

Wed/Thurs. Mar. 17/18, 1993.

Dear family,

Seems I have a few hours free this afternoon. Dad is off on an errand of mercy and I am not in the mood to be ironing. "Never do today what you can put off" is my motto. A couple of days hence we will be packing for our trip to Texas. I doubt that I will finish this letter before then but with the "save" system on the computer, these words should not be lost.

Essie's 80th birthday celebration was a success and truly a surprise to her. She believed her kids were taking her out but did not dream her friends and relatives would be there too. Chuck Jr. came from Europe (business and pleasure), Mary was in from Atlanta and Sue from Canada. She had 100% of her kids there. Mary has taken a full week off. We had her and parents over for dinner last night. Mary told us a lot about Don's illness, surgeries, and death. She is a very grieving widow. Wisely she is forcing herself to go to support groups and finds some solace among others in her situation.

We had one of our coldest walks of the winter this morning! Will spring ever make it? Yesterday morning it was raining and warm. By afternoon we had another cold front and went down to zero before morning. Hope Texas has some warmth to offer us. Doris and I have yard work planned.

Before I get further involved in trivia, I had better get to the purpose of this letter---that of continuing our family history as I remember it. Last mentioned, I believe, was our move to Endwell. Those were pre Tom days and life took on new adventure in a new house and community. It seemed to me that though you children missed your friends, you all were very receptive to this change. The luxury of 2 full bathrooms and enough bedrooms so that no more than 2 slept in one bedroom (not 4!) was well received by all of us. We welcomed the beauty of the area! Living in a newer neighborhood was not hard to take either. Shopping was convenient and church near at hand too. The neighbors (especially the Summers) were tolerant of our large family and very friendly. Busing you children to school was no problem. We seemed like a congenial and happy group. Our large yard was an asset----most of the time. Cutting grass and shoveling snow was a hassle at times. There was enough room to garden, play games and even plant trees which I recall Doris and Mary (?---not sure who the second one was) grew from maple keys. That is as scratch as you can go. Dad had his bird/squirrel feeders in their branches and one attached to the side window facing Winston. The new trees flourish! Remember? We had lots of trees and leaves to supply summer shade and fall leaves to gather and jump into. Raking them for refuse was no fun at all. The forecythia bushes that ran the length of the back yard on Winston were a rage of yellow in early spring! They grew like mad and were a pruning problems until winter. No doubt Jim will remember the rose hedge between us and the Fucks. Those were the wildest bushes I had ever seen! The pricklers were bountiful and branches grew fast and furious! I remember telling Jim early in the spring I would give him ten cents for every root he dug up before the growing season started. He did a great job and removed them all. After that I realized why the hedge---that hedge---had been placed there. Once the kids saw the hedge gone, our yard was used as a short cut to Homer Brink School!

You will likely recall adding bikes, (Dad in frequent repair of them) playing at Homer Brink playground SPUD (actually using ELEPHANT) to make the game last longer. walks with your father while I got BIG meals at Thanksgiving and Easter, swims in the CFJ pool for 10 cents each----and Doris's forever "40" as a guess at the temperature as we went by the bank thermometer in Johnson City, bathing 3 in a tub for many years even into Endwell days, (we called our bathrooms male and female facilities) the contests between you and your father in wringing out wash clothes after baths, the "dumb horse" rides to bed and the "Cheezy and Weezy" stories, Dad reading you stories and falling asleep on the job, (he also loved to amuse you reading books upside down and backwards). There were hot summer nights with the attic fan making an awful noise and a large fan in the window of the uppermost end of the house working hard to try to cool us down. Relief with the hose in the yard after supper (now that was cold water!) running through the sprinkler certainly is a cherished memory. There was amusement with the Frisbee on land and in water, picnics wherever we lived, (and some futile attempts at starting fires!) routine Saturday night supper of hot dogs or hamburgers and beans, flying kites early spring days, hiding Easter gifts (to replace the eggs that made such a mess---and Doris always pretending to be the last to find hers---. There were routine not such fun things too: shining shoes Saturday nights and showing them to Dad before you got your allowance (the boys scampering to Kent Drugs to buy baseball cards---and don't they wish they had them now!---) studying when you wished to watch television, getting ready for church and saying family rosary, ALL those hard assigned tasks as cleaning basement and garage, mowing and raking lawn, errands to run, and papers to deliver (later in life).

There are other rich memories; homemade Halloween costumes that really triggered the imagination, Mike and Mark diligently working on Space projects they entered into the school science program (and won!), making toy guns out of wood (we didn't allow toy guns or violence) and having your "gangs" and fights anyway, using cardboard boxes to slide down the grass, laughing together over the "Electric Company", "Rocky and Bullwinkle", "Get Smart", "Road Runner" and others---mostly favored by you and Dad. Also remember vacation trips with check lists of things to find and license plates to locate. GE had an annual Xmas party and each of you brought home your first gift. Prior letters I remember sharing with you the Easter sacrifices you made and the excitement of Xmas.

Hopefully we have provided you with more pleasant memories than adverse ones. One good thing about aging is that we tend to remember the good we experienced and forget the rough spots. In recall, I tend to make light of those pitfalls and now believe I was fortunate to have a relatively easy life rearing you children. In recalling my childhood, I remember hardship and suffering more than the good things in that part of my life. One thing I learned from my youth was the importance of family. We Zielinskis have stuck together all our lives and still do. Essie's recent party showed us again what a cohesive family we really are. Gee, Pen, and I got together, learned, and sang SISTERS putting some of our own words into it to show our affection for one another. We were well received. It was a fun occasion. I would like for you all to celebrate in happy memory too.

When Tom was born into our family, we were then complete! After I got over the shock of being pregnant so late in life and had a safe delivery, he became a very welcome addition. I know you used to think I spoiled Tom. Heck he was the only child who got full attention and I had time to be a devoted (though not doting!) mother to the youngest offspring. Tom was fun and you all enjoyed him, too, though you didn't care to admit it at times. Even Tom grew up as we all do. He's pretty terrific! Right?

It was in Endwell that you grew up. I remember days when Christ the King got to be too small and a new church, Our Lady of Angels, was constructed. While the building was being erected, we had our Masses in the basement of St. Joseph's church. Often you boys were serving on the altar and your parents were very proud! You may remember one Sunday we had Fr. Bruce Ritter talk to us about his work with the homeless and kids on drugs. We started contributing way back then and still do. Though Fr. Ritter was questioned for his behavior a few years ago and a new administrator was appointed, we believe the idea of providing for these unfortunates is a good one and we continue to support them. Tom was an infant then and played with Lego so that we could go to Mass as a family. If I had a nickel for every time I was reminded that "you are the family who set in the pews with 8 children" I would be some richer! I was proud of my brood then and still am. We are a good family!

From Christ the King most of you went to Seton Catholic High School where again you did us proud. Lee Ann showed us she was quite an artist, Doris and Jim clearly indicated they were science people and very good students. Mike, a very good student, too, seemed more interested in sports and factual things. Your parents tried hard not to push you too hard and wanted you to develop your own interests. We were thinking toward your adulthood and being happy in what you were doing to make a living. I saw what EE did for your father and I wanted job satisfaction for you.

It was here that you developed friendships and close ties. I believe all of you were happy with your lives and friends. Not many of you wanted to move to Florida and leave all that behind.

My dream of getting into the "empty nest syndrome" has not materialized. It is coming and it was a very interesting time in my life. You get to know what stuff you are made of when the kids leave home. The next letter should start the process. As you see, I did finish this letter before leaving for Texas. It did take 2 days, however.

*Love and prayers always,
mom*

Stay well and happy, 'ye all!