

IN IOWA, THE BROOKS DON'T BABBLE...THEY CARVE A LIFE

This is my life story. It began on July 31, 1925, when I, Alma Anne Barna, was born in the Samaritan Hospital in Troy, New York. My mother, then, Josephine T. Ryan, had graduated as a registered nurse from this hospital twelve years earlier. She was an unusual woman and she did unusual things. I have letters that she wrote to her mother when, in 1915, she traveled to Central America on a United Fruit Company freighter, a banana boat maybe??! 1917 - 1919, she served with the U.S. Army in France where she cared for wounded soldiers during and after WWI. This picture was taken about that time. She was in her early thirties. While in France she was exposed to mustard gas, and this may have contributed to her early death. After her release from the army, she joined the Navy where she met my father, Stephen P. Barna, and married him in Norfolk, VA on December 12, 1921, and became Josephine T. Barna.



Because she was married, she had to resign her position in VA, and shortly thereafter, she returned to her home in Troy, New York, where my sister, Miriam Joyce, was born about nine months later. Two years later, my father transferred to Pearl Harbor, in the Territory of Hawaii. Family tradition has it that mother planned to join him, so I could easily have been born there.

However, my grandmother broke her hip, and Mother found out she was pregnant. I can imagine that the thought of traveling on a slow boat to Honolulu, pregnant at the age of 42, and leaving a sick mother thousands of miles away, might have discouraged her. She canceled the trip. As a result, I did not know my father until I was three, and I was never very close to him. Having a venturesome spirit, I sometimes wish that Hawaii had been my birthplace.

Thirty some years later, my husband, Loren applied for a job in Hawaii, and even though the chance of his getting the appointment was, slim, we discussed it with our young sons. We never had done so when considering other moves. I think that was partially because it was such a distance away, but my early childhood experience probably made it seem attractive at that time. Come to think of it, I never found moving traumatic. I always thought of it as a new adventure, and a chance to make new friends.



Shortly before I was born, mother purchased the house at 522 Second Avenue, Troy, NY. It was an Italianate Victorian town house which had been a doctor's office, It was divided into three apartments with only one and one half baths, but at that time when indoor plumbing was still new, it was not substandard, Here is my picture when I was about one year old. This was my home until I was almost 19. Besides my mother and me, my three-year-old sister, called Joyce, mother's brother, John Ryan, and their mother, Anna Ryan, lived with us. They were an important part of our lives. Mother also rented out two small apartments. The same renters were there throughout my childhood, so they seemed part of our extended family. One was a single woman who played our piano, and we would sing along. I still love to sing and am a member of the Leisure World Chorus.

I think having all these loving people around as a child helped me keep an upbeat out look even when things were tough. We played with kids in the neighborhood and in a nearby playground. I was the

youngest and often considered a tag along, but I didn't realize it so I had lots of fun. I remember hearing tales of how my sister, her friends, and I would play hide and seek and they would let me hide, and never come and find me, but I never caught on. How naive I was and sometimes still am,

After dad's return from Hawaii. We often spent part of our summers with him. When I was four we went to Kittery Maine, and while we were there we made a trip out to the Isles of Shoals. I still remember that it was a desolate place with a church and few other buildings, but most of all, remember how much the sound of the ship's horn scared me. Still, I always knew the trip was a unique experience.



A few years later, we stayed at the Naval Air Base at Lakehurst, NJ. Joyce and I even attended school in the area for a couple of months. Before we went there this picture was taken. I was seven and Joyce was ten. I found this easy to remember as she was wearing her confirmation dress which she didn't like.

Lakehurst was the home of the dirigibles. Dirigibles are lighter than aircraft, like blimps, yet much larger, and with metal framing. I remember how long it took to launch a dirigible. The sand bags that held it down had to be removed, and a crane towed it to the launching site where it was released. It was interesting, but I did not like that the movie at the base theater could not start until the ship was in the air. About four years later Lakehurst was the site of the infamous Hindenburg crash and fire. This ended the era of building of this type of airship.

