

Nov. 8 '10

Hello -

Alice - thank you for <sup>your</sup> phone call. Enclosed find the programs for the military committal and Celebration of Life. Both events were very special. There were well over a hundred at Program/Reception. With my family and friends support - the day was even more special.

The last few months were tough for Alan - and when he made the decision to stop dialysis I told him he had made a tough decision but his quality of life was gone. Plus Scott was waiting for him. The nurse had told me about 3 months ago that he was failing fast. He also knew that my caretaking duties were getting to be too much. Craig did an incredible job handling arrangements, I was in charge of the program. The musical selections were his choice. A bagpiper played at Fort Logan. At Scott's request years ago he asked Alan to write about his life "The Ups and Downs of Alan Cobb." A good friend took excerpts from that - which is also included. We enjoyed your recent mailings. Love Barbara

Yes - Chicago was great!



## THE UPS AND DOWNS OF ALAN A. ROBB

IN THE EARLY 1980'S ALAN'S SON, SCOTT, SAID TO HIS DAD -"YOU KNOW, MY BROTHERS, CRAIG AND KEVIN, AND I, DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT YOUR EARLY LIFE AND THE HISTORY OF YOUR TIMES." THUS THE TWO NOTE PADS OF WRITING PAPER, GIVEN AS A CHRISTMAS GIFT, BECAME THE CATALYST FOR HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY FROM 1927 TO 1985.

BARB SUGGESTED A FEW PASSAGES THAT MAY SERVE TO REMIND US OF ALAN'S UNIQUE AND CLEVER SENSE OF HUMOR , IDENTIFIED BY THE "**ALAN--ISMS**" THAT WERE DROPPED ON US DURING CONVERSATIONS.

ALAN WAS BORN IN GRANT CITY, MO IN 1927. HE EMPHASIZES THAT HIS BIRTH CERTIFICATE DECLARES HIM LIGITIMATE. HIS FATHER CLYDE , LEFT WHEN HE AS 3 OR 4 AND SOON AFTER HIS PARENTS DIVORCED. HE CLAIMS THAT HE AND HIS 2 SISTERS, MAXINE AND CLYDENE, GREW UP "POORER THAN CHURCH MICE"

SINCE WE ARE JUST PULLING OUT A FEW INCIDENTS OF INTEREST TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS WE WILL CALL THEM **SIDETRACKS**.

**SIDETRACK #1** ONE MEMORY SO VIVID TO ALAN WAS REGARDING THE RAILROAD CARS THAT WERE UNLOADED BY HAND SHOVEL INTO THE SHEDS ALONG THE RAIL SIDINGS AND SOLD AT THE LUMBER YARD. " THE COAL THAT FELL TO THE GROUND WAS A WINDFALL FOR THE ROBB FAMILY. I REMEMBER GOING TO THE SHEDS AT NIGHT WITH A GUNNY SACK AND PICKING UP ALL THE COAL I COULD FIND. OFTEN THE SACK WAS SO HEAVY I HAD TO DRAG IT ABOUT A QUARTER MILE HOME. SOMETIMES I WOULD CLIMB UP AND THROW COAL OUT SO WE COULD HAVE SOME WARMTH IN THE HOUSE -- AND AGAIN DON'T FORGET -- IT WASN'T STEALING IT WAS SURVIVING"

**SIDETRACK #2** "WHEN I WAS IN UPPER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MY MOM, VESTA BEATRICE, DECIDED I NEEDED MY TEETH STRAIGHTENED. MONEY, WE HAD NONE ! BUT SHE WAS ALWAYS RESOURCEFUL . SO TO PAY THE DENTIST, I MILKED THE COWS, BOTTLED THE MILK, AND DELIVERED 2 QUARTS OF FRESH MILK TO THE DENTIST'S HOME, A MILE AWAY, EVERY NIGHT FOR 2 YEARS. BUT NOW I HAD STRAIGHT TEETH ON THAT LONG JOURNEY."

