

BARBARA CHILDS RN MSN MBA

LIFE UNPACKED



Life in Beirut, Lebanon before and after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War as seen through the eyes of an 11 year old United States Embassy Diplobrat.

Life

Unpacked

The true story of life in Beirut, Lebanon before and after the 1967 Arab Israeli War as seen through the eyes of a 11-year-old United States Embassy Diplobrat and how those experiences prepared me for the unexpected circumstances I would encounter as an adult.

Life is simple. Everything happens for you, not to you. Everything happens at exactly the right moment, neither too soon nor too late. You don't have to like it... it's just easier if you do.

~ Byron Katie

Copyright

Ebook design adapted from photograph taken
by E.L. Lunsford at Baalbek, Lebanon 1966.

Cover design by Barbara Lunsford-Childs .

Forward

It was the summer of 1967 and as usual, a gorgeous day outside. We lived very near the Mediterranean Sea and I could hear the sound of the waves crashing on the shore, a sound I had grown to love. There was an unexpected knock at our door. The man at the door had a few words with my dad and handed him a manilla envelope and then left. My dad turned toward us and with concern on his face as he realized the huge task he was facing. He had to get his family to the American University of Beirut grounds, check in with the Embassy, and make sure his job site at the Beirut airport was secure. He told us we had two hours to pack and get to the American University of Beirut grounds because we were being evacuated and that Israel was going to invade Lebanon sending thousands of

Palestinian refugees across the border into Lebanon. We had no idea the level of violence or how long this war would last. Just that we were going.... now.

I had no idea what any of that meant. All I knew is that I could have one suitcase and to pack the most important things because we didn't know when we would be back. I packed all my stuffed animals and no clothes, making my mother very unhappy with me when we reached our destination. This ended up ok because when we got back to the states we went to the most awesome store to buy clothes. We discovered Kmart! We thought we had died and gone to heaven! But I digress... We were not allowed to turn on any electricity in our apartment and we were also instructed to paint the headlights on our car blue because Lebanon had ordered the country to be in a blackout so Israel couldn't find Lebanon. We were to go to the American University of Beirut (AUB) to

wait for our ride to the Beirut airport to catch our assigned planes. We would then be flown to some unknown destination. My dad assured me he would keep us all safe.

That manilla envelope the American Embassy man gave to my dad, had instructions on where to go, what to expect, what to take, and more that was not shared with me. TWA would be the airlines evacuating us and that we would not know where we were going to be evacuated to until we got there. The envelope also had an American flag to put on the outside of our apartment to identify that Americans lived there. I don't have to say that my dad didn't follow those instructions.

As we made our way to the University grounds, we drove through protesters and riots, angry mobs, bombed out cars still on fire and lots of shouting. It was very scary. I was only 13 years old and my

world was about to change and all I could do was
trust.

Table of Contents

Copyright	4	
Forward	5	
Table of Contents	9	
Dedication	11	
Introduction	15	
CHAPTER 1	Who Am I ?	19
CHAPTER 2	Life is about to get real	40
CHAPTER 3	Journey to Beirut.	45
CHAPTER 4	Life in Beirut	64
CHAPTER 5	My father, my hero	92
CHAPTER 6	Religion in Beirut	104
CHAPTER 7	Trip to Cairo, Egypt.	123
CHAPTER 8	War comes to Beirut	147
CHAPTER 9	Evacuation	168

CHAPTER 10	Family Home Leave	180
CHAPTER 11	Return to Post War-Beirut	193
CHAPTER 12	New Orders to Frankfurt	213
CHAPTER 13	Yugoslavia to Frankfurt	232
CHAPTER 14	Adventures in Venice, Italy	251
CHAPTER 15	Frankfurt, Germany	273
CHAPTER 16	Frankfurt High School	291
CHAPTER 17	The BRAT Culture	306
CHAPTER 18	Back to the States	318
CHAPTER 19	The Good & The Bad	333
CHAPTER 20	Daniel & Leukemia.	343
CHAPTER 21	Candlelighters	364
CHAPTER 22	Back to UCLA	371
CHAPTER 23	Back to UCLA... again	394
CHAPTER 24	Lessons Learned	415

Dedication

To my dad, who gave me the courage to follow my dreams, to have courage in everything I do and most of all to remember whose last name I have. You taught me responsibility, veracity, how to get along with those



My father, myself, and my mother that have a different point of view from my own and how to "keep the peace" but still have a voice.



My mother, Geraldine S. Lunsford

And to my mom, who I didn't always see eye to eye on, but I was in complete awe of her boundless energy, her boldness, how proud she was of her children and how she never missed any of our our talent shows. I could hear her clapping above all others in the crowd. This was a woman that wore her excitement on her face, and no one could ever have any doubt she knew how to have a good time. She was Lucille Ball reincarnated.



USAF Ret. MSgt Jerry Childs and myself

Thank you to my wonderful husband who served 26 years in the United States Air Force, and who loved and supported me in caring for my disabled son and my parents who ended up with Alzheimer's. We were able to keep my parents in our home and help my sisters care for them. Except for my mom, we tried putting her into a really nice retirement home, but she had bipolar disorder and OCD and got booted out for kissing some of the male residents and taking

all her clothes out of her closet just to “reorganize. Bless my husband for allowing me to bring her to our home and for his unending patience! He deserves a medal!



All my children

To my wonderful children, you are my heart. Thank you for making life easy when it could have been so much worse. Thank you for all your support so I could reach the sky! And to Daniel, my son, what can I say? You are my hero and my inspiration.

Introduction

It was the summer of 1967 and as usual, a gorgeous day outside. We lived very near the Mediterranean Sea, and I could hear the sound of the waves crashing on the shore, a sound I had grown to love. There was an unexpected knock at our door. The man at the door had a few words with my dad and handed him a manilla envelope and then left. My dad turned toward us and with concern on his face as he realized the huge task he was facing. Dad had to get our family to the American University of Beirut grounds, check in with the Embassy, and make sure his job site at the Beirut airport was secure. He told us we had two hours to pack and get to the American University of Beirut grounds because we were being evacuated and that Israel was

going to invade Lebanon sending thousands of Palestinian refugees across the border into Lebanon. We had no idea the level of violence or how long this war would last. Just that we were going.... now.

I had no idea what any of that meant. All I knew is that I could have one suitcase and to pack the most important things because we didn't know when we would be back. I packed all my stuffed animals and no clothes, making my mother very unhappy with me when we reached our destination. This ended up ok because when we got back to the states, we went to the most awesome store to buy clothes. We discovered Kmart! We thought we had died and gone to heaven! But I digress... We were not allowed to turn on any electricity in our apartment and we were also instructed to paint the headlights on our car blue because Lebanon had ordered the country to be in a blackout so Israel couldn't find Lebanon.

However, Israel passed a message on to Lebanon to “Turn your lights on, we know where you are.” We were to go to the American University of Beirut (AUB) to wait for our ride to the Beirut airport to catch our assigned planes. We would then be flown to some unknown destination. My dad assured me he would keep us all safe.

The manilla envelope the American Embassy man gave to my dad, had instructions on where to go, what to expect, what to take, and more that was not shared with me. Pan Am would be the airlines evacuating us. We would not know where we were going to be evacuated to until we got there. The envelope also had an American flag to put on the outside of our apartment to identify that Americans lived there. I don't have to say that my dad didn't follow those instructions.

As we made our way to the University grounds, we drove through protesters and riots, angry mobs, bombed out cars still on fire and lots of shouting. It was very scary. I was only 13 years old, and my world was about to change and all I could do was trust.

CHAPTER 1

WHO AM I?

I had originally decided to write this book simply to document for my children and grandchildren the legacy our family has left for them and what our experiences with different cultures and people meant to me throughout our travels. But then, I decided one day that I wanted to know who my ancestors were and maybe they had something to do with why my family, but in particular me, seeks to always move around, take risks, explore. This is typical of nearly all Diplobrats, Military Brats and Third Culture Kids (TCK's). It is said by many Brats that it is common for us to get itchy feet and have the desire to move every three years. This is so true! it is in our DNA.

I did the test for the DNA analysis with Ancestry.com and you can imagine how thrilled I was to learn what a legacy my ancestors had left our family. My 10th great-grandfather was Sir Maurice Abbott who was the brother of Archbishop of Canterbury George Abbott. In 1604, the translation of the Bible was ordered by King James and Archbishop Abbott was named one of the eight divines of Oxford chosen to translate the New Testament. The archbishop was my 10th great-uncle. The archbishop kind of fell out of favor with King James when he went hunting with some of the royals and accidentally shot a gatekeeper with an arrow and killed him. The King pardoned him, but the archbishop sunk into a depression and never fully recovered.

George Abbott (there were a lot of them) was my 8th great-grandfather born in 1601 in London. He



ABBOTT FAMILY CREST

immigrated to America in 1640 landing in Massachusetts. He and his soon-to-be wife Hannah Chandler got married and they settled in Andover, Massachusetts. George and Hannah had 13 children who all settled in Andover, and many were graduates of Harvard College. Abiel Abbot, a son, was a surgeon in the French and Indian Wars, and the remaining sons served in the American Revolutionary War and Civil War.

There are many stories I've read about how living in early America was brutal with the bitter cold weather, no food, not being able to hunt in the wintertime, many children were dying of diseases and on top all of this, they fought off Indian attacks. One of the sons of Amos Abbott was kidnapped by Indians and scalped. There is a monument in the city of Andover, Massachusetts honoring George Abbott as one of the first settlers of Andover. The Abbott's of Andover were instrumental in facilitating the Underground Railroad and helping slaves escape to Canada. From what I understand, there are houses in Andover named after the Abbott family. I feel so privileged to belong to such a patriotic family that were also Abolitionists.

Another ancestor was Ebenezer Hyde who was a 2nd Lieutenant in the Revolutionary War. He was

my 5th Great Grandfather also on my Grandmother Dorothy Abbott Smiths side which is also my mother's line. It is with him that I was able to become a Daughter of the American Revolution of which I am very proud.

The Abbott's ended up moving from Andover to New York and eventually they migrated west and went to Michigan. My grandmother, Dorothy Berniece Abbott who was very dear to me, was born in Michigan and then moved to Evanston, Wyoming which is where my mother was born and met my dad. When I was very small, about four or five years old, I used to spend weekends at my Grandma Dorothy Abbott Smith's home in Evanston, Wyoming.

Grandma Smith was a schoolteacher, played the organ and piano for silent movies, and was very quiet. She would read to me all the time. Her favorite

past-time was to watch the Lawrence Welk show sitting in her comfy chair with the homemade doilies pinned on the arms of the chair. She would also have tea parties with her friends that lived near her. They would sit around and tell me how much I looked like my mother. I don't recall Grandma Smith ever driving. She would wear dainty white gloves, her hair was perfectly done, always wore a nylon dress with



My Grandpa Smith and Grandma
Dorothy Abbott Smith



Dorothy Abbott Smith as a child

a thin belt on it and off we would go to the tea party. It was like being at the Queen's castle in London, I felt special.

Grandma would read her Bible every day for hours upon hours. She watched some tv but spent most of her time in her bedroom. She didn't speak much to us but was always very kind to me reading me stories, and what time she did spend with me, she made it quality time that I'll never forget.

Grandma Smith had the most awesome house in Evanston, Wyoming. As a young child around five or six years old, I recall that in the middle of the house there was one hallway that was round in shape with doors leading out to different rooms. I could close all the doors and it would be pitch black. The bathroom was pretty large and had an old-fashioned bathtub with legs and I loved taking baths in it. The garage had a flat roof on it and my brother decided he could jump off it. Fortunately, he got caught by my dad and was punished. Grandma Smith had a stroke about a year before we moved to Beirut and passed away. I think that is the first time I saw my mother cry and show some compassion. It was very sad.

Both of my grandfathers were Engineers for the Union Pacific Railroad. Evanston, Wyoming is a small railroad town with a large train depot. The



Union Pacific Railroad passenger train with my Grandpa Lunsford as the Engineer waving at me

Union Pacific depot was built in 1900 due to the constant flow of passenger train traffic across Wyoming and the rest of the west but mostly Utah. I never knew my Grandpa Smith as he died a year before I was born from colon cancer. He was a tough old guy from what I heard from my mother. He met my Grandma Smith when she was in her 40's. She had rooms for rent for the railroad guys when they

would come through Evanston and rented a room to James R. Smith.

Grandpa Smith came from Gainesville, Florida and apparently, he had brought an alligator with him on the train. When he arrived in Evanston and he needed a room and a place for his gator. He rented a room from my grandmother without mentioning the alligator. He kept the alligator in my grandmother's bathtub, until she walked into the bathroom specifically used by renters and saw it. He removed the gator and next thing anyone knew; she was marrying him. I do believe he was somewhat narcissistic and abusive, which is why I believe my mother was somewhat like him. She knew nothing different than how she was brought up, wasn't always the kindest to me, but she did the best she knew how to do.



My grandma and grandpa Lunsford (my dad's parents) also lived in Evanston. My parents were born five days apart, with my mother being five days older than my dad. For those five days, he would always remind her that she was a year older than him which my mom didn't find humorous at all. My dad's parents were terrific. My mom and my Grandma Lunsford hated each other. I think it's because they were so much alike. But I loved her, she was a very classy woman, kept a beautiful home,

had plastic coverings on her couch and chairs in the living room, which is probably why the furniture lasted over 50 years. She would follow us kids around with a wet cloth to wipe our fingerprints off the walls and anything else.



They had a small basement in their house and in it was my grandpa's man cave with all his tools. He

always had some blocks of wood and nails and a hammer for his grandkids to go down to the basement and just build stuff. My grandpa Lunsford always had lots of change in his pockets and when he would see us, he would get all the change out and give it to us to spend at the little store around the corner. My favorite thing to buy was chocolate licorice at the little store. My second favorite thing to do today, is go to the Evanston McDonalds where kids walk around in their boots with spurs and their cowboy hats on and sit in saddles to eat their burgers. I have a love in my heart for the cowboys. They know what they want, enjoy what they have and are generally a happy bunch. Evanston, Wyoming has a Cowboy Days celebration every Labor Day with a fabulous rodeo, delicious food and cowboy clothes! Maybe that is why I enjoy the show Yellowstone so much!



Evanston, Wyoming McDonalds kids dining area



Uncle Jon and Aunt Connie

Grandpa Lunsford died of a cardiac arrest one day while we were still living in Beirut. Apparently he was in his yard cultivating his garden, which he loved, and just dropped down and passed away. My dad had to fly back to Wyoming by himself for the funeral and from what I recall, he was very upset. My Grandma Lunsford got Alzheimer's but continue to live in her home, which was a super cool two-story White House with pink trim.

My Uncle Jon who is my father's brother, lived next door to my grandma so he and his wife, my Aunt Connie, could look after her without having her live with them. My uncle relates the story to me of when he and my Aunt Connie decided it was time for Grandma to go into a nursing home. Uncle Jon was painting the outside of my grandma's house. He had an electric paint sprayer plugged into the dining room and the cord was long enough that he could paint the outside of the house. He would just get started and the sprayer would quit, so he would go inside and would find that my grandma had unplugged the sprayer. He would plug it back in and she would unplug it again. This happened about five times. Finally, Uncle Jon said the to my grandma, "Mom, leave that plugged in so I can paint the house." She yelled back at him "Well, I don't want that plugged in and who in the hell are you anyway?" They

decided it was time to move her to an Alzheimer's unit at the Evanston nursing home.

She lived for at least 10 more years and from what I heard she was a sassy thing at the nursing home. She used language you hear from sailors (nothing against sailors, that just the term given to cussers), she would hit the staff, bite, anything else to be ornery. She died just one month before turning 100 years old. I miss the woman she was. Her sister Harriet Spencer was the first woman in Wyoming to have a driver's license. My grandma, whose full name was Carma Spencer, would tell the story that we were related to Princess Diana Spencer. I cannot verify that fact, so I'll just say it was a story she would tell. I miss my grandparents and lost them entirely too soon.

My parents left Wyoming after they got married at 18 years old and my father enlisted into the Navy.



USS Leonard Mason, Battleship my dad was assigned to

He was sent to San Francisco and was assigned to be on the Battleship USS Leonard Mason. After being on the battleship, my dad received orders to McClellan Air Force Base to be trained on radar as an electronics technician. Sacramento is where my brother Cary and I were born in 1952 and 1954 respectively. My dad was going to be sent to the Korean War to serve however, due to my older sister Linda having been born with Rubella Syndrome

causing heart problems, blind in one eye and a premature baby, my dad was able to get a hardship discharge and was not sent to Korea. My sister is now the longest surviving Rubella Syndrome baby still alive. Given all her disabilities, my parents never treated her as if she was disabled. She did very



well in school, was a dancer and loved to pantomime to Neil Sedaka, Bobby Vee, Bobby Rydell and many more. She was a very talented dancer. She also has the most giving heart and was always trying to keep the peace between my brother and me. She

lives in Maine in an assisted living facility now and is doing well.

From Sacramento and McClellan AFB, we moved to Ogden, Utah where my dad was transferred to Hill Air Force Base. A few years later, we moved to Salt Lake City, Utah and stayed there for a few more years. I am pretty sure my brother and I, along with my sister Linda, went to at least three elementary schools during that time. My youngest sister Brenda was born in Salt Lake City, Utah and is six years younger than myself.

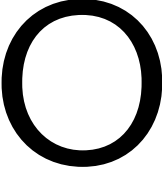


My dad was then transferred to Norman, Oklahoma where he was working out of Tinker Air Force Base. He was an electronics technician and worked with radar systems which is what he trained for in the Navy. He became a navigator at Tinker AFB and flew in T-Birds, working as the navigator behind the pilot. From there he was hired to work for the FAA as an electronic technician. I can still remember his slide ruler and I could never figure out what he got out of a slide ruler, still can't.

I had a great life in Norman, Oklahoma. I was in the Girl Scouts and would sell cookies at the University of Oklahoma, Norman, in the dormitories. I went on camping trips, had tons of friends and went to a great school named Andrew Jackson Elementary. My friends and I had a club that was girls only. We mostly just played on the swings and made cool forts. It was a happy life.

CHAPTER 2

LIFE IS ABOUT TO GET REAL

ne evening I rushed home because we had to be in the house when the street lights turned on and I was greeted by my parents and could tell they meant business. Just inside the front door in the living room where three men in dark suits were talking with my parents. It was dark outside and the lamps inside cast a huge shadow on these strange men in our house. Considering I was only 11 years old and about 4 feet 6 inches, this was pretty intimidating. These men looked like typical G-men with their briefcases, their black trench coats on, square plastic rimmed glasses and hats on their heads. I found this kind of scary.

The men told us that we would be moving to a far-away country, and it would take about 16 hours to fly there. What they left out however, was the part about having to go to Oklahoma City several times to get around 13 vaccinations to include Yellow Fever, Typhus, Typhoid, Cholera, Hepatitis B and C and Gamma Globulin (IgG) which you got in your butt and hurt terribly. Recently the Covid 19 vaccine came out due to the Pandemic of 2020 and people were afraid to get it. I said bring it on! With all the vaccines I had as a kid, this is nothing! We also received the Smallpox vaccine and several others that I cannot even recall. My smallpox vaccine must not have taken because I didn't get that huge scar that most people have when they get the smallpox vaccine. I just know my deltoid muscle hurt for several weeks and I had ice packs on them daily. My parents told us we would be in Lebanon for about

three to four years. My dad always told us that the best way to increase in rank was to move or accept assignments. He was a GS-11 when we left for Beirut and a GS-13 when we came home seven years later.

I told my teacher at school the next day that I would be leaving the country and moving to Beirut, Lebanon. She asked me if I knew where that was, and I told her I did not. She smiled and got the world globe down from the shelf in the classroom and proceeded to ask me to find it on the globe and to show the other students in the room. I was unable to find Lebanon on the globe. She pointed it out to me that it was a small country on the Mediterranean Sea wedged between Syria, Jordan and Israel. The relevance of the importance of this particular location did not even occur to me. I had no idea what

was awaiting my family and myself on this little journey we were about to embark on.

All this took place in the Spring of 1965 and only one and a half years after President Kennedy was assassinated. The Vietnam War was beginning to erupt, and President Johnson was the current President of the United States. What I can recall the most was watching the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan Show, Shirley Temple show on TV, and my mom



Lunsford family in Washington DC before leaving for Beirut,
Lebanon

actually ironing our sheets with a Mangle (Google it). This is what was huge in my current little world then. How my world would soon grow to include war and refugees, different cultures, and how I loved and anticipated all of it.

We flew from Oklahoma to Washington D.C. so my dad could meet with some people at the FAA headquarters. Dad made it a goal that we would see all the monuments, the Smithsonian Museum, Congress, the Constitution, the Museum of Medicine, and the Bill of Rights. We stayed at an old hotel that was supposedly a first-class hotel. It had an old elevator that had the gate that the elevator operator would open and close at each floor when he let people off. I recall he was such a happy man, always either singing the blues or whistling some old tune. I loved talking with him, he had some great stories.

CHAPTER THREE

Journey to Beirut



“Oh, lady of Lebanon, oh wide-shaded cedar, make of your green branches a protective roof for your children, despite the threats of a cyclone, and the roars of the devil, they fly under your branches and your overwhelming safety shields them.” - Charles Corm, *The Sacred Mountain* (2004)

We departed from Dulles Airport in Washington D.C. and arrived at our first destination in Rome, Italy. We were so excited about going to Rome! We

checked into a hotel that was near a traffic circle with the fountain where there are no traffic lanes or rules of the road. I don't recall the name of it as I was only 11 years old. I kept waiting for accidents to happen, but I was amazed there weren't more accidents there. We took taxi's everywhere we went in Rome. We visited the Coliseum, the Pantheon which was gorgeous, and St. Peter's Basilica.



We went shopping where my parents bought all kinds of marble statues. I'm pretty sure my dad was obsessed with Italian statues of women. They definitely were beautiful. Our first night in Rome,

we decided we wanted some authentic Italian spaghetti. I wasn't really impressed because it wasn't the spaghetti my mom made back in the states.

I regret not appreciating the dining experiences more, but then I was only 11 years old when we got to Rome. In our room, my brother and I were upset that the toilet paper was more like crepe paper than the soft tissue we used to in the United States. Funny what stands out in your mind the most. We stayed in Rome for about a week and then started our journey to Beirut.

We arrived in Beirut sometime during the afternoon. When you get transferred to a new assignment or base as with the military, your family is assigned a sponsor. Our sponsor was the Day family. They picked us up at the airport and took us directly to our hotel which was near the St. George Hotel called the Excelsior Hotel. It was a huge hotel



with chandeliers in the lobby, several restaurants, and a large outdoor swimming pool. We went up to our suite that had three bedrooms, a living room, and a kitchen. There was a wonderful basket of fruit and goodies for us to eat as we had no food.

When I am in a new experience or situation, I feel as though I am able to see myself outside of my body. It's really strange. This happened to me on our first day there. I look around and just take everything in so I can document in my head the people, the

scenery, the conversations and my feelings about all I am experiencing. We chose our various bedrooms we wanted to stay in and then decided to go down to the pool.



Excelsior Hotel Pool from our room

Before going down to the pool, I looked out the window and glanced at the pool. I saw this beautiful woman doing the most graceful breaststroke I had ever seen. Not that I had seen any other breast strokes, but this one was very impressive. She glided through the water like a real swan. She had long dark hair that she had put up in a bun and a beautiful face. Come to find out, when we got to the pool, she was a model and there was a swimsuit shoot going on at the pool. The owner of the swimsuit suit company noticed me and asked my mother if I could model the children's bathing suits for the catalog. She gave her permission, and I was thrilled. They handed me three or four suits to try on and I was too small for all of them. I was so disappointed, but they gave me lunch and a Shirley

Temple, and I jumped into the pool and went swimming, trying out the breast stroke which, by the way, is much harder than it looks. I got pretty good at swimming and diving while living in Beirut.

The next day while my parents were outside talking with our sponsor, I wanted to go down the street to look at some of the shops. Mind you, I was all of eleven years old. My parents let my brother, who was only 13 years old, and I go freely down to



Corniche Blvd, downtown Beirut where driving lanes don't exist

the shopping area which was along the Corniche Blvd. by ourselves. Imagine letting kids do that in today's world.

The Lebanese men seemed to really like my blonde hair. I couldn't go anywhere without some man wanting to touch my hair. I quickly learned to brush them off and ignore them. I never felt threatened or scared at all, mostly I was just as curious about them as they were about my blonde hair! I purchased my own silver puzzle ring on my first journey out by myself. The jeweler spent about 30 minutes teaching me how to put this puzzle ring together, I was so proud! Eventually my father bought me a beautiful gold puzzle ring and for himself, a big 18 ct. gold puzzle ring with eight rings to it, he never learned how to put the thing together. He would go on his FAA trips and the ring would fall apart and I would have to put it together

for him every time he got home. Finally, he got it soldered together which totally ruined the fun of having a puzzle ring in my opinion. My dad wore that ring until the day he died. His ring remains in our family.



My dad's puzzle ring

To this day I can visualize everything that went on around me. The smells and sounds, I can even remember how sweet that first banana was that I ate. Lebanon had the best fruit ever. We had to soak all our fruits and vegetables in bleach in the sink so we wouldn't end up with dysentery. If we did get

sick the cure was to eat the yogurt they had in Lebanon. It was unsweetened, thick and disgusting. Not even jam would make that stuff taste better. So, we would take Paregoric.

My little sister, who was about five years old, always had chronic diarrhea so she was always having to take the Paregoric. Years later I realized mom was drugging us with Morphine. No one knew, or at least we didn't, that Paregoric was an opioid! My little sister and brother got dysentery so bad that they were hospitalized for a while and placed on IV fluids. The hospital was the American University of Beirut Hospital. Cary made the big mistake of buying a tuna sandwich in a local market and eating it. He was hospitalized for over a week to get fluids in him so he could recover.

I had to use the bathroom so bad while visiting my brother in the hospital and had no idea how to use



Lebanese toilet aka Bomb Site

it! Inside the bathroom were two foot pads with a hole in the ground. This was Lebanon's version of a public toilet. The Americans called it a "bomb site". There was a glass bottle of water to wash your hands with and clean yourself with. In the Arab world, this was how they go to the bathroom. Fortunately, the apartments occupied by Americans or other foreigners had beautiful modern bathrooms with toilets and a bidet. I had no idea what a bidet was or what it was for, but it was fun to play in!

I was also hospitalized at the University of Beirut Hospital. My mother was talking with me at our dinner table and while I was looking at her, she says to me “Are you looking at me?” I acknowledged to her that I was looking straight at her but to her, it looked like I was looking to the right of her. She took me to a Lebanese eye doctor, and it was decided that I had amblyopia also known as lazy eye. I needed surgery to tighten the muscles of my eyes to straighten them. The surgery was completed, and my eyes have been perfectly straight since then. He did a very good job.