Of all my many memories of this time, one was of the poor housing we had there at Lakehurst. Joyce's best friend there was a Doctor's daughter, and they lived in a lovely two story dutch colonial style home with an electric stove. My father was a chief, and they did have good housing for the Chief Petty Officers, but families who were there permanently occupied those homes. We had a second story apartment which was poorly furnished and shoddily constructed. When a coastal storm struck the area, water poured in around the windows where we lived, and we had kerosene stove. This was smoky and inefficient compared to the gas stove we had at home. I also had my tonsils remove at the Naval Hospital there, and I remember how I hated the smell of the ether anesthetic they used. Otherwise it was not too bad. We also hiked around the woods on the base, and on one of those walks, we saw our first deer. Quite an adventure.

We returned to Troy because my grandmother was ill, and she died a few months later. In the years after she broke her hip, she was confined to a wheel chair, but from that wheel chair, she did the hand laundry, washed the dishes, and rolled around the house on her own. I never thought of her as being handicapped. When she died my sister and I became the dish washing crew, and Mother bought a washing machine. To make the chore less boring, we used to sing when we did the dishes. Several years later, my sister's daughters told me that Joyce had tried to get them to sing too, but I don't think they ever did it. Maybe the music of the 60's was not as much fun to sing as the music of the 40's. Automatic dishwashers saved our boys from that chore, but they put the dishes away. When they outgrew me, they loved to put them on the high shelves to challenge me perhaps!

My sister started making fudge when she was 11. This proved unfortunate for me when she accidentally poured hot fudge on my hand, which happened to be in the pan at that time. Our house was long from front to back, and mother was saying goodbye to a friend at the front door. When she heard me scream, she sprinted to the back and found me running forceful cold water on my wrist, which may not have been a good idea. Anyway, I was left with a large C shaped scar, which in my old age does not show much among the wrinkles. Mother took me to the doctor, but she said he didn't tell her any thing she didn't already know. This was usually the case in those days before antibiotics. Her training and experience enabled her to take care of most of our medical problems. After I had suffered through another illness, I talked the teachers into accepting me back in class without a doctor's excuse when I told them my mother was a registered nurse, and she could make that decision. I still have a lot of respect for nurses, and I know, doctors don't know everything.



About that time this picture was taken at a photo booth in a Five and Ten in downtown Troy. These stores sold a little of many things now sold at our expanded drug and fabric stores. They also sold sheet music of the latest hits. Radio was still fairly new and recordings were of poor quality, so live music was the best. A few year later came the hour long radio shows which featured live performances of the "Big Bands" of that era. Since we lived on eastern time, we used to beg for permission to stay up till 11 P.M. to listen to them on a school night. TV was still experimental.



Both our grandmother and uncle lived into their mid seventies. Johnnie was a fine and gentle man who was not only a part of our family, but in later years, my sister's family as well. Her children loved him, and my nephew, Karl, found him in his apartment where he died while reading a newspaper. Our older boys remember him well because he was one of the few people from the east who visited us in Iowa. I think son Bob didn't mind it when he started to gray prematurely because he remembers Uncle Johnnie had thick snow-white hair.

This is picture was taken in Johnnie's younger years. I do not remember him with a mustache. He was married for a short time, but this was before I was born. It wasn't talked about, He felt he could not remarry, because he was a catholic, but he had a girl friend named Ruth. He did marry her in about 1951,so he could care for her, and she died a few years later. In the mid thirties,he had been a victim of an industrial accident. I remember he came home from the hospital with white hair. Later when I told him I thought the accident had turned his hair white, he confessed he had kept it light brown by rinsing it with tea. This certainly is a money saving way to color one's hair!

