

“My Life Has Been Good!  
I Give Thanks!”

--NORMA DODGE

I was born on June 10<sup>th</sup> 1925 in a farm house that sat between the C&O railroad and the old canal in Higby, Ross Co., Ohio. The birth was unattended --my sisters Ollie and Ruth had been sent out to play and when my father came in from the fields, I was there, bathed and dressed and my mother was preparing supper. A neighbor asked to name me. She had two choices -- Norma Jean or Ella Mae. My family opted for Norma Jean.

I came from hardy stock. My mother, born Phoebe Sullivan was the oldest daughter of Cordelia Clark and Milton Sullivan. She had learned all about babies the hard way, taking care of the ten brothers and sisters who followed her. She had been married and widowed with two daughters, Marjorie 14 and Ruth 2 [and she] had lost two sons when she married my father in 1917.

My father grew tobacco in the hills of Mason County, W.V. He was a twin. Edward and Eva Hesson born in 1880 were the oldest children of Malinda and John Hesson. Dad's father John Hesson had fought in the Civil War, fathered 5 children and was widowed before marrying Malinda. After Edward and Eva there were 5 more children. My sister Ollie was born in 1918 -- two days before the Armistice of World War I.

The hills eked out a scant living for my father, his new family and his aged mother. When his twin and her husband moved in the four-room cabin in 1919, he decided to follow his father-in-law to Ross Co., Ohio. There he worked as a tenant farmer for the next six years.

Life was not easy. Ruth, a beautiful child of four became terribly ill. Her life hung in the balance for many months. To the surprise of her doctor, she lived but she was left with a badly curved spine. Later doctors would attribute the curvature to tuberculosis of the bones. Ruth's body may have been misshapen but her mind was silver-quick. I copied and looked up to her probably more than any other family member.

Marjorie was married with three daughters; Ruth was 10 and Ollie seven when I made my appearance. Dad was still a tenant farmer. Ollie and Ruth started to school that year, both in the first grade. Dad took them to school in a horse and wagon; when it snowed on an open sled.

About the time I was two, Dad left the farm and got a job as a section-hand on the C&O railroad -- a job he would hold for over 30 years. The house where I was born went along with the tenant farming so we had to move -- first to Andersonville. (My first memory is there from a window at the top of the stairs I watched a burial in a nearby cemetery.) My mother confirmed that memory many years later. There was no reason I should have remembered that incident but I have often wondered if it created a fear of death -- so many of my early memories deal with that fear.

There are just a few elusive memories before I was four. I remember visiting my grandfather Sullivan and begging to take home a baby calf. I was sure it could sleep in the bathtub. I remember being jealous of our neighbor's almost grown nieces when they came to visit her. "Em thinks 'em pretty but I thinks 'em not," I was quoted as saying. I remember

going with my sisters with a dishpan to collect broken Eskimo pies that the workers at the ice cream plant had saved for us. Many nice things happened to us because people noticed Ruth and admired her courage. Her health was still far from good; she suffered horrible head and back pain and had to stop school after only two years.

I remember, too, being terrified to look at the body of a little neighbor boy “laid out” in his home.

One of my favorite memories is of my mother pushing me in a wicker baby buggy the whole two miles of Chillicothe’s Halloween parade. Mother had long hair and she wore it in a ‘knot’. She had let it down (it fell almost to her knee) and she went as a witch. Ruth had insisted in marching in the parade and mother was afraid she might get her back hurt. Ruth did just fine but Mother’s head was sore for days. It was 1929 – “the flapper era”. Bobbed hair was all the rage and children along the way pulled Mother’s hair -- they wanted to know if it was truly hers.

I was four now and we lived on Jefferson Ave. (The picture of me and the wrinkled stockings and high button shoes was taken there.) Shortly after, I had whooping cough and old-fashioned measles at the same time. I remember being so sick and coughing, coughing, coughing. A doctor was sent for and that only happened if they feared you would die. I lived but my baby fat was gone and never until I was completely grown was I anything but thin.

That year my mother went to work at the canning factory and then as a cook in a restaurant. Ruth and Ollie watched me. Ruth still had and would always have headaches but her back was becoming stronger. She no longer walked with her hands on her knees. Ollie attended public school; Ruth had a tutor who came to the house. The tutor was there only for two hours a day and that lasted less than two years but what Ruth covered in that time was astounding!

I remember that Ruth made me a desk from a large cardboard carton and I would sit there in the corner, pretending to be at school, smart as Ruth and her tutor, with my pencil, paper and library books.

Ruth had a terrible temper. Poor Ollie bore the brunt of her frustration, but she was always good to me and I loved her dearly.

I had a happy childhood. Mother and Dad were always busy, trying to keep us in food and clothing. Mother was a wonderful seamstress. She could look at a picture, cut a paper pattern and lo and behold, you had a dress just like the picture. Once when I had a part in a church program and needed a white dress, she stayed up all night making it for me, and then went to work the next morning at the canning factory sleepless.

My mother and Dad didn’t do much hugging and kissing but I always knew how proud they were of me. I started school in 1931 at the Mount Logan School, a large modern school on Main Street. School was easy for me and I loved most of it.

The Lindberg baby had been kidnapped and found dead. Everyone was talking about it and we first graders were frightened out of our wits. One afternoon my friends and I were leaving school and a big kid (7<sup>th</sup> grader, no less) told us that our classmate, Sharma, had been kidnapped. She pointed out a man down the street, carrying a burlap bag over his shoulder. She told us that Sharma was in that bag. My friend, Thelma, and I would have to go in that direction to go home. We were terrified! My other friend, Madeline, lived in another direction so we went home with her. Unfortunately, Madeline's mother wasn't home so we hid under a table, not knowing what to do. Remember, we had no telephones. When we finally crept out it was becoming dusky. Hearts pounding, we ventured out. Thelma and I stood on the corner trying to get nerve to follow the kidnapper's path to go home. Just then, I spotted my dad's old Jewett with the isinglass windows, coming toward us. As happy as I was to see it, down deep I knew that I'd probably been silly, the kidnappers hadn't come to Chillicothe and I shouldn't have gone to Madeline's. I was always supposed to go straight home. I know I knew I was in for it!

When the car door opened, I began to cry. Mother and Dad were so relieved to find me, they listened to our story and sympathized. Alas, Thelma's parents did not and Thelma got a switching. Needless to say, Sharma was at school the next day -- no kidnapping -- there had probably been potatoes or coal in that burlap bag,

These were the depression years. Our family was lucky. Dad had his job on the railroad. His paycheck every two weeks was \$15 and with mother working, too, we were OK.

Mother was 44 and Dad 51 when mother found she was pregnant again. They had rent to pay; we bought groceries at Cox's store (no supermarkets, yet) and we had a running account. The bill was never paid completely then. I can remember hiding upstairs and pretending not to be home when other bill collectors knocked. Something had to be done!

Dad's foreman lived in a company house about 6 miles from town -- out the Charleston Pike, past the Eselgroth farm up the hill and over the railroad. It was a six-room house, yellow, outside plumbing, a cistern and a spring for drinking water. Bostic's were moving out. Their 15-month-old son had somehow crawled out of the yard and had been killed on the railroad tracks. They could not bear to live there longer.

The house rented for \$3 a month and best of all there were three acres to garden. The same day the Bostic's moved out, we moved in. I had just finished first grade.

My life changed. Mother no longer worked out but twice as hard. The garden had to be spaded, planted and weeded. She washed by hand with a scrub board, carried water, drug in and chopped wood to be burned. Supper was on the table when Dad came home at 4:30. Ollie and Ruth did the dishes and Mother and Dad went to the garden to work or saw wood.

We all helped. We walked the tracks, picking up coal that had fallen from the railroad cars; we picked wild berries, strawberries in June and raspberries and blackberries later. (I can still feel my skin smarting as the sweat dripped in the scratches from the vines.) We bugged

potatoes, knocking the bugs from the plants into a can of kerosene. We squashed the eggs and the beetles from the green bean vines.

I loved living in the country. Ruth was growing up and Ollie right behind her. Mother sewed them “Bobby Jones” shirts and a big polka dot beach pajamas. I even had a small pair of those made from their leftover material. Ruth had a dog named “Skippy” that we all loved. The engineers on the train saved funny papers and *True Story* magazines and threw them to us from the train. Sometimes the men on the caboose would throw us a chunk of ice. We’d run with it to put it in a pitcher of cool water and add lemon or orange extract that the Watkins man had sold Mother.

We cooled watermelon that Dad grew in the garden. Let them down in a tub on a rope into the cistern. We invited the Coxes with all their little ones to come, sit in the yard and eat all the melon they could hold!

I don’t remember being lonely but I invented a twin sister ‘Ima Dean’ to share my life. No one knew she was there -- I shared her with no one but she was very real to me. Sometimes, even today, I think of her and miss her.

It was Prohibition time. Dad made beer in the cellar. He used the same tool to cap the bottles that mother used to cap her catsup. I loved the malt smell but not the fear that dad would get caught making it and be put in jail. He didn’t make much, just for himself and sometimes a bottle to share with a visiting crony.

We knew we were lucky! We only had to watch the trains pass! Men rode the rails and the manifest (box) cars and once we saw a whole family sitting under an umbrella in a scooped-out hole in the coal. These were people without homes -- without jobs -- going somewhere -- anywhere to make life better.

Everyday tramps came to our door, asking for a bite to eat, most of them offering to work for it. They were unshaven, some barefoot, freezing if it was cold, sun-burned, sweaty and dirty in the heat.

Mother fed them all -- cold fried potatoes left from our supper, fresh tomatoes in season, cold biscuits, green beans or corn. Sometimes there were no leftovers and the fire in the cook stove had died out. Then Mother lit the little kerosene stove on the back porch and fried eggs from our hens.

One time, she even gave Dad’s good shoes to a barefoot tramp. She was sure she could replace them before Dad found out. As fate would have it, didn’t Dad want to visit a sick worker that very night? Mother had to confess. After a “Humph” or two Dad conceded “Well, he needed them more than I did” and he wore his work shoes.

Fall came, Mother went to church rummage sales, searched through piles of used clothing to find material she could turn or use to make dresses and coats for us. She was a whiz with a sewing machine and I benefited.

Ollie and I started to school in the red brick one room schoolhouse down the road. Sunnyside was the typical one-room school -- in front on a raised platform stood the teacher's desk and chair. Behind it on the wall the blackboard; the long backless bench where classes came to recite; the desks -- small single ones in front; larger double ones toward the back. There was a big black, pot-bellied stove in the center of the room and on one side just inside the entry, pegs to hang coats and lunch buckets with a high table for the bucket of drinking water. The dipper hung on nail above it. On the other side of the room a small bookcase contained a few, old torn schoolbooks that had been used over and over for children who couldn't afford to buy their own. Too, there were a few volumes of dog-eared fiction; *Robinson Crusoe*, *Tom Sawyer*, a book about two girls traveling with their mother on the Erie Canal to their new home in Ohio. These were the ones I remember and I read them over and over

In the entry Miss Miller pulled the rope that rang the school bell. When it rang, we lined up boys on one side, girls on the other to come in. Outside there was an iron rail separating the school yard and the Charleston Pike that ran in front. Near the road at the edge of the yard was the coal shed and outback two outhouses; boys and girls well apart from each other.

Along the sides of the school, long small paned windows filled the red brick walls. There was no electricity, no lanterns or lamps of any kind. On dark stormy days, Miss Miller would stop all the classes, stand close to a window and strain to read *Tom Sawyer* to all of us.

Ollie and I shared a desk, she was in she was an 8th grader, I started 2<sup>nd</sup>. Our teacher, Miss Miller, was teaching her 49<sup>th</sup> year. Her goal was 50 years but this would be her last year; her aged parents needed her at home. She drove a Model-T Ford and in good weather she'd pick up her students along the way. In bad weather -- slick roads, she passed them by, afraid of accidents. I don't know why -- there were very few cars on the road and she never drove over 20 miles an hour! In cold weather, she arrived long before the students in order to build a fire and warm the schoolhouse for them.

There were 19 students in the fall 1932 in all eight grades. I was the only 2nd grader and read very well, so was allowed to read with the two third graders. I began doing all my work with them and at the end of the year I was passed into the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Alas! After Ollie went on to High School the next year, I found 4<sup>th</sup> grade arithmetic and an unsympathetic 19-year-old teacher almost too much of a challenge. Math was never a favorite subject after that!

In December of that first winter, my fat beautiful baby brother was born. Dec. 6, 1932 was a warm misty morning and I ran all the way to school so I could be the first to tell my teacher. Ollie got there just before the bell rang and was very surprised to find I had been too shy to share my news.

That summer, a train with a hot-box stopped near the house. A man and a woman with a tiny crying baby came to the door, begging for milk for the baby. We didn't have fresh milk but mother had plenty of breast milk. While Ruth spread oleo on homemade bread and added tomato slices from the garden, Mother sat on the front porch and fed the baby.

With the train's first jerk, they hurried back to the freight car with the one can of Wilson's evaporated milk that we had, a full satisfied baby and the one dime they had offered for the milk. Mother sent a prayer that they would make it to Michigan where they had relatives and a promise of work.

Life continued good for us. My little brother George Edward, always called Buddy, was 18 months old. My sister Marjorie had six children; three older than I. Her youngest, Denver, was just two months younger than my brother. In August, 1934, Marjorie and her husband, Fred, and the children came to visit. After they left, Ida Mae, their oldest daughter stayed. She was to help Mother with the canning and in turn Mother (her grandmother) would buy material and make her dresses for school.

Saturday morning, our day for going to town, came. While we were getting ready to go, Dad using a newspaper torch tried to get rid of wasps that had built nests under the porch eaves.

In town, mother did her grocery shopping. Chillicothe now sported an A & P on Paint Street. (The Cox grocery bill had long been paid off.) Mae chose dress material at Mayfair's.

Home again, we toted the groceries up the hill to the house. As soon as lunch (we called it dinner) was over Mom and Dad went to the truck garden to work. Ruth, Ollie and Mae were to do the dishes while I played with Buddy to keep him happy and safe. There were left-overs that Ruth did not know what to do with (remember, no electricity, no refrigerator, not even ice). Ollie went to get Mom's advice. As she skipped along, she noticed shadows on the grass, looked up to see what was making them and saw, horrified, the whole top of the house was burning.

Before the fire department from town could send its truck and find a round-about way to get it near the house, it was too late. Almost everything we owned was gone. New school books purchased that day for the coming year, dress material, furniture, next winter's canned goods – everything except a few things Mother and Dad had carried out of the burning house.

Mother's eyelashes and eyebrows were gone, her face and hands were burned. Dad's knee was hurt when the stairs collapsed. He had gone upstairs to make sure Buddy was not in his crib up there. The first thing Mother had done was to give me Buddy's hand, tell me to take him down the hill by the road – not to let him out of my sight and not to come back up the hill. Dad didn't know this and Mother got her burns when she went back to find Dad and pull him out of the house.

That night was the first I'd ever spent away from my folks. Ida Mae and I went home with Aunt Rachel and Uncle George Pence. They had been in Chillicothe for their weekly

shopping, heard of the fire, and came out to see if it was true. Mother & Dad stayed in the playhouse shed. Firemen had used the cistern water to keep it from burning, too. I don't know where Ruth & Ollie went. They may have stayed with Mother and Dad or perhaps, gone to their friends, the Shrader's on Renick Ave.

I don't remember how I felt—I played leap frog happily in the yard with my cousins. Mae cried and cried. I like to believe I didn't realize the enormity and not that I was just unfeeling.

A church in town loaned us a revival tent. Dad built Mother an outside fire place from the cellar bricks and they continued to salvage all the garden vegetables that were left. Churches and other organizations, as well as our friends sent empty jars. Mother canned and saved as much as she could.

Had the fire not been unkind enough, mother was crushed when she lost her wedding ring. It was the only jewelry she owned and though we hunted & hunted, we never found it.

When all the garden stuff was gone and it was so cold inside that the tent that you could see your breath, we moved to a rented summer home about 2 miles away. It was owned by a well-to-do family. The Vincents had one grown daughter and several grown sons. One of their sons was Joe, sheriff of Ross County.

The firemen decided a spark from a railroad train engine must have started the fire. No one mentioned the wasps. Whichever, the house was gone! Months later, the C & O sent us a \$300 check. I thought it was a great amount of money but I was told it wouldn't begin to buy a small portion of what we lost.

The summerhouse was wonderful for me. It was on a plateau in the middle of the woods, no neighbors. The nearest, the Vincent's was at least a half a mile away. It wasn't such a delight for Mother and Dad. The road to the house was impossible, except in the very best of weather. Even then, the garage was a quarter of a mile away and groceries and coal had to be carried from there. Another half mile was added to that when we went to the mailbox or to pick up the evening paper. The house, meant for summer occupancy was hard to heat, one bedroom almost impossible. All the water except what could be caught in a rain barrel had to be carried up a steep hill from the spring.

We lived there until I was past 10 and into March of my 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Sunnyside. It was much farther to walk there now. Most of the time, I went down the hollow and followed the creek. It cut the distance and I loved the walk, especially after a snowfall. I made the first tracks, except for those of an occasional squirrel or bunny.

Ollie went to the first year of High School, and then dropped out to work for a family as a mother's helper. Ruth was still at home with Mother, Dad, Buddy & me.



The best part of living at the Vincent place for me was having Marjorie and Fred move close. Fred became a tenant worker for the Vincent's. They lived in the tenant house about a half a mile in the opposite direction from us. Fred was glad to get the work although the Vincents were not easy people to work for. He worked from early light to nearly dark six days a week. In return, he got the use of a cow, the house and \$7.00 a week. This was in 1934-1935. While they lived there, Ruthie, their 7<sup>th</sup> and next to last child was born.

Marjorie never seemed like my sister. She was 20 years older; but she was the mother of my closest and dearest friends. Her third daughter, Pat, was 10 months older than I, Ann almost 15 months older than Pat. Those two and little Maxine, three years my junior, made the Vincent years "the greatest". Buddy, two months older than his nephew, Denver, and two years younger than Sonny, his other nephew, became great playmates. Years later, Buddy and Denver enlisted together in the Navy during the Korean War. All three of the boys remained close friends until Bud died of cancer in 1981. He was 49.

I had my first wild animal pet. Dad rescued a den of baby groundhogs after a hunter shot the mother. The babies hadn't opened their eyes. We managed to save just one of them; had funerals for the ones who died.

We named the survivor, Herman. He got bigger and out of danger. His box was put on the porch. We expected him to go back to the woods. He did -- to explore -- but he was there every meal time. He could smell potatoes frying from anywhere. He learned to turn the button on the kitchen screen door and went in and out as he pleased. He never bit any of us but Marjorie's boys weren't tolerated. He and Skippy [Ruth's dog] were great buddies. He hibernated during the winter -- showing up to eat several times during the winter. We moved during his second winter and though we went back in the Spring we never saw him. One of the Vincent men (Billy) told us he was sure he saw him several times during the next summer, fat and healthy.

The Vincent house was built on a small plateau halfway down a hill. At the foot of the hill, a small sparkling Creek made its way down the hollow. There, too, just across the Creek was the spring, the purest, coldest water filled from a pipe hammered between the rocks of the next hill.

Small wild animals and birds were everywhere. And snakes! Barefoot, we stepped gingerly around them -- but not always. We kept our distance when we saw a rattlesnake.

I never saw a pair of snow pants. I wore long underwear under tan cotton stockings. How good it felt in the Spring when Mother let me discard the hated things! No more lumps in our stockings -- our legs looked so smooth and slim!

Once I appreciated them -- lumps and all! It had been clear cold and I had permission to go to Marjorie's house with her girls after school. I just had to be home by dark. Their house was up a different hollow from ours. To get from their house to ours you went up a small hill, crossed

a cornfield where we found Indian arrowheads when it was freshly plowed. Then you went down another small hill, crossed the creek and you were home.

The girls and I got to their house but by the time we got there, it had turned much colder and the sky was dark. It looked like a storm was blowing in. With no way to let my folks know, Marjorie thought I'd better go on home before the weather worsened.

Halfway across the cornfield, the sky got black and howling winds started. The blowing snow and sleet felt like needles being pushed into my face. It was a real winter blizzard. I laboured between each corn shock and finally slumped beside one. I couldn't tell where the path was, my feet and hands were numb. I couldn't go on -- I'd wait there until the storm let up.

I don't know what would have happened if a dark shape hadn't emerged from the whirling white. My dad had come to find me, buttoned his coat around me and carried me home.

Mother washed my face in cold water, soaked my hands and feet, then wrapped me in a blanket and sat me near the hot stove. I suffered no permanent damage but I learned respect for Ohio blizzards.

The Dionne quintuplets were born the same year as Buddy. The ten-cent stores were full of books telling their stories and books of paper dolls. We girls were intrigued by the five beautiful babies. We pretended we were their nursemaids and divided their names between us.

The highlight of the summer was the Sullivan reunion. On Saturday before the first Sunday in September, chickens were caught, heads chopped off, their bodies dropped in buckets of scalding water, plucked (my job). Yuk! I hated the smell of wet feathers! It was all forgotten though when the incomparable, wonderful smell of frying chicken filled the kitchen.

I loved the reunion! Once when I was older, I counted my first cousins. There were 83 and most of them were Sullivan cousins!

Great bowls of green beans from the garden, corn or baked beans, potato salad, Mother's famous butterscotch pies were packed in cardboard boxes and baskets. These would be added to more chicken, big pots of homemade noodles, all kinds of vegetables, rolls, cakes, and Aunt Cora's sugared crust peach pies. Umm! We cousins could hardly wait for noon on that best day of summer. How hard it was to stand quietly and listen to Uncle Will's long, long, drawn-out blessing.

After dinner we played games, talked and lined up for snapshot pictures. Often Uncle Will and his family got out the guitars and banjos and sang hymns. Very few cousins stayed close to listen.

Finally, the grown-ups began to pack up; Grandpa Sullivan's children kissed each other; the cousins, tired and dirty, waved goodbye and it was over for another year. Summer was over -- school started the day after Labor Day.

My last year at Sunnyside was a farce! The old Eastern school building in town was declared unsafe and some of the far-east-end students from Chillicothe were bused to our little one room school. They turned the school upside down; frightened the country bumpkins, terrified the teacher and ran things the way they wanted. I don't know if I learned anything that year. Two of the less disruptive 6<sup>th</sup> grade boys, Bob Seymour and Norman Manson played big roles in our lives in future years. Bob, Norman, Pat (my niece) & I double-dated the summer after I graduated from High School. Pat & Bob were married during World War II and Norman might have assumed a greater role in my life if I hadn't met my future husband that year – but I'm getting ahead of my story.

As I said, we moved from the Vincent house in March [1935] to a much nicer house on the Marietta Pike. That was to be my home until I came to Columbus to work in 1942. The home was owned by the U.S. Government and the rent was \$9 a month. I finished the 6<sup>th</sup> grade at another one-room school, Bunker Hill.

The next fall I started 7<sup>th</sup> grade at Centralia – a consolidated school; 12 grades, about eight miles from my home. I liked all subjects, except any math. Mother and Dad were proud of my grades. Mother continued to do without things for herself so that I had nice clothes and the things I needed for school.

I believe my family considered me odd. I had a desire to have more, not to be ashamed of the way we lived. My family was honest, hard-working but they didn't belong to the community. They didn't attend church. They didn't go to school functions – though they did go to see the junior and senior plays because I was in them. They had lost some of their teeth, had little formal education. They didn't have nice clothes. Mother even went barefoot and I cringed if she was out when the school bus stopped at our house. In short, I was ashamed of them. I can remember those feelings and also, searching for the first star of the night to wish on. My wish was always, "Please let my parents live at least 25 more years." I would have been 12 or 13 at this time; Mother, 51 and Dad, 57. God was good – they lived 40 years more, long enough for me to grow up and realize their worth, their goodness; better people than I could ever be!

Junior high passed and I was in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Dad's boss, Mr. Weaver, had a son in the same grade. Ira was smart, really and truly smart! My folks thought I was just as smart. I wasn't but Ira and I were always in competition. That first year we both received the scholarship medals on the last day of school. They were given to the boy and girl with the best grades in the whole high school. Ira and I had identical point averages. Now we were really in competition!

There were no counselors at Centralia. There were basic subjects you had to take and so, to keep my grades up I took subjects that I did best in and skirted the ones that were hard. I loved English and Latin, History, but I shunned all math that wasn't required. And so, I kept at Ira's heels at my own expense.

I was a year younger than anyone else in our class and I was slow to mature. I had lots of friends at school—no enemies – teachers liked me – but I was “just there”. I wasn’t special. Most of my classmates lived near each other; most lived on farms and they visited back and forth. We had no close neighbors with children.

I read constantly, every week I got another stack of books from the library. Marjorie’s Ann & Pat went to Centralia but now, we lived miles apart. We weren’t as close and we used to be. Ann was a year ahead of me and Pat in the class behind. I didn’t like my classmates to know they were my nieces. It made my mother seem old and even more different from theirs. No one I know had nieces older than themselves! Worst of all, they called my mother, “Ma”. How I cringed at that.

Ruth and Ollie were both married. When they both became pregnant, things became rough for them. Work and money were scarce.

Mother, Dad, Bud, & I moved from the upstairs bedrooms to the enclosed back porch, leaving those rooms to my sisters and their husbands. Mother put up flimsy partitions and curtains to give us a little privacy on the unheated porch.

Besides the back porch we had a kitchen and a sitting-dining room. The parlor was across the hall. There, Mother put up a bed and both of my sisters’ babies were born there. I loved Sharon and Dickie, born just a month apart. But before they were born, I was horrified – my Home Economics teacher scheduled a customary home visit. I wanted to disappear when Miss Reid had to be entertained in a room with a bed in it! I begged Mother to take it down but since it might be used at any time, she refused.

By 1935 my sisters had left to make homes for themselves and our life became more normal. President Roosevelt had established the WPA [Works Progress Administration], the PWA [Public Works Administration], & NRA [National Recovery Administration], the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps]. The one that affected us the most was the CCC, the Civilian Conservation Corps. The government had built a CCC camp on adjoining property to our house. Every evening, green-uniformed young men, noisy and boisterous, would run down the hill on the path behind our house, on their way to town. I had always gone and come just about as I pleased but my parents curtailed my wanderings at this time. Despite their fears, the CCC boys were always polite and proved to be good neighbors.

Between my sophomore and junior years something wonderful happened! That summer we got new neighbors. A family named Sparks bought the house closest to us. Mr. and Mrs. Sparks had a daughter, another Pat, and three sons, Gene, Dick & David. Pat was 6 months older than I and Buddy was in the same grade as Dick.

The boys became instant friends. It was great for Bud. We all loved him desperately and he was spoiled rotten. No one insisted he do anything he didn’t want to do. He was very

intelligent; he never had the dual feelings that I had. He just accepted. At any rate, he spent most of his time with the Sparks boys now and his life expanded.

The daughter, Pat and I met. She had gone to Chillicothe High School. She'd been a cheerleader there and when she started her sophomore year at Centralia everyone loved her. She tried out for cheerleader and made it hands down. Pat was small, no figure yet, not much chin, not really pretty. She wasn't shy – she was confident, self-assured. How I envied her!

There wasn't another girl, or boy either, for miles around. Pat wanted people, friends around her and so next summer our friendship cemented. We confided in each other. We had a crush on the same boy who didn't even look at us. Pat decided that I should go out for cheerleading. (I couldn't possibly!) She insisted – taught me the cheers, how to turn cartwheels, how to laugh and not be so serious. She was my first “best friend” and my last year of school was fun, fun, fun! I belonged! I began to like myself. Pat was responsible for that and I think the course of my life changed because of her.

I am not sure when conscription started but one of Ollie's ex-boyfriend's number was selected and he was first drafted to go into the military. My father read the papers and listened on our battery-operated radio to the nightly news. I remember how upset he was when Poland was invaded. In school, we studied and heard about the things that were happening in Europe. It seemed vague and far-away until on Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941 it became all too real. As I felt the horror of Pearl Harbor, I realized it would be my classmates, my friends who would be among those to bear the brunt of World War II.

I graduated that year in May, the first person in my family to finish High School. I wanted to go on to college. -- (Incidentally, Ira was class Valedictorian; I had to settle for Salutatorian) –but I knew that was impossible.

My parents were proud of me but in less than two weeks from graduation, Mother let me know it was time for me to find something to do. I understood. I would be 17 next month and my school days were over.

The summer before I had worked in an office and office work did not appeal to me. I was not a good typist, couldn't always read my shorthand if it was cold!

A NYA (National Youth Administration) camp had been built just beyond Mound City outside of Chillicothe. They would train young people for war jobs. The boys would live at the camp, but some local persons would be chosen for day-training. That sounded interesting to me but there was a catch. You needed to be 18. Nothing daunted my mother. My birth had never been recorded so she and my sister, Ruth, went to the court-house to get my birth certificate. They reported my birth date as June 10, 1924. In June, I am 18. By June, I was riding my bicycle two miles to town, leaving it at the Royal Theater on Paint Street and catching the truck that took us to the NYA camp. I can't remember if I chose or was chosen for the machine shop there but after the first physical examination I had ever had, that is where I landed.

We wore slacks. Until now slacks or pants were rarely worn by women or girls. We wore our dad's old overalls for picking berries or perhaps, a pair of farmerettes or slacks on a picnic.

At the camp our hair had to be completely covered with a kerchief tied "mammy-style" around our head. I was introduced to a lathe, a milling machine, drill press. We took classes in trigonometry, safety-awareness. We learned how to read a micrometer.

I was pleasantly surprised to find I liked working on the machines. I made a hammer on a lathe. Mr. Hamm, our instructor decided I was ready for the milling machine. I like it better than the lathe. I was assigned one of the milling machines – sometimes Mr. Hamm would send a new pupil to watch and learn from me.

In July, there was a new shipment of boys to camp. Several were assigned to the machine shop. Among them were two who said they were brothers. They were not – just first-cousins! Both were 18, had graduated that spring from a high school in Union Co., Ohio. They were both nice looking with dark hair and eyes. After a few days, one of my friends asked me which I liked better. I responded, "The taller one – the one with the gray in his hair."

The very next day he came over to work with me. Mr. Hamm hadn't sent him and I was sure he would tell him to go back to the lathe. I saw him watching but for some reason he left him there.

I liked him and it wasn't long until he asked me to go out with him. I had been double dating with my niece, Patty, that summer. Patty and Bob. Norman and Norma. (Yes, the same two east-end kids from 6<sup>th</sup> grade.) It had been fun – I had a wonderful time. Pat & Bob were serious about each other. Norman and I were just good friends. We did fun things, rode bikes, slid down fresh straw-stacks, and went to wiener roasts at my sister's. We liked walking in the woods. Norman played the guitar and we were invited to a lot of parties. One Sunday morning, after a long evening at my sister, Ollie's, we had breakfast with Pat and Bob and decided to go to the zoo in Cincinnati. At the last Pat & Bob decided not to go but Norman and I took a bus to Cincinnati, a street car to the zoo, then the River Queen back downtown and a train back to Chillicothe that evening. Norman was a known-quantity. He came from a back ground similar to mine. He had met and talked to my parents. We had fun together.

When I thought about a date with the new guy (his name was Melvin, a name I had always despised) all my doubts about myself and my background hit me in the face. I kept making excuses but dating Norman wasn't so much fun now. I began to make excuses not to see him, too. Patty was angry with me. She said I was not treating Norman right. Had he done something to offend me? "No."

At the end of August, the first two girls left the machine shop for jobs in the southern part of the state. Mr. Hamm took Jayne Park and me to Columbus to Ranco to be interviewed. He told them we were still in training and had other another month to go.

The N.Y.A. camp was being changed from a resident to a day center and all the resident boys were being sent away to Carrollton, Ohio. Joe and Melvin were among those to leave on September 2<sup>nd</sup>. Melvin and I had promised to write each other but I doubted if I'd ever see him again.

That same afternoon, Mr. Hamm told Jayne and me that we were to report to Ranco in Columbus the next morning at 8:00 AM. After a quick trip home, while mother heated the flat iron to press my slacks, and I packed practically everything I owned, except my winter things, Mother gave me all the cash that she had, \$10, and I met Jayne in Chillicothe. Jayne's sister Juddie, and her friend, and Jayne's mother took us to Columbus. We rented a room on King Ave with a family named Hanlin. Mr. and Mrs. Hanlin had three children, 2 girls just about my age, still in high school, and a younger son. There was a bedridden grandfather who died while we lived there. It was the first place we looked at, about three blocks from Ranco and close to Ohio State University, and Mrs. Park gave it her stamp of approval.

The next morning Jayne and I checked in at Ranco, a small factory located next to the Olentangy River on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. It had been converted from its peace time activity to a defense plant.

Jayne and I were fingerprinted, photographed for our passes; we signed loyalty oaths and finally, shaking in our shoes were sent to the shop foreman. We were the first two females hired at Ranco to replace males in the machine shop. Our job would be to build the aluminum frames that held automatic pilots for the war planes.

Our training had been excellent and we hadn't any trouble learning what was required. The worst thing was the kerosene we used to cool the milling machine cutters irritated my skin.

Jayne had borrowed \$10 from her family, too, and she had a dollar and change besides. After we paid the \$6 weekly rent for our room, each of us had a little over \$7 left. We had no idea how long it would have to last. Actually, the second weeks rent was due the day before we got our first check. Mrs. Hanlin was kind enough to let us skip the day and we paid on Friday after that.

My first paycheck was for \$30.49. It was an unheard-of amount for a little country girl to be making. My father, still a section hand on the C&O made about \$75 monthly.

During the first two weeks we worked at Ranco there was a war bond rally held. Jayne and I, along with the rest of Ranco, watched Fred Astaire dance and heard Ilona Massey sing the National Anthem. In my opinion, I thought Mrs. Astaire more attractive than Ilona Massey with her too-bleached hair.

I signed to have 10% of my pay taken out to buy war bonds. I believe Jayne did the same.

I had a diary of sorts then and I still have them. In it I wrote that after the first paycheck Jayne and I went to Taylor's Restaurant on High Street to splurge. Two Coney islands costs 20 cents, a dish of baked beans and one of applesauce another 10¢, and a glass of milk 5¢.

Jayne's half-sister Helen was married with two children and lived on Pontiac St. just off Hudson Ave. It became our home away from home. She agreed to wash and iron our slacks for \$1 a week (after we found the Chinese laundry near us charged 35¢ for one pair of slacks and 25¢ for a shirt).

The next few months was a period of adjustment. I was terribly homesick. I liked Jayne but she smoked and she used "damn" in her conversation. Both shocking to me! I lived for the letters from home and finally got the one I wanted most. That tall, dark haired handsome guy from New California had written the night he had gotten to Carrollton and Mother had forwarded it to me.

One night Jayne and I decided to walk downtown we were awed by the huge Lazarus store and gawked at the AIU [American Insurance Union] tower, the only high-rise in Columbus in 1942. Exhausted we took a streetcar heading north on High Street but had to pull the stop cord when it turned off High onto Spring Street a few blocks later. We started walking home. It was late when we finally reached King Ave. -- and then the sirens began to blare. Lights went out -- it was our first experience with a Black-out and we had to grope the next few blocks home in the dark. We were met about a block away by a man with a flashlight. Mr. Hanlin, a black-out warden, had been worried about us.

There was gas rationing that year and our trips back to Chillicothe were mostly bus trips. Sometimes Helen and her family would go and they'd crowd us in, too. Several times my family would be able to save enough gas stamps and Ruth would drive Dad's old car and come get us or bring us back. I had a half chow-half spitz dog at home that I missed as much as my family. Dad had gotten her from the Weavers (Ira again) during my senior year in High School. She was a puff of white fur and I named her Victory. Believe it or not, some of her white turned brown and a perfect white V appeared in the center of her head-- just above the eyes!

Vicki and I had been inseparable -- she had gone with me to the school bus in the morning and met me there in the afternoon. When school started that [next] year and I was gone, Vicki still met the bus, hoping.

The first time I got to go home, it was an unexpected trip with some of Jayne's family. Of course, no one knew I was coming and I got there after dark, everyone in bed. I opened the front door stood in the hall and was immediately knocked down and covered with dog kisses from a very happy, excited dog. She slept with me that night.

Things began to get easier. I enjoyed working at Ranco. We got raises. I loved earning money and before Christmas Mother had bought new living room furniture -- a fold out sofa, two armchairs and a 9 by 12 rug with money I was sending her.



On paydays we received currency in envelopes. There was almost always a \$2 bill and these weren't common down home. At least I had never seen one before. On Bud's birthday (he was 10 that year) along with his present, I gave him a \$2 bill and Mother claimed it cost her a fortune in the next few years. Every time Bud wanted to spend it, she would exchange it for two \$1 bills and then give it back when he felt bad about it being gone.

Letters came regularly from Carrollton and Melvin finished his course and got a job at Curtiss Wright. He worked 2<sup>nd</sup> shift and rode a Curtiss bus from his home in New California and back each day. We talked several times on the phone and finally had our first date -- we went to the Ohio Theatre and saw *I Married a Witch* starring Veronica Lake. I fell head over heels in love. He came to stay in Columbus with his sister who lived only a few blocks from us on Eighth Ave. His sister, Ruth and her husband invited me to dinner. I was nervous and I think he was, too. We were just beginning to relax when the doorbell rang -- there stood two young ladies asking for Melvin Dodge. His brother-in-law, Bob, had opened the door and you could tell he was puzzled as to what to do. As it was, a friend of ours from the N.Y.A., had been passing through Columbus. She had been in Arkansas with her Army husband, and he had shipped out and she was on her way east. Jayne knew I would want to see her and as she had known Melvin there, too, had found Ruth's address in the phone book and brought her there. I will always remember how relieved Melvin looked and how funny Ruth and Bob thought it was. I realized Melvin really cared about impressing me, too.

We had several more dates. Mostly movie dates and we exchanged Christmas presents. He gave me a pair of white Bunny fur mittens and a white triangular scarf with red tassels. I gave him a chest of the cigarettes he smoked then -- Phillip Morris. I loved the smell of his cigarettes then -- but never as much as I hated it years later when I realized what cigarettes had caused.

By this time, we were crazy in love. Melvin wanted to enlist in the Air Corps but his parents begged him to wait -- maybe he'd get a 6-month deferment that Curtiss Wright wanted for him. Not to be -- he got his induction notice on January 20<sup>th</sup> and on February 4<sup>th</sup> he reported for duty. He would be 19 in nine more days. He was sent to camp Gordon, Georgia and put in the Field Artillery.

Jayne's older sister, Juddie, came to Columbus to work at Curtiss Wright. We said "Goodbye" to the Hanlins and moved to a 3rd floor attic apartment on the corner of Pennsylvania and King Avenues, a few blocks away. The bathroom was huge and such a luxury! We had shared a tiny one with the Hanlins & 2 other roomers who had moved in after the grandfather died. There was a kitchen with an old gas cookstove on four legs, with round porcelain jets, thumb sized, to turn the burners off & on. A big oven sat beside the burners. There was a bedroom- and a sitting room-landing at the top of the stairs with a horsehair sofa, one end curving like a pillow. Impossible to sleep on and even uncomfortable for sitting. I had never heard of air conditioning and we didn't own a fan -- the heat made it impossible to sleep.

