

Thoughts of Family



CHRISTMAS

Christmas is my favorite time of year. I have very fond memories of Christmas past. I especially remember what happened on a Christmas Day when I was about seven years old.

I woke up that morning, along with my brothers, so excited. I was ready to jump out of my skin. We were not allowed to go downstairs until my mom and dad were awake. My parents wanted to see our faces as we opened our presents. We all ran downstairs to see our Christmas tree lighted with presents neatly placed under the tree. As we started opening gifts, I was very happy with all of the things that I got, and I was happy for what my brothers got. When everything was all opened, the bottom of the tree was empty. I then noticed a note attached to the bottom of the tree addressed to me from Santa. I was so shocked. The note said that one of my presents was too big for the sleigh and that I would have to pick it up at Swallens the day after Christmas. I was so excited; I couldn't imagine what it was.

The day after Christmas, my family and I went to pick up my gift. When we pulled in the lot, there were sled marks in the snow and my dad said, "See Santa's tracks"? I was shaking with excitement. I got a sled/car; you could put skis on it for snow and then in the summer, you could put wheels on it. That is one of the fondest memories I have of Christmas.

Kelly Bond

MY GRANDMOTHER AND HER LIFE

My Grandmother has been an inspiration to me. My Grandmother was born on May 15, 1872 and passed away in 1962 at the age of 90 years.

My Grandmother was wise in everything she did. My Grandmother was a good woman. She spent about three fourths of her life living on farms. She had a lot of brothers who worked in the farm fields doing what had to be done. They all had to go to school in the winter but when it came time to plant they had to quit school.

When she was ten years old she lost both her father and mother. Her mother lived three days after her dad died. While her brothers went to gather neighbor women of that time to clean her up, my grandmother fixed breakfast. She made biscuits and gravy with ham and eggs. All of the children had to go and live with their aunts and uncles. My Grandmother lived with this one aunt who did not much like her so she had to go work in other people's homes.

She had a hard childhood, but she succeeded in becoming a good mother. My Grandmother raised eight kids by working in the fields and canning what she raised in her garden.

My Grandmother raised me till I got married and left home. My Grandmother raised me because when my mother got married for the second time, my step dad did not want me because I was another man's child. My dad died before I was born. My mom got married when I was two years old.

My Grandmother was a good woman and I am trying to be like her in some ways. She believed in the old fashion medicine and taught me how to be a good mother. This is why I like to write about her.

Ida E. Osborn

HOW HE INSPIRES ME

For as long as I can remember, my Grandfather has been an inspiration to me. Ever since my childhood, I've relied on his infinite wisdom to help carry me through. Wisdom, in this case, refers to more than his intelligence. A warm heart and kind soul offered support during times of distress. His ability to see reason would help to keep my family and me on the correct path. Most importantly of all, he never abated; in his mind, giving up or giving in were never options.

In my memories of growing up, there are plenty in which my Grandfather showed perfect examples of generosity. For instance, when my parents divorced, he offered me a shoulder to cry on. When his son struggled with drugs and alcohol, he didn't pass judgment. Instead, he offered his son a person to talk to. Even when I dropped out of high school, he didn't think any less of me.

As a teenager, my Grandfather's knack for finding logic and reason were of great assistance. Whenever emotion ran high, his calm words would help to keep my head above water. For example, when my father moved out of the state, my Grandfather helped to ease my pain by pointing out my father's reasons for moving away. Also, when my first pet died, he helped me realize that death was a part of life, and there was nothing I could have done to prevent the passing away.

Through it all, my Grandfather has never backed down or backed out. His childhood wasn't easy; nine brothers and sisters in a small house would not be easy to survive. He raised a family, ran a ranch, and worked full time through his entire adulthood. Even after developing Alzheimer's, he fought to live and be himself.

In the end, I think my Grandfather would be proud of me. After all, he did teach me that knowledge, kindness, and perseverance are incredibly important, and I think I learned well.

