

One Dat At A Time

by *Harry Zirkelbach 08-08-2010*

Without knowing, I had adjusted to this thought, One Day at a Time.

Every day is gem, another in a weightless diadem we wear, cannot see.

Or so it it has developed, one step, then another,
to this very room of Giant friends.

Details are a blur now, but I have been privileged to walk with Giants. Really.

Moments highlighted here include, beginning school at age 5; military; family.

My parents were 29 when they wed. (So was I that many years later). Once prosperous they were demoralized, never crushed, by the Depression. Their two children were kept unaware of the assault. They simply asked for help from a relative in far away city, accepted that offer, moved away forever from their then home, never looked back.

Began a new life. Here dad earned \$4.00 a week, long hours for a 6 day work week, came home, smiled, did chores there, never complained about the hand dealt.

Dad constantly swore, so much that none were offended. All adjectives replaced by a curse, never seeming vulgar to those who worked and competed with including Mom. Dad and Mom, my first giants.

This new world had me in the 5th grade with classmates more than a year older. They became mentors, my early Giants, protectors.

This continued in the same community through High School where on graduating in 1939, I was too young to be employed in industry.

What's left,? Go to College. In these years, someone, a fellow student, taught me to study. Read the text book! Sacrifice some loitering.

It was really an awakening, made a difference. And I remain nice guy, well liked, struggling student, suddenly capable of facing exams without terror. The school was teeny, Catholic boys, never more than a handful in any class. Classmates had ambitions that had not seeped to me. The non-cleric group announced a College.

Sounded good to me. The day we were to leave, I alone boarded the bus to Detroit. Went anyway.

Engineering school complete, summer 1944, classmates join the Navy, me in the parade. Most are accepted. My Engineering contemporaries are given duty in our specialty, but on the basis of the alphabet.

The "Z," I become a Line Officer, not Specialist in Naval Aviation, forever redirecting my path. And that made all the difference. College Giants are replaced.

In new friendships Giants galore. Training in Explosives, underwater diving, photographer; changes following so rapidly, that before I caught my breath, I am a civilian, again. But thoughtful enough, to remain in the Navy Reserve for the next 25 years. The idea, Reservists, a mainstay for maintaining Peace.

The war ended for my small group in 1947, after a year in Japan, disposing of munitions the Japanese Armed Forces had abandoned with the August 15, 1945 surrender. The Commanding Officer of our group recruited me to join him in a Denver adventure, which failed, without harming friendship.

Without planning, he wed my wife's sister a year after my spring 1951 wedding to Barbara Foley

What happened then? It's a blur. More Giants.

Yes, there were nine children.

You figure.

One day at a Time, made the difference.