We didn't stay there long -- we moved to half a double -- 911 N. Summit St. with Jayne's younger sister, Fran and her new husband. There were 3 rooms, a living room with a gas fireplace, dining room, kitchen downstairs. Three bedrooms and a bath up, a coal furnace in the basement, big front porch with a swing, and a postage size yard in back. We lived there for over two years. Well, Jayne and I did. Fran and Paul soon found a place of their own. Juddie was there until she got married and left to be with her husband, a Chief Petty Officer in the Navy. At times we had others living with us -- Pat Sparks spent the summer before she started to college -- I can't remember where she worked. Juddie's mother-in-law, Mrs. Smith and her daughter Donna, worked at Curtiss and lived there some of that time.

Jayne was a movie buff and we saw almost every movie when it came to the neighborhood "Garden" at 5<sup>th</sup> and High. We bought roller skates and skated on the sidewalks -- often ending up at Goodale Park. I brought my bicycle up from Chillicothe and Jayne bought one. We rode all over Columbus. Jayne became engaged to a boy she had dated all through High School. When he came home from Baltimore where he had been working, he had enlisted in the Navy.

In August, 1943, six months after he'd left, Melvin came home on furlough, a Sergeant. He was so handsome in his uniform! He took me to meet his mother and father. I took him to meet mine.

His sister told him he should enlist in the Air Corps. He did and passed the physical exam and test. The same day we became engaged. He gave me a diamond. It was a wonderful bittersweet time.

Back at camp Gordon, he received his orders from the Air Corps. In October his transfer came through and he was sent to Kessler Field, Mississippi. He had 8 days traveling time and got to spend five of them at home. Wonderful, again but he was told that a cadet could not be married. Was that good or bad?

Kessler Field was less than wonderful but the time there was very short. He was sent to Niagara University, a small Catholic University near Niagara Falls, N.Y.

Classes were hard but being a cadet was exciting. Very different from an Army Post. The neighborhood welcomed them and there were parties for them. Dances -- and he was so handsome in his cadet uniform! When he asked me to come for Christmas 1943 to Niagara Falls, I decided I'd better go.

He reserved a room for me at the Red Coach Inn and I bought a railroad ticket. I had ridden on trains before. Because Dad had worked on the railroad, we could order passes and one summer Mother and I had gone to Michigan to visit her brother. Another summer, Mother, Buddy and I went to Colorado to see her Aunt Emma and Uncle Ed Wolf. This time, though, I took a sleeper. It was the only way I could be certain of getting there at Christmas time. Servicemen had first priority in the coaches. Another first experience -- it was fun seeing the

berth made and though I was nervous about undressing and dressing in bed and keeping my clothes from being wrinkled, I got through it.

Melvin couldn't be there to meet me and that was another first -- checking in and staying in a hotel all by myself. O.K. again. I decided I could do anything if I wanted to do it badly enough.

I can still remember the thrill of opening the door to his knock and seeing him standing there so handsome -- shiny, shiny shoes, uniform creases pressed so sharp that they looked like they'd cut you if you touched them -- his hat in his hand. I remember walking to the Falls, ice everywhere, unbelievably cold, unbelievably in love. We must have eaten -- where or what is lost. We must have had presents for each other -- I don't remember. I carried a box there from his family but I don't remember what was in it. But—oh, I do remember to this day how I felt as I sat on the floor by his knees back in the hotel room. How I wish there was no rule about cadets getting married -- how I wished there was no war -- how I wished. Bitter-- bittersweet! There was only two days he was able, because it was Christmas Eve, to come in to the town about 10:00 AM and stay until 11:00 PM but on Christmas Day he had to get back early in the evening. My train left several hours later and when I went to settle my bill, I found it had been paid. I was so embarrassed! What must the hotel clerk think -- and it wasn't true!

Back in Columbus the old routine continued. Alarm turned off in the morning. Go shake Jayne and be sure she was awake, bundle up, walk the eight blocks to work, clock in before seven, check the work orders, start up your mill, check each piece with a micrometer, couldn't be off even a 1/1000 of an inch, lunch, more milling and checking, quitting time, clock out, hurry home to check the mail. The rest of the afternoon could be anything- grocery shopping, housework, fun things, maybe a new movie at the Garden but always, time to write the almost daily letter.

Mother called. Victory was sick -- she thought it was just distemper and she wasn't going to live. I begged an afternoon off and took the bus down home. Vicky was too sick to lift her head. She didn't seem to know I was there. I had to be back to work the next morning. I left in tears.

Somehow. Mother pulled her through. She had stayed up night after night doing the things only Mother knew how to do. Victory lived, but she had tremors, she had fits and worst of all she didn't remember anything or anyone. She wasn't cross but she didn't show any affection. They couldn't keep her home. She'd never gone away without one of us before. I think it was a relief when a farmer some miles away shot her. She'd run into his yard where children were playing during one of her fits. She was foaming at the mouth and he thought her mad. We couldn't blame him.

In January 1944 Melvin had been in the Army a year. He received the Good Conduct Medal. His cousin, Jim (N.Y.A. camp) was in the Marines and was sent to the South Pacific. His best friend, Jim, shipped out to Europe as a paratrooper.

The courses at Niagara University were hard. He had Physics, Meteorology, English, Navigation, History. Every afternoon from 5:45 until 7 he drilled; Physical Training from 7 to 8; Study Hall, 8:00 to 9:30. From 9:30 to 10:30 you got things ready for the morning inspection. Then classes again. It didn't leave much time for writing or being homesick. And the local townspeople sent out invitations for dinner and dances. He was working hard and getting good grades. I knew he deserved the fun times, even needed them for relaxation. I tried not to be jealous -- afraid he'd meet someone he'd like better.

He finished his Student Aviation and was appointed Flight Lieutenant First Class. His parents went to Niagara Falls to see him on his birthday, February 15<sup>th</sup>. He was twenty, no longer a teenager. He started Flight training. There were stalls, dives, and climbs, he was surprised that he felt like he was standing still in the air even when he knew the plane was flying fast. Finally, he got to handle the controls by himself.

There was a dance held at the Cataract House in their honor when they finished at Niagara. Melvin sent me an invitation but I couldn't go. He was sent to Santa Ana, California in March where he was assigned to Squadron 106. For the next two weeks the squadron was scheduled for all kinds of tests and physical examinations to determine what they were qualified to do. Pilot, Bombardier, Navigator? There would be 9 weeks there of pre-flight training, then those who hadn't washed out would be sent to a flying school for a few more weeks. Then active duty.

There were rumors and rumors and on March 31<sup>st</sup> the Commanding General of the Army Air forces sent out an order, returning all enlisted men who had volunteered from the Ground Services Forces, who had not actually started pre-flight, back to the Ground Forces. It wasn't Air Cadet Dodge anymore. He became Sergeant Dodge, U.S. Infantry, Rifle Company and was sent to Camp Roberts, California. More interviews and in May he was assigned to Cadre duty.

The good news was that he was home May 21<sup>st</sup> through May 30<sup>th</sup>, traveling time, on his way to Camp Butner, N.C. We didn't know how much time he'd have in the States. We thought we should get married. We thought we should wait. He said it wouldn't be fair for to me if he didn't come back or was disabled. I said I'd take the chance -- I couldn't bear if that happened to me and we hadn't married. We wavered back and forth -- May 30<sup>th</sup> came and he had to leave.

At Butner, he was picked for Expert Infantryman School, passed with flying colors, promoted to Staff Sergeant. There were rumors, more rumors. "They were shipping out next week" ... "They were being sent back to Air Corps." He tried to volunteer for a mission to the Far East -- not enough infantry training for that. He tried to volunteer for a paratrooper unit -- he

was told he was too valuable where he was. He was placed in charge of a section and sent out in the field.

Our letters flew. Would I come down and marry him there? Was he going to get a furlough? We both needed our parents' consent—would they give it? I was able to reach him and talk on the phone. Rumor was now that he'd get a leave in September. He was being made a platoon Sergeant in the 89<sup>th</sup> Infantry and would be in charge of its final training before being sent to Europe. The Battle of the Bulge was in full swing and they needed more infantry replacements.

Finally, a rumor became reality, Melvin came home on leave Sept. 16. We took our blood tests and on Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>, secured consent and our marriage license on Sept. 18<sup>th</sup> and I became Mrs. Melvin Dodge Sept. 20<sup>th</sup> 1944. I was nineteen – Mel was twenty.

We had until Sept 26, sharing some of that time with his family. We knew it was almost sure to be the last for them until the war ended. I planned to leave my job and go to Durham even though we weren't wouldn't be able to see much of each other.

It was a wonderful furlough but somehow Mel read his orders wrong and went back a day early. Mel received quite a ribbing! There was even an item in the camp paper. "What Sergeant got married on his furlough and reported back to camp a day early?"!

Back at Butner Mel had to go out on maneuvers -- it wasn't until Oct. 11<sup>th</sup> he could get into Durham to find a place for me to stay. On Oct. 13<sup>th</sup> I arrived at 106 W. Seeman St. in Durham, N.C. There in every minute that we could be together, we crammed memories that would have to last for a long, long time.

I couldn't work. There was a specified time from the time you left a defense plant job before you could be hired in a non-essential position. There were some temporary jobs available for the Christmas season but they couldn't hire me. The essential jobs weren't open for wives of the 89<sup>th</sup>. It was common knowledge that they'd be gone by the New Year. So, I lived on my small savings. At the end, I had to cash in most of my War Bonds.

I usually walked down to the dime store during the day and, at noon, ate there. I learned to eat black eyed peas and grits. They didn't cost much and I still like grits. When Mel could come in for overnight, we'd get fat delicious ham sandwiches, oozing tomatoes and mayonnaise from the drug store and sometimes on the weekend we'd splurge downtown where the largest, juiciest. best T-bone steaks I have ever eaten were served. We went to a couple of movies and, once, we went out dancing with some of Mel's soldier friends and dates. Mostly, we were content just to be together, to dream and to plan for after the War.

We bought a two-foot Christmas tree but like nylons, Christmas tree ornaments couldn't be found in any store. I found a roll of some imitation red ribbon; we picked up pine cones that were just about everywhere. I bought a box of ivory dishwashing powder. My landlady, Mrs.

Vasser, let me heat it with water into shining peaks in her kitchen. We took our hands, piling it like real snow on the needles and pine cones, tied red ribbons on the ends of the branches and pronounced it the most beautiful Christmas tree in the world.

We'd carefully chosen and sent home gifts for our two families and there had been boxes from home. I remember just three presents, a dear brown teddy bear we couldn't afford and we couldn't resist sending Kody, Mel's little niece; fried chicken, in the box that Mother sent, along with some other things long ago forgotten. It smelled great "and we" ate it! I've tried and tried to remember -- I must have given Mel something but I can't recall. He'd chosen a copen blue, --sort of cotton, gabardine dress for me that I had to wear on Christmas Day for him.

Four-thirty AM, December 26, we clung together a few last seconds and I watched him from the window as he turned the corner.

I remember untying the ribbons, packing the pine cones in the suitcase with my clothes; and almost blinded by tears, I carried the tree with its artificial snow down the steps to the alley. I left on the train for Ohio that afternoon.

Back in Chillicothe, on Dec. 30, a change of address card came:

S/Sgt Melvin B. Dodge, 35625978  
Co. D. 353<sup>rd</sup> Infantry, A.P.O. 89  
c/o Postmaster, New York, N.Y.

Jayne had given up our house and moved into a single room. All our itinerant housemates had deserted her and she was getting ready to move to San Diego to be with Juddie and her new baby while husband, Clifford, was out at sea.

Since I didn't have a ready-made place to go in Columbus and Mother and Dad wanted me to stay home, I went to the ammunition plant near Chillicothe and was hired. It was Friday and I didn't start work until Monday. I was glad to be back with Mother and Dad but I'd been on my own for 2 ½ years and I felt like a displaced person. I decided I'd feel that, no matter where I was. I had promised Mel to go see his parents. So, on Friday afternoon I took a bus to Columbus, stayed all night with Jayne. She had a nice room on Indianola Ave. but she'd be leaving soon for California.

Saturday morning, I went back to the bus station, took a bus to New California. Mom and Dad Dodge were happy to see me -- we had a few tears together. I stayed Saturday night. Of course, I didn't belong there -- I'd only spent a few days there and Mel had always been with me.

Sunday, I took the bus back to Columbus. There I had some time before the bus to Chillicothe came and to fill it, I walked the two blocks to Lazarus. I was so blue. I stood in the

middle of the store and looked around. And it hit me -- I didn't want to go back to work in Chillicothe. Columbus was my home now.

I stayed with Jayne until she left for California. And by that time, I was working the second shift at Curtiss Wright on the same mill where Mel had worked before his Army days. I had met a girl there who needed a roommate and moved to Grandview. The lady who owned the house, "Aunt Polly", rented to three other friendly girls. We had use of the living room and kitchen, shared our ration points for meat and sugar and the cooking.

Pauline Thoma, my roommate, was waiting for her soldier boy to come home from the South Pacific. It was a good place and I was there until Mel came home again.

On February 12 I received my first letter from Mel. It had been started on the high seas and the last line read "Have landed somewhere in France." There was one word censored, a neat little square cut from the paper. It was obviously a day of the week.

In the next letter he asked me to send him some red topped wool socks and a scarf, and anything to eat. Every letter asked for food to be sent. You felt so frustrated! The package couldn't weigh an ounce over five pounds and by the time they were wrapped, you were lucky to contain three pounds of food. I used my sugar ration to make fudge and send it as often as I could. For each mailing you had to show a letter and an envelope with a request. After they were read at the post office both were stamped and couldn't be used again.

The division was on the move and letters, always asking for you to send food as often as you could were few and could be used just the one time. I could and would have written fake letters with requests but the envelopes with the APO couldn't be copied.

The 353<sup>rd</sup> marched across France. The French were so happy to see them, inviting them to share the very little they had. In return the soldiers gave them soap and cigarettes.

It rained constantly and it was cold. I got another letter with a request for a parka hood and more fudge. The fudge was sent, the tiny amount that could be sent. I scoured the Army store department stores, everywhere. I couldn't find anything but one khaki toboggan and a scarf. They weren't even too thick. I sent them.

There was a long time then without letters. Finally, one saying they had crossed Belgium, Luxembourg, and were in Germany. Mel's sister and I saw a picture in the *Stars and Stripes* of a small assault boat with soldiers crouched low. According to the caption it was the soldiers of the 89<sup>th</sup> crossing a river under fire. We thought we recognized Melvin.

Many, many years later his son would give him *The American Heritage Picture History of World War II* for Christmas. He flipped through the pages Christmas morning and there on page 562 was the same picture. Here it was much clearer and there was no doubt of identity.

The 89<sup>th</sup> was attached to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army now under General Patton. Neither his mother, sister nor I heard from him for a month. Our hearts were in our mouths. We knew from the dispatches published in the *Dispatch* that the 89<sup>th</sup> was in heavy combat.

We studied maps, read the papers, saw the names of places we remembered from geography; names we'd never heard before – Echternach, Cochem, Burg, Moselle Ruer, Enkirch, Bruel. In March – Walhausen, Löffelscheid, Schwarzen, Dellendorf, and Worms.

In the first 10 days of combat, the division had opened a vital supply route over the Moselle River taking more than 5000 prisoners, cleared more than 100 towns and villages and several hundred square miles of territory. Casualties were heavy.

There were more – Wellmich, St. Goarshausen. Nazi homefront broadcasters dubbed the 89<sup>th</sup>, “The Army Shock Troops.” By March 30<sup>th</sup>, four days after the Rhine crossing, the “Bulge” was free of Germans.

I received a letter written April 1<sup>st</sup>, Easter, 1945. It was getting warmer. There had been a wonderful break in a once-luxurious hotel, “Staatliches Kurhaus Schlangenbad” not far from Wiesbaden. The day before, the first box I had sent on February 13 had caught up with him. The fudge was great. The socks were welcome, feet were always wet and cold.

On April 5<sup>th</sup> after an unsuccessful attempt for surrender of the city, the 89<sup>th</sup> cleared Eisenach. After heavy fighting they took 500 prisoners, 50 vehicles and a freight yard full of supplies.

The division swung southeast – Friedrichroda, -- Wutha – Rhula. There were bitter last-ditch battles. At Ohrdruf, they liberated a large concentration camp. Several hours previous, SS guards had shot all the prisoners too weak to move. They found 3000 bodies burned and buried in pits. Nazi barbarism was never doubted by the 89<sup>th</sup> after the Stalag Ohrdruf.

April 12 – Bad Berka – Kahla – Saale River. The prison count passed 15,000. They freed 325 Polish women officers from Blankenhain Camp. Weida – Zwickau – Stollberg. The Nazi army fought desperately. They were strafed by ME-109s; our sabotage troops tried to infiltrate and harass communication lines and supply. The war was nearing an end but the 89<sup>th</sup> wasn't aware of it.

Early May 7<sup>th</sup> the 89<sup>th</sup> suffered its last combat casualty just seconds before the “cease fire” order at 8:30 AM. The war in Europe was over but the victory was only half-won. There was still the Pacific.

The rest of May was spent in keeping order in Thuringia, patrolling roads and guarding installations. On June 1<sup>st</sup> the unit began retracing its steps across Europe. They settled in at Camp Lucky Strike, France, to await redeployment.



There were more letters now. I asked about the men I had met in North Carolina. Sgt. Bohlke had been hit by shrapnel, was back in the States. Ed was getting out on points; he'd received the Legion of Merit in China (it had just caught up with him). Lt. Gibson's baby was born the same day they'd crossed the Rhine; Mike, killed at Greiz.

A time of rumors -- they were being sent straight to the Pacific -- the division was staying together -- the division was being broken up -- they would be retrained in the U.S. -- occupation. Mel had no idea what was going to happen. He and his friend, Little John, from Illinois, went to England, Ireland and Scotland. Later, a furlough to Paris.

He had been at Le Havre now for nearly three months. They lived in tents and trained every day.

Back here in Columbus, Ohio, life continued in much the same way as before V-E Day. The terrible dread of what each day might bring was gone for me; I slept better at nights but now, you could afford to think about being lonely. I still worked the second shift at Curtiss, still joined any queue. A pair of hose was a prize; most of us went bare-legged. I even stood in line for an off-brand of cigarettes to give Dad Dodge. Sometimes it was a candy bar with a name you'd never heard. Almost every window had a blue star in it -- some gold -- and you thanked God that yours didn't. My sister Ollie's husband had been drafted and they had three children. Mel's brother-in-law, too. Both went to Europe, too late for combat. We were thankful.

Joe Dodge was sent home from the Pacific. He and his sister Virginia came to see me. Mel and Joe's cousin, Dodge Converse had been killed in action.

On April 12 President Roosevelt died. I had been 7 when he was first elected. I did not remember any other. Harry Truman became our new president.

On August 6<sup>th</sup> we heard that the first atomic bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima, a Japanese army base and city. President Truman told the press it had been a punch of 2000 B29's. It was more than I could imagine -- I didn't realize what it meant. In science classes I had been taught that the atom was as small as matter could be divided and now that wasn't true anymore. Three days later the second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.

I was at work at Curtiss on August 14<sup>th</sup>. Just after 7:00 PM the whistles began to blow all over the building. The loud speakers blared "The Japanese had agreed to surrender." We were told to go home. I can remember going down the stairs, four or so abreast. The excitement so intense -- we were drunk with joy.

Buses took us home. The streets of downtown Columbus were filled with people celebrating. There was dancing in the streets.

The girls at Aunt Polly's decided not to go downtown. Pauline and I changed to dresses and we went to First Community Church where we gave thanks. Our men could come home now. When we came out of church, it had rained. The air had cooled. We took off our shoes

and walked home splashing in the puddles along the way. Happy! Happy, gloriously wonderfully, happy!

On Sept. 2, 1945, aboard the U.S.S. Missouri, the Japanese signed the surrender document and the United States was at peace.

Our jobs at Curtiss were finished. I went back only once -- to pick up my toolbox and to do what paperwork that was required. Now I had to think about finding other work. There were thousands of us without jobs. Pauline got a job at Lazarus. Another friend from Curtiss told me she was going down to the Statehouse -- she'd heard they were hiring a few people. I went along and was sent to the Governor Lausche's office.

I was interviewed, I wasn't 21 yet and couldn't vote but I was asked if my parents did. I was so ignorant of party politics that if they had asked me how they voted, I would have answered "Always Republican" but luckily, they did not and I was hired. I was sent to the Department of Liquor Control to work in the file room.

Working in an office was a new experience for me. I liked the work, the people above me. There were three other girls about my age that had just started working there and we became good friends.

I kept busy. I had my work and friends there. We took our lunch and ate on the Statehouse grounds. They took pictures of me with the Statehouse statues to send Melvin. At home, we took turns cooking our evening dinner; we went to movies. I visited my friend, Edna Webb, who lived at Bliss College. Edna and I had gone to Sunnyside school when we were in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades. Her family had moved away but we had kept in touch and when both of us ended up in Columbus, we renewed our friendship. On Saturdays, I often sat with Kody while Ruth worked, still at Curtiss. Later when it became North American Aviation, she stayed, the top woman there; in the Budget Department. Other weekends I went home and sometimes to New California to see Mom and Dad Dodge.

But no matter how busy I was, the most important time of the day was mail time. The war had ended but Melvin was still in France. I kept hoping he'd be sent home. In July he'd gone to Lunéville, France to represent his infantry in the XVI Corps Track meet. He captured the 100-meter event in 11 [seconds] and the 200 meter in 24.9 [seconds]. He sent pictures of the winners. There was one of a tiny girl handing him a bouquet of flowers. The pictures came up missing. I searched and searched but could only surmise that I had left them on the bureau top and either Pauline or I had knocked them into the wastepaper basket, unnoticed. They could not be replaced and I regret losing them to this day.

In September there was a cablegram on our wedding anniversary. Later he and Cpl. Lukehurst, one of his squad leaders went to England on leave.

On October 9<sup>th</sup> the doorbell sounded after I was in bed. I opened a cablegram. “Just back from England. I am being sent to the 83<sup>rd</sup> Army in Bavaria for occupation. Love, Melvin”. I fought back tears.

The 89<sup>th</sup> was being sent back to the States. Everyone with less than 60 pts. was sent back to Germany for occupation. Points were given for days of combat but added to these were 12 points for each child. It was fair enough but I was reminded that 12 points added to Mel’s 49 would have brought him home

Mel wrote that Austria was unbelievably beautiful. He was stationed at Wells, Austria and was terribly homesick. Physically, army life could not have been better. He missed most of the intense cold because he was put in charge of supplies. He hated the paperwork and wanted to be sent back to the field. He drove to Leinz for lumber, overturned a truck on an icy road. Luckily neither he nor the two P.W.s [Prisoners of War] were hurt. He made T/Sgt. [Technical Sergeant], was put in charge of the N.C.O. [Non-commissioned Officers] club. He and another Sgt. shared a room. They had a P.W. to bring them breakfast, do their laundry, shine their shoes. He was the captain and star of the company basketball team.

The mail service was terrible; he would go 5, 7, even 8 days without a letter, only to get all of them on the next day.

His NCO club was considered the best in camp. He had three women working for him, a cook and two waitresses. He found a girl singer who was very good. Christmas time was coming. Songs like “White Christmas” and “It’s Been a Long, Long, Time” haunted him.

He went hunting and shot a deer, the first and last animal he ever killed. He had a jacket made from its hide and sent it home.

He worked and played hard. His morale lifted a little when he and his 1st Sgt. bought a little car for \$75. They had real beds made in town to replace their bunks. The beds had springs. He began to understand German.

In March, Pauline’s Leo came home from the Pacific. They were married and I moved downstairs to a couch.

I had saved my Army allotment and Mel asked me to put his name on a list for a car when it was available. Veterans had first choice -- no one else had much of a chance for a new car. 1941 was the last year automobiles had been made. There would be a few available in 1946. We decided on a Pontiac and I gave Kauffman Pontiac \$200.

In late February I received a v-mail form telling me not to write anymore – Sgt. Dodge was coming home. Then a cablegram dated March 10<sup>th</sup> that he was leaving for the boat -- another dated March 14, he had not left -- didn’t know when he would and then, on the 20<sup>th</sup>, yet another – “Darling, sailing from Bremerhaven 21<sup>st</sup> March ’46 on the Costa Rica for home. Love, Melvin”

On Monday April 1<sup>st</sup> the SS Hampton Sidney docked in New York. T. Sergeant Melvin B Dodge was aboard.

There was a call from New York. We talked for an hour. Pauline was aghast. Did I realize what that would cost? He was sent to Camp Atterbury to be discharged. He called that night; we talked for over 2 hours. And the next night. And then, on April 5, 1946 his mother and dad's wedding anniversary, he was home. For us the war was finally over. And a new life together began.

I took a week off work we spent it with his parents; went to Chillicothe to see mine. My brother-in-law had been home for months.

When the week was over, Mel's sister invited us to stay with her. Bob was still in Europe and Mel did some babysitting for Kody while I was at work.

No one who hasn't had this kind of experience can fathom how happy we were to be together again. There were some problems. Mel was nervous, he talked in his sleep, sometimes had nightmares. He stuttered some and though that stopped for the most part, it would crop up always in times of stress.

Ruth had friends, a couple, who wanted to sublet their apartment for the summer. We rented it. There were three rooms downstairs, two rooms up. We used the one bedroom. It had a canopy bed that we loved. The Cooks had left some of their personal things stored in the other bedroom. They had a 3-year-old daughter and the room had a white youth bed, made by the father. The headboard had her name in cut-out wood letters, "SUSAN".

That summer I worked, Mel helped his dad, a cattle dealer, from time to time. He visited several colleges, wrote to Niagara University. Niagara University sounded good to both of us. Muskingum didn't sound bad but the Dodges and Ruth persuaded him that Ohio State was his best choice.

He became angry with the Pontiac Agency when they wouldn't tell him where he stood on the list and demanded the retainer back. They gave it to him, no questions, even though I had made all the arrangements. Our name had been on the list since shortly after the war ended and now, I wondered if we'd ever get a car.

He couldn't wait and bought a 1940 Olds for \$1000, a small fortune. The car looked great but was over 6 years old and in the next six months we spent \$600 more for repairs. He took it to Bob White Olds on N. High Street. We swore they charged us \$10 to lift the hood.

That summer we went to Spring Valley, Illinois, to see Little John. He lived with his mother and father. We had a great time. Men who have been in battle together seem to share a bond that is never severed. The car held up for the trip.

The end of summer came and the Cooks came home. We found a two-room upstairs apartment on Garden Road, the same street where Ruth and Bob lived. Bob was home now and he and Mel began classes at Ohio State. Bob had dropped out before the War and now with the G.I. Bill decided to finish college.

Larry Snyder the track coach was very interested in Mel. He wanted him to forego Freshman football but Mel wanted to play football for O.S.U. One evening, after work, Bob picked me up instead of Mel. We drove to the University Hospital where they were putting a cast on Mel's left leg. He'd torn all the ligaments in his knee during a football practice. His other knee was lacerated and cinders from the track were embedded in the flesh. There were always black specks under the skin. Needless to say, that was the end of any chance at becoming a track star.

Christmas came, the time so precious. We remembered our tree in Durham and the empty year he'd spent in Austria. We were still young and probably foolish but we felt there was just one thing missing; the baby we wanted so desperately.

The old car broke down again and someone at Bob White's conscience must have felt sorry for us. The very first 1947 Oldsmobile had just come in and they let us buy it. They gave us \$600 for the old car. We'd lost \$1000 on it in six months. My allotment savings were gone. The new Olds cost \$1960, the payments were \$93.16 a month. We had \$90 from the G.I. Bill and the money from my job. The same week we bought a car I realized I was pregnant!

We had no idea what we would do when the six months I've been allowed to work would end. How could you pay \$93.16 out of \$90? I was skeptical; thought maybe we shouldn't take the car. Mel knew we could manage.

The car was fantastic. It was black and shiny and ran. Well, almost all the time -- if you drove through a puddle the motor died and would only start again when it completely dried -- three or four hours later. Only a minor inconvenience, compared to driving the first 1947 Oldsmobile sold in Columbus. There weren't very many of them either.

I got through the next six weeks somehow. Many mornings I'd have to get off the bus and walk the rest of the way to work. I was nauseated. I lost ten pounds and then began to gain. When I had to stop working at six months, I had already popped out.

Mel's parents welcomed us and we moved in with them in New California about 20 miles from Columbus. Mel's first year at Ohio State had ended.

He spent that summer buying and selling cattle. He drove his dad all over the state. Meat was no longer rationed and the world couldn't get enough. We paid our way and more. Dad made more money that year than he had ever before.

Mel decided he couldn't afford to go back to school that fall so he enlisted in the Marine Reserves.

In September I went home to Chillicothe to stay. Our baby was due Sept. 27 and I wanted to be near my doctor. I was having a few problems and I was miserable. The baby still hadn't come when I went in for my appointment, Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> and Dr. Franklin decided to speed things up. He ruptured the membrane.

I left the office, got on the city bus, and went to a scheduled birthday dinner for my nephew's birthday. In the middle of dinner my labor started and my sister, Ruth, took me to the hospital.

Mel had two flat tires on his way from New California and he arrived nervous -- his stutter very pronounced, but in plenty of time. Our beautiful Susan Elizabeth, 6 lb. 8  $\frac{3}{4}$  oz. was born at 6:41 in the morning, October 4<sup>th</sup>. Now we were a family.

Susan was a beautiful baby. We were so proud of her. We spent that winter again in New California. Melvin's mother and I got along very well, though I am sure it wasn't easy for his mother to share her home.

Sometimes, we put Susan's tiny chest of drawers in the car and Mel would take me to Chillicothe to spend the week with Mother and Dad and Bud. Bud was in high school and Mother had two foster children, brother and sister, living with them. Everyone adored Susan. They were happy to have us. It gave me a pleasant change and I'm sure that Mom Dodge enjoyed some free time.

Mel and his father worked together again that summer. They put 70,000 miles on our new car. Dad had another boom year.

About this time Mel got out of the Marines and applied for and got a commission in the Army. He volunteered for Escort duty. They had started bringing back the bodies of World War II casualties and his job was to meet the train and then escort the casket to the nearest kin or designated funeral home, staying until after the funeral.

Families were so appreciative, some even insisting he stay in their home. It was a noble thing to do, but it was heartbreaking and when fall came and his time was completed, he was relieved to be able to stop and start back to Ohio State.

We had applied for housing in a city project and just before school started, we moved into a second floor, 3 room and bath apartment in the Rich Street Housing project. To live there you either had to be a married student with at least one child or a senior citizen with a limited income. There were a few other low-income families, but for the most part there were 5 or 6 buildings filled with students with young children. The rent was unbelievable -- depending on your income and it started at \$18.50 a month, all utilities paid.

It was a wonderful place to live. We made friends that would stay our friends for a lifetime. The men went to school, studied together. We women cooked in our tiny kitchens,

washed and dried clothes in the basement, and did the little bit of cleaning our places demanded, cared for our children and spent hours together, comparing and confiding.

Susan had her first birthday there. She and her Daddy were very close. They spent hours together when he finished studying. She went with him to wash the car -- wherever he went, she was at his heels.

There was a park within walking distance. We could hear merry-go-round music so we took Susan and walked over. There were banners proclaiming "West Side Jubilee" on a large stone building. People were going in and out. Mel walked in to find out about the building. He came out, still a little puzzled. It was a city recreation building, Sunshine Recreation Center. It was the first we had ever seen, but it wouldn't be the last.

Many of the students didn't have cars. We were so fortunate and we took others with us to our favorite place, The Zoo. In the winter you could drive into the empty parking lot and spend as long as you wanted in the two buildings that housed the animals. Sometimes you'd see the keeper, who was glad to share his knowledge with us. Rarely, were there other visitors. In one building there was a row of big cats, two lions, two tigers. I think there was a leopard. On the other side were the monkeys. There were several chimpanzees, one who either loved or hated Susan in her pink snowsuit with the peaked hood. He would watch her, chatter and throw straw; he never paid much attention to the rest of us. I remember baboons and some Diana monkeys; a beautiful graceful gibbon.

We held our noses when we entered the second building. In a pool at one end was one of our favorites, Pete, the hippo. There were some tapirs and a rhinoceros, too. There must have been some other animals but these two buildings were open to the public all winter; no charge. If we had the gasoline, we went almost every week.

Mel graduated in March 1951. There are so many memories, the hen parties in the evenings while the husbands studied at home with sleeping babies. I remember the Lackeys, the Rhineharts, the Motts, Hilshers, Pat and Bill, Phama and John, Ginny and Ward, Jean and Jerry -- and more.

Just before Susan was two, a doctor-to-be and his wife, Nora, moved into the apartment next to us. Nora and I became best friends; forty-five years later we still are.

I remember choking back tears when the Lackeys returned that first year after summer vacation. They had left for home in Kentucky in June with fat six-month Monty. They were back in September -- Monty had had polio -- he wasn't so fat and his eyes were crossed. A couple of years and a couple of eye operations and Monty was as good as new. Polio was a dreaded word. There was no vaccine.

If I told all the memories that keep flooding back, I would never finish. The time I turned my back and Susan ran her arm through the washing machine wringer. That is not a good

memory. Nor is the time that Susan was with Mel and Dana Mott washing our car near the tracks. A 10-year-old boy fell under the train. Mel and Dana heard his screams, reached between the train wheels to keep pushing his head down when he tried to lift it, until the train had passed. He was still alive, minus his legs when the emergency squad took him away. Mercifully, perhaps, he died the next day. The sound of the sirens sent Susan into screams of terror for months.

Mel spent one summer at Ft. Knox on active duty. He worked one summer and after school for his dad's friend, Butch. It was construction work and he hated it. He worked after classes, for a short time, at a Bible store downtown.

He and Dana Mott served as bouncers at Friday night dances at the YMCA one whole winter. I remember we saved each \$2 check and the next summer we used them to take Susan to Niagara Falls.

We went back to Chillicothe to my little brother's High School graduation in May 1950. The next month he and my nephew, Denver left for the Great Lakes Training Center. They had enlisted in the Navy until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthdays – Dec. 1953 and on February 1954.

We went to see all the Ohio State football games. I only remember missing one -- the one almost every person in Columbus claims to have attended. The Blizzard bowl, November 1950.

I was pregnant again and it was time for me to see go see Dr. Franklin in Chillicothe. Mel had taken me down on Friday. On Saturday, Jean and Jerry Feddersen, my friend Nora, pregnant, too, and Melvin sat out in the Blizzard, the worst of 37 years, and earned their claim to fame. Michigan won that game, 9 to 3, on blocked kicks, the snow so thick fans couldn't see the goal posts.

Mel followed the snowplow down Rt. 23 on Monday to bring us home. Schools were cancelled, streets impassable. Mel played with Susan and the Mott boys in the snow. He pulled Susan on a sled downtown to the barbershop.

Again, God would be good to us. Bud served on a LST [Landing Ship Tank] and Denver an aircraft carrier during the Korean War and they both came home safe and sound.

My sister, Ruth's health had improved greatly during her teen-age years. She had two beautiful, healthy children and a great husband. But during the time Bud was gone her health began to fail.

Dr. Franklin wasn't very optimistic and Mother asked the Navy to grant Bud an emergency leave. He was in Alaska, ready to board a naval plane to bring him back to the States and was bumped off the plane by some high officials. His guardian angel must have been watching over him -- that plane crashed killing all aboard.



Finally, though, Ruth's health did improve. The bone marrow had stopped producing red blood cells and she had to have a transfusion every few months and would probably need them the rest of her life. Ruth bounced back -- she'd always been a fighter.

Mel's graduation time came, March 1951, and I was so proud of him. I felt I had received a second-hand-sort-of-education along with his degree in Education. I had typed, edited and digested "umpteen" class papers. Some of it had had to sink in. Bob Krick, Mel's brother-in-law received his Master's degree at the same ceremony.

Jerry Feddersen had worked in the City Recreation summer program and he suggested that Mel apply, too, the next summer. He could look during the summer for a coaching position for the next fall.

That sounded good and Mel was hired. Where? -- the same Sunshine [Recreation Center] we had been so curious about the first year in the project.

The Williams' (my friend Nora and her husband Jim) baby and our baby were due the same week, July 1951. We both still lived in the project but because of the forthcoming addition she had moved to a four-room apartment and we'd been promised one in the building across the street.

Their Becky was born July 2<sup>nd</sup> and on July 6<sup>th</sup> we had another beautiful baby girl, Dana Diane, 7 lbs. 4 oz.

This time I wouldn't let my family call my husband until our baby was born. (The playground season was in full swing and his supervisor, Dorothy Jones, had commented on the inconvenience of having a baby during that busy time. I would show her!) I left Susan with Mother and took a cab to the hospital.

Dana was turned wrong and there were some frightening minutes before she was born -- bruised and battered but perfect otherwise. I had longed for Mel when things were difficult. I had cut off my nose to spite my face.

The four of us went home the next week to a different apartment. The promised one had become available while I was in Chillicothe and Mel and some of his friends had moved our things. The furniture was all in place but all the linens & clothes were still in boxes. Mel was still taking classes working on his Master's degree. He had a paper due and after I'd hunted out towels and sheets and settled Susan and the baby, I started typing.

I worked too hard and lost my milk. Our beautiful little girl did not gain we put her on formula and she began projectile vomiting. At six weeks she was still at birth weight and Dr. Larcomb was very concerned. He considered hospitalizing her but decided to change her formula and wait one more day. The bottles began to stay down -- not all but enough. She began to gain and by three months was right where she should be.

She was a happy, good baby, but when we put our Christmas tree up, she developed asthma and until she was past two, she was on medication for it most of the time. Around that time, the asthma stopped completely

Our friends were leaving the project; one by one they graduated and left for home. Some like us, who stayed in Columbus, paid more rent and got an extension while we looked for some other place to live.

The summer after Dana was born was a hard adjustment for me. While Mel was in school, he had spent a great deal of time at home and now going to school and the long hours at the center, 2:00 to 10:00 PM and Saturday mornings, didn't give him much time to spend with us. Susan missed him terribly. I resented Miss Jones and her domineering air. We had the only real quarrel we ever had. I complained, got angry, said hurtful things. Mel came back with "And do you think I like it? What do you want me to do?"

It was enough, I was ashamed. We'd both had adjustments to make. Change is rarely easy. But we loved each other and we passed that bump in the road.

Susan started kindergarten; had her tonsils out. Dana had her first birthday. We purchased our first television.

A friend of Melvin's had invited us to his house to see Television back in 1949. That was the first time I had ever actually seen a program. Now we had our own set. Susan loved the Roy Rogers show. The Big Top on Saturday morning was a favorite.

We got a puppy, part collie, and gave it an original name – Lassie!

We rented a house on the West Side; Richards Avenue. Melvin stayed with Recreation Department. He liked it and was made the Director at that same Sunshine Center. Jerry stayed, too, the director at Schiller Park.

Nora and Jim had left the project when Becky and Dana were 8 months old. Jim finished his residency, had to fulfill his obligation to the Navy. Their 3rd child, David was born while Jim was at sea during the Korean War. Now they came back to Columbus & Jim began to practice. His field was urology. They bought a house in northeast Columbus and Nora and I rekindled a special friendship.

Susan started to John Burroughs School in the first grade. Dana was a little girl, not a baby, such a pretty independent little thing.

