baptized at Our Lady of LaSalette.



**Donna**



**Linda, Warren & Donna Stephens**



**Gertrude Crane & Donna Stephens**

Don had to evict his father gently as he was causing total upheaval and now with the third child Warren needed his bedroom in the basement back. Mr. Stephens returned to the Detroit area and found a home with friends and then with Shirley when she got out of the mental hospital. Red worked on and off as it suited him to do so. He was a spotter in dry cleaners. When they got tired of his drinking on the job they would fire him and when he ran out of unemployment he would find another unsuspecting employer. When women would bring in their fine fur coats to Red for summer storage, he would take

the coat, give them a claim ticket, and then throw the coat on the floor in the back room for the duration of the winter. He would pick it up off the floor and return it to the unsuspecting owner in the fall.

The family used to laugh about Red's approach to income tax. If he had a refund coming back, he would file that year, if he owed the IRS, he would not file. They never caught on to him. When Mrs. Stephens was in the hospital, the family was so disgusted with Red as he collected all her sick pay checks and spent them on his booze. Nothing of that money went to poor Christine.

Mom and I used to walk to Sam's Department store at Warren and Conner a number of times after it opened up in the 1950's. It was a very long walk but we enjoyed the challenge. We used to walk along Forest Avenue as it was a more pleasant walk than on Warren. We would shop through the store, leisurely pick out our purchases, pay for them, then head home.

One time we were so dumb as to buy 2 heavy lawn chairs and lug them home all by ourselves. Boy, were they heavy, carrying them all that way! We were bushed by the time we got home. Sandy and I were stupid crossing Conner at Forest instead of going to the light on Warren Avenue. The traffic never cleared on Conner at Forest, so Sandy and I used to walk to the middle of the road, then stop and wait for the other side to clear. Boy, was that ever a dangerous thing to do! Those cars used to whiz by us, barely missing us! I was sure that one of them was going to run over our toes! Dumb!



**Linda Stephens White**

When Linda was only one year old Nancy thought to herself how very cute that little girl was and how much cuter she was when Nancy curled her hair. For her first birthday Nancy actually decided to give Linda a permanent! The permanent turned out gorgeous and Linda looked so darling in it, but I couldn't get over how brave Nancy was to try to use those harsh solutions on a one year old kid and expect her to sit still through it all.

Nancy was very talented at cutting hair. She used to give Warren and Doug very professional looking haircuts. You couldn't tell her haircuts from a barber cut. Not so my haircutting ability. When my boys were small I used to cut their

hair myself to have the few dollars and believe me, it looked it. We used to call Bill and Doug's haircuts by me "soup bowl" haircuts. It was a real chop job!

Bill always loved playing war. He loved to throw things up in the air and pretend they were bombs or hand grenades. One day Ed changed his sparkplugs and Bill eagerly seized the old sparkplugs to use as hand grenades. He spent the afternoon on Alter Road throwing the sparkplugs up in the air and making the appropriate sound effects. Pretty soon he got pretty carried away as the "hand grenades" went higher and higher into the air. Next thing we knew Bill was pitching the darn things right into the middle of Alter Road and wouldn't you know it, a woman in a brand new black Ford drove right under Bill's "hand grenades" and down they came, "Bang! Bang!" right on the roof of her brand new car, boy, was she scared and upset. She said she could never face her husband with those dents in the car. She was hysterical, wanting to know who threw the spark plugs as his parents would have to pay for the damage to her car. When Bill saw the sparkplugs hit the top of the car, he was gone! He ran through the side of Ligotti's house, through the backyard, out the gate and home like the wind! Mrs. Ligotti was working in her garden and she was very curious as to why Bill was running like the devil was at his tail as Bill simply did not normally move this fast! She soon found out. In comes the lady with the dented car, demanding to know from Mrs. Ligotti who the little kid was who ran through her back yard a minute ago. "Oh, oh, Sandy thought, here's where big mouth Mrs. Ligotti is going to spill the beans as usual". But for the very first and last time in her life, she used a little discretion and somehow managed to develop a temporary diplopia. That was about the only thing Bill was ever clever enough to get away with in his life.

Bill's usual luck was that he'd be playing with the neighborhood kids, they'd get into mischief, and when they knew they were in dutch, they'd hop a few fences and get lost and Bill would be left standing there to take the consequences. Once Leonard threw a rock into Forest, hit a police car square just by dumb innocent luck, the police car passed by before they registered that they had been hit, then stopped, thought about it and then backed up to the alley. Leonard at once realized that he had scored a direct hit on a police car of all things and jumped a few fences, something he wasn't too good at but managed this time to save his hide. When the police car pulled back to the alley they found one confounded Bill trying to figure out what had happened and where Leonard had disappeared to.

Mrs. Ligotti used to have her nose in everybody else's business. We used to have an amused tolerance for her snooping and unsolicited advice. But Ed used to get tied in knots when he tried to use the phone from our house for business in the morning and Mrs. Ligotti was on it with "Tootsie Mary", her cousin, and wouldn't get off. She'd talk for hours. Ed would have to scoot over to the store to get to a phone. And when we were on the phone Mrs. Ligotti would pick up the receiver and eavesdrop. One day Ed had had enough and

called the Michigan Bell Telephone office and had a new party line installed. The new party line were people unknown to us and were much more considerate in their use of the phone.

One funny story Mrs. Ligotti reminded me of years later. We never had any flowers on our property except tiger lilies on both sides of the front porch and a snow ball bush in front of the porch. That was it for flowers. One day Sandy went to Ligotti's, was fascinated by their pansies, decided that that was just the thing to spruce up our back yard, and ripped out the whole clump and took it home to our house. She just set the clump on top of the mud in our back yard and figured it was properly planted. Mrs. Ligotti took a little walk down the alley when she found her pansy clump missing, and sure enough found it in our back yard! She then took her pansies back home and replanted them.

Mr. Reichard used to do a lot of real fun things for all of our kids, but the more fun it was, the more risk it entailed. I was willing to take those risks as my kids really enjoyed what he rigged up for them and my risk taking was justified as none of my children were ever hurt on Mr. Reichard's inventions.

The best invention of his and the most dangerous was the foot swing set real high up in a huge old tree in his backyard. The swing rope would extend about 20 feet in the air and end about 2 feet off the ground. The kids would pull the rope way back, climb up a ladder holding the rope, put their feet in the noose of the rope, then swing wildly right over the neighbor's side fence and then back again to the garage until the rope slowed down. When he first installed it, the first tryout by the kids was right after supper. Louise tried it first, slowly until she got the hang of it, and in a short period of time she was up on the garage taking a wild leap for the rope Tarzan style, and then flying right over the Leopard's house to the south of her. Mrs. Leopard was washing dishes, had a whole stack in her hand to put away, saw a kid come flying right over the roof of her house. She figured that some kid had just got hit by a car in the alley and was about to land dead on her roof, dropped and smashed all the dishes in her hand out of sheer startle. Boy, was she mad at those kids when she found out she busted all her dishes over some new tree swing! In the winter Mr. Reichard froze up his whole back yard as a skating rink and all the neighborhood kids went skating, usually with skates borrowed from him. He was a wonderful man.

Mr. Reichard used to take my kids skating on the canal at Jefferson and Nine Mile Rd. The kids had a ball. One time Mr. Reichard fell in on thin ice and had to be pulled out by his dog Freckles who passed a rope to him and then pulled. Louise actually had the gall to get mad at her father because he fell in and cut her skating short! Believe it or not, he changed into warm clothes then took Louise back skating while he sat in Brownie's on the Lake restaurant and sipped hot drinks while watching his most loved daughter skate.

In winter Mr. Reichard used to take the kids to Bald Mountain for skiing in some farmer's sloped fields. The farmer used to take pity on Mr. Reichard sometimes and let him sit in the house and watch the kids out the window.

The project that Mr. Reichard dreamed up that ended up in him locking horns with Mrs. Ligotti was when he took one of Louise's red children's chairs and jammed it solid into Louise's red wagon. He tested it to make sure the chair wouldn't come loose. But when Mrs. Ligotti saw this she threw hysterics, saying her dear Leonard was going to get hurt and demanding that Mr. Reichard dismantle this creation. He very politely refused but stated that he respected her wishes and that Leonard would never ride on it. Poor Leonard was absolutely miserable.

Leonard never had very good coordination and it showed one day when we all went tobogganing together at Rochester State Park. Mr. Reichard set up the toboggan, tested it, and told us how to sit, how to steer, how to lean and how to roll off if needed. We all listened intently. Then we all loaded onto the toboggan. First Leonard in the front, then Bill, then Sandy, then Louise. Leonard must have been day dreaming when instructions were given as he didn't lean the way we were told to and we kept screaming at him to lean the other way as he was sending the toboggan right into a tree! He just wouldn't listen and kept leaning the wrong way. We were heading right smack dab for a real big, solid tree. Jump!! Mr. Reichard bellowed. Off rolled Louise, off rolled Sandy, pulling Bill with her as she went. And there sat Leonard, staring straight ahead! JUMP!!! Shouted Mr. Reichard. JUMP!! ! screamed Sandy and Louise. Leonard just sat, legs crossed, staring straight ahead. CRASH! ! !! Head first, Leonard kissed that big tree real good!!! And boy did he ever scrape up his whole face!! And Mr. Reichard no way wanted to bring that banged up kid back to our big mouthed neighbor! Boy, did he ever catch it that day! And not a word of remorse for the fine toboggan Leonard smashed up due to his stupidity.

My Bill always admired Richard Reichard's most elaborate train set with two engines, miles of tracks and twin switching controls. It was the finest train sets that money could buy, and even whistled and smoked on command. One day the Reichards up and gave that whole fine train set to Leonard. Boy, did Bill drool over that set. Leonard never really appreciated that fine train set like Richard did. Richard had that train set go all over his upstairs bedroom, under the bed, tables and all. I never saw a finer set.

I bought Doug a train set for Christmas when he was too young yet for it, only 5 years old. Mike got his paws on it, setting it up on the dining room table. Before the holiday was over the train landed on the floor and broke pieces off the engine. But it still ran okay.

One Saturday Ed called home to talk to me but I wasn't there, I was out shopping. Doug and Bill were watching Saturday afternoon television with the

usual fights over what channel was going to be watched. They used to roll on the floor, punching one another, trying to determine whether they were going to watch Bill's army picture or what Doug wanted. One day in the middle of one of these punching sessions Ed calls me. I'll get it! Bill yells. No, I'll get it, Doug yells! And they both make a mad dash to the phone. They both get there simultaneously and both pick up the receiver, pulling it back and forth, screaming, let go, I want it. No, you let go, I want it! Neither would let go of the receiver and each was punching the other and both were screaming bloody murder. Ed was fuming, thinking what if this was a customer or business associate calling his house! Suddenly one pushed, one pulled and they both hung up the phone back on the receiver. Ed couldn't believe it!

In the summer Mr. Reichard would take Sandy and the other neighborhood kids to Jefferson Beach amusement park. Afterwards he would often take them to Howard Johnson's for an ice cream cone at his own expense.

Ed and I went on a vacation for a week to one of the islands and Aunt Elenore agreed to come and baby sit for us. Aunt Elenore was not used to a house full of active kids after raising her polite, well behaved, sedate Marianne. My kids sure were a change! Doug was the hardest to cope with as he was the youngest and a real hand full! On Sunday Aunt Elenore invited her husband Herman to dinner in the afternoon. He came over happy and friendly to all of us. Doug was in a very unsettled state of mind as the eye just fell off his favorite teddy bear and he was quite upset about this. Herman noticed this and took a look at the teddy bear and declared he could sew the eye back on good as new. Doug was happy with this suggestion and the kids soon brought out my sewing basket. Herman chose the proper thread and needle, found the eye and proceeded to sew it back on. When the sewing was complete he handed the teddy bear back to Doug with a smile on his face. Doug took one look at the teddy bear, saw that the eye drooped, had a temper tantrum and threw the teddy bear clear across the room! Herman, unused to such behavior, didn't know how to handle Doug but decided to ignore him as he wasn't the one responsible for his behavior.

Elenore tried to keep my house as clean as she kept hers and Mike told her flat out that this was a waste of energy as it wouldn't stay clean for very long. But Elenore insisted in keeping the house spotless at all times. By the end of the week, between Doug's behavior and all the housework Elenore was totally exhausted, both mentally and physically. When Doug acted up for the umpteenth time on the last day, Elenore lost her temper and walloped him a good one. Then she sat back in the chair closest to the dining room archway, half dead from work. Boy, was she ever glad to see me again! Having 5 kids one at a time and getting used to each new addition gradually is one thing, but to suddenly be hit with 5 all at once is just a bit too much. The kids, however, enjoyed having her visit for a week and were sorry to see her leave.





**Elenore & Herman Mc Kinin**

One day when I was back from vacation I was talking to my sister Elenore on the telephone while Douggie played in the living room and dining room and my other kids were in school. While talking in peace to Elenore it suddenly dawned on me that I hadn't seen Douggie for awhile. I called for him all through the house and no answer. The last time I had seen him he was dressing up his teddy bear in a coat. I told Elenore I had to hang up and go look for Douggie as I couldn't find him anywhere. I looked both inside and outside the house, and no Douggie. I walked all around the neighborhood and still no Douggie. We had two painters, Bob & Tom repainting the house so I had them stop painting to look for Douggie. No Douggie... I finally called the police and they came and took a description of him and said they would patrol the neighborhood trying to find him. Some time later a patrol car pulled up with Douggie in the back seat. It seems that he got bored listening to me talk on the telephone with Elenore so he dressed up his teddy bear, put on his own jacket and then decided to go visit the neighborhood park on the other side of Warren Avenue, the Matthew Corrigan Playfield. He crossed Forest alright by himself, then continued on to Warren. When he got to Warren he said there were an awful lot of big, fast moving cars and he didn't know how to get across the street. He said a nice lady came along and helped him walk across Warren Avenue. He then went into the park, set his teddy bear down and proceeded to play on all the equipment until the policeman spotted him and took him safely home. The policeman gave him a big lecture about not running away from home again.

One day Sandy went to the library near Ed's store at Audubon just off Warren and wanted to take out a book. The librarian looked in her card file of overdue books, then asked Sandy if she was related to Norman Bender. Sandy figured there was a catch, so she said no. The librarian then complained to Sandy that Norman had checked out and never returned all their books on golfing and a few on fishing.

Ed won another trip, this time to Andres Isle. It was another tropical paradise in the middle of the cold winter. We really enjoyed this trip. What I remember most about this trip was the beautiful island music. Agnes Bender babysat my kids this time around and she didn't fare much better than Elenore even though she had had 5 kids herself. Agnes was older when she sat for my kids and their shenanigans drove her crazy at times. Mike and Sandy had a game they loved to play. Sandy would stand at the top of the stairs and Mike at the

bottom. They would throw the ball at one another as hard as they could and each would make sure they dodged that ball or it would hurt like mad. They really had a good time playing this, which I allowed when I was home as they didn't hurt anything, but all the laughter and shouting drove poor Agnes to distraction. She banned this game while she was there. The kids loved Agnes' cooking as she fried everything, was a very good cook, everything was very tasty. But the housework and Doug were too much for Agnes too, and by the end of the week she was overjoyed to see me again. Agnes was very good to the kids and they were sorry to see her leave.

Ed needed warehouse space for his business so he ended up taking all the windows out of our garage, putting a bar across the double doors leading into the alley and putting a padlock on the front and back doors. He then put his inventory in the garage for safekeeping. When a customer ordered merchandise Ed's delivery men would come to the garage on Alter, find the ordered item, remove it from the garage, set it on the truck and deliver it to the customer's house. They would generally remove it from the carton at our house and the kids would have the large cartons to play in for a few days until I threw them out on trash day.

The kids loved playing one game in particular with the television or the refrigerator cartons. They loved to put the cartons all together, pushing the opening together and then interlapping the flaps on both ends, thus forming one long tunnel. One kid would then go to the end of the tunnel and sit down and wait. He would be the victim. The other kid would stand outside the tunnel, growl, carryon like he was real mad and would be the wolf. The wolf, when he was real mad, would start to crawl through the flaps of the tunnel in order to find the victim and eat him. The victim sat at the end of the tunnel waiting to be discovered and eaten by the wolf. If one had an imagination, it was a real scary game, sitting there waiting to be eaten. One had to have a good heart when the wolf came crashing through the last flap and into one's compartment!

Ed had problems with theft, probably mostly with his own employees. Things would turn up missing and the doors and windows would remain intact, suggesting that the perpetrator had a key. One time the Morgan family behind us called dad and told him that there was a delivery truck in the alley and did it belong there as it was a rather odd hour to be loading up a truck. By the time Ed got there the truck was gone and so was some of his merchandise. Another time Victor Meeseman called and said there was a man in our garage in the dark smoking a cigarette as he saw the red glow in the dark. Mom went out to look and the man left by the back door.

Once Nancy and Mike started a fire in the garage when they were about 7 and 10. They came running in to tell me as the fire was about waist high. Ed did

not yet have his merchandise in the garage at this time. I ran outside and doused the flames quickly with water.

Sandy remembers taking inventory a number of times with Ed in the evening with a flashlight in hand. Don hated going into the garage as he swore there were mice in there and after his mice episode on Montclair he didn't want to meet up with one again. But Sandy thought about the possibility of mice for a moment or two, but not being the squeamish sort, soon let that thought pass and got on with crawling up, on and over boxes, getting all the serial and model numbers for Ed. Sandy loved the climbing and squeezing in in tight corners behind all the boxes. Ed didn't. He had claustrophobia and those tight spaces brought it out. He'd move the boxes a little this way or that until Sandy could squeeze in. In an hour or so they'd both happily tromp back into the house, Ed with a complete list in his hand which he could then compare to the last list.



**Mike & Nancy**

Mike worked at Ed's store since he was 12 years old. Mike preferred working as he thought it was boring sitting around the house with nothing to do. Sandy used to go over there maybe once per month, polish a few refrigerators and stoves, dust some televisions and radios and earn 50 cents, which was twice her weekly allowance and if she was real lucky, she could talk Ed into taking her to Alinosi's or BJ's restaurant for lunch. Ed would go for lunch if he had someone to watch the store while he was gone. Sandy and Ed usually had a malt, Sandy a BLT, which Ed would insist that the bacon be thoroughly cooked to avoid the possibility of getting trichinosis and Ed usually had eggs or a hamburger.

Ed's garage was often beyond capacity as Ed used to buy carloads of merchandise as he got such a good price on a whole carload. He would then sell off some of his stock to other dealers who liked Ed's prices and couldn't deal directly with the factory as their credit was no good. Soon Ed looked around for another warehouse and Sandy told him that an 87 year old lady by the name of Mrs. Deiss was renting her garage out for \$15 per month and was now looking for a new tenant. Ed went down and talked to Mrs. Deiss. She agreed to give Ed a years lease for \$15 per month. Ed signed the lease and moved in his merchandise. Soon Ed discovered that a number of expensive items were missing from the warehouse and that his locks had not been

tampered with. Ed was bitter and thought it was an inside job done by someone who was a friend of Mrs. Deiss. He soon terminated this arrangement as it was too costly in terms of missing merchandise.

Mrs. Deiss had a man friend who was married to an invalid. This man, Mr. Hyatt, was a carpenter, 81 years old, who spent a lot of time at Mrs. Deiss' house. We needed a bathroom upstairs as I was sick of climbing the stairs in the middle of the night every time I had to use a bathroom, so I decided it was high time we converted Ed's darkroom into a functional bathroom. Mrs. Deiss sent her carpenter friend over to give an estimate and Mr. Hyatt was the low bidder by far, so he got the job. He measured up everything and went and bought the materials. He then drove over to our house and started lugging all the materials up the stairs. This was just before Easter and wonderful weather for that time of year. Mike, who happened to be at home at the time, saw Mr. Hyatt, who was about 5' 3" and no more than 115 lbs, struggling with a window frame over his shoulder, trying with all his strength to get that darn thing up the stairs. Mike came up to him and offered to lug the window frame up for him. Hyatt became very huffy, saying that was part of the job and he was very capable of doing his own work. We all smiled at how Mr. Hyatt vehemently denied he was having any difficulty with the window frame and with great effort, tried very hard to make it appear light work, when in fact he was strained to his limit! We all knew it was a matter of pride with him, and a denial that he was getting older and frail. Mr. Hyatt finished the bathroom on schedule and we all thrilled with it. I had him put in floor to ceiling cabinets along the entire north wall for storage space. We had a new window in, a bathtub under the window, and a new toilet on the west wall next to the bath tub. The new sink was on the east wall in front of the toilet. Boy, was that ever convenient evenings! But Ed was a little sad over the loss of his darkroom as that signaled the end of another era for him.



**Doug Bender**

One day Doug didn't look right to me so I decided to take him to the Doctor. Dr. Hassig had just moved out of his practice on Mack and Marlborough to Eight Mile and Ego streets in East Detroit to a brand new office. So I took Doug who was half mast there. We sat in Hassig's waiting room for an eternity when suddenly it was our turn to see him. Hassig, a man with a marvelous sense of humor, breezed in and asked what he could do for us today. I pointed to Doug and told him he was sick and I was wondering what it was and what to do for him. Hassig took one look at Doug and exploded, "Jesus Christ, he said, he's

been sitting in my office all afternoon next to a half dozen pregnant women! " Get him out of here now by the back door before they find out! Just put him to bed for a week and he'll be fine! But get him out of here!

When Mike got the new Schwinn Panther we gave Sandy his old second hand 26 inch bike. She was only 7 years old at the time and had a devil of a time riding it. At first she put her leg across under the bar and rode that way, but soon she got braver, put that bike up to a fence in the alley, climbed the fence, jumped from the fence to the top of the bike, which seemed a mile high to her in those days, and then pushed the bike off from the fence and went sliding one way over the top of the bar, and then the other as she tried to conquer riding a bike much too big for her.

One day Bill and Leonard were playing together, when suddenly Sandy came down the alley upset. She was riding Mike's old bike, better than 10 years old, when suddenly the frame cracked and the front of the bike separated from the back. Sandy brought the bike back in two pieces and was trying to figure out how and if the bike could be put back together. While Sandy was in the house eating lunch, Bill and Leonard gave Sandy's broken bike away to the sheeny man who walked through our alley with a horse drawn wagon on a weekly basis. Sandy was furious at those two. She walked up and down the streets trying to find the sheeny man to get her bike back, but she never found him. That was the end of her and Mike's first bike.

Sandy also got Nancy's old bike out of the basement, had the tires repaired at the gas station and rode it around the block. The bike was way too big for her and all she could do was stand up and hold onto the handle bars that were way over her head. When the bike got a flat down at Louise's, it was too much for Sandy to push that big bike back home so she left it on Louise's lawn. The police came and picked it up in a few days. Sandy asked Ed to go to the police pound, find and reclaim her bike. But Ed was too busy with his business and soon the time for reclaiming the bike passed.



**Bill Bender**

One day Bill and Leonard were playing together and some of the older kids in the neighborhood were teasing them, so Leonard decided to fill some balloons with water and hit the kids with them as they sat up in the tree at Calvin

Siedolf's house. Leonard brought out the water balloons and gave Bill a few to help him throw them at the kids up in the tree. Bill threw 3 balloons, very wide of the mark and hit Leonard full force with the water on every try, the balloons burst on a limb right over Leonard's head.

One day my kids were playing with Leonard, Louise, Ronald and few other kids in the alley just outside Leonard's house. Most of the kids were sitting on the dog house or hanging on the fence, when all of a sudden Mrs. Ligotti appeared in the back bedroom and started unbuttoning her dress! The kids just stood there and stared at her, dumb Leonard included! Then she wiggled her shoulders out of the dress, and dropped it to the floor. Dumb Leonard still just stood there and watched with the rest of the kids. Next she grabbed the hem of her petticoat, pulled upwards and off that came too. Everyone just sat there in their front row seats and watched. Then she grasped her rubber Playtex girdle and started wiggling and gyrating wildly, trying to pull it down. At this point all the kids in the alley started roaring with laughter. Mrs. Ligotti looked up and out of the window and she almost died of mortification to see what an audience she had. She quickly grabbed the window shade, gave it a good yank, and suddenly, due to her excess force, the entire window shade came off the window. She then quickly yanked the curtains shut. Afterwards she came out and angrily chased all the kids away.

Another time Mrs. Ligotti had spent the entire afternoon weeding her garden and come suppertime she was quite pleased with the results of her efforts. She grew many vegetables and some flowers every summer. Her gardens were always very orderly and her produce grew well. Come 4:30 pm she watered the garden good, then went in to change clothes for supper. After changing clothes and checking on her supper, she came back outside once more to check on her garden. She found a stray weed sticking up in the second row that she had somehow missed earlier. She bent over full from the waste and stretched far out to reach that stray weed. Leonard came in the yard at that point from the alley and something just got into him and he just couldn't resist. Leonard picked up his baseball bat laying nearby in the yard, got a good grip on it, took a swing and hit his ma square on the butt and she went flying into the mud head first. Leonard then stood there laughing heartily until he saw the Aunt Jemima rising up from the black ooze. His self preservation instincts then came to the fore and he took off running down the alley. But he was still laughing so hard he had a hard time catching his breath. And the more she thought about it, the madder she got and the madder she got the faster her feet moved. Leonard soon felt her hot breath down the back of his neck. He soon stopped laughing so hard and started running faster. His size 18 mother was so furious that she almost caught him by the time they got to the end of the alley on Canfield, but fortunately for him she ran out of breath before he did. She walked back down the alley dripping mud and vowing to kill him. Leonard hid out for the next half hour. Come 5 o'clock the entire Ligotti family sans Leonard was sitting down to a wonderfully aromatic home made spaghetti



dinner. Leonard felt crest fallen over losing dinner. As they ate he crept back into the yard and sat on the back stoop. Mr. Ligotti, who knew what a miserable nag his wife could be at times, felt sorry for Leonard and after dinner was cleared away he snuck Leonard a sandwich out the back door.

Leonard's Christmases were miserable next to ours and the Reichard's. Our kids would get at least 6 or 7 toys on a stack plus new clothes. The Reichards would get double that. Leonard would get a \$5.00 fire engine and a white shirt. I used to tell my kids to keep their big mouths shut around Leonard about what they got for Christmas and I wouldn't let Leonard in on Christmas day until after the toys were put away.

One Christmas I could have shot Sandy. The kids got Ed and I out of bed at 6 am as usual, they were so excited over what Santa Claus had left them. After everything was opened the place looked like hooligan flats, all the paper and boxes strewn everywhere, plus all those toys all half put together and strewn to the 4 winds. While the kids played and poor Ed tried to orientate himself from such a rude early awakening by the kids, I made them all a nice big Christmas morning breakfast. We all sat down to eat and then afterwards we all dressed up in our Christmas best and trudged through the high snow to church and the snow was really high that year. After mass Sandy got separated from the rest of us as she saw Father Alexis Croke, OSM and as she really liked him the best of all the priests at St. John Berchman's she skipped off to the rectory to wish him a merry Christmas. Father Croke liked her very much too, so he sat around and talked to her for awhile and when it came time for her to say goodbye he looked outside and saw how deep the snow was and decided it would be kind to drive her home. When they got in front of our house we were just about to go in the house when Sandy jumped out of the car and invited Father Croke in. I could have died when I thought of what my living room looked like! He'll never make it alive to a chair, I thought horrified, not with his bad legs! He must have seen my consternation, for he declined the kid's invitation. When I thought back on it later, I was sorry I didn't invite him in as I'm sure now that he would have understood the happy clutter of childhood.



**Sandy**



**Mickey**



**Mickey**



**Billy**

Every Christmas it seemed the same thing happened sooner or later, usually when I was off to church. Ed would always wait until Christmas Eve to buy a

tree as that is when we trimmed it. He would go from lot to lot to see what was the best tree he could get for \$1.00. As darkness fell the prices got cheaper and Ed always managed to find a long needled pine for that price. After looking at every tree there was for sale, Ed would go back to the lot with the best trees and start haggling. But Ed never seemed to have too much common sense when it came to picking out Christmas trees. Every single darn year he would bring home the thickest based darn tree in the lot! The tree stem would turn out to be about twice as thick as the Christmas tree stand. Out would come the saw and Ed would hack away at the base with the saw, trying and retrying the base until it finally fit. Then he would drag the tree from the backyard into the house. We usually put the tree in the northeast corner of the living room, but once in a great while we would put it in the southwest corner.

Another regular with the trees that Ed's would pick out was a huge hole right in the middle large enough to drive a Mack truck through, it seemed. I used to agonize over the huge hole and then turn the tree this way and that, trying to hide that darn huge hole, until one year I hit upon a perfect solution which I then used every year thereafter. When Ed put the tree up in the stand I would immediately look for the huge hole which somehow was always standard in our tree and would then face that huge hole straight forward into the room and then put the manger inside. It was a really pretty manger and the hole looked like it was specially made for the manger.

Then invariably within 3 days Bill and later Doug would manage to topple over the Christmas tree. As the family stood transfixed we would see, SWISH!! SWAY!! OVER!! before we could reach out to save the tree! And everyone would look at the tree dumbly as the bulbs would be smashed and/or scattered over the room. We'd have to push the tree upright again and retrim it. I soon learned after a few years of this to tie the tree down to the curtain rod and the picture frame, but with little success. Even with tying the younger boys managed to knock it over. It became a regular Christmas ritual to put the tree up twice.



**Sandy & Doug**



**Bill**

In the fifties we had 4 children at home, so we stayed at home most of the time, but on Christmas Eve our families had a nice custom. One by one Ed and my sisters and brothers would stop over briefly, have a drink with us and wish us a blessed Christmas. We so looked forward to those visits. Many times they

would come laden with gifts for the children. The children would first feel the packages. If they were hard, the kids whooped with joy as it was bound to be some neat toy, but if they were soft, they would put a polite wooden look on their faces, tear it open, look at what they really didn't want to get and turn it politely over to me as if it were really my present. I loved getting homemade dresses from Mildred for Sandy through the years. Mildred was an excellent seamstress and she sewed some really beautiful things for Sandy. Towards the end of her life, Mildred Neff got a misty look in her eyes, and said, "I really learned to sew well after I married. I wished my grandmother Sophie Becker Ott had seen my handiwork and saw how well I could sew. When I was a child she was forever criticizing my work and she died before I mastered sewing".



**Bernie Neff, Marie Bender, Keith Neff, Mildred Bender Neff**



**Norman Bender, Stuart Neff, Sophie Becker Ott, Bruce Neff**

One day in the middle of the night Sandy was by Mrs. Meeseman's new upstairs tenants who were really getting loud about 3 am. Right after Sandy woke up, Doug, who slept in the middle bedroom, did too and he sleepily ambulated into Sandy's room to see what all the racket was about. Both Sandy and Doug knelt next to the side window and watched George and his wife run all over the apartment, her first with George in pursuit. She ran into the bedroom, jumped onto the bed, ran across the bed, jumped off on the other side of him, ran into the kitchen, into the living room, then back into the kitchen again, screaming repeatedly, " George, DON'T !!! " The kids got sleepy and went back to bed. The next morning was an absolutely gorgeous June day and Doug and Sandy came out of the backyard and into the alley heading toward Louise's house. George was in the alley washing his car. As Doug was

passing George, he said real loud, Oh, George, DON'T!!!" and then kept walking down the alley. George stared at him for better than 10 minutes!

Sandy and I remember coming down in the middle of the night to use the downstairs bathroom before the upstairs one was installed and we would hear loud noises coming from the usually very quiet Meeseman house. Mr. Meeseman would be drinking beer and playing cards with his sons and son in laws and by 2 am and thereafter, things got pretty loud as the beer flowed free. They would have fits over losing and accuse the other guy of cheating. The next morning all would be very quiet over there until the next card game.



**Nancy & Douglas Bender**

Warren used to come over to visit fairly regularly with Nancy and he came to be quite confused as to who I was because Doug was the same age as him almost and he couldn't comprehend his relationship to me. Warren finally settled on what he considered to be the proper moniker for me, he called me "Douggie's Mama" . It was a few years before Warren comprehended that Douggie's Mama was also his grandmother.

Don worked for Ed on East Warren Avenue since he lived on Montclair, but Ed was very worried, as the business was very bad due to the recession of 1958-1959. He felt that it would be better to close the store while he still had most of his life savings still intact and goes work for someone else and sell off his remaining inventory that way. When Ed closed up he felt so sad that he had to let Don and his brother go and he worried about them. Everything turned out okay for Don, however, as he soon got a job at Kelly Furniture and Appliance on 12 Mile Road in Berkley as a salesman. Things were not so good for Norman, however. Norman went out to visit his daughter in California and got several jobs there, not lasting long at any one of them as no one was as lenient as Norman.

Norman then went out to visit his son Richard in New York. Richard and he soon got into fights as both were drinking rather heavily at times. Richard got hysterical and put Norman in a psychiatric hospital in Binghamton, New York. Norman wrote Ed and told him of his predicament. Ed wired Norman the money and signed papers to get him back to Michigan. They sent Norman to a hospital in Michigan where Ed promptly signed him out and set him up in his

own place. Ed vouched for Norman to several employers in the Detroit area. Norman got several jobs here but couldn't hold onto to them. Norman was quite sick by then and was much older medically than his chronological age.

Don, in the meantime, was very steady and secure with Gene Kelly. Don was a good and dependable worker. He had a day off every week and the pay was fair. In time he received very good bonuses, which they called "spiffs" both on a monthly basis, as well as at Christmas. He also had a week vacation in the summer. Don remained there for about 6 years before striking out on his own as a furniture refinishing in about 1966.

On the 16th of January, 1958 my third grandchild was born, Donna Christine Stephens. She was an adorable and good baby. Really cute, and content. I remember babysitting her when she was 5 months old so Don & Nancy could go on vacation. We so enjoyed having her and she was such a joy to take care of! So good and happy. We have a picture of her on the kitchen table after I gave her a bath. She had such pretty, perfect features.



**Donna Stephens & Bill Bender**

Donna was baptized in Our Lady of La Salette Church in Berkley. Gertrude and Arthur Crane were her sponsors. We had a little party for her afterwards in Nancy's house on Franklin.



**Warren & Linda Stephens**

This was the year my granddaughter Linda learned to drive. Don and Nancy were over our house in the summer visiting us and having dinner. After dinner the kids went outside and played. All of a sudden we heard a big commotion outside and looked out to see what was going on. There was Linda flying down



the driveway in Don's car, heading right for Alter Road! Into Alter Road she went with the car, across the street and smashed into a parked car across the street! Boy was Don ever hopping mad! Nancy and I, on the other hand were much more worried about whether or not Linda was alright! She was okay but shaken up. It was quite a few years later before she had her second driving lesson.



**Donna, Linda & Warren Stephens**

Nancy had a nice habit of dressing up the little kids, getting out the stroller and walking from her house on Franklin to Don's store (Crazy Kelly's) on 12 Mile just the other side of Coolidge. Don loved to see his little family coming to meet him and then they all walked home together.

One day Nancy had all the kids dressed and as she started out the door Donna wet her pants. Nancy brought all the kids back in and changed Donna, then started out again. Just as she started out the door Linda had wet pants too, so in they all went again and Nancy then changed Linda. Nancy looked at her watch and was upset as it was now so late that Don would be on his way home before they got to his store. But the little family all started out on foot hoping to at least meet him along the way. When the little family got to 12 Mile Rd there was lots of excitement and Nancy wondered what was going on. She soon found out. It was an act of God that the kids had chosen that particular time of that particular day to wet their pants as a car had jumped the curb and had gone barreling down the sidewalk on 12 Mile Road where Nancy and the kids always walked. Had they been on the sidewalk that day the whole family would have been killed as there was no way they could have gotten out of the way in time. God works in mysterious ways!

Ed, I and the kids went back to Lion's Head many, many times over the next 30 years. The last time I was at Lion's Head with my Ed and Bill was for my anniversary in August, 1981. We just drove off one day and took our chances at finding accommodations. We drove to the Cedar Grove cottages and Mrs. Szulc, the new owner, just happened to have the little cottage available. So Ed and I had the bedroom and Bill and Sandy slept on the couch and a mattress on the floor. We had a wonderful time as always.





**Marie, Bill, Sandy**



**Marie**



**Edward**



**Sandy & Bill**



**Sandy & Marie**



**Marie & Edward**



**Edward**



**Edward & Marie**

In 1957 Ed, I, Sandy, Bill and Doug went to Lion's Head and rented the middle cottage, #2. Doug and Bill went to play on the rocks together and soon we heard a big fight brewing. Ed and I were embarrassed, so we called to Bill to get up to the cottage, figuring all would be peaceful again if we separated the two boys. Bill came up and Doug stayed down on the rocks. Doug and Bill were both running. Doug tripped and smashed his hand on the rocks and started screaming bloody murder, twice as much noise as before we broke them up! Bill, still running toward the cottage, turned and looked behind him to see why Doug was caterwauling, and suddenly both boys were screaming their heads off! Bill, looking behind him and still running forward, smashed full speed ahead into the stone chimney and did his forehead up real good!



**Sandy**



**Edward**



**Marie & Edward**



**Donna**



**Marie**



**Sandy**



**Marie & Sandy**



**Donna, Marie & Ed**

We used to love going to Barrow bay and look around. On the drive in there was a huge stone cliff on our right that was impressive in its massiveness and beauty. And in Borrow Bay itself there were a series of cottages, a deep drop and a river leading into the Georgian Bay. And back by the main road on the way out there was a huge dam across the river. I used to get so mad at Ed and Sandy because if it was there they had to either climb it or walk across it and that dam was no exception. They walked across that narrow dam but couldn't get to the other side on the first try as the dam was broken down on the south side. Later they managed to crawl across it.



**Marie**



**Sandy**



**Marie & Sandy**



**Sandy**

The Lighthouse at the Indian Reservation at Cape Croker was an especial treat in the 1950's as an old priest frequented this route on his way to keep the light house keeper company. This old priest had a keen sense of humor which, in spite of his age, came to the fore one day while he was traveling through the scary, dank, close, dark forest that stretched from Cape Croker inward to the lighthouse. It wasn't wide enough for a car to pass through and the tree branches scraped against the car and that road just twisted and turned and any time we expected to come to a dead end with no chance of turning back. The priest had the same sense of eeriness that we did for he made up a whole set of signs which he nailed to the trees along the way. He called it "Devil's Bend" and warned you to turn back "While you still may!" The signs got more ominous as one twisted and turned inward. One felt like he was going to end up in the devil's workshop at the end of that trip!

We also enjoyed walking in two ruined "forts" in Canada, one in Barrow Bay, the other on Carter Road in Lion's Head on the way to Grieg's cottages. They were a lot of fun to walk in, sit in and on and to take pictures in.



**Marie & Edward Bender at the Martyr's Shrine, Midland**

We also enjoyed taking a long excursion to Midland and visiting the martyr's shrine and the 30,000 island boat ride. Once we also stopped in Collingwood on a nice warm sunny June day and we took a ski lift ride.

Suddenly when we were high up in the sky on that ski lift, and wondering about our sanity that we ever agreed to get on such a scary, dangerous contraption, it began to rain in driving sheets. Boy, were we ever freezing cold! And we were forced to ride that darn thing back down again as it was too far and too steep to walk!

Ed then drove up Michael's 1964 Dodge with a big engine and positraction up that very steep mountain road. Mike's car just dug in and went up that steep incline with no strain. We tried that trip again another year in Ed's 1959 Opal and we had to turn the car around and drive back down before we were half way up and the car didn't have enough power and traction to make it. The year we got the 1964 Dodge up there we almost tumbled over the side of the mountain Ed drove along this one road, then slowed down and then stopped as he couldn't see over the next hill. He got out and looked and was so grateful he decided to look first. It was a sheer drop off at the crest, the road ceased there with no warning!

They also had an Indian fort at Midland that Ed and I had enjoyed visiting in the early 50's.

Ed and I also enjoyed going to Tobermory for a few hours and watching all the tourist boats and divers come and go. One year I used the Laundromat in Tobermory and was so shocked. All my clothes were ruined by the rubber from the diving suits that someone washed just before I did.







**Sandy & Marie**



**Ed & Marie**



**Sandy, Ed & Donna**



**Marie, Sandy, Donna**

Ed and I also liked going back to Look About on Lake Huron to swim, stop in the lodge and just enjoy the beautiful scenery. We & the kids had many a good time in the warm shallow water of the beaches on that side. Ed and the kids used to like to rib me when they played ball as I couldn't catch too good. I later found out that that is a common problem for people who have astigmatism like me as we lose sight of the ball for the last 6 inches due to this problem. Ed always joked with me and said that as long as I aimed at him he was safe as I wasn't all that accurate, to put it mildly. But Ed always added that he was in real trouble if I got smart and aimed somewhere else as I might then hit him dead center!

We also liked to go to the Christian camp south of Wiarton at Chesley Lake. It was a lot of fun golfing to the sound of Onward, Christian Soldiers music over their loud speakers midday. We also liked eating lunch in their lodge. They also had a lake on their property. We never stayed overnight there.



**Marie at Eugenia Falls**



**Sandy**



**Marie & Sandy**



**Donna & Sandy**

Ed, I and the kids also traveled to Eugenia Falls south of highway 21. I almost could have lost my Ed there. He was standing on the falls taking pictures when he suddenly became unsteady and started staggering toward the falls. Sandy grabbed him and held him steady. We all had nightmares over that one.

We always ate and shopped in Wiarton as well as Owen Sound. We were glad when they built the municipal building so we had a convenient bathroom to hit on our shopping excursions. We usually ate at the restaurant on the west side of the street on the north side of town called the Bedford. The food was lousy as is most of the food on that peninsula. None of those restaurants would survive one week in the Detroit metropolitan area. We also used the bathrooms of the Bedford restaurant before they put in the municipal building.



**Donna & Sandy**



**Donna Stephens**



**Sandy Wilhelm**

We loved the Sauble falls south west of Wiarton. They were rapid but shallow falls, usually not deeper than your knees. We loved to walk across those falls. If you stared straight down at the falls for awhile you felt like you were surfboarding very rapidly down stream and it was hard to maintain your balance. Once Sandy fell over, flew downstream and almost knocked Shorty over too. Another time one of us got a fishhook in our foot in those falls.



**Marie & Ed**



**Sandy & Marie**



**Ed at Pacey's**

We loved playing cards and penny pitch evenings at the cottage. Bill would carry on so when he was winning or putting one over on us! He would laugh hysterically, flap his wings like a chicken, get up and run around his chair and then flop back down again, still laughing and guffawing. When he was losing he was sullen and if you laughed at the change in his demeanor he got mad at you and told you he didn't think you were funny.

Ed loved to stand under the cliffs on a rainy day and skip stones. He would raise up when throwing the stone and would bang his head and draw blood. But he was having so much fun he didn't even care. He also climbed cliffs with Sandy. One time he climbed a cliff, got into a deep forest and then sunk into a snake hole up to his knee. He was scared he had broken his leg that time. When he got free of the snake hole, it was rapidly getting dark in that deep forest and he and Sandy were afraid they wouldn't find the way out before complete darkness enveloped them. But the 1 million mosquitoes helped them find the way out.



Ed liked scaring me in the boat at Johnstone and Pine Tree Harbors in the northern part of the peninsula. I would get so mad at him if he wouldn't stay close to shore! And then he'd tease me by rowing in circles and pretending he was lost. We have a picture to show what I thought of those shenanigans!

Ed and I would go to the show in Wiarton in the early 50's and leave the kids with ma. One time the fog was so thick on the way back that I was scared stiff and sure we'd never find our way back over that desolate dirt road. But Ed found driving in the fog a real challenge and always managed to arrive safe and sound.

One day on Alter I heard a lot of commotion outside on my front lawn so I looked out the window and what I saw horrified me! There lying on my front lawn was Mrs. Meeseman's relative. She and her husband were well up in age. He had gotten in the car first and as she was getting in the car he started it up, accidentally threw it into gear and the car shot up on my front lawn, spewing out the wife in the process. I felt so sorry for her. I ran out of my house and offered to call an ambulance but they both turned down this idea. A very sore and shaken old lady gradually arose from my front lawn and managed to get back in her husband's car and they drove off home.

Mr. Meeseman in his last driving days was a real hazard on the road. Ed and I used to grit our teeth watching him navigate a U turn in front of our house. He would drive about 5 miles per hour down Alter Road, the whole world would honk angrily at him, making him even more flustered. He would stop across the street from his house and begin navigating the U turn at about 1/4 of a mile per hour! Honest! A snail could have walked across that street faster than his car. All the traffic would slam on their brakes and then they'd honk like mad at him as he proceeded to block both lanes making his cautious U turn.

Mr. Meeseman used to have a case of beer delivered to his home every week. I remember the beer store man delivering it. He would walk between the houses and drop the case off at the back door.

Mr. Meeseman used to love to frequent Whitey's bar on Warren and Alter and also the bar at Mack and Nottingham. He used to make those perilous U turns on Mack Avenue too. Louise Reichard lived next to the beer store and she used



to lay even money that Mr. Meeseman wouldn't make it across the street in one piece. But somehow he always did.

However his car didn't make out so good on the home front. Ed had his 1951 Pontiac professionally painted by the paint shop on the corner of Ashland and Warren for \$125.00 and that gave Mr. Meeseman the idea that he'd like a new paint job too. Ed's paint job was most professional. The same could not be said of Mr. Meeseman's. He got out several buckets of paint and a ladder. He then rested the ladder against his car and started brushing the paint on. When he got done the car looked funny. You could see every brush stroke and the paint was not appropriate for a car. It was a flat, dull paint when it dried. He left his car in the backyard for several days to dry, then he drove it back out to the street. Out of curiosity I watched him back up. I wish I hadn't! SCRAPE!!! Against my house. There went one patch of paint. SCRAPE! !! Against his house. More paint gone! Yucch!!! Half the sides were wiped out after he hit our houses three or four times!

Another funny Mr. Meeseman car story...Ed and I were sitting on the front porch one beautiful sunny summer afternoon on a Sunday. Suddenly along comes Victor Meeseman, Mr. Meeseman's son. He gets out a shovel and digs all around a snow ball bush that sat in front of the Meeseman porch. After he dug all around the bush he tried to yank it out of the ground. No luck. He dug some more and then yanked again. No luck. Then we watch Victor drive Mr. Meeseman's small 2 seater car over the sidewalk. (Mr. Meeseman's car had no back seat). Then we watch Victor tie the rope onto Mr. Meeseman's bumper, then the other end of the rope onto the big bush under the Meeseman's porch. Then Victor got in the car and started driving off. When he got to the end of the rope neither the bush nor the car would budge. He backed up and drove forward again. The car darn near picked up off its front wheels but no go. Victor then backed up and then made a fast run for it. Suddenly the car shot forward and went into the street. The bush tore out of its moorings finally, you say?!? Wrong! The bumper ripped right off the car and sat there all by itself tied to the end of the rope! Mr. Meeseman stood there looking so dumb, staring at the bumper sitting there all by itself on the end of the rope.

Another time my back doorbell rang and I went out and found Mr. Meeseman standing at my back door. When I answered he said something about having been in an accident and would I be a witness.

He spoke as much Belgian as English, and his English was heavily accented, so I did not understand enough to carry on a meaningful conversation. Fortunately he did not press the issue and went back home and I never heard about the court appearance again. What would I ever be able to say about his accident that I never even saw?

One beautiful day in May, Sandy came home from high school and said she had to catch grasshoppers for her biology experiments. While eating supper, Sandy got a brilliant idea. She looked over at Doug, age 8, who was busy eating supper and said to him, Doug, how would you like to earn a fast quarter? Doug was all ears. Sandy handed him an empty mayonnaise bottle with a lid and told him to go catch some grasshoppers. Doug was glad to oblige, as he said he knew just where to find some, over by the Carmack's house there were plenty to be had. While the rest of us were still eating a leisurely dinner of pot roast, mashed potatoes, carrots and gravy, Doug slipped off his chair and was on his way to a grasshopper hunting safari. While we were eating, about 10 minutes after he left the kitchen, Doug let out one devil of a loud wail that just got louder and more insistent. Ed was disgusted and embarrassed at Doug disturbing the entire neighborhood and said, "There goes Dupus again!" In roars Doug full volume, running like the devil was at his tail! One look at him and Ed was sorry he had made the disparaging remark about his loud mouth. Doug was just squirting blood out of his hand! Sandy and I ran him to the bathroom and ran his hand under cold water. Sandy watched the wound and said, oh, oh! We have to take him to the hospital quick! Look at how that blood pumps out! He cut an artery & if we don't get him there fast he'll loose a lot of blood! Ed jumped up, we took him fast to the car after wrapping his hand tightly in several towels to stop the blood some, and off we sped to Cottage Hospital. When we brought him in and they saw the blood spurting, they took him immediately to the emergency area. I tried to go with him, but they said no, that they were going to put stitches in his hand and it would be better if I was not in the room. I guess they didn't want some squeamish woman passing out on them! So Ed, Sandy and I sat there in the dim but classy waiting room and again we sunk our heads into our collars as Doug was doing a good job of yelling his head off! We knew he was still alive and with us, that's for sure! A very bedraggled doctor came out about a half hour later and said the bleeding was stopped and we could take him home now. I said, take him home, don't you want to keep him overnight? They all said a resounding, firm, NO!!! They'd had enough, I guess, and figured it was my problem now. We took him home, and boy, what a night I had! I slept with him because he was badly shaken up, but what a battle I had. When he fell asleep, he was a real restless sleeper, was all over the bed and beat me to death with the thrashing of his arms & his legs. I sure was glad to be back in my own bed the next night!

Sandy had a little fun afterwards from this incident. We brought home the two towels just drenched with blood that night and as I had my hands full with Doug, Sandy offered to wash out the bloody towels for me. I was grateful for the help. But Sandy's motives were not altruistic in this case. She knew just what she wanted; she found another jar, then wrung all the blood from those towels out into the jar. Then she washed the towels clean after all the excess blood was wrung out. The next day she took the jar full of blood to school with her and put it in front of Mary Bal duck's nose (the most squeamish kid in the class) and said, guess what this is? Mary had no idea, so when Sandy

enlightened her, she screamed so loud the whole school heard. Doug saw the jar of his blood later that day but was totally unimpressed. He thought it was dumb to carry old blood around in a jar.

We hadn't yet got the stitches out of Doug's hand when suddenly his mouth bothered him. I had Sandy take him to Dr. Krebs' office as he needed the stitches out and I figured the doctor could look at his mouth at the same time. The doctor told us it was trench mouth and Sandy had to take Doug back to the doctor for daily shots for about 5 days. Sandy would put Doug on the front bar of her Panther bicycle and ride him to the doctor's office. Doug hated going as he hadn't yet got over the trauma of the stitches and now he was getting more shots. That was a rough spring for Doug! and Bill had a Saturday ritual. Either they sat in front of the T.V. set and slugged it out (literally!) over what program to watch, with whoever got in the best punches getting his choice of programs while the other one laid on the floor and bellowed. The other ritual was to go together to the show for one of those God awful Godzilla meets Tarzan, or other such scary or war movies. Mostly they would walk to the Harper or the show on Mack and Chalmers. When they went to the Harper I-94 was being built so they would slide and play on the freeway and the embankments on their way to and from the show. One time Bill wanted to see a picture playing at a show near Cadieux and Harper so Ed picked them up after lunch, gave them each a quarter for the show, then gave Bill a dime and a note with the phone number of the store on it and told him to call when the movie was over and one of the delivery men would come and pick them up. He then gave them each another 10 cents each for candy as he let them out of the car. The kids bought the candy, sat down in the theatre and watched the show.

Afterwards Bill walked out of the theatre and started asking passersby which way to Warren and Alter. Doug started losing his patience, telling Bill they didn't need to know that, just get on the phone and call dad and they would be picked up and driven home. Bill muttered something about they're having to know how to walk home. Call dad! Doug hollered. Bill started walking in the direction someone gave them. Finally Doug, in a burst of sheer anger, caught on. The dime for the phone call is gone, huh? Doug asked Bill. Yup, said Bill, I bought extra candy with it. Bill kept asking directions until two very bedraggled little boys walked into the front door on Alter. Doug didn't forget that for a long time afterwards.

I used to calm Doug down by giving him a bath on Saturdays, toweling him dry and then sitting down with him to watch the Milky party with him. He used to enjoy doing that with me. I used to have to sit through all those dumb clown jokes and Twin Pines milk commercials just to keep the kid happy.

About 1959 the city of Detroit installed new street lights on Alter Road. They were much brighter than the older ones and this did not please me too much as the new lights were brighter, much closer together and shined in my bedroom nights. But the kids liked playing under the brighter lights in the

summer time. The older lights were turned on by hand each night and we would watch as sections of light would be turned on, one after another, every single evening. The time they were turned on varied according to the punctuality of the person throwing all the switches. The new lights were automatic and went on with a photoelectric sensor. And, boy, do I remember the summer of the jackhammer when the city busted up all the old asphalt and put new down. RATTATATAT~~ the jackhammer went all day long, every day, all summer~~ and Bill used to sit there watching them and imitating the sound.

In 1958 Ed won another trip, this time to Acapulco, Mexico. Again, it was in the middle of the winter and we were both looking forward to the trip, but not the plane ride. When we got there we found we almost preferred the cold. Boy, was it ever hot and humid there Like a steamy, overgrown jungle!! Every one took a siesta at high noon and we soon knew why. It was so hot that unconsciousness was preferable to suffering through all that heat. One day Ed decided to take us on a boat ride down the lagoon. Not a very smart idea, we soon found out. It was steamy, filthy, green, stinking, slimy water, I was getting sick to my stomach from smelling it. Ed soon made another discovery that he did not share with me until much later. He looked up into the trees and discovered dead branches laying on top of the live ones. After awhile he discovered that the dead branches moved... they were snakes!! Snakes by the dozen were sitting over our heads in branches lazily looking down at us! Ed knew if he showed me that he would have total panic on his hands. As it was we cut our boat excursion short as Ed and I had enough with the heat, steam and filthy smell. We were warned not to eat any fresh fruits and vegetables while staying there as they were not sanitary enough for North Americans. They were indeed right. Ed must have eaten something fresh for on the last day as we were packing up Ed was suddenly overcome with such a great weakness that he could hardly stand on his feet. He was so sick to his stomach and had such bad runs. But Ed was determined to get out of there and go home where the standards of cleanliness were much higher. I started feeling queasy myself but another lady on the trip had gotten lomitol pills from her doctor which she shared with me and I was soon feeling a lot better, but not perfect. We got Ed on the plane. He was amazed that he was able to make his legs stay under him for that long. After Ed got home he found out that one of the other dealers was so sick that he was taken to a local hospital in Acapulco and remained in the hospital for over 9 months and was never well again when he finally did return home. All in all, that was the least pleasant of all our trips. It was so hot there that we never even wanted to go outside and sightsee.

## 1959

The next year Ed won another trip, this time to San Juan, Puerto Rico. We really liked it there. It was very pretty and the streets all had Dutch names and

the architecture was of a very clean, pretty Dutch design. That was also the wildest of our trips. We remember a fellow appliance store owner, Ed Law, who was on board with us trying to find his luscious, seductive wife every evening. He would go from room to room shouting, "Jackie, Jackie, where are you?" Jackie was having a very good time on that trip and she wasn't about to be found! But she made such a fool out of him that we truly felt very sorry for him.

And there was another woman who was the life of the party. We had parties every night around the pool, and as all the booze was free, a lot of people got pretty tight, and most especially this gorgeous gal with a new expensive evening gown and a fancy coiffeur every single night. She would be feeling no pain and would soon be the life of the party. Before the night was over someone would pick her up, put her on a serving cart, give her a fast ride around the pool, and then in she'd go!, fine clothes and all. Every night, same repeat performance, same lady, same pool, just a different outfit destroyed.

We did a lot of sight seeing there and bought a number of souvenirs. That was a very nice trip. Nancy and Don watched our kids while we were gone, then Ed won a second trip and we watched her kids while she was gone. Nancy and Don really enjoyed that trip too, but in their case it was Don who was the life of the party by the pool. Don had borrowed a number of Jack Jackson's \$200 suits as Don didn't own anything that he considered appropriate for evening wear. Then at the pool party one of the owners went hand over hand down to the end of the diving board, dangling in mid air over the water, then turned around and went hand over hand back again. He then dared Don to do the same. Don, with a few drinks in him, took up the bet. With Jack Jackson's best suit on, he grasped the diving board, lowered himself beneath it and started going out to the end, hand over hand, dangling in mid air. The guy who had just done it got up from his seat walked out onto the diving board while Don was hanging and started jumping up and down on the diving board, making it impossible for Don to keep hanging on as he was getting bashed by the springing diving board. Nancy started screaming for Don not to let go as he had Jack's best suit on. But in went Don, suit and all!

Ed won one trip he went on alone. I was upset about that trip as I knew how the men acted on those trips and I didn't want Ed to be tempted to pick up something cute for a night and then bring something else not so cute back home! But Ed went for a week. It was a combination business and pleasure trip. Ed said he was amazed at how his fellow salesmen got suckered by floozies in the bars in Las Vegas. They would order champagne and the men would discover at the end of the evening that the champagne drunk by the floozies cost \$100 per bottle! Ed said if he was ever tempted, all he had to do was to think of me and the kids. Ed said he could never again face me and especially his kids if he cheated on me. Ed was always such a moral, upright man.

Ed said he took a walk in the desert just outside of Las Vegas and was suddenly thrown right off his feet and on his face! A whirlwind had come along behind him, and unaware of its presence or its power, he got bowled over.

One day Ed brought Doug home a 26 inch shiny new red bike in the summer. Doug was ecstatic! He was on that thing and wobbling down the sidewalk in no time with Ed holding onto the back end. In a very short time Doug was off and riding on his shiny new bike. Ed then ran into the house and got his camera and took pictures of the occasion. Doug took pretty good care of that bike for quite some time to come.

One night we were all fast asleep when suddenly we all bolted awake by what sounded like the bricks falling off the chimney. At first we thought something hit the house! Sandy was the first one out of the house. She was sleeping in the middle bedroom upstairs, bolted out of bed right after the crash and flew down the stairs, taking several at a time. She went right out the door in her pajamas and was just sick at what she saw! There in front of the house Ed's beautiful, faithful old 1951 Pontiac was smashed right up to the back seat & sitting in front of Ed's car was a very drunken man in a Ford who was trying to restart his car so he could run away. Sandy ran back into the house screaming for Ed, who was already on his way down. Ed was sick to his stomach when he saw what happened to his beloved car. This car had 100,000 miles on it, but ran like new. Nothing Ed could do for the car now. I called the police and asked them to come over. Ed had the guy come into our house, but the guy was so terribly drunk that he couldn't even pronounce his name, let alone remember his address! The police soon came and took his license out of his wallet to copy down the information. We figured the police would haul him off to jail as he obviously had been driving in a very drunken condition. We were shocked when the police, who were having a very hard time getting the guy into their police car as he was so drunk he was unable to get himself to bend down and in the car. The one policeman had to push his head down to get him in the car as he was striking his head against the side of the car. As the police were stuffing him into the back seat we were mad and shocked when we heard them say that maybe they should take him home rather than in so as to cause no trouble! They were more interested in the well-being of the drunk than us!

Ed fought to get his Pontiac repaired, but lost. They would only give him \$75.00 for his car because of its age. Ed was furious, he just spent \$125 to have it painted! But they told him that was his tough luck, that he shouldn't have spent that money on an old car like that.

We told the kids to leave the carpenter's car alone. It sat there all smashed up for about a week. But when Sandy heard that Ed was getting cheated by the insurance company, she stole many of his tools and put them in Ed's tool box in the basement. When Ed realized what a bath he had taken from the insurance company, both of us were secretly pleased that Sandy took those



tools. He got off scot free, he didn't have to pay one dime and the insurance company paid him off well as his was a newer car.

Ed bought a used 1957 Pontiac, a pretty coral and beige one as he had had such good luck with his 1951 Pontiac. His good luck did not extend to the next Pontiac. It was a gas guzzling lemon, to put it mildly. And the trunk was full of rock salt which was rusting out the underpinnings. And when you put the car in gear you had to wait a while for anything to happen. Ed was used to a stick shift and its positive response and the sloppy automatic was an irritation to him.

Ed lent his 1951 Pontiac to Julie Meeseman once and when she got back home she was hysterical as the whole trip she couldn't get Ed's car to go into second gear. Turns out Ed never used second gear, he merely shifted it from 1st to third as the engine was powerful and 1st gear was high geared. But Julie didn't know that.

Ed thanked the Lord for his sloppy automatic transmission one day on his way to work, though. The light turned green, he stepped on the gas, and as usual, nothing happened. Suddenly a kid darted right into the path of his car. Had his car started right out, he would have hit the kid.

In about 6 months Ed had had enough of that dog, and went car hunting. He found something interesting out there, a 1959 Opel Kadette Record. It was little and cheap and it appealed to him. It also got 26 miles to the gallon, after 8 miles to the gallon on the last car. I was with him when he bought it from Krajenke Buick in Hamtramck and brought it home in January. After supper he offered to take the whole family for a spin. We readily agreed and Ed, I, Sandy, Bill and Doug hopped in and off we went. First off there was dissention in the back seat as it wasn't wide enough for 3 people. We took to riding with Doug, Ed and I in the front in subsequent rides. Anyway, in a few blocks out it started snowing. It soon settled on the ground in a white blanket. But Ed could hardly see the snow as the Opel's windows fogged up so badly we could hardly see out! And the defroster was never adequate to dissipate the moisture inside the car.

Then the car started slipping all over the road as it was so small and had very poor traction! What a way to start out with a new car! But Ed loved that car despite its many faults.

When Aunt Agnes was babysitting my kids for a week a funny thing happened. Sandy's biology teacher told the kids to take lima beans and germinate them to observe the process. Sandy did this as she was told. She put a towel in a flat pan, wet the towel, then put the lima beans on top the wet towel. She then folded the towel over the beans and waited. True to instructions, the beans did germinate and Sandy completed her report. Then Sandy hated to just throw the beans away. She decided to see how high they would grow without earth and

outside weather conditions. The lima bean vines ended up about 3 feet tall, but spindly and pale looking. At this point Agnes came to our house and the first night she had to sleep with Sandy until Ed and I left early the next morning, at which time she could have our bed. Agnes came in Sandy's bedroom in the dark, was at the foot of the bed when suddenly the lima bean stalks brushed against her arm. She turned around to see what had touched her and let out a gosh awful sound when she saw those ugly, spindly vines in the dark. Agnes' first command as my kids babysitter was that those vines had to go!

One morning in the dead of winter I opened up the front door in the pitch blackness of early morning, and got the shock of my life. There, not 6 inches from my face and staring right at me with surprise was the face of a stew bum! We just stood there face to face for over one minute, so great was our surprise! He was as badly shaken as I was! He was delivering newspapers in return for a free meal.

Another time I answered the door and some guy was selling something. I told him I wasn't interested and shut the door and went about what I was doing before I answered the door. Suddenly Sandy says to me, Ma, I hear footsteps upstairs! (We were supposed to be the only ones home at the time.) I marched right upstairs and here wandering around up there was the salesman! What do you think you're doing here, I asked him in my sternest voice!? Oh, I thought this was an income he said and fled.

Ed and I had decided to move about 1956, but it took another 5 years before we found a suitable home. We had been on Alter Road for 17 years and we dearly loved that home, but the neighborhood was threatening to change soon as the Negroes were already at Connor and Warren and were gradually creeping our way. Ed wanted to get out while our home still had some value left, because once the blacks move in the house values plummet. None of us except Ed really wanted to move as that house was so comfortable and centrally located and had been home for so many years. But Ed was right, it was time to go.

For the next five years we looked at many homes in many areas. We looked at Ruzanne's homes in St. Clair Shores on Joan St. We looked in Madison Heights, in Clinton Township on Fierz Place and also King's houses near Harper and Crocker. So many times Ed almost bought and when the deal fell through I was so glad as so many of those homes just were not big enough for our large family. Many a time I prayed that we would find just the right house.

In 1959, right on our 25th wedding anniversary, we found a home on 19 Mile Road in Sterling Township. We had left the house on Alter about 9 am and went to Belle Isle in the morning. Before we got to Belle Isle Ed and I were so terribly hot as it was one of those scorcher days that August can bring, so we decided to go back home and put on much lighter clothes and a pair of shorts. Nancy was babysitting our kids for us while we spent the day alone together.

Unknown to us, Nancy, Sandy and the kids had walked to the dime store at Mack and Chalmers and had bought special wedding cake pans, and then went to the baker shop across the street and purchased a bride and groom, wedding birds, and 25th anniversary decals and had just got back home and were in the process of assembling the cake mix when Ed and I suddenly and unexpectedly walked in again. Nancy and Sandy went 100 miles per hour to hide the evidence before we walked in the kitchen, then she managed to keep us out of there so we wouldn't spoil her surprise.

We changed clothes, spoke a few words to the kids, then left again. After we enjoyed Belle Isle for a few hours we decided to take a ride and check on model homes again. Ed remembered a house he liked at 19 Mile Road and Clinton River Road, but thought was a little too expensive for his blood. We decided to take a second look at this house and drove out there. We were delighted to see that the house had been reduced \$1500 and so we put a deposit of \$50.00 down on the house, then drove back home in time for dinner.



**Edward & Marie Bender**

We were so delighted with the beautiful 3 tiered layer cake with the bride and groom on the top layer, love birds all around the sides along with the 25 anniversary silver decals. That cake was most professional in appearance and no baker could have done better! Nancy always had a real flair for decorating, which she demonstrated on this cake.

We all ate dinner together in the dining room as it was a festive occasion, drank champagne after being toasted by Nancy, had pictures taken and then ate dinner and afterwards with great reluctance, we cut into that beautiful anniversary cake.

Ed and I felt bad about having our anniversary pictures taken in shorts and casual dress, but it was over 100 degrees that day, we had suffered miserably all day and we were on the verge of prostration from the heat, and attiring in hot stuffy formal attire was beyond our capabilities.

So we figured the best way to wind up a very happy anniversary was to just sit and enjoy the evening with Nancy, Don and the younger children. That was a day that Ed and I long remembered. Sandy told me later that Nancy was upset that she didn't get us a more expensive anniversary present as it was an

important anniversary and it was the only significant present we received. But I was sad that Nancy felt that way as I loved the silver rimmed crystal bowl she gave me and in fact I still have it to this day. I just used it this Thanksgiving. And I still have my fond memories of that beautiful 3 tiered anniversary cake. Ed and I couldn't have had a happier 25th anniversary, except of course, better weather!

Well, back to the new home. I said to Ed to try to get a home in the subdivision of Dresden Village #2 off 19 Mile Road as that was my favorite location. That subdivision had been a cattle farm a few short years ago, but was now mostly built up with new one and two story homes. The salesman had nothing available at the time, so that's when we started to look in earnest, but always something held us back from buying; that and another problem - the house on Alter Road was very hard to sell. They all liked the inside of our home, which was very comfortable. But they didn't like the wide street and the traffic because most of them had small children. Another deterrent to selling was the small back yard and the ugly, flat roofed garage which was attached to the neighbor's garage. A further problem was that ugly, old monstrous white octopus furnace which took up most of the basement and was truly an ancient relic. It heated fine, but nobody believed it to look at it. In fact, when the house was finally sold, no mortgage company would close with such a furnace in the house, so a new furnace had to be installed and the price added to the purchase price of the home.

Ed's business wasn't thriving like other years and for the next 8 years it took its toll on dear Ed. The business was gradually declining and it made me very sad to see Ed so unhappy because business was his whole life he worked so hard and such long hours.

Around the Christmas holidays Ed worked from 9 am until 11 to 11:30 pm as long as customers were coming in to buy!

Many a night Ed would wake up in a cold sweat and tell me that he dreamed of being in a big barn with steel beams overhead, so unlike a place of business! He had this exact same dream over and over again.

He really worried about his failing business. He started advertising more and more, continually cutting the cost of his merchandise so that he was giving it away a little over cost, and still not enough business. He changed his name to Cadillac T.V. as he had a friend with a business of the same name on the west side and they agreed to go in on the same ad and split the cost. Ed Law would get the west side business and Ed would get the east side customers they calculated. The ad worked well for Ed Law but not for our Ed.

After much agonizing Ed decided to liquidate his merchandise and go into business with a business associate of his, a Mr. Thern Baxter, who owned Baxter's Appliance on Gratiot just north of 7 Mile Road in Detroit.

At first Ed worked in the same store as Thern at Gratiot and 7 Mile Rd. Ed had brought his unsold appliances and televisions with him and the agreement was that Ed was to get back the wholesale cost of each piece of his that was sold and the company was to realize the profit. Naturally Ed concentrated on selling off his own merchandiser which he was quite successful in doing as the business was much better on Gratiot Avenue than on Warren. But this caused a lot of friction with Thern as Ed was a good salesman and pushed a lot more merchandise than the other salesmen. Thern soon saw that his inventory was not diminishing at the same rate. Ed had excellent credit with all the major companies and was able to make all his payments and realize some profit as well. But in the end, Thern did end up with some of Ed's merchandise for which Ed was never reimbursed.