In 1935, my father retired from the navy because of heart problems, and came home to live with us. We finally lived as a family. We took trips together, They loved to travel, and they entertained their friends in our home. Sadly, I do not have a picture of them together. Some times we went down to New York City. Recently, they have been showing advertisements for the ongoing Rockettes Show, but we never went to one. Instead, we went to museums, zoos and to visit our parent's friends. My particular favorite was the Hayden Planetarium. I even wanted to be an astronomer until someone told me it involved a lot of math, never a favorite subject of mine even though science was..

Our time together did last to long did not last long, because my mother had two bouts of pneumonia and died in April of 1939 at the age of 55. My sister, Joyce, was 16 at the time, and I was just 13. We were still adjusting to dad's presence. To help ease our sorrow, he took us on a trip as far south as North Carolina. We visited Washington, D.C., and stayed with friends of his in Virginia. It was a good trip. I love to travel, and that summer was a busy one for me. We then returned to Troy and got back to real life. My sister and I did the household chores, and continued to do them when school resumed in the fall. I am sure our cooking was not too good, but we managed. Joyce had started college that fall in Troy, but a year later, she moved to Albany to begin nurses training. I was alone taking care of things. We did have a housekeeper for a year or so, but she left when she married. Not long thereafter, Joyce got sick, dropped out of school, and returned home. About a year later, she married Paul Loatman, and moved to Washington, D.C.

During these years, we entered WWII, and I started college in the fall of 1942. The first year I stayed in a dormitory near the campus, but the second year, I commuted the 15 miles to what is now State University of New York at Albany. One of the worst things about the commute was how cold my toes got while waiting for three different buses. Maybe that is why I enjoy living in hot the Arizona desert.

I was again the cook and bottle washer for dad and uncle. During 1943, I had my first boy friend. My group of friends loved to have parties at our house because there was no one around to watch over us, but after one party got too wild, I said **no more**. I had sense enough to know I was not up to that responsibility. My boyfriend's friends mother was tolerant enough to let us have future parties there. He was drafted into the army that summer. The next summer, I agreed to go to D.C. to help Joyce after she had her second child. She was my sister and she had asked, so I went. At that time, I had no idea that I would never live in Troy again. I didn't really miss Troy, but I loved to look out of my bedroom window at the scenery on the hills. It was especially beautiful in the fall when the trees were in full color.

Washington was an exciting place to be during 1944 and 1945, and as I was not too happy at college or at home, I decided to get a job. In time, I found a room of my own, and ended up staying there about two years. While I was there, President Roosevelt died, the war ended, and I broke up with my boy friend after he returned from Europe. I attended the Roosevelt funeral cortege, the return parades for several generals and the celebration in downtown Washington on V-Jay Day. I also decided I wanted to return to college because I hated typing, and the women who had degrees were earning a lot more than I was, and I wanted to be equipped to make money. Typing was never one of my talents. I could never have typed this if it weren't for the back space and delete keys, and the other wonders of my word processing program.

The war was over, so my brother-in-law's job ended. He and my sister moved back to 522. By this time, they had had four of their twelve children, and one renter. Uncle Johnnie was still living there too. My job was also ending, so I started to apply for college admission. I knew I wanted to study dietetics. Cornell University and Iowa State had been recommended to me. I applied both places. Iowa State accepted me first and was cheap, so I decided to follow Horace Greeley's advice and go west. In any case, there was little room for me at 522, and no need for me to be close to home.

Having never been very far west of the Potomac, at the age of twenty, I boarded a train for Ames, Iowa. As I traveled west, I noticed the land became flat and the soil less rocky. The brooks were straight sided and silent without the rocks. Therefore, the brooks did not babble, but there were lush cornfields, and neat farmsteads. I also noticed the people seemed more easy going and not so suspicious of others.

Despite the lack of great scenery, I found it a very comfortable place to live.

I had written my father, who was living in Philadelphia at the time, and told him of my plans to go to Iowa to college. Since I had not asked his permission to go, I did not ask him for any financial support. I managed to pay my expenses with my savings, scholarships, and two summer jobs. One was as a waitress in downtown Chicago, and another as a cook in a summer resort in the Black Hills in South Dakota. During the school year, I also worked part time in the food service area of the university's Memorial Union.



