

**MEMORIES, HEALTH CARE
INFORMATION & POEMS**



A TRIPLE READ

THREE BOOKS IN ONE

Written by

MARY KOLISNYK SPRY-MYERS

MARY'S JOURNEY

**Highlighting her memorable and enjoyable
life stories, adaptation to situations,
resolutions and progress reached, one day
at a time.**

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INTRODUCTION

In the 1800's Michael Kolisnyk immigrated to Canada from Ukraine, settled in a small community in Manitoba, married Helen Zaretsky, I was the fifth child born in the family of seven. My challenge in writing my memories is to highlight a few life stories, portray a number of specific situations in my journey as I continue in my eightieth year.

Regarding my health, I feel honored, have enjoyed and appreciated eighty years of comfortable living, fortunately my body responded well in overcoming a few health issues. I would like to share with my readers basic information in making health care choices, assisting in enriching one's life, beginning at a very young age.

One of my hobbies and relaxation tools has been writing poetry, reflecting my thoughts of nature, love, and life. I am delighted to share a number of poems with my readers.

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AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE

How about you taking a turn on the water skis, Mary, my husband Bill suggested one morning. We were visiting with relatives at Lake John in Ontario, Canada, approximately forty-five years ago. “I will be in control of the boat and Jim will be available to assist you should it be necessary. We will take you around the lake one time after you are up on the skis,” Bill stated. Jim, Bill’s cousin was an excellent athlete and a strong swimmer.

Initially I was reluctant to attempt this challenge. Then I re-assured myself by thinking about the many people I knew, including Bill who had taken up this sport and how envious I had been as I watched them perform in an effortless manner on the skis. They presented themselves very relaxed, enjoying the beautiful scenery along the way. “Why shouldn’t I be able to manage this sport as well?” I thought to myself. “Bill and Jim will be there for me should I have an unexpected problem.” Deep down I had many concerns as I was not a swimmer and had never been in the lake much further than the shoreline. “What if my lifejacket does not keep me above water? My children are very young and they need me.”

“Are you ready, Mary?” Bill asked me. I surprised myself with a “yes” response and was quickly being attached to the skis. I was beginning to feel excited about this new adventure, could feel the adrenalin flowing throughout my body. A wonderful feeling! “Okay, get ready, hang on to the rope tightly and we will get you up,” I heard Bill say. I was surprised and elated when I was pulled up on my haunches and was actually skiing behind the boat. My next concern I had to deal with was to stand straight up on the skis. I attempted this procedure several times without success. Each time I tried to stand taller; my skis seemed to get further apart, making it more difficult for me to concentrate on my

water skiing challenge. I was worried about the possibility of this situation causing injury to my body. I could see Bill moving his hands up, trying to provide me with some information; I did not understand him and had no way of communicating with him. I thought he was trying to let me know I should stand up on the skis which was what I was consistently working on without success. I decided to make one more final attempt to stand straight up on the skis. "Wow", I thought to myself as I persisted with what I now felt was a most difficult ordeal. "I am not going to make it and will have to focus on another plan. I can feel my legs going further apart when I attempt to stand straighter. My legs are getting weaker. I cannot continue in my present position on my haunches. I have to make a quick decision to resolve this unbelievable problematic adventure. "Will my life jacket keep my body afloat if I let go of the rope?" I thought to myself. I decided I had no other choice; I reluctantly let go of the rope and down I went, very much concerned about the consequences in the middle of this large body of water.

The water was cool. I was thrilled and relieved with the realization of my body actually floating on top of the water. "Thank goodness this activity is over", I thought to myself. "I can get into the boat and will soon be back on shore with my children." Getting into the boat was more of a challenge than I anticipated. Bill brought the boat around very close to me and Jim made an attempt in assisting me into the boat. Due to my exhaustion from my skiing experience I was not much help to Jim when he challenged this procedure. After several unsuccessful tiring attempts I remained floating in the water with the feeling of failure and an extremely sore body. Finally, Bill and Jim each held on to my body and together pulled me up into the boat. I had no idea the return to the boat was going to be such a difficult ordeal. I also had no idea my thighs and legs would become so bruised and weak from my casual attempt in enjoying a fun sport. For many days following this experience, I struggled

at home and at work, functioning with weakness and soreness to different parts of my body. "Was it worth the trauma?" I frequently asked myself. My true feeling was "No, it was not worth the trauma, but the experience was unforgettable and worth-while.

As I returned to my children on the beach, they embraced me and were excited about my performance. I knew, although water skiing was a family sport and looked inviting, this sport was not for me to continue challenging. My son Ranny, our oldest child informed me he was concerned about me in the middle of the lake, knowing I could not swim. He also indicated he realized how important it was for him to continue his swimming lessons each summer and to concentrate on his progress in this activity. After many years of swimming lessons, practice swimming, and boating, our three children became ardent swimmers and water skiers, enjoying the water sports. Our family vacations were spent at an all-inclusive lodge in the Muskoka area for a few summers, followed by summer vacations at our cottage on Lake Scugog for a few years. Swimming is a vital requirement for all children and adults. Being a swimmer would have given me more confidence, benefiting me in my frightening situation during my first and only water skiing experience. Many years later, Bill and I purchased a condominium with a swimming pool, providing me the opportunity to practice swimming, beginning across the width of the pool at the shallow end. After reaching a comfort level I practiced swimming along the length and edge of the pool, increasing my distance. Learning to swim in my later years was a challenge, resulting in a feeling of satisfaction and comfort, an enjoyable experience.

My intent is to share with you many more of my memories, my life stories (as I remember them), provide an avenue for my siblings, my children and family, their children, and their children's children etc. to familiarize themselves with

my life. Family members may have different memories regarding these stories.

In putting together a family history, including a health history, it is helpful to gather information at least three generations from both sides of the family. Heredity plays a strong role in many health related issues. My stories and legacy may make family members aware of similarities, more knowledgeable of their health history and appreciative of their life. Hopefully it will also assist them in understanding the most important thing in life is not money and wealth. These two items have the possibility of disappearing very quickly. A few of the important gifts we are able to achieve, share, enjoy and maintain are togetherness, good health, humor, happiness, appreciation, understanding, care for each other and for ourselves. Most children are inspired, could benefit from family storytelling, the kind they would like to hear, suited to their needs. They may make comparisons in themselves and other family members. Should they be living through a difficult period, family storytelling could possibly be an asset and outlet, assisting them in understanding their own experiences. Some events may not be funny, might be rather humbling, that is what helped make me what I am, each experience was a foundation for my future.

ENJOY!!

PART ONE MY YOUTH

CHAPTER ONE

During the depression years Ukrainian settlers grouped together in Canada on heavily wooded acreage known as “Homestead” property. One of the areas was in a small community called Sclater, Manitoba. The Canadian Liberal Government enticed immigrants to come to Canada by offering them acres of undeveloped land for ten dollars as their own to develop, farm, and hopefully make their home. It was believed that farmers, based on their temperament, were the desirable immigrants for selection and to pursue in pioneering. These immigrants were placed in block settlements for psychological and practical reasons, sharing their equipment and assisting each other in work projects. My grandparents participated in this immigration program. Mom, Helen Zaretsky was two and one-half years old when she immigrated to Sclater, Manitoba in Canada from Bukovina, Ukraine in 1911 with her parents and her brother Tony, one and one-half years old. A homestead was chosen approximately one mile from the home of friends, Ukrainian immigrants, where a one room log cabin was built while my family lived with their friends. The walls of this log cabin were plastered and sod was placed over the poplar poles as a roof. The sod roof did not provide adequate protection from the rain inside the cabin. Mom's second brother Frank was born during a rain storm. Grandma kept her new baby dry from the rain by placing him under the table which was covered with a piece of oilcloth. The next summer a two room house was built, also with poplar logs, lumber was used to cover the roof. This house provided a home to additional family members for many years.

A small store, post-office, and train station were located

in Sclater, approximately two miles from my grandparent's home, reached by walking along a little trail. In 1916 a school was built, one mile from their home. Mom was eight years old, one of the first pupils at this school, could not understand a word of English. She was a good student, soon overcame the language barrier as she enhanced her English vocabulary.

Mom quit school at age fourteen after passing into the eighth grade. A High School was not available in the area. After quitting school, Mom assisted Grandma at home with the children (her seven siblings) for six months, and then went to Winnipegosis where her Uncle resided. He was instrumental in obtaining housework for her with a Doctor's family of four children, ages' two to seven. Payment was fifteen dollars a month, eighteen dollars during three summer months when gardening was added to Mom's responsibilities. After one year of working for this family, Mom felt she had a good learning experience in housekeeping, cooking, baking, caring for children etc and left the family, went home for a couple months.

Dad, Michael (Mike) Kolisnyk was the first child born to Jacob and Mary Kolisnyk on Oct 3, 1898, in Zilesia, Galicia, under Austrian rule at that time. Mike attended school in Zilesia, studying in both Ukrainian and Polish. His report card indicates he was a willing student, although Mike suggests the "Professor" gave him a bonus for tilling his garden. In the autumn of 1911, thirteen year old Mike, along with his mother and two younger sisters Nellie and Annie set sail for Canada to join their father who had sailed before them to locate a home in the 'promised land'. Some years later Mike was saddened to learn the Professor, along with a number of his classmates were killed in World War One. He felt most fortunate to have escaped the ravages of that war due to his parent's foresight in immigrating to Canada.

When choosing his land, Jacob settled close to family and other Ukrainian pioneers in the Sclater area, had a preference for bush country and wooded lands in the vicinity of lakes, felt he could become self-sufficient in providing his own wood for fuel, logs for building and selling. Jacob acquired a quarter section of land and immediately built a one room log home with a birch bark roof. After completing the table, benches and beds of wood he was ready and anxious to receive his family.

My grandparents loved the countryside of Ukraine and would have preferred remaining there rather than immigrating to Canada. I do not feel they realized the hardships facing them in a new country, including the need to learn a new language. Their description of Ukraine was very picturesque with deep flowing rivers, winding crystal clear lakes, lush green woods, fruit groves, beautiful mountains, sunny coasts, fertile soil and flat land rich in natural resources, agricultural and mineral products. The climate they experienced in Ukraine is similar to Canada and the United States. Peasants in Ukraine at one time were slaves, bound by the land owned by their Lord, called serfdom. In 1843 they were freed from serfdom and allowed to own real estate property, but were unable to purchase the land due to lack of funds, financial assistance was not available to them. This was the situation of my grandparents, and the reason for their desire to immigrate to Canada, expecting an easier life for themselves and their families.

Mike did not attend school in Canada due to delays in developing the education system in the community where he resided. With his keen interest in reading and writing, Mike adapted quickly to the English language. He was very helpful in providing communication assistance in the English language to the needs of family and friends, both in speech and writing. Mike showed a keen interest in the arts available to him in the Ukrainian language, enjoyed and contributed in both acting and

singing, had a very acceptable singing voice. Mike's mother had a high-pitched singing voice and very much enjoyed using it in entertaining her grandchildren or any other listeners. Mike enjoyed being close to nature, hunting, surviving in the wilderness. He left his family in his late teens, obtained work with the Canadian Northern Railway. The love of the seas and ships lured him to the Great Lakes on the grain ships. He was classified as a 4th Engineer fireman, feeding the furnaces with coal to make steam. On one of his trips returning to Sclater traveling by train, Mike met Helen, she was also returning home to Sclater following a work program. They became friends, continuing their relationship after their departure from the train.

Helen and Mike were married Feb 26th, 1924, at the ages of fifteen and twenty-five years, following a short courtship, residing in Sclater, Manitoba in close proximity to both of their families. Mike, his sister Ann and brother-in-law Emil had a little house on his father's farm where the four of them resided for the first six months of their marriage. Helen and Mike resided there for another two and one-half years, and then purchased a bush farm a short distance away. Cutting down trees for cordwood sales to Winnipeg and Brandon Wood Dealers was the main industry for employment. The men, at all ages worked consistently from daybreak to dawn, work was laboring, unsafe and low paying. Mike continued toiling with cordwood cutting for four and one half years. Helen was persistent in developing herself as a competent wife and mother, initiating a self-development strategy. The experience she received in domestic work prior to her marriage assisted her in achieving a comfort level in homemaking and childcare skills.

Mike and Helen became parents of seven children, of which I was the fifth. I was named Mary in recognition of my two grandmothers. The first child, Harry, born Dec 3rd, 1924 died at the age of a few months, leaving my parents with a fear for their future children. Due to the inability of my parents to provide

medical care for Harry, the cause of his death was not known. Based on the symptoms of other children in the neighborhood receiving medical care during that time, pneumonia was accepted as the cause of Harry's death. My sister Olga, the second child also became seriously ill at the age of nineteen months. When my grandmother Mary, my father's mother, offered to care for Olga, using remedies familiar to her, Mom became assertive. She said to my Dad, "Mike, you have to go and bring a doctor to care for Olga right away. I listened to you and your mother when Harry was sick. You told me your mother would make him better. Harry died and I feel if we had brought a doctor to him, he would have lived. I am not going to let the same thing happen to Olga." Mike telephoned the Doctor; the Doctor came to their home and left some medication for Olga, followed by a successful recovery. Helen, a young teenager, was burdened with family responsibilities of an adult; these responsibilities were accepted by her and maintained. Helen would not allow their parents to influence her and her husband in their decision-making and family responsibilities. She was also keen and successful in developing her strength with the neighbors in her role as Mike's wife and mother of their children.

CHAPTER TWO

There was little knowledge of life outside this community with the exception of knowledge achieved from the education at school and experiences in work projects.

Gradually a number of families were stimulated in leaving the community, hoping for a richer life and settlement elsewhere. We were one of the families to make the move, settling in an English speaking community, Hayfield, Manitoba, located sixteen miles south of Brandon, away from the family circle. In 1930 Dad and my Mom's oldest brother Tony put a down payment on a farm. The two story farm home was a castle to Mom and she worked consistently in keeping the home attractive and clean, as well as caring for all us children.

It was not long before the siblings in our family favored the English language, frustrating Mom and Dad when they spoke to us in the Ukrainian language and we responded to them speaking the English language. This situation assisted our parents in mastering the English language for which I am sure they appreciated over the years. However, it affected the ability for the children to maintain their speaking skills in the Ukrainian language, understanding the language was maintained. This situation created difficulty for us to communicate with our relatives who were unsuccessful in learning to speak or understand the English language, mainly our grandparents.

My first early childhood memory occurred during the time Mom was in labor, giving birth to my sister, Edith. A neighbor lady with mid-wife experience arrived to assist mom in the delivery. I was placed outdoors to play and was to remain in the area surrounding the house. While playing, I heard a hissing sound. I looked up and saw this thing with a long neck stretched out running towards me, hissing. I became petrified and began screaming. My screaming must have had an impact on this thing

as it stopped running, turned around and walked away. The mid-wife came outdoors to console me when she heard me screaming, informed me that thing was a gander, a male goose. My fear of geese with their long necks and hissing sound continued the remaining of my childhood years.

My main attraction to the home was the stairway banister located in the front entrance hall; I slid down on it as frequently as I could when I thought Mom was not in close proximity. Additional early childhood memories reflect mainly specific areas of the farm home, sitting around a large table in the large kitchen having breakfast, my bed shared with my siblings, a play swing we enjoyed at the back of the house, an outside toilet, the relationship and impact a boarder in our home had on our family. At a very young age I was given a box of popcorn by a neighbor, I shared small amounts with my siblings. After completing the box of popcorn, I was asked by one of my siblings for the whistle located in the box of popcorn, quickly realizing the hard, round item I had difficulty swallowing was not popcorn, it was a round, hard device called a whistle. I was not expecting anything else but popcorn in the box. Mom was apprehensive this device I swallowed may not pass through my bowel, creating a problem. She encouraged me to eat porridge and toast frequently, anxious for my bowels to move. My oldest sister Olga was assigned the chore of accompanying me in each toilet need using a chamber pot, checking my bowel movement for the whistle. I was teased by my siblings about the possibility of another mode of whistling with the whistle. A great relief for all of us, plus much excitement when I was successful in passing the whistle!

Mom purchased a used sewing machine and taught herself to sew. She collected, washed and bleached 100 lb empty sugar and flour sacks, making tea towels, curtains with embroidered flowers on the bottom of the side panels, handkerchiefs, plus petticoats and bloomers for the girls in the

family. Neighbors responded to Mom's needs by donating their used clothing, empty flour and sugar sacks to her. Mom reciprocated by making a few items for them. My aunts also donated their used clothing which Mom very much appreciated having available in making clothing for us children. There were many hours spent by all the girls in the family in what we called "ripping the clothing apart", a job we were not fond of as children. I very much enjoyed and looked forward to attending Sunday school, getting dressed in my Sunday dress with matching bloomers; both items made by my mother from used donated clothing. The bloomers had elastic at the waist and elastic at the bottom of each leg. Mom wrapped a penny in the corner of my handkerchief and placed it in one leg of my bloomers as a safe place during the walk to Sunday school. I was thrilled to have money for the collection plate and proud to be walking with my older siblings.

Mom loved poetry and we used to love hearing her recite poems, one verse in particular she frequently recited from the poem titled PERSEVERE, I believe Mom was hoping we would benefit from this verse:

When you have work to do, boys
Do it with a will
Those who reach the top, boys
First must climb the hill.

CHAPTER THREE

Unfortunately, after our move to Hayfield, Manitoba, drought with heavy sand storms hit the southern area of Manitoba, continuing for a number of years. Mom stated we were in desperate need for financial assistance but Dad refused to apply for welfare, five dollars a month per family was available. Dad and Uncle Tony traveled out of our area during the winter months to cut cordwood, attempting to obtain some cash for the farm maintenance and daily living needs. During this time my mother was the only adult in the home, responsible for the children and farm animals, including the daily milking of cows, watering and feeding of the animals, cleaning the area in the barn used by the animals. She organized her outside activities in the morning while the youngest children were asleep, the late afternoon activities were organized after Olga and her siblings arrived home from school. Olga took charge of all her siblings while Mom attended to the animal chores in the barn.

One spring day Dad attended an auction sale, hoping to purchase some seeding equipment. He sat down on the bench by an elderly gentleman. This gentleman immediately initiated a conversation. "My name is Riddle. I am a single, retired Veteran, have a small monthly Veteran's pension and am looking for a place to live. Can you help me?" Dad was surprised with this request for assistance and thought about asking Mom when he arrived home if she would consider taking Mr. Riddle as a boarder. "When do you need a place?" asked Dad. "I need a place today and can pay in advance. I have my possessions with me", responded Mr. Riddle as he glanced under the bench. Dad looked under the bench and saw a burlap bag (gunny sack) partially full. His thoughts immediately flashed over Mr. Riddle's comment about paying in advance, our desperate need for funds

and decided to bring Mr. Riddle to our home as a boarder without Mom's permission, thought he would be an asset in keeping an eye on the children during the time Mom was busy with her barn chores when he was working away from home during the winter months. Mom was appalled with this decision. She could not believe Dad attended an auction sale to purchase seeding equipment and brought home an elderly, dirty man as a boarder for her to care for, a big responsibility she did not need with a young family. "Where would they have him sleep? The three bedrooms were all in use with the family. The children will have to share one bedroom and give up the other," Helen thought to herself as she envisioned the extra workload she would have caring for this elderly man along with her children, their activities, the housework, gardening, milking. "I will have to make the best of the situation for now but am hoping this man will not be our boarder for long. He is very dirty and smokes a pipe. Maybe Mike should look after him, he brought him here."

