

## CHAPTER X

### AFTERWORD

The day after the funeral everyone went skiing. It just felt like the right thing to do, something Jane would have approved of, after our long confinement in the sickroom, even if Judy did not approve. It turned out to be a glorious day of release and recreation, thoroughly enjoyed by all the family and friends who came along.

The Toronto home was filled with food and flowers and soon the letters of condolence began to come flooding in. Included below are just a few of them:

Ann Arbor, Michigan

Feb. 3, 1987

Dear Al and kids:

I cannot begin to tell you how much fun I had skiing with you at Park West last Friday. Being a total nutcake with you guys and E.C.'s guys was the best thing that I could have done. I was cheered by our fun and our frolic. I hope that you were too and can remember it for a long, long time. I sent Steve Brown a note thanking him for kindly lending me his entire ski outfit.

I wanted each one of you to have a copy of the prayer that I gave at the family service prior to Jane's funeral. Since I had to write it out in order to give it, typing it up and running off a few copies was easy. I've enclosed enough copies, so that each of you can put one into your Book of Remembrance. I believe that the blessings I enumerated are yours because of Janie's faithfulness.

For almost two hours, the day before Janie's funeral, I drove around Ann Arbor in my car and walked through a wooded area near our home and thought about Janie, Al and the kids. During my twenty-minute walk through the woods, I had a gentle feeling come over me which enlightened my understanding about the precious gift of life and what it means to us when a life is gone. I was totally alone feeling the inspiration of truth. I like to think that God was dictating to my mind the blessings that Janie had negotiated for you.

I've sent a copy of the prayer to immediate family: E. C., Gary, Grandma Toronto, Aunt Carol, Judy and Marion, Uncle Dave and to Jean Brown, Janie's best friend. There are a few extra copies so that you can share it with whomever else you wish. I also sent a copy of this letter to E. C.

I want to be with you again! I want to ski with you again! I want to bring my boys out and nutburger around with you again. I love you. Ellen loves you and my boys love you. See you soon!  
Love,

Bob [Toronto]

Not long after the funeral Al wrote to Ralph Woodward:

Midway, Utah

February 5, 1987

Dear Dr. Woodward,

Enclosed is Jan's music and \$235 that was received for the Ralph Woodward Chorale Memorial. Most people gave cash and did not want to be placed on your mailing list, if you have one. I am sorry the total is not ten times as much. On the day of the funeral I was rushed off to the cemetery

and did not have an opportunity to thank you and the marvelous members of the Chorale for your unselfish service. To me, your music was the highlight of the funeral, and I am sure Jane would feel the same way.

Your coming to sing fulfilled one of Jane's last wishes. About three months ago, while we were sitting in the hot tub, Jane planned out the entire funeral program—speakers, music, burial plot, etc. She especially wanted the Chorale to sing. For every funeral that we have ever had up here for the last five years there have been two lovely ladies from the Ward that sang "In the Garden" with extreme scooping and vibrato. Jane hated it. And she swore she'd haunt me if I let them sing at her funeral. So, you see, you saved me from the Twilight Zone.

I would like to tell you what your Chorale meant to Jane. She loved classical choral music and never had a chance to sing any from the time she left college—until she joined your group. She looked forward to practices and performances with zeal and would come home raving about the music, you and the members of the Chorale. Singing with you was the highlight of her week. It took her away from the mundane routine of life and made her feel special and talented.

These positive feelings were hard to come by for Jane during the last two years. As silly as it sounds to us, she felt like a failure in most aspects of her life because of the cancer. The hardest thing for me to cope with, as her husband, was not her death or pain, but the gradual loss of self-esteem in this wonderfully talented, aggressive and intelligent woman. I am convinced that most of it was due to the tumors in her brain.

Anyway, you and your Chorale filled a void in Jane's life and provided her with some of the most joyful experiences she had during the last few years of her life. If you ever feel like your efforts are not worth it, forget it! I am sure the other members of the Chorale feel the same way. For Jane, your Chorale provided a cultural candle on the hill in a world filled with poor ward choirs, schmaltzy renditions of "In the Garden," the singing of new Mormon Pop songs in Sacrament Meetings and mediocre community choirs.

Jane and I would like to thank you, Ralph, from the bottom of our hearts. And thanks to those members of the Chorale who took time from their busy schedules to come and sing at the funeral. I could not have been more pleased with the whole thing.

