

## This Mom's Memories

In January 2001 my friend, Debb Elgin, and her daughter, Denise, of Freeport, IL gave me a book that sort of doubles as a journal.



It asks questions that set your mind in gear and you fill in the rest of the page with your own memories of your life in answer to those questions. Due to copyright laws, I cannot reproduce the questions but I can print my answers here. The pages were filled at various times throughout the past 3 years, hence the dates appearing with most of the entries. Some of the entries may be duplicates or variations of those found in other sections of this website. I write from the heart and the heart does not always pay strict attention to grammar or punctuation so, please cut me some slack! This file is dedicated to and written for my five kids but you are free to peek into my life along with them. I hope this file sparks some of your own memories. Debb is a special friend who began her Micro Switch (Honeywell) career the same night as me and we were an unbeatable duo when it came to getting our way at Micro.



We took on the "suits" and generally won our arguments. What fun! What memories!

Since this file is a work in progress, tune in for updates.

## Mom's Memories

2/24/01

My favorite pastime as a kid was lying in the cool grass of the lawn south of the house and watching big puffy clouds form shapes of animals and whatever else my childish imagination could conjure up across the sky. Being an only child, this was an experience I never shared and, in later years, it didn't happen either. I do remember one warm summer night when you five were in my life and we snuggled on blankets on the front lawn on Florence Road, watching meteor showers until very late.

03/22/04

My dad was a farmer all his life. In fact, he started that responsibility as soon as he got out of grade school because his father was ill. Mostly I remember my dad in a pair of blue bib overalls and a long sleeve shirt (rolled up to his elbows).



Mom was always at his side. When I was about Junior High age, they built an addition to the barn and doubled their milking herd. The eighty acre farm kept him busy but he and Mom still had time to visit relatives about once a week in evenings. Life was simpler

then.

He did not have fancy modern machinery but kept at the job until it was finished.

03/22/04

Mom was always at Dad's side. She didn't often drive a tractor but had a hand in everything else. Chickens---lots of them! -- were always her job and she sold eggs for over thirty years.



Her gardens were huge and supplied all of our vegetable needs. The freezer was packed and the basement was loaded with home-canned goods by fall. Mom still found time to sew 99% of her own clothes, most of my clothes, and lots of Dad's shirts. She baked her own bread and always had cookies and cakes and pies on hand. She was still baking and cooking 3 weeks before she died. Crafts and crocheted things were a big part of her life.



She and her sisters and friends exchanged ideas and patterns. For many years she had a massive strawberry patch and sold berries every June.

03/21/04

I can vividly picture our living room when I was a kid. The walls were papered then (paint jobs came during my high school years...and Mom painted those walls some wild colors...the worst I can remember was chartreuse). Curtains were plastic. A blue couch was along the west wall and a big green chair was in the northeast corner. An old wooden forerunner of the modern-day recliner sat in the northwest corner. That was Dad's spot and he had a magazine rack and his pipe smoking supplies beside him.



Mom usually sat on the couch with her crochet projects and Gramma Pieper used a small gray wooden chair with arm rests that sat beside the large bedroom doorway. That doorway used to have rolling doors but Mom didn't appreciate the cold drafts that came out of the pockets during winter so she nailed pieces of tin over the openings. An oil burner was along the north wall. The floor was covered with a flowery linoleum rug. After fifth grade, a TV had a place of honor along the east wall.

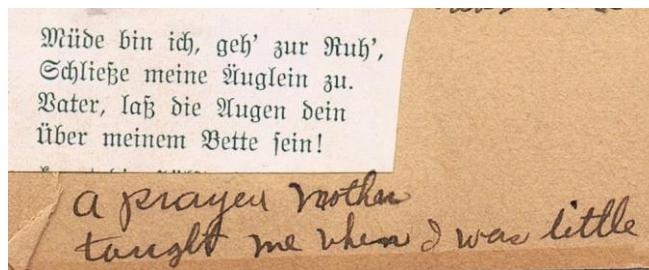


My usual spot was sprawled out on a quilt on the floor or at a card table with jig saw puzzles or my favorite white plastic building blocks. A relative from Chicago was a salesman for a plastic company and gave me several sets of those blocks. One of you kids has them now but I can't remember which one of you ended up with them when I left Freeport.

08/30/04

As early as I can remember, my mom taught me the prayer:  
Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.  
If I should die before I wake,  
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

And I was scared to death every night that I would die in my sleep!  
My kids did NOT learn that prayer. *The little prayer below was found in Mom's scrapbook:*



03/13/03

My childhood home was on Edwardsville Road, near German Valley, IL. It wasn't fancy or modern or even insulated but it was filled with love.







It was my parents' first and only home together. My great grandparents built it, several sections at a time, more than a hundred years ago. Then it stood vacant for about twenty years until my folks were married and made it into a home again.



All that is left of the farmstead of my youth now are several outbuildings and a lone mulberry tree by the road plus a walnut tree that used to be smack-dab in the middle of the chicken yard. A pretty new house is standing in place of my childhood home.



03/21/04

I had no brothers or sisters but found a "brother", Reuben Bolen, in high school.



We stuck together like glue and I loved him dearly! In Biology I filled in the workbooks and he cut up the nasty frogs so we both got through the class. I got a sister-in-law in 1961 but she didn't become my "sister" until about 1987. Marion was so special to me and my world changed drastically when she died. How I wished for her counsel in '98 and '99! *That's beloved Sis Marion below:*



07/27/04

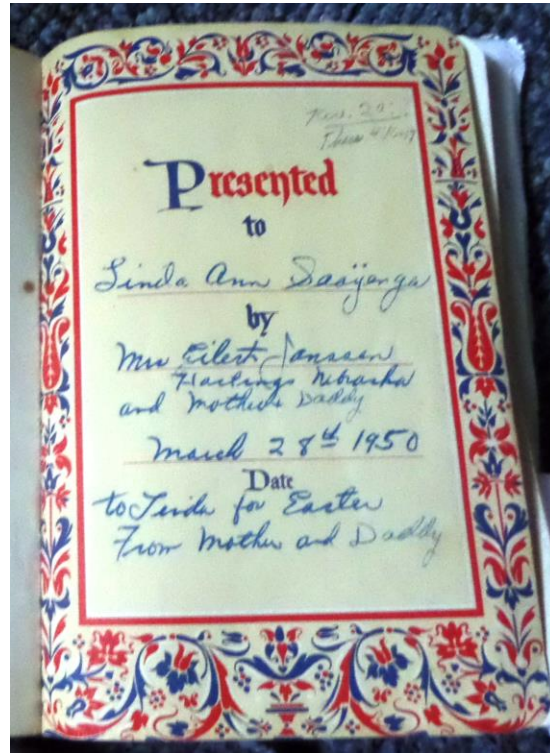
Some important lessons in life have been absorbed by me:

All change is for the better --no matter what. It may not look like it when it is happening but, six months or a year later, you are actually OK and probably better off to boot. The only change this does not always include is death. When you are in a corner, look around you. God always provides a door but you need to have the guts and faith to walk through that door. Scripture states, "This too shall pass." That works for both bad and good times. Be good stewards of the good times because someday they will change too, just as

the bad things will pass eventually. Plan for tomorrow but be sure to live life today.

01/01/04

My first Bible came from my parents but was partially paid for with gift money from Suzie C/J's great grandma. It is still in use and is kept beside the couch in our den. It is read each morning. Anna Janssen is long gone but her gift lives on.



03/14/03

The scent of fresh bread reminds me of coming home from school to find "squeeze bread". To eat it, you simply pulled a section from the loaf, slathered it with butter, and enjoyed! A sound that mentally sends me back to German Valley is the sound of vehicles driving through fresh snow. It is a muffled sound and I can almost hear the cars and trucks, with their chains thudding and clanking, as they glided down the long hill in front of my birthplace. All was well in my world then and I felt protected in a cocoon of soft snow. Even today, a soft snow seems to muffle the glare of the world around me. A sight that still transports me to my childhood is a big full moon. Dad kept his threshing machine in the cattle yard and, when my folks were milking late, I used to crawl up into the machine and stretch out on a wide conveyor belt. The only sounds around me, as I watched the clouds float over the big white moon, were the rustling of the cattle and the whirring of the milker motor or the mewing of a kitty. In my kids' imagination, I was in a rocket ship, soaring through space -- until Mom called me to go to the house for supper. *If you look closely at the picture below, you can see Dad and me at the front of the rig:*





11/14/03

There were so many favorite foods in my childhood. Sometimes, when I got home from school, Mom had fresh squeeze bread ready. She arranged chunks of dough tightly in a pan and baked them. You just pulled a soft piece from the loaf, slathered it with warm sweet butter and maybe a slice of Velveeta. Mmm!

She also made huge pots of vegetable soup. This stuff was not the watery orange-colored concoction from a can! It was full of hunks of tender beef and veggies from her own garden.

My mom made her own cottage cheese from fresh milk. She had a flat silver-colored pan and I remember it sitting on low heat at the back of the stove until it "clabbered". She drained it through an old dish towel. This product was nothing like today's commercial cheese. It was harder and chewy. She put onions and celery salt in it and covered it with top cream (Mom brought a quart jar of fresh milk from the barn every morning. After it sat a few hours, the cream rose to the top - a product equivalent to today's whipping cream.)