Once our household goods arrived, we moved into an apartment in the Farah Building which was situated out toward the airport and faced the Mediterranean Sea. This apartment was an entire floor of the building with a balcony that surrounded the entire apartment. We lived on the fourth floor and



Picture from our apartment on the 4th floor

had to take an elevator to get to the apartment. I can still smell the stench of the heavy tobacco that permeated that elevator. This elevator was the type that you would step into, pull the steel gate closed, and then push your button to your floor and hope the elevator would get me to my destination. Years later, I thought about that building and wondered if it was used for any of the American hostages that were

taken many years later. The thought of this would make me incredibly sad and sick.

The apartment itself was amazingly beautiful! It had marble floors, chandeliers throughout, four



bedrooms with a bathroom in each bedroom, and a huge living room with sliding glass doors covering the entire wall. A balcony surrounded the entire apartment. It was beautiful. Once my father had forgotten his keys inside the apartment and did not have an extra one. The only way into that apartment

was to lower someone from the fifth floor down to the fourth floor. Guess who got chosen? If you chose me, you were right. My father tied this heavy rope around my waist and with him and a few other men holding onto the end of the rope, I was lowered down to the fourth floor, swung myself onto the balcony and was able to enter through the unlocked balcony door. I wasn't scared at all because I knew my dad had me.

Also included in the apartment was what was called a maid's quarters. My mother went through 17 housekeepers during our time in Beirut. Our towels and other linens kept disappearing and my parents would just say whoever stole them must have needed them more than we did. And it was ok.

At night I remember having the doors to the balcony that surrounded our entire building open for the Mediterranean Sea breeze to come through. The

waves were so calming, the moon was shining on the sea which looked like glass. The beauty of it will never leave me. We lived just across the street from



the beach. To this day I can close my eyes and hear the sounds of those beautiful waves. So good.

When we were finally settled in our new apartment, it was time to find some place for my brother, my sister and myself to attend school. The American Community School (ACS) was run by the oil companies and was very difficult to get into. Students had to take a test and pass with a B or better.

Many of the embassy employees had told my parents about the British Manor House school. This school was up in the mountains and took a long time to get there. My siblings and I were enrolled in that school. We had to wear uniforms consisting of a pleated grey skirt, white button-down shirt, a grey cardisweater, white socks and black shoes. This was our first



The British Manor House, Beirut, Lebanon

experience ever having to wear a uniform.

I was in the sixth grade and was enrolled in 13 different subjects to include French, Arabic, English, Latin, Algebra, Geometry, Sciences, and several others I don't even recall. One day while sitting in one of my classes, the teacher did not show up. A man came in and I had never seen him before. He proceeded to give us all a Bible and preach to us and ask us if we were "saved". I had no idea what he was talking about. I thought "saved from what?"

My parents were not very happy with the school, so they decided to send my older sister to the Department of Defense (DOD) school in Ankara, Turkey and they enrolled my brother in a Catholic school in Beirut. We were not Catholic, so this was a difficult thing for my brother to wrap his head around. Eventually, he was so miserable that he also was sent to attend the DOD school in Ankara, Turkey and he thrived there. I was able to get into the

American Community School in Beirut for my sixth-grade courses, the year was 1966 and life was really good.

Chapter 4

LIFE IN BEIRUT

I loved living in Beirut, Lebanon. I found the people to be so nice. When we would go shopping, we were always offered a 7up soda in a bottle with a straw or some pita with hummus. When we would go to the pool at the Excelsior Hotel , they would bring us a huge tray with Arabic



The St. George Hotel

(Pita) bread and the best Hummus you could imagine. I loved eating Shawarmas which are like Gyros only they were made with lamb meat in Beirut and had hummus and tomatoes in it. They were cooked on an upright spit and the meat would be carved off in thin layers for the shawarma. I've had Gyros in Florida, but nothing matches the original Lebanese shawarma.



Lamb Shawarma

Lebanese breads are a favorite of mine. One of my most favorites is a circular type of bread called Lebanese Kaak. It is made to look like a purse and



Lebanese Kaak Bread

inside the middle are delicious smelling spices from a blend called Za'atar consisting of oregano, basil and thyme or hyssop and sesame seeds. It's so incredibly delicious. Another really good bread is

called Lebanese Mountain Bread. When we first got to Beirut, we found a shop that sold grilled chicken. The chicken was covered in what was called “mountain bread”. It is thin as paper and covered in a garlic paste that when unwrapped, made the chicken so good. We thought it was just paper until we were told it was edible. Once we learned that, we couldn’t get enough of it!

Going to the movies was a real treat in 1966 Beirut. First time I went to the theater, I found it to be an amazing experience. The Lebanese had assigned seating back in the 60’s. Movie theaters were first class affairs. In the middle of the movie there would be an intermission. The intermission started with music and then up out of the floor an opera singer would appear and sing for everyone in the theater. I have never seen anything like it! Women and men would dress up in their best clothes.

I saw women wearing fur coats, beautiful dresses with amazing jewelry on. The men were all in suits with ties. It seemed as though money was plentiful. Lebanon was enjoying a great economy, loads of tourists would come to Beirut, and it was a prime place to travel to. The Phoenicia and St. George Hotels were absolutely stunning. The attention given to the tourist trade was first class. That being said, there was also the poorest of poor in the city, hidden from the shorefront where all the best hotels were and the Diplomats lived with their families.

The Lebanese food was pretty good, some I liked, some I didn't. When we arrived in Beirut, we had a housekeeper that was hired to cook, clean, do the laundry and all other household tasks. Mind you, these women were only paid about 17 cents per hour which was the going rate Diplomats paid. Today, I am horrified that they only got that much and did so

much work! No wonder they were always stealing from us. The housekeeper stayed in the maids' quarters because my mother traveled with my father on many of his trips. Mom would go to Spain, Italy, Paris, and many other countries. I look back on it now and wonder if I ever saw her! I had my older sister and 10 missionaries to look after my brother, younger sister and myself.

The housekeeper cooked fish for us on our first night in our new apartment. I was disgusted because she left the head on the fish with the eyes glaring up at me on my plate. I got up from the table and made my opinion known. I'm afraid I wasn't very nice and I feel bad about how I acted to this day. She did not deserve that.

Another housekeeper we had was very interesting. She was not pleasant to look at, in fact she looked a lot like the witch in Sleeping Beauty that

gave Sleeping Beauty the poisoned apple. Her name was Hanny. She spoke very good English and was very interested in what I had to say about just about anything. I remember one weekend she was asked to help out with a wedding held at our apartment for a Lebanese doctor and his bride at my mothers request. Even at my young age, I found this to be very odd. He's a doctor and I don't think I ever heard what his new bride was, but I don't think their wedding was sanctioned by the powers that be. My dad had a small spy camera and took some pictures of the wedding without anyone knowing. I had suspicions my dad was doing something else besides working for the FAA.

Hanny was sitting in the kitchen, and I came in to visit her. She was crying. She looked at me with her dark brown eyes and it was one of those ugly cries, we all have those ugly cries right? I asked her what

was wrong? She said the doctor's bride came into the kitchen and demanded that Hanny not to come out of the kitchen and show her face because she was too ugly. Hanny had warts on her face and was old. She was probably much younger than she looked, I'm pretty sure she had a rough life in her past. My heart broke for her. I was only 13, but I could feel her heart, her pain, her shame. This was the moment I learned about true compassion and how it feels. I held her hand and told her she didn't need to go out there because she didn't need those people. Her job was not to be liked by them or anyone else, her job was to like herself and be proud of what she does. We were her family and she knew we did not judge her.

It was at ACS that I met Claude Salhani. We ended up going steady briefly and he gave my his really nice ID bracelet. That's what you would do

back then is wear the guys ID bracelet. We never dated, never even held hands I'm pretty sure. He was very nice and a real gentleman. He was going to the Catholic school where my brother was going. Since



Claude Salhani and our friend Bonnie Sharp

my brother played drums and had a band, Claude would come over to our apartment to hang out. We had a lot of special friends back then. Today, Claude Salhani is a currently a world-famous war correspondent, has written multiple best-selling

books, been in nearly every war in the Middle East and was even at the receiving end of a terrorists firing squad. He has remained a very good friend of mine.



Claude Salhani, War
Correspondant

Some of our other friends would come by since most of them were all were musicians. Mind you, we are only talking about the seventh or eighth grade. One good friend of my brother that would often come by our house and hang out was Stewart Copeland and his brother Ian. They all played the drums it seems.

Their father was the CIA Station Chief assigned to the American Embassy in Beirut. Stuart Copeland was and continues to be very successful drummer.



Stewart Copeland

He was the drummer of The Police and continues to have an amazing career and has kept in touch with Cary.

Cary seemed to have all the luck in world. His first girlfriend was the daughter of the American Ambassador to Lebanon, Ambassador Porter. The Ambassador had two daughters that were twins.

Cary would invite her to a movie date, and she would arrive at our apartment to pick him up in an official US Ambassador's limousine with the American flags flying on the front. They would go to the movie and



At ACS with the American Ambassador Porter's daughter.

then be dropped off back at home. I remember we all made fun of him having his girlfriend pick him up in a limousine.

Cary bought himself a Ludwig silver sparkle drum set that he was so proud of. He was only 14



Sac on vocals, Cary on drums, Lee Whistler on acoustics and David Bach on keyboards

years old at that time. He formed a band with two Indonesian guys, Sac and Harry Djaruman and called their band Los Trios. Sac was the older brother and singer of the band and also played guitar while his brother Harry would play the bass and Cary, my brother, was on the drums. They were really very good. They played at many of the hotels on the

Beirut coast including the St. George Hotel and the Phoenicia. Their band was in high demand.



Sac, my brother and I as I was singing White Rabbit. I had no idea what that song meant at that time

My father bought me my first guitar and Sac volunteered to teach me how to play it. In six months, I was teaching him, and we still remained friends for a long time. Sac came to Germany when we were transferred there and stayed with us for many years, We have lost touch with him, I'm hoping he is all right. Sac was like a big brother to

me and such a great influence. He and his brother were the first Muslim's I had ever met. They taught me many things about the Muslim faith. Our family had great respect for him and his family. He fit into our family like he was part of it.

During the summer of 1966, the 6th fleet came to town. They arrived in Beirut and it was a really important event. My mother was the social director for the American Embassy, so she planned this fabulous canteen for the sailors. Everyone was looking forward to that evening because when sailors arrive, who knows what all happens.

Pre-canteen, my mother had arranged for my brother Cary to have a French tutor because he wasn't doing very well in French at school. Mom was paying for only Cary to have this French tutor. The tutor advised my mom that I could sit in on the lessons for free. I wasn't even taking French but was

expected to spend several hours a week in this tutoring session with my brother. I refused to go along with this any longer and so my mother grounded me, and I was not allowed to attend the canteen. I was so angry with her because not only was she making me miss the canteen, and not only was I not taking French, but it was my 14th birthday. We had about four or five sailors over for dinner that night and they talked my mom into letting me go to the canteen. We also got a VIP tour of the Navy ship which was incredibly interesting I thought. I couldn't believe how huge that ship was.

The evening of the canteen finally arrived two days later. It was a huge event. My dad was sitting at a table like he always does and just watched my mom do whatever it is she wants to do. He loved to see her happy. I was dancing with the sailors, and I



That group of sailors in the back, they are dancing with
my mother

glanced around and saw this huge circle of sailors all gathered around something or someone. I made my way over to see what was going on, and lo and behold, it was my mother dancing with all the sailors, they were lined up to dance with her. My older sister Linda begged my dad to get my mom out of there so she could at least have a chance to get some attention

from some sailors. My mother loved to dance and more than that, she loved music.

Mom loved music and every weekend I would wake up to Trini Lopez blasting Lemon Tree from the stereo my parents had. My dad loved his electronics. He had a Dual turntable, an Akai reel to



One of the many dance parties held in our apartment. These are all Diplobrats from many countries. Even Ambassador Porter's daughters were there!

reel tape recorder, Fisher speakers and music was constantly playing in our home.

I never knew a house could get dirty. Mom would have the entire house cleaned windows and all before we even got up in the mornings. She would clean the house before the housekeepers would arrive because she would be horrified if anyone thought she was less than perfect. I kind of inherited that trait, but I'm not obsessed with cleaning windows at 0 dark hundred in the morning nor am I obsessed with cleaning windows during Covid now.

We spent nearly every weekend at the American Embassy Beach Club. It was very nice, had a large pool that had a high dive and a lower diving board and also a children's pool. While we would go swimming, my mom and all her embassy friends would have a beer or two and just talk. My mom loved to play bridge and tried to get a bridge club



American Embassy Beach Club

going, but the interest wasn't there. There was just too much for embassy wives to do between shopping and tourism. The swimming pools were filled with salt water from the Mediterranean. My brother and I spent more time in the sea than in the swimming pool. I learned how to dive in that pool though and got pretty good with flips, swan dives, fork knives, and hand stands from the high diving board. It was fun until I did a flip and came very close to knocking

my head on the dive platform. This really scared me, and I had a mental block about doing any more flips.

One of the trips to the beach club has stayed in my mind ever since it happened. All of my siblings were in the car with my mother driving. We were headed home from the beach club, and it was about a 30-minute drive to home. There was a really bad



The Embassy beach club adult pool

sandstorm and for some reason my mother pulled into the grassy area between the two lanes on the

highway. She proceeded to yell at us to “get out” and she would come back for us. I’m thinking, “What is wrong with her?” We stood in this middle grassy area trying to shield our faces from the horrible sand blowing at us that stung very badly. After about 30 minutes or so, she came back and picked us up. She was calm as could be and could never answer the question “why did you do that to us?” Never did she give me an answer to that impulsive action she put us in danger for. We figured it was the Lucille Ball in her coming out.

The Lebanese were very interesting people through my eyes. From our apartment balcony, I could look down at the coffee house see the Arabic men gathered having a good time just chatting and smoking their Hookuh’s with each other. I was curious about the pants they would wear because the pants were very baggy in the middle and hung down

past their knees. The story I was told, and I apologize to anyone reading this if this is incorrect, but this is what we were told when we lived in Beirut. The



Passing time with their friends and water pipes.

Arabic men were so relaxed and just seemed to love to visit with friends and smoke for hours.

One of my favorite places to go was to the souks. The souks back in the 1960's was a lot different than the souks that were popular before the Beirut explosion in July 2020. We bought a lot of leather, food, fruit, and a bunch of brass trays, cups, lamps,

and everything else brass. Looks beautiful on the shelf at the souks, great price, but it's a lot of time



The Souks

and elbow grease keeping it up! My mom worked so hard trying to keep all the brass and silver she bought polished. She also loved to buy Turkish rugs. She bought so many of them, the rug person at the souks would stop by our apartment and unroll them and she would choose what she wanted, always getting the



Me playing my guitar (one of the many brass trays behind me)
price she wanted, not what he wanted. She got really good at price haggling. It was almost embarrassing.

The men and women that peddled their goods were amazing. I saw men pushing carts uphill full of fruits and vegetables and women carrying baskets and breads on their heads. They just wanted to be able to put food on their tables and support their families. I often thought how I would love to know their stories. They are such hard workers.



Pushing his cart to sell his goods

My mother had a friend who owned his own jewelry store in Beirut. He wanted an American refrigerator and mom wanted a full karat diamond ring. They made a trade giving him our new



Carrying her goods on her head

refrigerator and she got a beautiful, perfect 1 ct. diamond ring. My dad picked up another refrigerator on his next trip to Incirlik AFB in Adana, Turkey at the base exchange. I do believe my dad got the better deal. However, the jeweler was thrilled to have an American refrigerator that no one else had.



The Mediterranean Sea during large storm

“The beauty of the sea is that it never shows any weakness and never tires of the countless souls that unleash their broken voices into its secret depths.”
Kassem, Zeina (2014). Crossing

The weather in Beirut was absolutely beautiful. I live in Florida now and the weather in Beirut is a lot like Florida. Humid, very warm and storms both mild and strong. I don't recall Beirut ever having a hurricane, but they did have a huge storm in 1968 that breached the sea walls and flooded the Corniche and most of Beirut. There was a man that was washed away when the waves went over the sea wall. My dad and I saw it coming and there was nothing we could do about it. I felt awful for his family and kids if he had any.

CHAPTER 5

MY FATHER, MY HERO



My father worked at the Beirut International Airport for the Federal Aviation Administration and his main office was in the American Embassy



The FAA DC-3 unpressurized plane

however, my dad's mission with the FAA was out of the Beirut airport. I don't believe my dad had to go to the Embassy except to pick up mail, meetings, and other secret stuff I had no idea about. Dad flew in and out of every country in the Middle East such as Libya, Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Ethiopia and many more. Dad told me the flight crew had the job of going to all the countries in the Middle East and Europe such as Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Egypt, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Africa, Turkey, Spain, Italy, and many more I'm sure, to make certain the radar used



My dad, the navigator for the Beirut FAA-FIG

at these foreign airports were up to US radar standards for our planes. That's his story and he stuck to it! I never knew exactly what he was doing.

I do recall flying with him a few times on the DC-3 and noticed next to where my dad sat, there was a



American Embassy of Beirut, Lebanon, 1966

huge camera that went through the floor of the plane. Dad was very good at what he did. He was even better at keeping secrets. We heard rumors that he was working with the CIA doing ground surveillance and taking pictures of airfields in Egypt and other countries. I have no proof or documentation, except that I saw the huge camera sticking up through the floor of the plane so ground pictures could be taken. This was a DC-3 propellor plane without any decompression capabilities. One of the boys whose

father was a pilot, traveled with us to Egypt and upon landing, his ear began hurting terribly. I remember him crying, and his was a big 14-year-old! When we finally landed, he had to go to the hospital and have his ear lanced. Every time I land in any plane now, I am chewing on gum or something.



A painting my dad brought back from Ethiopia. Painted with an eyelash and gold paint. The detail is incredible.



Area 51 plaque given to my father with The Road Runner on it

When my dad finally retired from the FAA after 25 years, he went to work at the Nevada Test Site in Area 51 and was assigned to Special Projects. I have no idea what he did there either. He worked for EG&G which was based in Las Vegas. He would leave for McCarran Las Vegas Airport at 3am and arrive back at home at 3pm. He worked at the Test

Site for 26 years and also retired from that position. He was given several plaques when he left, and my brother and I noticed the plaques all had a road runner on them. My brother Cary did some research and discovered that the Road Runners at Area 51 Special Projects were CIA guys assigned to some secret stuff. I was pretty sure there weren't any UFO's he was involved with, but lately with all the UFO sightings in the new as seen by commercial pilots, I'm not so sure now.

I recall a conversation I had with him before he got Alzheimers Disease. I asked him what he does at the Area 51 test site. He told me it's a secret. I then said to him, "Well, if you did radar in the Navy is that what you are doing now? He smiled and said, "It's a secret." I then asked him "So if you are following someone or something, is it ours or is it theirs (not knowing who theirs would be in my

mind)?” My dad would only say, “They are ours now.” That’s the most I ever got out of him. He certainly was true to his mission.

As a requirement to work in Area 51, he was subject to a lie detector test every 30 days. At first, he was concerned because they would ask him if he ever took anything from the site. He had come home one time with an Area 51 pen in his shirt pocket and felt totally guilty about that. Apparently, pens weren’t a big deal though.

My dad could do no wrong in my eyes. He taught me about cars, how to change a tire, check the air pressure, how to fish for trout in the Colorado mountains, and why everyone needs a dog in their life. Dad loved his dogs. He had dachshunds, Yorkies, we even had a stray large Poodle in Beirut he brought home one day that had mange. When we lived in Germany, he adopted a large Dachshund

from a German man who we later found out was a Nazi during the war. The Dachshund's name was Axl. This had to be the meanest dog ever, but he was beautiful and very muscular. A definite alpha dog. This dog would sit on your feet while you were at the dining table and stick his neck out and growl the entire time.



Ed & Geri Lunsford 1948

Even though my dad was always there for me, I knew that his first true love was my mother. He told all four of us kids that whether our mother was right or wrong, he will always take her side to keep the peace. No questions asked. We understood this and never challenged him to choose.

My dad ended up getting Alzheimer's in his 70's and he lived with our family for a few years. My mom was certain that working at the Nevada Test



Three generations- my father, my son Ryan, my grandson
Breghten

Site caused his decline due to all the radiation. He didn't recall much but he always knew who we were. He had lost 90 percent of his hearing over the years from all the noise on the FAA plane, which was not a pressurized plane. I don't know if that contributed to his Alzheimer's, or if radiation from the test site was a factor in it. Most likely he had Alzheimer's because it runs in my family. My grandma Lunsford (my dad's mother) had Alzheimer's for over 15 years and finally succumbed to it at the age of 99 years old. My mother believed he got it because of all the underground testing that was done while he worked there.

I've often thought I was cheated from having memories and a legacy of my dad. I don't know him except that he was an amazing father and best friend, I didn't know what he did, but I've certainly drawn up a lot of theories in my head. What I do know for

sure is that he was chosen for the team because, per the website for the Roadrunners International, “Each member of the Special Projects team was selected for his and her unique qualifications, family stability, ethical, integrity, and moral qualities” and that is enough for me. Over those 50 years, I can remember my father saying to me over and over again, “remember whose last name you have.” I have never forgotten and to this day I honor the Lunsford name and the sense of humor we are all blessed with from my dad.

CHAPTER 6

RELIGION IN BEIRUT

It was nothing for me to share my Sunday, and everyday as a matter of fact, with two religions or faiths. On Sunday it was natural to share our hymns with a Muezzin for the Adhan or “call to prayer or also for the Khutbah or sermons at the same time. You see, our second apartment in Beirut had a mosque directly behind us and we were treated every day to the man in the mosque singing. My dad got to where he would sing along with him, which never worked out very well. We learned about the Muslim faith from my

“Indonesian Big Brother” Sac Djaruman who was himself a Muslim and who we came to love as a member of our family. He is the one who taught me how to play the guitar and was the singer of my



Getting ready for church, yes we were moving that fast. (Note the camel saddle seat.)

brother’s band Las Trios and later Shady Grove in Germany.

On Sundays, we held church for all the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints or Mormons in

Beirut in our living room, usually about 25 or so members from Armenians to Lebanese and other Arab nationalities. Most spoke English and if someone didn't, the missionaries would translate. This really made for an interesting Sunday I found. I loved seeing all the different people and how they interacted with everyone in the room. Everyone was polite and respectful and eager to hear what the missionaries had to say, that is everyone except my dad, my brother, my sisters and myself. My dad would just stay in his bedroom and read. He wasn't much into religion. He did enjoy kidding around with the missionaries though.

My father and his parents and ancestors were all raised in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints also known as Mormons. My mother's family were all Presbyterian's from England. My mother was converted to the Mormon faith before I was

born. I think she joined because of my sister Linda's health problems and disability and because my sister had the faith that the Lord would heal her, and so my mother joined the church also. My father was Mormon, but as long as I've known him, he has never been a regular church goer. He would tell us that religion was stuffed down his throat as a kid and wanted nothing to do with it, but he supported my mother in whatever she believed in.

My dad enjoyed having his beer and scotch on the rocks every now and then and my mother would go to church when it was convenient. I believe she was more of a social church goer also known as a "Jack Mormon". She also liked a beer every now and then, especially at the beach club. She really tried to make us kids go, but we weren't really into religion either. I went because I was a "people pleaser" and always wanted to make my mother happy. As an

adult now, I've learned that being a people pleaser only hurts yourself.

That all changed when we got a call from a church official from the Swiss mission. He advised us that 10 missionaries had just arrived in Beirut to complete their missions, which were about two years long and would we be interested in having a visit from them. My entire world changed at that moment, and I found that these young men would end up guiding my moral compass that would also guide me throughout my lifetime.

In 1965, the missionaries, all 10 of them, came to visit us and my mom was thrilled to be able to feed them, entertain them, talk to them, and care for them. We became their home away from home. We would sit around the living room and listen to the newest Bill Cosby comedy albums and laugh and laugh. We all enjoyed comedy a great deal. We would play

games, chess, checkers, listen to music, talk about their families and their homes and the people they meet while spreading the gospel.

Every Sunday morning, my mom and I would rush around getting the room set up for Sacrament



The Sacrament table with the Arabic bread and water meeting. Everything had to be perfect for my mother. She is a perfectionist when it comes to entertaining even if it was a church meeting. The Sacrament is a meeting the Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-Day Saints has every Sunday. Typically, it lasts an hour and there is an hour of Sunday school along with a women's meeting known as Relief Society and a men's Priesthood meeting. Missionaries truly loved the Armenian population as the Armenians were the most open to hearing about the Mormon religion and welcomed the missionaries into their homes.

We were talking to this one missionary whose name was Elder Roger Buck, he told us that he was born in Bountiful, Utah. He said his parents were from Evanston, Wyoming and graduated from Evanston High School. My mom was shocked! She asked what their full names were, and it turned out she knew his parents from when they lived in



Elder Buck and myself wearing a Red Cap given to me by a Lebanese police officer.

Evanston. She asked “Elder Buck” what is your first name? He replied “Roger.” It was at that moment that she remembered holding Elder Buck when he was a little baby while visiting the Buck family. He became very special to our family.

Elder Buck became a big brother to me, and I could ask him any advice and he would give me his honest opinion. He also taught me valuable ideas such as putting lemon on my hair to make it blonder.

He always had super blonde hair and a great tan, which meant to me he wasn't spending all his time spreading the gospel. He loved catching "sun rays" as he would tell me. He may have been a tad vain.

My mother has always been a very spontaneous and impulsive person. She would make decisions in



Snow tubing with the LDS missionaries

a split second without thinking twice about whether or not her decisions were good ones. My dad was known to be the only person that could reel her in, but he generally was as impulsive as her, just not as

loud. So, one morning, my mom offered to take two of the missionaries to the mountains which had just had a large snowfall for some great inner tubing in the snow.

Lebanon has the most beautiful mountains and located at the top of the mountains are the The Cedars of Lebanon. The cedar tree is the famous tree



The “Cedars of God”

on the Lebanese flag that Lebanon is known for. The Cedars of Lebanon have only a few trees left as they are protected now.