We children enjoyed sharing one bedroom. Edith slept with Mom and Dad until she slept through the night, no longer requiring a night feeding, then slept in our room. The three beds in our room were situated fairly close together. One of our fun activities after we were ready for bed was to have a jumping spree, jumping from one bed to the other, trying to increase our distance with each jump. Mom and Dad did not support this activity and had warned us there was to be no further jumping on the beds and in the house. One evening the four of us initiated a jumping competition, thinking we were very quiet in this activity and would not be heard. I was on a bed near the bedroom door, preparing for another jump and heard footsteps on the stairway. My reaction was to immediately stop jumping. Dad entered the bedroom, saw my three older siblings jumping and disciplined them. He did not see me jumping so did not discipline me. I quickly crawled under the bed covers without saying a word. My siblings felt I was pampered, received special treatment and that

I should have reported my involvement in this activity to Dad and been disciplined as they were. We have had many chuckles over the years at our family get-togethers about this episode plus others, particularly including Mr. Riddle.

Unfortunately, during the period Mr. Riddle lived in our home, he severely affected the children by discrimination, showing favoritism towards me, hatred towards my brother Walter, and having very little interest in the other siblings. This was not a healthy situation for our family. I expect there were many times my siblings hated me for the preferential treatment I received from this grouchy old man. Mr. Riddle purchased a doll for me (the only doll we had in our family), requested Mom sew me a special dress, and entered me in a children's beauty contest at the annual Brandon Fair. I was not a winning candidate but looked pretty with my special dress and hair done in ringlets. Mom made my ringlets by wrapping wet locks of hair around narrow strips of cloth, then wrapping the cloth back up around the lock and tying the two ends at the top. These ringlets were most uncomfortable, particularly when sleeping. When my hair dried, the strips of cloth were removed and I had ringlets. I wished so many times Mom would leave my hair without ringlets, as she did for my sisters. Mr. Riddle had my photo taken the day of the fair and presented Mom and Dad with a few copies of the photo. I have one of the copies framed on the wall in my computer room. My siblings resented the special attention I was receiving from Mr. Riddle. They began showing a hateful disposition towards me and I did not blame them.

CHAPTER FOUR

My brother Steven Alexander was a New Years baby, born in 1937. Mom went to her family in Sclater for his birth, taking Edith with her. Dad was left in charge of the rest of the family. It was quite an experience for him and for us children. Dad was not comfortable assisting us in preparing for school in the morning. Olga and Zenia were our big helpers during those mornings and after school.

After purchasing the farm in 1930, the depression years were an extreme burden to my parents, the worst depression the world had ever known. Factories closed, thousands of workers were unemployed, new graduates tramped the streets looking for work, many took to 'riding the rails'. Prices of farm products dropped. Wheat which had been as high as three dollars a bushel fell to thirty-five cents a bushel. The worst drought experienced in the western provinces added to these difficulties. For eight years rainfall was scarce producing dust storms following the sun burned soil. Many farmers abandoned their farms.

Mom's sister Jean worked for a neighbor for a short period, visiting us regularly. Her sister Ann also worked in the neighborhood and lived with our family. Mom felt good having her sister's visit us, enjoyed preparing special food for them, particularly Ukrainian food. Ann later attended High School in Brandon, spent weekends with us. One summer weekend Ann and her girl friend Jeanie walked the fifteen miles from Brandon to our place. They developed blisters on their feet, were extremely exhausted, not remembering much of their walk. They both felt much better after a feed of Mom's perogies, were happy Dad was able to give them a ride back to Brandon in his old Nash car. Jeanie later married Uncle Bill, Aunt Ann's brother.

Following seven years of striving financially, unable to make the annual farm payments (were not able to make any payments), Dad decided to give up the farm. In 1937 we returned to Sclater and the family circle for support and assistance. All farm equipment and animals were sold for whatever price was obtainable. Dad drove his old Nash car; the car engine started by cranking, inserting an actual crank (a long metal rod bent into an angular shape) into the front of the car and cranking the engine until it started, followed by Dad quickly working the choke button to keep the motor running until it warmed up. We were all in an anxiety state until the car started, hoping it would continue functioning until we reached our destination. We also hoped we would not have any flat tires-- based on experience, Dad produced a few swear words (we were not allowed to repeat) when he had to deal with a flat tire. Prior to starting the car Dad arranged seating or standing spaces for each of us in the car. The youngest child was in the front with Mom and Dad, held in Mom's arms, the remaining five children were each assigned seating or standing areas in the back, each preferred standing to see more of the outside areas, hoping for animals to be visual; we negotiated changing places with each other during the journey. Dad attached as many boxes of clothing as possible to the car, and we headed for a new life. He planned to arrange for a truck and return for the furniture, household utensils and remainder of our belongings in the next few days. My siblings were happy to rid themselves of Mr. Riddle, felt excited about the move. I had mixed feelings at the time.

CHAPTER FIVE

It was not easy for Mom and Dad to relocate with very limited finances and no work projects. A vacant small one large room house, close to the Sclater River and close to relatives, was available to us. The house contained a cook stove and heater. My aunt and uncle living in the area made donations of household utensils to us until our utensils were relocated. Our grandparents brought hay into an area of the one room and placed bed sheets over the hay for our sleeping accommodation, a goose feather down comforter for our cover up. Extra covering as required was provided with our coats and jackets.

Dad joined the local men in cutting down trees for cordwood sales. Mom was thrilled to have water available in the river, in close proximity to the house. Fortunately we were there during the fall, spring, and summer, Mom set up her tub for washing clothes near the river. She washed the clothes by scrubbing them up and down on a board with a corrugated surface of metal, rinsing them in the river and hanging them over a rope line made by tying each of the ends of the rope to individual trees. Clothing requiring special laundry attention was soaked in pails of soap and water and then placed on the stove, reaching a high heat level, activating the removal of dirt and stains. Bluing was used in the rinse water to hopefully whiten the white clothing. Heating a flat iron on the wood stove, attaching a wooden handle to the flat iron, moving the iron over the wrinkled clothing produced the ironing process. We cleaned the smoke from the stove on the irons before use by moving the irons over old rags or paper. Mom carried water from the river to the house for drinking and for general use in the home. Approximately once a week she took all of us children to a shallow area of the river for a bath. During the cool weather we had our weekly tub baths in the house. Mom carried the necessary water into the house,

heated the water to a high temperature in a pail on the stove, and poured most of it in an aluminum tub on the floor, adding cold water to a comfortable temperature for bathing. Usually the younger children were bathed first. The remaining hot water was added to the tub half way through the bathing. One of the conditions the older children had to deal with is whether anyone peed in the bath water prior to their bath. There was never a definite response as to whether anyone did have a pee release. It was kept a secret until we were adults, sharing this information at a get together following the consumption of a couple alcoholic beverages with much laughter.

Our lighting during my youth consisted of a kerosene lamp, a wick/oil lamp, functioning similar to a candle, with a small fuel container at the bottom of the lamp. The lower half of the wick, a cord or strand of loosely woven twisted or braided fibers, is dipped into and absorbs the kerosene. The top part of the wick sticks out at the top of the fuel container. The kerosene absorbed in the wick burns when the top part of the wick is lit, producing a yellowy flame. As the kerosene is burnt, capillary action inside the wick draws more kerosene up from the fuel container to be burnt. The size of the flame and extended area of the wick can be controlled by turning the small knob on the lamp. The flame is protected by a glass shade. If the wick is turned up too high, smoke may be produced, affecting the glass shade. Kerosene lanterns were used outdoors and in the barns where the farm animals were located. The light on the lanterns is protected by an enclosed case with transparent sides.

We were excited about attending a new school and reuniting with our cousins during our walks to school. The walks gave us communication time together, sharing experiences. The walking path to school was located in a heavily wooded area. There were bears roaming around us, plus many other wild animals. Our cousins taught us to walk quickly and remain close together when going to and from school, to run as fast as we

could if we saw or heard a bear or any animal near us. The men, including my father, cut down trees in the wooded area near the path for cordwood sales. We were more relaxed walking when we heard the men working, knowing we could call for help if needed.

CHAPTER SIX

Dad worked consistently in the woods, hoping to earn sufficient funds for a down payment on a farm. Cordwood cutting was very laboring and he was not happy with this line of work. After approximately nine months Dad informed Mom he felt it was time to take a portion of their savings and put a down payment on the purchase of a farm. When we woke up early one morning Dad was gone. Mom informed us Dad walked to the highway, planning on hitch hiking to a farmland area approximately thirty miles away. My siblings and I enjoyed the close relationship we had with our cousins and were not happy about moving to another location. Approximately two weeks later, Dad returned home. Excitement was very clear in his speech during the explanation of the land purchase he had made. "We now have an acre of land to build a country store with an attached home. We will live there and I will manage the store. Dunkinville is the name of the closest school. It is approximately one mile away. Walking to school without the fear of wild animals coming near you children will be a pleasure. There are not any wooded areas near the road to the school." Mom was totally surprised with Dad's sudden change in plans and skeptical about this business venture. She realized Dad was not happy cutting cordwood, had a strong desire for a business, for this reason she decided to support the project.

The small one room country store was built with an attached small two-room home for the eight of us in the family, two adults and six children. Our sleeping accommodation was arranged with two double beds and one twin bed in the bedroom. A curtain was hung on the door between the two rooms for privacy. Family clothing items were stored in piles on a bench at the foot of Mom and Dad's bed. All bedding and linen items not in use regularly was stored in cardboard boxes under the bench

and under the beds. Mom and Dad slept in one double size bed. The three oldest siblings slept in the other double size bed located directly across from my parents. Two siblings slept with their heads at the head of the bed, one sibling slept in the middle between these two siblings with his/her head at the foot of the bed. The remaining three of us in the family slept in a twin bed located at the foot of the bed our siblings slept in, using the same format. The problems we had in our small bed were, the coils of wire holding the thin mattress did not spring back due to many years of usage. All three of us slid to the middle, were squashed close together in the middle of the bed. On the unfortunate bed wetting nights, everyone sleeping in that bed would be soaked. The occurrence was a disaster to all of us. Mom encouraged us to pee in a "slop pail" located in the other room, during the night. The pail was emptied in the morning. The main room, much larger, was used for all other domestic needs. During the late fall, early spring and winter months a wood burning heater was set up in the main room producing heat for the two rooms. A wood box was located near the kitchen stove used for the storage of wood. The wood was obtained by cutting down trees in the surrounding area with a chain saw, sawing the tree logs into blocks for splitting with an axe; the wood was piled in rows for drying before being used in the house. Dry wood provided the best fire. We children were responsible for keeping the wood box filled, carried wood in our arms into the house, placing the wood in the wood box. The heater reduced the available living space of the room. The prevalence of dust and smoke was inevitable during the frequent removal of the ashes, carrying in wood and adding wood to the fire.

We did not have a telephone during my living at home years. The local post-office had the only telephone in our community during that time. The telephone was fastened to the wall in the postmaster's living area, had a polished box with a black receiver hanging on the side. When the receiver was lifted

the call went to the operator, who directed the call manually. Operators could listen to conversations, as could other people, it was a party line. We had a battery radio used only for news broadcasts listened to by Dad. Televisions, videos, computers, I-pods etc. were not in existence.

Family life in our small home and attending the local school was a very pleasant experience for me. I loved my family and my teacher, was a good student, was pleased to have only one mile to walk to Dunkinville School. My teacher married Bill Gillespie following several years of teaching and boarding at the home of Bill Gillespie's parents. The students in my grade, including myself, were invited to our teacher's home during the summer holidays shortly after she was married. We were thrilled with the invitation even though we had a long walk to reach their farmhouse. We were served lemonade and cookies. Mrs. Gillespie explained to us drinking lemon juice was excellent for our health and the moist peelings were excellent for body rubs. She demonstrated this by rubbing the lemon peelings over her face and arms. The memory of this teacher keeps returning to me during my use of lemons in the kitchen; she was very inspirational to me as a teacher and I am most grateful to her for the development of my primary education.

I began my schooling in Grade one in the month of September at the age of four, was accepted at that age because my fifth birthday was in October, and maintained a perfect attendance record each year in public school. Our big problem in public school was head lice. If one of us had the misfortune of having these irritating bugs nest in our heads at school, we would all have to be treated at home. We were in close proximity with each other at school sharing a desk, the bugs travel quickly from one head to the other. I was in an uncomfortable situation one afternoon, seeing several lice fall from the head of the student sitting on the other side of my shared desk. I did not quite know how to handle this predicament in order to not

embarrass my classmate, did not want the lice to reach my head. Mom had recently treated us by applying and rubbing coal oil to our scalps, requiring several treatments. It was important to get rid of the nits (eggs) as well. I knew Mom would not appreciate having to repeat this treatment so soon. We were in a spare period and I had asked to sit with this student to work on a special project. "What will I do?" I thought to myself. I quickly raised my hand for the teacher's attention. When the teacher responded I informed her I was not feeling well and asked her if I could leave the class immediately. She agreed and my mother was happy with my decision. I recently read two separate articles describing two young girls, experiencing head lice. Their treatment consisted of rubbing gasoline on their scalps. Unfortunately as they let the gasoline soak in, the fumes in the apartments built up, they were ignited by a nearby pilot light on a stove. The girls were badly burned. One girl died; the other remained in critical condition. I think about all of us children sitting around in a small room with coal oil soaking on our scalps in front of a wood cook stove and heater burning, plus at least one lamp (kerosene) burning. Although coal oil is not as flammable as gasoline, I believe we were very fortunate there were no fatalities or casualties. Coal oil was frequently used in our home to start the fire in the stove in the mornings and as required.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Each family lifestyle remained very primitive for many years with families working together many hours each day clearing land, planting and nurturing gardens, building log homes etc. My grandparents on my father's side, Jacob and Mary Kolisnyk had very good genes, with all the difficult manual work activities and primitive living accommodation, their lives continued into their eighties and nineties. I loved spending time at their home in the wooded area; a feeling of being in a forest.

My grandfather grew tobacco leaves, had a special small building (shack) where he dried the leaves, rolled his cigarettes, and smoked them. The shack provided privacy for my grandfather, which he very much enjoyed. During the winter my grandfather had a wood stove for heating in this shack, worked at building wooden furniture items for their home and to trade for necessities in the home. The shack was smoke-filled most of the time. In the summer he worked on developing some of the farmland, raising a few farm animals.

My grandmother worked in her garden during the summer, also picked wild blueberries, Saskatoon berries, chokecherries, cranberries, gooseberries and pin cherries in the surrounding woods for preserving into fruit and jam, storing them in jars and small crocks. She loved singing during her time working in the garden and berry picking. The main items purchased in the small local store were one hundred pound sacks of white sugar and white flour, plus seeds for planting in the garden. My grandmother made large barrels of sauerkraut and dill pickles in the fall, made goose down comforters during the winter from her goose feathers, after plucking them from the butchered meat provided for the home and for trade. Geese and chickens were raised in the yard area surrounding the house;

therefore the area was polluted at all times with slippery feces (poop) from the poultry. Trying to avoid walking in these feces (poop) was a difficult task. Trying to stay away from these geese was also a difficult task. My memories of my experience with geese was not positive, I was very much frightened when the geese hissed, came towards us with their long necks stretched out. Hunting for eggs laid by the geese and hens was a task we enjoyed; goose eggs were much larger than the eggs laid by the hens.

The road into our grandparent's farm from the main road was a narrow dirt road with deep ruts. On one of our visits we experienced with our old car, Dad was concerned about getting stuck in these mud ruts, the area was so heavily wooded the sun had difficulty reaching it; therefore the road was rarely dry, particularly after a rain. We children were more concerned in how to miss walking into the feces (poop) from the poultry when playing in our grandparent's yard. Dad won out on that visit, he traveled by car without any problems on the mud road, most of us children slid into the feces (poop), covering a large portion of our clothing with goose and chicken shit. My mother had the difficult task of laundering the heavily stained clothing after we returned home, requiring special treatment by heating them in a sudsy water on the stove.

My grandparents on my mother's side, John and Mary Zaretsky had a more complicated lifestyle. My grandfather had an ongoing psychiatric health problem displaying unsafe situations with his family, spent a great deal of time in the Brandon Hospital. His work history frequently took place away from home; working time was minimal due to his health situation. My grandmother had the responsibility of caring for her children on her own, assigning the older children to assist her by them caring for their younger siblings. She had very limited funds during her very difficult life. My mother, aunts and uncles started work at a very young age to help provide food for the family. My

grandmother lived with one of her sons during her later years. She developed stomach cancer, died in 1943 at the age of sixty. My Aunt Ann cared for my grandmother at Uncle Frank's home during her later stages of cancer until her death. My mother arranged for me to travel by bus to Uncle Frank's home, assist Aunt Ann in caring for my grandmother during the last few days of her life. I was thirteen at the time. This was my first death experience. My responsibility immediately following the death of my grandmother was to travel by bicycle to the village, notify the storekeeper of my grandmother's death, the storekeeper would notify the residents in the community. It was after dark, I did not have a bicycle light, was pedaling fast not knowing there was a steep hill, called Sclater Hill, on the dirt road with many ruts, a most scary experience when trying the brakes down the hill with very little response. It was a big chore walking up the hill with the bicycle on my return. I do not remember my grandfather personally. He died at the Brandon Hospital in 1955 at the age of seventy-six.

CHAPTER EIGHT

In 1938 Dad began his business venture, enjoyed it very much, including the socialization he developed with his customers and neighbors. The shelves were stocked with groceries purchased on credit from a company servicing the other local grocery stores. During the day a buzzer sounded when the front door of the store opened. This buzzer sound in our home made us aware a customer required shopping assistance. Neighboring farmers initially were Dad's valuable customers. However, after a couple years, due to their financial status in not knowing when the grain would sell following their harvest, most of these farmers asked for credit purchases at the store. Dad honored their credit with the agreement they would pay him in the fall after their grain was harvested and sold. Unfortunately this credit agreement was not fulfilled. Many of these farmers shopped at the store in the local towns following their harvesting in the fall, did not pay down their debt to Dad, and were no longer Dad's paying customers. This was a troublesome time for my parents. Dad was in debt with no possibility of retrieving his losses from the non-paying customers. Fortunately Mom planted a large vegetable garden. With a portion of the family allowance money she received from the government, she purchased cases of fruit and preserved them in glass jars for the winter months. Wild berries, strawberries, raspberries, chokecherries, cranberries were picked locally by all of us, preserved in glass jars as fruit and jam or jelly. The jars of preserved fruit, canned vegetables and some of the vegetables from the garden were stored in the root cellar. During the fall season Mom made sauerkraut, dill pickles and sweet pickles in large crocks, mustard pickles in large jars and stored them in the root cellar along with the vegetables remaining in the garden. She was determined to have food for her family. On a fairly regular basis Mom made a special large

casserole with shredded potatoes and fried side pork, baked in the oven, our one dish supper, very much enjoyed by the family. One day I invited a friend over after school, asked mom if she could stay for supper, thinking she would enjoy the casserole as we did. She filled up on two servings of preserved raspberries for dessert, did not appreciate or eat the potato casserole. We very much enjoyed Mom's perogies, made of mashed potatoes, cottage cheese, sauerkraut, or different fruits. We loved to compete with each other in the number of perogies we could eat. Mom also made the following Ukrainian dishes—studenetz (head cheese or jellied pork hocks), borsch (beets and vegetable soup), babka, (Easter bread), holuptsi (cabbage rolls filled with rice or buckwheat), malysnyky (crepes filled with cottage cheese) and mamaliga (cornmeal).

CHAPTER NINE

Dad purchased the acre of land the store and house were built on from the couple that owned the attached farm. They were instrumental in encouraging Dad to open a store, offering the acre of land to him from a corner of their farmland at a low price. Dad was invited to their house for a meal a few times during the building period. Shortly after our family arrived, this couple came to the store and expressed an interest in a friendly relationship. The lady began coming frequently, either to purchase a couple items or asking if Mom had time to chat. Mom was a very busy lady and preferred not to have to stop her family responsibilities to chat with this neighbor, who she identified as being a very nosy neighbor. Mom was happy to invite the couple over a few times to reciprocate for the meals they had shared with Dad prior to the arrival of our family. After accomplishing this gesture, Mom expected to continue their relationship on a very friendly, casual basis, as she did with all the other neighbors. This did not happen. This lady continued her frequent stops at the store, asking many personal questions regarding the business and our family, becoming verbally abusive at times. Mom and Dad responded to her with very little information. After a couple years, this couple came to the store one day and threatened Dad with an eviction notice. When Dad purchased the acre of land he paid for it in cash. He shook hands with the owners on the deal but Dad did not obtain a registered deed from the Municipality because of the additional cost. My parents were in turmoil with this threat plus the store business was in financial problems. We could hear our parents late into the night, discussing the future possibilities for our family, a scary feeling for all of us, not knowing how our lives were going to change. A few days later Dad left home to obtain work at the Sheridan Mines; he was successful in being hired as an underground driller at the Sherritt Gordon Mines; Mom was

left with the management of the store, home and family responsibilities, including the eviction situation.