07/29/04

My first job that actually paid money was picking strawberries in Forreston when I was in high school. That only lasted a couple of days. I do remember earning enough money to buy three decorative plates to hang on my bedroom wall. After graduation in 1961, I worked for a short time in the office at Burgess Battery (This company is long gone.). In 1988 I worked as a cashier at Freeport's Ben Franklin, then at Twigg Accounting for several years. After we quit farming I got jobs through Kelly's and Manpower at MTX (as in car stereo speakers), Thermos, and Furst-McNess. Then came Honeywell and Rainbow Ridge (caring for disabled adults). Once I got to Virginia, the jobs were with Ericsson, TransWorld, and now Intercon. From June 1961 through July 1998 I was a farmwife, etc. and did all books for the farm and Country Communications (the family business). Between those duties I chased pigs, kept a large garden, froze 400 pints of

corn most years and chased you kids around. My highest wages were at Honeywell -just under \$12 an hour (but I put in whole lot of overtime and that sure did add up nicely) --- better than the \$10 a day picking strawberries. *Below is my very last pay slip from Micro Switch (one of the BEST places I ever worked):*

DISTRIBUTION INFORMATION			RATE	CHECK NUMBER	PERIOD ENDING	CHECK DATE		
WMS X 2 IL50 - D1-004			11.450	2094234	01/16/2000	01/21/2000		
EARNINGS		CURRENT		YEAR TO DATE	DEDUCTIONS TO EARNINGS	CURRENT AMOUNT	YEAR TO DATE AMOUNT	
	HOURS		AMOUNT					
Reg Pay	01/16	32.00	366.40		FED W/H S 001	59.69	151.75	
Reg Pay	01/14		0.00	732.80	MEDI	7.26	19.97	
Vacation	01/16	4.00	45.80	229.00	OASDI	31.02	85.38	
Holiday	01/16	4.00	45.80	366.40	ILSWT N 001	13.02	35.42	
Shift 2 Py	01/16	43.30	10.83	30.83	Health	5.00	15.00	
Vac Payoff	01/16	3.30	37.79	37.79	Dental	1.25	3.75	
Reg Py Ded	01/16		0.00	-45.80	HSSOP	28.13	81.48	
Sick	01/16		0.00	45.80	Bonds	5.00	15.00	
					Lg Trm Dis	0.00	4.30	
NON WAGE INCREASE TO TAXABLE GROSS								
						CURRENT CHECK AMOUNT	YEAR TO DATE AMOUNT	
TOTALS								
						CURRENT CHECK AMOUNT	YEAR TO DATE AMOUNT	
						GRS PAY	506.62	1395.82
						TOT TAX	110.99	292.52
						TOT DED	39.38	119.53
						NET PAY	356.25	983.77
						FED ERN	472.24	1295.59
						OASDI ERN	500.37	1377.07
						MEDI ERN	500.37	1377.07
OTHER MISCELLANEOUS								
HSSOP EC							14.06	
STATEMENT OF EARNINGS AND DEDUCTIONS				DETACH AND RETAIN				

**Honeywell**

08/27/04

We had some dandy winter storms in the Midwest and a few jump out in my memories. One time school was closed and my folks and I tried to go to Freeport. We got stuck about a mile west of home. I don't think I have ever had such cold feet. I remember sitting in front of the oil burner in the living room and my feet were bright red.

During adulthood, I vividly remember several storms. Once a storm hit during the day and word was out that school was closing. Your dad and I took off on the John Deere tractor for Baileyville and German Valley to pick up you kids. The tractor had a large cab and we ended up with your dad and me, you 5 kids, and Dave and Sue Meyer. We had to come through Drakes' field because the road past Seurings' was blocked with huge drifts.

Another storm blew shut Highway 26 west of our farm. One vehicle got stuck and more came behind and also got stuck. Finally the entire mile was full of cars and they were there almost 8 hours. Gary Greenfield was in that mess so your dad took him food with the snowmobile. The picture below is of Gary about that time:



08/27/04

My favorite dessert recipe is fairly complicated. It consists of my five kids, their spouses, all of my grandchildren, Jill and Dave, Jim's son Scott, and numerous friends and relatives gathered around Jim and me. Who needs sweets with all that love?

03/25/04

My favorite dress-up outfits as a child were varied. One that sticks out in my mind was a hot pink water-marked taffeta dress. Another was a light pink silky dress with rhinestones at the neckline. Very early one Easter morning, I woke up to find a gauzy white and lavender dress hanging in front of my bedroom window.



Behind it was a huge green shamrock plant and it was framed with white lace curtains. It just glowed in the rising Easter sun! To be honest though, most of my clothes the first 7 or 8 years were made from feed sacks and they were pretty. Chicken feed came in cloth bags and you simply picked out which sacks you needed so you had enough fabric to sew the garment. Each bag was about a yard of fabric. Naturally, the bag you needed was at the very bottom of the pile of feed sacks and the dealer had to move many bags around to get to it. *The page below is from Mom's 1949 diary.*

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13

sold chicken \$52.36 worth  
old hens  
wash today and went  
to Penn Miller awhile this  
P.M. to get sacks  
Went to Louie Miller  
after sack to night

I still have a booklet advertising Simplicity patterns that called for a specified number of feed sacks for each garment.





12/13/03

When my dad built a new corncrib, it was finished well before the harvest. I claimed it for a playhouse until I was forced out by ears of corn. I had such fun designating areas for the kitchen, dining room, etc. I used Crayons to write words all over the inside of that building --- even going so far as “painting” certain areas with my Crayons. That corncrib was mighty colorful on the inside. Then Dad filled it with corn and I never played in it again.



Years later (actually, about 45 years) I looked inside it after it was no longer in use and found traces of my artwork still there. Smokey, my faithful companion when the crib was new, is just a pleasant memory now but his name still is visible. One more thing to add to this: during the summer, when the lightning bugs were plentiful, I remember catching those bugs, dismantling them, and smearing the phosphorous parts all over my dogs. Smokey was especially stunning with yellow glowing blobs all over his long black fur.

08/27/04

I wasn't in as many extracurricular activities as most teenagers but I did manage to keep busy. There was Girls' Chorus, Choir, FHA (Future Homewreckers of America), Pep Club, and Yearbook for two years -- one year as co-editor with Ron Ludwig. Chorus was fun. One year Judy Trei Meyer, Carol Lee Asche Garnhart, and I entered contest as a trio. We got a third and I remember one of the judges' comments on our rating sheet. “Smile! You are alive, you know!”

KANSAS HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION  
MEMBERSHIP BOOK  
VOE-3

Choir Groups and Vocal Ensembles

CLASS \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE OF APPEARANCE \_\_\_\_\_  
SCHOOL: Forrester CITY: Forrester  
TELEPHONE ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Judges should grade each selection 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7 in the designated column. Considerable comment should be made on the left side of this sheet. Final rating must be placed in the space at the bottom of this sheet.

SELECTION \_\_\_\_\_

TONE (breath, head, nasal, vibration, notes)  
1  2  3  4  5   
*Very nice blend. Very professional very lively.*

INFLECTION (in its parts, notes, line blend)  
1  2  3  4  5

TECHNIC (pitch, command of it, diction, modulation, effects, vocal range)  
1  2  3  4  5   
*Very nice blend. Good vocal technique.*

1 2 3 4 5  
INTERPRETATION (style, tempo, phrasing, articulation, intonation)  
1  2  3  4  5   
*Good blend of harmony and melody. Good use of dynamics.*

MUSICAL EFFECT (blend, contrast, variety, unity)  
1  2  3  4  5   
*Very good blend of harmony and melody. Good use of dynamics.*

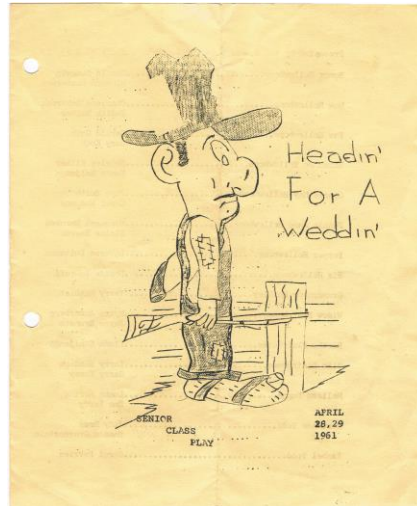
APPEARANCE (stage, costume, deportment, confidence)  
1  2  3  4  5   
*Very good appearance.*

MEMORIZATION  
1  2  3  4  5   
*Very good memory of all songs.*

FINAL RATING  
1  2  3  4  5   
*Very good.*

I attended lots of basketball games but very few football games because I despised the

game and got no thrill out of standing around in the cold, watching the boys purposely mashing into each other. More fun was the Senior Play.



