

Personal Stories to Share

FROM THE PARISH SECRETARY (and more!)

By Vicki Fankhauser

AN EASTER STORY

CHRISTMAS BELL

BROKENNESS

WALLPAPER AND GOD

THE LIGHT OF LUCIE

KNOWING A FATHER

SANDALS

GRANDPA

A FISHERMAN

YOU CANT JUDGE A HIPPY BY HIS LOOKS

REMEMBER THE RAINBOW

MEMORIES OF MICK

AUNTIE MARGIE

FEEL THE WARMTH

MOTHER'S DAY - KITTY

A BEAUTIFUL CASTLE

AN EASTER STORY -[TOP]

I would like to share with you and Easter Story that my great-grandfather, Mick experienced first-hand. He never rally mentioned much of this experience to me, and what is written here is from research and what I think he must have felt.

January 22, 1943, was a stormy, gloomy day, in the New England Port. The miserable weather added to the already glum, frustrating, and frightened feelings Mick and many of the 903 National Guardsmen, merchant marine, and civilians were experiencing as they boarded ship on the U.S.A.T. Dorchester. Many of the troops were leaving home for the first time, which added more frustration and sadness to the depressing atmosphere of the day. Although Mick had served in the Navy during World War I, and knew that there would be an interesting adventure ahead of him while he helped the Conservation Corp build bridges abroad, he himself was leaving behind his beloved wife Elsie, a his daughter Audrey with her new baby Caroline, his daughter, Bernice who just found out she was expecting a child, and his daughter Margie who was in Milwaukee. What was really frustrating him was the fact that two of his daughters had husbands fighting this war. What if neither one of their

husbands came back alive? Now, here he is, on his way to God only knows where to help his country his country during this troubling time, but what if he didn't come back alive? What about Elsie? What about his daughters? What did he get himself into?

Looking at the ship was not very comforting to Mick either either. The Dorchester, built in the 1920's was an old luxury liner that was taken "out of the mothballs" and refitted into an Army Transport ship for World War II. The partitions and bunks that were hastily built into her marred and scarred whatever beauty she would have had. Being the carpenter he was, Mick ran his hands over the ship's scarred interior, mourning the loss of the beauty this ship must have had during her hey day. In her luxury ship days, 314 passengers could sail across the ocean in luxurious style. Now on this transport mission, the 903 men on board were literally packed in as tight as sardines in a can. As he tried to make his way through the mass of men to his assigned bunk, Mick amused himself by wondering how big of a can opener it would open this sardine can.

Among the men that boarded the ship with Mick were four chaplains, of four different religions. Rev. George Fox, a Methodist minister; Rev. Clark Poling, a Dutch Reformed minister; Alexander Good, a Jewish Rabbi; and Father John Washington, a Catholic priest. Each of them had received a call from God to be chaplains during this war. They had gotten to know each other through the chaplain school they all had attended. The sky pilots had had similar convictions, each of the believed in ecumenicalism, that being everyone should be treated the same no matter what their religion. They also had several conversations on doing unselfish acts in order to help others.

As the chaplains watched and listened to the men as they boarded the ship, they knew they would have their work cut out for them during this voyage. No only was the air filled with sadness and uncertainty typical of men leaving the safe haven of home for war, but also the only people that knew that the ship was headed to Greenland were the Dorchester's crew and the four chaplains. It wouldn't be until they were well out to sea before the passengers would be told they were headed to Greenland. The chaplains knew that when that was found out, there would be more desolate feelings being shown because Greenland was a godforsaken, ice covered, desolate place.

Fear would be something else the chaplains would have to help passengers conquer because the route the Dorchester would be taking was called "Torpedo Junction". This was the area in the Atlantic where Nazi subs were sinking 100 ships a month. To protect the Dorchester and two other freighters from sub attacks, the Coast guard Cutters, Escanaba, Tampa, and Comanche accompanied them for protection.

Right away, the ministers started mingling and talking with the men, letting them know that the chaplains would always be available to talk to. The four sky pilots would always talk and jest with the men, putting them all at ease. The enlisted men on board quickly realized that these four men were special, they treated every man on board as an equal, and just as special as a person from the chaplain's own faith.

The chaplains started having floorshows every night, where the service men would sing and dance, setting their minds free of worry for a while. The divine services the chaplains presided over at first were not very well attended, but as the Dorchester got farther away from home, attendance grew.

On the evening of February 2, approximately 150 miles from Greenland, the men on board and chaplains had enjoyed a very good show, the tension on board the ship had eased up, and most everyone was having a good time.

Even though they were very close to Greenland, Dorchester's Captain ordered everyone to sleep in their clothing and lifejackets. Most of the men, as they got ready to bunk down for the night, disregarded this order. They didn't want to wear those uncomfortable things in their hot and sweaty bunks. Instead of bedding down for the night, Mick had put on his life jacket, and gone above deck to get some fresh air. The old salt that he was, he loved watching the sea, the big waves as they crested and crashed against the side of the ship kept him in awe, the hugeness of the vast ocean, the coldness of the air, the smallness of the ship, all this the greatness of his maker's creation right before him.

At 12:30 in the morning of February 3, the German U-boat U-223, raised its periscope out of the ice waters, and sighted in the Dorchester. A few moments later, the sub fired a torpedo, which was a direct hit to the Dorchester's engine room, below the water line. Approximately 100 men died instantly from the explosion.

Men were tossed out of their bunks; others were thrown against the ship's bulkheads, as the crippled ship listed badly to the port side. The ship lost electricity and the troops started to panic. All logic, sense and reasoning were lost at this time amongst the service men. Once topside, the men realized that they were about to die in the bitter cold Arctic air. Some men were so hysterical that they jumped overboard, into the horrid, cold water. Life rafts that some of the men could get loose fell into the water and floated away, others that had men in them were capsized by the stormy seas around them. The explosion sent Mick sailing overboard into the cold, cold water of the Atlantic. Mick noticed the red lights from other's life jackets bespeckling the water, how they bobbed up and down, beckoning, saying, "Here I am! Please come and get me to safety Lord!"