This was a big change in my life. Where were we going to live? Mom was left with a very large responsibility dealing with this lady who was obsessed with getting us off the property. Each time she saw Mom outdoors, she swore and hollered at Mom to get off the property. Mom ignored her and did not respond. Dad was happy with employment at the Sheridan Mines. In the past, he had purchased, at a low price, some undeveloped land for future farming close-by. He had cleared a small area, approximately ten acres, and was anxious to prepare this cleared land for seeding. His thoughts were to earn sufficient funds at the mine for more of the acreage to be cleared, prepare the cleared land for seeding, purchase farm equipment, move the store and house to the farm and begin farming. It would require continuous work at the mine for several years to accumulate sufficient funds for this project.

Mom agreed for Dad to save as much of his income as possible and she would manage with food from the garden plus funds and/or food she received for seamstress and embroidery work, knitting mittens, scarves and socks, crocheting doilies etc. Dad worked long shifts at the mine and Mom worked long days at home with the family. The store was providing very little income, the abuse from the neighbor was continuing more frequently. At the end of the school term in June, Mom decided it was time to make the move to the farm. She arranged for several men in the neighborhood to separate the house and store and move them individually to the farm, at two separate times. Prior to moving the buildings, the men cleared an area on the undeveloped land for the buildings and a road to the buildings from the main road. The house building was set up separate from the store building. The house now had an open area where the store had been attached. We lived in the house with several bed sheets covering the open area for a few weeks before a

neighboring carpenter closed in this area with wooden boards. Fortunately it did not rain during this period. Mom used the store building as a kitchen and storage area and sleeping area during the spring, summer and fall; when we had visitors sleeping overnight it was also used as a sleeping area for them.

We carried pails of water from a ditch close by, boiling it for drinking and cooking until Dad arranged for a well to be dug for water. A hole was dug to the water level. A wooden crib with a ladder was installed into the hole. The entrance to the well was approximately two feet above the ground. This area was covered with wooden boards placed loosely over the opening when the well was not being utilized. Our method of obtaining water from the well was done by lowering a pail with an attached rope to the water level, flipping the rope until the pail lay on its side, filling with water, then drawing the pail of water up with the attached rope. Shortly after the well was usable, our farming process slowly progressed with calves, cows, horses, pigs and chickens; a new venture. Dad spent two and one half years working at the mine, saving money to gradually expand farming.

The well was the provision for our only food refrigeration during the spring, summer and fall. During the winter months, we could store food- requiring refrigeration outdoors, providing it was in a container, unavailable to the roaming animals. Following the milking separation process, the cream was stored in a container called a Cream Can. The Cream Can was slowly lowered to the water level in the well by a rope attached to a hook at the top of the well. The local Creamery provided a weekly pick up, using the grading process to arrive at an amount for payment of the cream. The payments were known as cream checks. These cream checks were the only money most farmers, including us, had to live on during the spring, summer and autumn months, until the grain was sold following harvesting. Butter was used sparingly as Mom wanted to increase the amount of cream available for the Creamery pick up, increasing

the value of the cream check for family needs. Butter was made by churning fresh cream in a standing churn with a plunger, or in a barrel turned end-over-end, we used the barrel system. Churning butter was a task Mom assigned to us children, this task seemed to take forever; our arms became very tired. Eventually granules of butter separated out leaving buttermilk. The butter was washed and worked by Mom kneading it with a wooden paddle to get rid of the excess liquid, and then salted. We enjoyed drinking the buttermilk and Mom used the buttermilk in her baking. Additional items requiring refrigeration, including the butter were placed in a pail and lowered in the well, using the same method as for the Cream Can. During the winter months, I felt obtaining water from the well was a most difficult and unsafe procedure. I was totally uncomfortable dealing with this chore. My biggest concern was during the periods of ice development around the well and thirsty animals were pushing their way to the water troughs. Dad felt it would be difficult to maintain a water pump, particularly during the winter months, and chose not to have a pump installed.

One spring day Dad was drawing water from the well for the cattle. A couple of piglets came running from the barn area to the open well as he was emptying a pail of water in the trough, one piglet fell in the well. Dad called for my mother. She quickly came to the well from the house, got the cattle and other piglet into the barn area. The piglet in the well was alive, trying to stay afloat. A squealing noise was coming from the well. Dad climbed down into the well using the ladder attached on one side of the crib in the well. He got a hold of the piglet by an ear with one hand while hanging on to the ladder with his other hand; he pulled the piglet closer to him, was able to wrap his arm around the piglet's abdomen, giving him more control of the piglet. Mom was beside herself not knowing what to do to help. Carrying the squirming piglet up the ladder seemed like an impossible task for Dad. Fortunately, a neighbor stopped in on his way to the village

to ask my parents if they needed anything from the store. The neighbor quickly removed the rope from the water pail, lowered it into the well to Dad, suggesting Dad tie the rope around the piglet's abdomen; the neighbor would pull the piglet up slowly while Dad kept control of the rope and piglet during his climb up the ladder and out of the well. They were successful!! The good neighbor stayed on to draw as much of the contaminated water from the well as possible by rope and pail. Shortly following this episode Dad purchased a pump for the well and had it installed.

We lived a very rustic lifestyle. Toilet facilities were not available to us for a few years following the move. The wooded area behind the house was the most popular area used for toileting needs, a difficult procedure during the rainy days and winter months. Menstruation was an uncomfortable, difficult process with very little discussion and explanation plus very little equipment available in the management of menstruation.

CHAPTER TEN

My grandmother (Mom's mother) came to visit us periodically from Sclater, Manitoba. One day she arrived with our little cousin, Elmer, approximately two and one-half years old, dressed in a cute sailor suit.

Mom informed us Elmer was going to live with us for a short time. His dad, Uncle Tony, Mom's brother worked in the bush, logging on Vancouver Island, was separated from his very young wife, and Elmer was in need of a home. We immediately loved Elmer. He was a happy, warm, cuddly child. Mom told us she would be receiving a small amount of money monthly from Elmer's dad for his care. She would like us girls to take turns looking after Elmer after school and during the school holidays. Mom informed us she would order each of us a pair of shoes from the Eaton's catalogue before school started in the fall. Each of us looked forward to spending as much time as possible with Elmer plus we would each have a new pair of shoes to wear to school, not hand me downs that did not always fit well. With all the excitement in having Elmer join our family, we did not think about our sleeping accommodation. "Where will Elmer sleep?" suddenly we all questioned Mom. "I have worked it out" she replied. "Olga and Zenia will sleep on the pull-out couch in the main room. Elmer will sleep with Walter and Steve in the large bed. Mary and Edith will sleep in the single bed. During the summer the boys will sleep in the "store" building." My brother Steve, a couple years older than Elmer, was happy to have Elmer live with us and play with him but he did not appreciate the special attention Elmer was receiving. We were spending more time with Elmer than with Steve, hoping Elmer was comfortable in adapting to his new environment, we did not realize how this change in our home was affecting Steve. Fortunately for us Steve forgave his sisters, accepted his new role as big brother to Elmer, and began enjoying his cousin as a playmate. Elmer

remained a member of our family for approximately eight years. When his Dad purchased the local store with living quarters at the back of the store, and relocated, Elmer moved in with him; we all missed him immensely!!!

My childhood years were a very warm and tender experience, based on fond memories, playing games outdoors with my siblings and cousins when they visited, mainly Touch Tag, Ring Around the Rosie, London Bridge, Jump Rope, You're It, Auntie High Over, Hop-scotch, Marbles, when available, Hide-and-seek, football using a tin can for a foot ball, climbing trees, trying to go as high as possible on the swing and assisting in the preparation of food for family visits and get-togethers. I remember my life as a more simple time, looking for shapes in the clouds, sharing our family bicycle with rides on the handlebars of the bike, decisions were made by going eeny-meeny-miney-mo, and the worst thing you could catch from the opposite sex was cooties. One of the big fads of the fifties and sixties was a large plastic ring that was twirled around the waist called the Hoola-hoop. The Limbo was also popular; a stick was held and lowered to each individual's capabilities as you danced under it. Many adults, including myself enjoyed participating in the Hoola-hoop and the Limbo.

Our experiences beginning at a very young age included freedom, failure, success, and we learned how to deal with each situation. The only time we had unpleasant situations was when our parents were away from home for a couple days attending a family wedding or funeral. We became restless, engaged in family feuds.

Ukrainian Christmas Eve Celebrations were most memorable get-togethers with as many family members in the community as possible attending and contributing to a Ukrainian Christmas Eve ritual dinner held on January 6th, at one of the family members' home. Gifts were not exchanged. The women

shared the preparation of twelve meatless dishes. The reason for twelve courses is linked with “the twelve days of Christmas” or the twelve apostles. The following dishes were most often served; a wheat dish, pickled herring, borsch, cabbage rolls, sauerkraut, white beans, dried mushrooms with gravy, a couple fish dishes, potato onion dumplings, a special bread, poppy seed cake.

Baby chicks were purchased in the early spring, cared for in a barricaded area in the house in our main room until the weather was warm enough for them to be relocated in the hen house near the barn. The chicks were very noisy all day, quieted down during the night. Having these chicks in the house was quite a challenge for my mother as she also had pots of tomato and cabbage plants she grew indoors from seeds in preparation for planting in the garden in the spring. Fortunately our dog “Lefty” remained outdoors year round, sleeping in the barn area at night during the winter, he was not allowed in our PACKED HOUSE!!

One of Dad's challenges following his return home from work at the Sherritt Gordon Mines was brewing whisky for his own use, was pleased with his success and continued with this procedure for a few years. This homemade whisky was called moonshine, home brew or hard stuff, drank straight up with no added beverage. I enjoyed being with Dad when he had a few drinks of the home brew; he was relaxed, happy and playful with us children. I was aware the making of moonshine was illegal. On the way home from school one day I saw the Royal Canadian Mounted Police driving around in our area. I was petrified, thinking they were looking for Dad to arrest him for brewing whisky. I knew Dad hid the home brew in the straw stack but did not know the exact location. I was so relieved when I saw the RCMP driving away and my father was not a passenger in their car.

Moonshine was simple to produce by using yeast and sugar to ferment a grain or mixture of grains. Corn was popular. Fermentation, the chemical reaction that occurs when the yeast breaks down the sugar, produces alcohol along with other by products. The grain, sugar, and water mixture called mash is left to ferment for several days until the bubbling stops. The mash is then “cooked off” or distilled to remove the alcohol. Distillation is accomplished by stirring and heating the mash in an enclosed vessel called “the still”, at a precise temperature, causing the alcohol to evaporate into steam. The mash mixture is heated to just below the boiling point, causing evaporation of the alcohol. As pressure builds inside the still, the alcohol steam rises, is forced through the pipe located at the top of the still, leaving the yeast water mash behind. The alcohol produced is strained through a cloth to remove impurities and bottled in jars right from the still. Unless the mash is maintained at a perfect temperature throughout the run, the alcohol produced will be weaker. The dangers of moon shining if caught by the RCMP during the production were; risk of arrest, stiff fine, or prison time. There was also the possibility of the still exploding if excessive heat generated more heat than can escape; also not knowing whether the alcohol you are drinking is safe, as laboratory analysis were not available. I am so thankful the RCMP were not diligent in checking the homes for alcohol brewing in this vicinity, my dad and neighbors could have been arrested should an RCMP check have occurred during one of the productions.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

This move to the farm created a change in our school district and the school we were required to attend, called Allenvale. At the age of twelve, I completed Grade eight, had applied to take Grade nine by correspondence at the Dunkinville School. Following our move, Mom decided it was best for me to continue at the Dunkinville School for another year as the teacher was more experienced and could provide assistance to me in my correspondence program, should there be a need. My walk to school was two and one-half miles, one and one half miles further than the distance from our previous home. The following year Mom decided I miss one year of my schooling to assist her on the farm full time while Dad was working at the Sherritan Mine. Most of my activities were geared mainly to the daily care of the farm animals, harnessing the horses and driving them to the village to pick up the weekly mail and grocery supplies. The two horses we had at the time were considered to be “broncos”, a little wild and fast, particularly when not exercised frequently. I was frightened during the total time of my contact while feeding, watering, harnessing, hitching, and driving these horses. As a necessity I persevered with this chore and managed, providing great satisfaction to Mom. My great fear in these travels to the village was the possibility of the horses reacting to a scary situation after dark, on our return home. Would I have the ability to control them? Fortunately for me, an uncontrollable situation did not occur.

One of the tasks my mother challenged me with was the butchering of fowl for family Sunday dinners. The procedure was to hold the rooster with one hand by the legs, laying the rooster's head and neck on a wooden block. With the other hand, use the hatchet on the rooster's neck, hopefully killing it instantly. I made the effort several times but was not successful. Each time I

brought the hatchet down, the rooster moved and I ended up clipping a wing several times instead of the neck that was supposed to be on the wooden block. I was timid, was slow in bringing the hatchet down. After attempting this task several times, I suggested to my mother we not plan on chicken for dinner until Dad was home. It was not long before family members became aware of our problem and we received several offers of assistance. This was very much appreciated by our family, as chicken was our only available meat at that specific time of year.

As Mom adapted to the different situations encountered in her life, she understood and helped us children understand the need for education beyond public school. It was difficult for Dad to understand and accept advanced education as a need for the feminine gender. Based on his philosophy women married, accepting the role of wife and mother, an education beyond public school was not required. Knowing we had full support from our mother, my sisters and I were very strong in pursuing the advanced education goal even though it was extremely difficult. Firstly, there was not a High School in the rural areas or bus service to a High School. Secondly, there was not any financial assistance available to us, at home or elsewhere. Parents in our community had the expectation all children would contribute to family farming chores and responsibilities at a young age, prior to or following the completion of Public School, they were not encouraged to attend High School. Fortunately, our mother did not support this expectation, encouraged each of us to continue our education, however possible.

We siblings had a good relationship with each other with the exception of the sibling feuds occurring when our parents were away; we became restless, initiated activity mostly male against female. Quite often the number of sisters at home overpowered Walter, our oldest brother, presenting an unfair battle. In order to obtain some leverage for himself when

shorthanded, our brother collected all the under garments (panties, slips, brassieres) he could find belonging to his sisters, hung them on a clothes line in the front living room and kitchen windows for viewing from the exterior of the windows. The girls were most concerned, not knowing who would be coming around for the viewing; immediately made a decision to accept their brother as the winner for that episode.

One summer weekend when the family was all at home, Mom made arrangements to have a family portrait taken with the local photographer. There were a few frustrations as the family prepared for this event. Steve had difficulty fitting into his suit, Ede was sulking-she wanted her hair curly-Zenia insisted Ede have pigtails for age differentiation, Mary hogged the only mirror we had- her braids had to sit 'just right' on top of her head and she couldn't decide if she should insert two combs at the back of her hair. Mary also decided she would not be smiling for the camera because she hated her front teeth. Walter teased, provoked and exasperated all of us throughout the preparations, Olga, always the peacemaker tried her best to get the "show on the road". Finally we were all in our half-ton truck, Mom, Dad and Steve in the cab, the rest of us standing in the open back of the truck. When we reached our entrance at the gate, the truck became stuck in the mud from the heavy rainfall the night before. All of us, with the exception of Steve and Dad, got out of the truck to push, we were successful. Our shoes were a mess with mud but we were confident they would not be noticed in the picture, our clothing had a few mud splashes. On arrival at the Photography Studio, the photographer lined us up for the picture taking, his head under the black hood of the camera, requesting a "smile" from all of us, there was not much enthusiasm from the family. Steve saved the day by producing a "fart", Walter poked Olga and myself, the laughter spreading to all of us. Thanks to Steve we completed our mission as a Happy Family by

producing our one and only family portrait (see picture at the end of Book One)

Our family life on the farm consisted of work activities each weekend organized by Mom, plus looking forward to an occasional dance held in the town hall on Friday or Saturday evenings, including box socials. When attending a box social, the ladies each prepared and brought a box of food for the planned lunch hour during the dance; the boxes were auctioned to the highest male bidder without knowledge of the owner, the owner and purchaser shared the lunch during the lunch hour. These participants were not always comfortable and happy sharing their lunch with each other. During the dancing periods ladies lined up on one side of the hall, the men lined up on the opposite side. When the music began, the men walked to their lady of choice, requesting a dance. Each lady could accept the request or refuse. Our dancing varieties included polka, waltz, jitterbug, tango, cha-cha, fox trot and square dance (very popular). My two older sisters were not in favor of Mom allowing me to attend these functions with them, felt I was too young. Fortunately Mom did not follow their suggestion. My breasts developed at an early age, exceeding the development size of my two older sisters; they suggested I wrap a tight binder around my breasts to flatten them down. I felt they were jealous of my developing breasts, chose not to follow their suggestion. The reason my sisters were not comfortable with me attending the dances with them, they had opportunities from young men requesting to give them a ride home from the dance, and they did not want me tagging along, complicating their smooching possibilities. Mom was anxious for a report from me the following day. She very much enjoyed the chitchat the next morning, hearing about our dance and evening activities as we cleaned the house, scrubbed the floors while she sipped on her left over breakfast coffee. My sisters complained to Mom about her waking us so early, knowing we had a late night. Mom's response was always the same, "if you are able to

dance all evening until late at night, cleaning the house should not be a problem for you the next morning.” We experienced getting stuck on our muddy road driving to our home after a dance a few times, having to push the Good Samaritan’s car out of the mud, also experienced Dad standing outside in his long one-piece underwear, waiting for his daughters to return home, wondering why they were so late, and checking who gave us a ride home. Smooching time was unavailable!

Blueberry picking was one of our rituals each summer. A neighboring farmer would drive his half ton truck to the Cowan area where the closest wild blueberry patches were located, accommodating as many standing passengers available to ride in the open back of the truck at a minimal cost for each passenger. Mom appreciated having this transportation, she arranged for my older sister, Zenia and me to go blueberry picking with her one Saturday, leaving very early in the morning. When we reached the blueberry area, Zenia informed Mom she would like to pick with the younger group and join them for the day. Mom gave my sister one of the milk pails for her picked blueberries, plus her lunch, reminded her to meet us at a specific area before sunset. When we arrived at the meeting area with our pails full after a very full day of picking, my sister was there; her pail looked to be full of blueberries, which really pleased Mom. The next morning Mom began the big job of preparing the berries for preserving; she realized there were not as many berries picked as she expected. Zenia had filled the lower part of her pail with leaves; when Mom questioned her regarding the leaves, Zenia stated there were not many berries to pick, did not want Mom to make an issue in front of her friends about the small amount of blueberries she had picked, decided to use the leaves as a filler. Our question to my sister was, did she and her friends spend much time looking for blueberries? We did not receive a response, just a smile.