Rebecca Zielinski

TRULY A LOVE STORY

I said farewell to a dear friend in the fall of 2000. She was my dearest friend and sister-in-law; her name was Kathleen.

As a young girl at the age of fourteen, she and her girlfriend were hit by a drunk driver while walking home from school. As they walked and were playing their flutes, a car came screeching and swerving around the curves, out of control. It hit Kathy and Patty, throwing them 300 feet into the air. Kathy ended up in an embankment face down with major internal injuries. Patty, her best friend, was also thrown down over the hill.

Patty and Kathy were nearly dead. The car that hit them never stopped or even turned around. Lying in the hospital in a coma for over a month, the girls finally came to. For their families, it was a miraculous moment. After being in the hospital for two months and getting stronger, Patty was released before Kathy.

Kathy was out of the hospital in time for her big dance at school. Oh how she didn't want to miss that! She still wanted to go even though her black hair wasn't there. Her hair had been shaven in the hospital to reconstruct her skull after the violent blow. So, she and her best friend, Patty, went to the shopping center and got a wig. How they laughed and even cried, but that didn't stop her! Saturday came and off Kathy went looking as pretty as she possibly could.

As Kathy became older, she began having severe headaches and saw numerous doctors, but they said that it was normal. In the summer of 1967, Kathy went to a party and there he was – the most handsome man she had ever

seen! He had blonde hair and the prettiest eyes. He had his cigarettes rolled up in his sleeve and looked “dreamy”(as she told me). It was love at first sight!

Kathy and George continued seeing each other for months, going dancing, watching drive-in movies, and going out for a soda pop. They were in love.

In 1968 he was called out to war. Everyday Kathy would write, or he would call if he had a chance. George was in the Marines for four years. In his last year of service, he asked Kathy for her hand in marriage. But Kathy had not told him of the news that the doctors had told her and her mother. The doctors felt that she would never be able to have children due to that hit and run accident.

The young couple married in the summer of 1974. To their surprise and after many years of prayers, on October 31, 1977, they had a beautiful baby boy. Oh, how this boy was the love of their lives! “Buddy” they called him. Buddy was a fast learner, did everything his dad would do, and more. He was Daddy’s boy!

Surprisingly, after he was born, then came another boy. Oh, how they were proud of this little guy, Jeffrey! He, too, was a fast learner and Daddy’s boy. Growing up in a loving, caring, environment is just what Kathy always dreamed about. George would work everyday on the road as a truck driver, and she would stay and tend to the house and their two God-given boys.

One day while my brother, George, was at work, Kathy decided to start supper while the boys and George were not home. She had been experiencing a headache for a while. She had put on a pan of vegetable oil for homemade French fries. She loved to cook and bake for her family. Her headache was becoming more intense. Kathy sat down for a

while, forgetting about what she was doing, dozing off into a deep sleep. The oil was getting hotter and hotter; it burst out into flames catching the kitchen curtains on fire. It had spread. It was a miracle that the alarm had gone off. Kathy was waking up from the noise of the smoke alarm. She put the fire out with baking soda. At that moment, the boys came home and panicked when seeing smoke as they came in the front door.

For the next few years, Kathy continued experiencing more and more head pain. Kathy and George made a decision to see a neurologist. The doctor gathered the family and broke the devastating news that Kathy suffered from a tumor in the heart of the brain. At that time, it was the size of a golf ball and continuing to grow. The doctor said he could go in and cut, but he would only be able to remove a little of the tumor because of its location.

So, they made a decision to go ahead and do the surgery. In July of 1983, she had the surgery. The boys were very little, not quite understanding what was going on. Buddy, the oldest, was 8 years old, and Jeffrey was 6. After being in the hospital for 8 weeks, Kathy got to come home. The boys were very happy to see mom, but mom could not see them. We thought that it would clear up after awhile, but it never did.

