

## CHAPTER XVIII



**D**uring my term as mayor of Temple City I wrote a weekly column for the Temple City Times under the byline of "LIKE IT IS.", which proved to be very popular with readers. It was my way of establishing and maintaining a line of communication with the residents. Subjects included, among other things, how the city government worked, responsibilities of the various departments and the inter relationships with other surrounding communities and Los Angeles County. When I retired from the City Council, Helen Schrader, editor of the newspaper, presented me with a bound book containing all of the columns I had written. I still have the book and enjoy reading it from time to time to help me recall how things really were in those days. I find it interesting to note that things have not changed much over the years.

In 1967 I developed polyps on my vocal chords and had to have them removed in a delicate surgical procedure. I was not allowed to talk for three months and had to communicate by hand written notes and head nodding. This made my job at work and on the city council a bit difficult but I came through it OK and when I was finally allowed to talk was relieved to find my voice had not changed into a fog horn.

Virginia was elected to the Temple City School Board and soon became president of that organization resulting in a local joke that the mayor was sleeping with the president of the school board. We were both so

busy with these involvements that we had a slate board and chalk hanging on the wall of the service porch so we could leave messages for each other. Looking back I regret that these activities took so much time away from our children during their developing years. It must have been hard on them and I now wish we had spent time with them during those years. In spite of this we did have a fairly close knit family and thoroughly enjoyed the times and activities we had together.

Jim and some of his friends started a rock band and used to practice in the garage. I made them keep the garage door closed to protect the neighbors but in spite of this we had several visits from the police in response to neighbors complaints. The band got to be pretty good and played at the LA County Fair in Pomona on Temple City Day. They also got an extended engagement playing at the Ice House in Glendale and finally reached the point where they were to enter into a contract in Idaho. Their manager was to fly up to Boise with one of the band members to negotiate the contract and the band members, including their girl vocalist, were all staying at our house. It was wall to wall sleeping bags in the living room for several days.

On the weekend the two were to fly to Boise I had taken our plane and flown up to Merced to attend the annual antique aircraft fly-in and on my way back Sunday afternoon, as I was over Pasadena above a thin overcast, I suddenly saw a huge black mushroom cloud of smoke come up through the overcast in the vicinity of Azusa and I assumed a gas station or something had blown up or was on fire. I was in radio contact with the tower at the El Monte airport at the time and heard someone come on the air saying there had been a mid-air collision between two planes.

When Virginia picked me up at the airport to take me home we had the car radio going and learned that an Air West Jetliner had been hit by a military jet and both had crashed in Duarte. When we got home the kids were all very upset because they thought it was the

flight that their two friends were on. That sad fact turned out to be correct and they died along with everyone else on the plane. It was a very trying time for all of us including Virginia and myself as we had gotten to know the kids well while they were staying with us. The kids were determined, however, and went on up to Boise where they played at the hotel for a long time.

In the meantime, Harriet had been married and presented us with two neat little grandchildren, Craig and Carrie. Rich was busy with an aviation ground school he established in Burbank and had acquired a red headed wife and a silver Corvette. Jim married a girl in Boise and they gave us another grandchild, Kimberly.

In 1971, I noticed that Virginia was eating a lot of Tums to relieve stomach pains after every meal and finally talked her into seeing her doctor who erroneously diagnosed the problem as an ulcer. She received treatment for the supposed ulcer until she was finally diagnosed as having colon cancer. Surgery in 1972 found the cancer rather wide spread and it was followed up with radiation and chemotherapy. She got well enough to go back to work at the bank where she was employed at the time and was able to continue working for about six months when the cancer began getting the upper hand and she passed on in August of 1972. One of the most difficult times of my life was that day when I had to notify our kids that their mother had died, even though we all knew the situation was terminal.

Virginia was buried in Rose Hills Cemetery in Montebello where I bought two grave sites side by side. The head stone on mine is already in place with my name and date of birth etched into it. It is just waiting for me give up the ghost so the date of my death can also be etched onto my head stone. As things stand now they are going to have to wait a while before completing that last task. I'm sure not of a mind to hurry things up for them.

Following Virginia's death I entered into a period

of being a widower which I did not like at all. I was getting invited to dinners by well meaning friends and neighbors who for some reason always seemed to have a single unattached woman present. They were match-makers doing all they could to get me hitched, but I had decided I needed no help and at the right time would do my own choosing. In the fall I dated a couple of local gals which mostly involved taking them out to dinner just for the company of a female to enjoy the good food with me.

The time of my own choosing finally came in January of 1973 when I attended the Chamber of Commerce mixer and saw Evelyn Taylor, who was a former friend of Virginia, dressed in a pink outfit with her dark copper colored hair piled up high on her head. I made my move and asked if she had anything to do after the mixer to which she replied in the negative. So I took her to the Embers in Arcadia for more drinks and a steak dinner during which time I learned she was going through a divorce from her husband George who I casually knew. We dated a couple of times and then, on a rainy night with wine, cheese and apples in front of a warm fire in the fire place I seduced her. That seduction scene was right out of a Hollywood production and was later written up as the feature story in the Valentine Day issue of "Country Life", a slick magazine published in Southwest Riverside County. I received a number of compliments following its publication.