During the months of June and July, Picnics and Field Days were popular, held in different community locations, accommodating students and adults from different areas to compete in sports. Most times we were transported to and from these activities standing in the back of a half-ton truck. The Picnic I relate to was held in Pine River, approximately thirty miles from our home. Ede and I were players on our softball team that day, Ede was pitcher and I was in the field. When we were ready to start our game, we were short a catcher; those were the days when gloves and masks were not worn or available in playing softball, particularly the small league games. Ede suggested I replace the catcher; felt the two fielders could manage on their own. I was no catcher but was happy to give it a try. It wasn't long after we got started I ran into a problem; I missed catching a foul ball and the swift ball Ede pitched to me hit me on my nose. I was a mess, my nose was bleeding, my whole face was swelling and in a short time my nose and eye areas were turning black/blue. I was having a lot of pain. Nobody mentioned a concussion and I probably did not think about injury to the interior of my head. My concern was what my face looked like. First aid was not available, we did not have a ride home until everyone traveling with us was ready to go home; that was not for a long time as there was a dance in the evening and everyone was planning to attend the dance. I do not remember much of the remainder of the day or evening, struggled through sitting quietly during the dance. I was extremely happy to get home and into bed but was not sure how to inform Mom about my situation in the morning; she was not a big supporter of sports, particularly with injuries affecting the ability to function in daily routine activities.

Olga was living at home at the time, teaching at a local public school, had attended the dance and knew my dilemma; she and Ede got up as soon as they heard Mom in the kitchen, informed Mom I was not feeling well and would like to sleep-in.

After breakfast Mom came into the bedroom to check on how I was feeling. She had quite a shock when she saw my face. After Ede explained the total happenings to Mom, I was not assigned any work projects, spent the next couple days lounging and recuperating prior to leaving for Winnipeg, planning to obtain work for the next few months before entering Nursing School. This freak accident was a detriment in my work activities during these months.

CHAPTER TWELVE

My first experience in the workforce began at the age of fourteen, following my year of being home from school to help my mother. I obtained employment with a family during the school summer holidays in a more prosperous farming area approximately thirty miles from home. In the past few years I had assisted relatives in our neighborhood with children by taking on the responsibility of being in charge of their children when there was a specific need, did not expect or receive remuneration. I felt very excited about my first work experience for which I would be paid, did not understand how vulnerable I was in this totally new venture and responsibility. I was very excited when my employers arrived for me. However, my mother's look of total helplessness as we said "goodbye" was a picture of sadness. She wept, hugged and consoled my younger siblings, as I was leaving with my employers and their two children. I did not realize at that time how difficult it must have been for my mother to let me go, knowing the expectations and possible responsibilities I would be challenging. I have relived those moments many times during my years as a teenager, adult, and mother, empathizing with my mother and her feelings.

The daily responsibilities in my job began early each morning assisting with the milking of cows, and the milk separation process, washing the separation utensils, continuing through the day assisting in caring for the children until their bedtime, plus housework, and gardening, including picking peas for shelling and freezing. I was taught to shell the peas using an electric washing machine; the agitator was taken out of the tub, a sheet was draped in the tub. After blanching the peas and plunging them into cold water, I fed them through the wringer. The shells went through the wringer, falling into a container, the

shelled peas dropped on the draped sheet. I was taught to be very careful not to obtain any injuries to my hands by my fingers reaching too close to the wringer in this procedure; should this occur I was directed to stop the function of the wringer immediately preventing any further injury. The shelled peas were placed in plastic bags and into the freezer. During one period of the summer I was left alone with the house responsibilities and care of the two children while the mother was admitted to the Hospital for the birth of their third child. I recall seeing bananas in their cupboard. I had never tasted bananas and after tasting them, decided to enjoy them, ate the whole bunch.

I worked consistently for long hours that summer, consoling myself at bedtime in the privacy of my own room, fantasizing about my plans to enter Nursing School. I missed my family very much and would have traded my private bedroom for being at home sharing a bedroom with my family. Writing frequent letters and hoping someone would contact me by telephone, was my only means of dealing with my loneliness. Early one evening I was called to the telephone, experiencing excitement and anxiety as I reached for the receiver. Hearing my mother's voice brought tears to my eyes. I felt so relieved and elated, knowing someone really cared about me. I also experienced sadness knowing my Mom would have had to walk a few miles to reach a telephone to make the call. However, her efforts were specifically for me. This made me feel special. I returned to the same family the following summer, taking responsibility for the two older children and the housework while the mother was admitted to the Hospital for surgery. At the completion of my work assignment, my employer asked me if I would like to try on a couple dresses she had made for herself, no longer fit her and would probably fit me. They did fit me. I informed my employer I liked the dresses, thinking they were being donated to me. My employer informed me they really looked good on me, fit well. I could have them at five dollars

each. Immediately I calculated my take home pay for the two summer months would only be twenty dollars if I purchased the dresses, reducing the money I needed for books, supplies etc for high school. I was naive, did not have the ability to say “NO” to my employer, agreed to purchase the dresses. Mom was upset when I arrived home with the dresses and less money, felt it was an unfair request handed to me, I had been used. The dresses were for summer wear only, had been worn, not worth the money I was charged. This experience taught me a lesson in the need to develop the ability in speaking out for myself.

After completing the year at home helping my mother, followed by my first summer work experience, I enrolled at the High School in the town of Minitonas, approximately ten miles from our home. I was fortunate in obtaining work with a young family in return for my board and room. My daily routine included attending classes, assisting with the household chores, family activities etc after school and weekends, along with coordinating time for my studies and completion of assignments. Most of my classmates were enjoying a coke and socialization after school, during the evening and/or on weekends. I was not able to join them due to lack of funds and responsibilities to my live-in family. I did not request a weekend to go home as I did not have bus fare, was expected to assist with the children on the weekend, was content keeping busy with my assigned chores and school homework. Two classmates I related to and was inspired by while attending class were Bernice and Betty. Bernice lived on a farm and Betty lived in town. I was honored to receive an invitation from Betty for an overnight at her house and was able to make the necessary arrangements with my live-in family. I felt Betty and her parents had a very comfortable lifestyle, lived in an elegant home with a beautiful big yard. My vision was, the children in our family could have a great time playing in this large yard. Unfortunately I felt I would not be able to reciprocate by inviting Betty to my parent's small, rustic family home on the

farm. Betty was an only child, had her very own bedroom, we were a family of eight plus our cousin Elmer, sharing one bedroom in a two room home.

I spent my two years of High School in Minitonas living with three different families. The first family and I were compatible, had a good relationship. At the end of the first school year, without any advance notice to me, this family moved to a western city, leaving me with a void in living accommodation for the following school year. I had committed returning to my previous employer for summer work, depending on this money for my books and supplies for the next school year, did not have time to explore the possibility of a family interested in accepting my offer to work in exchange for board and room during the next school year.

My High School Principal had learned of my plight in the need for accommodation for the next school year. He and his wife invited me to live with them, assisting with the children and providing domestic services, in exchange for my board and room. Sleeping accommodation for me would be a couch in the living room. I was highly impressed with this offer coming from my Principal and his wife. My decision to accept was made quickly, with an awareness of the limited space in the home. I was comfortable in a limited space, sleeping on the couch. My big problem was adjusting to a reduction in funds for my books, school supplies etc due to the purchase of the two dresses.

A few weeks after my move to the residence of my High School Principal, my second live-in family, I woke up early several mornings with the feeling of what I thought could be a mouse crawling around me on the couch. Mice were quite prevalent on the farm, including in the house, therefore I was not concerned about this situation. I experienced a sudden shock several mornings later when I was wakened with the same feeling. As I opened my eyes I looked up and saw this man bent

over me with his right hand under my blanket. His immediate reaction was to stand up straight and comment that he was waking me. It was a little early; he thought I might want to spend some time on my studies. I was stunned!! Immediately I felt I had been used in being offered accommodation in this home. I did not feel comfortable in discussing this issue with anyone, including his wife. My decision was to remove myself from this home as soon as possible; I could not jeopardize my education. I really did not have anyone to talk to about my situation. Informing my parents would not be of any assistance as I was not comfortable with their possible reaction; they had a very high regard and respect for highly educated people and I did not feel they would believe me. Informing my school friends was not a possibility; their parents had a high respect for the High School Principal. My approach was, I would have to continue with this family until I could obtain accommodation elsewhere. I desperately needed my education and this man was not going to prevent me from continuing in my program. I had developed a plan in my mind as to how I would challenge any future re-occurrences, hoping there would be none, fortunately for me there were none.

It was Christmas Holidays before I managed to settle in with a third live-in family. A primary teacher and her family accepted me to provide domestic services in their home in exchange for my board and room for the remainder of the school term. Their acceptance was a blessing to me. I informed my previous live-in family my reason for making a change was because of limited sleeping accommodation in their home.

I experienced difficulty in attending classes taught by my Principal. I did not have respect for him, felt hatred towards him, this man had attempted to abuse me sexually, had used exploitation tactics, placing me in a very confined, uncomfortable position. I had no other avenue to pursue. My education was most important to me and he was the only teacher available for

many of my classes. My Principal frequently approached me in class with a grin on his face, asking how I was managing with my new live-in family, questioning whether I had sufficient time for my studies.

Mom was very pleased with my success in obtaining residency with the Principal's family. She had great respect for education and teachers, was extremely upset with my decision to leave this prominent family. When I informed her of the benefits I would enjoy and appreciate with my new family, including my own room, she became more supportive. The situation with my High School Principal remained my own unforgettable secret for many years. I feel this experience was instrumental in developing me in the management of future situations, realizing the importance of making the best choices for me in each situation was my responsibility. Approximately thirty years later, at a family get together; I shared this secret with my family. Mom reacted with hostility as she listened to the details.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

At the age of sixteen I had completed Grade Eleven, the required academic qualifications to enter Nursing School. I did not meet the age requirement of eighteen.

Teachers in rural schools were very much needed at this time and opportunities were made available to students completing Grade Eleven or Twelve, interested in teaching. A one-year permit was obtainable during the summer school break by attending a Normal School Program for six weeks with no financial cost to the student. Mom encouraged me into this Program and was anxious for me to consider teaching as a profession. The Teaching Program required less education time as a student in comparison to the Nursing Program. This scenario was a plus in Mom's vision. My feelings continued in favor of the Nursing profession.

I enrolled in the Teaching Program and became a permit teacher in a rural school with twenty-nine children from Grades One to Seven. I was sixteen years old at the beginning of my experience in the teaching profession and taught a student fifteen years of age in my Grade Seven class at the school. I envisioned the possibility of difficulties with this student, was thrilled there were none. Due to my primitive and financially poor background, I functioned in a quiet and shy manner, lacked confidence and never really became close to my peers. The teaching experience was a benefit to my growth and development as I gained a feeling of worthiness plus respect from the students and community. My life changed during my teaching experience, I enjoyed the feeling of having identity and being recognized as an equal contributing person, my public school teacher was my role model. I was able to purchase a new wardrobe, was popular in dating, and was saving money for Nursing School. Mom remained hopeful that I would change my

mind regarding my career choice. My vision in becoming a Registered Nurse was very strong and although I enjoyed the year of teaching, it was not my profession to pursue.

Following my teaching experience, I had a period of approximately seven months prior to entering Nursing School. I decided to seek employment in the big city of Winnipeg, with my blue/black eyes and puffy face received while playing softball at the Pine River Picnic. Fortunately my Aunt Ann was generous in sharing her home with family members requiring the need; I took advantage of this opportunity. My first employment during this period was a waitress position in a soda fountain. This type of work and recognition was totally different from my previous experience as a teacher. On the third or fourth day a customer threw a cup of coffee at me because I did not respond to him as quickly as he anticipated. My responsibility with another customer was the reason for the delay in attending to this customer. My employer did not deal with the situation on my behalf, making me feel extremely put down and frustrated. When I returned to Aunt Ann's home she encouraged me to seek employment elsewhere, which I did, feeling very much abused. I did not receive payment for my short working experience at the soda fountain.

My next employment was at Eaton's Catalogue Sales Office. Customers placed orders with the sales clerks for merchandise from the catalogue. I was called the "runner", responsible for obtaining the merchandise that was ordered. After viewing the merchandise, should the customer decide on the purchase, he/she completed the order. My responsibility was to return all merchandise not purchased to the appropriate area. Should a customer wish to view the merchandise at the location area, my responsibility was to escort the customer to that area.

One day I had the experience of escorting my School Inspector and his wife to a specific area for merchandise

viewing. I became extremely flustered when he immediately recognized me, asking me what I was doing in this line of work. When visiting my school, my Inspector had praised my work, encouraged me to continue in the teaching profession. I had indicated to him that I would be entering Nursing School, was not aware at the time my entrance would be delayed from September to January.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Hooray! My first day of Nursing School had finally arrived. The institution I had applied to and been accepted was the St Boniface Hospital School of Nursing, managed by the Catholic “Gray Nuns”. I was extremely excited as my Aunt Ann and I approached the Nurses Residence. We were escorted to the large formal parlor where young ladies dressed in elegant attire, including hats, were all seated, accompanied by their parents and/or other family members. “Were we in the right place?” I thought to myself as I looked around the room. I arrived with a small cardboard suitcase and a cardboard box, wearing a plain cotton dress. The small suitcase containing most of my clothing had a belt around it due to the lock not functioning well. The cardboard box contained the remainder of my clothing, including my new white duty shoes and six pairs of lisle stockings required to be purchased prior to my arrival on the first day of the program. I had made payment for my books and cape in advance; these items would be received by me following admission to my room. The cape was to be worn to church and special occasions. Payment for these items utilized practically all of my savings, placing me in three years of a “no money” situation. There were no financial institutions available to me for a loan. I was totally dependent on the charity of the “Gray Nuns”. Aunt Ann offered to accompany me to the Nurses’ Residence on my initial day. She had experienced financial hardships during her education program, acquiring a teaching certificate; was actively involved in teaching, communicated comfortably with the religious sisters on my behalf. She was most helpful, an asset to me in my developing years.

I had two front teeth (eye-teeth) that protruded; was very self-conscious about this situation. My siblings used to call me

“gopher” when they were irritated with me. Dentistry and braces were not available to me for financial reasons. I was not comfortable portraying a big smile, always attempting a small smile with my mouth closed. I frequently had a vision of my improved smile with future funds for dental work. This was an expensive project, would have to be included on the wait list following my first work assignment, the purchase of my new wardrobe was my first priority. The darkness under my eyes remained noticeable, fading slowly. During my physical, the senior intern determined I had a practically healed fractured nose.

I had never met or seen a religious sister prior to entering Nursing School, had never attended Mass in a Roman Catholic Church. I was enrolled as a Catholic student, assigned to share a room with a Catholic student on a floor with all Catholic students, called the Catholic floor. How was I ever going to manage this situation? My religious experiences had included periodically attending the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church when visiting my grandparents on my father’s side, and the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church when visiting my grandmother on my mother’s side. I also attended an English Protestant Sunday School for a few years.

Family members recommended I indicate my religion as Catholic on the application form, would be more impressive to the Nuns. I followed this suggestion, had no idea I would be expected to follow the Catholic faith under close supervision while living in Residence. My previous experience to Catholicism had been very limited, much different than my upcoming experience.

All Catholic students were required to attend mass regularly in the small chapel in the Hospital. The first uncomfortable situation I experienced was not having a rosary during prayers and not knowing how to pray with a rosary. I was

most appreciative to have a classmate offer me her spare rosary. However, I was not comfortable admitting to her that I had never prayed with a rosary before. I quickly tried teaching myself by observing, listening, following the actions of my peers, whispering prayers I had learned as a child attending Sunday school. All Catholic students were expected to attend confession on a regular basis. This process was foreign to me, a totally new experience. "What was I going to confess? What could my Catholic classmates be confessing?" I thought to myself. "They are in the confession booth a long time." I really could not understand how anyone could sin in our confined, closely supervised environment. My turn for the confession booth was next. I entered the booth, kneeling in front of a very small window. All of a sudden the window opened, I could see a small portion of a face and a voice was asking me to begin my confession. I related my perplexity in not always telling the truth when questioned about my life prior to entering nursing school. I felt classmates with parental financial assistance would not understand and relate to my experiences. The priest was sympathetic to me, gave me a prayer penance, I left the confession booth feeling good. Catholicism was a part of my life for the next three years.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Living in residence, sharing a room with a classmate was the beginning of our Student Nursing training and Probationary Period. I settled in quickly, was comfortable with my accommodation and anxious to progress from classes to caring for patients. Adjustment was difficult for the students who had never been away from home and their families. Students with families in the city went home frequently at the beginning of the program, returning with food to share with many of us. We were not long in developing close relationships with each other, spending many hours in one room (sometimes smoke filled) sharing activities in patient care, listening, consoling each other following difficult situations and reminiscing. The Nun on duty at the front desk on the first floor periodically asked us to reduce the noise level, at times she informed us it was time to turn out the lights, which we did, whispering in our continuing chatter. One incident, a food situation I was involved in was not resolved. Our time off duty after working the day shift and attending classes was seven in the evening followed by our dinner in the cafeteria. When working the night shift we had to attend classes for two hours beginning at one pm, obtaining very little sleep prior to our shift start at 7:00 pm. When working the day shift, there were days we were late arriving in the cafeteria for our meal at 7:00 pm, finding very little food available to us. We would fill up on toast and jam. A most upsetting situation was the bread available to us frequently showed blue mold on some areas. My roommate and I agreed this situation was not acceptable. After venting our frustrations to each other we decided to speak to the Director of Nursing about our concern. The Director of Nursing, dressed in her Gray Nun attire with her face and hands the only parts of her body not covered, responded to our concerns in a very calm manner, expressing our ungratefulness for any food we received,

whether we liked it or not. The molded bread situation continued; fortunately there were no known ill effects.

Many students had difficulty adapting to twelve-hour shifts, including several hours of class. With only one-half day off a week, our days and weeks on duty plus classes were very long and active. This was not a problem for me. My early working experiences developed me maturely. I was prepared to adapt to whatever was necessary in order to achieve my goal in becoming a Registered Nurse. I did not have spending money, having only half a day off a week was sufficient to spend with my aunt living in the city or family members visiting the city. Dating was difficult due to shifts being scheduled working until seven pm on the day shift. Occasionally, when not required to attend class, we were scheduled one day from seven am to four-thirty pm. Unbelievable!! The Residence door was locked at ten pm. We received one eleven- hour pass and one twelve-hour pass monthly. Free time outside the residence was very limited, similar to a religious cult, barely allowing the opportunity to see a full movie from the beginning to the end of the film. Having something acceptable to wear on a date was another problem. I looked forward to any one of my sisters coming to the city for pleasure/work. I was able to borrow items of clothing from them for special occasions, should they occur. First year students experienced popularity with second and third year students by agreeing to loan them items from their wardrobe for special occasions.

Receiving mail, a telephone call, an invitation to dinner were highlights in my life and I cherished each communication. Mr. and Mrs. Allen had retired from farming, moved to a home in Norwood close to St Boniface Hospital, from their farm in Renwer, Manitoba. When I contacted the Allen's they invited me to their home for dinner, which I very much appreciated. These invitations continued during the remainder of my time in Nursing School. My first meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Allen took place at

their home and farm prior to my nursing school education. They lived approximately a mile from our home. The Allen's raised a bull with their herd of cattle; this bull was shared with the neighboring cattle in the sexual reproduction program. My responsibility at the time of the sexual need of one of our cows was to encourage this cow down the road to the Allen farm for a visit with the bull, a most embarrassing chore for me to deal with. Fortunately the men in the Allen family took over the responsibility of the reproduction procedure as soon as I reached their farm; I was invited to wait in the house with Mrs. Allen until the procedure was completed. Mrs. Allen always had a cookie or some cake for me while we chatted during our waiting period.

A patient I provided care for and her husband generously invited me to their home for dinner a few weeks following the patient's discharge from the Hospital. They did not have children. I was very grateful to their generosity, keeping in touch with me on a regular basis with dinner invitations, sharing Christmas activities with my student friends and myself.

I envied my friends when they received their regular allowances from their parents, were able to plan their activities and shopping based on this income. My mother and I corresponded regularly. Her letters meant so much to me, relating information about all family members. The thought of a few dollars being included periodically crossed my mind as a fantasy, in my heart I knew my mother did not have sufficient funds for the family at home, therefore could not spare even a small amount for me. My mother frequently commented in her letters how thankful she was to know I was comfortable, receiving food and lodging while gaining an education, which was the situation.