Sincerely,  
Al Toronto

Ralph's response was heartwarming:

Provo, Utah  
February 20, 1987  
Dear Al,

Please forgive me for not acknowledging the wonderful letter—and the donations—you sent following Jane's funeral. I'm only sorry I didn't write to you before that, to tell you what a privilege we felt it was for us to be there. I have rarely attended a funeral that made me feel more uplifted and dedicated to try to "fight the good fight" in at least a fraction of the way your wonderful wife did. The magnificent tribute her dear girlfriend gave her was, I'm sure, the way all who knew Jane felt, but she spoke not only from her heart but with great eloquence as well.

I have at least a partially valid excuse for my poor manners. The day of the funeral was a forerunner of many bad ones for Margaret [wife]. To make a long story short, she went into the hospital that weekend and had a large hematoma removed from her brain. The surgery was highly successful, but her other problems, diabetes, leukemia, etc., have kept her there, with several crises in the ensuing time, including this past Monday night, when both we and the doctors were concerned about her survival until morning. But she is a bit better, and will probably be moving to a private room tomorrow. We don't know how long she'll be there, but hope she can come home soon.

When this development occurred Monday night I thought I'd have to cancel Wednesday's concert, but when things looked a bit better I decided to go through with it and was glad we did, because it turned out very well. I called it "A Night in Vienna," and we sang music of Schubert and

Brahms. Included on the program were Lu and Linda Wakefield and the Ballroom Dance Team, so it was a delightful experience.

Incidentally, and getting back to your letter, we were deeply impressed with the fine singing of "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth." I'm sure Jane would have loved it and certainly it was several cuts above "In the Garden!"

Many of the Chorale members wanted copies of your letter and I'm sure they would want to join me in thanking you for it and its contents. You may be sure we shall never forget Jane and your urging us to continue did me a lot of good, believe me. I've wondered a good deal about it for many years.

Thanks again, Al, not only for your thoughtfulness, but also the courage and fortitude you and your lovely family have shown to all of us, including the day of the funeral.

Sincerely, Ralph Woodward

Unfortunately, Ralph's wife, Margaret, died not long after this letter was written. Other letters were addressed to E.C.:

Raymond, Alberta, Canada

February 15, 1987

Dear Ellen Claire,

I was deeply touched by your letter. I have great empathy for you. You are by far the greatest person I know, having gone through what you have the past six months.

People tell me how brave I am, but it isn't so. People like yourself are the brave ones. My mother used to tell me how many of the Weavers died from cancer. It looks as though it is continuing on down the line. She said they used to call it the "Weaver Cancer." It took all of Riley Weaver's family but Jim. I think he is still alive. It also branched out into the families of Shaffers, Clarks, Hardys and their families here in southern Alberta. A person can't help but wonder what the future holds for us and our grandchildren...

My sister is 83, her health is good and her mind is clear. I am thankful for that. She lives in her own home and spends the summer taking care of her flowers and yard.

I keep very busy as secretary to the Relief Society and also to a newly formed society who is publishing a book to be ready by 1989 to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the mental hospital here in Raymond. I'll say bye for now as George is waiting to mail it for me. Please take care and God Bless You.

Love you,

Dora [Thomson, a cousin]

Provo, Utah

January 26, 1987

Dear Ellen Claire,

I just have to write you a little note to say many, many thanks for your call. I feel sorry that you and all of us have to face up to such sorrows. I keep recalling your mother's passing, and admire you the way you held up. You had Jane play for us when we were at her home after the funeral. May you be able to do as well at this time. We will pray for you. Hope Gary will be brave also.

I found your Christmas card and have it ready to mail to Hannah Mae. I called Jasmine and John Edmunds, Margaret Cain. Tried to get Mary Mitoray and Mitchell. They must still be away...

I will try to write to some of our Chicago friends. I am not a good correspondent, but will push a bit.

Keep up your fine good spirit so you can write to me again.

Love, Louise Williams [Margaret Weaver's dearest friend from Chicago days]

Raymond, Alberta, Canada

February 13, 1987

Dear Ellen Claire and family,

Thank you for letting us know of the passing of your beloved sister, Jane. It was a real shock to us, because at Christmas time we received a lovely picture of the family on their holidays and she looked so well and happy, it was a joy to behold. We treasure it!

Our hearts go out to all of you. We'd be most happy if there was any way we could lighten the sorrow, and the emptiness of the years to come. Somewhere there must be a lovely lady to fill in for her for the guidance and loving care [the children] will need. I'm ever grateful for the new mother my father found for us. Also the young wife of our son (one of five) passed away three years ago with leukemia, leaving four very small children. He now has a lovely, caring mother for his [children] and they love her dearly. Otherwise we would probably have the care of them. Much as we love them, it would be a bit too hard on Donald. I can't say for myself without having it day in and day out. But I'd surely be willing to do my best....