03/21/04

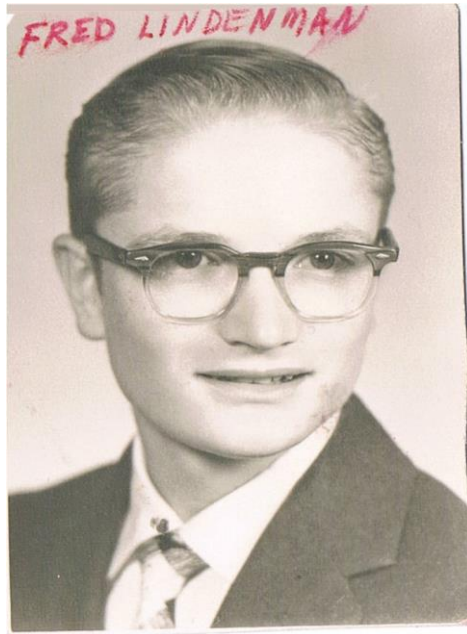
The hardest thing I ever had to do was divorce your father. I had to admit to the whole world that I had utterly failed at my marriage. In my mind and up-bringing, that was unforgivable. I am not proud of breaking up the family unit and causing you five to have to travel two directions to see your parents. I only hope you have forgiven me and can understand the personal pain that went into that decision. Divorce is always wrong if there is any chance of change in one of the partners but, sometimes, I believe God uses a “lemon-flavored” experience to help us grow. I love you all so much and am sorry for all the things you had to see and hear. I also believe God has given me a second chance at happiness. Please learn to love and respect Jim as I do.

03/21/04

I don't remember any crazy fads during grade school but do think of some in high school. The guys wore their jeans LOW and had “D.A.” haircuts (D.A. as in duck's a\_\_). The hair was combed back from the face and made kind of a curl at the back of their head. Girls wore crinolines which were VERY full half slips under their skirts. They were made of ruffles of net and some gals soaked them in sugar water to make them stiff. When they sat down, the net crackled as the stiffness gave way. Any girl going steady wore the guy's class ring on her finger and wrapped the back of it with yards and yards of dental floss or yarn to make it fit. You could buy bright colored feathers and stick feathers around the ring (so the ring was more noticeable!) in colors to match your outfit. We wore penny loafers or black and white saddle shoes. When the white of those saddle shoes started looking ratty by spring, you could put a drop of food coloring in the white polish and match your outfit. VERY UPTOWN!

06/06/04

My first date was with Fred Lindenman.



His sister, Barb, and I were good friends and I had gone to spend a few days with her in her home near Cedarville, Illinois.



Fred offered to take us skating at the Pines. Barb got sick on the way there so we never did get to skate. Barb slept all the way home and Fred and I chatted. About a week later he found me at a church youth group play practice and asked me to go with him to the county fair. WOW!! My first official date! And we had a ball! The next year I went to the fair with Ron Smith.



In between was skating with John and Frank. So much for first dates...

June 2004

Yes, I **DO** remember my first kiss and it "ain't none of your beeswax!"

06/05/04

Birthdays were a big deal when I was growing up. My mom always made a fancy cake. Because my day was just after Christmas, Mom hit some great sales and I got more *loot*. *Always the Cornelius family came for a party. Below are Elgin, Fan and Dick Cornelius, my dad, Wessel Wessels, Mom and me: This was in January 1950.*



I do remember three parties with classmates and they were such fun. *The picture below was in 1957 when my 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade classmates came to our home. Back Row L to R: Larry Stein, Steve Borchers, Don Cornelius, Terry Mathiot, Larry Hinders, George Baal and Jerry Guth. Center L to R: Jerrene Borchers, Darlene Ross, JoAnn Miller, Charlotte Filer, Rose Marie Buttell and Judy Ross. Front L to R: Lin, Bonita Greve, Charlene Ackerman and Sandra Hammer.*





Once, during high school, my girlfriends surprised me. (See below Sandy Gravenstein, Shirley Dieken, front: Diane Buss, Betty Kitzmiller, Elaine Heeren, Birthday Kid, Lyla Schoenhardt and Carol Jean Meyer)



The next picture is in 1961 when my senior classmates came to help me celebrate. (Front: Elaine Heeren, Lyla Schoenhardt, Shirley Dieken, Birthday Kid, Carol Jean Meyer, Diane Buss, Judi Walker. Back: Betty Kitzmiller, Carole DeVries, Aljean Frisbie, Judy Ross and Luann Moring)



I don't remember any special gifts --- just being made to feel special myself on those occasions. Now I appreciate birthdays because they mean God has given me another year to watch how much my grandkids have grown, how much my kids have succeeded and I had another year with Jim. Trust me: at sixty one, you DO appreciate birthdays!

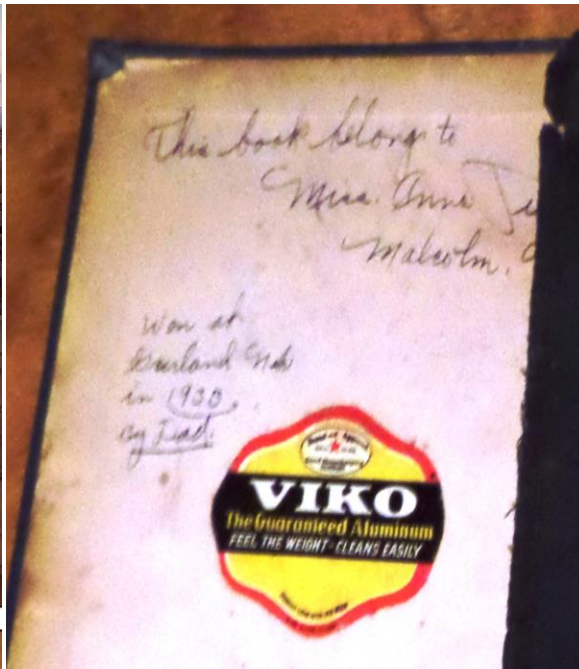
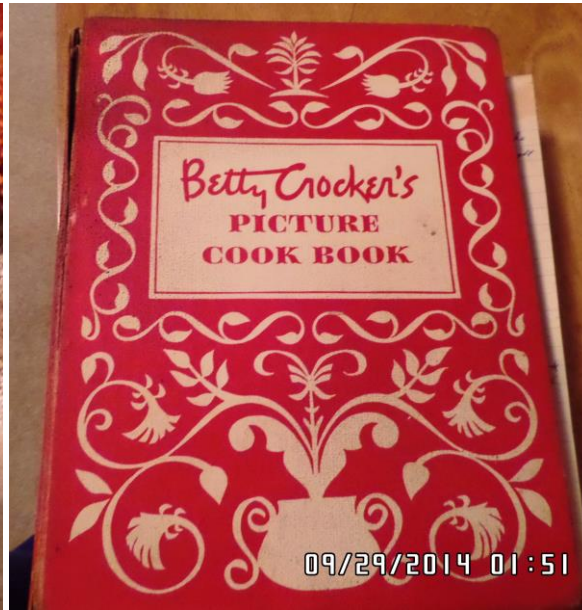
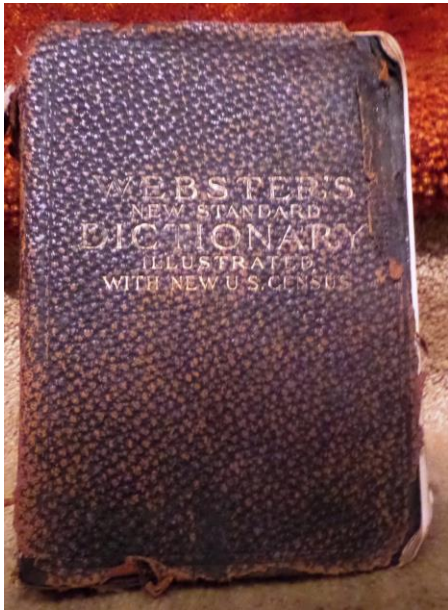
06/05/04

What decorating and gardening tips????? I'm still trying to figure the stuff out myself! For years my home was decorated much in the "Early Garage Sale" style. It does look better now.

Gardening????? Plant the seed and pray.

02/25/01

Even though I love to read, books were simply not a large part of my early childhood. At home there were only a few books that I remember ---- the Bible, a very old dictionary, and Mom's Betty Crocker cookbook. Oh, yes, and a very old cookbook that was stored way up high in the cupboard. (That one was won in a Bingo game in Nebraska for my mom by her dad. It was full of hand-written recipes and I now have it in a place of honor in our library.) *Below are the dictionary (copyright 1911), Mom's Betty Crocker and the very old cookbook. Of COURSE I still have them!*



Several farm magazines came each month but reading just wasn't a big deal. Evenings Mom crocheted or sewed and Dad smoked his pipe and dozed when they were not chatting (this was before TV). Once somebody gave me Alice in Wonderland but I didn't like the story -- no idea where that book went. At school I read most of the books in the library --- but there weren't all that many. As a little kid, most of my "reading time" was spent assembling jig saw puzzles or designing miniature houses with small plastic blocks (the forerunner of today's Lego Blocks). Oh, and I drew oodles of house plans. TV -- all three channels -- was my window to the world after fifth grade.