I went to Dr. Krebs, a doctor Ed met in his store at 16389 E. Warren. Dr. Krebs had an upstairs office in the next block north and he used to come into Ed's store, buy and socialize. Ed told me he was a good doctor and to try him. My nerves were really bad as I was going through the change of life and I thought I'd go there and see if he could help. I had been to Dr. McKenzie, the doctor who delivered Bill and Sandy, on Rivard in Grosse Pointe for my nerves and Sandy's stomach aches. Dr. McKenzie gave us both hormone shots but both felt that they did no good, so we didn't go back to him. So now I thought I'd give Dr. Krebs a try for the same problem. Dr. Krebs was very confident that he could help me. He said it was a problem of not having enough estrogen in my system so he'd give me estrogen shots and I'd be okay again. So I went there frequently for estrogen shots. Dr. Krebs went on vacation and so his office girl, Mrs. Lord, gave me the shots in his absence. I really liked Mrs. Lord, she was a no nonsense woman of about 50 who worked hard for Dr. Krebs. Dr. Krebs made home calls, office calls and hospital rounds and he went from 8 am to 11 pm and beyond, all the while with Mrs. Lord at his side. He was getting a little forgetful from old age and Mrs. Lord was his extended memory. So I trusted both of them.

Suddenly one day the back of my calf hurt a lot and it felt real hot to the touch. I called Mrs. Lord and told her my problem. Mrs. Lord called another doctor who was a friend of Dr. Krebs and told him my symptoms. The doctor was immediately alarmed, saying that I had a blood clot from the estrogen. They told me to stay off my leg and not move around much so as to not dislodge the clot. After a very worrisome week, I was alright again. But I never trusted Dr. Krebs as much after that.

I was very mad at the pharmacist who was downstairs from Dr. Krebs who was also a friend of Ed's and who used to drop by the store and chat. Ed got to talking to this pharmacist about how much strain he was under and before I knew it, Ed was bringing home a vial of unprescribed Librium pills, a gift from his pharmacist friend. I did not one bit appreciate this. I was scared of the effects and the potential addictive qualities of these kind of pills. I already had my hands more than full with Sandy. She was down sick with a kidney

infection almost every month, in excruciating pain, and high fever. Every time she had one of these attacks the doctors gave her codeine to kill the pain, and I was so awfully scared that my little daughter would get addicted to these dangerous pills. So I didn't need Ed trying out the same stuff and I told him so. But Ed said it took the edge off his nerves what with his business going bad due to the recession.

I was also very nervous about the other pills Sandy had to take. One antibiotic after another. Mostly it was chloromycetin for the recurrent infection. Those pills just about sent Ed to the poor house! They cost \$1.00 per pill, a high price considering that was an average hourly wage in those days. And she had to take 4 pills per day for 10 to 30 days straight. I got even more nervous about these pills when Ed took the prescription to a different pharmacist and the pharmacist asked him how old the person was who was taking these pills. When Ed told him 11 years old, the pharmacist handed him back the prescription and told him he refused to fill it as it was a far too dangerous drug for a child, that this drug could cause serious, irreversible, fatal blood disorders similar to leukemia in many children. But then the doctor told us the girl might die of the infection if we didn't give it to her, so we filled it at Dave's Drug store on Warren and Maryland.

We were constantly rushing Sandy to the hospital, usually St. John's Hospital in Detroit. Those kidney infections were life and death, especially in 1956 and 1957 when they came on in full blown force. She would be well one hour and the next her temperature was shooting up to 105 degrees F and she was beside herself in horrid pain. She would freeze and sweat alternately, and her skin crawled from the fever. The school would call us, Ed would rush over and pick me and then her up and we would rush to St. John's Hospital. Ed would try to soothe Sandy, telling her we would be there real soon and the doctors would give her something to bring the fever down and ease the pain. Ed would take Chandler Park drive as it was lightly traveled, a wide road and ended right at the hospital. One time with the worst infection she was really sick and they put her in the emergency room and started trying to figure out what was wrong. Sandy told them right away, another serious kidney infection. Ed and I were standing out in the hall beside ourselves with worry when those kind wonderful Catholics came out and told Ed they had to have \$100.00 cash before they would treat our little girl! Ed was numb with fear and shock, and his response was to bolt from the hospital, fly over to his store some 2- 3 miles away and pull \$100.00 out of the cash register and fly back with it. Ed normally would have been in a fighting mood over such an insult, but he knew his kid's life was at stake. When Ed got back the kid was in awful shape. She was so sick that what was going on around her seemed more like a dream than reality. They then started an IV and an antibiotic and admitted her once they saw the cash. That was a real insult as she had been there before and we had paid the bill in full before she left the hospital on every occasion. Once they admitted her and she was comfortable in a bed, Ed and I went home exhausted and went to bed



ourselves. After we left Dr. Hassig came by, stood at the foot of the bed and cried, telling the nurse that her life was touch and go at that point and it was in God's hands. Ed and I sure wish he would have let us know as we would have stayed with her. We could have lost her while we were home sleeping!

Sandy was in the hospital once, twice and sometimes 3 times per year, mostly all kidney infections. Poor Ed had no health insurance at all in those days and all hospital bills came out of his own pocket. But we never heard one word of complaint from him. Never. And the doctor visits! We went from doctor to doctor, hospital to hospital. We were even in Henry Ford Hospital, and they did even less than the others, just clouded up the issues and cost another bundle. Dr. Bicknell the kidney specialist was useless. His personality was almost vegetative, and he had absolutely no interest in the problem. Just sent a bill punctually. Dr. Hassig had a heart of gold and he tried everything he could, but nothing worked right. Dr. Hassig took a personal interest in Sandy and he used to spend his evenings and weekends pouring over medical books and journals trying to find an answer to stop all those infections. When I got splinters in my finger, Dr. Hassig was so tender hearted that he almost had tears in his eyes when he hurt me digging them out. He would stand up and walk around a bit to give me time to rest and calm down and when he had them all out he was more relieved than I was! There used to be a humorous side to my frequent calls to Dr. Hassig. I would call him up and tell him that Sandy had another infection, and then I would grin to myself in spite of the seriousness of the situation, as the doctors first response #@\*%& was unprintable. Then while he was on the phone with me he would often get into a darn big fight with his wife while the line was open and I was waiting for him to return while he was gone looking up something. One time I heard him say to her, what do you mean, you didn't pay that bill!!?!?! \*&~%\$# it! I sat there in my dining room, receiver to ear, smiling. But my smile would vanish abruptly when I heard my kid upstairs, moaning in pain. But Hassig would soon return to the phone, tell me to have the pharmacy call him. Then I would once more trudge over to Dave's and pick up the medicine. Antibiotics for infection, sometimes Urised to turn the urine orange and sanitize it, and the usual pain killers. Four days later after antibiotic therapy Sandy would just be able to crawl out of bed, white as a ghost, and painfully make her way back to school.

She was a good student, so she quickly caught up. But she was always fretful over what she was missing and was ever fearful that one of these days she would miss something important enough that she wouldn't be able to catch on again. One time when she was in the hospital for a longer spell when she went back to school she forgot the combination to her locker. She was so upset and embarrassed over that!

And Sandy always said that many of the nuns in her school were the least charitable people she had ever met. When she was sick and out of school they would make snide remarks and say she was gold bricking to get a few days off.

I would get so upset over these accusations. They never came and visited her and saw how she suffered.

The worst physician we ever ran into was a Dr. Flora that Dr. Krebs recommended. Dr. Hassig later said he knew of Dr. Flora but he knew what a horrible man he was and never would have subjected Sandy to his ministrations. Well, Dr. Krebs recommended him so we tried him. The man was a sadist. He subjected Sandy to a surgical procedure that normally took 1/2 hour under anesthesia without any anesthesia and dragged it out over 2 hours. During the procedure he left the instruments in place and went on a coffee break! Ed and I didn't know this, naturally, until after the fact. Then the doctor told us that he thought she didn't have a kidney problem! We went back to Dr. Hassig in total shock and confusion. Dr. Hassig was very upset with him, and told us he knew bad kidney infections when he saw them, suffered through the pain and high fevers with Sandy and saw the kidney x-rays get repeatedly worse with each infection and to stay away from such an outrageous doctor as Dr. Flora.

Sandy had another kidney infection one month later and we stopped by Dr. Flora's office again. He then admitted that it looked like a kidney infection and that he might have been wrong before. But we didn't trust or like him and Dr. Krebs then told us of two new kidney specialists, two young doctors, James G. Edwards and Guy Sewell who were on East Warren at Marseilles in a new office building. We went there and trusted and liked those physicians very much. But we got there too late. They put Sandy back into the hospital and then gave us very upsetting news. Her kidney was now dead and would have to come out if she was to live more than another 10 years. Ed was beside himself with fear. He loved Sandy very much and had visions of losing her on the operating table in the middle of such a serious and difficult surgery. Ed was quite insistent that Sandy go to the Mayo Clinic for a complete evaluation. I balked and so did Sandy. I was run ragged with going from doctor to doctor, hospital to hospital, and the thought of going to a strange state alone with the child was too much to face. Sandy calmly told Ed no, that she was confident in Drs. Edwards and Sewell and felt that she couldn't find more competent. Dead is dead, Sandy said, no one was going to be able to resurrect a dead kidney.

More tests were done and then we had to wait another six weeks to get a second x ray to affirm that the kidney was truly dead. Once the second x ray showed a still dead kidney, Sandy told Dr. Edwards and Sewell to get the operation over so she could get on with her life. She had lost almost a whole year of school, from November through June, and she had to recover in time to go back to school in September. The doctors were surprised that the child was pressing for the major surgery, they thought she'd put it off as long as possible. But Sandy was a very active child and had spent most of the past 6 months in bed, something totally out of character for her. And when she did get out of bed she would lock horns with her dad, who was scared of losing her if she stayed

up. Ed blew a gasket when he found out that she had thrown a 112 dozen baskets at Carmacks on the way back from church.

## 1961

So on April 19, 1961 Sandy checked into Cottage Hospital to have her kidney removed. Sandy figured she had about a 50% chance of leaving that hospital alive and facing that operation was very hard on her. Ed and I were dancing with nerves. Here was something that was totally out of our hands and our child's life hung in the balance and we didn't have enough medical knowledge to make an informed decision. We all had our backs to the wall. The surgery started at 10:30 am and lasted till about 4 pm. Ed and I sweated it out. With every passing hour things looked worse and worse. No one told us much of anything. Finally, an eternity later, the doctors came and told us it was over and went well. It was evening before we got to see our child as she was in the recovery room for hours as they were trying to stabilize her blood pressure, when Ed first saw her he was scared she would die from the severe blood loss. She was as white as a ghost and was unconscious most of the time. When the doctors came in Ed asked for a blood transfusion. The doctors confirmed that she had lost a lot of blood but felt that she was young and would replace the blood in time on her own, that a blood transfusion was more potentially dangerous than helpful. Ed and I stood by her side well into the evening. Ed held her hand the whole time, whether she was awake or asleep till his back broke from leaning over. She was in a great deal of pain when she was awake.

We expected her to be an invalid for months. We bought her a new bedroom set with a new mattress so she would be comfortable. What a shock we soon got! Ed and I, with great trepidation, came to visit Sandy in the hospital, hating to see her down and suffering like that! Well, on the fourth day what did we see when we came in but Sandy standing at the foot of the bed bouncing an Indian rubber ball! We were stunned but so heartened. But Sandy had been so scared by the thought of almost dying and in such pain that she didn't sleep day or night for 5 days after that operation.

She got a get well card from one of the rottenest nuns in the school telling her how they were so impressed about how little she complained about all that sickness and pain and calling her almost a martyr. Sandy was unimpressed with their outpouring of 11th hour sympathy. She said better that they had treated her with a more Christian attitude when she was so sick and needed their charity. Not now, that her problem was solved and she could now look forward to a normal life.

Unknown to us at the time, Sandy was contemplating dropping out of high school as we were about to move to the suburbs and she lost interest in starting the 11th grade over again in a public school. The Mother Superior,

Mother Mary Ligouri, was an intelligent and compassionate person and she might have guessed better than Ed and I what was going through Sandy's mind. Mother Ligouri told Sandy that she had seen in her school records that Sandy had gone to the grade school principal on her own when she was in the sixth grade and had asked to be double promoted from the sixth to the eighth grade as she was ahead of herself grade wise and was bored. And she had noted that Sandy had successfully completed the 7th grade in summer school and had done well in the 8th grade the following year. (Ed and I had no part in Sandy's decision to ask to be double promoted in sixth grade, she simply came up with that idea herself out of thin air. Ed and I were given a consent slip by Sandy and were asked to sign it after Sandy had made all the arrangements with the principal and had taken an IQ test which supported her contention that she was intellectually ahead of herself and should be with the older children. Naturally Ed and I gladly and proudly gave our consent for double promotion. We felt it was an honor that one of our children could accomplish this and we knew she would do real well. After all, she was consistently on the honor roll despite being in bed 4 days out of every month and was always studying. But we were amused that a 10 year old kid could attempt this all on her own and pull it off.) Anyway, Mother Ligouri told Sandy when she visited her in the hospital that she could take all of her 11th grade in summer school and again be double promoted into the 12th grade. That breathed new vigor into Sandy and from that time on she was determined to go on with her studies.

But it was a very difficult summer for her. She was in constant pain and was so tired from surgery and loss of blood. But she tackled the lessons and come September was back in school. But we were packing up and moving over Labor Day weekend to Diamond in Sterling Heights. Sandy wanted to finish high school at Servite and we agreed as she had enough upheaval. So we approached Ed's brother Art and his wife Agnes and they spoke to their daughter Carol who had just left the convent and was living with them again and they agreed to let Sandy stay with them. So Ed, I and the rest of the kids moved to Sterling Heights and Monday through Friday Sandy lived at 4554 Neff with Art and Agnes. They were real good to her, but Ed and I could only give them \$10.00 per week as that was all we could afford. They were satisfied with that and Sandy was careful not to cost them too much & all worked out well. Agnes was a real good cook and Sandy really enjoyed her suppers there. Ed picked up Sandy on weekends.

Well, one day Ed got a call from the salesman of the Gigantic homes on 19 Mile Road. He said that he had a lot on Diamond Drive and Delvin in Dresden Village #2. We okayed the transaction, put money down and then the hassle between Ed and the builder commenced and lasted over the next 6 months. Ed wanted a lot of extras, so after all was added up, argued about and haggled over, the price went from \$12,990 to \$16,550. Ed wrestled them into the ground to keep the price to that figure. And arguments! Ed would travel out to

the lot often while the home was being built and would force corrections of sloppy workmanship. Hagglng over sloppy workmanship was such a common occurrence with this haphazard builder that a year after we moved in the salesman, Mr. Burke was hospitalized with a nervous breakdown!

Ed's main improvements were a half basement (he couldn't get a full one, no matter how hard he argued), improved brick, (Ed loved the orange brick he chose) and one picture window in the family room instead of two smaller windows. Ed also had hardwood floors put in upstairs and down except for the family room and the adjoining lower level. We were very disappointed that we couldn't have the same cork tile that the Healy's had in their family room as that was so cozy looking, but that tile had been discontinued.

Finally, after that 6 months of hagglng, we moved into our brand new home at 11284 Diamond Drive over the Labor Day weekend of 1961.

I remember that moving day well. We rented an open U-Haul trailer and made many trips back and forth. On one trip up Schoenherr, I saw my beautiful new bridge lampshade blow away, but there was no way to stop and rescue it, so it was forever lost. I remember in the evening waiting in the family room for another load and suddenly, looking around that desolate family room with junk scattered everywhere as it had been haphazardly removed from the truck, I felt very homesick for Alter Road and was panic stricken for a few minutes that I had left my home of 17 years. Sandy didn't help my mood any as she was very unhappy about leaving Alter Road and never completely adjusted to the move. Everyone else in our family enjoyed moving and felt it was a step in the right direction, just not Sandy. The rest of us were right, of course. It was a much better neighborhood, retained its WASP orientation and appreciated much in value. None of the above could be said of the home on Alter Road. It is worth less today than when we sold it, while the present value of the home on Diamond is in the neighborhood of \$172,000.

I loved my new home, but I dearly missed my beloved first home on Alter Road, where I had my last 3 babies and the lovely next door neighbor, Mrs. Meeseman and her sweet daughter Julie.

I missed the buses to go shopping downtown after the children were in school and going to Ward's and Federal's and the dime stores at Gratiot and 7 Mile Road.

Another thing that bothered me was the long hours Ed was putting in, working from 9 am to 9 pm, 6 days per week. He left home at 8:15 am and got home at 9:45 pm. He would drop very wearily into his green lazy boy chair and I would bring him a big bowl of chocolate and vanilla ice cream and a mug of hot water. Ed would eat the ice cream, drink the hot water, turn on a little television and watch his favorite detective stories, such as Mannix, Perry Mason, Dirty Harry

and Columbo. But as a rule, long before the picture ended, Ed was fast asleep, snoring peacefully.

Ed had only one day off, Sunday, and he would try to cram far too much into that one little day - Mass, a dinner of roast beef, mashed potatoes, carrots, and gravy, then going for a country ride, then coming home and playing ball with the kids and grandkids, then eating ice cream in the evening and watching his favorite detective T.V. programs. Then the depression of having to face a new work week.

I would often get the jitters over every new and difficult experience I would have in the new home, such as being shut off from shopping without a car or means of transportation, having to make new friends, loneliness creeping in as I thought of my old neighbors and friends, etc. Ed would say to me, "Marie, calm down, you have a brand new home!" I did love my new home but Sandy and I would talk on occasion of moving back to our old familiar haunts.

Cynthia dear wasn't too happy about the thought of having to leave her old school, Servite High, so as mentioned earlier I talked Agnes and Art Bender into letting her live with them until the next June, when Sandy would graduate from high school. Aunt Agnes agreed, and Sandy came home every Friday evening with Ed after he quit work on 8 Mile Road and then take her back to Agnes' every Sunday evening.



**Don & Nancy's house at 11151 Saar, Sterling Heights, Michigan**

When Nancy and Don saw our new house they became enthusiastic and decided to buy one of these houses too. Don managed to get a lot on Saar, just off Penny, at 11151 Saar. He couldn't get a full basement, however, and pretty much bought the house as the model stood. It was a warm and cozy home for them and they were quite happy there.

Nancy moved from Berkley to Saar at the end of September, 1961, just 3 weeks after Ed and I moved into our new home.

Nancy and Don picked the same style as us, right around the bend on Saar. It was much easier and nicer to have Nancy and Don close to us now. It also solved my problems of isolation and not being able to get to shopping as Nancy and I went everywhere together.



Nancy's new home was decorated very beautiful, as usual, and they were happy together, and what do you know -a new home -a new baby on the way after a couple of years!

Doug started 3rd grade at Dresden elementary right behind our home and Bill started 8th grade at Sterling Junior High at 19 Mile Road right across from our Catholic Church, St. Matthias. We tried to get all the kids in at St. Lawrence Catholic School in Utica but they had no openings in any of the grades.

Ed's partner Thern Baxter wasn't in very good health as he suffered from a bad heart, so he wasn't very easy to get along with, so after a few years it was mutually decided upon that Ed would go to another store to reduce the friction. Baxter told Ed he had rented some space at a building situated at Hoover and 8 Mile Road so Ed agreed to go over there and run that store. They were under the same roof with a furniture company, which was fine with Ed as it would draw in more business.

One Monday morning Ed checked the address and drove from our house at 11284 Diamond in Sterling Heights, down Schoenherr to the new store. Ed got out of his car and walked into his new store. He felt dizzy and pale when he stepped inside, for it was the large barn of his recurring dreams! What he had repeatedly dreamed about for years had finally come true!

Ed sold enough there to satisfy himself, but he was 50% partner with Baxter and this rankled him as he really preferred to be his own sole boss. When the partnership was formed Ed hired a lawyer to represent his interests to make sure the new partnership agreement was properly written and fully legal. Ed couldn't believe it when he was in the meeting and heard his attorney talking. Thern Baxter and Ed had mutually and cordially agreed that this was going to be a 50- 50 partnership and when Ed's lawyer got in there he said that that wasn't right, that Thern should have controlling interest in the partnership. Ed was really shook up and angry over this jerk he had hired to represent him! Ed fired the lawyer on the spot, adjourned the partnership incorporation meeting, and hired a new lawyer who wasn't too swift but at least didn't try to cut Ed's throat.

One of the reasons Baxter was so interested in Ed as a partner was that Ed had such excellent credit while Thern messed up his credit so bad that most of the major appliance companies would only ship him merchandise prepaid or COD. They then used Ed's name to get shipments. The General Electric company made Ed sign papers that he himself was personally responsible for making the payments as they considered Baxter a deadbeat. This made Ed very nervous as he did not have control over the checkbook, Baxter did. But with some prodding from Ed, those bills were paid fairly timely.

Ed used to tell me the humorous things that happened at the store. At the barn in the furniture section, there was 2 very hot little numbers working in

the office. They were middle aged over painted women who knew what to wiggle and how. Ed used to smile and tell me how they threw themselves all over him and how Ed would have to change isles frequently to keep from being trapped in a corner by one or another of these hussies. One day Sandy came home for the weekend with Ed. She had taken a bus to 8 Mile Road and had walked the last mile to Ed's store and had waited there for a couple of hours until Ed got off work. She sat in a chair out of the way and did her homework. She told me how she observed first hand how those two threw themselves at Ed. She laughed and told me not to give those two one minute's thought. Such bold, overdressed, over painted hussies certainly weren't Ed's type!

Ed then moved to the store at 8 Mile and Mound that he and Baxter rented. Again, he was in with a furniture store which again seemed to help sales. There were some funny salesmen working on the furniture side and as long as Ed had business he enjoyed himself. But what Ed was very worried about is that he was too far removed from the books which Baxter kept and when he did have a look at them, he was scared at what he saw. Those books probably weren't in the black when all the debts were paid, and Baxter was doing considerable juggling, something Ed never did. Then one day Baxter opened up a store in Port Huron. This really worried Ed as he had no control over this third store. The next time Ed looked at the books he determined that not all of the taxes had been paid. At this, Ed's blood turned to water. You don't mess with the Federal Government. Ed knew it was time to separate. Ed wrote a letter of resignation, completely severing his relationship to Thern Baxter and all of his stores and sent this letter certified, return receipt requested. Sandy took the letter to the Utica Post Office. This was the first time Sandy had handled a certified letter.

For the first time since the 30's Ed was unemployed and a nervous wreck. He had a family to support and he didn't want to dwindle his savings. I told Ed he hadn't had a vacation in a long time and I thought this was a good time for him and I to just take off to Canada, just him and I and relax for a week or two. Ed agreed. We just packed up on the spur of the moment that summer day and took off for Lion's Head. We had a peaceful and private vacation which gave Ed time to relax and just breathe again before beginning some new adventure. Ed was a nervous wreck over no job, though. As soon as we got back home Ed started looking around to see what would suit him. Before he really got into serious job searching, Don informed Ed that he had worked on Gene Kelly, owner of Krazy Kelly's in Berkley and that Kelly had agreed to hire Ed as he needed an experienced salesman. Ed was relieved to have a means of support. But this was the lowest time in Ed's life and one from which he never recovered. Ed's self confidence was shattered, as was his pride. He hated working for someone else and suddenly the long hours were a horrible drag when worked in someone else's establishment.

And Don was the one that really made life unbearable for Ed. Don criticized and ridiculed Ed in front of the other men every chance he got. Don got so

vicious that even the men who had no affection for Ed told Don to back off. Ed was really hurt by Don's viciousness, but in spite of it all, Ed never uttered a bad word against Don. Those were the most difficult years for all of us for when the head of the household is desperately unhappy, no one else in that household can be really happy either.

Ed started getting black moods about this time. He would be really happy and upbeat, then like black cloud passing over the sun, a deep ugly mood would overcome him and suddenly he would quit what he was doing and go to bed to be by himself. In an hour or two the mood would pass and all would be well again.

Ed started getting spells of nervousness too about this same time. He would work off his nervousness by going for a long, brisk walk. He did this often at work too. He would eat a quick lunch at Woolworth's on the corner and then walk as fast as he could around the residential neighborhood north of Kelly's. Many neighbors started greeting him as they saw him daily. Ed would use this time to pray. He would fervently pray for all of his family. From the time he went back to church in 1956, Ed became as devout as his mother had been. From 1956 to the end of his life, prayer became very important to him. The worse things became the more Ed would pray for help. Every day driving to and from work, Ed would pray the entire way. Ed had some close calls driving as he would get so engrossed in prayer that he would almost miss seeing something in his way.

## 1962



**Sandy (Cynthia) Bender**

My Cynthia graduated from Servite High School with high honors in June, 1962. Ed and I attended her graduation ceremonies in Detroit, then we drove back together to Sterling Heights, where Ed took pictures of all of us to commemorate the day. We bought Sandy a lovely green and white linen dress with a pleated skirt for the occasion.

Sandy was a brilliant student all through the years in spite of all the pain she had with her infected kidney (pyelonephritis, they called it) from the age of 9 to

the age of 16 when she was operated on at Cottage Hospital in Grosse Pointe Farms, the same hospital where she was born some 16 years earlier.

Sandy learned to drive and when she got her license, my world opened up, my darling was so good to me. On weekends she would drive us to Hudson's, Wards or Federals, go shopping for groceries, or go for long rides in the country. My Nancy continued to be very good to me too, taking me wherever I needed to go. Mike was available too to take me on errands in his 1956 Ford.

Mike had a horrible time, in those recession years of 1958 -1961. He went on job interviews everywhere, but no luck. In those recession times, nobody was hiring. Everywhere he went it was the same story, we don't need anyone now, try back later. It really lowered his self esteem to not be able to find gainful employment.

Doug was a real live wire and loved teasing Mike and trying to get the best of him. One day Mike, who never did a thing wrong in his life, pulled a real good one on Doug. Mike was sleeping around 10 am one beautiful summer morning and I was cleaning out the refrigerator. Doug was playing in the dining room. I opened up the ice cream carton in the freezer to see if it could be put into something smaller to make more room. When I opened the carton, what did I see but a fork sitting in the ice cream and great big gouged finger prints running down the front of the ice cream. Right off the bat I knew I only had one kid who would do something like that... Doug! Doug, I hollered, come here! What do you think you're doing to our ice cream! I bellowed. And I cracked him a couple of good ones. Doug looked at that ice cream carton incredulously! He was stunned to see a fork and finger print gouge marks in it. I didn't do it! He said with sincerity. I cracked him another few good ones for lying to me. He was stunned as he knew as well as I that no other kid in the house would ever do something like that and for once he was totally baffled as he knew he didn't do it and it was unthinkable to blame anyone else for this. I didn't do it, he repeated. Honest! I whapped him a few more good ones and he bellowed with indignation. Mike, laying in his bed, covered his mouth with his pillow to smother his peels of laughter. He had done that the night before to set Doug up!

One day Mike got the break he was waiting for, he heard his plant, the Dodge Main plant in Highland Park might be hiring back. Mike went back there and put in a new application and to his great relief, was soon called back to work. But he got the shaft by the plant too, as he had been off work for a longer period than he had been employed there, so he had to hire in as a new employee and lose all of his old seniority. But this was no time to haggle, in this situation you take what they give you and keep your head down and your mouth shut. Mike was hired on as an apprentice electrician, a job he had a natural aptitude for. Mike was a very intelligent young man and should have completed college. While Mike was in his 11th year in High School, a nun talked to Ed, I believe it was Sister Mary DeLourdes, and she told Ed that

Michael was a very intelligent young man and should go on to college, but that he probably would not go on his own as he was lacking in self confidence and needed the support of his parents in this endeavor. Ed failed the boy in this respect, but certainly not intentionally. Our kids were the first generation to attend college, Ed and I knew nothing of college, how to get there, what its significance was to Mike's future, how to force your way in the doors, what curriculum to pursue, etc. It was all Greek to us, but what we didn't know certainly did hurt Mike's chances for the future. Had Ed known then what we know now, I'm sure he would have tried much harder to help Mike. So much for 20 - 20 hindsight. Much later Bob Barr told us that Mike had scored very high in his IQ test in high school, in fact Bob thought he remembered that Mike had the highest IQ in the class.

Right after Mike started back at Dodge Main, the phone rang in the wee dark hours of the morning, and Sandy ran downstairs and answered it. It was Mike asking her to drive to 12 Mile and Van Dyke to a gas station and pick him up as his engine had conked out and the car could not be driven as it was ready to throw a rod.

Sandy picked him up and he spent the day finding a dependable used car. He chose a full sized mint green Plymouth with a stick shift. It served his purpose of being dependable and getting him back and forth to work. Mike was so worried about just starting work and having to make car payments immediately. And what if he got laid off again, was in the back of his mind when he had to take out a loan for this car. Mike was a very responsible person and took life very seriously.

No story about my years on Diamond is complete without speaking about my dear next door neighbor, Rose Lutfy. Whenever you had an encounter with Rose you walked away smiling. She put so much sunshine into my life! Rose had a very hard life, which had just recently taken a decided turn for the better when she married Wally Lutfy, a bachelor whose family owned a creamery in Detroit. Wally's mother and older brother had a fit when Wally, a life time bachelor, suddenly married an older woman who had had a child. But that was tough, because Wally and Rose were very much in love, were very compatible, and didn't give a darn what others might be thinking.

Wally's older brother was not entirely on the level in his business dealings and used Wally as a patsy. Whenever something was a little shady, the brother had Wally sign the papers. When the brother later got in trouble, Wally was almost pulled in along with him as he had signed the questionable documents. All the strain that Wally was under with this problem caused his heart to go bad maybe a little earlier than it would have otherwise. Wally was a sick man by the time he moved to Timberline Meadows about 1967 and died not too long afterwards of heart complications.

Back to Rose. She complained almost all the time, and the more she complained, the funnier it was as her complaints were always well steeped in humor, as she was well able to see the funny side of life. The funniest times we had together concerned first her tomcat, Casey, and secondly her son Mike Hurley.

Casey was the boldest, blackest, sleekest cat you ever wanted to meet. Casey would roam all night long and was quite adept at finding himself girlfriends. Casey would sit on our back fence with a female cat nearby and he would yowl all night long. I used to laugh at the comics where someone would throw the shoe at the cat in the middle of the night but that's what Sandy ended up doing in Casey's case when Ed and I asked her to do something as nobody was getting any sleep. Casey moved but ended back up on the same fence. We finally learned to sleep through all the racket. Then Mrs. Lutfy got another cat, a strawberry blonde named Peaches, who also sat on the back fence and yowled all night. All hours of the day and night Mrs. Lutfy would be coming through the gate in our fence to get her darn cats. She finally asked me for a key to the padlock I had on the fence so she could get through the gate closest to her house. One day her cat Peaches ran way up high into our backyard tree and couldn't get down. It spent the whole night in the tree yowling. The next day the cat was still in that darn tree. When Sandy got home from college Rose came over and asked Sandy to get up into the tree and rescue Peaches for her. Anyone else than Rose, Sandy would have told them where to go but Sandy liked Rose. So Sandy got out the big extension ladder, put it into the locust tree and climbed up till she could reach Peaches. She then got a grab on Peaches body and got scratched to pieces by that hysterical cat. But she got the cat safely out of the tree.

Casey was a BOLD cat, I mean really BOLD! We never saw a cat like Casey. One very early morning Mike walked out the front door about 5:30 am and went to work. Unknown to Mike he had let Casey in the front door. It was below zero and Casey wanted the comforts of home. Casey wandered through our house and settled on our family room where Doug was sleeping on the couch. Casey climbed up onto the couch and settled his body down right on Doug's face. Doug woke up, found this warm furry thing on his face and gave out a good startle. He threw that darned cat off his face and I threw him out of our house with Rose's help as that darn cat would not leave on his own.

Another time it was below zero and Ed's Opel wouldn't start. Ed was sitting there in the predawn hours, trying to crank that pesky car into life. Ed sat on the driver's seat with the door open and one foot on the pavement while grinding away. Suddenly out of nowhere Casey became airborne and sailed over our fence and smashed full force into Ed's windshield, scaring the daylights out of him as he had no idea what that big black mass was that came hurdling toward him out of the dark! Ed had his face about 6 inches from the dashboard and thought Casey was going to hit him full on right in the face!





**Bill with Ed's Opel Kadett**

Another time Ed was back out in the driveway, again trying to crank the Opel into life. Again, he had the side door open, when suddenly Casey came from behind, landed on Ed's shoulder, walked down his arm and crawled onto the dashboard. Ed admired the sheer boldness of that darn cat too much to get him good. Ed merely said a few startled words to the cat and brushed him off the dashboard.

Mike made the comment recently that Casey must have been Ed's favorite cat!

The Lutfy's had two very spoiled dogs as well, BoBo and Kimiko. BoBo was a hunting dog and Kimiko was a Pekinese type. BoBo was a good ball player. Kimiko was a bouncy dust mop type.

Mrs. Lutfy used to get so exasperated at the antics of her only son Mike. She used to tell me all that he was up to, then say she had had that kid "right up to my crotch". I used to giggle at her when she said that.

One day her son, who loved to tease Doug, called him over to their yard and then he chained and padlocked Doug to their fence and walked away. Doug called out to Rose who came out and surveyed the situation. Rose did not have a key so she was unable to unchain Doug from the fence, so she did the next best thing. She went in the house and brought out to Doug all Mike's goodies. She gave Doug Mike's hostess cupcakes, Twinkies, potato chips and pop. Mike was not too pleased when he learned his little trick had backfired on him.

Another time I was out shopping with Nancy when Doug and Mike Hurley got home from school. Doug went into our house and changed clothes. Mike just walked in our house without knocking or ringing the bell as he knew that only Doug was home. Mike then walked upstairs to Doug's room, grabbed a hold of him, then dragged Doug down the front stairs, bumping his hips against every stair. Doug had gained 7 inches in height that year and was still growing, and unknown to us his hip socket was much larger than the ball of his leg bone, and due to this rough handling his leg bone had dislocated and came out of the hip socket and he was in pain and had a hard time walking due to this. I had to end up taking Doug to Henry Ford hospital, where he was admitted and his leg put into traction to get the hip bone back into place. Doug had a room mate

whose name was Zack and whose father was a physician practicing in that hospital. Zack was a very staid dignified kid and I wondered what ever he thought of my son's antics? But it was obvious that Zack enjoyed watching Doug carry on. The biggest trouble Doug got into is when he turned the bathtub control to shower instead of tub, and when the nurse came in and started running the water, the shower water gushed out and allover her head and uniform. Doug was no longer her favorite kid, that's for sure.



**Doug & Taffy**

The day we took Doug home from the hospital, he was not in the best of moods. He was very cranky and out of sorts as it is a big adjustment to leave the hospital after having spent over a week there. He wanted us to give him the radio Ed had loaned him to listen to while he was in the hospital and we refused. Looking back, we should have let him have that little radio.

Another funny Lutfy story... On Halloween a few years after we moved in the Lutfys had their porch light on and were receiving trick or treaters. The next door neighbors on the other side of the Lutfys, the Maloneys, told Wally and Rose he might stop by on Halloween for a drink. Around 8:30 pm he did amble next door and holler trick or treat. Wally smiled as he saw it was his neighbor. Before Wally could open the door, the neighbor pulled out a bar of soap out of his pocket and soaped up the whole storm door! Rose could have killed him!

Mr. Maloney was never very ambitious. One day he was telling our kids that he really should paint his house and garage, but that he was waiting for a day when it was not too hot, not too cold and the wind was blowing just right. We got such a kick out of that statement that we were to use it many times over in the years ahead.

Mrs. Lutfy had a very soft heart and could never say no to anybody. This soft heartedness got her into trouble on a number of occasions. One time the neighbors across the street, the Mitchells, asked to borrow her car as theirs was broken down. Rose told them that maybe they shouldn't borrow her car as her brakes were worn right down past the metal. Mr. Mitchell promised to be careful and borrowed the car a number of times with the brakes in that condition. Rose finally got around to getting those brakes fixed and a few days later Mr. Mitchell borrowed the car again. Rose got a call that Mr. Mitchell had

a fractured skull and was in the hospital. What had happened was that Mr. Mitchell had no idea Rose had fixed the brakes, so when he came to a red light, he stomped on the brakes with all his might, the car now stopped on a dime, and Mr. Mitchell was thrown violently into the windshield and cracked his skull!

Another of our neighbors was Mrs. Clayton, Mickey was her first name. Mickey had been married when she was 17 to a man twice her age who had been married before. Mickey had two children and not enough to keep her busy, so she was forever visiting neighbors and friends. I used to cringe to see her coming, and soon it got so bad that I just had to get rude and tell her that she would have to leave as I had work to do and couldn't sit around all day.

But Rose had a heart of gold and she couldn't say no. So Mickey started spending more and more time at Rose's as the other neighbors told her they didn't have all that time to coffee clutch. Mickey spent so much time over there that Rose started getting hysterical when she saw her coming. Mickey would spend her whole morning over at Rose's. Rose would finally get rid of her at noon. Mickey would then go home to eat and feed her kids. But then right afterwards she would head right back over to Rose's. Rose got so she was hysterical as soon as she saw Mickey starting catty corner across the street in her direction. Finally Rose blew up and told Mickey to stay away. Then she felt so guilty that she was so mean to Mickey.

Mickey had very bad nerves and was quite hyper. She was too hyper for me as she made me quite nervous. Besides, I had never been one to sit and gossip and I cherished my privacy. If I wanted to sit and talk to someone, I would much prefer to spend the time chatting with my two daughters, not some stranger.

Mickey used to run her husband down to the point that I used to feel sorry for the poor guy. One day his car broke down so he asked Sandy to drive him to work at 12 Mile and Van Dyke. Sandy really didn't want to as she had to get up 2 hours early to get him there by starting time and then sit around college in the predawn hours waiting for her classes to start. Mrs. Clayton really starting acting up, with visions of my Sandy making a play for her husband Russ. Sandy and I grinned at such a preposterous supposition. Sandy had no interest in an over 50 married man who drank too much. Sandy said, that's the gratitude you get for crawling out of the house 2 hours early and driving some guy to work.

Mickey used to get her poor husband tied in knots. She would nag him to death until he would come out on the front lawn and start whining and screaming at her. Then he would take off drunk in his car or motorcycle. Once he got in his car, started it and then was so drunk that he was weaving allover the Healy's and Well's lawns. He must have realized how blitzed he was as he drove down the side walk and lawns back to his own home.

Mickey got pregnant with her 3rd child and she made no bones about not wanting that child. Abortion was not an option, at least not legally, in the 1960's. Mickey miscarried many children so she expected to miscarry this one too. But as the 7th month came, it was apparent that this child would probably be born alive. She became very agitated over this thought. In the middle of the winter she took to wearing 3 inch heels, going out onto the solid ice and throwing herself onto the pavement. After 4 or 5 unsuccessful tries, she finally succeeded in bringing on premature labor. Mr. Clayton called us up late one evening and asked if Sandy would come over and sit with his kids. He was very insistent that Sandy not clean up the mess, just watch the kids. Sandy said there was blood all over the bedroom, that she must have bled quite heavily. We heard the next day that she had been delivered of another boy, that no extraordinary measures were taken and that the child had just expired. Mickey was much relieved over the loss of this 3rd child and never had another one after that.



**Marie, Taffy & her witch**



**Sandy, Taffy & the witch**

My biography would never be complete without mentioning my witch which graced the front porch of Diamond and later Grant Park every year for Halloween. Boy, did I ever scare Taffy with that witch! I put my ironing board outside, then draped Ed's long black raincoat over that. I then set the witch's face inside the rain coat and secured it in place. I then took Ed's long black socks and stuffed baseball bats inside the socks, and then put the socks in Ed's black dress shoes. Boy, did she ever look scary, if I do say so myself! The first time Taffy went out the front door right after I set up the witch she jumped a foot off the floor when she saw that scary thing out of the corner of her eye! I felt kind of guilty, but it was funny watching her jump like that!



**Taffy & Doug**



**Marie**



**Taffy**



**Al, Taffy & Doug**

Taffy also loved helping out at Christmas time. She loved helping unwrap presents. While we were at church in the morning, Taffy would sniff the presents under the tree and then just open up her own. We would laugh when we would come home and see the wrapping paper and the cellophane all around the Christmas tree. Then when we would open up our own presents we would let Taffy help yank the paper off our presents with her teeth. Taffy also got in over her head one year when Uncle Al visited us for Christmas. Al, unknown to us, dropped a Librium capsule on the living room rug. While we were at church Taffy chewed off about half of the capsule and swallowed it. When we got home Taffy was walking really goofy – her leg would go way up in the air and she would almost fall over as she tried to transfer from one leg to another.



**Taffy & Moondog**

Taffy had a boyfriend that she had a lot of fun with when he would come over to our Diamond back yard. We would open the gate and let him in and then Taffy and Moondog would run and run and run until exhaustion set in. They would both drink the water bowl dry, Moondog would eat all of Taffy's food, they would both lay down to catch their breath, then they would be up and running all over again! Moondog got his name as he was born just as the first moon shot went up into the air. The visits stopped when Moondog got busted by the cops twice for being loose in the neighborhood.



**Marie & Nancy**



**Marie & Sandy**



**Don, Nancy, Craig, Donna, Warren & Linda Stephens**

One day that winter we woke up to find the streets a solid sheet of ice. There was no school or college that day due to the hazardous driving conditions. Nancy got a brilliant idea for some real uncommon fun. She called Sandy up and asked her to put her ice skates on and they would all go ice skating through the streets of the village and that's just what they did. They spent several happy hours skating through the side streets of Dresden Village, Nancy and Sandy in the lead and Nancy's kids not far behind. That was the only time they were ever able to do that.

Another time in the summer Nancy and Sandy decided to ride their bikes to Mt. Clemens and back. They went up Canal Road and back Clinton River, turning at the bend. They had a wonderful time except for one heart stopper. At the bend there was a farmer's Collie who chased both of their bicycles. They both put their leg closest to the dog up on the bar and peddled with the leg away from the dog, going as fast as they could. The dog finally lost interest in chasing them and they made it home, none the worse for wear.

One time Nancy was driving around the bend from Saar to Diamond coming over to my house, when suddenly Don came barreling around the bend from the other way, missing Nancy's car by inches, if that! Nancy was really shaken and got real mad at Don for scaring her like that and nearly wiping out both cars. Don just grinned and said to her, "an inch is as good as a mile!".

Another time Ed was trying to get onto Van Dyke from Canal Road, a very dangerous and busy intersection. After waiting and waiting, Ed finally spotted a very narrow opening in the traffic and took it. At the same time another car



came barreling across the intersection and somehow barely missed smashing into Ed. That car, Ed noticed as he completed his turn, was driven by Don!

One time Ed and I went to what in those days was the Food Fair parking lot at Van Dyke and Canal Rd to look at the model homes at that intersection. We had Bill and Sandy in the car with us. While we were in the model home, Bill got restless and decided to get out of the car. A real hard gust of wind sprung up, grabbed the opening car door, and darn near turned it inside out due to its light weight and flimsy construction. It got a real big dent in the side near the hinges and Ed had to take it to a repair shop.

## 1963

On Friday, November 22nd, 1963 I was in the kitchen on 11284 Diamond in Sterling Township. I just cleared away the lunch dishes, when my neighbor Mrs. Rose Lutfy came over all excited, telling me that the President, John F. Kennedy, was assassinated! We were glued to the television set for the next 3 days watching the developments. We saw glimpses of the motorcade, what you could see of the shooting and the body being flown back to Washington. The next day we saw first hand Ruby shoot Oswald. Then we saw the Kennedy funeral in all its pomp and pageant.

## 1964



**Sandy**

When Sandy was in her second year of college she started suffering from recurrent pains in her abdomen and by May she couldn't take the pain any longer and knew she needed a doctor, but didn't know who to go to as she didn't trust Krebs and Hassig didn't do surgery. Nancy told her that she had gone to a doctor in Utica by the name of James William Finn who was a gynecologist and a real nice man. So Sandy picked up the phone to make an appointment to see him. She called at noon time. The doctor himself answered the phone and began shouting at her as soon as he picked it up. Sandy, taken

aback, was silent at first, then meekly said she would like to make an appointment. The doctor was then embarrassed, explaining that he was just breaking up with a partner and thought it was the partner on the phone wanting to argue around some more. After Sandy went there she found out what she suspected, that the right ovary was kicking up a fuss again, as it had done on and off since she was 11 years old. Dr. Finn made an appointment with Dr. Christian Matthews, the most prominent surgeon in this area and a protégé of Dr. France, Detroit's renowned physician, and they decided that the best solution would be a wedge resection of the right ovary to relieve the build up of cysts. So on June 5, 1964 Sandy had the second operation on her right ovary, the first having occurred on March 23, 1956. Both my girls had problems with their ovaries. Right after Don had married Nancy in 1951 she got a low grade fever, dark circles under her eyes and a dull pain in her abdomen. In her case the right ovary was also diseased and had to be removed as it might have turned to gangrene. Don said it was nice of us to wait until he had to foot the bill to have her ovary go bad!

Both Nancy and Sandy suffered intermittent recurrent cystic ovary disease, odd because I didn't have a moments problem with this my entire life. Maybe it came from Ed's side of the family or my sisters?

Ed's sister Beatrice and her husband Ed came over our house several times on Diamond. The first several visits they brought their little 5 lb brown haired dog Skippy. Skippy was a friendly dog and he enjoyed exploring our family room while Bea and Ed enjoyed their visit with Ed and I. The first time they came to our house Ed and I weren't home and I was embarrassed to hear that Mike and Sandy did not invite them in and entertain them. But they were both very surprised to see them as they had not seen them for ages as Ed Gamache seldom went visiting.



**Ed Gamache & Beatrice    Harold Neff    Mildred Neff**

Bea had only a few good years after that. She had suffered from diabetes since she was in her 30's and by the time she reached her 60's the disease had taken it's toll. She started having trouble with her vision, and soon developed cataracts as well. In those days Ed's sisters Mildred and Bea had had some silly little quarrels and for a number of years weren't speaking to one another. I constantly told Mildred that she should make up with Bea as life was too short

and she might lose her sister, so she should enjoy her while she may. Mildred took my advise and soon she and Bea were on best speaking terms again and visited back and forth repeatedly. I was so happy to see that. Mildred was so excited to have her sister Bea stand up for her again when she remarried Harold on their 50th wedding anniversary on the 28th of November of 1968. But alas this was not to be, for Bea passed away in September of 1968, just 2 months before her sister's 50th wedding anniversary.

I think we saw more of Bea and Ed after we moved on Diamond as they had two children living only a few blocks away from us, their sons David and Eugene Gamache. They would go there for a Sunday afternoon and then stop in and see us on their way back home.



**Ed, Shirley, & David Gamache**

Sandy and Ed and the boys used to play ball on the diamond behind our house on the Dresden elementary school ground. One day Ed was batting and would walk over and pick up the stray balls when he didn't hit them out to the outfield. Suddenly someone jumped out of a car and walked over to the fence and said, "That has to be Uncle Ed, no one else hitches up his pants like that!" It was Dave Gamache driving through the subdivision. Ed had broken his hip when he was hit by a car when he was 10 years old and it had never healed correctly and now one hip went inward and he had a hard time keeping his pants up due to the lack of support of the one receding hip. So he used to take his hand and forearm and grabbing a hold of his belt, hitch up his pants. He did this all of his life.

Ed also had a distinctive walk because on leg was a little shorter than the other, not so you could notice it when you looked at him, but when he was tired or had a bit too much, it did affect his gait. Sandy used to say she always knew when Ed was coming to visit her in the hospital before she saw him as when he walked one footfall was louder than the other. She also used to smile when he came home from one of the parties at Kelly's a little loaded as the heaviness of one footfall was much more pronounced when Ed had a little liquor in him. He never had any pain in his hip or leg, fortunately, after his broken hip healed up.



**Elenore & Herman Mc Kinin**

We have many fond memories of going over to Elenore and Herman's or Marianne and Frank's for the Christmas holidays. No one put on a spread as elaborate as Elenore and her family did. Entertaining was always first rate, with no special touch left undone.



**Elenore & Marianne**



**Herman & Elenore**



**Laurie, Elenore & Patti**

The table setting, china and flatware were exquisite, as was the table cloth and dining room furniture. Going over to Elenore's for Christmas was always one of life's finest pleasures. We had such fun gathered together at her house on San Jose, or Marianne's on Rockland. We would have a very fine dinner and anything you cared to drink. Then afterwards we would socialize and play cards. I remember one year the drunker my brother Bill got, the better his luck got. Frank kept right on gambling with Bill, sure his luck would turn as Bill got soused. Bill did get thoroughly soused, but his luck never deserted him. Bill left at 4:30 am with a bucket full of change and a stomach full of liquor. We heard for years from Bill's whole family how scared they were with his wild driving home. Bill was on both sides of the street and over the curbs. But by the grace of God his family made it home safe and sound. But his driving was so bad that 14 year old Debbie, who never drove in her life, begged to drive home and Dorothy seconded the suggestion.



**Patti, Mildred, Cindy, Laurie  
Marie, Marianne & Judy**

We had wonderful family gatherings at our house, and not to brag, but my spreads were every bit as good as Elenore's. I used to cook at least a day ahead of time and all day the day of the gathering. I used to be so nervous, hoping that everything would be done at the same time, and that I would have enough of everything so we wouldn't run out. Ed and I usually set up the ping pong table in the family room and we ate and played cards there. The room was 13 by 20 so we had plenty of room for the whole family. We have many nice pictures of those happy gatherings.

In later years we have pictures of Shorty and Jean when they were back again in the family where they belonged. I guess I must have even been more nervous than I realized because I still have nightmares that the family are all coming over and no matter how hard I work, the food just isn't ready!

Let me preface the next set of stories by saying that Ed and I never drank except at Christmas time and never at any other time of the year, so that is why the following stories are so funny as they were so out of character for us. Ed used to have 6 or 7 drinks at Elenore's and we used to be so worried about him driving home, especially if it was icy, and especially when we owned the Opel as that car fogged up so easily and we couldn't hardly see out and the defogger worked very poorly. There was one time that both coming and going from Elenore's it was so icy that we thought we'd never get there and back alive. And we hated having to travel down Telegraph, which was the only logical way to Elenore's from our house in Sterling Heights. Ed always called Telegraph highway dead man's stretch as it had a reputation for so many fatal accidents. But it took a lot more than 7 drinks to make Ed drunk, so we always managed to make it back safely. Three funny stories about Christmas parties at our house on Diamond, all involving Ed's special recipe punch, which packed a real good whallop as it tasted like pop but was loaded with Champagne, vodka and bourbon. Ed made up the punch, testing it as he went along, then asked me to drink a cup full which he handed to me to see if I thought it tasted good. I had just finished up every thing I could with the dinner and was now waiting for the meat to finish cooking and the guests to arrive momentarily. I drank the punch down right away as I was thirsty and did not realize how much liquor Ed had dropped in it. About ten minutes later

Elenore and Herman pulled up to the front curb. I was so happy to see them getting out of the car, so I went to get out of the rocker to go to the front door and greet them. When I started getting up from the rocker, I had a sudden dizzy spell from the drink as I am very sensitive to liquor, so much so that my family always teases me that I can get drunk from sniffing the cork. I fell right back in the chair, started up again, and again the room wobbled around me. I got real excited and told Ed, "What am I going to do, the company is here and I'm too drunk to get up and greet them!" Ed just laughed at me, helped me up and once I was on my feet I realized that that 4 oz of punch really didn't have that big of an effect on me after all.

Another time Ed made the punch and it was a real big hit as usual. More people wanted the punch than anything else. At the end of the Christmas party Ed and I were standing there taking a breather as the last guest left around 10 pm. I then went out into the kitchen to wrap up all the leftovers when suddenly I spotted some punch left in that beautiful glass punch bowl. So I told Ed to do something with that 12 oz of punch that was left so I could wash out the punch bowl and put it away so it wouldn't get broken. I was running around picking up things, and a few minutes later when I came back into the kitchen I smiled and gasped at how Ed chose to take care of the left over punch there he was with the punch bowl in his two hands, tipped up to his mouth, drinking the leftovers right from the bowl! I gave him a disapproving look and Ed sheepishly answered, "It was real good punch! "

A third punch bowl story that took place at our house...We all ate and drank to our heart's content. We were all content as it was one of my best meals ever and all went well. Then we all played cards and let all our kids pretty much amuse themselves while we played cards together. At the end of the evening we were sitting and talking before our company had to start their long trek home, when suddenly we all noticed what 2 year old Judy De Maria was doing! The poor kid was thirsty and we were too busy to pay that much attention to her, so she went from table to table and finished off everybody's "pop". Yup, you guessed it, that "pop" was none other than Ed's punch! The kid probably got about 4 - 5 oz of liquor in those drinks. Frank was quite concerned and said he would help Judy metabolize the liquor by having her walk around the house. As he held her hand, walking her around, he grinned and said he expected that someday he would have to help one of his kids walk off too much to drink, but not quite this soon! 2 years was a bit early!





**Elenore & Herman Mc Kinin**

Herman ended up in the hospital and was seriously injured for awhile. Herman was driving to work when suddenly a car in the opposite lane of the freeway lost control, hit the middle barrier, became airborne, and landed right on Herman's car, crushing in his hood and causing damage to his legs. Herman suffered blood clots to both legs for weeks, a very dangerous condition that could have led to a heart attack or stroke if those clots had dislodged from his legs and moved upwards. Herman said that one of the most interesting things that happened to him at this time was that a nurse sat by his bedside at night while he was sleeping and said that Herman was reliving his childhood and had even spoke some Russian in his sleep. Herman did remember vaguely some of the dreams of his childhood when he awoke.



**Ann Ross Mc Kinin, Elenore & Marianne**

Herman's mom was the guiding force in his home and ran everything with an iron hand. In her last days she got cancer and Elenore had to go over and help her out, and then go to the doctor and the drugstore and get morphine and bring it to her home to kill the pain. The doctor always told my sister Elenore to never let anyone know she was carrying morphine or someone would rob her for sure. Herman's mother continued to run the home from her bedroom to the very end. In fact, on the day she died she had made up a chart of work to be done for the week ahead.



**Dave, Laurie, Elenore, ? & Herman**

We used to have wonderful afternoon luncheons at Elenore and Marianne's too. Nancy or Sandy would drive the three of us over there and Elenore and Marianne would be waiting for us with the lunch ready to be put on the table. These weren't ordinary lunches, either. They were pork chops, mashed potatoes, gravy, a wonderful fresh vegetable, wine to match the dinner and a fancy desert. We lived such a long way apart that we had a standing joke when we arrived, we would say to Elenore, where's the bathroom and when do we eat?



**Elenore, Marianne, Doris & Mildred**

After lunch we would sit and socialize. Once at Marianne's and once at my house we played around trying to throw a basketball, but with me and Marianne that was funny as we couldn't get that heavy ball up that high to save our soul. Once we played darts at my house and that was more my speed. Sports was never my specialty.

One time Elenore asked us if we would drive to Detroit and pick up our sister Mildred for lunch. Sandy was glad to do so. We drove to Mildred's at 12012 Gunston. She was all ready and in the best of spirits and looking forward to what we all knew would be a wonderful afternoon visit of the Dahl sisters and their kids. We were driving along 12 mile Road and Mildred and I were gabbing away, catching up on all our sisterly gossip. Sandy, knowing we weren't paying a bit of attention to the route, and knowing we were not the best at directions, decided to tease us a little. She said, "Aunt Mildred, if I dropped you off on this corner, would you be able to tell Doris where to pick you up?" Mildred looked around with alarm on her face and said, "Heck, no, I haven't the foggiest notion

of where we are!" We all laughed! In a few blocks I knew where we were as suddenly we were passing the Shrine of the Little Flower on Woodward and 12 Mile.

Sandy picked up Mildred once and brought her to my house when Elenore and Marianne came to lunch. We all had such a wonderful time. We always laughingly said that the Dahl sisters weren't together more than 10 minutes when we'd start a loving, friendly series of argumentative banter. We would so look forward to our fun banter, that Sandy would laugh at how I would practice up on what I would say to tease my sisters days before we got together! Those were wonderful, happy, loving days, and they came but once.



**Doug, Edward, & Bill Bender**

I remember one time Ed and I had to take both Bill and Doug to the emergency room of St. Joseph hospital in Mt Clemens because Doug had banged up his fist and Bill had a red and swollen eye. Dr. Schmunk was on duty as the emergency room doctor that day. He had a nice personality and a good sense of humor. He looked from Doug's fist to Bill's eye, burst out laughing, and said "You don't have to tell me what happened!" He then fixed them both up and sent them on their way. Dr. Schmunk lived on Elizabeth Road between Hall Road and Groesbeck. He had a sign outside his house that said "Schmunk's happy acre". It was such a warm sounding sign. Then a few years later there appeared in the newspaper a story that said that Dr. Schmunk had been accused by his step daughter of incest! Some happy acre, I thought to myself! Then a few years later another article appeared in the Detroit News. It said that Dr. Schmunk of Mt. Clemens, Michigan had been arrested in a Midwest state and accused of murdering his wife! I never would have believed it of him!

Another emergency room physician at St. Joseph Hospital that we liked and often saw was Dr. Henry Winkler. He also had a real nice personality and a good sense of humor. Some ten years or so later Dr. Winkler asked to rent the doctor's office next to St. Anne's at Harper and Cadieux. Sandy told Vern she knew Dr. Winkler, that he had been an emergency room doctor at St. Joseph's and that she had liked him. Vern rented the place to him and before he even moved in the fireworks started. First he had to get into the clinic at 8 am because the Internal Revenue was after him and he had an appointment with them and he couldn't be late, because "those boys harass the devil out of you"

Then after Dr. Winkler moved in his clientele was almost exclusively young Negro men who were so high their feet didn't touch the ground. Then the next thing we heard was the fact that the pharmacy that St. Anne's often used, Wrigley Drug, refused to fill any prescriptions from Dr. Winkler as they were almost exclusively narcotic in nature and those young boys didn't look sick to the pharmacist.

Then Sandy had to go over to his office to collect the rent. She was seated in the doctor's office waiting for him to make out the long overdue rent check. While she was waiting she was looking at all the junk posted on his bulletin board. Sitting on the bulletin board was a prescription for delaudid, all filled out and signed and dated. All that was left blank was the name of the patient! Then the doctor's partner, a woman doctor, asked for the lease to be put in her name as she wanted to kick Winkler out as he was passing dope. Next thing Sandy knew, the woman doctor was moving out and Winkler's buddy was patrolling the parking lot in the dark with a loaded gun in his pocket. Sandy told Vern it was time he and she vamoosed out of there for the night, that things were a little too hot! Dr. Winkler moved a year later and set up another young boy's drug clinic two blocks away. It was his pattern to move every year or two to keep ahead of the authorities. So much for the upstanding young doctors we met at St. Joseph's hospital in Mt. Clemens!



**Nancy & Don**

I remember going to Henry Ford Hospital with Nancy as she was SO very thin that I could see every rib, she was losing her hair and was tired. After many tests they at first called it Simmond's disease, but later they realized that it was from Nancy dieting so strictly while she was carrying Donna and then carrying on with that diet afterwards. She lost 8 lbs while she was expecting Donna and then she never ate a normal meal again. To this day she is seriously thin. This permanent calorie deprivation has been very hard on her nervous system. Ed used to comfort her on Saar when her nerves first bothered her from not eating. He used to sit with her for a long time and offer her positive reinforcement to make her feel better. He used to tell her how pretty and how smart she was and how she could overcome this problem in time. Ed loved Nancy very much and wanted so much for her to feel better. I certainly did, too, but I didn't have quite the way with words that Ed did. He managed to put into words what I was feeling.



**Warren & Linda**



**Warren, Linda, Donna,  
Nancy & Craig Stephens**



**Warren & Nancy**

We had some wonderful and peaceful Christmas eves on Saar and on Diamond. We would get together about 7:30 pm. Ed and Don would get off work about 6 pm on Christmas Eve and would drive straight home, getting there about 6:45 pm. I would feed Ed and Nancy would feed Don, then we'd get together about 7:30 pm with both our families.

One Christmas Eve Don was on his way home and he was driving down Penney Street when he saw a guy get out of his car and out of the corner of his eye Don could see that there was something wrong with this fellow so out of instinct he slowed down. The guy started walking around the car, then suddenly passed out and fell right in front of Don's car! Don narrowly missed running him down!

Nancy had some very peaceful Christmases at her home. She would find a nice Christmas music station to turn on, and as midnight neared the music would get more solemn and more religious in nature. It was so relaxing to open presents in the presence of family and listen to that wonderful music.

A few Christmases we went to midnight mass. But that didn't work out too well for two reasons. First, Mike wouldn't go with us, so it split up the family and secondly Ed had worked so hard all day that once in the quiet of the church he couldn't stay awake. He tried so hard, as he liked attending church and he wanted to welcome in the Christ Child, but to no avail. Once I remember Father Partensky giving the Christmas sermon and looking over and there was Ed nodding his head. He would nod off, catch himself, pull his head up, nod off again, etc. Finally in the middle of the sermon he went out like a light and started pitching over and we were sure he was going to hit his head against the pew in front of him, so Sandy and I were about to wake him out when he let out a BIG SNORE and the whole church snickered and looked around to see who was snoring. But in the meanwhile we were trying to keep Ed from banging his head against the pew as we tried to wake the poor guy up, all this going on while Father Partensky was still trying to deliver a sermon! Sandy and I both shook Ed and told him to wake up, when suddenly he pulled his head back upright and said in a loud voice that could be heard all around the



church, HUH1?1?! All the heads in church started whipping back around our way again. I quietly said to myself, no more midnight mass.

When we would get home after midnight mass the spell would be broken. Instead of it being a cozy Christmas Eve, it would be just plain late, with everyone too tired to eat the late night dinner Nancy or I would prepare.

Nancy continued to have problems with her left ovary and the doctor told her she couldn't have any more children. Around about 1964 Don suggested that Nancy might go out and get a job as all the kids were in school. Nancy loved being a homemaker and working outside the home just did not appeal to her. Just as she was faced with this problem, Mother Nature suddenly intervened and solved her problem for her, as a bolt out of the blue, she suddenly found she was expecting again after 6 years of no new baby! We were all thrilled as we hadn't had a new baby in the family since Berkley. Donna was 3 1/2 when Don and Nancy moved on Saar. Donna learned to ride a tricycle shortly after she moved in and used to come peddling over to my house to visit me. This was no problem as there were no intersections between our houses so the child could peddle on the sidewalk all the way. Donna used to be such a cute little kid as she got off her bike and would come into my house. Sometimes I would call Nancy and tell her Donna was with me and then Donna and I would have lunch together.



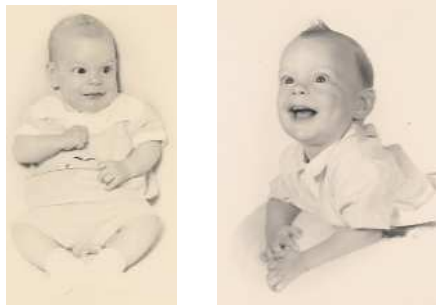
**Donna Stephens**

Doug and I didn't have as much time alone together as we should have as I was so busy with the 4 kids plus my grandkids coming along and he was kind of pushed aside in the shuffle. As I look back I wish we could have had more quiet times together. Nancy, Sandy, Donna and I went to Rochester State park when Nancy was 5 months pregnant and I don't know where our heads were, but we all climbed up and down the steep hills, Nancy and all! Nancy made it okay, but little Donna lost her footing and went down that steep hill head over heels. Nancy could not get to her as fast as she wanted to due to her own balance problems. But Donna was alright, just a few scrapes and a big scare.

Nancy was sick throughout most of her pregnancy with Craig, a problem she did not have with earlier pregnancies. Nancy spent a lot of time on the couch and she would suddenly bolt off the couch and run to the bathroom and upchuck. She would beg Dr. Finn for an antiemetic, but the medical profession was just beginning to realize that birth defects were resulting from taking



drugs so he seldom would prescribe anything for her, just a shot now and again when the problem really got out of hand.



**Craig Stephens**

What I remember very well about the year before Craig was born was Nancy's reaction to the occasional cricket she would encounter in her first floor laundry room on Saar. The first time Nancy encountered a cricket, Sandy and I thought something awful happened to her as she let out a blood curdling scream and we all came running to the laundry room. We then followed Nancy's panic stricken gaze to the source of her horror. Sandy burst out laughing, here she was screaming over one dumb old cricket! But each new cricket elicited the same response in Nancy.



**Elenore & Marianne**

I remember in December, 1964 Elenore and Marianne and I and Sandy went over to Nancy's house for a nice elaborate luncheon, then afterwards we decided to play a game of Scrabble, a newly invented game that Nancy, Sandy and I got hooked on. Elenore and Marianne joined us for a friendly game. Well, both Elenore and I can have a temper at times and at the end of that game both of our hackles were up, though Lord remembers why? It ended up that as we were putting the tiles away in the bag, we suddenly slammed the board together and upwards and outwards from the dining room and the tiles flew all over the kitchen floor and under the counters, refrigerator, etc. I said in my sassiest tone of voice to Elenore, You pick it up! Elenore gave me just as sassy and answer back, No, you pick it up! I will not, I said! Sandy was just sitting back thoroughly enjoying the Mexican standoff of the two hot tempered Dahl sisters. The next thing we knew, Nancy, 9 months pregnant, was on her hands and knees picking up the tiles under the refrigerator. We then came to our

senses and both offered to pick them up, but Nancy said, no, she had them just about all up!



**Emma & Don Remsing**

Nancy had a very sad heart whenever her dearest neighbor across the street, Emma Remsing, came over to visit as Emma had just lost her beautiful 2 1/2 year old blue eyed blonde angel to leukemia. Nancy was so happy for her own baby, yet felt so guilty about opening Emma's old wounds. The year before Emma sat on Nancy's back yard, holding her little swollen up, bruised china doll in her arms, waiting for her to die. The child would then leave Emma's arms and sit on the swing set for awhile, but Nancy thought that little Laura looked so odd on the swing set as the child was so grown up emotionally that telling her to go sit on the swing set seemed almost insulting, like telling an adult. That girl was so wise beyond her years, and even started comforting her mother and helping her mother cope with her impending death at the end. It gave everyone the chills. The child got sick at Easter time and died in August of the same year. The doctors think she got the leukemia from the dog who had distemper just about the time that Laura was infected with the leukemia. They buried the little doll with her favorite blanket & tennis shoes.

One day just one month before Craig was born I got a call from Nancy that she wanted to go to Topps Department store at 13 Mile and Van Dyke and would I go with her. She wanted to buy some curtains. I told her, Nancy, we can't go out shopping today, the television says a huge snowstorm is heading our way and will be upon us within the hour. Nancy got really upset with me, stating that she just had to go shopping now, and she was going with or without me. I was afraid to go out with that snowstorm coming, but I was even more afraid of Nancy going out alone in that kind of weather, so with a lump in my throat, I agreed to go with her, thinking how stupid this all was, to go out in this kind of weather. Well, we got to Topps alright and spent quite some time shopping. We paid for the stuff, then walked outside to the car. I was so upset, there was at least 3-4 inches of snow on the ground and it was falling so fast that the visibility was nil. Even Nancy was now nervous about driving 7 miles home. We got out of that parking lot by zzzing and rocking the car. Getting onto the road wasn't any better. The snow was all piled up all over Van Dyke and no snow clearing equipment was in sight. And you'd better keep moving or you might get hopelessly stuck. On the other hand you'd better not be moving too fast as you might spin out of control or bob sled into somebody. I was a nervous wreck, and saying I told you so just didn't seem appropriate at this point, but I sure did think just that! The snow kept coming and we were doing all of 10

miles per hour, but that seemed like breakneck speed in all that snow! By the time we got to 18 mile both of us were exhausted and on the verge of hysteria. The snow was now at least 6 inches deep in the road and the car was threatening to get stuck for good and we couldn't keep the car in its own lane as the ruts were buffeting the car about. Finally at 18 Mile Road Nancy said she couldn't go any further and that she was going to call home for help. Mike answered my phone. Nancy was so happy and relieved. She told him she was stuck at the hardware store at 18 mile and Van Dyke and couldn't get any farther and she wanted him to pick her up and drive her home. What Michael answered to her is not printable here, it went something like this #\$\$%~&\*. Michael asked her why she thought that it was any safer or easier for him to drive in that than her, and that she went out voluntarily knowing a snow storm was coming and shouldn't ask him to risk his brand new expensive car on a day like this! But true to his responsible nature, Mike left the house and battled his way to 18 and Van Dyke. Meanwhile the hardware store owner had enough of watching this storm from his empty store and wanted to go home. He finally told Nancy and I that 8 months pregnant or not, we would have to leave his store at 5 pm as he was locking up and going home.

Storm clouds began developing for Don and Nancy about a month before Craig was born as Dr. Finn warned her that the tests were showing that the Rh factor was developing in her unborn child and that there was a possibility he might even be born dead. Most probably due to his Rh problem, Craig suddenly started to make his appearance in this world a few weeks early.

## 1965

Don rang my doorbell at 1:00 am Thursday evening and asked me to come home with him to watch his children, that Nancy was in labor, and he was going to take her to the hospital. Nancy called Dr. Finn and told him that the labor pains were already just a few minutes apart, even though they just started. The Doctor told her to go to the hospital immediately and that he'd meet her there. Don flew with Nancy as she was hollering to Don that the pains were coming so fast that she didn't think they would make it to the hospital on time. Don made it from Saar to St. Joseph Hospital in Mt. Clemens in 18 minutes flat! Nancy said that when she got in the hospital the labor pains were coming so fast and hard that the nurse's aides were beginning to tear off her clothes in the elevator! Nancy said she was praying that the elevator wouldn't stop somewhere else along the way! She went from the elevator to the delivery room and immediately delivered Craig without the benefit of a physician or even a nurse being present. There were just two nurse's aides there, one a kindly colored woman. The nurse's aides tried to get her to hold the baby back until they got help, but Nancy said no way, he was ready and he was coming! Dr. Finn never made it. He answered Nancy's call, hung up and fell back to

sleep immediately! He never showed up till the next morning! Nancy was tempted not to pay him for the delivery as he did nothing, nor did he have to pay any other doctor.