Hop Cassidy and Bud Bond, Ohio State football players worked that summer at Sunshine for Mel.

Jean & Jerry, Mel and I, and Dorothy Jones went to Akron to the National Soap Box Derby. Dinah Shore was there and in a white picture hat and sun dress. We stood beside her. Bud Bond had insisted we should stay with his parents while we were in Akron. They were

celebrating their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary -- and that seemed so far away to me. I don't know why; our tenth was coming up in September.

We bought a house on Girard Rd. It was a dear little house, story and half. There was a tiny kitchen, small dining area, a living room, two bedrooms and bath downstairs, a paneled room in the basement. The upstairs, perfect for the girls, was one big bedroom with closets under the sloping roof, built in shelves, drawers and a big toy closet.

It cost \$11,900. We borrowed \$1000 down payment from Mel's mother and paid it back the first year. We got a G.I. loan and the interest was only 4 ½%. Our payments, taxes included, were \$75 a month. Of course, as taxes went up so did our payments. At that time Girard Rd. was a tiny street with only houses. It ran behind a new partly built shopping center called 'Graceland'.

There was a small yard in front, a cement slab porch, a backyard with a garden, playhouse for the girls, and a garage. It even had wooden storm windows. We were so proud! It was to be our home for 22 years.

We moved on Oct. 8, 1954. The house was in Sharon Twp. and Susan joined the Brownies troop. They already had a leader and asst. but it was a large troop and they could use more help. I became an asst. leader, too, taking Dana and walking to Homedale School for the meetings. Many times, Dana opted to play with Janie Wellinger. Janie & her mother had stopped to welcome us when we first moved in, and Dana and Janie became inseparable. They were just over three but they were both very out-going. They played at our house or at the other almost every day.

Dana made friends so easily. The Marsons moved down the street. Steve and Lea were just Dana and Susan's age. Over on Leland, Sue and Angie, same ages, became their friends. Dana and Janie clashed once in a while -- they both had ideas on how to do things but Dana dominated Steve and Sue. They almost always did her bidding. Susan was very shy. She chose her friends more slowly, was more critical of them. She enjoyed Lea sometimes. Angie and she had little in common. The first year we lived there, Amy Phelps, on the corner behind us, was her chosen playmate. Amy was even more shy than Susan and they seemed comfortable together. But Amy and her family moved to another state.

We settled into a routine. Mel left for Sunshine about noon and was rarely home before midnight. Center hours were 2 to 10:00 PM but there were always things to do before and after; reports, clean-up, plans. Staff meetings with other directors were held on Saturday mornings. In the summer we competed with Mel's Saturday afternoon and sometimes Sunday golf games.

Golf and his coin collections were his hobbies. I am sure he enjoyed his golfing companions as much as the game. They were all ambitious men, dedicated to their professions. Most were future leaders in the city. Names that all Columbus would know in the next few years: Frank Reda. John Young, Jim Hughes; future judges, city attorneys.

A Recreation Director's salary wasn't great. I thought about going to work. Ruth Krick wanted me to come to North American, I checked with the Liquor Control -- they'd welcome me back.

Mel didn't want me to work; it wasn't that he thought women shouldn't. The girls saw so little of him, he thought they needed me. I had to agree. I spent a lot of time without Mel but I found my own interests. I had friends with children -- we got together often -- and there was always the telephone. I became more involved with scouting, took training courses, volunteered for Day Camp. Dana celebrated her July birthday in the children's unit at Blendon Woods until she was old enough to go as a Brownie.

When Mel had first come home from the service, we'd started going to his little church at New California. It's a little picture-card country church with an old cemetery. Judah Dodge who had migrated to Ohio from Vermont by covered wagon in 1814, is buried there. Rev. Vance, the minister, had married us. Church had always been an important part of Mel's life. His faith was strong and he lived what he believed. I had had no church ties and I loved being part of the New California Presbyterian congregation. Susan and I were baptized on the same day and Dana later. Even now when we sing the Doxology, I am back there in the pew with Mel and his parents. I don't even need to close my eyes to see the dark wood pews the red runner up that worn floor, Rev. Vance at the podium.

But it was 30 miles away and our time was limited. We decided we needed to be part of our new community, the children, especially, to make ties with and attend Sunday school classes. We chose the Presbyterian Church nearest to us, Overbrook.

It was a much larger church and it continued to grow. I never felt as nurtured as I had at Cally and as I look back, I know it didn't have the impact on the children that Mel had received at the little church in New California. Whether it was the fault of the church or ours, I don't know.

Mel and I didn't spend as much time together as many couples but I don't want to leave the impression that we'd grown apart. Our time together was good. There were Sunday visits to my parents, to his parents. In the summer the city recreation camp's swimming pool was open to us many weekends. All the staff would be invited and we'd have a great time.

The West Side Board of Trade had its summer picnic at Indian Village Camp and Mel always led the games. Tom Timlin and his brother entertained all the employees there, too. The girls and I loved going much more than Mel did. The camp had to be saturated with whatever triggered his allergies. It was after one of these picnics that I realized that Mel was having the same symptoms that Dana had had with asthma. I insisted we go over to Nora and Jim's and asked Jim about it. Jim confirmed my diagnosis and recommended an allergist, Dr. Hankinson.

Test results showed that Mel was allergic to house dust, mold and just about every kind of pollen. He started taking shots. In future years both Dana and Susan would share the same fate.

In 1956 Dana was five. Sharon Twp. school didn't have kindergarten classes but Columbus schools did. There were six five-year olds in our near neighborhood and their parents enrolled five of them in Glenmont School's afternoon kindergarten class. (Steve Marson would attend Our Lady of Peace.) We were to pay tuition but never did -- at election time the area in which we lived voted that it be annexed to Columbus.

We had acquired an old second-hand car and I and two of the other mothers took turns driving them there that year: Dana, Janie Wellinger, Sue Frith, Debbie Husted, and Dougie Snider. Dougie was a problem, poking the girls, quarrelsome, noisy. I had him sit up front with me but it was before seat-belts were introduced and he'd turn around, sit on his knees and continue his mischief. I was sure I'd wreck the car and kill all of us. I tried telling stories but he wasn't interested. We'd go to the back way, over Cooke Road, because it was full of dips that tickled their tummies. We called it "The Magic Way". He liked that but Cooke Rd was only a portion of the ride.

Quite by accident I learned Doug like to sing. "I've Got Spurs that Jingle, Jangle, Jingle" was his favorite and we jingled, jangled from home to school, from school to home the weeks that I drove all year long.

That was the year I miscarried. I was pregnant in my fourth month. I had chosen a Columbus Obstetrician, Dr. Zartman. I couldn't take time out with Dana in kindergarten, Susan in fourth grade to go back to Chillicothe to old Dr. Franklin again.

When I began having trouble Dr. Zartman sent me to University hospital but the second night there I lost the baby. Dr. Zartman tried to comfort me by saying there were wasn't any obvious reason I had miscarried; that sometimes it was nature's way of keeping an imperfect fetus from being born.

Mel came to the hospital for me. We didn't talk about our loss. I wasn't sure of his feelings -- maybe our baby hadn't become real to him. We reached the parking lot and there waiting in the car was Lassie. Mother had taken the girls home with her; he'd been alone. I knew Lassie had provided comfort for him and he was sharing it with me.

My friends Nora and Shirle Husted (Debbie's mother) had sent me a plant at the hospital. There were 3 tiny ceramic worms. Papa, Momma, & a baby worm with a whirly-gig on his beanie cap. Dana was intrigued with the worms, took them for sharing to kindergarten.

At Open House, her teacher told me that Dana had shared them with "My mother went to the hospital to get a baby -- but she got these instead."

The next fall both girls were bussed to Sharon school. It had been newly annexed, too.

Susan had to leave her friends at Homedale. She joined a new scout troop at Sharon. The other girls had been together all four grades before. Susan felt left out. It wasn't a happy year for her.

In 1955 the Salk Polio vaccine had been made available to the children in Columbus and parents breathed easier the following summer. Susan had the vaccine in 1954 when second graders had been used as a pilot test. It had been stopped abruptly because of some cases in California attributed to bad vaccine from the Lilly Co. Fortunately, there were none in Columbus and whatever had gone wrong was now corrected.

Mel had stayed in the Army Reserves after he received his commission. He had been investigated and cleared for classified information, no restrictions. He held the rank of Captain now and was Commanding Officer of the CID (Criminal Investigation Detachment), Reserve Unit at Ft. Hayes. They met Tuesday evenings and Mel always came home for dinner that night. Tuesday night dinners were special ones. Other weeknight dinners with only the girls and me might be anything. Susan ate a variety of foods; Dana, for some time, was a peanut butter & jelly, with milk fan.

Every summer the reserve unit would go for two weeks of training. I remember the year that Mel came home covered with chigger bites. I counted 40 under one arm and stopped counting. He was miserable, even ran a temperature.

In 1958, Mel and one of his Second Lieutenants, Frank Peterfy, were required to take a 14-week Military Police Officer Course at Ft. Gordon, Georgia. They wanted a car while they were there and since Frank and Bev only had the one car, they left on January 1<sup>st</sup>, driving our turquoise and white, snazzy, hardtop convertible we'd bought the fall before. I was left with the clunker and hoped it would get me through that time. Actually, it didn't behave too badly, refusing to the start only a couple of cold mornings and just one flat tire coming home from Chillicothe. Fortunately, it happened in South Bloomfield with a convenient Sohio station near.

Before he left, Mel opened a checking account. It is very hard for me to believe now, that until now, we had been married 14 years and had paid all our bills in person when we could, or by money order if we couldn't.

While Mel was gone, Jerry Feddersen collected Mel's checks from the Recreation Dept. and deposited them for us at the downtown branch. I found how easy it was – "why hadn't we opened one before!"

Taking care of bills by writing checks might have been easier but everything else was harder! It was a terrible winter, shoveling snow was tiresome but I only needed to clear the front walk & porch for the mailman and back walk to the garage but getting the garage doors open (they weren't the overhead kind we have now) and the car out of the icy alley was another matter!

I hadn't realized how much we would miss him. I know the girls did and I ached to have him back. When Mel had been gone seven weeks, Mom Dodge offered to stay with the girls for a weekend so I could go to Georgia. The only way I could go over the weekend would be to fly and I had never flown. I was very frightened at the idea and if I hadn't needed to see Mel, I would never have gone.

Nora took me to the airport and I vividly remember the walk to the plane. Walking down death row couldn't be dreaded much more. But I walked, I boarded the plane. I remember the plane taxiing down the field. I remember looking down as it left the ground and started to climb. I loved it! I loved the flight back!

That weekend helped me get through the next 7 weeks. The graduation program would be April 11<sup>th</sup>. That was Easter!

I decided to take the girls out of school, take the train to Augusta, go to the ceremony and drive home with Mel. (Bev had gone down with her two preschoolers, got an apartment and spent the last month there. Frank would drive home with them, of course.) Mel was able to get us into the Officer's guest house so it would be only cost us the train tickets one way and a motel room for one night on our way home. The girls had never ridden on a train and I told them how much fun it would be. I explained how you rented pillows and slept in your seat. They were excited.

We would leave Columbus late morning. There was several hours between trains in Cincinnati and then late afternoon we'd leave there, spend that night on the train, get into Augusta early afternoon on the second day.

I thought I had planned well. We would be able to eat our lunch and have another snack if they wanted it in Cincinnati. I packed apples and raisins, a few cookies. When I bought the tickets, I'd been told there was no diner but there was an early morning stop where a vendor would board the train with coffee, milk and sweet rolls. You could order hot chicken lunches that would be brought to the train at noon. At the last minute I stuck in a couple individual boxes of dry cereal.

All went as planned. The girls were awed by the train station in Cincinnati. I had been there only once before - that zoo trip with Norman before I had even met Mel. The girls had hot dogs for lunch. They were too excited to eat much. We didn't have as much time as I thought -- there wasn't time for a second snack but I bought candy bars for all of us to eat later.

At first, the train was fun. Dana was intrigued with a tiny girl named Samantha. She rolled the name around on her tongue, over and over. She was going to have a baby when she grew up and call her 'Samantha'.

Going to the bathroom on the train was a new experience. There were many trips.

They ate their candy bars, their apples, most of the raisins. I finally got them settled for the night. I don't remember much about the night so I assume they slept.

The breakfast stop was very early. By the time the vendor got to our car, the sweet rolls were gone. He still had milk and I dug out the cereal. The girls drank their milk and ate the dry cereal. It wasn't much of a breakfast but it wouldn't be long until lunch. I ordered and paid for it. I was hungry and it sounded so good -- hot fried chicken, home-baked biscuits, mashed potatoes, a vegetable; individual baskets for each of us. All were foods that both girls like.

We were all tired of riding, the scene from the windows was just unexciting flat, brown country. It was only halfway through the morning and already I'd been asked half a dozen times how much longer until we'd be there. I kept reminding them of lunchtime, how much fun it would be; eating from your own basket on a train! I knew that would be a diversion, take up some time. After lunch it would be only a short time before Augusta.

We heard the train's shrill whistle, was jerked almost out of our seats as the train tried to stop and then heard and felt the impact. The train jerked, slowed, jerked us once again. Stopped.

No one in our car was hurt. We weren't even sure the train had hit something but the train had stopped. That was certain.

The conductor came through, checking to see if everyone was all right. He asked us to stay in our seats, not to leave our car. Our train had hit a stalled automobile on the tracks. He didn't know anything else to tell us.

On a later trip through our car, he told us that no one had been hurt. The occupants of the car had been able to get out when they heard the train coming. The car was mangled, strewn over the tracks.

We were over two hours late before the tracks were cleared and our train could proceed. There was nothing left to eat, everyone was cross and tired and hungry.

We got our lunches, finally, two hours late. They were cold and unappetizing. The chicken wasn't too bad, but the cold mashed potatoes and biscuits were pronounced 'Yucky'. Fortunately, the train was trying to make up time and we got to our station almost as soon as they were finished and we'd brushed off the crumbs; & washed our hands and faces.

It hadn't been like the wonderful train trips my mother and I had taken when I was a child but I was sure Susan and Dana would remember it! And there at the station, waiting for over two hours, was who we had come to see -- their daddy.

We settled in the guest house. They had given us two rooms. They certainly weren't plush but they were clean and adequate.

Mel still had classes to attend so we found a spot where Susan and I could sit in the warm sun. It was warm and Dana played in the sand. I had brought out a towel and she took a short



nap there. When the girls tired of that, I took the car and we drove out of camp. I remember a park or preserve with a lake. We took pictures.

Easter came. The girls got the usual foil-wrapped chocolate eggs from Eagles in their slippers. They didn't seem to miss Easter baskets. I am sure they'd been fore-warned before we left home.

We went to the Graduation, watched them hand out the diplomas. We were introduced to the rest of the class; several were soldiers from Thailand.

We were packed and ready to start home. If we started as soon as the ceremony was over, we could drive part way that evening, stay all night and get home the next day. The girls could go back to school on Thursday.

We just got started when we had to stop and let Dana out. She was carsick vomiting. We started again and had to stop again. Dana often got carsick but never this bad -- maybe, it wasn't that. I felt her forehead -- she didn't have a fever.

We wouldn't get home if we kept stopping. So, we made another stop -- this time at a grocery store where we bought paper bags. What a shame! The mountains in Tennessee are so beautiful. Dana didn't feel like looking at them and I was too busy with her to appreciate them. I wonder how Mel and Susan remembered that day.

We stopped in West Virginia someplace for the night. Dana stopped vomiting but she didn't want to eat.

On the way home next day she told me, "My ear keeps talking to me". When we got home and she still insisted that something was talking in her ear, I syringed out her ear with warm water. I could not believe my eyes, she turned her head to let the water drain out, and with it was a tiny red spider about 1/4 of the size of a pin head, still kicking. And that was the end of the talking ear.

I imagine when she took her nap in the sand it had crawled in her ear it. It certainly was an eventful trip. I was glad we were home all together again.

In January 1959, Columbus was hit with the worst floods since the flood of 1913. Much of the near West Side, commonly known as the Bottoms, was underwater. Over on Leland Ave, the Frith's watched the river get closer and closer to their house. Several of the houses at the bottom of Girard had several feet of water in the basements. We had my sister Ollie's grandson "Chip" and daughters Kelly and Norma Ann from Chillicothe with us because they were fighting flood waters and Chip's baby brother Billy was born during that time. Chip and Kelly were 2 and 5. Norma Ann had come to help care of them.

After the water had receded and the little ones had gone back home, Mel and I helped Emmett Seely clean his clean up his store “The West Side Hardware” and house -- much was destroyed.

In Aug. 1959, Mel was appointed as the third supervisor in the Recreation Dept. Miss Jones and Jerry Feddersen were the other two. Jerry had been given a provisional appointment in October 1956 but when the civil service tests were given in April '57, Jerry had only placed 5<sup>th</sup>. Mel was 2<sup>nd</sup> and after a longer than normal delay had been appointed to that position in June, but resigned 2 weeks later enabling Jerry to move up to 4<sup>th</sup> place. When the third-place candidate moved and didn't leave a forwarding address, Jerry could be appointed. Publicly, Mel claimed that there had been no pressure for him to resign but Jerry was Mel's friend; he had been in that position for 6 months and it would have been hard for him to be demoted. (Besides that, Miss Jones favored Jerry and that was all right with me. I was never fond of Dorothy Jones.) Now in 1959, a third position was opened. (Mel had asked when he had his name removed from the list that it be replaced for any future openings.)

The centers were divided between the three and Mel was given Sunshine, Eleventh Ave., Windsor Terrace, Sullivant Gardens, Glenwood, and the new Whetstone Center built in 1957.

The North end community around Whetstone was not happy with the down-town control of the center and Mel's first and most pressing task facing him was to smooth the troubled waters.

In 1959, I was pregnant again. This time I wasn't so positive. I wanted another baby, had ever since I had miscarried three years before, but I was 34 and not so naïve. I knew what it cost to raise children now. Susan was twelve and Dana eight. We had decided we really couldn't afford another child. But Mel said “If this is the worst thing that ever happens to us, we'd be blessed.” He was always so positive.

There was another fear, nagging at the back of my mind. I felt great, no morning sickness, just a little tired. I'd felt terrible the first months with both girls. I'd felt good that last pregnancy. Was there a connection? I kept remembering what Dr. Zartman had said in the hospital.

The fourth month passed and I felt better. I put that disturbing remark about imperfect fetuses out of my mind -- or thought I did. I hadn't mentioned it to anyone -- not even Dr. Zartman.

I wore a maternity smock for the first time to the State Fair. I told the girls. Nora gave me her Tommy's crib and I painted it, moved the TV set and couch from the extra bedroom to the basement. I made new curtains. I'd given almost all the baby clothes away so I had to get new ones. Nora gave a baby shower for me. At Christmas time, Mel bought a clothes dryer from Seeley's Hardware and Emmett installed it while Nora kept me busy at her house making cookies. Mel wanted to surprise me. The dryer was the first we'd owned

The baby was due on Valentine's Day. Mel's birthday was the 15<sup>th</sup>. The baby would make a nice 36<sup>th</sup> birthday present.

In January I began having back pains -- they were like beginning labor pains and I'd get out of bed to wait for harder ones -- and then drop back to sleep. February arrived I didn't really expect the baby on Mel's birthday. Both other babies had been late. It was leap year, maybe February 29<sup>th</sup>.

Valentine's Day was on Sunday. Windsor Terrace Recreation Center was being dedicated; it was one of Mel's centers and he left for the day. I went to the bathroom couldn't believe it -- I was going to have a baby on the day it was due!

I baked a cake read the Sunday paper, did a little cleaning, checked my bag for the hospital. I called Nora to tell her my news. She insisted on taking the girls home with her for the night. They had school the next day but she swore it would be easy for her to bring them to the bus stop next morning. Mel wouldn't have to go for Mom Dodge until the next day.

About five-thirty I decided I'd better not wait -- I called Mel to come home -- the ceremony was over -- the janitor could clean up without his supervision.

When he came home, I decided we'd better check in at University. Checked in, prepped, put in the labor room, the nurse came in telling me that my husband had given orders that I was not to deliver until after midnight. For once, I didn't think much of his humor. Time seemed to be standing still.

I wished Mel could have been with me. With Susan he'd stayed until I was ready to deliver. Not at University in 1960 -- you were all alone with only a nurse coming in to examine you. It seemed like hours between her visits but I knew it wasn't.

The fear that I had put completely out of my mind -- well I'd hadn't. I tried not to think of imperfect fetuses. If nature goofs and doesn't get rid of the imperfect fetuses -- do they turn into imperfect babies? How imperfect?

At last Dr. Zartman came. It was time to start the caudle. There was a mirror rigged so you could watch the birth. I kept my eyes averted -- I was frightened of what it what might be.

The baby came. A voice said "It's a boy!" I dared to look. They laid him on my tummy. I began to shake. I couldn't stop. We had a son -- and he was OK. They took the baby away to be washed and dressed but I still couldn't stop shaking. My teeth were chattering. They put more blankets on me. I knew they were concerned -- but I still shivered. A nurse stayed with me. I began to calm down -- they let Mel come to me. I began to feel warm and sleepy -- and content.

We hadn't really planned for a boy -- we had decided we knew about girls; they were pretty nice; we'd like another, please. Now, we had a son -- oh yes, we'd keep him. When we

were first married, our dream plans had called for three boys. Our real family was complete now -- Susan and Dana and a son. Who would want anything else?

We had tossed names around. Dana like David, Susan like Steven, Mel wanted Michael, I liked Matthew. We compromised on Thomas, the only boy's name that the four of us could agree on. Thomas was Mel's paternal grandfather's name and that decided us. Besides, Nora's 3-year-old Tommy was so cute. Matthew went well with Thomas and we all agreed for it for his second name.

The second day at the hospital they came in to get the information for his birth certificate. Thomas Matthew Dodge, 6 lbs. 10 oz. born Feb. 14, 1960.

Nora came to the hospital in the afternoon and I told her that we copied from them. She was surprised we hadn't named him for his father. I assured her neither Mel nor I liked his name. I knew he would not want a son named Melvin. She was skeptical.

Mel came in that evening. I was positive but to prove Nora wrong I told him, "They came in for the baby's name today and I told them -- "Thomas Melvin." Mel's grin stretched from ear to ear. I couldn't wait for him to leave. I had to get to the desk and change that baby's name before it was recorded. And -- Thomas Melvin Dodge, 6 lbs. 10 oz. born Feb. 14, 1960, was official.

He might have been a good baby if he hadn't had colic. He was on medication for nine months. We started out with Dr. Larcomb but he had retired and though he still saw his old patients one day a week and agreed to take Tommy, it didn't work out. Dr. Kasmersky was recommended.

Tommy was a wiry, active baby. At four months he managed to get from one room to another if you left him on the floor. He developed wonderful finger coordination and loved to build things with his blocks.

Our Lassie was so jealous when I brought Tommy home from the hospital. She stayed under our bed for three days, coming out only to eat or to go outside.

Even when he crawled and came near her, she growled. He mimicked her. He called all dogs "Grrrr." At last, she accepted him. They ended up best friends. She lived nine more years, 18 years old, a good old age for a collie.

The girls were active in Girl Scouts; they went to established camp, Ken-Jockety every summer. Susan loved camping, she had good leaders. Dana liked Brownies but not half as much as the ballet and, later, dramatic classes she took at Whetstone Recreation Center. I think she only tolerated camp because Sue Frith and Becky Williams were tent mates.

Susan and I had bicycles; we really liked cycling. We brought Dana a bicycle for her birthday, eighth or ninth, I'm not sure. Mel taught her to ride and we all rode all over North Columbus. That must have been before Tom.

When Tom was born, Susan was already at Dominion Jr. High and halfway through the 7<sup>th</sup> grade; Dana, at Sharon Elementary in the 3<sup>rd</sup>. They needed transportation for all the meetings and classes they attended. My car was considered the bus to Whetstone by all the neighborhood kids Dana had recruited for Whetstone. Tom's schedule was always being interrupted and he spent half of his time in the car, it seemed.

I usually took Lassie with me, but on one Whetstone run the car was too full. She looked dejected. I should have taken time to put her in the house but I expected to be back in 20 minutes or so. She'd be waiting by the door when Tom & I got back.

She wasn't, but I didn't notice. It was much later when I realized she wasn't in the house. She wasn't anywhere. We all hunted and hunted. She didn't come home. It was cold out -- zero weather. Lassie had a thick coat but she wasn't used to being out. We called the animal shelter; she was wearing a collar with her tags attached. "No, no dogs had been picked up near Graceland -- none anywhere with that description".

Three nights passed. We still hunted but without much hope. Saturday morning came and Mel had to visit his centers. He took Dana along. He decided to stop at the Humane Center - just to be sure. He and Dana walked down the aisles, looking in cages. No welcome bark -- they turned to leave, disappointed. Walked down past the cages again. They found her -- huddled in the back of one of the dim cages, not in the group of animals to be adopted, but in the group destined for the gas chamber.

We couldn't believe they found her -- at least it looked like her. She was subdued, dirty, wore no collar. They were told she'd been picked up on Roberts Road, at least 20 miles away, only half an hour after we'd left her at home. She'd been running along a ditch, there was no collar. Because of these things or for some reason, we had been told she wasn't there. And we had called each morning, three different times.

On the way home she started acting like our Lassie. We thought she'd be angry with us; perhaps, she'd given up hope for coming home. We never knew how she got to Roberts Rd. nor where her collar had gone.

We were so happy to have her back.

The memories flood my mind. Most of them good.

These mid-life years flew. Susan finished junior high. She was chosen to go to Pelee Point with other Girl Scouts. The playhouse in the back burned, set by an arsonist who was caught several fires and several years later by an Arlington fire fighter, Jack Haney, who ironically, lived in one of the new houses built at the bottom of Girard Rd.

Susan played the flute in school and the school orchestra. Dana finished elementary; was so happy when she finally got braces on her teeth, practically lived at Whetstone Center, developed asthma again and started shots. Janie Wellinger, Dougie Snyder, and Debbie Husted from Glenmont kindergarten years had all moved after that kindergarten year. Dana, Sue and Steve were still friends. She and Sue were Mrs. Clark's, dramatics leader at Whetstone, willing slaves.

I got even more involved in Girl Scouts, became the Neighborhood Chairman when Tom was 3. Kar Mel Village housing development, Forest Park, and Devonshire were finished. Somehow, they became part of Sharon Girl Scout Neighborhood. It became my job to see that the troops were organized and leaders found. It was a big challenge but I thrived on it. Sharon Neighborhood had started out with 10 troops, including those at the Blind and Deaf Schools. When I finished my term three years later, we had over 40 troops, some of which had as many as 30-40 girls in them and the neighborhood had become so large, it was divided into two. I attended Macy, the National Girl Scout training center in New York one summer, for a week.

Susan was part of an active senior troop in another neighborhood. She loved scouting, was chosen as Senior Planning Board representative from her troop, elected to be Vice President of Senior Planning Board. Later, she was chosen, one of four scouts, to go to the National Girl Scout Convention in Miami, Florida. After the convention, there was a side trip to Nassau. She would stay the full 10 years in Girl Scouts.

Dana stayed, too, but only because I was her leader. Camping was not her cup of tea -- her allergies always acted up and one year our Cadette troop camped 8 times. I had two good assistant leaders. Nancy Ihnat took charge of all the music. Our troop was known for its singing and we were asked to perform at several council events. My other assistant, Ethel Norman kept all the girl's records, did all the paperwork. Another mother, Jody Jennings was always ready to help, drive, go camping with us. I was left free to help the girls with their badges and challenges. They were supposed to govern themselves and I did think they learned through trial and error to do that.

Dana didn't always think so, but it was a good troop. We never had a waiting list, we accepted everyone who wanted to join. We had 50 members at one time -- the largest Cadette troop in the whole Seal of Ohio Council.

Tom didn't lack for playmates. On Girard and Leland, there were three other boys all born in 1960. Mitchell Thorne, Gary Rundio, and Steve Graham. John Mount was only a year older. Gary had two "stair-step" younger brothers, Ted and Charlie. When the boys became a little older, they added three more to our neighborhood list -- Jens and Kim Monk and Charlie Urban from Old Beechwold. Tom, Mitch, Steve, and Gary started kindergarten at Sharon. They joined the same Cub Scout den. Colleen, Gary's mother and I each were responsible for a month of meetings during the year. We pooled our months and drove them once a week to Thompson Swim Center for swim lessons. Now I had "Douglas Snyder" multiplied by four or five. It was

only once a week though and I understood boys a little better. You didn't ask -- you ordered them. Actually, it was fun.

On January 1<sup>st</sup> 1964 the *Citizen Journal* published the pictures of the "10 top men of Columbus." A reporter, Sam Purdue, had told me earlier, sworn me to secrecy. I could hardly wait for Mel to open the paper that morning. I was sure he had to know but he hadn't! When he saw the front page his usual poker face was nowhere to be seen; there was just delight and surprise.

It was one of the first public honors he was to receive. There would be many to follow it.

In January 1965, Mel's father died. He had suffered a massive stroke three years before. It was very sad -- his physical health improved a little; mentally there was none. Mom Dodge took care of him at home. At first it wasn't so bad. With help he could be led to a chair and spoon fed, even used a urinal if it was offered often enough. But as the months stretched into years, even this deteriorated. For the last six months he had lain in fetal position, needing everything done for him. Soft food had to be put into his mouth, his mouth held shut while you rubbed his throat to encourage him to swallow.

Ruth and Mel went home often, tried to spell their mother some. I helped, too, with laundry and staying with Dad while someone else took Mom to the store or to a doctor. For years I had taken her all the places she wanted to go but Mom was so nervous now, and Tom, the gentlest of little boys, made her even more so.

Mel often went just to help bathe or shave Dad; help change the bed. He gave enemas. Mel never ceased to amaze me. He was so neat and so fastidious about his own personal care; I had never dreamed he would do the things he had to do. He had loved his dad very much and he did not want him in a rest home.

Mom was near a breakdown and even Mel had agreed a rest home was the only answer. Dad died quietly -- just stopped breathing before the move was made.

I took Tom to the funeral home, hoping he would remember the handsome old man in the blue suit and red tie instead of the curled up sad body in the bed. I knew he wouldn't remember him before his stroke. We had been out on Sunday, the day before, and Dad and Tom, just past two, had tossed a big ball between them. I had tried to keep that memory in Tom's mind but two is young. I doubt he remembers any of it.

Dad Dodge was buried in Greenlawn Cemetery in Columbus, beside Bruce and Nancy Ish, his in-laws, the people who had adopted his wife. Uncle Homer, his brother, was irked - all the Dodges were buried in Marysville.

In June Kody was married to Craig Wallace. After their honeymoon, they would live in Seattle. Craig was an engineer. He'd been hired by Boeing Aircraft.

It was a beautiful wedding. The ceremony was performed at Overbrook. Kody had been close to us; the Kricks lived near and Kody had been a frequent guest at our house. Ruth and Bob went out of town a lot and I was always home. Kody enjoyed our children. There were only a few years between Kody and Susan -- it seemed less. Our children were the only cousins she had -- she considered us her extended family. When she was little Mel (Uncle Barney, to her) reveled in hearing her wild tales and, much to Ruth's disgust, encouraged her to invent more. Even if Kody had been an unpleasant child, it would have been hard for us not to have her; Ruth and Bob were so good to our children. Their expensive birthday and Christmas gifts kept our children practically clothed, Mel & me, too.

But, back to the wedding -- Susan was Kody's maid-of-honor. Dana, fourteen, and tottering on her first high heels, was one of the bridesmaids and Tom in a pink linen jacket, short white pants and white oxfords was the ring bearer.

Bonita Sherman, older by two years, was the flower girl. She liked Tom and everyone had teased him so much that he didn't want to be in the wedding. I bribed him with promise of a new kitten to replace Putter-pat, our big male cat we had found dead in the alley.

The church is a beautiful church anyway and with the flowers and the pink dresses, it was awe-inspiring that day. As my children preceded Kody up the aisle, I had visions of them, walking down it again on their own wedding days. As it turned out, none of them would. It would be a long time until we'd gather again at Overbrook for a special family ceremony and it would be not be a happy one.

Mel's name began cropping up in newspapers. He was well-liked. Even people who opposed some of his ideas, respected and couldn't really dislike him. He had very few enemies. I don't want to make him into a saint. He had a memory like an elephant. He never forgot any intentional wrong or hateful thing. Sometimes it was years later but eventually that person was repaid -- and well. In the meantime, and afterwards, he seemed to be to bear no grudge, often working, hand in hand, to get something accomplished.

If I became miffed or upset about something he'd done or hadn't done he would never argue. He always found somewhere he had to go and when he returned, it was if I had never taken him to task. It was frustrating -- we could never have an argument to clear the air.

Sometimes the problem I'd complain about was ignored. More often, it didn't happen again. He just never said "I'm sorry" and he saw no need for me to say it either.

He joked, "I'd be the first person to admit I was wrong, if I was ever wrong." or about food, "I'd tell you if I didn't like it." These were meant to be funny but I'm afraid he saw a lot of truth in them.

If the children did anything wrong or foolish, I couldn't stop ranting or lamenting. Mel was sure they felt bad about it -- 'let it go'. He didn't cry over spilled milk.



I remember when Susan was little and took her father's Indian-head penny collection to school to share. A couple of the pennies were missing when she brought it home. I wanted to know how she could have been so careless -- Mel knew she already felt bad enough -- why should we make her feel worse?

On the other hand, he wasn't there and their responsibility was mine alone a great share of the time. I remember when things got a little tense between the little girls and me, when he was at home, he tried to lighten things up by telling them "What a mean old mommy you have." I knew he didn't mean it and I thought they knew it, too. Susan was older, she was probably wise to him but Dana, as an adult, said it never occurred to her that he was teasing. She had a mean old mommy and Daddy thought so, too.

I got some second-hand compliments that I treasured. Emmett Seeley came to put in a new sink. He told me how proud Mel was of the girls and that it was because Norma's such a good mother! I knew Mel loved me; approved but I would have liked to have been told more often. He'd had no trouble writing it but now the words didn't come so easy. I had to remember "actions speak louder than words."

In 1967, Nick Barack retired. The Recreation Commission had two good men to choose between. Mel and Jerry. Mel was hired as the Recreation Director. I knew the Commission had made the right choice. Mel appointed Jerry, Asst. Director.

Mel knew, to accomplish good things for Columbus, he would need influence and money from powerful people. His list of friends grew -- they included people like Governor Rhodes, Judge Kinneary, John Galbreath, the Wolfe family, Charles and Robert Lazarus. I could add pages of names. There were just as many people who had no influence and no money who were his friends. Ronnie Koch worshipped him, called him every few weeks to find out how Dodge and 'Little Susan' were. When Mel had been at Sunshine, even before we left the project, Ronnie had started coming to the center. He had cerebral palsy and was mentally-impaired. Mel had put him to work in the office answering the telephone. Ronnie felt important and Mel understood that. Ronnie loved Susan because she belonged to his hero.

Ronnie's parents died, first one, then the other. Mel went to the funeral home; Ronnie's married sister was taking him to live with her. The calls came less often but one day an excited Ronnie called; he was going to live in a group home. The calls continued with his progress, always asking about Little Susan. It's been almost 2 ½ years since I've heard from him. I hope he's still O.K.

I've left out so much I want to tell. Animals were always a part of our lives. Mel was always bringing something wild home. It started in our first apartment on Cherry Dr. Susan was probably 3, Mel in school.

Uncle Homer, Dad Dodge's brother, had a farm between Marysville and New California. He and Aunt Lucille were the parents of Joe -- Mel's "brother" at the N.Y.A. camp. They were

the parents of Jean, Judy, Ginny, Jim and Dick, too. Joe and Mel (everyone in Cally except his mother, dad, and sister, called him Barney) were the same age and Mel, who had no brothers, spent as much time as he could with them.

We went to Uncle Homer's often; he and Aunt Lucille reminded me of my family. I really loved them. They hadn't had grandchildren yet and Susan and Kody were much made over when we went.

At any rate, Uncle Homer wasn't very fond of the foxes who are nuisances on a farm. He would trap or kill the adult foxes to get rid of them, but it was hard for him to kill the babies he dug out of the den. Mel happened past and he sent him home with a tiny little one.

We found a box, found something warm to wrap him in, used the eyedropper from Susan's vitamins to feed him canned milk diluted with boiled water and a drop of Karo. It worked for babies and this was certainly a baby. He thrived and we named him 'Homer'. I added a drop of Susan's vitamin and taught him to lap from a saucer. He grew and was eating everything. We couldn't take him outside -- pets weren't allowed in the housing project. As Homer grew it was harder to keep him there.

He was half grown now all over the apartment. I was afraid he'd slip out a door when it was opened. And we couldn't afford to lose our apartment -- it was such a good deal. Reluctantly, Mel put him in his box and took him to Sunshine. He took him to the room upstairs that no one used. He papered the floor. He fed and kept fresh water down and Mel took Susan and me to visit before the Center opened. I don't know how long we kept him there. Eventually, he got too frisky there, too. He went the fate of most of our early wildlife. We dumped them on my mother and dad.

Dad loved Homer. I doubt if mother was quite as fond of him; most of his care would have been hers. He spent his time in the house, walking across the mantle in the dining room. Mother's mantle was always cluttered -- she saved everything -- rubber bands, buttons, needles, pins, thread, letters, half used boxes of patent medicines. She piled everything in glass dishes and tin boxes to be sorted and put away -- someday. They ended up on the mantle.

Homer would lift each foot dauntedly and cross the entire shelf without disturbing a solitaire item!

They built him a huge covered pen of chicken wire and put it in the middle of the front yard. He spent his time between the house and pen. Sometimes he dug out of the pen and they'd find him gone, but he always came back. Dad would fill in the hole, reinforce the pen.

One morning Mother went to find him and he was gone. She spied him in the field, headed towards home. At the same time, she saw the man with a raised gun. She ran screaming, "No! No!" It was too late. The hunter felt bad. Mother and Dad felt terrible -- if they'd thought about it being the first day of hunting season, they would have kept him in the house overnight.

I tried to rationalize. Homer had given us so much enjoyment. If we hadn't taken him, he would have met the fate of the rest of his litter; he always came back so he must have been content to be a pet. The truth was -- we did take him -- we taught him not to fear man -- and because of that he was dead.

I have forgotten something. Homer was not the first. When Mel first came home from the Army and we lived in the sub-let flat on Northwood Ave', we'd had another fox. Mel brought him home from Uncle Homer, too. This one was older and never became tame like Homer. We called him Junior and kept him in the basement. Mel bought a collar and leash and took him walking on Indianola.

Junior didn't like me. He'd nip me if I gave him the chance. Mel had to feed; clean up after him. We didn't keep him long. He was still wild. I am sure Dad took him to the woods and let him go.

After Homer there were no more wild animals until after we'd lived on Girard quite a while. We had Lassie, Putter-pat -- the tiny tiger kitten Tom chose at the Cattery the morning after Kody's wedding. That was Missy. We had Missy twenty whole years. Tom buried her here in our backyard. We let Missy have one litter before she was spayed.

We watched her deliver, wash the four little kittens. She settled down with them and I went to bed.