11/14/03

I know that money was very tight when I was a kid but I never felt "POOR". There was



always good food on the table and the necessities of life were available. When I left Freeport I came across the box that my parents used to budget their finances during their early marriage years. It was wooden with small saucer-shaped compartments. Each section was marked, one for electricity, one for Linda's insurance, one for groceries, etc. You must realize those sections were only large enough for coins so you understand the scope of their income. Marked on the "Budget Box" is "\$5.66 total"



Mom and Dad were good at recycling. We never had a fancy car or nice furniture or a modern kitchen but it never seemed a hardship. My parents rented thirty acres to the west of our farm and I vividly remember their conversations when that land came up for sale. They simply could not justify the cost and the debt. But I never ONCE heard them lament the loss of those acres. Life seemed to go on exactly the same as before except Dad didn't have to work in the field quite as much. The riches in my family did not show up on a balance sheet and Uncle Sam never got to assess a tax on them.

08/27/04

I used to get into hot water with Mom and she used to spank me but I don't remember the infractions. What I DO remember is the time I headed down the road with my doll buggy toward the neighbors.



Dad caught up with me and spanked me right there in the middle of the road. My



feelings were hurt a great deal more than my backside and I NEVER ventured out on that road again. I discovered that, if I walked along the cornfield and climbed through the fence, I could get to the neighbors without going on that road. By the way, my dad only spanked me once and I never forgot it. Mom was always the disciplinarian.

07/26/03

I was never a rebel but, in the late 50's and early 60's, there were no curfew laws and it is a wonder I didn't find trouble. We kids used to go skating at The Pines (about 30 miles from home) on Saturday nights. The late session ran from 10 until 12:30 and we girls came close to problems several times. We also tore around the country late at night when we were supposed to be at slumber parties. The big thing then was "bush-whacking" -- sneaking up on parked cars out along dark country roads, yanking open the doors, and yelling, "Bush-Whack!" at the startled couple. We had no clue the risks we were taking. Curfew laws are marvelous! But then, so is the wisdom that comes with age --- and being a parent yourself.

07/26/03

When did I first learn about sex? Oh, my! Such a subject for a mother to reveal! I was totally innocent (and ignorant). About fifth or sixth grade my mom decided it was time to tell me about the "Birds and the Bees". She began the subject by telling me that, out in the barnyard, "Bullie" was not playing leap-frog with the cows. Hey, what did I know? My dad always told me that he and Mom had found me in the garden in the cabbage patch. At the time I was convinced that God just placed a baby over night in a family. I remember once praying for a brother or sister and telling Mom that I wanted a sibling by morning ---and then being angry when no baby was there. It must have really hurt Mom because she had had several miscarriages. But back to the leap-frog revelation: It all sounded so yucky and I remember laughing at the whole idea. But I learned! By the way, not too long ago a good friend in Freeport told me that, until her first child was born, she honestly thought babies were born through the mom's belly button. Such a surprise she had!

04/19/04

I wish I had not been so self-conscious about my height during my adolescence. I should have had the guts to go to dances and not be such an egghead. I wish, too, I had respected myself more and stood up for myself. People are treated badly because they allow themselves to be trampled on a continuous basis. If you roll over and play dead all the time, there will always be somebody who will be only too willing to take advantage of a dummy. It only took me 55 years to learn this -- a real quick study!

04/19/04

These are things I am MOST glad I tried, though not necessarily in the following order:

- + Sex - no comment necessary here
- + Learning to master the press machine at Micro Switch. The first night at that job, I just knew there was NO WAY I could ever make those electrodes fit in that press wheel and I was ready to walk out, then got up some determination and came back the second night when a few more electrodes actually fell into place. Oh, the wonderful friends I would have missed if I had not tried again!
- + Learning to solder - How else would I have ever met Jim?
- + Riding a roller coaster - I don't HAVE to do it ever again.
- + Pizza - YUM!
- + The decision to move to Virginia - Oh, what a good decision that one was!
- + Roller skating - I loved it!
- + Speech Class in high school
- + Airplane trips and train trips
- + Learning to sew
- + Dancing with Al Weigel at Muskego, WI
- + Cake decorating
- + Weight Watchers
- + Getting on the internet
- + Driving alone to see my kids
- + A second try at marriage!

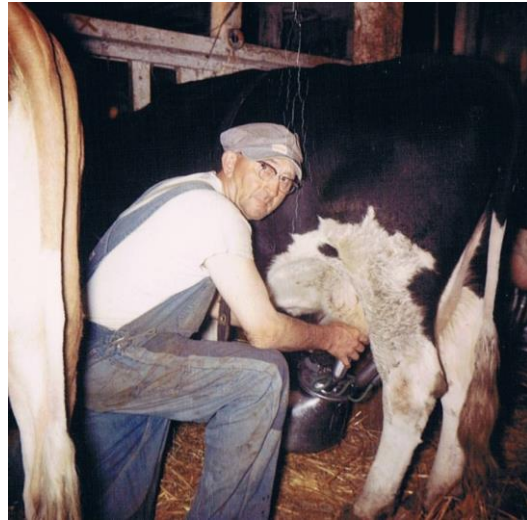
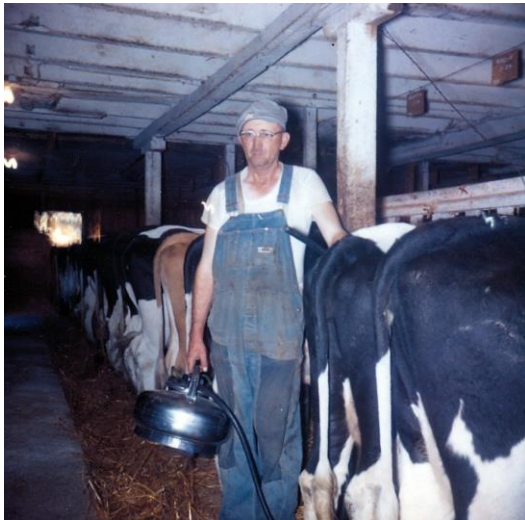
02/25/01

My mom got dressed in her very best for church each week. Her home-sewn dress was usually mostly blue because Dad liked blue. Her church dresses were generally made of a fabric that was shiny - and she carried her BEST! Purse. That purse could be any color - often home-made - but her shoes were always sensible and black. She always put on very tiny ear rings (Never any expensive jewelry), a pretty necklace, and often a pin of some sort. None of the above three items were a set but the colors usually matched her dress. Anytime she wore a coat - and I only ever remember her having ONE coat that she did not sew herself - it, too, had a pretty pin attached. The only time I ever remember seeing her wear her engagement ring was at her funeral. Always it was in a tiny box in the dresser drawer. She bought herself a wedding band in later years but that was only worn occasionally. By the way, those purses were always called "Pocketbooks".



08/14/04

Dad's usual attire on workdays was bib overalls when I was growing up.



They were usually striped or solid blue - with scads of patches. His shirt was generally home-sewed. High-top laced work shoes (ALWAYS brown) were his normal foot attire. In the winter he wore wool underwear (called Union Suits) but complained about them itching until he learned to wear cotton one-piece suits under the wool. His winter coat of choice was a black garment that he called his Mackinaw. I don't know if that was the brand or what. Most of the year he wore a denim baseball-type cap, but, when it was really hot and he had to work in the field, he wore a wide brimmed hat that was constructed with a solid hard plastic-like material -- and he had painted that hat with aluminum paint.



When it was raining or snowing, he had five-buckle overshoes. I can't remember seeing him with gloves but he must have worn them during winter. And he usually had a wad of Rite-Cut tucked between his cheek and his teeth. Sometimes the Rite Cut was replaced by Black Jack gum. His church attire was a suit and a blue shirt.



I never saw him wear a white shirt. He always said white shirts were funeral shirts -- and he did not wear a white shirt to his own funeral either. My dad went to his grave in a nice blue shirt and suspenders with his beloved Antique Engine Club commemorative buttons pinned to those suspenders.

08/14/04

Weekends always started on Sunday morning with church. Afternoons might include visits to or from relatives or a long drive to check out crops. Saturdays were just another work day on the farm. ***Never*** do I remember Dad doing field work on a Sunday! One year the harvest was running late and I can still picture my parents deciding if it would be OK to pick corn on Thanksgiving Day. They agreed that it was not a Sunday so it would be acceptable and Dad picked corn all day. Snow came a few days later.



03/11/03

A favorite dish that Mom used to make during my childhood was Pigs in the Potato Patch. You kids were often served it and now Jim enjoys it too.

Slice left-over boiled potatoes

Add some diced onion

Toss in a couple of sliced wieners

Add milk to just about cover the ingredients.

Season with salt, pepper, celery seeds, and butter

Heat till hot and thicken with a bit of flour or corn starch or instant potato flakes.

My concoctions never taste as good as my mom's did, but, perhaps, I am remembering the love more than the food.

08/30/04

I never went to a dance in my life. I went to the Junior and Senior proms (Jr. with your dad and Sr. with my mom) but we left after the banquet both times.

*Below are Judi Walker, Betty Kitzmiller, Barb Ludwig, Diane Buss, Lyla Schoenhardt, Doris Rummel, Lin and Carol Jean Meyer.*



An earlier entry in this boring saga which you are now reading alludes to dancing with Al Weigel. This was after a snowmobile race. The sponsors had a tent set up with a live band to entertain us while we were waiting for our trophies. Al grabbed me by my hand and gave me no choice but to go with him. It was such fun and I knew then how much I had missed by not going to dances in school. *That is Al below and he races bicycles now (2013) instead of snowmobiles....and I still think he is a sweetheart.*



That was at Muskego, WI and anybody who attended those races will remember the WONDERFUL chili those people sold. YUM! What? Why are we talking about chili in a paragraph about dances? Oh, well.