There was a very funny little story about Nancy, I and Sandy a few days before Craig was born. Nancy was bouncing names off us for our opinion. She was thinking of either Craig or Robert for a little boy and we all unanimously chose Craig. She was so sure it was a boy that she just picked a boy's name out. Suddenly one day just before Craig was born Nancy called us up in a panic, suddenly deciding on a name if it was a girl, and now that she had the name picked out, wanted to know, how do you spell Deborah?



**Craig Michael Stephens**

One hour after she delivered a little boy, Craig Michael Stephens, born January 18, 1965, Don was back home again! Boy was I ever surprised! And my family couldn't believe it as I started to crawl back into bed so soon after leaving. They were all excited that Nancy had a little boy. But the life and death crisis rapidly developed. He was badly jaundiced, yellow all over and so tiny from the Rh factor. They tested his blood and told Nancy that it was very serious and there was a good chance that the little infant would not survive. When Emma Remsing heard that news, she quietly told Nancy it was better to lose the child at birth than later when you knew his personality. But that was no comfort to Nancy at this point. The doctors said his only chance to live was if they replaced all of his blood. Don and Nancy, numb from fear, gave their consent in writing for this new treatment. So they started threading needles into that tiny little guy, taking blood out by one route and putting it in by another. This procedure was very hard on Craig. He could not be fed for 2 days, only sugar water, until he stabilized. The poor guy was only 5 lbs at birth, and he now dropped to 4 1/2 lbs and looked like a plucked chicken! Nancy's nerves were shot, looking at this baby in the bassinet behind the glass and wondering if this was the last time she would see him alive. She finally decided she would be better off going home where she had the comfort of her older, healthy children. So every day Sandy and/or Don would drive Nancy to the nursery to look at her yellow, still infant. You had to look hard to see he was still breathing, he was so still. He would open his eyes once in awhile, but not for long. One day, about 4 days after he was born, Nancy was standing there at the nursery window with Sandy at her side, when suddenly she started softly crying as she looked at Craig. A kindly nursery aide asked Nancy what was wrong, and

Nancy replied that her baby might die and she had never even seen him cry! He doesn't cry, Nancy said. Oh, he cries sometimes! The nursery aide replied. Would you like to see him cry? Nancy replied that she would, so the aide walked over to Craig, reached in the little blue bassinet and pinched him on his skinny little arm! His little lip curled up in a very hurt expression, quivered, then he started to cry over his first deliberately inflicted cruelty. Nancy was so grateful to see him cry! She cried right along with him, hers being tears of joy! And a funny thing happened. As Craig continued to cry, he turned much pinker and from that day forward, he no longer had that deep yellow hue. That pinch was the turning point!

Sandy remembers taking the Van Dyke bus home from Dr. Sternberg's office in downtown Detroit in the David Stott building. She would read the newspaper on the way home. The paper was full of accounts of how ill Winston Churchill was. Sandy remembers thinking that she wondered if Craig and Winston Churchill would make it. Craig did, but Winston Churchill didn't.

About a week after his birth the doctors released Craig from the hospital. He was one of the very first children who had been treated with blood transfusions as they had just learned what the Rh factor was. The Doctors told Nancy she was very fortunate Craig lived as he was badly affected and he could have turned sour and went on them very easily. It had definitely been in God's hands. Ed's poor mother, Elizabeth Ott Bender had lost one child before Ed and 7 after Ed, all due to the Rh factor. That dear soul thought that they all died of pneumonia and had blamed herself for all of those deaths as she thought she had failed to keep the children warm enough. She went to her grave without knowing that their deaths were in no way her fault. Ed and Norman were the only children to survive. Their survival was due to one simple fact -- they had Rh negative blood like their mother and therefore did not suffer from the sickling of their blood due to its compatibility to Elizabeth's.

Elizabeth's first Rh baby was Wilfred. He was born dead. Grandpa called the city as they had no money for a funeral. The baby's dead body sat on the ironing board for 2 days waiting for someone from the city to pick it up. A man came with a briefcase the next day, walked over to the ironing board, picked up the baby with one hand by the abdomen, and stuffed the little body into his briefcase, walked out and hopped on the streetcar! Poor grandma said she'd never call the city for help again, that she'd find the money to bury the child.



**Robert Bender**



**Mildred & Mary Ann**



**Mary Ann Bender**

Ed told me about the last Rh baby. Her name was (Marian) Mary Ann and Elizabeth was so thrilled when she had her as it had been a long, long time since she had had a girl, some 16 years earlier. But Elizabeth had to work very hard, washing other people's wash over a wash board to make ends meet, so she needed a babysitter for Marian. My dear Ed was chosen for this job, much to his chagrin. He wanted to play baseball, ride his bike, Zev, and generally spend his time exploring the neighborhood looking for some excitement. And all of the above activities was not compatible with babysitting some dumb little sister, so grandma heard plenty of grumbling when he had to baby-sit. Marian was in a lot of pain from the Rh factor as her blood cells were sickling as in sickle cell anemia, and dying. So Marian cried all the time, something that endeared her to little 9 year old Ed even less. Suddenly Marian took a turn for the worse, stopped eating, and suddenly passed away. Elizabeth was beside herself with grief, and in this bitter grief she said an awful thing to her little boy, she said, well, Ed, you wanted her dead and now you got your wish. Ed was horrified by what his mom said to him and he never forgot it. Ed was to say many times in the years to come, I NEVER WANTED MARIAN TO DIE!

Ed was very concerned and upset as his tiny young grandson faced the same fate as his baby sister Marian, and his two 3 month old bothers, Robert and George. Ed prayed so very hard for little Craig that he might get better and live. Ed's fervent prayers were answered. It was almost as though Craig's life made up for losing little Marian. Ed still spoke of Marian after that.

Don brought little Craig home from the hospital in Nancy's arms and after settling them in the house and grabbing a fast lunch he had to bolt back to Kelly's. Right after Don took off for work Nancy remembered that all of the formula and bottles and other baby paraphernalia from the hospital were in Don's trunk! It was such a miserable snowy day that Nancy did not want to go out so she called Sandy and gave her a list of things to go to Food Fair and buy.

A little while after that Nancy had to get more supplies for Craig so she drove her 1962 red Valiant out of the driveway, but got stuck in the snow. She gunned and gunned and gunned that car until finally the rear wheels started smoking. When Don looked at the car he was furious! The car was not stuck in



the snow bank; Nancy forgot to release the handbrake and she burned the rear brakes out! But Don had the finesse to mostly keep his mouth shut!

The first few days home Nancy wouldn't let anyone hold Craig as this was her first chance to do so as she was not allowed to handle him while he was in the nursery. She held him almost all the time for two days straight, then relaxed and gave the rest of us our long awaited turn at holding him. I was amazed at how very light he was. I never held a baby this light. Sandy called Craig "plastic bones".

Sandy used to baby-sit Craig and the rest of the kids whenever Don and Nancy wanted an evening for themselves, to go to a movie or visit a friend.



**Don Remsing, Sandy Bender, Craig Stephens**

Craig Michael was baptized at St. Matthias Church on 19 Mile in Sterling Heights. The sponsors were Sandy Bender and Don Remsing, a good friend across the street on Saar.

Sandy remembers babysitting Craig in his playpen while Nancy and Don went to church. Sandy bought Craig an expensive, see through, elaborate, beautiful top. It cost too much for her limited budget, but she loved that top, so she got it for Craig. She wound it up for him and he was fascinated at how it spun. But before the day was over, Craig stood up in his playpen on top of the top and cracked the clear plastic. But that's the way most of the toys we buy for the children end up! I remember being grateful if the toys remained intact till Christmas evening!



**Linda**



**Donna**

Linda, Donna and Emma Remsen's daughter, Caroline played together. Laura played with Donna too, until her death a year later. Nancy was very supportive

to Emma during this long, drawn out tragedy in her life, and this is what really cemented their friendship through the years.

This was a star crossed neighborhood, it seems. Donna's other friend, Carol Schulte, who lived right next door to the Remsing, had diabetes but got along quite well. One summer day she went to camp and came home sick. Shortly afterwards she slipped into a coma and died, most probably a victim of Reyes' Syndrome.

The next door neighbors to Nancy were the Kyle's. There is a very funny story about Sandy and the Kyle's right after we moved into Diamond. Nancy was still unpacking and called me to borrow something, so I gave it to Sandy and told her to run it over to Nancy so she could make supper. Sandy took me literally, she grabbed the food and trotted all the way around the bend and popped into Nancy's house totally out of breath as she ran into the kitchen. Suddenly, Sandy stopped dead in her tracks, stunned. There were a bunch of strangers in Nancy's house sitting at the table eating. Suddenly it dawned on Sandy and she could have died of embarrassment. All those darn houses looked alike and she ran into the Kyle's house, one short of Nancy's, by mistake. That whole family sat there staring at Sandy like she didn't have 'em all together as she muttered, wrong house, and ran back out again.

A few years later the Kyle's oldest son, Dave had just learned to drive and had his own junk car. One Saturday Dave and his father got into one rip roaring fight and David ran out of the house in a rage, jumped into his car and roared off. He drove aimlessly through the streets, trying in vain to cool off. He drove up Van Dyke, came to Mc Clellan, turned east on Mc Clellan and managed to get up a speed of 70 Miles per hour in one short block. He then roared right through the stop sign on Deshon and ran into a mother of 3 children who was coming home from shopping at A & P. She had one of her children in the car with her. Dave's car slammed into the side of her car and she went flying out of the car, through the air and landed on the lawn nearby, her neck broken. She was killed instantly. Those children never forgave Dave for killing their mother. He would run into one of the children now and again and they would bring up her death to him just to make sure he never forgot. Dave told them he was sorry, but the kids told him sorry would not bring their mother back to them.

Nancy took Craig everywhere with her while she went shopping, ran errands, etc. The women in Topps used to make nasty remarks when Nancy had 2 week old Craig with her in the shopping cart. The women would say that Craig's cry sounded premature and that he shouldn't be out of the house in such inclement weather.

When Craig was 5 months old we took him on a picnic to Belle Isle. We had our whole family with us, including Ed and Don. Craig was so cute that day. He could just sit up if you leaned him forward a bit and then watched him. He was

fascinated with the flies that landed on his picnic table and tried to grasp the flies between his fingers, which looked like pincers. Naturally the flies flew effortlessly away as Craig reached for them. Craig also enjoyed his first swing as Sandy sat him on her lap and swung with him on the huge metal swings. But our picnic was spoiled and we were forced out of the park and could not go there again for fear of our own safety because of all the cat calling and foul language and insults hurled by the blacks driving by. The police were just a short distance away, but did nothing. Ed, Sandy and I had some very fun Sundays on Belle Isle, despite the problems with the natives. Ed would rent a single bike and Sandy and I would rent a bicycle built for two and off we'd go down the bike path, Sandy in the back and I in the front. Those particular bicycle built for two steered from the back, so Sandy sat there to control the bike. I never even learned to ride a bike until I was 54 years old, but sharing a bike with Sandy I had complete confidence as Sandy was very strong and good at sports and I just knew she would keep us both upright and out of trouble. My faith was justified, we never had a problem with her navigating. That was a scary bike path, in two spots there was a big tree right in the way as you had to make a sharp turn, then avoid the tree, make a right turn and go over a high bridge. Sandy used to have to build up speed just before the tree in order to get over the high bridge. I hollered in fear the first few trips around that big old tree, but after that I mostly settled down and just went along for the ride, so to speak. Sometimes literally. Once Sandy was wondering why she was getting out of breath as a sudden, looked at me and bellowed. I had my feet up on the bar relaxing instead of peddling! Ed was not so lucky the last time we went bike riding. He was on his own bike, and when he was going around the obstructive tree and then up the bridge he didn't have enough speed and the bike stalled, he fell off and really injured his ribs. He thought he broke them it hurt so bad. He couldn't catch his breath or even move it hurt so bad! He gave Sandy his car keys and told her to drive his car as close as possible and pick him up as he couldn't even walk. Thus ended our biking expeditions on Belle Isle.

We also went canoeing twice on Belle Isle and had a good time although we were very nervous about the Negroes throwing stones, trash, etc. at us from shore and making loud comments. But in spite of that, we had a ball. Except that you must know by now what I thought of being in the water in a boat. The canoe rental was right next to the Detroit Yacht Club & you had to go through a flock of geese to get into the canals.

We used to love to drive around the island, look at the beautiful sights and see the huge freighters passing up and down river. We would sometimes stop for an ice cream from the Good Humor man. We also played some baseball on the island on their diamond. Most of the time I would bring a book along and read until they pestered me into playing a little. Ed, Sandy and I also golfed once on Belle Isles golf course. We used to play "kangaroo golf" as I never could drive the ball very far and Ed would drive it much farther than Sandy. So we would

make teams. Ed and I would take turns driving the same ball alternately, and we would pit ourselves against Sandy, who played alone against us. Our scores would come out fairly even that way.

We used to walk the paths on Belle Isle too, but it made us nervous as there was a lot of criminal element hanging around on the island, eyeing the whites slyly out of the corner of their eye. Every time we went to Belle Isle, Sandy and I used to tease Ed about the time when he went to Mount Clemens and got lost when Sandy was 4 years old. That year he drove us to Belle Isle, then couldn't get off the island as it was so jam packed with cars that they wouldn't let him over into the right lane, and only the right lane could exit onto the bridge. Ed was so frustrated after 4 attempts around the island. On the last attempt, Ed stopped first at that most beautiful Scott fountain and we all watched the fountain change all different colors, then we finally succeeded in getting off the island. Ed then went from Belle Isle to Mount Clemens, where little Sandy got such a kick out of it as Ed got thoroughly lost in Mt. Clemens before returning home. For years afterwards when Ed would ask us where we wanted to go for a ride, Sandy would answer, let's go to Ma Clemens and get lost!

On the way back from that expedition to Mt. Clemens to cool off as we were all so hot that 100 degree summer day, Ed was driving down Connor by the airport, when suddenly a car got out of control about 4 cars behind him and ploughed into the car in front of him. Ed was the last car in that chain reaction accident. Ed got out of his car and checked it over and all he could see wrong was that his hub cap flew off from the impact. So Ed picked up his hubcap and we continued on home.



**Craig**

Another funny shopping story. When Craig was about 11 months old Nancy, Sandy and I went Christmas shopping at Hudson's. Michael used to dress up real spiffy, in \$200 and \$300 suits and go with a doctor of finance to the Detroit Yacht Club on Belle Isle. The doctor was a lifetime member so Mike and he would go there on Saturday evenings, have dinner and make an evening of it. Mike appreciated the finer things in life, so Nancy thought she'd go to the expensive men's section of the store and get Mike a fine set of cuff links to go with his white dress shirts. We pushed Craig around in his stroller and he was a good boy most of the day, but we had been shopping for hours and he was

now getting cranky. Nancy wanted to finish her shopping so she bought Craig a Hershey's candy bar to keep him quiet, so she opened up the candy bar, pushed the stroller out of the main isle where we were shopping, and gave it to him. It did the trick. He quietened right down. We found the right cuff links for Mike after about 20 minutes of looking. We paid for the cufflinks, Nancy put them away in a safe place, and while she was doing this Sandy and I walked over to retrieve Craig from his quiet, out of the way corner. Good thing it was quiet, out of the way, and had no salesmen in it! Sandy whispered, "Oh, no, we'd better get out of here!" Nancy and I looked funny at Sandy as she said this. But however, when we looked at Craig we knew it was time to scram, and fast! Craig was sitting next to \$200 pants (not suits, just pants!) and he had mushed up and melted his candy bar all over 3 or 4 of these expensive trousers! We made a fast, quiet exit.

Mike's friend that he went to the Yacht Club with was a doctor of finance. Mike gave him some money to invest in the stock market. It was bad timing for one thing and Mike has phenomenal bad luck with investing for another, but in the end Mike took a bath in the stock market. Mike always says that if you want to sink a man financially, just tell Mike what stocks the guy's invested in. Mike will then buy the same stocks and for sure those stocks will sink like a lead balloon.

We used to shop at Gorenflo for our rings and other gold jewelry as Ed knew them from his business and they were the most reasonable in town. One time we went there with all of our kids and were looking at rings. One ring after another he took out of and put back in the case. Suddenly the man said, hey, one of the rings are missing! Nancy, Sandy and I started looking all over the counter and in the cases, but no ring. Suddenly, we heard a ping! and there on the floor the ring had just fallen! Evidently, one of the small kids liked the shiny bauble and when it was discovered missing, dropped it on the ground! We could have dropped from embarrassment when that happened! I'm sure he never knew it wasn't one of us adults.



**Mike Bender**

One time Mike was sick in the hospital, sleeping. He was drowsily half awake, half asleep when a nurse gave him a shot. What was that, Mike asked her? Penicillin, she replied. I'M ALLERGIC TO PENICILLIN!! Mike told her. Suddenly he felt something funny and put his hand on his forehead and found his

forehead was rapidly and dramatically swelling! The nurse ran down to the nurse's station, drew, up an injection of an anti-inflammatory, ran back down the corridor and administered this second shot. Mike was amazed at how fast the swelling disappeared after that shot. He said he could feel his forehead swell up and just as rapidly return to normal.

Mike was unable to become a pilot as he was color blind, a red green color blindness, just like my dad. One time Ed had his fire engine red Valiant parked in the back yard and when Mike told Sandy that the car was the same color as the grass to him, she showed astonishment, and Mike then was sensitive as he did not want to be ribbed about his color blindness.

A cute story about my dad, Bill Dahl. When cars first came out he took my sister Mildred for a ride, and as a light turned colors, my dad said to Mel in a panic, Mildred, quick, what color is that light? Mildred laughed at him, thinking he was horsing around. I'm not kidding, he shouted, What color is it? That was the first time any of us ever realized that Dad was color blind.

My son Doug is also color blind. A blinking light is a horror for Mike and Doug as they cannot tell for sure if it is yellow or red. They figure it out by watching to see what the other cars do as they approach it.

Mike and Doug have one recurring problem with the color blindness, what clothes go with what? It is a real problem for them as they do not see subtle shade variations as we do. We used to pick out Mike's clothes for him when he went to the Yacht club, and one day he made out a chart of what clothes went with what.

Color blindness is passed from mother to son. I inherited from my dad and passed it on to Mike and Doug, but not Bill. My girls may or may not have inherited it. We will see later. I doubt very much if Nancy inherited it as neither of her two sons have it. I bet Sandy inherited it as, like me, she can't see subtle color variants and we argued frequently over what shade of what color an object was. My dad inherited from his mother Minna Kaiser Dahl Henkel. Her dad, Johann Kaiser, was also color blind. Johann was born and died in Bischofswerde, West Prussia, a very small village 50 miles south of Danzig in what is now Poland, but was then Germany.





**Sandy**

Sandy and I went back to our old neighborhood on Alter Road and visited Mrs. Elodie Meeseman. While there we inquired about her husband Victor and she sadly told us he was dead. We were so very sorry to hear this, and asked her how it happened. She got a sheepish look on her face and said one morning she was fixing him breakfast and when he was in the bathroom too long she went in and checked on him to see if he was alright. There he sat on the toilet reading his Belgian newspaper. But he had been dead for over 4 hours. He got up in the middle of the night, picked up his Belgian newspaper and headed for the bathroom. He strained at the stool while reading the newspaper, blew a valve in his heart and died instantly, still sitting upright with the paper in his hands.



**Marie & Sandy**

The next time we visited Mrs. Meeseman she had more sad news to tell us. Her brother came over from Belgium to visit her. They were having a nice, cozy visit together, just the two of them. One day he decided to get out the late Mr. Meeseman's car and take Mrs. Meeseman for a car ride. Mrs. Meeseman waited and waited, and no car appeared. Finally she got up and went out the back door to see what was keeping her brother. He was dead on the pavement, face down, in her back yard. She buried him in America. A week or so later Mrs. Meeseman went across the street to visit with Mrs. Van Heusey. They were both talking about her brother's death, when all of a sudden, Mrs. Van Heusey clutched her chest, let out a loud scream, then slumped over dead! Mrs. Meeseman said two heart attacks that close together was just a little too much for her to take! A few years later we got a phone call from Juliette Tas, her daughter, telling us that Elodie had passed away. She had had a stroke and spent her last six months of life in a nursing home. Her home was sold by the family right after that and was purchased by a black family.

This was about the time that Sandy saw an advertisement in the local paper that a half Collie-half German Shepherd was ready for adoption at the Humane Society animal shelter. Ed saw the picture and said that the dog bore some resemblance to his Sport.

Sandy went to the shelter on her lunch hour when she worked at 23 Mile and Mound Bank of the Commonwealth. That dog had been adopted out. Sandy had the urge for a dog, but there was nothing like Sport there. But she ended up walking out with a white smooth haired dog. She brought it over to the bank and kept it in a box for the afternoon and mopped up his occasional accidents. She brought him home that night. None of us but Doug were taken with that dog. Doug put that dog in his bedroom, dressed him up in black leather hat and put a cigarette in his mouth. The dog would sit up there in the room with Doug and all his friends and listen to the loud music and breathe in all the cigarette smoke! He also slept with Savage at night and mopped up the accidents. But I didn't want my rugs ruined so I put him in the half bath overnight and put newspapers down. He tore up all the newspapers and made a big mess. Ed was disgusted about the mess in his bathroom every morning. Savage cried all night which didn't endear him to us either. I put a barrier in the kitchen to keep him off the carpets, but he jail broke quite often. And he'd get real wild at times, running around frantically and trying to bite everyone. We'd all jump up on the couch to get away from him! One day I saw an ad in the paper that a boy had lost his dog who sounded just like Savage in physical description. I called up the lady and told her I found her dog. She and her little son came over and determined that it wasn't her dog, but they agreed to take Savage as a replacement. That got rid of my problem, and in a few weeks Sandy and Doug got over the loss of the dog.

When Sandy was in her second year of college, in about December she started getting more and more tired. The weariness progressively increased and she could hardly drag herself out of bed. Her skin got real dry and flaky and she was always cold, no matter how hot the house was or how warmly she dressed. Finally by February she had to drop out of school as she couldn't stay awake long enough to drive there and back. She was falling asleep and had no attention span. She went repeatedly to Dr. Finn but he had no answer. At first he pooh-poohed her tiredness, saying when he was in college he was always tired, too. Then he thought maybe she had mononucleosis. But when she was so tired she couldn't stay awake, he knew it had to be something serious and sent her to Dr. Hiller. Dr. Hiller put her in St. Joseph's hospital and started running tests. He found that all of her hormones were extremely depressed, except TSH, which was very high. But she was very deficient in thyroid hormones. They started an ACTH drip to see if her hormones would respond to stimulation as her adrenal hormones were also extremely depressed. Thyroid medication was started. Sandy, it was later determined, was beginning to go into a thyroid coma when she was admitted to the hospital and the thyroid

medication was what brought her back out of it about 2 weeks later. Sandy was soon sleeping day and night at that time.



**Ed & Sandy**

She could not stay awake long enough to eat meals. She would wake up later and find food in her mouth as she had fallen asleep between taking a bite and starting to chew. Dr. Finn apologized to Sandy for not detecting the thyroid problem as he said all the symptoms were there, but that he simply failed to put them together into the correct diagnosis. He told her she was lucky as a thyroid coma is very hard on the heart, just like Nellie's diabetic coma and she could have went on heart stoppage like her grandma did. With thyroid medication, things quickly returned to normal and Sandy was back in Wayne State University that fall. But the rest of the hormone levels never did straighten out and that remained a problem, but only a nuisance. It was later determined that Sandy's sudden thyroid hormone producing failure was most likely due to an auto-immune response, that is the immune system in her body attacked and killed the active thyroid hormone producing tissue. Sandy always was my sickly kid, always coming up with some new serious medical disorder, although you couldn't tell it too look at her, she was always so robust looking. I used to call Sandy "my Grandma" as she was always ailing on something, often had to walk slow and bent over due to illness or repeated surgery and I was always more springy than her in those days. She had 10 surgeries from her 5th to her 26th year. It drove me to distraction and Ed to the poor house. We had no insurance to cover most of these 10 surgeries and her many other hospitalizations.



**Linda Stephens White**

When Nancy was asked to sign Sandy's new autograph book she got for Christmas, she put an entry in that book that summed it up quite well, she

wrote, "To my delicate horse of a sister, built like a battleship with weak kidneys!" and she signed it Shakespeare's mother, to be or not to be. The signature reflected the fact that she was expecting Linda at the time she wrote this. Sandy's illness created hardships for the rest of our children. They were left to fend for themselves while I sat with her in the hospital. In fact Sandy" had one of her surgeries on Nancy' s birthday, so I had to sit in the hospital all day with Sandy instead of celebrating with Nancy. I ended up sneaking out of the hospital early despite Sandy's protests, in order to spend an hour or so with Nancy on her birthday. And the anxiety Ed and I were under wondering what was going to happen next was felt by the other children, too.



**Craig Stephens**

One day Nancy was driving up the new M-53 freeway from Hall Rd to 23 Mile Road. She was in a hurry and was driving about 75 miles per hour. She had 2 year old Craig beside her in the front seat. Suddenly, out of nowhere a huge bird smashed right into her windshield. Suddenly Nancy was in a total panic as she was hurdling along at 75 miles per hour with her precious little son in the car with her and she couldn't see a thing as her entire windshield was covering with blood, guts and feathers! She quickly rolled the window down and looking out the side window was able to see where she was going. Craig sat back fascinated, looking at the windshield. In awed, hushed tones, Craig said with reverent surprise, "Oh, mommy, yook at the fevvers!"



**Marie, Nancy, Mike & Craig**

Another funny Nancy story. One day Nancy went to Eastland quite late in the day and she was returning home after dark. She was quite upset as she was kind of lost and wasn't sure if she knew the way home or not. Suddenly, at the intersection of Garfield and Utica Road, Nancy ran out of gas. She cruised into the gas station at that corner on the last fumes in her tank. She then pulled out her wallet and discovered she had no money! She was very upset, no

money, no gas, and didn't know the way home. As she was standing there on that corner, panic rising in her throat, wondering what to do, she suddenly didn't believe her eyes. There standing as the first car at the red light was her brother Mike! Was she ever relieved! She flagged him down, he pulled in the gas station, gave her money, got gas in her car and showed her the way home. Talk about happy endings!



**Sandy & Nancy**

Nancy used to be a real daredevil with gas. She would actually drive to Eastland and back to Utica on an almost empty tank of gas! Nancy and Don used to have contests to see who could run the car most on empty as whoever had the car when it was out of gas had to pay for the gas with their allowance. Nancy used to run out of gas on Clinton River Road, go into the gas station and get 25 cents worth of gas and pour it in the tank, then drive the gas can back, thank the attendant and pull off with the 25 cents worth of gas! She said she'd let Don put the rest in. The gas station attendant would be amazed to see Nancy drive off with a huge Chrysler Imperial with only 25 cents in the gas tank!



**Warren Stephens**

One day Nancy and Warren went shopping at Food Fair. Nancy loaded the Imperial with the groceries then started for home. As she was backing out of the parking space she was looking behind her to make sure she didn't hit the car behind her. Warren said, mom,... mom,...mom! Nancy replied, don't bother me, I'm busy. Warren then said, in an emotional tone of voice, "Oh, mom! " That tone of voice got Nancy's attention! She looked at Warren, then followed the line of his intense gaze she had driven into the car next to her, had picked it up off the ground as she continued to drive into it and it was now so far off the ground it was about to fall over! She gently eased the car back into the parking spot, got the car next to her back down, then pulled out and started for home, very shaken up.



**Nancy & Craig**

Nancy used to take me shopping every week and I was so grateful that she did so, but boy, what a marathon shopping that was! Nancy didn't have that much money to work with and she pinched every grocery penny as she got to keep all left overs from her grocery money. So we went to all 4 grocery stores in the area, buying the cheapest at each store. And sometimes we made the rounds of stores twice when something was cheaper somewhere else.



**Clara & Ray Fredrick**

One beautiful May day I got a call from my Uncle Ray Fredrick. He said that my Aunt Clara Dahl Fredrick had just passed away, a victim of pancreas cancer. Ray said with a tear in his eye that Clara knew she had a growth in her pancreas two years ago, but being a stubborn Dutchman, she wouldn't let them remove it. Ray was somewhat bitter that Aunt Clara did not try to save herself with the operation. Ed was very close to Uncle Ray as Ray often stopped by Ed's store and bought, or just talked. After we paid our respects to Ray, we went up to the casket. Clara was such a beautiful woman as she lay there in death that it took your breath away just to look at her! I have never seen such a gorgeous corpse in my life. Clara was always a beautiful woman all her life.



**Elenore & Marianne**



We went visiting Elenore and Marianne a few weeks after Clara's funeral and the course of conversation naturally turned to Clara after dinner. Sandy and I exclaimed at what a beautiful woman she was. Marianne politely listened to us and when we were through talking Marianne said to us, "I have always been taught to respect my elders, and I do, but they do have to earn that respect and I hate to say it, but Aunt Clara was the biggest bullshooter in our family!" We all giggled and apologized to Aunt Clara if she was listening, but we all had to kind of agree. Clara loved to put on the dog. Elenore got her birth certificate a few years before and found out that, like me, her name was goofed up on the certificate, so she had to get it straightened out so her legal papers would match her birth certificate. So she went to Aunt Clara to ask her to go to the Herman Kiefer Hospital and fill out an affidavit that Elenore's name was Elenore, not Wilhelmina Elenore. When they went to Clara's house Marianne had driven over in her brand new Cougar and planned to drive them to Herman Kiefer. But Aunt Clara had different ideas. Clara said she'd have her servant bring her Cadillac around front. Marianne said the "servant" was Ray's garage mechanic and the Cadillac was ancient and had definitely seen better days. Clara had a sharp tongue like her mother, and that got her into trouble with the family at times. But Clara never had any children, which she stated was her choice, so she could hold her head up higher as she never had anyone to embarrass her.



**Minna Dahl Henkel, Bob, Celia**



**George & Anna**



**Clara**

Clara was generous with her sister Annie and Annie's children, but she would put her two cents worth in as she was helping out. I felt so sorry for dear Aunt Anna Dahl Galvin when I went to visit my grandmother Henkel at Annie's house just before grandma died. Her poor, dear Annie was doing all the work

and Grandma was complaining that Annie was not doing enough and building up Clara, who was doing very little. That wasn't fair!

I had tried to learn to drive once when I was quite young and just married. But Ed worried about my reflexes and coordination and didn't want me to drive as there was little need for a car in those days as you could take the street car anywhere. So Ed scared me real bad when I was behind the wheel of the car trying to learn and I soon gave up trying. Ed's sister Bea and my sisters Elenore and Mildred ran up against the same type of opposition from their husbands. Men in those days thought it was only their prerogative to drive and that the wife should depend on her husband for whatever form of transportation that could not be accomplished by using the Detroit Urban Streetcar system, which was quite good in those days. Elenore got mad at Herman for his chivalrous and uncooperative attitude one day, grabbed his car keys and drove down to Eastern Market. She said she hadn't much mastered the stick shift and found herself cruising down the Eastern Market streets at 40 mph, barely missing all the obstacles. Bea got stubborn and taught herself to drive, but still principally used the street car system. My sister Mildred learned to drive and did so freely until one day when she had a bad accident, at which point she gave up driving altogether and let Sunny or Doris take her where she wanted to go.



**Mildred & Doris Stocker**



**Sandy**



**Marie**

Well, one day in 1968 Sandy convinced me that being caged in the house for lack of transportation was no fun so I should learn how to drive. I was interested but scared. Sandy said she would teach me. We started out on some dirt roads, which I mastered pretty good as I had steered the car for Ed sometimes and had the feel of steering. 26 Mile Road was just built and was

practically empty of traffic, so Sandy decided to give me some driving practice there. She turned the wheel over to me at 26 Mile and Mound Road. I then traveled west on 26 Mile, doing somewhat less than the speed limit and feeling very shaky and unsure of myself. Then Sandy said we would turn around at the next intersection and travel back west again. So when Sandy saw the opening in the meridian, she told me to slow down and get ready to turn. I slowed down, went into the curve slow, and keeping my wheel turned, got onto 26 Mile Road. But when I got back on the road, I did not straighten my wheels out, so I kept turning in a U-turn and jumped the curb and went up onto the grassy meridian. I then got stuck in the soft grass and my wheels started sinking, so I panicked some more and started gunning the car to get it out of there. Sandy kept screaming at me to get my foot off the gas pedal as a huge semi truck was barreling down on us and if I got my car out of the mud I would shoot out into the path of the semi. But I didn't listen to Sandy, I just kept gunning the car in my sheer panic. So Sandy, not wanting to die an untimely death at this point, reached over and pulled the car out of drive and into neutral. When the semi passed, Sandy got the car back on the road and let me take over driving again. She was either very brave or very dumb! But after more driving lessons I began to feel a little less panicky behind the wheel and not so long afterwards, the big day came when Sandy drove me down to the driver's license bureau where I passed my written test with a perfect score, and I also passed my driver's demonstration test, but the tester felt I could use a little more practice. I felt so too, like maybe a whole lifetime of practicing before I'd ever be relaxed behind the wheel.

But after that I did good and in time I became more and more brave and my horizons gradually widened. I even went to Mt. Clemens and back on a number of occasions and even to Eastland, and not to brag, but I never caused an accident as I was very careful. While Bill was in the service he let me use his little white Valiant. It was a very nice and manageable car and I soon fell in love with it. I did all my errands in that Valiant. I was so sad when Bill came home from Vietnam all upset and sick and insisted in taking back this beautiful little car. He tore that car to pieces with his erratic driving in no time, something he never did before Vietnam. I was so sick when that car hit the junk pile.

One more Marie driving story.. I borrowed Mike's new dark green Cougar to go to Mt. Clemens. I took Bill with me. Mike made me promise never to let Bill drive his car as he didn't want his car torn up. I agreed to this stipulation. But on the way back from Mt. Clemens, the back fell off the driver's seat and I almost fell back while driving. I found it impossible to drive with the back of the seat missing, and would not have been able to bring that car safely home. I asked Bill if he could drive it carefully home under these circumstances. Bill had problems remaining upright, but he got us and the car safely home.

Believe it or not, in those days Mike used to trust me with his brand new car and let me go shopping with it every week.



**Marie & Taffy**

Once I mastered the car, Sandy got another brilliant idea, why shouldn't I be able to learn to ride a bicycle? Now, I wasn't so sure about that one! I never learned as a kid and I really didn't like the idea of breaking my dear little bones at this stage of the game. I had ridden with Sandy on a bicycle built for two on Belle Isle, but in that case Sandy held the bike up while I got on, then balanced for both of us as we started off and sailed down the path. She used to holler at me not to lean over to one side, and when we reached a turn she'd tell me which way to lean into the curve. Boy, would I hear it if I leaned the wrong way! But by the end of the day I had leaning into curves right down pat. And now Sandy was trying to cajole me into trying it solo. I didn't think this was such a good idea! But when one day Sandy showed up with a brand new bike that would especially fit me, I had to give it the old college try! Sandy held the seat while I got on and wiggled my way down the street. Before Sandy collapsed from exhaustion, I got the hang of it and was riding on my own. I couldn't have believed that I could learn how to ride as fast as I did! In no time I was cruising down the street, while Sandy grabbed her bike and caught up to me. She told me to stay close to the curb, but to make sure I rode out far enough to avoid hitting parked cars. I managed all of that very well. We went from Diamond to Delvin to Saar, right passed Nancy's house. Then around Saar and back onto Diamond and back home. But one thing Sandy had forgot to tell me, how to stop the darn thing! I didn't know how to use the brake, nor where it was! When I reached our house, I went up the drive, onto Healy's front lawn and then I took a leap and jumped free of the bike and landed softly and pretty safely on all fours. Suddenly, before I could get my bearings and assure myself that I was in one piece, I suddenly heard a whole chorus of laughter and looking over to Clayton's house, I saw the Clayton boys and their friends breaking up with laughter, pointing over my way! Well, so much for retaining one's dignity!

After that Sandy showed me the brakes and things went a lot smoother after a few more 4 point landings. I soon took to stopping and putting my foot on the curb, then getting off from there and walking my bike to the back yard. We went all over on our bikes. Through Dresden Village, through Utica proper and even into Dresden Village #1 by St. Matthias Church. One day we were coming back home down 19 mile Road when we came upon the M-53 freeway overpass on 19 Mile Road. Sandy was first and she rode around the sidewalk. I was right behind her, but when I saw the guard railing, I just seemed to drive right

towards it and very abruptly I scraped my left leg full force right into the guard rail and fell off my bike. I was in so much pain from hitting the guard rail that I had waves of nausea and weakness and was trying hard not to faint dead away right there on the sidewalk! In the height of my suffering a teenager in a hot rod car came screeching to a stop right next to me and one of the kids hung out the car window and hollered to me, "Hey, lady, got the time?!" That was hysterically funny. Here I was dying in pain, on the verge of fainting, and someone asks me for the time!

## **MA BARKER YEARS**



**Warren Stephens**

Rose Lutfy used to tease me to no end about the scrapes my boys would get into. She would laugh with a merry twinkle in her eye and say, "Why you're just like Ma Barker with her boys!" (Her darling Mike was no better than my kids, but in her eyes her little Lord Fauntleroy could do no wrong.) Here are some of the stories her and I used to laugh and/or cry over.

One day Don got into his delivery van and noticed that his tools were scattered all over the truck. He cussed out Warren, figuring he and his buddies must have sat in the van and messed everything up. When he found out the real story why the van was all messed up, he blew a gasket. His darling 13 year old son got talked into "borrowing" his van for a 3:30 am joy ride. Warren and some of the neighborhood kids, mine included, stole Don's truck keys, pulled the truck out of the driveway in the middle of the night, and proceeded to give themselves their first driving lessons. And what a wild lesson that was. The boys ended up on Utica Road and took that real sharp curve just before 16 Mile Road at better than 70 Miles per hour. They were very lucky that they didn't turn the van over! They got the van back home without Don being the wiser, but one of the neighborhood kids told his parents who in turn told Nancy. Don was so angry that Warren is lucky he's not still grounded to this day!



**Doug Bender Sr & Taffy**

Another time my littlest brat got into the liquor and had himself a party with some of his friends. When I found out about it, I locked up all the liquor into the upstairs hall closet. That lasted for about a week, when one day I looked closer and found that Doug had pulled the pins on the door! I ended up putting a lock on my bedroom door that could not be removed and stored the liquor in my clothes closet. If anyone ever saw that stash of liquor in my closet, they would have thought I was a closet drinker.

Ed and I never drank except on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, but then not that much. And Ed got a lot of liquor for gifts when he was in business, so it accumulated over the years.

I remember one year Sylvania was courting Ed's business, so one day my door bell at home rang, I answered it, and here was a beautiful liquor cabinet, lots of bottles of liquor, a drink shaker and a wire mixer. It was beautiful and quite elaborate, but most inappropriate for Ed and me. But it looked nice in our dining room on Alter Road.



**Doug Bender Sr.**

Another time Doug and his best friend, Bob McDonald decided to have themselves an early Christmas party down by the Clinton River and to take one of Ed's liquor bottles just to make sure it was merry. Well, it sure was lively. The boys, having no experience with liquor, like fools chug-a-lugged it down, then looked at each other and said nothing was happening. Then as a sudden it hit them full force and they were almost glued to the snowy river bank. They got scared then and decided that they did not want to pass out at the river side and maybe freeze to death there, so with every bit of their strength they managed to pull themselves up from the Clinton River. Where shall we go now, the kids asked each other. Let's play it cool and go to the Sterling House and by coffee and sober up, Doug suggests. Yeh, good idea,



let's go, was the consensus of opinion. So they all weaved their way to the restaurant. Doug told the rest they are far too drunk, so they should just sit in a booth and he'll order and bring back the coffee. Okay, they all agree and sit down. Doug is standing in line waiting to order coffee, when in walks several big, strapping, Sterling Heights police officers. McDonald panics! Hey, Doug, he hollers, there's the police and they're going to notice that we're drunk, bellows out Bob. Yeh, sure, now that you've screamed it out across the whole restaurant, he'll sure notice, thinks Doug. Shut up, you big fool! was Doug's answer. Doug gets the coffee and by the time he gets back to the booth, Bob is maudlin drunk. He is crying and reliving his whole life at this point. Stop blubbering and sober up, Doug commands him. But Doug doesn't feel any too well either and he decides that they better get out of the restaurant before Bob makes a bigger fool of himself and start for home. So off they go on foot down the newly opened Riverland Drive. They get down about a block when Warren notices his mom is coming down Riverland from Van Dyke. Let's get a ride home, he says, we're so drunk our legs will never get us there! Now, lets use our heads, Doug tells the guys. Think about it. Our reflexes are greatly slowed down due to the liquor, so let's speed up when we get in the car and they'll never notice the difference! So they practically rip the car doors right off their hinges and jump in like the devil was after them. "YOU'RE DRUNK! ! ! ! " I roared! How did you know, Doug replied? We were so cool about it.



**Bob Mac Donald**

When the supply of liquor at my house dried up, Bob started dipping into his father's generous supply to keep the boys' whistles wet. I soon found out that they were merrily mellow in Doug's room after Bob got there with a little bundle hidden under his coat. They would partake of Bob's supply and then sit there and listen to the latest garbage music (Cacophony is the better term). Savage used to sit there with them with the black leather lid on his head as he was encircled in a smoky haze. I swear that that dog seemed to fit in with that crowd!

When I would open the door to Doug's bedroom, all the smoke would come billowing out. I used to call his room "Otto's Smoke Shop".

I finally got wise one day that Bob was the supplier. So when he came in, he was the usual happy, outgoing, big smile on his face Bob. Hello, Mrs. Bender, how are you! He'd say most effusively. Hello, my foot, what are you up to now, was my mental reply. What I said aloud was hello, Bob, how about taking

your jacket off down here first? Stunned silence. How do you fold up that bottle into the jacket so Mrs. Bender doesn't see it and what do you say to the guys who are waiting for a little liquid repast? What a revolting development!

The next time Bob came in, "Hello Mrs. Bender, how are you?" he'd say in his friendliest "Eddy from Leave it to Beaver" voice. See, I'm taking my jacket off right here, and see, nothing in my pockets! See ya later, as he climbed the stairs to Doug's room. Three minutes later I get a telephone call. It is the Claytons across the street. I just thought I should tell you, Mrs. Bender, that Bob McDonald had tied a bottle of whiskey to a rope that Doug had just lowered and they are in the process of hauling that whiskey bottle up on the rope. Thank you so much for letting me know, I said then hung up the telephone and ran up and burst the door open and caught them red handed with their little bottle of cheer.

Doug's friends always tried to act real cool and they were embarrassed to tears by one of Bob's antics. For awhile there he would take to bringing his baby pictures over to our house to show to me. I thought he was the cutest, most adorable baby and I effusively told him so. The more I praised up his baby pictures, the more he brought over. The guys were just dying of embarrassment, but Bob was basking in the glory of his better days!

One funny story about Bob and his baby days. When the two boys painted the town red, Mr. MacDonald and Sandy went over to Mr. Beck's house at the corner of Sterritt and Hall Rd (it has since been torn down) in order to apologize and to offer to set the damage to rights. Mr. Beck was a professional accountant who worked out of his own home and he was most gracious to Sandy and Mr. MacDonald. Sandy wanted to merely apologize, then offer to clean up the red paint off his mail box and garage door. But Mr. MacDonald, who fortified himself with his favorite hard stuff before setting out, became as maudlin as Bob when he sat there in Mr. Beck's study. Mr. Beck, who was very busy with little time to spare and Sandy both thoroughly enjoyed Mr. MacDonald's verbose meanderings. Mr. MacDonald took them right back in time to Bob's birth and they both learned that Bob was premature and underweight. They also learned that no matter what Mrs. MacDonald fed him, he couldn't tolerate it and got smaller and smaller. Sandy and Mr. Beck had mental pictures of Bob being about ready to depart from this world, when suddenly Mrs. MacDonald found the right pediatrician who prescribed goat's milk, and from then on Bob began to thrive, put on weight and his young life was saved. Somehow when Mr. MacDonald got through with this story, one felt so grateful that Bob survived that you could no longer hold a little thing like painting the town red against poor little Bob.

Bob was an artist. He had real talent and could draw anything for you, but most especially cartoon figures. He drew his wonderful cartoons throughout my address book, and for years I would chuckle every time I came to one of

his cartoons. His cartoons were so well done, with such universal and sage humor, that I never got tired of looking at them. Mabutú was his favorite figure. He was a black jungle Negro with a big bone through his nose. Mabutú had a very wonderful, basic sort of humor. He used to run around in loin clothes with a spear in his hand and was basically a cannibal. Then there was the down and out poor white trash man with the fruit flies and other assorted bugs flying around his head as he collected the garbage. In my phone book it said next to the garbage man, "Don't be an ass, let Phineas clean the trash!" Phineas was the Barr boys' nickname for our Mike.

On another page Bob did a caricature of a mortician. The caption said, "you stab I em, we slab I em!" (This was done during the Detroit riots.) When Bob was around you couldn't help laughing, regardless of what else he might be up to behind your back! Bob had a real nice sister, Yvonne and nice parents. Bob's dad worked for the Big 3 and in his fifties developed health problems from the unhealthy work environment plus his drinking problem. He found out he had a tumor, and in a surprisingly short period of time, he was gone. It was quite a blow to the MacDonald family how fast that happened.

I remember when we really met the MacDonald's for the first time. Doug and Bob had snuck out in the middle of the night and had literally painted the town red. With a can of spray paint. They painted a racing stripe down the middle of a real old car. And on another jalopy they wrote "Sh#\$% Coupe Special". They painted up street signs and mail boxes. Then just when they were spray painting the judge's sign (Yup! THE JUDGE'S SIGN, the judge they were about to go before when they got caught, good old Judge Havey), a cop spotted them and hauled them in.

We got Doug out of hot water by getting medical treatment for him and Sandy volunteered to eradicate all the paint. She took the paint off the street signs and the mail boxes. The MacDonalds got the paint off the cars. One of the car owners, the one with the Sh#\$% Coupe Special written on it, was hopping mad and was crying out for vengeance. But when we found out the guy was a good Catholic, we had the parish priest talk to him and he cooled right down and developed a charitable attitude toward the boys. We had to pay for one street sign at Sterritt and Deno that was ready for the dump, but they decided to stick us with the cost of a new one so we wouldn't be off the hook that easy, and the MacDonalds and Ed and I had to pay for the judge's sign to be specially chemically treated to remove those lovely red stripes. We weren't about to aggravate the judge at all at this point as the previous January our older son Bill was having target practice down by the judge's back yard on the Clinton River off Clinton River Rd near Suncrest and ended up shooting the judge's son with his bee bee gun! Oh, no, we were not about to aggravate that judge one little bit!



**Mike**

About that time our eldest son Mike bought that motorcycle. As we were mentioning before, and one day he decides to ride to Mt. Clemens and back. On the way back he ended up in the bushes of a home near what is now the Resurrection Cemetery at Clinton River Rd and Romeo Plank. He hit the bushes real hard, but it was lucky that it was bushes he hit first as they probably greatly cushioned his fall. He was suffering from shock after falling off the cycle and the lady who owned the house was so concerned about his well being. He wanted to get up and get back on the cycle again, but she was horrified at the idea as she knew he was hurt and was in shock. She told him she wanted to call his family, and Mike thought that was a good idea, but due to the shock couldn't remember our number. She finally found our number through the operator and Sandy answered the phone. She was down there in a flash and immediately knew that Mike needed medical treatment. He had a head injury and was bleeding from a cut near the eye. She had to drive his car there as she had no car at that time. She was not used to driving his stick shift green full sized Plymouth; he was in pain and told her to take it easy and not jar him every time she jack rabbit the car with its sticky clutch. But they got there to St. Joseph's real quick and in no time he was all patched up and back home again.



**Mike Bender**

The woman whose property it was, was a real nice person. She put Mike's motorcycle away safe and sound in her garage and made Sandy and Doug show identification before she'd let them take the motorcycle. "I promised that fine young man I'd take good care of his motorcycle for him!" She replied. And she took her promise very seriously, indeed.

Bob Mac Donald got into another bad scrape at 19 Mile and Schoenherr during one of his drinking bouts. He had all the guys in the car with him and was driving at break neck speed down a very bump by road and suddenly decided to pass up the car ahead of him, which he did by stomping the gas pedal to the floor. The car roared forward, danced wildly on that broken pavement, making all the kids in the car scream at Bob to slow down, that he was going to kill them all! And yup, sure to prediction, Bob completely lost control of his car, was totally air bound, and then came down right on top of a bunch of culvert pipes laying there for road repairs. And Bob tore up a bunch of newly laid sod on the minister's property. Bob jumped out of his car, saw that he had torn it up, threw himself on the ground, pounding it with his fists, screaming that he was going to kill himself! The minister actually felt sorry for Bob and tried to console him! The kids in the car weren't sure whether they dared to move their limbs or not, scared something might be broken. You okay, Doug asked his friend? I think so, the friend replied. You okay, the friend asked back? I think so, he replied. Hey, Dave (Kyle), you okay? They asked. No answer. DAVE, You OKAY!! They asked. No answer! They turned on the interior lights and asked him again, you okay? There was Dave staring straight ahead in sheer terror. Hic! Was his only reply. Hey Dave, speak to me! Hic! he responded. Oh, God, the boys said, Bob is creating such a loveable circus, that he's going to get out of this one okay too. The cops love him, the minister loves him, he's got it made.



**Bill**

Bill got real drunk only once, but believe me, he did a bang up job of it! Ed and I were terrified that Bill was not going to survive the night! Sandy and Doug were terrified of Bill, they went downstairs in the living room when they saw the condition Bill was in and wouldn't go near Bill for all the tea in china. Doug laid on the living room couch, Sandy on the family room couch. But no one slept that night but Bill. Bill went to Hurley's house on New Year's Eve while Ed and I were out with Nancy and Don and he and Kyle got Bill rip roaring, life threatening drunk. Bill looked like Ghingis Khan. The other kids had visions of being murdered in their beds by him and couldn't stay upstairs. Bill made horrible animal sounds all night long and gave all of us the shivers. Bill's head slipped over the end of the bed and Ed and I thought he was strangling. We got his head back on the bed. And Ed and I took turns

cleaning up Bill and the bed all night long. Bill slept a very deep sleep and didn't wake up till 10 am the next morning. That's when the other kids were able to slip off to sleep, knowing I was up and the crisis was over. Poor Ed had to go to work on no sleep. I gave Bill a glass of water to wet his furry tongue. That was a mistake. When he drank the water, it made him drunk all over again. I wanted to kill little Lord Fauntleroy at that point. I didn't even feel charitable towards his mother at that point. Bill never did that again.

Another night Sandy got a call from the Shelby police, that they had Doug in the police station and could she come and get him. What's the charges against him, Sandy gingerly asked? Nothing, the nice policeman answered. Doug was a passenger in a car being driven by a bunch of drunken teenagers. He got sick from too much booze, so the guys stopped their car right in the traffic lane on Van Dyke, pulled Doug out of the car, and he promptly passed out on the hood of the car. The police were near by and promptly intervened as they were afraid that the driver was going to pull away with Doug still on the hood! Sandy went to the station, picked up Doug, and thanked the kind policeman for his assistance.

Another time Bill was just over 21 and Doug and his friends still underage teenagers, so they suckered Bill into buying booze for them and driving them around in his car to find a good drinking spot. Bill bought the booze and drove to, I know you won't believe this, Judge Havey's house and parked at the end of that dead end road, popped the caps and were enjoying a quiet repast when suddenly Bill saw Christmas lights in back of his car, nice flashing red and blue ones. Oh sh#\$%, the boys said as they turned around, the cops found us! And found them they did, a car full of minors with Bill at the wheel. Bill got hauled in for contributing to the delinquency of minors and spent the night in the jug. The next day he was taken before Judge Havey who was getting sick of hearing the name Bender. He sent Bill to the Mt. Clemens slammer for 5 days to cool his heels for serving bubbly repast to his kid brother and his friends. Five days later Bill was sprung with the warning that he was to stay away from Doug for 6 months. I laughed when I heard this. They slept in the same bedroom.



**Bill & Marie Bender**



**Douglas Bender Sr**

One other excitement in those days. Sandy was riding around on her 3 speed racer that Ed and I had bought for her for Christmas the year she lost her kidney, waiting for Ed to come home. Suddenly a car full of teenage boys



came around the curve and seeing Sandy, slowed down and tried to pull her into their car. Just then Ed's car came around the corner and they split. Sandy did not tell Ed what had just happened as Ed would have chased them, sure as the devil. He had a temper when his family was threatened!

One last cute story. Bob MacDonald had about \$200 saved up in the bank from his paper route. One day he got mad at his dad, his mom and the whole world and up and ran away. He took his money out of the bank, took a bus to downtown Detroit, went to a hotel there, checked in and promptly ordered room service. He did this for several days, eating lush meals in his room. He then got lonely, took a cab back to Utica, visited with Doug and all his friends, took a cab back to the hotel room, had another day of room service, got lonely and remorseful, and, you won't believe this one, he went to the police station in downtown Detroit, got histrionic, telling them he wanted to surrender himself! The cops shook their head at this fruitcake, took the information, and gave him a free ride home.

## 1968

One day Ed and I discussed the merits of paying off the mortgage on the house on Diamond, versus leaving the money in the bank and continuing to make the payments. Ed decided he wanted to pay the house off and have the comfort of knowing the house was free and clear. So on his day off he went to the Bank of the Commonwealth at 19 Mile and Schoenherr with our savings account book in his hand and told the manager he would like to know the payoff amount on his house mortgage.



**Edward & Marie**

The bank manager called the mortgage department in downtown Detroit and got a payoff balance, about \$1600. Ed then made out a withdrawal slip for that amount and the manager closed out the house mortgage, gave Ed his receipt, and then shook Ed's hand, saying that it is seldom that he has the pleasure of serving a customer who is paying off the house mortgage, that that is indeed a rare occurrence. Sandy had gone along with that day as she knew it was a very important event in Ed's life and she wanted to be there to witness the transaction.

Ed and I had our names on two house mortgages; Alter Road and Diamond, and Ed had managed to pay both of them off before the term of the mortgage was complete. Ed paid off Alter Road in 4 years, Diamond took a little longer, it was about 7 years before he made his final payment. The Alter Road home cost \$4800, the Diamond home was \$16,990. My name on the Alter Road mortgage was Marie Anna Bender, then later on the Diamond mortgage it was Marie Henrietta Bender. The reason for the change is that I needed my birth certificate to get a social security card in the 1960s. I did not need a social security card when I worked before my marriage as social security did not come into being until 1935, one year after I married Ed. IRS later wanted a social security number on everyone who filed and to get a social security card you need a birth certificate, so when I got my birth certificate I found out to my surprise I was listed as Marie Henrietta, not Marie Anna. That must have been Grandma Henkel's doing as my mom said I was Marie Anna after my godmother, but evidently Grandma Henkel was present when I was born and told the doctor Marie Henrietta as Henrietta is Minna's middle name. (Elenore got the same shock when she got her birth certificate as she was listed as Wilhelmina (Grandma Henkel's full first name)).



**Mildred Neff & Michelle Bender**

Ed's sister had to go into Mt. Clemens General Hospital for a bladder suspension as she was not able to leave the house as her bladder leaked. So she entered the hospital under her doctor, Dr. Doerring, and had the operation, which was very successful. So we decided to visit her several days after her surgery. Ed, Sandy and I got out of our car in the hospital parking lot and started the long trek to the entrance of the hospital. Sandy suddenly had a real funny mirthful sound to her voice, and said to Ed and I, "Oh, mom, dad, look! And she pointed to a man walking ahead of us. It was none other than our brother in law, Harold Neff, carrying a pot with 2 hydrangeas in it. It was hilarious watching 4' 11"! Harold carrying that pot as the hydrangeas were taller than he was, and they were swaying back and forth in a most comical manner above his head! Ed smiled a most wide smile. I am sure Ed was thinking back to the time when he and Harold worked together at Great Lakes Steel factory and Harold Neff came along the length of the factory dragging a chain over his shoulder. Ed and the other guys were laughing hard to themselves as the chain was bigger and heavier than Harold and it was such a comical sight seeing that undersized half-pint dragging that oversize

chain. He presented the same sort of picture now with those oversized hydrangeas.

We caught up with him and walked in together. Mildred had an odd room, up until recently it had been the new born nursery. Mildred was in good spirits, she loved her hydrangeas, healed well and quickly and was soon back home and as good as new.



**Sandy & her car**

Sandy was going to school and working and had a lot of bills to pay, with tuition and books and all, so she hadn't been golfing at all yet that summer and it was now the end of July. When Sandy got her paycheck from the bank she decided she could afford to treat herself to a game of golf. She couldn't make up her mind whether to play the front 9 Rammler or the shoot 18 on Metropolitan Beach's course. As she was driving past Rammler a little voice in the back of her head kept telling her to stop there, but when she thought it over, she decided that Metropolitan Beach was more fun, so she drove on. When she got to 16 Mile and Groesbeck the light was green and had been so for a short time. She drove out into the Groesbeck intersection with the green light in her favor. She could not see out onto Groesbeck as there was a huge mound of construction dirt over 7 feet tall obstructing the view. As she entered Groesbeck, there suddenly coming head on right at her was an old station wagon. It happened so fast that she never even knew she put on her brakes or that she had been hit. The old station wagon totaled the left front of her car and sent her car wildly spinning across Groesbeck and into the path of the car to the right of her as well. A fireman was sitting at the intersection and witnessed the entire accident. He stayed with Sandy and observed her vital signs until an ambulance came. Sandy and an 89 year old lady in the next car were the first to be put in the ambulance as they were the most badly injured. They were rushed to Mt. Clemen's General Hospital for treatment.

Sandy suffered amnesia for about 1/2 hour then began to remember things again. She remembered our name and phone number. The hospital called us but we were not at home. She then had the hospital call Nancy on Saar. Nancy, not realizing how bad Sandy had been hit, casually said she'd be over after she got done feeding her kids and cleaning up. Sandy was half hysterical with fear as she had suffered a bad head injury and had in fact put her head

partially through the windshield due to the impact. Before Nancy left her home she found us at home and told us to go pick up Sandy at Mt. Clemens General hospital, that she'd had an accident. We didn't think too much of it as we left for the hospital as Nancy was so matter of fact. When we got to the emergency room of the hospital we walked the corridors looking for our daughter. We couldn't find her. We walked back and forth several times, looking at the people on the stretchers, but no sign of Sandy. Suddenly I recognized the clothes tucked under the one gurney as being Sandy's. I looked long at the girl on the gurney before I realized it was my own kid! Her face was so blue and swollen up Ed and I didn't even recognize her! They bandaged her head all up and told us to take her home and watch her closely and bring her back if her pupils became unequal or if we couldn't wake her up! Ed and I took her home, and as we looked at her head injury, we got more and more scared! What did unequal pupils mean? We weren't doctors! How bad was this ugly looking head injury? We got her home and put her to bed. By now we were shaking with fear. She was in so much pain she couldn't sleep. Then after a few hours she couldn't move her limbs too well due to the extreme pain and we all wondered if she had any broken bones. After a night of this, Ed and I couldn't take anymore of this uncertainty so we called Dr. Hiller, who had recently treated Sandy for hypothyroidism, and he told us to admit her to St. Joseph's Hospital, the hospital of our choice. We were so relieved. Let the doctors and nurses guess what unequal pupils are and whether anything was broken. Sandy was in the hospital for 5 days and was sent home after her head injury improved. The police came around and filled out a new report as they had to do when an accident victim is admitted to the hospital. The lady's insurance company did not want to pay for Sandy's car, so she was forced to sue them.



**Bob Barr**

Sandy got a lawyer through friend's of Mike's, the Barr boys who needed a lawyer to get them out a few minor scrapes. She engaged the services of the law firm of Williams, Rains and Williams, and after a 1 1/2 year delay, a \$1,800.00 settlement was paid out of court. Sandy had to make car payments on the smashed car as well as the replacement. The smashed car was a 1 year old car from a rental agency that operated out of Detroit City Airport. It had a dent on the right front fender and supposedly had 11,000 miles on it. She got it for \$1,100 with a limited warranty still intact. The ball bearings in

the rear went bad shortly afterwards and the dealership said that the car had 38,000 miles on it, not 11,000. But it was a good running car and would have had many more years of service. The replacement car was a 1965 fire engine red Mustang with 3 speed on the floor. It was one of Sandy's favorite cars, although mechanically it was not nearly as sound as the last car and the mileage had also been turned back by the previous owner, Sanderson, a fellow who had just earned his doctor of medicine degree.



**Mike Bender**

We had big excitements in the summer of 1968. Someone excited the Negroes to riot, and riot they did, in a big way. It was not limited to Detroit either, although that the biggest source of civil unrest. There were also riots in Mt. Clemens and Pontiac, as well as in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles. Both my son Michael and my daughter Sandy worked in areas affected by the riot. Michael was in the greatest danger. He worked at Highland Park Chrysler Plant in Hamtramck on the midnight shift, and he had to go into Detroit to start work at 11 pm. The border between Detroit and the suburbs was effectively shut off by the suburban police at all major intersections. Mike traveled down Van Dyke to get to Davison and McNichols to his plant. He was stopped at 8 Mile Rd by armed police. He stopped at the crossing point and told them he was on his way to work at Highland Park Chrysler Plant. They told him if he was crazy enough to betake his lily white skinned body into the heart of the riot, to be their guest. Mike was unafraid and he was able to travel back and forth in relative safety for the next 3 weeks. Mike used to pack a lunch to take to work and at about 3 in the morning he would pick up his lunch and walk up on top of the roof of Highland Park Chrysler Plant and eat in peace. During the heart of the riot, Mike had a ring side seat to all the shenanigans going on in Detroit. He would sit up there and see half of the city being burned down. There were fires everywhere and when the fire department would respond to a fire, the fine upstanding citizens of Detroit would take pot shots at the firemen. The firemen would either get burned from the front or shot from the back. One day Mike was sitting up there as usual and there just a half a block away he saw a truck pull up, several black guys hop out, kick a store open, and then run in and start loading their truck full. All the while this was happening a policeman was standing on the corner watching. Just watching. He did nothing to stop them. He just stood and observed. Mike couldn't believe his eyes.





**Sandy & Marie**

Sandy was working for Manufacturer's National Bank as a utility teller, meaning you went where they told you, often to a different branch every day. When the riot broke out Sandy was working at 19 Mile and Van Dyke. The day after the start of the riot, the bank called and told her to go to the Woodward and Square Lake branch. Sandy thought about it for a moment, then told them that she had seen on the television the rioting going on in Pontiac and that she did not want to go to that branch as she would have to drive through Pontiac. The manager mumbled that that's what all the tellers were saying and they couldn't find anyone to staff this branch. Sandy told them she would go in a few days if there were no more murders in Pontiac.

Meanwhile in Detroit conditions were unbelievable. The Negroes were running wild in the city, murdering, burning and looting. They were burning down all of their own homes and most of the victims were fellow Negroes. Finally the government had enough of the lawless behavior and as a sudden, huge tanks started rolling down the streets of Detroit. It seemed so odd to see tanks rolling down Kercheval, Charlevoix, etc., the places where Ed and I used to live. Those were such quiet, peaceful neighborhoods at one time. Once the tanks and the National Guard moved in the riots were soon over and everybody went back to sleep again. Sandy found out why everyone went back to sleep when she talked to a social worker who worked in the effected areas before, during and after the riot. Once the National Guard moved in, the government started putting floods of pure heroin on every street corner and selling it dirt cheap. One side effect of the government using pure, uncut heroin. Hundreds of dope addicts dropped over dead as they shot up huge amounts believing it was their usual weak supply. Once the cheap "nickel bags" reached the streets in unprecedented quantities, all the violent Negroes went peacefully back to sleep once more.

Ed, Sandy and I took a ride down Kercheval and Charlevoix streets a week or two after the riot. We were shocked at what we saw. Over half of Charlevoix and Kercheval buildings were burned right to the ground, including Ed's old stores at 9110 and 9100 Mack Ave. It was so sad to see so many old landmarks burned to the ground. It was unbelievable that that much destruction could be wrought on a city in the space of a few short weeks!





**Linda, Doug & Warren**



**Craig & Edward**



**Bill**



**Sandy, Michael & Marie**

Ed played baseball every Sunday with Sandy, Bill, Doug and now his grandchildren were joining in too. Ed and my kids would go out to Dresden school playground to the backstop right by Nancy's backyard and before long out would come Warren, Linda and Donna, all jumping over the 6 foot high school fence to join Grandpa. They would all take a turn at batting and fielding, with Ed doing the lion's share of the batting, his favorite part of the game. Pretty soon Craig would come out to the back fence and ask someone to hoist him over so he could play too. No dice, the kids would tell him, you're too little and you'll just get hurt. So all the while the older kids played, Craig would hang on the back fence and whine.



**Al (Elmer) Bender**

One day I got a call from Ed's brother Al. He was in the hospital. He was crossing Warren and Connor when a car came zipping around the corner, hit him and dragged him down the street some. Al suffered a broken shoulder. We never did find out who was the driver of the car. It was a hit and run who made a clean get-away.



**Marie babysitting**

I liked picking up pin money, or "mad money" as I called it that I could call my own and spend any way I chose without feeling guilty. One day Sandy came home from the bank and said that one of the tellers there needed a babysitter for a few hours after school and she lived only 1 mile away and would I be interested in sitting? I said yes to earn a few extra dollars. The father of that home was killed in a car accident on his way back from hunting. He had had too much to drink and had fallen asleep on the way home and had gone over an embankment, rolled the car over and had been crushed to death. The mother of the children, Diane Griffin, was very bitter that her husband's irresponsible actions caused her to lose her husband and be faced with raising these four young children all on her own. She was so depressed and angry that it really wasn't a healthy atmosphere for her children to grow up in. I tried to do everything I could for those children to give them a happy, normal environment, but the atmosphere in that home was so depressive that I was not entirely successful. The mother had had hysterical episodes in which she had repeatedly threatened to kill herself, which greatly depressed and frightened the children. I used to take little 3 year old Dean over to my house and read him fairy tales and play with him. I even gave him a birthday party over my house in which I invited his friend and the neighbor children. The money I earned at that job was not worth the trouble I went through caring for those children. But I did do a work of mercy for those kids for several years.

Jim Clark also asked me to baby-sit his children for a week while his wife went into the hospital to have a baby. I was very reluctant to baby-sit these kids as Kenny had a reputation that preceded him far and wide. Was that kid ever horrible! He was definitely a disturbed child and I had all I could do to keep him in line for that one week. He was impulsive, and uncontrollable when he got into one of his wild spells. He had a very short attention span and it didn't take much to aggravate that kid. And the other kids weren't too much better. My kids looked like angels next to these kids! By the end of the week Kenny got a few good spankings and a lot of discipline and I was exhausted! I was so glad when Jim's wife Fran came home and I could leave that house! Jim realized what a job I had had with those kids and he paid me very well for my services.

I went to the mall once with Mrs. Clark, and I saw why Kenny had such emotional problems. When he was absolutely horrid, she rewarded or ignored

his behavior. But when he was behaving himself she would suddenly reach over and crack him right in the face! I couldn't believe her behavior and was so glad to get back home again. Her driving was as erratic as her discipline. That was the last ride with her! Mike met Jim Clark at work and was friends with him for years. Mike bought a dirt bike at Jim's urging and went riding his bike on the sand hills of the then unfinished M-53 freeway. Jim had ridden for years and was therefore a much more practiced rider than Mike. Jim used to try to egg Mike on to try some daredevil stunts on the sand. Jim got away with them, Mike sometimes didn't. Mike used to dump the bike sometimes trying to keep up with Jim. Jim loved that bike and put it in the dining room of the house. I couldn't believe it when I went to baby-sit to find a motorcycle in the dining room! The kids used to crawl up on it and I was very nervous that it would fall over on them and crush them.



**Marie, Bill & Sandy**

Bill used to go to Mt. Clemens twice a month for counseling at the Child Guidance Center. I didn't drive in those days so in the beginning Ed would drive him there on his day off, Tuesday. But I felt sorry for Ed as he had only one day off, so I asked my neighbor Ann Healy if she would drive us if I would pay her for her trouble. Ann said she didn't want money but would be so grateful if I did her ironing for her in return as she had no time for it. Ann was going to college in those days to complete her requirements for her teaching certificate. So we agreed, she drove and I ironed for her. That worked out fine, until I learned to drive, then I took Bill on my own. Ann then paid me for doing the ironing as she hated that job and had no time or patience for it. When Ann drove Bill to Mt. Clemens I was so proud of him! He dressed well, and was very polite and courteous to Ann. He used to open the car door for her and never forgot to thank her for driving him. What a difference in his behavior and mannerisms before and after Vietnam!

Ann had perfect children. They were always well dressed, studious and never raised their voices. Their only fault was that the oldest Karen, was far too quiet and shy, quite immature for her age and preferred the company of horses over people. One day when she was 12 and my Doug developed a crush over her, Ann was upset as she said her daughter was a very young 12 years and couldn't handle a boyfriend. Doug soon felt that she was not appropriate for him and lost interest in her.