Years went by. My brother and Kathy asked if I could stay and help with the boys since I did not have a family of my own, so I moved in to help out. Kathy was able to use a walker for a while, and then it got to where her equilibrium was bad. She would lose her balance and fall, and she had taken some bad falls. If she could not get around with that, she would crawl to where she was going. She would yell out to us because she would get lost while looking for the bedroom or bathroom.

In spite of her condition, she kept her sense of humor. George would take her to the park and she would wear his Jack Daniels hat, although they did not drink. They thought it would be funny because of her staggering when he would hold her up. They would laugh and laugh! Oh, how he loved her and she loved him!

Years went by and she got worse. George thought it would be best for her to live in a nursing home. How that broke his heart dearly! The boys were teenagers by then, going out with the guys and having girlfriends. It was hard for them. They sat with mom while dad was working or I couldn't be there. We traded weekends so we could have a break. She was put in the nursing home and was in there for over 4 years. We visited her often, switching days and weekends. We would read to her and she loved listening to the "oldies but goodies" radio stations, so I would turn the radio up loud for her to hear.

Buddy went off to college to pursue his dream of becoming a music teacher. He followed in his mother's footsteps; she also went to Bowling Green University to study to be an English teacher. Jeffrey followed his dad's footsteps by starting his own construction business.

Kathy would be so proud of her little guys. It was a fall night in 2000 when we were called to come down to the nursing home. The Hospice Center informed us that they had given Kathy one day to live, if that long. Sitting by her side, her two handsome young men would talk to her and comfort her as much as they could. She passed. As we were walking out of the room, the "oldies but goodies" station was playing the song, "When A Man Loves A Woman." For the last time, I turned around and turned up the volume on the radio.

Debbie Shepherd

MY LIFETIME LESSON

The most influential person in my life is my father. He hasn't been in my life for the past five years. In the thirteen years he raised me, we built a relationship that lasts a lifetime. Even though he kept breaking my heart, I still have a lot of love for him. My dad died July 9th of the year 2000. My father has made the biggest impact on my life.

My dad and I had a really close relationship. We had the kind of relationship where you're so close to someone and you're always around them, which builds a lot of memories. I never go a day without thinking of him or even mentioning him. We had an almost perfect father-daughter relationship. He showed a kind of love for me that no one else has or could even come close to.

My dad had problems that weren't noticeable, but they affected his life and my family. My mother divorced him about a year before he died. I never was given an explanation why. I was told they fought too much, which was true.

The minute I found out my dad was dead, I knew my life would never feel the same. I never knew my father's drinking was a problem, which could lead to different drugs. The day he passed away was the same day I found out the reason why my parents separated. On that day, he overdosed on a powerful pill, Oxycontin, which was the reason why he never woke up.

You would never think something like a pill so small could take your father's life forever. My dad's death changed my life permanently. He made me the person I am today. Our time spent together was short, but I could never even imagine how I would feel or who I would be if I never knew him.

Stephanie Clark

A SPECIAL LOVE

A father and young son, that's something sweet,
But a Grandpa and Grandson, that can't be beat.

The way they play throughout the day,
A love that strong makes you stop and say "hey."

The way they talk,
the way Grandpa laughs when the little one walks.

It fills your heart with such happiness and glee,
There is no more love than the two of thee.

So many things being taught,
He sure learns from Grandpa, he sure learns a lot!

That kind of love cannot be broken,
It can only be felt and not spoken.

Kevin L. Izor

MY HERO

When I say my hero, I look at the person I love very deeply. That person would be my mother. My mother loved and took care of her family. My mother never had the money to buy herself anything, because she had four girls, and her husband had two children.

My mother loved her husband and children. When she married, her husband already had two children from a previous relationship. My mother also had two children from a previous relationship. After their marriage they had two children together. It was kind of like the Brady bunch. We lived in a two-bedroom house. All five of us girls shared a room. My brother had his own room. The living room was my mother's room.

My mom was always the one who worked. The job she had paid very little. I don't see how she paid the rent or bills. Even with six children, she managed to buy clothing and other things we needed. Even though most of our clothing came from the thrift store, we still had clothes. It was hard trying to buy shampoo, soap, laundry soap, toilet paper, and toothpaste for six children.