The Cedars of Lebanon were cut down about five thousand years ago, and is now called the “Cedars of God,” a 250-acre grove that contains all that is left of

the beautiful cedars that covered the mountains of Lebanon. These cedar forests covered huge swaths of the central mountain range which is between Syria, the Mediterranean Sea and Israel and Palestine. Lebanon's cedar trees are famous for providing lumber for King Solomon which he used to build the first temple in Jerusalem. The Phoenicians used Lebanese cedar wood for shipbuilding, the Ottomans used the cedar wood for railroad ties and the cedars also provided resin for mummification. So, as you can see, the Cedars of Lebanon have been important to the entire region. Over all those years, the incredible cedar forests disappeared over a span of about 3,000 years. I feel very fortunate to have been able to play among the trees and go inner tubing with some Mormon missionaries and to retain that memory for a lifetime and beyond by writing this book for my family.

My family took the missionaries on several trips during their mission to Beirut. We drove to Sidon, Tyre and Byblos which are all south of Beirut. We



Walking the shores of Tyre and Byblos with the missionaries and some locals

took four missionaries with us on that trip. We walked along the shores of Tyre which in the Bible there are scriptures of Jesus walking “along the shores of Tyre”. These cities were run by the Phoenicians and were independent city states around 2500 B.C. There are excavations all over these cities

that have mysterious burial sites of people in layers of sand. Some of the people were buried with weapons in brick graves and children were found buried in clay pots. We explored these burial sites all day. My father was obsessed with going to as many ruins as he could. My dad was a huge history buff and he loved reading, visiting and hearing about all the history in this part of the world.



Medusa's sarcophagus (so they say)

One of the grave sites we visited was very strange. The guide that was with us, who was a local,

told us that the coffin was the sarcophagus of Medusa. We all looked inside of it and could see the imprint of a head that had snakes coming out of it. Now, I know I was only 13 years old, but even I knew Medusa was not a real person (or was she)?As we



Artifacts I found on the beach in Tyre and Sidon

walked along the shores of Tyre, I spent some time digging down into the sand because the locals told us that artifacts were still being found. After some time digging, I found two small clay heads, and a small pipe. We also found several metal belt buckles, and hundreds of Phoenician Tiles. The tiles most likely

came from the Crusaders Castle that extended out into the sea in Tyre.



The Crusaders Castle in Tyre



Byblos Ruins

I enjoyed having all the missionaries around. They made holidays extra special for us. At Christmas time we had an extra long table and sat my entire family of six and 10 missionaries. It was a



Christmas dinner with the missionaries

feast fit for a king and my mother was in her glory. Afterward, we would sit around, several would play games, chess, checkers or just listen to the newest Barbra Streisand album or jazz albums my father would buy at the BX in Incirlik at the AFB in Adana,

Turkey. They would enjoy the potato chips, the cans of A&W root beer which you could not get in Beirut then. I baked Lemon Meringue pies, cookies, cakes and breads for them to take home to their apartments. We had so much fun. The missionaries were from everywhere. We had missionaries from Brazil, United States and other countries.

My mom consider herself a Jack Mormon which basically means you believe in the church, but you don't adhere to all the rules. I believe she enjoyed the social life in the church, which is why most people go to any church and is healthy for mental health. She saw the missionaries as friends or even adopted sons that she and dad felt they had to make sure they were safe. We were always there for them. My mom continued to enjoy her occasional beer and my dad continued to have his scotch on the rocks. Most of the time when the missionaries were over, my dad

would go to his room because they drove him crazy at times and reading was his favorite thing to do. Besides, they kept my mom from nagging him to death (my words, not his). My mother was a very high maintenance woman and loved to talk.

When I was married, I was very active, and was even married in the Mormon temple. The marriage did not work out needless to say. I left the church and so did my children when they were old enough to make their own decisions on what they believed in, all on our own volition. I consider myself more spiritual than religious today. No matter what religion a person is, everyone seems to believe there is a higher power above which gives most people a purpose, a meaning, and hope for a brighter future for themselves and their families. I believe there is a God above, I believe that Jesus is his son and that there is a holy spirit. I believe in miracles, healings,

and blessings. I also believe that when we die, we will be reunited with our loved ones and our pets in heaven.

CHAPTER 7

TRIP TO CAIRO, EGYPT



My visa stamp leaving Cairo

had the wonderful opportunity to accompany my dad and the kids of some of the FAA families on a trip to Cairo, Egypt. We arrived at the Beirut International Airport and checked in at the hangar where the FAA plane was parked. The FAA crew in Beirut worked for the Federal Aviation Agency under the umbrella of the Civil Aeronautics Agency. The group my dad belonged to, called the Flight Inspection Group (FIG) which was a part of the FAA

since the start and is charged with flight safety.



The Beirut FAA DC-3

Nowadays, GPS satellites provide the basis for air navigation and changes to aviation. With continued growth of air transportation, new technology supports flight inspection growth which has changed over the years. The foundation of flight inspection may have changed from the 1960's, but the original foundation of the program, which is to ensure aviation safety, still remains today.

We boarded the plane, which wasn't pressurized at all, and chose our seats. There were about 20 seats in the plane that I could remember, and many of the children belonging to the crew were on that flight.

As I'm looking out the small dirty window at the ground crew getting the plane ready to fly, I looked to the front and noticed most of the crew on their knees praying. This scared me to death and wasn't funny at all. I quickly realized this crew loved playing jokes on all of us. I laughed after I realized they were messing with us.

The flight to Cairo wasn't very long that I recall. We landed and were taken to a villa owned by an Egyptian family in Cairo that the crew knew well. The villa was beautiful with lots of flowers planted in the front courtyard which had a gate we walked through to get to the house. The house was beautiful inside. I loved seeing all the Egyptian decorations placed throughout the home. It was so warm and inviting.

A bountiful dinner was made for all of us. I have never seen so much food on one table in my life,

except maybe Christmas and Thanksgiving. The



Cairo villa we stayed at

common foods I remember were laban which is yogurt and labneh which is cream cheese. I could handle those dishes just fine. Since my parents grew eggplant back when we lived in Oklahoma, I was used to the taste of it and actually really loved fried

eggplant. The Arab dish is a pureed eggplant called baba ghanoush.



The hummus was the best I have ever tasted. Arab food also commonly consists of sheep eyes, lungs, spleens, spinal cords, and lamb's tongue.



These dishes never passed by my lips, not then and not now.

The sight of the glorious ancient monuments of history was breathtaking! We went with several of the FAA families that took the trip with us. The most exciting thing I looked forward to was the Sight and Sound show featuring the history of the Pyramids and the Sphinx. It was breathtaking! The show was





The Sphinx with the Great Pyramid and another Pyramid

about how the Pyramids and the Sphinx were built and how the nose of the Sphinx was shot off by a cannonball fired by Napoleon, but that just isn't true. The Sphinx was created in the 1700's which is well before the days of Napoleon. An Egyptian Arab historian wrote in the 15th century that the nose was destroyed by a Sufi Muslim named Muhammad Sa'im al-Dahr in 1378. Apparently, Egyptian peasants would make offerings to the Great Sphinx to control the flooding cycle so they would have a good harvest. Sa'im al-Dahr wasn't pleased by the



My mom at the Great Pyramid with a pilot's wife

devotion of the peasants to the Sphinx, so he destroyed the nose of it and was later executed for doing so. This made me wonder if that old saying “Don't cut off the nose to spite your face” came from this, which is an expression to describe a needlessly self-destructive over-reaction to a problem.

When we arrived in Giza, we were greeted by three or four Egyptian men taking the money to enter the historical site. I was watching from the back seat of the car all the wheeling and dealing he was doing

in broken English and thought it was not just interesting, but really humorous. My father handed him a couple of Egyptian pounds to pay our fee. When the guy taking the money got the change out, he put the pounds in my dad's hand first and then the change on top. As my dad was closing his hand, the guy slid the pounds out and then denied doing any



The camels are coming hoorah hoorah!

such thing. My dad is not one to cause drama, so he laughed, and we went on our way.

As we were driving to where the pyramids were, there were a couple of camel herders who obviously made money by giving tourists rides on their camels. They came galloping up to us singing “The camels are coming hoorah hoorah, the camels are coming hoorah.” It was so hilarious I can remember them to



My parents on the camel



Me and my camel

this day! We paid them the “baksheesh” which is money, and we all got our rides on the camels.

As I recall, camels are not very pleasant animals. They spit, they stink, and they are super uncomfortable to sit on. Getting off of them is a talent. The camel kneels on his front legs, and you are facing the ground and have to figure out how you are going to get off of this animal. I find it fascinating that a camels have three eyelids and two

rows of eyelashes which protect their eyes in the sand. They can survive long periods of time without food or water. When they haven't eaten for a long time, they use the fat in their hump for energy which causes the hump to decrease in size. Isn't nature just amazing? Now, if they could do something about the spitting and the smell.

After the camel ride, we went to see the Great Pyramids. My brother and I decided it would be a great idea to climb to the top of one of the pyramids



The Great Pyramid

and be the first to put our names on the top. I chickened out since the pyramid was so high, but Cary climbed all the way to the top and found when he got there a ton of names and initials were already written on the top. Cary seemed so defeated when he got back down to the ground. I thought I would die laughing at him!

The pyramids are absolutely amazing and wondrous to look at. The great pyramid is one of the



The pyramids are an absolute miracle

seven wonders of the world. The great pyramid was constructed by slaves serving a powerful and merciless Egyptian pharaoh. I had seen the movie “The Ten Commandments” and could just imagine all those slaves building these pyramids in the hot sun with their upper bodies roasting in the sun wearing just a white garment on their lower body. They were beaten with whips and expected to move tons of rock, cut into huge slabs to build this amazing tomb.



The Great Pyramid entrance to Pharaoh Khufu chamber

The great pyramid was built around 2560 B.C and has a subterranean burial chamber under the actual pyramid which it is assumed was opened and robbed many years ago. The Pharaoh Khufu's sarcophagus rests in the King's chamber. It was meant to connect the fourth dynasty King Khufu with the Gods. It is also known as the pyramid of Cheops. This pyramid took over 20 years to build and is the most massive thing ever constructed. It was built from over two million stone blocks, each weighing more than two tons each. The stones were cut using nothing but copper tools. The sides of the blocks are aligned precisely to points of a compass and differ in length by no more than two inches. The great pyramid was the tallest man-made structure in the world for over 4000 years. It's hard to even imagine the amount of human strength and endurance these slaves had to build so many of these tombs.

There is another pyramid called the Step Pyramid



The Step or Djoser Pyramid

or the Djoser Pyramid. This pyramid looks like a bunch of stairs clear to the top. It is pretty unique. It is a six tier, four-sided pyramid and is the earliest colossal stone building in Egypt built in the 27th century BC and is a central feature of a huge mortuary complex in an enormous courtyard surrounded by ceremonial structures. I found Giza

nothing short of amazing and learned so much of the history of Egypt at the age of 12. I truly feel I could not have gotten a better education than my life during my junior high school years.

We also went to see the huge statue of King Ramses II. King Ramses erected more monuments and statues and fathered more children than any other pharaoh. He is regarded by Egyptians as Ramses the Great, and he reigned for 66 years. He is considered to be the at the height of Egypt's power. A huge



King Ramses II

statue with King Ramses lying prone was built in his honor. The size of this statue was incredible!



King Ramses II temple in Abu Simbel

King Ramses had a monumental temple built which wasn't discovered until 1813. The King wanted to make sure everyone knew he had built this temple, so he had four over 60-foot tall, seated statues of him at the entrance. The temple was dedicated to the sun gods and extends 185 feet into a cliff. The temple had to be saved when it was discovered during the building of the Aswan Dam

and risked being flooded out. Our tour guide explained to us that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization or UNESCO had to save it by raising it about 200 feet for preservation.



King Tut death mask

The next day we traveled to The Valley of Kings to the Grand Egyptian Museum. I found King Tut's tomb to be absolutely amazing! All the gold and

silver, the carvings, the hieroglyphics cannot be described enough to do it justice. There were glass displays of nuts and raisins and all forms of food that were placed in his tomb so he could eat in the hereafter.



Hieroglyphics from the tomb

Luxor was about 9 hours from Cairo and was a long ride but completely worth it. What I remember the most was the gold death mask, the mummy of King Tut, and the food. The gold and ornamental jewelry was also just beautiful. There were 5,398 items found in the tomb, including a solid gold coffin, a face mask, several thrones, archery bows



King Tut's mummy

which it is guessed that he was very good with a bow.

There were trumpets, some wine, sandals and fresh



underwear. King Tut was born in the 1300 B.C. era and was the last of his family dynasty. He was a



small guy, only about 5 foot 6 inches and had several physical disabilities. The tomb has been restored since I saw it in 1966.



Painting my parents bought of the story of Bethsheba's visit to King Solomon

My parents bought a beautiful painting that looked like a comic book on canvas. The painting depicts the story about the Queen of Sheba, whose name was actually Bathsheba. Bathsheba came to Jerusalem with her trusted entourage of people to visit King Solomon, whose wisdom she had heard

was to be praised. After testing the Jewish king with hard riddles and seeing the splendor of his court, she recognized the Divine source of Solomon's wisdom, and acknowledged him as her superior. King Solomon ended up giving her everything she wanted. According to some traditions this included a sexual relationship, from which a son later emerged who would become the ancestor of the Ethiopians. The painting also shows that they “bed” together and you can see a baby in the lower pictures. This painting also remains in our family.

CHAPTER 8

WAR COMES TO BEIRUT

It was the summer of 1967 and as usual, a gorgeous day outside. We lived very near the Mediterranean Sea, and I could hear the sound of the waves crashing on the shore, a sound I had grown to love. There was an unexpected knock at our door. The man at the door had a few words with my dad and then handed him a manilla envelope and left. My dad looked at us with concern on his face, probably realizing the huge task he was facing to get his family to the American University of Beirut grounds, check in with the Embassy, and make sure his job site at the Beirut airport was secure. He told us we had two hours to pack and get to the American University of Beirut grounds because we were being



On the morning of June 5, 1967, Israeli fighter-bombers swooped over the Mediterranean toward airbases in Egypt and in less than three hours, destroyed the bulk of the Egyptian air force. A similar fate awaited the air forces of Jordan, Syria and Iraq.

Retrieved from ynet.news <https://historycollection.com/>

evacuated and that Israel was going to invade Lebanon sending thousands of Palestinian refugees across the border.

I had no idea what any of that meant. All I knew is that I could have one suitcase and to pack the most important things because we didn't know when we



Israeli IDF forces at the Western Wall for the first time during Six-Day War. Photo Courtesy of YNetNews.com

would be back. So, I packed all my stuffed animals making my mother very unhappy with me when we reached our destination. We were not allowed to turn on any electricity and the headlights on our car had to be painted blue. We were to go to AUB to catch our assigned planes and would be flown to some unknown destination. My dad assured all of us he would keep us all safe from any harm.

The history of the Middle East is very complex. It starts in 1917, when Sir Arthur James Balfour, a

British Foreign Secretary promised Palestine to the Jewish people as their national home. It was not until 1948 that the state of Israel was established. Because Arab land was taken, the Arab countries retaliated and thus invaded Israel. Border violence continued. The missionaries would tell me stories they had heard from some of the Palestinians they had been teaching of how they had relatives that had been driven out of Jerusalem when Israel formed. Apparently, they had left by foot with only what they could carry. When I asked if the Palestinians felt as though they were forced out, the missionaries had gotten the answer that non-Jews could exist side-by-side with the Israelis, but they would not be able to vote, work or own land, nor have any other privileges. As a result, the Palestinian refugees settled in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

On May 27, the American Embassy in Beirut was bombed. From what I understand, some windows were blown out and since it was next to the American University of Beirut (AUB), there was a concern that the University was also in danger. On June 2, there were some more demonstrations protesting U.S. Policy in the Middle East in Beirut. It was about this time that my dad had been getting information about the possibility of getting things together as we may be evacuated with all the rest of the Americans.

In June of 1967, Israel launched a pre-emptive strike against Egypt, Syria and Jordan called Operation Focus. Over 200 aircraft took off from Israel converging on Egypt from the North. Catching the Egyptians by surprise, Israel assaulted 18 other airfields and eliminated about 90 percent of the Egyptian air force while they were still on the



Israeli soldiers overlook Jerusalem

Retrieved from ynet.news, <https://historycollection.com/>

ground. After attacking Egypt, Israel then attacked the air forces of Syria, Jordan and Iraq. On June 5th, Israel had won full control of the skies over most of the Middle East and gained air superiority. There was also a ground war that started on June 5th as the Israeli infantry forces went across the border into the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula.

On June 7, 1967, Israeli troops responded to an attack by Jordan, who apparently had gotten misinformation, by counterattacking on East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Israel captured the old city of Jerusalem at that time. On June 9th, there was an intense air attack when Israeli tanks and troops advanced on the Golan Heights in Syria.

Finally on June 10, the United Nations brokered a ceasefire which took immediate effect. In 1967 there was a massive Palestinian exodus from the war where around 280,000 to 325,000 of the Palestinians fled out of the territories captured by Israel during and in the aftermath of the six-day war. So, as you can see, the conflict in the Middle East has had no real resolutions and it's all about the land. As Americans, we understand this concept.

On June 5, which is the day war was declared between Israel and the Arab World and is also the day Israel attacked the airfields in Egypt, Jordan and Syria, we got word that we were to leave Beirut before evening. At around noon that day, the American Embassy representative came to our door, handing my father a packet and telling us to pack one



June 22, 1967, Palestinian refugees carry their belongings as they prepare to cross the wrecked Allenby Bridge over the Jordan River from the Israeli-occupied section of Jordan. Photo Courtesy of Times of India

bag per person and go to the staging area for the evacuation.

The evacuation kit included the following items:

Identification or control booklet and instructions

A check sheet.

A form to be executed for disposition of effects.

Vehicle Registration cards

An American flag label for our car windshield

An identity label in Arabic to put on our car

American flags to be put on our door

Individual identity tags to be affixed to clothing

Inventory booklets

Tags for car keys, house keys, luggage

Labels for effects to be stored or shipped.

Labels identifying property belonging to U.S.

Government, landlord, or rented locally

giving owner's name and address

Another manilla envelope addressed to:

Administrative

American Embassy

Beirut, Lebanon

with the following items in it:

Vehicle registration card, tagged keys, copy of residence lease, Disposition of effects with authorization, receipts for utilities, deposit slips for telephone meters or rented furniture.

Inventory of personal effects and property so the embassy can facilitate your effects if needed.

Also included in the packet was a schedule of buses, a schedule of incoming and outgoing planes, location of toilet facilities, location of medical aid station, location of communications and key telephone numbers, pharmacies, hospitals, play areas, infant formula and food preparation. The general situation and current information was given

to my father on the world and Middle East conditions, transportation and housing facilities for the handicapped. My father was instructed on where to leave our car, any personal belongings, valuables and where the lost and found was. I packed my suitcase full of my sweet little stuffed animals and some underwear and I announced I was ready to go.

During the night, thousands of Americans prepared by packing one suitcase each, locked their apartment doors leaving all of their possessions behind, and advanced to the AUB staging area to be evacuated. We were among those Americans. In our case, our Lebanese concierge said he would care for our car, the keys and apartment. Not all Americans decided to evacuate, even though all were strongly encouraged to do so.



Pan Am loading up American evacuees.

My father had sternly told the missionaries when they came to see us off at the university grounds, that they had better get their belongings and get back quickly as there was only one plane left that they might be able to make. Their reply to my father was that they had a priesthood meeting scheduled for that evening and wouldn't be able to get back in time. My father was seething! He impressed upon them that this is a Middle Eastern war and the United States had ordered an evacuation of all Americans and

besides, their lives may be in danger and that “God would most likely understand”, he said sarcastically. The elders quickly left and by the time they got back to AUB, we had already left so we had no idea what happened to them.

I did find out several years later, that some of the missionaries did leave on the last plane out of Beirut, but some did not and chose to stay with the families, both Palestinian and Armenian, whom they had baptized into the church. Elder Buck was one of those. He had become very close to a Palestinian family and apparently stayed with them through the war.

My mom didn't even have time to clean up from the birthday party we had for two of the missionaries, so everything, including the cake, was left on the table. My brother decided that he was going to run downtown to pick up some pictures he had

professionally taken of his new silver sparkle Ludwig drum set. He told me that he had to run down alleys and dodge rioters, people protesting with signs, bricks and rocks being thrown and chants against Americans. When he finally got back to our apartment with his pictures and scared to death, my father was so angry with him. Cary told me he was punished enough just by the fear he experienced going to the photographer.

The following was taken from the American Association of Diplomatic Studies paper, statement by James. K Bishop Jr., Commercial Officer, 1966-1968, Beirut, Lebanon.

“We evacuated 3,300 people in 36 hours by getting Pan Am to send to Beirut eighteen aircraft, leasing a half a dozen MEA airplanes, and commandeering an American ship

which happened to be in port. The Foreign Service manual gave us the authority to do that; so we did. We put 600 people on the deck of the ship, which took them to Cyprus. It was a pretty wild time. We used the campus of the American University as the evacuation center. I sat up shop there with my consular staff--my faithful Lebanese assistants. We did the necessary documentation work for the evacuees. At one point, we heard gunfire which seemed to be getting closer and closer to us. We could see the British Embassy staff, whose chancery was next to the University compound, busy burning their classified documents on the balcony.

They also heard the gun fire; they went back inside and then returned carrying hockey sticks and cricket bats--to repel anyone who might have tried to climb into the building, I guess. As it turned out, the gun fire came from Lebanese troops who were retreating in the face of Palestinian mobs that were sweeping through the campus. We were harassed by the Palestinians who were very suspicious of the use we might be making of our walkie-talkies, but no physical damage was inflicted. At night, we did hear and see explosions in the harbor. I remember people playing guitars and singing while waiting for buses to take them to the

airport. We had to travel through neighborhoods filled with Palestinian refugees, who were presumably hostile. We had Lebanese soldiers and policemen, with machine guns, on the buses.

We took the evacuees to the airport and put them on the planes. I said goodbye to my own family. No one knew where the planes were going because Pan Am had pulled them off of their regular routes and was going to send each plane to a point where it could be used again for regular Pan Am flights. I was asked to stay in Beirut along with about 25 other embassy employees out of a complement of 225 that we had when

the war started. The staff which was left included Marines, younger officers and the DCM--the Ambassador having been ordered to evacuate. It was an exciting time for a few days.

I was the duty officer the night Nasser announced that he was resigning. I was in the chancery with just a Marine and an Army captain who dropped in for conversation. We had people grouped together in apartments located on the two main access routes to the Embassy. Someone in one of the apartments reported by radio that a mob of about 5,000 people was marching by toward the Embassy. I had been given the

name of a Captain Nohas--I believe--
at military headquarters whom I was
to call in case of an emergency. So, I
called him, and he told me that he was
aware of the mob. He said that there
were some Lebanese army tanks were
following the mob. I suggested that
perhaps it would be wiser to have the
tanks move ahead of the mob so that
they could come between it and the
Embassy. Ultimately, the tanks did
move ahead of the mob and broke the
mob up before it could do any more
damage to the Embassy. By then the
embassy had been firebombed and
shot up by protestors.”

Retrieved January 21, 2021, from <https://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Lebanon.pdf>



Photo courtesy of [history.com](https://www.history.com). Retrieved 05/19/2021 from <https://www.history.com/topics/middle-east/six-day-war>

It was a scary, dark, and treacherous time in my life as I remember. This experience provided me with so many coping skills to handle the many crises I would have throughout my life. It provided me with a sense of humanity in seeing the suffering of those who are victims of war and their ability to survive, cope and come out on the other side mostly better people, but not always. It also gave me unending compassion and love for the children who

cannot speak for themselves, who become orphans, and how important it is to comfort them with kindness, love and caring. There were over 500,000 refugees as a result of the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict.

CHAPTER 9

Evacuation

The American women and children were on the priority lists and first to be evacuated. Next were those who had no dependents such as American University of Beirut students, missionaries and tourists, followed by classified personnel, American Embassy staff, and finally the rest. It was preferable that husbands leave with their families, but it was impossible in many instances. In our case, my father was able to travel with us.

I was able to get so much information from my father over the years. He kept meticulous records and was always reading about the continuing conflicts. He left me all those records and notes he had taken during that period of time in our lives.

I have very clear memories of waiting for our plane to arrive to pick us up. We were up all night, some people had brought guitars, so we were able to play guitars and sing and have a pretty good time. Given the situation, I wasn't afraid at all, in fact, none of my friends were either. It was like a fun slumber party. There was plenty of food and drinks and things to do. But things got very serious, very quickly.

Our name was called as our plane had arrived. We had to travel in old open-air buses from the university grounds all the way to the airport, about 10 km or 6 miles that had Lebanese police or soldiers with machine guns escorting us. That doesn't seem far, but I felt as though it was taking forever. Along the way to the airport on the highway that runs along the Mediterranean, I was sitting next to my father who was in between my mother and me. My mom

was holding my younger sister. No one said anything.



Bombed out car on Beirut Road to airport

As I was looking out the glassless broken window, I saw cars that had been set on fire, other bombed out vehicles, rioters that were screaming and yelling anti-American and Israel rhetoric, and a ton of angry locals. As we continued on to our journey to the Beirut Airport, I recall looking up at my dad. He looked concerned, but calm. I knew our entire

family would be safe in his care. It was a long night but finally the sun came up and we were able to board our plane. At that point, he became my hero for life.

Both Pan Am and Middle East Airlines planes (MEA) were used, plus one ship to Cyprus. Most flights were sent to Athens, Greece; and other flights left for Ankara or Istanbul, Turkey, Rome, Italy or Frankfurt, Germany. No one knew exactly where their flights were going until the planes were in the air. Future arrangements for meeting friends and family became close to impossible and very complicated. I had learned from friends in Beirut that the Jews living in Beirut were being protected in the homes of Lebanese.

My family had decided we would take the opportunity to go on home leave instead of directly back to Beirut. My father wanted to let things calm down somewhat. So, two weeks after arriving as an

evacuee from the Arab-Israeli war in Beirut, Lebanon, we flew to America to drive from Washington D.C. to San Francisco, California and back to Washington D.C. to then head back to Beirut.

When we were evacuated Pan Am flew us to Istanbul, Turkey which was pretty exciting! The U.S. government put us up in the Hilton Hotel for two weeks until it was safe to go back to Beirut. While staying at the Hilton, we were given two deluxe suites, one for my parents and the other for all four of us kids with an adjoining door to my parents room. We had room service if we wanted, and it was completely paid for courtesy of the U.S. Government. After the first few days, my brother discovered that his girlfriend and her family was also sent to Istanbul and were staying at the same hotel. Now, he was 15 going on 21 and she is 14 going on 25. I'm pretty sure this is when he decided to make

me his look-out for the next five years. There were times when I had to put Band-Aids on his neck because of all the bruising she caused. This is another story for another time.

