

IN MEMORIAM
Raymond S. Beggs
August 7, 1932 - June 1, 2014

Ray led an adventuresome life in various ways. Born in Edmonton, Canada while Dad studied Physics at the University of Alberta and earned his Master's Degree there, Ray visited his paternal grandfather's mink and wheat farm near Edmonton. And Mom helped her in-laws in Ardrossen by cooking on a wood-burning stove.

Later the family moved to Rochester, New York, where Dad worked for Kodak and Bea was born. In the winter Ray enjoyed riding his sled down the snowy slope in front of our home. And we have a photo of him, Bea and Cousin Peter sitting on that sled, with Spotty, our dog beside us.

Being a farmer's son, Dad moved to the outskirts of Schenectady, NY to raise watermelons, cantaloupes, pigs, and a cow and calf. Dad fondly told how Ray, the happy young farmer, was singing while sitting on the seat of our John Deere tractor and plowing another row of the field. A special event caused talented Ray to become a precocious NY driver when the neighbor called to say our calf had strayed over to his farm. Dad, Ray and Bea went by car to retrieve the calf, then Dad had to lead it down the road by a rope while Ray drove slowly with the headlights on. I believe it was his first time driving a car.

Ragweed by the roads back East made Dad's hay fever flare up, driving him ever westward. Eventually we settled in Pasadena, where he worked for Cal Tech, then finally moved to Pacific Palisades, by the ocean, in 1947 when Dad began his career as a UCLA Engineering Dept. Professor for 27 years. Mom was so thankful not to have to move again. Ray learned to use tools at an early age, and had fun doing projects with Dad, such as assembling a Heath Kit radio, with vacuum tubes, the need for soldering wires, etc. Ray also helped Dad build a red brick incinerator/BBQ in the back yard. In the summers Ray and Bea used the hoe to make furrows and plant rows of carrots, onions, tomatoes and corn, which Dad deemed an educational experience for youngsters. Remember the Victory Gardens of WW II?

Mom and Dad encouraged a love of music and nature, and summer vacations usually including hiking in state or national parks and listening to the park rangers at the nightly shows tell about the plants and animals, and how glaciers scoured out the valleys. We enjoyed these very much.

His interest in cars began early for Ray, as he watched Dad make repairs, and Ray neatly used a razor blade to cut out pictures of cars and airplanes for his scrapbook. His University High School studies included calculus and trigonometry, which prepared him for very challenging Engineering courses at UCLA for at least one semester.

Then the Korean War broke out, and our Navy man followed the extended family's tradition of joining the Navy. (Uncle Harry Marcum was a career officer and cousin Russell (who looked almost like Ray) where both at Pearl Harbor on that fateful 1941 day. And Uncle Fred was the first in the family to travel through the Panama Canal - on a USN ship.) After book camp in San Diego, Ray found himself on a mine sweeper that pitched, rolled and yawed over 45 degrees during monsoons near Japan. No wonder he wrote us an urgent letter asking Dad to buy the widest motorcycle belt he could find and send it ASAP - so he could hold himself in. Sometimes almost all the crew was seasick, and he was the only one manning the Engine Room. He was based in Sasebo Harbor, Japan, and the most exciting event on the mine sweeper was when their net reeled in a Russian land mine that got quite close to the fan tail of their ship. (It could have blown him sky high, but for the grace of God.) After they let it go, they got out every gun on board to shoot at it to try to blow it up before it blew up one of our landing boats. Unlike a John Wayne movie, no one hit it, and sunrise was approaching, so a helicopter had to be dispatched to do it.

After such life-threatening experiences, it was a relief to be assigned to the U.S.S. Hector, one of our largest repair ships in the Pacific. Ray said that was like walking on land. When he couldn't make it home for one Christmas, he greatly appreciated Uncle Harry inviting Ray to his ship to eat Christmas dinner together. And Ray, a Radioman First Class, spread Christmas cheer by playing Bea's record (cut by her piano teacher across the street from home) of "White Christmas" and other Christmastide songs. Various Navy men asked him to play that song more than any other, as they all dreamed of being home for Christmas.

He and Dad had enjoyed riding their motorcycles together. After he joined the Navy, he stored his in San Francisco, so when he had a weekend or longer leave, he would jump on and buzz down Highway 101 to home. Once again he had a life-threatening experience and was protected by the Hand of the Almighty. He had been required to stand watch on deck at night for 4 hours, so he was tired when he began that trip home. Near San Luis Obispo, he fell asleep on his bike, which was going at a fast clip!! Fortunately there was a wire fence along the shoulder, and that safety-conscious rider wore a helmet and well-padded motorcycle jacket. He went into the fence, which stopped him so he didn't hit the telephone pole in front of him!! Dazed, he saw a gas station, and lay on the floor in the men's room unlike daytime. Then he phoned Dad to get an open UHaul trailer and come to get him. At home, he soaked the abrasions on his forearm in a roaster of Epsom Salts while telling Mom and Bea the details of his misadventure.