Sandy had spells of ESP and clairvoyance like Ed through the years, but the most spine chilling occurred in September, 1968. Ed and I were painting our bedroom and Sandy was just waking up in the morning, when suddenly she encountered the spirit of Ed's sister Bea, who said she was desperately looking for Ed as she was really shaken up and Ed had been her mainstay in earlier years. Sandy came into our bedroom, looked at Ed with a quizzical look on her face, and said to him, "Dad, I just saw your sister. She just died and she was trying to reach you." Ed and I told her that she was mistaken, that she must be thinking of my Aunt Clara Fredrick who had just died in May of 1968. Sandy said no, it was Ed's sister and she had just died and was looking for him. We didn't for a minute take any store by such an outrageous dream. Ed and Sandy had seen Bea about 4 weeks before and she had never looked better. She was dressed in a ski jacket and ski pants and had a modern, young appearance about her, considering she was 68 years old. However, within the hour the phone rang. It was Bea's son Dave. Bea had just died at the time that Sandy had seen her!

Bea lost her will to live when her eyesight went bad. She had had cataracts removed, but the operation was botched and she could only see shadows after that. Bea was very bitter as Ed didn't treat her very well when she was recovering from her surgery, which just added to her feelings of helplessness and depression.

Bea looked good until shortly before she died. Suddenly she aged right before her children's eyes and as a sudden the doctor warned them that she was fading fast and they should get to the hospital. Dave said he was the first to get there but she was already gone. Dave said that looking at his mother just dead was an experience that shook him up very badly and one he hopes never to have to live through again. The doctor told the family that Bea's internal organs were like those belonging to a person over 90 years old due to her diabetes.

Bea was laid out at the Weitenberner Funeral Home on Gratiot and her funeral mass was at the Grotto on Gratiot. Her entire extended family was there as she was the first to die. Uncle Art was in poor health and was shaken up by the funeral. He had a hard time walking down the isle of the church as he was unsteady on his feet as a result of a stroke he had suffered in 1951 while dancing in the Ball Room at Gratiot and Utica Road in Roseville. Uncle Art was miffed that day as the funeral parlor mistakenly put his sister Mildred and her family ahead of Art, and Art said to Agnes that he was older and he was therefore going first in line. Agnes grabbed him by the arm and said, oh no you don't you just stay right here with me and don't kick up a fuss! I was offended by the tone of the sermon given by the priest. Instead of dwelling on Bea's many virtues, the gist of his sermon was that Bea was facing the terrible last judgment and that soon we would all be facing the same judgment, so we'd better repent. We are basically a very good upstanding family and I felt that

that priest was coming out of left field with such remarks. As the funeral procession was going down Gratiot Avenue heading for Mt. Olivet cemetery, I suddenly saw the local show that Bea used to attend when her kids were young. I smiled and pointed out that show to Sandy and told her that Bea was in that show watching a movie one afternoon in 1935, when suddenly she had to get up and leave in the middle of the show as suddenly she was going into labor with Mary! Yes, indeed, there were a lot of memories in that old neighborhood around Goulburn.

We buried Bea in the new section of the cemetery right near the new chapel in the back of the cemetery. Ed has his plot right next to her, and two years later Ed and I purchased the grave right at her feet for Norman.



**Edward, Bill & Marie**

Bill had his share of troubles in high school. He attended Utica High at 21 Mile and Shelby Road. Like usual, he had his share of enemies and friends. He had a friend Frank and his brother Dan Alfter who belonged to the Civil Air Patrol, the same as Bill. They lived on Oleander Drive off Hall Rd. Ed used to drive him there and sometimes he'd take his bike or walk. They were very nice to Bill. He also was friends with Mike Hurley and Rick Kyle, although these guys sometimes played him for sucker. Bill also liked to pal around with Doug's friends, Bob MacDonald, Bob Frohriep, Dennis and Steve Trendal, Ford Meachem, etc.. Bill had some problems keeping up grade wise, but the school put him a lower level Math and English program and then he did quite well, getting mostly B's. He was much more content with this new program. The other kids Bill was friends with did average in school too, so there wasn't much hassle from them.

Bill got a job at Food Fair stocking shelves. He liked the job and used to go there after school. He worked there for 9 months, giving up the job only when he signed up for the Army.

One day Ed came to Food Fair at 10 pm to pick him up after work and what Ed saw made him extremely upset. One punk kid who worked with Bill was challenging Bill to a fight and was holding a tire iron in his hand threatening Bill with it. Ed jumped out of the car and calmly but authoritatively defused the situation.

Bill took more razzing than any of our other kids. We tried to protect him as best we could, but in the end each kid has to fight his own battles as his parents cannot follow him around all day. Bill had more battles to fight than the average kid. The bullies just seemed to like to pick on Bill. The problem started as early as kindergarten. When Bill went out on recess in kindergarten he used to hide in the bushes as a school bully used to look for him and punch him out. Bill was not strong enough to defend himself against this guy, so hiding out seemed the best solution to him. Throughout grade school he continued to be picked on, even in the Catholic School. In fact, he received his worst treatment at the hands of his 4th grade teacher, Mrs. O'Keefe. She went out of her way to pick on Bill. She had a favorite student, a boy about 2 years behind the rest of the class in his physical development, very tiny but of average intelligence. Mrs. O'Keefe got it into her head that our Bill was picking on this little kid, and she made life unbearable for poor Bill. Bill didn't even know what was supposedly going on at first, and when he figured out what she was talking about, he was baffled. Bill said he didn't even go near that kid, and didn't pay him any attention one way or another. Mrs. O'Keefe did severe psychological damage to Bill. He went into the 4th grade as a very happy, carefree boy and left that grade a sullen, morose child. Sandy saw how Mrs. O'Keefe was treating Bill and when she heard the accusations against Bill, she asked her homeroom teacher, a real fruitcake named Sister Mary Falconieri, for permission to go to Mrs. O'Keefe's room. Sr. Falconieri, who loved dissention and strife, saw a good fight brewing in this potential encounter and told Sandy she could go. Sandy went down the hall and asked Mrs. O'Keefe for an explanation of what the problem was that Bill was facing. Mrs. O'Keefe told Sandy in a very belligerent manner that Bill was picking on her pint sized pet. Sandy refuted this accusation, saying Bill never picked on any kid in his whole life. Mrs. O'Keefe became very belligerent and started poking Sandy in the chest with her finger as she hollered. Sandy lost her temper and when she spoke, she poked Mrs. O'Keefe right back! Sandy then saw Sr. Falconieri out of the corner of her eye, hiding around the corner, thoroughly enjoying the circus. Mrs. O'Keefe seemed to back off Bill a little after that, but she was never decent to Bill.



**Bill Bender**



Bill went to St. John Berchman's from the first to the 7th grade. Most of his teachers were decent to him, but all realized that Bill had some kind of a problem that we just couldn't put our finger on. Bill's second grade teacher used to keep him after school, work with him one on one, saw that he memorized his homework, then called on him the next day so he could be proud of what he had just learned the night before. On every occasion, his memory was a blank. He just never seemed to retain what he had just memorized. But Bill ended up with a good education in the end. He could read and write very well and spell exceptionally well for a boy. He also could do math without any real problems. But abstract reasoning ability just was not much there. But he did so very well on the other aspects of an IQ test that he came out with an IQ of 124, a remarkable feat considering how badly he failed in the spacial relationships and abstract reasoning sections.



**Bill Bender**

Bill graduated from Utica High School in June of 1966. He was very proud of his diploma. Sandy remembers driving him to Utica High to have his graduation picture taken. He was dressed so nicely that day, he was so proud of himself and just radiated with confidence and self-satisfaction, a rare occurrence for Bill. Sandy just knew that his picture would turn out well as he looked so good that day. And the picture really turned out even better than expected. Bill and our whole family was so pleased with how he looked. I have that picture of him sitting in my bedroom today. I feel so sad when I look at that picture wondering what might have been if Bill had not gone to Vietnam.

Bill tried to join the Army in 1967 but to our relief he was turned down. Ed and- I knew he just was not cut out to go to war and the Vietnam war was raging then. Bill then tried to join the Navy. They sent him for psychological testing as they thought he couldn't handle the stress of war. Bill was sent into a room full of psychologists and young boys being interviewed. Bill sat down at a desk and the doctor proceeded to interview Bill. He asked Bill why he wanted to join the service and Bill replied full of enthusiasm, that he wanted to shoot all those gooks dead, ACK, ACK, ACK! ! ! As soon as Bill said this, all the doctors and other boys stopped dead in their conversations and all stared at Bill. Bill got agitated and asked them why are you all staring at me!?!?

Needless to say, Bill was not taken into the Navy either. In the summer of 1968 Bill tried once again to join the Army and this time the war was going full gear and they hadn't met their quota of recruits this month and needed anything they could get. So Bill was unlucky enough to be this month's quota of cannon fodder. Ed was devastated when he heard Bill had joined up of his own free will as Bill had an automatic exemption. Ed begged Bill to reconsider, but Bill was adamant, he wanted to go to war and shoot at the "gooks". So in 1969, off he went. Ed and I hugged him extra hard as we both thought we would lose him for sure as he just wasn't well enough equipped to protect himself. We both stood there at the airport, with Sandy at our side, staring after him as he walked down the airport corridor until he disappeared from view. At times like this you are not comforted by the rest of your children, you can only focus and concentrate on the one who's in danger.

Bill went to boot camp in Alabama. Ed, Doug and I drove down there to visit Bill. Bill had very short hair, as all boot camp trainees have and he was considerably thinner. They had ran him into the ground and starved the extra weight off. They had started him on helicopter repair courses.



**Doug, Marie & Bill Bender**



Doug went with Ed and I on this trip. Ed and I were pleasantly surprised at how expertly Doug could read a map. He was able to effortlessly guide us all the way from Detroit to Alabama by studying the AAA maps. Doug was also

able to guide Ed through big towns, with all their confusing twists and turns as well. Doug's diet on that trip was a real gastric delight -- greasy hamburgers, french fries, chocolate milk and shakes. Ed and I ate a more sensible diet. Doug would go to the greasy spoon diner in town and Ed and I would pick out a decent family style restaurant. After we ate we would meet at the car and then travel on our way south. On our way down we stopped to view an underground cave. While we were in the cave they turned off all the lights and Ed who always had claustrophobia, had a full blown anxiety attack. He was on his way out before they even turned the lights back on. He had to get out as fast as his legs would carry him in order to curb the anxiety attack. I ran after Ed as fast as I could, but I could not catch up to him. Poor Doug was left behind and due to all the people in his way, he could not catch up to us. I felt so sorry for our young 12 year old son. That was a terrible thing to do to him.



# United States Army Aviation School

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PVT WILLIAM H. BENDER

OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE PRESCRIBED COURSE OF INSTRUCTION FOR

AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE (ENTRY) COURSE (67A10), CLASS 67-236

ON 25 JULY 1967 AND IS AWARDED THIS



## Diploma

GIVEN AT FORT RUCKER, ALABAMA

\_\_\_\_\_  
LUCIEN C. BENTON  
Lieutenant Colonel, Armor  
SECRETARY

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DELK M. ODEN  
Major General, USA  
COMMANDANT

USAAVNC (Reg) Form 93, 16 Apr 65



# United States Army Aviation School

PUT WILLIAM H. BENDER

OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE PRESCRIBED COURSE OF INSTRUCTION FOR

SINGLE ROTOR TURBINE UTILITY HELICOPTER REPAIR COURSE (67N20), CLASS 68-17

ON 8 SEPTEMBER 1967 AND IS AWARDED THIS

## Diploma

GIVEN AT FORT RUCKER, ALABAMA



*Lucien C. Benton*

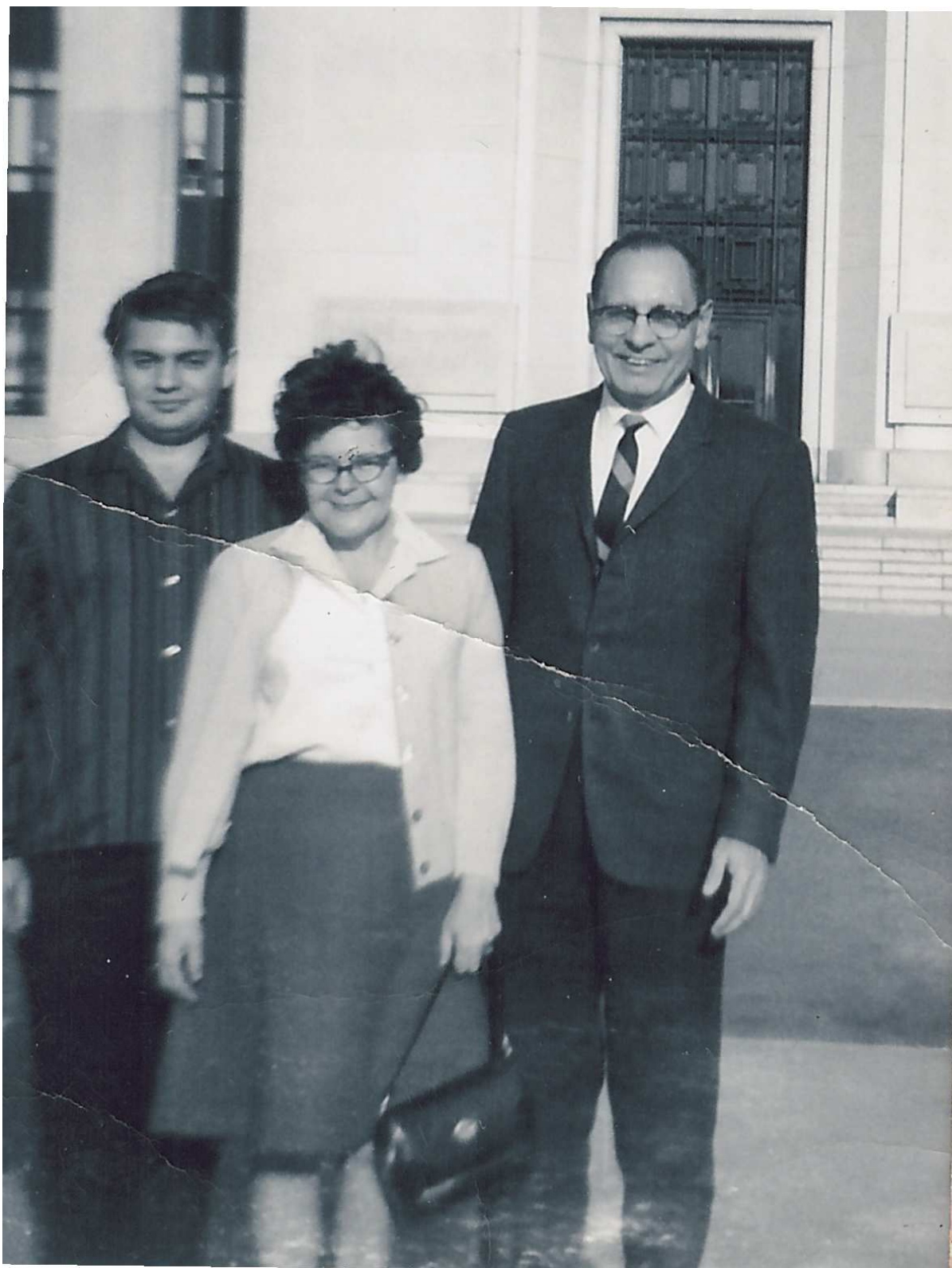
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**Bill, Marie & Edward at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland**



# 1969

We finally got to Bill's boot camp and had a nice visit with him before turning around and going back home. Bill used to proudly show us how he spit shined his army issue shoes. Bill was proud of his shine, but he soon found out that his fellow recruits didn't see it that way as Bill kept them up at night endlessly polishing and repolishing his shoes. He turned off the lights when they started threatening him with violence if he didn't hop into the sack and turn out the light. Both Ed and I commented on the beautiful blue eyed, blonde Alabama girls we would see! They certainly had a peaches and cream complexion.

After boot camp, they sent him to Alabama, repairing helicopters. After a 6 month course in helicopter repair, the army sent him to Vietnam.



**Edward & Bill Bender - 1967**

Oh, how our heart broke as Ed and I put Bill on the plane for Vietnam after his last furlough home! We felt like we'd never see our boy alive again, that we were losing him forever. And in a way we did lose our boy forever, for the conditions in Vietnam were unspeakably horrible for him, he was not able to bear what he was forced to live through, and he broke under the strain. We were never told that Bill was sick or in the hospital for over 7 weeks after he was there. Bill had to endure rats the size of big cats eating his c-rations, the gooks shooting at him as he was sitting on the wall on all night guard duty, and finally the death of many of his friends when the Vietnamese snuck into his camp in the middle of the night and blew up his buddies' bunker. In Vietnam, the men would dig a long trench about 3 feet deep, and then put a long canvas top over the trench. They would then put sleeping bunks inside and use this as a barracks. Bill didn't like the guys he was with and repeatedly asked for and finally got permission to move into the bunker with his friends. But as usual, there was paperwork to go through channels first. As the paperwork was working its way through, Bill's friends were blown to smithereens. And Bill and his bunk mates suffered shell shock as their bunker was close by the blown up one. And they told Bill and the other boys to shovel out the dead bodies from the other bunker in the middle of the night right after it happened. Bill saw all those arms, legs and pieces of torso and went off the deep end. He was taken to the

Saigon hospital after he really lost his cool and tore into his fellow men, supposedly even shooting into the camp as well. Bill said as he was being taken to the hospital, his commanding officer told him, "Bender, you're either going to get the biggest court martial or the biggest pension in history!" Bill got the biggest pension. Bill was glad of one thing, that the prophesy of his boot camp commander didn't come true. As Bill was leaving boot camp, his commander said, Bender, you'll never make it back from Vietnam.

Bill was in the hospital in Saigon for 6 weeks before we were informed. I used to get letters from Bill very regularly, then when they suddenly stopped coming, I was very nervous and upset as I was afraid he had been killed!

From Saigon hospital Bill was transferred to a hospital in Japan, where he also remained for about 6 weeks more. After he was in the Japanese hospital for a few weeks I suddenly got a call on Diamond in the early evening that I couldn't understand, but I figured it must have something to do with Bill as the operator sounded very Asiatic and I couldn't understand a word she said. I was so nervous and scared. I cried for Sandy to come and take the phone and see what the Asian woman was saying. It may be that I couldn't understand her out of sheer fear and shock, as I thought maybe she was going to give me real bad news about Bill. Sandy took the phone, understood the woman, and told me to take the receiver back as it was Bill, that the Red Cross was going to pay for him to speak to me for 3 minutes. Bill was very agitated and worked up and I didn't get a bit of information from him other than he was in a hospital in Japan. But the most important piece of information that I was so desperately longing to know was answered by that phone call our little "Big Bill" was still alive! Nothing much else mattered. But when I hung up I started worrying about him all over again. Why was he in the hospital. How was he getting along there? What had happened to him? What would now happen to him in the future? Was he coming home or back into combat? Ed and I were sick with worry. Of our 3 boys, Bill was the least equipped to handle being in a war.



**Doug, Edward & Bill Bender**

Some six or so weeks later we got a message that Bill was on his way to the Bethesda Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Maryland. Sandy said to Ed and I, let's pack a suitcase and get there right after Bill arrives. So that's what we all decided to do. In March of 1969, we all set off for our first trip to Washington, D.C. God favored us with unbelievably beautiful weather, 70 degrees the entire

trip and sunshine. Bill was thin, remote, and very antsy. He couldn't sit still. He had to stay at the hospital all day, but was allowed to go out with us after 3:30 pm. So every day we went and picked him up, took him to dinner and sightseeing and we even got to let him stay with us in the motel overnight several nights. After a week with Bill, we had to head back home as Ed had to get back to work.

How upset Bill was we didn't realize until he got to come home to us several months later. He was like a caged animal, very restless and always pacing back and forth. He couldn't sit still. His driving was very angry and erratic. He couldn't sleep day or night and was awake more than he was asleep. The VA gave Bill very powerful pills and told him how lucky he was because before they had these pills they had to wrap a shell shocked veteran in cold wet blankets to calm him down. I fervently wish they had wrapped my boy in those blankets and kept him off those horrible, dangerous pills. He had no need of any pills before the service and now they had him permanently dependent upon very dangerous major tranquillizers and whenever he had a problem from these pills they would give him more or double his dosage!



**Bill Bender**

We really didn't get our Billy back when we look back, what we got back was almost a stranger who made the next 13 years of our lives pure hell. How Bill suffered those 13 years! No one but he knows how bad he suffered! Bill was poisoned with Agent Orange while over there and soon developed the nervous problems and then a severe, juvenile type diabetes and had to be put on insulin. But that was not the problem. His destroyed nervous system was. Bill hurt so bad inside, so deep inside that none of us could ever reach in and help ease his pain and suffering. It was his own personal hell. Ed and I could only stand back and watch and try to help and cry a lot.



**(1) Craig, Sandy & Bill (2) Mikey, Sandy, Bill, Karen, Shelley, Edward**

Ed and my retirement was ruined because of what the government did to our son. We were forever trying to comfort him, do for him, take him places, but to no avail. The more we did for him, the greater his unmet needs. Bill could never marry because of his poor health. And he so wanted to marry and have a wife and children of his own. How Bill loved children! He would do so much for the children in our family and for the children of his friends. Life passed Bill by. He never got to do the things that other boys who did not go to Vietnam did. His life was one long series of frustration and pain.



**Don, Nancy, Warren, Donna & Linda Stephens**

Not too long after Bill got back from Vietnam we received another severe emotional blow - Nancy informed us that she and Don were permanently picking up and moving to California. How devastated we all were! We couldn't believe that we were about to lose half of our family. Going to California was as though they were leaving our planet! Ed, I and the kids knew that we would seldom see them after that as that was too great of a distance to be traveled in a reasonable length of time by car.



**Bill & Marie Bender**

Bill's driving became atrocious after he returned from Vietnam. He tore up every car he got his hands on. He gunned the engines, did wheelies and peeled tires. The transmissions hemorrhaged under his care. When he got his pension he bought a red Dodge Dart Swinger with a 340 engine sticking out of the hood of the car. He had the trunk lettered in Chinese. That car was a potential lethal weapon in Bill's hands. Bill loved to take that car out on the freeway to "see what it could do". And "do" it could, well over 100 miles per hour. And Bill tried to get the car to do just that, and in ten seconds flat. He would stop dead on the M-53 freeway with another hot rod next to him, shout "GO" and see who could shut who down. They would fishtail all over the highway trying to get traction in their bid to gain top speed immediately. Bill always had some buddies along for the ride and they would lose 10 years off their life from sheer fear. They would see the telephone poles coming straight at them and Bill would refuse to shut down. Bill would be all over the shoulders and the grassy medians, trying to bring his race car under control. You had to be suicidal to drive with Bill more than once. The local police all knew Bill and they loved ticketing him. One day the police pulled him over and Bill was crestfallen. Gee, Bill told the officer, this ticket will cause me to lose my license. The cop then replied that he would not give Bill a ticket now, then, as he wanted to save the last ticket for something really big. Then the cop asked Bill what the Chinese lettering on the back of the car meant. Bill laughed and told him it meant "kiss your posterior goodbye when you get in this car!"

One day when Sandy worked at Bank of the Commonwealth her car was disabled. So Ed drove her to work in the morning and we informed Bill that he could pick her up after work. Bill showed up after work fairly punctual and Sandy hopped in his car. She immediately requested that he drive easy as she was not impressed with speed. That was the wrong thing to say. Bill decided to show off. He screamed out of the bank's parking lot and started "power shifting" gears on Van Dyke. The transmission hemorrhaged under the strain and Bill was in all 3 lanes of the highway at the same time. Sandy was so angry and upset with Bill's crazy driving. This was the last time Sandy ever drove with Bill.

One day Bill had 2 guys in his car with him and he came roaring up in our driveway and screeched to a stop then ran into the house to get something while the 2 friends sat in the car waiting for him to return and take off. Doug had a temper tantrum over something inside the house and went bolting out of the house and into his car in the garage. Doug roared the engine to life, slammed the car into reverse gear, and stomped the gas pedal to the floor. Bill's two friends watched in widening horror as they saw Doug's car catapulting towards them at ever increasing speed. There was nothing they could do except open their eyes wide in horror and drop their jaws. CRASH!! !! OH #\$%-&\*!!!! Doug exclaimed. He was so angry that he never even looked in the rear view mirror before roaring out of the garage. That sure looked good on our records, one family member creaming another's car in our own driveway!

Sandy borrowed Bill's race car one day when she had to make home calls as her car was broken. Boy, was she ever embarrassed! As soon as you put the car in first gear it did 40 miles per hour and roared like a tiger no matter how gently you handled the car. The clients would look at her and say, "Pretty racy broad! "

In early 1969 we had a farewell dinner for Nancy and her family at the Chuckwagon in Dryden. Craig was 4 years old and real charmer. Our hearts were broken looking at him as we knew we were soon going to lose the sunshine of our lives. How we cherished those last few days with Nancy and her family! At the Chuckwagon Craig entertained us all by singing Jingle Bells then Hey, Jude. He was a very independent little guy. Sandy was sitting next to him at the table and she heard him mention something about going to the bathroom so she took him by the hand and started leading him away from the table. He asked where they were going as she said, to the bathroom, like you asked. Craig replied I just came back from there.



**Craig Stephens**

Craig, usually a poor eater, decided to have seconds that day so he took his plate and walked back to the glass case where they carved and served the meat. He didn't come even half way up to the glass. He held his plate up real high so they could see it. The carver saw him and asked him what he wanted and he told him so more sliced beef. The man was carving the meat for Craig when the boss came by and told the guy to get to work. The guy replied that he was working, he was carving meat for a customer. The manager thought the guy was back talking him. The carver saw the funny expression on the owner's face and said, I really do have a customer! There's this little shrimp down there who wants more beef! He then had to come around the counter to get Craig's plate as Craig was too little to hoist it up high enough.

Craig was a very poor eater. Nancy forever had to coax him to eat, and then he wouldn't eat much. Nancy complained to the pediatrician about Craig's appetite. The doctor told her she was making too much of it and was probably causing the problem by focusing too much attention on food. Leave him alone, the doctor said, he'll eat when he's hungry. So Nancy took his advise for one month, then brought Craig back to him as Craig was getting thin and sick from lack of food. The doctor took one look at that skinny runt and he knew his advise last month had been wrong. He took a blood test and found that the kid



was now anemic. Force him to eat, was the new verdict. We helped Nancy get him to eat. First he'd eat breakfast with Nancy and the kids, then he'd eat some more of whatever Don was eating. Then Nancy would bring him to my house and we'd talk him into eating whatever we were eating. Once I asked him why he wasn't eating his cookie. He told me in his very authoritative, irritated voice that "ya dink owange joos fiwst!"



**Sandy Bender, Nancy & Craig Stephens**

We loved to see Craig coming over. He was sunshine personified. Always happy, always upbeat. One day he came over for mother's day carrying my present himself. He came running in the back door announcing in a very happy voice, "You got company!", then proceeded to trip and land right on top of my present!



**Craig Stephens**

One day he was in my back yard, bent over, picking flowers for grandma. He had such an intense concentration, studying the aunts in the clover that Sandy ran in the house, got Ed's camera, called him at work, told him to look out the window and tell her what to set the camera at, then ran out focused and shot. It was such a beautiful picture, one that we treasure to this day.



**Craig Stephens**



**Marie Bender & Craig Stephens**

One day Craig was coming back from shopping and we bought him a little lunch pail. He got his finger stuck in the hinges so we put a band aid on the

sore finger. Sandy got a cute picture of him sitting on her red Ford Mustang with his finger bandaged and a frown on his face.

Sandy worked all day at Bank of the Commonwealth Monday through Saturday from 9 to 5 then went to Wayne State University full time evenings, from Monday through Thursday from 6 pm to 10 pm. Wayne State was shut down for over a week during the riots so she did not lose that semester, fortunately as she was going to college in the summer too.



**Sandy**



**Wayne State**



**Marie & Sandy**



**Edward & Sandy**



**Uncle Al Bender**

Just before Thanksgiving, 1969 Ed, Sandy and I went to visit Norman and Al in the Parkside projects where they lived together. We brought a turkey for them to fix for their thanksgiving, and Ed gave Al \$25 to buy groceries to go with it. Sandy and I went into their bedroom to hang up some clothes that Ed was giving to Al and we noticed how horrible the mattresses were that Al and Norman were sleeping on. Sandy and I talked Ed into buying a mattress for both of his brothers as a Christmas gift this year. Ed agreed, and several weeks later Sandy drove over to Kelly's and they put the mattresses on the top of her car and tied them down. Doug went with Sandy to help carry the mattresses in the house. When Norman and Al saw the new mattresses, they were thrilled to death Norman thanked Sandy and Doug at least 5 times and then thanked Ed and I another half dozen times for those mattresses! And then Doug and I carried out the old, broken down, beat up mattresses. As soon as we got them out of the door a young teenage Negro boy took one look at those mattresses, and you'd think they were brand new the way he asked us hopefully if he could have those old mattresses. As soon as we said yes, they were gone! He hoisted them up on his back and trotted off.

Norman also told Ed he couldn't see anymore when the sun was shining so he was forced to stay indoors most of the time as he was blinded on a sunny day.

Ed, I and Sandy had our own favorite eyeglass place, Admiral Optical Company at Griswold and State Sts across from the David Stott Bldg. They were on the 5th floor and charged only \$19.95 for frames and lenses. So on Ed's day off Sandy, Ed and I drove over to Al's and picked up Norman to take him downtown for eyeglasses. Norman was dressed up so well when we picked him up, in a suit and a topcoat. Right after we picked him up we stopped at the Top Hat hamburger stand at Warren and Conner. Norman pretended that he wasn't hungry as he had no money and he was ashamed to have Ed pay for him. But Sandy brought out a whole sack full of hamburgers, fries and coffee and told Norman that he was just going to have to help us eat all this food, which he eagerly did once it was in the car and being passed around.

Once we got downtown we could not park as far away as we usually did because Norman's legs were bad and he couldn't walk very far without getting pain in the calves from lack of circulation. So we parked close by and walked slowly. Ed took Norman first to the optometrist to get his eyes examined as we knew the prescription had to have changed as he couldn't see anything anymore. The optometrist gave us news which stunned us all. He said that Norman had very bad cataracts and there were no glasses available that would improve his eyesight. That he was legally blind for all intents and purposes unless he had cataract surgery. So we left that day with no new glasses for poor Norman. Ed and I used to give both Al and Norman money as they were both living off Al's old age pension. We would also bring over bags of groceries as we couldn't trust them to buy nourishing food so we brought staples with us. Al and Norman both knew how to cook and they did make use of all that we brought.

The apartment was fairly clean considering that it was inhabited by two old bachelors. There was only one thing that really turned Ed, Sandy and I right off the time we came over and found green grease in the frying pan! Boy, did I clean that pan out fast!

A cute story about Al. Ed and I and Sandy were taking him somewhere so we told him he had to take a bath and get dressed up. When we got there I ran warm bath water and told Al to take a bath and put on the new clothes I had brought for him. 15 minutes later Al steps out of the bathroom with his new clothes on. Hey, wait a minute, I said to myself, he couldn't possibly have bathed properly and changed clothes that fast! So I went into the bathroom and looked and sure enough, the bath water was crystal clean and the wash cloth high and dry, still neatly folded.



Ed, Sandy and I visited Ed's parents' graves in Mt. Olivet cemetery about this time and when we found the graves, Sandy was quite upset that they were unmarked. Ed and I agreed that she was right, that his parents deserved markers. So we shopped around and found the nicest markers in Mt. Clemens at Cass Ave and Groesbeck, across the street from the Clinton Grove cemetery. This was the same stone cutter that Sandy was to buy Ed's marker from in July, 1982.

## 1970



**Sandy Bender**

In June of 1970 our daughter Sandy graduated from Wayne State University with a Bachelor of Arts degree. Ed and I attended her commencement services in the evening in June, 1970.

Sandy paid for most of her tuition and books as she worked full time at Bank of the Commonwealth as a Head teller while attending Wayne State full time. Ed and I did help her out from time to time when expenses got away from her. Shortly after graduation, Sandy approached Bank of the Commonwealth about getting a position in either management or personnel. The Bank said they had nothing open at that time. Sandy went to the library and studied the Civil Service job opening announcements and found that there was a Social Worker opening and that the test would soon be given. She took the test, got a score of 94, was soon interviewed at Oakland County and then Macomb County. Sandy accepted the position in Macomb County and was hired by Doris Earl, a real soft hearted but slightly eccentric widow in her mid 60s. Sandy started out as ADC case and social worker on April 27, 1970 in the old Mt. Clemens office, in a 102 year old building that used to be the county poor house.

Ed and I were worried about her working with such low class people as we felt that it wasn't safe. Our fears could have been realized as a social worker who later worked the same area that Sandy had earlier was killed and buried by welfare recipients.

Sandy's first big excitement in that job came in September of 1970. The State gave all recipients a big raise in their check and all the social workers came in to work on Saturday to recalculate all the ADC budgets by hand and submit sheets for computer input into Lansing. Judy, a fellow worker, was on vacation that week and no one got a chance to update her client's budgets. Sandy went on home calls in the Village Road solid Negro project off 15 mile and Gratiot the day the updated checks had just been received. She made a 10 am house call to her client, Bessie Mae, who had 11 children at home and who had just consumed one fifth of whiskey that morning as she said it made the washing go easier. Sandy got all the necessary information, then left Bessie's house and started heading toward her car, but she didn't get far when she was suddenly completely surrounded by about 15 ADC mothers who seemed to have come from nowhere. They were all angrier than hornets, all demanding to know why their ADC checks weren't raised. Oh, no! Thought Sandy, half of Judy's caseload must live here! Sandy tried to remain calm, taking a piece of paper out of her briefcase, telling them if they would all tell her their names, she would go back to the office and change their budgets. This just made the crowd angrier, as they wanted that money today, not in two weeks. There was no way Sandy could get the money to them sooner, as it had to go through the state computer first and be paid out from Lansing. Suddenly Beulah Mae pulled out a knife and started waiving it around in the air in Sandy's direction, using it to punctuate her sentences. Sandy tried to back away but couldn't as she was totally surrounded by irate Negroes. So Sandy just kept talking slow and calm. Suddenly, Bessie Mae bursts out of her house with a shot gun cradled in her arm, saying, "Beulah Mae, now Beulah Mae, if yo touches that white girl, I'll blow yer haid off! II Beulah answered to Bessie, "Now Bessie, now Bessie Mae, tell me true, would yo blow my haid off?" Bessie replied, Ah sho would!" While they were bantering back and forth Bessie was waiving that shotgun all over the air, and her eyes were totally bloodshot from all that booze. Sandy thought, aw, sh#\$%!, she's going to shoot us all! But as they were talking and shouting back and forth the ring around Sandy loosened up and she started slowly backing up out of it. And she just kept walking slowly and steadily backwards, stealthily so that no one would notice. She finally got to the street and as she turned around and looked at her car, she could have died with anxiety; sitting on the hood of her car was four teenage Negro boys. She said in calmest voice, "Would you please get off my car? One by one, with a sly grin on their face, they slid off the car. When they were all off, which was only about 3 minutes, though to Sandy it was an eternity, she jumped in her car, daring not to look back at the warring ADC mothers. She then had to turn around in a narrow street full of parked cars on both sides. That was the last time she ever parked

her car facing inwards. From that day on she made sure her car was ready for a fast escape if needed. She then pulled out of Village Road and out into 15 Mile Rd. Once she got to 15 Mile Road and Gratiot, she suddenly starting shaking all over. She came back home to us on Diamond and laid down on our couch for several hours before making her next call, waiting for her limbs to stop shaking! If her bosses didn't like it, they could go straight to he#\$%!, thought Sandy.



**Sandy Bender**

One other scary incident happened several years later. Sandy was in an all Negro neighborhood off Ten Mile and Gratiot comforting a new widow, but getting very nervous as it was 5 o'clock in December and getting quite dark outside. Finally, she couldn't stand it any longer, and said goodbye and made for the door. It was now pitch black outside and the sidewalks were full of bumpy ice and she had parked around the corner and down the street. She was precariously balancing on the bumpy ice, paying strict attention to where she was going as it was too dark to see the ice real good. Suddenly she heard a disturbance on the sidewalk ahead of her and looked up and saw a pack of big, mean looking dogs, fighting each other tooth and nail, getting some real good chunks out of each other, heading right for her! And here she was on very slippery ice covered with melting water, trying to figure out real quick how to get out of their way without slipping, falling, and offering herself to them for dinner, sprawled out in front of them on the sidewalk. There seemed only one thing to do. She threw down her briefcase, grasped the fence next to her and quickly sprung over it, just before the dogs were upon her. As she was trying to catch her breath from the fright, she suddenly heard a chorus of deep laughing gravelly voices, looked up and to her horror, she had jumped into a back yard full of menacing, low class appearing young Negro men! She quickly grabbed the fence for dear life once again, sprung back over it and somehow got to her car without cracking her skull open on the ice!





**Marie & Taffy**



**Steve Trendal & Taffy**



**Taffy**

Bill was visiting his good friend, Steve Trendal on September 8, 1970. Bill called up Sandy from Steve's and I started hearing snatches of a conversation that I didn't like the sounds of. Is she cute? I heard. A cockapoo? How old is she? What does she look like? How big is she? How big is her mother? "No, no dog!" Was my answer to this conversation. But mom, Bill says she's so cute and he's in love with her!, Sandy said. Then I heard another burst of conversation, the gist of it was that this dog was really cute and cuddly and small. Both kids were worked up to a fever pitch and I soon found my resolve against another dog melting. Bring her home only if she's cute, I finally said, and remember, she's on probation for 6 weeks, and if she doesn't behave, out she goes! Sandy jumped right in Ed's car and off to Steve Trendal's she went. She had an address with her as she had never been there before. I could see how hopped up she was over this dog and I could hear how enthusiastic Bill was, so it was no use holding out too long. Those kids were hooked. Sandy said she pulled into Trendal's driveway about dusk and left her headlights on. Bill came out of the house and Sandy asked where the puppy was and Bill said, there, to your left in the fenced in kennel area. Sandy pulled her car around and shone her headlights on the kennel, then got out and searched for the puppy. She saw the mother and was a little disappointed as she was black and a little too big for a cockapoo. But where's the puppy? She asked again. There, behind the mother, Bill said. Sandy was a bit afraid of the mother as she looked a little militant. But she went over and looked behind the mother, and it was love at first sight! There behind Hope, the mother, stood a 8 lb curly haired white little ball of fur with Taffy colored ears. And she was so scared! She hid behind her mother for protection. I want her! Sandy said with utmost enthusiasm. So Steve went into the pen and fetched Taffy and handed her to Sandy. Sandy gently put baby Taffy in the car and drove her home. After about a mile Sandy was very worried as Taffy was upset and licking her lips. Sandy was sure that dog was going to barf! Just hang on a few miles more, Sandy gently said to the pup as she drove her carefully and gently home. An eternity later, Sandy pulled up in front of our home and she knew she just had to get that puppy onto land right away as that dog definitely had an upset stomach. Sandy oh, so gently picked her up and URP!, all over the front seat, piles of strong smelling horse meat! YECCH! The damage was done, so Sandy picked her up and brought her into the house. When she picked up Taffy, Taffy was

shivering from fear. She was like she had a motor going she shivered so bad. Sandy brought her into the living room, and Mike, who was watching T.V., opened his arms when he saw that fluffy white little bundle of nerves. Sandy passed Taffy into Mike's arms where she remained for over an hour until she calmed down. Mike completely encircled her little body in his arms and this had a calming effect on her. One look at that cute little fluffy face and body and I knew I was done for, that dog wasn't going anywhere.



**Marie & Taffy**



**Taffy & Doug**



**Doug, Marie & Taffy**

She was such a perfect, well behaved little thing. So cute and so vulnerable. She slept in Sandy's room nights, and whenever Taffy had an accident, which wasn't too often, Sandy and Doug would run and clean it up right away so I would think that the puppy was house broken. She was housebroken real quick though, in less than one week.

The next question was what to name the puppy. We gave Ed the honor of naming the dog and he chose the name "Taffy" for her . This is not the first time he chose the name Taffy. Ed and I used to call Sandy "Taffy-Amber" when she was a baby to highlight the color of her hair and her eyes. Ed now named the puppy Taffy as her ears were a Taffy color.



**Taffy**



**Taffy and her “Tiger mommy”**

When Sandy would leave home to go to work or college Taffy soon found herself a surrogate mommy to give her comfort in her lonely hours. Taffy soon took over one of Sandy’s stuffed animals – big orange and white Tiger. She chewed an eye off the Tiger and kind of sucked on it’s tail but otherwise she left it intact.

In a few months' time Taffy's puppy fur worked its way out and was replaced by an adult fur. We were disappointed to note that most of the Taffy color in her ears disappeared and in time they turned pure white like the rest of her body. That two toned face and dropping it. I wondered why she as a sudden started dropping it. In looking at her closer I found out the reason why. She had lost her baby eyeteeth! I found them in the carpet when I was vacuuming! She was loosing her teeth all over the house that month. When I'd vacuum, I'd hear TINK! and I'd know, there goes another one of Taffy's baby teeth!



**Craig & Taffy**



**Bill & Taffy**

Speaking of losing small objects in the carpet. ..One day I went over to Rose Lutfy's house for a few hours and when I got back home my diamond was missing out of my engagement ring! I called up Rose and told her but she couldn't find it anywhere. I always said after that that BoBo ate my diamond. That was the diamond that Ed gave me on our tenth wedding anniversary.



**Bill & Marie**

Bill was coming home from Canada with us when we stopped at the Southampton Hotel to eat lunch. We first suspected that Bill had diabetes that day as he ordered 6 large glasses of orange pop, and with each glass of pop, he just got thirstier and kept having to go back and forth to the restroom. He complained of having a stomach ache from all the fluid, but needed more. He also terribly itchy legs. We took him back to the VA and they diagnosed diabetes and put him in the VA hospital and started him on insulin. He was never very well controlled and was in and out of the VA hospital for his sugar or his nerves.

Sandy fought hard for Bill to get a decent VA pension. He was given 10% when he first came home, but Sandy said that was nothing considering his present state of health and what he'd been through. She kept filling out the appeal papers and urging Bill to keep getting on the bus to Chicago for reexamination. This persistence paid off, Bill eventually got 100% disability pension of \$1242 per month. Sandy later came home with more information, saying Bill had only 2 months to apply for a social security disability pension as he wouldn't have enough working credits to get one after age 25. So at her urging Bill kept going down to social security and appealing when he was first turned down. They finally capitulated and decided to give it to him, providing he could prove enough work quarters. Bill and that social security worker went all through the east area phone book looking up Bill's employers, as after the war he worked 3 weeks here, 2 weeks there, 5 days here, etc. His nerves were so bad he could never hold a job for long. But that counselor finally eked out enough work quarters for Bill and he got his social security of about \$243 per month. That took the pressure off Bill as he now had enough money to live comfortably on. But once he got his disability payments he was forbidden to do any gainful employment. That was a shame as I felt he would have been better off to have been allowed to drift from job to job than to sit home and watch TV all day and night.



**Bill, Marie & Edward**

Bill suffered terribly with his nerves for the rest of his short life. His was in and out of Battle Creek hospital and the Allen Park hospital. Ed and I and sometimes Sandy would visit him there, but what a trip that was, 3 hours each way! Such long driving was exhausting for Ed, who worked such long hours and was already dead tired without getting in a car and facing an ordeal when he got there, then driving all the way back.

We'd get so frustrated trying to find Bill on that large complex. We would call up ahead of time, tell Bill we were coming and the approximate time we'd be there and asked him to stay in his part of the complex at about that time so we could find him. But when we'd get there, every time, Bill was no where to be found. We would ask one of the other patients where Bill was and invariably they'd give us some very complicated directions to somewhere remote on the complex. We'd get a stunned look on our face, and most of the time the other patient would have pity on us and lead us to Bill. One time we were looking for Bill and were walking down a long corridor that lead to another building, when suddenly coming toward us was a very wild, angry looking tall skinny fellow waiving boards menacingly in the air, hollering angry obscenities while swinging the boards. Ed and I were really worried. There was no place to go to get away from him as we were in a long corridor with no room to duck into and he was coming straight at us! Ed and I pretended we were paying no attention to him, kept close to the wall with our eyes averted and kept on walking straight ahead, and thank the good Lord, he just walked on by us without striking or challenging us! That was a close call.

We had many bad experiences when going to the VA hospitals. They had many angry, sick patients, and not enough staff and many of the professional staff they did have were incompetent or on drugs themselves, especially their doctors. Bill was seen by a number of doctors whose eyes were glazed over by drugs, and whose clothes were coming apart and were held together by big safety pins that hung down with the torn lining. These doctors were totally apathetic, never listened to what the boys had to say and were only interested in writing a new prescription and getting them on their way. Bill learned it was useless to talk to them, that you'd get more response out of talking to a brick wall! One of the other fellows was very disturbed and became very angry when he wanted to talk out his anger and the stupefied doctor was in a world of his



own. The boy became so angry that he jumped over the doctor's desk, grabbed him by the tie and started punching him out. The doctor got a 4 week paid leave of absence out of this incident, but no one ever looked into his drug usage or lack of competence. Our boys gave their best in the defense of our country, but when they needed medical attention, they got 3rd rate treatment.



**Marie Bender & Taffy**

Ed and I finally demanded that they give Bill vouchers to see doctors in the vicinity as Ed was getting too old to drive that far on a regular basis and those VA doctors were so pathetically incompetent and uncaring. And we had enough of the strange characters that would hang out at the VA hospital. One time Ed and I had to stifle a grin as one guy came up to the desk to register, wearing women's white go go boots and a matching white purse. He wiggled his fanny so cute and had very limp wrists.

Bill was very disgusted by this guy and Ed and I just kept the grin off our face and kept our distance. Bill had a friend he met in basic training who lived in Youngstown, Ohio. Bill went by car to visit him when he was on leave and met his friend and his family. Bill got word a little while later that his friend was killed in a car crash while home on leave. His friend had the GI insurance so his very poor mother collected the \$10,000 insurance money.

Bill was automatically insured while he was in Vietnam, but dropped the insurance later. He said he didn't care to make someone rich at his own expense. Bill received a lump sum social security check of \$3,000. Bill didn't know this check came and he was so busy blowing his money right and left that it just made me sick to watch him blow this money too, so I put it in his bank account and he never knew he had the money. This money collected interest and 10 years later helped pay Bill's burial expenses.





**Norman John Bender**

One day we got a call from Al. It was the 9th of November, 1970, the 26th anniversary of Ed's dad's death. Henry Charles Bender had passed away in the Parkside Projects this date in 1944. Al said that Norman, aged 56, had suffered a stroke while trying to repair Al's television set in the living room of the apartment. We went to visit Norman. He was in good spirits and had not suffered too much paralysis. He stated to Ed and I and Sandy that he had a screw driver in his hand and was in the process of removing the back of the television set when all of a sudden the screw driver just started floating through the air all by itself! He was fascinated by this and just stood there watching the screw driver move. It then occurred to him that the screw driver was still in his hand and that his whole arm was also waving around in mid air and that he had no control over the arm, nor any feeling in it. He walked away from the television set and kept watching his arm. As he got close to the couch he said he suddenly felt a weakness in his leg as well and half stumbled and half fell onto the couch. He rested on the couch for awhile and discovered that the weakness, numbness and lack of feeling in his right extremities were increasing and he got scared and asked Al to call the city of Detroit ambulance service. An ambulance was called and Norman was transported to St. John Hospital on 7 Mile Road and Mack in Detroit.

Norman was in the hospital from November 9 to December 9, 1970. At first he was doing alright, but then they decided to put dye into his spine to study what if any damage was done to his brain by the stroke. That test was a fatal mistake. Right after the test was done Norman started becoming less lucid, suffered increasing debilitation and finally slipped into a coma around the 1st of December. Before Norman deteriorated, a priest slipped into his hospital room and asked him what religion he was and Norman answered Catholic, but admitted that he hadn't been to church for years and years. The priest spent lots of time with Norman, got him to go to confession in a way that was very comfortable and natural for Norman, gave him absolution for his sins and brought him holy communion. He also gave Norman the last sacrament, the anointing of the sick. Norman was really at peace after that. (It must have been due to Norm's mother's influence as she was a very religious woman all of her life and she loved Norman most dearly of all her children and always wanted things to turn out good for him.) Anyways, Norman really lucked out. He lived his life exactly the way he wanted to. He was irresponsible in regard to his duties to his wife and children, but almost all of Norman's sins were acts of omission rather than commission, as he seldom deliberately did something

wrong. And then in the end, his Lord God, full of love and compassion and forgiveness, just falls into his lap in the form of his representative on earth, the priest.



**Evelyn Reid Bender**

Evelyn was informed and she came often to the hospital, even though she was now married to her third husband, Toots Manzel. (Toots' father, Huntz Manzel was grandfather Henry Bender's boss on the sod farm). The sicker Norman got, the more frequently Evelyn came. At the end she stayed with him all day, every day. Norman looked horrid at the end. His eye sockets turned all black and his eyes sunk back into his head. The little bit he was conscious he didn't recognize anybody. But he sure did recognize Evelyn's voice. Sandy told Evelyn to talk softly to him of anything that happened a long time ago when they were both young as he would remember that. Norman was very restless at the end and he would thrash about in his bed and pick at his bed blankets. But when Evelyn would sit near him and talk to him about long ago and far away, then he would calm right down and be peaceful again. We bought pajamas for Norman for a Christmas present, but he never wore them. Norman hung on long enough to pass his 57th birthday, then quietly slipped away in his coma on the 9th of December, 1970.



**Marie, Art & Agnes Bender**

Norman's boys asked Aunt Agnes where to go for a funeral parlor and she recommended R.G., and G.R. Harris, right around the corner from their home, at Harper and Maryland. Ed and I and Sandy were upset when we heard that Norman's body was already there as that is about the highest price funeral home in the metropolitan area. We figured that Agnes picked that one as Uncle Art couldn't get around too well and they didn't like to drive at night, so they decided to pick the closest one. Ed, Sandy and I helped to boys to make the arrangements for the funeral. When Ed and I saw that Norman was not going

to live, we went to Mt. Olivet cemetery and bought the grave at Ed's sister Bea's feet so that Norman would be next to family. That grave cost \$150 at the time. We then gave the boys the deed to that grave so Norman could be buried there. They were grateful for our help. The boys picked out a nice gray metal casket and Norman had on a very nice suit. He looked very nice when he was laid out. He had lost a lot of weight in the past month and now looked a lot like his dad, Henry Bender.



**Harold & Mildred Bender Neff**

Aunt Mildred Neff kicked up a real fuss and was totally out of line in her behavior as she entered the funeral parlor for the first time that first day. Well, she blustered, I hope he doesn't have a cheap, cloth casket! What got into her, Richard asked Sandy. He was non-plussed at her behavior. They did nothing to deserve such treatment! But she was well satisfied with the casket, even though she hated to admit it and settled down quickly.

Richard Bender asked Sandy to stand next to him during the viewing hours and to whisper to him who the relatives were as they entered so he could give a greeting of recognition as they approached him. This worked out really well. Just as Sandy was about to whisper that the next guest was Francis Donald Bender, Art and Agnes' son, Richard stepped forward with his hand outstretched, and said to Skin in a very friendly manner, "I'd know that nose anywhere! Hi, Skin!" Skin was a little embarrassed, but friendly.



**Clyde Bender**



**Virginia, Richard, Gary & Delores Bender**

On the last night of the funeral around about nine o'clock Richard and Gary were talking to Sandy about how they both had to go to the banks in their small towns and each borrow \$750 to bury Norman. Then they were perturbed at Pinky, their little brother because he refused to contribute to the funeral and he insisted on being listed as Ronald Valcke (not Bender) in the death notices. Gary then drifted off and Sandy and Richard were alone together at the back of that big reception room. Richard then said to Sandy that he noticed as he greeted all of the relatives that he and Sandy and Bill were the only ones with

lighter hair in the family, and that he was the only one with curly hair and blue eyes and he found it odd that he was different from the rest. Oh, Lord, thought Sandy to herself, after you just borrowed \$750 to bury Norman, I'm not about to tell you the story about the blue eyed, blonde curly haired plumber that stuck around your house for weeks before you were born and then disappeared into thin air the moment Evelyn found out she was pregnant! Uh, uh! No way!

The day of the funeral was quite upsetting for both the Catholics and the Jehovah Witnesses as both religions clashed with one another. Norman had no interest in Jehovah Witness, but his son Richard and his family were very involved in this religion as it had stopped Richard from drinking and had turned his life around. So Richard wanted a Jehovah Witness burial and the rest of the Bender kids had no religion, but wanted Catholic as they knew their dad was Catholic as well as his whole family. So a heated compromise was made between the kids. A Jehovah Witness was to preach at the funeral parlor and a Catholic priest was to do the final commendation and farewell at the Catholic cemetery. Well the Jehovah Witness preacher knew he had a captive Catholic audience and he used this opportunity to shove the parts of the Jehovah witness religion that differed from the Catholic's beliefs right down the throats of the Catholics. He told them there was no life after death, that when you're dead, you're dead until the last day when the Jehovah God will raise us all back up from the dead. All those old, frail Catholics just did not need to hear that when you're dead you're dead. At this point in their lives they desperately needed some hope of the Resurrection and a survival of the personal soul. Then at the cemetery it was the turn of the Jehovah Witness members to get all aggravated over the ritual of the Catholic Church, which they had been taught to despise. However, in spite of it all, everybody emerged from the funeral friendly.

Afterwards we went to my house for a funeral luncheon which I had prepared. It was a fine luncheon and was a most congenial time. However the roads were covered in ice and snow and we were all sure we would slip into one of the big ditches on Clinton River Road before we got to my house!



**Marie, Bill & Sandy Bender**



**Edward & Marie    Guessed who just missed her putt?    Sandy**

Sandy, Ed and I went golfing at the Bruce Hills golf course north of Romeo in about 1969. She seldom got to golf that year as she was going to school full time and working full time and doing homework in between. Well, wouldn't you know it, but Sandy came down with poison ivy that she got from the rough off one of the two holes on the golf course. She really suffered with that and it really tired her out as she couldn't sleep as she stayed up and itched most of the night. Her lawyer who was handling her car accident case talked her into suing for the poison ivy. Well, Ed and I had to go and take depositions in the case, and the next year the golf course tried to serve Ed with a subpoena to appear in court as a witness. The lawyer told Ed he didn't have to appear as we had his deposition. Ed didn't want to go to court so one day as he was driving home he spotted a process server sitting in front of our house waiting for him. We warned Ed he might be there as the young process server was at our house with his girlfriend in his car trying to serve Ed. Ed knew if he drove into his driveway the guy would jump out of his car and serve him the subpoena, so Ed drove around to the back of the house, parked in the school parking lot, jumped the 6 foot back fence real quick and skeedaddled into the safety of our house. That process server never did catch up to Ed and he didn't have to appear in court.

Ed's memory started getting bad at about this point. It was a shock to me when I first realized that Ed couldn't remember that well as his memory had been sharp as a tack all through the years. I used to give him my whole weekly grocery order on Alter and he'd keep it all in his head, and he wouldn't forget a thing! His memory was like an encyclopedia. Anything that went in there stayed there. Now suddenly, he had problems recalling recent events, although his long term memory was unimpaired. For the first time Ed had to start carting a list around with him so he would remember things. He used to carry a little notebook in his shirt pocket with notations written on it. He would get so irritated with himself when he would forget something! He would say over and over again, "My memory is getting so bad!"

# 1971

Bill now got \$1450 in monthly tax free benefits from the VA and social security. This was more than he needed, and he was bound and determined to blow it all as soon as he got it. Money burned a hole in Bill's pocket. When he got a few thousand ahead, Ed and I would have to take him to Highland Appliance and he'd blow it on an ever better stereo system or a new T.V. Bill would turn on both TV's, one on each station, then also turn on the stereo and watch the cartoon figures on the T.V. jump to the music of the stereo! It was bizarre to watch. Bill had all new furniture and lived very comfortably.



**Sandy & Bill Bender**

His first apartment when we moved from Diamond was at 11932 Daisy Ct in the Seasons 4 apartment complex. This complex was brand new and Bill was the first occupant of his apartment. It was a very comfortable, cozy apartment. The rent was only \$128 per month, with heat and water included.

Sandy and I picked out the apartment for Bill and put the down payment on it. It was about a month before he could move in as they were finishing the interiors of the apartments. These were prefabricated units that came in by truck from Ohio. The biggest detraction about these apartments when I think back is the creeps that used to float over to Bill's place to see what they could sucker him out of. They all knew Bill had money and they wanted to help him spend it.

Some of Bill's friends were messing with illegal drugs and on occasion one of them would try to get Bill to try them too. Bill was quite resistant to trying them as he was afraid of them. One time one of the creepier of the guys talked Bill into trying some "Angel Dust" one weekend. Bill called us up soon afterwards asking for help as he was so terribly frightened. Bill was scared, upset and seeking our comfort. We weren't sure if he needed medical help or not so we sat up with him and the worse of it passed by morning. But he was sick over it for a few days. He was really angry with the kid who forced this stuff on him. Bill never really experimented much with that sort of stuff after that. That same creep stole several of Bill's psychotropic pills and tried them out along with his usual assortment of drugs. The kid told Bill that he conked out for two days from that combination. He blamed Bill's medicine and said Bill



was a real junky. But Bill told that kid that it was his combination of ingredients that nearly done him in.

Bill lived at Season's Four from about 1971 to about 1975 when he moved to an apartment in Chesterfield at Cotton and Sugarbush to be near us when we moved to Dino Circle. That was a nice apartment but Bill was getting into it with the upstairs neighbor when he played his loud music late into the night. Bill was only there for about 6 months when we all agreed that it would be better if he bought a condominium on Dino Circle near to us. We shouldn't have had Bill quite so close as he came over morning, noon and night and it was a bit hard on our nerves again.

Ed was getting very, very tired, so tired he just dragged. Sandy and I were very worried that Ed wouldn't last very long if he continued looking that tired. He would drag himself out of bed in the morning, dress, eat his oatmeal with brown sugar, cinnamon and raisins, drink his hot tea, wash, dress and shave and off he'd go by 8:45 am to be at Kelly's by 9:30 am. He'd pull his car out of the garage, open the gates, drive out and then shut the gates again. He would then pray for all of us on his long drive to work. He'd take Van Dyke to 18 Mile Road to Coolidge Hwy to 12 Mile Road to Kelly's. He'd usually get there right on the nick of time. A few times Kelly made nasty remarks when Ed was a few minutes late for work. Ed would often feel so terribly bad that he was no longer his own boss and had to take guff from others. Ed's spirit was broken by the time he worked for Kelly's. He felt like he was only a shell of a man. His self confidence was shattered and his happy go lucky outgoing personality was for the most part a thing of the past.



**Edward, Marie and Craig**

Ed talked often about the change in his moods over the years. He said that when he was a child and a young man, he was bursting with happiness and enthusiasm, and felt that he was going to accomplish great things in life and was going to become quite wealthy. As a youngster he took it for granted that he was going to have a fine house, a yacht, and a nice summer cottage. When he started his own business he felt he was on his way to the realization of these dreams. It was only in 1958 - 1959 that it hit him solidly in the face that he was over the hill and that none of these dreams would ever come true, in fact he was faced with the fear of not being able to contribute to the ordinary support of his family. He had a true horror of ever becoming destitute and

having to go on welfare. He wouldn't even breathe the word welfare for fear of painting the devil on the wall. It was at this point that Ed became a broken man. He said that he almost never got those wonderful feelings of happiness and exhilaration that were an ordinary part of his childhood. Now he was just so very tired and worn out. He would come home at 9:40 pm at night, his body just dragging from weariness. He would spend the entire drive home again praying for all of us, that the Lord would continue to bless and protect us and give us all that we needed and keep us in His care. We would open the gate for him before he got home. Ed would drive into the garage, shut the garage door for the night, then come in the back door. He would wash his hands, then sit in his favorite green lazy boy rocker and turn on his favorite detective programs. I would then get him his ice cream and hot water with some milk in it. He would promptly fall asleep after drinking the hot water and eating the ice cream.



**Edward & Marie Bender**



**Sandy & Edward Bender**

He started to suffer from arthritis in those days and would listen to every quack cure he'd hear on the TV or radio. I was making up solutions of vinegar and honey in water as one of the arthritis cures. You guessed it, all he got out of that was a gut ache! We'd rub Ben Gay and other arthritis lotions on his shoulders and elbows. To no avail.

Ed's greatest pleasure in those years was going to play baseball with whatever family members could be cajoled into playing on the weekend. First there was Norman in his early days. He coached Norman in pitching and Norman got so good that he got a write up in the Detroit News. They called him a new "Big Chief Bender" Ed also got a write up in the Detroit News for his ball playing, and Ed almost made it to the minor leagues he was so good. Ed also had a write up in the Detroit News as a child for his writing ability. He won a short story contest. Ed used to write a lot of short stories as a child and had wanted

to be a writer when he grew up, but when he was older he realized that most short story writing does not put much food on the table.

Later Ed played ball with Norman and Bea's and Art's kids. He used to come running up to Bea's house early Sunday morning and actually drag her kids out of bed to play. But they loved to play so it didn't take much to get them on their way to the nearest ball field. Later he played with Norman and his own kids. Ed was hard on the kids. He really hollered if they missed a ball, so ball playing became more of a chore than a delight to Nancy and Michael. He mellowed after that, so the younger kids were not under as much pressure, so grew to like the game better.

Doug and Mike were his best ball players, but Sandy did real good for a girl. Ed used to watch Sandy play ball and when she had a real good day he would be real proud, especially if the spectators made good comments about Sandy's playing. On the way home after the game Ed would tell her about her good playing, or what the spectators had said. He'd feel real proud about his kid, but then suddenly he'd look real sad, his shoulders would slump, and he'd say to her, "Too bad you're just a girl!" Same thing when she'd bring home a good report card. He'd puff his chest out over his kid being on the honor roll. But then again, he'd look real sad, his shoulders would droop, and he'd say, "Too bad you're just a girl!"



**Sandy**

My Sandy grew up being far too much a tomboy. She wore Mike's old castoffs, which she loved. She hated girl's clothing and got out of it as soon as she got home from school or church. She ended getting her hair cut short without my knowledge or consent. This first happened in 1954 when my sister Elenore came over for a visit and cut mom's hair while she was here. Ma just loved that short haircut, which looked so good on her as she had a natural wave to her hair and it sat so pretty. Sandy greatly admired Ma's haircut, and slyly praised it to the high heavens till Elenore took the hint and asked Sandy if she wanted the same kind of hair cut. Boy, did she ever! But she played it cool as she knew if she was too eager appearing Elenore might back off. So she just inched over to Elenore, let her put the towel around her neck, and SNIP, SNIP, SNIP!!!

Sandy got her heart's desire in 15 short minutes. Let me tell you, that haircut was certainly not my heart's desire. I was shocked when I saw it. Now I definitely had 4 boys and one girl. That haircut completed the sex change! A stranger wouldn't have the foggiest notion that year that Sandy was a girl.

I should have put my foot down with dress code and hair style, but I didn't. Sandy was so insistent and those darn clothes and haircut pleased her so! And when Louise got her first pair of boy's Levis I knew I couldn't hold out there either. She pestered me to death, morning, noon and night till I bought a pair to have some peace again. But one thing I have to say, Sandy was very cheap to clothe. She loved Mike's hand me downs and her only clothing expenses were the school uniform, a few Sunday dresses which she hated, and several pair of flannel shirts and Levi's every year, and a new coat. She didn't even need a new coat for her 10th, 11th and 12th years. Marcel Tas, Juliette Meeseman's new husband, just got out of the service and gave Sandy both of his army jackets, which were an ugly army green but very warm. Sandy thought she died and went to heaven when she got those army jackets! I knew better than to try to take them away. I hated those things, they looked awful. But they were her most prized possessions.

Nancy, on the other hand, cost Ed and I so much more in clothing. She was thoroughly feminine and loved new clothes. She dressed very neatly and fashionably. I was always so proud of the way Nancy dressed. She also looked older than her years as a teenager due to prudent selection of clothing which gave her a more sophisticated air.

My two daughters were total opposites. Nancy was feminine, dainty and clothes conscious. She was also very conscious of the boys and had her first crush by age 8. She used to sit on the Schneck's front porch and moon over Eldon by that age. Sandy was born a tomboy. She was rough and tumble and self sufficient right from her crib. The way she treated her dolls would bring a tear to your eye. With her brother's big baggy clothing, she looked like something out a refuge camp at times. The short haircut was a disaster. One just has to look at her 4th grade picture to agree with me. But, oh, she was interested in the boys early too! When one crossed her path and looked sideways at her she pulverized him! She had the distinction of having beat up every boy in her fifth grade class. When she was 9 years old I was real worried when I saw her with Jerry Westingburger as he was older than her, not of a very good family, and I had just been through the war with Nancy's crushes. I chastised her very much and ended up spanking her good for being seen with him. When Sandy found out I was so adamant about her staying away from Jerry due to the fear of a romantic development occurring, Sandy almost doubled over with laughter. What she was doing with Jerry in the alley was planning the latest strategy in the Alter - Ashland war the boys were engaged in, that is, the boys and Louise and Sandy. Louise and Sandy spent days throwing rocks on the garage roof to pelt Jerry with when he came by.

When I'd talk to Ma about Sandy being a tomboy, she said to leave her alone and let her enjoy herself, that Nellie was a tomboy too and outgrew it in her later teen years.



**Nancy**

In California, Nancy decided to take a whole carload of kids on a field trip through the mountains. As she got dressed that day, she was putting on one of her best blouses, when she got an ESP flash that said, why do you want to ruin one of your best blouses? Nancy shook that thought off as nonsense and finished dressing and was on her way. Nancy and her kids piled in the car and one by one picked up the other kids. For those of you that are superstitious, there were 13 people in the car as they started their fateful trek up into the mountains. Nancy was driving her Vista Cruiser station wagon that she had brought there from Michigan. It had been a good sturdy car for them all through the years and was always quite dependable. But car maintenance was always Don's short suit, he never had the time nor the interest. And so it went with the Vista Cruiser. Don had been out for an evening with Nancy a few days before and had run over a big dip in the road very hard, which they later figure caused the brake failure in the mountains. Anyway, Nancy blissfully drove off for a day of fun with a very overloaded car. Then off and up into the mountains. Going up was no problem. The car handled beautifully. It was the descent where the horror began. Nancy noticed as she was descending down the side of the mountain that the car's brakes did not seem to hold the car back. She was not sure at first, but within a minute or two she saw she was gaining speed. She was hysterical, wondering what to do to preserve the life and safety of the 13 people in the car. She thought of driving into the side of the mountain, but she was now going too fast and might go over! Nancy told Warren that the brakes gave out and frantically asked what to do. Warren told her to put on the emergency brake, which Nancy promptly did. When Donna saw Nancy put the emergency brake on, she figured the emergency was over and slid down in the seat and relaxed. But the emergency brakes were shot too. Nancy continued to pick up speed. She thought of putting the car in reverse, but was afraid of the consequences.

Up ahead two cars were stopped dead for a light, a little Volkswagen and a huge brand new station wagon. Nancy in a split second realized there were 3 choices: 1. hit the Volkswagen and kill everybody in there for sure, 2. hit the

big station wagon. Those people might survive the impact, but it would go harder for the occupants of Nancy's car, or 3. try to miss both of them and continue straight ahead. Nancy chose option number 2 and hit the station wagon full force. So much for the station wagon. She accorded it right up to the front seat, but the passengers were alive with only minor injuries. It turned out that the driver of the car was a physician who had just picked up his new station wagon from the dealer and had decided to take an afternoon off work and take his wife and son for a spin. Bad decision on his part. Time for another new car. All the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put his station wagon back together again!



**Donna, Warren, Craig, Linda Stephens**

However in Nancy's car things were critical. When Warren saw the crash coming he was sitting behind Nancy and put his arms around her shoulders to hold her back from the steering wheel, but without success as they both went flying in the impact. Donna broke her ankle bones and was saved from more serious injury because she was slouched down and the impact was taken by her feet and ankles. Craig had a shard of glass sticking out of his lip, which he was so proud of himself when he expertly removed it by himself. A girl in the front seat received severe facial injuries, was bleeding badly and was to have many stitches to close her jagged cuts received when her head went through the windshield. It was this girl who saved Craig from serious injury because when she saw the accident coming, she tucked Craig behind her on the seat real quick, thus keeping him from hitting the windshield. But it was Nancy who was the most seriously injured. She had hit the windshield hard and had passed out. She was lying unconscious on the side of the road until help came. Her kids were hysterical, unable to help her. The doctor whose car she hit was very bitter and did not raise a hand to help out. He merely stayed put with his family and showed no interest in the injuries suffered by the people in the other car. Ambulances came and they were all taken to the hospital. Nancy was unconscious and soon after entering the emergency room, she went into deep shock and her heart stopped. The doctors used the defibrillation paddles on her heart and it resumed beating. Nancy heard everything that was said, but was paralyzed, blind and could not speak. A little while later, her heart stopped again. When her heart stopped, she felt herself float upwards and looked down upon the doctors working on her body. They got her heart started again and she felt herself return to her body. Her heart stopped 5 times in all that day. A young resident worked on her diligently each time her heart stopped. But he



was soon chastised by the emergency room attending physician, who told him that that patient was gone, to stop wasting his time working on someone who was as good as dead and to start sewing up these other accident victims. Nancy heard him say that and was horrified. She wanted to scream out at him that she was not dead, but she was unable to speak. She wanted to move some part of her body to show him she was still alive, but nothing would move. But she kept screaming silently to herself, don't give up on me, I'm not dead! But she couldn't move her lips, nor force her vocal cords to respond.