I never read Donald's letters, so I don't know whether he has mentioned his health. He has his share of miseries and maybe part of mine because I keep so well by comparison. We are both old, but many live much longer nowadays. A dear Raymond lady just died at 106 years, and in relatively good health. Count me out!

You will take comfort in the knowledge that Jane is free from pain and in good hands. May the Lord bless her husband and children and you folks.

With our sympathy and love,

Alice Nilsson

Dear Shaeffer family,

I don't know if you knew Allen and Jane sent us a picture of their family while they were on holiday... We were happy that the therapy was really helping. Ever since we met you and Janes family it has seemed like you had always been part of our own family. We still drive past what was once the Weaver farm. It seems to have a special attraction as though some of them are still there. So far the buildings are still there as if waiting for some of them to come back. Very few small farms left, very few of the original buildings left on places we knew. It wasn't easy to make a living but it was a good place to raise a family and children learned to work. Even learning how to grow a garden had been a big help towards their living...

...Early this fall a news item stated that across Canada over twenty five thousand farmers had their property repossessed and many more would be added to the number by spring. All the state of the economy is blamed on the low price of oil. That may have had something to do with it but I think only a small part. There have been worker strikes in every part of the country. Many business operators have been forced to discontinue. An article appearing in a farm paper stated at one time unions were necessary because of the greed of big operators, now the tables are turned and the greed of unions has caused the immense number of unemployed. A short time ago the price of oil started to climb, as a result the stock market became active so government announced the economy was recovering. What is happening now is exactly what took place before the bottom fell out of the economy in the 1920's and 1930's. This period of time was often referred to as the "dirty thirties." Your father and grandparents lived through that period. Wages were no more than \$1.50 per day. It was as difficult to pay twenty dollars per acre for land then as it is to pay a thousand now. Many large families were raised in very modest homes, very few cars or tractors. The horse was mostly the only source of power. Looking back ... it seems to me like the quality of life was better then. People needed each other and there was pleasure in very modest things. It seemed like neighbors cared about each other and often worked together during harvest or putting up a building. Likely every generation looks back at some period in their lives that they remember as the good old days...

...You are all very dear and special to us. We feel the sorrow you are going through. I realize that isn't much help, but we care and we are happy you are a part of our family of friends. We had some dear friends in Arizona. We had hoped to visit once more but health conditions would have

to be considerably better than they are at present. Anyway, we are going to try our best to overcome our problems so we can at least travel with some of the family occasionally.

Well, I'll close for now, but will do our best to keep in touch with you. We didn't know your mother had died. I wish we had known you earlier.

Lots of love to you and your family,  
Donald Nilsson

In the fall of 1987 Al met and subsequently married Susan Czyrocki. She and her son, Chase, were welcome additions to the Toronto family. Suzy took on the almost overwhelming task of parenting a ready-made family all at once. She created order where there had been chaos and stability where there had been struggling. Soon the girls and Will were calling her "mom" as she shaped up the rough edges where hair styles, clothing and manners were concerned. E.C. was grateful for being relieved of the weight of worry over impossible parenting duties that really could not be conducted long-distance. She also felt that Jane would have approved of Al's choice for many reasons, one of which was that Suzy was never on Jane's "Do Not Marry" list. Yes, during Jane's last months she composed a list of women that Al should avoid. Susan, of course, was unknown to her, but Jane certainly would have been comfortable with Al's choice. In the ensuing years Suzy has created a beautiful bond of sisterhood with Jane that overarches the limits of time and place.



Kyle, Texas  
Sept. 29, 1987  
Dear E. C.,

I am sure you can imagine our surprise when Al called last week. I'm still reeling. He had told me the last part of August that he was dating, and had specifically mentioned Sue, but I had no inkling that he was so near to marriage. Don't much think he did either at that point, do you?

Anyhow, I am so eager for his happiness and for the kiddos up there. I talked with Carrie, and she sounded very hopeful and even relieved to have a woman coming in to join the family. And her attitude about a new little brother was absolutely charming (and I was especially pleased to hear her express understanding and concern for Will, to reassure him of his special place in all their hearts.)