Next morning, when I checked, there were five. We named the last, "Me, Too". We found homes for Me, Too and two others right away. The all black one was pretty, we decided to keep him. "Ebony." We never found a home for the other kitten. It was a male, too, a tiger with a yellow cast to his coat; he became "Gopher". Missy was spayed. Ebony and Gopher were bigger than Missy. She had been a good mother but I guess she decided it was time for them to leave the nest, or maybe, she thought we had two cats too many. She started chasing them out of the yard and one morning, they were gone. We scoured the neighborhood, checked all the streets around. They hadn't been killed on the streets; no one had seen them. They never came back. Did Missy really make them leave?

Mel bought Coonie at a pet shop and brought him home. Coonie was a ringtail raccoon. He lived in the girls' playhouse and Mel and the girls were crazy about him. He walked on a leash and they took him to Graceland after the stores closed. (There was a time when stores did close around 6:30 -- I've almost forgotten. And before that there were blue laws; stores were always closed on Sunday, too.) There was a wishing well in Graceland between the Big Bear and the Penney's store. People threw in a few coins in and Coonie couldn't wait to get to the well. He'd hump down the sidewalk, climb the sides of the wall and over he'd go. I was horrified. Was Mel going to let him take the money? Coonie wasn't interested in money. It was the mints and candy wrappers he was after. Coonie would do anything for something sweet. He

was a good pet as far as wild animals can be good pets and he lived with us fat and healthy until we were told raccoons could get rabies and we should see that he got a rabies shot.

I don't believe there was a chance of him acquiring rabies. He was never with a wild animal, never out except on a leash. He did see Lassie but her shots were always current. But we listened, took him to the vet. No one told us rabies shots are almost always fatal to raccoons.

Then there was the time Dana entered a Diamond Milk Company coloring contest. The winner was to receive a live bunny. She hadn't started to school. She watched for the milkman every day. She was certain she'd win.

One afternoon to my surprise, 'Diamond Joe' knocked at the door. He looked a lot more like Dick Knipfer, who worked for Mel at Sunshine, than 'Diamond Joe' to me.

'Diamond Joe' asked for Dana. He produced the white bunny she had won – and - her picture was so good, there was a gray one for her big sister, too!!

I was a little upset when I found out 'Diamond Mel' had chosen a male and a female. (Bud and I had had rabbits once.)

We had a hatch hutch made, put the bunnies in it.

Labor Day weekend was coming up. We were driving to Virginia Beach. The 'Mertz' next door was going to feed Lassie and the bunnies.

It was a good weekend. Now, I can't imagine going someplace like Virginia Beach without a reservation but we did, and we found a place on the third floor of an old hotel across the street from the beach. I remember a dip in the ocean with the girls.

Mostly, I remember the Yoders. The Yoder family were Amish and had lived in Cally. Mel had gone to school with Al and Chris. He knew they lived near Virginia Beach and called Al. We were invited to Al's house. Chris and a third brother, Lester were there. Chris insisted on showing us his house, too. It was on an island and you could have put our whole house in his garage. They had learned carpentry from their Amish people during World War II, had ended in Norfolk and started building boats. We were told the yard they owned could turn out a yacht in one day. The Yoder boys had done alright!

We stopped at Mt. Vernon, stayed at a motel on Route 40, then spent the next day in Washington, DC.

The big trip over; we turned down the alley at home and saw Dana's white bunny hopping there. The gray bunny had had her first litter. The Mertz' didn't know about rabbits; they called the veterinary college and were told that the male would eat the new babies. She had nowhere to put the white rabbit so she had turned him loose.

We caught him easy. I don't know why we bothered. By the end of the next summer, we had 57 rabbits. We had just turned the garden over to them. Everything was eaten to the ground. They took up residence under the playhouse. It was strange but Pitter-pat who'd caught many wild rabbits, never bothered our bunnies. He seemed to know they belonged to us. Animals are so much smarter than we give them credit for being.

We picked up and kept a baby opossum for a short time. There was a skunk, deodorized and from a pet store, smelled so bad I made him a home in the basement's deep window well. One morning he was gone. I felt bad about that because his defense was gone, but he had a place to go. Even though we lived in Columbus and behind a busy shopping center, it was only yards to what was called in our street plat, 'Delawanda Park'. At that time, it was several wooded acres of river-front separating Graceland, Girard, Leland, Rathbone, and Delawanda Avenues from the Olentangy River.

Back then, no one but the neighborhood residents went there. It was a great place for taking Lassie, picking wild violets. It wasn't mowed; there were daisies, thistles, ragweed and puddles, fun to slide on when it froze. It was a safe refuge for the rabbits, squirrels, raccoons, birds that lived there. They spilled over in our neighborhood, overturning garbage cans, nibbling the flowers, vegetables. I don't remember anyone being upset about them though -- I know we weren't.

There was another fox called "Sweetie-Pie" and another whose name eludes me. None of these stayed long times but while we had them, we loved them. They had all been rescued either from Uncle Homer or a pet shop. We never took anything from the wild.

I was glad Mel's need to have wild things around didn't apply to snakes and mice. Kody loved snakes and would let the garden and black ones that we found sometimes in the flower beds run all over her hands and arms. I wouldn't have hurt them but I was happy to see them slither away.

We had two parakeets at different times. The blue one, a gift someone didn't want, was adopted while we were still at the project. He had moved with us to the west side and then to Girard. When he died of old age, my mother replaced him with a green one, "Tweety". Tweety was displaced and moved to the TV room in the basement when Tom was born. Tweety was a good pet. He could be let out of his cage, let fly in the house; you held your finger out and he'd land on it.

I remember the time he flew, slipped or somehow ended up behind the gas cooking stove and the kitchen wall. The kitchen was so tiny, the appliances were wedged beside each other and it was a major operation to get him out. The refrigerator had to be pulled and shoved out so that I could reach behind the stove for him. I was so afraid I'd scrunch him in the process but he was retrieved; his feathers were dusty, greasy. Good as new though. when I got him cleaned up.

In later years, Lassie died while Dana was home on Christmas break, the freshman college year. My mother raised Australian terriers and she gave a registered pup to Tom. We named him “Hercules” and he was joined by “Sampson”, another Aussie, six months later. Sampson was meant as a gift for Kody but we ended up keeping him. We lost Sampson with cancer, when he was 10 but Herkie lived almost 15 years with us.

Tom brought home a hamster but “Hammy” was killed by the Aussies in the middle of the night. He slept in a cage in Tom’s room; managed to get loose. It was terrible for Tom -- I was afraid he would hate Herk and Sam. I tried to explain that they’d been bred to kill rats. “Hammy” was new; they didn’t realize he wasn’t a rat.

Tom brought home some little mice from the pet store in Graceland. We rented an old beat-up garage across the alley for \$3 a month and Tom kept them there. Mice multiply even faster than bunnies and he soon had a garage full. When he got so many that they weren’t fun anymore he gave them to the pet store, the ones that didn’t escape -- and I’m sure not by accident. He knew the pet store fed them alive to their snakes. I wouldn’t be surprised if the house on Girard and Leland aren’t plagued with part white mice yet today!

And then there was the Thor, a beautiful fox (from uncle Homer again). Thor was special. He had his own house in the dog pen, formerly our garden. The Aussies lived in the house but as more houses had been built, traffic was much heavier and no one let dogs run free if they loved them. We’d converted that area to a place for them to exercise and play. Truthfully, it hadn’t been for been a garden for many years -- the red raspberry bushes were still there but the rhubarb never came back after the rabbit years. There had been swimming pools, the cement-set pole for the tether-ball and the elephant on a spring that Mel had brought home for Tom when he was a baby. The area was separated by a rail fence with a gate under the red rose arbor, where the doves always built flimsy nests that came down when the wind blew. At some time, we’d added poultry wire behind the rail fence to keep whatever animals we had at the time inside.

Thor was the last fox for us. He was so sweet and friendly. Mel walked him all over the neighborhood. Everybody knew him -- we never heard anyone complain. We would let him out to run in the pen with Herkie and Sam. They had so much fun together. Thor especially loved [when we gave him a piece of] chicken, he would run with it and bury it -- to be eaten later we suppose.

Tom especially loved Thor. He was playing with him one evening when without warning Thor began to convulse. We took him to the vet where he died. There was an autopsy. They told us that Thor had been poisoned & traces of a common rat poison were found. I could not believe anyone poisoned Thor and I still don’t.

I had a theory which I couldn’t prove. I believed Thor had dug up and eaten one of his buried chicken pieces and it was contaminated. I had read that poisons can still be lethal in landfills for years. The little playhouse the children used had been a chicken house once before

we moved there. I remembered my dad putting out rat poison around his chicken house. He would poke it back under where the chickens would not get to it. I believed that could have happened and I didn't want to believe that any of our neighbors hated Thor -- or us.

Susan finished Junior High, went to Whetstone High School. She had volunteered as junior camp leader at Indian Village Day Camp and when she was old enough, she was hired as a leader there. She had saved her money and it paid for her tuition at Ohio State. We paid for her books. She lived at home. Sometimes I took her to classes, sometimes she rode the bus.

Her Aunt Ruth Krick encouraged her to join a sorority. Ruth graduated from OSU and I knew she felt cheated because there hadn't been money for her to do the things she wanted to do. She had been disappointed when Kody had no interest in sororities. Ruth told Susan she'd pay the Sorority fees. Rush week came & Susan became an Alpha-Xi-Delta. Ruth was as good as her word. She paid her fees all four years and at least one quarter. Susan lived at the house. It was a luxury we couldn't afford. It was a very generous thing for Ruth and Bob to do.

Dana was at Whetstone now. It had only been four years since Susan had started there, but so much had happened in our society that there was little comparison. We were into the Space age, trying to keep up with the Russians; the fight for equal rights for the Negro was being waged. The nation was beginning to be concerned with the misuse of the environment. President Kennedy had been shot and killed. Lyndon Johnson was President and we were in the Vietnam War. Black riots and burning of ghettos, killing of at least 40 persons, injuring thousands, had happened as close as Detroit.

All this unrest and violence was reflected in the students' behavior. I began hearing about drugs, the girls' dresses were so short, they seemed to be no more than a blouse with a wide belt, morals dropped, they'd lost their faith in their elders.

I wasn't as aware of all of this as I should have been. Our family was intact; I didn't feel threatened. Tom was in elementary school. He had started in first grade the same year Susan started to college. Dana was a freshman in high school. I was still involved in Girl Scouts, headed the library at Sharon school.

The City Division of Parks and Forestry merged with the Recreation Department in 1973. Mel's responsibilities were growing. He had served on Hubert Humphrey's Youth Council. He had been proud when Vice President Humphrey had come to Columbus to participate in the dedication of Blackburn Recreation Center. The department kept growing.

He had inherited Mr. Barack's secretary and when she became pregnant and left, he brought an employee from the Parks Division to City Hall to be his private secretary. Her name was Peggy Penn and she became invaluable to him.

Peggy was a lot like me. As she settled into the new position, she kept things running smoothly. Mel trusted her judgment there, just as he did with mine and home. We loved Mel but we didn't think he was a god. Between us we kept his feet on the ground.

Besides being so capable, Peggy was a young, attractive, black. Today there would be no need to add the last but in 1968, we had a white City Hall. Mel knew that that had to be changed.

My girls were growing up. Susan's personality was far more like mine. When Susan decided she was old enough for her hose, lipstick, whatever, she fought for permission. Dana always at a younger age, just showed up wearing the same things and we hardly noticed. I was sure when Susan was ready, she'd choose a person who we could accept and approve of. Dana was another story. She had lots of good friends, boys and girls. When she started dating, we already knew a lot of the boys -- the others were boys we liked. Mel was more critical than I, but the things he found fault with were insignificant. Then, just before her junior year she started dating Frank Sefranek. Frank's big brother, Tom, and Kody had dated all through college. We all thought Tom was the one she would marry. Neither Mel nor I liked Frank. He picked Dana up, wearing jeans with holes in the knees, a red handkerchief tied around his head. He was polite but you felt an undercurrent of scorn. He was anti-everything, too manipulative, too possessive of Dana. He even seemed sinister to me. Frank was a year older than Dana and when he left Columbus to attend an art college in Florida, we breathed a sigh of relief.

The recreation dept. supervised a playground at the State Fair. Susan met a handsome OSU dental student there; both of them hired as recreation leaders for the summer. Jim Marsico asked her to go out with him. The school quarter that followed Susan was living at the Alpha Xi house. I knew she was dating Jim but she was also dating an agriculture student. Susan had never been one for confidences but I had the impression that Ed was her favorite. How wrong I was!

We began to plan for a June wedding. Jim's parents were of Italian heritage and large weddings are traditional to them. Susan knew we were low-key and would prefer a small wedding. Mel and I compromised. Their wedding, June 7, 1969 seemed large to us. I'm sure it seemed a very quiet one for the groom's side.

They chose to be married at Our Lady of Peace. Jim's faith would not allow them to be married at Overbrook. It was a lovely wedding, a beautiful bride, a handsome groom.

Rev. Dronsfield, our minister from Overbrook and Monsignor Rhiel, from Our Lady of Peace shared the officiating. The bride's attendants wore yellow. Kody came from Seattle to join three of Susan's sorority sisters and Dana. Susan and Jim's brothers, 9 & 11, were part of the wedding party. Tom carried the ring; David the Holy Water. There was a reception at the Athletic Club downtown.

The wedding had occupied my mind in time for months. Dana's coming high school graduation had been almost completely ignored.



Three days later I sat in the bleachers at Whetstone scanning the line of graduates as they were given their diplomas. It wasn't hard to pick out Dana -- she stood out. There she was, wearing the most wrinkled, unpressed gown in the whole line. Her cap was perched on the back of her head.

I felt so guilty. I shouldn't have -- she was quite capable of pressing her own gown. It just hadn't occurred to her it needed it. She was oblivious to its state. If someone had mentioned it, she would have shrugged her shoulders -- it didn't matter. That was Dana.

Richard Nixon was our president now. He had defeated Hubert Humphrey the year before. George Wallace had been a third candidate. In 1968 both Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were assassinated. In March of '69 World War II hero and ex-president General Eisenhower died. In July, Neil Armstrong walked on the moon.

My 89-year-old dad talked to Mel about the moonwalk. He had watched the T.V. pictures. So much had happened in his lifetime, he went out looked up at the moon. He was sure the pictures had been fake, taken out in the desert somewhere. He was skeptical -- but long before he died 11 years later, he confessed that he had been wrong.

Jim and Susan had an apartment in Grandview. Jim was back in Dental School; Susan taught first grade in Kirkersville.

Dana started college at Ohio University. In four years, tuition had sky-rocketed. Mel was making more money now but Dana would need a student loan. She had no trouble getting one with the Columbus Municipal Credit Union. We borrowed only the smallest amount that we couldn't squeeze out of our budget. We had a horror of being in debt. Except for car & house loans and Lazarus and Penney's accounts that were never allowed to pile up, we had never owed any money.

In 1968, Mel had taken a week's vacation and we had our first vacation in Florida. I felt sorry that Susan couldn't go. But she was just beginning her time at the sorority house and that eased my conscience. We liked Siesta Key and went back almost every year through the 70s and 80s.

Those first years a whole group from Columbus would go, getting apartments on Siesta Key. They were great vacations but after that first one I really doubted if Mel would ever want to go back.

We were leaving in the wee hours of the morning on April 5<sup>th</sup> (I hadn't realized until now but that was the date Mel got home from the service. It had been 22 years before. How could that much time have lapsed?) and on the evening before, Martin Luther King was killed. Jim and Shirley Richards and the girls and our family had reservations in Atlanta for the next night.

We checked in at the motel late afternoon. It was warmer there than at home, but too cold for everyone except Tom to try the outside pool. We ate dinner, but it was early yet and Mel and Jim decided to take a look at down at Atlanta's downtown.

There were police everywhere, people congregating on corners. Very few cars, some streets were barricaded. They decided to go back to the motel. When they listened to the news at eleven, they understood. King's body had been brought home to Atlanta that evening. There was a plea out for people to stay away from the downtown area. If Jim & Mel had stayed just a little longer, they would have been caught in some ugly scenes.

We left very early the next morning. Everything was quiet. The radio reported that the rioting that Atlanta had feared had been averted.

It's a long ride from Atlanta to Sarasota! When we finally got there the next day, Ginny Young (wife of John Young, Columbus city attorney) was waiting for us. Ginny, John and their two boys had already been there a week. Ginny was just ready to go on a walk on the beach, there was only an hour more of sun, would we like to join her?

I declined, wanting to get the suitcases unpacked & check out the place we had rented. Mel looked disappointed so I suggested he go with Ginny. I had Dana and Tom to help me. Mel had driven the whole way and he needed to unwind.

It was hot. I don't remember the temperature but I remember that the blacktop was too hot to walk across barefooted.

Well, Dana and I, unpacked put up the towels we had brought, brought in the groceries. It was it was only one large room with two couches that let out, stove, refrigerator, table and chairs, and a television set. Everything was clean and almost new. It was on the second floor, had an outside balcony covered with new, blue outdoor carpeting. (I have no idea what was on the floor inside!) We had made the reservations from a list of places that John Young had given us & we hadn't known what to expect. Actually, it was quite nice, considering we only paid \$100 for the whole week for the four of us.

Mel, carrying his shoes and stockings came back filled with words of praise. The sand was so white and soft, water in the Gulf so warm! They'd been out over an hour and Mel, who could look at the sun and turn brown, had already begun to tan.

That walk was almost all Mel saw of Florida. When he went to bed, the tops of his feet and ankles were pink and tender. The next morning, they were so swollen, the skin looked like it would burst, they hurt too much to stand on, let alone walk. I could tell he was running a temperature.

I checked at the office; they gave me their doctor's phone number and Jim Bell, Columbus Water Superintendent, helped me get him to the car. The doctor said it was a really

bad case of sun poisoning; gave him a shot, some water pills, told him to stay off his feet and soak them in the bathtub several times a day in cool water and keep them out of the sun.

Mel did not miss one detail of Martin Luther King's funeral. He was a prisoner and the T.V. his only resource while the rest of us, covered ourselves with sun tan lotion, and walked the beaches, built sandcastles, and played in the breakers. By Friday he could stand on his feet and on Saturday there were almost normal and he was able to start the drive home.

Everyone in the group that year told someone else at City Hall and they teased Mel unmercifully. In the years that followed, Mel always wore his shoes and socks in Florida. He walked on the beach with his shoes and socks. He loved to lay on a lounge beside the pool soaking up the sun. He wore his swim trunks and his socks.

Mel loved the sun – he tanned so fast, got so dark. He'd lay his arm, always darker, next to me, Dana, Tom, everyone, and say "I'm not getting any sun". His face was dark, his arms, his legs -- except for the white line that started about four inches above the ankle bone and went to the soles of his feet. Bill Paterson of radio and TV fame, termed it "virgin skin" and it caught on. The teasing continued.

Mel paid Bill back. They both lay by the pool hour after hour. Mel got dark but Bill didn't tan that quickly. Mel told him it was because he moved around too much. Bill lay stiff as a poker for several sun sessions. He was full of chagrin when he realized he had been had.

Dana hadn't been in college very long until Frank left his school in Florida and enrolled at O.U. Yuk!

When Dana left for O.U., she wasn't happy about going. It had been her choice but now she was reluctant to go. She had been accepted in the School of Dramatics, but she had auditioned for a scholarship and hadn't received one.

I had taken her and listened to all the try-outs. There had been two who stood out above the others. Dana was one of the two. It wasn't just my opinion -- I heard the same consensus from the audience. I never doubted Dana would not receive one and I don't think Dana did either. We found out that the scholarships were not awards on talent only. There were other considerations, the school was short of males; they needed minority students.

The disappointment dampened Dana's enthusiasm. She didn't want to go to O.U., she didn't want to consider O.S.U., and she didn't want to go anywhere.

She was enrolled at O.U. and since she hadn't come up with a better plan, I ignored her lack of enthusiasm, drove her to Athens and helped her settle in.

At home the next two months were low points in my life. When one of my children was unhappy, I was unhappy, too. (I think most mothers react that way.) I felt guilty that I had insisted that she give O.U. a chance. Both my girls had left the nest. Mel did not seem to think

there was any problem -- he actually seemed happier with the reduced confusion in our tiny house. I resented that he wasn't feeling as unhappy as I was.

In September we were married twenty-five years -- I criticized Mel's gift. I had taken up golf; talked Nora into taking lessons, too, and Mel had brought me my first pair of golf shoes. They were the right size, a good brand, Etonic. Please don't ask me why I wasn't pleased. I know I'd have been less pleased if he'd bought me a silver tea set or a piece of silver jewelry - they wouldn't have interested me at all. Everything irked me. Perhaps it was a letdown after Susan's wedding. I didn't like myself.

As I look back now, I really believe it was the empty nest syndrome. I don't remember how long it lasted -- but I remember how unhappy I was -- and that is not my nature.

Dana's letters told me she was becoming more and more interested in her classes in spite of herself. That made me feel better. Susan and Jim seemed happy; they kept in touch. They had no laundry facilities and I offered to do theirs --it was no problem and I knew I'd see them at least once a week.

The library at Sharon Elementary School took up so much of my time. It was run completely by volunteers. The PTA had a fun fair each year to make money to buy the books. Children donated books on their birthdays. I asked the teachers for suggestions and searched book stores and catalogues for the best bargains.

Mothers volunteered as librarians to check out the books and to help children find the ones they wanted. It wasn't always easy. Books weren't coded, just put in categories and librarians had different ideas about these. We decided to incorporate the Dewey Decimal system into our library. We did it but it took almost a school year to finish it.

Not all elementary schools in Columbus had their own libraries and I'm sure no one had more or better books or a system as good as ours. The school board saw a need and part time librarians were hired for the schools. I was offered the job at Sharon. What was a plus for most schools was going to be so much less than Sharon was used to having. I knew the children and the staff would be unhappy. Tom would only have another year at Sharon so I just volunteered to help the paid librarian on the half day a week that the library would be open.

Tom was easygoing; the girls had been thrilled with a baby brother. They vied with each other for his attention. He had had a lot of attention but, at the same time, with the girls 9 and 12 years older, and their activities and needs more pressing, he rarely came first.

I don't remember any problems we had with Tom those elementary years. The boys from the neighborhood usually ended up in our back yard. Mel had a loft put in the garage with the ladder and it was a calling card for all of them.

Tom's grades in school weren't as good as the girls had been but they weren't below average. Teachers did comment that he could excel if he would exert himself. The same teacher

that had been so good with Dana was the worst for him. Later in High School, I read an assignment he'd written for an English class. In it, his only memory of that year, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, was watching a fly on the ceiling.

I worried about him, tried to prod him but neither the teachers or I had made much success. Mel didn't worry -- he accepted him as he was -- "he had just inherited Mel's father's disposition".

We still had Lassie but she'd suffered a stroke and would wander off, get confused. We knew her time with us was limited and Mother gave Tom one of her Aussie pups. Lassie did not seem to notice or care; we didn't have to feel guilty.

Herky was an absolute darling and at Christmas before Susan's wedding, Kody home for Christmas, fell in love with him wanted one to take home to Seattle. Mother didn't have any puppies at that time but there was another litter, same father, different mother 6 months later. We picked out one, had Mother keep him for us. We thought he would make a perfect gift for Kody when she came in June for the wedding. He would be just three months old, perfect!

Unfortunately, Mother brought him to us before the wedding. Kody loved him but she was going to Sarasota to see her paternal grandmother and asked us to keep him while she was gone. She'd pick him up a few weeks later on her way home.

When she came back, Kody got up nerve to tell us that she'd rescued a big dog from the pound in Seattle right after Christmas. He didn't like other dogs -- had attacked and almost killed another. She just couldn't take the puppy.

If she had told us when she first came, we would have taken him back to Mother. She never had trouble selling her puppies; there were few Australian Terrier breeders. But we had the puppy six weeks and while we would have had no trouble giving him to Kody, we were too attached to give him to someone else. We named him Sampson.

Two male terriers were a mistake. They never decided who was dominant and they fought. When the doorbell rang you had to separate the two snarling, biting, leaping dynamos before you could open the door. At first Sammy bore the brunt but as they grew older, Herk bore the most scars. We loved them both.

When they weren't fighting, they were the best companions. If Herky was tethered in the yard, Sam could be left free. He wouldn't leave without Herk but if Herky managed to get loose, away they both went, fast as the wind. A neighbor would call and the search would be on. When they were spotted, all you had to do was to open the car door and they jumped in -- good as gold, until next time.

When we moved and didn't have a fenced-in yard for them, Mel walked them every evening. They couldn't wait. I can still see him, so straight and tall. those two perky dogs, ears and stubby tails upright; Herk on a leash -- Sam walking by his side.

There was so much opposition to Vietnam. The youth of our country accused our generation of being too materialistic. Most of the accusers had never seen people hungry, unable to feed their children, never knew a mother who went barefoot so her children could have clothes for school.

To show their scorn, they purchased worn jeans, clothes from a second hand and army stores with their parents' money. I had a hard time sympathizing with them.

They pointed to us as being 'suburban backyard conformists' ignoring the country's needs. There was some truth -- but being in our own backyard had been the dream of World War II Veterans. There was no doubt that we had followed our country's leaders with little questions, but the almost 16 million G.I.s who came back from World War II had been taught to do just that. Those that didn't, didn't come back at all.

They were so righteous, so willing to point fingers. Today I look around our world -- there have been some strides made -- but is humankind in better shape?

At any rate there were protests and flag-burning on every campus and on May 4<sup>th</sup> 1970 everything exploded at Kent State. It was terrible, horrible, unbelievable!

My first act was to call Nora. Becky was at Kent State and I knew how frightened her mother would be. It was several hours before Becky could place a call. She was O.K.

O.U. closed, as did many Ohio colleges, to prevent more violence. Students were sent home.

It was an awkward time to have Dana home. Mel was going to Washington on official business., (I've racked my brain but I can't remember the reason), and I had decided that Tom at 10 was just the right age to benefit from a trip to our capital.

Whatever the reason, I know Mel had meetings in the House or Senate because he had chosen the hotel on the Hill so he would be close. I wasn't sure how an indignant protesting college freshman was going to fit into our plans. Dana was eager to go -- she knew that a group of O.U. students were going to be in Washington at the same time. She planned to join their protest.

We got to Washington and checked in. We were just a few steps from the Capitol, our car was taken to the garage. We were told all automobile traffic had been barred from the downtown streets, barricades were up. Maximum security measures were in force.

There was a small refrigerator in our room and we sent out for soft drinks. The hotel employee who brought them suggested a nearby restaurant for dinner.

At first, we were told there were no tables available, but when Mel gave them the name of the man who recommended the restaurant, they found one.

We were seated, given menus. The waiter left. Tom couldn't keep his eyes from a nearby table where a man and woman were knotted together. We opened the menus and gasped. Coffee was \$3.50 and this was in 1970 when you never paid over 50 cents for coffee in the very best restaurants in Columbus. Usually, it was only a quarter.

Entrees and dinners were extremely overpriced. There were no sandwiches, nothing that a ten-year-old wanted to eat. Mel would have made the best of it but I refused. It had been an overly long time since we've been seated. Tom's eyes were bugging. We left.

Outside it was getting dark. The streets were empty. There were no restaurants. It looked as if we'd go without dinner that night.

A policeman with a guard dog came out of a side street. He directed us to a small restaurant in the basement of a building not far from the White House.

We walked from the Capitol to the White House, and after some good reasonably-priced food, back up the Hill. Except for the few people in the cubby-hole restaurant, we saw no one except the guards and their dogs. We were stopped only once but eyed closely by all the rest. It was an eerie feeling.

Tom and I saw Washington. I'd been there a few years before with Mel (that time I know why - Mel was at the American Youth Opportunity Conference) and I'd done everything -- the White House, the Capitol, Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial. I had even taken the bus out to Arlington Cemetery, stood from afar and watched a military funeral; saw the Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the Robert E. Lee house, President Kennedy's grave. I had stayed so long at Arlington, that I was afraid the last bus back had gone. (It hadn't occurred to me to get a schedule or ask about return times.) It was getting dark and I walked across the Potomac. On the other side I found a bus to take me to our hotel.

Mayor Sensenbrenner was attending the conference, too. Before we started home, we dropped him at the Police Training Academy in Virginia. He was aghast that I had done this sightseeing all alone. He had been mugged on his former visit to Washington.

This time Tom and I did most of the same things. We added the Smithsonian, the Treasury, F.B.I. Dana elected to stay with Mel. I know she was in Representative Chalmers Wylie's office where his page, Jack Foulk, a future Franklin County Commissioner told her some stories that would have rivaled Kody's tall tales. Although Dana asked, no one could tell her where the protests were being held. We didn't give her much help, I'm afraid.

Susan was obviously pregnant. I wanted to be told. I crocheted booties and stuck them in a basket of clean wash. No comment. Susan never did tell me. One day Jim, alone, picked up the wash, started out the door, stopped and hesitantly said, "Uh -- we want to tell you, Sue's going to have a baby." What kids!!!

On October 20, 1970 our first grandchild was born. Susan and Jim named her Amy Rebecca. Because of dental classes, I got to drive Amy (and her mother) home from the hospital. It wasn't much of a privilege. I was so afraid something would happen before we got her there that I actually shook.

I thought that Tom had been a colicky baby. He couldn't begin to hold a candle to Amy! She cried for hours on end; days on end! That Jim managed to stay in school that winter, was a small miracle. But he did and eventually Amy got over the colic.

I was so fortunate to have Amy here in Columbus. She was the Marsico's first grandchild, too, and I knew they envied me.

Amy was so dear to me and every day she got cuter. Her hair was a mess of light curls. She crawled. She was standing, holding onto things. – but all good things come to an end. Jim had graduated in June and he had to serve his two years in the army. They bought a Volkswagen camper and -- they were gone.

They had come the night before to tell us goodbye as they were leaving very early in the morning. The movers were to be there later and Nora and Shirle, my friends, went with me for company, to wait for them, supervise and sign the receipt for their things to be put into storage.

I remember walking into the room where Amy's bed stood. The bed, just as it was when she had been lifted out, a pink pacifier in the center. I'd been brave until then. I would miss them so.

Dana decided on her Major – dance. Tom went to Dominion Junior High. Jim was stationed at Fort Hamilton, New York; Susan and Amy with him, of course.

Each spring Mel, Tom, and I went to Florida for a week or ten days. Dana went, too, the first year and she was at O.U. We went to New York twice to see Susan and Jim. Susan, with Amy in a backpack, took us to see the Statue of Liberty. We saw Chinatown, St. Patrick's Cathedral. Jim took Tom for a ride on the subway one night. Susan and Jim came home as often as they could. Amy was as cute as a button.

The spring after Amy was two, Susan and Amy went to Florida with us. We drove about 9 hours a day, two straight days, and Amy was a trooper! She sat, ate, and slept in her car seat without a whimper. When we stopped for gas (our pit stops), Susan would get her out of the car and they would run for exercise.

These years were good ones for Mel and I. We were in our late forties but our health was still good -- we felt great, a lot of the things that plague a young marriage were gone. We'd made compromises and forgot that they were compromises. There was a little more money. I was a director on the Girl Scout Board, on the G.S. Council nominating committee. Nora and I played golf several times a week during the summer. Colleen Rundio had introduced me to garage sale browsing.



Mel's career had snowballed. In 1973, the Recreation Department had merged with the Parks and Forestry Department and Mel was made its director. There were awards from the Ohio Recreation Association and the National Recreation Association. His department was considered one of the best in the United States. He was asked to teach a class on Recreation at Ohio State. The United Auto Workers asked him to do a seminar at their training center at Black Lake, Michigan -- and then a second one.

These seminars turned out to be fabulous vacations for us. The lodge at Black Lake was beautiful. Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball had spent their honeymoon there. The food was so good. Mel and I each gained pounds while we were there. Walter Reuther had died in a plane accident a few years before but we met his brother, Victor. There were other speakers whose names were familiar in the news. Today I've forgotten who they were but I remember Mel calling my attention to the TV and saying "We met him at Black Lake".

Jim's two years were up and he opened an office in Canfield, Ohio. I would have liked them close but at least it was Ohio. Erin Kathleen was born March 20, 1974; our second beautiful grandchild.

Dana's summers were spent at home. She didn't drive then and I spent hours driving her first to Worthington, and then to Westerville, where she worked for their summer recreation programs. It was after her Junior year that she attended a dance course at Long Beach, California.

Frank Sefranek had gone to be with his brother, Tom, a pilot for Eastern Airlines in Los Angeles. I think that is correct but, at any rate, he was at Long Beach when I received a call from Dana telling me Frank wanted her to leave college, marry him. I remember, vividly, my feelings. I prayed I would say the right thing. I remember telling her that she owed it to her father and to me, to graduate; there was a lot of money invested in her education. There would be time to think of marriage later.

My heart was in my mouth. I was sure marrying Frank would be the biggest mistake she could make. He would destroy her. I waited for arguments. She said simply, "O.K."

I stopped worrying about Frank after that. I realized nothing I could have said would have kept her from marrying him if she had really wanted to.

It was much later that she told me, she had dated Frank first because he was Tom's [Sefranek] brother (the whole family, Kricks and Dodges, had liked him) but Frank had threatened to kill her and her family when she had tried to end their relationship. No wonder I felt Frank was sinister!

Dana graduated with honors, got a T.A. at U.C.L.A.; hated California, hated U.C.L.A.! She left to live in New York City. She liked New York; found it hard to make enough money to do the things she'd come to New York to do. She came home to Columbus to stay in 1977.

My life with Tom through the junior high school years was the opposite of calm. Seventh grade was all right but sometime about the end of that year I began hearing from the other mothers that Tom was the heartthrob of his class. 'They thought he was so-o handsome.'

I took a second look at Tom. I didn't like and I'm sure Mel hated his shoulder length hair. But I felt that long hair wasn't important enough to make an issue over since half the boys his age wore it that way. Mel refused to hire leaders with long hair and beards but he chose to ignore Tom's.

But in the eyes of the just turned teenage girls, his soft, wavy brown hair and dreamy brown eyes beneath those thick dark brows made him a dreamboat.

Tom wasn't ready to handle this adulation and he swaggered around doing everything the in-crowd did. He had smoked cigarettes for two years before I found out. He was smoking pot.

I confronted him he argued with me that there was nothing wrong with marijuana, it didn't hurt you, etc. Tom had always wanted my approval. I refused to give it to him. He would start his arguments to persuade me when we were alone. I would not approve and sometimes to keep my sanity, I'd get in the car and drive to the shopping center to get away from him. More often than not, he'd find me -- pound on the car door, wanting to present his case again.

At least I knew what Tom was doing and I believe my disapproval kept him from getting in deeper. I had told the mothers of the neighborhood boys because I knew they were involved, too. Their sons denied any part of it and Tom was considered the bad boy of the neighborhood.

Mel's mother had broken a hip for the second time and this time, Mel and Ruth decided she just couldn't live alone out in New California. While she was at Whetstone Convalescent Center, they had rented her an apartment in the Senior Housing Center at Second and Summit Streets. (The center had been built on the site of the house Jayne and I had rented when we worked at Ranco.) They took Mom Dodge there when she was ready to go home. She wasn't happy about it. I took her grocery shopping, to get her glasses adjusted, to see the Doctor, the Dentist, to get a permanent.

There were many legitimate errands to do for her, most of them needing done while Ruth and Mel were at work. And if there wasn't any real reason, Mom could always invent one.

I really loved Mel's mother. She was difficult at times but she'd been good to me. I am not inferring that I resented helping her. I did not -- but it really ate up my time.

And -- my dad had fallen (at that time he was 93) and broken a hip, too. They put a pin in but he never walked again. He was in a wheelchair and he and Mother still lived alone. They had built a small house on Ruth & Richard's 3-acre lot in the late 50s. At first Mother was as much help to Ruth as Ruth to Mother, and they both benefited. Now it was different, Mother needed so much more help. Ruth became so stressed and her heart condition worsened so much that her doctor warned Richard that he must keep her away from them.

I spent at least one day, sometimes two if I could manage, each week driving to Chillicothe, taking Mother to the store for groceries, cleaning the bathroom, the refrigerator, doing her washing. Dad had to use a toilet-chair; his wheelchair would not go through the bathroom door. That had to be emptied, cleaned, deodorized. Mother in her late 80s wasn't senile but she was slipping.

We had tried to hire someone to stay with them. It was impossible. The best we could do was to get a Public Health Nurse to come out once a week. I knew Ruth & Richard thought they should go to a nursing home but Mother & Dad saw no need for that. I was glad to do what I could but it really wasn't enough. And this was taking another hunk of my time,

Most of the time that I spent with parents was during school hours but still, I never made the Chillicothe trip back until six or seven o'clock. Many evenings and whole days in the summer, Tom had to be on his own. I couldn't change these needs and I tried not to feel guilty. But there was another thing I did feel guilty about.

Mel was a director of the Columbus Municipal Credit Union and he had made two special friends there. Clem Mazza and David Koontz. Clem had worked for the Columbus City Water Dept.; David was a retired Columbus policeman. They both were Court Bailiffs. (They may not have retired from their first jobs at this point, probably had not.)

These three men really liked each other; they all been in World War II; they all knew so many of the same people; they all loved Columbus, their wives and their families. Best of all, they shared a bigger-than-usual sense of humor. They had all worked very hard and for the first time, they had enough money to do a few extra things. There was a significant difference. Clem was 10 years older, and although Dave was just a year or so older than Mel, his youngest children, twins, were Susan's age. -- We still had Tom who needed supervision.

I had met their wives, Mary Jane and Helen and I liked them. Back in 1970, Mary Jane and Clem had gone to Florida with us where we rented adjacent apartments. We'd gone to the State Credit Unions Convention together. About this time, the men had joined the Swiss Club downtown and they started taking the wives to dinner once or twice a month. Soon we were meeting them both Friday and Saturday nights.

Mel saw no harm in leaving Tom home those nights. I did, and I tried to persuade Mel to my way of thinking. At first, I refused to go but Mel really wanted me to go and I wanted to go, too.

We never stayed out later than 10. Usually, we left as soon as Mel came home from City Hall. We gave our name to the hostess as soon as we got to the club, went downstairs to talk and have a drink until our table was ready. It didn't take long to be served and to eat. Mel and I rarely went back downstairs to listen to music or dance. It was more likely to be 9:00 o'clock or 9:30 when we got home.

John Mount's family had moved to a home off Godown Road across the river. He went to Ridgeview. Tom liked to have him stay over on Friday nights and since I felt John was safer than a lot of Tom's friends I didn't object. Once Tom was invited to stay there but he never went after that. When he told me John's mother and father quarreled a lot, I understood why John liked to come to our house so much. Soon John came every Friday night. His father dropped him off and he picked him up Sunday night. We were never asked or thanked. I had begun to think it was a little much and I resented the parents. I felt sorry for John. I knew Tom and he were together far too much and I didn't think we should be leaving them alone.

I knew we shouldn't. I felt guilty -- but I went anyway. One Monday morning, after John had been there, Mel called he was coming home to pick Tom up from school and to take him to the police station. Frank Peterfy who was on the narcotics squad (Mel's CID unit had disbanded years before) was there to talk to Tom.

Later I was told that 2 girls at Ridgeview had begun had been drinking. One of them allergic to alcohol, nearly died. Of course, they didn't want to admit to drinking and when the officials were trying to find out what they had taken or if anyone might have given them something, they mentioned John's name. Actually, John hadn't given them anything but he was a problem kid and they called his father in. When the father was told that John might have given the girls something (LSD was suspected) he blurted, "Then he got it from that Dodge kid."