But that young doctor would not give up on her and by the end of the day her heart stabilized and the immediate crisis was over. After a stay in the hospital, they sent Nancy home to recuperate. That didn't last more than a few hours until Nancy suddenly started tilting violently to one side and couldn't right herself. One more wild ride to the hospital where she learned the reason for her tilting to one side is that she was bleeding in the brain, causing stroke symptoms. That gradually subsided, and she gradually improved, but from then on she had neurological after effects from the head injury.



**Nancy Bender Stephens**

One more story from that accident...The doctor who saved Nancy's life developed a crush on her. He came around and asked her for a date. Nancy was flattered, but told him she was a married woman and couldn't go out with him. He asked a number of times before giving up. Nancy thought he was a nice, cute fellow. In looking back, one wonders what might have been?



**Edward & Sandy Bender**

In the summer of 1971 Ed had another gall bladder attack. This was a bad one and he knew for sure that surgery was preferable to another one of these attacks. And especially since his sister Mildred assured him that each gall bladder attack is worse than the one before. Ed checked into St Joseph hospital and was admitted to a ward of 6 men on a sun porch. Ed's surgeon was Dr. Christian Matthews, a fine surgeon of sterling reputation. The

operation went well and Ed was back in his room in a bout 5 hours. I sat right by Ed's side and Sandy sat nearby too. I stood up and stroked Ed's head when he woke up the first time in his room and told him I was there and everything was going to be alright now. Ed had a wild, non-focusing, dazed look in his eyes, said he had never been in such pain, promptly fell back to sleep and didn't wake back up till the next day. I have always been amused over Ed's ability to shut out unpleasant things, but this took the cake!

Ed had two excitements when he was in this room recuperating. The man next to him promptly expired just as they were ready to take Ed for surgery. And then later the new guy in the same bed wouldn't turn out his light at night when asked to do so by the fellow in the next bed. He got lippy instead. The fellow in the next bed got so worked up that he jumped out of bed, and then took his fist and punched the light bulb right out of the over bed light and cut his hand real bad and had to have stitches.



**Edward Bender & Taffy**

Ed returned home within a week with no untoward effects. He soon was back to playing ball with the kids again and walking Taffy every day. But he had to cut some of the fat out of his diet after that.

One day Sandy met a teller who used to work with her at the Bank of the Commonwealth. Her first comment to Sandy was, "Did you hear about Frank Matese, our old bank manager?" What, Sandy replied? He got arrested for embezzling! You got to be kidding! Sandy answered, Frank was the nicest guy I ever met! Yeh, but with sticky fingers, the other teller replied. It turns out the assistant manager, Louella, turned Frank in when she saw him playing around with the signature cards in the dormant savings accounts files. She figured that there was money missing so she turned in her suspicions to auditing downtown. The place was swarming with auditors for three days and at the end of that time they had Frank arrested. It turned out that he was dipping into the savings accounts of little old ladies and men who had not touched their money for years. None of the customers ever found him out either.

Sandy realized in looking back at her teller days at that branch that Frank had stolen from her cage as well, as there were a number of times when \$400 - \$450 was missing from her cage and Frank made only half hearted attempts to find the missing money. The money was only missing the days that Frank worked in her drawer with her and the day would be so busy that she could

not count out the money with him. Other tellers had the same experiences with Frank. Even Frank was standing right in front of Annie's window when the \$1000 had disappeared from the bank shipment right under Annie's nose. There sure had been big excitements that day! And now they nailed Frank for his indiscretions. Frank wanted it all and he wanted it now, which was what lead to his downfall. Such a pity that such a nice man had to get himself into such big trouble.



**Arthur Bender   Agnes Radtke Bender**

Agnes invited Ed, Mildred, Sandy and I over to her house for a Christmas time luncheon during the holidays. We had very happy day together, but were shocked at how pale and thin and older Art had gotten. He was just a shell of his former self. He was much weaker too and he spoke more softly now. It was very sad and we knew why Agnes made a special point of inviting us over. The handwriting was on the wall. Art would be with us only a short time longer. Ed felt so terribly bad to see his oldest brother in such a weakened condition, especially considering we had just buried Norman. We cherished that day with Art and Agnes, knowing it would probably be the last visit with Art. Art got much sicker, had a series of heart and vascular attacks, and was often rushed to the hospital. His daughter Monaclaire rode in the ambulance with him the last time and described the horrible time Art had that time. Art slipped away on the 7th of October, 1971 at the age of 74 years. He was laid out at the funeral parlor on Chalmers Avenue, just a few short blocks south of St. Juliana Church. Art was laid out in his casket for his birthday 3 days later, on October 10th. Carol and Lou Myers brought their two small boys in their arms to see their grandpa for one last time. Why doesn't he wake up was one question. Then when they had heard that it was grandpa's birthday, the youngest one started singing Happy Birthday to him. It was too much for the family to bear and the children were carried away to the sitting room.

Art had a very nice funeral. Everyone was there. He was buried in Mt. Olivet cemetery about 5 sections away from Bea and Norman, near the side street in the new section.



**Mildred & Harold Neff**

Sandy drove Mildred and Harold Neff back and forth to the funeral parlor as Harold couldn't see too good nights anymore and he was afraid to drive after dark. Harold was so grateful to Sandy that she took this heavy burden off his shoulders. When Harold would come to visit us those last years he would actually drive Van Dyke all the way down to 8 mile, then would drive across 8 mile and then back up Gratiot as all of those streets had street lights and he could see the road.

I chastised Sandy as she would go into Harold and Mildred's house and sit down with them to tea and fruit cake and talk with them for hours before starting for home. Let them go to bed at a decent hour, for gosh sakes, I used to tell her. But Sandy replied that they were retired, could sleep in in the morning, and that they enjoyed her company and she theirs. Today she says she wishes she'd have stayed even longer as these are some of her fondest memories, sitting sipping tea and enjoying the company of her aunt and uncle. Those times, they came but once. And now they are no more.

Ed, I, Mildred and Sandy went back to Agnes' house the next Christmas season for a nice luncheon. Mildred Neff brought some of her homemade Christmas cookies and Agnes had a batch of homemade cookies baked, so we had an abundance of choices for dessert. I had to smile to myself. Sandy chose a cookie, liked it very much and complimented Agnes on her baking. Mildred was miffed and told Sandy in the car on the way home that that good cookie was hers. Poor Sandy couldn't keep the homemade cookies straight!

During the course of the luncheon conversation, the topic under discussion was Grandma Bender's pictures which were in the possession of Art at the time he died. Agnes said there were several boxes of old pictures in the basement, that her arthritis was too bad to navigate the stairs, and that Sandy was welcome to go to the basement and sniff through the pictures if she so desired. Sandy really desired to do so, but was having a wonderful time socializing with Agnes, Mildred, Ed and I and felt it would be impolite to bolt off to the basement. But Sandy could kick herself today that she didn't get back to those pictures before Agnes died!



**Mike & Taffy**

Mike and Sandy went bike riding together and took Taffy with them. Taffy was always well behaved and trotted right along with the bike. They went down Diamond to Donley, then up Donley. Taffy would wait to be given permission to cross a street. Sandy gave her permission to cross the side street that Mike and she were crossing and suddenly instead of following them across the side street she veered out into Donley and darted across that street instead. There were cars coming in both directions and Taffy ran right in front of this one car being driven by a 30 year old lady. The woman stomped on her brakes but Taffy was right under the car. Sandy just got hysterical and started screaming. He wheels stopped just 1 inch short of running over Taffy! Sandy and Taffy were scared out of their wits. Mike was very upset too, but he was a quiet sort of fellow and he was upset over Sandy's outburst of hysteria. Sandy ran across Donnelly and scooped up Taffy in her arms. Taffy was physically fine, but was as badly shaken as Sandy.

## **1972**

Doug was not comfortable at Don and Nancy's and wanted to come back home to Michigan. We all agreed. Don and Nancy weren't comfortable with Doug either, they said he'd never talk to them or socialize with them and they never knew what he was thinking.

So in June, 1972 Doug was on his way back home to Michigan. Doug had accomplished two major feats while in California: he had completed one year of college and by going to a doctor whose name Sandy had supplied, Doug had got a permanent deferment from the Selective Service for medical reasons. We had had one son messed up in Vietnam, we all agreed we didn't need to have that happen to a second one.

Doug ran into rotten weather all the way home as a hurricane had made its way all the way to Pennsylvania and ruined the weather for most of the United States. Doug came home, moved in with Mike and diligently pursued his college degree.

As we stated earlier, Sandy and I saw how exhausted Ed was, so we decided in order to save his life, we would try to get him to partially retire and take an early social security payment. We figured out the entire budget. We knew it would be very close, but we figured we could just make it on his social security

and part time checks from Kelly's. Ed thought that budget was much too tight for comfort, and he determinedly refused to retire. So Sandy and I reworked the budget, then we decided that if Ed and I sold the house on Diamond and invested the money that we could have a comfortable retirement. When Ed looked at those figures, he was more comfortable with it. So Sandy moved first, to 11358 Canal in the Dresden Manor Apartments.



**Marie, Ed & Sandy Bender**

We sold the house to our son Mike on land contract for \$30,000 and moved ourselves to 11410 Canal in an upstairs 1 bedroom apartment. Doug decided to stay with Mike, so Ed and I were finally alone after 40 years! We loved our new found freedom and peace. We had our family over often, but then they would leave and we would have blessed peace and quiet. Mike kept Taffy at first and Mike and Doug took care of her, but she would visit Sandy, Ed and I on the weekends.



**Taffy**

Taffy was a really smart dog. One day Doug and Mike treated her mean and her feelings were really hurt. She sulked for awhile in the back yard, then hit on a solution to her problem. She dug out under the fence, then proceeded down Diamond, up Donley, around Birkhill and out onto Canal. We found her walking down Canal heading right for our apartment!

One day we were celebrating my birthday, on the 13th of November. We started the celebration over Mike's house, then went to my house and played ping pong. Doug stayed home on Diamond. Suddenly Mr. Clayton looks out his front window and thinks he sees flames coming from Mike's garage, but he isn't sure as he had had a lot to drink and couldn't trust his senses. So he went across the street, up our driveway, and looked again. Yup, it still looked like flames to him so he rang our bell, Doug ran downstairs and answered. When



Doug heard fire in the garage, he sprung into action, running into the back yard. He lifted the garage door and was about to get his prized 1962 red Ford Falcon Station wagon that he had bought from Don's brother Jack in California, out of there. But as he started for the car, Mr. Clayton detained him, and before he could go in the flames suddenly shot skyward and the whole garage was an inferno.



**Doug, Tuffy & the 62 Ford Falcon**

Mike was at school when this happened and didn't get back until the firemen had it just about under control. Doug frantically called me and Ed, I and Sandy rushed over to Mike's to see the flames shooting up over the house and into Healy's back yard. We were wondering if the Healy's porch was going to go up in flames! Suddenly we remembered, Tuffy was in Mike's house all alone and the house was filling up with fumes! Sandy ran in and tried to turn the lights on. No lights. The garage fire had burned through the electrical wiring. Sandy ran in the house and called and called Tuffy. No response! We thought that maybe Tuffy had been overcome by smoke as she is only 16 lbs. Sandy called frantically, still no Tuffy. We were in the pitch black and had no flashlight. Suddenly Sandy heard CLANK, CLANK!! softly coming from the corner of the living room where Tuffy liked to lay behind Mike's new end table and her license had clinked on the bottom wood pedestal. Sandy ran over there, got a hand full of Tuffy and picked her up and carried her to her car parked by the Wells' house on Delvin.

What a dirty filthy mess that fire was! The flames were spectacular as they shot over 20 feet into the air! Then afterwards the next day all was dirty, filthy, oily, greasy, depressive ash. Bill lost a brand new Honda motorcycle with only 100 miles on it. Doug lost a prized 1962 Ford Falcon station wagon from California in mint condition and could not afford to replace it. And Mike, Ed, Sandy and I lost many items of personal value in that fire, such as our golf clubs, bikes, etc. AAA tried to give us trouble when there were belongings of more than one person in the garage and tried to disallow Ed, Sandy's and my items as we didn't live there. But Sandy read through all of our renter's policies, and the policies clearly stated that all of our belongings, whether on or off our property, were covered. Mr. Songer, our agent, stopped quibbling and started processing our claims. Sandy was a big help in compiling lists of lost items, their age and worth. We got a good value, but still not the replacement value, as a result of her efforts. But she'll never get to heaven if she kept making up those kinds of fibs! The Healey's lost several of their shrubs which their insurance replaced.

The next night after the fire Ed was walking Taffy along Donley around 9 pm at night, and right after he walked past a certain house on Donley, their garage suddenly burst into flames, the same as what had happened to Mike's the night before. The timing was perfect for Ed to have run into that garage and threw a match! Ed and I were nervous that witnesses would tell the police that a man walking a white cockapoo was the most likely suspect!

Mike got a new garage out of it, which pleased him as he was nervous about the condition of the old one which was rotting out in places. And for little more money he was able to get it aluminum sided. And he also installed an electric garage opener to give more security as the fire department believed that it was deliberately set.

A disturbed delinquent kid at Sterling Junior High who lived about 8 houses away from us on the bend at the end of Diamond bragged around school that he was the one who torched the garage. The police were told but nothing ever came of it.

We were all very angry that someone would come onto our property and torch our garage and its contents. We were very attached to our possessions and were very upset over losing them, especially Doug's mint shape Falcon.

Ed and I decided to go by plane and visit Nancy and Don in California. Ed decided to go even though he hated 1. airplanes and 2. being away from home. But we made it there and back safe and sound and we had a wonderful time. Ed had read about the Monterey Peninsula as a boy in school and had always wanted to see it, and now in his twilight years he finally got to see it. He loved it! He thought it was a most breathtaking sight! I thought it was the scariest, most nerve-wracking drive I had ever been on. I don't know what was uppermost in my mind, the beautiful scenery or the fear of going overboard any minute as Don was repeatedly falling asleep behind the wheel on those hairpin turns 5 miles up in the air! I was an absolute nervous wreck. After seeing the Monterey Peninsula, we visited the Hearst Castle which was most interesting, and then on to San Francisco, the city of cable cars and China town. It was a most memorable trip, one I won't soon forget. A funny story about San Francisco...Nancy, Don, Ed and I were walking along the main drag in San Francisco taking in the shops and the sights, when suddenly one of the women in the red light district slips her arm through Don's and starts walking off with him. Nancy caught on to what was happening, and she grabbed Don away from that overdressed hussy, saying, you're not walking off with my husband!

One day Ed's boss Joe Balough came to Ed and asked to borrow his car to go out to lunch. Ed declined, saying he'd rather not lend out his car and could Joe borrow someone else's? Joe got very upset with Ed and created a scene. Ed was backed into a corner and had to lend his car if he wanted to continue working there. Ed handed him over the car keys. Joe came back several hours later,

gave Ed his car keys and confessed to Ed that he had smashed up Ed's 1970 Dodge! Ed went out and looked at the smashed front end and was sick! That is precisely the reason that Ed did not want to lend his car out! Ed got the fender fixed, but it was not a first class job, and forever more Ed had permanent alignment problems with that tire. All tires put on that side of the car promptly wore unevenly. No amount of realignment could solve that problem.



**Edward Bender**

Ed used to feel sorry for Joe Balough even though Joe did not give Ed and even break, giving other employees preferred status and better bonuses, days off and first crack at customers. But Joe suffered from such terrible headaches that he never could get rid of for very long. Joe was the bookkeeper and brains of the organization and when things were not going well it was up to Joe to change them. Ed remembered how many horrible tension headaches he got in his store on Mack Avenue and later on Warren Avenue when customers would not come in day after day and he had bills to pay and payments to make on unsold merchandise, so he knew what Joe was going through. Ed now suffered from depression and loss of self esteem, but the tension headaches were now over as he was not the one who had to pay the bills and keep the place afloat through good times and bad.



**Mike Bender**

Mike hated sales and said he had nightmares for years and years afterwards from working in Ed's store. He hated the selling part, having to talk people into buying a certain product, but what he hated the most was the real dead times, waiting for a customer to come into a totally empty store. That was a real killer.

The men used to get "spiffs" for selling certain products, but not others, so naturally Ed and the other men would brag a product that had a bonus attached to it up to the high heavens. They sold an awful lot of Serta mattresses for that reason. Each mattress carried a \$2 bonus. Ed would get so frustrated when another salesman would steal his customer or would write up

one of Ed's return customers after he had put in all the work. It was a dog eat dog existence.

Shortly thereafter Ed had another problem with that car. He left Kelly's noticed he was running low on gas, so he stopped in the gas station at Woodward and 13 mile Rd and filled up. Ed got one mile away when his car coughed, sputtered, then quit. He called Sandy, who promptly came and got him. When he had the car towed for repair it turned out that there was junk in the gas he just bought which clogged up the gas tank, the lines and got into the carburetor. Ed had to have the gas tank washed out several times before the car stopped acting up. And then he was worried that the gas tank might rust from all the water pumped into it.

Don wanted to kick Warren around for awhile to impress on him how upset he was with him. Don and Nancy said Warren could drop out for a year until he grew up a little.



**Warren Stephens**



**Warren & Sally**

Warren married Sally Smith on the 6th of September, 1972, his great grandparents, Nellie Rehfeldt and William Dahl's 66th wedding anniversary. The whole family liked Sally, they thought she was a sweet kid. However, within a few years Warren and Sally separated and Sally went back home to Oregon.

Ed and I suddenly had some time together when he semi retired and we moved into the Dresden Manor Apartments at Canal and Sterritt in Sterling Heights. I so enjoyed having Ed to myself. We would go lots of places together, often just

to get out of the house. We would even go on long rides to Marlette and other small towns. Sometimes we would take his sister Mildred or our Bill with us to give them a day out of the house. We would go and visit Sandy in her apartment, or Mike and Doug in the house on Diamond, or Bill on Daisy Ct., but then we could go back home and be alone together again. I remember that Christmas in the apartment on 11410 Canal, upstairs. Sandy and I started crocheting in the summer and by Christmas we had made everyone an afghan. Talk about work! Every free minute found us crocheting our fingers off! But we got all of them done, even in enough time to get Nancy's family's afghans off in time for Christmas.



**Ed, Marie & Craig**



**Craig & Sandy**



**Nancy & Craig**



**Marie & Craig**

Nancy came to visit us for the first time since she moved out to California when we were in the small apartment. She brought little 6 year old Craig with her. The other children remained behind in California as they were in school full time. Craig was in kindergarten that year so he could afford to miss school. We have pictures of Craig sitting next to Ed, who was so tired he looked very depressed. Whenever we looked at that picture of Ed looking so down in the mouth, we used to laugh and label that picture, "Having a great time, wish you were here!" The Michigan family missed Nancy and her children very much so it was a big thrill every time they came out for a visit, especially when she brought her youngest child Craig with her. Our family made such a big fuss over Craig that Nancy laughingly remarked that she wondered if she would have been welcome if she came without him!

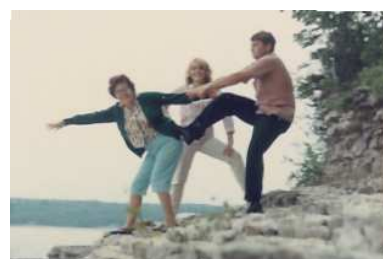
The one big problem Ed had there, though, was that the residents would park their car in Ed's space and he would have to go looking for a space to park his car.



**Ed, Marie & Bill Bender**



**Marie & Edward**



**Marie, Sandy & Bill Bender**



**Marie & Edward Bender**



**Sandy & Marie**



**Donna Stephens**

We were on vacation at Cedar Grove Cottages that year for two weeks, when at the end of the first week Ed developed a horrible pain in his side and went to the Lion's Head hospital in town. The woman doctor there told Ed he was having a gall bladder attack, so he should go home and have the gall bladder out. So we packed up all our things and started home. We were all so disappointed as we had one week of vacation left. What a rotten time for that to happen, when we only got 2 weeks vacation per year! Ed laid down and Sandy drove us all the way home. Ed then checked into St. Joseph's hospital in Mt. Clemens and was seen by Dr. Cholak, who said he could treat the gall bladder with medicine and avoid surgery. Ed started feeling better with the medicine and as the pain subsided, Ed got frisky and decided he needed exercise after laying in bed all week, so he walked up and down the halls for hours. But he thought he still needed more exercise so he started walking, then running up and down the stairwells. After having had a good workout, he then returned to bed to rest. He was in bed a short time, when suddenly a tremendous pain shot upwards from his chest into his jaw. He signaled with his hands to his roommate, a young man, to get help, then felt himself going unconscious. A nurse came running, took a look at him, and then brought the adrenalin and other stimulant drugs necessary to counteract a heart attack in progress. She shot the drugs into Ed and he was soon out of immediate danger of cardiac arrest. They then transferred him to the intensive care unit, where he remained for the next week. The nurses in intensive care told him he was lucky that such an alert nurse was on duty, as she not only prevented cardiac arrest, but also prevented most of the heart damage that so often accompanies those kind of heart attacks. Sandy worked only 8 blocks away so she visited Ed twice a day during the day, then she came home and we had a quick dinner, then she would take me to see Ed in the evenings. He did well and was soon ready for discharge. Ed had a funny problem while he was in the intensive care. The doctor said he couldn't get out of bed for any reason, but Ed found he couldn't pee unless he stood on his feet. The doctor smiled at this and wrote an order that Ed could stand up by the side of his bed.





**Edward after he had his first heart attack**

Ed was tired, pale and drawn when we brought him home to that little apartment after his heart attack. We had a wonderful, but screwball drinking neighbor, right across the hall from us. His name was Carl Kennedy. A real gregarious, likeable fellow. Well, when we brought Ed up the stairs and stood before our apartment door, there on our door was a wonderful big sign, printed by Carl, that said "Welcome home, Mr. Bender!", such a nice thing to do.

Ed's memory got even fuzzier after the heart attack, but it was a gradual process that we didn't notice at first until we looked back. Ed probably had some oxygen deprivation during that heart attack which further affected his memory.

## 1974

Ed and I weren't satisfied with that apartment, so one day when I saw that someone was moving out of the end cottage apartment, I asked the manager if Ed and I could have that one. She said yes. So we cleaned up the apartment and the kids helped us move all our stuff from one to another. Sandy then painted the old apartment as that was the deal if you wanted to move from one to another, that you yourself had to paint one of them.

We loved that little cottage at 11424 Canal. It was very comfortable and no more stairs for Ed to climb, a concern after he had that heart attack. We fixed up that cottage so that it looked just like a private home. We bought new orange living room and dining room rugs, and a new rug for the bedroom. I bought new drapes and drapery rods for the living room and dining room, which had nice big windows. We had nice furniture that I had bought when we were on Diamond. And of course we had our old bedroom set that we had bought before Sandy was even born. And the washer and dryer were right in my little utility room off the kitchen, with no stairs to climb. That was heaven! We were very happy and content there, Ed and I. Ed used to walk Taffy every day for miles and miles. She was very obedient and would walk off leash. She would sniff everything along the route and would have walked 4 times as far as Ed with all her zigzagging up and down lawns to catch every stray scent that came her way.



**Mildred & Harold Neff**

While we were in that cottage we received word that Harold Neff had had a heart attack and was in bad shape. He was released from the hospital after we visited him there and went home for one week. Harold was very weak and very sick as his heart was no longer functioning at all well. Harold cried often that week, begging to see his only daughter Sally before he died. He offered to pay her fare and all expenses. Sally was told this but never came. Harold was put back into the hospital again later that week. Ed, I and Sandy went to visit him again in the hospital. Sandy was hesitant to go into the intensive care unit as she had a bad cold, but when she saw how bad his EKG looked, she went in to say goodbye to him, as she knew he would not last long enough for her to hurt him. We said a sad goodbye that 31st day of March, 1974 and the next day, April 1, 1974, Harold was gone. Harold had a very nice funeral through Verheyden Funeral Home in Grosse Pointe where his mother and Ed's mother had been laid out some 20 years before. It was a very dignified funeral. One thing we didn't like was that they changed rooms on us the second night. Harold went from a downstairs room to an upstairs room on the second night.

Ed and I were very supportive of Mildred before, during and after the funeral. We took her everywhere she wanted to go after Harold died, so she got out for shopping, restaurants, etc. Her neighbors were also very good to her and took her many places. Ed and I smiled at the change in Mildred after Harold died. Once Mildred started associating with all these sharper, well dressed widows, she soon started to dress much more modern and stylish as well. She really looked sharp when she changed her dress to match the others. Mildred, Bill, Ed and I became a frequent foursome for shopping, restaurants, and just trips in the country. Mildred was very kind and understanding of our Bill. Her son Bob had some of the same problems as Bill had so she knew first hand how hard it was. Bob had not gone to Vietnam, so he had been able to marry and support his family all through the years, but our Bill was not so fortunate.

There was another child in the family with Bill's problem, Arthur Bender II, the grandson of Ed's brother Art. Little Art II also had to hide in the bushes at school recess and his father had to pick him after school and drive him home as the other school kids picked on him so badly. Such a shame. Children are so cruel. But Art now holds a job too, although he still is not quite like his other siblings. There is something wrong with all three of those children that you can't quite put your finger on, but it shows up from early childhood. They

are not retarded by any means, in fact Bill was quite intelligent, they are not schizophrenic either, but there's just something wrong. Both of Bob Neff's children seem to show a touch of the same problem, but not as bad as Bobs.

Shortly after we moved into the cottage Sandy asked for a townhouse. The managers said no, that they reserved townhouses for married couples with children. About 6 months later the manager told Sandy that there was a townhouse available, a corner one at that, right behind our cottage and that she could have it if she wanted it because it was in rough shape as the tenants had painted the walls black, and that if Sandy wanted to fix it up, she could have it. Sandy wanted it, so she put 6 coats of good quality paint on the walls to cover the black and I scrubbed the floors with my electric scrubber for hours to remove the filth. Sandy bought new carpeting and new window shades and curtains and moved in. It was cute and gave more privacy than the upstairs apartment. In the upstairs apartment you could hear almost every word uttered by the eighty year old residents downstairs and Sandy got tired of listening to the old lady whine for her afghan and her husband refuse to get up and get it for her.

Sandy had a real cute 83 year old neighbor living across the hall from her in the upstairs apartment. Marie Mallul was the lady's name. She was born in the old country in Austria and came over here as an adult. She was as tough as nails - a real no nonsense German woman like Grandma Henkel. She used to burst into Sandy's apartment without warning. She'd amble in back bent over and sit in the nearest rocker and tell Sandy to play "Wooden Heart" as it was an old German melody that she liked.

One day Sandy saw a Grandfather's clock at Krazy Kelly's fell in love with it, and bought it and put it in her apartment. Marie Mallul came over to see what was coming in the front door when the clock was delivered. She looked at that grandfather's clock, squinted walked around it, and then declared she wanted one too. Sandy described what styles they had they settled on, something larger and darker than Sandy's, and in a week it was delivered. The old lady and her children were delighted with the clock and her children started fighting over who was going to inherit it.

Back to Taffy. One day after college Sandy went over to Mike's house to get Taffy. When she walked in the back door she was real quiet as the kids loved to sneak up on her and see what she was up to. This day as Sandy opened up the back door she heard RRRR,..RRRR,... run, run, run!" What ever is Taffy up to, thought Sandy? She snuck very quietly in and waited. Sure enough, Taffy ran back to the half bath downstairs, grabbed the end of the toilet paper on the roll in her mouth, got a good grip then started running off with it. RRRR! went the toilet paper roll as the paper rolled off! And as Taffy made a fast beeline around the corner the toilet paper would rip off the roll. Taffy then ran into the living room with a long streamer trailing behind her. She then ran up onto and then

over the chair with the streamer in her mouth and when the streamer was now on the chair, she let go of it. She then spent the next 3 minutes like a typical housewife, observing that streamer and running from one end of the chair to another, pulling on it first on this side then on the other till it laid just the way she wanted it to, like a housewife trying to get a table cloth straight. Then off to the bathroom for the next piece! Sandy got such a kick out of this behavior that she left the toilet paper just where Taffy put it so Mike and Doug could see what she had been up to!



**Craig, Taffy and Doug**

A short while later Doug came home from school and found Taffy laying up across Mike's brand new wood table with her butt hanging over on one end and her front paws crossed, hanging over the other end, as she sat up there and watched out the front window. Boy did Doug ever holler at her for that!



**Doug & Craig**

Another time Doug went to Oakland University and there was no classes that day as the parking lot was snowed in so he went back home and was bursting with energy with nothing to do so he decided to clean up Mike's house. And did her ever clean up the house from pillar to post, including scrubbing all the floors. When Mike got home that day the house was sparkling. Doug was always an exceptionally neat kid and keeps everything in exact order. Mike is very clean, but a bit cluttery. Well Doug couldn't stand the thought of his cleaning being messed up, so when Mike got home Doug said that the whole house was clean and that he expected it to stay that way, so don't be a slob, and when you come in, take off your shoes so my floors stay clean. Ed and I were upset to think that Mike was so good to Doug to let him stay there for nothing and then he talks to him like that. But Mike always loved Doug very much, felt close to him, and because of the vast differences in their ages, was able to take Doug's guff in a good spirit.



**Edward, Taffy & Jessie**

Ed and I persuaded Mildred Neff to go to her daughter Sally's house for her first Christmas without Harold. We told her we would take care of Jessie, but that the 120 lb Joker, a Collie with neurological problems, would have to go to a kennel. She was mostly concerned about Jessie and now agreed to go knowing that Jessie would be in good hands. Mildred told us what dog food to buy for Jessie and told us that he ate twice per day. We got his bowl and his leash and then later drove her to the airport. She was gone for about 2 months. Jessie settled in very well with us. He liked Ed and I and showed no signs of distress after the first day. I would feed Jessie a whole bowl full of food twice a day, just like Mildred said. I knew this was too much food for a Dachshund, but it was Mildred's dog, not mine and I only did what she told me to. Feeding time became a problem as Jessie would growl and snap at Taffy when I first tried to feed them side by side. So I fed Jessie in the kitchen and Taffy in the living room and that worked out good. Jessie would try to get Taffy's food too, so I had to watch and if Taffy did not eat right away, I would pick up her bowl and put it in the refrigerator. Ed would take both dogs for a walk through the snow and bitter cold several times per day. Ed did not put either one of them on a leash as Taffy would blaze the trail and Jessie would follow in her footsteps. Jessie had a hard time getting over the snow banks as his belly would scrape bottom and he'd have to wiggle his weight off the top of the bank. At first he was very winded and he would have to stop and let him get his breath, but he soon developed stamina and could keep up without frequent stops. Taffy would leave Jessie alone until we were about 50 yards from home, then she would get very jealous about taking Jessie back into her home and would attack and broadside him in the snow. He was very patient and would not fight back.

When Mildred came back home 2 months later, Jessie was 10 lbs lighter from all the exercise and was in much better shape physically. When Mildred saw her thinner dog, she felt remorse instead of being happy over the improvement in his well being. Oh, she said to me, Marie, I forgot to tell you, Jessie is used to eating three big meals a day! Jessie's weight crept back upwards after that.

One day a year or so later, Mildred heard a cry from Jessie and went running out to the backyard and found him laying next to the house and panting

heavily. Mildred recognized that Jessie was having a heart attack. She sat down with him, petting him and holding him tight, telling him that she realized that he was suffering but that there was nothing she could do for him. A few hours later Jessie slipped quietly out of this world. Mildred called one of her sons, who came out and buried him in Harold's vegetable garden. He was 13 years old. She and Harold had taken Jessie away from their next door neighbor when he was still a pup as the neighbor was cruel to him and Harold couldn't abide by seeing such cruelty. Finally one day Harold walked over, told the neighbor that he didn't deserve to have Jessie and that he was taking him. And that was how it was. After that it was Harold's dog. Jessie was a good fellow. His only two indiscretions were that he bit a mailman in the back of the ankle and he nipped a visitor, the Snell's. The Snell's said that they were going to send Mildred the bill as they knew she had insurance. She told them okay, but you'll never be invited back again.

Our son Mike had worked for years for Highland Park Chrysler Plant, but when that plant was being phased out it caused great worries for Mike as it was uncertain where he would go. He had an opportunity to go to the Chrysler plant that was being set up in Ohio. Mike decided to look at conditions in that northern Ohio city so after he worked all night Sandy drove him in his car to Ohio. It took about 2 hours to get there from our home in Sterling Heights. Mike did not like what he saw. It was a mostly rural area, the only housing nearby was a trailer park. And it was so far from us. He declined that offer. He then got a chance to go to the tank plant at 11 1/2 and Van Dyke in Warren, which he took. Later the tank plant was sold to General Dynamics. General Dynamics was a worse employer, as soon as they got in the plant they started cutting wages and benefits. As of this fall the future of the whole tank plant is in question as the government may cut back on tank production.

Towards the end of 1974, Ed and I learned we were soon to be great-grandparents! Linda was expecting her first child in May of 1975. I was excited and wanted to be there for this child's birth so about a week or two before the baby was due I hopped a plane to California. Ed would have liked to come, but he was just too nervous about planes and about being away from home, so he stayed in the apartment where he felt comfortable. Taffy stayed with him and Sandy.



**Douglas Bender Sr.**



My youngest son, Douglas Paul Bender graduated from Oakland University in 1974. Ed and I were so very proud of him, all the more so because he had to work hard to overcome his sluggish study habits of his earlier years and learn in college what he had neglected in high school. We remember so well going to the commencement exercises at the college with him. Unfortunately the seating was limited so our other kids could not go there and experience one of Doug's greatest moments. The first year of college he went out to California, lived with Don and Nancy and completed his first year of college there. We never believed it when he stuck it out and passed all his subjects and was now ready for his second year! It was like a fairy tale. Especially since Doug passed every subject, while my grandson, Warren, passed softball, getting D's in all his other subjects. I couldn't believe either Warren or Doug's behavior!

## 1975



**Nancy, Nicole, Linda & Marie – 4 Generations**

About 2 weeks later the big day came. At first Linda had gone into the hospital briefly a number of times, thinking she was in labor, but no luck. My sister Mildred was hoping that Linda's baby would be born on her birthday, May 3rd. Finally on May 4th the doctor said the baby was late enough and induced labor. Little Nicole was born on the 5th of May, 1975. I was right there at the hospital and got to see her as soon as she was born, cleaned up and placed in the nursery. My first grandchild, what a thrill! But also a bit scary too, as one can hear the clock of life ticking away more with each new generation.



**Nicole**

Linda named the baby Nicole Marie. I got to give the baby her first bath and I got to hold her often while I was out there. The time flew by all too quickly and

I soon had to say goodbye to Nancy, Linda and Baby Nicole. But we managed to get a 4 generation picture before I went. I told Ed all about it when I got home.

Right after I got home the manager said that the doctor who owned the apartments got a divorce and his wife won control of the apartments and that she was significantly raising the rent in August. Mrs. Fortis, the manager was also making snide comments about our having Taffy, even though there were other dogs in the complex.



**Doug, Karen & Marie**



**Marie, Ed,  
Shelley**



**Karen, Ed,  
Shelley**



**Karen, Marie, Ed,  
Doug and Shelley**



**Ed, Sandy & Marie**



**Sandy & Taffy**



**Sandy & Werner**

**All these pictures were taken outside and inside 28558 Dino Circle, Chesterfield Twp**

At that point Ed, Sandy and I decided to look for a new home, a place to call our own. After looking around we finally found a brand new condo home in Chesterfield Township off Sugarbush and Cotton Roads. We found the elevation we liked on my sister Mildred's birthday. We put a down payment on it that day, and in July, 1975 we moved into our new home at 28558 Dino Circle in Mt. Clemens area, Chesterfield Township. Vicki Klassen sold us the condo. We all really liked Vicki, she had such a wonderful sense of humor. We all used to drop into the model before and after we bought a home in order to sit and chat with Vicki.

Ed, Sandy and I went to the closing on the condo. Vicki had told Ed, Sandy and I that she was processing the mortgage only in Sandy's name as Ed and I were too old to qualify for a mortgage and the entire mortgage could be turned down if all three names were on it. When we went to the closing and Ed and I didn't have to sign anything, Ed got really upset. He thought his name was on the mortgage too. Evidently he didn't understand when Vicki told us about the mortgage.

We got a good deal on that home. The government had a special program going at that time in which a first time buyer would qualify for a \$1500 payment from the government when he or she bought the condo. Sandy got that special government payment as it was her first home. We would not have qualified for this if all 3 names were on the mortgage. Sandy also qualified to put only 5% down as she was a first time buyer. It was called a Majic mortgage. Our payments were \$268.00 per month. Our association fee was \$20.00 per month, which was raised to \$50 a month just as we were moving out.

It was a comfortable house, with a living room, family room, country kitchen, large bath, 2 bedrooms and a full basement. It had a beautiful view, we faced a horse farm in the rear. The back yard was quite rural in flavor. Too rural in some regards. Several times I could have died when Taffy came home full of horse dung that she had just rolled in! Oh my God! was my first response. The second was to take her to the laundry tub for a quick wash job. Once she came home utterly defeated. I knew there was something wrong just by the way she carried herself. When I opened the door, I knew why. She had just gotten sprayed full force by a skunk! First I thought I was going to throw up. But then I knew I had to do something fast, so I picked her up and carted her to the laundry tub for a thorough and quick wash job.

We had one complaint about this house, however. In summer the Air Force jets continually roared over head, one every 3 minutes. Their shadow appeared right over our house evenings as they came in for a landing. When we complained to Vicki about this, she said straight faced that they were not supposed to be flying over our house, that they were supposed to be flying over the water. She said the pilots knew this, so that only the inexperienced ones flew over our house as they didn't remember the correct flight path. Then she would break out with a little grin on her face that said, I gotcha on that one!

We all laughed nervously over another tale. It seems our house was not the first to stand there. The first one was blown away by the tornado which struck Cotton Rd in 1964! Boy, that was some tornado! Sandy was in the hospital when the tornado hit and suddenly lots of tornado victims started filling up her ward. One man came to visit a tornado victim in her room, comforting her as she had insulation just blown into her skin from head to toe by the tornado. She said she was preparing dinner when suddenly the cabinets came loose and started coming at her. But they never hit her for she started floating through the air too. She finally came down about 25 feet away when a big tree in her front yard stopped the house's flight. She found one child laying on the ground near her, and after a frantic search found her new born face down in a big puddle. Miraculously, he was still breathing. All the husbands were trying to get home to their families but couldn't as the National Guard had cordoned off the area. The man who came to visit Sandy's room mate was very brave. He

went around comforting the victims when he himself had just lost his wife and a new baby who was about to be born. He said he considered himself lucky that his two sons survived, although they had shattered bones. That man's big decision that week was whether to have the undertaker take the baby or not. He decided that he wanted to see his baby. The next question was one casket or two. The baby was buried cradled in its mother's arms.

Doug got his first professional job as an assistance payments worker for the State of Michigan, working at the Kercheval and Algonquin office. He had a humorous little old lady for one of his first supervisors. She had a little too much to drink for lunch, came back to the office afterwards, stopped to talk to Doug and put her one foot in his wastebasket. She was too sluiced to realize what she was doing.

The main feature of Doug's office was the bomb threats. That office spent hours every month sitting on the curb or in the local bars playing cards while the security and the supervisors checked the place out for bombs. And the dress code of the workers was abominable! Sandy mentioned to Doug about how skuzzy the clients were dressed and Doug replied that they were not clients, they were the workers!

Doug got his car stolen right out of their parking lot at work. He heard his alarm go off, but by the time he got downstairs, the car was history. He then bought a nice aqua Datsun hatchback with the insurance.

One other excitement at that office. There was a blind man who sold newspapers on the side of the building. Everyone liked him and would stop and chat with him. One day some mean bastard came along and blew him away in broad daylight.

Doug had an apartment for a short time at 16 and Harper, but it was too far from work so he moved to Alter and Charlevoix. Sandy, Ed and I would feel our skin crawl when we stayed there after dark. That was some neighborhood! Doug's little upstairs apartment was charming and he had it furnished so nicely, but the natives scared us to death. We would look over our shoulder from his house to his car, moving fast to minimize our exposure. One other nasty thing about that home, it had rats in the basement.

## 1976



**Mrs Pacheco, Freddie, Donna, Nancy & Don**



**Donna on phone to GG**

In February of 1976 I got another call from Nancy. Our granddaughter Donna was getting married soon, to Freddie Pacheco. I had to hear all the details by phone as I was not able to be there in person. I talked to Donna the morning she got married and then later in that day. Donna got married in Nancy's house in a lovely little ceremony. They sent me some pictures. Donna looked so lovely in her wedding dress. They moved in with Freddie's parents for awhile until they could afford a place of their own.



**Marie Bender, Nancy Stephens, Donna & Michelle Pacheco**

Donna's first child, Michelle Marie Pacheco was born on the 25th of September, 1976. Michelle always reminded Sandy of Ed's mother Elizabeth Ott Bender, but in a prettier sort of way. She was a very good looking & personable little girl. I went out to California again in the first year of Michelle's life and had a 4 generation picture taken with this sweet little one too.



**Donna & Michelle**



**Freddie**



**Michelle Pacheco**

Don soon gave Freddie a job in his store delivering furniture. This gave them a more stable income so they could have a better standard of living. Donna was very frugal with her money and it was amazing what she was able to purchase on her budget.

A few years later Freddie was not as nice to Donna as he should have been, she warned him she wouldn't put up with his behavior and when he didn't change, they separated. Donna made a splendid go of it on her own, owning much more than most other single parents.



**Karen & Doug Bender**

Doug started telling us about this girl he met at social services. He heard she was on a baseball team, so he used to go and watch her play. He wondered how he could get her to be interested in him? Finally she noticed him and a conversation developed.

Her name was Karen Otter. Karen told her friend at social services, "I met this real young guy who's interested in me". Her friend said that Doug wasn't all that young and Karen replied that he seemed awfully young to her. Karen lived on the east side of Detroit in a flat off Gratiot and Six Mile. Doug and she started dating regularly and in January they announced their engagement.

On the coldest, snowiest day of the year, Ed, Sandy and I went out to the Otter family's farm in Waltz, on Otter Road to meet Doug's fiancée's family. They were the most charming of people. Ed and I and Sandy were delighted with them. They were so warm and friendly that you soon felt that you knew these people all of your life.





Karen and Doug asked Mike, Bill, Sandy and Craig to be in the wedding party, so shopping for a dress and tuxedo selection and fittings soon followed. Karen chose the most beautiful candlelight colored wedding gown. It looked so lovely on her! Sandy wore a peach colored gown. I bought a lovely yellow floor length, mother of the groom dress. It really looked nice. The only one who was out of character was Ed. His tuxedo clashed with his complexion.



**Karen & Douglas Bender**



**Louise & Clarence Otter**

The entire family almost had a lynching party instead of a wedding on the big day. The men took Doug's house on Waltz Road in Waltz to dress. The women gathered at the Otter house on Otter Road. We got all gussied up and headed out for the church about 45 minutes before the big day was to commence. We all stood at the back of the church, checking to make sure that all was in order. It was. Except for one minor detail. The best man was no where to be found! It was now 10 minutes before the hour and no sign of Mike! Then 5 minutes to count down and no Mike. Then the church bells began to ring out their joyful tidings and on the stroke of the bell, in walks Mike, cool as a cucumber! Mrs. Otter was first in line to lynch him! Mike looks around at everyone getting lined up, listens to Mrs. Otter cry out, where were you, we were all getting so nervous, afraid you wouldn't show!, and then remarks, "Maybe I shouldn't have worked all day today, huh? Traffic was murder on the way here". Something more than traffic was almost murder! But like Don said, an inch is a good as a mile, and Mike was there before the last bell tolled.

It was a beautiful wedding. Little Natalie and Mahrya were the flower girls and we all had to kind of keep our eye on Mahrya as she was so young. But she tried so hard to be good!



**Edward & Marie Bender**

I was so steamed at my kids that afternoon, I could have wrung their necks! After the church ceremony I went over to Doug's house while they were taking pictures in the field behind Doug's house to use the bathroom. Doug let me in as I had no key to the house. While Ed and I were in the house, the wedding party started getting in their cars. I told the kids to be sure and wait for us as Ed and I had no idea where on Telegraph Road the reception hall was. Okay, the kids said, we'll wait for you and you follow us in your car! Well, about 5 minutes later a rust colored car pulls into the end of the procession and the kids say, that's mom and dad, let's go! So the wedding procession wound its way down Will Carlton Road towards Telegraph. But the rust car was not Ed and I! We were still in the house. And as I was coming out of the house, I was really steamed at those kids! Ed, they're leaving without us! I said. Come on, let's get in our car quick so we don't lose them! I don't know where to go! So Ed jumps out of the house, and I follow along right behind me and pull the door shut afterwards. I started to walk towards the porch stairs and guess what? Yup! My dress is stuck good and fast in the door! And the door is locked. And Ed and I don't have the key! I gently tugged on my dress. Forget it. It's jammed in their good and tight! I'm not about to go anywhere! I had steam coming out my ears as I watched the wedding procession slowly drive off into the sunset!

Mike, Doug, Karen and Sandy walked into the reception hall and started greeting guests. They wanted to set up the receiving line, but no Ed and Marie. Where is mom and dad? Sandy asked. They should have found a parking spot by now. You'd better go out and see what's the matter, Sandy said to Mike. Mike was soon back. Know that rust car? It wasn't dad's! I'd better go back and try to find them! I hope their not driving up and down Telegraph lost! Mike said. He needn't have worried. I was safe and sound at Doug's front door! A key was found, Mike managed to wipe the grin off his face that he thought I didn't see and we were on our way. Mike's only comment to Sandy when he got back to the hall, was, "Boy, mom's steamed!"

All was soon forgotten in the excitement of the wedding reception. We all lined up in the receiving line, greeted our many guests and then were seated and the celebration began. The music was nice and the food excellent. We ate Mr.

Otter's prime beef that he was forced to process through a commercial processing plant due to some dumb Health Dept rule as he was supposedly feeding the general public. Since when is your immediate family the general public?"

Doug and Karen slipped out after midnight and around 1 am a tired, happy crowd started gradually dispersing. We all met at the Otters the next day for breakfast and to watch Doug and Karen open up the wedding presents. Doug and Karen had been given the honeymoon suite at the Renaissance center as a wedding present from Karen's brother.

At Thanksgiving of that year Doug and Karen had some most happy news to share with us, their first child was on the way and was due around the end of July! How thrilled we all were! It had been so long since we had a baby in the family! We could hardly wait!



**Doug & Karen on Waltz Rd**



**Werner Wilhelm**

On December 1, 1976 Sandy got a telephone call from Werner Wilhelm, the owner of Wil Mar Convalescent Home, asking her for a date. Sandy accepted and they set their first date for the Shelby Inn at Mound and West Utica Roads for December 4, 1976. They had lunch together and then Sandy came back home to Chesterfield to go out with the family as we were celebrating her birthday a day early that year.



**Harold (Shorty) Marie, Mildred, and Bill Dahl**

Marie, Edward and Sandy were invited to Marie's brother Bill's home on December 4, 1976. Also present were Marie's youngest brother Shorty and his wife Jean. Mildred, Sonny and Doris were also there that day. We had a nice meal and then settled down to a fun card game most of the afternoon. We all took family pictures to commemorate that day. Bill was always so much fun. He was so funny that when he laughed his laugh was so infectious that even if you didn't hear the joke you had to laugh because Bill's laugh made you laugh. And boy, could he ever tell a good joke! We just loved listening to Uncle Bill he was so entertaining. His wife of many years, Dorothy was a very nice person but unlike Bill she didn't have a funny bone in her body. Debbie and Sharon, Bill and Dorothy's daughters, inherited Bill's sense of humor. The three of them could be rolling in the isles with laughter over one of Bill's funnies, but often Dorothy just never understood what was so funny. All of the Dahl children had a marvelous sense of humor. When one got together with this family laughter was soon to follow.



**Bill & Dorothy**



**Bill, Dorothy and Shorty**



**Debbie**



**Sharon**

## 1977



**Donna, Greg & Linda White**



**Linda & Donald**

A year later Linda got married to Gregory White, a very fine fellow and very compatible with Linda on the 26th of March, 1977. Gregory soon adopted Linda's little daughter, Nicole. Greg accepted Nicole as his own, but not so his parents and grandparents. They wanted him to have a child of his own blood. This was not important to Greg, however, and he was very happy with his little family.

Greg went in with Don as a furniture refinisher and Don soon taught him the trade and gave him most of the referrals as Don was busy establishing the Walker Road store. Greg then went out on his own shortly thereafter. There was a little bitterness in the separation, as often happens in these circumstances.



**Donna, Craig, Linda, Diane Parks, Warren, Nancy & Don Stephens**

Warren married Diane Parks and they moved into a cute little apartment not too far from where Linda lived. Diane later moved with Warren to Washington, D.C. when he started law school there. She worked while he went to school. Things did not work out too well there, and not too long after that Warren and Diane separated.

Nancy was upset when Warren had divorced Sally and married Diane. At Linda's 21st birthday celebration in a nice restaurant Nancy got all dewy eyed and said that Sally was like Nancy was on the inside and that Diane was what

Nancy was like on the outside and that Nancy wished that Warren would have stayed with Sally as she like her very much.



**Linda Stephens**

Linda got disgusted with Nancy, saying this was her birthday, and couldn't we have a good time instead of worrying about Warren?

In the summer time we would go to the lake just one mile away by car and go swimming at the foot of Cotton Road, Ed, Sandy, Bill and I and naturally, Taffy too. One time we took her out waist deep then let her go to see if she could swim. She swam really well and was not too concerned about the deep water as long as we stayed close to her. Then she spotted a German Shepherd and started swimming toward him. He looked at her, let out one good deep bark and her eyes bulged, she turned on a dime, and rapidly swam in the opposite direction! When we got out of the water Taffy found a pile of really rotten fish and rolled in it. Another fast wash job when we got her home!



**Edward & Marie**



**Marie**



**Sandy**

One time Ed and I went to Metropolitan Beach in the middle of the day and went golfing, then decided to just enjoy a leisurely stroll along the beach. We walked for about a mile, when as a sudden we walked into an area of really rotten fish. The smell seemed to appear from nowhere! Ed and I turned around and walked back as fast as we could, but the damage was done. We both smelled as bad as the beach! All I could think of was that I wanted to get home quick, take a bath and change clothes. We walked back to the car and started for home. On the way home we were passing K-Mart and Ed decided to run in quick for a roll of film. I told him to make it quick, that I was staying in the car. Ed jumped out of the car, went in, up to the camera counter and was looking at some merchandise. Suddenly, one of the girls at the counter said to the other girl, "Whew!!! What STINKS!!!!" The first girl replied, "Shh!!!!", and pointed at Ed!!!



Bill lived just across the driveway from us, a little too close. In between Bill and I lived a young overly painted woman of about 38 with 4 daughters who brought home a new "uncle!" almost every week. She was a wild one! In the end she moved out to an "uncle's!" house and left her children alone in the condo! She used to drive Sandy nuts as she would rev her car every morning right under Sandy's bedroom window at 4:30 am.

Bill loved his new condo. Sandy painted and wallpapered it up in a masculine vein to Bill's liking. He had blue sailing ships on the living room wall, and tasteful semi-nudes in the bathroom. His family room had very cozy dark paneling. Bill kept his expensive stereo in the family room and the 2 TV's in the living room.

I used to go over to his place every week and straighten up his rooms, Bachelors, "oh Boy!". Bill told his friend, John Fries, who lived down the block that I straightened up his place for him, so John asked me if I would do it for him too. I did, every other week and earned \$5.00 per hour for my labors. John's place was easy to clean as he was basically tidy. I continued to clean for him for awhile when we moved to Base Street in New Baltimore. I bought our \$500, 25" console TV with the money I earned at John's.



**Marie, Shelley and Ed in front of Bill's condo in Chesterfield**

I had a very scary thing happen to me when I was cleaning Bill's house. I knew I had a problem with hypoglycemia and when I would get weak and dizzy I knew my sugar was low and that I should eat something. One day I was working at Bill's and was almost finished when suddenly I started feeling weak and goofy from not enough sugar. I'm almost done, I told myself, and I'm going to finish as I don't want to come back after lunch. I suddenly found myself standing in Bill's yard, not knowing where I was or how I got there or where to go. I was almost like partially paralyzed and couldn't get myself to go back into the house! Boy was that scary. I finally, with all of my mental strength, willed myself to get back into Bill's house and I then went to my house and ate real fast. That was the last time I kept going when my blood sugar was low. That was the worst low blood sugar reaction I ever had, and was that ever frightening!

Ed and I visited Bill's place often and he would play records for us and we would take him to the restaurant down the road, the Riviera or the Acropolis.

Bill was most generous, and insisted on paying for us most of the time. Ed loved his Bill, he never refused to take Bill wherever he wanted to go, to visit friends, go to the afternoon matinee, or visit record shops; Bill loved his music!

Bill was a very honest and kind hearted man, he always wanted to buy us something, or help us with monthly finances. He was probably the kindest hearted of our children, the most generous and outgoing.

On July 28, 1977 we got a call from Doug saying that Karen had gone into labor. Mike was putting up the TV aerial at the time, so as we watched him put up the antenna, we waited expectantly for the next call from Doug. That second call was long in coming. Finally Doug called and said they were taking the baby caesarean as Karen had been in labor for over 30 hours and the baby still couldn't come on its own. So little Michelle Marie Bender was born on the 28th of July, 1977 in the evening. The next morning all of us went to Seaway Hospital in Trenton in order to take a peek at our new addition. She was so cute and so peaceful looking, lying there sound asleep. Sandy took pictures of her through the nursery window.



**Shelley Bender**



**Shelley & Marie**



**Shelley & Karen**



**Karen, Doug, Alvira & Shelley**



**Louise, Clarence & Shelley**

Ed, Sandy and I went to visit Karen and tell her how cute the baby was, then we went to a nearby restaurant with Doug for a late breakfast. At first Doug was a little disappointed that it wasn't a boy, but when he thought about it for a few minutes, he got a smile and look of wonder on his face and said, I have a little girl!



**Sandy, Linda, Shelley, Clarence & the Minister**



**Alvira, Louise, Shelley & Karen**



**Karen, Doug & Shelley**

We all gathered together in Doug and Karen's cute little house in Waltz for the baptism. Karen dressed Michelle up in an adorable christening dress sewn by Edward Bender's sister, Mildred Bender Neff and then we all walked across the street to the church for the christening. Sandy was one of the Godmothers. Michelle was christened in the St. John Lutheran Church in Waltz, the fourth generation of the Otter family to be a member of that church. That church was founded by the German settlers who came here from the old country, and the Otter family was among those first settlers.



**Mildred Neff & Karen**



**Bender Edward & Sandy**



**Marie & Sandy**



**Edward, Marie and Shelley**

After the christening we all gathered in Doug and Karen's house for a nice dinner and get together. Present that day was the extended Otter and Neumann families as well as our family.



**Marie, Shelley, Ed**



**Marie and Shelley**



**Shelley Bender**



**see my measles!**

Shelley was a good baby, that is, until evening. She had a habit of crying for several hours each night before settling down and going to sleep. That was quite a trial for Doug and Karen. We have a really cute picture of Shelley holding her shirt up in the air. She had a red rash on her tummy and at first we thought it was the measles, so we dubbed this picture, "see my measles!!"

Doug and Karen had the cutest little house in Waltz, which Doug did major repairs on while they were living there. The house had originally been a gas station and belonged to Karen's uncle Elwood Otter until his death a few years before. Mr. Otter, Karen's father, had been executor of his brother's estate and sold the home reasonable to Doug and Karen before they got married. Karen put her \$3000 savings in it as a down payment, then her Uncle Louie lent her another \$10,000 at very low interest rates in order to fix it up nice. Doug fixed it up real nice, but Karen had put up with an unbelievable mess while Doug was bringing the house in order. But she seldom complained, instead complimenting Doug on each new improvement.

There is a sad story attached to this home, however. Before Elwood Otter owned it a young woman with an infant lived there. She suddenly got cancer, and the whole town would see her sitting in her house, rocking her little baby and crying day after day. She soon succumbed to the cancer.

One day soon after Doug and Karen were married we took a ride to Waltz to look at Doug's new home, then decided to stop in and say hello to Grandma Neumann, Mrs. Otter's mother, as she was such a warm friendly person. Grandma Neumann welcomed us into her home warmly, but within a few minutes kind of forgot who we were and was then scared about the strangers in her house. We at that point explained who we were and then she remembered and was content again. A little later she looked at Ed with fear as she once again forgot who he was.

Grandma could remember anything that happened years ago, but due to her advanced age (88) and arteriosclerosis, her recent memory was flawed. So she could never remember Doug's name as he just entered the family, but she could remember others who had been with the family for years. So to her Doug became "what's his name". That moniker "what's his name" bugged Doug to no end! We thought it was real cute, but not Doug!



**Alvira Neumann & Shelley Bender**

Grandma Neumann could speak fluent German and translate German documents into English. Her grandparents came from Pommerania in what is now Poland, but was then Germany. Grandma Neumann would get real mad if you told her that one of her relatives were polish as she insisted she was pure German. But her ancestors lived right on the polish border and did have a polish member or two among their descendents.

Grandma Neumann had had a real rough life. Her husband died as a result of an infection he got from harvesting wheat with a black fungus in it. He got a pimple on his face near his nose, and within 3 weeks he was dead. Poor Grandma Neumann had 2 children and Karen's mother on the way. She had to support herself for the next 20 years taking in wash and doing housework. She was a wonderful woman with a heart of gold. She was the organist for the church for over 50 years. Her grandson Kevin has taken up where she left off.

When Grandma Neumann was 90 years old she got real feeble. Her family were afraid they were going to have to put her in a nursing home as she was so difficult to care for as her health kept deteriorating. They found a Lutheran home they could use if they had to. But the 3 daughters persevered and were able to care for her at home right up until the end, but at great emotional and physical cost. Grandma Neumann developed a real high fever, then quietly slipped away.

We went to the funeral parlor and met the extended Otter family, including one cousin who was raised by Punch's family. This cousin had hilarious tales to tell concerning the Otter family history. He told of one time when he waved to a plane from Otter Road and the plane actually landed nearby and the pilot got out and talked to him! Another story was about the "wild 80", 80 acres where nothing seemed to grow. That 80 acres had Indian artifacts on it, and may have been an Indian burial ground. Someone later came along and drilled for oil on that property. But it was useless to grow crops on.

Another hilarious story was about the Otter relative who was a rum runner on the Detroit River during the prohibition. One time the coast guard figured that they had contraband on board and went after them. The Otter relative figured there was only one alternative that would work, change course, head right for the Coast Guard boat and ram it broadside! They did precisely that and the



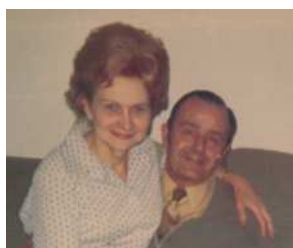
Coast Guard forgot about the rum runners for awhile because they were too busy swimming ashore!

Grandma Neumann was buried next to her husband in the Waltz cemetery just down the road from Doug and Karen's first house. Ninety year old Grandma lies next to her 23 year old husband. So incongruous!



**Edward, Marie and Shelley Bender**

One day Ed parked in a handicapped spot while he and I went into K-Mart. When we were done shopping and returned to the car, there was a ticket, big as life, on the windshield! Ed was so crestfallen! But then I got a real good idea. Take me over to the police station, I told him and I'll see if I can't get that ticket fixed! So I went over there, and as I got out of the car and with my bandage still on my leg, I limped into the station and told him I had parked there because I had a bad foot. They tore up the ticket! Ed and I saved \$25.00 with my grand performance.



**Dorothy & Bill Dahl**

In May of 1977 we went to visit my sister in law Dorothy who was in the hospital. She had been in and out of the hospitals most of that year, and had been able to attend her daughter Debbie's wedding, but she had looked terrible, so thin and white and drawn. She had always been thin, but when we saw her in the hospital in May, she was about 70 lbs, tops. She said it hurt so bad to lay there as all her bones were sticking out so sharply. Her skull was that of a skeleton. And her idiot doctor told her that she didn't have cancer, that it was just her nerves. Suddenly, two weeks before she died they found cancer in every cell of her body. Her death was a real horror for her family. One side of her face turned completely black at the end. Debbie, 6 months pregnant, ran out of the room in horror. She had to take a leave of absence from her job from that time on as she had been through so much with



Dorothy's final illness that she needed a rest. Dorothy died on May 20, 1977, only 58 years old. (She was born on June 19, 1918.)

Dorothy's brother had died two years before. He had lost his eyesight to diabetes and was in very poor health for a number of years. Bobby hadn't worked in a long time due to his poor health. One day his friends took him to Canada for lunch to get him out of the house. He had a pleasant lunch and on the way home fell asleep, then later slumped over. Bobby's asleep, huh, said the driver? I'm afraid its an eternal rest, the passenger said. But for gosh sakes, don't let the kids here know and let's try to get him across the border as a sleeping passenger. It will take a book full of red tape to get him back home if we let the border know he died in Canada! They got away with it.

Bobby's funeral was a chiller. When they went to close the casket his mother, Mrs. Dolato, cradled the dead boy in her arms and let out the highest pitched, most spine chilling wail I have ever heard. It made my skin crawl! She had to be pried away from her son and forcibly removed from the funeral parlor to her car. Bobby lived with her and was a very big part of her life. Mrs. Dolato died the next year. She just suddenly sort of gave out. It was a big surprise to all of us as she looked well. Dorothy died the next year. Dorothy inherited all of Mrs. Dolato's money as the sole surviving child. Bill inherited it upon Dorothy's death. Mrs. Dolato's husband had left her comfortable as she was able to support herself and Bobby and Dorothy all through the years without ever having to go out to work.

## 1978

Shelley was such an infant yet, only 4 month's old when Doug and Karen gave us the big news, another little one was on the way! We were thrilled to have another baby, but in a way Sandy kind of felt sorry for Shelley that she would have to share her mother with another baby when she was still such a baby yet herself!



**Michael Bender II**



**Sandy & Michael Bender**



**Shelley, Doug, Mike & Karen**



**Michael**

This time we had an exact date for the next one's birth months ahead of time. It was decided to have Mikey on the 20th of July, 1978. Sandy asked Karen if she was tempted to have Mikey on Shelley's birthday, but Karen said no, that she wanted each child to have his own birthday. This time around the family was fully prepared for the big event and were around when Mikey was born. We saw him right after they put him in the bassinet. We smiled when we saw him, he had the same nose as Shelley did! A cute little upturned one! Shelley came to visit her little brother in the hospital too, but she had no comprehension of what was going on or who he was.

Ed, Sandy and I watched Shelley that week. We had babysat Shelley a number of times that past year as well. We had a portable crib we put her in in Sandy's room. During the day I would sometimes let the new baby sleep in the front closet as it was a very safe, secure place for her and she seemed secure there.



**Mike, Ed, Shelley and Sandy**



**Ed, Shelley & Marie**



**Shelley & Marie**



**Shelley**

Ed decided to vacuum Karen's rugs for her while she was laid up. While Ed was vacuuming the front bedroom, the door suddenly swung shut. Ed pushed on the door to open it, but it wouldn't budge. He thought it was stuck and pushed harder. It was still stuck. When he pushed real hard it suddenly gave a little. He looked on the other side of the door and couldn't believe his eyes. On the other side little Shelley was holding the door shut and was so strong that she had at first prevented him from opening up the door!

Right after Karen got home from the hospital, she wanted Shelley back, so we brought her over in the afternoon. We put her in her highchair and proceeded to feed her lunch. Suddenly there was a pitiful, high pitched little cry from the bedroom. Shelley turned her head around and looked toward the bedroom in absolute wonderment! What was that? She soon found out what that was, her new baby brother Michael Douglas Bender.

## Mike's Baptism



**Doug, Shelley, Mikey & Karen     Mike, Sue, Mikie, Louise & minister**



**Mikie, Shelley & Sandy**



**Mikie, Mike & Edward Bender**



**Shelley, Dougie & Mikie**

Michael was baptized shortly after birth too, also in St. John Church in Waltz. We went to Doug and Karen afterwards, but this time the house was much more pleasant as almost all of the work had been completed. Again the extended Otter and Neumann family came over and we had a most pleasant afternoon of eating, drinking and just plain enjoying each other's company.



**50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary – Mildred & Sonny**

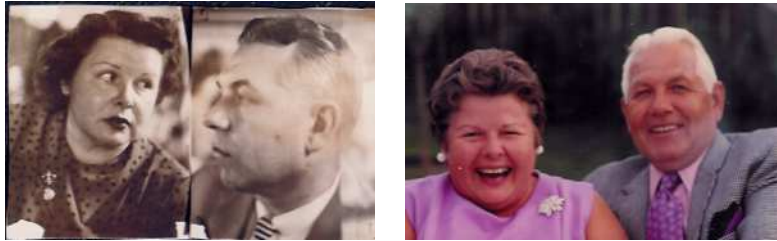


**Doris, Mildred & Sonny Stocker**



**Bill, Ann, Marie, Ed, Elenore, Herman, Mildred, Sonny, Jean & Shorty**

On the 5th of June, 1978 Mildred and George (Sunny) Stocker celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary at Gino's Surf on the water in Mt. Clemens.



**Elenore & Herman McKinin**

Ed, I and Sandy went. Herman and Elenore had come up from Florida to help celebrate. It was a wonderful celebration and a most pleasant one. The day was perfect, sunny and the temperature just right. The Lord certainly smiled upon them that memorable day! At first Sunny didn't want all the fuss, but once the celebration began, he was the one who enjoyed it the most. Poor Mildred had an awful sinus headache that day, but she still enjoyed her 50th anniversary.



**Px Herman took  
Mikie & Sandy**



**Herman & Elenore**



**Mildred, Shorty, Marie, Elenore**



**Marie, Ed, Elenore, Marianne  
& Sandy at Shorty's 6/78**

Poor Uncle Herman had just learned that he had cancer and he'd been receiving regular treatments in Florida. But he knew his days were growing shorter and despite very poor health and much discomfort, he was determined to come back up here to Michigan and to see all of us for one last time. Herman had a hard time expressing his emotions, but he was able to convey to each and everyone of us how much we meant to him. It was a very emotionally moving experience, that last visit. For we all knew it was going to have to last for a long, long time. Herman watched Sandy taking pictures of the crowd at Aunt Jean's and Uncle Shorty's and he asked Sandy for the camera as he said she was always taking pictures of others and no one ever took a picture of her. So she gave him the camera and he took one of the nicest pictures we have of Sandy. We were all so sad that day as we spent our last visit with Herman.



**Herman Mc Kinin**



Herman passed away shortly after that, on the 14th of September, 1978, just 5 months short of his 50th wedding anniversary. He had a premonition that he wouldn't make it for he gave Elenore a beautiful new diamond ring for her 49th anniversary, and told her, he didn't know whether he would make it for the 50th and he wanted her to have this ring from him.

Herman turned a deathly white when the doctor first told him he had cancer. Herman had many brothers and sisters who had cancer, as well as his mother, and he knew the meaning of the word. The cancer had metastasized and there was no hope of recovery. They think it had started in the colon, but they weren't sure.

Herman was in and out of the hospital after that. On the 14th of September, 1978 he had just come home from the hospital by ambulance and a home health care nurse was at his house about to help him get settled in. Herman felt awful. The nurse sent Elenore to the drugstore for his prescriptions. When Elenore got back Herman was in awful shape. He then started having a heart attack and told Elenore to call the EMS. The nurse told her not to. Poor Elenore was torn in two. Herman then gave her a command to call the EMS. She knew by his voice just how critical he was, so she went to the phone. The nurse got to the phone first and called Herman's doctor. She told the doctor what was transpiring. The doctor told Elenore to be kind and let Herman go to heaven as it was time. Herman died there half in and half out of the entrance to the home.



**Shorty**



**Marie**



**Dave, Laurie, Elenore,?, Herman**



**Marianne & Frank**

My brother Shorty and I went to Florida for the funeral. Poor Shorty was in a wheelchair and his mobility was greatly limited, but he wanted to go. Sandy was supposed to go with us, but she got so nervous about flying that at the very last minute she backed out. Herman had a lovely funeral. All his

grandchildren had come back to Florida for the funeral. In fact Laurie and her family were on the same plane with us. Herman lies buried in Florida a few miles from Elenore's home.



**Michael Joachim Pacheco**



**Freddie & Michael Pacheco**

On the 3rd of October, 1978 Donna's second child, Michael Joachim Pacheco was born. He was very undersized and his arms and legs were pitifully thin. But he had such an engaging personality, though, and twisted his way into all of our hearts. He bore a strong resemblance to Craig and to Bill when they were young boys.



**Aspen behind Marie Bender on Grant Park**

In 1978 Ed needed a new car as the Satellite Sebring was a bucket of rust. But we didn't have the money so Ed continued to drive it, bad ball joints, front end and all. Mike, a most wonderful generous son, took pity on us and after shopping the new car lots for weeks, surprised Ed and I by taking us to Sterling Heights Dodge & telling us he was buying us a new Dodge Aspen. He told Ed to pick out the colors he liked and Mike ordered us our own brand new custom Dodge! Ed chose burnt orange exterior with a brown interior. Ed loved that car and went everywhere with it. We had such a good time driving around in that car, in fact, that Mike was shocked at the mileage that that car had in a few years time. Slow down a bit! Mike said, that car has to last a few more years. But we didn't slow down one bit. Ed and I enjoyed our many outings with that car and when Ed died 4 years later that car had over 71,000 miles on it. I'm still driving it today in 1989, but it really is getting decrepit.

Before the Dodge Ed had the Satellite Sebring that he bought from Mike. Ed said that that car was too big, but it had everything on it and Mike sold it to us so very reasonable and it was in mint condition, so we couldn't turn down that offer. We went through upstate New York at 85 miles per hour for over 8 hours in that car. It really rode smooth!