07/24/04

Actual family reunions were rare. The one I remember most happened in 1984 when I took my folks to Nebraska for a reunion on Mom's side of the family. *That's Mom and her siblings; Art Pieper, Alma Lostroh, Mildred Plautz and Esther Miller. Note in 2013: all five and their spouses are gone now.*



We gathered in a church basement and played games on the lawn.



It was great to see my cousins but it was over way too soon. Better would be the opportunity to talk to each cousin for a few hours without the rest of the herd. Family reunions lately have been you kids' Faist Kids' Annual Reunion and I'm so honored that you allow Jim and me to be a part of it. *The picture below was taken in Georgia in 2005. L to R Back row: Ryan and Matthew McCarthy, Randy Faist holding his Miranda, Monica Faist, Cindy Watson holding Ben and Abby, Jim and Lin. Ellen and Larry Faist, Sandi Parsons. Front: Jeff and Lori McCarthy, Amelia (Randy's), Justin (Sandi's). Front little kids: Morgan (Sandi's), Anna and Emma (Larry's)*



I hope you keep up the tradition. You have started something good and worth the time. Getting together with family when I was a kid was mostly when a relative from out of state showed up.

03/01/04



My dream was to become a journalist but, instead, I got married 3 days after high school graduation. Our lives steer us in the direction that God wills so I don't think I was cut out for that career. Besides, I would have missed having you five!



I never went to college but do feel I have picked up a few skills anyway. In the early sixties college was not the sacred cow or "be all" that it is today. But I often wonder how far I could have flown with the right training. It is fun to muse and dream of such things, but my life today is A-OK too.

06/05/04

I do remember sitting in Iler School in third grade with the assignment to draw a picture of what I wanted to be when I grew up. The picture I drew was of a farm and a woman feeding chickens -- well, I thought they looked like chickens anyway! The farmer was on a tractor. In another 8 or 9 years I actually was a farm wife and I always loved the land.





Now I live in Virginia, far from that farm, but still go out in the yard to do my farming -- planting flowers, watering my tomatoes, pulling weeds, etc. And I spot every cow along the mountain roads.



05/02/04

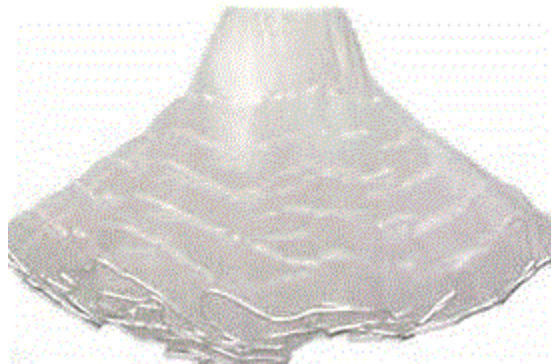
Best friends in grade school would have to start way back in first grade. My dad, Menno Miller, and Ernest Hageman were the three school directors of Iler School so the Miller kids (Norman, Roger, and Marilyn), the Hageman kids (Joyce, Glenn, and Gene) and I often had the chance to be together. *Below in 1948 you see in the back: Marilyn Miller being held by Mrs. Wilson, Norman Miller and Joyce Hageman. Front: me, Roger Miller and Glenn Hageman.*



For most of my twelve years of school, those kids were part of my day. Marilyn and Roger now live in California and we often correspond by e-mail. Glenn was born one day after me so we have had quite a few friendly discussions about who is the older and who is the smarter.

12/02/02

In high school, during the late 50's and early 60's, the girls all wore skirts and sweaters after Labor Day --- and those skirts had better touch the floor when you were on your knees or you were sent home! I remember one gal being sent home for wearing black hose. The skirts were either very straight woolen ones or extremely full with miles of net ruffles underneath. The crinolines (We called them "Can-Cans.") were soaked in sugar water or a gummy starch solution before being stretched out to dry to achieve the desired stiffness. And you could hear the sugar crack when you sat down. But it was high style! *Here is an example of our "Can-Cans":*



01/10/02

What I love best about your father is you five kids.



04/05/04

When I was a kid the fireworks in Freeport, IL were set off across the Taylor Park Lagoon. Everybody brought blankets to sit on and it was either freezing or mosquito heaven. Well I remember hurtling up River Road toward East Freeport after a hot day of making hay and rushing through evening chores. I used to watch the first flashes in the sky as Dad barreled the '38 Buick westward. Later years, when you kids were younger and the fireworks were launched from the fairgrounds south of Freeport, we spent the evening at Uncle John Faist's home on Factory Street. *That's Uncle John with my beloved five and their cousins, Gary and Mark Greenfield in 1970:*



A mob of people descended on John and he spent most of the evening hauling old chairs from his basement so everybody could sit comfortably. Each family brought along snacks and you kids spent a good bit of the time rolling down the grassy hill by his grapevines. Beginning in 1999, you have included me in your Faist Kids' 4th of July Annual Reunion ('99 at Sandi's in GA,





2000 at Larry's in northern WI,



2001 at Cindy's again,



2002 at Sandi's





and 2003 and 2004 at Randy's home in Janesville, WI.



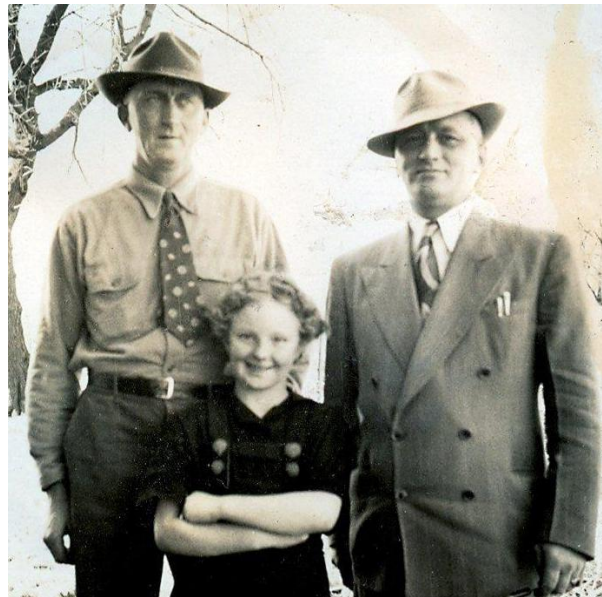
I hope you keep up the tradition long after I am gone and that you keep inviting me until then. I see you all together and feel the pride flow over me.

05/01/04

Me participate in a rally or demonstration? NEVER!!! There are better ways to deal with problems without making a scene.

07/25/04

My uncle George was a radio repairman in England during WWII. It was his job to get the radios running again when the bombers limped back to England. He told stories of having to clear radios of body parts sometimes before repairing those radios. He also would not touch Brussels sprouts because he had to eat so many of them when supplies were cut off to his base. Uncle George was a favorite of mine and I think I knew him better than any other of my uncles. He lived in Freeport but was at our home 3 or 4 times a week when I was a kid. *In the picture below are Uncle George with my dad and me:*



He took me to so many parties and school functions while my parents were still doing evening chores. Once he brought me a '78 record of Liberace because he felt that I needed to listen to better music than the music most teenagers of the times. I never listened to that record and wish I had it now. During summer Mom's chickens roosted in the trees overnight. I remember the night Uncle George arrived, made a quick trip into the darkness under the trees in the chicken yard, and got plastered from above. He always wore a crew cut so this time he came sputtering to the house with "whatever" dripping down the sides of his head. I had NEVER heard him swear before. Never did again after that either.

In later years Randy was in the military but that would need at least another whole page to tell that story. That's both of them below:





07/19/04

I never learned to swim but always wished I could. When you kids took lessons at Oakdale Park, Opal Wilhelms, the teacher, tried to teach me, too, to no avail. I panic when my face gets under water -- maybe that is why I despise overhead showers. As a little kid I was deathly afraid of water puddles and crossing bridges. I claimed the "sissles" would get us. No idea where that came from. I can float just fine -- as long as my fingers can touch the bottom of the pool.

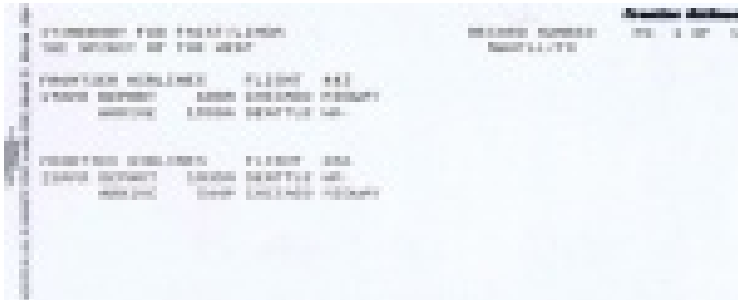
07/27/04

The trip -- or a tiny part of it -- that sticks in my memory would be a couple of days after Thanksgiving 1999. My plane was clearing the mountains west of Roanoke, VA and it struck me that this was the last time this would be my return trip home to Freeport. Plans were in place for me to move soon to Virginia. It was the strangest feeling -- not scary, but exciting -- and I've never regretted that decision to move. When I was a kid there were numerous trips to Nebraska by car. Since I married Jim, we've taken three trips to Illinois by train plus one trip there by car.