John's weekends ended. The next time I saw John would be years later. He had been in the army and was back home. His parents had divorced, both were dead. He went camping with us. He'd grown up to be a fine young man. I like him.

Tom's jaunt to the Narcotics Dept., as frightening and upsetting as it was for all of us, was not all bad. I had Mel's attention now and Tom had to realize that even if he could get his mother's approval it still wouldn't make marijuana legal.

As the junior high years ended, life got better for Tom. He applied and was accepted at Fort Hayes Career School. He played the French horn and Les Susi, his instrumental music teacher, was going to head the music department there. For the first time, Tom seemed to have a goal. He met other students who were really motivated in music.

1976 was the Bicentennial Year -- a banner year for Mel. By this time there were very few people in Columbus who didn't recognize the name of Mel Dodge. There were the children from the centers, there were the activities for senior citizens, the Golden Age Hobby Shop and the annual Golden Age Hobby Show, the Softball Leagues, Soccer, Basketball, Golf, Touch Football Leagues. The Recreation and Parks Department counting its seasonal help hired more people than any other department and had as many, probably more, volunteers. He was a familiar face on TV news programs, a name in the local newspaper. In 1975 he'd won the George Meany Award. It is no wonder people knew who he was.

He had been able to talk Gov. Rhodes into turning over the old Armory to the city and had made it into a Cultural Art Center. He persuaded developer John Galbraith to donate \$500,000 for a fountain in the new downtown park across from Mound Street from the Center, and on July 6, 1976, in the midst of the nation's celebration, the Bicentennial Park was dedicated. The bell from the U.S.S. Columbus of World War II fame had been given to the city and to climax the ceremony it was rung by three tiny citizens, our granddaughter Amy, Peggy Pen's nephew, and Councilman Charlie Mentel's son, Sean.

I had made long dresses and old-fashioned sun bonnets for Erin, 2 and Amy, almost six. I doubt if Erin will remember, but in the years to come Amy can tell her descendants she was a part of the country's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday.

In April before the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration, we spent the only complete family vacation since the time when Thomas was small and we went to Lake Erie. This time Tom, Mel and I from Columbus, Susan and Jim, Amy and Erin from Canfield, and Dana from New York spent a week at Siesta Key together. Judge Crawford and his wife, Anne, were there at the same time and Dale took a picture of all of us, had it reproduced on wood and gave it to us. I love it -- it brings back such happy memories.

We knew -- but Mel did not, that he was being honored for his 25 years with the Dept. at a dinner the week after our vacation. Sue Weed, one of his assistants was in charge and for weeks before she had plagued me with requests for pictures, names of people to invite, my memories. She went to see Mom Dodge and Mel's sister, Ruth, and they gave her more.

I don't know how we managed to keep it a secret (our vacation was a big help) but we did. Everyone was there when he was driven up to the Neil House where the marquee spelled out "This Is Your Life, Mel Dodge."

Mel bought a house (I had never seen the house -- outside or in) from a golf buddy; the price determined by the outcome of the game. And in November 1976 we moved from our tiny home of 22 years to a new house. It was a modest house, but for a family who had raised three children, 2 of them girls, in a house with one tiny bathroom, the two and ½ bathrooms seemed luxurious.

Tom went to Fort Hayes School in the morning, Whetstone in the afternoon. He brought his friends here to practice. He started a collection of guitars, bought an amplifier. Sometimes when my ears ached, I almost wished our neighbors would complain. No one did; it must not have been as loud as I thought.

I was a terrible dancer, did not read one note of music. I often quoted Ulysses S. Grant who claimed he could recognize two songs, one of them Yankee Doodle, and the other wasn't. (He knew one more song than I.) It was ironical that Tom was so interested in music and Dana a modern dance major.

The winter of 76-77 was unusually severe and resulted in a natural gas shortage. Columbus citizens were told to set furnace thermostats at 58 degrees. I bought long underwear for Mel and Tom, coals for the fireplace and shivered. I huddled in the family room near the fireplace, wrapped myself up in blankets and crocheted or read. Many of the schools had to close and Mel and John Ellis, Supt. of Columbus schools, worked together, combining centers and schools to form "School without Schools".

Tom had had a Dispatch paper route since he was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. When we moved here he took a *Citizen Journal* route, delivering the papers early in the morning before he got ready for school. That winter, many mornings were below 0°. It would have been easy for Tom to quit but he kept at it, collecting after dark. He learned to appreciate the houses that had the paper money ready for him.

I remember Tom and me going to Chillicothe after one of those cold snow storms. Probably, his school was closed, but anyway he went with me. There were places on the freshly-plowed route #104 where the snow was as deep as the car and it only needed a top to form a one-way tunnel.

We had taken shovels but I was very happy to see the lane back to Mother and Dad's was already cleared. They heated with coal and my brother had checked on them, brought in coal so Mother hadn't needed to go outside for it. That winter, though, was the straw that broke the camel's back. The public health nurse insisted Mother and Dad be put in a rest home. Ruth and Ollie found one in Frankfort, Ohio, where Mother and Dad could have a room together with their own bed and chairs and I went down and we signed the papers. I don't think they told my brother. He would have protested violently. None of us could take both of them and we felt they might be happier in a home together there than living apart with Bud, Ollie, or me.

I knew they were being picked up the next day. Ruth insisted that they not be told until that morning. I went home with a heavy heart. They had done so many good things for us, for others, and now we were doing this to them. I couldn't bear it -- I wished they could die in their sleep during the night. Dad was 97, Mother 90.

It was horrible for them. Mother called me crying. "They had been mean to Dad." (They'd given him his first shower -- he was almost deaf, and he was sure they were trying to drown him. He became agitated and the nurse had had to be loud and stern to keep him from hurting himself -- or her. Mother had heard the commotion and came to Dad's aid.) Mother was confused, frightened. I tried to comfort her on the phone, promising nothing. I was heartsick.

We had been asked to stay away for the first two weeks to give them time to adjust but Ollie and I went anyway. We were given that explanation and believed it. We saw Mother and Dad, two pathetic people who had lived too long, so dear to us. We tried to reassure them, talked and talked. At last Mother consented to stay until the weather broke. I don't know about Ollie, but I cried all the way to Columbus.

Things got worse before they got better. Unable to cope with the change, Mother's mind became clouded. She didn't seem to recognize me for several weeks. They had to separate Mother and Dad. After that first bad episode, Dad actually liked the rest home. He was the oldest resident and all the ladies who worked there gave him special attention. He lapped it up. I can still see his old, toothless grin when they teased him. He missed his dogs though. Dad and Mother had gotten rid of all but two of the dogs when Dad broke his hip. But those two were devoted to Dad, there was always one in the chair with him.

Ollie had taken the dogs. She kept them for a long time. If she gave them to someone later, I know she found them a good home. We took Mother and Dad to her house that summer and Dad spent all the time on a chaise lounge in the yard with his beloved terriers.

Mother's mind began to clear. She began taking an interest in things again. She made a friend and they swore they had been friends before. She and Dad always had their chairs together; they ate together. When I visited every week. Mother was glad to see me. I took them for rides when the weather was good enough. Mother loved to stop for a hamburger. We all visited them as often as we could.

Mother was better but she always wanted to go home. We knew we didn't dare take her. She never got to go home again.

In November, Dad and Mother celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. We had a cake, ice cream. Their pictures were in the paper. They enjoyed the day.

Mom Dodge needed more help and Ruth and Mel had found a lady to live with her. She had been there less than a week when Mel got a call from her that something was wrong. Mom had started screaming, become violent when the lady tried to get near her. Mel and Ruth hurried to the apartment, conferred with her doctor, Dr. Karrer in Plain City. He instructed them to send her by ambulance to the Marysville Hospital. He would meet them there.

A month later Mom was her own self again. Dr. Karrer felt sure, she had become confused and had taken more of her medicine than she should. Mom had a lot of medical problems and she took nine different kinds, with different directions and how often they were to be taken. Ruth had gotten boxes with divisions for days, morning, noon and night, before meals, after meals, but it would have been confusing for anyone. Besides that, Mom had a strong mind of her own -- she didn't need to be told how to take her medicine -- she had taken medicine before Ruth was born!

Dr. Karrer told Mel and Ruth that she needed the supervision of a rest home and he said he would tell her. Dr. Karrer had been Mom's doctor for years. He had taken care of Dad; his wife was his nurse; they were Mom's friends. We never knew what he told her but she accepted the change gracefully. She moved to the rest home in Marysville. Mel kept her apartment for her for a while, but she had no interest in going back and Ruth and Mel moved the things Ruth wanted to keep to her house and gave the rest away.

Mom liked the rest home much more than living in Columbus. Some of the attendants were children of acquaintances, she knew some of the other occupants. Dr. Karrer dropped in at least once a week. She was close enough for Aunt Lucille and Uncle Homer, Aunt Louise, the new minister at Cally (Rev. Vance had died), church members to stop in often. She liked the crafts. She seemed more content than at any time since she had to leave her own home. When Mrs. Vance was brought in, terminally ill, Mom was able to visit and comfort her.

Sometime before this time, the responsibility for the Columbus Zoo had been taken from the Service Department and it became part of Mel's domain. The director had left and the zoo was without a permanent one. Our zoo was in a sorry state and Mel heard the Knoxville, Tennessee Zoo's director's advice. 'You need to take an exotic animal with you when you go out asking for money'. The Knoxville Zoo was doing a lot of building, new things and Mel thought if Guy Smith got results that way, then we should try it.

The only trouble after checking the animals out, he didn't see anything at the zoo that could be taken out that would attract attention. That fall, 1977, he brought home a lion cub from Kings Island amusement park.

When I first heard his plans, I stated loud and clear that I was not going to raise a lion and Mel agreed. She would live at the zoo.

The night he picked her up, he stopped with her, just to let me see her, he said. I am sure they weren't expecting her at the zoo, nor did he have any intentions of taking her there. There is absolutely nothing cuter than a lion cub. I don't know how Mel could have instructed her but he must have -- she let Tom and Dana, who had just come home from New York, pet her and then she ambled over to rub against my legs, settled on my feet. Of course, she stayed.

Elsa stayed almost a year. She earned her keep, going to all sorts of places where she generated interest in the Zoo. Shortly after, she went to live at the zoo, Jack Hanna was hired as the new Zoo director. Under Jack in the next 12 years, the Columbus Zoo became nationally known, one of the best in our country. Mel was always there, advising, supporting, promoting -- and bringing home more animals.

Elsa was the first though and she remained Mel's favorite. She celebrated her first birthday, her second. Mel still went to play with her. Jack and the keepers cringed -- she would put her paws on his shoulders, lick his face. She was so strong she could easily break his neck. The last time he went in, she refused to let him out. She stood between him and the door -- for what seemed like hours to the keepers watching, when at last Elsa was tricked to the other side of the cage and he slipped out. Mel had to admit he couldn't go back again. After that, Elsa had to be content with pats, scratching, and extra tidbits of food, through the bars. When she was outside, Mel would tap on the glass and she'd come running, pawing the glass. She never forgot. As I write this now, May, 1994, she is still at the zoo.



January 20, 1978, we woke to one of the worst blizzards we had ever had in Columbus. Everything came to a standstill; not so for my family.

Tom's papers had been delivered to our house before the worst of the blizzard. At the usual time, he got up, braved the terrible ice filled winds and delivered every paper in that sub-zero morning. Radios and television, for those lucky ones who had power, warned people that streets were impassable without a 4X4 vehicle.

Mel made a few calls, to the Mayor, the Police Department, the National Guard. He decided they needed to open a center as an emergency shelter. I don't remember who came for him but a government jeep picked him up.

Dana was working as a teacher for the Columbus State Institute. There was a plea made for anyone who could possibly get there to please come in. They were desperate. Kathy, a coworker who lived near had a 4-wheel drive and they made it in. Hardly anyone else came. They ended up with almost all the care of the mentally-handicapped students, for hours on end.

The blizzard ended. People had bragged that they attended the Snow Bowl of 1950, now they wore sweatshirts proclaiming "I survived the Blizzard of 1978".

In June Tom graduated from the from high school. There were two ceremonies, one at Fort Hayes, they were the first graduating class. There was a final concert -- the boys wore white tuxedos. Whetstone had outgrown the athletic field where both Susan and Dana had received their diplomas. We watched the Whetstone graduates' line, heard the names called at O.S.U.'s Mershon Auditorium.

I knew so many of them: Gary, Steve, Mitchell, Seth, all children I'd helped find books for at Sharon; John, Mike, and Bo from Fort Hayes. The line was short now, I was filled with compassion as Chris Young's name was called. Mel had been playing golf with his father when Ginny had called John home the day Chris was born. Ginny had died of cancer only a month before.

That summer Bonnie Campbell and I took a group of cadette age Girl Scouts on a wider opportunity experience to spelunk at Carter Caves, Kentucky. I surprised myself by being able to crawl through tunnels no longer than our garbage can turned on its side. It was a new experience for me and I enjoyed myself but I have no desire to ever repeat it. Once was enough.

Tom enrolled as a freshman at O.S.U. Unfortunately, one quarter was enough for him. We hoped he would change his mind and go back later. He had first one job and then another -- he worked at the State Fair on the Sky Ride each year and that seemed to be the only thing he really liked.

In October I went to the Girl Scout National Convention in Denver, Colorado. I had another wonderful time. I got my second airplane trip. At the actual convention we voted, along with other issues, to keep Girl Scout members exclusively female.

I visited the Molly Dodd house, the famous Brown Hotel, took a day long bus tour in the mountains, saw where Bill Cody was buried. I roomed with and cemented my friendship with Donna Anderson and Gerry Morgan. Bonnie Chappell was my traveling companion to and from the convention.

Home again, I went to Marysville to see Mom Dodge. She was failing fast. Ruth had Thanksgiving dinner with her. Mel and I saw her on Saturday. She died December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1978. She was 82. I would miss her.

Christmas 1978. Mel, Tom, Dana and I went to Canfield to be with Susan, Jim Amy and Erin. It snowed Christmas Day. Giant flakes floated down, covered everything snow white. It looked like a Christmas in a fairy tale!

December 29, the Koontzes and Mazzas came here to watch the Gator Bowl. We watched, unbelieving, as Woody Hayes tackled the Clemson player, ending Woody's football career.

In January 1979, Dr. Jim Williams (Nora's husband) operated at Grant Hospital on Mother to remove bladder stones. She had been suffering with bladder infections for a long time and Jim thought the operation wouldn't be any harder on her than the constant pain. Mother was 93 two days before the operation.

The operation went well but Mother had a miserable recovery. But gradually she began to feel better and Ruth & Richard took her back to the rest home on February 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mel went to Washington, D.C. to confer with Jay Solomon, General Services Administrator. He was serving on the National Historic Preservation Task Force. It was my fourth visit to Washington but I still found new things to see. While Mel was at the meetings, I went to the Zoo and saw the pandas. They were the only two in the United States, and I saw my first white tiger, too. I visited the National Geographic building. We were there three days and left in a rush because they were predicting a big storm. We traveled the Pennsylvania Turnpike and were glad that we were ahead of the storm, remembering the time, coming back from visiting Susan in New York. That day they closed the turnpike while we were on it. We had made it to Harrisburg that time, checking into the last available room at a Holiday Inn. I'm sure Tom remembers. There was an indoor pool. He had no trunks along but I cut the legs off a good pair of jeans so he could swim.

This time we kept ahead of the storm. We were glad to be home again.

Tom had started working with Wolfe & Son's Furnace Co. He didn't like it. I was exercising with Nora several mornings a week at Elaine Powers. I was feeling good. I had had pneumonia twice, once on Girard Rd. and again in 1977. That time it had hung on so long that Dr. Van Buren had begun to suspect the new Legionnaires disease. I worried about Mel -- he had stopped playing golf the summer before. He didn't have much energy.

Sometime around 1968 Mel had had chest pains and the heart specialist, after some tests in his office, titled it a heart attack. Mel was put on digitalis and took it for several years. There never were any follow-up tests. That doctor died and Mel went to another doctor in 1971, who insisted his heart was fine but he had diabetes. Dr. Bradley put him on oral diabinese but these were discontinued when it was found that diabinese could lead to cardiovascular disease. Mel watched his diet after a fashion. He did not eat sweets, any sugar. He never limited fresh fruit or anything else for that matter.

He had regular check-ups and in January, 1979, Dr. Bradley had complemented him on his excellent state of health. He told him to continue the diet he was following and the weekly allergy shots Dr. Hughes gave him. (Dr Harkinson had retired.) This sounded good but I still worried.

We were both into bird watching. We added another feeder to the one Susan and Jim had given us and we could sit in the family room and watch the birds as they came to eat.

Mother was out of pain; her spirits were better but she didn't gain back much strength. She was tottery, would fall when she stood. She didn't remember that and to prevent her from getting hurt the attendants had to restrain her. She fretted about it and in March when no one was looking, Dad wheeled his chair close to hers and untied her. The inevitable happened. She fell. She always wore the little gold hoops on her ears that Mel had given her and one of them must have caught on something -- it was torn out of her ear. There were other cuts, luckily no bones were broken, but she had to be taken to the hospital and stitched up. I went to see her the next day -- she was only partially coherent.

Dana had her own apartment and a cat named Simone.

Mel and I went every weekend to the Zoo to see Elsa. We missed her here at home. Mel brought a feisty little 2- month-old black bear home for a night. He bit everyone!

In April, just after we got back from our annual Florida trip, Amy had her First Communion. I had made her dress and she looked sweet.

In August, Tom started working for the Fair again. He had stopped working for Wolfe and Sons.

Mother wasn't doing well. The doctor came and told us she had pneumonia. We decided not to have her taken to the hospital; we were told the outcome would be the same. With I.V.'s she might live a few days longer. They could keep her pain free at the home; they loved her, took good care of her and one of us could always be with her, all the time.

I was with her all day Friday. She slept most of the time but when she was awake, she knew me and we talked. She wanted to get my dinner. (At home, Mother couldn't have a guest without feeding them.) I told her I wasn't hungry yet but we planned what we would cook later.

She told me how good everyone was to her. Once in her sleep she called out, "Grandma!" After another nap she smiled and told me her dad had visited her -- he was going to come back.

When it was time I had to go home, I kissed her and told her I'd be back on Sunday. I went out by the desk where Dad sat in his wheelchair, kissed and told him goodbye

Mother died the next day, August 18<sup>th</sup>. I don't think any of us was with her. I know Marjorie and her daughter, Anne, my brother and Patty, his wife, and Ruth had all been with her at some time after I was. There couldn't have been much of that time that she was alone. But I wish someone had been with her.

Amy and Erin were *Little House on The Prairie* fans. Amy, nearly nine, knew everything there was to know about Laura Ingalls Wilder and she wanted to go to Missouri to see her home. Susan asked me to go with them; I know she knew how I was feeling.

We left on Wednesday before Labor Day, just the four of us and the trip is one of my special memories. We spent the next day in St. Louis. I remember exactly how the little girls looked. I had made them matching large polka-dotted red dresses. They were sleeveless and had big white collars. I know they were the two prettiest little girls in all Missouri that day. We went for a ride on the Mississippi in a steam boat. The climax of the day was the Arch. Erin, five, was frightened and she had to be coaxed and coaxed to get her into the little cars.

We stayed all night in a hotel where the girls could play in the pool. The next morning, we ate at Denny's where a cockroach fell from the ceiling in my plate of food!!

I don't think Amy enjoyed Laura's home as much as I did. 'Erin liked the Arch better'!

It was late when we got there, so we drove into the next town, spent the night and went back the next morning. When we left, we found the cemetery and were able to find Laura and Rose's graves. We drove all the way home. Near St. Louis we saw the most beautiful double rainbow I have ever seen.

The ride home was long and the girls were bored. Susan & I started a game with them. We were Ma & Pa; they were Mary and Laura. It entertained them. Susan and I got carried away - we got silly, punchy. I wonder if the girls remember it half as well as I do.

Tom met and started dating his first serious girlfriend, Susan Cohen. She was from Tennessee and she took Tom there to meet her father and brothers; her mother had died a couple years before.

Mel and I both liked Susie. We felt sorry for her, too. Mel helped her to get a job at the Conservatory. I helped her find furniture for the apartment she had rented. I made her curtains.

Lillian Carter came to Columbus for the dedication of Sensenbrenner Park. Mel had his picture taken with 'Miss Lillian'. She was as close as he had been in getting a picture with a President. There had been many with Hubert Humphrey but he was only a V.P. His [Mel's] son

had bested him there. Tom had met, shaken hands with President Ford the day before Jimmy Carter defeated him. That picture fuzzy but recognizable, hung on the basement wall amid all Mel's awards and pictures.

Sammy, our Australian terrier, wouldn't eat. We had him to the vet in December but the medicine he gave him didn't do anything to help him. He didn't eat anything but he seemed so appreciative of everything I did for him. He got so weak, but he was so loving. He seemed to be trying to comfort me. We took him to the vet again in January. He gave him a shot and told me if that didn't work, exploratory surgery was the only other option.

Tom carried him into the office, tears streaming down his face. I told the doctor what we wanted -- if there was anything they found that could be helped. do it, -- anything. But if they found something that couldn't be helped -- don't let Sammy wake up; he's suffered enough.

They operated January 9<sup>th</sup>; he was full of cancer. Sammy didn't wake up. It hurt. Maybe if Sam had been older, but he was only 10. Sam's death hurt more than that of any pet we have owned. Maybe, it was because it was because I was still mourning Mother. I remember the day was sunny, bright; it didn't seem right for the sun to shine.

Maybe it was because I was so worried about Mel. He had no energy at all; he had lost weight. His eyes stood out from the rest of his face. When I begged him to go to the doctor, he told me he saw Dr. Hughes every week. I knew he liked and trusted Dr Hughes but he was an allergist and after all, that's what he treated.

Dana had met Eric Koppert. She was happier than I'd seen her for a long time. I don't know when she had met him but I know he sent me flowers when Mother died. I was pleased at his thoughtfulness, especially since he hadn't known Dana very long.

They were being married Saturday, January 9<sup>th</sup> at the Franklin Park Conservatory. Mayor Moody was going to perform the ceremony. We were having the reception at Walnut Hills Clubhouse. Mel had made all the arrangements.

But I said I was worried about Mel. Dana always takes the bull by the horn and acts. I have always thought her motto must be 'It's better to do something rather than nothing -- even if it's wrong.'

She knew when Mel's next appointment with the allergist would be and she called him. As it happened, Dr. Hughes was out of town and his calls were being taken by a doctor who had never seen Mel. He was indignant with Dana when she told him that Dr. Hughes should either be treating her father for the obvious symptoms he had or tell him to go see another doctor.

But she had stirred the pot. When the appointment time came, the doctor did look at Mel and he recognized a very sick man. I don't know now what he based his suspicion on but he gave Mel the name of an endocrinologist and told him to make an appointment right away.

Of course, I confided in Nora and she talked to Jim. Jim thought Mel should see Dr. Skillman at University Hospital. Jim told us that Tom was one of the top endocrinologists in the country. Nora and Liz Skillman, Tom's wife, had been together in Nursing School. The four of them had been friends for years. Jim would call and set up an appointment. How fortunate we were.

Dr. Skillman gave Mel the results of his tests on Thursday before the wedding. He had a thyroid condition that was causing all the problems. It was curable. They would start treatment on Monday.

He also called and told me that he understood about the wedding but I was to see that Mel did not do one unnecessary thing. He was in such a precarious state that he was prime candidate for a stroke or a heart attack.

The wedding was as pretty as it was simple. The guests stood among the lush green foliage and baskets of hanging vines and watched the wedding procession cross the bridge, then stop at a little alcove where Mayor Moody conducted the ceremony, orchids blooming behind him.

They crossed the bridge and I watched. First Mayor Moody followed by Eric and his best man. They passed Tom on the bridge strumming his guitar. Erin next and Amy, carrying nosegays of pink daisies. Sue Frith pretty in a soft green color. Dana, wearing a white silk street-length dress with bouquet of more pink daisies and ribbons. Dana, walking beside her handsome father whose life she just may have saved.

The reception was the most fun wedding reception I ever attended. Eric's classmates from Kenyon came from New York or wherever else they were, to be with him. They entertained us with songs they had sung at Kenyon. They were good. Everyone was relaxed. Everyone had a good time.

Monday morning, Mel was at Dr. Skillman's office. He drank his first radioactive iodine.

In April we were went to Florida again. In May, Mel was given his first "normal" thyroid tests. but it wasn't until August of the next year that they were no longer borderline. Dr. Skillman pronounced him cured. He would continue to see him for tests every six months for several more years. He assured us he had no diabetes.

Dona Anderson, Jerry Morgan, Jeanne Johnson and I had been working on organizing a "sustaining board" group made up of Girl Scout adults who were still faithful to scouting but weren't active anymore. We invited everyone we could think of and held a tea at the Cultural Arts Center. We had a good turn out and the Trefoil I, at last, became a reality.

Father's Day June 15<sup>th</sup>, my sister Ruth had all of Mother and Dad's family to her home for a picnic. She was going to bring Dad there for the day. We were all there except Dad who wasn't well enough to come. He hadn't been sick just more feeble all the time. Tom, Mel and I

had been down a few weeks before. Someone visiting others, had a baby and one of the attendants brought the baby over to Dad and let him hold it for a few seconds. He grinned and announced to the whole room, "This baby is not one year old yet and I'm almost 100". He was. On October 2<sup>nd</sup> of that year, it would be his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. His twin sister had died 20 years before

Mel and I stopped in Frankfurt to see Dad. He was in bed and I was shocked to see how sick he was. I think he knew me -- he indicated he wanted a drink and I tried to give him one. He choked so bad that he couldn't drink. I kissed him 'Goodbye'. I did not expect to see him in this world again. He died the next morning

We went to the Ohio Theater, Mel and I, Tom and Susie, to see the *Brubaker* premier. *Brubaker*, a prison movie starring Robert Redford had been filmed near Columbus and Tom had been hired as an extra. We were thrilled at the premiere to be able to recognize Tom in two different scenes.

Mel brought home a third lion. He called her Norma. I nicknamed her Stormy. Our second, Hannah, had come and gone. We hadn't kept her as long as Elsa. We had gone to Dunedin, Fla. in November the year before, and took Hannah to the zoo to stay until we got back. Thankfully, I had taken her about a week before we were to go and it took the whole week with me going every day to feed her, until she would eat by herself. I refused to bring her back when we came home. She was nearing six months and unlike Elsa she wasn't easy to manage. She was definitely my lion -- not Mel's. I know we couldn't keep her much longer and I couldn't put her or me either through another traumatic adjustment when we would have to take her back again.

I had felt so bad when I had to leave her at the Zoo, that I told Mel emphatically that I would not have another lion! I hadn't heard about Norma (Stormy didn't stick, though I tried hard; it was embarrassing to have two Normas in the same house!) until I saw a picture of Mel with a lion cub in the newspaper. He had told the whole city he was naming her for me -- how could I refuse to have her?

She was here the same day her picture hit the streets. Stormy was an easy-going lion. She did a lot of P.R. I could drop her off at the zoo, Jack could take her on Qube [TV] or to dinner, almost any place. I would pick her up or they'd bring her back and she wasn't upset with any of it. But she had one fault that the others hadn't had and because of it she had to go back to the zoo when she was only four months old. We had built a cage in the basement large enough that a full-grown lion could turn around in. It wasn't used much because you can't leave a lion unsupervised while you're gone. There wouldn't be much worth keeping if you did. So, the lions slept in the cage and stayed there if we went out. There was no top on the cage but we hadn't needed one. It had actually been built for our Aussies when we just moved in but we didn't use it -- they proved to be so much better behaved in this house. Maybe, because there was so much room.

I can remember the first time it started. Norma had been put in the cage when we were going out to eat. Before I got to the basement door at the top of the steps, she was right behind me. I took her back, expecting to find the cage door open. It wasn't. Puzzled, I put her back in - - this time I got to the family room, my hand on the door to the garage. She pushed the basement door open, padded joyfully to join me. Again, I took her back -- this time I watched from around the corner. She was up, over, down the other side of the 7 ft. wall in a flash. I can't remember what we did that night but it wasn't long before she was living at the zoo.

I don't know what happened to Norma. Hannah would go to a zoo in New Jersey. We would hear about her from time to time. Norma stayed at the zoo for several years. She had one litter of cubs. She was a favorite because of her good disposition. I didn't realize she wasn't there until 1991. I don't know when she left and I don't know if Mel knew she was gone either. I knew when her cubs, nearly grown, left. One had only a stub of a tail; the keeper called him 'Bobby'. He was Norma's first born and when she was cleaning him up, she bit off his tail.

Fall and the Ohio State Fair. Tom worked at the Sky Ride again. He was asked to go with them to Arizona. Mel was horrified that I didn't discourage him from going. It was 1980 -- Tom wasn't a teenager anymore. He needed to grow up. I knew Tom well enough -- he wouldn't be gone long. His friend, Ron, was going, too. Ron would do anything to get to California -- he was sure he had a future there. (And he did!)

They left in September. Tom wrote, called from Phoenix. They went with the ride to California. Ron stayed in California. Back in Phoenix. I don't know when Ron got back to Phoenix but on November 20<sup>th</sup> the day they came home, both of them -- but not alone. They had met Suzanne in Phoenix; she had always wanted to live in Ohio. She offered her old van to bring all of three of them here. Suzanne was half-Mexican and she was the most beautiful girl I have ever seen. Tom assured me she was Ron's girlfriend.

When Ron's mother (smart woman) would not let Suzanne stay and they came to me with long faces, I told Suzanne she could stay in the spare bedroom, temporarily.

Suzanne had no trouble getting a job at Fridays. She was a disaster, so nice at first but she started coming home in the wee hours. I knew she was drinking, seeing men after work. Ron seemed uninterested. I began to think he'd only used her as transportation home. Susan came home with the girls -- they were excited about Christmas -- going to Lazarus to Santaland. Suzanne was rude to Susan, almost hateful to the girls. I had had it! Ron was going back to California. He bought a car of his own. He wasn't interested in taking Suzanne home (the van had konked out as soon as they got here). I bribed him. I paid Ron \$100 to take Suzanne with him.

She was here exactly 33 days. It had been a bad experience but I quote Shakespeare: "It's an ill wind that profits nobody." As a result -- Tom's whole life would change.



Later we would hear from Ron how Suzanne had bypassed Arizona and had him take her to an aunt's home in California. There the aunt had screamed and raged at Ron. He heard for the first time that Suzanne, married with two little girls, had abandoned them, taking her husband's van.

They had driven home in a stolen van! I could only be thankful that I had not permitted her to leave it here.

Eric and Dana had moved to Loudonville. Eric was joining his father's insurance agency. Dana had been happy working for the State and I know she regretted leaving, but Eric would be much happier there. Dana was going to open a dance school on Main Street.

They came home for Christmas. Eric and Dana -- Susan -- Jim -- Amy -- Erin -- Tom -- Mel -- me. It was a wonderful Christmas.

Ruth and Bob had gone to Seattle to be with Kody and Corvi, Kody's daughter. We missed them. I thought of our parents. I missed them all.

Tom was taking classes at Columbus State. He particularly liked photography. We had bought him a Minolta camera for Christmas two years before and it had triggered an interest. He seemed to be applying himself to his classes. He was still dating Susie but it wasn't a good relationship for him and he knew it. Susie wanted to get married; Tom had enough sense to know that he wasn't ready. They'd broken up when he went to Arizona but had drifted back together again.

Susie's older brother, Bob was drowned in a boating accident and she was hurt when Tom wouldn't go to Tennessee with her while they were searching for Bob's body and the funeral that followed. She had always had moody spells and after Bob's death these were much worse. Tom had never known how to handle her moods -- they pulled him down, too.

Sometime that summer I was at an event at the Sheraton Hotel. I can't remember why I was there but I found myself talking to Norina Wolfe. Norina and John F. Wolfe hadn't been married very long then. I didn't know Norina very well but I knew she had three daughters and at least one had been in several escapades. I had to have something to talk about so I told her about Tom bringing this beautiful Mexican girl home and all the rest. She laughed and laughed. Someplace in the conversation the photography interest was brought out and I remember commenting that there were a few places where it could be used to make money. I remember her saying something about how Mel had helped half the kids in Columbus -- and when his son needed encouragement...

I forgot the conversation. It had served its purpose, given me something to talk about, entertained.

Several days later, Mel came home and told Tom that Channel 10 wanted Tom to come in for an interview. Mel seemed a little puzzled -- I wasn't. I remembered Norina's laughter and her comment. I have never stopped being grateful to her.

Tom was hired as an assistant in the photography lab at the TV station. When they decided the lab wasn't needed any longer, he was sent to *The Columbus Dispatch* as an apprentice photographer. The usual time for apprentices to stay went past and he still stayed. It's been ten years and he's still there.

And as Shakespeare wrote "It's an ill wind, that profits nobody."

Mel and I drove to Denver, Colorado to a National Credit Convention. It was the first we had ever gone to. He had been a director of the Municipal Credit Union for a number of years. It had been tiny at first, started by a handful of firemen. Now, it was one of the largest credit unions in the state. The manager and perhaps the president of the union always went to the two different conventions held nationally. The directors put in many unpaid hours but there had always been seminars and the state conventions held in Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Columbus in rotation. Wives were always included. Mel and I had never felt cheated but now it had been decided they would send two or three couples to each of the national ones. As I said, we went to Colorado and we elected to drive. We stopped in Kansas to see President Eisenhower's birthplace, we spent a night and a day in Colorado Springs where we went to the Zoo, and we took the incline up Pikes Peak. I got to go with the wives to tour the Air Force Academy. I insisted we had to eat at the "Vault" and Mel loved the bowls of shrimp that just kept coming.

When it was time to leave, we drove into the Rockies on narrow, straight-up roads with berms looking down for what seemed like miles below. We came back Route 80. We had driven across eight states and into a corner of Wyoming.

It was our first big convention -- there were others. I think we flew to all the rest except the next, Chicago -- Atlanta, Reno Phoenix, Los Angeles, Hawaii. Fabulous vacations and all for free!!

On our way home from Colorado, way up on the top of the mountain at a gift shop we bought souvenirs to bring back. I don't remember all of them but one stands out vividly -- it was a stuffed big horn sheep and it was to be for our third grandchild. Dana was pregnant.

Erin was seven, Amy almost at eleven. It would be fun to have a baby to cuddle again.

Susie concluded Tom was not interested in marriage and her father came to move her things to Tennessee. I was glad that she was going for Tom's sake but I knew she would miss me, too. She had placed me in a "surrogate mother" role and I had learned to love her, faults and all.

Dana kept her dance class open. I think she was still dancing until she went to the hospital. It was a long, hard labor but then, we had a grandson! September 28, 1981.

I went to the hospital to see him. I could have been looking at his mother when she was born. He was a darling. I couldn't wait to hold him.

I didn't have long to wait. Mel drove me to Loudonville to stay with Dana as soon as Eric brought them home from the hospital. They had named the baby Eric Dodge, but everyone called him "Weazer".

I was there seven days. I went home before I planned. Loudonville isn't very big, Dana and Eric lived just off the main street and there were dozens of visitors. I particularly remember Grandma Edna, Eric's father's mother, a tiny perky old lady who you instinctively knew you wanted to know better; the family doctor who quickly looked Weazer over, proclaimed him a fine baby and left; and a young interesting-looking woman with a slight foreign accent. She had a little girl with her (8, 9, 10?) with long straight hair hung nearly to her waist. There was something striking about the child. I wasn't sure what it was. I met Deborah Easterday for the first time.

One day we had to take Weazer back for his PKU test. I drove Eric's new red truck and Weazer, head lolling, sat almost upright in a car seat between Dana and I. I was so glad to get him back home without a broken neck!

A telephone call on the seventh day blew my perfect world apart! Mel called to tell me my brother was in the hospital. Pat, his wife, had called. Bud had inoperable cancer. He gave me a number to call. I was numb. I couldn't believe it -- I managed to dial the number. Pat answered, she was at the hospital. It was true -- an inoperable cancer on the spine. Bud wanted me to come to the hospital.

I called Mel to come get me. I went home that night.

I went to see Bud at St. Anthony's. He wanted to explain about the land in West Virginia where Dad had been born. Mother and Dad had given it to him. He would like to give it to me but he had so little to leave Pat, he couldn't. He wanted to tell me himself; he was sorry. I told him it wasn't important.

A terrible thought just came to me as I write. Was Bud asking me to buy it then? Oh, I do hope not. I have always thought I could read what people weren't saying and I know that never occurred to me then.

He told me that she understood if she sold it, I was to know first. There was no mention of needing money right then. I pray he wasn't asking -- I thought he only wanted me to understand.

We were scheduled to go to Oglebay Park that weekend and we went on. I stopped Sunday night as soon as we were back. Pat was still there. Bud's leg was swollen, tight and hot. I didn't like the way how it looked. Pat went to get someone to look at it. They elevated it.

When his doctor saw it the next morning, Bud was rushed to surgery. On Friday, he was taken for the second operation; they were hoping they weren't going to have to amputate. Four days later he was able to move his toes. The doctors were optimistic.

There was another operation, this time on the back area. He was in intensive care. They started radiation treatments. I spent as much time as I could with him. Pat was faithful coming up from Chillicothe. Sometimes she stayed here, but she preferred to go home. Judy, his stepdaughter and Wendy, Judy's daughter who had lived with Pat and Bud all her life came when they could. Both of them were still in school. Teresa was there every day with her mother. Pat and Bud had brought her home from the hospital, one day old. They had adopted her as soon as the papers were ready. Now she was 18 and loved her dad, fiercely.

It wasn't bad enough to have the cancer, gangrene had set in the leg and it had to be amputated.

Bud was such a good patient. All the nurses and doctors loved him. It didn't matter that the pain was unbearable, he never became irritated with anyone.

Our sister, Ruth had a stroke the day of Bud's first operation. She recovered but never regained the use of one hand and only partial use of one foot.

Bud wanted to go home and the week after Thanksgiving he went home. They brought him back daily in a borrowed van equipped with a lift, for radiation at Grant Hospital. Teresa would pick him up in her arms and put him in the wheelchair.

I saw him last on December 4<sup>th</sup>, but he was babbling incoherently. I thought I was disturbing him and I left. He called me December 6<sup>th</sup>, his 49<sup>th</sup> birthday, to tell me how sorry he was. He said he knew when I was there but he couldn't control his speech. He was clear in speech and mind that day.

On Dec. 20, Pat called me from a St. Anthony's. They had brought Bud up in an ambulance, he couldn't get his breath. He died going into the emergency room. His funeral was December 23<sup>rd</sup>.

All the children were here for Christmas, our first one with Weazer. There were 10 of us now. It was bittersweet Christmas for me.

In April we went to Florida again, Tom, Melvin, me, for 10 days. The last week, Amy and Erin were joining us. I drove to Tampa to pick them up. They were as good as gold. We did the usual things. The trip home in a rented car was a little crowded. I let Tom ride up front with Mel and I spent most of the daylight hours reading a book about a little Swedish girl and a bird, a Wagtail. We ended up driving the entire way home without stopping except the usual pit stops. The girls were troopers. I complained more than they did!