Before the Sebring Ed had the 70 Plymouth Duster that Sandy had talked him into buying as she got a real good deal on it, then had to buy another Duster as the custom ordered one took forever and she was without a car. So Ed bought the Duster for \$2300. Sandy's Duster was blue, Ed's was burnt orange with a black interior. He hated the black interior, but he had no choice.



**Marie next to the Duster**



**Ed & Marie looking at bake goods on the trunk of the Valiant**

Prior to that he had a 1966 red Valiant. He loved that car. He had jewed down Manicotti at 9:00 pm on a slow day in a slow week and Mike was trying to decide whether to sell a car for practically nothing or not. He finally ended up selling Ed that car as Ed was not about to leave the show room until he got that 1966 Valiant for \$1800 out the door. And that he did. And in the bargain Mike gave him \$600 for a Ford Falcon he just bought for \$600 that had been in a terrible car wreck and now ran sideways on three legs. That definitely was one of Ed's better nights!

Prior to that Ed had a 1962 Ford Falcon that he had bought from Jerome Duncan. That was a nice car. It had a manual choke that enabled us to start that car in the dead of the winter.



**Bill in front of the 1959 Opal Kadett**

Ed had been forced to turn in his 1959 Opel on the Falcon as he had taken the Opel for an oil change at a gas station at 8 mile and Mound and they had forgot

to put new oil in the crank case and Ed had driven several miles before the oil light went on. Ed figured the engine was half shot after that, and with the car never wanting to start, he finally gave up a car which I considered to be a real lemon, but which he was very attached to.

An Opel story that bears retelling here. Ed could never start those darn Opels in the winter, neither his nor Sandy's so he used to put a heavy delivery van blanket over each engine and put a car repair light inside under the blanket as a means of raising the temperature under the hood. Ed was always very careful about the placement of the blanket and the light so as to not have the light touch the blanket or anything under the hood. One night Ed was so bone weary that he asked Bill to put the light under the hood. He explained all the precautions to Bill first. Bill, never a stickler for doing things right, just went out, put the light up against the hoses, then plunked the blanket right on top of the light, went inside and hopped in bed. About 1 am, Sandy hears the doorbell and run down to answer it. A prim, well dressed woman is at the door and she informs Sandy that one of the cars is on fire. Sandy yelled to Ed, who put his pants on, grabbed his overcoat and came running out. Sandy called the fire dept. When she got outside, Ed had lifted the hood and was putting the fire out with the parts of the blanket that wasn't burnt yet. Ed had the fire out by the time the fire department got there. Ed had told Sandy to wake Mike up and get him out of the bedroom that was right next to the burning car in case the gas tank should blow up. But Sandy was not able to wake Mike right away, and in 10 minutes the crisis was over. The Fire Department were very nasty and said they found a light under the hood and what was it doing there. Sandy's car was completely burnt out under the hood and was taken to the Opel dealer in Pontiac for repairs.

Ed, however, we soon discovered, was burned in a number of places. Sandy said a prayer, pulled out the choke just so on Ed's car, and miraculously, the darn car started. Sandy then drove Ed to St. Joseph's hospital for treatment of his burns. They dressed, treated and wrapped up Ed's fingers, most of which were burned black in spots. His top coat was burned through in several spots, we learned to our horror when he got in the light. We were so very lucky that Ed wasn't hurt worse and so very upset with Bill's slip shoddiness which caused the crisis. Bill said the fire was all our fault. If we hadn't asked him to do it, it wouldn't have happened.

Before the Opel Ed had a Pontiac Chieftain briefly which he had picked up second hand.



**1951 Pontiac Chieftain**



**1949 Dodge**



**Our car in 1948 on Alter**

Before the Chieftain he had had a 1951 Pontiac he had purchased at Causley's in Grosse Pointe. That was his best car ever. It had over 100,000 miles on it when it was hit and would have lasted for many more years if it weren't for that drunk who plowed into it in the middle of the night on his way home from Whitey's bar.

Before that Ed had a 1949 Dodge that he bought from Raynal Bros. That car was a gem on sunny days. But on rainy days it stayed home.

We don't remember what Ed drove between his first car, the one with the rumble seat that he bought the day he met me and the 1949 Dodge.



**Marie & Mikie**



**Marie, Mikie, Bill, Shelley, Karen & Ed**



**Shelley, Marie & Mikie**

I stayed over Doug and Karen's on a number of occasions that year and thoroughly enjoyed myself. It was a lot of fun playing with and taking care of those two little babies. But I always had one worry. The train tracks were right down the block and crossed right over the sidewalk and I always had visions of the kids sitting on the tracks on their tricycles as the train was coming their way.

But that was not to be, thank goodness. Doug got wander lust in his bones. He wanted to sell the home he had fixed up and with the profits of his labors, he planned to build a brand new house. Doug looked at and put money down on a water front lot in New Baltimore, then looked at an existing home in New Baltimore right in town, also on the water. But Karen wanted to stay near her family in Waltz and her family wanted her to stay nearby, so Mr. Otter donated 2 acres to Doug and Karen just down the road from his farm on Otter Road. So Doug broke ground there and while he was building that year Mr. Otter was ploughing up the land and planting soybeans practically right up to their side door.



**Doug, Shelley and Karen**



**Karen & Doug on Halloween on Dino**

Marie threw a Halloween party while living on Dino. She had the basement all decorated up. It was a real fun evening. Karen had the best costume by far. Sandy was a fortune teller and Marie was a witch. Marie told the story of when she threw a Halloween party for Nancy when she was a teenager on Alter Road. Marie was dressed up fine for most of the party, then slipped into a witch costume later, came downstairs and told fortunes. One of the boys got fresh with mom when she was the witch, so when that boy was bobbing for apples Marie slammed his head under water in the tub and held it there. She then ran back upstairs and changed to her finery. No one believed that Marie was the witch. (Especially if you ever heard Marie's witch voice – boy, was it ever a classic! Many a time us kids would ask mom to do her witch voice just to hear it again.)

We decided to move after 3 years of living in the condo because the association raised the condo fee to \$50 and there was a constant stream of people moving in and out and I was afraid that with the lower class moving in, that it would become run down in time and I wouldn't be able to sell. So we put the house up for sale in July, 1978 with Vicki Klassen, the person who sold it to us. Vicki had us wait till July before putting the house up for sale as she said that if we sold before the 3 years were up we would have to pay the \$1500 back to the government. Vicki was the person to get the job done, believe you me. Even if she had to cut a corner or two to do it. Well, very soon Vicki found us an all cash buyer, Mrs. Scharf and her mother who were moving out of Detroit and wanted something safe in the suburbs where they wouldn't have to cut the grass or shovel the snow. The \$50 condo fee didn't bother them in the least. Once we sold the house, the pressure was on for us to find something suitable and move in 90 days. What a bill to fill! Sandy went to Furton Real Estate on Gratiot and 21 Mile Rd and found a bi level on 52324 Base Street in the heart of New Baltimore. Ed and I loved the house and the area. We loved going for

walks in that area and going to the city park on the water and reminiscing about the good old days. The owners of the house on Base Street quickly found a Warren ranch at 13 Mile and Schoenherr area and moved out just before Thanksgiving.

Sandy closed on a Friday and we moved in the next day. Sandy said that was one of the loneliest days of her life. Ed did not want to go to the closing as he was not a signer on the mortgage as we were again determined to be too old to have our name on the mortgage and have it approved. And Vern wanted no part of the transaction, so Sandy had to go it alone. The bank, Detroit and Northern, pulled a lot of sh\$%~ at the closing with no forewarning and Sandy had two choices, to sign those outrageous demands that she forfeit her rights, or to walk out of there, lose her deposit and we would be homeless as well. So she signed under duress.

We moved in the weekend before Thanksgiving. I got all the stuff straightened out and put away and a whole Thanksgiving dinner made by Thursday, no mean feat!

Doug, Mike and Vern showed up for moving day. Sandy also hired two young guys to help too. Mike, Doug and the two guys worked hard. Vern did a lot of supervising and big talk, but did lay his hand on the removal of the refrigerator from the basement. The stove also had to be hauled up, what a job! Jean and Shorty also showed up to watch when we got to Base Street. Jean had a new dog, a 5 lb Lahso Apso named Spooky, a jet black little runt. Spooky tore out of their car, ran over to Vern and attacked him, repeatedly biting his ankles! Jean was non-plussed! Spooky never attacked anyone before or after that, just Vern. Jean said maybe it was because Taffy was sort of attacking Spooky and maybe Taffy got Spooky overly excited.

But they didn't know what Sandy knows. ..that all dogs hate Vern! He's been attacked by the finest of dogs, including Taffy. Taffy, the mildest of creatures, would bare her teeth whenever she saw Vern coming. It got comical to watch her take repeated nips out of him. One time Vern brought his Uncle Kurt on his first visit to our home on a holiday. What a cute dog, Kurt said in German, then reached out to pet Taffy who was in Sandy's arms. Taffy took one sniff, decided he smelled like Vern, bared her teeth and took a good nip out of him. He pulled back his arm in shock, and said, "she bites"!

Sandy did not want to stay in that house for long. It had major structural problems that couldn't be remedied cheap. The last owner had dug out to the foundation in the rear and had put in a door wall and a patio outside. But he didn't dig down to the frost line, so every time winter set in the whole back wall of the house would raise up and crack all the plaster, the cement and the beams of the house itself. And secondly, no matter what we did, we couldn't heat that lower story. It was always freezing down there in the winter. Sandy lit

up the pot bellied stove that was down there and put one of those paper logs in to keep it burning for awhile. Boy, did it ever burn! It got so hot the whole stove turned red, and the walls around the stove were so hot you couldn't touch them! We sure were scared that night. We called the fire department, but they said they couldn't do anything and we should wait and see if it cooled down by itself. And Ed complained bitterly that the very dry heat from the stove was drying out his nasal passages so much that it was painful.

The scenery was beautiful there, but every week Sandy and Ed had to cut a half acre of grass, what a pain! The front was easy, but the back! That was a whole day's work. But we used to like to sit on the wooden swing on Sundays and listen to the church bells peal. One of the churches used to ring out religious songs on Sunday afternoon. The kitchen was in the front and every morning we would eat breakfast and look out at the beautiful field across the street.

Sandy never liked that house. She said that of all the houses she has lived in before or since, that one alone had a bad feeling, a cross between unhappy and evil. Ed and I never felt anything like that, just Sandy. But sometimes you wonder if houses do have a character to them, for the family before and after us got out of that house real fast too, nobody living there for even two years.

## 1980

In January, 1980 Mike and I had our hands full for the first two weeks. What a treadmill! Ed and Sandy got sick at the same time. Sandy had been having trouble with the thyroid pills she was taking since last August. She became sensitized to that particular thyroid formula and the pills were making her nervous. In November of 1979 she went to a local doctor as our doctor of years and years, Dr. Finn had a series of heart problems, had a pacemaker put in, got an infection and almost died, and therefore retired suddenly. The local doctor said that maybe her problem was that her thyroid was functioning okay again and maybe she didn't need the pills anymore. The only way to find out, he said was to stop taking the medication for several months and see what developed. So Sandy took his advise and stopped taking the pills. She was no longer nervous, but with each passing week she got more and more lethargic, her skin got very dry and flaky and she started retaining water. She went back to the doctor and told him about these developments. He took another thyroid test and told her to stay off the pills and come back in a month. She did, and now she was barely staying awake through the day. The regular doctor was on vacation, so she saw the substitute and had another blood test taken. The substitute said it was low, but to wait for the next test before deciding whether or not her own thyroid would kick in and start functioning.



Then all hell broke loose the last week in December. Sandy started feeling really bizarre, she said it was like coming out of anesthesia, you're partially conscious but everything around you looks and sounds like it is coming from a long way off. She couldn't awake from that bizarre state but she couldn't go to sleep at night either. Then Sandy sought help from us and from Vern. She told us all how sick she was and that it was the thyroid but she was too far gone to shake her stupor long enough to take definitive action on her own to find a competent doctor who could reinstitute the proper thyroid medication. Sandy was in the beginning stages of a thyroid coma, but like in the case of my mother some 25 years earlier, we were all unaware of it.

In the middle of Sandy's crisis, Ed developed one too. He had had hemorrhoids for years and years, but he now suffered from so much pain and bleeding that he feared it was cancer and didn't want to seek treatment. But on the last day of the year, suddenly one of the hemorrhoids became strangulated, engorged with blood, and hung down, the size of a pear. Ed was forced to seek medical help. I called Sandy and asked her to take Ed to the hospital. Sandy told Vern that she was terrified to drive as she was seeing things as though they were in a dream and far off and that driving was a dangerous nightmare. But she returned to New Baltimore and managed to drive Ed and I to St. Joseph hospital west, where he was admitted and scheduled for emergency surgery.

Meanwhile, Uncle Sunny Stocker dropped dead of a stroke! And Ed is now in St. Joseph's and Sandy in South Macomb and Sunny is laid out at 6 Mile and Gratiot in Weitenberner's Funeral Home. I called Mike in Sterling Heights and asked him if he would drive me to both hospitals to visit Ed and Sandy and then take me to the funeral parlor to see Sunny laid out. Mike had to ride back and forth from New Baltimore to Mt. Clemens to Warren and then to the funeral parlor in Detroit and then repeat all that driving again the next day. Mike decided he had enough of all that driving and he talked to Doug about building Ed and I a home in Utica for our old age, where we could be close by.



**Mike & Shelley**



**Mike, Ed, Shelley & Sandy**

Doug and Karen and the two kids lived with Mike in Sterling Heights for several months as they had sold their house in Waltz and their new home was not yet livable. So Mike had lots of pleasant company for awhile. It took the old bachelor some getting used to, to have two little babies under his roof! He said the kids gave him indigestion at supper time! That's when they decided to kick

up a fuss every day. But it was cute watching them get around and play and have a good old time. A funny story...You all know what Mike thinks of church, or at least you should know... he says it gives him a good feeling to go there once in a while, say once every 5 or 10 years or so, to go to a wedding or a funeral, and then he's all set till the next event. Well one day his doorbell rings in the evening so he got up and answered the door. There standing in the doorway was a Lutheran minister, telling Mike he wanted to welcome him to the community. Mike just left him standing there looking dumb as Mike just stood there and made no response till the minister took the hint he wasn't welcome and left rather bewildered. When Mike repeated that story to Doug and Karen. Karen was embarrassed and said, Oh, Mike, we went there for Sunday services and registered as a new family in the parish and the minister came out to welcome us. I wonder what he'll think about such a strange reception!

Doug and Karen moved into their far from finished home in Waltz and were very happy there with their two little kids and tons of work ahead of them. But Doug and Karen worked very hard on finishing the house and were proud of every new accomplishment. After a year of working in sawdust, nails and exposed wiring, they were done with the worst of it. And you know the saying that with every new house comes a birth or a death? Well, we soon learned that little Dougie was on his way into this world. He was due in the end of August, 1980.



**Louise, Doug, Clarence**



**Shelley, Marie, Doug, Mike**



**Shelley, Dougie & Mikie**



**Douglas Paul Bender Jr**

On the 27th of August, 1980 we were all back at the hospital again to get our first glimpse at the newest addition to our family. He was so cute lying there in his bassinet. But he didn't really bear too much resemblance to the two older children, he had a different appearance, and a different nose. He was a taller, thinner child.



**Kevin, Edward, Marie, Douggie, Joan and the Minister**

Several weeks later we were back at St. John's Church in Waltz for his christening. Ed and I were sponsors. Afterwards we all went back to Karen and Doug's for dinner and visiting. Another most pleasant, memorable day. Sandy has said many times over the past 8 years how much little Douggie reminded her of her brother Michael when he was growing up. He is tall and thin like Mike, but also there are so many facial expressions that makes us recall many things that our Mike said and did so many years before.

Ed and I started to look for a lot to build our new house on in February, 1980. We scoured all around the city of Utica and even into Shelby Township. We were interested in one lot on Saint John Street that backed up to 21 Mile Rd but the owner wasn't interested in selling that lot alone as he wanted to sell that lot and one on 21 Mile Road as a package to a commercial developer. We then looked at a lot next to Hurler's house off Hahn and Klingkammer. That one looked good but he wanted a little too much money and we just didn't want to go the extra thousand unless we had to. I talked to Elsie Scheper about a lot she owned and when I asked her if she would be interested in selling it to me, she just said a blunt, rude "no". We also looked at a lot that backed onto Flickenger's school playground, but Ed and I didn't want all that noise again.



**Our vacant lot on Grant Park**



**Sandy, Taffy, Bill & Edward**



**Our vacant lot on Grant Park**

One day we came across a delightful lot on Grant Park with beautiful large trees in the back and side yard. We rang the doorbell of the owners, the Snoor family who lived next door and asked them if they would be interested in selling. They said they never thought about it before, but yes they might be interested, for us to come back in a few days as Mrs. Snoor had to see if her husband wanted to sell. It was obvious to Ed and I though, that Mrs. Snoor was the real boss in that house and that she wanted a few days to sleep on the idea before making a final decision. A few days later the answer was yes and that they would sell for \$18,000. We accepted this price, paid the Snors cash for the land and the building of the house was now ready to commence.

I was embarrassed to ask them if we could now use their water and electricity to start up the building of the house as naturally we had no utilities yet at this point in time. They were most gracious in their approval of our request. Ed and I tried to pay them for their utilities, but they wouldn't hear of it. They have always been such gracious neighbors.



**Sandy, Bill, Taffy & Edward**



**Tracy, Bob Beck's dog**

The boys then went to City Hall to pull permits for everything, nice and legal. Doug then drew up all the plans for the house. They commenced building our new home on Mother's Day, 1980. Just before they started Ed, Bill, Sandy, Taffy and I stood on the bare lot and took a picture of the lot as it was the day we bought it. While we were first standing on our property, Tracy, the Beck's dog, who was 1 1/2 years old at the time, came over to our lot and started growling at us to get off what she considered her property. She walked sideways with her head down and tried to nip Sandy, growling her warning the whole while.



**Doug & his crew starting**



**45430 Grant Park rough in**



**Marie & Taffy**



**Back bedroom**

Doug was the main contractor. He did the bulk of the work and was overseer of the entire building project, including the excavating, building of the basement walls and foundation, and the roughing in. He also did most of the finished carpentry.





**Michael**



**Douglas**



**Sandy**

Mike did the electrical work, and helped where needed, and paid all the bills. Mike paid Doug and his crew for their work and their time off from their regular jobs. Mike not only paid for all labor, but also all the supplies that went into putting up the new home.

Sandy dear helped with the work and also put in all the insulation in the walls and attic. She paid two kids to climb like monkeys into the rafters to thread in and staple up the insulation. One kid lasted 1/2 hour, the other worked like a trooper all day in 92 degree heat. Sandy and I were sick with a bad headache from working so hard in all that heat.



**Marie and Taffy bagging and removing the big bushes on the north side**

Sandy and I also did another big job by ourselves. There were many big overgrown bushes on the north side of the front of the lot and we decided they would be better out of there, especially when it came to cutting the lawn. It was also in the way of grading as we had to build our home up higher than the other lots as we wanted a basement and the water table is very shallow in this area. We dug only 4 feet deep when we hit water so we had to build up 3 feet above ground level with fill dirt in order to have enough depth for the basement. We then had to put in a sump pump system to drain away the accumulating water, especially in the spring season. Later Mike even put in 2 sump pumps for safety in case one quit working.



**Grant Park ½ bath & bedroom**



**Mikey**



**Shelley & Mikey**

I remember how cute little Mikey looked walking through the walls when the house was just framed in, carrying PVC pipe in his arms.



**Grant Pk frame in May, 1980**



**Marie**



**Doug & crew framing in**

I also remember how hard Doug's crew from work worked framing the house. Only one guy had any notion of what he was doing, the rest Doug had to babysit like a bunch of school children. It got on Doug's nerves to have to supervise a bunch of greenhorns, watching that they didn't cut short or nail on an angle as they made the outer walls for the house. That was exhausting physical labor and we feared that the men would not continue to show up until the job was done as they walked like zombies from exhaustion by the third day. Sandy and I would feed them all lunch at Michael's house to keep them content and on the job. Doug would grumble about how long the second crew would take eating and relaxing.



**Dave Rivard**

I remember the bizarre conversation taking place as Doug's friend Dave was putting the plywood on the roof. He said to Doug, you'll never guess who's on my caseload! Who, Doug replied? The fruitcake who worked in our department who poisoned our coffee pot! You're kidding! Just make sure you don't drink your coffee after she's been in your office! Doug told him with a wry grin. It



turns out that this gal they were talking about was very paranoid, thought no one liked her at work, and one day started lacing the coffee pot at work with rat poison. The coffee drinkers started getting sick, the non coffee drinkers were fine. They never would have guessed that their coffee was being poisoned except that she actually told someone what she was up to!

The guys worked themselves to the bone, but by the end of the first week they had the shell up, and by the following weekend they had the house weather proof. Boy, were those guys ever glad to go back to their soft desk jobs!



**Edward & Marie Bender**

Ed and I meantime worked like troopers too. We would have to drive back and forth from New Baltimore to Utica every day, we were so tired! The public park, Grant Park, at the end of our street saved us in those days. It had a public restroom, so several times every day, Ed, Taffy and I would trek down there, use the facilities, then back to work.

Ed and I started at 8:00 am and worked until dusk! We varnished all the wood work through the house, three times and we also insulated all the rooms and the basement.



**Grant Park rough basement**

A funny story about the basement. While the guys were working on the interior of the home, a huge load of pea gravel was delivered and had to be shoveled into the basement. The guys were so tired from framing, it made them hysterical to think of all that heavy shoveling ahead of them! Then Doug looked down Grant Park and there walking down the street towards him was a huge, very well built Negro. A Negro was an unusual site in Utica, so he caught Doug's eye right away. Then Doug got a brilliant idea. Try to talk this muscular, well built guy into shoveling the pea gravel into the basement for him! Doug jumped down from the roof, approached the black guy and asked him, hey, you want to earn some really good money? Doing what, was the

question. Just shovel this pea gravel into the basement and I'll pay you \$5.00 per hour! Uh, I don't know. ..the guy replied. It's really good money, Doug told him again and it's not that hard of work. The Negro guy thought about it for a minute and said, oh, okay, give me a shovel. Doug gave the guy a shovel pronto. And the guy started shoveling it in like he was a machine. He just swung that shovel in one fast, smooth coordinated arc, picking up the pea gravel, dumping it in the basement, lifting up the empty shovel, refilling it, etc. He moved so fast that they could hardly keep their eyes off him! He got that job done so fast it was breathtaking. Doug thanked him and paid him for his hard work. The guy muttered that he didn't do it for the money, that he was a professional football player and did it to keep in shape. Doug was so embarrassed, offering a professional football player "good money" for the job!

We were worried about theft or vandalism, and until we could lock our house we asked the police to keep an eye on our materials. But we had no theft or vandalism. Mike took out a builder's insurance policy to cover himself. It was a hard policy to get and rather expensive. Fortunately we did not need the policy.



**Marie Bender**

We had a few minor casualties during the construction. I was overworked and suddenly I got chest pains. I was taken to St. Joseph Hospital and admitted. Sandy bought me pretty new pajamas for the stay. But fortunately, my heart checked out alright and I was soon home again and back to the salt mines! Sandy was knocking stakes out of the ground in the driveway with a ball ping hammer, when suddenly she missed the stake and smashed her leg. Mike was there at the time and asked her if she needed help. She said no, but that she was going to his house to wash it off and apply first aid. She went right to his house, sat down and suddenly a sickening wash of pain came over her and she felt herself getting weak and dizzy and about to faint. Mike was nearby, but had no telephone yet. So Sandy called Vern at St. Anne's and he called an ambulance. Sandy got the leg x- rayed. Nothing was broken, but the doctor told her she had struck the lining of the bone, and that it would be weeks and weeks before the pain would subside. Fortunately the pain was gone in a few days.

We finally moved into our dream home on the 14th of November, 1980, just in time for Thanksgiving. Ed and I were so proud of our new home, the pretty carpeting throughout the house, and the beautiful Anderson windows, and the house was so sound proof due to all the insulation. And the wood work was so

beautiful, even if Ed and I said so ourselves! The trees in the back yard, so beautiful, just like a park! And Sandy planted many flowers and evergreen bushes and two cherry trees. Ed loved the two car garage to park his car, and to putter around.



**Doug, Marie & Edward**



**Michael**

How many times Ed stood at the large bay window in the dining area and remarked on his wonderful children, to build us such a beautiful new home. Ed would say over and over what a wonderful son Mike was, how much he loved Mike and how much he wished he could tell him this without embarrassing him! Ed also remarked what a good workmanship Doug did on our house and how proud he should be of his work. I also pointed out to Ed that we had to give Doug credit for building the house as he more or less talked Mike into building instead of buying an existing house and that Mike probably would not have undertaken building if Doug had not been the one to work on the house.

A cute Doug and Ed story. While Doug was putting in the flooring, he was so very particular about making sure that the floor was nailed and glued down very solidly as he knew how Ed checked every house for squeaks in the floor. Doug must have put an extra 10 pounds of nails in that floor just to make sure that it didn't squeak! After the house was built, sure enough, Ed walked around on every inch of the floor, checking for squeaks. Ed stood in the kitchen, rocking back and forth in one spot, with a frown on his face, saying, "It squeaks". Doug couldn't believe it, and had to try it out for himself. He found the one very small, insignificant squeak, the only one in the whole house. Damn, Doug said, I was so careful that it wouldn't squeak, and he went and found the one squeak in the whole house! My dear Ed was to enjoy his home for only 18 months, till a fatal heart attack took him from us!



**Bill Bender**

A cute Bill story. Bill was never known for his ambition and especially in the last years of his life. He didn't feel good and he moved slowly and seldom lifted a finger unless he had to. Doug, on the other hand, was working day and night like a beaver and needed all the help he could get. One day Doug decided that he could get some help from Bill. This I gotta see! Sandy said to Doug. Doug then wagered with Sandy that he could keep Bill working for 2 hours steady helping him. HO! HO! replied Sandy! You're on for that bet, Doug! Despite what Doug may tell you to the contrary, he lost that bet by a mile. Bill was back on the couch long before the big hand on the clock made it twice around the dial.

Bill was drafted into service once more while we were building our house. Sandy got off work early and was painting our entire house as we were close to being able to move in. She was working like a trooper when in walked Bill with Ed and I. Sandy looked at Bill and said, hey, Bill, you can help for a few hours until we go to supper! Bill's facial expression was anything but enthusiastic, but he didn't say no. Sandy gave Bill a pan, roller and extension stick. Bill rolled on one wall, rolling one streak up one end of the wall and another streak down in another direction before his stomach got the better of him and he had to go eat. Sandy was mumbling about how stupid that idea was, how she created a lot more work for herself cleaning out the roller and pan than if she had just let Bill lounge on the couch.



**Doug Bender**

Doug was by far the real worker on that house. He was there day and night, day in and day out. He started around Mother's Day and we moved in in November, a remarkable feat considering that he worked full time for the State.

**1981**



**Steve Trendal**

In May of 1981, right on Mother's Day, about 4 pm in the afternoon tragedy befell the Trendal family, long time friends of Bill and the family who gave us Taffy. Steve went to his mother's home and when leaving a friend asked him to do a favor and drive the motorcycle home for him. Steve readily obliged, unfortunately. As Steve was driving down Mound Road headed south, a car driven by a 17 year old who just got a license pulled right in front of Steve. Steve had no chance to stop, swerve or anything! Steve hit the car broadside, then flew straight up into the air and then slammed down on the pavement. He died instantly, right there by the AAA office.



**Agnes Radtke Bender**

In May of 1981 we got a call from Agnes Bender's family that she was quite sick with cancer and was in Bon Secour hospital. So Ed, Sandy, Mildred and I went over to the hospital and visited her. She was very much thinner than usual, was weak, had an IV, and her hair was quite thin from chemotherapy. But she was in uncommonly good spirits for what she had been through and still faced. She laughed and smiled and heartily thanked us for coming to visit her. She said she had suffered from breast cancer for years, but now appeared to be losing the battle. Now 83 years old, she smiled and said to us, "I guess I just got too old!" Shortly after that, in July of 1981 we got a call from her family that she had passed away.



**Carol Bender Meyer**

After the hospital she had gone to Carol's house and her daughters had taken turns nursing her. The cancer had gotten very bad the last few weeks and she had periods of some disorientation. She turned her thoughts heavenward at that point and told the children that she wanted to go home to her parents and extended family.

She was laid out in the Arnold funeral home at Warren just east of Cadieux, just a few short blocks from her former home at 4554 Neff. It was a nice

funeral parlor and spacious. She was buried a few days later in Mt. Olivet cemetery at Uncle Art's side. They had a nice funeral luncheon for her afterwards.

In October of 1981 Ed complained of shooting pains in the back of his neck at the base of his skull. He wanted someone to drive him to the hospital. Ed could be quite a hypochondriac at times, and Sandy was exhausted that night, and shooting pains in the back of the head just didn't sound like a medical emergency, so Sandy ignored Ed. Ed slipped out of the house and went to the hospital himself. I got a call from St. Joseph West that Ed was being admitted as he had a dangerously irregular heartbeat. We immediately drove over to the hospital, feeling very guilty that we didn't accompany Ed there in the first place. We saw Ed's EKG in the emergency room. It was all over the place. It skipped many beats and the beats it did have were wildly irregular. They put Ed in the intensive care unit and started him on new heart medication. Ed got the part about having to go to the bathroom standing up out of the way, then laid back and relaxed. Five days later his heart was well regulated and he returned home to us. Little did we know that this heart medication would only give my dear Ed an 8 month reprieve from death.



**Edward Paul Bender**

While Ed was in the hospital Sandy and I went over to St. Lawrence cemetery for the first time and looked around at what was available as we hate last minute decisions. But we certainly thought we had more than 8 months.



**Jackie Prince Stephens & Warren Stephens**

Warren Stephens and Jackie Prince were married in Maryland before a judge in a civil ceremony on October 1, 1981, the year before Edward passed away.





**Craig, Linda, Warren, Nancy and Don Stephens**

Warren also completed law school, passed the bar exam and began practicing law in the Washington D.C. area. His parents and siblings came out to Maryland to help celebrate this milestone.



**Mildred Bender Neff**

Aunt Mildred Neff celebrated her 80th birthday in September of that year. Her children took her out for a birthday dinner the Sunday before, but no one planned to spend the actual day with her so Sandy took an afternoon off work and went over to her house about 1:30 in the afternoon and stayed with her until 11:30 that evening. It was a dismal, rainy day. Mildred was a little disappointed at the weather as she said her birthdays through the years were usually warm and sunny. Sandy picked up her mail from the mail box for her, then just sat and talked with her for hours about the olden days. Mildred had an excellent memory and could remember just about anything. Sandy found her extremely accurate with her dates, usually within a year. Mildred told her many fascinating family stories, including a few skeletons that had been pretty well hidden through the years.



**Mildred Bender Neff & Mrs. Neff**

Mildred had been quite religious in her later years. She went to mass every Sunday, being driven by Harold before his death, then later by her widow friends. She also said a part of a rosary every night after retiring for the night. Mildred would laugh her usual laugh and say, but I always fall asleep before I

get more than a decade said. Oh, well, I'm sure the good Lord understands! In her earlier years she was forbidden by Harold to go to the Catholic Church for fear of displeasing Harold's mother, who was rich and from whom Harold expected to inherit considerable property and money. So out of deference to her holding the purse strings, Mildred stayed away from the Catholic Church, going to the Grosse Pointe Presbyterian Church with Harold instead. But after Mrs. Neff died and the money was safely in their hands, Mildred drifted back into her own faith once again, thus once again fulfilling the old bible prophesy "raise up a child in the ways of the Lord and he will not stray in his older years." (Notice it did not say middle years, it said older years.)



**Mrs. Sally Sanderson Neff, mother of Harold Neff**

Mildred was a very generous woman and did much for her sister and sister in laws out of the goodness of her heart. Mildred also often functioned as a midwife for the family too in those rough depression days when no one had a dollar to their name.



**Agnes**



**Beatrice, Mildred & Elizabeth**



**Evelyn**



**Elizabeth, Marie, Hank, Bea, Mildred, Evelyn**

One of Agnes's children was born in Mildred's house on St. Clair in Grosse Pointe and Bea came over to Mildred's house and promptly miscarried on her kitchen floor. What a mess of blood that was, Mildred said! You'd have thought Bea exsanguinated for all the blood there was all over the kitchen floor. Mildred

said she had to keep all of Bea's kids out of the house so they didn't panic when they saw all that blood! But Bea survived and was soon back on her feet again. Evelyn also delivered at Mildred's house. Mildred's house was always a busy one. Even Grandma Bender spent her last 6 weeks in a sick bed at Mildred's in her sun room. It was a lot of work for Mildred as Grandma had cancer pads and once she became delirious, was incontinent. Grandma would feel so terrible and would tell Harold that she was ruining his hard wood floors, but Harold was so very kind to Grandma in her last hours and told her warmly not too worry about it, that floors can be refinished. Mildred was most fascinated when Grandma Bender started talking to Grandpa Hank in her last days. Mildred would tippy toe up to the sun room to eaves drop, but always, even though Grandma could not see or hear her, as she approached the conversation would end until she left the room. Mildred believes that Hank really was there talking to Grandma.

Mildred was a lover of a good ghost story and her demise gave us one of the best ghost stories of our family in this century! When Mildred was sick in the hospital, Saratoga in Detroit, her son Bob and his wife Shirley went to her house to straighten up as she had years and years of stuff accumulated and Bob knew she wouldn't live much longer and so he started pitching things out. Mildred had been going down hill for the past year. In the last year of her life she had lost most of her eyesight and could barely see more than shadows. But in August of 1981 she was able to identify pictures for Sandy. Sandy put a few pictures in that she knew who it was just to make sure that Mildred could see well enough to get the people straight. Mildred got real huffy when she came across a picture of her own son Bruce in the pile. She knew it was a test on Sandy's part and was offended by it.

In October, about a week and a half after her birthday, Mildred called me and said she was real sick and was going unconscious and needed help right away. For Lord sakes, I told her, try to get to the front door and open up your half dozen locks so the fire department can get in! I called the fire department and they had to let themselves in as Mildred was unconscious by the front door. She was taken to Mt. Clemens General hospital where she stayed for 1 week before going home with her son Bob.

One week later she was back in the hospital with another attack. Her circulatory system was shutting down. Sandy took a few hours off work and sat with Mildred in the hospital. Sandy was sick at what she saw when she went to the hospital. There was Mildred in bed restrained. Sandy sat with Mildred and soon determined that Mildred had all her faculties and should not be tied down like a dog. The staff did it for their own convenience. Sandy helped Mildred to the bathroom then helped her sit up in a chair. Mildred was very upset as she said she remembers nothing about the fire department coming, about being in the hospital for a week or being at Bob's house. She said in a real emotional tone, " I guess I'm doomed! " She said that 3 times she was so upset over her

impending death. Mildred had fought to live valiantly for the last several years, but now after many small victories was losing the war.



**Mildred Bender Neff   Sally & Robert Neff**

From the hospital Mildred went again to Bob's house. She slept most of the time and was partially conscious, partially confused. She was all bundled up with even a hat and scarf on as her circulation was so bad and it was only about 62 degrees in Bob's house. I felt so bad that they couldn't turn up the heat for the old lady for just the last few weeks of her life.

Mildred desperately missed her own home on Glenwood in Mt. Clemens and was constantly asking her son Bob to take her back there. But Bob wouldn't take her when he went there to get fresh clothes as it was too much problem to bundle her up, get her into the car and get her back out again and up and down the steps. And he was also afraid that if he took her back into her own home she would refuse to leave the home and get back into his car. So Mildred never got her fervent wish to once more see her beloved home on Glenwood that her Harold had so lovingly built for her. She never got her wish, that is, until she was once more able to propel herself under her own power.

## 1982

Mildred got worse, went to St. Anne's nursing home after she developed gangrene of the foot at Bob's and soon stopped eating and was sent to Saratoga hospital. She lingered at Saratoga from December 14 to January 3, 1982. She was very upset at going into a nursing home. She kept saying over and over how many people she had nursed in her last days and she never dreamed that when her time came no one would nurse her. She was unconscious most of the time in St. Anne's and the hospital. In St. Anne's she kept insisting that there was a fire across the hall. She also was asking for her grandmother Sophie Ott to put vinegar water on her gangrenous foot, just like she used to do when Mildred was a child and had growing pains.

Sandy and I went to visit her on Sandy's birthday in the nursing home. I asked Mildred if she knew who I was and she smiled at me and said I was Marie. Later in the hospital Mildred's son Bob was so upset because Mildred didn't

know him anymore. One day Mildred regained consciousness in the hospital, turned to Bob and asked him, "Why are you doing this to me?" Bob ran out of the room in grief.

Now for the best part of the story... Bob and Shirley were at Mildred's all day January 2 cleaning out her house. Time got away from them and the next thing they knew it was midnight. Bob said he wasn't driving home this late, that they would stay the night and he would go to work from there. Shirley agreed. Bob went and slept in his mom's twin bed and Shirley slept in the living room on the couch. Suddenly in the middle of the night Shirley was suddenly awakened. She almost died of fright when she saw what had awakened her... it was the ghost of Mildred, taking one last leisurely stroll through her house, looking this way and that at her earthly possessions. As Mildred went around the corner into the kitchen, Shirley had Bob awake and they were out of that house in a flash, pajamas and all!

Now, as Paul Harvey says, for the rest of the story.. .Sandy and I are sitting in the Arnold funeral parlor in the same room as Agnes was laid out in, when in comes Mildred's neighbors who live behind her on what used to be Harold's property. The neighbors said that they were all in their house in bed, early in the morning the day Mildred died, when suddenly they heard their front door open and then someone coming up their front stairs. They could have died of fright as the whole family was home in bed and no one would walk in like that. Then to their utter astonishment, their bedroom door opens and in walks Mildred! She walked right past the foot of their bed and to their bedroom window that faces out on Mildred's property. Mildred stood there for awhile surveying her property from their window, then quietly disappeared!

Mildred wanted her funeral mass to be said in her local parish, but for practical reasons, that was not done. She had her funeral mass said in St. Matthews on Harper and Whittier. She wanted to be laid out at Verheyden on Mack Avenue the same as Harold and her mother, but Arnold was cheaper so the family chose Arnold instead. She was buried on the 6th of January, little Christmas. The church was decorated up with all the Christmas decorations that seemed so odd to look at when you're there for a funeral mass. She was buried at Harold's side in the Neff family plot in Forest lawn cemetery at Van Dyke south of McNichols.



**Bill Bender**

Bill went through years of seeking medical treatment at the V.A hospital in Allen Park for his diabetes, which was never controlled very well and for his nerves which never improved since he was sprayed with agent orange while serving in Da Nang Vietnam. This went on through the years until 1982 when Bill shot way too much insulin and went into a coma for one month and died at the Allen Park V.A. hospital on June 15, 1982. Bill was taken to St. Joseph Hospital east in Mt. Clemens and was there for over 20 days in a coma. It was obvious after several days that the continuous seizures he had for the first 24 hours had resulted in severe brain damage as evidenced by very abnormal brain waves. Ed and Marie visited Bill almost every day through that grievous period. Toward the end his body started breaking down. He had foot drop, which they tried to control by having mom and dad buy him high top tennis shoes to keep his foot in proper alignment. He then started having skin breakdown. One time mom and dad came into his hospital room and found him in an awful mess. Mom went to the desk and had him cleaned up post haste.

About 5 days before he died St Joseph hospital had him transferred to the VA hospital in Allen Park. Mom and dad made that long drive regularly to visit Bill. On June 13th Sandy and Werner got home from visiting Nancy in California. Marie was talking to Ed about Bill's condition when they saw him at the hospital that afternoon. Marie said to Ed that Bill was very close to death. "OH NO!!!" was Ed's response. He had refused to accept the obvious, that his 34 year old son was about to leave this world in a day or two.

Marie received a phone call the morning of June 15, 1982 from the nurse at the VA hospital – Bill had passed away that morning. We were asked to drive to the VA hospital to fill out paperwork and claim Bill's body. Ed was unable to go as he was in such deep shock so Sandy volunteered to drive Marie there. The doctor we spoke to was very sympathetic and kind, an unusual occurrence as most VA doctors in Bill's experience were distant and appeared to be drugged. In a few minutes the interview was over, the papers signed and we were on our way home permanently minus one member of our close family circle.



When we got home dad was still in deep shock. We got home just in time to make lunch. Marie and I were also in such a state of shock that it was ridiculous to see how difficult it was to try to put simple sandwiches on the kitchen table. We walked around in circles like in a trance. It just didn't seem possible that our 34 year old Bill was dead and gone forever.

Bill was laid out at the William L. Sullivan Home in Utica and buried in St. Lawrence Cemetery. Nancy came for Bill's funeral as did the rest of her family. Nancy was thus able to have a nice visit with Ed and me that week. Nancy went back home shortly before Ed passed away, never knowing that she would be flying back to bury her dad in less than a week. My Ed took Bill's death very hard, he didn't want to admit that his son was gone forever! Edward wanted pictures taken of Bill's funeral but Marie said no. So we didn't do it.



**Elenore Dahl Mc Kinin**

Elenore was visiting us from Florida and had to go back to Frank's mother's home where Marianne was staying until her mother came and they would go home to Florida together. We had a lovely week end with both Elenore and Marianne. On that Friday Sandy took a bus home from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Ed met her at the bus station in Pontiac and we immediately drove to Laurie's house in St. John Michigan where Elenore and Marianne were visiting. We picked them up and drove them back to Utica, stopping at the Big Boy restaurant at 21 and Van Dyke for supper. They then stayed at my house on Grant Park Friday through Monday. We had a wonderful time together but the whole time Sandy and I were so scared as Ed kept complaining of a raw feeling in his chest. He had a bad heart for over 10 years so we were really worried. Sandy slept on the living room floor, giving Elenore and Marianne the 2 guest bedrooms. My Ed and I slept together. (After Ed died and I found myself alone in our marital bed I consoled myself nights by hugging a pillow and pretending to myself that it was Ed I was hugging.)



**Marie & Edward Bender**

On Sunday Ed drove all of us to Mt. Olivet cemetery in Detroit at 6 Mile and Van Dyke to visit our mom Nellie's grave. When Ed pulled into the cemetery and was driving down the main road he asked which way now. Elenore said straight ahead, Sandy said turn left. Ed put on his brakes hard, stopped the car right in the middle of the highway and said, "Make up your minds!". We then followed Elenore's directions and soon got to the grave site. We took some wonderful pictures. These are the last pictures taken of my beloved Ed.

Sandy offered to drive Elenore to the De Maria's on the west side of Detroit. We asked Ed if he would like a ride with us. He said he would rather rest at home, as he usually wished to do lately. Sandy mowed the lawn while Elenore packed. Ed looked out onto his back yard and remarked to Elenore how beautiful the lawn looked freshly mowed like that, especially when it was mowed from house to fence, it was so beautiful in freshly mowed rows. Ed then remarked to Elenore how helpful Sandy was in doing chores and errands for them.

Sandy and I had a horrible premonition that entire week that Ed was very soon to die. We somehow just knew it and there was nothing we could do to stop or ward it off. It was just fast approaching. The last two days Elenore and Marianne were at our house Ed complained of a very raw feeling in his chest. Oh, God, Sandy and I thought, here it comes! I put my arms around Ed in the hall that Tuesday as he told me about the raw feeling in his chest. What else could I do about it?

We said goodbye to Ed and Taffy and started taking out Elenore's luggage. As we said goodbye Sandy was looking at Ed, so very thin sitting in the green lazy boy and thinking that she wanted to look at him a few minutes longer as she would have to remember him as he was that day for a long, long time to come. (Ed was sitting in the exact same spot in the living room that Marie would sit in for the last time 20 years later.)

We had a nice visit with Mr. and Mrs. DeMaria. She asked us to stay for dinner, but I said no thanks, I promised Ed I wouldn't take too long. I had a nervous feeling and I didn't know why, but after I kissed Elenore goodbye and wished her and Marianne a safe trip home, we said goodbye to the DeMarias.

Sandy and I drove up to the house and saw Ed standing on the porch watching for us. He said he took Taffy, our cockapoo, for a walk, but not a long one, he said, as he didn't feel too good. It was about to storm and the front lawn was high and Sandy did not want to go back to work tomorrow and leave Ed to mow the lawn when he didn't feel too well, so she quickly got out the lawnmower to cut the lawn before it started to storm.



**Edward Paul Bender**

But the storm clouds were gathering in the house as well. I went into the house and saw Ed standing at the kitchen doorway kind of leaning against the frame. He said, "I don't feel well". I walked over to him and took his arm to lead him to the rocker, when I thought, my gosh!, he's dripping wet, his arm was soaked and his face so white. He was so dizzy, the room spun so, that he couldn't find the chair by himself. I lead him to the rocker and saw that he sat in the rocker and told him I would be right back. He then said to me, "This is it", "I'm done for". I ran outside up to Sandy and said, Sandy, I think Dad is having a heart attack!

Sandy turned off the mower and went to Ed and asked him if he thought he could walk to the car. Ed said he didn't need to go to the hospital as this was it. He just wanted to sit in the chair, most uncharacteristic of him as he was always the first one to want to go to the hospital when illness threatened. Sandy grasped his right arm, asked him to try to stand up, which he did. She then walked him to the car, figuring she could get him to the hospital faster than waiting for an ambulance! Sandy gently helped Ed in the front passenger seat and I got in the back behind Ed. Ed was slumped over praying all the way to the hospital. I leaned forward in my seat and held Ed's shoulders in my arms, telling him we would soon be at the hospital. It was now raining a hard, constant rain.

While Sandy was giving the information on Ed, I stood by the gurney they had Ed laying on. He looked at me and said, "Marie, I love you"! Those were the last words he said to me. They put Ed in the intensive care unit at St. Joseph Hospital. Mike came and was with me when Ed was still in the emergency room of the hospital. Sandy said she had out of town company at Werner's and had to run home fast and then come right back. When she got back Ed was now in the intensive care unit and Mike and I had had a chance to visit him there. Mike and Sandy were at his side around 9 pm and the doctor told Michael that Ed had 75% of his heart gone, but seemed to be making a remarkable recovery! Ed talked first to Sandy and Marie alone in the intensive care unit, then asked to see Mike. The nurse told him only two visitors. Ed raised up on his elbows and asked again to see Mike. Then he asked again and again! He was very insistent, he wanted to see Mike one last time. So the

nurse, seeing how agitated he was getting, said yes, and let Mike in. Sandy went back in with Mike, determined to get one last chance to be with her beloved father. Ed said that he was so glad to see Mike one more time, then said to Mike and Sandy how glad he was he got to see Nancy one more time. He said this twice. And then he sighed and added, and the others too!



**Edward Bender**

Ed fell asleep while Sandy and Mike were with him. Sandy stroked Ed's head while he talked. Ed was so bright, alert and emotional in the intensive care. He knew that was his last time with his family, although we did not realize it at the time. We left the intensive care unit that night under the impression that everything was under control!

The next morning at 6:25 am Sandy woke up and said to herself, Dad is gone. Then she got aggravated with herself for being dramatic, consoled herself that everything was still okay and tried to go back to sleep. I got a call at 7:30 am, from the nurse saying that Ed had a major heart attack and to get over right away. Well Sandy and I got to the hospital as fast as we could. Walking in the corridor I saw the nun and I knew we were too late. I lost my Ed on June 29th, 1982, Tuesday at 6:25 am. It was two weeks to the day since my Bill died.



**Marie in front of St Lawrence Church**

Funeral arrangements were made from Sullivan's and the ceremony was from St. Lawrence Church and burial in St Lawrence cemetery in Utica. It was an exact rerun of Bill's funeral two weeks before. My beloved Ed and Bill are buried side by side.



**Marie Bender standing by their graves**

My darling daughter Sandy bought 14 graves to keep the family buried together. She also bought a lovely upright stone with Ed's and my name on it. I think of Ed and Bill every day and pray that if possible they take care of me until I see them again some day.

Well, that completes the story as it was told by Marie. Now Sandy is completing the rest of Marie's life story covering the last 20 years of her life, from the time Edward died until the end of Marie's life on December 5, 2002.



**Werner Wilhelm Craig Stephens Sandy Bender Wilhelm**

Werner told Sandy that she must remain behind at the cemetery until the casket was actually buried. Craig volunteered to stay with Sandy in the cemetery. So Craig and I remained while the rest of the family went to the old Sweden House in Utica for the funeral luncheon. It was a good thing we stayed. The grave diggers asked me if there was anything inside the casket that I wanted before they completed the burial. Well it doesn't take a Rhodes Scholar to figure out that these grave diggers doubled as grave robbers! And, no we didn't want anything out of the casket. The only thing we put in the casket was a tan statue of Our Blessed Mother, whom dad was devoted to. I was later sorry that I didn't put a baseball bat in too. Baseball playing was dad's greatest past time.



**Clyde, Olive & Carol Bender Bob & Mona Claire Shorty & Jean Dahl Bill Dahl Jr.**

Afterwards we went to the Sweden House and joined the rest of the family for lunch. I also quietly paid the luncheon bill with mom's money. Art Jr, Clyde, Carol and Monaclaire were there. Mom's brothers Bill and Shorty were there and also mom's sister Elenore who came back to mom's house and stayed with us for the duration of the funeral. Mildred and Doris and Puggy were there. Right after the lunch Aunt Jean had to rush Shorty to the hospital as he stopped breathing. That was the first of many episodes of his heart stopping. Jean had to rush him to the hospital many times after that. Uncle Bill brought his friend Ann. Laurie Rotary and her husband and 3 children were also with us that day. John Dale and Virginia were also present.



**Doris, Puggy, Elenore & her family**



**Virginia, John, Marianne, El**



**Marianne, El, Laurie & Family**



**Emily, Brandon, Kristen**

After lunch most of the family came back to Marie's backyard for a few hours that afternoon. Skin brought me some copies of very valuable pictures of our grand and great grand parents from Art's collection. Marie was a very gracious hostess that afternoon and genuinely enjoyed socializing with all of her relatives, many of whom she seldom got to see.

After all her company returned to their own homes, Marie began her life as a young widow after 47 3/4 years of marriage. It was quite an adjustment for Marie as she had been married most of her adult life and had never really been on her own before. She went from her parents home to working for wealthy families after she lost her father. From being a nanny Marie began her married life with Edward. And now Marie began her life in her home at 45430 Grant Park all alone.





**Marie with Ed's car in background**

**Sandy & Marie with Ed's car**

Marie inherited Edward's car which she decided to use to do errands close to home. Marie went to the secretary of State with Ed's death certificate and her marriage license and got the car transferred to her name. She then used the car to drive 4 blocks to go grocery shopping at Bazley's market at Van Dyke and Hahn streets, and also to get her hair done by Linda at the Vanityzz beauty shop in the same shopping center. She also took her pants to be shortened at Monika's Sewing Center in the same shopping center. Before Dad retired Marie used to drive to Mt. Clemens to take Bill to Child Guidance on Gratiot, but now she stayed close to home.

Marie remembered that she had an insurance policy on Ed's life so she called the company named on the policy and they told her the closest agent was in the Monitor Leader Bldg in Mt. Clemens. So I drove mom there to collect on the policy. She was pleased to discover that the policy was worth double the face value due to the amount of time the policy had been paid off and was now earning interest. That was the last of the insurance policies as Marie had cashed in the kids' policies once they were grown, saying that their last expenses were now their responsibilities. I remember the day these policies were taken out. A doctor came to our house on Alter Road to do the physicals before the policies could be issued. Bill was about 4 years old and I remember the doctor putting the stethoscope to his thin bare chest to listen to his heart and lungs. Bill's arms and shoulders were just thin little sticks in those days. Doug wasn't born yet. Marie and Ed took out a \$5,000 policy on Ed's life, \$2,500 on Marie's life and \$1,000 on each of the kids' lives. I asked the insurance company for a copy of the policy as the family information had historical significance.



**Marie Bender & Shelley Bender**

Marie now lived alone in her house at 45430 Grant Park. Sandy lived 4 blocks away on Brownell and was over every day for breakfast and dinner. Marie said she ate much better when someone else ate with her as she would then cook a

full meal. If she ate alone, she would just do a sandwich or other quick cold meal.



**Shorty & Jean Dahl**



**Tom Dahl & Pat Nowicki**

Right after Dad died Aunt Jean and Uncle Shorty invited mom to go camping with them to Ludington, Michigan together with their kids, Pat and Tom and their grandchildren. Mom was afraid to go camping. She had never gone and she was afraid she'd get cold, so she stayed home.



**Nancy, Nicole, Marie, Linda**



**Marie Bender**



**Greg, Michelle, Michael, Linda**



**Marie & Michael Pacheco**



**Michelle & Donna**



**Don Stephens**



**Michelle, Nicole and Mikie**



**Freddie Pacheco**

Marie received an invitation from her daughter Nancy in the fall of 1982 to come out to California and spend a month or two with Nancy and her family. Marie accepted this invitation and had a very warm, loving reception from her daughter and all of her grand children and great grandchildren. Marie went out to Nancy's house in November before her birthday and had a wonderful birthday celebration with all her California family. She remained in California for Christmas and enjoyed a warm, wonderful Christmas, the first in many years, with Nancy and her family. She had a number of wonderful family pictures taken on that trip that we enjoy to this day. Marie came back to her family in Michigan on December 27, 1982, in time to celebrate a belated Christmas with Mike, Sandy, Doug, Karen, Shelley, Mikie and Duggie.

## 1983

Taffy was getting very old by this time. She was 12 years old when Ed died. Ed knew in June 1982 that Taffy was getting senile as she would walk along side him as usual and suddenly she would take off on a walk, forgetting she was supposed to walk with Ed. Her eyes were shading over with cataracts. On July 29, 1982, one month after Ed died Taffy started to develop a hemangiopericytoma on her hind hock. I will always believe she developed this a month or so after a very angry neighbor kicked her very hard in that spot because she wandered onto his unfenced back yard as I was skating along side of her. Sandy took her to the vet to have this removed. The vet did remove it but said it would recur as this was a form of cancer and she did not get it all. By October it had returned and was getting quite large. Taffy began to dribble. Nancy and Don came to visit mom in October and Nancy told Marie that this could not be tolerated and that Marie was to take Taffy to the vet and have her killed. Marie agreed as they were more concerned about the rug in the living room than they were about Taffy. I took Taffy for her last walk on October 9, 1983. I was upset beyond words as I had no place to take Taffy at that point and due to Nancy's urging Marie said she couldn't remain on Grant Park. On the walk Sandy cried to Heaven with her whole heart and begged Edward to come and take Taffy with him as they were going to kill her the next day. Taffy was very vigorous and perky on that walk so Sandy could not believe they were going to kill her. They did kill her. Taffy was so frightened on the way to death row that her whole body shook uncontrollably. She whimpered, cried, whined and shook in the last few minutes of her life. Then the doctor injected her with a lethal poison and in a few seconds the vigorous dog lay stone dead on the slop table.



**Marie & Taffy**



**Elenore Mc Kinin**



**Marie Bender & Elenore**



**Marie & Elenore**



**Marie & Elenore**



**Elenore**

Elenore came to visit Marie almost every year. They were all wonderful visits, full of warmth and love. Sometimes we would visit at moms the entire time, sometimes we would go up to Lion's Head. Marie and Elenore have always had a very strong sisterly bond between them. They love one another dearly. They have so much fun and frivolity when together. They banter back and forth lovingly as soon as they get together. Their ties run very deep and go all the way back to Baldwin.

Once around 1984 Marie went to visit Elenore in Florida for several weeks, staying in Elenore's house in Pampano Beach. Mom flew there and back, I having brought her to the airport in Detroit and Frank De Maria picking her up in Florida. And when mom flew back to Detroit she had a stop over in Maryland and who boarded her plane and visited with her? John Dale, Elenore's son, that's who! What a pleasant surprise that was!



**Marie at Elenore's in Pampano Beach**



**Elenore & her son John**



**John & Virginia Dahl Dale**

Speaking of John, Elenore surprised us all with the revelation that her son John had found her in Florida! We all knew about John, but John was a nebulous, long ago and far away baby who was peered at through the nursery window by Mildred Stocker, who put her hand up to the baby's through the glass and declared that his hand was as white as hers. Then Grandpa Dahl



took Elenore to the St. Vincent De Paul Society and they signed the papers giving custody of John to that agency and then John was neither seen nor heard from again. Then after 63 years John set out on a mission to find his mother, and after a lot of painstaking research and a little upside down reading of the adoption agency documents, John managed to work Florida from the Keys upward until he hit pay dirt when he found Elenore in Pampano Beach. He contacted her first with flowers, then by phone, then in person. She felt an instant loving bond to him and was so proud of what he made of himself and decided to share her good fortune with her family. So she called up Marie and told her she was coming to Marie's house with John so he could meet all of her family. Marie called Shorty to invite him to come to her house to meet John. Shorty was beyond speechless as he was the only one in the family who had no knowledge of John's existence until he received that astonishing phone call. He was not about to miss this meeting for all the tea in china! Even though Shorty had suffered a double amputation he managed to get to Marie's living room in his wheelchair. Several men carried Shorty's wheelchair up the 4 steps. Shorty stared incredulously at John the whole evening. He couldn't believe that he had never known of John till now.



**Shorty**



**Shorty, Jean, Ed & Marie**



**Doris, Ed, Jean & Shorty**

Poor Shorty went through hell from the time he had his first heart stoppage the day we buried Edward until his demise in August of 1984. Jean had to rush Shorty to the emergency room numerous times as his heart kept stopping from June 1982 till August 1984. Then due to heart failure Shorty got gangrene first in one foot, then in the other one. He ended up suffering two amputations. Then his kidneys failed and he had to go on dialysis. He had the peritoneal dialysis which meant that Jean had to repeatedly change bags of solutions as she ran the fluids in and out of Shorty's abdomen. And Shorty got abdominal infections on several occasions and had to be hospitalized to cure the infections. He also needed to be hospitalized and go on hemodialysis when his BUN and creatinine got too high. And Jean had to transfer Shorty with a Hoyer lift as he had no legs and therefore couldn't stand or help with the transfer in any way. Shorty was very distraught at having lost both of his legs and told his sister Elenore that he wasn't a man anymore. Elenore went home very upset when she heard him say that. And then a horrid thought came to her on the ride home – that they had always called him Shorty and now due to the double amputation he was indeed a short person. Elenore said she could never again call him Shorty after that. She now called him Harold for the rest of his life. Mom was terrified of losing her legs also after seeing what happened

to Shorty as she always had bad circulation in both of her feet and the vascular surgeon told her she was at risk of losing all circulation in her legs.



**Mildred & George Stocker**

My sister Mildred Stocker was sick for several years with colon cancer, probably inherited from our grandfather Fred Dahl who died at age 49 of this disease. At first Mildred had no idea it was cancer, calling her loose stools “the blow outs”. Then one day when she was visiting us she told us that she now had blood in her stool and she was afraid it might be cancer. After one or two years of bloody loose stools Mildred was now in pain and went to the doctor for testing. Her worst fears were confirmed – it was colon cancer. Soon the cancer started causing a blockage so she ended up having surgery in which they had to do a colostomy. She then had a bag attached to her lower abdomen which Doris had to help her care for and empty.



**Mildred, Sonny & Doris Stocker**



**Doris & Mildred Stocker**

We would go and visit Mildred on Gunston and it was soon obvious that she was in quite a bit of pain. She would lie on her living room couch and one could see the distress in her facial features and general demeanor. When we first came in we would greet Mildred, sit down in the living room and talk to her. After we sat for awhile we wondered to ourselves if we would dare to ask her if she wanted to play 4 handed canasta. We always decided to ask, figuring Mildred could always decline if she was in too much pain to move. Mildred would always without hesitation say yes, she’d love to play. She would then rise from the couch and take her usual place at the far end of the dining room table. Sandy would almost always be her partner sitting at the near end of the table. Doris would sit by the window and Marie nearest the kitchen. Doris would give Mildred a pain pill, get out the double deck of cards and the canasta tray and we’d be off to another fun game. Mildred loved to win at canasta and more than half the time Mildred and Sandy would win. Mildred would just beam with pleasure, but win or lose, she just loved the game. Mildred also



loved poker which she played with her brothers Bill and Shorty, but Marie and Sandy never really learned to play poker, so canasta was our game of choice.



**Sandy**



**Marie**



**Mildred**

By the 1980's Gunston was almost all black so the neighborhood made Sandy and Marie nervous. Sandy would always tell Marie, "Mom, say all your goodbyes indoors and once we leave the house we intend to walk fast to the car, get in pronto and lock the doors, start the car and be on our way as fast as we can". Well, it almost never failed, Marie and Mel would say lots of goodbyes in the living room, then open the front door and say lots more goodbyes standing out there with the door open. That would drive Sandy wild, especially if she saw young black men walking down the street in groups. Sandy would grab Marie by the elbow and say, "Let's get in the car now!" Marie thought Sandy was being rude. Sandy thought it would be a good idea to get oneself in such a position to live another day.



**Doris Stocker**

This neighborhood made Doris nervous also. She had retained her dad's service revolver for safety. One time when we were playing cards Doris heard noises and wondered if someone got into the basement. So she pulled the service revolver out of the dining room end table drawer and went cautiously first into the side vestibule then down the basement stairs. Boy, was Marie scared. She was hoping the bullet wouldn't come through the basement ceiling and nail one of us in the dining room. But it was soon back to normal card playing when no one was found in the house.

## **1984**

Mildred's surgery and radiation was a horrible experience for her. Every day Doris would mark on the calendar each treatment that was completed and

show Mildred that that many fewer were left to endure. The radiation made her very sick and made it hard for her to eat. From this time forward to her death Mildred had lost an awful lot of weight and was only a shadow of her former self at the end. They did the radiation in order to attempt to shrink the tumors but they were only mildly successful in so doing.

One bitterly sweet funny episode from when Mildred was in the hospital. In the middle of the night the nursing staff awakened Doris and told her to come down to the hospital that they needed her help. When she got there she knew why they needed her. Mildred, due to the drugs they had her on, was hallucinating and what she saw terrified her. In the corner of her room she saw a huge gorilla with a hat on, holding a child under his arms intending to take off with the kid. Doris explained it was only a mirage due to the drugs, so Mildred calmed down although she probably only half believed Doris.



**Mildred Dahl Stocker**

Another time in the hospital Mildred got into an uproar over a nursing instructor with a very limited knowledge of insulin. Mildred told the nursing staff she needed beef insulin as she was allergic to pork insulin. In comes the student nurse with her insulin. What kind is it, Mildred asks. Pork, the student replies. PORK!?!? Mildred replies. I can't have pork insulin, I'm allergic to it. The student gets the instructor who comes back with the pork insulin intending to inject Mildred with it. NO!! I'm allergic! The supervisor tries to tell her she is not allergic to insulin, she always takes it. NOT PORK! Mildred replies. The stupid supervisor is not aware that there are different kinds of insulin so she thinks Mildred is obstreperous and is just being difficult. She argues, she carries on and tries to inject Mildred. Mildred threatens to back hand her if she comes any nearer with that pork insulin. The nurse falls back into the chair in Mildred's room saying she just can't put up with just such patients. But Mildred did not get the pork insulin.



**Doris Mae Stocker**

Poor Doris had to go on half days at her job at the IRS in order to take care of her slowly dying mother. Doris left work at 1 pm every day and then rushed home, scared to death of what she might find. She hated leaving her mother alone for those 5 ½ hours, but she couldn't afford to quit her job before retirement and she was so very lucky that they were sympathetic and allowed her to work half days. Especially in light of the fact that Doris often talked about the succession of new bosses who knew nothing about the job they were about to assume and gave Doris lots of problems. One day Doris called Marie and told her that her mom was being admitted into Bon Secour hospital and that the doctor felt like Mildred was dying. We called Elenore to advise her of Mildred's condition and Elenore said she wanted to be there. So Elenore got a plane ticket and Sandy picked her up at Detroit Metro. Elenore stayed at Marie's house that visit. Doris called Bill and Bill also showed up at the hospital the next day. The day of Mildred's admission Marie and Sandy got there around lunch time and Mildred was still conscious, but she was living simultaneously in this world and the next. Sandy asked Mildred some genealogy questions, knowing no one else would know the answers. Mildred indicated that her husband Sonny was right at her side at the head of the bed so she started asking him the questions.

The doctor indicated that Mildred was throwing blood clots into her chest and that this would be very frightening and stressful for Mildred so he ordered an IV morphine drip for her. Within an hour of starting this morphine Mildred went to sleep and for the most part with a few brief wakeful periods, remained unconscious until her death on March 12, 1984.



**Sonny Stocker**



**Elenore**



**Bill Dahl**



**Marie**



**Doris & Mildred**

The next day we were all in Mildred's room for almost the entire day. Bill and Marie and Sandy and Elenore and Doris were all there together. Boy, was

Uncle Bill ever funny that day! He told one story after another of funny things that happened to Mildred and him in their younger days and he had us laughing so hard we had trouble breathing. The priests have always told us to be careful of what you say in the hearing of a dying person because the hearing is the last sense to go and in Mildred's case that surely was true that day. We looked over at Mildred as she laid in her bed a few feet away from Bill and as he told his funny stories you could see Mildred with a little smile on her face, listening to her brother Bill.

One time the nurses did something to Mildred while she was unconscious that suddenly frightened Mildred very much for all of a sudden, Mildred grabbed Doris around the neck and could have strangled her she had such a death grip on her throat. Doris and the rest of us were genuinely frightened until someone broke Mildred's grip free.

On March 12th Elenore said she had to go back home, that she was so glad that she was able to see and sit with her sister Mildred for a few days before she passed away. At 4:30 am I drove Elenore to the airport and she returned to her home in Florida. I then went from the airport directly to work, sat down and started typing on my typewriter. I typed on one key and another letter appeared on the paper. That was not physically possible, so I stopped typing, trying to figure out how that could have happened. I immediately came to the conclusion that Mildred had died that morning. So I called up Bon Secour hospital and asked to be connected to Mildred's room. No one was there. I called the nurse's station and was told to call the family. I then knew for sure she had passed. I called Doris. Mom was with Doris as Marie had sat all night with Doris that last night so Doris would not be alone when her mother passed away. The Doctors were amazed that Mildred had last for 5 days as they expected her to pass in the first 24 to 48 hours after admission. Marie was horrified at the size of the bed sore Mildred had on her coccyx. On the 4th day they tried to wash her up and the flesh just came right away with the bed sheet. A young nurse was so horrified that she ran right out of the room terrified at what she saw. Marie and Sandy saw the urine coming less and less into the bed side bag and becoming ever more brown and knew it was very close to the end.



**Mildred Dahl Stocker**

Marie stayed awake almost all of that last night as did Doris. Marie looked at Mildred with her erratic breathing. Mildred would stop breathing for up to a minute and Marie would figure, that's it, that's the end. Then she would start

breathing again. Finally early in the morning Marie said to Doris, I think this is her last breath. Doris looked intently at her mother's face and saw a little dove like apparition leave her mother's nose and travel heavenward. Doris very strongly felt a Divine Presence in the room the moment her mother passed away and felt very comforted by that.

Uncle Bill came over and Marie, Sandy, Doris and Bill went together to pick out flowers, to make a visit to the rectory to make funeral arrangements, and then to a bridal shop to pick out a gorgeous light mint green dress for Mildred. We all then went for lunch at the Riviera Restaurant at Gratiot near 23 Mile Road in Chesterfield Township. Uncle Bill paid for the lunch.



**Kenneth, Lorraine & Marvin Stocker**



**Sharon Dahl Smith**

Mildred had a lovely funeral. Many relatives came. Marie and Sandy and Bill were there the whole time with Doris. Kenny Stocker and his wife came. Dr. Marvin Stocker came. Sharon Dahl Smith was also there. Sandy took pictures of Mildred at Doris' request. Sandy has always been the main photographer in the family, a hobby taken up from her dad Ed and Doris has often said she is so grateful of the pictures she has of her mom and dad as the majority of them were taken by Sandy through the years.



**George & Mildred**



**Earl**



**Mae Stocker**

Mildred was laid to rest in Mt Olivet cemetery next to her husband, George Stocker and her son Earl. Her mother in law Mae Stocker is also in the same Stocker family plot. As they were lowering the casket it started to rain. That made Marie think back to the day in 1938 when she attended little 7 year old Earl's funeral at this same spot. Marie said after she went home after little Earl's funeral it started to rain and when she thought of that rain falling on the little boy she just cried and cried and cried. (Earl seemed to have the ability to bring out the tears in all of us, it seems. Shortly before Mildred died, she brought out her old set of pictures and among those old pictures were several



pictures of Earl. Sandy had never seen Earl nor any pictures of him as he died before she was born. So when she saw what a beautiful little boy Earl was, and how he didn't need to die if only Dr Stocker had removed his appendix before it ruptured, it so overwhelmed her that she cried all the way home for that lost little boy.)



**Mildred, Doris & Marie**

Doris, like Aunt Jean a few months later, did not realize how overwhelmed she was with all that care of a dying person with so many health care needs to be met, many of which was horrifying. So once Mildred was gone Doris was beside herself trying to get her life back to normal. Marie offered to let Doris come and live with her for 6 months so she wouldn't be alone in that scary neighborhood in Detroit. Doris took mom up on her offer so she and Puggy moved in with mom on week days, going home weekends. Puggy didn't adjust too well to the change. Marie was aggravated by the fact that that darn dog would go under the bed when Doris went off to work and would stay under that bed all day long until Doris came back home again. Marie liked Puggy a lot and was vexed that Puggy didn't take to her as well. In fact Marie and Sandy were at Tom and Jan Dahl's house on Vincent Trail in Washington Township the day they gave that puppy to Mildred, Doris and Sonny. Doris was "gone" on that puppy the minute she laid eyes on it. And Sonny and Mildred were not far behind in their falling in love with the little guy. In fact after Sonny's death Puggy would get up on the couch on top of Mildred and start looking up into the air and moving his paws the same way he did when Sonny would tease him. Mildred would often wonder at Puggy's behavior, saying to us, "Do you think Puggy sees Sus!?"