While in Istanbul, Turkey we took advantage of exploring the city. Istanbul is a beautiful city. We saw the Blue Mosque which is amazing, and the



The Hagia Sophia

Hagia Sophia is breathtaking. The Hagia Sophia, which is dubbed the "Eighth Wonder of the World"

is one of the most visited places in the world in terms of art and architecture history. The Hagia Sophia was built in 537 AD and was mostly famous for its massive dome. This was an engineering marvel, the world's largest building at the time. From 537 until 1453, it served as an Eastern Orthodox cathedral and the seat of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, except between 1204 and 1261, when the Fourth Crusaders converted it to a Roman Catholic cathedral under the Latin Empire. It then functioned as a Christian church for 916 years. When the Ottomans took the city, Fatih Sultan Mehmet converted Hagia Sophia into a mosque in 1453. It had the status of a being a mosque for 482 years until 1935, when the founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, converted it to a museum. Following restoration work during the Ottoman era and the adding of minarets by architect Mimar Sinan,

Hagia Sophia became one of the most important monuments of world architecture.

Recently, the President of Turkey Erdogan (1) placed an edict stating the Hagia would again be called a mosque. So, two of the most famous mosques in the world are in the city of Istanbul, Turkey. Visiting the Hagia Sophia was simply amazing. I had never seen anything so beautiful. We took some pictures and then decided to go to the Blue Mosque next. The Blue Mosque is not as big as the other mosques I have mentioned but the interior is nevertheless beautiful. It's located exactly near the sea in Istanbul. There was also a market we visited since my mother loved to shop so much and had Turkish handmade products to choose from.



The Blue Mosque

The Blue Mosque is majestic! The colors, decor, beauty is just gorgeous. It was built under the reign of Sultan Ahmet I, between 1609 and 1616, and is the last of the great imperial mosques. The building had to outdo its neighbor mosque, the Hagia Sophia, and its rival, the holy mosque of Mecca. It was built with six towers, which angered the religious orthodoxy. so in order to resolve the conflict, it was

necessary to finance and build a seventh minaret (a tall slender tower next to a mosque) in Mecca.

The Blue Mosque owes its name to the 20,000 tiles from Iznik adorning the walls. These beautifully enameled tiles are illuminated by spotlights, which give off a beautiful bluish glow in the prayer room. I'll never forget that hue of blue, it was mesmerizing! The entrance to the mosque is only open certain hours for tourists to allow for prayer time for those who worship. We were able to go into the mosque to see its beauty. We were instructed to take our shoes off, but I don't recall anyone asking my mom, myself or my sisters to cover our heads with a scarf. We could have, and probably did, I just don't recall that.



Istanbul Grand Bazarre

After leaving the Mosque, we took a taxi to the famous Turkish Souks or open market. It was absolutely amazing and crazy crowded! I had just turned 13 years old and by the time I walked out of the souks all the women in my family had a new black leather coat, leather skirt, leather boots. We were quite a site to see. Of course, my mother bought a bunch of gold jewelry and other items which I don't recall. We went back to the Istanbul Hilton and

prepared to leave for the United States a few days later. We spent the rest of our time enjoying the pool and other amenities. Finally, it was time to continue on to the United States for one month to go on home leave, which is an opportunity for Diplomats and their family to go back to home base and visit with family.

Reference:

(1) Hagia Sophia Will Be Called a Mosque-Erdogan.

Retrieved 05202021 from [TRTworld.com/turkey](https://www.trtworld.com/turkey)

CHAPTER 10

FAMILY HOME LEAVE

We flew into JFK airport and then took a taxi to a car dealer that my dad had special ordered an LTD two door car for us to take back to Beirut. I say special ordered because he had requested that the radio dials in the car be placed between the driver's



wheel and my dad's door giving him exclusive control of the radio. I guess that is

what you do when you are traveling and living with three teenagers. We were so upset when we saw what he did, and we were not in very good moods for the next day or two. My father was the kind of man that only listened to talk radio, and in 1967, FM Talk was very boring.

So, we started our six-week journey from New York to the Bay Area in California and then back to Dulles airport to fly back to Beirut as one big happy, cheerful family. When we got back to Beirut, we were driving the Comet again, so I don't have any idea what he did with the LTD. This is a mystery to me. I am assuming he made arrangements to send it to either Beirut or our next assignment which was in Frankfurt, Germany.

Home leave consisted of our entire family, my dad, my mom, my big sister Linda, my brother Cary, my little sister Brenda and myself. We were all piled

into a six-passenger sedan and sentenced to life day and night with the family for six weeks. We did very well actually, with only a few hiccups here and there, but we did all survive I'm happy to report.

I have to say what an awesome father I had. I discovered The Monkees show that started a 3pm every weekday. Beirut, Lebanon did not offer English speaking television, so I missed a lot of tv. In fact, I missed eight years of television between being in Beirut, Lebanon and Frankfurt, Germany. This was a good thing though because we all learned to cultivate talents.

So, my dad, to keep at least me happy, would start driving with all of us in tow at 9am and by 3pm we would be checked into a hotel, usually a Holiday Inn, and I would be watching The Monkees. My dad would call it his "Family Home Evening" time and would pull out his bottle of scotch, and only the best

kind I'm sure, for his nightly scotch on the rocks to wind down from the family togetherness. After my show, my brother and I would go to the swimming pool and my sisters would watch tv, sometimes going to the pool.

We drove through many states and mostly stayed in Holiday Inns. When we got to Tennessee, we stopped in Lebanon, Tennessee and pulled into a gas station where dad wanted to strike up a conversation with the owner, so he mentioned we had just been evacuated from Lebanon. The owner mentioned something about hearing there was bad weather in Lebanon (Tennessee). My dad was struck how this man didn't know anything about world events. We continued on our journey.

We arrived in another state, I think it was Nebraska and pulled into the Holiday Inn for dinner and the night. I remember my dad telling me that he

traveled so much that it got to where every town and every hotel looked the same so he never could remember what state he was actually in. That is how we all felt after awhile. We had a lot of fun playing tricks on each other. My mom would be in her bed and Cary and I slept on separate rollaway beds. I remember sticking a curler in my moms bed by her feet. She thought it was an animal and completely lost it. Once she recovered, she laughed along with the rest of us.

While we were getting ready to go out to dinner, my little sister (who was always trying to copy everything I did) came into the room and had her long blonde hair parted down the middle just like mine, instead of on the side like she always had it. Brenda was only seven at the time and I was 13. I was furious that she had to copy everything I do.

Brenda also had my Baby Oil for sun tanning which



My mother with her sunglasses on as a result of a fight between
my sister and I

came in a glass bottle at that time. I started walking
towards her and she could tell I was furious.

Brenda threw that bottle of Baby Oil to keep me
from getting it and the bottle hit my mother right in
her eye. My dad was furious with me, at Brenda and
probably at life in general since being cooped up
with his loving family for six weeks which could not
have been easy. My mother went through the rest of

the trip with a black eye and had to wear sunglasses everywhere. I felt horrible. I think that was the worst thing that happened on our trip. I promise, I really do love my little sister even though the above picture shows my non-verbals were screaming at her.



My parents would get so aggravated with all of us kids because from the moment we got into the car, we would fall asleep. They would point out important monuments and landscapes across America and we were always sound asleep. We did



The Devil's Slide, Evanston,
Wyoming

visit Mount Rushmore and Crazy Horse Memorial in South Dakota which was really breathtaking. In Wyoming, we visited Devil's Slide and Flaming Gorge, which is the highest suspension bridge in the world, or was at that time.

Between Wyoming and Utah, on the Utah side, is the Devil's slide. It literally looks like the devil slid down the side of the mountain. As a little girl, I would pass it often when my parents would drive

from Ogden, Utah where we lived to Evanston, Wyoming where my grandparents lived. I always looked for two landmarks, the Devil's Slide and the stick that held the mountain on the side of the highway up to keep it from crashing down. I totally believed both stories. My parents of course, played it up so we all believed it.

Our family finally arrived in Evanston, Wyoming to visit family members there. My dad had about 150 hours of slides, well not really, but it seemed like it, to show to our relatives. I can really read people's emotions and determine their feelings very easily. Even at the age of 13, I could tell my grandparents and the rest of the family had seen and heard enough. I started to get a little nervous and told my dad I think they had seen enough. He took my cue and turned on the lights and turned off the slide projector.

We had a family reunion while we were there and little did I know that it would be the last time I would see my Grandma Lunsford or my cousins. The only living relatives I have now of my dad's generation are my Uncle Jon and my Aunt Connie and all my cousins who also live in Evanston. I just adore them and all their children, now grown with their own families and my cousin Renee whose mother Frances



Uncle Jon (my dad's brother) and Aunt Connie was the sister of my mom. I last saw my Uncle Jon

about three years ago and I broke down into tears seeing him because he reminds me so much of my dad. Even just writing this tears well up in my eyes. I miss my dad so much! I have also kept in touch with my cousin on my mom's side and my cousins on my dad's side who are the children of my dad's older brother.

From Wyoming and Utah, we drove to San Francisco to see my Aunt Francis who is the sister of my mother. She has a daughter Renee who I still keep in touch with. Renee has beautiful daughters that are so talented artistically and a very talented son.

On the way to the Bay Area, we stopped in Reno, Nevada where my dad had made arrangements for the family to see Trini Lopez performing. I was all dressed up in a beautiful white dress and had nylons on and some not so high heels. I had to go to the

bathroom, so my older sister went with me as she also had to use the restroom. To get to the bathroom facilities, we had to walk down some wide, carpeted stairs, seemed like 50 of them. My body started traveling faster than my legs and about five steps from the bottom I took a flying dive to the bottom floor and landed sprawled out in all my glory with my dress hiked up to my waist and my pride completely decimated.

My sister came running up to me covering her mouth, I could see she was laughing her butt off, but asked if she could help me up. I told her no and got myself up avoiding the throngs of people that had gathered to watch me. It was just awful. Probably why I don't wear heels to this day. Before we left the next day, we stopped at a casino, and I had my first plate of dollar pancakes. I was hooked.

We drove across the Golden Gate Bridge, ate in China Town and went shopping there also. I loved every moment of the shopping! We also went to the Embarcadero, ate some ice cream and got candy at Ghirardelli's Chocolate Factory. So good. My Uncle Ray drove us down Lombard Street and I'm certain all four wheels came off the ground making my dad a nervous wreck.

We made our way back to the East Coast, and we were still a very happy family at that point. My family loves to travel, my mother's eye was all healed up, and we caught our plane at JFK airport this time to fly to Beirut, post-war.

CHAPTER 11

RETURNING TO BEIRUT

W We arrived back in Beirut mid-July 1967 to a completely devastated country. The streets were overrun by Palestinian refugees and other Arabs fleeing the West Bank, Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and even Syria. At 13 years old, I had never seen anything so sad in my short life. The



Refugee camp on the road to the Beirut Airport. So very sad.



Refugees coming into Lebanon from
Palestine Photo courtesy of
middleeastmonitor.com

poverty was devastating, the sadness, hopelessness and helplessness was palpable. What I saw were families living on the sides of the road in cardboard boxes. The women would venture out into the streets, hands outstretched hoping to get some “baksheesh” from foreigners. Some of the women would carry their injured child in their arms begging

for anything we could give them. My heart was broken for them. How do you even begin to help them?

When my husband, my son and I moved to Utah in 2013, we went food shopping and I noticed a Middle Eastern Muslim woman wearing a hijab with three children sitting on the side of a road with a sign that read “Help me feed my children”. I immediately flashed back to 1968 Beirut after the war, and I knew I had to help her. My husband drove me back to the store where I bought some chicken, fruit, drinks, yogurt, bread and some sweets for the children.

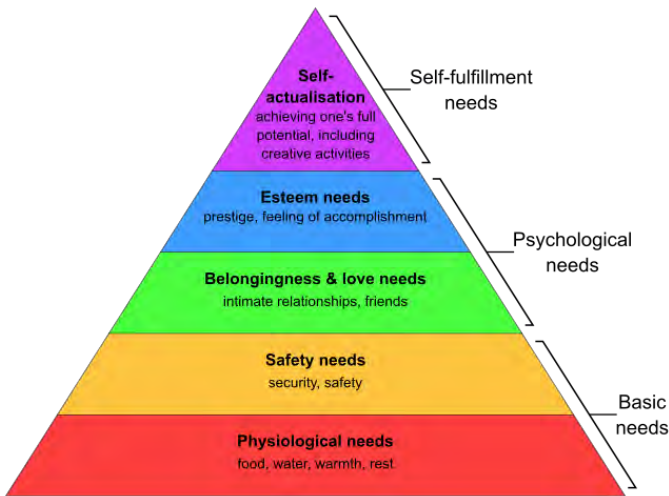
I approached her with the grocery bags, and she had such a sad look in her brown eyes. I gave her the bags of food and asked her where she was from. She stated she and her husband, with their three children, had moved to Utah as refugees from Syria and the recent wars there. Luckily, I keep up on all things in

the news regarding the Middle East, in fact, I call myself a news junkie, so I knew exactly what this family had endured. She smiled at me, gave the children the food and I smiled back telling her “Salam”. I’m hoping that was the right way to say good-bye and that she appreciated my attempts at making her feel welcome in our city of Syracuse, Utah. After nearly four years in Beirut, you would think I would have learned to speak some Arabic.

The apartment we lived in had a manager, called the concierge who was a Palestinian and had a wife and two little children. These children spoke not only Arabic, but French and English also. They were ages two and five. As my dad and I walked by them one day, the little two-year-old greeted us speaking English. My dad looked at me and said, “If she can speak three languages why can’t you?” I looked at him with disgust and kept walking. I wish now I had

learned French, Arabic and German, but I just wasn't motivated to learn another language.

After the 1967 war when we arrived back in Beirut, I remember well my thoughts and feelings at that time, I was overwhelmed with how to help. I talked to my dad about it, and he voiced the same feelings I had, and we would hand them whatever money or food we had in the car. I was alone with



my dad as we drove out to his office at the airport and slowly made it through the throngs of refugees. What would help them the most? Blankets, money,

food, clothing? Who was helping them? I suddenly realized what they needed and desired the most was a country. They had no place to belong. Now that I am a Diplobrat, I kind of know how it feels to not have a home to go to. I'm not sure where I belong except that my country is the wonderful and free country of America.

I often tell people that my heart breaks for the Palestinians that don't have a country to go to and I understand why they are so angry and anxious to get their land back. What I don't agree with are the methods Hamas is using with terror attacks and lobbing rockets into Israel who in turn sends rockets back often killing many. There just seems to be no way to win this strategy in my eyes.

At the same time, my heart breaks for the people and children of Israel having to endure bombs coming into their country. When I was working in

the pediatrics unit at the University Medical Center Hospital in Las Vegas, Nevada. I was assigned to a family from Israel who was visiting the United States on a vacation. They had spent a week in California going to Disneyland and other vacation sites. They rented a van to drive from California to Las Vegas to continue their vacation and a truck had veered into their lane on I-15 running them off the road into the median flipping their van. Their 13-year-old daughter was an Israeli Olympic gymnastics hopeful and had been severely injured in the rollover. Her leg was caught under the van and had to be amputated due to the severity of the injury and the fact that her leg had been in the dirt for several hours and was also crushed.

I went into her room on the first day and introduced myself to her and her family. They were understandably devastated. She was in so much pain

that she had to have an intrathecal (spinal) intravenous morphine drip. I developed a very good relationship with entire family who was just wonderful. I had come into the hospital one night on my day off because I had a date with a boyfriend and he didn't show up. I was very upset, and the father of my patient wanted to know what was wrong, so I told him. In his Israeli accent he said to me "Barbara, all men are dogs. There are good dogs and there are bad dogs. But they are all dogs." I couldn't help but laugh, he had lifted my mood.

I went into my patients' room to say goodnight to her and found her crying and very depressed. She said to me "Barbara, why did God do this to me." I told her "God doesn't do things like this to people. Life is both good and bad, 50/50. If we didn't know the bad, we wouldn't enjoy the good. God is there to get you through the bad times, to comfort us, to listen

to our prayers. She smiled and hugged me. She was finally discharged and they flew back to Israel.

Soon after the family went back to Israel, Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1991 and the United States launched Operation Desert Storm. The Israeli's were ordered to wear gas masks and hide from the scud's missiles coming in the country. I received a letter from my patients stating she was recovering well, but she is was terrified because she has to wear a gas mask all the time and hears the scud's landing around her home. My heart broke for her, and I was so sad. I wrote back to her trying to give her some encouragement, but never heard from her again. Life is just so unfair at times for all children in all countries. I hope she is alright.

As I think about the refugees today, which I often do because even today, there are so many refugees in the world that have had to leave their country due to

war and war crimes, I think about Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The first need isn't even love and belonging, which is they want more than anything, to belong somewhere to some country. The first needs are their physiological needs which as far as I could see at that time and at my age of 13 were not being met. Those needs are water, food, warmth and rest. I don't think they had much of any of the four. Their next need would be safety. I'm not seeing much of that either. They live in cardboard boxes, unprotected from the elements. Most of their children have broken bones for some reason or another. Mother to mother, I can't even imagine.

After safety comes the belonging and love. I did not see a lot of men but I'm sure they were



Post war downtown Beirut

somewhere trying to find help for their families. I hoped they at least had love in their lives. I hope they could see love and kindness and caring in my eyes as we handed them some baksheesh or food. I hoped they saw my heart. As far as the last two elements of Maslow, esteem needs, and self-actualization are probably something they had never experienced in their lives. I would imagine their self-esteem would get a boost just to find water or food or shelter for their family. I prayed they would find comfort

somehow and keep their children loved, healthy, and safe.

We arrived at our apartment directly from the airport and everything was untouched. We had left



Our second apartment in Beirut

so quickly that the birthday cake and drinks we were celebrating with the missionaries for their birthdays was still on the table but hard as a rock. We did have a battle with cockroaches and a rat or two. My mother ended up on the tops of our table a

time or two when a rat would run by her in her kitchen. She has quite the scream. Our apartment building was without any damage luckily.

Once my family returned to Beirut after the 1967 Arab-Israel War, we were shocked when we arrived



Palestinian refugee camp in Northern Lebanon 1967
Retrieved from www.yenisafak.com

to find our beautiful Beirut and the devastating damage done to the country. The numbers of Palestinian and Albanian refugees coming into the city were increasing by the day. My father had warned us to be very careful because of the influx of

refugees looking for anyway to get money or property, and I understood that as something they were forced to do. We could no longer just walk down the street or take the bus wherever we wanted. My mother no longer had a housekeeper in our home, and we took trips as a family to continue to visit places in Lebanon we had yet to see. No one was afraid, but we were aware.

A friend and I had decided to take a taxi to the movie one day and after the movie, we called another taxi to take us back home. We had never had to worry about safety before the war with the taxi drivers. I mean, they drive Mercedes! The Lebanese love Americans and were so very happy when we came back. We got into the taxi, and he drove us to my apartment building. When he pulled over, he turned around in his seat and proceeded to put his hand up my friends' dress shaking his head yes and

saying something to us in Arabic which neither of us spoke. We started hitting him with our hands and purses and I was able to open the car door and we escaped to my building concierge without injury. He called the police, which was a joke, but the taxi driver was gone by then. We never took another taxi and didn't go anywhere unless our entire family went. This same concierge looked after our apartment and our car while we were evacuated. He was a great man.

I felt awful that things had changed so drastically. Today, I can say that these experiences prepared me for the lawlessness that my own country of the United States of America was going to go through in the future. As a Registered Nurse, I have seen some of the worst of humanity, but I have also seen much



Post-war Excelsior Hotel

more of the best of humanity. I believe that life is 50/50. Fifty percent good and fifty percent bad and that is ok. I accept this. You won't ever know the good if you haven't experienced or seen some of the bad. Over in the Middle East, good could very likely

mean I'm still alive. There comes a point in all lives that you must focus on the good and learn to cope with the bad. This is the way of the world, and unfortunately, that part of the world has more bad than good.

I returned back to school and entered the eighth grade at the American Community School (ACS). I took the regular core classes and did very well. There was one activity that I clearly remember. The students were called to the auditorium to participate in a mock convention, and I assume it was a Republican convention because Richard Nixon was the only candidate being voted on. ACS was owned and run by the oil companies and the mock candidates were all Republican as I recall. This was 1968 and the candidates running for president in the United States were Richard M. Nixon (R) and Hubert Humphrey (D).

I was 14 years old and knew nothing about politics, never mind what the Republican or Democrat party platforms stood for. My parents never discussed politics and it wasn't until when I was out of school that I learned they voted Republican, although, they did vote Democrat for President John F. Kennedy when he ran. I knew nothing about the Vietnam war because it wasn't discussed and there was not any English-speaking television in Beirut at that time.

Current events were always discussed because of where we lived. However, I remember having to sign a document in the school office that was required if the students were going to continue to attending ACS. This document was a condemnation for a group that was building in popularity in the junior high and high school grades called the SDS or Students for a Democratic Society. Our parents were

sent notices that we had to sign it and promise not to have anything to do with this group. I knew nothing about this group, only that they were forbidden to students. So, I signed it. My brother and I never have been interested in activism. Probably because my father would have been very disappointed in us. We had the utmost respect for our father.

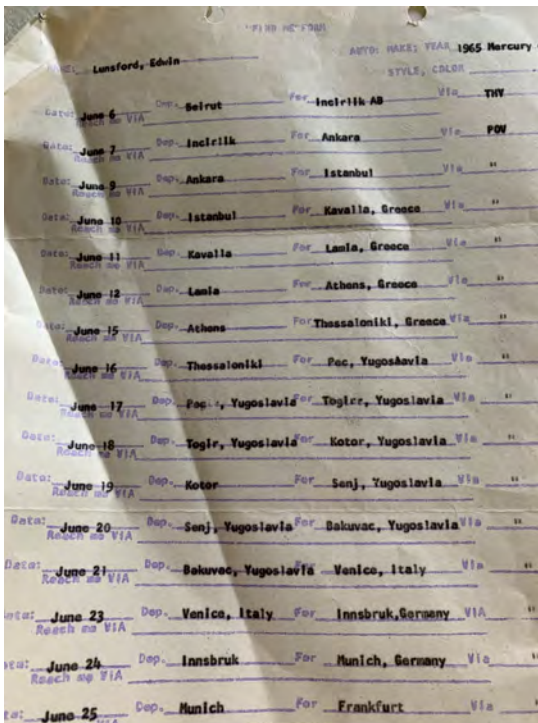
Recently I was thinking about this group and researched them. As I got older, I learned that the SDS and the Weathermen radical group were connected. This was a national student activist organization in the United States and wherever there were American run schools overseas. They were the principal representations of the New Left. This group was started by Tom Hayden, Bill Ayers and two others. They addressed problems of poverty, and impoverished neighborhoods and they were also community organizers. The SDS also protested

university academic policies and the Vietnam war. It wasn't until later that I read about bombings the Weathermen had been convicted of. When I signed the document that I would not support the SDS, it was the last time I heard of them or its founders until I was an adult. These topics just were not discussed when I was overseas attending school. My parents advised my brother and I that we would sign it no questions asked, and we did. My sister Linda did not have to sign a document like this one because she was attending a Department of Defense school in Ankara, Turkey. My parents continued to never speak about politics along with other topics in our home. As an adult now, their avoidance of these topics did not benefit me as an adult.

CHAPTER 12

NEW ORDERS TO FRANKFURT

My dad received new orders for a transfer to the American Consulate in Frankfurt, Germany. I would be starting ninth grade in the fall when we got there. My



dad decided we would load up in our car with all our suitcases and belongings and make a trek from Beirut to Germany taking nearly a month for the trip. There were three American families in all that would travel with us in a caravan through Syria to get to the Incirlik Air Base in Turkey so we could travel in safety. We had a Mercury Comet for the six people in my family to ride in, and the other families were in station wagons. My dad had made an itinerary to give to the American Embassy in Beirut detailing our entire trip to Frankfurt.

Our first stop out of Lebanon was at the Lebanon/Syria border to get our passports stamped. We had the Diplomatic maroon passports meaning no one could detain us for any reason as we had diplomatic immunity. I saw several cars stopped and being searched for who knows what. The seats were torn out and every nook and cranny was being



searched. I felt very blessed that my dad was a Diplomat. I also could imagine how scary it would be to the people getting their car searched and torn up, especially if there was no good reason.

I know that American military bases have random car searches for cars trying to get on base, even the active duty or family members were subject to searches in the vehicles including the trunk. I was searched one time getting onto Moody AFB in Valdosta, Georgia and that was intimidating. I can only imagine going through that in a country such as

Syria or Turkey. This was before all the borders in Europe were opened to all.

We had the opportunity to get out of our car and we saw some Syrian border patrol men taking a break with several children playing in the area. My sister and I walked over to them, and we played together



Playing with Syrian children on the Lebanon-Syria border with all the children. We joined hands and went around in circles playing Ring Around the Rosy. I don't know who wrote this little poem and turned it into a song, but as I grew up I thought about being in Syria and playing with the kids and I felt horrified at

how awful the words that song had to it. Minus the awful song, playing with those Syrian children was and is one of the highlights of my life that I will never forget. We didn't understand each other, but we saw each other's heart and soul and goodness and became soulmates for life. Their laughter was contagious. I don't even know their names, but that's ok, I know their sweet faces and smiles. We had lunch with all of the families in our caravan and then ventured on to Turkey. The picture of us playing with the Syrian children was taken about 30 miles from Aleppo, on the Lebanese/Syria border. Aleppo was made infamous by the Syrian war and ISIS. Realizing this made the entire tragedy more real and very disturbing.

As the below picture depicts, we were in a forest area to have lunch and the women had to go to the



bathroom which meant we were going into the trees



My little sister Brenda catching a snack

for cover. We thought we were in a private area where no one would see us squat and relieve our bladders. Next thing I knew, about 30 Arabs came out of the trees and stood there and watched us. This was very upsetting to all of us, and we couldn't get out of there fast enough. Guess you might call us all very naive. We finally reached Adana and the Incirlik Air Base where the other two families separated from us and went our own ways.

The Officer's quarters were very nice. Once on the base, we could shop at the Base Exchange, go bowling at the base bowling alley, we ate at the Officer's Club which was really nice. While we were there, some famous singers would perform at the base. We saw Bobby Vee who was one of my older sisters' favorite singers. We stayed at Incirlik Air Force Base in Adana, Turkey for a few days and then



Spending a few days in Adana (Incirlik AFB)

headed out to Ankara, Turkey to pick up my brother and sister at the Department of Defense High School where they were dorm students.

When we got to Ankara, we stayed in a very nice hotel. We went to the high school where we greeted Cary and Linda. Linda was graduating from high school, so we were able to see the graduation which didn't take long because it was a graduating class of less than 30. There was also a dance afterwards and



My brother playing drum with Kachina in Ankara

my brothers' band was playing for the dance. His band was called Kachina, they were really good. The band was pretty popular in Ankara and played for many events. Bob Doerschuk was their keyboard player who has since then become a famous author and writes for Downbeat magazine. We gathered up Cary and Linda and continued on our trip to Frankfurt staying right on my dad's timeline.