IN RELATING STORIES ABOUT HIS SISTER, CLYDENE, ALAN SAID "CLYDENE WAS 2 YEARS AHEAD OF ME IN SCHOOL. IT WASN'T THAT SHE WAS SMARTER THAN I, JUST THAT SHE WAS BORN 2 YEARS EARLIER".

### **A TYPICAL ALAN--ISM**

**SIDETRACK #3** "PROBABLY BACK IN THE 2ND GADE I WAS EAGERLY LEARNING NEW WORDS AND PHRASES. THESE WERE ACQUIRED FROM THE TEACHER, MY PEERS AND THE OLDER KIDS DURING RECESS. ANYWAY, I MUST OF THOUGHT I WAS REALY SMART ONE DAY WHEN CLYDENE FOUND ME IN THE FLOWER GARDEN HAPPILY SAYING, "SON OF A BITCH", SON OF A BITCH." CLYDENE SNITCHED AND MOM QUICKLY LEARNED ABOUT MY NEW FOUND WORDS. AND I MUST SAY, MY VOCABULARY HAS NEVER BEEN AS COLORFUL SINCE THAT DAY."



**SIDETRACK #4** IN MY 7TH GRADE YEAR MOM DECIDED TO RAISE TURKEYS. SO THE BROODERS WERE BUILT AND BROUGHT INTO THE HOUSE DURING THE COLD WEATHER. SUDDENLY WE WERE LIVING IN THE KITCHEN AND THE UPSTAIRS BEDROOM. BROODERS, YOUNG TURKEYS, AND THEIR 100 LB. FEED SACKS TOOK OVER THE DINING ROOM, LIVING ROOM AND DOWNSTAIRS BEDROOM. NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE NEXT YEAR WE MOVED OUT OF TOWN TO THE FARM. MY JOB WAS TO LOAD THOSE 100 LB. FEED SACKS, WEIGHING MORE THAN I DID, ONTO A SLED AND OUT TO THE TURKEYS HALF A MILE AWAY. REMEMBER, I WAS A REALLY SKINNY, LIGHTWEIGHT KID SO THIS WAS ONE BIG JOB I HAD TO DO EVERY DAY AFTER SCHOOL. I TIRE JUST THINKING ABOUT IT !"

**SIDETRACK #5** "MOM AND I DECIDED TO GROW CORN ONE YEAR WHEN WE WEREN'T ABLE TO RENT THE FARM OUT. SHE BOUGHT A USED FARMALL TRACTOR. AFTER CULTIVATING THE CORN FIELDS WITH A BORROWED CULTIVATOR, I WAS GIVEN THE JOB OF DRIVING IT BACK TO THE FARMER WHO LIVE ABOUT 30 MILES AWAY. ALONG THE WAY I HAD TO CLIMB A LONG, STEEP HILL. WHILE TRYING TO SHIFT DOWN THE GEARS STUCK IN NEUTRAL AND THE TRACTOR WITH CULTIVATOR ROLLED BACK DOWN HILL INTO A DITCH BANK BENDING THE SHAFTS. I WAS SO SCARED THAT I WAN'TED TO DIE WHEN I RETURNED HIS RUINED CULTIVATOR. I CRINGE ABOUT THIS EVEN TODAY. BUT WE FINALLY GOT THE CORN INTO THE CRIBS SOMETIME IN JAN. OR FEB. SO MUCH FOR THAT MONEY-MAKING ADVENTURE."

**SIDETRACK #6** MOM DECIDED WE WOULD GIVE UP THE TURKEY BUSINESS AND MY SENIOR IN H.S. WOULD BE MINE. I STAYED IN TOWN WITH FRIENDS SO I COULD BE IN THE SENIOR PLAY CALLED, NUTS AND BOLTS --NO, IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK, I WAS NOT THE NUT. BUT WE SURE MADE THE MOST OF THE ONLY FORM OF ENTERTAINMENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THIS SMALL COMMUNITY. BACK IN THOSE DAYS IT WAS CALLED 'SPARKIN' !