In desperation my roommate and I found a means to obtain a wee bit of funding. We collected empty milk bottles and soda pop bottles along the roadside in our area, sold them at a

corner store. We also collected empty soda pop bottles on nursing units and sold them at a local store. The owner of the store was aware of our financial situation and accommodated us. These funds were a big plus in my life. Approximately half way through the third year of my Nursing Program, the Gray Nuns initiated an allowance program of five dollars per month to the third year students, minus the cost of any breakages while on duty, thermometers, syringes etc. Fortunately for me I did not have breakages, received my full allowances for the few months the funds were administered. There were so many items I desperately was in need of and anxious to purchase, I had difficulty prioritizing each month. I will never forget that wonderful feeling of having a few dollars to spend on myself, being able to look forward to the same pleasure next month, providing there were no breakages.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Graduation in May, 1952 consisted of the September class, plus the following January class, which was my graduating class. Graduates interested in employment were requested to submit their names for a work assignment at St Boniface Hospital; they were able to begin work immediately following completion of their student schedule, before writing the RN exams. I was elated with my assignment as Assistant Head Nurse on a surgical unit with one week off (without pay) to write the nine RN exams at the University of Manitoba. My experience in the Assistant Head Nurse position was most helpful in achieving my future goals. I am very grateful to the Director of Nursing at St Boniface Hospital for her recognizing my capabilities.

The move out of Residence was both depressing and exciting. There were many memories to cherish of our three years together. My roommate, Cathy and I looked forward to sharing an apartment with two sisters, friends we socialized with, established in an apartment downtown. We were most excited about this change in our lifestyle, no longer having a curfew, having our own accommodation.

Graduation was a beautiful day as we all lined up on the stage in our starched white uniforms, black bands on our new starched caps, each carrying a beautiful bouquet of red roses. My parents attended along with my Aunt Ann, one sister plus a few friends including Betty. As a graduation gift for me my parents purchased a beautiful brown striped three-piece luggage set. I was deeply moved. I knew how difficult it had been for them to commit themselves to attending my graduation plus the purchase of a gift. I was thrilled to finally be able to place my old suitcase in storage in the event it was needed at a later date.

Life as a Registered Nurse provided me with the opportunity of purchasing a few items for my wardrobe, very much needed; a mustard colored two piece knitted suit complementing my young, trim body, a beige cashmere coat with a front tie belt and alligator shoes, my first three expensive items. We had a shortage of Registered Nurses during a polio epidemic in Winnipeg shortly after I received my RN; I worked with these patients on my days off on the night shift at the King George Hospital, very stressful to manage, particularly patients in iron lungs. There was a shortage of nurses, I had very little orientation and experience; the extra cash was very much appreciated by me. Not long after my credit purchases, still in debt, my coat was missing from the apartment. I traced all my activities, could not remember leaving the coat anywhere. Living in an apartment with four people plus frequent visitors, I thought there was a possibility the coat could have been removed by one of the visitors. Recently when chatting with my sister Zenia about our experiences during the years of depression, she informed me of her situation when she did not have sufficient funds to pay her rent while living and working in Winnipeg. She confessed to me she borrowed my cashmere coat from my apartment, did not return it, sold the coat, using some of the funds to pay her rent. I was happy to finally know the answer to my dilemma. We had a hearty laugh, clocked this episode up to our years of experiences and existence.

OUR LIFE

FUN and ENJOYMENT are important in our life, should be reached by learning the best pleasures are the kind you work for, the rarest kind come in mastering something difficult. The most reliable fun—best tasting and longest lasting is not obtained by turning the mind off or blowing it, but by learning to use it.

Adults have a habit of asking children what they would like to be when they grow up. During my youth the female gender occupations were secretary, teacher, nurse, boys could be anything they wanted to be except secretary or nurse. Today the choices are endless, exciting, and satisfying for both genders but one does not always know which the right one is. Assess your working and social needs, set goals and objectives in managing your life, accept your good and not so good qualities, contribute to your personal growth, creating a meaningful, fulfilling life for the present and future.

During our childhood years, most of us had very few thoughts on how we react to living our lives, expecting to go on indefinitely. As we became adolescents we were aware life was the interval between conception and death, without knowledge of the length of the interval. In adulthood, most of us have concerns and self-esteem in how we conduct and satisfy our lives.

We are expected to be builders, contribute to society and not cling to obsolete unworkable concepts. Some of us live by having to settle for survival, barely getting by each day. Each of us needs all the help we can get to master the social changes confronting us at a rapid pace, assist us in enjoying the feeling of peace, with a sense of purpose in the world.

Regarding your life, contribute to the universe effectively during this period, you will be compensated with fulfillment and be assisting mankind with his/her life.

I would like to share a poem with you by R. L. Sharpe:

“Isn’t it strange, that princes and kings?
And clowns that caper, in sawdust rings
And common people like you and me
Are builders for eternity?
Each is given a bag of tools,
A shapeless mass, a book of rules
Each must make, ere life is flown,
A stumbling block or stepping-stone.”

PART TWO MARRIAGE & FAMILY

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

During our student days, my girlfriend Cathy and I frequently discussed the possibility of traveling east to Toronto for employment once we graduated and were financially established. After working for approximately eighteen months we began making definite plans. My experiences as Assistant Head Nurse at my training Hospital were most valuable to me and I very much appreciated having had this great opportunity in developing my career. However, I felt the need to expand my vision in my profession, submitted my resignation. My superiors were not pleased with my decision and made it known to me by making me feel uncomfortable and unappreciative for leaving so early in my employment. We departed for eastern Canada by train, stopping along the way to visit with my relatives in Sudbury, Toronto and Pickering. While in Toronto I applied for a position, was accepted at the Hospital for Sick Children. We visited my sister Zenia and family in Pickering prior to my planned starting date. While visiting there Zenia suggested we apply for work at the Oshawa General Hospital, which we did. We were successful; I was offered an Assistant Head Nurse position on a Surgical Unit, a most gratifying achievement; did not begin my work assignment at the Hospital for Sick Children. Working in a non-Catholic Hospital without the close supervision of the religious Nuns was a big change to me. I was experiencing a more relaxed environment. I did miss the feeling of belonging to a family- like group.

My next big excitement came in the development of a relationship with Bill Spry. Following a couple years of work, socializing and serious dating, we became engaged. Bill lived at

his Aunt and Uncle's home, Gertrude and Alec Nicolson, where we spent a great deal of our time, watching television in black and white (my first television experience), and babysitting Sharon periodically. The Nicolson family was very supportive and accommodating during our courtship and following our marriage. Bill's sister Bernice and family were also a big part of my life prior to and following our marriage. Thank you all for enlightening my life with your friendship and many contributions.

Bill and I were married in the Tweed United Church on September 24, 1955. Our small wedding reception took place at the cottage of Bill's mother and sister, with guests from Bill's side of the family plus a few friends, an enjoyable, memorable occasion. It was not possible for any of my family members to attend. Bill and I, newly married, began our journey to the west coast the evening of our wedding, stopping along the way to visit my family and relatives, enjoying many celebrations. Our total assets were a car, wedding gifts, clothing, personal possessions, plus a very small bank account. We were seeking adventure. After arriving in Vancouver, we spent a month lounging and exploring the beauty of Vancouver. I felt guilty, had never spent this much leisure time before, was enjoying each day, and was becoming concerned about our small bank account dwindling down to a close zero. Bill enrolled in the Real Estate Program, passed the necessary exams; I was accepted on staff at the Private Pavilion, Vancouver General Hospital. We began our life's challenges together in a totally new environment with a new vision, renting a small two-room furnished basement apartment until we saved sufficient funds to make a down payment on the purchase of a small two-bedroom home.

Marriage was a new experience for the two of us, adapting to a shared life after each of us living independent lifestyles, making our own choices, decisions etc. This change was difficult to accept and manage at times. However, not following the rules of marriage created problems; we worked

together on an acceptable median. Our relationship continued effectively as we progressed in becoming established, stimulated by our achievements, expecting this feeling to continue indefinitely.

When I became pregnant with our first child, I was elated, felt confident in continuing my work at the Hospital, managing my pregnancy. Based on the Hospital rules, I was required to resign when I reached the fourth month of my pregnancy, creating a financial impact on us. Maternity leaves of absence were not obtainable. We quickly adapted to one salary, continued on that basis until the birth of our third child. Our first child, Ranny Blaine was born at the Burnaby General Hospital. When I went into labor, Bill accompanied me to the Hospital; I was admitted, expecting the delivery in the next few hours. Ranny was not born until approximately twelve hours after my admission. Bill telephoned a few hours after my admission, he was informed by my attending nurse my progress was slow; he should get some sleep and would be called closer to my delivery time. The Hospital staff was not successful in contacting Bill the next morning, a most disappointing situation for both Bill and me.

Our residency in western Canada was filled with beauty found in the mountains, oceans, lakes, woods etc. There was a feeling of being closed in by the mountains when I first arrived in the west, especially compared to the prairies. That feeling soon passed and the mountains became a part of my everyday life. When visiting my family in the prairies, the contrast was an unforgettable experience, feeling the whole world had opened up again. "Would I feel comfortable returning to the mountains?" I thought to myself. After a short period in the prairies, I missed the feeling of closeness and security the mountains provided. I periodically relate back to this warm feeling.

Our next big adventure was a move to Florida, promoted by one of Bill's business colleagues. We had visited Florida for a

short period while Bill attended an insurance business conference in West Palm Beach, had not taken the time to study the lifestyles, economy, culture and climate. During our visit to Florida, Ranny lived with friends, the Peckham family in Victoria, British Columbia, was cared for by Dorothy Peckham, a beautiful lady. Dorothy accepted this responsibility, knowing the extra workload involved. Ranny was close to a year old, not walking on his own. When we returned from Florida we recognized a great change in his development and he was walking on his own. Our financial situation was challenging, we had sufficient cash for the ferry to and from Victoria plus fifteen dollars to re-establish ourselves at home for a few days. I have frequently looked back to this situation, very much aware of Dorothy's kindness and caring character in accommodating our family needs. The Peckhams relocated to Fort Lauderdale, in Florida. Stu established an office in Florida with the Insurance Company where he was employed. Bill was encouraged by Stu to also relocate, work for him; Bill accepted the offer.

We sold our small two bedroom home furnished, making it easier for the relocation to Florida. Stu and Dorothy invited us to stay at their home for a short time while getting settled which we very much appreciated. Living and vacationing in Florida were totally different experiences. I realized this comparison after our move was made and we were attempting to re-establish our lives and home. Our initial visit occurred during the winter months with the external heat at a comfortable level, the hotel unit was kept clean, cool, no pesticides. My experiences following the move were different. I became pregnant with our second child during our move to Florida. My body had reacted with nausea during my first pregnancy. This second pregnancy felt much more intense with extreme exhaustion, I was anxious to get settled.

A home with a swimming pool was our purchase in Fort Lauderdale, a big highlight for my husband, being a good

swimmer. I was not able to swim, was not impressed with the swimming pool. On the positive side, I felt it would add to the family enjoyment and there was the possibility of my learning to swim. One Saturday morning during the middle of my second pregnancy, Bill was cleaning the swimming pool, forgot to close the gate as he entered the pool area Ranny was having play time in the back fenced in yard. I was in the master bedroom, which overlooked the pool, heard Ranny chattering, followed by a splash, then silence. My body became extremely rigid for a short time, I could not move or speak, kept thinking of the long distance from our bedroom to the pool area and I could not swim. Bill was underwater; cleaning the drain at the deep end of the pool at the time Ranny fell in at the shallow end of the pool. Bill heard the splash, quickly walked through the water to the shallow end of the pool, pulled Ranny out, cleared water from his lungs and stimulated crying. Bill's quick response was effective immediately, providing a positive, much appreciated outcome for all of us.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

We sold our home in Fort Lauderdale during the summer, relocated to Orlando in the interior of Florida to accommodate Bill's career. We leased a furnished apartment for a month while waiting for occupancy to our new home. The apartment was not air-conditioned, we were into the hot summer months and I was approximately seven months into my pregnancy. Our entertainment consisted of relaxing in Bill's air-conditioned office after business hours, attending double-featured drive-in movies after dark. Ranny was great, he fell asleep very quickly at the beginning of the first movie when his food was eaten, slept until morning. One evening we attended a Doris Day double-feature movie and a third one was added. Sitting for long periods was not comfortable during this stage of my pregnancy. When progressing into the second movie, I crawled in the back seat to stretch out and fell asleep. When I awoke we were into the third movie, one of the few cars remaining in the parking area.

We learned about pesticides when living in this furnished apartment without air conditioning, cockroaches were very plentiful. If not controlled, cockroaches could gradually take over a kitchen. Due to the warm climate down south, cockroaches are accepted as part of life in many of the homes. We had viewed the apartment during the day prior to leasing, did not notice any bugs. On the first evening after darkness occurred, the only lighting we had turned on was in the living room, where we were reading. Later we turned the lights on in the kitchen, could not believe the activity occurring. We heard a scurrying noise-the roaches were moving to dark areas in the cupboards. There were MANY! Roaches look so large when spread out, are able to move into very small areas. We moved everything possible in the food line from the kitchen cupboards into the refrigerator. I had

difficulty working with food in the kitchen, remained out of the apartment as much as possible for the duration of our lease. Cockroaches were very minimal in our home in Florida, we were very conscious about regular spraying, the need for control. One incident I experienced was having a roach fly out of a potato I was peeling. There were holes burred in the potato where the roach had settled. It was a peculiar and scary sensation from this little pest. Initially I kept potatoes in the laundry room, located at the back of the carport. Following this incident I quickly moved the potatoes into the refrigerator with the other vegetables. We organized a bridge club in our neighborhood, taking turns hosting, serving coffee and dessert. On the first evening one of my neighbors was hosting, I entered the kitchen while she was preparing coffee, offering my assistance. As she removed a cool, baked cherry pie from the oven in the stove, a number of roaches flew off the pie. The few roaches remaining on the pie were fanned off prior to serving. I was not a dessert eater that evening!

My second delivery, Bonnie Sue, and third delivery, Denise Ann, occurred in Winter Park, Florida. Health care was efficient, health care funding was quite an experience after living in Canada where we enjoyed a totally different health program. We purchased health care insurance shortly after arriving in Florida. All health care plans included a waiting period for maternity care. I was pregnant with Bonnie Sue on arrival, was not eligible for medical or hospital coverage. We purchased another health care plan providing greater protection. My third pregnancy occurred shortly following this change, for the same reason I was not covered for my maternity and hospital care. The hospital requested full payment by me prior to being admitted for delivery. The attendance of a Pediatrician to care for the newborn baby at the delivery was mandatory. Bad timing for our very small budget!!

My body continued with the same reactions during my third pregnancy, plus vaginal spotting during the early stages. I lounged in bed for several weeks, no serious complications with my pregnancy. My big concern was the possibility of a long stay hospital admission and no health coverage. Both deliveries were well managed by the nursing and medical staff. Bill attended the third birth, an enlightening and rewarding experience for both of us.

The economy in Florida was not progressing as anticipated during this period. Families were moving in and out of the state with a larger population moving out. The housing market was over built, leaving many homes vacant, not sold. The male spouse in many households maintained two jobs. The minimum wage was very low. It was a difficult time for us, insufficient funds to accommodate our family without any signs of a positive change in the near future. Nursing jobs were limited with low pay, requiring state registration. Shortly after my arrival home from the hospital with Denise, we decided to leave Florida, return to Ontario, Canada. Bill purchased a trailer, loaded most of our furnishings and belongings in this trailer. We traveled by car, pulling this loaded trailer. Bill's mother was visiting with us at the time, traveled with us to Canada. I very much appreciated her assistance, caring for Ranny and Bonnie Sue while I attended to our newborn. I often wonder how I managed that trip and move so soon following the birth of Denise. There were parts of the trip I did not fully remember, remaining rather vague to me. Bill and his mother were very supportive; we had some interesting and funny experiences which made our trip enjoyable.

My mother-in-law, Mary Awilda and I maintained a close relationship over the years, enjoying our time together. The memory of her attitude and lifestyle made an impression on me, particularly in my senior years. The following is a reflection of Mary Awilda during my life's journey:

You have been an inspiration to me
Sharing positive thoughts each day
Your friendship promotes strong feelings
With compassion and love to stay

Our chit-chat of the present and past
Brings a closeness I very much enjoy
Reminding me of the times we had
Sharing your youngest son and boy

Your outgoing personality and charm
Are enjoyed by all residents within
Friendship is gained from this attribute
Shared freely with all next-of-kin

Relating with many young kin-folk
Teaching them what you know best
Referring to one's life as a puzzle
Piecing it all together, their test!

We made an attempt to sell our home in Orlando, were unsuccessful due to the oversupply market, and had no alternative but to sign the home over to the bank where our mortgage was held. Years later Disney World was built close to the area we vacated, a big change to the real estate market.

Shortly after relocating to Oshawa, Bill and his brother-in-law Clinton Lough arranged to attend the Toronto Exhibition, taking their two sons, Ranny and Harvey, approximately five to six years old, an exciting adventure. While walking around the exhibits Bill constantly kept hold of Ranny's hand with the exception of a very short time while checking an exhibit. Suddenly Bill noticed there was a void in their group, Ranny was missing and could not be found in the area. Fortunately the Security Staff were helpful in identifying Ranny as being lost, placed him in the appropriate area for lost children along with many others where he was later picked up by his much worried and thankful father.

Approximately five years later we returned to Florida by car on a vacation, stopping for breakfast one morning in the state of Florida, enjoying the food and relaxation. Bonnie Sue had purchased a few postcards in the restaurant, was anxious to mail them to her friends. The location of the closest mailbox was a postal outlet next door. Bonnie Sue asked to go next door and mail her cards while we finished our breakfast coffee. We agreed, requesting her to return immediately after mailing her postcards. It wasn't long before we realized Bonnie Sue had not returned. Bill and Ranny rushed next door to investigate what was causing the delay. Bonnie Sue was not there. Bill noticed there were two entrances to that building, he and Ranny quickly left the entrance they expected Bonnie Sue might have taken to leave the building rather than the entrance she would have used to enter the building. They ran down the street, could see Bonnie Sue in the distance walking on the sidewalk, they kept running and calling her name until she heard them and responded. She was looking for the restaurant where we expected her return, relieved to see Bill and Ranny, an unforgettable experience for all of us. We had visions of Bonnie Sue being abducted. What a relief when we realized she was okay. It was so wonderful to have all family members together, ready to continue our vacation in sunny Florida!!

PART THREE

MY CAREER/ANGIOEDEMA

CHAPTER NINETEEN

We were now residing in a different environment and country, concerned about our financial problems, no assets other than a car and furniture plus a very tiny bank account. We returned to the city most familiar to us, Oshawa, Ontario, leased a house for one year and obtained success in the job market. Bill picked tomatoes on a farm for several weeks, was accepted at General Motors on the day shift, I returned to nursing at the Oshawa General Hospital. I had been inactive in nursing for approximately five years, felt confident in returning to my profession. I made application for employment on the evening shift, enabling me to spend more time with my children. Bill's mother needed a home, resided with us, happy to accept the job of caring for the children during the time both parents were at work. I was hired by the Nursing Department at the Hospital immediately, assigned to a charge position on a nursing unit the following evening. There were only two staff members on the evening shift assigned to this unit, a Registered Nurse (RN) myself and Registered Nursing Assistant (RNA). My orientation that evening included any information I received from the RNA working with me, and the Evening Supervisor. After a few weeks I was offered the position of Assistant Evening Supervisor, continued in this role for approximately five years.

My next advancement in my career came at the time Denise, our youngest child, was eligible for kindergarten. I was offered the position of Nursing Coordinator on the day shift. The Nursing Department was decentralizing administrative personnel and their responsibilities to specific areas, beginning with Surgery, Special Care Areas, Medicine, Pediatrics etc. My role was to gradually establish each Nursing Coordinator position.