Fox, Goode, Poling and Washington sensing the hysteria going on around them on the ship, immediately started calming and talking to the panicking troops. Many of the men didn't have any life jackets or clothing on. The chaplains calmed the men down, and helped the servicemen find life rafts. The chaplains opened storage lockers and passed out life jackets. They led the men to lifeboat stations. They helped persuade men that were scared to death to go over the side of the boat, to safety. They did not stop and ask each passenger what religion they were before they gave out lifejackets. It did not matter to them what faith or color of skin these men were. The important thing was to get the men to safety. Rabbi Goode even stopped one enlisted person from going back below deck to get his gloves. The rabbi took off his own gloves and gave them to the fellow, saying he had another pair in his cabin. Goode did this unselfish act to keep the man from going below deck and possibly dying.

A service man approached the chaplains and told one of them that he had lost his life jacket, and he couldn't swim. The chaplain took off his own lifejacket and placed it over the young man's shoulders saying, "Take this. I'm staying, I won't need it." The other three chaplains repeated this kind an unselfish action. Again, it didn't matter if the man was Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish. What mattered to the chaplains was that people got to safety.

As the last of the troops got off the Dorchester, into the icy, cold Atlantic waters, they and Mick watched as the four chaplains linked their arms, and began to pray prayers of their faith. A flare's light briefly lit this wondrous sight. The Dorchester then shuddered, and plunged beneath the ocean's surface, taking the sky pilots to their eternal home with God. Mick took this all in, watching in amazement, and not knowing until later what these four sky pilots did to save lives.

Right after the Dorchester had been torpedoed, the Coast Guard Cutters went into action. They all fired a fusillade of star shells, easily making them targets for another sub attack. The three cutters were loaded with depth charges, and would cause massive destruction if they, themselves were hit by a torpedo. Because of this, the Comanche escorted the two freighters out of harm's way. The Escanaba, which was not equipped with radar, began looking for survivors, while the Tampa screened for the enemy sub.

As the Escanaba moved through the sea, the crew that was in the bow of the boat called out to survivors. Even with a lifejacket though, a person could not survive the cold, icy water of the Atlantic for more than even a short period of time. Men specifically trained in the use of wet suits, jumped into the water, and aided survivors and two lifeboats to the cutter. To help out, Coast Guardsmen climbed over the side of the ship onto the cargo nets to help bring the survivors aboard.

After a while, the Tampa went to protect the freighters and the Comanche returned to screen for the Escanaba. The Comanche's captain decided that simply screening wasn't enough. He would again and again stop searching to rescue Dorchester survivors.

Because of the Escanaba's and Comanche's heroic efforts, disregarding their own safety to help others, 230 men were saved, Mick being one of them.

This whole turn of events of the Dorchester tragedy is in itself an Easter story. For it says in the second chapter of Philippians, verses 3-4 "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." This is something that not only Fox, Goode, Poling, Washington, and the crews of the Escanaba and Comanche did for the Dorchester survivors, but this is also something Jesus Christ did for us. He died to save us, for the forgiveness of our sins.

This event really impacted Mick's life. As a young man, he was always very leery of sky pilots. Through the bravery of the four chaplains he was able to accept ministers as men of God. He himself also would spend the rest of his life doing unselfish acts helping his fellow man.

Bibliography

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CHRISTMAS BELL - [[TOP](#)]

Christmas is my most favorite time of year. Baking all sorts of Christmas goodies, and filling Christmas trays with them for Christian fellowship with friends and family; smelling the pungent evergreen scent of the Christmas trees; getting down the Christmas ornaments, going through them, and remembering fond memories of when and where I got some of them; hearing Marty groan and say we'll soon need another tree if I keep collecting ornaments. Watching people as they stop and wish each other a Merry Christmas. How heart warming and special all the Christmas activity is to me.

I remember my grandparents listening to Christmas music that Bing Crosby and Perry Como sang. I loved to listen to Bing singing Silent Night that beautiful Carol would and still touches me so deeply. Perry Como's Ava Maria was another song I loved to hear.

Another fond memory I have is of a Christmas bell. This is a bell my Grandma would hang up in the middle of her kitchen. It was about 12 inches tall, gold, with holly leaves and berries decorating the top. It was very pretty to look at. The bell clapper was made of Styrofoam painted gold. When you pulled the clapper down, the bell would great and groan, almost like it was complaining of having to play. The bell would then merrily play Jingle Bells. Oh how I loved to hear that bell play! I would beg an adult to lift me up to pull the string again, and again, much to their chagrin. When I was really little about four or five years old, I would remember standing under that bell wishing that I could reach up and pull the string to make it play. It seemed so far, far away. As I got a few years older, I was allowed a couple of times a day to put a chair underneath to pull the string and hear its merry tune. Even on the chair I had to stand on my tiptoes in order to reach the clapper. It still seemed so far way at times, and boy I would reach and strain, just to be rewarded by that merry melody. The year I turned 14, I was tall enough not to need a chair, but still had to reach way up to pull the rope to hear the bell play. Even now as old as I am but still very vertically challenged, it still seems quite a reach to get that wonderful reward. But now more so, I pull it for my kids and cousins, as they have grown up wanting to hear the bell play its cheery Christmas tune. Funny thing is, that bell has been played for so long, and pulled so often one would think it would be worn out by now. I am sure the older adults of the family wished it would have quit working about 35 years ago.

Jingle Bells may not be an appropriate carol to write about when thinking of Christ's birth, but I think of it like this. At times, God, just like that bell clapper to a little child, may seem so far away, almost out of reach. But there are times also, that he is within arms reach of us, to comfort and sooth us with his love. Just as that bell would reward people with its cheerful melody.

