



Volume 28, Number 6

"We are Family...I Got All My Cousins with Me"

July 2015

Contrary to popular belief, I am not going for directly for the laughs as writing a eulogy or making a formal statement at a funeral is a tricky thing; you want to tell a story which helps reassure everyone that things will be all right given enough time and enough love. And you have to construct a story that my sweet, departed sister Ellen would enjoy hearing. While my humor will be muted, Ellen would be disappointed if all I did were straight lines as she believed that life was meant to be enjoyed and embraced. We are a sadder group today but soon, welcome memories of Ellen will surround us all and I know they will evoke both smiles and laughter.

Well, first things first. I know Ellen is pleased that all of you are in church. While she had to take some extreme measures for it to happen, I am confident she is happy to see the pews packed with close friends and caring relatives. If some of us...I mean some of you... wanted to add a mid-June church visit each year as a supplement to your obligatory Christmas and Easter attendance, speaking for myself... that would be a nice opportunity to reflect on her passing while enjoying special memories of your friend, your grandmother, your mother, your wife, your sister, your cousin or favorite in-law.

Secondly, my sister was a lot of things;

- As many of you know, while she comes from a long line of **grudge holders**, but she always demonstrated caring and forgiveness every day. But between you and me, while she forgave, I doubt if she ever completely forgot. While this may be a distinction without a difference but all in all, her forgiveness is a rare quality and deserving of a mention.
- She was **kind**. In 1973, shortly after obtaining my driver's license and experiencing my first auto accident, I was shipped out to Cheyenne for a few weeks to allow my mother some peace and quiet. The first thing Ellen did when I arrived was teach me how to drive a car with stick shift and encouraged me not to dwell in the past but rather to go forward with dispatch and alacrity. The combination of her confidence and patience she showed with me still resonates to this day.
- She was also **patient with all of us (including Mike, Dean and myself)**. I look out at a few of the personalities in this room and think about all the trials and tribulations we collectively put her through....whether it was trudging through rainy and cold Scotland, rolling her eyes at some libelous comment in the Newsletter or just dealing with the collective group of knuckleheads before me, she demonstrated patience and aforementioned kindness to each and every one of us.
- **But** while she was patient, she also provided us with a litany of (usually correct) opinions whether we wanted to hear them or not. On a special shout-out of the grandchildren; if you wonder where your lack of a poker face comes from, thank your grandmother. Her **fascination with life in general**, key family events that involved grandchildren, the overall human condition and the comings and goings of people, both strangers and friends, is hardcoded into your own personality..

Finally, she was **lucky in love** as she was lucky enough to find her soul mate John and have 33 years of a happy life together. And while it did not beat Uncle Bing/Aunt Lorraine's record of sixty-one years, thirty-three years of marriage in our family immediately places you on the medal podium and needs to be recognized. In conclusion, I will miss my sister, as all of you will, but I use to take comfort in that she is at peace, surrounded by dear relatives and friends in heaven. And with the likely group here today who will ascend into heaven eventually (you know who you are), Ellen is happy and looking down at us all and can't wait to see you again. And for the group still in the undecided heaven category, there is no time like the present to be more like Ellen. **Rest in peace Ellie Baby.**