My health had been good over my working years to date. Minor health problems I was experiencing were diarrhea with abdominal cramps and bloating, mucous in stool, nausea, and migraine headaches. Following a Sigmoidoscopy I was diagnosed and received treatment for an irritable bowel; the cause was not identified. My headaches with symptoms of pain, nausea, fatigue, light and noise sensitivities came on suddenly approximately once in a two month period, lasting a few hours. I received a diagnosis of migraine headaches from my physician; the cause was not identified, I did not receive any specific treatment. Based on the literature I have recently read on irritable bowel and migraine headaches, food allergies or food intolerances, chemicals in food could trigger both situations. I was not tested for food allergies at that time. My pap tests were showing changes in the cells, the possibility of developing into cancer. Following several uterine procedures my gynecologist recommended a hysterectomy, I agreed and pursued with no complications or requirement for further treatment, spent four weeks at home recuperating.

During my years as senior administrator, I was experiencing fatigue (totally drained of energy), my whole body ached, my sleep was disturbed, my concentration was affected, I had difficulty performing in my administrative position. Many months were spent with medical input not knowing the problem, finally I was diagnosed with Fibromyalgia by a Rheumatologist, a widespread pain and fatigue disorder for which there was no specific treatment at that time, and the cause remains unknown. Fortunately, my health began improving after my diagnosis, returning to normal in a shorter period of time than expected.

In the early seventies, I awoke one morning with severe swelling on the left side of my face, affecting my left eye, nose and mouth. My immediate reaction, I must have an infected tooth with no other symptoms except for the swelling. Following consultation with my physician, I was referred to and examined

by Dr Smith, an Internal Medicine Practitioner, specializing in allergies. He prescribed adrenalin, informed me I probably had an allergic reaction, possibly a once in a lifetime incident. Should swelling reoccur following this one time reaction, Dr Smith would like to be made aware as soon as possible. Following the adrenalin administration my facial swelling gradually reduced to normal. I had no idea this one time incident was going to expand, impact on my body and life. In a very short period I was bombarded with elevated reddened areas moving throughout my body, including the soles of my feet. Edema affected my eyes, face, lips, tongue and throat at different time periods. I was prescribed prednisone, started taking antihistamines on a regular basis. Dr Smith administered the allergy skin testing with negative results. I studied the diets recommended to me, following them closely, my external reactions continued. In addition I was experiencing reactions to my digestive tract, headaches, joint pain and extreme malaise, continuing for days and weeks at a time. I was referred to an allergist at a large teaching Hospital in Toronto, he agreed I had an allergy, could not identify the cause. I was also referred to a Gastroenterologist, ruling out any stomach and intestine problems. Following several years of medical studies, I was given a definite diagnosis of Urticaria and Angioedema, with no identifiable cause.

Urticaria – also known, as hives – are raised, itchy red, often welts (wheals) of various sizes that appear and disappear on the skin, may look similar to mosquito bites. These lesions blanch with pressure. Angioedema, a similar swelling, causes large welts deeper in the skin, especially near the eyes, lips, tongue, throat, gastrointestinal tract, lasting up to three days. They are usually non-itching, non-pitting, deeper swellings. A more serious condition – Hereditary Angioedema (HAE) is an uncommon, inherited disorder, which can cause sudden, severe and rapid swelling of the face, arms, legs, hands, genitalia,

digestive tract, and airway. Hereditary Angioedema (HAE) affects only about 6,000 people in the United States. I recently discussed my diagnosis with my Allergist; he informed me my Angioedema was not Hereditary Angioedema.

Acute hives can last from less than a day to up to six days, chronic hives can last more than six weeks. Angioedema and hives can occur at the same time. Histamine release is the cause of the swelling. Shellfish, fish, nuts, eggs, chocolate, milk, monosodium glutamate (msg), preservatives and unknown additives may be the cause of allergic reactions. Food manufacturers add harmful toxic amino acids such as MSG to all kinds of food to enhance taste; other food additives containing MSG may be called caseinate, autolyzed yeast enzymes, beef or chicken broth, natural flavoring, hydrolyzed vegetable protein, soy protein concentrates, soy proteins, soy isolates, and autolyzed yeast extract. All of these names are disguised names for glutamates; MSG is contained in many foods we eat, may be followed by allergic reactions, and has been a serious situation for me. Medications, pollen, animal dander, coloring dye, latex, some insect stings, and production of antibodies can cause acute hives or Angioedema. A definite cause may not be determined for more than two-thirds of cases of chronic Angioedema. There wasn't anyone in the health profession known to me, able to identify the cause of the reactions to my body; I could not identify a pattern. Chemistry in my body had changed causing reactions to unknown substances. My migraine headaches stopped occurring after I developed Angioedema.

Winters were a contributing factor to my joint pain, nasal crusting, burning sensation to my eyes, body exhaustion. Arranging vacation to a warm, non-polluted area was a benefit I pursued, giving my body a boost, a more normal feeling. My abnormal feelings reminded me of how I felt during my pregnancies. Angioedema really affected my personal and professional life. I had not planned on advancing in my career

because of my health situation. After a few years, I finally experienced a reduction in the frequency of my symptoms, a great relief. Due to health reasons of the Director of Nursing there was a need for recruitment of an Acting Director of Nursing. Following much consideration I committed myself to accepting the temporary position Acting Director of Nursing. I continued in the Acting position for approximately two years, was appointed Director of Nursing, title changed to Vice president of Nursing.

My senior position was an exciting challenge, providing stimulation, opportunities for staff development, improvement in patient care. The role of a nurse; meet patient needs, integrate all input from other departments. The nurse functions include a liaison between patients, families, and other team members, coordinate and manage patient care, consult with other health care professionals, educate patients and families, research. The basic clinical practice of a nurse includes a nursing history and assessment, formulating nursing diagnosis, developing a plan of care, implementing the plan of care, evaluating the outcomes. My involvement, chatting and reminiscing with staff at all levels was rewarding to me, based on our feelings of continuity, stability, achievement, satisfaction. I was pleased with my contributions to the Hospital and the outcomes!

CHAPTER TWENTY

My problems with Angioedema fluctuated during the next few years. Daily antihistamine provided some control. One experience, my first edema (swelling) to both sides of my throat, required treatment in the Emergency Department. This incident was a concern to me during the reaction, I quickly allowed it to pass when the swelling reduced to normal following the treatment, continuing with my daily activities and responsibilities, hoping there would not be any more serious reactions. Previous experiences consisted of swelling on one side of my throat.

My second serious experience occurred while vacationing in Naples, Florida, a few days after arrival. The back of my throat was red and sore at bedtime on this specific night. The passenger sitting next to me on the airplane informed me she had a sore throat and cough; I assumed her bug was passed on to me, with these thoughts went to bed. My throat was troublesome during the night, my breathing was affected, I was awake off and on. At approximately five o'clock in the morning, I felt the front of my neck tightening, quickly got out of bed, realizing it was Angioedema affecting my throat and larynx. By this time my throat was practically closed in, the edema started at the back of my throat, moved forward. I quickly woke Bill, requested he transport me to the Hospital, I contacted the Emergency Department by telephone regarding my reaction, the need for immediate treatment. We traveled at a consistent speed, with very little traffic at that hour of the morning; it seemed forever to me. My thoughts during this drive have remained very vivid to me, maintaining calm and taking deep breaths to provide sufficient oxygen to my brain were important factors in my managing this very serious situation. An Emergency Nurse met me outside the Emergency entrance,

treatment was initiated immediately, was effective, to my relief. While lying on the stretcher in the Emergency Department recuperating, I thought seriously about my professional responsibilities and my health issues. Literature I had read recently indicated Angioedema could affect the lungs causing pulmonary collapse. One article stated histamine had been identified in the heart muscle in autopsies of deaths diagnosed as caused by acute coronary infarct. During my discussions with physicians regarding these possibilities, there was not total agreement. Due to me being one of the two thirds of the cases with Angioedema without a definitive cause, I could not erase these statements from my mind. My life was being displayed as being in a danger zone, requiring immediate attention for preservation. This was the first time I really became panicky since the onset of Angioedema.

My first priority was to request a replacement for me in the Vice President of Nursing position. It was necessary for me to research the causes of my body reactions in order to control the edema effects; a more relaxed lifestyle was to my benefit. I also realized the need for me to carry a pre-loaded syringe with adrenalin, prescribed by the Emergency physician. My family physician prescribed prednisone tablets to be taken along with the adrenalin in the management of a serious situation, edema to the throat and larynx. I received a referral to another allergist to confirm my health status, the management of my edema. Following extensive blood testing, there were no further solutions, the cause of my edema was not known, was triggered by my body chemistry.

PART FOUR

FAMILY DEVELOPING YEARS

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

My active return to the nursing profession during the years of family growth began on the evening shift to accommodate the family care requirements. Bill's mother lived with us during the first couple years of my return to the workforce, assisting in the care of the children during my absence, taking total care of the children in the absence of both parents. These arrangements were beneficial to all family members. Unfortunately there was a distinct favoritism shown to our youngest child, Denise, by Bill's mother. This was understandable, a grandmother developing a relationship with her granddaughter when caring for her as a newborn. This situation did not promote a comfortable environment, had an impact on our other two children. Vivid memories returned to me regarding the favoritism shown to me by our boarder during my childhood, the impact it had on my siblings. I felt strongly it was necessary to correct the situation by making changes in our family care. An agreement was reached, we arranged for an apartment in close proximity for Bill's mother. She was relieved from her family care responsibilities, developed a circle of friends enjoying social activities, continuing a close relationship with the family by visiting on a regular basis.

We were fortunate in employing a caring person to relieve Bill's mother. Marie McLaughlin, a very lovely lady, continued with us for approximately five years. She accepted family and housekeeping responsibilities on my working days, arriving each morning prior to my leaving, remaining until the

children returned to school after having their lunch at home. Our children were very comfortable with Marie.

During the summer of 1970 Bill and I arranged a three-week vacation in Europe, visiting five countries, Germany, Austria, Italy, France, and Switzerland. We flew into Frankfurt Airport, traveled for the three-week period in a rental car, an Opal Kadette. We did not make any hotel reservations; had some interesting experiences trying to get accommodation a few evenings. We drove through many little villages with cows grazing or being herded through the village to their appropriate stables; enjoyed the beauty in the countryside, spent an afternoon and evening on the Canadian Army base in Baden-Baden. The speed traveled on the highways was excessive; there were not many speed limits, the left lane was for passing only and the drivers adhered to this, traveling on the right lane when not passing. Driving through all five countries we noticed the houses and barns were all located side-by-side, providing more warmth under the same roof. We did not see any screens on the windows and screen doors on the houses; bedding was hung over the open windows for airing during the morning.

We crossed the Bodensee Lake by ferry, drove to Reutte in Austria. The scenery was spectacular with the huge green mountains on both sides; water springs trickling down in spots. While staying there we went to see the tallest mountain in Germany; went up the cable car in Austria, crossed into Germany at the top of the mountain, the tallest mountain in Germany, nine to ten thousand feet high. The view was exciting, particularly as we went up and down in the cable car, seeing the mountain climbers and the shelters.

The first dining experience in Italy, we did not have a translator so were not sure what we had ordered from the menu. When the first three courses, including pasta were served, we expected that was our meal, we ate everything, feeling full. A

little later the rest of the dinner arrived. We learned to eat slower and more sparingly during our future dinners, enjoying a full evening dining experience.

We had many interesting experiences during this excellent vacation; our sincere thanks to Marie and Garnett McLaughlin for their kindness in making it possible by caring for our children at our cottage on Scugog Lake during this three week period. Thanks also to our children for adapting to this change in their lives; a big adjustment.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Over the years the children gradually began accepting more responsibilities with housekeeping chores, progressed successfully into the part time job market. These years of development were frustrating for our children and for us, their parents. The parenting skills I had adapted to, based on my personal experience as a child and teenager, were ineffective. Bill also struggled, trying to facilitate his parental responsibilities with a domineering approach to our children, as was accepted by him from his father during his developing years. This approach was not acceptable to our children. As parents we were uneducated in the parenting and management of the teenager of the time, and would have benefited by receiving guidance or by attending a parental teaching program.

Youth did not appear to have respect for their elders as we had been taught and practiced, were not impressed with fancy clothing, were more interested in knowing first names of people and what they are about, what we were doing about our environment, enjoying the smiles on children's faces. In retrospect, as busy parents I feel we did not take sufficient time to listen and understand our children, make them more comfortable regarding their concerns. This flowed back to our development and upbringing concept "children were to be seen and not heard." The families of today have developed a listening process for their young people, accepting them for what they are, responding without threat, achieving family respect. They are asked for and respected for their opinions in discussions. This attribute is most important for our youth, particularly during their developing years.

Family conflict became a problem in our home with many ill feelings and frustrations experienced by all family members, contributing to a dysfunctional family. The affects of

alcoholism, including frequent mood swings, broken promises, repeated heartbreak and lack of family responsibility experienced during these years were a most difficult and unpleasant situation, gradually destroying the family relationship. Unfortunately the person who needs help is often the last person to understand the complexity of the situation. The quantity of alcohol a person consumes is not nearly as important as the behavior that can follow and the results it can have on others, mainly family members. In reviewing the situation I failed in my responsibilities in not seeking professional counseling for the family.

My experiences as a mother and wife during these years were filled with feelings of despair, anxiety, apprehension, love, hope, compassion, inadequate resolutions, inadequate spousal and parenting skills. I remained close to each of my children, attempting to maintain a loving relationship and bonding individually with each of them, hoping our communication would be meaningful to each other and keep us together. My feelings of loss as the two older children disrupted their structured developing years and left home to challenge the unknown were traumatic experiences.

In my opinion the sensitivities of our youth have been greatly conditioned by the impact of Cable Television, VCR's, CD and DVD players, followed by the internet, PC/Mac, high definition TV, cell phones, I-Pods etc, catching vibrations from the whole world in a way we did not when we were young. We relied on a father/mother or "those who know" to tell us. Father, at the dining room table, no longer is expected to sound like the "Boss," moral authority for the youth changed. Father's values may continue to be respected; are no longer automatically accepted. The walls of the homes of our youth have been stretched to the boundaries of the earth; they live in a much wider world, as we presently are doing.

The youth of the sixties and seventies were into an era of protests, love-ins, drug experimentation, could not understand why our cocktails, cabinets with many pills were all right while

theirs were all wrong. Welfare departments in many communities, including our region, provided living out packages for students sixteen years of age and over experiencing an incompatible home environment. This encouraged many teenagers to become more aggressive with their parents in making demands, giving very little consideration to their own future planning and parental respect. During the late sixties, the style of music changed from rock and roll, pop music derived from the blues music that has heavily stressed beats and often simple, repetitive lyrics, to acid rock, electric rock music with instrumental effects and lyrics suggesting or promoting psychedelic experiences.

A recent article in the Wall Street Journal indicates eighty-two percent, ages 18 to 29, seventy-nine percent, ages 30 to 74 believe there presently is a "generation gap", defined as "a major difference in the point of view of younger and older people today. As a senior I relate to these thoughts, the young understand the world today, what worked in my youth has little relevance today. With all the advanced technology the world is changing at a fast pace, difficult for many seniors to keep up. Age is no longer the qualifier for being the person to go to for advice. For example, going into a computer store, you want the young guy with the earrings and blue hair; he can talk about your computer. We can go on line to find useful information.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

One of Ranny's interests was to explore the west coast including Vancouver Island. He left home on this mission at an early age, accompanied by a High School buddy, and had a number of friends to contact on their arrival. His big challenge was to experience commercial fishing, working long hours at a time. During the first summer of Ranny's commercial fishing experience, Denise and I flew to Vancouver and Vancouver Island on vacation. When we reached the village of the fishing port, the fishing boat Ranny was on was at sea and we could not obtain any information as to when it would be returning. I tried communicating with Ranny on the boat but did not receive a response. I frequently walked down to the pier where the boats were arriving; hoping the one I was waiting for would be in shore. After a couple days, while walking down to the pier early in the morning, I recognized Ranny on a boat unloading fish. He looked so young and small to be working on a fishing boat in the rough waters. I wanted so much to hug him, talk to him. Ranny informed me he would be busy unloading fish, would require sleep, and would not be available to us for awhile. I understood his position; my vacation time was running out, I had not completed my motherly mission. There were many dangers at sea while fishing, many still unknown to my son, he was in a vulnerable position and this concerned me. We finally did spend a few days together, on leaving I was experiencing feelings of loss.

The following year Bill & I spent our vacation with Ranny and Bonnie Sue in Vancouver and on Vancouver Island. They were both involved in commercial fishing, our vacation time being off season for fishing gave them time to spend with us, and we explored islands and areas we had not seen before, a delightful experience.

Later that year Bonnie Sue travelled from Vancouver to Europe, she used the five dollar a day plan. She met up with a girl from New York, travelled together, and thoroughly enjoyed each experience and adventure, communicating many of them to us by letter in a descriptive format. Our daughter came home from Europe just prior to Christmas with a happy outlook on her

life and future, her gift to me was a very ancient tea pot which I treasure and keep on top of my refrigerator. Bonnie Sue returned to Vancouver Island, planning to return for the fall education program. Approximately two letters later, there were signs of our daughter not returning in the fall. The following letter was written on an airplane, she was heading for Bangkok to explore the Orient.

Bonnie Sue was very keen on travel, anxious to see as much of the world as possible.

The following is a poem Bonnie Sue shared with me shortly after her relocation to Bangkok, written by Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh:

LOVE

Has nothing to do with someone else
It is your state of being
Love is not a relationship
A relationship is possible
But love is not confined to it
It is beyond it
Man becomes mature the moment he starts
Loving, rather than needing
He starts overflowing, starts sharing, and starts giving
And when two mature persons are in love
One of the greatest paradoxes of life happens
One of the most beautiful phenomena—
They are together and yet tremendously alone
They are almost one
But their oneness does not destroy their individuality

Communication with Bonnie Sue continued regularly by mail with very descriptive, interesting letters of the areas she explored, friends made, different lifestyles exposed to her, along with an occasional collect telephone call. Teaching the English language at an adult school was one job available, she attended Gemology School gaining much knowledge in the world of gems,

received a certificate in Gemology and pursued Scuba Diving. For a period of time I received several notebooks from Bonnie Sue with pictures highlighting the Orient, along with her daily activities.

Realizing our daughter was adapting to the Orient, had no immediate plans to return to her homeland, we arranged for a tour of the Orient, Australia, New Zealand, allowing time to spend with Bonnie Sue in Bangkok and Singapore. On arrival in Bangkok, we found Sue (had dropped using Bonnie in her name) was rather hyper, her speech had a Thai accent, she spoke very quickly with many questions to her father about his brother Cecil who had died at the age of eighteen. She talked about feelings of her Uncle Cecil's spirit and guardian angel watching over her, experiences of black magic very real to her, gem business she and her friends were initiating. I did not feel good about Sue during this conversation. On questioning her she stated she had very little sleep the night before our arrival, was exhausted, excited about the gem business and our visit. The following day, after a good night's sleep, she appeared more relaxed and rested.

We visited with Sue and her friends in the apartment they all shared. One girl was from Vancouver, the other from New York, all about the same age, appeared to have a close, caring relationship. The conversation was geared to their future progress in gems and gemology, black magic was a big factor in Sue's life with specific incidents experienced by her she shared with us. We also visited the Gemology School Sue graduated from, meeting a number of the teachers and owner of the school. I coordinated as much time together with Sue as possible while in Bangkok, trying to reach a close relationship with her, the results were not satisfying to me; she appeared distant, evasive at times during our conversation.

As our tour progressed to Singapore, Sue joined us in Singapore. Being a resident she could not fly with us on an international airline from Bangkok, flew on a domestic airline. Sue stayed at the apartment of an Asian girl she had befriended while previously in Singapore. Fortunately our hotel was located in close proximity to this girls' apartment; I was looking forward to spending more time together. On our first evening we planned dinner together, Sue invited her Asian girlfriend to join the three of us for dinner, followed by disco, a popular form of entertainment in Asia at the time. We noticed a great deal of touching, hand holding being displayed by the Asian girl with Sue, had not taken place with her girlfriends in Bangkok. While dining, we attempted questioning this girl regarding her family, her work, her responses appeared evasive to us. Sue stated this girl had the ability to assist her in managing the Black Magic that had been imposed on her recently, was confirmed by the Asian girl, there was no response to us when we questioned how this would be accomplished.