When I think back, I remember my mother holding us tight and telling us how much she loved us. I remember her wearing holey clothes and worn down shoes. I remember when going to the store, she always looked but never bought herself anything.

My mother is really the true hero. She taught us how to love, and how to take care of a family. She taught us that family comes first even if it takes going without. That is why my mother is my hero.

Rose Salyer

MY MOTHER IS SOMEONE VERY SPECIAL TO ME

My mother is someone very special to me. I never knew her very well. At the age of six years old, she was taken from me by death. I remember very little about her.

It was early fall, September 4, 1942. How do I remember? I remember my father saying she passed on the birthday of a close friend. His name was Jeff, and it was the beginning of a school year for me. I was ready to enter the first grade.

The lady that was to be my teacher, Mrs. Evans, was moving in her home just a short distance from where our family lived. My father was helping her and her husband to move into their home when my grandmother yelled to us that something was wrong with my mother. My father and I rushed to see what the problem was.

We lived in a rural mountain area in the state of Tennessee and carried our water in pails from a nearby spring that flowed from the mountain a short distance from our log mountain home. My mother had gone to the spring for some water and had been too long. My grandmother got concerned and went to see about her. She had a seizure, passed out, fell, and rolled under a fence and down a small hill into the small stream of water which flowed from the spring. Her head was lying the water. She had probably drowned.

I would like to get to know her for the person she really was. I wish I could just sit and talk with her for a few hours and then take her to a nice restaurant for dinner to enjoy a good meal with her. Where we lived there were no restaurants. That would be something I could do for her that she was never able to do in her short life. I would love to

take her for a long drive in my car and enjoy some scenery. I'm sure she would enjoy that.

If I could spend one day with my mother, I would love to know how she felt about my two younger sisters and me. My youngest sister was only six months old at the time of her death. I wonder if she would be proud of my sisters and me. I wonder what she would think about us and her six grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. I'm sure she would be very proud of all of us. I would like to know what her likes and dislikes were.

As I vaguely remember, she was a very neat, well-kept lady. She wore nice dresses that my grandmother sewed for her. My grandmother made all of our clothes. She was always a neat and clean person. Her long black hair was worn pulled to the back of her head, as most ladies wore their hair in those days; she was beautiful as I remember. I remember her playing hide and seek with my oldest sister and me one time. One of us would hide our face, and the other two would hide behind trees. Then the person hiding their face would find the two that were hiding; it was fun.

I remember my mother being a real good lady and a wonderful person. Everyone spoke well of her. I do not remember ever hearing her complain about anything. She never knew what a hardship was; it was just the way of life we lived and was accepted as our best.

If I could spend one day with my mother, it would be a very special day. I would live that day to its fullest. It would be the most wonderful day of my life. But, she was taken from me at such an early age. I will always remember and hold onto what memories I have of her.

Art Massengill

MY DAD, THE INSPIRATION LEADER

The person who has inspired me is my dad. The reason is because he has taught me the way of life. He's showed me how to work on things. He's also showed me how to rig things, which means how to fix things with equipment and the proper tools to do it with.

He's the one that brought me to bowling. My dad is the first one in our family to bowl a 300. Then he had his problem.

It was a Monday. We went to Home Depot to pick up carpet. He got dizzy in the store. I thought nothing of it. We went back to the apartment complex to lay tile. He took his medication, and we went bowling. It was one of our bad nights. We lost all the games. Then we went home and had dinner and we went to bed.

Then came Sunday morning. It was about 3:30 – 4:00 a.m. Dad wasn't feeling so good. He was burning up. We called for the squad and before the squad pulled away, we told mom if they find out anything to give us a call.

It took them about 2 days to find anything. When they found out what the problem was, they told our mom. They said it was a stroke on the left side of the brain. Usually when a person had a stroke it takes everything, from your strength to your balance to everything else. The only thing it took from him was his balance.