They told us about all the family being there for the wedding. I'm sure it was very difficult in some (many) ways for you [to attend], but what a selfless thing to do for Al and the children, and for Sue. You guys truly are a marvelous lot. Jane is so proud of you and your supportiveness. Those people in that home need a mother-person very much, and Al has no business trying to be mother and father too long. And dear Carrie surely has earned the right to fling herself fully into her senior year. That girl has earned so many stars for her crown, as have they all.

I'm eagerly awaiting a chance to meet my new friend Sue. When you have time, write and tell me your impressions. About everything.

And just for the record, when Tim first told me that Al had called, it was as though Jane had died all over again. Almost. Even though I can be happy for them in this new phase of their life, it was like opening an old wound again. Only each time it heals up a little tougher and smoother and quicker. This little clipping in today's paper sure hits the nail on the head, only I have had wonderful understanding and support. I haven't written you to thank you for your notes and phone calls, but believe me they have meant a lot. Seems like when I was down I didn't want to call you and risk getting you down, too. And when I wasn't down, didn't dare take the chance of getting that way! Aren't I the selfish one, huh?

There have been so many times in the past months that I have been pensive or blue, and usually Tim can figure out that it's still part of the grieving process—he's about the best there is when it comes to being there for those moments. Not once has he said "that's enough," or "why are you still feeling that way?" He grieves with and for me.

One of the sweetest things Jane did for me was the little stitchery works (I have some of the ones she was working on for you, so I know that you know exactly what I mean.) I can see them on the wall and have such a feeling of what friendship is and love is. She gave me that gift, and it will always be with me.

My love and best wishes to you and your family. I hope the fall and coming holiday seasons are wonderful, and that your [son's] upcoming wedding is just glorious!!!

Please come to see us when you can.  
Love, Judy

E.C. had only one other conversation with Judy, though she tried on several occasions to establish a rapport. Judy passed away sometime in the 1990's but E.C. did not learn about it until much later.

Below are a few retrospective thoughts from our current time:

South Jordan, Utah  
May 22, 2002  
Dear Ellen Claire:

I appreciated receiving your note regarding your sister, Jane. Although my association with her was somewhat limited, there were times when we had an opportunity to be with her or near her and feel of her great personality and spirit... What I do remember about Jane is that she was an optimist, an enthusiast, and that she enjoyed life and everything associated with it during the time that I was

privileged to know and associate with her. We enjoyed her accomplishments as a musician on occasion and also her happy and pleasing personality... I wish you well in the writing of her history, it is certainly a history worth writing...

Best wishes,

Norman Bangerter

[Norm was Jane's bishop during the time of her mission. Later he became Utah's governor.]

Salt Lake City

August 6, 2002

Dear Ellen Claire,

Sorry I took so long to write about sweet Janie. I have thought about it often... What I remember clearly is her smile and those wonderful dimples! Was she ever unhappy? When I think of her I see that smiling, dimpled face. She was a delight to be around, as were you. You were both angels in disguise, or maybe not in disguise...

Much love,

Beryl Jensen Smiley [Boarder and "big sister" from our Chicago days.]

Salt Lake City

June 4, 2002

Dear E.C.,

When I think of Jane, my memories are not so much the things she said or did, but the way she made me feel. I was a bit removed from her in that I was the cousin of her nieces and nephews, but she always seemed closer to the family in general, like one of the older cousins, or an aunt or something. I remember her being around a lot as a guest of Gary and Naomi, and then as a fellow ward member.

My first memory of her was at a family Christmas party at Grandma Bangerter's. She was probably about seventeen or eighteen years old, and was still wearing glasses. I was a three or four years old, and I fell in love with her immediately, and spent the entire evening sitting on her lap and telling her everything I knew. I remember having a crush on her after that. She was always very sweet and considerate of us children. I recall running through her house on 3835 South, and although she was probably tired of us kids tearing around, she was patient and kindly when she told us to hit the road.

I remember very clearly attending her missionary farewell when she was called to serve in South America. She stated that she was at a point in life that she could pursue any course she wanted—traveling in Europe, or buying a sports car—but she chose to serve a mission because it seemed right to her.

We thought she was glamorous and sophisticated when she was in our ward before and after her mission. She taught at Granger High and all of the high school kids loved to be around her. I also remember when she got home from the mission. She began driving the red '63 Corvette that Gary had owned.

She sat behind me in church one week and I turned around in time to watch her insert a contact lens. It was the first time I had ever seen anyone do that. I was shocked to see someone touch their eye. Little did I know then I would spend the next thirty years doing the same thing.