BROKENNESS - [[TOP](#)]

I remember one special family meal when I was about six or seven. My family had just finished a huge turkey dinner with all the fixings. My aunt, Candy, and I were starting to wash the dishes. There

was no end to the pile of pots, pans and plates! It seemed like we washed and dried dishes forever! Grandma had used her best dishes for the meal, and Candy and I were repeatedly told to be careful and not to break any of her dishes. Well, we got the dishes all washed and were drying them, when Candy got the idea to try to balance one of the dinner plates on my head. She told me to hold still. I didn't want any part of this idea, so I started to walk away, thinking she still had hold of the plate. She didn't and it fell to the floor, breaking in several pieces.

Grandma was not very happy at what had happened. She told Candy and I that she would never be able to find a replacement plate, because that particular pattern had been discontinued by the manufacturer.

For the next couple of years after this, every time there was a special gathering in which that particular set of dishes was used, Candy and I would be reminded of us breaking that plate. One would have thought that Grandma would never forgive us for doing that. Sadly, when my Grandma started to develop dementia, we stopped hearing about that plate.

A few years ago, Marty and I went to Red Wing, Minnesota, for the weekend. We were walking by stores and window browsing, when I saw it! The plate! One that looked exactly like the one Candy and I broke years ago. Hallelujah! We went into the antique store to look at it. I told the dealer my story on how a plate like that got broken, and a replacement would never be found. He told me that the pattern had been a very popular one way back when, and because of that a replacement would not be hard to find. Yup, I bought the plate.

The next time Marty and I went to Stone Lake, we brought the plate with us. I was hoping and praying that Grandma would be lucid at this time, so that she would remember the plate-breaking incident. I was crestfallen when she unwrapped the plate, and didn't remember about the other one being broken. I was somewhat hoping to be redeemed from the sin of breaking the plate, but forgiveness was not there, just a blank stare.

That was a very difficult moment for me, not getting the atonement I so desperately needed from the sin of breaking the plate. Forgiveness would not be there, because of Grandma's failing memory. I have come to accept that. Though finding a replacement for the place, one could possibly consider me forgiven. But am I? I need that acknowledgement from her that I have been forgiven, in order to feel like I have been forgiven.

Christ died for our sins. He made the ultimate sacrifice for us with his life. This is one thing we, as Christians will never forget. That he died for the forgiveness of our sins! The forgiveness is there! We are forgiven! Dementia has robbed me of receiving this forgiveness from my Grandmother. Deep down I know that if she was still her old self, she would have been shocked to get the replacement, but also joyful because her dinner set was complete, and yes I would have been forgiven.

Lent is a somber time of reflecting on things in our lives, like breaking a plate and being forgiven. Christ died for our sins. The exuberance we feel participating in the Lord's Supper on Maunday Thursday, preparing the meal to be served in special dishes. The sadness, shock and brokenness we feel on Good Friday. The excitement and joy we feel finding on Easter Sunday, that he has risen, and the new life to come!

WALLPAPER AND GOD - [[TOP](#)]

Early last year, right after Marty and I finished wallpapering and redecorating our bedroom, I

succumbed to a very nasty sinus and ear infection. Yes, I got ribbed about being hard of hearing, and saying "huh" all the time. Having an ear infection really makes a person understand what the hearing impaired people go through in their daily lives, not being able to listen to what is going on around them.

When I went to the doctor he prescribed antibiotics, steam and rest. Usually my perky self is on the go all the time, but instead, I slept and slept, with the vaporizer right next to the bed. That noisy machine ran day and night for several days. My ears were so plugged up I couldn't even hear the phone ring when it was right next to my head.

I ran the vaporizer so much that the wallpaper started to come unglued from the walls, and started sliding down, onto the floor. Our cat Princess, jumping off the bedroom windowsill and ended up getting tangled up in the paper as it fell while she was jumping. Nothing is worse than a cat stuck on wallpaper. It gave me a good laugh watching her trying to get it off of her paws. Thank you Lord for letting me see some humor in this.

Marty, was not very happy about this whole incident. He ended up re-gluing the wallpaper that fell down back onto the wall, and re-gluing the seams that let loose. The glue stuck, and the wallpaper has stayed put ever since. Although we have not had to run the vaporizer in that bedroom since then and I think if I did, Marty would not be too happy if the wallpaper came off again.

Not only was this illness a very important lesson about patience and having solitude in a quiet world, but it symbolizes the fact that no matter how "steamy" of a situation we can get in, and not think God is there for us, he sticks with us, just like the wallpaper on the cat's paws. No matter how far away he seems to us at the time. He is pretty well glued to us, as a caretaker.

We need to be patient and understanding when we are battling an illness. It may take time to get well, or for the doctors to diagnose what is wrong. We need to be confident that God is there for us, to comfort and care for us, leading us down the road to recovery. Sometimes it may be bumpy, other times it may be smooth sailing.

KNOWING A FATHER - [[TOP](#)]

My grandparents, Porter & Bernice got married on October 26, 1941. Porter worked at a train yard. His main job was to use the turntable, and turn the engines around so that they would be on the right track to start their trips on. Bernice went to work in an electronics factory.

When World War II started, Porter was anxiously waiting for his draft number to be selected. He wanted to serve his country. He couldn't stand the uncertainty of not knowing when he was going to be chosen. So in mid 1942, he joined the Marines. He did basic training in San Diego, and advanced training and weapons training at Camp Elliot about 20 miles north of San Diego. He served in Okinawa in the motor pool, and was wounded by friendly fire there. The truck he was working on was rocketed and strafed by one of our own planes. He was not shot, but picked up some shrapnel and bits of coral.

My dad, Porter, Jr. was born after grandpa enlisted. During the war, my grandma and Margie, her sister, lived together in Milwaukee. Grandma worked at a factory, and Margie stayed home taking care

of my dad.

So that Porter Jr. would know who his daddy was, Bernice would frequently show him Porter Sr.'s picture. The person in the picture was who my dad recognized as his father.

In February, 1946, Porter came home from the war. He went back home to Milwaukee. One could imagine the excitement and love my grandma showed when grandpa came through that door, after being separated for a long time.