He told us that the doctor said it would take from 6 months to a year for him to get back to the normal stuff that he did before the stroke. But today our dad, Randy McCoy, is back doing whatever he wants to do. It took him 2 months to

walk on his own without any help. When the league started back up, he was out there with the rest of us bowling.

When he stepped out on the lanes on Saturday night for the first time in over 3 months, I had a smile on my face and in my heart. I kept it all night long. To this day I still have that smile in my heart. Watching him bowl is like watching an angel get his wings, and it makes me proud to know him. I will never forget that day.

Terry Kimbler

ABOUT MY MOM AND DAD

I was born on October 10, 1978. It was in Cambodia, when the war hit us. My mom, dad, my brother, and my sister were with me. We tried to hide from the soldiers, but I cried too much.

We had no food or water. It was hard for us to find a place to hide because I cried. I had to take a bath with cow dump, and drink them too. We ran and ran to Thailand. That was when my brother and sister died, because of no food. After that I don't remember how we survived in Thailand.

In America, I went to school from grade 1 through grade 9. That's when I dropped out because I was pregnant. I stayed home. I never thought I would have a chance to go back to school, but I did.

I live away from my mom and dad. I love them a lot. Whenever I need them to help me with something, they help me. If I need money, they will give it to me. If I need a ride, they will help me. Now it is hard for me to think, because they always help me. But I can help them.

I'm the person that thinks a lot. I'm afraid that one of these days, they will be sick. I know they will need me. I will give up my life for my mom and dad because they brought me to this world, so I can see the sky. They helped me through the war, to Thailand, and into America, where we all have freedom. Now, we don't have to run. We have enough food to eat and a place to stay. Thank you Mom and Dad. I love you with all my heart.

Sochea Sang

IN MY FATHER'S TIME

In my father's time, he was raised in a holler called "Rocky Fort." There were no roads or sidewalks. The closest dirt road was at least two miles away. There were no stores close to his family house either. Anything that his family bought from the store, they would have to carry by horseback. Heavy things like building materials, they brought in by sled or wagon with the help of the horses.

In my father's time, his family had no inside electric. They kept their milk cold in a spring. Their bologna stayed at room temperature, and their eggs and a lot of their meats were fresh daily.

In my father's time, he had very few toys. He made cars out of matchboxes, and he used shoeboxes as trucks. They didn't have video games, computers, VCRs, DVDs and most people didn't have TVs. Televisions were very expensive and only the higher-class people could afford them.

In my father's time, he had to walk to school. He didn't have a bus to ride. He had to walk on a little path that went through the woods two miles to his school. His school was a one-room schoolhouse, which only went to the 8th grade.

In my father's time, he had to do his chores every morning before he went to school. He had to gather the eggs from the hens and milk the goats.

After school my father had to feed the animals again. Then he had to work the crops during garden season. They had 10 acres of farmland. He would then have to draw water from the well, gather wood for cooking and heat in the

winter, do his homework, eat dinner, and get cleaned up for bed. There was little, if any, time to play or relax.

In my father's time, he had to take a bath in the middle of his backyard in a washtub. His mother used a lot of home remedies if his family got sick. Some of these remedies included herbs, which they picked off the land. Ginger was used for the flu; ginseng was used for aches and pains; and Queen of the Melba, which was found by the water, was used for menstrual cramps. His mother would store the herbs in sealed containers to keep them fresh, and whenever someone was sick, she would boil them and make a tea for them to drink.

In my father's time, his family didn't put their money in the bank. They kept it hidden in their house, and sometimes they hid it outside. They saved every dime that they could.

In my father's time, his mother and two sisters did all their laundry on washboards, and then they hung the clothes outside to dry on clotheslines. They canned and dried all of their vegetables. They butchered their own meat. They cooked almost everything from scratch.

In my father's time, he spent his Saturdays working in the garden and cutting lumber for cooking and heat in the winter. He also did anything else that needed to be done around the house, including his daily chores.