On the night Jane and Al were married I drew babysitting duty. Naomi hired me to tend her two little boys and Dave Bangerter over at Grandma's house. So I was the only one in the family that did not attend the wedding.

In early 1968 there was an elaborate stake musical put on in our meetinghouse, and Jane and Al had some of the lead roles in the production. They sang and danced together on stage.

I recall how much I enjoyed the Christmas of 1975 when I was serving in Clovis on my mission and Jane and Al visited from Texas. It was wonderful having a chance to get reacquainted with Jane and have family there to enjoy. I have never forgotten that Christmas and the feeling of it

and that you were kind enough to include us in the festivities. You will never know how much you meant to us in those days.

The last time I saw Jane was in the fall of 1986 when she sang at John Weaver's welcome home. She was very ill at the time, but did a wonderful job as always. I remember hearing her sing at many church meetings and entertainments. And I remember her smile when her entire face crinkled into deep dimples.

E.C., we have loved you and Jane. It has been pleasant for me to remember these few things about your wonderful sister.

Keep in touch. Love,

Harlan [Bangerter]

Clovis, New Mexico

February 2, 2003

Dear everyone,

Yesterday, when we lost the Columbia space shuttle on re-entry, I was reminded of the Challenger disaster of 1986. I remember Jane saying that her first reaction was to wish she'd been aboard – to spare herself and her family a slow death. But that was not to be.

Though the years have come and gone, the pain of losing Jane has mellowed only a little for me over time. There is a permanent gap in my life where she once was. Even as I write this I feel overwhelmed with grief once again. The gift of her love was one of the central pillars of my life and her friendship was my mainstay. Though my life has been filled with many others to love, there will never be another Janie.

In a certain way the sadness is blessed by the knowledge that “to grieve well is to live well,” as pointed out by a favorite writer of Jane's, Rabbi Harold Kushner. His book, When Bad Things Happen to Good People, was a great help to both Jane and me during that last dreadful year of 1986.

Jane's wonderful legacy lives on in the lives of her children and grandchildren. They are remarkable and beautiful people. They are the survivors of one of life's great tragedies—losing a young mother—and they have triumphed over that adversity. It has made them stronger, more compassionate people, and perhaps better parents, too. (See appendix with family data.) Jane would be gratified and delighted with her daughters and their husbands, her son and his wife. And she would be actively spoiling her wonderful and amazing grandchildren.

Carrie, a fine musician like her mother, earned her degree in nursing and later served a mission in the Philippines. She married Dr. Trent Burrup. They are the parents of two beautiful daughters and they use their many talents in the service of others.

Amy earned her art degree at Southern Utah University in Cedar City. A talented artist, Amy is a freelance medallion sculptor, making plaster casts for commemorative coins and medallions. She married Steven Weir and together they are the parents of two wonderful little boys.

Cindy's success as a personal trainer preceded her marriage to Grant Glasscock, whom she met at Brigham Young University. They are the parents of a wonderful son and a beautiful daughter.

William served a Spanish-speaking mission in Uruguay. He married the former JoAnn Black. They live in Provo, Utah where they are currently attending school. Chase Toronto, is serving a mission in Albuquerque, New Mexico at this time.

Like their mother, each of Jane's children is a blessing to their parents and to others. They are all amazing, accomplished and gracious people—each successful in his or her own way.

Looking back over my own life, I can honestly say that caring for Jane during her last weeks, was the most difficult task of my life. Yet, it was the best thing I *ever* did. Without the support of my own dear husband and children it would have been immeasurably harder, but with their prayers and understanding, as well as that of an army of Jane's friends and neighbors, I was able to bear up under that awful burden. I was happy that I could give Al some assistance then, and I have been grateful for his assistance with this memorial project now.

For all who believe that an individual has significance beyond their earthly mortality, it becomes a work of gratitude and obligation to honor the memory of the deceased. It often happens that once a person dies, however, he or she is elevated to instant sainthood. If that has been the case with Jane, she would not approve. Though she was very much a human – with faults and failings like the rest of us – nevertheless, she was a star, and her light glowed more brightly than most.

The gift of Jane's life keeps on giving. Through the years since her death, her legacy has had an ever-widening circle. As of this writing she has six grandchildren. I suspect there may be more. Jane's greatest fear in dying young was that her children would forget her. With this collection of a few, perhaps inadequate, documents of her life, I pray that Jane's children and grandchildren will be forever blessed by knowing a little more about her through this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Ellen Claire Weaver Shaeffer

February 2003

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