

Nancy's stories of Mom Hall

I was born on April fool's Day, 1958. According to Mom, I came into this world kind of backwards; literally (posterior) and in the sense of the word...

My earliest memory with mother was on a family trip to Yellowstone (1961-62); I think I was about 3 or 4 years old. I can't guarantee the accuracy of this story because I was so little -- but this is the way I remember it. Everyone in the family wanted to take a boat ride on Yellowstone Lake despite the clouds and the wind (I didn't have a choice in the matter). So dad rented a boat that had a partial cover over the front half. Everyone piled in, and off we went. To begin with, mom made me wear this big puffy uncomfortable orange thing (life vest) that I didn't like. The lake was choppy, and I was really scared. I can remember crying and screaming the entire time despite mother's nurturing attempts to calm me down. She held and rocked me the entire time. I probably wondered why everyone else thought this was fun... didn't they sense the danger? I remember feeling relieved when the ride was finished. I'm not sure if this next incident happened the same day or not, but I'm pretty sure it was the same vacation. Mother sent Tracy Jr. to the car (I seem to remember a station wagon of some sort?) to get some food out of the back. I went tagging along behind him with Mother watching out the door of the cabin. Just about then, a bear came strolling into camp and mom yelled for Tracy Jr. and I to get into the car, which we hastily did. The bear came up to the side door that we had just slammed shut and stood up on his hind legs, placed his paws up on the side of the car, and began to rock the car. I remember screaming, and Tracy jr. told me to shut up! Mom grabbed 2 frying pans and banged them together to scare the bear off, which must have worked -- because I'm still here to tell the story. I think mom would have taken that bear on if she'd had to.

Mother had a lot of confidence in her children, and didn't give up on us easily. Before I came along, she was successfully raising 6 children to musical perfection. She wasn't about to fail me either. I was probably about 8 years old when she started me on the piano. Mom was SERIOUS about our music practice, and we all knew it had to be done. Every day we were awakened at 5am to practice our instruments, eat breakfast and get ready for school, and we had better not complain! However, after several years of lessons and not much progress - she switched me to the violin. It didn't take my violin teacher (Mrs. Lambert) long to notice my lack of musical inclination, and didn't hesitate to tell mom that she was "wasting her money". I'm sure this came of no surprise, but mom wasn't about to give up... the next thing I knew I was taking voice lessons from Ruth Melville. Of course, that didn't pan out either, and since there wasn't much more hope for me in the music department, Mom began to encourage my interest in art. Initially I was allotted a \$15.00 allowance to purchase art supplies with. I spent \$20, which was readily granted, and came home with a sketch book, charcoal, an acrylic paint set and brushes. And over the years was supplied with clay, turquoise, silver, flux & a blow torch (for lapidary work & jewelry making). Mom involved me in several summer and evening classes such as leaded glass, oil painting, watercolor, theatre workshop, pottery and drawing, and in every case, I was finally in my element! ...Unfortunately, I was in her element too! Once after arguing with Charlotte over use of the basement

bathroom, Mom moved Charlotte upstairs, and let me use the basement one. She let my friends autograph the walls, and I was allowed to freely paint decoupage and adorn them. But she drew the line when it came to a revolver I painted on the wall which was carefully pointed in the direction of the commode. In addition to the bathroom, she allowed me to have full design privileges in my bedroom as well. I think I re-painted it several times, wallpapered at least once, added light effects to, sewed curtains, and even built a large wooden platform in it for my bed. She seemed happy to contribute paint as needed, and even agreed to install my choice of carpet. I chose dark brown thick pile shag. And when it came to room cleanliness, she'd look in & let out a grunt of disapproval, bite her lip, and shut my door on the terrible mess inside. Wow! What a cool mom!

However, Mom had a lot of rules. I'm pretty sure most of her rules were made or enforced on my behalf to try and control my free spirited nature. But I didn't do well with rules. Some of them worked, and some of them didn't. Here's a sampling;

Rule 1) When I was sixteen I was given "The two date rule", (can't date the same guy more than two times in a row – No going steady, no sitting on boy's laps, and no necking). But rules were made to be broken, weren't they? So I lined up a group of boys who were the "go between" dates. They'd pick me up as if they were taking me out, and dropped me off at Doug's, thus enabling Doug and I to sneak in more dates.