We had more wild animals. I know there was a lion here while Bud was in the hospital. It must have been Tom-Tom. Tom-Tom, named him for our son, was the only male lion we ever had. He, too, was a sweet lion, but I don't remember too much about him.

The Columbus Zoo had begun to breed cheetahs. Not many zoos were successful but they had a litter the year before. They had been able to hand-raise a female cheetah.

This year there was another litter born, one male cheetah lived. Mel kept wanting to bring him home, I was afraid we'd lose him. There was so little known about raising cheetahs. At last, he seemed big and strong enough and we brought him here. They had named him Duma at the zoo -- it was supposed to mean "fast-fleet-speedy" in Swahili, we were told.

Duma made an excellent houseguest. He was so much smaller than a lion, and so much more gentle. Where the lions retracted their claws, cheetahs cannot. They were far more scratches; a bureau in my bedroom still show deep ones that he put there when he wanted to look out the window. Everyone was wild about Duma!

He was so gentle, I often held Weazer on his back and let them walk around the kitchen. Duma was to live here until after his first birthday. We could have kept him longer as far as our safety was concerned but he was full grown at the end of that time and he wasn't getting enough exercise here. They hoped he would breed at the Zoo.

It was going to be an exciting year for us. We were going to have another grandchild! Susan and Jim were expecting a baby in August.

In November we were to go with Mayor and Jean Moody to Africa! Mel had planned the IULA (International Union of Local Authorities) convention here. Tom Moody was president of the group then and he had invited them to Columbus for their first convention in the U.S. There had been no money to have a convention and Mayor Moody had dumped everything in Mel's arms.

Columbus came up with a bang-up convention. Mel had finagled funds. The hotels were full of international people, dozens of volunteers picked them up at the airport, ran the registration desks, information booths. There were official meetings, of course but there were sightseeing tours of downtown and the university, trips to the Zoo, climaxed by a big picnic held at Darby Dam with a stage set up with bluegrass music to entertain.

In appreciation, we had been invited to attend the planning session for the next convention. And it was to be held in Nairobi, Kenya.

Saturday night we had dinner at the Swiss club with Mazza's and the Koontz's. The Koontz would not be there the next weekend. They were going to Indiana to see David's brother.

That Friday, August 6<sup>th</sup>, Mel called. David was dead. Helen found him in the orchard. She had made a fast trip to drop a grandchild off at the fairgrounds. They were packed and ready to leave for Indiana as soon as she got home. We were all in shock. David seemed so healthy -- we didn't know his heart was bad. Mel came home and we went to be with Helen. Mary Jane and Clem drove up at the same time.

Anne Elizabeth Marsico was born August 11, sucking her thumb. Now we have four grandchildren!

In Nov. Duma went to stay with Debbie Casto while we were gone to Africa. There was a fire and police strike threatened and Mayor Moody decided he couldn't leave the city.

Jean, Mel and I left. When we got on the plane in New York, I couldn't believe its size. I didn't see how anything that big could ever get off the ground, yet fly us to London. But it did.

I couldn't look enough -- we rode in a huge black Rolls Royce taxi, the doorman at the Hotel wore a top hat and tails. Jean went to her room to take a nap. We tried, but the excitement was too much. We got up and walked. We were only in England 2 ½ days but we crammed them full. We took the train to Canterbury, toured the cathedral. We were met by the veterinarian from Howlett's Zoo, where we were impressed by the gorilla habitation (it would be a model for our Zoo's gorilla habitat that was still just a dream then).

We were served lunch in the mansion [Aspinall mansion], a meat pastry, fresh Brussel sprouts grown on the grounds, fresh raspberries served with clotted cream. Lord Aspinall was in London; he sent regrets that he could not be there to show us around.

Back in London, Jean went shopping while we went to the Tower. We only saw from our taxi but we saw Buckingham Palace with its Guards and their high fur hats. We saw Victoria Station, the Parks, the Thames, London Bridge.

We took the plane to Africa. We were met by the Mayor of Nairobi, Nathan Kahara, who had to have pictures taken of all of us together for the newspaper. We were escorted to a huge black limousine and driven to the Panafric Hotel. There were baskets of fruit waiting in our rooms.

Meetings for the conference didn't start until Monday so Mel and I lost no time in hiring a mini-bus to Amboseli National Park. Jean declined and we were pleased to be going just the two of us. The driver was there before daylight the next morning. We got back long after dark. Memories of that day will never fade.

We saw herds of wildebeest, giraffes, a pride of wild lions, water buffalo, rhinos, hippos, monkeys, eland, zebra, some whose names I'd never heard of. We did not see a solitary cheetah, although our driver said there were many. And he told me the Swahili name for cheetah -- Duma!

We ate at Kilimanjaro Lodge. I took a picture of a Massai boy driving cattle and was reprimanded by our driver. Maasai do not want their pictures taken. They must be the only ones in Kenya who do not, because if there are three or four of their buildings together, there will be one of those rickety-tin sheds that will bear a sign advertizing photographs.

Mayor Moody, representing the U.S.A was on the agenda. He had told Mel he would have to speak for him but neglected to give him any other information. Mel was tense about it and when I walked into that huge hall and saw the men sitting behind their countries' signs, I was really nervous, too. I shouldn't have been. He delivered a speech that sounded as if he'd spent days getting his data together. He got a resounding ovation from the other delegates.

All the delegates were given a guide or person who advised and offered you any help you needed. Mel's guide was a young woman who had gone to college in Dayton! Her name was Jennifer. She was President Moi's daughter.

There were tours for the ladies, we visited their hospitals. Jennifer's friend, a nurse originally from Belgium, was married to an African doctor. We met him. We went through the maternity ward and where they kept the preemies. They were so proud of their modern hospital. Some things seemed very primitive to me. For instance, the mothers in the maternity wards brought their own blankets for their beds. Their food was brought to the hospital by their families. Surely there was some arrangement if there was no one to bring food, but we weren't told. Some were eating while we were there – no one seemed to have but one bowl.

Rose, the doctor's wife did not seem very happy. She told us she had two little boys. She had not been home to Belgium since she married, not even when her father died. Her husband was afraid that she would not come back. She was afraid of her husband, not physically. Perhaps, she was an exception, but I was glad I was married to an American.

There was a trip to a pig farm; a factory where hundreds of people were culling and wrapping carnations to be sent to various other countries, ours included. We visited a village where we formed a line and learned a native dance. We were taken to Lake Naivasha and visited a beautiful lodge there.

Back at the Conference, there was a parade where Pres. Moi waved to the people from the sun roof of a green limousine. We toured Nairobi National Park and saw the animal orphanage there. There was a barbeque in the park, we went to the Bomba where different tribes danced native dances for us. Very interesting at first but as the night wore on, I wished there were a few less tribes.

The wives were taken to Sunshine Orphanage. The children lived in small houses, with 15 or so children. The "auntie" as she was called, was usually a widow with children of her own to raise. When she came, she would remain as long as she was useful. There were two rooms downstairs, not large by our standards; a kitchen with a long table and benches, a living room with another long table and wooden chairs. There were pictures on the walls, yarn embroidered

muslin tablecloths in the living room. Upstairs, there were three bedrooms, two with bunk beds and cots, one for girls, one for boys, the third had a couple of cribs for the babies and a cot where “auntie” slept. Everything was neat and in place. There were no toys in sight.

The children were in school. We were to go there next, after the “auntie” served us cookies the children had made for us the night before.

At the school we were entertained, first by the younger children who sang and danced for us and then by the older ones who just sang. The children all seemed happy, sending shy smiles in our direction.

I forgot to mention, there were two adorable fat babies in the house that we toured.

Mayor Kahara had arranged to take any delegates that wanted to go, to Mombasa after the conference. I was dying to go and I know Mel would have liked to, also. Jean wasn’t interested. I don’t think she was nearly as fascinated with Africa as we were. Nathan insisted changing our plane tickets would be easy – he would see to that. But we had reservations in Germany that were waiting for us. We said goodbye to Africa.

We landed in Cairo to change planes. Another adventure -- we were only to be in Cairo for a short layover -- about two hours. Our names were called just before the plane from Nairobi came to a standstill. ‘Mr. and Mrs. DOGE’. When it dawned on us that we were the Doges we went to the front of the plane where they were waiting for us. After we persuaded them to let Jean come with us, we were taken to a small bus and driven to the terminal. The airfield was the way like nothing I had ever seen. It was sandy and in one place we saw a small wall of sand and barbed wire. There was a man with the machine gun pointed toward the plane.

Our bus stopped and we were ushered to the waiting room where they asked for our passports and took them to one of the ticket windows. The flight we were scheduled to go on came and went. Mel had gone to the window several times but he was motioned to sit down. About four hours later, with no explanations we were called, given our passports, put on another bus and driven out to a plane, not an Egyptian Air, listed on our itinerary, but a plane that read Sinai.

We started up the wooden ramp. I stopped, demanded to know where the plane was going. The man at the bottom of the ramp motioned me on. Mel and Jean were behind me. We were the only passengers getting on. I don’t know how the others felt but I wanted to know where we were being sent. A male attendant came to the open doorway. I asked again. He answered in perfect English, “Frankfurt, Germany”. I went up the ramp.

We got to Frankfurt hours late. It was Saturday night and Jean wanted us to stop and get some German money. Mel was eager to get the rental car, Mayor Moody had reserved. I’d been stopped at customs. Mayor Kahara had given us canes with carved animal handles as we left. The customs officer wanted to know the value of them and I had to explain that we had not



purchased them and hadn't the slightest idea. After one was unwrapped, he seemed satisfied and I was sent on.

We were given directions to where our luggage could be picked up by car and Mel left us there while he went to get the car. He was gone over an hour. Just about the time we'd given him up, he drove up. He'd circled the airport and ended up on the Autobahn. He could see the airport but couldn't find his way back. At last, by trial and error, he had made it. We were now over six hours later than we had planned and we still had to find our way to Mainz where we were staying.

Mayor Moody expecting to be with us, had chosen things that he wanted to show us. He had been to Germany, driven from Frankfurt to Mainz -- it would have been almost routine for him but for a novice like Mel, were real challenges.

Once we got back to the Autobahn, we had no problem until we got to Mainz. Near the airport, some of the signs were in English but in Mainz -- German was all we saw. We got off far too early. Jean knew the hotel was right on the Rhine. It was so late there were few people on the streets and Mel could slow down and look more. We found the river and finally saw a sign "Mainzer Hof Hotel". We were there.

Next morning, we decided to sightsee. Jean was right. We should have gotten money at the airport. Everything is closed on Sundays. She came to the rescue with a little she brought from a previous trip. We bought gas and had enough to stop at a picturesque stop along a train line and have a snack. We drove following the Rhine to Köhn. There were beautiful old castles, rows and rows of grapevines on the slopes. When Jean or I saw something we wanted to get a better look at, Mel stopped and we all investigated. We drove through little farming villages where all the houses were clumped together, the fields they farmed surrounding them. We saw churches, cathedrals.

One day we went back to Frankfurt to the Zoo. Mel boasted he could get us in free. Jean knew he could not. Of course, he did. All he had to do was to ask for the director, tell him we were from Columbus Zoo. We not only got in free, but got a guided tour.

Jane was a real sport. I'm sure the things we wanted to see were not what she would have chosen but she never complained once.

Another day we drove to Worms. She shopped, brought Christmas presents for all her family. We bought some mittens, a keychain I still use, and a little wind-up music carousel with Christmas trees and wooden people on horses. It was a cheap little thing but it's been a part of every Christmas since.

The restaurant at the hotel was on the top floor. While you ate you could watch the boats go up and down on the Rhine. The food was so good. I especially remember the hard rolls and butter.

On Saturday, Jean came to our room, we unlocked the little cabinet with its drinks and snacks, and listened to the Michigan and Ohio State game. When it ended, it was too late to eat; the restaurant had closed. I remember so much -- but I don't remember who won the game. We left on Monday. Thursday was Thanksgiving.

New Year's Eve, Mel and I were home. Weazer, Eric and Dana were in Columbus. Eric and Dana had gone out with friends and we were watching Weazer. He had on fire engine red pajamas. I stood him on the kitchen floor, Mel called to him. He took steps, there was at least four inches of sleepers beyond his toes. It didn't faze him. He plopped over. I picked him up. He tried it again. Before he got too tired to try more, he could walk from the middle of the kitchen floor to the edge of the family room rug. We were so happy -- Weazer learned to walk at our house.

I was still active on the Girl Scout Nominating Committee. I had started volunteering at the library at Cranbrook School. There were only grades K through 3<sup>rd</sup>. You might have thought you were at a United Nations meeting if the children had been older. Most of the children there came from the areas around Ohio State. We had children of all colors. They were so cute. I read stories to every class. I was afraid of mispronouncing a word, some were so advanced, they'd be sure to catch it. Some were bilingual. One day after trying almost all the library time to get a tiny oriental boy to laugh or at least react to my stories, another little boy piped up, "Hey, forget him --he can't understand English".

Duma was still living here, though he was gone out on P. P. [promotional excursions] several days a week. Mel and Patty Cupps even took him to Canfield, to a school assembly. That's 180 miles one way and I'm not sure but I don't think they had him in a carrier.

We were becoming world travelers; Mel had been invited to the regular IULA meeting in Stockholm in June. We would be going again with Jean and Mayor Moody and this time there were no threatened strikes. When we got on the plane they were already seated. We went first to Copenhagen.

We checked in at the Royal Hotel Copenhagen less than a block from the Tivoli Gardens. In the three days we were there I think we may have created a whirlwind. We walked every corner of the gardens, spent several hours on Stroget, the pedestrian street, with all its shops. (Jean bought Danish flatware to send home. Tom and Jean, both, were measured and ordered clothing, leather, I think.) We were invited to Town Hall to meet the Lord Mayor of Copenhagen. Jean & I had our pictures taken with him. We went to see The Little Mermaid, we toured the Rosenborg Castle. From seeing The Little Mermaid, we walked on along the harbour where we were allowed to go into one of the tall ships that was docked. Mayor John Rousaki of Savannah, Ga. had met the captain when it had visited there in 1976. We were all invited to his quarters where I tasted schnapps for the first time. I only touched it to my lips and I was on fire for the rest of the afternoon. Mayor Moody downed his with one swallow. We walked through the police courtyard of Amalienborg. On our last day there we went to Copenhagen Zoo. Pat

Schlink, a delegate from Minnesota, went with us. Pat was a nurse and she had asked me the day we walked from Little Mermaid to the Palace if I knew that Mel had emphysema. It was the first time I was aware it was apparent to other people.

There were seven delegates from the United States. Five wives including me made up the even dozen.

We left Copenhagen by train. We had first class sleeping compartments. The train is put on a ferry to cross the sound to Sweden. We all left our railroad car to stand on the ferry and catch a glimpse of the castle of Hamlet, the Kronborg.

Mel and I climbed into our sleeping compartments before midnight but we could hear some of the others partying each time the train stopped and we roused. I think the sleepers were wasted on some of the group.

We had asked to be called in time to get presentable before the train got to Stockholm. We were ready and out in the aisles when the train stopped. We waited for someone to help with our luggage. It wasn't until the train started jerking again that we realized no one helps with luggage. Some of the men ran outside and others passed suitcases out the window. We all managed to get off in time, our luggage scattered along the track.

There was no help here either. We were able to locate a cart and get everything inside the station.

Our itinerary said we would be met by its agent and transferred to our hotel. No agent. We found a telephone but no one had Swedish coins. Someone working at the food counter took pity on us and gave us a coin. We were staying at the Hotel Reisen in Old Town. They would send a bus for us – within the hour.

We were all hungry, our train had arrived at 8:00. At almost nine, someone opened the exchange window; we were all in line. Our bus came.

The Reisen sits a door away from the Swedish Royal Palace and it faces the Baltic Sea. There is only a narrow street between the two. The view was breathtaking.

We were served coffee and rolls and waited in the lobby while we were assigned rooms. Ours was a beautiful room but I was disappointed -- the view was of another building. I had just finished putting our clothes in drawers and on hangers when Mel came back to tell me they had another room with a better view, but it wouldn't be ready for several hours. I knew at 11:30 that morning there was a sightseeing bus tour scheduled for the Congress. We were told not to worry - leave everything as it was; they would take care of it.

And they did, our things moved, everything in place, even toilet articles in the huge old-fashioned bathroom when we returned. The furnishings weren't as modern as the first room – but-oh! the view!

There was a huge window, very tall and narrow by hotel standards, with two sets of drapes, the inside ones were sheer, blowing in the window that had no screen or bars though we were on the third floor; the other pair were ugly, thick black. (I would understand the need for them that night.) Our room faced the harbor. There are no words to describe the beauty. The harbor with the small sightseeing boats plying up and down, tooting as they passed each other. Straight ahead across the harbor you could see the island of Skeppsholmen and beyond it you could catch the top of the Wasa, the Swedish warship of 1628 found at the bottom of the Bay and raised in 1956. To the right you could see some big freighters, one flew the U.S.S.R. red flag with a hammer and sickle. To the left, across the harbor was Blasieholmen, the largest island of Stockholm. We could easily see the modern Grand and Strand Hotels. If you leaned out and looked directly to your left you could see the corner over the Royal Palace and people walking on the Strombron bridge to Blasieholmen. The rest of Olde Town was behind us, waiting for us to discover it.

That night at the Welcome Buffet, held in the gardens at Stadshuset, Stockholm City Hall, we met many of the people who had been at Nairobi, some from the IULA Congress in Columbus. I remember among these Mayor Hans Koschnick from Bremen, Germany, Han van Putten and his secretary from the Hague, the mayor Amsterdam and his obnoxious wife. On the tour that afternoon I had found Joseph Lesiew from Eldout, Kenya.

Joseph hunted us out and we sat on the steps of City Hall. "No, Nathan would be not be coming; he was having political problems in Nairobi." He [Joseph] insisted on driving us to the Kenyan embassy, where we met the Kenyan ambassador to Sweden and his wife. I was amused at Joseph. Evidently the ambassador was a friend of his, but I felt sorry for the wife. She had two children, had not expected visitors. If I had known differently. I would have thought it was Joseph's house. He took us everywhere, bedrooms, opened closets for us to look into, invited us to stay for dinner.

They Ambassador and his wife were gracious. We sat down, family style, children included. There was plenty of food. We weren't hungry. We'd had a fabulous luncheon at the Opera House after the morning tour and there had been tables of food at the welcome buffet, but we ate. I remember there was a chicken dish, several vegetables and for dessert, we were proudly served Del Monte fruit-cocktail. There was more of the Kenya coffee that we knew from Nairobi; it will peel enamel from your teeth!

We had gone to the opening session at Folkets Hus at 4:30, between the luncheon and the welcome buffet. The opening address had been given by His Majesty, King Gustav. He was accompanied by Queen Silvia.

The buses were to be leaving immediately after and as we left the assembly hall, the king and queen passed by. The aisles were narrow and her dress brushed my arm. She glanced at me and smiled an apology. I had been bumped by a queen!!

The entire week was all just as unbelievable. There was a study tour, wives invited, too, to Kista, a new satellite town and its industrial Center, a bus trip and a boat ride to the island Vaxholm and was told its history beginning in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. We toured the old fortress, saw the antiquated cannon that had stopped the Russians from going any further in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. We were welcomed by Vaxholm's top official and sat in front of the town hall for a program. I haven't the slightest idea what was said, I was too busy watching a pair of wagtails. I'm sure they were the descendants of the one in the book I had entertained Erin and Amy with on that long ride from Florida, two years before. We came back by boat through the archipelago. There was a visit by boat to Drottningholm Palace, the permanent residence of the Royal family. We walked through the vast formal gardens, saw the Chinese Palace and the 18<sup>th</sup> century Theatre.

In the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup>, we were awakened by the sound of boats toot-toot-tooting. On Midsummer day, everyone goes to the islands, and the boats filled the harbour. They were bedecked with green trees and branches. (I even saw a baby carriage with a small tree strapped in front later that day.)

We were scheduled for the islands, too. That evening we were directed to the ferry, to cross to Djurgarden where we spent hours at Skansen, the oldest open-air museum in the world. There were 150 buildings representing different historical periods and social classes. We watched them blow little beads of glass and were given them as souvenirs; we saw the zoo filled mostly with Scandinavian animals. There was another dinner, serve-yourself style. I remember Mel's plate with just a few dabs of food. Most of the dishes contained fish and huge pink slices of fresh salmon. Mel didn't eat fish and he wasn't about to eat reindeer meat!! They raised herds of reindeer for meat the way we do cattle but to Mel they were eating Bambi.

We got off the ferry. We walked down the walk, along the Baltic Sea. It might have been twelve-thirty at night, but it was Midsummer's and it was as light as twelve o'clock noon.

All of the U.S. delegation had been wine and dined at the American embassy. Lucia and Michael Zimmerman (2<sup>nd</sup> in command at the Embassy -- I'm sure they wouldn't be called vice- ambassador but whatever) had seemed particularly interested in us, inviting us out to eat without the others. We were more puzzled than flattered. Lucia kept in touch for several years, she wanted some help in starting a project she'd been working on, here in the U.S. She called, wrote letters, came to Columbus several times. Mel tried but he was of little help.

I toured every street in Olde Towne while Mel was in meetings, then took him to see the most interesting ones. We laughed about following V.P. Bush around. He'd been in Nairobi just before we were there, and then again here. In both cities we had seen, "Bush Go Home" graffiti.

We both loved the Royal Gardens between the hotel and the Folkets Hus where the meetings were held. It had beds of flowers, a nursery for children, a restaurant with outside seating, a large fountain, huge lion figures the children climbed on, and best of all, giant chess boards painted on the walks with chess pieces 3 feet high. Old men played all day, and crowds

gathered around to watch their moves, in absolute silence. There were prams with children, almost old enough to start kindergarten, most of them sucking a pacifier. I remember everyone laughing, gay. I know Sweden's suicide rate is very high but it was hard to believe in the park.

We ordered food and sat at an outdoor table. White pigeons came swooping down to steal french fries almost knocking over our water.

Two little girls, about seven and nine, shed their clothes when they finished eating and completely nude splashed in the fountain. No one seemed to care.

After you passed the gardens, you went through the office district where all the buildings looked like they'd just been completed, very modern. It was such a contrast to Olde Towne.

The last evening the National League of Cities were our hosts at a cocktail party at the Riesen.

There was more to attending an International Convention than the things we saw and did. There are people, funny stories that will live on long as any of us are here to tell them. Mel had met two men who thought of pranks that matched his. Charles Roger from Seattle, Washington and John Rousakis, who was mayor of Savannah, Georgia.

Four years later, John Rousakis happened to be in Columbus, Ohio when Mel received the Jewish National Fund Tree of Life award. He came to the dinner; the camaraderie was still strong.

We got home on the 24<sup>th</sup> -- the Girl Scout Council was host to four international opportunity girls -- two from Iceland, two from South America. On July 2<sup>nd</sup> we had a welcome cookout for them here. Duma entertained everyone. The girls from Iceland spoke English; the South American girls did not. I'm afraid they went home thinking that everyone in Columbus kept a cheetah in their house!

1984 was a more-of-the-usual things. Duma had gone to the zoo to live. Our visits to the zoo continued. Duma was always happy to see us. Elsa and Mel would communicate through the bars if she was inside, or the glass when she was out in the yard.

Tom had met and was dating a student from College of Art and Design, exclusively now.

In February, Mel celebrated his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. His emphysema was more pronounced but, otherwise he was in good shape.

Buck Reinhardt was Mayor; Dick Celeste, Governor. Different parties, Mel counted both his friends.

In April we went to Florida again. For the last few years, we've been going to Turtle Beach, the southern part of Siesta Key.

Weazer, past two, had lots of tiny cavities, probably the result of all the night juice bottles. They were making trips to Columbus to a children's dentist on Morse Rd. I often met them there. Dana had another concert in May. We all went.

In June we went to Atlanta for the Credit Union Convention with manager Jean Dunaway and Bill, Sandy and Steve Mills, Jan and Steve Snedker.

The spouses went to the Atlanta Zoo [and] Stone Mountain. We all ate – we went to Aunt Pitty Pat's where the waitress apologized to Mel for all the animal heads hanging on the wall.

Lord Aspinall came to see our new Ape Villa that was completed that year.

In August every one of the family except Jim went to the Sullivan Reunion. There was a group picture taken. We had a good turnout. It would start going downhill in the next few years. Tom took pictures of Weazer and Annie at the old iron pump. It ran in several papers: the *Dispatch*, *Chillicothe Gazette*, and the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*.

Annie celebrated her 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday here.

In November the *Sunday Dispatch Magazine* ran a wonderful 4-page picture story of Mel "The World According to Mel Dodge". The magazine cover was a full-page picture illustration of Mel. It was wonderful tribute. All the family was here for Thanksgiving, including Ruth and Bob.

In December, a Siberian tiger cub came to stay for five weeks. Bronson was three months old, and had been hand raised. She was on her way to Cypress Gardens but the Zoo had borrowed her to take on the annual Christmas office visits. We loved Bronson; she was still bottle-fed and gentle. It snowed while she was here. We have pictures of her playing in the snow under the spruce tree in the backyard. I was so sad when she left.

I needn't have been. In January I heard someone from the Zoo had gone to New Jersey. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> lion, Hannah had had a litter and they were going to bring a cub back. I hardened my heart. Hannah had been such a nervous lion -- why on earth would they want to have a cub of hers? Hannah had been very dear to me but then, I was the only person she really trusted. She had been a handful. They could take care of this new little lady at the zoo.

I didn't hear the first day they brought her to the Zoo. But on the second, the phone rang. It was Jack. No one had been able to get a drop of formula down her. "She's going to die," Jack moaned. What could I do? Within an hour she was here.

She was the youngest cub I had had. She wasn't yet four weeks old and she wasn't about to suck on that nipple. I tried several times -- she looked so pitiful. I sat down on the kitchen floor in front of the furnace register and held her on my lap, wrapped in a baby blanket. I really didn't know what to do; she just refused to accept it.

As she grew warmer, she began to fall asleep. I stopped forcing the nipple but when she was fully asleep, I pried those tiny needle-sharp teeth apart and slipped the nipple in her mouth. She woke up, looked disgusted, refused to suck. I rubbed her throat. No reaction.

I left the nipple in her mouth and she went back to sleep. I don't know why I did, but I pressed the nipple against the roof of her mouth. You could see the milk leaking out the corners of her jaws. All at once she swallowed and she began to suck. She drank it all.

I supposed that that would be the end of it. But next feeding time she refused the bottle again. This little lady missed her mother and she didn't want a substitute.

I had to go through that same routine each time for several days but finally, she began to nurse without the preamble. She began to inhale the bottles like all the others.

We named her Dandelion. I had never had anything happen to an animal in my keeping but I came close to killing Dandy. I was very careful of what the animals played with. They loved to bat empty Clorox jugs around but I always watched carefully and took them away when a tooth went through the plastic. Balls had to be large enough not to swallow, never smaller than a volleyball. Any towel or blanket was discarded if they frayed on an edge.

But I had let Dandelion have what I thought was a wonderful toy. It was a ball with a leather-like cover, but it wasn't filled with air so she could push and bat it around and not send it flying. She loved it and she played with it for several weeks.

Dandelion was a small lion, probably about 45 or 50 pounds. She was four months old and I wasn't worried about her now. Evidently, I hadn't checked her toy often enough because one evening I found the cover ripped at the seam. When she wasn't looking, I disposed of it. The stuffing was solid foam rubber. I breathed a sigh of relief that I found it before she got the cover ripped off.

Dandy didn't take a bottle now; she had horse meat mixed with Esbilac (formula). She ate as usual the next morning but in just a few minutes it was back up. It didn't have to happen a second time; I remembered the ball. When I recovered it from the trash can, sure enough what I was afraid I'd find -- under the ripped cover a piece of the foam was missing.

I called Jack. He called Dr. Gardner, the vet at OSU who looked after our zoo animals. Jack called back, "Take her to the Veterinarian Clinic".

They operated that evening and removed a 2 ½ inch piece of foam rubber. I felt so guilty.

I would have understood if they had taken her straight to the zoo when she was healed but they called us to come get her. Mel drove me down. We were taken behind the swinging doors where there were rows of cages. I saw cats and dogs but no Dandelion. There was one big cage with paper over the front. Poor Dandelion, she had a big white frill of a collar around her



neck and a shaved belly. She had not been a good convalescent; the paper was there because she snarled and spit if they passed her.

“Where was her carrier?”, the student vet wanted to know. We hadn’t brought one. I had her collar and leash but with that ruffle around her neck they were useless. I picked my baby up in my arms and carried her to the car. She didn’t snarl and she didn’t spit.

She was glad to be home and you could tell. I dreaded when I’d have to take her back to have the stitches removed. It was time; I needed to call.

A veterinarian who appeared from time to time on ABC’s Good Morning America was visiting the Columbus Zoo. Mel had Debbie Casto who often took Dandelion out for PR promotions, bring her to his office. The doctor had heard about Dandelion and he wanted to see her. (Knowing Mel, he wanted to show her off.) I wish I could think of the doctor’s name. I know his last name started with K and his first name was Steve. Sometime in the last few months I read in the paper that he had died of Aids.

No matter what his name, he took the stitches out in Mel’s office. Dandelion didn’t even know when he did.

When Dandelion got too big to be taken out, she went to the Zoo. Three lions at the Zoo are really all they want to keep permanently. Mel would never give consent to have Elsa leave. DJ, the other lioness at the zoo was born there. She was just a little younger than Elsa and she and Elsa got along well. Tom-Tom, a beautiful male lion made up the trio.

Jack knew Dandelion was special to me. He showed me a letter the Director of the El Paso Zoo had written. They wanted a lion and it sounded like a good place for her. Dandy had to stay inside the carnivore building at our zoo -- unless she fought both Elsa and DJ for the right to be part of their family. Jack said it was my decision. I told her goodbye.

1985 was a year of good and bad changes. We weren’t very far into the year when a very bad thing happened. My good, good, friend, Nora had to have open heart surgery after a heart attack. It was a triple bypass and two of the repairs “blocked out” within days of the operation, the third used the mammary vein and it is still working eight years later. She has angina and controls it with nitroglycerin pills but she had to slow down some but she still accomplishes so much and has done more for others since her heart attack than most people do in their entire life.

In April, Herky who’d been ailing for months was in obvious pain, and we took him to the vet with the same instructions and results as those of Sammy almost seven years before. We couldn’t really grieve for Hercules. Like Lassie, he’d had a good long life and we wanted his suffering to end.

On April 15<sup>th</sup>, Mel was appointed President of the Columbus Convention Bureau. After 34 years he was leaving the Recreation and Parks Department. It was his decision. I hoped he

would not regret it. I didn't know how I really felt, probably the same as Mel -- Excited and Sad at the same time

The money was a big calling card. He would have his PERS retirement and almost \$30,000 more a year. I think as much as anything he knew he needed to slow down. The department had grown and grown.

Mel left City Hall one day, took over the offices in the Lincoln Leveque Tower the next day. He took Peggy with him. Jim Barney was appointed the new Parks and Rec Director. I had my doubts that he could handle it. I also doubted if Mel could keep from telling Barney what to do.

I was with two of my friends from Centralia high school the day the announcement was made. We ate at Biddy's in Dublin. After we ate, we went to a small dress shop there. I bought an off-white skirt, more expensive than I usually pay and it would have to be shortened, too. Virginia and Grace liked it and I was feeling heady enough not to care. And in June it was just the thing to wear to Gail and Dan Hogan's wedding. The reception was at the Big Bear Farm and Mel had an elephant brought from the Zoo

In April when we lost Hercules, I decided to wait for a while before getting another dog. I knew that I would want one but I wanted to get things cleaned again and I wasn't ready.

Tom brought home the oddest-looking pup from the animal shelter. I wasn't ready for another dog but when Mel objected by saying I didn't need the extra work, I reminded him that he never felt that way when it was a lion to be taken care of.

Tom decided to call his dog Willy Bite. When he was a baby, his sisters gave him a stuffed dog and that was its name. The stuffed dog or what is left of him still is in the toy box in the basement.

In July we went to the Credit Union Convention in Reno. This time we went with Jack and Carol Ritter and Jan and Steve Snedeker. We had our picture taken with The MGM lion (there is a sheet of glass between you and the lion but you can't see it). We saw Carol Channing in *Hello Dolly* and tried our luck at the slot machines. We had none.

We left Reno and went on to San Francisco to Mel's first Bureau Convention. He had not registered me, so I had the time he was in meetings to sightsee by myself. I rode the streetcar down to the Wharf. Did all the things there, walked to the Presidio, took a boat out to Sausalito, did the walking downtown tour. We stayed at the famous Fairmont.

Two conventions in one week -- fun!

In August there was a big celebration at Sunshine Park in Mel's honor. Sunshine was renamed. That building we wondered if we were allowed to just walk in -- back in 1948, is now the Dodge Recreation Center. Peggy orchestrated it all. There were elephants from the Zoo,

stands to depict the arts, golf, parks, softball, football, the senior citizens – everything. It seemed like the whole city was there. Michqua picked up all of us in a van. We stopped and ate at the Jai-Lai after it was over. There is only one thing I regret. They had a big balloon there and Mel and I were supposed to be taken up but they thought it was too much wind. This was the second time I thought I was going to get to go up and it didn't work out. The other time was at the Antrim's. The balloon developed a giant hole. I wondered if there would ever be a ride. I would really like to try it. I am sure Mel was happy the wind came up.

This was the year I finally got to see *Tecumseh*. After the rededication, Susan and her girls stayed in Columbus and we went on Saturday. Annie was so frightened; she kept her head under her blanket most of the play. The guns are loud!

In October we were invited for the fourth year to the Annual Yearling Trials at Darby Dan. That was always a fun day. You were given a program with the horses' names and the races they would be running. They had given the horses the names of the lady guests. Norma Dodge won.

Mayor Reinhardt appointed me a member of the Animal Shelter Board.

Dave Tulley who went to school with Tom was on the Johnny Carson show. It had been filmed live some time ago and he called to tell Tom to watch. A scheduled pianist had mashed his fingers and had canceled his appearance too late for Johnny to get another. He had asked for anyone who could play in the audience. Dave was in the audience and in cutoff jeans and sandals, flipped the tails he didn't have and sat down to play. He played so effortlessly and so well; the audience wouldn't stop clapping!

We hadn't had Willy Bite long when Missy died. She and Hercules had been together for 17 years and I thought she missed him. Of course, she was nearly 20 but when Tom first brought Willy home, she perked up a bit. Either Willy's exuberance or the effort was too much. Tom buried her in the backyard.

Mel settled into his new job. I never once heard him say he was unhappy about the move -- that just wasn't his nature. There were the usual problems when you take over and start doing things differently -- he lost an employee or two and picked up better ones. Jim Barney was having much more trouble, a great many of the office staff were too loyal to Mel and he was just across the street, close enough for them to take their complaints. I heard from some that he told his staff that he didn't want to hear from or about Mel Dodge. He was running the department. I was indignant, but then realized he really didn't have a choice. Mel gradually let go; of course, he never would completely.

Nora was able to play golf but we took a cart now and only played nine holes.

My social life was divided into two categories, mine and Mel's and mine. I had made friendships through Girl Scouts, my bosom buddies, renewed high school ties that hardly

included Mel. I often lunched with Gerry Morgan and Jean Johnson from Girl Scouts, or with Ginny Quick and Grace Mone from my high school days. Nora and I spent hours together golfing, refunding, walking, talking. Her husband, Jim, asked what we ever found to talk about for day after day. Nora told him when we ran out of things we started over again. That was true. I have heard some of her favorite stories so many times. I am sure I participated in them and I know that it is the same with her. My friendship with Nora is like slipping your foot into an old shoe -- it's so comfortable you can wiggle your toes and enjoy it; the shape has moulded to your foot and you know it will support your weight. Nora and I and the third of our threesome, Shirle. Nora played bridge with Shirle and when Shirle moved near us before Dana went to kindergarten, we became friends, too. Shirle, mother of the little redhead, Debbie, of the jingle-jangle kindergarten year, and Rob and John born later when they moved to Chicago. I have a good friend, Colleen Rundio, who lived on Leland and through about 13 years of my life shared kids and scrabble games. Colleen's husband, Chuck, died in 1978 and Mel helped her get a job with the city. We don't see each other so much now but we'll always be friends, I know.

I called these my friends -- Mel knew some, Nora -- Shirle -- Colleen very well and had met the others and their husbands, but they had become our friends because of me, not Mel.

Besides my friends and our activities, I still volunteered a lot. There was an Animal Control Board and still the nominating committee for the Girl Scout Council and, of course, there were animals. I loved the big cats but they were work!

**NOTE TO READER FROM THE TRANSCRIBER: The following note was written by Norma to her daughter Susan. Susan had asked Norma to write memories for a class project. The note was crossed out. I have included it because I think it is fun.**

*Susan,*

*Tues. morning. I am only to 1986 -- I have kept writing constantly. If this has to be done by Thursday, I'm afraid you may have 3 options -- finish it yourself, tell your teacher I have died of exhaustion, or flunk the course.*

*I love you -- will continue writing. Hope to finish very soon.*

*Mother*

Tom was still living at home and the girls came often. Weazer and Anne were lots of fun now. Weazer was just past four and Annie three. The older girls were really interesting. You could begin to see glimpses of the adults-to-be. Amy would be 16 this year. Erin was 12 and sometimes it seemed she was more Annie's mother than Susan.

We still went to the Swiss Club a lot. Marian and Bob Daines usually joined the Mazzas and us -- sometimes Don and Donna Printz. We tried to get Helen to come she did a few times but I think it made her too sad. Marian, Mary Jane, and I met for lunch with Helen frequently.

Helen had sold the farm and moved to Westerville, a move she and Dave had been planning since before his death.

Last year Duma had been sent to the San Diego Zoo on loan for breeding purposes. There had been no litters and Mel asked Jack to bring him back. He came, and was upset; didn't want to eat. Mel went to the Zoo; Duma knew him immediately. Mel hand-fed him a few times and he was fine.

Amanda Blake "Miss Kitty" from the old TV *Gunsmoke* series was in town. She loved cheetahs had had some on a ranch and I think, had donated one to the Columbus Zoo earlier. I met her at the Zoo and Duma behaved like a gentleman. He let Amanda pet and even kiss him. She was thrilled. We must have stayed in the yard with him for half an hour.

My sister Marjorie had open heart surgery in the spring. She was 83 she'd had a pacemaker for a long time. It was a hard surgery but it gave her several more years. Looking back, it might have been better -- she lost two daughters, Anne and Pat, to cancer in those years. But second guesses are worthless.

In January, Tom ran down the stairs, telling me to turn on the television. The space shuttle had exploded! The whole nation mourned.

I had an excited call from Dana. We were going to have another grandchild! I had thought that Weazer or "Zar" as they called him now, was going to be an only child. The new baby was due right after Zar's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Mel went to the AAZPA [Association of Zoos and Aquariums] conference in Washington, D.C. He had been thinking "Pandas" for the Columbus Zoo. Toledo had them on loan from China. He had told Mayor Rhinehart and as Buck was always so enthusiastic about everything for Columbus, he arranged a meeting with the Chinese ambassador. After the conference, Buck, Mel, Bill Wolfe and Maggie, Public Relations Director for the Zoo, met with Ambassador Ping.