03/13/03

I was never out of the United States until Randy and Monica took your dad and me to Vancouver (oh, you spell it). It was a marvelous city with its French influence and buildings. There were lots of boats on the water and we were viewing them from a park that was "miles" in the air above the water. If Canada qualifies for the term "abroad", then I've been. Otherwise, forget it! There are so many things in the USA that I'd love to see before venturing abroad. I just want to dip my toes into the Atlantic and the Pacific. I was about 60 or 70 feet above the Pacific on a rocky outcrop on the Olympic Peninsula

once but we couldn't find a road down to the water.

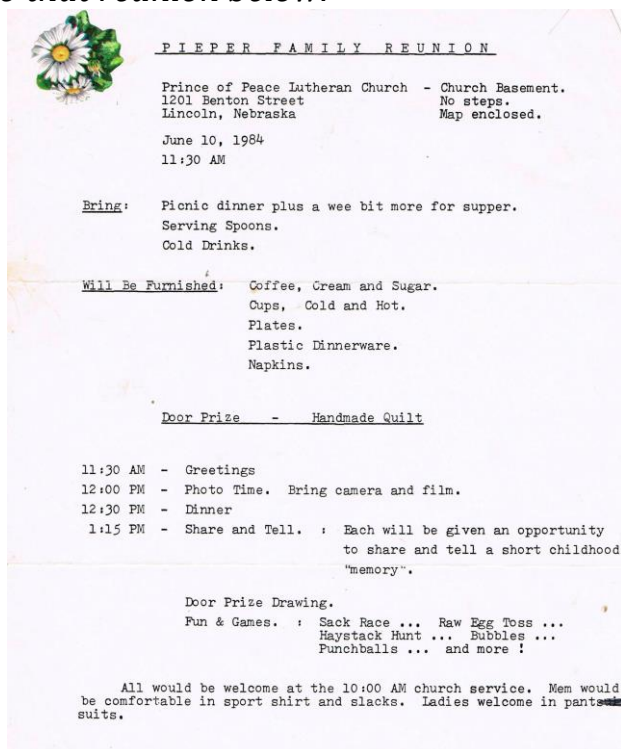


07/21/04

In the mid-80's, I was a chaperone on a youth mission trip for Faith Methodist Church. We spent a week in Farmington, NM but, on the way there, we stopped in the Colorado Springs area at The Garden of the Gods Park. Never before, nor since, have I seen such an awesome place! Another marvelous place was way up on Pike's Peak. Below us was Colorado Springs. It was pitch dark on that mountain but the lights of the city actually twinkled in the crystal clear air. I can close my eyes still and see it again in my mind.

03/17/01

My mom's relatives were from Nebraska so most summers found one branch of the family in our home for a visit. About every other summer we visited Nebraska for a week. One of those times was my folks' fifteenth anniversary and my aunts held an open house in their honor. Years later I took my parents there for a family reunion. It was their last trip. *See the invitation to that reunion below:*





Once, when I was in fifth grade, my folks sent me by train to Nebraska for about two weeks. Such an adventure! Uncle Reinold's pony stepped on my foot and I never cared much for horses since then. Mom's cousin visited often but they always pulled a dilapidated old home-made trailer and my dad snorted that it looked like Gypsies had invaded. That camper may not have looked very classy but it got them where they needed to go.

03/21/04

I can't remember any tragedy in my life as a kid but life got hard when my dad was diagnosed with cancer in '76, then my mom in '86. I guess those aren't tragedies either -- just a normal progression of life -- but it makes you face your own mortality. And you better make the most of today with special people in your life because life can change so quickly.

03/19/03

To me a perfect day would be about 72 degrees, with a gentle breeze, and plenty of sunshine with whipped-cream clouds waltzing across the sky. Maybe I'd be sitting in the swing on our carport with a glass of diet Coke and a good book or a plastic canvas project. Because this is 2003, I'd sure want you kids and Jim near. It would be nice to hear neighborhood kids -- or grandkids -- laughing as they play. My pals, the birds, would be having a committee meeting at the birdfeeder in the apple tree and that gentle breeze might be causing the wind chimes to serenade me. I'd want to know that the bills were paid and supper was brewing in the oven. Bright pink petunias would be blooming all around the house and the mountains would be visible in the distance. Oh, and a loaf of bread would be baking in the bread machine and it would smell sooooo good!

10/19/03

I despise raking leaves in the fall (spring is OK though). If the Good Lord did not want those leaves there, He wouldn't let 'em fall there! My favorite outdoor job was hauling in corn from the field. The colors are gorgeous, there is a nip in the air, it smells SOOOO good with wood burners fired up, the grain dryers are humming, and there is a sense of urgency to get the crop out of the field.



You kids were safely in school, the house was warm, and there was usually something good brewing in the oven for supper. Now I rarely see a cornfield but the memories still reside in my heart.

01/01/04

If I could choose to be a patron of a charity or organization, I would adopt a battered women's organization -- no explanation needed. My life now has **NO** similarity to my life of so many years.

04/02/03

I never owned a bike because my folks didn't think I had a safe place to ride it. This puzzles me yet. They had an 80 acre farm with a lane clear to the south end. Oh, well! No water ski or snow ski experiences either but I LOVED to roller skate. Most Wednesday nights during my high school years my folks took me to the rink at Elroy, IL and I had a ball! There was something called the Grand March. Everybody had a partner and you did all sorts of fancy skate steps. A guy from Prophetstown, IL and I always went out for that -- we were both lousy but we sure had fun. We never skated together any other time during the evening and I don't even remember his name -- just that he worked in a factory that made mailboxes.

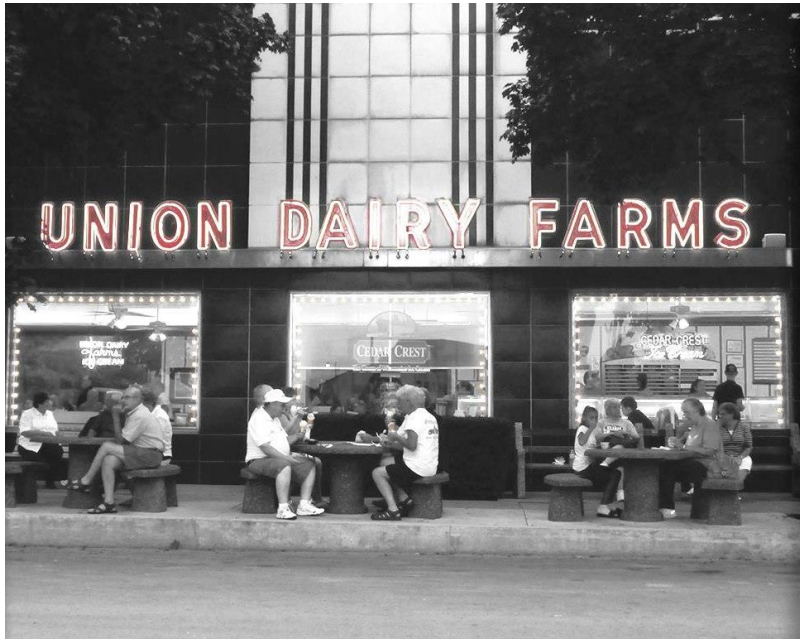
"Big Time" was when you could get to the rink at The Pines near Polo, IL

03/21/04

When I was growing up, my parents weren't much into games as a family. I do remember summer nights, when we were together with Aunt Rose and Uncle Harold Sues, the cousins and I used to play out in the lawns way after dark till it was time to go home. We tried to turn cartwheels and played rousing games of hide and seek. Most fun, though, were the games of "Mother, May I?" *Below back: Dick, Lin, George. Middle: Harvey, Sylvia, Dan. Front: Jim.*



I loved being around those kids! Still today, I cherish getting e-mails from Sylvia or Dick or June. Back to summer memories -- when my folks and I went to Freeport for groceries and supplies, the last stop before leaving town would be at the Union Dairy for a HUGE ice cream cone. Oh, it was such a treat! -- and we hurried to lap the rivers of yummy treat as it ran down the sides of the cones. *That's the Union Dairy below:*



Sometimes, when chores were done and it was already dark, we used to sit outside (air conditioners were unheard of in those days) and watch the heat lightning in the distance. That is when my parents got into some of the grandest discussions about growing up so many miles apart and I loved to listen to them chat.

03/17/03

I was born on the farm and lived on a farm 55 years. Cows and I go way back.. My dad used to have me milk "Box Car" by hand because he said a milker would not work on her. I spent most of chore time dealing with that cow. One day I came unexpectedly to the barn and discovered the milker on Box Car. The jig was up and I never had to milk that dumb cow again. To Dad's credit, it was a great way to keep me occupied while my parents worked.





When I was a teen-ager, my job was to pitch enough corn silage out of the cement silo for the cows. That silo made an echo sound and I used to sing at the top of my lungs while I worked. The neighbors probably thought somebody was getting killed with all that racket. I used to love looking out the hay mow door and getting a bird's eye view of the countryside. The fields looked like a giant patchwork quilt.