Grandma told my dad that the man standing there was his father. Dad didn't recognize this person, he did not match the man in the picture. Dad ran and got the picture of his dad and showed it to Porter saying "this is my dad." It took some convincing from both Porter and Bernice before dad understood that this man was indeed his father. What really made him understand was seeing grandma's happiness and excitement of this person's return, Dad figured out that this person, indeed was his father.

In Matthew's Gospel, when Jesus asked his disciples who he was, Simon Peter, with great conviction said Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the Living God" A few verses later, Simon Peter got confused as to Jesus' purpose on earth, not liking what he was hearing, but and not wanting to accept the fact that Jesus would die.

Porter, Jr., got to know who his father was. He developed a very wonderful relationship with Porter Sr. Yes, Porter Jr. got confused about things in life, but Porter Sr. was always there, helping and guiding him. Just as God is here with us guiding us, loving us, and helping support us through each day. We may not recognize him being in our lives, but he is there for us, to guide us, lead us, love and protect us during the times we may wander away from him.

THE LIGHT OF LUCIE - [[TOP](#)]

"Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." --Matthew 5:16. Yes, it is a common verse you hear during a baptism. When I think of this acclamation, it reminds me of Lucie Buck. I got to know her while I was growing up. She and her husband lived up the road from my grandparent's house.

They owned George and Lucie's, a quaint little gift store right in downtown Stone Lake. This wonderful place had a myriad of trinkets and gift ware for people to purchase. Lucie had everything from plaques with Stone Lake, Wisconsin on them, to ruby colored wine goblets for a couple's 40th wedding anniversary. Going into that store was like an adventure to me, always finding new things to look and marvel at.

The true gem in that store though, was Lucie herself. Her pleasant smile and gentle manner made it

easy for anyone to talk to her. She grew up in England, and had an enchanting British accent that would mesmerize me as she talked about living in England, or things happening in town.

You would never hear Lucy complain, or be bitter about things. She would reminisce at times about being in England during the Battle of Britain, and I often wonder if that is how she found her calling in helping people, because she was always there when someone needed help. She would offer a shoulder to lean or cry on. She would show excitement when one of us kids would pop into her store and share some wonderful news about our lives. When times were tough for us, she would find ways of making kids feel special.

Lucie was always there for people. Whenever something happened in a person's life, she was there right away, offering help and encouragement.

She would oversee things for people and dinners for funerals when people died. Her garden always grew so abundantly. It was like a horn of plenty at times, she would drop off produce to people she knew could use it. She was always busy helping and encouraging people in any way that she could.

As she ministered to and helped people, the smile she had would light up her whole face. The genuine joy and happiness radiating from her out towards people was always astounding, and gave people a warm and happy feeling.

Lucie had told the story of working in a factory in Britain during the wartime. While working, during this devastating time, she would sing a hymn about Jesus being a light and a beacon. What a statement of faith! Lucie's shown bright with confidence in serving the Lord back then, as it did years later, as she helped comfort and feed people that needed strength and support during their times of trial.

Lucie recently passed away after battling cancer. Even though in pain from this disease, she still showed happiness in wanting to sing Sunday School songs witnessing her faith in God.

As her memory continues to give the people that knew her the light and witness to serving God, I know she surely must be lighting up heaven with her happiness.

SANDALS [[TOP](#)]

HOW MANY SANDALS DID JESUS WEAR OUT? during his ministry? Yes, that is an odd question to think of pertaining to Jesus. It is one though I think of while working at my job at the shoe store. Just how many pairs did he wear out with all of that walking he did? The "average" person will wear out five pairs of shoes a year, that is wearing the same pair day in and day out until the pair is no longer wearable. Also an average pair of shoes will last for approximately 500,000 miles of wear (boy, all those few steps here and there during the day really count up, don't they?).

While the Gospel of Mark has Jesus' ministry lasting about three months, Matthew and Luke has Jesus' ministry lasting about a year, and John has Jesus' ministry lasting approximately three years, traveling to Jerusalem three times for the Passover, it is hard to tell exactly how many miles he walked. Also, with his shoes made from ancient technologies exactly how many pairs he would have worn out is not known. Let's just say it must have been a lot.

We know about the people he met while journeying to different places, and the locations he traveled to. Could you imagine the beauty of the surroundings he saw on his way to Cana or Jerusalem? The awesome sun rises and the sunsets? The frustration of sudden windstorms. The joy of seeing his destination just a mile or so away. Knowing that Martha would have a wonderful meal waiting for him, and the discussions he would have with Mary and Lazarus. Or just having the time to himself to think while walking, contemplating and thinking of what he must do to save us sinners.

I do a lot of walking. At times to get me from one place to another. Other times though I walk to unwind, and to try to sort things out. At times, I pray as I walk. The solitude of being able to silently praying while walking, quietly thanking God for the beauty surrounding me is so fortifying and empowering. You may be asking what can a person pray for while walking other than not to get hit by a car? While passing by children at a playground, I pray for their safety. Passing or being passed by someone that is having car trouble, I pray for their safe journey. Passing houses, I pray for the owner's well being. I also pray for friends and family.

At times, when my life is very hectic, or uncertain, I take walks, and force myself not to think of anything. I just get wrapped up in the beauty of the world around me that God has created. The sudden blessings he gives me of finding blackberries along my path, or helping a person with directions on how to get somewhere in town. Seeing God's sense of humor when I get caught in a sudden shower, then being blessed with the most beautiful rainbow I have ever seen. How incredible! How awe inspiring! When I get home, I feel so much better, so refreshed, and ready to tackle any challenges that are set before me.

Try it sometime! You will not only get closer in your relationship with God, but you will be getting good exercise for your body as well! Happy walking!