Rule 2) Be home on weekends by midnight. To enforce this rule, she set an alarm clock. If I wasn't in by midnight to shut the alarm off, the alarm would wake her up and she'd wait by the door for me. I was grounded one day for every minute past midnight! There was no getting around this rule, and I didn't want to be grounded or I wouldn't get to see Doug, so I was usually home on time!

Rule 3) When I wanted to go out, I had to tell her where I was going, who I'd be with and what time I'd be home! If I wasn't where I said I was going, I'd be grounded. ...And no 'cruisin' center street! I'm pretty sure I broke this rule more than once, but one particular time I just about got killed as a result;

I told mom I was going to mutual but instead I went out 'cruising' in a car with a couple of boys (can't remember who) and a neighbor friend, Heather Magelby. We all drove up to lover's lane (above the temple) to play a game called elephant. The object of the game was to find a car that was parked (with steamy windows) and pull up behind it; Then one of us would jump out of our car and crawl over the top of the car beginning at the trunk, and then over the roof and down the windshield onto the hood, pound on the windows and run back to the car. In this instance, a chase ensued. We hastily sped away, laughing and screaming, and driving carelessly. When we arrived at the base of rock canyon just above the temple (at the time there were no homes there) we took a sharp left hand turn and hit some gravel and rolled the car. Fortunately nobody was hurt. Since Heather and I didn't want to get in trouble, we left the scene of the accident and hurried home. Heather's parents were notified about the accident by the police. The boys had 'given in' and told the police that there were also 2 girls involved. When I got home, I went down to bed without saying a word to my parents. It wasn't long before Dad and Mom were

also notified about the accident, and were immediately by my side checking for broken bones and bruises. (...and scolding me!)

Rule 4) Mom used incentives to encourage good behavior and grades – usually cash. Just one draw back... I had to pay her for grades below a ‘C’, (which was often the case). In April of 1973, Mom asked me to help her transplant 48 Heritage raspberry plants at the farm. Mom had me carry the water to each transplant in a bucket. She told the family that I did it cheerfully (“yes Nancy”) and that I was a pleasure to work with & she couldn’t have done it without me... but immediately followed her statement with; “Don’t be overcome – I promised her she could buy a new pair of shoes to go with her new dress for the dance, tricky, - - especially as her Daddy and I had previously decided that she deserved the shoes anyway”. Mom was usually able to get positive results from me with bribes.

As a young girl and teenager, I thought Mom was kind of ‘tight’ with money. On birthdays we were usually given five bucks and a ‘freebie’ card that came in the mail from the heart association or something similar. If you needed money, it had to be ‘earned’. We knew not to complain or she’d recite stories about how she was raised during the ‘depression’. When money was loaned, it came with a price; a written contract with a payment schedule including INTEREST. However, looking back over the years I have come to the realization that Mom wasn’t a ‘tight wad’ at all! ...she was actually generous. Her gifts were almost always hand made. I can’t speak for the boys, but at some point growing up, the girls all received a Ginny gown, a quilt, a new dress, a stuffed animal, a hand-made coat or scarf, an outfit for a doll, a costume for Halloween or the school play, or fabric and patterns to make school clothes or a dress for the prom. And you could always count on a really fun party. It almost seemed like mom enjoyed the parties more than us, and I’m sure that’s mostly because she put so much effort into them! I can still see & hear her laughing and having fun right along with the rest of us kids. Every birthday party was an adventure and her treasure hunts were clever and challenging. But it didn’t stop there! She threw ‘leap year’ parties, new years, Christmas, water parties, and even Night-Blooming Cereus parties! (Mom had an ugly Night Blooming Cereus plant that only bloomed about once a year, and opened as soon as the sun went down, stayed open all night, and wilted in the morning. The flower’s bloom was magnificent and the fragrance was heady and intoxicating, but I really think it was all just a good excuse to stay up and wait for the flower to open, and share food and fun with friends and neighbors. Around the time that I started liking boys, mom threw me a ‘boy-girl’ party... complete with an “under the sheet” game (which was supervised, of course). I seem to remember during one of these ‘boy-girl’ parties that she had to run upstairs to get something. After a few minutes had passed she hollered down the stairs; “why is it so quiet down there?!” We all started laughing, and I just rolled my eyes with embarrassment! When I turned 16, she hauled two car-loads of kids down to the sand dunes where we played all day and ate egg-salad sandwiches, homemade pickles, carrot & celery sticks and cookies. And on the Sunday before every birthday Mom was famous for preparing your favorite home-cooked meal and a dessert.