They invited them to the Zoo and in June, the Chinese guests came. They were entertained royally. They were given a tour of City Hall, served d'oeuvres in Council Chambers where they were welcomed by the mayor. On Friday night there was a dinner held in their honor at the Huntington Capital Club. There was a dinner at Darby Dan Farms on Sat. night and a visit to our zoo on Sunday. The Zoo had a new white tiger cub. The ambassador's wife held and gave it a bottle. Jack announced it had a name: Ping.

Mel and Jack were great at honoring people by naming an animal after them. Sometimes the names were legitimate, but there were times a little poetic license was used.

We had a beautiful cheatah name Zakari. She had been in the first litter ever born here. She was hand-raised at the Zoo and was the mother of a number of litters. When Bill Cupps was

perfecting a breeding program, she was invaluable because she would let people she knew examine her cubs.

“Zakari,” she was to everyone at the Zoo, but when Mel took Norina Wolfe on a behind the scenes tour then one day, she became ‘Norina’. There was a jaguar born the day the I.U.L.A. delegates were visiting the Zoo. Jack named her Iula. I read reports of Iula in the news letters put out each day during the conference in Stockholm. They said Iula had been raised at home by delegate Melvin Dodge and was hale and hearty at the Zoo.

Hale and hearty, she may have been but I had never heard a keeper mention an “Iula” and I knew for a fact that she had not been raised in Mel Dodge’s home.

I have a letter Mel has saved written by Arthur Hiller just after *Teachers*, the movie made here at old Central School, was finished. In it, Hiller says he is bursting with pride to know that he had as an animal walking around the Columbus Zoo with his name. The return name on the envelope is “Ex Honorary Mayor Arthur Hiller”. I think that both Buck and Mel may have kissed the blarney stone.

In May we were supposed to have our picture taken for Overbrook’s new directory. I had to cancel. We waited until the last day to have them taken because Mel had so many commitments that week and then when the day came, he felt too bad to go. I was disappointed; there won’t be another directory for several years.

Patty Hesson had told me just before we went to Africa that she wanted to sell the land in West Virginia. She could not find anyone to appraise it for her, but her lawyer had checked prices of land near theirs and had given her a price. It seemed very little for 85 acres, even hills with practically no roads to get to them. “Did I want it?” I had no money that was mine alone so I checked with Mel. It is useless land and I didn’t think he would want to buy it. The money would be just be gone -- and though they didn’t amount to much, there would be taxes. Mel got the money at the bank – “those hills had been in the Hesson family since the Civil War and of course he wanted to me to have them!”

So, the Hesson Hills are still in the family. I offered to give Tom the title to the land if he would quit smoking but the price was unacceptable to him and it will be up to all my heirs to keep it or not, more than likely.

When we were in Africa, Pat and Ollie went with Tom so that he could know how to find it. I remember being there just three times, twice as a little child, and once Tom and I had taken Mother and Dad. Tom was twelve, I believe.

After the initial visit, Tom had been down several times trying to clear a path back to where the old log house had stood. It burned down while aunt Ev was still living there. I have a vague memory of seeing her sitting on the porch peeling peaches. That would have been in 1931, because I know I started school the day after we came home.

I had gone down twice, once with Tom and Susan, and once just a few weeks before with Dana, Eric and Zar. They were on their way to New York for vacation and wanted to see the land. Both times we had finally found the cabin site, but only by trial and error. Tom had gone to Charleston to pick up maps that were used for tax purposes. Those and some pages he zeroxed from the county records were all we had for boundary lines. The original deed was worthless, “so many poles from a white oak stump near a branch to a stone in Wolf Creek.” for example.

Ollie had been there more often than I. She and Ruth and their husbands had been there only once after they were married. The place seems to have a pull for Ollie and me, Tom and Susan, and I know it had for Bud too.

That summer 1986, Ollie, Tom and I went to W. Va. in Tom’s jeep to see what Ollie could tell us. What fun we had! It was hot and sultry but we wore long jeans, shirts with long sleeves, hats, and our pants tucked in our socks to keep out ticks. Ollie remembered approximately some of the boundaries and when we found barbed wire on some trees, we really got excited. Tom had brought orange marking tape and as we found first one tree, then, a strip of barbed wire, we marked them. We began to see the lines forming. Fighting through briars, uphill, sliding down hills; falling, sometimes having to backtrack we went around the whole 85 acres. There is one section on the southwest boundary that we couldn’t find any definite boundary.

We got so carried away that we had not gone back to the jeep for lunch. It was late afternoon when we got back, untied our bandanas and wiped the sweat off our faces. We ate our lunch in the jeep after we noticed there were hundreds of microscopic ticks crawling in the dust alongside the dirt road. Ollie and I were dead tired, dirty, hot, sweaty, and Tom was not much better.

We hadn’t finished all we wanted to do so we went back to the Krodel Park near Pt. Pleasant. Tom put up his lightweight two-man tent while Ollie and I took showers and put on a change of clothes we’d taken just in case. While Tom showered, we unrolled the sleeping bags; there was just room enough for them to cover the floor. They got in first, one on either side and if they needed to get up, they would have to step on me in the center

We slept like logs. After a quick breakfast at McDonald’s, back the 20 or so miles to the place. We did a little more marking, some exploring, took a lot of pictures, and left shortly after noon for home. I had been so proud that I at sixty-one could still climb the hills and brave the weeds and insects until I remembered I was following in my sixty-seven-year-old sister’s tracks! When Bonnie, Ollie’s daughter looked at the pictures of Ollie and I taken that day, she remarked that we looked like we had just stepped out of the movie *Deliverance*.

I was saddened in August to get a call from Fran, Jayne Park’s sister. Jayne had died in North Carolina. We had only kept in touch through Fran and the few visits Jayne made home

but we had been together those “first adult” years when so many changes were happening. We had been part of each other’s lives. In a small way we had made history together. I attended her funeral. I closed another door in my life.

Erin broke her foot at our house. She and her friend Rose were staying with us so they could attend “Summer experience” at the Zoo. One evening we had tiger cub guests and Erin went to the basement to get her camera. She slipped and hurt her foot. I thought it was probably a sprain but the next morning when I took her to the hospital, it was broken. They put on a soft cast on it and we rented crutches. Erin’s doctor at home thought a walking cast would be better and she went home to have it put on. Rose stayed here. Erin returned for the last day of camp,

Jim Marsico was in the Air Force Reserves and for his active duty that year he had been sent to England. It seemed like a wonderful opportunity so Susan and the girls were going to go, too, while he was there. Passports were ready, tickets bought. Poor Erin. She went to England, sore foot and all.

We went to Boston for our second International Bureau Convention. Mel had been with the Bureau now for a year and he knew all the presidents of the Ohio bureaus and had talked by phone with others. In San Francisco, the previous year, we had been late checking in and since I hadn’t been registered, I didn’t meet anyone. It was all new to me.

Boston was a great town to visit. We stayed at Copley Square. Everyone took a cruise on the Charles River. There was a bus trip for accompanying persons to Newport, Rhode Island where we toured the Breakers, a mansion built by built in 1895 by Cornelius Vanderbilt. We stopped to see the church in Newport where Jack and Jackie Kennedy were married. We all went to the Kennedy Library and Museum in Newport where hors d’oeuvres were served. We were shown the bear of Keytar fame. I went downtown on the subway (another first for me) and walked the Freedom Trail. The trail included the State House, Old North Church, Copp’s cemetery (where I did a tracing of an old tombstone “Nabby Dodge, wife of Capt. James Dodge who Departed This Life -- March 28, 1796. Age 25 Yrs.” There was Faneuil Hall, old South meetinghouse, the U.S.S. Constitution and Paul Revere’s house. The last night party was held at Faneuil Hall.

On October 4<sup>th</sup>, Susan’s birthday, Samuel Dodge Koppert was born. He was big and lusty, perfect! Now Mel and I had five grandchildren. God was good to us.

Christmas, everyone was here again. It was baby Sammy’s first visit to our house. The girls and their families were here from Thursday Christmas afternoon until Sunday night. There were eleven of us now.

We had the Ambassador’s promise to help us in our request for the pandas. We were going to ask to have them during the summer of ‘92 for the celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery of America. In September the first delegation was sent to China. Mel did not go.



It was getting harder for him to breathe. He did not exert himself overly much if he could help and he tried to hide it from others.

As I look back, a lot of good things happened in 1987 but the year started off with a bang. The county commissioners voted not to reappoint Mel to the Zoo's Operating Board. When Columbus heard by way of TV and newspapers on February 11, it shook the whole city. In 1985 Mel had led a successful drive to get a Zoo levy on the ballot. He'd been working for a long time to get the county wide support for the Zoo, and evidently the voters agreed, voting overwhelmingly for a 0.25 mill levy. In a compromise, an 18-member operating board was formed to oversee the use of these funds. It was made up of six appointees each from the Zoo Park Association, the city and the county commissioners.

Mel was still on the 15-member executive board, chairman of the facilities committee. The county commissioners had nothing to do with that.

The people were outraged! Mel Dodge, second only to Jack Hanna was "Mr. Zoo" to them. People smelled political retaliation in the act. Letters, phone calls, TV spots, editorials resulted. Marjorie Wylie, the commissioners' new appointee was in tears -- she hadn't known who she was replacing. She wanted to resign. Jack Hanna, in Kenya with the photographic safari threatened to quit. Mel was interviewed photographed, proclaimed he was not angry about the ouster.

February 12<sup>th</sup>, *Columbus Dispatch* headlines read "Mayor puts Dodge back on the Zoo Board". Jim Barney, the man who had replaced Mel as a Recreation and Parks Director had resigned so that Mayor Reinhardt could appoint Mel. (The Parks and Recreation Director is an ex officio member of the Columbus Zoological Park Association as stated in the Bylaws and Jim would still have that position.) Mel was back on the appointed board, no thanks to the county commissioners.

In April Jenny Pettit from the zoo, brought the second cheetah I would raise. She was a week less than three months old. The zoo had 2 cheetahs to hand raise, Pippa and her brother. They had chosen to give me Pippa. Her brother was calm, had a disposition like Duma's. Pippa was a different story. She was nervous, jittery, trusted no one. As I discovered later, the nursery was happy to see her go.

Pippa wouldn't let me touch her. I slept in the family room in the basement on the couch. She slept in her carrier, huddled in the back. The door was open; I fed her, talked as soothingly as I knew how. The third morning I woke to find her beside me. From then on, she was my friend. She would do almost anything for me. She hissed at Mel or Tom; she did not like males. She never got over her distrust of them.

She wasn't taken out as often because the Zoo had her calm brother to take. For some money-raising event for the Zoo (I don't remember what), Jenny picked me up in the van and we took Pippa and her brother to the Confluence Restaurant where we stood for an hour, in the entry

hall while people stopped to look, ask questions or give the cheetahs a gingerly touch as they went in or out. There was a fire burning in the fireplace and Jenny and I stood on either side with those beautiful, graceful animals. They were about six or seven months old, nearly full grown and they behaved beautifully. I discreetly steered the men towards Jenny and her cat. I don't remember Pippa hissing once.

The other outing I remember with Pippa wasn't as successful. Mel wanted to show her off at the Bureau which incidentally, had moved to the thirteenth floor of the One Columbus Building at Broad and High. The windows in Mel's office overlooked the State House grounds. Jenny came with the Zoo van. Pippa was about four months old. She hadn't been here long, and she needed me for security so I went along.

We got on the elevator with a minimum of excitement. She behaved fairly well at the reception desk. In Mel's office she was polite, if reserved, to the ladies who came in but she hissed and spit at him, and every male. Since Mel was always talking about his animals, the women thought it was a good joke on him.

Pippa stayed a year and I reluctantly let her go because I was afraid she would break a leg. She loved to run in the basement, and in the laundry room and would leap on the washer, to the dryer, back across the room. There was a drain cover on the floor that she often sent flying on one of her leaps. I had visions of her foot slipping in the drain and one of those thin fragile legs snapping.

So, Pippa went to the Zoo. She loved the keeper, Stacey, and got special attention from her. I felt good about Pippa and her new home.

She'd been there less than a month when she caught her foot in the fence, on one of her runs and leaps and broke her foot. X-rays showed nine bones broken.

It happened on Saturday and O.S.U. didn't want to operate until Monday morning. She went back to the Zoo. Stacey said she was in obvious pain, refused food, and wouldn't try to walk. Mel and I went to see her. I took some beef liver (a treat she loved) along with co-jack cheese) and Stacey opened the pen door for me. She looked at me with those beautiful eyes, and ate the liver from my hand. She purred, and I cried. When we left, she got up and hobbled to the door, following me.

At the hospital they put pins in her foot. She favored the foot for a long time.

We were still negotiating with the Chinese. They loaned us Golden Monkeys for the summer. They didn't have cheetahs and we were giving the government a pair for the Beijing Zoo. Pippa was suggested. Mel was indignant. Pippa (they had given her another name) is still one of the few cheetahs we have at the Zoo now. She is in the cheetah yard with the others. This spring, 1994, I took Susan, a college sophomore, Erin, and Annie to the Zoo before its opening hours. We were allowed to go in the yard with two of the keepers. I had not been close to Pippa

since 1987. I called -- she finally started toward me. The keepers were very nervous: the other female was threatening Pippa. Cheetahs can hurt, even kill, each other in a fight. I left. I still don't know whether she knew me or not. Columbia, the other female has since died. Perhaps I'll get another chance to go with Pippa again. I'd like to know.

The "1992 committee" was really busy. They were planning an international event for Columbus for that year. We were one of the cities being considered for an international flower show. In June, 3 nights straight they entertained the officials who were visiting these cities before they made a decision. The first night there was a dinner at Gene D'Angelo's home in Muirfield Village, the second we were hosted by the Wolfes in their "Wigwam", and final night the Galbreaths invited everyone to Darby Dam Farm. Besides the flower show, Gene D'Angelo headed a committee to build and bring a replica of the Santa Maria to Columbus' Riverfront. 1992 was going to be an exciting year! Pandas, a life-size Santa Maria, an international flower show! They hoped it would put Columbus on the map.

Pippa was invited, along with Mel and me to the home of Dr. Nick Baird (a member of the Zoological Executive Board) and his wife Ronnie. Dr. Gardiner, head of the Veterinarian College at O.S.U. had taken care of our zoo animals faithfully over the past years but he was retiring and the Board had decided we needed a doctor all our own. The afternoon at Dr. Baird's was to meet our new veterinarian, Dr. Lynn Kramer. Dr. Kramer came from a from the Cincinnati Zoo. (It's a small world -- we found out he was married to Marian Daines' niece.)

There were two conventions to attend in July. We had to choose between the IACVB [International Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus] Convention in Knoxville or going to Hawaii with the Credit Union. Guess which one we chose?

Hawaii was fantastic! It had never been a place I particularly wanted to visit. I had never changed the image that I had derived from movies in the early 40s and 50s. Beautiful dark-skinned women in hula skirts, leis around their necks, wreath of flowers on their heads, swaying to the gentle breezes while an equally handsome man drummed on his ukulele.

Two other credit union couples, Mark and Jackie DeVine and Sandy and Steve Mills were with us when we landed at the Honolulu International Airport. We were met and leis of fresh flowers were dropped over our heads. We were put in the hotel limo and driven over modern superhighways to our hotel, the Hilton Hawaiian Village -- a marquee declaring it "Home of Don Ho". The lobby, open to the outdoors, was filled with huge vases of bird of paradise flowers and palm leaves. We were taken to our room, a luxurious room with a huge bathroom, big, big closets and a king-size bed. Best of all, sliding glass doors led out to your personal balcony. There was room for chairs and a small table; a white pigeon sat there to welcome us.

The credit union manager, Jean Dunaway and Bill, her husband, had come the day before. It was Saturday, the convention business didn't start until Monday. They had arranged a visit to Kauai the next day for us.

The plane so old; we had our doubts. But we reached Kauai safely. We teamed up with Jean and Bill and the men rented a snazzy little red car and we took off. The red car looked snazzy all right but Jean and I deep in the back seat could see very little; our knees were close to our chins.

We'd had no breakfast, so we stopped at the first place we found. The men ate hurriedly, to go out for gas they said. When they returned, they'd gone back to the airport to exchange cars. They were grinning, happy they'd surprised us. The car they brought back might not be snazzy or red, but it certainly was more practical for sightseeing.

We piled in the car, ready for the highway. There is just one main road on Kauai and it circles the island and we couldn't get lost. Jean asked Bill where the camera was and his grin faded. It was in the snazzy red car. Back to the airport again -- the camera was at the desk. Bill picked it up. Good, now we were off!

No. We had just pulled into the main road when I looked in my bag for my tiny Olympus. I carried a camera around my neck loaded with film for prints; the Olympus had slide film.

The Olympus wasn't there. I remembered taking a picture with it from the back seat of that snazzy red car. Back to the airport. Bill spotted the snazzy red car in the lot. Sure enough, there on the back seat, almost invisible against the black leather seats, lay my camera.

Laughing, we left the airport at least an hour behind the others in our group. I think we laughed at goofs we made the whole thirteen days we were gone.

We stopped on our circle around the island to see Opaekaa Falls, the Wet Caves, the Fern Grotto, the point at Haena where "Blue Lagoon with Elvis Presley" had been made, the waterspouts at Spouting Horn. We saw our first double rainbow, looked out at Waimea Canyon. We stopped at Chara's on the North Shore to eat our lunch.

It was an absolutely beautiful memory-making day but I hadn't seen one swaying hula dancer, not one ukulele! During the convention days that followed, we walked on the Waikiki Beach along the Ala Wai Canal, on the Ala Moana Blvd. We went to see Don Ho; we all went on a catamaran sunset dinner cruise and watched an incredibly beautiful sunset. We took a rickshaw ride to the International Market Place where we bought gifts and souvenirs to take home. After walking all through the market, we walked back to the hotel. This was the most walking I'd seen Mel do for several years. He felt better in Hawaii, looked so healthy and happy.

We had dinner, the eight of us, at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel and each couple bought a copy of a picture snapped at our table. We went to see Al Harrington at the Polynesian Palace, where I finally saw the hula dancers and ukuleles. On Kauha Road near the hotel, we spotted a man with a beautiful blue and gold bird (a macaw, I think). It flew to Mel's outstretched arm, an orchid in its beak, and I captured that memory on film.

Mel and I took the bus past Diamond Head to the zoo (no matter where we went, it was a must for Mel to visit their zoo). We went alone this time. It wasn't a large zoo but there were huge banyan trees with children playing in the "houses" among their roots. We saw the NENE goose. The Nene was of special interest to me. For years I'd been putting the name in a four-letter space in crossword puzzles – "HAWAIIAN BIRD" and now I had a picture to go with the word.

The weather was beautiful. It rained, small showers that lasted only minutes, the rain drops glistening in the sun that kept shining. And the rainbows -- always there were rainbows!

The convention came to an end. The DeVines and Mills had breakfast with us and flew to Hawaii, the Big Island, where they were spending another week.

Mel had agreed before we left to stay for four more days but he was content to stay at the Hilton on Oahu. The Dunaways stayed put, too.

Mel and Jean checked out tours and decided the island, Hawaii. The four of us flew to Hawaii on another plane that clattered and shook, but made it. We loaded into the Graylines bus and started another great tour. Our tour guide's father was an American World War II serviceman who had married a Polynesian girl. He was born and grew up in the U.S.; his roommate in college had been from Hawaii. He had come to Hawaii to visit, stayed to marry and settle there.

David Ross was an excellent guide -- he told us Hawaii's history as the trip progressed. We started at Kahalu'u Beach and he pointed out a restored village of King Kamehameha's government. Our first stop was at the Kona County Store, where everyone sampled and bought Kona coffee. We saw the Hulihe'e Palace, home of the last Hawaiian ruler, King Kalakaua and, a tiny wee church, Catholic Church of St. Peter, that was built on the foundation of an ancient Hawaiian temple.

We stopped for lunch at the Panahi'u Black Sands Restaurant for buffet dinner. Two outrigger canoes served as tables from which we selected delicious Hawaiian dishes and fresh fruits. We walked through the beautiful gardens and down to the beach to see the black sand. We had been told of the curse that followed anyone taking the sand from the Islands. We read the sign "Removal of Sand Prohibited, Hawaiian -- county code CH-15 section 15.6". There were children in swimsuits playing on the black rocks, digging in the black sand.

We walked back through the gardens to load the bus. I had to stop to take something from my shoe. Black sand! I sneaked a quick look around, poured the black grains in an empty film case. “This would be a real souvenir!”

The next stop was the Hawaii’s Volcanos National Park. We looked into a volcano crater, walked through the lava tubes. The Fern Forest there had ferns as large as trees; foliage so green and lush that it almost took your breath away.

We turned the corner on the path and came face to face with Sandy and Steve, Mark and Jackie! “Their accommodations in Hawaii weren’t as good as they could be,” we were told. We felt smug as we told them goodbye again.

We walked on the 1982 lava flow at the Halemaumau Crater. We walked on lava that had spilled from the Mauna Ulu Volcano and was still warm. We could see the fire from the volcano and the white steam above it from the bus, a safe distance away.

There was a stop at the processing plant Mauna Loa macadamia nuts; another at Rainbow Falls. The day was ending. We made our final stop at Hilo Tropical Gardens before boarding our rickety plane back to Oahu.

No one of our generation would go to Oahu and not visit Pearl Harbor. That and the Punchbowl made up our next day’s agenda. It was another warm, beautiful day but today instead of the heady delight of the rest of our vacation, I felt full of sadness and soul-searching.

We went to the Punchbowl first. The slopes were covered with white tablets marking the graves of World War I, II, Korean, and Vietnam War veterans and their families. A 30-foot statue of Columbia, representing a mother looking over her lost children, looks down at the marble slabs that list the names of the missing servicemen. Bill found the name of a friend there. We walked amongst the rows of markers. My eye caught one of them, a Colonel Martin Dodge, who fought in World War II. We left quiet, no one felt like talking.

We took another city bus to Pearl Harbor. At the Visitor Center we stood in line to get numbers for the shuttle-boat ride to the Arizona Memorial. There were many numbers ahead of us. We watched a film on the attack. We took pictures of each other standing in front of the U.S.S. Arizona’s 10-ton anchors. I walked the U.S.S. Bowfin, a World War II submarine restored as a museum. Mel waited at the Visitor Center. I don’t remember if Bill or Jean went with me or not.

Finally, our number came up. We saw the Arizona’s big bell at the memorial. I was surprised to see parts of the Arizona still protruding from the water and the oil slicks from the Arizona. This after almost 50 years! I had just read in the Visitor Center Museum the numbers of men who had gone down with the Arizona, most of them lying beneath us still. I had read the ages of the men who died there. I’ve forgotten the numbers but I remember my thoughts. They

weren't men -- they were just boys. The average age of the sailors was still in the teens. The pictures taken that day showed us looking tired, solemn, sad.

Mel loved the sun. He found a spot at the swimming pool where he loved to lie, stretched out on one of the lounges. He never lacked for people to talk to; he struck up a conversation with everyone. This wasn't new, by any means; he had been doing it ever since he came back from the service. People interested him but they amused him, even more. In Hawaii more than any other place, he always had tidbits to share with me when I'd come back from walking the beach or a trip to the street of open stalls. Nothing maliciousness or hurtful -- just amusing.

Jean and Bill were going to Maui. Mel went to buy our tickets but he had only purchased one. He said he wanted to spend that day by the pool. He wanted me go with Jean and Bill. I couldn't imagine why he enjoyed the big Island so much. Maui sounded a lot more exciting.

I refused to go without him. Finally, he told me the rest of the reason. He had found it hard to breathe in Hawaii and the elevation of the House of the Sun on the Maui itinerary was considerably higher than any place we had been on Hawaii.

I let him persuade me. His reasoning was that he'd be much happier lying in the sun, not worrying about breathing. I didn't like lying in the sun except for short periods, why shouldn't we both do what we wanted? Besides, as he pointed out, we already had the ticket.

I went and I enjoyed Maui, not as much as I would have had Mel been along but certainly more than lying by the pool.

We had the same short shaky plane ride. This time we were going in small vans. There were probably three or four besides us in our van. The driver was young and not overly talkative. He had an obviously memorized spiel about the places we stopped and certain points of interest. He didn't add anything more and after we asked a few questions that he had no answers for, we stopped trying to draw him out.

We stopped at the Sunrise Protea Farm and walked through the garden. I wasn't sure what protea was but it must have been a flower classification, I surmised. They dried flowers and made crafts from them. A bouquet, including shipping was advertised costing \$35.50.

We were shown the valley where 2/3 of all the pineapples marketed by the state of Hawaii were grown.

We began to drive up, up, up. When we reached Haleakala Park, I thought we might be at the top of the world. The van stopped. It was as far as the road went. From there we climbed a mountain of steps to the peak where "The House of the Sun" sat. It was really just an observation shelter overlooking the crater. From that point, there was absolutely nothing higher than the roof of the shelter; no land higher than that on which we were standing. Clouds beneath

you in the crater prevented you from seeing its bottom. The blue of the sky met the blue of the sea in the distance. It was beautiful and eerie.

Behind us and down several thousand feet was a building with two white domes. From where we were, I thought it resembled a Turkish mosque. We were told by our driver that it was “Science City”. I assumed it gathered information about volcanic action from the information our driver had given us - it could have been anything.

Back down that parking lot, we were shown several Silverwood plants. It was the only plant in any direction. Our driver did tell us it could survive the cold nights and hot days because its silvery leaves covered with hairs could reflect the sunlight, act as a windbreaker, and absorb and store water. Between five and fifteen years, it would reach about 6 feet, bloom and die. It was against the law to destroy one.

At the parking lot bicycles were being taken out of vans. Bikers were putting on their windbreakers and helmets, preparing for the Maui Downhill, a bike ride from there (10,230 feet) to sea level.

As we descended, daisy like yellow flowers began to show up between the rocks. I spotted and took a picture of a Nene goose climbing on more of the rocks when we stopped at the Ranger station. We stopped for lunch at Pukalani Golf Course, watched golfers as we ate.

After lunch, on our way again. Maui’s “rocks” as we get near sea level became green foliage covering the lava formations. Unlike Hawaii, where lava was being formed, Maui had had no volcanic activity for several hundred years.

The most interesting stop of the day was at the Iao Valley State Park. At the Black Gorge, our guide pointed out a rock formation called the Jack Kennedy profile. After trying several positions, I could see a resemblance. People lined up to take photographs of it, as recommended by our guide, I followed suit. I have two nice photographs but as far as they can be concerned, John Kennedy’s profile is lost forever.

The picture of the Iao needle, a strange lava formation reaching 2200 feet from the valley floor is far more interesting. We were told the valley was named after Iao, daughter of Maui, God of the island. The legend, shortened greatly, holds that the needle is Iao’s lover turned into a pillar of stone. He had been condemned to death by Maui, but Pele, the volcano goddess, intervened and kept him from becoming ashes, and made him a permanent part of the earth, reminding everyone of the consequences of defying a sacred law

We drove past the Kaanapali Beach, saw the hotel and the golf course bearing that name. I remembered watching on TV the Kemper Open that is played there.

When we got back to the hotel on Oahu, Mel was waiting, ready to eat dinner, looking brown and rested.



The next day would be our last day. We did some sightseeing on all Oahu. We took a bus to Mt. Tantalus. We'd been told the view was terrific. The bus passed through some residential houses built on the slopes. The flowers were gorgeous. I recognized some of them – hibiscus, sprays of bougainvillea, orchids, plumeria -- I had no names for most of them.

As the bus wound its way up the twisting streets, the lady bus-driver pointed out the Marcos home, where they lived in exile from their country.

The view was as good as we'd heard. It looked down on the University of Hawaii. You could see the Punchbowl and Pearl Harbor in the distance.

We went downtown, saw the State Capital with the statue of Father Damien in front. We walked to the Judiciary Building and gazed at the golden robed statue of Kamehameha the Great. We passed the Iolani Palace, home of the last royal ruler, Queen Liliuokalani. We gaped at a banyan tree that covered a whole block, planted by a queen in the 1880s

We headed back to the hotel to pack. There at the State House in front of Father Damien was a group of small children wearing blue paper crowns. The teenagers supervising them, saw me with my camera ready to snap. One of them, a Polynesian boy lifted his arm and with a wide grin, gave us a Hang loose gesture, "Hawaii's greeting". It was a good way to end our visit.

At the airport, the film cylinder with the black sand in my purse weighed on my conscience. I remembered the curse on people who took the sand from the island. I kept seeing the sign, "Removal of Sand Prohibited".

I couldn't take the sand back; I wish I had left it at Punalu'u. I emptied the black sand into a pot of flowers. It was the best I could do.

In August Eric Dodge and Annie came to go to the Zoo's Summer Experience. (At almost six, Eric Dodge had decided he was too old to be Weazer.) At school they called him Eric but since we needed some way for our family to keep the two Erics straight, he was usually called by both names. Erin came too, to stay that week. She would be going to the Zoo as a Zoo Aide the following week

The week started great -- I'd been looking forward to it. Erin had gone when she was not much older, perhaps Eric's age. It was always a pleasant time for Mel and me when the grandchildren were here, but -- we'd never had Eric and Annie together for a week without parents! Before the end of the week, I wanted to scream! They argued, they fought, they ganged up against me, no matter what I did it was wrong. Even Erin who almost always thought Anne was perfect, agreed. They were terrible! I swore silently, "Never Again."

The week did end. I'm sure both mothers thought I was exaggerating. I wasn't; it was even worse than I told.

Mel was honored by the Board of Realtors as “Man of the Year” and the following month received the Jewish National Fund Tree of Life Award. I went to both events and I was proud of course, but there have been so many awards, so much praise, I was a little blasé about them

Ruth and Richard celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in September. Ollie and Eldon celebrated theirs in December. It didn’t seem possible. The years had gone by so fast. In seven more years, it would be our turn.

By February of the next year, 1988, I knew Dana was pregnant again. Sammy was just sixteen months old. His second birthday and the new baby were due about the same time.

Dana was feeling much worse than in her previous pregnancies and on February 26<sup>th</sup>, I got a call from her. She was in the hospital; they were giving her IVs to stop her constant vomiting. I brought Eric Dodge and Sam home with me. Dana was there four days.

In April, Tom, Ollie and I went back to W. Va. to hunt morels. On the way, I had stopped to see Ruth. She was going back into the hospital. Ruth looked so frail and pathetic, but she seemed cheerful.

In West Virginia, we found the woods full of mushrooms. A day back there always seemed hours longer than my days at home. It gives me peace. “From the hills I gather courage | Vision of the world to be | Strength to lead and faith to follow | All are given unto me.”

This would be a year of saying farewell. The first was Earl Harper, husband of my niece, Mae, Marjorie’s oldest daughter. Two weeks later, Shirle’s mother died. There would be others.

Shirle and her mother were quite close and though in her eighties, she hadn’t been ill. It was a great shock. Shirle’s air conditioning in her apartment went out the same day and that was a good excuse for me to coax her to stay overnight at our house.

Shirle was distraught, which was to be expected, but I was worried about her physical condition. She was having dizzy spells where the rooms seemed to be spin around her.

That month was not all bad. We had some exciting news. Dana had gone to for a sonogram and she called, still not able to grasp it at all. It wasn’t one baby -- it was two babies! No wonder she had been so ill, those hormones had been racing!

I was thrilled! Since Dad was a twin, I had thought that Ollie or I might carry on his tradition. We hadn’t, but Uncle Charlie, Dad’s brother, had had twin grandchildren. Later I would worry about the additional risks of a of a multiple birth and the problems that having three children in two years would bring. It wouldn’t be easy for a seven-year-old either, who had to adjust to having a brother after being the center of his parents’ -- and grandparents’ lives for five years! But my first reaction was elation!

For the last year I had been working with other Girl Scout volunteers and staff to set up a wider opportunity for cadette-age girls, here in our own council. Now, the girls had arrived; for

the next 13 days they would be based at camp Ken-Jockety. A few were local girls but the majority were from other councils and states.

Our committees' hard work was over. I got to meet the girls. I don't remember all the things they did while they were here. I had used Mel's influence to set up their visit to the Zoo and an evening at Darby Dan Farm. I was at both of these and on one other evening I went to the field where they were having hot-air balloon rides. The girls invited me to go up; but, even with the two balloons, it would take a long time for every girl to participate. I didn't want to any girl to miss her chance because of me. Another balloon ride opportunity missed! Today I am still waiting for another.

We did the usual things the first part of the year, dinners at the Swiss Club, my lunches with our friends, my animal control, Girl Scout work. Mel's meetings and work, our annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July day at Journal Island.

In late July, we went to the IACVB Convention. If the president of a convention bureau missed two meetings in a row, the bureau was not allowed to continue as a member of the international group. Mel had missed last year's meeting when we went to Hawaii, so this one was a must.

No one had to twist our arms. It was being held in Amsterdam. Dana wasn't having any problems and we'd be gone just six days including travel time. Tom wasn't living at home but his apartment was very near and he'd take care of Willie.

We arrived in Amsterdam, very tired. In New York we had been disappointed to find our scheduled KLM flight had been changed from 5:45 PM to 11:55 PM. We were, along with the number of IACVB delegates, on standby for the earlier flight and another at 9:25.

We had already been at Kennedy for several hours; if we had to wait until the confirmed time, we would be there for 10 hours! We had been directed to the Rembrandt/Business Class Lounge and Jeff Newman who was on the IACVB staff was apologetic. Food had been brought in for all of us but it wasn't a happy group of campers.

The 5:45 flight left with none of us. Just before nine o'clock Jeff whispered to Mel and another lady from Ohio, who was traveling alone, to follow him. Outside the room, he told us there were 3 spaces on the 9:25 flight. He hurried us down and within minutes we were in the air. The bad side -- we were almost four hours behind our pre scheduled flight; the good side -- we were 2 ½ hours ahead of the rest of our group.

At the Schipol Airport, the driver of the hotel bus was waiting near the baggage claim to take us to our hotel, the Amsterdam Sonesta. We watched the luggage go around and around. Realization hit us; it would be on the confirmed flight, there hadn't been time for the airlines to transfer it.

We were told that we had to go to the baggage claim office to report. The hotel bus driver had other passengers; he shrugged his shoulders and took off.

They were polite, sorry about the lost luggage. We explained that we were sure it wasn't lost. Nevertheless, forms had to be filled out. They would send it to us, by taxi, when it was found. How could it take so long to report lost luggage, sure to be on the next flight?

The hotel bus had gone. We took a cab, sharing it with the lady from Ohio. She was not going to be a favorite of mine. In the cab she blurted, "I hope my eyes aren't as red as yours".

We went to our room. There was a door that opened up to a roof patio. I hardly glanced at it. We took off our shoes and sunk down on the bed. It was almost 2:00 PM.

We were wakened half an hour later by knocking on the door. Our luggage had arrived. And, so had the other delegates we had left at the lounge in Kennedy. Oh well, we were still one up; we'd had half an hour nap.

At the informal welcome party that night we greeted friends and met new people. I might lament Mel's leaving the recreation dept. that he had put thirty-four years into, but it was easy to get used to these conventions. The accommodations and programs were tops. There was even a children's program for delegates who brought them along, as well as their wives. Children were picked up and at the hotel in the morning, returned to parents in late afternoon. There was babysitting available for the evening events. None of this was free, of course. The IACVB package (registration, air flight, and scheduled dinners and program) was paid for by our Convention Bureau for Mel. The directors board would probably have picked up the tab for mine, the same amount. We were told they had in the past, but Mel considered it inappropriate. We paid for mine.

We went to the Opening Session, were welcomed by the mayor of Amsterdam. The keynote speaker was Pierre Salinger. We went on a canal boat tour with a stop where we visited one of their diamond centers. We watched the process of a raw diamond through the first cut to the final mounting, ready to be sold. We were told the history of Amsterdam as we passed the house and buildings that seemed to rest at the very edge of the canal. We heard that Amsterdam was the city of islands separated by miles of canals and connected by 1,000 bridges.

Amsterdam was interesting, beautiful indeed, but it was the city with more litter and graffiti than any other I had seen. There was even an iron bed in one of the canals not far from the Anne Frank house. In contrast, the great houseboats that lined some of the canals were festooned with pots of colorful flowers.

The evening reception was in the Night Watch Gallery of the Rijksmuseum. It was the first time the museum had allowed one to be held there.

Both Mel and I were amazed at the at the Rembrandts' spectacular beauty. And they were so large! I had never been a great lover of his paintings; they always seemed too dark and

somber, but to see one of these was to change my mind forever. I remember holding a cup of coffee in my hand. I backed away, what if I were to stumble ...!

The accompanying persons were treated to a bus tour, whose highlight for me was the Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterlo. There were rooms of paintings, Millet, Ensor, Picasso, and my favorite, a collection of Van Goghs. The weather hadn't cooperated that day; there was a chilly downpour. Not many people braved the sculpture garden. But here, the rain had tapered off to a gray drizzle and I remember the dripping branches and arbors above the graveled path as I walked from one splendid sculpture to the next – Rodin, Lipchitz, Moore, Serra, Bourdelle. It was awe inspiring!

That day we were taken to a shoe-makers and watched the wooden shoes evolve from a block of wood. We had lunch at a farmhouse in Hoge Veluwe National Park. Our last stop was at Zaanse Schan, a picturesque fishing village with working windmills, sheep and geese in the pastures between the canals. There was a shop where the cheesemaker, a sturdy young woman with red ruddy cheeks, dressed in white winged-cap and starched white apron demonstrated the process.

Zaanse Schan was as typically "Holland" as I had always imagined it; I had to keep my eyes from searching for the little boy with his finger stuck in the hole in the dike. If the canals had been frozen, I am sure Hans Brinker and his friends would have been skating.

A friend and I walked to the Anne Frank house. A visit, there, tears at your heart. I remembered Mel's description of the horrors of the concentration camp his army outfit had liberated -- no wonder he had stuttered when he came home

The same friend Carol and I rode a bus to Dam Square and took pictures of the Royal Palace. The flag was not flying. Queen Beatrix was not in Amsterdam.

Mel and I visited the Artis Zoo; they were celebrating their 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Zoo wasn't so large but it was teeming with visitors. At some exhibits it was almost impossible to get close enough to see the animals, especially one where a keeper was playing with a couple of monkeys. Mel and I loved the play park for the children. There were outside tables and chairs where parents could rest or picnic. I remember a 3-foot Penguin with water running from his beak, just at the right height for a child to get a drink. There was a hippo to climb on, his mouth wide enough to hold three children. The best, a giraffe, legs spraddled, long neck hollowed out, with his head to the ground made a wonderful slide.

Back at the Sonesta, you only had to turn the corner to see a restaurant – Ankara Grill-bar -- the sign above the door proclaimed. There were always two live chickens pecking at the stones in front of it, a white hen and a splendid cock rooster, brown and black with a shiny black tail feather. I wouldn't have noticed them in the country, but loose on the sidewalks -- I know there must have been a story. I wish I could have heard it.

Past the Ankara, a block farther, were narrow buildings, the first floor of each with a big glass window, like shops on a downtown street. The floors above had smaller windows, three or four. There were two of these facing each other.

I had gone for a walk and came upon these quite by accident. I saw the beautiful lady all in white, bra, panties Garter belt hose, and high heels sitting in the window. She looked like a princess on a throne. I was standing across the street. A man passed, the lady lifted her hand and smiled at him. He walked past her, entered a small door at the end of the building. A few minutes later a red blind was pulled down on in one of the small windows. I noticed some were blank, several had red blinds.