Our next stop was driving from Ankara, Turkey to Istanbul, Turkey. We had been there before when we were evacuated from Beirut for the six-day war. We only stayed one night and then drove to Kavalla, Greece. Kavala is a beautiful coastal city 275 miles from Istanbul. We had to take a ferry to cross into Greece which wasn't longer than about 30 minutes. In Kavala, my parents booked a hotel room right on



I got fried at the beach in Kavala, Greece



Kavalla, Greece, Great paddle boarding!

the beach. At nighttime we could hear a great band playing and people were dancing and having a great time. The next day, we went to the beach and Cary and I rented a couple of paddle boats and spent all day out in the waters of the Aegean Sea. I got fried. My burn was second degree and I could barely even walk or lay down to sleep. Cary got sunburned also, but not nearly as bad as I did.

My parents told us to get dressed for dinner at the restaurant and I had no idea how I was going to



The Parthenon in Athens Greece

tolerate clothing. I had been laying down with a towel wrapped around me because my burn hurt so bad. But I did it, I managed to put a sundress on and we had a wonderful seafood dinner down at the club where the music was playing the night before. It was so fun!

We stayed in Kavala for one night and then our journey continued on to Lamia, Greece which is about 285 miles from Kavala, Greece. Lamia is a very busy city with lots of buildings and quaint

restaurants with delicious food. We only stayed one night there, had dinner and then got back into our car now headed to Athens which was about 132 miles. My dad must have known not to keep four kids and an OCD wife cooped up in a car longer than three to five hours at a time. We were so excited for Athens.

We visited the Acropolis on our first day which was amazing! The ruins absolutely took my breath away. My dad told us stories of the history of the Acropolis and Parthenon. The Parthenon is largest temple of the antiquity period from 447 BC to 338 BC which was so long ago and even before the birth of Christ it is hard to even imagine. The Parthenon has monumental rows of columns that are beautifully sculptured in so much detail, the temple is such an inspiring sight to behold. In the frieze on the eastern side, there is a depiction of the birth of the goddess Athena.

As the story of Athena goes, she was born from the forehead of her father Zeus which I found very interesting, not likely, but interesting. Apparently, (2) she was born wearing armor from the forehead of her father Zeus. According to one story, this is because he swallowed her mother, Metis, while she was pregnant with Athena. Athena and her uncle, the sea god Poseidon, competed for the affections of the Greeks, and each provided one gift to Greece.

Reference (2) 10 Fast Facts on Athena and Her Parthenon Retrieved 5/20/2021 from www.thoughtco.com



The temple of the Olympian Zeus.

Poseidon provided a salt-water spring rising from the slopes of the Acropolis while Athena provided an olive tree, which provided shade, oil, and olives. The Greeks preferred Athena's gift and named the city after her and then built the Parthenon on the Acropolis, where Athena is believed to have produced the first olive tree. I fell in love with Greek mythology and read all I could about it, including taking a course in Greek mythology in the ninth grade. I still find it fascinating.

The largest statue in Ancient Greece is the temple of Zeus. This temple is a colossal temple at the center of Athens. You can see the Acropolis in the background. It was dedicated to Zeus, "The Olympian" whose name originates because he held the position as the head of the Olympian Gods. Construction on this temple began during the rule of the Athenian tyrants in the 6th century BC. These tyrants wanted to build the greatest temple in the

ancient world. It was completed in the 2nd century AD, some 638 years after the project had begun. During the Roman period, the temple which included 104 giant columns, was renowned as the largest temple in Greece and housed one of the largest cult



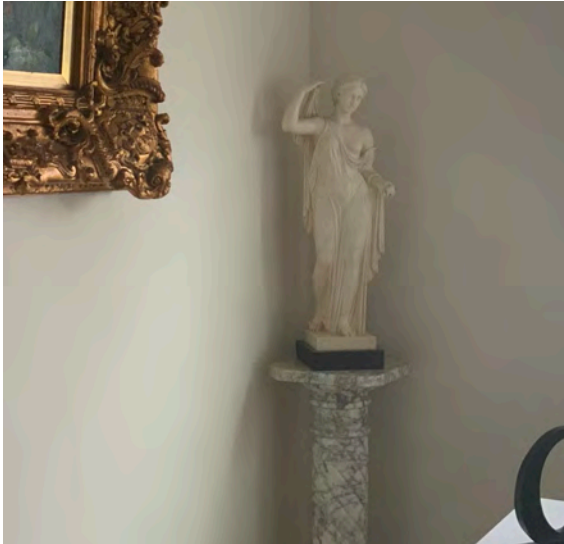
The Lunsford family (dad took the picture) at the Acropolis (we are not a touchy-feely family as you can see, but we love each other).

statues in the ancient world.

We also visited the Plaka shopping area where I got those amazing tie up sandals in the picture with

my family in front of the Acropolis. The Plaka reminds me a lot of St. Augustine, Florida with the stores and restaurants and Greek souvenirs to buy. I live not too far from St. Augustine now and love to go there and enjoy the shops. We also visited the Olympic stadium and the Roman baths. All the sights of Athens are simply amazing and beyond description. I am so glad my parents took us there to see it all in person. Since I was only 15 years old when we visited Athens, I would love to go back and explore this great city again.

After three days in Athens, and a carload full of Greek statues along with the six adults, we left and headed to Thessaloniki, Greece. This city is beautiful and has so many historical and ancient stories to be heard about it. Thessaloniki has so many buildings of different styles and influences.



Greek statue we brought back from Athens

Throughout its history, the city was home to Ottomans, refugees from Asia, Jews, Greeks and many more. The architectural wonders are an amazing sight to see. We only stayed there one night, so we didn't get to see much in the city except a fortress over-looking the city. We left Thessaloniki early the next morning to head out of Greece and began our journey to the former Yugoslavia which

has since been broken up into many countries now known as the Balkans.

We headed for our next destination on my dad's itinerary which was Pec, Yugoslavia now known as Pec, Kosovo. I have chosen to include a brief history of Yugoslavia for this portion of my book.

CHAPTER 13

From Yugoslavia to Frankfurt



A Brief History of Yugoslavia

Between 1804 and 1940 and before the second world war, Yugoslavia had endured imperialism, a monarchy, wars, poverty which occurred mostly amongst the peasants, the elites ruled and the country broke into

pieces on multiple occasions. While there are multiple writings on Yugoslavia after the wars of the 1990's, few scholars had written in depth about early Yugoslavia, and what had been written somehow was destroyed when different governments came in.

There have been three federations that have had the name of Yugoslavia. The earliest was the Land of the South Slavs, this was a nation state for a single South Slavic people, a state built on individual liberties and not on collective rights. Even though the country was called the South Slavs, the ethnicities of the Slovenes, Serbs and Croats were understood to be just tribes of Slavs. The second was called the Kingdom of Yugoslavia which lasted from 1929 until World War II. After World War II, the country was called the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This republic included Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Bosnia and

Herzegovina, Slovenia and Croatia. This Kingdom of Yugoslavia, held firmly by Tito's Communist Party, had a constitution that modeled that of the Soviet Union. After 1945, the communist government took large landholdings, the public utilities, and industrial enterprises and launched industrialization. In 1948, Yugoslavia split with the Soviet Union and by 1960 delved into market mechanisms called workers' self-management.

A civil war began in 1991 when Croatia and Slovenia followed by Macedonia a few months later, declared they were seceding from the Yugoslav Federation. In 1992 the Bosniaks, who were the Muslims, and the Croats also voted to secede. Civil war continued to build and Serbia and Montenegro created their own federation by adopting a new constitution. International efforts to mediate the civil war and in response to the Serbian military launching

a major offensive against the Kosovo Liberation Army, NATO retaliated with a bombing campaign. The Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic ordered a campaign of ethnic cleansing against hundreds of thousands of Albanians from Kosovo.

During 1998, the dispute between Serbia and ethnic Kosovo Albanians deteriorated quickly into armed conflict between the Kosovo Liberation Army and federal forces who had started killing Serbian policemen and politicians. The next year, the Serbs launched an offensive to defeat the insurgents. NATO forces retaliated and began a bombing campaign against Yugoslavia assuming Milosevic would surrender. Milosevic was arrested by the Yugoslav government in 2001 and went on trial by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia on charges of crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide.

In 1996, the United States under NATO deployed troops to Bosnia, Hungary and Croatia to help “keep the peace.” As an employee of AAFES (the Army and Air Force Exchange Services) I volunteered and deployed along with NATO for AAFES. I went to Hungary, and then I was assigned to Camp Slovanski



Me in my BDU's, Kevlar Helmet and Flak Vest on the Sava Bridge between
Croatia and Bosnia. 1996

Brod, and traveled to Bosnia while I was there. AAFES employees were not allowed to leave the

camp alone. We traveled in convoys of AAFES vehicles, usually Jeep Cherokees, and lived in military tents, wore BDU's, Flak Vests and wore Kevlar helmets. We lived, slept and ate with the military. An experience I enjoyed and will never forget.

(3) Slobodan Milošević, president of Yugoslavia. Retrieved 4/30/2021 from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Slobodan-Milosevic>

Our Trip Through the Former Yugoslavia (1968)



We left Greece and headed to our next destination; Yugoslavia now known as the Balkans. Our first destination was to Pec or Peja as it is also

known in Kosovo. Pec was occupied by Albania during World War II and after the war, Pec once again became a part of Yugoslavia as part of the Autonomous Region of Kosovo. The relationships between the Albanians and the Serbs were frequently tense during the 1900's. This came to a head in the Kosovo War of 1999 when the city suffered heavy damage and mass killings. Nearly all of the houses in the city were damaged or even destroyed. This city continued to suffer even further damage in violent inter-ethnic unrest in 2004.

When we were in Pec in 1968, it was a beautiful small city with lush greenery, gorgeous trees and quaintness. We only stayed there for one night however, I don't recall the name of the hotel. We never noticed any unrest in the city. The hotel was very nice and the restaurants served great food. My dad was obsessed with ordering fried Octopus



because he had heard so much about how great it was from his co-workers in the FAA. One of the restaurants we went to was in Pec and once again, dad ordered fried Octopus and they brought him pickled squid. We must have gone to many restaurants throughout our trip through Greece and Yugoslavia and he never did get his fried Octopus.

After we left Pec, the next destination on my dads' itinerary was to Trogir, Yugoslavia, now belonging to Croatia and is right on the coast of the



Adriatic. Trogir is famous for its beautiful Renaissance, Boroque and Romanesque buildings and lies on an island connected to mainland via bridges. Trogir is home of the Cathedral of St. Lawrence which houses Renaissance Chapel of St. John and from there you can see the gorgeous views the belltower in Trogir. There are medieval city walls that are still intact that are breath-taking.

When we arrived in Trogir on June 17, 1968, it was getting to be evening time. We were told by a local that the Bell Tower clock that was in front of us

was damaged in the war and had stopped at the exact time the bomb hit it. Apparently it is now repaired. My dad then checked the hotel he had made reservations at and they stated they did not have the reservation. He came back to the car and we could tell he was upset. He explained to us that we didn't have a room to stay in because the hotel didn't make the reservation as he requested. He checked with all the other hotels in Trogir with no luck. All of a sudden we noticed a crowd gathering around our car. We were shocked when we realized what was happening.

The citizens of Trogir were coming out of their homes asking if we would give them the honor of staying with them in their homes. Most did not speak English, but we knew what they were trying to say. My mother was very leery about staying with people we didn't know, especially in a Communist country.

Tears came to our eyes as we considered the heart of these Yugoslavs and how generous and loving they were. My mom and dad had already decided we would spend the night in our car, until a very well-dressed elderly man came up to my fathers' window, knocked on it, and in perfect English he asked us if we would do him the honor of staying with his family for the night. He said, "just come to my place and see if it would be acceptable to you and your beautiful family". A calm came over our family, you could just feel it. We felt safe. We got out of the car and in my mind now, it seemed to me that all my memories of that day, in that city, were in black and white and grey. Everything was grey and dreary, just how you would expect a communist country to look like. The buildings were made of grey concrete and very cold looking, there did not seem to be any color anywhere.

We decided to see what he had to offer and went with him as he requested. As he led us to his home, which was in an apartment in a huge white and grey multi-floor building, he explained to us that all three of the large white apartment buildings on the street used to belong to him until the communists took over Yugoslavia. He said he lost everything to the Socialist Communist party run by Tito. Now he only had his apartment to his name. His family welcomed us with open arms and were so generous to us. They fed us and showed us to the rooms we would be sleeping. As I recall that bed was the most comfortable bed I had ever slept in. I just sunk in it and the covers were so cozy and warm.

I don't recall this family's name, which I regret to this day. I was 15 and knew better than that. What I do remember though, is the man invited us into a room that when he opened these beautiful French

doors, all of a sudden everything I saw was suddenly in beautiful color! He had silver, crystal, gold, ornate French provincial furniture, and a sparkling chandelier hanging from the ceiling. He explained to us that he had been able to save these things when the Communists came by hiding it all from them. He said this is all he owns in the world now and is determined to see to it that his sons in the United States get it. He had obviously been one of the elites in the country but war and the communist government had taken it all.

As he came to a beautiful white and gold dresser, he opened up a drawer and pulled out a framed picture of President Kennedy. He held the picture to his heart and after pausing for what seemed 15 minutes, he stated "I love this man" as tears rolled down his cheeks. My heart broke, my family was in tears, we hugged him. We stayed in that room and

heard his stories about what he and his family had



been through. I vowed at that moment that I would never let this happen to my country, the United States of America. I just could not imagine it ever being even a possibility. Even if it meant I had to run for office someday.

We retired to bed late that evening and woke up to a wonderful breakfast cooked for us by his wife. I



Trogir, Yugoslavia (now Croatia)

will never forget our trip to Trogir, Yugoslavia which is now Trogir, Croatia. The coast is beautiful and I would recommend anyone to visit this beautiful city on the coast.

Next on the itinerary was the Yugoslavia coastal city of Kotor. This is one of the most wonderful cities I have ever seen. It is also on the Adriatic coast and is the deepest natural fjord-like bay in the Mediterranean Sea. The scenery around it including the steep mountains which come very close, almost

straight down to the waters edge, and is most spectacular. The old Mediterranean port of Kotor was built during the Venetian times and was completely fortified around the entire city. It is a city of various traders and sailors, whom I'm certain have many great stories to tell. Visitors we spoke to



Kotor, Yugoslavia (now Croatia)

in Kotor raved about the natural beauty of the Gulf of Kotor and told us not to miss the old fortified town of Kotor.

Once again, my dad was determined to get his fried Octopus. We sat down at this great outdoor seafood restaurant and my dad ordered “fried octopus”. They brought him pickled squid. He just

couldn't understand why they couldn't bring him fried Octopus. He asked and they told him he needed to order fried squid and not Octopus. We have no idea why. I think he gave up at that point. I don't recall the hotel we stayed at in Kotor but I am certain it was very nice.

We continued to drive north up the coast to Senj, Yugoslavia. Senj was very interesting. Its claim to fame is that it is nearest to where Tito's Yugoslavia had internment and labor camps, especially prominent during the period when it had broken ties with Moscow. During 1948, there was a lot of imprisonments, internments and even concentration camps in Senj. Anyone who was deemed to be an enemy of the established system such as clerics, Chetnics, liberals, nationalists and anarchists were interned to prison camps. The two camps were built in the vicinity of Senj.



Senj is also a beautiful coastal city on the Adriatic. It is more of a fishing village. We were only there for one night, but we walked some of the coast and had dinner once again at a seafood



Senj, Yugoslavia (now Croatia)

restaurant. I remember seeing all the fish the local fishermen had brought in that day. There were so

many, seemed like hundreds of all kinds of fish. Never saw a squid or an octopus, and to this day I doubt I ever want to. We left Yugoslavia after staying over the night there and headed to Venice, Italy.

CHAPTER 14

Adventures in Venice, Italy

We drove to Venice, Italy on June 21, 1968 and hit a really bad thunderstorm which lasted hours. We were in our car which was the Mercury Comet with all six of our family members in it. This was the first time during the entire trip that we hit inclement weather. Our suitcases and all our belongings were on top of the car in the rooftop



luggage rack. We pulled into the parking lot which is where you catch a boat that will take into Venice. Looking at the top of our car at the mess that was awaiting us, we knew everything we owned was



soaking wet. My dad made the decision that we had to unpack our bags and hang everything that was soaked on whatever we could find to hang them on. Turned out, the only we could find to hang our clothes on were other cars in the lot. Talk about being

an embarrassed and humiliated 15-year-old. I will never forget that scene.

We spent many hours trying to get the worst of it all to dry. In the above picture is me in the red shirt, and my sister and mom at the front of the car. As you can see, the top of our car was loaded with luggage and B-4 bags, packed full.



We finally got everything put away, mostly still wet and I'm not sure what my parents did with it all. I don't recall them taking it on the boat to get to Venice, but we stayed in Venice for two days so they

must have taken them with us to the hotel we stayed at in Venice. My dad and mom always had a way of taking care of things themselves and not involving the kids, which I'm not certain is a good idea, but that is how they always handled things.



Venice was amazing! We shopped, ate, played with pigeons and saw the most amazing sites. After going to our hotel, we made our way to the Basilica



The Basilica

Di San Marco. It was huge and one of the most beautiful structures I have ever seen. Apparently as the story goes regarding why it has the title of being barbaric, in 828 A.D., the Basilica was built to be the home for the bones of the Evangelist, St. Mark. His body was stolen from Alexandria, Egypt by a couple of Venetian merchants. These merchants smuggled St. Mark's bones by stuffing them into a big barrel of pork to get them by the Muslim customs officials.

The gold was just breathtaking to see and so beautiful.



We took a ride on a gondola. The size of our family required us to rent two gondolas. The gondolier we had was a very talented guy. He sang

in a couple of songs in his native Italian and it was so wonderful! This was so much fun for us to experience. Afterwards, we decided to go shopping. My parents bought crystal necklaces for the girls and then we searched all over Venice for a fisherman's net that my brother wanted to hang in his room on the ceiling with ocean items like shells and concha's placed in it. Once we got home, this actually looked pretty cool. There were paintings my mom just had to have and a few more statues and we were done with shopping.

We went back to our room at the hotel and left our packages so we could continue the sight-seeing. We ate lunch and went to St. Mark's Square to play amongst the hundreds of pigeons that inhabit the square. It was fun to see the pigeons flying and landing on my younger sister Brenda. We continued on our tour of Venice and saw a wonderful art

gallery, more incredible churches, statues, bridges and delicious food. I seem to recall that someone in the family got really sick with gastric enteritis while we were in Venice.

We headed out after two days in Venice with our next stop being Innsbruck, Germany but I'm pretty sure we didn't stay there even although it was on my dad's government itinerary. We went instead two



Mozart's Square

hours further and stayed in Salzburg, Austria. There we stayed in a really nice hotel near Mozart's Square.

I loved Salzburg because it was like being back in Mozart's time, like time had just stood still.

There is a bronze statue of Mozart from 1842 that was placed in the middle of the square in 1842 in Salzburg in the presence of the sons of Mozart. The statue was designed in 1842 by an Austrian Ludwig Schwanthaler and then it was cast in bronze by Johann B. Stiglmeier. Bavaria's King Ludwig I was an important patron of the Mozart statue and donated the heavy marble base known as a plinth.



Schloss Leopoldskron (picture courtesy of salzburg. Info)

We visited where the “Sound of Music” movie was filmed and as a family, we went to the theater in

Beirut called The Strand and watched “The Sound of Music”. I fell in love with that movie and now that I was able to visit Salzburg, Austria, the movie had so much more meaning. Austria is a beautiful country, so well-kept and clean.



The Horse Pond (picture courtesy of Salzburg. Info)

We saw the “Horse Pond” which Maria and the children sang around and the “Schloss (meaning Castle) Leopoldskron” which is a favorite place to film among movie makers. We also visited several of the museums such as The Birthplace of Mozart



The Birthplace of Mozart and his sons

and a museum that had some of his instruments and furniture. I would love to go back to Salzburg, Austria someday to see the new Sound of Music Museum.

The next day we left Salzburg and drove to Munich, Germany. While we stayed in Munich, and we drove out to see the Dachau Concentration camp. My parents particularly wanted us to see this historical museum so we could witness what happened during World War II by the Nazi's and



The crematorium ovens in Dachau

Hitler. This is the most somber, sad, and reality jarring museum I have ever been too. Walking through the museum, there are large pictures of all the bodies, the buildings where Jews and other people deemed unacceptable to Hitler were gassed. There were shoes and socks and other pieces of clothing once owned by someone, including children's clothing displayed safely behind glass cases. I have a soft place in my heart for the Jewish

people just as I do for the Palestinian people (excluding Hamas of course).

We also drove to Neuschwanstein which is where the castle that Walt Disney copied for his Sleeping Beauty castle. Neuschwanstein Castle, built in the 19th-century is a palace built on a tough and bumpy, winding hill above the village of Hohenschwangau in southwest Bavaria, Germany close to Munich. The palace was commissioned by King Ludwig II of Bavaria to be a retreat. The castle is half theatre, and half fairytale, and it embodies the soul of King



Neuschwanstein Castle, Bavaria

Ludwig II of Bavaria, popularly known as 'Mad King Ludwig'.

Ludwig II's had a reputation as being a reclusive and eccentric king which made it easy to see why Neuschwanstein has the reputation of being called



Horse Wagon trip to the castle

the castle of the fairy-tale king. King Ludwig II wrote a letter to the German composer Richard Wagner, making clear his intentions with Neuschwanstein to rebuild the old castle ruin of

Hohenschwangau in the authentic style of an old German knight castle. It is believed that Ludwig II



Neuschwanstein from above (courtesy of
TripAdvisor.com)

built Neuschwanstein for political and deeply personal reasons. In 1866, Prussia emerged victorious from the Austro-Prussian War, forcing Bavaria to accept an alliance with the empire when King Ludwig II of Bavaria essentially lost his power.

Many believe that this castle was the centerpiece of King Ludwig's imagined kingdom so he could act as a true royal.

After spending the morning at Neuschwanstein, we went to Eagle's Nest, Hitler's headquarters in the Alps in above the city of Berchtesgaden which is a beautiful ski resort in Bavaria. The Eagle's Nest, also known as the Kehlsteinhaus was a Third Reich or Nazi building built on the top of a rocky, grassy area that rises above Obersalzberg near the town of Berchtesgaden. Eagle's Nest was exclusive to the Nazi Party for government meetings and social affairs. We had dinner in the Biergarten which was decorated exquisitely and looked out on the overlook where Hitler's army kept watch. The windows were very small from what I remember. It was also very cold up there.

At the end of World War II, after the 101st paratroopers captured the Kehlsteinhaus, the American soldiers of Easy Company were assigned to occupy the building as their assigned duty in Germany.

A History of Eagle's Nest

The Eagle's Nest was designed as a 50th birthday present for Adolf Hitler. Commissioned and overseen by Martin Bormann, the home remains an impressive feat of engineering even today. It was reached by what is still today Germany's steepest road. Bormann recruited Italian engineers and road makers, experts in carving thoroughfares through the Alps.

The steep mountain road ended in a tunnel that was dug into the mountainside, at the end of which was, as there still is today, a gleaming brass elevator. With reserve power still supplied by a U-Boat engine, the elevator would carry guests and its infamous owner to the final summit. The house itself was fairly modest, but luxuriously decorated (the red marble fireplace was a gift from Mussolini), and the views over Germany and Austria were spectacular.

In reality however, Hitler rarely set foot in his extravagant present. Rumored to suffer from not only chronic claustrophobia, but also

vertigo, Hitler preferred to spend his time in his opulent mansion further down the mountain, the infamous Berghof. The famous photographs of Hitler relaxing in the summer with Eva Braun, his dog, surrounded by children, were all taken down the mountain. Much of the inner circle of the Nazi party also built homes here, as Hitler spent roughly a third of his time in power here. A village for around 2,000 members of the party was constructed, with kilometers of still hidden bunkers and tunnels burrowed into the mountainside beneath them.

Eagle's Nest retained such symbolic power that various divisions of the

Allied Forces raced each other to be first to Berchtesgaden, then to the mountain top home. Several claim the honor of being first to the Eagle's Nest, including the French 2nd Armored Division, and more famously, as commemorated in the HBO drama, *Band of Brothers*, the U.S. 101st Airborne's Easy Company. In 1960, control of the Eagle's Nest was handed back to the German government, along with the problem of what to do with it. As with many ex-Nazi sites, there was a worry about preserving a monument for neo-Nazis to visit. And so, the spectacular Eagle's Nest, Hitler's 50th

birthday gift, was turned into what it is today: a beer garden and restaurant, with little mention of its former notorious owner. The guided tours available however make compulsory stops at a “Documentation Center” at Obersalzberg, a museum that tells the full story of the horrors of the Nazi party era in Germany. (Retrieved 3/21/2021 from Atlas Obscura.



Hitler's hideaway called "Eagles Nest"

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/the-eagles-nest-berchtesgaden-germany>

CHAPTER 15

FRANKFURT, GERMANY

We spent one more night in Munich and then headed to Frankfurt which was about an eight-hour trip. We were anxious to get to our new home and start building a life in Germany. When we arrived, we drove to our new address which was located in Hicog. Frankfurt had several housing areas that the



Christkindle market and City Hall (Romer) at Christmas

military active duty lived in, but Hicog was where officers and State Department or Consulate people were assigned to live. It was very nice, near an underground tram, the PX (AAFES store) and the Frankfurt American High School which is where my brother went and I went to Frankfurt Junior High School because I was in the 9th grade and the high school took students from 10th to 12th grade. He could walk to the high school as it was near Hicog, but I had to take a military bus to the Junior High School. I tried sitting in the back which is where the cool kids sat. I don't remember if I sat in the very back or not, but I was close to the back.

We arrived in the afternoon and there were so many people my age that were just hanging around and talking and were so nice and happy to meet me and my brother. There were benches all around the housing area and it was nice just hanging out with

teens my age. I didn't have that opportunity in Beirut. My younger sister Brenda was going to go to the Frankfurt Elementary School, but right above our apartment, was a family with daughters Brenda's



Hicog Housing

age. She spent a lot of time at their house.

I quickly learned the exchange rate, which was four marks to a dollar, which is unheard of today. It wasn't long before my mother took us downtown Frankfurt to shop. The problem with shopping at the

PX which is the military store, is everyone else shops there. I remember buying my Junior Prom dress at the PX. When my date and the other couple going with us showed up to my house, she was wearing my exact dress. How humiliating!