Doris soon afterwards asked for a sign from God as to the right home to buy in a safer neighborhood. She soon got her answer. She found a lovely condo in Shelby Township and in answer to her prayers it was located on Georgetown Ct., with her father's name in the street she felt that was the right choice, which it certainly was. It turned out to be the perfect home in the perfect neighborhood with the perfect neighbors.





**Donna, Pat, Chet & David Nowicki**

In August of 1984 Jean and Pat invited us to Pat's son's baby shower as David and his wife were expecting a son shortly. This would be Shorty's first grandchild and David and his wife Sue went to Shorty's deathbed to tell him that they just learned that the baby was a boy – a rarity in the Dahl family as most children are female.



**Harold Joseph (Shorty) Dahl**

At the end of the baby shower Pat pulled Marie and me to one side and told us that Shorty had talked to the Catholic priest and got permission to end dialysis and to die peacefully as Shorty had had enough suffering. The amputations did not in any way lessen his pain as Shorty now suffered from excruciating phantom pain. Shorty was worn out and he had had more than he could bear. The priest had given Shorty permission to die in peace. Several days later, on the 26<sup>th</sup> of August Shorty quietly slipped out of this world into the next.



**Marie at Niagara Falls**

I took mom on a 2 day vacation to Niagara Falls with my new dog Bear. We went to have lunch at Kingsville at the Smorgasboard at the old hotel there and then we traveled on to Niagara Falls for a few days of rest and relaxation. Little Bear, only 8 lbs, was a big hit at the Falls. I carried him on my shoulder most of the time. People all came up to him to pet him and adore the little guy. As soon as we got back home we heard the very sad news that Marie's youngest

brother Shorty had passed at the young age of 67 years. I typed up a mass book for Shorty, got it to the printer and had it over to the funeral parlor the first afternoon he was laid out. We all then put the pages together, folded and stapled the booklets to get them ready for the funeral mass.

When Sandy came over to breakfast around 8 am Marie had already eaten or was just finishing her breakfast as she got up each morning around 7 am. Marie always got up, got washed and dressed immediately before breakfast. She would then have breakfast, do the breakfast dishes and then spend the morning cleaning and straightening the house. Her house all the days of her married life was spotless – clean and uncluttered.



**Marie, Sandy & Bill**



**Marie & Ed**



**Ed, Marie & Bill**



**Marie**



**Edward**



**Sandy & Marie**



**Marie & Edward**



**Sandy at Pacey's**

A little over a month after Ed died Sandy and Marie went to Lion's Head and rented a cottage from Mrs. Lydia Szulc, one of the Cedar Grove Cottages that had been built in the early 1950s by Wilbur T Pacey. We rented cottage #3, the end cottage whose back end was hidden by the pine trees, thus affording it the most privacy. Mr. Ed Szulc was dead by this time so privacy was not so much an issue as it was when he was alive, carrying out his peeping Tom activities all over the complex. That visit I kept looking up the road to the small cottage as dad, mom, Bill and I stayed there for 4 days on mom and dad's anniversary on August 25, 1981. I almost felt as if I looked at that cottage long enough they would appear again.



**Marie Dahl Bender**

The first night mom was there she developed the worst cold of her life. She was really stopped up and really suffering. Sandy became very concerned, realizing that as a sudden she would now be totally responsible for Marie's well being for the rest of her life. That was a very sobering and very scary thought. There was a beautiful sunrise that first morning, the most beautiful that Sandy had ever seen, but being it was 5 am Sandy felt that with how miserable Marie felt she didn't dare awaken her to view it. Marie said afterwards she would have enjoyed seeing it, cold and all. Marie got better that week and enjoyed her stay in Lion's Head as we always did.

That year I discovered the poems in the Toronto Star in the Obituary section that were written as memorials to people's loved ones. In reading over that section of the paper I loved some of those poems and felt that they pertained to my dearly departed father. Some of those poems were so apropos that they brought tears to my eyes. Mom got aggravated when she saw the tears and told me to stop reading that section of the paper. Mom has always been very much of a realist and she has always faced life's losses somewhat stoically. She cried one day when her mother died, till dad told her to cut it out, that her mother would not want to see her crying and that Nellie was in a far better place. After that she didn't cry anymore.



**Edward Paul Bender**

Mom was mostly dry eyed over dad's demise. Maybe it was because she had seen and heard him a number of times right after he died. A few days after he passed on she was vacuuming the kitchen rug, a task dad always enjoyed doing. But now with him gone, mom found that she had to take over this job. Suddenly while she was vacuuming dad suddenly appeared, standing over her shoulder watching her. She dropped the vacuum and ran. A few days later she was pinning a corsage I had received onto the skirt of the doll lamp in my bedroom when as a sudden dad's full length but gauzy figure appeared right behind mom. She turned and saw him and was so frightened and upset that she ran out of the bedroom and into the living room. Another time she was

sitting in her chair where the TV is now and when she looked over to dad's chair she saw his lower legs and feet in front of his chair. She was shocked by that appearance and talked about it repeatedly for quite a period of time. She has also heard him call her name when she is lying in bed in the morning. She said he only calls her name, she hears nothing more than her name.



**Doggie, Jeremy, Shelley, Marilyn & Mike**



**Shelley, Doggie, Mikie, Marie & Doug**

Shortly afterwards mom and I along with Mike and Marilyn, went to Doug and Karen's house. Together we all went to Willow park, had a picnic and then Mike, Doug, Karen and I played some baseball in the grass, dad's favorite game. We have a picture of little Doggie with chocolate all over his face. Boy, he must have really enjoyed the chocolate cake Karen brought! Doggie had been very traumatized on the day we buried my dad. When Doggie saw the wide open hole and heard that the casket was going to be lowered into that hole and then covered over with dirt he became really upset, saying over and over, but he can't breathe, but he can't breathe!



Marie and I went to Lion's Head to Mrs. Szulc's Cedar Grove Cottages almost every summer. One year I even talked Mrs. Szulc into letting me bring Bear. She said that year I could bring him if we went in June, which we did. Mom and I used to love to go walking along the shoreline every morning after breakfast but soon mom could no longer make the trip as walking would activate her bowels and she would be horrified by the thought that she might soil her pants before she could get back. Many a time I had to run back and get the car and drive her home. Our favorite walk was to the German Brejak A



frame cottage and back again. Sometimes, usually in the afternoon or early evening we would walk down Carter Rd and look at all the Grieg stone cottages we used to rent in the 1960s. Grieg cottages were by far our favorites, but by 1968 Byron and Tessie Grieg had sold all of them so they were no longer available as rentals.

Mom and I no longer walked the stones after Dad's death, it was too hard for her. In the 1950s and 1960s we would walk for miles on the stones. That was the easiest way to town as it was a flat surface. We no longer walked the road to town either as it was severely uphill and would hurt mom's legs too bad.



**Elenore Dahl Mc Kinin**

One year mom and I took Aunt Elenore to the cottage and she just loved it too. I would have to stoke the pot bellied stove every night when the sun went down and the chill set in. I would then have to get up in the middle of the night to put more wood on the fire and get it going again, often not an easy fete.



**Marie at Szulc's with her canasta tray of cards**

We spent our nights in the cottage playing scrabble and various card games, usually canasta. We had so much fun with the card games. And on rainy days sometimes we would spend the whole day playing cards and scrabble. We would be bleary eyed by bedtime. In the rental cottages the bed sheets always felt somewhat damp due to the humidity. Earlier we had to bring our own sheets, under the Szulc's she provided them and laundered them.

We made most of our meals in the cottages in those earlier days. A yearly ritual was on the way up to the cottage we would buy vegetables and meat. As soon as we got settled we would put mom's huge pot on the stove, cut up and throw all the meat and vegetables into the huge pot and let it simmer all day long. We would then eat on that soup for about 4 or 5 days till it was gone. That soup drove Mrs. Szulc into an absolute frenzy! She would stick her nose right up to the kitchen screen and holler at us with vehemence, "Whatch you doing

in there!?!?” She couldn’t stand us using her electricity to cook soup hour after hour, all day long. One funny vegetable soup story. One year Elenore went with us to the cottage and when we were a short ways north of Forest we saw a vegetable stand. I said to her that we had better stop here as often there are no more vegetable stands between here and the cottage, which that year it turned out, there weren’t. Elenore and I got out of the car, and mom stayed in. “Now don’t you two go nuts in there!”, mom said to us. Well, Elenore and I had a good time in that stand. We’ll need some of this and this and this .... we went on and on. And out we come back to the car with 4 armsful of vegetables. “You two did go nuts in there, just like I thought!” was mom’s reply to our sacks full of vegetables. Elenore spent the next several minutes explaining to Marie all what we bought and what we’d be using it for. But mom didn’t buy any of it. Boy, did we ever have a wonderful vegetable soup that year!

Several times in a week we would eat out. Our favorite place was the Look About Lodge as one could see the water as one dined. But the food was terrible! There was nothing edible on the menu. But all of the Bruce Peninsula in those days was very poor food. Another place we enjoyed eating at was the big white house on Hwy 6 at the Ferndale crossing. It was a 100 year old house converted into a restaurant and had a very charming atmosphere. They also had a very delicious burned chicken breast and really good soup.

We loved to ride up and down the back roads, especially the 40 hills road. Boy! What a roller coaster that road is! Thrills and chills around every corner! I loved teasing Aunt Elenore on that road. When we got to Tammy’s Cove area, I said to her, “Aunt Elenore, if you got out of the car here, would you be able to call John and tell him where to pick you up!?” Elenore looked around and replied, “No way!”

All through the years we all loved to ride into Wiarton and go shopping at the dime store and the small shops there. We could always manage to pick up a few used books at the Smoke Shop to read in the cottage. Or we could drive to just before Hepworth and browse through the huge old turn of the century bookstore there. And for really big, all day, walk till you drop shopping there was always Owen Sound, the biggest city on the Peninsula, about 50 miles south of the cottage. Until recently, we always shopped at the dime store and general store in downtown Owen Sound but after dad died they built the Heritage Mall and that killed shopping in downtown and made many of the old time shops go out of business. Downtown always used to close at noon on Wednesdays, so you always had to remember not to go shopping on that day. Not so with the Mall, you can shop day and night every day of the week.

Whenever we would get ready to leave Szulc’s Cedar Grove cottage to go back home Marie would clean the cottage pillar to post. She scrubbed and cleaned everything, every corner. We would always leave by noon. Check out time was 10 am but Marie told Mrs. Szulc if we stayed till noon all the cleaning would be done. Mrs. Szulc liked that idea as she was getting quite old and cleaning was



much harder on her than when she first bought the place in 1968. In those days she did all the hard scrubbing on her hands and knees whenever some one moved out and she used to smell like a polecat. So when mom finished packing and cleaning it was lunch time. Mom said we would have to eat in town as we didn't want to mess up any more dishes. So this one time it was a gorgeous day, 72 degrees and sunny. Marie suggested that we buy fried chicken at the corner convenience store in Lion's Head and then take it to the park and have a picnic on a picnic bench at the beach park in town. So we did just that. We opened our chicken boxes and Marie, Taffy and Sandy had a delicious chicken dinner. Sandy was so preoccupied in feeding taffy and seeing she didn't stray that she didn't notice that a seagull had landed on the picnic table and had grabbed Sandy's whole key chain and with it in his mouth had flown high over the very deep water in front of us. If that bird had dropped the keys over the water that would have been a disaster for those were Sandy's only set of keys, car keys, house keys, office keys. How we ever could have gotten home I have no idea. But fortunately, by a real stroke of luck, the bird flew back over the grassy section of the picnic area and dropped the keys about 10 feet away from our picnic bench. And fortunately for Sandy's and Marie's nervous systems, we did not know they were Sandy's keys until the bird was back over land!

## 1985



**Michelle Pacheco holding Ashley Meyer**

In the summer of 1985 Donna came to visit Mom with her 10 year old daughter, Michelle Pacheco. They had a really nice visit with mom in her house. That was Michelle's only visit to her Great grandmother Marie in Michigan. Michelle and Donna went bike riding through Sterling Heights and Donna showed Michelle all the places where she grew up, lived and went to School. She also showed Michelle Heidi's field where Donna spent many an hour in her childhood playing in those woods.

# 1987



**Warren Stephens law firm**



**Jackie Prince & Warren**



Ed and I were so proud of our grandson, Warren Donald Stephens when he completed his Law Degree and was admitted to the Bar in Washington, D.C. He soon landed a good position with a prestigious law firm in Washington and then a few years later started his own law firm. He had just married his sweetheart, Jackie Prince and together they bought a fine home in Annapolis, Maryland. Jackie very much wanted to start a family when they came here for Bill's funeral in 1982, but Warren felt that the timing was not yet right.



**Warren & Casey Shea**



**Casey Shea**



**Casey Shea**



**Jackie & Casey Shea**



**Warren & Casey Shea**

Then on May 24, 1987 Warren and Jackie proudly presented us with our newest addition, Casey Shea Stephens, an adorable little red head with a twinkle in her eye.



**Don, Craig, Warren & Jackie**



**Warren & Jackie**



**Warren, Craig & Donald**



**Warren & Jackie**

Nancy, Don, Craig and Linda went to Maryland to visit Warren and Jackie when Warren passed the bar. They had a very nice visit. When Marie looked at all the pictures she wished she could have been there too.



**Casey Shea Stephens**

A very sad sequel to this story – Don fell in love with Margie and they decided to start a divorce. Don tried to get Nancy to file as Margie told him he was less likely to lose as much money if the woman filed. Then Don and Margie tried to make the family think that Nancy was crazy when she told the family of all the sneaky rotten things Don and Margie were up to. Warren flew out to California and spoke first to Nancy and then went and spoke to Don. Warren knew without a doubt that his dad was lying through his teeth. Warren went back home very saddened over what Don and Margie were doing to gain the upper hand financially. Shortly thereafter Warren sent his dad the latest portrait picture of his little daughter Casey Shea. Don sent the picture back!!



**Donna & Dave Catron**

Donna married David Catron, a good looking blue eyed light haired tall fellow. He was most amiable, but not overly fond of work. That was a shame as he came from a good hard working family. Donna was married to him for several years before she got tired of carrying the entire financial burden and sought a divorce. Donna lost quite heavily financially in that divorce, as Dave, who never much worked, got a lion's share of Donna's business.

# 1988



**Donna, Ashley & George**



**Michael Pacheco, Donna, George & Ashley Meyer**



**Ashley & Donna Meyer**



**Ashley & George**



**Ashley & Michelle**



**Ashley**



**Ashley**

Donna married again to George Meyer and they had a child, Ashley Christine, on September 11, 1988.



**Craig & Scott**



**Scott & Craig**



**Scott & Mary Anne**



**Mary Anne, Craig & Scott**



**Scott**

Craig and Mary Anne also had Craig's first child Scott Michael in June. (Mary Anne also has 2 sons by a previous marriage.) They were both thrilled to death with their new arrivals.



## 1989



**Werner Wilhelm & “his son” Bear**

In 1989 my husband Werner purchased Sun N Lake Towers in Sebring, Florida and on a number of occasions mom went down with us and lived in apartment 203A the entire time I was there. She would drive down with me as I pulled a 4000 lb trailer from Utica to Florida. Mom loved the trip and was always a champion traveler. She stayed awake all of the way and made sure I stayed awake driving. She loved the scenery as we traveled through the mountains, but she sure was afraid in the Jellico, Tennessee area when she looked straight down into the valley very far below the road!

## 1991



**Sun 'N Lake front**



**Sun 'N Lake rear**



**Sun 'N Lake entrance**

When we arrived in Sun N Lake Towers Marie was soon the “chicken in the basket”, so to speak as word got around fast that she was the owner’s mother so everyone cottoned up to her. Everyone wanted to be friends with the bosses’ mother. Fannie and Darlene, the peacocks of the facility, invited mom to sit at their table, but mom soon declined and sat with Hulda Lodder, an intelligent and no nonsense, very sensible woman. Mom liked Hulda a lot and really enjoyed her company.



**Marie & Hulda**



**Marie & Sandy**



**Marie & Sandy**



**Marie – her apt.**



**Jana, Marie & Mabel**

Mom soon ran the country store and the ice cream parlor. She enjoyed both activities. It gave her something interesting to do with her time. Mom also played cards with the women in the card and game room evenings. They usually played 4 handed canasta. Mom was really good at it and was a very good partner. Sometimes when Werner was sick and went to sleep early I would go to mom's apartment and she and I would play canasta together.



**Views from Marie's apartment window at Sun 'N Lake Towers**

Mom had the very best view out of her apartment window. Her room overlooked the golf course and was even situated on the water hazard on the 5<sup>th</sup> hole. She had a beautiful glass top table on which we played. We would play until about 10 pm in the evening. Mom would want to go to bed at 10 pm as she was always up early to wash and eat breakfast and then be to exercise class by 8 am. All exercise was done sitting down, copying what the people on the tape were doing. Mom, Fannie and Darlene were the main participants but many others joined them from day to day.





**Marie Bender & Walter**

There was also a potential romance going on between mom and a fellow who looked a lot like Edward – his name was Walter. Boy, did he like mom. For him it was love at first sight. Marie seemed to run into him at every turn. He lived in the same tower as mom and he made sure he saw a lot of her. He was a very decent, professional man but mom said she just wasn't interested in a new husband, she preferred to remain a widow. She said she had no interest in having to take care of an old man. Walter was sick for a very brief period and quickly passed away. He had nice furniture which his children asked us to purchase. Mom went up to his apartment as soon as we heard the furniture was for sale and she decided to purchase his sleeper sofa and his tables. From then on I loved teasing mom, saying she was sleeping in Walter's bed. She wasn't sure she enjoyed this little bit of teasing.

Mom also joined in band practice twice a week. She enjoyed making music with a large crowd of residents who joined in. Mom played a kazoo. On Sundays mom and I would go to Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church for the 10 am mass. Mom also enjoyed the once a month major entertainment dinners. We had the Sweet Adelines on several occasions and also a group of Cloggers several times. Then there was Sam, who played 1930s and 1940s music on the piano. He played by ear and did a fantastic job. He was unable to read a note of music, but if he heard a song he liked he could play it flawlessly. The one time when mom and Werner were there Sam played as his last song of the night, "How Great Thou Art". Everyone was so emotional over how well he played it and how well everyone sang along with it that they kept asking for an encore. Sam ended up laying that song 5 or 6 times, with each successive time the song got louder and sang with more and more feeling. The last time ended in such a crescendo that it almost rang the rafters! For sure that song made it all the way to the gates of highest heaven!

## 1992



**Marie Bender in her "skit" outfit**

Mom also was a major participant in a skit program we all put on one evening as that month's major entertainment. It was a fashion show, with each person representing a different decade in American history. Diane started off as a flapper from the roaring twenties. I ended the show as a casually dressed executive of the 90s, impersonating Werner. I wore his clothes and his sandals and was a close image of him. And mom impersonated Werner's mother Mama, striking me with a broom for not dressing or acting properly. We brought the house down that night. Werner was not there, he was back in Michigan. I called him that night and related everything about that play.

Mom dressed elegantly while down there. She almost always wore a skirt and blouse, all first rate clothes. After all, she had to keep up with Fannie and Darlene!

## 1993



**Sandy & Werner Wilhelm**

Sandy lost her beloved husband, Werner in January, 1993. Mom attended the wake and funeral in spite of the fact that Sandy's husband wanted only me and a few long time employees of Wil Mar there. Afterwards Marie and Ann helped Sandy clean up her husband's home as I was so busy taking Werner back and forth to dialysis and running the nursing home and retirement center in between that I had little time for laundry and straightening out our house. Mom was a big help. Mom was always a whiz when it came to straightening and cleaning. Mom's house was always spotless and totally uncluttered and now she helped me to do the same. Mom turned 80 years old that year but one would never know it as she was so supple and energetic and young appearing.

I had to travel to Sebring, Florida in March, 1993 as my sister Nancy told the staff that Werner was dead so I had to drop everything and get down there to get Administrator licenses for several of my staff.



**Marie, ?, Hulda, the cook, ? & Mabel at Sun 'N Lake Towers**

Mom went with me on that trip and helped out. She really enjoyed living at Sun N Lake Towers and socializing with the residents there.

Marie was very healthy until the 83<sup>rd</sup> year of her life. She took no medication most of her life, and then only trental and aspirin in her later years. She would go to doctors for check ups but they never found much of anything wrong. The only health problems she had was having 5 children in her younger years, then a blood clot in her leg when Dr. Krebs gave her way too high a dosage of estrogen intramuscularly for change of life. Menopause gave Marie a very difficult time. She became very very nervous for over 5 years and was always aggravated and was always out of sorts and screaming at all the kids for little reason. And later Dr. James Wm. Finn found a lump in her breast but that turned out to be benign.



**Marie Dahl Bender**

The frightening stage of her health status began when she was about 75 years old when her toes started to turn red. I took her to a vascular surgeon to have the circulation evaluated as we were frightened with the status of her toes. Dr Sumat told us we had reason to be frightened, that the status of the circulation in her lower extremities was compromised. Marie always had circulation problems in her lower legs from the time of her youth. She often had cramps in her legs and feet from poor circulation. Many times one could see mom crying and stomping her feet to try to stop the cramp. Dr. Sumat told us that mom had such narrow veins and arteries in her legs that surgery to increase the flow of blood to the lower legs was very risky and he would not recommend it. He put mom on trental to make her blood corpuscles slipperier. She also

started taking an aspirin a day to increase circulation. Sandy was always amazed that Marie could take an aspirin or two every day, day after day as Marie comes from a family with a long history of bleeding stomach ulcers. But mom was never affected this way.



**Marie & Cindy**



**Marie at Dr. Goodwin's office**



Mom started going to Dr. Goodwin, the foot doctor to make sure she was doing everything possible to protect her feet. In the beginning my husband, Werner Wilhelm, took mom with him when he went. Mom was the model patient, my husband used to make cat like noises to express the pain he was feeling as the doctor worked on his feet. The podiatrist stated that mom's circulation was better than the vascular surgeon indicated for although mom's pedal pulse seemed almost absent, she does continue to have adequate peripheral circulation. Dr. Goodwin has been mom's salvation. His working on mom's feet every 2 months has kept serious potential problems in check.

Mom drove herself across Hall Road to an appointment with an Indian woman doctor who took over Dr. Finn's practice. Mom started getting really afraid of crossing such a busy highway herself so she soon called the Utica Senior Citizen transportation center at Utica City Hall and now the Senior Citizen bus driven by Pam Trendal took mom to the doctor and other errands.

Then came the Grand Finale of Marie's driving career. Mom was getting more and more fearful of driving by this point and only went grocery shopping and only using the back roads to get there. She stopped driving on Hahn as cars would speed up and down that road. So instead she drove down Grant Park, east on Mc Clellan, and then north on Deshon. From there she could drive into the back of Bazley's market. Well, one day Doug came out to visit her and he stood on the front hood of dad's car but still wasn't able to reach what he wanted to work on so he asked mom to back up the car a little so he could climb up on the higher hood so he could reach the upper rafter area. So mom got into the car, started it up, put it into reverse gear, and as she started to put her foot on the gas she noticed it was shaking like mad from nervousness. So when she stepped on the gas, she accidentally stepped on it really hard and the car went ROARING out of the garage and onto the driveway. Mom looked straight ahead and saw Doug hanging by his arms from the rafters. Mom then got really panicky and thought, "OH NO! I can't leave him hanging up there, he might fall and really get hurt", so CHINK!! she put the car into drive, stepped hard on the gas to get there really fast and save him, and ROARED back into

the garage!! Doug saw the car flying right at him, so he lifted himself up really high in the air by his arms, chinning himself on the rafters as mom came roaring through, hitting the shelves on the back wall of the garage. Mom was just shaking all over with fear. I could have killed my son!! She feared. She couldn't sleep for 3 days afterwards, thinking of what could have happened to Doug if he had not chinned himself on those rafters.

The second thought that came to her mind afterwards was, "If I had run over him, how could I have ever have called his wife and said to her that I just killed your husband!?"

So that was the abrupt end of mom's driving career which had begun in the 54<sup>th</sup> year of her life and ended in the 77<sup>th</sup> year! The very next day mom had gone to the Secretary of State office, handed them her driver's license and said, "Here, take this thing. I don't want it anymore. Give me a Michigan I.D. instead."



**Doug, Kathy, Marilyn, Doris, Jean, Chet, Doug, Pat, Marie and Mike**

Mom cooked almost every day at home. About once a week Mike and Marilyn would come over to mom's and have dinner with us and we'd always play cards afterwards. Sometimes in those early years Marilyn would come over to mom's in the middle of the afternoon and they'd play scrabble together.



**Mike & Marilyn**

Mom first met Marilyn right after Bill's funeral. Marilyn met Dad briefly at the Otter's the Saturday before Father's Day when we all gathered together at Doug's house. After dad died mom and I would continue to go to the Waltz festivals in Waltz. We would sit in earlier years with dad on Doug's front lawn, and then after dad died and Doug had sold that house we sat on the curb in front of the bank and watched the parade go by. Then after the parade would finish we would walk past Grandma Neuman's house and go to the fairgrounds



and buy a roasted chicken dinner and all eat together. Mr. Clarence Otter used to help roast all the chickens over grates set over an open pit fire. Then there were rides for the kids, young and old, to go on and then after that we would watch the sky divers come down. In the parade we used to watch Allen and Linda Otter ride the old fashioned high wheeler bikes down main street.



**Nancy, Marie & Donna**



**Marie & Mike P**



**Nancy in her dining room**



**Nancy, Linda, Nicole, Marie**

Mom went out to California to visit Nancy and her family a number of times after dad died. The first time was in 1982, the year he died. She went out there in early November, before her birthday and stayed until December 27<sup>th</sup>.

So she was able to celebrate her 69th birthday on November 13th, Thanksgiving and Christmas with them. Sandy remained in Michigan working and taking care of Taffy. I had a very special birthday that year in spite of mom not being there. I had planned to go to the Waltz Christmas bazaar that day, but when the day dawned bright and very warm I just had to stay home with Taffy and enjoy this most unusual of birthdays. It was 70 degrees F on my birthday, an unheard of temperature for the 5th of December in Detroit area! So I put on a pair of shorts, went to the nursery and bought 100 tulip, daffodil, hyacinth, and crocus bulbs and Taffy and I spent the day planting the bulbs and having a picnic together. Taffy and I sat on the front sidewalk and ate deli hotdogs in the skin and deli hot dog buns.

When Mom got home on December 27<sup>th</sup>, Sandy, Mike, Marilyn, Doug and his family had a belated Christmas celebration. Mom was very happy and relaxed after her joyous trip to California and was full of news of our California branch of the family.



**Casey Shea Stephens**



**Jackie, Casey Shea & Patrick Stephens**





**Ashley Meyer & Donna Stephens**



**Craig & Scott Stephens**

In the years that followed Marie was very happy to enjoy the births of her newest great grandchildren. Nicole, in 1974, Michelle Pacheco in 1975 and Michael Joachim Pacheco in 1978 were born while Edward was still living. The remainder of his grandchildren, he passed away before they were born. Only Marie, his widow, remained here to enjoy their offspring. Casey Shea, the child of Warren and Jackie, was born in May, 1987 in Maryland. Then in June, 1989 Craig and Mary Anne's son Scott Michael was born in California. In September of the same year Ashley Meyer, the daughter of Donna Stephens and George Meyer was born in California.

Then in June, 1990 Warren and Jackie's son Patrick Kyle was born in Maryland. Unfortunately all of these children born after Ed died were half grown before Marie and Sandy got to meet and enjoy them.

## 1994



**Edna in white, Marie in yellow as they leave the hospital in July, 1995**

1994 started out kind of scary and aggravating for poor Marie. Sandy would come over to Marie's house in the morning. Mom would be sitting in her chair looking out the front window at the teenage girl across the street who was waiting for the school bus to come. The girl was skipping rope one morning as mom was watching her and asked Sandy "Is that one girl or two skipping rope?" One, I said. "I thought so", Marie replied. "Those two were skipping in absolute perfect unity so I figured I must be seeing double." She was seeing double. As we drove around town she would ask me if there were one or two of various people, cars etc. Sometimes she would see okay, then suddenly she would see double. She had been seeing Dr. Shulman, an optometrist since 4/23/82 and was having twice a year eye exams. So I took mom to Dr. Shulman. Her health was okay. She was seeing double because her eye

muscles had become so weak that sometimes they did not properly focus, thus creating a double image. The doctor found at that time that mom had glaucoma, just like her 2 sisters, Mildred and Elenore had, so he started her on timoptic eye drops that later were changed to cosopt when timoptic were not strong enough to reduce the pressures into the 17 or 18 range. Cosopt did the job. Sandy always begged him for free samples as a small bottle of cosopt cost \$80. Most times we got 3 to 6 months of free samples, which was good as Marie often paid up to \$1,100 per month for all her medications after she broke her hip. Then in June of 1994 Dr. Shulman told Marie her cataract was ripe and she needed surgery in July. Marie agreed. Sandy and Marie viewed a video on this operation. Then on July 26, 1994 Sandy took Marie to St Joseph east hospital where Marie had the cataract in her right eye removed. The operation went well and in a few hours Marie left the hospital, went to a restaurant for a quick lunch, then went home and slept the afternoon and evening away in her lazy boy chair. The next morning she went to the doctor's office and had her bandage removed. About 1 month later her eye healed to the point where she realized she had almost 20/20 vision in her right eye. She had some mild pain with the operation and from time to time sharp pain. The doctor removed a stitch which greatly lessened her pain. One year later on the 18<sup>th</sup> of July, 1995 Marie had her left eye operated on. Again, minimal pain and one month later she had almost perfect vision. Marie, who wore glasses with thicker lens all of her adult life, suddenly found her vision was so good that she had no further need for glasses, neither distant nor bifocal. Our friend Edna had surgery also on the same day but her story was not a happy one. She ended up losing all vision in the operated eye and most of her vision in the other eye due to a stroke and macular degeneration. Mama was indeed very lucky, having almost perfect vision right to the end of her life. It was only in the last year that mom couldn't read better than 20/100 on the eye chart.



In 1994 Marie and Sandy went to Lion's Head for a one week vacation. We rented a hotel room at the Lion's Head Beach motel in the city of Lion's Head. Marie took short walks with Sandy around the town, to the marina and down the Light House dead end road. But Marie could no longer take long walks over the rocks or up the steep road that leads out of town as her legs got sore from long walks. So one day while Marie stayed behind and read a book Sandy walked the rocky shore line to Carter Road. Once on Carter Road Sandy was overcome with joy to see that the Glocca Morra cottage, the very finest of

all of Byron and Tessie Grieg's cottages was for sale. It gave Sandy a feeling of boundless joy to think she could own that cottage.

The next morning Sandy got up early and called Paul Annet and said she wanted to see the Glocca Morra. Paul came down, picked up Sandy and Marie and drove them to the Glocca Morra. We then walked through that once marvelous cottage. What a big disappointment – that once beautiful, best on the entire shoreline cottage was heavily water damaged due to a leaky roof which sent water running down and staining all that beautiful knotty pine paneling. In addition the owner had put on a bedroom addition that was sitting 10 feet on the neighbor's property. As we were driving down Carter Road to this cottage I noticed that Booth's Tanglewood cottage was also for sale. So I told Paul let's stop there and look at that one too. So Paul parked there and Paul, Marie and Sandy got out of his car and started in. Another real estate agent with a couple were about to disembark from another car and go in and view this cottage too. So Paul suggested to the other agent that they first drive down further and look at the other cottage first so we wouldn't all be tripping over each other. So they went. We then entered the Booth cottage. The Booths were at home. Marie sat with the Booths and chatted with them in the living room while Paul and I went through the cottage. Marie was in love with this cottage at first sight and just knew that was the one she wanted Sandy to buy. And she also really liked the Booths too and enjoyed chatting with them. Sandy was astonished at the excellent condition of this cottage and all the wonderful amenities it contained. Yes, I want it, she thought to herself. So Sandy went back to Paul Annet's real estate office and called Steve Feldman who said to buy it if I wanted it. So I then put down a down payment and filled out the purchase papers. 15 minutes later the second couple came in the office to buy the Booth cottage. I was so glad I got there first.



**Marie in Liv Rm**



**Marie & Elenore on deck**



**Living room of cottage**



**Card Room**

The cottage came with all the furniture which was a real blessing as beds and furniture and washer and dryer and stove and refrigerator are very expensive in Canada. We offered \$15,000 less than their asking price. They accepted. Marie was ecstatic. It took 30 days to complete the transaction. We put in the offer to purchase on August 31, 1994 and the closing was set for September 30<sup>th</sup>. Marie and Sandy drove up to Lion's Head the night before. We had a motel reservation in Wiarton as the closing papers were to be signed there in Peter Pegg's office on Saturday. What a rotten surprise Sandy and Marie got

when they drove into Goderich. It suddenly turned dark and all of a sudden a thick fog started rolling in. Boy, was Marie and Sandy scared. It was pitch black, no street lights and blankets of fog kept rolling in off the lake. The fog would thin out. Marie and Sandy would be so relieved – the fog is lifting! But then ¼ mile further on it got to be pea soup again. Marie wanted to stop at a motel for the night, but Sandy told her we had to be in Wiarton the next morning for the closing. Marie said we could start out early the next morning. But the fog seemed to get thicker as the night wore on and Sandy was afraid it might be impossible to drive through later on. The only thing that saved Marie and Sandy that night was that it was a newly repaved road and there was a brand new bright white line on the right side of the road and so Sandy followed that white line all the way to Hwy 6. By sheer luck at the intersection of Hwy 21 and Hwy 6 the fog dissipated and the intersection was visible. A very shaken Sandy and Marie arrived around midnight at the motel at the top of the hill north of Wiarton.



**Peter Pegg's law office**



**Sandy's cottage, Lion's Head**



The next morning Sandy went into Peter Pegg's office, handed him the cashier's check, signed the papers and then Marie and Sandy waited until Monday afternoon to take possession of the cottage. So Marie and I stayed in room #6 at the Top Notch motel on Friday night and then moved to the Lion's Head Beach motel for Saturday and Sunday nights. On Monday Mrs. Booth asked if she could take until 5 pm to clear out as the packing was taking longer than they expected. I told her no problem. Paul Annet gave me one set of keys to the cottage and at 5 pm Mrs. Booth gave me her set. Mr. Booth came over and showed me everything in the cottage and the little quirks here and there and how to handle them. Mom talked to Mrs. Booth while Bronson and I walked through the cottage. Marie and I really liked Bronson, he was a gentleman from the old school. We liked Mrs. Booth too. She told Sandy she felt like she knew me all of her life. Sandy had the same feeling about her.



**Marie's bedroom**



**Elenore's bedroom**



**cottage living room**



Sandy and Marie moved in to the new cottage on September 30, 1994. Marie got right to work unpacking. Then she started dusting and scrubbing, even though the cottage was already very clean and in perfect order. The next day Marie was on her hands and knees scrubbing already clean floors. Marie and I made the beds we were about to sleep in while we were there. Marie felt she was in 7<sup>th</sup> heaven. Every night we were there we sat in the card and game room and played canasta and scrabble. Days we went exploring, like in the good old days. That first year we parked down below and walked up the wooden stairs to the cottage. Marie was able to make those stairs on her own but her left knee hurt so she walked up favoring her sore leg.



**Elenore & Marie**



**cottage, walk on right**



**drive & walk**



**drive before cement**

The next year I had Brian Shearer put in a cement driveway on the north end of the cottage as I could see that it was getting very difficult for Marie and Elenore to make those steps. Once the cement driveway went in it was a flat walk from the driveway to the entrance of the cottage. I also had Brian put in a guard rail all along the north side of the cottage as Bronson had fallen a number of times and I didn't want mom to fall. The turn around area at the back of the drive was really tight but it worked. As Marie became weaker and started having strokes that driveway was a Godsend as she could not have gotten into the cottage without that flat surface.



**Marie, Warren, Casey-Shea, Jackie, Patrick**



**Marie, Warren, Patrick, Casey-Shea**



**Marie & Patrick**

Marie loves that cottage, year after year she enjoys it as much as she did when Sandy first bought it. Until June of 1999 Marie took care of herself and moved freely around that cottage by herself. For the past 4 years or so she had the problem of suddenly walking sideways without warning, which was always a surprise to her and disturbed her as she had no idea why that was happening to her, but until 1999 she never fell, even though she had a few anxious moments until she caught herself and stopped the stagger.



**Hayley, Toni, Marie & Chelsea**



**Marlene, Sandy, Marie, Rochelle,  
Hayley, Toni & Chelsea - Nov 13**



**Rochelle, Marie & Sandy**



**Marie & Cora, who Marie said was mean to her**

Then after her broken hip in July, 1999 Marie had to have a 24 hour caregiver both at home and at the cottage. That really upset her as she really wanted to maintain her independence. But that was no longer possible. The caregivers moved into Marie's cottage bedroom with her and occupied the other twin bed.

The broken hip occurred at the cottage on June 15, 1999. We had just arrived there after a 6 hour drive from Utica. We unloaded at the cottage, then went to Mom's Restaurant for dinner. After returning to the cottage Marie went into her bedroom and unpacked and hung up her clothes. She then left her bedroom, turned and shut her bedroom door and as she pivoted she knocked the head off her femur and fell to the floor in front of the main bathroom. She was in deep pain. Curt had come up with us, so I called to him. He picked Marie up off the floor and put her in the wheelchair, which we almost didn't bring up with us. He then wheeled her to the van and lifted her out of the wheelchair and hoisted her into the side seat. We drove her to the Lion's Head hospital. They helped us get her out of the van and onto the wheelchair and then on the table of the emergency room. They x rayed her hip and found the broken jagged head of the femur laying loose in her hip area. She had to remain in the hospital from Wednesday 9:30 pm until 10:00 pm on Thursday evening when Taylor ambulance from Detroit came and picked her up.

Much later Craig and Mary Anne's beautiful little Valerie was born in February, 1994 and their adorable little Roxanne was born in May, 1996. We met all of the California children in May, 1997 when we went out there after an absence of many years.





**Valerie Stephens**



**Scott, Mary Anne, Valerie & Craig Stephens**



**Roxanne Stephens**

## **1997**

It was this year that I purchased a wheelchair for Marie so we could take her shopping in the mall and other long walking distances. But Marie was too proud to get into a wheelchair so that chair sat in her garage for the most part until in 1999 after she broke her hip. The repaired hip caused her so much pain and altered her gait so much that she was forced to use a wheelchair and a non wheeling walker. I had also bought her a red wheeling walker with hand brakes in 1997 to steady her as she was staggering around the house and had fallen several times. We had a physical therapist come to her home after she got out of Beaumont hospital as Marie could not walk when she left the hospital. The therapist was supposed to teach Marie proper gait training and part of this training consisted of Marie using the red wheeling walker at all times. The therapist showed her how to walk around the house using a walker and how to get her breakfast by putting the bowl, spoon, box, milk on her walker and push it to the table, and then transfer the items in front of her place while hanging on to the walker for safety while doing so. The funny smile on her face told the therapist and me that Marie had no intention of doing that. When the therapist walked out of the house, mom's red walker got permanently parked. Mom has never been mechanically inclined and maneuvering that walker seemed to her to fall into that category. It was just too cumbersome and slowed her down and made her make too many awkward movements. Life was just much easier and more free wheeling for Marie to be on her own two feet with nothing out in front to shove around. So it was goodbye red walker, hello stagger.

We went out to California in May 1997 to attend Nicole White's wedding to Mark Blais and to visit with and enjoy all of the California children that mom and I never yet met or hadn't seen for a long long time. The last time I was out to California was June, 1982. Mom had not been out there since the early or mid 1980s, so it was a very special and joyous reunion for all of us, especially since Mike and Marilyn also came out with us.



**Mark & Nicole White Blais**

The May of 1997 visit was the last time mom was walking on her own. She was in Nicole's wedding and walked down the aisle on her own. She did very well and looked like a million dollars in Nicole's wedding video. Marie had her picture taken with all of her California family and most of them turned out very well.



**Michelle, Nancy, Ashley, Donna & Michael**

Marie was so happy to see all of her family again. Nancy was so happy to be with us in California but stated she had to travel back to Nevada on Wednesday as she had to get back to work so she wouldn't lose her job. Her friend Bob took the wedding video which turned out very well. Mike and Marilyn rented a car separate from us in order to run over the desert as they didn't want to be jammed into a van with all of us.



**Mark, Nikki, Nancy, Nicole, Marie & Marilyn**

Marie along with the rest of us went over to Linda's house the day after the wedding and watched Nicole and Mark open their gifts. We spent a happy day there then about 4 pm we left Linda's and followed Donna over to Craig and Mary Anne's house to visit their family. This was the first time Sandy and Mike had seen any of Craig's kids or met his wife and this was the first time Marie saw Valerie age 2 or Roxanne who was only a few weeks old. Roxanne had a worrisome rash on her head which soon went away.



**Mary Anne, Roxanne, Valerie, Scott, & Craig Stephens**

Craig was still shook up over the fact that he could have lost Mary Anne at Roxanne's birth as Mary Anne suddenly lost a lot of blood which shook up the hospital staff and when Craig saw the nurses shook up he almost passed out himself from fear. Marie enjoyed the new baby very much, but also all her other grandchildren. But Marie always has a special affection for new babies. So Roxanne stole the show that trip out to California.



**Marie Bender & Roxanne Stephens**

On Wednesday all of us returned to Las Vegas to visit with Nancy before flying back home. Nancy returned to work at the blinds store about a mile from our hotel and we ended up staying one night at the Mirage and then the rest of the time at Sam's Town which we enjoyed the best. The Mirage had the same rooms with a little different décor but cost twice the price. The gambling was

much more expensive. There were no nickel machines here like at Sam's Town. The entrance at the Mirage was absolutely beautiful, with foliage and fish tanks, etc. But that was a problem for Marie as she can not walk that far without her legs hurting her. So we cancelled our second night's reservation and returned to Sam's Town.



**Marie, holding her purse still full of her money plus \$11 in winnings, over her head**

Marie liked gambling a little but was careful never to lose much money. At Sam's Town she sat down in front of a quarter machine and started playing. Not too long afterwards she hit a minor jackpot and the coins kept coming out and out and out with a jing jing jing. Marie was very happy and when all the coins were in the tray she picked up a cup and started putting all the coins in a cup. Sandy asked her if she was going to play anymore and she said no, she was not about to lose her earnings. So when Marie filled the cup Sandy said she'd take the cup over to the cage and get the coins turned into dollars. Nope, mom replied. I don't trust their count. I'm taking my cup of coins up to my room and I'm going to count the coins myself to make sure they don't cheat me! She counted out her coins then let Sandy take her coins to the cage to get dollar bills.



**Donna, Marie & Marilyn**

Marilyn was miserable as she hadn't slept well for days so she changed her tickets and flew home ahead of time. Mike stayed in Las Vegas with us. Nancy and Bob took us to the best smorgasbord in Las Vegas but that was a problem as we had to stand in line for over an hour to get seated. That was really hard on Marie's legs. But it was a wonderful buffet, the best we ever experienced. But Sam's Town buffet was also very good and had more food that one could ever eat. Marie stayed seated and Sandy got her her food. They also took us to the casino restaurant in Henderson which was Nancy and Bob's favorite.



**Marie, Nancy & Bob**

We flew back home from Las Vegas, a much more congenial airport than LAX. It was much easier for Marie as it had much less walking.

Marie then had about 5 strokes between August of 1990 and August 27 of 2001. Each stroke affected her speech and hearing center and the right hand and right leg. She lost all of the hearing in her left ear and a profound amount in her left ear. With the second stroke Marie lost partial use of her right arm. It happened on Sunday December 15, but I did not realize it was a stroke until the next Wednesday. From Sunday to Wednesday Marie repeatedly told me how much her right hand hurt her. I thought it was arthritis pain, like the pain her mother Nellie called rheumatism. Then on Wednesday when I came to take mom to lunch she said to me, "Watch this". She lifted her arm and suddenly it flew up all by itself and her hand smacked her in the right eye. She did that 3 times and every time she lost control of her arm and her hand smacked into her eye. I then asked Marie to lift her hand over her head. She did and when her hand was straight up in the air it bent at the elbow, flew back down, and struck her on the top of the head. Marie looked at me and laughed a very startled, nervous laugh. I then took mom to Beaumont hospital for evaluation. They took a MRI and said it didn't show any damage from a stroke. But when mom had another stroke and a 2<sup>nd</sup> MRI was taken the first stroke damage showed up on that MRI. They said it often happens that the damage does not immediately appear on a MRI until weeks later. Every stroke mom had has fortunately been mild but each one did successive damage, weakening her right arm and leg.

## **1999**

On June 15, 1999 Curt Crawl, Marie, Sandy, Kitsey and Harrigan drove up to our cottage in Lion's Head for a 5 day week end. Curt was going to do some tree trimming and repairs. Mom was going to enjoy the scenery. We got up there around 5 pm, unloaded the van and went to Mom's Restaurant for dinner. We then went back to the cottage. Mom immediately set to work unpacking her suitcase and hanging up all of her clothes. As soon as she was done with that she left her bedroom, turned to shut the door behind her, staggered and fell in front of the bathroom door. She was crying in pain, something she never did any of the other times she fell. I asked her if she could get up, she said she didn't know. I called for Curt to help me get her up.

Curt was delayed as a raccoon was bothering our van and he had to get him away from the tires and brake linings. A few minutes later Curt came in and together we started to stand Marie up. She was in horrid pain and was not able to bear any weight. At that point I knew for sure she had broken her hip. Curt half lifted her into the wheelchair, wheeled her out to the van then lifted her out of the wheelchair and into the van, a very difficult lift as the van seat was considerably higher than the wheelchair. We drove her to the emergency room at Lion's Head. They took x-rays and discovered that Marie had knocked the head right off the femur. They do not do surgery in Lion's Head so they said we would either have to transfer her to Owen Sound or get her back home to Michigan. She was in considerable pain, it broke Sandy's heart to see her in so much pain and to know that the head was right off the femur and jabbing into her flesh. It took Sandy 1 ½ days of diligent work to find an ambulance to take Marie back to Michigan. Canada has socialized medicine so they refused to use their ambulance to transport Marie back home. The Lion's Head nurse tried to get the Canadian ambulance to transport Marie to the Hotel Dieu Hospital in Windsor and then have an American ambulance pick her up from there and transport her to Crittendon Hospital in Rochester, Michigan. Canada refused to transport Marie anywhere in their ambulance, saying they needed it for local transport.

I called Dr. Nathan, Marie's Romeo, Michigan doctor and asked him what orthopedic surgeon and what hospital would be best for Marie. He said without hesitation that Dr Maibauer at Crittenden hospital was the best. I then called my attorney to get him working on finding an ambulance. The nurse at the Lion's Head Bruce Peninsula hospital was calling everywhere to get an ambulance. Among others I called Taylor Ambulance in Detroit. They had changed their name but were still listed in the phone book under Taylor. They agreed to do it but said they would have to finish all their Michigan runs first and then find two volunteers to travel all that distance. At 4:30 they said their crew was on their way up. I had also called the Toronto based air ambulance as I felt that would be the most comfortable for mom, but they were not able to do it for 2 days. I wanted Marie in Crittenden by Friday morning so Dr Maibauer could operate on her on Friday. The ambulance showed up at quarter to 10 at night. What a time to start a 5 hour run home, especially since I had hardly slept at all in the past 3 nights. Fortunately Curt was with me so he shared the drive home. Marie was taken off by ambulance so Curt and I had to run back to the cottage, put the dog and cat in the car, lock up the cottage and then head home. I had called Mike earlier in the evening and asked him to meet the ambulance when it got in to Crittendon as Marie as in a lot of pain and was scared and it would be a lot of comfort to her to have one of her children present. He said he would. I then called him back at 9:45 pm and told him Marie would not be getting in to the hospital until 2 am as the ambulance took so long to get to Lion's Head. He then said at that point that he couldn't meet her there. So now she would have to arrive in Crittendon alone, scared and in pain.



Boy was I ever scared and stressed as we started out for home after 10 pm. It was pitch black out and now some wispy fog started rolling in. Oh, no, I cried out, what a horror it will be if we have to drive down in deep fog like I had to the night we came up to buy the cottage. But once we got off the Bruce Peninsula and onto Hwy 21 the fog lifted. We got into the Mc Donald's in Port Elgin just as they were about to close.

We ran into the restrooms, and then bought some coke and fries to keep us awake on the long dark journey homeward. We then hit the open road traveling southward at a very good clip as there were hardly any cars on the road at that late hour. I drove from Lion's Head to Goderich, then asked Curt to take over as I was too tired to make it any further. We suddenly caught up to Marie's ambulance in Goderich. They pulled into the gas station there hoping to find diesel fuel as they were getting very low. The station had no diesel and they stated there were no open diesel stations between Goderich and the American border. The ambulance attendants began to sweat it out, hoping they would make it that far. I ran into the restroom, got us some more coke, opened a can of nuts and a bag of chips and hopped into the passenger side of the van. Curt drove. When we got close to the Hwy 402 Curt passed the ambulance to lead them into the freeway. Evidently the ambulance drivers did not recognize our van for when we pulled into the on ramp they sailed right past us continuing on on south Hwy 21. Curt and I groaned, sure they would run out of gas. At least I knew that Marie was comfortable still as I looked in on her in the gas station in Goderich and saw that the morphine was holding her well and she was asleep and mostly comfortable. But what if they ran out of gas? Evidently they immediately realized their mistake for they ended up in Crittenden hospital in 4 hours and 15 minutes.

Marie was scheduled for surgery that Friday at 1 pm. Mike met Sandy at the hospital and we stood with mom until at 3:45 pm Dr Maibauer and his staff came and got her to take her to surgery. Dr. Maibauer himself grabbed the end of the bed and pulled it into the operating room. The surgery went very well and the top of her femur was removed and replaced with a steel ball and shank. Dr. Maibauer said they could have reattached the head of the femur but that normally never lasts and surgery would have to be re done. After the surgery Dr. Maibauer said mom had considerable amount of osteoporosis which is why the break occurred. He said any woman over forty should never rotate at the hip but rather should turn her whole body and keep the hip in line with her pelvis. Such twisting he said is the usual cause for the head of the femur to twist loose from the rest of the bone.



**Marie in these pictures is in Crittenden hospital rehab center to learn to walk again**

Mom was in quite a bit of pain and distress from the surgery and from the weights hanging from her leg and from the compression sleeves on her legs to prevent the formation of blood clots. 4 days after surgery they were contemplating whether she could benefit from physical therapy. Sandy assured them Marie could and so they said they would give her a 4 day trial to see whether she could follow instructions and learn to walk again. She made slight progress in those 4 days so they kept mom there, a whole 4 weeks it turned out to be. She kept trying to get out of bed and the wheelchair by herself. Sandy kept telling her not to do that, that it was much too dangerous. One afternoon shortly before Sandy came to visit she stood up out of the wheelchair and fell on the floor on her operated hip. Sandy went with her to x ray and fortunately nothing was dislodged or broken. Sandy insisted that they use a posey belt to keep Marie safely in the wheelchair. From then on Marie was safe from further falls. Marie did not transfer well or walk until about 3 to 4 days before they were to discharge her. Sandy told Marie she had to stand, transfer and walk a little if she wanted to go back home. If not she would have to go to a nursing home. Well Marie got really serious about that and when discharge came Marie had accomplished those goals.

Sandy had a really hard time finding a 24 hour care giver to stay with Marie at home. Sandy called Marie's hairdresser and she recommended Dora and Cora. Cora was free. Sandy called her and made arrangements for Cora to meet Sandy at Marie's house at 10 am on July 16, 1999 and together they would go to the hospital to discharge Marie. Sandy also took Toni Put along for help in handling Marie. The day before Toni and Sandy went to the hospital and practiced getting Marie into Sandy's van with the instruction of the physical therapists. That transfer went fairly well.



**Toni & Maire at Crittenden hospital**



**Curt & Marie at her new ramp**



**1<sup>st</sup> time up the ramp to the house**



**Marie & Curt at 45430 Grant Park**

Marie walked now with the walker, in fact on the way home we stopped at the Uptown Restaurant and Marie walked right into the restaurant to the table by herself with the aide of her walker. She could no longer use the rolling walker and had to use instead a pick up and put down type walker as she needed more control. After lunch we took her home and she saw her brand new handicap ramp that Marvin Stadler put in for me over the last 3 days. I knew I couldn't get her wheelchair up 4 stairs so when I discovered that she was going home I called Marvin and hoped against hope he could put such a big project together in 3 days. He didn't disappoint me. He and his 80 year old 100 lb carpenter friend got to work on it right away and when mom came home they were just putting the finishing touches on it. It was perfect. I was so grateful to Marvin. And to his 80 year old helper who yesterday was scooting all around under the ramp nailing it fast from the underside. Marvin, a very devout Lutheran proved true the old Christian adage, "By their good works shall you know them". It is in times of greatest need such as this that you learn really fast who your friends are and who the good and true Christians are.

Curt Crowl, another good friend, was there to meet us when we got home and he was the first one to wheel mom up the ramp in her wheelchair. He brought her up backwards, something we never did again, but it worked well for mom as he tilted her backwards to keep her safely in her chair. After that we wheeled her up the ramp forwards, telling her to keep her feet up, and we wheeled her down the ramp backwards to protect her feet and keep her safely in her chair.



**Marie in her chair**



**Marie and Cora**

We put Marie in her electric lift chair that Sandy bought for her last year when she couldn't get herself out of a chair a year ago. Marie then slept away most of the afternoon. When she came home from the hospital her chair was facing

away from the window. In November when Marie thought she was dying she had Toni and Rochelle move all the living room furniture, pointing her chair sideways so she could look out of the front picture window in what she thought were her last days. The chair remained sideways as Marie often enjoyed looking out the window to watch who was coming and going. She loved seeing Sandy come up the ramp. Here she comes! Marie often said as Sandy came up the ramp.

Toni left to go back home and Cora took over watching Marie. I soon went to Marie's back bedroom to get some money for food out of her hidden stash of cash in her second drawer under her clothes. Her money had been stolen in the few hours since we brought her home. I knew who did it but I was over a barrel as I had no relief caregiver.

Cora took care of mom from July 16<sup>th</sup> to the middle of October. At the middle of August when we were all on vacation with Warren and Jackie, Marie told Jackie in secret that Cora was very mean to her. Sandy had never seen any indication of this, but one never knows what happens once one leaves the patient alone with a new caregiver. We began to look around for a replacement at that point.



**Rochelle, Marie and Sandy**

I asked Curt if he knew of anyone who could care for mom weekends. He said he knew 2 young women, Chris and Rochelle who might be able to alternate weekends. He felt Chris was more available as Rochelle had a Monday through Friday job at Lahser Prevocational Center. Chris never showed for an interview but Rochelle did, promptly. I liked Rochelle a lot right from the first time I met her and she agreed to care for Marie from Friday after work till Sunday at 5 pm. Rochelle worked out very well and appeared to be very kind to Marie. Then one Thursday Toni spotted Rochelle in the Uptown Restaurant having lunch upstairs. I needed someone to cover that night for mom so Toni hailed Rochelle over, we spoke to her and she agreed to care for mom. Rochelle also said she just lost her job at Lahser as she had taken too many sick days so she was looking for employment.



**Cora, Rochelle & Marie**

Being Marie was so upset over Cora I alternated Rochelle 3 days and Cora 4. Cora got really upset even though she was getting the same amount of money now as she had before when she was working 4 days a week. Rochelle, Marie, Cora and Sandy went up to the cottage in Lion's Head twice, once in September and once in October. Cora was very temperamental and out of sorts especially the last time and kept calling home to see if there were calls for her for a new job assignment. On one of the last days Rochelle was sweeping fallen leaves off the cement driveway with me and we were talking about the fact that money and many of mom's towels, sheets, pillow cases, and drinking glasses had been stolen from Marie's house. I had said to Rochelle that God will deal with whoever stole these things from a poor defenseless handicapped old person. Cora became even more agitated. When we got home to Utica and I paid Cora she became very antsy and said she was leaving and she probably wouldn't be coming back anymore. Marie and I were greatly relieved although now I was scared as to how I was going to cover all of Cora's 24 hour shifts. Rochelle said she would cover all shifts, working 24 hours a day 7 days a week until I found someone else. Rochelle also said she would prefer to take the 5 day per week shift and let the new girl have the weekend shift. That's just what we did. Rochelle worked out very well. I called Bonnie Niemi again for a referral for another girl for the weekend. She recommended the 24 hour care agency. I called the agency. They came to the Blue House, filled out all the paperwork and from that time forward I was able to cover the shifts and give Rochelle some time off. But, boy, did those 24 hour care givers ever leave something to be desired! I was so glad when much later I was able to cover all shifts with my friends.

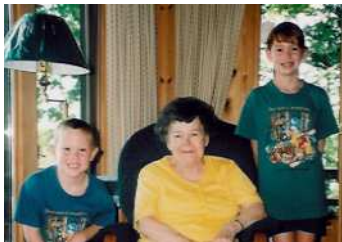
Cora was very nervous that there might be some legal repercussions about the missing money, dishes, glasses, sheets, pillow cases, towels and wash clothes so she kept calling Edna to see what was going on. I had thought briefly about calling in the police but in the end I wanted no more problems as I had more than I could handle so in this regard I totally believed in an old German saying Werner used to tell me when I got out of a very sticky situation, "Just get the louse out of your pelt", Werner used to say. So that's what I did. Just washed my hands of a very bad situation and had gotten off relatively easy from that mess.





**Marie in her new car lift**

In July of 1999 I learned about a handicap lift chair that could be put into my van to lift mom in and out without injuring her repaired hip. I learned that GM would pay \$1000 toward the cost of the seat as my van was less than 4 months old. So I contacted Creative Controls in Troy and they were able to retrofit a Braun electric turning seat into my 1999 Silhouette Olds. This way were able to get Marie in and out of the van without twisting her hip. But there was one short coming to that seat – it was designed for someone 5’4” or taller so mom had to step up onto a stool to be able to get into the seat. But the greatest shortcoming of all occurred due to Cora’s inattentiveness in bringing Marie’s seat out the side. Cora only partially opened the side door, then pushed the seat coming out button with the sliding door only partially open. As a result the seat kept jamming into the door and knocked the door completely off its hinges and on the first couple of days of Warren’s vacation in Lion’s Head to boot! But Warren saved the vacation by sealing the door shut and then pulling Marie in the other middle seat by putting a blanket on the seat, setting mom’s fanny partially on that blanket, then having someone in front of and behind Marie pushing and pulling her into the car. That was an expensive repair not covered under warranty.



**Patrick, Marie & Case Shea**



**Jackie & Patrick**



**Warren's Family leaving Lion's Head**



**Mike, Marie, Sandy, Jackie, Casey Shea, Warren & Patrick**



Sandy and Marie first invited Warren, Jackie, Casey Shea and Patrick to come up to the cottage in Lion's Head with us I believe in 1997. They accepted our invitation for a 5 day visit. From Lion's Head they were going to go on to Niagara Falls, then back home to Millersville, Maryland. Well, this first visit it turned out we all had a wonderful time so since then we have made a 2 week Lion's Head vacation the first week in August an annual event. We love spending time together. Marie loves watching her 2 grandchildren at play. It makes her so very happy to spend these two weeks together with them. They had a wonderful time playing in the water in the rocky bay and go in usually 2ce per day unless we are going shopping in Wiarton or Owen Sound, or they are going horse back riding near Cape Croker or we are going to the Handicraft House by Wiarton or the fishing village in Tobermory. Nights Warren works on his computer or we all play cards together. The first year we went up together Patrick played cards with Marie. Marie walked very well that first year and she helped Jackie load and unload the dishwasher and do some of the chores around the cottage.



**Patrick & Casey Shea at stable**



**Casey Shea getting on horse**



**Marie, Jackie, Patrick & Casey Shea**

In 1997 and 1998 Marie slept with Sandy in Sandy's king size bed. Marie had the side of the bed closest to the bathroom. Sandy was afraid of Marie shutting the bathroom door because if Marie fell between the shower and the bathroom door no one could get in to help her back up. But Marie, stubborn as always, shut the door and fortunately nothing happened. After Marie broke her hip and needed a caregiver Warren's 2 kids had to sleep on air mattresses, first in their parents' room and then later in the living room.



**Jackie, Warren, Casey Shea & Patrick Stephens**



**Patrick & Casey Shea playing piano**



The first two years they came up the kids played Sandy's electronic piano. Patrick loved making noise with that thing! He would put the background music on, then with his toe he would turn on the noisy toy Sandy had given him and then he would play his latest learned piece. Marie and Sandy loved the circus! Warren told Patrick his nerves couldn't take it any more. Warren made the funny statement that any toy Aunt Sandy sends Patrick seems to make a lot of noise.



**Warren, Jackie, Marie, Casey Shea, Nancy & Patrick**



**Marie, Sandy & Elenore**



**Patrick on cottage piano**

In May of 1998 both Nancy and Aunt Elenore came to Marie's house just before Mother's Day. Our plan was to all drive to Maryland and for Elenore to spend her very first Mother's Day with John and Virginia and for Nancy and Marie and Sandy to spend Mother's Day with Warren and Jackie and the kids. Nancy had not spent Mother's Day with Warren for over 20 years so she was plenty excited too. We were scheduled to start our drive to Maryland on Tuesday. On Monday evening at around 9 pm we all came back to Marie's house and started up the 4 stairs and into Marie's house. Elenore was the last one to go into the

house as she was gathering up her purchases to carry I with her. Sandy offered to carry the stuff in for Elenore but Elenore was very firm – no, she could carry her own stuff in. Well Elenore got up the first 3 stairs okay but as she was leaving the 4<sup>th</sup> stair to get onto the porch she lost her balance and started falling backwards down the stairs. Fortunately she hung onto the pipe rail for most of her fall, thus being much closer to the ground before she lost her strength and fell the rest of the way and hit the back of her head on the pavement. Boy did her head hit the pavement with a sickening thud! Sandy was so frightened, she was afraid Elenore might die of a head injury. But Elenore remained conscious the whole time but just kept moaning and crying out in pain, how badly her head hurt! Sandy said we had to call an ambulance but Elenore kept refusing – she didn't want one. But Sandy thought the situation was dangerous and called one anyway. While waiting for the ambulance to arrive Nancy and Marie were standing on the very edge of the porch looking down at Elenore. Sandy kept hollering at them to get back, she didn't want two or three of them on the pavement. When the ambulance got there Elenore kept refusing treatment or to be transported, saying ambulances cost money. Sandy told the ambulance company to transport her to the hospital, that she could have a serious head injury.



**Marie, Elenore and Nancy in St. Joseph hospital**

They said they were taking her to Beaumont Troy. Sandy got there, no ambulance. The hospital called the dispatcher and found out they went to St. Joes West. So in the dark, murky fog Sandy drove through 10 miles of construction zone on M 59 and arrived at St. Joes. Elenore was in a room. I went in to be with her. She was in a lot of pain. I was scared but didn't want Elenore to see it as I didn't want to scare her anymore than she already was. And I wanted to divert her attention from all the pain she was in. So I got a brilliant idea that just fit the situation at hand, - I sang her a song my mom always sang to me whenever I hurt my head when I was a little kid – so I sang to Elenore, “I was walking down the street, oh so neat, down the street, when somebody moved my street, I fell down and went boom! I sighed and cried and ran home to mommy dear! Oh, how that certain place was hurting! Momma put me straight to bed, oh my head, straight to bed, when somebody moved my bed, I fell down and went boom!” Elenore laughed and cried at the same time –

I'm dying and Sandy's singing that silly song to me! But it did cheer her up. I stayed with her till about 11 pm till they put her in a room. Marie, Nancy and I then went to visit her on Tuesday and Wednesday and I went alone on Thursday morning. When I got there Elenore told me she was ready to go home, she was being discharged. So I helped her get dressed and took her to Marie's house and then we all went to the Uptown Restaurant for lunch. We sat in the corner booth. Elenore said to me at the end of lunch, "Well we're all packed, all washed up and dressed nice and pretty, let's take off for Maryland. I don't want us to miss Mother's Day." Sandy asked her if she was sure she could travel, just getting out of the hospital. She said the doctor told her to sit in the front seat and always look straight ahead and then she shouldn't get too dizzy. So we went back to mom's, I loaded the luggage and the guests and we were off.



**Casey Shea, Patrick, Jackie, Marie  
in Warren's family room**



**Warren, Jackie, Marie, Casey Shea, Marie, Nancy &  
Patrick in front of Warren's house**



**Nancy, Casey Shea, Jackie, Patrick Elenore, John, Virginia, and Warren**

The ride to Maryland was lovely. It was early May and all the greenery was just sprouting and many of the flowering trees were in full bloom. And the mountains are always so lovely. We stayed overnight in Pennsylvania and we were at John and Virginia's by 4 pm the next day. We stopped and ate just before we arrived which worked out perfectly. After visiting John and Virginia we carried on to Warren and Jackie's. It was a lovely visit for all of us. And on Mother's Day we met up with John and Virginia at their favorite diner and all sat at one long table and had a very nice dinner. Warren's children were so exceptionally well behaved that it was a wonder to all of us. Such lovely children.





**Marie, Nancy & Elenore**



**Nancy, Marie and Elenore**



**Elenore, Nancy & Marie**

After we left Warren and John's houses we were off to Niagara Falls for a few days there. As soon as we settled in the room Elenore wanted to go to the casino so Nancy stayed with mom and Elenore and I were off. Elenore, who is always lucky, won \$218 that trip so she had extra spending money. I was a nervous wreck taking the 3 of them around the falls as they were all unsteady on their feet and I was so afraid one of them would fall. We had mom in a wheelchair and Nancy was on her blue walker and Elenore and I took turns pushing mom. But we really enjoyed looking at the Falls, both from the American and the Canadian side.

After 2 days we left the Falls and continued on to Lion's Head, taking all the country roads there as there was almost no freeway between the Falls and Highway 6. We then enjoyed a week at my cottage before returning to Marie's house. Nancy then went home in 2 days and Elenore in 5. It was a lovely visit, one that Marie thoroughly enjoyed.



**Karen, Nancy and Marie at Shelley's restaurant**



**Karen, Shelley & Nancy**

When we got back home to Michigan Shelley and Karen invited us to dine at the restaurant where Shelley was working. We all went there and had a lovely dinner. But the big surprise was Nancy's chef's salad that Shelley so laboriously and lovingly created. It was indeed a true masterpiece – so artistic and topped off with a smiley face on top created by cherry tomatoes! Nancy

was very pleased, especially since she has always felt a very special attachment to Shelley. Shelley was very pleased that Nancy was so tickled pink by her special salad.



**Doug, Sandy, Marie & Linda**



**Linda & Marie**



**Linda & Marie**

In October Linda surprised mom by telling her she had a conference in New York that would end on Friday and that after the conference she would fly to Michigan and spend 3 days with mom. Mom was so pleased! We picked up Linda on Saturday morning and spent the weekend driving around to old haunts and reliving old memories. Linda loved the beautiful fall colors in the park by Mike's house. Linda was so sad to see that they had torn down the trees in Heidi's field and were in the process of building condos there. We have some very lovely pictures of Linda's visit to mom.

In May of 1999 Elenore again returned to Marie's for a 3 week visit. We all went up to my cottage in Lion's Head for a 2 week stay but Marie was very non alert, she had her head down and was mostly non responsive that whole time.

After Aunt Elenore returned back home to Minnesota Marie gradually became more and more alert and it was then that I realized that Marie was in the throws of a new stroke those 3 weeks. On the day we were returning from the cottage to Marie's house mom fell out of bed and laid there for over an hour until I got up and went to her room and found her laying there. Elenore was wondering why Marie was not joining her for breakfast as she usually did every morning. When Sandy went in Marie's bedroom she found Marie talking to Ed. She said he was keeping her company while she was on the floor.



**Sandy, Marie & Marlene**



**Toni**

After that Toni Put and Marlene Kaminski started helping out caring for Marie on alternate weekends. Toni and Marlene had helped me out 1 ½ years ago when Marie got out of Beaumont Hospital after having been in bed there for 5 days straight. When I got Marie back home she was still caring for herself over



night but I was half hysterical to find that Marie couldn't walk or stand at all as she was too weak from being in bed all that time. Toni came over to Marie's after Wil Mar when she got off at 9 pm and Marlene also came over and together they walked Marie up and down her hall until she was patterned back into walking on her own again. That was a life saver as Marie could not have remained home without being able to walk.

Then the first of November, 1999 Marie had a major crisis. She was so weak and sick and her breathing was so labored that Dr. Nathan said that she probably wouldn't last till her birthday on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November, and almost certainly not till Thanksgiving. We were all very upset. When I said goodbye to mom that night I thought I would never see her alive again. Toni came and spent the night with mom as Rochelle was beyond worn out from ministering to Marie day and night. Rochelle walked out crying and did not want to leave. Curt came over later in the evening to check on Marie's condition as was also very visibly upset. But not only did she pull through that night, but many many nights after that as well. She celebrated her 84<sup>th</sup> birthday on November 13<sup>th</sup> and then had Thanksgiving dinner the end of November. We all thought that the thing that most pulled Marie through 1999 was two major upcoming events. First, ever since mom was a little girl she wanted to live to see the year 2000, which now was just around the corner.