It was there at the Union that some of the most enduring relationships of my life were formed, and where I met the handsome farm boy and Navy veteran, who became my husband. Our marriage, as well as the friendship of about a half dozen other coworkers and their spouses, have survived for over 60 years. In fact, a couple we stood up with, Bob and Wilma Johnson, visited us here in Arizona last week. A year after their marriage, Bob served as Loren's best man. Wilma was pregnant and felt she shouldn't be my maid of honor, so I was pleased when Loren's twin sister consented to be my attendant.

On April 2, 1948, I became Alma Barna Elliott, when Loren Spencer Elliott and I were married. We were still in college. The ceremony was at Collegiate Methodist Church near the ISU campus in Ames. This caused my sister some grief because I had been raised in the Catholic Church, but I was most pleased that my dad and his new wife, Sadie Calhoon Reese Barna, came from Salem, Ohio to give me away. His financial help was a big factor in making the wedding a more festive event. About 100 attended. Sadie was a fine woman who made my father's few remaining years happy. He died in Salem three and one half years later at the age of 60. His wife lived an active life until she was 97 and outlived another husband by many years. We enjoyed visits with her whenever we traveled east throughout her life. She lived to be 97.

Those years were busy for us. I graduated from college in December of 1948 and Loren in June of '49. At that time, I was expecting our first son, but before he started his first job, we made a trip back east to see my dad and Sadie in Ohio, and my uncle and sister's family in Troy. We decided to return via Montreal, Canada, which was about 150 miles to the north. We drove from there through Ottawa to Sault Sainte Marie. It was more of an adventure than we had planned, because many miles of this main route across Canada were not yet paved, and we were driving a car that was 15 years old, but when we had car trouble, they had the parts needed to fix it.

We arrived back in Ames safely, but when we were moving 40 miles from Ames to Jefferson, IA, our car went off the road, and ended up in one of those non-babbling brooks. That was the end of our '34 Plymouth. Loren suffered only minor injuries, but I was quite seriously injured. Luckily, there was no damage to the baby, but because of a completely severed upper arm bone, I had to wear an arm and body cast for the remainder of my pregnancy. With my bruised face, missing teeth and my arm and tummy, sticking out, I was really a sight to behold! Loren posted my wedding picture by my hospital bed so the nurses would know what I really looked like.

Mark Stephen Elliott was born on October 22, 1949. A week later, a surgeon, put a bone bridge on the still unhealed left arm. By the time my arm finally mended, and the bridge removed, I was about three months along with my second pregnancy. Our second son, Robert Loren Elliott, was born October 25, 1950, just one year and three days after Mark. During that time, Loren had begun two new jobs, and

we had moved back to Ames from Jefferson.

Housing and engineering jobs were both scarce at the time. We lived in five different places, and Loren's second job with the USDA was a temporary appointment. After Bob's birth, a friend of ours was called back into the army to serve in the Korean War. The school system in Manson, Iowa needed to fill his job teaching agriculture to veterans. Loren was an Agricultural Engineer, so he was qualified. The job paid about \$1000 more per year, which was a princely sum at that time. We moved, yet again, to a small northwest Iowa town. Small town living was not my favorite, but we lived in Manson for eight years. Loren began playing duplicate bridge at this time and he is still an avid player. He has achieved the rank of Emerald Life Master, and has been among the top 500 annual master point winners nationally three different years.

During those years those years in Manson, I sang in the community chorus, and church choir, and I participated in other church and community activities. Mark and Bob started school, and our third son, James Reese Elliott, was born August 7, 1954. We had a new home built for our family, and we finally had a decent place to live. This picture was taken shortly before we moved from there, L. to R, Mark 9, Alma 34, Jim 4, Bob 8 and Loren 34.