We enrolled in school and every morning I would stand out front rain, snow or sun and wait for the bus. We had one bathroom in our apartment for the four of us kids so you can imagine mornings were not pleasant. I finished ninth grade and graduated on to Frankfurt American High School.

I loved going to FHS. There was a teen club just across the street that we hung out at during lunch and ate burgers. The movie theater was in the same vicinity. We paid very little to get into a movie, I think about 75 cents or so and a huge bag of popcorn was twenty-five cents. Before every movie, the Star-Spangled Banner would play on the screen and we

had to stand for it. After that, the movie would start. Coming back to the states after graduating, it was very odd not standing for the National Anthem at the



theater. It felt uncomfortable.

Germany has the absolute best public transportation system. There are underground railways called U-bahn's, street cars, and trains. You could always get wherever you wanted to go, especially downtown. We had a lot of freedom as



Jahrhunderthalle



teenagers in Frankfurt. Our favorite places to go were to Anthony's Pizza, Bologna's Italian restaurant, and the Jahrhunderthalle which is a large

concert hall. I saw The Beach Boys, an absolutely wonderful Flamenco dancer, Steppenwolf, Melanie and several other performers and bands there.

Frankfurt American High School had an honors choir called The Melloteens. This acapella choir was 40-50 students that had to try out to be in the choir. This was a special honor to have bestowed on you.



Ms. Virginia Johnson was our choir leader and was just amazing. We had the opportunity and were

invited to attend the Berlin Music Festival and we were so excited to go.

The Melloteens mostly performed at Officer's and NCO clubs and some local places. We were the



Melloteens performing in the Berlin Music Festival

best. The trip to Berlin was really fun, but kind of scary. We boarded the train at the Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof to head to Berlin. There is a place the train had to travel through when went through East Berlin to get to our destination in West Berlin. We were told to stay in our cabins and do not look out

the windows at all. Of course, all they had to say was “don’t look” and we automatically wanted to look at what we weren’t supposed to look at. We could see



On the German train traveling to Berlin

East German soldiers with their German Shepherds walking up and down past the train cars and holding mirrors to see if anyone was underneath the cars

trying to escape East Berlin. It was really very intimidating.

We were all assigned an American sponsor family in Berlin that we were supposed to stay with during the trip. My sponsor family was absolutely wonderful. They were so accommodating to me and had everything there I could possibly need. The day of the concert we all met at the hall and took our places. The student pianist that was a member of the Melloteens was the best ever. His name was Tom Hardaway and he could play a piano like nothing I've seen or heard before.

We were able to do a little sight seeing and went to the Berlin Wall and to Checkpoint Charlie for some pictures. I was able to pick a piece of the wall out about the size of a racquetball and I brought it home. I have no idea where it went, but I haven't seen it since I left Germany. My favorite

performances with the Melloteens were at Christmas time. We performed at so many NCO and Officer Club singing beautiful Christmas music. That will always be one of my favorite times.

The East Germans were very serious people. They weren't playing around with anything. My father's FAA plane had flown to Berlin on a mission.



Hummel I got in Germany of the 3 flight paths

There were three flight paths American planes could use and they had better not veer off the paths. The FAA plane did just that and the next thing my dad knew, they had two MIG's escorting them and were told to get back on the path or they would be shot down. I think the entire crew nearly peed in their pants! My dad said he was very intimidated! I



Hummel of Checkpoint Charlie

bought a limited Hummel of Check Point Charlie for

myself and one for my father. He loved it. The Hummel that goes with it for the Freedom Series is the Berlin Airlift Hummel with the three flight paths.



I had a few very good friends that I hung out with. We used to go to Sachsenhausen on the weekends to a place called the Balalaika. We loved going there. My friend Karen and I would bring our guitars and play them and sing Cat Stevens, James Tayler,



I spent some time singing with “George and the Rockets”. My bother Cary was the drummer in back of me.

Melanie, Joni Mitchell and John Denver songs among other folk artists. It was kind of like a folk bar. There were always different musicians performing at the Balalaika. Sachsenhausen is know for its Apple Wine. Of course, I didn’t drink in High School, nor do I drink now as an adult, so I would drink their Apfelsaft which is basically really good apple cider.

Christmas is a very special time of the year in Germany. Between Kris Kringle leaving candy in

your shoes outside your door, the snow and the decorations, the bakery goods, and caroling with the Melloteens in different neighborhoods, to all the Christmas markets, it has to be the best place to spend Christmas. We also would get on the trolley car and carol to everyone and usually all different nationalities. They loved us, and we loved them.



97th General Hospital, Frankfurt, Germany

We went Christmas caroling this one year at the 97th General Hospital. Vietnam was in full force in

1970 and when GI's would get injured, they would usually end up at the 97th General. There were only two times in my life during the Vietnam years that I faced a reality check as to what was going on and who was affected. This one time we were caroling at the hospital and we walked into a room where this young guy, around 20 years old with blue eyes and blonde hair, was in what I believe was a Stryker Frame round and could rotate 360 degrees with the patient upright. The Stryker frames back then remind me of that iron lung mentality. Instead of stabilizing just the area of spine that was broken, the injured patient was placed in a device that would immobilize his entire body. His treatment seemed as debilitating to him as the problem being treated.

We went into his room and began to sing Christmas carols to him and he smiled and tears ran down his face. This made me so sad, but then I

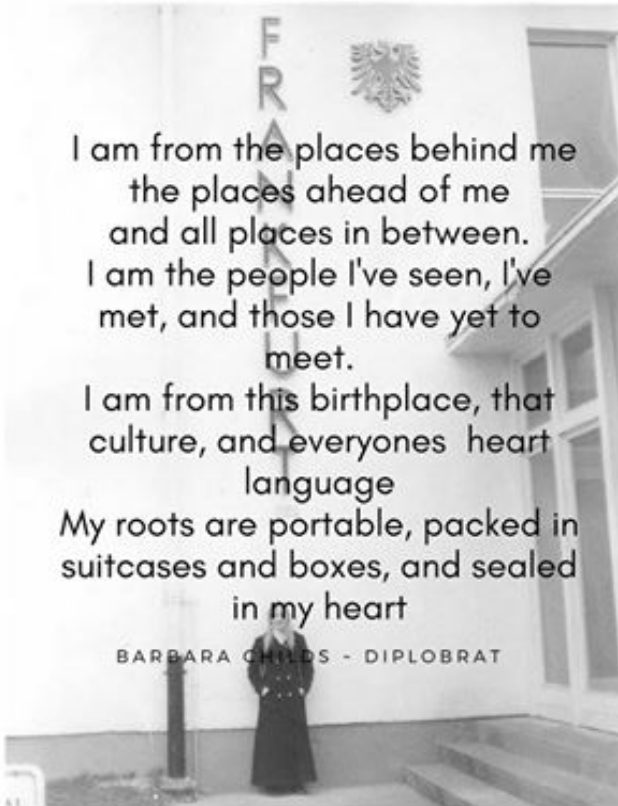
thought that just maybe we brightened his Christmas and his day. I certainly hope so, but more than that, I prayed he would recover and could walk again and feel some happiness.

The other incident where I realized there was a terrible war called Vietnam was when I was visiting my girlfriend Meredith Kellogg at her house which was not too far from where I lived. I rang the doorbell and her mother answered, she was crying. Meredith came to greet me and I could tell she had also been crying. I asked what was wrong and she told me they had just been notified that her brother had been killed in action in Vietnam. My heart sank. I couldn't even begin to imagine how difficult this was for this sweet family. I left her house, making sure she knew she could call me at any time.

We sat together the next day in the grass in front of the football field and I just listened to her. People

don't know what to say in situations like this, but I knew that all she needed was a friend, someone that knew she was suffering even though there was conversation. Even though this happened over 40 years ago, I recently asked her if she remembered me being there, and she did. I was so glad I was there for her at that moment. She is still a very good friend of mine and is doing well with her own family now.

CHAPTER 16

FRANKFURT AMERICAN HIGH
SCHOOL

Going to Frankfurt American High School was amazing. There are many famous people that also attended FAHS in the past such as General Norman Schwarzkopf, Julianne Moore, David Bach, Stanley Whitaker and many others. My brother Cary and I were only one grade apart and although we were both musicians, we really didn't hang out together. I was more of a folk music lover and he was a drummer in multiple bands playing anything from rock to oldies and even touched on some jazz. We shared some of the same friends, but never really hung out together. He had a girlfriend through most of high school that was German and attended a private school. Her father was an opera singer at the Frankfurt Opernhaus and was very good from what I understand.

I had my share of boyfriends, but as soon as they realized I wasn't going to "give" them anything, they soon moved on to more fruitful adventures I suppose. And that was ok. Being raised in the Mormon faith even thought I never really was very active at all; I still retained the morality taught to me. I was known as the girl who didn't drink, didn't smoke and didn't even cuss, although I can say I do throw out a cuss word at times now. My friends never seemed to mind that I never consumed alcohol. I was always invited to wherever they were hanging out. I was very busy in high school. I still don't drink alcohol, not because of any religious or moral beliefs against it, I just don't like the taste of alcohol and I have no tolerance for it. All alcohol does for me is make me sleepy. I can have more fun not drinking and watching others make fools of themselves.



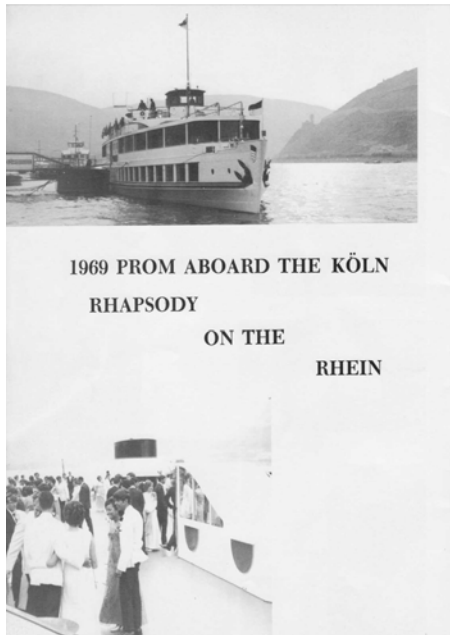
Doing our DJ thing, I'm front left

I joined several organizations in high school. As mentioned above, I was in the honor acapella choir. I was also in the drill team, the motorcycle club, and



The FHS Radio Club

the student government. My favorite organization though was the radio club. I had to try out for the radio club because we were D.J.'s on AFN or the American Forces Network and had our own program called Teen-30. We were really bad, or maybe I should say, I was really bad at D.J.ing, but I have really great memories from being on the Teen 30 radio show, to the Folk Club and the motorcycle club.



1969 PROM ABOARD THE KÖLN
RHAPSODY
ON THE
RHEIN

I went to the Junior/Senior Prom when I was a Freshman and a Sophomore. The Junior Prom I went to with my boyfriend at that time, was a cruise down the Rhine River. It was awesome because we were able to see the burning of the castles as we passed them. That boyfriend turned out to abusive and controlling. This guy was very popular and I soon found out that he was not such a nice guy.



My mother pinning on my very first corsage for the 1969 Junior Senior Prom (I was only a freshman at that time)

One evening I was spending the night with my girlfriend after I had told him that I did not want to see him. While we were in my girlfriends bedroom, we could hear him screaming outside, throwing a complete fit. I was terrified. I had not ever experienced anyone this crazy before. The next day I went to school and he showed up with his hand in a cast. When I asked what happened to him, he stated that he broke his hand by hitting a pole. I no longer wanted to see him anymore, because I was afraid of him. I knew his father was being transferred back to



Junior/Senior Prom 1969 held here at the beautiful Palmengarten event hall

the states, so I held on until I could get rid of him that way. It wasn't that long of a wait.



At the 1970 Junior/Senior Prom with B.P. at the Palmengarten in Frankfurt

The Palmengarten is a beautiful large garden in Frankfurt, Germany. Many events are held there and we were lucky enough to have the Junior/Senior Prom in 1970 held there. My date was the lead singer

of the band my brother was in at that time. He was a good guy and had a great voice, in fact, he still does!

I was a sophomore at that time. One day my brother came home from band practice and told me that I should forget about dating this guy. Once again, I had chosen badly. He was cheating on me with someone at one of their gigs. I was crushed but trusted my brother when he told me I could do so much better. I started seeing this guy from a different lens, and I'm glad I did. I continued to sing with the band, but the relationship was over. My brother told me that BP had said to him that he need not worry about me with guys, that I have a great head on my shoulders and can be trusted to not make mistakes. Honestly, I am proud to say that I can attend a Frankfurt American High School Reunion and know that no one could ever say they slept with me.

I've actually been able to look at many people from a different lens in my lifetime. He is now just an acquaintance of mine but has been very successful



My brother Cary, Mike Doane and the Passarelli brothers in the band "George and the Rockets".
Frankfurt, Germany

in his life by being a famous chef at top restaurants.



My friend Karen Daughtry and I performing at the talent show at Frankfurt High School and we took first place!

I was in several talent shows while attending Frankfurt American High School with my friend



My friend Karen and I at the talent show

Karen. My brother was also in the same talent contests, he says he won and I say my friend and I won. Pretty sure I'm correct!



We had so much fun playing in the talent shows for two years in a row. We have continued to keep in touch through Facebook and by phone but haven't seen each other except once in person since graduation in 1972. We met up in Hilton Head with a few other friends and our spouses. It was really fun and we picked up like no time had gone by at all! This is what is so great about being a Military Brat or Diplobrat. You don't grow roots, but you

certainly grow vines that continue to grow and spread through the years.

While in high school, I was able to do a work study since I had all the credits I needed to graduate with. I got a job with Davis Agency which was a travel service for United States military and State Department dependents. I basically worked as a travel agent booking flights. The fares were incredible for flights to and from the United States. I don't know what happened to this company, but they were great to work for.

The 1972 Frankfurt American High School was held at the Frankfurt Zoo. I'm not sure I liked the idea of graduating at a Zoo, but there it is. I graduated and moved back to the United States with no plan, no idea what I wanted to do, no resources, and really no advice from my parents except get a job, join the military, or go to college. They made it clear they had

no money for college for me. I was completely unprepared for being an adult.

I consider myself very lucky to have been able to attend the American Community School in Beirut, Lebanon and Frankfurt American High School. You cannot beat a Department of Defense school for an excellent education, knowing that all people were treated equally regardless of race, color, creed, financial status in life, or rank of the sponsoring parent. Life was great, the people were great (except for a few creepy boyfriends) and I loved my life!

What most people do, is they just stop expecting, and therefore they never fail. They keep their expectations really low. They just keep recycling the same life. They never go outside their comfort zone, and then they never really have to deal with trying to miss their own expectation or not meet their own expectation.

~ Brooke Castillo, CEO
The Life Coach School

CHAPTER 17

THE BRAT CULTURE

It doesn't matter if you are a Military Brat or a Diplobrat or even a Third Culture Kid (TKK). The definition of a BRAT is a son or daughter of a member of the military, the State Department or TCK's that grow up in a culture different from their own. It is said that the term "BRAT" originated from British Regimented Attached Traveler which meant the families of a British military person that were able to travel with the member. The term has stuck and now all military dependent children are proud members of BRATS. In the case of Military and Diplomatic Brats, we wear the name as a badge to be proud of because of the many stressors, frequent moves (usually every 2-3 years) and the cultural experiences outside of what

we had before. This is what makes us so much more resilient than children that grow up in one place in the country their family is originally from.

BRATS are used to having fleeting relationships amongst the people we interact with. I never knew when someone would come into or out of my life from the age of 11 years old. I also never knew if I would ever see any of these friends or close relationships again. BRATS make lasting impressions on the people they meet and in return every person we meet makes a lasting impression on us, no matter how small.

I have had many encounters with people I have met in one country only to come across them in another. For example, I was applying for a job in a doctor's office about five years after I had returned back to the states to resume life as an adult living on my own. While sitting in the office waiting room, I

was observing the people conversing with each other in the room when I heard a woman say she had graduated from Frankfurt American High School (FAHS). My ears perked up and I replied back that I too had graduated from FAHS. We discovered we were both in FAHS at the same time only she had graduated one year ahead of me. I remembered meeting her in my student council group. She remembered me in the talent shows and she also remembered my brothers band and how good they were. I was amazed at what a small world this is. Being a BRAT came with its issues too. You never really seem to fit in anywhere, even when you get older.

Military BRATS and Diplobrats are the heartbeat of our country. We give up our parents for our country, to do the work of fighting for and saving our

country and yet we are also the children that grow up



Retrieved from www.wearethemighty.com

saying goodbye to our friends more than any other group. This is what makes us resilient, able to cope better than most, and the most likely to be successful children of any other group of children growing up. The definition of resilience in the Merriam-Webster dictionary is the ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change. We are great at



having fabulous coping mechanism and have the ability to just “figure things out.” Why is it we are so resilient? One reason is that BRATS watch their military or diplomatic parent closely.





I was exposed to my dad's influence, I married an active-duty USAF man, and his son Justin was influenced by my husband, his day. What a wonderful legacy.

This parent is a hero and is put on a pedestal usually. This parent is a role model for courage, duty, honor and freedom. Usually this parent is physically fit, takes care of their body and is always alert and strong because of all the actual and potential threats they go through.

I knew my dad was willing to give up everything, keep every secret he was sworn to, even for his own life, for the love and duty of our freedom, our country and his family. This is why my siblings and I took it very seriously when he would say to us every time we would leave the house “Don’t forget whose last name you have.” And even though I didn’t serve as a Diplomat or in the Military, I have continued on my dad’s legacy by saying to my kids “don’t forget whose last name you have”. Which really didn’t work because I always had a last name different than my kids.

Diplobrats and military kids are exposed to leadership, courage and honor everywhere around us. We grow up to be fighters, not victims. Studies have shown that greater than eighty percent of BRATS to include military, Diplobrats and TCK’s,

can relate to anyone, regardless of differences such as race, ethnicity, religion, or nationality.



We also watch and learned from our parent that wasn't the Diplomat or Military member. This is the person that took care of absolutely everything on the home-front. I watched my mom in Lebanon take on her Lebanese neighbors to defend my brothers right to play the drums while practicing in our living room. I watched my mom bargain down a vendor of rugs,

jewelry, etc. to get the price she was willing to pay for a good. She was never afraid. My mom would get so frustrated with all the one-way streets in Lebanon that she began to do as the Lebanese do, which is to just back down the one-way streets. Hey, the car was facing the right way! I watched my mom put on amazing social events for the American Embassy as the social director and put on an amazing canteen for the sixth fleet when it would come in. I was always so impressed with her ability to organize and get things done. I watched my parents gather us together to be evacuated from a war in Lebanon.

All of this is what made me so resilient when my son was diagnosed with Leukemia, my other son with Schwackmann Syndrome, leave a husband in Germany and move to my own place on the economy and then arrange to have all my goods and my car shipped back to the states on my own. What you

make of life and then how you react to it can make or break you. When my three-year-old was diagnosed with Leukemia I was in my third year of nursing school at UNLV. My psychiatric nursing class instructor watched how I coped with everything and she complimented me by remarking “Barbara, you have the most amazing coping skills I have ever seen.” This comes from my DNA as a Diplobrat and all my experiences.

The one area BRATS are not successful in is relationships. There is a higher rate of divorce in the BRAT population than in any other. The experience of being a constant stranger to where they go can lead us to feel estranged everywhere, even if later in life they settle down in one place. I have a very difficult time making friends. I actually have a t-shirt that says, “I like essential oils and maybe three people”. In the back of my mind, I am so used to saying good-

bye to people that it makes it difficult to let people in. You never know when you are going to lose a friend and then move on to have to make new friends. I have become a very good social introvert. When I go to events, I find myself avoiding the chit-chat. I like to be alone. I like my privacy. I especially don't like all the games companies make you play to get to know your co-workers. My happy place is at home with my husband, my son and my three mini-dachshunds.

So, what is the answer to leaving my introvert ways to being comfortable meeting people. I've had to learn to tell my brain that these are only thoughts that are causing me feelings of fear in my brain. I don't have to accept these thoughts and I can change my thoughts to change my feeling. I tell my brain that "It's ok if I don't keep this acquaintance as a lifetime friend, I have met a wonderful person and

she or he has added to my life”. It’s ok if someone doesn’t like me (which I can’t even imagine), it not their job to like me, it’s my job to like me. I have become much more resilient and comfortable with gatherings of people since I began self-coaching myself. Everyone should learn how to self-coach themselves.

CHAPTER 18

BACK TO THE STATES

I wish so much that I could have had a Life Coach back in 1972 which was the year I graduated from high school. Today, I have a Life Coach and have trained to become a Life Coach to others. I also think that Byron Katie is probably one of the best mentors anyone could have.

This part of my book is causing me anxiety, pain and regret. I realize it is nothing but my thoughts about my past. These are the choices I've made, it's like I fell into everything and nothing was planned. I didn't need to take care of my needs growing up, my parents did that for me. Instead of using my prefrontal cortex, I used what is known as the lizard or primate brain which is the brain of fight or flight. I recall just wanting someone to like me or even love me. I wasn't thinking about being a Senator or

Congressman, I wasn't thinking about being an astronaut, doctor or a chemist or something really hard. These thoughts were not in my brain. The thought in my brain was "who am I going to marry to take care of me." I did not have an identity. And this is what I looked for.

I was able to rent a room from a very nice woman in Cypress. She rented out one room with two beds in it for two college girls. I wasn't in college, but it crossed my mind that maybe I might like nursing. I didn't feel a passion for it though.

I met my first husband at the Cypress LDS Institute of Religion and started hanging out with him and his friends. They lived in a house rented out to five college students, all very nice and they also had plans for life. Except for the guy I picked. He was just like me, no plans for the future. Did I ask the right questions? No, of course not. Instead of him

reading his psychology book, he would ask me to read it to him while he closed his eyes supposedly listening. I actually did this. We dated for quite awhile and there were warning signs.

I was a musician and loved to play my guitar and sing. I would play for anyone who asked. Until one day I was playing my guitar for a group of people at the Institute and later on when my boyfriend and I got to his house, he told me he didn't want me to play and sing anymore. Shocked, I asked him why he would say such a thing, His answer was that he was jealous of my talent and didn't want to have to listen to me while he had no talent. He couldn't keep a job, was always taking temporary jobs. He dropped out of college. I was visiting my mother because she was sick in bed. I told her that I was going to marry him and that I needed to go because he needed me to drive



Me and my guitar

him somewhere. My mother and father hated him. They thought he was a lazy bum and would never amount to anything. I told her I loved him and that I had to go. She gave me an ultimatum at that point. Her words were “Either him or me.” This is something you should never say to your daughter if you don’t want her to marry someone. I chose him

and left the house. That was the first time I had stood up to my mom, and it felt good.

The next sign I missed was when my parents showed up at my apartment. My boyfriend was there and they begged me, in front of him, not to marry him. We were planning on getting married in the LDS Temple the next day. I told my parents that we were going to get married. My brain was saying “Please, give me a reason not to marry him, help me figure out my future, give me an offer like college.” It didn’t happen.

The final sign was when we were getting into his car to go to the temple very early in the morning. He laid the marriage license on the top of the car and a strong wind blew by and the license went flying off the car. He chased it down. I didn’t listen to any of the signs. Getting married was something new and exciting in my boring unplanned life.

Throughout our marriage, there was always money problems. He got a job with an insurance company and they offered him a very handsome salary for six months to build up his clientele. He wasn't successful at it, and I soon found out he wasn't even going to work. He would spend his days going to work for a few hours and then going fishing the rest of the day. He would spend his time at porn movies and nude beaches and smoking pot all the while I was taking care of three children under five and thinking I was married to a good Mormon guy that didn't smoke, drink, had morals and would always be a good husband and father. I was so wrong.

My youngest son Ryan was born in 1978 and within a month he was showing signs of failure to thrive. I was nursing him, but it didn't seem to be enough for him. My brother-in-law at that time was

working for a grocery supplier and offered to get us free formula if Ryan could drink soy-based formula. We started him on the soy-based formula that was made by a company who was soon found to be cutting corners by not providing sodium chloride in the formula. Ryan was so sick and my husband would not allow me to take him to the doctor.

My mother drove down from Las Vegas because she was so worried about Ryan. We took him to the doctor and was told the formula is damaging his kidneys and causing the failure to thrive. It was shortly after that my parents rented a U-Haul and while my husband was at his night job, we loaded up the U-Haul with all our belongings and I left him, taking my three children, going to Las Vegas, and still having no plan for my life.

I was hired at Sunrise Hospital as an Emergency Room admissions clerk within the first week I

arrived in Las Vegas. My parents were caring for my kids for a while until they gave me an ultimatum of finding my own place to live and getting childcare. They were not going to care for my kids even though they loved them enormously. “You made your bed, now you have to sleep in it” they would say to me.

I got my apartment and the childcare and figured things out. My parents have this habit of driving the car of my life and then abandoning the car at their convenience. Once again, I let this happen because I was the perfect people pleaser. Pleasing my parents was more important than fixing a marriage. Even though the marriage only lasted five years, I had three wonderful children that I am so proud of now. My oldest is an orthopedic upper-extremity surgeon, my daughter is a California State attorney and my son Ryan who was so ill, is an MBA PMP and a project manager for medical devices.

My ex kept trying to get me to come back to him. He would show up in Las Vegas in the ER and wait to get a few words with me on my breaks. He would try to hold my hand while walking to the cafeteria and it just made me ill. It wasn't until two months after we got divorced that he told me he is getting married again. I was relieved, little did I know the hell I would go through with his new wife.

I left my job at Sunrise and was hired by the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department as a records clerk and later on I was promoted to Dispatch. While I was at work, I got a phone call from the babysitter of my kids. This woman was a disabled nurse who used to work for Howard Hughes as his nurse. She was on a flight in one of his planes and the plane crashed and she was unable to continue working as a nurse because she could barely walk anymore. She decided to go into childcare and take care of babies

and toddlers. Ryan had been having difficulty keeping food down. He was about six months old at the time and had seen so many pediatricians. They diagnosed him with failure to thrive and placed him on Soy formula, meat-based formula, corn formula, every kind of formula you could imagine. Nothing worked. He continued to have explosive vomiting and diarrhea.

I answered the call from my babysitter and she said to me “Barbara, I think Ryan is dying.” I asked her what she meant and she told me Ryan was not crawling, wouldn’t cry, wouldn’t eat and is losing weight. My heart broke, I started crying at work. I knew he was sick, but I didn’t realize just how sick he was. I called my mom who worked for a Beer Distribution Company and she told me that she had just spoke with her boss and that he is going to fly us down to Children’s Hospital in Los Angeles.