The following day we were invited to the apartment of the Asian girl, where Sue was staying. When we arrived we were introduced to an Asian male. He did not live in the apartment, remained with us during our total visit. We sat around a kitchen table, talking, drinking a fruit punch. This man's presence seemed rather peculiar to me. The apartment contained very little furniture in the living room. The bedrooms were furnished sparsely, rented out to girls on a sharing basis. The whole situation and environment appeared foreign. I did not have the opportunity to question Sue regarding the details, found myself accepting it all as Asian culture and way of life. Sue and I spent very little time together the remainder of our time in Singapore; the Asian girl seemed to have a strong hold on her. Sue became impatient with me, particularly when I approached the subject of her leaving Asia. I was having difficulty clarifying in my mind the reality of the life Sue was pursuing. There was something very

unreal in my mind, would not surface in my vision. I strongly felt time away from the environment would benefit Sue.

During the evening prior to the morning of our departure, I invited Sue to join us for breakfast the next morning. She arrived with her uninvited Asian girlfriend, remaining with us throughout breakfast and our "Goodbyes". I did not feel comfortable leaving our daughter. There had been some indication Sue would be traveling to France during the summer, promoting her gems, would follow with a visit home prior to returning to Asia. I could feel myself clinging to this possibility. My position became very vulnerable with feelings of the inability to convince my daughter to leave Asia. This had been a priority for me. My Angioedema kept surfacing during my travels, an ongoing concern to me. As we left Singapore, I reassured myself by visualizing Sue's lifestyle, including the black magic, as a reflection of the Asian culture.

PART FIVE BLACK MAGICK

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

A very short time following our return home from our extended Asian tour, we received an early morning telephone call from Sue requesting a specific amount of money to assist her and her friends in the gem business. She seemed anxious with no interest in further communication, had not mentioned this need during our visit, and had spoken positively regarding her financial position with a supply of silver jewelry ready for marketing. We wired her the money. The letters we received from Sue in April and May following our return home showed signs of her being somewhat unsettled with herself and her business. Her letters continued regularly expressing happiness and love to all family members, including an invitation for her sister to meet her in France that summer to spend time together. Denise was anxious to accept the invitation but was committed to her summer work program, was expecting her sister to be home later in the year. On this basis she decided against traveling to France. We received a very long, complicated letter in June from Sue, including an expectation of a specific amount of funds. This letter along with one we had received a couple weeks earlier, reviewed by several Council Of Mind Abuse representatives located in Toronto, were ninety-five per cent certain our daughter had been indoctrinated in a religious movement, could not identify which movement. A professional with a Doctorate in Psychology confirmed this assessment based on our written and verbal communication with Sue. We felt the possibility of Sue being brainwashed, beginning with Black Magick.

Black Magick-is a type of magic often used to bring harm to another person; defined as the ability to successfully alter a

person's illusion of reality about their life so completely the fabric of reality is altered in conformity to the person's belief.

Brain Washing-the process begins long before the individual starts to believe. The change is gradual; it begins when a recruit starts to behave. The mechanics are hidden; victims often do not know they are being manipulated, although the results may be sudden and shocking.

We immediately contacted the Canadian and US Embassies for assistance in locating Sue, they were not successful. We also telephoned the Asian girl in Singapore who had shared her apartment with Sue. The response we received, Sue was not there but she would try to get the message to her, seemed to know our daughter's whereabouts, we did not hear from her or Sue. A few days later Bill received a collect call from Sue during the early morning hours after I had left home for my work at the Hospital. Bill stated Sue's voice and speech were clear, sounded very confident, indicating she was very serious about everything she had written in the letter to the family. Sue would not give her father an address or telephone number to contact her, he could send the requested funds to Poste Resante, Singapore (General Delivery).

The following morning, prior to my leaving for work, I received a collect call from Sue. She sounded very composed, expressing herself in a very cold, programmed conversation, and had lost her accent that was so significant to us during our visit with her. I asked Sue how I could keep in touch with her. Her response, "there is no need to; you can send any funds to Poste Resante, Singapore." I had difficulty understanding my daughter's totally cold feelings in our conversation, had always felt our relationship had been close and caring. Sue did not respond to my feelings during our short conversation. As she hung up, I was drained, hurt, angry, felt I had lost my daughter, something was terribly wrong!!

The approach we took in dealing with this unbelievable situation was to develop our knowledge in mind abuse and cults, talk to as many of Bonnie Sue's contacts as possible for information on how to reach her. Unfortunately we were not successful in any communication following this indoctrination.

I learned from one of the COMA representatives, a previous cult member, it takes approximately three to five years following indoctrination (brainwashing) for a cult member to begin family contact. I also learned a small percentage of cult members never return to their families and society, may deteriorate mentally and physically, do not have the intellectual ability to form intimate, human relationships, are used as slaves for as long as they are able to produce, then who knows what happens to them? A most depressing scenario!! I would like to share the following interpretation of leaders in movements, given to me by a friend--" Some people justify the way they live--instead of fitting their lives to a philosophy, they invent a philosophy to fit their lives." Denise was studying Psychology and Sociology in her curriculum at the University of Toronto, I asked for her assistance in helping me understand the indoctrination procedure and outcomes. The many discussions we had helped me cope. I purchased and read many books recommended to me by the COMA representatives, studied every article on mind abuse available to me. On a regular basis I mailed registered letters to Sue addressed to the main post office, these letters were not retrieved by her. She had previously used the main post office for her mail when a permanent address was not available.

We contacted the number on our telephone bill in reference to the most recent collect calls we received from Sue, requesting to speak to Sue, was informed by a male voice she had left the country. Following much persistence by me, with hesitancy this male gave me a telephone number and address in Bangkok. When I called this number, the apartment number was

requested which I did not have. I called back to the number in Singapore, requesting the apartment number, the same male voice answered again, stating he did not know the apartment number and hung up. The voice of the male kept surfacing in my mind, in my opinion he was the Asian male we had met at the apartment of the Asian girl where Sue was staying in Singapore. Following my attempt, the Embassies reported to us they spoke with an employee at the apartment building in Bangkok, Sue had been living there, had left without a forwarding address. The US Embassy also spoke with a staff member at the Asian Institute of Gemological Sciences where Sue had graduated. The staff member advised the Embassy Sue had visited the school two weeks earlier, planned to return to Singapore. I called the two numbers again in Singapore with no results. The Embassy called other possible contacts, there was not anyone that knew or would admit to knowing where Sue was located.

We had contacted our travel agency, enquiring about flights to Asia, making tentative bookings, wondering if my husband or I should try locating our daughter by communicating personally with the people we had contact with in Asia. Based on the information we received from COMA, we decided not to travel to Asia unless we knew Sue's whereabouts and were able to assist her in obtaining help for herself. Otherwise, it would probably be an emotional, fruitless mission.

I approached a colleague, a professional with a Doctorate in Psychology, regarding our concerns. He reviewed the last two letters we received from Sue with the following response: "Going by the differences in content and style of the two letters, I would conclude the second letter indicates a serious change in the emotional and mental state of the writer, particularly in view of the fact it is written to parents. The second letter suggests a loss of control of the boundaries of acceptable communication between child and parent. It is not the non-conformity in the tone of the letter that is disturbing but, also, the

internal struggles she identifies, the aggressiveness and personalized conflict between the forces of good and evil she speaks about. The process she is going through may not resolve itself spontaneously, it may require professional intervention. I can appreciate your concern about your daughter's well being."

During our years of family development we were blessed with a very positive outcome, our daughter Denise. She had developed beautifully throughout her teenage years to a very lovely, competent young lady, following a normal routine in her life, was focused in her scholastic journey, and graduated from the University of Toronto, successfully contributing to the employment field. Denise was there for me, I was able to vent my frustrations to her. She was an asset in assisting me in living through her sister's traumatic situation. Following a seven year relationship with her High School sweetheart, Denise and Ron Svajlenko announced their marriage, a very happy, exciting time as the plans for the wedding progressed. Denise and my conversations frequently reflected her sister, we were disappointed Sue would not be there to attend and participate in her wedding, as they had planned years ago. Denise and Ron coordinated the activities and celebration without highlighting specific family members; I was touched by the articulate planning and outcome. The wedding was held on May 24, 1986, a beautiful church marriage followed by an enjoyable reception held in the Ukrainian Hall in Oshawa with many out-of-town guests and family members attending along with local friends and family. Dinner, including Ukrainian food was very scrumptious, very much appreciated and enjoyed; dancing progressed into the wee hours of the morning with Ranny having a ball on the dance floor, the bride and groom boarding an early flight to a Caribbean Island for their Honeymoon.

A few weeks following the wedding, early one morning during the week, the telephone rang at approximately five-thirty. As soon as I heard the ringing, I thought of Sue, expecting to

hear her voice as I answered the telephone. Sure enough! It was Sue calling from Australia. Our last communication from Sue had been from Singapore, in July 1982, approximately four years ago. We continued our communication on a regular basis, making plans for me to visit Sue in Australia in February, following approximately five years of abstinence; a most memorable reunion plus plans for many more visits!!

On September 11, 1988, Ranny was involved in a serious motor vehicle accident in the Ottawa area. He had many facial fractures and injuries requiring extensive facial surgery and dental work; had a long recovery period. During the latter part of his recovery, he visited with Sue in Australia.

Unfortunately my allergies continued over the years. I was able to identify specific shellfish, Chinese food, monosodium glutamate, aspartame, and some dried fruit as definite causes of my reactions. The challenge now was to identify the many foods that contain any of these problem foods. Unknown additives have also been a problem and challenge in my daily diet. Chinese food with no msg (monosodium glutamate) is now available in some eating establishments

TYPICAL TEENAGER

Jane, a shy young mother and nurse had recently moved into a new residential area with her fifteen- year-old daughter, Carol. Both mother and daughter were beautiful with stunning carrot color hair and petite bodies. They loved the outdoors, were elated having the availability of a park close by, particularly the tennis courts. Carol was becoming more outgoing at school, was manipulative with her mother at times.

“How about a game of tennis after school today, Carol?” asked Jane as she and Carol were preparing to leave the house that morning. “It is the last day of school and work for this week.”

“Sorry mom, I have already made arrangements to play in a foursome,” responded Carol as she kept looking in the entrance hall mirror, brushing her hair. “I am also booked to play tennis on Saturday afternoon.”

“Saturday afternoon is our cleaning time,” responded Jane. “You know how you love to sleep in on Saturday mornings. That leaves the afternoon for cleaning.”

“I know Mother,” whined Carol in her baby-like voice, “but it is important for me to socialize in order to become popular at school. I wondered if you would mind taking over my workload this Saturday. Will you please?”

“How about using Saturday morning to complete your housekeeping tasks?” suggested Jane.

“Oh, but I can’t, Mom,” Carol insisted. “Can’t you see I want to look delicious on the tennis court for my new friend John? I need to sleep in and then I’ll need lots of time to get ready. I know you want me to enjoy the weekend so I won’t miss my friends from our old neighborhood.

Jane reluctantly conceded. “Alright Carol, but I will appreciate your assistance the following Saturday.”

Carol smiled gleefully as she followed her mother to the car. “Sure Mom, no problem. Oh, by the way, is that the Saturday I was invited to spend with Dad on his new boat?”

PEACE WITHIN ONESELF, A FULFILLMENT

How does one attain peace with oneself? Is it something that comes automatically when one is free of problems? Is it something that one develops within oneself following satisfying performances? Or is it a contribution, passed from one generation to another regardless of any productivity?

Our understanding of the infant and toddler is that warmth, food, safety and love are the most vital needs during their development. With these needs satisfied they gain contentment, which possibly contributes to attaining peace with oneself.

The schoolchild equally requires these basic needs to be met; they also need understanding, belonging, recognition and stimulation for personal growth. With these provisions the schoolchild adapts easier to new experiences, is able to feel secure which contributes to attaining peace with oneself.

As one develops into the adolescent world the reactions of everyday living are affected socially and psychologically, by needs adolescents have in their relations with others and to themselves. In many respects all human beings are similar physically, emotionally, spiritually; no two are exactly alike. People differ greatly in their learning ability, inner contentment, calm, serenity, and peace of mind. Because of inherent intelligence, one person may learn a great quantity of material very quickly, while another can learn only a smaller amount. This also pertains to applying knowledge into action.

Feelings and reactions are consciously or subconsciously learned behaviors; they may be called attitudes. These attitudes are acquired through past experiences in social environment. One acquires attitude toward food, religion, politics,

wars, nationalities, parents, grandparents etc. Have these beliefs come about from one's own thinking? Feelings may be pleasant or unpleasant, are the result of a person's response either to one's environment or to something that has happened with oneself. Feelings can become so intense; they affect the internal organs, resulting in what we call emotions. If a person's needs are not met to one's satisfaction, an unpleasant feeling, example-anger, hatred, fear, jealousy, discouragement is experienced, so intense it becomes an emotion. When a person's needs are satisfied, there is a feeling of pleasure, happiness, and enthusiasm. Minor annoyances are not disturbing, can be shrugged off or faced and overcome. This individual is at peace with herself/ himself and with the world.

Men and women develop self-respect by being highly regarded by others. When this has been established a feeling of self-confidence assists in facing the problems of everyday life. The average person can admit he/she may be wrong, has enough self-confidence to continue on without the need for constant reassurance. The need for self-realization and accomplishment are the highest needs, until one determines the kind of work one wishes to perform, this need is difficult to fulfill.

A comment frequently stated by citizens reaching their senior years, "I want to make peace with myself and the world." What do they mean? It could be they want to meet their challenges to the best of their ability, contribute to the world, in so doing satisfy their needs. This fulfillment offers peace; peace of mind, peace with oneself and peace with the world!!!

I am now a senior, enjoying each day with a busy agenda including my writing, socializing with family and friends, reaching fulfillment. This fulfillment, in my estimation is my achievement of peace within me!!!

PART SIX MY RETIREMENT

AN EVENING TO REMEMBER

**You are cordially invited to a Dinner on the occasion of the
retirement of**

MARY SPRY,

Vice President –Nursing
Oshawa General Hospital

To be held at the Oshawa Golf Club, on
Thursday, 30 November, 1989
6:00 pm Cocktails
7:00 pm Dinner

RSVP by 23 November, 1989 to Joyce Wilson,
Nursing Office, Oshawa General Hospital
24 Alma Street, Oshawa, Ontario L1G 2B9
(416) 576-8711, extension 3321

It was an evening Mary Spry will remember for many years.

Members of her family, friends and co-workers, gathered together with her at the Oshawa Golf Club to make her retirement dinner a huge success. More than 120 people attended.

It was an evening of warm speeches and conviviality among people with whom Mary had shared most of her working life. It was also an evening of memories, of looking back at the long road, which had led her from her student days at St Boniface Hospital to the office of Vice President of Nursing at the Oshawa General Hospital.

Several speakers recounted Mary's highlights of her long nursing career. Altogether she spent thirty-seven years in the profession, twenty-nine of them served at Oshawa General. During this time Mary progressed steadily through various nursing positions until she was named Director of Nursing following the death of Joyce Stewart. She was appointed Vice President of Nursing several years ago when the Board of Governors established this corporate position.

Mary was a tireless worker in the Nursing office. Her department was the largest in the hospital with over eight hundred employees; it took a lot of time and energy to keep it running at high gear. Mary recently characterized the role of nurses today in this way, "Nursing is a profession with high contributions, outcomes, and rewards in which each day a single action of a nurse may positively influence the entire life of an individual."

On her retirement Mary was presented with the traditional silver tray and check from the Board of Governors and a beautiful water painting from her staff.

This poem, written by Mary for her retirement dinner, sums up, in a small way, her thoughts about the nursing profession.

MY PROFESSION

When I received my nursing diploma
Approximately thirty-seven years ago
I thought I had totally mastered
The art of nursing as a "pro"

Each year has added progress

In the delivery of patient care
Nursing process, care plans, theory
A structure for all to share

Keeping updated with changes
Advancements in the nursing field
Requires ongoing reading and practice
A challenge for all to yield

Seminars, workshops to attend
Continuing education a must
Specialty skills a requirement
How does one possibly adjust?

Demands from patients and families
Are heavy to cope with each day
Unlimited work in limited time
Requires creativity along the way

Nursing is caring, providing care
For patients and families assigned
Interacting, coordinating all services
A fulfillment for peace of mind!!!

November 1st, 1989

To: Head Nurses, Department Heads, Directors of Nursing, Medical
Advisory

Committee Members, Board Members

This letter is to formally announce to you the retirement of Mrs.
Mary Spry, Vice President of Nursing, after some 37 years of leadership
in the nursing profession.

Throughout her career Mary has been a witness to, and a
participant in, a tremendous amount of change in the nursing
profession, the medical profession and hospital administration. Many of
her contributions to Oshawa General will be seen and felt for many
years to come.

Mary pioneered the decentralization of nursing management and nursing care beginning in 1967 and continuing to this day. Along with this change has been the nurturing and development of the roles and accountabilities of Registered Nurses, Registered Nursing Assistants, Support staff, as well as the Head Nurse. Along with major expansions to educational programs through the establishment of the Clinical Coordinators, innovations have been introduced that include a high school student program, preceptor program, resource teams on each of the nursing units, facilitator program, and the clerical student clinical experience program.

Mary's commitment to ensuring the quality of care is demonstrated by the many quality assurance mechanisms she has established including an extensive auditing program, patient questionnaire program, nursing liaison committees, nursing management committees, and the introduction of the Henderson Model of Nursing, among many others. Overseeing the introduction of computerization and new accounting practices (MIS) for nursing can also be listed among the highlights of Mary's accomplishments.

In addition to managing the largest department in the hospital, Mary has played a very active role with the Senior Management Team, Board Committees, Medical Committees, and the Board as a whole, often sparking debate and discussion and always ensuring the Nursing point of view is well represented.

I hope you will join me in congratulating Mary on her many accomplishments here and wishing her all the best in her retirement.

D. A. Home,

President

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

The first month of my retirement I felt guilty not going to work after being employed most of my life. That feeling soon passed and I was beginning to enjoy a new life. Bill and I spent six months at our condominium apartment in Naples, Florida and six months at our home in St Catharines, Ontario. During my time in Naples I visited an Ophthalmologist regarding floaters in my eye. He informed me the floaters were not a problem, the high pressure in my eyes was a concern, the diagnosis was glaucoma, requiring immediate treatment with eye drops to lower and control the pressure. My Ophthalmologist in Canada had been examining my eyes regularly, indicating the pressure was a little high requiring frequent testing, did not recommend or prescribe the necessary eye drops. Due to the delay in treatment I have less vision in my left eye, affecting my reading. One of the eye drops prescribed for me was timolol, which I used regularly for many years with no side effects. In my 79th year I was experiencing severe fatigue and heart palpitations, relating this to a heart problem. My Cardiologist referred me to a Heart Rhythm Specialist for a possible pacemaker. I was referred to my Family Physician for a thyroid test which was within normal range. He reviewed my medications, stated one of the side effects of timolol is the possibility of lowering the heart rate, and my heart rate was 38 when checked by him. After being off the timolol eye drops for three days I gradually started feeling stronger and my heart rate started increasing slowly. My heart rate had been slow for a few years, being monitored by my physicians. It remains slower than the normal rate, increases when walking, my energy level is much improved.

My body felt more relaxed during retirement and I was not experiencing as many angio-edema flare-ups with this life

change. I was able to spend time with Denise and her family in Oshawa; visit with Sue and Ranny in Australia. Sue had been living in Australia for a few years; Ranny was there indefinitely, depending on the work situation.