GRANDPA [[TOP](#)]

Thumbing through my clip art books looking for filler for a bulletin, I found a clipart of a man and a bear face to face. This brought back childhood memories of my grandpa. No, no magnificent tall tale of him hunting a big ferocious bear, but rather of the song he would sing about a preacher and a bear. I don't remember the exact words to the song, but I do remember how low grandpa's voice would go when he would sing the word "Bear". It always fascinated me. He had other songs he liked to sing

about young folks and old folks at a Christian Sunday School, and one with the refrain "Chicory-Chick is Me". The soft, soothing, but comical way he would sing these songs would captivate children of all ages. Countless children fell asleep on his lap listening.

He also loved to play the harmonica. Watching the shiny mouth organ slide back and forth between his hands and mouth was captivating in itself. Hearing the pleasant tunes of Amazing Grace, Swanee River, and other songs he played, was very soothing. My kids were given grandpa's harmonicas after he died. Paul right away figured from watching "Gump" that it would be easy to play. Between him, Kari and myself, and books on harmonica playing, we have come to the conclusion that it is a true gift from God to be able to play one of these things.

Even though Grandpa wasn't one who talked much about faith or religion, through his actions and love of people and the outdoors one could tell he was a devoted Christian.

The first time I ever went fishing with him was when I was four; he took me musky fishing on Lake Sissabagama. He caught a huge musky (at least to a four-year-old), and was trying to get it close to the boat to land it. I took one look at the fish when it did its figure eight, and decided I did not want to be in the boat with that fish. I, like Peter, was going to try to walk on water. I remember Grandpa grabbing me and telling me to sit still and everything would be ok. I didn't quite believe him, but after sitting down way up in the bow, and watching him get that huge monster of a fish into the boat, I did indeed find out that everything was ok.

Several years later, there would be numerous times we'd get caught in a sudden storm while fishing. It would be raining so hard; you literally couldn't see your fishing pole in front of you. He would say if he aimed the boat this way we'll get to this resort or that person's dock. Sure enough, though thoroughly soaked, we would arrive safely to shore, right where he said we'd be. Through adventures like that with Grandpa, I learned not only about faith and trust, but also how to truly love, enjoy and respect the beautiful things God surrounds us with.

Grandpa was a very patient, caring, loving, and understanding man, who became friends with a wide range of people throughout his lifetime. Grandpa loved helping and being with people. He believed in helping his fellow man. The only thing he would not do was to tell people where the good fishing spots were.

In many ways, he was a gift from God to his family, his coworkers, and his friends. A gift that everyone had the opportunity to share, enjoy, and learn from.

As we prepare for the Christmas season, let's all remember, reflect upon, and love the special gift of Jesus we received from God that holy night in Bethlehem. Merry Christmas!

A FISHERMAN [[TOP](#)]

It has always intrigued me the number of times that fishing was used as a backdrop and an example for Jesus in the New Testament. Fishing was the profession of several of the disciples, something they did almost on a daily basis, something they could really relate to. Being with Jesus, they experienced everything from surviving severe storms, learned about faith being an excellent floatation device, catching so many fish their nets couldn't hold them all (good thing there weren't game wardens back then, eh?), and partaking in a couple of inspiring fish dinners. All the while they did this, they learned valuable advice about God's word and love from Jesus.

Fishing was a favorite hobby for my grandfather, Porter Baldrige, Sr. He was very well known for his fishing talent. People often said he more than likely could catch a fish out of a mud puddle.

When he fished, it was like he became one with the water. The things that would tax the normal fisherman; like finding the perfect fishing spot, selecting the right bait, knowing how to let a musky play itself out before landing it, all came second nature to him. He didn't take this unique gift for granted either. There would be times where he wouldn't catch anything, he would be a little frustrated, but not really bothered by it. He would willingly tell people what baits worked best for what fish, and at what time of the day. The only thing he would not do was tell people where the good fishing spots were.

On the opening day of trout fishing, he would wake all of us fisher people up at 4:00 a.m. Once he knew we were on our feet, he would start making the traditional Opening Day Breakfast of very strong coffee, fried eggs with laces, and thick, lumpy oat meal that was guaranteed to stick to your ribs. This tradition was a very important part of fishing to him also. To see him smile as he cooked this meal, and watching him beam as he proudly set the plates down in front of us, took away any discontent about being woken up at that early hour or it below freezing outside.

Fishing for pan fish with him was a very special treat for me. We would spend the whole afternoon fishing, catching one right after another, and enjoying God's beauty around the lake shore. When we would call it quits, we would have our limit, and I would be so very sunburned, but very happy and content.

The first time I got caught in a very bad storm while fishing with Grandpa reminds me a lot of the story in Mark about when Jesus and the disciples were out in the water, and a sudden storm came upon them. Grandpa obviously couldn't stop the storm the way Jesus did, but his calm manner in which he handled this instance and got us safely to where he wanted to be along the lake shore filled me in awe. It was a very good lesson in faith and trust for me. Never again did I freak out when he and I would get caught out on a lake in a storm.

My son, Paul, has inherited my Grandpa's love and knack for fishing. He will fish every chance he gets, and is constantly arranging and rearranging his tackle box. How this comes so second nature to

him reminds me a lot of Grandpa.

The first time Paul went trout fishing was the spring after my grandpa died. Paul was five years old. Marty got Paul's small fishing rod and bait set up, and cast it out for Paul. He turned his attention to his own fishing equipment when Paul started yelling, "Dad, Dad, I got a fish!" Marty looked and saw Paul being dragged slowly towards the river by whatever it was Paul had hooked on to. Marty quickly grabbed him, and just concentrated on keeping Paul from falling into the water. Paul reeled and paused, reeled and paused, watching his line as the fish came closer to shore. The fish Paul landed was a 13-inch brook trout. Mart has often said that it seemed like my Grandpa was there in spirit, telling Paul exactly what to do with the reel and pole as he brought the fish in.

I hope all you fisherman have good luck this coming trout fishing opening weekend. Fish safely, and please enjoy God's beauty that surrounds you as you fish.