He served in the Navy 1951-1955, and was discharged just as Mom and Bea were about to fly to New England. Dad had gone ahead to spend his sabbatical year in Wiesbaden, Germany, working for the US Air Force in Europe (USAFE), and Mom and Bea had to follow a schedule set by the AF. Mom wept when she couldn't see Ray before catching that plane. Eventually we had an apartment on Dotzheimer Strasse, and the German landlord brought Mom and Dad 12 red roses in a cut glass vase for their 25th anniversary. Ray spent a lot of time making precision drawings with a drafting machine for Dad's Problems and Solutions Manual. We enjoyed vacations north to Goslar and 2 weeks in Bavaria, seeing all 3 of King Ludwig's famous ornate castles - and learning that he financed Wagner (whose music he adored) so he could focus on composing more operas.

When we returned home, Ray was employed on the night shift at General Telephone, changing truck tires (heavy), etc. with the repair crew. Later he worked days as a machinist at Hughes Aircraft (after Dad had coached him about use of a lathe), and holding those old WW II machines to precise tolerances was a challenge.

Eventually he married Lorraine 6/1968 and moved to her home in Redlands. She had a great sense of humor (sign -Keep your kitchen clean. Eat out!) and loved to square dance (mild exercise and a great way to meet people). We were amused when she insisted that Ray take square dance lessons before they tied the knot at a church in Redlands. And Dad raved about her wonderful German chocolate cake. We took turns visiting each others' homes at times on weekends. Lorraine had 2 daughters, Lori and Holly, by her first marriage, and didn't feel like starting another family. Ray viewed the daughters as his own.

They were married before he began his CDF career. He had taken a professional truck driving course, shifting through 15 gears. Soon after they were married, he got a job in Casper, Wyoming hauling hot tar for road repairs (summertime only). Ray went ahead to find an apartment, then we 3 dropped off Lorraine with Ray and continued our vacation to national parks, etc.

He finished automotive courses at Santa Monica City College, and felt that was one of the main reasons that the California Dept. of Forestry (now CalFire, a name he proposed at a state convention decades ago) hired him. Most firemen knew less about repairing their trucks than that son of a Mechanical Engineering professor. His years on the farm and hiking in the woods helped motivate him to protect plants in CDF regions. He enjoyed this career more, and was proud of driving fire truck for 17 years without an accident. His most life-threatening event with CDF was when he was helping to fight a house fire. The captain sent Ray alone (contrary to protocol) to the kitchen area. When he poked at the ceiling to ascertain the extent of damage, suddenly the timbers crashed down on top of him and his fire helmet. After lying there, he

regained consciousness near burning lumber and crawled outdoors. (Fire fighters should always be sent in pairs.) Sometimes he was sent to other areas to help with really bad fires. Bea recalls that during the Lake Elmore fire, when there wasn't enough room indoors for the crew to sleep and rest, Ray and others were required to sleep with a cardboard box over their heads to avoid inhaling falling ashes!! Another major challenge was fighting brush fires - also fleeing rattlers and other wildlife - for which CDF did not give them ANY breathing apparatus. No wonder he eventually lost 50% of his lung capacity and had to retire early on disability.

His golden years of retirement gave him more time to catch up on reading *Road and Track* and other automotive magazines, since cars were always among his favorite subjects. He also read books about the JFK conspiracy, and discovered that Lee H. Oswald was eating lunch in the cafeteria with others in that book bldg. during the shooting, with bullets coming from in front of the car.

A very special and lengthy vacation trip in the station wagon fulfilled his dream of visiting Mount Rushmore in South Dakota with Lorraine and Bea one autumn. A gym friend had raved to Lorraine about the Cody museums, so we drove through Grand Teton National Park (which Lori and Ed had visited), Jackson Hole (where the city park's 4 arches are made of intertwined antlers), Yellowstone (where Lorraine saw the geysers for the 1st time, and buffalo crossing the highway with snow on the ground). Ray was afraid the approaching storm would bring more snow, so we drove down to Cody and spent a day at the 4 sections of his museum. Ray enjoyed the rifle and handgun collection, and Bea was delighted with the extensive Indian artifacts and the life of Buffalo Bill Cody.

Civic-minded Ray and Lorraine went for daily walks in Redlands, and helped keep the city beautiful by picking up trash in the plastic bags they always carried. This included walking up a hill for the cardiovascular exercise. After exercising regularly at home as well, she appeared to be more physically fit than Ray. So it was a deep shock when she fell in the street in front of their home and died in the hospital early next morning on 1/30/2005. He told Bea that he thought about Lorraine every day.