It dawned on me. There this was a “lady of the night”. I had read about these legal houses but, like the chickens had not expected them a block from the hotel.

Still across the street, I decided I had to have a picture of this to show my friends at home. I sneaked my camera out of my purse, decided the beautiful lady in white was not looking my way and looked through the lens.

There was a loud tap, tap, tap, on the glass behind me. I snapped the camera and turned. I hadn’t been aware of the house behind me.

There, an equally-pretty lady in red “un-dress” was angrily shaking her head at me. I guess they didn’t like having their pictures taken. When they sat there for all the world to see, what would it matter? I decided I’d better leave -- I had my picture, I hoped.

Every residential home had windows clothed in white or cream-colored lace curtains. I even saw a public restroom with lace curtains.

We had stopped at a shop that sold them, exclusively and half of our busload had gone back to the bus with packages. I would have liked some for my two kitchen windows at home but I didn’t know the measurements.

There was something else besides lace curtains that you saw everywhere. Dogs. There were people with dogs on leashes everywhere; there were dogs on the canal boats. I never saw a small dog. There were boxers and labs and dalmatians, a great Dane, golden retrievers. They all look like purebreds, too. I know we have a lot of dogs in the U.S. but you don’t see them on our downtown streets. Well, not in Columbus, Ohio, anyway.

A dinner cruise was scheduled for one night. Another “it’s a small world” incident took place during it. Mel and I were talking to a couple of young men and they asked where we were from. Mel said “Ohio” and one piped up that he had gone to a small college in Ohio but he doubted if we’d heard of it. We asked him to try us and he answered “Kenyon”. “Oh, our son-in-law graduated from there.” Names followed and although he was an upperclassman of Eric’s, he remembered him. This was on the North Sea.

I've forgotten his name now but I remembered it long enough to tell Eric. Yes, he had known him.

I have to tell the best story of this convention. Before we left, we had been given several different tour options for one afternoon. All of them would end at the Kurhaus Hotel in the Hague, for an evening reception. We had chosen "Royal City, The Hague". We had thought if it worked out, we might slip away from the group and visit the I.U.L.A. administrative offices. It would be fun to see Han Van Putten and his staff again.

We left Amsterdam on the buses to go to The Hague. The men had been in a meeting until 11:30, so the first stop was at a restaurant in the center of The Hague. The luncheon was very good. I remember we were served broad beans, unfamiliar to us.

There was half an hour after we finished eating, until the tour would commence again. We were told we would meet where we had gotten off the bus. Mel and I walked for several blocks looking in shop windows. We got back just at the appointed time. There was no bus but our tour guide was there. We were going to have a short walking tour through the Binnenhof, where the parliament meets and the ancient "Hall of Knights".

I think when Mel heard the words "walking tour" he panicked. He told me he was going to wait there until we came back. I argued with him. I wanted him to ask the guide how much walking there would be, or at least let her know his intentions.

He was adamant, irritated with me; told me to go on with the group. We were across the street from the restaurant. There was a strip of flowers, a park bench overlooking this busy intersection. The group was already half a block away. Should I stay, too? Should I go? Mel sat down on the bench. I ran to catch up with the others.

The court was filled with history. The Hall of Knights was built in 1250 and contains the throne room. Here, once a year on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of September, the queen speaks, outlining the government policy for the coming year.

In our walk to the next building, I was able to tell our guide that Mel was back at the restaurant and would wait for the bus there.

She looked troubled; the tour did not go back that way. Then she smiled, she would talk to the bus driver. I relaxed.

The bus was waiting on an opposite end of the courts. I saw the tour guide talk to the driver. We all got on -- except the guide. She waved goodbye as we pulled away.

The bus turned and twisted through the streets and it wasn't until we were out on the highway that I realized we weren't going back past the restaurant at all.

The bus driver assured me "another bus". I wasn't happy about it. This was the afternoon that delegates and spouses were together and I had been looking forward to it. But

there was nothing I could do. I knew we were stopping at Madurodam, a miniature city 1/25<sup>th</sup> actual size, depicting Holland's principal sites. Probably, we could get back together then.

Our bus stopped at the Peace Palace, that houses the International Court of Justice. We stayed just long enough to snap pictures. Then on to Madurodam.

The miniature city was a fairyland and it covers several acres. It was crowded with visitors, but except for our busload, I didn't see any of the I.A.C.V.B. people. I was beginning to have a gnawing fear in a pit in my stomach. I tried to forget it and snapped a lot more pictures but I was relieved when it was time to get back on the bus.

It was a long ride back, but at last the bus pulled in to the Kurhaus. It was an impressive building, but I was mostly interested in getting inside and finding Mel. I hoped that he would be there. He wasn't. I asked everyone that I knew if they had seen him. No one had.

I ran on to Jeff Newman, scurrying around as he always was, trying to please each delegate, making sure everything ran smoothly. I breathed a sigh of relief; Jeff would do something.

I told Jeff my story and I could see that he was really concerned. It was six o'clock and it had been 12:45 when I had left Mel. It reassured Jeff when I told him I knew Mel had his program book with our destination that night in his coat pocket.

Jeff assured me he'd find him, hurried off towards the center of the hotel. I climbed the wide staircase to the balcony where the delegates and guests were loading their plates with delicious food. The balcony or terrace as they called it, looked down on the lobby from all four sides. In the lobby below a large choir was rendering Dutch tunes. I hardly looked at anything as I scanned each group, hoping somehow to find Mel already there.

The hotel was absolutely gorgeous. Three years before it had celebrated its one hundredth birthday. Its old guest book, called the Golden Book was a work of art, and it contained the signatures of their prominent guests through this period. A few: Queen Wilhelmina, Joan Crawford, President Truman, Winston Churchill, Goethe.

I went back down to the lobby and out the canopied door flanked by two marble lions. It was dusky now. I imagined how I would feel left completely alone in the center of a big city not able to understand a word of Dutch. Why hadn't I stayed with Mel?

Just then, walking slowly up the walk giving the impression he was exactly where he was supposed to be came that old white-haired man I love so much.

I was dying to hear how he had spent the day, but I felt I first had to let Jeff know he was there. We took the elevator to the reception balcony and I found an empty table just beside the elevator. Mel looked so tired. I parked him there; told a relieved Jeff, and returned to the table.



Mel wanted to go to the restroom and wash his hands before we got something to eat and exchanged stories. I told him the restrooms were directly behind the elevator on the floor below us.

He assured me he'd be right back, stepped on the empty elevator and the door closed behind him. I brought some appetizers and something cool to drink for us back to the table and waited for Mel. I waited, and waited, and waited. He could not possibly be lost. I decided he must have found someone and was talking. Excusing myself to the other couple at the table, I decided to go down and rescue him.

I went to the elevator and pushed the button. The door opened; there stood Mel. He'd been there all the time. The controls inside were stuck. He had pushed every button, including the red trouble one. Nothing had worked!

I don't remember much more of the evening. I know we were on the first bus to leave the "den Hague" to return to Amsterdam.

A little sheep-faced, not much but a little, Mel told me about his afternoon.

After the Walking tour had left, he had sat on the bench watching the traffic and people for a long time. He finally realized the tour wasn't coming back that way.

He wasn't worried; he had money and a taxi would take him to the Kurhaus. No cabs came by. A gentleman sat down on the bench. Mel asked about cabs but the man shook his head. But when he heard the name Kurhaus he pointed in a direction. Mel asked how far the man held up five fingers. Mel asked blocks and the man nodded. Well, Mel could walk five blocks.

He waited a little longer. No buses. No cabs. He decided to walk. He walked five blocks, seven, eight. He stopped counting. By now he was in the residential area with empty streets. Certainly, a busy hotel wasn't going to be in this neighborhood. He decided he'd better turn around and go back to the restaurant where he could ask for help in calling a cab. (He didn't say, but I knew that walking that far would have winded him.) He did say he hadn't realized how far he had walked.

But he made it. He reached the park bench, started across the street. He heard his name called. Dale Fenley, Cleveland, Ohio Bureau President, was leaning out of a yellow bus, yelling at him to hurry up. He was going to get left. This busload had been taken downtown and let out for a day and shopping in The Hague. The bus had picked them up a block or two away. When Dale saw Mel, he just assumed he was with that group and missed the pickup point. Mel let them assume just that.

He would have gotten away with it, too, if I hadn't been so worried, asked so many people if they had seen him. The Ohio Convention and Visitors Bureau thought it a big joke that

Mel Dodge had had been stranded in The Hague, and was still teasing him about it when we met in Reno the next year.

In late August, Dana began to have contractions. The babies weren't due until October. Her doctor put her in the hospital in Mount Vernon. She was there five days, then allowed to go home on bed rest. I brought Sam home with me. It was September so Eric Dodge was back in school.

Elsie, a young Amish girl who lived near Eric's parents in Galloway came days to be with Dana and help get Eric Dodge off to school. Four days later Dana was back in the hospital again. She stayed 12 days this time.

I loved keeping Sam. He was the sweetest and best baby, but his Daddy thought it was better for him to be home. He never seemed to be homesick here but each time I took him home, he threw tantrums so I know the whole thing was very traumatic for him -- he'd always been a mommy's boy.

This time Dana stayed home one whole week. Back to the hospital again. She had become so frequent a guest that all the nurses knew her; she monitored her own contractions.

Just before Eric Dodge's birthday, Sept. 28, Dana's doctor decided she could go home, take it as easy as possible, no work. The babies were near term and they would let nature take its course at this point.

On Eric Dodge's seventh birthday, Jean and Bob, the other grandparents, Susan and Annie and I all were there to celebrate his and Sam's birthdays. Sam would be two in six days.

Dana came downstairs for the party. The boys were so happy. Samuel was in heaven with his mother home. He would stay for hours on her bed looking at books, just happy to be near her.

Now that the babies were near term, they seemed to be in no hurry to be born. Ten more days passed.

On Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, Dana called. It was time. I went to Loudonville, picked up grandsons one and two. We had known for several months that the new babies would be grandsons three and four.

Early the next morning, Eric called. "The boys are here" were his first words. They were healthy, full-term babies, big for twins. Thomas Dodge, born first, weighed 6 lbs. 3 oz. Jack Dodge, his big brother, weighed 6 lbs. 5 oz. Dana's months in the hospital and bed rest had paid off. The Kopperts had four sons. Mel and I now had seven grandchildren. I felt blessed, seven times over.

The two Big Brothers and I celebrated. We went to the Zoo. Uncle Tom came over and he and Eric Dodge fixed a net in the tree in the backyard and hauled Eric up in it. Sam joined in the fun

On Monday evening, I had to take the boys back. Eric Dodge had missed the one day of school. Elsie would be there to take care of Sam, and I would be going there when Dana and the twins came home. I stopped at Mount Vernon Hospital. Eric Dodge was excited, he was going to see the babies. I don't know what Sam thought. Annie had given him a toy twin stroller and two dolls for his birthday. He had felt the babies in his mommy's tummy but I am sure two big, live babies that could cry was a big surprise to him.

Eric Ray was at the hospital and the visit was a success. Sam's eyes were wide. Eric Dodge had had a new brother only two years before; he knew what to expect. He wanted to know which was Tom, and which was Jack. Eric Ray lifted Sam in the bed beside Dana. Together, they held a baby. Sam touched the baby with one finger and smiled. Big brother Eric got to sit on a chair and hold a baby all by himself.

Grandma Dodge couldn't look enough. The babies didn't look alike at all. Jack had dark hair. Tom's less and lighter. They started to fuss. Dana pressed the button and the nurse took them back to the nursery.

Eric Dodge and Sam spent some time with their mother. She kissed them "goodbye" and we left. I had been afraid Sam would cry but he went off with his dad without a peep.

I stayed in Loudonville that night helped Elsie and Eric Ray with breakfast the next morning, and on my way home dropped off Eric Dodge at his school.

I went back the next day. It was Wednesday, October 12 and Dana, Jack and Tom came home. I stayed two weeks. Dana felt good. She had been housebound so long she was like a chicken let out of its coop. I took her, Sam and the babies to Mount Vernon to exchange some jeans for Eric Dodge that were the wrong size. The first day she was allowed to drive she drove all of us, me, Elsie, and all the boys to the mall in Mansfield. Elsie pushed the babies in their twin stroller. Dana gave the older boys all of her attention. Elsie could not go six feet without someone stopping her to ask questions, look at the babies. We decided it might be a good idea to make a sign and attach it to the front of the stroller. "We are boys. We are two weeks old. We weighed over 6 pounds each. No, we are not identical."

Dana was nursing both babies. At first, she did not have enough milk and even after she did, the babies cried and cried. The babies were nursing on demand to encourage milk supply. Eric and I were exhausted, carrying babies back and forth all night long, rocking them when they cried. If we were exhausted think of how tired Dana must have been. Elsie was a godsend -- she came every morning, fresh after sleeping all night!

Sam was the one who suffered. We all tried to give him extra attention but the babies took up so much time there wasn't much left just for him. His disposition changed from that good, sweet natured baby to an unhappy little boy who whined and threw terrible tantrums.

We took the babies to the doctor the day I left. Jack had gained 14 oz., Tom 11. They weren't crying because they were hungry. I hated to go home but I wasn't feeling very good myself, and I knew Mel was lonely. He had come up to see the babies and I could hardly bear to see him go back alone.

I went home. My not feeling very good developed into a stubborn case of pneumonia that would not clear up for the rest of the year. I was scheduled for a bronchoscopy on Jan. 4<sup>th</sup>.

Ruth Krick had retired from North America in a few years before. Bob retired a short time later, too. They went to Russia. Mel and I went over to take them to the airport. I noticed Ruth was not using her right arm. I knew she had not been feeling well. I suspected a stroke. Ruth had a thing about never complaining, never letting anyone know if she felt bad. Years before she had gone to Cleveland Clinic and had her thyroid removed. She had a plastic surgeon do it so there would be no scar. Mel and Ruth, as I said before, were very close but we never even heard about it for several years. It would not have been out of character for her to have suffered a small stroke and not tell us.

They had come back from Russia; made plans to go to China. In China, Ruth got very ill. I never knew exactly what happened; Bob only told us that he was afraid he wouldn't get her back home alive

She checked into Cleveland Clinic, came home again but was never well after that. She seemed to be unsteady and began wearing sneakers to help her from slipping. Soon, Bob was always with her supporting her as she walked. She fell in the bathroom, broke a hip. When she came home from the clinic that time she was in a wheelchair. For the last two years she had deteriorated steadily. Bob took excellent care of her. She was at St. Ann's hospital in November. Kody came from Seattle and persuaded her father that there was nothing left to do but to put her in a nursing home.

Susan and Annie made their yearly visit to Lazarus to visit Santaland. Dana came, too, with all four boys and Elsie. Eric Dodge, Annie, and Sam had their pictures taken with Santa. They all looked so sweet. I was bursting with pride

December 23 was Bob and Ruth's 49<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Early that morning Ruth died.

All our family came home for Christmas. Mel didn't say much but I knew he was hurting a lot. His dad, mother, and sister were gone. I was lucky I still had two sisters.

Calling hours for Ruth were on Dec. 26<sup>th</sup>. Bob, Kody, Corvi and Elizabeth came back to our house between the afternoon and evening hours. Ruth loved to have all of us together for Christmas. We had spent more Christmas days at her house than any other place.

We were back at the funeral home at ten the next morning. Ruth was buried beside her mother and father at Greenlawn Cemetery. Everyone went back to our house.

Within the hour, my sister Ruth's daughter, Shelley called. Her mother "was sleeping away." Kody offered to take me to Chillicothe. We were all so tired; I didn't want to leave Mel alone; I would go the next morning. Shelley called early the next morning. My sister Ruth was dead. I had waited too long.

Ruth's funeral was on Dec. 30<sup>th</sup>. She was buried at Floral Hills not too far from Mother, Dad, Bud.

I took down the tree the next day. I wanted all the Christmas things out of the house. We needed a new year.

On Jan. 4 Tom took me to Riverside for my bronchoscopy. I was still running a temperature when I got the results on the 13<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Ingles was pleased; there were no signs of malignancy -- the blood was caused from acute bronchitis. More antibiotics.

Mel was sick, too, with flu-like symptoms. We spent the entire month of January, one or the other, sneezing, coughing, running temperatures and swilling medicines.

And on the 21<sup>st</sup>, Jenny Pettitt, from the Zoo, brought a baby lioness. She assured me she would only be here or two months. She was scheduled to go to the Omaha Zoo. Tom named her for me. He called her "Cleocatra".

Cleocatra was our last cat. Everyone came to see her while she was here. She was a nice little cat but I did not get too attached to her, perhaps because I knew she wasn't going to be here long, but also, I was worried about Mel. He wasn't getting over this flu. He felt rotten and stayed home from work several days, unheard of for him. He was still feeling bad when I came down with another full-blown case of pneumonia the last of February.

We were both beginning to think we'd never feel good again.

We were looking forward to Florida. We had tickets on Eastern on March 14<sup>th</sup>. Eastern went on strike the week before so we drove down. Tom and Laurie went with us to help Mel drive.

We were there 10 days. The weather was perfect. I came home feeling good again. Mel had not bounced back like I had hoped. It was April before he began to feel like himself again.

Dana's twins were growing and all our children and grandchildren were fine. Shirle and I had been going to church regularly and I felt good about those two things. I needed something good to think about.

Marjorie was back in the hospital again. This time with a blood clot in the lung. I went to Ross County Medical see her. We had a good visit, although some of the time she hadn't known people, had been confused.

In late April Willy jumped out of Tom's open Jeep and ended up with his foot under the back wheel. His foot was not broken but was mangled. It was on Saturday, so we had to take him to the Emergency Veterinary Service on Schrock Rd. near Cleveland Ave. They stitched him up and we picked him up three hours later. The trip to and from the hospital were the only trips I ever took with Willy, at least to this day, when he didn't drive me crazy with his constant barking.

We had a terrible time getting him out of the car. Finally, Laurie managed somehow. Tom felt so bad, he wouldn't leave Willy's side. He slept on the floor in the family room beside him. Will was on antibiotics and it was several weeks after the bandage was removed before he started using all four legs again, August before he was back to normal.

May was a better month -- much better. I started putting seven years of pictures in albums -- what a chore! Amy came to stay a week with us -- she needed a week "on the job" participation before she graduated from The Villa. Mel took her to Channel 10. She enjoyed the week and we enjoyed it even more! Amy was such a dear.

Dana came down for the day to get a permanent and brought Elsie to help with Sam and the twins. Both Jack and Tom were sitting [up] alone.

It is the year 2006. I started writing this Erin's sophomore year in college. I think it was 1993/94. I think I stopped because the year 1991 was getting too close in my musings and I didn't want to live it again. Today, I read this for the first time since I put it down after the last paragraph. I am amazed at what I had remembered -- many things I'd forgotten. Today, I lived a great part of my life over. Now I need to finish this. Tom and Jack were born in 1988 so we must have been in the year 1989.

#### April – 2009

In 2006, I still wasn't able to bring this up-to-date. Maybe now, nearly twenty years later I can. Mel has been gone 18 years this August. I miss him so much. My life, I'll soon be 84, is divided into 3 sections: Before Mel, with Mel, and After. Mel died August 19, here at home. He was the only 67. I met him when I was 17; we were married 2 years later & had 46 years, 11 months together. Today, his name still comes up in Columbus. The May issue of Columbus

Monthly has an article on the Cols. Recreation Dept. where he is praised and referred to as “The Legendary Leader”.

The next two years after 1989, are a blur now. Tom and Laurie broke up. Tom was devastated. He dated an artsy widow, older than himself. There were two more convention trips, one to Los Angeles, the last to New Orleans. Mel made good friends with many of the other cities’ convention presidents. The New Orleans trip exhausted him. We flew to Florida in 1990. I thought Mel would not make it back home, his emphysema seemed so bad. Thank heavens, Tom was with us to help get him home.

He went in the hospital, came home, still went to the office every day. I knew how bad he felt, how he pushed himself. In April, he had a terrible pain in his side. I took him to the doctor, then to the hospital. They operated for appendicitis. Hours later, the doctor came to the waiting room to tell us it wasn’t his appendix. It was colon cancer. The hospital stay was terrible, he was in excruciating pain -- wanted to see no one. I stayed with him night and day. Finally, he got to come home -- with an oxygen tank. What bittersweet days! I drove him to the Zoo after hours to visit Elsa, for rides; we remembered how much we loved each other. What a wonderful life we had had.

Tom had been dating Deanie Masler & in July they were married by Mayor Buck Reinhardt with Deanie’s 2 sons, Jared and Josh in attendance.

I took Mel to visit Mary Jane and Clem; we went to see Helen Koonz at Cardington. His incision broke open -- I learned how to clean and care for it. It healed again but there was lump beside it. He started kemo – 50% chance of it doing good (I was devastated; Mel thought the odds good). Second kemo, 30% & the last only 10% but he died after the first injection.

All of us were with him – Susan, Dana, Tom and I. He had been downstairs the day before, even shaved, but sometime on the 19<sup>th</sup> he lapsed into a coma.

I can’t, even today, write more about those days. It is too painful. So many people helped us through -- my family, Mel’s coworkers at the Convention Center, Jack & Suzi Hanna, Terry Russell, my neighbor Tammy.

The funeral was a private one -- just family and the Hannas. We drove to the cemetery to see a U-Haul truck beside the gravesite. Jack had Elsa and Duma brought there. Elsa’s eyes never left the casket as my children and their spouses carried it to its final resting place.

The next day a memorial service was held at Overbrook. The church was packed. Mayor Reinhardt declared all flags in the city be flown at half-mast.

Mel’s life was over and the third part of my life began. I cannot believe 17 ½ years have passed. Terry Russell proposed to the Zoo Board that I finish out Mel’s term on the Board. Mayor Reinhardt and Mayor Lashutka reappointed me. It was so hard at first but the Zoo loved Mel & it welcomed me.

In 1992, Mel's Ameri-flora was celebrated & the pandas from China visited our Zoo -- without Mel. He had worked so hard for them.

Shirle and I went to Seattle where we visited Kody and Corvi. I, who had never driven on a vacation, rented a car and Shirle and I took the ferry and spent three days in the islands. Corvi & Kody came to spend the last day with us. Kody had news, "Tom had called -- Deanie and he were having twins."

In January 1993 Deanie and Tom's preemie boys were born. They were both over 4 pounds but there were problems. They stayed in the hospital another month after Deanie went home. Finally, the day came to bring Mel & Dolf home. I went with Deanie to drive them home.

They weren't home long until Mel was rushed to Children's. He was rushed to Trauma. It was touch and go but 3 weeks later he came home again. I had stayed with Dolf much of the time so Deanie could spend time with Mel.

The first year was really hectic! The boys were on monitors. Our hearts were in our mouths when they went off. Most times a flip on the foot would start them breathing again. I stayed many months to help, coming home once in a while to bathe and let Willy Bite know he wasn't totally forgotten.

It was hard on Deanie's other sons, too. Josh, a first grader was the real problem and continued to be for many years. Now in 2009, he seems to have come to grips with life. Jared & he are both employed, on their own but visit often.

In 1994 I took the docent training and became a Zoo Docent. I went on a Zoo-sponsored trip to Australia & New Zealand with Mary Jane and Helen. What a fantastic adventure!

Shirle & I took several more trips -- a Tauck tour to the Canyonlands, where I flew over the Canyon, [and] went with Shirle, river rafting! Another great vacation! We went to Vermont, to Boston to see the tall ships, and then on to Cape Cod & Martha's Vineyard. In 1997, we went to Italy. It was great! At least for me -- Shirle didn't feel well -- she'd fallen a few weeks before, and was having trouble walking. It was the beginning of the Parkinson's that was wasn't confirmed until 2007. We traveled by bus, starting in Rome, visiting Florence, Naples, Isle of Capri, Assisi, Venice, Verona. What a beautiful, romantic country. I'm glad it's part of my granddaughter's heritage.

Nora, Shirle and I read the Bible usually at Nora's, at least once a week. We ate at MCL. Nora had developed diabetes; she took good care of herself. How she loved her children, grandchildren, Jim and me. We met in 1949 and we were closer than sisters. Nora was such a good person. Life continued. My health was good. Shirle's not-so-good -- first one bad thing,



then another. I resigned from the working Board at the Zoo, stayed on the Big Board<sup>1</sup>, went to the AZAD meetings – Seattle, Chicago, Philadelphia, Houston. The Zoo was the place I felt closest to Mel.

The grandkids continued to grow up. Amy has had quite a life -- traveling with the theater, working in peace relations. Erin married to Ed in a beautiful July wedding. Annie is graduating this year from law school. Eric Dodge has struggled with bipolarism but will graduate from college this year. He will always be on medication, but hopefully will still have a good life. Dana's other boys have formed a band the "Up All Nights". I have gone to hear & watch them several times. I wish them luck.

Tom's sons, Mel and Dolf are freshmen at Fort Hayes. Mel is quite good at Art. It is too soon to know where their life will lead. I wish them the best, too.

On Shirle's birthday in January 2004, Nora died. Next to losing Mel, this was the hardest for me to get through. She had been at the hospital with her heart, came home. I had baked a custard pie and took it to her the day before. I kissed her goodbye. Jim found her not breathing the next day. The squad was able to restart her heart, but she never regained consciousness. Oh, how I miss her!

In 2005, Mary Schnelle, my Overbrook friend and I took a cruise to Mexico, Central North America, Belize. Before I left, I was able to go to the hospital to see my absolutely beautiful great-grandson -- Daniel James Kagel, a 9 lb. Preemie!

Daniel has been a joy to me. He started calling me Dodgie and he has brought me so much happiness. His Mama, Erin, is a nurse at Dublin; his Daddy, an engineer with ODOT.

Ed has battled cancer; Erin's back is a mess. My children all have joint pains and aches. It is 2009 and I don't know what the future holds for me or my 13 descendants, their spouses, Josh, Jared, but I know My Life Has Been Wonderful!

April 2022. Trying to think about what to write. Thirteen years have passed. In 2003, I joined a group of zoo docents for 3 weeks in Namibia, Botswana and Zambia. It was an amazing adventure. The only thing better would have been seeing it with Mel.

Mel has been gone over 30 years. Anne got married and we welcomed John into the family. My youngest grandchildren will be 30 next year. I have been blessed with four more great grandchildren – a sweet and beautiful sister for Daniel, named Elena, soon to be a teenager; delightful, dynamic Sally who just turned four; her brother, Jimmy, almost one who is the best natured, smiling baby. Sally and Jimmy are Annie and her husband John's children. I am so proud of all of them. Dexter, Dolf's son is 5. I don't get to see him as much as I like; he lives

---

<sup>1</sup> The Big Board was a group of interested supported persons without any legal votes or responsibility. They met 4 times a year.

most of the time with his mother. I love them all. Mel and my 17 descendants -- and I thank God for each of them.

So much has happened -- my dearest friends are all gone. I lost my last sister in 2010. I almost lost my son with heart failure. I thank God for the time we are together. Tragically, we lost Jim. Susan's husband. Jim was special and he was like a son to me. Eric, father of four of my grandsons, is battling melanoma. I have lost two beloved nieces and a nephew. COVID-19 changed our lives and I lived two years in a blur of dread and the count of deaths. Amy was here, home on vacation from her humanitarian work in Syria, and I saw her for the first time in 2 years. A wonderful visit!

I do not go out much. Soon to be 97 and my spine is bent and crooked. I no longer can hold my head erect but I still live alone, take care of myself and Dewey, my dog who has been my constant companion the last 9 years. There are aches and pains, stumbles, but as yet no falls. But life is still good.

Most weeks, besides the calls and visits for my children, the only voices I hear are those from the Zoom Bible Study. They have sustained me now that I get to church so seldom. What a gift they have been. My life has been good! I give thanks!

## Metadata for photos illustrating Norma Dodge's Story

Order of information:

- the page number in the text that the photo or photos illustrate, followed by the actual text,
- thumbnail copies of the photos in the photo file (the bolded photo captions are also the file names).
- Metadata related to the picture, including the names of multiple people in a group, an approximate date of the picture, the place where the picture was taken, and the photographer, if known. This information is also recorded in the picture metadata.

p.1

My mother, born Phoebe Sullivan was the oldest daughter of Cordelia Clark and Milton Sullivan. ... My father grew tobacco in the hills of Mason County, W.V. He was a twin. Edward and Eva Hesson born in 1880 were the oldest children of Malinda and John Hesson



**Phoebe Sullivan as young woman;**

Phoebe Sullivan is Norma Dodge's mother. Picture was taken in West Virginia. Photographer unknown.



**Phoebe Sullivan**

This picture was taken in Chillicothe, Ohio by Norma Dodge.



**Edward Hesson as a young man**

Edward Hesson is Norma Dodge's father. Picture was taken in West Virginia. Photographer unknown.



**Aunt Eva, Mom and Dad**

Eva Hesson, Phoebe Sullivan Hesson, Edward Hesson. Eva and Edward Hesson are twins. Picture taken in Chillicothe by Norma Dodge.

p. 1

Marjorie was married with three daughters; Ruth was 10 and Ollie seven when I made my appearance.



**Ollie & Ruth**

Ollie and Ruth Hesson. Ollie and Ruth are Norma Dodge's sisters. Picture taken in Chillicothe, Ohio.



**Me, Ollie, Ruth, & Marjorie**

ca. 1990.

p. 2

I was four now and we lived on Jefferson Ave. (The picture of me and the wrinkled stockings and high button shoes was taken there.)



**Norma - about 4 years old**

Norma Hesson 1929. Picture taken on Jefferson Avenue in Chillicothe, Ohio

p. 10

The highlight of the summer was the Sullivan reunion. ... I loved the reunion! Once when I was older, I counted my first cousins. There were 83 and most of them were Sullivan cousins!



**Sullivan cousins**

The girl standing just behind the left shoulder of the boy in overalls is Norma Hesson. The littlest boy in the front row is Bud Hesson (Norma Hesson's little brother).

Picture taken in Chillicothe, Ohio.

p. 12

A NYA (National Youth Administration) camp ...



**Me with friends at the N.Y.A. camp, 1942**

(l-r) Norma Hesson, Delores West, Irma Wolfe, and Jayne Parks. Picture taken in Chillicothe, Ohio. The N.Y.A. camp was located where the Ross County Fairgrounds are now.

p. 15

The next few months was a period of adjustment. I was terribly homesick. I liked Jayne but she smoked and she used "damn" in her conversation. Both shocking to me!



**Jayne and me – early 1944**

Jayne Park and Norma Hesson. Picture taken in Columbus.

p. 17

He was so handsome in his uniform! He took me to meet his mother and father. I took him to meet mine.



**Mel - August 1943**

Photo taken by Norma on the trip to Chillicothe to meet her parents

p. 18

I can still remember the thrill of opening the door to his knock and seeing him standing there so handsome -- shiny, shiny shoes, uniform creases pressed so sharp that they looked like they'd cut you if you touched them -- his hat in his hand.



**Norma and Mel - August 43**

Columbus, Ohio. Picture taken by Ruth Krick



**Norma 1944**

Norma Hesson Dodge, Chillicothe, Ohio.

Mel Dodge carried this photo of Norma while overseas.



**Mel and Norma 1944**

Columbus, Ohio

p. 44

The memories flood my mind. Most of them good.



**Melvin Dodge Family**

Norma, Susan, Dana, Mel, Tom Dodge. Columbus, Ohio. Photo used in the Overbrook Presbyterian church 1962-1964 directory.

p. 45

I got even more involved in Girl Scouts, became the Neighborhood Chairman when Tom was 3.



**Scout Leaders Norma Dodge & Nancy Ihnat minding the spaghetti pots**

Cadette Troop 260 camping at Old Man's Cave, Hocking Hills

p. 53

Tom especially loved Thor



**Tom and Thor**

Tom Dodge and pet fox, Thor. Columbus, Ohio

p. 54

Our family was intact; I didn't feel threatened. Tom was in elementary school. He had started in first grade the same year Susan started to college. Dana was a freshman in high school. I was still involved in Girl Scouts, headed the library at Sharon school.



**Susan, Dana, Tom**

Susan, Dana, & Tom Dodge. Columbus Ohio. Mel kept this picture on his desk at City Hall

p. 55

We began to plan for a June wedding.



**Susan and Norma, June 1969**

Susan and Norma Dodge, Columbus Ohio

Photo by Tom Dodge

p. 68

In April before the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration, we spent the only complete family vacation since the time when Thomas was small and we went to Lake Erie. This time Tom, Mel and I from Columbus, Susan and Jim, Amy and Erin from Canfield, and Dana from New York spent a week at Siesta Key together. Judge Crawford and his wife, Anne, were there at the same time and Dale

took a picture of all of us, had it reproduced on wood and gave it to us. I love it -- it brings back such happy memories.

Note to CML: Version 1 (Dodge Family in Fla 1976 -1) is an actual scan of the photo. Version 2 (Dodge Family in Fla 1976 -2) is a photo of the photo. I don't know which is best to use. For some reason the photo of the photo is brighter. If the quality is good enough to use, I tend to favor the brighter version. Advice? I've included both in the set of pictures for your review.



**Dodge Family in Fla, 1976 -1**



**Dodge Family in Fla, 1976 -2**

Description: Jim & Susan Marsico (Susan holding Erin), Dana, Tom, Norma (with Amy Marsico), and Mel Dodge, Siesta Key, Florida. Picture by Dale Crawford.

p. 68

... he was being honored for his 25 years with the Dept. at a dinner the week after our vacation.



**Dinner honoring Mel**

1976 Celebration of Mel's 25 years with the Recreation and Parks Dept. at the Neil House, Columbus.

Norma Dodge, Bob Krick, Tom Dodge (standing), Ruth Krick, Mel's mother, Mel Dodge (standing), Jean and Mayor Tom Moody.

p. 71

The night he picked her [Elsa] up, he stopped with her, just to let me see her, he said. I am sure they weren't expecting her at the zoo, nor did he have any intentions of taking her there. There is absolutely nothing cuter than a lion cub. I don't know how Mel could have instructed her but he must have -- she let Tom and Dana, who had just come home from New York, pet her and then she ambled over to rub against my legs, settled on my feet. Of course, she stayed.





**Elsa arrives**

Elsa & Norma Dodge, Columbus. Photo by Tom Dodge

p. 73

Elsa stayed almost a year. She earned her keep, going to all sorts of places where she generated interest in the Zoo.



**Elsa in her favorite chair**

Elsa at the Dodge home in Columbus. Photo by Tom Dodge.



**Norma & Elsa**

Columbus, Ohio. Photo by Tom Dodge.



**An early morning walk with Elsa.**

Norma Dodge walking Elsa, Columbus. Photo by Tom Dodge.

p. 75

Mel and I went every weekend to the Zoo to see Elsa.



**Mel and Elsa at the Zoo**

Mel Dodge and Elsa at the Columbus Zoo. Photo by Tom Dodge

p. 78

Our second, Hannah, had come and gone. We hadn't kept her as long as Elsa.



**Norma & Hannah**

Norma Dodge and Hannah at the Dodge home in Columbus. Photo by Tom Dodge.

p. 78

I told Mel emphatically that I would not have another lion! I hadn't heard about Norma ... until I saw a picture of Mel with a lion cub in the newspaper. He had told the whole city he was naming her for me -- how could I refuse to have her?



**Norma and Norma**

Norma Dodge & her namesake. Columbus, Ohio. Photo by Tom Dodge.

p. 82

They had named the baby Eric Dodge, but everyone called him "Weazer".



**Norma with grandson Eric Dodge Koppert**

Columbus Ohio. Photo by Tom Dodge

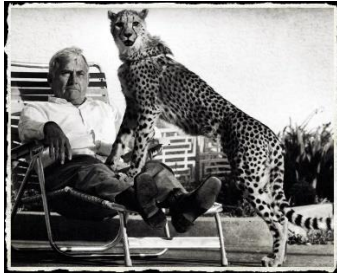
p. 84

Duma made an excellent houseguest. He was so much smaller than a lion, and so much more gentle.



**Norma & Duma**

Norma Dodge & Duma, Columbus, Ohio. Photo by Tom Dodge.



**Mel & Duma**

Mel Dodge & Duma, Columbus, Ohio. Photo by Tom Dodge.

p. 94

In August every one of the family except Jim went to the Sullivan Reunion. There was a group picture taken.



**Sullivan Reunion, 1984.**

Chillicothe, Ohio.

p.95

We loved Bronson; she was still bottle-fed and gentle. It snowed while she was here. We have pictures of her playing in the snow under the spruce tree in the backyard. I was so sad when she left.

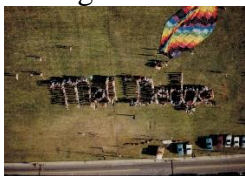


**Bronson playing in the snow**

Dodge home, Columbus Ohio. Photo by Tom Dodge.

p. 97

In August there was a big celebration at Sunshine Park in Mel's honor. Sunshine was renamed.



**Dodge Park Tribute**



**Formerly Sunshine Recreation Center**

Dodge Park Recreation Center, Columbus Ohio. Photo by Norma Dodge

p. 99

I called these my friends – Mel knew some, Nora – Shirle -- Colleen very well and had met the others and their husbands, but they had become our friends because of me, not Mel.



**Norma, Nora, & Shirle**

Norma Dodge, Nora Williams, Shirle Husted. Columbus.

p. 84

Duma was to live here until after his first birthday.



**Norma & Duma**

Norma Dodge and Duma. Columbus. Photo by Tom Dodge

p. 91

Joseph hunted us out and we sat on the steps of City Hall [Stockholm].



**Norma, Mel & Joseph Lewiew**

Norma & Mel Dodge, Joseph Lewiew (friend from Eldout, Kenya). Photo taken on the steps of City hall, Stockholm, Sweden.

p. 100

Amanda Blake “Miss Kitty” from the old TV *Gunsmoke* series was in town. She loved cheetahs had had some on a ranch and I think, had donated one to the Columbus Zoo earlier. I met her at the Zoo and Duma behaved like a gentleman. He let Amanda pet and even kiss him. She was thrilled. We must have stayed in the yard with him for half an hour.



**Norma, Duma, and Amanda Blake**

Norma Dodge, Duma, Amanda Blake at the Columbus Zoo.

p. 109

We had been told of the curse that followed anyone taking the sand from the Islands. We read the sign “Removal of Sand Prohibited, Hawaiian -- county code CH-15 section 15.6”.



**Norma on the black sand beach.**

Norma Dodge, Black Sand Beach on the island of Hawaii.

p. 127

In 1994 I took the docent training and became a Zoo Docent.



**Norma and Mac**

Norma Dodge and Mac at the Columbus Zoo. Photo by Tom Dodge.



**Norma and a pronghorn**



**Twenty years a docent**

p. 128

The grandkids continued to grow up.



**Granddaughters Amy, Erin, & Ann**

Amy, Erin, & Ann Marsico. Granddaughters of Norma & Mel Dodge. Photo by Tom Dodge

p. 128

Erin married to Ed in a beautiful July wedding.



**At the wedding of granddaughter Erin**

Erin Marsico and Ed Kagel's wedding. Norma Dodge with great-grandsons, Mel & Dolf Dodge. Photo by Tom Dodge.