In my father's time, he would rest on Sunday. He would either go fishing or hunting for fun. He always hoped to catch some fish or kill an animal because that would mean that his family would have some good food to eat for a few days.

In my father's time, he was the man of the house most of the time. His father worked the coal mines, and later his father worked at Armco Steel, and he was gone from home for days at a time.

In my father's time, he also had to help with his crippled sister who had polio when she was 12 months old and became crippled for life. The family didn't have a wheelchair, so he had to lift her at least 12 times a day, even though she was 3 years older than him. She was a big woman too. She weighed at least 300 pounds.

In my father's time, there weren't many jobs in his hometown of Manchester, Kentucky. My father didn't want to leave his family, but he wanted to work at a job where he wouldn't have to struggle. He had heard from his dad that there were jobs in Ohio. When my father turned 17 years old, still just a kid himself, he came to Ohio and moved in with one of his sisters who already lived here. He then got a job at Pepsi Cola Bottling Company. This is where he met my mother and they got married and had four children.

In my father's time, life was much harder for him than he made it for us. We didn't always have the best, but we had everything we needed and some of what we wanted. We had indoor plumbing and electric, though my father still sat in the dark. There were many times we would come home from shopping and my father would be sitting in the dark. We had a TV too, though my father seldom watched it. We raised a small garden every year. We had to do chores daily too, but nothing compared to what my father had to do while growing up. And on Sunday we rested.

In my father's time, his holidays were different for him than they were for us. Christmas for him was a big dinner, fresh fruit, hard candy, and sometimes one or two presents. Birthdays were a homemade cake and a big dinner

of his choice, but he never had a party or received any presents. Thanksgiving was a big dinner, and on New Year's, they did nothing at all. On the Fourth of July, they would shoot their guns in the sky. Halloween was a holiday that they didn't celebrate at all because they lived one mile away from the nearest house, so by the time they walked to one house, it would be time to turn around and come back home. At Easter they would sometimes walk to the school to an Easter egg hunt, but they didn't get Easter baskets.

In my father's time, life was definitely harder. When I was about five years old, we drove to Manchester, Kentucky. We brought a sack lunch with us. We then walked to the place my grandma had since moved to which was still a long way off of the nearest dirt road at a place called Mud Lick. I thought my feet were surely going to fall off. I remember being carried some of the way there. And I remember, just when I was sure that I couldn't walk another step, my father turned around and came back to carry me. He had the saddest look in his eyes; I think he thought he had made a mistake by making us walk a long way as he had when he was a child. He opened his arms when he got to me, and I refused. I said I'd walk. And I did walk, all the way there without saying a word too. I had blisters on my feet the next day too. I remember playing on a big huge rock while I was there. I saw what I thought was a snake statue, until it moved. I was scared to death. Then my grandma moved from there to a new farm house at a place called Sand Hill which was still in Manchester, Kentucky. I remember begging to draw water from the well. It looked like fun. It wasn't; trust me. I thought my arm was going to break. Everything was so heavy. It seemed like forever until I was done. Never again did I ask to get the water from the well. I can't imagine drawing water enough time to make a bath! One time I went with my grandma to get a chicken at that same farm house. We went to the chicken coup, I thought that was weird, but I didn't ask. The next thing I knew, my grandma grabbed a chicken by

the neck, slugged it around, and snapped its head off. The chicken started running around with no head. I didn't eat chicken for dinner that night or for a long time after that.

In my father's time, life was different for him than it is today. My father is retired and he has 3 grandchildren. He lost his wife, my mother, in 1994 from complications during a colonoscopy. All of his immediate family has passed away. He also lost a son who was murdered. But despite the hardships, my father has moved on with his life. I'm so glad my father took that chance and moved to Ohio when he was only 17 years old, though sometimes I think he misses that rural life. I know a few times while we were growing up he thought about buying a farm. I'm glad he didn't though because farm life is a hard life.