**Nicole carrying Devon, her 1<sup>st</sup> child**



**Marie, determined to live to see  
her 1<sup>st</sup> great great grandchild,  
giving raspberries to the grim reaper**

The second major soon to take place event was the pending birth of her first great great grandchild, Devon Blais. So when she rallied we figured that was why. Nicole got Marie all excited when she sent her pictures showing she was pregnant with Marie's first great great grandchild, which they now knew would be a boy whom they would name Devon.



**Nancy, Marie, Devon, Linda & Nicole**

So now the long anticipated trip to California was before us. Marie wanted to be out there for the birth of her first great great grandson. She had flown to California 25 years ago for the birth of Devon's mother Nicole, her first great grand child and now she was back out there for the birth of the first member of a new generation. We flew out on January 5<sup>th</sup> as the expected due date was January 11<sup>th</sup>. However Devon did not arrive until January 17<sup>th</sup>. Marie was there in the hospital the day he was born and despite her weakened state she got to be one of the first to hold him. We hired a professional photographer, Focus West and had a full set of professional pictures taken. The first set were taken the day Devon was born and then a second set was taken later at Linda's house with Mark's family present for the extended family picture taking session. Marie was so thrilled to see and hold her first great great grandson. She had been fearful that no one would let her hold the baby due to her weakened condition so she was so thrilled to be able to repeatedly hold little Devon. Marie stayed with her family in California until February 12<sup>th</sup> when we returned back home to Michigan.



**Marie in her new lift chair**

The next 2 years for Marie was one long expanse of the sameness of days. 24 hour care remained more and more of a necessity as she was very weak. She would get up mornings, walk on her walker to the bathroom, get help bathing and dressing, walk to the kitchen, have breakfast, and then walk to her electric lift chair in the living room where the chair would lift her and her legs into position and she would spend the majority of her day with her legs up watching TV or reading books or "rag" magazines (Enquirer, Star, etc). We would go out for lunch and dinner, Marie in her wheel chair.



**I'd sneak out of bed, if they caught me I'd stick my tongue out, if they didn't catch me I'd sneak back into bed and act like I'd never got up.**

The caregiver's main serious problem in caring for Marie is that she will never call for help when she needs to get up at night, she just tries to sneak out of bed on her own. This has resulted in several nocturnal falls, fortunately none of them too serious. But Marie just won't call for help. So we have to use a baby monitor to listen to when she is getting up and recently we bought a TV monitor to watch and listen for her. We have had a bed alarm and have put bells on her walker.

## **1999**

Mom's first 3 falls have occurred before she had 24 hour caregivers. The first time I came in to her house after having just left her for the night. I went to K Mart and just had a very strong feeling that I had better go back to mom's house and check on her. That was a psychic connection from her to me. She had staggered backwards all across the room and hand landed on her fanny by the back wall of the back bedroom and was unable to get up. So she just kept calling over and over to me to come back and help her. Somehow I heard these silent calls and came and helped her back up. At this time a number of times I came to her house in the middle of the day and found her stuck on the toilet. Several times she told me she was stuck on the toilet for over 2 hours as she couldn't get back up.



**Marie wearing the 1<sup>st</sup> alert button**

Due to these problems I bought raised toilet seats, put bars on the walls of the main and half baths, including in and out of the bathtub. I also called a first alert company and had them bring out an alarm system in which mom wore a button around her neck and if she got into trouble she could push the button and they would call me to go help her. The first time she pushed the button

they called me and couldn't get me as Edna was on the phone with me so they called Ann. Ann found her half in and half out of the half bath shower, with her ribs lying on the rim of the shower. She called the fire dept, then me. I came right over and they took Marie to St. Joe's West for x rays. Nothing was broken so hours later we were back home, albeit Marie full of bruises. Another time I came for lunch and found Marie on the floor. Why didn't you push the button, I asked her. Because I didn't want the fire dept to come was her answer. She had been on the floor for 2 hours. She had rolled over to a chair and tried to pull herself up but was unable to so she waited for me to come. I pulled her up and determined that she had no injuries. A third time she pushed the button at 6:30 am the very day that Warren and his family were coming to go to the cottage. When the alert company called me I was hysterical – what do I do if mom broke something and has to go to the hospital? I ran over there and found all the lights in the house blazing. I ran into the living room, no one there. I ran into the kitchen – no one there. I ran into the full bath, sure she fell there as the lights were all on. No mom. I ran into all 3 bedrooms – no mom. I then ran full speed into the half bath and almost knocked her down as she was coming out as I was running in. “hey, mom, why did you push the emergency button, I asked her”. “I didn't”, mom replied. You must have, I told her as Massachusetts called me and said the button was pushed. I didn't push it, mom said. You did too, I said. Oh, I must have sat on it! Mom replied. There the button was, laying on the bed, protecting the bed from harm. What a relief that we didn't ruin Warren's family's vacation!

Boy, did that button give me lots of moments of sheer panic. Whenever mom did push it, they would come on her really loud speaker phone and talk to her. She would never respond to them so I was always in great fear that she was knocked unconscious. But I guess two things kept her from responding to them – she was very hard of hearing and she had great speech difficulties due to the multiple strokes. And so many times mom wouldn't even wear that darn button and would walk around unsteadily for hours with the button on her dresser or her bed.

The circulation in Marie's feet continues to be a major concern. We take her to the foot doctor, Dr. Goodwin at least bimonthly, often several times in a month. He has treated her red swollen big toes many times and has managed to keep them in good order despite her lack of good circulation in her extremities. He also has to do repeat surgery on the outer aspect of her heel as she continually gets decubitus pressure sores there.



**Bill Dahl, Jr, Marie's brother after his amputation**

The need to keep her feet in very careful observation and treatment came back to us in a big way when we heard that her brother Bill had one leg amputated due to gangrene and was about to have his other leg removed also due to gangrene. Two brothers with gangrene brought home to us just how dangerous her lack of circulation could become.

We visited her brother Bill along with Doris shortly before he died. He was in a nursing home in Port Huron. Marie, Sandy and Doris went to lunch on the water together and then Doris showed us the way to Bill's nursing home. I never would have found it on my own as it was tucked into a side road in an older section of town. We found Bill in the day room of the nursing home. He was about the only one there. He looked the same as before, except a little heavier. And as Sharon said, it was hard to see him in sweat pants as he was always such a snazzy dresser most of his adult life. But now that he was an invalid ease of dress and undress for the staff was now the main concern. Bill was very affected by the many mini strokes he had suffered to the point that he appeared to have Alzheimer's instead. But I think Bill might have recognized his sister Marie as he stared at her with a big smile on his face and said LuLu several times while they were together. (LuLu was the name they had for one another as children.) Bill was still a happy individual but 99% of his cognitive function was gone due to numerous strokes. Strokes run in the Rehfeldt family. Aunt Tillie had 4 strokes by the time Nellie died and she had several more after that.



**Debbie Dahl Tymczak & Sharon Dahl Smith**

About 6 months later in October we received a call from Pat Nowicki that Uncle Bill had passed away on October 22, 1999. She called me at 8:50 pm and the funeral parlor 30 minutes away was closing in 10 minutes so I was unable to attend Bill's wake. So I called Debbie's house & spoke to Debbie. She said Bill was going to have a service at St Hedwig cemetery the next morning and gave



me directions to the cemetery. I called Doris & advised her of the funeral. She decided to ride with Marie and me. We arrived at the cemetery about 10 minutes before the ceremony was to begin. The family was already lined up in a semi circle so Doris, Marie, Rochelle and I stood at the foot of the circle. We waved to the family but waited till after the service to talk to them. We were the last ones to walk around the casket as the family went first. Mom was in a wheelchair so we wheeled her around Bill's casket and I explained to her that her brother Bill was inside as the casket was closed the entire time at the cemetery. Mom was very sad and patted the casket goodbye. When we went outside the family was all in the cars with the windows rolled up and no one greeted or acknowledged Marie, Doris or me. I went up to the car, knocked on the window, had them roll the window down and talked to them. They told me where the luncheon was to be held (they invited us to it over the phone the night before). I told them I would follow them over. Doris tried to get me to simply drive home as they had so ignored us after the cemetery service. But I wanted to see them so I followed them over. They were much more cordial once we got into the hall. I had a nice talk with Sharon and Debbie and Sharon's husband Bill. We parted the best of friends. Elenore had no chance to come to her brother's funeral as there was no way she could have flown to Detroit on no notice. We could barely get there by car it was such short notice.



**Doris & Marie at Nellie, Minna & Fred's grave**



**Marie & Doris at Mildred & Sonny's grave  
Earl & Mae Stocker are also buried here**



**Marie, Elenore & Doris**

Doris loved her Aunt Marie very much and came often to visit with her. They often sat and talked in mom's house and earlier Mom and I went to their house on 12012 Gunston in Detroit and had dinner and played canasta. After Mildred died Doris lived with mom for 6 months before selling her home on Gunston and moving to Georgetown Ct in Shelby Township. God was certainly with Doris on that move as she got a good price for Gunston and moved into her new house and found she was surrounded by wonderful neighbors. Doris, mom and I have made a number of trips to Mt. Olivet cemetery to commemorate Mildred's or Nellie's death date and to pray for the repose of their souls.

## 2000

2000! The long awaited year 200 had finally arrived. Marie had given a lot of thought to that date ever since she was a young teenager on Baldwin. She thought often of the coming turn of the century and wondered many a time



whether she would live to see it or not. She fervently hoped all through the years that she would live to see this day. And now it has become a reality. We asked her if she wanted to stay up and watch the new year and century come in. No, she could see it in the morning, the same as she did every other year since Ed died. So come 1/1/2000 Sandy made a big fuss to Marie over this date and Marie just smiled a very satisfied smile. It was finally here and she was still here to greet this momentous new day and new Millennium. Such a circus was made of this day for about 6 months before it arrived – all kinds of dire predictions were made by all the erstwhile soothsayers, but this day dawned quietly with no glitches. Marie had no interest in all the worries and predictions being made – she knew that was all nonsense. For Marie it was business as usual, one quiet day followed another – and the big events in her life consisted of what part of her anatomy was presently causing her pain at that moment and what could be done to alleviate the pain. Marie's life has now reduced itself to the here and now. Her world now consists of what is happening within the 4 walls of her home or the Uptown Restaurant or occasionally one of the doctor's offices. Marie did not want to go to a doctor's office, especially the podiatrist's office as a visit there involves some degree of pain as he peels away skin around an affected area.



**Valerie, Scott, Mary Anne, Marie, Craig & Roxanne**

In the summer of 2000 Marie's grandson Craig came to Utica with his wife Mary Anne and their 3 children Scott, Valerie and Roxanne. Mary Anne was terrified of flying so it was a major accomplishment for her to come to Michigan for the visit. It was a long and wonderful visit. We rented a 15 passenger van to take us through Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland. It was a trip of a lifetime for Craig as he got to visit his father's birthplace and meet his dad's relatives. We went cemetery hopping and found many of his relatives graves in Tennessee. In visiting relatives they shared with him many very precious pictures of his great grandparents and their siblings. It was a most enriching trip. He even met his grandmother's 99 ½ year old sister Kathleen in Knoxville. That was quite an emotional experience for Sandy

as she remembered Craig's grandmother Christine Young Stephens and Kathleen was so much like her in features and voice. It was like visiting a ghost out of the past.

This trip was hard on Marie as Rochelle had to walk Marie up a plastic 2 step stool backwards to get her into the rented van. And walking down was just as scary for Marie and Rochelle. Toward the end Marie insisted on sitting down on the floor of the van and scooting out. It turned out that that proved to be easier for her and safer too.

Craig and his family went to a resort in Western Maryland and there they met Warren and his family. It was the only time Warren and Craig's wives and children met each other. We had a wonderful 3 day stay together there. Marie got to visit with both sets of children and their families together. She enjoyed her stay there.



**Locky Belle Richter  
& Herbert Stephens**



**Christine Young**



**Roxanne, Craig, Scott, Valerie & Sandy**



**Craig in Mt. Olivet cemetery**



**Sandy, Craig & Scott**



**Marie Bender's mother**



**Donald Stephen's mother**

After Maryland Craig met another of his distant relatives on his dad's side of the family in Ohio, was able to duplicate pictures and newspaper announcements, including several of Herbert H Stephens and his wife Locky Belle Rector Stephens and then we traveled back to Michigan. Craig visited

Mrs. Stephens grave site as well as the Bender and Dahl grave sites in Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Detroit then we went to Lion's Head for a two week stay there. Marie got to visit with Scott, Valerie and Roxanne as well as Craig and Mary Anne for the duration of the visit in the cottage, thus giving her lots of time together with this very fine family.



**Scott, Roxanne & Valerie**

Marie taught Roxanne and Valerie how to say “Wheel!” as they traveled over the up and down hills of forty hills road north of the cottage. Marie loves traveling up and down this very hilly, twisting dirt road, which she has done repeatedly since 1951 and her great grandchildren equally enjoyed the wild ride. A funny aside – Mary Anne is terrifying of flying and the plane trip home was very bumpy which scared her half to death and gave her white knuckles all the way home. But not little Roxanne. Every time the plane hit a pocket of turbulence and fell hundreds of feet in an air pocket the other passengers were turning white with fear, but not Roxanne – every time the plane dropped Roxanne would call out “Wheel!” just like her Great grandma Bender taught her!

Toni Put is one of Marie's alternate weekend caregivers. Toni has always been quite psychic all through the years and living with Marie was no exception. Up at the cottage Toni was sleeping in the same bedroom with Marie in the other twin bed when suddenly at 4:30 am Marie started talking earnestly to her deceased relatives, putting her arms up into the air and pushing them away, saying, “No, go away! I'm not ready yet, I don't want to go!” Toni was spooked and stayed in her bed as far away as she could be from that action going on on the other side of the room.



**Marie Bender & Toni Put**

Toni has often heard Marie talking to her deceased mother, father, brothers and sisters and sometimes even to her deceased son Bill, but when one night at 1 am in the morning Toni heard the deceased sister Mildred and brothers Bill and Shorty talking back to Marie she was in deed totally spooked! Toni said there was no way she was going to go into that room with the ghosts talking! Marie was playing cards with Mildred, Shorty and Bill and they were all talking aloud about the game. Mildred had said, here, give me the cards, I'll show you how to shuffle them correctly! Then Toni actually heard the cards being shuffled.



**Chelsea, Hayley, Marie and Toni**

Another time when Toni was watching Marie at midnight Toni suddenly heard Medieval chanting going on in Marie's room and then later she heard beautiful church like organ music coming from Marie's bedroom on Grant Park. Toni was very spooked and remarked to me that at the time that was happening she was not about to walk into that room to take a look – Toni was afraid they might take the wrong soul with them! Toni says taking care of Marie is certainly like being in the Twilight Zone.

**2001**



**Marie Dahl Bender & Kaitlyn Marie Blais**

In February, 2001 Marie got some more exciting news – her great grand daughter Nicole was expecting another baby around October, 2001. Then a month later a new news release from Nicole – the baby to be was a girl and her middle name would be Marie making this baby the 5<sup>th</sup> Marie in a line, with 2 more Marie Annas before Marie Dahl Bender. Marie was so very happy – another great great grandchild and now this baby was going to be named after her! Marie was excited to meet this newest baby in the Dahl family line. This time Marie did not give us the same health scare as she did shortly before Devon was born. She remained in weak but stable condition the rest of that year and in November, 2001 Marie was now winging her way back to California to meet her latest namesake. Kaitlyn Marie had been born on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October, 2001 but we waited a few weeks longer before going out there as Nicole and Mark had purchased a home in Anaheim Hills and in November they would be in the home and Marie could get in a one story home, but not in a 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> story condo that Mark and Nicole were moving out of.



**Devon, Mark, Kaitlyn Marie & Nicole Blais**

We set the photo shoot for a Sunday afternoon at Linda's house. The first photo shoot was done in Nicole and Mark's condo in Irvine, California a few days after Kaitlyn Marie was born and before Marie flew out there. The second photo shoot had our whole side of the immediate family present. This time Mark's family were not there. They were not able to get out to California till Christmas time. It was a very successful photo session and mom looked so good in all her pictures. No one could believe she was 88 years old. Mom loved holding and looking at the baby. She loved watching Devon too, saying often about both of them, Ah, the baby!





**Marie & Nancy**

On Marie's 88<sup>th</sup> birthday Linda had a luncheon for Marie, Nancy, Sandy, Rochelle, Nicole and Devon and Kaitlyn. It was a wonderful intimate little celebration. It had balloons, cake and presents and lots of memorable pictures. The food was delicious, the company warm and friendly and loving.



**Scott, Roxanne, Mary Anne,  
Marie, Craig & Valerie**



**Michael, Marie, Donna, Ashley,  
Michelle, Craig, Valerie**

Then that evening Marie had another big birthday celebration at the Claim Jumper. The rest of the family was present for that celebration. Linda refused to attend that celebration as she refuses to socialize with Craig and his family. Present that night were Marie, Nancy, Sandy, Rochelle, Donna, Ashley, Michelle, Michael, Craig, Mary Anne, Scott, Valerie, and Roxanne. It was such a happy, cozy evening and Marie thoroughly enjoyed her birthday celebration. Some more wonderful balloons were brought here that night.





**Marie Dahl Bender**

We took all of the balloons home to the Woodfin Suites and they remained there for the duration of our vacation. Marie really enjoyed seeing all of her California family again but this time she admitted she was totally worn out and that the trip to California was just a bit too much for her this time. She indicated that she knew this was the last time she could go to California as she no longer had the strength to leave home. So 2 ½ weeks later Marie was on her way back home to Michigan once again.



**Michelle, Michael, Marie, Bob, Nancy, Donna, Gary & Donna**



**Greg, Michelle, Sandy, Marie, Michael, Natasha, Nancy, Donna, Linda, Ashley, & Bob**



**Roxanne, Scott, Valerie, Rochelle, Marie,  
Mary Anne, Craig & Nancy**



**Nancy & Bob**

Marie, Sandy and Rochelle flew back home to Utica, Michigan to return to our everyday life. Marie is now once again sitting in her motorized recliner which she had setting next to her front window so she could easily see outside. “Bearsie”, her beloved Bear, remains at her side day and night, day in and day out. Sandy made Marie a copy of her prayer and poem book which Marie enjoys reading. Most of Marie’s day is now devoted to TV watching, “rag” magazines and going out to a restaurant for lunch and dinner. She is getting weaker and weaker, is no longer able to walk or to transfer by herself, but she remains in good spirits.



**Sandy, Marie and "Bearsie"**

## 2002

Once she got back home Marie got more and more weak. At first she walked on her walker to and from her bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and living room by the use of her chrome walker. But as the months passed by March of 2002 she was no longer strong enough to walk. As of April, 2002 she is barely able to do a simple turn to assist in a quarter turn from chair to commode, or wheel chair or car etc. And for the first time Marie is saying that life is not any fun anymore and that she guesses it's time to go away.



**Marie**



**Toni**



**Ann**



**Marie & Helen**



**Marie & Sandy**

As Marie gets weaker it is ever harder for Sandy to keep caregivers on a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week basis. Toni has not been around since the beginning of February and Ann says she is too sick to help. Helen was always scared of watching mom for fear that mom might fall, but Helen was always there for mom and me whenever I called her. Helen's response always was, "Give me a few minutes to walk my dog Cody and then I'll be ready". But Sandy always felt bad asking Helen to help because she was always very stubborn in her refusal to take money. Sandy has a check for \$230 in the front seat of her Cadillac with Helen's name on it. Mom's inability to help with transferring is scaring off potential caregivers. Life is very rough for both Marie and Sandy these days. We are both very frightened of what might come next and at times

when we are totally worn out we find we are both getting short tempered and thoroughly nerve wracked. As Werner once said when he and the dog Bear were close to death, "Dying is hell".

But then came May and with it came warmer weather and an annual visit from Marie's dear sister Elenore. How we all look forward to Elenore's visits to us! We all get so excited driving to the Detroit Metro airport to pick up Elenore and begin our 3 or so weeks of pure fun! Mike often came with us to help out with the 2 wheelchairs and the luggage. That way he could stay with the 2 women and the luggage while I would get the car and drive to the curbside and pick up the people and luggage.



**Marie & Elenore**



**Marie & Elenore**



**Elenore at baggage**



**Marie & Mike**



**Mike & Elenore**



**Sandy, Marie, Elenore**



**Elenore & Marie**



**El & Marie**



**Rochelle, Marie and Elenore**

As usual we all packed our bags, got "neat and pretty" and all piled in the car for breakfast as usual at the Uptown restaurant and then off to Lion's Head for 2 weeks of fun! And a cold 2 weeks that was, but we didn't care – we all had a really good time as usual, rain or sleet or sun! Aunt Elenore made one technical booboo however. Aw, Sandy, you don't need to leave us at Mom's restaurant to go to the cottage to turn on the heat while we eat. It's not that cold out, you can turn on the heat when we get there. Ya, sure.





**Elenore**



**Marie**

**BRRR!!! I'm freezing!!**



**Elenore**



**Marie**

**AH!!! Nice and warm at last!!!**

Take a look at Elenore and Marie all bundled up in rugs and comforters and towels over their bodies and heads and that tells you the whole story of how cold it was that evening in the cottage till the heat kicked in. Elenore said she was cold clear through to her bones under all those coverings!

Marie had a stroke that trip while we were in the Owen Sound Mall shopping. There is nothing to be done for the stroke except pain medication so that's what we did – gave Marie a couple of pain pills and kept shopping with Marie hanging over in her wheelchair and Elenore comforting her as they sat at right angles to one another in the lobby of the women's dress shop while Rochelle and I shopped for clothes for the two of them. Every time I found something I thought Marie would like I would bring it out to her, put it under her bent over head and ask, "Mom, would you like this?" Most of the time she replied, "I'd love it!" So we'd put it in her pile. The same with Elenore. The two piles grew to a very impressive size. Rochelle had a 3<sup>rd</sup> smaller pile. Then after 1 ½ hours of running the shop keepers ragged matching blouses with sweaters, socks, etc. Marie started coming out of the pain of her stroke and said to us, tongue in cheek, why don't we just walk off and leave all those carefully matched outfits just sitting on the counter? Marie is always able to maintain her finely tuned sense of humor despite her ever increasing frailties!



**Marie,Rochelle, Elenore**



**Marie & Elenore at Zellars**



**Marie shopping**



**"Let's go & leave it on the counter!"**



**Elenore in St John**



**Elenore & Laurie**



**Brandon, Laurie, Marie, Elenore & Kristen**



**Laurie, Sandy & Elenore**

When Elenore, Marie and Sandy returned home to Utica we called Elenore's grand child Laurie Rotary and made arrangements to see her in St John Michigan. We went to their home, visited with her daughter Kristen and then we went to the cemetery and visited Marianne's grave and took pictures. We then went to the local senior citizen home to show Elenore what is available in apartments that serve 2 or 3 meals a day and have senior activities. Marie kept saying to Elenore that she thought they were touring the complex for her. Elenore kept telling Marie, no, it was for Elenore not Marie. Elenore thought it was too expensive and not the kind she would prefer. Sandy found the place depressing. But boy, we never figured on what Marie's delayed impression of the place would be! After we toured the facility we went to a local steak restaurant and ate with Laurie and her children as they came in. After we ate, we took a group picture and then took the long ride home. We got home shortly after 11 pm so we wheeled mom right into her bedroom, figuring she'd be exhausted. As Rochelle started getting mom ready for bed mom suddenly started sobbing and crying, something she never does! And she just kept crying for over a half hour. Nothing we said would soothe her. Finally we found out what the problem was – mom was convinced in her heart that we were putting her into a nursing home! After we told her no for a long time, she finally stopped crying and went to sleep but I don't know whether at that time she believed us completely or not.





**Shelley, Marie, Doug & Sandy, Lion's Head**



**Shelley on Larry's boat**



**Doug & Sandy on Larry's boat**



**Karen & Lizzie in cottage**

In July Marie went up to the cottage with Shellie, Karen and Doug, her son. They all had a wonderful time together and we took a number of pictures to commemorate the visit. Shellie's little dog Lizzie also came up for the visit. Lizzie is so small that she got to go shopping with us in the Owen Sound shopping mall in her carrier and no one in the mall was the wiser!



**Marie, Doug, Shelley, Clarence & Louise**



**Doug Jr. & Marie**



**Doug, Mike, Lizzie, Shelley & Doug Sr.**



**Marie, Doug Sr, Doug Jr, Lizzie, Shelley, Mike & Karen**

Marie's grandson Dougie graduated from the police academy and became a Monroe County deputy sheriff. Marie was unable to go to his graduation as it was such a crowded auditorium, but afterwards she went to Karen's house and was so proud to have her pictures taken with Doug in his uniform. Boy, was that ever a really hot day for poor Dougie to get all dressed up in his hot uniform, but he did so for the picture taking session. The Otters were also so proud to have their picture taken with their grandson too that day.



**Sandy & Mike, Warren, Marie, Jackie, Casey Shea, Patch, Patrick & 2 kittens**



**Sandy, Rochelle, Marie, Casey Shea, Warren, Patrick & Jackie at Mom's**



**Patrick, Sandy, Marie & Casey Shea**



**Patrick, Warren, Marie & Jackie**

Marie had 6 trips to the cottage this last year of her life. In August she got to spend her annual 2 weeks with Casey Shea, Patrick, Jackie and Warren, and naturally with Patchie too. But this year Patchie brought along two baby kittens! They had a ball playing in the brand newly constructed 2<sup>nd</sup> story apartment. Sandy smiled herself to sleep that first night when those adorable little kitties thundered their way to and fro across the floorboards at bedtime. It was such a fun sound to listen to.



**Marie with eyeball**



**Bob Quenneville**



**Cindy, Matt & Bob**



**Cindy**



**Cindy & Marie**

Ma also enjoyed her trip up in October with Bob and Cindy Quenneville. Bob started a new game with Marie to get her to use her arms – Cindy bought this disgusting looking, squooshy feeling ball full of eyeballs and Bob had Marie

throw that ball and try to hit him in the head. She had a look of pure glee in her eye as she tried hard to bean him! But, oh boy! I grimace yet today to think of what happened the first time mom met Bob and his son Matthew! They came into mom's house while she was asleep and Cindy then walked into the driveway to meet Marlene who was just coming on duty. Mom woke up to find no caregiver in the house but rather 2 strange men standing there, one of them stretching his over 6 foot frame. It would be an understatement to say that mom freaked! And those of you who know mom know when she freaks she gets wildly angry, and this time was no exception. She came out of her sleep cussing both of these men out. Cindy came out and couldn't calm mom down, she was on a roll! Sandy came in and there was just no cooling mom off. So Sandy said let's put mom in the car and on the way over to the Outback Steak house she will cool off. No way! At home she was just warming up for the big one. Sandy sat next to her at the restaurant and told her to stop it. Her eyes blazing, she just got louder and more insulting. STOP IT!! Nope, she was just going to tell those @#&\*( just what she thought of them. Sandy told her repeatedly that these are very nice people. Didn't cut any ice with Marie. Sandy put her hand over her mouth. With eyes blazing with anger she bit Sandy's hand. Sandy rolled her to the bathroom and had a stern talk with Marie. I kept them at opposite ends of the table that evening. WHEW!! How uncomfortable! Bob asked Cindy if she was sure she wanted to spend 2 whole weeks with just an angry lady. Cindy assured him that mom wasn't like that at all, that most of the time she was pleasant and funny. Later when Bob went up to the cottage with Sandy and Marie he fell in love with that cute, funny lady. He now knew what endeared her to all of us over the years.



**Marie and Sandy**



**Marie in St Mark's**



**Marie & Cindy**



**Cindy & Marie in Mom's**

Cindy was attendant to mom's physical and spiritual needs, so she took it seriously when mom said she wanted to go to church in the morning. Cindy took her to morning mass at St. Lawrence at 8 am twice on a Monday and also took her twice to St. Mark Church in Lion's Head. The parishioners and the priests treated mom so kindly and were so attendant to her when she came into mass.



**Fr Tim Szott**



**St. Lawrence Church**



**Fr. Tim Szott**



**Fr Tim & Marie**



**Sandy, Marie, Rochelle**

Father Tim Szott at St. Lawrence was also very good to Marie. Every time she threw a serious stroke I would contact Fr. Tim and ask him to give Marie the Last Rites of the Roman Catholic Church, which he did on 3 different occasions. Each time it gave Marie great comfort to receive this sacrament. The purpose of this sacrament is either to give improvement to the physical well being of the patient or to forgive them all their sins and all punishment due to their sins and guarantee them an immediate place in God's heavenly kingdom. Marie went to confession each time and then received the sacrament of the sick with great feelings of peace and comfort. And each time the sacrament helped to restore her physical health as she greatly improved each time. When mom threw her last stroke on November 10, I asked Father Tim if Marie should be anointed again. He said no, she had been anointed 3 times, all her sins and the punishment due to her sins have been forgiven and that when she died she would be St. Marie and go directly to heaven. When I told mom that on her birthday she just beamed with joy. Those words of comfort were without a doubt her best birthday present she received. Mom and I talked about the wonderful reception and party she would have when she died and would be with all those who loved her here on earth. That gave her great joy and hope.





**Marie at Uptown**



**Marie teasing us**



**Marie & Rochelle sharing a joke**

We closed the cottage in October and started home for the long winter ahead. The waitresses at the Uptown were so glad to see Marie return. They all just love her and love to watch her get wound up and interact with Rochelle and Sandy, but especially with Rochelle. Rochelle and Marie had so much fun together, teasing, goading and making faces at one another.



**Marie & Judy - Nov 13**



**11/13/02 Marie & Sandy**



**Marie & Rochelle**



**Marie & Sandy (waitress)**

As Marie's 89<sup>th</sup> birthday approached the waitresses and the owner at the Uptown were busy planning a really nice birthday party for Marie. The Saturday before her birthday Marie was so much fun, so full of life and laughter and so easy to tease and get a cute response out of! But then as cruelty would have it, at 11 am on Sunday morning, November 10<sup>th</sup> in the middle of a happy and lively exchange of light banter between Cindy and Marie, a curtain suddenly fell – Marie had another and quite serious stroke. It was the worst one yet. It made her sleep 23 hours a day, took away her ability to swallow liquids and solids and glued her right arm right up against her chest.

She could no longer bear weight on either of her legs after that. When we stood her up her legs were like spaghetti. It was the beginning of the final countdown in life.



**Shelley, Marie & Lizzie**



**Rochelle, Marie, Karen  
& Shelley**



**Marie & Brandy**



**Marie in Elenore's pj's**

For the past 6 weeks we had planned to have Karen and Shelley over to mom's for lunch and a big shopping trip as K Mart had a one day only 20% off day. We used this day for all of our dear friends to shop for their families for Christmas. So when mom threw this stroke we decided to go through with the shopping trip as there was nothing that could be done about her stroke. Shelley was disappointed as mom was so non alert most of the day. It was really bad timing as Marie threw the stroke just as Shelley pulled into the driveway at mom's house. But by the end of the day Marie became a little more alert and was able to interact with Shelley a bit. Elenore sent a nightgown to Marie for her birthday present. Mom liked that nightgown and in fact died wearing it on December 5<sup>th</sup>.

With each passing day in November and December Marie slept more and more and became less and less alert. By the end of November she seemed to stay awake from the time they woke her up at 11 am for about 45 minutes. We would get some cottage cheese and peaches or some apple sauce down her and then she would fall asleep. Most dinners we ordered for her she was unable to swallow and the food would go back uneaten. Mom would let us put the food into her mouth but then she would be unable to swallow it, she would store it up till she looked like "chipmunk cheeks" and the food would then have to come back out again.





**Marie & Judy**



**Cindy & Marie**



**Ann**



**Marie & Helen**



**Rochelle, Marie & Toni**

We have been very fortunate over this summer of 2002 in getting new and most competent caregivers to round out Marie's last days of care. First we had the good fortune of having Judy Dunn swallow her bubble gum, so to speak, and volunteer to watch Grandma from 5 pm to 9 pm on Thursdays and sometimes one or two more evenings per week while Rochelle went home. Then when Toni realized that since she quit we were having to use an agency she suggested Cindy Quenneville from Canada might be willing to sit mom. She was more than willing. She had lost her driver's license due to her potential heart condition and needed to find a job and we fit the bill just in time for her to save up money for her cruise to Hawaii in May 2003. So Cindy does 3 days a week and Rochelle does 4 and now Marie has loving, competent, caring caregivers the entire week long. Marlene continues to do 5 to 9 3 days a week and Ann and Helen fill in as needed. It is such a blessing to have these wonderful people to help out. Marie loves them all and feels safe in their presence.

November 10<sup>th</sup> began the very serious and scary part of Marie's care. She can no longer swallow, her arm is glued to her chest, preventing comfortable and safe transfers and her legs are spaghetti. She sleeps 23 hours per day and when she awakes her eyes do not quite focus and look strange. She is in pain whenever we try to move her or position her and she often exhibits fear when awake. For the first time mom's face is drooping a little on the left side of her face.



**Marie after her 7<sup>th</sup> stroke on Nov 10,02**



**Marie with Devon & Kaitlyn on 11/13**



**Marie & Bearsie on 11/15**

On November 11th I took mom to Dr Nathan and told him mom had had a 7th stroke the day before. At first I thought it was her first left sided stroke but later on I realized examining her symptoms that it was another right sided stroke. Dr Nathan examined mom and told me which nerves he felt were affected by this latest stroke. He was concerned about her inability to swallow and told me that this was the beginning of the end for sure and that it would be best not to feed her or give her liquids any more as it would only prolong the inevitable – that her heart was no longer able to pump nutrients to her extremities and to her brain and skin and that if we fed her it would most likely result in aspiration pneumonia.

But I was unable to not feed her and so Rochelle, Cindy and I tried everything we could think of to get some nutrition down her, both to prevent decubitus by getting sufficient amounts of protein into her system, to keep her hydrated to prevent dehydration, and mostly for comfort so that mom would not die hungry. In all but the decubitus we succeeded. Mom ate right up until the day she died. When we asked her if she wanted baby food or cottage cheese or apple sauce in the restaurant mom always said yes until supper time of the last day.



**Marie & Judy at the Uptown**



**Marie & nightlight**



**Marie & Waitress Sandy**



**Marie getting sleepier as the end approaches**

The liquids were landing in her lungs and she would cry for 2 to 5 minutes in the saddest sounding misery and her breathing was very wheezy sounding.

We resorted to buying and feeding her baby food at home and in the restaurant as that seemed to slide down okay. Her favorite was banana and strawberry flavor. She would say umm, umm, umm when Rochelle would offer her a jar of that flavor.

I remember how hard it was to find thick it. I called the local pharmacies, no luck. I called Family meds and Binsons, no luck. Family meds told me to try Meijer pharmacy at 15 mile and Utica Road. They had it. So after lunch I drove down there and got a small can of it to see if it would work. And as I was driving back home down Utica Road I got a very sad phone call from Rochelle. Mom was in horrible pain in her chest. Rochelle gave her one codeine, then two and she was still suffering. I told her to give her a 3<sup>rd</sup> one. She was still crying in pain. I called Dr Nathan. He said it was okay to give her a 4<sup>th</sup> pain pill, but that mom now really needed morphine, so I needed to call hospice as he could not himself prescribe morphine.

The day before Thanksgiving Rochelle and I realized we were losing the battle and that I was in uncharted waters now in trying to care for mom. Dr Nathan said we should call in hospice. On the Wednesday before Thanksgiving mom was in all that chest pain, and now she was getting decubitus on her coccyx region. So I called St. Joseph hospital hospice and they took the info and sent out a nurse on Friday to do an intake. By then the decubitus was spreading and was now not just pin holes but was spreading and turning an ugly grey color. The social worker came out on Monday and the volunteer coordinator came out on Tuesday. I told them mom's decubitus was totally out of control, she was in pain and we needed to have the nurse come out to evaluate her and to give her more effective pain medication. So on Wednesday the nurse came out and gave mom liquid morphine that we dropped into her mouth with an eye dropper. It was sorely needed at this point in time as the decubitus turned black and huge and underneath it was looking like red meat. And her heels were a total horror – huge areas turned dark brown and gooshy to the feel. Mom was sitting up on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December and I prayed to God that mom was unable to see her feet as she would be horrified if she saw what was happening to them overnight. When Rochelle pulled the covers aside and showed me mom's feet I felt faint. At that point I prayed fervently to God that he would take her into his arms real soon.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December I emailed close family members and told them how sick mom was and how I felt that the end was really near. My cousin Pat emailed me back and said that if they were welcome they would like to come on the afternoon of December 4<sup>th</sup> to see mom about 4 pm after Jean got off work. I emailed her back that they would be most welcome. They came and stayed for about 1 ½ hours. We had a really nice visit. When Aunt Jean went into the bedroom mom opened her eyes and looked right at Jean. Jean felt that mom knew her. Earlier that day when mom woke up and looked at me she had a strange look on her face, it looked almost as though mom was angry. We gave mom more morphine and in a few minutes she was calm and fell back into a restful sleep again. Pat, Jean and I went to the Uptown restaurant together.



**Sandy, Elenore, Marie, Pat and Jean**



**Judy's angel that attended Marie's funeral**

While we were there in about the 3<sup>rd</sup> booth Judy came in and said she had bought a beautiful statue of an angel for mom. She brought it into the restaurant. I asked Judy to put it in my van for me. Judy took my car keys and put the angel in mom's special seat in the van, buckling her in with the seat belt. We left the angel there until the time for the funeral when we took the angel to the florist shop to get yellow flowers put into the bowl under her face. I went back to mom's house and watched her labored breathing as she slept away her last few hours in a coma.



**Marie wearing the nightgown from her sister Elenore**

God answered my prayers. All day on my birthday, December 5<sup>th</sup> mom was in a coma. The coma seemed to deepen as the day progressed. She woke up a little bit in order for Rochelle to get her out of bed, put her in a wheelchair at the side of her bed and change her nightgown to freshen her up. Rochelle put mom in the nightgown that Aunt Elenore had sent her for her birthday. Mom liked that nightgown and was happy to be wearing the one her sister Elenore had given her for a birthday present. Rochelle then changed the bottom sheet on mom's bed and was about to change the top one when mom indicated that she was exhausted and wanted to go back into bed without any further ado, so Rochelle gently transferred mom back into her bed, this time never to rise from it again. Mom was a bit uncomfortable from the transfer so after Rochelle got

her comfortably situated she gave mom another dose of morphine. With this morphine mom settled right down to a comfortable slumber.



**Mike**



**Marilyn**

Around 4:45 pm Mike and Marilyn came to mom's house to celebrate mom's birthday. We had called Mike 2 days before to tell him mom was close to death but he had decided to wait for Sandy's birthday to come. Rochelle and I were wondering if mom would be gone before that as she was very close to the end on Tuesday. We sat around and talked for awhile and then Mike went in to see mom and was quite upset at how labored her breathing was, for she was trying by fast breathing to get enough oxygen into her bloodstream as her heart was not circulating enough blood through her lungs to properly oxygenate the circulatory system. Judy came in at 4:45 pm to watch mom so Mike, Marilyn and I went to a restaurant to celebrate my birthday. It was a very unsettling evening. My mind and heart were back with mom. We went back home and Mike gave me an expensive watch from Costco for my birthday. Afterwards we went back into mom's bedroom when the morphine wore off and she became a little conscious again. She looked right at Mike but we don't know if she recognized him or not. Mike and Marilyn said goodbye to mom and left around 9 pm.

Mom's breathing became more irregular after that. She had a few periods where she would just stop breathing for a spell and then start up again. Toni came that evening and said she was going to stay with mom until she passed away. Cindy came in about 8:45 pm and was scheduled to stay until Monday at 5 pm as Rochelle was having the cortisone shot into the base of her spine on Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup>.



**Toni, Judy, Rochelle and Marie**



**Cindy**

Toni and Cindy put on the baby monitor so they could hear mom breathing when they were out of the room. The rest of the evening Toni and Cindy were



frequently in and out of mom's room checking on her. Sandy took several pictures of mom with Bearsie at her side as she was pretty sure these were the last few minutes of Marie's life here on earth.



**Bearsie and Marie in the last minutes of her life**

With the morphine in her system mom was very peaceful. Then at 10:27 pm Cindy went in the room and mom was breathing irregularly. Then at 10:28 pm Toni went into the room and discovered that mom had just stopped breathing. Toni then immediately called to me and we three went into mom's room and sat with her for the required 30 minutes before calling anyone to report her death. (The undertaker and the hospice nurse said you have to wait at least ½ hour before calling, otherwise the fire dept comes and begins a valiant effort to revive the person. It was a horrific thought that anyone would revive her so that the rest of her flesh could continue to further rot on her while she was still alive.) About 10 minutes after we all sat with mom I thought of Aunt Elenore who had called me last night for my birthday. I had given her the sad news about mom's condition when she asked about mom so now I figured I should call her back and tell her mom was gone in case she wanted to make arrangements to come to Michigan for the funeral. So I laid the phone on mom's legs while I looked up the number. Immediately Toni and Cindy had a fit, telling me mom's legs hurt so not to put anything on them, then we all looked at one another with the dawning realization that as of the past 10 minutes mom was no longer in that body any more. I called Elenore and told her. She was so undecided and upset as she said she had been so weak and tired and totally exhausted so she thought she could never make it to Utica.

I then called Mike and told him mom was gone and asked him to call Nancy and the family in California as they are 3 hours behind us and would need time to make arrangements for plane tickets and to tell their employers they would not be at work for awhile due to the funeral. I told Mike I was so exhausted from only having 3 hours sleep the last 3 days I couldn't function anymore and I still had to face dealing with hospice, the undertaker and the police and saying goodbye to our dear mother when all was said and done with this death ritual. Mike said he would call them. Sandy then took a few pictures of Marie moments after she expired as it is a German custom to have pictures of a person's entire life from birth to death and the funeral afterwards all documented in an album.



Then for the next ½ hour Toni, Cindy and I sat with mom and said our goodbyes to her in our hearts. She lay there so peaceful looking in her own little bed with her snow man flannel sheet and pillow case, her Christmas scene flannel sheet underneath her, her wedding ring quilt on top with her yellow down throw over the top to keep her warm in her last few hours because as her temperature climbed to 104.4 F she started feeling very cold due to her temperature and lack of circulation. And throughout all of the last hours of her ordeal, her beloved little green Bear, "Bearsie" lay quietly at her side on the pillow right next to her head. In the last 2 hours or so he also wore Marie's pearl rosary that she and Sandy bought when her sister Mildred died as this pearl rosary was a twin to the one Mildred held in her hands when she was laid out in March of 1984.

Then when the 45 minutes were up Sandy called the after hours hospice beeper number and the nurse called back and Sandy told her that Marie had passed away. The nurse then took about 45 minutes to come. She pronounced Marie dead at 11:40 pm and then called the Utica police to report that a hospice patient had just died in her own home. The police came, talked to the hospice nurse, looked in on mom and then left. While waiting for the police to come the nurse then asked Sandy a lot of statistical and family history questions for the record. Sandy requested that the death certificate be completed by Dr. Satyanathan as he took care of mom for over 10 years and was very good to her and knew her entire medical history. The hospice doctor had never even seen mom.

The nurse then called the funeral parlor and about 45 minutes later they arrived. They brought the gurney into the hall outside of mom's bedroom and then they came in and decided the best way was to carry mom out of the room in their arms and then lay her on the gurney in the hallway. They removed the outer covers and then used a draw sheet that Toni had put under Marie as an under sheet to pick her up with as it was a full size sheet we had folded in three parts. They unfurled the sheet and then picked Marie up in it. They then turned her 180 degrees to bring her out feet first and in so turning her they bumped her pain wracked toes into the wall. We all winced until once again we realized that Marie's soul was no longer in this body. They placed mom on the gurney and then strapped her on and zipped up the outer covering leaving her head out. It was the oddest sight watching her body being rolled down her hallway as rigor mortis had set in and being her head was always elevated on the bed it remained elevated in place and her head and neck were suspended in mid air and bobbed as the gurney rolled down the hallway.



### **The 2 funeral directors who took mom out of the house on Dec 6**

They stopped in front of her Christmas tree before opening the outer door and taking her for the last time out of the home she so loved and lived in for the past 22 years. They explained that they had to zip the covers over her head when they took her outside, which they then proceeded to do while standing in front of the Christmas tree. They then opened the door and rolled her on the gurney over the threshold and down the ramp. Sandy and the caregivers then stepped outside on the ramp and watched the undertaker roll the gurney into the blue funeral parlor mini van, close the back door and drive off. It was now 1:11 am on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2002. Thus ended a long, happy and productive life that began on Holcomb in Detroit, Michigan on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November, 1913 at 4:30 pm with William and Nellie Dahl and their 5 year old daughter Mildred, 4 year old daughter Dorothy and 1 ½ year old daughter Elenore in attendance. As you have just read, there were many many days and years in between with many events and happenings, many births, weddings and deaths in those intervening years, all attended and experienced by our dear Marie. And now life still goes on for all those who have been given life by Marie and Edward, and I am sure these momentous events will still be experienced by both of them, albeit now in the spirit realm where they can still see and hear us, but where we can no longer see them and must rely on our faith to know they are safe with God in heaven and can continue to guide us and watch over us in spirit.

Thus ends Marie's story as she was here in the flesh to experience it. Now comes the part of the story where we honor her with our presence at her wake and funeral and where we by our prayers will be sure to conduct her into the house of the Lord if she is not already there, as most of us believe she presently is.

December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2002 dawned cold and dreary for Sandy, Marie's younger daughter. The onerous task of going to the funeral parlor and making arrangements for Marie's funeral weighed heavy on her shoulders. We had to gather the burial clothes together. On November 22, 2002 Sandy had gone to Lord and Taylor's in Lakeside mall on Pat Nowicki's advice and had found a most beautiful cream colored 3 piece suit with a silk leaf colored blouse underneath. Sandy brought it to Marie's that November morning and showed it right away to Marie. She just beamed with joy over how beautiful that dress was. Sandy now wonders if Marie knew of the purpose for that dress. The caregivers think Marie did know it was her funeral suit. The next item of

clothing chosen was a very warm pair of Christmas socks we had just bought for mom and her warm white leather tennis type shoes. Years and years ago Marie had repeatedly told Sandy that her feet were always cold and made Sandy promise over and over again to clad her feet in something very warm. That wish was now being honored. (That also made Sandy reflect on another wish that Marie asked Sandy to do everything in her power to fulfill – that Sandy do everything in her power to see that Marie never lost her legs or feet to gangrene as both of her brothers had experienced before they died. This wish had also been carried out – Sandy fought Marie's poor circulation in her feet problems for 15 years with many doctors' appointments, toe surgeries, and all manner of various treatments to these compromised toes and in the end we had saved the toes, feet and legs. She had died with her extremities intact.)

We then chose some underwear and some of her favorite jewelry. We had a Christmas pin chosen by Judy and also a cross given to mom by Judy as her early Christmas present. Judy gave it to her early, right after her birthday as she feared Marie would not make Christmas 2002 which is what had happened. Mom wore all 3 of her bracelets given to her by Toni, Sandy and Mike for her 89<sup>th</sup> birthday. Mom loved all those bracelets and looked at them with loving eyes often those last few days of her life. She loved the sparkle of those bejeweled treasures. Mom also wore on her other lapel a favorite pin Sandy had bought her in Tobermory. On her fingers she wore her wedding ring given to her by Edward, but picked out by Sandy and Nancy in the 1960's when her original wedding set wore out from years of use. She never was too happy with this set as Nancy had chosen white gold saying that was the color now in fashion, but Marie would have picked out yellow gold, the same as her original set. Marie also wore the red ring given to her by Rochelle last November 2001, the black onyx given to her this birthday by Sandy, the yellow topaz given to Marie by Bill when he was in service in the late 1960s, and the gold ring given to her for the previous Christmas by her sister Elenore, which had the initials MHB on it. Mom often traced those initials and knew they represented her names, Marie Henrietta Bender. She also wore a gold ring given to her by Sandy last year.

The funeral director then met with me, Toni and Cindy in the side office by the Grant Park door. He asked when we wanted to start the funeral. I didn't know, and said I would have to call Mike to find out what the California family members said as to when they could come. So I called Mike who was at mom's house. He said he never talked to them last night. (He talked to Nancy and asked her to call her kids.) I was really upset, saying how did I know when to start the funeral if I didn't know who was coming and when they were flying in. Mike got in earnest calling them and Ray Lope, the funeral director suggested we would start the funeral on Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup> and bury mom on Wednesday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, thus giving the California people enough time to fly in.



**Marie, Elenore and Doris**

Elenore had left messages at mom's and the Blue House by the time I got back from the funeral parlor on Friday. I also had frantic message from Doris as Elenore had called Doris asking her to pick her up at the airport if she couldn't get me as Elenore was flying in at 9:40 pm that same day. I called Elenore right back and told her I would be at the airport to pick her up. I told her I would meet her at the gate when she got off the plane. Doris then called and said she wanted to go to the airport too. She said she told Elenore to take a limousine to Doris' house as Doris was not familiar with the airport. That made poor Elenore out of her mind with anxiety over not being met by a family member. Doris came to mom's house at 4:30 pm and her, Cindy and I went to Uptown to eat and then drive to the airport. Doris was upset with me because I ordered chicken strips. She said it was Friday and I should order fish. So I ordered fish to keep Doris happy. We then arrived at the airport about 50 minutes early. Only one could go to the gate so I got the single pass and told Cindy and Doris to meet me on the 2<sup>nd</sup> level after I picked up Elenore. Doris got so antsy waiting for Elenore and me, sure that we were lost. It was a good thing that Cindy was there with her and knew our game plan because if Doris started straying looking for us we might never have connected up with her. (Doris had never been to the airport before so she said she would not have been able to find her own way around that huge, confusing complex.)

Elenore's plane came in a few minutes early but she didn't get off until after 10:01 pm as they had no wheelchair available for her so she was stuck on the plane. At that point I wished I would have brought mom's wheelchair for her. As I sat there and waited for her for the better part of an hour I felt mom so strong there that I was almost positive she was right there with me. But mom that I felt this night wasn't old and disabled, rather the mom I felt was in her late 40s at best and was in perfect health and very vigorous of mind and body. It was such a powerful experience and so overwhelming. Finally the feeling faded and Elenore got off the plane and we had a very emotional reunion. Then the porter wheeled her to was so sleep deprived it wasn't safe for me to get behind the wheel. I had had less than 3 hours sleep three nights in a row due to mom's last illness and death. We baggage claim and we got her suitcases in short order. By this time Doris was really upset as she was sure I forgot where I told them to wait for me. So now we had Elenore and her luggage and began the long drive home. I let Cindy drive as I got Aunt Elenore to mom's house and gave her some of mom's pudding in a cup and then talked awhile and said

goodnight. Elenore settled in mom's back bedroom and Cindy stayed with her nights and days until the funeral was over and Elenore flew back home to Minnesota.



**Warren**



**Elenore**

The next day we went to lunch and then back to the airport again and Cindy picked up Warren who flew in from Baltimore, Maryland. We all had a nice visit together that Sunday night and Monday morning we all went to lunch at Uptown and then went over to the funeral parlor to begin the wake at 1 pm. We waited from 1 pm to 1:10 pm for Mike to join us. When he didn't show I called his house in Bloomfield Hills. He was still at home. At that point I said all of us who were there would now go in together. Mom was a true vision of loveliness! She never was more beautiful looking than she was that day.



**Marie Bender Dec. 09, 2002**



**Mike, Nancy, Marie, Sandy and Doug Dec 10, 2002**

Mom's face has always been an ageless one – all through the years she always looked much younger than she was and her facial features never much changed from her teens to her late 80s. And she was so beautiful in that breathtakingly beautiful 3 piece suit. It was gorgeous on her beyond my wildest expectations. I was so pleased with her entire appearance. Sullivan's had done such a beautiful make up and cosmetic job on her and her hair was perfect. She was so life like in appearance. And so young looking – I felt she looked not a day over 50.



**Bearsie & Marie**

**Bearsie in his silver sleigh**

We brought Bearsie with us that first day and had a Christmas sleigh full of yellow flowers made up for him so that he could sit right at the head of mom's casket for the duration of the funeral. But we noticed one thing right away was missing – no rosary in mom's hands. I brought this right to the attention of the funeral director. He said we didn't supply him with a rosary. (They used to always automatically supply any deceased Catholic with a rosary in their hands.) So I looked down at Bearsie who I was carrying in my hands and removed his rosary from around his body that he had been wearing since before mom died. The funeral director then took that pearl rosary and put it in Marie's hands. Bearsie had the place of honor all through mom's funeral. He sat right up at mom's head in his sleigh full of flowers and greeted all who came calling.

The wake was extremely well attended by all of our friends and both dad's and mom's family. On Monday Nancy called very upset with her decision not to go to mom's funeral due to health problems. In the end she decided to come and we were able to get her tickets to go on the same plane that Donna and Michelle were coming in on as this plane made a stop over in Las Vegas. And when Craig and his family said they also wanted to come we were able to have their plane come in minutes after Donna and Michelle's arrived. But I needed 2 drivers as there were over 7 people, beyond my van's capacity. My dear friend Rudi said he would also drive so he and Cindy went to the airport at 5:30 am on Tuesday and picked them all up. Both Rudi and Cindy carried mom's funeral booklet with her picture on the front so they could know who they were. Rudi went up to Donna and Michelle and put the funeral booklet right in front of them and they said, "Oh, you must be Rudi". So all of the travelers were located, but not Donna and Michelle's luggage. It never made it out of Las Vegas. So they filed a claim and then drove to mom's in Utica.





**Rudi**



**Mass Booklet**



**Michelle & Donna**



**Cindy**



**Scott, Craig, Valerie, Roxanne & Mary Anne**

Craig and his family and Donna and Michelle we set up in the Courtyard by Marriott in Utica as the house was too crowded. We put Elenore, Nancy, Bob and Cindy in mom's house. But Bob and Nancy were very squeamish about sleeping in mom's bed so Cindy ended up sleeping on the floor as she didn't want to sleep in mom's bed either. (I found great comfort afterwards laying in mom's bed so I could feel close to her when I missed her so.)



**Nancy & Bob**



**Don & Emma Remsing, Nancy & Bob**

Michelle desperately needed stuff as her luggage was lost so we went to K Mart while the rest of the family went to breakfast at Uptown. We then met them for breakfast and then after socializing at mom's house and taking pictures we headed over to the funeral parlor for the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the wake. The second day was as well attended if not more so than the first. Nancy had her dear friends Emma and Don Remsing come and sit with her.

Our professional photographer Ann Kay came and took professional pictures of the funeral and its attendees. People from all over who knew and loved mom came. All of dad's nieces and nephews said that mom was their favorite aunt when they were growing up. They were talking about life in the 1930s and

1940s as they all went their separate ways after 1950. Clyde remembered the day dad brought mom over to Art and Agnes' house and Clyde came out of the bedroom, saw Marie and then went back in and told his siblings that he just saw Ed's new bride, and boy, is she ever pretty! Monaclaire then came out to the living room and told everyone what Clyde had just said, and was Clyde ever embarrassed!



**Clyde, Olive & Carol Bender**



**Bob & Monaclaire**



**Ann Kay**



**Jean & Pat**



**Jan**



**Tom Dahl**



**Debbie & Sharon**

Mom's hairdresser of over 10 years came and told many stories of her visits with mom. Mom's foot doctor came and was very attached to mom as his patient all through the more than 11 years. Mike's friend Bob Barr came and told stories of the olden days when he was in high school with Mike and visited in mom's house. Aunt Jean and Pat came and visited and had their pictures taken by Ann. Tom and Jan came, as did Debbie Dahl Tymczak and her husband Ken. Debbie was so frustrated by her slow return to normal after her aneurysm surgery. Sharon was unable to come as she resides in Georgia and money is tight.



**Sister Janet**

Sister Janet Sullivan came and conducted a memorial service on the second night at the funeral parlor. Many of us shared our memories of life with Marie. That night Linda White faxed over her memories of life with GG. These 2 pages

were brought to the church, were read by Sandy and then placed in the treasure drawer of mom's casket. Linda wanted to attend Marie's funeral but she had been very sick for over a week with the flu and over that weekend she had a bad ear infection and the doctor told her not to fly. Nicole also wanted to attend but when Linda couldn't go Nicole felt there was no way she could handle two small toddlers by herself.



**Linda & Marie**



**Linda's letter in Marie's casket memory box**



**Nicole & Marie**



**Sandy, Nicole & Marie**

That second night we went to the Ocean Breeze Restaurant for a very late dinner. Once again some family members were claiming that I was being politically incorrect with some of my remarks – oh well! We got home after 11 pm and went to bed.





Wednesday was the day of the funeral. A very somber day, that's for sure. The finality of the whole thing sure jars one into reality on that day. We all met in church at 10:00 am. Mom was laid out in state at the back of the church just in front of the baptismal font. All of Marie's children, Nancy, Michael, Sandy and Douglas were there throughout the entire funeral. Mom's only surviving sister, Elenore McKinin was there with her grand daughter Laurie and Dave Rotary. Mom's only surviving sister in law, Shorty's wife Jean Dahl and her daughter Pat Nowicki were there. Doris Stocker, Mildred Stocker's daughter was there.



**Mike Bender II, Greg Put, Curt Crowl, Doug Bender Jr,  
Bob & Matthew Quenneville, and Fr Tim Szott**

The pall bearers, Greg Put, Bob & Matthew Quenneville, Curt Crowl, Douglas and Michael Bender were dressed in very fine suits and were very impressive looking. Sandy was there with all of mom's caregivers – Toni, Marlene, Rochelle, Cindy and Judy. Mom's other former caregivers – Helen Kent and Ann Kay were also there. Warren, Donna and Craig were there along with their mother Nancy and Bob. Linda and Nicole were home as Linda said she was too sick to fly. Craig's whole family were there. Michelle Pacheco was there, Michael Pacheco and Ashley Meyer were in California. Karen Bender was there with all of her children, Shelley at her side and her two sons as pall bearers. Our cousin on Ed's side, Carol Bender Meyer was there. Alan Otter, Karen's brother was there. Stephen Feldman, Sandy's attorney was there.



**Doug Sr, Sandy, Doug Jr, Shelley, Karen and Mike II Bender**

The funeral service, conducted by Father Timothy Szott, was very impressive as attested to by all of those in attendance that day. We had funeral mass booklets prepared by Sandy Wilhelm that had the entire service therein as well as a biography of Marie in the back and several pages of color pictures

depicting the different stages of Marie's life. Father Tim gave a very impressive, very personal and heart felt sermon. It gave all of those in attendance hope of eternal life when one left this earth plane. Ann Kay was there to take professional still pictures and Bob was there to take video, but Father Szott was very restrictive in his allowing pictures to be taken as he didn't want the service to be disrupted by flash bulbs popping or people moving around. Ann was allowed two flash shots and Bob was told to stand in the side aisle on the left hand side and to stay in one spot for the entire service. Bearsie, Marie's beloved green bear was there in attendance for his mommy's service too. He is very little so he was allowed to sit right up in front where he could be near his mommy and still see everything. Being a very reverent little guy, he took off his hat for the entire service. Father Tim later said that he was looking at that darn little green bear through the entire service.



**Bearsie in the first pew in Church at his mommy's funeral**

Sister Janet pulled Sandy aside and said she needed people to go up to the pulpit and do the readings. I asked Warren to do the first reading, Karen to do the second reading and Pat Nowicki to do the prayers of the faithful. They all did a marvelous job on those two readings, Pat especially since "Lord hear our prayer" had been inadvertently omitted and she knew just where to insert those words repeatedly. Mom had specifically requested over 25 years ago that the song "Hail Mary, Gentle Woman" be included in her funeral service, so it was sung. Mom also loved the song, "How Great Thou Art" so we sang that one also. The entrance song "I will raise him up" was sung at Edward's funeral and mom and I loved that song, and it is traditional to be sung at funerals so we used that one in mom's funeral also. Marie and Sandy also loved "This day in New Jerusalem" so that was chosen as the last song as we exited the church to begin our journey to the St. Lawrence cemetery to say our final goodbye to our beloved Marie.





After the mass the coffin was loaded into the hearse by our pall bearers and the mourners went into their cars which had been arranged according to age and closeness to Marie. Warren had a breathtaking picture of Nancy as she sat in the limousine looking out the window at the funeral procession winding its way toward the automobiles. We made one big mistake however. Aunt Elenore went into Laurie and Dave's car and the funeral director did not put this car into the proper place in the funeral procession. So when we got to the cemetery and people started getting out of the cars and going into the tent I was so upset to see that Elenore was at the very back of the procession and had to walk an awfully long way and in the snow to get to the tent. But she managed it magnificently, walking the whole way like a person half her age!



**Marie's casket at the grave**



**Curt, Doug Jr, Mike II, Greg, Matthew and Robert Quennville**



**Marie**



**Nan with Pieta**



**Nan, Craig, El, Michelle, Doug, Donna, Mary Anne, Warren**



**Mitzi, Nan, Sandy, Craig, Doug Mary Anne, & Roxanne**



**Jean Lippert Dahl**

In the tent the coffin was placed on a pedestal and the mourners gathered around. Seats were placed near the coffin for the older members of the immediate family. Elenore, Jean, Sandy, Nancy, and Mike sat in front. The priest said the final prayers of commendation and farewell and then the mourners got back into their cars and headed for the Uptown restaurant where we had chosen to have the funeral luncheon. We chose the Uptown, which is not a usual setting for a funeral luncheon because mom and I and the



caregivers went there over 80 % of the time for lunch and supper and the owners and staff there treated mom and all of us like a million dollars. They all loved mom and catered to her every need. They loved her so much, especially her antics when she decided to tell Rochelle and I off. And when mom got so weak she couldn't hardly eat and couldn't swallow much they continually brought different dishes until they found one mom could swallow. And they never charged us extra for these 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and sometimes even 4<sup>th</sup> dishes. And they set us up so nicely in the back section, accommodating 43 of us for lunch.



**Ray Lope**



**Sandy & Michael**



**Sandy by open grave**



**Marie's open grave**

My husband Werner always insisted that a family member stay behind and oversee the burial to make sure nothing was stolen from the casket and to make sure the casket ended up in the right grave. So I stayed behind and once again Craig offered to stay with me. I was very glad for his company once again, the last time we stood together observing a burial was when Edward was buried on July 2, 1982. The others drove away and suddenly I realized that someone took off with my camera. I was upset as I wanted more pictures. So Warren pulled over and used his digital camera to take the pictures I wanted. Bob then also joined us and videoed the entire burial scenario. Ray Lope personally attended to all matters of mom's funeral. First they reopened the casket by the prayer service area and removed all of the jewelry that Michael asked that we keep rather than bury on mom. I wanted to bury her with all of it on her as she enjoyed her jewelry but Mike insisted that it was no longer her, just a hunk of mortal remains and that the living needed the jewelry to cherish and to fill a big hole in their lives. So Ray took it off and gave it to me at mom's grave site. We left on Judy's Christmas snowman pin, Judy's cross given to mom a few weeks earlier and Toni's bracelet given to mom for her birthday this year and the gold diamond pin given to Marie by Sandy in Tobermory in 2001.



**The boom that picked up Marie's casket and put in on the flat bed.**



**Marie sitting in front of Nellie & Minna's grave in Mount Olivet cemetery**

**Marie said to Sandy at Nellie's funeral, "I just realized that I am now the generation that is standing before an open grave." It was 47 years later that Marie's grave was now standing open in St. Lawrence cemetery.**

Then the boom picked up mom's casket and loaded it onto the flat bed coffin carrying truck and they drove it up to the open grave. Warren took pictures of the open grave prior to this. Dad's cement vault was totally exposed in the open hole. Mom's vault containing her casket was then lowered into the ground and placed flush up against dad's vault. So now they lay side by side in death as they did so many years together in life. We then took the shovel off the truck and I threw the first 2 shovels full of dirt on mom's casket. And then Craig and Warren also each shoveled a shovel full of dirt on top of the casket. Bob videoed the entire ceremony for us. The grave diggers then hand shoveled dirt on both sides of the vault then they finished filling in the hole using the heavy dirt moving equipment. In a very short time we were standing in front of a closed grave, with only the dirt over the grave and mom and dad's monument stone standing in the background as a memorial to their lives here on earth. The funeral director said they were putting in an order to have mom's death date put on the stone and he asked me if I wanted anything else engraved there. I said yes, under her name and dates I wanted the words inscribed, "She loved us all", which is the veritable truth. She did indeed love each and

every one of us in her own way. She was so glad to see each of us, especially so when she became disabled and had to wait until we would come to her.

After the hole was filled in we sadly walked away from the grave containing the remains of our beloved Marie. 89 years of life lie in that little 3 foot by 6 foot piece of earth. When I watched mom die, it was not just an 89 year old mother who passed out of this world into the next. It was also Nellie and William's little 4 lb daughter whom they put in a cigar box and placed in the oven to keep her warm.



**Nellie Rehfeldt**



**William Dahl Sr**



**Marie - age 6**



**Bill Marie-age 10**

It was also the 6 year old grossly undersized and underweight little girl eating her graham crackers and milk every school day morning at St. Charles Boromeo school on Baldwin and St. Paul in Detroit after having joyfully attended daily 8 am mass. It was "my little wee wee" as her dad Bill affectionately called her as he lovingly tapped her on the head with his newspaper as he came home from work that night. It was her brother Bill's almost twin sibling who called each other "Lu Lu" as they played together in their backyard on Baldwin. It was a 4 year old child wondering why every one was crying so hard on her birthday, not understanding that they were burying her 8 year old sister Dorothy that day.



**Marie-age 14**



**Pauline Rehfeldt**



**Bill Dahl  
(last picture)**



**Nellie Dahl**



**Marie Dahl Aug 24, 1934**



**Ed Bender Aug 24, 1934**



**Marie & Nancy 1936**



**Michael 1938**



**Marie & Sandy**



**Marie & Bill 1948**



**Marie & Doug 1952**

It was a young teenage child attending her Grandma Rehfeldt's funeral on her 13<sup>th</sup> birthday. It was a 15 year old broken hearted young teenager who sobbed her heart out every night for over 5 years not understanding one bit how her father, whom she thought had loved her so very much, could have ran away without a trace, leaving the entire family totally destitute. It was a 16 year old young woman forced by the League of Catholic Women to leave school which she loved and be wrenched away from her mom and her brothers and go live with strangers to be a nanny to their children. Yes, our dear little Marie cried a river of tears over her lost father and being forced to live with strangers in those 5 years. But it was also our young Marie who met and then fell in love with her Edward in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of her life. It was also the Marie who bore and cared for Nancy, Michael, Sandy, Bill and Doug that we buried today. Likewise we also buried Warren, Linda, Donna, Craig, Shelley, Mike and Doug's grandmother. We also laid in that cold dark grave the great grandmother of Casey Shea, Patrick, Nicole, Michelle, Michael and Ashley, Scott, Valerie and Roxanne. Into that little plot of land in Utica we laid the body of Devon and Kaitlyn's great great grandmother who so loved them that despite her great infirmities she traveled to California to meet them and to give them the legacy of having their pictures taken with 5 generations of Dahl/Bender/Stephens, an accomplishment that may not be repeated again for the better part of the next century, if then. Yes, Marie was many different persons to many of us. She was the child, the sister, the wife, the parent, grandparent, the "GG". She was the beautiful aunt, the favorite aunt. She was the American cousin who was a pain in the derriere when visiting her Canadian cousins as she was afraid of everything on the farm – the big dog, the huge horse, and the attacking geese. Yes, when we look back over our long lifetimes, Marie put it very well when she said to me that it doesn't even seem like the same lifetime when she looked back over those earlier years, when she remembered sitting in Waterworks park on Jefferson Ave in Detroit, eating sweet cherries and waiting for the birth of her first child, Nancy. It seemed to her to be a different life time. And what a different life it was, comparing her early years to the present. Who among us know of the dearly beloved in mom's early life – who in mom's today's family knows Nellie and William Dahl, her parents; Pauline Rehfeldt and Minna Dahl, her grandparents; George and Amelia Dahl, Frank and Celia Dahl, Clara and Ray Fredrick, Eddie Dahl, Bud & Anna Rehfeldt, Anna & Paul Galvin, Hattie &



Ed Forkel, Tillie and Chuck Doench, Lizzie Rehfeldt, her beloved aunts and uncles? Yet these were Marie's whole world in her early years and we weren't even dreamed of yet. Ah, yes, it was as if Marie lived in more than one world, and when we buried Marie today we buried a Marie that was many things to many people over the better part of the last and into this century. She was an infant and tyke to them, a mature woman, a wife and mother to us and an old woman in a wheelchair to her great and great great grandchildren. But to all of us she was a gentle, loving soul, always ready with a kind word and a big smile. (Just don't get her worked up or she might call you "Buster" or something even worse than that!)

Yup, that was our Marie. Many things to many people but beloved by us all.



Well, children, that ends the story of my earthly life, but remember:

Do not stand at my grave and weep,  
I am not there, I do not sleep.  
I am here with those of my children  
Who watch or wake or weep tonight,  
I stand guard over our babies as they sleep.  
I am at your weddings, birthdays, celebrations  
I rejoice at your births, God's new creations  
I am with you as you worry, fret and pray,  
I will wing your prayers to our God on high,  
For I have been anointed, so you see,  
In this heavenly realm, I'm Saint Marie!  
And when you depart this earthly place,  
You'll once again see my smiling face!



(Just don't screw up, I'm not fond of visiting really hot places!)