DUE TO LACK OF FUNDS, I DECIDED NOT TO GO TO COLLEGE. WE HAD SOLD ALL 30 OF MOM'S REGISTERED ANGUS FOR ONLY \$10 PER HEAD SO THE TUITION MONEY WE PLANNED ON WAS JUST NOT THERE. MY MOM, VESTA BEATRICE SAID, "OKAY, IF YOU WANT TO BE A BUM ALL YOUR LIFE DON'T GO TO COLLEGE. ALAN ENROLLED AT MARYVILLE IN 1945 PLANNING TO MAJOR IN BUS. ADM. IN ED. WHICH WOULD ENABLE HIM TO TEACH, WORK IN BUSINESS, OR EXPLORE OTHER OPTIONS. ALAN SAID, "THERE'S NOTHING LIKE CHOICES AND THE MORE THE BETTER." THE GI BILL PAID TUITION AND \$66 A MONTH EXPENSES. --WOW! SO HE GOT A JOB TO MAKE ENDS MEET -- THEN ANOTHER AND ANOTHER, ETC.

LET'S LOOK AT THE GREAT VARIETY OF SOME OF THE 26 JOBS ALAN ROBB HAD DURING HIS FIRST 60 YRS.

1. STEALING COAL AND CORN FOR SURVIVAL
2. PEDDLING HIS MOM'S FRESH BUTTERHORNS (CROISSANTS) IN TOWN
3. RAISING COMMERCIAL TURKEYS, CATTLE AND CORN
4. SERVING IN THE US ARMY AS OFFICE WORKER AT FT. LEAVENWORTH, KS

5. PLUCKING CHICKENS FOR A RESTAURANT
6. CULTIVATING AND HARVESTING FLOWERS FOR A FLORIST
7. ASSEMBLYMAN OF TRACTOR CHAINS (REALLY DISLIKED THIS JOB )
8. PAYROLL ACCOUNTANT FOR A RESTAURANT
9. BUSINESS TEACHER AT GRAHAM HS. MO; LIMON HS,CO; LANDER HS, WYO; BRIGHTON HS, CO; BURLINGTON HS, CO; AND BOULDER HS,CO.
10. SALES CLERK AT AN EXCLUSIVE DENVER MEN'SWEAR STORE
11. CONCRETE MIXER AND LAYER (NOT A LABOR OF LOVE)
12. SURVEYOR'S ASSISTANT (HE HELD THE POLE)
13. MANAGER OF A SWIMMING POOL ( ALAN DID NOT KNOW HOW TO SWIM)
14. SERVING IN SEVERAL OFFICER POSITIONS AT CO. ED. ASSO.
15. COORDINATOR OF C.U.'S CONTINUING ED. PROGRAM
16. INSTRUCTOR OF SHORTHAND AND TYPING AT CU
17. POSTCARD SALESMAN ( JUST TO HELP OUT A FRIEND)
18. OWNER/MANAGER (WITH BARB) OF A GIFT SHOP IN GRAND LAKE, CO.
19. AFTER RETIRING, OWNER AND DESIGN ARTIST OF A WOODWORKING BUSINESS

**CONCLUSION** - THROUGHOUT ALAN'S WORKING LIFE IN 26 DIFFERENT JOBS HE LIVED BY 5 LESSONS --- AND I QUOTE:

LESSON 1: IF ONE IS DOING SOMETHING, DO IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME.

LESSON 2: ONE'S PUBLIC APPEARANCE DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

LESSON 3: DON'T TAKE ON JOBS YOUR PHYSICAL BODY CAN'T POSSIBLY HANDLE.

LESSON 4: BE OPEN MINDED, LISTEN AND LEARN FROM ANOTHER'S KNOWLEDGE AND ACTIONS.

LESSON 5: TRUE LEADERSHIP CAN BE LEARNED ONLY THROUGH LIFE EXPERIENCES.

WE THINK YOU WILL ALL AGREE THAT THESE LESSONS SUM UP AND EPITOMIZE THE MAN WHO'S LIFE WE ARE HERE TO CELEBRATE TODAY.

AND I QUOTE HIM WHEN I SAY,

**"ALAN A. ROBB, YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY BABY."**