About this time, the number of veterans needing farm training was dwindling, so Loren started searching for another job. His second cousin in who lived in Fort Dodge, IA, was leaving his job with the USDA Soil Conservation Service. They lived only 20 miles away, so we invited them over for a farewell dinner. When Loren mentioned to Clinton that he needed to find a new job, Clinton suggested to Loren that he apply for his still vacant position. Loren was hired as an engineer, and that was the start of his life's career. As the job, location was close to our new home, we did not move until he received a promotion and transfer to Sioux City, Iowa three years later.

It was good to be back in a city again with all its conveniences. Even though it was a meatpacking town, we really enjoyed living in there. As our son, Bob, said it was a nice place, but it sure smelled bad. We lived there for over three years until Loren had an offer to transfer to a job in Topeka, Kansas.

It was while we were in Sioux City that I first joined AAUW (The American Association of University Women). This national organization promotes educational opportunities for women and financially supports scholarships and fellowships locally, nationally and internationally. They also have many study groups and meetings at the local level. Through this group, I have met many interesting women and learned many interesting things in every city in which I have lived since, including Topeka, Des Moines and Mesa. I was happy to move south to Kansas, as we had suffered through two horrendous winters in 1962 and 1963,

The following year Loren was offered a transfer to a job he had wanted in Iowa, and we moved once more, this time to Des Moines. This was a good place to be because Loren's two sisters and their families were there. In addition, we were closer to Loren's aging parents. When the older boys were in junior high and Jim was in third grade, we finally settled down. It was our home for 30 years.

Up until this time, I had been busy raising the boys and moving. I kept house, and continued my church and AAUW activities. I had also started playing duplicate bridge. With the boys, approaching college age we decided it was time for me to find a paying job. Despite my lack of experience, I was hired by Iowa Methodist Hospital and, in January of 1965, I began a dietetic traineeship. Three years

later, I became a registered dietitian. I worked in that profession for over twenty years. My work was principally as a clinical nutritionist, and still have an interest in that field.

Loren had good leave time, and so did I, so we were able to take many family vacations, beginning in 1959. We started out tent camping, and then we owned two fold down trailers. The boys traveled with us until after they started college. When summer jobs kept Mark and Bob from traveling with us, we invited their first cousin, Kirk, to accompany Jim on a three-week journey to the Northwest. Kirk still talks about what a great trip that was. Before the boys quit traveling with us, we had visited almost half the states. Mark enjoyed traveling west with us so much that he chose to go to college in Wyoming and has lived out west most of the time since.

In 1967, I made my first airplane flight to New York to attend my 25th high school class reunion. This was only my fourth trip back to New York since our 1949 visit. Two trips were by train for funerals one was my father's in 1951, and the other to my uncle's in 1959. In addition, in 1965, we made a family trip to visit Joyce and her family. They had recently moved out of the aging house in Troy into a new four-bedroom home near Poughkeepsie about 100 miles to the south. This was a great improvement in their living situation. The older children were working or in college, and the youngest of the twelve was in grade school.

Her husband, a physicist, had a new job with IBM. Still with several of their children still at home, making ends meet was always a problem. With all the family responsibilities, Joyce was unable to have an outside job, but she was very intelligent and a good manager. Besides keeping the family organized, she was a volunteer scheduler with the FISH an organization that arranged rides for the elderly and disabled to doctor's appointments. The majority of her children earned college degree and, two have a P.H.D. Sad to say, she and her husband were heavy smokers, she died of lung cancer at the age of sixty, and her husband died of cancer a year later. Her death was a great loss to her family, her church and her community.

I was pleased to be financially able to visit her more frequently in the years before her death, and we became closer than we had been for several years. She finally was at peace with my decision to leave the Catholic Church, and I still hear regularly from some of her children. One of her granddaughters earned a Masters Degree at ASU near here, and we met for lunch regularly while she was here. E-mail has made it easier to keep in contact with her and others in the family.