12/01/03

The summer after fourth grade my parents sent me to Nebraska on the train by myself. The conductor seated me beside a young lady named Leanne and I just loved her.

————— TUESDAY - AUGUST 4 —————

*Linda left for Lincoln Nebr  
on the train from Mt Carroll  
she wants to stay a couple weeks*

After 2 weeks Gramma Pieper and I came back to Illinois.

I remember Aunt Alma letting me wear my cousin, Karna's, dress to church. It was a "big girl" dress and I felt so grown up! One other trip that stands out in my mind was in Aug. '98 when I first realized that I could leave Freeport and be at Larry and Ellen's home in six hours and I could do it any week-end that I chose to. Such a feeling of freedom and

release!



03/16/03

Someday I would like to visit Montana and see “The Big Sky Country” for myself. In my mind’s eye it is filled with mountains and cattle but I suspect I might find much more. Maybe someday Jim and I can ride a train there. When Randy and Monica moved from Washington to Minnesota, Cindy and Larry took time off work to help them make the trip with two Ryders. They made a marvelous video of their adventures and I am hooked!

12/01/03

Tips for successful entertaining? Very simple! Invite folks over for an evening affair, turn down all the lights, set out oodles of candles -- and they won’t spot a single cobweb. Only invite people who are worth your effort. If you invite someone who makes you uncomfortable, no matter how hard you try, it won’t be quite good enough. Entertaining should be about being with people you enjoy and people who don’t give a hoot if your roast burns or the dessert is a flop. When you have to “try”, the event only ends up being “trying”. Mary Kay Owens once suggested letting the cobwebs remain for a Christmas party and just suspend ornaments from those webs. Good idea!

08/22/03

I learned to sew on Mom’s old treadle by trying to sew a straight line on some old rags. Gramma or Mom was usually using the machine to sew clothing, quilts, and craft projects. Mom got a new fancy, dandy electric model and junked the old treadle. Can you imagine the value of that machine today if she had just kept it? The new one was made in Japan and she called it “The Darn Jap” whenever it balked -- which was fairly often. The last time I saw that machine, it was in the chicken house on Florence Road. When I was a freshman at Forreton High School I took Home Ec and our first project was to sew a



cobbler's apron. I also sewed a straight wool skirt that year but never really sewed much until after I married your dad. My folks gave us a sewing machine for a wedding present and I LOVED IT! About the time you kids were in grade school I bought my Kenmore with its fancy stitch disks. That machine sewed PJ's, shorts, slacks, tops, shirts, numerous Homecoming outfits, prom and spring dance dresses, Barbie clothes, and patched oodles of jeans and coveralls. It also sewed Lori's wedding gown. As I write this addition to this paragraph on Oct. 19, 2003, that machine is at its fifth address and is covered with Barbie clothes once again --- this time for five little granddaughters -- and this gramma is having a ball!

03/26/04

The Christmas of my freshman year in high school my mom and I rode the "Land of Corn" train to Chicago to see the Christmas lights. Oh, such a wonderland! We were two country hicks from the sticks but strangers helped us catch buses and find our way around town. It's a wonder we didn't get mugged! We went to Garfield Conservatory and saw thousands of poinsettias, bought some bird ornaments at Marshall Field's (I still have them.) and took in all the sights and beautiful window decorations. Such a marvelous trip! Many years later Sandi and I walked Michigan Avenue late one night after taking Lori to O'Hare. The magic was still there! Just this past December Randy and Monica drove Jim and me along Michigan Avenue. It was alive with millions of tiny white lights -- still the magic!



I sat in the backseat and was mentally transported to that day so many years ago and was re-living the trip with Mom. I think the magic I felt was my memories of Mom.

03/27/04

My favorite subject anytime in school was English. I love the way words flow together



and you can find a word for any emotion or idea. Give me a good book to read and I'm a happy camper. Classical literature doesn't excite me though. My dream, as a teen-ager, was to become a journalist and I inhaled anything in the local paper written by Olga Carlile. Many years later she and I corresponded. What a treat! I never became a journalist -- never will -- but the pages of this book prove what a nut I am about words. *That's beloved Olga in the picture below:*

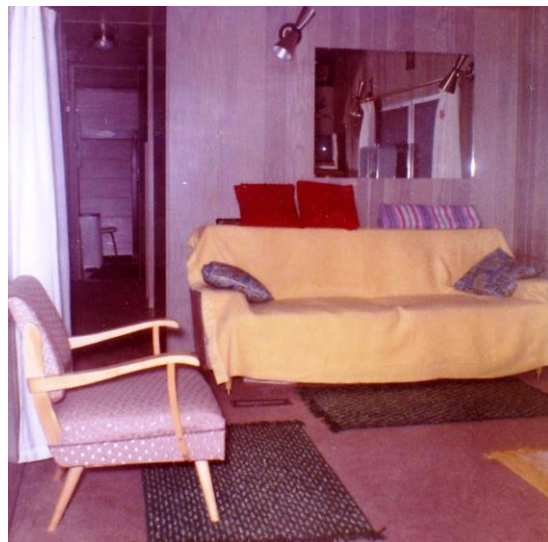


06/28/04

I left my childhood home June 3, 1961 when I married your dad. We moved into a 10' X 50' mobile home (purchased used in German Valley) that was set up northeast of the house at 455 W. Florence Road, south of Freeport, IL.



It was exciting to be the "lady of the house" and I thought it was BEAUTIFUL!"



It was such fun to use the things in my “Hopeless Chest”. In those days young girls had hope chests. From a very young age, girls collected dish towels, measuring spoons, anything that might someday be used in their own future home. I had a lot of “stuff”. My dad called my collection the “Hopeless Chest” though. The appliances in my new home were all turquoise and I had to learn to cook on a gas range -- didn’t like gas then and still don’t. Even the kitchen sink was turquoise.



Everything in the bathroom -- tub, sink, stool -- was bright pink. later, I think my present home is the prettiest ever.

Now, four houses



07/10/04

I don't think I had a best friend during adulthood until the first Nancy Becker came on the scene. I loved her but was completely fooled by her and it took me a long time to let my guard down again. *That's Nancy below:*



Years later found Edna, Max, Debb, Lottie, and Bev in my world. Today my best friend is Jim, even though the others remain a part of my heart family. One gal who has been a part of my world since about 1980 has been Sue Pickett. Sue and I have the type of



friendship that endures long periods of no contact. When we do get together, it seems as if there has been NO lull in time and we can just pick up the threads of mutual thoughts.

*Below is my pal, Sue.*



There are so many people in my life like that. I cherish Donna Cornelius, Judy Meyer, Kathy Merrill, Linda Goodman, Lorraine Swalve, Jane Stenbridge, Jane Wright, Todd Clancy, Sylvia Hillman, Liz Koehler, Lois Covault, Papa Bear Smothers. All these plus so many more are the pearls in my necklace of life. Just thinking of them keeps my heart warm.

03/31/03

What would I like to learn to do? Not so much learn to do but simply learn. I want to know about underground streams which feed wells; why five kids in the same home with the same parents can be so different; why the sun or moon sometimes looks so much larger when in the exact same position; why artesian wells are not more common; why my cookies are generally lousy; why the prevailing weather pattern is west to east but hurricanes go east to west; how a flower grows; how sound travels; why it is so much easier to gain weight than lose it; why the last ten minutes before you leave the house go SO fast.

10/24/03

This page -- or the whole book -- isn't big enough to address the subject of what I would do differently in life if I could. I'd like to think I'd respect myself more if given the chance to do things over. I'd probably make the same bone-head mistakes again, but, in reality, our mistakes are not really that. They are a vehicle of our life experiences that make us unique and prepare us for later life. Mistakes are not something we consciously set out to do. They are what we call our experiences later when we look back and realize we made lousy choices. Marrying your dad was **NOT** a mistake! Without that part of my life, you five would never be the five that you are. I might have five kids but they would not be **YOU FIVE**. However, my past does make me appreciate my present "BIG TIME!"

01/01/04

My personal style in clothing, makeup, etc. isn't so much style as it is whatever I have. No, that isn't accurate. You will rarely see ruffles or lace on me. Ninety nine percent of my clothes are solid colors, those being clear or bright or pastel rather than muted or smoky. Rarely am I without ear rings -- and I have about a hundred pairs. None of those pairs are expensive so I can wear them without fear of losing something valuable. And I am not above wearing two different ear rings. My ear rings need to be fairly small and not overly gaudy -- except some of my Christmas ones. Generally there is a chain and pendant or tiny heart around my neck. On my left hand are my engagement and wedding rings -- on my right hand is my beloved Mother's ring. These NEVER come off!

08/31/04

The best speaker I ever heard would be Pastor Keith Boyer at Crossroads (New Covenant) Church north of Freeport, IL. When Keith is on a roll, you are so involved in his thoughts that you lose track of time and are disappointed when he closes. He teaches rather than preaches.

02/25/01

I am a person who has had very little formal education and my life has not been a picnic, but God gave me five wonderful kids. I like to think I've influenced them a bit toward being hard-working, honest, and gentle people who love their own kids as I do mine. One person's fame is worth nothing more than a page in a history book but my kids have the potential to make a mark on this world and be decent God-fearing citizens today. What more can any mother ask? God has protected me in some very nasty situations and I trust He will protect my kids from harm too.