The year following my retirement we were blessed with our first grandchild, Megan Mary, born Sept 11, 1990. We had a beautiful family get together after her arrival. Sue made her first trip to Canada from Australia for the special occasion; we had a great deal to celebrate. Megan Mary has developed beautifully, is now in her third year of University at St Catharines, Ontario. We were blessed with our second grandchild, Nicole Christine, born February 23, 1993. Nicole was a premature baby, requiring special care in an incubator at the Oshawa General Hospital for several weeks prior to bringing her home. She has developed beautifully, presently in her last year of High School. Megan and Nicole, thank you both very much for your beautiful letters, emails, visits, and for keeping in touch. You are a big part of my life!

I would like to share a poem with my granddaughters written by B. Netherland, a reflection of my feelings as your Grammy -

GRANDMA'S PEARLS OF WISDOM

I've traveled paths you've yet to walk
Learned lessons old and new
And now this wisdom of my life
I'm blessed to share with you

Let kindness spread like sunshine
Embrace those who are sad
Respect their dignity, give them joy
And leave them feeling glad

Forgive those who might hurt you
And though you have your pride

Listen closely to their viewpoint
Try to see the other side

Walk softly when you're angry
Try not to take offense
Invoke your sense of humor
Laughter's power is immense

Express what you are feeling
Your beliefs you should uphold
Don't shy away from what is right
Be courageous and be bold

Keep hope right in your pocket
It will guide you day by day
Take it out when it is needed
When it's near, you'll find a way

Remember friends and family
Of which you are a precious part
Love deeply and love truly
Give freely from your heart

The world is far from perfect
There's conflict and there's strife
You still can make a difference
By how you live your life

I am very blessed to know
The wonders you both will do
You're my caring granddaughters
I very much believe in you!

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Later in 1993 we received a very upsetting telephone call from Sue in Australia. She had a lump in her breast, was scheduled for a biopsy and possible lumpectomy. I immediately made flight arrangements and was with Sue prior to and following the procedure. Her biopsy was cancerous and a lumpectomy surgery performed. She had six weeks of radiation treatment; chemotherapy was not prescribed. I had the opportunity to meet with her physician and asked if chemotherapy would be included in her treatment, particularly at her young age of thirty-two. He indicated no, just the radiation therapy prescribed by her Oncologist. I suggested to Sue and Doug they obtain a second opinion from another Oncologist regarding her cancer treatment. They spoke to a couple physicians, felt comfortable she would not have to deal with the side effects from the chemotherapy, did not pursue my suggestion for a second opinion from an Oncologist. When I returned to Naples, Florida, I spoke to a surgeon in our building regarding the usual post-operative treatment for breast cancer. He stated many Oncologists were prescribing radiation therapy only, for patients with breast cancer following lumpectomy surgery. Sue's follow up medical care did not have any negative findings, she felt good.

During the winter of 1996, my seventh year of retirement, Bill and I agreed to end our marriage of forty years. Following my divorce negotiations and proceedings, I established myself in our Florida home, giving up ownership to our residence in Canada. With the support of my family and friends plus participation in a variety of activities, I gradually began to feel more positive about my life and myself. Sue and Doug were planning to relocate to the United States from Australia; I invited them to live with me temporarily. They arrived

in Naples, Florida in October 1996, enhancing my life with many enjoyable hours of companionship.

Shortly after arriving in America, Sue complained of a wheeze. I was concerned about the possibility of cancer reoccurring in her body. She had a physical exam, blood work, chest x-ray, was assured there was no sign of cancer. Her condition did not improve. She was re-examined by two different physicians, received a confirmed diagnosis of asthmatic bronchitis. Sue had other symptoms not accurately diagnosed until she felt a lump under her arm, testing as the same type of cancer she had in her breast. This cancer was diagnosed in several areas of her body.

Sue's life ended June 2, 1997 at the young age of thirty-six, approximately four years from the time of her cancer diagnosis, surgery and treatment. It was like a very bad dream. I could not believe I had lost my daughter to cancer eight months following her arrival from Australia. Denise was with us prior to and during Sue's death. She stayed on for a while longer, giving us time to grieve together. I was so relieved to have Denise with me during this crisis. Doug, Sue's husband remained with me following Sue's death, we comforted each other, bracing ourselves to go on one day at a time. Doug remained with me for a couple years, and then relocated to Nashville; he passed away in June 2006.

The loss of young adults in our family has been most devastating; feelings of loss have been endured by all family members. My sister Olga lost her life in a motor vehicle accident in 1972, at the age of 42. Bill, my sister Zenia's son lost his life following an extensive body-burn accident in 1976, at the age of 23. They are forever in our thoughts.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Approximately five months following Sue's death, I was experiencing some bowel changes. My primary physician referred me to a Gastroenterologist; was booked for a colonoscopy immediately. Three precancerous polyps were removed; the fourth had developed into a cancerous tumor. My Surgeon did a rectal exam on my first visit; informed me the tumor was located close to the rectum, requiring a permanent colostomy. I was shocked; had undergone a complete physical exam, including a rectal exam eighteen months prior to this diagnosis. At that time my physician and I discussed the occasional bright blood on the tissue I had been experiencing for several years following a bowel movement, considered to be from my existing hemorrhoids.

I had difficulty with the need for major surgery including a permanent colostomy, followed by radiation and possibly chemotherapy. It felt as though the roof was caving in on me. Armed with the warm support of my family and friends, once again I braced myself to go on....one day at a time.

My sisters Ede and Zenia were visiting with me during the time of my diagnosis. Fortunately for me Ede offered to stay on during my surgery and follow-up treatment. As we packed my bag on December 15, 1997, and drove to the Hospital in Fort Myers, in the very early hours, the morning of my surgery, I developed the feeling of wanting to escape, to just keep driving. We both remained very quiet--deep in thought. My feeling of the trip to the Hospital was a blur; I kept hoping I would wake up from a bad dream, which did not happen. This feeling gradually diminished after we arrived at the surgical preparation area; I was soon relaxed and dozing. Ede remained with me in the preparation area for as long as it was possible, and then she

made herself available in the waiting room, anxiously awaiting the Surgeon's operative report.

Surgery had gone well and I was pleased with my comfort level following major surgery. However, when I was fully awake and making an effort to move, I realized I could not raise my right leg, had severe numbness over the area of my right knee. My left front thigh also felt numb, did not cause any restriction in movement. A Neurologist was consulted; an assessment by a physiotherapist was performed, Electrical Stimulation was administered twice, leg exercises were initiated. The diagnosis indicated prolonged pressure had been placed on the femoral nerve during surgery, causing nerve damage. The Neurologist was optimistic, felt the injury was temporary, and would correct itself in two to three weeks. Unfortunately progress did not occur as anticipated by the Neurologist; it took months of continuing therapy to walk safely without a walker (using a cane), and to drive a car.

Following surgery I was admitted to a room with one bed. A chair with a pullout bed was provided allowing Ede to spend the nights with me. It was most comforting having her there, providing assistance and support. During the day Ranny and Doug took turns spending time with me, relieving Ede. I was blessed with caring family members; they contributed immeasurably to my early discharge and care at home.

Initially, management of my colostomy at home was a bit of a challenge to both Ede and me. We had a number of frustrating experiences, were able to work in a few laughs along with the frustrations. We soon came to the realization, following a few clean-ups; a colostomy has the ability to function at the most inopportune times, particularly during the changing of the bag and wafer.

The loss of the use of my leg was a major concern to me. Progress was very slow in the nerve regeneration process. Exercise therapy was the main activity each day, leaving very little energy for anything other than personal care and basic daily activities. Ede and I worked on the exercises at home along with Electrical Stimulation and exercises with the therapist at the Rehabilitation Center. After four weeks I was still struggling. Ede offered to continue her stay with me for as long as I needed her. I was ecstatic!!!

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

The Laboratory report identified cancer cells in one of my nodes. I met with my medical and radiation Oncologists to determine the course of therapy for the next five to six months. The surgical insertion of a Med Port was recommended to accommodate the chemotherapy treatment, a scan was ordered to detect any spread of cancer to the liver and other organs. Fortunately none was detected.

During the preparation for my first scan in the Radiology Department, after surgery, I realized my colostomy bag was bulging. Assuming it was caused by air or gas, I slowly tried to deflate the bag, was surprised to see brown liquid trickling out. The technician quickly pulled on a pair of gloves, responded to my needs, we emptied the bag several times before proceeding with the scan. I suddenly realized the prepared solution I drank that morning had an impact on my bowel activity; there was a need to carry extra colostomy supplies with me. Following the procedure I washed as much of the brown liquid off my purple pant suit as possible in the bathroom; returned to the waiting room to join Ede. As I entered the waiting room a pleasant lady made a nice comment to me regarding my “very attractive pant suit.” I quickly responded “thank you” and greeted Ede with a big smile, ready to share my purple pantsuit experience.

On the morning of January 26 1998 Ede drove me to the Fort Myers Hospital for the Med Port insertion in preparation for the chemotherapy treatment, an outpatient procedure. Upon waking from the anesthetic in the Recovery Room, I felt tightness in my neck on the Port side. The nurse loosened the bandages; assured me I was fine and discharged me. It was approximately an hour's drive to my home. Shortly after leaving the Hospital I could feel my neck becoming increasingly tighter, my throat began to swell; my anxiety increased as I realized this was an

Angioedema reaction. I routinely carry an adrenalin kit with me; I was going to a Hospital and would not be eating any food, felt it was not necessary. Ede debated whether to return to the Hospital or continue on home, choosing the latter. She kept looking over at me, checking my color and breathing while driving over the speed limit....desperately hoping to attract the eye of a Sheriff!! Using the front passenger mirror I kept observing my throat swelling, hoping it would not swell on both sides before medical help was available. Finally we arrived at the first Medical Clinic available to us; it was the Cancer Center where I had previously met with my medical Oncologist. The immediate reaction from the staff was for me to go to the Naples Hospital Emergency Department; Ede refused to go any further with me in my condition. My Oncologist immediately treated me for the reaction with reduced swelling occurring in a couple hours. Due to the large amount of neck swelling I was admitted to the Naples Hospital for further observation and treatment for two nights. After leaving the Hospital my neck remained swollen; it was several weeks before the feeling in my neck returned to normal. While changing the dressing in the Hospital, the nurse commented she could not use iodine as an antiseptic because of my allergy to seafood. I suddenly realized the cause of my reaction was possibly "iodine." Yellow stains were very visible around my Port area. Seafood allergies were documented in all my preadmission forms; the correlation was not identified. The radiation and chemotherapy treatment was postponed for one week due to this reaction.

On February 2 1998 I began the combined treatment program of 5 FU chemotherapy 1ml/hr administered by a battery operated pump attached to my Port, Monday to Friday for 28 treatments, plus daily radiation. I developed diarrhea along with fatigue and loss of appetite. Lomotil helped slow the diarrhea to some extent, helped boost my energy levels for a while; I did require a few Intravenous infusions to replace my fluid loss. Ede

accompanied me to Rehabilitation to exercise my affected leg. She continued exercising my leg at home, encouraged me to work with her, even though I lacked the energy, encouraged me to eat by preparing any food I felt I could possibly eat. Mashed potatoes were eatable in small amounts. Ede remained with me until the end of this five-week period; how fortunate for me!!

The week following the completion of combined radiation and chemotherapy, I gradually started feeling improved; after four weeks of time out with no therapy I gained a few pounds, felt well and kept improving each week. It was time to begin the next phase of chemotherapy treatment consisting of Intravenous Lacovorin solution followed by 5 FU by IV push, administered on a daily basis for five days. After three weeks off, the total process was repeated three more times. The administration time was less than an hour. Reactions were minimal during this four-month period compared to my previous combined treatment of chemotherapy and radiation. I struggled with the mobility of my nerve-damaged leg. Still unable to drive the car, I depended on Doug to chauffeur me to the clinic and back for all of the chemotherapy sessions. He was there for me!!

Denise, Ron, Megan and Nicole visited during my recovery, providing support and assistance during my days of returning to an active life. Ranny also visited, encouraged me to drive the car short distances during the off-season period with reduced traffic. I could now reach the brake and gas pedal with my affected weak leg. I drove slowly, gradually increasing my speed as the strength in my leg increased.

I have worked consistently to strengthen and develop my atrophied leg muscle, movement has improved, remains deficient; I require concentration while walking, unable to walk at a fast pace, unable to run, ride a bicycle, have continuous tightness and leg pain, some numbness over the knee cap. My understanding is a technique has been developed to determine if

nerve supply is being compromised during colorectal surgery. I would like to express the importance of using this technique to prevent nerve damage. It is most difficult for one to deal with major surgery and recovery, including a colostomy, radiation and chemotherapy; the addition of nerve damage is overwhelming!!

I was blessed with a dear friend Gordon Myers; he stood by me during the months of my illness and recovery, did not consider cancer and a colostomy a detriment to our relationship. Two weeks following my last chemotherapy treatment Gordon and I ventured out on an automobile trip to the west coast and the Rockies, visiting family, exploring new territories; a most successful trip, contributing to my improved health and well being.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Ede was diagnosed with breast cancer following her return home. She responded well to surgery and treatment, attributes her early diagnosis to the awareness she gained from my situation and in caring for me; the knowledge and experience gleaned helped prepare her for her own immediate challenge. I am grateful to Ede for the many hours of loving care she provided to me; I am also grateful to Len for his gracious understanding in Ede's extension to her Florida visit.

Caring for Sue during her illness, facing daily unexpected, continuing critical situations including her death was an indescribably tragic experience for me; I had not had time to grieve before my own fight for life began. I am so very grateful for the continuing support of my family and friends.

Gordon and I were married October 9, 1999 in Toronto at the Granite Club. Approximately ninety family members and friends joined us to celebrate this special memorable occasion. The following day Denise and Ron hosted an Open House in their home in Oshawa, Ontario, a most delightful social event, very much enjoyed and appreciated by Gordon, myself and all attendees.

Gordon and I sold our homes, purchased an apartment in the Monaco Beach Club, a condominium building on the beach in Naples, Florida. We have a very relaxing lifestyle together, including frequent visits from our children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, family, and friends.

Interesting travels experienced by us have included a motor trip out west, through the Rockies in 1998, a 28 day Bus Tour of the United Kingdom in 2001; a 35 day Bus Tour of

Europe in 2003, visiting twelve countries; a four week automobile trip in 2004, visiting family and friends.

In 2004 I was experiencing periodic abdominal pain, mild to severe, obtaining relief after lying down with a heating pad to the abdomen for a few hours. Appropriate physicians provided medical examinations, including blood work and x-rays, with no conclusive diagnosis.

On March 29, 2005, we had invited Joan and Jim Fernandes over for dinner. They live in Canada, were spending a couple months in Naples. I was feeling abdominal pain shortly before their arrival. After their arrival I had to excuse myself and lie down, as the pain was getting more severe. After a short time I could feel a round lump on the exterior of my right lower abdomen. The pain was excruciating. All of a sudden I felt a release of this lump both within the abdomen and the exterior. My immediate thought was my bowel had ruptured. I tried walking to the bathroom; felt too weak, returned to bed and called for Gordon to call 911. The pain was unbearable. The ambulance personnel kept asking me questions; I kept asking them for something for pain. While in route to the Hospital I kept telling them I had a ruptured bowel, hollering for something for pain, repeating this information to the Emergency staff, followed by no memory until I woke up seeing Denise sitting at the foot of my bed in the Hospital. My only recollection at that time was this realistic vision I had, three funeral cars were lined up, waiting for me. This vision remained with me during my recuperation period. I was on a ventilator, had many tubes in place providing medication and nourishment to my body. Knowing Denise had traveled a distance, was not in Naples prior to my admission to the Hospital, I said to her, "I think I am missing a couple days." Denise responded, "A couple, how about six. You had a ruptured twisted bowel, had surgery, have remained in a coma for six days. Prior to your recent response, the possibility of your survival had been questionable by the medical team with plans

for brain testing. Fortunately you responded very shortly prior to the planned brain testing.” My body had experienced many changes in the past week; it was reassuring having Denise with me as my advocate, she was able to stay a few more days. My thanks to Ron, Megan and Nicole for managing at home in her absence.

I had a great deal to assimilate in the changes to my life after waking from my coma, along with being very weak, requiring Physical and Occupational Therapy. I received progressive care in the Intensive Care Unit, had a month of Rehabilitation in the Hospital followed by rehabilitation at home for a few months. My affected leg was very weak, requiring intensive therapy, using a walker followed by a cane. I used the atrium area on our floor in our condominium as a walking area with a walker, cane, then on my own. On the days Gordon did not golf, he walked with me on the walkway along the beach. I continue my walks along the beach, keeping my affected leg active; on non-walking days I spend time on the Rowing Machine in the Exercise Room.

Macular Degeneration, the dry type, was another one of my health problems in my senior years. This eye disease affects an area at the center of the retina called the macula, which gives us the acute and detailed vision we need for reading, driving, watching television, recognizing faces, activities that require fine, sharp, straight-ahead vision. In most cases the loss of vision is gradual, occurring over several years at any adult age. In some cases it can happen suddenly. Early diagnosis is the key to effectively treat the disease. The only treatment and nutritional support for those diagnosed with macular degeneration or those at risk for macular degeneration is a diet including large amounts of fruit and vegetables plus a high potency vitamin and mineral supplement, slowing the progression. The wet type occurs when new blood vessels form under the retina, they can break easily, causing bleeding under the retina. The wet

condition can worsen more rapidly than the dry type, with more severe effects, including complete central vision loss. Studies indicate first-generation family members are up to three times more likely to develop macular degeneration, should alert their eye care professionals about this condition.

Following my ruptured twisted bowel I did not expect any further abdominal pain, thinking the cause would have been corrected. Unfortunately my abdominal pain kept re-occurring with spasms and bloating. I visited a few physicians with no diagnostic results following blood work, colonoscopy including stomach examination, x-rays etc. I returned to my Gastroenterologist informing him of my symptoms persisting, he prescribed a Lactose Intolerance Test, in a short time I was informed of my High Intolerance to Lactose. Between my allergy to msg, my macular degeneration plus my high lactose intolerance, it leaves me with a diet mainly of fruit and vegetables plus Lactose free foods. When a Lactose free diet is not followed I experience fatigue, nausea, vomiting, abdominal distention, very severe abdominal cramping, lasting approximately eight to twelve hours. I am becoming more comfortable at home with my diet, have less reactions, staff in restaurants are much more knowledgeable in the need for Lactose free foods, making dining out more enjoyable.

Gordon and I traveled to Toronto and Ottawa in late August and beginning of September /09, celebrating reunions with each of our families, a very active, most enjoyable experience. Transportation was available to us at all times by family members; very much appreciated.

I continue enjoying my travels to Las Vegas, spending time with Ranny, having a get together with my sisters. Our next future planned travel venture is a get together in Las Vegas with Denise, Ron, Ranny, Ede, Zenia and any other family members that are able to join us, celebrating my eightieth birthday.

My daily routines plus a few projects keep me active, am thankful for so many positive changes and outcomes, including Gordon. He has made a difference in my life. Thanks to all family members for caring and keeping in touch; I enjoy and appreciate each of your visits. The Myers family has been a wonderful family addition in my life, thank you all for your love and acceptance!!

This is the story of my life to date; my hope is that you will possibly learn something from my experiences. Sometimes there are situations that haunt you, have power over you, once you confront them, they lose their power. In telling my story, I felt this was my situation plus I gained a better understanding of each issue. I am looking forward to continuing my journey..... enjoying each milestone, one day at a time!

SUNSHINY RAYS

To my family!

Life passes quickly
So much to unfold
Wrinkles advancing
A creative mold
Memories capture
My years gone by
A worrisome feeling
Not accepting why
My health is faltering
Have aches and pains
Joints are stiffening
Those afternoon rains
I love my life
Relaxing, divine
Family visits
Time is mine
Afternoon rest
A little wine too

~ 124 ~

Feels so good
My love for you
Thank you all for
Easing my days
My journey home
To sunshiny rays!!