They say the second time around is the best and I was about to find out if that is true. Evelyn had eight children the oldest of which was the same age as my youngest. Her kids and mine had all gone to school together and were somewhat acquainted. Of course her kids were anxious to see what this guy she was dating looked like so she invited me up to her house on Val Street in Arcadia for dinner. I had a pipe in my mouth as I knocked on the front door. Her youngest daughter, Patty opened the door and as I stepped inside a little guy named Johnny, who was four years old hit me in

the face with a pillow knocking my pipe and burning tobacco out of my mouth and onto the deep white pile carpet on the living room floor. I was shocked and rather upset and embarrassed but we got everything cleaned up with no damage to the carpet. As we were sitting down enjoying one of Evelyn's famous baked bean dinners a mutual acquaintance knocked on the front door to deliver some papers to Evelyn. When she saw me there she blurted out, "How nice that I had found someone to feed me." I think she was surprised to find me there and then realized what she had said and became quite embarrassed but we just laughed it off.

Word rapidly spread around town that we were seeing each other. Here we were with eleven kids between us and were falling in love with each other. Things came to a natural conclusion with my proposal and her acceptance. We were married on July 27, 1973 on our patio. Dress for the day was casual with only family in attendance. She and three of her kids moved into our house in Temple City. My kids were all out on their own by this time. Rich was living in Sylmar, Harriet was married and living in Baldwin Park and Jim who had been in the Vietnam War, was in Boise, Idaho.

Jim took his basic training at Camp Ord near Monterey and was shipped out to Vietnam in January of 1968 where he served in the Armored Division of the First Infantry Division known as the Big Red One. Virginia and I took Mom Bosch, who the kids called "Gramme", along with a cute little blonde girl named Pat Yoder, up to see him while he was at Fort Ord. After he shipped out we sent him a tape recorder of which we had a duplicate at home and we kept in touch by mailing recorded messages back and forth. Some of his recordings were quite dramatic as they were made in the heat of battle and you could hear all the gunfire and noise in the background. Much to our relief, Jim came home in one piece although with the Purple Heart, and was the object of a big welcome home party in Temple City.

All of Evelyn's kids had also flown the coop except for the three we setup housekeeping with in Temple City. They were Patty, Jimmy and Johnny and their ages were 12, 9, and 4 respectively. Her other children were Jeanne, Georgia, Robert, Donny and Sandra. So there I was, ready to raise another family, hoping to avoid the mistakes I made on the first time around. At the time of our marriage Evelyn was an area manager at May Department Store in Los Angeles while I was busy at Hughes Aircraft. I would pick her up on my way home from the plant in El Segundo. During my tenure at Hughes I was one of a three man committee appointed to find a location for a new Hughes Facility which was to become the Ground Systems Division. The three of us spent several weeks looking at potential property from Santa Barbara to San Diego and chose the Sunny Hills Ranch in Fullerton where Hughes then built a one million square foot facility.

While Evelyn and I were courting I had a 12 speed bike that I would ride up to her house in Arcadia. The May Company had a sale on bikes and she bought three ten speeds, one each for she, Patty and Jimmy. Johnny rode in a box we fastened to the back of Evelyn's bike. We did a lot of fun riding with the kids to picnics in a park in San Marino and other local points of interest.

When Casual Corners opened a store in the Fashion Square Mall near the Santa Anita Race Track in Arcadia, Evelyn was given the job of Store Manager. While at the May Company she got the idea of growing bait worms from one of her co-workers who was growing and selling them at a good profit. It sounded like fun to me and I became a worm farmer setting up growing bins in the back yard in Temple City. They were called "Wonder Worms" and the name was copyrighted. At this same time we invested in video game vending machines and had them in locations all over Southern California. I had also established a bait worm route that included bait shops from Lake Castaic to Newport

Beach. These two enterprises kept us on the road a lot of the time and were intended as a source of retirement income. They did provide us with a tidy income for a few years but then the great worm business that was sweeping the country went into oblivion and newer video game machines made ours obsolete. We eventually got out of both businesses.



Evelyn and me toasting each other at our patio wedding in Temple City.



Evelyn and I pose with the Minister after he tied our knot in Temple City.



**YOU ARE ALL CORDIALLY  
INVITED TO ATTEND A  
NO HOST**

**COCKTAIL  
PARTY**



**TO HONOR :**

**BILL HARKER**

*RETIRING AFTER **23** YEARS  
WITH HUGHES AIRCRAFT CO.*

*TO BE HELD :*

**JUNE 25th 1976**

*AT THE :*

**5:00 P.M. - UNTIL**

**HACIENDA HOTEL**

**SOUTH STABLE LIGHT ROOM**

**525 N. SUPULVEDA**

**EL SEGUNDO, CA.**