

Linda Kok

Comer's Mystery Person of the week - March 15, 2008

I was born and raised in Long Beach, California.

Born in Chicago, Ill.

By age 5 had lived in Chicago, Oklahoma City, Spur, Texas and Evanston, Illinois.

Lived in Evanston from age 5 to 15.

We lived 2 blocks from Lake Michigan, so spent much time at the beach. I loved the water - often I was in the water for 2 or 3 hours straight. Being chubby helped, I think.

In the winter I'd ice skate almost daily. The park across the street flooded the baseball field for ice-skating. I loved it!

I took piano lessons at Northwestern University. I'd ride the bus by myself to my lessons. It cost 3 cents. Later the fare increased to a nickel.

When I was 7 my father invented a squeeze bag for margarine. This was during WW II and all butter was being sent overseas to our troops. And people wanted a substitute for butter that was yellow. The stores were not allowed to sell yellow margarine. So my father came up with a plastic bag of white margarine, with a yellow food coloring capsule in it. The homemaker then broke the capsule and squeezed the bag, until the margarine became yellow. My Dad made a lot of money on this invention. Later he invented the Butterball Turkey. He sold that, but kept the name "butterball" for his new butter molding business.

After he made this money he bought a cabin cruiser yacht, which we enjoyed on Lake Michigan.

When I was 15 our family, which now consisted of 6 girls (I was no. 2), moved to Grand Rapids, Mich. We bought one of the largest houses in town. It truly was a mansion - 7 bedrooms, 8 bathrooms, 2 living rooms and a den, full attic, and basement. A tennis court in back and large pool on the side. We also bought a cottage on Lake Michigan. You would think we had it all.

But alas, money doesn't buy happiness. I had felt truly happy in Evanston, living in a 4 bedroom apartment, the family cozy and connected. Our family never really enjoyed our life in the big house.

I attended Interlochen Music Camp for 3 summers. I went to Calvin College, played cello in a string quartet, and was in the Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra.

After college I taught elementary school for 2 years: a year in Grand Rapids and a year in Livonia, Michigan, when we lived in Ann Arbor.

Marrying my husband was a huge turning point in my life. Life became joyful and happy once more. We eventually had 4 children, and now 8 grandchildren. We lived in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Gowanda, New York, Iowa City, Iowa, Grand Rapids, Michigan and now Bellflower, California

During my life I taught elementary school for 20 years, piano lessons for 25 years.

I enjoy reading, traveling, being with our grandchildren, teaching piano. I walk 30 minutes every day. I also bike and swim when time and weather allow.

Funny events:

At age 7, I stole a piece of candy from a dime store. When I put it in my mouth it had an awful taste. I threw it away and never stole again. Did God arrange that?

I talked in my sleep as a child. One night I said "I am the King!" 5 times in a row. I walked in my sleep. Once my mother stopped me just before I climbed out the 2nd story window.

At age 11, I slept overnight at a friend's house. She persuaded me to smoke one of her mother's cigarettes. It made me so sick that she said I needed an alka-seltzer. Well that made me even sicker. I never had a cigarette or alka-seltzer again.

First kiss - in a car at age 16. Maybe it was his first also - because he missed my lips and kissed my nose instead. Embarrassing!

Set off a stink bomb in a high school assembly.