02/25/01

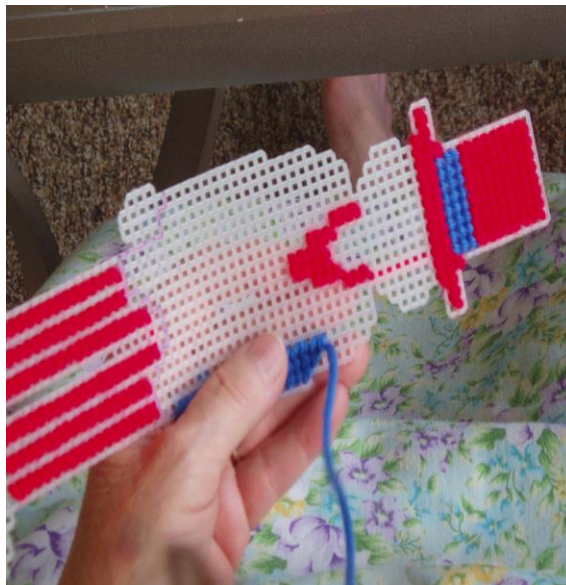
Oh, so many memories of canning and harvesting experiences during my childhood. My dad and I were combining oats. Dad was unloading into my wagon and stopped on top of a bee nest. He yelled for me to, "RUN!!!!!!", and we took off across the field. Eventually, Dad and the bees passed me and Dad got a great many stings. Oats stayed in

the field the rest of that day.

One year my folks' potato crop did not yield but it was a banner year for the butternut squash. I can still picture a heaping manure spreader of squash backed into the old tin garage. We ate squash every day till the next year's crop of potatoes was ready for harvest. Mom had a massive garden and I can remember the adrenalin rushing as we hurried to haul in anything perishable the day before the first hard freeze was forecast. Each year, during the county fair in Freeport, we took a day off to see the sights. But first we made a stop at the A&P and bought five or six bushels of peaches -- usually about \$2.50 per bushel. We spent the afternoon at the fair but the next several days we spent canning all those peaches. Oh, how pretty those jars were on the basement shelves among the pickles, cherries, pears, canned meat, and vegetable soup! And don't forget all those jellies and relishes.

02/28/01

I guess my favorite hobby right now is creating things out of plastic canvas. When Lori was expecting Ryan, I decided to use yarn that I'd gotten from my mom to crochet a baby blanket. After two days of your Aunt Marion's patient training, it became obvious that crochet hooks and I would never make music together. What to do with all that yarn!? "Plastic canvas projects" was the answer -- except that I keep buying more yarn. My pattern books are a nasty expensive habit -- once I did vow to buy no more books till I'd used one pattern out of each of the books I already had. What a joke! That's as easy as losing weight. I love this craft because I can start with a blank canvas and create something pretty.



A second hobby that is gaining favor is my bird watching. Cindy gave me a feeder for Christmas and I love seeing how many birds come to it. They know my voice now and



come when I put out fresh goodies -- bird seed, cookies, buns, chips, Bugles, popcorn, grapes.....

04/04/04

The strangest thing I've ever seen happened very early one July evening in the late '70's. There was a huge cloud in an otherwise clear sky and that cloud was alive with lightning. It did not move but kept up the fireworks for over an hour. Then it disappeared. About 1AM another cloud did the same thing. I was never able to get an explanation of what caused such a phenomenon. There was NO rain or storm associated with those clouds. I've also witnessed a couple of Northern Lights shows that were eerie but breathtaking. Such a fascinating world! God and Nature can provide more drama than man can ever imagine!

07/26/03

Hayrides were a great thing when I was growing up. I remember going on them as part of grade school and birthday parties. Once, when your dad was a member of the Freeport Radio Police Auxiliary, the whole crew and their families had a party at our farm and we went on a hayride. It was cold and damp but it was fun. One of my last hayrides was in '98 at a Fourth of July party at a neighbor's home on Florence Road. The last one was at Randy Woessner's farm near Shannon, IL. Lottie and I went to that one which was for New Covenant church members. It was so fun riding around the back roads west of Shannon. Everybody brought a pan of chili and they dumped it all in huge roasters so it all tasted the same. Mmmmm! It was so yummy after that hayride. In the fall there were Halloween parties -- and during my wild teen years, I ripped around German Valley with my friends soaping windows. Now I know what a pain it is to get that stupid soap off windows but it seemed like fun at the time. When I lived on the farm, I used to love the fall harvest, seeing all those loads of golden corn.



It was comforting to wake up in the middle of the night and hear the gentle “whoosh” of the corn dryer going through its cycles. I used to go out to the dryer bin every hour to check the gauges overnight. A real pleasure was sitting in the cornfield, waiting for my wagon to be filled and thrill at the sight of hundreds of ducks and geese circling above my head at sunset.

03/29/03

During my teen years I belonged to a church youth group -- even was president one year. There I learned to know the kids and we had such good times together in a Christian setting. My friend, Shirley Dieken (now Jordan) and I were best buddies.



And there was also my brother-in-the-heart, Reuben Bolen.



Sheryl Schlaffer and Harold Rust directed a play which we presented and I learned so much from them. The theme of the play was about a wedding. Ruth Fuls and Gerry Schlaffer baked and decorated a huge wedding cake which was served after the play as refreshments for the congregation. As I write this tonight, Jim and I are in Martinsburg, WV. We were at Dalton's fifth birthday party today. *That's Dalton below:*



My childhood seems so long ago. I remember my own birthday parties and later the ones for each of you five. Ah, memories flood back and are so sweet.

09/03/04

Tips for good health:

- + Don't step in front of moving vehicles.
- + Keep your nose out of other folks' business.
- + Marry someone you love and who loves you back.
- + Food served with love tastes better.
- + A tiny dab of Ben Gay stuck up your nose will clear out your sinuses - but, OH! IT BURNS!

02/24/01

Probably my greatest treasure is the experience of having five fabulous kids. The memories of you five growing up and the knowledge of what good people each one of you is, is worth far more than any material possession. "Things" come and go. They can be lost in fires, divorces, or just plain wear out. You kids live in my heart and keep me going on days when I'd just as soon give up -- and there have been many of those kinds of days.

September 2003

I am thankful that I grew up in a loving home with parents who cared deeply for each



other. I was allowed to "be a kid" and learned to dream and also be creative. I had responsibilities but they never seemed like drudgery. My parents taught - by example - that life could be good without the latest gadgets, fancy cars, and clothes. My beloved Uncle George widened my horizons with his visits. He never treated my conversations as "kid stuff". *That's my precious Uncle George below:*



I am thankful for learning the basic foundations of faith and decency.

September 2003

I often think of my playtime in the kitchen of my childhood home. Mom had a coal/cob/wood burning cook stove. Behind it was the cob box that had a flat top. The top of it was covered with a soft cushion. In winter I used to play with my paper dolls there and often fell asleep, absorbing the warmth of the fire and nestled in that secret world, out of the way from anything going on in the kitchen. Back there also was stored a wooden ring, padded and wrapped with soft purple flannel. When Nature began to call, you placed that wooden ring inside the cook stove oven for a couple of minutes, then tucked it under your coat and headed for the outhouse. That warm ring was a welcome buffer between a bare bottom and a frosty seat on a cold winter day! My job as a little kid was to fill the cob baskets in the cob house just south of the kitchen. The building was about 12' X 12' and it was full of cobs. Every year more cobs were piled on top so the lower layer was pretty dusty. It was such fun to climb up nearly to the roof and slide down those cobs - and, BOY! Did you ever get dirty!

09/05/04

The most wonderful gift I could ever receive would be the knowledge that I will someday meet all of my family and loved ones in Heaven. Everything else pales by comparison.

07/27/04

I think my life today is the happiest I've ever been. I loved seeing you five grow up and there were good times then too. But personal contentment, freedom from fear and a sense of true value makes the choice of today "hands down". Life for me today is 180 degrees from what I ever imagined. I can watch you five as you raise your own families and know you are OK. I also have been given a second chance at personal happiness. I am **SO** blessed!

03/29/03

The word that best describes my life is "Blessed". I was born to two loving, decent parents and had a good childhood.



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Money was not plentiful but I always had what I truly needed. I know now that my parents often "made do" with less so I could have things. I grew up in a good community and had excellent teachers. My childhood was during an age of innocence without fear.

I spent 37 years living on a farm near Freeport. Even though life there often wasn't so hot, I loved living in the country.



I was blessed with you five. Who could ask for better kids?! Also I have so many other "kids" that aren't mine biologically, but are mine in my heart. And all those grandkids! Then I was blessed with the move to Virginia and the blessings were heaped on me ever since -- even found the love of my life with my precious Jim. I am so greatly blessed!





03/25/03

I've made many goofs in my life but do have some advice to leave with you.

Trust God, roll with the punches, and make the best of whatever you can't change. Don't take yourself too seriously - nobody else does anyway. Practice a good sense of humor even when you would like to clobber somebody. If you sweat the small stuff, it will just get worse. Don't put off doing something that is truly important to your well-being until you have more money or until you have a nicer job, etc. Grab the gold ring and hang on for dear life! Take educated risks.

**Bottom line: Trust God!**