Redlands gets hot and smoggy in the summers, so eventually Ray bought a 3-bedroom home amid the clean air and towering pines of Mariposa (gateway to Yosemite National Park), in the western foothills of the Sierras. He and Bea took turns behind the wheel on their long trips to haul supplies up there in his camper. We gathered furniture, food, etc., and Bea sewed beautiful flowery chintz curtains for the kitchen. There were several fruit trees in the back yard that deer loved to eat, plus a walnut tree, patio and kid's playhouse. We also served lunch to George and Barbara, the only friends Bea knew in the area. He thought he had a fixed mortgage, but the rate increased until he couldn't cope with it. So we rented a truck on 2 weekends to retrieve most of the home furnishings when he lost the home.

Ray moved in with Bea in 2011 in Pacific Palisades near the ocean, Mother Nature's air conditioner, where cooler, cleaner air awaited him that in Redlands, where summer heat (in the 90's) and smog had given him chest pains. This was much better for his health. (In Mariposa he didn't know anyone, and who would take care of him if he broke a leg on an icy sidewalk in the winter?) Here he walked to the center (6 blocks) almost every day, picked up the mail at the post office, and got a few groceries in his backpack. He did this for over a year while Bea worked 2 jobs. One day he was shocked when his right knee suddenly gave way without warning, and he fell down during his daily walk. After that he pushed a grocery cart to and from the store on level ground to steady himself. He did not have any other type of regular exercise.

Our relatives live in or near Redlands (a 2-hr. drive to the east on I-10), and we enjoyed our family gatherings there, including Thanksgiving and Christmas, Ben and Brittany's marriage, celebrating the birth of Josiah and Leslie's first baby, etc. Jet and Rebecca hosted some of the more recent gatherings when they became too much for Holly. We also enjoyed visiting with Holly and Mike over a cup of their special, delicious coffee amid the rolling hills of Yucaipa (east of Redlands).

Since he had some cardiovascular problems, Bea drove him to doctor appointments and helped get his medications. He thought some of them made him dizzy. Bea retired from her 10-year career as a medical coder

at the end of 2012 to take better care of him. She also read various nutritional books and articles to facilitate this. They enjoyed several vacation/business trips to Weaverville, in NW California's Trinity Alps. Decades before, he and Dad had bought some timbered hillside acres about Douglas City, near Weaverville and the BLM campground by the Trinity River. In 2013 he fell six times. His eyesight became more blurry, so he didn't do much reading. But we enjoyed a few trips to Weaverville, where his local lawyer, James Underwood, helped him donate and transfer all of his hillside acreage to the Douglas City Volunteer Fire Dept. (closest to his acres), whose limited budget was eaten up by truck repairs. For a year they have sold raffle tickets on two of the areas, and 7/4/2014 they will draw names of the lucky winners. Ray had originally wanted to be there then, but realized in the spring that he wasn't up to the long trip.

During 2014, Ray stayed home much of the time, and after we discovered popular old-time TV shows on Cozi-TV (Channel 4, subdivision 2), he enjoyed watching Western favorites: Bowtie, The Lone Ranger, Roy Rogers and Maverick in the mornings while Bea prepared breakfast and his daily assortment of pills. He didn't like to get outdoors and walk in cool weather, but did walk on the sidewalk on a warm day. By then he could only walk the length of our property. Earlier he could walk 1/3 block up to the intersection.

Ray fell several times in 2014. Once he fell by his bed and had a laceration on his forehead. Since he was stable otherwise, Bea drove him to Kaiser Hospital to be sutured. His declining health and lack of much exercise eventually led to his fall on 5/23. The Fire Dept, Paramedics transported him to Santa Monica Hospital, which transferred him to his Kaiser West LA Hospital. By Sunday he was improving. Holly and Mike Pruiksma came to visit.

JESUS CHRIST has introduced Himself to Ray through the reading of His WORD & Ray prayed with Holly & Mike openly to commit his life into HIS hands, receiving blessed peace & assurance of eternal life in his SAVIOR.

Wednesday they gave him a cardiac stress test (injected chemicals), and then his health declined. By Friday morning he was transferred to ICU and placed on life support. Lori Schindler met Bea Saturday morning, and Dr. Pak told them of multiple system failures. On the way home, Lori felt uplifted when she saw a license plate with "Mom [heart shape] Ray" - an inspiring sign sent by the Guiding Hand of Providence. On 6/1 near midnight he passed from this life to a better one in heaven, where there is no pain, disease, or death.

Ray is survived by Holly and Lori, Bea, 4 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren.

"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life" - John 3:36