YOU CANT JUDGE A HIPPY BY HIS LOOKS [[TOP](#)]

It was always an exciting time in the late 1960s when my Uncle Randy would come home from college. It was so thrilling to see what kind of trinket he would bring me, or to hear his stories of exciting college life. What was even more interesting though, was to see which friends he would bring home for the weekend with him. I remember one who would bring her cute curly haired dog with her, and another one that no matter how many times she came to visit, she would run into the closed glass door that separated the family room from the rest of the house. She did this even after my grandma put decals at eye level on the door. My grandparents never minded any of the friends he brought home, regardless of their little quirks, or backgrounds. They treated all of our friends like family, and their house was always open to anyone.

One boy in particular I will never forget meeting. His name was Jeff. Randy had called and told my grandparents that he was bringing Jeff home for the college break. The night that they were coming, Grandma decided to make fried chicken. My aunt was setting the table, and grandpa had just come home from work. I was playing with toys on the floor. Grandpa was standing next to the stove, talking to Grandma, telling her about his day. Grandma had her back to the outside door.

We heard Randy's blue Chevy pulling into the yard, then their footsteps coming up the outside steps, to the front door. Randy came in, hollering, "I'm home, here's Jeff!" Jeff then came walking into the kitchen. He had long, flowing black hair and a beard. He wore black and white striped bell-bottom pants, and a wildly colored, loosely fitted tunic. Sandals, love beads, and wire-rimmed glasses completed this very mod hippy get-up.

Grandma started saying, "Jeff, welcome to our..." she turned around, and in shock, threw the plate of chicken up over her head. Grandpa reached up and grabbed the plate, quickly setting it down. He then said, "Jeff, welcome to our home. Any friend of Randy's is a friend of ours." My Grandma, still somewhat speechless, nodded her head in agreement. (This was the first time she had ever seen a

hippy in person.)

Jeff's eyes twinkled, and he sat down and ate dinner with us. He answered questions as to where he was from, and what major he was taking in college. After dinner, my grandma showed him the bedroom he was going to stay in. A little while later, he emerged from the bedroom looking like a clean-cut young man. He was now dressed in blue jeans, T-shirt, and short black hair. The only thing reminiscent of his earlier look was the wire-rimmed glasses and the neatly trimmed beard. Jeff then told my grandparents that he was writing his college thesis on hippy's impact on society. He wanted to see firsthand how society actually treated hippies, so he would go around to different places in his costume, to see how people reacted, and what they said.

The next day, Grandpa and some of his coworkers were taking a lunch break at the Co-op in Hayward. In came Randy and Jeff, who again was in his hippy garb.

One of grandpa's coworkers leaned over to grandpa and said, "Would you look at that weirdo?" To which my Grandpa replied, "Last night, that weirdo stayed at my house." That's all grandpa had to say. It ended any and all sarcasm towards Jeff from the rest of the group. They all knew how grandpa treated everyone with respect and friendliness, no matter who they were. They also knew deep down that that's how they themselves as Christians should treat their fellow man, no matter what they looked like.

I'm not sure what ever happened to Jeff, but I do know how my family met him has reinforced in me the importance of not judging my fellow brother or sister in Christ by their appearance. Peace be unto you Jeff, wherever you are!

REMEMBER THE RAINBOW [[TOP](#)]

A reporter on CNN said that the dates in which historical things happen in a person's life time that a person remembers are not the happy or special occasions, but disasters-- like both Kennedy assassinations, Martin Luther King' Jr.'s assassination, the Challenger explosion, Columbine, Oklahoma City. September 11, 2001, will also be a date that people will remember, not the happy events that happened in their lives that day, but the awful terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania. What a horrible, horrible nightmare it was that unfolded in the morning of that date. Seeing the footage playing and replaying of the planes crashing into the World Trade Center. Watching the one tower as it collapsed and disintegrated into itself, like it was a building block tower a child whimsically knocked down into itself. Hearing my brother who is working on the telecommunications at "Ground Zero" comment on having to deal with the smell of smoke and the "other smell" there just gives me the chills. The stress and frustration involved in helping my visiting father find an alternate way of travel back to Washington state rather than an airplane. How horrible. How can anything like this happen to us?

I remember thinking the same thing two years ago, when my own personal history was marked by a disaster that will always be remembered. August 22, 1999. It was supposed to be a day remembered for its happiness and fun of my Uncle's Surprise 50th Birthday Party. It was marred instead with the horrible news that Marty's niece Stacie, who was first thought missing, then found dead, presumably killed by her boyfriend. What a horrendous shock. I remember feeling numb, not knowing what to do or say. Just drawing close together with all Marty's family as they gathered together. Leaning on each other, gathering the strength and courage we all needed to get through the coming days. Hearing the overwhelming responses from people, hearing the phone ring, not wanting to write a check for fear of being asked if I was related to the Fankhauser girl that was killed. Grieving the loss of a loved one, seeing the response it had on the community, and how Stacie's community of friends and acquaintances remembered her and honored her helped with my healing process.

Seeing now how my brothers and sisters in Christ gather together at Bethany and other locations not only in numbness and disbelief, but closeness and unity to deal with the initial shock of this terrible event. The strength and comfort God has bestowed on people through this hard time is reassuring. Just as hearing the anthem of God Bless America being sung frequently. What empowering ways we can come together and start to heal.

The one thing that I will remember quite vividly was the day after Stacie died; it rained, and rained, and rained. I have never seen so much rain in one day's time. It was like God was sad and was crying over Stacie's death. When we went to go out to Stacie's parents house after it finally stopped raining, the kids spotted a huge double rainbow that literally started where Trinity stands, and ended by Marty's brother's house four miles away. What an awesome sight and symbol of God's promise that things will get better.

That wonderful symbol brought my family the strength and courage to face the coming days. It seemed like it took forever for the wheels of justice to turn. One court hearing after another came and went, but finally he was sentenced to a very long time in jail. He will never harm another person again.

Yes, things have gotten better. Our lives have gotten back to normal. With Kari now in high school, we often remember things Stacie did in high school, and wonder what she would have thought of school and family activities that have happened. Precious memories that bring smiles and happiness in our lives and thoughts.