Ryan at the hospital diagnosed with Schwackmann Syndrome

We got to Children's Hospital and after a battery of tests, he was finally diagnosed with Schwackmann Syndrome which is a failure of the pancreas to provide digestive enzymes. Food was just running through him without providing any nourishment. He was placed on digestive enzymes called Pancrease and discharged to home. I now had a son that had a serious syndrome. Ryan would always be very tiny and look sickly as he grew. When he finally got to be a teenager, he started to put on more weight and



Ryan with his son Breghten

now looks very good. He is married now with a



My son Ryan with his sister Melissa

beautiful wife and 5 children, all redheads and blondes.

While working at the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, I pulled into the indoor parking garage and parked in a space I didn't realize was a no parking space. I went out to my car and found a ticket on it. When I returned to the records department, I mentioned to my co-workers that I got a ticket in the parking garage. They told me just to take it to the muni-court Judge because he usually takes care of the tickets for the records staff (Who happened to be all female). I went to the Judges chambers and told the clerk at the window I would like to see the Judge. There was only one judge at that time in muni-court.

The clerk led me into the Judges chambers and the Judge told me to have a seat, right next to him. I took the seat and watched in fear as he told his clerk

to get the two wine glasses to offer me a drink with him. She brought them to me and he proceeded to tell me that whenever he fixes tickets for the “girls”, he normally gets a sexual favor in return. I was horrified. At 24 years old and super naive, I wasn’t sure what the term meant, but I knew it was a sexual act.

After what seemed like forever of my silence, but was only a minute, I stood up, grabbed my ticket and told him I would rather have an anvil dropped on my head. I proceeded to the payment window and paid my \$40 ticket. My opinion completely changed with regards to supposed authorities. I lost all respect and figured they were not to be trusted. I never heard a word from anyone about the incident and never said anything to anyone because I knew he was an important judge, had been there for a long time and could make my life miserable at the police

department. I'm pretty sure most women have also had a #me-too moment in their lives. I won't mention his name here because he has passed away and out of respect for his family, I don't think it is necessary. I don't feel damaged by it because I handled it. I don't let my brain tell me I am damaged because of this. I dealt with it and I'm done with it. This was the first time I have spoken about it. I was not a "people pleaser". It felt good.

CHAPTER 19

THE GOOD AND THE BAD

What I don't want to unpack in this book are the relationships with my ex's and yes, I've been married four times. I had three beautiful children with my first husband. I raised them by myself as a single mom for most of their lives. Their junior high schools were in Las Vegas and they were very good schools. My son Ryan went to high school in Germany as I was married to a man in the Air Force and we lived in Spangdahlem, Germany and Traben-Trarbach, Germany, which was absolutely a dream assignment. My daughter graduated from high school in Las Vegas and my older son Ben graduated from high school in California because he lived with his father.



Traben-Trarbach, Germany



Traben-Trarbach, Germany

The reason my oldest son lived with his father,
my first husband, is because after I left him and took

my three children to Las Vegas to live near my parents, and after he spent a month begging me to get back with him, he found a girlfriend and married her within two months of me leaving him. He went to court in Las Vegas to get custody of Benjamin.

Even though my ex was living with his mother and father, and he wasn't even engaged yet to this woman he met, their attorney asked the judge if the "fiancé", which she wasn't prior to the court filing, could speak to the custody matter. She got on that stand and lied about everything. What a great family they have, that she is a wonderful mother and on and on. My family all knew she was not truthful. The judge took my five-year-old son away from me who had a full-time job, and his sister and baby brother and sent Benjamin to California.

To this day I have nightmares of watching Benjamin crying, reaching his arms out for me out

the car back window as his father's parents drove away from me. I have never recovered from the trauma of losing my son. Especially since after my ex married that woman, she repeatedly abused him physically and emotionally. He would never tell me because he said, "I would just get it worse." The drugs, gambling, and emotional abuse from them was awful. My son would hold me and not want to let go when we would meet to trade off kids.

Had I known what an evil person that woman was, I may have stayed just to protect him. He turned out well although I'm sure what he went through caused emotional stress for him. He told me he got his brains, looks and talent from me. I will say his father was a good dad taking him hiking and fishing all the time, he taught him how to enjoy the outdoors, but what he had to endure with the woman who forced my children to call her "mom", I'll never

forget. There is much more about this topic I could write about, but I won't because it doesn't serve me and nothing good would come from it. Some things are best left unsaid.

My son Ben is a very successful upper extremity orthopedic surgeon now. He went to school at UCLA, did his medical school also at UCLA and his residency at Boston University. He then went on to do his fellowship at Wake Forest University Hospital and continues to be an attending in the orthopedic unit. He married a wonderful woman who is also a doctor and they have a beautiful and smart daughter. I'm so proud of them.

My daughter Melissa went to high school in Las Vegas and my youngest son Ryan went to elementary and middle school also in Las Vegas. Being a single mom, I made a point to live in a very nice area that had a great school for my kids.

When Ryan was a sixth grader, the school board instituted busing which meant my son was going to be bused across town to North Las Vegas, a very poor area in Las Vegas with schools that had police officers on campus. He says to me “mom, this school has police officers here!” I knew he could handle it because that is what we do. He was a good kid that never got into trouble at school. He did get into trouble at the local drug store near where we lived when he stole some baseball cards. His Grandpa



picked him up, Ryan never stole anything again. We actually graduated together with our MBA's. Me with my MSN, MBA, MHA and he got his MBA and also is a Project Management Professional with his PMP. I was and still am a very proud mom! Ryan has five beautiful children, all red heads and are amazing all in their own ways. Their second child Lindy is my mini me. She looks exactly like I did when I was a kid.



My Grandchildren

My daughter Melissa was always a great daughter and my best friend. I didn't like her boyfriend at all though. Every time I came home from work I would see her sitting on the couch and him laying his head in her lap sound asleep. I thought he was a bum. He was several years older than her and out of high school. Melissa was a junior in high school. I know better than to criticize a boyfriend because all it accomplishes is making them closer together to spite the parent. I just bided my time, bit my tongue and waited for her prefrontal cortex to kick in.

She came to me one day after they had been dating for over six months telling me she wanted to ask me something but prefaced it with "I don't want you to be mad at me." I told her "Melissa, I would be mad at you if you told me you were pregnant." She proceeded to tell me that they want to have sex

and would like some birth control first. I told her that her boyfriend was older and supposedly street wiser than she was and that I would arrange her to see my gynecologist to get the prescription on one condition. This was when HIV/AIDS was very new. I was working in a laboratory as a supervisor and phlebotomist. I told her that I want him to come to my lab so I can draw his blood for an HIV test. She agreed that they would do this.

He showed up to my lab and I proceeded to draw a tube of blood from him. While the needle was in his arm I asked him "So, what exactly is it you want to do with my daughter?" Oh, my goodness, the look on his face was priceless. His test came back negative and I had her call for the appointment with the doctor. I arranged with my doctor to have him counsel the both of them and then give her the birth control script. She broke up with him shortly after

they had the prescription. She tells me today that I did everything just right and she hopes her daughter



can trust her as much as she trusted me. She is married and has a great husband and two wonderful kids.

My daughter is now a very successful attorney and works for the Department of Managed Care in Sacramento, California. She has a great husband and two beautiful children. I am so lucky!

CHAPTER 20

DANIEL & LEUKEMIA

Throughout my life I have made some whoppers of mistakes. I have no regrets because I learned many lessons and things always seemed to work out for me. About two years after my divorce from my first husband, I met another guy, also a Mormon, whom I married in the LDS Temple. Mind you, I was not an active church goer, but I kept meeting these Mormon guys who I thought were really good guys and once again, I was very disappointed.

We had a son named Daniel in 1982 and he was just adorable. He was a very healthy, super happy little baby and a complete joy. He rarely cried at all. His dad was 11 years older than me and wasn't exactly honest with me about his age until after we got married. He was younger looking than his age, so

it wasn't a big deal to me. He had a great job with Nevada Bell which turned into AT&T years later.

We were active in the church and I was given the job as the Young Women's Camp Director. Once a year we went camping with the girls ages 13-18 for a week and we would have a great time, hike, have



Daniel age 3

plays, cook, make crafts and do all kinds of fun things. Daniel's dad went with us to set things up and help with things if needed. We left our son

Daniel with his mother who lived in Boulder City, Nevada not too far from Las Vegas. When we returned, she reported that Daniel didn't eat much and just laid around not really doing anything.

The next day I made an appointment with his pediatrician and since I couldn't get in, I took him to the Urgent Care to be seen. They drew some blood and told me he most likely had the flu and told me to follow up on the lab work. I followed up with his pediatrician the next day and they also drew bloodwork on him and said they would call me when the results came back. The next morning, Daniel woke up and came in the kitchen to me crying. I picked him up and sat him on the kitchen counter and



Daniel just before diagnosis of Leukemia. Note the bruises on his forehead and under his right eye.

I was horrified. He had bruises all over his legs and arms and had these little red spots all over him. He had a bruise over his eye. I called the pediatrician and told them that something is wrong with Daniel and that I promise I did not beat him or even touch him. I asked them if they had gotten his labs back yet

and they told me they had not but to come in and they would look at him.

I arrived at the pediatrician's office and the other doctor that worked with Daniel's pediatrician looked at Daniel and I could see the concern in his face. We were placed in a room and the doctor came in with Daniels's file. As he opened the file I could see the blood draining from his face. "I am going to admit Daniel to the hospital because he is anemic and will refer the Pediatric Intensive Care doctor to have a look at him.

We drove to the hospital and Daniel was admitted to the ICU. The ICU doctor, Dr. John Carlisle came in, who I had known from working at the hospital, and said to me that he is about 90% certain Daniel has leukemia and he has notified UCLA to send their air ambulance and I have four hours to go home and pack to go with Daniel. I felt like I had been hit by a

MACK truck. I couldn't cry in front of my son because I didn't want to worry him. I was alone, scared, my head started pounding and I said to myself, "You can do hard things Barbara, your whole life you have prepared for times like this." The fixed wing MedStar came and picked us letting me ride with Daniel. The flight took about an hour.

Needless to say, while I was sitting in my son's room, I called the doctor's office back and demanded to know whose fault it was that Daniels lab results were not labeled "critical" and that no one in the doctor's office notified me that the labs were even back. It had been three weeks since the labs had been drawn. His platelet count was 50k, white count was over 40k, and he hardly had any red blood cell count or hematocrit/hemoglobin count. But I was too shocked by the diagnosis to be too angry at the doctor. I told my self I would deal with that later.

I called Daniels's dad who drove from Las Vegas to Los Angeles and got there just as they brought the Medical Consent forms to me for signature. This consent was the size of a book. It was a stack of papers about 2 inches deep with all kinds of words I couldn't even pronounce never mind understand. The Pediatric Oncologist and the Oncology fellow were with me trying to explain it all. My head hurt; my brain was on pause. I told them "You know what, I trust you that you will do the best you can for my son, so I will sign the papers now." I signed the consents for all the medications, treatments, bone marrow aspirations, chemotherapy, spinal taps, you name it, I approved it all. You just have to trust that they knew how to get him the best treatments there are available.

Because Daniel was placed on chemotherapy, he was assigned a private room. There was a list on a

closet door in the hallway that parents had to sign up for everyday to get a roll-away bed for the parent to sleep on. This bed had to be returned everyday and signed out every night, first come, first serve. The parents of the other children on the pediatric floor were very nice and polite. These parents are nothing short of miracles of complete courage. I felt like I had found my people. There were families from Mexico, and other countries in South American, families from states west of Utah and foreigners from all over the world that had tragedy strike while visiting America.

UCLA was unique because they catered to parents of the very ill children. They had a parent



About week five on chemo, most of
the hair is gone

meeting every Thursday for any of the parents that just wanted to sit around a large conference table and talk to each other and to a social worker that would also come to the meeting. I found so much peace in that meeting. We were all of like mind even though many of us didn't speak the language of some of the

other parents, we all knew how everyone felt, the anxiety we felt, and the unknown.

I recall there was a family that had just arrived from Mexico whose little girl had been shot in the stomach by a cartel member. She was only 9 years old but was in critical condition. They were given special permission to enter the California via the UCLA Medstar who got permission to enter Mexican airspace, pick her up, and bring her and her family to UCLA for emergency treatment. Their parents seemed terrified, they didn't speak any English, but the hospital staff and the other parents knew how they were feeling and we welcomed them into our "group".

Daniel started his chemotherapy the day after we arrived at UCLA. I had to sign permission for bone marrow aspirations, spinal taps and any other treatments that were necessary. I quickly learned

about white cells, platelets, transfusions, chemotherapy, oncologists, nurse practitioners, the brilliant nurses, interns, residents and fellows. My head was spinning. I had the worst headache I have ever had and it just wouldn't go away. We were on the bone marrow transplant unit only because he was on intense chemotherapy and had to be in isolation. He did have a clown that was able to visit.



The multiple moods of Decadron!

UCLA has the best hospital food ever. They would make croissant sandwiches with crab stuffing, shrimp cocktails, and pretty much anything you could want. The physicians on the floor would usually write for two trays so the parent staying with the child could eat also. It would get pretty expensive eating twice a day and having to pay for it in the cafeteria. Besides, my husband wouldn't give me any money to buy food, telling me to eat off Daniel's tray. This was the beginning of the end. I spent the entire six weeks with Daniel all by myself. Daniels's dad only visited once and seemed to be completely out of touch with what was going on. I was doing my best to cope with the situation on my own. I did a lot of buffering of my emotions with the German cookies in the UCLA bookstore and the food in the cafeteria. I gained about 15 pounds sitting in that room for six weeks. Buffering is what I call it

when someone over does something to feel better. Be it overspending, overeating, for some over drinking it's what I call buffering. I was definitely overeating and overspending. You see, UCLA is located in Westwood where the most awesome shopping is.



Just not feeling good at all



About at the five-week mark at UCLA, Daniel was crying and wouldn't stop. He seemed to be in pain and I couldn't get a nurse to do anything for him such as some pain medication. This one nurse who was a Philippino RN name Supa, came to the room and was going to give him some pain medication. She appropriately listened to his chest and his breathing and told me she would be right back but couldn't give it to him at that moment. The next thing I knew, an x-ray tech was coming into the room

with a portable x-ray machine to do a chest x-ray. The nurse explained to me that she didn't like the way Daniel was breathing and wouldn't give him the medication until she knew his respirations wouldn't be compromised due to the medication.

The doctor came into our room about 10 minutes later telling me that Daniel has a spontaneous pneumothorax and would be needing a chest tube placed. This was the reason he was crying so much. I thanked that nurse for being alert and for withholding the medication that would have made his breathing even worse. There is nothing better in this world than a well-trained RN who is alert to things that just aren't right.

Finally, when we were ready to head back to Vegas, I was making a plane reservation for Daniel and me to fly back when the doctor came in and told we can't fly back, we had to drive back because of

Daniel's pneumothorax in his lung. He had just had the chest tube removed and it is likely his lung would collapse at a high altitude. I had to call Daniel's dad and tell him he had to drive from Las Vegas to UCLA to pick us up. We were able to leave the hospital about 6 hours later.

We got home and settle in. The women of the LDS church brought meals to us every evening for dinner for about two weeks which was really nice. Daniel had a doctor at UCLA that had just finished her fellowship in pediatrics and was happy to assume care for Daniel in Las Vegas where she opened her practice. Her name was Dr. Golden and she was a godsend to us. She did all his chemotherapy in her office and was always there for us anytime we needed her.

Dr. Feig, the Chief of UCLA Pediatric Oncology would come to Las Vegas monthly to see all his



Daniel loved playing in the sink in his room, the water was controlled by foot pedals on the floor. Perfect for a little kid.

patients in one day at one of the oncology offices in Las Vegas. Dr. Feig would do the bone marrow aspirations and spinal taps as well as monitor how well his patients were doing. Daniel would always ask me when I would tell him he had a doctor appointment “Am I going to get a spinal tap?” His

appointment wouldn't be until the afternoon and I didn't want to ruin his entire day so I would just tell him "I'm not sure", although I knew exactly what was going to happen. We would get there and Daniel would see the spinal tap or bone marrow tray and look at me with tears running down his face and say, "Why didn't you tell me?" He broke my heart. This was so hard.

My oldest son Benjamin spent the most time when Daniel had an appointment at UCLA, going with us. From the age of 12, Ben watched intently when Daniel would get a spinal tap or bone marrow transplant. He was so curious about all of it and was impressed with UCLA.

When Ben was in high school he had a drum set and spent the majority of his time playing drums after school. When he got older and graduated from high school, he wasn't sure what he wanted to do with his

life except be a famous rock drummer. My husband at that time had gotten orders to Germany to Traben Trarbach and Ben decided he wanted to come and visit and figure out what he wanted to do. We lived on Bitburg AFB in the housing which was pretty nice. Ben got a job as an exchange detective at the Base Exchange. When it was time for him to go back to the states, his Aunt Sandra offered to let him stay at her and her husband's home on the condition that he go to college. Ben was not a good student in high school barely making C's.

Ben went back to California and enrolled in Fullerton Jr. College and graduate with a 4.0 in general education. He realized "Hey, I can do this!" He applied to UCLA based on his grades from Fullerton Jr. College and was admitted with a full ride scholarship. Two years later he graduated with a degree in neuro biology and decided maybe he could

get into medical school. He applied, using his experience as the brother of Daniel and how he was present for all of Daniels treatments in his medical school entrance exam essay. Ben was accepted into UCLA medical school with a half-ride scholarship and after four years he was a full M.D.

He applied for a residency at several teaching hospitals and was chosen by Boston University to do his residency in orthopedic surgery and sports medicine. Ben told me that the residency was the absolute hardest thing he ever did and there were many times he wanted to quit, but he had that drive that is in our DNA and never gave up. He finished his residency and did two Fellowships. One at San Diego Kaiser hospital in Sports Medicine, the other one at Wake Forest Medical in Winston-Salem, NC in upper extremity and hand surgery. He is currently

an attending surgeon at Wake Forest and teaches also. Needless to say, I am so proud of him.

Dr. Ben is married to a beautiful woman, also a physician and they have a wonderful daughter, who is super smart by the way, name Lily.



CHAPTER 21

CANDLELIGHTERS

CHILDHOOD SUPPORT

Dr. Feig had invited me to a meeting this was going to speak at that evening with the group Candlelighters for Childhood Cancer. This is a group of parents who all have children up to the age of 18 years old that have been diagnosed with cancer. In 1982 there were over 300 families that had a child in Las Vegas diagnosed with some type of cancer. There were kids with Wilms Tumor, neuroblastoma, astrocytoma's, various forms of Leukemia, bone cancers and other cancers that I can't even remember. I just know that cancer was a crisis in Las Vegas that would later be investigated because of the clusters of kids diagnosed with cancer.

When Daniel was diagnosed at UCLA, I was given a form to fill out listing all the chemicals we used in our home, pesticides, were we on well water, what soaps we use, they wanted to know everything. Daniel was on the protocols for the Children's Cancer Study Group who developed the protocols. Depending on the white count upon diagnoses, the age of the child, and whether the patient was a male or a female a machine would take all the numbers and crunch them and spit out a protocol for that child. The protocols were either two years with radiation or three years with intrathecal (spinal tap administration of chemo) methotrexate medication. Daniel got the three years on chemotherapy with the intrathecal methotrexate administration to be done every 30 days. He had a bone marrow aspiration in his hip every 3 months. He had to have a broviac placed in his groin which was a tube going into a vein where

the chemo would be given so he wouldn't have to be poked all the time.

Three-year-old Daniel had a vocabulary that a college student would be hard put to have. He knew about broviacs, methotrexate, Decadron, vincristine, L-Asparaginase and would explain to anyone what it was to anyone willing to listen. He was bald from the chemo so he looked like a nine-month-old that could talk about chemo and stethoscopes and white counts. He was just amazing. His broviac never clotted and he was able to use it the entire time he was on chemo. I would have to flush it with heparin daily.

Daniel was on Decadron which is a stronger form of Prednisone and he took it daily. He was always so hungry and it got to where I had to prepare food at night to feed him during the night because he was super hungry. Needless to say, mom didn't get a lot

of sleep! I would nap when he did but it still wasn't enough and I also had three other kids. Daniel ate so much that he started to look like the Pillsbury doughboy due to the Decadron giving him a round face. I bought him a taco salad from Taco Bell which he ate the entire thing. He waddled to me from the couch and said, "I'm hungry."

I went to the Candlelighter's meeting and met people going through the same thing I was. We were a family without even knowing each other. At that meeting there were parents that had a question about whether their child should be tested for HIV or Hepatitis C since this was the 1980's. I recall seeing the UCLA air ambulance arrive on the helipad which faced Daniel's room. A nurse had come in and told us that the helicopter was bringing Rock Hudson for admission to the hospital. He never left the hospital alive. He died soon after admission from what was

later known to be AIDS from the HIV virus. What was sad and pretty disgusting was seeing reporters trying to scale the wall up to the helipad to get their pictures. So sad that moments such as that couldn't be private.

After about five months, I became the Vice President of the Las Vegas Chapter of Candlelighter's. There was a vote due in Congress on the Family Leave Act which was to go to the desk of President H W Bush. We all thought he would sign the bill because he had a child die of cancer. We stayed in a very hotel in Washington D.C. and went to see the monuments and many of the other sites. We made it to Congress and met with many of our Congressmen and Senators for Nevada.

Senator Harry Reid spoke with us about the bill and said he would consider it. He then took us on an underground tour of the tunnels and trains. It was all

so very interesting. We got to sit in the Congressional Hall and listen to some of the Congressmen speak. In the end, President Bush vetoed the bill which upset all of us. However, President Clinton did sign the bill later which was excellent for families of sick children. I was very happy that I was able to go to Washington D.C. and lobby for such an important issue.

Mission and Vision of Candlelighters for Childhood Cancer

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide emotional support, quality of life programs, and financial assistance for children and their families affected by childhood cancer with the goal of allowing them to focus on the journey, and most importantly, loving their child.

Our Vision

Our vision is to alleviate the isolation many families feel at the time their child is diagnosed. We offer our love, care, encouragement, and understanding so that nobody will face the uncertain world of childhood cancer alone.

CHAPTER 22

BACK TO UCLA

Daniel had only been diagnosed with leukemia for about four months. He was as bald as could be and we had a nickname for him, we called him Danny Warbucks. He was chubby from constant hunger and eating due to being on Decadron. I would have to wake up several times during the night to feed him because of his want for food.

The sun rose on what looked to be a really nice day. until I laid eyes on Daniel and knew something was very wrong. He was breathing what seemed to be very fast. I counted his respirations and they were over 60 per minute. Normal breaths per minute for a 3-year-old are around 24 to 40. He seemed to be struggling to breathe. I called Dr. Golden's home phone number which she had given me for



Just started the chemo, still has his hair

emergencies if Daniel wasn't doing well. I told her his respirations and that he had a 102 temperature. She told me she was going to direct admit him to the pediatric ICU at Sunrise Hospital and she would be there shortly.

I gathered Daniel up into my arms and drove him to the hospital. A radiology tech came to our room and did a portable chest x-ray on Daniel and left. Within 15 minutes, Dr. Carlisle, the pediatric

intensive care doctor, showed up and told me he had bad news for me. He said “Barbara, Daniel’s chest x-ray is very bad and he needs a lung biopsy immediately.” He explained that we could be flown to Utah or back to UCLA for the biopsy and that the biopsy cannot wait. I told him we would go back to UCLA because they knew Daniel and it was closer. Within just one hour, the fixed wing UCLA MedStar had arrived at the hospital and flew us to UCLA.

The MedStar crew quickly got Daniel off the plane and he was taken once again to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit on the Bone Marrow Transplant Unit. This was our home at UCLA when Daniel was first diagnosed. Daniel was put in a room and was placed in an oxygen tent while the medical team was getting labs, getting x-rays and everything else the medical team has to do when a new critical patient is brought in. The pediatric nurse practitioner told



Daniel's dad and I to go down to the cafeteria and grab some lunch while they complete their assessment.

We were sitting at a table in the cafeteria eating something, I don't even recall what it was, when we heard over the loudspeaker "Will the parents of Daniel Peterson please come back to the floor STAT." That's it! Nothing more was said. I thought Daniel had died! We left the cafeteria and ran all the way to the third floor and into his room and they

wanted a signature for the lung biopsy to be performed. My heart took a few minutes to recover. We signed the form and while we were standing there, the Pediatric Intensive Care doctor, Dr. Harrison, came into our room and discussed the results with us and updated us on his condition.

“Daniel only has a white count of 300,” the doctor said. A normal white count is 5,000 to 10,000 for a three-year-old. Daniel had just had an induction of Cytoxan to his protocol a few days before and he completely crashed. He had no immune system basically. Not only does the chemotherapy wipe out the white blood cells, but also the platelets and red blood cells. “Daniel is too critical at this time to do a lung biopsy on, he would never make it through it. What we do know is he most likely has pneumocystis pneumonia and will be treated for that,” Dr. Harrison told us.

While at Daniels bedside and watching all the nurses and doctors around him, his respiratory rate increased from 60 breaths per minute up to 90 breaths per minutes. I couldn't take my eyes off Daniel. His little body was in a sitting position and leaning forward and he had sheer terror in his eyes. Even though he was on 100 percent oxygen in the tent, I saw nasal flaring and he was using his accessory muscles in his chest and neck just to get a breath. I knew he thought he was going to die. I wanted to save him! I wanted to breath for him! The decision at that moment would be to intubate him. Daniel's dad and I were escorted out of the room while they put him on a vent.

My parents had arrived at the hospital by this time. The Chief of Pediatric Oncology, Dr. Feig, came up to Daniels's dad, my parents and myself and explained just how critical Daniel was. He told us he

has about a 30 percent chance of survival due to the infiltration of the pneumonia. Dr. Feig showed us his x-ray films revealing a complete white out of his lungs; and then his white count only being 300, giving him basically no immune system to fight with. This was the first and last time I ever saw my dad cry. I saw little or no emotion from my mom. I made a mental note of this, but let it go at that moment. Making a statement at that time would not have



served the situation one bit. I broke down and started

to cry and my dad hugged me. My thoughts were “I am going to lose my baby!”

Once my family left, I was alone to deal with all Daniels care along with his medical team. Daniel not only had the best pediatric oncologist with Dr. Feig, but also the best pediatric intensive care physician in Dr. Harrison and the bone marrow transplant ICU



Dr. Harrison and the medical team working hard to get Daniels O2 levels down by increasing the PEEP

RN's are the best nurses in the business. I was so fortunate to have them caring for my son.