Karen Smith

A TRIBUTE TO MY MOTHER

Jane M. Ellington (Scales) a.k.a. Honey, was born on September 4th in Tuskegee, Alabama. She was the youngest of 14 children. She always had a fashion sense and loved to dress with the little she had. When she became a teenager, she learned to sew clothes and cut hair. She also learned to crochet. She made clothes from yarn as well as different fabrics. She used newspaper as a pattern. She made clothes for her family. She also made curtains and crocheted blankets and house shoes.

Honey moved to Cleveland, Ohio, in 1943 where she had her first son. She was young when she had her first child, so she gave her son to her older brother to raise while she got into the world of fashion and design. Ten years later in her life, she met a man who she later married. This man saw her talent for making clothes and cutting hair. He helped her find work in a barber shop. She started working in a barber shop on East 63rd and Scovill cutting hair, doing line-ups, and grooming. In her spare time, she made clothes. Soon she had four children with her husband. She had sent for her first son and that made five children. Honey worked at the Barber Shop, made clothes, and did all the motherly things for her family.

By 1964, Honey had eight children, five girls and three boys. By 1966, two of her children were killed, one by a drunk driver and the other shot by a Cleveland police. Honey went through a very hard time trying to accept that she would not see these children grow up. But she never gave up. She remained a strong woman. She divorced her husband. Then it was Honey and the children. Her cousin babysat for her, and she continued to work.

By 1979, Honey was teaching teachers to sew different fabrics at the Woodhill Job Centers in Cleveland. She made leather suits, drapes, and sheets of fabrics. Soon, she took one of her teacher's place and taught others to sew. I, Yolanda Lewis (Scales), am living proof of the clothes she made because I'm her youngest child.

God bless you mom for all you did for me and my siblings.

Jane M. "Honey" Ellington (Scales) departed her life in September of 1985.

Love you Mom!

Yolanda Lewis

A MOTHERS DAY

Beth woke up with the sound of rain hitting the siding of the house. She sat up stretching while reaching for her glasses on a table next to her bed. She looked at the clock and saw that she was late. Everybody had slept in. Beth jumped up and ran down the hall to get her boys up. Beth rushed as she got the kids and herself ready to go to school and work.

They all got into the car with their backpacks and lunches. Beth asked her sons if they had everything then realized she had locked the keys in the house. "NO, NOT TODAY!" she blurted out. She asked her eight-year-old Tyler, who was the youngest, to help her. She lifted him up to an unlocked window so he could climb in and get the keys. Tyler got the keys, and they were finally ready to go.

Beth's sons went to two different schools. Tyler went to grade school and her oldest son Travis, who was twelve, went to middle school. When she was done dropping Travis and Tyler off to school, she headed to her job worrying all the way that she might get fired.

Beth worked at a big fancy restaurant that paid good money, plus tips. She'd been there for two years. As she was walking through towards the employee lounge she caught a glimpse of the schedule. Just then, she remembered something about a change she overheard her employer talking about the day before. Beth walked over to the schedule and sighed in relief to see that she was off today instead of tomorrow. Beth just shook her head and laughed at herself as she walked out and got back into her car.

Knowing that she didn't have to work, Beth decided to run some errands. She paid her electric, phone, and car

insurance bills. Then Beth got all her grocery shopping done without her kids. She thought this was really nice since all she heard from them is, "Can I have this?" over and over again when they went to the store with her.

Beth arrived home just before the boys got off the bus. They came in the front door as she was putting the groceries away. Beth yelled, "Hang them up," knowing that they would just throw their book bags and coats on the floor. Travis and Tyler sat down at the table to do their homework, and Beth started dinner.

After dinner Beth started cleaning up, washing dishes, and doing some laundry. When Beth got all the housework done it was already time for the kids to go to bed. When the boys went to sleep, Beth settled down in her bed and set the alarm, so she wouldn't be late in the morning. She finally fell asleep watching television with the remote in her hand.

Gina Rodgers