In 1973, I made my first trip overseas to five countries in Central Europe. Loren's sister Zoe was going and I tried to talk Loren into the trip, but he did not want to go, so he said, "Go without me if you want to." I did. I found a friend to accompany me while Loren stayed home. It was a whirlwind tour, but very interesting and informative.

After living in the city of Des Moines for 13 years, in 1976 we moved to the suburb of Clive. Mark and Bob were out of college and Jim was at ISU, so I always say when the kids grew up and left home, we bought a bigger house. Bob did stay with us for a while. He had started working for the phone company, which is now Qwest, but he moved away about a year later into a house he and his future wife were buying. He and Margaret married about six months later. The other boys returned home later for short stays, so we enjoyed having the extra space. It was amazing how much fuller our house seemed with one offspring there.

I eventually started working part time, and then retired, yet still I found a lot to do. Since Clive was a smaller city, so I volunteered to be on a couple of city committees. For many years, I served on the

Parks and Beautification Boards.. During those years, we increased our Greenbelt trails from two to five miles, planted several Children's Forests. At the committee's urging, the city council passed an ordinance which assured that new developments had to include land or funds for recreational use. Recently, I recently found out that those trails have now been joined with other trails and now extend over 40 miles

Through a friend in my Spanish class, I became involved in the Des Moines Council for International Understanding. We set up programs for international visitors, and took them to their appointments with locals working in the visitor's field of expertise. Des Moines is an important state government, agriculture, insurance and publishing center, so I escorted them to a variety of appointments in Des Moines and ISU in Ames. As vice president, I was privileged to represent the organization at the Council of International Visitors convention in Washington D.C., which is my favorite city. I also volunteered as a docent at Living History Farms near our home. I did manage to be paid for one thing. That was being a food judge at the well-known Iowa State Fair. I enjoyed doing this and did it for until we moved away from Iowa.

After the boys left home, we sold our camping trailer and began traveling to bridge tournaments and Elderhostels. Loren once said I'd look over the list of upcoming tournaments, find a place I'd like to visit and suggest we go there. It was easy to convince him because friends often attended too, and he enjoys the game so much. One of those places was Honolulu, Hawaii, I spent most of my time sightseeing, this included visiting two of the other Hawaiian Islands, but through the years, I did play bridge often enough to earn the needed master points to eventually become a Life Master. We probably visited most states during these years, and met many interesting people.

Bob and Margaret Doyle were married in Urbandale, Iowa on April 8, 1978, and they have three children, Alicia born May 16, 1979, Matthew born July 15, 1982 and Sean born March 27, 1985. Urbandale is where they now make their home. Mark and Susan Warren were married on June 27, 1988 in Gallup, New Mexico where they still live. Jim is not married and lives in Houston Texas.

Loren retired in late 1982, and I retired in 1987. Around the time I retired, we bought a motor home. Had some nice summer vacations, and also began traveling south in search of a home where the winters were more mild, so we traveled to Arkansas, the Rio Grand Valley of Texas and Mesa, Arizona. Many of our bridge friends had already left Des Moines moved to Arizona, so after several visits we decided to move there. In April of 1993, we purchased a home in the community of Leisure World in Mesa.

Because the market was a little slow we arranged for an October possession date, but even during the great flood of 1993, we managed to sell the house ourselves in less than a week. It sold in early July so we arranged for an earlier possession date and moved in mid August. We rented a truck and with the help of our sons Jim and Bob, and his wife Margaret, and their seven year old son, Sean. We loaded the truck and drove it, our RV and our car to Mesa. The temperature was over a hundred at that time, but we rented a motel room for them, and they all enjoyed the pool. Single son, Jim had come up from Houston to help us with the loading and driving.