As we wait for the wheels of justice to turn so that those responsible for the September 11 acts of terrorism will be brought to justice, we can do things to make the time pass more quickly. Fly your US flag. Help comfort one another. If you are able, donate to the Disaster Relief Funds. Slowly, things will move forward as we protect this wonderful country God has blessed us and our forefathers with.

God Bless you all, and as you see rainbows in the future, remember God's promise!

MEMORIES OF MICK [[TOP](#)]

He was a small, stocky gentleman who may have been short on stature, but was long on patience and understanding. To him, having no hair on the top of his head did not mean he was bald. It meant that he had a long forehead. His slow, steady gait did not mean he walked slowly. To him he was letting a turtle win a race. This person with the positive outlook on things was my great-grandfather, Mick.

Hearing stories he told of his mischievous childhood, working for Al Capone as a stone mason in Couderay, having a ship blown out from under him in Word War II, and being involved in some hijinx of his own, has made me always believe that he had a special "guardian angel" watching over him.

He spent most of his free time hand crafting model ships. To watch his hands which resembled a pair of well-worn leather gloves due to their size and texture dance over the ratlines and other rigging was enchanting. Witnessing his God given ability to transform a few laminated boards, dressmaker's snaps, old oil cloth window shades and black fish line into a Spanish Galleon complete with sails furled out, and cannons poised and ready to fire, was just awe inspiring.

As he was busily crafting things out of wood in his workshop in the basement he would start whistling. The tunes that he came up with were really not recognizable melodies but more of cheerful toots and tweets that became a mesmerizing tune in its own right. It was such a joyful noise unto the Lord that my grandmother's house still echoes that vibrant sound that he blessed us all with a long time ago.

Seeing the way his eyes would light up or the way he would chuckle to himself when something struck him funny would make a person wonder what Mick was up to. From the animated way he would slowly peek around a corner, to the way he shrugged his shoulders and rolled back his eyes in disbelief of what was going on would always bring out a laugh from someone. There were times when my grandmother would be lecturing one of us and Mick would do this. We could never figure out who got in trouble more: us for laughing while grandma was being serious, or him for not setting a good example for us to follow.

It was Mick's job to wipe the kitchen table after a meal. He would get so carried away whistling and wiping, that whoever was sitting too close to the table would either get their hands or face washed by his flying dish rag. He would always chuckle, and say "Oops, I wonder what I did that fur?" Or, he would look at the cloth in mock horror and say "Good golly, green blood." The look of disbelief on peoples faces when he did this to them for the first time always was always priceless.

Because of his easygoing manner, and lovable charm, he quickly became everyone's friend. Many a people found him an easy person to talk to, one who would not judge, but would sit, and listen, and when need be, offer advice. He was always there for people.

Mick had not lived an easy life, but knew how to make the best out of each day the Lord had given him to live. The special talents he had, he used to bring a little joy into others lives. Be it with a simple laugh from his antics, or with the joy people had from looking at his magnificent ship models. The joy and laughter he brought to people meant a lot to him, and was an important part of his stewardship during his lifetime.

AUNTIE MARGIE [[TOP](#)]

I always enjoyed when my Grandma's older sister, Margie would come to visit.

The best way to describe Margie is to compare her to the character Mame, in the book *Around the World with Auntie Mame* by Patrick Dennis. She was always dressed in the latest styles and was made up very glitzy and glamorous. She would be off the wall and zany a lot of the time, really knowing how to enjoy life to the fullest.

She would captivate people with her stories of her adventures. Her vivid description of seeing Liberace perform in Vegas, could make a person actually see the flamboyant costume he wore as he played the piano. She would get so engrossed in describing the Broadway show she just saw, that she would take you right into the performance by singing one of the songs. I still can hear her singing "If I were a rich man, daidle, deedle, daidle, digguh-digguh deedle daidle dum."

Whenever she talked to someone young or old, that person would always have her full attention. She would not think anything of getting down on her hands and knees to hear what a little child had to say, because that small person was important to her.

She helped me in my early teenage years learn that it was fine to be your own person. You didn't need to dress or act like everyone else to be someone. To live your life, you needed to be yourself, the way God made you. To be a blessing to others.

When my dad moved to Milwaukee she taught that country boy a lot about big city life in Milwaukee, and about life in general. Looking back on their treasured times together, there were a lot of lessons and examples of a large and vital faith. One of the things she always told dad was "Don't make shame" What she meant was to be honorable, respectful, honest, caring, loving, and above all, to act with class and dignity. She was very proud of her family, as I am sure that her lessons took. She taught dad, by example, about volunteering, how to act in social situations, and what society and God expects of a human being. He carries her with him in his heart and mind; she is a large part of his philosophy of being a Boy Scoutmaster. Many times he has told his Senior Patrol Leader "Don't make shame!" Funny, that person knows exactly what dad means.

Dad and I both last saw Margie at my uncle's wedding in 1980. She was at her best that night, a beautiful, dynamic, and classy lady. Right after the wedding, she and her husband retired to Florida.

Always the adventurous one, after moving there, she took up ballroom dancing, and started taking cruises. She came down with Alzheimer's disease in the nineties, and passed away recently. We miss her very much, but know for certain she is in a better place, and we are quite sure she is telling the apprentice angels "Don't make shame!"

FEEL THE WARMTH [[TOP](#)]

The Lenten season, a time of reflection and self-discipline. A time, like winter, where it is cold, and bleak, showing no signs of new life. A time for contemplation and self-examination.

This time of year, I feel so cold. The cold, then damp, then cold weather just seems to penetrate deep into my bones. The temptation of the few days of above normal warm weather doesn't help, just gets me more discouraged, feeling even colder when the more season-like weather returns. This makes me feel like I will never get warm again.

This brings back memories of having to bundle up in long johns, wool pants, a sweater, winter coat and hat, just to bear the cold temperatures outside waiting for the school bus. How it would seem like it would take the bus forever to come, the longer I waited, the colder I got. Finally, when the bus would come, getting to my assigned seat, which was the one right behind the bus's heater, where I could start getting warm. This became a feeling of penance though, because the people around me had been on the bus for a long time, and would be getting too hot, and would ask for the heat to get shut off.