Dr. Harrison's main goal to start with was to get the oxygen down to a level that wouldn't hurt his brain. Oxygen at 100 percent can do harm not just to the lungs, but also to the brain. The ventilator settings for Daniel were oxygen 100%, PEEP (positive end expiratory pressure) 10, respirations 24. Dr. Harrison wanted to get Daniels's oxygen level down to prevent brain damage but had to bring up the PEEP to 14 which is a lot of pressure on the lungs and could cause a pneumothorax. Dr. Harrison spent nine hours that first day in Daniels room trying to get the O2 down while at the same increasing the PEEP to get oxygen to the tissues of the body. This was a delicate goal for Dr. Harrison, but he did it! He got Daniels O2 down to 70% with a PEEP of 14. I wasn't an RN at that time, so I don't remember all

the ventilator settings, but I do recall two main numbers, those being oxygen at 100% and PEEP placed at 14 to bring the oxygen ventilator settings below 100% to prevent damage. Dr. Harrison did it, he saved Daniels's life and I am so very grateful for what he did and the time he spent to help Daniel.

The nurses were so professional, warm, friendly and compassionate. One nurse named Micky was



Two of the Bone Marrow Transplant nurses. Mickie (in the blue) was the best ever.

taking care of him many of the days we were there. She took such great care of Daniel. One day she walked in and found that a floating nurse had just put any baby blanket on the bed underneath Daniel. This upset her and she wasn't going to have Daniel on anything but the best. She found a new package of the blue striped baby blankets and only used those for Daniel. She called them Daniels "Dillard's sheets." I want to be a nurse just like her. I decided



Supa, another wonderful nurse of Daniels.

at that moment I would be a pediatric oncology nurse. I did get my master's in nursing, but never lived where there was a pediatric oncology hospital.

Daniel was on that ventilator for six weeks. I kept hearing from the medical team that he has a 50/50 chance of survival. He could survive if he could just increase his white count that was wiped out with the Cytosan. He had no immune fighters to fight for him. I started doing a mediation where I would actually visualize his body producing white cells. I would start in his bone marrow and build the white blood cells from there. Another problem I had in the back of my mind was that he was missing at least one month of chemotherapy already. Will he relapse? So many worries and questions in my mind. I tried not to let my thoughts go crazy because I knew that thoughts create feeling and a feeling is just that, a feeling. It's not a real thing. I would sleep with

him on the bed, play music for him on his Fisher Price record player I had brought with us from home, I would talk to him, sing to him and hold him as the nurses would let me. I never left him longer than one to two hours. All night long I would hear the hum of the ventilator with the breaths being provided to Daniel from it. I would always walk into his room and I knew he sensed my presence because his heart rate would increase just by hearing the sound of my voice. Before he got sick, he had a habit of sucking his pointer finger on his right hand. He wasn't doing any of that.

Then one day, I met Desiree. Desi as we call her and still do as we are good friends still, had a 9-month-old daughter brought into UCLA from Nellis AFB where Heidi had been diagnosed with heart problems by the medical team at the base. Shortly after that, Heidi continued to get worse and it was

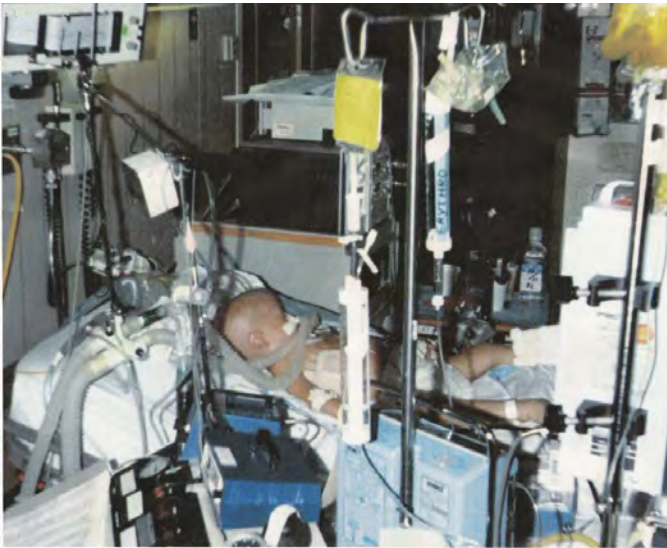


discovered she had T-cell leukemia with a mass in her chest. T-Cell leukemia is a higher risk leukemia than the type Daniel had been diagnosed with. Heidi was adorable. Often I would walk into their room and find Desi, who was probably 5 feet 9 or so all curled up in Heidi's crib sleeping with her. The staff tried to tell Desi she couldn't sleep in the crib with Heidi, but Desi didn't care, she just kept doing it. You develop an attitude when you have a sick child. Hard to explain, maybe it's a syndrome of parents

with ill children. Heidi's protocol was chemotherapy and radiation to the brain. Watching a child that young go through all that is so disturbing. Desi always seemed to be there for me when I needed her. We would escape the hospital and go down to Westwood and window shop. Neither of us had any money, but it was fun regardless. Some of the M.D. residents, interns and fellows would give us an empty room so we could sleep in at times. We were grateful for the accommodations. Heidi had a rough road with her health, but she is a beautiful and healthy woman now and I am so proud of her and her mom!

At about week five, I was looking at the current labs in Daniels's chart for that morning. I had to take a double look at them. Daniels white count was increasing at an amazing rate! His little white cell SEAL team kicked in and were fighting like a SEAL

does! The doctor was amazed, he told me he never thought Daniel would get better. He kept telling me that sometimes a child will seem to be getting better, but then they crash and die. I refused to listen to this kind of talk. I left Daniels room with my shower bag and fresh clothes, got into the shower and will never forget what happened. Writing this part of our story brings chills to me, along with the tears. I put my face up to the warm, almost hot, water and had a



Daniel after being intubated and placed on a ventilator, age

break down. I cried and cried, I begged, I prayed, but mostly I remember bargaining with God. “Please dear God, don’t take him, I’ll do anything you want! I can’t lose Daniel, not now, not when he seems to be improving!” I crouched down on the shower floor and cried and cried. I don’t even know how long I was in there. I promised to always have God in my life, please, just let Daniel live. I was going through



Supa and one of the other awesome nurses

the steps of grief and didn't want the last steps to happen to me.

I walked back into Daniels room and laid on the bed with him. I sang to him, I told those white cells to keep fighting. The next few days Daniel continued to improve and even the doctor admitted he is going to pull through. I had all the doctors from Dr. Feig to Dr. Harrison and all the residents tell me that I was the one that helped him to survive. It was my positive thinking, love and determination and Daniel felt all of it.

Daniel was getting better and was trying to push the ventilator tube out of his mouth with his tongue and one of the doctors and all his nurses were so happy. They called respiratory for an "emergency extubation." In reality, there is no such thing as an emergency extubation, but everyone was cheering Daniel on. Daniel was extubated and crashed three



Dr. Kathryn and RN Mickey calling for extubation

hours later. I headed back to the showers to bargain, cry, plead and make more promises. Just save my baby!

They re-intubated Daniel and he continued to improve, his white count continued to increase and the doctors placed him on CPAP on the vent. The PEEP was normal and he was on around 25% oxygen. He began to decline with his breathing and Dr. Harrison called for a chest x-ray. Daniel had

another pneumothorax on the right side, so now he had experienced two pneumothorax's and required another chest tube. He finally improved from that and was able to be extubated. About four days after he was extubated he was well enough to go home. One of the female residents we called Dr. Kathryn, came into our room. She sat down next to me and told me that Daniel and I were the reason she went into medicine. She had started to feel like she had



Daniel after extubation and waiting to go home

made a mistake becoming a doctor, but she said Daniel's survival from this horrible pneumonia renewed her faith in medicine and survivors. She thanked me for being such a good example of a parent.

After Daniel was extubated, it was then that I realized what bad shape he was in. He was literally like a newborn again. All his muscles were atrophied from his neck muscles down to his feet. He was going to require a lot of physical therapy. A friend of mine who was a well-known physical therapist



and owned the Las Vegas Institute for Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine. This was an Institute that worked with Las Vegas famous boxers, Olympic Champions, famous sports individuals and now Daniel.

Keith took a special interest in Daniel and had him walking in just six weeks. He would get on the floor and crawl with Daniel while Daniel was trying to walk. Daniel had complete foot drop on both feet. It was a big job and Keith was the man that





got Daniel back to normal. We bought a home gym to help Daniel when he wasn't at the Institute and I've never seen a more determined 3-year-old kid!

CHAPTER 23

BACK TO UCLA... AGAIN

We were doing well with Daniel for about a year. He got back on track with his chemotherapy and physical therapy. He hadn't gotten sick in a year. Then it hit the fan again. This time, his white count wasn't the problem. Daniel was now four years old and had been doing well. He woke up late one morning and was burning up with a fever of 104.3. I immediately called Dr. Golden's office and was told that she was on vacation that week but Dr. Snively would be assuming his care per permission from Dr. Golden. The office staff said to bring him in and they would see him.

I got to the office of Dr. Golden and Dr. Snively at around 12:15 and found they had gone to lunch but would be back at 12:15. I sat on the couch across from the elevators in the hallway and waited for the medical staff to

get there. The elevator opened and they immediately said to me “Where have you been?” I explained that I got here as soon as I could. They told me that they have 15 more minutes left on their lunch and would be with me after lunch ended. I was furious. I asked if I could just go into an office so Daniel could lay on one of the tables because his fever was so high and he was having a hard time staying awake. The staff looked very aggravated at me and let me in, just to have to wait a good 45 minutes for Dr. Snavely to come into the room.

The doctor examined Daniel and his temp was still 104. He stated, “he doesn’t look that sick to me, I think he just has the flu so I’ll send him home and follow up in a few days but call if he gets worse.” I continued to fume. I bundled Daniel up, called the Candlelighter’s of Las Vegas President Ron and told him I needed two tickets to UCLA STAT! Ron called the travel agency, got the tickets to me and

within an hour I was on my way to UCLA. I was so angry with Dr. Snavelly, but once again, I had to focus on what would or would not serve me at that moment and I focused on my very sick son.

We arrived at UCLA and had to go through the emergency room. They immediately saw how ill Daniel was and sent us right to Dr. Feig's clinic. Dr. Feig was waiting for us, he took one look at Daniel and said, "He's got meningitis." They admitted him to the same floor he had always been on which was the pediatrics unit third floor. This time we were not put on the bone marrow transplant unit because he had a good white count. Daniel and I got into the elevator, which I was very familiar with, and I hit button number 3. I immediately went into a panic attack. My heart started to race, my respirations were deep and fast, and I felt the feelings of gloom and doom as the elevator reached the third floor. My feet

felt like they were glued to the elevator floor. I could not move them, they were stuck. As the doors opened I stood there, not wanting to get out. I wanted to run, run as fast as I could with Daniel to the nearest airport and say, “This isn’t happening!” I gathered myself, took a deep breath, grabbed tightly onto Daniel’s hand so he would be ok and slowly walked to the nurse’s station. They all remembered him and asked me if I was ok because I looked a little pale they said. I said “Please just take us to his room”, his eyes hurt because he had photophobia from the meningitis and he couldn’t stand light.

We had a room where Daniel had a roommate. I kept the curtains around his bed drawn tightly and was grateful to have a window bed. Daniel and I started watching tv and he seemed to be doing ok. Dr. Golden called me when she got back from her vacation and told me how sorry she was that Daniel

and I had to go through all that trouble. She asked me to give Dr. Snavelly a second chance though. I remember saying to her, “Dr. Golden, I love you and I trust you, but Daniel doesn’t have second chances. So, when I bring him into your office and he has a temperature over 100, you and Dr. Snavelly don’t get to send him home. I need you to hospitalize him and then we’ll find out that cause. I don’t care if it’s a sore throat, hospitalize him first because he doesn’t get second chances.” Dr. Golden said she understands and it will never happen again.

A few hours later I was holding Daniel in my lap and I noticed his bladder was the size of a cantaloupe. I called the nurse in and she was very concerned and called the doctor. They ordered his bladder to be drained slowly by capping off the catheter intermittently so his bladder would not go into spasms. They couldn’t understand why his bladder

wouldn't drain on its own but they knew it was neuro related.

Shortly after getting his bladder drained, I was watching him and he was barely breathing. Then he would take a gasping breath and then stop breathing again. He looked panicked. I slapped him on his back and hit the emergency call button on the wall. Now, if you have ever been in a teaching hospital where there are interns, residents and fellows, what you get in your room is nothing short of amazing! There were so many doctors and nurses, respiratory tech and radiology techs running into this small two bed hospital room. They took immediate action to find out what happened or what was happening to Daniel. He was rushed to the intensive care unit on the same floor. He was difficult to arouse and wouldn't eat anything. He just slept and finally started breathing before they had to intubate him.

The doctor ran all kinds of labs on Daniel, did blood cultures, urine cultures, CT scans, MRI's, you name it. After about a week, he was moved from the ICU to a regular private room. He seemed to be getting better and discharge planning had begun. Nothing ever cultured out.

One evening, about three days after coming out of the ICU, Daniel started to scream in pain. He would roll back and forth in his bed and cry, grabbing his left leg. I didn't know what to do for him except to call for the nurse for some pain medication. The nurse answered the call bell that I had rung and asked what was wrong. I told her and she said she would put a call into the doctor.

I waited one hour, then two, then four, all the time while Daniel was screaming in pain. The nurse came by the room and closed the door, I guess he was disturbing them at the nurse's station. So, I went and

found the red wagon that parents take their kids up and down the halls in and placed Daniel in it and proceeded to walk back and forth near the nurse's station. Yes, I was the parent from hell, but I was the parent from heaven for my son. They told me to go back to the room and I replied, "Look, I asked for the doctor four hours ago and no one has come, so if I have to listen to him screaming in pain, so do you until he gets some relief." A resident came 10 minutes later. You do what you have to do.

The doctor ordered some injections of morphine for Daniel into the same leg that that was in so much pain. I wasn't sure of the rationale for that, but if it works, then ok. That same evening, I was watching Daniel rolling back and forth in bed crying in pain and I noticed his left leg had gotten smaller. The calf circumference in his right leg was noticeably different, in fact it was shrinking so fast it was nearly

half the size of his left leg. I was so frustrated about the pain, the rapid atrophy of his left leg and just started crying. I couldn't control this situation; I didn't know what to do.

I decided to run downstairs to the pediatric oncology nurse practitioner Fran and made it into her office. She could see how upset I was and had no idea Daniel was going through this amount of pain. First thing she said to me was "We need to get the pain management team up there to be in charge of his pain!" I immediately felt like someone was going to do something. I could breathe.

The pain management team came to Daniel's room and immediately stopped the intramuscular morphine injections. They explained to me that the morphine only offers him peaks and valleys of pain and pain relief. They placed him on Methadone by mouth. I was completely amazed at how wonderful

this worked as a pain management method. Every four hours he would get a dose of Methadone and didn't cry anymore. There was one instance I had with a nurse who walked into Daniel's room and handed me Daniel's methadone to squirt into his mouth. It was in a syringe without a needle, so it was no problem for me to give it to him. I gave the medication to Daniel and right after he had swallowed it, the nurse came running back into his room and said to me "You didn't give him that medication yet did you?" I replied that I had given it to him. I also asked her why she would ask me that question. She told me that the medication actually belonged to a child down the hall and wasn't Daniel. Now I'm thinking this is UCLA medical center pediatrics that doesn't have your normal flu and other childhood issues that go to a community hospital. This is UCLA! Here, we have liver transplants, bone

marrow transplants, cancer of all kinds and this nurse gave me someone else's med to give to my son? I was not happy, in fact, I was angry, but not angry enough to make a scene. I requested to meet with the nursing supervisor on duty and told her the problem. She said the nurse had told her about it and that the medication was Valium. This wouldn't have hurt my son, in fact, it did him some good to relax, but this is not acceptable. This is a critical incident. The nurse came in and apologized and I accepted her apology. But first I made her realize this could have been tragic. She understood and was taken off Daniel's plan of care.

The medical staff still hadn't figured out what was causing all these symptoms Daniel was having. In all the tests they performed on him, nothing cultured out. It was a mystery to the physicians. In my mind, he had all the symptoms of Polio. Being

on chemotherapy at three years old, he was unable to get all his vaccinations. He had the symptoms of urinary retention which can be caused by the bladder and pelvic floor detrusor muscles become paralyzed by the poliovirus. He had the breathing difficulty because the poliovirus attacks the motor neurons of the brain stem resulting in reduced breathing and swallowing capabilities. They did MRI's and a CT scan and could never figure out what was going on. Of course, they never tested for the poliovirus because it no longer exists they say.

When I got my RN license years later, I was talking with the infectious disease doctor at the hospital I was working at about Daniel. He thought that what Daniel had sounded more like polio also and offered to run a titer lab test on Daniel to see if he had any of the antibodies for polio and it came out positive. The doctor also believed Daniel had polio.

Daniel has post-polio syndrome now with the clubbing of his left foot, a four-inch discrepancy in left leg length, muscle wasting in the lower leg of his left leg which still shows muscle atrophy 35 years later. This leg length discrepancy has caused Daniel to have significant scoliosis.

What he was actually diagnosed with at UCLA was meningoencephalitis. I can't get anyone to listen to me about the post-polio syndrome however the live virus OPV was given until 1987 at which time the inactivated virus injections had begun. Daniel got the OPV at 2 and 4 months but was unable to get the booster at four years of age because he was on chemotherapy. He also has epilepsy from the diagnosis.

According to The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and the NIH, the symptoms of post-polio syndrome include:

Slowly progressive muscle weakness

Fatigue

Muscle Atrophy



Loss of muscle function

Pain from joint degeneration and increasing skeletal deformities such as scoliosis

Daniel checks off all these symptoms.



His scoliosis continues to get

worse and Daniel ended up wearing a brace on his

leg. My mom said he reminded her of Tiny Tim of the Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol. Now when I watch it every year, the movie brings me back to Daniel and all he has been through.



Things continued to get worse. Daniel was going to have surgery on his left hip because due to all the steroids (Decadron) he had been on for years, he had developed osteonecrosis of his left hip. The orthopedic doctors at Shriners Hospital did the usual

pre-surgical labs and it was found that Daniel had Hepatitis C. He had gotten many platelet transfusions when he was first diagnosed which is where he contracted the Hepatitis C. We had no idea we were living with Hepatitis C in our household. Thankfully, no one has contracted the Hepatitis C.

When my family moved to Utah about six years ago, I got a job as an RN Case Manager with Select Health. Daniel saw a gastroenterologist doctor that deals with Hepatitis C and wanted to put Daniel on Harvoni. Daniel has always taken care of himself and his liver. No Tylenol, no alcohol, nothing that could be liver toxic and he faithfully took the herb Milk Thistle as a protection for his liver.

The gastroenterologist performed a liver biopsy on Daniel's liver and after having Hepatitis C for over 35 years, his liver was in perfect condition. No scarring, no elevation in the liver enzymes, nothing.

It was perfect. Harvoni is a drug that gets rid of hepatitis C but it has one drawback. It costs \$100,000 for a 30-day treatment. Of course, the insurance company denied it stating his liver was not damaged enough from the Hepatitis C. He needed to have some scarring or liver cancer apparently. The gastroenterologist and I appealed the decision stating that as a patient with a history of already having cancer, he is at a high risk of getting liver cancer from the Hepatitis C, which would then cost the insurance company a lot more. The medication was approved, he took the medication daily for 30 days and he is now completely hepatitis C free, which is a miracle.

He still takes epilepsy medication as he has had multiple grandmal seizures. He was going to have the surgery to cut out the area where the seizures focus from, but halfway through the procedure, it failed and he had a brain bleed and the doctor had to

about the procedure. He was a patient at Shands hospital in Gainesville, Florida.



When Daniel woke up he was on a ventilator. The doctors were afraid he had suffered a stroke, but he



gave us all the thumbs up that he was ok and new what was going on.

Two days after he came off the vent he told us “It’s going to take more than this to get rid of me!” I absolutely love this kid, his attitude, and his tolerance. He is steadfast in his LDS religion and has improved with everything in his life since all his problems began. He is disabled and lives with my husband and I at home in Palm Coast, Florida. He is an absolute joy! He graduated from high school at the age of 21 and is so proud of that accomplishment. He is also a genealogical historian and loves helping people find their family histories.

Daniel had gone the past seven years without having a seizure. Things were going great. My husband got Covid, the neurological kind that affects your taste and smell. I also got Covid from my husband which was also only neurological

symptoms. Food didn't taste right, smells were extremely strong and I kept hearing noises that occurred in front of me, but instead of hearing where the noise was actually coming from, I heard the voices and other noises behind me. I had a hearing test and exam by an ENT and passed everything. I also had a terrible case of vertigo. So, we knew it was Covid-19. Two days later, Daniel was walking into our kitchen area and he dropped onto the floor having a major Grand Mal seizure. He also tested positive for Covid-19 and has had four Grand Mal seizures in the past five months. He goes to the Mayo Clinic for his epilepsy appointments, but they say there is no relation to Covid-19. I don't believe this, it's too coincidental. His last Grand Mal seizure was just three weeks ago in Aldi. He hit the floor with his head and after his seizure had stopped, EMT's took him to the hospital for care. He required seven

stitches in his head and a CT scan to make sure he didn't have a bleed in his brain. We live our lives with positivity and love and quietly waiting for the next shoe to drop.



Daniel Peterson age 37

CHAPTER 24

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

I don't consider myself as missing out on anything in my life. Byron Katie, who is one of my favorite authors and who I quoted at the beginning of this book also says,

“How do we know it was meant to happen that way?”

“It did.”

~Byron Katie

The trick is how your brain uses what has happened to you. Life is 50 percent good and 50 percent bad and it's best if we accept that so we won't ever be disappointed.

I have only written about a little less than half of my crazy life. I am always looking for the next adventure, the next place to go. This is the Brat syndrome, but I think it is a very positive thing. I have been married to my husband for going on 23

years now. He has two wonderful sons who have made their own ways and have been successful at what they have chosen to do.



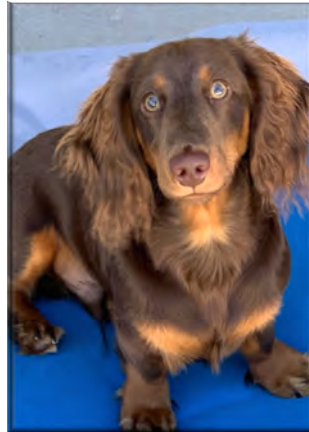
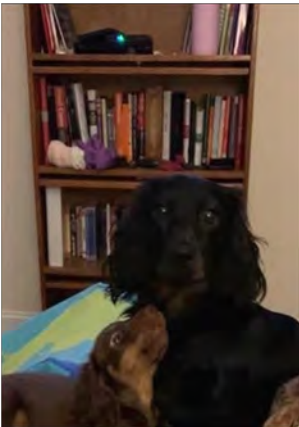
Justin is in the Air Force and is in Avionics. Currently he is stationed in Okinawa with two of his children from his current marriage. He also has two children from his prior marriage.

Jon is my husband Jerry's second son. He lives in Georgia, works for Toyota doing painting on cars and is the definition of a southerner. He has a heavy southern accent and a fiancé, loves to fish and hunt and drive his four-wheeler in mud. Jon was born in the Netherlands when my husband was stationed there with the USAF. Jon's fiancé Kelly has two children from another marriage who Jon has taken on as his own.



Both of my husband's sons are living their own dream and have really great work ethics. My husband and I are very fortunate to have successful children and I credit the experience they had growing up as military Brats and the kids of a Diplobrat.

I have learned that I will always want a dog or two in my life, preferably Dachshunds. I grew up with Dachshunds and I just think they are perfect.



On Children

What have I learned from raising my children? Keep them close to you. Always support their decisions they make as long as you are confident it will serve them. Don't be a people pleaser. If they want you to do something and you just can't or don't want to, it's ok to tell them no but that you love them and it's ok for them to be upset with you. "I know you really want me to take you to your friends house, but I'm really tired and I really don't want to." It's ok to say no to your children. Be honest with them even if they don't want to hear it.

Don't be people pleased. This is the opposite of being a people pleaser. When you are people pleased, you know it. This is when your kid or someone else doesn't usually help you out and then

all of a sudden they are doing things just to get something from you. This is called being people pleased.

I spent my life people pleasing my parents, especially my mother. I just wanted her to love me. I craved feeling acceptance and love from her. I knew she loved chocolate so I would go to the store and bring her a chocolate bar, just to please her and get her love. I would clean the bathrooms as a 10-year-old, dust the house, anything I could find to do to make her acknowledge me. I felt invisible to her.

One time when I was about 10 years old, our entire family went to visit friends of my parents in Salt Lake City, Utah. We all walked into the house, my parents and us four kids. The friends of my parents exclaimed, “Oh, we remember these three but we don’t remember Barbara!” I was crushed. How could that be? I really was invisible. Don’t do

this to your kids. They grow up to feel less than, invisible and spend their life trying to do A+ work just to get recognition only to be rejected.

I had three master's degrees hanging on my office wall several years ago before my mom got dementia. I graduated with a 4.0 with a master's in nursing, a master's in healthcare administration and an MBA. I showed her my diplomas on the wall, she looked at them and said nothing, just walked on. I am so grateful I had my dad who I knew was proud of everything I did in my life. There was no doubt. Pay attention to all of your kids. Even if one is independent and successful, that one is probably the one that needs the most love. Teach your children that it isn't anyone's job to like them, it is their job to like themselves.

Give yourself self-care and let your daughters see you. Get your nails done together, have lunch

together, make that bond strong. When your daughter gets a boyfriend you don't like, don't voice your dislike, just accept it. She'll see what a loser he is without your negativity which just throws her at him more. Trust her decisions, it really works.

Pay attention to the little aches and pains. Be an advocate for your child whether for medical care, school, or activities. Find the best care for your child by researching providers before you take your child to them. It will serve you well.

Be sure and pick up the sequel to this book. I discuss my nursing career, my career as a loss prevention supervisor in Germany, Netherlands and Belgium, and working as a supervisor with the American Red Cross. How I volunteered and went to Bosnia, Croatia under the flag of NATO and worked loss prevention at the military stores, lived in a tent, wore BDU's, Kevlar and a flak vest. I discuss my

work as a RN case manager working Medicaid and Medicare under Obamacare and worker's compensation. I have worked in nearly every nursing field from pediatrics, neuro, ICU Critical Care, and Ortho with lots of stories to tell. I know the insurance industry probably better than anyone because I have seen it from the patient's view, the parent's view, the medical view and the case manager view.

Finally...

Thank you so much for reading or listening to my life stories. I hope you found something that helped you in your own life. I hope I have helped you in many ways. You are in my heart always.

Barbara Childs RN MSN MBA MHA

Certified Life Coach