Loren has often been lucky and he lucked out when a week or so after we arrived the temperature did not exceed 85, so he could do some needed yard work. We had moved further from Bob, Margaret and their daughter, Alicia and sons Matt and Sean, but we were closer to Mark and his wife Susan who lived in Gallup, New Mexico, which is about a five-hour drive from Mesa. Of course, we missed Bob and his family, but they made it down for visits, and we went back to Des Moines to visit them, for football games, and for Graduations.

I missed the family and all my activities in Des Moines, but it did not take long to become active in Mesa. When I attended the activity fair in the fall, I signed up for hiking and the Leisure World Chorus. Although I had walked our Clive Greenbelt for years, it did not present half the challenge that the sunny, rocky hills of Arizona did. I enjoyed it so much I struggled on, and when the weather cools, I still go hiking on the rugged yet lovely trails. Our hikes now are not as long or strenuous, but they are still good exercise. After 25 years of not singing, I didn't know if I could, so I was pleased and surprised when the person next to me told me I had a beautiful voice. Like my hiking that has not improved with age, but as I am not a soloist, I still enjoy participating in the group. Our chorus CD'S sound very good. When I play one in the car, Loren always says with wonder, "Is that you're Chorus?!!"

Shortly after we moved here we began taking ballroom dancing lessons, and have been danced some ever since. Through our class we met several great couples, so when our dancing teacher organized a trip through the Panama Canal, we decided to go. Loren got this first passport, and I renewed mine. It was an interesting trip, but neither of us became hooked on cruising. A month later we were glad we were prepared to leave the country again.

In February of 2002, Loren received an inquiry from an airman stationed in Okinawa. He wondered if Loren knew three specific fliers from the carrier on which he and the air men had served. He told Loren that the people of Okinawa wanted to build a memorial to them, because the Japanese soldiers had tortured and killed them instead of imprisoning them as should have been done. They felt their spirits were haunting the island of Ishigaki. Loren knew one of them very well, and as the Makassar Strait's historian, he was asked to help locate family members of the slain fliers.

Loren and other veterans from the ship searched the internet tirelessly and finally did manage to find relatives of all three families. Members of two of the families, three nieces and a one nephew were able to make the trip to the dedication, one pilot from the aircrew, and Loren, a ship's crew member, represented the USS Makassar Strait. I also went, so we, as a couple, represented the family who could not attend. We later delivered the American flag given to us to this family at their home in Kansas.

From the time we arrived in Naha, Okinawa, Japan, the ten of us were treated royally. Receptions were held in our honor, and we toured the city. This included, The Imperial Palace, and the Peace Garden, which honored all who had died during the Battle of Okinawa no matter on which side they fought. The memorial plaques included the names of the three to whom the memorial on Ishigaki was dedicated. We took a ferryboat about 250 miles south to that island, where dedication of the beautiful monument, and an evening party were held. The ferry trip was most interesting as we were about the only Americans on the ship, so we really felt immersed in Japanese culture, and on the trip, back a typhoon was chasing us, that was probably the most memorable trip of our lives.

Before I left Des Moines, I had transferred my AAUW membership to the East Mesa Branch. I had not been very active in Des Moines, but I hardly waked through the door when someone asked me to help with our branch newsletter, and for about twelve years, I was not without a job. I served as newsletter editor, chair of a couple of committees and served as president of the branch. As president, I was sent to the national convention, which, as luck would have it, was held in Washington, D.C. It was a good and successful experience, but I finally said enough already and began doing other things, among them was .tap dancing.

As president, I wrote an article for each issue the newsletter, so I joined the computer age. My typing

is still so lousy that my favorite keys are backspace and delete, so I needed a word processing program to produce readable copy. When Loren got a new computer, I inherited his old one, so it was not long before I was on e-mail, but except for designing a few invitations, writing some letters, short news articles, and this story, I have not progressed much further. I helped with a basic computer class, where I learned as much as I helped, and with my new laptop computer, and I hope to learn more about the wonders included on the internet..