One thing I have noticed about this time of year, though, is that when you stand in front of a window during the late morning hours, you can see the bright sunshine, and feel its intense warmth. It warms through your body, penetrates deep into your soul. It's like feeling God's love rekindle deep inside of you. As it fully envelopes you, it seems like a blanket wrapping itself around you so that you feel snugly, safe and secure in His love, and it helps you remember God's presence is there in your life.

I know that in a few short weeks we will be blessed with the warmth and brightness of spring. We'll be blessed with Jesus' resurrection, a new life! The bleakness of lent, the cold and cruelty of Good Friday, leads us to the empty tomb, the resurrection, and new life on Easter Sunday!

As we await spring, and the ability to do away with our winter coats, let your relationship with God continue to shine in and through you, keeping you warm all year through!

MOTHER'S DAY - KITTY [[TOP](#)]

Last July our neighbor, Ray, found a kitten under his steps that a mother cat had abandoned. He didn't know how to take care of it, so he brought the kitten over to our house.

This precious little bundle of soft white, gray and brown fur fit into the palm of my daughter, Kari's hand. She was so little, so tiny, so cute and cuddly. We figured she was about two weeks old. Kari made a bed for her out of a box, some towels and some fake fur she had. Kari decided to name the kitten Princess. That night, we kept her away from our other animals. Not sure if our dog, Lacey, or Splash would hurt her.

The next day, I went to the pet store to see what we could feed her. To my amazement, they had actual kitten formula, and bottles to feed kittens with. Well, the bottles didn't work out so good. Using them, we ended up getting more formula on the kitten than in her. We started using an eye dropper instead, which worked better, with Princess getting more formula that way.

We slowly started introducing her to the other animals. Splash, our calico cat, sniffed Princess, then walked away, ignoring the little bundle of fur. When I knelt down to show our dog Lacey the kitten, she right away started washing the kitten and nuzzling it. It was so incredible, watching a dog, starting to mother a kitten like that. When we let the kitten have free roam of the house, Lacey, the ever protective mom, would walk behind her, watching to make sure Princess would not get into any trouble. Several times Lacey would stop the kitten, and give her a bath, washing Princess from the tip of her nose to the end of her tail.

Both the kitten and dog play with each other. Lacey is ever so gentle not to hurt the kitten. The kitten being the typical cat, pounces and jumps on the dog whenever she can. Lacey, will nose the kitten and chase her throughout the house, but will not jump on or hit the kitten. For a while there, Lacey would walk by the kitten, and Princess would jump up and grab the dog's feathery tail. After a while, Lacey's poor tail looked very pathetic, with clumps of hair missing here and there, but she loved the kitten so unconditionally, that she would not stop the kitten from playing with her tail. After a couple of weeks of this, Lacey had had enough. After the kitten jumped and pulled on her tail, Lacey, using her front paws, pushed the kitten down, firm but gently as to say,

"Now that's enough, show some respect." Ever since then, the kitten has not bothered Lacey's tail.

Recently, the kitten was washing Lacey's face. Lacey yawned, and the kitten stuck her head right into Lacey's mouth. Ever the caring one, Lacey did not close her mouth until Princess moved her head out of Lacey's mouth.

What a sign of trust and unconditional love. Like the way we humans love and protect our children, unconditionally and trusting in them. Yes, there will be times where our children will try our patience, but also, there will be times when we burst with pride over accomplishments our children do as they grow up.

Happy Mother's Day!

A BEAUTIFUL CASTLE - [[TOP](#)]

When Marty and I bought our house in 1990, we thought we had bought ourselves a castle. Some of its interesting amenities included: Broken windows in the front porch, a sagging living room floor, in other rooms, where linoleum curled up in places, it was nailed down with eight penny nails. The kitchen was like going back into the 1940's with rusted steel cabinets, and a rusty single basin sink. The rest of the house was painted in a shade of green that was so ugly, you can't put it into words. The mud porch off the kitchen was in such sad shape, that when it rained, it rained harder in the mud porch than it did outside.

Family and friends thought we were crazy buying such a house that needed so much work. But to Marty and I, we had bought ourselves a castle. We didn't see its shortfalls as detriments, rather we saw them as opportunities and challenges to turn this house into the loving home we envisioned.

We were told by several friends that it is said that the greatest challenge for a marriage is when a husband and wife take on a building project by themselves. We didn't let this deter us. We did the work ourselves.

At that time, I had been working for the City's Building and Fire Inspection Department as a secretary. Through talking with the inspectors and with contractors that came into the office, I got tips and advice on doing the projects we needed done.

Our daughter Kari has a definite sense of style and color. She has helped us several times figuring out which wallpaper and paint will go in the rooms we are working on.

Paul, ever the engineer of the family, has been able to figure out ways of getting the clawfoot tub out of the bathroom, and moving boards, and furniture around corners and down the stairs.

A little paint here, floor jacks there, replacing glass, getting new light fixtures, made a world of difference right away. We found out that there is no such thing as a simple two-hour project when Marty went to put an outlet in a wall. He didn't encounter just one layer of plaster and lath, he encountered several layers, each going in a different angle. Replacing an outside door in the kitchen, we found out that the old outside door provided the only support for that wall.

With remodeling the kitchen and a bathroom, I have learned two things: It is difficult installing a microwave shelf under a cabinet, when you are only 5'2, and are on a chair, standing tiptoe at an angle holding the shelf in place while it is being secured to the wall and other shelves; also, those old clawfoot tubs are indeed made out of steel are very heavy and awkward for a small person to hold up while its feet are being installed. Marty and I did it together. Yes there were very trying times between husband and wife, but we persevered, and now our remodeled and redecorated home is indeed our castle.

As we live together as brothers and sisters in Christ, let us work together, lean on each other, and

understand each other as we continue to build God's wonderful church throughout the world!