In the years since our trip to Okinawa, Loren has not used his passport, but we have made a trip to Des Moines at least once every year. There have been graduations and football games to attend and it is always great to renew our friendships and visit with relatives, Sadly Loren's younger brother, Jack, and twin, Lois sister died over ten years ago, but happily Loren's older sister Zoe is still going strong. At 90 she walks 2 miles most days and still volunteers at a hospital every week, and we just celebrated her 90 and a half birthday. The weather was too bad to celebrate in mid February. Another happy occasion was when Lois's husband, Roy married a lovely Philippine woman who has made great addition to our family group. No other weddings in the offing..

I have traveled with friends. I ventured to Newfoundland, Great Britain, and most recently, my friend, Violet, and I took a cruise from Buenos Aires around the horn to Santiago Chili. I had to practice my rusty Spanish, because Violet liked to wonder around the cities on our own. The cities were interesting, and the Falklands and Cape Horn more than lived up to their reputation for stormy weather. I learned what wind chill really was. Soon I will be leaving for a wedding of one of my sister's grandsons in New York state.

We celebrated our 60th anniversary April of 2008 here in Leisure World with friends, and later that month, we celebrated with our most of our family in the San Diego area. We drove there with Mark to welcome our marine grandson, Sean, when he returned from a tour of duty in Iraq. This is a picture of the happy group of Elliotts who were there. Left to right are, Margaret, Bob's wife, my husband, Loren, me, Alma, son, Bob, grandsons Sean and Matt, Mark took the picture. Luckily, it was peaceful in Fullajah when Sean was there. Bob and Margaret's 30th anniversary also was that April so we had three reasons to celebrate.



Our health has been good. We are both active and feel well, but I seem to require some maintenance to keep me that way. My knees and hips are holding up well, for which I am most grateful because, I do hope to hike a little longer, and to walk around our lakes and in the mall even longer,

Loren is playing lots of bridge, and he raises beautiful roses. Mark is retired from teaching, and Bob is beginning to think about retiring after working thirty plus years for Qwest. Jim in Houston survived Hurricane Ike, but it blew out a window in his apartment, which caused some water damage. He helped the apartment manager clean up the building as other units suffered more than his. His work at sporting events soon resumed, and he is managing his investments, which is a challenge at this time. Bob's children are all busy working and unmarried, so no prospects of great grandchildren that we know of, but they are getting on with their lives as ours are drawing nearer to a close.

June 2009: This year had been going well when on Bob and Margaret's 31st anniversary Bob called and told us he had been diagnosed with large cell type B lymphoma. As soon as Loren recovered from his cataract surgery, we left for Des Moines. Last week Bob had his second pet scan and he is now cancer free. He has to have one more chemotherapy treatment, and will need to be followed for five

years. We thank God and his fine doctors for the wonderful results. Sean is now out of the marines and beginning to get on with his life. .

November 2010: This is still a work in progress. Sad to say Bob had a recurrence of his cancer and had a stem cell transplant. They could use his own cells, but he had yet another recurrence, and is now starting radiation therapy. Later, sad to say, Bob passed away on December 19, 2011. We all miss him, but we still have his art work and his home repair projects, as well as three fine children to remember him by.

We are doing quite well healthwise, but at age 89 Loren doesn't want to drive long distances any more and doesn't like to fly either which makes it more difficult to get to Des Moines. Loren's sister died in November last year after over 91 years of robust health, so there is one less reason to go back there. Our daughter in law is still there as are our three grandchildren, but we still have no great-grand children and only one dim prospect.

Loren is still playing winning duplicate bridge, and I plan to sing to our chorus this fall. We celebrated our 64 wedding anniversary last April, and I will have my 87th birthday next week, July 31, 2012. Mark from Gallup, NM, and Jim from Houston TX will be here to help me celebrate. Mark comes about once a month to visit us and to play duplicate bridge with his dad and he is getting quite good at it he is as a novice. As I sit here writing this addendum to my story, I realize that this page is much more detailed than the rest of my story. All the less to bore you!!

Alma Elliott